

# STEWARTBY CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN



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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

- 1.1 This appraisal of Stewartby Conservation Area was conducted by BEAMS Ltd, the trading company of the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust, in conjunction with Bedford Borough Council between September 2015 and April 2016.
- 1.2 Stewartby Conservation Area was designated on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1986; its boundary has not altered significantly since designation and no changes were proposed as part of the 2016 review. Designation of a conservation area introduces additional planning controls within the boundary, including control over the demolition of unlisted buildings, strengthening control over development and provides additional protection for trees. However, conservation area designation does not stop change; it ensures that change respects the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### **Objectives**

- 1.3 The objective of this appraisal is to define the special interest of Stewartby Conservation Area by analysing its historic development, landscape setting, views and spaces and through the assessment of the architectural and historic qualities of its buildings. The appraisal will identify positive, negative and neutral features and spaces, and the problems, pressures and capacity for change. It is intended to assist and guide all those involved with development proposals. The approach used in preparing this document is based on current good practice guidance as set out by Historic England in *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (English Heritage, 2011).

### **Public Consultation**

- 1.4 There is a strong emphasis on community involvement in the production of appraisals to ensure the documents are as accurate as possible by assessing local knowledge, to encourage local involvement and to give people the chance to influence the document. Further details regarding the public consultation exercise can be found in section 8.0.

### **Status and Contacts**

- 1.5 The appraisal will be used as a technical document to inform planning decisions and will be subject to a process of monitoring and review.
- 1.6 The Council offers a charged for pre-application advice service which presents the opportunity to discuss proposals and their acceptability prior to submitting a full application. Due to the sensitive nature of conservation areas and in order to preserve/enhance their special interest development within the area is subject to stricter standards and regulations and applicants are encouraged to use this service.

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## **2.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **National**

- 2.1 A conservation area is defined under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Local planning authorities have a duty to designate such areas as conservation areas. Section 71 of the Act requires local planning authorities '...to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement...' of these conservation areas.
- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 includes government policies for conservation in section 12. Paragraph 127 requires that 'when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest'.
- 2.3 Further paragraphs in section 12 give guidance to local planning authorities in the exercise of their planning powers in conservation areas.

### **Local**

- 2.4 The Bedford Development Framework Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan has the following objectives relevant to conservation areas:
- Achieving high quality design that takes into account, among other things, local character and local distinctiveness
  - Protecting and enhancing the Borough's built and cultural assets
  - Fostering the development of heritage and cultural tourism



Fig.1. Stewartby Conservation Area map

### **3.0 DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

- 3.1 Every conservation area has a distinctive character, which is derived from its topography, historical development and current uses. Features such as streets, place names, landscaping, views and buildings are all important contributors.
- 3.2 The special interest of Stewartby Conservation Area lies in its history as a planned model village. It was built between 1927 and 1978 for the brick workers of the London Brick Company. Of particular interest is the retirement complex of Sir Malcom Stewart Homes, the first phase of which was designed by Sir Albert Richardson and which remains largely untouched since it was built (No's 1-24 being grade II listed). Two landmark buildings are of particular note, the Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes Common Room (grade II listed) and the Stewartby Memorial Hall which both retain their architectural character and detailing. Other notable points of interest are the village centre with its numerous landmark buildings, the open space between Stewartby Way and The Crescent, the views within the Conservation Area and out to the brickworks, the broad verges and numerous trees.
- 3.3 Summary of significance and special interest:
- Planned model village associated with the London Brick Company including housing, amenities and community spaces.
  - Low density plan form as part of the planned village layout which contributes to the open character of the village.
  - Limited palette of materials notably the use of the Fletton rustic brick and clay roof tiles that gives a great unity to the built form
  - Landmark buildings, notably the Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes Common Room and the Stewartby Memorial Hall that form focal points within the Conservation Area and contribute to key views and vistas
  - Associations with notable architects including Sir Albert Richardson, architect of the first phase of Trust Homes, Oswald Milne, designer of Stewartby Middle School and E Vincent Harris, architect of the Memorial Hall
  - Open spaces and trees, both public and private that contribute to the open character of the area and contribute to important views
  - The open nature of frontages with little/no boundary treatment to define separation between the public and private realm
  - Setting of the Conservation Area adjacent to the LBC brickworks with the listed chimneys evident in a number of views throughout the Conservation Area and beyond.

#### 4.0 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND LANDSCAPE



Fig. 2. Stewartby, view from west of listed chimneys and kilns

- 4.1 Stewartby is located four miles south of Bedford in the Vale of Marston and approximately ten miles north east of Milton Keynes. It is a civil parish, created in 1937, by amalgamating Wootton Pilling and Wootton Broadmead from the parish of Wootton, and Kempston Hardwick from the parish of Kempston Rural as well as part of Houghton Conquest and Marston Moretaine. The original village of Stewartby lies on an east/west axis and for the most part is included in the Conservation Area. To the north is an area of more densely planned housing built after the Second World War along Park Crescent, Pilling Road and Rousbury Road (Fig.1).
- 4.2 The village is surrounded by evidence of its industrial origins as a brickworks. To the west lies the now redundant site of the London Brickwork Company with its grade II listed four surviving chimneys and two kilns which will form part of the new housing development (Fig. 2). To the south the old clay pits have been turned into lakes, the largest is known as Stewartby Lake. Surrounding this is the Marston Vale Community Forest. The area is bounded to the west by the A421 and to the east by the B530. Stewartby is also situated between two railway lines, the Marston Vale Railway line connecting Bletchley to Bedford to the west and the Midland Mainline Railway to the east (Fig. 3). The effect of the roads, railways lines, lakes and brickworks is to create an inland island community at Stewartby.
- 4.3 Stewartby lies on a sedimentary rock known as Peterborough Member. The sub soil is Oxford Clay which runs in a belt from the Humber down to the Dorset coast. The area around Stewartby has one of the largest exposures of Oxford Clay and is the reason for the development of the brickworks in this area. There are some exceptions however, around Broadmead Farm and in the middle of Stewartby there are areas of alluvium and head. This is a mixture of clay, silt, sand and gravel deposited by the movement of water. The land is essentially flat and low lying at 111 feet by the lake but rises gently to the east, where the Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes are located, to a height of 154 feet above sea level.



Fig. 3. Aerial view of Stewartby showing brickworks to the west and lakes to the south

## **5.0 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

### **Nineteenth Century**

- 5.1 At the beginning of the nineteenth century Wootton Pilling was a small rural hamlet but by the end of the century the brickwork industry was beginning to transform the area. One of the key events and a catalyst for the development of the brick industry was the arrival of the railways in the area. In 1844 a group of local businessmen promoted the idea of a line to Bedford which was supported by George Stevenson. It was agreed that a line from Bletchley to Bedford would be built and it would join the London to Birmingham line at Bletchley. The engineers would be George and Robert Stevenson. Work began in 1844 and the line finally opened in November 1846. The line ran through Marston Vale and had seven stations. Stewartby would not have its own station until 1905. The London and Birmingham Railway and the Manchester and Birmingham Railway amalgamated with the Grand Junction Railway to form the London and North Western Railway. The line was extended to Oxford in 1851 and from Bedford to Cambridge in 1862.
- 5.2 Wootton Pilling lies on a layer of Oxford Clay which runs diagonally across the country from Weymouth in Dorset to Scarborough in Yorkshire passing through Oxford, Bedford and Fletton, near Peterborough. The origins of the Stewartby brickworks lie in events in Fletton near Peterborough in the nineteenth century. James McCallum Craig bought land in Fletton just south of Peterborough on which he started a brickworks in 1879. The bricks were made from surface clay which made them heavy and expensive to transport and restricted their market to the local area. McCallum subsequently leased his brickworks to George Seale and James F O'Connor of Finsbury Park who got the Hempstead brothers to run it. It is believed to be the Hempstead brothers who made the crucial discovery in 1881 that by using lower Oxford Clay beneath the surface clay, a better, cheaper brick could be created. This would have a profound effect on the future of Wootton Pilling.
- 5.3 The lower Oxford clay is a shale-like, grey-green clay deposit known as The Knott. The natural moisture content and low plasticity allows it to be crushed and then pressed into brick shapes and crucially fired immediately without having to wait, as with green bricks, to be cured. The clay also contained sufficient organic combustible material to virtually burn itself during firing, hence the reason it has been called "the clay that burns", this ensured lower fuel costs. In addition, the lime content was constant, which prevented the bricks from cracking during firing. There were also few impurities in the clay and those that there were could be easily removed. The result was an altogether better quality cheaper brick.
- 5.4 The only negative aspect of the discovery was the production of very oily fumes which necessitated the redesign of the Hoffman kilns with a transverse arch which in turn meant the process of firing was better controlled and ultimately fewer bricks were spoiled and discarded.
- 5.5 The demand for Fletton bricks grew, particularly in London where the brick was still cheaper than local bricks, despite the cost of transporting them by train. It was the railway infrastructure that allowed the business to flourish. The Fletton brick was a structural brick and had no aesthetic appeal.

- 5.6 One of the largest exposures of Oxford Clay lies south west of Bedford in the Vale of Marston. It was here In 1897 B J Forder & Co opened a brickworks at Wootton Pillinge and at Elstow that would be the origins of the vast brickworks that would develop on the site in the twentieth century.

### Twentieth Century

- 5.7 In 1900 B J Forder & Co was floated and sold to the Keble brothers of Peterborough who were brick makers and Halley Stewart, the prospective liberal candidate for Peterborough and his son Percy Malcolm (known as Malcolm). The Stewarts had money to invest, having recently sold a family business. It quickly transpired that the Keble brothers wanted a fast return on their investment in contrast to the Stewart family and they left the partnership in 1906. Halley Stewart became Chairman and Malcolm Stewart became Managing Director of the company. The company's interest initially lay in all building materials but by 1912 they had sold the lime and cement side of the business to British Portland Cement and concentrated on the developing of brick production at Wootton Pillinge.
- 5.8 The London Brick Company had been founded at Fletton in Peterborough by J C Hill a builder who needed a continual supply of bricks and found it logical to buy his own brickworks. The company expanded and eventually bought land at Wootton Broadmead (and in other parts of Bedfordshire). In 1905 the London Brick Company bought four hundred and fifty acres in Wootton Pillinge. After the war in 1920 the London Brick Company bought the Wootton Pillinge Brick Company which had been founded in 1901. There were now only four brickworks in the area - The London Brick Company, BJ Forder & Co, the Itter Companies and the United and Northern Brick Company. It made sense for them to merge and reduce their costs and thereby increase their profits. In 1923 The London Brick Company merged with B J Forder & Co to become The London Brick Company and Forders Ltd.



Fig. 4. Wootton Pillinge, Ordnance Survey map, 1925

- 5.9 In 1924 Sir Halley Stewart stepped down as Chairman and his son Malcolm succeeded him. Malcolm Stewart had been instrumental in modernising brick production and increasing output at the firm. Halley used his new found time to focus on a long held dream to build a model village for the brick workers along the lines of Bournville for the Cadbury workers in Birmingham or Port Sunlight for the Lever soap factory workers. Halley was a Congregationalist and a Liberal MP both of which informed his strongly held beliefs regarding the importance of the welfare of his workers to the success of the business.
- 5.10 When the Stewart family first became involved in Wootton Pilling there were a handful of farms and a few cottages. By 1910 two blocks of four cottages had been built for the workers. However, the first comprehensive plans for a model village providing modern spacious and sanitary accommodation were drawn up by the company architect, Mr F. W. Walker in 1926 and work began soon after. The model village was inspired by the garden city movement of Hampstead Garden Suburb and Letchworth where low density housing was situated in a landscape setting with large gardens. A sense of space and greenery were essential and desirable characteristics.
- 5.11 In 1928 the first phase of housing was completed around Churchill Close. The houses had running water, electricity and drainage facilities. They had indoor bathrooms with flushing toilets. The houses were spacious and gardens large and all for a low rent. They must have seemed luxurious in comparison to typical Victorian terraced housing with outside toilets and small gardens. The next phase of housing was built along Stewartby Way up to School Lane and from where the Memorial Hall stands down to the station.
- 5.12 In 1929 the Stewartby Memorial Hall was opened in memory of the villagers who had lost their lives in World War One. It is now commonly known as the village hall. The building was designed in a neo-classical colonial idiom by the architect E. Vincent Harris. It completed the first phase of building work at Stewartby incorporating the south-west segment of the village and was, and still remains a focal point for village life.
- 5.13 Ever concerned for the welfare of the workers the focus of the model village turned to providing communal spaces. In 1932 The Club House was designed by E. Vincent Harris and the following year the General Store opened. The same year Halley Stewart was knighted.
- 5.14 In 1934 the company architect F.W. Walker again provided plans for the next phase of development to the north of Stewartby Way. These were Alexander, Montgomery and Wavell Closes. The houses were built around *cul de sacs* which were perpendicular to Stewartby Way. The names were changed to the names of leaders after the Second World War.
- 5.15 In 1936 Sir Halley Stewart died. In the family's honour and in particular to commemorate the life of Sir Halley, Wootton Pilling was renamed Stewartby. Soon after, at the suggestion of his son Malcolm, a new parish was also created called Stewartby, which was almost entirely formed by land owned by the company. This included land in Wootton Pilling and Wootton Broadmead from the parish of Wootton as well as Kempston Hardwick from Kempston Rural. Unsurprisingly the first chairman of the parish council was Sir Malcolm Stewartby.

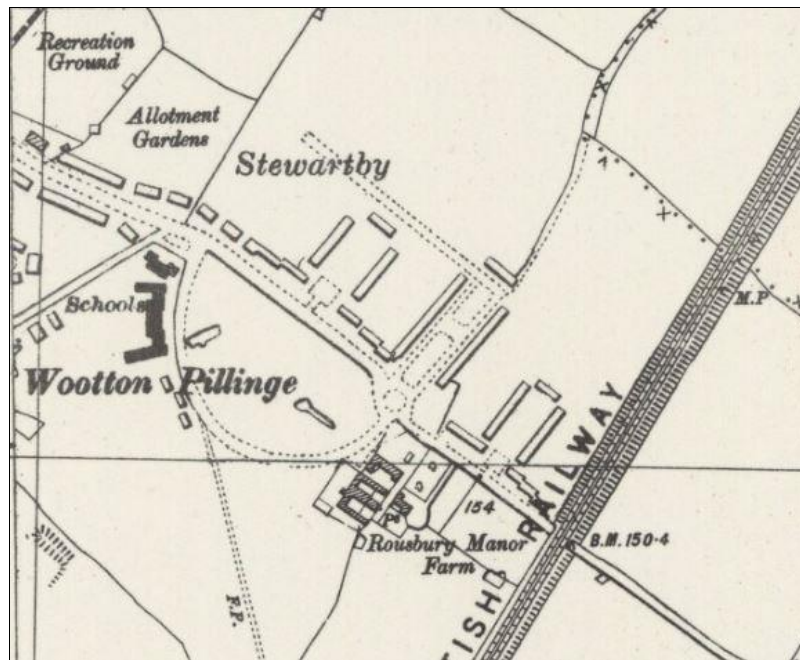


Fig. 5. Stewartby, Ordnance Survey map, 1938

- 5.16 At the same time that the village was renamed, Stewartby opened a middle school in the village, which had been planned from the conception of the village but took ten years to come to fruition. It was built by Bedford Borough Council on land given by the Company and was designed by Oswald P Milne. Prior to this children had to be bused to neighbouring villages.
- 5.17 Following the end of the Second World War a new phase of development was undertaken to develop north of Alexander, Montgomery and Wavell Closes with Park Crescent, Pillinge Road, Rousbury Road and Magpie Avenue. This included a play area and a long awaited place of worship, the Stewartby United Church, a non-denominational place of worship for the community sited near the junction of Park Crescent and Stewartby Way.
- 5.18 Sir Malcolm Stewart, the son of Sir Halley Stewart was always concerned for the welfare of his workers and like his father correlated their well-being to the success of the company. In the 1950s he set up a charitable trust to ensure the comfort of company workers in their retirement. The eminent architect Sir Albert Richardson, a notable inhabitant of Bedfordshire at his eighteenth century town house in Ampthill, was commissioned to design two courtyards of bungalows and a Common Room that would be situated on high ground to the south east of main village.
- 5.19 Richardson was an establishment figure. He was an esteemed architect, architectural historian and conservationist. Before the war he was professor of architecture at the Bartlett with his own architectural practice and editor of the architectural journal. After the Second World War he taught at Cambridge and was appointed President of the Royal Academy in 1954 just before he began designing the Malcolm Stewart Homes. He was knighted in 1956. His scholarly passion for Georgian architecture and neo-classicism fed into his professional work where he blended the style of these with the demands for modern living. He published two works on Georgian architecture; *London Houses from 1660 to 1820: a Consideration of their Architecture and Detail* (1911) and *Monumental Classic Architecture in Great Britain and Ireland* (1914). He was a founder of The Georgian Group.

- 5.20 The twenty-four bungalows and the Common Room designed by Richardson were officially opened in 1956. In 1964 thirty-six further bungalows were built, eighteen in 1970 and a final eight in 1978, all designed by the estate office to harmonise with the original bungalows. Those workers who had been with the company for fifty years or more were entitled to a home. However, with the closure of the brickworks there are fewer retired workers and a number of the houses are now in private hands.
- 5.21 After the war there was a shortage of labour, as returning soldiers turned their back on working in the brickworks. Some prisoners of war, who had remained in the country, found work at Stewartby. Eventually due to the shortage of labour, workers had to be hired from overseas. The first wave came from Italy particularly around Naples and later waves came from India, Pakistan and the West Indies. In 1950 Sir Malcolm Stewart finally retired and was succeeded by the deputy chairman, Arthur Warbouys. He died in 1966 and Sir Ronald Stewart, Malcolm Stewart's son succeeded him. However, by the late 1960s the building sector was in recession. Sir Ronald realising that the company needed to diversify set up London Brick Land Fill Ltd. In the early 1970s there was an economic slump and men were laid off, the original Forder & Co works closed at Elstow. In the 1980s there was a drive towards modernisation and some of the chimneys were destroyed. In 1984 the Hanson Trust bought a majority share in the business. On 14 July 1986 the south of Stewartby was designated a conservation area in recognition of its special architectural and historic interest. Attempts by the company to build a super plant failed because of concerns about the environmental impact. Sir Ronald Stewart died in 1999 and Stewartby brickworks finally closed in 2008. The remaining kilns and chimneys were granted listed status in January 2008.

## 6.0 SPATIAL ANALYSIS



Fig. 6. Stewartby Lake from Green Lane

### **The Character and Interrelationship of Spaces within the Area**

- 6.1 Stewartby is characterised by a feeling of green space throughout, whether this is the public space of The Crescent or the more private space of Churchill Close or simply the generous verges that line the streets. The main artery of the village is Stewartby Way which has a far greater sense of enclosure at the west end near the village centre than where it rises to higher ground in the east and opens out into The Crescent. Stewartby Way reflects the path of earlier rural roads that passed through the area. An east/west road from Wootton Pillinge which descended the hill to meet the north/south road to Wootton Broadmead is now Broadmead Road to the east and Green Lane to the west. The approaches from the east and west are different in character, the eastern approach is more rural and the western approach is more industrial.
- 6.2 The approach from the east off the Ampthill Road (B530) and along Stewartby Way is a fairly short and straight entrance to the village across flat countryside rising gently on its arrival in the village. Both sides of the road are lined with hedges and small trees which restrict views out across the surrounding landscape. The railway bridge itself forms a key entrance point into the village. Semi-detached housing begins immediately on the right as one passes under the bridge. The Malcolm Stewart Homes also begin at this point but are less visible as they are set back behind trees and a deep verge.
- 6.3 The approach from the west is off the Bedford Road. Initially the road has unkempt hedging on either side. It rises gently and curves where it begins to run parallel to Stewartby Lake, the leisure lake that now fills the clay pits (Fig. 6). Hedges also screen the large area of industrial wasteland at the beginning of the road on the east side. The hedging is replaced by post and rail fencing on the east side of the road and the view opens out to the drama of the surviving chimneys and kilns of the London Brick Company. The road passes under a corrugated iron covered bridge and over the railway crossing. Immediately on the east side are buildings from the brickworks sited next to the road. The character of the approach changes and hedging resumes on either side of the road, poplar trees are visible at the

entrance to the village where the road curves to the north and semi-detached housing begins on the east side of the road.

- 6.4 The village can also be approached from the north along Broadmead Road which branches off the Bedford Road to the north of Green Lane. The road has kept its rural character as it winds across open countryside. The only indication of the industrial nature of Stewartby is the slag pile on the south side of the road at the beginning and the views across the fields to the surviving chimneys and kilns of the London Brick Company (Fig. 7). At the entrance to the village is a light industrial estate and shortly after the London Brick Company Headquarters appears on the west side of the road and the Stewartby Memorial Hall is visible ahead.



Fig. 7. View of Stewartby from Broadmead Road to the north

#### **Open Space**

- 6.5 One of the chief characteristics of Stewartby is the generosity and scale of its open spaces. The principal open spaces in Stewartby are The Crescent and the area that forms the village centre, between the Stewartby Memorial Hall and the London Brick Company Headquarters as well as the area behind the Hall known as Churchill Close. There are smaller open spaces between the Malcolm Stewart Homes and their accompanying allotments.
- 6.6 The village centre is the publicly accessible heart of the village. It has large grass verges to the rear, front and sides of the Memorial Hall. There are two roundabouts linked by a rectangle of lawn between the Memorial Hall and the London Brick Company Headquarters. Lying to the east is a crescent shaped area of lawn in front of the Club House. On the west side of the space is a bus shelter with tiled gabled roof next to which is sited the Stewartby sign. A large proportion of this open space is tarmac. There are a number of trees, a horse chestnut on the rectangle of grass and a variety of specimens including some conifers on the western boundary of the space and some mature specimens lining the curve of the crescent in front of the sports hall (Figs 8, 9, 10, 11).



Figs 8, 9, 10, 11. The village centre, clockwise from left, central grass area, area in front of London Brick Company Headquarters, view towards Club House and Shop, The bus shelter and Stewartby sign.

- 6.7 Behind the Memorial Hall is Churchill Close, a publicly accessible triangular area of grass surrounded by semi-detached houses (Fig. 12). There is a now defunct fountain and several trees on the triangular green at its centre (Fig. 13). There are deep verges in front of the houses with original street lighting and the remains of a brick fragment path running along parallel to the road (Fig. 14).



Figs. 12 & 13. Churchill Close, central grass area (left) and fountain (right)



Fig. 14. Churchill Close, path and street lamp

- 6.8 The Crescent is, as its name suggests, is the crescent shaped area of open space formed by Stewartby Way to the north and the curve of The Crescent road to the south (Figs. 15 & 16). The area is large and open with few trees apart from the north-west corner where there is dense foliage and a village pond and playground near to the school. On the west side overlooking the space is the school and several large detached houses; on the east side overlooking the open space are the Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes.



Figs. 15. The Crescent open space, looking west

- 6.9 The Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes are arranged around carefully planned open spaces and where they face the road have deep grass verges (Fig. 16). There is a central avenue with two grass covered roundabouts at The Crescent end. The avenue leading up to the Common Room is lined with a double avenue of cherry trees and is overlooked on either side by a terrace of bungalows. To either side of this centrally planned space are grass courtyards surrounded by bungalows. To the rear are curved grassed areas with rose beds and other ornamental planting either side of the Hall (Fig. 17). On the east side of the centrally planned section of the Homes is a larger four sided grass courtyard to the rear of which are the allotments that are also part of the complex (Fig. 18). There is one further smaller grass

courtyard to the east by the railway line. Throughout there is original street lighting and careful planting of trees and all areas are publicly accessible although the courtyards have a more private and intimate feel than the area to the either side of the hall.



Fig. 16. Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes, open space, grass verges



Fig. 17. Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes, open space, the rose garden



Figs. 18. Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes, allotments

- 6.10 Open spaces outside the Conservation Area, but within Stewartby, also contribute to its character and setting. To the north between Park Crescent and Broadmead Road is a large recreation area from which good views across to the rear of the houses along Stewartby Way, the Sports Club and the Stewartby brickwork chimneys are visible. To the south of the

larger houses along The Crescent are the playing fields of the Marston Vale Middle School, these are not publicly accessible. The village is surrounded by clay pit lakes to the south, industrial wasteland to the north-west and countryside to north and east which all form part of the setting of the Conservation Area and contribute to Stewartby's unique character.

### **Landmark Buildings**

- 6.11 Within the Conservation Area are a small number of landmark buildings; these are visually important structures that make a statement, form a full stop at the beginning or end of a view, hold an important corner position, can be seen at a distance, or stand above the general roof line of the surrounding buildings.

Landmark buildings within Stewartby Conservation Area are:

- Stewartby Memorial Hall
- London Brick Company Headquarters
- Club House
- Stewartby village shop
- Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes Common Room
- Marston Vale Middle School

### **Focal Points**

- 6.12 The principal focal point of Stewartby Conservation Area is the centre of the village with its cluster of landmark buildings around the intersection of the three roads into the village. In particular the Memorial Hall can be seen from Green Lane, Broadmead Road and the end section of Stewartby Way. Other focal points include Marston Vale Middle School at the junction of Stewartby Way and Park Crescent with a large lay-by in front. The Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes Common Room is also a visual focal point which can be viewed from The Crescent as well as the curved gardens to either side.

### **Key Views and Vistas**

- 6.13 The western part of the Conservation Area is relatively flat and the buildings low rise so that there are few opportunities for really dramatic views. The eastern end of the Conservation Area has greater opportunities for key views due to the topography and the particular urban plan of the Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes. There are dramatic views across The Crescent from the south-east down towards Stewartby Way with great stretches of grass, trees and sky above and from the roundabout at the top of Stewartby Way. Conversely looking from Stewartby Way up to the Malcolm Stewart Homes across The Crescent is also a key view (Fig. 19). There are key views of the Sir Malcolm Stewart Common Room from The Crescent and from either side across the rose gardens (Fig. 20).
- 6.14 There are important views looking ahead (west) as one descends along Stewartby Way to the brick chimneys outside the Conservation Area.



Fig. 19. The Crescent viewed from the north



Fig. 20. Sir Malcom Stewart Trust Homes, the avenue looking towards the Common Room

### **Trees and Vegetation**

- 6.15 Trees and vegetation play a key role in the character of Stewartby, partly inspired by the Garden City Movement but also likely to have been a conscious choice in contrast to the lack of greenery in the brick factory area. There are deep grass verges throughout the Conservation Area (Fig. 21). In places there are carefully planted avenues of trees although some specimens are now missing.



Fig. 21. Trees and grass verges along Stewartby Way.

## 7.0 CHARACTER AREAS

- 7.1 Stewartby Conservation Area can be divided into two distinct character areas. Each area has a different character and appearance that relates to its past and current function, the design of the street layout and its buildings and the types of material used in their construction. These character areas are illustrated in Fig. 22 and are discussed separately below.
- 7.2 Character Area 1 encompasses the majority of the Conservation Area excluding the Sir Malcom Stewart Trust Homes (Fig. 22). This includes the east side of Green Lane as it enters the village, Churchill Close; the area between the Memorial Hall and the London Brick Company Headquarters and the Club House; the area either side of the length of Stewartby Way up to the railway bridge at the east end of the village; the open space of The Crescent and the school; and large houses to the south-west of The Crescent.
- 7.3 Character Area 2 is a sub area of the village known as the Sir Malcolm Stewart Trust Homes (Fig. 22). The homes were built in a number of planned stages to house retired brick workers. They were part-designed by the architect Sir Albert Richardson and were funded by the Sir Malcolm Stewart Trust. The area covers the south-east corner of the Conservation Area and radiates out from the semi-circle of the eastern half of The Crescent. The centre point for the plan appears to be on the north side of The Crescent open space, opposite the centre of the access road to Alexandra Close. From this point a series of courtyards, avenues and gardens surrounded by single storey bungalows radiates out. Road access is from Stewartby Way and the avenue off The Crescent.
- 7.4 The Sir Malcom Stewart Trust Common Room and No's 1-24 of the Trust Homes are grade II listed and lie within the Stewartby Conservation Area. The two kilns and four chimneys at the Stewartby Brickworks are also listed grade II and are visible from parts of the Conservation Area.

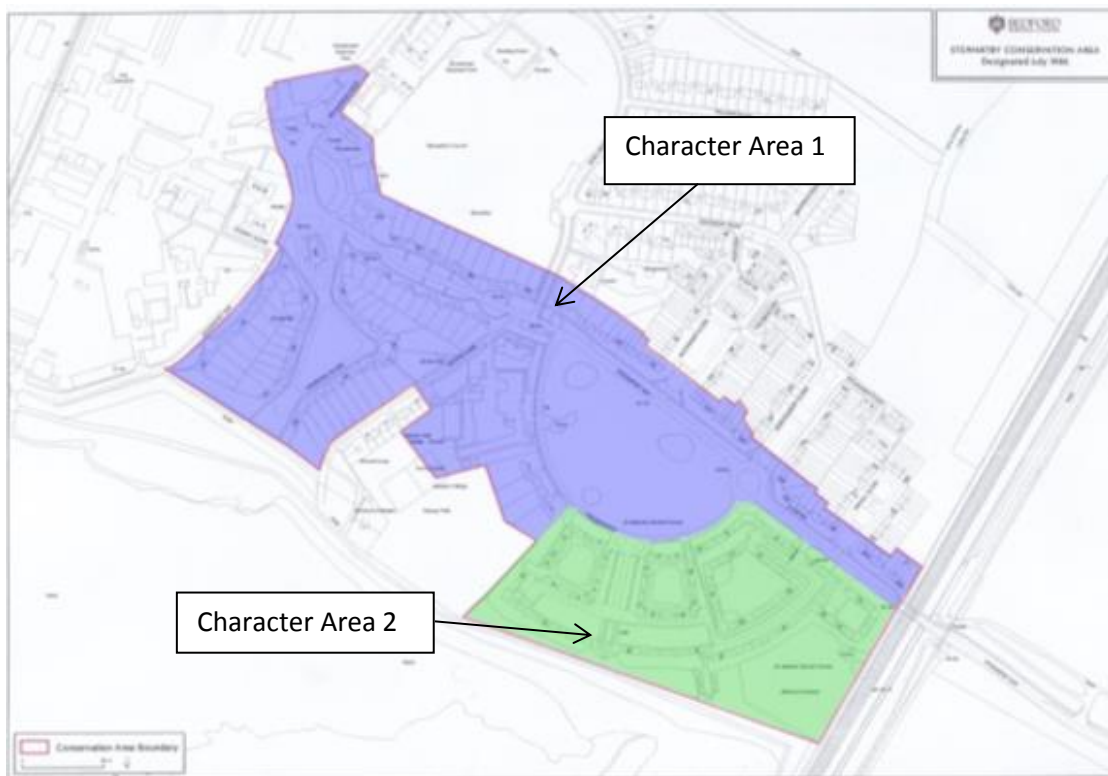


Fig. 22. Map of Stewartby illustrating character areas 1 & 2

## 7.5 CHARACTER AREA 1: STEWARTBY WAY, GREEN LANE AND CHURCHILL CLOSE

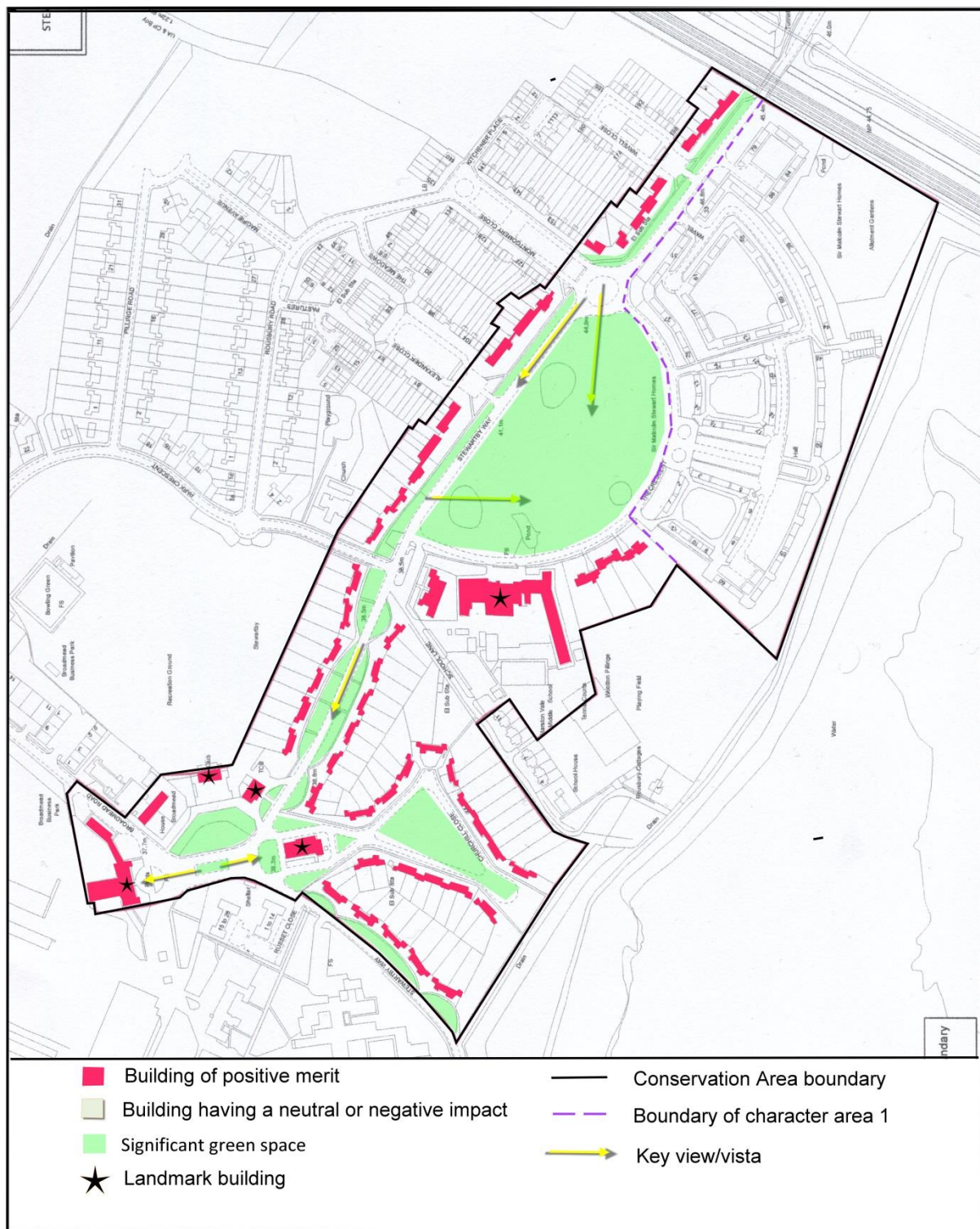


Fig. 23. Character Area 1, appraisal map

- 7.5.1 The overall character of Character Area 1 is suburban with a mix of greenery and mostly semi-detached housing. The majority of buildings are in residential use and were built as such. Originally they were rented out to brick workers and their families but are now privately owned. The village has its own shop in a purpose built building, a sports club built for the brick workers and a Memorial Hall which fulfils the function of a village hall. There are no public houses.
- 7.5.2 Stewartby Way forms the spine that runs east/west across Character Area 1 and remains the principal road of the village. Where Green Lane and Stewartby Way meet, forms the heart of the village, surrounded by public buildings generously set within deep grass verges. Broadmead Road, the main approach from the north, enters the village by the London Brick Company Headquarters. Opposite the school, Park Crescent meets Stewartby Way and leads to the village outside the Conservation Area. On the south side of Stewartby Way, The Crescent curves round the large open green space. Stewartby Way continues on the north side of The Crescent with semi-detached housing set behind deep verges and a line of horse chestnuts. Alexander Close, Montgomery Close and Wavell Close run perpendicular to Stewartby Way but only their entrances are included in the Conservation Area. At the top of the hill there is a roundabout at the north end of the intersection between Stewartby Way, Montgomery Close and The Crescent. Stewartby Way continues east with more semi-detached housing set behind green verges and trees until it passes under the railway bridge and finishes when it meets the B530.

#### **Architectural and Historic Qualities of the Buildings**

- 7.5.3 On entering the village from the east along Green Lane, the first group of houses consists of five pairs of semi-detached houses (Fig. 24). The end pairs have their own small semi-circular green verges in front with a red cement semi-circular footpath between the grass and the houses. The central three have a larger semi-circular verge and a more open aspect due to the absence of trees in front of the houses and the shallowness of the curve. The houses themselves were built in the late 1920s, after Churchill Close but are similar in character to the pair of gable ended houses at the entrance to Close. The houses are two storeys with a single storey side extension and are constructed of brick. They have projecting gable ends, steep tiled roofs with overhanging eaves and chimneys projecting above the roof line. The front doors with one exception are all half glazed and are mostly uPVC but retain their original flush profile with original flat door hoods. The windows are all now uPVC but have mostly retained the detail of the original metal framed casements with multiple panes replicating the glazing bar details of the original. The boundary of the Conservation Area runs down the centre of the road.



Fig. 24. Green Lane, looking west

- 7.5.4 Churchill Close was the first part of Stewartby to be built in 1928. It is characterised by the large expanse of green at its heart. There are twelve semi-detached pairs of houses regularly spaced around the triangle of grass and two further pairs facing each other across the entrance to the Close. The entrance houses and one example in the south-west corner are similar to the design of the houses on Green Lane (Fig. 25). The other houses are all two storey with a single storey side extension, which in the case of the west side of the Close, actually link the neighbouring houses together. This type of house has a hipped roof with overhanging eaves with a slightly projecting central bay with a gabled roof with entrance doors to either side of the central bay (Fig. 26). The doors have overhanging bracketed flat door hoods. There are several examples of original doors in the Close but the majority are uPVC replacements. Two houses retain their original metal framed windows but the rest have been replaced with uPVC most of which are sympathetic to the form of the original metal windows. The brickwork has been used decoratively with arches over the windows with alternate bricks and clay tiles and a brick string course with projecting bricks across the central element of the houses. The houses have a central chimney and a tall prominent chimney stack at either end.



Fig. 25. Churchill Close, gable ended house type



Fig. 26. Churchill Close, central gable house type

- 7.5.5 The verges have pathways running parallel to the road constructed of fragments of Fletton brick, pathways perpendicular to this run up to the front and side doors of the houses. Where the side extensions have been turned into garages, driveways have been built across the grass verges to the road. The original street lamps remain (Fig. 27) as does the now defunct fountain in the centre.



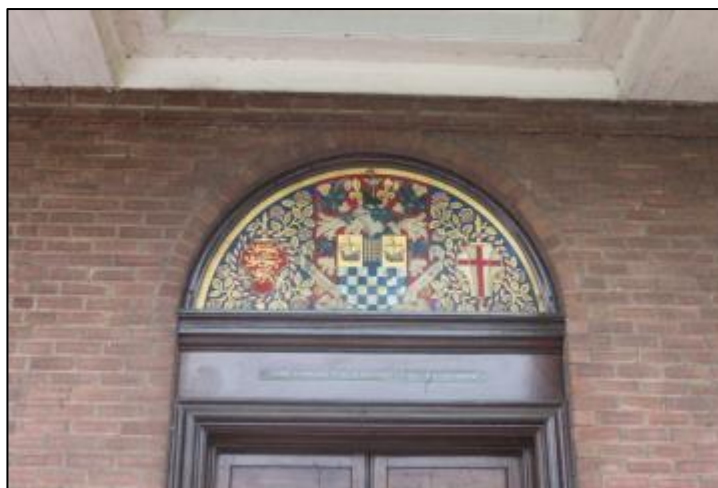
Fig. 27. Churchill Close, west side, brick pavement and original street lamp

- 7.5.6 The Stewartby Memorial Hall sits at the entrance to Churchill Close and was designed by the architect E. Vincent Harris and built in 1929 (Fig. 28). It is the architectural highlight of Character Area 1. It faces north and is placed on an island around which roads access Churchill Close. It is built in a neo-classical colonial style with a temple façade surmounted

with a clock tower facing the London Brick Company Headquarters. The building is built of Fletton brick including the four brick columns which support the pediment. The pediment is weather boarded with the symbol of a beehive in the centre (Fig. 29). There are large wooden double entrance doors with a coat of arms above in the tympanum (Fig. 30). There are casement windows either side. To the rear is a three storey cross wing built in an arts and crafts style. The front of the building is of two storeys as is the hall at the back, this is reflected in the metal framed windows with wooden surrounds on the side of the building. A single storey extension was added in 1978 on the hall's east side. The roof is Westmoreland green slate which is the only use of this material within the Conservation Area.



Fig. 28. Stewartby Memorial Hall



Figs. 29 & 30. Stewartby Memorial Hall, pediment with beehive and tympanum with coat of arms

- 7.5.7 The London Brick Company Headquarters opposite the Memorial Hall and at the westernmost edge of the Conservation Area was the link between the village and the workplace (Fig. 31). It is a single storey flat roofed building entirely constructed of brick in a classical idiom. The ends project forward with central arches which incorporate circular flower beds reached up four steps and set into the arch. There are classical urns on either corner of the projecting arches at roof level (Fig. 32). It has a central wooden panelled door

reached up four steps and with a classical stone architrave (Fig. 33). On either side are four windows, which are now boarded up and the building remains unused. The chimneys of the brickworks and other ancillary buildings are visible from this part of the Conservation Area.



Fig. 31. London Brick Company Headquarters, south elevation



Figs. 32 & 33. London Brick Company Headquarters, arch with flower bed and entrance door

- 7.5.8 On the opposite side of the road is a large semi-detached house built of Fletton brick and accessed from Broadmead Road (Figs 34 & 35). It has a steep tiled roof with chimneys stacks either end situated parallel to the ridge and a central stack which lies transversly. One house is known as Pilling House and the other Broadmead House. The rear of the houses overlook the grass crescent in front of The Club House. The size of the building and its prominent situation suggest that it was for two senior members of the company.



Figs. 34 & 35. Pilling House and Broadmead House, west elevation (left) and south elevation (right)

- 7.5.9 The Club House was designed by E. Vincent Harris and opened in 1932 as a sports and leisure facility for the brick workers (Fig. 36). It is a single storey building with an attic floor built of Fletton brick. It has a distinctively steep hipped and tiled roof covering the central section of the façade. There are flat roofed side extensions which continue the curve of the façade. On the ground floor are three full height arched windows with three further dormer windows at attic level. It has large chimney stacks at either end. Two modern doors have been inserted into the main façade at the south end.



Fig. 36. Club House, west elevation

- 7.5.10 The village shop opened for provisions in 1933 (Fig. 37). It is Fletton rustic brick under a steep tiled roof with overhanging eaves. It has two facades, one facing the crescent in front of the Club House, which is the private face of the shopkeeper's house and the public face onto Stewartby Way which is the shop. This façade has projecting gabled wings which have large bay windows on the street between which is the main door of the shop under a catslide roof. The windows have all been replaced with uPVC. The eaves of the east side of the shop break into a pediment shape over a window. From this side of the shop views out to the recreation ground behind and outside the Conservation Area are visible.



Fig. 37. Village Shop

7.5.11 The houses along the west end of Stewartby Way between the shop and Park Crescent were built in the late 1920s. There are twelve pairs of semi-detached brick houses. These follow the pattern of the main prototype in Churchill Close. They are two storey with a single storey side extension. The roofs are hipped and have a projecting central gable with tall chimney stacks at either end (Fig. 38). The pattern of footpaths and green verges is similar to the houses on Green Lane. The pairs at either end have small crescent shaped footpaths apart from the two last houses on the north, while all the houses in the middle have large crescent shaped footpaths. Footpaths lead off the main path to the front and side entrances. Driveways have now been built across the verges in many cases. The overall character of this section of Stewartby Way is lush and verdant and more enclosed than elsewhere in the Conservation Area. There are views between the houses on the south side through to mature gardens beyond. On the north side the views are more open between the houses which back onto the recreation ground.



Fig. 38. Stewartby Way, west end, looking east, central gabled house type

7.5.12 The Marston Vale Middle School was designed by Donald P. Milne and opened in 1937 (Fig. 39). It is stylistically different to the other public buildings in Stewartby and has a more municipal feel. The clock tower is a small concession to the Memorial Hall and the Stewartby architectural ethos. It has a long façade fronting onto The Crescent set back from the road and overlooking the village pond. The windows are large and horizontal and would originally have been metal framed. The glazed central doorway is set into a large stone architrave.



Fig. 39. Marston Vale Middle School with village pond

7.5.13 Further along The Crescent are four houses which are different in character to the other houses in Stewartby as they are larger in scale and grander in detail and must clearly have been built for senior members of the Company (Figs. 40 & 41). The central two are semi-detached and linked by single storey wings and garages to two “L” shaped detached houses on either side. They are brick under steep tiled roofs with overhanging eaves. The windows were originally timber framed and survive on the detached house to the west. The front doors are panelled timber with classical architraves on the semi-detached houses and door hoods on the detached houses. They combine features and styling from other houses in Stewartby and the Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes which they are located next to. The gardens are wider and larger than other houses in Stewartby. They have open plan front gardens with a low brick wall in front and driveways up to the garages and footpaths to the front doors.



Figs. 40 & 41. Large houses on The Crescent (left), detached end house (right)

7.5.14 The north side of The Crescent from Park Crescent to Montgomery Close commences at the west end with two familiar semi-detached house types, the hipped roof with a gabled centre and the gabled ended house. The next house along begins a run of symmetrically planned houses centred on Alexandra Close. The houses either side of the entrance to the Close form a terrace of four houses. The end house has a centrally planned façade facing onto Alexander Close (Fig. 42). The façade fronting Stewartby Way has a central archway to access the rear, either side of which are the two central houses with half glazed doors. The end of the terrace furthest from the Close is gabled and forms the fourth house with its entrance on the side (Fig. 43). The windows would originally have been metal framed. The

doors have stone architraves around them and are noticeably different from the doors of the earlier house types.



Figs. 42 & 43. Stewartby Way, terraces at entrance to Alexander Close

7.5.15 The two terraces either side of those fronting onto Alexander Close have four houses each and express this in their facades onto Stewartby Way (Fig. 44). They also have a central archway for rear access. They have paired entrance doors with stone surrounds to the houses to either side of the archway. The eastern most house on the eastern block appears to have its original metal framed windows which have a horizontal character akin to the windows in the school building (Fig. 45). The uPVC windows that have replaced the originals have given these houses a more neo-Georgian character than was perhaps originally intended.



Figs 44 & 45. Stewartby Way, north side, terrace of four houses (left), original metal windows (right)

7.5.16 Finally, at either end of the run of houses symmetrically planned on Alexander Close are two houses which appear to be detached but are in fact semi-detached with two houses incorporated (Fig. 46). They are "L" shaped with steep tiled roofs and with overhanging eaves and a projecting gable with one entrance door to the front and one to the side.



Figs. 46 & 47. Stewartby Way, north side, semi-detached house (left) and view from The Crescent (right)

- 7.5.17 The two types of terraces and the semi-detached houses at the end are all linked by single storey links unifying the scheme (Fig. 47). They sit behind a line of mature chestnut trees and deep grass verges. The verges are dissected by a footpath running parallel to the road. Driveways now cross the verges and footpath. The gardens are open plan. The houses look out across the expanse of grass that is The Crescent.
- 7.5.18 On the north side of Stewartby Way, between Montgomery Close and the railway bridge, the pattern of house types change again. There are two detached houses, one overlooking Montgomery Close and the other overlooking the roundabout (Fig. 48). They have asymmetrically placed front doors with two windows to the side and three above. On their flanks there are box style bay windows. The two are linked by a flat roof extension. Wavell Close forms the central axis of another run of symmetrically planned houses. Either side of Wavell Close are two semi-detached houses, each with one façade facing the Close and one facing Stewartby Way (Fig. 49). The treatment of the doors is similar to the houses further west. They have steep gabled roofs with prominent chimney stacks on their sides as in the earlier houses around Churchill Close. Either side of these are some simple semi-detached houses which have a more block like character than the earlier houses. To the west there is another semi-detached house on the same design. However, to the east next to the railway line the symmetry is lost and there is a four house terrace with the archway in the middle that replicates others further west of the roundabout on Stewartby Way (Fig. 50). It has a projecting gable end to the east and a central arch for rear access. All the blocks of housing are linked by a single storey link with an arch to access the rear. There are deep verges and a footpath that runs parallel to the road. Driveways have been created across the verges to access the houses.



Figs. 48 & 49. Stewartby Way, Roundabout detached houses (left) and semi-detached houses (right)



Fig. 50. Stewartby Way, east end, terrace

## Building Materials



Fig. 51. Fletton rustic brick

- 7.5.19 Throughout Character Area 1 the palette of building materials is extremely restricted which has the effect of unifying the area as a single entity. All the buildings are built of bricks from the Stewartby brickworks whether that is the public buildings or the private houses. The particular brick manufactured at Stewartby was known as the Fletton brick, this was reddish in colour and the size of a man's hand making it easy to lay. It was and still is the workhorse of all bricks. The particular kind of brick that is found in Stewartby is known as the Fletton rustic and is distinguished by the wave pattern on the exterior facing side (Fig. 51). The type was invented in 1922 at Stewartby shortly before work began on the model village. It is also possible to see the use of bricks in a more decorative way over the windows where bricks and clay tiles alternate to create interest.
- 7.5.20 The original windows were constructed of metal on the houses but have now largely been replaced with uPVC (Fig. 52). The Memorial Hall still retains its original metal framed windows although those on the other public buildings, the shop and Club House have been changed, those on the London Brick Company Headquarters are currently boarded up. The doors were constructed of wood but have also now mostly been replaced with uPVC (Fig. 53). The roof tiles are red clay with the exception of the Memorial Hall which has green Westmoreland slate. The houses have painted wooden soffits and there is liberal use of painted wood weatherboard on the clock tower and pediment of the Memorial Hall.



Figs. 52 & 53. Original metal window (left) and wooden door (right)

### **General Condition, including Neutral or Negative Factors**

- 7.5.21 The area is in generally good condition. The houses are now privately owned and with few exceptions are well maintained. Stewartby Way is a fairly quiet road apart from the beginning and end of the school day when the street becomes congested with cars for a short period. There are no yellow lines in the Conservation Area which is a positive for maintaining the look of the area. Most residents park in their own driveways and there is parking at the shop for those visiting it, for those picking up from the school there is a tarmac area on the corner of Stewartby Way and The Crescent.
- 7.5.22 The grass verges throughout the area are well maintained and contribute to the paternalistic feel of the model village. Extensions to the sides of houses have been successfully limited to single storey extensions though those with the ridge set just below eaves level are less successful in terms of maintaining the massing of the original design and subservience of the side extension (Fig. 54).
- 7.5.23 Modern living has inevitably impacted on the houses and changed their overall character. The houses all have uPVC windows with few exceptions. uPVC is a modern material and cannot accurately capture the form or material of the original metal framed windows. Many of the replacement windows do attempt to follow the glazing bars of the original windows and do not impact too negatively. However there are examples of dark stained wood uPVC windows or glazing bars that do not reflect the original that have a negative effect on the individual house as well as the houses collectively (Fig. 55).
- 7.5.24 The addition of modern elements such as satellite dishes and solar panels can disrupt the uniformity of the built form and detract from architectural detailing. In some instances this is evident within the character area and can have an adverse impact (Fig. 56).
- 7.5.25 A key characteristic of Stewartby is the open plan front gardens which blend into deep grass verges. However there are a few examples where boundary fencing or walls have been installed which affect the uniformity of design and create a more cluttered impression and are therefore regarded as negative.
- 7.5.26 The London Brick Company Headquarters has boarded up windows and remains unused. The area in front has grass growing up between cracks and the overall impression of a derelict and unused building is detrimental to the Conservation Area (Fig. 57).
- 7.5.27 The surviving brick mosaic footpaths survive well around Churchill Close and act as a reminder of the origins of Stewartby Village. Elsewhere they have been replaced with red tarmac which harmonises with the original intention and is neutral. However, there are examples of dark tarmac patches of pavement which impact negatively and detract from the uniformity.
- 7.5.28 The houses were sometimes created with discreet driveways. However many of these have been turned into hard standing driveways which is inevitable given the need to park close to the houses. However, sometimes these are less successful where the driveway is too wide or unsympathetic materials have been used (Fig. 58).
- 7.5.29 Street lighting is often original and positively enhances the area. There are good examples in Churchill Close and several examples in a different style outside the large houses on The Crescent. Elsewhere the modern lighting is discreet and has a neutral effect on the area.

7.5.30 Signage is generally limited, although there is an example of a larger scale sign along the verge on Stewartby Way (Fig. 59).



Figs 54 & 55. Large side extension reaching eaves (left) and brown stained replacement windows (right)



Figs. 56 & 57. Solar panels and satellite dish (left) and boarded up LBC Headquarters (right)



Figs. 58 & 59. New driveway on an inappropriate scale and sign on Stewartby Way

## 7.6 CHARACTER AREA 2: SIR MALCOLM STEWART TRUST HOMES

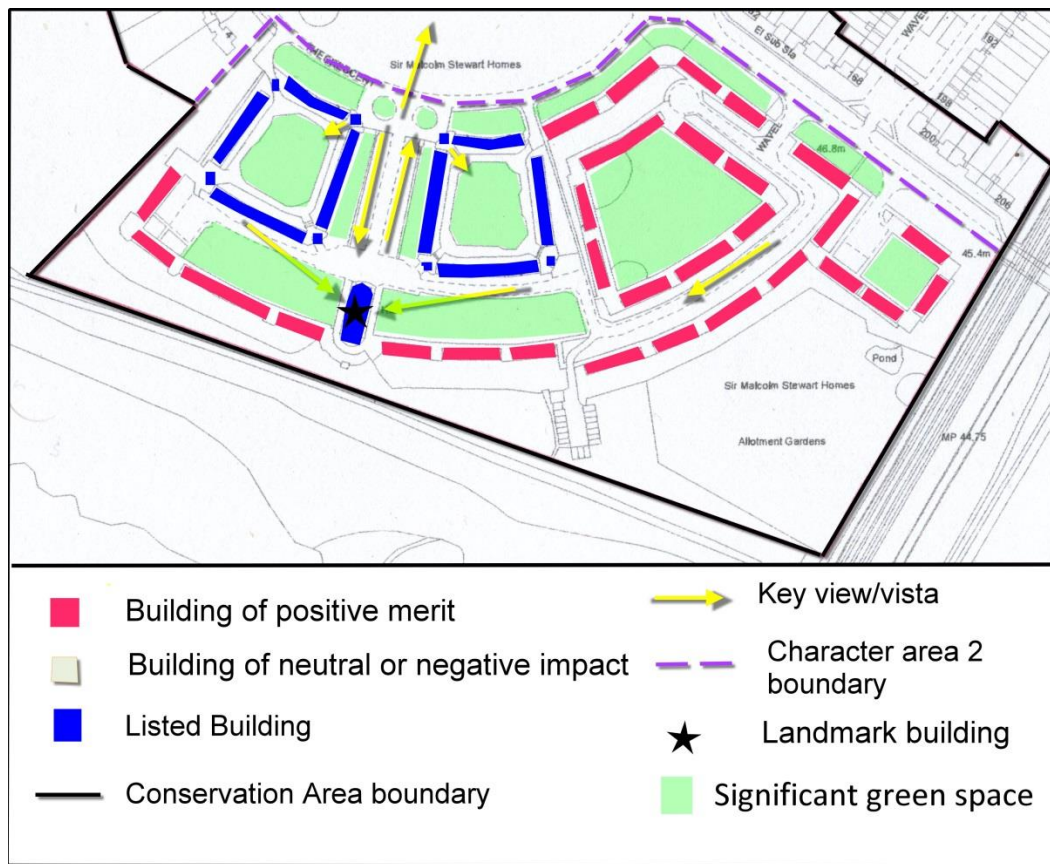


Fig. 60. Character Area 2, appraisal map

- 7.6.1 The character of area 2, which comprises the Sir Malcolm Stewart Trust Homes, is orderly and peaceful with a consistent uniformity of architectural scale, character and detail. There is a feeling of retreat from the rest of the busier parts of the village. Once inside the development there is a sense of enclosure due to the nature of the urban plan based on a series of courtyards. The roads inside the area do not have names, instead the house numbering orders the area and where there would be road signs there are signs indicating the directions to access house numbers.
- 7.6.2 Despite the sense of enclosure there are many attractive views into and out of the area. From the houses on The Crescent there are sweeping views down towards Stewartby Way and the village centre. Within the area there are important views either side of the Sir Malcolm Stewart Common Room, across rose gardens on either side and along the avenue to The Crescent. There are also gaps between the houses which afford views on the south side, out to the allotments and on the west side, the chimneys of the brickworks can be seen. Interesting views are also created along the crescent shaped road as it curves. Finally there are enticing views into and out of the courtyards from the corner openings.

### **Architectural Detailing and Historic Qualities of the Buildings**

- 7.6.3 The first two courtyards on the west side with the avenue between and the Common Room were all designed by the architect Sir Albert Richardson in 1955-56 and are now grade II listed. They were officially opened in 1956. This section of The Sir Malcolm Stewart Trust Homes is centrally planned. The houses themselves are all single storey with clay tiled roofs and Fletton brick elevations. There are two houses overlooking The Crescent and three at the rear overlooking the Common Room (Fig. 61). There are three houses on the side overlooking the avenue and four on the outer side.



Fig. 61. 1956 phase of development, houses overlooking The Crescent

- 7.6.4 At the end of each range of bungalows there is a half glazed door in the centre of the elevation between brick pilasters. To either side are circular windows with glazing bars (Fig. 62). The elevations of the north side of the courtyards, overlooking The Crescent, are symmetrically planned and introduce the essential architectural idiom of the courtyards. In the centre between the two houses is a square opening with an arched timber entrance which leads through to the courtyard (Fig. 63). To either side are the centrally located main entrances with three sash windows on the arch side and two on the outer side. The main entrance doors are solid wood six panelled doors which retain most of their door furniture (Fig. 64). They are surrounded by an elegant architrave painted white with a small door hood and are accessed up a footpath from the street. The windows are timber framed six over six sash windows set flush within the reveal (Fig. 65). There are two chimney stacks projecting from the roof ridge of each house. The original copper guttering remains as does copper flashing along the top of the entrance doors and over the bay windows (Fig. 66). The down pipes are uPVC and are a replacement. On the courtyard side these ranges are similar apart from the introduction of timber framed bay windows at either end of each house with four sash windows in between (Fig. 67).



Fig. 62. 1956 phase of development, end elevation with central door and circular windows



Figs. 63 & 64. 1956 phase of development, square opening (left) and entrance door (right)



Fig. 65. 1956 phase of development, six over six sash window



Figs. 66 & 67. 1956 phase of development showing copper guttering (left) and bay window (right)

- 7.6.5 The three houses along either side of the avenue are arranged with two square openings leading to the inner courtyard to separate the three houses (Figs. 68 & 69). The central house has three sashes to either side and the outer two have three on the inner side and two on the outer side. Each house has two chimney stacks projecting from the roof ridge. The window, door and guttering details remain the same as the north side and the introduction of square profiled bay windows overlooking the courtyard is also the same.



Figs. 68 & 69. 1956 phase of development, bungalows overlooking the avenue, west side (left) and east side (right)

- 7.6.6 The ranges of houses to the south of the courtyards are different to the other three sides as they reverse the elevations. The bay windows appear on the road side of the range and the main entrance is on the courtyard side (Figs. 70 & 71).



Figs. 70 & 71. 1956 phase of development, south range, road side (left) and courtyard side (right)

- 7.6.7 The outer sides (ie the east side of the east courtyard and the west side of the west courtyard) differ in the detail of the fenestration and doors. They don't have any bay windows on the courtyard side, instead they have projecting bays and wider timber framed windows (Fig. 72). The main entrance doors are located on the outside of the courtyard. They are also wooden six panelled doors but have windows to either side and a wider setting (Fig. 73).



Fig. 72 & 73. 1956 phase of development, outer range of bungalows, courtyard side (left) and entrance door (right)

- 7.6.8 The central courtyards have a grass centre with a broad gravel path around the outside and further grass verges up to the houses (Fig. 74). Adjacent to the houses is a small strip of gravel. The central grassed area is planted up with fruit trees. Residents have planted some shrubs outside the houses on the courtyard side which contributes to the more informal character of this side. An avenue of fruit trees adds to the character and appeal of the avenue.



Fig. 74. 1956 phase of development, courtyard

- 7.6.9 The Common Room was designed and built by Sir Albert Richardson in 1955-56 and is part of the original development (Fig. 75). It is now grade II listed. Its function was as a meeting place for the community. It is designed in an elegant neo-classical style and is both mentioned and illustrated in Pevsner, where its Scandinavian influence is remarked upon. It

is constructed of Fletton brick and set on a paved stone plinth. Its key feature is its deep panelled eaves canopy supported on slender Doric columns. The canopy roof is covered in copper sheeting. It is in an extremely good state of preservation.



Fig. 75. Sir Malcolm Stewart Trust Common Room, north elevation

7.6.10 To the front are double half glazed doors with top lights above and an inscription between. There are six columns along the front elevation supporting an entablature. The side elevations have nine columns and tall casement windows with glazing bars. To the rear of the side elevations are two square shaped bay windows similar to those on the houses (Fig.76). The underside of the roof is coffered and painted in white and blue (Fig. 77). The guttering and downpipes are all copper.



Figs. 76 & 77. Common Room, west elevation, bay window and downpipe (left) and coffering (right)

- 7.6.11 To either side are crescent shaped rose gardens which contribute to the setting of the building. There are gravel paths along the sides of the building which open out into a crescent shape gravel area to the rear with a brick and metal fenced boundary overlooking woodland outside the Conservation Area (Fig.78). The elegance and openness of its setting enhances the character of the building. When built the area around it was entirely open, since then new housing has been built and the sense of enclosure increased.



Fig. 78. Common Room, curved gravel area to rear

- 7.6.12 In 1964, after Richardson's death, thirty-six more homes were built around the perimeter along The Crescent and Stewartby Way and curving back to the Common Room and beyond (Fig. 79). They were specifically designed by the Estates Office to blend in with the existing two courtyards. They successfully achieve this but there are a number of differences none the less. The houses are made of Fletton brick with hipped tiled roofs on the same scale as the Richardson houses. They also use copper for the guttering and downpipes and painted timber windows. All these elements combine to harmonise the different phases. However there are numerous differences in the detail which are subtle enough not to upset the whole.



Fig. 79. 1964 phase of development, bungalows overlooking The Crescent

- 7.6.13 These houses are all pairs and dispense with any of the squared openings of the earlier houses to demarcate separate houses. The end elevations also have half glazed doors and pilasters but are flanked by square windows rather than round windows (Fig. 80). The chimneys are simplified from the earlier houses where the two flues are expressed in the brickwork of the chimney stack, here the stacks are smooth and block like (Fig. 81). They retain copper flashing around the base of the chimney which is not the case in the earlier houses. The front elevations take the form of the square profiled bay window and extend the top to create a porch with a side support which replicates the glazing of the bay windows (Fig. 82). These are filled with opaque lined glass. The doors themselves are wooden and flush and retain their door furniture and are in contrast to the panelled Georgian inspired doors of the Richardson designed houses (Fig. 83). To the side of the door is a glazed panel with glazing bars to match the porch support. The whole feature is set on a white tiled plinth. Each house has one timber framed sash window to the side of the porch. The rear elevations of the houses are plain and consist of four sash windows on each house. The sash windows although painted timber differ from the earlier examples as they are eight over eight rather than six over six (Fig. 84).
- 7.6.14 Most of the pairs have wide openings between them with views which works particularly effectively on the south side, as these views are through to the allotments of the Homes beyond. There are communal washing lines between the houses and the allotments (Fig. 85). On The Crescent and Stewartby Way pairs of pairs are joined by high brick walls with a timber arched gate embedded in the wall. They are accessed with a path from the road which splits to access the front doors.



Figs 80 & 81. 1964 phase of development, end elevation with square windows (left), block-like chimneys with copper flashing (right)



Figs. 82 & 83. 1964 phase of development, bay window with attached porch (left) and door and glazing of porch (right)



Figs. 84 & 85. 1964 phase of development, eight over eight sach (left) and south elevation overlooking allotments with washing lines (right)

- 7.6.15 Along the curved road within the development, there are deep verges in front of the houses with a paved path running along directly in front of the houses with occasional links to the road. The western half of this group overlook the gardens to either side of the Common Room and now forms part of its setting.
- 7.6.16 In 1970 a further eighteen houses were built. These were also built as pairs around a courtyard on the pattern of the first phase. The north side of the courtyard is in fact a terrace of four houses. In all other details they follow the pattern of the 1964 houses. The open courtyard is larger than the original courtyards and has a few randomly planted small trees and shrubs (Fig. 86). It is not as appealing or characterful as the early courtyards and lacks the intimacy of those spaces. There are deep verges on the road side and a paved path following the line of the houses.



Fig. 86. 1970 phase of development, courtyard

- 7.6.17 In 1978 a final eight houses were built to the south of the other houses accessed off Stewartby Way (Fig. 87). These follow the 1964 house type and are arranged in pairs around a partially grassed and partially tarmacked courtyard. They lack attention to detail of the earlier houses and are lacking the use of copper guttering and downpipes. They have metal windows.



Fig. 87. 1978 phase of development, courtyard

### Building Materials

- 7.6.18 The limited range of building materials used throughout the Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes unifies the different building phases and creates an harmonious entity. The roofs are all tiled with red clay tiles although those on the 1978 houses appear to be a slightly different type. Throughout Fletton rustic bricks are used on the elevations and also on walling between the houses. The windows are all timber framed and painted white. Doors are all wooden with metal door furniture. Ceramic tiles are used on the entrance step to the 1964 houses and later. One notable material that is used throughout the Homes and which distinguishes them is the use of copper which has turned to Verdigris. It is used extensively on the roof of the Common Room but the incidences of it on the guttering and chimney flashing and over the main entrances and on top of the bay window entrances and the lampposts all help to tie the scheme together with flashes of green. The lamp posts and lanterns on timber posts at the entrance to the courtyards are also all copper (Fig. 88). The square openings in the original houses have brown stained wooden arched entrances.



Fig. 88. Copper lamp post

- 7.6.19 Gravel is used around the houses, the paths around the houses and across the stepped entrances to the courtyards have concrete slabs. The pavements are tarmac and both they and the verges have cobbled or bricked edges.

**General Condition, including Neutral or Negative Factors**

- 7.6.20 The Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes are extremely well maintained by the Trust that built them and continues to look after them. This has served them well and has resulted in very little change to the houses most probably because they have been so well maintained it has not been necessary. Even small details such as the door furniture survive. Had they been in private ownership there would have been far greater pressure for change and renewal.
- 7.6.21 The few negatives that exist are relatively minor. The downpipes in some of the houses have been changed from copper to uPVC and this is to be regretted. The colour of the Verdigris copper is a distinctive feature of the area and to replace it with UPVC lessens its visual impact (Fig. 89).
- 7.6.22 The corner areas into the original courtyard have been redesigned to aid access. They now have ramps and handrails. Given that the occupants are retired it is inevitable that mobility issues will need to be accommodated. In some instances modern, reflective materials have been used and could be better integrated with the use of a more sympathetic material (Fig. 90).
- 7.6.23 When the houses were designed wheelie bins were not catered for. As a result they clutter the corners of the original courtyards and ends of the other ranges of houses and have a negative impact upon the area.
- 7.6.24 Some of the half-glazed doors at the ends of the houses have been replaced (Fig. 91). These are generally reasonably similar but it would be preferable wherever possible to extend the life of the original doors.



Fig 89. 1964 Phase of development, UPVC downpipe (top left)

Figs. 90 & 91. 1956 phase of development, chrome handrails ( top right) and replacement half glazed door (bottom left)

## **8.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is subject to public consultation as per Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 8.2 A 4 week public consultation on the draft document commenced on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016. A total of 310 letters and e-mails were sent out to statutory consultees and interest groups and parties. The parish council were also informed and asked to advertise via posters and their website.
- 8.3 Paper copies of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan were available to view at the Customer Service Centre, Horne Lane and at local libraries in Bedford, Bromham, Kempston, Putnoe and Wootton. Three hard copies were also available within the village at the village hall, club and Common Room. An electronic copy of the document was also available on the Council's website at [www.bedford.gov.uk/conservation](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/conservation).
- 8.4 Comments on the document could either be made on-line via the Council's website, by completing and posting hard copies of the feedback form or via e-mail/letter.
- 8.5 A public meeting was held as part of the process to discuss the appraisal and management strategy on 30<sup>th</sup> June at Stewartby Village Hall.
- 8.6 The public consultation period ended on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016. 9 responses were received in total. Following the closing date a summary and evaluation of the responses received was prepared to inform preparation of the final version of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

## **9.0 MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **Introduction**

- 9.1 The designation and appraisal of any conservation area is not an end in itself. The purpose of this plan is to provide a strategy for the management of Stewartby Conservation Area in a manner that will safeguard and enhance its character and appearance. It follows on from the Conservation Area Character Appraisal, in which the special character and visual qualities of the area are identified, along with any issues that are currently affecting the area.
- 9.2 The condition of Stewartby Conservation Area varies depending on the character area. Character Area 1 is in a mixed condition whereas Character Area 2 is in a very good condition. This guidance draws upon the themes identified in the character appraisal as “General condition including neutral/negative areas”.
- 9.3 The Management Plan will be used as a technical document to provide guidance for owners and businesses in the Conservation Area and to inform and guide the development control process and policy formation.

### **Statutory Controls**

- 9.4 Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions to assist in the preservation and enhancement of the area. Additional planning controls exist within conservation areas including, but not limited to, those set out below:
- Demolition or substantial demolition of a building will usually require the Council’s consent.
  - It will become an offence to carry out works to trees without first notifying the Council consent although certain exemptions apply.
  - The Council is required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area when exercising its powers under the Planning Acts/ Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act.
  - Planning applications require a greater level of publicity.
  - Permitted development rights are more restricted.
  - Specific statutory duties are placed on telecommunication operators.
  - The right to display certain types of illuminated advertisement without consent is excluded.
- 9.5 If an applicant is unsure whether planning permission is required for works the Council offers a charged for pre-application planning advisory service which will highlight the need for permission and any additional requirements.
- 9.6 There is an existing Article 4 Direction in effect in Stewartby in order to preserve the character and interest of the area. This restricts the scope of permitted development rights and a planning application may be required for development that would have otherwise been permitted development.

### **Building Repair, Maintenance and Alteration**

- 9.7 The preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of a conservation area is dependent, to a substantial degree, upon the retention and appropriate maintenance of its historic buildings and upon the nature of any alteration to the built fabric. In 1987 Stewartby Conservation Area was served an Article 4 Direction which in effect withdraws certain permitted development rights.

- *The Council will consider the design guidance written in 1987 for the Article 4 Direction and the options for amending this guidance in light of changes which have taken place since its original publication.*
- *When determining applications for planning permission for alterations to the buildings within the Conservation Area, the Council will ensure that all proposed works and/or new development within, adjoining or likely to affect the setting of the Conservation Area, preserves and/or enhances its character and appearance. The issues to be considered in assessing such applications will include proportion, height, massing, bulk, use of materials, relationship with adjacent buildings, alignment and treatment of setting.*

### **Buildings At Risk**

- 9.8 The derelict state of the London Brick Company Headquarters is a cause for concern and is having a negative impact on the Conservation Area.

- *The Council will support schemes for the re-use of the Headquarters building which preserves the building's architectural and historic significance.*
- *The Council will also monitor the building's condition and consider the effect of this on the amenity of the area when considering the use of its statutory enforcement powers.*

### **Additional Planning Controls**

- 9.9 Some minor works to unlisted buildings in use as single residential dwellings can normally be carried out without planning permission. Development of this kind is referred to as "Permitted Development" and falls into various classes as listed in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. Unfortunately these minor alterations can cumulatively have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Certain power exists, known as an Article 4 Direction, which can withdraw some permitted development rights in the interests of preserving/enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- *The Council will consider the existing Article 4 Direction introduced in 1987 and the options for amending this guidance in light of changes which have taken place since its original publication.*

### **New Development**

- 9.10 Any future development whether on a large or small scale should seek to respect the unique character of the village and the Conservation Area by complying with all relevant planning policy and being based on good design principles.

- *New development should comply with all relevant planning policy and be based on sound design principles.*

- *All forms of new development in the Conservation Area or affecting the setting of the Conservation Area should be contextually appropriate in respect of proportion, height, massing, bulk, use, relationship with adjacent buildings, alignment and treatment of setting;*
- *Carefully chosen materials should be used in order exactly match or convincingly complement those in the immediate setting;*
- *Careful attention should be paid to detail including roof pitch and distribution, proportions and details of openings*

### **Setting and Views**

- 9.11 The setting of the Conservation Area is very important and development proposals which are likely to affect the historic skyline and interrupt important views of the Stewartby chimneys should be carefully considered.
- 9.12 Due to the planned nature of the Conservation Area there are a number of significant views across the area including the open space and focal points, such as the identified landmark buildings. Any proposals which will impact on these views will be carefully considered.
- *The Council will seek to ensure that any future development respects the key views, within, into and out of the Conservation Area. The Council will seek to ensure that these views remain protected and that regard is paid to these views during public realm works or enhancement schemes.*

### **Open Plan Character**

- 9.13 A key characteristic of Stewartby throughout the Conservation Area is the open plan character of the front gardens and verges.
- *The Council will seek to ensure that the open plan character of Stewartby is respected and preserved as far as possible through its statutory planning powers.*
  - *The Council will seek the preservation of open frontages in determining any proposals for development in the Conservation Area.*

### **Enhancement of Public Realm**

- 9.14 The historic character of the streetscape is relatively well-preserved in Stewartby, which contributes positively to its character. Street lighting is a combination of original lighting or low key modern lighting.
- *The Council will ensure that new street furniture and surfacing is sympathetic to the character of the Conservation Area while maintaining its statutory highway obligations.*

### **Open Space/Trees**

- 9.15 Stewartby Conservation Area is characterised by its greenery and open spaces. The key open spaces that have been identified in the appraisal are the open space between Stewartby Way and The Crescent and Churchill Close. There are deep grass verges throughout the Conservation Area which contribute to its character. In addition there are more private open spaces in and between the Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes.

- *The Council will encourage stakeholders and the local community to maintain the open spaces*
- *In partnership with other stakeholders, the Council will ensure that the tree population of the Conservation Area is protected in accordance with government guidelines*

#### **Resources, Monitoring and Review**

- 9.16 Where funding and resources allow, the Conservation Area will be reviewed on a five yearly basis and the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be updated where necessary.

#### **Conclusion**

- 9.17 For the management of the Conservation Area to be successful, the local planning authority and other stakeholders, including the inhabitants and those that work in the area must remain collectively committed to the preservation of Stewartby Conservation Area.

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Bedfordshire, Ordnance Survey map,

Letter to householders from North Bedfordshire Borough Council regarding the Article 4 Direction, 10 September 1987

### Websites

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[www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk) for Victoria County History of Wootton Pillinge

<http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/CommunityAndLiving/ArchivesAndRecordOffice/CommunityArchives/Stewartby/StewartbyIndexOfPages.aspx>

[www.stewartbyparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.stewartbyparishcouncil.org.uk)

<http://clutch.open.ac.uk/schools/marston-brickies00/website/brickworks/parentbrick.html>

## APPENDIX 1

### Historic Environment Records relevant to Stewartby

LOCATION/ADDRESS	HER REFERENCE
Two Kilns and four chimneys at Stewartby Brickworks	13503
Coronation Brickworks & Clay pit	8474
<i>(now destroyed, to north of Stewartby, classified as a monument)</i>	
Bedford-Bletchley Railway	11594 Monument
Moat, Wootton Pilinge <i>(now under clay pit lake)</i>	3431 Monument
Brickworks, London Brick Co.	8473 Monument
Community centre, The Crescent	8468
Village Hall, Stewartby Way	8467
Original Brickworks of B J Forder	8472 Monument
Brickworks, Wootton Pilinge Brick Co.	8471
Moat, Wootton Broadmead	8294
Deserted Medieval Village, Wootton Pilinge	8292 Monument
Club House, Broadmead Road	8469
Iron age features, Stewartby Recreation Ground, Park Crescent	MBB21738, Monument
Post Office Stores, Stewartby way	15185
Cropmarks, Wootton Broadmead	9603 Monument
Clay Pit	2989
Brickfield and Kilns	7138
Brickfield and Kiln	7137
Main Building LBC Stewartby Works	8466
Stewartby School	1130
Wootton Broadmead Medieval Settlement	17039 Monument
Clay Pit	6683
Mortar	8293

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Listed Buildings within Stewartby Conservation Area**

Sir Malcolm Stewart Homes, nos 1-24, seven lamp standards and railings

Sir Malcolm Stewart Trust Common Room