

Listening Learning Leading

Great Haseley Conservation Area Character Appraisal

May 2005

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The Council first published the Great Haseley Conservation Area Character Appraisal in draft form in July 2004. Following a period of public consultation, including a public meeting held on 4th August 2004, the Council approved the Character Appraisal on 2nd September 2004.

Introduction

Great Hasely is commodiously and pleasantly situated on an easy ride, extending from east to west about ---- furlongs. And to passengers that come to it from the east, south and south west, affords a handsome Prospect. It hath a good Air and a pretty cleanly scite, being founded on a natural rock and is (in short) an Healthful and agreeable place of Habitation. ¹

Thomas Delafield, a historian writing in the 1730s about the history of Great Haseley, recognised the physical assets of the village and describes with some sense of pride, the special characteristics of the village, many of which are still discernible today. This character appraisal of the Great Haseley Conservation Area seeks to identify exactly what it is today that gives Great Haseley its special character and looks at how this can be preserved and enhanced in the future. ²

The appraisal also includes a review of the boundaries of the conservation area and possible extensions are identified. Any extension to the conservation area will be subject to a separate consultation exercise.

The document is divided into various sections as follows:

1. The History of the Area

This covers the period from prehistory to the present day. It includes significant architectural history, important dates and references to people and events that have helped to shape the area we see today.

2. The Established Character

This is an assessment of the existing character, including the topography of the area, the vernacular style, predominant building materials and natural or man-made features of local interest.

- ¹ Thomas Delafield, Notitia Haseleiana or Some memorials of the Antiquities of the Parish of Hasely in the County of Oxfordshire, Bodleian Library, Gough MSS Oxon 19,183, c. 1735-9, Bk 1, p.47
- ² The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act places a duty on every local planning authority to determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The Act also states that the local planning authority should, from time to time, formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas.

1. Great Haseley - the History of the Area

The character and history of an area are closely linked to its archaeological remains. The archaeological constraint plan identifies the location of ancient monuments, earthworks and known crop marks, find spots, archaeological sites and linear works identified on the Sites and Monuments Record maintained by Oxfordshire County Council.

There is little published on the history of Great Haseley and this brief account is not intended to fill the gap. Using some of the general information on the area, drawing on some of the unpublished information available and what can be gleaned from surviving buildings, a brief account is given here of significant elements in the history of the village.

Chief amongst the unpublished sources is Delafield's history ³, three manuscript volumes in the Bodleian Library, which give a history of the village up to the early eighteenth century. Delafield was born in c.1690 and wrote his history in the late 1730s (volume 3 can be dated to 1739). Another valuable source of particular relevance is an estate map of 1701, drawn by Gascoyne, which shows the buildings of the village and its surrounding fields (see map 1). ⁴

Early history

In common with most towns and villages, little is recorded pre-conquest and there is no information on the county sites and monuments record to illuminate the early history of the village.

The name is thought to derive from Hazel Ley - meaning a clearing in a Hazel wood. For many centuries



Map 1 Gascoyne's map of 1701

woods stretched from the main London - Oxford road to beyond Standhill and there appears to be no mention of a road to the village until after the Norman Conquest, though there is mention of one, past the Foundry through to Cuddesdon. As Roman coins have been dug up in the churchyard it is possible that there was a settlement here very early and there is evidence in a document now in the Bodleian Library that by 800 A.D. there was a church here, dedicated to St. Peter, as it still is. Part of the font is also thought to be Saxon. By the time of Edward the Confessor this area, known as Hazeley, belonged to Queen Edith ⁵.

There are two references to Great (and Little) Haseley in the Domesday Book. The principal landowner was Miles Crispin, who was granted the land by William the Conqueror and who held:

..... 16 hides (notionally the amount of land which would support a household). [There is] land for 18 ploughs. Now in demesne [are] 3 ploughs, and 5 slaves; and 15 villans with 13 bordars (the former were peasants of higher economic status than the latter) have 15 ploughs. There are 60 acres of meadow, [and]

- ³ Delafield, op.cit., bks 1-3
- ⁴ Bodleian ref. (E) C17:49 (58)
- ⁵ website: www.thehaseleys.com

⁶ Dr Ann Williams and Professor G.H. Martin eds., Domesday Book; a Complete Translation, Alecto Historical Editions, London, 2003, p.437

⁷ *ibid.*, p.427

⁸ County Archaeological Services

⁹ Delafield, *op.cit.*, bk1

¹⁰ Delafield, *op.cit.*, bk.1, p.126

woodland 2 furlongs long and 2 furlongs broad. TRE (Tempore Regis Edwardi - i.e. before the Conquest in 1066) and afterwards, as now, worth £15. ⁶

There is also a reference amongst the land held by the Bishop of Bayeux to Hervey holding land in Great and Little Haseley:

There are 9 hides. There is land for 9 ploughs.. Now in demesne [are] 2 ploughs, with 1 slave; and 8 villans with 3 bordars have 6 ploughs. There are 30 acres of meadow. It was worth £7; now £6 ⁷

Medieval

The Church and Churchyard of St.Peter's are of medieval origin and archaeological evidence probably of a medieval manor survives in the fishponds, now filled in, in the eastern part of the field known historically as North Grove and South Grove and in the earthwork along the southern boundary to this field ⁸. The fishponds appear on Gascoyne's map of 1701 and were still evident on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map of 1881 (see map 2). The boundary of the Groves was probably a manorial boundary. It also appears on Gascoyne's map and is shown as an earthwork on the 1881 Ordnance Survey map. Whilst this map shows it planted with trees, it was not bounded by trees in the early 18th century, nor are trees shown on the 1920s OS map.

In the medieval period, written records concentrate on the lives of "the great and the good" focusing on who married whom and what children they had. The amassing of large estates meant fortune and power and the retention of these estates depended on male issue. Delafield's history therefore details

successive owners of the manor ⁹ though they would not necessarily have lived in the village, as most had other large estates elsewhere. Many were major figures nationally, marrying into the royal family and other aristocratic families. Of these, the Pypards are of particular local interest as this family had probably lived in Great Haseley since the Conquest and evidence of their occupation may still be seen on the ground.

The family was one of great antiquity and of foreign extraction, having come to England with William the Conqueror, though they were apparently less distinguished than some other lords of the manor. They were, in fact, undertenants rather than owners of Great Haseley, though there are records of the Pypard family owning land in other parts of the county to which they gave their name e.g. Rotherfield Peppard.

It was not until some time after 1400 that they became owners of the manor, and their 'Mannour Place was scituate at Great Haseley, being heretofore called the Farm Place, as the eastern Yard and the Great Barn do still carry that name'. ¹⁰ This is the approximate site of the present manor house. The eastern yard is where Church Farm is now, with the Great Barn running along the northern boundary. This was originally probably twice the size of the existing barn, indicating the significant wealth of the manor. The Pypard line died out in 1482 and the patronage of the Rectory of Haseley was given to the College of the Dean and Canons of Windsor.

It was during the 1400s that the Old Rectory was built. Even though it was partly rebuilt in 1846, much of the original 15thc fabric remains. It is of a traditional open hall and cross wing

plan with the large traceried mullion and transom windows lighting the open hall. It was a building of sufficient antiquity and acknowledged worth to be noted by Delafield in the 1730s as typical of an ancient structure ¹¹.

The 16th and 17th centuries

The successors to the Pypards - the Lenthalls - are also of significance in that they have left behind standing buildings, for it was the Lenthalls who built the present manor house in the last quarter of the 17th century. Amongst records relating to the Lenthalls are the deaths of three members of the family within 6 days of each other, in November 1558, presumably from a common sickness. Eight burials are recorded in the parish register of November that year and 12 more in December. In addition six 'goers by the way' i.e. strangers were buried.

As Delafield's history moves into the 17th century much more is included by way of personal details as he incorporates information passed down to him by older people in the village. Edmund Lenthall, who is mentioned as one of the trustees of the poor of Great Haseley in 1651, died in 1667.

Delafield notes:

*He was very well remembered by many antient People, who were lately living in the Parish of Hasely; whom I have heard describe him as a little black man in his person, of a lean and long visage, with a red face full of pimples, and of a temper very hasty and passionate.*¹²

He supported Parliament during the Civil War and thereby secured the neighbourhood from mutilation by troops quartered at Thame. He

encouraged the neighbourhood to take up arms in the Parliamentary cause:

*And there is not a grown person now living and bred up in the Place, but remembers Old Anthony Thame, a very antient man, who was a regular Trooper in their Army, and to his death preserved his Ammunition Coat, being a good red cloath turned up with blue and brass buttons; in which he almost every Sunday appeared at Church.*¹³

Edmund had died a year before his father, Sir John Lenthall, so it was his son, William, who succeeded in 1688. He built the present manor house and appears to have been a colourful, if dissolute, character:

The last of this name and family was William Lenthal esq., second son of Edmund, who built the present mannour house. He married Lucy, one of the daughters of Edmund Dunches esq. of Little Wittenham in Berkshire....But what through the Passion that his Lady had for Dress and Play, and his own Profuseness, and still more ruinous vices and debuacheries, he went not only through his estates here and elsewhere, but even his hereditary Patrimony of the King's Bench. And at last died so much reduced, and so little known, or at least regarded, that I cannot assign the place where he was buryed, unless it be St Georges Church, Southwark, within the rules of the King's Bench. Though I have heard it said that he was buryed at the expense of the Earl of Radnor, who has his estates here at Lachford.

His wife survived a short time and lived at Haseley and 'was there buryed in

¹¹ibid., bk3, p.37

¹²Delafield p.145

¹³Delafield, p.146

¹⁴Delafield vol.1, 146-7

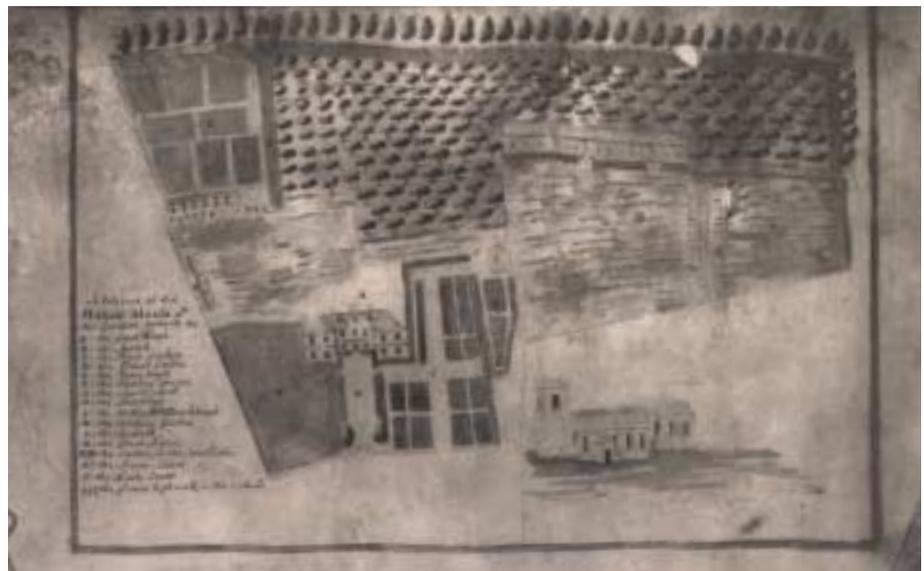
the buryal place of the family, where I (Delafield) went to school in the church about 1700, and some years after, her Achievement was to be seen against the wall.... but there was no stone to show the place of her grave.'¹⁴

It was probably shortly after his grandfather died that William embarked on building the manor house which undoubtedly contributed to his financial problems. The 1701 estate map by Gascoyne clearly shows the manor house more or less in its present form (see map 3), though it was subsequently altered in the late 18th century. The functions of the outbuildings and garden areas are also listed giving an insight into life in an English country house at this time. Listed, presumably in order of importance are: the Great House; the Aproch; the Prive Garden; the Flower Garden; the Dove house; the bowling greene; the Courtyard; the Brewhouse; the Stable and Coachhouse; the Kitching Garden; the Orchard; the Great Barne; the Stables for the Cart Horses; the Barne Court; the back Court; the Greene high walk in the Orchard.

The Great Barn suffered a partial collapse some time in the first half of the 18th century and the present stable block was built on part of the site. The glebe map of c.1730 shows the truncated Great Barn and the new stable block. The Blackalls acquired the estates around this time and may well have been responsible for the work.

Famous rectors of this period were: John Leland, historian and chaplain to Henry VIII, John Harding, who helped in the translation of the Bible, Authorised Version commanded by James I and Christopher Wren, father of the famous architect.

It is not until the 17th century that any significant evidence for the history of ordinary folk in the village is found. Evidence for their lives lies principally in surviving buildings and the landscape. Several small houses date from the 17th century, such as 10 and 11 Mill Lane, The Orchard, Vine Cottage.



Map 3 Detail from Gascoyne's map

The 18th and 19th centuries

Many more buildings survive from the 18th century, principally along Rectory Road. The plan form of the house i.e. the arrangement of rooms, its section, materials and detailing can all provide information on how people lived. A range of houses from high status to humble can be found, indicating continued prosperity throughout this period. Some of this building involved the remodelling of earlier houses.

The Blackhalls who lived in the Manor House during the 18th century, and whose typically 18th century monuments can be seen in the vestry, were great benefactors to Haseley. George Blackhall started the Haseley Charity, now called the Taylor and Blackhall charity, and left a considerable sum for the education of children.¹⁵ The Old Rectory was remodelled in 1846 by William Birkett, Rector. In the 19th century, when Canon Wooler lived here with his family, nineteen servants were kept.

The village was on the route of an old drovers road and many drovers stopped here for refreshment. In the 18th century the village is reputed to have had 18 alehouses or inns.

In the 19th Century a Carrier Service to Thame and Oxford was begun. This consisted of a covered van with two horses; benches ran along the sides of the van; straw lay on the floor and there were candles set in storm lanterns. Rugs were provided to cover the legs of passengers in cold weather. The carrier went to Oxford on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 9am reaching Oxford about midday, making several stops on the way to deliver and take on parcels etc. He started back at 4 pm reaching Haseley 8 - 9 pm. The cost was one shilling return. On

Tuesday the carrier went to Thame. For this an open cart was used, with seats back to back along the middle. A large umbrella was provided for the passengers in wet weather.

The Report made in 1883 by Canon Ellison, the Rector, lists nineteen activities going on in the village then, including a Drum and Fife Band, a Night School, for which two pence a week was charged and a sum returned at the end of the winter for regular attendance, and a Lending Library.

An independent chapel had been built by 1881 on Backway and the Victorian houses at the junction of Latchford Lane and Church Hill had also been built by then. In 1892 a Village Institute was opened for the use of the village every weekday evening in winter. When the school was rebuilt in 1902, this Institute became the infants' school and a Church Hall was constructed out of the Glebe Farm Barn opposite.

Most of the money in the Taylor and Blackhall charity was used up in the rebuilding of the school in 1902 which closed in 1990.

¹⁵Website:
www.thehaseleys.com

2. The Established Character

Great Haseley is an attractive village with a well-preserved historic core that is still very much at its heart. Although the village has seen some modern development on small sites in and around its pre-modern boundaries it has not been subject to substantial growth beyond this. The historic village can be considered as two areas quite distinct in character: that set on a hill around the church and Manor House and the main road through the village (Rectory Road).

The topography and historic development of the village in these distinct areas has produced an interesting variety of historic characters that is the essence of the village today. The village features spaces bounded by walls and trees that give an enclosed feeling, open areas with a more public character and areas with a rural character. Despite this variation there is great consistency in building materials throughout the village, principally due to the widespread use of local stone in buildings of all dates and types.



Fig.1 The Crown House

The local building stone is one of the defining characteristics of the village but the way it is used varies from building to building and is determined by the age, type and original status of the structure. Thus, well-dressed masonry might be seen in the window and door dressings of St Peter's Church and the Manor House while rougher 'rubblestone' is used for cottages, many walls and agricultural buildings. Everywhere, however, there is a consistency of colour and texture created by the provision of stone from the former local quarries and stone pits. Some buildings feature a rendered surface applied to the stone (such as the Old Bakery on Rectory Road), both to protect it from the elements and to give it a more fashionable appearance. Timber framing is only found in early buildings such as The Crown House, dating from the early 17th century (see fig.1) and The Crucks, 16th century or earlier or in more humble structures, like The Farm's former granary, where it frames panels of brick. The soft, orange-red local brick was also used as dressings for windows and doors, in chimneystacks or as coping for walls. It is only from the 19th century onwards that brick is used for entire buildings, usually small cottages infilling gaps between the earlier properties and institutional buildings. Many of these later buildings are good examples of their type and make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area by following the form and pattern of earlier building in the village.

The earliest roofs in Great Haseley were of thatch, for the cottages, or tile, for the grander houses and the Tithe Barn - see figs.2 and 3. Though many formerly thatched buildings have been re-roofed in tile, thatch remains an

important part of the village's character. The traditional tile of the area is a plain tile in an orange-red clay that over time weathers to a darker ruddy colour. This material is widespread in the village and can be seen on buildings of all types and all dates up to the early years of the 20th century.

Boundary walls built from the local stone are common in Great Haseley and form one of its chief characteristics. These walls range from high, neatly dressed coursed stone walls with coping stones (or later bricks) seen around the Manor House, see fig.4, to low rubble stone walls capped with stones on edge seen bounding many small cottages and fields. Entrances are traditionally commensurate with the status of the property and the consequent type and size of its boundary wall: ornate imposing gate piers and gates to the Manor House, simple gateways to the cottages.

Trees contribute greatly to the character of the area. The area around St Peter's Church and the Manor House has many mature trees. These are an interesting mixture of native species in hedges and more exotic specimen trees in the grounds of the Manor. This area also enjoys important screens of hedgerow trees, especially on the western side of Thame Road and those that mark the boundary of the manor, both native and formal examples. Trees are also features of the open spaces within the village and play an important role on the traditional edges of the village, like Backway. The large open areas in the village are formed by the grounds of the large houses and church and by the open fields and large gardens of modern houses. All these make an important contribution both as settings for the



Fig.2 37 Thame Road



Fig.3 The Farm, Rectory Road



Fig.4 Gates piers to The Manor House

houses within the village and as 'soft edges' to the village as a whole. There are a number of significant local views both inside and into the conservation area which form important parts of its character. The views in from Thame Road, Rectory Road and the fields behind the church and Church Farm reveal the essential character of the village. Similarly, vistas within the village (along Rectory Road or on Mill Lane, for example) are an attractive mixture of greenery, walls and buildings.



Fig.5 34-36 Thame Rd

The approach to Great Haseley along the Thame Road presents an interesting and attractive view. The road twists and turns on a series of gentle rises with hedges to each side and at several points tantalising views of the village are revealed. The church tower dominates the scene and seems to rise from the roofs of Church Farm's buildings which can be glimpsed just above the trees that shroud the houses. It is quite fitting that these are the only buildings visible from this vantage point as they are (with the Manor House) some of the key components of the village and their

position on high ground reflects this.

When entering the settlement on the Thame Road the first building encountered is No. 37, see fig.2. This is a small early 18th century house built of rubble stone with a thatched roof. As it is situated at the top of rising ground it is a major feature in both the view into the village and when looking out along Thame Road. Due to the road being in a slight cutting at this point it is raised on a grassy bank without formal front gardens. Thame Road is characterised by historic properties of this kind. No. 38, Rosebank Cottage, is another 18th century stone house and is also thatched. Nos. 34-36, near the junction with Rectory Road, are cottages of a similar form, although somewhat altered. The shapes of roofs and dormers and the height of chimneys suggest that they too were originally thatched, although they are now tiled, see fig.5.

The historic houses on Thame Road raised on banks or built at the road edge, the trees, shrubs and stone walls along the side and the closing of the view at either end (by the brow of the hill looking out of the village and by Highway Cottage looking into it) give Thame Road a narrow and enclosed feel. Only the modern development of Four Corners Cottage and Hendra is at variance with this. Although stone has been used, both for the boundary wall and the house itself, the orientation of the house and the overly open aspect of its (and Hendra's) frontage threaten to dilute the otherwise consistent character. The view north up Thame Road out of the village is dominated by a typical mix of village and countryside. The rhythm of descending thatch rooflines at No. 38 is extremely attractive but the scene is diminished

by the adjacent bungalow built in a non traditional style and in a very prominent position. The roofs of Nos. 34-36 also detract through their concrete tile cladding.

Thame Road opens out at its junction with Rectory Rd and becomes more recognisably a village centre. Highway Cottage is a major landmark here. It wraps around the corner of Rectory Road and is a feature in views along Rectory Road from the west and looking in both directions on Thame Road. The character of the village changes subtly at this point as Rectory Road opens out to the west and wide spaces between the buildings occur.

The southern part of Thame Road, from the junction with Rectory Road towards the war memorial is dominated by the wall bordering the grounds of the Manor House. This high, imposing wall is a mixture of 17th and 18th century work, all built in roughly dressed, coursed local stone, see Fig.6. It is topped with a mixture of coping stones, mortar capping and brick with a portion at the southern corner of the wall built on a brick base. The entrance to The Manor Stables is marked by gate piers with ball finials. set This feature is repeated down Thame Road where other openings and breaks in the wall occur and is, in fact, echoed in the top of a neatly trimmed yew hedge. This establishes an interesting rhythm to the wall. The wall successfully demarcates the church and Manor House from the remainder of the village (historically separating commoners from clergy and gentry) and is an imposing structure that still has a huge visual impact on the village scene. Not that it is dour and monumental; in addition to the gate piers and finials, quadrant walls mark the position of the former main

entrance to the Manor House. The stonework itself is also interestingly textured and patterned, the result of several phases of building whilst the visual impact of the wall is also softened by the large trees behind it and the grass bank in front.



Fig.6 Manor House boundary wall

Where the Manor House wall faces houses on Thame Road, the character of the street is principally one of densely built stone. The only exception to this is the former main entrance with its wrought iron railings in front allowing the area to open out. Where the houses end, the road takes on a wholly rural character; a hedge with trees borders the field to the west, known historically as The Grove and the corner of the wall bordering the field on the east is covered in a yew and deciduous shrub hedge.

The row of houses opposite the Manor House on Thame Road have as their centrepiece the Crown House, see fig.1. This is a large early 17th century house built on a U plan with gabled stone wings on the street front and timber framed walling with herringbone brickwork infill around the entrance. It was formerly a coaching inn where

drovers would stop or change horses on the way to London. Flanking the Crown House are a small stable/barn belonging to the house and a row of well-preserved later cottages (Nos. 40-42) all in stone with red brick lintels over windows and doors and plain clay tile roofs.

The Manor House and church stand separate from rest of the village. The north and east sides of this complex (the land beyond Church Farm and the church yard) are open onto fields. These not only demarcate the Manor House and church area but also afford interesting views into the conservation area. The eastern side of the church and farmyard offer spectacular views of the distant Chilterns due to the sloping topography on that side.



Fig.7 Yew hedge to the south of Manor House

Although physically separated from the main part of the village, neither church nor Manor House are visually screened. Both sit proudly on the high ground commanding views of the approaching paths. A broad path runs along the southern edge of the Manor House's grounds enclosed by a stone wall on one side and a magnificent yew hedge on the other, see fig.7. While the

wall clearly provides privacy and security for the Manor the hedge provides a strong feature in the landscape designed to be appreciated from the house. The wall was reportedly built to protect the sensitivities of the village from the goings-on at the Manor House in the late 17th century. On the south side of the path, behind the yew hedge, is a small roughly triangular field that slopes gently towards Thame Road. The west and east sides of this field feature low rubble stone retaining walls with mixed hedges on top punctuated by occasional large trees. This field plays an important part in defining the village at this point and in separating the Manor House and church area from the remainder of the settlement. That this field has not been built upon is due to its proximity to the Manor and its place in views from the house; as such it can very much be considered a part of the Manor House's setting and perhaps historic curtilage.

Church Hill, see fig.8 is an unmade road climbing the hill to the Manor House and Church. It maintains the rural feel of this part of the village owing to the hedge on the west side and trees which overhang it. Church Cottage and Waltham Cottage stand on the east side of the lane. They are traditional in form and scale and set an appropriate context. Looking back down Church Hill, Greystones and Brookes Cottage can be seen with fields beyond. At the top of Church Hill is an open circulation space formed by a length of quadrant wall beside the Manor House grounds and the entrances to the Manor House and Church Farm. From this position the character of the Manor House and church area is well illustrated. Although all around are the boundaries of

historically high status buildings distinctly separate from each other and from the rest of the village, it is a surprisingly light and open spot. The walls and trees around the Manor and church do not hide these buildings but rather allow impressive views of both. Although hidden from the village when on Rectory Road, the approaches to the Manor and church (Church Hill and the path in front of the Manor) actually display the buildings to good advantage.

From the top of Church Hill the third major component of this part of the village can be seen: Church Farm. This is very much a compound ancillary to the Manor House and is largely screened by it from inside the conservation area. At the top of Church Hill the square stone building with a small timber louvre to the top of its pyramidal roof and a single round-headed window overlooking Church Hill is the dominant building. There was a dovecote on the site in the 17th century and the current building may be an 18th century alteration to this earlier structure. Behind this are the mid 18th-century stables of the Manor House, now converted to residential use.

There have been major changes within the Church Farm complex. Unsightly large modern farm buildings which disfigured the setting of the magnificent Grade I listed barn have been swept away and a new house and ancillary buildings have been built.

At the top of Church Hill stands St Peter's Church. The church tower is a dramatic feature, see fig.9. The wide iron gates to the churchyard, small trees and open setting of the tower emphasise its importance and stature and visually it balances the Manor House. An attractive path formed by



Fig.8 Church Hill

stones placed on edge leads to the west end of the church. The churchyard has an interesting and unusual character. There are relatively few trees and the gravestones are set in orderly rows with only occasional recumbent stones to detract from the regularity of their formations. Furthermore there are not many large memorials in the churchyard which is predominantly populated by small, simple headstones. This is not to say that the stones are uninteresting. There are a remarkable number of well-preserved early 18th century headstones with typical decoration of cherub heads and memento mori motifs on the west and south sides of the church. An important aspect of the churchyard's character is that the long eastern and southern boundaries are formed by low walls, hedges and small trees which give an open feel and allow a great deal of light to enter the churchyard. A footpath runs behind the eastern hedgerow from where excellent views of the distant Chilterns can be appreciated.

The path along the eastern edge of the churchyard also borders Church Farm



Fig.9 St Peter's Church

and it is from here that the complex of buildings described above can best be seen from a public vantage point. The east wall of the barn can be seen from here and the barn is also a major feature when seen from the fields further to the east and from the road to the tennis courts on the northern side. The walls that surround the former farmyard similarly play a very important role. They define the village edge and link it, physically as well as symbolically, to the church and Manor.

The southern corner of the village is an interesting and important one. The field to the south of the Manor is, as mentioned above, a significant component of the landscape around the Manor House. The Thame Road curves around the southern edge of the field and is remarkably rural in character. There are large numbers of mature trees on its western side while the hedge above the retaining wall to the field obscures the manor and church. The view towards the junction of Church Hill with Latchford Lane includes the front garden of Greystones. Greystones is an interesting house. Although

substantially altered in modern times it clearly has much earlier origins (a stone mullioned window and the outline of an earlier roofline can be seen in one wall) and may have been a building of some status. Brookes Cottage may also have a significant history and together with the pair of handsome Victorian houses across the road (Nos. 46 and 47) forms an attractive group to the south of Church Hill on Latchford Lane. These properties demonstrate how the village did not, historically, spread beyond this point. Although modern bungalows built further along Latchford Lane have dramatically altered the character of this part of the village, the junction of Church Hill and Latchford Lane is a remarkably intact survival of a traditional village fringe and marks the boundary of the conservation area at this point. The garden of Greystones is typical of the large gardens, partly used as vegetable plots in a self-sufficient economy, traditionally associated with small houses in south Oxfordshire villages. Today this garden acts as a link between the village and the fields beyond and here it is proposed slightly to extend the conservation area to include all the land up to the boundary with the arable fields on the road to Little Haseley. This undeveloped land is essential to preserve the unspoilt setting of the village war memorial, an unassuming but dignified structure, the position of which seems to have been selected for its prominence on a main route but also for its quiet and reflective surroundings.

A much more extensive proposed addition to the conservation area is the large field behind and to the west of the war memorial, see fig.10, The medieval earthwork forming its boundary still exists and it probably



Fig.10 Field proposed for inclusion in the conservation area.

marked the boundary of the medieval manor (see history section). It contains the remains of medieval fishponds which were still surviving in the late 19th century - see 1st edition Ordnance Survey map). These are clearly shown on Gascoyne's map lying in the southern end of South Grove. In the early 18th century the field was used for pasture and the tree-lined path which crossed it in Gascoyne's day is still marked by the current footpath. The field has been planted in recent years with a commercial tree crop in informal groups and along the boundary although the open nature of the field is retained. Whilst this planting forms an attractive addition to the field, it is not part of the historic character of the village. From the footpath along the northern side of the field there are extensive views into the rear gardens and grounds of the many historic buildings along Rectory Road. Particularly striking is the magnificent view over its drystone ha-ha wall of the Old Rectory, see fig 11 but there are many tantalising glimpses of other gardens as well.

Rectory Road contains the bulk of historic buildings in the village. These are spread along its long and winding route which contains quite distinct changes in character. The eastern end of Rectory Road, from the junction with Thame Road to The Plough public house, is very much the centre of the modern village but even within this small area there are subtle variations in the pattern of building that change the character of the village. One characteristic is the mingling of houses with agricultural buildings and ancillary outbuildings and the juxtaposition of relatively dense groups of buildings with open areas. The resulting pattern of building is consequently varied and



Fig.11 The Old Rectory

informal, having developed organically over the course of centuries.

The easternmost portion of Rectory Road is a broad, curving street with a grass bank on the northern side (the southern side having long been paved over). A tightly grouped series of houses run from Highway House to Hallowell (formerly The Rectory) on the south side, while opposite a low stone wall fronting an open space is flanked by two plain outbuildings. This arrangement gives the road a very open aspect which is maintained by the large gardens fronting Crucks and the Old Rectory on the south side, both bounded by stone walls. This area displays the characteristic mix of relatively humble cottages (such as the Old Bakery) and farm buildings with larger houses like Hallowell and Church Farm House. Church Farm House is a large, handsome early 18th century building. With a short front garden the house is close to the road and forms a powerful presence in the streetscape. The three storeys are defined by string courses on the front elevation and the almost dour expanses of blank stone wall at the sides can be seen from up and down

the street. Although of a similar date Hallowell is a smaller building with a less imposing, but no less attractive, façade. Also built in coursed rubblestone it has a similar stringcourse defining its two storeys and a delightfully textured old tile roof. Opposite Crucks is The Farm, a close-knit group of buildings abutting Church Farm House. The main house is an early 18th century building presenting its gable end to the road and its main elevation to a small yard with an attractive brick, stone and timber granary dated 1762 and a range of former stables opposite. The modern working part of The Farm is accessed from a track beside the rubblestone Stable Cottage with Rose Cottage flanking it.



Fig 12 Rectory Rd looking west.

The stone walls on the south side of Rectory Road are a crucial part of its character but also very important are openings in the walls, such as that which offers an intriguing view over a five bar gate between the boundaries of Crucks and The Old Rectory, and the trees and vegetation visible beyond them. The Old Rectory originally dates from the 15th century, and the space created by its grounds and the high boundary wall makes a major impact on the village street. The character of

the village changes from the curve in the road by Dame's Bank as Rectory Road becomes narrower and the buildings more dense, some of them constructed directly onto the street. The village hall and school are important focal points here and the entrance to Backway creates an open circulation space between them. Dame's Bank and the Old School House hold important places in this area owing to their elevated positions. Dame's Bank is a 19th century house fronted by an attractive stone retaining wall and bank while the Old School House is a very well-preserved example of a slightly austere Victorian school house. The former Institute building (now offices) cannot help but stand out somewhat as a brick building entirely surrounded by stone. This is not helped by its prominent position but it is of a scale and form not out of keeping with the village scene and the associated playground is a significant open space in this part of the village. The village hall fits in well, especially with the former buildings of Glebe Farm behind it. The southern side of Rectory Road between the village hall and the Plough is quite densely developed. Sundial House draws attention with its striking baroque façade of the early 18th century, altered by the addition of Victorian windows and a portico in the 1850s. Spokes Farmhouse and the row of cottages adjacent (Nos. 25-28) also make a significant contribution to the streetscape but this harmony is broken by Breccia. Although the form and scale of the building are essentially in tune with the surroundings the modern materials are not. Breccia may also have been built on part of Spokes Farm's yard, removing an important open space in the village centre. Lewington Close (built on former glebe

land) is even more clearly at odds with the established historic character of the village but much of it is well-screened, only Nos. 1 and 2 being visible from the main road and the whole is excluded from the conservation area.

The Plough is an 18th century building, see fig.13, although there has been a pub on the site since at least the 16th century. It remains a focal point of the village and in a way marks one end of the village centre. From the western edge of the village to the Plough, Rectory Road has a less densely-built, more rural feel. When entering the village from the west on Rectory Road there is some modern development that dilutes the historic boundary between village and countryside but much of this is set well back from the road in what were once small fields. The paddock in front of Bavaria is crucial in maintaining this character, as is the view across open fields to the east of Sands Farm. Similarly, the front gardens of Badger's Brook and Brookfield contribute to the scene simply through their openness. Although the modern house at Sands Farm is a prominent landmark as the road curves into Great Haseley the historic village quickly emerges on the bend where the thatched roofs of Nos. 5 and 6 Rectory Road and Nos. 7-9 and 14 Mill Lane come into view. These properties, along with Nos. 16 and 17 Rectory Road (Rose and Clematis Cottages), which are also visible upon rounding the bend by Mill Lane, form an excellent group of vernacular buildings so typical of the village: thatched stone-built cottages and houses. Their irregular positioning and setting within clusters of trees are characteristic of the village.

The traditional character of the village between The Plough and Mill Lane is

less well-preserved although there are some fine individual buildings and the overall historic form is still strongly apparent. An area of modern infill between The Plough and No. 24 Rectory Road (the four modern houses; Yanwath, Eaves, Barton Turf and Hunter's Moon) breaks the established pattern of building both in form (the houses are too deep with shallow pitched roofs) and in materials. Horse Close Cottages make an even greater intrusion into the scene by opening out what would have been a winding section of lane flanked by hedges, although the original effect has softened since the houses were built in the 1950s. Fortunately, this does not affect the view downhill from The Orchard. This building, No. 24 and Vine Cottage form an attractive group with creeper-covered stonework and the thatched roof of Vine Cottage overshadowed by trees before the road winds out of sight. The view back into the village is similarly interesting with a rhythm of gables and the corniced front of Sundial House running down the hill to The Plough, with the stone wall to the left festooned with vegetation. The



Fig.13 The Plough

field opposite Horse Close Cottages is an increasingly rare survival of the type of open space that would have separated many of the historic buildings on the western side of the village. Southview, which sits in the middle of this open space, is a large house not built in a traditional fashion and does somewhat mar the area; nevertheless, this remains a significant open space.

Mill Lane links Rectory Road with Backway before going across fields on the north side of the village to Haseley Windmill. At the Rectory Road end it appears as an unmade track leading to The Old Barn at the entrance to which it is visually closed but in fact turns abruptly left where the track becomes a footpath. The entrance to Mill Lane at its southern end is framed by Nos. 7-9 and 14 Mill Lane, attractive thatched stone houses referred to above. The top of the lane is similarly rich in well-preserved traditional buildings, although The Old Barn has seen a good deal of alteration through its conversion to residential use. The area between No. 12 Mill Lane and where the path emerges on Backway is an unusual and characterful one. Where the path briefly opens out between the gardens of Nos. 1 Backway and 12 Mill Lane, Walnut Tree Cottage and Spring Cottage it forms a secluded glade. This area is quiet and peaceful, with trees, tall hedges and overgrown walls all around and the red tile roofs of the houses on Backway forming a backdrop. The path is very narrow between Backway and this area, with overhanging vegetation and the stone wall of No. 1 Mill Lane enclosing it.

The unmade track called Backway forms the edge of the historic village on its northern side. As well as being a back lane to Rectory Road between

the school and the edge of the village, it probably provided both rear access for houses on Rectory Road via their gardens and a way into the fields beyond the village. As such the historic character of Backway is formed by an open aspect to the north with views of the fields beyond and on the south side by gardens and paddocks behind stone walls. This character remains largely intact except at the eastern end of the track. Although Backway historically defined the village from the wider countryside there was some development associated with the old quarry on the northern side of the track during the 19th century. Stone Yard and Piccadilly Cottages and the former Congregational chapel beside the entrance to Piccadilly Farm are all evidence of incursion across the track but they cluster close to the point where Backway leaves Rectory Road and do not intrude very far into the countryside. They have, however, formed a nucleus around which some more modern developments (Piccadilly Farm, Millstone and Sailview and Jasmine House) have grown. These properties, with the accompanying concrete surfacing and conifer screens, have radically altered the character of the eastern end of Backway, especially where the houses of Lewington Close back on to the track. Immediately to the north, however, the Miss Cross Field children's play area acts as a breathing space between this uncharacteristically densely developed area and the western part of Backway, where the track is bordered on its northern side by the village allotments.

Perhaps the best-preserved part of Backway is the western section between the Miss Cross Field and the western end of the track. This area is open to the allotments and fields on the

northern side with views of Haseley Windmill in the distance while the south side is mainly dominated by gardens. The plot to the rear of The Orchard is especially interesting as it is still an orchard and was shown as such on Gascoyne's map and the 1st Edition OS map. It displays the kind of historic land use that once fringed the village and filled spaces between the houses. Other interesting features of this part of Backway are the historic buildings (some of them former farm buildings) which stand on the south side of the track but look out from the village. Whistler's Barn stands on the village side of the track and may have been constructed to serve the fields across the track as well as the plots within the village envelope. Merrythought is situated in a similar position and it is likely that The Old Barn on Mill Lane had access to the fields as well. At the western end of Backway is another surprise. The Barracks and Cobhall Cottage are a curious little complex: an uncharacteristically dense development in a part of the village that seems mainly to have been composed of small fields between the houses. No. 1 Backway and Spring Cottage combine with these cottages to form an attractive close-knit group. The Barracks and Cobhall Cottage have remarkably small gardens for the village and look in upon themselves. This has resulted in several new windows being inserted in the formerly blind north side of The Barracks.

It is proposed to extend the conservation area to include the allotments and the Miss Cross Field to the east as both are considered vital to the wider setting of the village and provide valuable open space which is not given over to agriculture.

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