



Tidcombe Manor

**TIDCOMBE
CONSERVATION AREA
STATEMENT**

COMMITTEE DRAFT

February 2005

North

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- Conservation Area Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Significant unlisted buildings and walls
- Significant Trees
- Native hedges
- Public Footpaths and bridleways

TIDCOMBE CONSERVATION AREA



The secluded village lies among trees below an east facing scarp slope of the downland



The approach to the village. Cottages beside the lane give the first signs of place.

INTRODUCTION

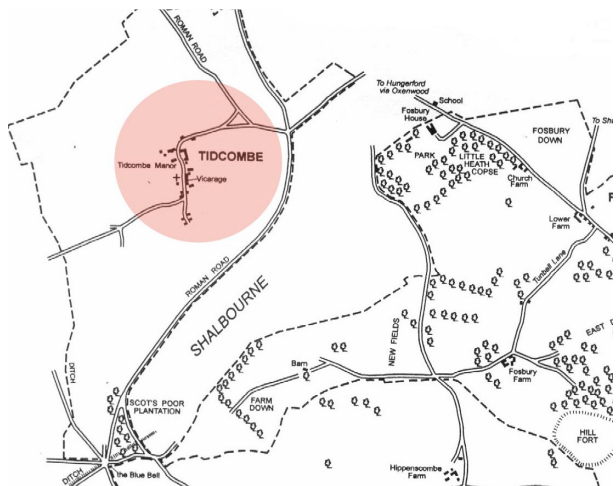
The purpose of this Statement is to identify and record those special qualities of Tidcombe that make up its architectural and historic character. This is important in providing a sound basis for the Local Plan policies and development decisions as well as for the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of the area. The Conservation Area was designated in 1975. This Statement includes a review of the Tidcombe Conservation Area and is intended for all those with an interest in the village, or undertaking work on the buildings, landscape, roads or public spaces. It is also essential reading for anyone contemplating development within the area. By drawing attention to the distinctive features of Tidcombe it is intended that its character will be protected and enhanced for the benefit of this and future generations.

LOCATION

Tidcombe is in a secluded position in the - east of the county eight miles south of Hungerford off the A338 on a minor road near the Wiltshire border with both Berkshire and Hampshire. Marlborough is 11 miles to the north west and Andover 12 miles to the south east.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The village is small, of about 12 houses, in a hilly area rich in mature trees and reached by a winding lane. The few buildings are widely spaced along the lane. These are principally the 18th century Manor, the 13th century church, a 19th century former vicarage and an active farmyard. There is a small former school house and several cottages with various outbuildings. The wooded grounds of the manor, the vicarage house and the churchyard constitute most of the village area. Paddock and meadow adjoin the lane that passes out through the village to become an un-metalled farm road leading up to the downland.



Location of the village in the area



The lane in the south of the village follows the edge of this shallow valley before ascending on to the downland as an unmetalled track.

LANDSCAPE SETTING AND GEOLOGY

Tidcombe is enfolded in undulating countryside and is approached by the former Roman Road from Marlborough (Cunetio) to Winchester and then by its own narrow lane from the north east that emphasizes its seclusion and rural character.

The village lies among trees beneath a scarp slope of the downland within the Chute Forest Landscape Character Area. A shallow valley to the south runs east and west.

The larger and more significant trees are those that have been formally planted in and around the grounds of the Manor and the churchyard. The soil type in the village is entirely chalk and there are no visible watercourses.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Tidcombe is first recorded in the 8th century as Titan-cumb, a Saxon settlement with the name that derives from the Old English 'the small valley belonging to Tida'. By 1086 it was known as 'Titicome'.

Ancient field systems exist to the east and west and strip lynchets surround the village. To the south a complex of boundary ditches or droveways are scheduled by English Heritage as ancient monuments.

ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Tidcombe was probably part of the Bedwyn estate that was passed by the Crown to Abingdon Abbey in the 8th century and held there until about 975. In 1066 it had been granted away from the Crown to Wenesius and subsequently down to members of the Beauchamp family of Elmley Castle, Worcestershire.

In the 12th century it was held by Henry Hussey and subsequently through marriage to his heirs Henry and John Sturmy. The latter held the estate in 1331 and by 1382 it belonged to a Sir William Sturmy, also known as Esturmy, then warden of Savernake Forest. In 1391 he assisted Easton Priory and parish to recover after the 'Black Death' of 1368 by giving them the tithes and perquisites of Tidcombe church and the income from the manor of Froxfield.

Sir William died at Wolfhall in 1427 without a male heir but his daughter Matilda married into the Seymour family. Her son John at 14 years old became the first Seymour Warden of Savernake Forest and became known as 'the worthie Sir John'.

By 1540 the manor of Tidcombe was acquired by Sir John's son Edward who had gained favour with Henry VIII and elevated to Earl of Hertford. He was executed in 1552 and the manor passed to his son Edward who was a minor.

From 1553 to 1675 the manor descended with Tottenham Lodge in Great Bedwyn successively to William Duke of Somerset and via Sarah his widow until by direction of the Duke of Northumberland, Hugh Percy, it was sold in 1767 to Edward Tanner. It was he who in about 1770 built the Manor house. On his death in 1779 the house and manorial estate passed to his son John. From John Tanner it passed to Sarah his daughter and to her son the Reverend William Churchill. In 1872 he sold the land to Thomas Hayward from whom it passed through his son to Mr J W Hayward who owns Tidcombe Farm of 940 acres and farms a further 2000 acres in 2005.

Soon after its building Tidcombe Church was appropriated in 1391 by Easton Priory. The Church's rectory estate of Tidcombe was held by the priory until the Dissolution in 1536 when it was granted to Sir Edward Seymour. In 1547 Sir Edward gave it to the Crown in an exchange and passed to St George's Chapel Windsor but it was confiscated by the Parliament in 1643 and assigned to the Windsor



The centre of the village. The rural character of the settlement is exemplified by the predominance of trees and wide grass verges over roadways and buildings.



The Parish Church of St Michael has 14th century fabric.



The 18th century Manor in its beautiful setting of lawns and trees



Tidcombe Manor, the gateway off the lane



*St Michael's Parish Church.
The churchyard wall has a lowered section
where a footpath passes into the Manor grounds*

Castle almshouses. At the Restoration in 1654 it was returned to the chapel. By 1838 the church estate consisted of only 48 acres and all the tithes of both Tidcombe and Fosbury were valued at £481 and these were commuted. In 1867 the estate was passed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who sold it in 1920 into private ownership.

Vicars were ordained and presented until 1575 when stipendiary curates served the church. In the 18th century perpetual curates were licensed by the bishop until in 1868 they again became known as vicars. In 1856 Fosbury church was consecrated and Tidcombe parish reduced in size. From 1879 until 1979 other parishes were added and have since become the Wexcombe united benefice. Throughout the last 400 years St George's Chapel, Windsor has continued to be patrons of the parish and the united benefice.

The living of Tidcombe was poor, the incumbent was without glebe and entitled to no tithes. In 1812 it included only a thatched house and that in 1833 was declared unfit for habitation and was reported as dilapidated in 1843. The present Vicarage House was built in 1865.

On census Sunday 1851 there was a congregation of 50. However during the 19th century church services were so well attended that there was no room for all the parishioners and instead some attended local non-conformist meetings. More room was made and additional free seats were provided in the church.

A National School was opened in 1846 and continued until 1855 when teaching transferred to a cottage until 1858 when a new school was purpose-built for about 20 children. This remained open until 1879. The building survives as a house.

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER

The Manor house occupies the north eastern part of impressive, lawned and wooded grounds that form the major part of the village. Of 2-storeys the house originates from the 1770s and has several architectural features of the period. The south façade and the east facing road elevation are both symmetrical about central doorways and sash windows in red brick walls with stone dressings. An open stone pediment covers the main door and fanlight and tall chimneys emerge symmetrically from the hipped roof of plain clay tiles.

To the side a detached single storey wing extends east that also has sash windows.

To the west Hunter's Lodge is an early 20th century building. This is attached to the garden boundary wall that separates the Manor from Manor Farm yard. Viewed from the lane the wall appears as a low curved structure retaining trees, a laurel and a box hedge. Trees and shrubs outside the wall appear to be maintained as part of the Manor grounds and with the wall are an asset to the character of the lane.



Tidcombe Manor. This curved retaining wall is a fine feature facing the lane on the north side of the house.

The formal entrance to the grounds is by way of a fine gateway with brick flank walls, gate piers of brick and flint banded with stone ball finials and wrought iron gates.

The Manor house, its entrance gates and grounds with the many impressive trees are together probably the most significant feature of the Conservation Area.

The Parish Church of St Michael is situated on a rise in the ground off the west side of the street. The graveyard adjoins the Manor grounds that almost enclose it with tall ash and beech trees. The grade II* listed building has original fabric of the 14th century including walls of rendered flint with limestone dressings and windows in the Decorated style. The roofs to the nave and aisles are of unusually low pitch and covered in lead. The small north porch of brick has a datestone of 1675 and the tower buttresses are dated 1707.



St Michael's Church. The 14th century nave arcades of the church.

In the churchyard there is a group of four listed stone monuments one to Marie and Jane Tanner of the 18th century and three in Portland stone to the 19th century Hawkins family of Wexcombe. The older tomb is of a more porous stone but in fair condition though heavily discoloured by lichen growth due to the effects of shade and dampness under the overhanging trees.

Iron railings originally surrounded the Hawkins tombs and were present in 1986 but these have gone and the tombs are now free standing but in good condition.

The church, churchyard monuments and walls with the surrounding trees are particularly significant in the Conservation Area.



*St Michael's Church.
The listed Hawkins and Tanner monuments are in the south west corner of the churchyard.
Manor Cottage is adjacent the churchyard*



Vicarage House of circa 1865



Two pairs of 19th century cottages face across wide paddocks from the lane entering the village.



Flint Cottage A listed building of the 18th century



Flint Cottage. A reconstructed timber outbuilding with thatched roof and traditional weatherboard cladding.

Vicarage House, now the farmhouse, is situated opposite the church on the east side of the lane. It was provided for the incumbent vicar in about 1865 but sold in about 1926 as a private house. Of 2-storeys and built in red brick with a stone string course it has a main façade facing south towards the downland with two parallel rear wings forming a ‘U’ shaped plan. The fenestration is symmetrical with 12 pane sash windows and central doors. The slate roof is hipped over the south facing rooms but there are chimney gables to the north. The front door has faced the drive since 1957 and is separated from the lane by railings. A low curving brick and flint garden wall defines the garden on the south side where previously there was the entrance, the drive and a circular lawn. The grounds extend beside the lane towards the east with stable outbuildings to the north behind some traditional flint and brick laced walling. Most of the traditional building group was lost in a fire in 1888. East of the buildings paddocks extend out to the lane where it enters the village. Groups of horse chestnut and belts of other broad leaf trees define the grounds up to the boundary of the Conservation Area.

The traditional design and materials of Vicarage House, together with its garden and walls, its open paddocks area with its tree groups are together significant to the character of the Conservation Area.

The two pairs of farm cottages on the north side of the sunken lane are mid 20th century in character but existed in 1880 although probably nearly new at that time. The hipped roof and south facing façade of each pair are symmetrical. Entry is by a central double doorway to a lobby with a front door to each side. There is a single central chimney serving both cottages. The casement windows are recent replacements fitted to the original openings.

West of the above Flint Cottage was sold away from the farm in 1930. It stands closer to the lane than the cottage pairs and adjacent to a pleasant hillside grove of beech and small oak trees. The cottage garden of mainly lawn is informally separated from a public footpath by lengths of native hedge. The 18th century listed building is symmetrical about a central chimney and thatched over flint walls laced with brick. The windows are 19th century pattern casements and a traditional timber clad lean-to is attached to the east side.

The two pairs of cottages endow the village with a sense of place but the thatched Flint Cottage makes a particularly historic contribution to the character of the Conservation area.

Opposite and facing the paddock is Manor Farm Cottage a mid 20th century house with the hipped tiled roof and steel windows that became standard elements of cottages that were on the farm estate at that time.

The rear of the house faces the lane where a wide verge is the site of a former pond.

On the southern edge of the beech grove to Flint Cottage is a thatched and timber clad outbuilding of some character that has been recently rebuilt or renovated. It is traditionally set into the hillside and constructed of materials once common for local agricultural outbuildings. Although apparently new and still unweathered the building is, because of its construction in traditional materials, an asset to the Conservation Area.



Manor Cottage.

Manor Cottage stands just south of the church in the Manor grounds. From the lane it is sited behind a high evergreen hedge overlooking lawns with young fruit trees but separated from the church by the low churchyard wall. Although now roofed in cedar shingles with the mid 20th century steel framed windows it existed in 1880 with timber attic dormer windows and a steep thatched roof. The latter together with the red brick and flint walls and brick chimney stacks seem to suggest it has been extended at least once since original construction.

It is a significant building by way of its relationship to the Manor, proximity to the church, traditional brick walls and chimneys and general form.



The School House originates from 1858 but was much altered in 1959

The School House stands on a bank close to the lane and is reached across a wide grass verge. The garden is partly defined by a remaining length of the stone wall across the frontage that once enclosed the children's' playground.

The building is now largely mid 20th century in character with steel frame windows under a relatively low pitched plain tile roof. Concrete lintols have been inserted to widen existing window openings. Single storey and attic parts of the walls however are of brick laid Flemish bond with dark headers which have been subsequently built-up in a different brick to a full 2-storeys high. However window openings in the gable walls are brick arched.

The School House and its garden wall are significant to the history and character of the village.



Cottages No.s 10 and 11 are pre 1880 but was largely rebuilt in 1950

Cottages No.10 and 11 have been rebuilt to a largely plain mid 20th century character. The relatively low pitched tiled roofs and large metal windows replaced cottage details of an earlier design. Its division into two, its materials of red brick and tile probably reflect the earlier buildings in shape if not in proportions.

These cottages, because of their proximity to the roadside, their contribution to the village group and their traditional form and materials are significant to the character of the Conservation Area.



'Downside' of 1979. The yew tree, native hedge, bank and verge enhance its setting

'Downside' is however entirely a 1979 replacement of four cottages in the same grounds and as a chalet bungalow it has few of the traditional characteristics of the vernacular cottages. Its scale, roof pitch and dormer windows however are not inappropriate to the location and when combined with the yew tree at the gate and the thick enclosing hedge do little to detract from the fine rural setting on the southern edge of the village.

BUILDING MATERIALS AND DETAILS

WALLS

Knapped flint with brick dressings. Flint Cottage has not only a thatched roof but walling traditional in the area. The walls are of horizontal panels in knapped flint laced with 3 courses of brick. Brick is also used for the quoins and window surrounds. The east side lean-to is of timber frame clad in horizontal waney edged, possibly elm, weatherboard.

Greensand stone with brick dressings. The greensand stone is found in strata below the chalk. It is a sandstone which, though soft compared with most stone for building, is relatively impervious and can be used as a rubble with flint and dressings or lacings of several brick courses each. In traditional outbuildings the brick lacings are of fewer courses and the flint and greensand rubble tends to predominate.

Brick is a universal material manufactured in the Vale of Pewsey from the 17th century. Initially used sparingly for chimney stacks and impervious base-walls for timber-frame, malmstone and cob walls that are a feature of chalkland villages. Brick became more readily available in the late 17th century for dressings in combination with local traditional materials and then in the 18th century for complete walls. The best brickwork from the mid 18th century includes overburnt or vitrified blue headers built into solid walls of Flemish bond and soft red bricks rubbed to form gauged arches with limestone dressings. The Manor façade is an example of this type of fine jointed brickwork from the late 18th century in combination with limestone dressings.

ROOFS

Thatch was the roof covering for nearly every ordinary village building until the 19th century. Wheat was grown in the parish and produced quantities of straw. Roofs could be regularly re-thatched at low cost. Any alternatives would have to be brought in by cart. Historically roofs were thatched in 'long straw' in the district. However few examples remain and the two thatched buildings in the village are covered in 'combed wheat reed'.

Plain clay tiles.

Use of plain clay tiles in the village is contemporary with the wide use of bricks in the 18th century. Examples in the village include the Manor where the tiles are handmade, and machine made on the roof of the chancel at the church, the School House and most roofs of the cottages.

Lead Roofing

The nave and aisles of St Michael's Church are of a low pitch unsuitable for covering with tiles or slates and so lead sheet has been fitted over the boarded structure. The lead moves under varying weather conditions of heating and cooling and is divided into suitably small areas for fixing. The welted seams visible between the sheets are weather tight but allow for movement while concealed nails and clips hold them down.

Lead roofing over such a large area is neither common in Tidcombe nor usual in rural buildings.

Less unusual is the roof at the Manor where the roof incorporates narrow lapped sheets of lead on 'mop-stick' rolls to cover the tiles at hips and ridges. Lead is also used for lining the big gutters concealed behind the parapet walls.



*Thatch over a flint and brick banded wall.
Timber casement windows with glazing bars*



Walls of flint and greensand stone with brick



*A plain clay tile roof with lead rolls over hips
Red brick walls with stone dressings. Timber
sash windows and a panel door with a fanlight*



*A roof of cast lead with welted seams. Walls
are of flint, chalk and greensand stone rubble
rendered in lime with limestone dressings*



Manor Farm. Industrial type farm buildings may not be picturesque but indicate the continuing importance of agriculture to the village.



Flint Cottage. Although this type of timber clad lean-to is not unusual for such thatched cottages the waney-edged weather board and the slot shaped windows are not traditional in the area and not particularly appropriate to the listed building.



The winding lane has soft edged verges and grass banks. It is bounded by native hedge and timber post and rail fence overhung by broadleaf trees along much of its length .

UNSIGHTLY AREA

The wide farm entrances of Manor Farm seem to be alien features off the narrow lane. The lane actually passes between two 20th century farm building groups. On one side is a former stockyard and on the other are grouped cereal storage and drying sheds. These industrial types of agricultural shed are different in scale and materials to the traditional buildings of the Conservation Area. However the continuing presence of the farmyard on this site is evidence of the importance of agriculture in the locality and essential to the vitality of the village.

PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

The village has a small population relatively widely distributed and quite remote from the main centres of population and business. It is in a locality very active in farming and country pursuits. There would seem to be few pressures for change to this environment. Agricultural methods on the land seem to have reached a level of efficiency beyond which it is unlikely to progress without detracting from allied country businesses such as syndicated shooting and horse riding. The maintenance of trees and preservation of native hedges for example are essential to the habitat of game birds.

The village has a tranquil and rural character that would be vulnerable to erosion by the 21st century way of life if residents and visitors unaware of country lore were to increase.

More car and delivery vehicle traffic could cause the soft edges of the narrow lane to be eroded. Widening the metalled surface or reinforcing the edges with kerbs should not however be an option. Grass banks are an intrinsic part of the rural character of the street and should not be excavated back or hardened to form additional parking spaces. Hedgerows should not be breached for additional vehicular accesses.

All buildings in the Conservation Area are protected from demolition without consent. The listed buildings are protected from alteration by their status but there are several unlisted buildings and walls that may be altered or breached without specific consent. To preserve the character of the Conservation Area it is vital that when these structures require maintenance they should be carefully repaired in matching traditional materials to original detail.

Outbuildings of traditional design and materials should as far as possible be preserved unaltered including their doors and windows. Traditional walling materials should not be rendered or painted for the first time.

Brick walls, local stone walls and gates are an asset to the street scene and should be maintained as existing. Hedges and post and rail fences are also traditional enclosures of field and gardens in the village. Wire and panel fences, coniferous hedges, open fronted and rockery gardens are alien to the village.

The continued use and care of the Parish Church is essential to village life and character.

THE PLANNING CONTEXT

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local planning authorities to determine which parts of their area are "Areas of Special Architectural or Historic



The Manor stands among formal plantings of trees in extensive grounds.



The Parish Church of St Michael is overshadowed by the towering trees



*The 1675 datestone with initials EHWT over the church porch. The church is Listed Grade II **

Interest ”, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” and to designate them as Conservation Areas. The Act, and advice given in Planning Policy Guidance Note15 - Planning and the Historic Environment, states that the local planning authority should formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of all Conservation Areas and this assessment, published as the Tidcombe Conservation Area Statement is part of the process. This Conservation Area Statement was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on SPG provides additional information on the interpretation and implementation policies and proposals contained in the Local Plan. been undertaken during the preparation of this Statement. Paragraph 3.16 of PPG12 – Development Plans, also states that adequate consultation is a requirement for adoption of SPG. The Council considers that the consultation undertaken meets with obligations set out in PPG12. The Kennet Local Plan 2001-2011 has been adopted by the Council and became operative on 30th April 2004 and provides background information for the detailed interpretation of policies contained in the Replacement Local Plan, particularly Policies PD1, NR6, NR7, NR8, HH5, HH6, HH8, HH12 and ED9.

ENHANCEMENTS

Tree stocks should be maintained and where appropriate replanted. This is important particularly where there are single aged stands of mature and over-mature trees. The long-term replacement of horse chestnuts, which border the paddocks, should be considered with the same or alternative appropriate native broadleaf species.

SUMMARY

The secluded village is a delightful environment of historic and traditional buildings among many fine trees. The Manor with its large and beautiful grounds together with the medieval church are the principal assets of the Conservation Area.

The traditional Vicarage House stands in relatively open grounds with more informal groups of trees. The few cottages, of which two are thatched, stand among trees and roadside hedges endow the village with its sense of place. The farm group although untraditional in design and materials is an integral part of the life and character of the village.

Two buildings are listed Grade II* and one is listed Grade II. Some monuments in the churchyard are also listed Grade II. In addition approximately fourteen other buildings of traditional design and several roadside walls are significant to the village.

A limited range of materials distinguishes the particular character of building in the village. Apart from the church these are clay tile roofs and brick walls. Flint is also found with brick dressings in traditional walls. Greensand stone for walling and thatch for roofs are now rare but survive respectively in a roadside boundary wall and the roof coverings over two buildings.

Listed buildings and tombs in the Conservation Area are generally in good condition and none appear to be at risk.

The quality of the environment could be threatened by the following:

- The importation of untraditional standard designs and materials for the repair of buildings and boundary walls.



Trees and grass verge along the lane on the southern edge of the village



Flint Cottage looks out from among the trees

- * Hard surfaces applied to the grass verges for additional car parking space.
- Breaches formed in hedgerow and bank for additional private vehicular accesses.
- Neglect in the maintenance of trees, hedgerows and grass banks.
- Any further loss of traditional outbuildings in the village.

CONCLUSION

Economic and social changes may bring about pressure for development but potential for residential building within the Conservation Area is both limited and restricted. Plots for new developments or the extension of residential gardens into the paddocks would be quite inappropriate to the rural character of the village. New developments would increase traffic in the lane and detract from the tranquility of the Conservation Area.

The character of the Conservation Area is vulnerable to inappropriate repairs or minor alterations to historic and traditional buildings. Care therefore needs to be taken in specifying all building works.

An abundance of trees and hedgerows also contribute to the bucolic character. Maintenance, and where appropriate, replanting of these natural features in the public and private domain is to be encouraged.

The emphasis of conservation should be on protection and preservation of the 'status quo'.

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CONSULTATIONS

Tidcombe and Fosbury Parish Council
 J W Hayward Esq. Tidcombe Farm
 Wiltshire County Council
 The Director of Environmental Services
 The County Archaeologist
 Wiltshire Buildings Record
 The Campaign to Protect Rural England
 English Heritage

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If you require any further advice or information please contact :-

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Keeping Kennet Special