

Strete



South Hams
District Council

STRETE **DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN**

1. PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN:

This Management Plan complements the **Strete 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 **Strete 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 QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES:

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. The questionnaire adopted a SWOT type (strength, weakness, opportunity, threat) format. (see Appendix 1). Suggestions and criticisms have been considered and several have been incorporated into this management plan. The responses have been summarised below with the largest number of responses at the top of each section. Only twelve responses were received but two of these were very detailed and there are several empty holiday houses in the village.

The local Primary School at Stoke Fleming which serves Strete, was also involved. They were given a talk about what makes up the character of a conservation area and they completed a questionnaire similar to the one distributed within the conservation area. Logical answers have been included with the SWOT analysis.

Strengths

(based on questionnaire responses)

- Countryside location with sea views
- The historical importance of the buildings
- Post Office, shop and pub
- Traditional stone walling
- Period Post Box, K6 telephone box and historic street furniture
- Use of local building materials visible in old properties
- Sympathetic barn conversions
- Common land
- No yellow lines
- Varied rustic and polite architecture
- Being an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Coastal Preservation Area
- No pavements
- The property frontages are at varying distances from the road but in keeping with each other
- The history
- The church
- Pretty cottages
- House names give indication of provenance
- Few driveways in front of properties
- open fields in village centre
- Conservation Area designation

Weaknesses

(based on questionnaire responses)

- Inappropriate alterations and building materials such as use of UPVC
- Lack of property maintenance
- Road markings
- Buses and fast cars
- Unsightly street furniture
- Street lighting and signage
- Wheelie bins
- Lack of traditional quality highway maintenance
- Potential development outside conservation boundary
- Excessive road traffic
- Overhead cables
- Residents working on vehicles on the road
- Unswept roads
- Litter in the summer
- Overgrown trees
- Empty second homes
- Not enough parking
- Cars parking on the pavement

Opportunities

(based on questionnaire responses)

- Remove speed circle road markings and unnecessary road signs
- Enforce planning law more rigorously
- Restrict HGV use of Totnes Road and A379
- Introduce grants to assist property owners to carry out repairs with traditional materials
- Replace insensitive street furniture e.g. new bus stop sign adjacent to village pump
- Use minimal street lighting and turn off lighting at midnight
- Renovate and apply for Listed Building status for the village pump
- Overhead cables to be removed
- Provide a litter bin at the Bus Stop and generally provide more bins
- Adopt Article 4.2 Direction
- Use traditional methods of repair
- Have permanent photographic record of historic village.
- Bring back old road names
- Provide a new car park
- Sweep roads
- Large trees should be pruned
- Circulate more householder information about restoration procedures.
- Use well thought out paint colours on buildings
- Introduce some form of discreet traffic calming
- Leave the village as it is
- Stop further UPVC fenestration.
- Replace wheelie bins with bag collection
- Negotiate public rights of way through the fields to the south-west of the conservation area
- Install speed cameras
- More speed restriction
- Weekly collection of household waste
- Encourage more property maintenance

Threats

(based on questionnaire responses)

- Development of the fields in the centre of the village
- Overuse of road signs and markings
- New development and inappropriate modifications to old buildings
- Inappropriate alterations
- Double yellow lines
- More cars)
- Development
- Cutting down trees
- Incompetent builders
- Widening Hyne Town Road and the area entering The Plat, and general road widening
- More infilling
- More houses in fields near The Platt, which would lead to traffic congestion
- More street lighting
- Pavements
- More traffic
- Insensitive paint colours on buildings
- Loss of K6 and period post box
- Introduction of more UPVC windows
- More litter
- Demolishing old buildings

Public responses to the question: Is the Conservation Area boundary correct?

- The boundary is correct
- Include the open fields in the village centre
- No. Create a buffer zone around the village by including surrounding fields.
- Include Cobblers Well garden
- The village pump and Kings Arms Car park should be included
- Strete Lodge and former terraced garden should be included
- Include Asherne Estate
- Tannen Land should be included, as should Summerhill and the two ex-police houses
- Exclude 12 and 13 The Platt
- Tennis changing room at Blossoms should be included
- Asherne Cottages and gardens, and Asherne Lodge should be included
- Include Well Cottage
- The Conservation Area should be scrapped
- No. Include Parsonage Lane, Tallis Rock and Cobbold House
- Include gardens of houses in Conservaton Area

3. APPLICATION OF PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK:

Strete 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**. 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).

4. NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONSERVATION AREA:

The residents appreciate the low density of housing within the conservation area and very little new building has taken place within it. The garden areas in Strete contribute to the rural atmosphere that still exists in the village. Large ranges of farm outbuildings have been converted to residential use and in spite of the introduction of some unfortunate windows and doors, the original building outline has been retained.

Development of Fields to South West of Village Centre

In recent years there have been discussions about development of this central site in the village. While both The Local Plan and the LPR point out that “the

area of open agricultural land within the south-western part of the village makes an important contribution to its character (D7.7), it is recognised that this is a logical site to absorb new housing development. Understandably, there is opposition to this development and this is clearly reflected in the responses to the questionnaire. The issues here are not only the loss of the rural land in the centre, but the impact of the new development when approaching the village from the west. A draft design brief has been prepared that examines the role of this open space and sets out to preserve much of this green heart of the village whilst proposing a limited development of part of the site. The Council believes that this compromise can strike a balance between preservation of the character of the conservation area and the meeting of housing need.

Alterations to Existing Buildings

Some of the building stock within the conservation area has lost a lot of its original detail with replacement windows and doors in UPVC. Any new construction or alteration will need to be of the highest quality and design and in accordance with central Government guidance and the 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, account being taken of the history of the site, the character of surrounding buildings and its contribution to the townscape. 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:

Traffic Management and Public Realm

The A379 which goes through Strete can become very busy. The sharp bend at the junction with Church Hill does slow traffic as do 20 mph road markings. These however do not help with the volume of traffic which is a problem in many villages on busy main roads.

There are no double yellow lines in Strete and their absence is very welcome and unusual. It is hoped that the village will continue to tolerate the limited selfish parking that inevitably occurs, as a result, while accepting that the moment may come where some parking restriction becomes inevitable.

The standard of streetscape repairs and signage has been criticised. Residents feel that the finished product is often inferior and not in keeping with a conservation area. Perhaps extra funding could be found which would allow superior products to be utilised – this has been done at Stoke Fleming where external funding has helped bring several projects to fruition.

Car Parking facilities are inadequate at Strete. There is a small amount of parking at the north-east entrance to the village but once this becomes unavailable the Kings Arms car park is used by visitors who are not patrons. The Local Plan has recognised the need for extra parking and suggests the

site adjacent to the Kings Arms car park (SHLP/D7.9). Extra parking will have to be considered in conjunction with any new building development.

6. 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 Strete 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. 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.

7. BUILDINGS AT RISK:

The Council is not aware of any buildings being at risk in Strete.

8. ENFORCEMENT:

There does not appear to be a problem of non compliance with planning regulations in Strete. Where works needing it have been carried out without planning permission and have not achieved immunity through a period of time, enforcement action will be taken.

9. TREES AND LANDSCAPE:

There are two Tree Preservation Orders in Strete and both these are in the garden at Hynetown House. Generally, significant trees do not contribute greatly to the conservation area but gardens and shrubs do. There is however one tree that should be mentioned. Close to Cox's Farm Barn, a fine Turkey Oak (*Quercus cerris*) is visible from many parts of the conservation area. Conservation Area designation provides protection for all trees in a conservation area and a Tree Preservation Order is not required.

If the conservation area boundary extensions are implemented, some protection will be given to the important group of Cedars at the western approach near Strete Lodge.

10. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PREPARATION OF APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

English Heritage place great emphasis on local authorities engaging with the local community when preparing conservation area appraisals. This was done at an early stage when a questionnaire was sent to residents in the conservation area asking them what they considered special about their area, what things could spoil it and what could be done to improve the area. Residents were also asked if they considered the conservation area boundary to be correct. The school at Stoke Fleming that serves Strete, was also involved. They were given a talk about conservation issues and asked to fill out a questionnaire similar to the residents' questionnaire. Once the draft appraisal and management plan were complete, copies were made available in the Post Office, on the Council's web site and at Follaton House. Residents were invited to comment on the content. The drafts were amended accordingly.

11. CHANGES TO THE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY:

Many residents would like to see the boundary enlarged.

It is proposed that three alterations be made: (see Appendix 2)

1. Well Cottage and garden to be included. Although much altered it still warrants inclusion as some original features are visible.
2. Nos. 12 and 13 The Plat to be excluded from the conservation area. The new boundary would follow the stone wall boundary beside the path which was utilised by pupils at the school before it closed.
3. The garden of Cox's Farm, the open areas adjoining the garden either side, Asherne Cottages, the public house car park and Asherne Lodge to be included. It is thought that this section contributes to the semi rural character of this part of the village. Any development in this vicinity would have to be carefully designed in order to respect this sensitive setting of the conservation area.

12. SUSTAINABILITY IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Strete has always adapted well to changing times. The war saw a farming community forced out of the village for a year to find alternative housing; after the war there was an influx of new residents and changing farming methods meant that life in Strete also changed. The three farms gradually disappeared and outbuildings became the residential houses that form part of the conservation area.

The village is served by a strong and circumspect Parish Council who wish to preserve the village and its rural heritage. Many ugly modern traffic restrictions have been resisted and yet the village still seems to function.

The Post Office/shop has every necessity and may become an increasingly important facility as the effects of climate change take place and if private car use declines.

Concerns have been expressed about an apparent disregard for the use of traditional materials within the conservation area and the Council shall consider whether their use is appropriate in planning applications in the conservation area.

The Council's Conservation team will always provide advice on how best to reconcile historic conservation with modern building materials. 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.

Strategic Objective	Expected Outcomes	Actions	Accountable Officer	Resources	Start date	Target date	Links to other strategies
	Open space strategy	District wide draft open space strategy under preparation	RK	Staff time	Mar 2007	Dec 07	
	Article 4.2 Direction	Internal discussions about its implications and strategy for serving it.	SM	Staff time	March 2007	Autumn 2008	
	Enforcement	Continued vigilance of unauthorised works in the conservation area		Staff time	Ongoing		