

Uffcott Design Assessment

April 2022



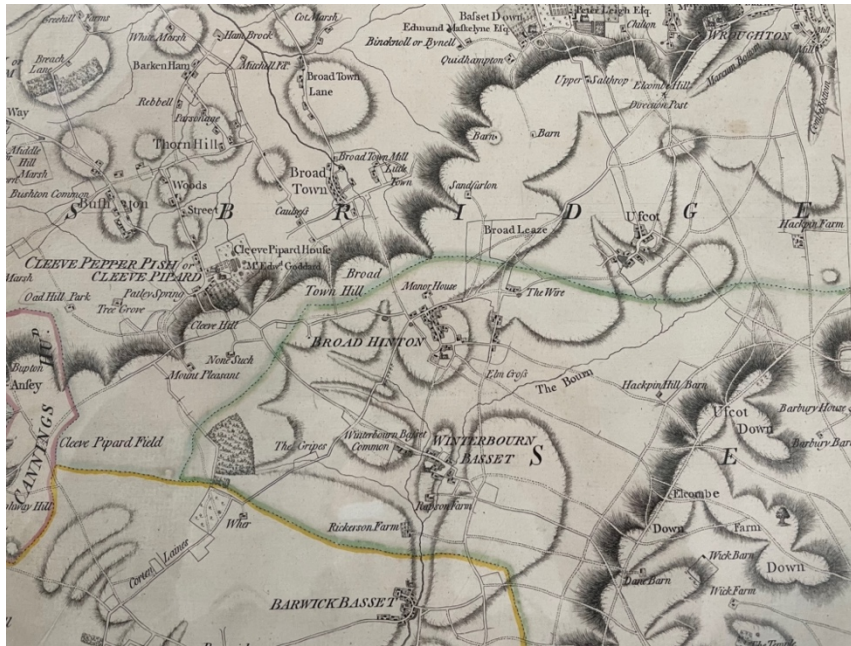
Uffcott viewed from the South West

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A Brief Background

Uffcott lies at the head of the Kennet Valley. To the South and West sides of Uffcott, flows the head stream of the River Kennet, identified as the Bourn on the attached Andrews and Durys map of 1773.



Andrews and Durys Map 1773. North to the top.



Map of 1617. Uffcott sites outlined in green. North to the left hand side.

As can be seen from the above early maps, the 'lazy S form' of the main route through Uffcott, which crosses the head stream of the River Kennet, is Uffcott's defining historical feature. This is reinforced by two Grade 2 listed buildings at the centre of Uffcott, namely;

White Cottage, an early 18th Century Chalkstone property.

Located just south of this property is an 18th/19th century chalkstone garden wall with a thatched capping. The wall also has 2 sarsen raking buttresses and a 19th century post box inserted. The rear of the wall has the traditional method of bee keeping prior to the use of beehives. (refer enclosed photographs)



Grade 2 listed White Cottage, Uffcott.



Grade 2 listed garden wall facing North, Uffcott.



Rear of Grade 2 listed garden wall, Uffcott.

Uffcott's pattern of settlement has remained very similar since the 17th Century. The 2 farmsteads of Uffcott and Dunsford have both been at the heart, and also the mainstay, of the settlement for hundreds of years. They are directly accessed from the main thoroughfare, which gently rises through the settlement from the entry/exit to the South West, to the entry/exit at the North East. Residential properties were also directly accessed from this thoroughfare, principally around the area of White Cottage.

It was not until the mid 20th century that further expansion of Uffcott took place, with the developments around Stones Farm and New Cottages to the North East and the development of Pond Cottage with residential properties being located on the access road from the main thoroughfare. The existing farmsteads of Uffcott and Dunsford also expanded with further buildings.

Uffcott Design Review



Uffcott viewed from the South West.

Uffcott is located within an area designated as one of 'Outstanding Natural Beauty' and is identified as a medieval settlement.

In the Wiltshire Core Strategy Document 2015, Uffcott is not identified as a village and there is no settlement boundary defined. Wiltshire Council designate Uffcott as open countryside within the Core Strategy (WCS, 2015).

It is positioned to the North East extremity of the Parish and closely borders Swindon Borough Council's sphere of influence, including the Wroughton Airfield with the original hangers now used as storage for the Science Museum and other commercial uses presently under review. The majority of the previous runway areas and surroundings have now been developed as a solar farm.



Uffcott showing Listed Buildings (Heavy Outline to Buildings) & Tree Preservation Orders (Light Green)

Access/exit to Uffcott is from 2 points on the Swindon-Devizes road (A4361), at Weir Farm and at the crossroads with the link to Salthrop Farm. This latter access/exit also provides an access point to the former Airfield. It is hoped that the continued use of this route will be in keeping with the rural character of the settlement and surrounding area. The same assessment applies to the main thoroughfare through Uffcott.

As previously mentioned, the core of Uffcott is the main thoroughfare through the settlement and this provides the primary visual character. The overall impression is one of a working farming/equestrian community interspersed with residential properties. The following 3 photographs taken from the same point at the South Western entry/exit point exemplifies this.



Entry/exit to Uffcott viewed from the South West,

At the centre of Uffcott, just south of the Grade 2 listed White Cottage and adjacent to the Grade 2 listed wall, is the entrance to Uffcott farm and its business hub, which is opposite the entrance route to Pond Cottage. (Refer photograph below.)



Uffcott centre with access to Uffcott farm.

Residential Properties

The residential properties in Uffcott are a mixture of bungalows, dormer bungalows and 2 storey high dwellings. The latter tends to be the most common. The properties have a range of finishes, including chalkstone, render, timber boarding and fair-faced brick walls with roof finishes of slate, tile, fibre cement tile and thatch. Various combinations of these finishes have been utilised throughout Uffcott.

The properties are generally set back from the road behind landscape screens often linked with high banking.



Main thoroughfare through Uffcott viewed from the North East.

The architectural form of the residential properties follows the traditional route with sloping roofs, sometimes with dormer windows, and openings through external walls in the expected format. One of the latest developments is Stones House, as shown on the photograph below, which depicts how the traditional format for residential properties is being adopted.



Uffcott, Stones property

There would appear to be gaps along the main thoroughfare suitable for further houses to be built without necessarily affecting the visual impact along this principal route. Submissions for such development would appear to have been made to Wiltshire Planning but have been rejected.

There has been considerable development with extensions to existing properties sometimes identified as garages with space above. Some of these tend to have a hybrid appearance of being in the process of becoming residential at some stage. It might be more appropriate for a full residential approach to be taken.



Uffcott Garage adjacent to the Ark on the main thoroughfare.



Uffcott main thoroughfare viewed from the North East.

Farming, Equestrian & Business Properties



Uffcott farm

As expected from such businesses, there is a range of buildings to suit the working context required. These vary from early fair-faced brick buildings to later, timber faced business units as depicted in the following photographs.



Uffcott farm



Uffcott farm

There is an awareness of these properties from the main thoroughfare but they don't have a dominating impact as the residential properties, with their strong perimeter landscape, provide screening.



Uffcott viewed from the North.

Summary

The overall impression is that Uffcott is a thriving community with its mixture of residential and business properties. The former provides the essential traditional village character when experienced from the principal public thoroughfare.

It is hoped that later and future developments don't undermine this character by removing the perimeter landscaping and banking to the main thoroughfare.

It will also be interesting to hear the residents' opinion about allowing further development along the main thoroughfare.

Design Guide Outline

The following repeats the general view expressed in the Broad Hinton Design assessment.

It is notoriously difficult to try and put together a design guide as to the appropriate design parameters for development. Good design is a very subjective matter with at times totally different views being held for the same solution.

The phraseology of providing a design in keeping with the location/site and maintaining the scale and proportion of the surrounding properties is a common baseline. This allows a degree of interpretation by all parties and certainly gives a talented architect/designer scope to bring imaginative ideas rather than be restricted by prescriptive directives.

As described earlier, Uffcott has adopted a range of different materials and finishes, although there is generally an adoption of maintaining a traditional residential architectural format. There is a need to identify different parameters for the residential and business areas.

However, the following points could be applicable to the residential areas:

- a) Dwellings to be no higher than 2 stories or 2.5 stories if the volume within a pitched roof is used.
- b) Properties should respond to the local identity and character.
- c) Landscape frontages to the access road of the property should be maintained and/or reinforced.
- d) Off street parking for 2 cars to be provided per household.

The National Design Guide which can be downloaded for free from the gov.uk website gives a good explanation of the issues involved (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>).