

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Westwick Conservation Area was designated on 1 March 1990. This document aims to fulfil South Cambridgeshire District Council's duty to 'draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement' of these areas as required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the commitment made by policy EN29 in the adopted Local Plan. 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.

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 Westwick is a small linear village with houses that, with the exception of the hall, directly face the road.

3.2 The majority of buildings in Westwick were built between 1850 and 1939 with only two buildings constructed since World War Two. Westwick Hall is the dominant building in hierarchical terms, though visually it is hidden by trees and relies solely on its front gates to identify its existence. The model farm to the east of the village has a much more marked presence due to the use of high

quality polychromatic brickwork. Both the railway station and the former New Inn were purpose built for a use that has now ceased and both have been converted to houses. Westwick Hall Farmhouse and the villa (Foxelwood), at the east end of the village, are the only pre-war medium sized houses; the rest of the C19 houses being small terraced cottages.

3.3 The trees and hedgerows that line the road and the old railway track are intrinsic to the character of the village. They form definite boundaries and act as a foil to the built forms, especially where they enclose the road opposite the terraces of cottages.

3.4 The parkland and views out across agricultural land are essential to the village and give it an essentially rural feel. The brook contributes much to the vegetation and wildlife interest of the village as it meanders through the Conservation Area.

3.5 The original Medieval settlement, together with the site of one of the original village manors, survive as earthworks within the grassland to the north and south of the road. These are clearly visible, and although in private ownership, the remains south of the road may be viewed from the public footpath that runs through the site.

4.0 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE

4.1 Westwick was originally a daughter settlement of Cottenham. It was too small and late to have its own church and initially settlers worshipped at Cottenham. By the late C13 however, the chaplain of Cottenham refused to bury Westwick residents and soon after all the residents were attending services in Oakington which was much nearer. Westwick has always been small. There were four households in the Domesday Book, rising to 21 by 1279 before depopulation in the Middle Ages. By 1674 there were ten houses but only five families at the end of the C18. The village grew rapidly to 80 residents in the 1870s before falling once more to 12-15 families after the 1890s. Today there are probably less than fifty residents in this portion of the settlement, but this figure is difficult to confirm as Westwick now forms part of the Oakington parish, and the houses around the old railway station were technically never part of Westwick.

4.2 The largest manor in Westwick belonged originally to the Sheriffs of Cambridgeshire after the Norman Conquest before passing to the Lisle Family. The estate changed hands a number of times but in the C19 was owned by the Lintons,



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who built the present Westwick Hall in 1855-6 on the site of the Manor House, and then went on to build the model farm (in 1868) and the labourers' cottages.

4.3 Belbouches Manor also existed in 1066 when it was owned by Guthmund. After the Conquest it passed to David de Argentine and then the Chantemerle family. The manor passed to the Belbouches family in the late C12 and remained in their ownership to the C15. The manor stood on the land to the north of the road east of the brook. Earthworks are still visible today.

4.4 The village has always been an agricultural community with the surrounding land used mostly for cereal crops and keeping sheep, pigs and cattle. By the time of enclosure, the Lintons were the main landowners and employed a bailiff who lived in Westwick Hall Farmhouse and labourers, several of whom lived in the row of cottages by the road. At its peak in the 1860s, the farm covered 500 acres and grew cereals, roots and clover with pastureland for 700 sheep. There was also a windmill south of the hall which was demolished in the late C19.

4.5 Like many of the surrounding villages, market gardening became popular in the C19. The Morris family owned land in the village and in 1914

Foxelwood, at the east end of the village, was erected for Bertha Morris who grew fruit there seemingly until the outbreak of World War Two.

4.6 The majority of other houses in the village were built for, and occupied by, railway workers in the C19. These survive as the row east of the former station and the pair of cottages east of the hall.

5.0 GEOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

5.1 The village is generally surrounded by agricultural land and stands within the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands as defined in the Greater Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003. The village is effectively within open countryside and has no 'village framework' in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

5.2 A northward flowing brook (Beck Brook) runs beside the railway line before dog-legging to flow on the south side of the road. It dog-legs again and flows due north on the east side of the railway cottages.

5.3 Westwick lies on land sloping gently from about 11 metres above sea level in the south to barely 6 metres in the north of the parish. The southern part of the village stands on gault clay, the road on a ridge of Lower Greensand and the north on Kimmeridge Clay.

5.4 Westwick is separated from Oakington by a narrow belt of land that contains some significant Medieval remains. Most of the settlement lies along the road through the hamlet, with open farmland to the north and parkland and further farmland to the south. Cottenham village lies a mile and a half to the northeast.

5.5 From the road within the village, in several places, there are fine views out into the surrounding parkland and open countryside. The village is also characterised by belts of trees lining the roadway and individual mature trees within the parkland.

6.0 ARCHAEOLOGY

6.1 The village has two main areas of archaeological interest. The first site is north of the road, west of Westwick Hall Farm. This is the site of the Belbouches Manor and probably parts of the Medieval settlement. House platforms, courtyards and holloways (tracks) can still be easily seen in the grassland.

6.2 The other area is to the south and west of Westwick Hall where evidence of ridge and furrow can still be seen south of the hall, whilst other earthworks are evident in the parkland to the west

of the hall.

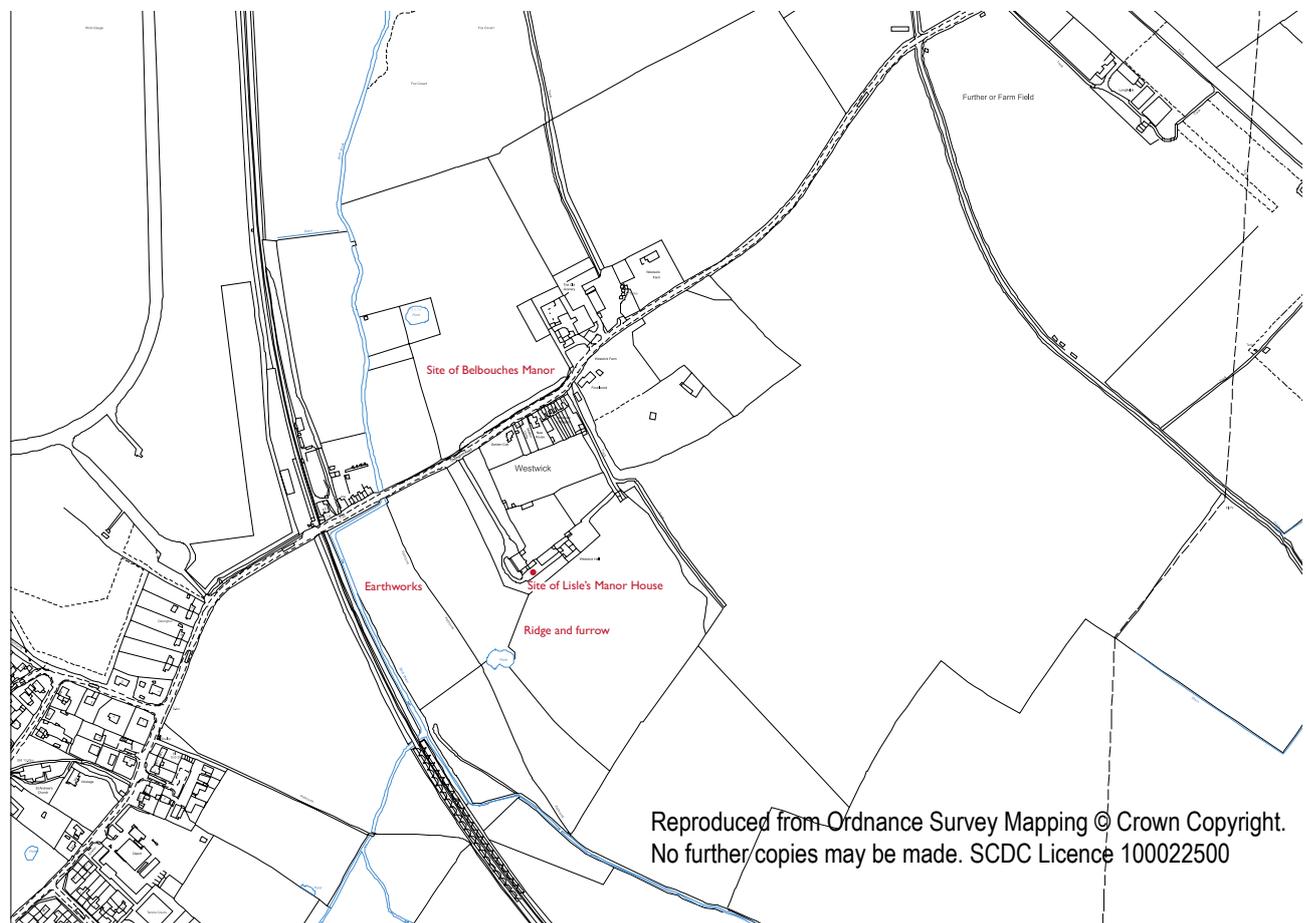
7.0 TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

Oakington Road (north side)

7.1 The western boundary of the Conservation Area is formed by the disused railway line. The old railway crossing gates survive and are an instant reminder of the railway. Looking down the old track-bed to the north, the platform survives in front of the old station. Looking north and south, it is clear just how much vegetation has sprung up beside the track. This is now a positive feature and one which acts to demarcate the entrance to the village and the Conservation Area.



View south along the disused railway line



Areas of archaeological interest

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7.2 On the north side of the road, east of the old railway track, is the former Oakington railway station / station master's house (map:A). This opened in 1848 and the building is in the Italianate style popular for railway buildings of that era. The east range is the older part and is gable-on to the street with overhanging eaves and an arched sash window at first floor level. At ground floor is a slate-topped bay with arched windows. The building was extended later in the C19 towards the railway line with a two storey block under pitched roofs set at right angles to the Italianate range and further extended with a C20 single storey flat roofed block with rendered walls and modern windows. The side elevation of the Italianate block with its paired chimney stacks is very prominent looking west. Like the crossing gates, the picket fence and gates of the old station survive.



Old railway station

7.3 Beside the station is a wide access used for parking and to reach an industrial use beyond what was the station car park. This is not visible from the road, though there are some attractive ornamental trees behind the old station.



Former New Inn

7.4 East of this access is a house formerly the New Inn which opened in 1858 (map:B). This

is of painted brick with a slate roof. Whilst the first floor windows are modern, the ground floor has a typical 1930s pub frontage with red brick surrounds and some leaded glass. Outside this property is a large tarmac apron which extends in front of the cottages to the east. The setting of all these buildings could be much improved and softened by an appropriate landscaping scheme here.



Weatherboarded outbuilding

7.5 Between the old pub and the row of cottages there is an accessway which allows views of a pleasant weatherboarded and slate outbuilding with a backdrop of mature trees behind it. The terrace was originally a group of 5 single bay cottages of gault brick walls under Welsh slate roofs. Two of the cottages have been combined into a single dwelling and these, together with the adjacent cottage, have been cement rendered. At the western end of the terrace a further cottage has been more recently constructed (again in gault brick), with a slightly higher eaves line and a roof now covered in concrete tiles. All have modern windows. Behind the terrace is a surviving range of brick and pantiled outbuildings visible down the vehicle entrance with a mature hedgerow and trees behind.



Old railway cottages



Brick and pantiled outbuildings

7.6 Beyond this terrace is Beck Brook. This dog-legs under the simple gault brick road bridge and continues down the south side of the road before dog-legging again to flow on the east side of the old railway line. Looking north along the brook, its western bank has a dense hedgerow with trees, whilst the eastern bank is more open with views out into the farmland and across to Westwick Hall Farm. The hummocky ground reveals the presence of Medieval earthworks.



View north along the brook

7.7 This open land runs for a considerable distance before the next building, Westwick Hall Farmhouse (a Grade II Listed Building), is reached (map:1). This three bay two storey house was built in 1868 and is a 'High' Victorian design with polychromatic brickwork. The walls are of gault brick with bands of red and vitrified bricks and arched window heads. Above the central door is a bulls-eye window. The first floor windows are half-dormers and the twin chimney stacks curiously run in line with the roof ridge. The roof is of slate with ornate red ridge tiles. The wide gables are

particularly attractive and the eastern one has a date stone in its apex. There is a large single storey wing to the rear that once formed part of an open courtyard of farm outbuildings but has now been separated from the former farmhouse and is in commercial use.



Westwick Hall Farmhouse

7.8 Adjacent to the farmhouse, and of a similar age, materials and design, is the Old Granary (map:2). This is also a Grade II Listed Building and has now been converted to office use, though it still retains the character of a fine 'High' Victorian agricultural building. The only regrettable aspects of this conversion are the loss of the original timber doors to the arched headed openings, the insertion of air conditioning units and the detailing, material selection and lighting to the car parking area in forecourt area. East of the Old Granary, and still within the boundaries of the Conservation Area, are a series of modern agricultural buildings. Beyond the Conservation Area boundary is a modern farmworker's dwelling and open farmland with nurseries separating the hamlet from Cottenham.



The Old Granary

Oakington Road (south side)

7.9 Heading back westwards along the south side of the road, the first property is Foxelwood (map: C). This is a substantial house built in 1914 in association with a market garden business. It is of painted brick with sash windows under red brick heads and a slate roof. There is a large single storey wing of matching materials. To the east of the house is open farmland defined by hedgerows with occasional larger trees which is included within the Conservation Area.

7.10 West of Foxelwood is an unmade track which gives rear access to some of the cottages to the west. On the east side of this track is a painted brick and slate outbuilding to Foxelwood with a substantial hedgerow with larger trees beyond. On the west side is a garage under construction and then a mature hedgerow which marks the boundary of the garden of Westwick House. At the end of the track is a vista out across open farmland whilst the track bears to the west and leads to the converted stable range and outbuildings of the hall. The east elevation of this substantial range of buildings is two storeys of gault brick and clay tiled roofs. The windows are modern and there is a single flat-roofed dormer. Either side are flanking single storey wings of similar materials.



Hall stable range

7.11 Back on the main road, there is a row of eight agricultural workers cottages, now known as Westwick Cottages but originally referred to as Westwick Terrace (map:D). These C19 cottages are built of gault brick with Welsh slate roofs, hipped at either end. All but one of the cottages retain their original 8 over 8 sash windows and many also retain their original front doors. Large brick chimney stacks enliven the ridge line and give a rhythm to the row. At the east end is a two storey extension still under construction, with a matching hipped slate roof.

6



Westwick Cottages

7.12 Beyond Westwick Cottages is the appropriately-named New House - a modern dwelling of buff brick with blue brick detailing and a concrete tiled roof. It has a single storey lean-to entrance hall nearest the road.

7.13 To the west of New House is a pair of C19 brick houses known as Station Cottages (map: E). The westernmost cottage has a slate roof, the eastern one pantiles. A central chimney stack divides them as does a small C19 cast-iron fence on the roadside. Both cottages have modern windows and much rebuilt brickwork, whilst the easternmost cottage has been significantly extended in reclaimed bricks and matching clay pantiles. The gable end with its white bargeboards is very prominent when viewed from the east. West of the cottages is a detached modern house (Garden Cottage which in 1973 was owned by Westwick Hall) of white painted brick and a concrete tiled roof, modern stained timber windows and a central brick stack.



Station cottages



Garden Cottage

7.14 The main entrance to Westwick Hall is signaled by the presence of a low wall and gate piers and beyond is an avenue of mature trees with the hall frontage visible in the distance. The hall is Grade II Listed and was built in 1855-6 (map:3). It has gault brick walls under a hipped Welsh slate roof. The principal front has a range of three recessed double hung sash windows with glazing bars and a central doorway with plain pilasters. The side elevation opening onto the park is longer, with 5 bays of double hung sash windows.



Entrance to Westwick Hall



Westwick Hall

7.15 Back on the main road, the southern boundary has some large trees in contrast to the more open northern boundary. The views here are spoiled slightly by the presence of telegraph poles and wires.



Westwick Hall Farm and telegraph poles

7.16 From the south side of the road bridge is a footpath which runs south east towards Histon. This crosses the very attractive parkland of Westwick Hall and includes large mature trees including some magnificent oaks. Fine vistas out into the open countryside and of the front of the hall can be gained. Around the southern corner of the hall are some fine mature garden and ornamental trees. Behind the brook, which runs alongside of the road, is a mature hedgerow with occasional trees. In places, views through this dense belt to the parkland beyond can be gained. The brook dog-legs again at the old railway track which forms the western boundary of the Conservation Area.



View of the hall from the parkland

8.0 KEY CHARACTERISTICS

8.1 Westwick is a very linear settlement with the majority of houses directly facing the road often with no front gardens. Only the hall and model farm are set back from the road; the former by almost 200m.



Buildings on the footpath edge

8.2 The village virtually divides into three areas, each has houses on one side with open land or parkland opposite. The three areas are: the west end around the railway which has housing on the north side; the middle zone which includes the hall and the houses and cottages to the east of it all of which stand on the south side of the road, and the farmhouse and model farm at the east end which are north of the road. This pattern means that trees and open spaces dominate the village despite the presence of small terraces of housing.

8.3 No building in the village exceeds two storeys in height. Virtually all the buildings were constructed in the C19 and are of gault brick with slate roofs. Some properties have subsequently been rendered and painted whilst one of the pair of Station Cottages has a pantiled roof. Such roofs and peg tiles are also found on outbuildings in the village as is weatherboarding for the walls. The model farm makes use of polychromatic brickwork popular in the 'High' Victorian period.

8.4 Natural hedgerows and lines of trees are key features of the village. Only the hall has a formal gateway and flanking walls whilst the neat garden and hedge in front of the farmhouse and the picket fence in front of the former railway station are positive features.

8.5 The western boundary of the village is formed by the old railway line and its flanking vegetation. Just like the main road with its mature trees and hedges, this is very important in defining the village

edge and contributing to its green character.

8.6 The roadside trees especially around the brook and the entrance to the hall often provide almost a natural arch of foliage over the road. This is a very positive feature especially in summer and autumn.

8.7 The only negative characteristics of the village are the unsympathetic modernisation works undertaken on some of the cottages, the utility poles that impose themselves on the open landscape and the streetlights, which have unattractive galvanized steel columns.

9.0 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

Additions

9.1 Extending the boundary to the south would enable the area of ridge and furrow and all of the area of potential archaeological interest east of the old railway line to be included. This area, part of which is parkland to the hall, is important to the character of the settlement and to its history. The land is bisected by a footpath which means that the space can be enjoyed by all.

9.2 Currently the western boundary of the Conservation Area runs down the middle of the railway track. It is proposed to slightly amend this boundary by moving it to the west to ensure that all the planting on both sides of the railway track is included within the boundary.

Removals

9.3 None

10.0 ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

10.1 The major enhancement opportunity would be the landscaping of the tarmac apron outside the former New Inn and adjacent cottages at the west end of the village. This large expanse of black-top has the effect of widening the carriageway. An appropriate hard surface or even grass and tree planting would be a significant improvement.

10.2 Although perfectly functional, the parking area in front of the Old Granary is rather harsh, and some of the materials and detailing more reminiscent of a modern industrial estate than the setting of an historic building. A modest redesign and use of more appropriate lamp columns for example would make a significant improvement to the building's setting.

10.3 In common with many local villages, the telegraph poles and the wires they support are

quite intrusive. This is especially the case in Westwick where they run across areas of open land. Ideally these should be run underground, though it is recognised that in such a small village, the cost may be prohibitive.

10.4 The galvanised streetlights found in the village are obtrusive in places. Replacing the columns or if possible painting them green would help them blend better with the general character of the village.

10.5 The District Council may make discretionary grants available towards the repair of certain historic buildings and structures within the district. These grants are made to encourage the use of traditional materials and craft techniques and are generally targeted at Listed Buildings, though visually prominent non-listed buildings within Conservation Areas may also be eligible for grant aid. More specific advice on the availability of grants, as well as on appropriate materials and detailing, is available from the Conservation Section within Development Services Directorate at the District Council.

10.6 The District Council may seek to make 'Article 4 Directions' to retain traditional detailing on the exterior of non-listed buildings within the Conservation Area, where such details have not already been lost.

11.0 POLICIES TO PRESERVE THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA

11.1 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.

11.2 New buildings within the village are unlikely to be acceptable as Westwick is not identified as a village capable of growth in the Local Plan. In considering the design of extensions to existing buildings, 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. The following will also be important factors when considering extending a building:

Scale - buildings should not exceed two storeys in height. Modestly-pitched Welsh slate roofs are the norm in Westwick, but care must be taken to ensure that the roof proportion is appropriate for the building and location. Dormers are not a

feature of the village and rooflights should only be installed on less visible slopes.

Location on the plot - extensions should respect established building lines and the principles of subordination so that they do not undermine the architectural interest of the main building. Existing trees and hedgerows should be preserved and new screening vegetation planted. Care should be taken to think about the future needs of occupiers and ensure that this is compatible with the maintenance of important trees.

Materials - Westwick has a very limited palette of materials illustrated in part 8 of this report. This palette should be used as a guide for new development.

Colours - As no building in the village dates from earlier than the mid-C19, painted rendered finishes would not have been found. Where there are painted or rendered buildings in the village these have been applied later. A rendered finish to an extension may be appropriate to make it subordinate to the main building. Care should be taken in such cases to use soft earthy paint colours rather than strident tones or brilliant white.

11.3 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 overtly formal gates and walls are not considered.

11.4 The District Council will encourage the Highway Authority and statutory undertakers to reduce the visual clutter and impact of plant, road signs and other street furniture. Where signs are needed, their size should be kept to the minimum allowable and, wherever possible, they should be fixed to existing features rather than being individually pole-mounted. Appropriate designs and colours for street furniture will be encouraged and necessary but unattractive plant should be appropriately screened.

