

SUTTON CONSERVATION AREA

JUNE 1971

CIVIC AMENITIES ACT 1967

This document describes a Conservation Area which the County Council has designated under the above Act.

Just as there are individual buildings of architectural and historic interest which need safeguarding, so also are there areas of good architectural quality, historic importance, and special interest. The aims of a Conservation Area however are not only to preserve but also to enhance the character and appearance of an area. Although it may not be possible to justify the preservation of some features, the aim is that these should be replaced with something at least as good.

This document describes the important features of the area, and attempts to show how its attractive nature can be safeguarded and improved.

The aims of the Conservation Area procedure can only be fully realised with the willing co-operation of the Rural District Council, the Parish Council, and other organisations and individuals with an interest in the area. The County Council are already grateful to these people whose comments have been invaluable in preparing this document.

Sutton has been an important village for many years. John O'Gaunt is reputed to have lived at Sutton and Sutton Park, now occupied by The John O'Gaunt Golf Club, was formerly the seat of the Burgoyne family who came to the village about 1500. The present House is modern but to the north of it is a large earthen mound, said to be the site of the original house, and undoubtedly of early date. It has been encircled by a ditch and local tradition has it that the village was formerly near to it.

Camden in his Magna Brittainia mentions a rhyming grant by which John O'Gaunt gave Sutton to Roger Burgoyne.

I, John of Gaunt
Do give and do grant
Unto Richard Boyne
And the heir of his loins
Both Sutton and Potton
Until the world's rotten.

Sutton can also 'boast' of one of the most unsatisfactory Anglican Clergy at any time, Edward DraxFree, rector of Sutton, who in 1823 was accused by his own church wardens of drunkenness, swindling, shoplifting, selling the lead off the Church roof, pasturing cattle and horses in the Church yard, and of having three illegitimate children.

Sutton is a small street village of pastoral quality, with open cottage development and pleasant park-like character.

The entrance to the village from the west is the most interesting and attractive; the church is approached through groups of trees with the Old Rectory immediately to the east of it, the fall of ground being eastward. At the foot of the slope the road crosses by a ford one of the numerous small streams that feed the River Ivel. The footpath is carried over the stream by a narrow stone pack-horse bridge, an Ancient Monument, probably of 14thC origin, with two pointed arches. Beyond the stream is the greater part of this small village, the older houses being mostly built of timber and plaster with tiled roofs.

All Saints Church stands at the south-eastern end of Sutton Park. The 13th century is the first represented in the church, to it belongs the south doorway and the south arcade of four bays. In the 14thC the chancel was entirely re-built. The western tower is an addition of the 15thC and the south porch, built in place of the earlier one which had a steeper gable, is also of the 15th century.

The Old Rectory, a Grade II Building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest is of considerable interest. The oldest part belongs to an 'H' shaped building of timber and plaster, probably of 16thC date, with a later wing on the north side.

Beyond the ford the area of interest weakens as one travels eastwards. Several individual buildings are worthy of mention, however, notably the C17 or earlier Brook House, a two storey dwelling listed as a Grade II building. Opposite on the south side of Main Street, is the C17 Manor Farmhouse and further east, are the 17thC John of Gaunt Public House and the 17thC Village Farmhouse, both worthy buildings. Unique to Sutton and Potton are the oblique layered iron-stone walls which form boundaries to some of the older buildings in the village.

Agreement has recently been reached with the Eastern Electricity Board that all the overhead lines will be placed underground in the near future, thus removing the eyesore created by these unsightly poles and wires.

GENERAL POLICY

In order to maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the Conservation Area it will be necessary to:-

1. retain important buildings and boundary walls and encourage the improvement of existing buildings rather than their redevelopment.
2. retain the lines formed by existing buildings, boundary walls, particularly the iron-stone walls, and hedges. Ensure that the shape and definition of the important spaces are maintained. It is especially important to retain the gaps immediately to the east of the pack-horse bridge.
3. ensure that redevelopment and new development make a positive contribution to the area and that they are entirely appropriate in terms of siting, design and materials used. In particular, any new building should be designed as part of the group in which it is situated and not as an isolated structure. Applications for development will not normally be entertained unless supported by detailed plans.
4. retain trees and hedges wherever possible, see that they are properly maintained and replaced when necessary. All important trees will need to be identified in greater detail and their protection secured by agreement with the land owner concerned, or by making of Tree Preservation Orders to support the existing. To achieve this, the help of the Parish Council will be necessary. Trees lying just outside the Conservation Area will also be taken into account because they form an essential background to the area.