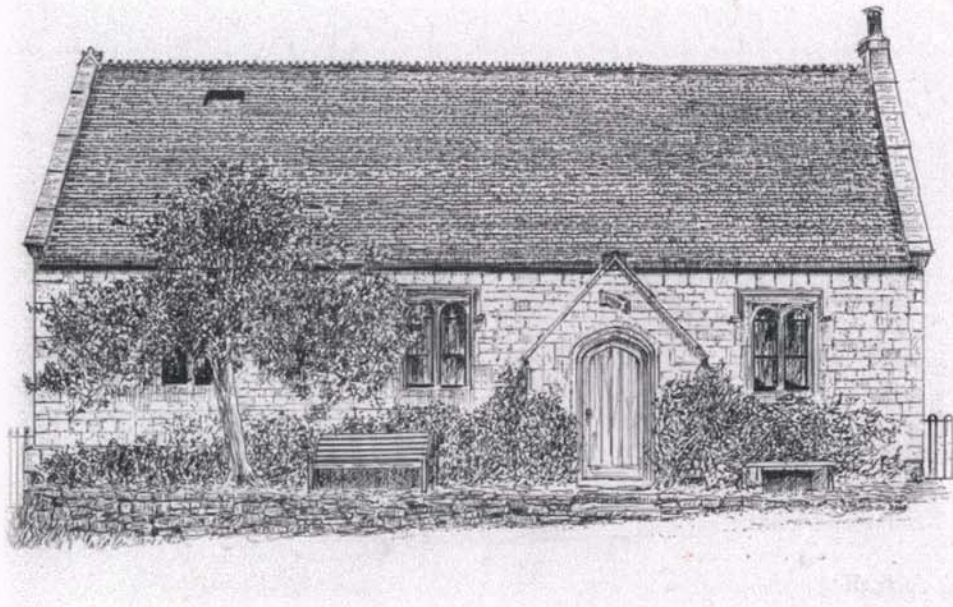


The Parish of West Stafford

Village Design Statement



*The Village Hall
(formerly West Stafford Village School)*

**Adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance
by West Dorset District Council
December 2002**



Stafford House

This statement has been prepared on behalf of West Stafford Parish Meeting.
Comment should be made to the Chairman of the Parish Meeting.

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Introduction

The purpose of this Village Design Statement is to provide supplementary planning guidance to cover any future development in West Stafford. The statement was produced by a working party which was open to any resident who wished to contribute. Moreover, the whole of the village was invited, first, to participate in a Workshop Day from which a set of themes that capture the character of West Stafford evolved. These themes are set out in Appendix A.

The core of the Village Design Statement is a set of development and building guidelines intended to preserve the character of the village and its setting within the surrounding land, as defined in the 'themes'. However, in order to provide a suitable background, sections on historical development, present character, natural environment and landscape, the buildings, and tourism and the local economy have also been produced.

Throughout the process, there was the widest possible consultation. The guidelines represent a consensus view where possible, and a majority view where necessary. The entire document was presented to all residents at an Exhibition Day, following which some minor amendments were made. It was formally approved by a Parish Meeting on 2 September, 2002 and then endorsed by Knightsford Parish Council on 4 September, 2002.

The local planning authority has adopted this statement and all applications for planning approval will be expected to abide by the guidelines. Service providers (such as electricity and telephone companies) and the highways authority will similarly be expected to take note of the statement when they carry out work in the village.

Although the guidelines are primarily intended as an aid to the planning process, owners can make many changes

to their properties, which have an effect on character, without seeking planning permission. It is hoped, therefore, that where such permitted changes are made, those making them will have due regard to any relevant guidelines and so help preserve the character of the village; however, no guideline should be considered as having any retrospective effect.

This statement is the result of considerable dialogue and productive co-operation between West Dorset District Council Planning Department and the working party, for which all West Stafford residents are grateful. We confidently expect, therefore, that the Council will respect the guidelines produced and work towards maintaining the character of the village when making future planning decisions.

The working party is also grateful to Knightsford Parish Council for its support and to the residents for their invaluable contributions.



St Andrew's Church

Historical Development

West Stafford, a parish covering some 1,000 acres, lies south of the river Frome and immediately east of Dorchester. It falls into two distinct parts on both geographical and historical grounds, divided by the South Winterborne, which flows north-east across the parish to join the Frome at the weir in the grounds of Stafford House. The westerly part was the manor of Frome Billet. The easterly part was the land of West Stafford itself.

There is considerable evidence of occupation from the Neolithic Age to Roman times, mainly in the western and southern areas of the parish. Notable remains include the Henge at Mount Pleasant and various barrows. However, Frome Billet and West Stafford, both recorded in the Domesday Book, were the only settlements in the parish from the Middle Ages until the 19th century.

Frome Belet or Billet is now reduced to a single house (Stafford House, formerly Frome House), which is situated on the southern side of the river Frome on land formerly known as Everard's Manor. The parochial church of Frome Belet, mentioned in records made in 1278 and 1470 stood a little west of Stafford House, but there is now no trace of it. A rectory is also mentioned here in 1291 but it was united with West Stafford in 1470. Very slight and indistinct traces of possible enclosures and ground disturbances are visible in fields to the west and south-west of Stafford House.

The main settlement of West Stafford lies to the south of Stafford House, and the entrance to the village is close by St Andrew's Church. The village name seems to derive from Stanford (which can be interpreted as a stony ford) in the Domesday Book. It is called West Stafford because there was once an East Stafford (now called Lewell and part of the parish of West Knighton).

The parish church is on a site that has been used for worship for over 600 years. The tower was built early in the 16th century, and the nave and chancel date from about 1640. The beautiful Laudian furnishings, which are almost intact, were re-sited in the new chancel when the church was enlarged in 1898.

The present Manor House of West Stafford (formerly known as Manor Farm) was significantly altered from the original in about 1720. A chapel stood to the east of the ancient buildings but has long since been abandoned.

There are strong Thomas Hardy associations. Stafford House was the 'Frome-Everard House' of *'The Waiting Supper'* and the nearby weir was the scene of a drowning. The Frome Valley was supposedly the 'Valley of the Great Dairies', and the church regarded as the place where Tess and Angel were married in *'Tess of the d'Urbervilles'*. Thomas Hardy's father purchased land known as Talbots in 1887. Thomas Hardy chose it as the site of Talbothays Lodge, which he designed and had built for his brother and sisters, together with nine cottages known as Talbothays.



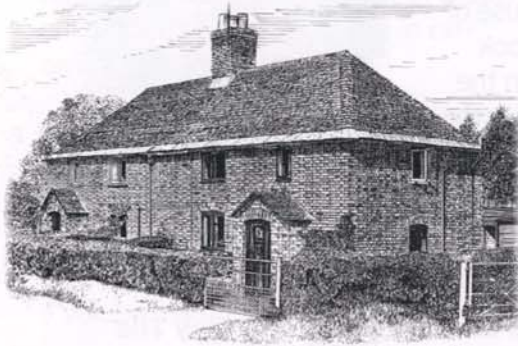
Talbothays Lodge

Present Character

West Stafford now comprises: Stafford House, its adjacent courtyard residences, together with Keepers Cottage and Frome Farm nearby; the main settlement area; Stafford Farm to the south beyond the village bypass; Talbothays and the Dairy House to the east. It extends to some 130 dwellings and has a population of about 235 adults and 43 children.

The population has risen by over 80% in the period 1960 - 2000, with an increase of about 20% in the past 10 years. This growth has been created by housing development; at the end of the 1950s, there were just 56 houses in West Stafford, 112 by the end of the 1970s and 138 by 2002. Because the growth has not been organic, the balance between age groups is uneven and the average age of residents is high.

West Stafford is, however, a comparatively rare example of a community which is small enough to maintain its rural character but large enough to support a church, a pub, a well-used village hall (which was the school, built in 1846), and a childrens' playing field. It has no present day school, shop or post office.



Rose and Myrtle Cottages

Natural Environment and Landscape

The westerly part of the parish lies entirely on Upper Chalk except in the centre where a low hill capped with Bagshot Beds rises

to just over 200 feet. The easterly part is on Upper Chalk, which gives way to more acid soil on Plateau Gravel overlying Reading and Bagshot Beds, and slopes gently down, northward towards the river Frome.

The land surrounding the village is predominately farmland interspersed with a number of small woodland areas. The variety of soil types encourages a wide variety of plant species and many types of wildlife. The higher land provides most attractive views of the surrounding countryside, stretching for many miles. There are a number of well-used rights of way.

The Weymouth to Waterloo railway line and the West Stafford bypass run along the southern edge of the village.

The village of West Stafford which is centrally placed within the parish is compact, but with important outlying settlements. There is a West Dorset District Council Defined Development Boundary as well as a designated Conservation Area, which includes land to the north of the main settlement, and land of Local Landscape Importance.

The River Frome is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, which with significant water meadows adjacent to the village on the western, northern and eastern boundaries of the village provides excellent habitats for wildlife including the now endangered water vole and the recently returned otters.

Agriculture

A working farm, Stafford Farm, lies to the south of the village. Other agricultural land is either leased or rented for grazing, forage or cereal crops.

Trees and Hedgerows

Within the Conservation Area, there is a wide selection of mature, native trees, all of which are protected.

In other areas, similar varieties of trees exist, together with extensive hedgerows, again providing good habitats for wildlife. These also soften the landscape and provide a welcome visual amenity.

Open Spaces

Within the village of West Stafford, there are a number of open areas and wide verges, all of which give a sense of spaciousness to the village scene. In some instances, they provide excellent panoramas of the village itself and surrounding countryside. Such views are much cherished by residents and visitors alike. The area outside the Wise Man Inn and Village Hall was previously grassed, but since 1954 has become a casual parking area.

The Buildings

Although integrated as a whole community, West Stafford has areas with different characteristics, reflecting the period in which development took place, principally in the latter half of the 20th century. Within each of these small areas, the buildings generally harmonize both with each other and, with some exceptions, as a whole. This mixture of development is part of the character of the village.

There are three Grade I Listed buildings (the Church of St Andrew and Stafford House, both 15th century origin, and the 17th century Manor House) and more than 20 Grade II Listed residential buildings, walls, bridges and churchyard monuments, built between the 17th and 19th centuries. Glebe Court, the 17th century former rectory (now The Old Glebe and The Old Rectory), is one of the earliest and most substantial Grade II buildings. A full list appears in Appendix B.

The characteristics of the building development can be summarised chronologically:

16th, 17th and 18th Century Local Stone or Cob Walled, Roofs of Stone or Thatch

Traditional buildings in the village largely reflect the financial circumstances of their first owner. Two of the three principal early buildings (Stafford House and the Manor House) have coursed squared rubble and ashlar walls with Portland stone dressing and stone slate roofs, the exception being the former rectory, which was largely rebuilt or refaced in brick in 1767. It remained thatched until about 1970. Buildings of more modest origin were of cob wall and thatch roof construction. Chalk, one of the principal components of cob walling, was extracted from a site in the centre of the village now occupied by a garage and workshop. A number of older dwellings in the village are former farm buildings that have been sympathetically converted for residential use. Such conversions and internal modernisations have been a feature of development progress in West Stafford, particularly within the Conservation Area.

The Manor House

18th Century Brick Facing

Some use of brick took place in the village in the 18th century, in particular to reface Porch Cottage.



Mid-19th Century Stone and Clay Tile

The former school, now the Village Hall, is an excellent example of a traditional building constructed of rubble-stone walls with ashlar dressing and a clay-tiled roof.

Late 19th Century Brick Buildings and Welsh Slate Roofs

Late 19th century development in West Stafford reflects the growth of the use of local brick. There are several examples of Broadmayne Brick within the village centre and at Talbothays where the buildings constructed of this material have roofs of Welsh Slate.

20th Century Buildings

Almost all the 20th century development in West Stafford took place after 1950. There is a broad variety of domestic building styles but, in general terms, development has avoided urban and suburban uniformity.

The largest development (Glebeland Close), started in the 1960s, was low-density, mixed styles of bungalows and houses, using brick and/or reconstituted Portland stone dressing with tiled roofs. It is one of only two paved areas.

There have been two Council-built developments (Wynd Close and the retirement bungalows in Barton Close) built in the 1950s and 1970s in off-centre locations.

Growth of the village in the 1980s was based principally on limited in-fill sites. Some of this in-fill development has higher rooflines than neighbouring properties, so blocking views that were a valued feature of West Stafford.

The largest 1990s development (The Paddock) just behind the Village Hall is closely aligned to traditional style and is widely considered more sympathetic to village character than the modern design and material of some other recent development. Stone and thatch

still predominate along the line of the road through the village, defining the character for tourists, as does the thatched bus shelter, a modern construction in sympathy with its surroundings.

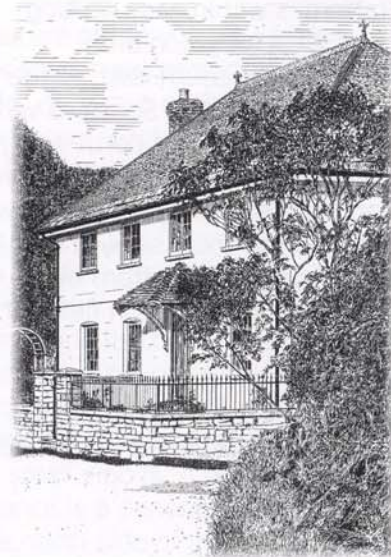


The Paddock (1990s)

There is a general mixture of rooflines, heights, materials and silhouettes, the best of which blend with and follow the contours and folds of the landscape. The various elevations and spaces within the village offer a variety of fine views of the surrounding countryside. The village has mains water. Mains drainage was laid in 1986/7.

There is electricity (installed in about 1950) but no mains gas supply. Telephones and electricity are mainly supplied by overhead cables.

Meadow House



Tourism and the Local Economy

Set in the heart of Hardy's Wessex, West Stafford is closely associated with Thomas Hardy and his work. The popular conclusion of Hardy scholars is that a number of buildings in the village can readily be identified with locations in his novels. These buildings, already of intrinsic historical interest, have an added cachet because of this association. The location of the village, less than three miles from the centre of Dorchester, makes it popular with tourists who want to visit a typical rural village or follow in the footsteps of Thomas Hardy.

In addition to providing a pleasant and attractive environment for the residents, West Stafford makes a significant contribution to the local economy as a tourist attraction. Its church, pub and other historic buildings feature in several books and pamphlets which are sold and distributed to visitors through Tourist Information Centres and local shops. Because of its location close to Dorchester, its rural setting and its facilities, West Stafford has a special appeal to walkers and cyclists. It is planned that part of the National Cycle Network will pass through the village, adding yet another feature to attract tourists.

West Stafford is within easy walking distance of West Knighton and Broadmayne to the south-east, Higher and Lower Bockhampton and Stinsford with Kingston Maurward to the north-west, and Woodsford and Tincleton to the north-east. Each of these villages has its own attractions to offer the visitor, and all can be reached from West Stafford by a network of footpaths through fields and by country lanes.

Tourism accounts for more than 10% of employment in West Dorset and is the

largest single industry in the region. With the 95-mile stretch of Dorset and East Devon coastline, from Orcombe Point in Devon to Old Harry Rocks in Dorset, now recognised as a World Heritage Site, there is a real opportunity to develop year-round tourism in the adjoining Dorset towns and villages.

However, the convenient location of the village also makes it attractive to developers wanting to build high-cost housing. Given its close proximity to Dorchester and the coast, it is vitally important that the current Defined Development Boundary be retained, so that West Stafford is protected from building expansion which would irreparably damage a vital asset of the local tourism industry.

Consequently the preservation of West Stafford from inappropriate development should be a matter of concern not only for the residents of the village, the Parish Council and the Planning Department of the District Council, but also for all those who have an interest in promoting tourism for the economic well-being of West Dorset. If the increase in housing and population of the past decade continues through the next decade, there is a real risk that it may adversely affect the essential character of West Stafford which is so highly valued by the residents and such an attraction for visitors.



Wise Man Cottage

Building and Development Guidelines

1. Defined Development Boundary

The existing Defined Development Boundary should not be extended because of the likely adverse effect of any extension on the compact character of the village and its rural setting.

2. Development within the Defined Development Boundary

Within the Defined Development Boundary, development should only take place if:

- a) the scale and nature of the development is in character with the village and its surroundings;
- b) the development does not involve the loss of an important area of open space or feature which is an essential part of the character of the village.

(These statements are in line with the criteria laid down in Policy SP1 of the West Dorset District Local Plan, adopted November 1998.)

3. Development outside the Defined Development Boundary

No development that detracts from the character and setting of the parish of West Stafford should be allowed outside the Defined Development Boundary.

4. Conservation Area and Land of Local Landscape Importance Boundaries

The existing boundaries of the Conservation Area and Land of Local Landscape Importance should as a minimum be retained.

5. Open Countryside and Rural Approaches

The open countryside within the parish of West Stafford and the rural approaches to the village from all directions should be preserved. The visual impact of these approaches should not be marred or destroyed by any development that would harm the special character of these areas.

6. Green and Open Spaces: Views

Any new development should not detract from existing rural views, green and open spaces and the agricultural character of the village. In particular, developers should give careful consideration to roof heights and to using the natural contours of the land to minimise detrimental impact.

7. Open Space in the Centre of the Village

A major feature of the village, which contributes to its rural setting and quality of life, is the existence of the paddock field and adjacent 'allotments' at its heart, within the Conservation Area.

This space affords the finest views in the village. In the foreground is the traditional centre itself, dominated by the parish church and its tower, and the thatched and tiled old cottages. Beyond is the lush valley of the River Frome with its water meadows, their hedgerows and occasional small woods; a beautiful scene. In the distance is a panorama of the high land on the north side of the Frome Valley.

At the western end are the downs to the north of Dorchester; in the centre are Kingston Maurward House and Thorncombe Wood. The wood leads to the Puddletown Forest in the east.

This open space, and the view that it affords, gives great pleasure to many villagers and visitors alike. Failure to preserve this essential feature in the Conservation Area from any development would destroy something that is so much part of the character of West Stafford and spoil the quality of life for many people.

If, however, despite this guideline, development is permitted, then at least some open space, and the view, should be retained, in addition to all other guidelines being followed.

8. General Principles of Development

This Design Statement seeks to build upon the principles enshrined within Policy CD1 (Design Standards) of the West Dorset District Local Plan, adopted November 1998, and in particular the requirement that for new buildings or alterations or extensions to existing buildings:

iii) The materials to be used will be appropriate to the area and sympathetic to the adjoining buildings

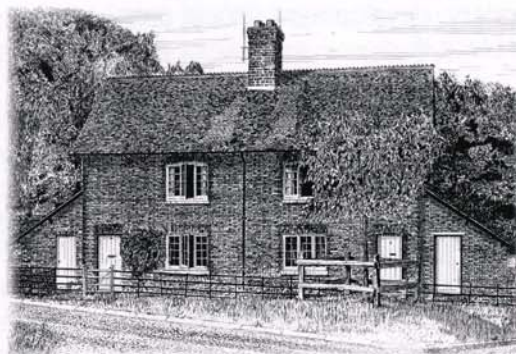
iv) The general design and mass of the building will respect the scale and be in harmony with the adjoining buildings and the area as a whole:

The historic built heritage of West Stafford is a vital asset to the economic viability of the area, particularly in sustaining tourism. The protection of that heritage, both visually and materially, is of the utmost importance. Any new development and alterations

to existing buildings should be designed to enhance and complement the character of the village.

Except where it is adjacent to any existing suburban style development, any new development should be sympathetic to the immediate surrounding area. If, however, it is adjacent to suburban style development, the new development should be sympathetic to the more traditional buildings in the village.

There should be no further spread of suburban executive-style housing, which is totally unsuited to West Stafford.



Chestnut Cottages

9. Size and Style of New Development. Conversions and Change of Use

Mixed housing development is a feature of West Stafford. Any new development should include a variety of house types and sizes that complement the predominant character of the village, avoiding suburbanisation or monotonous repetition of style. Development should be sympathetically planned to allow sufficient space around buildings to reflect the valued characteristic of spaciousness.

Existing building lines should not be revised without careful consideration of the impact.

Conversions and change of use of existing buildings must retain the ambience of the original structure.

10. Building Guidelines - Design and Materials

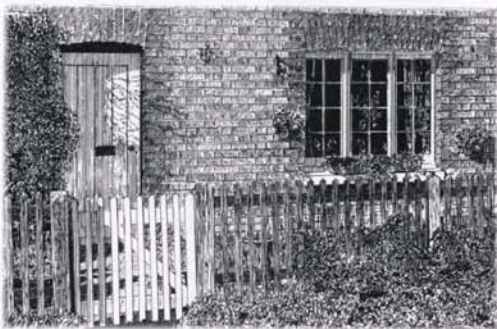
Sections a) and b) describe the variety of characteristic vernacular styles of buildings in West Stafford. They should be carefully scrutinised and reflected in the design of any new development.

a) Walls

The predominant materials are brick, render, cob and stone. Most cob walls rest on random-rubble or coursed-rubble stone plinths. When used, stone walling should be laid in lime mortar.

Traditional brick buildings are built with Broadmayne Bricks, now no longer available except as reclaimed material but suitable similar bricks are obtainable and should be used. The additional feature of local red brick is used on some cottages as quoins, lintels, architraves and sills. Brick lintels should be of semi-elliptical design.

Pointing should be "rubbed" flush. In the Conservation Area, the use of Flemish Bond or English Garden Wall Bond in preference to Stretcher Bond is recommended: see Chestnut and School Cottages, Church Cottages, Porch Cottage, Rose and Myrtle Cottages, Talbothays.



2, School Cottages

Reconstituted Stone is widely used in Glebeland Close, outside the Conservation Area, but is not otherwise acceptable. Natural Portland or Purbeck stone is preferred throughout when stone is considered a suitable material.

b) Roofs

Traditional roofs in West Stafford are of clay tiles or thatch (with natural slate at Talbothays and on the old Reading Room). Purbeck stone tiles are used on the lowest course of some of the older buildings and on some recent buildings in the Conservation Area and are considered an appropriate feature. Stone tiles may also be seen at Stafford House and the Parish Church.

Ornamental ridge tiles are a notable feature, also the use of scalloped tiles in decorative bands (see Church Cottages).

Concrete tiles have been used in buildings erected in post-war developments in Wynd Close, Barton Close and Glebeland Close, but should not be used in the Conservation Area. Synthetic slate has been used but further use of this material would be inappropriate. If slate is chosen as the most appropriate material only natural slate should be used (as at Talbothays).

Traditional ridges of thatched roofs are made of straw using the Dorset flush ridge technique. The decoration of the ridge is an individual and unique mark of the thatcher using patterns created from the liggers and spars. The advice of local Master Thatchers should be sought regarding the choice of suitable materials.

Roof pitch of principal tiled roofs should be within the range of 37.5 to 47.5 degrees, a pitch of at least

50 degrees being an essential requirement for thatched roofs.

Roofs should include a well-designed chimneystack which should, wherever possible, be used to enclose flues and/or other vents. Where this is not possible, flues and vents should be positioned as unobtrusively as possible.

The use of dormer windows and roof lights is generally discouraged, especially in visually sensitive areas. Where used, dormers should generally not be wider than the windows in lower floors. If required for the conversion of barns and similar old buildings, a conservation light that sits within the slope of the roof may be appropriate. Where new dormers or alterations to existing dormers are proposed, the roof should be appropriate to the character of the existing building.

c) Windows

Where casement windows are used, the non-opening light should be fitted with a fixed casement to match the opening light. This will help to maintain a symmetry which is typical of many traditional dwellings within the village. Top-hung lights are not appropriate in a traditional building.

For sliding sash windows and casement windows, the chosen material should be natural wood, painted white in preference to dark wood stain, with slender glazing bars. Dimension of casement width should not exceed 600 mm per light and proportions should follow the rule of the 'Golden Section'¹. The use of uPVC

windows of the best design and standard may be suitable outside the Conservation Area, but is discouraged within it. uPVC is not acceptable on a listed building.



Porch Cottage

d) Doors

Doors should be of wooden construction, particularly within the Conservation Area, of a style appropriate to the building and its neighbours, with careful attention paid to the door furniture. A letter box should be provided in an easily-accessible position, with a minimum width of 250mm.

Rainhoods and porches where they are appropriate should be provided with roofing of identical materials to the main roof.

e) Extensions

The bulk, height, position, size and detailed design of any extension should be sympathetic to the character and design of the existing building. Roofs must be pitched and of similar material to that of the existing building. Extensions and outbuildings to thatched houses may be roofed in slate or tile.

¹ See: Derrien D.D. *Design Guide: House Alterations and Extensions*,

f) Boundaries

If a boundary wall is deemed desirable at the frontage of a building, this should be of brick or stone, complementary to its neighbours. Alternatively, a picket fence or natural native hedging may be considered.

Cupressocyoparis Leylandii is unsuitable and should not be planted.



The Barn, Glebeland Close

g) Ancillary Items

Exterior lighting should be confined to a small zone. Security lights should be sited to avoid light pollution or intrusion on other properties or road users, and not normally exceed 150 watts.

Restraint and care should be exercised in the siting of TV aerials and dishes. Consideration should be given to the removal of redundant analogue aerials.

Electricity meter boxes and oil/gas tanks should be positioned out of public view wherever possible.

h) Listed Buildings

Notwithstanding any of the above, those proposing to work on listed buildings are encouraged to seek early advice from the local planning authority.

11. Roads and Traffic

Existing *culs-de-sac* should be retained. Through routes for vehicular traffic are not a feature of the village (apart from the main road), and are to be avoided in future.

12. Car Parking

Easily accessible off-street parking or garaging for at least two cars per dwelling is important for any new development, so that on-street parking can be avoided.

13. Frontages

Grass verges, front lawns and low front walls are a feature of West Stafford and designers should be encouraged to incorporate them in plans for any new development, in order to ensure an open, rural feel is maintained.

Existing verges should be protected. Hard kerbing and pavement should be avoided.

14. Walls and Trees

On any new development site, existing ancient walls should be preserved. Existing mature trees should, wherever possible, be retained and developers encouraged to plant more trees.

15. Services

There should be no extension to the existing network of service poles. All electricity supply cables, and where possible telephone lines, should be put underground.

Utility companies and developers should be encouraged to replace overhead cables with underground provision.

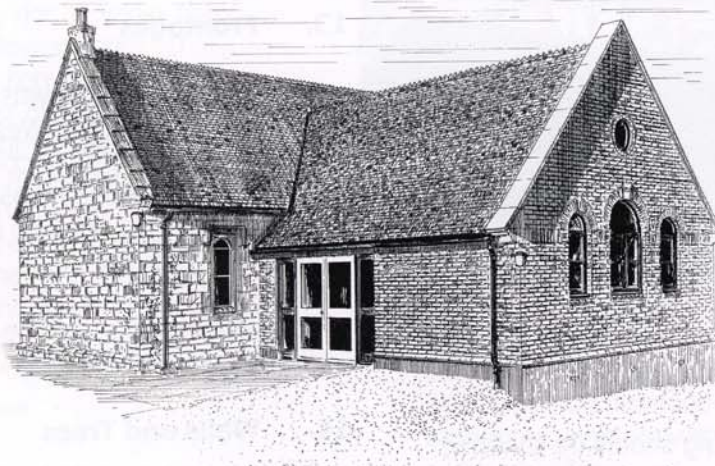
16. Street Lighting and Road Signs

There should be no extension to street lighting in West Stafford.

Street furniture should be kept to a minimum level consistent with road safety.

17. Wildlife Habitat

The valuable natural habitat through West Stafford, particularly public areas such as verges, hedgerows, footpaths and bridleways, should be protected so as to offer maximum encouragement to diversity and welfare of wildlife.



The Village Hall New Extension, 1993

Themes that Capture the Character of West Stafford

1. Village Setting

West Stafford lies within a peaceful and relatively unspoiled rural environment surrounded by farmland and woodland, adjacent to the county town of Dorchester. The River Frome, which lies to the north, is classified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The South Winterborne flows through the village and traditional water meadows lie between the northern edge of the village and the River Frome.

Much of the village, and a significant parcel of land to the north, is classified as a Conservation Area, part of which is also designated as land of Local Landscape Importance.

A Defined Development Boundary is drawn around the main settlement area.

2. Green/Undeveloped Spaces

Within the Defined Development Boundary:

- The paddock field and adjacent 'allotments' to the north of Glebeland Close

Outside the Defined Development Boundary:

- Newgass Field
- Childrens' playing field and adjacent paddock
- Stafford Green (between Stafford House and Frome Farm)
- The water meadows
- Fields east of Wynd Close
- The area south of bypass extending to Stafford Farm

3. Traditional Buildings

Within the heart of the village:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • St Andrews Parish Church | • Porch Cottage |
| • The Village Hall (the old school) | • The Barn (Glebeland Close) |
| • The Old Glebe and the Old Rectory | • Church Cottages |
| • The Wise Man Inn | • Manor Drive Cottages |
| • School Cottages | • Myrtle and Rose Cottages |
| • Wise Man Cottage | • Praps Cottage and The Gardens |
| • Davine | • Chestnut Cottages |
| • The Forge | • The Reading Room |
| | • Barton Barn and Barton Mews |

Outside the centre:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| • Stafford House | • Talbothays Lodge |
| • The Manor House | • Talbothays Cottages |
| • The Dairy House | • Stafford Farm |
| • Keepers Cottage | |

Annex A

4. Topography and Long Range Views

The main part of the village is built on the southern side of the Frome Valley on rising ground thus affording panoramic views of the surrounding countryside to Puddletown Forest to the north, Egdon Heath to the east, The Ridgeway to the south and Dorchester, Kingston Maurward and Bockhampton to the west, in addition to views within the village. The higher ground to the south of the bypass rises to Stafford Farm, with views extending to West Knighton and the Purbecks beyond.

5. Highways and Byways

The village enjoys the benefits of a bypass, which was opened in 1992. The unclassified road winding through village is intended to be part of the National Cycle Network. Several valuable rights of way exist through the village and beyond, and all are well used. There is some riverside access.

6. Pattern of Housing (Settlement)

West Stafford is a compact village, with no linear development and an obvious boundary between the settlement and surrounding farmland. There are also important outlying areas, which are part of and contribute to the whole, including:

- The Dairy House, Talbothays, Stafford Farm and Cottages, Frome Farm and Keepers Cottage

Although integrated as a community, the village has areas with different characteristics reflecting the period in which the development took place, principally in the latter half of the twentieth century. It comprises:

- Historical centre, Stafford House and Court, and the Manor House (Traditional)
- Talbothays Lodge and Cottages (1890s)
- Wynd Close (1950s)
- Glebeland Close (1960s)
- Barton Close (1970s)
- Rectory Lane and Stafford Gardens (1980s)
- The Paddock (1990s).

With some serious exceptions, within each of these areas the existing buildings harmonise with each other and as a whole. This mixture of development is part of the character of the village.

7. Lack of Suburban Features

For example:

- The high proportion of houses, throughout the village, with front gardens of different shapes and sizes giving a feeling of spaciousness which is so often lacking in modern suburban development.
- Various roof lines, heights and roofing materials

- Great variety of building styles and materials
- Most of the roads in the village do not have kerbs or pavements
- With the exception of one suburban street lamp opposite the telephone box, there is no street lighting in the village.

8. Landmarks and Features

Apart from the buildings of major architectural and/or historical interest already listed, notable landmarks and features include:

- Thatched bus shelter
- Open area in front of pub and village hall
- Bends in road (especially by the church)
- Entrances to village (from both ends)
- Well-kept individual gardens and boundaries
- Lack of pavement to main road
- Children's playing field
- Red telephone box
- Finger posts
- Commemorative seats
- Churchyard and cemetery
- The paddock field and adjacent 'allotments', old building and cob wall
- Numerous trees, including: the walnut tree and chestnut by village hall; the beech tree in The Paddock; the Jubilee Tree by Porch Cottage; the DCC Centenary Tree in Barton Close; and The Millennium Oak on Stafford Green.

9. Street Furniture

The following tend to emphasise the rural nature of the village:

- The older style post box in Barton Close with adjacent notice board
- The old style telephone box
- The glass fronted notice board beside the village hall
- The thatched bus shelter
- Footpath and bridleway signs.

10. Wildlife Habitats

These include:

- The paddock field and adjacent 'allotments' with surrounding trees, hedgerows and walls
- Private gardens
- Woods and hedgerows
- Trees
- Unimproved water meadows
- Roadside verges and hedges
- River Frome (SSSI) and South Winterborne.

Annex A

11. Sympathetic Design

Development has already taken place in the village. The following examples have contributed to the enhancement of the character of West Stafford by their sympathetic design and construction:

- The Paddock development
- Meadow and Willow Cottages
- Meadow View
- Extensions to 1 Church Cottages, 26 Glebeland Close and 5 Glebeland Close.

12. The Thomas Hardy Connection

- The existence of Talbothays Lodge designed by Thomas Hardy for his brother and sisters.
- West Stafford is the location in several of Thomas Hardy's works, including especially *'Tess of the D'Urbervilles'* with the name "Talbothays" being the only one which was not changed in that book.

Listed Buildings in West Stafford

Please note whilst this list has been extracted from official sources, mainly the *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, District of West Dorset, Parishes of West Stafford et al*, published by the (then) Department of the Environment, it is neither authoritative or definitive.

Grade I

Church of Saint Andrew
 Manor House
 Stafford House, including attached garden walls

Grade II

Barton Barn
 Brewery Cottage (now The Old Brew House) and Woodmans Cottage,
 including walls (Stafford Court)
 Bridge 300m west of Stafford House
 Bridge 400m north-west of Stafford House
 Cart shed and barn, Stafford Farm
 Davine, Petrela and The Forge (now Davine and The Forge)
 Former entrance gatepiers to Manor House
 John Gilbert and Elizabeth Roper monuments, in the churchyard
 Numbers 1 and 2 Church Cottages
 Numbers 1 and 2 Manor Drive Cottages
 Parish Hall (*sic*) (The Village Hall)
 Porch Cottage
 Praps Cottage and The Gardens
 Stable Cottage (Stafford Court)
 Stafford Farm House
 Talbothayes (*sic*) Lodge
 The Old Rectory (formerly The Rectory, now Old Glebe and The Old Rectory)
 William Anthony monument, in the churchyard

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