

GREAT BEDWYN



2003

Village Design Statement

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Introduction

Great Bedwyn lies some seven miles south-east of Marlborough in the shallow valley of the River Dun, which flows east to join the Kennet at Hungerford. The village is set within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and most of it is a Conservation Area. It is largely residential, with good facilities, but has limited employment opportunities. The approach roads are quite narrow with poor sight lines.

This Design Statement (VDS) describes the village as it is today and highlights the qualities valued by residents. It lists guidelines for future planning so that local knowledge, views and ideas will contribute to any development in the area.

The majority of those taking part in the consultation would like Great Bedwyn to remain a small, thriving community in a picturesque setting, and want any future development to be in harmony with the existing village and not to alter its essentially rural character.

This statement has been assembled from material gathered by questionnaire as well as from written and oral

feedback at a day-long workshop held in Great Bedwyn Village Hall on 9 February 2002. About one third of the 645 households in the village took part, as did local businesses and clubs. Drafts of the VDS were subject to a wide consultation process, including those who do not



Northwest approach from Forest Hill

live within the village envelope itself but within the Parish. This confirmed the clear and strongly supported consensus reflected in the following pages, and in particular in the Guidance on Future Development on page 19.

1. The Village Context

History

There is evidence of a prehistoric settlement in this region, notably the largest causewayed enclosure in England at Crofton, and the Iron Age Hill Fort at Chisbury with its substantial dyke, which could possibly



This is our village! Some of the residents watching the photographer on the roof of the Cross Keys. We're history! September 1999

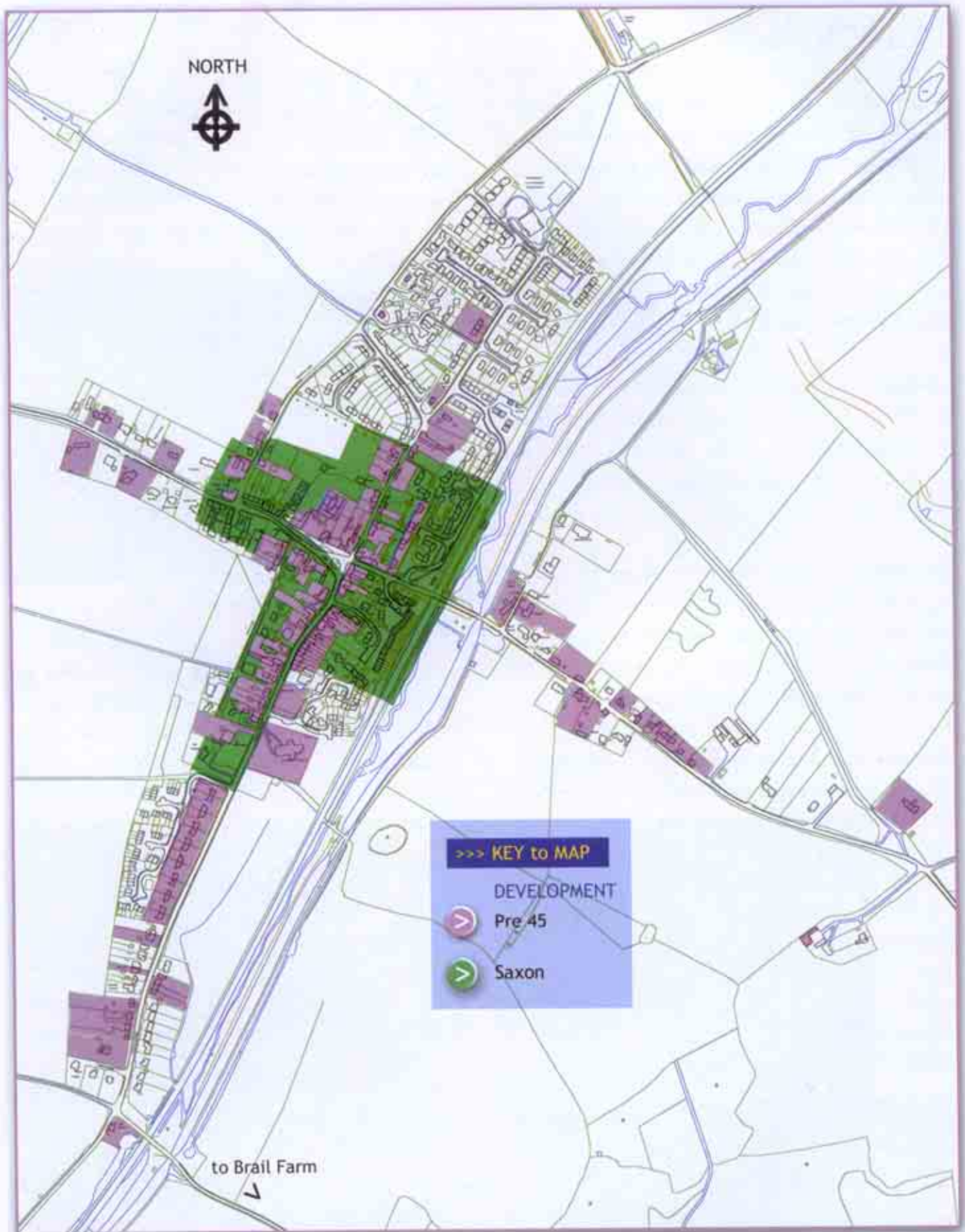
be an extension of the Wansdyke, running southwards from the fort. A Roman Villa was discovered to the south of the village in 1780 in the present day Bedwyn Brail near to the line of the Roman road from Cirencester to Winchester.

However, the earliest reference to a settlement at Bedwyn dates from 778, in a land grant from King Cynewulf of Wessex. Alfred enhanced its importance by making it a key defensive fortress on his north-eastern boundaries and by the 10th century Bedwyn had become the centre of a royal estate with its own mint.

1. See Map page 12

2. The 'Village Envelope' is defined as the Limits of Development in the Replacement Kennet Local Plan (policies NRS and HC22).

See Map page 12



Pre-1945 development of the village

In the Domesday Survey of 1086, the manor of Bedwyn was held directly by the Crown whilst the Church was in the Diocese of Salisbury. Henry II granted the manor to John Mareschal as tenant in chief, and it passed through marriage until 1483, when it reverted to the Crown. Agriculture, and later textiles, in particular the production of low quality woollen cloth on a commercial scale, provided the principal sources of employment. These activities required roads adequate for packhorses to bring raw wool and deliver the finished products to market. The still extant cruciform plan of the village, which dates from Saxon times, reflects the importance of these road links into the settlement. At the same time, the relative isolation of Bedwyn from other settlements encouraged the development of small businesses, and made the village self-sufficient.



Brook Street; ducks have priority!

The development of the village was influenced by its proximity to the Royal Hunting Forest of Savernake and by the fortunes of the local landlords. The most notable are the Seymours, one of whom married Henry VIII and later the Ailesbury family whose estates included most of the current parish. Although cloth production continued, this medieval township failed to flourish, falling between the bigger centres of Marlborough and Hungerford, and south of the road (now the A4) linking the great cities of London and Bath. Neither the opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal, which was made fully navigable between Newbury and Bath in 1810, nor the arrival of the railway in 1862, stimulated expansion, and Great Bedwyn remained a small village of farmers, maltsters and publicans. Between 1295 and 1832, the village elected two Members of Parliament, a privilege it lost in the Great Reform Act owing to its sparse population.

Many of the civic buildings, notably the mint, the market house (or Town Hall) and the railway station buildings, have disappeared and former shops, pubs, chapels, the forge and malt house have changed from commercial to domestic use. Conversely, a mail order firm now uses the old telephone exchange; the old Reading Room has become a hairdresser's, and the schoolhouse a doctor's surgery. Enjoying most essential services, the village has flourished as a place to live and its population includes many professionals, some of whom work from home.



Bedwyn Brail to the South of the village, with the allotments and St Mary's nestling in the valley

2. Economic environment, people and prospects

Agriculture

Agriculture has traditionally been the economic mainstay of the region, and this has only altered significantly since the 1970s when changes in farming methods led to a steep decline in the need for farm labour. Farming interests within the village envelope finally ended in the 1990s when

Pewsey and Swindon) drive to catch the Bedwyn train to Paddington, because fares are lower and parking is free, so increasing the parking problem in the village.

However, the communications revolution is enabling increasing numbers of professionals to work, at least



From Shawgrove copse with Burridge Heath on the horizon. Note the low roof lines.

the land to the east of Manor Farm was sold for housing development. Nevertheless, the village still draws its character from its farmland setting and the changing landscape. The varying crops and livestock are among the visual pleasures of Great Bedwyn's residents and visitors.

Employment

The village has a range of small local businesses, including makers of bespoke furniture, two car repair garages, two marble and stone companies, a mail order business marketing nursery products, and a basket maker, some of them outside the village at Brail Farm. Each typically provides employment for less than ten people, and does not envisage expansion of its business in part due to the high cost of housing and the lack of available land for building. Low unemployment in the region, combined with the high cost of housing in the village itself, makes recruitment and retention of staff difficult.

The limited employment prospects mean that many of the incomers to the village accept the need to commute to work, as far afield as Reading and London. Most commuters travel by car rather than by public transport (most working households have more than one car). Conversely some London commuters from elsewhere in the region (e.g.

partially, from home, a trend encouraged by the combination of a rural village lifestyle and easy accessibility by road and rail when required. This trend is likely to continue and will affect community life within Great Bedwyn. One problem caused by the attractiveness of the village is that house prices have risen steeply, while there is a dearth of affordable smaller dwellings for young adult residents.

RESULTS OF VILLAGE SURVEY

Housing

During the past twenty years approximately 200 houses have been added to the village, bringing the total to about 645. Based on typical population statistics, the additional houses, representing a mix of housing types including social housing, have added 360 over 18s, 280 under 18s, and 340 cars.

Residents

There are currently about 1150 people on the electoral roll, 170 children at the primary school, and perhaps 100 older children at schools in Marlborough and Hungerford.

Cars

A limited survey of the occupants of twenty 2-3 bedroom

houses and twenty 4-5 bedroom houses built in the last twenty years indicates that few of them use public transport to go to work and only twelve work locally. This indicates that further housing will result in an increase in the number of commuter cars.

Employment

There are approximately seven commercial companies, each employing less than 10 persons. These are mainly people already living in the area. However, most working residents commute out of the village, and local unemployment is relatively low.

Conclusions from the survey

The majority of residents who responded did not want any substantial development of the village, and preferred development of the remaining sites within the village envelope only. There was general support for additional low cost housing where possible. Many respondents were concerned about the effect on the infrastructure that would result from further development, and felt that this would permanently alter the rural nature of the village, and its cohesion as a community.

Village Shops

The market towns of Marlborough and Hungerford, together with the urban centres of Newbury, Devizes and Swindon, meet most shopping requirements. For more immediate needs, or for those not wishing to travel, the village has its own Post Office, General Store, Bakery, and a hairdresser, all of which are well patronised by the local community.

School

A village national school has served Great Bedwyn since 1835, when a new school building, partly funded by the Savernake Estate, was opened in Church Street. In 1993, now a primary school, it was moved to new, purpose built premises at the eastern end of the village, which were opened in April that year with 69 pupils on the roll. Subsequent development of residential sites at Shawgrove, Wansdyke, and Manor Farm, together with substantial infilling elsewhere, have resulted in a three

fold increase in the numbers attending the school, and the year 2001-02 started with a record attendance of 178. While the new school was built with expansion in view, the rapid rise in demand for places has already required the building of two further classrooms, one of which was funded through voluntary donations, and provision of a temporary classroom.

The Parents and Governors have recently raised a further £20,000 to provide another extension to house a computer suite. With completion of this project, the site will have reached maximum capacity, not just in terms of teaching premises, but also in respect to play areas, staff room, parking and other facilities.

Medical services

Meanwhile the Doctor's Surgery was moved into the Old School, which was renovated for the purpose. Two doctors are in practice and there is a surgery for small accidents and emergencies. These facilities offer a good service to the existing community of some 1750 people. The present surgery has no potential for further expansion, which would be necessary in the event of a substantial influx of residents.

Village Hall

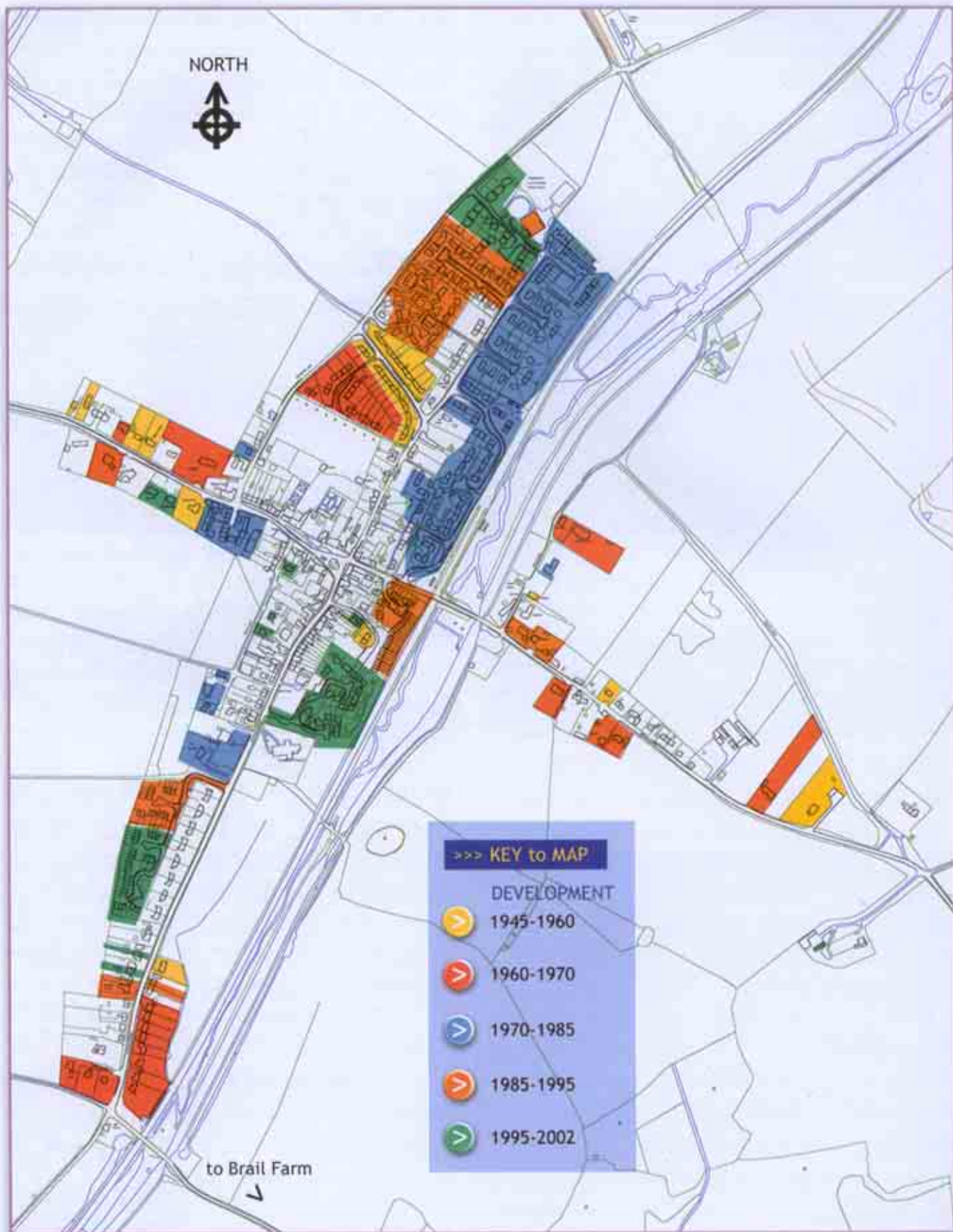
The Village Hall is used for a wide range of social, leisure and educational activities, including the oversubscribed pre-school. The limited facilities at the hall, as well as demand for other use of the accommodation, require the pre-school to operate a waiting list for children seeking places.

Church

St Mary's Church has a resident vicar who is responsible also for the parishes of Little Bedwyn, St Katharine's, and East Grafton, forming part of the Savernake Team Ministry.

Leisure Facilities

As befits a thriving community, Great Bedwyn offers a range of leisure facilities. The tennis club has two courts, which are heavily used for both juniors' coaching



Development of the village since 1945

sessions and club matches, and a small building known affectionately as the 'hut-house' which provides limited storage and changing facilities. The club is fast becoming an important training centre in the county. Planning permission for floodlights and the construction of a further court has been obtained, but still requires funding.



Freshly baked goodies at the Bakery

The cricket and bowling clubs are also well supported. The village playing field is owned by the Bedwyn Memorial Trust but suffers from poor changing facilities that need replacing.

The wooded downlands and canal towpath provide excellent trails for cyclists and walkers, as well as



The Surgery, formerly the school

opportunities for angling, canoeing, horse riding and ornithology. Public footpaths radiate from the village over the surrounding countryside, and The Wiltshire Cycle Way passes through the village, as does the Kennet and Avon Canal. Many of those who make use of this environment for sport and recreation travel from some distance, often arriving by rail or canal barge, as well as by car or bike, having been encouraged to visit in the first



The Post Office, with its interesting and eccentric decoration

instance by guide books describing the unspoilt nature of the village and extensive natural beauty of the countryside surrounding it.



The Stores stocks a wide range of food and drinks

Youth Facilities

Bedwyn has a flourishing Scout and Beavers group that meets in the village hall. The tennis club has a large youth section, and offers structured professional coaching throughout the year, whilst the cricket club welcomes young members.

However, there is little other provision for teenagers, indoor or outdoor, and there is about to be a large increase in the number of teenagers in the village. Those who, for example, wish to skateboard have to travel by train to Newbury. There is little for teenagers to do in nearby Hungerford and the bus service to Marlborough finishes in the early evening, while a car is needed to use the youth facilities in Swindon or in the other Kennet towns. The difficulty in providing even limited youth activities in a village is another reason for not allowing further



An interesting corner of the village

development to a point where any anti-social behaviour can no longer be constrained by local familiarity.

Public Houses etc.

Great Bedwyn's two public houses and shops benefit greatly from visitors. One of the former provides Bed and Breakfast accommodation and both have restaurants, and are well patronised by villagers and visitors alike. The publicans have noted that a significant number of the visiting customers are from overseas, who come here to sample English village life in a rural environment and to explore the local points of historical and archaeological interest. Rural tourism is seen as an important element of the local economy.

There is also a branch of the Royal British Legion, which has substantial premises and a large car park in the middle of the village on High Street. It has a bar and hall for public meetings. Membership is no longer

restricted to ex-servicemen and women. The local cricket club also has a bar in a clubroom close to the village hall.

Parish News and other facilities

Great Bedwyn's Parish News is produced by volunteers and appears regularly every month. It is financed by advertisements and is distributed free to all houses in the village and in Little Bedwyn and St Katharine's. Each issue contains news about the church, the schools, articles about gardening, contributions from the local vicar, doctor, parish clerk and policeman, announcements of births, marriages and deaths, news of forthcoming events and articles on topics of local interest.

The village has numerous active societies including a Women's Institute, local history society, Evergreens and separate lunch clubs for retired ladies and men. It has a music society, which promotes a series of professional concerts in the church annually, as well as a concert given by the society's own enthusiastic amateur musicians. The Millennium Choir was formed in 1999 and continues to be active; it performs at church festivals and on other, secular occasions. The Bedwyns' Link Scheme offers a voluntary service that can provide transport as well as help with caring and practical needs. Transport is the most often requested, to meet difficulty in attending appointments inside and outside the villages, within the parishes of Great Bedwyn, Little Bedwyn and St Katharine's.



Terraced houses, High Street

Policing and the Emergency Services

Great Bedwyn suffers relatively little crime or anti-social behaviour, other than petty theft and some minor vandalism by bored teenagers. The nearest police station is at Marlborough with a nominated police officer responsible for the village. This arrangement means that the officer gets to know the community and its problems, and will intervene in a preventive manner.

Ambulance support is less satisfactory as the designated service point is Swindon, about twenty minutes away at best. The surgery in the village is well equipped to deal with most minor problems, as is the Savernake cottage hospital at Marlborough.

The Hungerford Fire Service (nominated as first call to Bedwyn) normally provides a response of less than fifteen minutes.

Utilities

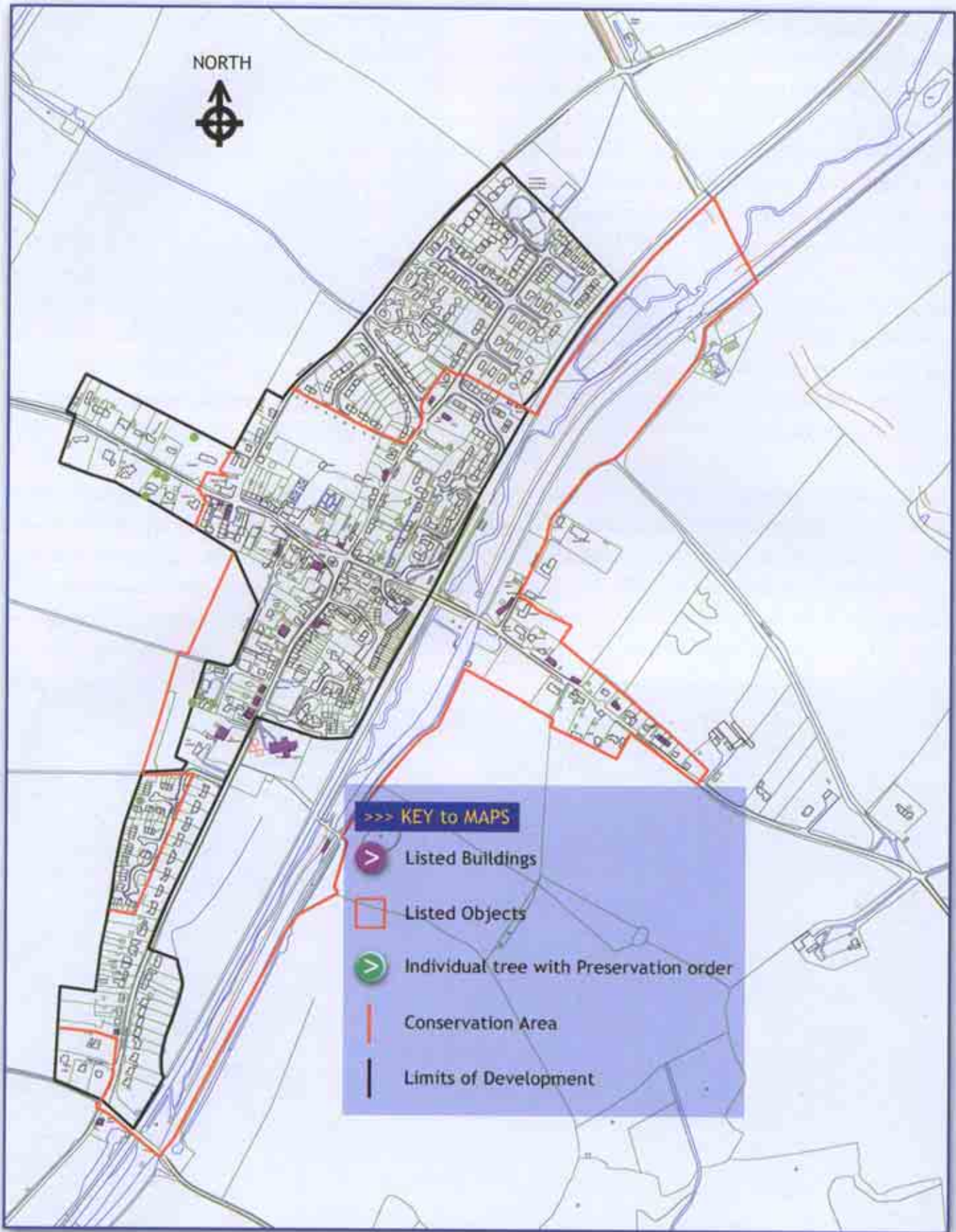
During heavy rain there has been some flooding, particularly in Church Street. This is the result of a combination of land drainage, culvert and highway drainage problems. There are very few public surface water sewers in the village.

Although the foul sewage system is generally robust and does not suffer from repeated blockages or local flooding, there are occasional problems. Any new development in the village would therefore require appropriate modifications to the current system in accordance with Thames Water's normal advice and procedures, before any new work is begun.

The potable water is drawn from chalk boreholes, treated with activated carbon, and is of high quality. However, the water supply network appears to be operating at full capacity. There may be a small amount of further supply available but when this is taken up, it will be very expensive to supplement it and extensive



The historic centre of the village, known as "The Chains", with the Victorian Jubilee lamp and Millennium oak tree; formerly the site of the mediaeval Town Hall, which was demolished in 1870, as it had become unsafe



The Village Envelope and Conservation Area

mains laying will be required. Thames Water would need to investigate (at the developer's expense) the impact of any new development on the existing network and even small-scale development could have a significant impact on the infrastructure.

There is no piped gas supply nor cable communications to the village.

3. The Landscape Setting

Great Bedwyn lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty³. The majority of the village is situated on the side of the river Dun where the land slopes up to Chisbury Wood and the Iron Age fort,

The river is bordered by what were once water meadows, the form of which is still discernible in places, despite their long abandonment. Today, dense thickets of willow, poplar and shrubs have formed in the vicinity of



The Kennet and Avon canal brings many visitors to the village



The cricket field, south-west towards Bedwyn Brail

and to Bedwyn Common. To the south-east, Bedwyn Brail and Wilton Brail enclose the valley, while Foxbury Wood and Burrige Heath lie to the east. Brook Street, leading south-east from the village, occupies a dry valley, which runs at right angles to that of the Dun. The gentle chalk slopes that rise to the east and west of the settlement are capped with clay, on which large areas of ancient, semi-natural woodland survive from an earlier more continuous coverage associated with the Royal Savernake Forest to the west.

The views out of the village are dominated by well-wooded hills, but Great Bedwyn is not immediately or totally enclosed by woodland. Instead its character is strongly influenced by the open riverside pastures and fields on the slopes from the village up to the trees which frame the skyline.

the railway line. Ash is also very common in this area, and at adjacent Burntmill lock, at the north-eastern end of the Conservation Area, an important group of aspen divides the canal from the river. To the south-west the views from the towing path and railway across the open pasture are dominated by the Church and the large but elderly cedar tree in the churchyard. This forms a particular vista into the historic part of the village across fields, which were once part of the land of Manor Farm, and provide the setting of the church.

Other prominent views into the village are from the north-west on Forest Hill road, and from the hillside to the south on the footpath to Bedwyn Brail; these show the concentration of buildings in the centre of the village, and the importance of mature trees and hedges. The older parts of the village, together with the open

³ See page 12. The land around the village is identified as an Area of High Ecological Value



St Mary's church, set in this tranquil area, stands on the site of a Saxon church

spaces (recreation ground, allotments, church meadow, and the water meadows) are designated as a Conservation Area, shown on page 12. That this actually encloses much of the village indicates the special nature of the area. Within the built up parts of the Conservation Area the most prominent tree is the mature stock tree on the High Street. Other established trees of note are the row of horse chestnuts bordering the eastern side of the playing fields, planted as a memorial to the nine men who lost their lives in the 1939-1945 war; the mature horse chestnuts close to the station adjacent to the railway bridge, the poplar trees around the Wharf, and the trees along Back Lane which are clearly visible from Forest Hill. Some planning requirements relating to the Conservation Area are detailed on page 23.



Many pleasure boats are based at Great Bedwyn

Allotments have existed to the north-west of Back Lane for over sixty years. The ground is now thoroughly cultivated and it is well used for this purpose by local inhabitants. Viewed from the surrounding hills, the most characteristic impression is a village nestling into the contours of the landscape, with rooflines well below the visible horizon.

Indeed, whether approached by road or rail, the traveller comes upon the village almost by surprise. From within the village the views of the surrounding countryside are spectacular and should be preserved. However, in recent times, insensitive development on the village outskirts has resulted in over-tall and therefore prominent developments, which are untypical in standing out rather than blending into the environs.

4. Settlement pattern



Traditional brick and clay tile construction in Farm Lane. The thatched cottages opposite date from the time of the Great Plague.

The village derives its character from its cruciform shape, typical of Saxon villages. Historically, Great Bedwyn was much more important as a service centre than it is today, and this accounts for the essentially urban form of the core of the settlement: the mediaeval township was centred on the High Street, the northern part of Church Street, a short section of Brook Street and the southern end of Farm Lane, which all show fairly compact, tightly packed property frontages that either back onto the footpath façades or else have very shallow forecourts and gardens. Back Lane, formerly York Street, was the main

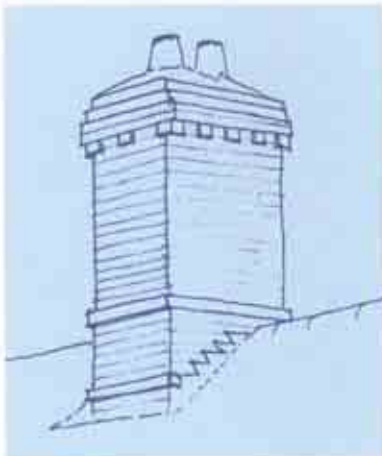
thoroughfare from the centre of the village towards Crofton and Wilton. Brown's Lane marked the north-eastern boundary.

The area beyond the central cruciform development is for the most part more generously spaced, with buildings being set further back from the road in good-sized gardens. Clear lines define the core of the settlement with streets bordered by continuous buildings, hedges or grassed banks. This form is echoed in the line of the canal and its towpath, the railway tracks and even the long station platforms.

While much of the twentieth century development has adhered to this linear pattern, the more speculative development of the past twenty years has been designed to infill relatively deep plots. Some of the layout and design has been unimaginative when compared to the earlier architectural character of the village.

5. Buildings and spaces

Despite the antiquity of many of the buildings, few in Great Bedwyn were built before the 18th century. Among the exceptions is Castle Cottage in Farm Lane, which dates from the 17th century and is one of the oldest dwellings still standing.



An example of a traditional chimney in Farm Lane, successfully re-used in Manor Road

A devastating fire occurred in the village in 1716, and destroyed or severely damaged twenty-eight houses. This explains why many of the older properties date from the middle of the 18th Century.

The most typical form of construction used the local red brick, derived from clay deposits, which were unearthed near the hamlet of Doddsdown.



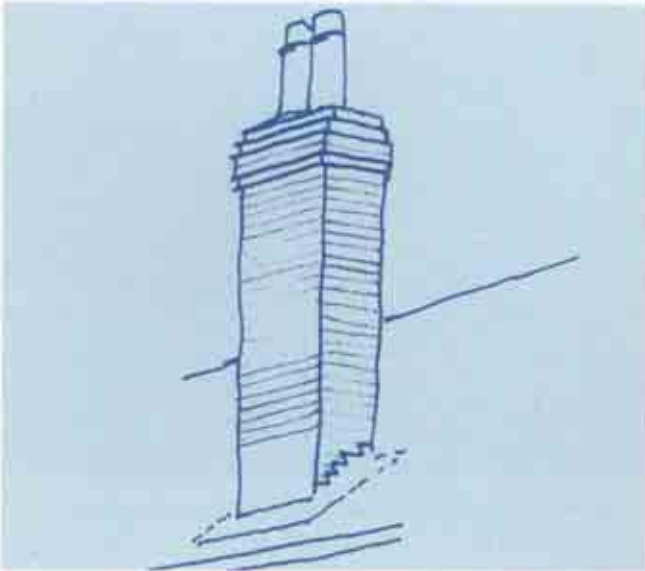
Harmonious modern houses at Shawgrove with interesting roof-lines



Modern houses in Granary/Manor Roads, reflecting the decorative brick and clay tile construction of some older village houses



The warm rust-orange brickwork of numerous buildings is a strong theme of Great Bedwyn and was used in isolation or in combination with other materials such as flint, to be found in cottages in Farm Lane, or with bricks of differing colours introduced for a patterned



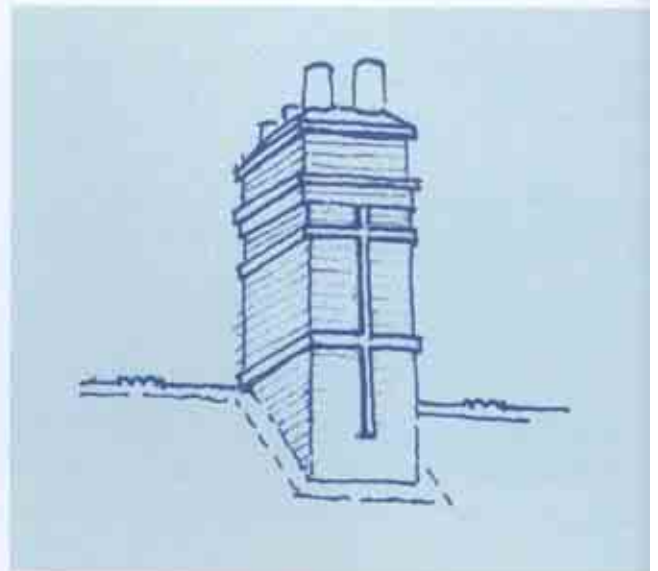
Traditional chimney on the Three Tuns, illustrating the decorative cap

effect. On the north side of Farm Lane there is a pair of red brick cottages dating from the mid-19th century, which are distinguished by their buff brick decoration.

Roofing materials are predominantly thatch, clay tiles and slates. The combed wheat reed thatch style is now fairly universal to thatched properties in the settlement, along with the more traditional long straw thatch. However, the most common form of roofing is the plain clay tile, which covers whole groups of buildings along the High Street, the south-western sides of Farm Lane and of Church Street as well as important individual buildings such as The Glebe House. The rich dark orange complements that of the local brick and reinforces the impression of the warm background colour of the majority of the buildings.

The impact of slate as a roofing material early in the nineteenth century had an effect not only on the colouring of the buildings on which it was used but also on their design. The shallower pitches of the former Post Office and Mill House roofs contrast with others designed for thatch or clay tiles, and the Old School building is slated. The former Methodist Chapel in Browns Lane (now converted to residential use) and the estate cottages in Church Street are prominent examples of this material, and all these buildings display the uncomplicated roof forms best suited to its use.

Examples of late nineteenth century building can also be found at the north-east side of the High Street where there



Decorative brickwork, High Street



An interesting late Victorian example



A good example of a dormer on a modern house. The windows have balanced lights

are two terraces consisting of four estate cottages; three further pairs stand near the church.



An example of an inappropriate window replacement.

The lights are unbalanced, and would look better with smaller panes. The top of the window would look better if above the eave of the dormer

Chimneys, which appear on almost all buildings in the settlement, make a considerable impact on the interest of the village roovescape. Most chimneys break through the ridge, but striking exceptions to this general rule are the chimneys which rise from the frontage eaves of a pair of cottages in Farm Lane, and the prominent stacks adjoined

6. Highways and traffic

Great Bedwyn is not on any major road. There is no road into the village on which a vehicle meeting a truck, bus, or tractor does not have to pull into the side. These narrow lanes serve to protect the village from most of the through traffic. Regardless of the direction from which Great Bedwyn is approached, the traveller passes through semi-wild woodland interspersed with breathtaking views across some of the finest rural scenery in southern England. Much of the character of the village is shaped by these minor roads, lanes and byways, which lead into it and radiate from the High Street, its central and frequently congested thoroughfare.

Within the village, the roads have narrow pavements, and in some areas wide, grassy verges, although along Brown's Lane and the oldest part of Farm Lane, dwellings front directly onto the road and in the latter case this is scarcely wide enough for motorised traffic. Three of the four access roads require traffic to cross

to outside walls of both Moonrakers in Church Street, and Castle Cottage in Farm Lane.

St Mary's Church, which occupies the site of the original building, was built in the 12th century and extensively restored in the 19th century. It stands on the site of an earlier Saxon church mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086. The existing building consists of works dating from the 12th to 15th centuries. The roof was raised in Victorian times and the nave extended.

Since the Second World War, Great Bedwyn has been steadily developed within the existing village envelope and a range of building styles has appeared. While weathering of the brick, combined with good gardening are steadily improving the appearance of many of these developments, there are also instances where the new development jars visually with its surroundings.

The greatest change in recent decades, however, has been in housing density, as shown in the map on page 8. New estates and infilling have been so extensive that there now remain few spaces for further housing within the village envelope.

elderly humped-back bridges, which are already weak. Despite the narrowness of the access roads and the absence of a through-road, the volume of traffic in the village can now bring vehicles to a halt. Delivery vans and trucks as well as private cars often conglomerate in the High Street and Church Street. The congestion and parking problems at the school at the beginning and end of the school day have been alleviated by recent parent/school pressure, resulting in minor engineering



Church Street is usually congested with parked cars

4. Railway bridges at Little Bedwyn and Brook St; canal bridges at Brook St and Mill Bridge.



Harmonious traditional construction in the High Street, illustrating pleasing roof pitch, well proportioned dormers and decorated chimneys

works under "The safe routes to school" scheme. Parents are encouraged to walk rather than drive their children to school, and to use Brown's Lane rather than Farm Lane as the car access to the school.

Similar hazards occur in the vicinity of the station, and the car park immediately adjacent to it is heavily over-used, encouraging commuters from the outlying villages and towns to park their cars along The Knapp or elsewhere in the village, to the inconvenience of Bedwyn residents. There is also a problem with arriving passengers having to cross the rail bridge (which does not

have a pavement) to reach the car park. The Parish Council is striving to persuade the train operator to tackle the problem. The Kennet and Avon Canal runs through the village and through what were once the water meadows. The wharf by Brook Street no longer handles



Pleasing roof lines in Church Street

any commercial traffic but is well used by leisure boats. The area is in poor condition, with a disparate collection of buildings and containers. The village is in discussions with British Waterways Board regarding upgrading the wharf area. Provisionally, some sort of visitor centre, a proper sanitary station for boat users, and a public WC are proposed.



Modern houses in Spaines



Modern houses in Wansdyke



An example of a conservatory designed to fit in with the house

Brook Street and Forest Hill are also on the 'rat-run' used by a significant number of non-residents between the A4 and the A338. Speeding is a danger on this route, particularly at the canal and rail bridges. This poses a serious hazard to pedestrians, raising problems that require

positive measures to limit traffic speed through the village. Parking in the centre of the village is a particular problem at times of events such as angling competitions and canoe races, because of the lack of adequate parking at the Wharf. Many cottages have no off-street parking.

7. Guidance on Future Development

1. Development beyond the present village envelope should be avoided as this would alter the character of the village, both socially and visually, and lead to major problems with the infrastructure, with adverse impact on rural tourism and to social problems of over-population.



Well balanced roof pitch, positioning of dormers, and traditional brick and clay tile construction

2. Open spaces, particularly the water meadows, Church Meadow, the recreation ground, the allotments and the cricket ground, should be preserved. Similarly, the visibility of the countryside from the centre of the village is fundamental to the community's character and should be preserved for future generations.

3. Limited infilling between existing groups of buildings, where appropriate, is acceptable but it should be in scale and match the existing brick and tile work and where suitable, thatch could be used.

4. More trees should be planted, to make good past shortfalls around recent development and could be funded from the parish precept. However, any new planting should avoid the routes of the sewers.

5. If a substantial site within the village envelope should become available, then any consequent development should be a mix of private and Housing Association homes in accordance with the Affordable Housing policies defined in the Local Plan. Any such housing should comply with the recommendations of this VDS regarding design, materials and the avoidance of modern estate appearance.



Harmonious mixing of old and new houses in the High Street

In such circumstances, Developers should be required to contribute to the funding of any associated studies and the upgrading of the infrastructure and landscaping. In particular, an impact study of the water and sewerage system will be required for any new development to determine the magnitude of spare capacity available, and the cost of this should be charged to the developer.

Specific proposals for future land use/development

6. Remaining Railtrack land should be used to provide additional parking for the station. It is for consideration that the existing railway communications would be more

5. See KDC policy HC32

6. See KDC policies PDI and HC 22

7. See KDC policies ED9 and ED13.

useful if the Thames Trains' service were extended to Pewsey and Westbury.

7. The Wharf area would be improved by resurfacing to provide additional car parking space together with construction of a WC for the use of tourists.

8. Youth facilities both indoor and outdoor will be required to cater for the substantial numbers of youngsters in the village, in the form of a youth club and BMX bike track.

9. An additional small light industrial site is justified, preferably by limited expansion of the Brail Farm site, which is outside the village envelope.

Design

Appropriate features for better design in Great Bedwyn are simplicity, strength of design and respect for surroundings.

1. For groups of buildings, uniformity should be avoided and simplicity of design should be the keynote, avoiding contrived and fussy detailing.

2. Roof construction should be of plain clay tiles and have a pitch of at least 40 degrees with a wall plate as low as possible. Traditional extended eaves and verges are preferred to flush designs.

3. Roof heights should take ground contours into consideration so that over-prominent roofs and bargeboards do not dominate views in and from the village. Fascias and bargeboards should preferably be painted in unobtrusive colours.

4. Garages should preferably be sited at the rear or side of houses. They should be attached where possible, or single freestanding units, rather than built in blocks separate from the dwellings. Realistic provision should always be made for off-street parking.

5. Extensions should be designed to be in keeping and in scale with the original building and its surroundings.

6. The choice of windows, particularly replacements, should follow the traditional patterns, with balanced lights, consistent sight lines and the use of multiple, rather than large single panes.

7. The size, location and design of conservatories are important and should take into consideration the style and materials of construction of adjacent houses.

8. A rural appearance should be maintained, requiring soft edging, good use of form and colour rather than harsh juxtapositioning of inappropriate materials.

9. Street furniture, including bollards and railings, should be in keeping with the traditional examples in the area.

10. Street signage should be kept to a minimum consistent with clear information.

11. The location of street lighting points should take into account the impact upon buildings and possible enhancement of the general streetscape, as well as the practical function of illuminating the roadway and pavement.

12. Hedges and fencing should be unobtrusive while gates should be of traditional rustic appearance.

13. Traditional British species of oak, beech, yew, ash and fruit trees should be planted in preference to exotic varieties. In general there is scope for further planting of trees to soften the view of buildings along public roads.

14. The Wiltshire Fire Brigade recommends the installation of sprinklers in any future development in rural villages.

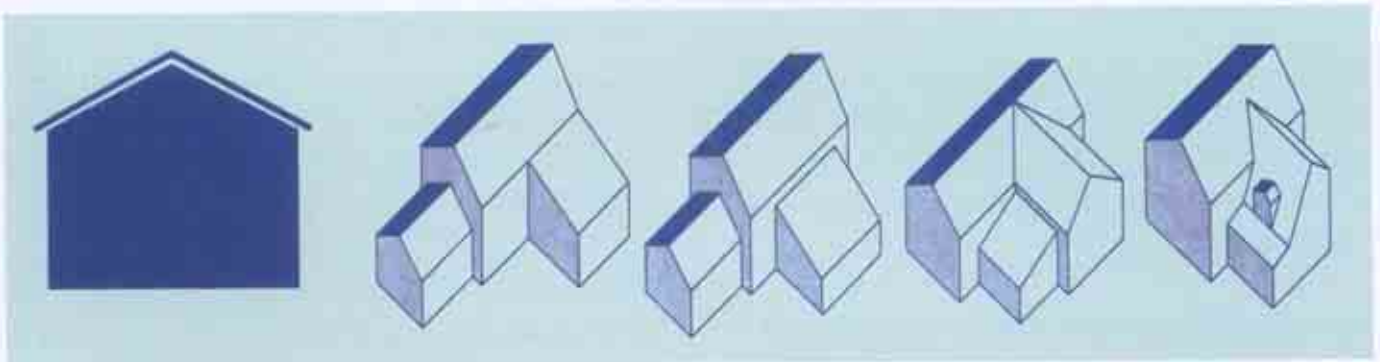
15. Surface water must be separated from the foul sewage on all new developments; the developer must make proper provision for surface water drainage to the ground, watercourses or surface water sewers. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is a major contributor to sewer flooding. (See Policy PD2 of the Replacement Local Plan).



Wonderful light in this picture, taken from Back Lane



Traditional cast iron street furniture at Foxbury Place



KEEPING IN SHAPE

One of the factors that can make houses in the countryside look 'wrong' is the relationship between the walls and the roof. In the classic vernacular profile, the roof can account for as much as half the height. When the floor plan is overlarge (above left), the house looks ill-proportioned. The other examples, adapted from the Suffolk Coastal Design Guide, show how scale and proportion can be preserved in combination of smaller units.



Decorative 19th century brickwork and windows

8. How our Design Statement was prepared

The process of preparing the statement began in June 2001 when Kennet District Council representatives briefed the community and recommended production of a Design Statement. This was followed up a month later when volunteers met to elect a team. The early stages of planning together with recruitment of further support were conducted between August and October.

During the autumn four teams distributed questionnaires throughout the village (attracting responses from 200 households) and then collated the data received which was presented at a meeting of the Team in January 2002. The consultation process was carried a stage further through an all-day workshop, held in the Village Hall on 9 February (attended by 200 people plus children). The first draft of the Report was prepared during March-April and circulated to volunteers, Parish and District Councils, to key points in the village, and the website, for consultation.

A re-draft was prepared during November and submitted to KDC in February 2003.

Appendix I

This Village Design Statement was adopted by Kennet District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on 19/6/03. SPG provides guidance on the interpretation and implementation of policies and

proposals contained in a Local Plan. Although it does not form a part of the Local Plan and therefore does not have the status that Section 54A of the 1990 Act provides in deciding planning applications, SPG may be taken into account as a material consideration.

The Secretary of State will give substantial weight to SPG when making decisions on matters that come before him, provided that it is consistent with the Local Plan, and has been prepared in the proper manner.

Paragraph 3.16 of PPG12 - Development Plans states that adequate consultation is a requirement for adoption of SPG. Kennet District Council considers that the consultation undertaken in the preparation of the Great Bedwyn Village Design Statement, as outlined in this publication, is consistent with Government advice and meets the obligations set out in PPG12.

The Replacement Kennet Local Plan (March 2001) is at an advanced stage of preparation having been subject to two stages of Deposit and a Public Local Inquiry. This SPG provides detailed background information for the interpretation of policies contained in the Replacement Local Plan, particularly Policies HC22 (Housing) and NR5 (Protection of the countryside). In addition, the guidance will be relevant to the application of Policies PDI, HC5, HC31a, HC32a (Housing), ED8a, ED9,



The canal and water meadows, looking towards Little Bedwyn

ED11a, E1b, (Employment), HH5, HH16, and HH12 (Conservation Area), HH8 (Listed buildings).

Appendix II

The Conservation Area (policy HH5)

A Conservation Area Statement has been published and adopted for Great Bedwyn, and copies can be obtained from Kennet District Council. This document will be taken into account when considering planning applications within or near the Conservation Area (see map on page 12). Conservation Areas are places of special architectural or historic interest, whose character or appearance should be preserved or enhanced.

The following are some of the general principles that apply to Conservation Areas. However, the regulations are complex and if in doubt, we recommend checking with the Conservation Section of Kennet District Council before starting work: -

1. Development (including alterations to buildings) should only be permitted where it would preserve or enhance its character or appearance. Proposals that would adversely affect the setting of the Conservation Area should not be permitted.
2. The size of extensions, alterations to roofs and erection of garden buildings that can be carried out without planning permission is subject to strict restrictions.
3. Anyone who wishes to fell, prune the branches or roots of a tree, or carry out other work that might damage a tree in a Conservation Area, must inform the District Council at least six weeks in advance.
4. Conservation Area Consent is required to demolish most buildings and structures such as boundary walls.

The Longer Term Prospects

This Village Design Statement fully supports the Kennet Local Plan policy regarding development, which will remain valid until 2011.

If, contrary to the residents' wishes, the Village Envelope is extended in the future as a result of a review of the Local Plan, or in the event of decision makers considering a departure from the adopted Plan, then the guidance in section 7 (especially paragraph 5) of this VDS, and the policies set out in the Local Plan with regard to affordable housing and planning obligations, should provide the basis for future development.

Affordable housing, where practical, should be spread, so as to avoid separate estates.



This simple porch is attractive and effective

Organisations consulted in preparing this statement

- British Waterways Board
- County Archaeologist
- The Environment Agency
- Great Bedwyn Parish Council
- Great Bedwyn businesses and residents
- Kennet District Council
- Knightstone HA
- Railtrack PLC
- Sarsen HA
- Thames Trains
- Thames Water Utilities
- Wiltshire Ambulance Service
- Wilts and Dorset Bus Co.
- Wiltshire Fire Brigade
- Wiltshire Highways
- Wiltshire Police

Acknowledgments

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