

# WANSFORD CONSERVATION AREA AND VILLAGE APPRAISAL

## REPORT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN



**Prepared by:** Planning Delivery Services, Peterborough City Council

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# **WANSFORD CONSERVATION AREA AND VILLAGE APPRAISAL REPORT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Conservation Areas are "...areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The purpose of conservation area designation is to retain the special character and appearance of an area and to bring forward measures to enhance its appearance and historic interest. Designation demonstrates a commitment to positive action.

The local planning authority is required to periodically review its conservation areas. A character appraisal is a way of identifying the key features that define the special interest of an area and proposals for enhancement. It is important that all those who have an interest in the conservation area are aware of those elements that must be preserved or enhanced.

This report assesses the historic and architectural qualities of Wansford, sets a measurable 2007 benchmark for future monitoring and makes recommendations for the management of the area over the next 10-15 years to ensure its special character, historic fabric and appearance are retained and enhanced. The information will be used as a basis to monitor the general appearance and condition of the Conservation Area and assessing progress in implementing the Management Plan. This report will be a useful source of information for residents, applicants and others who live in Wansford.

It is expected that further periodic reviews will take place with residents during this period. The report can be viewed or downloaded at [www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk) Copies are available on request from Planning Services, Stuart House East Wing, St Johns Street, Peterborough. A summary on public consultation is available.

The character appraisal will:

- identify the areas special character
- review existing conservation area boundaries
- provide a basis for considering planning proposals that affect the area
- make recommendations to ensure its special qualities are retained and enhanced.

**The Wansford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was adopted on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2008 as City Council approved guidance and is a material consideration when making planning decisions and considering other changes affecting the area to ensure that its special character and appearance is not harmed.**

### Scope of appraisal

The village of Wansford / Wansford (Stibbington) cum Sibson lies within the areas of Peterborough City Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and East Northamptonshire District Council. This appraisal relates to the village envelope and conservation area lying north of the river and south of the A47.

The primary focus of the appraisal is the existing conservation area. However, an appreciation of the historic and architectural significance of areas beyond the conservation area and village envelope has been undertaken. The conclusions and recommendations reflect the wider appraisal investigations. The appraisal reflects the advice given by English Heritage on Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans<sup>1</sup>. The appraisal draws on the Wansford Village Design Statement, adopted by Peterborough City Council in 2003 as planning guidance [www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk)

## **2. WANSFORD CONSERVATION AREA**

The village of Wansford lies on the northern bank of the River Nene, adjacent to the A1 and approximately seven miles west of Peterborough. It is a unique historic settlement. The nucleus of the conservation area is formed by the historic core of the village. The conservation area boundary is shown at appendix 2

The Wansford Conservation Area was designated by the former Huntingdon and Peterborough County Council in 1974.

## **3. A BRIEF HISTORY OF SETTLEMENT**

From earliest times, a point where the river Nene could be forded was of great strategic significance. This, combined with the rich natural resources of riverside pastures, flood plain fields and nearby woodlands made the Nene valley a good place for ancient settlement. The Sites and Monument Record includes stray finds of flint scrapers, arrowheads and axes from the Neolithic period close to and within Wansford village. Other finds from the Bronze and Iron Ages were made when the river was dredged and canalised in the 1930's; anecdotal evidence makes reference to Roman and medieval boats, wharves, jetties and revetments.

The Roman roads and nearby town of Durobrivae heightened the geographical importance of Wansford. It was close to the intersection of the great highways of Ermine Street and a major east west road and at least one bridge was constructed to carry Ermine Street across the river. The sites of Roman villas, quarries and other structures all lay within a few hundred metres of the current village centre. It is likely that Wansford was close to the head of the Nene navigation. There is evidence of settlement in the Wansford/Stibbington area around the port where materials such as stone, timber and bulk goods such as pottery and agricultural produce were transferred from one transport mode to another. Archaeologists have demonstrated that from Bronze Age times there was international trade in valuable goods such as pottery, metalwork, jewellery etc and this greatly expanded under the Roman Empire.

Location and the availability of local natural resources were undoubtedly factors that contributed to Wansford's importance in Saxon times. This wealth is reflected in the Saxon stone church. It is likely that the Saxon domestic settlement comprised a series of farmsteads, built in wood, lime and thatch, each situated just above flood plain level, in the centre of a small home field, strung out along the river valley. It may be that the small field boundaries alongside the Nene on the west side of the river due south of the present bridge and east of the A1 road bridge on the north bank are survivors from this period.

The Norman period brought major changes to the landscape and the village. The rolling landscape beyond the flood meadows was well suited to the open-field system; this would have gradually superseded the smaller scale Saxon enclosures. The great Norman building programme required vast amounts of stone and the nearby quarries were opened and exploited; it is likely stone would have been hauled along track ways to the Nene where it was put on barges for transportation to Ely, Cambridge, Wisbech and beyond. Woodlands such as Ring Haw, Old Sulehay and Bedford Purlieus were once part of the Rockingham Forest and common access to them and their woodland products was restricted by royal command. Between the woods and river valley, the landscape would have been open in character, bisected by many tracks providing access to common fields. A wooden bridge is known to have existed, because in 1234, King Henry III granted an oak from the Forest of Clive (possibly Cliffe) for repair of the bridge. In 1330, a statutory obligation to repair was placed on the Vill of Wansford following an inquiry to investigate the causes of the bridges neglect. The river crossing was therefore seen as a matter of national importance. In following years, the King granted the people of Wansford pontage (taxes on river traffic) for all wares passing under the bridge, in recognition of the burden the maintenance of the bridge imposed on the local community.

It is suggested that Wansford provided a staging point where building materials from the Low Countries, coal from the north east and other bulk goods were unloaded onto barges at ports

such as Wisbech and sailed up-river to Wansford. Here they were re-loaded onto wagons and transported by road to the midlands and north and south via the Great North Road. Local stone, timber and agricultural products would have made the return journey.

Medieval Wansford was a place with wharves, workshops and warehouses, with mills and inns and stables. The wealth it generated is reflected in a succession of builds and re-builds to the church with the 13th century tower, the 14th century spire and the 15th century raising of the aisle and clerestory's.

The current bridge was commissioned by Elizabeth I and dates from 1577. It is reputed that part of the reason for its construction was to provide a more direct route to Burghley House, the residence of Lord Burghley, one of her key councillors and Lord treasurer. The Haycock Inn was already in existence at this time. The original bridge structure consisted of 13 arches but 3 were washed away in a flood in 1672. Subsequent rebuilding took place between 1672 and 1674 and again in 1795, when 5 arches gave place to 2 wider ones. Thus today's structure has 10 arches. Acts were passed in parliament in the 17th century to require the river to be made navigable upstream.

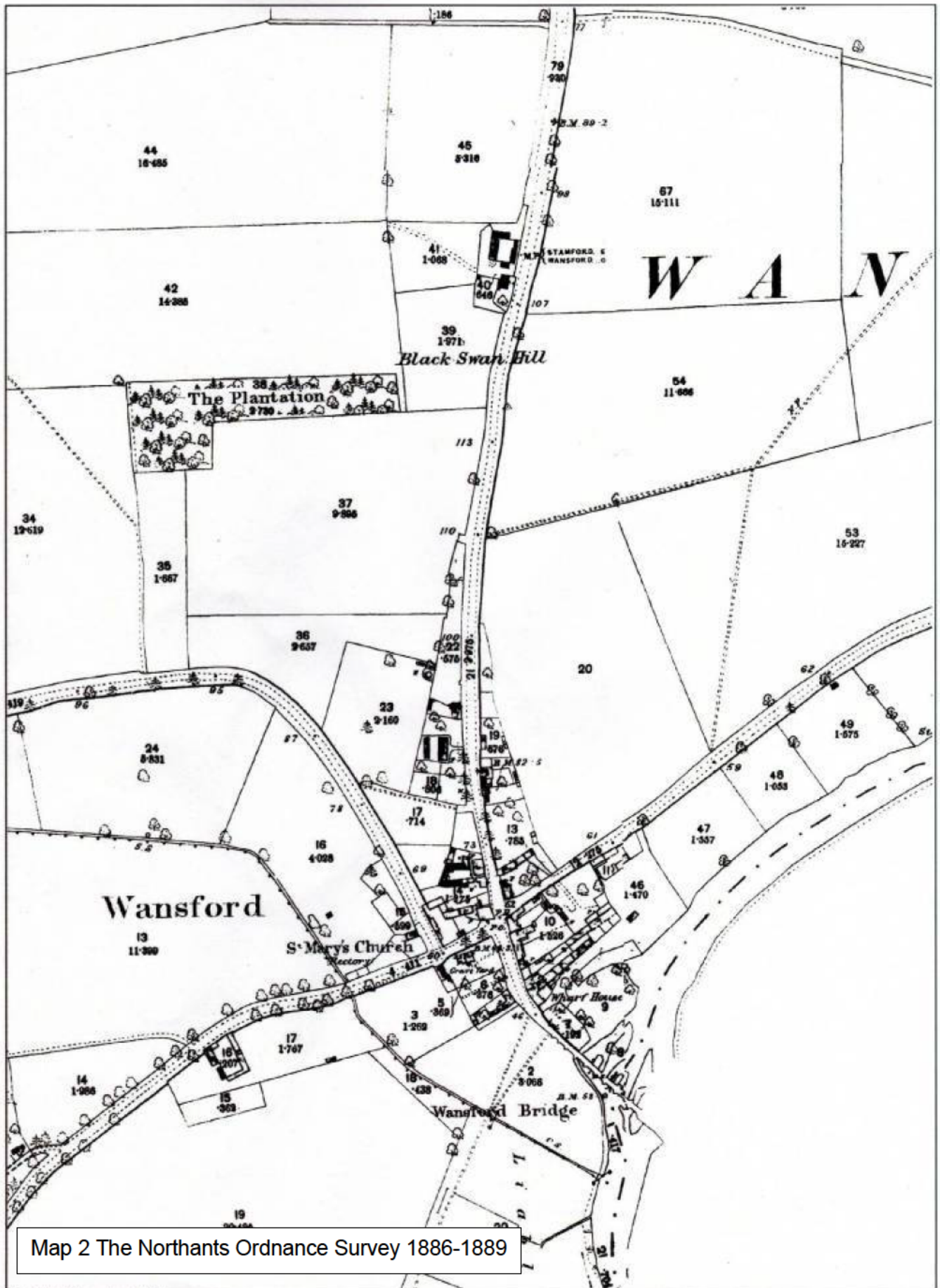
The growth of trade and ideas in the 18th century stimulated the need for faster communications; Wansford was a key staging post on the London/York/Edinburgh route with the Great North Road crossing the river and running through the centre of the village. As the volume of traffic increased, the Haycock expanded and other inns sprung up, including the former Mermaid Inn, which stood at the junction of North Road opposite the church. In 1748, Acts passed to improve Great North Road between Stamford and Wansford and in 1790 further road improvements provided better access to Kettering and the Midlands.

The 18th century also brought major changes in agriculture, resulting in the enclosure of the open fields and reorganisation of the landscape into farmsteads. It is likely that the settlement had always been clustered around the bridge crossing. The enclosure movement resulted in the demolition of scattered hovels to make way for the new field systems, to be replaced by new cottages within the settlements. However, the rather grander 18th century houses also shape the character of today's village. Most of these are clearly related to either the river, especially Wharf House and associated former warehouses (now converted to dwellings) and the highway traffic, such as 1 Old North Road (Greystones). Turnpikes had improved the quality of the road and by 1800; London was about a day's coach ride away, making Wansford a convenient stopping point. This sort of speed required regular changes of horses, hence the former stables to the rear of Greystone.

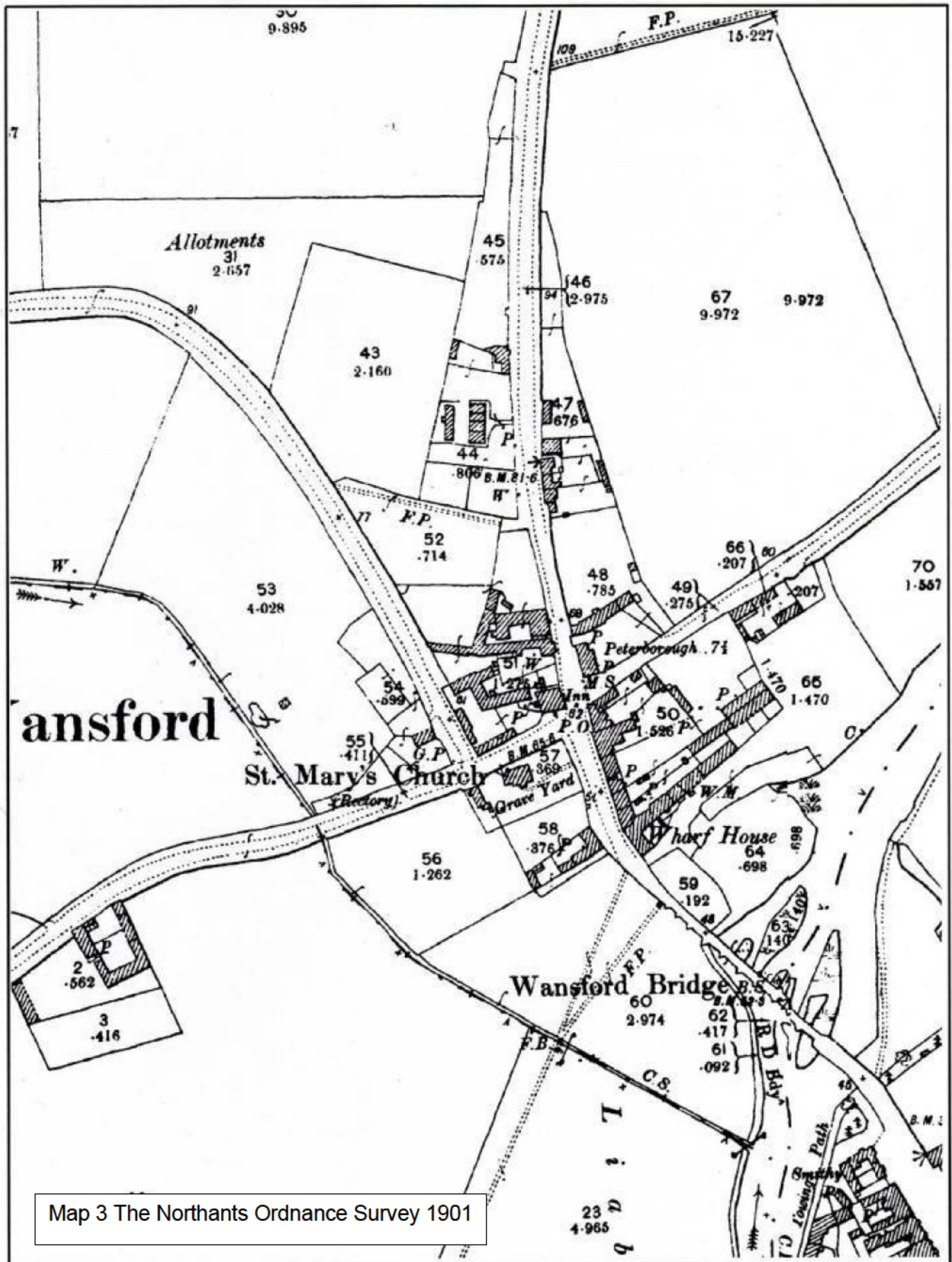
On the south side of the river, industry grew up, now remembered in names such as of the Papermills public house. Until 1845, Wansford was still a place dominated by river and road. By 1846 the first railway reached Peterborough linking it to London and Birmingham and a railway station, level crossing and signal box were constructed at Stibbington. The coming of the railways effectively meant the end of river transport and lessened the urgency to improve the road surfaces.

The 1886 OS map shows Wansford as a small settlement of around 30 main buildings arranged with frontages to the north river bank and either side of the North Road both sides of the church cross roads. The population is recorded as 143 in 1871 but only 82 in 1901. This large drop cannot be explained solely by the enclosures; it may be that there were changes in the census areas, or people moved to the rapidly expanding Peterborough. However at the turn of the 20th century, Wansford was still a small village, deriving a modest prosperity from road and river transport. The major change of the first half of the 20th century was the construction of the Great North Road Bridge and diversion of the now A1 trunk route during 1925-1928. The village was then bypassed and effectively isolated from its lifeblood. The Georgian port and inn stop became a 20th century quiet backwater. Further road works in the 1940's resulted in the demolition of 18th century buildings either side of the Old North Road/Yarwell Road junction. This opened up the village centre to create the "village green" feel that remains to this day. Aside from these





Map 2 The Northants Ordnance Survey 1886-1889



Map 3 The Northants Ordnance Survey 1901

Title OS 1901

Department

Drg. No.

PCC GIS

Scale

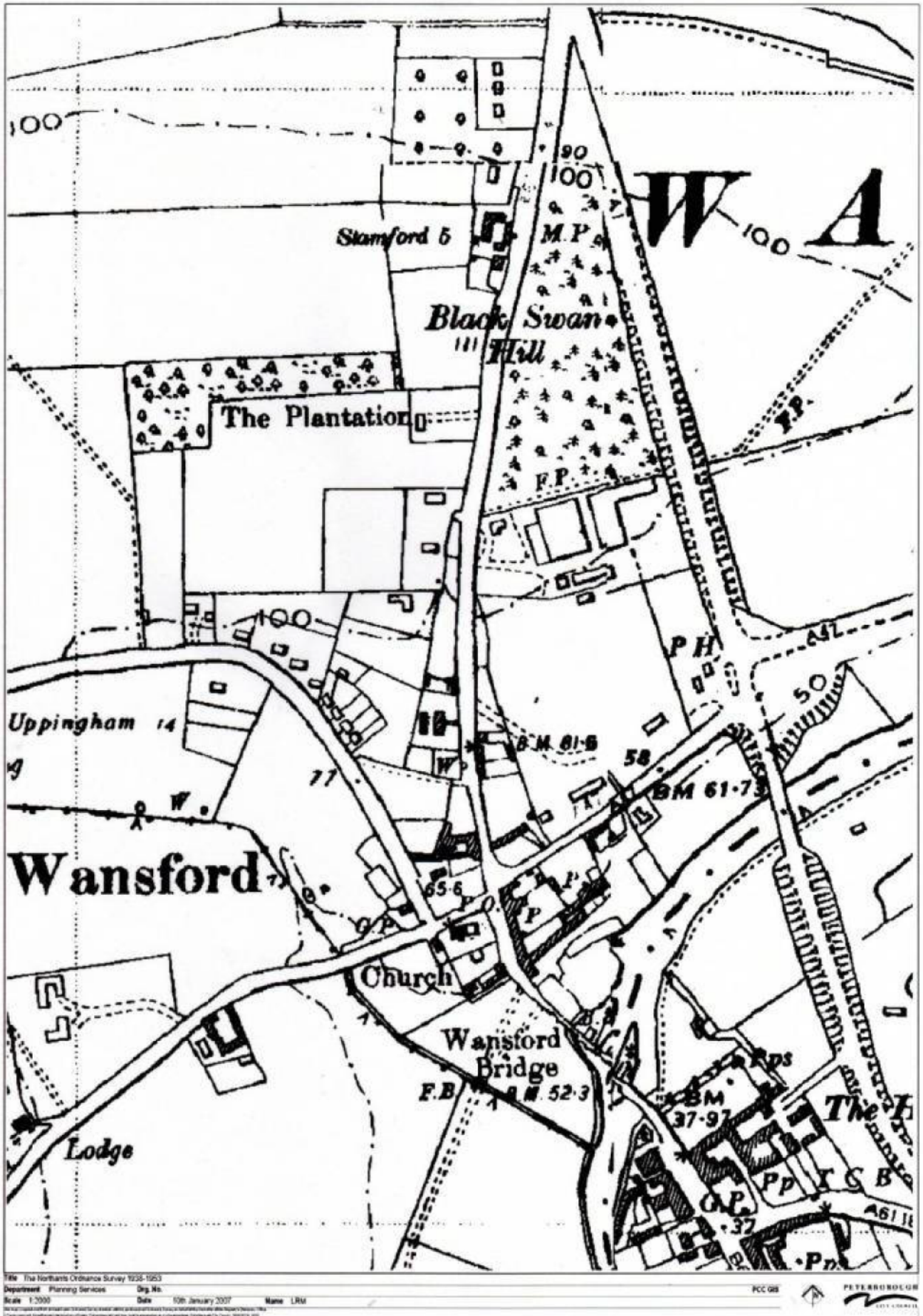
Date 19th January 2007

Name



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Map 4 The Northants Ordnance Survey 1938-1953

public works, only a small amount of development took place in the interwar period. Even as late as 1960, the built fabric of the remained much as it had been for the previous 200 years. Although the ancient riverside closes and footpaths to the east were truncated by the new trunk road, they could still be seen in the landscape.

At this time, Wansford and the neighbouring parishes of Stibbington and Sibson had several inns, a school, church, chapel, shops, a smithy, the railway and goods yard and other typical local workshops and mills as well as local cricket and football clubs. Today, almost all residents commute out of the village for work and leisure.

From the 1970's substantial amounts of new housing was built along road frontages and in estates between the village and the A47. Invariably, these are detached dwellings of 4 bedrooms or more, set back from the road frontages and accessed by a driveway. This form of development is in stark contrast to the traditional terraces set at the pavement back edge, which were the dominant built form until the 20th century. House building resulted in steady population growth to 350 in 1971 rising to 400 in 1981 and 443 by 1991. These village expansions were made possible by increased car ownership and commuting. To cope with this increasing car use, village roads were re-engineered with modern street lighting, concrete kerbs and tarmac footpaths and carriageways. The general rise in traffic volumes on trunk roads also required the installation of the half cloverleaf junction to the A1/A47 junction.

All this development has largely removed evidence of the ancient field patterns and their boundaries that appeared to have survived up to the mid 20th century. However, the alignment of the roads and, of course, the river historic bridge remains largely unchanged since medieval times.

#### **4. SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS & ARCHAEOLOGY**

There is just one scheduled ancient monument in the parish, this being the 1577 bridge. However, there have been many records of chance finds in the locality including mesolithic flint instruments (Scheduled Monuments Record number 00130), Roman artefacts including a bracelet, pot, and a fishing net weight (SMR record number 07856), and an Anglo Saxon spearhead (SMR 00129). Anecdotal evidence suggests that Roman and Medieval wharfs and moorings were in existence in the 1960's. Immediately west of the village, beside the Nassington road stood a Roman villa. To the east just above the river terraces and to the south of the Haycock are known sites of Roman settlement. There are also many ancient limekilns, quarries etc in the area.

Excavations just north of the Haycock (SMR 50532) yielded few significant archaeological finds, confirming that the river was prone to flooding and the early settlements, as indicated by Roman sites and the church, were located on high ground above the flood plain. However, the wet and silty alluvial soils of the flood plain provide a medium where riverside remains such as wharfs, wooden piles and even boats may remain preserved.

The map-based evidence indicates that the former riverside field closes may have Saxon origins. These have been largely built over on the east side of the bridge, but remain on the west side. Here they are unlikely to be developed because they are in the floodplain.

The extent of the settlement appears to have remained unchanged from medieval times through to the 1900's. Therefore there is a probability of evidence of earlier structures and artefacts within the current conservation area, particularly close to road frontages.

Current planning policies do not specifically recognise the potential archaeological remains that may exist in the village and its environs. The conservation area could include the series of closes that existed to the east of the village between the river and Peterborough Road. There may also be a case for the inclusion of the Grade II\* listed road bridge.

## 5. LANDSCAPE SETTING

Wansford is situated on the River Nene at the point where it descends from the rolling Northamptonshire landscape to the flat fenland. It is at the boundary of the Lower and Upper Nene Valley landscape character areas. To the west, the river is within a distinct valley with steeply sloping sides. To the east, it meanders through a relatively broad floodplain. The shallowing of the river also gave opportunities to cross, hence the name Wansford ('the ford by the spring').

The river valley runs along the line where Northamptonshire limestone rises from the overlaying clay. The southern/eastern valley slope is therefore mainly clay, whilst to the western valley slope the limestone bedrock lies close to the surface. The valley floor comprises of alluvial soils. The exposures of the high quality limestone were exploited from before Roman times for building and a number of ancient quarries lie close to the village.

Until canalisation in the 1930's, the valley floor either side of the village was sub-divided into a series of closes. This patchwork field pattern, which may have had its origins in Saxon times and earlier, still exists to the west of the bridge, where the water meadows remain, albeit as improved and semi improved grassland.

The drier valley sides were farmed under the open field system until the 18th century enclosures, when the open fields were fenced and hedged and the local systems of paths and highways 'rationalised'. The 18th century enclosure hedgerows still exist on the valley sides, giving a sense of the traditional perception of English Midlands landscape. Twentieth century arable farming has removed some hedgerows, returning a more open aspect to the valley. The higher ground to the north is wooded. Old Sulehay Forest is a remnant of Rockingham Forest. Royal ownership and rights were undoubtedly a factor in the retention of the patchwork of ancient woodlands that still exist in Peterborough and East Northamptonshire.



Views west of Nene valley from Wansford Bridge

Until the 20th century, Wansford was a small stone settlement nestled in the Nene Valley, clustered around the church and ancient bridge, but with the vitality of the inns and stables of a staging point and the wharves and warehouses of a small port. This would have presented a scene reminiscent of a Constable painting.

The 20th century has brought 3 major changes: Firstly, the Great North Road became the A1 and was realigned, widened with new bridges and junctions. The A1 and the A47 now bypass the village but dominate the landscape and present a physical and psychological barrier between the village and landscape to the east and north.

Secondly, the river was confined and canalised in the 1930's and the flood meadows drained bringing an engineered character to the Nene and its valley. River transport ceased by the 1950's and the moorings, wharfs, yards and warehouses were abandoned.

Thirdly, the compact settlement was extended northwards and quadrupled in size by the new ribbon and estate housing. Before the 20th century, Wansford was a settlement nestled in a valley; today, new development extends up the north valley side and breaks the skyline.

## 6. APPROACHES TO WANSFORD

### The Approach from the South



Wansford Bridge circa. 1924/1925 & present

There is a strong sense of anticipation when passing the Haycock and arriving at the historic bridge to pass across the river. The narrow parapets with the pedestrian refuges give a strong sense of human scale but also a vantage point for views of the distant church spire and open flood meadows. To the west the river is more arcaded and enclosed by trees. On crossing the bridge, one arrives at Bridge End. Here the presence of the 18th century buildings, mainly sited on the back edge of the footpath and rising ground gives a strong sense of enclosure. This contrasts with the openness of the bridge passage.

There is a clear sense of arrival at the Yarwell/Peterborough Road crossroads, mainly due to the powerful presence of the church and the open 'village green' feel of the central space.

As can be seen from the photographs above, this approach has remained largely unchanged for a century. However, today there is a clear conflict between the use of the bridge by pedestrians and the relatively high volumes of motor traffic; the bridge is no longer a comfortable place to walk or linger and look at the landscape.

### The Approach from the North

The Old North Road name denotes that this entrance was once a main north/south transport artery. The descent to the crossroads still gives a sudden sense of arrival. The presence of a settlement is marked by wooden garden fencing and the modern estate development of Swanhill and Black Swan Spinney. As one descends down the road, the stone frontage walls, imposing presence of 19 Old North Road and cottages 2, 4 and 6 Old North Road hint of a historic settlement. This is confirmed close to the crossroads by 17th century No 1 Old North Road and views of the church.



View from Old North Road

## The Approaches from the West

### *1) The Old Leicester Road (pictured below left)*

There is a sharp transition from landscape to built form. However, the built form comprises of 20th century estate ribbon development. On descending from the limestone ridge, the former stables buildings close to the pavement edge suddenly frame the view of St Mary's Church. Immediately past this gateway, the view opens at the village centre. The old stone field walls either side of the road denote that this new development replaced an agricultural landscape.



### *2) Yarwell Road (pictured below)*

The approach of a settlement is marked by isolated buildings on the limestone plateau and from this, a steep decent where groups of buildings (the doctors surgery) and trees give notice of the village centre. The sense of arrival is sudden when one ascends from a sharp dip in the road and the view opens onto the more open village core.



## The Approach from the East

On leaving the A1 there is a sense of relief to find oneself in a quite village street. The street character is mixed with assertive 20th century buildings on the southside and a high quality 2m-traditional stone retaining wall and trees on the north frontage. Midway along, the stone built terrace of No's 22a - 25 and the stone wall opposite form a strong sense of enclosure and from this point the general feel is of a traditional village street. Just before one reaches the central crossroads, the spire of the church comes into view heralding the village centre. The combination of the church and the open space make for a clear sense of arrival.



View from Peterborough Road

## 7. THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

### 7.1 Building Periods

**Only 5% of buildings in Wansford date from before 1800; 13% are 19th century; and 82% were built 20th century. In the conservation area, 21% of buildings date from before 1800; 45% are 19th century, and 34% were built in the 20th century.**

There are about 200 buildings that can be seen from the road frontages and form the street scenes of the village. These include all types of dwellings (detached, semi-detached and terrace), a church and other buildings including former stables and warehouses. About 18% of these date from before the 20th century. Most of the buildings present on the 1886 OS Map survive to this day. The exceptions being the 18th century buildings on the north side of the Yarwell Road/Old North Road crossroads which were demolished to make way for junction improvements in the 1940's and a terrace of cottages on the Old North Road east side.. Most buildings on the 1886 O.S. map are from the 18th century and it is likely that these replaced post medieval structures on the same frontages. Notable exceptions are No19 Old North Road, an exuberant Tudor style Duke of Bedford estate house, designed by architect S.S. Teulon and built for the cooper George Eyres, and No 1 Old North Road; a house of 17th century origins.



The Mermaid Inn, Old North Road 1925



Former Little Chef restaurant, Peterborough Road

Wansford is unique in having 2 listed bridges. Both the 1557 Elizabethan stone bridge and the Great North Road concrete bridge constructed between 1925 and 1928 were built to transport traffic across the River Nene.

Within the conservation area 12 buildings (or 17%) date from before 1900. In contrast the 20th century accounts for 81% of buildings in the village envelope but only 32.7% of buildings in the conservation area.

### 7.2 Protected Buildings

**Listed buildings make up less than 7% of buildings in the village, but over 20% of buildings in the conservation area. No buildings are subject to Article 4 Directions.**

There are 10 listed buildings and 2 listed structures in the village as detailed in the table below. However, within the conservation area are other traditional terraces mainly from the 19th century that substantially contribute its character and appearance. These include 2, 4 and 6 Old North Road, and 1, 2, 3 and 4 Peterborough Road. It may be that some of these may be suitable for adding for group value listing or Article 4 Directions.

The Art Deco inspired former Little Chef, which is close to and contemporary with the Grade II\* listed bridge, has been considered for protection but unsuccessful.

<b>Wansford's Listed Buildings</b>					
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Roof Material</b>	<b>Wall Material</b>
45/673	Church of St Mary, Bridge End	I	C13	Collyweston slate & Lead	Coursed Stone
45/674	No 4 (Meadow Cottage), Bridge End	II	C18	Thatch	Coursed Stone
45/675	The Corner House, Bridge End	II	C18	Collyweston slate	Coursed Stone
45/676	No 3 (Fielding House), Bridge End	II	C18	Collyweston slate	Coursed Stone
45/677	No 5 (Church House), Bridge End	II	C18	Collyweston slate	Coursed Stone
45/678	No 7 Bridge End	II	C18	Collyweston slate	Coursed Stone
45/679	Dowenderry House & Bridge Cottage, Bridge End	II	C18	Collyweston slate	Coursed Stone
45/680	No 11 (Wharf House), Bridge End	II	C18	Collyweston slate	Coursed Stone
45/681	Barn & Stables (adjoining ref 45/680), Bridge End	II	C18	Collyweston slate	Stone
45/682	Wansford Bridge	I	C16		Ashlar
45/683	No 1 (Greystoke), Old North Road	II	C17	Collyweston slate	Ashlar
45/684	No 19 (Hillside), Old North Road	II	C19	Collyweston slate	Coursed Stone
45/713	Great North Road Bridge	II*	C20		Concrete

### 7.3 Building Heights and Plan Forms

**Up to 1900, ceiling heights ranged from under 2 metres in cottages to about 3 metres in formal houses such as Wharf House and Downderry House. There was also great variety in forms with three storey, two storey with attics, two storey and single storey cottages with attics all side-by-side. In the 20th century, floor to ceiling heights became standardised at 2.3 metres, and single and 2 storey buildings were set out in evenly spaced rows to a rigid building line. In the village 70% of all buildings have been constructed to building regulation standards; in the conservation area, the figure is 53%.**



Views of Bridge End (East side) Former post office, Fielding Ho. Downderry Ho. Bridge Cottage

18th century properties include the Wharf House terrace and warehouses, the former post office and the former stables range.

The Fielding House, Church House and Wharf House range are formally proportioned 18th century houses combining the architectural detailing of the day with locally available materials. These properties have a relatively narrow plan form, are of 2 storeys with attics under steeply pitched Collyweston roofs.

18th century cottages are mainly of one storey with attics, and also have narrow plan forms. They are built in rubble with steep pitched roofs in Collyweston slate or thatch.

19th century structures include typical narrow spanned cottages such as 1 Yarwell Road and the stables to 3 Great North Road; there are also wide plan cottages, for example 11 - 17 Old North

Road. Numbers 2 and 19 Old North Road are more idiosyncratic examples of 19th century architecture, and so do not conform to a specific type of form.

20th century buildings have no typical form, ranging from municipal terraces and semi detached dwellings from the first half of the 20th century to the chalet bungalows and the 'executive style' properties on Robins Field constructed in the second half of the 20th century.

#### 7.4 Building Materials

**Before about 1850 the only building materials were local stone, Collyweston slate, and thatch. By the 20th century over 70% of all buildings in Wansford had modern concrete tile roofs, and 57.8% of all buildings were constructed in modern bricks.**

Until the 1930's, almost every building was constructed in locally quarried oolitic limestone. Cottages were in rough stone (rubble) laid in strict, but narrow, courses with larger dressed stones (quoins) used on the corners and in window and door reveals. Grander houses were built of better quality dressed stone (freestone), laid in wider courses and incorporating stone windowsills and heads and other decorative features. The highest quality buildings such as Wharf House were constructed in ashlar, with carved stone mouldings and detailing. Without exception, their roofs are in Collyweston slate.



Stone and Collyweston



Wharf House



Stone and thatch

Although the coming of the railways in the mid 19th century made cheap Welsh Slate available, this has not been widely used, with the preference remaining for Collyweston slate. The 20th century saw the introduction of mass-produced manufactured bricks and concrete tiles. These completely replaced stone, thatch and local slate as materials for new building and building renovation. The great majority of modern buildings are in modern mass-manufactured bricks and concrete tiles.

Stronger recent conservation policies since the 1990's have resulted in the re-adoption of traditional local building materials, especially within the conservation area. Today, the availability of local stone and the excellent visual qualities of replica Collyweston slate have also reinforced the use of traditionally based building materials. Furthermore, recent interpretations of the Building Regulations have allowed the use of thatch on new buildings, and a modern stone



property complete with a thatch roof has been recently erected. In fact, all building works in the new millennium have embraced traditional materials, both inside and outside the conservation area. This is important to redress the policy interpretation that has led to visually very different villages, with far more care being given to new building within the conservation area.



Development pre 2000



Development post 2000

## 7.5 The Built Fabric

Typical 18th century cottages are of 1 storey and attics with:



Longstraw thatch roofs with Collyweston slate roofs with hipped dormers, incorporating hooded or eyebrow dormers clay hogback ridge tiles, laced valleys and tile hung dormer cheeks

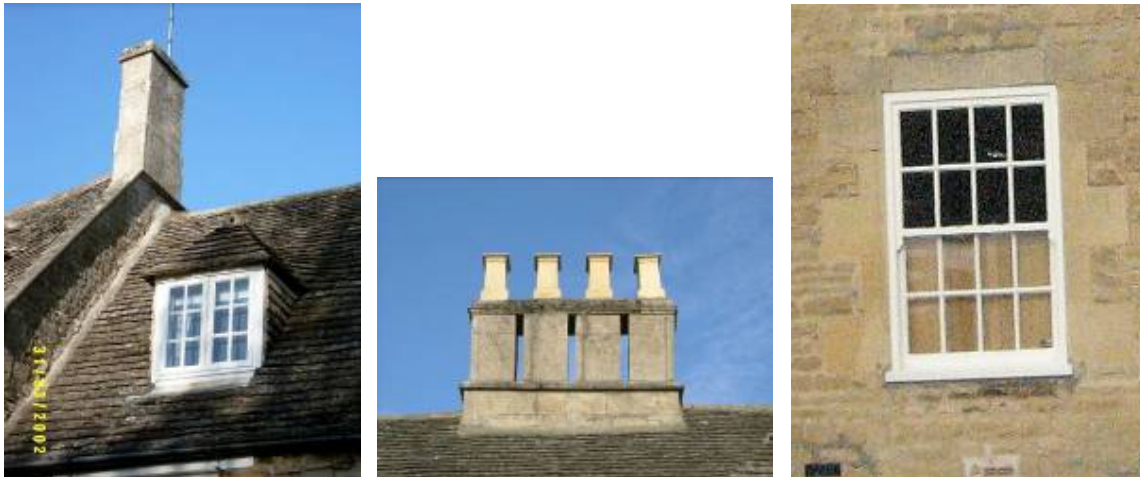


Chimneys are in stone. Most cottage windows are casements but there are also sash windows



most of the original plank doors have been replaced with modern pvc or joinery. Original detailing such as the door frames, steps and boot scrapers still survive.

Typical 18th century houses are of 2 storeys and attics with:



Steep pitched Collyweston roofs incorporating parapet gables and ashlar chimneys with hipped, casement dormers. Walls are in high quality freestone with ashlar window and door reveals and flat arch and quay block lintels.



Sash windows, either tripartite or double square to ground and first floor with casement dormers to the attics.



Flush panelled and raised panelled doors with decorative fan lights and ornamental joinery including moulded cantilever door hoods and modillion eaves.

Typical 19th century cottages are of 1 storey and attics and 2 storeys with:



Steep-pitched Collyweston roofs incorporating gabled dormers breaking the eaves line and simple clipped eaves and verges. Chimneys remained in ashlar.



Casement windows under a wooden lintel with wood or stone sills.



Plank doors with robust wrought iron latches and hinges and details such as steps and foot scrapers. Some of these are now being replaced with modern joinery.

Wansford's 19th century houses are idiosyncratic and untypical.



19 Old North Road

No. 19 Old North Road was built in 1850 when the village was still owned by the Dukes of Bedford. The design is by architect S.S. Teulon and is in similar Tudor-Gothic style to the ornamental buildings in the model Bedford estate village of Thorney. The structure is in course stone with freestone dressings and a Collyweston roof; it has a 2 storey canted bay with corbelled gable containing the Duke of Bedford Arms and with a stone mullioned and transomed window. The left-hand porch has a four-centred arch with the date 1850 in the spandrel; the ledged plank door has heavy wrought iron hinges. To the south is the Coopers workshop in similar style. The windows are cast iron diamond lights, again similar to contemporary patterns in Thorney.

No. 3 Old North Road is a 19th century house, probably re-fronted to include a porch based on classical influences with 4 fluted piers on plinth bases incorporating ionic capitals with volutes and brackets supporting the over sailing first floor. The windows are oak framed and transomed with metal framed and leaded lights. The ground floor is in ashlar, the first floor in timber frame and lime render.



3 Old North Road

20th century houses:



These are generally 2-storey in machine made brick with low-pitched concrete tile roofs and factory-produced casement windows with irregular opening light patterns. They are generally set well back from the road to uniform spacing.

21st century houses:



There are generally in stone incorporating replica Collyweston slate and even thatch roofs. In the conservation area, they are sited with consideration for the historic form of development.

## 7.6 Building Uses

**Almost all buildings in the village are in residential use, with the exception of the church. Public Houses, restaurants and a village shop do exist in the village, south of the Nene and outside the scope of this appraisal.**

It can be seen from the historic buildings remaining that even 50 years ago, there was a greater diversity of building uses. In the village as a whole (north and south of the river) the 19th century OS maps show a chapel, the church, 4 inns/public houses, a smithy, a post office, the station and a small goods yard. From old photographs and the evidence of today's buildings, it can be concluded that there were at least 4 shops.

Today, almost all properties in Wansford are in residential use and most people commute to work outside the village. Properties previously in traditional employment uses (for example the warehouses to Wharf House) have been converted to residential use, or demolished to make way for new homes. Surviving stables and warehouses have been converted into houses or adapted for domestic garages.

The number of people who live and work in Wansford is unknown; the number of residents who work from home is also unknown.

## 8. TREES, HEDGES AND WALLS

There is a clear pattern in the distribution of trees, hedges and walls. Within the historic village, stonewalls enclose frontages and plots. Outside this core, there is less consistency, with stonewalls, brick walls, indigenous and ornamental hedges and wooden fences, all marking boundaries.

Within the historic settlement core, the planting is mainly of native forest type tree species. In the 20th century estates, the emphasis is for ornamental tree and shrub planting.

### 8.1 Trees

The OS 1886-1889 historical map series can normally be taken as giving a reasonable representation of significant trees that existed at this time. It clearly differentiates between coniferous and deciduous trees. It would seem to show most but not all trees that are perhaps at least 30 - 50 years old and therefore prominent in the landscape or street scene at that time. However, experience has shown that fruit and nut trees and orchards are also shown, probably because these trees were far more socially and economically significant than they are today.

Remarkably, the 1886-1889 map shows that much of the structural planting that exists today has been in place for over 120 years. In particular, the Scots pines to the Old North Road, the Willows around Wharf House and the deciduous hedge trees on the Yarwell Road were noteworthy both 120 years ago and today. Some planting, which may have included traditional orchards, appears to have been lost.



Old North Road



River Nene (north)



Yarwell Road

Since the 1930's, the advent of dwarf ornamental trees and conifers has dominated plantings in front gardens and new housing areas. If the character of the conservation area is to be maintained, provision needs to be made now to begin to plant replacements for trees that were already in maturity on the 1886 village map.

### 8.2 Hedges

The native hedges on the south side of the Old Leicester Road and on the Yarwell Road are clearly associated with the late 18th and early 19th century enclosures. These are predominately hawthorn and blackthorn. Almost all other hedges are 20th century and ornamental.

### 8.3 Stone Walls

From at least Saxon times, small fields probably existed immediately around Wansford, used as safe grazing for stock and to grow herbs and fruit that is best cultivated immediately beside the dwelling. Pre-enclosure maps indicate a patchwork of fields close to the village street and it is likely that each field was enclosed by a stone wall.

Almost all walls now surviving, date from the 18th and 19th centuries. Within the conservation area, they were constructed to give security and privacy to the newly erected houses and cottages. On the fringes of the historic core, on the Old Leicester Road and Old North Road, it is likely that the walls mark the boundaries of pre 18th century fields and later enclosures. However, since they would have been built and rebuilt on many occasions, it is not possible to estimate their age.

The wall on the north side of the Peterborough Road bears a plaque with the words 'Peterborough City Council Community Programme 1986-1987'. This retaining wall is a fine example of local walling techniques, with carefully dressed small stones laid tightly together, in regular courses, giving great stability without mortar. 18th century walls are similarly constructed, but consolidated with mud/lime mortars, whilst 19th and early 20th century walls are laid with mortar beds. Fields walls tend to be more informally constructed and require regular rebuilding and repair.

All walls make an outstanding contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The puncturing of walls for new drives, gateways etc has diminished their visual and structural integrity.



Boundary wall to footpath



Peterborough Road

The substantial level of new housing has invariably involved the demolition or part demolition of frontage and often flank walls with new openings for car drives etc.

Many walls have been lowered, presumably to make them more stable or lost their copings that have then been replaced by cement. Many others are obviously deteriorating. It is a characteristic of their construction that they will require periodic rebuilding. The informally constructed field walls always required more regular maintenance, as winter agriculture work.

There may be opportunities to construct new traditional walls, or restore the height of existing walls, as part of new development schemes.

## 9. TOWNSCAPE

The townscape of Wansford has fundamentally altered with the village's changing role. From the O.S. 1886 map it can be imagined that 150 years ago the main north-south Great North Road and Leicester/Peterborough Road cross roads dominated the street scene whilst at the rivers edge, wharves and jetties would have presented a busy commercial panorama.

Today, the cross roads are offset and the buildings that once vied for trade at the junction have been demolished, creating almost a village green feel.

This open centre with the church on the south side gives a clear identity. However, this is somewhat diminished in that the dominance of the road and general spatial organisation tend to give the feeling of a 'place to pass through' rather than a 'sense of place'.

As noted in the 'Approaches to Wansford' section, the transition from village edge to conservation area is framed by key townscape elements. The most important of these are:

### 1. From the Old North Road

- The stone wall on the west frontage
- No. 19
- The stone walls on the east and west frontages at the Nene Close junction
- The Scots pine trees
- No's. 2 - 6
- The stone frontage wall and trees to No. 3.

2. From the east along Peterborough Road
  - The stone retaining wall and trees on the north frontage
  - No's. 21 - 22A and associated frontage stone walls either side.
3. From the west along Yarwell Road
  - The stone walls with trees behind to No's. 3 and 6
  - The stone wall adjacent to bridge, earth bank and trees to No. 2
  - No. 1
  - The churchyard wall
4. From the northwest along the Old Leicester Road
  - The (discontinuous) stonewall from No.1 to No.17A
  - The hedge fronting No's. 17A, 19 and 21
  - The (discontinuous) stonewall from the rear of 2 Robins Field to the stables
  - The gable end of 6 The Stables
5. From the south along Bridge End
  - The bridge parapets and open water meadows
  - No. 4
  - The church, churchyard wall and churchyard trees
  - No's 1 - 11
  - The tree groups south of No.1 and south of No. 4

A greater sense of arrival and place could be achieved if the spatial organisation at the village centre was re-organised to reinforce the 'square' or 'static' qualities of the space.

This could be achieved by means such as:

- Re-aligning the road carriageway, grass verges and footpaths
- Carefully positioned tree planting
- Re-organising street lighting and other street furniture items.

It is acknowledged that there is no historical precedent for these suggestions. However, the nature and role of the village have changed so fundamentally over the last 75 years that proposals along these grounds may be justifiable as 'enhancement works' purely on visual and possibly traffic management grounds.

It is accepted that no funds have been allocated for works such as carriageway re-alignment. It may be that tree planting and street furniture re-organisation could be achieved gradually through the small annual capital budgets and periodic maintenance funds.



## 10. MANAGEMENT PLAN

### Overall proposals

The City Council does not intend to prevent change or new development in the Wansford Conservation Area. The following policies and proposals are intended to manage change and avoid harming the key elements which define the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The policies and proposals are in accordance with national planning policy guidance and the relevant policies of the Peterborough Local Plan (Appendix 3). The Draft Management Plan complements the Wansford Conservation Area Appraisal. Proposals are shown on the Proposals Map (Appendix 2).

### 10.1 The Conservation Area Boundary

The conservation area boundary approximately reflects extent of the village in 1886. However, it does not accurately align to historic features such as boundary walls and ditches, or the ancient pattern of enclosures that existed between Peterborough Road and the river; nor does the current boundary reflect the potential archaeological resources that may still exist on the river bed and within the banks and margins.

A case can also be made for considering 20th century structures that are integral to Wansford's historic development within the conservation area boundary.

- **Extend the conservation area boundary to include the pre nineteenth century enclosures field systems and areas of archaeological potential between Peterborough Road and the river Nene, the new Nene bridge and the historic boundaries and enclosures on the Old Leicester Road, as shown on the proposals map.**

### 10.2 Protected Buildings

Numbers 2-6 Old North Road are unlisted buildings that may meet the national criteria for designation as group value buildings of historic interest and architectural merits. It may be that 3 Old North Road is also worthy of inclusion for its townscape/group value and idiosyncratic architecture.

- **Discuss with English Heritage including the above buildings on the statutory list as grade II listed buildings of group value.**

Numbers 1 - 4 Peterborough Road and associated boundary walls are important to the character and appearance of the conservation area but are not of sufficient age or architectural merit to be considered for listing.

- **Examine the use of Article 4 Directions on these properties. If Nos. 3 or 2-6 Old North Road are not considered for inclusion on the statutory list, the possibility of an Article 4 direction should be explored.**

### 10.3 Historic Buildings

In the case of most historic properties, the challenge is to retain original fabric such as old windows and catches and stays, doors and door-cases, brick and stone floors, staircases etc in houses that have already been modernised, extended and in many cases amalgamated.

It is noticeable that modern designs of windows and doors have been installed in some 18th and 19th century buildings. In others, replacement may be imminent in preference to repairs. In February 1998, Peterborough City Council published a broadsheet entitled "Renovating Your Cottage - A Guide For Owners". The advice this sets out still holds good today.

- **The broadsheet "Renovating Your Cottage is updated as necessary and distributed to all owners of traditional buildings.**
- **As a general principle, further extension of already extended listed properties and amalgamations to form larger dwellings should be resisted.**
- **On thatched properties, where old extensions are to be remodelled or where a new extension is acceptable in principle, the presumption should be that the new roof(s) will be in thatch of the same type.** (The new Building Regulations allow the use of thatch provided adequate fire precautions - the "Dorset model" -are in place). **On other properties, and particularly those with Collyweston slate, the original materials should be re-used and additional salvaged matching materials incorporated, as required.**
- **Cottage window and doors and frames surviving from before 1920 should be repaired and/or taken as patterns for the re-manufacture of replica doors and windows for use in repair and restoration on other similar buildings in the conservation area where modern patterns have replaced traditional fabric.**

#### **10.4 New Buildings**

The O.S. 1886 map clearly shows that the character of the village was made up of tightly clustered groups of buildings around the cross roads, but a looser form of development with gaps between buildings, with orchards and small fields enclosed by stone boundary walls. Constant pressure for infill and tandem development is beginning to erode this character.

In the past, the requirement to use sympathetic building materials has been restricted to the conservation area even though other areas in the village are close to and can be seen from the historic core and are prominent in the local landscape.

- **Further infill development within the conservation area should be generally resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that the new buildings and associated landscaping will clearly enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.**
- **In the village as a whole, where new dwellings are permitted, they should be designed with a narrow plan form of around 6m or less and constructed in local coursed natural stone. Bradstone or similar replica Collyweston slate should be the choice for new roofs, with thatch as a possibility on one and one and a half storey structures. Wansford does not have a tradition in either pantiles or Welsh slate, and these, along with modern concrete materials should be avoided.**

If, outside the conservation area, there are particular reasons why replica Collyweston slate cannot be used, grey/buff small plain tiles are readily available and far more sympathetic in appearance to the local building tradition than modern concrete tiles.

#### **10.5 Archaeology**

This report demonstrates that further action is needed to safeguard and manage the archaeological resource within Wansford.

- **All proposed development within the conservation area should include an appropriate archaeological assessment before the detailed planning application stage. The definition of development would include engineering works to highways, the greens and within gardens, and within the river, its margins and banks.**

## 10.6 Stone Walls

A number of properties have stone boundary walls. Some of these may represent historic boundaries, in some cases dating from pre-medieval times. The majority of walls date from the 18th and 19th century. Over the years, some walls have been reduced in height in preference to replacing top courses and copings. Were these reinstated they would clearly make a far greater contribution to the street scene. Peterborough City Council has available some detailed practical guidance notes on the building and repair of walls in the local style.



- **All existing stonewalls should be retained, maintained and rebuilt if necessary and where there are opportunities (for example as part of a landscaping scheme linked to the grant of planning consent), restored to their original height.**
- **The City Council, in conjunction with the Parish Council, English Heritage and other bodies consider ways to assist the repair of existing walls and the building of new walls in the local tradition.**

## 10.7 Street Furniture

During the 1960's and 1970's the streets were engineered with concrete kerbs to incorporate mains water, electric and sewers; concrete and steel street lights, tarmac pavements etc. These have very much changed the character and appearance of the village. There are vestiges of earlier granite kerbs and local hard limestone setts but these are very much the exception. A village water pump (pictured right) also still exists.



- **Retain all vestiges of historic street furniture and materials including the water pump, gas light standards, milestones, and granite and local stone kerbs and setts.**
- **As up-grading and replacement schemes for streetlights, railings, signage etc come forward; new designs and materials should be chosen to compliment the historic character of Wansford and its conservation area.**

## 10.8 Tree Planting And Landscape And Townscape Enhancement

The central area of the village presents a real opportunity for enhancement. This could be partly achieved by re-aligning the road and footpaths and carefully considered tree planting. Large species such as limes, oak or chestnut would (eventually) give the greatest townscape impact.

- **a design study should be prepared to consider potential works to heighten the sense of place at the village centre and enhance the setting of St Mary's Church, in close liaison with the parish council and relevant Peterborough City Council departments.**

## 11. CONTACTS AND REFERENCES

### Contacts

For advice on the conservation area and listed buildings: [www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk) or write / telephone: Peterborough City Council, Planning Delivery, Stuart House East Wing, St Johns Street, Peterborough, PE1 5DD; Tel: (01733) 747474; or e-mail: [REDACTED]

For advice on planning permission: [www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk); or write to address above Tel: (01733) 453410; or e-mail: [planningcontrol@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:planningcontrol@peterborough.gov.uk)

For advice on trees, works to trees and Tree Preservation Orders: [www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk) or write Natural Environment Section, Planning Delivery, Stuart House East Wing, St Johns Street, Peterborough, PE1 5DD; Tel: (01733) 747474; or e-mail: [REDACTED]

### References and sources of information

**Peterborough City Council** Planning Department archives; Sites and Monuments Record; Statutory List of Buildings of Arch. Interest and Historic Merit

**Peterborough Reference Library** Local Studies Archive; Census Records 1891 to 1991

**Peterborough Museum Archive**

**Pevsner, N.** The Buildings of England: Bedfordshire and the County of Huntingdon and Peterborough 1968

**Stuart-Mogg, D.** The Story of Wansford 2007

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- Legislation and Guidance

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Town and Country Planning Acts 1990 (part viii)

Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1): General Policy and Principles

Planning Policy Guidance Note 9 (PPG9): Nature Conservation 1994

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15): Planning and the Historic Environment 1994

Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16): Archaeology and Planning 1990

[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals. English Heritage 2006 -

Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas. English Heritage 2006

- Local Planning Policy and Guidance

Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement) 2005 [www.peterborough.gov.uk/](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/)

- web related

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

<http://www.culture.gov.uk>

For technical advice, including leaflets, on repairing, maintaining and restoring buildings:

### Appendix 3 Statutory Planning Policies

Wansford Conservation Area is covered by the Replacement Peterborough Local Plan 2005. The following is a summary of the main policies that protect the conservation area:

[www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk)

Policy H8	Village envelopes
H11	Group settlements
H15	Residential density
H16	Residential design and amenity
OIW10	Employment uses in villages
T10	Car and motorcycle parking requirements
R10	Shops in villages
R11	Loss of shops or A3 uses in villages
LT3	Controls over the loss of open space
DA1	Townscape and urban design
DA2	The effect of development on an area
DA3	Building materials in character with local tradition
DA6	Controls over tandem, backland and piecemeal development
DA8	Design of extensions and alterations
DA9	Protected spaces and frontages in villages
CBE2	Areas of archaeological potential or importance
CBE3	Development affecting conservation areas
CBE4	Controls over demolition of buildings in conservation areas
CBE5	Controls over demolition of listed buildings
CBE6	Control of alterations and extensions to a listed building
CBE7	Control of development affecting the setting of a listed building
CBE8	Sub-division of the grounds of a listed building
CBE9	Controls over change of use of listed buildings
CBE10	Control of alterations to buildings protected by Article 4 Directions
CBE11	Controls over Buildings of Local Importance
LNE9	Landscaping implications of development proposals
LNE10	Detailed elements of landscaping schemes
LNE11	Ancient, semi-natural woodland and veteran trees
LNE12	Hedgerows
LNE13	Controls over ponds, wetlands and watercourses
IMP1	Planning obligations

## Appendix 4 Effect of Conservation Area Status

Conservation area designation has the following effect:

- Permitted development rights that make a planning application unnecessary for some minor alterations and extensions to dwellings are more restricted within a Conservation Area. Planning permission is required for external cladding and painting, boundary walls, roof alterations, the formation of hard surfaces and additional controls over the positioning of satellite dishes. The size and location of outbuildings may require planning permission. **You are advised to contact the council concerning any proposed works to determine whether or not planning permission is required.**
- Special attention must be paid to the character and appearance of the conservation area when determining planning applications. Planning applications are advertised for public comment and any views expressed are taken into account. Applicants are encouraged to discuss ideas for development proposals with planning officers prior to submitting a planning application.
- Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of unlisted buildings. It is advisable to contact the council to confirm whether your proposal will require consent. In certain circumstances consent is also required for the demolition of any wall exceeding 1m in height (abutting a highway or public open space) or 2m in height elsewhere.
- Trees within conservation areas are covered by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). It is an offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot or wilfully damage or destroy a tree having a diameter exceeding 75mm at a point 1.5m above ground level. The local planning authority must be given 6 weeks notice of works to trees within a conservation area. Failure to give notice renders the person liable to the same penalties as for contravention of a Tree Preservation Order.

A potential additional means of planning control available to a local authority is the ability to apply an Article 4 Direction Order to residential properties: -

An Article 4 Direction made under the Planning Act removes some or all 'permitted development rights' from significant elevations, normally front and side. Alterations such as replacement doors, windows and porches, the creation of hard standings and the removal of original boundary enclosures may be insignificant as individual alterations. However, the cumulative effect of these alterations together with the removal of other architectural details such as chimneys, ridge tiles and decorative timber work leads to erosion of character and appearance. An Article 4 Direction requires planning permission to be obtained for these minor developments. No planning fee is paid in these circumstances. There are currently no Article 4 Directions in Wansford.