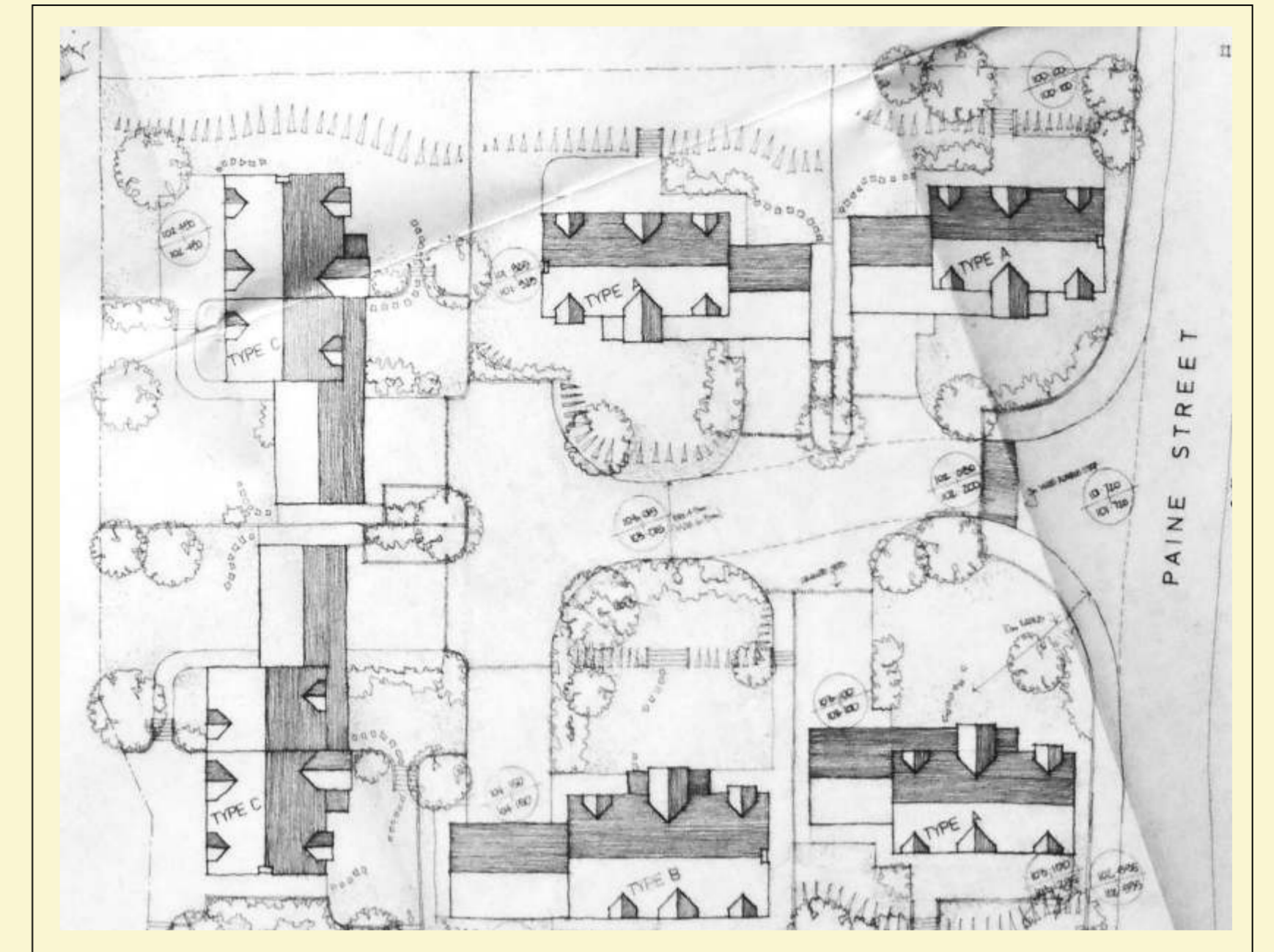
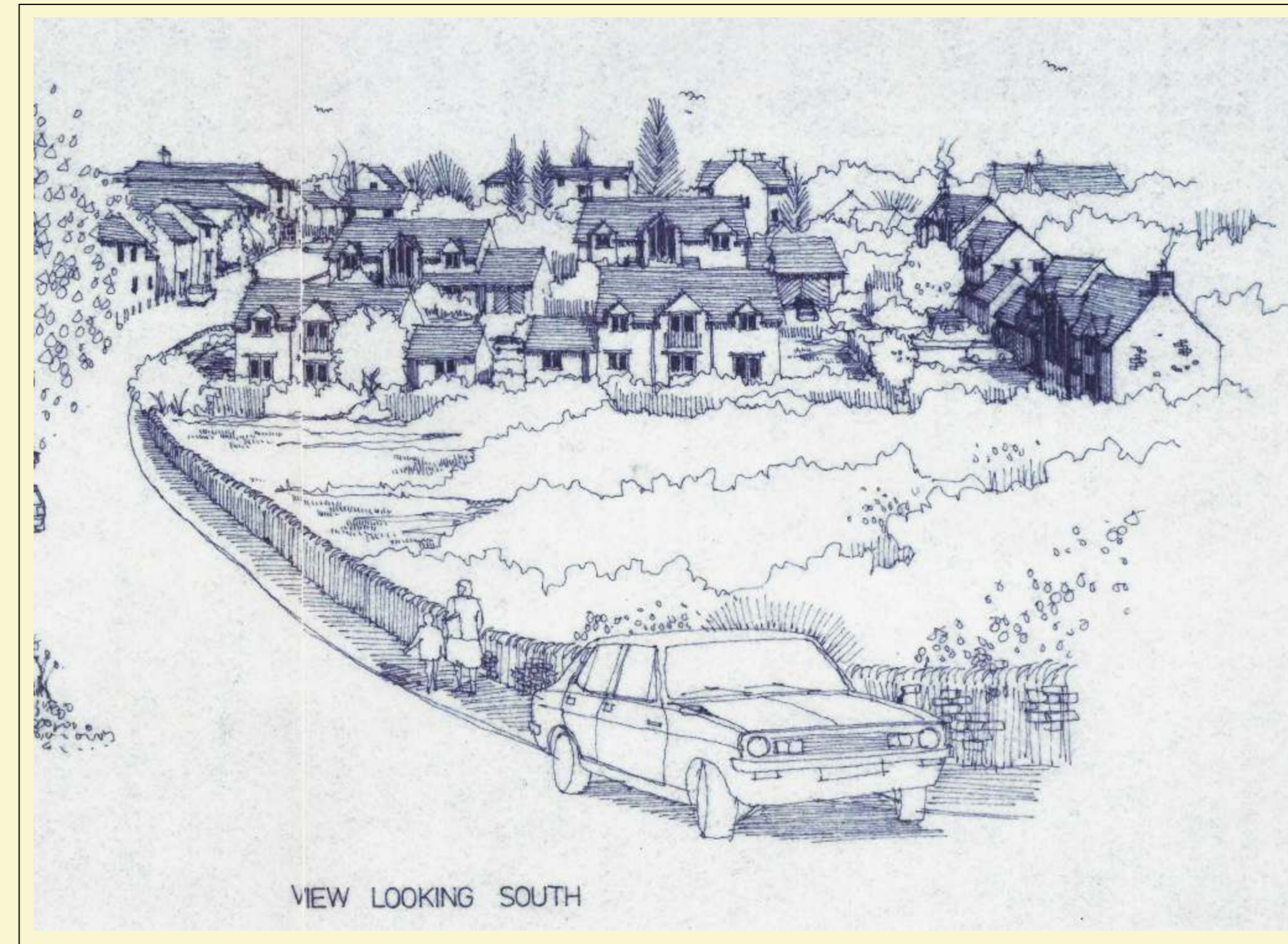


DEVELOPMENT IN THE VILLAGE: 5



The field on the west side of Paines Hill, seen by many as the heart of the village, was also once threatened with development. The owners at the time applied for permission in 1986 to build 6 large houses on it. Permission was refused; the owner appealed but the refusal was confirmed.

Today, Soay sheep graze on the land which is recognised in the Conservation Area appraisal as "the central valley, whose open-ness is a major part of the central character of the village".



May 1975

from Mrs. E. Walker, Post Office,

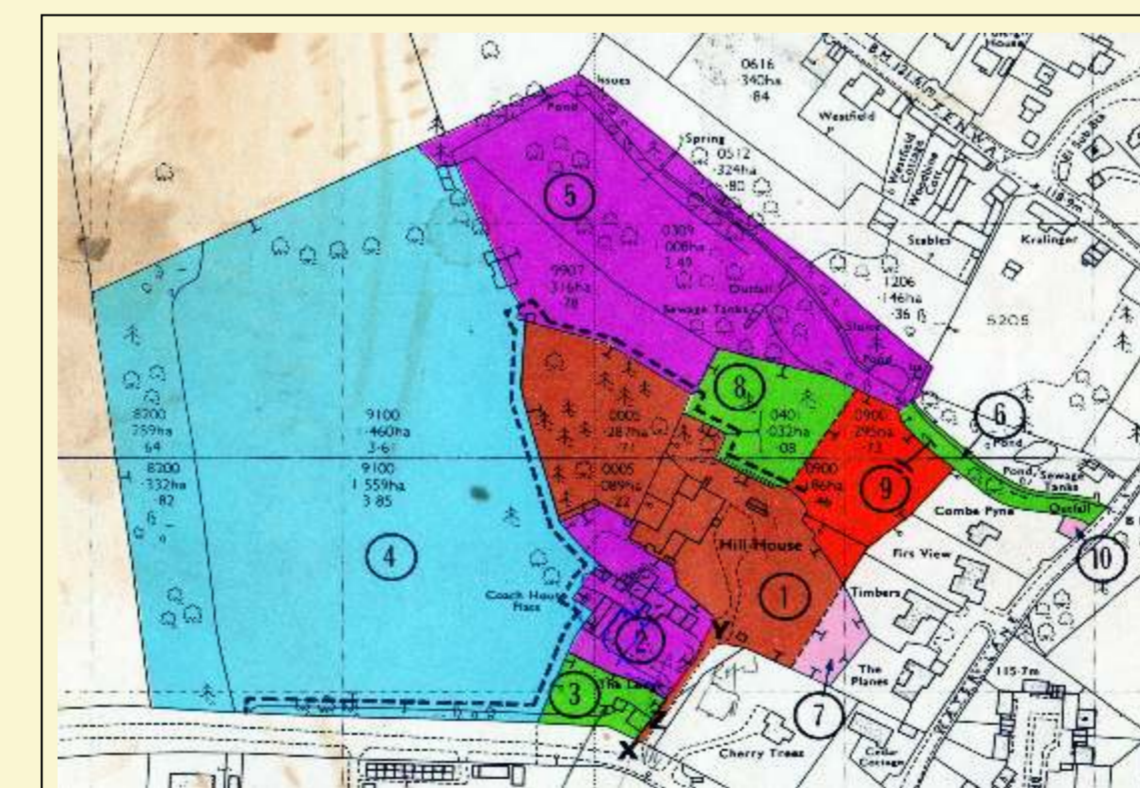
Dear Sirs,
 With reference to Mr Clifford's letter in the March edition of Steeple Aston Life. There are many people who would love to live in Steeple Aston. The reason why there are so many unsold houses at present is because of the shortage of money due to the national, even world-wide economic situation. Most other towns and villages have the same plethora of for sale notices. Many of the houses at present on the market in Steeple Aston could have been sold several times over had prospective buyers been able to obtain the necessary purchasing and or bridging loans. To illustrate this point at least three copies of Steeple Aston Life have been sold from the Post Office this month to different people who hope shortly to be living amongst us provided they can raise the necessary money for the properties they wish to purchase. The glut of sale boards is certainly more noticeable in Grange Park, where Mr. Clifford lives than in other parts of the village and doubtless passers-by are less frequent there because all the roads are cul-de-sacs. Those of us who live more centrally know that whilst visitors to the Village are quite common and house hunters by no means infrequent, most of the latter are looking for period stone properties, not modern estate houses, and of course the prices in this sector are, with reason, usually fairly prohibitive. There is nothing wrong with Steeple Aston. It is a very attractive place to live, as much for the quality of its life (and it's "Life"!) as for its rural charm.

(signed) Eunice Walker

The Grange Park estate was being completed in 1970, before SAL's first edition in 1973. However, as the letter on the right says, not all the houses had been sold five years on.



In June 1975 permission to convert Hill House into flats was refused by Cherwell Council, as it was thought more suitable for commercial or institutional use. Various lots (below) went to auction in 1976. The house itself was withdrawn but bought after the auction for £7,500. A scheme for 5 flats was approved later in the year.



THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 1975

Steeple Aston's new automatic telephone exchange.

Village phones go automatic

A wrong number in Steeple Aston will still be a wrong number in Steeple Aston will number, despite the GPO's new £28,000 automatic telephone exchange. But a right number should get through loud and clear for many years to come.

That, basically, was the message of Mr Peter Buck, the Oxford area general manager, who supervised the opening ceremony on Thursday.

Mr Ernest Steele, the chairman of Steeple Aston Parish Council, actually made the first call after ceremoniously switching in the last few lines of the new exchange.

"I am greatly impressed by what a beautiful place this is," he said, referring to the pleasant new building which houses the equipment.

Mr Steele also paid tribute to the good humour of the switchboard operators in Oxford, who deal with enquiries now that Steeple Aston is fully automatic.

FIRST PHONE

The village's first telephone was installed in 1925. Six years later there were 28 more lines, and the first manual exchange was in a shed at the back of the village post office.

At present there are 300 telephones in Steeple Aston, but up to 3,000 lines could be dealt with by the exchange, Mr Beck explained.

"Any further expansion can be met simply by extending the building," he added.

The first official telephone call from the new exchange went to Mrs Dorothy O'Sullivan. For many years Mrs O'Sullivan has been producing the parish magazine, Steeple Aston Life, and she agreed with Mr Steele

on the importance of a reliable telephone service these days. After the ceremony Mrs Joan Steele was presented with a bouquet on behalf of the GPO, and Mr Steele was allowed to keep the special handle used to connect the last few telephone lines.

The main advantage of the new exchange is its ease of maintenance, and reliability. Mr Beck said that he couldn't promise that anyone's phone bill would be cut, but he certainly hoped the cost of running the telephone service would be held down as the new exchanges were introduced throughout the country.