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Part 1: Introduction

Background to the appraisal

There are seventy conservation areas in Salisbury district covering historic settlements and small villages. A conservation area is described in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

Conservation areas are designated by the local authority and designation is the recognition of an area’s special qualities, which the council intends to safeguard as an important part of the district’s heritage. It is the accumulation of an area’s positive architectural or historic attributes, rather than the quality of its individual buildings, which makes it worthy of conservation area status. The attributes might include: the landscape setting of the area; the grouping of traditional buildings and the resultant spaces and sense of enclosure; the scale, design, type and materials of the buildings; historic boundaries; public realm; landmarks, views and vistas; and the present and former pattern of activities or land uses.

Conservation area designation allows for strengthened planning controls, gives protection to trees, and provides control over the demolition of unlisted buildings.

Planning policy context

The local planning authority is required by the legislation to periodically review their existing conservation areas. An appraisal of each area is therefore required in order to identify the particular attributes that make each conservation area special. Guidance is provided to the local authority in carrying out this task in the English Heritage publication Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals and its companion document Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, both published in August 2005.

There is also guidance from central government in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994), which advises that the local authority should formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas. This is achieved by producing management plans for each conservation area.

Salisbury District Council has encapsulated the broad principles of the government guidance in its existing local plan policies (policies CN8-CN17). This will shortly be reviewed as the council starts to produce new policies through the local development framework. Planning applications that affect the character of the conservation area should be considered on their individual merits, in the light of the Local Plan policies, and taking into account all other material considerations. The appraisals and management plans are used to guide and inform the decision-making process.

Steeple Langford lies within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. An historic landscape characterisation was completed in August 2008. This highlights management issues beyond the immediate boundaries of the conservation area. Further information can be obtained at www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk.

Purpose and scope of the document

Conservation area appraisals and management plans are seen as the first steps in a dynamic process, the aim of which is to seek the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of conservation areas and to provide a basis for making decisions about their future management.
Each appraisal and management plan aims to:

- identify those elements of the conservation area that contribute to its character;
- identify elements that detract from the character; and
- propose measures to maintain or improve the positive character, local distinctiveness and sense of place of the conservation area.

The importance of conservation area appraisals and their associated management plans is expressed in central government Best Value Performance Indicators BVPI 219a, b and c. The indicators emphasise the need to follow the English Heritage guidance and the importance of involving the local community.

All reasonable steps have been taken to carry out a thorough appraisal of the conservation area, and with the exception of some areas of private land that it has not been possible to access for the survey, the appraisal is as comprehensive as it can be.

**Executive summary**

Steeple Langford Conservation Area was designated on 8 February 1989. The boundary of the conservation area as designated is shown in Appendix 1.

The key characteristics of the Steeple Langford Conservation Area are:

- An attractive and tranquil riverside setting.
- Extensive use of the local Chilmark type limestone.
- Survival of a key group of historically important buildings: the church, the manor house, the former rectory and the mill.
- Stone and cob boundary walls tying groups of buildings together and defining the lanes.
- The distinctive regional vernacular tradition of chequerwork walling; in this case stone with flint.
- A small but visually striking lead broach spire to the church which is seen in developing views throughout the village and from across the valley.
- Important groups of trees and individual trees, which act as a soft backdrop and punctuate and penetrate the townscape.
- The ever-present distant ridgeline of the uplands of the Wylye Valley.
- Some good eighteenth century buildings utilizing two colours of brick - buff and red - with the flared headers.
- A strong sense of enclosure formed by built form hard to the roadside, with gable ends figuring prominently in local and extended views into the conservation area.
- An interesting and unusual (in terms of materials used) group of estate cottages (although some have been much altered and diminish the group).

The summary of recommendations for the Steeple Langford Conservation Area arising out of this document are:

- One small group of buildings needs to be monitored for further deterioration.
• A modest group of houses have been identified for a potential Article 4(2) Direction.
• Tree Preservation Orders should be made on trees to the entrance to Montrose House (former Rectory) and to the eastern edge of the conservation area above Berwick Lane.
• Minor boundary revisions should be made to reflect exclusion of buildings which do not make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area and include historic survivals of Manor Farm and the immediate setting of the mill stream.
• There are two potential sites for redevelopment: north of the church, and the western corner of the junction of The Wirr and Salisbury Road.
• Removal/replacement of the roadside barrier outside Widdershins, Salisbury Road.

Part 2: Appraisal

Location and setting

The village of Steeple Langford lies on the north bank of the River Wylye, 13km west of Salisbury. The parish extends to both the south and north of the river, the portion to the south largely being associated with the village of Hanging Langford. Steeple Langford’s part of the parish stretches from the river at around 75m OD to the rolling former chalk downland, reaching 167m OD close to the northern edge of the parish.

The main road through Steeple Langford (until a by-pass was constructed in 1989) was the east-west route between Wilton and Salisbury to the east and Bath and Warminster in the west (now the A36). Two routeways traverse the valley, crossing the River Wylye at different points: one to the south-west of the church, was carried across the river by a bridge by the late 16th century at the least, and a ford further to the east. This fording point may have been where the prehistoric trackway, the Harrow way, crossed the river. A bridge was not built at this crossing point until the late 19th century. To the north from the ford the road divided into two – one crossing the main east-west road at the east end of the village, continuing north as Berwick Lane, while the second route, Duck Street, has its junction with the main road a little to the east of the churchyard.

Historical background and archaeology

Archaeological evidence for the occupation of the landscape surrounding Steeple Langford from the Neolithic period has been recovered from many sites within the parish. Neolithic stone tools, Bronze Age barrows, the Iron Age camp at Yarnbury Castle and prehistoric field systems show that there was considerable prehistoric activity in the area. Yarnbury was also occupied during the Roman period but it is likely that by this time most settlement was concentrated along the river valley, as is still the case.

The settlement derives its name from the presence of the ‘long ford’ across the River Wylye. Although sometimes known as Great Langford, the name Steeple Langford has been in use since the late thirteenth century.

The earliest documentary reference to Steeple Langford dates from 943AD, although the western boundary of the estate was described in 901AD in a charter of King Edward granting land in neighbouring Wylye to Aethelwulf. The Domesday Book (1086) provides the first specific information about the estate, recording that Waleran the huntsman held ten hides at Steeple Langford. The manor descended in the direct male line until the early thirteenth century when the estate was shared...
Parishes such as Steeple Langford that stretch from the river valley to the high downlands are usually interpreted as being of Saxon origin. These often long, narrow land units provided each community along the valley with the range of different resources: access to water, meadow in the valley, pasture and arable on the lower slopes and grazing on the higher and more distant downland. From the medieval period sheep and corn farming dominated the agriculture of the parish, in common with most chalk downland parishes. In the early fourteenth century the land of the manor was separated from that of the tenants whose arable strips were located in three open fields. As was the case on many chalk land manors across Wiltshire and Hampshire, large landholdings were being created as farms were amalgamated. Although this process sometimes began as early as the fifteenth century in some places in Steeple Langford it appears to have largely occurred in the early nineteenth century.

William Cobbett, who had stayed in the village when a child, passed through the village in 1826 and afterwards wrote:

“I found it a much more miserable place than I had remembered it. The Steeple, to which it owed its distinctive appellation, was gone; and the place altogether seemed to me to be very much altered for the worse”.

This may have been a reflection of the change from a population of tenant farmers to one of landless labourers with most of what had been the arable land of the tenants worked from two farms, both located at East End. These two farms were brought together shortly after enclosure of the commonable land in 1866, leaving Manor Farm in the village and East Clyffe Farm, built in 1869, at East End.

**Settlement plan**

In 1839, the date of the Tithe map, settlement in Steeple Langford was largely concentrated around the junctions of the two roads leading from the ford. Although the Duck Street junction now simply appears to be cross-roads, with the church set back to the south-west, the Tithe map suggests that there was once a large open area north and east of the churchyard which was over-looked by the manor house standing on higher ground to the north. Additionally, the road to the western crossing point of the river bounded the churchyard on its west side. By 1839 part of the area north of the church had been encroached upon by the malthouse complex, leaving a small ‘island’ surrounded by roads, and there was a narrow strip of encroachment hard against the north boundary of the churchyard. Along the east edge of the churchyard there were several small cottages but these faced directly onto the open area at the north end of Duck Street. By 1901 these cottages had gained gardens in front of them, pushing the west edge of Duck Street back to its present position.

Of the property plots shown on the Tithe map, only the plots on the north side of the main street give any indication of organisation in the layout of the village. The Tithe map shows a block of five long, narrow, plots with roughly parallel boundaries sharing a common rear boundary characteristic of planned development. To the east of this block was a series of short plots as far as the junction of Berwick Lane. The pattern of these regular plots, particularly the longer properties, has largely been lost.

South of the main road, opposite the large regular block of plots on the north side, there was some regularity in the short plots along the roadside. With the dog-leg turn in the long north-south boundary on the east side of these plots, there is even a hint that there may have been a similar planned block on the south side of the street – the dog-leg in the long north-south boundary might indicate where the rear boundary of this block lay.

The houses along Duck Street stood within irregularly shaped plots, especially those on the west side.
of the road, suggesting relatively late development. The curving line of the rear boundary of these plots, which reflects the width of the open area east of the churchyard, might represent the former limit of a wide route-way leading down to the ford that has been encroached upon. The few properties along Berwick Lane also appear to be encroachment onto roadside ‘waste’ and, at the top end of the lane, on the edge of a former chalk quarry. Such development can date as early as the sixteenth century but is more typical of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

**Archaeological potential**

There are no Scheduled Monuments in or adjacent to the conservation area.

Steeple Langford has almost certainly been the focus for settlement since Saxon times at least. Therefore it is probable that evidence for the origins and development of the settlement will survive below ground except where modern development will have destroyed or compromised archaeological deposits.

Evidence for the later medieval and post-medieval periods will also be encountered within the standing buildings of the village, some of which are not listed despite clearly dating from at least the eighteenth century.

There are no recorded archaeological excavations within the village to help inform the potential for archaeological deposits but an Area of Archaeological Potential has been identified based on historic map evidence and settlement analysis. Any future development proposals within this area may be subject to archaeological recording conditions in accordance with PPG16 due to the potential for the discovery of remains relating to the development of the village.

**Key historic influences**

The key historic characteristics of Steeple Langford are:

- An important fording point of the river.
- A series of farm complexes (Manor Farm and East End Farm dominating).
- Regular plots, in part, denoting a planned settlement (at least from the medieval period).
- Encroachment onto a relatively large open area to the north and east of the church.
- Amalgamations of farms in the nineteenth century which transformed the landscape and had a significant effect on the village.

**Spatial analysis**

**Character areas**

Conservation areas are designated for their special character, but within the area there are zones which are varied but contribute to the whole. It is important to define these ‘sub areas’ and provide a clear understanding of the defining elements, that make up the character of a particular part of the conservation area. This can lead to a much more useful and comprehensive document in development control terms and provide a clear idea of the make up of distinctive areas that have some cohesion.

It should be noted that while four sub areas have been identified, the transition between areas is also important and there is a cohesion to the whole conservation area, which should always be considered when addressing the character of the Steeple Langford Conservation Area.
Each character area makes reference to the following factors in a series of in bullet pointed paragraphs:

- form (cohesiveness – why a character area),
- scale and building line,
- significant groups,
- materials,
- views, and
- local features.

**General overview**

This small village emerged at the meeting point of two important routes, one crossing the river Wylye, the other following the line of the valley. The quiet and tranquillity of the present settlement is as a result of its relatively recent bypassing by the A303. The presence of this road is still heard and seen on occasions, with glimpses of lorries and coaches passing higher on the ridge to the north.

All Saints Church acts as a focal point to the village with the distinctive squat lead covered broach spire forming a significant local landmark in and beyond the village.

Large houses and farmhouses are set off the road in generous grounds and enclosed with boundary walls in stone and cob. Smaller houses and the former mill, malthouse and local shop and post office are set on the roadside and strongly define the route through the village and provide good enclosure in places.

A particular feature of the conservation area are the small group of estate type cottages (dated c1870-71) set in pairs to the main road (although some have been significantly altered) as well as the good group of listed houses and cottages forming an informal terrace to the eastern end of Salisbury Road.

Boundaries form a very important part of the character of the village and range from low stone walls to high cob walls and substantial hedges and trees.

**Character areas:**

1. **Western approach and Manor Farm – Salisbury Road**

- There is a looseness to the built form on approaching from the west, with the boundary treatments playing a much more important role of enclosure particularly on the north side of the road (figure 1).

- Buildings are set well back off the road and are enclosed to the north side of the road by strongly defining stone and flint and brick boundary walls. The houses and school are grander in scale compared to the rest of the conservation area with buildings of 2½ storey (and the equivalent at the school). In contrast to the north side, there are wide open vistas across the river valley to the south. Arrival into
the village core is signalled by the mill on the south side with its rather austere brick façade of partially blind windows hard to the road on the south.

- The houses and the school are seen individually, set in their own generous grounds rather than as groups. The exception to this is the remnants of the early farm buildings to Manor Farm which still form an important but much fragmented group, to the north of the Manor House.

- Dressed limestone (probably Chilmark or similar) and rubble stone is the main building component for this part of the conservation area. This has been attractively combined with flint to provide the characteristic stone and flint chequerwork of the region. Flint (with brick bands) is also used extensively in the distinctive and extensive boundary walls to this part of the conservation area. Roofs are handmade red clay tiles.

- There are long glimpsed views (over development and trees) of the spire of the church and similarly long views along the road into the heart of the settlement. The return gable of No.1 Church Cottages forms a particularly important visual stop to views looking east (figure 2) and defines the ‘centre’ of the village. Of note is a view to the north east which is dominated by the large modern farming structures to the north of Manor House.

- The distinctive use of flint and stone in a chequerwork pattern is a local detail shared with surrounding villages (most of which are also conservation areas). The use of local limestone for the boundary walls is a particularly strong locally distinctive feature of this part of the village.

2. Village core – Salisbury Road

- There is a very distinct point of arrival to the village defined in part by the junction with Duck Street and the dominant presence of the church and Montrose House (formerly the Rectory). Although both are set back from the road, these two buildings make an important contribution to the sense of enclosure and intimate scale of the village.

- A key defining element of this part of the conservation area is the variation to the building line, with some buildings making very strong statements in the streetscape defining junctions and tightening the road (The Malthouse, No.1 Church Cottages and Widdershins) and others set back with various boundary treatments including low walls, railings and hedges. The walls contribute to the strongly defined edge of the townscape throughout the village but this slight set back of houses behind them is a particular characteristic of this character area (figure 3). Houses are almost entirely 2 storey with little evidence of use of the roofspace for accommodation. The exception is the...
Church Cottages range with their strong line of dormers providing first floor accommodation in these modest cottages. It should be noted that this group was previously four thatched cottages subsequently sold in the 1950s and re-roofed.

- There are three key groups that define the character area. The group which defines the main junction is important in townscape terms but has lost some of its architectural integrity; the Church Cottages terrace is a particularly important part of the group in townscape terms. To the southern side Salisbury Road, the collection of estate cottages (dated c1870 - Coat of Arms/monogram to gable) is distinctive although much altered in places. Finally the high quality and materially distinctive (predominant use of brick) group of listed houses and the former ‘Bell Inn’ to the north of Salisbury Road, define in part the entrance to the conservation area from the east.

- The broadest mix of materials including limestone, ashlar and rubble stone is used for dressings as well as combined with flint in chequerwork (Malthouse and Fern Cottage); early red brick with some flared headers, render; painted and unpainted and roofs of red handmade clay tiles, natural Welsh slates and thatch; combed wheat reed (note – at the time of survey in April 2006, Fern Cottage was undergoing complete rethatching, and so cannot be commented upon). There is also a distinctive double Roman interlocking clay tile to Nos. 15-17 Salisbury Road (figure 4).

- There are glimpsed views of the church spire from parts of the character area. Travelling west the church is a focal point. On the south side of the street glimpsed views of the extensive chequer work of Montrose House are possible between each block of buildings. These views are informal but add to the charm and intimate scale of the village.

- The small group of late nineteenth century estate cottages are locally distinctive and very attractively scaled and detailed when found in their original form. The use of the ashlar stonework with flints in a chequerwork pattern is of interest as is the frequency of the use of a toothed plat band in brick (seen on 15, 17 and 19 and the Mill House)

3. Berwick Lane

- This character area is defined by the narrow lane winding up the steep valley sides. Despite some indifferent infill and much altered original buildings, its scale and topography are attractive characteristics warranting at least in parts its inclusion in the conservation area.

- Buildings are domestic scale (two storey). Their building lines vary but all the houses are set off the lane with small gardens and front areas. The Knoll, towards the top of the lane, is set gable to the lane - untypical of the others.

- All buildings in the character area form a modest but cohesive group and are linked by their scale characteristics.
Materials are varied and range from traditional brick to untraditional painted render, brick, stone and chalk block. Roofing materials also vary with clay tile, slate and modern roofing systems used.

Views are very limited within this character area, with the enclosure and orientation of the lane closing any views. However, glimpses across the valley can be had between and over houses, taking in the outbuildings of Manor Farm and trees dotted along the rear boundaries of the Salisbury Road houses. There is also a funnelled view south dominated by the ridgeline of the valley and rolling green hills (figure 5).

The use of chalk block to such great effect is a strong local feature of this character area. No.3 is a particularly good example of the use of large chalk blocks, no doubt dug from the former chalk pit further up the lane (figure 6).

4. Southern approach – Duck Street

- The road from nearby Hanging Langford crosses the valley bottom and the River Wylye and becomes Duck Street, culminating in the offset “T” junction with Salisbury Road. The character area relates to the arrival at the historic core of the village and the important junction of the two valley routes.

- Buildings are two storey but in reality often appear larger, either as a result of their steep roof pitch or the presence of accommodation in the roofspaces (figure 7). The building line is perhaps the most distinctive and important element of this character area in that buildings are hard up to the road or very slightly set back (including the double height scale of the cob wall to Montrose House, the former Rectory). This has created a very intimate and distinctive townscape which successfully and deliberately leads the traveller to the ‘centre’ of the settlement.

- Greystones Cottage, Corpus Christi Cottage and the converted barn to the north of this cottage form a very strong group of attractive predominantly stone buildings that define and enclose the street, and along with their
associated boundary walls, create a real sense of arrival and familiarity (figure 8).

- The local Chilmark type stone defines this part of the conservation area and is successfully combined with the equally characteristic thatch and red clay tiles. Boundary walls display a particularly high quality of craftsmanship and material use, which emphasises the distinctiveness of this part of the conservation area (but is shared in quality terms with the Western Approach (character area 1).

- The view ‘into’ the conservation area is partially terminated by the strong tall gable of Corpus Christi Cottage, set in a frame of mature trees beyond. This is a very attractive and important gateway to the conservation area. Local views are further terminated by the Malthouse at the junction with Salisbury Road. Views south out of the conservation area are funnelled by the tight townscape but are also characterised by the ever present distant ridgeline of the Nadder chalkland valley.

- The distinctive use of local stone, flint and cob in boundary walls makes for memorable and well defined townscape in this part of the conservation area.

**Architectural and historic qualities of buildings**

While a small village, Steeple Langford can boast buildings of a good architectural quality ranging in style and period from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, quite apart from the value of its multi-phased parish church.

All Saints’ Church is situated at one of the lowest points of the village and thus its tower, and squat broached spire clad in lead, can only be seen from a few vantage points in and around the village. The church has been enlarged and altered at various times from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries and was restored in 1864. Many of the main windows have tracery from the Decorated period. The north aisle has a very low-pitched roof more akin to the Perpendicular period and this is in stark contrast to the steep pitched roofs of the nave and chancel. The materials are characteristically flint with either banding of limestone or to a lesser extent chequerwork.

The two main houses of the village, namely Montrose House (the former rectory and also referred to as Corpus Christi House) situated behind walls and trees in Duck Street, and the Manor House on rising ground just north of the church, are characteristic of the late seventeenth century. Of a basically linear, shallow plan, and of two tall storeys with a steep pitched roof, both are regular facades of seven bays, although somewhat interrupted by later doors and windows. The most striking feature of both buildings is the beautifully executed chequerwork (figure 9) of limestone blocks and flints, not only on the front facades but also on side and rear elevations, complemented by clay plain...
tiles imparting a strong sense of inherent colour. The Manor House was partially extended to form a “double pile” house, with a short red brick nineteenth century range at the rear. Both houses display windows of the pre-Georgian era; the Manor House having two light windows with a central mullion and Montrose House having a fully intact set of cross windows - mullioned and transomed, which at its construction c1700 was beginning to be a little dated.

These two buildings are the best examples of ‘polite’ architecture of that period in the village, but there are good examples of less easily dated vernacular buildings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, namely the Malthouse with the characteristic long low profile and rectangular broad fronted plan. The Malthouse complex has a good range of outbuildings following the alignment of the lane leading to the Manor House (figure 10). The thatched Fern Cottage also dates from this period and has finely set out chequers of limestone and flint on both the front and side elevation, especially notable as this was a relatively modest dwelling. The Mill complex undoubtedly has remnants of the medieval and seventeenth century behind its various refrontings, alterations and extensions. Its north side is red brick with a characteristic toothed plat band and side walls in stone, whereas its south side is rendered.

The predilection for chequerwork seems to have given way in the eighteenth century to the adoption of fashionable brickwork exemplified by the range between Fern Cottage and Swaynes on the north side of Salisbury Road. The house (No.19) to the eastern end of this range was altered in the early nineteenth century and is in Flemish bond brickwork, with stone quoins, and is a symmetrical three bay building with sash windows. Flemish bond red brick, with stone quoins, is also seen on the line of cottages to the west of this house, though in this case with casements rather than the sashes.

The many styles characteristic of the nineteenth century, are surprisingly well represented in such a small settlement. Swaynes on the north side of Salisbury road is an attractive and ‘pure’ example of a late Georgian/Regency villa, with elegant recessed ‘6 over 6’ pane sashes and a simple Tuscan portico. The careful Flemish bond brickwork is of an unusual gold-grey colour. The roof is hipped with a low pitch clad in slate, perhaps the earliest example of slate cladding in Steeple Langford (figure 11). Thring House is of early Victorian origins, symmetrical with a characteristic low pitch slate roof, projecting eaves and gable end bargeboards.

The styles of the later nineteenth century are well illustrated. The group of semi-detached estate workers cottages on the south side of Salisbury Road date from 1870-71, according to the plaques displayed as part of the coat of arms or monogram on each pair of houses. Precursors of the semi-detached villas of suburbia, these houses are examples of early reinforced concrete construction. The houses are of a simple deep plan with either steep pitched gables facing the street, or lower pitched roofs, with eaves parallel with the façades. Windows are of a robust narrow sash type with recessed
lights grouped in twos and threes. The deep window surrounds make a strong elevational feature within the simple rendered façades (figure 12). The Victorian Gothic Revival is of course best seen in the restorations to the parish church. However, the school at the western edge of the village is also a good example of the style, in the carefully balanced asymmetrical south elevation. The windows are cusped trefoil neo-gothic arches or simple mullioned casements. The main gable is surmounted by a belfry.

The recently converted former public house on the eastern edge of Steeple Langford, in a somewhat stark machine-made red brick, is characteristic of a simple late Victorian ‘urban vernacular’ slightly out of place in this rural village.

The Vernacular revival of the late nineteenth century has influenced the architecture of Corpus Christi Cottage, Duck Street, just south of Montrose House. This tall L-shaped house with its steeply pitched roof, broken by a decorative gable, is a scaled up version of traditional cottage architecture. The low range of Church Cottages also appear to have been remodelled in this period period. This 1½ storey terrace effectively encloses the churchyard but its modest scale maintains the view of the church tower, when looking from the eastern end of the village (figure 13). Both sets of buildings have well detailed natural stonework, which has weathered well, giving them an ageless quality.

Examples of good quality twentieth century design are limited. However the ‘new’ Rectory of the 1950s has some merit in its elevational design. The more recent conversion of the barn on Duck Street is a reasonable approach to the dilemma of reconciling residential requirements with the utilitarian, almost windowless qualities of the barn.

Activity: prevailing and former uses

The radical intervention of the A36 in both landscape terms, and removal of through traffic to the villages of the Wylye Valley, cannot be underestimated. Villages such as Steeple Langford have been transformed from busy narrow thoroughfares, to quiet semi-rural backwaters. This, in turn, has had a distinctive impact on the character of this settlement.

This small unassuming village has an easily readable collection of historic buildings; for example, The Bell Inn (former public house), Mill House, The Manor House and Manor farm, the school and the converted barn on Duck Street. Today Manor Farm and the school are the only meaningful survivals of a use other than private residential in the village (excluding the church).

The school is a welcome asset providing a focus, in addition to the church, for the village community. It is unfortunate that the village has lost relatively recently its Post Office, local shop and public house (The Bell Inn).

Contribution made by key unlisted buildings

There are a number of unlisted buildings, that make important positive contributions to the character of the conservation area, both individually and in groups with and without listed buildings. Key groups are:

- Corpus Christi Cottage, Greystone Cottage, the converted barn north of Corpus Christi Cottage and the boundary wall to Montrose House.
• Manor House and its surviving historic farm buildings.
• Estate cottages to south-side of Salisbury Road.
• Buildings associated with the junction of Salisbury Road and Duck Street; The Malt House, Widdershins (much altered), Thring House, Nos. 1-3 Church Cottages.

In addition, a number of boundary walls and outbuildings make significant contributions to the character of the conservation area. Boundary walls and outbuildings are identified on the Townscape map and individual properties are listed in Appendix 4.

Prevalent local and traditional materials

For its scale, the village has a surprisingly varied mix of traditional materials present in the historic buildings. There is an underlying and ever-present use of local Chilmark-type stone in houses, outbuildings, boundary walls, and most notably used on the school, church and former Rectory. By far the most pleasing and locally distinctive use of the stone is when combined with flint panels to form chequerwork. Excellent examples of this can be seen at Montrose House, most notably the walls to Montrose House (figure 14), Manor House and Fern Cottage. Stone is also seen as rubble stone in boundary walls, for example the long stretch of wall to the north side of Salisbury Road, lining the western approach to the village.

Given the chalk downland setting of the village, cob is noticeably absent and is only seen in the outbuildings and boundary walls to Manor Farm and a small but significant section of boundary wall to Montrose House (the former Rectory) (figure 15).

Equally surprising is the presence of a relatively high number of brick-built houses. This includes Swaynes, constructed of a buff brick - no doubt intending to match the creamy white of the local limestone. However, most are of a deep red colour, handmade and in Flemish bond and often with flared headers (good examples can be seen at Nos. 15, 17 and 19 Salisbury Road).

The pebbledash render of the estate cottages (nos. 14-30 even) are in stark contrast to the local vernacular. When this is combined with natural Welsh slate, the effect is striking and not unattractive but appears somewhat out of place in this settlement which is otherwise strongly defined by local stone, flint and clay tile.
There are isolated examples of exposed chalk rubble to the north gable of No.1 Church Cottages (figure 16), No.3 Berwick Lane (see figure 6) and one of the surviving outbuildings to Manor Farm (to the rear of the Manor House). Other buildings may well hide this material behind later facades, or as part of side or rear elevations. The Church Cottages example is notable for its mix of ashlar stone, rubble stone, chalk and early brick, representing almost all regional materials in one elevation.

Roofs are predominantly red handmade clay tiles on relatively steep pitches. There is some natural Welsh slate, notably the distinctive group of estate cottages, and there is also the presence of a double Roman clay tile which is seen both on the attractive outbuildings to the Malthouse and Nos. 15 and 17 Salisbury Road. The regular appearance of chimneys in the roofscape is an attractive feature. They are almost entirely brick built in the cottages and small houses of the settlement. The only exceptions are the chimneys of the estate cottages with their rather austere narrow angular rendered central stacks without chimney pots, which adds to their striking appearance. The stone stacks to Montrose House (former Rectory) make bold statements about the status of this house and define the skyline in glimpsed views, but appear relatively recent and have an almost ‘Arts and Crafts’ boldness and exaggeration to them.

Thatch is also seen in the village. It is a very welcome survival of the tradition and adds variety where the clay tile predominates. The thatch is combed wheat reed but appears relatively mean and not multi layered (figure 17) in a usual combed wheat reed style. The one exception to this is Fern Cottage (undergoing rethatching at the time of survey) which displayed many of the traditional characteristics of the Wiltshire ‘combed wheat reed’ cottage. Ridges appear plain but slightly raised. The thatch is particularly pleasing when seen with the local stone (as at Greystone Cottage and Fern Cottage).

Local details

The locally sourced materials have largely dictated the architectural detailing characteristic of the village. The flint and stone chequerwork had obviously developed to a high standard and is widely employed, not only for the grander buildings and major façades, but also for minor elevations, for more modest buildings and even on some boundary walls (see figure 14). Not only were the raw materials plentiful, but the skills were passed on and developed over the generations.

The boundary walls form a distinctive and very locally influenced group throughout the conservation area. This is most evident on the western approach to the conservation area which is almost continuously lined with stone and flint boundary walls on the northern side of the road. The predominantly flint wall with brick bands and distinctive capping with a projecting stone drip is particularly striking and locally relevant (flint being the by-product of a chalk geological make-up). On some outhouses there is evidence of the Bridgwater double roll pantile being used. Local brickwork detailing includes toothed plat bands. This feature is seen on a number of the brick houses.

Roof design also displays a consistency within the village, in particular the use of the gable, some with coping stones and kneelers of carved stone and tile. Gables strongly define and close views into and along the streets in the conservation area.

The plaques on the estate workers cottages are important to establish the estate to which they relate and the date of construction.
Contribution made by green spaces, trees, hedges and natural boundaries (refer to Townscape map in Appendix 1)

Significant green spaces within the conservation area are largely confined to private gardens with the only significant semi public open space comprising the churchyard. To the rear of the properties of the north side of Salisbury Road, open fields stretch towards the A36. This section of the conservation area forms an important part of the open, semi rural valley setting of the village but is not public space.

There are some good groups of mature trees often framing key buildings such as the church and Montrose House (the former Rectory). Their presence in local and extended views is a very important positive characteristic of the conservation area. Of particular note are the four beeches flanking the entrance to Montrose House. These are important trees in the townscape but unfortunately completely mask any views to this fine house from Duck Street. Two trees (one immediately to the west of Swaynes and the other at the corner of No.19) form attractive punctuations in the townscape of Salisbury Road, being set at the roadside and forming part of soft boundaries to the respective built form (figure 18).

The hard boundary treatments are often complemented by hedges and planted edges, and the presence of incidental but mature singular trees. This adds to the general semi-rural feel of the village, with trees and mature hedges forming an important part of most local views into, within, and through, the conservation area.

Key views, vistas and panoramas (see Townscape map)

The focal point in terms of local views is the small but distinctive broach spire of All Saints’ Church. This is mostly glimpsed from vantage points through the village and from the higher ground to the north, and notably from Hanging Langford across the valley floor, but becomes more apparent and dominant on reaching the ‘centre’ of the settlement.

Other than this focus, views out of the conservation area (common with other local settlements) are dominated by the strong ridgeline of the sweeping valley. These dynamic open valley views (particularly looking south from Salisbury Road approaching from the west) are consistently contained and stopped by the landscape in a very attractive and memorable way. The presence of these ridgelines constantly reminds the observer of the distinctive character of the landscape setting of the villages of the Nadder valley and places Steeple Langford firmly in its geological and topographical framework.

Degree of loss of architectural and/or historic elements

The loss of architectural features is largely limited to the replacement and remodelling of window openings (the former Bell Inn is particularly regrettable). The remodelling of windows has had a significant effect on Nos. 14 and 16 Salisbury Road (figure 19) Widdershins and the former shop unit adjacent (figure 20).
Negative elements

• The sheds and garages to the south west of All Saints’ Church do not make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area (figure 21).

• The unkempt, undeveloped wedge of land to the north of the church does not make a positive contribution to the setting of the Grade I Listed church (figure 22).

• The modern farm structures at Manor Farm impact on local views through and out of the conservation area and compromise the setting of the Manor House.

• The over-engineered junction to The Wirr is a significant space leak in the townscape and does not relate to the historic character of the lane junctions or to the remaining parts of the conservation area.

• Berwick Lane has seen a number of late twentieth century additions of poor or indifferent quality which do not make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

• There are some examples of very poor repairs to stonework, particularly to boundary walls, which have compromised these important assets both aesthetically and practically (in as much as they may cause medium to long term failure of the wall) (figure 23).

• Untidy appearance resulting from extent of overhead wires.
Conclusion

Steeple Langford has retained much of its semi-rural charm and character, not least because of the lack of heavy traffic. This has had a direct effect on buildings in the village, for example the village shop and the public house have both been converted to residential use.

The church of All Saints acts as a focal point in the village and is seen and glimpsed from many vantage points throughout the settlement.

A diverse palette of materials, but with the use of the local limestone in various forms, provides cohesion and local distinctiveness.

The intimate scale of the settlement, the quality of houses (with only a few exceptions), the quiet tranquillity and semi rural character all contribute to the essential qualities of this conservation area and its relatively undiluted condition. As such it warrants its conservation area status with only minor recommendations for boundary adjustment to reflect key issues raised in the text.

Trees play an important role in the multi-layered character of the conservation area and it is surprising that none are protected individually by Tree Preservation Orders.

There is one small but significant potential redevelopment site at the heart of the village (to the north of the church). There is significant scope for betterment here which would both potentially improve the townscape of the village and provide a better setting to the Grade I listed church.
Part 3: Management plan

Vulnerable buildings and buildings at risk

Listed Buildings

- **Boundary wall to the Manor House, Salisbury Road (figure 24)**

  This important flint wall with brick bands and cement capping is in urgent need of repointing in sections, particularly to the lower part of the wall, and ivy has penetrated the capping and created potential places for water ingress.

  **Action:** Remedial work to systemically eradicate ivy, and carefully remove from the wall capping, repairs where necessary to capping and repointing where necessary in lime mortar.

![Figure 24.](both photographs) Boundary wall, Manor House; Ivy penetrating capping (top) and repointing required to the lower section (bottom).

Unlisted buildings

- **Outbuildings to the rear of The Malthouse, Salisbury Road (figure 10)**

  This small group of late Victorian outbuildings make distinctive use of Bridgewater type clay tiles and provide strong enclosure to the lane. Their traditional utilitarian form and character make a very positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. At present these outbuildings are in reasonable repair but are showing signs of potential problems in the future. The substantial weight of the attractive roof covering may be causing undue stress on the substructure. This needs to be carefully monitored.

  **Action:** Monitoring only at this stage.

![Figure 10. Outhouses to the Malthouse](image)
Article 4(2) Directions

Within the Steeple Langford Conservation Area there are two key groups of important unlisted buildings which would benefit from the protection afforded by additional planning controls in order to retain elements of particular historic or architectural interest.

The Management issues map identifies these areas for potential designations. Appendix 3 identifies which types of alteration should be controlled through Article 4(2) Directions for each area.

Tree Preservation Orders

Montrose House and grounds

The group of beech trees flanking the front entrance to Montrose House (formerly The Rectory) should be considered for additional protection by Tree Preservation Order as should some (if not all) of the trees within the grounds of this exceptional house. These trees form a green backdrop for much of the village and provide it with much of its semi rural charm and distinctiveness.

Trees to the rear of The Knoll, Valley View and Thistledown

This group forms an attractive backdrop to Berwick Lane and part of the wider landscape setting of the conservation area. Suggested boundary revisions would remove their present protected status.

Boundary revisions

As a result of analysis undertaken, the following are suggested boundary revisions to reflect ownership changes, recent development and local and national policy designations and changes.

It is suggested that the following areas should be removed from the conservation area:

Garages and sheds to the south of All Saints’ Church

These structures fall outside the settlement boundary and within a site of high ecological value. The policy framework is such that this parcel of land is unlikely to ever be redeveloped. This group of garages make no positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Their poor construction and prominent positions on the edge of settlement in semi open countryside could be said to have a negative impact.

It is suggested that the following areas should be included within the conservation area:

Area to the south of Salisbury Road to the south bank of the millstream (including the trees)

This strip of land forms part of the important setting and gateway to the western approach to the village. Of particular importance are the trees lining the Millstream, which define the watercourse.

Historic farm buildings surviving in the group north of Manor House

Remnants of the early historic farm complex survive in the form of a cartshed, pigsties and other open sheds, as well as low brick boundary walls. These are valuable survivals of the historic complex and form an important part of the setting to the Manor House and the story of the Manor Farm. Inclusion would not only further protect the setting of this important building but
would also control the demolition of these structures thus affording them some opportunity for meaningful reuse.

**Proposals for enhancement**

**Potential redevelopment/ development of sites**

**Site to the north of All Saints’ Church, Salisbury Road**

The tapering remnant of land between the northern boundary of the churchyard and the back edge of pavement on Salisbury Road is at present in a disused and unsightly state. Whilst it would be desirable to retain this area for open amenity space for the village this is a highly unlikely scenario. The site has the potential to support development which could enhance the street scene at this point by:

- Creating continuity of built form along the frontage
- Reinforcing the corner with Duck Street
- Continuing the use of stone or flint boundary walls
- Keeping the eaves line low (a maximum of 4.2)

**Policies/recommendations for new buildings** (generally smaller infill sites)

This guidance provides generic advice for smaller developments up to approximately 5 - 8 housing units. Salisbury Local Plan (adopted June 2003) contains in Policy H16 criteria relating to small-scale development sites and should, in the case of development in/adjacent to or within the setting of a conservation area, be considered in conjunction with this advice (particularly bullet point (ii) relating to the character of an area). Sites of a larger number will require considerable pre application negotiation and may be the subject of design briefs. Some small developments may be in such sensitive locations that they may require a concise brief from the local authority. In all cases a Design Statement will be required to accompany the application drawings. Where a Character Appraisal exists for a Conservation Area, this must be consulted by the applicant’s agent, the developer and the planning officer, as it will assist in setting the context of the development.

It is strongly advised that all parties visit the site and its setting. The setting will vary in virtually every case, but as a guide it should be taken as the area from which the site can be seen and the surroundings seen from the site. The setting can also be defined as the general pattern of uses in the vicinity. These may vary on each side of the site.

It is important to consider specifically: surrounding skylines, rooflines and landmarks (such as church towers), or if the development will have an impact on cherished views of the landscape or “signature” skylines.

**The surrounding built form should be appraised:**

- What are the typical sizes and shapes of building plots? Are these uniform or varied? If varied, consider largest and smallest types.
- How do buildings relate to the back edge of the footpath or carriageway? This factor alone can help to assimilate new buildings into the street scene.
- Are the buildings in the street free standing, or are they in small informal groups or more regular terraces?
- Are buildings linked in a particular way, for example with boundary walls?
- Do the buildings generally have their main ridgeline parallel to the street or at right angles?
- Are the buildings generally “grand” or modestly proportioned and styled?
- Is the character of the front boundary walls or fences an integral part of the character of the area?
- What are the predominant materials and colours in the area, and are any unique to the conservation area?

• The character of the site should be considered. The boundaries should be noted, especially if they comprise hedgerows, mature trees, vernacular walls, fences or railings.
• The access point to the site will have to be agreed. Generally, care should be taken to minimise any damage to front boundaries through the uncritical imposition of sight lines which may have the effect of removing most of a boundary.
• Consider potential assets on-site, such as the lie of the land, areas of shelter and sunny aspect, existing structures such as buildings or walls, trees or hedgerows which might be incorporated into the scheme.
• Develop a Design Concept. This should ask: What is the role of this development within the setting?
  - Is this a gateway or other edge development on the approach or periphery of the site?
  - Is it a focal point development terminating a view or providing a skyline?
  - Is the site at a pivotal point in the townscape, turning a corner from one type of development to another?
• The frontage part of the development should in virtually every case face outward to the streetscape, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so.
• The character of the development should be determined by layout and providing an appropriate sense of identity and enclosure. A sequence of spaces and places should be considered – from major to minor space, from formal/symmetrical to informal?
• The design should avoid any inappropriate suburbanising of the proposals through deep or irregular house plan, fussy elevations, spacious set backs from the building line, dwarf wall boundaries and inappropriate spacing between buildings.
• Design considerations such as window proportions, subservience of elements such as garages, roof type (gable end or hipped), roof pitch, projection or recession and choice of materials, which should derive from the character of surrounding buildings forming the setting.
• Contemporary solutions may be appropriate if it can be demonstrated that they derive from a comprehensive appraisal of the setting and site.
• The character of the site should be considered. The boundaries should be noted, especially if they comprise hedgerows, mature trees, vernacular walls, fences or railings.
Traffic management/street improvements

Road barrier outside Widdershins (figure 25)

The barrier is a structure considered necessary for the intensity of use of the road seen before the construction of the A36. Today, it is unsightly and probably unnecessary. If it is still deemed a requirement, consideration should be given to the detailed design and materials of a replacement.

Today the barrier is outdated and unsightly. Consideration should be given to an appropriate replacement, and incorporating this into a potential traffic calming scheme for this part of the road.

Wirescape

Given the tight character of the townscape, the presence of overhead wires is particularly evident in certain parts of Steeple Langford, particularly Salisbury Road (figure 26).

Recommended action:

The placing of overhead wires underground should be pursued by the local authority (by way of planning obligations) in any proposed acceptable redevelopment of a particular site or adjacent site or major alteration or extension to the buildings within the conservation area.

Public utilities should be encouraged not to add any further wires to the network that would necessitate the need for new telegraph poles. Any proposal for new telegraph poles should carefully consider the potential impact on local views within and through the conservation area. There will be a presumption against the further addition of any new telegraph poles or wires.
Bibliography and references
Crowley, D.A. (1995) Victoria History of the County of Wiltshire 15, Amesbury Hundred and Branch and Dole Hundred Institute of Historical Research/OUP

Other references:
Conservation Areas: Guidance Notes, Salisbury District Council
Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, English Heritage 2005
Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, English Heritage 2005
Salisbury District Local Plan Adopted June 2003, Salisbury District Council
The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation, AONB Office 2008.
GLOSSARY

Article 4(2) Direction: An Article 4 Direction may be issued by the Council in circumstances where the danger of the erosion of the character of the areas is such that specific control over development is required. The effect of such a Direction is to remove the usual permitted development rights, thereby necessitating a planning application to be made. It can include for example any proposals to replace windows, doors or the roof and can restrict the construction of a porch or extension, the painting of the external surfaces or the removal of chimney stacks.

Building line: The common alignment of building frontages in relation to the back edge of the carriageway, footpath or waterfront. The building line might also refer to a common alignment of the backs of buildings.

Building at risk: A phrase used to describe a building which is in poor repair (for example leaking/blocked gutters, broken slates, structural problems) and often vacant with no use. The combination of these two factors and the severity of the repair issues determines the degree of risk and the need for action.

Buildings of local importance: A building which is considered to make a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area, but does not meet the criteria for it to be added to the statutory list of buildings of special architectural and historic interest. It may, for instance, be part of a group which by its scale, alignment, materials or style contribute to the quality of the townscape.

Chapelry: Part of a large parish, usually with a separate settlement distinct from the main parochial centre, that was provided with a chapel sub-ordinate to the parish church.

Demense: Land retained by the lord of the manor for his own use or land that was part of the main farm of the manor.

Enclosure: The arrangement of buildings, walls, trees etc. to provide different levels of containment of space.

Public realm: The spaces between buildings accessible to the public, including the highway, green areas, squares etc.
**Scale:**
This can have two meanings: it can be used to define the mass or bulk of a building often in comparison to other buildings or spaces or (the more strictly correct) meaning appertaining to the subdivision of a building to create different effects for example the architectural expression of structural bays, intervals of windows, proportions etc.

**Setting / context:**
The physical (built and landscape), community and economic setting in which the development takes place.

**Streetscape:**
The character of the street environment, existing or proposed.

**Townscape:**
The urban equivalent of landscape: the overall effect of the combination of buildings, changes of level, green spaces, boundary walls, colours and textures, street surfaces, street furniture, uses, scale, enclosure, views etc.

**Vernacular/ polite:**

**Vernacular**
Traditional buildings of a region, frequently developed by local builders in response to the regional requirements, climate, site conditions and available locally sourced materials.

**Polite**
Designs developed by architects and architectural pattern books usually incorporating classical concepts of symmetry, proportion and scale in both plan and elevation.
Appendix 1

Schematic Maps

Archaeological Potential

Character Areas

Townscape

Management Issues

Conservation Area Boundary review
Appendix 2

Historic maps

Steeple Langford Tithe Map 1839

Ordnance Survey Map extract
Steeple Langford 1901

Ordnance Survey Map extract
Steeple Langford 1924
## Appendix 3

### Suggested Article 4 Directions

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Appendix 4

List of buildings of local importance

(DSee map 2)

Duck Street:  1, 2 and 3 Church Cottages, Corpus Christi Cottage, Vale Cottage

Salisbury Road:  14-36(even), (the former) Bell Inn, The Malthouse, Mill House, 
Steeple Langford C of E First School, Thring House, Widdershins,