

Woughton on the Green Conservation Area Review

Draft for Consultation

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1. General context

Introduction

- 1.01** 'Conservation areas are places of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.'¹ Woughton on the Green was first designated as a conservation area by Buckinghamshire County Council in 1978, eight years after the plan for Milton Keynes was published, as development of the new city was getting under way.
- 1.02** To protect the character and appearance of conservation areas a character statement is written that identifies and describes those features of special interest or which contribute to local character (section 2 of this document). The one-page conservation statement for Woughton on the Green, written in 1977, and possibly now lost, has not been subsequently reviewed or updated.
- 1.03** Since then government guidance has stated that conservation area character statements should be reviewed periodically to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. This review document updates the character statement for the Woughton on the Green conservation area. Although this review has

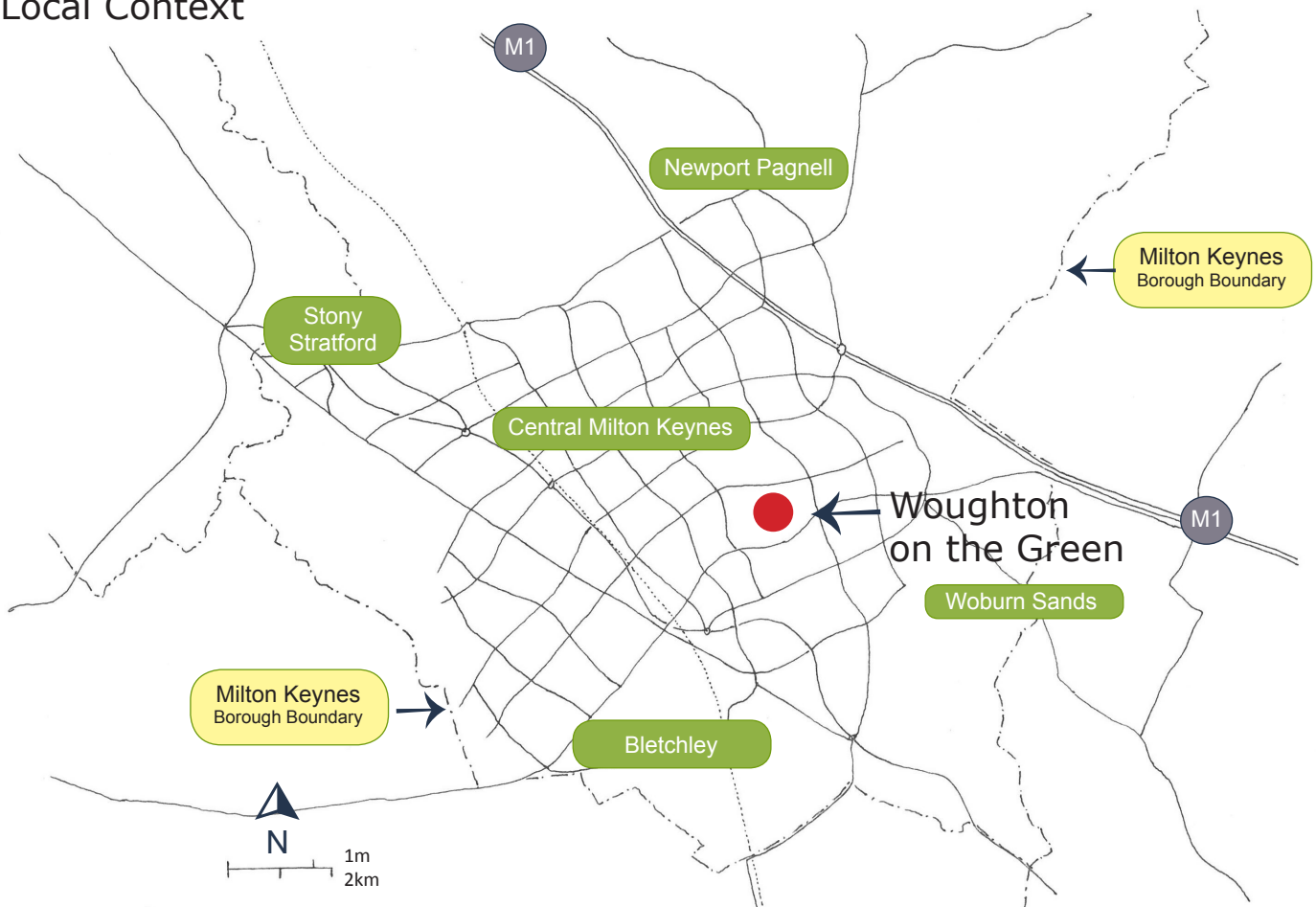
been undertaken by Old Woughton Parish Council, the duty to manage conservation areas and process planning applications is the duty of Milton Keynes Council, the local planning authority. The assistance of Milton Keynes Conservation and Archaeology Team in the preparation of this review is gratefully acknowledged.

- 1.04** The 1978 conservation area boundary was drawn around the historic core of the village of Woughton on the Green, and pre-dated the development of the surrounding land as part of the new city of Milton Keynes. Given the change in circumstances it is now proposed that this area be extended and modified in a number of ways, as described below.

Location and brief description

- 1.05** The village of Woughton on the Green is located slightly to the east of the centre of Milton Keynes, and on the east side of the Grand Union Canal. It occupies the central part of Woughton on the Green grid square.
- 1.06** Since the construction of Milton Keynes, the village of Woughton on the Green has ceased being one of the villages on the B 488 road linking Bletchley to Newport Pagnell, as it was previously. It is now fully integrated into the new city of Milton Keynes.

Local Context



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¹ The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990). Section 72.

1.07 St. Mary's parish church, the Old Swan public house, some small businesses, and Parkside House (a hotel, previously Woughton House) form a focus on Newport Road, which runs north-south. To both north and south cottages pre-dating the new city of Milton Keynes are strung out along the road. A minor road leads west from this nucleus and eventually opens out onto The Green, the continuation of the site of a medieval village, and now a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Around The Green, mostly concealed by hedges, are houses and cottages, a number listed as of architectural or historic interest.

Woughton on the Green and the new city of Milton Keynes

1.08 Woughton on the Green is one of a number of pre-existing towns, villages and hamlets that were integrated into the plan for the new city of Milton Keynes. It is one of eleven conservation areas in the new town designated area, and one of 27 within Milton Keynes Borough boundary.

1.09 *The Plan for Milton Keynes*² recognised that the villages were 'areas of unique character and high amenity,' and that 'special efforts must be made to ensure that they are not swamped by the very large areas of new development, and that they retain their unique character.' The Plan arranged for all the villages to fall within the grid of the main road network in order to allow the old roads to remain serving local functions.

1.10 A plan for Woughton on the Green, incorporating these ideas, was prepared by Milton Keynes Development Corporation in c.1973³ and presented to villagers. Although there were several differences in the plan that was finally adopted for the grid square, it was a useful document in preparing the way for defining the 1978 conservation area, and for showing how the character of the village would be preserved.

Context

1.11 Woughton on the Green grid square, including at its heart the village of Woughton on the Green, is now fully developed as part of Milton Keynes. The structure plan for Woughton on the Green grid square was carefully designed by Milton Keynes Development Corporation to protect the historic village from the impact of new development, mainly through the use of generous amounts of green open space.

1.12 The main area of new development is to the north of The Green, from which it is mostly concealed by hedgerows. This consists of a series of new housing areas constructed in the mid 1980s in a largely traditional style. The houses are mainly of two storeys, and range from very large detached houses near the green to more modest houses



1. St. Mary's parish church



2. The Old Swan public house



3. Woughton House, now Parkside House Hotel



4. Apple Tree Cottage, no.6 The Green

² *The Plan for Milton Keynes*. Milton Keynes Development Corporation, March 1970. Volume 2, pp. 102; 330-332

³ *Woughton on the Green, Village Plan and Conservation proposal for the Village of Woughton on the Green*. Milton Keynes Development Corporation.

further to the north. To their north a generous buffer of paddocks and a water garden, owned and managed by the Parks Trust, protects them from any disturbance by the nearest grid road, Chaffron Way H7. Various pre-existing houses line Newport Road to the north of the village.

1.13 To the east the village borders the Ouzel Valley Park, a broad swathe of green open space extending east to the River Ouzel, with distant views to the Brickhill woods. This was originally farmland and while now crossed by public footpaths, it continues to be grazed under the administration of the Parks Trust. A large area of the park, including the earthworks of the larger medieval village, is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The land by the River Ouzel is liable to flooding. The southern part of the Ouzel Valley Park contains the Woughton Playing Fields.

1.14 Immediately south of the church and east of the Old Swan public house there are two new developments. Turpyn Court is an infill site of small businesses, while nearby Lucas Place, consisting of three angled terraces of flat-roofed housing designed by John Winter for the Orbit Housing Association, was completed in 1975 before the conservation area was designated. Other houses line Newport Road further to the south. South of the village, though screened by trees, a large fenced allotment site adjoins a publicly accessible orchard and disused vineyard owned by the Parks Trust. These are bordered to the south by a bend in the Grand Union Canal. These open spaces and landscaped areas give generous protection from the grid road to the south, Standing Way H8.

1.15 The Grand Union Canal cut through the village in 1800 and although hidden from the village green by trees, with its moored boats it now forms the western boundary of the village and the conservation area. It is also the boundary between Old Woughton Parish and Woughton Community Council. Beyond it lies Peartree Bridge, with new housing and a marina. Originally the village green extended across the line of the canal, and the listed Old Rectory, now home of Inter-Action, a community arts organisation, is a historic remnant of this. The moated site and fishpond in its grounds are a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The canal bridge by the Old Rectory marks the route of a lane that once served farmland to the west of the village.

Topography

1.16 Any changes in ground level around the village of Woughton on the Green are relatively minor. As usual the parish church sits on slightly higher land, and to the immediate south Newport Road drops away, a rise which characterises the southerly approach to the village. The Green, for its entire length, falls gradually to the south to the watercourse behind the cottages on the south side. There is a very gradual fall in levels to the east beyond the village towards the River Ouzel.



5. 1973 plan for Woughton on the Green



6. New houses to north of The Green



7. Ouzel Valley Park, looking east towards River Ouzel



8. Turpyn Court, looking towards parish church

Apart from this the most noticeable level changes are probably the earthworks remaining from the medieval village.

Geology

- 1.17 Most of Woughton on the Green sits on boulder clay, and this turns to Oxford clay in the south west corner of The Green. There is a band of alluvium running through the gardens of the houses on the south of The Green, associated with the water course there.

Historic development

- 1.18 Woughton is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086, when two manors are mentioned. One was in the ownership of the Longville family for about 400 years until the mid 18th century, at which point the manors were united under the Troutbeck family. The lands of the parish were enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1768, when various charitable provisions were made for those people affected by the enclosures. At this stage the strip farming around the village ceased.
- 1.19 Surviving earthworks suggest that in medieval times the village followed a route from a mill on the River Ouzel, crossed The Green, and extended some way beyond the canal. Much of this is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It appears that the village consisted of a loose scattering of domestic and farm buildings strung out along this route, as suggested on the three modern information panels displayed around the site.
- 1.20 The only building remaining from this period is the parish church, which probably survived both because of its importance and also because it was built of stone. The rest of the medieval village has disappeared. Neither the reason for this, nor the date when it happened, are known. However, it is known that the frequent recurrence of the plague in Europe generally, and in Britain from 1349 until the great plague of London in 1665, caused significant loss of life both in towns and in the countryside.
- 1.21 It appears that the village, with a much reduced population, regrew on the edges of the original settlement, to the west of the church. The original village buildings and enclosures were probably left to decay and eventually became grassed over in the form of the earth mounds that are still visible. It was presumably at this stage that the village became known as Woughton on the Green, an apt description of its new form. Some archaeological evidence for the earlier village is supported by the excavation of a farmstead that took place near the site of the marina in 1973; most of the remainder of the extensive archaeological site has never been investigated.
- 1.22 The earliest cottages around the green, and the Old Swan Inn, date from the late 16th and early 17th centuries; a number are timber-framed and some



9. Lucas Place



10. Orchard to south of conservation area



11. Grand Union Canal, western boundary of the conservation area



12. The Old Rectory, originally in the village

are thatched. There were a number of farm houses, at least three of which are still lived in, and one of which (Green Farm) collapsed about 40 years ago. The arrival of the canal in 1800 separated the Rectory from the village, and it was later replaced when a new rectory was built south of the village in the mid 19th century. Woughton House was built in the mid 19th century and is now a hotel; its parkland, containing some of the medieval earthworks, is now in the Ouzel Valley Park.

- 1.23 With the coming of the new city of Milton Keynes in the 1970s, farming in Woughton on the Green gradually ceased as farmland was acquired for development, or was turned into public open space. What was once a farming village has now become a tranquil and highly valued residential area.

Planning framework

- 1.24 *The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* establishes a duty for councils to identify those places within its administrative area that are of special architectural or historic character or appearance and designate those places as conservation areas.
- 1.25 *The National Planning Policy Framework*⁴ was published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2012, and Section 12 deals with *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*. Among many other documents, it has now replaced *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* published in March 2010.
- 1.26 Councils have a duty to give special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas when determining applications for planning permission. The extent to which development requiring planning permission harms, preserves or enhances the character of a conservation area is given particular weight before decisions are made to grant or refuse planning permission.
- 1.27 Listed buildings in conservation areas are held to be heritage assets in their own right and works of alteration or extension will require an application for listed building consent to be made. Works are authorised only when written consent has been granted by the local planning authority and are executed according to the terms of the consent and any conditions attached to it.
- 1.28 The designation of a conservation area provides the council with additional controls over demolition, greater influence over the design of new development and provides additional protection for trees that are not already subject to a tree preservation order. These controls may be further extended by the introduction of an Article 4(2) direction that removes 'permitted development rights' that allow various alterations to be made

without the need to make an application for planning permission. The additional protection that an Article 4(2) direction allows is described in section 3: *Management proposals*. Further advice on the nature or extent of controls in a conservation area and how you may be affected is available from Milton Keynes Council's planning enquiries team⁵.

- 1.29 The presence of a designated conservation area potentially protects all the built elements and spaces that lie within it, including features hidden from public view such as walled gardens and outbuildings.



13. Parish church, seen from the north



14. Old Tudor House, no.3 The Green

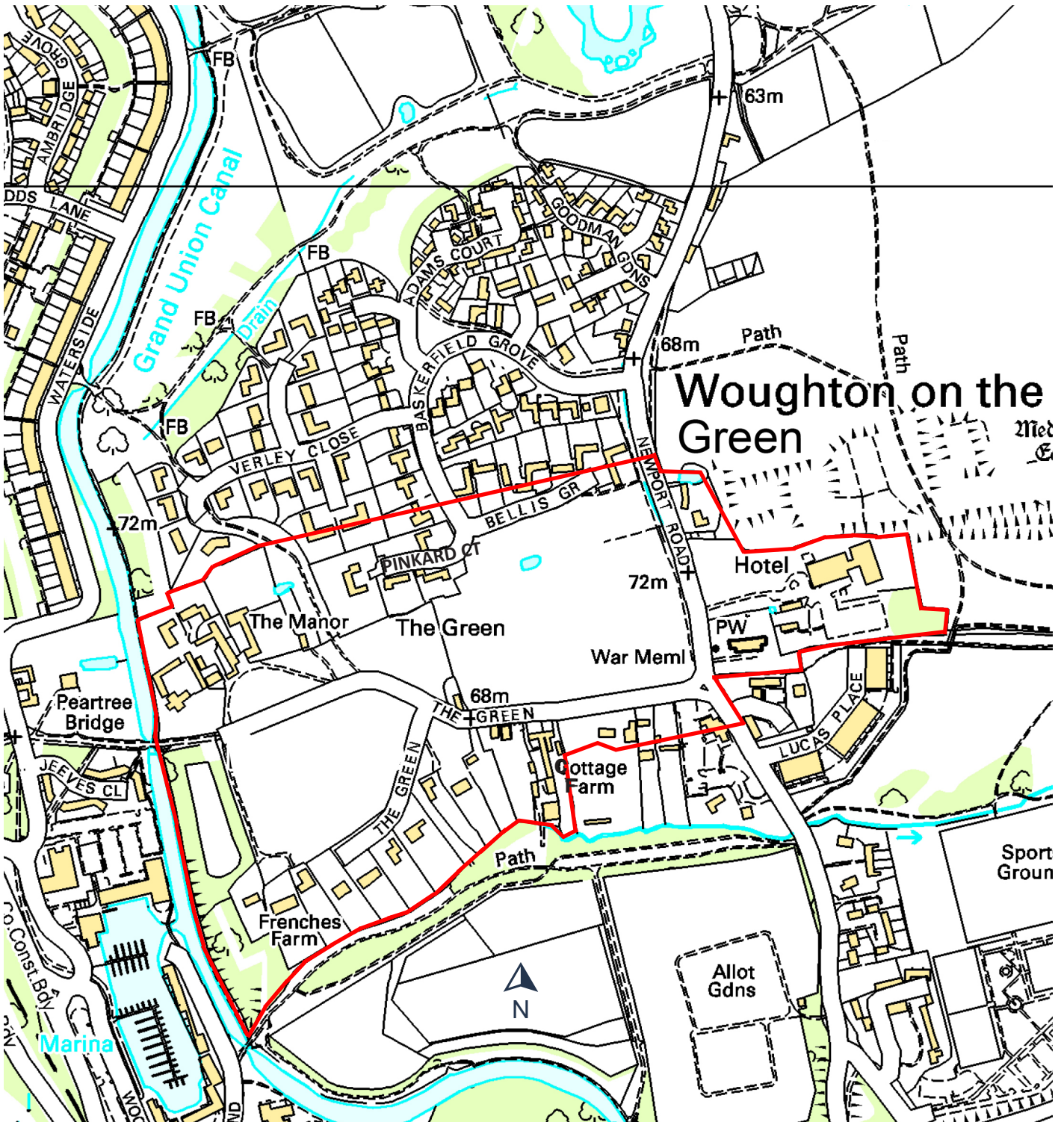


15. The Manor House, previously Manor Farm

⁴National Planning Policy Framework. Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2012.

⁵Telephone 01908 252358; email: planning.enquiries@milton-keynes.gov.uk

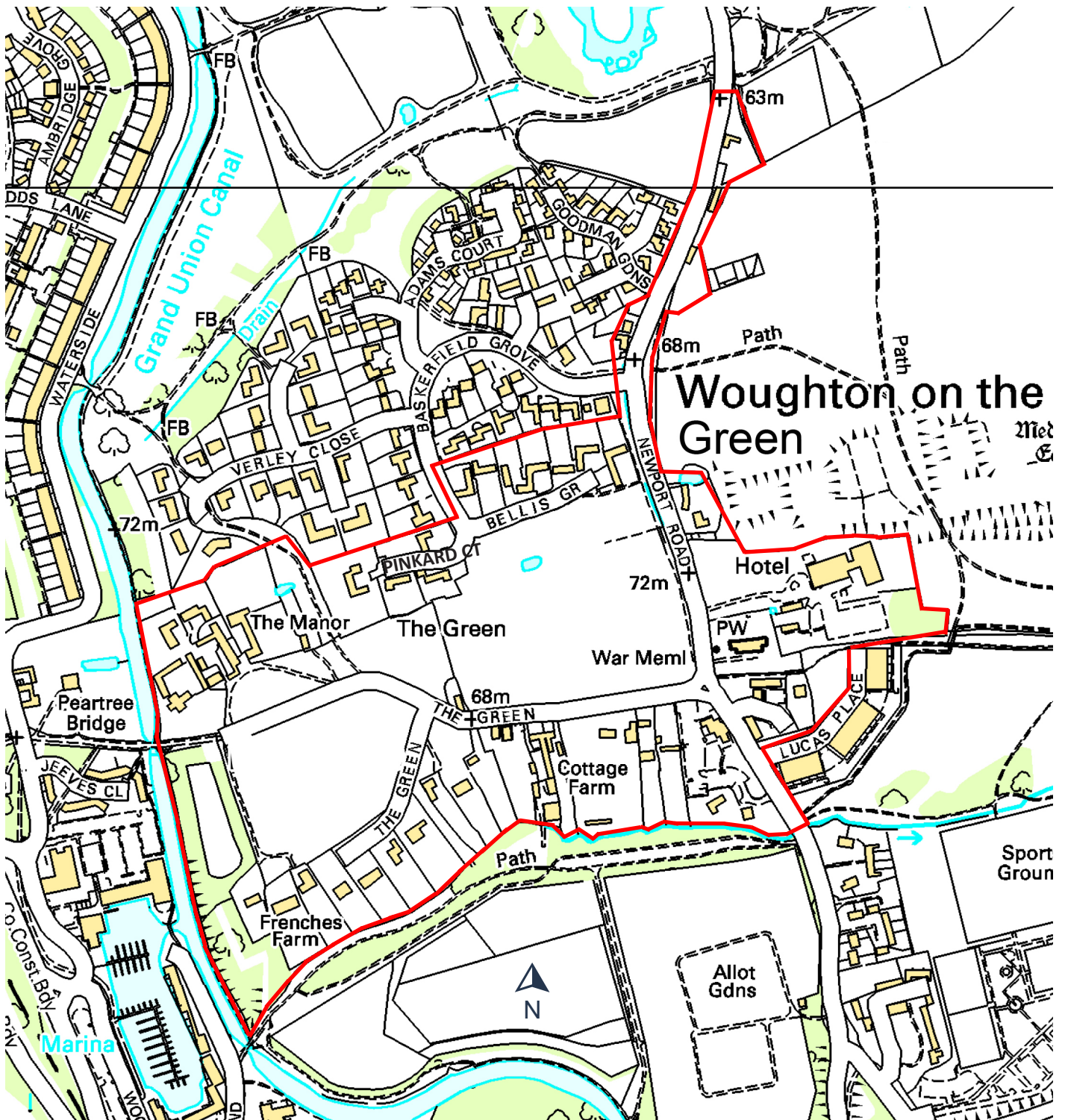
The present conservation area



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- 1.30 When Woughton on the Green conservation area was first designated in 1978 the village was surrounded by farmland, and this context was taken into consideration in drawing the conservation area boundary.

The extended conservation area



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- 1.31 Since then, with the arrival of Milton Keynes, there have been changes to the village's setting, as described above. The new setting of the village and the conservation area has prompted a re-evaluation of the 'place of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.'

1.32 The adjusted and extended conservation area boundary recognises that the village of Woughton on the Green is unlikely to change in the near future, and that this review is a good time to modify the conservation area boundary so that the present situation is better taken into account. Accordingly three changes are proposed. These are:

a) Pinkard Court and Bellis Grove

The development of residential streets to the north of the Green since the designation of the conservation area has resulted in a misalignment of the conservation area boundary. It is proposed that the boundary be realigned to follow garden boundaries, taking in all houses in Pinkard Court and Bellis Grove, which are partly visible from The Green, but no houses in Baskerfield Grove or Verley Close.

Pinkard Court and Bellis Grove are carefully designed and are important in the integration of Woughton on the Green into the wider city development.

b) Newport Road, north of the village

Newport Road north of the village has a string of 19th century cottages, some on its western side, but most on its eastern side, opposite an old field hedge. From the north it feels like an appropriately rural approach to the village which has been carefully preserved from the impact of new housing developments, and for this reason it should now be included in the conservation area.

c) Land between existing conservation area boundary and watercourse at east end of The Green, and to north of Lucas Place.

In 1973 Milton Keynes Development Corporation proposed that these areas be included in the conservation area. Now the value of Woughton on the Green village is better appreciated it is proposed that this important approach to the village from the south and land adjacent to the church and the Old Swan public house should be included.

1.33 These modifications to the conservation area boundary will help to preserve the historic and rural qualities that are so characteristic of the village.



16. Houses in Pinkard Court seen from The Green



17. Newport Road, looking south towards the village



18. Parish church, showing its setting and land to its south

2. Character statement

Introduction

- 2.01 A bend in the road that leads through Woughton on the Green grid square at the Old Swan public house, and sight of the church and its lychgate and the jubilee oak, mark the presence of the village. The lane to the west first passes between hedgerows with old cottages partly concealed behind them, and then opens out through a fence and gateway onto a broad green, with a scatter of buildings around the edge. In the 1994 edition of *The Buildings of England, Buckinghamshire* Woughton on the Green is described as 'A still rural grid square with the old village and ancient village green within an encircling band of linear park, paddocks and vineyard.'

Woughton on the Green's special interest

- 2.02 The special interest of the village and the conservation area resides in the fact that they form a tranquil historic nucleus that appears relatively untouched by modern life, while nonetheless being surrounded by the new city of Milton Keynes.
- 2.03 This special interest results principally from a) the expansive green in the heart of the village, b) the survival of old buildings, many of which are now listed, c) the encircling band of green spaces that largely protects the village from the sight of any modern roads and development, d) the long-established roads and footpaths within the village and e) the mainly low-key and appropriate treatment of hard surfaces and boundary fences and hedges, and the absence of street lighting around The Green.
- 2.04 The following headings describe and examine in more detail the main elements that contribute to the modified conservation area's special architectural or historic interest, and that give it its unique character.

Buildings

- 2.05 For a village with a small population Woughton on the Green has a relatively large number of buildings that have been listed as being of architectural or historic interest.
- 2.06 Those listed grade II* or grade II are as follows:

Listed grade II*

Church of St Mary

Listed grade II

Old Swan Public House, 6 Newport Road
*Woughton House Hotel, Newport Road
+Levi's Bar, Newport Road
Old Thatch, 4 Newport Road
Cairn Cottage, 1 The Green
Old Tudor House, 3 The Green



19. Accommodation for Parkside House Hotel, previously Levi's Bar



20. Cairn Cottage, no.1 The Green



21. North Cottage, The Green

Listed grade II (cont.)

Woodbine Cottage, 4 The Green Cottage Farm,
5 The Green Apple Tree Cottage,
6 The Green Frenches Farmhouse,
18 The Green, ☐The Manor House, The Green
North Cottage, The Green

**Woughton House Hotel. This was originally Woughton House, built c.1840 as a gentleman's residence; it is now the Mercure Parkside Hotel.*

+Levi's Bar. This was originally the carriage house for Woughton House; it is now accommodation for the Mercure Parkside Hotel and is no longer a bar.

2.07 National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 132) states: 'Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear or convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments.... grade I or grade II* listed buildings should be wholly exceptional.'

2.08 A small number of other buildings in the conservation area are non-designated heritage assets that make a positive contribution to the conservation area, as follows:

Lychgate, Church of St Mary
St Mary's Hall, The Green
The Lodge, The Green
Pear Tree House, The Green

The two canal bridges leading from the conservation area are also important heritage assets.

Materials and building form

2.09 There is a limited range of building materials, construction, and built form in Woughton on the Green, and this generally gives the scattered buildings a pleasantly understated quality.

2.10 The parish church is the only building whose walls are of limestone. Of the houses there is a small but valuable collection of timber-framed buildings dating from the late 16th and 17th centuries. Although by national standards these are not important examples, they nonetheless form the largest group within the new city of Milton Keynes. The timber frame infill panels are usually of brick. Later houses are invariably constructed entirely of local red brick. The infill panels and a large proportion of the brick houses are painted or rendered, finished white or pale cream. Sometimes this is a traditional lime-based finish, but more often a modern finish has been used.

2.11 With the exception of Woughton House, Pear Tree House and The Manor, houses usually have a simple elongated rectangular plan form and are of a modest size appropriate to the cottages they are. In some cases there are signs of incremental growth, which more recently is concealed at the back of the house.

2.12 Most houses are of two storeys. The earlier ones have steeply pitched roofs covered either in thatch, or more often in hand-made clay tiles, possibly replacing earlier thatch. Later houses have roofs of a shallower pitch, usually covered in 19th century blue/black Welsh slate. In a few cases modern concrete tiles have replaced the original roof covering to the detriment of the character of the conservation area. Earlier roofs sometimes have half-



22. Lychgate, St. Mary's church



23. St. Mary's Hall, The Green



24. The Lodge, an example of a white painted house on The Green



25. Pear Tree House, The Green

hipped gables, while later roofs usually have plain gables. A number of recently constructed houses ignore these patterns.

- 2.13** Window frames are usually of timber. The earlier examples have timber side-hung casements, usually with glazing bars. Sometimes metal opening casements with leaded lights have survived. Later windows are mostly side-hung casements, although there are examples of vertical sliding sash windows. On the whole the windows in the timber framed buildings are painted black to match the framing, while the windows in both the red brick and the painted brick buildings are usually finished in white. Regrettably there are a few examples of plastic replacement windows, other windows that have been finished in brown stain, and some with fanlights, all of which are to the detriment of the character of the conservation area.

Routes and open spaces

- 2.14** The historic routes and open spaces of the conservation area make a significant contribution to its unique character.

Roads

- 2.15** The major road through Woughton on the Green grid square is the old B488 which heads north from Bletchley to Newport Pagnell, named Newport Road. With the development of Milton Keynes this was downgraded to being the only distributor road within the grid square, and carries the bus route serving the village.

From the south it rises slightly but significantly as it passes the Old Swan public house. It then passes the entrance to the village green by the oak tree planted to celebrate Queen Victoria's golden jubilee in 1887, opposite the lychgate and church. The entrance to Parkside Hotel soon appears on the right after the church, and beyond it a glimpse over the Ouzel Valley Park before there is a string of 19th century cottages. These now read as part of the village sequence and for this reason this length of Newport Road is proposed to be included in the conservation area (see above).

Minor roads

- 2.16** The lane named The Green that leads to the village green from the jubilee oak by the Old Swan public house heads west in a straight line, and is enclosed by hedges on both sides, those on the left partly concealing some of the most attractive houses in the village. After some 200 metres the route arrives at the place where it enters open grassland.

This is marked by white painted fences to each side of the road, a remnant of the system of gate and cattle grid that originally kept grazing cattle from straying off the green. At this point the view



26. Newport Road and the Old Swan public house, looking north



27. The Green, looking east, with cottages on left



28. The Green, opening onto unfenced area



29. Footpath alongside The Green

opens out over The Green, and the road divides into a number of routes that traverse the unfenced grassland. One route crosses The Green in the direction of the canal bridge, historically giving access to the fields beyond, where it now ends in a footpath leading into Peartree Bridge past the Old Rectory.

The 390 mile National Cycle Route 6 passes through The Green on its way from London to the Lake District.

Footpaths

- 2.17 It is difficult to single out for mention any particular footpaths in an area so well provided with them. The important point to make is that the generous provision of footpaths, together with the necessary gates in fences and hedges, makes recreational walking around the area a highly valued pleasure.

Open spaces, views

- 2.18 Woughton on the Green has an abundance of open spaces that contribute to its rural character. The Green, and the generous amount of green open space between buildings, make a significant contribution to the unique character of the village, and are an integral part of the setting for the many listed buildings in the village.
- 2.19 The Green is a remarkable place, and unique in Milton Keynes. Despite the presence of the new city it manages to preserve a timeless rural quality, partly as a result of still being in part grazed by livestock. Standing somewhere in the middle of The Green, one is aware only of the sky and the expanse of open grassland. The perimeter is composed mostly of trees and hedgerows, which means that with the obvious exception of The Manor and its converted farm buildings, North Cottage, and The Lodge, most of the surrounding houses are barely visible. Many new houses to the south of the Green are entirely concealed, and those on the north side of the Green are also largely hidden from view. To the west tall trees and a dense hedge mark a paddock that runs parallel with the canal, while to the east there are glimpses of the church tower beyond the grazing livestock.
- 2.20 There are no unattractive views across The Green, but the views looking north west towards North Cottage and The Manor House, and the long view looking east towards the church are memorable. The passing motorist or cyclist will also enjoy the unfolding views up and down the Newport Road.

Trees and landscape

- 2.21 The village of Woughton on the Green and its conservation area have an established landscape that has evolved and been nurtured over many



30. North Cottage (right) and The Manor House (centre) seen across The Green



31. The jubilee oak, planted to celebrate Queen Victoria's golden jubilee

years, as a contrast to the rest of Milton Keynes whose magnificent landscape is recent and was designed. This imparts a feeling of continuous habitation, and is characterised by The Green, mature hedgerows, private gardens, and a variety of fine trees.

- 2.22 Examples of longstanding and traditional tree planting are a) the jubilee oak, b) the cedar in the churchyard, and c) the holm oaks along Newport Road, and other decorative trees in the grounds of Parkside Hotel. Many mature elm trees were lost to Dutch elm disease in the 1970s.
- 2.23 Two individual trees in the modified conservation area have Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). It is the landscape as a whole that complements and enhances the conservation area and for this reason the legislation is such that the conservation area affords similar protection to a TPO to all trees within it.
- 2.24 Milton Keynes Council has recognised the importance of many trees across its area by protecting them with TPOs. A TPO makes it an offence to cut down, lop, top, uproot, willfully damage or destroy a tree without first obtaining permission from the Council. It applies either to a single tree or a group, and to all trees in a conservation area.

3. Management proposals

Introduction

- 3.01 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out Milton Keynes Council's duty in respect of conservation areas stating that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.' It is therefore not only a question of ensuring that the existing historic character of the conservation area is preserved but also that any new development makes a positive contribution to it.
- 3.02 Reaffirming the conservation area's character presents an opportunity to look back at the success of the existing controls and the manner in which they have been implemented.
- 3.03 This draft management plan identifies other ways in which the planning authority's duty can be implemented more effectively including the use of an Article 4(2) Direction (see below).
- 3.04 The principles and advice contained in this management plan accord with the broad advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2012 and Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management published by English Heritage in 2011, and now under review in the light of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Woughton on the Green Conservation Area Management Plan

Planning Guidance

- 3.05 The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 128, says 'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.'
- 3.06 It goes on to say 'Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.'

Demolitions

- 3.07 Demolition of buildings which contribute to the character and appearance of the area will not normally be permitted in the conservation area. National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 133, says 'Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent,...' It goes on to give a number of conditions where this may not be the case.

New Development

- 3.08 The conservation area is developed at a very low density, and this is one of the aspects that give it a rural quality. Where new development has taken place (for example on the south side of The Green) the houses are usually entirely hidden by hedgerows and trees. It is unlikely that other sites for new houses will be found that will not have a detrimental impact on the special quality of The Green.
- 3.09 Notwithstanding this, any new development proposed in the conservation area should respect the scale, appearance, form, density, mix and layout of the historic patterns of development. Plan form, elevation, and materials should all complement the historic and architectural character of the conservation area.
- 3.10 The presence of existing buildings and details that contradict or undermine the historic character or appearance of the conservation area will not be deemed grounds for similar development. Where inappropriate development has been permitted in the past every effort should be made to avoid repetition.

Change of Use

- 3.11 Changes of use to a building or land where the new use would harm the character or appearance of the conservation area should not normally be permitted. Harm might result from increased vehicle movements, advertising, obtrusive lighting or some such.

Alterations to buildings

- 3.12 A large proportion of the buildings in the conservation area are statutorily listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. Other buildings that are not of special merit in the national context can still make an important contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Few of the older buildings in the conservation area fail to make a positive contribution to the village's character or appearance.

'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing

applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.' National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 135. As the conservation area itself is a designated heritage asset, all planning applications within it will be considered as affecting a designated heritage asset.

- 3.13 Proposals to alter buildings in ways that diminish their special character or appearance pose the greatest threat to the integrity of the conservation area. In line with national and local policy there should be a presumption against permitting alterations to buildings that adversely affect their individual character or appearance, or that of the conservation area. There are no controls over much of this unless a building is listed, hence the recommendation that an Article 4(2) direction be introduced.

Article 4(2) Direction

- 3.14 An Article 4(2) Direction can be made under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. The aim of an Article 4(2) Direction is to encourage the retention of high quality architectural features and to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the built heritage, by controlling small scale works that may be of little concern elsewhere but that would have considerable impact in an area of special architectural or historic interest.
- 3.15 The designation of a Conservation Area only goes some way towards protecting the integrity of buildings and their character. Under the Town and Country Planning Act (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, permitted development rights enable property owners within a conservation area to undertake small-scale extensions and/or alterations without the need for planning permission, and these rights have recently been extended under a relaxation of the legislation. Where these rights are unchecked, they can soon erode the special interest of the Conservation Area.

Management Proposals

- 3.16 It is therefore proposed that it would be appropriate for Milton Keynes Council to introduce additional controls by issuing an article 4(2) direction covering Woughton on the Green conservation area. It is felt that householders fortunate enough to live in an attractive conservation area should have no objection to submitting for approval any proposals for change (as opposed to repair and maintenance). Proper enforcement should also be exercised by the planning authority.

Repair and Maintenance

- 3.17 Householders are advised to seek advice on materials, techniques and finishes appropriate to the repair and maintenance of historic buildings within the conservation area. The primary source of local advice should be Milton Keynes Council's Conservation and Archaeology Team; secondary sources of general advice include the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), and English Heritage.

Buildings at Risk

- 3.18 Most buildings in the conservation appear to be well cared for by their owners.
- 3.19 There is one obvious case where this is not so: Cottage Farm, 5 The Green and Woodbine Cottage, 4 The Green, projecting as a wing to its rear. These two cottages have been empty and neglected for many years, and are now scaffolded. They are in urgent need of attention to prevent further deterioration, or possible collapse.

The Street Scene

- 3.20 Milton Keynes Council will pay special attention to the street scene and its contribution to the character and appearance of the area, and also to the preservation or enhancement of any historic items or features that it contains.
- 3.21 Outside the Old Swan public house Newport Road has received traffic management treatment in the form of speed bumps, narrowing, red tar macadam, and white lines. This design, although well handled, has robbed the road of its rural qualities, and is arguably inappropriate for a village setting where a lower speed limit might have sufficed.
- 3.22 Although not strictly speaking part of the street scene, the car park at the Old Swan public house deserves mention. It is to be regretted that the use of red tar macadam and concrete kerbs bears no relation to what might be expected in a village setting and in a conservation area. A gravel-coloured finish, without kerbs, and divisions into smaller bays with planting would have been a more sympathetic approach.

The recently installed lighting outside the Mercure Parkside Hotel is also noticeably unsympathetic to the village setting, both in its colour rendering and its brightness.

- 3.23 The minor lane and tracks serving The Green are exemplary in their lack of highway treatment. The few granite sett edgings, and the lack of highway signs, white or yellow lines and other highway

impedimenta should be maintained; the tracks that are not hard surfaced should be retained as they are. The decision not to provide highway lighting is to be commended, and should be continued.

- 3.24 The council will also place an emphasis on the need to retain and keep in good repair the fences to The Green and private boundary treatments, and avoid the loss of front gardens for hard standing for motor vehicles, and the hard surfacing of gravel driveways.

Trees and landscape

- 3.25 Trees and landscape make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the clear preference will be for their retention and maintenance (for example by the removal of ivy from tree trunks), and for continued renewal through the maintenance of existing hedgerows, and the planting of new hedgerows and trees where appropriate, using indigenous species. The use of Cupressus leylandii, for example, has no historic justification within a traditional village setting. It would be desirable for a hedgerow to be reinstated on the west side of Newport Road to the south of Goodman Gardens.
- 3.26 All trees in conservation areas that have a diameter of more than 7.5cm measured 1.5 metres above ground level are afforded similar protection to those covered by tree preservation orders (TPOs). It is not therefore considered necessary to propose other TPOs in the conservation area.
- 3.27 The present maintenance regime for public landscaping, in particular the grassland of the western area of The Green, is designed to encourage the visual and ecological attractiveness of the area, and should be maintained.



32. Cottage Farm, no. 5 The Green



33. Car park at the Old Swan public house



34. Missing hedgerow south of Goodman Gardens

4. Consultation

Consultees

Before submitting this draft conservation area review for adoption by Milton Keynes Council, the Parish Council will, among others, consult the following:

All property owners and tenants within the proposed modified conservation area.

English Heritage	SE Region
MP for Woughton on the Green	
Milton Keynes Council	Local ward members for Woughton on the Green Development Control Committee Members Strategic Directors and relevant Heads of Services Central library
Woughton on the Green Parish Council	All Councillors
Parish Councils abutting the conservation area	Woughton Community Council
St Mary's Church, Woughton on the Green	Churchwardens
Parks Trust	
SaferMK	Community Safety Manager
Milton Keynes and North Bucks Chamber of Commerce	
Milton Keynes Heritage Association	

Questions

Consultees are invited to comment on any aspect of the draft document.

In particular they may wish to respond to the following questions:

1. Do you agree it would be beneficial for Woughton on the Green if this new Conservation Area statement replaced the existing statement adopted in 1978?
2. Should the present conservation area be modified, as described in paragraphs 1.30 – 1.33?
3. Are there any additional aspects of the character of the Conservation area which should be included in the new Conservation Area statement? Please explain your reasons for suggesting these should be included.
4. Should the conservation area be subject to an Article 4(2) Direction made under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as described in paragraphs 3.14 – 3.16?
5. Are there any statements in the proposed Conservation Area Review which you disagree with? If so please say what these are and give the reasons for your view.

Responses and reactions

Consultee's responses, and the way the document has been modified in response, will be displayed on the Parish Council's website.

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