

WEOBLEY CONSERVATION AREA

APPRAISAL

June 2006

WEOBLEY CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1. Introduction

1.1 Weobley is a large village, and former parliamentary borough, located ten miles (16km) north-west of Hereford City. It is approximately 0.5 mile (0.75km) south of the A4112, a main road running east-west through Herefordshire. The village is situated on the gently sloping plain of the Newbridge Brook, overlooked by the steep sided Burton Hill to the south.

1.2 Weobley Conservation Area was designated in 1977 by the former Leominster District Council. The conservation area lies mainly within the Civil Parish of Weobley; although the northern part (north of the Newbridge Brook) is in the Civil Parish of Dilwyn.

1.3 The designation of a conservation area is no longer considered appropriate as an end in itself. For the designation to be meaningful the process requires the preparation of an appraisal to define what is special, thereby warranting the status of the conservation area. This should also form the basis for making decisions about the future of the conservation area, ensuring its character and appearance is taken properly into account.

1.4 An appraisal has now been carried out to review the special qualities of Weobley Conservation Area, particularly in view of changes within the conservation area since the original designation. The scope of the appraisal has included a review of whether additional areas should be added to, or areas removed from, the designation. At this stage, any proposals for boundary change are put forward as the basis for further discussion and consultation. Any decision on changes to the boundary of Weobley Conservation Area will be taken at a later stage in association with consideration of management proposals.

2. Planning Policy Context

2.1 There is a considerable amount of guidance and policy published by a number of sources concerning the use of, and approach to, the designation of conservation areas. A bibliography of useful publications is given at the end of this document.

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) sets out Herefordshire Council's planning policies. These policies will influence how development proceeds throughout the County, including within the village of Weobley.

2.3 The UDP contains policies setting out criteria for designating and reviewing conservation areas (Policy HBA5) and how planning applications for development within such areas will be considered (Policy HBA6). The purpose of setting criteria against which the designation of a conservation area will be judged is to ensure consistency of approach and help avoid the inclusion of areas that would not be in keeping with the special character of the area. A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which should be conserved or enhanced. The criteria against which the importance of the area is judged are reflected in the analysis that follows in this document.

2.4 Weobley is defined in the UDP as a 'Main Village' where residential development can take place on allocated and windfall sites within a defined settlement boundary

(Policy H4). The Weobley settlement boundary falls within the conservation area. The UDP also allocates one site for development within the village. This site, adjacent to Weobley Methodist Church (Policy H5), falls within the Conservation Area boundary. Its release together with any windfall sites would need to comply with design and other policies set out in the UDP.

3. Summary of Special interest

3.1 Weobley Conservation Area includes the village of Weobley and the rural area that immediately surrounds the village. The rural area is more extensive in the southern part where it includes much of Garnstone Park.

3.2 The village dates to at least the 11th Century, and there may have been a settlement on the site before that date. The form of the medieval planned town, with its wedge-shaped market place and burgage plots set out on a north-south axis, is discernable today in the layout of the village. The parish church and castle earthworks both date to the 12th Century, and are likely to have been preceded by an earlier church and fortifications. The medieval open field system, with its long narrow furlongs, was an integral part of the local economy. The form of the field system is retained in post-medieval enclosures and is also identifiable in contemporary field boundaries. In recent years, however, a number of these field boundaries have been removed.

3.3 During the medieval period, and into the 17th Century, Weobley prospered as a market town and wool centre. Today, a large number of surviving timber-framed buildings, dating to between the 14th and 17th Century, are evidence of that period of prosperity. Several architectural periods and styles are represented, including cruck-trussed buildings, box-framed buildings and 'wealden' style houses. Building types include merchants' hall houses, farmhouses and a school. A limited amount of new house building took place during the 18th Century, although there is evidence of Classical/Georgian architectural influence in the area. Further development took place during the 19th Century, including the construction of houses, churches, a mill, a school and a workhouse. Agricultural buildings of the 18th and 19th Century include barns, stables, sheds, a dairy and a cider house.

3.4 Heritage assets within the conservation area include 79 Listed Buildings, including one Grade I building and eleven Grade II*, and three Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Four unlisted buildings are identified as buildings of local interest. All of these buildings contribute to the special character of Weobley Conservation Area.

4. Location and Setting

4.1 The village of Weobley lies on a gentle north-facing slope at the centre of, and completely contained within, the conservation area. To the north of the village, the conservation area includes an area of meadowland on the floodplain of the east-flowing Newbridge Brook at an elevation of c. 90m above Ordnance Datum (OD). The silty (typical stagnogley) soils of this area are prone to seasonal waterlogging, and support stock rearing on permanent pasture. South of the meadowland, the generally deep, well drained, coarse loamy soils (typical argillic brown earths) support cereals and short-term grassland, and some fruit, potatoes and hops.

4.2 To the south of the village, the conservation area includes Garnstone Park, an area of parkland and agricultural land rising to 140m OD. A small stream, the Marl Brook, flows north through the conservation area, and through the village, to its

confluence with the Newbridge Brook. The Marl Brook has been regularised for much of its present course and it is likely that, in the past, the flow of water was greater.

4.3 The underlying bedrock of the area is the Raglan Mudstone Formation of the Lower Old Red Sandstone, composed of red-brown mudstones with beds of greenish-grey sandstone. This bedrock has long been an important source of building material, and can be seen today in many houses and boundary walls in the village.

5. Historical Development and Archaeology

5.1 The place name, Weobley, is of Old English origin. The suffix, *ley*, originally referred to a clearing in, or on the edge of, woodland, and later came to mean pasture or meadow. The prefix is thought to have been a Saxon personal name.

5.2 The Domesday Book of 1086 records a manor at Weobley (*Wibelai*) held at that time by Roger de Lacy, who had inherited from his father, Walter. The population of the settlement included 10 villagers, a priest, a reeve, five smallholders and 11 slaves. In addition to arable land (170 hectares), the manor included woodland (75 hectares, possibly on Burton Hill south of the conservation area) and a park.

5.3 Specific mention is made of assarting, the clearance of woodland for cultivation. Woodland provided a range of resources, and its management would have included coppicing. The park mentioned is likely to have been an enclosure for deer raised for domestic consumption. The presence of a priest implies that there was a church at Weobley at this time.

5.4 Before the Norman Conquest, the manor was held by Edwy Young. It is possible that a settlement existed at Weobley at that time, centred on the present day Bell Square where earthworks in the form of house platforms have been identified.

5.5 An earthwork castle was constructed by the De Lacy family in c. 1100 AD on the site of an earlier fortification. The castle was later rebuilt of stone, and extended. The earliest identifiable fabric of the present church probably dates to the 12th Century, but it is likely that an earlier church existed here (particularly in view of the Domesday evidence).

5.6 It is apparent from a number of sources that Weobley was a successful settlement that grew rapidly with planned burgage plots on a north-south axis. Two rows of burgage plots, aligned east-west, extended north from the castle on each side of Broad Street/Portland Street. A single row of burgage plots extended south on the east side of the castle. Back Lane, which provided access to the rear of burgage plots facing onto Broad Street and Portland Street, became the focus of further settlement.

5.7 From the mid-13th Century, charters were granted by the king for a market and a fair, and in the late 13th Century, Weobley sent two members to Parliament. By the 14th Century, Weobley was a thriving town, and documentary evidence of economic activities lists a range of occupations, including carpenter, shoemaker, smith, tanner, butcher and shopkeeper. Two watermills were recorded at this time, one located on the site of The Mill (now a residential building) on Mill Bank and the other on a site closer to the castle. A windmill was recorded by the beginning of the 15th Century. The site, on high ground west of the village, is known today as Windmill Knapp.

5.8 Markets were held in the Broad Street/Portland Street and Bell Square areas. The wedge-shaped Broad Street market place would have been wider at the south end than at present, and eventually contained two infill rows of shops and merchants' houses aligned north-south. This included a timber-framed market hall (demolished in the 1860s) and a row of buildings burned down in 1943. The eastern infill row survives in part as the present east side of Broad Street south of Mellington House. The former eastern edge of the market place coincides with a lane behind the infill row, and can be traced northwards following the line of the frontages of Mellington House and other buildings to the north.

5.9 From the end of the 13th Century, the strategic importance of the castle began to decline, although it continued to be occupied for several centuries. Throughout the medieval period, and into the 17th Century, however, the village grew and prospered as a market town and wool centre. The 16th and 17th Century in particular saw a considerable amount of new and high status building in Weobley reflecting its continued prosperity and significance as an urban centre.

5.10 By the beginning of the 18th Century, Weobley was in decline to some extent, partly due to the increasing strategic and economic importance of the town of Kington, eight miles (12km) to the north-west. There was very little construction of new buildings in the village during the 18th and 19th Century, although many existing buildings were adapted or extended. During the 20th Century, new housing estates and schools were constructed to the east of the historic settlement area. The division between the historic and the new areas is well marked, and generally follows the eastern boundary of the medieval settlement.

5.11 On the east and west sides of the village, contemporary field boundaries are indicative of the enclosure of an earlier medieval field system. This would have consisted of large open fields divided into narrow strips, or furlongs. To the west of Weobley, where the slopes are steeper, medieval (or early post-medieval) field boundaries are marked by lynchets (terraces). A deeply cut holloway, extending westwards from Meadow Street, has long given access to this area.

5.12 There was little change in field boundaries and orchards between 1887 and 1951. Since 1951, however, there has been considerable change as the result of the removal of field boundaries. Moreover, change of use from permanent pasture to arable was noted by the Land Utilization Survey of 1930.

5.13 Garnstone Park is thought to have been created in the 16th Century. The estate, together with its medieval house, was purchased in 1661 by Col. John Birch. Birch was responsible for alterations to the house and, possibly, for planting avenues of trees within the park. A new house, described as a 'castellated mansion', was built between 1806 and 1810 by John Nash. Garnstone House was surrounded by lawns, gardens and shrubberies. On the west side, there was a walled garden with hot houses and exotic fruit trees. The house was demolished in 1958-9.

5.14 The West Lodge of Garnstone, also designed by Nash, was constructed at the same time as Garnstone House. Fields End Farm, located at the south-west corner of the conservation area, dates to the 18th Century. The nearby Home Farm is of 19th and 20th Century date. The east and west lodges, and several buildings associated with the walled garden survive to the present.

6. Spatial Analysis

Character and Interrelationship of Spaces

6.1 Weobley Conservation Area consists predominantly of an agricultural landscape with a large village at its core. In the central area of the village, and in the area of new estates on the east side of the earlier settlement, buildings are set fairly close together. Some linear development also took place to the south along Hereford Road and to the north along Meadow Street. Two small industrial estates are located on Kington Road in the north-west, and several clusters of farm buildings are located in the south-west in Garnstone Park.

6.2 Along the northern edge of the new estates there is a belt of trees with cultivated land to the north. The trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO 090).

6.3 On the north side of the conservation area lies the meadowland of the Newbridge Brook. The topography is fairly level, but the land rises on the north side of the brook. The area consists mainly of large rectangular fields, bordered by hedges, given over to cultivation and grazing. There are clusters of trees and shrubs in the northwest part of the area in the vicinity of the industrial estates and Whitehill House (a former workhouse and, more recently, a housing development).

6.4 Fields lie on rising land to the west of the village. The fields at this location are generally smaller, and are also bordered by hedges. Fields closer to the village are generally used for grazing and those further to the west, for cultivation. On the east side of the new estates there is a strip of fields, some of which are quite long and narrow and bordered by high mature hedges. Most of these fields are in pasture.

6.5 To the south of the village lies the wide expanse of Garnstone Park. The area is actively farmed (arable and livestock) but the presence of large mature trees, including oaks, elms and an avenue of redwoods, together with small areas of woodland, gives the area a parkland quality.

6.6 There are several significant open spaces within the village itself. The most prominent is the site of the castle earthworks. The site is wooded on the west and south-east sides. In addition, an avenue of oaks extends northwards from the edge of the outer bailey. These trees date to c. 1837, the succession of Queen Victoria.

6.7 In the centre of the village, a long narrow public garden bordered by Broad Street, Portland Street and Market Pitch (the site of the medieval market place), provides a focus for social activities and shopping. The small garden, with its public art and street furniture, has an air of intimacy. The closely set buildings that surround this space promote a sense of enclosure.

6.8 In the northern part of the village there is a small, green open space that was formerly used as a bowling lawn. The relationship of this open space to the parish church is a significant aspect of the setting of the church, and of the recognition of the steeple as a local landmark.

Key Views and Vistas

6.9 There are a number of panoramic vistas within the conservation area:

- Looking south from the A4112 road across the Newbridge Brook meadows to the church steeple, to the timber-framed buildings of the village on rising ground beyond, and to the distant wooded uplands of Garnstone;
- Looking north from the churchyard across the meadowland of the Newbridge Brook;
- Looking east from higher land on the west side of the conservation area across the Weobley townscape;
- Looking south from Weobley castle earthworks across Garnstone parkland;
- Looking south-west from the Weobley to Hereford road near the East Lodge across Garnstone parkland.

6.10 There a number of key views within the village of Weobley, including:

- A sequential view looking north from the castle earthworks along the avenue of oak trees, through a gateway into Broad Street, with a distant view of the church steeple beyond; then, looking north along Broad Street, the projecting facades of buildings on the east side of the street creating a visual meander, the Red Lion Hotel at the end of the street creating a visual pause, and with the church steeple towering above the streetscape; finally, looking north from Church Street across the open space of the former bowling lawn to the parish church and steeple set in its churchyard;
- Looking south along Broad Street towards Market Pitch, projecting buildings and bay windows punctuate the view, a narrow lane offers a glimpse of the avenue of oaks beyond;
- Looking east from Meadow Street along Bell Square, the juxtaposition of intricate front elevations (including timber framing, jettied gables and bay windows), cobbled paving and greensward creates a series of textured surfaces;
- Looking west along High Street towards Market Pitch, a series of timber-framed buildings with intricate front elevations that include the following features: an arcade, pilasters, 1st floor jetties and dormer windows; the view is punctuated at Market Pitch by Corner House;
- Looking north along Hereford Road to High Street, a sweeping view that includes a range of stone-built houses with variable rooflines on the west side, a series of brick, rendered and timber-framed buildings on the east side, narrow front gardens with abundant shrubs and other greenery, terminated abruptly by a timber-framed cottage on High Street;
- A deflected view looking east then north along Mill Bank, following a deeply cut holloway enclosed by mature hedges, the view suddenly opens out to reveal a terrace of 19th Century brick-built cottages dominated by a four-storey former corn mill.

7. Character Analysis

Character Areas

7.1 The following character areas have been identified within Weobley Conservation Area:

1. Historic Core
2. Newbridge Brook Meadows
3. Garnstone
4. New Estates

Historic Core

7.2 The historic core character area lies at the centre of the conservation area; it includes the village of Weobley, the fields to the west of the village and several fields to the north-east. The plan form of the medieval borough, including the market place and burgage plots, has strongly influenced the layout of streets and building plots in the centre of the present-day village. The organisation of the medieval agricultural system, with large open fields divided into narrow strips, also influenced the post-medieval enclosure of open fields, and can be inferred from contemporary field boundaries.

7.3 The earliest surviving building in the character area is the parish church of St Peter and St Paul (Grade I), located at the north end of the village. The present structure dates to the 12th Century but may have earlier origins. In the churchyard is an ashlar cross (Scheduled Monument, Grade II) dating to the 14th Century. Earthworks at the south end of the village mark the location of the castle (Scheduled Monument), also constructed in the early 12th Century on the site of earlier fortifications.

7.4 The oldest surviving secular buildings date to the 14th Century with later alterations or extensions; there are three such buildings. All are former hall houses of timber-frame construction with painted brick or rendered infill on a coursed rubble or rendered plinth. The most prominent is the Red Lion Hotel (Grade II*) standing at the north end of Broad Street (the medieval market place). The box frame construction of the hotel contrasts with the cruck trusses of a building (formerly a barn) at the rear. The Unicorn Hotel (Grade II*) is located on the north side of High Street. This would have been a prominent location at the south end of the medieval market place (prior to infill by buildings now lining the east side of Broad Street). This building is particularly interesting because of its two jettied bays at first floor level, a feature more common in south-east England. (A similar 'wealden'-style house (Grade II*), dated to the 15th Century, is located at no. 4 Portland Street.) The Old Manor (Grade II*) is located on the south side of Bell Square, also thought to have been a former market place. The close association of these houses with medieval market places suggests that they may have been the properties of wealthy merchants.

7.5 A significant percentage of buildings in the character area are of timber frame construction with painted brick or rendered infill, dating to between the 14th (above) and 17th Century. Most have been altered or extended in brick; some were refronted in painted brick during the 18th or 19th Century. In the central area, particularly Broad Street, Portland Street, Market Pitch, High Street and Bell Square, these houses are likely to have been owned by merchants and tradesmen. Further from the centre, there are also timber-framed farmhouses and agricultural buildings. These include The Throne (Grade II*), Hereford Road, and The Dairy Farm (Grade II*) and Fenmore (Grade II) on Meadow Street.

7.6 Timber-framed buildings make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area. They identify Weobley as a village with a prominent history and they attract visitors to the area, so contributing to the economy of the region.

7.7 More recent trends in building design and construction are also represented in the character area. On Broad Street east side, three houses represent changes in architectural design and construction methods between the 15th and 18th Century. The Gables, no. 7 (Grade II*), is a 15th Century hall house with later alterations. It is of H-plan, with the main range aligned north-south, and timber frame construction with rendered infill underbuilt in coursed rubble. Mellington House (Grade II) is a late 17th Century timber-framed and stucco building with hipped roof, quoins, and windows with architraves and central entrance with moulded wooden architrave. These features give the house a Classical/Georgian appearance. The Bear and Ursa House, nos. 9 and 10 (Grade II), are of 18th Century date and were built as one house, formerly an inn. The building is of brick with roughcast front, hipped roof and coursed rubble plinth. It is plainer in appearance than its two neighbours. All three houses have a small garden to the front. A similar juxtaposition of architectural styles and periods can be seen throughout the village, contributing to the individual character of the conservation area.

7.8 Several 19th Century buildings illustrate the use of alternative building materials at that time, i.e., brick and stone. A former corn mill stands on Mill Bank. The Mill (Grade II) is brick-built and is four storeys high—the tallest secular building in the village. It has recently been converted into housing. A row of four houses, Mill Bank Cottages (Grade II), stands adjacent. All are of two storeys and are brick-built with tile roofs. Castle House (Grade II), Hereford Road, is an early 19th Century two-storey house of coursed ashlar under a hipped slate roof; the wooden door case has Doric pilasters and a moulded cornice. The house has a narrow garden to the front. There are several other stone-built houses at this location. A former school (now a shop) is located on Portland Street on the site of an earlier school. The one-storey building with two-storey cross-wing is built of coursed rubble with ashlar dressing under a slate roof with a small stone bellcote.

7.9 The steeple of the parish church is a prominent landmark; it can be seen at a distance from beyond the conservation area, and dominates the skyline from within the conservation area. In contrast, the castle earthworks, once the focus of political and economic control, are mainly hidden from view, except from Hereford Road. The four-storey mill, located at the foot of Mill Bank, is also fairly well hidden. It dominates the view only in its immediate vicinity.

7.10 The focal point of the village is the central Broad Street/Portland Street area. This small open space continues to be the commercial centre with several shops, a restaurant and three public houses nearby. This area exhibits the urban character of a small town centre with buildings set close together. On the west side of Portland Street, buildings are set back on the edge of a narrow pavement. On the east side of Broad Street, three prominent buildings have small front gardens. Further north, several buildings crowd onto the street while to the south, the pavement is quite wide. The short steep slope of Market Pitch at the south end of Broad Street/Portland Street results in a change of level between the east and west sides of the area.

7.11 A range of architectural styles and periods is represented, from 14th/15th Century timber-framed houses to 18th and 19th Century brick and stone buildings. The majority are painted, rendered or stuccoed in white, and, occasionally, in yellow.

7.12 Many roofs have clay plain tiles; the remainder are mainly of slate. The majority of windows are vertical sashes; there are also some bay windows. Several 19th Century shop fronts can be seen, as well plate glass 20th Century shop fronts.

7.13 Many of the buildings are of two storeys, however, gabled cross-wings and topographic gradient (sloping downwards from south to north and east to west) produce a variable skyline. This can best be appreciated when looking south towards Market Pitch. A similar variable skyline can be seen when looking north towards the gable ends of the Red Lion Hotel and The Old Corner House (II*), but here the church steeple towers above the skyline.

7.14 In the short High Street, buildings are set close together and crowd onto the narrow pavement. On the north side, the buildings are all timber-framed with painted brick or render infill of white or off-white. The buildings are of two storeys with pitched roofs of clay plain tiles or slate. The differing roof heights and the dormer windows of the Unicorn Inn create a variable skyline. Variation is also seen in the front elevations of these buildings since several, including the Unicorn Hotel, retain their first-floor jetties. On looking west along High Street, the view narrows towards Market Pitch until the gable end of Corner House (Grade II) punctuates the alignment.

7.15 Hereford Road sweeps southwards out of the village towards Garnstone. At its north end, buildings are set close together. On the east side, the street is dominated by The Throne, a 16th Century timber-framed building with rendered infill on a coursed rubble plinth. The house has been extended several times and now includes a range constructed of rendered brick and one of plain brick, all under a continuous roof of clay plain tiles. The front elevation is further differentiated by windows of different design and period. Immediately to the south, there are two timber-framed buildings refronted in painted brick (both Grade II). The row of buildings is terminated by Fairlawn (Grade II), an early 19th Century Classical/Georgian style building of brick on a coursed rubble plinth under a tile roof. The central bay of the south-facing front elevation breaks forward with a gable over. The parapetted west gable overlooks the street.

7.16 Further south on Hereford Road, the buildings are well spaced and, generally, set back off the street behind front gardens. The southern-most building in the character area is the Methodist Chapel, built in 1861. The building is of brick with stone dressings. A short distance to the north stands a barn constructed of sandstone rubble with timber frame, weatherboard and corrugated iron under a corrugated iron roof. The building probably dates to the 18th Century. The barn adjoins Oak View, a small two-storey house (in a terrace of two), rendered under a tile roof with two bay windows at the front on the ground floor. The house probably dates to the 18th or early 19th Century. In the early 19th Century, Hereford Road was wider at this point than at present and Oak View may have been used as a tollhouse.

7.17 Most of the buildings on the west side of Hereford Road are set close together. The most notable is the 17th Century Old Grammar School (Grade II*). The one-storey building is timber-framed with rendered infill on a coursed rubble plinth under clay plain tile roof. The east front has two dormer windows and a central entrance with gabled porch. Next is a row of five stone built houses, including Castle House. All are on short plots. The roofs of these houses are at different heights and create a variable skyline. Immediately to the south, the castle ditch is aligned parallel with, and close to, Hereford Road. The earthworks of the inner and outer baileys rise up prominently behind the ditch.

7.18 Shrubs and trees are fairly abundant on Hereford Road, even on the very narrow frontage of The Throne. To the south, the thickness and density of the vegetation increases. The view to the south is screened by trees and shrubs at the south end of the castle earthworks. The view to the north along Hereford Road is terminated by timber-framed houses on High Street.

7.19 In Bell Square, the houses on the north side are set closely together. Most are two-storey timber-framed buildings with white-painted brick infill on coursed rubble plinth under clay plain tile roofs. The roofline of the buildings follows the topography and is broken in places by the gables of The Old Manor. Windows include the transoms of The Corner House, vertical sashes, casements and bay windows. Several of the houses have a narrow flower garden in front and a cobbled footway. A grass verge planted with small trees shields the houses from the road.

7.10 Looking east along Bell Square, the view is enclosed by the timber-framed buildings, i.e., the Red Lion Hotel on the north side and The Corner House on the south side, and is terminated by white-rendered buildings on Broad Street. To the west, the view opens out onto green fields with mature hedges.

7.21 On Back Lane, most of the buildings are modern, well spaced and set back off the road in large gardens. A variety of designs can be seen. There are also several 17th Century timber-framed houses with painted brick and rendered infill, i.e., Bell House (Grade II) and Willow Cottage (Grade II).

7.22 Two prominent timber-framed buildings are located at the junction of Back Lane and Mill Bank. Marlbrook House (Grade II*) dates to the 15th Century. The house is timber-framed with wattle-and-daub infill on a coursed rubble plinth under a slate roof. The hall range has mullioned windows and the cross-wing has a jettied upper floor. Outbuildings extend to the rear. The Forge (Grade II) lies immediately to the south. Probably dating to the 16th Century, the building is of timber frame construction with rendered infill on a coursed rubble plinth under a clay plain tiled roof.

7.23 Further south on Mill Bank are the 19th Century brick-built Mill and Mill Bank Cottages. There are also two 17th Century houses set in large gardens, Camberwell Cottage (Grade II) and Orchard Bank (Grade II).

7.24 Mill Bank enters Weobley from the west as a deeply cut holloway enclosed by mature hedges. The view along Mill Bank is deflected to the left, emerging at the foot of the four-storey mill.

7.25 To the north of the village centre, buildings on Church Road and Meadow Street are widely spaced with views across open spaces with mature trees and hedges. The church spire towers over the churchyard and surrounding fields, and can be seen from all sides. Many of the houses on Church Road are of 20th Century or late 19th Century date, and are of various architectural styles set in large gardens. The oldest secular building is Parkfields (17th Century), a timber-framed house with painted brick and rendered infill on a coursed rubble plinth under a clay plain tile roof.

7.26 Of the buildings on Meadow Street, the majority (nine) are of timber frame construction with painted brick or rendered infill; many are on coursed rubble plinths with clay plain tiled roofs. Most of the houses and farmhouses were constructed as halls with gabled cross-wings, e.g. The Dairy Farmhouse (Grade II*), The Old Vicarage (Grade II). All show variability in terms of design.

7.27 At the north end of Meadow Street are two 19th Century buildings, the Roman Catholic Church of St Thomas of Hereford (Grade II) and the attached Presbytery (Grade II). The church is constructed of coursed stone rubble in Gothic style with a slate roof and small bellcote; the presbytery is of brick with a hipped slate roof.

7.28 The most prominent forms of boundary treatment in the character area are coursed rubble walling and mature hedges. Examples of stone walling can be seen surrounding the churchyard, on the north side of the castle earthworks, and in Bell Square extending along Meadow Street and in Broad Street. The churchyard wall exhibits several periods of build and repair, and several construction techniques. There is also evidence of reused dressed and picked stone. At the site of the castle, rubble walls incorporate dressed stones, some of which may have been part of the castle fabric. The weathered stone with lichen contributes significantly to the historic character of the area.

7.29 Mature hedges are generally used near the perimeter of the character area. They are prominent on Hereford Road, and in the area of the parish church and the castle earthworks. Wooden fences can be seen in Bell Square, Hereford Road and Meadow Street, and iron railings on the east side of Broad Street.

7.30 A number of unlisted buildings and structures make a positive contribution to the special architectural and historical interest of the conservation area. It is proposed that the following be considered for designation as buildings of local interest:

- The Old School, coursed rubble with ashlar dressing under slate roof with stone bellcote, built c.1873, Portland Street;
- Methodist Chapel, redbrick with stone dressings, built 1861, Hereford Road;
- Barn, sandstone rubble and timber frame with weatherboard and corrugated iron under corrugated iron roof, adjoining Oak View, Hereford Road;
- Barn, sandstone rubble and timber frame, timber exposed on west elevation, at rear of The Hayloft, Gadbridge Road.

7.31 Several other features, including street furniture, contribute to the character of the conservation area and promote a sense of continuity. These include:

- Black and white striped cast iron sign post with wooden finger boards and roundel marked 'Hereford CC', (i) Meadow Street j/w Bell Square, (ii) High Street j/w Hereford Road;
- Green cast iron gas lamp, Broad Street;
- Black cast iron pump, Hereford Street;
- Green cast iron stand pipe, (i) Bell Square, (ii) Broad Street, (iii) Church Road, (iv) Hereford Road;
- Red cast iron telephone box, lane off High Street leading to the castle site;
- Brick electricity substation with 'timber- frame and render' cladding (distressed), car park off Bell Square;

- Stone walls, particularly (i) surrounding the churchyard, (ii) north of the castle site (rear walls of houses facing onto Market Pitch, High Street south side, Hereford Road west side), (iii) Bell Square north side extending along Meadow Street east side;
- Area of cobble paving, (i) in front of houses at Bell Square, (ii) Broad Street.

Newbridge Brook Meadows

7.32 The character area is located on the north side of the conservation area. The Newbridge Brook flows through the area towards the north-east. At the time of designation of the conservation area, in 1977, this area was almost entirely agricultural. The only significant building was Whitehill House (Grade II), built in 1837 as a workhouse. The building is of double H plan (cruciform) and is typical of other workhouses built in the region. It is brick-built with a hipped slate roof. Today, it is used as housing. The building is well preserved with little alteration to the exterior.

7.33 The silty soils of the area can be prone to seasonal waterlogging, and the meadowland was used mainly for stock rearing in the past. The Weobley parish tithe map of 1838 records several fields in, or adjacent to, the character area with the descriptive term 'park' in their field name. This may be associated with the Domesday park. If so, this would suggest that deer were raised here for domestic consumption during medieval times. The tithe map also records the descriptive term 'meadow' for most of the fields in this area.

7.34 Existing field boundaries are characteristic of the reconfiguration of earlier meadow enclosure and drainage. The fields are generally quite large and there has been little change in their configuration since the tithe map was drawn (1838), except for the loss of several field boundaries in Dry Parks, a large field on the eastern edge of the character area. Agricultural usage today includes arable and livestock, particularly as a result of more efficient drainage.

7.35 Since designation, a number of developments have taken place on the west side of the character area along Kington Road. These include the establishment of two small industrial estates (Whitehill Park and Kington Road), and the construction of a sewage works, a small housing estate (Park View), and several individual houses. This has also entailed the sub-division of large fields into smaller plots in this area.

7.36 The character of the area is derived from its open spaces, large fields, and agricultural usage. This permits extensive views of the conservation area from the A4112 on its northern edge. More intensive industrial or residential development would change the character of the area, and its amenity value would suffer as a result.

Garnstone

7.37 The character area is located on the south side of the conservation area and accounts for approximately 40% of the total conservation area. It is mainly agricultural land, including arable and pasture. There are also a number of small areas of woodland. Many mature parkland trees survive, including oaks, elms and an avenue of redwoods aligned east-west along the old drive from the west lodge to

the site of Garnstone House (demolished). Today, the area is probably very similar to when first designated in 1977.

7.38 Buildings are located in the southern part of the character area. There are two main groups of farm buildings, and a small number of more scattered cottages.

7.39 Fields End, a group of about 15 buildings, is located in the south-west corner of the area. The farmhouse dates to the mid-18th Century (with some late 19th Century alterations). The two-storey building is constructed of coursed stone rubble with a slate roof and gable-end stacks with brick shafts. On the north front there is a central entrance with a gabled porch and a square oriel on the ground floor to the right. There are two other buildings of similar date: the stables and cider house of coursed rubble with ashlar dressings and slate roof; the cart and implement shed, originally built of coursed rubble with an arcade supported by wooden posts. There are two early 18th Century buildings: a timber-framed barn on rubble plinth with rubble gable ends, partly weatherboarded with corrugated iron roof; a two-storey cowhouse with coursed rubble ground floor, weatherboarded timber-framing and slate roof. An early 19th Century dairy is built of brick with a pyramidal slate roof topped by a louvre. These buildings are all Grade II Listed (the cowhouse was the subject of mid-20th Century alterations and was included in the listing for group value). Fields End farm includes additional 19th and 20th Century buildings.

7.40 Home Farm is a group of about six buildings of 19th and 20th Century date. Several cottages and other buildings of 19th and 20th Century date are also located in the area. These include the west and east lodges of the now-demolished Garnstone House.

7.41 West Lodge (Grade II) was constructed at the same time as Garnstone House (1806-10). It is a two-storey building of coursed rubble with a plain parapet and pilaster buttresses to the corners at the front elevation, and slate roof. East Lodge was constructed later in the 19th Century.

7.42 The character of the area is influenced by its open spaces and large fields. However, although the landscape is predominantly an agricultural one, views into the area from the castle site to the north and from the Weobley to Hereford road to the east reveal a parkland setting. The large number of mature trees scattered across an open landscape with small patches of woodland give the area its parkland character. The lodges on the east and west sides of the area contribute to this interpretation, even though the mansion at the centre of it all this no longer exists.

7.43 Garnstone Park is also recognised by Herefordshire Council as of local importance (an 'unregistered' park). As such, it is afforded the same measure of protection by the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan as parks and gardens of special historic interest registered by English Heritage.

7.44 Farm buildings and cottages are generally hidden from view due to screening by trees or distance from areas of public access. Fields End farmhouse and the associated Grade II Listed buildings are, nonetheless, of particular architectural and historic interest due to their design, construction and use of materials. This group of buildings, moreover, is within the designed visual envelope (vista or view) of Eywood (registered by English Heritage) and Titley Court (unregistered—recognised by Herefordshire Council). They are also protected by the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

New Estates

7.45 This character area is located on the east side of the conservation area. At the time of designation the area consisted mainly of fields and orchards. A wood-built primary school, constructed in 1834, was located at Burton Road near the junction with Hereford Road. Further west on Burton Road, several houses were located at Pepper Plock on a site occupied since the 19th Century.

7.46 Field boundaries took the form of closes with a high frequency of 'dog-leg' boundaries. This is indicative of the enclosure of an earlier, medieval open field system associated with the medieval settlement of Weobley.

7.47 Today, much of the area consists of planned residential developments of fairly high density. In Bearcroft (north of Gadbridge Road), there is a mixture of detached and semi-detached two-storey houses and bungalows. Most are brick-built; some are rendered, painted, or fitted with shingles. Roofs are generally covered with cement tiles or slate. Many of the residences have a small front garden with a low brick wall or hedge, or are open to the footpath. South of Gadbridge Road, there is a higher percentage of terraced houses sited on smaller plots. Weobley High School and Weobley Primary School are located on Burton Road in the southern part of the character area. Both are modern buildings. The former primary school has since been demolished.

7.48 Several public footpaths run through the residential area. Generally, the footpaths are hard-surfaced with high wooden fences on either side. There are no open green spaces within the area of recent residential development. A belt of various specimen trees forms a screen along the northern edge of the Bearwood estate. The trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO 090) imposed in 1976.

7.49 On the east side of the character area is a narrow strip of agricultural land. Evidence for the enclosure of medieval open fields is still discernible here, but the area is now divorced from its previous close association with the historic core of the conservation area as a result of the recent residential development.

7.50 The character of the area is now derived from its modern development. In plan form, architectural design, building materials and site density it is similar to recent planned residential developments in many other areas.

Prevalent Building Materials and Local Details

7.51 A large number of houses in the village of Weobley date from the 14th to 17th Century. They are timber-framed structures, most of which are of box frame construction (there are also several cruck-trussed buildings), set on a plinth of coursed rubble. Many originated as hall houses with one or two cross wings; at a later date, an upper floor with dormer windows was inserted into the hall. Early timber-framed houses were infilled with wattle (or lathes) and daub, later replaced with brick, painted brick or render. Original thatched roofs were replaced with clay plain tiles. Many timber-framed houses were later refronted in brick or painted brick.

7.52 Two 'wealden' style houses, dating to the 14th and 15 Century, are located in Weobley. These timber-framed hall houses would have had two cross wings with 1st floor jetties under a continuous pitched, hipped or gabled roof. Both of these houses have undergone alterations, and their original thatched roofs replaced with clay plain tiles or slate. Houses of this style are known more commonly in south-east England.

7.53 There are few houses of Classical/Georgian style in the conservation area, however, one such house occupies a prominent position in Broad Street. This 17th Century stuccoed building has a hipped tiled roof, quoins, and windows and a central entrance with architraves. The building is of timber-framed construction.

7.54 Buildings of 19th Century date are of brick or stone construction with tiled roofs. These buildings include dwelling houses, a former, a former school and a former workhouse. Most 20th Century houses are brick-built; some are rendered, painted or finished with shingles. Roofs are covered with cement tiles or slate.

7.55 Agricultural buildings dating to the 18th Century, including barns and cowhouses, are generally timber-framed with weatherboarding on a coursed rubble plinth, sometimes with coursed rubble first floor or gable ends, under a corrugated iron or tile roof. Weatherboarding may be replaced by corrugated iron.

8. Pressures, Capacity and General Condition

8.1 A considerable amount of residential development has taken place within the conservation area since its designation. This has occurred mainly on the east side of the village of Weobley and is generally of a higher density than elsewhere in the conservation area. Some infill development has taken place on the west side of the village in the area of Back Lane, and to the north-west on Kington Road. It is thought that, in the future, pressure for further development will occur as a result of the continuing recognition of the Weobley area as a desirable place to live, particularly in retirement.

8.2 Two small industrial areas are located on Kington Road in the north-west part of the conservation area; both may have the capacity for further development. Future development, whether residential or industrial, if undertaken at a similar level as that which has occurred since 1977, will almost certainly change the character of the conservation area considerably.

9. Current Issues

Boundaries

9.1 At several locations the conservation area boundary does not follow marked or recognisable boundary features:

- On the west side of the conservation, the boundary crosses several fields;
- On the north-east side of the conservation area, near Parkfields, the boundary crosses a field where a former field boundary has been removed.

It is proposed that at these locations the boundary should be realigned to follow recognisable features, such as field boundaries or public footpaths, without resulting in any significant loss to the conservation area.

9.2 The development of residential estates on the east side of the village post-dates the designation of the conservation area in 1977. It is suggested that these developments do not contribute to the character of the conservation area, and proposed that consideration be given to the re-alignment of the boundary to exclude these areas of modern housing.

Buildings at Risk

9.3 The Throne (Grade II*): Originally a farmhouse. 16th Century, extended in the early 17th Century, with some late 18th Century alterations. Timber-framed with rendered infill on a coursed rubble plinth extended in brick and rendered brick under a tile roof.

9.4 The building appears to be structurally sound and the roof in good condition (exterior only viewed, June 2006), but it is considered to be at risk/vulnerable for the following reasons:

- Infill panels are water-eroded and possibly damp
- Timber fascia boards are detached in places
- Building is presently offered for sale and may be unoccupied.

Other Issues

9.5 Views into the conservation area from the A4112 on the north side offer a sweeping panorama of the historic landscape, and an appreciation of the outstanding character of the conservation area.

9.6 This view is potentially at risk, however. Two small industrial estates are located near the north-west corner of the conservation area (in the Civil Parish of Weobley). Presently, trees and hedges screen, to some extent, a large red-roofed abattoir building in this area. This may improve as the trees mature. Additional planting should be considered if further development is planned in this area.

9.7 In the parkland setting of Garnstone in the southern part of the conservation area, a number of trees may be at risk due to their advanced age. Additional planting should be promoted in order to create a more varied age structure.

Sources

Herefordshire Council (2004) - *Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan: Revised Deposit Draft, May 2004.*

Nash, G. and G. Children (2003) - *An Anatomy of a Castle: The Weobley Castle Project.* Logaston Press.

Pevsner, N. (1963) - *The Buildings of England, Herefordshire.* Penguin.

The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (England) (1934) - *Herefordshire, Vol. III—North-West.* RCHM(E).

Salt, A.E.W. (1954) - *The Borough and Honour of Weobley.* Thurston.

Thorn, F. and C. (1983) - *Domesday Book, Herefordshire.* Phillimore.

Whitehead, D. (2001) - *A Survey of Historic Parks and Gardens in Herefordshire.* Hereford and Worcester Garden Trust.

Maps

British Geological Survey (1989) - *Hereford, England and Wales Sheet 198, Solid and Drift Geology. 1:50 000.* Ordnance Survey.

Ordnance Survey (1998) - *Explorer 202, Leominster and Bromyard, Hereford North*.
Ordnance Survey.
Ordnance Survey (1890) - *1st Edition, Sheet 25NE*. Ordnance Survey.
Soil Survey of England and Wales (1987) - *Soils of England and Wales. Sheet 3, Midland and Western England*. Ordnance Survey.
Weobley Parish Tithe Map, 1838.

Appendix: List of Heritage Assets

Listed Buildings

Grade I: Buildings of national importance and exceptional interest (2% of Listed Buildings).

- Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul

Grade II*: Particularly important buildings of more than special interest (4% of Listed Buildings).

- No. 1 Bell Square (house)
- The Old Manor (house), no. 2 Bell Square
- The Gables (house), no. 7 Broad Street
- Red Lion Hotel, Broad Street
- The Old Corner House, Broad Street
- The Throne (house), Hereford Road
- The Old Grammar School (house), Hereford Road
- Unicorn Hotel, High Street
- The Dairy Farmhouse and attached barn, Meadow Street
- Marlbrook House and attached outbuilding, Mill Bank
- No. 4 Portland Street (northern half of shop)

Grade II: Buildings of special interest.

- West Lodge of Garnstone, off B4230
- Fields End (farmhouse), Garnstone, off B4230
- Barn, Fields End
- Cowhouse, Fields End
- Dairy, Fields End
- Stables and Cider House, Fields End
- Cart and Implement Shed, Fields End
- Willow Cottage, Back Lane
- Bell House, Back Lane
- Nos. 4 and 5 Bell Square (two houses)
- Brook Cottage, Bell Square
- No. 1 Broad Street (house) and stables attached to rear
- No. 2 Broad Street including Portland Grange (house and garage)
- No. 3 Broad Street (house)
- Nos. 5 and 5A Broad Street (two houses)
- Little Croft (house), Broad Street
- Barn east of The Gables, Broad Street
- The Bear and Ursa House (two houses), nos. 9 and 10 Broad Street
- Mellington House (house and outbuilding), Broad Street
- Jeans Fashions formerly Lloyds Bank and Hayes Stores (house and shop), Broad Street
- Lloyds Bank formerly London House, Broad Street
- Terrace north of Lloyds Bank (three houses), Broad Street
- No. 1 Homeleigh (house), Broad Street
- No. 2 Homeleigh (house), Broad Street
- Post Office (post office and house), Broad Street

- Tudor Cottage, Broad Street
- R. E. Williams & Sons, Butchers, Broad Street
- Parkfields (house), Church Road
- Churchyard Cross
- Holmleigh (house), Gadbridge Lane
- Mayfield (house), Hereford Road
- Troisdorf (house), Hereford Road
- Fair Lawn (house), Hereford Road
- Wits End (house), Hereford Road
- Castle View (house), Hereford Road
- Castle House (house and Registry Office), Hereford Road
- No. 3 Hereford Road (house)
- South Place, Castle Green Cottage and Stone Cottage (three houses), Hereford Road
- Mile Post, Hereford Road
- Barn north of the Unicorn Hotel, High Street
- Unicorn Inn, High Street
- St Columba's (house), High Street
- Throne View (house), High Street
- Nos. 1 and 2 High Street (two houses)
- No. 3 High Street (house)
- Barn attached to no. 3 High Street
- Corner House, Market Pitch
- Market Pitch Cottage, Market Pitch
- Ye Olde Salutation Inn, Market Pitch
- Church of St Thomas of Hereford and attached Presbytery, Meadow Street
- Stawne (house), Meadow Street
- Fenmore (farmhouse), Meadow Street
- Outbuilding north of Fenmore
- The Cwm (house), Meadow Street
- Aroha (house), Meadow Street
- High Towers (house), Meadow Street
- The Old Vicarage (house), Meadow Street
- Barn north of The Old Vicarage
- The Mill, Mill Bank
- Mill Bank Cottages nos. 1 to 4, Mill Bank
- Camberwell Cottage, Mill Bank
- The Forge (house), Mill Bank
- Orchard Bank (house), Mill Bank
- Jules Café, no. 1 Portland Street
- No. 2 Portland Street (house)
- No. 3 Portland Street (shop)
- Whitehill House (housing), Kington Road

Scheduled Monuments

- Weobley Castle
- Kiln (site), Back Lane
- Churchyard Cross

Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record

- Weobley Castle
- Kiln (site), Back Lane
- Medieval Settlement, Broad Street
- Windmill (site)
- Medieval Settlement, Bell Square
- Churchyard Cross
- Romano-British Coins (find)
- Neolithic Polished Axe (find)
- Church of St Peter and St Paul
- Mill (site) west of Weobley Castle
- Market Cross (site)
- Planned Medieval Town, Weobley
- Unicorn Inn, High Street
- Red Lion Hotel, Broad Street
- The Old Grammar School, Hereford Road
- The Throne, Hereford Road
- House east of RC church, Meadow Street
- House east of RC church
- House east of RC church
- Aroha, Meadow Street
- Public Hall (former barn), Meadow Street
- Old Vicarage, Meadow Street
- House, Bell Square
- House Bell Square
- House opposite Red Lion Hotel
- Home Lea, Broad Street
- The Cottage, Broad Street
- House, Broad Street
- House opposite Red Lion Hotel
- House SE of Red Lion Hotel
- House, Broad Street
- House Broad Street
- House and Barn, Broad Street
- House opposite PO, Broad Street
- House, Broad Street
- Houses corner of High Street/Broad Street
- Deerpark, Weobley
- Market House (site)
- House Platforms around Church of St Peter and St Paul
- Houses, High Street
- House, High Street
- Homeleigh, High Street
- House, Mayfield Road
- House, Hereford Road
- The Cottage, Hereford Road
- Camberwell Cottage, Mill Bank
- Orchard Bank, Mill Bank
- The Forge, Mill Bank

- Marlbrook House, Mill Bank
- Willow Cottage, Back Lane
- Cottage (site), Back Lane
- Bell House, Back Lane
- Garnstone House (site)
- Dairy Farm, Meadow Street
- Park, Garnstone
- Park, Park Barn
- Unicorn Pub and Orchard, High Street
- Mill, Mill Bank
- Timber Yard, Broad Street
- Tanhouse Meadow, Broad Street
- Pound, Meadow Street
- NW corner of Town Defences
- Pond Bay SW of Weobley Castle
- Holloway, B4230
- Outer Bailey, Weobley Castle
- Castle component
- Churchyard
- Market Place, Bell Square
- Chamberwell, Mill Bank
- House and Shop, Broad Street
- Parkfields, Weobley
- Deerpark, Parkfields
- Brick Close Orchard
- The Glebe House
- Primitive Methodist Chapel, Hereford Road
- Toll House
- Stawne, Meadow Street
- Pugh's Barn, Meadow Street
- 2 High Street
- Nos. 5 and 6 Hereford Street