

Knapton Village Design Statement



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Introduction

In keeping with a number of other villages in the York area the residents of Knapton felt it was important that they devise and produce a Village Design Statement (VDS) setting out their views about the character of the village and identifying those aspects of the settlement which are of particular value. The VDS was approved by York City Council as draft Supplementary Planning Guidance to the draft Local Plan on 24 May 2006. It will therefore be essential to refer to the Statement when any future development within or in the vicinity of the village is under consideration. The VDS also includes some aspirational elements that are outside current planning regulations. The Statement, written in 2006, reflects both local feeling about Knapton and current City of York Council planning policy as laid out in the draft Local Plan. As the village and policy evolve, it is likely that the Statement should be subject to periodic review to reflect changing conditions and views about the character of the settlement.

The statement does not attempt to include within its scope the whole of the parish (see map on back cover). Instead, it covers the village itself and the open land around it. Outlying areas of the parish, such as the Trenchard Road estate and isolated farmsteads, now relate more closely to other communities and landscapes. The focus on the village and its rural setting reflects local feeling that they have a distinct and separate character.

The Village Design Statement has been researched and written by local people. An initial meeting, open to all residents of the parish, gave the opportunity to participate throughout its production. Following the decision to limit the project to the village rather than the parish, a questionnaire, circulated to 96 households, sought views on what should be included in the Statement. We received a response rate of over 50 per cent. A loyal core group of villagers met regularly to plan and implement the project and early ideas were presented and developed in the form of an exhibition in the local public house, a fund raising lunch and a very well supported village walk-about.

This Village Design Statement is the product of the efforts of local people, and we commend it for your interest and enjoyment.



Approaching Knapton in winter



View over fields in winter



Members of the Knapton VDS steering group



What is a Village Design Statement?

A Village Design Statement (VDS) is a publication designed to give local people the opportunity to influence the future of their area.

- ◆ It is a representation of the views of the people living in the village.
- ◆ It provides guidance to local people, developers, new occupants and planners for good quality design, appropriate to its location.
- ◆ It offers guidance to house owners carrying out house extensions and alterations such as window replacements, re-roofing and boundary treatments.
- ◆ It will be used by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance to inform decision making on proposals relating to any future developments within the village.
- ◆ It provides a tool to help manage change, not prevent it.

An important aspect of a VDS is in pointing out the significance of minor details such as windows, boundary treatments etc. Often such details cannot be controlled through the development control process and, therefore, the role of the individual property owner is crucial to maintaining a traditional aspect to a village.



The north end of the village in spring



Bland Lane in spring



Why Knapton?

The flat nature of the surrounding landscape and the quiet lanes that pass through the village make Knapton a favourite walking route and many are attracted from nearby York to stroll along the country lanes. It is particularly enjoyable on warm summer evenings when the fields are bursting with crops, the hedgerows are alive with birdlife and the beautifully tended gardens are at their best. And it is the gardens that bring life to the village. Residents have such a pride in Knapton and this is displayed for all to see in the tremendous array of plant variety and colour.

The people of Knapton have worked tirelessly to preserve the character of the village. We have a well-established and determined band of workers who will endeavour to ensure that our village benefits from thoughtful and sympathetic building in the future. In our view Knapton is worth preserving and we hope our efforts will be supported.

Our village may be small but it's interesting!

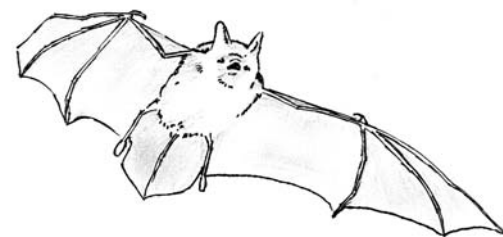
Knapton lies less than 4 miles to the west of York city centre and forms part of the parish of Rufforth and Knapton. The village is situated within the York outer ring road, to the east of the A1237 and significantly, for planning purposes, is "washed over" by the Green Belt (Knapton has been identified in paragraph 5.22 of the City of York Draft Local Plan as one of a number of settlements which have this status and are subject to additional planning considerations). Today it is surrounded, as it has been for many hundreds of years, by agricultural land. The village lies within Flood Zone 1, defined as being at little or no risk. However, the settlement is still at risk from overland groundwater or sewer flooding: the heaviest rainfall can cause surface drainage and sewer drainage problems.

The hamlet of the middle ages had open fields, evidence of which is preserved in the local names of Lowfield and Northfield. Enclosure, which took place mainly in the 18th and 19th centuries, created a landscape of defined, enclosed fields divided by hedgerows. Some of these field boundaries preserve the "s" shape formed by the medieval ploughing system in narrow strips, formerly called "selions". Fields today are mainly large and result from the amalgamation of the smaller fields of the enclosure period. The retained hedgerows include many fine mature trees (mainly oak) and are a valuable sanctuary for wildlife.

The village itself has a simple plan with a single principal street (Main Street) and, on the east side,

a "Back Lane". It is likely that the village was originally laid out as a 'single-sided' village, with the main street lined by houses and the back lane by farm buildings, with easy access to the adjacent fields. Later expansion caused new building on the west side of Main Street, but no back lane was ever created here. Most building is contained today within a tight envelope defined by Main Street and Back Lane. There are however, mainly modern extensions to north and south beyond this envelope. There is also one outlying dwelling on Lowfield Lane (thought to be a cowman's cottage originally), and modern farm buildings and stables have been built in the fields on Back Lane. Despite the proximity of the City of York, the surrounding countryside has helped Knapton maintain the appearance of a rural village and this is further characterised by, for example, the retention of red brick garden walls bordering Main Street and Back Lane to the north end of the settlement. These are thought to be remains of an old manor house and the retention of such attractive boundaries should be encouraged.

An informal survey, based on local knowledge, indicated that in late 2005 there were 96 dwellings in the village envelope, occupied by 173 adults (age 16+) and 49 children. With the exception of the local village pub there are no other employers actually providing employment in the village although a number of other self-employed people are based here.



Design Guidelines

1. Future development in Knapton should recognise the historic character of the village and its landscape setting.
2. Maintain the independence of Knapton as a village by upholding its present washed over Green Belt status. Development at the periphery of the village settlement limit should only be considered where it would not adversely affect the open character of the village's setting and entrances to the village.
3. Any development proposals should take account of the flood risk from overland, groundwater or sewer flooding, seek advice from The Environment Agency at a pre-planning stage, and consider the use of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). Surface water disposal from new development should be managed so as not to increase the risk of flooding.



Hedgerow trees in spring



Pasture land off Back Lane



Landmark oak at the north end of the village

A long history - ecclesiastical and agricultural



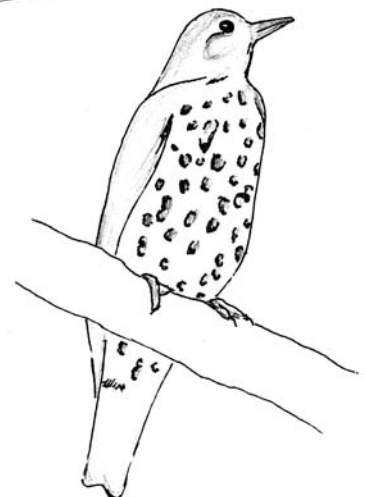
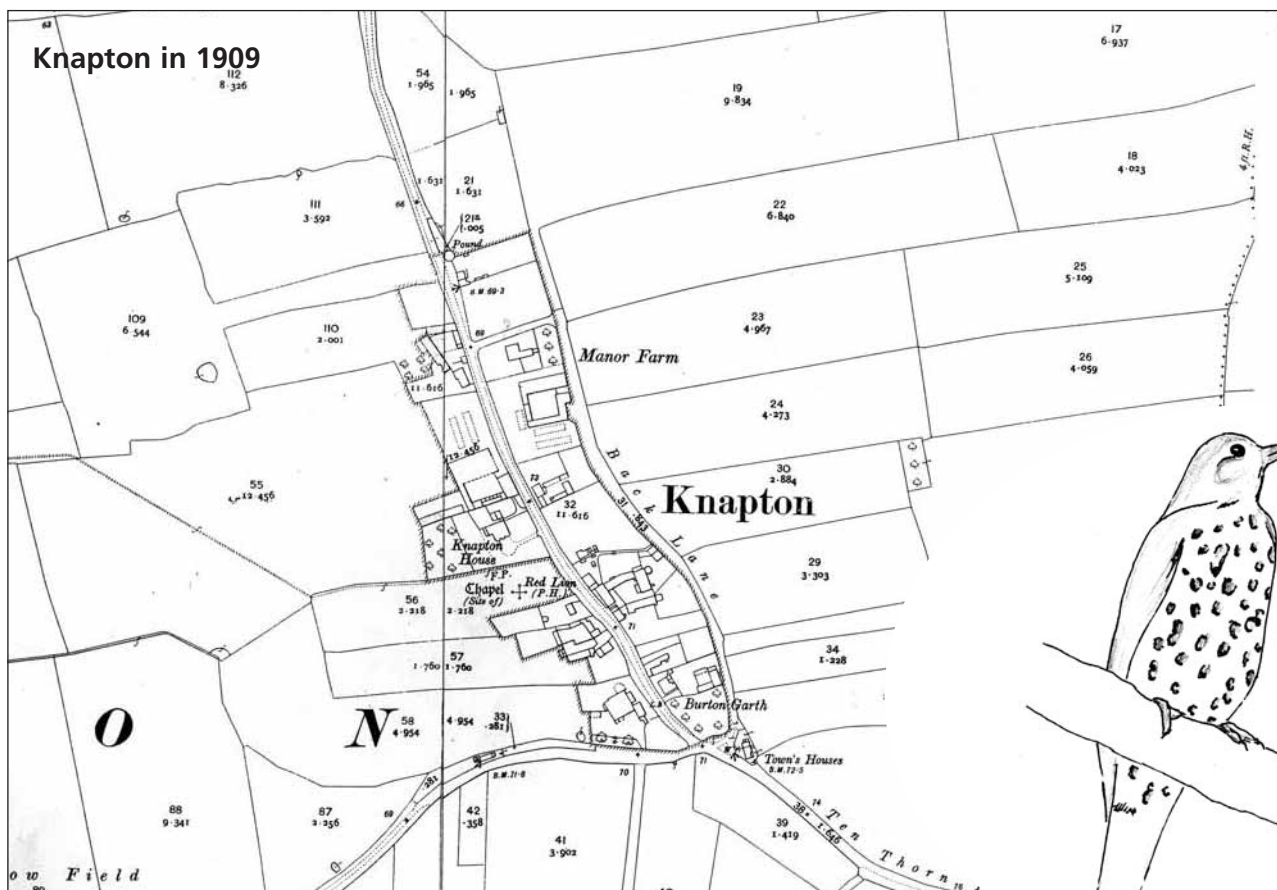
Knapton has been around a long time - the Domesday survey indicates almost 1000 years of established settlement. Throughout its history it has been bounded by agricultural land, with the ancient road to Harrogate to the north and the York to Wetherby road to the south.

The earliest map that can be viewed at the Borthwick Institute at York University is dated 1842. This shows a village of much the present size and layout, with Main Street and Back Lane and covered a total of 830 acres and 33 "perches" and included two woods. This 1842 enclosures map shows two tithable districts of Knapton in Acomb (or Akeham) and Knapton in Holy Trinity and the ecclesiastical association is further evidenced by the recording of a chapel-at-ease. This was attached to Holy Trinity, Micklegate, and stood on the site of the present Chapel House. But this was not the only building of interest as there was a tithe barn on Back Lane, a blacksmith's forge on the site of the present Knapton House (dated 1846 on its deeds) and a single storey cowman's cottage at

Knapton Lodge on Lowfield Lane, later used by the local beekeeper.

Whilst few of these older buildings remain we are thankful that those that have been preserved present such architectural beauty (see section on Character of the Buildings in Knapton). These include St Peter's Farmhouse and the attached cottage, St Peter's Cottage and of course the delightful Red Lion, our local public house.

It will be of no surprise that the available accommodation was mainly linked to agriculture and there was very little owner/occupied property. Throughout the years, Knapton has been under the control of various council administrations. The village became the responsibility of the City of York Council in 1996 and prior to this was administered by Harrogate Borough Council. In living memory, the village had five working farmhouses on Main Street and although these have all now closed down the layout of the village has changed little over the years.



Our historical pinfold

A reminder of our rural heritage can be found in the pinfold, which is situated to the North end of the village. It is 7.8m in diameter and is bounded by a brick wall with magnesium limestone copings. A plaque attached to the inside provides an interesting insight into the life of village. This reads "This pinfold was traditionally used for holding farm animals found straying in the village. Before their owners could collect them a fine had to be paid to the pinfold keeper (Pinder). The invention of wire fencing meant animals were less likely to stray from fields and the pinfold fell into disuse. Knapton has had several pinfolds, with this one dating from the 18th Century. It was restored in 1992 by Bishop Burton College of Agriculture on the initiative of the Parish Council."

We believe the pinfold must have been moved to its present position later than the Tithe Award of 1842, because at that time one was shown in the middle of the village close to the site of the present Knapton House. However, by 1889 the pinfold was no longer in the centre of the village and it was possibly moved to the northern boundary to be near the, now demolished, itinerant sheepshearers' cottages.

Design Guidelines

4. Retain and maintain the historic pinfold.



Knapton's pinfold

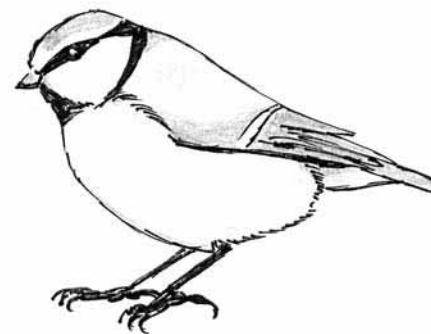
A landscape worth preserving

As described previously, the village is surrounded by farmland and grassland and is part of York's "Green Belt". The open flat arable fields surrounding the village are farmed for cereal, root and fodder crops and the remaining surrounding landscape is grassland. The fields are medium to large in size and are divided by hedges, which contain some larger trees. The village itself has become a mainly "ribbon" development over the past 80 years and latterly several mixed farms have been replaced by residential courtyards. The open views from the village provide one of its most valued assets and it is important that any development on the edge of the village preserves these vistas. Of significance are the views from Back Lane and along Ten Thorn Lane, with the tree lined fields stretching to the boundary with the city of York; and the area towards the north of the village, which is felt by many to be its best at sunset when the changing skyline, of reds and pinks, is particularly impressive.

The verges and mature trees on Main Street add to the rural feel. In the past these verges would not have been formally mown and would have supported a variety of wild flowers and a return to this practice is to be encouraged. The large gardens of some of the houses add to its open nature as well as providing additional havens for wildlife.

Design Guidelines

5. In accordance with Local Plan policies the green and open land between Knapton and York should be preserved to maintain the rural character and open vistas of the village and avoid merging with the edge of neighbouring settlements.
6. Retention, maintenance and extension where appropriate, of the grass verges should be encouraged in all new developments to encourage conservation of wildlife.



Wildlife and habitats

Mature hedges form boundaries and divisions and some, for example at Ten Thorn Lane, originate from the 18th century. The hedges consist of hawthorn, blackthorn, ivy, ash, dog rose, field maple, viburnum and bramble and these should be protected. Some of the tree cover occurs in the hedgerows where the principle species are oak, ash, elder, sycamore and field maple. The ash in particular has been continuously cut down and consideration should be given to allowing the ash in the hedges to grow to their natural height. The hedges provide 'corridors' along which wildlife can move from one area to another, and are home to many plants including white briony and stinging nettle. These support the many caterpillars, which are the product of butterflies and moths.

Mature trees are scattered around the village and surrounding farmland and add to the natural beauty of the area. The two cedar pine trees in



Cedar pines

the courtyard of 66, 68 and 70 Main Street have been assigned Tree Preservation Orders and consideration could be given to awarding the same status to other trees at Burton Garth, Knapton House, the Red Lion Public House, and New House Farm.

With the presence of such a number of large mature trees, tawny owls are frequently heard and both barn and little owls are occasionally seen hunting over the fields. The village itself is made up of cottage-style gardens which support a large variety of woodland type birds including blackbird, robin, great and blue tits, chaffinch, dunnock, woodpecker and wren. Ivy leaved toadflax and biting stonecrop can be seen clinging to the attractive stone walls surrounding some of the older properties.

The open fields support small breeding populations of red-legged partridge, lapwing and skylark, and the hedgerows are a particular lifeline for the declining populations of farmland birds such as goldfinch, greenfinch, bullfinch, linnet and yellowhammer. And it is hedges with berry-bearing shrubs that are an important source of food for maintaining wintering flocks of fieldfares and redwings. In the winter months the beautiful sight of flocks of golden plover, in the company of black-headed gulls, can often be seen feeding on the fields. It is vitally important that the surrounding countryside and other areas such as the orchard and hedges at New House Farm are preserved alongside any new development.

A wide variety of mammals are present in the open fields around the village, such as fox, roe deer, field mouse, stoat, hedgehog, shrew, mole, weasel and rabbit. Pipistrelle bats can also still be seen in flight at dusk and, as a protected species, the preservation of their habitat in the old farm buildings must be addressed by any prospective developer. These buildings are also the summer home of the swifts and swallows that journey 6000 miles each year to nest in Knapton.

In addition to birdlife and mammals the grassland also supports many native plants including creeping buttercup, meadow buttercup, small-flowered cranesbill, doves-foot cranesbill, silverweed and spear thistle. Common mallow, white campion and black horehound (in past times used to treat the bites of mad dogs) can be observed at the roadsides.

Design Guidelines

7. Modern conservation principles towards flora and fauna should be encouraged to retain as much green area and as many existing trees as possible in order to maintain a continued abundance of wildlife.
8. All remaining hedgerows of historical and wildlife importance should be identified and conserved wherever possible. Tree species should be allowed to develop into hedgerow trees within these existing hedges. The planting of native trees and shrubs, together with the reintroduction of hedges both within and on the periphery of the village should be encouraged to support wildlife, screen noise and maintain the natural landscape.
9. Tree preservation orders should be assigned to prominent trees in the village.



Hedgerow trees in spring



Autumn oaks in Lowfield Lane



Old Scots pine at Knapton House



Highways, paths and transport

Knapton's Main Street previously ran between Beckfield Lane and the A59 Harrogate Road but since 1987 has been intersected by the A1237, the northern section of the York Ring Road. This has reduced much of the 'non-village' traffic although at peak times vehicles are thought to use the village as a route through to the neighbouring York suburbs, a practice which residents are keen to discourage. Some on-street parking occurs, mostly in Back Lane. There is a car park at the rear of the Red Lion Public House and this provides adequate parking for its clientele.

The countryside around Knapton may be enjoyed by the use of a limited network of minor roads and public paths. There is no right to roam over agricultural land. There are three recorded public rights of way within Knapton parish, however only one starts from the village (see map on back cover). This footpath has suffered from development and is now inaccessible to the public. There are plans to re-route the section from Main Street and make use of the underpass to connect with the footpath on the far side of the ring road. The section to the underpass will also be upgraded to a bridleway and a new bridleway link created parallel to the ring road to link to Moor Lane (Knapton Bridleway No 1). This new route should be available to the public for summer 2008.

In our view, the minimal nature of the street lighting provides adequate security, is not intrusive, and is consistent with the rural character of the



Signpost on the green

settlement. Existing services (electricity, telephone) employ overhead cables, and these are visually intrusive in places. Knapton suffers from the illegal tipping of industrial and domestic waste, particularly in Bland Lane and Ten Thorn Lane. This is detrimental to the village.

Most households in the village have one or more cars and rely on these as the primary means of transport. The village is on the Arriva Selby-York-Wetherby bus service, which gives convenient public transport access to York city centre. A school bus picks up schoolchildren for transport to Poppleton Ousebank County Primary School.

Activities and amenities

There are few amenities in the village however there is a very popular public house, The Red Lion. In addition, there are regular visits by the mobile library, a post box is set into the wall at Burton Garth and there is a bus stop in Lowfield Lane. On the small grassed area at the south end of the village is situated a public notice board. Recreation areas are at a premium and it is therefore important that the playing field and village events area behind the New House Farm development is retained.



Design Guidelines

10. Traffic calming should be investigated whilst recognising that any schemes should be of a design and scale appropriate to the rural context and not visually intrusive.
11. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, adequate off-street parking should be included in all new development.
12. Every opportunity should be taken to re-route existing overhead services and wherever practical, new developments should install electricity and telephone cabling underground.
13. All 'Public Rights of Way' (footpaths, bridleways, and byways) should be legally defined, kept free from obstruction and their character maintained. Existing public rights of way should be retained and extended into any new developments. Modifications to existing rights of way could provide a valuable link with the surrounding countryside, especially by creating safe access to land beyond the busy ring road. Cycle paths should also be well maintained and protected so that they are open and available for use by the public at all times.
14. All possible measures should be taken to eliminate fly tipping.



Back Lane in spring



Footpath linking Main Street and Back Lane



The sinuous course of Main Street

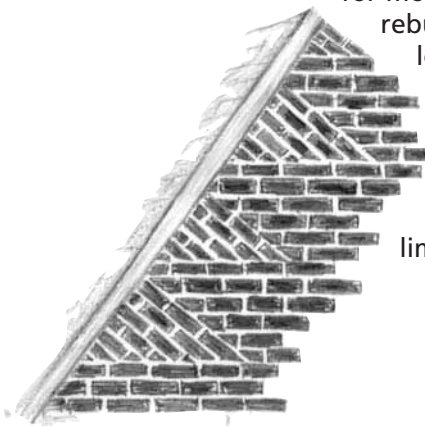


Character of the buildings in Knapton

The built environment of Knapton is largely the creation of the 20th century. In this period, the cluster of farmsteads shown on early maps was gradually replaced as the village was transformed from an agricultural settlement to one with a primarily residential character. The buildings of the village provide evidence of this transformation.

There is little photographic record of the appearance of the village before 1900, but it is likely that Knapton was a typical Vale of York settlement, mainly made up of farmsteads built of local brick and showing strong local vernacular features in their architecture. The village's three listed buildings – St Peter's Farmhouse and its adjacent cottages, all dating from the 18th century – display these features best: bricks are a pleasing mix of red and orange tones; clay pantiles were used for the roofs; windows had segmental arched heads and had small panes in Yorkshire sliding sashes; roofs had a steep pitch and used tumbled brickwork in the gables; and sill bands were used as a feature on main elevations.

The long, low nature of the Red Lion pub is typical of the character of Vale of York cottages. All the early houses and cottages are set directly on the roadside, lining Main Street. Early farm buildings, set back from the road, were built in the same materials, but most of the pre-1800 buildings have been demolished. The village pinfold (see page 6 for more details), although rebuilt in its present location, is an important reminder of the former agricultural character of the settlement, and is built in traditional brick capped with white limestone.



St Peter's Farmhouse:
tumbled
brickwork



St Peter's Group: Farm Cottage, Farmhouse and Cottage



Yorkshire sliding sash window



St Peter's Farmhouse:
arched window and
dentilled cornice

The character of the village began to change in the mid 19th century, when new styles were introduced. Three of the finest houses in the village – Knapton House, Golden Farm House and Burton Garth – are not vernacular in style, but have symmetrical elevations and classical features not especially associated with Vale of York building. All these houses have Welsh slate roofs, indicating the greater ease with which building materials could be transported long distances in the railway era, and some other houses replaced pantiles with slate. Knapton House was probably the largest in the village, and its status is reflected in the way that it is set back from the road in private gardens, divided from the road by a low brick wall with cast-iron railings and fine iron gates. It has impressive farm buildings, grouped around a courtyard to the north of the dwelling. The barn within this complex, latterly part of New House Farm, displays unusual gothic arched panels with openings for ventilation. Next to the barn is a cartshed with granary over. Burton Garth has a more traditional barn facing on to Back Lane.



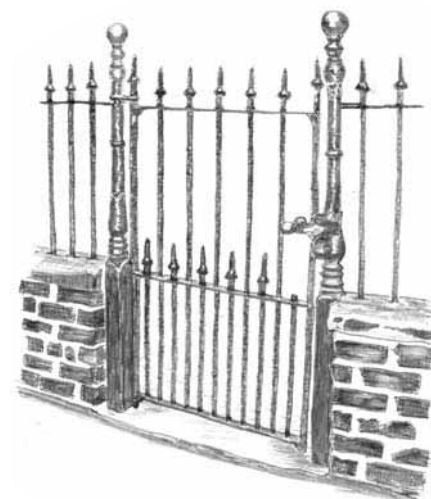
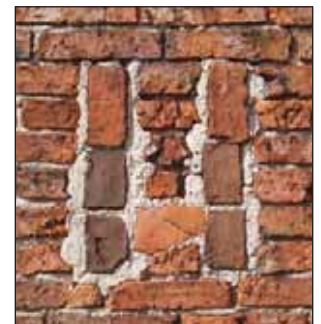
Burton Garth



The barn at New House Farm

The transformation of the village began to accelerate in the mid 20th century, and especially after World War Two. The bungalow or chalet style was introduced in three houses built before the war on Ten Thorn Lane, and this type of house became very common in the village in the 1950s and 1960s, taking the place of many of the original farmsteads. These bungalows, mainly in semi-detached pairs, used non-traditional brick, mainly in a range of reds and yellows, and have concrete-tile roofs. Most are set back from the road in gardens bounded to the front by dwarf brick walls. After 1980 new development, again replacing earlier farmsteads, was characterised by two-storeyed housing of various sizes. The St Peter's development of 1984 used non-local brown brick, but referred to local styles in the use of tumbled brickwork in the gables. The Manor Farm development of 1987 used a more familiar red brick, employed tumbled brickwork in the gables and retained the brick boundary wall, with its iron gate and limestone copings. The Ten Thorn Farm complex of 2001 has Vale of York brick of interesting character and a mixture of slate and pantile roofs, and it imitates features of adjacent earlier buildings. The Main Street houses have bay windows and doorcases, imitating the style of the nearby Burton Garth. They have also incorporated dentilled eaves cornices similar to St Peter's Farmhouse. The rear houses in this development, built to replace a barn, have reminders, in the form of the large openings, of the features of early agricultural buildings and echo the form of the adjacent barn at Burton Garth.

Traditional brickwork and pointing in the barn at Burton Garth





The Ten Thorn Farm development



Blue Cote Farm Cottage



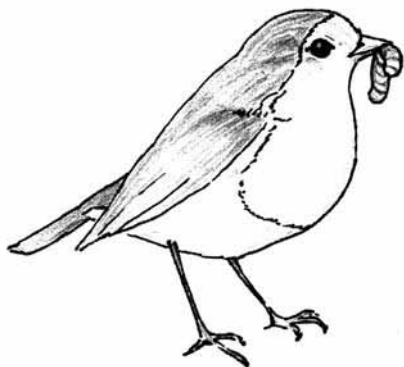
Bungalows on Main Street



The Manor Farm development

Summary of the character of the built environment

In 2005 the village of Knapton contained ninety five houses and was dominantly residential in character. Its housing is varied in type and date. A few houses date from the 18th century; there are a few 19th century houses and farm buildings; the post-World War Two era saw the introduction of brick bungalows; and post-1980



development has been characterised by a mix of housing types. Overall, the village has a mixture of small houses and substantial detached houses, and almost all the houses are spaciouly set within gardens or courts. Brick is overwhelmingly the dominant walling material, and the most recent building has reverted to the use of locally made Vale of York brick, strongly in keeping with the character of the area. Roofing materials vary: clay pantiles were the traditional material, but Welsh slate was employed in the 19th century, and in the 20th century concrete pantile, grey/brown or orange in colour, was dominant.

Design Guidelines

Whilst interesting new designs carried out in good quality building materials should not be ruled out, and indeed might be welcomed as part of Knapton's continuing development, most new building in Knapton, including extensions, should respect a number of features which contribute to the village's particular character.

15. New development should be contained within the settlement limit of the village, as defined by the Local Plan.
16. New infill within the settlement limit should not be so intensive as to change the open weave of the village's overall character.
17. Any future developments should seek to retain a social mix of house types and sizes, including affordable housing.
18. New buildings should be designed in such a way as to promote crime prevention and ideally meet the security requirements of the police "Secured by Design" scheme.
19. New building following a traditional design might benefit from inclusion of local vernacular features, for example, in window design, brickwork details, garden walls and railings.
20. The height and pitch of roofs should be compatible with and sympathetic to surrounding property.
21. Wherever possible, new rooflines or dormer windows to historical buildings should be avoided where they are detrimental to the character of the building.
22. Sustainable developments in the form of green building design and the re-use of existing traditional materials and buildings, particularly farm buildings, should be encouraged since these provide an important link with the village's agricultural past.
23. New buildings should normally be entirely of brick: pastiche half timbering or part stucco/rendering are not characteristic of the area and should generally be avoided in new designs.
24. Materials should complement the age of the building for example, traditional properties should use clay pantiles or Welsh slate where appropriate.
25. The preferred building material should be a good quality brick chosen to blend with the character of the neighbouring buildings.
26. Windows in older properties should accord with the period style of those properties, replacements should accurately reflect the styles of the originals. The use of traditional materials is preferred.
27. Extensions to be in keeping with the building of origin and not obtrusive to surrounding properties.
28. Boundary treatments should be sympathetic to their location. Use of traditional treatments such as hedges, iron railings and brick walls is encouraged in front boundary treatments.



Design Guidelines

29. Every effort should be made to support and prevent the loss of facilities including the public house and playing field.
30. The design and scale of street furniture, such as signposts and road signs, road markings, and lighting should be appropriate to a rural area and the character of the village.
31. Any advertising or signage should be kept to a minimum and be appropriate to the village environment by being low key in colour, size and lighting.



The small village green, with noticeboard



Many villagers rely on Knapton's bus service



Appendix

Suggested buildings for inclusion on list of buildings of local interest

A 'Local List' of buildings of interest includes those buildings which have some historical or architectural importance at a local level. The buildings might be typical of local character but not so significant in wider terms as to merit inclusion on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest, maintained by English Heritage. Inclusion therefore carries no statutory protection at present. A Local List for York is currently being developed by the City of York Council and is intended to indicate the value placed on some buildings by local people and to acknowledge the contribution which those buildings make to the village's character.

Suggested buildings for inclusion within Knapton are as follows:

The Pinfold
Farm buildings in New House Farm
Burton Garth house and barn
Knapton House
Red Lion Public House



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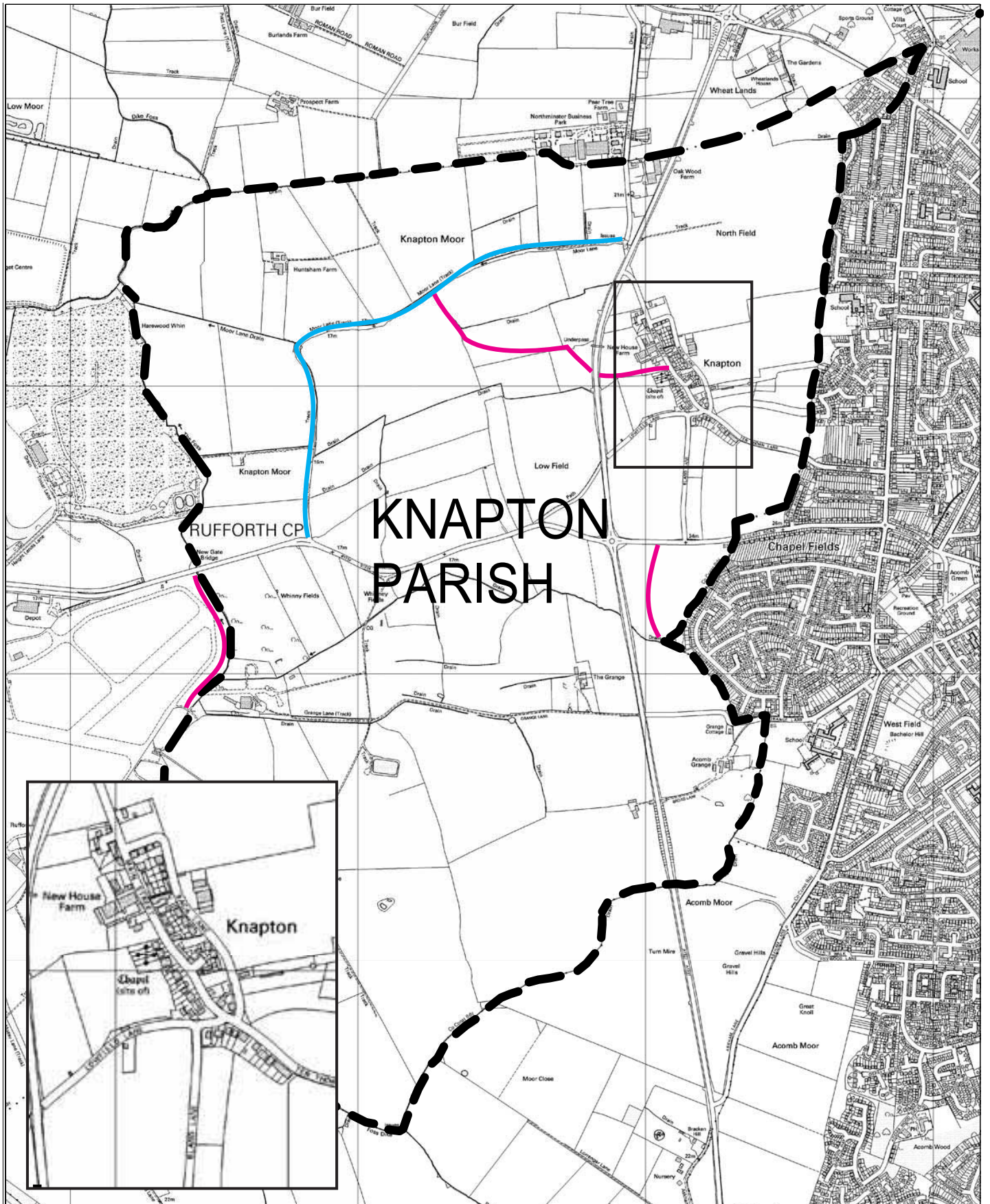
Philip Sinton

Joan Williams

Dave Wright

Marion Wright





- KEY:**
- Parish Boundary
 - Public Bridleway
 - Public Footpath

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