

FORMAL CONSULTATION DRAFT SOMERFORD KEYNES CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1. Introduction

- 1.1.1 Somerford Keynes Conservation Area was designated on 31 January 1989. A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, as defined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 1.1.2 A Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset, and is an important consideration in assessing planning applications.
- 1.1.3 This appraisal sets out the special interest and character of Somerford Keynes Conservation Area.

2. Character assessment

2.1 Setting and historic development

- 2.1.1 Somerford Keynes lies in the flat landscape of the Upper Thames Valley, in the western part of the Cotswold Water Park, and four miles south of the town of Cirencester.
- 2.1.2 It is a small rural village with agricultural origins. There is evidence of Neolithic, Iron Age and Roman activity, and the village is first recorded in a Saxon Charter of 685. The Manor was then recorded in 1211 as held by an ancestor of the Keynes family.
- 2.1.3 The village stretches for approximately a kilometre north to south along its main street and in to Mill Lane, with a further branch along Water Lane to the east. It has a strongly linear character, with buildings placed along these roadways. Historically buildings were fairly dispersed, but subsequent infill development has continued to follow this pattern.
- 2.1.4 The Conservation Area covers the northern part of the village, taking in a length of the main street, together with a distinct cluster of buildings set away to the west, which includes the Church and Manor House. The boundaries of the Conservation Area are shown on the map accompanying this appraisal.

2.2 Character areas and brief description

- 2.2.1 There are two distinct character areas within the Conservation Area. One is the cluster of buildings around the Church and the Manor House. This area also includes Somerford Keynes House, formerly the vicarage.
- 2.2.2 These buildings have a strong historic and visual relationship. The open land to the south of the Church and Manor House is crucial to this. It is former parkland, with important views from the public footpath of this significant group of buildings.
- 2.2.3 This important open space relates visually and historically to the Manor House, the Church and Somerford Keynes House. Map evidence shows this area to have historically been parkland to the Manor House. Formerly an avenue of trees extended from the south elevation of the Manor House, terminating at the proposed southern boundary edge. Although the avenue has been removed, some mature trees survive. To the west of the Manor House is an historic fishpond, which most likely related to the Manor Farm Complex.
- 2.2.4 There is a clear visual inter-relationship between the area of former parkland and the surrounding listed buildings. To the Manor House just a low wall separates the two, containing an opening that would have led on to the avenue of trees. The western edge of the garden to Somerford Keynes House bounds the open space and features a ha-ha, designed to give the house a pleasing parkland aspect.



Figure 1: *View north towards the Manor House and Church, from the public footpath that crosses their historic parkland setting.*



Figure 2: *View south west from the gateway adjacent to the Church, along the public footpath, showing one of the mature historic parkland trees.*

- 2.2.5 There is an important open space to the north of Somerford Keynes House, containing the sweeping driveway to this former vicarage. Trees line a lane to its north, which is also enclosed by dry stone walling, hedging and grass verges. From the lane there are views across the green open space towards Somerford Keynes House. A footpath crosses the southern edge of the space, connecting the Church and the main street.



Figure 3: *View east along the lane from the Church.*

2.2.6 The second character area is larger and comprises the main village street. Although the settlement pattern here is linear, there are gentle curves in its route through the village. This creates points where views down the street terminate, for example where Croft Cottage forms a focal building in views from the south.



Figure 4: *View north from Croft House, along the main village street, towards Croft Cottage.*

2.2.7 Historically buildings were fairly dispersed along the main street, separated by orchards and gardens. In the twentieth century a number of houses have infilled these spaces. These tend to follow the linear pattern of the settlement but, unlike the historic buildings which are set directly on or close to the street, they are often set further back within their plots. Generally a strong sense of enclosure is maintained all along the main street, with stone front boundary walls.



Figure 5: *View south along the main village street, towards The Bakers Arms, showing high enclosing walls and mature trees.*

2.2.8 Throughout the Conservation Area open spaces, many within private gardens, make an important contribution to its character. These spaces give the village an open grain, providing visual separation between buildings, and forming an important part of their setting. In particular the abundance of mature trees makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the area, providing height and a sense of enclosure in many locations.

2.3 Building types, styles and features

- 2.3.1 There are a number of listed buildings within the Conservation Area, and these are indicated on the map accompanying this appraisal. Also indicated are some historic unlisted buildings (non-designated heritage assets) that are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. A non-designated heritage asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having heritage significance, be it archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.
- 2.3.2 It should be noted that not all the heritage assets in the Conservation Area are illustrated on the map or mentioned in the text of this Appraisal.



Figure 6: *The Church of All Saints is Grade II* Listed and has Norman foundations, with fourteenth century alterations and nineteenth century restoration works. There are numerous listed chest tombs and other monuments within the churchyard.*



Figure 7: *The Manor House is Grade II Listed and dates to at least the sixteenth century, but it is largely seventeenth century. It is typical of a higher status Cotswold vernacular house of that period, with stone tiled roof, large gables, stone cross-mullioned windows and Tudor-arched doorways. To the west there are further listed farm buildings relating to the Manor.*



Figure 8: *A pair of unlisted late nineteenth century cottages to the north of the Church.*



Figure 9: *Somerford Keynes House (Grade II Listed) dates to 1804 and is a large house built in the classical style, with overhanging hipped slate roof, sash windows and a Doric porch. The house is set within attractive grounds, open to the former parkland to its west.*



Figure 10: *Croft House (Grade II Listed) is a larger and higher status historic house within the village, with a politer architectural character. It dates to the early eighteenth century, with nineteenth and twentieth century alterations. It is set within large grounds, and views of the building are fairly restricted from the street due to a higher enclosing wall and trees.*



Figure 11: *The large stable block (Grade II Listed) adjacent to the Dower House, built in about 1920, has a plain clay tiled roof, with hipped dormers, and high level half-round windows set within stone surrounds.*



Figure 12: *The Old Vicarage dates to the 1920s, and was designed by the notable local architect V A Lawson. It, unusually for the village, is roughcast rendered.*

2.3.3 Most of the other historic buildings in the village are built in the Cotswold vernacular style. These include a public house, an old school house, the old post office, and numerous historic cottages. Typical characteristics of these buildings are:

- One-and-a-half to two-and-a-half storeys in height
- Simple in form, with narrow steep gables, and end of ridge chimneys
- Eaves and verges are plainly detailed in the local style
- Small casement windows and dormers

2.3.4 There are some examples of traditional stone outbuildings throughout the village. Typical characteristics of these are:

- Single storey in height
- Very simple in form, with narrow steep gables
- Eaves and verges are plainly detailed in the local style
- Functional door openings and limited window openings

2.3.5 The majority of frontages are enclosed with traditional stone boundary walls. Typical characteristics of these are:

- Low in height, with just some examples of higher walls to larger houses and historic walled gardens
- In most cases a plain rounded mortar capping
- Gateways are generally just narrow breaks in the walls
- There are a few examples of ashlar stone gate piers



Figure 13: *The Old School House at the northern end of the village, dating to the nineteenth century.*



Figure 14: *The Bakers Arms pub (Grade II Listed) dates to the eighteenth century.*



Figure 15: A Grade II Listed cottage, dating to the late seventeenth century.



Figure 16: An unlisted cottage, with an attractive stone tile roof.



Figure 17: An unlisted cottage, with a blue slate roof, and distinctive arch-headed windows.

2.4 Building materials

- Buildings are constructed of local natural stone, generally in coursed rubble, but with some use of cut ashlar blocks on higher status buildings.
- There is wide use of natural stone tile roofing, a key element of the Cotswold vernacular. Some buildings are roofed in natural blue slate. Others, typically of late nineteenth century or earlier twentieth century date, are roofed in red clay plain tile.
- Chimneys are constructed in stone, with some in red brick.
- Boundary walls are traditional local dry stone construction.

3. Condition assessment

- ✓ A good number of buildings, both listed and unlisted, retain their natural stone tile roof coverings. Others maintain traditional natural blue slate and clay tiles.
- ✓ There is good survival of chimney stacks, which contribute to the architectural character of the buildings and add to the interest of the village roofscape.
- ✓ There is good survival of dry stone boundary walls to frontages throughout the conservation area, providing valuable enclosure to the street.
- ✓ Throughout the conservation area trees remain abundant, making a vital contribution to its character and appearance.

- ✘ There have been some cases of replacement windows installed in unlisted historic buildings that have detracted from the character and appearance of the conservation area. This is due to instances of non-traditional framing, glazing divisions and proportions, and some use of UPVC rather than timber.
- ✘ There are some examples of close-boarded fencing set behind boundary walls and high vehicular access gates that are beginning to detract from the street scene in certain locations.
- ✘ The treatment of some larger car parking areas detracts from the appearance of these open spaces and the setting of nearby buildings. This includes extensive tarmac surfacing and uncharacteristic enclosure, as well as a lack of landscaping or planting.

General information on CAs can be found at –

- <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/conservation-areas/>
- <http://www.cotswold.gov.uk/residents/planning-building/historic-buildings-conservation-areas/conservation-area-maps-and-appraisals/>

The formal consultation draft Somerford Keynes Conservation Area Appraisal was prepared by
Heritage and Design Service,
Cotswold District Council.

For further information or to submit comments please contact planning@cotswold.gov.uk

Deadline for comments - ???????



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