

# Hampton-in-Arden



Village Design  
Statement



# THE HAMPTON-IN-ARDEN VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

## Introduction

This Design Statement describes the qualities and features of Hampton-in-Arden which are particularly valued by the residents and which give it its special character. It has been compiled to make sure that local knowledge and understanding contribute to maintaining and enhancing the quality of the environment and of village life. It aims to ensure that changes, however small, will not impair the character of the village. The residents have been involved in the creation of this Statement through a consultation process and a series of open meetings.

### "Who is it for?"

This Statement is for:

- householders and local businesses
- statutory bodies, public authorities and utilities
- planners, developers and builders
- designers, architects and engineers

The Design Statement is not only for those who undertake large development schemes but also for anyone planning small changes in their own homes or gardens. All such changes could alter the look and feel of Hampton-in-Arden.

### "How does it work?"

This Statement has been formally received and recognised by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. Its recommendations will be used in assessing planning applications that affect the village. It gives local definition to the policies set out in Solihull M.B.C.'s Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

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## Acknowledgements

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- Mike Bryant for his role as co-ordinator in the production of this document.

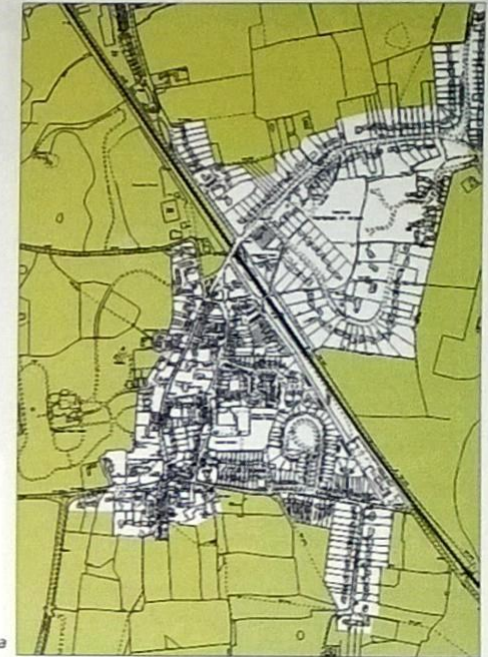


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Cover photograph by Pamela Parker. This shows the 2003 extension to the Parish Church and illustrates how the new can be made to blend in with the old.

Hampton-in-Arden derives its special character from its rural setting and from its historic roots, amply demonstrated by the hill-top siting of its Parish Church and the buildings fronting its main street. These form part of the present **Conservation Area** which is highly regarded by residents and is considered to be crucial to defining the character of the village.

The major part of Hampton-in-Arden was made an **Inset Area**, within the strategically important area of Green Belt known as the Meriden Gap, in the Solihull UDP adopted in April 1997. This states that the Council will take into account the importance of Hampton's rural setting, its historic buildings, open spaces, density of development, landscape and townscape, all of which contribute to its special character. Immediately beyond the Inset Area boundary, strict **Green Belt** policies apply. The Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines also apply to the village and its setting in the overall landscape.



Inset Area



Conservation Area



## The Character of the Landscape Setting



Aerial view of the village looking north

At many points within the village to the East, South and South West there are good views of the surrounding patchwork farmland. Views out of the village to the North West are mostly curtailed by the woodland of the Manor Estate that surrounds a small area of parkland. However, where Shadow Brook Lane exits the Manor/Spinney woodland, there are good views across fields extending to the Church and village of Bickenhill. The majority of fields are separated by well maintained hedgerows.

Actual woodland is confined to Siden Hill Wood to the East, and to the North the woodland surrounding the Manor estate and its associated Spinney. This spinney is in the ownership of the Parish Council and is managed for wildlife and as a local amenity. A new woodland, Shadowbrook Wood, has recently been planted by the Fentham Trust. It is in close proximity to the spinney and will be open to the public.

Below the village, the Blythe valley (an SSSI) and its water meadows have been and still are, valuable sites for the extraction of sand and gravel. This has, uncharacteristically for the area, created a number of deep lakes and ponds. Although generally not seen from the village they are becoming established as features of the surrounding landscape and are increasing the number of bird species. A new nature reserve has been opened by the Packington Estate adjacent to the river Blythe and is also contributing to an increase in bird species in the locality.

Some water meadows still remain and the flora and fauna around the area of the Packhorse Bridge are of interest. Orange balsam, wood anemone, meadow saxifrage, meadow rue and fringed water lily on one of the ponds, are flowers of particular note. An otter sighting in the area has been reported.



View from the Fentham Club towards Barston

To the North West of the village there are protected meadows accessed from Shadow Brook Lane. They are designated an SSSI and are owned and managed by the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. They too contain a good number of threatened floral species. Cowslip, betony, greater burnett, yellow rattle and orchid. Buzzards and kestrels frequent the area.

### It is important that

- views in or out of the village are protected.
- due consideration is given to the **Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines by developers and by the Local Planning Authority to enhance the landscape within and around the village.**
- **existing habitats are maintained to protect the established biodiversity, with particular regard for the sites designated as nature conservation areas, nature reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.**



View over the allotments towards Meriden



Looking into the village from a footpath to Barston



## The Character of the Treescape

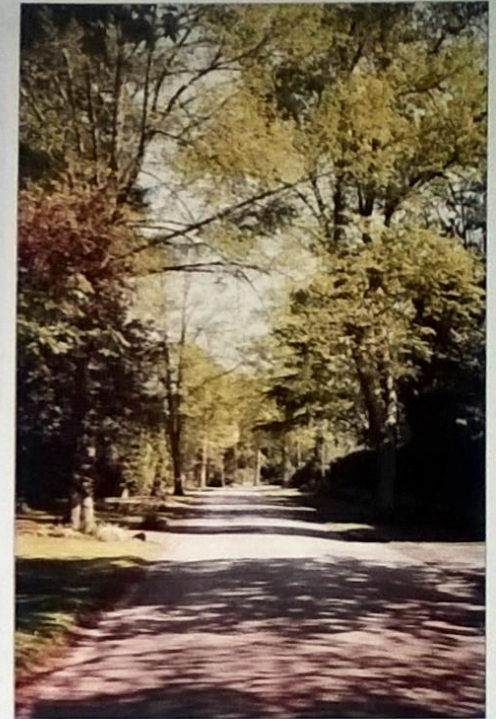


The village from the east. Note the lapwing Drive development in the lower middle of the picture with no provision for mature trees that are a major feature of the rest of the village

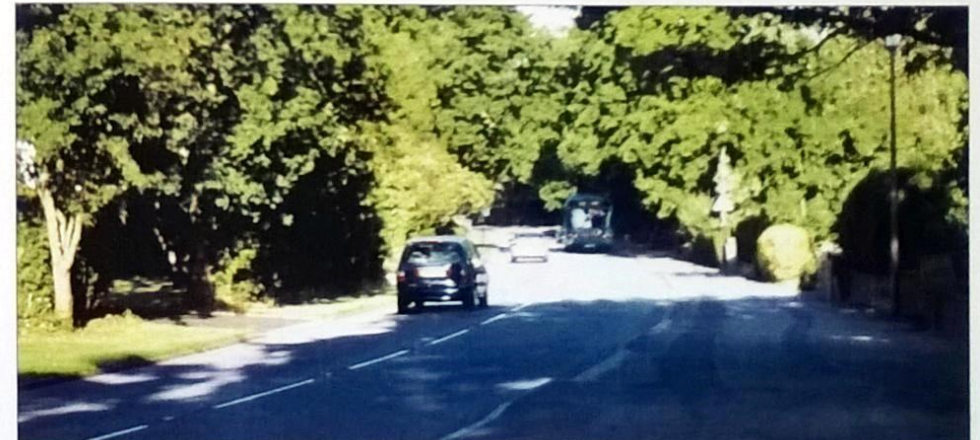
The landscape of Hampton-in-Arden and the surrounding countryside is dominated by trees. Of the local "natural" broadleaved species, oak, ash and sycamore dominate. In the parkland of the Manor many exotic species were introduced by Sir Frederick Peel. These include a great number of coniferous trees.

The churchyard displays mature lime, hornbeam, ash and sycamore. The village green, in contrast, carries conifer species contrasted by adjacent roadside limes and an ancient horse chestnut. Trees planted in large gardens and open public spaces complete the overall aspect of the tree dominated landscape.

- The arboreal aspect of the village therefore is paramount when planning any new development. Mature and established trees and hedgerows should be protected.
- All significant new development should include a tree planting scheme to enhance, soften and screen the development ensuring that as it matures it blends to become part of the existing landscape. The chosen species should reflect the existing pattern of tree cover within the village and should include semi-mature trees to aid the early maturity of the site.
- Any planting carried out by a developer and not part of an open space or the responsibility of a householder should carry a reserve fund to provide on-going maintenance.



The Crescent



Meriden Road



## The Character of the Settlement Pattern

Hampton-in-Arden grew up around the junction of the routes to and from Solihull, Coventry and Kenilworth. Before the coming of the railway in 1838 the settlement was largely confined to the higher ground around the church with cottages spreading along the High Street, Marsh Lane and Solihull Road and with a few outlying farms.

In 1968 the central part of the village was designated a Conservation Area. Here much of the development, whether residential or services, is small scale, compact and unpretentious. Many of the old houses front the streets, which are narrow by today's standards with narrow or even no footpaths. Contrasting building styles are inter-mixed within the Conservation Area, with wide views out and green space within. A number of buildings are listed and many are important, both historically and architecturally. In the early years of the last century, there was piecemeal development in the village. Small numbers of substantial houses were built along the roads to Birmingham and Coventry (Old Station Road and Meriden Road), in Bellemere Road and in the Crescent. Fine examples of Victorian and Edwardian houses still exist, though many have already been demolished and replaced by new developments.

In the 1930s, 40s and 50s there was ribbon development along Meriden Road, Old Station Road and Diddington Lane. This consisted largely of houses with significant gardens built on the vacant plots between existing housing.

In the 1950s and 60s estate developments were completed with houses in Peel Close, Elm Tree Rise and Meadow Drive. Several blocks of flats were built with the majority being unobtrusive. This resulted in an increased density of housing but still maintaining an impression of space. The Village Green, the Recreation Ground, Peel Close, the former cricket field, the school playing fields, the allotments and the use of service roads all contribute to this, and provide valuable open areas. The churchyard also provides a central area of open space.

Until the 1980s the majority of the development was of relatively low density, and involved building on



An early development of terrace houses on the High Street (houses on the corner with Fentham Road)



Station Cottages on Meriden Road



Meriden Road showing houses and a service road



8 & 10 Diddington Lane

good size plots. This maintained the rural character through the varied design and construction of the housing, preserved many of the open views of the surrounding countryside and retained the comprehensive network of footpaths, which remain features of the village to the present day.

The village has retained its centre, and remains a distinct community. The impression created is of a well spaced settlement with many mature trees which has evolved naturally over the years.

In recent years higher density housing has begun to change the character of parts of the village, in particular the run of houses built on Old Station Road and the development centred on Lapwing Drive. This type of development contrasts with the overall pattern of housing in the settlement, and as a result is not well integrated into the existing village.



Peel Close

New development should:

- be within the Inset Area of the village.
- respect the existing settlement pattern and retain the character of the village, including maintenance and extension of footpath links.
- maintain overall balance and provision for all sections of the community with appropriate intensity of land use.
- be gradual with no large step increases in housing stock, to allow new residents to be assimilated into village life.
- protect and enhance existing open spaces and greens within the village.
- retain or enhance the street scene and avoid development to the rear of existing properties which adversely affects them.



School playing field



## Highways and Traffic

The close proximity of a major road network has led to a substantial increase in traffic movements through the village as drivers attempt to avoid traffic hold-ups and black-spots, particularly at peak times.

The long slope of High Street and Meriden Road tends to increase the speed of traffic travelling in an easterly direction. Any development should have regard to the requirement to keep traffic generation to a minimum.

**Nothing should be done which makes the traffic situation any worse and steps to improve matters would be welcomed.**

**Concrete kerbing is not a uniform feature of the village and its use should not be extended unless associated with new footpaths.**

**Development should provide adequate parking off-road for residents and visitors.**

The village is well served by a comprehensive network of footpaths which link with the surrounding countryside and other villages beyond. Within the settlement, many of the gates and stiles of these old paths remain. Within the built area a number of roads have no pedestrian footpaths, in others, particularly the High Street, the pavement is so narrow as to be perceived as being unsafe, especially at times of peak traffic flow.

**Development should include access to, and extension of, the existing network of paths.**

**The maintenance of footpaths within the village should be improved and expanded.**

**Pavements in the built area should be easily negotiated by parents with pushchairs and the less able residents.**

There are no cycle-ways in the village, or links to the local cycle-way network. There is only one bridle-way.

**Development should have regard to providing safe routes for cyclists and horse-riders.**



High Street showing narrow pavements



Wakway alongside school playing field

**Cycle-ways should be encouraged to link up with national and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council sponsored cycle routes in order to encourage the use of the cycle as a means of transport.**

**Street-lamps are lit by predominantly white light and are mainly of the lantern type. The spacing of lamps together with their siting amongst the mature trees and hedges of the village provides a softer rural atmosphere to an otherwise urban feature.**

**Street-lighting should preserve the existing atmosphere.**

Security lighting is, in some places extremely intrusive. The colour of the lights does not fit in with the rural character of the village and the installations seem to lack a professional approach which could minimise the intrusiveness of the lights. The orange light from a sodium light source does not fit in with the large number of trees in the village.

**All street and security lighting should use white light sources, preferably the softer metal halide source. Professional advice should be used when installing security lighting.**

**Street furniture.** Litter bins are mainly small and, in the Conservation Area, are finished in black to complement the surrounding area. Seating is of two traditional types, hardwood park benches and cast-iron framed benches. There are five post-boxes in a variety of styles and an old-style red telephone kiosk.

**New street furniture should be designed to complement the existing styles and the environment.**



Footpath access to Peel Close

*Photograph on the back cover: An aerial view of Hampton from the south. It shows the significant number of mature trees within the village as well as the open spaces. Peel Close, the school playing field, the old cricket field and the Village Recreation Ground are visible*