

Stoke Fleming



Management Plan

July 2009



South Hams
District Council

STOKE FLEMING **DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN**

1. PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN:

This Management Plan complements the **Stoke Fleming Conservation Area Character Appraisal**. While the latter defines and evaluates the special interest of the conservation area, the Management Plan identifies the issues for its future development and enhancement. The overarching planning policies for the area are included in the adopted **South Hams Local Plan (1996)** the deposit draft **Local Plan Review** and the draft **Local Development Framework** documents. Generic advice for the conservation areas of the South Hams is provided in the Supplementary Planning Guidance Note **New Work in Conservation Areas (2001)**. The plan also takes account of the wider global, national and regional picture. Using the **Stoke Fleming Conservation Area Character Appraisal** as a basis, the Management Plan identifies those areas or features which could benefit from enhancement, considers where development might take place, where special policies may be required, or where enforcement is appropriate. The table at the back sets out a programme for action.

2. SUMMARY OF COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES

As part of the Conservation Area Appraisal process, and in accordance with English Heritage guidelines, as much local interest as possible was encouraged. A questionnaire was put through every letter box in the conservation area (Appendix 1). The questionnaire adopted a SWOT type (strength, weakness, opportunity, threat) format and residents were asked if they thought the conservation area boundary was correct. The responses have been summarised below with the largest number of responses at the top of each section. Several of the suggestions have been incorporated into this management plan.

Only nine responses were received but this could be because of a high number of second home owners or the fact that residents feel jaded about being asked to complete questionnaires. The low response should not be interpreted as evidence of resident apathy as Stoke Fleming has an active Parish Council and its residents are known to be very committed to various projects in the village.

The local Primary School were involved and were given a short talk about the elements that go towards giving a conservation area its character. They divided into groups and answered four questions collectively. The questionnaire format was similar to the one circulated to the residents within the conservation area. Logical and relevant answers have been summarised.

SUMMARY OF COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES

Strengths:

- Surrounding countryside
- Terraced stone houses that are in keeping with the village
- Coastal Path
- Narrow roads and stone walls
- Unspoilt area with character
- Views
- The church
- The Post Office and shop
- Strong Parish Council perusing planning applications
- Historic part of the village
- Communal volunteers who tidy village
- The discrete positioning of new building estates
- The old barns
- Pub
- Sanders
- Summer visitors

Weaknesses:

- Too much heavy traffic leading to congestion in the summer
- General litter and graffiti
- Road signs and road markings
- Poor property maintenance
- Plastic doors and windows
- Building big new houses on small sites
- Unattractive parking area
- Tarmac driveways and paths
- Overhead telephone cables
- Empty second homes
- Street light pollution
- Unchecked growth of trees below Pumping Station which obscure the view
- Cars parking on the pavement
- Too many signs
- Compost site
- Rubbish bins in the way
- Pollution
- Double glazing and conservatories
- Trees being cut down
- Big buses
- Caravans

Opportunities:

- Restrict plastic doors and windows
- Introduce better rubbish management
- Ban oversized lorries
- Control growth of trees adjoining Leonards Cove
- Have more bins
- Introduce speed bumps and speed cameras at village entrance
- Provide more shops
- Remove unauthorised development
- Encourage owners to maintain their property.
- Remove wheelie bins
- Encourage less general litter
- Restrict road signs
- Remove old people's bungalows south of Bidders Close.
- Provide more parking
- Have one way system
- Have a zebra crossing
- Provide hip height illumination on minor roads
- Move telephone cables underground
- Reduce parking and cars
- Paint a walk-way down to the shop.
- Create affordable housing
- Plant more trees

Threats:

- New modern buildings
- More traffic
- Unsympathetic development within, or just outside, the conservation area.
- Loss of the Post Office
- More litter
- Pylons and mobile or wind masts
- More streetscape improvements which detract from original village character
- Speeding cars
- Lack of indication from cars.
- More lighting
- More road signs
- Too many yellow lines
- Inappropriate house colours
- More building in village centre
- Building unsuitably large homes
- Loss of Pub
- Loss of local residents
- More second homes
- Cutting down trees

Is the Conservation Area Boundary Correct?:

- The conservation area is correct
- Include Leonards Cove Farmhouse and surrounding area.
- Should include Farwell House & stables; Stoke Lodge Hotel; Birdwalk.
- Should include fields adjacent to Old Lane, from village down to A379.
- Should include Endsleigh Corner, Stoke Lodge and Farwell House.
- It should include the entire built area to draw in all architectural styles.

3. Planning Policy Framework:

Stoke Fleming conservation area lies within the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The current development plan for the village is the 1996 **South Hams Local Plan** (SHLP). The 2002 **Local Plan Review** (LPR) reached First Deposit stage, though now there has been a change in Government policy requiring local planning authorities to move toward producing **Local Development Frameworks** (LDF) in place of Local Plans. However the LPR does have limited weight. Generic advice for the conservation areas of the South Hams is provided in the Supplementary Planning Guidance Note **New Work in Conservation Areas** (2001).

Both the Local Plan and the LPR acknowledge the importance of the landscape setting at Stoke Fleming (SHLP/1996/d6/6.3 AND LPR/E22.3). Both documents also refer to the need for careful consideration towards any development proposals and to the need for a larger car park. Plans are in progress to bring this about.

4. New Development in the Conservation Area:

There has been little new development within the conservation area. The building density has barely changed since mid C19, as the centre was already tightly packed with houses and buildings providing facilities.

Although the building stock has lost some of its original detail with the introduction of some replacement windows and doors in UPVC, the degree of replacement is not as great as in some South Hams villages.

Any new construction or alteration will need to be of the highest quality and design and in accordance with central Government guidance as well as SHDC publication *New Work in Conservation Areas*. This standard should apply equally within the 50m buffer zone and prominent sites where views into or out of the conservation area are affected. Any new development will always be scrutinised for detail, an account being taken of the history of the site, the character of surrounding buildings and its contribution to the townscape. Furthermore any new development will be examined as and when proposals arise rather than providing detailed information in this document.

5. Areas with Scope for Improvement:

Car parking in Stoke Fleming is inadequate. 50-60 residents have nowhere to park and the same applies to visitors. The current small car park at the top of Church Road is very small and needs to be enlarged. It is understood that plans are being implemented to bring this about. It is hoped that the extension will provide a more discrete position for the recycling skips which are currently placed too prominently.

6. Traffic Management and Public Realm

Many of the questionnaire responses expressed concerns about excessive traffic, which is unsurprising as the A379 goes through the centre of the village. However, much of the time traffic does is controlled by fortuitous pinch-points that have evolved over centuries. There seems little that can be

done to reduce traffic levels as this is at national problem. The Council will continue to be receptive to suggestions made by residents and to observe traffic measures that are being implemented in other villages with similar problems.

Double yellow lines are intrusive in parts of the village (even though their width and colour in Devon are more discreet than in other parts of the country). However, the alternative of having many individual signs (or worse, indiscriminately parked cars) is even less desirable.

7. Article 4 (2) Direction:

Only a small additional range of works is brought under planning control within a conservation area compared with an undesignated area. These do not include the replacement of door and windows or roofing materials, which remain permitted development on unlisted buildings in single residential use. Many historic settlements have been significantly altered by the replacement of these using inappropriate styles and materials and this cumulative erosion of typical and historic features is usually the greatest threat to the character of a conservation area.

Article 4 (2) Directions enable the local planning authority to remove certain permitted development rights in order to protect all or part of the conservation area from unsympathetic change. Planning permission would be required before these works take place (though no fee would be payable).

Although there are a fair number of replacement UPVC windows in the Stoke Fleming conservation area, the number is less than those in other areas. However in order to prevent further UPVC introduction, certain permitted works could come under planning control. These could include UPVC windows and doors, and also the stone walls which contribute so much to the character of the Stoke Fleming conservation area. Currently stone walling could be partially demolished under the present planning regime without the need for Planning Permission or Conservation Area consent. As there would be workload implications for the Planning Department with no financial benefit from fees, the Council will carry out a value for money assessment before considering imposing an Article 4.2 Direction.

8. Buildings at Risk:

There are no buildings considered to be at risk in Stoke Fleming.

9. Enforcement:

There does not appear to be a problem of non compliance with planning regulations in Stoke Fleming. Where unauthorised works have been carried out without planning permission and have not achieved immunity through a period of time, enforcement action has and will in the future be taken.

10. Trees and Landscape:

Trees contribute greatly to the character of the landscape at Stoke Fleming. Significant trees without Tree Preservation Orders have been marked on the main component map in the conservation area appraisal. The Council must be notified if it is proposed to fell a tree within the conservation area.

There are four Montorey Pines (*Pinus radiata*) close to the church which are just outside the conservation area boundary. They form a significant landmark and enhance the landscape setting of the village generally. These trees are not protected by a Tree Preservation Order but there has been no suggestion that they are under threat. The Council's policy towards unprotected trees is to depend on the vigilance of the public to inform the Council of any impending threat and it is hoped that nearby residents will take on this task.

There are two Tree Preservation Order group listings that come into the conservation area. One is in the south at Sanders, where the entire listing is in the conservation area; the other is in the north around The Old House, where a small section enters the conservation area.

11. Community Involvement in Preparation of Appraisal and Management Plan:

Local feed-back was encouraged from an early stage. A questionnaire was put through every letterbox in the conservation area and views were sought over several weeks while familiarisation and photography of the conservation area took place. The questionnaire adopted a SWOT approach (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) and the answers, as summarised, reveal many concerns. Local schoolchildren were given a talk about what conservation means and they filled out questionnaires collectively – logical answers have been included in the summary. Once the draft appraisal and management plan were complete, copies were made available in Stoke Fleming, on the Council's web site and at Follaton House. Residents were invited to comment on the content. The drafts were amended accordingly.

12. Changes to the Conservation Area Boundary:

There are three proposals to change the conservation area boundary marked with a yellow line on the management plan map (see Appendix two).

1. Leonards Cove Farmhouse - the oldest house in the village (though much altered) is to be included for its historic importance. Former farming outbuildings should also be included.
2. A small section opposite Tappers is to be redrawn.
3. The area around the well is to be redrawn slightly larger.

13. Sustainability in the Conservation Area:

In spite of some unsuitable UPVC additions, the historic building stock at Stoke Fleming is generally well preserved. Many less appropriate additions are fortunately screened by the high stone walls that border narrow lanes. Traffic will always be a problem at Stoke Fleming but the pinch points that have evolved on a narrow main road, help keep traffic flowing much of the time.

The village is served by a good Post Office/shop which provides additional facilities to residents such as a delivery service. A vigilant Parish Council oversees numerous voluntary projects. The number of second homes is high, but as has been pointed out they are well used, would provide unsuitable accommodation for a family, and are maintained by local tradespeople. It would seem that Stoke Fleming will continue to flourish.

Sometimes there is perceived to be a conflict between historic and environmental conservation, for example the improvement of insulation of historic buildings; usually there is a solution, however, and the Council's Conservation team will always be happy to provide advice on how best to reconcile the two.

ACTION PROGRAMME

DATE	ACTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME	ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER	RESOURCES
	Article 4.2 Direction	Internal discussions about its implications and strategy for serving it.	SM	Staff time
	Enforcement	Continued vigilance of unauthorised works in the conservation area		Staff time
	Open space strategy	District wide draft open space strategy under preparation	RK	Staff time
	Article 4.2 Direction	Further Internal discussions about adoption of Article 4.2 Direction	SM	Staff time