

## 15. STANSTEAD ABBOTTS AND ST MARGARETS

### 15.1 Introduction

**15.1.1** The adjacent settlements of Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets are located on the banks of the River Lea and New River. They have mainly developed along four roads: Station Road/High Street; Hoddesdon Road; Cappell Lane and Roydon Road. They are generally regarded as one settlement for planning and development purposes, with a population of just over 3,000.

**15.1.2** The settlement has good transport connections being located close to the A414, which provides links to the A10, M11, and M25. In respect of passenger transport, good road connections also facilitate a local bus network into Ware, Hertford, Harlow, and Hoddesdon. It also benefits from a rail link southwards into London and northwards to Ware and Hertford. Proximity to these transport links, together with the attractive setting of the settlement, increases the pressure for additional housing development.

**15.1.3** This chapter sets out the planning issues and policies specific to Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets. The policies seek to retain the existing character of the settlement, whilst making provision for appropriate development to meet the needs of the foreseeable future. The aims and objectives of the Local Plan for Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets are as follows:

#### Aims

- A. To maintain and enhance Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets as a pleasant place in which to live, grow up, work, shop, and spend leisure time.
- B. To make appropriate provision for the necessary needs of the present and future generations, in a way which is consistent with the principles of sustainable development.
- C. To prevent further coalescence with the surrounding settlements of Great Amwell, Hoddesdon, and Ware.

### Objectives

1. To ensure a sufficient supply of housing land is identified for Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets and their hinterland during the plan period, in accordance with the District Housing Provision Strategy, contained in Chapter 3 (Housing).
2. To ensure development meets the principles of sustainable development, as set out in Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Chapter 2 (Sustainable Development) of this Local Plan.
3. To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the settlement centre, by encouraging a range of shops and services and, preventing erosion or dilution of its retail and service function.
4. To maintain and encourage employment opportunities for local people, by retaining sufficient employment land and protecting the existing Employment Area for such purposes.
5. To protect and enhance the River Lea and encourage its use for nature conservation, recreation, transport, and other appropriate uses.

### 15.2 Settlement Limits

**15.2.1** Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets is excluded from and surrounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt, with the settlement limits being defined by the Green Belt's inner boundary.

**15.2.2** The main development strategy of the Structure Plan is to concentrate and direct development to the main named settlements. In the case of East Hertfordshire these are the towns of Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Ware and Sawbridgeworth. The Structure Plan allows for other settlements to be selected in Local Plans, within and beyond the Green Belt, where limited development may be appropriate to maintain the vitality of the area. Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets is identified as such a settlement.

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**15.2.3** The overriding planning objective of defining settlement limits is the prevention of urban sprawl and the coalescence with nearby settlements, and the protection of the settlement's special character.

**15.2.4** It is proposed that land to the rear of St Andrews Church be incorporated within the Green Belt. This greenfield site has for many years been included within the settlement limits of Stanstead Abbots in previous Local Plans and was allocated for housing in the Local Plan Second Review Deposit Version (December 2000). It forms the remaining undeveloped part of the original larger adjacent site, developed for housing during the late 1960's/early 1970's. A further review of the District's greenfield sites and appraisal of this particular site has identified its previous overlooked Green Belt importance. It is considered that it is required to be kept permanently open and undeveloped, due to its contribution to Green Belt

purposes, and its sensitive open location on the edge of Stanstead Abbots, adjacent to St Andrew's Church. The site has a positive relationship with the adjoining Green Belt land, and its inner boundary forms a defensible Green Belt boundary in this location.

### 15.3 Housing

**15.3.1** Based on the Housing Provision Strategy, as detailed in the Housing Chapter, Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets need to make provision for an additional net 165 dwellings, on sites of a size capable of accommodating five or more dwellings, between 1999 and 2011. These dwellings will cater for the housing needs of the settlement and surrounding hinterland. It is expected that affordable housing will be provided in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4 in Chapter 3 (Housing).

**Table 14.1 Completed Deposit Version Housing Allocations (included in Table 3.2 (b) in Chapter 3, Housing)**

Location	Ref No	Brownfield/ Greenfield	Site Specific Policy	Estimated Number of Dwellings		
				Open Market	Affordable	Total
St Margarets Filling Station, Station Road	323b	Brownfield	N/A	10	0	10

### ST1 Housing Allocations: Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets

In accordance with Policy HSG2 (II) the following sites, as identified on the Proposals Map, are allocated for residential development in Phase 1:

Remaining Deposit Version Housing Allocations (included in Table 3.2 (h) in Chapter 3: Housing)

Location	Ref No	Brownfield/ Greenfield	Site Specific Policy	Estimated Number of Dwellings		
				Open Market	Affordable	Total
Sanville Gardens	93	Brownfield	ST3	62	25	87
St Margarets Farm	95	Brownfield/ Greenfield	ST2	43	19	62
			<b>TOTAL</b>	105	44	149

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**15.3.2** The St Margarets Farm site, which was reserved as an Area of Special Restraint, for future housing in the previous Local Plan, has been carried forward for development. In order, however, to avoid potential confusion, the site is now referred to as two separate sites, and identified as such on the Proposals Map. The two sites are Sanville Gardens (Site ref: 93) and St Margarets Farm (Site ref: 95). A Development Brief covering both sites has been prepared by the District Council and was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance, to the 1999 Local Plan, in July 2000. This will be a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications in respect of both sites. These two sites are anticipated to accommodate the dwelling requirement for the settlement, with no further sites needing to be identified for housing development.

**15.3.3** Sites identified in the Deposit Version of the Local Plan, completed between April 1999 and March 2003, have been removed from Policy ST1 and are detailed in Table 14.1:

**15.3.4** The remaining provision will come from the sites listed in Policy ST1.

**15.3.5** *St Margarets Farm Site, Hoddesdon Road* - This site is located to the east of Hoddesdon Road and west of the railway line. The District Council, in November 2003, granted planning permission for 62 dwellings, including affordable housing and open space.

### ST2 St Margarets Farm Site

The site at St Margarets Farm, as identified on the Proposals Map, has been allocated for housing, including up to 40% affordable units, and open space.

**15.3.6** *Sanville Gardens Site, Hoddesdon Road* - This site is located to the east of Hoddesdon Road and west of the railway line. It is proposed that the site be developed for residential purposes, including affordable housing, community facilities and open space. Planning permission has now been granted for 87 dwellings on this site.

### ST3 Sanville Gardens Site

The site at Sanville Gardens as identified on the Proposals Map, has been allocated for housing, including up to 40% affordable units, associated community facilities and open space.

## 15.4 Economic Development and Employment

**15.4.1** The main designated Employment Area in Stanstead Abbots is located in the centre of the settlement at The Mill Stream/Maltings area off Roydon Road. Here a long established and successful maltings is located, together with a substantial provision of units for small enterprises. These premises play an important role in creating employment opportunities and meeting the needs of small businesses. There are also several other employment sites close to the railway line, and on the edge of the settlement, as well the commercial, retailing and service businesses centred on the High Street.

**15.4.2** The District Council considers it important to retain and encourage local employment opportunities, where appropriate, as outlined in Chapter 6 (Economic Development and Employment). The District Council proposes to retain The Maltings Employment Area in Stanstead Abbots for such purposes.

### ST4 Employment Area

In accordance with Policy EDE1 The Mill Stream/Maltings area off Roydon Road will be primarily reserved for industry comprising B1 Business and B2 General Industrial Uses.

**15.4.3** Where proposals arise for employment development outside identified Employment Areas, these will be appraised on their individual merits, taking into account sustainability criteria and the impact on neighbouring occupiers and the local area, as set out in Policy EDE3.

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**15.4.4** It is important that space is available for a variety of firms at different stages of their development, including new businesses. Within Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets there are a number of smaller sites that are not specifically designated for primarily employment purposes, but which would be suitable (and are used) for such purposes. Such sites can and do provide for a diversity of uses that should, wherever appropriate, be retained.

### 15.5 Settlement Centre/Environment

**15.5.1** The environment of Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets has been considerably improved since the opening of the A414 bypass in the mid-1980's and the completion of the environmental improvement scheme along the High Street in the early 1990's.

**15.5.2** Since the designation of the Stanstead Abbots Conservation Area in 1988, the High Street enhancement scheme has considerably altered the character and appearance of the settlement centre. This, together with the subsequent revision by Government of Listed Buildings and Conservation Area legislation in 1990, and the publication of PPG15, bring forth the need to review the Conservation Area boundary. The District Council will therefore, give consideration to reviewing the Conservation Area boundary for Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets, as part of its programme of Conservation Area Appraisals.

**15.5.3** In order to generally preclude a dilution of the shopping functions in Stanstead Abbots and to add to the overall vitality and viability of the settlement, proposals for the development or changes of use from shop (A1) to non-shop (non-A1) uses in the main commercial frontages as defined on the Proposals Map will be considered against Policy STC4.

### 15.6 Leisure and Community Facilities

**15.6.1** Chapter 10 (Leisure, Recreation and Community Facilities) includes policies regarding the retention, provision and improvement of such facilities. The review of the Local Plan provides the

opportunity to address any shortfalls in leisure or community facilities in Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets which may already exist, or may arise, as a result of any new development. A need has been established for a children's play area, bowling green and parish hall within the settlement.

**15.6.2** In addition, the local NHS Trust has identified a need for further doctors facilities to be provided in the settlement. It is proposed that a doctors surgery be provided as part of the associated community facility planned as part of the Sanville Gardens development.

**15.6.3** Within Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets all sites of public or private outdoor sports, recreation and open space facilities, or school playing fields to be protected are shown on the Proposals Map. Any proposals for development that would result in the loss of these areas will be refused unless the proposed development complies with Policy LRC1.

### 15.7 Lee Valley Regional Park

**15.7.1** To the north west and south east of Stanstead Abbots is the Lee Valley Regional Park. (See section 10.9 of Chapter 10). The review of the Lee Valley Regional Park Plan was adopted in April 2000. The proposals of the Park Plan are supported in Policy LRC8 in the Leisure, Recreation and Community Facilities Chapter.

**15.7.2** The most significant proposals of the Park Authority are to the south east of Stanstead Abbots and include an expanded marina and landscaped Country Park.

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**15.7.3** The Park already has an impact on the settlement through visitors supporting local services, along with the restoration of derelict land. The provision of further facilities in the Park will increase this impact, particularly in terms of additional traffic in the area.

### **ST5 Development Within the Lee Valley Regional Park**

The District Council will give careful consideration to any development proposals within the Lee Valley Regional Park, and such proposals will be considered against the following criteria:

- (a) the proposal does not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring residents;
- (b) a satisfactory access is provided;
- (c) appropriate provision is made within the site for parking and servicing in accordance with Policy TR7;
- (d) appropriate provision is made for landscaping.