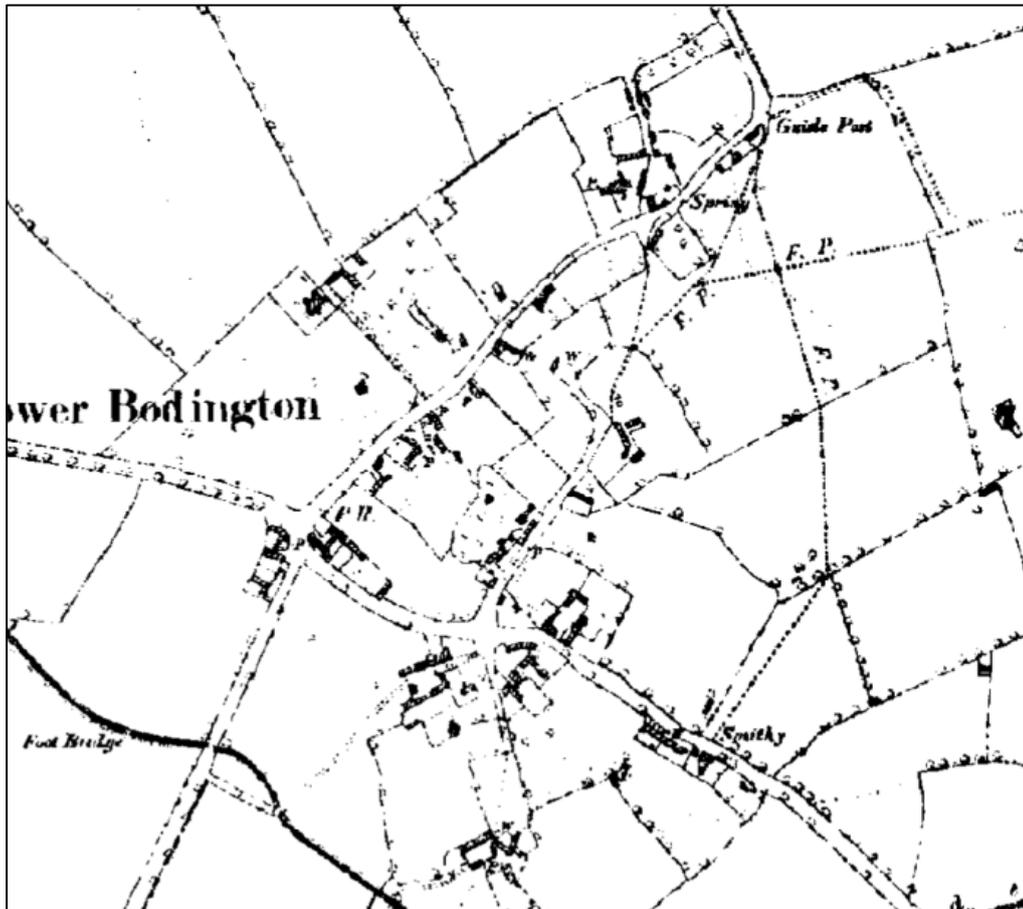




South
Northamptonshire
Council

An Assessment of Lower Boddington



Design and Conservation Team

Reviewed Winter 2017

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Introduction

Lower Boddington is a small hamlet that lies in the north-west of South Northamptonshire. It is located just over 1km south of its sister settlement Upper Boddington, 17km (11miles) north of Banbury and 25km (16miles) north-west of Towcester.

The parish is made up of two settlements Upper and Lower Boddington, with the former being the largest of the two. The parish has a population of 722 (2011 census). Once an agrarian settlement the majority of the population now out commute to neighbouring towns such as Banbury, Leamington Spa and Towcester.

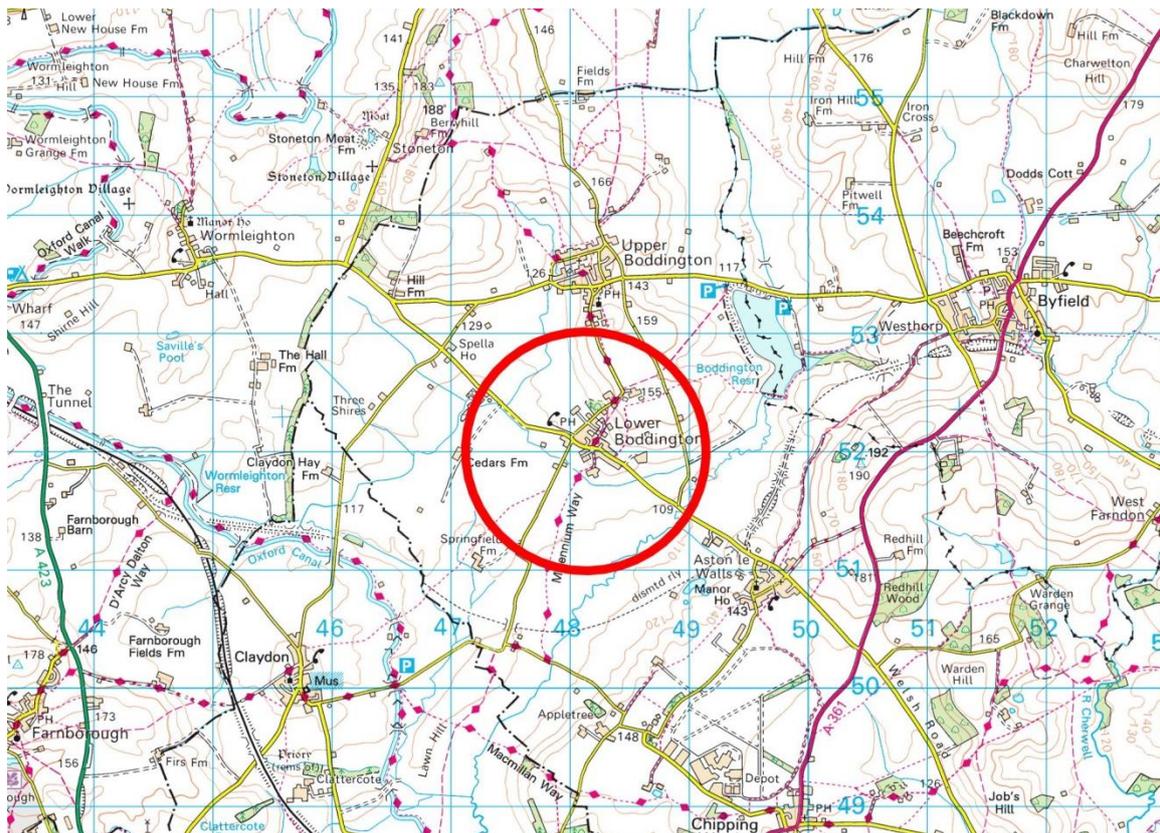


Figure 1: Location map of Lower Boddington © Crown Copyright and database right 2017. Ordnance Survey 1000022487

As part of the review of conservation areas, the Council has a duty to consider areas currently undesignated. Lower 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”. 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.

Origins and Archaeology

The majority of artefacts in the Parish have been found in Upper Boddington. Some slight evidence of settlement remains can be found in and around Lower Boddington. An L-shaped hollow-way illustrates that Owl End Lane, now a cul-de-sac, once extended north-east to meet Hill Road. Enclosures lie to the south of the village around Paradise Farm. The fields surrounding the farm contain small enclosures bounded by low scarps and shallow ditches. The date and purpose of the enclosures is unknown but they may have been abandoned paddocks of the farm. Archaeological evidence indicates that the medieval settlement was split in two with each settlement owning its own land and field system.

It is difficult to chart the early development of Lower Boddington however it is likely that it began as the smaller independent yet somewhat subservient settlement to Upper 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. Within the Domesday Book Boddington is listed as *Botendon* however 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.

Historic Development

The majority of historic properties within Lower Boddington date from the 17th and 18th centuries. In 1758 there was a Manor House and field system (pre 1758) separate from Upper Boddington. The earliest surviving vernacular buildings within the settlement are Bourtons Farmhouse (1655), Old House Farmhouse (mid C17) and the Manor House (mid C17). The village has continued to develop and change since this period, with much modern infill and development.

Plan Form

Upper and Lower Boddington were enclosed under the same Act of Parliament of 1758. To the southwest of Lower Boddington two large end-on furlongs have been ploughed as one. This appears to be an alternative route of the ancient drove road, known as the Welsh Road and once continued south-east towards Aston Le Walls.

The form of Lower Boddington has been dictated by the road layout which is loosely nuclear. The main thoroughfare of Banbury Road curves through the village. Two, once connected roads, run to the north off Banbury Road; Owl End Lane (now a cul-de-sac) and Hill Road.

The majority of historic dwellings are former farmhouses running parallel or gable end onto the highway with associated buildings and land to the rear. The plot size during the nineteenth century was larger illustrating the agricultural nature of the settlement; today modern development has disrupted those boundaries through modern infill and inappropriate development. Historic

footpaths are important both within the village and beyond connecting it to the surrounding settlements (Fig. 2).

Space and relationship between different areas

The individual groups of historic development have become distorted through modern infill in definitive gaps. The irregular layout of the village is further emphasised by a lack of urban linking features such as boundary walls. The walls that are present, like their associated buildings, are less regimented and dispersed in a variety of materials. The main means of enclosure within the village would be defined as trees and small hedges. The form and appearance of Lower Boddington does not promote it as a cohesive village, rather it characterises it as a scattering of individual units of historic development enveloped by modern infill.

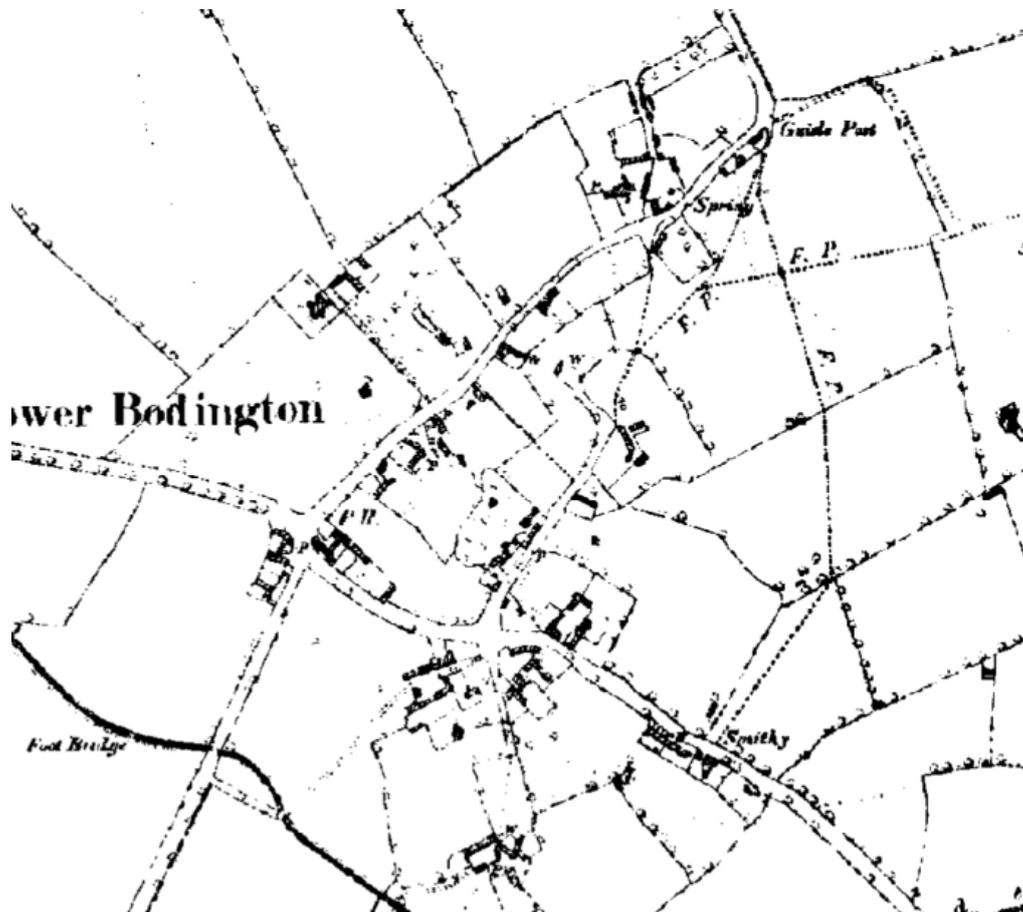


Figure 2: c.1843 map of Lower Boddington © Crown Copyright and database right 2017. Ordnance Survey 1000022487

The topography and mature vegetation within the village prevent any substantial streetscape and roovescape from being formed. Due to the loose form of Lower Boddington's layout there is no visible centre to the public realm. The only area that could be highlighted as creating a focal point would be the crossroads at the bottom of Hill Road; bounded by the Old Wesleyan Chapel and The Carpenters Arms.

The relationship between public and private realm is easily defined through footways, various means of enclosure and off road parking. The concentration of modern development in the centre of Lower

Boddington creates a substantial barrier between the various clusters of historic development therefore hindering the ability for a cohesive historic development to be read.

Architecture

The historic buildings of Lower Boddington are dispersed throughout the settlement. There are ten listed buildings dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. Most historic buildings are vernacular cottages or farmhouses; however the majority of buildings in the centre of the village are two storey modern houses with little architectural merit. There are some remnants of former agricultural uses, well displayed by the footprint of the buildings on the 1843 map (**Fig. 2**).

The terrace of stone cottages along the south of Banbury Road date from the 19th century, if not earlier. Unfortunately the cottages have suffered from piecemeal changes such as non-traditional windows and extensions which have in turn diluted the architectural merit of the buildings.

Building Materials and Local Details

The uses of traditional building materials together with the dispersed stone walls help to provide Lower Boddington with some coherence of its built fabric. Unfortunately most of the twentieth century properties are constructed in a variety of brick and the contrast with the traditional material is marked.

The traditional roofing material of the area would have been long straw thatch with a flush ridge, and there is an example of this on Hill Road, albeit it has now had a block cut ridge added in recent re-thatching.

A handful of properties still retain their stone mullion windows, however very few particular vernacular details or repetition of distinctive features are evident which could contribute to giving it an identity.

Contribution of Green Space and Trees

Historically Lower Boddington would have had substantial areas of open space within the centre of the village (**Fig.2**). However over time this has been eroded away by the intrusion of modern development, and this character of farmhouses intertwined and linked with the rural countryside has been compromised. As such there is very little in the way of landscape contributing to the character of the central core.

There are a number of mature trees particularly to the northern end of Hill Road and Owl End Lane that create a sense of enclosure not felt along Banbury Road. The trees and hedges contribute positively to the rural character of the village and go some way in lessening the effect of modern development. The open space of the agricultural land outside the village and its field boundaries are the main landscape characteristic of Lower Boddington; it encompasses the small village and contributes to the setting.

Positive Views

The lack of development on the south side of Banbury Road towards the west end of the settlement allows panoramic views out of the village across the attractive countryside. As the village is set on raised ground, characterised by gentle undulations, the mature vegetation along Hill Road and Owl End Lane somewhat restrict views out of the village. Where views are visible tend to be through accesses onto land, down footpaths or through gaps in the hedgerow or built form.

Negative Features

The modern infill of important spaces between the individual farmsteads is considered to be the main negative feature within Lower Boddington as this has harmed the significance of the semi-dispersed nuclear development. The cumulative impact of numerous alterations to historic buildings such as the replacement of traditional windows has also somewhat eroded the historic character of the area. Whilst there are no substantial negative elements within the village, these modern alterations and changes have diluted the overall character of Lower Boddington.

Conclusion

The conclusion following the assessment for Lower 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.” Lower Boddington is not considered to fulfil the requirements set out under legislation. Therefore Lower Boddington is not considered to be an area suitable for conservation area designation with the reasons for the conclusion set out below:

- The hamlet was a small community of farmers, relying on the settlements location on the main thoroughfare of Banbury Road and its proximity to Upper Boddington. The buildings historically were independent of one another, detached by farmland and grazing. Today the intrusion of a number of twentieth century buildings has caused the rural, agricultural character of the settlement to be somewhat diluted.
- The built environment within Lower Boddington is now characterised by its twentieth century modern development. The buildings are mostly semi-detached or detached houses constructed from buff or red brick or rendered. These properties are set back within their plots with front drives and gardens, weakening the character of the settlement by thinning out the historic built form.
- Although the settlement is surrounded by some archaeology, which is believed to be former farmsteads of Lower Boddington, it offers little to its current character.
- Lower Boddington’s most defining features are its mature trees and impressive views over the countryside that surrounds it which does not fulfil the necessary criteria of an area of “*special architecture or historic interest*”.