

SNITTERFIELD 2000



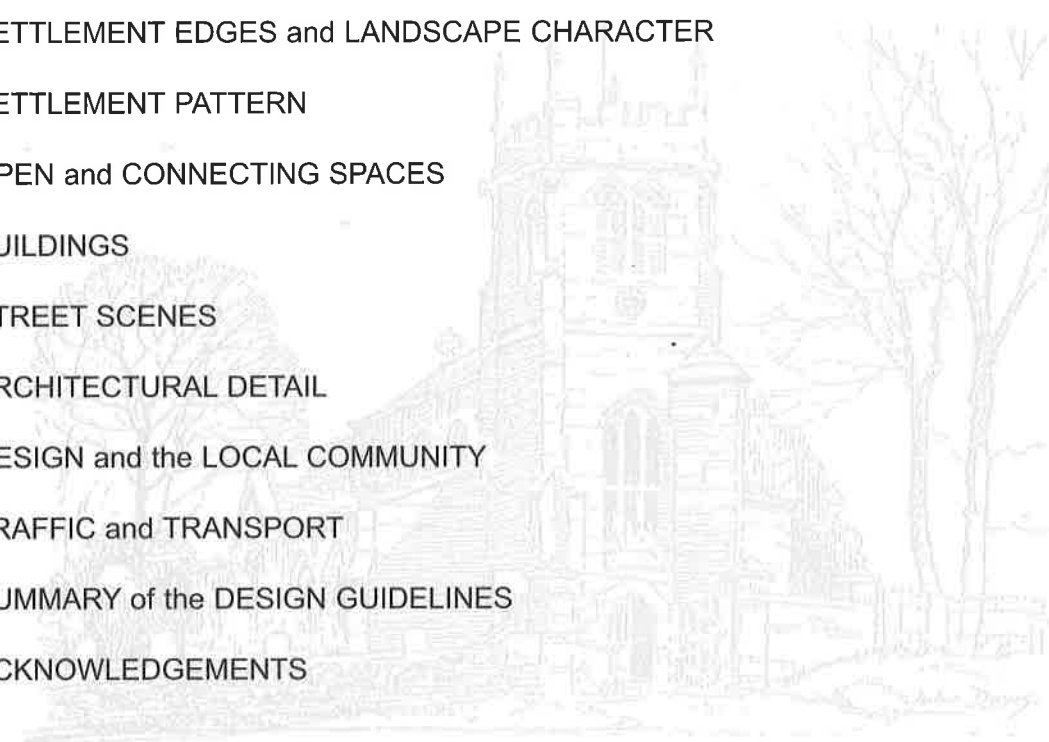
By the village ...

... For the village

VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

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FRONT COVER: an aerial view of Snitterfield from the east

CONTENTS PAGE: The Parish Church of St James the Great

NOTE

This Statement should be read alongside the policies in the Stratford-upon-Avon Local Plan, which reflects government advice from the range of planning and policy guidance documents. In particular this Village Design Statement provides details to the Stratford-upon-Avon Countryside Design Summary, the emerging District Design Guide and the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines.

The Village Design Statement has been adopted by the Stratford-upon-Avon District Council as a Supplementary Planning Guidance note. It is applicable to all involved in the planning process and can also raise awareness in the Village to small cumulative changes that can often erode local distinctiveness. This does not mean preserving in aspic, but managing evolutionary changes to maintain and reflect the local identity and character. This statement is for the use of residents, business, architects, builders, planning departments and those elected to approve planning applications at local and regional level.

SNITTERFIELD DESIGN STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This Village Design Statement has been produced by Snitterfield residents with the full support of Snitterfield Parish Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

It is the result of public consultation involving every household within the village and endeavours to describe the visual features and qualities valued by local people. The steering group was recruited via an advertisement in the Snitterfield Link magazine and the annual village meeting. The group compiled a questionnaire that was delivered to every home in the village, with a return of 37%. A workshop followed with a display of the questionnaire findings and residents photographed their favourite aspects of Snitterfield. The photographs and questionnaire responses provide the basis for the statement which recommends Design Guidelines. The Design Statement will be taken into account when considering planning applications and should help developers to understand the local characteristics of the village as perceived by local people.

It will be a source of ideas for architects working with local building styles some

of which are illustrated in this booklet and a resource for householders extending or improving their own home. It is about managing development and change in Snitterfield, not preventing it.

“The architecture and character of the buildings with traditional materials make the village special”.



LOCATION

Snitterfield lies below the northern rim of an ancient ridgeway, 6 miles south west of Warwick and 3 miles north of Stratford. It is built along the course of the Sherbourne brook with development on both slopes, most of the village being at around 300 feet above sea level, 180 feet higher than Stratford Town.

The most important features of the village, as elicited from the village questionnaire are the open spaces within the village, the public buildings including the School, Village Hall, Churches and the attractive architectural features of buildings such as Park House, Tudor House and Shakespeare Barn.

HISTORY and EVOLUTION

Surviving land charters suggest that the Saxon settlement of Snitterfield was established on a wooded and watered site to the north of the ancient trackway (now known as Kings Lane) running from the west to a fordable crossing of the Avon. At least two centuries before it was recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086, with 480 acres of ploughland and 12 of pasture. Progressive land clearance of the woodland forming part of the Forest of Arden to the north and introduction of the open field system of agriculture in the 12th century, led to an extension of housing from the primary nucleus. The Church still stands on its original site and along the

two widest lanes, now Church Road and Smith's Lane, at right angles to one another.

Here the landowners and tenant farmers who in the early 16th century included Richard Shakespeare, grandfather of the poet, his father John and Uncle Henry built their thatched houses. Each with its personal or several plots of garden a field to the rear and with adjacent cottages for the farm workers. Development elsewhere was inhibited by the extensive private estate of the Snitterfield Manor of which the Park survives as an essential open space, still defined by its original boundaries and by the marshy, often flooded area alongside the brook, on the northern flank.

Thus was established the pattern of linear housing development, backed by open spaces, which is such an attractive visual feature of today's village. The only major departure from this tradition was a compact estate of 84 houses erected by the Rural District Council in 1970 off the Wolverton Road.



A small number of 16th and 17th century houses and barns survive, wholly or in part. During the 19th century, the Philips and Trevelyan families, successive lords of the manor, replaced many thatched cottages by more substantial houses for the estate workers, and these dwellings are easily recognisable by their distinctive brickwork and clustered chimneys.

Village records, including the 17th and 18th century accounts of Churchwardens, Constables and Overseers of the Poor, paint a picture of a closely knit, self-reliant community, unusually generous in its treatment of the old and needy. The 18th century cottages built for them, although no longer owned by the parish, are still in use.



More recently the disposal of the Clyde Higgs dairy business and farm and the virtual closure of the Snitterfield Fruit Farm have severely reduced opportunities for local employment. At the same time much of the housing once occupied by the farm employees has been sold for private use with subsequent conversion, alteration or extension into "desirable residences"

reducing the availability of low cost housing in the village.

Today's village with its heritage of a reasonably balanced social mixture of occupations, personal beliefs and interests, and vital religious and secular - supporting facilities, is still of an appropriate size to maintain a distinct and individual identity, as an enterprising and caring community. This will certainly be put in jeopardy unless future housing development is very modest in scale and in keeping with the traditional, environmentally friendly, linear pattern, backed by open spaces.

Over the last half century the Snitterfield landscape, along with other areas of Warwickshire, has been dramatically changed as a result of agricultural intensification. This has taken the form of the enlargement of fields by the removal of hedges, felling of trees, and the clearance of spinneys and woods to create more land for cultivation. Now the wheel of fortune appears to have turned full circle with the introduction of such policies as set-aside leading to the re-establishment of woodland areas.



SETTLEMENT EDGES and LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Snitterfield is surrounded by farmland. It has six roads leading into the village, yet it is still a secluded settlement, with the exception of Smith's Lane and White Horse Hill, which unfortunately takes considerable through traffic. Each road leads to its own view of a part of the village.

There is a wealth of mature trees and hedges and ancient walls, which enhances the setting of some fine buildings.

The Sherbourne brook forms a valley through the village; much of it going through a culvert along The Green, sometimes underneath cottages. It flows in the open along School Road and Brookside to the ponds and open fields bordering Lodge Farm.

The Park to the south of Church Road is now farmland. It was the setting of a Stuart mansion Snitterfield Hall and every effort must be made to retain this area of farmland as a natural barrier between the village and the A46.

The view of the Medieval Church of St James the Great, from the Norton Lindsey road; with the tower brooding over the village, is greatly loved.

To the south of the Park the A46 forms a busy barrier, and the famous

view from the War Memorial must be world renowned as Shakespeare's (and many a Snitterfield villager's) favourite view of the Avon valley.



which owe their origin to the Philips family.

The School and Methodist Church at the centre of the village contribute to this

SETTLEMENT PATTERN and ROADS

Snitterfield has a simple road pattern based on the six main routes leading into the village and each road has its own distinctive features. The original settlement on the hillside around the church and the present alignment of Church Road, extended first into Smiths Lane, the link with Bearley and subsequently into the valley bottom development along The Green. These dispersed settlements can still be readily identified and while some of the building during the 20th century has followed the old established linear pattern there are identifiable pockets based on a series of cul de sacs leading from the traditional axes. Despite new building that has taken place in Church Road and Smith Lane, the overall impression is of substantial, well spaced, dignified dwellings, several of

spacious concept which contrasts radically with the narrow impact of The Green with its variety of closely packed cottages of assorted shapes and sizes, and typical cottage gardens

It is essential that "DISTRICT CHARACTER MAP and COUNTRYSIDE DESIGN SUMMARY" published by Stratford District Council in 1999 should be used in conjunction with this document when formulating developments in Snitterfield, (see Design Guidelines, page 11)



OPEN and CONNECTING SPACES

Responses to the village survey show that the open spaces and surrounding countryside are very important to people living in Snitterfield. The village does not have a village green or any central open space, but there are footpaths which circle parts of the village and a good view of Snitterfield can be seen from the footpath which runs from the Green to the back of the shop.



Within the confines of the village there is several established open areas which cultivate the feeling of space. Typical examples are the area lying behind the houses in Church Road, Smiths Lane, Bell Brook and Bell Lane, enjoyed by the residents of the surrounding housing, and the more obvious school playing field, almost in the centre of the village

Looking west from the Square, along The Green, there is a unique view of the fields on rising ground towards the alignment of the A 46(T), adding to the overall impression of spaciousness. The field to the east of Bell Lane where

cattle are often grazing is a constant reminder of the agricultural heritage so important in Snitterfield's past.

Conversion of this area into housing would have a serious impact on the rural aspect of Bell Lane and the village as a whole.

One private open space, which the village enjoys is the area known as The Park which contains some lovely old oak trees and also provides a buffer between

the village and the A46 Stratford Northern by-pass.

On the fringes of the village open spaces are equally important, perhaps the most significant being the one around The War Memorial at the top of White Horse Hill. At the western end of The Green, the established ribbon development gives way to open space utilised for a riding school and farming activities. Similarly the approach from Norton Lindsey has open space opposite the housing in Pigeon Green, forming a useful buffer between the village and the Severn Trent sewage treatment plant. Because of the varying topography caused by the

gradual transition from the ancient Arden Forest area into the northern segment of the Avon Ridge, each aspect of Snitterfield from its rural fringes offers a unique variation. Every effort must be taken to preserve this situation.

Sherbourne Brook, which runs along the Green and School Road, provides a habitat for wildlife and trees along its banks. Part of the brook flows under cottages in The Green having been culverted by the Philips family in the 19th century. The brook is open along School Road and Brookside to the ornamental lake beyond Bell Lane, which provides a home for wildfowl, herons and kingfishers. In view of the flooding experienced from time to time in The Green and village centre new developments should not have the effect of increasing flows along the brook.

The war memorial at the junction of Smiths Lane and Kings Lane provides a magnificent view across the Avon valley and provides a welcome rest (if no longer tranquillity) for many walkers using the 12 miles of public footpaths and bridlepaths, as well as cyclists and residents.



BUILDINGS

The buildings of Snitterfield are predominantly residential,



near Park Lane and the Tudor house on Church Road.

Below: The village centre

Below right: Highfield Close

with the School, Methodist Church and Fox Hunter Public House situated the cross roads in the centre of the village. The architecture is generally Victorian in flavour with steep clay tiled roofs and red brick walls. The Snitterfield Arms, Village Hall and Village Shop are on Smiths Lane and its continuation Bearley Road.

The houses fall into five general categories:

Scattered around the eastern side of the village are Tudor oak framed dwellings with red brick (formerly wattle and daub) panels, plain clay tile roofs, small leaded light windows and tall chimneys. Typical examples are the house reputed to have belonged to Henry Shakespeare



The distinctive Phillipps houses, neo Gothic in style with steep clay tile roof, sometimes with beaver tail tiles, large 'Tudor' chimneys, highly decorative barge boards and finials. The roofs are often framed with gables and the windows decorative small iron panes and stone surrounds. These houses are unique to Snitterfield and give the strongest identity and heritage to the village scene.



Simple well built Victorian cottages, sometimes in terraces and some standing alone, but all close together along The Green. The roofs are clay tiles, simple in shape, and red brick walls. Often characterised by 'hit and miss' brickwork of contrasting red bricks. Eaves, verges and window

surrounds are emphasized by dentil courses and projecting headers.

Council houses were first built in the village in Park Lane in 1928 and consisted of sixteen, three bedroom houses in six terraced or semi-detached blocks, all with a good sized gardens. Further developments have taken place in the fifties, Highfield Close and a substantial group of terrace housing including some bungalows off the Wolverton Road in the seventies.



Post war private housing has been built in small groups, for example, bungalows in Church Road and Bell Lane. The groups contain houses of similar style which have become individualised by the subsequent alteration and garden treatments whilst retaining a feeling of unity. Single houses on Smiths Lane and Church Road add variety to the housing mix.

Against this environment of mixed housing individual buildings such as the Church of St. James the Great progressively built in stone, starting in the 13th century dominate the village.

Park House and the western end of Church Road was

enlarged and designed to become the 'flagship' of the Phillips style houses in the village.

Below: Park House



Near the crossroads in the centre of the village stands The Manor, a William and Mary house dated 1699.

At the end of The Green is The Wolds, a former farmhouse and barns which have been continuously modernised and adapted over many years to present its 'manor house' appearance.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

In view of the wide variation of building styles within the village it is imperative that any future new building should be consistent in its general design with its immediate neighbours. This is particularly important throughout the designated conservation area.

In addition any alteration or extension of existing properties should harmonise with the original construction in height, style and building materials.

Alterations/extensions should be carefully sighted and designed to prevent the loss of important views to the open countryside.

Particular care must be taken to ensure that all new buildings incorporate a readily accessible off street parking facility. Where alteration to existing properties is proposed any change which removes or reduces off street parking opportunities should be avoided.



**Above: The Manor House
Below: The Wolds Cottages**



STREET SCENES

The village is entered from the south through a green archway of meeting trees at the top of White Horse Hill.

There is a mixture of substantial stone and brick walls, hedges and large trees enclosing Church Road, but also open parts

with views out to the surrounding fields.

Smiths Lane is enclosed by houses on banks with low stone walls and stacked herringbone brick walls, which occur in many parts of the village.

ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL

See illustrations on the map of the village.

DESIGN GUIDELINES: ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Throughout the village there are examples of unique design details giving character to individual buildings. Tall chimneys, small leaded or metal windows, intricate brickwork patterns, decorative barge boards and stone window sills are typical examples. These features should be preserved on existing buildings and, wherever possible, incorporated, to some degree, in any new construction, especially in conservation areas.

The Green is mostly very narrow and lined on both sides by many cottages of assorted shapes and sizes. Many are built on the flood plain and this was probably one effect of the Enclosure Award of 1766.

The Green is a tight built environment with planting and hedges bursting over

the tops of low walls or through wooden fences.

Bell Brook is distinguished by the stream and many fine trees behind it.

Most of Park Lane has unilateral development giving fine views into the Park.

The History Scrap Book of Snitterfield compiled in the 1950s by the W.I. list the trees that used to stand in the village. Many of these have now gone but we still have a new 'stocks' tree opposite the village shop and some beautiful chestnut trees down The Green which still provide conkers for the children.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

An essential feature of Snitterfield is the concept of open spaces within and around the village and the effective maintenance of this concept must be a paramount consideration in the determination of future development.

The linear structure with enclosed open spaces must be maintained and the views into and out of the village, from and to the surrounding higher ground should be protected from development. Existing paths and bridleways should be maintained to facilitate access by residents and visitors to the village.

DESIGN and the LOCAL COMMUNITY

The main road through Snitterfield goes from the War Memorial down the hill to the crossroads and out towards Bearley. Along this road are the majority of buildings, which make up the centre of this community, the Village Shop, the School, both Public Houses, the Village Hall and the Methodist Church. Only St James Church and the Surgery are outside this area.

school. A village where everyone drives everywhere as well as causing congestion and pollution, will also lose its sense of community.

The gradual change of Snitterfield from a working community with significant local employment opportunities to a largely car dependent commuter village may be overtaken by the current search for sustainability.

Communications technology and restrictions on the use of private transport will increase the potential for home working. This may stimulate planning applications, such as extensions to existing properties, the re-use of abandoned farm buildings for business or light industry purposes, or the provision of one or more telecottages within the community. Implementation of such developments should only be allowed where current



Above left: The 'stocks tree'

Above: The Green

Parking cars at any of these centres is a problem in Snitterfield, and any new large development should take into consideration, whether they are in walking distance to the shop and the

planning design criteria can be maintained whilst being mindful that the village is a dynamic organism and not a potential museum.



TRAFFIC and TRANSPORTATION

THE WHITE PAPER *"Policy for Roads, England 1980"* states in the opening paragraph "People can be free from the noise, the disturbance and the danger of traffic confined to inadequate roads." This freedom has not been granted to Snitterfield where the situation has deteriorated.

The Village Appraisal Project addresses the local transport issues and road safety problems for the village.

In 1978 the observed traffic flow along Kings Lane east of the War Memorial, was measured at 1720 vehicles, in a sixteen-hour period.

The construction of the A46 Stratford Northern Bypass was predicted to

increase the flow to a minimum of 14,600 vehicles by the year 2000 and this figure may already be exceeded.

The impact on Snitterfield has been considerable. Not only has the new road given easy access to the motorway and main road network increasing the attraction of the village for the car commuter. But contrary to the forecast of the 1980 White Paper substantial increases in the noise disturbance, danger and pollution have been created in Bearley Road, The Square, Smiths Lane, White Horse Hill and Kings Lane, as speeding cars and lorries travel to and from the A46 trunk road. Latest traffic surveys show 3400 vehicles using White Horse Hill in a 24-hour period. The difficulty is compounded by the remorseless increase in car ownership and use by residents, many of whom are obliged to park their vehicles on the highway with consequent danger to pedestrians, vehicles and property.

Car parking in the village centre is strictly limited and any new development should be designed to

encourage walking to the shop and school. A village where residents drive everywhere will lose its sense of community, as well as experiencing unacceptable levels of congestion and pollution.

In recent years public transport provision in Snitterfield has been eroded.



The long established hourly bus services to Stratford, Warwick and Leamington Spa have deteriorated to an irregular extended interval operation with only two direct services each way to Stratford on Monday to Saturday. Direct service to Warwick and Leamington is only provided on Sundays. Timings are such that anyone working or seeking entertainment in Stratford, Warwick/Leamington is obliged to use private transport.

Top: Landscape looking into The Green from the A46
Above left: Church Road
Above right: Stratford Northern bypass

DESIGN GUIDELINES

BUILDING and ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

The overall design, layout and architectural features of any new buildings erected within the village should be consistent with the adjacent properties. Similarly any alteration to existing properties, particularly those within a designated conservation area, should employ building materials and design characteristics which are in harmony with the original and adjacent properties.

The provision and use of off street parking spaces should be an essential element of planning consents for new building and any alteration or extension which removes or reduces off street parking spaces should not be granted.

VILLAGE DESIGN and OPEN SPACES.

The existing character of the village of Snitterfield is largely determined by the open spaces within the square pattern of the development and the surrounding Green Belt agricultural land. These features should be at the forefront of any development proposal to ensure that the concept of space within the village is retained.

The Bell Brook is an essential feature of the village, necessary for the effective removal of surface water and provides a wildlife habitat that contributes to the village atmosphere. It is essential that the impact of development is taken into consideration and that effective measures are in place to ensure regular clearance and maintenance of the brook to prevent pollution or blockage and encourage plant and animal life

Any future development should require the retention of mature trees and bushes lining the roadside and should ensure that there is new planting of indigenous trees or hedgerows consistent with the locality

TRAFFIC and TRANSPORTATION

Effective traffic engineering measures are urgently required on all approaches to the village to reduce the speed of through and local traffic. Measures are required to deter the passage of heavy goods vehicles which have no access requirement for the village, merely using the village as a short cut between the A3400 and A46(T)

All new buildings or barn conversions should have, and be required to use, off road parking spaces sufficient to accommodate parking needs generated by residents and visitors.

THE COUNTRYSIDE DESIGN SUMMARY

The aim of the countryside Design Summary is to maintain and enhance the distinctive qualities and character of the district. New development should therefore share some of the characteristics that define the area in which it is located. It should be clear that new development has features in common with building and landscapes of a similar kind in the area. Snitterfield Village Design Statement, as a record of local character, should be read alongside the Countryside Design Summary when considering the design rationale for new development.

References and Acknowledgements

Character and Design in Stratford-upon-Avon District - A Countryside Design Summary.
Stratford-on-Avon District Council 1998, a supplementary planning guidance.

Warwickshire Landscapes Guidelines.
Warwickshire County Council/Countryside Commission 1993.

Conservation Area Policies.
Stratford-on-Avon District Council 1993

Living and Working in a Conservation Area.
Stratford-on-Avon District Council 1997

Snitterfield Conservation Area
Stratford-on-Avon 1995

Landscape Design Advice Leaflet.
Stratford-on-Avon District Council 1998.

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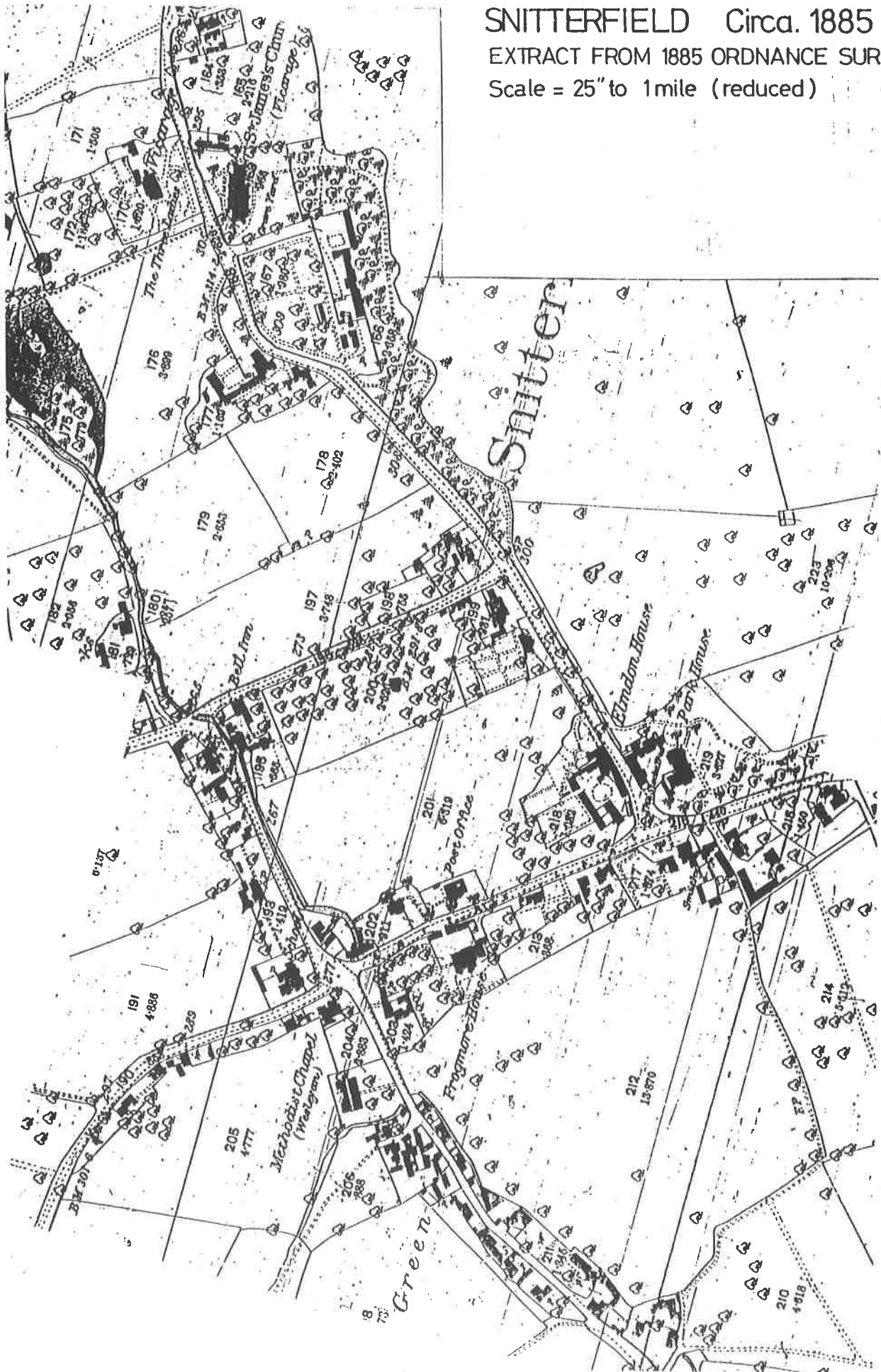
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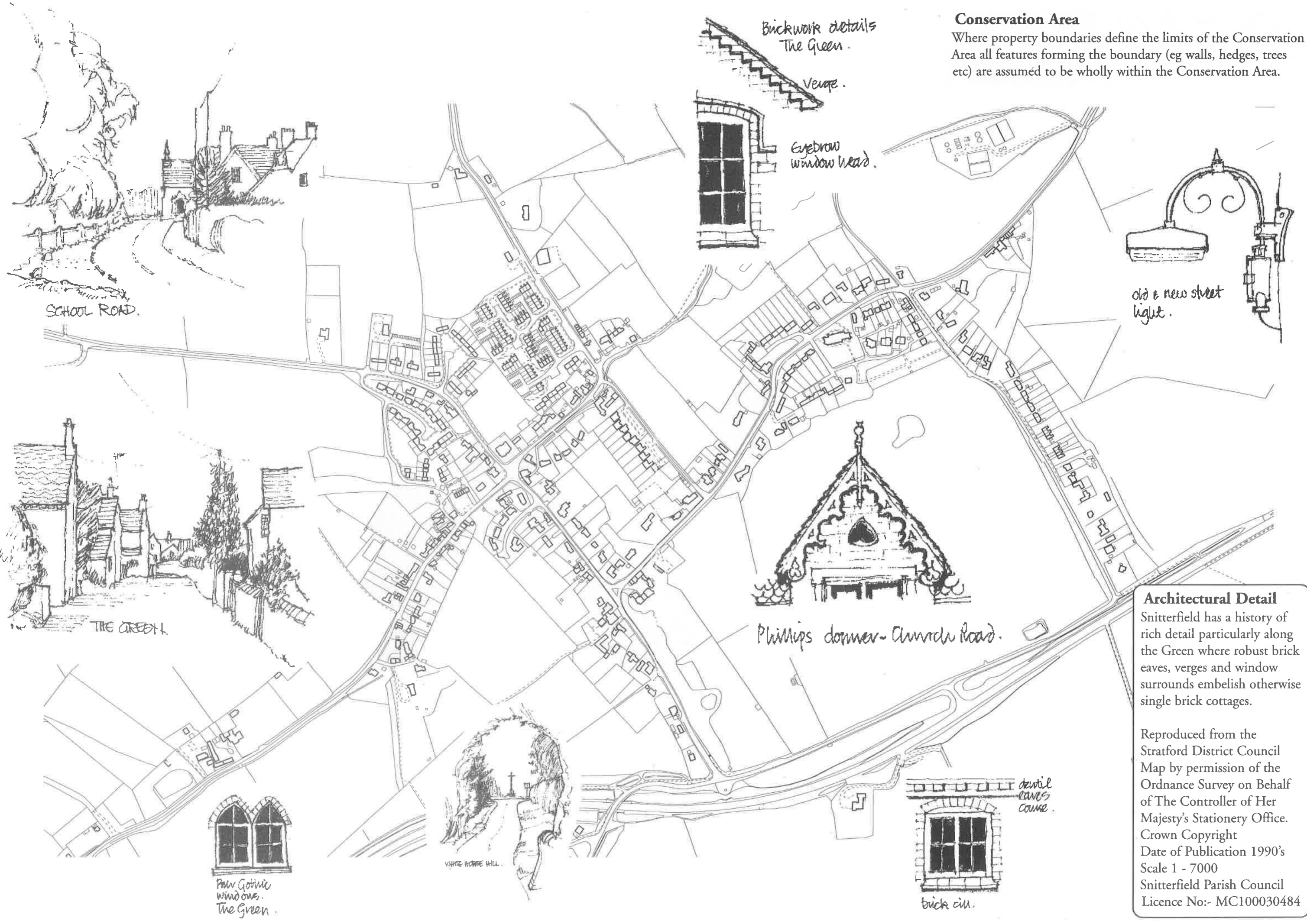
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SNITTERFIELD DURING THE NEXT LOCAL PLAN LIFETIME OR SOONER IF REQUIRED.

SNITTERFIELD Circa. 1885

EXTRACT FROM 1885 ORDNANCE SURVEY

Scale = 25" to 1 mile (reduced)





Conservation Area

Where property boundaries define the limits of the Conservation Area all features forming the boundary (eg walls, hedges, trees etc) are assumed to be wholly within the Conservation Area.

Buckwork details
The Green.

Verge.

Eyebrow
window head.

old & new street
light.

Phillips' dormer - Church Road.

Architectural Detail

Snitterfield has a history of rich detail particularly along the Green where robust brick eaves, verges and window surrounds embellish otherwise single brick cottages.

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SCHOOL ROAD.

THE GREEN.

Pinn Gothic
windows.
The Green.

WHITE HORSE HILL.

brick sill.

dewil
lanes
course.