NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

North Hertfordshire District Council

Weston

Conservation Area Character Statement

Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions UK Limited – February 2020

Report for

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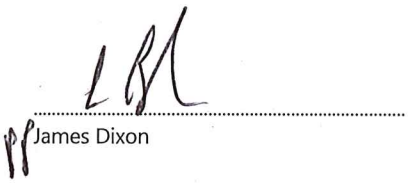

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Contents

1. Background 4

1.1 Introduction 4

1.2 Setting of Conservation Area 4

1.3 Historical Development 4

2. Character and Special Interest 5

2.1 Character 5

2.2 Statement of Special Interest 6

3. Key Assets and Views 7

3.1 Designated Heritage Assets 7

Listed Buildings 7

3.2 Non-designated Heritage Assets 8

Buildings of Local Interest 8

Buildings or Features that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area 8

3.3 Key Views 9

4. Opportunities for Improvement 10

5. Bibliography 11

Appendix A Conservation Area Map

Appendix B Photographs

1. Background

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Weston Conservation Area was designated by North Hertfordshire District Council in 1969 and its boundary has not been amended since. The boundary includes most of the developed area of Weston centred around Damask Green Lane, Fore Street and Maiden Street.

1.1.2 This report has been produced for the purpose of appraising the character of Weston Conservation Area. It includes a character assessment highlighting key features, a statement of special interest, a list of designated heritage assets, undesignated heritage assets and key views within the Conservation Area, and opportunities for improvement. It is accompanied by an annotated map of the Conservation Area which can be found in Appendix A. This report does not consider potential boundary changes in the Conservation Area.

1.2 Setting of Conservation Area

1.2.1 The setting of Weston Conservation Area is appreciably rural, and it borders agricultural land for almost its whole length, with the exception of parkland to the south. Much of the settlement of Weston is included within the Conservation Area The exception being the more modern residential development around Mill Lane, Hitchin Road, Friars Road and parts of Maiden Street.

1.3 Historical Development

1.3.1 The parish of Weston is recorded in the Domesday Book as a large settlement of 75 households and a large amount of associated land and woodland.

1.3.2 Weston appears to have always been a fairly dispersed settlement, with the originally cruciform Church of the Holy Trinity built to the south-east of the current centre of the village and other older buildings spaced along Damask Green Road, Maiden Street and Fore Street. Later 20th century in-fill buildings are fairly discrete, generally located down secondary streets, though modern estates established off both sides of Damask Green Road are considered prominent and visible.

2. Character and Special Interest

2.1 Character

2.1.1 Weston Conservation Area is largely concentrated along the linear Damask Green Road and Fore Street, which contain the majority of buildings of interest, though there is a significant branch along Maiden Street leading off this towards Church Street and the Church of the Holy Trinity. It contains relatively little green space, with the exception of the village green and gardens, though there is some pasture adjacent to the church. As such, the Conservation Area has the feel of being tightly bound to the roads through it. These are in general long which creates an elongated Conservation Area.

2.1.2 Across the Conservation Area there is a wide variety of architectural types and building periods represented. There are a number of timber framed buildings in Weston and these are generally roughcast or with later brick fronts. Pencroft (NHLE 1175679) on Maiden Street is roughcast and painted with a steep pitched thatched roof. It has medium sized casement windows and sits above Maiden Street on a steep grass verge. Also, on Maiden Street is Weston Mead (NHLE 1102494), this a 17th century house with exposed timber-frame (the only one in Weston), small casement windows and a steeply-pitched roof in red ceramic tile (Fig 2.1). The older part of the building sits at right angles to the road, although later additions rise from the rear of a thin grass verge along the road. There are a series of timber buildings along Fore Street, notable examples being Rosemary Cottage (NHLE 1175533) a 17th century house with panelled pargetting and a hipped thatched roof (Fig 2.2), Live and Let Live (NHLE 1102519), a 16th century former public house also with panelled pargetting, and Simon's Close (NHLE 1308284), a 17th century house with timber frame on a stuccoed plinth with casement windows and a steeply-pitched roof in red ceramic tile with a very large chimney.

2.1.3 The Church of the Holy Trinity (NHLE 1347414) is set apart from much of the rest of the village., connected to the village by a small unnamed road recorded on 19th century historic mapping. The church has fabric dating to the 12th century with many later additions and refurbishment (Fig 2.3, 2.4). It is set within a sub-circular churchyard and is generally well hidden by tree planting, though can be seen across the fields from the public footpath (see KV5).

2.1.4 Notable historic brick buildings in the Conservation Area include Town Farmhouse (NHLE 1102517) which has an 18th and 19th century exterior, possibly with an older interior. It has large casement windows with flat brick headers and a red tiled hipped roof with chimney stacks. There are a large number of other brick buildings in Weston and these tend to be either in red brick or painted, generally white. Roofs are generally in red ceramic tile, through there are some slate roofs, particularly along Damask Green Road. There are within the Conservation Area a number of small brick terraces typical of housing for agricultural labourers through the 19th century. Examples include 1-4 Fore Street, 1-3 Damask Green Road, and 1-4 Post Office Row (Fig 2.5), and the almshouses at Roe's Cottages.

2.1.5 There are two large farms within the Conservation Area. Oakley's Farm at the east end of Maiden Street includes Oakleys Farmhouse (NHLE 1175663), a timber framed building of the 17th century with a 19th century brick front (Fig 2.6). It has large casement windows and a gable ended roof in red ceramic tile. Also, within the complex is the Barn and Stable adjoining at Oakleys Farmhouse (NHLE 1347440), weatherboarded, timber-framed barns from the 17th and 19th century.

2.1.6 The other farm complex is the non-designated Darnall's Hall Farm, at the northern end of Fore Street. It appears to include a number of attractive conversions of long brick barns, probably of the 19th century, and a 19th century red brick, double-gable fronted farmhouse, and is therefore considered a building of local importance. Darnall's Hall itself, also non-designated, is situated to

the south of the 19th century farmhouse complex, adjacent to the remains of a medieval moat. Supposedly originally a Tudor house, shown with an H-plan on the 1884 OS map, Darnall's Hall subsequently burnt down and was rebuilt on the same site during the late 19th century. This is also considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

2.1.7 There are additional modern buildings within Weston, though within the Conservation Area these are dispersed and in-keeping with the wider character. Of note is Butts End on Fore Street, a compact 1960s or 1970s house of 1 ½ storeys under a tall, steeply-pitched tiled roof with box dormer windows and an external, tall trapezoidal chimney. Clearly of its time, this cottage manages something of the character of a small thatched cottage (Fig 2.7). Other modern buildings in Weston are not quite as successful, though none are clearly out of character when within the setting of designated buildings.

2.1.8 Damask Green Road and Fore Street join to give one linear routeway from one end of the Conservation Area to the other. These roads are pavemented for much of their length, though not continuously. Running north from the village green, the buildings are generally set back from the road behind hedges and front gardens, though there are a few examples of buildings rising directly from the road or behind thin grass verges. North of the junction with Hatch Lane, the footpath ends and the road becomes bounded by hedges on the west and a grass verge on the east, which runs most of the remainder of its length. Towards the northern end of Fore Street there is a large amount of green space around Darnall's Hall farm, including the remains of a medieval moat originally associated with the Tudor Darnall's Hall. Although comprising screened, private land, this area includes wide grass verges which contribute to the rural setting of the northern part of the Conservation Area.

2.1.9 The open, dispersed character of the outer areas contrasts with the more focussed central spaces of the village. Several buildings are concentrated around the important green spaces of Weston. These include the remains of a historic village green and pond located between Fore Street and Maiden Street and a small triangle of land bounded by Hitchin Road, Damask Green Road and Post Office Row in the centre of the village. and more accessible green space, including one small green triangle and a larger 'village green' and pond between Fore Street and Maiden Lane. Contrasting these is Maiden Lane itself, which has the feel of a sunken road, as the land rises on either side of it, partly behind modern stone revetments. While not quite of a wholly different character to the rest of the Conservation Area, this slight difference does amplify the sense of leaving the centre of the village towards this area of more dispersed buildings and the church (Fig 2.8).

2.1.10 The Conservation Area is generally free from intrusive signage, though there are some unattractive street signs at the corner of Damask Green Road and Hitchin Road. There is a useful historical information board on the village green, next to the pond.

2.2 Statement of Special Interest

2.2.1 Weston Conservation Area preserves the character of an area of mixed architectural styles containing a number of interesting timber-framed buildings, mainly along Damask Green Road, Fore Street and Maiden Street. Its buildings are generally post-medieval in date, but together show the development of the settlement over the last 500 years, including a good 1970s cottage on Fore Street. The sunken Maiden Street contrasts the flat Damask Green Road and Fore Street, lending some drama to the walk to Oakley's Farm and the Church of the Holy Trinity, which can also be reached via a footpath (a former road) extending from the end of School Lane.

3. Key Assets and Views

3.1 Designated Heritage Assets

Listed Buildings

List Entry	Name	Grade	NGR
1102493	WESTON MANOR, AND MANOR FLAT	II	TL 25927 30096
1102515	FRAYS	II	TL 25886 30006
1102516	THE COTTAGE	II	TL 25832 29790
1102517	TOWN FARMHOUSE	II	TL 25794 30017
1102519	LIVE AND LET LIVE	II	TL 25943 30301
1102520	APPLEGARTH	II	TL 25916 30172
1102521	WHEELERS PLAT	II	TL 25884 30239
1347415	THATCHED OUTBUILDINGS AT FRAYS, 35 METRES TO SOUTH SOUTH WEST OF HOUSE	II	TL 25865 29974
1347417	CULVERIN COTTAGE	II	TL 25954 30341
1347418	SWAYNES COTTAGE	II	TL 25951 30400
1347419	THE COTTAGE	II	TL 25867 30213
1175467	WOODVINE COTTAGE	II	TL 25885 30019
1175477	BARN AT FRAYS 20 METRES WEST SOUTH WEST OF HOUSE	II	TL 25869 29994
1175489	JUNIPER COTTAGE	II	TL 25831 29810
1175494	ROWANBUTT COTTAGE	II	TL 25805 29862
1175523	IVY LODGE	II	TL 25957 30310
1175533	ROSEMARY COTTAGE	II	TL 25925 30260
1175535	OLD FARMHOUSE	II	TL 25946 30435
1175546	CHERRY TREES	II	TL 25843 30238
1175657	ON THE GREEN	II	TL 25934 30162
1308284	SIMONS CLOSE	II	TL 25918 30358
1308288	ELM PADDOCKS	II	TL 25834 30135
1308299	RED LION PUBLIC HOUSE	II	TL 25840 30043
1102487	ROADSIDE WELL AND ENCLOSURES AT THE COTTAGE	II	TL 26157 30809
1102486	GREEN END COTTAGE	II	TL 26233 30859

List Entry	Name	Grade	NGR
1102494	WESTON MEAD	II	TL 26544 30201
1102514	CHURCH GATE AND COTTAGE BY THE CHURCH	II	TL 26658 29959
1102492	HORSESHOE FARMHOUSE	II	TL 26289 30292
1175663	OAKLEYS FARMHOUSE	II	TL 26649 30198
1175669	FAR END	II	TL 26693 30138
1347441	OLD COTTAGE	II	TL 26396 30252
1295323	GLEBE COTTAGE	II	TL 26672 29937
1347440	BARN AND STABLE ADJOINING AT OAKLEYS FARMHOUSE	II	TL 26624 30181
1347414	CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY	I	TL 26588 29952
1175679	PENCROFT	II	TL 26462 30224

3.2 Non-designated Heritage Assets

Buildings of Local Interest

3.2.1 Recommendations for buildings to be included on North Hertfordshire's Register of Buildings of Local Interest will be included in the Summary Report at the conclusion of the project.

Buildings or Features that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area

3.2.2 The following non-designated buildings are considered to make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of Weston Conservation Area.

- The Cricketers Public House, Damask Green Road
- The Old Bakery, Damask Green Road
- Baptist Chapel, Damask Green Road
- The part of Weston Barns facing onto Hitchin Road
- 1-4 Post Office Row
- Prince of Wales Cottage, Post Office Row
- 1-4 Fore Street
- Shaw Cottage, Maiden Street
- 1-2 Maiden Cottages, Maiden Street
- 102 Roe's Cottages
- The Vicarage, Church Lane

- Two barns at Darnall's Hall Farm
- Darnall's Hall

3.3 Key Views

3.3.1 There are a number of key views within Weston Conservation Area:

- KV1: From the south of the Conservation Area on Damask Green Road looking north towards the village green.
- KV2: From the west of the Conservation Area on Hitchin Road looking south-east towards Damask Green Road.
- KV3: From adjacent to the village green looking north along Fore Street.
- KV4: From Fore Street, adjacent to Swaynes Cottage, looking south towards the village green.
- KV5: From the 'dog-leg' in footpath Weston 019 looking south-east towards the Church of the Holy Trinity.
- KV6: From Maiden Street looking south-west towards the village green and Post Office Row.

4. Opportunities for Improvement

4.1.1 Opportunities for improvement within Weston Conservation Area have been identified as follows:

- New developments should incorporate off street areas for bin collection, as this is currently done from narrow pavements.
- The information board on the village green is interesting and useful, but could be made more accessible, either where it is now or in a new location.

5. Bibliography

Bettley, J., Pevsner, N. and Cherry, B. 2019. Hertfordshire. London: Yale University Press

Online mapping from National Museum of Scotland https://maps.nls.uk/

Open Domesday https://opendomesday.org/place/TL2530/weston/

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Appendix A
Conservation Area Map

525600 525800 526000 526200 526400 526600 526800 527000

230800 230600 230400 230200 230000 229800 229600

N

1102486
1102487
1175535
1347418
KV4
1308284
1347417
1175523
1102519
1175533
1102521
1175546
1347419
1102520
1175657
KV3
KV6
1308288
KV2
1102493
1308299
1175467
1102517
1102515
1175477
1347415
1175494
KV1
1175489
1102516
1102492
1347441
1175679
1102494
1175663
1347440
1175669
KV5
1347414
1102514
1295323

FORE STREET
MAIDEN STREET
DAMASK GREEN ROAD

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Key

- Conservation area

Listed Buildings

- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II
- Scheduled ancient monument
- Historic parks and gardens
- Heritage at risk
- Significant key view
- Building or feature that contributes to the character of the Conservation area
- Significant areas of trees
- Significant tree
- Significant green space
- Significant blue space

Note:
The Historic England GIS data contained in this material was obtained on 26/06/2019. The most publicly available up to date Historic England GIS Data can be obtained from http://www.historicengland.org.uk

0 50 100 150 200 250 300 m

Scale at A3: 1:5,000

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Client

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

North Hertfordshire District Council
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Weston

February 2020

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Appendix B
Photographs

B.1 Character Photographs

Fig 2.1 Weston Mead, Maiden Street. (NHLE 1102494).

Fig 2.2 Rosemary Cottage, Fore Street (NHLE 1175533).

Fig 2.3 Church of the Holy Trinity (NHLE 1347414).

Fig 2.4 Churchyard of the Church of the Holy Trinity with fields beyond.

Fig 2.5 Terrace at 1-4 Post Office Row.

Fig 2.6 Oakleys Farmhouse (NHLE1175663) and barn (NHLE 1347440), Maiden Street.

Fig 2.7 1970s building on Fore Street

Fig 2.8 The sunken part of Maiden Street with stone revetting to the left

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B.2 Key Views

KV1: From the south of the Conservation Area on Damask Green Road looking north towards the village green, with the 17th century Rowanbutt Cottage visible on the left.

KV2: From the west of the Conservation Area on Hitchin Road looking south-east towards Damask Green Road, an historic entry point into the centre of the settlement.

KV3: From adjacent to the village green looking north along Fore Street, the Conservation Area's longest street.

KV4: From Fore Street, adjacent to Swaynes Cottage, looking south towards the village green.

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KV5: From the 'dog-leg' in footpath Weston 019 looking south-east towards the Church of the Holy Trinity.

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KV6: From Maiden Street looking south-west towards the village green and Post Office Row.