

HALFORD
Village
Design
Statement



HALFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

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Adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Stratford on Avon District Council September 1999

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Halford Village Design Statement Group would like to acknowledge the use of information from the following documents in the preparation of this VDS:-

Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan

Halford Conservation Area Review Draft Report - December 1996 for Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Stratford District "Countryside Design Summary" Supplementary Planning Guidance

Warwickshire County Council and Countryside Commission "Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines" 1993

Ideas for organising, structuring & drafting your Village Design Statement
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Historical Documents within Halford Village including WI Records and work by Scarlett Potter

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They also wish to thank Andrew Wharton, VDS Project Officer for his guidance and support, as well as all Halford residents for their involvement, help and encouragement which has been vital in the completion of the document.

HALFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Introduction



The purpose of this Village Design Statement (VDS) is to provide guidance for the design of any new development in Halford. Good design can have a positive influence on the socio-economic infrastructure of a village and its community spirit. The VDS will help to ensure that further growth and development is sensitive to the local character that has evolved in Halford.

It must be understood that a village is a dynamic process subject to structural and behavioural change. It is inevitable that this will continue. Villages naturally grow gradually over many years. Halford has approximately 130 dwellings built over the last eight centuries, and any future development should be in character with the settlement's growth throughout its history. Development of a village is not comparable to that of a town, it cannot accept large numbers of new properties on one site. It is an essential requirement to the character of the village that the scale is strictly adhered to, with small numbers of houses on small sites. Where possible, in-fill sites should be utilised rather than siting large isolated developments on the periphery.



This VDS sets out to define the assets and geographical features that have resulted in the village community now on the site that has been occupied since Roman times. The contents have been researched and provided by residents of Halford, constituting a document of important features and aspects of the village, not to prevent change but to ensure future generations will appreciate the quality of village life. It has been commissioned on behalf of the residents of Halford, following consultation at two Workshops, an Exhibition and a Public Meeting. Whilst our VDS is primarily concerned with local character and design, it is not easy to separate other village design related issues. Future change should be sympathetic to the needs and diversity of the community and the high quality and distinctiveness of the village environment, thus aspiring to improve and enhance the quality of life for the community of Halford and the surrounding area.

HALFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

The History of the Village



Halford is located on a spur of land in South Warwickshire around which the River Stour flows on its course northwards to the River Avon. It was originally settled at the point where the ancient Roman road, the Fosse Way forded the Stour providing a natural resting place for travellers across the centuries right up to the present day.



The village possibly owes its name to the existence of a further ford just below the bend of the river and the old English word "Halh", meaning a corner or angle. Records exist of a settlement dating back to Saxon and Mediaeval times, including mention of a castle in the grounds which now belong to the Old Manor. The parish and church both date from about 1150 and the watermill from 1279.



During the development of Halford the Fosse Way became of lesser importance than the "Great Road" which crossed it -from London and Oxford via Willington and Honington, continuing through Halford to Nether Ettington, Goldicote and Stratford. Tracks from this road led down to the church and it was in the area bounded by these roads that the nucleus of the village began. Before the 17th century it is likely that there were many half timbered buildings in Halford with much thatch in evidence, although of course the church was of stone, but reconstruction and new building in the more prosperous early modern period was in stone and more recently in brick.



After the passing of the Enclosure Act in 1774 development began on the eastern side of the Fosse. At one time this area was known as Little Halford. The original five Parish Cottages were built on the south side of Idlicote Road near the Pound (already in existence), and then further along "The Folly".

A few years later a limited amount of development took place fronting either side of the Fosse Way including "The Bell", built as a coaching inn after the establishment of Turnpike roads, and the re-emerging importance of the old Roman road. The Bowling Green (possibly the oldest in England) was also created at that time. (In 1980 "The Bell" was renamed, becoming the "Halford Bridge Inn".)

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The river and millstream have formed a natural barrier to any spread of development to the south and west, and since Halford Manor (the new manor, originally begun in the 17th century) with its extensive grounds was built, there has been no development of the village northwards. Most building that has taken place in later years to the west side of the Fosse has either been infilling or redevelopment of small derelict sites. The only major new development in this area was in 1965 when seven houses were built in what had been "The Cherry Orchard" and is now known as Roman Way, a cul-de-sac fronting the Millstream.



Most larger developments in the village in recent times have taken place to the east of the Fosse Way, off the Idlicote Road between the Parish Cottages and The Folly. In 1951 a small area of social housing, The Leys, was built on the north side, which was followed in 1962 by a further group of similar Properties nearby, establishing the beginning of The Close. This cul-de-sac was later completed by the addition of bungalows, mainly for the elderly. A cul-de-sac of private properties, Stour View, was built off the south side of Idlicote Road in 1965. With the exception of a handful of houses and two existing outlying farms, there has been no development to the east beyond The Folly. Thus the village has retained a sense of compactness, contributing to the community spirit which exists amongst its inhabitants.



Originally an agricultural settlement, in the last two centuries Halford has also had other industries. The Blacksmith's Forge, originally a farrier's, is still in use today, now mainly producing ornamental metalwork. Mains water arrived in the village in the early 1930s and mains drainage in the late 1960s.



HALFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Landscape

Halford currently has around 130 dwellings in the parish and a population of some 300. Stratford-on-Avon District Council has prepared a District Character Map and Countryside Design Summary. It identifies Halford as being in the southern part of the "Stour Feldon Edge" character area and summarises its main distinctive landscape and settlement characteristics - it should be read in conjunction with our more detailed design statement.



The River Stour splits in two for about a quarter of a mile when it reaches the bridge carrying the Fosse Way (A429) and one spur forms a millstream passing the former watermill before rejoining the main river. A small tributary feeding the River Stour effectively forms the western edge of the settlement. The grounds of the Manor House and open farmland mark the northern edge of the village whilst to the east, the ring formed by Stour View and The Close contain the major housing developments.

There is an element of clay content to the soil in the area and also, with limestone having been quarried to the east of the village in the past, large quantities of stone are evident around the village either lying on the surface or just below ground level. Many of the older houses are built from these local materials.



Sweeping down from Ettington, the northern approach is relatively level whilst from the opposite direction, having crossed the river, a short incline leads one into the village centre. As the land to the south and west of the Fosse Way falls away down to the river, one looks down and across the western half of the village, giving glimpsed views of open countryside between and over the houses. To the north and east, the ground is flatter before opening out on to more undulating ground as one leaves the built up areas.

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Beyond the river to the south, more significant landscape features are clearly visible. Superb, long-range vistas open up, particularly from Roman Way, southwards towards the Cotswolds and Northern Gloucestershire. From Stour View, one can look south-eastward across the Stour Valley and see the spire of the church in nearby Tredington. Closer to the village, and clearly visible when approaching from the south, is meadowland which opens up these Southerly aspects.

In common with many other parts of the country, South Warwickshire roadsides were badly hit by outbreaks of Dutch Elm disease. There are few heavily wooded areas in the environs of Halford, but within the village there is a wide variety of mature trees bordering outlying fields, along the road verges and within gardens.



On the approaches to Halford there are mature horse-chestnuts, maples and poplars forming attractive avenues right into the village itself. Of particular significance is the stand of trees by the Bowling Green on the southern edge of the village which include yew, sycamore and ash. The most densely planted areas within the village itself are Mill Lane, Queens Street and around the church. Groups of laburnum and beech; lines of mature lime, horse-chestnut and cypress with ancient yews proliferate. In addition, along Idlicote Road there is a small stand of poplars, and, around the Folly, further yew, sycamore and walnut trees

HALFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT Settlement Character

The village has a centralised character with essentially a radial street plan. A glance at the map on page 9 will show how remarkably compact Halford is. Virtually all of the western side lies in a Conservation Area whilst to the east, three small areas (most notably the Bowling Green) are also included. Within Halford there are over 20 listed buildings and a similar number identified as "significant".



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Considerably enhancing the character of the village are a number of small open areas within the village itself. Arguably, the very heart of the village is the small "square" at the junction of Queens Street and Mill Lane. The square has a focal feature in a silver birch tree. There is a large triangular green at the northern end of Queens Street, where it joins the Fosse Way, in the middle of which is a mature weeping ash tree.



The historic Bowling Green lies hidden by protective hedging and mature trees on the southern edge of the village opposite the public house, whilst behind the Village Hall there is a small, enclosed grassed area where children may play safely.



Off Queens Street, opposite the churchyard, lies glebe land, currently allotments. These are well maintained by their tenants and are a reminder of the historical agricultural base the village once had.



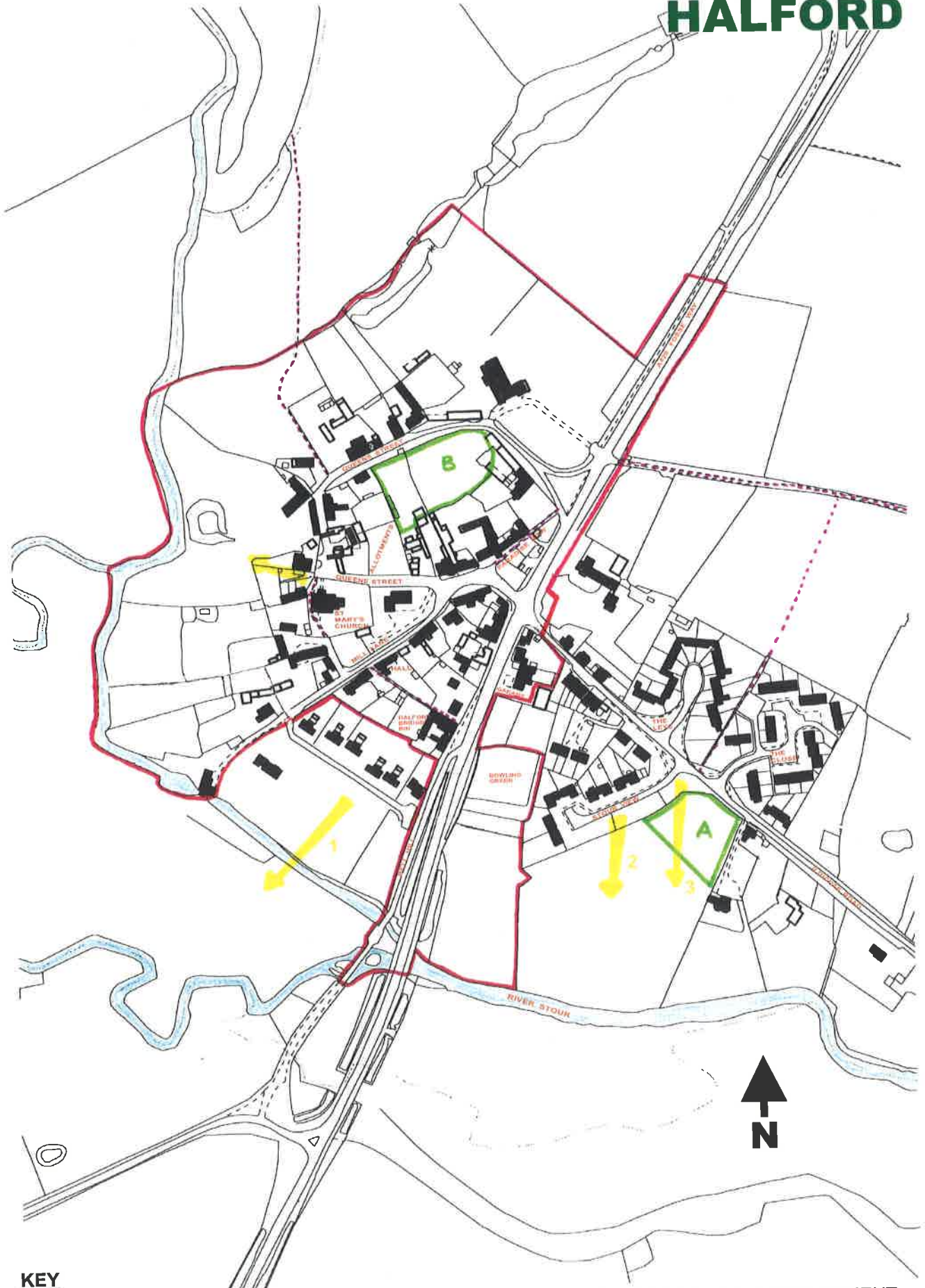
The private land within the central loop of Queens Street, previously the site of cottages and other dwellings, is presently mainly open space. Encircled by stone walls and a large barn it is an important area where any redevelopment should be sensitively treated, bearing in mind the historic character of the buildings around it.

Along Idlicote Road, there are wide, triangular grassed areas at the entrances to The Leys, The Close and Stour View which help frame and soften the entrances to these small developments. Mature clipped privet hedges form the front boundaries to the properties in The Leys and those nearest the road in The Close.



Running down from the public house to the old bridge is Bell Hill, the original southern entry route to the village. It has a large grassy bank between it and the Fosse Way, studded with mixed, mature trees. On its other side, an old hedgerow runs alongside and down to the marshland around the River Stour.

HALFORD



KEY

- CONSERVATION AREA
- - - PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY
- VIEWS OUT OF THE VILLAGE

- A SITE ALLOCATED FOR DEVELOPMENT
- B POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT AREA

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HALFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Buildings

The historic core of Halford consisting of the circle constituted by Queens Street and Paradise Row with Mill Lane leading off down to the Mill has its hub at the junction of these three ways. This is dominated by the only group of three storey houses in the village. Halford House with its stuccoed Regency facade and the red brick Yew Tree House face the fine Flemish bonded facade of Wyse House and the stone former public house, The Old White Lion, across the square.



Halford's early prosperity was based on farming, and although there are now no working farms in the centre of the village its legacy is left in the considerable number of larger houses in the village e.g. Village Farmhouse, Sykes House and Maryland. There are few stone barns in the village.



Apart from the Old Manor House in the corner of Queens Street, which is partly half timbered Elizabethan infilled by lime-washed masonry, some of the oldest houses in the village are a terrace of limestone cottages in Mill Lane (Cobblestones is circa. 1632), and a pair of semi-detached cottages further down the lane. Separating them is a limestone former barn which in the last 150 years has served as a school and is now the Village Hall. They all stand on a narrow partly cobbled bank well above the level of the street and face a fine limestone wall forming part of the Old Rectory garden and the churchyard.



The cottages in Mill Lane with their compactness and long rear gardens (a feature also present in the houses on the north side of Queens Street) blend in and support each other in one of the most picturesque parts of the village. The short lane off Mill Lane leading to the back of the church opens into a delightful enclave enclosed by Orchard House, Maryland and Yew Tree Cottage (a tasteful conversion of farm buildings) surrounding a gravel drive and neat grass verges. Similarly, although on a smaller scale, on the northern side of the church, Cox's Yard sees Vine Cottage and two stone and tile cottages, (pleasantly converted from four), cluster together around a short gravel drive. Also near the church will be found a terrace of three stone cottages with brick additions facing a footpath which traverses their front gardens.



HALFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



Post-war development is mostly seen on the fringes of the village where social housing has been built off Idlicote Road in a typical suburban style of two storey houses with on-street parking. Recently many of the "stone mullion style" windows have been replaced by p.v.c. double glazing, some of which are not in character with the development.

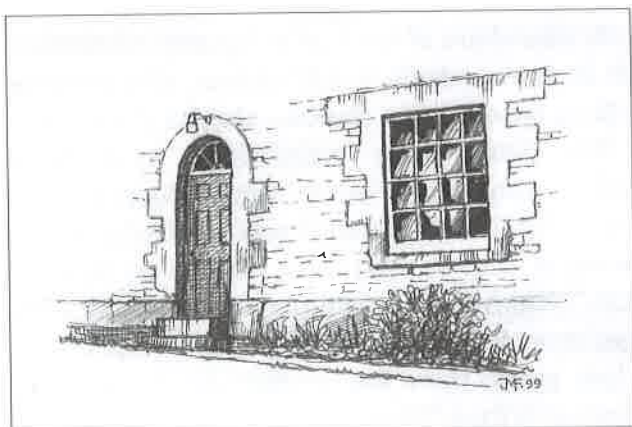
Older people have been provided for by bungalows built in a pleasing open plan, low-density scheme in The Close. Aylworth Cottages, a Warwickshire

Rural Housing Association development replacing the old Parish Cottages, shows well how modern housing can be provided in keeping with the street scene. Private development is catered for by Stour View, where the majority of houses are chalet style, and by a variety of larger houses in Roman Way.

HALFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT **Layout**



The majority of the houses in the village are small to medium sized cottages. These, for the most part, front directly on to the street without front gardens, a style which has been followed by Wyse House, and most of the cottages built before 1940 fronting the Fosse Way and that part of the village originally known as Little Halford. In the street scene this creates a tight continuous line of building frontages. Greystones, the only bungalow in the Conservation Area, with its front garden and uniblock drive which break the building line, is out of character with its surroundings.



Post-war houses have front gardens either open-plan, as in Stour View and Roman Way, or bounded by low privet hedges, as in The Leys.

A feature of the village are the rubblestone (cob) walls which can be found around the churchyard, much of Queens Street and in Idlicote Road. They contain the street space and maintain its attractive appearance.

HALFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Materials

In older Halford, the main building material is locally quarried coursed rubble limestone. On the north side of Queens Street some 17th century houses have dressed stone quoins, opening surrounds with stone mullion windows, fully moulded surrounds and drip Hoods. The stone used for the quoins is usually in a contrasting yellow brown colour (believed to be from Ilmington Down); larger brown stones occur sometimes in other walling. The 18th century Manor House, has a frontage added in 1904. On the Eastern side of the Fosse the building material is mainly brick, with a mixture of colours, yellow, buff and a variety of pale reds.



The earliest roofing material was thatch, of which only a few examples remain, as in Paradise Row, and stone slates seen notably at The Old White Lion and The Old Manor. The coped parapet eaves, as on Holego House for example, show where earlier roofing materials have been replaced by clay plain tiles, now the general roofing form used. Properties built around the 19th century generally display Welsh slates on their roofs. Later additions to some cottages include dormer windows at first floor level and little porches. Most have adopted pitched roofs for these. There are few flat roofed extensions to the older properties, and most houses have gentle pitched roofs.



HALFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Commerce



There are few commercial outlets. Mention is made elsewhere of the Forge, housed compatibly with its surroundings in a limestone, single-storey building opposite the church. Behind the garage on the Fosse Way outbuildings have been unobtrusively converted to light industrial uses such as furniture restoration and tyre fitting; an old limestone cottage next door houses an antique shop. There is adequate parking space in each case, well off the highway. The stone built cottage a few yards from the crossroads is now the Community Post Office.

HALFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Highways

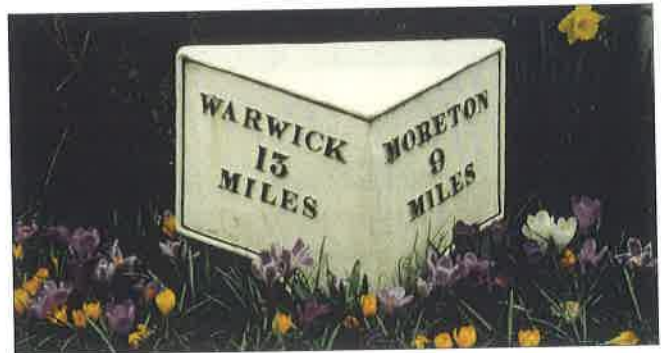


The wide verged arterial Fosse Way divides the village, encouraging drivers to ignore the prevailing speed limit. In the centre of the village it narrows, thus creating something of a hazard. Motorists increasingly use the road as a feeder route for the motorways, in particular the M40, the density of traffic being most noticeable during commuting times morning and night. At the traffic roundabout north of the village, the Warwick Road leaves the Fosse Way, whilst the Roman road continues northwards towards Ettington and onward to Newark.



In the village centre Idlicote Road joins the Fosse Way from the east. Restricted vision towards Tredington presents an uneasy access on to the main road. The road serves traffic from Idlicote and Honington and is regularly used by heavy and wide bodied farm vehicles. It has offshoots by way of The Leys, The Close and Stour View. The road divides at Park Hill Farm, with the narrow Honington lane being the path of the ancient route to Oxford.

The loop of Queens Street with its two access points to the Fosse Way forms an attractive feature. It envelops a central undeveloped area and has wide verges at both ends skirted by the distinctive stone walls quarried from village sources. Mill Lane is connected to Queens Street and offers access to Roman Way and the area south west of the Church. There are other spurs off Queens Street with pedestrian access only, such as Church Terrace and Paradise Row. Many believe Paradise Row was the original road leading from the Fosse Way down Mill Lane to the Watermill. Another speculation is that Paradise Row offered villagers the opportunity to avoid the Turnpike on the Fosse Way which existed until the last century.



A footpath runs alongside the Halford Bridge Inn through to Mill Lane, past the Village Hall. The path continues through the churchyard via a kissing gate to Queens Street. A bridle path follows the line of the old road across Henry's Meadow to the north of The Old Manor. To the east of the Fosse Way other paths lead to Idlicote and Fulready, tracing direct routes across fields and by way of the drive to Stepmoles Farm.



HALFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Street Furniture



There is little village furniture. Halford has retained its old style red telephone box which is nicely tucked away at the southern end of Queens Street, just visible to passing motorists on the Fosse Way. Nearby is the Victorian milestone indicating to travellers on the Roman road that it is 13 miles to Warwick and 9 to Moreton.

In the western part of the village overhead power lines have

mainly disappeared. As development takes place the rest of the village may also benefit from both power and telecommunication services being underground and out of sight. As with any small conurbation there appears to be a proliferation of traffic and other signs on the approaches to and within the village.



Village seats to encourage passers-by to rest a while are situated under the decorative weeping ash on the village green, and at the junction with Idlicote Road, with a further one strategically placed on the outskirts of the village in Idlicote Road.

HALFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Guidelines

SETTLEMENT PATTERN

In order that the compactness of the village should not be destroyed it is desirable that any further development should take place within the existing confines of the village, apart from the site in Idlicote Road allocated for housing in the Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan. This approach accords with the Category Three status of the village in the Local Plan.

OPEN SPACES AND VIEWPOINTS

Halford is a particularly compact village with very little in the way of open space within it. Therefore it is particularly important that the open spaces on the edges of the village are maintained.

The open space to the south of Roman Way down to the River Stour (see view 1 on map on page 9) plays an important role in retaining the compact character of the western side of the village. It provides excellent views out of the village and also allows a view of the village setting when approaching Halford from Shipston and the Armscote Road.

The open space opposite Stour View together with the longer view south west from its junction with Idlicote Road provides an important rural aspect to the eastern side of Halford (see Viewpoints on map on page 9). However, as part of this area has been allocated for housing development it is important that the layout of any scheme is sensitively designed in order to maintain longer views across and beyond from Stour View and Idlicote Road. The area to the south of the allocated site and down towards the River Stour plays an important role in the setting of the eastern side of the village and emphasises its compact edge character and should be protected from further development. This is characteristic of a hilltop/plateaux settlement as described in the District Council Countryside Design Summary.

HALFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

NEW BUILDING

It is vital that any further building in Halford reflects its character in layout and in its building materials and details. All new building must be compatible with existing neighbouring properties. Village style design, not town houses, must be utilised. Layout is crucial; where possible front elevations should be aligned along streets to show off well designed facades. A car parking space for each property is desirable, preferably at the side or rear, avoiding the dominance of open frontages for car parking and garaging.

ALLOCATED IDLICOTE ROAD SITE (A on map)

As the site is already allocated for development an opportunity exists to offer additional guidance on the layout and design of any housing scheme. The elevation of the site means that it can be seen when approaching Halford from both Shipston and Honington and therefore longer views into the development should be considered in order to create a suitable edge to this part of the village. Buildings should fit with the scale and height of surrounding properties and lower rise buildings may be appropriate. Much of Halford's essential character comes from aligning building frontages tight to the street, creating a series of enclosed spaces and an interesting street scene. An opportunity exists on this site to create an outward looking development by having a simply designed facade along part of the Idlicote Road. This may be achieved through terracing or through a linked frontage, whilst allowing glimpse views through the middle of the site towards the River Stour.

Materials chosen for this part of the village should reflect the colour, texture and cut of traditional brick and stone used in the area. A duller red brick combined with the mellow coloured stone found in older parts of Halford may well be appropriate. Most buildings in Halford have simple detailing and it is therefore important that detail is restrained to the essential. Traditional boundary treatments, such as walls can be seen in other parts of the village and can be used in conjunction with landscape planting to create edge definition and enclosure to plots.

QUEENS STREET AREA (B on map)

Preferably any development that takes place at this important site should have an overall cohesive identity, while utilising a variety of building styles thus linking it to existing properties. Terraced or mews type cottages should be included, some of which could be three storeys. It is preferable that stone be used as the main building material. Vehicular access to the development should be limited to just one road.

BOUNDARY DEFINITION

In all cases this should be in keeping with surrounding properties. On the western side of the village open frontages predominate. On the eastern side houses have either open-plan front gardens or gardens enclosed by low hedging. High walls and panel fences would be inappropriate.

ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING PROPERTIES

Alterations, including extensions, should be in keeping with the existing building. Flat roofs are inappropriate, particularly in the Conservation Area. Dormer windows should have pitched roofs.

GENERAL

The wide grass verges and the cob walls are a feature of the village and must be preserved. Environmentally, it is important to retain the local examples of ridge and furrow meadowland. Street lighting is inappropriate in the village setting and undesirable in Halford.

VILLAGE RELATED EMPLOYMENT

Scope exists for the setting up of small scale businesses which could offer local employment opportunities. This should be encouraged.

