

.....Widdington Conservation Area Appraisal and
Management Proposals, Approved October 2013



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Part 1: Appraisal 1

Introduction

1.1 This appraisal has been produced by Officers of Uttlesford District Council to assess the current condition of the Widdington Conservation Area, to identify where improvements can be made and to advise of any boundary changes that are appropriate. The document is in draft form and will be subject to public consultation and agreement by District Council Members.

1.2 The historic environment cannot be replaced and is a resource that is both fragile and finite. Particularly in an age when society and its needs change with rapidity, the various historic and architectural elements of Conservation Areas can be perceived to interact in a complex manner and create a 'unique sense of place' that is appreciated by those lucky enough to reside in such special places and the many interested persons who appreciate and visit them.

1.3 Uttlesford has a particularly rich built heritage, with 36 Conservation Areas and approximately 3,700 listed buildings displaying a variety of styles representative of the best of architectural and historic designs from many centuries. Generally and very importantly the clear distinction between built form and open countryside has been maintained.

1.4 The District is situated in an economically buoyant region where an attractive environment, employment opportunities and excellent transport links, road, rail and air, make it a popular destination to live and work. The District is particularly influenced by Stansted Airport within its administrative area and by the presence of London and Cambridge within easy commuting distance. Additionally there are other towns of substance such as Harlow, Bishop's Stortford and Braintree that provide employment opportunities nearby. With such dynamics the historic environment of the District is a popular destination for in-migration. The associated pressures accompanying such in-migration make it more important to protect the high quality of both built and natural environments.

1.5 The Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in 2005 recognises these facts and commits the Council to prepare Conservation Area Statements and Supplementary Planning Documents and the production of this document is part of this process.

1.6 Conservation Areas are environments which are considered worthy of protection as a result of a combination of factors such as the quality of design and setting of the buildings or their historic significance. In addition to the individual qualities of the buildings themselves, there are other factors such as the relationships of the buildings with each other, the quality of the spaces between them and the vistas and views that unite or disrupt them. The relationship with adjoining areas and landscape, the quality of trees, boundary treatments, advertisements, road signage, street furniture and hard surfaces, are also important features which can add to or detract from the Conservation Area.

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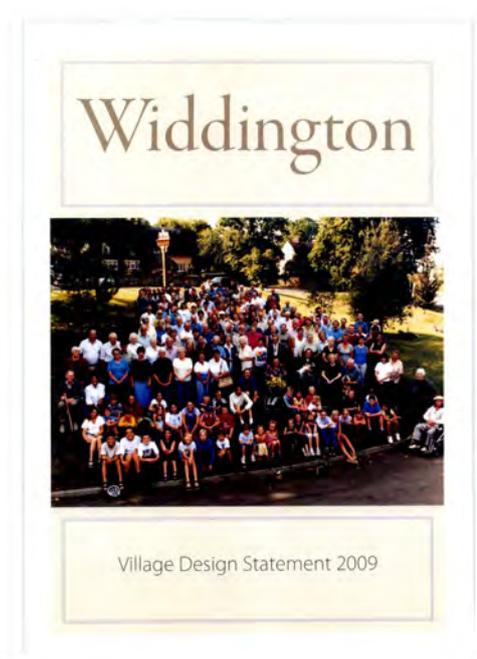
1.7 This Appraisal will consider these factors carefully. Once it has been approved by the District Council it will be regarded as a 'material consideration' when determining planning applications. The document also puts forward simple practical management proposals to improve the character of the Conservation Area and that are capable of being implemented as and when resources permit.

1.8 The recommendations in this Appraisal concerning non listed buildings and structures are generally formed by the field worker's observations made from the public realm and rarely involve internal inspection of buildings or their structural condition. Therefore such recommendations as set out in this Appraisal might be subject to reconsideration through the planning application process, where that is necessary, and which would involve the submission of additional relevant information.

1.9 This Conservation Appraisal will:

- Identify the special character of Widdington
- Identify detracting elements
- Review the existing boundary
- Put forward practical enhancement proposals

1.10 The document has been prepared in partnership with the local community and the Council would like to record its thanks to the Parish Council.



Picture 1.1 Widdington Village Design Statement, 2009

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1.11 The community has produced the Widdington Village Design Statement in 2009⁽¹⁾ and from this latter document it is clear that the environment qualities of the village are appreciated at local level and there is a desire to maintain its rural environment and protect the features of quality within it. The same document considered that the possibility of extending the Conservation Area should be explored and this is commented on elsewhere.

1.12 This document is written in three parts: Legal and Policy Framework; Appraisal; Management Proposals.

Planning Legislative Framework

1.13 The legal background for designating a Conservation Area is set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This states that the Council shall from time to time designate Conservation Areas, which are defined as being '*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance*'. The same section of the Act also requires that Councils undertake periodic reviews.

1.14 Section 71 of the Act requires Councils to '*formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement*' of Conservation Areas and hold a public meeting to consider them.

1.15 Within Conservation Areas there are additional planning controls and if these are to be supported it is important that the designated areas accord with the statutory definition and are not devalued by including land or buildings that lack special interest.

1.16 From October 2013 planning permission is now required for the demolition of a building in a Conservation Area but is subject to certain exceptions. For example, it does not apply to Listed Buildings which are protected by their own legislation, but is relevant to other non listed buildings in the Conservation Area above a threshold size set out in legislation (115 cubic metres). Looking for and identifying such buildings is therefore a priority of this appraisal.

1.17 Another exception relates to certain ecclesiastical buildings which are not subject to local authority administration provided an equivalent approved system of control is operated by the church authority. This is known as the 'ecclesiastical exemption'. Importantly in such circumstances, church authorities still need to obtain any other necessary planning permissions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

1.18 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 (as amended), defines the range of minor developments for which planning permission is not required and this range is more restricted in Conservation Areas. For example, the Order currently requires that the addition of dormer windows to front roof slopes,

1 Widdington Village Design Statement Steering Group *Widdington Village Design Statement*, 2009

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various types of cladding, satellite dishes fronting a highway and a reduced size of extensions, all require planning permission in a Conservation Area, whereas they would not require permission beyond.

1.19 However, even within Conservation Areas there are other minor developments that do not require planning permission. So as to provide further protection the law allows Councils to introduce additional controls if appropriate. Examples of such controls can include some developments fronting a highway or open space, such as an external porch, the painting of a house or the demolition of some gates, fences or walls. The removal of important architectural features that are important to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area or individual buildings within it such as distinctive porches, windows or walls or railings to non-listed properties can be subject to a more detailed assessment and if appropriate made subject to protection by a legal process known as an 'Article 4 Direction'. The use of such Directions can be made in justified circumstances where a clear assessment of each Conservation Area has been made. In conducting this appraisal, consideration will be given as to whether or not such additional controls are necessary.

1.20 Trees. Another additional planning control relates to trees located within Conservation Areas. Setting aside various exceptions principally relating to size and condition, any proposal to fell or carry out works to trees has to be 'notified' to the Council. The Council may then decide to make the tree/s subject to a Tree Preservation Order. This Appraisal diagrammatically identifies only the most significant trees or groups of trees that make a particularly important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Other trees not specifically identified may still be suitable for statutory protection.

1.21 Hedgerows. Some hedges may be protected by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. This legislation is extremely complicated and only applies in certain situations that are determined by the location of the hedge, its age and or its historical importance, the wildlife it supports and its number of woody species.

Planning Policy Framework

1.22 National Planning Policy Framework. Published in March 2012, this document replaces previous advice, including PPS 5, Planning for the Historic Environment. The principle emphasis of the new framework is to promote sustainable development.

1.23 Economic, social and environmental roles should not be considered in isolation because they are mutually dependent and positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment should be sought, including replacing poor design with better design. Whilst architectural styles should not be imposed it is considered proper to reinforce local distinctiveness.

1.24 In relation to the historic environment the new National Planning Policy Framework advises as follows:

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- There should be a positive strategy in the Local Plan for the conservation of the historic environment and up-to-date evidence used to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make.
- Conservation Areas. Such areas must justify such a status by virtue of being of '*special architectural or historic interest*'.
- Heritage assets. A Heritage asset is defined as '*a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listings)*'.
- Considerable weight should be given to conserving such heritage assets and the more important they are the greater the weight. For example the effect of an application affecting a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account and a balanced judgment reached. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II Listed Building should be exceptional whilst harm to heritage assets of higher status, e.g. a Grade I or II* Listed Building should be wholly exceptional.
- Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance or better reveal their significance and proposals that preserve such elements should be approved.
- The use of Article 4 Directions to remove national permitted development rights should be limited to situations '*where this is necessary to protect local amenity or the well being of the area...*'
- Green Areas. Such areas of particular importance can properly be identified for special protection as Local Green Spaces in selected situations.

1.25 Uttlesford Adopted Local Plan. Uttlesford District Council has a commitment to the environment and its Local Plan Policies. Uttlesford's policies protect Conservation Areas by only permitting development that preserves or enhances their quality and by preventing the demolition of structures that positively contribute to their character and appearance. The Council's Conservation Officer can provide appropriate advice.

1.26 The Uttlesford Local Plan was adopted in 2005 and can be viewed on the Council's website or a copy can be obtained from the Council. In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council is currently preparing a replacement Local Plan that will, in due course, contain the relevant Council planning policies.

1.27 The Widdington Village Inset of the Uttlesford Local Plan shows the existing Conservation Area and the Development Limits and two Ancient Monuments sites that are described later in this appraisal. Also shown is land designated as an Historic Landscape, Ancient Woodlands and County Wildlife sites but all of these lie well beyond the Conservation Area and so are not subject to scrutiny by this appraisal.

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1.28 Essex County Council Buildings at Risk Register. The County Council has a 'Buildings at Risk Register'. In relation to Widdington the latter document has not identified any such buildings within the Parish and neither has this Appraisal identified any.

1.29 Widdington Conservation Area date of designation. The Conservation Area was designated in 1976.

The General Character and Setting of Widdington

1.30 Setting. Widdington is a small rural community in open countryside on an approach road lined with trees and hedgerows set on an elevated position in the centre of the District. There are a number of Listed Buildings grouped around green spaces in the middle of the village. Nearby is the church and churchyard which dominates the immediate location in which it is set. It has been called the largest cul de sac in Essex and this fact may have influenced the limited development seen in the first half of the 20th century when compared with other settlements.

1.31 In the Parish there are 45 Listed Buildings or groups of Listed Buildings whilst in the existing Conservation Area itself there are 26 Listed Buildings.

1.32 General character and plan form. Of the above 26 Listed Buildings/groups of buildings identified on the English Heritage list, two are designated Grade I and one is Grade II*. These are respectively Priors Hall, Priors Hall barn and the Church of St Mary. A large percentage, about 45%, date from the 19th century, many having specifically been built at this time for agricultural workers. About 20% date from the 17th century and about 10% from the 18th century. The 14th and earlier, the 15th and 16th centuries are also represented.

1.33 Thatch is used as a traditional roofing material for several buildings within and adjacent to the Conservation Area and is representative of a historical roofing tradition in the District. It is therefore important that this material continues to be protected and replaced as the need arises.

1.34 Good quality walls, frequently providing boundaries to Listed Buildings are an important feature at a number of locations within the Conservation Area.

1.35 There are several unlisted buildings of architectural and historic interest that add to Widdington's overall quality which are described later in the document.

1.36 There are some poor quality elements such as utility poles throughout the Conservation Area that particularly detract.

1.37 Within the Conservation Area, trees, either as groups or as individual specimens are very important adding to its attractive appearance and diversity. Those within the churchyard and on and around the greens in the centre of the village are particularly important.

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1.38 Despite some modern properties with limited architectural qualities, the historic core of the Conservation Area represents a concentration of buildings grouped around traditional open spaces and other environmental features that warrants its formal designation.



Picture 1.2 Chapman and Andre map of 1777
(Reproduced courtesy of a private collection)

Origins and Historic Development

1.39 Historical background data has been extracted principally from the *Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Report*⁽²⁾ and the *Essex Historic Environment Record (HER)*⁽³⁾.

1.40 Prehistoric and Roman. The *Uttlesford Environment Characterisation Project* of 2009 advises that "The historic settlement pattern comprises small nucleated settlements at Widdington and Quendon... the dispersed settlement pattern has changed little since the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map" and "The zone is bisected by the River Cam/Granta whose valley contains a high potential for surviving palaeo-environmental

2 *Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Report*, Essex County Council, 2009

3 <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/>

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deposits. A number of ancient woods survive throughout the zone many of which are likely to contain earthworks. Evidence of prehistoric occupation has been identified throughout the zone ranging in date from the Neolithic through to the Iron Age ...".

1.41 "... Excavation indicates significant occupation of the zone in the Roman period exploiting both the position of the main Roman roads as well as the slopes of the river valley. Excavations close to Newport identified a rich cemetery which would have had an adjacent settlement. The settlement of this period would have comprised of dispersed farmsteads."

1.42 Medieval. The *Uttlesford Environment Characterisation Project* of 2009 continues "The medieval and post-medieval periods saw the creation of the deer parks and landscaped parkland which form such a large part of the historic environment of this zone... much of the landscape survives especially the ancient woodland... The two moats within the historic village of Widdington... are protected as scheduled monuments, with the hall at Widdington Hall containing a Saxon church ...".



Picture 1.3 Widdington Hall circa 1910 (Reproduced courtesy of the Widdington Village website)

1.43 A flavour of the hierarchy of ownership and society shortly after the Norman Conquest is set out in *A History of the County of Essex, Victoria History of the Counties of England* 1903, which describes the Domesday Book entry thus:

Widituna was held by the same Turchhill as a manor and as 4 and a half hides. Then and afterwards 3 ploughs on the demesne; now 2. Then as now 6 ploughs belonging to the men. Then and afterwards 8 villeins; now 11. 20 bordars; 6 serfs. Woodland for 10 swine and 12 acres of meadow. 5 beasts, 24 swine, 50 sheep. Then as now it was worth 7 pounds. To this estate belong 2 hides which are held now by 4 sokemen and are worth 33 shillings. (Glossary of terms: A 'Hide' was a standard unit of land measurement interpreted to be about 120 acres. A 'villein' was a peasant legally tied to land he worked on; a 'bordar' was similar to a villein

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who rendered service for his cottage') a serf occupied a low position of bondage approaching slavery). 'Demesne' essentially means land belonging to the lord of the manor.



Picture 1.4 Interior of Widdington church around 1920
(Reproduced courtesy of Saffron Walden Museum)

1.44 Post Medieval. In Victorian times, *Kelly's Post Office Directory for Essex, 1878*,⁽⁴⁾ describes Widdington thus: "Widdington is an ancient parish... The church of St Mary the Virgin is a small building, principally in the Early English style... was restored in 1872-73 at a cost of £2,500... the tower was rebuilt from the foundation of the old one, which fell down in 1871. The Congregationalists have a Chapel, erected in 1858. The soil is mixed and heavy: subsoil, clay on chalk. The chief crops are cereals, generally on the four-course shift. The common lands inclosure is just completed. The population in 1871 was 386. There was a National School and 2 public houses, namely the Fleur-de-Lis and William the Conqueror".

1.45 In addition to the farmers, the same Directory lists the following commercial activities: Shopkeeper, yeast dealer, grocer and shoe maker, baker, miller, blacksmith, carpenter (2), thatcher and boot and shoe maker.

4 *The Post Office Directory of Essex* Edited by E. R. Kelly, London: Printed and Published by Kelly and Co. 1878

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1.46 *The Place Names of Essex* by Reaney⁽⁵⁾ advises of a selection of the following names: Widintuna (1086), Withitone (1123-63), Widengton (1285), Widditon (1594). Possibly derives from early words meaning 'Willow Farm'.

1.47 The existing Conservation Area boundary is plotted on late 19th century mapping at Figure 1. It shows a school for Boys and Girls with play ground on a site opposite the Church now occupied by houses; a Post Office on the High Street; a Congregational Chapel in the vicinity of the present day Parish Hall and the two pubs, being those as identified in the Directory of 1878. The community was extensively treed at this time with some sites interpreted as being orchards. The central green would appear to have been planted in a more formal manner with a row of trees on its western edge leaving the remainder of the space open. Several pumps are also shown.

Character Analysis

1.48 Listed buildings. Individually listed buildings have been identified, plotted and a representative selection is described, such abbreviated descriptions being based on the Dept. of Culture Media and Sport's list. Full descriptions can be obtained on line at English Heritage's website or Heritage Gateway website (www.heritagegateway.org.uk) Listed Buildings are protected from unauthorised demolition, alteration or extension. Structures, including railings and walls, within the curtilages of listed buildings, if they are pre-1948, are subject to the same controls as listed buildings.

1.49 Non-listed buildings of quality and worthy of protection from demolition. This Appraisal has identified several non listed buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the Conservation Area. The basic questions asked in identifying such buildings/structures are:

- Is the non listed building/structure of sufficient architectural or historic interest whose general external form and appearance remains largely unaltered?
- Does the building contain a sufficient level of external original features and materials?
- Has the building retained its original scale without large inappropriate modern extensions that destroy the visual appearance, particularly in respect of the front elevation?
- Is the building/structure visually important in the street scene?

1.50 Trees and Hedgerows. There are trees that contribute to the quality of the Conservation Area. The basic criteria for identifying such important trees are:

- They are in good condition;
- They are visible at least in part from public view points; and
- They make a significant contribution to the street scene or other publicly accessible areas.

5 REANEY (Percy Hyde) *The Place Names of Essex*, Cambridge University Press, 1935

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1.51 Open land, open spaces or gaps of quality that contribute to the visual importance of the Conservation Areas where development would be inappropriate will be identified. The basic question asked in identifying any such areas is:

- Is the open space or gap an important landscape feature contributing to the general spatial quality and visual importance of the Conservation Area?

1.52 Private open spaces forming an important setting for an historic asset and unkempt spaces that have the potential to be enhanced are candidates for selection subject to complying with the principle question.

1.53 Any other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution are noted.

1.54 Article 4 Directions. Reference has previously been made to the potential of introducing Article 4 Directions in justified circumstances and the criteria for their selection in relation to features associated with selected non listed properties is as follows:

- In relation to retention of chimneys, these need to be in good condition, contemporary with the age of the property, prominent in the street scene and generally complete with chimney pots. Exceptionally chimney stacks of particular architectural merit without pots may be selected.
- In relation to retention of selected windows, these need to be on front or side elevations, fronting and visible from the street/s, contemporary with the age of the property and where the majority of windows of respective elevations retain their original characteristics and have not been replaced by modern glazing units.
- In relation to retention of walls or railings, those selected need to be below the prescribed heights (walls including a footpath or bridleway, water course or open space 1m fronting a highway or 2m elsewhere require prior consent for their demolition), be prominent in the street scene and make a positive architectural or historic contribution to its visual appearance.
- In relation to retention of other features, these may include good quality architectural detailing to non-listed buildings, constructed of wood, metal or other materials.
- It may also be appropriate to introduce Article 4 Directions to retain quality buildings below the prescribed threshold where consent for demolition is not required or to prevent the erection of inappropriate additions such as porches to terraced properties of historic interest.

1.55 Detracting elements. Any features that detract or are in poor repair and any proposed enhancements will be identified and appear in summary form in the Table set out in Part 2.

1.56 Important views. Such views are identified and are briefly described.

1.57 Revisions to boundaries of the Conservation Area. In suggesting any revisions to boundaries of the Conservation Area, consideration has been given as to whether or not the land or buildings in question form part of an area of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance should be conserved.

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Widdington village

1.58 General overview. The focal point of the Conservation Area is the green around which are grouped a number of important Listed Buildings including St Mary's Church close by which dominates the scene. These Listed Buildings display a variety of historic building types and the use of different materials. This most attractive scene is set off and enhanced by many fine trees and boundary walls

1.59 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Within Widdington's Conservation Area there are two designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments. These are Widdington Hall moated site and Prior's Hall moated site which are part of about 6,000 moated sites in England that survive in a relatively good condition. Prior's Hall monument contains "the remains of a pre-Conquest manor, a medieval grange and later farm buildings, including a 14th century barn, situated on high ground overlooking the River Cam. The original layout of the moat is known from a map of 1767 which shows the position of the southern and western moat arms which have been infilled subsequently... Slightly to the south east of the centre of the moated island are the standing remains of a pre-Conquest manorial church now called Prior's Hall, built of stone in the 10th or 11th century... Prior's Hall was known as Stone Hall at one time no doubt because of this early stone building... The manorial complex was incorporated into a medieval grange when the site and its lands were transferred to the prior of St Valery-sur-Somme in Picardy, France, after the Norman Conquest. The property was confiscated by Edward III in 1377 and given to the Bishop of Winchester, William of Wykeham, the founder of New College Oxford. The site passed to New College in 1379 at which time it was reorganised. Detailed records kept by New College show that it was still the centre of an important agricultural estate..."⁽⁶⁾.

1.60 Archaeological sites. Widdington Hall Scheduled Ancient Monument⁽⁷⁾ is also a County archaeological site whose area is more extensive. There is one such additional archaeological site lying beyond the Conservation Area being a possible medieval moated site (?) at Newlands, Wood End comprising a series of enlarged drainage ditches and farm ponds not considered to be a moat by the Ordnance Survey. The enclosed area is irregular in shape⁽⁸⁾.

1.61 Not all sites are of equal importance and the Council will decide a course of action that may vary from archeological investigation and recording to protecting such sites from development, when determining planning applications. There will generally be a presumption in favour of preservation in situ.

1.62 Individually Listed Buildings. A selection of representative Listed Building descriptions (generally abbreviated) is provided below. Additions in italics are the fieldworker's further comments.

6 Source: English Heritage schedule description - Scheduled Monument 1013760: Prior's Hall moated site

7 Scheduled Monument 1007836: Widdington Hall moated site

8 RCHME. 1916. *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Essex* - Volume 1. Vol 1 p347

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1.63 Church of St Mary the Virgin – Grade II*. Flint and stone rubble church of 12th century origin but very much restored in 1871-72 when the west tower was rebuilt. In the north wall of the chancel there is an early 12th century window and in the south wall there is the surround of a 13th century window with shafts with foliated capitals and much dogtooth ornamentation. The south door is 15th century. The chancel has a late 13th century piscina.



Picture 1.5 The Church of St Mary the Virgin, listed Grade II* of early date but as so often the case, 'restored' in Victorian times

1.64 Widdington Hall – Grade II. 15th century moated hall house considerably altered in the 16th century when a long five bay wing was added to the north, making an L-shaped plan. The south front of the main block has three gables of unequal size and a modern gabled porch. The north wing, now used as a barn, has a red brick wall with black brick diapering on the west side and has a timber-framed and plastered east wall, with a weather-boarded base. On the west side there is part of a brick crow stepped gable with a chimney stack behind it. To the west of this there is an early 17th century wing with a small staircase projection at the west end. The windows are modern casements. Roofs tiled, with a large square internal chimney stack to the main block. There is a considerable amount of original roof construction. Only part of the moat now remains.

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Picture 1.6 Widdington Hall, a 15th century moated hall house, currently being renovated

1.65 Rectory Cottage, Spring Hill – Grade II. Small 19th century timber-framed and plastered building. One storey and attics. Modern casement windows. Roof thatched, with two gabled dormers and end external chimney stacks.

1.66 Post Office and Stores, (*former*) High Street – Grade II. Early 19th century timber-framed and plastered building. Two storeys. Two window range of double-hung sashes with glazing bars. The ground storey has an early 19th century bay shop window with glazing bars. Central doorway with moulded architrave and cornice. Roof slate, hipped.



Picture 1.7 Former Post Office and stores, fine early 19th century shop window of architectural and historic interest

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1.67 Barn to north-west of Prior's Hall – Grade I. Fine timber-framed and weather-boarded aisled barn of mid 14th century origin. The barn is of eight bays with king post roof construction. There are two gabled entrance bays on the south side, with original bargeboards. The barn was undergoing extensive restoration in 1976-77 See: C A Hewett *The Development of Carpentry 1200-1700 An Essex Study*, London, David & Charles, 1969. (*The barn is currently administered by English Heritage and is open to public at selected times. Advice on line from the [English Heritage website](#)*).



Picture 1.8 Priors Hall barn of mid 14th century origin. It is estimated about 400 oak trees were required for its construction

1.68 The Old Rectory – Grade II. House of 16th/17th century origin but largely altered in the 18th century when it was refaced in red brick with a parapet on the south-west and north-west fronts. Some timber-framing and plaster at the rear. The windows are mainly double-hung sashes with glazing bars. A porch projects on the south-west front with plain Tuscan columns and a broken pediment. Roof tiled, with four flat headed dormers on the south-west front.

1.69 Prior's Hall – Grade I. House, probably originally a chapel. Circa 10th or 11th century; remodelled as house circa 14th century; extended in 17th or early 18th century with 19th century alterations. Flint rubble with Barnack stone quoins rendered; rendered timber frame brick and flint extension. Plain tile roof with gabled ends and hipped corner. Brick axial and gable end stacks. Plan: Overall L-shaped plan. The Saxon chapel is the E wing, its E end has a small (chancel) arch and blocked double-splayed window in the gable above; and the N wall of the lean-to on the E end is probably the remains of the chancel 'Nave of chapel' has plain 14th century crown post roof; smoke-blackened one and a half bays over hall and long clean bay to west with partition between remains of smoke-blackened plaster. Historical note: Belonged to one Thorkell (Thurchill) before 1066 and given to the Abbey of St Valery in Picardy after the Conquest. In 1377 confiscated by Edward III and given to William of Wykeham. Remained in ownership of New College Oxford until 1920.

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Picture 1.9 Priors Hall, at one time called Stone Hall because its walls are said to be of 13th century stone. (Reproduced courtesy of the Widdington Village website)

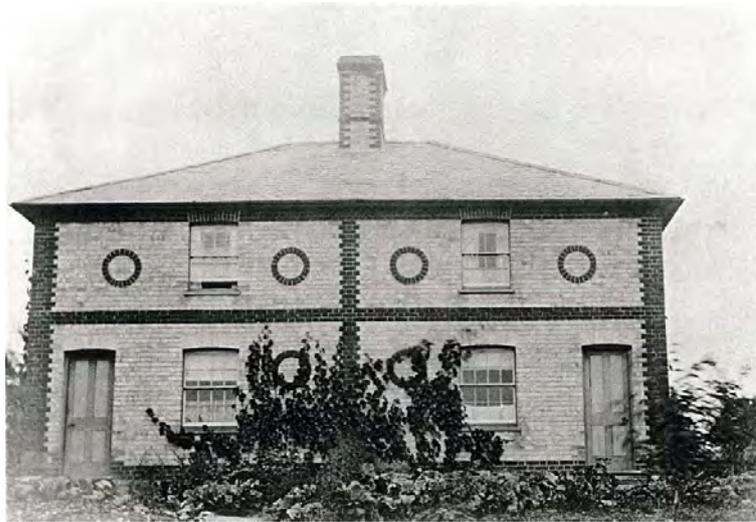
1.70 Outbuildings immediately south of Prior's Hall – Grade II*. Long timber-framed and plastered building of 15th century origin. Two storeys. Roof tiled, with some of the original roof construction remaining.



Picture 1.10 Listed outbuilding south of Prior's Hall

1.71 Flint Cottages, High Street – Grade II. Mid-late 19th century. Part of a range of semi-detached houses built to accommodate agricultural workers. An advanced project for its period. Flint pebbles and red brick quoins and dressings and an ornamental eaves cornice band. Gabled open porches. Roof slate, hipped, with a central ridge chimney stack.

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Picture 1.11 Pair of semi-detached cottages on the west side of the main street. Erected in 1867/8 (Reproduced courtesy of the Widdington Village website)



Picture 1.12 Flint Cottages, High Street. 19th century pair designed to accommodate agricultural workers

1.72 Important buildings or structures within the curtilages of Listed Buildings. Within the churchyard there are a number of tombstones of interest.

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Picture 1.13 St Mary's churchyard, well kept with an interesting range of tombstones

1.73 Fine boundary wall to the Rectory of varying heights principally of flint panels with brick detailing and brick rounded capping. This wall set off by its grass verge to front and framed by yew trees represents a very important visual feature in the centre of the village.



Picture 1.14 Boundary wall with verge to front and framed by trees is an important feature in the centre of Widdington

1.74 Boundary wall to churchyard. Constructed of flint with triangular brick capping and entrance gate.

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Picture 1.15 Fine boundary wall to churchyard. Acts as an extension to adjacent boundary wall to Rectory which in combination creates an environmental feature of considerable importance

1.75 Boundary wall to Bishop's. Red brick wall with brick capping detail approximately 2m in height. Some modest repairs necessary.

1.76 Brick and Flint walls within curtilage of Widdington Hall (a) to east of hall, wall in need of repair; and (b) near annexe building on approach road.

1.77 Two small outbuildings to immediate west of Widdington Hall weather boarded with tiled roofs 19th century or earlier. One needs modest tile repair/replacement.



Picture 1.16 Wall at Widdington Hall in urgent need of repair

1.78 Range of outbuildings to west of approach road, Widdington Hall. Weather boarded with tiled roof. Probably dates from 18th century or earlier. Important buildings adding to the interest and diversity of this important site. Some guttering needs replacing.

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Picture 1.17 Important curtilage buildings on approach to Widdington Hall

1.79 Brick and flint wall approx 2m in height at Prior's Hall.

1.80 Brick and flint walls to front of Flint Cottages, May House and Rose Cottage.

1.81 **Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution.** Prominent outbuilding between Bishop's and Barn Cottage, south of junction with Cornells Lane. A prominent building with flint wall and slate roof. A simple but very pleasing feature defining the street edge in this location.



Picture 1.18 This flint walled building defining the street edge south of Cornells Lane is free of clutter and acts as a strong visual feature of high quality in this part of the village

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1.82 Identified as 'Barn Cottage' on map. Plot and building situated at the corner of Cornells Lane. Of late 19th/early 20th century date with slate roof and two no. brick chimneys with pots. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for these chimneys may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification. In garden is 19th century pump, (see *below*).



Picture 1.19 The High street with the old Bakery on the left as seen in 1976
(Reproduced courtesy of the Widdington Village website)

1.83 The Old Bakery. A simple 19th/early 20th century two storey rendered house with slate roof and central chimney with pots. Central porch. Its simplicity adds to the quality of the street scene in this location. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected architectural detailing may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 1.20 The Old Bakery, High Street, a simple building worthy of retention

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1.84 Other distinctive features that make an important architectural or historic contribution. Pump in garden of Barn Cottage. Probably of 19th century date with spout, handle and finial. The 19th century map shows there was a pump within this curtilage, possibly not in its present location. Should the community wish to afford protection an application to English Heritage seeking its 'listing' may be appropriate.



Picture 1.21 Pump on the village green in the 19th century. (Reproduced courtesy of the Widdington Village website)

1.85 Pump on small triangular green to west of main green at junction with Church Hill. Probably of 19th century date with spout, handle and finial. The 19th century map shows there was a pump in this approximate location. Should the community wish to afford formal protection an application to English Heritage to seek its 'listing' may be appropriate. However it is understood the pump is on land administered by the Parish Council. The Parish Council may wish to consider some simplification of this area to reduce crowded and competing elements of street furniture on such a small area of grass.



Picture 1.22 Competing elements of street furniture on small triangular green where some simplification may be appropriate

Part 1: Appraisal 1

1.86 Wall fronting Pond Mead. Brick wall approx 1.5m in height adjacent to a highway and protected from demolition without prior consent. An important wall on this approach to the Conservation Area and in need of some repair works.



Picture 1.23 Wall fronting Pond Mead in need of some repair works and important in the street scene

1.87 Wall principally fronting Wray Cottage. Brick and flint wall, rounded capping detailing. Height varies but exceeds 1m adjacent a highway and thus protected from demolition without prior consent. In need of some repair works.

1.88 Red K6 telephone kiosk adjacent to road boundary, Village Hall site.

1.89 Important open spaces. Churchyard of St Mary the Virgin. A well kept expansive and important open space of strategic importance situated close to the centre of the Conservation Area. It sets off the church and range of tombstones and traditional trees within it.

1.90 Grouping of greens in the centre of the village. There are a series of open spaces and grass verges that consist of four separate 'green' spaces in the centre of the village; grass verges adjacent to the highway adjacent to the Rectory boundary wall (with discreet signs each with a request 'to keep off the grass' and a small triangular green near the church with tree and seat.

1.91 Clearly the local community recognises the importance of these areas by the application of signs on some of the grass verges requesting persons and vehicles to 'keep off the grass' and by the discreet and appropriate placing of short stout wooden posts as preventatives for mounting the eastern edge of the main green.

1.92 Some verges are badly eroded in places and a local resident has advised this is principally due to contractors vehicles servicing a housing development opposite the church. Waste Collection Operations by the Council have now been reviewed to reduce the risk to greens and verges.

1 Part 1: Appraisal



Picture 1.24 Small green near church whose edges are badly eroded by vehicles

1.93 It is suggested that the community be vigilant and monitor the impact following the completion of the small housing development previously referred to. If the desired improvements are not forthcoming the District Council Landscape Officer will be prepared to offer advice, if requested.

1.94 The main green is separated from its immediate neighbouring open space by a deeply rutted and potholed track which appears to have existed in the late 19th century as it is shown on mapping from that date. It would appear not to form part of the village green ownership. What can be said, however, is that it is visually disruptive and were it possible to unite the two greens, then this would represent a major visual improvement. Officers and the Parish Council are now seeking clarification on the legal status of The Green. Should any proposal proceed, the council's Landscape Officer can advise on a suitable scheme.



Picture 1.25 The deeply rutted track crossing and separating the central green is considered to be very visually disruptive.

1.95 19th century maps shows that the main green appears to have been landscaped by a line of tees on its western boundary whilst the smaller triangle to its north had similar planting on its eastern boundary at that time. This historic landscaping solution is considered better than today's planting because the former would have provided a

Part 1: Appraisal 1

greater sense of space, delineation and definition. Today's planting is more random and consists of a variety of differing species of both deciduous and coniferous species. The Parish Council may wish to consider a long term replacement programme that closer reflects the historical solution and simplifies and reduces tree species. The removal of overhead services would be particularly beneficial.

1.96 Open grazing land adjacent to Prior's Hall barn, between it and Spring Hill. Situated on rising ground this open land forms an important setting for the grade I barn and acts as a buffer between it and properties adjacent to the road. The Conservation Area boundary does not follow any physical boundary on the ground but on balance this is considered appropriate on this occasion.



Picture 1.26 Priors Hall barn and surrounding landscape in the early 20th century (Reproduced courtesy of the Widdington Village website)

1.97 Open paddock to west of Widdington Hall. This is an important gap separating the Church of St Mary the Virgin from Widdington Hall and from modern properties to the south of the church. It is an important gap that should remain undeveloped.

1.98 Particularly important trees and hedgerows. As shown diagrammatically on the accompanying plans. Trees in the churchyard, within Widdington Hall, within the Rectory and selectively on the central greens are important.

1.99 Important views. As shown on accompanying plans.

1.100 Elements that are out of character with the Conservation Area. Utility poles throughout the Conservation Area and their overhead services detract to varying degrees. The practicalities and associated cost of achieving real improvements, particularly in this difficult economic climate, is recognized. However it is considered appropriate to draw attention to the level of visual damage, particularly where this occurs in proximity to Listed Buildings and for the Parish Council to discuss the matter with the relevant utility company to explore the potential of achieving improvements now or in the longer term.

1 Part 1: Appraisal

1.101 Greens and verges eroded by traffic. Monitor and if remaining unresolved seek advice from the District Council.

1.102 Rutted and potholed track crossing central green. Consider establishing legal status and if in agreement, the Parish Council to consider seeking to incorporate and integrate within a single large green.

1.103 Opportunities to secure improvements. Seek selective replacement of discordant overhead services. Monitor ongoing vehicular erosion of village greens and verges. Parish Council to consider future of rutted track way crossing the green and if appropriate/possible, consider incorporating it as part of the green. Also Parish Council may wish to consider a long term landscaping rationalisation for the central greens and in this respect may like to approach the District Council's Landscape Officer.

1.104 Contact owner of Widdington Hall seeking cooperation to undertaking remedial repair works to flint wall to east of hall and to roof of small ancillary building to immediate west of hall and to guttering at barns on approach road. Contact owner of frontage wall to Pond Mead and seek co operation in undertaking necessary repairs. Contact owner of Wray Cottage and seek cooperation in undertaking necessary repair works.

1.105 Suggested boundary changes. None are proposed. The boundary at Church Lane is interpreted as following the boundary walls to the Rectory and churchyard.

1.106 It has been previously mentioned that the Widdington Village Design Statement considered that the potential for extending the Conservation Area should be explored. Possible candidates were Wood End, Cornells Lane, Hollow Road and Spring Hill. Some of the latter already lies within the Conservation Area. As a broad generalisation they are dominated by low density mid to late 20th century houses, many being set in larger grounds. Several Listed Buildings can be found within these areas whose architectural and historic qualities are already protected by Listed Building own legislation. The fieldworker considers these candidates are of insufficient 'special architectural or historic interest'.

1.107 Other actions. Community may wish to consider making application to seek listing of the pump in grounds of Barn Cottage, corner of Cornells Lane.



Picture 1.27 Pump probably of 19th century date in grounds of Barn Cottage, may not be in original location

Part 2 - Management Proposals 1

Revised Conservation Area Boundary

2.1 No changes are proposed.

Planning Controls and Good Practice: The Conservation Area

2.2 All current planning policies are contained in the Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in 2005. It is against this document that the District Council will process applications. As set out above, this will be superseded in due course by the Council's new Local Plan.

2.3 Applicants considering submitting any application should carefully consider the relevant policies and if necessary contact Council Officers to seek advice. For further details including advice on Planning Applications, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Landscaping and other general administrative advice, please contact the Planning Department for assistance.

Website: www.uttlesford.gov.uk

Telephone no. 01799 510510

Or write to Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4ER

Planning Controls and Good Practice: The Potential Need to Undertake an Archaeological Field Assessment

2.4 Potential need to undertake an Archaeological Evaluation. Good practice for applicants will be to carefully consider the content of the policies set out in the Local Plan.

Planning Control and Good Practice: Listed Buildings

2.5 Those buildings that are individually listed and other buildings, structures or walls within the curtilage of a Listed Building are similarly protected in law.

2.6 The Listed Buildings and associated structures within their curtilages, including those specifically identified by this Appraisal are important and are a major contribution to the quality of the built environment of Widdington. It is essential that their architectural detailing is not eroded or their other qualities and settings not compromised. Good practice for applicants will be to carefully consider the content of the policies set out in the Local Plan.

Planning Controls and Good Practice: Other Buildings that Make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution

2.8 Several such unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area have been identified. The Council will seek to ensure that these are retained. These are as follows: Outbuilding range between Bishop's and Barn Cottage; Barn Cottage, corner of Cornells Lane; The Old Bakery, High Street.

1 Part 2 - Management Proposals

2.9 Proposed Article 4 Directions. There are other distinctive features that are integral to some of the unlisted buildings identified in the previous paragraph that make an important architectural or historic contribution, including selected chimneys, windows and other architectural detailing. In some situations protection already exists through existing planning controls but in other cases protection could only be provided by removing Permitted Development Rights via an Article 4 Direction. The associated legislation is complex. Should the Council consider such a course of action appropriate there would be a process of notifying the affected owners separately at a later date. This would be associated with further detailed consideration and possible refinement of the general proposals set out earlier in this Appraisal.

Planning Controls and Good Practice: Other Distinctive Features that Make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution

2.10 This Appraisal has identified several features including walls railings within the curtilages of Listed Buildings that make a particular contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The latter are protected from demolition without prior consent virtue by Listed Building legislation and any proposal involving their demolition is unlikely to be approved.

2.11 Other walls and railings forming boundaries to non listed properties have also been identified as contributing to the visual and historic importance of the village and for the most part these are protected from demolition without prior consent.

Planning Control and Good Practice: Important Open Spaces, Trees and Groups of Trees

2.12 Important open land, open spaces and gaps. The open spaces as identified and as shown on the plans represent open landscape features that materially contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area which must be protected. These are: the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin; grouping of greens in the centre of the village; open grazing land adjacent to Prior's Hall barn and open paddock to the west of Widdington Hall.

2.13 Particularly important trees and hedgerows. Only the most significant trees and hedgerows are shown very diagrammatically. Subject to certain exceptions all trees in a Conservation Area are afforded protection and a person wanting to carry out works has to notify the Council. Trees that have not been identified may still be considered suitable for protection by Tree Preservation Orders. Owners are advised to make regular inspections to check the health of trees in the interests of amenity and Health and Safety.

Proposed Controls: Other Distinctive Features that make an Important Visual or Historic Contribution

2.14 The most important views within and out of the Conservation Area are diagrammatically shown.

Part 2 - Management Proposals 1

Enhancement Proposals to Deal with Detracting Elements

2.15 The Appraisal has identified a number of elements that detract which are summarised below together with a proposed course of action. Within the staff and financial resources available, Council Officers will be pro-active and provide assistance. It must be recognised that such improvements will frequently only be achieved with the owners' co-operation.

The features identified below are shown on the accompanying plans.

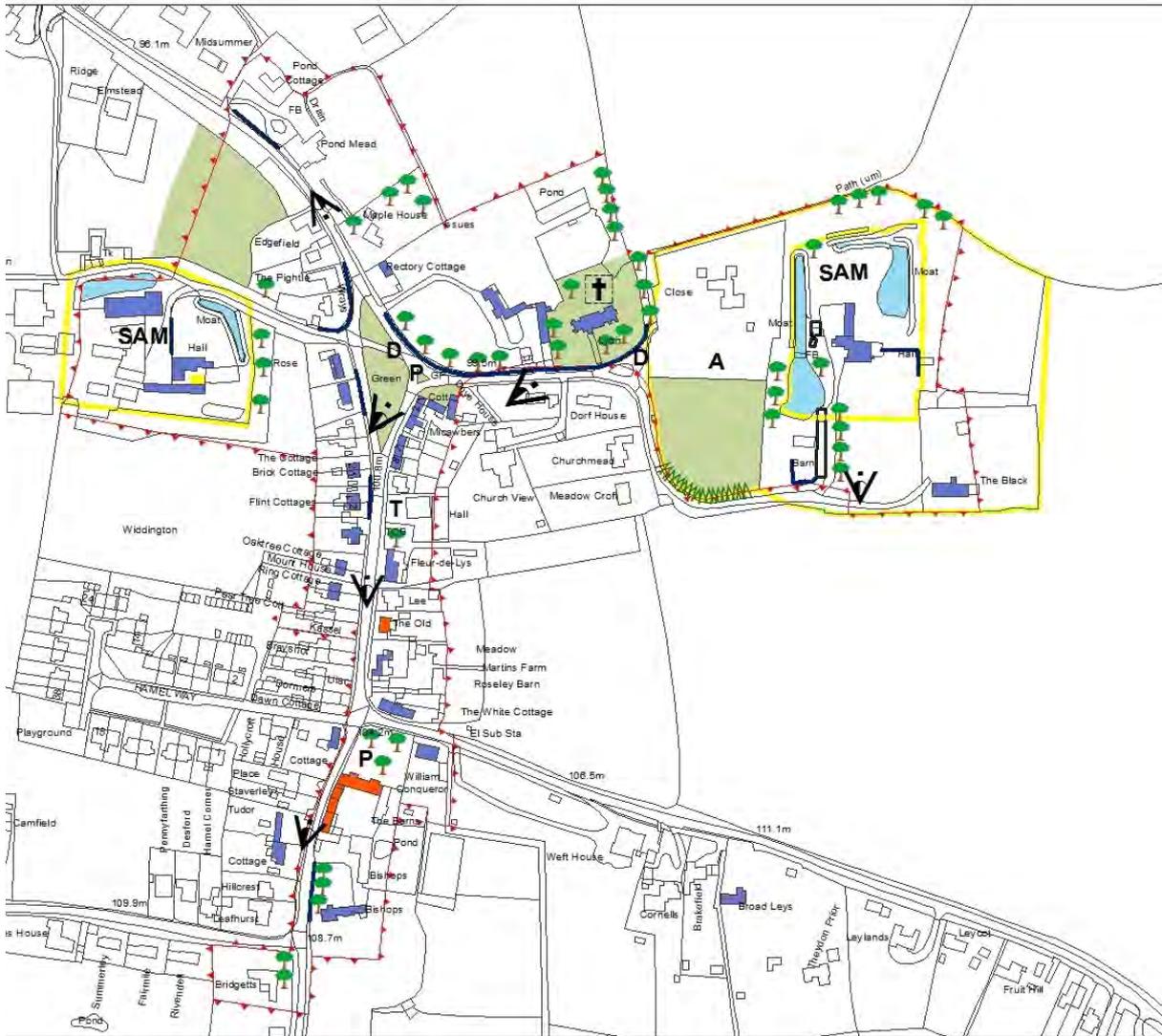
Detracting element	Location	Proposed Action
Overhead utility services on intrusive poles	Throughout Conservation Area	Contact appropriate utility company to explore potential replacement of selected overhead services
Edges of greens and verges eroded by traffic	Central greens and verges and green opposite church	Waste Collection Operations by the Council have been reviewed to reduce the risk to greens and verges
Track in poor condition detrimentally affecting central green complex	Bisects central greens	Officers and the Parish Council are seeking clarification on the legal status of The Green. Should any proposal proceed, the council's Landscape Officer can advise on a suitable planting scheme

1 Part 2 - Management Proposals

Other actions
Parish Council may wish to consider long term landscaping rationalisation of the central greens, possibly considering obtaining external advice from the District Council
Contact owner of frontage wall to Bishop's seeking cooperation in undertaking necessary repairs
Contact owner of Widdington Hall seeking cooperation in undertaking necessary repairs to selected walls and roofs and guttering as previously identified
Contact owner of frontage wall to Pond Mead seeking cooperation in undertaking necessary repairs
Contact owner of frontage wall to Wray Cottage seeking cooperation in undertaking necessary repairs
Consider the best means of securing long term and ongoing protection of 2 no. 19th century pumps; one located in grounds of Barn Cottage, the other on one of the central greens
Notify English Heritage of revisions needed to the listing report on outbuildings to the south of Prior's Hall

1 Maps

Fig 2 - Character Analysis



Widdington Conservation Area Appraisal Character Analysis Map

1:2,368 Uttlesford District Council
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Maps 1

Character Analysis Key

	Existing Conservation Area boundary (no changes are proposed)
	Scheduled Ancient Monuments
	Archaeological Sites
	Individually Listed Buildings
	Important Buildings in the curtilage of Listed Buildings
	Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the Conservation Area
	Important open spaces
	General location of important trees/hedgerows
	Water features

**Other distinctive features to be protected from demolition within the parameters of legislation
(including walls and railings within the curtilages of Listed Buildings)**

	Walls
	Tombstones
	Pump
	Telephone Kiosk
	Important views
	Important views
	Elements out of character

Maps 1

Management Plan Key

	Conservation Area boundary – adopted Policy ENV1 applies.(no changes are proposed)
	Scheduled Ancient Monuments – adopted Policy ENV4 applies
	Archaeological Sites, adopted policy ENV4 applies
	Individually Listed Buildings – adopted Policy ENV2 applies
	Important Buildings in the curtilage of Listed Buildings – adopted policy ENV2 applies
	Other buildings to be protected from demolition, see Policy ENV1. Additional controls proposed for selected buildings
	Important open spaces and waterfeatures to be protected from development, adopted policy ENV3 and ENV8 apply
	General location of important trees/hedgerows to be protected within parameters of legislation

**Other distinctive features to be protected from demolition within the parameters of legislation
(including walls and railings within the curtilages of Listed Buildings)**

	Walls
	Tombstones
	Pump
	Telephone Kiosk
	Proposed Enhancements

1 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Sources

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