

VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT THREAPWOOD

**A SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING
DOCUMENT**

(Adopted 12 December 2013)

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FOREWORD

What is a Village Design Statement?

The purpose of a Village Design Statement is to assist in the consideration and management of the future development of both buildings and landscape in a way that reflects and harmonises with the local character of surrounding buildings, spaces and landscape setting.

This document does not dictate whether a development should or should not take place. This will be determined by the policies contained within the Local Plan and supporting guidance. It is not meant to, and in itself cannot, stop development and change from happening within the Parish of Threapwood. This document aims to help identify typical and special features within the Parish that it is desirable to preserve, enhance or create in the future. It will help to influence how any future development fits by stating and laying out both the existing characteristics and qualities which are valued by the residents of Threapwood. It will also help provide guidance for any works in the public realm that are the responsibility of other departments or agencies such as the Highways Authority.

The Planning Background

This Village Design Statement for Threapwood has been drawn up by the local community and is intended to form a separate Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for adoption and use by Cheshire West and Chester Council. It will, once adopted, form part of a suite of Local Development Documents (LDD) that make up the Local Development Framework (LDF). The Council is currently working towards producing a Local Plan, a document that will set out the core planning policies for the Borough.

The Chester District Local Plan was adopted on 12 May 2006. Under the 2004 Act the policies contained within the adopted Local Plan were originally saved for a period of three years from the date of the Plan's adoption. In March 2009 Chester City Council's request for this period to be extended was approved by the Government Office for the North West. **The policies contained within the Chester District Local Plan will now remain in effect and continue to cover the former Chester authority area until such time as the Local Plan for Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council is adopted.**

This document sets out to add value to these policies within a local context. The Village Design Statement primarily supplements the following Chester District Local Plan policies:

- Policy GE7 - ensuring that all new development makes a positive contribution towards local distinctiveness.
- Policy ENV2 – aims to ensure that new development respects the local setting and context having regard to the character of the area, the layout, grain, landscape, density and mix of uses, scale and height, massing, appearance and materials.

However, there are also several other Local Plan policies as detailed in Appendix 1 – The Statutory Planning Framework.

Who should use the Village Design Statement?

This Village Design Statement is intended for Planning and Development Management Officers, Developers, their Architects and Designers in order to explain what the community would reasonably expect to see in a change of use or development. It is important for residents considering alterations and extensions to their properties in that it gives guidance to enable such development to harmonise with the distinctive character of their area of Threapwood. It will also be of interest to anyone else who wishes to promote any form of development or alteration of the environment of Threapwood, including landowners, local authorities and statutory bodies.

How has the Statement evolved?

During the summer of 2005 the Parish Council undertook a survey as part of a Parish Plan appraisal to investigate the concerns of residents and identify priorities for action. Action was then focussed on the top two priorities – road safety and community activity supported by better local communication. Once processes had been set in motion to address these issues, attention moved to the next two most rated priorities:

- Planning and development control.
- Protection of the environment.

The Parish Council decided the best way to pursue these concerns would be through the production of a Village Design Statement. A further questionnaire was distributed during the summer of 2009 seeking the views of residents on this proposal and the priorities they would like to see included in such a document.

A group of local volunteers was then formed to collect data and produce a draft document. In 2010 a summary was circulated to all residents for their comments. The subsequent draft was then discussed in detail with the Parish Council and officers from the Spatial Planning Department of Cheshire West and Chester Council to agree a final version to be submitted as a proposed supplementary planning document.

SUMMARY OF SUPPLEMENTARY POLICIES

The Natural Environment

LELP1: Landscape Character – Protecting the openness and the dispersed character.

LELP2: Landscape Features – Maintaining and enhancing features within the landscape.

LELP3: The Natural Environment and Habitats – Maintaining and enhancing key wildlife habitats and corridors.

LELP4: The Threapwood Valley – Preserving the setting and character of the Threapwood Valley.

LELP5: Boundaries Adjacent to Highways – Maintaining the open character and encouraging sympathetic planting.

The Built Environment

LBEP1: Scale, Massing and Height of Residential Development – Maintaining a low profile, and a dispersed character.

LBEP2: Form and Style of Residential Development – Encouraging high quality design and sympathetic style.

LBEP3: Design in Residential Development – Preferred design of windows, chimneys, porches, conservatories and garages.

LBEP4: Building Materials – Use of traditional, locally distinct materials.

LBEP5: Scale and Design of Agricultural Buildings – Maintaining openness of the countryside through appropriate scale and design.

LBEP6: Driveways – Use of permeable materials and materials that compliment the rural environment.

LBEP7: Gates and Boundary Hedgerows – Maintaining the character and existing field boundary treatments.

LBEP8: Lighting – Discouraging pollution from excessive use of lighting.

LBEP9: Waste Water Discharge – Providing details for the proposed disposal of waste water.

LBEP10: Improvement of Treatment Facilities – Suitability and performance of existing facilities.

LBEP11: Pedestrian Safety – Awareness of pedestrian safety and provision of pavements.

1. INTRODUCTION

This document has been written by a group of volunteers representing a cross-section of the residents of the Parish, and in consultation with the local community. The group has worked closely with the Parish Council, representatives of the Local Authority and other advisory bodies who have provided professional input and advice in support of the study.

The views of residents expressed through a survey of all households in the Parish have been summarised in the following “Statement of Community Values”

Statement of Community Values

The residents of Threapwood value most highly the peace and quiet of the surroundings. They have chosen to live in a unique rural settlement of dispersed individual dwellings, co-existing in harmony with a natural environment that provides a feeling of space and personal privacy. There is a strong feeling of being part of a loosely knit community where good relationships between neighbours and close family is cherished and supported by an appropriate balance of accommodation to meet local need. A feeling of safety and well-being adds to the quality of life. Residents value the personalised local services available to them and recognise the contribution of non-intrusive employment activity to a balanced community. Although somewhat remote from the principal service centres, the distance from more built-up areas and the surrounding expanse of accessible open countryside helps to retain the rural character so valued by those who live in Threapwood.

Mission

Embrace change that can be accommodated within the currently adopted policy framework and supporting guidance that:

- Protect and improve the integrity of the built and landscape resource;
- Promote a balanced, vibrant and inclusive community;
- Safeguard the values held by residents; and
- Respect the character and qualities of the Parish of Threapwood.

Key Issues

- Protecting open spaces between dispersed properties
- Lack of sewage treatment facilities and drainage
- Few amenities and minimal infrastructure
- Protection of the network of hedgerows, trees and other natural features that provide a variety of wildlife habitats
- The safety of narrow lanes and roads for all users

2. WHAT MAKES THREAPWOOD SPECIAL

2.1. The Location of Threapwood

Threapwood is a relatively isolated and dispersed settlement in open countryside¹ lying some 15 miles south of Chester and 3 miles west of the principal village of Malpas. The Civil Parish of Threapwood forms a tight boundary around the scattered properties and covers an area of approximately 100 hectares. The population of Threapwood Parish is 285 people (Census, 2001) living in 119 households. The border with Wales forms the western boundary of the Parish. Malpas provides many of the day to day services and amenities enjoyed by residents, whilst the market towns of Whitchurch, 9 miles to the south east in Shropshire and Wrexham, 9 miles away in Wales, offer shopping centres with major supermarkets.

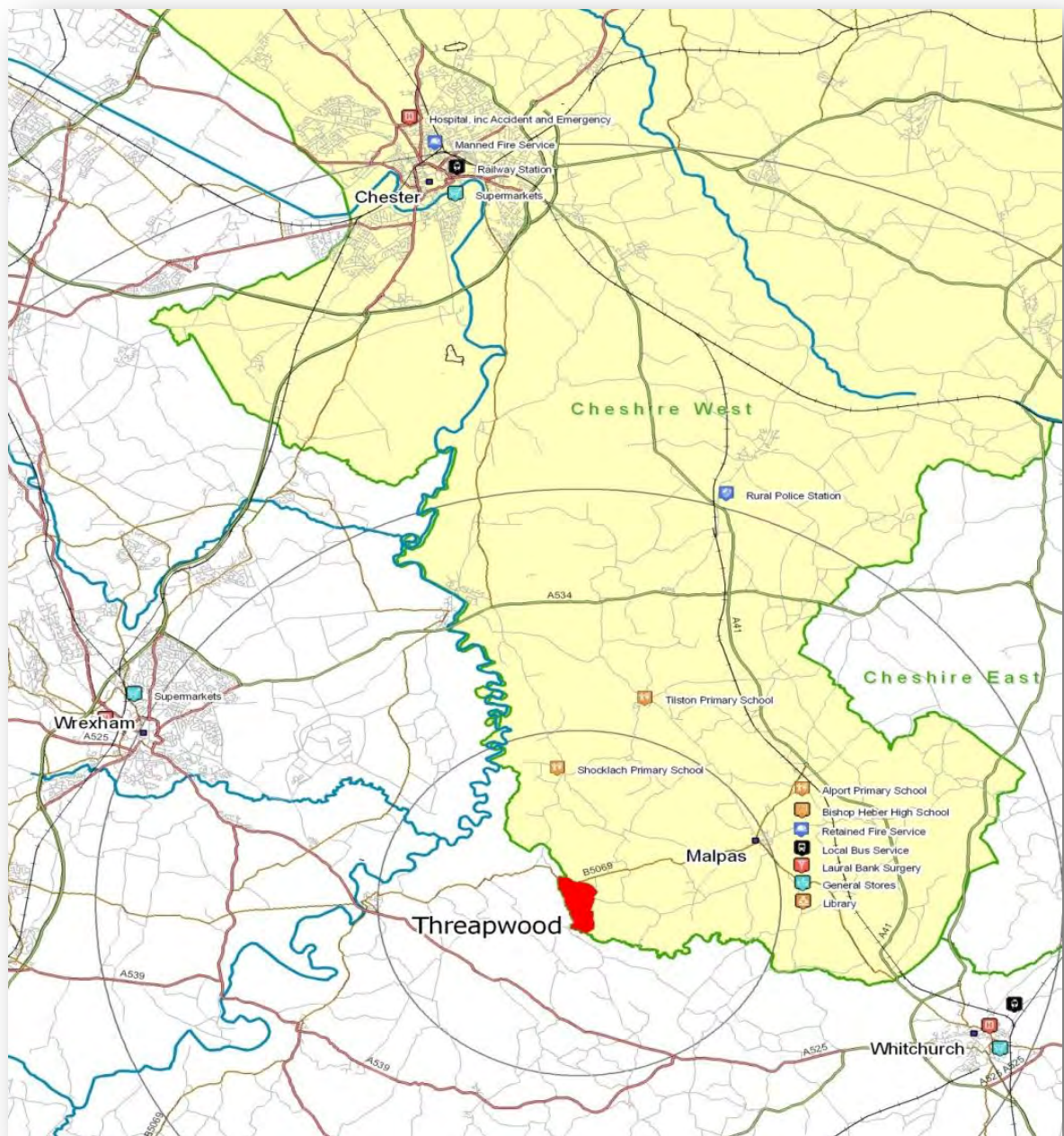


Figure 1: The location of Threapwood Parish

¹ Open countryside- as defined in the adopted Chester District Local Plan 2006

2.2. The Historic Setting and Development

An early reference to any form of settlement at Threapwood describes the area in 1753 as “containing about 300 acres, the greatest part of which is waste land; the rest is covered with twenty-seven cottages and small enclosures and the inhabitants numbered at 150”. This “poor” land fell outside of the jurisdiction of the authorities and became a refuge for squatters seeking an area of land from which to be self sufficient. The lack of administrative control resulted in a piecemeal development of the settlement with dispersed dwellings serviced by a network of lanes, tracks and footpaths. As plots of land became enclosed, a patchwork of small fields with mature hedges provided a demarcation and separation of the properties.

The form of the early settlement would have been restricted by the neighbouring estate land and the physical features of the landscape, most notably the relatively steep wooded stream valleys and the extent to which areas of land could be cleared and drained. The earliest identified record describes the area in 1690 as having “only three tenements and a cottage on the Cheshire side but seven houses on the Worthenbury (Wales) side”.

In more recent history, Threapwood remained a close knit community of established local families, relatively self sufficient and isolated from the economic growth of larger neighbouring settlements. From 1950 onwards, the character of the settlement has been altered as houses have been modernised and extended, and a small number of new houses have been built. With the closure of the remaining amenities such as the school in 1961 and Chapel 1985 the Parish is now made up predominantly of private residences with a number of businesses being established and operating in the area. A public house, village shop and garage and a church serve the community.

2.3. Amenities, Services and the Community

Threapwood is a settlement of dispersed dwellings that generates a sense of community but without the mass of population to sustain the infrastructure and provision of amenities usually associated with an established village. Services that are available locally are highly valued but most day to day necessities require travelling to the nearby village of Malpas and beyond (details of the principal amenities and their location are given in Appendix 2).



1. The Queens Head (Public House)



2. The Smithy Garage and Shop



3. Lanes are popular with horse riders

The small scale and nature of the settlement provides a valued informal community network. Access to the open countryside with its lanes and tracks facilitating exercise, dog walking, horse riding and a generally safe environment, coupled with the relative open aspect of many of the properties, brings opportunities for social contact. Equally, the dispersed nature of the properties standing in their own grounds provides space and

privacy within an established community for those who seek this. Community spirit is enhanced by a programme of well attended community events. Indoor public meetings and gatherings have to be held in the facilities of neighbouring communities such as those of Malpas or the adjoining communities of Tallarn Green and Chorlton.

2.4. Buildings of Public Interest

St. John's Church is situated off Sarn Road on the south side of Threapwood Valley and is a listed grade II building. It is accessed through attractive wrought iron gates which are also listed. The Church was built in 1815 and is known as a Waterloo Church. It has a distinctive plain edifice with square windows and a pretty bell cupola to the west end of its slate roof. There is a church yard to the north and south sides where the graves are well maintained. The Church provides the only public amenity building within the Parish.



4. St. John's Church

The remains of a derelict bottle shaped brick windmill stand in a remote although prominent position in meadowland adjoining the Threapwood Valley and are accessed from Mill Lane. The original building dates from the early eighteenth century and would have been three storeys high with a tapering dome. The upper part has fallen in with timbers and mechanism lying within the ruins. The structure is grade II listed as a Building of Special Architectural or Historical Interest.



5. Derelict Windmill

3. THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

3.1. Location of the Settlement within the Surrounding Landscape

Threapwood is located amongst gently shelving farmland rising from the River Dee flood plain in the west towards the ridge of high ground around Malpas. Three significant streams draining to the river Dee in the west cut into the relatively steep sided valleys colonised by trees and shrubs that now present important areas of nature conservation value. The surrounding area is distinguished by a network of established hedgerows with relatively abundant mature trees (typically oak) that enclose small fields that are predominantly used as pasture for the grazing of livestock.

The Chester District Landscape Assessment (1998) recognises Threapwood as falling into two distinct character areas of the Cheshire Plain / Dee Valley Flood Plain. The Wych Valley is a narrow valley containing a picturesque undulating landform extending from the county border at Threapwood through the Wyches to the catchment area near Grindley Brook. The valley is an Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV) that contains ancient woodland and designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Biological Interest (SBI). Much of the settlement area of Threapwood falls within the western fringe of the Malpas Character Area described as an undulating agricultural landscape with interlocking landforms.



6. Pasture land to North



7. Parkland to East



8. View across Dee Plain to Welsh hills to West

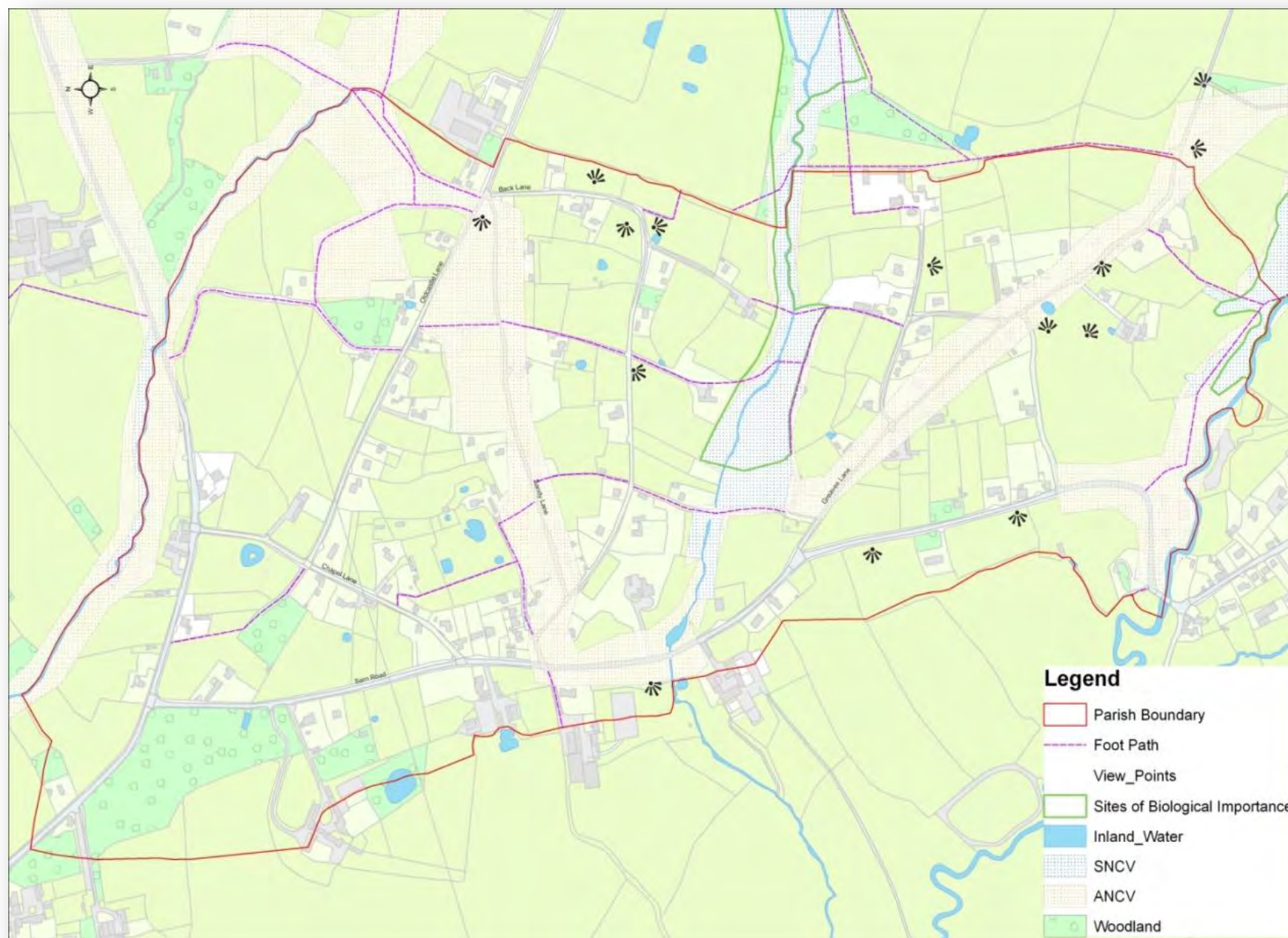


Figure 2 Landscape Character and Features in Threapwood Parish

3.2. Landscapes within the Settlement



9. Views into Threapwood

The Parish of Threapwood is characterised by being of predominantly open countryside with scattered properties set amongst small enclosures intersected by narrow access lanes. This patchwork of small enclosures bounded by mature hedgerows and trees now characterises the community of Threapwood presenting a three dimensional landscape within which the individual dwellings are set.

The field systems of the parish are defined by the Cheshire Historic Landscape Character (CHL) project as the Post Medieval Enclosure HCL sub-type and marl pits and medieval ridge and furrow are still common features. The existing field systems are generally of irregular shape and are separated in the main by predominantly mature hawthorn hedges containing a rich variety of native species and abundant mature trees.



10. Threapwood Valley

The Chester District Landscape Assessment and Guidelines (1998), describe the parish of Threapwood as being particularly distinctive from the rest of the Malpas area – “characterised by a landscape of small squatter type cottages set amongst small meadows bounded by hedgerows”.

Context: Threapwood is made up of an irregular network of small enclosures bounded by a network of established native hedges and abundant mature trees. This is a unique landscape setting characterised by the dispersed nature of existing houses and rural structures.

LELP1: Landscape Character

When considering proposals for development in Threapwood consideration must be given to the unique dispersed nature of the settlement. Development should not have an adverse impact on the dispersed nature of the settlement and the openness between existing properties and structures.

Relates to Local Plan policies: ENV2, ENV24

3.3. Features within the Landscape

Significant landscape features in the area include Flennen's Brook forming the boundary of the Parish to the north and Wych Brook the southern boundary. To the east of the Parish extensive new tree planting and water features formed by the flooding of the earlier brickworks by spring water now provide an important wetland habitat. These springs and the surrounding area feed a third water course known as Paradise Brook which effectively divides the settlement into Upper and Lower Threapwood. Each of these streams have eroded the overlying boulder clay to expose the sandy sub-soils and present relatively steep sloping margins with extensive mature tree belts.



11. Ponds at old brickworks

Woodland cover is and was historically low although many specimen trees, mostly established along the mature hedgerows of the many small enclosures, add to the tree belts forming the valley margins and present a three dimensional planted landscape. Many of the early orchards that would have been prominent in the area have been cleared over time. However the remnants of some still remain, together with many isolated fruit trees such as pear, apple and damson can be found, typically forming part of a retained boundary.



12. Orchard

Context: Significant landscape features in the Parish include Flennen's Brook, Wych Brook and important wetland habitats. Paradise Brook is a designated Site of Biological Importance (SBI) and the Threapwood Valley is integral to the landscape. Key features are identified on the map at Figure 2.

LELP2: Landscape Features

When considering proposals for development the distinct character of the landscape and the features identified in Figure 2 should be maintained and enhanced, and where applicable replacement planting with native species is recommended.

Relates to Local Plan policies: ENV2, ENV24

3.4. Nature Conservation and Wildlife Habitats

An extensive area along the Wych valley and a number of corridors extending across Threapwood are identified collectively as an Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV) and contain a total of 18 individual Sites of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV), two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and two Sites of Biological Importance (SBI). The most significant area is the length of the Wych Valley with extensive ancient woodland and species-rich unimproved grassland. A length of the valley woodland extending into the Parish known as "Greaves Woods" is designated an SBI as is an area known as "Threapwood Valley and Pond". "Threapwood Valley" in the centre of the settlement is formed by the Paradise Brook which rises from springs close to the flooded ponds of the old brick workings at the top of Oldcastle Lane and flows into the Wych Brook to the west of the Parish. The valley margins are noted for their species rich hedgerows and relatively species rich pastures whilst the low lying wet area around the ponds is species rich and colonised by amphibians. A further area along Flennen's Brook to the north of the B5069 is also defined as an SNCV.



13. Mature woodland of Wych Valley



14. Threapwood Valley

Threapwood and its surrounding area are fortunate in having a significant concentration of wetland habitats. Evidence from maps and aerial photographs suggest the existence of some twenty significant ponds with many more domestic ponds as ornamental features within private grounds. Whilst many ponds were originally formed in redundant marl pits others have been created by local residents to enhance wildlife habitats and collectively are a defining characteristic of the area.

A number of protected species are recorded as being present in Threapwood and special consideration has to be given to any development that might impact on their habitat. It should be noted that residents have made a significant contribution through the way most have managed their property and land to maintain and create wildlife habitats.

Context: The integrity of localised wildlife habitats can be damaged or fragmented by the effects of development, pollution, neglect, drainage, flooding, clearance, infilling or shading. There are a number of important habitats within and adjoining Threapwood that should be protected and preserved.

LELP3: The Natural Environment and Habitats

When considering proposals for development wildlife habitats and corridors, and the setting of these key features should, where possible, be maintained and enhanced.

Relates to Local Plan policies: ENV27, ENV29, ENV30

LELP4: The Threapwood Valley

When considering proposals for development, the setting and features of the Threapwood Valley and important green spaces should be considered and preserved.

Relates to Local Plan policies: ENV24

3.5. Lanes and Tracks

Many of the lanes and tracks in the settlement not only generate a sense of openness but also provide long distance panoramic views. Sarn Road along the western boundary of the Parish and the lanes leading to the higher ground in the east offer panoramic views across open countryside over the Wych Brook to the Dee Valley and Welsh Hills beyond.



15. Greaves Lane



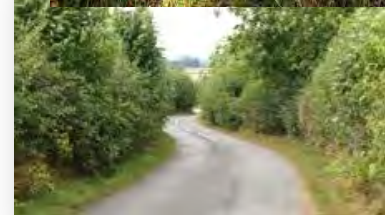
16. Oldcastle Lane

The lanes and tracks through the settlement are predominantly edged (72%) by verges of wild or cut grass. Some short stretches include a ditch or drainage channel within a wider grass verge. There are no metalled footpaths along any of the lanes and only short intermittent lengths along the roads. All of the roads and lanes have hedging as the main boundary treatment (with most in excess of 80%) which, together with their gentle curve and grass verges, adds to the rural character of the area. The majority of the hedging is of mixed native species with hawthorn as the predominant component.

Hedges forming field boundaries are typically kept to a height of about one and a half meters and most of the garden frontages continue this theme although some are planted with more ornamental hedging such as privet and hornbeam. Domestic hedging tends to be of varying height; higher where privacy is sought and at a lower level where used in combination with open fencing or low brickwork.

A network of tracks, bridleways and footpaths provide protected access through open countryside and have become an important amenity resource for those taking exercise - often as families walking with children, walking dogs and riding horses.

Context: Boundary features form a significant element of the landscape fabric and their continuity maintains the rural character of the area.



LELP5: Boundaries Adjacent to Highways

Development that would seek to alter boundaries adjacent to the highway should be sympathetic to the existing form and planting. Changes to boundary treatment should reflect and maintain the local character and openness along and through the settlement.

Relates to Local Plan policies: GE7, ENV21

4. THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

4.1. Residential Buildings

The Chester District Landscape Assessment and Guidelines (1998), characterises the parish of Threapwood as “a landscape of small squatter type cottages set amongst small meadows bounded by hedgerows”. Many of the properties have evolved from this simple form and retain some of the original features dating back to the early 1700’s. They have been constructed with locally extracted and manufactured Cheshire brick under a Welsh slate roof. The distribution of houses and the general building materials are shown in Figure 3.

Over time some of the original dwellings have been sympathetically restored to retain their original “cottage style” appearance whilst others were demolished and re-built or have been extended into substantial properties with multiple elevations. Some have incorporated other materials such as rendering to dress the original weathered surface.

A small number of the early dwellings are still standing semi-derelict and together with some of the more substantial outbuildings scattered around the settlement may be the subject of development at some point in the future.



17. Original cottages



18. Rebuilt in original style

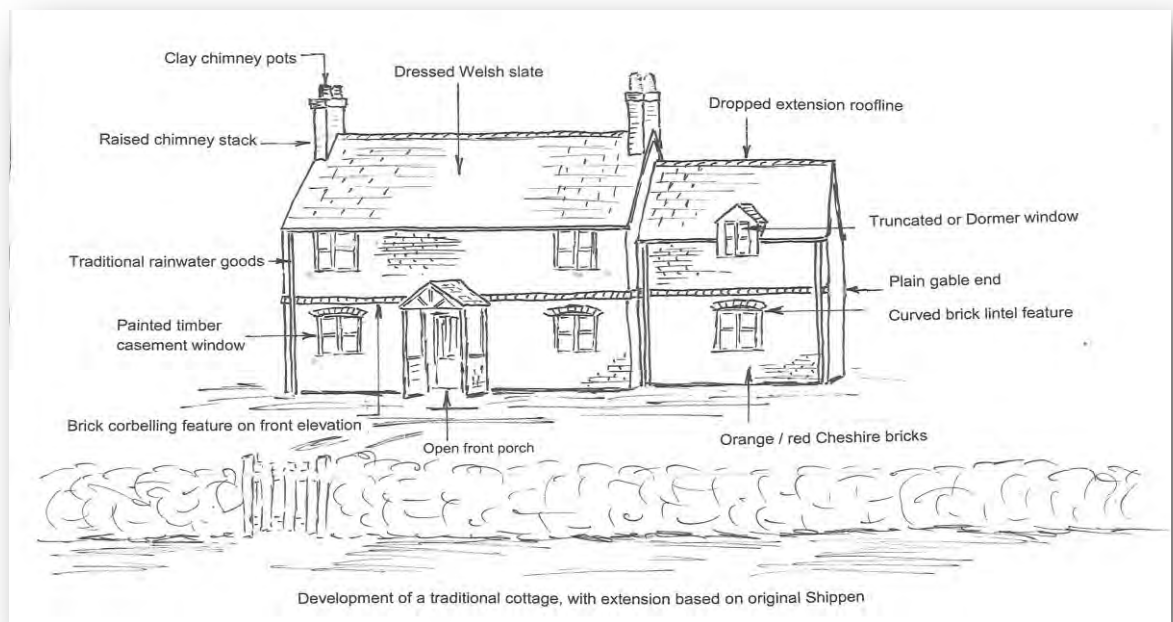


Figure 3 Development of traditional cottage

During the **early 1990's**, a number of new properties were built on open land or where existing structures had stood. In many cases the materials and design reflected the contemporary style of that period. A significant number of the new properties were built as bungalows where space allowed for the larger footprint of a single storey dwelling.

Over two-thirds of the properties in Threapwood are represented by a mixture of the **modest scale "cottage-like" houses that display traditional features such as small windows and low profiles**, and bungalows with a single level of accommodation although a few have dormer bedrooms within the roof space. Together, these two general types of property display the overriding characteristic of being of relatively low built profile.

Whilst many of the original properties present simple elevations, the combined effect of features such as cottage windows, projecting entry porches and raised chimneys stacks, together with the subtle appearance and colour of the mellow orange/red Cheshire brick and dressed Welsh slate combine to give an aesthetically pleasing appearance. Many of the original cottages have had substantial extensions built. Where this has been done sympathetically the character has been further enhanced by appropriately proportioned variation in multiple elevations and stepped roof lines. The inclusion of traditional style porches and projecting chimney breasts has added further interest to the elevations. This has been particularly effective where there has been linear extension to a property and avoids the appearance of a single mass, as might be the case where a property conversion has been restricted to the form dictated by the previous function of the original structure.

The cottage style windows are characterised by plain rectangular openings set into the brick work. Most have traditional arched brick lintels and simple wooden sills. The wooden casement windows have small divided light panes and are predominantly painted white. The upper windows are usually of reduced height - particularly where the upper floor projects into the roof space. Alternatively the latter is often facilitated by the inclusion of dormer windows presenting an attractive variation to the presentation of the roof mass and maintaining a lower profile. **There are very few examples where 'Velux' style window lights** have been used in prominent positions rather than dormer windows.

The typical style for chimneys on dwellings is a stack rising to just under one meter above the ridge height and capped with one or two relatively plain cylindrical or square pots. Most are a dominant feature of the profile of the property with some presenting a substantial chimney breast extending out from a gable end. Many properties retain the original fireplaces for their aesthetic appeal.



19. Modern bungalow



20. Varied elevations and features

The majority of properties that have a protruding front porch are of a traditional style, which adds to the profile and character of the front elevation of the property. In the case of older properties, these are usually open timber structures or timber bearing on a low brick plinth or wall and are generally of modest style. Most sit in proportion to the elevation – typically about twice the width of the door entrance with the ridge falling well below the lower roof line of the elevation. Many of the more modern buildings have functional porches that tend to be fully enclosed with a door and window lights.



21. Traditional front porch

Context: Good design in new residential development that reflects the low profile of the existing dwellings and respects the form of surrounding structures and the landscape setting can make a positive contribution to the overall character of an area.

LBEP1: Scale, Massing and Height of Residential Development

When considering proposals for residential development, where possible, houses and related buildings should be well sited in relation to the surrounding properties and the overall character of the area so as not to appear obtrusive. “Cottage-like” properties and low profile bungalows are to be encouraged to fit in with the existing built character.

LBEP2: Form and Style of Residential Development

Proposals for residential development should take account of the form and style of the cluster of neighbouring properties within which it is set, and should sit sympathetically within its setting to avoid creating a dominant presence in the local vernacular. High quality creative design is encouraged where it would not be detrimental to the existing balance between the built and natural landscape.

LBEP3: Design in Residential Development

When considering proposals for residential development (new and replacement dwellings and alterations / extensions to existing dwellings) the following should be considered:

Windows – should be kept in character and proportion to the style of the existing property and the character of the surrounding area.

Chimneys – the incorporation of a feature chimney that is functional in appearance, not overly ornate and in keeping with the local character and surroundings.

Porches – the addition of an open aspect porch that is of proportionate scale and style

Conservatories – should be built of materials that are complementary to those used in the principal building, typically a white timber framework standing on a Cheshire brick base. The structure should be subsidiary to the main accommodation and not overly ornate. Where contemporary materials are to be used, these should not conflict in form or scale with those used in the main structure.

Garages – should be detached rather than integral, creating the appearance of a traditional ancillary agricultural building or coach house. Door openings should be sufficient for one vehicle or a multiple of, rather than large opening structures.

Relates to Local Plan policies GE7, ENV2 - Supported by: SPD: Re-use of Rural Buildings, SPD: Design for Residential Development, SPD: Sustainable Development



Figure 4: Distribution of buildings and building materials in Threapwood Parish

4.2. Building Materials

Traditionally mellow orange/red Cheshire brick produced in the local brick works would have been the dominant building material for the area. Whilst some of the original brick buildings have been rendered two fifths (40%) of properties still present traditional brick and tend to be clustered in groups throughout the settlement. A sizeable number of all properties (20%) have been rendered and painted white as a finish of choice for more contemporary buildings or where the original brick work may have weathered. **Context:** The range of materials used in residential development in the Parish is varied. The effective choice of materials will help enable any new development to harmonise with its surroundings



22. Traditional local brickwork

LBEP4: Building Materials

When considering proposals for residential development the use of traditional and locally distinct materials will be encouraged where possible to reflect the existing and surrounding buildings and dwellings as in Figure 4 for example Cheshire brick, Welsh slate roofs and painted wooden casement windows.

Relates to Local Plan policies: GE7, ENV2, ENV9 - Supported by: SPD: Re-use of Rural Buildings, SPD: Design for Residential Development, SPD: Sustainable Development

4.3. Agricultural Buildings

The settlement is predominantly made up of small enclosures and is surrounded by farmland traditionally used for grazing dairy herds. Several farm buildings on the fringe of the settlement have been converted for residential or employment use and the associated land rented out or purchased by adjacent landowners for grazing livestock, or increasingly for equestrian use. The open countryside aspect coupled with the large number of manageable paddocks between properties has made Threapwood a favoured location for all aspects of equestrian activity and competitive horse riding. Some of the original farms have become the base for quite substantial commercial use. There have traditionally been a number of small holdings in Threapwood although those still in existence tend to operate as a secondary lifestyle pursuit, maintaining relatively small numbers of livestock. More recently there have been some small scale horticultural initiatives on agricultural land. Such concentrated activity places a number of demands on the planning system as new structures are required to support this usage of the land.

Context: The open countryside is a working environment requiring a balance of activity to manage the land whilst protecting the wider environment and general amenity of the area.



23. Farm used as business premises



24. Residential barn conversion

LBEP5: Scale and Design of Agricultural Buildings

Where structures relating to agricultural / farming / stabling are proposed in the open countryside, where possible they should be restricted to the height, scale and massing necessary to perform their required function and positioned close to other related buildings. Where this is not possible and existing landscape features or additional planting should be used to minimise their impact on the character and appearance of the locality.

Relates to Local Plan Policies: GE3, ENV2, EC22 - Supported by: 7(Sustainable Development in Rural Areas), Rural Strategy (DEFRA 2004), SPG: Chester District Landscape Assessment and Guidelines, SPD: Re-use of Rural Buildings

4.4. Driveways and Boundary Treatments

Less than half (46%) of the road and lane margins within the settlement are formed by the frontage of grounds containing properties. Three quarters of these properties stand within gardens fronted by native, or in a few cases, ornamental hedgerow, much of which is maintained at a height to provide privacy to the occupants.

Together with their grass verges, much of the roadside margin behind which the properties are located takes on a natural countryside appearance consistent with that of the many paddocks and fields forming open spaces in between and is a major factor in reducing the visual mass of the built environment. Fencing is only used in 11% of the plot frontages and where it is used it is mainly of a traditional rural nature such as pales or post and rail. There are very few examples of metal estate railings or high brick walls.

Most driveways to properties have an open aspect. Where gates are used they generally reflect the rural theme of traditional agricultural field gates – typically a five bar wooden or metal gate that reflects the wider environment. Driveways and parking areas are predominantly made from permeable materials such as crushed stone and gravel.

Context: The aesthetic quality of the built environment will be enhanced by the incorporation of traditional features that reflect the wider environment such as open gravel driveways and traditional gateways.



25. Sandy Lane



26. Oldcastle Lane



27. Gravel Drive

LBEP6: Driveways

When considering proposals that would alter the driveway and/or approach to a dwelling or small holding, consideration should be given to the use of permeable materials that are complimentary to the rural environment e.g. loose gravel or natural stone. Excessive areas of hard-standing or impermeable material that generate significant run-off should be avoided. Details of proposed drainage schemes including innovative approaches such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) should be considered through the planning application process.

Relates to Local Plan policies: GE4, GE7, ENV9

Supported by: SPD: Design for Residential Development and SPG: House Extensions

LBEP7: Gates and Boundary Hedgerows

Development that would create new boundary treatment and/or entrance gates should be in-keeping with the local character of the local settlement. Entries to the public roads should balance the requirements of the highway authority with the need to maintain the integrity of the rural environment with the continuity of hedgerows and grass verges. Gateways should also reflect the rural feel of the area.

Relates to Local Plan policies: GE7, ENV9, ENV21, ENV22, ENV24

4.5. Lighting

The Parish has no street lighting and is generally free from light pollution.

Context: Lack of street lighting in the Parish is important to the rural character of Threapwood .

LBEP8: Lighting

Light pollution into surrounding areas from the floodlighting of public areas and private property should be discouraged or minimised unless there are over-riding safety reasons for its provision.

Relates to Local Plan Policies: ENV14, ENV59

4.6. Drainage and Waste Water

Most of the present day settlement area of Threapwood sits on a significant layer of boulder clay overlaying sandstone bedrock and associated lighter soils. The cohesive nature of the boulder clay prevents free drainage of water. Many properties and fields rely on a drainage system to manage perched water and allow the free run off of water during periods of prolonged rainfall. In more recent times a lack of maintenance and a trend towards laying piped land drains has, in some areas, restricted the flow of surface water where these have been filled in, silted up or damaged. This is further compounded by the seasonal flow of groundwater rising to the surface as natural springs and seepages where it breaks through the overlying layer of clay.

The discharge of run-off from an increasing number of buildings and hard surfaces adds to localised concentrations of surface water following heavy rainfall. Whilst the amount of land between properties allows for some absorption of this water heavy rainfall can result in localised flooding, although this is usually short lived where there is effective drainage close by.

There is no mains drainage serving Threapwood and all properties within the Parish and a significant number close by are reliant on the use of private arrangements for the treatment of sewage and the discharge of waste water into the water courses and the wider environment. Given the impermeability of the clay soil, soakaways are less effective in this environment and silt up over time. Some properties discharge to a local drainage channel, where good maintenance allows free passage and further dilution of the discharged treated waste water. However, this is hampered in some situations by excessive localised loading or where dispersal is restricted.

Context: The effective dispersal of waste water and control of pollution is essential to the protection of the environment, its wildlife habitats and the well being of residents living nearby.

LBEP9: Waste Water Discharge

When considering proposals for development the applicant should provide information relating to methods to dispose of waste water without detriment to the local environment, in particular in relation to the ability of the local environment to accommodate the discharge of waste water from foul drainage systems outside of the site.

Relates to Local Plan policies: GE4, GE5 - Supported by: Building Regulations – Part H, BS6297, SPD: Sustainable Development

LBEP10: Improvement of Treatment Facilities

Where a new development intends to access the services of an existing or related property, account should be taken of the suitability of that facility and the opportunity to improve its performance.

Relates to Local Plan policies: GE4, GE5 - Supported by: Building Regulations – Part H, BS6297, SPD: Sustainable Development

4.7. Highways

Typically the roads in and around Threapwood have narrow carriageways with concealed entrances. Traffic has to share the limited road space with pedestrians- often walking with children or dogs and horse riders. These roads have tight bends and dips often with hedgerows close to the roadside that further reduce the visibility of those using them. In the absence of a lower speed limit traffic can travel at speeds of up to 60 mph.

Pavements are almost non-existent within Threapwood apart from a very short stretch along the B5069 to the western edge of the Parish, and along part of Sarn Road. Pavements are notably absent in important areas such as near to The Smithy Garage and Shop close to the junction with Chapel Lane; the blind corner by St John's Church, Sarn Road; and the approach to the Queens Head Public House.

Context: Pavements are not practical along most of the narrow lanes in the Parish and would be out of character with the rural environment. However, most have shallow grass verges that provide a limited but important sanctuary when passing vehicles occupy the width of the carriageway.



28. Pedestrians share road with vehicles



29. Horses pass close to vehicles



30. Cycle route 70 passes through Threapwood

LBEP11: Pedestrian Safety

When considering development proposals at or close to sections of the highway used by pedestrians to access public facilities or where particular hazards are identified, consideration should be made of pedestrian safety and contribution to the provision of pavements where practical.

Relates to Local Plan policies: TR19, TR20, ENV11

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Threapwood Village Design Statement

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6. FUTURE MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Chester District Local Plan was adopted on May 2006. Under the 2004 Act the policies contained within the adopted Local Plan were originally saved for a period of three years from the date of the Local Plan's adoption. In March 2009 Chester City Council's request for this period to be extended was approved by the Government Office for the North West.

The policies contained within the Chester District Local Plan will now remain in effect and continue to cover the former Chester City Council authority area until such time as the Local Plan for Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council is adopted. When the Core Strategy/Local Plan is adopted, there will be a need to review this document and all other Village Design Statements adopted by the Council to ensure they reflect the policies it contains.

It is the intention of the Parish Council to monitor the use of the village design statement in the decision making process.

APPENDIX 1 - THE STATUTORY PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Appendix 1 contains full details of the statutory planning framework within which the Threapwood Village Design Statement has been written. This fits within a clear hierarchy of planning policy that has been produced at national, regional and local levels:

National - In 2012 Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes were (n the main) replaced by a single more streamlined policy framework. The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)(NPPF)sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which County and District Councils must produce locally distinctive polices and plans for their communities. Further details can be found at www.gov.uk

Local - The ***Chester District Local Plan 1996-2011*** was adopted in May 2006 and sets out the detailed planning policies affecting new development in the former Chester District. The Threapwood Village Design Statement primarily supplements the following policies in the Local Plan:

- **Policy GE7** ensures that new development makes a contribution towards Local Distinctiveness
- **Policy ENV2** aims to ensure that new development respects the local setting and context having regard to the character of the area, the layout, urban grain, landscape, density and mix of uses, scale and height, massing, appearance and materials.

However, the Village Design Statement also supplements several other policies in the Chester District Local Plan including:

Policy GE2 Accessibility

Requires new development to improve access and facilities wherever possible.

Policy GE3 Impact on residential amenities

Seeks to protect the amenities of local residents.

Policy GE4 Availability of Utility Services

Requires that new development should only take place where it can be demonstrated that there would be no adverse impact on foul drainage provision.

Policy GE5 Protection of Water Resources

Ensures the protection of the quantity and quality of water supplies.

Policy GE7 Local Distinctiveness

Requires new development to contribute towards local distinctiveness.

Policy ENV1 Sustainable Development

Requires proposals to be in accordance with Sustainable Development.

Policy ENV2 Local Setting and Context

Requires new development to be designed to respect its surroundings and contribute positively to the character of the area.

Policy ENV9 Use of complementary materials within development

Requires materials uses in new development to respect the surroundings and contribute positively to the character of the area.

Policy ENV11 Safety and Security

Ensuring all publicly accessible spaces and thoroughfares should be designed with safety and security in mind.

Policy ENV14 District Lighting Strategy

Requires new development to provide external lighting schemes which enhance the image of the district at night.

Policy ENV21 Tree Preservation Orders, Hedgerows and Woodlands

Developers will be expected to integrate all significant healthy trees and woodlands and important hedgerows within their development proposals. Exceptionally where the approval of a development involves the felling of such trees the council will require replacement trees to be planted as part of an overall landscape scheme.

Policy ENV22 New Landscape and Development

Requires high quality design and implementation of hard and soft landscape works in new developments.

Policy ENV24 Rural Development

Development in the rural area will only be permitted where it would respect the key features of the landscape and not be detrimental to its character.

Policy ENV27 Nature Conservation

There should be no adverse impact on nature conservation value.

Policy ENV29 Features of Local Importance

There should be no adverse impact on features of high local value.

Policy ENV30 Strategic Wildlife Corridors

There should be no adverse impact on these corridors.

Policy ENV35 - 38 Conservation Areas

New development should preserve and / or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Policy ENV45 - 47 Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens

Development should not adversely affect the features of special architectural or historic interest.

Policy ENV59 Criteria for development with potential to pollute or be affected by pollution

Ensure present disposal systems can accommodate increases in volumes created by new developments

Policy EC22 New Agricultural Buildings

Ensuring impact on the environment is minimised.

Policy TR19 - 20 New Developments

Ensuring all new public highways are designed to operate safely and efficiently.

Policies HO4, HO5, HO7- 13, HO15-19, HO21 Housing Development

Provides guidance on housing development including infill development, affordable housing, windfall sites, housing in the countryside, extensions, conversions of rural buildings, replacement dwellings, and low cost housing.

In addition the former Chester City Council has produced several Supplementary Planning Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents that should be considered in any new development. These include:

- **Supplementary Planning Document: House Extensions**
- **Supplementary Planning Document: Re-use of rural buildings**
- **Supplementary Planning Document: Design for Residential Development**
- **Supplementary Planning Document: Sustainable Development**
- **Chester District Landscape Assessment and Guidelines (1998)**
- **Cheshire Historic Landscape Character (CHL)**

Full details of these documents are available on the Council's website at:

<http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=284>

Cheshire West and Chester is also required to produce a *Local Development Framework* which contains a portfolio of Local Development Documents, which will guide new development in the District in the future. Further details can be viewed at:

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Cheshire West and Chester Council are currently working towards the production of a new Local Plan for the whole borough. This will initially replace some of the policies within The Chester District Local Plan (2006), with the intent that the remaining policies will be replaced at a later date. It is anticipated that the VDS will align with the new Local Plan, once adopted. A review will be undertaken at the appropriate time.

APPENDIX 2 - LOCATION AND DISTANCE OF PRINCIPAL AMENITIES - 2012

Amenities and Services available within Threapwood:

- Smithy Garage and Shop – providing fuel, car servicing and repairs, essential provisions, milk round and a part- time, restricted outreach post office
- Queens Head (Sarn) – Public House
- **St John's** – Church of England Parish Church

Amenities and Services available in Malpas – 3 miles away:

- Laurel Bank Doctors Surgery – doctors, district nurse and pharmacy
- General Stores – extensive range of grocery and household provisions with extended opening hours, chemist, take-away and range of domestic products and services
- Post Office – full time with comprehensive service
- NHS Dental Practice
- Allport Primary School (also Shocklach – 3 miles away)
- Bishop Heber Secondary School
- Bus Service – A41 service linking Chester and Whitchurch via Malpas
- Jubilee Hall – Village Hall and Community Centre
- Retained Fire Service Station
- Youth Clubs
- Community Sports facilities (Bishop Heber)
- Library
- Elderly Care Homes and Services
- Veterinary Practice

Centralised services are based in Chester, Wrexham and Whitchurch:

- Principal A&E and General Hospitals – Countess of Chester (21 miles) and Wrexham Maelor (10 miles)
- NW Ambulance Service – based at Countess of Chester Hospital with outreach ambulance and paramedic serving rural area
- Cheshire Fire Service – operating from Chester (20 miles) (Shropshire Fire Service based at Whitchurch - 9 miles away)
- Cheshire Police Service (Western Rural Watch) - controlled from Winsford with part-time outposts at Dragon Hall (Tattenhall) and Mickle Trafford
- Supermarkets and Hardware Stores - Whitchurch and Wrexham (9 miles) and Chester (15 miles)

Threapwood lies to the south of the B5069 which connects the settlement with the A41, the main route between Chester and Whitchurch. The community is not served by a scheduled public transport and is therefore almost entirely dependent on private car transport. Previous attempts to include a bus route through the settlement to link with Whitchurch and Wrexham have failed to generate the required passenger usage. The nearest service is the A41 route via Malpas (3 miles away) to Chester and Whitchurch where other bus and rail services can be accessed.

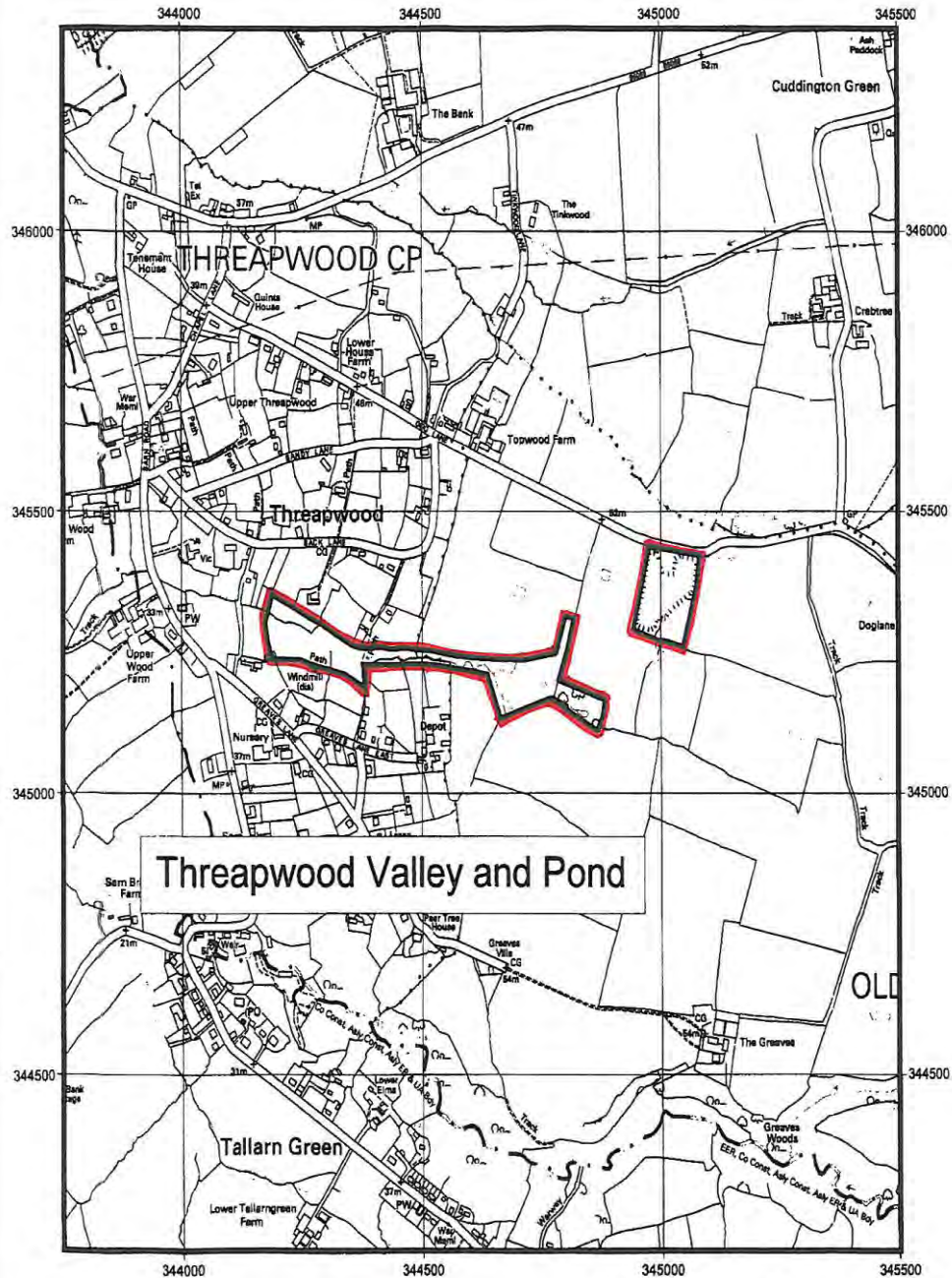
APPENDIX 3 - TABLE OF NATIVE HEDGE SPECIES

Recommended hedgerow trees and shrubs for the parish of Threapwood

Common Name	Latin Name	Can be used as hedge	Can be used as tree	Major species to area	Minor species to area	Notes
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>		✓			Appropriate locally but not indigenous
Apple Crab	<i>Malus</i> spp.	✓	✓			Useful food supply for birds & mammals
Apple - cultivated	<i>Malus</i> spp.		✓			Useful food supply for birds & mammals
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>		✓	✓		In many hedgerows but makes poor hedging.
Birch - Downy	<i>Betula pubescens</i>		✓		✓	
Birch - Silver	<i>Betula pendula</i>		✓		✓	
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	✓		✓		Useful food supply for birds & mammals
Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus</i> spp	✓	✓		✓	
Chestnut - Horse	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>		✓			Appropriate locally but not indigenous
Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	✓			✓	
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	✓	✓	✓		Useful food supply for birds & mammals
Elm - Wych	<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	✓	✓	✓		Mature trees succumb to elm beetle
Field Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	✓	✓		✓	Maybe too vigorous in mixed hedging.
Gean (wild cherry)	<i>Prunus avium</i>		✓			Appropriate locally but not indigenous
Grey Sallow	<i>Salix cinerea</i>	✓	✓		✓	
Guelder Rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	✓				Appropriate locally but not indigenous
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	✓	✓	✓		Useful food supply for birds & mammals
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	✓	✓	✓		Useful food supply for birds & mammals
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	✓		✓		Can be added to mixed hedging
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	✓	✓	✓		Useful food supply for birds & mammals
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	✓	✓			Appropriate locally but not indigenous
Oak - Pedunculate	<i>Quercus robur</i>		✓	✓		Useful food supply for birds & mammals
Oak - Sessile	<i>Quercus petraea</i>		✓	✓		Useful food supply for birds & mammals
Pear - Wild	<i>Pyrus communis</i>		✓		✓	Useful food supply for birds & mammals
Pear - cultivated	<i>Pyrus</i> spp.		✓	✓		Useful food supply for birds & mammals
Plum / damson	<i>Prunus</i> spp.	✓	✓	✓		Useful food supply for birds & mammals
Privet - Wild	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	✓			✓	Found in Greaves Lane areas
Rose - dog	<i>Rosa canina</i>	✓		✓		Can be added to mixed hedging
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>		✓			Appropriate locally but not indigenous
Spindle	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	✓	✓		✓	
Walnut	<i>Juglans regia</i>		✓			Appropriate locally but not indigenous
Willow - Goat	<i>Salix caprea</i>	✓	✓		✓	
Wayfaring Tree	<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	✓				Appropriate locally but not indigenous

The plants listed above are recommended trees & shrub species which are appropriate for planting schemes in the Threapwood parish. Professional advice should be sought on implementation of planting mixes for individual sites and the existing natural plantings in a particular area should be used as guidance.

Cheshire Sites of Biological Importance



1:10000

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APPENDIX 5 - LOCAL ASPIRATIONS

This section contains a number of aspirations of Threapwood's community, which it realises cannot be adopted by the Council within a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) under current planning regulations, because they are outside planning control. **These do not form part of the adopted SPD.** The Parish Council and local community will rigorously pursue these aspirations through the appropriate consultation processes as part of the emerging Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan.

Traffic Safety

Aspiration 1 - Speed Controls: A speed limit of 40mph should be applied to all roads and lanes within the Parish including the section of the B5069 where it runs through the Parish.

Aspiration 2 - Traffic Calming: Options should be assessed, considered and implemented where appropriate to reinforce adherence to the speed limits applied.

Maintenance, Creation, and Extension of Wildlife Habitats

Aspiration 3 - Wildlife Habitats: Landowners should be encouraged and supported to preserve, enhance and create resources of native woodland, hedgerows, trees, unimproved meadowland, ponds, streams, verges, ditches and geological features that contribute to the biodiversity and distinctiveness of the area.

The Built Environment

Aspiration 4 - New development: This should be restricted to the conversion of existing structures or non-viable employment premises designated as "brownfield" sites where there is a fit with the built environment but not where there would be an intrusion into open space designated "open countryside". Any large scale development of compact and uniform dwelling units would be out of character within the form and pattern of the existing dispersed settlement.

Aspiration 5 - Employment Development: There should be a presumption against any proposed new employment activity (change of use to employment or change of activity within existing designation) that is deemed intrusive and / or restricted by the constraints of the site location and services within the predominantly residential and rural environment of the Parish and surrounding area.

Aspiration 6 - Balanced Community: Proposals for new development should be required to take account of identified or justified local need, the balance of the community including the need for employment and the required access to services and amenities.

Amenities

Aspiration 7 - Amenities: In the absence of any formal amenity facility or recreational area within the Parish, options to secure such a facility should be identified and investigated as opportunities arise

Aspiration 6 - Rights of Way: Whilst planning policy protects legal rights of way, the use of footpaths as a recreational facility and means of exercise free from the hazards of the open highways should be encouraged and to this end should be improved or even added to where there would be a strategic benefit for the community. Where appropriate, verges along the roadside should also be protected and managed to offer a retreat from passing highway traffic.