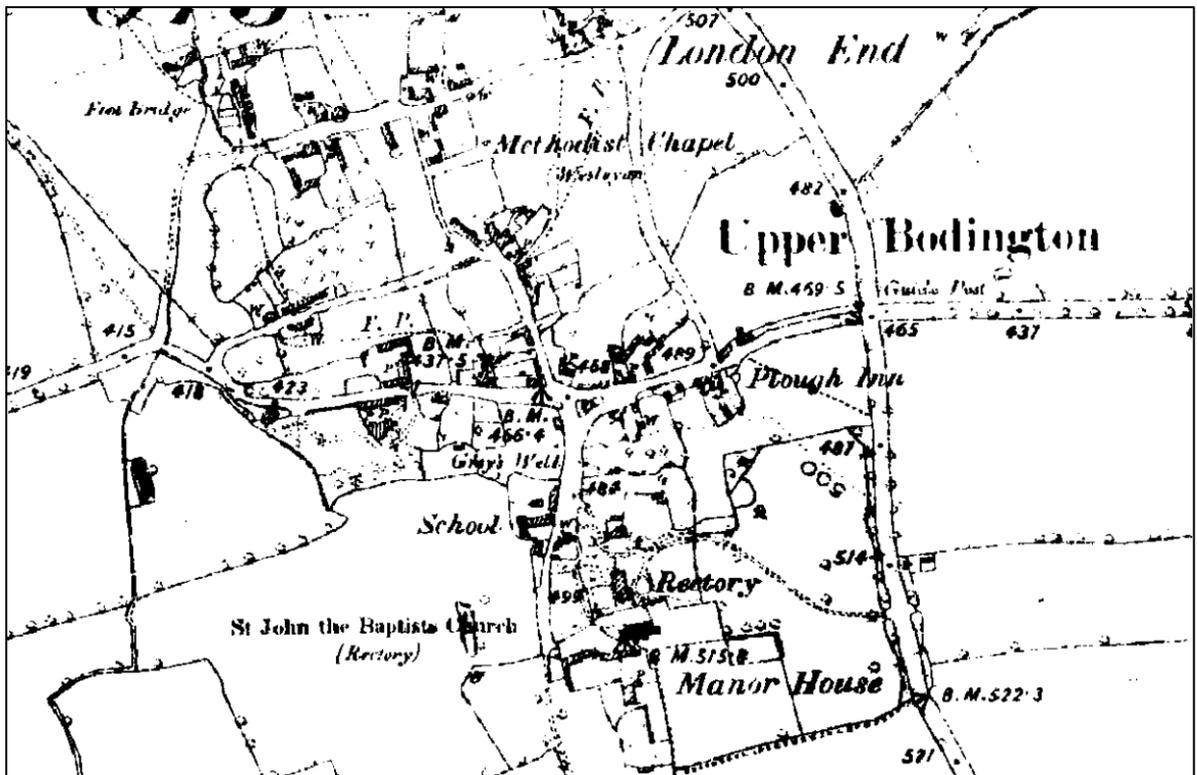




South
Northamptonshire
Council

An Assessment of Upper Boddington



Design and Conservation Team

Reviewed Winter 2017

Contents

Introduction	3
Origins and Archaeology	4
Historic Development	4
Plan Form	5
Space and Relationship between Different Areas	6
Architecture	7
Building Materials and Local Details	8
Contribution of Green Space and Trees.....	8
Positive Views	9
Negative Features	9
Conclusion.....	9

Introduction

Upper Boddington is small rural village that lies in the north-west of South Northamptonshire. It is located just over 1km north of its sister settlement Lower Boddington, 17km (11miles) north of Banbury and 25km (16miles) north-west of Towcester. A tributary stream of the River Cherwell runs to the west of Upper Boddington. The parish includes the villages of Upper and Lower Boddington, with the former being the largest of the two. The parish has a population of 722 (2011 census).

As part of the review of conservation areas, the Council has a duty to consider areas currently undesignated. Upper Boddington has been identified as an area to be assessed. Conservation areas are based on the statutory legislation in Planning (Listed Building Conservation Area) Act 1990 that states that conservation areas need to be “areas of special architectural and historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance.” In determining an area’s special interest there are a number of criteria which have been identified in regards to the built environment, highlighting the integral features of a settlement that contributes to an area’s character. The criterion aims to establish if an area warrants conservation area designation, with regard to its “special architectural or historic interest”. The National Planning Policy Framework, Paragraph 127, places further emphasis on the concept of “special”, stating “When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest”. The criteria can be viewed in Appendix B.

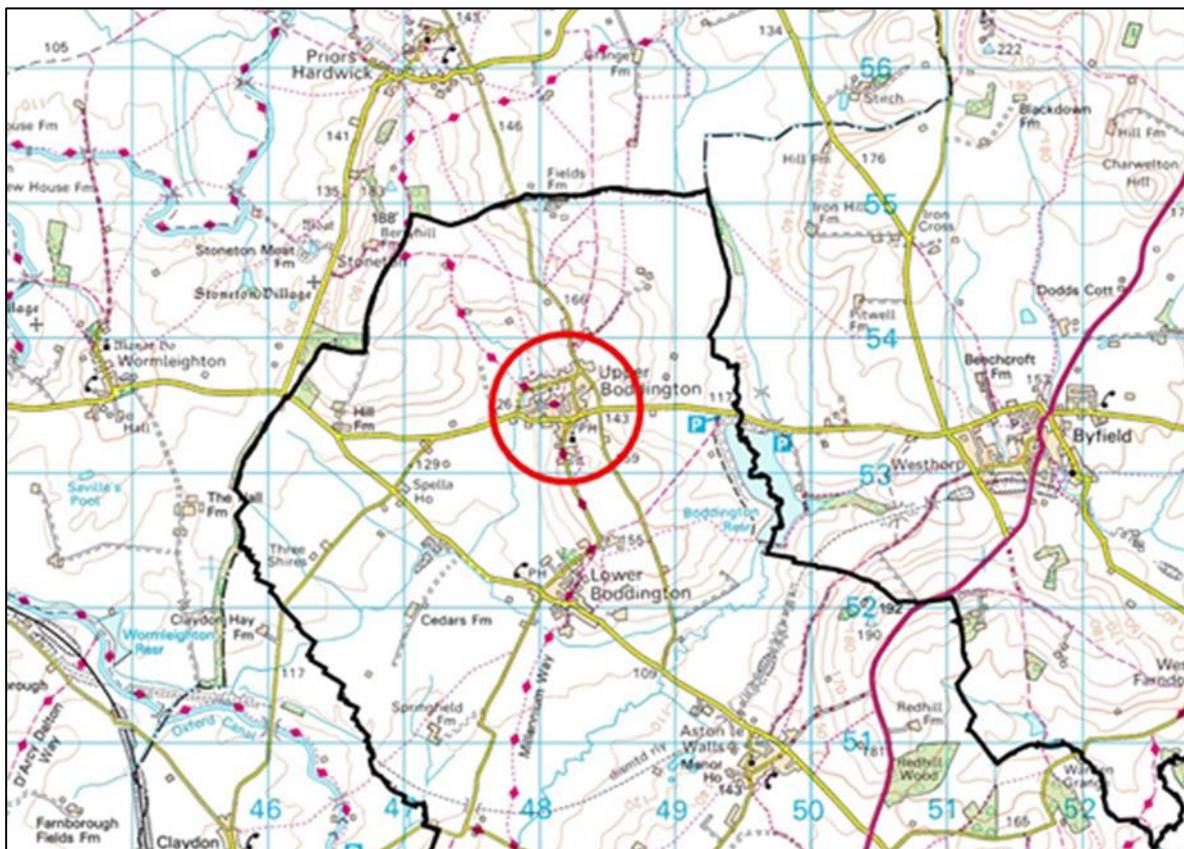


Figure 1: Location map of Upper Boddington © Crown Copyright and database right 2017. Ordnance Survey 1000022487

Origins and Archaeology

Boddington is listed in the Domesday Book as *Botendon*. Over the centuries it came to be known under various other names such as *Bottelendon*, *Budinton*, *Botyngdon* and *Botyndoun*. The name could originate from *Botas Hill* (dun). It is also thought to derive from the word *Boten*, a contraction of the Saxon plural of *botl* meaning habitation, dune or done or down.

Whilst there is some archaeological evidence it is difficult to chart the early development of Upper Boddington. It is likely that it began as the larger settlement to the smaller subservient hamlet of Lower Boddington. Reference is made to Boddington in the Domesday Book with two major landowners letting land; The Count of Mortain (half-brother to William the Conqueror) and Williams's nephew, Earl Hugh. Prior to their ownership the land associated with Boddington was owned by a Turi and Aschil, both Saxons. In the twelfth century the land was owned by Fulc Paynell, the Fee of Chester, William Meschin and the Fee of the Bishop of Lincoln.

Earthworks lie in the north-east of the village just south of Townsend Lane. They consist of a broad irregular hollow-way which forms a link between London End and the footpath of Frog Lane. On either side of the hollow-way are remnants of earthworks which indicate a series of closes bounded by low scarps. A number of large depressions in this area may represent former buildings or a larger settlement of one where the focus has shifted.

Along the north side of Townsend Lane there are purportedly a set of abandoned closes, probably a site of former houses. All have been destroyed by recent housing development save for a short section of another hollow-way. Fragments of an early medieval pot were also found in this area in 1975.

In the north-west corner of the village is a Dam, just north of Townsend Lane. On the mid-nineteenth century map a large pond covering almost 2.5 hectares is shown though there is no indication of its purpose (**Fig. 3**). Today the dam is 15m wide and 2.5m high with a break in the centre through which water flows. Below the Dam are the foundations of a stone building which are possibly the remains of what would have been a mill.

Historic Development

The historic development is difficult to interpret through the built environment, as it appears several phases of development have been lost or altered in the past. The majority of properties within the village now date from between the eighteenth and twentieth century yet only partially assist in trying to understand the historic development of the village.

Upper Boddington and Lower Boddington have strong ties due to their close proximity and shared ownership as of 1758 through an Act of Parliament. However the two were once separate as is evident through the existence of a Manor House in each settlement.

In the late fifteenth century the Lord of the Manor was purportedly Richard Empson, a courtier to Henry VIII. Richard's sister married William Spencer of Wormleighton, ancestor of the late Princess Diana. The Spencer family are thought to have owned the estate and manor of Upper Boddington from the middle of the sixteenth century until the early eighteenth century when it was sold by Anne, Dowager Countess of Sunderland.

The layout of the current village appears to have started to take form during the eighteenth century with the built form expanding northwards. This may have been as a result of parliamentary enclosure in 1758 allowing wealthier residents of the village to expand their estates. Although acknowledged in the Domesday Book, the current settlement has little architectural evidence of how Upper Boddington developed until the eighteenth century. The earliest surviving vernacular building in the village is The Old Rectory, which dates from the 1680s.



Figure 2: 1831 Estate Map of the Late Reverend Francis Montgomery, surveyed by William Ralphs– Northamptonshire Records Office.

Plan Form

Many of the older traditional buildings within the village core would have been homesteads and farmsteads with associated outbuildings. The plot size during the nineteenth century was larger than today with modern development disturbing older boundaries. The nineteenth century maps display a village of cross shape nuclear form with a small concentration of buildings to the north along a T junction, now known as Townsend Lane. On the 1891 map this dispersion of buildings look to be a collection of farmsteads with associated outbuildings (**Fig 3**).

The larger agricultural buildings and dwellings would have developed on the periphery of the village; however this has been distorted today by modern infill in the core of the settlement.

Footpaths are important both within the village and beyond connecting it to the surrounding settlements. Historic foot paths appear to be concentrated around Frog Lane leading into and around Townsend Lane whilst another appears to run from the Church to Lower Boddington.

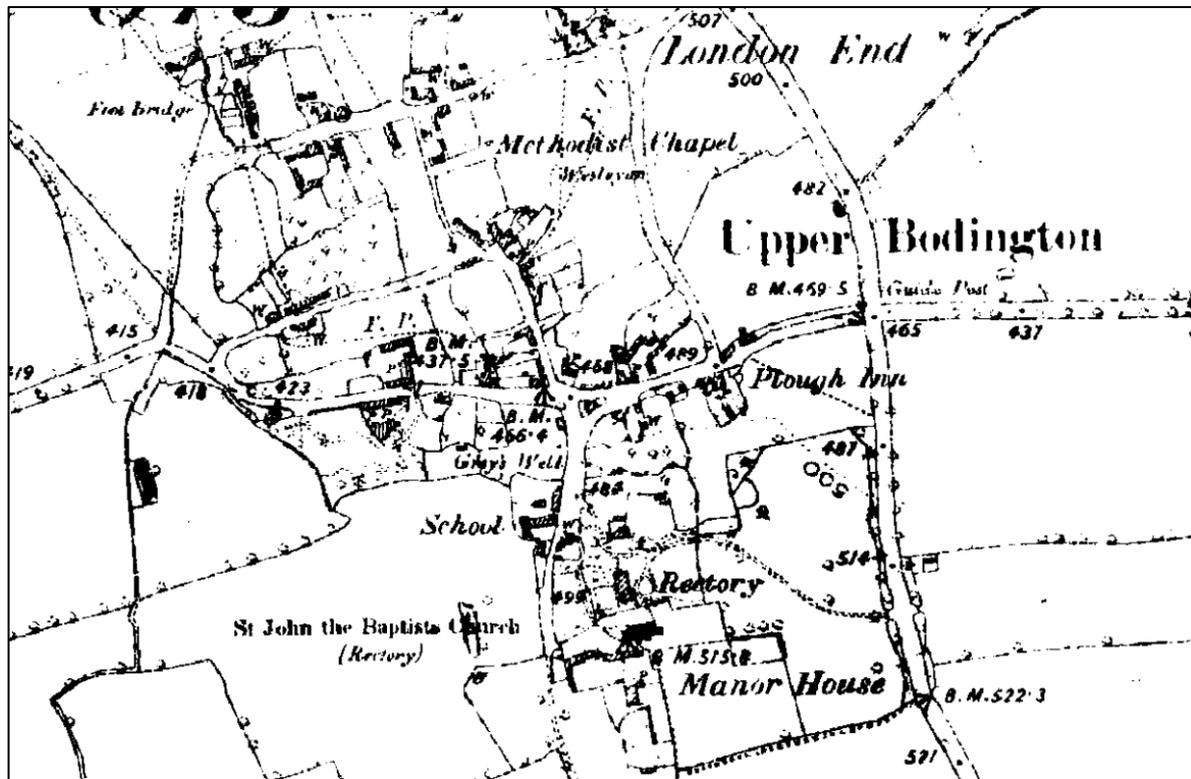


Figure 3: c.1843 Map illustrating the nuclear plan of Upper Boddington. © Crown Copyright and database right 2017. Ordnance Survey 1000022487

Space and Relationship between Different Areas

Upper Boddington has a loose linear form along a cross axis, with buildings situated on both sides of the road. The historic development is sporadic but with a linear emphasis along Church Road and Warwick Road. Development to the south of Church Road does not follow a linear pattern but consists of a cluster of larger buildings including the Church and Manor

The area lacks a sense of cohesion within its built form. The buildings form small individual groups which are fairly uniform in style, form, age. However, these individual groups do not interconnect with each other due to the intrusion of modern infill. The irregular layout of village is further emphasised by a lack of urban linking features such as boundary walls. The form and appearance of Upper Boddington does not promote a cohesive village character, rather it comprises of groups of historic development enveloped by modern infill similar to Lower Boddington.

Due to the loose form of Upper Boddington's historic layout there is no visible centre to the public realm or recognisable urban set pieces. The Church, when approaching from the north, is enclosed or somewhat isolated within its immediate setting screening it from the wider streetscape. One of the only areas, which could be highlighted as creating a focal point, could be Jubilee Field which was the medieval centre of the settlement. Although not a formal space, this is one of the only areas

within the village that provides an open area at the centre of the village since the visual focal points of Upper Boddington tend to be the short vistas and views across the built form.

The relationship between the public and private realm within Upper Boddington is difficult to differentiate at times, as the majority of the historic built form is set in close proximity with the highway. There is no clear interconnection between the different building groups, either visually or through urban features. However the rural nature of the area is emphasised through mature vegetation and agricultural land which bounds the settlement.

Architecture

A vernacular style predominates within Upper Boddington. The south end of the village is made up of a cluster of three large status buildings the Church, the Manor and the Rectory which sit set back from the highway. The buildings are individual in form and appearance, although fairly simple in regards to their design and detailing. They are generally modest in terms of scale and size, not exceeding 2-3 storeys in height. Following the refurbishment of the outbuildings, the Manor and surrounding complex has lost much of the setting. This erosion has resulted in a more domesticated style and appearance to the remaining curtilage. Glimpses of The Rectory are only visible from the churchyard. Set back within its plot, the contribution of the trees and surrounding vegetation means that it has a limited impact on the public realm.

The church sits within the middle of the cluster, set back away from the main road. The Church is Grade II listed and dates from the fourteenth century. The Church is a fairly imposing building, however, due to the extensive trees and vegetation that surround the Rectory and Church Road it is only viewed from limited angles and on the whole screened from the public realm of the village. The Church appears physically separate to the village and as such feels more associated with the landscape and setting than the rest of the settlement.

The second cluster within the centre of the village, along Warwick Road, is dominated by modest status buildings and former farm buildings predominantly of eighteenth and nineteenth century design. They are simple in design and form, with again some stone detailing over windows and doors. The Dial House along Warwick road is an ornate building of Victorian origins. Further down Warwick Road is Clatercote House a former farm built in 1708. Across the road is Boddington House, visible through gates, this grand house has been significantly altered and restored over decades. At the eastern end of Warwick Road is the village pub, one of the few thatch properties still remaining within the settlement. Whilst individually they can be appreciated, together they do not create a "special" area of definable character.

A number of modern properties have been built on infill plots. Trees and hedges go some way to screen a considerable amount of the development, however the individual complexes of the historic buildings has been diminished due to the unsympathetic materials used by this infill.

The third cluster is along Frog Lane and is dominated by vernacular cottages which predominantly sit parallel to the road. The historic buildings within this area are fairly unassuming 2 storey vernacular properties, presumed to be of eighteenth or nineteenth century construction. Two thatch properties are located here. All along Frog Lane a series of modern properties have been built on infill plots,

whilst some are sympathetic to the surrounding area most are more contemporary in design and as such detract from the overall built form.

The fourth cluster is along Townsend Lane and is dominated again by former farm complexes and vernacular cottages. There are some Victorian elements to properties at the bottom of Townsend Lane. The refurbishment and alteration of outbuildings and former farmhouses has meant the area has lost much of the architectural detailing original to the properties. Again, modern infill has detracted from the former layout of the area.

The buildings within Upper Boddington on the whole are typical of modest buildings in the area by being fairly simple in terms of their architectural detail and design. They are not considered to be exemplary of local or regional vernacular design however Dial House on Warwick Road is innovative and unusual for the area. They are therefore not considered to be of sufficient architectural quality to be considered as “special”, nor are they grouped together in sufficient numbers to give the settlement a cohesive character.

Building Materials and Local Details

Local building materials are used in the settlement, with the majority of properties being built in rubble or squared coursed ironstone. Brick is not a common material featured within the village although there are some examples along Warwick Road used predominantly in walls or as infill to stone buildings. The distinctive property of Island Cottage is completely brick and acts as a ‘pseudo’ focal point at the junction of Warwick Road, Church Lane and Frog Lane. Limestone has also been used for detailing on some properties. A handful of properties retain the traditional thatch material with eyebrow dormers and rolling eaves. Many more of the village’s older properties and outbuildings would have also been thatched, evident in the steep roof pitch and coped gable ends. However these have since been replaced with various material including slate, asbestos tile, cedar shingle, plain tile and in one instance, corrugated iron.

Windows and doors, would have originally been timber, however, there has been loss of traditional fenestration within the settlement with modern alternatives being used. These are not appropriate to the style and age of the properties due the use of plastic resulting in a loss of character.

Contribution of Green Space and Trees

Trees are an important feature of Upper Boddington, pockets of which help create an enclosed and almost wooded feel. This is particularly evident along the northern section of Church Road with trees lining the highway and a small copse located on the west of the grass verges. This however restricts views of The Old Rectory from the core of the village. Trees are otherwise found to the rear of private property offering a contrast to the vertical scale of the built form.

As mentioned the large field at the junction of Townsend Lane and London End, known as Jubilee Field, offers views of three counties. This open space, whilst unused but maintained, is the site of various earthworks in the village particularly a long hollow-way running from London End to Chapel Lane.

Surrounding the village are a number of large open fields, which demonstrate the agricultural background of Upper Boddington which helps place it within an agrarian context. These areas of land, whilst not of any particular historic or architectural significance, contribute to the setting of the village.

Positive Views

Due to the topography of Upper Boddington views and vistas are the main defining feature within the area. The village is characterised by undulations, which allows panoramic views from Jubilee Field. The lack of development on the south entrance of the village allows for views of the Church and Manor.

Due to the varying alignment of the road and topography, views within the village change incorporating different elements of the built and natural form. Trees and hedges feature prominently in most views. The short channelled changeable views within Upper Boddington are a dominating feature of the village.

Negative Features

Modern development and infill has outstripped the original settlement and only pockets of historic interest survive. There has been further intervention through extensions and conversions where the design is not wholly suitable to a vernacular style. Some traditional features have also been changed to inappropriate modern replacements. Whilst there are no substantial negative elements within the village, the dispersed natures of historic clusters and subsequent modern infill and modern alterations have diluted the character of Upper Boddington.

Conclusion

The recommendation following the assessment for Upper Boddington, is based on criteria (see Appendix) and the legislation regarding designation of conservation areas, as defined in the Planning (LBCA) act 1990, which states that conservation areas need to be “areas of special architectural and historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance.” Upper Boddington, although an attractive rural village, is not considered to fulfil the requirements set out under legislation. Therefore Upper Boddington is not considered to be an area suitable for conservation area designation with the reasons for the recommendation set out below:

- Upper Boddington is an attractive rural village; however there is a lack of cohesion within its built environment. The groups of traditional development are individual in terms of their form and detailing and are separated by significant modern infill, which does not help to reinforce a cohesive character within the area.
- There are no linking boundary features to unify the individual clusters; instead it is filled by modern development which, at times, can dominate the streetscape.
- The buildings overall have a simple vernacular style with limited decoration. The buildings are not considered to provide outstanding examples of any particular or age. The properties overall are not considered to be of “special” architectural quality.

- Archaeology is present within the village, some of which is believed to be sections of the former settlement, however this offers little to its current character.
- Finally, Upper Boddington's most defining feature is the impressive views over the countryside that surrounds it. There are also a number of short channelled vistas within the village. Whilst the merit of these views is appreciated, they are not enough to fulfil the necessary criteria of an area of "special architectural or historic interest." They relate more to the setting of the village rather than its character