

ALLERTON



VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Stone Allerton



Ashton



ALLERTON VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

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Chapel Allerton Parish Council

Planning has long been a major topic with the Chapel Allerton Parish Council. Planning decisions are taken outside the village and have to comply with a very complex set of rules. With this in mind, the Chapel Allerton Village Design Statement was initiated, to give guidance to the aesthetic character of the village, so that the existing environment of Chapel Allerton, Stone Allerton, Ashton and Washbrook can be maintained and improved.

I would like to thank personally the Allerton VDS group, led by Kate Durston and her team of David Dixon, Jean Bevis, Steve Redding and Tony Unwin for researching, writing and producing this document on behalf of Chapel Allerton Parish Council.

Patrick H Smith
Chairman, Chapel Allerton Parish Council

The VDS group thanks all those residents who contributed to the consultation process and who provided positive and helpful suggestions to the group.

We are most grateful to Philippa Drakeford who provided the sketch on page 10 and to Lester Durston for his Windmill drawing on the front cover.

We are especially pleased with the excellent architectural illustrations drawn by Steve Reading that have helped to bring our design statement to life.

Introduction

Allerton encompasses the villages of Chapel Allerton and Stone Allerton and the hamlets of Ashton and Washbrook together with the Top Road (Weare to Wedmore road, between Dunkery Road and Washbrook Bridge).

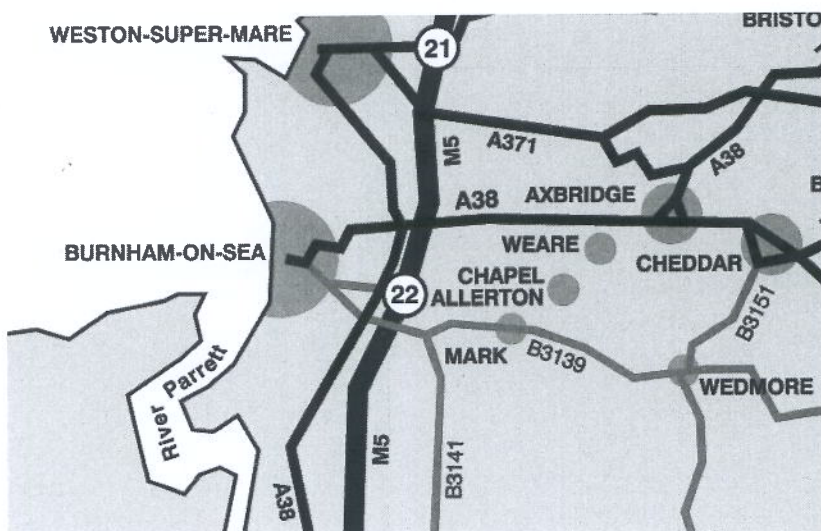
The Village Design Statement describes the main elements, which contribute towards the distinctive character of Allerton as it is today. The Statement highlights the qualities, which its residents have said they value and wish to protect. It aims to be a positive influence for change to enhance the special features and qualities for the benefit of future generations.

Chapel Allerton Parish Council initiated the Village Design Statement process with a questionnaire. A group of residents have progressed the Statement through research, debate and a Discussion Paper. Further consultations included an Open Day.

Allerton has been subject to a number of controversial planning proposals in recent years and residents have become concerned that the inherent character of the village is under threat. The VDS as an adopted Supplementary Planning Design Guidance document can be used as a valuable tool by the District Council and Parish to assess and guide future planning applications.

The VDS sets out the historical, architectural and landscape framework within which the village has developed in the past. Principles and proposals are outlined to guide future developments. It is intended to provide a greater awareness and appreciation of the villages' local character and distinctiveness. This in turn should lead to better quality planning decisions.

The Village Design Statement was officially adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Sedgemoor District Council on 16th July 2003 for reference in connection with design matters in the Parish of Chapel Allerton. The Parish and District Councils will use the Village Design Statement when planning applications are being assessed, but an equally important function will be to provide an appreciation of local context and thereby influence the building design process from the outset.



Historical and Community

Allerton has a rich archaeological and historical heritage. The present layout of the two main settlements of Chapel and Stone Allerton date from Saxon times. Earlier evidence of pottery and ash and of the salt industry have been found off Quarrylands Lane between Stone Allerton and Badgworth, these finds date back to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.

They each consist of a single main street running from the Somerset Moors up towards the higher ground within the Isle of Wedmore, with a stream running through each settlement. The main street in Chapel Allerton closely follows the stream valley and has a parallel back lane, whereas at Stone Allerton the main street dog-legs about the stream.

These settlements grew up as the centre of a thriving farming community where cattle and sheep were grazed and fattened on the lush marshy meadows below the villages in the summer months.

For many centuries the Dean and Chapter of Wells owned the Manor of Chapel Allerton and it was only in 1953 that the freeholds were sold to the tenants. Chapel Allerton has a church dating back to the 12th Century with a manor farmhouse alongside. There were two schools; one at Stone and one at Chapel, both built in the 1860s. Stone Allerton School closed in 1893 and is now used as the village community meeting hall. Chapel Allerton school continued until the 1950s when it was sold and converted to a dwelling.

The distinctive landmark feature of Ashton Windmill lies at the edge of the parish above the hamlet of Ashton. The present mill was built about 1760 and was the last mill in Somerset to grind corn. Milling ceased in 1927. It was saved from ruin and is now restored. Ownership passed to Sedgemoor District Council in 1981. A group of parish volunteer custodians open the mill to the public during the summer months.

Until the early 1900s the village remained a predominantly rural, self-sufficient community. There were a range of craftsmen and services provided by shopkeepers, coopers, blacksmiths, thatcher, miller, stone mason and even a taxman.

From Kelly's Directory of Somerset (1861)

<p>ALLERTON is a township, parish, and village, 9 miles from Highbidge station, 3½ from Axbridge (its post and market town), 10 from Wells, and 12 from Weston-super-Mare, in Bempstone hundred, Axbridge union and deanery, Wells archdeaconry, Bath and Wells bishopric, and Canterbury province, situated on the Weare and Blackford turnpike road. The church is of the date originally of about 1220, with subsequent work of the 16th and 17th centuries; it was restored 1860; has a nave, north aisle, chancel, turret with 3 bells, and bold porch. The register dates from 1602. The living is a rectory, worth £223 yearly, with about 8 acres of glebe land, in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of Wells. The Rev. James Coleman, M.A., is the incumbent.</p>		
<p>There is a parochial school, at which about 300 children attend. In this parish was erected the hundred stone, marked the hundred of Bempstone, parts of which still exist. The population in 1861 was 292, and the acreage is between 1,000 and 1,100. The Dean and Chapter of Wells are lords of the manor. The soil is loamy, the subsoil is limestone. The chief crops are grass. There are charities of 6s. yearly value.</p>		
<p>STONE ALLERTON is a hamlet, 1 mile from the parish church of Allerton, but for the most part situated in the parish of Weare. About eight houses in the hamlet stand on ground belonging to Allerton parish. It has a new school chapel. The Rev. H. T. Perfect, curate of Weare, is the incumbent.</p>		
<p>Chapel Allerton. Clapp Mr. Charles Clapp Mr. George Coleman Rev. James, M.A. Comer Mrs. Ashton Hatch Mr. Joel</p>	<p>Hardacre Joseph, farmer Hardacre William, farmer Hatch Jesse, farmer Higgs John, farmer, Ashton King Pamela, farmer Nuttcomb Jane (Mrs.), shopkeeper Petheram William, thatcher, Washbrook Teek Matthew, farmer, Allerton farm Vwiles Frederick, farmer, Vole Watts Joseph, farmer Whiting James, tailor Whitting William, shoemaker Wilkins Luke, farmer Wilkins Paul, miller, Ashton</p>	<p>Brice James, farmer & shopkeeper Coles George, shoemaker Cook Jesse, farmer Day William, farmer Durling George, farmer Frost William, stonemason Green William, farmer Ham Jeffery, farmer Ham Peter, farmer Ham Robert, butcher & shopkeeper Hatch Ezekiah, farmer Hatch Isaiah, wheelwright Hookway Robert, miller Hopkins Thomas, stonemason & shopkeeper King John, farmer King Samuel, farmer Pratten Charles, rate & tax collector & assessor of taxes for three tithings Slade Robert, farmer</p>
<p>COMMERCIAL. Brown Edward B. farmer, Ashton Chapman Robert, farmer, Toot house Clapp George, farmer Clapp John, cooper & parish clerk Clapp John, farmer, Ashton Comer Edward, farmer, Ashton Cox William, farmer, Pish Cuff John, farmer Ham Charles, farmer Ham Henry, farmer Ham John, farmer Ham Peter, farmer Ham William, blacksmith Ham William, farmer</p>	<p>Mapstone Mr. George Perfect Rev. Henry T Adams Thomas, <i>Wheat Sheaf</i> Bogle Ellen (Mrs.), boarding school Brice George, butcher & shopkeeper</p>	<p>Letters through Weston-super-Mare</p>

Historical and Community Evolution

By the end of World War II this variety of trades and occupations had diminished. A strong farming tradition remained with around 30 active farms. By 1989 this number had fallen to just 7 and by 2000 there were only a handful of working farms within the parish.

The population has altered little in size since the middle of the 1800s when it numbered 292. In 2000 the figure stood at 330. However considerable new building or redevelopment/conversion of older buildings has taken place over the last hundred years. The present-day settlements are now mostly residential with around 150 houses. 20% of the population are children and 28% are retired. Of the adult population in employment, almost half are self-employed and an increasing number work from home. This trend is to be welcomed, provided it remains small scale, as it helps to maintain the vitality of the village. 30% of workers commute to Bristol, Bridgwater, Weston-super-Mare, Cheddar and Wells, with a minority travelling further afield. There is no public transport and consequently there is a heavy reliance on cars. Car ownership is estimated at 2 per household.

The parish has a Village Shop/Post Office in Stone Allerton and a Public House, The Wheatsheaf, on the Top Road. Other community facilities include The Old Schoolroom, Stone Allerton (which holds up to about 60 people for meetings and private parties), the Church in Chapel Allerton and the Cricket field and pavilion between Chapel and Stone (which is the venue for the annual Harvest Home and other village activities). There is a small area of community open space around The Cross at Stone Allerton on the site of a demolished chapel.

The present-day inhabitants of Allerton are aware of their historical inheritance. Many residents have sympathetically restored their houses and preserve the historic features. There is evidence of a great sense of community pride throughout the village. Many villagers have expressed a wish that this community spirit and pride be nurtured for the future. The main part of Stone Allerton has been designated by Sedgemoor District Council as one of 12 Conservation Areas within the District in recognition of the high quality and attractiveness of its architectural environment.

The Street Chapel Allerton circa 1940



Historical and Community Guidelines

- Allerton's historical inheritance will be recognised and retained, particular care being taken to protect and enhance individual features of historic interest.
- New development will be expected to respect the historic character and pattern of the settlements wherever possible.
- Initiatives will be encouraged for the removal of unsightly street furniture or overhead wires where these detract from the historical settings and character of the village.
- In addition to encouraging good design in new buildings opportunities for enhancing community spaces will be encouraged wherever possible, in particular for:
 - o the enhancement of The Cross area in Stone Allerton.
 - o the creation of a village pond/recreation area near the Church at Chapel Allerton.
 - o the greater use by the community of the area around The Schoolroom and village shop.
 - o the provision or enhancement of pedestrian routes between the villages and community facilities.
- Small scale building conversions or extensions to accommodate home working will be encouraged provided the character of the villages and their rural setting is not adversely affected.

Allerton Church



Landscape Setting

Allerton lies on undulating land on the edge of the Isle of Wedmore and above the wetlands of the Somerset Levels and Moors. The Levels and Moors have been designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) in order to protect and enhance their special landscape, wildlife and historic interest. ESAs support specific agricultural practices to ensure protection.

The character of the landscape immediately adjacent to the settled areas is defined by small fields, which are enclosed by native species hedgerows, and used for grazing. There are the remains of old orchards within and on the edges of the settlements and small clumps of trees as well as some fine individual trees are in evidence. In the last 30 years Dutch Elm disease has taken its toll. As a result the landscape and sense of enclosure in parts of the villages has been eroded. The landscape is now more open and the parish more exposed than in the past.

Notable features in the wider landscape are visible from the parish. These include Brent Knoll, The Mendips, The Blackdowns, the Poldens, the Quantocks and the coastal areas around Brean Down. There are wide views from the Windmill and from footpaths which cross fields and link settlements. However the main built up areas of the village are tucked down into natural folds and hollows along the routes of streams. As a result views into and out of the village are limited. This adds to the element of visual surprise along the approaches to the village.

The settlements have evolved in an irregular and haphazard manner with no clearly defined demarcation between built-up areas and the open countryside beyond. Areas of open land within the villages give a real sense of rural environment and cohesion with the countryside.

Roadside hedgerows bordering fields and gardens provide a physical link between villages and hamlets and enhance the cohesion. In places hedgerows are high, for example along New Tynings (formerly Wedgewood House) frontage, and they contain a mixture of native species, such as hawthorn, blackthorn and field maple.

The villages and hamlets are linked together and surrounded by a network of footpaths. Many provide important views into and across the parish. Some enhancement and extension of this network would achieve benefits for the greater appreciation of the village, especially to the west of Stone Allerton and Chapel Allerton.

There is evidence that recent changes in the way the surrounding farmland is managed are having an impact on the character of the village and its setting. There has been a subdivision of fields on the edge of Stone Allerton and Ashton to form pony paddocks and stabling.

A large orchard area is being developed at Orchard Leigh Farm and there is a trend for large modern farm buildings such as at Manor Farm (Chapel Allerton), and Ashton Farm. This trend is likely to continue with the increased emphasis on agricultural diversification. It is important that these changes are managed in an imaginative and positive way to minimise any adverse effects and to bring about improvements to the landscape character wherever possible.

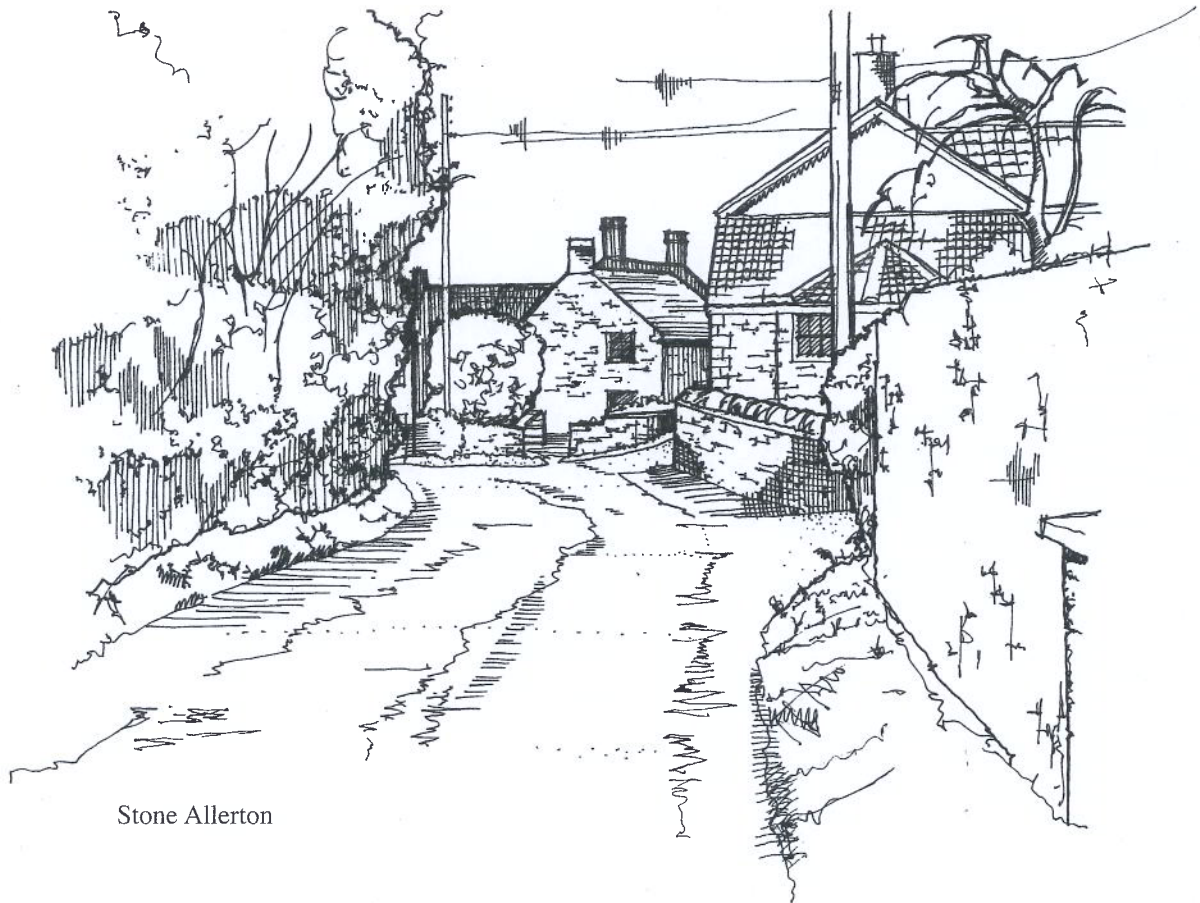
Landscape setting guidelines

- Development that would be visually intrusive in the landscape setting of the village shall be resisted unless adequate screening or landscaping measures can be achieved.
- All new development shall be expected to provide appropriate landscaping measures, including the planting of native trees and hedgerows.
- Opportunities should be encouraged to achieve substantial new tree and hedge planting enhancement at the entrances to the village: - from Badgworth to Stone Allerton, along New Road towards Manor Farm, Chapel Allerton, and at the southern approach to Ashton near Ashton Farm in particular.
- Development that involves the removal of native species hedgerows shall be resisted.
- Development involving the subdivision of field plots shall be expected to include the planting of native species hedgerows and trees as appropriate boundary treatment in every case.
- Agricultural buildings and stables should avoid isolated and prominent locations and instead should be well related to existing hedgerows, trees or buildings and be accompanied by additional tree planting if this is necessary to achieve better integration with the landscape.
- The opening up and improved maintenance of the network of public footpaths in and around the village will be encouraged, in particular, circular routes which provide an appreciation of the landscape setting of the villages.



Settlement Pattern and Layout

The main settlements of Stone and Chapel Allerton are separated from each other and from the other hamlets within the parish. However the nucleus of development within Chapel and Stone Allerton clusters around the lanes which pass through each settlement. The lanes linking settlements and hamlets are dotted with individual houses and farms at irregular intervals, eg. Brooklands Farm and Brook House Farm along New Road between Stone and Chapel and Ashton Mill Farm, Elm Leigh and Ashlyn between Chapel Allerton and Ashton. There are also groups of houses at Ashton, Washbrook and along the Top Road.



Stone Allerton

Approximately 45% of houses in Stone and 55% in Chapel were built during the 20th century. Post-war housing has mostly respected the historical pattern and layout. Development has been concentrated in the two main settlements and along the Top Road, mainly as infill between older houses or as backland development through the subdivision of larger gardens or paddocks. There has been no housing estate development and the old village boundaries have remained remarkably unchanged for more than a hundred years.

Settlement Pattern and Layout

Due to the irregular form of development in the past, large gardens, orchards and paddocks surround many older houses and farms. This has led to the open and spacious feeling and character we notice today, especially in Chapel and Stone Allerton. These open spaces are a very important part of the village character. Further infilling could pose a real threat and result in the erosion and reduction of these areas.

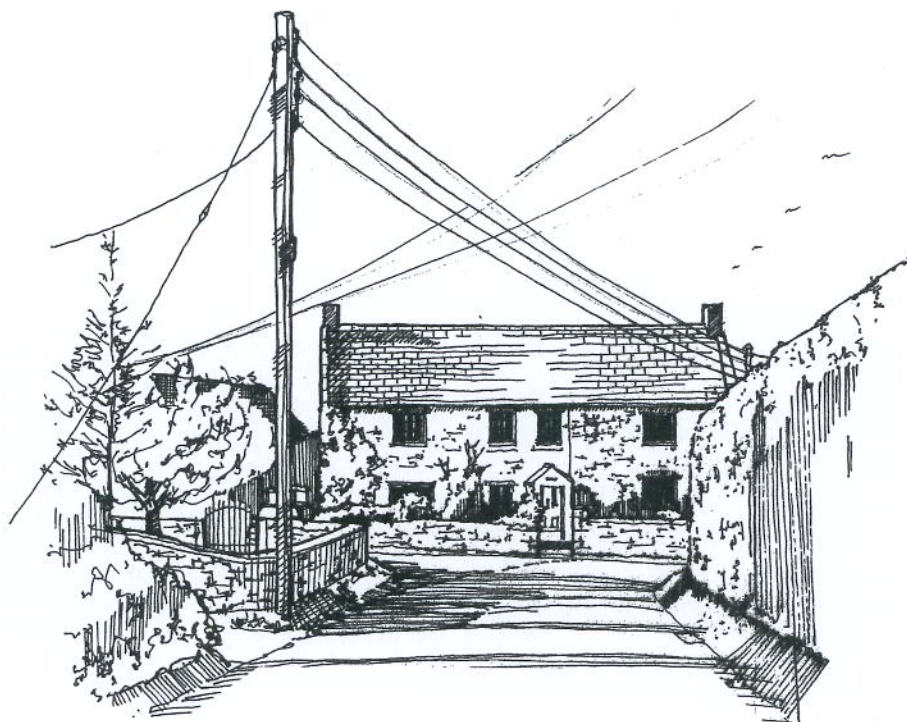
There are three open areas of particular importance in Stone Allerton; these adjoin (i) Manor Farm/Berries Brook (ii) Overbrook/Fern Cottage (iii) Sleepy Hollow and Holly Tree Farm. In Chapel Allerton the open spaces are less well defined and are on a smaller scale. Those worth noting are 2 garden areas each side of Manor Farm, the wide verge opposite the church and a number of larger garden areas along Front Street.



Front Street – Chapel Allerton

Individual trees feature extensively in the village scene. For instance at Stone Allerton Farm, Overbrook and Osborne House in Stone Allerton and at Harewood House and Manor Farm, Chapel Allerton. High boundary hedges, often topping stone walls are also a distinctive feature for example at Manor Farm, Stone Allerton.

Settlement Pattern and Layout



Stone Allerton

In places the street scene is enclosed by houses set close to the road, such as at Taverner Cottage, Stone Allerton and Portcuil, Chapel Allerton. In other parts there are wide grass verges, some planted with trees, which open up the street scene and make an attractive green addition. Wide verges are found at Manor Farm, Chapel Allerton, outside Allerton House, Rectory Hill and adjoining the stream areas outside properties fronting Scotland Lane and leading down to Allerton Moor in Stone Allerton.

It is important that these features are retained and enhanced where possible and the overall pattern of the settlement character protected.

The villages are served by narrow country lanes that have tight junctions and bends with limited visibility. This makes their use difficult for heavy vehicles, lorries and large buses. There is also an absence of footways. As a result harm is being caused to grass verges and trees as well as damage to walls and ditches which are adjacent to the roads. Measures to reduce the amount of heavy traffic using the Top Road and other village lanes will be welcomed. The use of smaller school buses would also assist in reducing physical damage to verges.



Settlement Guidelines

- The spacious and open character of Chapel and Stone Allerton is to be retained.
- Development that would encroach into the main open areas of the village will be resisted.
- New housing development will be expected to respect the linear layout of the village.
- New development with frontages on to the main village streets will be expected to retain existing hedging and/or natural stone walling. New hedges and/or natural stone walling shall be incorporated where necessary.
- Open green verges adjoining the lanes through the village will be retained. Opportunities for tree planting of native-species trees within these areas will be encouraged.
- Hard kerb edging between verges and road surfaces will be discouraged and the use of geometrical waiting bays shall not be used.
- New development will be expected to provide parking and access in such a way as to minimise the visual impact on the character of the village.
- The subdivision of large garden plots will not be encouraged where this would detract from the open character of the village street.
- Positive measures to decrease the amount of heavy goods traffic using country lanes through Allerton will be encouraged to protect the physical environment of the village.



Stone Allerton

Buildings

The Parish and its surroundings contain a rich legacy of buildings from the past, including important community buildings such as the Church and the Windmill. Approximately 30% of all properties were built before 1800 and a total of 13 buildings and structures are officially listed as being of historical or architectural interest.

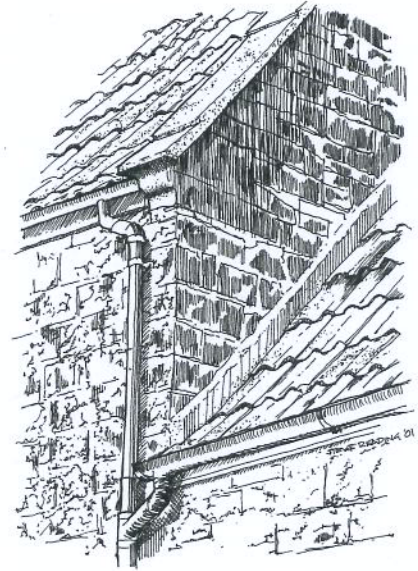
The older buildings that remain were once farmhouses, farm buildings or cottages of simple form and construction. These were built using locally sourced limestones which have often been colourwashed or rendered, with some architectural detailing in dressed stone which may have been brought from further afield. Most buildings have been gradually altered and renovated over the centuries but on the whole have retained their original form and character. This is the case at New House Farm, Sycamore Farm and Hillcrest Farm in Stone Allerton and Gunthorpe Farm and Moorland Farm, Chapel Allerton.



Chapel Allerton.

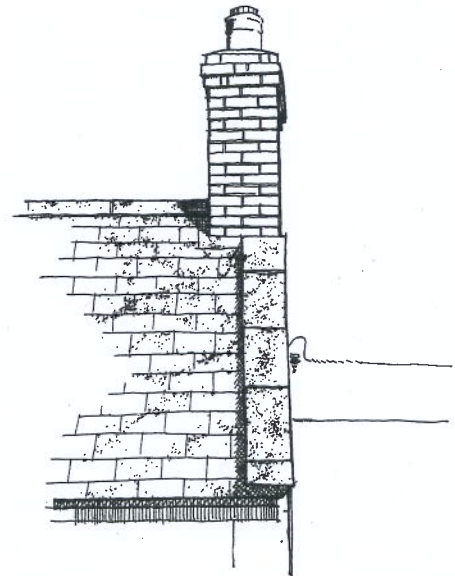
Clay tiles, usually pantiles or double romans, were mostly used for roofing materials. There are also examples of buildings with slate roofs, for example, at Corners and Manor Farm, Stone Allerton and Harewood House and Manor Farm, Chapel Allerton. Some houses have brick quoins and/or brick windows and door arches, for instance Sycamore Farm and Hillcrest Farm, Stone Allerton. However brick has been little used as a main building material in the past. Natural random laid stone or render is much more in evidence. Many properties are surrounded by natural stone walls, some of which are high and form a sense of enclosure within the street scene; for instance at Underhill Cottage, Stone Allerton and Allerton House, Chapel Allerton. Simple gates, usually of metal, were placed at the entrance to properties.

Buildings



Older properties are characterised by the following details: -

- Steeply pitched roofs with Welsh slates or clay tiles.
- Gable ends capped with natural stone copings.
- Small window openings, usually with casement windows and often with dressed stone cills and surrounds.
- Substantial brick built chimneys, usually at the apex of the gable and almost always within the thickness of the walls.
- Stone and wooden lintels and curved window arches.
- Front porches over the main doorways, either pitched roofed and enclosed or flat roofed and open.

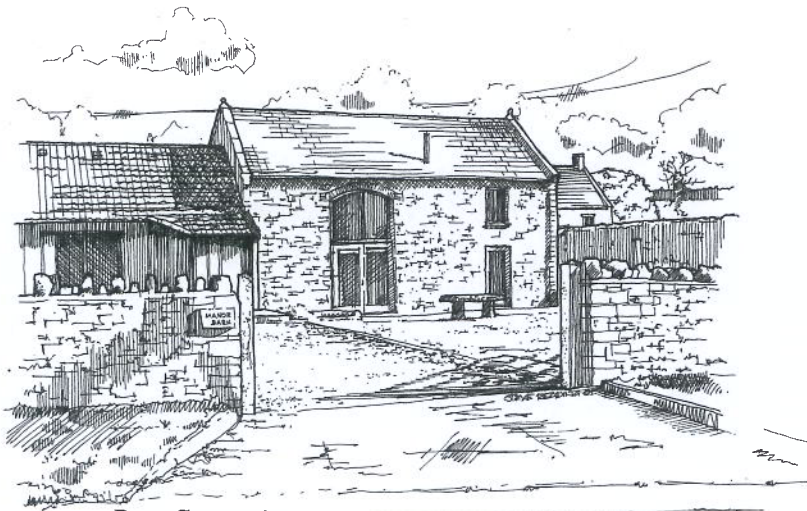


Buildings

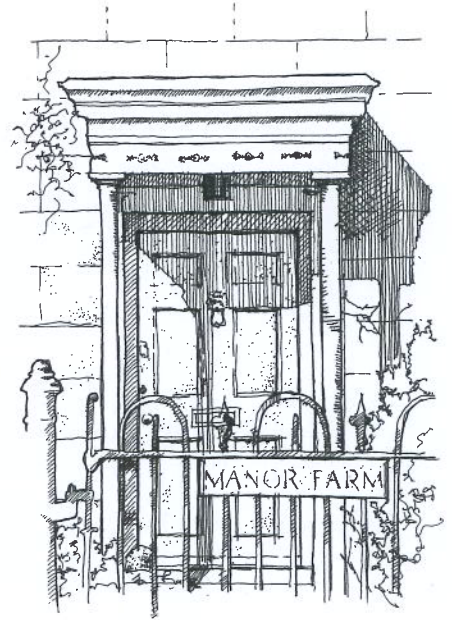
Local Features

- Timber barge boards with metal guttering and pipework.
- Natural stone, random laid walls with capping stones.

The elements noted above are repeated throughout the villages and hamlets and act as unifying features to give the parish an identity and sense of place.



Barn Conversion



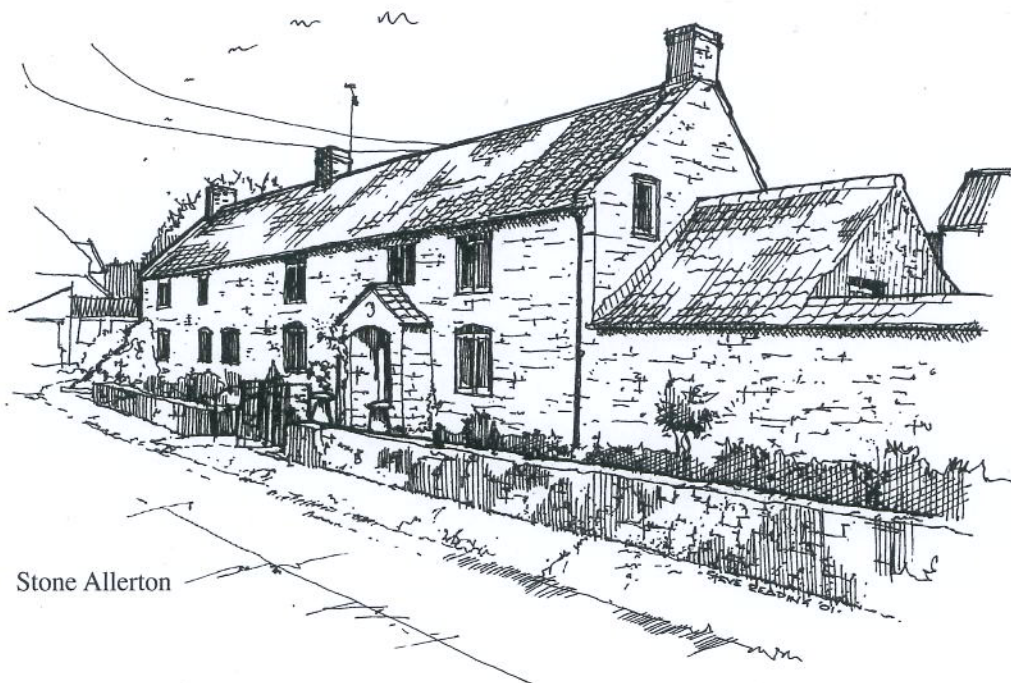
A number of former barns and farm buildings in the parish have been converted to dwellings in recent years. On the whole these have managed to retain or replicate many traditional features and details found on older buildings. They are generally well-sited in relation to their neighbours. The same has not always been true where new dwellings have been built, especially those built between the wars or just post-war.

Some have made use of reconstructed stone, brick or pebbledash render. Bungalow rather than cottage-style designs have been used and a few properties have large picture windows which contrast starkly with older, smaller cottage type windows.

Although these newer properties have gradually been assimilated and accepted into the character of the village, it is considered that they do not always sit very comfortably alongside older properties. They often appear too prominent in the street scene and have hard, engineered treatment of road frontages, with geometrical waiting bays and the use of brick, blockwork, timber fencing or conifer hedging as boundary treatment which contrasts markedly with the more organic form of stone walls, grass verges and mixed hedgerows elsewhere. They do not contribute to the maintenance of the historical quality or character of the village and it is considered important to ensure that future new development respects the traditional building styles in scale massing, detailing and materials used.

Building Guidelines

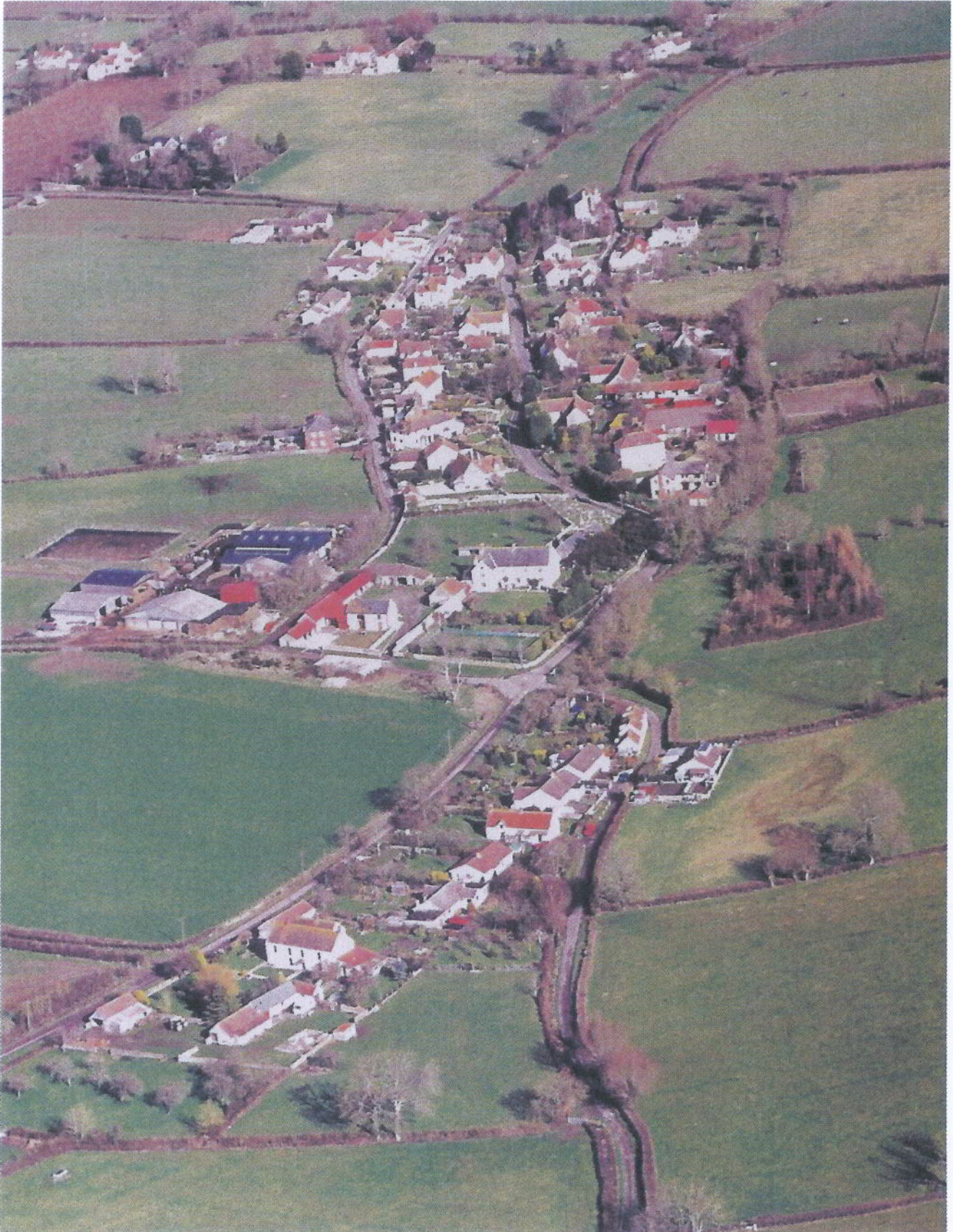
- The overall design of new dwellings will be on traditional lines. The scale and massing of older cottage or farmhouse buildings will be respected. Standard house types will be avoided.
- Domestic buildings will normally be in natural stone and / or render to reflect the use of traditional materials in the area.
- Natural clay tiles or slates for roofs should be used in preference to concrete tiles and conform to traditional roof pitches and overhangs.
- Chimney stacks in brick or stone are a notable feature and are to be retained and incorporated into new houses where possible. New ones will be positioned at gable apexes and not project outside the gable wall.
- New infill development shall take account of the character, scale, design, and siting of neighbouring properties in order to retain and enhance the visual character of the street scene.
- New farm buildings will respect the traditional character of nearby buildings. Traditional materials and appropriate use of colour shall be used where possible or screened by sensitive planting.
- New or replacement windows shall reflect traditional character and materials, particularly in the Stone Allerton Conservation Area.
- New boundary walls shall be in natural stone, random laid and incorporate capping stones in style and character with the traditional walls within the area.
- Porches of a scale and design similar to those used traditionally will be encouraged for new domestic buildings.



Map of Parish



Chapel Allerton





Allerton Village Design Statement

**- adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document
by Sedgemoor District Council on 27th March 2013**

Advisory note

The document had previously been adopted as “Supplementary Planning Guidance” in July 2003. Whilst the national and local planning policy context has subsequently changed, and therefore some references within the document may be out-of-date, the Council considers that the design guidance at the heart of this document is still relevant to interpretation of policy – it remains capable of serving as a supplement to planning policies which reference “local character” / design matters etc.

The Allerton Village Design Statement should be read in conjunction with the Sedgemoor District Council Core Strategy and other relevant supplementary guidance, such as the “Sedgemoor Landscape Assessment and Countryside Design Summary”. None of the settlements in Chapel Allerton parish are identified in the spatial strategy and therefore the previous development boundaries at Chapel Allerton and Stone Allerton have been abandoned. Relevant Core Strategy policies include:

- Policy P6, which relates to strict control of development in the countryside (i.e. outside development boundaries)
- Policy S1, which sets out the spatial strategy for Sedgemoor (which involves a relatively limited amount of development in rural areas)
- Policy S3, which sets out Sustainable Development Principles (including sustainable construction and environmental quality)
- Policy S4, which addresses mitigation of / adaptation to climate change (including materials, energy efficiency, natural shade and cooling, tree planting and water efficiency)
- Policy D2, which promotes high quality and inclusive design

It could also be relevant to interpretation of a number of other Policies, particularly in respect of references to “local character” / “amenity” / “sense of place”; the following Policies (when applicable) are the most likely:

- Policy D11 Economic Prosperity

- Policy D14 Natural Environment - Landscape
- Policy D17 Historic Environment

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