



# **EASTCOURT CONSERVATION AREA**

## **CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

February 2008

### **Planning Services**

-  Development Control & Conservation
-  Forward Planning & Transportation
-  Building Control & Property Management

## SUMMARY

A conservation area was first designated at Eastcourt in October 1985 in recognition of its architectural and historic character. Its special quality is summarised in the following way.

The hamlet of Eastcourt lies on the eastern part of the large village of Burbage which also has a conservation area, designated in 1993. It lies in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has the modern-day advantage of being by-passed by through traffic. It retains the character of a sleepy village and has a high proportion of historic buildings. These mainly consist of well-spaced thatched cottages and polychromatic brick buildings. The conservation area only has about 30 properties, these include the grade II\* listed Parish Church of All Saints and the County Primary School. The abundant presence of trees, hedges and other features of soft landscaping are important in maintaining its settled and timeless atmosphere. The untouched nature of the network of lanes is also an important characteristic of the historic environment – all contribute to make Eastcourt particularly worthy of conservation area protection.

Some rural conservation areas are in a state of relative economic decline, and suffer from lack of investment. More often, the qualities that make conservation areas appealing also help to encourage over-investment and pressure for new development. Eastcourt however is in a reasonable state of equilibrium where the long established rural character survives and significant change in the future is not anticipated. Where infilling or replacement of existing properties takes place in the future it will be important to ensure that special regard is given to the historic and physical contexts in which the new development will fit.

*Front Page: The main Street in Eastcourt - looking south.*

# EASTCOURT CONSERVATION AREA

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Historic areas are now extensively recognised for the contribution they make to our cultural inheritance, economic well-being and quality of life. Public support for the conservation and enhancement of areas of architectural and historic interest is well established.

The government requires local planning authorities to determine which parts of its area are areas of special architectural or historic interest worthy of designation as Conservation Areas.

Government policy stresses the need for authorities to define and record the special interest, character and appearance of all designated areas in their districts, and the Kennet Local Plan refers to the Council's intention to prepare up-to-date Designation Statements for each of 74 conservation areas within the District.

Change is inevitable in most conservation areas; the challenge is to manage change in ways that maintain and, if possible, reinforce an area's special qualities. The character of a conservation area is rarely static and is susceptible to incremental, as well as dramatic, change. Some areas are in a state of relative economic decline, and suffer from lack of investment. More often, the qualities that make conservation areas appealing also help to encourage over-investment and pressure for new development. English Heritage recommends that positive management is essential if such pressure for change, which tends to alter the very character that made the areas attractive in the first place, is to be limited.

The Council's performance in designating conservation areas, defining the special interest that warrants designation through up-to-date character appraisals, and publishing management proposals is now the subject of a three-part "Best Value Performance Indicator"

The following character appraisal and management proposals for Eastcourt are intended to replace a recently revised Statement that was adopted by the Council in 2004.

The purpose of this document is to identify and record those special qualities of Eastcourt that make up its architectural and historic character. This is important in providing a sound basis for planning policies and decisions on development, as well as for the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of the area. Beyond their use as planning tools, appraisals also have a wider application as educational and informative documents for the local community.








The document is intended for all those with an interest in Eastcourt, or undertaking work on the buildings, landscape, roads or public spaces. It is also essential reading for anyone contemplating new development within the area. By drawing attention to the distinctive features of Eastcourt it is intended that its character will be protected and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations.

The remainder of the document is divided into three further main sections – the character appraisal, future management proposals, and community involvement.

The survey work for the appraisal was carried out during the Summer of 2007. The character appraisal commences with a short description of the planning context and is followed by an analysis of Eastcourt's special architectural and historic interest. This represents the core of the appraisal.

The conservation area is complex and, although priority has been given to highlighting significant features, omission of items from the text or from illustrations should not be regarded as an indication that they are unimportant in terms of conserving the character of the area.

**Key to Maps:**

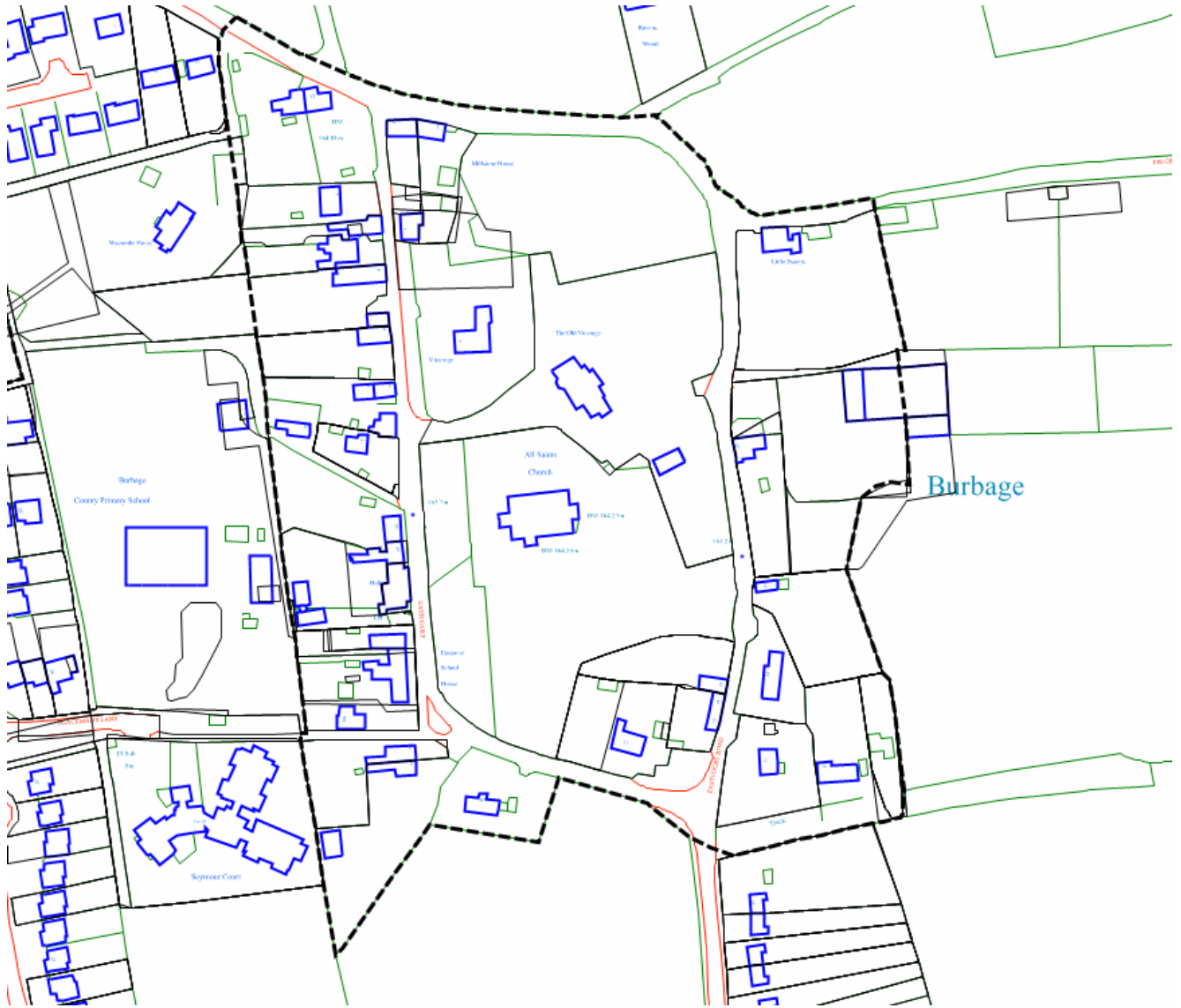
Conservation Area boundary		Groups of trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders	
Public Footpaths		Important trees and hedges	
Listed Buildings		Archaeological Alert Zone	
Unlisted buildings with townscape merit			

North is at the top of all maps

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## 2. EASTCOURT CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Map 1: The Boundary of Eastcourt conservation area



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### 2.1 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The procedures governing the protection of listed buildings are widely understood and mainly focus on the protection of individual structures. Conservation area designation, however, is the main instrument to give effect to conservation policies for a particular *neighbourhood or settlement*. Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of most buildings, and tree felling / surgery. The scale of extensions that may be added to existing dwellings as “permitted development” is also limited. Designation has some resource implications for the local authority and the owners and occupiers of property within the area, because of increased statutory controls and particular requirements for the repair or alteration of existing, and

construction of new, buildings. For many owners, however, these implications may be outweighed by the cachet of designation, and the tendency of controls aimed at maintaining the character of the area to sustain, or enhance, the value of property within it. Designation also provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest.

The general planning policy for Eastcourt is currently set out under the area of Burbage in the Kennet Local Plan 2011. Eastcourt is defined as an area of 'minimum change', planning permission will not therefore be granted for development which would materially damage the character of the area. Policy HH10 of The Local Plan elaborates this. Eastcourt is recognised as a village with limited facilities and new large-scale, comprehensive or 'estate' forms of development are unlikely to be acceptable. Planning policy (HC24) anticipates that new building development proposals are only likely to be in the form of limited individual proposals for infilling or the re-use or replacement of existing buildings where the development would be within the existing built up area of the village, would not consolidate an existing sporadic, loose knit area of development and would be in harmony with the village in terms of its scale and character. Where such proposals are acceptable in terms of general planning policy the Council will require them to have regard to the historic and physical context of the conservation area.

Eastcourt lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Natural Resources. The Landscape Conservation Strategy is also relevant as supplementary planning guidance.

The government has recently introduced a new kind of planning system in which the focus is on flexibility, sustainability, and the use of evidence to underpin the core strategies. Local planning authorities will in future produce local development frameworks consisting of a portfolio of local development documents. It is unlikely that the fundamental planning policy for Eastcourt will change significantly under the new regime.

It is probable that a new core strategy will be supported by supplementary planning documents (SPD) giving greater specific guidance, for example on development control matters relating to conservation areas. The legislation relating to conservation areas runs parallel with general planning legislation and there will be a need to ensure that appropriate linkages are in place. It is anticipated that this will be achieved by new Heritage SPD which will in turn be supported by adopted and published character appraisals and management proposals for individual conservation areas. This is where this document fits in.

The intention is that a clear definition of those elements which contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of a place will enable the development of a robust policy framework for the future management of the area, on which applications for planning permission can be considered.

A local authority's reasoning for designating a conservation area, as set out in a formal character appraisal published in support of a supplementary planning document, will be taken into account by the First Secretary of State and the Planning Inspectorate in considering related planning appeals.

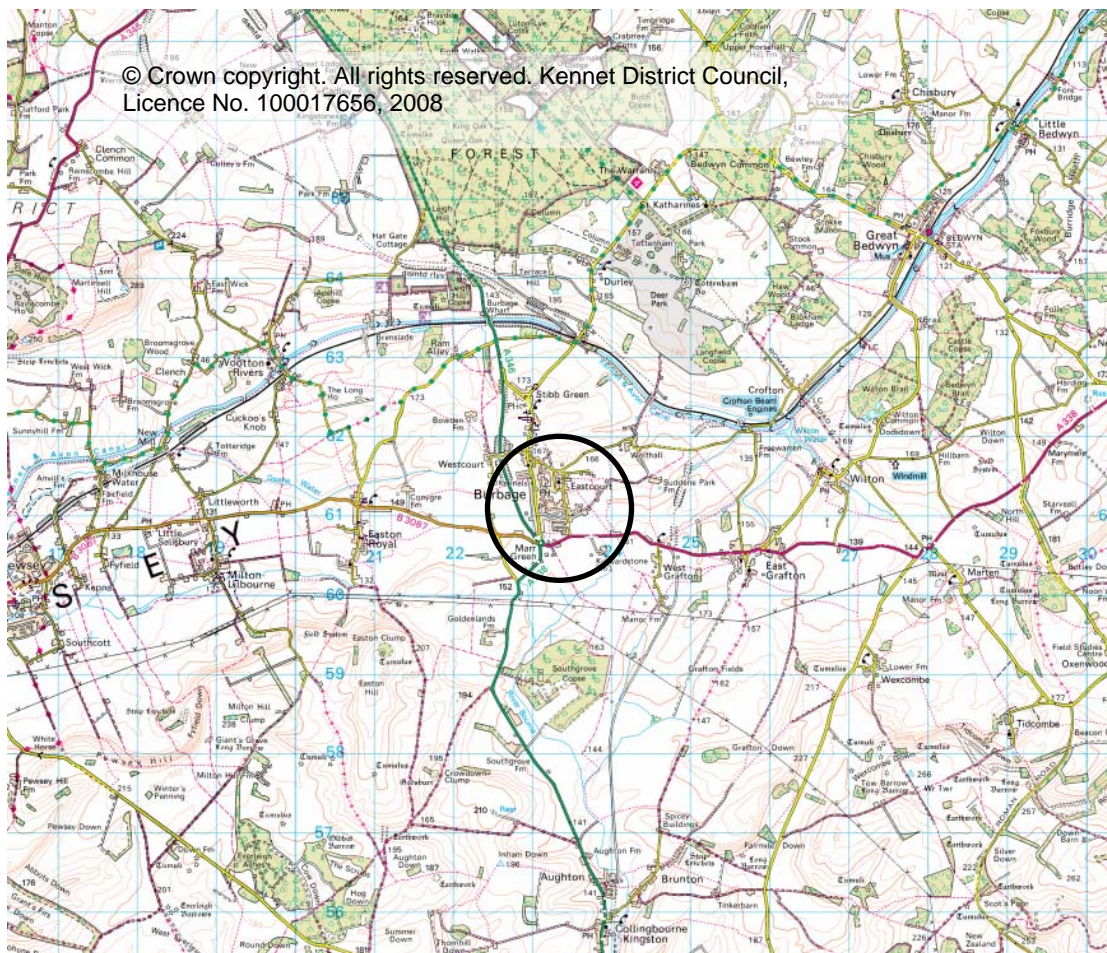
## **2.2 DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

### **2.2.1 Location and context**

Eastcourt lies south of Savernake Forest at the east end of the Vale of Pewsey, 5.5 miles southeast of Marlborough and 100 yards east of Burbage High Street.

The vale runs between chalk downs rising in places to 289 metres, these are part of the North Wessex Downs that range northwards from Salisbury Plain to the Thames valley. To the east of Eastcourt the Kennet valley cuts through the Downs so that effectively, the village lies on a connecting ridge of higher ground about 18 kilometres wide with the Marlborough Downs to the north and the Hampshire Downs to the south. The hamlet slopes gradually north-east to south-west at approximately 540 to 530 feet above sea level.

*Map 2. The setting of Eastcourt in a rural hinterland*



### **2.2.2 The boundary**

The conservation area takes in almost the whole of the settlement with exception of a terrace of modern dwellings to the south and neighbouring housing estates. The boundary essentially follows the rear property boundaries on the west side of the main street and follows round in a circle to encompass the church and the rear property boundaries to the east, off Eastcourt road. The boundary is closely drawn and there are no 'buffer zones' beyond the core of the village.

However, the surrounding areas of landscape are largely in agricultural use and are unlikely to be subject to development pressures.

There has been little significant change since the date of the original designation and it is considered the current boundary of the conservation area is appropriately drawn.

### **2.2.3 General character and plan form**

Eastcourt conservation area is essentially one row of historic buildings along a straight quiet road and of broadleaf woodland to the north and centre. There are no kerbs or footways to the road and it is bordered on the east side by a wide green verge in front of the church.

Towards the north end several houses and cottage walls define the west edge of the road. The 2-storey cottages tend to face south with gable ends to the roadside and vehicular access and parking between properties (see below). This disposition is both pleasant and unusual. Combined together with the great proliferation of trees on the wide verge opposite, the character of the place is of special character.

On the east side of the road the Parish of All Saints lies behind the pleasant linear green with spaced horse chestnuts and a central beech tree. Enclosing the churchyard are mature and native broadleaf trees incorporating three unusual cedars at the central gateway of the church (see below). The squat crenelated and buttressed church tower is of the 14<sup>th</sup> century but the wide body of the nave and aisles is of 1853 by T H Wyatt with walls and porch constructed of rich flint and freestone chequer-work.



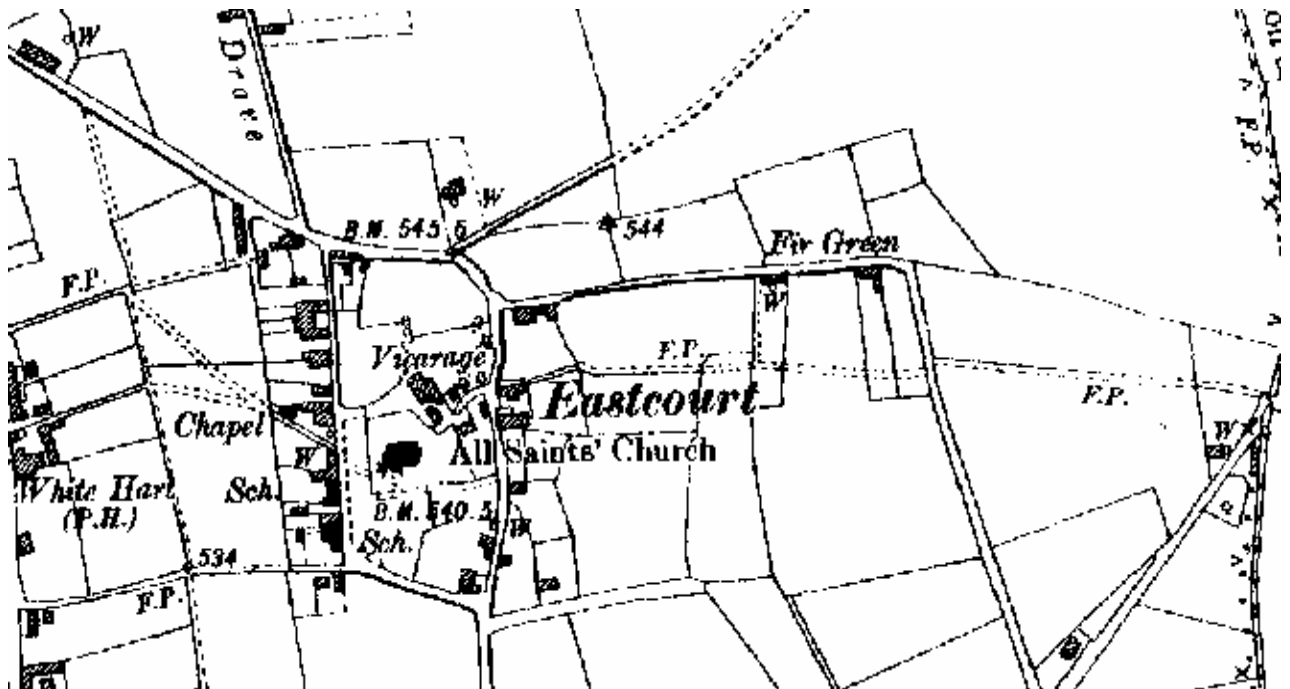
From the church gateway a tarmac footpath crosses the churchyard eastwards to a wooden gate which fronts a narrow lane, Eastcourt Road. This has quite a different character to that on the west side of the hamlet being set between grassy banks overhung by trees. There are fewer properties – largely thatched which are dotted along either side of the lane. Again, there are no curbs or pavements, giving the lane a rural and historic charm.



## **2.2.4 The origins and historic development of the area**

Eastcourt is just one of the hamlets that surround Burbage; others include Westcourt, Stibb Green, Ram Alley and Durley. In AD 71 the forest land of Burbage was part of a large forest estate known as Bedwyn, given by King Edgar to the Abbey of Abington but it was broken into four after 1066. Eastcourt is thought to have originated from land given to Burbage church. The church estate is mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086 as being held by one Viel, the priest. By 1139 however it was owned by Salisbury Cathedral and by 1150 it had established a prebend with the church estate as endowment. This lasted until 1847 when it passed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who sold the land to the Marquess of Ailesbury.

A school was first built in 1806 and a National School established in 1846 attended by 106 pupils. It was rebuilt in 1861 by which time the intake was over 140 pupils but was then closed on the opening of the present school in 1989.



*Above, Map 3: 1900 Map of Eastcourt*

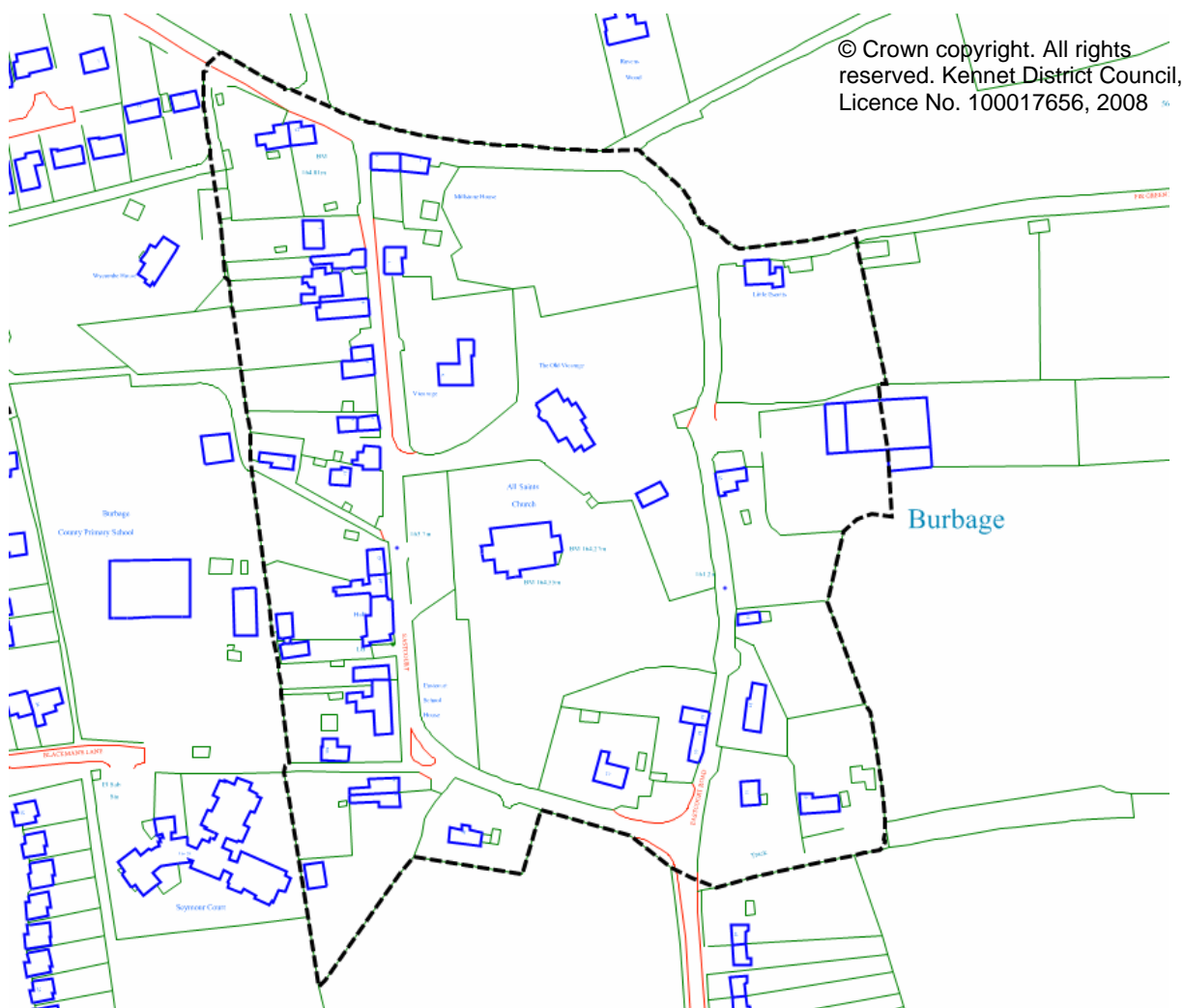
## **2.2.5 Key views and vistas**

The size of Eastcourt may be small but it features a number of attractive and varied vistas both within and around the conservation area boundary, see below. These reflect the varied attributes that make the hamlet worthy of conservation area status – mature trees, high banks, open spaces, enclosed lanes, the churchyard and the varied architectural styles of the village. The lack of road markings, large visibility splays, highway paraphernalia and the like makes Eastcourt unique in its largely unspoilt character.

*Below: eastward view towards Eastcourt Road. Below left: The churchyard. Below right: The Old Vicarage*



Below, Map 4: Key vistas and public footpaths



### **2.2.6 Architectural Character**

Most of the buildings in the conservation area, by means of their age, material construction, design and position all contribute heavily to the character and quality of it.

The built environment at Eastcourt is low rise – even All Saints Church has a relatively short bell tower. There are no other structures greater than two stories in height. Cottages shape the traditional and characteristic form of dwellinghouse.

The oldest properties are listed sixteenth and seventeenth century cottages of timber frame and thatch with dormer and casement windows. One is believed to be of ancient cruck construction. The bulk of these dwellings lie on the west side of the village and are interspersed with several unlisted early nineteenth century houses and outbuildings. These are significant in their own right and have a consistency of sash, small paned windows and planked front doors, one of which is to

a hayloft. Roofs are predominantly hipped and covered in welsh slate. Several buildings of brick are painted and have replacement windows.

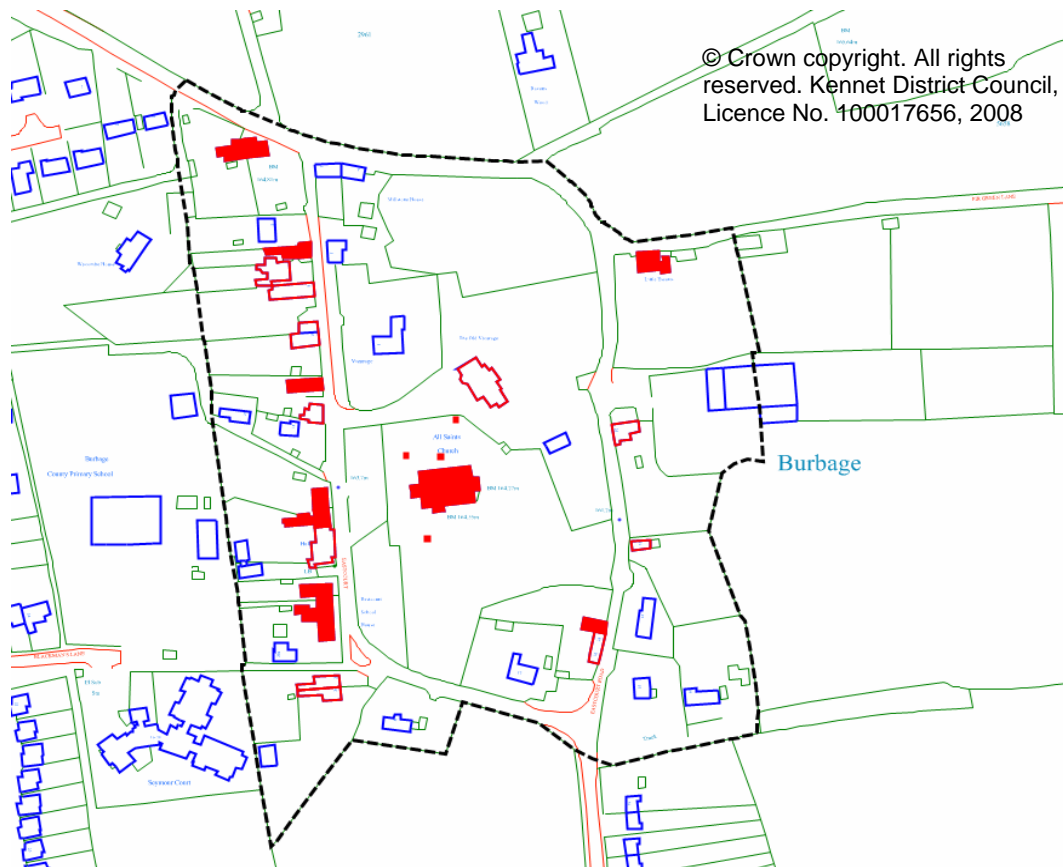
*Below: Examples of varying architectural styles within Eastcourt*



There is a consistency of style and materials of mid nineteenth century listed buildings towards the southern end of the village including the Church Hall and the former National School of the former Ailesbury Estate. These, together with a pair of unlisted cottages, No's 32 and 34 are of red and buff diaper brickwork with brick quoins and dressings. Roofs are steeply pitched in red clay plain tile with wide verge overhangs and barge boards.



*Left and above: Examples of Ailesbury Estate architecture.*



*Above Map 5: Listed buildings and unlisted buildings of merit within the conservation area*

### **2.2.7 The contribution made by greenery and green spaces**

Apart from being bordered on the west side by the settlement of Burbage, the three remaining sides face open countryside. To the north and east this land is used for arable farming and to the south is a large playing field.

In distant views across this open land, the tall trees in the wooded grounds of the church and Old Vicarage predominate and only a few fringe buildings are visible. In the north and east the sunken lanes are bounded by some hedgerow and trees, now much depleted by Elm disease, but still conceal the buildings from distant view.

Traditional cottages, particularly those with thatched roofs merge with the greenery; the character of the hamlet along the northern edge is exceptionally rural. The southern end of the lane is more open with only a few trees in the gardens of the cottages and bungalows. Similarly to the southeast, few trees lie beside the lane so open fronted gardens with non-native planting predominate.

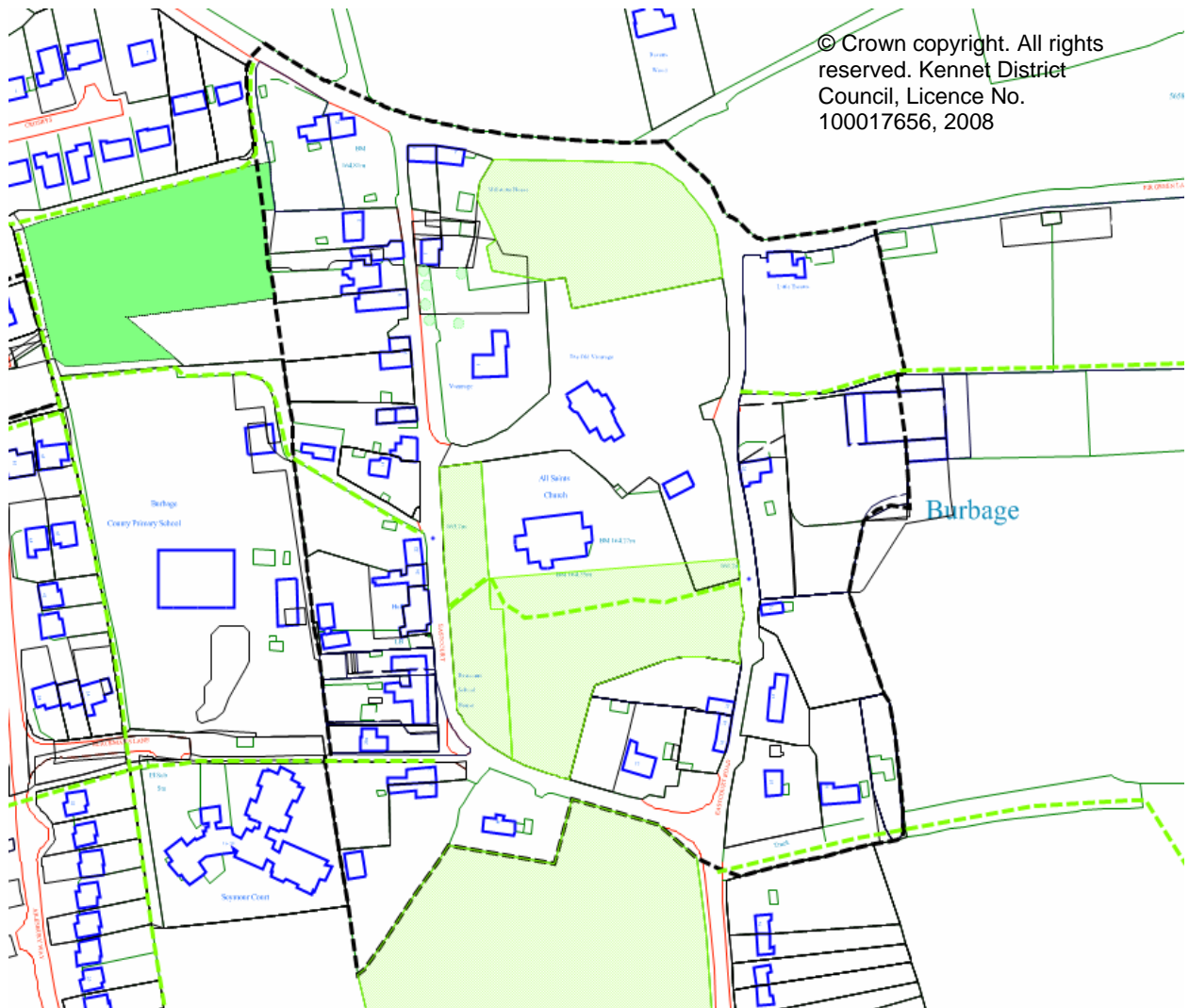
The west side is more intensively built up along Eastcourt but with grounds and gardens to the rear. Together with the playing fields to the south, there is still an undeveloped margin between the hamlet and development on the east side of Burbage High Street. Further infill between the two should be avoided to maintain the separate identity and rural character of the hamlet, apart from the modern residential developments of the larger village. Planning permission has recently been granted for the erection of several dwellings along the southern edge of the playing fields however it is hoped that the retention of land between this plot and Eastcourt hamlet will preserve the status quo of the conservation area.

The main area of open space in the conservation area lies in front of the church. This open green, dotted with several mature trees, plays a significant contribution to the character of Eastcourt village and provides an attractive amenity to its residents.

*Below: Northward view down Eastcourt road and right, The green in front of All Saints Church*



*Map 6. Important trees, hedges, open spaces and footpaths in and around the conservation area*



### **2.2.8 Surfacing and footpaths**

Around the hamlet most surfacing is low key with black top tarmac to the public roadway and private drives of gravel among the wide areas of grass. The character is strongly rural with no kerb or formal pavement. There is a simple network of public footpaths however that provide direct communication across the hamlet and into Burbage. Footpaths separate to the road are important to rural character and encourage less use of the private car. It is important that they are not diverted from their original direct routes, maintained clear of overgrowth and surfaced adequately to encourage universal use.

### **2.2.9 General condition**

Due to its attractive rural location and excellent transport links the settlement is largely prosperous. Properties have above average value and accordingly, the physical condition of its

historic buildings and other heritage assets is generally good. That said, a couple of properties are beginning to fall into a state of decline and could do with some overall maintenance, see below.



*Above: Examples of building that could do with sensitive repair and maintenance*

### **2.2.10 The extent of intrusion or damage,**

There are few negative factors and those that do exist are common place in most villages. The existence of overhead electricity and telegraph wires detracts from the special character of the area at certain points within the village. Television aerials and satellite dishes have a similar impact, as do insensitive alterations such as the replacement of timber windows with PVCu and the painting of fixtures, such as garage doors, in garish colours. Such things can easily be avoided with a little care and attention. The old and bent footpath sign to West Grafton could do with being replaced also.

*Below: unattractive aerials and satellite dishes*



*Below: An unsympathetic flat roofed extension with unsightly waste pipes, modern windows and aerial*



### **2.2.11 Problems, pressures and capacity for change**

In considering the future of the conservation area it is important to make an assessment of significance, and some analysis of how that significance is vulnerable to change. The character of Eastcourt as a traditional English village still shines through but a small number of 20<sup>th</sup> century dwellings fail to harmonise with their surroundings and pay little regard to the historic or physical context in which it



sits. Examples most notably lie to the north and south-east of the village.

There are no obvious potential development sites within the village and although gardens, open spaces and land between dwellings may be viewed as having potential, these areas are unlikely to be regarded favourably for development.

Having regards to general planning policy there are unlikely to be any major physical changes to the conservation area in the foreseeable future but where in-filling, or replacement of non-descript existing buildings, is under consideration it will be important to ensure that designs have regard to their historic and physical contexts.

## **2.3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The main sources of information used in the preparation of the draft appraisal :

*Devizes and Central Wiltshire* – John Chandler, Hobnob Press ISBN 0-946418-16-0

*Eastcourt Conservation Area Statement* – Kennet District Council

[www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)

*Wiltshire County Council*

*Kennet Local Plan*

[www.old-maps.co.uk](http://www.old-maps.co.uk)

## **APPENDIX 1 TO EASTCOURT CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

### **Locally important 'unlisted' buildings**

No's: 6, 8 and 10 Eastcourt

No: 16 Eastcourt

The Old Vicarage

Village Hall, 26 Eastcourt

No's: 32 and 34 Eastcourt

No's: 28 and 30 Eastcourt Road

No: 25 Eastcourt Road

No: 31 Eastcourt Road

*The location of these buildings is shown on Map 5*

## **3. EASTCOURT CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

### **3.1 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHARACTER APPRAISAL**

For the designation of a conservation area to be effective it is important that consistent judgements are made in determining its special qualities and local distinctiveness, as well as its value to the local community. Such judgements should be based on a thorough understanding of the area in its wider historic and physical context.

The character appraisal should be regarded as the first step in a dynamic process, the aim of which is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the designated area - and to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future through the development of management proposals.

Now that the appraisal has been drafted, proposals for the future management of the area will need to be developed. Logically these will take the form of a mid- to long-term strategy for preserving and enhancing the conservation area, addressing any issues arising from the appraisal and identifying any further or detailed work needed for their implementation.

The strategy needs to be realistic, bearing in mind the staff and financial resources likely to be available. At the present time the Council has no dedicated funds for grant aiding building repairs or enhancement work, although minor grants may be available for some tree planting schemes. Only a 'light touch' approach can be justified for most of the rural Conservation Areas within the District.

### **3.2 GENERAL APPROACH OF THE COUNCIL TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

In addition to the usual need to obtain planning permission for most forms of new development there is a requirement for applications to be made for Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of unlisted buildings, and notifications to be submitted for the felling or lopping of trees need to be notified

In exercising its planning powers, the Council has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

For most proposals in the Conservation Area the Council will require detailed plans and drawings of new development, including elevations which show the proposed development in its setting, before considering a planning application.

The Council will advertise all applications for planning permission for development that would affect the character or appearance of conservation areas.

### **3.2 GENERAL APPROACH OF THE COUNCIL TOWARDS CONSERVATION AREAS**

The Council's general planning policies towards development and demolitions in Conservation Areas are guided by those outlined in PPG 15 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

It is essential that a flexible approach is taken to the requirements of the Building Regulations and Fire Precautions Act and that rigorous application of general planning and highway policies should be relaxed where they would be in conflict with the preservation or enhancement of the area's character or appearance.

### **3.3 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AT EASTCOURT**

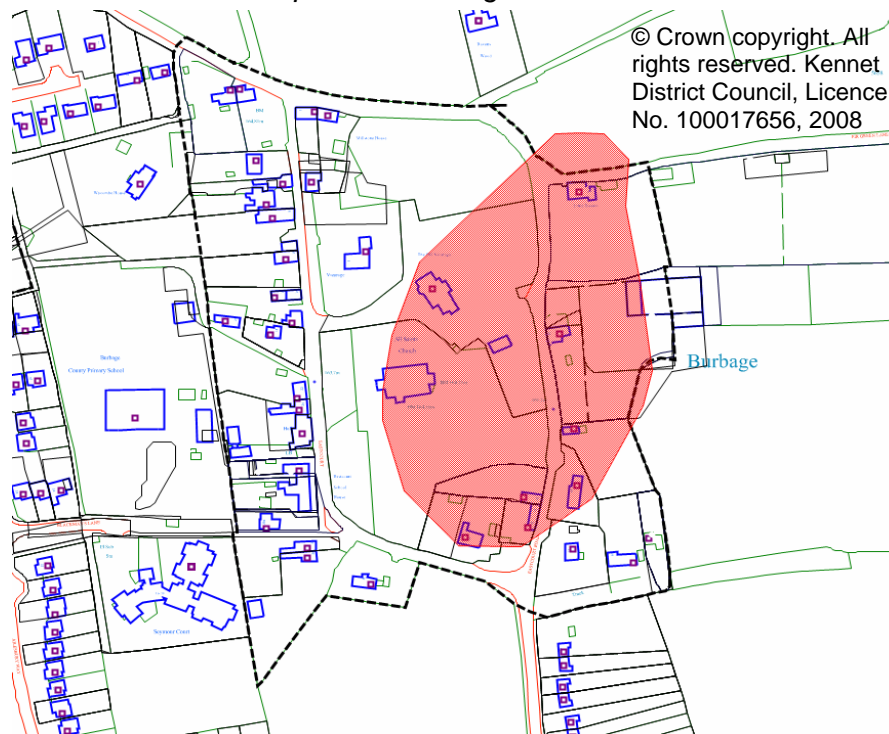
Applications for planning permission, conservation area consent, and tree works will be assessed with reference to the Conservation Area Appraisal. *There will be a presumption in favour of conserving key unlisted buildings, trees and hedges and views that have been identified.*

Following on from the above, at Eastcourt the preferred policy of conservation will lie with the preservation of the established 'status quo' rather than specific proposals for change. Where proposals for change occur the intention is to provide a framework to allow this to be carefully considered and managed in a positive way to reinforce the existing character and appearance of the area.

#### **3.3.1 Archaeology**

As noted in the appraisal there are signs of earlier clearances. The County Archaeology Service, in conjunction with the Council, has prepared archaeological zone maps for the district. These zones have been established following an analytical procedure for identifying and scoring archaeological sites and landscapes. Almost half of Eastcourt is included within an area of archaeological interest. The bulk of this lies around All Saints Church; it further encompasses Little Escotts to the north and No: 17 Eastcourt to the south. Since this area may contain below ground archaeological deposits from the medieval settlement, the Council will take archaeological advice on schemes involving below ground works. Preliminary consultation with the Archaeology Service is therefore recommended for prospective developers within this zone. It is unlikely that support will be given to development proposals which involve the disturbance of these areas.

*Map 7: Archaeological Alert Zone*



### **3.3.2 Infilling and Redevelopment**

At Eastcourt large-scale, comprehensive or 'estate' forms of development are unlikely to be acceptable. New building development proposals are therefore likely to be in the form of individual proposals for infilling or replacement buildings. The appraisal has noted that a small number of properties are not in harmony with the historic and physical context of the conservation area. The Council will therefore encourage the sympathetic redevelopment of those sites which currently detract from the character or appearance of the area. Where redevelopment does take place it will be important to maintain generous spacing between building blocks, to follow established building patterns, and to avoid destroying the verges, banks, walls and hedges fronting onto the lanes.

### **3.3.3 Design of New Buildings in the Conservation Area**

New development in the conservation area should aspire to a quality of design and execution, related to its context, which may be valued in the future. This in itself does not imply nor preclude working in traditional or new ways, but will normally involve respecting values established through assessment of the significance of the area. The aim of design guidance therefore is to encourage new development that complements the established grain or settlement pattern, whilst representing the time in which it is built and the culture it accommodates. When considering proposals for new development, the local planning authority's principal concern will be the appropriateness of the overall mass or volume of the building, its scale (the expression of size indicated by the windows, doors, floor/ceiling heights, and other identifiable units), and its relationship to its context - whether it sits comfortably on its site. A new building should be in harmony with, or complementary to, its neighbours. The footprint of new buildings should fit into the existing building pattern or grain. The use of materials generally matching in appearance or complementary to those that are historically dominant in the area is important, as is ensuring that materials, detailing and finishes are all of high quality. Within these criteria, new development should aim to achieve creative design solutions, whether contemporary or traditional in style.

In designing proposals owners and their architects are therefore advised to look carefully how their proposal will fit into its physical and historic context. Where construction work is involved particular care should be taken in the choice of building materials.

The palette of established materials at Eastcourt include :

- Roof coverings - Long straw thatch, combed wheat reed, welsh slate, handmade red clay plain tiles.
- Walling  
brick - Timber frame, wattle and daub, red and painted brick noggin. Red brick, buff and bath stone dressings, plain and knapped flint, chequered flint with Bath stone. Painted brick, stucco and cement render.
- Windows  
buildings - Timber casements for all types of buildings. Timber sliding sashes for C18 and later.
- Doors  
houses - Planked doors for cottages and former school buildings. Panelled doors for and larger buildings.

### **3.3.4 Extensions**

Relatively small proposals can cumulatively alter the character of the conservation area. It is important therefore that extensions to buildings do not dominate the host building, are of sympathetic design and material construction. Generic advice on the considerations to be taken into account in designing an extension is set out in a *Residential Extension Design Guide*. This is available free of charge from the Planning Services Unit at Kennet District Council.

### **3.3.5 Rethatching**

The importance of historic thatched roofs in Eastcourt has been noted. The Council has published Supplementary Planning Guidance on *Rethatching*, which is available on-line in the Conservation section of [www.kennet.gov.uk](http://www.kennet.gov.uk). This Guidance was recently updated following public consultation during 2007. The Council will shortly send copies of the revised guidance to the relevant owners.

### **3.3.6 Additional Controls**

In certain circumstances, the Council can apply additional controls to bring minor developments under restraint. This is particularly useful in cases of terraced development where thoughtless alterations can disrupt the harmony of adjacent properties. However, this has resource implications, is difficult to manage, and restricts the usual freedoms for house owners. In view of the individual nature of most properties at Eastcourt, and the above factors, it is considered that additional planning controls are not warranted. Similarly, additional control in respect of outdoor advertisements is not considered to be necessary at this location.

### **3.3.7 Care with Maintenance and Minor Alterations**

Listed buildings are already subject to additional controls, but in order to maintain the character of the conservation area the Council will also encourage the owners of unlisted properties to take care with maintenance and minor alterations. In particular the Council encourages the repair rather than replacement of original features. Where replacement of key architectural features including windows and doors is unavoidable then care should be taken to accurately copy original styles and details.

Similarly the Council encourages the long term maintenance of trees, shrubs and hedges identified in the appraisal. The planting of non-indigenous evergreen hedges and trees or close-boarded fencing in prominent positions is however discouraged.

### **3.3.8 Enhancement of the Public Realm**

Where resources are limited, balances will obviously need to be struck and priority given to key issues. There are only limited problems at Eastcourt. The biggest issues noted in the appraisal are the adverse visual impact satellite dishes and aerials, in addition to overhead telegraph and electricity wires in some parts of the village. The Council is unable to make a commitment to deal with this latter issue directly but would encourage landowners to seek carefully routing, preferably underground, when issuing wayleaves to public utility companies. Also attention is drawn to external sources of funding, such the Local Heritage Initiative, which are potentially available for community-led projects. This has the potential to provide funding for the implementation of ideas that emerge beyond the scope of the normal planning system.

### **3.3.9 Landscape Enhancement**

Throughout the conservation area boundaries between the settlement and the countryside are strong, as are property/street boundaries - these should be maintained as such. A large number of mature native trees help contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area and these should also be maintained accordingly. Pollarding, coppicing and replanting work in this area may accord with the landscape enhancement recommendations of the Council's Landscape Conservation Strategy and discretionary grant aid may be available for suitable projects.

## **4. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND REVIEW**

### **4.1 CONSULTATIONS**

Involving the community and raising public awareness is an integral part of the appraisal process. Publicity provides an opportunity to test and consolidate public support. However, with limited resources and 74 conservation areas (at the time of writing) within its remit, the Council has to strike a balance. Lengthy public participation can be very expensive and create delays in the adoption of appropriate controls, policies and guidance. The Council's priority is the provision of these elements within a short timescale. In view of the magnitude of the overall project, and the relatively short period for completion, the Council is adopting the following model.

Notifications of the conservation area review have been sent to community representatives (including the Eastcourt Parish Council), statutory organisations, and relevant amenity groups.

Copies of a Draft Appraisal and Management Proposals document were sent to the same consultees together with a feedback form on 12th September 2007. A copy of the Draft document was also placed on the Council's publicly accessible web site, a press release issued, and a poster placed on the village notice board. Opinions were particularly canvassed on whether the boundary still adequately reflected the area of special interest, whether the appraisal contains any inaccuracies or omissions in respect of the character of the historic environment, and whether the management proposals are suitable and appropriate for the conservation of Eastcourt. The Consultative Draft was placed on deposit for six weeks.

A number of written responses were received; these are summarised in a separate document available upon request from the Council. Although a number adjustments were made to the Committee Draft as a result of the responses it was not considered that any amendments were of major or strategic importance so the revisions were not re-advertised. The Committee Draft was also then placed on deposit for a minimum of six weeks.

### **4.2 ADOPTION**

This final, approved document for Eastcourt conservation area was formally adopted on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2008 by the Planning Policy Executive Committee on behalf of the District Council. The document is particularly intended to provide additional information on the interpretation and implementation of policies and proposals contained in the Local Development Plan. The character appraisal in particular will form an important role as part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework, and for the purposes of Development Control.

The final document has been published and distributed to consultees, and placed permanently on the Council's web site. It is also being made available for viewing on the Parish Council's web page. Hard copies of the document may also be purchased from the address given below.

### **4.3 IMPLEMENTATION**

The need for reference to the Character Appraisal will be on-going. The implementation of the management strategy, however, requires a number of one-off positive actions which the Council will undertake at the earliest opportunity commencing from spring 2008. The adoption of the document is thus not intended to be the end of the story. In addition to its use in exercising its

planning functions, the Council will also try to influence other agencies in the protection of the area.

#### **4.4 REVIEW**

Now that Appraisal and Management Plan has been adopted there will be a need to keep it up to date and relevant. The Council will therefore aim to ensure that 75% of all Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans have been reviewed within the past five years.

This booklet is one in a series of Conservation Area Statements, and Appraisals and Managements Plans, and other general policy, technical and information leaflets produced by the Conservation Team at Kennet District Council. For an up to date list, please contact :

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