

Stebbing Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals, Approved March 2010



Contents

Contents

1 Part 1: Appraisal	5
Introduction	5
Planning Legislative Framework	7
Planning Policy Framework	8
General Influences	9
The General Character of Stebbing	9
Origins and Historic Development	11
Character Analysis	16
Area 1 - High Street	22
Area 2 - Church End	32
Area 3 - Mill Lane to Stebbing Park	41
Overall Summary	48
2 Part 2 - Management Proposals	49
Revised Conservation Area Boundary	49
General Planning Controls and Good Practice in the Conservation Area	49
Planning Control and Good Practice, Listed Buildings	49
Planning Controls and Good Practice in respect of other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution	50
Planning Control and Good Practice, Important Open Spaces, Trees and Groups of Trees	51
Proposed Controls in Respect of Other Distinctive Features that make an Important Visual or Historic Contribution	51
The Potential Need to Undertake an Archaeological Field Assessment	51
Enhancement Proposals to Deal with Detracting Elements	52

Maps

Contents

3 Maps	54
Map 1- 1877 Ordnance Survey Map with Current Conservation Area	54
Map 2 - Character Analysis Areas	55
Map 3 - Area 1: High Street	56
Map 4 - Area 2: Church End	57
Map 5 - Area 3: Mill Lane to Stebbing Park	58
Map 6 - Management Plan	60

Part 1: Appraisal 1

Introduction

1.1 Uttlesford is extremely rich in terms of its heritage. It contains a wealth of fine buildings, many of them ancient and 'listed'. These buildings with their varied styles and methods of construction span many centuries. Attractive small market towns and villages punctuate the gently rolling countryside, whose arable and pastoral mosaic of greens, yellows, blues and browns alter with the seasons and from ever-changing crop selection. These fine built environments in their rural settings have been subject to damaging historic economic and social influences but many settlements still continue to possess an architectural form and setting of the very highest quality, certainly amongst the finest in Essex and some arguably, worthy of inclusion in a list of the nation's best.

1.2 Patterns of change will inevitably continue to shape and influence the environment in the future. In Uttlesford, we live in a location where there are many significant economic pressures and where our community is increasingly aware of the need to protect the environment. The District Council therefore considers this is a particularly relevant moment to appraise the qualities of our best historic and architectural areas and put forward proposals to protect and enhance them for both the present and future generations.

1.3 There is now widespread recognition that the quality of such conservation areas is the sum total of a number of factors. These include general layout, overall scale, the relationship of buildings to each other, the spaces and vistas between them and the elements that unite them, the mixture of uses, the quality of advertisements, road signage, surfaces, street furniture and trees, as well as the quality of the individual buildings themselves. Conservation area designation and the undertaking of this appraisal recognise the importance of all these factors, particularly in exercising the control of development and in formulating management proposals.

1.4 The purpose of undertaking this conservation appraisal which began in 2007 is to:

- Identify and justify the special character of the area
- Identify elements that should be retained or enhanced
- Identify detracting elements
- Review the boundary
- Put forward enhancement proposals
- Provide and strengthen development and design control

1.5 In undertaking an exercise such as this, one aspect that is too easily forgotten is the community itself and the people who live locally and contribute to its cohesion and social success. Stebbing is a vibrant community with a diverse range of local organizations for all ages and abilities. It was awarded the prize as 1999 Essex Village of the Year by the Rural Community Council of Essex, an award which acknowledged levels of activity and commitment of Stebbing's residents to the quality of life in the village. In the same year Stebbing was also runner up in its class for best kept village.

1 Part 1: Appraisal



Picture 1.1 Historic photograph of the Boy Scouts parading by the War Memorial

1.6 The village is fortunate to have an active parish council, a primary school, and a wealth of societies including: a local history group; an over-sixties group; a gardening club; Judo club; brownies; guides; cubs and scouts. Stebbing has a good range of sporting facilities in the heart of the village, a cricket and a bowling club and a tennis club with more than 200 members. There is also, a well used Village Hall, a village pub - the White Hart, a shop and a community minibus which all provide important services to this rural community. A Friday morning market has been established in the Village Hall offering a further useful facility and meeting point. A village pamphlet produced seasonally and a web site, provide voices for the community. Until recently an Elizabethan Fayre was held four-yearly, and was a popular local tourist attraction. The Stebbing Society, formed in July 1974, has played an active role in preserving the environment and the quality of life in Stebbing.

Part 1: Appraisal 1



Picture 1.2 Peace celebrations after 1st World War

1.7 In recent years, the village has completed two important building conservation projects: The restoration of the former United Reform Church Chapel and also of the first ever Friends' Meeting House. Both are now well used halls, benefiting the local community.

1.8 Essex County Council first designated the conservation area in 1977 and reviewed it in 1991. One consideration of this study will be to examine the extent of the existing boundaries to see whether or not further boundary changes are appropriate.

Planning Legislative Framework

1.9 To benefit all participants in this process, it is considered important that this appraisal outlines the basics of how the planning system operates.

1.10 The legislative basis for designating a conservation area is set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 hereafter referred to as 'the Act'. The Act states that Local Authorities 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'.

1 Part 1: Appraisal

1.11 Within conservation areas there are additional planning controls. It is important that if these are to be supported, particularly through the planning appeal process, our conservation areas accord with the above statutory description, that rational and consistent judgments are made in determining their special qualities and extent of their boundaries and that the concept of designation is not devalued by including areas that lack special interest.

1.12 Uttlesford has the responsibility in law to designate conservation areas and once designated has to review them from time to time (section 69 of the Act). Section 71 of the Act makes it clear that councils should 'formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement' of conservation areas and hold a public meeting to consider them.

1.13 There are two main additional planning controls that apply in conservation areas that are not relevant beyond them. Setting detailed exceptions to one side, buildings within conservation areas cannot be demolished without consent and secondly, any proposal to undertake works to trees has to be notified to the Council, who then consider whether or not to make such trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

1.14 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995, hereafter referred to as 'the Order', defines the overall range of minor developments for which planning permission is not required and this range of 'permitted development' is more restricted in conservation areas. In this respect, the Order currently requires that the addition of dormer windows to roof slopes, various types of cladding, the erection of satellite dishes fronting a highway and a reduction in the size of extensions, require planning permission in a conservation area.

1.15 However there still remain many other minor developments that do not require planning permission, even in a conservation area. To provide further protection to the built environment, councils may introduce additional controls. Examples of such controls include the erection or removal of chimneys, some developments fronting a highway or open space such as an external porch, the painting of a dwelling house or the demolition of gates, fences and walls. The removal of particular types of architectural features that are important to the character or appearance of a conservation area, such as distinctive porches and windows or walls and railings to non-listed properties could be specified in a such a direction known in law as an 'Article 4 Direction'. The use of such directions can only be used in justified circumstances and where a clear assessment of the conservation area's qualities has been made. In conducting this exercise we will establish whether or not such additional controls are appropriate for Stebbing.

Planning Policy Framework

1.16 The current local plan is the 'Uttlesford Local Plan' that was adopted in 2005 in which Stebbing designated a 'settlement'. The plan defines the conservation area, some of which lies within the 'Development Limits' where there is a general presumption in favour of appropriate development, including housing infilling on suitable sites.

Part 1: Appraisal 1

1.17 A particularly relevant policy in the adopted local plan that relates to the design of development within conservation areas is Policy Env1. This states that development will be allowed where it preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the essential features of a conservation area. It also states that demolition of buildings that positively contribute to the area will not be permitted. Thus one of the aims of this appraisal will be to identify non-listed buildings that contribute to the character and appearance of Stebbing's conservation area.

1.18 The Council is currently working on the new form document that has to replace the current adopted plan, namely 'The Local Development Framework' and this will supersede the current adopted plan when it has been completed.

1.19 This conservation area appraisal, once it has been subject to public consultation will be approved by the Council for use in the process of determining planning applications and also for implementing management proposals in Stebbing. Once the new Local Development Framework is in place this appraisal can be adopted as a 'Supplementary Planning Document' to support relevant policies in the new plan.

General Influences

1.20 The economic success of both Stansted Airport and Cambridge exerts economic and transportation influences throughout the whole region. Stebbing is situated in a primarily rural area north of the A120, about 12 km east of Stansted airport and 7 km west of Braintree. This recently constructed road offers a fast and efficient dual carriageway to the M11 motorway junction, giving access to London and Cambridge. Mainline railway links to London are easily accessible from Stansted Airport, Bishop's Stortford, Chelmsford and Braintree. The proximity of these good communication routes has tended to influence the residential make-up of the village in recent years with a split between those employed locally, mainly in agriculture, and those commuting to London and other areas. Stebbing, because of its location, will continue to be affected by these factors in the future and this emphasises the need to provide maximum protection to its historic environment.

1.21 For a rural village with a population of 1290, there is limited employment within the village. Agriculture and associated service industries remain the main employment source in the village. Other work opportunities based in the village are centred on local services: a building company specializing in historic properties; a shop (closed since the survey has been undertaken); a pub; a well-attended primary school; various sporting facilities which require maintenance and a number of other small businesses. Until recently the village had another pub, a post office functioning in the present village shop and a doctor, some of these needs are now being served in neighbouring towns such as Dunmow and Braintree.

The General Character of Stebbing

1.22 **Setting:** Stebbing is a dispersed parish made up of a number of built-up areas on relatively high ground above the valley of the Stebbing Brook. Bran End and Church End are separated from the main historic core of the settlement by wedges of open

1 Part 1: Appraisal

land through which tributaries to Stebbing Brook run. Beyond these areas some outlying scattered settlements have developed at Duck End to the north east and Stebbing Green to the south east.

1.23 Stebbing Brook and tributaries are particularly attractive forming part of the Upper Chelmer Valley landscape character area. The gently undulating valley floor is narrow and enclosed, framed by many riverside and hedgerow trees and woodland. Some county wildlife sites have been identified along Stebbing Brook to the north of Bran End for their species rich hedgerows and copses. The surrounding farmland is of Grade 2 (very good)⁽ⁱ⁾ agricultural value growing barley, wheat and beans although there is a band of Grade 3 land which follows the course of Stebbing Brook. The river valley is classified as zone 2 and 3 for flooding.

1.24 *General character and plan form:* The extent of the existing conservation area is a reflection of the central core of the community as it existed in the late 19th century, and as shown on the 1877 Ordnance survey map (see Map 1). The community then, as the conservation area today, consisted of the main historic core, namely Church End and the High Street with a scattering of buildings on Mill Lane. Further dispersed groups were in outlying hamlets. Stebbing has grown significantly during the 20th century, principally due to its location in relation to proximity of good communications, but the village has managed to retain its character in spite of this, and absorbed the new development without being spoilt.

1.25 The main village can be divided into two main character areas: The first area is the 20th century developments of Bran End Fields, Brookfields, Garden Fields and more recently Marshalls Piece. The undulating landscape affording views out, and the close proximity of the surrounding fields give most of these developments a fairly pleasant feel. The buildings are variable in type, some laid out following historic field plans such as Garden Fields, others following the line of the contours. The general character of these areas is one of architectural neutrality, where they neither detract from, nor contribute significantly to the historic core of the village. They have been constructed on pockets of land on either side of the road between the High Street and Bran End. Here hedges, trees and the undulating nature of the topography have to a great extent screened the majority of this expansion from the main road. These developments have been contained to the north of the historic core and away from it. Linking the old part and the new on the east side is the primary school, a dominant 19th century building and on the west side fields slope down to the wooded motte.

1.26 The second area is the conservation area and historic part of the village which includes the High Street, Church End, Mill Lane and Stebbing Park. The main change here, since the end of the 19th century, has been in Mill Lane where a continuous line of infill developments have meant that Tan Farm and Cottages are no longer isolated buildings.

i *Agricultural land Classification of England and Wales: revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land*, Defra Publications, 1988

Part 1: Appraisal 1

1.27 Development has generally been on the high ground between the Motte and the church. There are about 142 individually listed buildings in the extensive parish of Stebbing of which 65 are in the designated conservation area. Nearly half are from the 17th century. The 16th century is represented with 18%, less from the 15th (only 11%) and only 4.5% buildings from the 13th and 14th centuries. The rest include 14% from the 18th century and very few (4.5%) from the 19th. The vast majority 82% are timber framed and plastered.

1.28 Some of the very important features of the village are walls, railings and hedging. Some of the walling is of a rich red brick but others are flint panels supported by brick piers and capping. The flints are locally available, found in fields and stream beds surrounding the village. Hedging is mixed.

1.29 Throughout the conservation area there are trees in abundance, a number located in private gardens, some of which have been made subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

Origins and Historic Development

1.30 The principal published sources from which much of this information has been gathered are: *Stebbing – the Prospect for Survival*, Robert Holles, Kathleen Phillips, Diana Mann and Michael Kingdom, Published by the Stebbing Society 1975; *Stebbing Village Website*⁽ⁱⁱ⁾; and *English Heritage Website Pastscapes*⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾. Reference is also made to census data, the 1877 Ordnance Survey map, and other sources referred to in the text.

1.31 There is little evidence of early settlement in Stebbing and finds have been limited to remnants of Neolithic and Bronze Age flints used for tools. Other artifacts have been discovered in Bronze Age burial mounds in the area. Close to these mounds, an Iron Age and Romano British cemetery was excavated dating from pre-Flavian to the 2nd century^(iv) and used for about 150 years. The graves so far found have been comparatively rich, with brooches, glass and pottery goods deposited in each interment, however there is nothing to suggest they are Roman.

1.32 The village lies only a few kilometres north of the roman road, Stane Street, but there is no evidence of Roman settlement in the village itself. East of the village excavations have uncovered the remains of a probable Roman courtyard villa and ancillary buildings. Roman surface finds were excavated prior to construction of the new A120 and others have been uncovered on Stebbing Green, possibly left by legionaries and other travellers en route between London and Colchester. Additionally various furnaces were found with evidence of iron, bronze and lead working and a number of Roman pottery or tile kilns in the locality.

1.33 During the Saxon period, post 5th century, settlements are believed to have grown up in the hamlets of Church End, High Street, Bran and Duck End. By the late sixth and seventh centuries the name “Stebbing” came into use thought to have been derived

ii <http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~kccsteb/index>

iii English Heritage Pastscapes <http://www.pastscape.org>

iv English Heritage Pastscapes <http://www.pastscape.org>

1 Part 1: Appraisal

from “Stebba’s Inge”, the “Inge” meaning enclosure belonging to the “Stebba” or “Stybba” clan. At the time of the Norman Conquest records indicate that there was village settlement owned by Siward, Saxon 'thegn' (or thane).

1.34 Medieval: Domesday records suggest that in 1087 the village was divided into two manors and shared between two Norman lords, Henry de Ferrers at Stebbing Park and Ralph Peverell at what is now known as Parsonage Farm. There may have been a further manor at Porter’s Hall with land stretching away from the village towards Bardfield Saling and Great Saling.

1.35 The manor of Parsonage Farm encompassed 400 acres with 19 inhabitants^(v). These were bondsmen holding some 30 acres or more, paying service of three days a week on their Lord's lands. There were 31 tenant farmers and 11 serfs, 24 acres of meadow, a vineyard and enough woodland for 200 pigs. Through Peverell’s son’s alleged wrongdoings, the manor was taken by the crown and eventually passed to the de Ferrers family.

1.36 The manor of the de Ferrers at Stebbing Park was larger containing about 530 acres, 9 acres of pasture and woodland sufficient to feed 130 pigs. There were 8 villeins and 33 tenant farmers. From Domesday records sheep were the main livestock in the two local manors. De Ferrers held 210 Lordships, Stebbing Park being one of the five in Essex^(vi). The family was prominent at the court of William I, one member serving on the Domesday Commission. One was appointed Earl of Derby by King Stephen and another served with Richard in the Crusades and died at the Siege of Acre in 1191. In 1339 Henry de Ferrers obtained a Charter for a market and fair to be held in the Parish.^(vii) The motte castle was built between the 11th to 13th centuries is situated on a prominent west-facing spur in Stebbing Park, 750m north-west of the church. It includes a circular earthen mound 69m in diameter and is about 13m high. Surrounding the motte is a water filled moat. No evidence of a bailey has been found.

1.37 The present medieval church dates from the 14th century built on the site of an earlier building. Today it retains a distinctive finely carved stone screen under the chancel arch, only two others exist, one in Great Bardfield in Essex and one in Trondheim, Norway. The prominence and quality of this building represented the importance and wealth of the church in medieval times.

v Stebbing-The Prospect for Survival, (1975) Holles, R., Phillips, K., Mann, D., & Kingdom, M., The Stebbing Society

vi Buckler George, 1856, Twenty-two of the Churches of Essex, P. 233

vii Buckler George, P. 233

Part 1: Appraisal 1



Picture 1.3 Historic photograph of Church End with Maltings in centre

1.38 On the High Street, Tweed Cottage, a late 13th century hall house, is one of the earliest domestic buildings still remaining. From this period onwards, quality domestic buildings were constructed as peasants became prosperous Yeoman farmers, accruing wealth as a result of the thriving East Anglian wool trade. The lack of available manpower resulting from the Black Death in the mid 14th century, further contributed to the growth in sheep farming, which required less labour. Whilst the village contributed wool for the woollen industry, there is no evidence of weaving taking place here.

1.39 *Post-medieval:* The 16th century brought further changes to Stebbing. Following the Reformation, the focus moved away from the church and towards other buildings. High inflation and a rapid rise in population gave impetus to this. The resulting development along the High Street, Church End and Stebbing Green established the pattern of building that is evident today.

1.40 By the 16th or 17th centuries the manors had been divided into smaller farms. Agriculture by then was mixed farming and it can be assumed that the village would have been a fairly self contained community. In vestry records there are several references to corn-millers, flour-millers, malsters, bakers and alehouses, from the mid 16th century onwards.

1.41 In common with many communities in the Eastern Counties the village has grown northwards away from the church. It has been suggested that this reflects the early rise of Non-Conformism or Dissent in the area^(viii), and resulting in Friends Meeting House and the Chapel being much nearer to the village centre. Stebbing was one of the principal

1 Part 1: Appraisal

centres of early Quakerism in Essex and a meeting was recorded here in 1659^(ix). In 1672 King Charles II granted a Declaration of Indulgence to the dissenters to the established Church of England permitted meeting places under licence. This however was revoked in 1673 but reinstated under the Toleration Act of 1685. During this time the Stebbing Meeting House was built. It was constructed with double doors on the northern wall which were still present in 1913. It is thought that the building may have been concealed behind a cottage on the High Street.

1.42 During the two Civil Wars of the mid 17th century St Mary's Church is thought to have been used as a billet for the occupying forces of the Roundheads as well as providing stabling for their horses.



Picture 1.4 Historic view of High Street, Old Post House on left

1.43 The majority of the remaining buildings in the village were constructed during the 17th century. 17th and 18th century saw a refinement of detail and proportion in house building with some alterations to buildings, re-fronting and adaptations. At this time a fair was held in the triangle on the downs, north of the historic core, noted for lambs in the mid 18th century but by 1800's calves and cattle were marketed indicating a change in agricultural practice. At some point it moved to the rear garden of the Red Lion. The fair ceased in 1925 but reopened in 1970.^(x)

ix Uttlesford District Council Website

x Stebbing Village Website

Part 1: Appraisal 1

1.44 The population in 1841 was 1458^(xi). An extract from the Post Office Guide of 1863 showed the parish contained 4,301 acres, and the population in 1861 had dropped to 1,346^(xii). The village census of 1863 demonstrates that the village was still a self contained and vibrant society as the following selected range of local trades demonstrates. These include in addition to numerous farmers: a grocer; a baker; butchers; maltsters; millers; a number of shoe makers; a draper; a blacksmith; a brick maker; coach, cart and gig builders; wheelwright, harness maker; a carpenter and two surgeons. Also there were three public houses in the core of the village: The White Hart, the Red Lion and The King's Head.

1.45 The extent of development at the end of the 19th century is illustrated in Map 1 – 1877 Ordnance Survey map. The existing conservation area has been plotted on this map for information. It is interesting to note that population in 1881 was 1146^(xiii) only slightly less than the present population, yet the extent of development was much more restricted that it is now. Development was most dense along the High Street and Church End in the centre of the village where occupancy rates of houses must have been significantly greater than today. Many boundaries that existed at this time remain unaltered.



Picture 1.5 Thrashing corn at Church Farm, 1930's.

xi UDC website

xii Stebbing in the 19th century, Stebbing Village Website: <http://www.netcomuk.co.uk>

xiii Population 1881 was 1740

<http://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/rectype/census/uk/default.aspx>

1 Part 1: Appraisal

1.46 The agricultural depression of the early twentieth century only exacerbated the general decline in population as more and more villagers moved away from the land. The Population of Stebbing in 1951 had dropped to 1062 but increased again to 1200 in 1971 and 1330 in 1981 with the construction of the developments to the north of the conservation area. The 2001 census recorded a population of 1290.^(xiv)

1.47 Of the many farms within the village, Church Farm is one of a few working farms left, much of the rest of the land is now let or run by a cooperative. This is mainly due to changes in the agricultural economy. The introduction of more mechanisation has reduced the requirement for farm workers, so with present day improved transportation, most employment is sought outside the village in Dunmow, Braintree and beyond. The village now offers those from urban areas the opportunity to commute whilst enjoying a rural lifestyle and as a result this is mainly a commuting village.

1.48 Historically, the role of Stebbing has changed dramatically and there is little doubt that it will continue to be subject to significant pressures. Whilst it would be impossible and indeed undesirable to attempt to recreate past nostalgia, there is a clear duty to preserve and enhance what remains, principally the buildings, the spaces between them and their settings. The two reasons for doing this are easily understood. Firstly because the environment is historically important and visually pleasing and secondly such action will benefit posterity and enable future generations to appreciate, enjoy and learn from the past. The character analysis below assesses these qualities.

Character Analysis

1.49 The present conservation area has been divided into 3 zones, each with a map and key common to all. Text and photographs provide a brief description of each area. Historical photographs have been sourced from David Howland and other photographs are by the surveyor.

1.50 The extent of the areas is shown on Map 2. They are: Area 1 – High Street; Area 2 – Church End; Area 3 – Mill Lane to Stebbing Park.

1.51 *Potential redevelopment sites:* The identification of such sites is not an acceptance of the principle of redevelopment but an indication of potential pressure in relation to the individual site.

1.52 *Individually listed buildings:* The listed buildings have been individually identified from English Heritage's on line source and have been carefully plotted. Each individual area analysis indicates the number of listed buildings as a percentage of principal buildings in that area.

1.53 *Separately identified buildings within the curtilage of listed buildings:* Such buildings, if they are pre- 1948 are subject to the same controls as listed buildings. Walls of quality within the curtilages of listed buildings are separately identified. Other curtilage buildings are not individually noted in this exercise except in respect of the barn and greenhouse at Stebbing Park (see analysis of area 3 below).

Part 1: Appraisal 1

1.54 Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the conservation area: The basic criteria used to identify buildings falling into this category are (a) the non - listed building is of architectural or historic interest whose general external appearance has not been altered to such a degree that such qualities have been lost; (b) it exhibits a sufficient level of original features and materials; (c) it retains its original scale without modern inappropriate extensions that visually destroy the visual appearance of the building and (d) It is visually important in the street scene.

1.55 Scheduled Ancient monuments: There is one such designation within the conservation area, this being the site of the mount in Stebbing Park

1.56 EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS: The Mount- a motte castle at Stebbing Park

Description of the Monument: *The monument comprises a motte castle situated on a prominent west-facing spur in Stebbing Park, 750m north-west of the church. It included a circular earthen mount which measures 69m in diameter at its base, 15.5m in diameter at its summit and is c.13m in height. Surrounding the motte is a waterfilled moat which has a maximum width of 15m and is c.1.5m in depth. Originally a narrow causeway on the west side of the moat gave access to the motte but sometime in the last ten years this has been excavated to for a continuous moat and access in now via a small wooden bridge.*

The manor at Stebbing was held by Henry de Ferrers. During the latter part of Stephen's reign, the then owner, Ralf, the Earl of Chester, fled leaving his estates in the King's hands. There are references to an excavation of the motte by R Armitage, though no date is recorded and no details known. Excluded from the scheduling are the concrete water tank, the concrete and brick remains of an air raid shelter and the wooden footbridge but the ground beneath these features is, however, included.

1.57 Assessment of Importance: *Motte castles are medieval fortifications introduced into Britain by the Normans. The comprised a large conical mound of earth or rubble, the motte, surmounted by a palisade and a stone or timber tower. In a majority of examples an embanked enclosure containing additional buildings, the bailey, garrison forts during offensive military operations, as strongholds, and, in many cases , as aristocratic residences and as centres of local or royal administration. Built in towns, villages and open countryside, motte castles generally occupied strategic positions dominating their immediate locality and, as a result, are the most visually impressive monuments of the early post-Conquest period surviving in the modern landscape. Over 600 motte castles or motte-and-bailey castles are recorded nationally, with examples known from most regions. As such, as one of a restricted range of recognised early post-Conquest monuments, they are particularly important for the study of Norman Britain and the development of the feudal system. Although many were occupied from the 11th to the 13th centuries, after which they were superseded by other types of castle.*

1 Part 1: Appraisal

1.58 *Despite limited excavation, Stebbing Mount motte is well preserved and will retain information relating to the building of the mound and the medieval structures that occupied it. Additionally, environmental evidence is thought to survive, particularly in the lower silts of the waterfilled moat. Such evidence provides some indication of the environment within which the motte was built and the economy of its inhabitants.*



Picture 1.6 Wooded motte at Stebbing Park

1.59 ***Important trees and open spaces:*** The basic criteria for identifying such trees are (a) trees must be in good condition; (b) they are visible, at least in part, or as part of a group, from public viewpoints and (c) individual specimens selected should make a significantly dominant contribution to the street scene. It may also be appropriate to identify less mature trees, particularly if they appear as a group. The positions marked on the maps are indicative only.

1.60 Open spaces of landscape quality or of historic importance that contribute to the visual importance and add to the variety of the street scene or the conservation area generally, have been included.

1.61 ***Other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution:*** Local characteristics of the conservation area are boundary walling, railings and hedging. Many fine examples of walling are of red brick, or brick and flint. Due to the scale of the maps the position of walls are approximate and may include

Part 1: Appraisal 1

openings such as gates. Modern walls have only been identified if they have been well constructed in a traditional manner. Railings and hedging are noted where they make a positive contribution. Fences are only marked if they are a detracting element.

1.62 *Traditional materials and detailing:* Traditional materials and detail make a significant contribution to the character of the local area. The limited pallet of materials visible in the historic core of the village is derived from the range of local resources available. Buildings were most commonly constructed from oak or elm timber frame and infilled with wattle panels. Lime render from local chalk is the predominant finish more commonly with plain rather than pargetted decoration. Weather board is prevalent on outbuildings and barns, both feather edged and plain edged and painted black.

1.63 Before the 18th century bricks were typically only used for foundations, fireplaces and floors. These are handmade reds, occasionally with gault brick detailing and with cambered or gauged arches to openings. Brickwork is most commonly found in Flemish bond although English bond is also used, usually on perimeter walls and outbuildings where decorative effect is required. (In the 19th century there was a brickfield to the rear of Brook House).

1.64 Roofs are predominantly of handmade red clay plain tiles in reddish brown colour laid steeply (47 to 50°) sometimes half hipped. Natural blue-grey slate is at a lower pitch (35 to 40°) but rarer in Stebbing. Orange clay pantiles are used on outbuildings and some 20th century buildings. Thatch although once more common is now only found on one building in the conservation area. This is long straw laid at a steep pitch. The ridge is finished with decorative ligger work pattern. Roofscapes provide a rich variety of architectural detail, form and shape. Interest is drawn from the single or multiple red brick chimney stacks. With a few very elaborate constructions, most are of simple construction with an element of corbelling and generally they are squat and of simple form. On low 1 ½ storey cottages dormer windows penetrate the roofline where they typically provide contour and interest.

1 Part 1: Appraisal



Picture 1.7 Typical small dormer

1.65 Windows are largely traditional; in painted timber with either symmetrical, flush or recessed casements, occasionally horizontal sliding sashes, or vertical sliding sashes in later or re-fronted properties. Pentice boards are common above windows. (Although plastic replacement windows are to be found on a number of later properties, planning controls have protected listed building from these defacing alterations.) Where replacement windows are in evidence they are usually good timber copies of the original or are in period style. There are a number of historic shopfronts which should be retained.

1.66 Doorways are typically framed with porches and pediments. These range from simple flat canopy board with brackets to elaborate moulded surrounds with frieze and pediment. Plank and muntin doors are appropriate on the timber framed 17th century properties and paneled doors typical on those with 18th century features.

1.67 Boundary treatments are an important element in defining the street scene where they provide texture and interest to an area. Walls and railings interlink the buildings along the High Street. Elsewhere hedges predominate and act as a screen for modern developments. Fields too are defined by mixed hedging and occasionally simple wire fencing. Some painted or plain picket fencing is evident and appropriate fronting modest dwellings but poor quality timber fencing, evident in places, is not appropriate on the frontages in the core of the historic area.

Part 1: Appraisal 1

1.68 The main roads are predominantly tarmac with large rolled aggregate. The pavements to parts of the High Street are granite edged but low height on the east side. In the central section of the High Street one long length of kerb has been raised, doubled in width and dotted with conservation grade bollards. The result is attractive and has prevented vehicles mounting the footway. The majority of the smaller thoroughfares, Mill Lane and Church End are wholly or partly bordered by wide grass verges which provide extra texture and colour to the environment.

1.69 *Important views:* Only the finest views of landmark features or buildings have been shown. Development proposals that would significantly alter them will not be appropriate.

1.70 *Neutral buildings:* The uncoloured buildings on the plans are neutral in character and neither enhance nor detract from the street scene. Some are from the late 20th century and attempt to reflect the principles set out in the 'Essex Design Guide', some less satisfactorily than others.

1.71 *Detracting elements:* Features such as confusing poles of road signs, features in poor repair and broken fencing, have been identified on individual maps.

1.72 *Proposed revisions to the conservation area:* A few areas that are proposed for inclusion are now considered to positively add to the quality of the conservation area. Conversely areas are proposed for exclusion where they no longer contribute to the conservation area. Proposed changes are made where arbitrary boundaries exist.

1 Part 1: Appraisal

Area 1 - High Street

1.73 The details described below are shown on Map 3.



Picture 1.8 Historic view of High Street looking south towards church

1.74 Stebbing is essentially a linear village which stretches from Bran End in the north to St Mary's Church in the south. Development is on either side of this undulating route. The High Street is the core of the main historic settlement and lies on an elevated section. The ground falls away to the west towards the river affording views from the higher ground towards open countryside. At the southern end of the High Street, the densely packed built core abruptly opens out to an attractive rural scene, comprising a pattern of small fields and the leafy curtilage of the churchyard.

1.75 The village High Street is flanked on either side by a high density of historic listed buildings of considerable architectural interest. This forms a street of the highest quality. A total of 35 listed buildings are present, representing 70% of the total in this part of the conservation area. The majority of buildings front the street, some are set back and others abut it. They are predominantly plastered and painted in a variety of colours, mellow yellow, ochre and blue. A limited range of traditional materials have been used in construction, but varied shapes and heights provide a street scene that is of pleasing visual appearance. The length of the High Street between the Vicarage and Church End is an almost unbroken series of old buildings and hedges. The important

Part 1: Appraisal 1

gaps between some of the buildings are filled by high walls of mellow brick or flint and provide an elevational continuity. These walls are a special feature of Stebbing and should be retained.



Picture 1.9 Rich mix of historic buildings along High Street

1.76 On the east side, the street is fronted by a number of large buildings and farmhouses, interwoven with more modest cottages. Some of the farmhouses retain their outbuildings behind, beyond which, are open fields. The close proximity of the fields behind the High Street, is essential to the character of Stebbing and important that this relationship is retained, and not further obscured or eroded by development.

1.77 The street has been subject to some 20th century changes. Some individual properties such as Ilex House and the larger complex of Livery Mews are examples which reflect principles set out in the 'Essex Design Guide'. Carpenters Cottage is a good example of infill between two 17th century structures. Sensitively designed, with correct use of scale and materials, the result is a sympathetic solution which does not detract from the adjacent historic buildings.

1.78 The skyline provides a rich variety of architectural detail, form and shape. Tiled roofs, some half hipped, some with dormers and squat chimney stacks provide a distinctive roofline.

1 Part 1: Appraisal

1.79 In contrast to the built form, the Bowling Green, (originally the site of two cottages), now provides a pleasant open contrast in the centre of the village. To the south of this, the mature trees of the Vicarage gardens provide an attractive and dominant element introducing verticality and colour.

1.80 The High Street does not provide a direct connection between built up areas, therefore much of the traffic is local and does not appear to be of a great concern. However parking in the evenings and weekends can cause considerable congestion, narrowing the road and inhibiting traffic flow. Parking at the southern end of the High Street can be particularly problematic where visibility is poor due to the hill and bend in the road. Any further building development within the High Street must recognise these parking issues.

1.81 *Individually listed buildings:* The historical importance of the Stebbing Memorial Club, otherwise known as the Quaker Meeting House is recognised by its Grade II* listing. The hipped red plain tile roof is not a common feature in Stebbing. The early red brickwork is not typical either but the use of brick is evidence of the importance of the building in the village at that time. Constructed in Flemish bond, it is ornamentally patterned with Diapering in black header bricks. The original frontage, to the north side, has large lead casement windows; the doorway no longer extant. The present frontage has a central doorway with flat headed porch supported by two Tuscan columns above which is a moulded brick plaque dated 1674. The high set windows, which appeared to have been raised at some time, give the building a “doll’s house” appearance. The building is set back from the road fronted by an attractive mixture of paving and set cobbles which is entirely appropriate for this important site.

Part 1: Appraisal 1



Picture 1.10 Stebbing Memorial Club, dated 1674

1.82 Beyond this building to the south end of the High Street is Tudor House, a fine Grade II exposed timber-framed building dating back to the 15th century or earlier, with later additions and alterations. The crosswing is two storey with upper jetty supported by curved brackets. The north section of the building is one storey with attics. The red plain tiled roof has one central gabled dormer. To the front there are mainly diamond leaded casements and six panelled round headed door. There is one window and an oriel bay to the crosswing and an original mullioned window can be seen at the south end. Inserted into the main range is a red brick concertina chimney shaft on a moulded brick base.

1 Part 1: Appraisal



1.83 Other dominant and notable buildings at this end of the High Street are, the Post Office and Stores, known now as Bakery House, originally a 17th century timber framed core but brick fronted in the 19th or 20th century and with a red plain tiled roof. The red brick front is decorated with a yellow brick band and yellow gauged brick window arches with 19th/20th century sliding sash windows. Hillcrest is a further substantial building from the 17th century (or earlier) timber-framed and plastered with red plain tiled roof. The distinctive 19th century doorway is framed with plain pilasters, moulded capitals, plain frieze and a moulded canopy. Next to Tudor House, White Hart Cottage and Willow View, once one building, are 17th century or earlier. Timber-framed and plastered with red plain tiles clad roof of side purlin construction. A further notable building is Town Farmhouse, a substantial and imposing building near the centre of the High Street. Dating back to the 16th century, it is timber-framed with a long wall jetty.

1.84 The Vicarage/Glebe House is a substantial structure of two builds set back in extensive grounds. The earliest is timber framed and plastered with red plain tile roof. This is fronted by a 19th century section of painted brick, sliding sash windows with grey slate roof. This is now divided into two dwellings.

1.85 The White Hart is situated in the centre of the High Street and a social point of the village. The building is 17th century or earlier with later additions and alterations. Its timber-framed construction is plastered, with a main range to the left, and a lower level range to right and with a red plain tiled roof. 3 light 19th century small paned casements to main range and 17th century iron casements to right. Two 19th century panelled doors

Part 1: Appraisal 1

to the front with moulded surrounds and frieze one with a flat canopy. The frontage has a dentilled moulded cornice to eaves and 2 red brick chimney stacks. It was recorded as a public house in 1756 and 1855.



Picture 1.11 Historic view of High Street with King's Head public house on the right

1.86 On the opposite side of the road, The King's Head was a public house until recently. This substantial building dated back to the 16th century or earlier. The timber frame is plastered and panel pargetted with a 2 level jetty to the front. The red plain tiled roof is hipped to sides with 4 red brick chimney stacks. This two storey building has small paned casements to the first floor and 3 bay windows of small paned sliding sashes to the ground floor and 2 board doors. This is now a residential property.

1.87 Bell House, Sibley House and Ducketts are an interesting group. The Bell House was recorded as a public house in 1756. More recently Ducketts has been in use as a butchers shop. The core of the house is thought to be about 17th century and timber-framed. The brick frontage was constructed in the 19th century with decorative gault brick bands and window arches with red brick keystones. The small paned sliding sash windows to both floors and a grey slate roof would have been incorporated then. Ducketts retains the hipped canopy with wooden curved brackets and a butcher's shop window.

1.88 One of the oldest buildings in the village is Tweed Cottage, as already noted, a 13th century hall house with crosswing is to the left. In the 16th century a floor was inserted on the right. Internally, the sooted roof, arched braced tie beam and truncated king post are evidence of this buildings age. Opposite is Sharrocks and Archway Cottages, originally one building. They were constructed about 15th or 16th century with exposed timber frame, and a long wall jetty.

1 Part 1: Appraisal

1.89 Honeysuckle Cottage is the only thatched building remaining in historic core. It abuts the street forming a dominant gateway at the foot of the hill at the north end of the street.

1.90 *Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the street scene:* There are no houses which fall into this category.



Picture 1.12 Trees of Vicarage Garden make a positive contribution to the High Street

1.91 *Important Trees and Open Spaces:* The grounds of the Vicarage whilst private and not accessible to the public, are of considerable importance in so far as its mature trees emerge as a dominant visual feature from public view points. These mature trees make a very valuable contribution to the quality of the High Street. The open leafy quality contrasts with the more enclosed built form of the surrounding street providing additional variety of form, colour, scale and shape. Trees play an important role in the street scene elsewhere by providing vertical emphasis and visual focal points. Some, but not all are subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

1.92 *Other distinctive features:* One long length of red brick walling encloses the gardens of the Vicarage. Some small important sections of walling link other buildings

1.93 Other features protected by statutory listing and designated as Grade II include: a Type K6 telephone box designed by Sir Giles, Gilbert Scott constructed in cast iron, with domed roof, crowns to top panels and margin glazing to windows and doors; and within private grounds, six 19th century cast iron pumps.

Part 1: Appraisal 1

1.94 Important Views: Three such views are identified.

1.95 Undoubtedly, one of the finest views is that from the north, looking along the High Street where the tightly packed rows of pastel, coloured historic houses line the street, framing the distant tower and spire of St Mary's Church. The second is from the rural scene to the south towards the built up historic core. The third is the distant and uninterrupted view out from the High Street eastwards to expansive skies.



Picture 1.13 View from the south towards the High Street, unspoilt transition from rural scene to townscape

1.96 Detracting elements: Traffic congestion noted earlier resulting from narrowing of the road due to parking on both sides may be helped to some extent by restricting parking in some sections to allow passing points. This however would be considered difficult to achieve without extensive use of signage and road markings which are themselves detracting.

1.97 Ducketts is situated in a prominent position in the centre of the village. Presently this is in a poor state of repair, with boarded up door and brickwork in need of attention. If action could be taken to improve the frontage, this would represent a major improvement to the street scene.

1 Part 1: Appraisal



Picture 1.14 Detracting elements of wire fencing and plastic litter bin sandwiched between listed buildings

1.98 Opposite Tudor Cottage, the curtilage of the electricity sub-station, presents an unsightly view. It is enclosed by poor quality wire fencing with concrete posts and a poor quality gate. Set amongst important listed buildings, this is a highly detracting element. Some simple improvements could be made such as hedge planting that would be highly beneficial to the environment.

1.99 There are some litter bins on the High Street, one next to the bench by the Bowling Green, outside the village shop and by the telephone box. These are black plastic models. Consideration should be given to replacing them with better quality “conservation grade” range.

1.100 A large black and green recycling bin is permanently placed outside the village shop for use by the shop owners who have no other place to store it. Negotiations should take place for UDC to resolve this, which may mean the provision of an alternative better quality model.

Part 1: Appraisal 1



Picture 1.15 Plastic litter bin and recyle bins impinge on street scene

1.101 *Revised Boundary Changes:* No changes recommended

1 Part 1: Appraisal

Area 2 - Church End

1.102 The details described below are shown on Map 4.



Picture 1.16 Historic View of Church End towards Red Lion with Maltings in foreground

1.103 Church End lies south of the High Street core but is isolated from it by a band of small fields on the west side and wooded meadow on the east. Here the village is dominated by the Church of St Mary set back in extensively treed churchyard. The road through Church End lies perpendicular to the High Street and links Little Dunmow to Stebbing Green. The character of this area is defined partly by the mixed scale and types of buildings and partly due to the street form which dog-legs around the former Red Lion pub. The T-junction is centred by a War Monument. Neither roads are major routes but do generate a significant amount of local traffic and the speed of traffic through Church End has been raised as a concern.

1.104 Towards the eastern end of Church End, the former Red Lion Public House provides a visual stop. The Red Lion lies on the convergence of the main road on the north side and two footpaths to the south. Here, small two storey vernacular houses generally follow the line of the road some forming short terraces, others standing individually. Apart from Littles which abuts the street, the buildings here generally front it and are set back behind large grass verges. They are predominantly timber framed and plastered, the majority with plain tiled roofs. Entering the village from the east side provides a very marked transition between the open expanse of fields to a condensed built form with buildings and walling flanking the narrow road which bends sharply, thus accentuating the sense of enclosure of the village.

Part 1: Appraisal 1

1.105 To the south and west of the junction with the High Street, Church Farm and Parsonage Farm dominate the street scene. These visually enclose this end of the village. The inclusion within the conservation area of some small fields between the farms and the High Street, accentuates the rural feel of the village.

1.106 There are 18 listed buildings in this section of the village representing approximately 50% of the total. Comparison with the 1877 Ordnance Survey map reveals that there have been some changes. The rather disjoint character of the street scene was at one time more defined and enclosed by a large malting on the corner of the churchyard, a more substantial building to the east of the Chantry and farm buildings on the roadside curtilage of Parsonage Farm (Priors Hall).

1.107 During the 20th century a number of buildings have been constructed in Church End. The more recent builds such as the cottages to the east of The Chase are the more successful, suitably scaled and detailed. Recently, a larger development has taken place in Ruffels Place, built to Essex Design Guide principles, set back from the street and not impinging on it. A number of other 20th century buildings do not contribute positively and should redevelopment occur, something more appropriate in scale, materials and detailing would greatly enhance the area.

1.108 *Listed Buildings:* The Church of St Mary's is a grade I church dating back to 1360 with later restorations. The walls are of flint rubble with clunch and shelly oolite dressings and some bricks. The Nave, North and South Aisles and Tower walls are embattled, with gargoyles on the south side. The brick clerestory was inserted in early 16th century. Roofs are lead, grey slate to Aisles and red plain tile to Chancel whilst the wooden spire, on top of the tower, is finished in shingles. The most distinctive feature is magnificent stone screen already mentioned which fills the chancel arch. Other notable features include: one remaining coloured stained glass window; brass monuments, one from 1390 in the Nave, and in the chancel from 1608; a 15th/16th chest with iron bound lid made from one large section of timber; remains of wall paintings in chancel, nave and aisles; and a clock in the West Tower which is approximately 200 years old.

1 Part 1: Appraisal



Picture 1.17 Priors Hall, dating back to 1400

1.109 Another building of note is Parsonage Farmhouse (Priors Hall), a superb and substantial building and a prominent feature on the approach to the village from the west. Set back from the road in extensive and well manicured gardens, is the fine exposed timber structure, infilled with plaster, with plain red tiled roof. Listed as Grade II* this was originally a hall house with cross wing, dating back to 1400. The building has been subject to many alterations: a red brick chimney stack inserted about 1490; and in about 1600 the hall was largely rebuilt with first floor long wall jetty, the roof of the crosswing was raised and a large red brick chimney and staircase turret rebuilt. This new range was 1½ storeys high above the jetty. Within the curtilage of Parsonage Farm is the individually listed Parsonage Farm Barn, situated adjacent to the road. Dating back to between the 17th and 18th century it is constructed of 8 bays, it is part plastered part weather-boarded with red plain tiled roof with 2 midstreys and crosswing to right.

1.110 Church Farm lies in a prominent visual position on the junction with Church End and the High Street. This grade II building dates back to the 15th or 16th century although much altered and extended. English Heritage describes it as timber-framed and plastered, jettied to left return, red plain tile roof with central gable, now with H plan with further extensions left and hipped right. This 2 storied building has various casement windows to the upper floor and 19th century transomed window bays to the ground floor. Distinctively shaped left and central chimney stacks and a truncated 2 shaft octagonal chimney stack on the right with square base. Church Farm is set behind an unusual rubble wall. In an area with a rural feel, bordered by hedges in some respects

Part 1: Appraisal 1

it is out of place but having been there for over 50 years, it could now be considered part of the character of the village. To the west and the rear of Church Farmhouse are a number of individually listed buildings. These include one 17th century and one 18th century black weather boarded barns with gabled midstreys one of 6 bays, one 7. Originally these would have been thatched. A further noted grade II building is the Dovecote south of the house, dating back to the 15th century, timber framed and plastered with hipped red tiled roof surmounted by a square cote.

1.111 The Chantry lies on the west side of the church nestled behind a wall, shrubs and trees. This is a fine medieval building, exhibiting plaque dated 1480, with exposed timber frame and plaster infill and some weather boarding to right return. A long wall jetty is visible to the front and left return connected by an arched and moulded dragon bracket and moulded capital. Ogee bracing to the 1st floor and a board door with arched head surround. The hipped red plain tiled roof has gablets. This 2 storey building has 3 range diamond leaded casements.



Picture 1.18 Historic view of east part of Church End. Now much enriched by vegetation.

1.112 A further group of buildings east of The Chantry are 2 storey tightly knit cottages from various periods fronting the street comprising Anne Cottage, Squirrels, Meadow Side and End Cottage. The oldest, Anne Cottage and Squirrels date from about the 16th century, timber-farmed with half hipped tiled roof. End Cottage is approximately 17th century timber-framed with tiled roof. Between these, Meadow Side is a later building of possibly of 18th century with grey slate roof. All have small paned casements, doors

1 Part 1: Appraisal

with small canopies over and red brick chimneys. Opposite is Serenga a 1½ storey building dates back to about the 16th century. Unusually weather-boarded with a corrugated iron roof this has 2 flat head dormers. These cottages form an important eastern approach to the village, framing the view of the church in the background.

1.113 Facing the Chantry is a range of quality buildings. All are grade II listed, timber-framed buildings with plain tiled roofs. Littles is a two storey 17th century building or earlier. Unlike the other buildings, its gable end fronts the street, decorated with ornate barge board and pendant. There is 1 window range to gable end and 4 to the right return made up of small paned vertical sliding sash windows. The board door is surmounted by a flat canopy and brackets. Adjacent, are Hillside and Churchview, once one building dating back to 16th century or earlier. This two storey grade II building has crosswing to the right and red brick chimney stacks, The 1:1 window range of mainly 19th century with 3 light casements with 17th/18th century square leaded casement to crosswing first floor. Beyond this is The Chase, once two small cottages. It comprises a 1 storey building with attics and 2 gabled dormers, a side purlin roof and an off-centre red brick chimney stack. The central board door has pentice board over and the 3 windows to the ground floor are traditional horizontal sliding sash windows. This row of buildings is set back from the road with a generous grass verge which provides a cohesive link in this section of Church End.

1.114 The former Red Lion Public House is a timber-framed and plastered, H plan with gabled crosswings to right and left and red plain tiled roof which dates back to the 16th and 17th centuries.

1.115 *Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the street scene:* There are no buildings which warrant inclusion in this category.

1.116 *Important trees and open spaces:* The Churchyard is well maintained and its extensive area contains a wealth of interesting tombstones and mature trees, with a particularly attractive avenue of trees framing the gravel path on the west side. Many of these have been replaced. The trees play a very prominent and positive landscape function in this part of the village.

Part 1: Appraisal 1



Picture 1.19 Extensive treed churchyard

1.117 The wooded field to the north of the church contains a high concentration of trees. The juxtaposition of this field, linking the historic focus of the village and the church is very important and must be retained

1.118 Opposite Parsonage Farm is a patchwork of small fields included within the conservation area boundary. These greatly contribute to the setting the buildings of Church End and the High Street. They emphasize the rural feel of the village and provide strong connections to the countryside beyond. It is important that they are retained. The links with the countryside are further accented by the pattern of hedgerows defining the edges of the fields which are woven into the village plots strongly linking the built environment with the surrounding countryside.

1.119 Priors Hall is set in immaculate gardens with a pond and some fine trees visible from the roadway and nearby public footpaths.

1.120 Other distinctive features: Around the Church and The Chantry, flint and brick walling contributes to the quality of the environment. One modern quality section of walling has been constructed next to Littles.

1 Part 1: Appraisal



Picture 1.20 The Chantry, 15th Century, nestled behind flint and brick walling and lush vegetation

1.121 The tall sign fronting the Red Lion serves as a picturesque reminder of former public house.

1.122 The wide grass verges provide extra texture and colour to the environment. Mixed hedges in this area make an important visual contribution to the landscape.

1.123 *Important views:* Two important views have been defined. One is at the east approach to the village of the tightly knit terrace with the Church in the background. The other is the west approach rising up from the Stebbing Brook.

Part 1: Appraisal 1



Picture 1.21 Fine view towards church on eastern approach to Church End

1.124 *Detracting Elements:* The issue of speeding traffic on the approach from the direction of Stebbing Green has been raised by local residents. Although the road has a 30 mph speed limit, the sign has been removed. Replacement of this on the existing post with the addition of a “sharp bend” warning may help to reduce speeds from this direction.

1.125 Reaching the junction of Church End from the direction of the High Street the view is of Church Farm and buildings. This view is seriously eroded by the presence and dominance of some 20th century farm buildings to the east of the farmhouse. Negotiations with the landowner should take place to discuss how to reduce their impact, most easily achieved by planting of trees within the curtilage which would also be highly beneficial to the environment.

1 Part 1: Appraisal



Picture 1.22 Electricity poles are detracting elements in such an important rural scene

1.126 Within the field opposite Parsonage Farm Barn, the electricity poles are a highly intrusive element to this attractive rural scene. If their removal could be secured this would represent a major improvement to the environment.

1.127 Opposite the church, paint is peeling from the red post box. This would benefit from a coat of paint.

1.128 The garden of End Cottage is a scene of dilapidation and a detracting element. This can be viewed through the gateway from the street. Improvement or concealment of this would greatly enhance this part of Church End.

1.129 *Revised Boundary Changes:* An extension is proposed to the boundary to the east of Seringa to include some large trees which border this property and the field to the east. These trees are a dominant feature and provide an important visual backdrop at this end of the village. Minor realignment has been made south of Littles and Church Lodge where property boundaries changed following new building development.

Part 1: Appraisal 1

Area 3 - Mill Lane to Stebbing Park

1.130 The details described below are shown on Map 5.



Picture 1.23 Mill Lane, verges and hedges add to the rural appeal

1.131 In this section of the conservation area, the countryside slopes away from the west of the High Street down to the river valley and includes Mill Lane, the Town Mill, the watercourse, and mill race as far as Stebbing Park with the wooded castle “motte”. This area is characterised by its intensely peaceful and rural feel enhanced by the relative absence of traffic. Bordered by high hedging and steep grassy banks Mill Lane follows the fall line from the High Street down towards Stebbing Brook where tall trees serve to accentuate the depth of the valley. The wide valley floor is a delightful peaceful scene with meadows water and trees and the town mill.

1.132 Mill Lane is characterised by a diverse range of buildings, made up of number of high quality historic buildings, three of which are Grade II*, interspersed with individual 20th century housing of various styles, some more suited to their setting than others. Most are concealed behind high hedging and therefore do not detract significantly from the historic environment. At the upper end of the street, some larger buildings dominant the scene, the former Methodist Chapel and the former United Reformed Church, now the village hall. Further down the hill is the superb, medieval, Tan Farmhouse.

1 Part 1: Appraisal

1.133 Stebbing Park and the motte are some distance from the village core. Although substantial in size, the motte's setting on lower ground and hidden by tall trees largely obscures it from the village. A public right of way runs on the east side linking it to the recreation ground. Here the contrast of the wooded Stebbing Park and the open expanse of the well kept recreation ground, is most apparent. The recreation area is surrounded by some fine mature trees. To the west are wooded areas, fields and the water meadow to the rear of Stebbing Mill.

1.134 *Scheduled Ancient Monument:* Stebbing mount motte is well preserved and was originally scheduled on 10 August 1923.

1.135 *Individually listed buildings:* Although only 34% of the buildings in this section are listed, three are of the highest quality and designated as Grade II*.



Picture 1.24 Stebbing Park nestled between the motte and Stebbing Brook

1.136 Stebbing Park lies north-west of the village High Street. Designated for its importance as Grade II*, the house dates back to 15th/16th century is of L-shape plan, timber framed and plastered with single storey extension to left front. The frontage has a moulded and dentilled eaves cornice, 18th century small paned sliding sashes windows and 6 panel door with ornate fan light above, moulded pilasters, dentilled capitals and frieze with flat canopy above. The roof is of red plain tiles with two 16th century red brick chimney stacks. The rear wing is jettied and has a 17th century iron leaded bay window

Part 1: Appraisal 1

with original shutters and original ironmongery on the ground floor. This building is in the most peaceful of settings on the edge of the village nestled in picturesque parkland between the Motte and Stebbing Brook.

1.137 Stebbing Mill formerly listed as Town Mill is an 18th century water mill, recently restored, as noted above, recognised for its importance by its Grade II* designation. Timber framed and weather boarded, it forms a dominant and important structure bridging the valley at the mill race. The red plain tiled gambrel roof is ½ hipped to the left. A gabled weather boarded hoist loft protrudes from the upper floor supported with arched timber brackets. The recent restoration of the mill included the original use of glass cladding on the western wall. Whilst maintaining the integrity of the structure this has allowed light into the building and allowing an external view of the mill machinery.



Picture 1.25 Stebbing Mill and Mill House, 18th century important buildings in unspoilt setting

1.138 Adjacent and separately listed is Stebbing Mill House, an 18th century or earlier building, painted red brick with parapet wall to east gable and red plain tiled roof. This two storeyed building with dormers in the roof has central doorway with 19th century bay windows to left and sash windows to centre and right. This building group is attractively set back and within the floor of the valley fronted by a large area of pea shingle, and framed on either side by large mature trees.

1 Part 1: Appraisal

1.139 The oldest building in this section, dating back to the 15th century, is Tan Farmhouse. This is a fine medieval building, and designated Grade II* listed building. It retains one of the two original, jetties to the north. This was reduced during the insertion about 1600 of a diagonal shaft, back to back chimney. The exposed timber frame is infilled with plaster. A rich red plain tiled roof is detailed with half hip and a gablet to the right. The building is set back in gardens with fields on two sides.



Picture 1.26 Tan Farmhouse, a superb Medieval building

1.140 The United Reformed Church dated 1877 is constructed of red brick with yellow brick bands and slate roof. Single central gabled panel breaks forward with yellow brick stepped cornice and flat topped pilaster feet and stepped cornice to the eaves. The distinctive moulded band of stylised laurel leaves runs at window head and below the windows are some decorative, foliated, yellow bricks panels. The central doorway has stone pilasters and moulded keystones.

1.141 *Separately identified buildings within the curtilage of listed buildings:* Within the grounds of Stebbing Park are the remnants of a 13th century barn. Also worthy of note is a 19th/20th century greenhouse with hipped roof and ornate cast iron crested ridge and finials with cast iron side brackets. Some 5 metres east of the House is Stebbing Park Barn, an individually listed Grade II timber-framed barn dating from the 17th/18th century and adjoining the Motte.

Part 1: Appraisal 1

1.142 Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the street scene: The Congregational Chapel is a dominant building dating back to 1719^(xv) repaired and extended in the early 19th century. It is constructed of brick, painted with formal gable ended frontage incorporating a fine multi-paned window to front 1st floor, and pilasters breaking forward at each side of the front face. This building was subject to recent planning approval for conversion into a number of residential units and a new development within the grounds fronting the lane. To the rear a graveyard will remain and with some important trees.



Picture 1.27 Former Methodist Chapel, dominant and important building

1.143 Opposite the chapel is a notable pair of 19th century houses. Nos. 1 and 2 Mill Lane are constructed in red brick with yellow brick dressings with slate roof gabled to front. They have good detailed dressings with foliated symbols, original openings with storm porches to the side. Unfortunately these dwellings have been subject of replacement double-glazed windows which detracts from their overall appearance, nevertheless they still retain enough quality features to be included here. They are also representative of the few 19th century buildings within the conservation area.

1.144 Important Trees and Open Spaces: This part of the conservation area is characterised by some extensive open spaces and other wooded enclosed areas, some not accessible to the public but all providing an attractive backdrop to the village and

xv Holles et al 1975

1 Part 1: Appraisal

much of historical importance. Within these areas are a considerable number of fine mature trees which are not subject to Tree Preservation Orders. These have been identified on the map.



1.145 The recreation ground is a well kept and delightful public open space, which performs many of the functions of a village green, with a cricket pitch and children's play park. This is an important space, linking the historic built core with the woods of Stebbing Park and countryside to the west of Stebbing Brook beyond. The quality of this space is derived from the vast open expanse and finely manicured cricket pitch, surrounded by very many quality mature trees. This has not been identified as a protected open space in the Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in 2005, however this is an important element in the character of Stebbing and should be prevented from being lost to development.

1.146 In order for the public to enjoy this area some consideration should be given to providing additional seating. Apart from the those within the veranda of the cricket pavilion, there is only one other located next to the brick wall on the south side and no seating at all in the vicinity of the play park.

1.147 At the lower end of Mill Lane there is a further important open space along the valley floor crossed by a public footpath. It is characterised by open meadowland between Stebbing Brook and the old mill race in an attractive, peaceful setting fronting the Stebbing Mill and bordered by tall trees. To the rear of the Mill, and within its private grounds, the valley floor is a more expansive. Upstream of the weir where the race is

Part 1: Appraisal 1

at its fullest, it dissects the meadow, and unobstructed by trees, the views stretch out to the farmland beyond. Here, some large trees are confined to the line of the brook and the north-eastern edge of the mill race and Stebbing Park beyond.

1.148 Other distinctive features: Brick walling to the west of the former Congregational Chapel is to be retained as part of the planning application on this site. High hedging bordering the properties in Mill Lane form an important interaction between the countryside and the village, reflecting the patchwork of surrounding fields and country lanes in the vicinity. They define boundaries, screen buildings and provide privacy for owners.

1.149 Important Views: There are two identified. The first is that looking westwards from the cricket pavilion towards the valley, to open countryside beyond. The second, is towards the Mill and Mill House from the river bank, presenting a pleasant, peaceful, rural scene.

1.150 Detracting elements: Without doubt the telegraph/electricity poles on Mill Lane, introduce an extremely discordant element, conflicting with the listed buildings and the attractive semi rural setting. If their removal could be secured this would represent a major improvement to the environment. This would involve considerable short term disruption for local residents but that must be balanced with resulting visual benefits.

1.151 A number of posts require attention on Mill Lane, at the access to the recreation ground. The concrete footpath sign is leaning over. There is also a wooden post now redundant and a metal gate and post requiring painting. Dealing with these elements would be a small but beneficial improvement to the Lane.

1.152 The only public bench available (outside the pavilion building) is solid but lacking a coat of paint. A simple paint job would immediately improve this feature.

1.153 Mill Lane is characterised by the hedging and grass verges. On the south side, the brightly coloured garage wall of Bishop's Garden is intrusive and detracting. Recommendation is to negotiate with the owner to repaint it in a subtler colour in due course, and/or to plant climbing plants or hedging which would go some way to reducing the impact.

1.154 The majority of the open space in the recreation ground is well managed, but on a number of visits it was noted that the play park had been untended and generally looked untidy - grass required cutting and litter lay on the ground. This suggests that this area may require a more frequent programme of maintenance.

1.155 A further area which may require an improved maintenance programme is the public right of way on the east side of Stebbing Park. Here brambles and nettles constrict the path detracting from the enjoyment of walking through this attractive and historic area.

1.156 Revised Boundary Changes: An extension to the conservation area is recommended on the north side of the recreation ground taking in a number of large and dominant trees including five mature oaks.

1 Part 1: Appraisal

Overall Summary

1.157 Stebbing is a tranquil, rural village of some importance in historical, visual and archaeological terms. Its range of early listed timber framed and plastered buildings, the church and substantial castle earthworks just outside the historic core of the village make a particularly important contribution to the environment. Quality buildings from later periods provide diversity of architectural types.

1.158 Throughout the conservation area and along the peripheries of the settlement significant open spaces and extensive tree cover enhance the individual buildings of importance, whilst reinforcing the pleasantly rural character. Modern developments within the conservation area have not, with a few exceptions, detracted from the historic core. Distinctive boundary walls of considerable visual merit and historic importance frequently link buildings and open spaces to provide overall cohesion. These walls and green spaces are an essential component of the village's visual heritage contributing significantly to the overall quality of the conservation area.

1.159 A very small number of unlisted buildings have been identified that are architecturally, visually and historically important. These, together with their architectural detailing could be at risk unless measures are introduced to protect them. Some have suffered from inappropriate alterations already.

1.160 There are very few remaining infill plots for development but where such development does occur, it must be sensitive and respect the character of the conservation area in that particular location and that which is important to its overall quality.

1.161 A number of important open spaces have been identified. Important trees have been plotted indicatively as have important views that should be retained.

1.162 Detracting elements have been described and the manner in which these could be dealt is described in the table set out in the management proposals below.

Part 2 - Management Proposals 2

Revised Conservation Area Boundary

2.1 The revised boundary is shown on Map 6. Some small areas are proposed for inclusion. These are (a) a strip of land to north of the recreation ground comprising a number of fine mature trees and (b), a narrow piece of land to the east of Serenga also to include some large trees. A minor area proposed for exclusion is to the rear of Littles and Church Lodge.

General Planning Controls and Good Practice in the Conservation Area

2.2 The general controls and national legislative framework has already been described. Against this background, the Council's Development Control staff process planning applications assisted by the Council's Conservation Officer.

2.3 Planning applications are currently considered against policies set out in the Uttlesford Local Plan that can be seen on line at [planning @ uttlesford.gov.uk](http://planning@uttlesford.gov.uk).

2.4 One particularly relevant policy, Policy ENV1 – Design of Development in Conservation areas says *'Development will be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the essential features of a Conservation Area, including plan form, relationship between buildings, the arrangement of open spaces and their enclosure, grain or significant natural or heritage features. Outline applications will not be considered. Development involving the demolition of a structure which positively contributes to the character and appearance of the area will not be permitted'* This policy was a main consideration for developing management proposals set out below.

2.5 Good practice advice for applicants wishing to submit an application is to carefully consider the wording of the above policy and enter into discussions with the Council before submitting the application to avoid delay and hopefully achieve a satisfactory outcome.

Planning Control and Good Practice, Listed Buildings

2.6 There are 65 individually listed buildings and these are shown on Map 6.

2.7 Policy ENV 2 – Development affecting listed buildings says *'Development affecting a listed building should be in keeping with its scale, character and surroundings. Demolition of a listed building, or development proposals that adversely affect the setting, and alterations that impair the special characteristics of a listed building will not be permitted. In cases where planning permission might not normally be granted for the conversion of listed buildings to alternative uses, favourable consideration may be accorded to schemes which incorporate works that represent the most practical way of preserving the building and its architectural and historic characteristics and its setting.'*

2.8 The listed buildings in the conservation area are indicative of local character. They span many centuries and display a wide variety of architectural styles, methods of construction and use of materials. Good practice advice to applicants is to acknowledge this essential fact when submitting an application and recognise that the Council's

2 Part 2 - Management Proposals

overall objective is to ensure that proposals accord with the above policy especially in terms of scale, form, detailing and the use of materials. A pre-submission discussion with the Council's Conservation Officer is advised to establish such parameters.

2.9 In Stebbing a hand made plain clay tiles are the predominant roofing material. When repairs are necessary, hand made plain clay tiles must be used. Early photographs show there were once more thatched roofs than currently exist. Thatched roofs on any remaining thatched buildings must remain so and any repair works must be carried out in the traditional manner in long straw thatch. The natural slate is another traditional material, particularly on 19th century listed buildings and when it becomes necessary to re-roof such buildings appropriate natural slate to match existing should normally be used. The use of plastic windows on listed buildings is entirely inappropriate. The Council will use its powers of enforcement in appropriate situations if unauthorised works are carried out.

Planning Controls and Good Practice in respect of other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution

2.10 Policy ENV1 referred to above includes such buildings that are identified on Map 6. In Stebbing this is a small number. As set out earlier, any buildings in conservation areas cannot be demolished without consent. Because of the important architectural or historic contribution the buildings identified on Map 6 make to the conservation area, any application involving their demolition will normally be refused.

2.11 Not surprisingly a number of windows have been replaced in a few of these buildings by inappropriate modern ones. In some buildings in the District some original doors and original open porches have been replaced. Occasionally traditional roofing has been replaced with modern material that is inappropriate. New enclosed porches have also been erected that detract from the architectural and historic importance of some properties and the street scene. It is therefore proposed to introduce an additional control to prevent this from happening in the future and the mechanism to achieve this is known as an Article 4 Direction as briefly described previously.

2.12 The Council therefore suggests an Article 4(2) direction to remove the right to alter windows and doors, porches and roofing materials on selected dwellings be introduced. An appropriate consultation is likely to take place in due course. Additionally it is considered appropriate to control the erection or construction of new porches.

2.13 The government advises that such powers should be used sparingly and this advice has been heeded. Notwithstanding the proposed Direction other quality features such as chimneystacks and pots, decorative brickwork and bargeboards will remain unprotected in law. Good practice by responsible owners will be to maintain and retain these features. The Council's Conservation Officer will offer advice on request.

Part 2 - Management Proposals 2

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

2.14 Policy ENV3 Open Spaces and Trees says *'The loss of traditional open spaces, groups of trees and fine individual specimens through development proposals will not be permitted unless the need for the development outweighs their amenity value'*.

2.15 Stebbing is fortunate indeed to have the extensive area of the Recreation Ground and the different character of the valley floor fronting Stebbing Mill. Additionally, within the conservation area are extensive fields, woodland and some open countryside. It goes without saying that development on any of these sites would be entirely inappropriate.

2.16 The general and diagrammatic locations of trees that make a particular contribution to the conservation area are illustrated in Map 6. Other trees also contribute to the quality of the street scenes. As noted in the appraisal all trees in the conservation area (subject to exceptions) are afforded protection, as owners have to notify the council if they wish to undertake works to them. Many trees have been made subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

2.17 Good practice guidance for owners includes making regular inspections of trees to check for dieback and danger in the general interests of amenity and health and safety. The Council's Landscape Officer will offer advice in appropriate circumstances.

Proposed Controls in Respect of Other Distinctive Features that make an Important Visual or Historic Contribution

2.18 As the appraisal has demonstrated there are lengths of walling and hedging that are distinctive to Stebbing. These represent an essential component of the village's visual heritage and must be protected. The walls of quality are shown on Map 6 and can be divided into two categories. Firstly there are those within curtilages of listed buildings where listed building consent will normally be refused for any proposal involving their demolition.

2.19 Secondly there are other walls that are not in the curtilage of a listed building. The Council proposes to introduce an Article 4 Direction to remove the right to remove walls and appropriate consultation are likely to take place in due course.

The Potential Need to Undertake an Archaeological Field Assessment

2.20 There are few opportunities for development within the conservation area as most sites considered acceptable for development have already been built on. However because of the archaeological importance of Stebbing, and when development is proposed, applicants should familiarise themselves with Policy ENV4 –Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance. This policy states, inter alia, that *'...In situations where there are grounds for believing that sites...would be affected developers will be required to arrange for an archaeological field assessment to be carried out before the planning application can be determined...'*

2 Part 2 - Management Proposals

Enhancement Proposals to Deal with Detracting Elements

2.21 The appraisal has identified the following elements that detract from the qualities of the conservation area. The table below identifies them and proposes a course of action in summary form.

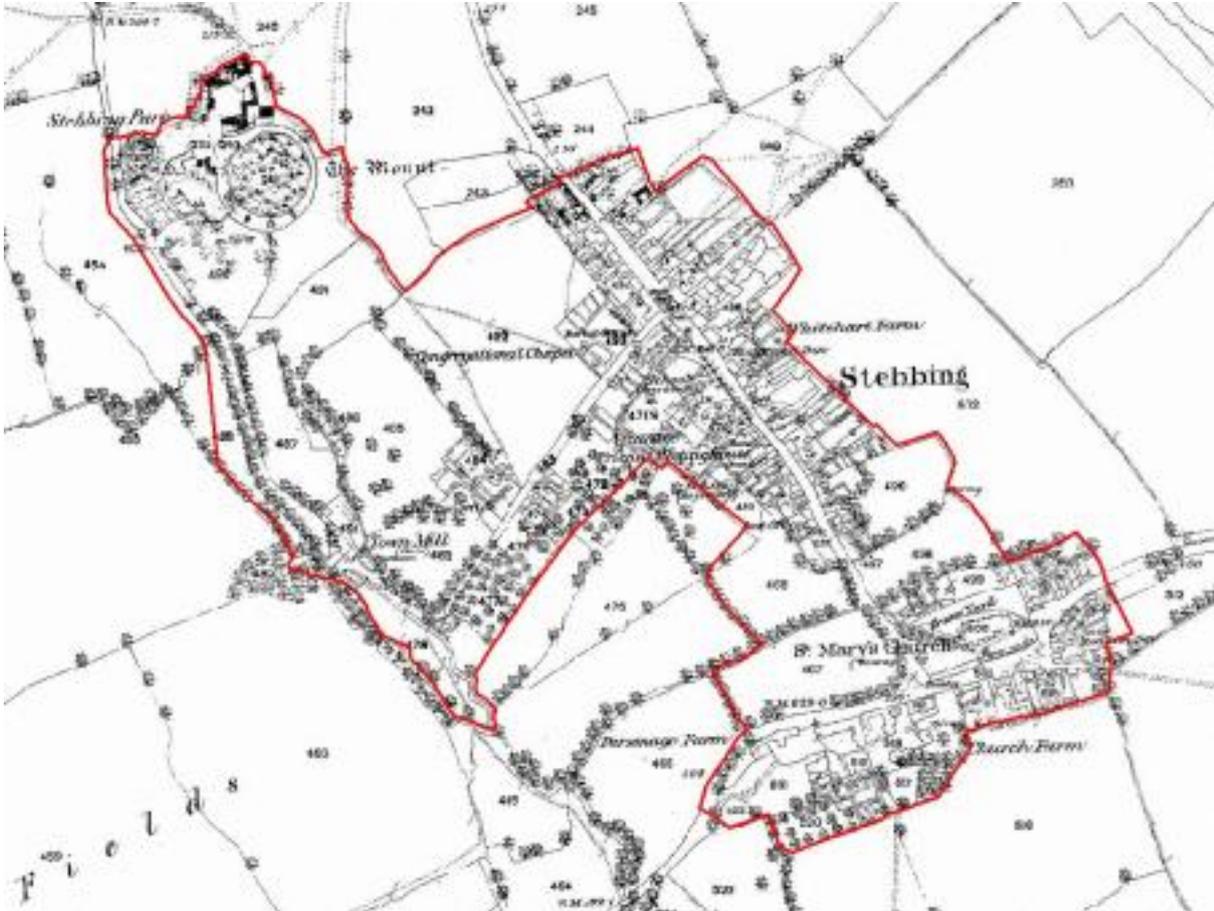
Detracting Element	Location	Proposed Action
Neglected building	Ducketts, High Street	Liaise with owner to repair brickwork and improve frontage
Poor quality wire fencing	Electricity Sub Station, Motts Yard	Liaise with UDC to plant hedging
Plastic Bins	Centre of High St and at village shop	PC to consider replacement with better quality models
Speeding Traffic	Eastern approach to Church End	Liaise with ECC Highways Dept. to replace 30mph sign
Intrusive 20 th century farm building	Church Farm	Liaise with owner to consider planting of trees to reduce impact and positively enhance street scene
Electricity Poles	Field opposite Parsonage Farm	Liaise with utility company to seek removal and under grounding of services
Electricity/Telegraph Poles	Mill Lane	Liaise with property owners and utility companies to seek removal and under grounding of services
Rusty and redundant posts	Entrance to Recreation Ground, Mill Lane	PCC to consider painting and rationalisation
Bench in need of painting	Recreation Ground	PCC to consider repainting
Brightly coloured walling	Bishop's Garden, Mill Lane	Liaise with owner to seek solution to reduce impact that could be achieved by planting or painting
Untidy overgrown grassed area of play park	Recreation Ground	PCC to consider improved maintenance programme
Overgrown vegetation on public right of way	To east of Stebbing Park	PCC to consider improved maintenance programme

Part 2 - Management Proposals 2

Detracting Element	Location	Proposed Action
Lack of Seating	Play park, Recreation Ground	PCC or other to consider provision of bench overlooking play park

3 Maps

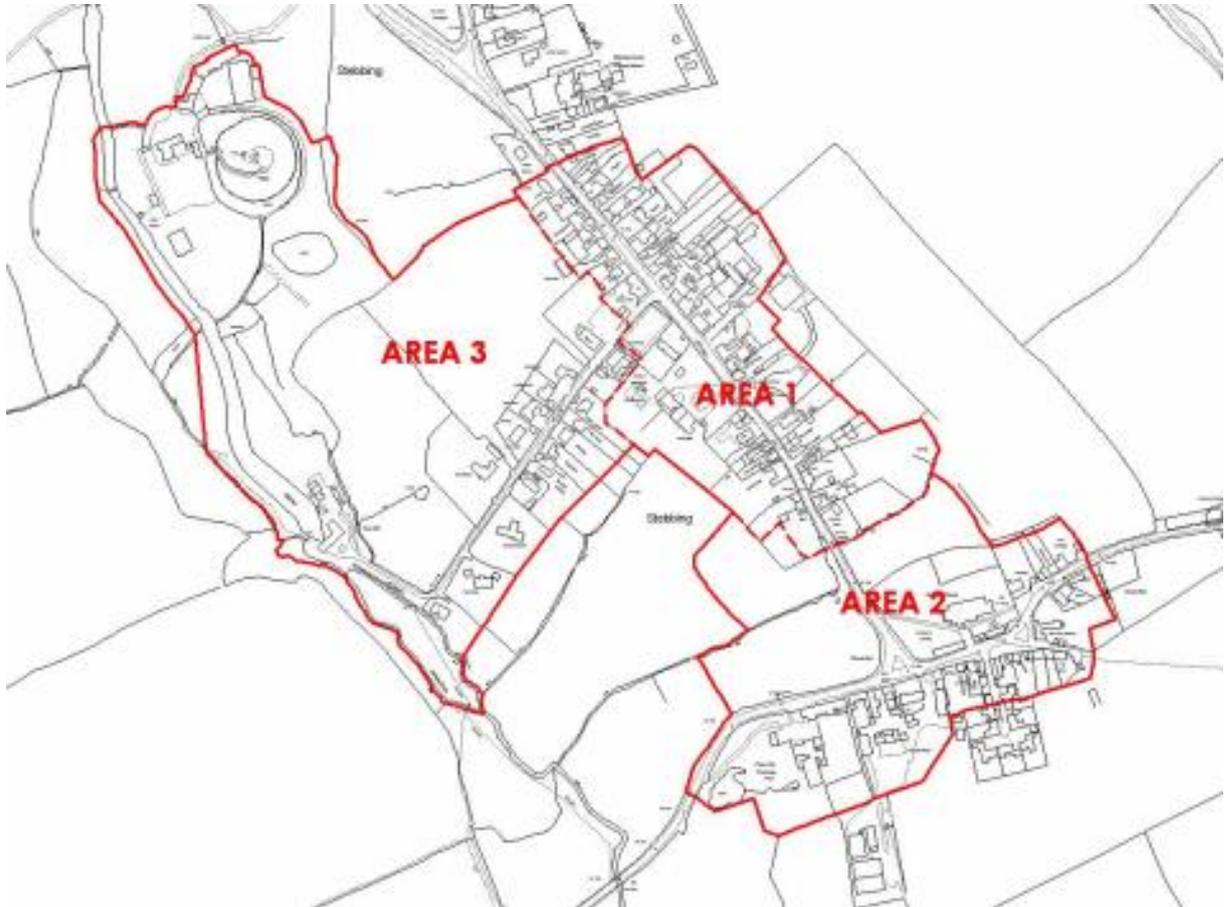
Map 1- 1877 Ordnance Survey Map with Current Conservation Area



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Maps 3

Map 2 - Character Analysis Areas



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3 Maps

Map 3 - Area 1: High Street



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Maps 3

Map 4 - Area 2: Church End



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3 Maps

Map 5 - Area 3: Mill Lane to Stebbing Park



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Maps 3

CHARACTER ANALYSIS KEY

-  Existing Conservation Area Boundary
-  Individually Listed Buildings
-  Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the Conservation Area
-  Important Open Spaces
-  Important Trees
-  Important Hedging
-  Other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution
-  Important Views
-  Detracting Elements
-  Proposed boundary revisions to the Conservation Area
-  Include additional area
-  Exclude existing area

3 Maps

Map 6 - Management Plan



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Maps 3

MANAGEMENT PLAN KEY

-  Revised conservation area boundary, adopted Policy ENV 1 applies
-  Listed buildings, including important curtilage buildings, adopted policy ENV 2 applies
-  Other buildings to be protected from demolition, see policy ENV 1. Additional controls to be introduced for selected buildings
-  Important open spaces protected from development, adopted Policy ENV 3 applies
-  General location of important trees/groups of trees
-  Important Hedging
-  Walls
-  Railings
-  Other distinctive features to be protected from demolition within parameters of planning law. Additional controls to be introduced for selected walls and railings
-  Proposed enhancements