

BARTON on the heath
Village Design Statement





BARTON-on-the-HEATH

Village Design Statement

CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction
 - 2 What is it all about?
 - 3 The planning context
 - 4 Geographical & historical background
 - 5 The village as it is today - the people & future prospects
 - 6 Special considerations and challenges that affect the development pressures in the village
 - 7 Character of the landscape setting
 - 8 Settlement pattern character, buildings and spaces
 - 9 Character of local roads
 - 10 Street furniture
 - 11 Conclusion
- Village map
- Acknowledgements
- Appendix

"well, we'll see't.

come, madam

wife, sit by my

side and let the

world slip: we

shall ne'er be

younger."

Shakespeare's Christopher Sly, the tinker, in the Taming of the Shrew came from Burton Heath (understood to be Barton-on-the-Heath).

1. INTRODUCTION

The Barton-on-the-Heath Village Design Statement (VDS) has been produced by a group of Barton-on-the-Heath residents, with contributions and comments from a wide cross-section of the village community.

The document reflects the general view of the residents. The VDS process began with an initial meeting, at which 80% of households were represented. This meeting dealt with the establishment of the VDS committee, the terms of reference and a full briefing on the VDS and its aims. It was followed by the issue of a questionnaire to all households. The results of the survey were then used in the preparation of the draft document. The village children were involved in a painting competition with the theme of "our village", and a photographic project was also undertaken. A number of meetings were held by both the committee and latterly the village, to consult and review the various draft documents. The VDS group has tried to ensure that the document reflects the Cotswolds AONB Management Strategy which calls for action to produce "design guidance to identify local distinctiveness and examples of building and conservation which illustrate good practice in conserving character" and "in new development promote good design involving the use of traditional materials or appropriate suitable alternatives"



The response from the village to the whole process has been encouraging and has indicated that there is a deeply held belief that the village does have a distinctive character.

Barton-on-the-Heath is a small village set in a Conservation Area and in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Its rural atmosphere, the green, the views – both to and from the village – and the distinctive character of the houses, all need to be maintained and conserved.





THE VILLAGE HAS
SEEN REMARKABLY
FEW PHYSICAL
CHANGES OVER
THE PAST
HUNDRED YEARS

2. WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

The VDS describes the character of a village that makes it a special place in which to live. It covers only the village of Barton-on-the-Heath, from an area centred on the village green, stretching north, encompassing Leys Farm and Hopyard Hill Farm, south-west as far as Rectory Farm and south-east as far as Barton Hill Farm.

It is a reference document offering guidance to anyone considering any form of alteration, redevelopment or extension to their property in and around the village. It will be as useful to an individual householder planning to build an extension or putting in new windows as it would be to anybody applying for consent to build a new house, however unlikely that may be, or, indeed, a property owner planning tree felling or new planting.

The VDS reflects the views and opinions of the villagers and acts as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) Local Plan.

Anyone applying for planning permission in the village will have to show that they have considered the guidelines the VDS contains when drawing up their plans.

3. THE PLANNING CONTEXT

This VDS will, once adopted, form part of the planning policy framework, used by SDC in making decisions on planning applications.

The planning policy framework is a hierarchy of policy; it will therefore provide guidance at the most local level and at the lowest level of the planning framework. It will inform and influence planning decisions in the village by assisting the Parish Council, which is consulted by SDC on planning matters. It will also help by encouraging a direct and voluntary local initiative that will conserve and enhance the character of the village.

In the new revised deposit draft of the SDC local plan review 1996-2011 the settlement hierarchy has been revised. Barton is now in the group of villages designated as "(iv) All other settlements". In these settlements the provisions of "Policy (rural areas) RA3" in the Warwickshire Structure Plan (WASP) and Policy (community) COM1 in the local plan will be applied. As this is an agricultural area "Policy (countryside) CTY.2 Re-use of rural buildings", "CTY.4 Farm diversification" and "Policy (principles) PR.11 'Bad Neighbour'" uses may be applicable. Constraints will be applied on residential and industrial development except in accordance with the provisions of individual policies in the plan.



4. GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Barton-on-the-Heath, also known as Bourton-in-Henmarsh, is situated just within the Warwickshire border and close to the Four Shires Stone that once marked the meeting point of Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire.

This north Cotswold village is built on a hillside overlooking a rolling agricultural landscape of hills and valleys; to the south, the land rises steeply to Barton Hill at over 800 feet; to the north, it falls towards the valley of Stanford Brook and Nethercote Brook, both tributaries of the river Stour.

The village has seen remarkably few physical changes over the past hundred years, mainly because of the continuing presence of agriculture. Livestock farming and the absence of any industrial development have allowed it to retain a close relationship with the surrounding landscape.

The oldest building in the village is the Parish Church of St Lawrence. The western, northern and eastern walls of the nave were built in the early 12th century with the southern wall of the chancel being rebuilt in the 17th century. The Chapel was probably built in the 14th century and the tower built in three stages, the last of which, the bell chamber, has traces of 14th century work. There are now two bells in the tower. The small one bearing the name John Kerry dated 1672 and a large one by Henry Bagley dated 1740. Dating back over 700 hundred years, the Church of St Lawrence plays an important part in the life of the village.

Barton House dominates the village. The first Barton House was built in 1200AD, at the same time as the Church, but of this only five vaulted cellars remain. The present house was built in 1550 for John Marshall, whose family had owned the estate for two centuries. In 1625 the house passed to the Overbury family who brought in Inigo Jones to model the great hall and create the panelling in the Oak room. In 1741 the estate was bought by the Bird family, who were prosperous silk merchants from Coventry, being finally sold by their descendants in 1898 to Colonel Stanley Arnold. He modernised the property with the help of the distinguished architect Sir Guy Dawber. The current owners of the house, the Cathie family, came to Barton in 1949 and have continued to enhance it.

Barton was familiar to Shakespeare. His aunt Joan Arden, married to Edmund Lambert, lived in the village. Shakespeare's Christopher Sly, the tinker in the Taming of the Shrew, came from Burton Heath (understood to be Barton-on-the-Heath).

5. THE VILLAGE AS IT IS TODAY - THE PEOPLE AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

A visitor to Barton-on-the-Heath in 1952, returning in 2002, would readily recognise what they saw 50 years ago - there has been so little change to the village scene. There are currently 33 houses in the village and the population is 98. There have been some changes in the demography over the last 5 years due to new families moving into the village and an increase in the number of children.

Numerous properties in the village have been extended in some way and some agricultural buildings have been converted into attractive residences. Other new building has been carried out mainly in a sympathetic manner using a mixture of Cotswold or Hornton stone and appropriate roof coverings. The small development at Camden Close has been improved with the addition of a car park. Barton was a predominately agricultural settlement but the number of farms is now reduced to two, Home Farm, forming part of the Barton House Estate and Leys Farm. The change in farming practices has naturally brought about a substantial reduction in the labour force on these farms and has resulted in a change to the working population. This has led to some smaller cottages being converted into larger family dwellings and some agricultural buildings converted into holiday cottages. Unfortunately like many Cotswold villages several of the houses are owned as second homes and are not occupied as much as would be welcome.

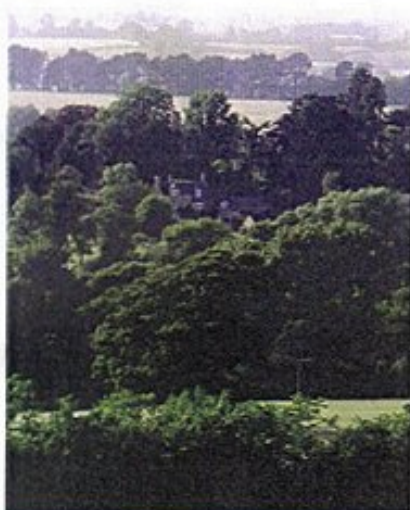
6. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CHALLENGES THAT AFFECT THE DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES IN THE VILLAGE

Current planning policy will severely constrain any redevelopment in a village that has shown little change since 1885 and there is no development pressure in the village at the current time. However there are some important challenges that will arise during the life of the current Local Plan. Further changes in agricultural practices and the state of the market may lead to renewed attempts to carry out development. This would not find favour in the village and the Parish Council would resist any development in the strongest possible terms. This presumption against development has been reinforced by a recent report by the planning inspector who, when refusing an appeal for the redevelopment of Leys Farm, deemed the proposition of new housing (both large and small) unacceptable and even the provision of low cost affordable housing ill advised in a village with no amenities (no school, no shop or post office, no public house and a limited bus service).



BARTON WAS
FAMILIAR TO
SHAKESPEARE. HIS
AUNT JOAN ARDEN,
MARRIED TO
EDWARD LAMBERT,
LIVED IN THE
VILLAGE.





BARTON ON THE
HEATH IS SITUATED
IN THE COTSWOLD
FRINGE, IN AN
ELEVATED
POSITION SIMILAR
TO THAT OF A
TUSCAN HILL TOWN.

Most properties in the village that required extension or redevelopment have been dealt with and the only new Cotswold stone house to be built in the village in the last 30 years has just been completed on the site of a demolished row of three tiny cottages.

Due to the increasing number of young children in the village consideration needs to be given to the provision of a secure children's playground. This will depend very much on whether a suitable site can be found.

Despite the provisions of Planning Policy Guidance note 7 (PPG7) that allows for development on small gaps within small groups of houses in the countryside further development is unlikely as the western side of the village is mainly dominated by the Old Rectory, the Church, and Barton House and its grounds, and with current planning policy in place, Barton-on-the-Heath is likely to remain a well preserved small Warwickshire village.

7. CHARACTER OF THE LANDSCAPE SETTING

Barton-on-the-Heath is situated on the Cotswold fringe, in an elevated position similar to that of a Tuscan hill town. With its agricultural background each approach to the village is through farmland. These open views give the village its character and appeal and should be protected. The immediate surroundings are mainly permanent pasture with some surviving ridge and furrow. Hedgerows are used as field boundaries rather than fences or walls, although the ravages of Dutch elm disease have now wiped out the many trees that flourished in the area. To the west, beyond the formal gardens of Barton House, the rolling pastureland is given over to deer farming. To the north and east permanent pasture gives way to large arable fields where the land flattens out towards the valley bottom. The distinctive form, layout, materials and colour of the Cotswold stone villages, of which Barton-on-the-Heath is a particularly well-preserved example, and their intimate relationship with the high quality landscape, has a unifying effect that is unique to the character of the region today.

Most vantage points within the village give far reaching views. To the north, across Stanford Brook, there are open views towards dominating pine trees, known as "Barton Firs", on the ridge. To the east the land falls away towards the valley bottom and Long Compton and to the south the view is over a more complex topography of hills and valleys, leading up to Kitebrook and the A44. Public footpaths radiate from the centre of the village towards Great Wolford, Little Wolford and Little Compton.

Design guidelines:

The approaches to the village should all be respected in order to maintain the open aspect and agricultural setting. Appropriate tree plantings should be actively encouraged, as has been carried out on the Great Wolford road, to enhance the approaches to the village, and replace the ravages of the Dutch elm disease.

Trees are important to the village although few are covered by tree preservation orders (TPO). Planting of appropriate indigenous species should be encouraged wherever possible. Anybody considering work on trees and hedges in the Conservation Area should be aware that consent is likely to be required from the Local Authority. Inappropriate hedge laying and opening up of gardens should be considered with care in order to protect visual amenities. Barton has some fine trees in the village, such as the poplars in the garden of Campden Farmhouse. These can be seen from all over the village and are part of its character.

All efforts should be made to retain the areas of permanent pasture that contribute to the open aspect of the edges of the villages and the open spaces within the village should be protected against further development to enhance the openness and character of the settlement.

The character of the remaining stone built farm buildings makes an important contribution to the landscape setting of the village. This contribution should not be lost through demolition or inappropriate conversion.

The contribution that native trees and hedgerows on the village edges and in the surrounding countryside make to the rural landscape character is recognised and should be carefully preserved.

The Village Green is at the heart of Barton. It has a special setting that must be maintained. The Drinking Fountain in the centre of the green is listed, as are five of the surrounding properties. There is a case for the Old Parochial Church School to be listed along with any other properties fronting or adjacent to the green to ensure this important open area is maintained and protected

Wherever and whenever possible all overhead cables in the village should be rerouted underground.

8. SETTLEMENT PATTERN, CHARACTER, BUILDINGS AND SPACES

Barton-on-the-Heath has an intriguing mixture of houses arranged along its distinctive, horizontal 'H' shaped settlement pattern. The centre of the village is the triangular green with its magnificent oak tree and the attractive Cotswold stone houses that overlook it. The western side of the village is dominated by Barton House, its lodge and formal gardens, the Church of St Lawrence and the Old Rectory. To the north of Barton House are a row of smaller cottages, which end with Henmarsh House at its northern extremity. The north east quadrant is totally dominated by Home Farm and Leys Farm with their range of utilitarian agricultural buildings and the south east quadrant is sparsely populated, with the exception of the small enclave of Camden Close with its neat crescent of four pairs of 1950's semi-detached houses and the adjacent cottages.

There are 20 listed properties and 15 unlisted buildings of significance in the village. These dwellings fall into four distinct groups. Firstly, **Barton House** with its formal gardens, grounds and extensive range of outbuildings, is in a class of its own. Secondly, the **principal village houses**, which are mainly of two and a half storey construction and include the Old Rectory, Home Farm and the larger houses fronting the village green. Thirdly, the remaining **original houses** and cottages, which are principally of two-storey construction, or sometimes a single storey with dormer windows illuminating a first floor contained within the roof void. Lastly, the **modern group**, which covers the houses that have been developed within the village over the years. These would include Camden Close; the extension of original buildings such as the three substantial Cotswold stone family houses to the northern edge of the village and the converted farm buildings on the lane leading down to Bakers Farmhouse; and the new house on the Little Compton Road.

THE VILLAGE GREEN
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Design guidelines:

The comments below are intended as a guide. For more detailed examples of what is deemed to be acceptable please refer to the Barton-on-the-Heath website. These are taken in the village and show the appropriate materials in situ.

Walls should be constructed of reclaimed brick, new or reclaimed Cotswold or Hornton stone, mixed to match the construction of adjacent or attached properties. Great care should be taken to match the style, coursing and pointing of adjacent properties. It should be remembered, however, that there is nothing wrong with new brick. The important thing is that any brick should be of an appropriate colour and texture and that the brick bond and mortar are suitable.



Roofs should be traditionally styled, steeply pitched between 45° and 55° depending on the type of roof covering. Roof coverings within the village vary from traditional Cotswold stone slates through blue slate to high quality imitation Cotswold stone. These are acceptable and they should be actively encouraged. Predominant roof coverings in the village are blue slate and concrete tiles. Concentrations of one type of roof covering should be avoided in adjacent houses.

Chimneys are an important feature of Cotswold stone houses. If new construction is to take place, they are to be a welcome feature. Their design and shape is to be in keeping with those of its neighbours.



Window openings within the village range from traditional Cotswold stone mullions through simple joinery, to a more complex modern timber design. Traditional design, whether timber or metal, is to be encouraged and should be in keeping with the proportions of the buildings, and painted an appropriate colour. The over-use of brilliant white should be resisted whenever possible.

Within the village conservation area the use of replacement UPVC plastic windows should be resisted as should multi-paned mock Georgian windows and 1930's Crittall metal windows. Where new windows are to be installed, consideration should be given to replacing all the visible windows with a more consistent, traditional painted casement type to improve the visual amenity and maintain the village street scene.



The use of Conservation roof lights is acceptable in the Conservation Area. Outside this area the careful use of Velux roof lights is acceptable.

Any dormer windows that are installed should be small and subservient to the other windows on the front elevation. They should be unobtrusive and not too numerous.

Boundary walls should be of dry stone construction where possible.

Gates where required should be simple or more elegant five bar agricultural style gates rather than more complex metal equivalents. Barton House gates are an exception and are listed.



Any rebuilding or extension to buildings in the village should be of individual design and well integrated, to reflect the landscape character of the area.

The siting of any new buildings or extensions should be examined from all directions. Perspective drawings or artist's impressions should show how new developments extensions and conversions would appear in relation to their overall surroundings and adjacent properties.

House owners should respect and enhance the architectural quality and variety of the street scene. Extensions and alterations, as well as new buildings, should use materials and be of a design compatible with original and adjacent buildings.

The open spaces within the village and the views into and out of the village are essential parts of its character. Any new works, including infill or extension should conserve and, where possible, enhance these elements.

Extensions to existing buildings should take special account of gaps that provide worthwhile views to surrounding countryside or open spaces within the village.

Important open spaces within and on the edges of the village should be maintained. The erection of field shelters and stables in these fields is acceptable (subject to the appropriate consent if required) as this is a rural/agricultural area and home to numerous horses and other livestock.

New accesses should be designed to minimise the loss of boundary vegetation and achieve an appropriate balance between highway safety and amenity.

External elevations and roofs should enjoy at least minimum standards of maintenance and repair to protect the overall character of such a small village.

9. CHARACTER OF LOCAL ROADS

The village has one principal road running from north to south. The traffic going through the village tends to be agricultural vehicles, although in recent times, it has become a cut through from Great Wolford and Long Compton. The users are primarily parents taking their children to school. The road through the village is mainly edged with grass verges backed by substantial Cotswold stone walls. There are some short sections of footpath. Where there are open spaces within the village, the verges tend to be backed by open fields, hedges and trees. Barton benefits from most of its residents having off street parking, and this is to be actively encouraged, in order that the tranquil environment is not despoiled by the motor car any more than is necessary. The village green has no formal edging but is bounded by large pieces of Cotswold stone, which add to the rural nature of its setting. The three recently extended properties to the northern edge of the village are approached by a private road, which has recently been improved by the residents. The only area of car parking within the village is that at Camden Close, which was paid for by the Parish Council for the benefit of those residents. As car parking on the side of the road is unsightly, every effort should be made to promote the provision of off street parking especially where a new planning application is being made.

10. STREET FURNITURE

We are fortunate that in Barton-on-the-Heath, we have no streetlights, nor is there an over proliferation of street signage. There are 30-mph signs on the main routes into the village together with simple village nameplates. Whilst we appreciate that residents do require outside lighting for security purposes, where possible this should be controlled in a way that does not become a nuisance to others.

Design guidelines:

The use of modern low-noise road surfaces should be considered when re-surfacing the through road.

Every effort should be made to retain the existing rural character of local roads and any changes to materials or street furniture should be consistent with that character.

The impact of street signage should be minimised without impairing safety.

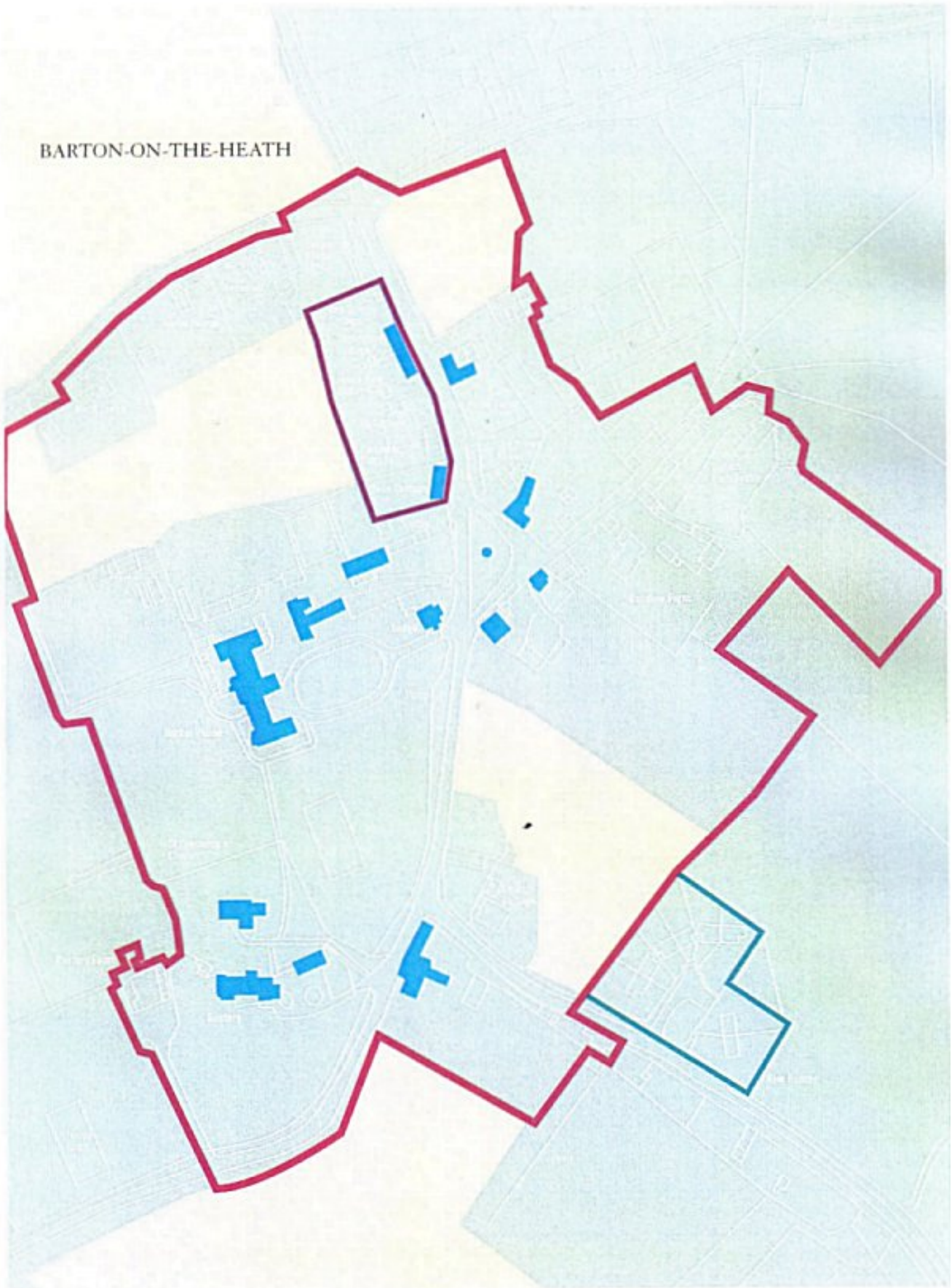
11. CONCLUSION

The Village Design Statement has been drawn up by the majority of the people in the village who are interested in the future of this beautiful conservation settlement. Its purpose is to act as Supplementary Planning Guidance for individuals applying for any form of planning permission in Barton-on-the-Heath; for the present and future Parish Councils and for the Planning Department at Stratford District Council. This Statement has alluded to the village's very limited amenities, its comparative isolation, its unchanging nature as far as building is concerned and the demographic alterations due to the changing nature of farming in this country. The planning guidelines which the Statement has highlighted will help all those concerned in any way with this unique small Cotswold settlement and its future development.



THE ROAD
THROUGH THE
VILLAGE IS MAINLY
EDGED WITH
GRASS VERGES
BACKED BY
SUBSTANTIAL
COTSWOLD STONE
WALLS

BARTON-ON-THE-HEATH



■ Listed Buildings ■ Modern Houses ■ Small Cottages ■ Important Open Space ■ Conservation Area Boundary



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Barton-on-the-Heath Village Design Group wishes to express its gratitude for the support and commitment of the following:

The Residents of Barton-on-the-Heath

Andrew Wharton ex VDS Officer of Stratford District Council

Colin Staves (Policy, Heritage and Design Manager) Stratford District Council

The Councillors sitting on The Barton-on-the-Heath Parish Council

The Authors of the Barton-on-the-Heath Millennium Book 2000

Photographs by Jan Pelczynski

REFERENCES

The VDS has been written with reference to:

The Stratford on Avon Design Guide April 2001

Cotswold AONB Management Strategy 1996

Stratford on Avon Local Plan Review Revised Deposit Draft January 2003

Warwickshire Structure Plan 1996-2011

Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines. Countryside Commission

Long Compton, Little Compton and Great Wolford VDS publications

The Barton-on-the-Heath Conservation Area Review (October 1998) unpublished

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