



WOOTTON CONSERVATION AREA

**EAST STAFFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
PLANNING SERVICES**

Town and Country Planning Act 1971

East Staffordshire District Council

At its meeting on the 14 May 1990
under the provisions of Section 277
of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971,
the Full Council of the East Staffordshire
District resolved that the area shown on
the enclosed plan be designated as
"Wootton Conservation Area"
and used as the policy basis
for development control.

Cover : Cross House and Cross Cottage, Wootton

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INTRODUCTION : CONSERVATION AREAS

Legislation has existed since the Town and Country Planning Act of 1932 to preserve buildings of architectural or historic interest and the 1944 Act set up a system for listing them. The system has saved many fine old buildings from destruction or mutilation but demolition and redevelopment of other buildings has shown that the preservation of single buildings alone is not sufficient to preserve the character of an area, and often the overall character is more important than any individual building.

The character of an area is compound of many things : individual buildings of interest, spaces between buildings, street patterns, trees, groups of buildings and, consequently, the 1967 Civic Amenities Act allowed local authorities to designate those "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". The 1967 and subsequent Acts have been consolidated and re-enacted in the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

There is an important difference between preservation, by the listing of buildings, and conservation. Preservation implies freezing, as in a museum, but conservation is more dynamic and has been described as "not only maintaining in good repair but also regenerating and enriching" and "preserving purposefully ; giving not merely continued existence but continued useful existence". In Conservation Areas the element of change cannot, and should not, be ruled out, but should be controlled to maintain and enhance the character and feel of an area.

Department of the Environment Circular 8/87 states that there can be no standard specification for Conservation Areas. They may be large or small, ranging from whole town centres to squares, terraces, and smaller groups of buildings. Often they will be centred on Listed Buildings, but pleasant groups of other buildings, open spaces, trees, an historic street pattern, a village green or features of archaeological interest may also contribute to the special character of an area.

The effects of designation of a Conservation Area on property owners, on the local authority and on the community in general, are described later in this document. In due course, detailed proposals for the enhancement of the area will be prepared, but the ultimate success of the Conservation Area depends on the active interest and support of the community.



Towards Nook Farm

THE AREA

Wootton is a small settlement of gritstone buildings on the southern slopes of the Weaver Hills, south-east of Leek and 9 miles north of Uttoxeter.

The centre of Wootton straddles a relatively lofty spot in the undulating countryside and all roads approaching the centre, with the exception of that from the north-west, climb to it.

Five lanes and one track meet at the village centre, but the junctions are staggered, allowing the intrusion of buildings between, which, together with the linking dry stone walls give a sense of enclosure and a close, intimate character, whilst the gaps between the buildings ensure a visual continuity with the surrounding countryside.

There are panoramic views over the surrounding countryside from many points within the village.



Towards Delbert Farm

The C380 road between Ellastone and Leek which passes to the west of the village is used by a substantial number of heavy lorries carrying roadstone from nearby quarries. However, the village centre is far enough away from this road to enjoy a quiet and secluded environment.

The village is a typical nucleated settlement of the Staffordshire Uplands, where a close grouping of farms and cottages centre around a convergence of lanes and tracks, originally connecting homes in the centre with work places, in the widely dispersed strips of the open field system. Many of the approaches to the village are sunken below the adjoining fields which probably indicates their long usage. There is evidence, from the proximity of burial mounds on the Weaver Hills and at Stanton, that the region was populated in ancient times.

The predominant building material, used in the village, is stone, often a grey weathered colour, and mainly used in course, large ashlar blocks. Embellishments to the basic stone building may be seen in heavy coping to gables, mullions and door heads. These details combine to create a visually interesting style.

Nook Farmhouse, on Back Lane, is of the Seventeenth Century with later alterations and extensions. It is of coursed, large stone blocks with a diaper-patterned clay tile roof.



Parish Rooms towards Hole Farm

The barn and stables, north of Nook Farmhouse, are late Eighteenth Century, or early Nineteenth Century, of coursed and squared stone and a plain tile roof, with coped verges on rounded kneelers.

The cottages south of Nook Farmhouse were formerly one cottage, now extended. It was probably built in the Eighteenth Century and extended in the early Nineteenth Century. The earlier part has coursed and squared stone, partly ashlar, with the later part in ashlar with herring-bone tooling. The cottages have a clay tile roof with coped verges.

The Dell, on Hall Lane to the very east of the village, is probably an Eighteenth Century cottage of coursed and squared, large stone blocks with a clay tile roof and coped verges.

There are some interesting farm buildings at Hole Farm, comprising pigsties and a feed shed, and stables, all of mid-Nineteenth Century origin. The pigsties and feed shed are of ashlar with herring-bone tooling and blue tile lean-to roofs against a high back wall, with returned sides and against-east return wall. The pigsties have low doorways and the yard is divided by low walls with round headed railings. The stables are of coursed, squared and dressed stone with a clay tile roof.

Lane Cottage, to the south of the farm, incorporates a former detached kitchen. It is dated 1704 but has later alterations. It is of coursed, squared and dressed large stone blocks and has clay-tile roofs with coped verges on rounded kneelers. The house and kitchen are now linked by a Twentieth Century addition.

Fold Farmhouse and Fold House, to the west, form a pair of houses. They are of Seventeenth Century origin with Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century alterations and additions. They are of coursed, squared and dressed, large stone blocks with a plain tile roof. The gabled porch on the left-hand side is dated 1797 on the bracketed pediment hood. The barn to the immediate west of the farmhouse is Seventeenth Century with late Nineteenth Century remodelling. It is of coursed, squared large stone blocks and has a plain tile roof with coped verges on rounded kneelers.

All the buildings are Grade II Listed Buildings.

There are no special townscape features which contribute to the character of the area, but the unified architectural styles and materials are of important visual significance within the Conservation Area.

The village buildings, being constructed of the same stone used for enclosing the surrounding fields, reflect the rural nature of the settlement.

This is emphasised by the absence of roadside footpaths and kerb-edging. Their definition is less perceptible and the buildings then become the dominant visual feature.

The village contains prominent groups of trees and hedgerow trees which soften its general character.



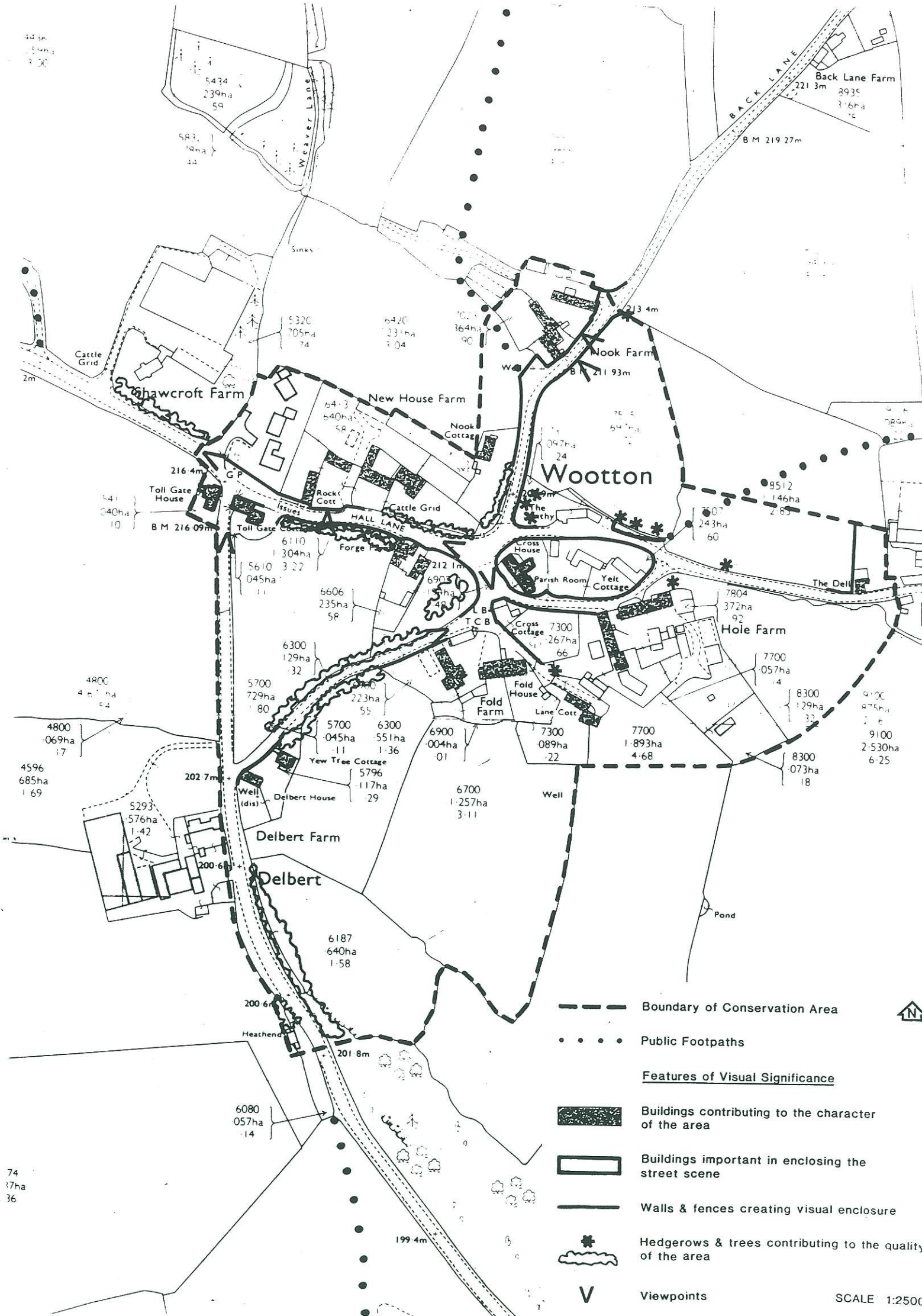
Tollgate Cottage

THE CONSERVATION AREA

The designation of the Conservation Area at Wootton will allow for the preservation of the character of the area and provide for positive action to enhance its appearance as and where necessary.

The plan shows the boundary of the Conservation Area, together with its major physical features, which make a visual contribution to the character and appearance of the area.








The Conservation Area is centred on the village of Wootton, highlighting its close, intimate character and the juxtaposition of its main buildings.



44 1/2
15 1/2
3 20

74
17ha
36

74
17ha
36

-  Boundary of Conservation Area
-  Public Footpaths
- Features of Visual Significance**
-  Buildings contributing to the character of the area
-  Buildings important in enclosing the street scene
-  Walls & fences creating visual enclosure
-  Hedgerows & trees contributing to the quality of the area
-  Viewpoints

SCALE 1:2500

AFTER DESIGNATION

The Local Planning Authority has a responsibility to formulate and publish proposals for the enhancement of designated areas and to submit them to public meetings, so that the views of local people can be heard and considered.

The implementation of such schemes will inevitably be through the involvement of both the local authority and the owners and residents of the area.

PROPOSALS FOR ENHANCEMENT

These proposals are suggested as guidance for the future enhancement of the area, and would have to be fully considered before being formally adopted as improvement measures.

Much can be achieved if everyone is aware of the advantages of a conservation area, the more positive protection of the attractive features of the area, an improvement in the physical and visual amenities, with consequent benefits in the value of property and the quality of life in the area, ensuring that the continuing activities of altering, repairing, decorating, maintaining buildings, are carried out in a responsible and neighbourly manner.

There are no particular areas which are in need of improvement or enhancement. The properties are well-maintained and alterations and extensions are generally in-keeping with the existing buildings.

The area has remained largely unchanged over the years, apart from refurbishment, and conversions. This has improved the basic structure of the village.

Most of the buildings in the village still perform their original function. Where buildings have been converted, perhaps to residential use, there is a danger that new external treatment threatens the village identity. The loose, informal groupings of buildings, all having a similar, simple style are not sufficiently strong to support substantial alternative designs, elevational treatments or changes in materials.

The use of modern materials and designs should be avoided where possible, particularly in streetworks and townscape feature e.g. surfacing, signs, lamp posts, litter bins etc. The use of traditional materials would enhance the appearance of the Area.

Untidy and unsightly structures such as pre-fabricated garages, Calor gas tanks, greenhouses and similar buildings should be screened or replaced where possible and signs, litter bins and fencing should be refurbished or replaced where necessary. Street clutter should be removed wherever it proves to be a nuisance.

Soft landscaping, trees, and hedges should be retained and supplemented where necessary, as they are important to the setting of the area.

Public footpaths should be sign-posted, where necessary, in accordance with Countryside Commission advice.

Future developers and statutory undertakers should be encouraged to provide telephone and power lines underground.

The K6 (red) telephone kiosk should be retained and renovated if feasible.

The Conservation Area lies within the Landscape Conservation Area and such policy protection influences decisions regarding future proposals which may affect the character of the area.

Development Control Policies

Policies which will be adopted are as follows :-

- 1) Development will be controlled to maintain/enhance the character of that area.
- 2) Proposals for demolition or insensitive alterations of buildings which would adversely affect the character of the Conservation Area will be resisted.
- 3) New development, alterations, extensions and other minor development within the Conservation Area will be required to pay special regard to the character of the surrounding buildings and the Conservation Area, in matters of detailed design and in the use of traditional materials or acceptable modern substitutes.

THE EFFECT OF DESIGNATION

The immediate effect of designation is that greater publicity is given to applications for planning permission for development which in the opinion of the planning authority would affect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Particulars of the application must be advertised in a local newspaper and a notice displayed on the site. The plans and documents must then be open for inspection for 21 days before the application is determined. This gives local people the opportunity to consider the proposed changes and to comment on the effect on the character of the area.

Any representations received must be taken into account by the planning authority when reaching its decision.

In considering applications for development affecting a Conservation Area, special attention will be paid to such matters as the height, scale, massing, detailing and materials of any new buildings proposed, in order to ensure a sensitive relationship with the site and neighbouring development. Building and planning standards that would normally be applied to new buildings may need to be relaxed to ensure that new development will harmonize with its surroundings, and also to assist in preserving the character or appearance of an existing building.

"Outline" planning applications will not normally be acceptable. The local planning authority will require detailed design drawings and particulars, including plans showing the relationship of any new buildings to adjoining development.

It should be noted, that some types of development which would normally not require planning permission, may require permission or consent in a Conservation Area.

If they feel that there is a special need to do so, the planning authority may apply for a direction under Article 4 of the General Development Order. Such a direction would bring any particular class or classes of development at present permitted by the Order, under planning control.

Small extensions to private dwellings, or the painting, rendering and colour-washing of buildings, are examples of permitted development. Such work, if unsympathetically or unimaginatively undertaken can ruin the character of an area and an Article 4 direction would require them to be the subject of applications to the planning authority.

With certain exceptions, the demolition of a building or part of a building in a Conservation Area requires Conservation Area Consent from the planning authority. This gives the opportunity to consider the effect that demolition would have on the visual character of the area. The thoughtless demolition of a building can create an unsightly gap in the local scene. Normally consent is not given unless there are acceptable and detailed plans for redevelopment.

Where a "Listed Building" is involved, then the Authority would wish to see a full justification for such action, and evidence that all reasonable attempts had been made to preserve the building through conversion or the consideration of alternative uses.

To carry out any demolition works without the prior consent of the Council is an offence. Applications for demolition are required in addition to any other approvals that are required to carry out any new development on a site.

To maintain the contribution which trees make to the environmental quality of a Conservation Area, a quality which can so easily be lost by felling or damage, it is an offence to lop, top, uproot or fell any tree, unless notice has been served on the planning authority and consent has been given, or six weeks have elapsed since the date of the notice. This gives the planning authority the opportunity to make a Tree Preservation Order if it so wishes.

LISTED BUILDINGS

The Secretary of State for the Environment maintains a list of buildings of architectural or historic interest. In the listing of buildings, attention is paid to their special architectural or historic value, for example, if they represent outstanding examples of past technological innovations, or are associated with well-known characters or events. Other buildings may be listed because of their contribution to a group of other buildings. The buildings listed are classified into grades, indicating their relative importance. Grade I buildings are limited to those of only exceptional national interest. Grade II includes the remainder, though particularly important buildings with special qualities are described as Grade II*.

Alterations to a listed building require a special form of consent from the Local Authority called 'Listed Building Consent'. Before any works may be carried out which might affect the historical interest or architectural quality of the building, an application must be submitted. This consent though, does not convey any planning permission for any new development, as this has to be applied for separately.

The Statutory List of Buildings for East Staffordshire can be inspected either at the District Council Offices, Burton or the County Council Offices at Stafford.

BUILDINGS IN NEED OF REPAIR

Many old buildings are threatened by neglect and decay. Where a building has fallen into disrepair, the Local Planning Authority can issue a 'Building Repairs Notice', requiring the owner to take the necessary steps to prevent the building decaying further. In other circumstances, urgent repairs can be executed by the Authority for the preservation of an unoccupied Listed Building. Compulsory purchase powers can be used to acquire a building if it is not being properly preserved.

GRANTS FOR WORKS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

- a) Conservation Area Grants
Staffordshire County Council and East Staffordshire District Council have powers under certain circumstances, to offer grants towards the cost of eligible works in Conservation Areas which preserves or enhances the area's character.
- b) Listed Building Grants
Both the County Council and the District Council provide grants towards the repair and maintenance of buildings of architectural and historic interest in cases where the public can be said to derive some benefit. The grant is not a subsidy to the owners of such buildings, but is intended to help the owners with the additional costs of repairing these buildings in a manner which is appropriate for their special character. The amount of grant offered is at the discretion of the Council. Applications should be made to either the County Planning Officer, Stafford or the Head of Planning Services, East Staffordshire District Council, Town Hall, Burton upon Trent from whom application forms are available.
- c) Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission Grants
These grants, made under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953, by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission, are offered for repair works on historic buildings of outstanding national importance, i.e. Grade I and occasionally Grade II* Listed Buildings. Further information may be obtained from the Planning Services Department.
- d) Home Renovation Grants
These grants may be available for certain houses that require the provision of basic amenities and certain other improvements and repairs, rather than those which are of some architectural or historic interest. Further information is available from the District Council's Head of Environmental Health Services.

LEGISLATION

The powers relating to the designation of Conservation Areas, and the listing of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, are contained in the Town and Country Planning Acts 1971-74. Reference should also be made to Circular 8/87 'Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas - Policy and Procedures'. Copies can be obtained from Her Majesty's Stationery Office or their agents.

NOTES ON BUILDING MAINTENANCE

So many costly building repairs could be avoided if a few simple rules of maintenance are followed.

A watchful eye and an understanding of how buildings work pays dividends. Very often buildings which are unused or underused are left by their owners without even the most elementary degree of maintenance. Some of these essential maintenance jobs cost nothing.

Water is the most common agent of destruction and water penetration can lead to hundreds, and in the long run, thousands of pounds worth of damage when left untreated.

Ten simple, and mostly inexpensive, rules of maintenance are given here. Check them off against your own building and save yourself money.

REGULARLY CLEAN OUT GUTTERS AND GULLEYS

Continual leaks from gutters, hopperheads and downpipes will throw water against specific parts of outside walls. As well as producing unsightly stains and encouraging vegetable growth, these points will become saturated and any timber built into them will rot.

All rainwater goods should be inspected once a year to make sure that leaves and silt do not collect and cause blockages, and to make sure that all joints are watertight.

Always start from the top and work downwards.

Finally, at ground level, make sure the gulleys and drains are free from blockages.

REPLACE SLIPPED ROOF TILES AND CHECK ALL COPINGS AND FLASHINGS

Make sure replacement tiles match. Rosemary (Staffordshire Blue) tiles are still made but demolition contractors can often supply good second-hand tiles. If you find a good supply, buy enough to keep some spare.

Check battens are sound before laying new tiles. Most repairs to old roofs require expert skills, especially repairs involving joints and flashings.

REMOVE BANKED EARTH FROM THE FOOT OF WALLS

One of the simplest and most beneficial maintenance jobs is the removal of banked earth from the foot of walls. If a building has a damp proof course (d.p.c.), the outside earth-level should be at least 6" below it. Even if there is no d.p.c., (and most houses built before about 1875 do not have one) it is sensible to keep the outside ground-level below the inside floor-level so that the parts of walls abutting floors can 'breathe' and dry out.

VENTILATION

If the free-flowing of air is impeded in roof spaces, in cellars, under suspended timber floors and in disused chimney flues, there will be a danger of damp leading to rot. Because of this, air bricks or vents should be inspected and cleaned annually to ensure they never become blocked.

REMOVE IVY FROM BADLY POINTED WALLS AND REMOVE ANY PLANTS WHICH ARE GROWING OUT OF A WALL

In walls, copings, gutters, chimney stacks and elsewhere this is an obvious elementary task that is nevertheless often left undone.

If left to grow, the roots of saplings and the aerial roots of ivy can cause severe cracking and, eventually, structural failure and collapse.

When cutting down ivy, sever it at the roots and leave it for a season so that it is quite dead before ripping it off. This way any damage to the wall will be minimised.

PAINT EXTERNAL WOODWORK EVERY FOUR YEARS

External woodwork and ironwork should be painted about every four years if the protective coat is to remain effective. Basically, the process should include washing to remove dirt, rubbing and scraping down to remove flaking paint, stopping up cracks, painting all bare wood or metal with the correct primer, then an undercoat, which is rubbed down before the application of a top coat. Remember to paint the tops and undersides of doors and windows and sills.

RE-POINT WALLS AND CHIMNEY STACKS WHEN NECESSARY

Re-pointing is important when necessary but so often it is done badly and sometimes it is carried out when not necessary. ALWAYS obtain professional advice before re-pointing. Contact the Head of Planning Services, East Staffordshire District Council, Town Hall, Burton upon Trent.

TO CLEAN STONE AND BRICK, WASH IT - DO NOT BLAST IT

The use of sand blasting as a technique for cleaning stone and brickwork is growing in popularity but in most cases it is a bad choice since it has two basic drawbacks. Firstly, it removes the surface skin or crust of stone and brick which can vastly increase the vulnerability of the materials to weather attack, and secondly, it blunts sharp edges, thereby spoiling any architectural details the building may have, such as mouldings around doors and windows. Please seek professional advice before cleaning brick and stone. Contact the Head of Planning Services, East Staffordshire District Council, Town Hall, Burton upon Trent.

AVOID CHEAP SUBSTITUTE MATERIALS - THEY MAY COST YOU MORE IN THE LONG RUN

A stop-gap repair job using a cheap substitute material rather than the proper thing usually leads to a waste of money in the long run. For example, there is no real substitute for lead for flashings. Cheap alternatives soon need to be replaced. To take another example, blue clay tiles and stone slate roofs, once laid, will outlast concrete tiles.

Also, there is the likelihood of spoiling the appearance of a building if a 'proper' job is not done. A good example of this is the use of 'off-the-peg' replacement doors and windows instead of obtaining reproductions of the originals from a joiner. Admittedly, this usually costs more but often the real price of a factory-made substitute is the loss of the building's character.

DO NOT ALTER LISTED BUILDINGS WITHOUT PERMISSION

If you own a 'Listed' building or think your building may be listed, always check with the local planning authority before you get involved in detailed building plans. Not only can this save you from prosecution (in most cases where work is carried out without consent) and from planning delays, but it can also save you time and money since you will be able to obtain expert advice upon the best way to tackle the problem.

If you intend to undertake major works you should retain the services of an architect. You will be likely to recoup the cost of professional fees in the long run by obtaining an attractive and trouble-free job.