

Hempstead was a village in the conservation areas were chairman of the parish council, Dr. Richard Bassett, said: "We are not satisfied."

Dr. Bassett commented: "Obviously from this meeting there is strong feeling in the village. We will enlarge the parish council's Plans Sub-Committee to prepare a case to take to the Minister."

"We shall produce photographic documentation and expand on our reasoning for why we feel it should be a conservation area. We hope this will be sufficient to cause a reconsideration to be made."

In 1967 the parish council suggested areas at each end of the village, and Saffron Walden Rural Council suggested a smaller part of the village. But the county planners rejected both suggestions.

Borderline

Conservation areas are aimed at protecting villages and towns from development which would harm their character. Applications for planning consents in these areas would be dealt with at county level instead of by the local authority.

One of the county council's architect-planners, Mr. Mel Dunbar, told the meeting that Hempstead did not satisfy the criteria for conservation areas. It was a pleasant village and would be included in a non-statutory supplementary list of 30 villages where extra care would be taken over the type of development allowed.

But if villages like Hempstead were included in the conservation list the number in the county might be as many as 150, and the term "conservation area," intended to cover such places as Thaxted and part of Newport, would be devalued. "The line has to be drawn somewhere," said Mr. Dunbar.

He added: "Hempstead was a borderline case which I and others had visited three times. It is a nice, charming, little village which we will do our best to protect but not a conservation area."



One of the attractive old cottages at Hempstead which the villagers would like to be included in the conservation areas.