



LITTLE COMPTON Village Design Statement

Adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance September 1998

INTRODUCTION

What is the Little Compton Village Design Statement?

It is a publication that describes the character and qualities of Little Compton that are valued by its residents. Its aim is to ensure that any future changes in the village take into account local knowledge and ideas and protect and enhance the special nature of the village. It has been prepared by the Little Compton VDS Group in consultations with all the residents of the Village by means of a Questionnaire and three public meetings. It also reflects the Cotswolds AONB Management Strategy which calls for action to "produce design guidance to identify local distinctiveness and examples of building and conversion which illustrate good practice in conserving character" and "in new development promote good design involving the use of traditional materials, or appropriate suitable alternatives . . ."

Who is it for?

Change doesn't just mean building new houses - at present the Local Plan classes Little Compton as a Category 4 Settlement where further housing development would be inappropriate because its character would be affected detrimentally. Change may, though, result from small scale developments, conversions and extensions as well as from day to day repairs and improvements. Change cannot be prevented, but with the Little Compton VDS working alongside the Local Plan, it can be managed and guided so that Little Compton remains the beautiful village that we, its residents, enjoy living in.

This Statement and its Guidelines is addressed to all those who may be involved in planning, approving or implementing any change that may alter the look and feel of the village.

- **Residents and businesses** - providing guidance for keeping alterations and extensions in sympathy with the character of the village.
- **Developers, Architects and Designers** - to help set the context and character and to explain what the residents expect to see in any new or altered buildings.
- **The Local Planning Authority** - to assist its decision making on planning applications.
- **Statutory Bodies** whose actions affect the appearance of the village.
- **Local Community Groups** who help to form local opinion.

How will it be used?

The Little Compton VDS has been adopted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and its recommendations will be taken into account when planning applications are assessed. In this way it will complement the Local Plan and existing design guidance as it affects Little Compton, and will also assist the Parish Council in assessing and commenting on planning applications and village design issues.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The name "Little Compton" is derived from the old English words "coombe", a valley on the flank of a hill, and "ton", a town or settlement. In mediaeval times it was known as "Compton in Floribus" - Compton in the Flowers. The village lies in a hollow on the edge of the Cotswold scarp with gentle hills on three sides. It is the most southerly village in Warwickshire and borders Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire.



St. Denys' Church (rebuilt mid 19th C)

The first church was built in Norman times and the settlement has probably existed for around 1000 years. The magnificent manor house dates from the 16th and 17th centuries as do many of the older houses in the village. Over the years the village has grown and it received a major boost in the mid-19th century when a brewery was built along with a large Georgian style house for its owner (Washbrook House) and smaller cottages for the workers and manager (Brewery Row and Brewery Cottage).

The building of the brewery also served to link the part of the village which had developed to the east of the manor and church, with the

western end which was clustered around the original pub (now Pillbridge House).

In the 1880's further dwellings were built - unusually for the area, partly in brick - at the western extremity of the village, together with a small development known as Newtown on the southern side of the A44 trunk road

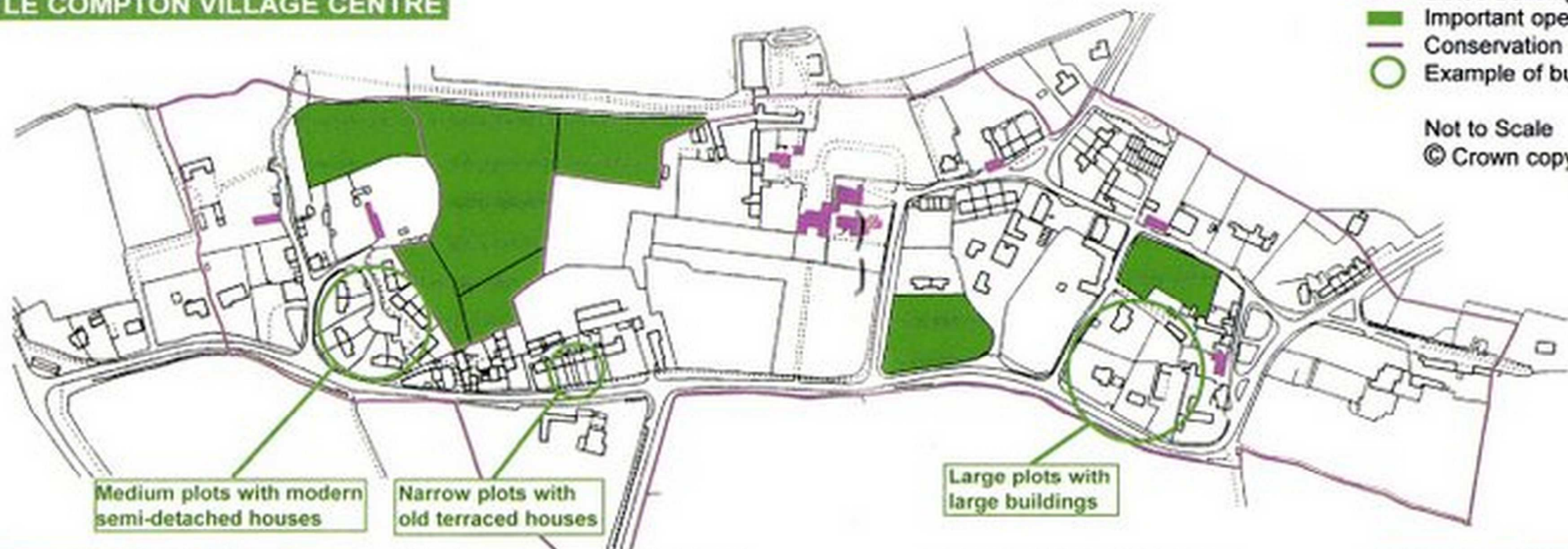
This century further small developments have taken place - Pool Close and Deerpark Bungalows in 1922, Pinchester Close in 1954, Juxon Bungalows in 1963 and Willow End in 1994. The brewery has closed and its buildings have now been re-developed as private dwellings. The mid-Victorian vicarage and its outbuildings, which became redundant when a modern clergy house was built in the 1980's, has been subdivided into apartments and two modern houses built in its grounds. A number of single dwellings, mostly in traditional styles, have been erected on previously undeveloped sites and on sites created by splitting off parts of the gardens of existing properties.

In 1970 most of the village was designated as a Conservation Area and in 1990 it became part of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The parish contains 19 listed buildings of which 13 are within the Conservation Area.



Cottages at Old Post Office Row

LITTLE COMPTON VILLAGE CENTRE



VILLAGE SETTING AND LAYOUT

Most roads leading into the village descend the surrounding hills and provide pleasing views over the village. From within the village, the hills, and their patchwork of fields bounded by dry stone walls, hedges and trees, provide an attractive backdrop when glimpsed between the houses.

The hills have limited the spread of the village and the two main streams which flow down them, the Washbrook and the Pill have, with minor exceptions, determined the southern and northern boundaries of the village respectively. As a result, the village has remained well-defined and compact.

The village has one principal road running approximately east-west, following the line of the Washbrook.

With the exception of Washbrook House, the main village development lies to the north of this road, either fronting it directly or accessed by short lanes. At the eastern end, roads branch off towards

neighbouring villages creating two small enclosed blocks.



Post Office

The roads are mostly edged with wide grass verges with only small sections being kerbed. Footpaths, where they exist, are of tarmac. Where there are no dwellings, the verges are backed by hedges and trees and overlook open fields. Mature trees within the grounds of many dwellings create an atmosphere of rural tranquillity.

In such an environment, street furniture can be intrusive. There is no street lighting, and name signs

are discreetly finished in white lettering on a dark green background. The only advertising is associated with Reed Accountancy College (which now occupies the manor), the Red Lion Inn and a few Bed & Breakfast establishments.

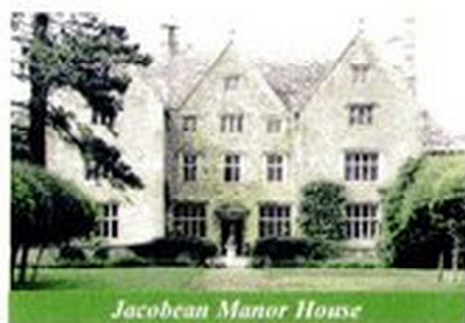
Village dwellings range from the small terraced cottages of Brewery Row and Redlands Row, to large detached properties such as Langston Farm and Washbrook House. In spite of recent infilling, several significant open spaces remain, including some ancient orchards, which are shown on the above map. The whole effect is one of openness and variety.

BUILDING STYLE AND CONSTRUCTION

Most building is in local stone, and this has had a unifying effect as can be seen in Redlands Row where terraced cottages of differing roof lines and window styles have been

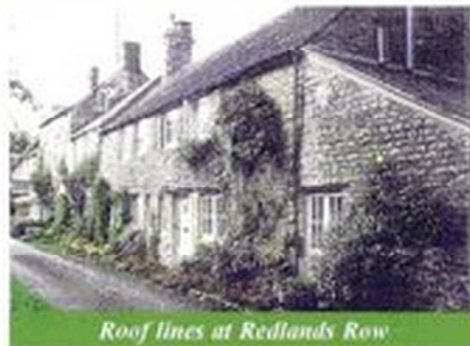
integrated by the use of the same building material. Some modern properties have been built of artificial or re-constituted stone, and although its texture is different to

natural stone, it retains a similar colour match. In late Victorian times local stone became unfashionable and a few houses of that period were built in red brick.



Jacobean Manor House

Some properties were originally thatched, but most roofs are now clad either in stone slates or blue slates, with modern properties using artificial stone coloured slates. Roof pitch is generally steep with a variation in ridge height. Roofs are set low on the walls of their buildings



Roof lines at Redlands Row

and the general impression is that buildings are low. Apart from the manor, no building exceeds two storeys although some have rooms built into their roof space.

In the older houses, windows are small and subdivided into smaller panes. A few have stone mullions and drip mouldings. Front doors are usually plain painted wood with simple door furniture and cases. Where the front door led straight into the main living room most owners have now added porches for extra privacy and insulation.

Chimneys are plain and functional although original stone construction has often been replaced by brick work.

The older dwellings fronted directly onto the road, but by Victorian times front gardens had become popular, separated from the road by a dry stone wall with a metal

or wooden gate. Dry stone walls are also the commonest way of marking the remaining boundaries of most older properties.

Little Compton suffers from poor television reception and many residents have erected tall aerial masts in order to get an adequate service. This has resulted in some unsightly collections of aerials. In a few cases satellite dishes have been sited on the front walls of dwellings.

Most properties built in the last decade have blended well with the overall village scene.

The manor is by far the largest building in the village and even dominates the neighbouring church. It has been much modified over the centuries and the present mullioned windows were inserted in the 1920's to replace the sash windows that had been installed in the previous century. The present church was built in 1865 to replace an earlier



Modern house in Cotswold vernacular

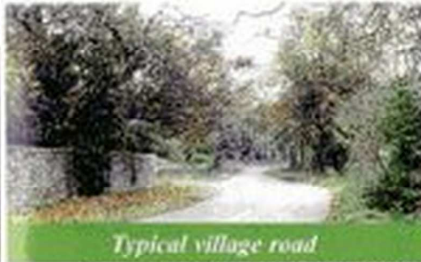
building, with only the unusual 14th century saddleback tower being retained. Nevertheless, the manor and church, both of which are listed, form an important grouping at the centre of the village.

SUMMARY OF GUIDANCE

The term "development" is used to signify any change introduced into the village and includes, for example, extensions and alterations to or the conversions of existing buildings, the erection of new buildings, changes to roads, footpaths, verges, or the introduction or modification of street furniture, etc.

The village setting and layout

- The setting of the village, flanked on three sides by hills, is of paramount importance. Inappropriate developments on its edges, or which are obtrusive to its skyline, must not spoil its appearance on the approaches down these hills.
- The village roads should not be "upgraded" by straightening, widening or kerbing. Grass verges should be retained and trees replaced by landowners as necessary.
- Footpaths should be surfaced in tarmac or a similar compound rather than paving slabs, and in some cases stone chippings may be more appropriate.
- Street furniture, signs and advertisements should be discreet and kept to a minimum.
- Utility companies must respect the village environment and should be encouraged by the Parish Council to route services underground.



Typical village road

Building style and construction

- The Manor House and Church are pivotal to the village scene and should be protected from any developments which detract from their settings.
- In all types of development, consideration should be given not only to its appearance from the adjacent roadway, but also to its effect on the wider views of the village from its approaches.
- Developments affecting existing buildings, whatever their age, should respect the inherent character and setting of those buildings.
- Materials, whether stone or brick, should match those of the existing building in style and scale.
- Roof lines should be sympathetic to those of adjacent buildings in terms of slope and ridge height - no building should exceed two storeys in height.
- Chimneys should be appropriate to the local skyline and not obtrusive.
- Doors and windows should be fitted into original or similar sized openings - traditional materials should be used and plastic should be avoided.
- Picture windows should only be used where appropriate to the setting.
- Flat roofs and Velux windows are inappropriate on older buildings.
- When plastic rainwater goods and downpipes are unavoidable, their appearance can sometimes be improved by painting.
- When a porch is necessary on an older property, its style, scale and construction should be carefully chosen to harmonise with the building.
- Satellite TV dishes should be mounted in accordance with Conservation Area regulations, and terrestrial aerials mounted where they are least visible from the road and from the village approaches.



- New buildings should use local or reconstituted stone that is appropriately coloured and textured with stone coloured or blue slate roofs. The size and style of the coursing and pointing should be similar to that used in existing buildings and the whole should be sympathetic to the Cotswold vernacular.
- New buildings and extensions should be of a size appropriate to the plot on which they are erected; examples are shown on the centre page map.
- The road boundaries of plots should be bounded by dry stone walls with traditional header stones - not cement capping. Traditional hedging (not Leylandii) is an acceptable alternative provided that it is kept trimmed to a reasonable height. Wooden fences or panels are not encouraged.
- Gateposts should be of wood, metal or stone of a height in keeping with the adjacent wall or hedge, with wood or metal gates. Field gates are suitable for drive entrances.



Typical Dry Stone Wall

Anyone contemplating development should remember that, in addition to the above guidelines, it may be subject to planning policy within Stratford on Avon District Council Local Plan and to regulations governing developments in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, within a Conservation Area or affecting a Listed Building, most of which are statutory.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information may be obtained from the Planning Department of Stratford on Avon District Council, who can also provide copies of the following publications which may be relevant to proposed developments:-

Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines (Warwickshire C.C./Countryside Commission 1993)

Countryside Design Summary (Stratford on Avon District Council)

Little Compton Conservation Area (Stratford on Avon District Council 1994)

Cotswold AONB Management Strategy (Cotswold AONB Joint Advisory Committee 1996)

Further copies of this booklet may be obtained from the Clerk to Little Compton Parish Council.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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