

STUDHAM VILLAGE APPRAISAL
& CONSERVATION AREA

SEPTEMBER 1973

INTRODUCTION

1. This document is the reviewed policy for the village adopted by the County Council.

It is one of a series presenting the County Council's policy for individual villages and superseding by stages the present classification policy.

2. This document also describes a Conservation Area which the County Council has designated under the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

Just as there are individual buildings of architectural and historic interest which need safeguarding, so also are there areas of good architectural quality, historic importance, and special interest. The aims of a Conservation Area however are not only to preserve but also to enhance the character and appearance of an area. Although it may not be possible to justify the preservation of some features, the aim is that these should be replaced with something at least as good.

This document describes the important features of the area, and attempts to show how its attractive nature can be safeguarded and improved.

The aims of the Conservation Area procedure can only be fully realised with the willing co-operation of the Rural District Council, the Parish Council, and other organisations and individuals with an interest in the area. The County Council are already grateful to these people whose comments have been invaluable in preparing this document.

1. THE VILLAGE IN THE AREA

South Bedfordshire forms part of the Outer Metropolitan Region in which the bulk of post-war growth in the South East has occurred. Consequently this part of the County has grown the fastest, accommodating over 2/3 of the population growth and an even higher proportion of new employment since 1950. With the continued growth of Luton/Dunstable and the creation of a new city at Milton Keynes, villages in South Bedfordshire will face even greater pressures for development in the future, with the implication of further changes in their traditional function and social, economic and environmental characteristics. These same pressures will also generate an increasing demand for recreational opportunity within the area. Studham is located in a part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where these demands on available land are particularly acute reflecting:-

1. The high environmental quality of the area and ease of access to Luton/Dunstable and the towns of north-west Hertfordshire which make the village particularly attractive both for the retired and for high income commuters. Since the war, Studham has been subject to the increasing demands for residential accommodation which those factors imply.
2. Proximity to Whipsnade Zoo and the chalk scarp of Dunstable Downs both of which are recreational areas of regional significance. The attractively undulating and well wooded countryside surrounding the village and accessible from a network of definitive footpaths, the Forestry Commission area of Heath Wood, a small holiday caravan site at Byslips End and the extensive Site of Special Scientific Interest (126 acres) to the East, embracing Byslips, Fareless and Dedmansey Woods, are all likely to become more important as the recreational pressure on the A.O.N.B. increases.

2. VILLAGE CHARACTERISTICS

The population of Studham Parish at the 1971 census was 884, an increase since 1951 of nearly 300. The number of outstanding planning permissions is currently high. Physical growth since 1951 has been fragmentary largely taking the form of:-

1. Private residential consolidation and extension of 'ends' at Byslips and Common Road to the east and south of the main village.
2. Extensive private estate development at Holywell to the north, unrelated to the main village and based on outline planning permissions dating from the mid 1950's. Most of the commitments to development in Studham are located here.
3. A considerable westerly extension of the main village along the axis of Church Road. This has comprised the private residential development at Swannells Wood, a sizeable Local Authority housing area centred on Church Close, and the private, predominantly bungalow, development along the south side of Church Road beyond its boundary with the Common, and extending some way along the east side of Valley Road.

In the old village core immediately to the north of the junction of Kensworth, Church and Dunstable Roads, cottage terraces of red and whitewashed bricks possess an intimate group value enhanced by the severely constricted Dunstable road and sufficient to merit designation as a Conservation Area (see end of this report). They are seen to their best advantage along a wooded approach from the north, the approach from the south emphasising the incongruous nature of development along Church Road, although lessened in impact by the screening effect of trees in Swannells Wood and the bend in Church Road beyond its boundary with the Common.