

this balances the different hard and soft elements in the scene. The River Brett forms the eastern boundary and keeps the edge between streets and fields clear and sharp; with more maintenance it could enhance the appearance and amenity of this area still more.

*Aims and Objectives:*

¶ \*The permanent grasslands adjacent to the village should be preserved as an essential element of the views into and out of the village.

¶ Existing hedges and woodland are also important to the views and every effort must be made to retain and improve their contribution to the landscape.

¶ \*The District Council should be urged to join together the two Special Landscape Areas.

¶ Historic features, even when not officially classified, ought to be recorded and conserved.

¶ The Environmental Agency and others should improve the visual and amenity aspects of the River Brett.



## THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

### THE PAST



High Street

Lavenham has become known internationally for its old timber-framed houses, cathedral-like church and variety of picturesque streets. In large part its charm is derived from its buildings, which span 500 years and more and bear witness to the changing economy and social structure in the village and the changes in taste, building techniques and materials.

The old houses were constructed to quite a strict formula in each era, and built from local materials. The earlier houses usually provided a main hall and one or more two-storey cross wings, a formula that was remarkably adaptable to changing life styles. Later on a fireplace replaced the open hearth in the hall, a floor was inserted to make upstairs rooms, and, later still, a brick outer skin was sometimes built with sash windows inserted, changing the appearance of the building completely.

When the cloth industry collapsed many older buildings were removed. However in the 19th century Lavenham saw renewed growth in housing and produced its own

## SHOPPING AND AMENITIES

Lavenham is unusual for its size in being virtually self-sufficient in all the amenities necessary for comfortable living. Most residences are within ten minutes walk of good shops (groceries and household goods, butcher, baker, fruit and vegetables, pharmacy, wines and spirits, newsagent and tobacconist). The Post Office offers a full range of facilities and the village enjoys good collection and delivery services. There are well-run, friendly pubs offering good food and accommodation, an internationally renowned hotel with extensive facilities and an outstanding smaller hotel with a highly regarded restaurant. There are B&B facilities to suit every pocket. A modern medical centre provides comprehensive facilities at GP level, well-supported by the village pharmacy and pharmacist on duty. The Lavenham Dental Practice provides dentistry for the village and surrounding area. Perhaps surprisingly, given the preponderance of older residents, there is no residential retirement or nursing home or day-care facility within the village, though there is warden-assisted housing.

Retail facilities in the village are vulnerable to intensifying competition from supermarkets and stores in Sudbury and Bury St Edmunds – both easily accessible to the 80+% of households with, or having access to cars. Out-of-village shopping has been encouraged by the loss in recent years of a filling-station and banking facilities. Conversely, and fortunately, tourism accounts for nearly 50% of all retail business and supports a number of galleries and shops selling gifts and non-staple commodities. To date, the village has largely escaped the more tawdry manifestations of the tourist industry.

The absence of banking facilities is seen by nearly 90% of residents as a major lack, despite the widespread availability of ‘cash back’ in shops and personal banking facilities provided at the Post Office.

*Aims and Objectives:*

¶ To maintain and sustain the existing wide range of shops and amenities.



Little Hall, The Great House, The Angel

## COUNTRYSIDE

Lavenham is situated within a gently undulating landscape of high visual quality, which provides the setting for the remarkable views into and out of the village. Recent changes in agricultural production have altered the landscape in many ways, and maintaining the remaining permanent pasture, hedges and woodland is now of critical importance.

Closely associated with the countryside is the excellent and extensive network of footpaths, which are mostly well maintained and used by residents and visitors. The Railway Walk is a County Wildlife Site.

Designated Special Landscape Areas lie to the east and north-west of Lavenham, and the high quality of the intervening landscape suggests a strong case for joining the two areas. Many features of historic value survive in the Parish, including Paleolithic sites, Anglo-Saxon and mediaeval deer park boundaries and Second World War defensive fortifications known as pill boxes.

Within the village the townscape is not just buildings but includes a variety of landscape features. Though front gardens are not traditional in the central streets, vegetation in the many rear gardens breaks up the built environment and



Lavenham from Preston Road

