

Malvern Hills
District Council

Stretton Grandison CONSERVATION AREA



Quality services
across two shires



1.0 DESIGNATION

Malvern Hills District Council has designated part of Stretton Grandison as a Conservation Area under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It came into effect on 22 September 1993 and the boundary of the area is shown on the centre pages.

The designation is a recognition by the Local Planning Authority that part of Stretton Grandison has special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

2.0 BOUNDARIES

The northern boundary includes the rear field boundary hedge of Bishops Cottage, follows and includes the brick and stone walling adjacent to the A417 before turning north to encompass Stretton Grange and its barns. It continues in a projected straight line across open fields to encompass Stretton Court, Church Cottage and St Lawrence's Church.

The eastern boundary continues around the churchyard before following the hedgeline of the paddock to the south to the point where it meets the lane to Homend Park and Upper Eggleton.

The southern boundary follows the field hedge on the north side of the lane, continuing along the hedge bounding Hopton Cottages and the Old School House to the A417, which it crosses in a projected straight line to continue around the stone and field hedge boundaries of Stretton Cottage, to re-join the A417 north of Stretton Cottage.

The western boundary includes and follows the field hedge boundary adjacent to the A417 and encompasses the garden of Brinsop barn, where it turns north across the A417 to Bishops Cottages.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTER AND HISTORY

Stretton Grandison is a small hamlet situated approximately 7 miles north-west of Ledbury, mid-way between Ledbury and Bromyard. The designated Conservation Area is centred on Stretton Court.

Stretton Grandison comprises a small informal group of mainly traditional buildings loosely clustered on the lower slope of Homend Bank, slightly elevated above the Frome river valley. The surrounding countryside comprises rich farmland renowned for hops and cider fruit. The wooded hillside of Homend Bank provides a green backcloth to the buildings, and the numerous mature specimen trees around the Church and Stretton Grange compliment the formal parkland setting of Homend Park.

The Grade I Listed Parish Church dates from the 12th century and is slightly elevated, forming the visual focal point of the hamlet. The open paddock and pond to its south form its immediate setting. Church Cottage, a predominantly timber framed 17th century cottage with thatched roof, is sited next to the lychgate and forms a picturesque relationship with the Church. Its south gable elevation is constructed of the same sandstone rubble as the Church and wall bounding the lychgate. Stretton Court is a farmyard group comprising a 17th century Grade II listed timber framed farmhouse situated within a yard bounded by a range of barns and outbuildings. These are constructed from traditional materials mainly of stone, brick, slate and tile. This is a working farm and it forms the heart of the hamlet and Conservation Area. Open farmland to the west and the belt of mature trees to the east of Stretton Grange provide a setting for the farm grouping. Stretton Grange, formerly the original vicarage, is a large imposing 18th century three storey building partially concealed by the belt of trees to its east. A 17th century barn to its rear is Grade II listed. Other buildings flank the A417, a road of Roman origin and giving the hamlet its name "Stretton". These buildings include Bishops Cottages, a pair of timber framed Grade II listed 17th century cottages set back off the road, Brinsop Barn, a Grade II timber framed listed barn now converted to a dwelling, and the timber framed Stretton Cottage.

4.0 THE NEED FOR CONSERVATION

Much of the Conservation Area has remained unaltered for many years, and the quality of the existing buildings is recognised by the number of listed buildings included. Its special character is derived from the quality of these buildings and their informal loose clustering around open spaces and the presence of many fine mature trees. Stretton Court which still performs a farming function provides a sense of continuity with the past. These traditional buildings may, at some future date, become redundant from their existing use. Change of use, or unsympathetic alteration of the farmyard and outbuildings could significantly alter the character of the hamlet and could result in the deterioration of the environment. Replacement or reinforcement of existing property boundaries with modern fencing could be equally as damaging.

Unless measures are introduced to regulate this change, the area will quickly lose its original character and the district will be impoverished by the loss.

There is, therefore good reason to invoke powers available to the Council to preserve or enhance the character of the area.

The Council is aware that successful conservation cannot be achieved by the use of planning controls only. Much depends on cooperation and goodwill between all parties involved; land or property owner, the local amenity society, the planning authority and the individual.

It is hoped that this co-operation will be obtained since it is in everyone's interest to ensure that an environment of great value is preserved or enhanced.



5.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES

Conservation Area designation is not intended to freeze the whole area into a static museum piece. Change is inevitable, but successful conservation is a positive mixture of preservation and sympathetic development.

Stretton Grandison Conservation Area is situated in open countryside outside a defined settlement boundary, so development will normally be restricted to the extension, modernisation and conversion of existing buildings.

The survival of a number of important historic buildings has resulted in a rich expression of architectural styles reflecting the past. The scale of architecture provides an important sense of unity that is strengthened by the use of a simple range of materials.

The integrity of this architectural character can be affected in a number of ways.

- * It may be degraded by the use of materials or elements unrelated in terms of style or proportion.
- * A lack of understanding of the architectural composition can result in the loss of detail due to inappropriate alterations or lack of maintenance.
- * It may be disrupted by the introduction of discordant elements that draw the eye and break the rhythm.

To try and avoid these situations, the following design characteristics have been identified as important elements. They should provide an influence for development in matters relating to scale, detailing and use of materials:-

- (i) **Scale** - predominantly modest two-storey cottages with the upper floors partly within the roofspace. Stretton Court and Stretton Grange are on a larger scale, Stretton Grange having a third storey.
- (ii) **Layout** - a mix of semi-detached (originally) and detached dwellings mostly facing and set well back from the roadside in large plots. A common theme is the traditional grouping of dwellings with attendant buildings, found at Stretton Grange, Brinsop Cottage and particularly at Stretton Court which retains its traditional farmyard grouping of farmhouse and buildings to front and rear.
- (iii) **External wall finishes** - predominantly timber framed dwellings with painted brick infill panels; attendant buildings are a mix of timber frame, with some use of weather board cladding, brick and sandstone. Exceptionally, Stretton Grange is painted brick.
- (iv) **Roofs** - a mix of thatch, plain clay tile and natural slate on pitched and hipped roofs. It is important that in alterations or extensions, roofs should be covered in traditional materials. The angle of pitch, eaves detailing and ridge heights should be similar to those of existing roofs in the vicinity.
- (v) **Chimneys** - of varying sizes. In order to retain the existing skyline, chimney stacks and pots should be retained even when no longer used.
- (vi) **Windows** - predominantly painted timber casement windows with flat heads and a vertical emphasis. Wherever possible original windows should be retained, but where replacement windows are necessary it is of vital importance in retaining the unity of the street frontage to ensure that the openings are not enlarged and the original style and material of window is replicated. Window openings in extensions should mirror the proportions of those in the existing building and have a similar solid to void ratio.
- (vii) **Dormer Windows and Roof Lights** - Dormer windows are to be found in the Conservation Area, and are typically small and set low down in the roof at eaves level. Where new dormer windows are to be introduced they should be of this traditional design. Additional dormer windows should accord with the originals in terms of design, placement and spacing. Rooflights are not to be found within the Conservation Area and should be avoided.
- (viii) **Boundary Walls and hedges** - Low boundary walls are a feature of the Conservation Area and should be retained. Repairs and new walling should match the existing walls in material, colour, pattern, bonding and use of mortar. Hedges are also a feature and should be retained.

6.0 OBJECTIVES OF CONSERVATION

In designating the Stretton Grandison Conservation Area, Malvern Hills District Council has recognised the apparently divergent demands of progress and preservation. It has introduced a framework of objectives that identify a balance between the requirements of conservation and the demands of development and seek to:-

- a) Preserve or enhance Conservation Areas.
- b) Identify a balance between the requirements of Conservation and the demands of development.
- c) Protect listed buildings from demolition and unsympathetic works.
- d) Encourage the proper repair and maintenance of listed buildings.
- e) Preserve the setting of listed buildings.
- f) Provide opportunities to safeguard and enhance buildings of architectural and historic interest.
- g) Prepare enhancement schemes in Conservation Areas.
- h) Ensure that development is sensitive and compatible with the historic fabric of the village.
- i) Prepare and publish supplementary guidance notes on appropriate conservation issues.
- j) Safeguard sites of archaeological interest.



7.0 POLICIES FOR CONSERVATION

Designation of a Conservation Area implies the recognition of a visual and environmental quality unique to the particular area. The overall character and appearance of the area is made up of many varied and different environmental features. The historic patterns of settlements, buildings of individual or group value, the presence of open spaces, trees, important views and other landscape features all contribute to the high amenity value and special character of an area. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that in exercising its development control function, the Council pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or

enhancing the character or appearance of the area. This can be achieved by protecting them from decay, neglect and unsympathetic development.

Policies have been included in the Malvern Hills District Local Plan, Chapter 7.0 Conserving the Built Environment, to cover issues of enhancement, development and demolition in Conservation Areas.

The following policy references are from the Malvern Hills District Local Plan.



PRESERVING OR ENHANCING CONSERVATION AREAS CONSERVATION POLICY 1

It is desirable that positive steps be taken for the enhancement of Conservation Areas. The Council has a duty under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to prepare schemes for preservation or enhancement. These schemes can include new floorscape; street furniture; street lighting and building illumination; highway management; signing; services and landscape issues.

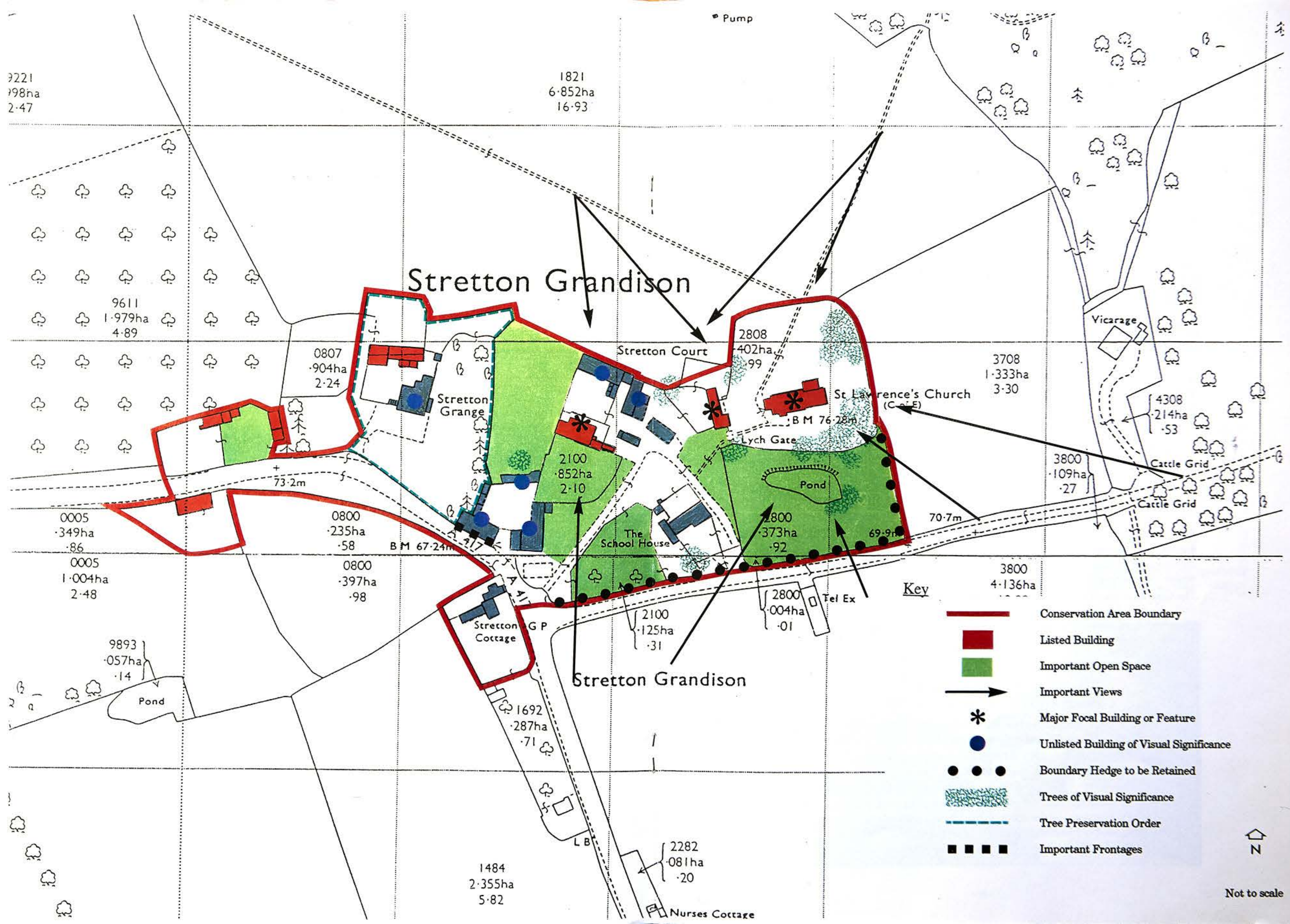
NEW DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS CONSERVATION POLICY 2

Stretton Grandison is situated in open countryside so it is anticipated that new development will normally be limited to residential extensions, garages and other small ancillary buildings.

The cumulative effect of these often small developments, if undertaken without due regard for the existing architectural character, can result in the overall quality of the area being eroded and the real objectives of conservation being devalued.

DEMOLITION OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS CONSERVATION POLICY 3

Not all buildings within a Conservation Area are listed. An unlisted building can make a positive contribution to the character of a Conservation Area on its own, or as part of an established group and should be retained wherever possible.



ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS

CONSERVATION POLICY 9

Conservation Areas often include a number of Listed Buildings. These are buildings of special architectural or historic interest which have been identified as worthy of preservation and therefore included on a statutory list compiled by the Secretary of State for the Environment. These buildings frequently demonstrate a history of adaptation and change resulting from improved social standards and design influences. The pressure for change is now more demanding than ever before and historic buildings are threatened by unsuitable alteration or extension. In exercising its development control function, the Council must give special attention to the desirability of preserving its stock of listed buildings.

DEMOLITION OF LISTED BUILDINGS

CONSERVATION POLICY 7

Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area represent a record of history relating to building skills, improving technology and changing and improving social standards, and there is a need to protect these buildings that demonstrate an important part of our heritage.

THE SETTING OF LISTED BUILDINGS

CONSERVATION POLICY 11

The setting of a Listed Building is an integral part, not only of an individual building, but also of the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The setting of a building can vary from being an integral part of a group or terrace of buildings in a streetscene, to the isolated parkland setting of a country house. The extent of the setting can also vary from a small garden enclosure to the need to consider parkland settings or historic landscapes. The setting places the building in context and great care must be taken to avoid isolating a building from its surroundings.

RE-USE OR CONVERSION OF RURAL BUILDINGS

CONSERVATION POLICY 12; EMPLOYMENT POLICY 6

Rural buildings represent a recognisable part of the architectural heritage and social history of the district, and have survived because they performed their job well. The Council will consider a continued agricultural use as being of primary importance, and the building should, where possible, remain in agricultural use.

The Council acknowledges that changes necessitated by the advance in technology and improved work practices have gradually led to many agricultural and rural buildings becoming redundant. These buildings, particularly Listed Buildings, should not be allowed to deteriorate and new uses can often be the best means of preservation. Any change to a new use must respect the essential features of the building.

ARCHAEOLOGY

CONSERVATION POLICY 17; CONSERVATION POLICY 18

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 requires that consent is required from the Secretary of State for any works affecting a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Sites as yet not scheduled or recorded may be equally important and worthy of protection and evaluation. The evaluation of sites may vary from large-scale rescue excavation through to watching brief work.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 states that in exercising its development control function the District Council must consider the effect of development proposals on archaeological sites as material to the determination of planning applications. Unsympathetic development can prejudice the use of these sites for educational, leisure or tourist opportunities.



SATELLITE ANTENNAE

CONSERVATION POLICY 20

Satellite antennae and dish aerals are likely to feature more prominently in the environment of the 1990's due to the expansion of satellite broadcasting. The Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988 as amended considers the positioning of satellite antennae. In many instances the siting of such equipment is outside planning control. Some control is retained, however, and in exercising its development control function the Council will safeguard the qualities of the Conservation Area.

ADVERTISEMENTS

CONSERVATION POLICIES 22, 23 AND 24

In designated Conservation Areas, Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. Government advice contained in Planning Policy Guidance 19 indicates that this is appropriate to outdoor advertisements.



Much of the district is of high landscape value. This quality is recognised by the existence of both the Malvern Hills and Wye Valley Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a locally designated Area of Great Landscape Value. In these areas special consideration should be given to maintaining the high amenity value of the landscape. In order to facilitate this control Areas of Special Control of Advertisements under Section 221 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended have been designated. Stretton Grandison is included within the Area of Special Control of Advertisements.

The effect of this designation is to impose more strict controls over the sign or advertisement which needs express consent and also to the size of the sign or advertisement which can be displayed with deemed consent.

8.0 THE ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF MY PROPERTY LIES WITHIN A CONSERVATION AREA?

A number of special planning controls operate in Conservation Areas:-

NEW BUILDINGS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

In exercising its development control function, a District Council must give special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. Where new development is considered appropriate, the essential architectural characteristics of the Conservation Area have been outlined. These qualities should provide an influence for all new development.

CONTROLS ON ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS

Normally certain minor works may be permitted development and be exempt from planning controls. The amount of permitted development allowed in Conservation Areas is less than elsewhere. Where extensions or alterations are proposed, the architectural characteristics of the Conservation Area should provide an influence in matters of scale, detailing and materials.

Before undertaking any works which will alter the external appearance of any property or involve new extensions you should consult the Planning and Technical Services Department which will advise you whether your proposals require specific permission.

PLANNING APPLICATION PROCEDURE IN CONSERVATION AREAS

Planning Applications are submitted to the District Council. Proposals must include detailed plans and elevations and indicate materials to be used. Outline applications are not encouraged. Applications affecting the character of the area will be advertised in a local newspaper and by notice on the site for 21 days. The Parish or Town Council and neighbours will be notified. The application will also be available for inspection at the Planning and Technical Services Department. Written representations received as a result of advertising and consultations will be considered when the application is determined by the appropriate committee. Your application should be determined within 8 weeks from registration.

DEMOLITION IN A CONSERVATION AREA

Section 74 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 controls the demolition of most buildings in Conservation Areas. As a general rule if you wish to demolish a building or part of a building you will need to apply to the District Council for specific permission known as Conservation Area Consent. This application will be advertised in the same way as for planning applications. If you are in any doubt about whether you require Conservation Area Consent contact the Planning and Technical Services Department.



LISTED BUILDINGS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

Conservation Areas often include a number of listed buildings. These are buildings officially identified by the Secretary of State as being of special architectural or historic interest. Special controls exist to protect listed buildings and any proposals to demolish, alter or extend these buildings will require special permission known as Listed Building Consent in addition to any Planning Permission or Building Regulation Approval that may be required.

TREES IN CONSERVATION AREAS

You are required under Section 212 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 to give the District Council six weeks notice in writing of any proposals to fell or prune trees. During this period the District Council will decide whether a Tree Preservation Order is necessary to safeguard the tree. Trees which are already the subject of a Tree Preservation Order must not be felled or lopped without prior written consent from the District Council.

ADVERTISEMENTS IN A CONSERVATION AREA

Specific consent is required for the display of most advertisements and signs. There are exceptions, but the advertisement regulations are complex, so advice should always be sought before erecting a sign or hoarding.

9.0 WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION?

Officers are available to provide general information on procedure and Local Plan Policy or offer technical advice on repair and maintenance of Listed Buildings. Advice on proposed new development, demolition, alteration or extensions is given by officers without prejudice to the determination of that application by the Council's elected Members.

If you require any further information or application forms for Planning Permission, Conservation Area Consent or Listed Building Consent contact the:

Planning and Technical Services Department,
Brunel House, Portland Road,
Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 2TB
Tel (01684) 892700