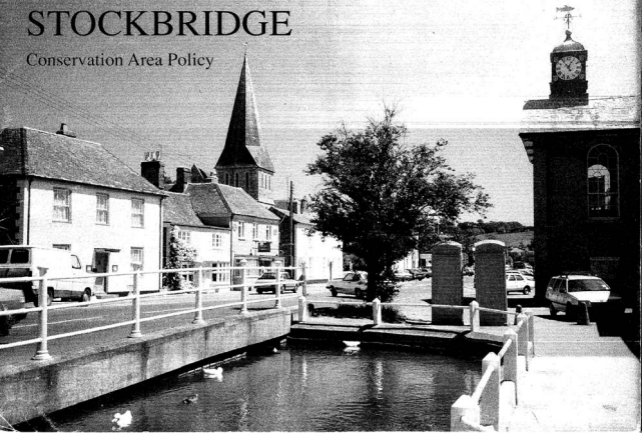


# STOCKBRIDGE

Conservation Area Policy



# **STOCKBRIDGE**

## **Conservation Area Policy**

Following a period of public consultation this policy was adopted by Test Valley Borough Council on 8th January 1992, the date of designation of the extended Stockbridge Conservation Area.

John Pybus Dip TP, MRTPI,  
Chief Planning Officer,  
Test Valley Borough Council,  
Council Offices,  
Duttons Road,  
ROMSEY,  
Hampshire, SO51 8XG.

Price £5.00

## INTRODUCTION

Conservation of the environment is one of the most important functions of local planning authorities. To be successful it must be the concern of all of us who value our towns and villages, which have evolved over centuries and contain many beautiful and historic areas whose individual character is due to a highly diverse combination of buildings, trees and spaces.

Since 1967 local planning authorities have designated as Conservation Areas those areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. At present there are more than 7,000 Conservation Areas in England and Wales; of these nearly 300 are in Hampshire and 36 in Test Valley.

The Stockbridge Conservation Area was originally designated by Hampshire County Council in 1971. In common with other earlier Conservation Areas in Test Valley, the boundary was very tightly drawn along the backs of properties in the High Street. In 1991 the Borough Council considered that the Conservation Area should be extended to include additional buildings at the edge of the town and in Longstock parish, together with the open fields, watercourses and woodland which form its setting. Following the publication of a draft leaflet and a period of public consultation the areas below were added to the Conservation Area:-

1. The water meadows to the north of the High Street from Longstock Road to the A30 including Longstock Mill and the Recreation Ground. The views across this area from the River Test bridge are especially important.
2. The corresponding swathe of land to the south of the High Street from the Houghton Road to the A3057 Romsey Road, extending as far south as the Common Marsh and including the northern end of Marsh Court Lane.

3. Steepleton Farm, which includes an area of archaeological interest comprising an Iron Age hillfort and settlement.
4. Old London Road and Little Dean House.

Conservation policies are designed to complement rather than substitute for other planning policies. This document is NOT a village plan or a local plan and therefore is not concerned with the principle of whether development takes place. It will, however, have much to do with the form that any such development should take, including alterations or extensions to existing buildings and the protection of trees. Particular attention is given to such matters as design, scale, location, use of materials and effect upon the street scene or landscape setting.



The River Test at Longstock Mill

## THE CHARACTER OF THE TOWN

Stockbridge lies in the heart of the Valley of the Test and grew up at the junction of two ancient routes during the period of Roman occupation. To create an all seasons river crossing point, it is believed that the Romans constructed a causeway of chalk across the water meadows, upon which the town is founded. This largely accounts for its pronounced linear character, straddling a succession of small, managed watercourses, and culminating in a larger bridge over the main river. The quality of the water means that the Test is one of the most important trout fishing rivers in the country.

The main approaches to Stockbridge from east, west and south drop steeply down to the village at the floor of the valley. Conversely, looking out from the main street, there is a strong consciousness of rising land at each end covered with fields and trees, with buildings such as Dean House forming elements in this setting.



Footpath from the Common Marsh



The White Hart Inn

The High Street is a wide hard-surfaced space fringed with a rich variety of buildings of assorted ages and styles, mostly two storeys high. Many are, or were formerly, inns serving the passing trade which has always been such an important element of the town economy. Some modern shop and commercial frontages, like Grand Prix Newsagents and the Co-op, may disguise properties which are actually two or three hundred years old. Many buildings have very long rear gardens and paddocks, relics of old burghage plots which would have been cultivated by the freeholder for his own household's needs. Between the buildings run numerous streams and small ways leading to the open land beyond, such as the public footpath beside the Waggon and Horses public house leading to the Common Marsh.

Certain buildings form landmarks in the scene. At the eastern end of the town, old St. Peter's Church dates back to c.1300 but only its chancel survives, the remainder having been demolished in the 1860's when the new church was built in the centre of the High Street. The spire of the Victorian church is prominent above the roofline and for a distance across the surrounding water meadows. The Grosvenor Hotel and the Town Hall are both early 19th century buildings, constructed of the white Beaulieu brick. The Town Hall and the street area immediately to the west is the main focal point of the town, busy with local residents and visitors who often congregate around the stream crossing.

The High Street narrows as it crosses over Borough Lake, but beyond the White House the vista opens out with important views from the Stock Bridge over the Test as the road crosses into Longstock parish, particularly to the north across the flood plain of the river.

The Houghton-Longstock road crosses the main street at right angles just to the west of the bridge. A further group of buildings of historic interest are clustered near to the junction, including the Drovers House, Windover Farm and Longstock Mill.

Around the town, on the Downs, are several sites of archaeological interest from the Bronze and Iron Age periods, particularly at Danebury, Meon Hill, Woolbury and Steepleton Farm.

Key features of Stockbridge are:-

- the linear nature of the settlement, bordered by undeveloped water meadows
- the broad, open character of the main town street, crossed by stream courses and punctuated by 19th century public buildings forming local landmarks

- the otherwise generally small scale of buildings along the main street, with a mix of local building materials and styles
- important views out of the town, particularly at each end of the main street, and from various points across the surrounding water meadows
- significant belts and groups of trees forming landscape features especially at the edges of the built-up area.



Stockbridge Town Hall

## PLANNING POLICIES AND CONTROLS

Planning policies for the Conservation Area aim to preserve and enhance its special character. They are complementary to existing land use and countryside policies contained within the Mid Hampshire Structure Plan and the Andover Area Local Plan which provide a detailed and up to date framework for development decisions affecting Stockbridge. The latter will soon be superseded by the Test Valley Borough Local Plan, currently in preparation. Certain special controls already exist for the present Conservation Area and would be extended to cover the enlarged area when designated. These include:

- a) limits on normal permitted development tolerances;
- b) restrictions on demolition of buildings and structures;
- c) restrictions on felling and other tree work.

The design of new development must be sympathetic to and enhance the character of the area: furthermore there will be extended opportunities for public comment on proposed development. You are strongly advised to consult the Planning Department before any works are undertaken to ANY building, structure or tree.

### *1. Demolition*

All buildings including walls within a Conservation Area are protected by law from demolition. The only exceptions are certain very small or temporary buildings. Anyone intending to demolish all or part of a building within a Conservation Area must first apply for consent from the Borough Council.

### *2. Listed Buildings*

Buildings which are statutorily listed as being of special architectural or historic interest by the Secretary of State are additionally protected, and it should be noted that this applies to interiors as well as exteriors. Prior listed

building consent must be obtained from the Borough Council before any works to alter, extend or demolish any part of a listed building are commenced. Such works could include external redecoration, re-roofing, the alteration of doors and windows, changing rainwater goods, removal of internal fixtures or structural changes. Permission is also required for the erection of small buildings such as garden sheds within the grounds of a listed building, or for changes to gates, fences or walls enclosing it.

Some key points to note when considering repairs or alterations to listed buildings:

- Traditional repair techniques normally prove more reliable and more economic in the long term.
- Repair existing traditional windows, cast iron gutters etc. wherever possible to preserve authenticity. Avoid replacement with non-traditional materials such as uPVC or aluminium windows, concrete tiles, artificial slates or plastic gutters. These would, in any case, require listed building consent.
- Retain original internal features such as doors, fireplaces, panelling and plasterwork which are an integral part of a listed building's character.
- Do not use damaging cleaning techniques such as sandblasting on old timbers or brickwork. Avoid paint or spray treatments for walls and roofs which are short lived and can actually cause long term damage by sealing in moisture and preventing ventilation.
- Ensure that new brickwork is a good match with existing and use lime mortar for careful compatible pointing.
- Do consult the Borough Council for advice.

Some buildings shown on the plan as being of local interest may merit statutory listing, and the Borough Council will be requesting the Department of the Environment to consider further listings in the area.

### 3. *New Development and Alterations to Non-Listed Buildings*

Designation of the enlarged area as a Conservation Area does not preclude the possibility of new development within it, subject to local planning policies; but it is important that new developments should be designed in a sensitive manner having regard to the special character of the area.

Similar considerations apply where alterations or extensions are proposed to existing buildings of local interest or other non-listed properties in the area. Major threats to the general character of Conservation Areas are the many 'small' alterations to non-listed buildings that can take place. For example, the use of mass-produced doors and windows in wood stain or uPVC should be avoided. Although a few minor works are regarded as 'permitted development', and may be carried out without the need for planning permission, in many cases formal consent will be required. Owners should therefore check with the Planning Department at an early stage when considering works to their property.

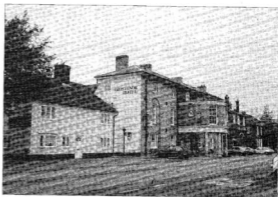
Detailed applications will be required to show the relationship of any proposal to its site and surroundings to ensure that new development 'fits in' by reflecting traditional building forms and the use of local or compatible materials. Outline applications will not be accepted.

New development should preserve and/or positively enhance the enlarged Conservation Area's character by:

- reflecting traditional building forms in terms of density, siting, height, massing and scale;

- using local or traditional materials, colours and detailing;
- retaining and reinforcing local landscape features such as trees, hedgerows and important open areas.

Where development involving building work is proposed, the Borough Council, mindful of the archaeological potential, will ensure that adequate time is allowed for excavation/ investigation of selected sites before and during development and may attach conditions to planning permission as appropriate. As very little is known about the early archaeology associated with the founding of Stockbridge, all developments are of potential interest.



The Grosvener Hotel

#### *4. Opportunities to Comment on Proposed Developments*

The Borough Council is required to advertise applications for development affecting a listed building or the character of a Conservation Area in order to allow opportunities for public comment. Notices are placed in the Andover Advertiser and on or near the land to which the application relates. Twenty-one days are allowed for the public to inspect the details of the application and to make representations to the local council.

#### *5. Trees and Landscape Features*

In Conservation Areas trees are protected broadly as though they were subject to Tree Preservation Orders. The only exceptions are some very small specimens and cultivated fruit trees. The Borough Council must be notified at least six weeks before a tree is proposed to be felled, uprooted or pruned in any way (unless being done in connection with a previously approved development) so that an inspection can be carried out.

The retention of trees and hedgerows is generally encouraged, but where development proposals would involve their removal, this should be clearly indicated as part of any detailed planning application. A landscaping scheme should include an accurate survey of existing features showing their location, height, spread and species, together with any new planting.

Not only are there important groups of trees within and adjacent to the Conservation Area, but there are certain open spaces which contribute significantly to the character of Stockbridge. Because of this it is improbable that any development will be permitted on them. The Borough Council would therefore wish to see them retained and enhanced accordingly.

#### *6. Advertisements*

Due to the mixed residential and commercial nature of Stockbridge, a balanced approach must be maintained towards signs. Strict controls concerning the display of outdoor advertising will be applied within the Conservation Area and the Council will give consideration to the possible designation of an Area of Special Advertisement Control.



St. Peter's Church

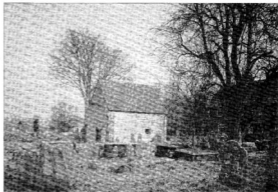


## BUILDING REPAIRS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT

In addition to the legal consequences of a Conservation Area designation, it is important that action is taken to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area, such as improvements to footpaths, bridleways, open areas or tree and hedge planting. Special funding has been arranged by Test Valley Borough Council, Hampshire County Council and English Heritage for historic building repairs and environmental enhancement projects under the Hampshire Country Towns Initiative and the Stockbridge Town Scheme. It is envisaged that some schemes will be directly initiated by the Borough and/or County Councils, whilst projects proposed by private owners, Parish Councils, etc. may be eligible for grant aid. The improvement of Old St. Peter's Churchyard was carried out using joint funding under these arrangements. A separate leaflet is available explaining the grant schemes in detail.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Advice and information on legal requirements and development matters can be obtained from the Area Planning Officer at the Planning Department, Council Offices, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover, Tel: (0264) 364144. Advice on historic building work, repairs, details of grants and landscape matters is available from the Design and Conservation Section of the Planning Department, Council Offices, Duttons Road, Romsey, SO51 8XG. Tel: (0794) 515117.



Old St. Peter's Church

# APPENDIX 1

## Trees in Conservation Areas

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Sections 211-214) requires anyone who proposes to 'top, lop, uproot or wilfully damage or destroy' a tree in the Conservation Area to give six weeks notice to Test Valley Borough Council. This requirement is intended to give the Borough Council a final opportunity to serve a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) before work is commenced. Work may not be commenced within the six week period without consent.

If the work to a tree in the Conservation Area is begun without the six weeks notice, the person carrying out the work becomes liable for penalties similar to those for contraventions of a Tree Preservation Order and a similar duty to replant. If the authorised work is not completed within two years of giving notice of consent, further notice must be given. The particulars of a notice are recorded by the Council in a register open to public inspection. 'Notice' forms are available from the Planning Department of the Borough Council.

The six week rule does not apply to trees that are dying, dead or dangerous, or where works are necessary for the prevention or abatement of a nuisance. Except in an emergency, however, a minimum of five days should be given to the authority to decide whether to dispense with a requirement to replant with a tree of appropriate size or species.

There are certain categories of trees that are exempt from most Tree Preservation or Conservation Area controls; these are summarised below.

### Main exemptions

i) trees of less than 75mm in diameter, 1.5m above ground level or 100mm where the act is carried out to improve the growth of other trees (except Woodland Tree Preservation Orders);

ii) trees cultivated for fruit production that are growing or standing in an orchard or garden;

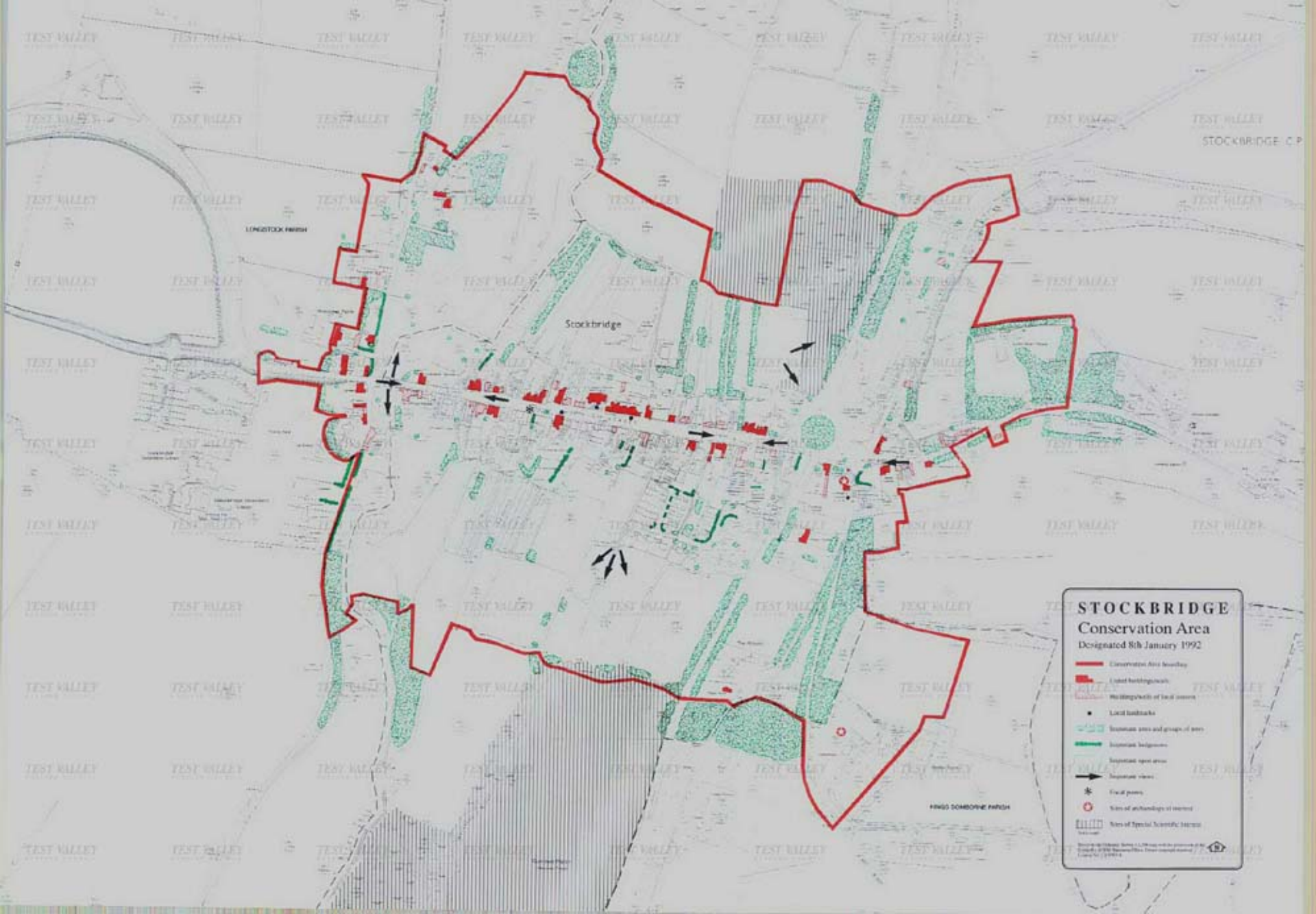
iii) trees cut down in accordance with a forestry dedication covenant or Forestry Commission plan;

iv) trees cut down by a statutory undertaker (such as British Telecom or river authority); and

v) trees which need to be felled to enable development to be carried out following the granting of planning permission.



Marsh Court Lane



### STOCKBRIDGE Conservation Area Designated 8th January 1992

- Conservation Area boundary
- Listed buildings/structures
- ▨ Buildings/width of local interest
- Local landmarks
- Important areas and groups of trees
- Important buildings
- Important open areas
- ➔ Important views
- \* Civic points
- Sites of architectural interest
- ▨ Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Stockbridge Conservation Area is a registered conservation area of the Test Valley District Council. It is designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1987. The Council is responsible for the management and protection of the area.