

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 QuBE Planning Ltd were asked by South Cambridgeshire District Council to advise on the potential for a Conservation Area in Rampton village as part of a programme of conservation appraisal work being undertaken in the second half of 2004/5. This appraisal sets out the special architectural and historic interest of Rampton to support the designation of a Conservation Area. This document includes; a character appraisal, design guidance for new development, and policies for the management of the area in order to preserve its character.

1.2 This section to report on public consultation and confirm the status of the appraisal as supplementary planning guidance / document.



Village Green

2.0 WHAT ARE CONSERVATION AREAS?

2.1 Conservation Areas are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

2.2 When a Conservation Area has been designated, it increases the Council's powers, with planning applications judged by their impact on the character and appearance of the area. Greater controls over the demolition of buildings and structures are imposed whilst the rights that owners have to do works to their properties without the prior need to obtain planning permission (known as 'permitted development rights') are reduced or may be taken away. Stricter controls are also exercised over the design of new buildings, and owners must give the Council six weeks' notice of their intention to carry out works to trees. Planning applications affecting a Conservation Area must be advertised on site and in the local press to give people the opportunity to comment.

3.0 OVERVIEW OF THE AREA

3.1 Rampton is a small 'fen-edge' village on the Cottenham to Willingham Road eight miles to the northwest of Cambridge.

3.2 Despite being relatively small, the village has an interesting history and a character which changes from the east to the west end. The east end is the most historically interesting with the site of a deserted Medieval village and castle with the church tucked away amongst a wealth of trees. This part of the village is tree-lined and has a very intimate townscape.

3.3 The area around The Green is much more open though it too has many mature trees and some fine historic buildings which gently enclose the space.

3.4 The High Street is much more typical of the fen-edge villages with a long straight street lined by small-holdings and with few mature trees. There are several attractive historic properties however of similar materials and forms to properties elsewhere in the village.

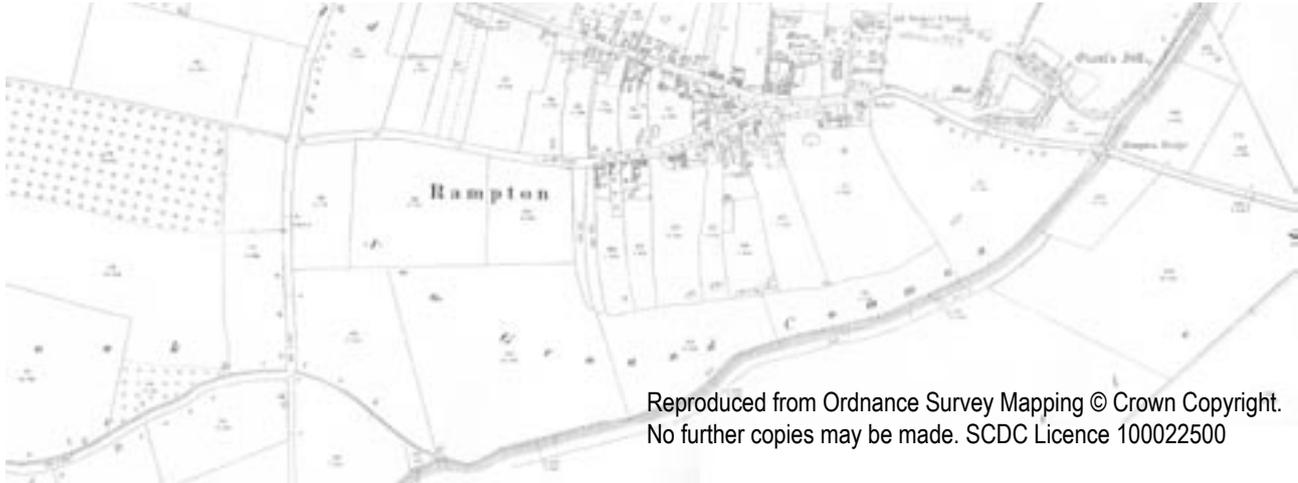
3.5 The modest nature of the village is readily apparent in the architecture of its buildings. Of the pre-C19 buildings, only the Manor House has any real architectural pretension; even the church has a very 'organic' feel due to its variety of building materials. The majority of the other cottages are timber framed and thatched. C19 buildings are mostly of gault brick with slate roofs and tend to be more ostentatious than their earlier vernacular neighbours. Some of the more recent C20 developments sit quite easily with their neighbours as the building materials have been well-chosen. The bungalows and houses of the 1950s-70s fit in less well.

3.6 The Conservation Area boundary has been tightly drawn to ensure that it includes the areas of greatest historic interest and townscape character. Areas of open land surrounding the village and areas of modern housing have not been included.



The Manor House

4.0 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE



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Extract from 1902 Ordnance Survey

4.1 Rampton is one of the smallest of the fen edge parishes and may have been originally dependent on nearby Willingham (possibly as a sheep-rearing settlement) as the two villages shared pasture until the C17. The Domesday Book records 19 tenants. By 1664 there were 39 households; by 1801 this had dropped to 35 families giving a population of 162. By 1951, the population had slowly increased to 220; today there are around 400 residents.

4.2 Two Neolithic axe-heads were found in the village and there have been some finds of Roman pottery shards. However the oldest building in the village still recognisable today is the church, which may have been founded in Saxon times.

4.3 The remains of this castle, together with the village around it survive in the area known as 'Giant's Hill' to the east of the present C12 church. This is owned by Cambridgeshire County Council and parts of it are a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

4.4 The manor took over the castle site and it was granted to the de Lisle family in the C13. A parkland covering some 18ha was created around the manor and the village centre was moved to the west to surround a triangular green after Robert de Lisle was granted a license to hold a market and fair late in the C13. Much of this green still survives together with the stump of the market cross (now known as the village cross).

4.5 In the C17, the Manor House was also relocated to its present site (known in the C16 as Grandtofts) onto drier land west of its original location. In addition to the houses around the green, ribbon development along the roads to Willingham and Longstanton took place. Later, houses on the south side of the High Street were built on part of the village green.

4.6 In the C19, most of the farms were owned by Cottenham and Willingham farmers meaning that the majority of the village's population were labourers. The purchase of a large estate by Cambridgeshire County Council at the outbreak of World War One and its subdivision into a number of smallholdings provided the impetus for a number of independent smallholders to move into the village, transforming its social character.

4.7 The very limited growth of the village until after World War Two has meant that C19 houses tend to be replacements or small infill plots with some spread mostly towards Willingham where small holdings with market gardens and soft fruit orchards developed to supply the Chivers factory at Histon in the late C19. Since the 1950s, there has been more considerable development of Local Authority houses and bungalows along King Street and Cow Lane. There is a small 1990s estate of detached houses off the High Street.



The village green

5.0 GEOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

5.1 Rampton lies within the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands Landscape Character Area and the West Anglian Plain Natural Area. The village is surrounded by agricultural land; most of it Grade 3, with some high quality Grade 2 land to the west. Much of the surrounding land is used for horticulture and in particular fruit growing.

5.2 The most attractive entrance into the village is from Cottenham to the east. The land between Rampton and Cottenham is generally open, quite flat land until Rampton Bridge is reached. To the southwest of the bridge is New Ground Common, a relatively wild area of grassland and trees. To the northwest of the bridge is the Giant's Hill area. This was parkland as recently as 1887 when the first Ordnance Survey map of the area was published. A path known as 'Lovers Walk' in Victorian times ran along Westwick Brook and there is a large spinney, and other belts of trees lining the road and visible from it. The fine mature trees and other vegetation form a very attractive gateway to the village from the east,

5.3 From Willingham to the west, the road passes through flat agricultural and horticultural land with occasional small holdings. Recent traffic calming measures signal the entrance to the village, though the more built-up part of the village really only becomes evident as the road straightens. The setting is similar when entering along Cow Lane to the north and King Street and Cuckoo Lane to the southwest with sporadic small holdings giving way to more consolidated ribbon of C20 houses closer to the village centre.

6.0 ARCHAEOLOGY

6.1 The Giant's Hill area, with the site of the 'anarchy' castle and the original Manor House of the de Lisle's, together with the remains of the early village is of obvious historic interest. In the C12, during the period known as 'the anarchy', King Stephen started the construction of a castle at Rampton as defence against his former ally, the robber baron Geoffrey de Mandeville (together with another castle at Burwell and possible further castles at Swavesey and Caxton). In 1144, de Mandeville attacked Burwell whilst it was being built and was mortally wounded. His rebellion collapsed and the castle at Rampton was never finished (as evidenced by the incomplete moat).

6.2 In addition to the earthworks of the castle, Giant's Hill also contains the remains of a

deserted Medieval village with evidence of house platforms, ridge and furrow cultivation and hollow ways (tracks); the most noticeable one running towards the church. West of the castle is a mound which may have been a windmill, whilst on the mound itself is the remains of an anti-aircraft gun emplacement dug by the Home Guard in World War Two.

6.3 On the opposite side of the Cottenham Road from Giant's Hill is an area known as New Ground Common. This contains various ponds and earthworks that are also likely to be associated with the deserted Medieval village. Unlike Giant's Hill, this area is not accessible to the public.

6.4 The Green, which contains the remains of the market cross and is surrounded by a number of historic buildings (including the re-sited Manor House), has been the hub of the village since the C13. This ancient morphology, supplemented by the historic field boundaries which can be traced in the majority of the building plots in the village clearly demonstrates that Rampton retains its historic settlement pattern.

7.0 TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

Church End

7.1 The east end of the village is entered by crossing the bridge over Westwick Brook. A solid hedgerow and trees generally hides the Scheduled Ancient Monument known as Giant's Hill. This area includes the remains of the moated castle and Manor House together with the earthworks of the deserted Medieval village. These remains include house platforms, hollow ways (tracks), possibly the site of a windmill and some evidence of ridge and furrow. This area is fully accessible to the public and allows some excellent vistas to and from the church as well as including some fine belts and groups of mature trees and hedgerows.



East end of the village



Earthworks viewed from the church

7.2 The northern verge of the Cottenham - Willingham Road mostly comprises fairly dense hedgerow and trees broken by the gated entrance to the Giant's Hill site close to the church. These trees and hedgerows act as an important transition between the open land and the buildings of the village and form an attractive gateway. The southern side of the road, which includes an area called New Ground Common also has a less solid hedgerow boundary and views across the open grassland can be gained. There are some archaeological remains here, probably also associated with the deserted Medieval village though this land is private and the remains are not accessible to the public. Recent traffic calming measures with red 'rumble-strips' now also signal the entrance to the village.

7.3 Heading west, the C20 houses and bungalow have no particular architectural or historic interest and are therefore not included within the Conservation Area. Beyond them, the former school is of more interest (map:A). This was built in 1845 and is of gault brick with a steeply pitched Welsh slate roof. Although this has been substantially altered and extended since its conversion to a house following the closure of the school in 1963, the public face remains a positive feature, augmented by the wrought iron fence and mature tree on the east boundary. Adjacent to the former school is No. 14 Church End (map:1). This is a cottage of c1700 of plastered timber frame and with a thatched roof. It is Grade II Listed and once more its setting is enhanced by two mature trees on the road frontage.



Former school

7.4 Opposite No. 14 is the lane up to the church. This is particularly attractive, narrow and tree lined and with the rectory wall and railings on the west side and views across an overgrown paddock to the east. Both the rectory and the church are surrounded by numerous fine trees including several cypresses around the church. The church, which visibly dates from the C12, has roofs of thatch, tiles and slate and walls of field stones, limestone rubble, clunch and red brick (map:2). Though not an architectural gem, its rather organic look together with the mass of building materials used make it of great interest. It is Grade II* Listed. There are some excellent vistas across the Giant's Hill area from the church and the remains of an old trackway that once connected the church to the site of the deserted village is very evident.



All Saints Church

7.5 The rectory had six hearths in the mid-C17, but by 1836 was described as ‘a mere hut and in ruins’ (map:B). It was rebuilt in its current form between 1855 and 1862. The rectory has walls of gault brick under a Welsh Slate roof. The boundary wall to the road and some areas of railings which contribute to its setting require repair in places. Although the rectory is not particularly visible from the public domain, it has obvious group value with the church.

7.6 Returning to the road, west of the rectory is a pair of bungalows and then the C17 Manor House (map:3). This is a prominent Grade II Listed Building, half-H plan and built of timber frame that was subsequently clad in a soft red brick later in the C17. It has a clay peg tiled roof. The building is set back from the road with a lawn and is partially screened by two good trees. To the west is the farm entrance with a 1960s house that has an unusual slate-hung first floor. To the rear are a series of interesting outbuildings.



Gable of the Manor House

7.7 On the south side of the road are a modern bungalow and house, the latter with a fine tree on the road side, and the red brick 1950s village hall, altered in 2005. This is well set back from the road again with fine trees surrounding it and on the deep grass verge. Following the introduction of the District Council’s kerbside collection of refuse for recycling, the prominent recycling facility is probably redundant and could be removed. Beyond the village hall is a pond, which is again surrounded by mature trees. The consequence is that Church End forms an attractive gateway to the village from the east because of the presence of so many fine trees.



Outside the village hall

The Green

7.8 Since at least the C13, the green has been the heart of the village and therefore it is no surprise that the majority of Rampton’s historic buildings surround it. Close to the bottom of Cow Lane, on the north side are Nos. 1 and 2 The Green (map:4). These are a pair of C17 thatched cottages with timber framed walls now faced in brickwork, modernised in the C19 and further restored in the 1990s. They are Grade II Listed. Nos. 15 and 17 on the west side of The Green are a pair of cottages (originally three) of plastered timber frame and Grade II Listed (map:5). No. 15 has a clay peg tiled roof, while No. 17 has clay pantiles. The cottages date from the C17 and C18. No. 17 was heavily restored in the 1980s but shares a very fine chimneystack with ornate shafts with its neighbour. On the south side of the Green is a further pair of C17 Grade II Listed cottages, Nos. 12 and 13 (though they now form a single dwelling), again of timber frame construction and with thatched roofs (map:6). These are complemented by Nos. 1-3 King Street to the west.



No. 17 The Green

7.9 Intermingled with the C17 cottages are a range of C19 and C20 houses. The most noteworthy of these are Nos. 19 & 20, on the west side which is a pair of relatively unaltered late C19 gault brick houses with sash windows, red brick detailing, a central gable with bargeboards and a tiled roof (map:C). Also of interest, but on the north side, are Nos. 4-7 which are again C19 and of gault brick with Welsh slate roofs (map:D). This small terrace has lost character through incremental changes to the windows and erection of porches.



Nos. 19 & 20 The Green

7.10 The C20 buildings are of less interest and include No. 10 which is of brick and render with a tiled roof (map:E) and the village garage, which is also on the north side, is inoffensive with quite discrete signage. The modern bungalow on the south side (No. 14), a 1960s house next to the garage and a more modern red brick dwelling (No. 3), lack the townscape and architectural qualities of their more traditional neighbours. Between No.14 and Nos. 1 & 2 King Street is a cul de sac of modern houses. That nearest the road has weatherboarded walls and a pantiled roof and sits comfortably with its more historic neighbours.

7.11 The Green itself has attractive trees on the north and south sides with particularly striking specimens to the east of No. 1 King Street and outside No. 15. On the northwest corner of The Green is the Grade II Listed C19 water pump (map:7) which is of cast iron with a wood casing and on the south side, the stone base of the village cross which is also Grade II Listed (map:8). On the grass verge to the east of the garage is the attractive post-mounted village sign whilst a 1930s K6 telephone box stands just west of the garage.



Grade II Listed water pump

High Street

7.12 The High Street also contains a number of buildings of townscape interest. On the east side of Cow Lane, are the thatched Grade II Listed cottages (Nos. 1 & 2 The Green) whilst on the west side is the Free Church Mission Hall built in 1902 (map:F). This is an attractive gault brick hall with a tiled roof and decorative bargeboards to the main roof and the porch which fronts High Street. Next to it is a bungalow and then the Black Horse, a well-proportioned creeper-clad public house of the mid C19 sat behind a simple picket fence (map: G). Beyond the public house on the north side of the road, the houses and bungalows are mostly 1950s and 1960s and of little architectural or historic interest.



Free Church Mission Hall

7.13 The south side of the road has a stronger character, particularly in the area either side of the footpath leading through to King Street, where No. 31 is a Grade II Listed, brick-faced timber framed cottage under a thatched roof which dates from the C17 (map:9). The adjacent cottage on the eastern side of the footpath (No. 29) also dates from the C17 and has rendered timber framed walls and a thatched roof (map:H). This building was de-listed following rather unfortunate over-restoration.



The High Street (No. 31 in the distance)

7.14 Continuing east is a building with probably C18 origins, rendered walls and a clay tile roof with modern extensions (map I). Beyond, Home Farm Close is a small modern cul de sac of houses. The choice of building materials used is good and the weatherboarded and pantiled 'barn conversion' which faces the High Street in particular complements the traditional agricultural buildings closer to The Green (map:j). Between the two is a good, extended early C19 farmhouse (Nos. 15 & 17) of gault brick with a tiled roof with a well-proportioned doorcase adjacent to the road (map: K). Beside it but set back behind a high hedge is No.13, a large, probably 1950s red brick house.



Home Farm Close

7.15 On the corner of The Green is a prominent farm group. The best buildings are the barns with weatherboarded walls (map:L). The farmhouse itself probably dates from the 1950s and is of red brick and of little architectural merit. The corner site is very open and the view into the farmyard allows a prospect of the rear of the modern houses on King Street. The low boundary wall to the site is in need of repair on the corner of The Green.

7.16 It is very noticeable how the character of the western part of the village differs from the eastern end. This is due to the straightness of the High Street and its lack of trees. The character of the High Street is more typical of the fen edge villages with their ribbons of small holdings lining quite wide roads with few mature trees.



East end of the High Street

King Street

7.17 Generally King Street contains modern houses and bungalows and lacks the architectural and historic interest of The Green, Church End and the eastern end of the High Street. However Nos. 1-3, which in townscape terms have a group value with



Nos 1-3 King Street

are Grade II Listed (map:10). They were originally two houses and a shop and are also of rendered timber frame construction, but have corrugated iron roofs, though they would originally have been roofed with longstraw thatch like the other nearby cottages. Unlike most of the surrounding cottages which have front gardens surrounded in most cases by low walls or picket fences, Nos. 1 & 2 stand right on the back of the footpath.

8.0 KEY CHARACTERISTICS

8.1 Buildings in the village do not exceed 2 storeys.

8.2 The walling materials of traditional buildings in Rampton include rendered timber frames, red-pink bricks, gault bricks (during and after the C19) with weatherboarding used for low-status agricultural buildings and for the upper parts of the gable ends of thatched cottages. Traditional render colours would have been earthy hues though today most buildings are white.

8.3 Traditionally longstraw thatch and clay plain tiles were the predominant roofing materials with clay pantiles used for low status and agricultural buildings. Welsh slate became popular during the C19 and is therefore relatively common. Several agricultural buildings have corrugated iron sheets over the roofs; this also covers the roof of one formerly thatched property.

8.4 Architectural detailing of note includes the shaped gables of the Manor House are the most striking piece of architectural detailing. Several of the thatched cottages have weatherboarding to the upper parts of their gable ends whilst the C19 Nos. 19 & 20 The Green have ornamental bargeboards decorating the verges. Fascia boards are not found on early buildings where gutters tend to be fixed into the masonry on rise and fall brackets. Boxed eaves are similarly a modern feature which can appear clumsy when contrasted with traditional details.

8.5 Windows and doors within the earliest cottages in the village included simple casement windows often subdivided into small panes. By the C19, sliding sashes were very common. The examples in the village are mostly relatively late C19 designs with quite large sheets of plate glass. Substantial houses have fine paneled doors, with a prominent doorcase to No. 15 High Street. Earlier cottages have either simple paneled or 'plank' doors.

8.6 Boundaries in Rampton tend to be either simple picket fences or hedges with only a few

brick walls built before the C20. These are generally of gault brick. Attractive railings survive around part of the Free Church Mission Hall, the former school and the rectory.

8.7 The agricultural character of the village survives in the range of farm buildings on the corner of The Green and the High Street and to the rear of the Manor Farm.

8.8 The Green is an essential part of the character of the village and adds a sense of pace and greenery right into the heart of the village. This is supplemented by the pond and verge to the east of The Green and the verge to the north.

8.9 Mature trees are vital to the character of the village particularly along Church End and The Green. The impression when entering from the east, particularly in summer, is of a village full of mature trees and hedgerows which line the gently curving road and add great intimacy to the townscape.

8.10 The Giant's Hill area including the treed setting of the church and rectory contributes a huge amount to the character and appearance of the village. This is the oldest part of the village and the church and archaeological remains are of great historical significance. The land also has great amenity value with its attractive open vistas and mature trees and hedgerows.

8.11 One of the key features of the village is how its character changes over such a short distance. Church End has a gently curving road lined by mature trees and hedgerows. In summer especially, buildings are glimpsed rather than seen from distance and the feel is intimate and enclosed with the only vista being a fleeting one across the western field of Giant's Hill. The Green continues the tree-lined feel though the space opens out with buildings quite gently defining the edge of the space. High Street is a complete contrast and has much more the feel of the typical fen-edge villages with a long straight road lined by readily-visible buildings and few mature trees.

9.0 ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

9.1 There are a number of sites with potential for some form of redevelopment. These include the farm on the corner of High Street and The Green, the land to the east side of the King Street - High Street footpath and possibly the garage. The development of any of these could be prejudicial to the character of the village if not sensitively

handled however and it is very important that 'key characteristics' of the traditional buildings in the village are followed if new houses are to sit happily with their neighbours.

9.2 There are several opportunities for enhancement to the townscape. These include removing the now superseded recycling facility and reducing the number of utility poles and overhead wires.

9.3 Nos. 1 & 2 King Street are important Grade II Listed Buildings at a prominent position in the village. They would benefit from short term repairs and maintenance to the joinery in particular, whilst the buildings would be massively enhanced by the removal of the sheet-metal roof covering and re-thatching in longstraw and the repair or re-rendering of the walls.

9.4 The walls around the farmhouse garden on the northwest corner of The Green have fallen in places and require repair and rebuilding. Part of the wall around the rectory is also in need of repair.

10.0 POLICIES TO PRESERVE THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA

10.1 These policies should be read in conjunction with those in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. Summaries of relevant policies are provided in Appendix A, but it is advisable to consult the Local Plan itself.

10.2 In considering the design of new buildings or extensions to existing ones, the Council will take into account the impact of the proposal on the setting of Listed Buildings and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Section 9 of this document sets out some of the key characteristics which need to be taken into account. The following will be important in determining whether a new development is acceptable:-

Scale - buildings should not exceed two storeys in height. Steeply-pitched roof forms are the norm for vernacular buildings in the area, but care must be taken to ensure that the roof proportion is appropriate for the building and location especially if accommodation is to be provided within the roof. Any dormers etc should be appropriately detailed and scaled and rooflights ideally only provided on less visible slopes.

Location on the plot - buildings should respect

established building lines unless there are good reasons for setting back further within the plot to maintain frontage trees or hedgelines.

Materials - Rampton has a relatively limited palette of materials with different types being more suitable for buildings of particular types or scales. Care should be taken to ensure that, for example, high status materials such as stone are not used for deliberately low-key buildings.

Colours - traditional colours for paint and render in the village would have been subdued

earthy tones. Encouragement should be given to ensure that very strident colours are not used in new developments to avoid them overdominating the traditional buildings of the village.

12.3 Boundaries are very important to the character of the village. Positive boundaries identified in this appraisal should be retained in good condition. Where new boundaries are proposed, care should be taken to ensure that they use appropriate materials and that very formal gates and walls are not considered for new properties. Picket fences and hedges will normally be the most appropriate form of boundary for new houses in the village to respect the village's predominantly rural character.

12.4 The Green and the grass verges around it are important to the character of this part of the village. The Council will work with the Highway Authority and statutory undertakers to ensure that verges are not removed or damaged. Where private drives cross over grass verges, owners will be encouraged to use bound gravel or other visually 'softer' materials rather than formal block paving or setts.

12.5 The Council will work with the Highway Authority and other statutory undertakers to reduce the visual impact of plant, road signs and other 'street furniture'. Where signs are needed, wherever possible they will be fixed to existing features rather than being pole-mounted. Appropriate designs and colours for street furniture will be encouraged and necessarily unattractive plant appropriately screened.

