

ACHIEVING CONTINUITY



Alveston Village Design Statement

Introduction



Looking
towards
Stratford from
Alveston
Church Tower

Being a small village, close to, yet separate from surrounding development, Alveston has a unique character. The village still retains its rural nature and, in the opinion of its residents, it is this special quality that sets it apart from its more urban neighbours and must be conserved.

This document has been written following a period of consultation, questionnaires, workshops and exhibitions in the village hall. The design recommendations express the combined views of the people who live in the village community.

The aim of the document is to guide and influence change in a way that respects and builds upon village characteristics. The views of villagers expressed in this design statement will become part of the planning framework.



Location

Alveston is a tranquil South Warwickshire village, lying beyond the outskirts of Stratford-upon-Avon. It is situated to the south of a loop in the River Avon.

The major part of the village is within a conservation area. This allows selective infill but excludes large-scale development.

On the south side of the B4086 are open fields. The buildings on the immediate south side of the B4086 are considered part of the village.



Population

Alveston is a small village. As at February 2001 there were 273 residents in 138 households. The population consisted of 106 men, 122 women and 45 children under the age of 18.

In addition to the residential population, Alveston has one of the largest Youth Hostels in the country. The hostel consists of three properties housing 12 staff with accommodation for 132

guests maintaining high occupancy throughout the year. Alveston Leys Nursing Home has 35 people under care and a further 22 people in residential flats.

History of Alveston Village

Various scattered Iron Age deposits (from 700BC to about 50BC) have been collected over the years around Alveston. These, combined with aerial photography over the village that show crop marks, suggest that the area has been populated since the Iron Age. There is no evidence of a full-scale village of the Iron Age, but rather scattered farmsteads of small family groups.

The Old Church at Alveston: the site possibly dates from Saxon times



The earliest mention of Alveston is in a charter dated 966 AD. The Bishop of Worcester held the land in Alveston and that of other manors surrounding it from the mid 10th century. The village of Alveston derives its name from the Saxon personal name, Eanulf, and his settlement, or "tun". The parish of Alveston has the same boundaries today as it had at the time of the charter. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 when it had 44 households, a church and three mills.

The land remained Church property until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1535, when it came to be held by the Crown.

The village largely escaped the turmoil of the Civil War (1642-46) apart from troops from both sides requisitioning sheep and cattle, destroying hurdles and creating a general nuisance.

In 1689 the Peers family built a new house on the site of the old manor house and enclosed some land around it creating a park.

It is possible that during this time some of the old timber framed houses of the lower part of the village were removed. Records show that the old church was renovated in 1712 and was eventually abandoned around 1839 when the new church was built.

The latter half of the 18th century brought many changes to the village. The road from Stratford-upon-Avon to Wellesbourne Montfort was turnpiked in 1771. The common open fields were enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1772. The process of enclosure created large landowners who were able to benefit from consolidated holdings and from supplying a growing population in the towns and cities. The road enabled better communications. Coaches carrying mail and passengers were able to move faster and more conveniently. Farmers who lived in the village now moved their households to the farms in the fields which made many large, old buildings available for newcomers. At the beginning of the 19th century, many of these old farm houses

were inhabited by people new to the area who improved on and added to the fabric of the houses they acquired. Houses that were affected in this way include Baraset House, Hemmingford House, Kissing Tree House, Alveston Leys and The Woodlands. It is possible that the new owners also tore down the old labourers' cottages that had existed since the 16th century, and replaced them with the houses which stand today.

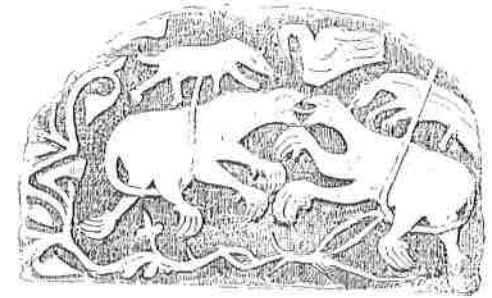
Occupations were beginning to change too. Previously the community was entirely agricultural. With the arrival of the upper middle classes in the new villas, a new class of occupations was established. Maids, footmen, cooks, gardeners, grooms and butlers were needed for all the new houses and the families living in them. Census data collected during the reign of Queen Victoria shows an increasing range of new occupations such as basket and mat makers, shoemakers, waggoners, carpenters, maltsters, brickmakers, bricklayers, dressmakers, shopkeepers and

laundresses. Reeds cut from the river were used for thatching.

The 20th century brought with it more change than ever before. Two World Wars and the subsequent pressures on the people and land resulted in a shift in ownership of land and occupations. Many of the old families of Alveston, who had lived in the tied cottages, moved to the newly built council houses in Tiddington, preferring them to the old, inconvenient houses that had stood for a century. The advent of the motor car increased mobility and encouraged commuting, resulting in many of the houses being purchased by outsiders who changed the character of the village irrevocably. The result was that the village shops and post office collapsed from lack of custom, leaving more premises vacant for conversion into yet more homes.

Alveston has had its share of post war developments. Houses were built along Alveston Lane from the early 1950's. In the 1970's Alveston Leys Park was

created on the parkland belonging to the big house, and Avonfields Close was created at around the same time on land which had been allotments. Further infill has occurred, but the essential appearance and rural nature of the village with its mixture of open spaces, views, wooded areas and characteristic houses has largely endured.



Tympanum from
the old Church

Landscape Setting and Character

DESIGN GUIDELINES:

- The eyeline towards the village from the B4086 should continue as it is and not be disturbed by any new high roofs. The building height line should be restricted near all entrances to the village.
- The open spaces surrounding the entrances to the village should remain intact in order to keep the rural view, clearly distinguish the boundaries of the village and to maintain Alveston's concealed setting. This will help to prevent creeping urbanisation.
- Any future development on the Young Plants site should be limited to the area currently built upon. The field should remain as pastureland. A barrier of deciduous trees and evergreen shrubs should be established to hide the village to its rear. The view between St James Church and the War Memorial along with the rural outlook from Hemingford House must be maintained.



Lying in the upper Avon valley, Alveston is entirely surrounded by pastureland.

The topography shows that the village is concealed from the B4086 in the south because it nestles in a fold on a terrace of the Avon. Viewed from across the river in the north, the village is screened by a panoply of mixed trees giving the impression of a totally wooded area.

To the north and west the loop in the river forms a natural boundary. To the south, the B4086 is effectively an 18th century by-pass of the village. After this road was built Alveston became an 'access only' village.

There are three roads into the village, all minor country lanes, leading downhill into the clusters of housing that form the distinct and individual sub-areas in the settlement. All of these roads lead through pinch points (formed by housing or trees) to junctions identified and characterised by formal greens. These are an important feature of the village.

Each of the approaches is bound on at least one side by open space. Property, where found, is generally well screened. The open spaces create a distinct segregation from the main road and from the ribbon development of Tiddington. Starting from the East, the first two approaches, Kissing Tree

Lane and Church Lane, together with their abutting clear space, are currently within the conservation area. The land adjoining the western approach, Alveston Lane, was taken out of the conservation area in 1992 despite objections from villagers.

The field between Young Plants and the War Memorial is a fundamental element of village character. It establishes the village's rural nature. Villagers have expressed an overwhelming view that this field be conserved as meadowland. This is because the intrinsic quality of this field as a green "buffer" between the village and the main road is critical in preserving the special characteristics of the wider conservation area.



The eyeline from the B4086 should not be disturbed by high roofs



Highways and Footpaths

The west entrance into the village, Alveston Lane, meets Church Lane, the middle entrance, at Lower End and carries on through The Rookery to the village green and Ferry Lane. Mill Lane, a cul de sac, leads from Lower End to the Old Church.

Kissing Tree Lane, the easterly entrance to the Village, also leads to The Rookery but from the opposite direction to Alveston Lane. Avonfields Close, Ferry Lane and Kissing Tree Way lead off Kissing Tree Lane. Ferry Lane runs past the village green

and continues towards the river. There is a fourth entrance, a footpath leading from the most easterly end of the village, along the river to Ferry Lane. There is no extension to this path along the B4086.

There are footpaths within the village, one being a gully between Church Lane and Alveston Lane. A second runs from Mill Lane, through the Old Churchyard, onto Alveston Lane just above Lower End. There is also a footpath from the end of Mill Lane down to Alveston weir, below Alveston House.

Traffic and parking are an increasing problem in the narrow country lanes. Commercial vehicles are becoming larger, entering the village more frequently and during unsociable hours. Visitors regularly park along The Green when visiting the Ferry Inn and on the village lanes when visiting the Malthouse. During church services, cars are parked along Church Lane and Kissing Tree Way. The only car park in the village is at the Youth Hostel. A significant number of houses have inadequate or no off-road parking.



Village verges and greens are also under threat from the increasing number of vehicles in the village. Large commercial vehicles and buses that have taken a wrong turn in the village regularly cut up the small green by the Ferry Inn. Cars parked on the rural roadside are gradually destroying the grass verges.

The straight stretch of the B4086 attracts speeding vehicles and motor cycles. The junction with Church Lane at Baraset, by the Youth Hostel is an accident black spot.

Other village amenities include:

- St James Church and the Old Church of St James
- Fishing on the outskirts of the village (Swiffen Bank)
- The village green which is used by villagers for summer parties and celebrations.

Employment and Amenities

With the exception of the Ferry Inn and the small tuckshop in the Youth Hostel, most amenities are accessed in nearby Tiddington, Wellesbourne, or in Stratford.

There are numerous bus stops in the village, which serve the route from Stratford to Wellesbourne and beyond.

The main employers in the village are Alveston Leys nursing home, the Youth Hostel and seasonally, Young Plants Nursery. Other employers include the Ferry Inn, Pimlico's restaurant, two engineering workshops at Baraset and the farms surrounding the village. In addition, in the knowledge-based economy, an increasing

number of residents now spend at least part of the week working from home.

The Alveston Village Association owns the Malthouse (Village Hall), together with Swiffen Bank, a stretch of the riverbank to the east of the village.

DESIGN GUIDELINES:

Parking and Traffic

- There should be no yellow lines as they are out of character both with the rural nature of the village and its conservation area status. Any new development should have off street parking. In addition any planning application must give full consideration to commercial vehicle access during development and on completion.

Footpaths, Verges and Bus Stops

- Footpaths on village lanes should be sympathetic with the rural character of the village.
- Grass verges and greens must be protected. Appropriate aesthetic solutions should be encouraged to prevent vehicles driving over and parking on verges and greens.
- A country footpath connecting Charlecote Park and Swiffen Bank would enhance greatly village amenities including hiking access to the Youth Hostel. Similarly a path going west from Swiffen Bank to Kissing Tree Lane would be a major benefit.
- Bus shelters on both sides of the B4086, outside the Youth Hostel should be constructed in character with the one on Kissing Tree Lane.

Lighting

- Lighting in the village should be sympathetic to its rural character. New housing developments should not increase the average density of lighting.

The River Avon at Alveston

DESIGN GUIDELINES:

- The retention of the open areas is essential to the character of the village, acting as a buffer zone along the southern edge of the village.
- The high proportion of large private gardens must be protected and sub-division of these properties into a number of smaller plots should be discouraged.
- Any new development should be accompanied by extensive planting of trees and shrubs compatible with those already in existence, so maintaining the privacy. Non-compatible fast growing conifers should be avoided.
- If there were to be any further development, it is felt that part of the scheme should consider the benefit to the Village of a further public open space for use as a playground for children and as a recreational area.



Lower End from the Church Tower, showing open spaces

The river is screened from the centre of the village. There are views across the river, downstream from Mill Lane and upstream across Swiffen Bank.

At present there is no navigation upstream of Alveston

weir and this has resulted in a strong river ecology.

Current proposals to open up the river would mean that Alveston would house an important lock. This would provide a major resting and collection point at Alveston

creating additional traffic in the village and associated access problems. It would also provide a footbridge across the river.

Village residents have debated the future of river navigation fully at Village Association

AGM's and also at specially convened open meetings.

There is a consensus against making the river navigable, as it would change forever the character of the village and the nature of the community as described in this document.



St. James Parish Church, Alveston

Landmarks

The principal landmark is St. James Parish Church, the tower of which is the only prominent feature clearly visible from outside the village.

The area surrounding the War Memorial at the western entrance to the village is an attractive feature.



Open Spaces and Boundaries

The large green in front of The Ferry Inn provides a focal point for the more populated part of the village. The green is a pleasant, open, grassy public area with several mature trees at the southern end. A path along one side gives access to a row of Victorian cottages and there is an open view to the northeast across the grounds of the Dial House to Hatton Rock.

Both the triangular green in front of the Ferry Inn and the end of the large green are regularly damaged by large vehicles and some redesigning of this area is thought to be appropriate to prevent this.

A key feature of the village is the existence at most road junctions of small triangular greens – currently six in number. The open grassed area by the War Memorial at the top of Alveston Lane provides a point from which to enjoy an easterly view to the Parish Church.

Villagers have access to a length of riverbank running along the Avon from the end of Ferry Lane to Wellesbourne



Road. This provides a haven for wild life and nature conservation.

Whilst there are no other public open spaces, there are two large areas of private parkland adjoining Alveston House on the north side and Kissing Tree House to the south.

The village is surrounded by privately owned agricultural land, some of which, notably along Church Lane and Mill Lane, extends into the heart of the village. Within the

settlement there is a high proportion of large detached residences with extensive private and secluded gardens profusely stocked with trees and shrubs. This creates the unique feeling of a 'hidden' rural community.

To complement the open rural aspects of the village, most individual properties are bounded by walls, fences or thick hedges – often of considerable age. These give a high degree of privacy, which is an important aspect of the village.

Buildings

The Alveston conservation area document, which was published in 1992, describes 11 listed buildings in the village. These include two of the original Alveston "Villas", Kissing Tree House and Hemingford House (Youth Hostel). Baraset House, which lies to the south of the B4086, is also one of the original Villas but is not mentioned in the conservation area document. Alveston House built on the site of the original manor house, is a classic William and Mary house built in 1689.

There are a further 70 buildings and structures specifically mentioned as "significant" to the character of the village. Many of these buildings neighbour one another, adding to the particular character of the village's sub-areas.



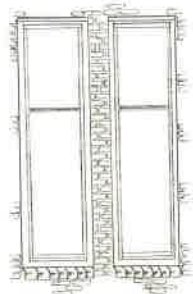
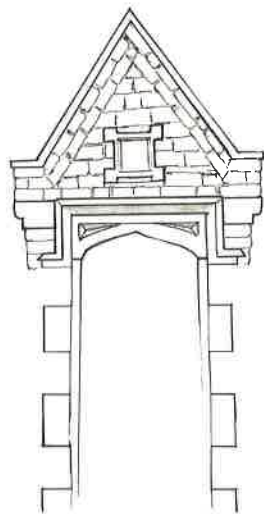
Jasmine Cottage showing decorative brick work



Hemingford House – one of the original Alveston "Villas"

Building Styles and Layout

Even though Alveston is a small village, there are distinct features in different areas. These need to be conserved.



Lawn House



Kissing Tree House



The Woodlands



The Lodge



The building character is:

1. **Alveston Lane:** This lane defines the westerly approach to the village. The buildings in Alveston Lane are on the west side only and are single and double-storey detached houses, standing in their own grounds set back from the road, overlooking the Avon floodplain to the rear. They were developed in the 1950s and 1960s and are typical, good quality houses of that period. Features include hipped gables and dormers and a variety of styles.

2. **Lower End:** This is a hamlet of double-storey houses, most of which adjoin the road and are either terraced or in close proximity to one another –

giving a strong sense of a community within a community. All houses are brick built, around half being painted. It is this variety and proximity that gives the area its particular character. Most of the houses in the area are designated as “significant” and many incorporate the gabled dormer windows which occur all round the village. Hemingford Cottage and Church Cottage have distinctive window surrounds.

3. **Old village:** The oldest part of the village has the greatest proportion of listed buildings; Alveston Lodge, The Old Vicarage, The Old Church of St James and Alveston House. This is a tranquil, rural setting off the main village thoroughfare, surrounded by open fields with

the river to the north and west. Even here there is a range of styles encompassing the half timbering of the Old Vicarage, the Tudor and Victorian features of Alveston Lodge and the elegant William & Mary Alveston House.

4. **Alveston Leys Park:** This development juxtaposes converted buildings from the Alveston Leys estate and contemporary 1970s individually designed houses set in their own extensive grounds. The area, approached by a single drive, is heavily screened, maintaining a strong sense of privacy. None of the buildings is listed or considered significant in the conservation area document. The more modern houses feature flat roofs

and the unique use of copper roofing together with the large “picture” windows of the period.

5. **The Rookery, the Green and Ferry Lane:** The Rookery leads to the Green, which is the centre of the village. Styles in the Rookery vary, buildings being either painted or of natural brick, having both slate and clay roof tiles. The houses backing onto the river tend to be larger, sit in their own grounds and are set back from the road. Mock timbering is a strong feature. The character of the green itself is defined by a Victorian terrace with cottage gardens at the front. The green is enhanced by the situation of the village pub, The Ferry Inn, which acts as a focal point. This area contains numerous

The Old Bakery



Hemingford House



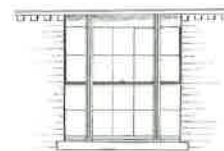
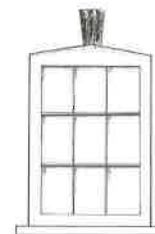
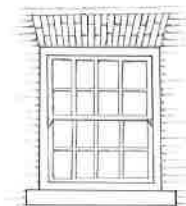
“significant” properties together with three listed buildings which, when taken together, define the overall character of this area.

6. **Kissing Tree Lane:** The southern end of the approach is characterised by low-level brick buildings, which protect the important sight line of the village. To the north, the houses are characteristically larger properties, all being rendered or painted brick. With the exception of buildings in Avonfields Close, the majority of houses are “significant”. They include some elegant large residences with rendered elevations, Regency and Victorian windows, window heads and parapets. The Lodge has interesting Gothic features.

7. **Kissing Tree Way:** Kissing Tree Way is a rural lane. Houses to the north are set in their own substantial grounds being set back from the road. Designs vary, being both rendered and natural brick, of contemporary and traditional design. Kissing Tree House, a listed building of early 19th century origin, lies to the south in its own grounds, part of which is meadowland. The nine-pane sash windows with keys to the head replicate those at Alveston House.

8. **Church Lane:** This is the middle entrance to the village, with two important listed buildings, Hemingford House and St James Church, described in detail in the Conservation Area Document. Opposite the Church is the Young Plants' site.

9. **The B4086 and to the south:** Properties adjoining the B4086 and those to the south lie outside the conservation area, but the houses and occupants are considered part of the village. Baraset House lies to the south and is one of the original Alveston villas.



DESIGN GUIDELINES:

- Retain the distinct sub areas of the village. Any development must retain the character of each sub-area. This means that extensions or new building must take account of the character set by neighbouring significant and listed buildings.
- The scale and proportion of new buildings and extensions should harmonise with their direct neighbours. Plans should be accompanied by a perspective drawing showing this relationship.
- Any alteration or improvements to a property need to be in sympathy with its neighbours in addition to maintaining its own character.
- All developments must be in keeping with the rural nature of the village. Urban characteristics should be discouraged.
- Potential development in St. James Close should include sufficient off street parking and must retain the sight line from Kissing Tree Lane to the centre of the village.
- Any future buildings on the Young Plant's site should not increase the area covered currently by buildings, nor detract from the view between two village landmarks – the War Memorial and the Church; nor the rural outlook from the YHA.
- Any development should take into account the flood plain of the Avon.

Flora and Fauna

DESIGN GUIDELINES:

- Any future development should ensure the preservation of present wildlife habitats.
- Responsible farming and recreation close to the river is needed in order to maintain its special environment.



Along the peaceful banks of the river Avon at Alveston thrive willow, reed beds, mosses and lichens which support an abundant and varied wildlife population. Also found here are fungi including two rare

varieties. Due to limited public access and no established navigation, this habitat is virtually undisturbed and supports a significant collection of fish, waterbirds and other creatures including those less

commonly found on the lower Avon. e.g. the Great Crested Grebe, which has successfully bred on this stretch of river. Otters have also been sighted and are being encouraged to inhabit this area.



Many belts of mature trees along field and road boundaries, together with gardens well stocked with shrubs and flowers, provide shelter and food for indigenous and migrant birds, moths and butterflies. The river valley offers a natural flight path for special resident species of moths and butterflies and is also used by migrating species from the Mediterranean and Africa.

Alveston provides a home for the second largest colony of Pipistrelle bats in Warwickshire.



Design and Sense of Place



A sense of place is made up of all the elements already described in this statement, which are inter-related and influence each other. Geology influences landscape. Landscape and evolution determine location and settlement pattern. Settlement pattern and history influence the type, size and design of buildings based on population demands. The buildings already present influence the population mix, which contributes to the tone of the village.

It is important that the gradual evolution of the village continues, and that it does not stagnate or die. One contribution that we can make towards this is the provision of housing that is affordable to youngsters, either to buy or to rent. The support of the South Warwickshire Housing Association would be helpful in bringing this about. By encouraging local young people to stay in the village we safeguard the future of the local school and continue the "vibrant community spirit" so much appreciated by residents.



Making it Work

This statement takes account of policies in the Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan which reflect government advice from

the range of planning and policy guidance documents. Part of Alveston is designated as a Conservation area by Stratford-on-Avon District Council. In particular this statement provides detail to supplement the Stratford-on-Avon District Countryside Design Summary and the Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines.

This Statement has been adopted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance. It is applicable to all involved in the planning process and serves to raise awareness of smaller cumulative changes that can often erode local distinctiveness. This does not mean preserving in aspic, but managing evolutionary changes to maintain and reflect local identity and character. This statement is for the use of residents, businesses, architects, builders, planning departments and those elected to approve applications at local and regional level. We seek to raise everyone's awareness so that we retain the distinctive characteristics of Alveston.



Approach

Involving the community, addressing the issues

Villagers were involved from the start, with an initial survey focused on identifying the themes to be addressed. Volunteers were requested to act as the 'core project' team.

The core team of 18 villagers worked to develop these themes and assemble background material for the project. With the aim of representing the entire village the project team sub-divided into three groups. A photographic survey was undertaken and the results assembled for display to all

villagers in the Malthouse. The display was presented to the village over a weekend where over 100 villagers added their comments and views. These comments were analysed and the draft VDS text was presented at the annual village party, where further views were gathered.

The project started in November 2000 and was completed in September 2001. Throughout, advice has been taken from Stratford-on-Avon District Council.



Further References

Existing Supplementary Planning Guidance

Stratford-on-Avon District Design Guide
SDC, 1999

Stratford-on-Avon District Character Map
SDC, 1998

Countryside Design Summary
SDC, 1998

Alveston Conservation Area
SDC, 1992

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