



SEEND CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT

March 2005

Planning Services



Development Control & Conservation

Forward Planning & Transportation

Building Control & Property Management

SEEND CONSERVATION AREA



The character of Seend derives from its attractive historic buildings, its landscape setting and the contribution made by walls, hedges and trees. The alignment of the road through the village is also significant bringing certain buildings into prominence as this varies.



Viewed from the south on the road from Worton the buildings of Seend appear on the ridge but in summertime are largely obscured by trees. The south side of the village contains large buildings in generous settings.

The purpose of this Statement of the Seend Conservation Area is to identify and record those special qualities of the village that make up its architectural and historic character. This is important for providing a sound basis for local plan policies and development control decisions as well as for the formulation of proposals for the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the area.

The Statement contains an assessment of the Seend Conservation Area and is intended for all those with an interest in the village, or undertaking work on its buildings, landscape, streets or public spaces. It is also essential reading for anyone contemplating development within the area. By drawing attention to the distinctive features of Seend it is intended that its character will be protected and enhanced for the benefit of this and future generations.

Seend Conservation Area was designated on 1st May 1973 and is centred on the High Street. The Conservation Area extends from the Bell Inn on the western boundary of the village to Turner's Farm in the east. To the north the boundary includes the school and the Recreation Ground and encompasses the modern housing developments of Dial Close and The Lye. To the south the church and churchyard, the houses and their gardens on the south side of the High Street and parts of the open fields are included. The canal and Seend Cleeve are outside the Conservation Area.

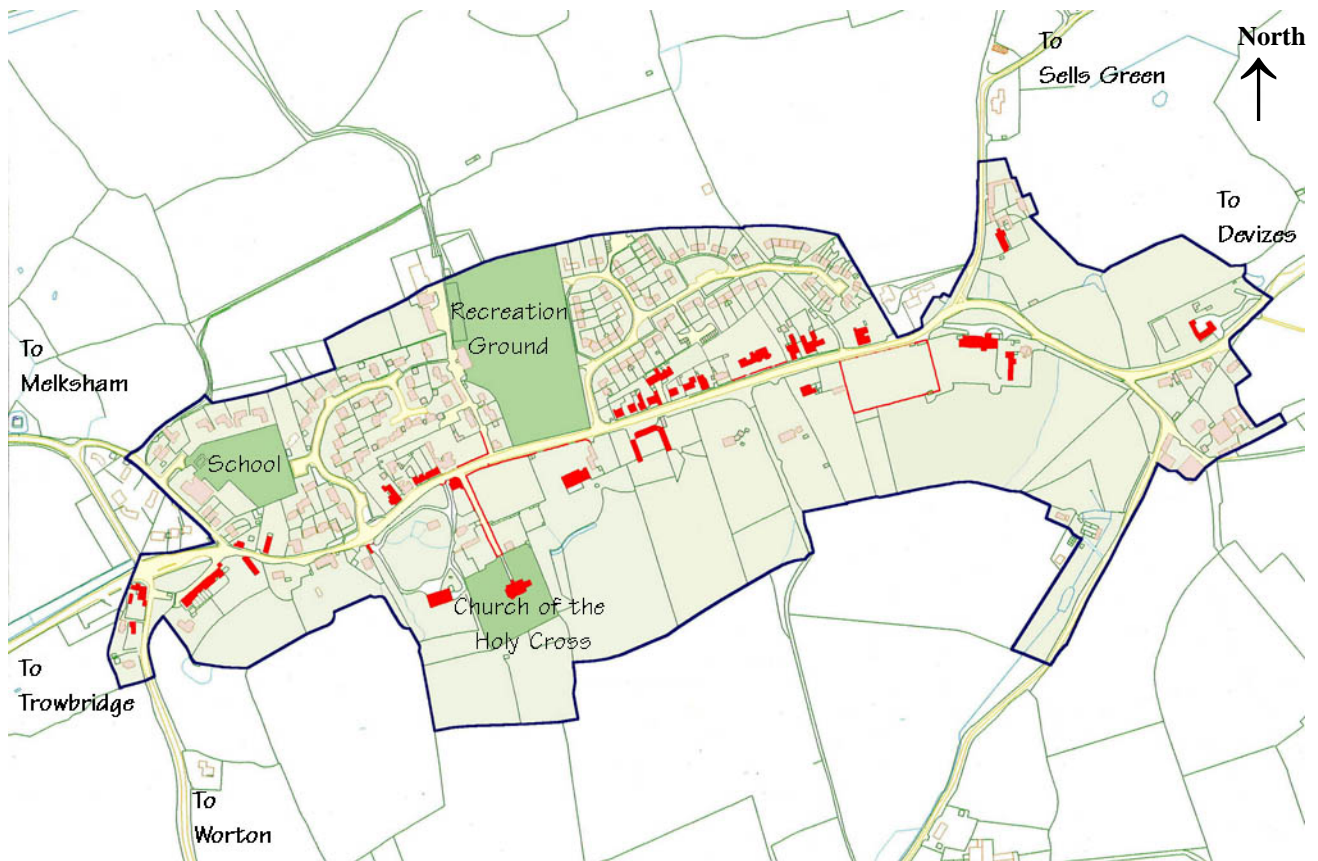
The main characteristics of Seend are:

- Its location on a ridge running roughly east-west with the land falling significantly to north and south and with extensive views.
- A number of buildings of high architectural and historic quality, especially those located on the south side of the High Street.
- The Parish Church of the Holy Cross dating from the 15th century.
- A high proportion of vernacular listed buildings from the 15th century to the 19th century plus various walls, gateways and other features of interest.
- A fine collection of mature trees both individually and in groups. These trees form an important part of both the High Street and the surrounding landscape.
- Important open spaces including the playing fields and churchyard.
- The influence of historical development based on farms and smallholdings to the east and former industrial activity to the west.

Geology and topography

Seend is located in the western part of Kennet District and is approximately 4 miles west of Devizes and 6 miles east of Trowbridge. The main route through the village (the A361) runs east-west and there are secondary links north-west to Melksham and south to Bulkington, Worton and beyond.

The village sits along a ridge of iron-bearing Lower Greensand which runs on an east-west line for approximately 1¾ miles. This ridge stands at around the 75 metre contour and is between 20 and 50 metres above the surrounding clay vale with extensive views in all directions. The southern boundary of the parish is Summerham Brook that flows north-west to join Semington Brook and through to Seend Head.

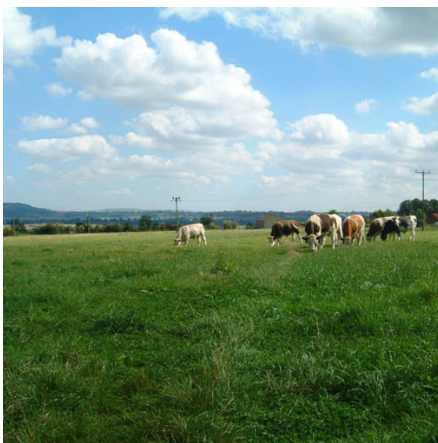


Seend Conservation Area with the listed buildings marked in red. This map shows the overall form of the historic village with limited building to the south of the main Devizes to Trowbridge Road and in-depth building to the north.

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Origins and development of the village

Seend takes its name from its location, Sinda noted in 1190 and meaning a sandy place. In 1240 Seend formed part of the hundred of Melksham and for several centuries links with Melksham were important.



Although links north-west to Melksham were historically important the development of Seend remained predominantly on the ridge. Open views to the north have therefore been retained.

A road along the ridge dates from medieval times, or earlier, and provides the basis for the planned layout of the settlement. The awkward road turns at each end of the village appear to have been caused by encroachments on former open spaces. To the east are the links to Bromham and Devizes and to the west to Melksham and Trowbridge. In 1675 the main route was recorded in Ogilby's road book as forming part of the thoroughfare from London to Wells and in 1750 and 1752 it was turnpiked by two trusts along the whole length from Devizes to Trowbridge and beyond.

The Domesday survey of 1086 recorded mills in the vicinity of Seend but there is no reference to Seend and none of the mills are or were within the Conservation Area. Although peripheral to the main centre of clothmaking in West Wiltshire, weaving was a significant industry within the village. The rebuilding of the Church of the Holy Cross about the end of the 15th century, replacing an earlier church, is evidence of the wealth of Seend's clothiers at that time.

In the middle ages the parish lay along the southern edge of Melksham forest and the northern section of the parish, now crossed by the canal, was a medieval park, created in the 14th century and enclosed in the 17th.



The origins of Seend as a farming settlement can still be identified in buildings such as Egypt Farm.

Much of the rest of the parish north of the ridge was probably rough grazing and wood pasture whereas south of the ridge were large fields. These were eventually sub-divided and later enclosed such that the farmhouses that were once located within the village street moved out to the open countryside.

Early water supplies were taken from wells located on either side of the High Street and an adequate supply of water would have been important in the decision to locate a settlement on the ridge.

In the middle of the 18th century Seend was a thriving centre for agriculture and wool trade and much of the wealth of Seend, as evidenced in many of the buildings, derived from the domestic woollen industry. Towards the end of the century the traditional industry declined as competition from mechanisation took hold and although a factory was built in 1814, at Factory Row, this survived no more than 20 years.

A detailed description of the influence of the wool trade on Seend is given in *Seend Past and Present* by Edward Bradby. This shows that, in addition to the clothiers, there were independent craftsmen, mainly weavers but later also tailors. The status of many of the historic buildings in the village reflects the social structure from this time.

In 1780 a new Turnpike road was opened to provide a shorter distance from Devizes to Melksham passing north of the village through Sells Green which must have reduced passing trade in Seend.

Religious nonconformity also had a notable presence in the village. Wesleyan Methodist teaching began early in Seend, probably inspired by John Wesley's sermon in the village on the 8th November 1749. At that time meetings were held in private houses or cottages and it was not until 1774 that the Methodist Chapel was built at Factory Row, opened by John Wesley in 1775.

There was a charity school in Seend in 1724 and in 1832 Thomas Bruges paid for the erection of a building in the north-east corner of the churchyard, described in an 1848 directory as a "neat schoolhouse for the instruction of poor children". In 1863 the school was moved from the churchyard and a new school built in School Road where it was recorded as a National School. Subsequent changes and extensions are evident in the school as seen today.

In 1838 there were seven farmhouses dotted along the High Street. Throughout the 19th century settlements were largely self contained and relied on local traders and craftsmen. Bakers, butchers, blacksmiths and carpenters, and other trades were recorded within the village. As well as their more specialised jobs the carpenter and blacksmith played an important part in the erection and repair of buildings working with masons, bricklayers and thatchers.

Reference to all of these trades could also be found in the village during the 19th century and almost certainly earlier. In the 19th century there was a flourishing brick and tile works at Sells Green that continued in production until 1915. The terrace of five three-storey cottages at Factory Row (Weavers Cottages) is believed to have been converted from a clothing workshop that was known to have been on the site and mentioned in a rate book of 1821.



18th century buildings such as The Manor House are evidence of the wealth in the village at the time.



The weavers' cottages at Factory Row are early 19th century and sit alongside the Methodist Chapel of 1774.



The Church of the Holy Cross dates back to the 15th century. The present building was extensively restored in 1876 and this again shows evidence of the wealth in the village.

The Seend section of the Kennet and Avon canal was built between 1796 and 1800 on a line running parallel to and just north of the village. Seend wharf was located west of the village where the Barge Inn now stands and the improved transport links encouraged economic activity in the locality. The canal provided an outlet for agricultural produce and a base for the haulage of coal.

Equally important for the economy of the village was the construction of the railway in 1857. This was a single-track broad gauge line running from Devizes to Holt where the line divided to serve Melksham and Trowbridge. In 1862 the line east to Hungerford was completed thus providing a direct route to London. Seend had its own railway station located where the road down Bollands Lane crossed the line and this was enlarged in 1908 with the track doubled to allow trains to pass. The railway closed in 1966 and the line was dismantled.

The existence of an iron-ore field in Seend was recorded in 1666 by John Aubrey who described it as the richest he had ever seen but it was not until the middle of the 19th century that any attempt was made to exploit it on a commercial scale. Aubrey also believed that springs in the area could be beneficial to health but his attempts to obtain recognition of their medicinal power were not successful.

The first industrial activity in the iron trade dates from 1854 when J.E. Holloway, a coal merchant from Hampshire, leased the mining rights on a quarter of an acre of land at Seend, in the field just below the Bell Inn. The extracted ore was conveyed by canal to Bristol and then by ship to South Wales. This brought in speculators and investors and eventually led to the formation of the Great Western Iron Ore Company to smelt iron on a site just south of the canal bridge near the Barge Inn but within two years the company was bankrupt.

New ownership and continued activity saw the completion of blast furnaces although financial insecurity remained. The most successful period of operation was from 1873 to 1889 and in the later years the ore was again exported. The intermittent smelting operations undoubtedly brought an influx of workers to the village, some of which would probably have walked to work from the surrounding villages. The 1886 Ordnance Survey map shows "Seend Iron Works disused". The blast furnaces and other buildings were demolished in 1889.

Mains water was not installed in the village until 1937 and then only after a number of wells were found to be polluted. The first electricity had arrived just before this in 1931 but it was not until 1952 that the first street lighting appeared. Mains drainage was installed in 1960.

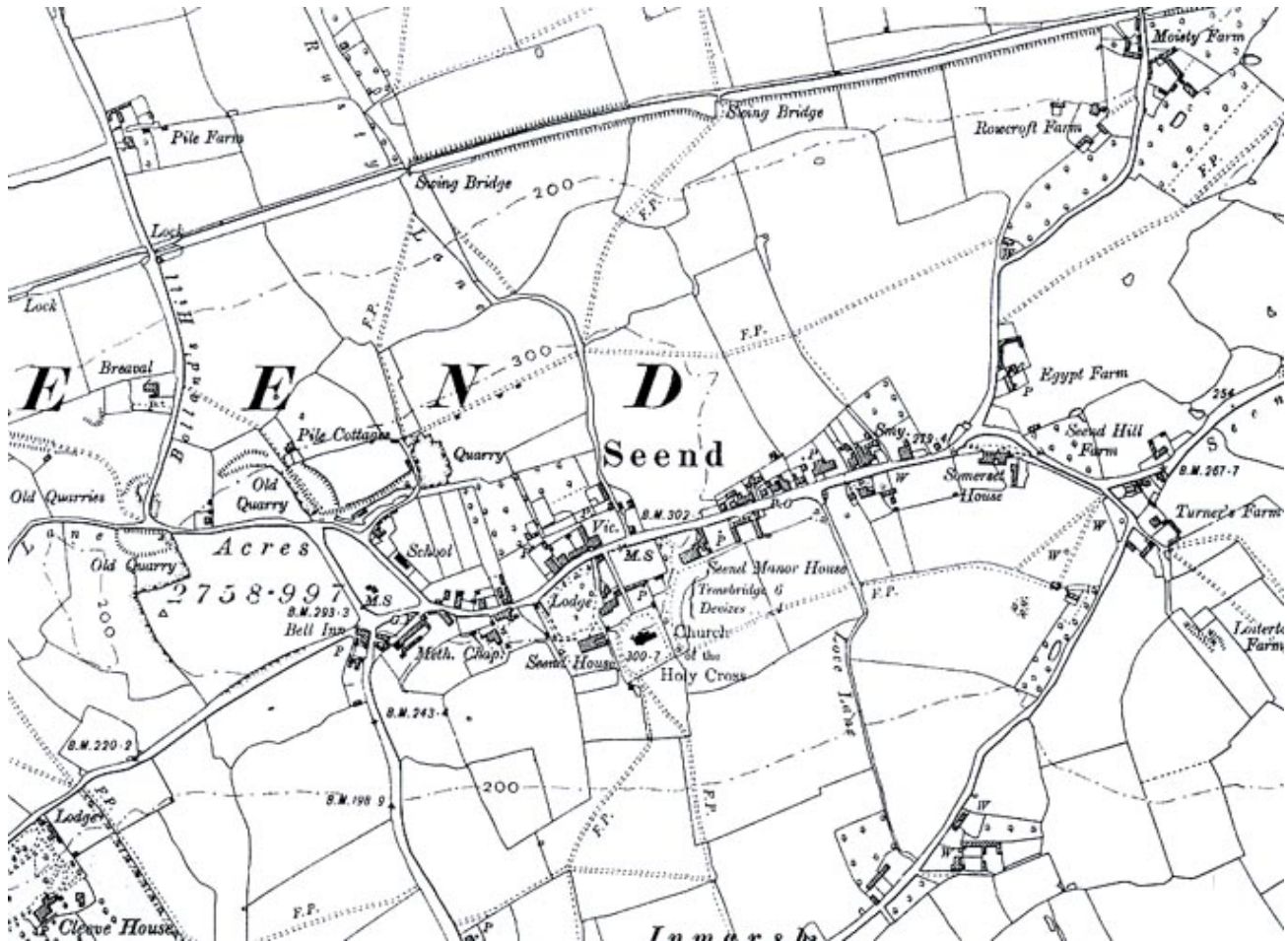
In 1933 the first council houses were built these being 1 and 2 Bath Road but the largest expansion is seen in the 1950's building by Devizes Rural District Council of the 60 house estate at The Lye on the north side of the High Street. The main estate was completed between 1951 and 1956 and its northern boundary was determined as the line for the then proposed Seend bypass which was never built. Alongside and west of The Lye is the village playing field purchased for the purpose in 1967. In the 1970's 17 houses were built between Dial House and School Lane in what is now called Dial Close and this area was later extended eastwards towards Rusty Lane. These two developments and the increasing influence of vehicular transport and personal mobility were the most obvious changes of the 20th century.



Because of its position close to the road Badbury House is one of the prominent buildings of Seend. It dates from the mid 18th century but possibly contains an earlier core.



The buildings of The Lye seen here from the edge of the playing field show the sympathetic way in which they were designed to integrate with the village.



Seend in 1901 showing the importance of the east/west road link. Most of the buildings within the village shown on this map have survived and are within the Conservation Area. The most obvious alteration compared to the present day map is the construction of large areas of housing on the north side of the village

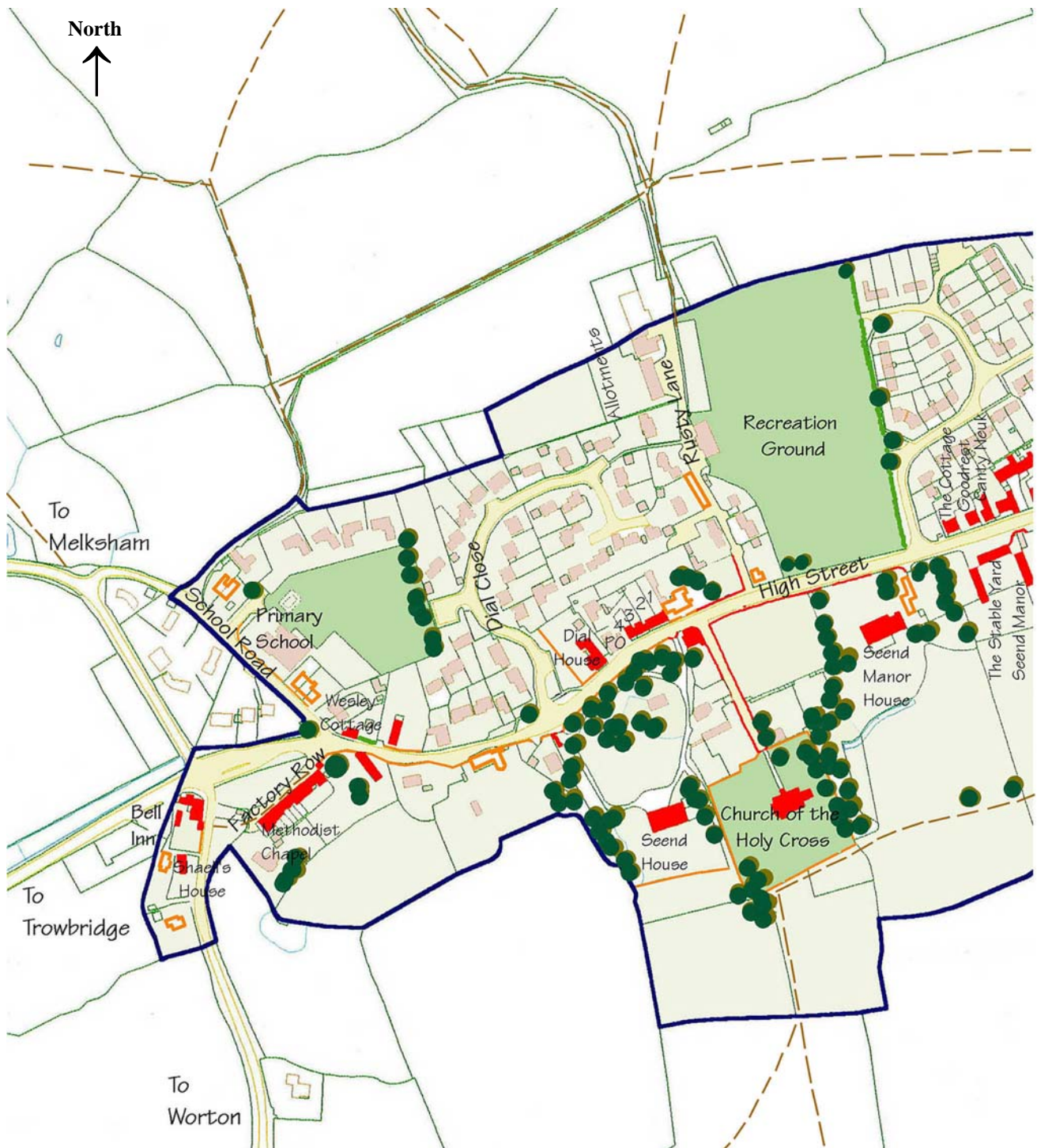
The effect of the later part of the 20th century changes in employment and the provision of services taken together with the continued expansion of individual mobility means that villagers now seek employment and services elsewhere. Although there is still a village shop the patterns of present day shopping and leisure mean that those in the village travel for most of their goods and services. The results of this are that Seend is predominantly a residential village with a fine collection of historic houses of varying sizes. There is also a constant flow of traffic through the main street with the A361 as a major route serving the wider area.

Archaeological significance

The earliest records from Seend relate to several Neolithic flint tools discovered to the north and south of the village. In addition two Romano-British coins have been uncovered in the garden of Beech House.

The village itself has Medieval origins, being first recorded as Sinda in 1190. To the north of the village crop marks noted on aerial photography relate to a probable late Iron Age/Romano-British settlement site overlain with Medieval ridge and furrow. A possible Medieval farmstead has been noted and may relate to that of Row(e)croft recorded in 1377.

Seend Conservation Area - west



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The base map used in this report is the latest available – recent changes within the village may not be shown.

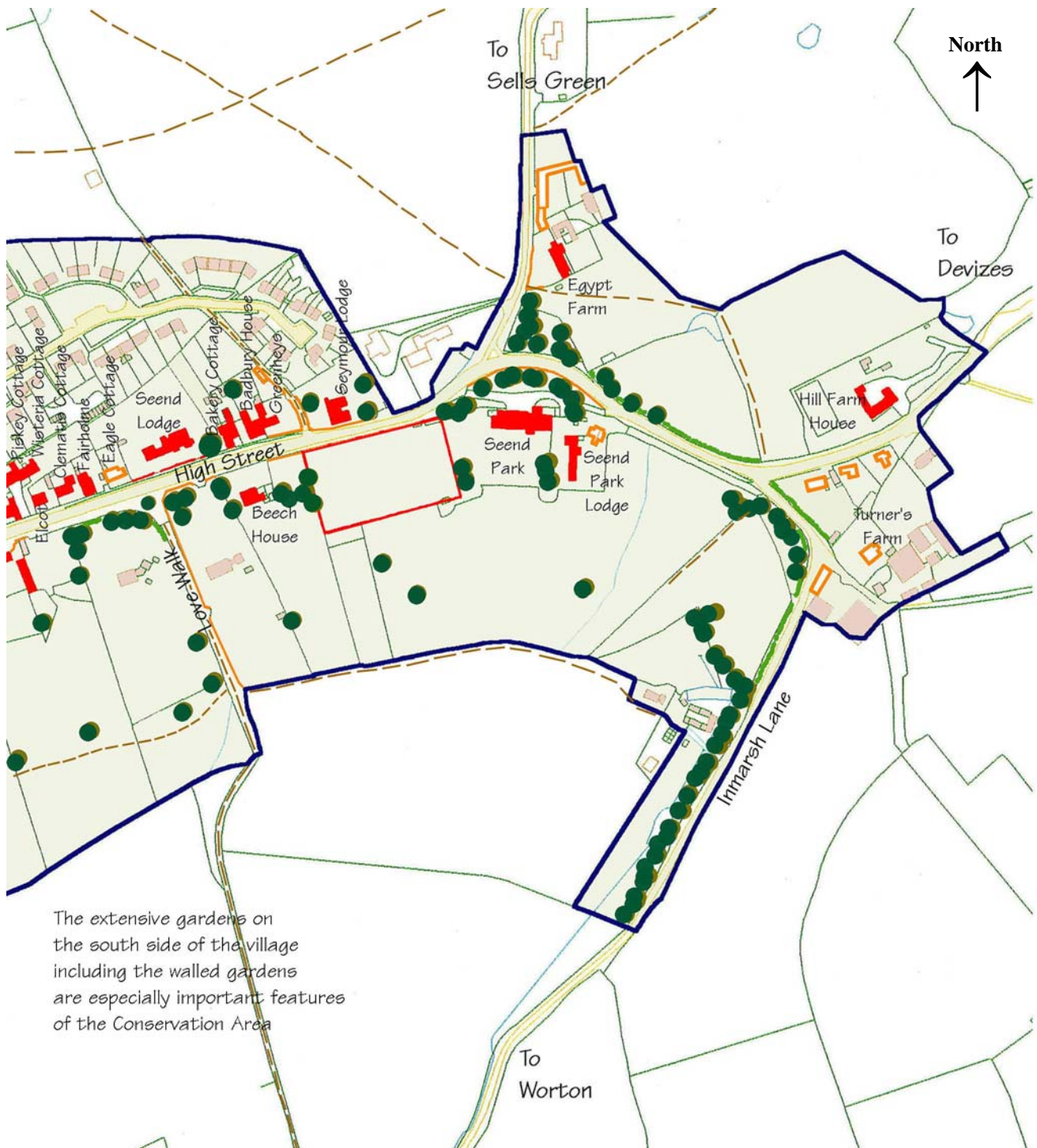
Note:

All of the banks and grass verges within the Conservation Area are important as are individual boundary hedges but cannot be shown on a map of this scale.

Small and medium size trees are the mature trees of the future and should be assessed accordingly

— — dotted lines indicate the main footpath routes

Seend Conservation Area - east



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Key

- Conservation Area Boundary
- Listed buildings and walls
- Significant unlisted buildings and walls
- Significant trees
- Significant banks and hedges

Details of listed buildings are correct at the date of publication but can change
For up-to-date information it is advisable to check with the District Council.

Architectural and historic character



One of the oldest buildings in Seend is Hill Farm House which dates from the 15th century. The combination of timber framing with stone tile roof is typical of the period. The left-hand section is believed to be 16th century.

Over 50 of the buildings within the Conservation Area are listed as of special architectural or historic interest and this does not include the various listed walls, gatepiers and other features. In addition there are many unlisted buildings of traditional design and appearance that are an integral part of the architectural character of Seend. It can be seen from the Conservation Area map that a significant proportion of the pre-1950 buildings are listed thus emphasising the historic quality of the village.

One of the distinctive features of Seend is the way in which the built-up area of the village is visually contained. When approaching from either east or west the introduction to the village is by way of roadside buildings leading into High Street. The same impression is given on the minor roads into the village, whether from Sells Green past Egypt Farm or from Seend Cleeve. The elevated position of Seend is particularly evident from the south on the road from Worton where village buildings appear on the skyline, although in the summertime are partly hidden by the trees.

When approaching Seend from Devizes the first building within the Conservation Area is Hill Farm House, one of the oldest buildings in the village. Hill Farm House is a timber frame construction from the 15th century with 17th and 20th century alterations and additions. Some of the timber framing can still be seen and there are two cruck trusses to a former open hall within the core of the building. The roof covering is stone tile. The position of the building is such that it is often seen only in passing and its quality and historic character is easily missed.



The quality of the elegant buildings that were built on the brow of the ridge facing south is best appreciated from the footpath running just below the village. The setting of Seend Park (formerly Seend Green House) is just one example of this.

The buildings opposite to the south are 19th century, built of local brick with slate roofs. This small group of buildings, Elm Cottage, the Old Police House and Brow Cottage are all in the traditional 19th century style and although not listed, are very much part of the village character of the period. The northern part of the lane running south-west to Turners Farm is within the Conservation Area and includes the farmhouse and other traditionally constructed agricultural buildings

Returning to the main road, the view ahead to the west is of the recently planted extended garden of Seend Park (formerly Seend Green House). Before reaching the house is Seend Park Lodge increasingly hidden behind new planting as this matures. Seend Park itself then appears as the road swings right and then left, the front drive to the house being surrounded by mature trees providing an attractive setting to the building.

Seend Park is one of the high status buildings in the village and is a late 17th century building altered and extended in 1760 for Mary Duchess of Somerset. The house is of ashlar Bath stone construction and is partly hidden behind trees and hedges. As with a number of buildings on this side of the road, the quality of the architecture and the importance of the related landscape setting is only really apparent when viewed from the public footpath running close to the southern boundary of the Conservation Area.

As High Street turns past Seend Park it then opens up into the main vista of the High Street. This is the historic centre of the village with a remarkable collection of historic buildings on both sides of the street.



Bakery Cottage dates from the 18th century and is built in the local red brick with a stone slate roof. It was recorded as a bakery from 1760 to 1967.

The prominence of poles and wires in certain parts of the village is evident here and in the picture below.



Seend Lodge, built around 1700, was altered in the early and late 19th century. Of particular interest is the quality of the original brickwork and, just to the left of the picture, the coach house and stable.



Beech House is a typical 19th century design constructed of entirely of ashlar and with a Welsh slate roof. The plan form is also characteristic with windows on all sides.

In many villages the buildings individually would be worthy of detailed description but here it is the collective view that is especially attractive. The interesting aspects of this view are the alignment of the street, with enclosure at each end, the prominence of some of the buildings close to the road, extensive brick walling and groups of trees.

In many cases it is not readily apparent what is behind the brick walls, especially on the south side of the street although the impression is that these must be the gardens to large houses. Opposite the kitchen garden wall to Beech House is Seymour Lodge, a brick built house said to date from the early 19th century. Indications are that this is a rebuilding of an earlier structure once called Marsh Farm and dating from the 17th century, although no obvious signs of this early date can be seen.

Continuing along the north side of the street is the small group of houses Greenheys, Badbury House and The Old Bakehouse, each of a distinctive style.

Greenheys, similar to Seymour Lodge, is an 18th century refronting of an earlier building presenting an attractive view in brick and slate. To the right of the building is a 19th century extension related to but clearly distinguishable from the original. Badbury House is mid 18th century, and is an ashlar fronted building with a half-hipped mansard slate roof. The Old Bakehouse also 18th century is much smaller in scale and being constructed in brick with a stone slate roof has all the appearance of being older. According to the listed building description it was recorded as a bakery from 1760 to 1967.

Beech House, on the south side of the road, is a stone and slate villa of around 1830 set back from the carriageway, as are many of the buildings on this side. This gives the buildings an imposing setting and emphasises, with some exceptions, the differing status between buildings on the north and south.

Seend Lodge, which dates from around 1700, has been considerably modified, probably in the later 19th century, with the addition of two front projecting bays and other modifications. Included in this composition is the single storey stable block in line with the main building but set back behind high brick walls. Glimpses of the stable block show it to be finely detailed with a centre stone eagle finial. Between The Old Bakehouse and the eastern wall of Seend Lodge is a very fine beech tree that is a key feature in this part of the street.

Wide grass verges on either side increase the apparent width of the street providing an enhanced setting to the buildings. In the late 20th century two houses were built either side of Love Walk on the south side of the road. These are mostly hidden from view either by brick boundary walls or high hedges and the attractive feature in this locality is the lane itself that runs south to reveal wide open views across the Plain. The "green lane" character is reminiscent of earlier times.

A change in character occurs on the north side of the High Street where a group of mostly 18th century cottages can be found. These are a mix of brick and rendered buildings with clay tile and in some cases stone tile roofing. The compact nature of this group of cottages is in marked contrast to the much lower density development to the west.



This view of Piskey Cottage is easily missed by all those who drive through the village but is one of the hidden attractions of Seend.

Glimpses of the buildings to the rear, these being a row of three houses with a datestone of 1797 on one of the chimney stacks, illustrate that the smaller buildings within the village also have a distinctive architectural quality.

The building now known as Seend Close is the former stable block to The Manor House, converted to provide residential accommodation. The main front of this 1769 building faces south so that it is the rear of the property facing the road. The centre block of the building has a slightly projected pediment and hexagonal cupola over the former carriage arch, now much enhanced by recent re-opening of the archway.

Diverting from the High Street to the north is the access to The Lye. At this point it is not immediately apparent that the road serves a significant amount of development because levels are such that the new buildings are hidden from the street by the frontage buildings. The cottages are brick with stone quoins and the layout is spacious. Efforts were clearly made by the architects to produce a development compatible with traditional village character and this has been achieved. The buildings on the western edge of the development can be seen across the playing field which is the area left open north of The Manor House at the insistence of the then owner who originally owned the land on which The Lye is constructed.

Opposite the playing field on the south side of High Street is The Manor House, a fine country house of 1769 extended in the 19th century. The building presents a rendered front to the street and is set back to provide a "in and out" carriage drive to the building. Once again the setting of the building is greatly enhanced by the mature trees both within and close to its grounds.



The location of the Parish Church on the southern edge of the village means that it is often seen as here in silhouette. The quiet of Church Lane and the churchyard is in marked contrast to the busy main road.

At this point in the village there is a gap in the development and a large section of brick wall concealing The Manor House gardens. It also conceals the view of the church which does not become apparent until immediately opposite Church Lane. The church is some way from the High Street and its quality only becomes obvious on approaching the gates to the churchyard. This approach is described by Nikolaus Pevsner in The Buildings of England series as "a charming approach between the garden walls of two large houses."

The Church of the Holy Cross dates from the 15th century although substantially rebuilt in 1876. The building is ashlar faced with gargoyles, battlements and pinnacles and has a range of three-light windows including three-light windows in the clerestory. The churchyard provides an oasis of calm away from the busy main road and although it stands high on the ridge the view to the south is largely obscured by the trees on the southern boundary.

To the north of Church Lane is the Vicarage, one of the many unlisted buildings, that are very much a part of village character. Once again the garden to the building is hidden behind a brick wall, in this case the wall also being a key feature in the approach to Rusty Lane. The medieval doorframe and door are believed to have been removed from the church in the 1876 remodelling. At one time Rusty Lane presumably served the agricultural activity in the village, although now it presents a random collection of mid to late 20th century houses and bungalows with the occasional former agricultural building or stone wall appearing.



The view looking north along Rusty Lane. Although there are few historic buildings in the lane, its earlier importance was as a communication link.

The last building on the east side of the lane is the Irene Usher Memorial Pavilion which serves the playing field. Further north on the west side is the development ends with the corrugated iron building of the Women's Institute building and Seend Social Club both of which have a large area for car parking in front. Community buildings and spaces in Rusty Lane are the focus of village activity and particularly important in this respect. Further north the lane becomes a footpath which descends the hill towards the canal and may have been used as an indirect route to Seend Station, the station being just to the west at the foot of Bolland Hill.

West of the Vicarage is a row of four cottages, 18th century in character although built on earlier construction. Numbers 1 and 2 to the right of the row are brick refronting of former 17th century timber frame cottages. The brickwork to 3 and 4 is painted. The cottages have distinctive steep pitched roofs and substantial brick chimney stacks. Visually part of this group although not physically connected is the Village Stores and Post Office, a building that is important because of the contribution made by its activity to the character of the village.



Approaching Seend from the west the prominent entrance to the village is marked by Wesley Cottage. This is another of the key buildings located on the outside of the bend and therefore highly conspicuous.

One of the particularly interesting buildings of Seend is Dial House and this is because of its early origins and style. The building dates from the 15th century and was encased in red brick in the 18th century. The steep pitched roof indicates its early origin and this is covered with stone tile. To the front of the building is a massive projecting 15th century ashlar chimney breast with a sundial. Being set slightly back from the street behind a low brick wall Dial House, together with the Post Office and cottages just to the east, is an attractive group.

In contrast the single storey ashlar built Lodge to Seend House, together with the gatepiers, is the only indication of another of the grand houses of Seend. As previously indicated, the higher status houses face south and are located on the top of the ridge and here Seend House is almost completely hidden from the High Street by the trees.

Approaching the western end of the village the street reduces in width and turns slightly creating a traffic bottleneck (which incidentally forms very effective traffic calming). Further high walls and buildings create a feeling of enclosure and this is evident approaching from both directions.



The contrast with the view above is a reminder that village character changes according to the time of day and the seasons. The roof forms become more prominent when there are no leaves on the trees.

If you arrive at Seend from the west the key building is Wesley Cottage prominent in the view. This little house of 17th century origin was refronted in brick in the early 19th century and is now painted. The building is recorded as being used by John Wesley before the chapel was built opposite in 1774 and it is often said that he preached from the well-worn doorstep.

The western edge of the Conservation Area includes Factory Row, Bell Hill and School Lane and the character here is different from that of the main village with the crossroads a dominant feature. Numbers 6-10 Factory Row are a distinguished group of three storey brick built houses of around 1815 and at the western end is Methodist Chapel of 1774.

The approach to the village from the west is on a steady incline with the Bell Inn on the skyline. Skyline development is also evident from the south where conversely the views to the south from the ridge are



Historic architecture is well represented at Dial House where the 15th century origins of the building are now encased in 18th century brickwork, once again with a distinctive stone slate roof. The 15th century ashlar chimney stack and sundial is a particularly distinctive feature of Seend.



Clematis Cottage is an 18th century refronting of a 17th century timber frame building. The section to the right is early 19th century.



18th and 17th century detailing. The painted render, sash windows and six panel door are characteristic of the 18th century. Stone mullion windows being typical of the 17th century.

extensive. Development along School Lane is 19th and 20th century.

Building materials and details

Brick is the predominant building material in Seend as used in buildings from the 15th century to the present day but there is also significant use of stone. The impression of Seend as a largely brick village comes not just from many of the buildings but also the extensive boundary walls that line parts of the High Street.

There were two local brickworks, one in Seend Cleeve between The Barge and The Brewery Inns which closed about 1850, and Sainsbury's brickworks at Sells Green (later the Devizes Brick and Pottery Company) that closed in 1915.

The quality of historic brickwork depends on the size, colour and texture of the brick, the bond used in construction and the mortar mix. Within Seend are various examples of traditional brick bonds, English bond (alternate courses of headers and stretchers) was often used in the 16th century and Flemish bond (alternate headers and stretchers in each course) is more representative of the 17th and 18th centuries, but also carried out to the 19th century. The less attractive stretcher bond is a 20th century feature.

Building materials in vernacular buildings are closely related to the date and style of construction. Until the 20th century the materials used within the village were those readily available or, following completion of the Kennet and Avon Canal, those easily transportable such as Bath stone and Welsh slate.

Timber framing generally indicates early building sometimes going back to the 15th century. Evidence of this can be seen at Hill Farm House on the eastern approach to the village and at Clematis Cottage in the High Street although the building is now an 18th century brick refronting of the earlier structure.

The earliest surviving use of stone in the village is at the Church of the Holy Cross. Stone in building is used in various ways again related to the date and style of the construction. Rubble stone can be seen in some of the early buildings including Dial House and in the 17th century buildings such as 1 Bell Hill (Shaells House) and the original parts of Wesley's Cottage.

The character of stonework depends on the type and source of stone, how it is cut and laid, and on the mortar materials and techniques used. Within Seend a number of the higher status buildings are constructed with front elevations of fine jointed ashlar Bath stone and these are buildings mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries. Particularly good examples are Badbury House and The Manor House (both 18th century), and Elcot and Fairholme (19th century).

The evidence of iron in the local stone can still be seen in parts of the village, most obviously in the walls surrounding the car park to the Bell Inn.

Combinations of brick and stone are common particularly where used within the classical style and these are usually in the form of quoins and door and window surrounds.



The simplicity of the architecture of Nos. 1-3 High Street is especially attractive as is the mix of materials. The unaltered rooflines and chimney stacks are important parts of the picture.

Roof coverings in the village range from stone tile to clay tile and Welsh slate. Stone roofs are laid in the Cotswold tradition of diminishing courses with swept valleys which tends to emphasise the age of the buildings. Clay tiles include plain and profiled, the plain tiles used mostly on 18th century buildings and Roman tiles on those from the 19th century.

Chimney stacks are important features on all historic buildings and there are a number of good examples. In the early buildings the stacks tend to be large, in later buildings they are placed to enhance the architectural style.

The village contains examples of high quality ironwork such as the gates to the churchyard. The milestone in the High Street is another interesting iron feature.

Landscape setting and the contribution made by green spaces and trees

Trees form an extremely important part of the setting of both the village and individual properties. They are often found within parkland and designed garden settings but are also important components of some of the more recent development.

Trees and landscape features of particular note are:

- The woodland, new hedging and parkland at Seend Park Lodge and Seend Park
- The lime trees and Horse Pond at Threeways
- The small copse opposite Threeways at Egypt Farm together with the hedgerows around the paddocks.
- The hillside woodland at Broomhayes Farm
- The large roadside beech at Seend Lodge
- Holm Oak at Beech House
- Mature trees in The Vicarage grounds
- Mature woodland setting at Seend Manor House, the Church and Seend House, which is important as part of the immediate setting of the buildings and the Conservation Area and in longer views of Seend from the south.
- Fields and parkland along the southern slope of the village
- The walls and verges along the High Street enclose the vistas in each direction, which terminate in mature trees

Problems and eyesores

As with almost every other settlement in the district, the speed and frequency of traffic through the village is disturbing and is especially noticeable because of the volume of traffic, including heavy goods vehicles, using the A361 travelling east-west across the county.

The problem of speed in the High Street is exacerbated by the relatively straight road alignment, although the recent alteration in the speed limit from 40 to 30 mph is helpful. Vehicles, whether moving or parked, are intrusive but there are often only a few vehicles parked in the High Street. The bends at both ends of the village slow the traffic and parked vehicles often provide an element of traffic calming. The footpath on



Looking west the High Street buildings are obscured by the trees emphasising the major contribution made by trees and open spaces to the character of the village.



The footpath running west from the Methodist Chapel is one of the few places where traditional paving can still be found. Such details need to be preserved.



The impact of vehicular traffic is greater in the narrower parts of the High Street but the alignment at either end of the village does help reduce traffic speeds.



The outbuildings at Egypt Farm are one of the few places in the village where building decay is evident. The other structures that will need careful attention in due course are some of the boundary walls.



The essential quality of historic brickwork is determined by the colour and texture of the bricks, the brick bond, and the lime mortar used in construction.

An example of the type of problem found in the Conservation Area - local brick built in Flemish bond where the incorrect use of hard cement pointing has caused erosion of the brick

the north side of the road provides a safe access for pedestrians.

Boundary walls are an especially important feature in Seend, particularly in High Street. Many of these walls are built of handmade brick usually Flemish bond set in a lime mortar. In places repairs have been undertaken using cement mortar and apart from being unsightly this is damaging. The use of hard cement mortar causes accelerated erosion to the bricks and may in due course lead to instability.

The buildings in the village are generally well maintained and few buildings at risk are evident. The outbuildings north of Egypt Farm alongside the lane are showing signs of decay and the roof covering, although recently patched, appears fragile. Several garages are in poor condition or unsightly, such as opposite the Bell Inn and there are examples of broken fencing as at Love Walk.

Service poles and overhead wires can be obtrusive especially in the winter months and this is evident in various parts of the Conservation Area. It is most noticeable in High Street where poles are sited close to listed buildings.

The most sympathetic boundary features are the brick walls and indigenous planting. Timber fences such as can be seen at Hill Farm House can be obtrusive but the fence here will in due time be concealed with recent planting.

Listed buildings are subject to special control and cannot be altered without consent. Nevertheless, listing cannot impose retrospective controls and there are some buildings where modern window styles intrude. Windows and doors are also important features of all buildings of architectural or historic interest whether listed or not although unfortunately some have not survived and have been replaced with unsympathetic modern designs.

Preservation and enhancement

Preservation and enhancement of the character of the Conservation Area depends on all who have an interest in Seend either as owners, occupiers, the District and Parish Councils and other service providers. Owners and occupiers of land and buildings have the ability to enhance the area through their direct activities, some of which may require planning permission or listed building or conservation area consent.

The District Council is responsible for planning control, and preservation of the character of the Conservation Area is a statutory duty. Work undertaken by those providing electricity and telephone supplies can affect the quality of the environment as can works carried out within the highway.

Preservation of existing character

It is the aim of the District Council that the character and appearance of the Seend Conservation Area should be preserved and there are various ways in which this can be achieved. The following list is not exhaustive but is intended as a guide to the type of work that would contribute to maintaining the quality of the village.

Action by the District Council:

- Applications for planning permission and conservation area consent



The rural character of villages is increasingly under threat as it is all too easily lost when repairs and maintenance are undertaken. Attractive historic features that are part of the landscape make a major contribution to the quality of the Conservation Area.



The gates and gatepiers to the churchyard were made by J Burt of Devizes in 1812 and are listed grade II. There are a number of other listed walls, gates and gatepiers in the village.



Standard windows do not sit happily in historic buildings. Replacement windows should always follow the traditional design and detail of the period of the building.

to be assessed with reference to this character appraisal.

- Advice to be made available to owners of historic buildings, listed and unlisted, to encourage good standards of maintenance and repair and the retention of original materials and details.
- Contact to be maintained with the County Council as Highway Authority concerning works within the Conservation Area and in particular the protection of the remaining stone kerbs.
- Proposals for tree and hedge planting to be encouraged, especially where needed to ensure trees in appropriate locations can grow to maturity.

Action by owners:

- Look carefully if considering changes to buildings and surroundings and always view your proposal in its context. Where construction work is involved take particular care in the choice of materials.
- As a general rule repair rather than replace original features and where undertaking alterations to doors and windows on traditional buildings copy original styles and details. Where modern windows have been installed in historic buildings look at the possibility of replacing with original styles and designs.
- If proposing extending a building consider this as complementary to the existing and design in keeping. Take particular care to identify the character and scale of the original building and the importance of the spaces between buildings and avoid being intrusive in sensitive locations.
- Consider the long-term maintenance of trees, shrubs and hedges and where appropriate identify sites for replacement tree planting.
- Avoid the introduction of evergreen hedges, trees or modern fencing in prominent positions.

Enhancement

There is little in Seend that is out of keeping with the character of the village and the scope for enhancement is limited. Where changes are proposed they should be designed to reflect the intrinsic character of the relevant part of the village using materials and details that maintain the rural scene.

- Poles and overhead wires are obtrusive in various parts of the village: resiting poles to less obtrusive positions or placing wires underground would be an improvement.
- Care needs to be taken in the maintenance of existing trees and hedges avoiding their replacement with non-native species. Where this has occurred, replacement with indigenous species would enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area.
- In terms of long term conservation the well-wooded and parkland appearance of the southern side of the village should be enhanced with the implementation of a phased replanting programme and hedgerow restoration. To the northern and eastern ends of the village the restoration of copses and the removal of dead elm and the replacement with new native species trees should be undertaken.
- Non-original windows can be found in a number of historic buildings in Seend. Modern windows are likely to have a limited life and the opportunity should be taken on future renewals to use a style and detail to match the original.

- Broken fencing and non-native trees as at Love Walk should be replaced with indigenous hedging to reinstate local character.

Areas of potential change

There has been significant change within the Conservation Area in recent years with the expansion of residential developments on the north side of the village and the potential for further change is limited. Economic and social changes are likely to bring about pressure for development or redevelopment with unused or underused farm buildings such as at Egypt Farm often seen as an opportunity for conversion. Planning policies will limit the likelihood of significant change in Seend.



This study of Seend is intended to highlight the significant features that make up the character of the village. Omission of items from the text or from the illustrations should not be regarded as an indication that they are unimportant in conservation or planning terms.

The planning context

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local planning authorities to determine which parts of their area are "Areas of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" and to designate them as Conservation Areas.

The Act, and Government advice given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, Planning and the Historic Environment, states that the local planning authority should formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of all Conservation Areas and this assessment, published as the Seend Conservation Area Statement, is part

of the process.



Love Walk, running south from the High Street, is an attractive location from which to appreciate the extensive views south across the Plain.

This Conservation Area Statement was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 3 March 2005. SPG provides additional information on the interpretation and implementation of policies and proposals contained in a Local Plan.

Consultation procedures, consistent with the advice contained at paragraph 4.7 of PPG15 – *Planning and the Historic Environment*, have been undertaken during the preparation of this Statement. Paragraph 3.16 of PPG12 – *Development Plans*, also states that adequate consultation is a requirement for adoption of SPG. The Council considers that the consultation undertaken meets the obligations for consultations set out in PPG12.

The Kennet Local Plan 2001-2011 has been adopted by the Council and became operative on 30th April 2004. This Statement provides detailed background information for the interpretation of the Local Plan, particularly Policies HH5 and HH6. In addition, the guidance will be relevant to the application of Policies PD1, HC22, HC33, ED10, ED12, ED13, ED28, AT26 and TR17.

Summary and Conclusions

Summary

The economic activity and past prosperity of Seend remain evident in the many fine buildings that line the road through the village. Viewed individually many of these buildings are of considerable architectural and historic interest and, especially when viewed from the south, the settings of the higher status buildings are impressive. Although there are few buildings dating from the 15th century, much of Seend is 18th and 19th century with major developments in the mid and late 20th century including The Lye and Dial Close. Recent expansion in Seend has therefore been considerable with the number of new buildings far exceeding the old. In terms of the Conservation Area, these new buildings are generally located behind the High Street and do not have a major impact.

There is evidence that Seend is a lively village with activity concentrated in Rusty Lane where the Irene Usher Memorial Pavilion, the Women's Institute and Seend Social Club can be found and where there is access to the playing field. In addition to the Parish Church, the village retains a primary school, the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and the Village Stores and Post Office.

The major change that has taken place in Seend since the Conservation Area was designated in 1973 is the continued reduction in local employment opportunities to be replaced by a largely residential and mobile population. Accompanying this has been investment in the repair, alteration and extension of houses and cottages in the village together with the construction of a number of new ones.

Conclusions

The substantial new residential development that took place in Seend in the latter half of the 20th century has reduced the potential for additional development because there is no significant space within the village framework for this to occur. There could be limited opportunities for



Uses are an important component of village character and need to be preserved wherever possible. Buildings designed for a specific use are often distinctive such as the former brewery attached to the Bell Inn.

The Inn itself is also of note in having an unusual form of 18th century roof structure.



Conservation does not mean preservation but is about managing change. The early 19th century extension of Greenheys has been sensitively designed to match but in such a way that the original brick front can still be identified.

redevelopment but many of the older buildings are either listed or of historic interest where retention is a planning priority.

The design and siting of many of the historic buildings limit the potential for alteration and extension although there may be more opportunity within the recently developed areas. The character of the village can be adversely affected by changes to existing buildings especially buildings of historic interest. It is always important to recognise, and work with, the form and grain of the village taking into account historic boundaries and overall density. Open spaces and large gardens are part of this open grain and should not be seen as development opportunities.

Careful maintenance of historic buildings, both listed and unlisted, will be necessary in order to protect the character of the Conservation Area. The thing to avoid is the introduction of elements that are unnecessarily obtrusive or urban or sub-urban in character. Modern boundary walls and fences, paved surfaces and high intensity street or security lighting would fall into this category.

Sustainability and the protection of rural areas are major considerations in the Kennet Local Plan. Seend is described as a village with a range of facilities suitable for limited residential development, although, as previously indicated, the physical opportunities for this are limited. The landscape setting of the village is especially important as are the open spaces within the village. The whole of the area south of the main road falls outside the village development framework.

Trees, verges and other landscape features are important but can be vulnerable to damage or may be affected by the passage of time.

All of the components that make up the special character of the village need to be identified and protected to ensure that future changes are not harmful. Preservation of the character of Seend is for the benefit of existing and future residents, businesses and visitors. The information in this character assessment is intended to assist this process and provide guidance for the future.

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Keeping Kennet Special

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This leaflet is one in a series of Conservation Area Statements and Guidance Notes produced by Kennet District Council. For an up to date list, or if you require further information or advice, please contact:

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