

GUIDELINES:

The Conservation Area.

There would appear to be little realistic potential for additional house building in the conservation area. However, in places there is clearly scope for the addition of conservatories, garden rooms and similar modifications. Where such is the case, the utmost care must be taken, when preparing an application for planning permission, to ensure that the architectural and historic integrity of the whole area should be most carefully considered. In all cases, the use of traditional materials is of paramount importance. The use of plastic in guttering and down pipes and uPVC for windows and doors must continue to be avoided. Similarly, the use of modern, wire-cut bricks and tiles of inappropriate materials and colour should be discouraged.

- Any new construction within this area should be traditional in design and reflect the materials, colours and sufficient features of neighbouring properties to ensure continuity and harmony.
- Ridge height and existing, ancient, sightlines and views should all be carefully considered, evaluated and taken into account.

- Roof pitch and roofing materials, dormer windows, chimneys, gable ends and porches should all harmoniously blend with the existing styles, colours and features of established buildings.
- In the matter of replacement doors and windows and the addition of conservatories, orangeries, pergolas and similar features, residents and developers are urged to consider most carefully the cumulative and particular effect of such on their own and neighbouring properties within the Conservation Area.
- Guttering, down-pipes and similar services preferably should be replaced on the basis of like for like.
- The scale and detail of replacement doors and windows should retain the balance and symmetry of the originals and the relationship between voids and the solids in walls should not be compromised nor destroyed.
- Replacements in uPVC and similar contemporary materials should be only considered where they fully reflect and conform to the colour, shape, proportions and, often, durability of the originals. Wherever and whenever possible, however, their use should be avoided in favour of the original materials employed.
- Cement rendering or the use of masonry paint to conceal damaged or worn bricks or stonework as an alternative to replacement should be avoided.
- Tiles and slates should not be replaced with other-coloured or differently profiled substitutes or be manufactured of materials that conflict with neighbouring properties.
- Existing chimneys should be re-pointed and renovated whenever possible and should not be removed, shortened or fitted with conspicuous cowls. Any new chimneys should take their cue from existing styles, regardless of the fact that early styles are sometimes of significant height to provide the necessary “draw” for wood-fuelled fires.
- Rooflights preferably should not be installed on the street side of any property in the Conservation Area.
- All extensions, however modest or small, should always reflect the character of the main building with flat roofs considered entirely unacceptable.
- New boundary walls should be of natural stone or a matching equivalent with appropriate regard to sympathetic colouring. Brick, block or reconstituted stone walls should be considered unacceptable.

In all matters, conformity with the existing, local vernacular should be considered paramount.

Arterial Ribbon and Radiating Developments:

- There are six areas of what may be considered ‘self-contained’ development in Wansford – Thacker’s Close, Black Swan Spinney, Swan Hill, Nene Close, Robins Field and Robins Wood.
- A seventh ‘self-contained’ development, on the site of former market garden behind 8, Old Leicester Road, is presently under construction (May 2003).
- Each of the six developments, all built in the last third of the last century, has its own singular signature and each blends with its contiguous neighbours with commendable fluidity. Much is undoubtedly due to the considerable priority given to soft landscaping and open spaces when the developments were planned.
- In the majority of instances, an absence of unsightly brick and block walls, railings and picket fencing between the front gardens and the provision of often quite generous and well-tended verges contribute significantly to an open, airy ambience.
- This overall feeling of spaciousness, even when it is not strictly the case, should be considered and emulated in all new development; not least since existing residents should, reasonably, be allowed to continue to enjoy such a valuable amenity that is a noted, keynote feature of the village.
- In addition to potential loss of amenity through being overlooked by new or extended buildings, now that recent landscapes have evolved and matured over the past quarter century, non-indigenous, fast-growing conifers present an increasing and contentious problem. Where soft landscaping is an issue, it is recommended developers plant indigenous broad leaf varieties wherever possible and only dwarf species of fast-growing evergreens. *Leylandii* should not be regarded as appropriate screening.
- A key characteristic of Wansford is not only the spacing of housing but often the angle neighbouring houses are juxtapositioned. The advent of two and three car households is also a consideration that must be rationalised when developing new properties or building extensions.

- With the possible exceptions of Nene Close where the garage blocks are remote from the houses and at Bridge End, kerbside parking is the exception in Wansford. Developers are encouraged to provide adequate off-road parking provision consistent with Local Plan policies.
- The more mature ribbon development along the established arterial roads is of a considerable variety of styles. Any future infill developments and extensions should respect the existing building lines, spacing and all existing hedges, and stone walls preserved. As stated, the gaps between the buildings are of the utmost importance in maintaining, indeed generating, the feeling of spaciousness and light that is such an important characteristic of Wansford.
- In general, developers and residents should adopt a sensitive, coordinated approach to the layout, design and proposed materials to be employed in all new construction work.
- Planning submissions should ideally include accurate perspective drawings and site plans which incorporate all neighbouring properties with a clear indication as to how all new construction will appear in relationship to existing surroundings and landmarks.
- New building on the peripheries of the village should continue to give high priority to landscaping to protect and enhance all village approaches.
- The development of a 'hard edge' to the village contour should be avoided.
- Infill and both lateral and vertical extensions to existing properties should ensure that space for essential maintenance, continuance of adequate light and views of surrounding countryside should not be compromised.
- The emphasis should remain on the inherent quality, from a community perspective, of any newly created environment.
- Materials should be of good quality and of a colour, style and form to harmonise with their surroundings.
- Suitable provision should be made for landscaping and grass verges, as appropriate, and the retention of mature indigenous trees, hedgerows and old stone walls.
- New street lighting in the Conservation Area should be sympathetic to the surroundings.
- All street signs and furniture should be kept to a minimum needed to serve their purpose and be of good quality, considerately positioned and of harmonious design.
- Inappropriately positioned masts, aerials and dishes should be discouraged.

CONCLUSION

- The village of Wansford is fortunate in being relatively compact in size and shape and in encompassing a number of small, essentially complementary, modern developments branching out from more mature ribbon development along ancient arterial roads. The Conservation Area comprises the ancient stone bridge with its immediate northerly access and additional properties along the lower reaches of the Old North Road and the intersections with Bridge End, Peterborough Road, Old Leicester Road and Yarwell Road
- Each segment of the village has its own architectural signature.
- Future development, whether by infilling or extensions, should be careful to retain the essential character and proportions of surrounding buildings and open spaces.
- In design, new buildings should incline towards existing housing styles and not reflect the "mass production" characteristics of urban and suburban estates, which so often look out of place in a rural setting.
- Care should be exercised not to compromise existing open aspects by overdevelopment of individual sites or properties, nor materially change existing relationships between buildings and open space.
- This Village Design Statement should be viewed as an organic document that will evolve and develop over the coming years to meet the changing needs and challenges of the future - and re-address old challenges and problems that prove resilient to resolution. The objective will remain unchanged:

“...to ensure that future changes and development in the village are viewed in the light of this carefully considered understanding of Wansford’s past history and the present day situation; formed by a consensus of those best qualified to form such an opinion – Wansford residents.”

APPENDIX

Public Consultation - procedure and process

On 9th April 2001, Miss Carry Hayes of Peterborough City Council Planning Services and Ms. Deborah Willis of ACRE attended the Wansford Parish Council Meeting and offered a detailed outline of the concept and objectives of Village Design Statements with recommendations on the preferred approach, format and possible sources of funding. After discussion, the Parish Council agreed to proceed and pursue the development of a Wansford Village Design Statement and accepted the offer that David Stuart-Mogg should steer the project and would canvass the village for interested parties to form a Steering Committee. The foregoing is recorded in the appropriate Minutes of Wansford Parish Council and also published on pages 16/17 of the May 2001 issue of Living Villages.

A Steering Committee was formed during May/June 2001. A Questionnaire was designed, published and hand delivered to every household in Wansford during the first week in July with a request for responses by 23 July. During the week following 23 July, households that had not returned a completed questionnaire were contacted to establish whether they wished to participate. In the final analysis, 40% of households responded with completed forms. A further explanation of the objectives of the Village Design Statement and details of the Questionnaire were published on page 7 of the July issue of Living Villages with a repeated invitation for any villagers interested to join the VDS development team.

As a result of information offered in the returned Questionnaires and research carried out by members of the Steering Committee, a first draft of the Wansford Village Design Statement was developed under the general guidance and with the assistance of Peterborough City Council's Planning Service.

On 9th November 2001, a notice was published in the Rutland & Stamford Mercury, page 35, advising that as part of an extended Public Consultation period, the Wansford VDS was on public display in St. Mary's Church, Wansford until Saturday, 1st December. Flyers were printed advertising the Public Consultation and posted on both village notice boards, in the village Post Office and in the church entrance. The display took the form of each page of the VDS being printed A4 size, encapsulated and mounted on sequential display boards along one wall of the church accompanied by full, explanatory notes. Comments, corrections and/or questions were invited. Details of the Public Consultation period were also published in Living Villages, page 8.

The Public Consultation engendered no suggested corrections or amendments, but much positive comment on the initiative. Local concerns, not related to the VDS, were expressed however, as had been the case in a number of the Questionnaires earlier returned. The Steering Committee addressed these often forcefully expressed concerns by way of a qualified ADDENDUM to the VDS.

A final draft VDS was then submitted to Peterborough Planning Services, which returned a number of amendments to be included. A dialogue ensued over several months until a consensus on content and wording was reached. Peterborough Planning Services then submitted an extensive list of interested parties to whom the Steering Committee should send copies of the VDS for comment and approval. This list included the Church Commissioners, specified local builders and estate agents and other similar bodies which could have a commercial or other interest in Wansford. No formal responses were received to this exercise.

The VDS was then formally submitted to Peterborough City Council and approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 22nd August 2003.

ADDENDUM

Villagers' Concerns

N.B. The following paragraphs are entirely outside the scope of the Village Design Statement and are, therefore, wholly excluded from the terms for consideration as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

However, they do represent issues that greatly concerned the clear majority of respondents to the VDS Questionnaire. Although it is recognised that these matters are outside the parameters of the VDS remit, it is felt most strongly that Peterborough City Council should at least be aware – and the Parish Council reminded – of these strongly felt local concerns.

- The issue of traffic relates mainly to the speed of traffic passing through the village, especially in a southerly direction down the Old Leicester Road and Old North Road plus the increasing number of heavy goods vehicles passing through the village. Most especially, the number of large H.G.V. s using the narrow, steep and obliquely angled junction of the Yarwell Road with the Old Leicester Road notably to access the quarry facility at Sulehay. Considered local opinion over many years has been that some form of traffic calming is required on the long, straight stretch of road between the King's Cliffe turning and Robins Field. It is understood from the Parish Council that Peterborough Highways Division considers this problem 'of very low priority'. An overwhelming majority of responses to public consultation made a plea for traffic movements to be calmed and reduced: especially H.G.V. s. The Planning Authority is therefore asked to give likely traffic implications high priority in considering any planning application in Wansford or neighbouring villages.
- Concern regarding the lack of a safe children's play area within the village, protected from traffic hazards, was a recurring anxiety repeatedly expressed by a significant number of residents throughout the village.
- Development outside the existing village envelope would undoubtedly only achieve the effect of turning Wansford into an even larger dormitory village and suburbanise its present rural character: with little or no material gain to either the village or residents.
- Respondents to the VDS questionnaire were overwhelmingly of the view that future development outside the present village envelope should be resisted at all costs. This view, if sustained, will inevitably put pressure on existing infill land - and those properties with development potential - to produce the highest return for the freeholder. Clashes of interest are inevitable. However, reference to the impact, desirable and otherwise, of past planning decisions and consideration of the recommendations of the considerable body of village opinion that has guided publication of this VDS should, with the guidance and professional expertise of Peterborough Planning Services, ensure Wansford maintains the essentially rural ambiance presently enjoyed.
- The overall feeling in the village towards the concept of business and commercial activity within the village boundaries, as monitored in the VDS questionnaire, was negative. That said, it would appear inevitable that in the coming years increasing numbers of people will be working from a home base as consultants, agents and 'teleworkers' or offering professional, social or personal services to local and surrounding communities. It is the considered opinion of the VDS Team that limited commercial activity within the village, of a non-intrusive nature, is vital both to maintain and enhance the vitality of the community as a whole.



Village envelope as at October 2001. Visual aid for general overview purposes only.

Disclaimer

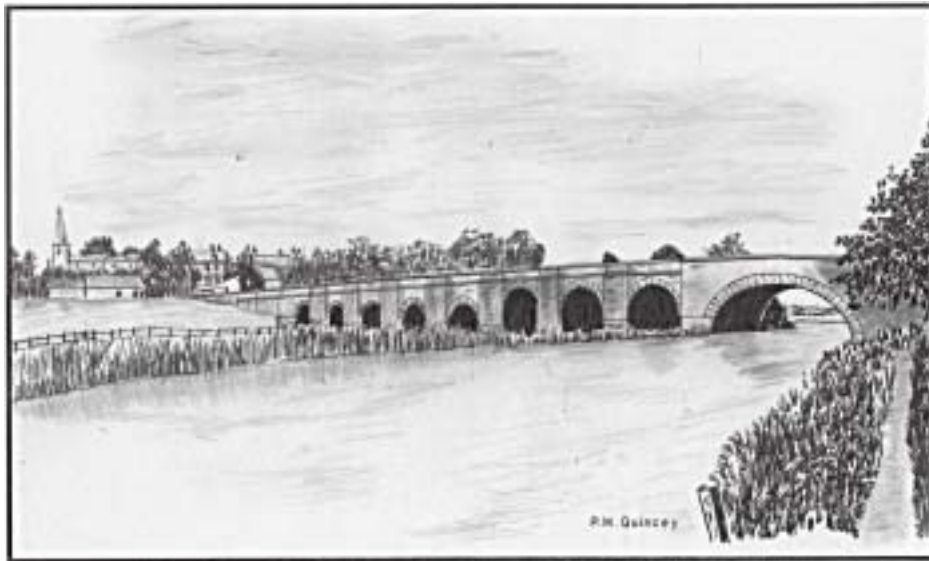
This statement is based upon the research of the VDS Team, public consultation and the assistance of professional planners. It is not intended as a substitute for personal enquiry or investigation and those having an interest in property in Wansford should make such an enquiry, investigation and survey.

The VDS Team and the Wansford Parish Council do not accept responsibility for any representation, misrepresentation or inaccuracy in respect of the content of this statement nor for any cost, claim or demand that may arise in respect of it.

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Wansford

Village Design Statement 2003



View of old Wansford from the Stibbington towpath

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