



## Introduction

The village design statement describes Loxley and the features that give it a unique character. It seeks to provide guidance on future development and ensure that any new development is in keeping with local character and distinctiveness.

Government guidelines identify the need for developments to: *'respond to their local context and create or reinforce local distinctiveness'* (PPS1, 2005). Guidance also notes the role of design statements in promoting good quality design (PPS7, 2004).

The Stratford on Avon District Local Plan, due to be adopted in 2006, notes that the views of the local community as expressed in a parish plan and village design statement will be fully taken into account in the planning process (Policy COM.1). In particular they will be used:

- To assess the merits of schemes put forward to meet local needs.
- As a material consideration in making planning decisions.
- To identify opportunities for environmental and other enhancements.

The statement is relevant to everyone affected by potential changes to the village and its surroundings - householders, planners, developers, builders & public bodies.

The process of preparing the statement has also provided an opportunity for residents to have a say in the future of their village. Resident engagement has been integral to the process enabling full and active involvement of the community in its production and the accompanying Parish Plan.

Two community meetings have been held, each attended by between 30 to 40 residents. The first of these meetings in September 2004, was used to help identify key local concerns. A further meeting was held in February 2005 to discuss the results of the Parish Plan survey (with questions on the environment, local services and facilities, traffic, planning and development). The survey findings - distributed to every household in the Parish - are also reflected here. Two-thirds of households completed it, demonstrating a strong community spirit and a robust statistical basis.

A workshop, involving a smaller group of residents and Parish Councillors, was held in March 2006. This working group discussed planning and design issues identified through the Parish Plan process, and has progressed the design statement. A draft of the statement was made available on request and at a 'drop-in' meeting at the School held on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2006. The meeting was attended by 15 residents with a further 5 households unable to attend on the day requesting the document.

# Settlement evolution



The parish of Loxley is located just 4 miles to the south-east of Stratford-Upon-Avon, 6 miles from Junctions 13 and 15 of the M40 and some 2 miles to the west of the rapidly growing parish of Wellesbourne.

The settlement site at Loxley is an ancient one, predating the Roman occupation of Britain, and probably began as a clearing in the woodland near the bottom of the hill that runs west from Wellesbourne.

The Church is the oldest building in Loxley, dating back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century - a present day reminder of the settlement's ancient origins. The village is in the Domesday Book (1086) which records a thriving agricultural community and a resident priest.

Later, ownership of much of the Parish passed to Kenilworth Abbey which Henry VIII confiscated in 1538. At this time Robert Croft was the tenant at Loxley Manor, a name still to be found in local house and field names.

The medieval village in the valley was later abandoned and new houses built on higher ground. By the 1850s the former parish lands were divided between 7 farms. Farming continued to provide most jobs well into the 20th century.

While there are thatched cottages and buildings that date back to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, many are Victorian - including the school and the pub. Development has continued from this date up to relatively recent times in fairly piecemeal fashion, including construction of local authority developed housing in Manor Lane and Hilltop in the inter-war years.

More recently the Parish has been subject to considerable development pressure with several new housing developments built. As a result, Loxley today has a wide variety of housing types and styles widely dispersed throughout the village.







## Special character

Panoramic view

Loxley's historic features, small-scale, diversity and elevated position - the main part of the village is situated on a plateau some 80 feet up from the Stratford / Wellesbourne Road – are key to defining its character.

The overwhelming 'feel' is rural, with houses maintaining open aspects to the rear. The hilltop location provides panoramic views across the countryside, notably from Long Hill.

Loxley is of architectural and historic interest. Landmark buildings include St Nicholas Church, which stands on the site given to the Cathedral Church of Worcester in circa AD 760. Re-built in the 1750s it still retains older features. Remains of the Saxon building can be seen in the herringbone stonework in the wall of the Chancel.

There are 3 listed buildings - St Nicholas Church, Loxley Farm and the Old Rectory. Loxley Manor, Loxley Hall, the School and The Fox public house are also of historic interest. Other historical features include the churchyard monuments, the war memorial on the green and the village stocks kept in the Church.

While the predominant building material is brick, there is a wide mix of styles and types of housing. Buildings date from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, ranging from manor houses, to simpler cottages. The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the provision of social housing and the conversion of the post office and shop to housing. More recently, there have been several demolitions and extensions to provide larger modernised 'executive' accommodation.

Despite these changes key community buildings have been retained, including the local public house, the Church, community school and playing fields.

The village itself nestles in a patchwork of fields, hedges, woodlands and hills. The village to the south of the Stratford / Wellesbourne Road sits within a designated 'Special Landscape Area'. The Church Meadow Nature Reserve, where traditional ridge and furrow strips can be seen, is an SSSI.

The rural character of the village is further reflected in the absence of street lighting, the many established hedges that skirt the road through Loxley and several sites within the village fronting onto the road that continue to be used for grazing sheep.



Character Cottage – Lower Loxley



Character Cottage – Village Centre



Special Landscape Area – from Hillside

## The village and its setting

The Parish covers some 645 hectares. It contains 159 homes – around one-third of which have been built since the 1980s - two residential communities (Loxley Village and Loxley Park) and has a population of around 338.

It retains a rural character and agriculture is the main land use. Development is mostly one house deep, retaining open rural aspects to the rear. In addition to new housing developments at Barracks Green (1980s), Loxley Fields (1990s) and Loxley Park (2001), new houses have been built on the Goldicote Road. Several houses have been enlarged and four have been demolished and rebuilt from scratch since 2004. However, there has been minimal infilling facing the roads.

Today the village is characterised by considerable diversity in terms of the mixture of sizes, styles, type and density of buildings. The following areas can be distinguished:

### Lower Loxley - low density, historic, open spaces

Lower Loxley contains a great diversity of housing from Loxley Hall to smaller Victorian terraces. In the main it comprises older brick built properties and while the terraces front onto the road most are set well back and obscured by hedging. Several buildings are listed. Others such as Loxley Hall with its 18<sup>th</sup> century outbuildings are of historic interest. Several Victorian properties are painted in traditional black and white colours. The area is low density and rural in character, interspersed with fields and open spaces - the Churchyards, Loxley Church Meadow Nature Reserve and the Village Green. The Green has a War Memorial at the top and affords views across the countryside. Toward Stratford are several more isolated farms and houses.

### Hill Side - diversity of tenure and housing type

While uniformly brick built there is a diversity of sizes from larger detached properties to smaller retirement bungalows. Houses date predominately from the 20<sup>th</sup> century and include a mix of privately owned and social housing for rent. Barracks Green is a Housing Association development comprising 9 red brick homes for rent of different sizes including retirement bungalows. A further 7 new homes were built in the 1990s at Loxley Fields, a mixed development. Both developments have rear gardens and open plan frontage. There are views across the countryside from several vantage points, including the Special Landscape Area.

### Village Centre - higher density, historic heart of the community

The village centre contains several historic properties and key community facilities - public house, school and the former Post Office. It is developed to a higher density with green spaces and rural views to the rear of most houses. The housing includes medieval structures (Loxley Manor – an old but unlisted building); Victorian houses several painted white and fronting directly onto the road; and more recent local authority developed cottages, brick built & set well back from the road (Manor Lane).

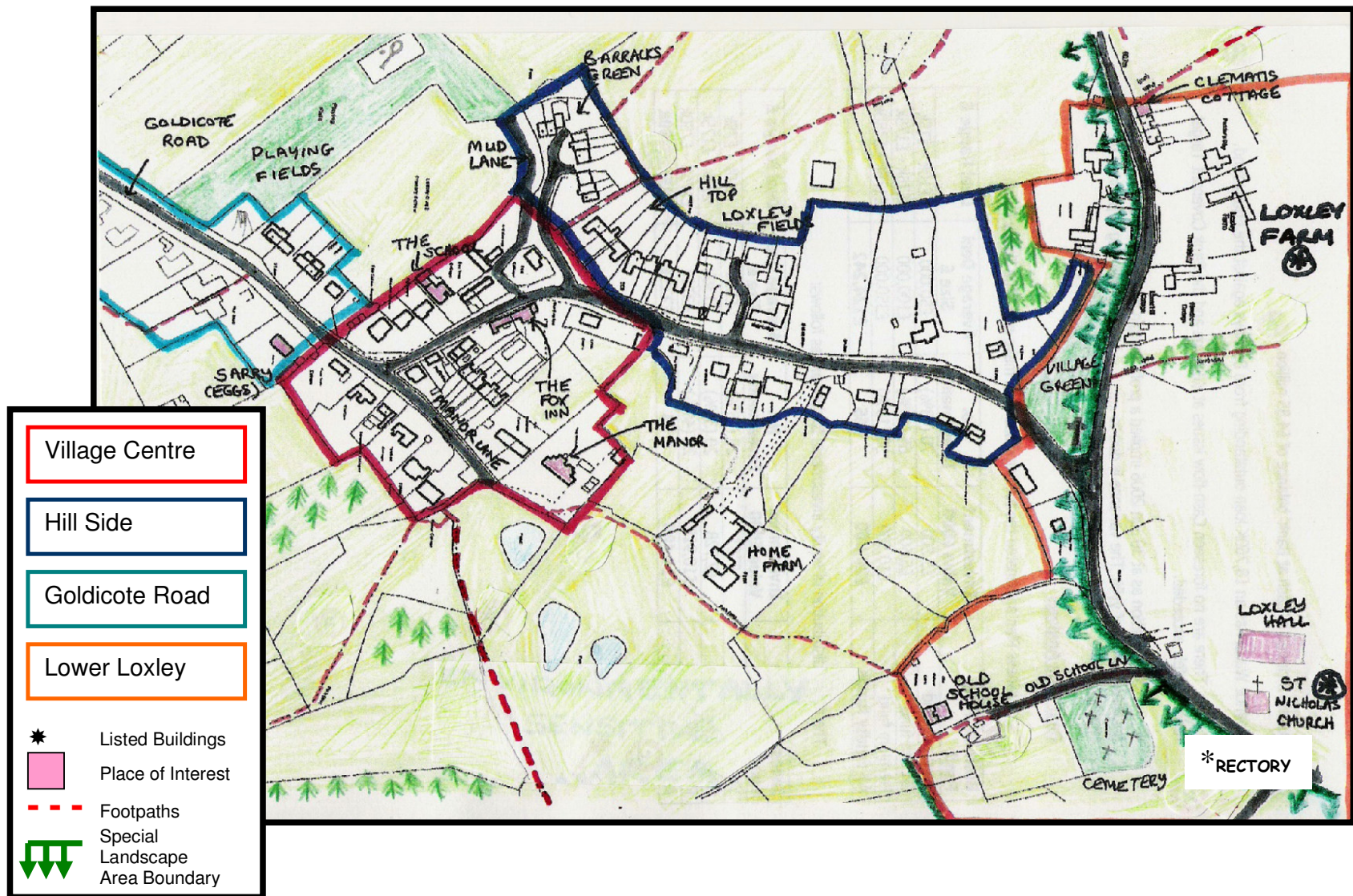
### Goldicote Road – recent development

Five new large detached brick built houses - some with dormer windows, front drives, rear gardens and largely filling the width of the building plot - have been built on Goldicote Road. Prior to leaving the village there is a left turn into Ettingley Farm Drive, with houses to the left, which ends at Ettingley Farm. Goldicote Road leaves the village and climbs to the top of Long Hill (400 feet in height), providing panoramic views across Warwickshire.

### Loxley Park – executive housing estate on private road

The largest and most recent development at Loxley Park (some three-quarters of a mile away towards Stratford) comprises 32 homes. In the main these are large 'executive' red brick properties on relatively small plots, 'neo-Georgian' in style on a private road. A 'brownfield' site, the estate was developed on a previous industrial site.





## New development: location, form & layout



Based on the results of the parish plan survey, workshop and analysis of the character of the village, the following guiding principles have been adopted. These reflect the desire to preserve the rural and open character of the village.

- The rural character of Loxley should be preserved and (sub)urbanisation avoided.
- Sufficient space should be left between and behind buildings to preserve the 'open aspect' of the village and retain links with the open countryside beyond.
- Preserve the landscape setting, protecting important views and settings into, out of and within the village.
- Ensure that any development is of a scale and design that is in sympathy with its immediate surroundings (style and materials) and the character of the village.

Consultation revealed a strong desire that if further development were permitted (and some 40%/38% considered no additional housing is required to buy/rent), then affordable housing to buy (46% of respondents) or rent (28% of respondents) is the priority, along with the general desire to maintain a socially 'balanced' community.

- If development is permitted, it should be in response to unmet local need.
- Any future development should conserve the variety of housing - a characteristic of the village – & promote privacy for existing & new build.
- New development should meet high standards in terms of energy efficiency and resource use; should make a positive contribution to the village environment; and should respect local tradition and context.
- New development should reflect the local context in materials, design and layout.
- All planning applications showing proposed changes to houses to be seen in the context of the neighbouring surroundings.
- Boundaries of natural materials should be incorporated (eg hedges, stone, brick).
- Ensure development on sloping sites has structural and visual problems resolved.

### Infilling / Backfilling

There has been limited infilling / backfilling, which would negatively impact on the open character of the village.

- Ensure there is no infilling / backfilling in fields behind the houses in Loxley and that the current density of one house next to the road is maintained.



## Extensions

Extensions should respect the scale and style of the original building.

- Ensure that any extensions or alterations to existing buildings are in proportion to the original building and size of the site. The design should respect the character of the main building.

## Redevelopment

The consultations<sup>1</sup> revealed concern that houses should not be allowed to become 'mini-mansions', filling plot sizes, particularly where this involves demolition and/or substantial alteration to the older cottages that remain.

- Avoid wherever practicable, demolition of any habitable character cottages in the village, on design and sustainability grounds.
- Cramming large buildings on small sites should be avoided. Redevelopment should respect the context of neighbouring buildings and the wider village.

## Details and materials

The main building material is brick, although there is some stone and timber framed buildings.

- New buildings should be in brick. Extensions and conversions in brick should seek to match the original in style, colour and source of material.
- Bricks should be local red/brown and matched to the original.

Loxley has a varied roofline in keeping with the diverse age, style and size of homes. Houses built this century tend to have more steeply pitched roofs. Older cottages tend to be 'flat fronted' and simple; for example most do not have any brick corbelling below the eaves. Roofing materials are mainly clay tiles, slate on older cottages with some thatch.

- New roofs should reflect local tradition and context. Materials should be plain clay tiles, slate or thatch.
- Interesting roof lines and chimneys are essential. Velux windows are to be discouraged.

Attention to detail is important. For example, windows in an extension should respect the original design. The use of UPVC for new doors and windows could have a negative impact on the character of the village.

- Traditional materials should be used in replacement doors and windows in older dwellings.



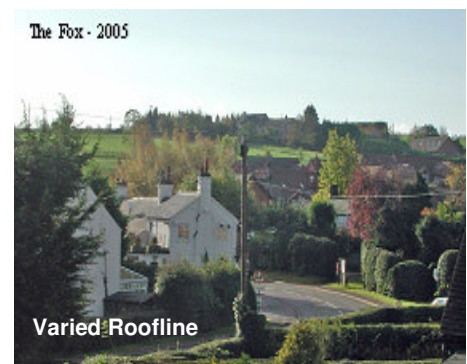
Old Forge - Traditional Tile & Brick



Timber Framed Thatched Cottage



Traditional White Cottage - Slate Tiles



Varied Roofline

<sup>1</sup> Only 9% of respondents to the Parish Plan Questionnaire thought there should be additional large housing to buy in the village. Of the other 91%, some made specific comments regarding out of character expansion & the 'destruction' of traditional cottages.

# Landscape & environment

Given the village's elevation, there are a number of places which afford spectacular views across the countryside, notably Long Hill, Ettingley Farm Drive and the Village Green. Views within the village tend to be more restricted by changes in topography, hedges and trees. Looking into the village there are views from the fields and footpaths behind Loxley Farm and Manor.

- Every effort should be made to preserve historical boundaries, landscapes and open views.

Key open spaces include the Village Green (1/2 acre), playing fields and the Loxley Church Meadow Nature Reserve SSSI, previously Glebe land and now managed by the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (7.7 acres). There remain several privately owned fields in the village that front onto the road, used for grazing sheep.

The Nature Reserve is one of the finest cowslip meadows in the County. The ridge and furrow indicate it was cultivated in medieval times. The Meadow is characterised by plants such as dropwort, common spotted orchid, common knapweed, great burnet and crested dog's tail. Many varieties of Butterfly are also to be found in the Meadow, particularly in early Spring.

- Maintain the Village Green and other open spaces to reflect the rural character of the Village.

Special Landscape Area designation further reflects the high quality of the environment surrounding the village.

- Resist development proposals which would have a harmful impact on the appearance of the landscape.

The village includes a great number of trees – oak, ash and poplar. More trees need to be planted on the playing field's boundary where many are now dead.

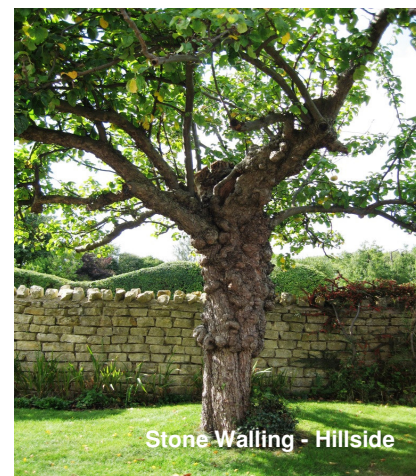
- Protect existing trees, encourage planting and review Tree Preservation Orders.
- Tree planting of native species is encouraged. In the village vigorous conifers should be resisted.

Those who own the land around Loxley and those who farm it maintain its rural aspect. This is reflected in the grass verges and significant network of hedges.

- Retain and maintain existing hedges, ditches and grass verges.

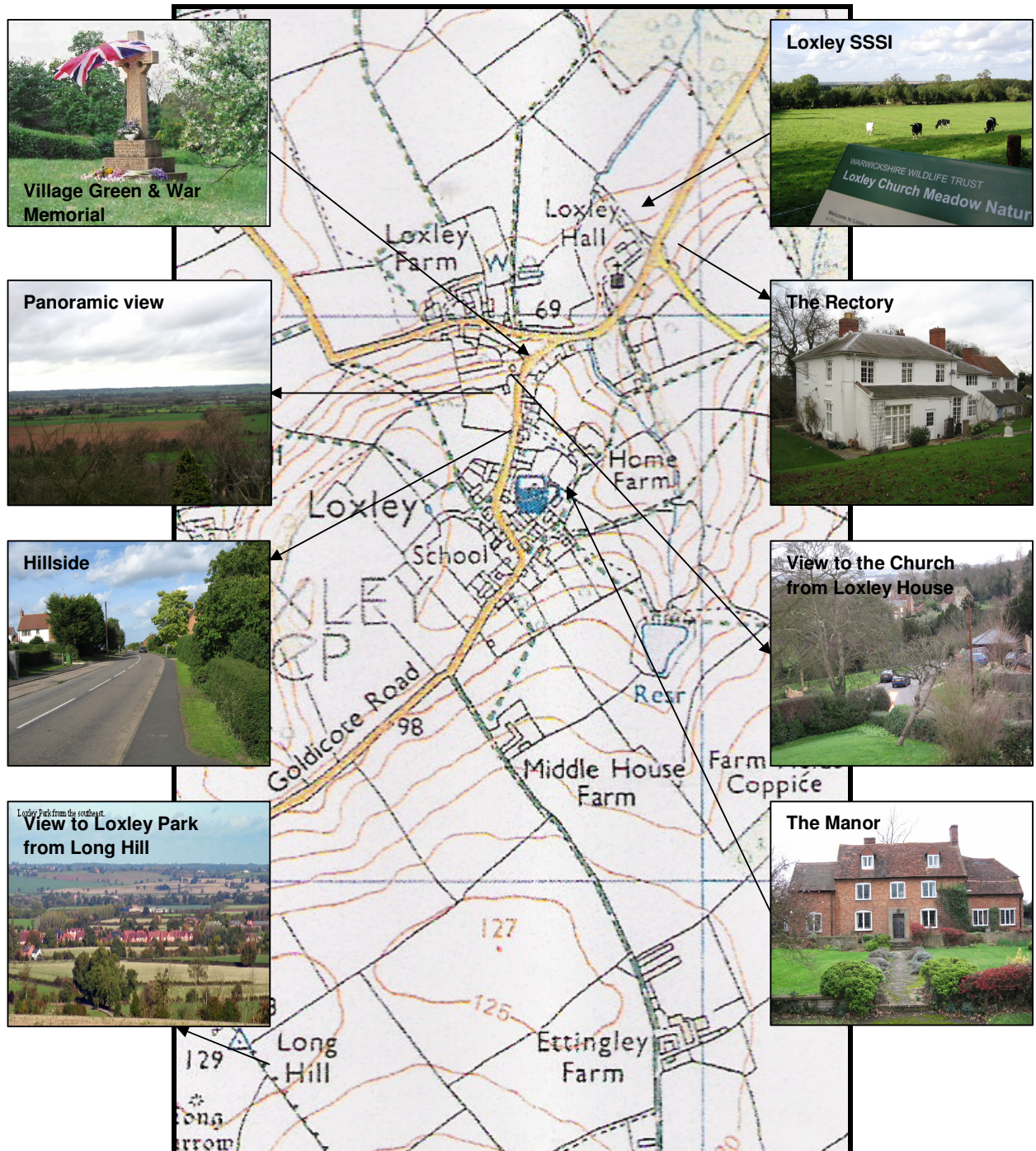
Boundary treatments contribute to the character of the village; in new developments they should be rural in character.

- Stone walls, picket fencing and hedges, characteristic of Loxley, are preferred.





# Views from and within Loxley







The village of Loxley borders 3 main roads: the Wellesbourne /Stratford Road which runs through Lower Loxley; Goldicote Road which connects to the Banbury Road; and the main road through the village. While there are pavements alongside the road through the village, there are none along Goldicote Road. Equally, the pavement on the Wellesbourne Road only extends from the village to the Church where the road width is restricted.

Traffic speed emerged as a priority issue in the parish plan survey, especially in and around the school. Parents and schoolchildren expressed concern regarding the speed of traffic and the lack of pavements in parts of the village. While there are some practical limits to what can be achieved, greater consideration should be given to appropriate design, traffic calming and co-ordinated signage. The community is working with the Council to investigate the possibilities for establishing 'gateways' at the three entrances to the village and to make proposals for improving traffic signs.

- Encourage awareness of speed limits in the village through better 'design solutions', especially in the vicinity of the school.

Given the elevated position of the village, the gritting of roads in winter was highlighted as an issue in the parish plan survey.

- Ensure gritting takes place on all village roads in the future.

There is a network of footpaths through the village and into the fields, enjoyed by villagers and visitors to the countryside. The replacement of wooden stiles with kissing and metal opening gates has improved access to public footpaths.

- Promote the replacement of wooden stiles with kissing or metal opening gates where appropriate.
- Protect the existing rural rights of way network.

Protecting the rural character of the village by:

- Resisting street lighting.
- Encouraging any remaining overhead cables to be put underground.
- Ensuring signs are kept to a minimum and new signs and street furniture is well designed and located to avoid clutter and an urban effect.

