LITTLE CHEVERELL CONSERVATION AREA

CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

September 2007
The Council has designated a new conservation area at Little Cheverell in recognition of the architectural and historic interest of the village and the quality of the landscape setting.

Little Cheverell is an attractive and generally well-maintained village of particular interest because of its location at the foot of the northern scarp of Salisbury Plain and in the valley running north. Apart from the effects of traffic the 20th century has made relatively little impact on the village and it remains largely unspoilt, retaining its low density rural character. Trees and the landscape setting are crucial parts of village character. Little Cheverell is generally modest in scale, the higher status houses being largely hidden from view. Much of the village is 18th or 19th century and a number of buildings are listed.

Some conservation areas are in a state of relative economic decline, and suffer from a lack of investment. More often, the qualities that make conservation areas appealing also encourage over-investment and create pressure for new development. Little Cheverell however appears to be in a reasonable state of equilibrium where the long established rural character survives and significant change in the future is not anticipated.

Where in-filling or replacement of existing properties takes place in the future it will be important to ensure that special regard is given to the historic and physical contexts in which the new development will fit.
LITTLE CHEVERELL CONSERVATION AREA

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The first conservation areas within Kennet District were designated almost 40 years ago. Conservation areas imply stability and continuity in a rapidly changing world and the concept has proven to be very popular with residents and investors. Over the years the number has grown as the importance of historic character has become more evident and in response to public demand. There are currently 70 conservation areas within the District.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that every local planning authority shall from time to time determine which parts of its area are of special architectural or historic interest worthy of designation and take action accordingly.

Conservation area designation is the main instrument to give effect to conservation policies for a particular neighbourhood or settlement. Designation introduces general control over the demolition of buildings and tree felling. It also provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest.

In order that a consistent and objective approach is followed in deciding which areas to be designated the Council has adopted a number of District-wide criteria. A review of settlements within the District indicates that Little Cheverell contains a significant number of historic buildings set within an attractive landscape and that designation would be appropriate. A Village Design Statement was published in May 2004 and this indicated a significant desire within the village for conservation area designation.

1.2 Purpose of the document

The following character appraisal and management proposals for Little Cheverell are intended to identify and record those special qualities of Little Cheverell that make up its architectural and historic character. This is important in providing a sound basis for planning policies and decisions on development, as well as for the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of the area. Beyond their use as planning tools, appraisals also have a wider application as educational and informative documents for the local community.

The document is intended for all those with an interest in Little Cheverell, or undertaking work on the buildings, landscape, roads or public spaces. It is also essential reading for anyone contemplating changes or new development within the area. By drawing attention to the distinctive features of Little Cheverell it is intended that its character will be protected and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations.

The remainder of the document is divided into three further main sections – the character appraisal, future management proposals, and community involvement.

The survey work for the appraisal was carried out during the spring of 2007. The character appraisal commences with a short description of the planning context and is followed by an analysis of Little Cheverell’s special architectural and historic interest. This represents the core of the appraisal.
In this Conservation Area Statement priority has been given to highlighting significant features. Omission of items from the text or from illustrations should not be regarded as an indication that an item is unimportant in terms of conserving the character of the area.
Key to Map:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservation Area boundary</th>
<th>Important trees - the main structure only is shown and only those within the conservation area boundary</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listed Buildings</td>
<td>Archaeological Alert Zone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlisted buildings with townscape merit</td>
<td>Details of trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders are available from the District Council</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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North is at the top of all maps

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The information given on listed buildings and boundaries is correct at the date of publication. However, designations may change through time and up to date enquiries may be necessary.
2. LITTLE CHEVERELL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

2.1 Location and context

Little Cheverell, 5 miles south of Devizes, is in the south-west corner of Kennet District where the main link to the village is the B 3098 Westbury Road which runs east-west. The built-up area of Little Cheverell extends from the crossroads around ¾ mile northwards either side of Low Road, a minor road to Great Cheverell that follows the valley. The village is just over 1 mile west of Littleton Panell and 3 miles east of Erlestoke.

Map 1: Ordnance Survey map showing Little Cheverell and the surrounding area

Little Cheverell is one of a number of villages lying at the foot of the northern scarp of Salisbury Plain. Like most of the other parishes in this area Little Cheverell parish is long and narrow and to the south includes land on Salisbury Plain.
The geology in the village is complex with variations that run in bands across the parish. There is a covering of alluvium in the extreme north, and south of that Kimmeridge clay, Portland beds and Gault outcrop. A wide band of Upper Greensand crosses the central part of the parish and then there are the outcrops of the Lower, Middle and Upper Chalk of Salisbury Plain. A deep valley has been cut through the Greensand by a stream rising at Hawkswell spring at around 300 feet and running north.

The Westbury to Upavon road linking the villages at the foot of the scarp passes through the village. As it crosses the deep valley cut by the stream from Hawkswell spring it makes several sharp turns and, as it climbs eastwards out of the village through a tributary valley, it is deeply incised.

The village is in the valley cut by the stream from Hawkswell spring. About ¼ mile north of the spring the valley widens and is crossed by the Westbury-Upavon road. The church, The Rectory and Parsonage Farm were all built near the crossing, the church being south of the road on a high embankment.

The lane from Great Cheverell looking south towards Manor Farm Cottages

Low Road at the north end of the village looking south

The setting of Little Cheverell seen from the approach along the lanes

2.2 The origins and historic development of the area

The history of the parish reveals Saxon and Roman connections and archaeological studies indicate that the present Little Cheverell has medieval origins but little is known of this. There was a church at Little Cheverell by 1291 and early development was probably close to the church, Glebe Farm and Manor Farm as indicated on the archaeological alert map on page 21. The present Church of St Peter (formerly the Church of St Nicholas) dates from the 14th century with features such as the tower and the porch entrance still surviving. The church was rebuilt in 1850 to the designs of Thomas Cundy.

Development at Little Cheverell took place historically to serve a farming community, the traditional pattern of agriculture being one in which meadow and pasture were on the level land in the north, the sandy soils of the Upper Greensand and the clay soils of the Lower and Middle Chalk were tilled and there was rough pasture on the Upper Chalk in the south.
Until the 20th century almost all the buildings in the village were north of the road. Over time the village had developed northwards from the crossing of road and stream along the narrow steep sided valley cut in the Greensand. By 1722 cottages were reported to be "strung out along the valley" and a census of 1785 recorded 44 houses and 192 inhabitants.

The Andrews and Dury's map of 1777 (shown left) indicates development clustered around the road junction with a separate small settlement at Fuzzys Hill along Low Road. The Church was isolated on the south side of the road and close by was Hatchwell Spring (now called Hawkswell)

The population which was 159 in 1801 increased rapidly to 263 by 1821 and 285 by 1841 but fell to 255 in 1851. The reduction followed an economic decline in agriculture leading to low wages such that the population by 1871 was 203 when some houses in the area were demolished.

Inclosure took place in the 16th and late 17th centuries and the gradual disappearance of common rights virtually eliminated the system of strip cultivation and common pasturing of animals by the late 18th century. In the early 19th century the downland south of the old Bath to Salisbury road was ploughed, as were a few lowland pastures, but changes in the land were not significant before 1860. Between 1860 and 1916 a good deal of lowland arable was converted to pasture and used for dairy farming. The Little Cheverell Dairy Company, established around 1890, was merged into Wiltshire United Dairies in 1896 when the dairy at Little Cheverell was closed.

The road from Westbury to Market Lavington was turnpiked after 1758. An old downland road from Bath to Salisbury was used until the late 18th century but this was never metalled and fell into disuse. The parish is crossed in the north by the main London to Exeter railway, opened by the GWR to Westbury as an extension of the Berks and Hants extension railway in 1900. The nearest station was Lavington which closed in 1966.

In 1802 there was a brickworks on glebe land on the south side of the Great Cheverell to Littleton road. The business became the Market Lavington Brick and Tile Company in the 1920s but closed in the early 1930s.
Until late into the 20th century the pattern of settlement in the parish had changed little from what it had been in 1722. South of the Westbury-Upavon road Hawkswell House and four pairs of houses were built in the early 20th century. Glebe Farmhouse stands north-west of the church with The Old Rectory north-east of the church and between them, on the main road, are the 18th century Bridge House and Pillar Box Cottage and a number of new houses and bungalows. Through the valley running north most of the buildings are 19th century cottages or 20th century houses and bungalows. The Owl which became a public house in 1939 has been both an ale house and off-licence selling beer.

Map 2: The Ordnance Survey - 1886

The special interest of Little Cheverell is that it is the only remaining springline village on the north side of Salisbury Plain which has remained free of major new development. The village has retained its parish church, community hall and pub but travel to one of the larger towns is necessary for other services.
2.3 The boundary

The proposed Conservation Area takes in virtually all the village. Enclosing the parkland of Hawkswell House in the south the boundary runs east to include Little Cheverell House and then runs north to include the cottages as far as Rest Harrow. The line then runs south, again following the valley, to the point where it turns east on the northern boundary of Manor Farm, to then follow the minor road south and link up again with the grounds of Hawkswell House.

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Map 3 : The conservation area boundary

2.4 General character and plan form

The character of Little Cheverell owes much to its rural location and the surrounding topography. Development is low density with buildings strung along either side of the valley. The relationship of buildings with the landscape is a very important part of the character. In some places buildings sit high above the road and look over the valley. Depending on levels and the landform other buildings sit close to and level with the road or are built below road level. This pattern is evident all along Low Road. Throughout the village trees and hedges provide the backdrop and in many cases also frame the view.
There is a marked difference in character between the east-west route of the Westbury-Upavon road and Low Road running north. The main road carries a significant amount of traffic and the junction is the only place where the building form is dominant. There is a section of footpath along the built-up area on the opposite side of the road from the church which emphasises the need to keep away from passing traffic. For the most part Low Road is a single track enclosed by banks, hedges and trees. The curved alignments of both roads and variations in levels present constantly changing views.

In addition to the church the three most architecturally or historically significant buildings in the village are Manor Farmhouse (formerly Little Cheverell Farm), Little Cheverell House (formerly The Rectory) and Hawkswell House. All of these are of considerable architectural and historic interest but are almost completely hidden from public view. These buildings therefore make virtually no contribution to Conservation Area character, although their grounds form part of the rural landscape.

2.5 The character along the Westbury-Upavon road

Approaching Little Cheverell from the east the road from Market Lavington is deeply cut into the hillside and winds down through the valley. The first building evident is the village hall and the road swings sharply to reveal Bridge House, Pillar Box Cottage, and the junction with Low Road. As the road climbs west it passes the parish church sitting on the high bank on the south side. Opposite are several late 20th century houses and, just to the north-west of the church, Glebe Farmhouse. The built-up area of the village ends at Manor Farm Cottages which are located on the minor road running north. The footpath on the section of road from Manor Farm Cottages to Bridge House also extends northwards along Low Road.

2.6 Low Road

Although the junction of Low Road with the Westbury road is the visual centre of the village much of the development is to the north. Looking from the junction along Low Road the historic quality of Little Cheverell becomes evident with the 19th century Old School House and Springside Cottage prominent in the view.
The pattern of development - high on the hillside - at road level - and below the road

Changes in level and alignment bring various buildings into prominence or, alternatively, show the contribution made by the landscape. Low Road opens out to reveal The Owl which is set back behind its forecourt with Beech Cottage and Fir Tree Cottage on the east side and numbers 1-4 The Terrace to the west forming a small nucleus of buildings. Just north again Ivy Cottages sit on a high bank with a steep access from the road. Next down is Rose Cottage, a late 19th century brick building at right angles to the road.

Trees, hedges and banks then dominate the view as the road swings gently left to later reveal Myrtle Cottage dated 1856, with Holly Cottage alongside, both of which are at road level. On the west side of the road several 20th century houses are almost completely hidden amongst the trees. Further north the houses on the west side of the road sit at low level giving prominence to the roofscape with the views opening out across the valley.

The small green, with seat, just north of Marlen is one of the few accessible open spaces in the village with the stream running alongside. Laundry Cottage is a late 19th or early 20th century build based on an earlier (probably late 18th century) construction. Alongside is a small terrace of early 19th century cottages close to the road. As the road runs further north it soon links with the lane into Great Cheverell.
2.7 Key views and vistas

Frequent variations in the horizontal and vertical alignment of the lanes through the village create a constantly changing scene. Buildings on the outside of a curve, or sitting high on a bank will always be prominent with trees, banks and hedges frequently enclosing the view. As the landscape falls away, this provides distant views across the valley. In some instances rooftops are prominent as can be seen from the churchyard looking towards Bridge House and in relation to the buildings on the lower (west) side of Low Road.

The views illustrated are from Low Road to the Church and from the Church to Low Road show how the landscape is the dominant characteristic and how the buildings relate to the landform. A number of important views are illustrated in the Little Cheverell Village Design Statement 2004, including views that extend beyond the conservation area boundary. These emphasise the importance of the surrounding countryside to the setting of the village.

Views to the village are limited by the topography of the land with few long views into the village, and those parts which are visible are generally on the higher parts around Hawkswell and Manor Farm, which are seen from the Salisbury Plain scarp.

2.8 Architectural Character

All of the buildings in Little Cheverell sit within the landscape and there are only few occasions where buildings dominate. As previously indicated, the high status buildings in the village, Manor Farm, Little Cheverell House and Hawkswell House, although individually significant, make no contribution to the overall scene. The architectural character of the village is therefore small-scale, generally two storey, with buildings from the late 18th and 19th centuries. 20th century buildings are interspersed. The 18th century Bridge House, which was originally part malt-house at three storeys and prominent at the road junction is an exception.

Many of the buildings have a similar form with narrow plans, relatively steep pitch roofs and two-light casement windows giving a vertical emphasis. Some of the later buildings have sash windows but the vertical emphasis remains. Construction generally is brick and clay tile, including pan tiles that are probably from local sources, with occasional slate roofs or rendered walls. Brick chimney-stacks, sometimes decorative, add interest to the skyline. The church is distinctive in outline having retained its 14th century tower and is stone built with a stone tile roof.
Local distinctiveness is determined and enhanced by individual features. One such example is the porch to Springside Cottage which has unusual circular brick columns: another example is the sign for The Owl. The traditional red telephone box and pillar box add interest to the village scenes. Traditional walling in brick and stone is evident in Low Road which together with stone kerbs maintain the rural character. Other historic features mentioned in the Village Design Statement include a number of old spring fed dipping wells along the sides of Low road and the recently restored Sheep Wash near the Village Hall. All of these features need to be protected.

Six buildings are listed as having national architectural or historic importance. The list is now almost twenty years old and several other buildings could be considered to meet current day criteria for inclusion on the statutory list. Other buildings that contribute positively to the character of the proposed Conservation Area have been identified and are shown on the map on page 15 and listed in Appendix 1. Typical examples are The Old School House, Springside Cottage and The Owl.

Good quality brickwork, usually Flemish bond set in lime mortar, is an attractive feature of the village with decorative and patterned brickwork used on some walls and buildings.
Map 4 - Listed Buildings and Significant Unlisted Buildings and Structures with the main framework of trees only - hedges are important but are not shown; the individual and group tree preservation orders cannot be shown on this scale of map.
2.9 Landscape and the contribution made by greenery and green spaces

As has already been shown the contribution made by trees, hedges and greenspaces, including private gardens, is considerable. Hawkswell dominates the higher southern part of the proposed conservation area with formal gardens and a designed parkland, including a series of ponds and significant swathes of mature trees. The trees to the west of the lower pond are protected by a group Tree Preservation Order and include: sweet chestnut, beech, horse chestnut, Norway maple and other species.

Across the designed parkland the Church of St Peter is a prominent feature, with a very important yew tree on its southern side. When viewed from the B3098 the church is seen in a well-wooded location on top of a steep bank which has been recently replanted with trees and shrubs.

To the east along the B3098, beyond the small village hall and open green, the road is located in a steep wooded cutting. To the north is Little Cheverell House, where many of the trees are protected by TPOs, most notably: the Holm oak, English oak and yew along the B3098; the yew and holly along Low Road, and the parkland ash, oak and pine in the paddock and in the hedge on the northern boundary.

Manor Farm is located on the western side of the conservation area in an open setting above the main part of the village. It is well hedged and there are a limited number of mature trees. To the east of the farm, at the top of the bank which drops to the main village, a dense deciduous tree belt runs north and divides Manor Farm and the higher ground from the valley and the core of the settlement.

Along Low Road, where the development is largely confined to the eastern side of the stream and valley floor, mature trees and the steep valley sides form dominant features. The Millennium village green provides a small open space area on the western side of Low Road north of The Owl Public House. Mature, high amenity trees dominate, with TPOs at Cedar Croft, an unoccupied dwelling on the western bank of the stream, and on beech and pine trees on the opposite side of the road. However, there are many more mature trees of high amenity which dominate the valley sides, particularly on the sloping gardens on the eastern side of Low Road. These are currently unprotected by TPOs, but will become protected by virtue of the conservation area designation. In addition many of the landscape features of the surrounding countryside outside the proposed conservation area contribute significantly to the character of the village.
Hedges and dwellings close to the road, along with railings and low walls, create varied roadside boundaries to the domestic properties. In places the road runs high up the valley side, level with the ridges of the dwellings, and divided from them with hedging.

On the western side of the valley small, wet pastures with dense hedges and hedgerow trees form a network which continues throughout the settlement and joins in with the semi-natural woodland at Shovel Wood beyond Copsewood, west of the village. Copsewood is located in a mature, riparian garden of great charm and character. Many of the trees are protected by TPOs, as are the oak standards at the eastern end of Shovel Wood, and which are located within the proposed conservation area boundary. To the north of Copsewood the valley begins to open out into the much wider Bristol Avon clay vale.

2.10 General condition

Due to its attractive rural location the settlement appears outwardly prosperous and the physical condition of its historic buildings generally in good condition. At the present time there are no listed buildings that could be said to be at risk.

Overall the condition of the lanes appears to be reasonably good and there are no planned traffic management schemes affecting the proposed Conservation area. As with most villages there are a few minor negative factors. In general, however, property owners have cherished the area and the emphasis needs to be on keeping it this way rather than removing eyesores.

The extension and alteration of traditional buildings can often be difficult to handle sympathetically and, due to the prominence of many small cottages, Little Cheverell is proving no exception. In one or two isolated cases the renewal of windows and doors has been out of character with the host building.

Some parts of the village are slightly marred by overhead wires but sometimes these are hidden amongst the trees. Low Road being narrow the banks and verges alongside are vulnerable to over-running by vehicles but as yet this does not seem to be a major problem.

2.11 Future pressures and capacity for change

In considering the future of the Conservation Area it is important to make an assessment of significance, and some analysis of how that significance is vulnerable to change. There has been some incremental loss of character due to minor alterations to unlisted buildings which can take place outside of planning control. Nevertheless the character of Little Cheverell as a traditional settlement still shines through.

The loss of boundary features in order to accommodate the motor car can lead to a loss of rural character and an increase in suburban qualities. Similarly, the recent drive for exploiting more sustainable sources of energy can lead to a conflict with the conservation of historic character. Solar panels formed of reflective materials and sited on prominent roof slopes, and wind turbines, could easily weaken the character of the Little Cheverell Conservation Area.

Having regards to general planning policy there are unlikely to be any major changes within the proposed conservation area in the foreseeable future but where there are any new proposals or if replacement of existing buildings is under consideration it will be important to ensure that designs have regard to their historic and physical contexts.
2.12 Acknowledgements

The main sources of information used in the preparation of this draft appraisal:
Little Cheverell Village Design Statement - 2004
The Victoria County History

APPENDIX 1 TO LITTLE CHEVERELL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Locally important ‘unlisted’ buildings

| The Old School House | Meadow View Cottage |
| Springside Cottage   | Holly Cottage       |
| The Grey House       | Myrtle Cottage      |
| Dinas Cottage        | Rose Cottage        |
| The Owl              | 1-2 Ivy Cottages   |
| 1-4 The Terrace      | Yew Tree Cottage    |
| Marlen               | Beech Cottage       |
| Laundry Cottage      | Fir Tree Cottage    |
| Copse Wood           |                     |
| Hilliers Cottage     |                     |
| Meadow View          |                     |
| Rest Harrow          |                     |

In addition there are various stone / brick boundary walls that enhance the area particularly those in the vicinity of Laundry Cottage, Yew Tree and Fir Tree Cottages and Springside. Along the main road the walls at Pillar Box Cottage and Glebe Farm House are also important.

The buildings are shown on the map on page 15 but it is not possible to plot walls and similar features on a map of this scale.
3. LITTLE CHEVERELL CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

3.1 Relationship with the Character Appraisal

For the designation of a conservation area to be effective it is important that consistent judgements are made in determining its special qualities and local distinctiveness, as well as its value to the local community. Such judgements should be based on a thorough understanding of the area in its wider context, reached through the detailed appraisal of its character.

The above appraisal should be regarded as the first step in a dynamic process, the aim of which is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the designated area - and to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future through the development of management proposals.

Now that the appraisal has been drafted, proposals for the future management of the area will need to be developed. Logically these will take the form of a mid- to long-term strategy for preserving and enhancing the conservation area, addressing any issues arising from the appraisal and identifying any further or detailed work needed for their implementation.

The strategy needs to be realistic, bearing in mind the staff and financial resources likely to be available. At the present time the Council has no dedicated funds for grant aiding building repairs or enhancement work, although minor grants may be available for some tree planting schemes. Only a ‘light touch’ approach can be justified for most of the rural Conservation Areas within the District.

3.2 The Planning Context

The procedures governing the protection of listed buildings are widely understood and mainly focus on the protection of individual structures. Conservation area designation, however, is the main instrument to give effect to conservation policies for a particular settlement.

Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of most buildings, and tree felling / surgery. The scale of extensions that may be added to existing dwellings as “permitted development” is also limited. Designation has some resource implications for the local authority and the owners and occupiers of property within the area, because of increased statutory controls and particular requirements for the repair or alteration of existing, and construction of new, buildings. For many owners, however, these implications may be outweighed by the cachet of designation, and the tendency of controls aimed at maintaining the character of the area to sustain, or enhance, the value of property within it. Designation also provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area’s special interest.

The general planning policy for Little Cheverell is currently set out in the Kennet Local Plan 2011. In Chapter 1 - Introduction and Foundation of the Plan, the need for development to be sustainable is emphasised. All new development needs to be directed to where there are adequate facilities to serve the population. New development around villages and in the open countryside will therefore be will be resisted.
Little Cheverell is identified (Chapter 2 - Housing and Community facilities) as a settlement not suitable for new housing development. New housing development will therefore be restricted to infilling, the replacement of existing dwellings, or the re-use of existing buildings or the redevelopment of existing buildings provided that the development:

a) is within the existing built up area of the village;
b) does not consolidate an existing sporadic, loose knit area of development; and
c) the development is in harmony with the village in terms of its scale and character.

The Local Plan also sets out (Chapter 6) a range of generic policies relating to new development proposals within Conservation Areas.

The government has recently introduced a new kind of planning system in which the focus is on flexibility, sustainability, and the use of evidence to underpin the core strategies. Local planning authorities will in future produce local development frameworks consisting of a portfolio of local development documents. It is unlikely that the fundamental planning policy for Little Cheverell will change significantly under the new regime. It is probable that the core strategy will be supported by supplementary planning documents (SPD) giving greater specific guidance, for example on development control matters relating to conservation areas.

The legislation relating to Conservation Areas runs parallel with general planning legislation and there will be a need to ensure that appropriate linkages are in place. It is anticipated that this will be achieved by new Heritage SPD which will in turn be supported by adopted and published character appraisals and management proposals for individual Conservation Areas. This is where this document fits in.

The intention is that a clear definition of the elements which contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of a place will enable the development of a robust policy framework for the future management of the area, on which applications for planning permission can be considered.

A local authority's reasoning for designating a Conservation Area, as set out in a formal character appraisal published in support of a supplementary planning document, will be taken into account by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Planning Inspectorate in considering related planning appeals.

### 3.3 General Approach of the Council towards Development Proposals

In addition to the usual need to obtain planning permission for most forms of new development there is a requirement for applications to be made for conservation area consent for the demolition of unlisted buildings, and notifications to be submitted for the felling or lopping of trees. In exercising its planning powers, the Council has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

For most proposals in the Conservation area the Council will require detailed plans and drawings of new development, including elevations which show the proposed development in its setting, before considering a planning application.

The Council will advertise all applications for planning permission for development that would affect the character or appearance of conservation areas.
3.4 General Approach of the Council towards Conservation areas

The Council’s general planning policies towards development are set out in Policies HH4 (Historic Landscapes), HH5 (Development in Conservation Areas), and HH6 (Demolition in Conservation Areas).

It is also essential that a flexible approach is taken to the requirements of the Building Regulations and Fire Precautions Act and that rigorous application of general planning and highway policies should be relaxed where they would be in conflict with the preservation or enhancement of the area’s character or appearance.

3.5 Special Considerations at Little Cheverell

Applications for planning permission, conservation area consent, and tree works will be assessed with reference to the Conservation Area Appraisal. There will be a presumption in favour of conserving the key unlisted buildings identified. Where trees, hedges and views are important to the character of the area there will also be a presumption that these should be preserved.

Following on from the above the preferred policy of conservation for Little Cheverell will be the preservation of the established ‘status quo’ rather than specific proposals for change. Where proposals for change occur the intention is to provide a framework to allow this to be carefully considered and managed in a positive way to reinforce the existing character and appearance of the area.

3.5.1 Archaeology

The County Archaeology Service, in conjunction with the Council, has prepared archaeological zone maps for the district. These zones have been established following an analytical procedure for identifying and scoring archaeological sites and landscapes.

The archaeological alert zone map shown here has been identified as covering the possible medieval development of Little Cheverell, the area being centred on the land surrounding the Church.

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3.5.2 Infilling and Redevelopment

At Little Cheverell new large-scale, comprehensive or ‘estate’ forms of development are very unlikely to be acceptable. Planning policy anticipates that new building development proposals are only likely to be in the form of limited individual proposals for infilling, re-use or replacement of existing buildings. Where such proposals are acceptable in terms of general planning policy the Council will require them to have regard to the historic and physical context of the Conservation Area. In considering new buildings it will be particularly important to maintain generous spacing between buildings, and to avoid destroying the verges, and walls and hedges fronting onto the lanes.
3.5.3 Design of New Buildings in the Conservation Area

New development in the Conservation Area should always aspire to a quality of design and execution, related to its context, so that it may be valued in the future. This in itself does not imply nor preclude working in traditional or new ways, but will normally involve respecting values established through assessment of the significance of the area. The aim of design guidance therefore is to encourage new development that complements the established grain or settlement pattern, whilst representing the time in which it is built and the culture it accommodates.

When considering proposals for new development, the local planning authority’s principal concern will be the appropriateness of the overall mass or volume of a building, its scale (the expression of size indicated by the windows, doors, floor/ceiling heights, and other identifiable units), and its relationship to its context - whether it sits comfortably on its site.

A new building should be in harmony with, or complementary to, its neighbours with a footprint that respects the existing building pattern or grain. The use of materials generally matching in appearance or complementary to those that are historically dominant in the area is important, as is ensuring that materials, detailing and finishes are all of high quality. Within these criteria, new development should aim to achieve creative design solutions, whether contemporary or traditional in style. In designing proposals owners and their architects are therefore advised to look carefully how their proposal will fit into its physical and historic context. Where construction work is involved particular care should be taken in the choice of building materials and whenever possible should seek to reinforce local distinctiveness.

The palette of established materials at Little Cheverell include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roof coverings</th>
<th>Walling</th>
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<tr>
<td>Clay tile and slate.</td>
<td>Red brickwork usually in Flemish bond. and painted render. Occasional use of stone in conjunction with brick.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.4 Extensions

Relatively small proposals can cumulatively alter the character of the Conservation Area. It is important therefore that extensions to buildings do not dominate the host structure. Generic advice on the considerations to be taken into account in designing an extension is set out in a *Residential Extension Design Guide*. This is available free of charge from the Planning Services Unit at Kennet District Council.

**Useful guidelines include the following:**

- All extensions should be in scale and character with the building to which they are added and should not dominate;
- Particular care should be taken to ensure that the original character of traditional buildings is maintained with extensions on major elevations set back from the existing and with roof lines lower;
- Plan forms should be narrow to reflect local tradition and roof pitches should relate closely to those of the existing building;
- Window proportions should relate to those of the principal building and should generally be set back within the reveals;
• It is not always necessary to exactly copy roofing materials provided that a traditional clay tile or natural slate is used. This can help maintain the character of historic buildings by following a long established building tradition.

• Garages are not always easily assimilated into village scenes and prominent locations and double doors should be avoided. Driveway finishes should be rural in character.

3.5.5 Care with maintenance and minor alterations

Listed buildings are already subject to additional controls, but in order to maintain the character of the Conservation Area the Council will also encourage the owners of all unlisted properties to take care with maintenance and minor alterations. In particular the Council encourages the repair rather than replacement of original features. Where replacement of key architectural features such as windows and doors is unavoidable then care should be taken to accurately copy original styles and details and use traditional materials. Particular care is necessary to maintain historic brick and stonework and especially to avoid repointing using cement or similar hard mortars.

Conservation of the historic environment lies at the heart of sustainability principles. However, the growing trend towards the generation of domestic-scale energy sources by the use of solar panels and micro wind turbines can conflict with the preservation of historic character and in certain locations will be relatively ineffective. Although the Council will be generally sympathetic to these initiatives care needs to be taken to ensure that only visually unobtrusive locations are agreed.

The Council also encourages the long term maintenance of trees, shrubs and hedges identified in the appraisal. The planting of non-indigenous evergreen hedges and trees or close-boarded fencing in prominent positions is however discouraged.

As no listed buildings have been noted as being immediately at risk from decay, action under the Urgent Works or Repairs Notices procedures is not considered to be necessary at this stage.

3.5.6 Enhancement of the Public Realm

Where resources are limited, a balance will obviously need to be struck and priority given to key issues. There are few problems and only limited opportunities at Little Cheverell although removal of overhead power and telephone lines would improve the appearance. Work undertaken in the village recently with the restoration of the sheepwash shows that local initiative and action is often the best way to achieve enhancement. Proposals by the village to renovate the old spring fed dipping wells along Low Road are an attractive idea and support for such initiatives will be given where resources permit.

Other enhancement suggestions:
- Continued tree and hedge management in the village.
- The planting of new trees throughout the conservation area to ensure a continuity of tree stocks as the over-mature trees reach the end of their lives.
- Continued management of ponds and water courses.
- Management of the green and repair of the railings outside the village hall.
4. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND REVIEW

4.1 Community Involvement

Involving the community and raising public awareness is an integral part of the appraisal process. Publicity provides an opportunity to test and consolidate public support. However, with limited resources and 70 Conservation Areas (at the time of writing) within its remit, the Council has to strike a balance. Lengthy public participation can be expensive and create delays in the adoption of appropriate controls, policies and guidance. The Council’s priority is the provision of these elements within a short timescale. In view of the magnitude of the overall project, and the relatively short period for completion, the Council adopted the following model.

Copies of the Draft Appraisal and Management Proposals of the proposed Conservation Area were sent to community representatives (including Little Cheverell Parish Council), statutory organisations, and relevant amenity groups together with a feedback form.

A copy of the Draft document was placed on the Council’s publicly accessible web site, and a press release issued. The draft document was placed on deposit for a minimum of six weeks. Options were particularly canvassed on whether the designation should be made, the extent of the boundary, whether the Appraisal contained any inaccuracies or omissions in respect of the character of the historic environment and whether the management proposals are suitable for the conservation of Little Cheverell. The Council had indicated its willingness to contribute to a briefing session, walkabout, or public meeting. As a result a meeting hosted by the Parish Council was held in the village hall on 1 August 2007.

A number of written responses were received and these are summarised in a separate document available upon request from the District Council. Although a number of adjustments have been made to the Consultative Draft as a result of the responses, it was not considered that any amendments were of major or strategic importance and the revisions were not re-advertised.

4.2 Adoption

The revised document was formally adopted on 20th September 2007 by the Planning Policies Executive Committee on behalf of the District Council as its strategy for Little Cheverell Conservation Area and for the purposes of development control. Amongst other things the document is intended to provide additional information on the interpretation of policies and proposals contained in the Development Plan. The Character Appraisal in particular will form an important role as part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework.

The final document has been published and distributed to consultees and placed permanently on the Council's website. Hard copies of the document may also be purchased from the address given below.

4.3 Review

The preparation of the document should not be the end of the story. It will be used by the Council in exercising its planning functions. The Council will also try to influence other agencies in the protection of the Area. After the Appraisal and Management Plan have been adopted there will be a need to keep it up to date and relevant. The Council will therefore aim to ensure that 75% of all Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans have been reviewed within the past five years.