

## Introduction

This Village Design Statement (VDS) has been produced with a view to giving guidance on design and environmental issues, so that any future development takes into account the opinions of local people.

The VDS was started in the Spring 2000 with a public meeting and has subsequently been prepared by a group of volunteer residents. It has been formulated through consultation with all local people, by open meetings, surveys, workshops etc. to ensure a balanced and true representation of local knowledge, feelings and ideas.

Within the VDS it describes the history of Welshampton, and highlights the distinctive features, qualities and character of the village as it is today.

The aim of the VDS is to encourage anyone considering development or alterations, however small, to take into account the key issues raised and to incorporate the recommendations into their plans.

The VDS acknowledges that the village will continue to evolve and aims to assist in achieving a balance between tradition and innovation, ensuring a sustainable future for Welshampton and its community.

The Village Design Statement has been adopted by North Shropshire District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

# The Village Setting

The village is located in the northern part of the peaceful North Shropshire countryside between the historic market towns of Whitchurch and Ellesmere. It is found in 'The Meres and Mosses Natural Area' as defined within the map 'The Character of England: landscape, wildlife and natural features' developed by English Nature and the Countryside Commission.

This countryside has spectacular scenery, diverse wildlife and a unique landscape of rolling sandstone hills, meres and mosses. The nine meres close to the village were carved out by glaciers during the last ice age over 15,000 years ago.

Welshampton's slow development and growth over the years has blessed the village with a varied mix of appropriate Shropshire houses. Its pleasing vista of red brick, black and white Tudor, Victorian and Georgian homes mingle kindly with the surrounding countryside as they huddle together in small pockets punctuated by the ever present open fields and green areas.

Its assortment of homes from small two bedroom terraced to five and six bedroom family properties all show character and taste.

The landscape setting of mixed character houses of 6-8 types in total, surrounded by open field views is one nurtured and enjoyed by Welshampton inhabitants and one they want to see respected for any and all proposed growth to the village settlement.



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# History of Welshampton

The earliest notice is in the Domesday Book which states that the Saxon possessor was called Aldith. It was rated then at 3 hides and valued at fifteen shillings. By the time of the survey, in 1089, the value of the village had doubled and a subtenant called Albert, held it under Reinald, the Sheriff of Shropshire, who in turn was the tenant of Sir Roger Montgomery.

The name 'Hampton' is derived from two Saxon words meaning 'high enclosure' which, according to local tradition, was originally situated at the highest point in the parish adjoining Bank Farm in a field that is still called 'Old Hampton'. The prefix 'Welsh' was not added until the seventeenth century probably to denote the fact that most of the inhabitants were Welsh-speaking. The oldest known written record of its use is dated 1587. The single word 'Welshampton' seems to have been adopted when the railway came in 1863.

The village was probably transplanted, in the linear way it is still to be found along the main road between Whitchurch and Ellesmere, after it was devastated by the Black Death in 1349. The ecclesiastical parish was formed in 1391 when John de Kynaston, an ancestor of the Mainwarings of Oteley who fought in the Battle of Shrewsbury, built a timber-framed church on a site adjacent to the present church. No vestige remains now of the medieval structure which was demolished in 1788 to make way for the construction of a cruciform brick church. This was in use until the present church, designed in gothic style by Sir Gilbert Scott, was built in 1863 as a memorial to Charles Kynaston Mainwaring at the expense of his widow. The Methodist Chapel was opened in 1843.

The village saw some expansion in the nineteenth century when the two rows of houses near the Sun Inn appeared. The school was built in 1850 at the instigation of the vicar with funds from the Diocese and the National Society with the additions of a schoolhouse in 1855 paid for by public subscription and a second class room in 1859. A large extension was added in 1896 and further alteration and



modernisation has been made in recent times. The 150th anniversary was celebrated in grand style at the old vicarage during the summer of 2000. The school now provides excellent educational opportunities, not only for Welshampton children but also for those from the surrounding districts. It is an asset for which the village is justifiably proud, a fact nationally recognized in an award for excellence.

A branch of the Cambrian Railway from Oswestry to Whitchurch was cut through the village in 1863, which provided transport from the station until its closure under the 'Beeching Axe' in January 1964. In June 1897 the worst disaster to occur on the whole Cambrian railways system, until that time, took place just outside Welshampton station when an excursion train was derailed with the loss of eleven lives.

A notable feature of the village is the grave of a South African prince who died here in August 1863. A stained glass window and an inscription perpetuate his memory inside the church and a succession of visitors from Lesotho has provided a living link for well over a century. The Queen Mother of Lesotho and Prince Seeiso, the heir to the throne, visited Welshampton in the millennium year.

The war memorial in the churchyard is in the form of a tall Celtic cross with the names of all servicemen killed in the two world wars inscribed on the base. Among these are Charles and Michael Moody, the twin sons of the Vicar of Welshampton who were both airmen of great distinction.

The villagers showed tremendous community spirit by organising extensive fund raising events over a period of approximately three years to build a new parish hall, which was opened in 1993 by Olympic Gold Medallist Neil Thomas, a former resident of the village. The new building which provides excellent facilities replaces an old hall, erected in 1921, which during its existence hosted many social gatherings.



# A Tour through Welshampton

Welshampton village has developed and changed gradually over the decades from a thriving homestead for the farming community to a pleasant and characterful Shropshire village of some note.

Though its lifeblood as a farming community has ebbed and dwindled, its residents have added to a more close community life style in an admirable fashion, and without losing its village spirit and culture.

The present settlement is dominated by the main A495 road, an arterial route from Whitchurch to Ellesmere. Everyone, whether just passing through or visitors, are greeted with a tranquil and settled village, one with a feeling of space and character.

As you journey East to West you can delight in the picturesque Welshampton after long miles of often sparsely inhabited countryside. The approach gives a feeling of openness as displayed by the large rolling fields rising to the left. The old Railway Station is to your right, a fond memory of a bygone day when trains came and went and where the old platform still stands as testimony. To your left as we carry on, a small cluster of post-war dwellings comes into sight enclosed as a semi-circle, called 'Welsh View'. To the right are homes of a clearly earlier date, punctuated with the long established village garage and the newly built heart of community life, the Parish Hall. These all look over cheerful open fields and distant views smattered with ancient trees, hedgerows full of bird and animal life and grazing horses in their paddocks. The fields end at what



was once the village's oldest school but is now a dwelling house alongside the B5063 as it adjoins the A495. On this tightly twisting B-road one notes the 'Brownlow Estate' style houses with their decorative chequer brick facades. The other houses along this road reflect a similar collective nature as they dwell together in neat little encampments. Back at the A495 junction with the B5063, the main road takes a sharp right turn into the centre of the village.

On both sides of the road are houses of various size and form. 'The Sun Inn' public house dominates the right hand side with a green area for holidaymakers' touring caravans, followed by a neat and colourful row of Victorian terraced homes. Opposite is an almost identical terrace but from a later period, built from the reclaimed bricks of the previous church and with a single red brick house at the frontier. Mixed around these are various new and older buildings.

The village hairdresser is in a new style set of cottages with gravel forecourts. Just before a fine example of a two storey black and white Tudor house with oak shingle roof, one of the oldest houses in the village, is found our mysterious ancient mound, a noted historic feature and scheduled ancient monument.

Coming up on the left-hand side is the main turning to Lyneal and more new and old houses can be seen in idyllic settings against the Shropshire scenery. The eye immediately spies upon the most noted feature of the village, its early church accredited by its unique chequer board slate roof and 'round house' gable and, towering above is the well proportioned spire and bell tower, where the bells peal out to mark special occasions. To enter the churchyard one passes under the finely carved oak portal of the lychgate, truly a most notable feature of Welshampton.

On the opposite side of the road, we find the Victorian purpose-built school, little changed on the exterior as old photographs testify; inside it has grown



into the well proportioned primary school that it is today. Children who have attended this school, for ages 4 to 12 years, will heartily vouch for its warm atmosphere and excellent teaching standard. This is due to the fact that it is still a small village school and therefore still boasts a wonderful personal touch with its some 60 pupils.

Adjacent is the pre-school unit, providing facilities for toddlers through to school age; it was funded by the community and built by local volunteers and tradesmen.

The main road now begins to wind its way towards the last farm on this side of the road before the end of the village enclosure. Back on the other side, adjacent to the church is what was once the vicarage, now a splendidly appointed small manor house with fine established gardens, with the old 'vicars gate' still in use. The final dwelling, 'Gate House', an old toll-house, ends the village as it would have years ago. The road meanders on through rolling hillsides towards the meres and the town of Ellesmere.

As we passed by the school earlier, we could have wandered down the country lanes and back around to the start of our journey, walking in a loop amongst the fields and meadows. Houses are again clustered in small groups to accommodate the local residents and 'Hampton House' is to be seen, set back in fields and horse paddocks.

In all, a whistle stop tour through Welshampton demonstrates well how its some 300 residents work and live in their day to day life. The landscape setting of the village illustrates appropriately its choice of mixed housing in among spacious siting of open fields and meeting areas. Its homes have been built in small clusters surrounded by open space and fine established hedgerows, vital for wild life, with trees and open aspects.

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# Recreation and Leisure

Within easy reach are the medieval towns of Shrewsbury and Chester and the spectacular scenery of North Wales.

The village is also uniquely located close to the bustling market towns of Ellesmere, Wem and Whitchurch but in quiet rural countryside which is second to none.

The meres close to the village are a haven for wildlife and birds and attract many thousands of visitors every year. Away from the busy main road the country lanes are quiet and are very popular with walkers and hikers throughout the year; they are also well used by horse-riders and cyclists alike.

Located in close proximity to the village are three caravan sites offering a range of amenities from semi-residential to touring facilities. At the centre of the village is the 'Sun Inn', which serves as a



useful resting-place for walkers and hikers, serving meals and fine ale.

The Llangollen Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal, which runs from Llangollen, in North Wales, to the Shropshire Union Canal at Hurleston, passes within 1 mile of the village. This canal has fascinating architecture, spectacular aqueducts, splendid scenery and is therefore one of the most popular canals in the country. It is also used for the transportation of 12 million gallons

of water a day, as well as carrying more boating traffic than it ever did in its commercial days. The canal is also a popular location for anglers.

The Parish Hall provides excellent facilities for all types of functions and there is a tennis court alongside.

The church and chapel welcome worshippers and along with the school are the centre for many events and activities that typify the true village community atmosphere.







# Key Village Buildings/Facilities



## Church & Churchyard

The St. Michael's & All Angels Church of England, that stands today, was built in 1863 in a 13th century style. It is surrounded by a walled graveyard together with mature trees set on the outskirts of the village boundary. The Church position boasts rural views to the west and is surrounded on the other elevations by new developments and the main highway. The distinctive patterned roof with a south facing conical shaped gable known as a bellcote or apse structure elevates the magnificent building and its distinct sandstone architecture. The Church's and the surrounding position development maintains the openness of the village. The previous church was constructed of red brick made from locally dug clay roofed with slate from the Glynn quarry, Denbigh. The houses on the terrace were built utilising these local materials around 1864.

The vicarage, which stands adjacent to the present church, was built in 1841 and is constructed of traditional red brick with a slate roof and depicts a similar style of architecture as the brick church, which was demolished to allow for the building of the new church.



The present Methodist Chapel was built in 1843, and is constructed of brick, which has been rendered and painted white. The roof covering is provided by a slate roof. The windows to the building are small and constructed of wood. The building is accessed from the highway and adjoins a habitable dwelling.



#### Parish Hall

The Parish Hall built in 1993 is positioned to give good access and parking to the facilities. The building construction being of modern red brick walls covered with a grey pan tile roof. The low pitched roof allows the appearance to blend into the tree/shrub line of the adjoining properties and its size is proportioned to buildings in close proximity.

#### School

The village school built in 1850 is positioned opposite the church and also has distinct architectural features. The red corner sandstone blocks and window cills built into the red brickwork clearly define the structure. These features provide a building that has character in the rural position it occupies. The playground area is neatly ring fenced by traditional vertical iron railings.

The adjacent pre—school building was erected in 1997.



#### Main Road

The A495 Whitchurch to Ellesmere road is the main Village highway which sets out the geography of the main core village development. The majority of its length is lined by footpaths and boundaries are defined by walls, fences, shrubbery & trees, which allow the rural appearance to be maintained to all properties lining the route. The road & pavement surfaces are finished in tarmacadam to standard detail.

## Services to the highway

The village has many above ground services following along the main road e.g. electricity and telephone cables. These services are predominantly fixed to wooden poles and are positioned at the sides of the highway. The street lighting luminaires are also fixed to these poles to provide illumination at night.

These essential services criss-crossing above, sadly detract from the beauty of the village setting, as can be demonstrated by the photograph below.



#### Public House

The public house, which serves the local community, is called 'The Sun Inn'. It was built in or around the 1800's and was amongst three in the locality at that time. The building is constructed of red brick which is predominantly painted white to the front and side elevations covered by a slate roof. The building has painted wooden windows to the front and rear. The building stands to the pavement edge and the cellar is accessed via access covers on the pavement.

#### Terrace Houses

The village terrace houses consist of two blocks.

The one set of terrace stands adjacent to the A495 through the village and was built around 1864. The appearance of the terrace was originally red brick but in recent time has been rendered and painted. A number of the terraces still have the small porches to the front elevation with the distinct carved fascia boards which is also found to the dormer windows to the first floor.

The second block of terraces also built in or around the mid 1860's remain in red brick with a slate roof. These terraced houses stand away from the main road and are accessed via a roadway opposite the Sun Inn. The terrace features have not been altered since they were originally built retaining the wooden doors & windows.

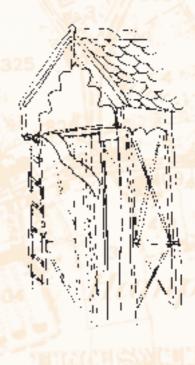
#### Balmer

The terrace houses at the Balmer were built in or around the 1800's and have distinctive carved fascia & bargeboards. They were constructed of red brick with slate roofs and stand adjacent to the road. This same woodwork detail can be identified on a number of properties within this area and is a feature of houses built as part of a growing estate at that time within the Balmer.

## Black & White Property

One of the oldest properties known to Welshampton was built in or around the 1700's and was constructed from predominantly wooden materials with a thatched roof. The building today is listed and has been subject of investigation by the heritage departments of the local council. The property today is painted black & white and has been re-roofed utilising a light coloured shingle tile which retains its original character. The property position was deemed to be the start of the village development and a map dated 1752 indicates a cluster of dwellings in this location which identifies the then heart of the village.







## Recent Development

Recent development has consisted of small schemes ranging from single dwellings to up to four dwellings, on infill parcels of land between existing properties. The new dwellings have mainly been detached properties, either bungalows or houses, with only one scheme producing a pair of 'affordable' semi-detached properties, constructed through a housing association.

In the main recent developments have not enjoyed a smooth passage through local authority planning and construction because of the concerns of local residents. These concerns have been centred around three areas: -

- · Increased traffic on narrow lanes
- · Urbanisation of the village
- Worsening the problem of disposing of surface water through land drainage and foul water through existing septic tanks.



In the construction of recent dwellings, the developers have attempted to follow the theme of the existing village by encompassing brick construction, pitched tiled roofs, dormer and cottage style windows, open porches, conventional gables, corbelled brickwork, fascia/bargeboard design and, by retaining/replanting hedgerow boundaries and trees.



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## Future Development

## If future development is to take place the following should be considered:-

- a) The feeling of openness and space within the village should be retained, dwellings not constructed on top of one another, including the planting of trees/hedges and the creation of green areas between properties.
- b) Any such schemes must carefully consider the method of disposing of surface and foul water, not only within the curtilage of the scheme but the effect the scheme will have on existing properties.
- c) All new utility services, especially electric and telephone cabling to be laid underground, including feeds to the site, thus preventing the further proliferation of timber poles and overhead wires.
- d) Any large schemes (over five dwellings) should also consider the inclusion of a communal green area, perhaps forming for example a village green, and a children's play area or a recreation area e.g. bowling green.

- e) Access to and from any new development must be very carefully considered and planned, as the existing roads and lanes are very busy, especially at the peak times of the day; any developments will make this ever more so.
- f) Consideration in the design and construction of future dwellings should be given to include:-
  - Slate or tiled pitched roofs
  - Mixture of red brick and rendered wall constructions
  - Conventional gables
  - Dormer or cottage style windows
  - Open porches
  - Ornate fascia or barge boards
- g) A mixture of properties i.e. schemes should include properties suitable in size and cost to cater for young families, established families with children and for retired people.



Artist's impression of a development (showing four styles)



# Welshampton

VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

2002

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