

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.

The western approach to the village along Church Road provides an attractive wooded entry to Church End.

Despite the western post-war extension of the village, the Church End area around the 13th century Church of St Mary has retained its hamlet characteristic.

Beyond this the general attraction of Studham as a place to live reflects its setting in high quality countryside, the close links with which are emphasised by extensive views out from the main village especially over the wide frontage of the Common and from outlying 'ends'.

There is no service or manufacturing employment in Studham and the village now performs an almost exclusively residential function for Luton/Dunstable and the towns of north-west Hertfordshire.

The Primary School extensions have now been carried out and the premises are capable of accommodating 160 pupils.

As is common in villages of this type, growth has not been accompanied by any significant improvement in the level of local services and facilities. The main deficiencies are:-

1. Limited shopping provision consisting of a post office/general store and only one other shop. Outlying development in the parish has not generated any separate shopping facilities despite its considerable scale (Holywell) and distance from the main village. There is no adequate alternative provision in surrounding villages.
2. Absence of main sewerage. Although programmed this is unlikely to be installed before 1974.
3. Infrequent buses - there is now no public transport, as London Country Bus Services Ltd withdrew in February 1972. Since then a private service has been in operation between Studham and Dunstable providing - in very general terms - an hourly service each way in the mornings and a slightly less frequent service in the afternoons.

Although two of the above needs could be met, the overall level of facilities will be insufficient to support more than minor growth in the future. Development in scale large enough to generate a significant improvement in services and facilities would be completely out of character with the village and its surroundings.

The current local authority waiting list as an index of housing need in the village is not high (a total of 6 families). Since 1960, however, the Rural District Council has experienced difficulty in securing sites for development in Studham, while villagers on the waiting list have shown a marked reluctance to move to extensive Local Authority housing at Kensworth within the same letting area. The area includes Whipsnade which has a waiting list but where no further Rural District Council housing is programmed or would be compatible with reviewed policy for the village. The Luton Rural District capital programme for 1974-5 provides for a further 10 houses in Studham on sites yet to be agreed, including the provision of old persons dwellings.

### 3. CONSTRAINTS

Studham lies within the Chilterns A.O.N.B. and proposed South Bedfordshire Green Belt. The policies associated with these areas identify the village as one in which large scale development is inappropriate. In addition, general County Council policy has been to accommodate the bulk of its population growth within the urban areas, where a full range of services can be provided in the most economic and efficient form. In consequence,

village planning policy in Bedfordshire has been basically restrictive. Studham occupies a category 'D' position in the county-wide Village Classification adopted by the County Council in 1961, with the intention that it will remain substantially unaltered both as to size and character.

Both the physical structure of the built up area and the nature of surrounding land ownerships severely limit the potential for further growth in the parish. These major constraints are:-

- (a) The extensive Common, provisionally registered as Common Land, which constitutes a desirable limit to village growth along its border with Kensworth and Church Road.
- (b) The special characteristic of Holywell Estate - the fragmentation of the existing large plots inside the Estate or expansion beyond what remains of the existing unimplemented planning permission would produce a further shift of growth away from the main village. It would have crucial impact on an area of high environmental quality particularly in view of the scale of comparable development to the immediate east at Old Hill Wood (Whipsnade Parish).
- (c) The fragmentary nature of development elsewhere in the Parish. Further development of Common Road, Byslips and a detached ribbon of bungalows to the north of the main village along Dunstable Road would consolidate this unfortunate feature of post-war in the Parish to the detriment of the countryside.
- (d) Both (b) and (c) imply the need to locate future growth within the main village. Development along the axis of Church Road however is virtually 'complete' and there is little potential for further growth within the existing built up limits. To prevent further encroachment on to open countryside away from the core of the village it is particularly important to retain the existing westerly limit of development and a line to the south defined by the limit of dwellings along Valley Road.

#### 4. STUDHAM VILLAGE POLICY

1. The aim of the local Planning Authority is to retain and enhance the existing character of the village and the surrounding area which lies within the proposed South Beds. Green Belt and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Within the existing framework of the village new development should be limited to the odd infilling sites and undeveloped sites with planning permission, and to improvement and replacement of existing dwellings.

Any case for small scale local authority housing required to satisfy an essential local need will be considered on its merits as an exception to the general policy, but would be likely to receive favourable consideration only if the development was capable of being fully integrated into the village without detriment to its appearance and character; in this connection, the possibility of further housing at the end of Church Close should be considered. Outside the limits of the main village area, apart from sites with planning permission, no new development will normally be permitted unless in exceptional circumstances, for example, in the essential interests of agriculture.

Any new buildings will be expected to be of a high standard of design, with extreme care exercised in their detailed siting in relation to adjoining buildings and in the choice of materials to be used externally.

2. In support of this overall policy it will be necessary to:

i. Ensure that applications for development are supported by details.

ii. Consider the desirability of recommending the addition of some buildings in the village to the Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest.

iii. Consult with a view to removing poles and overhead wires, which detract from the attractive qualities of the village. Eastern Electricity and the Post Office have recently completed undergrounding work in Dunstable Road; elsewhere main telephone cables are already underground.

iv. Exercise strict control over advertisements within the village.

v. Retain trees and hedges, see that they are properly maintained and replaced when necessary, and encourage new planting where this would improve the scene, particularly in the vicinity of the cross-roads and the area of Common facing the Methodist Chapel, in Church Close and south of the new development in Valley Close.

vi. Make Tree Preservation Orders with the help of the Parish Council to cover all important trees in the village. In this context Swannell's Wood is the major priority.







vii. Consider the future of Studham Common both as an important landscape feature and a possible area for recreational use. Parking of cars on the Common and in narrow Dunstable Road is a problem that will need to be looked at carefully.

3. Within the Conservation Area the following additional policies will be necessary if its character is to be ~~maintained~~:

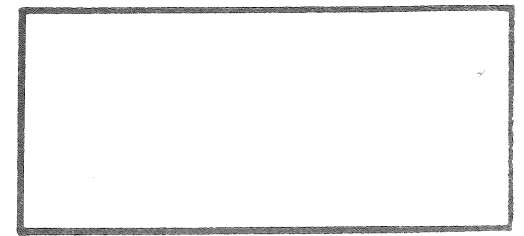
i. Retain important buildings and encourage their improvement rather than redevelopment. Urgent attention should be given to Nos. 5, 7 and 9 Dunstable Road which are the subjects of a closing order - if these cottages were demolished the whole appearance of Dunstable Road would be spoilt.

ii. Retain the existing building lines and hedge lines. These should be abandoned only where there is an overriding road safety reason. The Conservation Area is small and the redevelopment of even one building (such as 5-9 Dunstable Road) and the setting back of its replacement could easily destroy the character.



-  Outstanding Planning Permission
-  Important Tree Group
-  Important Hedges
-  Important Views out of Village
-  Boundary of Conservation Area
-  Important buildings within Conservation Area.

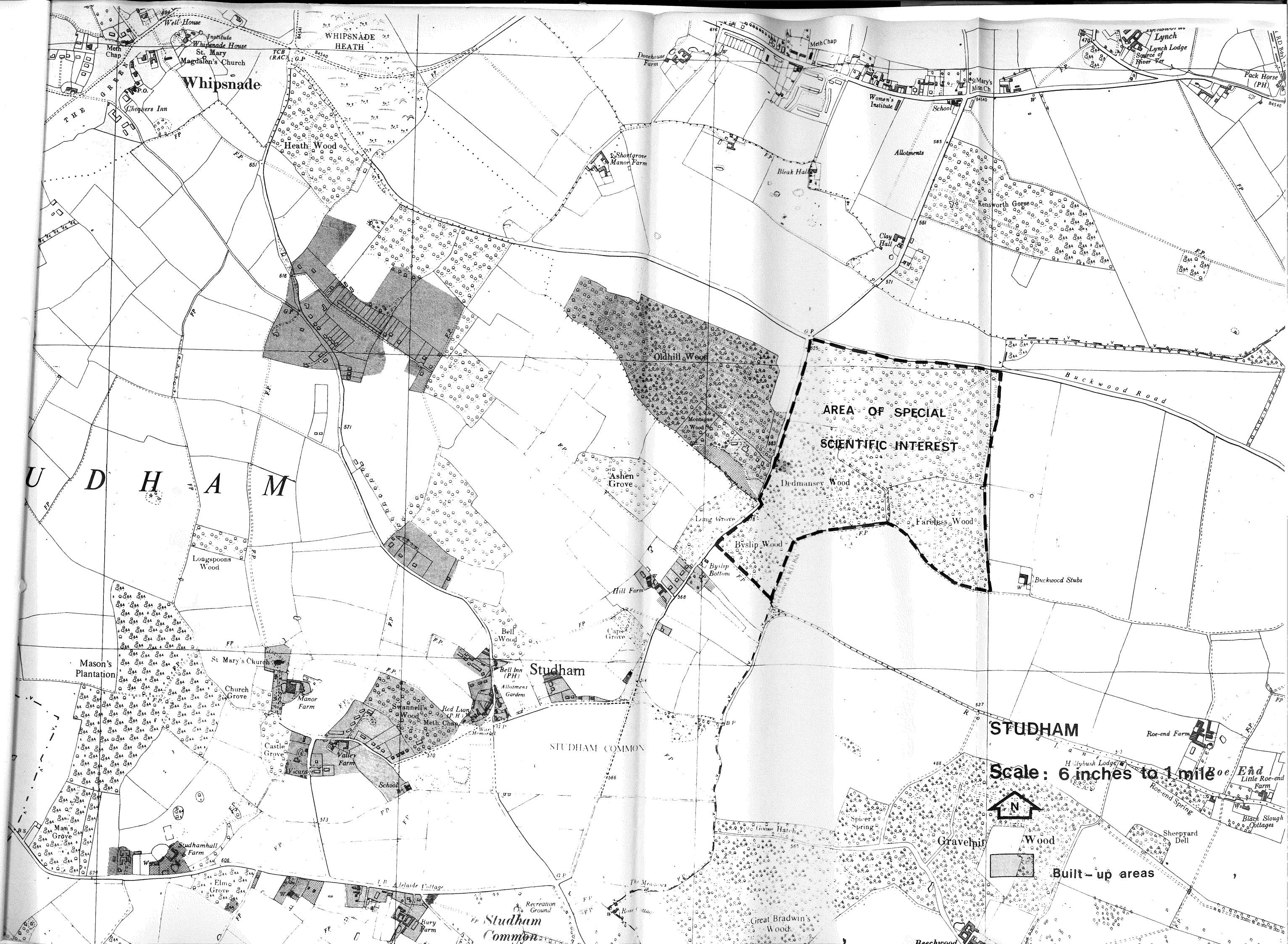
# STUDHAM



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 County Planner  
 Bedfordshire County Council

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Scale \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ord No \_\_\_\_\_





Whipsnade

WHIPSNADE  
HEATH

Studham

STUDHAM

Scale: 6 inches to 1 mile

AREA OF SPECIAL  
SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Built-up areas

Wood

STUDHAM COMMON

Studham  
Common

N

Gravepit

Great Bradwin's  
Wood

Roe-end Farm

End  
Little Roe-end  
Farm

Black Slough  
Cottages

Sheepyard  
Dell

Roe-end Spring

Hillybush Lodge

Spicer's  
Spring

Grange Hatch

The Meadows

Recreation  
Ground

Elmo  
Grove

Man's  
Grove

Studham  
Farm

Castle  
Grove

Valley  
Farm

Manor  
Farm

Church  
Grove

St Mary's Church

Mason's  
Plantation

Red Lion  
P.H.

Swannell's  
Wood

Bell Inn  
(P.H.)

Bell  
Wood

Hill Farm

Byslop  
Bottom

Long Grove

Ashen  
Grove

Oldhill  
Wood

Dedmansey Wood

Fareless Wood

Buckwood Stubs

Buckwood Road

Pack Horse  
(P.H.)

Lynch  
Lodge

Source of  
River Ver

St Mary's  
Mist Ch

Women's  
Institute

School

Black Hall

Shortgrove  
Manor Farm

Donhouse  
Farm

Meth Chap

Magdalen's Church

Whipsnade House

Well House

Chequers Inn

Meth Chap

THE  
GREEN