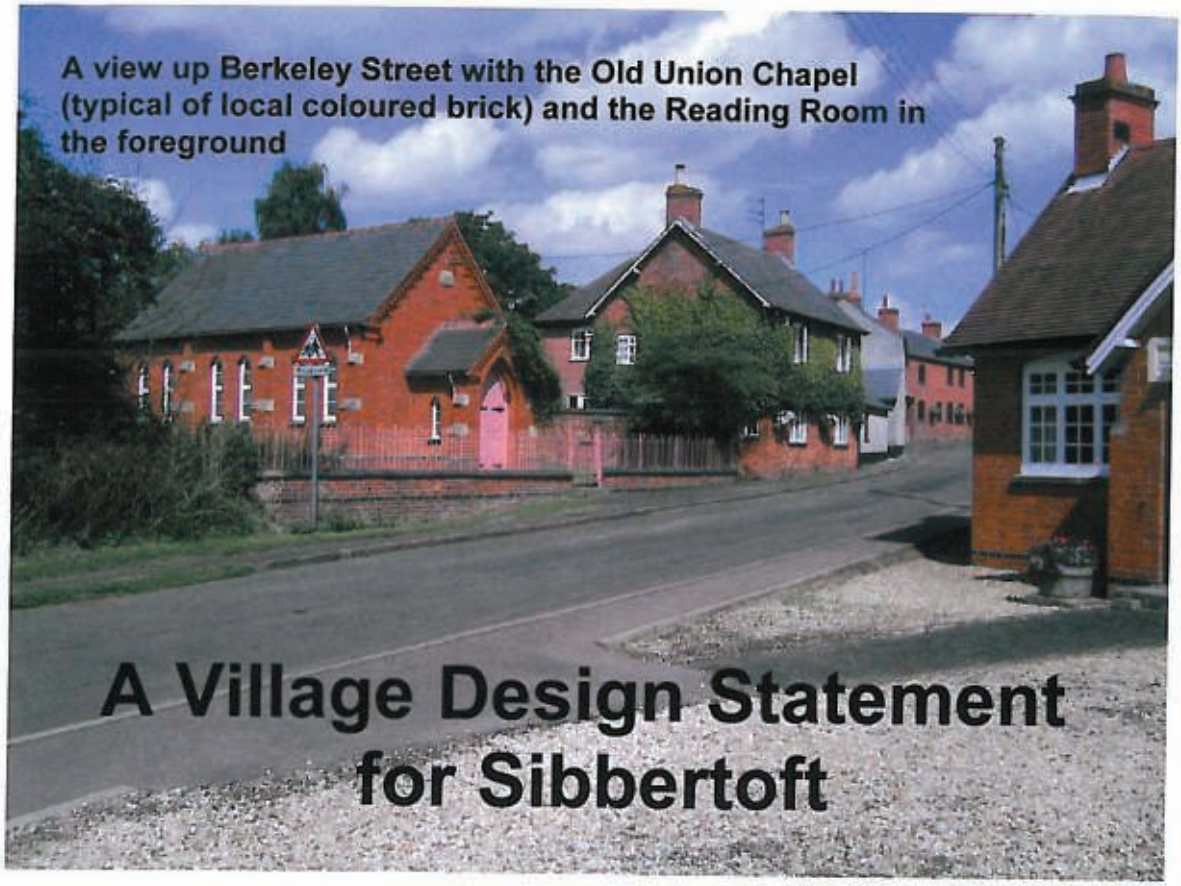


A Village Design Statement for Sibbertoft

Supplementary Planning Document

May 2008

Contents:

Introduction.
Village context.
Industrial & commercial development guidelines
Landscape character.
Landscape guidelines
Hydrology
Hydrology guidelines
Settlement.
Settlement guidelines.
Open spaces.
Open space guidelines.
Buildings.
Building guidelines.
Highways and street furniture.
Traffic/highways guidelines.
Street lighting
Street furniture guidelines.
Village amenities.
Guidelines summary.

Annexures

A: Map of important open spaces and views
B: Important trees and hedges (with map)
C: Important walls and fences (with map)

Sibbertoft Village Design Statement

Introduction

What is a Village Design Statement?

The Village Design Statement (VDS) describes the village of Sibbertoft as it is today and highlights the qualities valued by its residents. This Statement has been produced by the Sibbertoft VDS Steering Committee in consultation with all of the households in the village. The aim is to tap local knowledge, views and ideas in order to improve the quality of our environment in line with the statements of principle adopted by the Parish Council in 2004. These are that

- **New buildings should follow in the traditions of their settings, reflecting the important characteristics that make Sibbertoft special**
- **Standard designs that could belong in any suburb, are not appropriate in the countryside**

This VDS is helping to ensure that our local distinctiveness and character is taken into consideration when local planning decisions are being made. A Design Statement shall be submitted to accompany all planning applications to demonstrate how the developer has met the criteria and guidelines set out in this VDS.

In 2005 a series of focus groups with volunteers was held. This involved around 10% of the residents (defined as the number of people on the electoral roll living within the village which totals 205). As a result of the focus groups, a survey questionnaire of 105 questions was prepared and posted throughout the whole village and 98 replies were received (just under half the residents) on which this document is based. Detailed appraisals have also been undertaken by volunteers on specific aspects of village design: housing design; street furniture; walls/fences and trees/green boundaries. In addition a number of written suggestions were also received. The Steering Committee would like to thank all those who took part.

It should also be noted that in 1998 the Sibbertoft Parish Appraisal Committee commissioned a parish wide survey through a comprehensive questionnaire: this resulted in a number of recommendations to the Parish Council. There was an 80% response and the views of the parishioners were summarised and recorded in a book entitled **Sibbertoft in the year 2000** (see bibliography). Some of these findings will be referred to in the body of this document. The survey for the Village Design Statement duplicates much of the 1998 survey. There has been no discernable change of opinion in the seven years. It should also be noted that some items that were raised by the village during the VDS process were development, rather than design issues. Rather than discard some of these issues as not being relevant to the Village Design Statement, these have been highlighted below the guideline sections as "Village Preferences". They are included purely to highlight for information the desires of the village, but carry no planning weight.

Who is it for?

Change is brought about not only by large developments, but also by the smaller day-to-day adjustments to homes and gardens, open spaces, paths and hedges, which can alter the look of the whole village over time. The VDS is therefore addressed to

- Planners, developers, builders, architects, designers, engineers
- Statutory bodies and public authorities
- Householders and local businesses
- Local community groups

How does it work?

A Consultation Draft Design Statement was placed before Planning Committee on 26/9/07 and Strategy Group on 11/10/07. It was accompanied by a separate Sustainability Appraisal (Consultation Draft). Consultation took place on these documents for 6 weeks until 14/12/07. These documents returned to Planning Committee on 2/4/08 and Strategy Group on 17/4/08.

The consultation was in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. This design statement was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by Daventry District Council at Full Council on 15/5/08 and supports policies in the Daventry District Local Plan 1997 and the emerging Local Development Framework. The Sustainability Appraisal was approved as a separate document.

A copy of the report of Consultation is available on the District Council's website or from Daventry District Council on 01327 302559.

Village context

Communications

Sibbertoft is situated in northwest Northamptonshire on the border with Leicestershire almost exactly halfway between Leicester and Northampton. It is 12 miles from Rugby to the west and Kettering to the east and 6 miles from Market Harborough. Junction 20 on the M1 motorway is 8 miles to the west and the nearest access to the A14 is about 5 miles to the south. The nearest railway stations are in Market Harborough, Rugby, Northampton and Kettering. There are a number of international airports within one hours drive. There is a bus service to Market Harborough on Tuesdays and Saturdays (market days).

Economic infrastructure

Flax weaving and farming formed the principal trades up to the Industrial Revolution, whence the weaving industry disappeared from the village. The toll-road from Leicester to London, later to become the A50 trunk road (now A5199) ran through Welford which was an important coach stop. The opening of the Welford Branch of the Grand Union canal in the early 19th century bought commodities such as cheap coal and Welsh slate to the locality and the Rugby & Stamford railway opened up east/west connections with a station at Theddingworth, 3 miles distant. The railway station at Market Harborough opened up two north/south routes.

Much has changed since then. Most of the local rail connections have disappeared but there are fast trains from Rugby and Market Harborough and from the latter you can make a direct connection to Eurostar at Kings Cross/St Pancras. The canals no longer carry goods locally and a new road network has opened up which reflects the modern logistics of distribution, as a result Sibbertoft now has excellent road connections and most of the large Midlands conurbations can be reached easily within an hour.

Farming is still the principal trade although it now employs few people and the number of dairy farms has decreased. The emphasis is now on arable, sheep, beef and leisure. The conversion of Sibbertoft Manor to a Nursing Home now provides the single largest employment opportunities within the immediate locality. According to the 1998 Parish Appraisal the village is seen as being too small to support a shop and on balance that more businesses should not be encouraged. Leisure activities dominate with the Red Lion operating as a pub/restaurant, an amenity appreciated by the villagers; fishing lakes have been created as has a 4WD track and self-catering holiday cabins. The Coventry Gliding Club, based on the former World War 2 airfield (which is just outside the parish), has expanded its activities and now holds international gliding competitions.

Social infrastructure

The village changed markedly during the second half of the 20th century. Electricity was first connected to the village in 1935 but not widely connected until after World War 2. Mains water and sewage only reached all of the village at the beginning of the 1950's. New house building accelerated during the 1970's which radically altered the appearance of Welland Rise and the population numbers started to rise. Roads within the village were renamed, however the primary school closed in 1972 and children are now bussed to Welford. The shop (general store and post office) also closed in 1988 and sports such as cricket and football are no longer played in the village. The Women's Institute ceased about 10 years ago and there are no other clubs or social groups. The only Non-conformist chapel ceased regular services in 1983 and closed for good in 1996.

Although Sibbertoft is a very small village it has an active social life based around the church, the Reading Room and the pub. The nearest doctor's surgery is at Husbands Bosworth 3 miles away. The Police operate from Daventry 15 miles away.

Political infrastructure

The Parish Meeting was granted Parish Council status in 1952. The parish is part of Daventry District Council and is represented by a District Councillor (who also represents Welford, East Farndon and Marston Trussell now known collectively as Uplands). Since the boundary revisions of 1994 Sibbertoft, formerly within the Daventry Parliamentary constituency, now lies within Kettering Parliamentary constituency.

Population and social mix

Sibbertoft is not seen as a dormitory village although a significant proportion of villagers do travel out of the village to work. There is a mix of commuters and home-workers and, since the Parish Appraisal in 1998, an increasing proportion of retirees (in one street alone over 40% of the households are now retired couples). There is also an increase of single person households. The number of children of school age is due to fall within a year or two as a 'bulge' of boys (double the number of girls) reaches sixteen [Source: Village Appraisal 1998]. The stock of social housing has halved in recent years through the 'Right to Buy' policy. Property in villages such as Sibbertoft tend to attract a higher price than a comparable property in an urban area when sold – the so-called 'village premium'. Taken together these two factors (the reduction in the number of local authority houses for rent and private houses that are more expensive than those in towns) mean there is marked lack of affordable housing (an issue raised in the focus groups but without coming to a solution). This affects the social mix as supply is dictated on purely economic grounds.

There is perceived to be an under provision of smaller family/starter homes and that in the last ten years most houses have been too expensive (too big).
Sibbertoft Parish Appraisal (1998)

With increased affluence the number of cars have increased faster than the number of inhabitants although traffic safety is not at the top of villagers list of concerns. The population within the parish is 343 according to the 2001 census and is comparable with the population in the parish recorded in the 1861 census which is smaller than when it was at its peak in 1841 (see **Sibbertoft in the year 2000**, p121).

Noise level concerns

General noise levels have increased over recent years. There is constant background noise from the A14 fast trunk road although this varies according to wind direction and has not caused much concern. In the summer there has been a dramatic increase in air traffic over the village also giving a constant background noise. The village is concerned that this may increase as the village is within the proposed area of stacking and descent

into Nottingham/East Midlands Airport and in any case the Government have forecast a general increase in air traffic from all airports.

The Three Counties police helicopter is based at Sulby and often flies close to the village at any time of the day or night. Coventry Gliding Club uses a number of tug flights - these are particularly busy (and noisy) at weekends in the summer.

1. Industrial and commercial development guideline

The Village Appraisal (1998) highlighted the views that businesses operating in the village should be encouraged providing they are not a nuisance. In the VDS Questionnaire (2005) there is no clear consensus as to whether there should be new commercial development within the village, and this is in line with the recommendation made by the Parish Appraisal (1998) that "businesses or other economic developments are not preferred although on balance more jobs would be welcome especially if these were associated with a shop" However, the local residents feel that the village is too small to support a shop and that all existing businesses should offer local employment.

1.1 Businesses already established in the village are to be encouraged but only if they operate as 'good neighbours' – not adversely affecting the community with unreasonable working hours, pollution of any kind, or generating unreasonable extra traffic volumes.

1.2 Should any new industrial or commercial development, or the conversion of existing buildings for such purposes take place then they should be to a high quality design with high quality materials, sympathetic with its locality and with low visual impact.

Village preference

- **New industrial or commercial development is not preferred.**

Landscape character

Bedrock and surface geology

Sibbertoft is situated on the edge of the Northamptonshire Uplands (see below*) surrounded by a Special Landscape Area to the north and east of the village affording fine views along the upper reaches of the Welland valley. The River Welland rises in the parish although it remains underground within the village. The River Avon also rises close to the village and the watershed is estimated to be less than 100 metres wide at a point just to the east of the junction of the Naseby Rd/Church Street. See section on **Hydrology.**

The parish lies over Jurassic Middle Lias clays and silts and is covered by a mixture of gravel and boulder clay. The pockets of boulder clay have been exploited as building material: firstly as unbaked clay and then fired as the distinctive orange-red coloured bricks. Large sea-rolled boulders embedded in the boulder clay were used in building foundations. The southern part of the parish is characterised by gently rolling open fields. To the north there is the escarpment of the Northamptonshire plateau with more dramatic views and more tree cover. In recent years a number of small lakes have been man-made.

*Sibbertoft is part of an area of countryside defined and described by The Countryside Agency as the Northamptonshire Uplands (Area 95) at http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/CC/east_midlands/northamptonshire

Special environmental and historic sites

Coombes Hollow covers about 11 acres in the north of the parish and is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest – a fine example of unimproved grassland. There are also a number of County Wildlife Sites and one Scheduled Ancient Monument – the site of Sibbertoft Castle.

The open nature of the fields to the south of the village was the site of the Battle of Naseby. The parallel ridges allowed the opposing armies to mass in wide formation within view of each other. This is where the set piece action took place and is marked by a monument. The later part of the battle, the Royalist retreat and rearguard action all took place within the parish. This is described in **Sibbertoft in the year 2000**, p25-27 and in a more recent publication ***Naseby: English Civil War – June 1645*** (see Bibliography).

The field at the bottom of Westhorpe known as The Orchard is the site of the Mansion House. Most of the earthwork features that can be seen in this field are the remains of a late seventeenth century garden landscape in which a boggy area around the bottom of Westhorpe was drained into an ornamental lake with islands. The history of the development of the Mansion House is described in **Sibbertoft in the year 2000**, p28-31. The field is bounded by an old brick wall that is possibly contemporary with the former house and a fence of modern Georgian-style palings (see also **Walls & Fences** at **Annexure C**).

Field patterns and footpaths

The shape of the visible landscape has been most influenced by field enclosures. These started early and about one third of the parish was enclosed by 1650. The remaining open fields were fully enclosed in the Parliamentary Enclosures in the latter half of the 18th century. The hawthorn or 'quickset' hedge became ubiquitous and much of the field boundaries today are predominantly hawthorn. Field patterns have changed since then mainly due to the creation of larger fields and the consequent removal of hedges. Many hedges are laid and it is encouraging to see that this rural practice has not died out. There has been an increase in the last few years of new hedge and tree planting and this too should be encouraged.

Several footpaths and bridleways cross the parish that were designated in 1934 and in 1994 a long distance footpath which runs from Banbury to Stamford, the Jurassic Way, was created by linking several of these existing footpaths. It passes through the village and is well used by walkers.

Visual character of the village from different directions

The visual character of the village varies greatly depending on the direction of approach. It can hardly be seen from the Harborough direction as it lies on the far side of a ridge with the church tower just visible above the horizon. From Naseby the whole settlement can be detected from a distance by the massing of mature trees, especially those in the grounds of the Nursing Home and the former Vicarage. From the airfield there is a tree-lined approach with filtered views of Westhorpe across The Orchard field.

Trees and hedges

Trees and hedges are also an important part of the village landscape giving enjoyment in their own right but also softening the hard edges of the built environment and in places defining boundaries or demarcating open spaces and in themselves helping to protect some open spaces. Some hedges are ancient, being survivals from medieval boundaries. Some areas of trees as well as individual trees are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) but there are several areas and other individual trees that do not have TPO's but are considered to be locally important (the details are set out in **Annexure B.**)

Agricultural buildings

The landscape is also dotted with agricultural buildings. In recent years many of these have taken on an uncompromisingly industrial aspect. Some of the older farm buildings, such as brick byres and stables, still survive. They are also an important source of the vernacular style and should be preserved.

It is recommended that the following guidelines is read in conjunction with the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Action Plan that can be viewed at http://www.northamptonshirebap.com

2. Landscape guidelines

The village is situated in a landscape with many attractive views. Trees and hedges are important elements in the village landscape; they help encourage wildlife and are visually satisfying in their own right and should be maintained and managed appropriately. Further information about trees and hedges can be found at Annexure B.

The following guidelines seek to protect and enhance the landscape and are aimed at everyone:

2.1 Plant native species to retain landscape character and to benefit wildlife within the village. Local native broadleaf trees include Ash, Elm, Lime and English Oak.
2.2 Mature trees should be retained wherever possible, and tree roots protected during any groundwork.
2.3 Existing hedges should be retained wherever possible to form boundaries and hedge laying encouraged.
2.4 Local hedgerow species are be encouraged. Local species include Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Crab Apple, Holly, Elm, Field Maple, Hazel and Ash.
2.5 Hedge heights, except for specific screening purposes, should be no more than approximately 2 metres high in the interests of road safety and good neighbourly relations.
2.6 Trees and hedges should be maintained and managed.
2.7 Any uprooted and diseased trees should be replaced either in the original position or elsewhere within the plot.
2.8 Wildlife shall be encouraged by protecting existing wildlife environments and by creating new habitats such as copses, hedgerows, ditches and ponds, as well as open areas of rough grassland. Advice is available from the Wildlife Trust for Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire.

Hydrology

Sibbertoft sits astride one of the principal watersheds in England on a perched water table. Two of the major river systems rise within about 100 metres of each other. The Welland issues in the village as a spring in Springcroft but may start elsewhere. It travels underground in a westerly direction and the main course is culverted by an underground drain away from the village to the west. The historical record reveals a dynamic hydrology (see Sibbertoft in the year 2000 pp 29-31) and small changes in the underground course or a rise in the water table could have a detrimental effect on surrounding buildings. These concerns were raised by residents who objected in writing in 1995 to the Sulby planning proposal and again in 2003/4 as an objection to the Springcroft proposal. Again a number of concerns about flooding or movements in the water-table have been raised by residents with the Parish Council over many years and

they will continue to raise these concerns with Anglian Water. Recent flooding of the footpath by the Dog Yard might be connected to either a general rise in the water table or a new spring opening up.

3. Hydrology guidelines

In general there is a perceived risk of flooding in the lower parts of the village due to the extremely dynamic hydrology.

3.1 Strong consideration should be given to taking expert hydrological advice when considering any development in Sibbertoft.

The West Northants Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (in preparation) will help identify areas at risk of flooding. The Environment Agency have also prepared a guide to rights and responsibilities of a riverside owners *Living next to a River.*

Settlement

Historical development

Historically, Sibbertoft was created out of two distinct settlements – the village of Sibbertoft centred around the church and the former Sibbertoft manor house and farm (situated between Manor Gardens and the the corner of Church Street and Clipston Lane) and the settlement of Westhorpe around the Westhorpe manor farm (now Welland House, Westhorpe) and the former Mansion House (sited in The Orchard at the bottom of Westhorpe). Until the middle of the 17th century these were in separate ownership. The enclosure of fields started earlier in Sibbertoft than most other places and the evidence can still be traced in field pattern and property boundaries. There then followed a population explosion and many cottages and smallholdings developed in and around the edges of the village. These were abandoned during the earlier part of the 19th century and their remains can be seen in the fields today as humps and hollows. Around the middle of the 19th century virtually all of the land in the parishes of Sibbertoft and Sulby came under the single ownership of the Villiers family and it was they who commissioned the massive Victorian development – the school, the School House, the Vicarage and the heavy restoration of the church. They closed The Old Swan in Church Street and redeveloped the Manor farmhouse as the present Sibbertoft Manor now the Nursing Home, Church Street in the late Victorian/Edwardian style. This history of continuous change can be readily traced in the settlement pattern today.

Growth threats

The collapse of Barings Bank in the 1990's brought the potential for massive change as they sought to sell off farmland at the highest price which they owned and which flanked the west and north sides of the village. Wholesale housing development was feared and many villagers took defensive positions by acquiring 'ransom strips' on land backing on to houses on the east side of Westhorpe and the north side of Welland Rise with a view to preventing vehicular access and thus minimising the threat of housing development blocking their views across open land. Around the same time the villages of Sibbertoft, Sulby and Welford came under threat of massive housing development on part of the former airfield at Sulby. This was mainly as a result of a change of Government planning policy to create 'new villages' in the countryside. The threat was removed by concerted local action. The Parish Appraisal (1998) recorded an overwhelming agreement with the view that "the village cannot accommodate any more new houses."

The changing appearance

The major changes in more recent times, which have radically altered the look of the village, have been in Welland Rise, along the Naseby Road and the Beeches Close development off the Welford Road. The last remaining examples of 'cob' houses in

Westhorpe were demolished and the allotments fronting the Naseby Road and the upper south side of Welland Rise were developed as Council houses during the 1930's. During the 1970's a row of detached houses were built on the north side of Welland Rise below Coombes Farm. Clay tile roofs and russet-pink bricks became common. Most of this housing was built to repetitive standard designs and lacked any vernacular detail. This was also the period of rapid population increase.

During the 1990's the first new road was added. The street name was agreed as Beeches Close which reflected something of the history of the site – the orchard and Home Close of Beeches Farm. After negotiation, the developer David Wilson Homes provided design finishes in keeping with the local plainer, more vernacular style.

Most development since the 1990's has been two-storey house infill in gardens in ones and twos. However there is evidence of three-storey dwellings within the village: these are the prestige buildings from the late Georgian and Victorian eras, mainly the homes of wealthy tenant farmers. The tallest dwelling, the former Vicarage, was built by the Villiers family (the main landowner at the time) with the intention of attracting a senior cleric to position of Vicar. Buildings such as this were statements of status and power. Any new dwellings of more than two-storeys need to be especially sensitive to their location and setting. Great care should be taken to ensure that the roof height does not dominate over its neighbours and takes into account the slope of the land. In a recent development of three large detached dwellings set around a courtyard the design has a strong sense of enclosure, uses sympathetic materials and generally uses vernacular detail however the sheer vertical scale and massing of the buildings has caused local concerns.

Important open views

Views of the open countryside are considered to be important to the vast majority of the villagers, especially those on or very near the edge of the village who already enjoy what they see from their windows. A door-to-door survey was undertaken to gauge the opinion of residents. All of those sampled replied that they thought that views of the open countryside were important and many added that this was a very important consideration when purchasing their property. They valued the enjoyment brought by rural tranquillity and proximity to wildlife. Those residents who live in the central portion of the village valued glimpses of the open countryside, a tranquil garden or courtyard setting and a variety of mature trees and hedges which afforded privacy, softened the outlines of surrounding buildings and enhanced wildlife activity. They believed that any infill development that blocked the views they considered as important would be detrimental to their amenity and enjoyment. It has not been possible to categorise any particular view or to assess it against any objective or subjective scale except that an established view of the church would be paramount in importance and most detrimental if lost.

4. Settlement guidelines

In the Daventry District Local Plan (adopted June 1997) Sibbertoft is a Restricted Infill Village. Planning Policies HS 22 and clauses 4.88 to 4.92 apply, as do policies EM11, 12, 13, and 14. Sibbertoft's settlement pattern is predominantly based on an historic street plan and each street has a distinctive character. The shape of the village is defined by surrounding fields and this is important to give the village its rural character. Being a small village of moderate overall density a majority of the houses enjoy views over open countryside. Most others enjoy filtered views to the open countryside. Older village houses nestle into the landscape with roof heights often lowering in response to the slope.

4.1 Visual proximity to the countryside should be preserved.

4.2 Streets are characteristically winding, with a streetscape being revealed gradually. This street design characteristic should be retained and reflected in the design of any new streetscape.

4.2 New dwellings should respect the general local character of building close to the street. Any new development should be based on analysis in order to properly reflect the layout of surrounding buildings i.e. some areas are characterised by dwellings abutting the pavement, whilst others are set behind a boundary wall.

4.3 In those areas of the village where current dwellings are set further back from the street, any new development should provide a wall or hedge that follows the edge of the pavement.

4.4 Care should be taken to limit building heights on rising ground so as to avoid dominating neighbouring building and those lower down the slope.

4.5 All existing important views within the village and into the countryside (as identified on the Map at Annexure A) should be protected and enhanced.

4.6 Infill development or lateral extensions to existing buildings should not interfere with important views out of the village.

Open spaces

Village boundaries and spaces

The settlement has developed within boundaries. These boundaries have been largely dictated by agriculture – fields for grazing encircle the village and this has largely limited the spread of development. The village is still effectively confined within its ancient street plan much as you see it today. Open spaces are part of this plan and play an important part in determining the shape and appearance of the built landscape. Sibbertoft has a number of open vistas within the village itself (see **Map** for important views at **Annexure A**) and these should be retained. Paddocks such as the Dog Yard also play an important part in the social life of the community.

The following open spaces are considered to be important to the form, character and setting of the village and should be preserved:

The Dog Yard (IOS1 on the Map). A paddock used for grazing bounded in part by an ancient hedge but mainly by Georgian cast-iron palings. Possibly part of a former village green. Together with the vernacular architecture that fringes the paddock it forms a signature view as one enters Berkeley Street from the Welford/Naseby Road. As a conveniently located open space it has been popular in recent decades as a venue for fetes and larger social gatherings and as such has become an important social amenity.

Springcroft (IOS2 on the Map). A pasture bounded mostly by hedges and now converting to scrub. Subject to an Inspectors decision following a planning appeal (APP/Y2810/A/03/1110540). The appeal was dismissed on the grounds that it "would be detrimental to the form, character and setting of Sibbertoft". Objectors to the planning application also raised fears about the consequences on hydrology as Springcroft is marked as the source of the River Welland. (See section on **Hydrology** above)

Recreation Ground (IOS3 on the Map). An important village amenity with a variety of play equipment to suit all ages of children.

War Memorial (IOS4 on the Map).

Green triangles. There are seven triangular spaces (numbered GT1 to GT7 on **Map**) of which the largest is the remnant of a village green. Two of the traffic triangles (GT4 and 5 – see **Map**) are under threat from vehicular traffic churning up the verges. If steps are not taken then they will disappear altogether as the tarmac repairs slowly encroach over the edges of the green.

5. Open space guidelines

Open spaces are important to the visual quality of the village.

5.1 The Dog Yard and Springcroft should be retained and managed as Important Open Spaces.

5.2 The Recreation Ground and War Memorial are owned and managed by the Parish Council. They should be retained and managed as Important Open Spaces (IOS). The Parish Council has drawn up a long-term management plan for both of these spaces.

5.3 Green triangles should be retained and managed and where possible reinstated to their original size.

Buildings

Historic buildings

The oldest surviving building is the church of St Helen thought to date from the 11th century: it sits on the highest part of the village and its tower is an important landmark. It was heavily restored during the later part of the 19th century and is a Grade II* Listed Building. There are three further Listed Buildings: the old school built in 1847 (now a private dwelling): Grade II. No 41 Welland Rise thought to date from the late 17th or early 18th century: Grade II; and Springs Farmhouse in Berkeley Street which is dated in the brickwork as 1741: Grade II. However, several other buildings predate these examples and date from the third quarter of the 17th century (*Historic Sibbertoft* – see Bibliography). Until the last quarter of the 18th century the most common type of building was 'cob' – straw thatch over clay. No examples survive but the legacy of thatch roofs is much in evidence in the steeper angle of roof pitch. Although some ashlar brownstone survives the majority of the pre-20th century houses are local orange-red brick and in the 18th and 19th century properties the use of vitrified dark blue headers give distinctive patterning. Welsh slate is the common roof material.

Modern buildings

Most 20th century dwellings are brick under slate. Some of the brick is of russet-pink colour reflecting a clay stock that is not local. Some of the roofs are in mass produced red-brown clay tiles that are alien to the traditional materials. Many of the dwellings are similar to those found on many suburban estates in which garages and car standing tend to dominate the frontages and where the 'picture window' is ubiquitous – the so-called 'executive home'. Many windows and doors have been replaced with white UPVC. Some of the most recent developments have tried to borrow details from the vernacular style with varying success. Most of the recent developments have been in cul-de-sacs that tend to isolate them geographically from the rest of the village (although it is not felt by most villagers that they isolate the residents in the cul-de-sacs). Some have a more suburban feel with the presence of street lighting, pavements and repetitive designs. Along with many local villages there is also a trend to build taller by adding a third storey as well as increasing site densities. Most modern houses are detached with four or five bedrooms and are very similar in design to each other. As a consequence there is an imbalance between larger and smaller houses and more monotony. The Village Appraisal (1998) found that there was "some dissatisfaction with the appearance of the buildings built in the last ten years" and that "any under provision should be made primarily through the conversion of redundant buildings and to a lesser extent through single dwellings in controlled locations".

It is recommended that the following guidelines are read in conjunction with "Towards a 'New Vernacular'" issued by The Countryside Agency (2004) at
http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/PP/planning/design_construct.asp

Parking

Most parking within the village is off-road. The exception to this is short sections of roadway in which there is insufficient or no provision for off-road parking to the dwellings fronting the street. This is not generally perceived to be a traffic safety problem except on or near the double bend in Welland Rise. The pub in Welland Rise often attracts more cars than can be accommodated in their car park. It is, therefore, important that all new development should provide sufficient off-road parking.

Drainage

Areas of hard surface can create increased water run-off, which may result in flood risk. To assist in reducing this risk and manage water flow, all parking areas shall be designed to incorporate sustainable drainage systems. These can be provided through a variety of design techniques, such as permeable paving etc.

Walls and fences

Boundary walls and fences are important features in Sibbertoft and a full description of them is provided in **Annexure C**. More suburban style fencing, such as close-boarded fencing should be avoided.

6. Building guidelines

These recommendations have been prepared in conjunction with the Building Design Working Group. Traditions of local architecture can be the stimulus to new buildings of originality and imagination. There is a demand for smaller dwellings especially if they are affordable– see also comments on *Population and social mix* in the section on Village context.

6.1 A developer must show evidence that the design minimises energy wastage.

6.2 The use of renewable energy is encouraged providing it is sympathetically incorporated and not detrimental to local amenity or character. Further guidance on energy conservation and renewables may be obtained from Daventry District Council.

6.3 High quality materials, individuality of the design, and an avoidance of repetitive designs should be provided in order to avoid the mass-produced look seen all over England.

6.4 The colour, texture and patterns of long-standing local materials in the village should be a source of inspiration for new buildings. In particular the colour of the bricks should be orange-red.

6.5 Orange-red brick should also be used for boundary walls.

6.6 Where several buildings occupy the same site, consideration should be given to variation in design and plan lay-out to avoid monotonous repetition.

6.7 New buildings on rising ground should take care not to over-dominate its neighbours or detract from the roof-scape or interfere with important village views as identified on the map.

6.8 New development proposals that are too large in scale and massing for the plot are not acceptable.

6.9 The typical layout, settings and garden forms of neighbouring properties within Sibbertoft should be analysed and reflected when preparing new development proposals.

6.10 Large areas of hard surfacing should be avoided.

6.11 All parking areas are required to be designed to incorporate sustainable drainage systems.

6.12 New-build garages should not obscure the fronts of dwellings.

6.13 New garages should relate to the dwelling to which they belong and be in sympathy with surrounding property in terms of design, materials and construction.

6.14 Parking shall be provided off-road. Exceptions to this shall be where this is inappropriate to the existing local layout/design character within the local area.

6.15 Parking areas should be located to the side and rear of dwellings.

6.16 Boundary walls and caste iron palings are important features in Sibbertoft and any development should retain and conserve existing walls and caste iron palings, wherever possible (further details about walls and fences can be found at Annexure C).

6.17 New development should include a sense of enclosure rather than incorporating open-plan front gardens.

6.18 Existing older buildings should be maintained using original or sympathetic materials and details.

6.19 All development shall be designed to be secure.

6.20 Developers are required to provide sufficient space for secure waste bin and box storage within units e.g. within a garage, to reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour. Developers are advised that at the time of adoption of this Design Statement, the District Council issues residents with 2x240 litre bins and two kerbside boxes of 40 and 55 litres. However, developers are advised to contact the Council's Waste Team for current advise.

6.21 Developers are encouraged to consider incorporating sprinkler systems within all new units.

6.22 Developers are advised that at the time of publication of this Design Statement, the District Council were working with the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) to prepare a checklist of FRS design issues. Developers are therefore advised to contact the LPA regarding any requirements. Developer contributions may be required as part of development and developers shall refer to current supplementary guidance on this.

Sibbertoft's traditional vernacular fabric needs to be preserved where possible.

6.23 Replacement of an old window and door should be a last resort.

6.24 Replacement doors and windows should retain the scale, detail and materials of the original openings.

6.25 Older brickwork should be retained in its original state, ie characteristically, not rendered or painted.

6.26 When adding conservatories consideration should be given to using wood and avoiding UPVC or similar materials

The Environment Agency has prepared *'A guide to Developers'* for sustainable construction advice www.environment-agency.gov.uk/developers

Highways and street furniture

Traffic and traffic management

Traffic levels of heavy goods vehicles and general vehicular traffic through the village fell once the A14 opened in 1993. Car traffic has increased since then probably as a result of general increases in car ownership and heavy congestion on the A14 at peak periods. Car parking in the village remains a problem especially along the length of Welland Rise and especially in the evenings around the pub/restaurant.

The volume of traffic through the village is a matter of concern and although traffic calming measures would be welcome it is, nevertheless, felt that most schemes

(chicanes/gateways/sleeping policemen etc) weakens the quality of the streetscape by bringing in too many urban elements and clutter, thereby weakening it visually. This is in conflict with the second statement of principle adopted by the Parish Council on the first page of this document.

Characteristics of the streetscape

Most of the earlier buildings are either side-on or front directly on to the pavement. Access is mostly down the side of the property to the rear with outbuildings around the edge of the plot. Such areas are the most densely settled with an enclosed and more informal building arrangement. The main building line is right on the road and yields a distinctive streetscape, particularly as the streets trace a sinuous curve. Where older buildings have been replaced, or where there is new green field development there has been a more 'suburban' layout with dwellings sited further back into the plot and the quality of the streetscape has been seriously weakened. See also the section on ***Buildings***.

White concrete kerbstones now replace dark granite setts which in scale and colour blend well into the streetscape: white UPVC windows and doors now replace wood: grit bins are bright yellow – this proliferation of gaudy colours serves to detract from the street scene.

Street lighting

White street lighting was replaced by high intensity orange in the early 1990's and since then the number of lamps has also increased. Most of these additional lamps are on dedicated galvanised steel poles. The light is intense and the close proximity to dwellings has meant that some of the lights have had to be modified to reduce the level of light flooding into these properties. There is now a government-backed initiative to reduce unnecessary light pollution and a majority of the residents seem to be in sympathy with this objective.

Street furniture

Streetscapes are now punctuated by street furniture. A telephone box, speed limit signs and bus stops; electricity and telephone wires on poles together with streetlights; TV aerials sprout on every house and more recently dishes; a bus shelter; litter-bins and grit bins at road intersections. We have got so used to them we hardly notice them. However, excessive or unnecessary furniture impairs the visual quality of the streetscape. More recently Highway Regulations have resulted in a more urban elements creeping in to the village streetscape: concrete kerbs, large visibility splays and urban street lighting.

The village has many seats placed at convenient intervals and affording open views. These have been donated by individuals and are a welcome addition, as are the hundreds of spring bulbs planted in the verges by volunteers.

7. Traffic/Highways guidelines

There is some concern about traffic volumes and speed through the village. There is an ambivalent attitude to traffic calming measures (there are as many for them as against) however there is general agreement that rigidly adhered to Highway Regulations leads to excessive signage, concrete kerbs, large visibility splays and urban levels of street lighting all of which serves to weaken the streetscape.

7.1 'Rural England' (October 1995) encourages new roads, footpaths and signs to be built to standards appropriate to their rural setting.

7.2 Where rural verges remain within the village they should be retained and managed (see Map).

7.3 Concrete kerbs should be replaced by suitable material appropriate to the village such as dark granite setts.
7.4 Visibility splays should meet the required Highways Authority standard.

Street lighting guidelines

Street lighting is preferred providing it is not intrusive.

7.5 Lighting levels should be appropriate to the village context.
7.6 White down lighting is preferred.
7.7 Private security lights should be positioned to avoid nuisance ie do not intrude on to neighbouring property or traffic.
7.8 Galvanised steel lamp posts should be avoided.
7.9 Street lights should be mounted on the wooden telephone/electricity poles whenever possible.
7.10 Overhead wires and cables should be run underground wherever possible.

Street furniture guidelines

7.11 Street furniture should be functional, high quality, rustic, easily maintained and enhance the visual appeal of the streetscape.

Village amenities

There are many factors that lead to a deeper and fuller enjoyment of village life. Some are almost insignificant or simply are not appreciated until they disappear. The following features were overwhelmingly endorsed by a large sample survey undertaken in April 2005.

- Chiming clock (on the church tower)
- Peel of bells (in the church tower)
- The Reading Room as a village hall
- A licensed burial ground in the churchyard extension
- A post-box (in Welland Rise)
- A bus service to Harborough on market days (Tues & Sat)
- An old style telephone box
- Bench seating in various locations
- A notice board for Parish Council business next to the pub and notice boards outside the Reading Room for Parish Council business and for the use of the general public
- Litter bins in various locations

Village Preference

- **The villagers strongly encourage the providers of these amenities to ensure their long-term survival.**

Guidelines summary

- **Businesses should be 'good neighbours' in all senses**
- **Development for new industrial or commercial use should be of the highest quality**

- **Historic boundaries should be maintained**
- **Protect trees and hedgerows**
- **Plant native species**
- **Protect wildlife and habitats**
- **Respect ancient settlement patterns**
- **Protect views into and out of the village**
- **Integrate new development carefully**
- **Protect open spaces**
- **Conserve the fabric of older buildings with appropriate treatment and material**
- **New buildings should respect the built heritage of the village and be in sympathy with neighbouring properties**
- **The height and mass of new buildings should not dominate over its neighbours**
- **Highways, signs, paths, street furniture and fittings should suit the local rural context**

Annexures

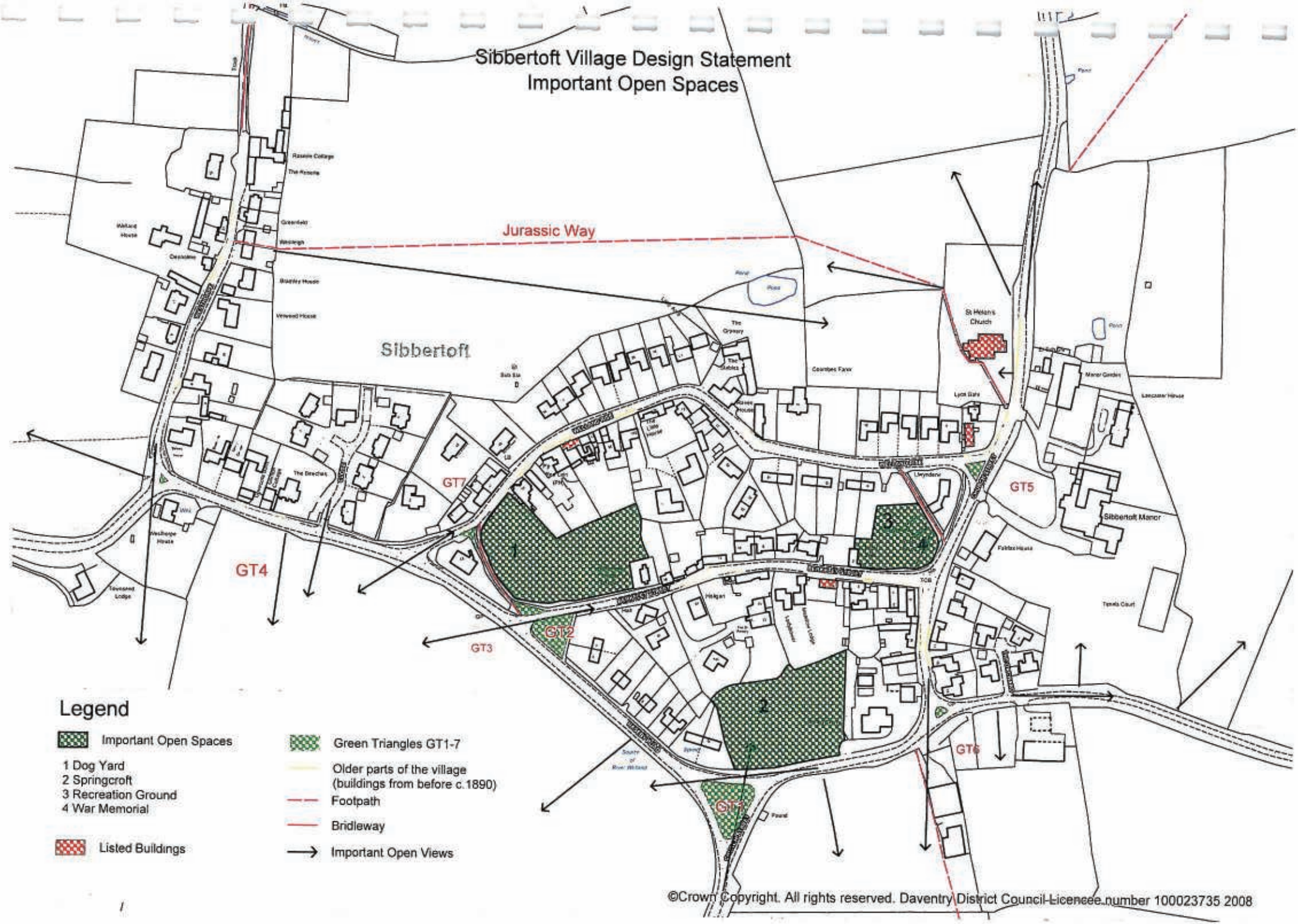
A: Map of important open spaces and views etc.
B: Important trees & hedges (with map)
C: Important walls & fences (with map)

Prepared by the Sibbertoft Village Design Statement Steering Committee.

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Sibbertoft Village Design Statement
Important Open Spaces



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Sibbertoft Village Design Statement

Annexure B

Important trees & hedges

Historical background

Many trees were planted in the Victorian period. The TPO areas around Sibbertoft Manor Nursing Home and the former Vicarage have an abundance of native and non-native species. Large ornamental and exotic species were very much the style during this period. This helps to give Sibbertoft much of its landscape character – the massing of different tree shapes and colours on the horizon as you look at the village from a distance. Individual specimens also survive – a Scots Pine and a Wellingtonia for instance. All of these were the result of planting by the Villiers family of Sulby Hall from the middle of the 19th century onwards. On a domestic level many fruit trees survive from this period – apples, pears, plums and cherries. They mark the position of small orchards which extended throughout the village in the 19th and early twentieth centuries. A few scattered walnut trees also survive although they are just a token of the former population.

More recently, smaller non-native species have become popular. Ornamentals such as acers, eucalyptus and Douglas Fir (Oregon pines) are typical of the latter half of the 20th century and the popularity of fruit trees has waned. However, a few ancient plantings still survive - yew and oak, some of them hundreds of years old demonstrate their former strategic importance for the defence of the realm – yew for bows and oak for ships. Even the ubiquitous hawthorn was first planted over 300 years ago as part of the re-organisation of the field system. Some very large specimens could therefore date back to this period.

Elsewhere in the woods and hedgerows the native species were cultivated and managed for building material, furniture and fuel. Oak, elm, ash provided the standards and hazel coppice for a variety of domestic uses as well as nuts. No coppice survives within the Parish. Two or three elms survive by the footpath next to the Recreation Ground. The wide variety of small trees and shrubs in the remaining hedgerows testify to the ecological diversity that existed less than a century ago. Some of this diversity has disappeared due to the removal of hedgerows and modern agricultural practices.

Proper care and maintenance

All trees and shrubs need proper care and maintenance. New plantings need regular watering and staking. Trees need pruning and sometimes more extensive surgery to protect the health of the tree or for safety reasons. Leaf fall has to be cleared. Care should be taken that trees do not shade a neighbouring property or are planted too close to cause damage to property. Tree roots should be avoided when ground-work is being undertaken. Hedges that form a boundary with a neighbour's property should be kept at a reasonable height - a maximum of 2 metres is recommended as the right

balance between nuisance and privacy. Hedge laying is special rural skill that should be encouraged. Variety of planting encourages diversity of wildlife as well as giving eye appeal.

Definitions used related to Annexure B location plan:

Community planting: areas where Community planting has taken place or may be considered suitable for Community planting. These areas are variously designated as Important Open Spaces (IOS) or Green Triangles (GT) within the control of the Highways Agency or the Parish Council.
TPO: a Tree Preservation Order. This prevents the removal or work to a scheduled tree without prior Local Planning Authority approval.
TPO area: a designated area in which all trees are protected i.e. trees here at the date of designation, not subsequent new trees.
Native hedges: hedges (mature or new) of native species which contribute to the landscape.
Native trees: individual mature native species in the village that are important to the landscape. The trees shown are easily visible from public open spaces and footpaths/highways.

For further advice about TPO's, please contact the Local Planning Authority.

Prepared by the Trees & Hedges Working Group as part of the Sibbertoft Village Design Statement.

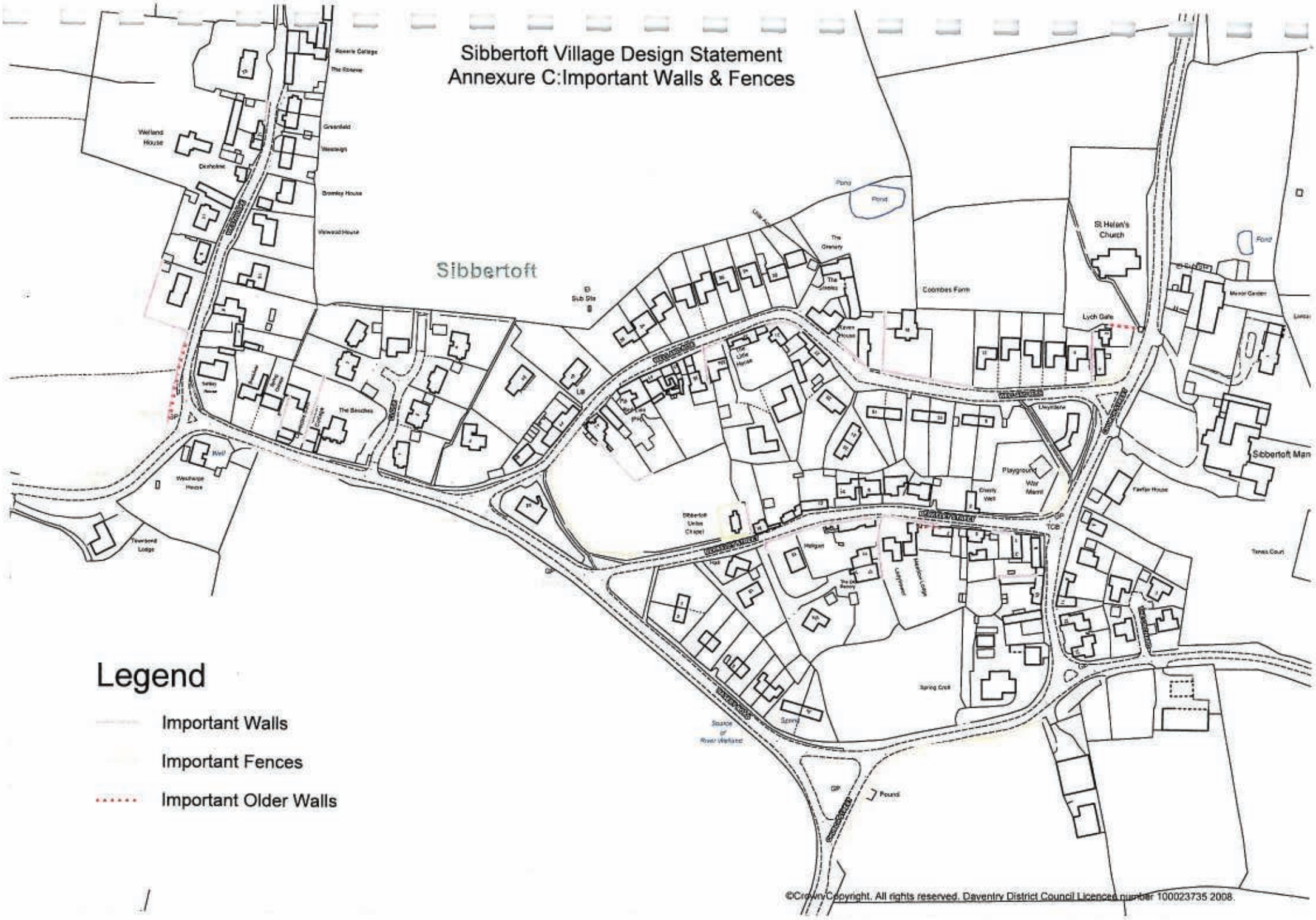
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Sibbertoft Village Design Statement
Annexure B: Important Trees and Hedges



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Sibbertoft Village Design Statement
Annexure C:Important Walls & Fences



Legend

- Important Walls
- Important Fences
- Important Older Walls

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Sibbertoft Village Design Statement

Annexure C

Important walls & fences

Historic background

Walking around Sibbertoft today you would be excused for thinking that the village has always been built of brick. That is not the case. Many of the lower status buildings – the labourers and servants cottages - were built of straw and clay - the traditional 'cob'. Examples of this vernacular style survived until the 1930's. The clay was found in small pockets all over the parish. Boulder clay was, as its name implies, made up of clay and boulders. The larger smooth boulders can still be seen in the footings of several houses in the village and the smaller boulders and pebbles were often used in pathways. The boundary walls were also built of a clay straw mix but unfortunately, unlike many of the surrounding villages, the last mud wall was demolished during the 1970's to make way for the detached houses at the top of Welland Rise.

The earliest higher status buildings were probably built of stone, mostly Nothamptonshire brownstone. During the Middle Ages the Sibbertoft Manor House (thought to have been situated close to the site of the present Nursing Home and possibly demolished sometime in the 17th century) and the Vicarage (which was situated somewhere in the field next to Manor Gardens opposite the church and possibly demolished around the same time) were probably brownstone. The church of St Helen is the oldest surviving building to contain this material although it was heavily restored during the 19th century. The revetment wall on the southern boundary of the churchyard is of brownstone as are the coping-stones that cover it.

If it was the fashion to build in stone during the 14th and 15th centuries then by the 16th century higher status houses were being built of brick. Although we cannot be certain, it is probable that the Mansion House (which was situated The Orchard field at the bottom of Westhorpe and demolished in the first half of the 19th century) was built of brick – it was the luxury material of the times. Certainly the brick wall which follows the line of the boundary shown on the plan of 1782 has 'Elizabethan' style bricks in the centre bottom section. The Elizabethan/Jacobean brick was longer and thinner than their 18th century counterparts. This is the oldest surviving section of brick wall in the village and probably dates to the 1650's when the Mansion House was erected by the Sturgis family. Slightly later sections of the same wall have several culverts set into the base – reminders of the time when the bottom of Westhorpe flooded regularly. The same walling continues around the southern and western perimeter of No.7 Westhorpe. The boundary of The Orchard with the Welford Road is fenced by modern Georgian style palings. This style of fence was originally chosen for the safety of road users as it affords a view round the bend for vehicles travelling in an easterly direction. It has additional value as it is sympathetic in style to the heyday of the Mansion House estate. It also allows open views across the field from a westerly direction which affords glimpses of the remains of the unusual late 17th century landscaping. Similar

fencing was also erected around the perimeter of the Cow Field on the bend of Church Street as you travel towards Naseby. The fencing follows the outline of the Pound – the place where stray cattle were kept – thus protecting this vestige of village history.

By the middle of the 18th century many of the better-off tenant farmers could afford to build their farmhouses of brick. The roofs would be thatched. Typical of this style is Springs Farmhouse (No.7 Berkeley Street) with a pattern of dark blue headers set into the facades (diaper work). Part of the boundary wall – the short section of diaper work - to the west of Springs is contemporary with the house which is dated by brickwork in the western gable to 1746. The coping stones along this section of walling are similar in style to those set over the wall in the churchyard mentioned above.

Many 18th and 19th century boundary walls survive. Some modern walls have been built to reflect the valued qualities of the older walls. Round-headed brick coping was popular during this period but only a few examples survive – the short section of walling along Banks field opposite the Beeches is typical. Some older fencing survives. The Victorian cast-iron palings (dated to 1847) around the edge of the playground of the former School at the top of Welland Rise are a good example. Similar style palings were erected in the 1920's to form the boundary of the flower garden around the War Memorial. Cast-iron palings and gate are set in a low wall to the front of The Old Union Chapel in Berkeley Street dating to 1877. The Dog Yard and Old Union Chapel is partly fenced with Georgian cast-iron field palings. Again, like The Orchard field they give a pleasant open aspect and thus contribute a unique quality to the village landscape.

Prepared by the Walls & Fences Working Group for the Sibbertoft Village Design Statement.

23/10/05