



NEWNHAM

CONSERVATION AREA

24 APRIL 2008

[Part 1 of 3]

Newnham Conservation Area was designated on 8th June 1970 and has not been reviewed since. This document assesses the setting, character and appearance of the conservation area. Areas where improvement opportunities exist are also identified. This document may be read in conjunction with the Register of Buildings of Local Interest and the review background paper.

SETTING

Newnham is located to the east of the A1 between Radwell and Ashwell and is surrounded by arable farmland bearing the hallmarks of "... *parliamentary enclosure: large, rectangular fields, hedges of thorn without timber or hedgebanks of any size and straight roads from the village nucleus...*" (p.184, The Hertfordshire Landscape)

A Tithe Map dated 1842 does not show Ashwell Road, with access to Ashwell either from a road to the south or from a road north of Newnham via Caldecote. However, by 1877 (1st Edition Ordnance Survey) Ashwell Road had been formed. The earlier route via Caldecote would have meant that Newnham Manor and the Parish Church of St. Vincent would have been at the primary entrance into the village, whereas, Caldecote Road is now very much a side road and a secondary access into the village. The fact that Ashwell Road is now the main route between Newnham and Ashwell means that the present-day Newnham Hall is more prominent than Newnham Manor when passing through the village towards the A1.

Whilst there is a moated site to the north west of Newnham Manor this is not a scheduled monument although a scheduled monument does exist to the south of the village as indicated on the conservation area map where there is evidence of a ring ditch and enclosure.



LOOKING EAST FROM CALDECOTE ROAD



LOOKING NORTH-WEST FROM ASHWELL ROAD

CHARACTER



PARISH CHURCH OF ST. VINCENT

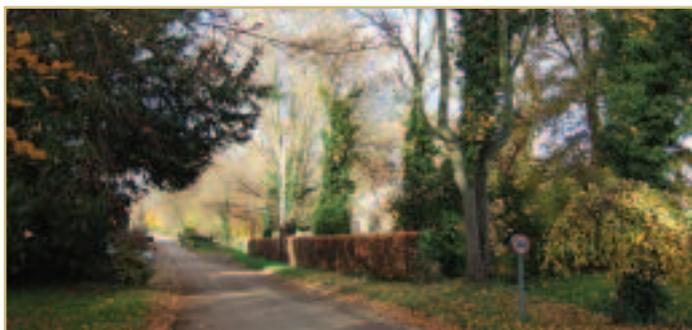
It is interesting to note that in 1877, the village was served by St. Vincent's Church, a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (now the site of the village hall), a post office (on the site of the side garden to no.1 Caldecote Road) and a Church of England School (built in 1860, closed in 1945 and now called 'School House'). Today, the village has no post office or school, although the Parish Church of St Vincent (grade II* listed) and the village hall still provide a focus for aspects of community life.

Newnham is on the main route between its larger neighbour, Ashwell and the main road to London (A1). Consequently most of the traffic passing through the village is heading to other destinations. The perception of the village is one based on a strong farming tradition with Newnham Manor and Newnham Hall at opposite ends of the village being the most significant secular buildings. The agricultural-based character of the village is firmly established when approaching Newnham along Ashwell Road with a group of large farming buildings dominating the view. A further group of modern farm buildings

exist some distance to the south-east of the village along Newnham Road, whilst a grade II listed barn next to Newnham manor and two agricultural buildings fronting Ashwell Road, provide a reference to a much earlier farming tradition.

A drawing by Betty Ratcliffe in Merlin Waterson's book, *'The Servants' Hall – A domestic history of Erddig'* indicates a bird's eye view of the original Newnham Manor occupying this moated-site in 1754. A book by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England entitled 'Hertfordshire Houses' states that the '*... moated manor house was rebuilt by William Dyer after he succeeded to the estate in 1680 and before he became sheriff in 1694, this was pulled down early in the 19th century.*'

In terms of historical associations, Newnham is noted in 1883 as being the birthplace of Reginald Hine, whom Sir William Beech Thomas calls the 'prince of Hertfordshire historians'. The fact that there are no pubs in Newnham was originally due to the high principles of the then squire, Reginald Hine's father (p.62, Victoria Glendinning's Hertfordshire).



LOOKING NORTH ALONG CALDECOTE ROAD FROM IN FRONT OF CHERRY HOLT

Newnham Road does not figure to any great extent in the layout of the village whilst there is a significant contrast between the characters of Ashwell Road and Caldecote Road. The former

being relatively heavily trafficked with a more built environment and more significant curved road alignment limiting views, whilst the latter is a much quieter road leading to the hamlet of Caldecote and has the character of a verdant country lane with loose-knit development. Due to its central location at the junction between Ashwell Road, Newnham Road, and Caldecote Road, the village green has become the main visual focus in the village. One of the important and defining characteristics of Newnham is the lack of development in depth.



ASHWELL ROAD WITH LODGE COTTAGE IN THE FOREGROUND

APPEARANCE

When approaching Newnham from Ashwell, the initial view is of a triple gabled, large, modern agricultural building situated at the entrance into the village and which detracts from the setting of Newnham Hall.

Just before reaching the Hall there is a red brick building with its gable end facing towards the road and has a neutral contribution in the streetscene. The front part of the triple gabled building together with the red brick building were previously within Newnham Conservation Area. With the boundary now drawn more tightly and excluding both buildings, any subsequent development of this site should be assessed against whether it affects the setting of the revised conservation area. Having mentioned the more recent buildings, there are two frontage, earlier outbuildings on the north side of Ashwell Road that contribute positively to the streetscene. The red brick building is grade II listed whilst the gault brick building is regarded as a Building of Local Interest and should also be retained.



RED BRICK BUILDING SOUTH OF NEWNHAM HALL



GAULT BRICK BUILDING NORTH OF NEWNHAM HALL

According to the listing, Newnham Hall (formerly Church Farm) is an early 19th century house with 16th century origins. It is constructed of red brick with white brick additions and is set back from the road behind two large grassed areas and a gravel forecourt. The 'open' frontage belies the fact that a significantly greater number of buildings occupied the site of Newnham Hall in 1877 and have since been demolished. The present-day, well-maintained frontage setting and the location of the red brick outbuilding on the road frontage, do contribute positively to the setting of Newnham Hall.



NEWNHAM HALL

Before reaching Lodge Cottage on the same side of the road, there is a gap through which there is a view across fields towards St Vincent's Church in its well-treed setting and is a view worth maintaining. Further south and still on the same side of the road, there are three, grade II thatched listed properties in a row (Pilgrims Cottage, Old Thatch and Thatch End). The former is described as a 17th century house, Old Thatch is described as mid to late 17th century whilst Thatch End is described as probably early 16th century and a '*remarkable small late medieval house*'. The existence of these three houses suggests that there was an established route between Newnham Hall and the church well before Ashwell Road was formed (as mentioned previously, Newnham Hall was formerly known as Church Farm).

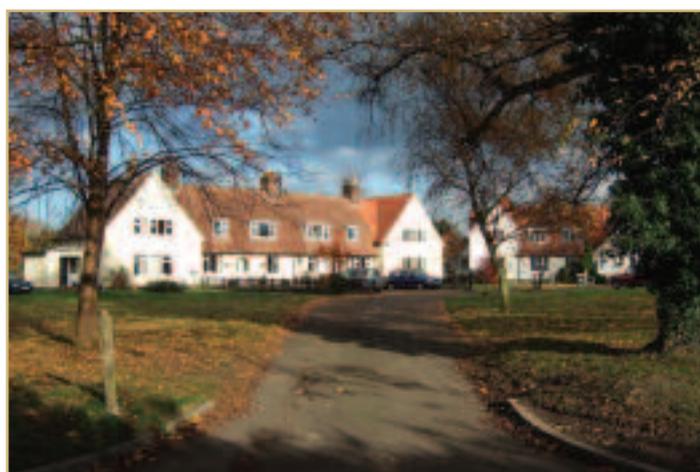
Just before reaching The Green and still on the north side of the road, the fence at no.8 The Green has recently been replaced, improving the appearance of the conservation area. Having said that, planting a native hedgerow on the roadside boundary would have improved the appearance of the area still further.

Nos.1-8 (inclusive) The Green forms two terraces of four dwellings enclosing part of this important open space and compliment nos.1-3 (inclusive) Rose Cottages, built in the 18th

century and situated on the south side of Ashwell Road. In front of nos.1-8 The Green stands a grade II listed well-head pump. To the west of no.1 Rose Cottages, Corner Cottage and Mill House (no.1 Ashwell Road) provide an important streetscene function in addressing this corner position and were built in 1925 (see third photo below).



LOOKING EAST TOWARDS THE GREEN



LOOKING NORTH-EAST TOWARDS THE GREEN



CORNER COTTAGE WITH ROSE COTTAGES BEHIND

To the west of no.1 The Green is an area of land that is neutral. In conservation terms, if the site remains 'open' the church in the distance will remain in view, whereas, if appropriately developed, a scheme would balance the two existing terraces on the north side of The Green. The properties looking onto The Green are distinctive and provide sufficient design cues for what may be acceptable, for instance, most of the buildings are 1 1/2

storey, rendered with plain tiled roofs, dormer windows and forward facing gables.



LOOKING NORTH-WEST FROM THE GREEN

On the other side of the road stands the School House which is a Building of Local Interest. A small bell and belfry are still in evidence from the road. The long, narrow curtilage to the School House runs parallel to the road and at its most northern point, a vehicular gate opening allows views out towards open country side and a field known locally as 'Castle Gate'. To the north, is Newnham Manor, an 18th century grade II listed house built in red brick with vitrified headers and yellow/grey brick addition to the right and tiled, hipped roof. The Manor together with the outbuildings and barn to the north, are situated parallel to and relatively close to the edge of Caldecote Road.



NEWNHAM MANOR

The barn opposite the church is grade II listed, has a noteworthy frontage and makes an important contribution to the streetscene. However, because of the overall condition of the building it has been identified by the Local Planning Authority as a Building at Risk. It is, therefore, important to secure the repair and appropriate long-term use for this building. To the north of the barn and on entering the site around the moat, the general appearance is that the area is rather unkempt. The water level in the moat was very low at the time of this review, exposing the poor condition of the moat retaining wall. Furthermore, the footbridges in the vicinity were poorly maintained and the general impression is that to enhance the character and appearance of the area will require substantial improvement.

In contrast to the condition of the moated-site, nos.1 and 2 Moat Cottages together with the former Vicarage (built in 1837) are well kept and contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area. The origins of nos.1 and 2 Moat Cottages are unclear, however, the 1842 Tithe Map shows a buildings on the same site and position. Furthermore, whilst The Victoria History of the Counties of England states that '*... near the site of the manor, but without the moat, there is an old building, said to have been once the malting house of the estate, now converted into 4 cottages*'. Whether or not nos.1 and 2 are a former Malting House has not been ascertained.

The contribution that the Manor Farm complex makes to the streetscene of Caldecote Road is juxtaposed with the verdant setting on the opposite side of the road marked by hedgerows, mature trees and an open field between the parish church and 'Cherry Holt'. This field is an essential part of the village's character and appearance and should remain open.

IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

These sites are noted as being areas where improvement opportunities exist.



LISTED BARN (see 1 below)



GLASSHOUSE (see 2 below)



FOOTBRIDGES AND RETAINING WALLS (see 3 below)



ANGLIAN WATER SUB-STATION (see 4 below)



TRIPLE GABLE BUILDING (see 6 below)



RED BRICK BUILDING ADJACENT TO NEWNHAM HALL'S NORTHERN BOUNDARY (see 6 below)

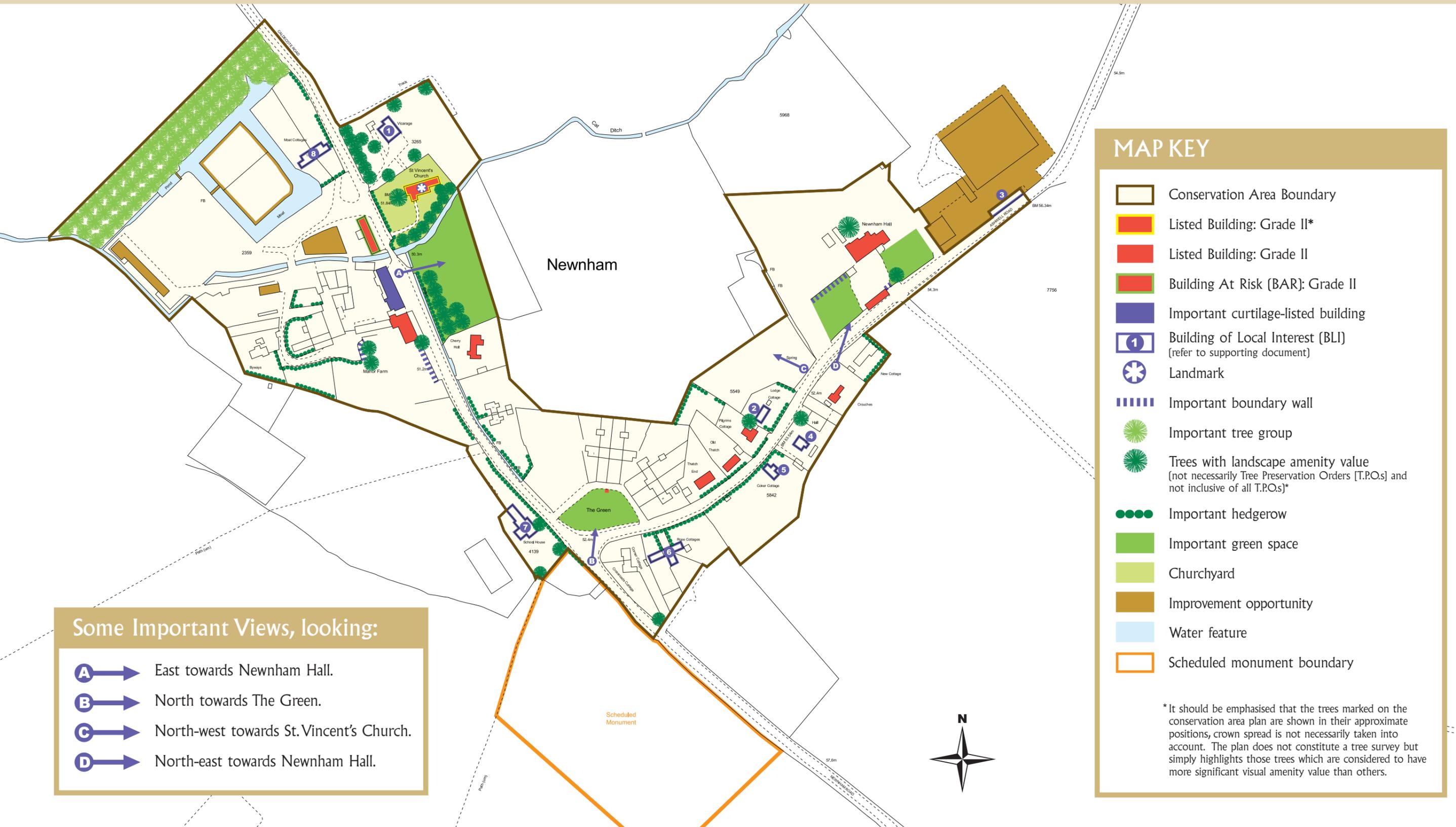
1. Listed barn to the north of Newnham Manor
2. Large glasshouse to the south of the moated site
3. Footbridges and retaining walls relating to the moated site
4. Anglian Water sub-station to the north of Newnham Manor
5. Long, timber clad building parallel to west boundary of conservation area
6. Agricultural buildings on the north side of Ashwell Road, located at the entrance to the village but outside the conservation area.
The buildings establish the agricultural character of the village and there is scope to improve the setting of the conservation area.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Glendinning, V (1989) *'Victoria Glendinning's Hertfordshire with photographs by Hugo Glendinning'*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London
- Munby, Lionel M. (1977) *'The Making of the English Landscape – The Hertfordshire Landscape'*, Hodder and Stoughton, London
- Page, W (1971 reprint) *'The Victoria History of the Counties of England - A History of Hertfordshire Volume II'*
- Waterson, Merlin (1980) *'The Servant's Hall – A domestic history of Erdigg'*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London and Henley

NEWNHAM

CONSERVATION AREA - ADOPTED 24 APRIL 2008



PLANNING GUIDANCE - APPROVED FOR DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PURPOSES

STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION AND PROCESS

15 Jan 2007	Baldock & District Committee
16 Jan 2007	Cabinet Meeting
23 Jan 2007	Meeting with Newnham & Caldecote Parish Council
27 Jan 2007	Public exhibition at Newnham Village Hall
24 Feb 2007	Public exhibition at Newnham Village Hall
9 Mar 2007	End of public consultation
15 Mar 2007	Meeting with Chairman & Vice-Chairman of Baldock & District Committee
27 Mar 2007	Cabinet Meeting
8 May 2007	Meeting with Newnham & Caldecote Parish Council
30 June 2007	Newnham & Caldecote Parish Council support changes
8 Nov 2007	Chairman & Vice-Chairman of Baldock & District Committee support changes
26 Mar 2008	E-mail from Portfolio Holder
24 Apr 2008	Approved by the Head of Planning & Building Control following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Transport

In addition, there was local publicity, entry on the District Council's website and letters were sent to various groups, details of which are available from the address below.

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