

WETHERINGSETT
VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT
WETHERINGSETT
CUM BROCKFORD



FRONT COVER PHOTOS (top-bottom)

+ cottage style window & weatherboard

+ Church Street showing thatched
almshouses 1920's

+ same view taken in 1990?

BACK COVER PHOTOS (top-bottom)

+ recently built Brambly Cottage showing
brick plinth, pantile roof & chimney detail?

+ road sign at Pitman's Corner

+ Town Farm, c. 1360-90, the oldest house
in the village note pentice board, barge

boards, brick & flint wall + cottage style
front door & porch with pantile roof

BACKGROUND PHOTO + aerial view of

Wetheringsett Church & Manor &

surrounding area note: large amount of
mature trees & rural atmosphere



Shrublands c. 1500-1450 - wattle and daub
note: beams & peg tiles



Paxes house - wattle and daub

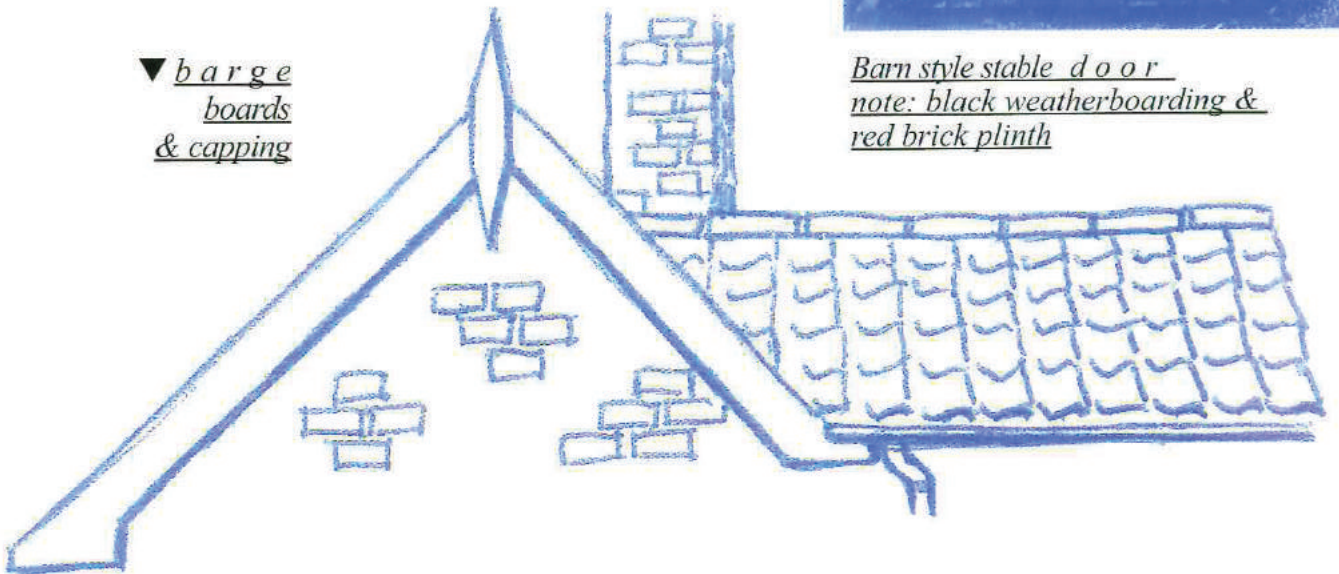
note: early style of window close under eaves of thatch



Barn style stable door

note: black weatherboarding &
red brick plinth

▼ barge
boards
& capping



WETHERINGSETT CUM BROCKFORD

INTRODUCTION

Over the past years residents have recorded in this statement how the village is seen today and how they would like to see it develop in the future.

This was done by: -

- 1 surveying the views of villagers by means of a questionnaire
- 2 running a school children's project and subsequent exhibition
- 3 organising many discussion groups and public meetings
- 4 running exhibitions, displays and notices in the village newsletter

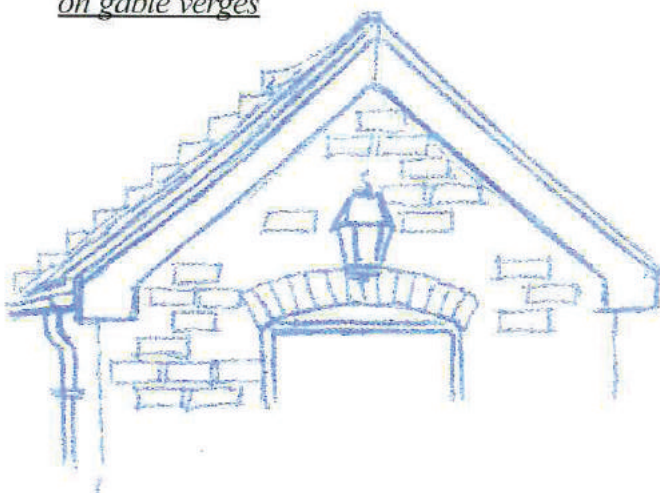
Our aim was to state how we would like to see the village develop, using existing buildings where possible, whilst considering how any changes might affect the landscape. It is important to preserve the appearance, atmosphere and character of WETHERINGSETT CUM BROCKFORD as well as the conservation area and many important vistas and open spaces.

We address this statement to

- All villagers; householders; businesses and landowners;
- Public authorities and statutory bodies including the church;
- Planners; developers; builders; architects; designers; engineers;
- Local community groups and preservation groups.

This village design statement has been adopted by Mid Suffolk District Council, Suffolk County Council and the Highway Authority as supplementary planning guidance and its recommendations will be taken into account when planning applications are assessed. This document will remain subordinate to the requirements of the Local Plan.

▼ capping
on gable verges



contents

1 Community	pages 2-3
2 Settlement	pages 4-5
3 Landscape Observations	pages 6-7
4 Landscape & Wildlife	pages 8-9
5 Rural Economy & Roads	pages 10-11
6 Code of Behaviour / Appendix	page 12

1 Community

WETHERINGSETT CUM BROCKFORD is a rural parish in Mid Suffolk consisting of small hamlets in addition to the “village centre”. The village is set in a valley through which flows the river Dove and it includes a conservation area comprising the 14th century church, the school, the school meadow, the cemetery, the manor house, Steps house and opposite the church until recently, the village post office, a village sign etc.

The adjacent settlement extends southwards up towards Hockey Hill. This comprises mixed housing and ribbon development as far as the war memorial. This area houses approx. one third of the parish population.

On the edge of the school meadow is situated the village hall the only public meeting place remaining in the village.

The remaining area and two thirds of the population is distributed in small hamlets around a six and half mile rectangular route connecting the parish together.

Brockford Street straddles the A140 trunk road and a further two-dozen isolated properties complete a total of approx. 230 houses.

The total population at the 1995 census was 640.

The community still retains its very rural character, except perhaps for the southwestern corner where there is a very large depot for lorry containers and storage, built on the site of the Second World War airfield.

There are some 210 people employed within the parish. The community facilities/services are: -

- 1 The Church**
- 2 A School and Pre-school Play Group**
- 3 A Village Hall**
- 4 A Petrol Station and Agricultural Engineers**
- 5 Horticultural Nurseries**
- 6 A Garage Engaged in Repairs and Servicing of Cars**
- 7 A Coal Merchant**
- 8 Bus Services.**
- 9 Mid Suffolk Light Railway**
- 10 Building Company**

Community activity has dwindled due to a lack of public houses and the poor facilities offered by the ageing village hall. Most people seek their entertainment outside the village.

1 Community Guidelines

In order to cater for the housing needs of the village a wider range of housing should be built. (See Appendix - page12)

The sewage scheme could be expanded and the water pressure improved to enable more houses to be built away from the current system.

Community facilities could be improved with the provision of a modern village hall with a community shop, club and leisure facility attached. This would provide a social centre, sporting and cultural activities for all age groups.

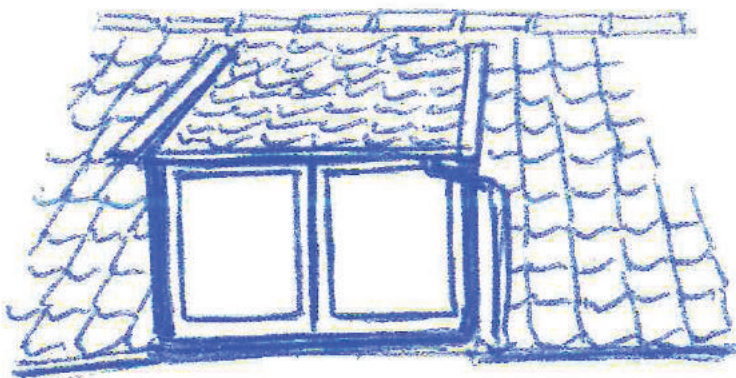
The road system to be signed more definitely to denote the hamlets.

Modern light industrial units are needed to increase and diversify the employment chances locally.

The school could be improved and enlarged.

A recreation/play area and a wildlife area could be created on the school meadow.

These aspirations will need to be addressed through the Mid Suffolk Local Plan.



▲ *dormer windows*



2 Settlement

There are a number of prominent farmhouses and halls in the parish, along with a variety of cottages. Some farm buildings and barns provide accommodation for a variety of small businesses whilst further barns are at present in various states of repair. It would be desirable to develop a strategy to encourage owners to restore these buildings as necessary, employing a flexible approach to planning applications. It is desirable to make the cost of these repairs viable to the owners and to preserve the heritage for all.

There is a wealth of listed buildings within the parish, under thatch, clay pantile or natural slate roofs. Many of the dwellings still retain their timber frame constructions, with wattle and daub infill, which is cased in lath and lime plaster. Some of these dwellings have solid clay lump walls, plastered with clay and chopped straw. These houses usually had their own pond, from which the house building material was dug. Many of the old timber framed houses with pantile roofs would have been thatched originally. Archaeological remains provide an invaluable record of our heritage and care should be taken that development does not needlessly or thoughtlessly damage remains. Developers are therefore encouraged to seek advice from the Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service.

The almshouses at the centre of the village are partially constructed of locally made soft red bricks, but they still retain excellent examples of their ancient timber framing. These dwellings would have originally been thatched.

There are a number of modern brick built and/or rendered houses within the parish and in the main these blend in and add to the variety of the settlement. However it would be desirable if future buildings were designed to incorporate features displaying rural character and avoiding characteristics typically associated with suburban dwellings. Designs should demonstrate respect for their setting and incorporate features in keeping with the immediate surrounding area.

The satellite areas of the village have seen little development and are outside the settlement boundaries described in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan. To preserve the character of the parish as a whole, any development proposed for these areas should be carefully controlled as required in the Local Plan.

The Summary of Housing Needs (Feb '99) identified a need for more smaller houses to cater for young families and retired citizens. This type of housing would encourage the younger parishioners to remain and raise their own families here. It should also attract new families to the village, hopefully bringing new ideas and enthusiasm for School, Church and revive the Post Office. To reduce impact on the appearance of the core of the village and the Conservation Area, some further development opposite Hockey Hill may be acceptable. Some of this land is accessible via public footpath and this could be used to provide pleasant routes for further communication within the parish.

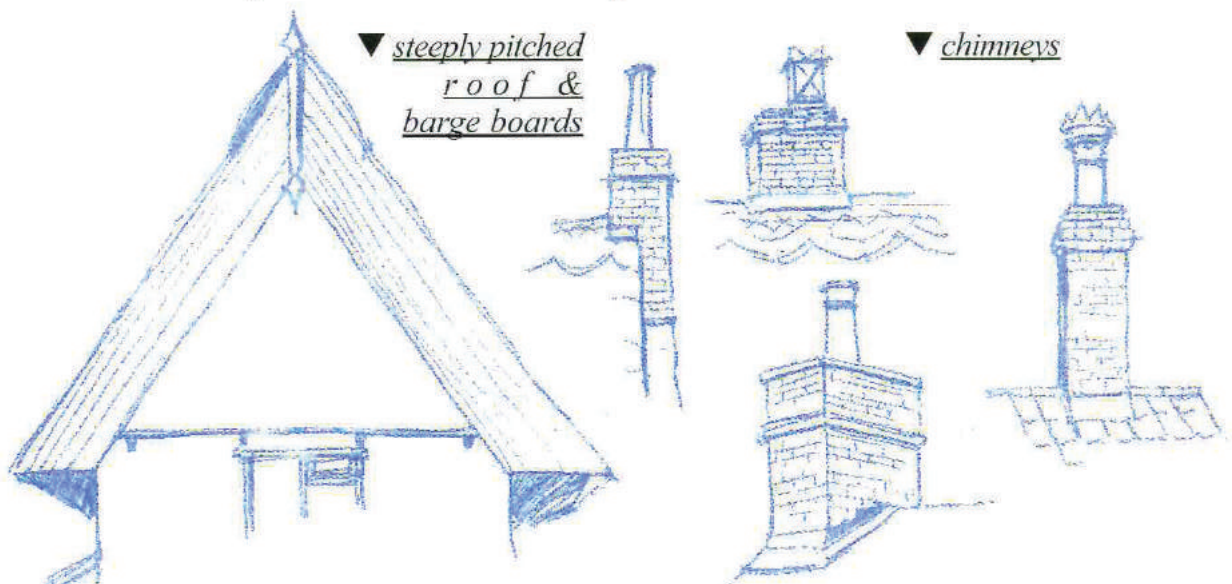
2 Settlement Guidelines

Development anywhere in the parish should enhance and improve the surrounding area by paying regard to the existing environment.

Cul de sac development should be avoided as it creates unnecessary urbanisation.

Dwellings in the vicinity of listed buildings should complement the area by incorporating subtle features in sympathy with their surroundings and the use of appropriate materials as set out in the following guidelines: -

- *windows should incorporate narrow glazing bars with glazing of an appropriate module size. The tendency to provide very small windows should be avoided*
- *incorporation of barge boards and capping to gable verges*
- *incorporation of pentice boards to windows in suitable locations, and to large rendered gables*
- *soft red brick plinths to provide more visual interest to rendered dwellings and create a link with the past*
- *buildings with relatively low eaves, dormer windows and clay pantile roofs fit in well (as in the red brick semi-detached pair of houses at the entrance to the old builders yard)*
- *roofs should tend to be steeply pitched, in keeping with the traditional style of the village dwellings*
- *chimneys should incorporate local features*
- *protect views by avoidance of development with continuous building lines*
- *maintain access to footpaths*
- *encourage tree planting to suitable pockets of unused land*
- *encourage use of pedestrian links from any significant future development to the existing immediate settlements. These paths should remain unfenced wherever this is possible*



3 Landscape Observations



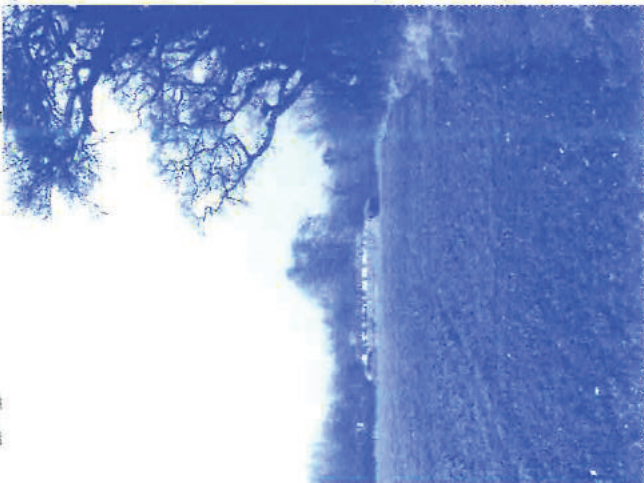
*view along Church Road
Opposite Wetheringsett Manor,
depicting much loved mature
mixed hedge & trees*



*part of conservation area used as a school
playing field for village fetes & functions
providing an important focus point for all
the community*



any new houses should not disrupt the visual character of the main conservation area centred around the Church and that future housing could be dispersed around Hockey Hill and adjoining hamlets such as Brockford Street, Park Green, Wetherup Street.



view of fields beside Hockey Hill showing mature trees & small copse which add to the rural charm of the village



aerial view of nearby hamlet Pages Green & surrounding countryside

4 Landscape & Wildlife

The River Dove has had a strong influence on the northwest sector where some water meadow still remains. The village centre has been built along the river valley. Moving south, the development of Mendlesham Airfield has left a large open, hedgeless and treeless area, which has now been reclaimed as mainly farmland, with the exception of the industrial estate, which adjoins the A140.

The eastern section of the parish retains a significant number of smaller fields that have remained unchanged for hundreds of years, which should continue to be maintained.

The influence of the River Dove and the relatively unchanged nature of the eastern section mean that there is an interesting and wide variety of river and woodland species, some of which are rare. Some are of national significance, such as *Kingfishers*, *Heron*s, *Water Vole*, *Mink* and three types of *Woodpecker*. Others are significant locally and are included in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan such as *Pipistrelle Bats* and *Great Crested Newts*. Many other small mammals are recorded including the *Yellow-necked Mouse*. Good numbers of bats can still be seen on summer evening hunting the insect life that are attracted to the numerous ponds and ditches that are associated with the many old properties. These ponds and ditches are also home to many amphibians such as the *Common Frog and Toad*. The south-west section is an important feeding ground for *Lapwing and Golden Plovers* on migration. It is important that new planting supports significant species that occur locally.

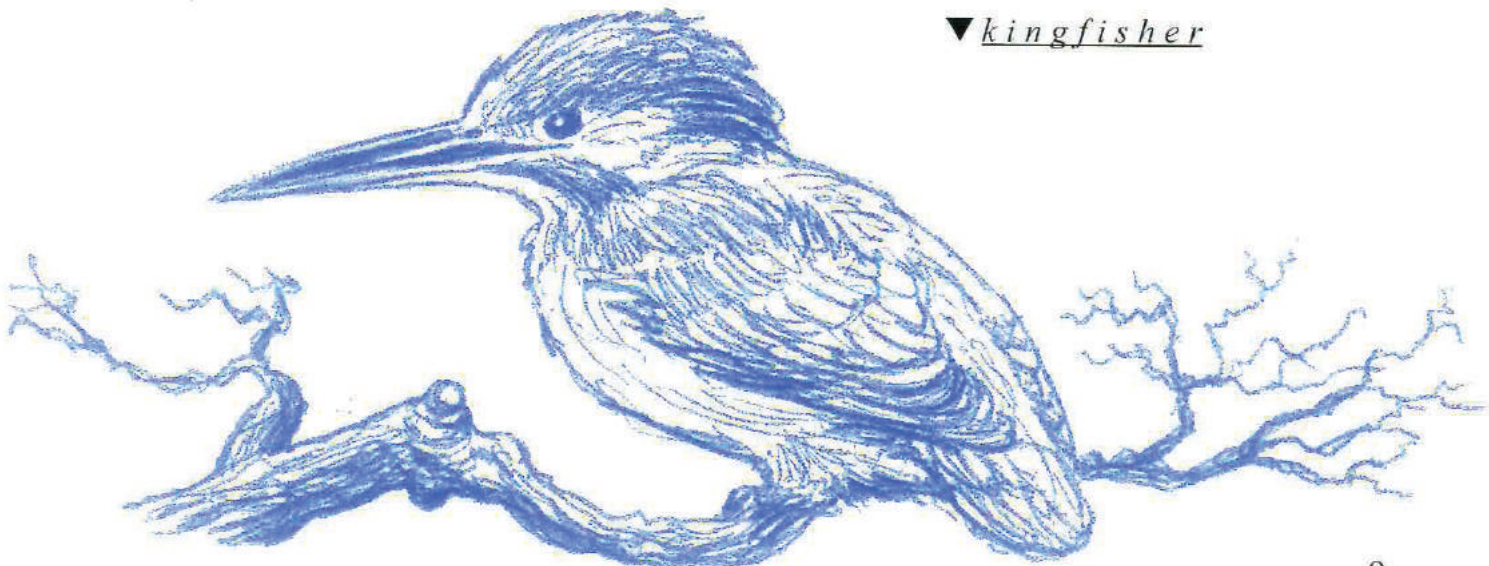
There are very few bridleways but a rich network of footpaths, which if carefully selected and maintained would provide greater enjoyment of our countryside and access to adjoining parishes.

Hedgerows are key landscape and wildlife features, which are much appreciated. Their complex history and natural character, especially when properly managed, are a valuable heritage worth protecting and incorporating in new developments. The hedgerows that border the many fields contain a large number of native tree and shrub species. *Alder*, *Ash*, *Elder*, *Hazel*, *English Oak*, *Horse Chestnut*, *Hawthorn*, *Blackthorn*, *Bramble*, *Ivy and Holly* as well as old *fruit trees* make up an important feature of the landscape. One section of ditch in High Lane is now managed by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust in order to conserve the habitat. The churchyard of All Saints Church has the potential to provide a valuable wildlife area through sympathetic management along guidelines provided by Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

4 Landscape & Wildlife Guidelines

- *Conserve special features in the landscape.*
- *Integrate new buildings and farm structures into the landscape.*
- *Ensure key views are not lost.*
- *Consider the impact of new developments, and the access to them, on surrounding habitats.*
- *Shelter, soften and contain the edge of any development using appropriate native broadleaf species. (See Appendix - page 12).*
- *Incorporate established trees into developments.*
- *Where possible leave dead trees to provide a food source for wildlife.*
- *Protect ponds and ditches.*
- *Leave a margin untouched around streams, ponds, ditches or verges.*
- *Conserve and maintain hedgerows for optimum landscape and wildlife effect.*
- *Where appropriate, manage churchyard along Suffolk Wildlife Trust guidelines, to optimise landscape and wildlife benefits.*

▼ kingfisher



5 Rural Economy & Roads

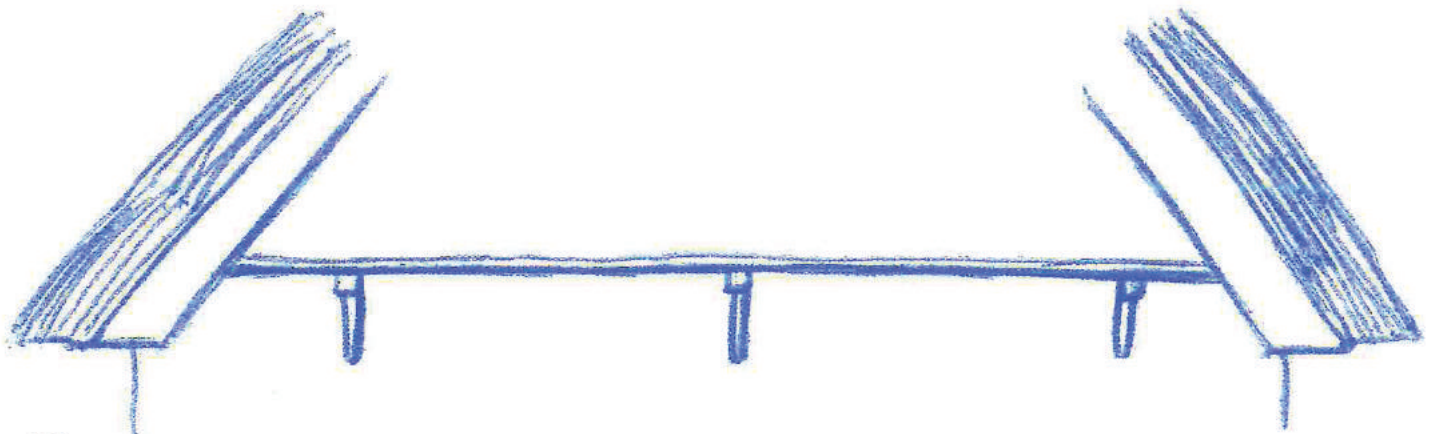
Small businesses have emerged as the major source of employment within the village. Many are sole traders or partnerships, which tend to employ only a small number of people. A substantial proportion of village residents either work within the village or are retired. The remainder work outside, principally in Ipswich.

The narrow roads do not facilitate larger businesses and the retail facilities within the village are limited.

The existing road pattern is mainly country lanes except for the one main road (A140). This adds to the particularly rural character of the village, which we wish to retain.

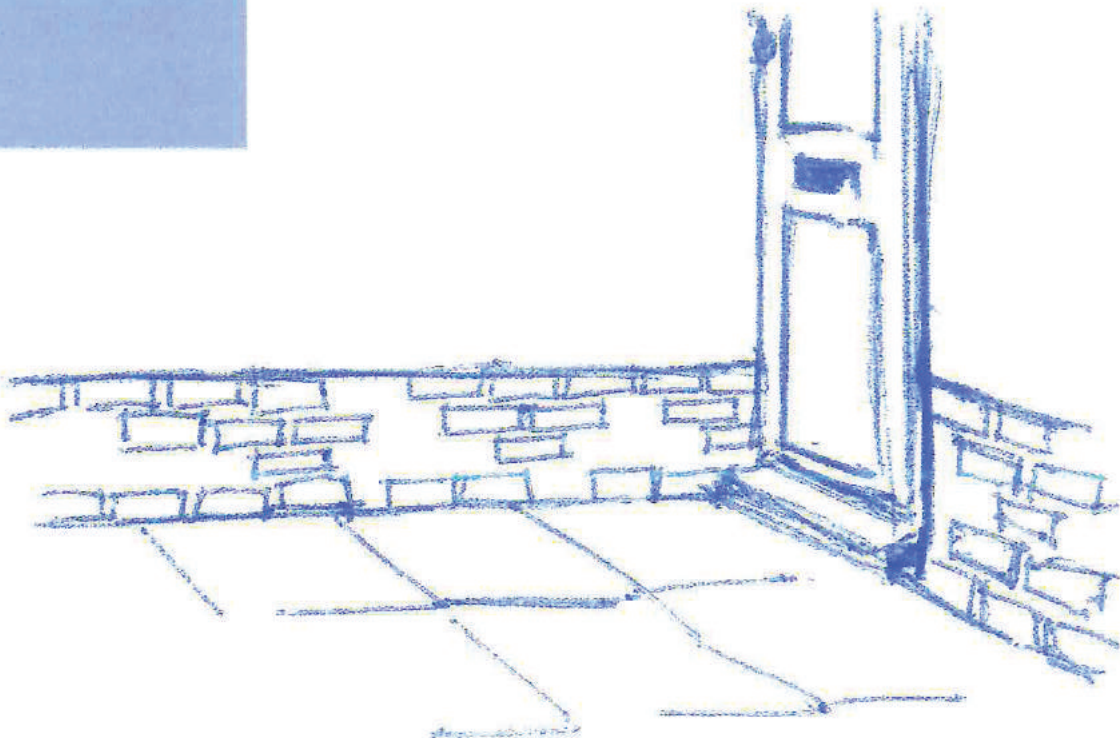
There is very little street furniture in existence, and what exists is well integrated.

The further prosperity of the village could be encouraged by making it easier and more attractive for the setting up of small businesses.



5 Rural Economy & Roads Guidelines

- *Encourage the sympathetic conversion of traditional agricultural buildings to form modern light industrial units, offices or small workshops. This will increase and diversify local employment opportunities while retaining their contribution to landscape and architectural heritage.*
- *Design traffic calming measures.*
- *When making planning applications any projected traffic movements and the hours of operation that will be generated by the activity will be carefully considered.*
- *When operating and /or developing new settlements or commercial activities roadside or surface water flooding should be avoided.*
- *If installing lighting to outside areas, whatever the activity, work in accordance with the 'guidance notes for the reduction of light pollution' issued by the institution of lighting engineers (tel. 01788 576492) reduce glare and sky glow pollution to a minimum.*
- *Development should encourage improved local public transport, provision of local shopping and leisure activities.*



6 Code of Behaviour for Developers

The following is taken from the work of the children of the parish.

Change things in a sensible way:

- ✓ *ask us before you do anything*
- ✓ *respect the village*
- ✓ *keep the village peaceful*
- ✓ *only build what people in the village want you to*
- ✓ *use suitable materials - more wood than concrete*
- ✓ *keep buildings looking like country buildings*
- ✓ *keep old buildings looking old respect nature and the environment*

Please do not:

- ✗ *kill trees*
- ✗ *kill animals or destroy their homes*
- ✗ *damage other people's property*
- ✗ *make the environment look ugly by building too many houses*
- ✗ *cause pollution or rubbish*
- ✗ *build ugly factories*
- ✗ *build sky scrapers, airports, big roads or motorways, mansions and train stations*

Appendix

Housing Needs. New homes are needed ranging from starter homes to executive housing.
More single person retirement homes are needed.

Trees. Existing native broadleaf species include Alder, Ash, Elder, Hazel, English Oak, Horse Chestnut, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Bramble, Ivy and Holly.



modern semi-detached dwelling
note: dormer windows
set into roof

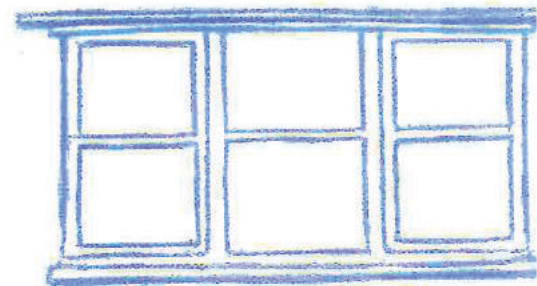
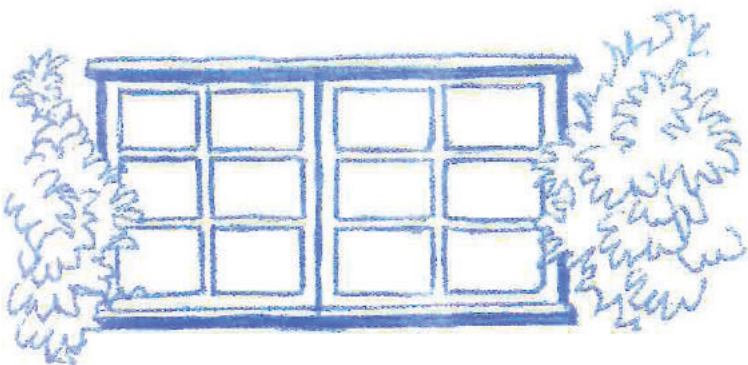
Drawing of almshouses
by Helen, one of the
pupils at Wetheringsett
Primary School



cottage style window

Special thanks to Village Design Committee led
by Peter Smith
Artwork & design: Lorna Oakley
Illustrations: Kim Mills Map: Roger Goulding
Loan of old photos: Win Smith
Photos: David Hosking, Peter Smith
Text edited by: Eamonn Evans
& all other contributors

Published 2003



▲ windows with narrow glazing bars

