



# **CHISBURY CONSERVATION AREA**

## **CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

### **COMMITTEE DRAFT**

August 2006

#### **Planning Services**



Development Control & Conservation



Forward Planning & Transportation



Building Control & Property Management

## SUMMARY

Chisbury was first designated a Conservation Area in 1993 in recognition of its architectural and historic character. Its special quality is summarised in the following way.

Chisbury is an ancient settlement with layers of history. It once enjoyed a strategic status with evidence surviving in the form of the hillfort and associated archaeological features. St. Martin's Chapel also bears witness to changing times. Although this medieval building fell into agriculture use it is now restored and maintained as an architectural monument. To some extent this reflects the pattern of modern history at Chisbury. Although farming remains at the core of Chisbury's character it is now developing a new role as an attractive location for living, commuting and non-agricultural work. It remains a small rural hamlet with a timeless atmosphere set in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It contains a high proportion of historic buildings and consists of Chisbury Manor, Lower Farmhouse, and a range of cottages of which the Victorian Estate buildings centred on the small green are of particular importance. A smattering of modern buildings are interspersed throughout the Conservation Area giving a total of about 25 properties. In addition, to the working farms, the presence of trees, hedges and other features of soft landscaping are important in maintaining a rural atmosphere.

Chisbury is largely under the control or influence of the Crown's Savernake Estate and it has not experienced the more extreme development pressures felt by some neighbouring settlements. It remains an attractive settlement in a reasonable state of equilibrium where the long established rural character survives and significant change in the future is not anticipated.

*Front cover : St. Martin's Chapel from the north*

# CHISBURY CONSERVATION AREA

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Historic areas are now extensively recognised for the contribution they make to our cultural inheritance, economic well-being and quality of life. Public support for the conservation and enhancement of areas of architectural and historic interest is well established.

The government requires local planning authorities to determine which parts of its area are areas of special architectural or historic interest worthy of designation as Conservation Areas.

The Chisbury Conservation Area was first designated on 9th September 1993.

Government policy stresses the need for authorities to define and record the special interest, character and appearance of all designated areas in their districts, and the Kennet Local Plan refers to the Council's intention to prepare up-to-date Designation Statements for each of 69 Conservation Areas within the District.

Change is inevitable in most conservation areas; the challenge is to manage change in ways that maintain and, if possible, reinforce an area's special qualities. The character of a conservation area is rarely static and is susceptible to incremental, as well as dramatic, change. Some areas of are in a state of relative economic decline, and suffer from lack of investment. More often, the qualities that make conservation areas appealing also help to encourage over-investment and pressure for new development. English Heritage recommends that positive management is essential if such pressure for change, which tends to alter the very character that made the areas attractive in the first place, is to be limited.

The Council's performance in designating conservation areas, defining the special interest that warrants designation through up-to-date character appraisals, and publishing management proposals is now the subject of a three-part "Best Value Performance Indicator".

The Council has made some progress in defining the architectural and historic character of areas, and a Conservation Area Statement for Little Bedwyn, in the same parish as Chisbury, was adopted in 2003.

The following character appraisal and management proposals for Chisbury are intended to replace a short Statement that was adopted by the Council at the time of the original designation in 1993.

The purpose of this document is to identify and record those special qualities of Chisbury that make up its architectural and historic character. This is important in providing a sound basis for planning policies and decisions on development, as well as for the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of the area. Beyond their use as planning tools, appraisals also have a wider application as educational and informative documents for the local community.

The document is intended for all those with an interest in Chisbury, or undertaking work on the buildings, landscape, roads or public spaces. It is also essential reading for anyone contemplating new development within the area. By drawing attention to the distinctive features of Chisbury it is

intended that its character will be protected and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations.


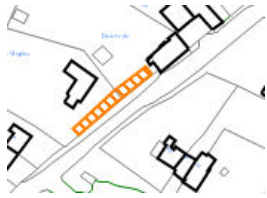

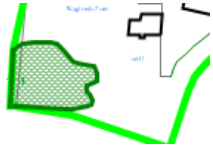



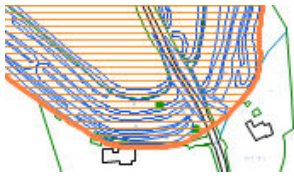
The remainder of the document is divided into three further main sections – the character appraisal, future management proposals, and community involvement.

The survey work for the appraisal was carried out during March and April 2006. The character appraisal commences with a short description of the planning context and is followed by an analysis of Chisbury's special architectural and historic interest. This represents the core of the appraisal.

The Conservation Area is complex and, although priority has been given to highlighting significant features, omission of items from the text or from illustrations should not be regarded as an indication that they are unimportant in terms of conserving the character of the area.

*Keeping Kennet Special*

**Key to Maps:**

<p>Conservation Area boundary</p>		<p>Groups of trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders</p>	
<p>Public Footpaths</p>		<p>Important trees and hedges</p>	
<p>Listed Buildings</p>		<p>Archaeological Alert Zone</p>	
<p>Unlisted buildings with townscape merit</p>		<p>Scheduled Ancient Monument</p>	

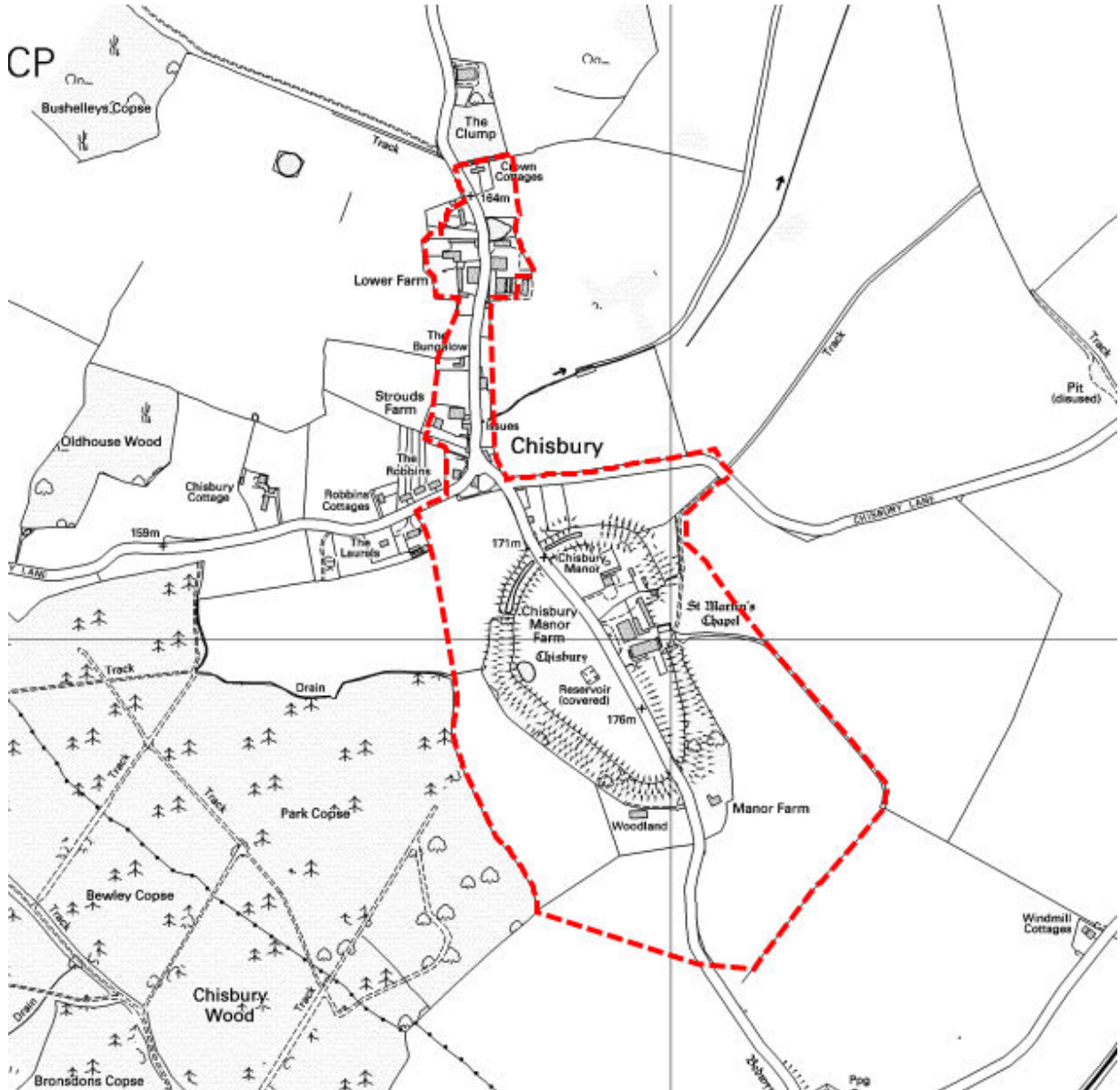
North is at the top of all maps

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 Kennet District Council LA078328 2002

The information given on listed buildings and boundaries is correct at the date of publication. However, designations may change through time and up to date enquiries may be necessary.

## 2. CHISBURY CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Map 1 The Boundary of Chisbury Conservation Area



### 2.2 DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST

#### 2.2.1 Location and context

Chisbury lies about a mile west of Little Bedwyn village and similar distance north of Great Bedwyn. Little Bedwyn has a pub and the parish church is located there whilst more extensive

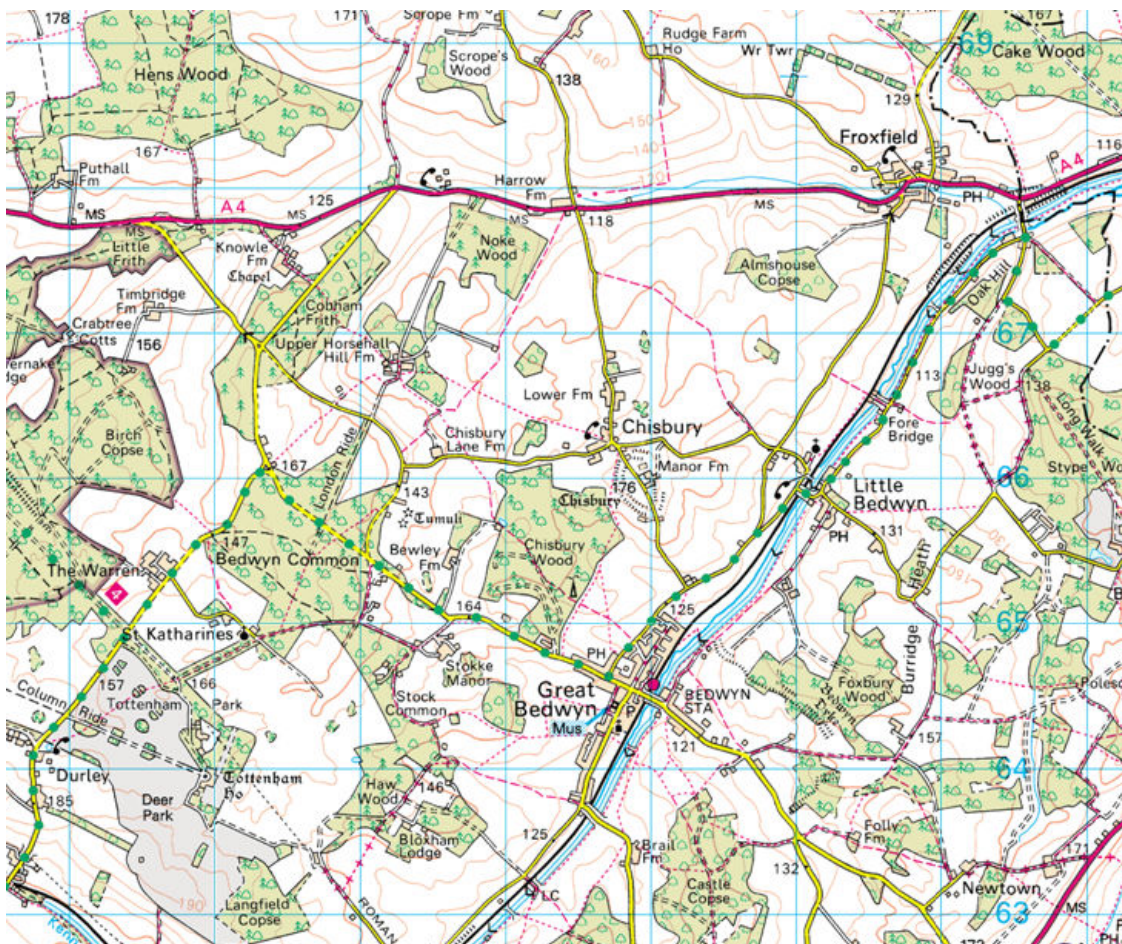
community facilities are provided at Great Bedwyn.

The hamlet is located in an extensive area of countryside about 170m above sea level where the landscape is characterised by enclosed downland. It is set on a hill top in rather wild terrain on the eastern fringe of Savernake Forest. Either side of the hill, dip slope streams drain eastward and eventually meet with the River Kennet.

Although Chisbury is distinctly rural it is unusual in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in having working farms within the settlement. Arable fields and pasture abound in the surrounding countryside. It is comparatively remote from major service centres and Chisbury is now carving out a new role for itself as a tranquil and attractive location to live and work. It has provided inspiration for a small number of artists and is increasingly a place of choice rather than necessity.

The landscape setting is an important part of the character of the Conservation Area. The hill top location ensures there are ever-present views of the countryside evident from the rear of most properties. The prospect to the east takes in Wiltshire, Berkshire and Hampshire. Glimpses of the landscape from the hamlet, and fields within the Conservation Area, contribute significantly to the atmosphere of the place.

*Map 2. The setting of Chisbury in a rural hinterland*



### **2.2.2 The boundary**

The conservation area takes in most of the settlement with the exception of comparatively modern buildings in Chisbury Lane. The boundary essentially follows the rear property boundaries on either side of the lane north of the green. The surrounding areas of landscape are largely in agricultural use and are unlikely to be subject to development pressures. Further south the boundary is more generously drawn to include the setting of the hillfort.

There has been little significant change since the date of the original designation and it is considered the current boundary of the conservation area is appropriately drawn.

### **2.2.3 General character and plan form**

The quintessential character of Chisbury is of a small farming community with the major buildings located within the hillfort, and expansion northwards around the crossing of minor lanes. It is a small rural settlement having just over 30 households.

There are no tall buildings or structures. The built environment at Chisbury is low rise; even St Martin's Chapel lacks a bell tower. The general layout is of widely spaced buildings and the architecture mainly consists of one and half, or two storeys buildings. Most dwellings either face the lane, or are aligned with roof ridges at right angles to the road. Apart from the architecture, the distinctiveness of Chisbury is characterised by solitude and relative isolation. There is no significant intrusion from traffic or other noise, apart from agricultural activity.

*Photo 1. The village green*





#### **2.2.4 The origins and historic development of the area**

The name Chisbury is thought to derive from Cissa's burh. Cissa is believed to have been a sub king who ruled eastern Wiltshire and Berkshire in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The settlement however was established many centuries earlier when it was chosen as the location for the construction of an Iron Age hillfort. The ramparts to Chisbury camp enclose about 6.1 ha. A late-Roman or possibly Dark Age linear ditch known as Bedwyn Dyke can be traced southward. This is sometimes regarded as an eastward extension of Wansdyke.

The strong defensive position came into its own in the latter half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century during King Alfred's reign when Chisbury was brought into commission as emergency stronghold. It became part of chain of burghs provided for the security of Wessex. By the end of the first millennium Great Bedwyn had developed as the main centre for the Savernake area but owing to its vulnerable location Chisbury remained in use only as a place of last resort - foreshadowing developments in the south of the county at Old Sarum and Salisbury.

A church had probably existed at Chisbury since the Saxon period but this was replaced in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by St Martin's chapel which remains a captivating reminder of Decorated gothic architecture beneath its rustic thatched roof. Although the chapel was still in use up until the Reformation it later lapsed into agricultural use before falling into disrepair. It was eventually restored in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is now in the guardianship of English Heritage. During the Middle Ages Chisbury Manor belonged to a series of families and was eventually sold to the Earl of Ailesbury of Savernake.

A map of 1612 does not indicate any buildings north of the hillfort and a number of buildings at the core of the existing hamlet date from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. These were augmented by Victorian estate cottages centred on the small triangular green.

Buildings associated with agriculture dominate the hamlet, even in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Working farms operate at Lower Farm, Stroud Farm and Chisbury Manor Farm.

*Photo 2. Brick and flint agricultural buildings at Lower Farm.*



### **2.2.5 The character and interrelationship of spaces within the area**

Chisbury is located on a network of minor lanes and through traffic is not a major problem. The lanes have a quiet, rural character and for the most part have soft verges and grassy banks. Property boundaries are marked by hedgerows which also contribute to the informal and bucolic nature of the hamlet. The absence of formal kerb and separate footways is also a key factor in defining the special character of the public realm.

The great majority of buildings are informally sited, although around the village green the cottages have a more formal relationship with the alignment of the lanes. The absence of modern estate type development, or continuously built-up frontages, however creates an unpretentious character and the comparatively large spaces and gardens around most houses are as important as the buildings in defining the quality.

*Photo 3. The lane near Lower Farm*



### **2.2.6 Key views and vistas**

Looking towards Chisbury the main views are found glancing up towards the hilltop and St. Martin's Chapel. The reverse views, particularly the panoramas south and eastwards across the landscape of the North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are particularly attractive. Within the Conservation Area the view of the driveway and west facade of Chisbury Manor is a major eye catcher. Throughout occasional glimpses of the surrounding open fields, Chisbury Wood or the wooded ramparts of the hillfort are also noteworthy. The main view points are shown on Map 3.

Photo 4. Chisbury on the horizon from the direction of Great Bedwyn



Map 3. Key vistas and public footpaths



*Photo 5. The west facing façade of Chisbury Manor House.*



### **2.2.7 Architectural Character**

Most of the buildings in the Conservation Area, and their means of enclosure, help to shape its character in a positive way.

The architectural character is based on three main genres. There are the polite designs characterised by Chisbury Manor and Lower Farmhouse. These substantial brick and tile properties demonstrate the influence of national architectural styles upon the hamlet. Then there are the estate buildings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The cottages incorporate a blend of pattern-book influences with decorative diaper brickwork beneath Welsh slate roofs. Local materials are also incorporated in the form of flint panels. Finally there are the vernacular buildings based on regional traditions. Older cottages such as Nos. 9, 10 and 11 demonstrate timber framing, straw thatching, and a low eaves line. Most consist of one and half stories with the first floor accommodation located within the roof space. There is a total of nine thatched buildings in the hamlet.

The front to back span of all the cottages is also comparatively small, normally about 5m. Even the construction of larger traditional buildings is constrained by the limitations of available timber. Chisbury Manor, for example, has a superficially large scale, but even here it is formed from a number of components each with a narrow span.

Four properties are listed as having national architectural or historic importance; and St Martin's Chapel, in addition to the hillfort, is scheduled as an ancient monument. The protected structures are shown on Map Nos. 4, 5 and 6. The list is now almost twenty years old and a number of additional buildings are close to meeting current day criteria for inclusion on the statutory list. In addition a number of other buildings can be identified that contribute positively to the character of the conservation area. In total twenty one structures or properties of particular townscape merit have been noted. These are also shown on the maps and in Appendix 1. A typical case is the estate cottages around the green.

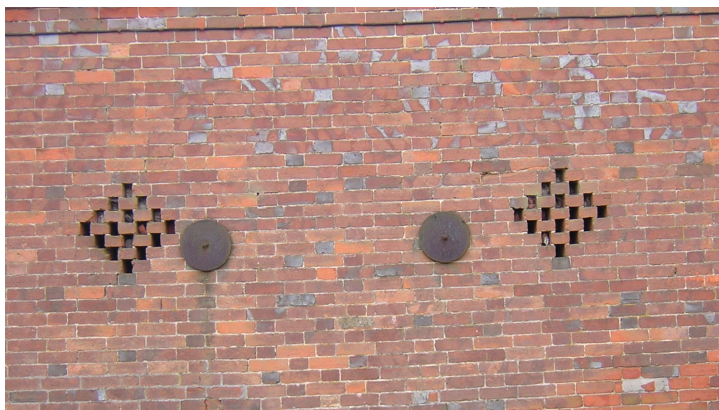
*Photo 6 . A rare 19<sup>th</sup> century post box - architectural details can add significantly to the enjoyment of a locality, and some can have an impact well beyond their size*



Architectural ornamentation is usually simple; plank doors and flush fitting casement windows are important characteristics. The agricultural buildings are also important reminders of the origins and raison de'être for Chisbury and even these display characterful details such as the brick barn at Strouds Farm

The underlying geology of the locality is an important determinant of the essential character of the settlement. The surrounding chalk uplands do not supply plentiful supplies of high quality building stone, and the good natural drainage historically limited the availability of water to support a big population or mill power. However, the chalk downs have been suitable for the growing of cereals and wheat straw has evolved as a major roofing material. In the Bedwyn area the chalk has thin layers of overlying clay with flints, and sands. The flint can be used to produce a very durable, if hard to work, walling material. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century the overlying clay was also used for the manufacture of handmade bricks and plain tiles which also became significant building materials at Chisbury.

*Photo 7. Strouds Farm barn with ventilation patterns in the brickwork.*



*Photo 8. Victorian estate cottages*



*Photo 9. Close up of flint nodules used at St Martin's Chapel.*



*Photo 10. Nos 9 - 11 Chisbury*





*Photo 11. Lower Farmhouse*



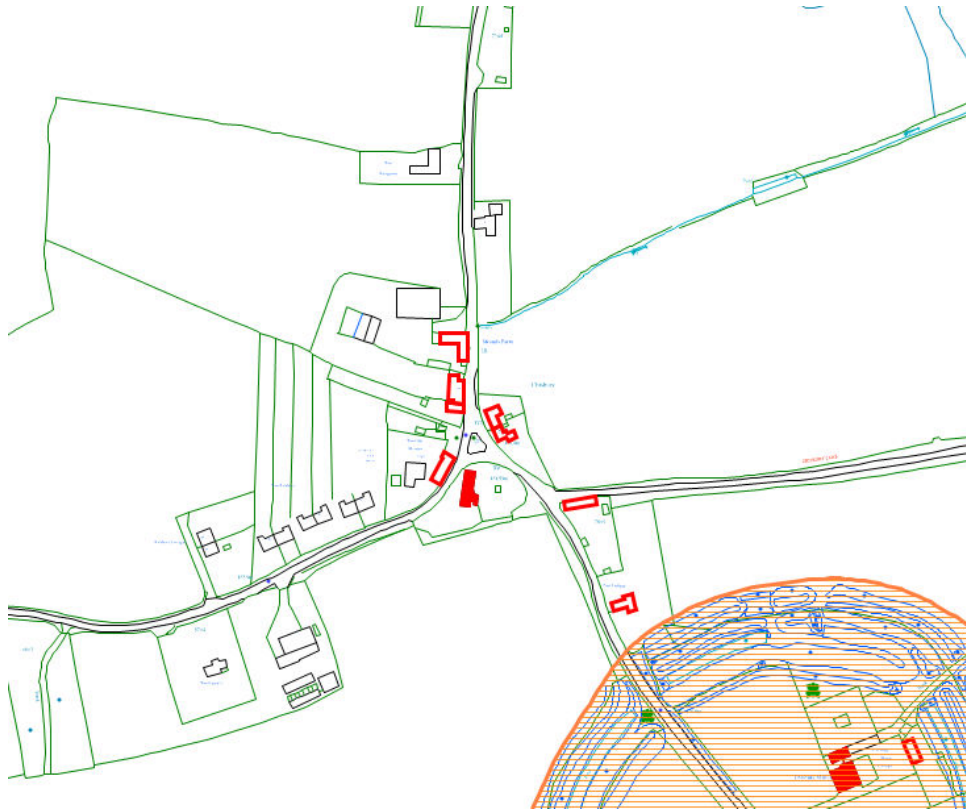
*Photo 12. Nos. 6 and 7 Chisbury*





The northern zone is separated from the central zone by undeveloped frontages. The central zone is focussed around the cross roads and the small village green. Once again a farm (Strouds) lies at the heart but here the architecture is slightly more self-conscious. The estate cottages and former Mission Hall have a calculated picturesque quality and a triangular green forms the focal point. The 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages are typified by diaper pattern brickwork and moulded bargeboards. The lanes have an intimate, human scale.

*Map 5. The central zone*



*Photo 13. Nos 1 and 1a Chisbury*



To the south lies the third zone. This is set on higher ground and is based on the oval ramparts of the hillfort and its setting. It is separated from the central zone by a steep and sunken lane. In places the earthwork is about 14m high although much of it is concealed by trees. A small number of modern buildings have encroached onto the outer setting of the hilltop but settlement within the oval is well-established and is constrained to the east side of the lane. It essentially consist of the Manor House, Manor Cottage, St Martin's Chapel and Manor Farm. The present Manor House, one-time residence of Sir Brian Horrocks (1895-1985), dates from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century but this replaced a much older timber framed structure. The atmosphere is of ancient history and seclusion. There is no public access to the ramparts but there are permissive rights of way to the enigmatic Chapel.

*Map 6. The southern zone*



Photo 14. St Martin's Chapel and Manor Farm



### **2.2.9 The contribution made by greenery and green spaces**

The surrounding countryside is dominated by semi natural woodland, blocks of conifer plantation and arable farm land. Although no trees are subject to preservation orders trees, boundary hedges and street greenery are vital elements.

Native hedgerows containing mature boundary trees are a special feature when entering from the north. At the northern end of the Conservation Area tree and hedge cover is generally strong with almost continuous, mainly native thorn. The obvious gaps are to the front of the farm buildings at Chisbury Lower Farm, two paddocks on the western side of Lower Farm, the frontage to No. 4 and around the farm buildings of Stroud's Farm. In the vicinity of Lower Farm there is a stand of mixed young and mature native and non-native trees and hedging. The most prominent is the weeping willow to the south of a silted up pond, an established pleached lime hedge to the front of Lower Farm and six old pollard willows on the verge of No.5. From here there are distant views towards the tree belt surrounding the hillfort to the south.

Two prominent mature oak trees stand to the rear of properties on the western side of the lane in the vicinity of The Bungalow and Stroud's Farm.

Within the main settlement area the small village green is an important focal point with a young oak whilst domestic gardens also make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. Around the green, planting consists of a greater proportion of non-native trees and hedges, with properties immediately south of the green containing a wide range of deciduous

and coniferous species comprising Scots pine, yew, cherry, holly and a number of other conifer species.

On the north west side of Chisbury Lane there are a number of mature holly trees but hedging is weak. The south side of the lane could also benefit from improved hedging. The paddock on the south east of Chisbury Lane contains three prominent oaks against the backdrop of the hillfort and plantation beyond.

The lane through the ramparts is characterised for by steep verges and banks, whilst the absence of formalised footways and kerbs adds to the bucolic character of the settlement. The lane leading up to the hillfort has strong tree and hedge cover on either side with some trees arching over the road. There is a prominent lime and oak standing towards the road in the paddock area and frontage of Fort Cottage.

Three isolated mature oak mark the boundary to a paddock further down the lane to the east, although hedging along this stretch is also weak. Hedging to the other side of the road is very strong comprising mainly of thorn.

Within the hillfort Chisbury Manor is again well treed with a mix of native established trees and hedges within the grounds. An established beech hedge fronts the property, with two dominant yew trees standing on either side of the main entrance drive. Tree cover around the horse stud buildings and either side of the main road is also generally strong with a good mix of young and mature trees. Within the hillfort the open paddocks on the west side of the lane form important private open spaces. Tree cover thickens as the road drops to the south, with beech hedging screening the grounds of the two most southerly properties.

When viewed from the lower ground northwards, the hamlet has good tree cover, with a strong woodland block immediately west of the hillfort. However, limited screening around Woodland House does create a prominent view of the building against a backdrop of green.

The eastern boundary of the Conservation Area is generally strong with good tree and hedge cover although there are open views to the chapel and farm buildings.

*Photo 15. The heavily treed ramparts of the hillfort*





*Map 7 Important trees and hedges*

### **2.2.10 General condition**

Due to its attractive rural location the settlement is relatively prosperous and the physical condition of its historic buildings and other heritage assets are reasonable. At the present time there are no listed buildings at risk, or in an obvious serious state of disrepair. The former Mission Hall and adjacent K6 public telephone kiosk, however, are not well maintained and appear to face uncertain futures.

The general condition of the surface of the lanes appear to be in reasonably good order, and there are no planned traffic management schemes affecting the Conservation Area.

### **2.2.11 The extent of intrusion or damage.**

As with most Conservation Areas there are a few negative factors. The village green contains a certain amount of utility company paraphernalia and its outermost angles are prone to overrun by vehicles causing erosion of the grass.

The overhead wirescape of electricity and telegraph wires also detracts from the special character of the area particularly north of Strouds Farm.

One or two of the unlisted cottages have suffered unfortunate alterations to windows. Modern window frames, particularly those made of plastic, rarely have the refinement of the originals and can easily detract from traditional character.

*Photo 16. Original windows to the ground floor, replacement windows to the first floor.*



The loss of boundary features in order to accommodate the motor car can lead to a loss of rural character and an increase in suburban qualities.

*Photo 17. The double garage and wide forecourt have reduced traditional character.*



#### **2.2.12 Problems, pressures and capacity for change**

In considering the future of the Conservation Area it is important to make an assessment of significance, and some analysis of how that significance is vulnerable to change. There has been some incremental loss of character due to the occasional modern structure or to minor alterations to unlisted buildings which can take place outside of planning control, Nevertheless the character of Chisbury as a traditional farming hamlet still shines through.

National trends also suggest the future of traditional agricultural buildings may be in some jeopardy. Obviously using them for their original purpose is likely to offer the best chance of retaining character. If this proves impossible then it will be particularly important to find sympathetic new uses for the farm buildings at Lower Farm and Strouds Farm.

Having regards to general planning policy there are unlikely to be any major changes to the Conservation Area in the foreseeable future but where the replacement of non-descript existing buildings is under consideration it will be important to ensure that designs have regard to their historic and physical contexts.

#### **2.4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The main sources of information used in the preparation of the appraisal :

*Marlborough and Eastern Wiltshire* – John Chandler, Hobnob Press ISBN 0-946418-07-1  
Wiltshire Collections – published by Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society 1862.

## **APPENDIX 1 TO CHISBURY CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

### **Locally important 'unlisted' buildings**

St Martin's Chapel  
Brick farm building west of St Martin's Chapel  
Chisbury Manor Cottage  
Fort Cottage  
14 Chisbury  
The Old Mission Hall  
1 and 1a Chisbury  
2 and 3 Chisbury  
Farm building at Strouds Farm  
5 Chisbury  
6 and 7 Chisbury  
2 no. farm buildings south of Lower Farmhouse  
Farm building north of Lower Farmhouse  
9 – 11 Chisbury  
1 and 2 Crown Cottages

*Keeping Kennet Special*



## **3. CHISBURY CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

### **3.1 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHARACTER APPRAISAL**

For the designation of a conservation area to be effective it is important that consistent judgements are made in determining its special qualities and local distinctiveness, as well as its value to the local community. Such judgements should be based on a thorough understanding of the area in its wider context, reached through the detailed appraisal of its character.

The above appraisal should be regarded as the first step in a dynamic process, the aim of which is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the designated area - and to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future through the development of management proposals.

Now that the appraisal has been drafted, proposals for the future management of the area will need to be developed. Logically these will take the form of a mid- to long-term strategy for preserving and enhancing the conservation area, addressing any issues arising from the appraisal and identifying any further or detailed work needed for their implementation.

The strategy needs to be realistic, bearing in mind the staff and financial resources likely to be available. At the present time the Council has no dedicated funds for grant aiding building repairs or enhancement work, although minor grants may be available for some tree planting schemes. Only a 'light touch' approach can be justified for most of the rural Conservation Areas within the District.

### **3.2 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

The procedures governing the protection of listed buildings are widely understood and mainly focus on the protection of individual structures. Conservation Area designation, however, is the main instrument to give effect to conservation policies for a particular *neighbourhood or settlement*. Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of most buildings, and tree felling / surgery. The scale of extensions that may be added to existing dwellings as "permitted development" is also limited. Designation has some resource implications for the local authority and the owners and occupiers of property within the area, because of increased statutory controls and particular requirements for the repair or alteration of existing, and construction of new, buildings. For many owners, however, these implications may be outweighed by the cachet of designation, and the tendency of controls aimed at maintaining the character of the area to sustain, or enhance, the value of property within it. Designation also provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest.

The general planning policy for Chisbury is currently set out in the Kennet Local Plan 2011. Chisbury is not recognised (Chapter 2) as a settlement suitable for new housing development. New houses will normally only be allowed where they are necessary in connection with employment essential for the countryside, to provide holiday accommodation from the conversion of existing buildings, or essential as providing the only economic means of retaining an historic structure.

The Local Plan also sets out (Chapter 6) a range of generic policies relating to new development proposals within Conservation Areas.

The government has recently introduced a new kind of planning system in which the focus is on flexibility, sustainability, and the use of evidence to underpin the core strategies. Local planning authorities will in future produce local development frameworks consisting of a portfolio of local development documents. It is unlikely that the fundamental planning policy for Chisbury will change significantly under the new regime. It is probable that the core strategy will be supported by supplementary planning documents (SPD) giving greater specific guidance, for example on development control matters relating to conservation areas. The legislation relating to Conservation Areas runs parallel with general planning legislation and there will be a need to ensure that appropriate linkages are in place. It is anticipated that this will be achieved by new Heritage SPD which will in turn be supported by adopted and published character appraisals and management proposals for individual Conservation Areas. This is where this document fits in.

The intention is that a clear definition of those elements which contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of a place will enable the development of a robust policy framework for the future management of the area, on which applications for planning permission can be considered.

A local authority's reasoning for designating a conservation area, as set out in a formal character appraisal published in support of a supplementary planning document, will be taken into account by the First Secretary of State and the Planning Inspectorate in considering related planning appeals.

### **3.3 GENERAL APPROACH OF THE COUNCIL TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

In addition to the usual need to obtain planning permission for most forms of new development there is a requirement for applications to be made for conservation area consent for the demolition of unlisted buildings, and notifications to be submitted for the felling or lopping of trees need to be notified

In exercising its planning powers, the Council has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

For most proposals in the Conservation Area the Council will require detailed plans and drawings of new development, including elevations which show the proposed development in its setting, before considering a planning application.

The Council will advertise all applications for planning permission for development that would affect the character or appearance of conservation areas.

### **3.4 GENERAL APPROACH OF THE COUNCIL TOWARDS CONSERVATION AREAS**

The Council's general planning policies towards development is set out in Policies HH4 (Historic Landscapes), HH5 (Development in Conservation Areas), and HH6 (Demolition in Conservation Areas).

It is also essential that a flexible approach is taken to the requirements of the Building Regulations and Fire Precautions Act and that rigorous application of general planning and highway policies should be relaxed where they would be in conflict with the preservation or enhancement of the area's character or appearance.

### **3.5 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AT CHISBURY**

Applications for planning permission, conservation area consent, and tree works will be assessed with reference to the Conservation Area Appraisal. *There will be a presumption in favour of conserving key unlisted buildings, trees and hedges and views that have been identified.*

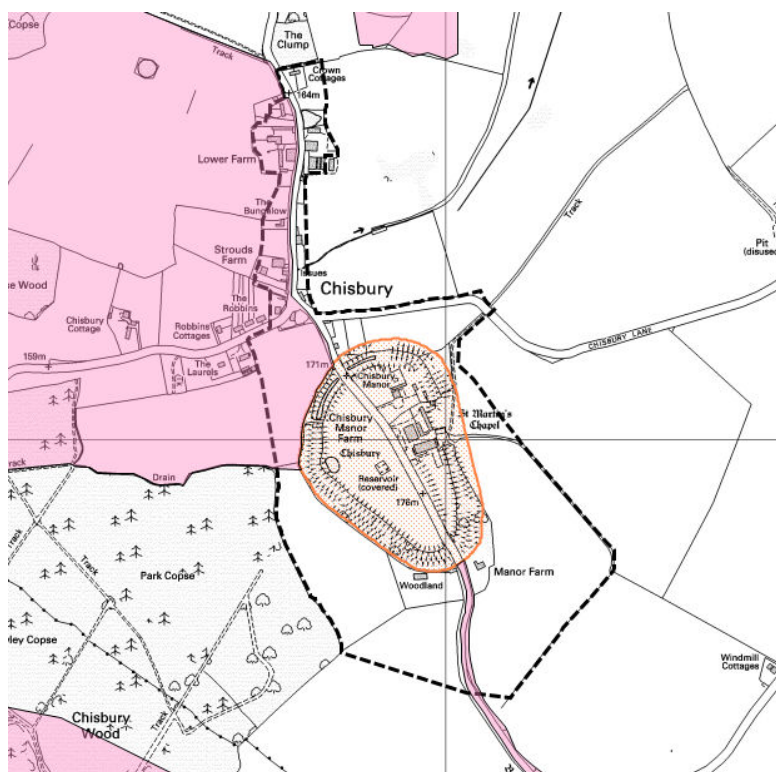
Following on from the above, at Chisbury the preferred policy of conservation will lie with the preservation of the established 'status quo' rather than specific proposals for change. Where proposals for change occur the intention is to provide a framework to allow this to be carefully considered and managed in a positive way to reinforce the existing character and appearance of the area.

#### **3.5.1 Archaeology**

As noted in the appraisal Chisbury has been subject to occupation and alteration over many generations. The Iron-Age hillfort and St Martin's Chapel have been scheduled as ancient monuments and any proposed works affecting these structures must be referred to English Heritage for approval. In addition the County Archaeology Service, in conjunction with the Council, has prepared archaeological zone maps for the district. These zones have been established following an analytical procedure for identifying and scoring archaeological sites and landscapes.

Bedwyn Dyke, leading southwards from the hillfort, is included within an archaeological alert zone where there is likely to be an archaeological objection to below ground development. In addition, most of the Conservation Area west of the main lane (see Map 8) is identified as containing an extensive field system probably relating to the hillfort. This indicates a high degree of archaeological potential and preliminary consultation with the Archaeology Service is therefore recommended for prospective developers within the zone.

*Map 8 Archaeological Alert Zone*



### **3.5.2 Redevelopment**

At Chisbury large-scale, comprehensive or 'estate' forms of development is unlikely to be acceptable. Planning policy anticipates that new building development proposals are only likely to be in the form of individual proposals for replacement buildings. The appraisal noted that a small number of properties are not in harmony with the historic and physical context of the Conservation Area. The Council therefore encourages the sympathetic redevelopment of those sites which might be said to detract from the character or appearance of the area.

### **3.5.3 Design of new buildings in the conservation area**

New development in the Conservation Area should aspire to a quality of design and execution, related to its context, which may be valued in the future. This in itself does not imply nor preclude working in traditional or new ways, but will normally involve respecting values established through assessment of the significance of the area. The aim of design guidance therefore is to encourage new development that complements the established grain or settlement pattern, whilst representing the time in which it is built and the culture it accommodates. When considering proposals for new development, the local planning authority's principal concern will be the appropriateness of the overall mass or volume of the building, its scale (the expression of size indicated by the windows, doors, floor/ceiling heights, and other identifiable units), and its relationship to its context - whether it sits comfortably on its site. A new building should be in harmony with, or complementary to, its neighbours. The footprint of new buildings should fit into the existing building pattern or grain. The use of materials generally matching in appearance or complementary to those that are historically dominant in the area is important, as is ensuring that materials, detailing and finishes are all of high quality. Within these criteria, new development should aim to achieve creative design solutions, whether contemporary or traditional in style.

*Photo 18. 1 and 2 Crown Cottages – 20th century buildings that have fitted harmoniously into the hamlet.*



In designing proposals owners and their architects are therefore advised to look carefully how their proposal will fit into its physical and historic context. Where construction work is involved particular care should be taken in the choice of building materials and whenever possible should seek to reinforce local distinctiveness.

The palette of established materials at Chisbury includes :

Roof coverings - Wheat thatch, plain clay tiles  
Walling - Timber framing, flint, chalk cob, brown stock brickwork

### **3.5.4 Extensions**

Relatively small proposals can cumulatively alter the character of the Conservation Area. It is important therefore that extensions to buildings do not dominate the host structure. Generic advice on the considerations to be taken into account in designing an extension is set out in a *Residential Extension Design Guide*. This is available free of charge from the Planning Services Unit at Kennet District Council.

### **3.5.5 Farm and Other Traditional Buildings**

The appraisal noted the important contribution of farm buildings such as the barn at Strouds Farm, and the simple brick and flint structures near Lower Farm. The Council has generic advice on the maintenance of this endangered category of buildings which might prove useful and will therefore send copies of the literature to the relevant owners. The *Historic Farm Buildings* advice leaflet is also available on-line in the Conservation pages of [www.kennet.gov.uk](http://www.kennet.gov.uk).

As no listed buildings have been noted as being at risk from decay action under the Urgent Works or Repairs Notices procedures is not considered to be necessary. However, the unlisted former Mission Hall near the green is vulnerable to dilapidation. The structure was probably built as an estate workshop but may have doubled up as a place for non-conformist worship. The Council encourages a new lease of life. This, ideally, might restore a community use – small shops and meeting rooms have been provided successfully in surrounding settlements. Alternatively, it might lend itself as an artist's studio or artisan's work space.

*Photo 19. The former Mission Hall.*



### **3.5.6 Additional Controls**

In certain circumstances, the Council can apply additional controls to bring minor developments under restraint. This is particularly useful in cases of terraced development where thoughtless alterations can disrupt the harmony of several properties. However, this has resource implications, is difficult to manage, and restricts the usual freedoms for house owners. In view of the individual nature of most properties at Chisbury, and the above factors, it is considered that additional planning controls are not warranted at this time. Similarly, additional control in respect of outdoor advertisements is not considered to be necessary at this location.

### **3.5.7 Care with maintenance and minor alterations**

Listed buildings are already subject to additional controls, but in order to maintain the character of the Conservation Area the Council will also encourage the owners of unlisted properties to take care with maintenance and minor alterations. In particular the Council encourages the repair rather than replacement of original features. Where replacement of key architectural features such as windows and doors is unavoidable then care should be taken to accurately copy original styles and details.

Similarly the Council encourages the long term maintenance of trees, shrubs and hedges identified in the appraisal. The planting of non-indigenous evergreen hedges and trees or close-boarded fencing in prominent positions is however discouraged.

### **3.5.8 Enhancement of the Public Realm**

Where resources are limited, a balance will obviously need to be struck and priority given to key issues. There are only limited problems at Chisbury. The biggest issue noted in the appraisal was the adverse visual impact of public utility paraphernalia and vehicles eroding the triangular green. The public utility companies and the highway authority may be persuaded to take inexpensive remedial action.

External sources of funding, such the Local Heritage Initiative, may also be made available for community-led projects. The Countryside Agency's initiative for *Parish Plans* may also be relevant. These are local, action-based plans, which may address a range of problems and opportunities affecting rural communities. This has the potential to provide a model for the funding and implementation of ideas that emerge beyond the scope of the normal planning system.

The restoration of the pond at Lower Farm, additional mixed native hedging along Chisbury Lane, and native tree planting to maintain the sylvan character of Chisbury is also encouraged. Such works might benefit from a Council Landscape Conservation Grant.

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## **4. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND REVIEW**

### **4.1 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Involving the community and raising public awareness is an integral part of the appraisal process. Publicity provides an opportunity to test and consolidate public support. However, with limited resources and 69 Conservation Areas (at the time of writing) within its remit, the Council has to strike a balance. Lengthy public participation can be very expensive and create delays in the adoption of appropriate controls, policies and guidance. The Council's priority is the provision of these elements within a short timescale. In view of the magnitude of the overall project, and the relatively short period for completion, the Council is adopting the following model.

Notifications of the Conservation Area review have been sent to community representatives (including the Little Bedwyn Parish Council), statutory organisations, and relevant amenity groups with an offer to attend a meeting if desired.

Copies of the Draft Appraisal and Management Proposals have been sent to the same consultees together with a feedback form on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2006. A copy of the Draft document has also been placed on the Council's publicly accessible web site, a press release issued. And a poster placed on the Chisbury notice board. Opinions were particularly canvassed on whether the boundary still adequately reflected the area of special interest, whether the appraisal contains any inaccuracies or omissions in respect of the character of the historic environment, and whether the management proposals are suitable and appropriate for the conservation of Chisbury. The Consultative Draft was placed on deposit for six weeks.

A number of written responses were received. These are summarised in a separate document available upon request from the Council. Although a number adjustments have been made to the Consultative Draft as a result of the responses it was not considered that any amendments were of major or strategic importance and the revisions were not re-advertised.

### **4.2 ADOPTION**

The revised document was finally formally adopted on .....by the Planning Policy Executive Committee on behalf of the District Council as its strategy for the Chisbury Conservation Area. The document is intended to particularly provide additional information on the interpretation and implementation of policies and proposals contained in the Development Plan. The character appraisal in particular will form an important role as part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework, and for the purposes of Development Control.

The final document has been published and distributed to consultees, and placed permanently on the Council's web site. It is also being made available for viewing on the Parish Council's web page. Hard copies of the document may also be purchased from the address given below.

### **4.3 IMPLEMENTATION**

The need for reference to the Character Appraisal will be on-going. The implementation of Management strategy, however, requires a number of one-off positive actions which the Council will undertake at the earliest opportunity commencing from October 2006. The adoption of the document is thus not intended to be the end of the story. In addition to its use in exercising its

planning functions the Council will also try to influence other agencies in the protection of the Area.

#### **4.4 REVIEW**

Now that Appraisal and Management Plan has been adopted there will be a need to keep it up to date and relevant. The Council will therefore aim to ensure that 75% of all Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans have been reviewed within the past five years.

This booklet is one in a series of Conservation Area Statements, and Appraisals and Managements Plans, and other general policy, technical and information leaflets produced by the Conservation Team at Kennet District Council. For an up to date list, please contact :

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**Schedule of Representations received on the Consultative Draft Chisbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Correspondent</b>	<b>Summary of Comment/ Representations</b>	<b>Summary of Response</b>	<b>Action</b>
General	Campaign to Protect Rural England	Document appears to be well up to required new high standard		
Management Proposals	WCC Libraries & Heritage	It is helpful to see the archaeology alert maps being used positively. However although the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Chisbury Camp is referred to in the text and on the plan it is not referred to in the key	Agreed	Key to maps adjusted

Minor editing of the Committee Draft has also taken place where appropriate and is not listed above.

In addition to the Correspondents listed above Consultative Drafts were sent with an invitation to comment to:

Little Bedwyn Parish Council

Wiltshire County Council : Highways Area Manager; Environmental Services Policy Officer; Environmental Services Planning Officer

Wiltshire Highways Partnership

The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society

The Pewsey Vale History Society

District Council Ward Member

15 August 2006