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T.P. Williams, A.R.I.C.S., M.R.T.P.I.,  
Borough Estates and Planning Officer,  
Kettering Borough Council,  
Bowling Green Road,  
KETTERING. NN15 7QX.

## Introduction

Many parts of our towns and villages have some special atmosphere or character which is created by the arrangement of groups of buildings, trees and other elements of the street scene, rather than by the architectural merit of the individual buildings themselves.

For many years it was generally accepted that such areas should be preserved and yet, in practice, many of the buildings which contributed to the special character of such areas could be demolished without the consent of the Local Planning Authority.

To overcome this problem provisions are contained in the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 for the designation of Conservation Areas, which are defined as "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". The emphasis is on the collective quality of areas rather than of individual buildings, although individual buildings of high quality are an important element in establishing the quality of an area, together with other factors. However, such buildings are protected by separate legislation.

To designate a Conservation Area a Local Planning Authority has to decide upon the most appropriate boundary for the area to be protected and then to formally declare it to be a Conservation Area. Notices must be published in the "London Gazette" and at least one local newspaper. This is all the statutory procedure involves. The confirmation of the Secretary of State for the Environment is not required.

Having designated a Conservation Area, the Local Planning Authority, Kettering Borough Council, is:-

- (i) encouraged to treat applications for new developments or alterations to existing buildings within the Area with greater attention, to ensure that as far as possible the proposed developments harmonise with their surroundings in terms of scale, materials, colour, style, size and overall appearance;
- (ii) empowered to exercise special controls as regards demolition of buildings and tree protection within the Conservation Area;
- (iii) in a position to consider whether other controls - such as powers to cancel automatic planning permissions for certain classes of development or to declare areas of special advertisement control - should be utilised;
- (iv) required to advertise, in both the local press and on site, details of any planning application which would, in the opinion of the Authority, affect the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

The designation of a Conservation Area does not by itself exclude new development, nor can its conservation be considered in isolation from natural growth and the existing and future needs of village users, such as shopping, commerce, farming and residents. Designation however does ensure that claims for the conservation of the character of an area take their proper place when changes are proposed.

Although designation of the Conservation Area may be followed in due course by detailed proposals for the enhancement of the area, or parts of the area, ultimate success will depend on the active interest and support of the community as a whole.

## **Future Action**

The boundary of the Conservation Area has been carefully considered by the Borough Council following consultation with the Parish Council, local people, amenity bodies, and the County Council. A public exhibition, illustrating the designation of the Conservation Area, was held in the village.

A specific responsibility is placed upon the Local Planning Authority to take account of the character of Conservation Areas when exercising its planning duties and grant-giving powers. Development proposals, which in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority affect such areas, must be advertised and account taken of representations received from local and national interests in determining each case.

Designation of a Conservation Area is only a prelude to action for conserving and enhancing its character and appearance. This document is concerned with the reasons for designation. It analyses and defines the basic qualities of the particular features and groups of buildings which are considered to make a significant contribution to the character of the area. The Development Control Policies contained in this document include advice on how suitable forms of development may be achieved.

Detailed plans may be required showing the design of new buildings when applications for outline planning permission are being made. Conservation Area status involves specific statutory obligations to obtain listed building consent for the demolition of virtually any building in such an area, to notify the planning authority of any intention to cut down, uproot, top or lop trees, and to comply with special regulations which may be made to control advertisements.

Improvement and enhancement of Conservation Areas is not only dependent upon long-term proposals. Much can be achieved in the immediate future by local initiative in street redecoration, removal of untidy advertisements and the general maintenance of individual buildings. Public participation, local interest and voluntary action by amenity bodies in restoring and improving the attractive parts of the environment is essential following the initiative of the Local Planning Authority in designating the Area.

## Appraisal

The Stoke Albany Conservation Area was designated by Kettering Borough Council on 30th November, 1982 (Minute 82.PT.173).

The village of Stoke Albany is located some 5 miles east of Market Harborough off the A427 Corby road, within an attractive undulating landscape of enclosed fields typifying the northern margins of Northamptonshire.

The older built area of the village is concentrated on the western side of Ashley Road and is characterised by vernacular stone-built cottages bordering narrow tapering lanes. These lanes extend westwards to a public footpath which conveniently defines the western boundary and gives attractive views into this part of the village.

There are a number of modern in-fill dwellings within the village which blend well with the character of the established buildings. However the more recent areas of both local authority and private development bordering Harborough Road tend to stand apart from the older parts of the village.

Mention should also be made of the attractive outlier situated around the war memorial, where a more open pattern of development still reflects the prevailing village character typified by the use of local materials and stone boundary walling, and dominated by the Church of St. Botolph.

Small grassed, open spaces make a significant contribution to the character of the village. Such areas are located fronting Ashley Road and the Old School House. A larger open area abutts Manor Farm and borders the eastern side of Ashley Road, permitting attractive views across the valley to Wilbarston.

Stoke Albany is, therefore, an attractive blend of buildings constructed over the last three centuries, together with small open spaces and narrow lanes which all have considerable charm and character, and its designation as a Conservation Area will help to safeguard its special appeal and qualities.

## Development Control Policies

The following policies and advice have been adopted by the Council to operate as a guide to new development in the context of the overall principle of the designation of the village as a Conservation Area, namely to conserve the essential character of the area. Such policies are thus the principles by which application for development will be considered by the Council. Applications not in accordance with these policies will therefore only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

It is considered to be of considerable value to engage the services of an architect or designer who is experienced and creative in his approach to design in a Conservation Area. In addition, the value of discussing a proposal with officers of the Borough Estates and Planning Department prior to the submission of a planning application cannot be emphasised too strongly.











- (i) Planning applications will not usually be considered in outline; details of the siting and design of a proposed building, including elevations, which show the proposal in the context of its surroundings, will be required.
- (ii) The demolition of significant buildings, significant frontages and buildings on the statutory list will normally be resisted.
- (iii) Consent to demolish other buildings within the Conservation Area will normally only be granted where there are acceptable and detailed plans for the redevelopment of the site.
- (iv) The demolition of existing boundary walls or the removal of trees where these form important elements in the street scene, will be resisted.
- (v) New buildings will only be permitted where the siting, layout and materials used are in harmony with the character of the area.
- (vi) Alterations and extensions to existing buildings will only be permitted if they are carried out in a sympathetic manner in terms of design and materials, both in relation to the existing building, and other buildings in the locality.




# Stoke Albany Conservation Area

## Appraisal Plan

**Key**

-  Listed Buildings
-  Other Significant Buildings
-  Sites In Need Of Enhancement
-  Significant Walls
-  Significant Open Space
-  Focal Point
-  Significant Slopes
-  Significant Trees & Planting
-  Public Footpath
-  Significant Views

Scale 1:2500

  
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STOKE ALBANY C P

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