








With the exception of views, only those features in the key that are located within the boundaries of the conservation area are defined on the plan.



0 25 50 75 100 Meters

-  Conservation Area (CA) boundary
-  Listed building
-  Building of local note
-  Important views in, out and around

-  Important wall
-  Important trees
-  Important open space



Listening Learning Leading

# **Aston Tirrold & Aston Upthorpe Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

May 2005

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The Council first published the Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe Conservation Area Character Appraisal in draft form in July 2004. Following a period of public consultation, including a public meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2004, the Council approved the Character Appraisal on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2004.

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## Introduction

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.

This document is an appraisal of the Aston Upthorpe and Aston Tirrold Conservation Area to give an overview of the established character to be preserved and to identify possible areas for future enhancement. It is intended to assist in defining what is of special architectural or historic importance, what should be protected and to give guidance as to the form, style and location of future change and development.

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. Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe - the History of the Area

## Introduction

The villages are sited at a spring line. There are many springs which arise within and close to the villages, and probably these were the reason for the original building of a settlement at this location, as with the other spring-line villages between here and Wantage, and beyond. The Astons are the most eastern of this string of spring-line villages, before reaching the Goring Gap at Streatley.

Domesday Book identifies only one village, called 'Estone' with two land holdes. It only later came to be identified as two separate parishes. Until the nineteenth century the two settlements appear to have been more distinct than they are today. Although infilling between the two villages probably took place over a considerable period before the nineteenth century. Aston Upthorpe to the west and north of Fullers Road (which still defines the parish boundary) lies beneath the wooded slopes of Blewburton Hill with buildings bordering Thorpe Street, Fullers Road and Spring Lane whereas in Aston Tirrold, the settlement was associated with St. Michael's Church and buildings along Aston Street and Rectory Lane. The more recent houses to the south east of Baker Street now link the buildings to the north west of Baker Street with those further to the south along Baker Street that would historically have been more easily distinguishable as Aston Tirrold. Modern development has largely taken place on the outskirts of the village, although modern houses also fill gaps along the streets and lanes in the village itself.

The Astons are surrounded by fertile farming land, the soil is loam and lies partly on the Upper Greensand and partly on the chalk of the downs. There is archaeological evidence for sporadic prehistoric occupation of the slopes of Blewburton Hill and Lowbury Hill and several ancient roadways traverse the Parishes. The archaeological record for Blewburton Hill suggests that it was used in both the Romano-British and the Anglo-Saxon periods. In the gravel pits  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile north of the village on the South Moreton Road there have been frequent finds of Roman pottery and human remains. Local tradition holds that the battle of Ashdown in 871, where King Ethelred and Alfred defeated the Danes could have taken place within the locality.

## Aston Tirrold

Documentary evidence describes how the control of land in the parishes changed hands over time. Pre-Conquest records for the manor of Aston Tirrold show it was assessed at 15 hides and name the wife of Lanc as holding the land <sup>1</sup>. Domesday Book notes that the Count of Montain also held land in Aston Tirrold (which were held by Arkell before 1066) and that the land is held from him by the Abbey of Preaux <sup>2</sup>. In 1086 the manor was under the king's control and was controlled by successive Earls of Warwick until at least 1446 when, with the death of Anne Beauchamp (c.1448) ownership passed to the crown <sup>2</sup>. Aston Tirrold probably owes its name to Nicholas, or his son Geoffrey, Torrold de Aston who were both immediate tenants under the Earls of Warwick in the twelfth century. The manor of Aston Tirrold then passed through various ownerships in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In 1577 Thomas

<sup>1</sup> Berks VCH, vol 3

<sup>2</sup> Morris, 1979

<sup>1</sup> Berks VCH, vol 3

<sup>2</sup> Whitwell, 1984

<sup>3</sup> Wordie, 2000

<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately Aston Upthorpe was not surveyed in the same way as it lay within the Parish of Blewbury and was, therefore, outside the jurisdiction of the Archdeaconry who commissioned the Glebe Terrier survey in 1634.

<sup>5</sup> Berks VCH, vol 3

<sup>6</sup> Morris, 1979

Stampe bought both manors from John Yate, and was succeeded by his sons<sup>2</sup>. From 1649 the Hatton and then the Fuller families controlled the estate. By the close of the nineteenth century the whole of the estate was in the possession of Thomas Wellingham Fuller and it was then sold to Francis John Kynaston Cross <sup>2</sup>. (The 1900 sale of the estate also included large portions of Aston Upthorpe).

St. Michael's Church, Aston Tirrold is one of the oldest buildings in the village. There is documentary evidence for the existence of a church here in around 1080 as a grant made by William the Conqueror to the Abbey of Preaux in this year included the right of presenting the incumbent to Aston Tirrold <sup>1</sup>. Bishop Jocelyn of Salisbury (1142-84) informed the Abbot of Preaux that in order to present a parson he would firstly need to gain the consent of Nicholas, son of Tirrold <sup>1</sup>. The fabric of the church is itself ancient, with evidence of twelfth century work to the nave and choir and the remains of an Anglo-Saxon door, now relocated in the Victorian north wall <sup>2</sup>. The chancel, south transept and tower probably date from the thirteenth century. The transept appears to have been partially rebuilt and new windows added in the fourteenth century <sup>2</sup>. The church was much altered in the Victorian period. In 1852 the gallery and box pews were removed and the chancel arch was renewed, the arcade and north aisle were added in 1863 and a Norman window was transplanted from the old north wall to the west end of the new aisle <sup>2</sup>. The twentieth century saw the addition of the organ and vestry. The date of the south porch has not yet been established but it was probably constructed in the nineteenth century utilising parts of fourteenth and fifteenth

century screens from elsewhere in the church <sup>2</sup>. The transept roof is original. Over the chancel arch is a truss with a crown post and braced tie beam, which probably survive from the fifteenth century nave roof. However, the nave and chancel roofs are otherwise Victorian <sup>2</sup>.

It is unclear who built Aston Tirrold Manor House but Joseph Fuller (1721-1810) is known to have lived there <sup>2</sup>. Copse Style House also dates from the early eighteenth century and was inherited by Richard Fuller (1717-75) and remained in the possession of his family until 1904. Filberts is dated 1745 and was built onto an earlier more modest house <sup>2</sup>. Thomas Fuller Junior lived here until his death in 1858 <sup>2</sup>.

The enclosure of farming land in Aston Tirrold is documented from the sixteenth century. The Lord of the Manor of 'Aston Turrold' enclosed 30 acres of arable land in 1512 and another 30 acres were enclosed in 1516 <sup>3</sup>. An ecclesiastical freeholder was presented to Wolsey's Commission as having enclosed 30 acres of arable land in 1515 and having displaced four persons <sup>3</sup>. These early enclosures were sporadic and surveys undertaken in 1550 and 1634 <sup>4</sup> indicate that a primarily open field farming system based on a five-field system of arable and mixed husbandry prevailed <sup>3</sup>. The rate of enclosure gathered pace in the eighteenth century, common land on the downs and twelve of the open fields were enclosed in 1743 and an Act of Parliament enclosed the further fields in 1808 . Nevertheless the rate of change as indicated by title deeds appears somewhat slower and it has been suggested that just over half the land in Aston Tirrold remained open in 1817 <sup>3</sup>.

## Aston Upthorpe

Aston Upthorpe was contained within the parish of Blewbury until 1862 when it was formed into a separate civil parish. Documentary evidence indicates that in 964 King Edgar gave a 'mansae' of land in Aston Upthorpe to his queen, Elfhryth<sup>5</sup>. According to Domesday Book, during the reign of Edward the Confessor the land had been held by a free woman called Aelfeva but during the reign of William the Conqueror was passed to Reimbald of Cirencester, the king's chancellor<sup>6</sup>. The land subsequently came under the control of the Crown and then of the Abbey of Cirencester until the Dissolution<sup>1</sup>. The land continued to be held by the crown until it was granted to Sir Francis Knollys in 1564 and subsequently to his son the Earl of Banbury<sup>1</sup>. In 1650 the land had passed to William, Lord Craven, who forfeited his estates during the Civil War<sup>1</sup>. Aston Upthorpe is not mentioned among the Craven estates, which were sold by Parliament, and the land returned to the Cravens after the Restoration. The amount of land owned by the Cravens decreased over time and in the nineteenth century was sold<sup>1</sup>.

Documents of 1227 mention All Saints Church as a chapel-of-ease to nearby Blewbury, but there is some evidence that the nave may date from the eleventh century as there is a Norman window in the north wall and both the north and south doorways are Norman in form although the former is restored and the latter infilled and plastered over<sup>2</sup>. The roof of the church is fourteenth century, the west window fifteenth century and the timber north porch probably dates from the early seventeenth century<sup>2</sup>. The church may, however, stand on the site of an even earlier church. The early fabric of the existing building and the theory that the

battle of Assendune or Ashdown was fought in this area have led to speculation that this is the place where King Ethelred is said to have remained at prayer while his brother Alfred defeated the Danes<sup>3</sup>.

The Slade Family have a very long record of residence in the village and have, like the Fuller family, associations with several buildings in the two villages<sup>2</sup>. The Slades acquired the land at Thorpe Farm in 1521<sup>4</sup>. By 1728 John and Deborah Slade were struggling with their 21 children and sold the land remaining as tenant farmers<sup>4</sup>. The Slades continued at Thorpe Farm until 1906. Croft House was once inhabited by a Slade family who invented blotting paper at Hagbourne Mill but is said to be unrelated to the Slades of Thorpe Farm<sup>4</sup>.

The United Reformed Church on Spring Lane is evidence for the involvement in Non-Conformism of John Fuller and his family who were, up to the beginning of the twentieth century, among the principal landowners and farmers in the Astons. A tradition of Non-Conformism in both Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe is evident as early as 1662 when two local clergymen were among many incumbents who were evicted from their livings for refusing to subscribe to the Act of Uniformity<sup>2</sup>. At first John Fuller provided a barn for Non-Conformists to worship in, moving to a larger barn in the yard of William Pope before Joseph and Richard Fuller built the present meeting house in 1728<sup>2</sup>. The chapel was served by Thomas Keyworth, author of *Principia Hebraica* published in the 1840s. A school was attached to the chapel from 1871 until 1907<sup>2</sup>.

The pattern of the enclosure of farming land in Aston Upthorpe appears to be much the same as that for Aston Tirrold. Some non-parliamentary enclosure had

<sup>1</sup> Berks VCH, vol 3

<sup>2</sup> Whitwell, 1984

<sup>3</sup> Gaynor, 1989

<sup>4</sup> Underhill, 1973

<sup>5</sup> Wordie, 2000

<sup>1</sup> Berks VCH, vol 3

<sup>2</sup> Whitwell, 1984

probably taken place in the eighteenth century. The Blewbury Enclosure Agreement of 1767 included 'Aston Upthrup'<sup>5</sup> and an Act of Parliament enclosed further fields in Aston Upthorpe in 1793<sup>1</sup>. In 1805, however, just over half the Blewbury parish had yet to be enclosed by Act of Parliament<sup>5</sup>.

### **Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe from the nineteenth century**

The land between the two villages was built on and filling in probably took place over a considerable period of time. The division between the two parishes became Fullers Road, which follows the Parish Boundary<sup>1</sup>.

There were once two schools in the Astons, The British and the National School, both of which are now in residential use but are identified in this study as Buildings of Local Note. The British School, now known as The Old School House, Spring Lane was the Non-Conformist school and was so called because it was run according to the principles of the British and Foreign School Society. The other school, now also known as the Old School House, Aston Street, operated according to the guidelines laid down by the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church; it was built in 1847 and enlarged in 1882<sup>2</sup>. The presence of two, in effect, rival schools in such a small community led to such friction between the villagers that when the British School closed in 1907, pupils transferring to the National School would arrive an hour late to avoid religious instruction<sup>2</sup>.

Horse racing in the twentieth century made an important contribution to the character of both villages. The first trainers used rented stables at Copse Style House<sup>2</sup>. The land at Upthorpe

formerly belonging to the Slade family was bought by Major John Morris who built the first training stables and the two cottages opposite Edlins on which his initials and a 1912 date stone were inserted<sup>2</sup>. A modest house built by the Slades on Blewburton Hill was enlarged to become Blewburton Hall and the brother of Major Morris also built Orchard House<sup>2</sup>. There were four trainers in the Astons by the Second World War and the Aston Upthorpe Stud continues the tradition in the present day<sup>2</sup>.

The provision of housing also influenced the development of the villages in the twentieth century. New estates were built on the periphery of the villages with little regard for local building traditions. A number of buildings on The Croft were built before the Second World War, however most of the houses on the south side were built in the 1980s by Adby Builders. The row known as the Cornish Houses built in Morton Road after the war to provide Council housing (apparently they were known as Cornish Houses because they were originally designed to be built in Cornwall). In 1968 a Village Plan was prepared by Rural District Council Officers and Architect's Panel for Berkshire County Council, the then Local Planning Authority. The plan was prompted by the building of the bungalows in Aston Street and sought to restrict infilling and to prevent development outside the village envelope. Preservation orders were placed on the majority of surviving trees. The desire for housing in the village has, however, continued unabated and in several cases, even in recent years, the spaces between the Astons' historic buildings have been filled by buildings that still do not respect local building traditions.

## 2. The Established Character.

In this study the villages' history and established character have been examined in a way which takes account of the close relationship between Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe by describing the nature of the settlement along the streets, roads and lanes which link the two villages.

Red brick is the most commonly used building material in both Aston Upthorpe and Aston Tirrold. Often burnt headers are used to create diaper patterning (see Fig. 1) and there are some examples of the use of decorative panels of knapped flint (see Fig. 2).



Fig 1. Diaper patterning in brickwork using burnt headers



Fig 2. Decorative panels of knapped flint

There are a number of buildings where the brickwork is painted or rendered, white or cream colours being the most commonly found. Locally produced bricks are in evidence and

characterised by their red colour (see Fig. 3).



Fig 3. Brickwork at St. Michaels Church



Fig 4. Timber framing

There are a number of timber framed buildings in the villages (see Fig. 4) and both churches are primarily of stone. The dominant roofing material is the local plain clay tile, whose distinctive orange-red colour weathers over time to a darker hue (see Fig. 5).



Fig 5. Local handmade plain clay tiles



Fig 6. Natural slates

A number of nineteenth century buildings have Welsh slate roofs (see Fig. 6) and there are several earlier buildings with thatched roofs (see Fig. 7).

Boundary walls of varying type are found in both Aston Upthorpe and Aston Tirrold. The higher status walls,



Fig. 7 Thatching

such as those associated with Copse Style House and Filberts, are 2-3 m in height with buttresses and decorative copings. They are interrupted by doorways, as at Filberts or by decorative iron gates as at Copse Style House. Knapped flint work and burnt headers also decorate more modest boundary walls in the villages, and cob walling, with a thatched roof is found in Aston Street. Steep and narrow grass verges contribute to the settlement's rural character and the absence of footways is a characteristic of the narrow grid like lanes that pass through the village. The footpaths that connect the lanes are of great importance, the majority in the summer months form green tunnels running at right angles to the highways connecting different parts



Fig 8. A narrow footway enclosed by trees and hedgerow

of both villages (see Fig. 8). Views of buildings are rare from the footways and contrast with views from the lanes with their often close-knit buildings fronting the highway (see Fig. 9).



Fig 9. Close knit buildings on Thorpe Street

Spring Lane, Fullers Road and Baker Street are notable for the frequency with which horses and their riders can be seen. The junction between Fullers Road and Thorpe Street is usually busy with motorised traffic. Rectory Lane is quieter as it is a cul-de-sac that leads off the main routes through the village. The vast majority of the buildings in the Conservation Area are residential although there are several notable exceptions such as The Chequers Public House and the adjacent garage, which can be found in the heart of the conservation area while farming continues on the settlement's periphery.

The short glimpsed views available from the narrow maze-like lanes and footpaths contribute to the visual interest within the village, as do the long views that are available beyond the settlement, across arable fields to the downs beyond. There are significant views of the buildings of Copse Style House and Farm and Thorpe Farm from the track that runs from Spring Lane across fields to the slopes of Blewburton Hill. Views into the village of the buildings that line Aston Street are available from tracks

into the fields to the south east of the village (see Fig. 10).

### Chalk Hill

Approaching Aston Tirrold from the Blewbury Road the entrance to the village is signified by the substantial eighteenth-century red brick wall, with a rounded brick coping and stepped brick buttresses, which curves along the eastern side of the highway. It quite dramatically replaces the mixed hedgerow field boundaries found outside the village. Lollingdon track, an ancient trackway to Cholsey via Lollingdon Farm follows the southern edge of Aston Tirrold. Where the track passes Filberts it is characterised by a formal avenue of trees. The red brick boundary wall to the front of Filberts is here replaced by traditional painted, cast iron rails. The track then becomes more rural in appearance, winding out of sight and eventually leaving the village where it leads to the fields to the east of Aston Street. Views of Filberts' formal eighteenth-century frontage are available from the track and mature trees planted in Filberts' garden are also visible above its tall red brick boundary wall (see Fig. 11).



Fig 11. The formal boundary wall to Filberts

### Aston Street

Aston Street begins where the road into the village from Chalk Hill forks outside Filberts. Aston Street runs north



Fig 10. Abbey Thorn Cottage

east to meet The Croft with Rectory Lane branching off to the west towards the Manor House and St. Michael's Church. The tall, red brick wall that forms the boundary to Filberts runs to the east of the street and contains an interesting architectural detail, a two centred arch with a white painted door set into the wall.

To the west of the street the modern housing, tarmac footway and standard railings contrast with the historic nature of the buildings that front the street to the north and east. To the east of the street and at the junction with Rectory Lane several historic houses front the highway including The Cottage, now known as Tirrold House, a house the west wing of which dendrochronology (tree ring dating) shows was built in around 1286. The east wing of this house was probably added in 1508 and there were further major additions in 1620. The building was restored in 1956 and in 1991-2 and its constructional and decorative details now contribute greatly to the historic and visual interest of Aston Street. The boundary to Freelands is also of interest, it appears to be a thatched cob wall, although the wall now may contain some modern materials. The very early origins of this house contribute greatly to the historic interest of the conservation area (see Fig. 12).

Fig 12. Tirrold House



The Close to the east of the street contrasts with the earlier buildings that characterise Aston Street. The single storey red brick buildings, while not reflecting local building traditions have an attractive 'almshouse' appearance and add interest to views along the street. A red brick wall encases steps that descend from the lawn to the front of The Close although the standard metal handrails and the use of tarmac hard-standing here do not reflect the otherwise traditional nature of the street scene.

The traditional red brickwork and old plain tile roofs of Skirmers, Blacksmiths Cottage and 9 Aston Street contribute to the historic character of the street. The banded fish-scale and plain tile hanging at the largely seventeenth century Skirmers and the herringbone red brick infill panels to the small timber framing at the seventeenth century Blacksmiths Cottage provide great architectural interest. 9 Aston Street is somewhat later, dating largely from the eighteenth century and the attractive red brickwork that fronts the street is decorated with grey headers in Flemish bond. Seventeenth century Abbey Thorn Cottage is set further back from the highway and its

appearance differs somewhat from the buildings fronting the street. The large timber framing and rendered infill with the thatched roof above add interest to views from the street.

Although not listed, the Old School House is a building of local note. It dates from the nineteenth century and housed the National School (see Fig. 13). Red and burnt brick headers have been used both in attractive panels and in diaper work on the building while its white painted bargeboards and slate roof are characteristic of Victorian buildings in the Astons. The boundary wall is particularly fine with brick and flint panels and half round brick copings.

Fig 13. The Old School House



Fig 14. Aston Street

The variety of dates and building types represented by the buildings that front Aston Street combines to produce a very attractive street scene (see Fig. 14). Further along Aston Street there are attractive, longer views towards the Church of St. Michael terminating with the church's stone tower rising above the mature trees and hedgerow at the junction with Rectory Lane. There are glimpsed views available of Twitten, a modest, probably late seventeenth century, small house set back from the highway. Crossways, Chestnuts, Jervis Cottage, Peartree Cottage and 1 and 2 Aston Street, however, all front the

street and contribute to the attractive views along its western side.

The boundary in front of Peartree Cottage is of historic interest being another thatched cob wall. Armadale is a modern bungalow and is not in keeping with the historic character of the street scene here but is largely screened from the street by a tall coniferous hedge.

Crossways is a more formal building than those that front the street to the south, with its dentil cornice, leaded mullion and transom windows and attempted classical proportions forming a late seventeenth century façade to an early seventeenth century building (see Fig. 15). The use of classical



Fig 15. Crossways

detail in this building is evidence for the status and aspiration of its earlier inhabitants. Classical details were incorporated into buildings by owners who had or wanted to give the impression of having had the type of education in the classics that was only available to society's elite. The building lies at the junction to Rectory Lane is not as high status in terms of detailing and materials as the Manor House and St. Michael's Church to the north but was clearly built by people with higher aspirations and or access to more resources than the more modest vernacular dwellings to the south.

Crossways can also be contrasted with Chestnuts and 1 and 2 Aston Street, to the east of the street. They were also built during the seventeenth century but are of less symmetrical or formal appearance without classical ornament and are vernacular buildings using local building traditions. An understanding of the significance of architectural detail and form is important and the ornamentation used on individual buildings adds greatly to the historic interest of the conservation area.

There are important views along the street here: the variety of building types forming an irregular rhythm to the buildings to the south of the street and the tall coniferous hedgerow screens views of the church to the north. Short and steep grass verges form the boundary with the highway in places to either side of the street. There are important horse chestnuts at the Studio, which contribute to views along Aston Street.

The Manor House is next to St. Michael's Church and access from the manor to the churchyard is available through a two-centred arched door in the wall. The outbuildings historically associated with the Manor House also add historic interest to the street scene. The walls enclosing the Manor House and St. Michael's Churchyard also contribute to the sense of seclusion in this part of the conservation area and add to the historic character of the setting of this Grade II\* listed building. There are important lime trees at St. Michael's Church. The eighteenth century red brick gate piers with stone copings and classical details in the return wall at the entrance to the Manor House can be clearly seen from Aston Street and lend it a more formal character at this point.

The Manor Barn is probably early eighteenth century and stands to the north of the Manor House on Aston Street, from which it is separated by the wall described above. The brick and flint work, weatherboarding and old plain tile roof contribute to the character of Aston Street and the building's original function is still apparent from the street. Glimpses of twentieth century red brick stable buildings to the east of Aston Street add to the very rural character of the street here. In marked contrast is the



Fig. 16 Baker Street and Blewburton Hill

street scene to the north which is dominated by the modern housing that does not reflect local building traditions and is consequently excluded from the conservation area.

To the east of Aston Street is Manor Farm, designed by Clough Williams-Ellis who with Sir Patrick Abercrombie founded the Council for the Protection of Rural England in 1926.

There are important horse chestnuts at Races farm. A footpath runs from St. Michael's Churchyard to Rectory Lane and links Aston Street to Baker Street. As the path leaves the churchyard it runs past the grounds of The Manor House and the painted timber glasshouses belonging to The Manor

House can be seen above a red brick and flint wall to the north. The path is enclosed to the south by the red brick and clunch outbuildings associated with The Old Rectory, a nineteenth century house of stuccoed brick with a Welsh slate hipped roof. The Old Rectory enhances the historic and architectural interest of this part of the conservation area but is in a discrete location, screened by dense foliage, which allows glimpsed views from Aston Street of its white-stuccoed walls and red brick outbuildings.

The footpath follows the boundary of the meadowland that lies between Aston Street and Baker Street. Views to the east are enhanced by the rhythm of the Manor House roof, with tall red brick chimneys and dormer windows breaking through the old plain tile roof and the tower of the Church of St. Michael providing a focal point. Views to the north and west are characterised by the expanse of paddock land stretching towards Baker Street, the houses of various ages to the west of Baker Street and the open land rising beyond (see Fig. 16).

### Baker Street

Baker Street runs from the junction with Fullers Road and Spring Lane. The absence of a formal footway along its



Fig. 17 Baker Street

length and the historic buildings that front the highway contribute to its distinctive character. The more modern houses are in contrast set well back from the road (see Fig. 17).

To the west of Baker Street before the junction with Aston Street long views of arable fields and the slopes of the downs beyond can be obtained through gaps in the tall mixed hedgerow set back behind the grass verges which form the boundary to the street. The limits of the village are less formally defined here and buildings only begin to dominate the street scene to the north of its junction with Aston Street.

The houses at its junction are modern, set well back from the highway and do not add to the historic character of the conservation area. Further along Baker Street, however, older houses begin to crowd the highway and the village appears to begin here with development on either side of the street. The buildings to the east of Baker Street are at this point denser and more regularly spaced. To the west land associated with Copse Style House fronts the street. Further north along Baker Street the views of Copse Style House and its associated land and gardens are limited by a screen of tall mixed hedgerow above a grass verge.

Finches is an important historic building which lies along the lane which leads west from Baker Street towards Copstile Farm. It is grey brick, with red brick dressings.

To the west of Baker Street, Rose Cottage, once called the Old Post Office, is historic but is set back from the highway behind a short grass verge bordered by a red brick wall. The dominant roofing material in the street is plain clay tile with a notable exception at

The Old Bake House, which is roofed in a combination of tile, thatch and slate. The building's varying eaves heights and roof forms make an important contribution to the conservation area and are indicative of the building's historic development and the development of local building trends. Keepers Cottage is a timber framed house and has a half hipped with a gablet roof to one side, the lower of the two roofs terminates in a modern gable with a dormer window breaking through the eaves.

A glimpsed view of a weatherboarded barn with corrugated iron roof to the rear of Keepers Cottage is available between it and The Old Bake House and adds interest to the street scene. The windows of Keepers Cottage and the Old Bake House are painted timber casements.

To the west of Baker Street Little Finches, a modern red brick bungalow with a garage and driveway fronting the street, is not in keeping with local building traditions. Its boundary is a red brick wall above a short raised grass verge. Finches, on the lane which leads to Copse Style Farm makes an important contribution to the village's historic character. After Little Finches the west side of Baker Street can seasonally be very 'green' in appearance with a tall, mixed deciduous hedgerow above a short but steep grass verge. The dominant building material here is red brick, usually rendered or painted with tiled roofs and weatherboarded barns and garages.

To the north of Keepers Cottage, on the east of Baker Street, modern red brick houses dominate the street scene; they are not of a locally distinctive style or of particular historic interest but are set well back from the

highway mostly behind modern fences or railings beyond low grass verges. A red brick wall in front of the modern building which houses the Post Office continues in front of 1 Baker Street and Downscroft.

Fig. 18 The Baldons



The historic interest of the east side of the street resumes with The Baldons, a building of local note which, although much altered is set back only a short distance from the highway (see Fig. 18). The cottage, probably dating from the nineteenth century, has painted brick walls, an old clay tile roof, red

brick chimney stacks and dormer windows. The windows of The Baldons are also in keeping with the character of the conservation area being painted timber casements in the older portion of the house (and standard UPVC double-glazed windows have been used in the lean-to extension).

Adjacent to The Baldons is North Lea, a modern house that does not add to the distinctiveness of the area but is significant in that it is the last building to the east of Baker Street before the open fields that separate the Manor House and the Church of St. Michael in Aston Tirrold.

A footpath that runs from the Church of St. Michael towards Aston Upthorpe United Reformed Church crosses Baker Street here. There are no more buildings on the east side of the street. Instead a large pasture field extends towards Aston Tirrold Manor House and the Church of St. Michael. To the west of the street houses are all in the parish of Aston Upthorpe and are on the whole set further back from the highway with the exception of The Manse.

### Spring Lane

Spring Lane runs from the junction with Thorpe Street and Fullers Road to Copse Style Farm where it leaves the village and the conservation area. At the junction of Spring Lane with Thorpe Street, the lane is enclosed by tall mixed hedgerow above grass verges with only the roofline of 10 and 11 Spring Lane and Lowbury occasionally visible above the hedgerow. Here the lane is characterised by modern houses set well back from the highway. There are, however, notable exceptions with several attractive Victorian houses.

10 and 11 Spring Lane are of red brick,

Fig. 19 Spring Lane



gabled to the highway and have painted decorative bargeboards. They are of local note adding historic interest to the conservation area. The highway boundary here is mixed hedgerow behind a short grass verge. Attractive views of Rose Barn and lawns can be glimpsed from Spring Lane between 10 and 11 Spring Lane and Lowbury House.

Baggs Cottage and The Old School House are also buildings of local note. Located to the east of Spring Lane they form an attractive group with numbers 10 and 11 to the west of Spring Lane (see Fig. 19). Red brick is the dominant building material here constructed in Flemish Bond with diaper work in burnt headers for decorative effect. The gables here also have painted timber bargeboards and painted timber casement windows. The slated pitched roof slopes of The Old School House are broken by dormer windows and gables to the street. The boundary to the front of The Old School House is a brick wall.

Springfield House is bordered by a modern brick wall and set some way back from the highway. Beaufort House, Little Gables and Berry Croft House are also set well back and do not contribute to the local distinctiveness or the historic character of the lane.



Fig. 20. United Reform Church

Aston Tirrold United Reformed Church, an eighteenth century Presbyterian Chapel of red brick with a tiled roof and attractive round-headed windows to the north, south and west elevations adds great interest to this part of the conservation area (see Fig. 20). It is thought that the chapel is the second oldest Non-Conformist Church building in the old county of Berkshire having been built in 1782. The chapel and Copse Style House stand on the periphery of the conservation area and are the last buildings in the village before Spring Lane leaves the village to run uphill towards the A417, which is situated on higher ground to the south of the settlement. Copse Style House is of great historic and architectural interest, a Grade II\*, probably late seventeenth century listed building. The stables can be seen from the road and the upper portion of the house and boundary wall contribute to the historic nature of the street scene and views out of the village.

Spring Lane is constricted between Copse Style House and its outbuildings and the tall grass banks opposite.



Fig. 21 Copse Style House outbuildings

Behind the bank the fields extend to the south west of the village. A footpath climbs the bank and emerges into the fields to the west of Spring Lane. Long views are available across the cultivated fields to the rolling slopes of the downs beyond. The buildings of Copse Style Farm form an attractive group that dominates views from the footpath to the east (see Fig. 21).

### The Croft.

Croft Corner fronts the highway here where there are some very narrow grass verges but no footway. The boundary wall to Croft House is tall at approximately 3-4m and lends an enclosed feel to this part of The Croft. The limit of the conservation area at this point is marked by the opening up of the street with modern houses set well back from the highway behind garden plots to either side of the street. Attractive views of the evenly planted trees on the grass verges to the south of The Croft are interrupted by driveways for vehicular access. To the north of The Croft the grass verge

becomes more narrow with taller hedgerows planted in the garden plots to the front of the modern houses to the north of the street. Views terminate where the road turns sharply towards Aston Tirrold Manor House.

Views of the rear of the buildings to the east of Fullers Road can be glimpsed from the lane between Croft House and Dormers. This glimpsed view terminates with fields where the land rises to the south and in the foreground the thatched and weatherboarded outbuildings of Popes can be briefly seen. There are glimpsed views available from the lane of the rear of Croft House where the wall is lower in height.

The view out of the village from the Croft is a very important one (see Fig. 22). The view can be glimpsed between the boundary wall of Croft House and the first modern house to the south of the Croft. The fields outside the village can be glimpsed where the land rises to the south with mature trees in the distance. In the foreground there are views of the weatherboarded outbuildings associated with Popes on Fullers Road. Where the wall is lower at Croft House, views of the house itself can be glimpsed from the Croft through a screen of trellised roses above a red brick wall. Although these views towards and out of the conservation area are important, the architecture of The Croft does not reflect the distinctively local character of the village and it is not proposed that the conservation area should be extended to include this part of the village.

### Fullers Road

Fullers Road runs from Upthorpe Farm to the junction with Spring Lane and Baker Street. The approach to the



Fig. 22 View from the Croft

village along Fullers Road is relatively open. The direct link between the rural farm buildings and the fields that surround the settlement is here broken by twentieth century housing that lines either side of Fullers Road. The houses are set well back from the highway behind grass verges to the west and low grass verges and garden plots to the east. These houses lie outside the conservation area boundary and their inclusion would not be justified, as they do not contribute to the distinctive character of the village.

The buildings of Upthorpe Farm, however, contribute a rural feel to the edge of the village. Historically, the farmstead was an important element in the village and it is proper that that the boundary be extended to include the rest of the farmstead. Upthorpe Farmhouse was probably built in the late eighteenth century with roughcast probably on brick, a plain tile roof and brick stacks. The farmhouse and associated outbuildings and barns are likely to represent the edge of the village as it existed before the addition of housing in the twentieth century and the essential form that it took before this time can be seen by comparison with Thorpe Farm and Copse Style which have not been similarly encroached upon by modern housing.

The Red House is of unusual design. Its use of traditional materials and its location fronting the highway make its inclusion within the conservation area justified as it serves as a good boundary indicator separating the more modern, standard housing on the settlement's edge from the historic buildings in the village's core. As its name suggests, the Red House is of red brick with stone dressings to the doors and windows. Its unusual Victorian Tudor frontage and distinctive

undulating boundary wall are striking features at the entrance to the heart of the village and the building is certainly of local note.



Fig. 23 Moreton Road

There are limited views available from here of the weatherboarded walls and the long plain clay tile roof of Aston Upthorpe Stud which contribute to the rural feel of the street before the buildings enclose the highway. After the road passes Red House and Upthorpe Farmhouse the buildings begin to crowd the street, the highway becoming more enclosed between tall red brick walls (see Fig. 23).

There are no views available of Orchard House itself but there are glimpses of the greenery lining its driveway. Views out of the village towards Moreton Road from the junction of Fullers Road with The Croft include seasonal greenery, the modern buildings are set well back from the road and the village appears to end with The Red House and the buildings of Upthorpe Farm.

At the junction of Fullers Road with The Croft tall red brick walls and buildings enclose the road with only very narrow

grass verges separating them from the highway. The elevation of Croft Corner that fronts the street is mid eighteenth century with a range of nineteenth century additions facing The Croft. Croft house dates from the late eighteenth century. The view along Fullers Road towards the war memorial is characterised by the foliage of mixed hedgerows and mature trees to the west and by the red brick buildings that enclose the highway to the east and Suggetts an important listed building - the view terminating with the mature trees in front of Selesk House.

Local plain clay tile is the predominant roofing material in this part of the village as for example at Upthorpe Farmhouse. There are, however, several notable exceptions. Slate is used to roof some of the later and higher status buildings such as The White House and one of the pitched roofs at The Red House (the other is of plain clay tile). The Old Pyles is of timber-framed construction with white rendered infill panels and a thatched roof with plain clay tile to some of the lower slopes.

Brick is the most common material used in the construction of buildings that line Fullers Road. Grey brick, with red brick dressings is used at Croft Corner although red brick characterises much of the street, with painted brick at The White House. Croft House, however, is a late eighteenth century house of white render again probably over brick.

The outbuildings of Orchard House have attractive brick and knapped flint banding to the gable fronting the street and on the flanking wall to the south. The other flanking wall is of painted brick. The White House is a building of local note, an attractive house of rendered and painted brick which lies

in a very prominent location within the conservation area. It was originally a georgian house whose roof was extended following a fire. The painted timber sash windows add to the historic character of the building; the roof is of slate with central and end chimneystacks. Mature trees to the east of the street relieve its enclosed feel and add interest to views within the conservation area.

The majority of roofs in this part of Fullers Road have a single ridge, with the notable exception of the twin-span roof visible behind the low parapet of The Red House. The hipped roof of The White House is also uncharacteristic of the roofscape in this section of Fullers Road. The roofs tend to be unbroken by dormer windows but are punctuated by solid square chimneystacks that add interest to the roofline.

Traditional and historic windows are in evidence not only at Croft Corner but also to The Red House and The White House. They are characteristically painted timber, single-glazed, vertical sliding sashes.

Clay tiles and slate both characterise the roofscape of Fullers Road. Old Pyles uses both plain clay tiles and thatch. Old Pyles also differs from the other buildings in the street in that it is timber framed, whereas the majority of the other buildings are of red brick which is rendered and painted at The White House and Croft House.

Walls form an important part of the character of Fullers Road. The boundary walls of The Croft are of red brick, at Suggetts of red brick with flint panels and a beech hedge above. A hedgerow encloses the street in front of Old Pyles but red brick boundary walls continue to dominate the west

side of Fullers Road.

The gable end of the outbuilding adjoining the entrance to Orchard House incorporates attractive bands of brick and flint work and has an unusual high-level window.

Views out of the village are available from Fullers Road at the junction with The Croft. The road winds its way out of the village towards South Moreton and although there are modern houses along it they are set well back from the highway and so the vista created is one in which the village ends with the buildings of the Red House and Upthorpe Farm after which only the trees and hedgerow to either side of the road can be seen.

To the east of the street the stables of Popes Farm can be glimpsed from near the Chequers Public House. They are of red brick with a plain clay tile roof and attractive painted stable doors with heavy iron door furniture. The tall red brick wall that forms the boundary of Popes Farm obscures most views of the buildings behind, although the attractive stable block and the timber framed house with red brick herring bone infill panels can be glimpsed through the relatively modern iron gates. The roof here is of plain clay tile and the windows are painted timber casements.

Plain clay tile is also used on the pitched roofs of Forge Cottage where tall brick chimneys break the roofline. The painted 'pebble dash' render here is not characteristic of the conservation area. The Forge is rendered, with an old plain clay tile roof and modern stained timber casements with leaded lights. Its roadside boundary is a beech hedge.

Where Fullers Road terminates with the war memorial, there is more open



Fig. 24 Fullers Road

space with the garage and Crossways set further back from the highway (see Fig. 24). The open space in front of the garage is filled with cars and the hard standing is functional concrete. Crossways is largely hidden behind a tall beech hedge with glimpsed views from the junction. The garage is not of historic or architectural interest; its buildings are purely functional using breeze block construction with corrugated asbestos roof. The war memorial with trees and green space behind are an important focal point for views along Fullers Road. The small area of lawn behind the memorial is one of the few really public spaces in the heart of the conservation area.

### Thorpe Street

Thorpe Street runs in an arc from Fullers Road back to Spring Lane.

Near its junction with Fullers Road to the north of the street the tall red brick wall forms a solid boundary to the highway, broken by the formal entrance to Orchard House with the wall curving inwards to meet tall red brick gate piers and a decorative, twentieth century, painted iron gate.

The formal garden and twentieth century red brick house can be briefly seen behind. An attractive red brick boundary wall with decorative burnt headers and half round brick coping runs past Edlins Cottage. To the south of the street, the boundary is formed by a tall beech hedge over a narrow grass verge and obscures views to the south. At the junction with Hagbourne Road is an attractive Georgian building (Edlins) with (what appear to be) original sash windows to the front elevation and a later painted timber porch. The boundary here is also of historic interest - iron rails over a dwarf brick wall with a small area of garden behind.

A variety of building styles and ages characterises this part of the village. There is an attractive group of nineteenth century buildings comprising The White House and its outbuildings with the outbuildings adjacent to the driveway to Orchard House. Old Pyles, opposite, is much earlier - dating from the seventeenth century. Its large timber framing with rendered infill panels and thatched roof

contrast with the red brickwork that dominates the street.

The street here is characterised by historic buildings which front the street including Stockwells Cottage, probably of late sixteenth century origin but re-fronted in the nineteenth and eighteenth century, Laurustinus and 10 and 11 Thorpe Street which probably date to late seventeenth century. The Old Boot Inn is an unlisted building whose early origins make an important contribution to the historic character of the streetscene. There are also glimpsed views of Stockwells, a historic building which retains in views from the street its traditional form.

Towards the junction of Thorpe Street with Spring Lane vegetation dominates the street scene (see Fig. 25) - the only built structures to be glimpsed from this point are sections of red brick wall where the road bends past All Saints Church. This appearance is seasonal, of course, but certainly the effect in summer is that of a green tunnel. This part of the conservation area has a predominantly rural feel. There have been recent additions to the street, namely the Village Hall and Thorpe Cottages that lie to the south of the road. The Smithy to the east is, however, a historic, timber-framed building set well back from the highway.

Further along the road All Saints Church and the adjacent Thorpe Farmhouse can be seen where the road bends sharply to the north providing a significant focal point in views along the street.

There are important views available between the buildings to the west of Thorpe Street from Thorpe Farmhouse onwards of Blewburton Hill rising behind the village. Blewburton Hall is



Fig. 25 Thorpe Street

rendered with a clay tile roof and can be glimpsed on the wooded slopes of the hill.

The land between Rose Barn and Spring Lane was historically associated with Thorpe Farm and it makes an important contribution to the character of the conservation area.

A road runs out of the village to eventually meet the B4016. It is characterised by grass verges that increase in height and steepness and force the road to narrow between them. A variety of building ages are represented here including the seventeenth-century, timber-framed house with painted brick infill panels at 5 Hagbourne Road and the modern dark-stained, weatherboarded stables of Aston Upthorpe Stud to the west of the road. Tall brick and flint walls form the boundary to the east of the road with a brick wall to the west which then gives way to modern close boarded timber fencing. The buildings to the east of the road include Langford Cottage, a Victorian building of local note, accompanied by several similar but later houses on ground that rises to either side of the highway. The road runs uphill as it leaves the village with open fields to either side.

### **Important open spaces outside the conservation area**

The burial ground at the bottom of the Croft was given to the village in the early twentieth century, and has been used since then. The recreation ground to the south of the village is another important green space on the edge of the village. It too was donated to the village and is used by, and is of special importance to, the inhabitants of the village.

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# **Aston Tirrold & Aston Upthorpe Conservation Area Management Plan**

May 2005

## **Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe Conservation Area Management Plan**

The Council first published the Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe Conservation Area Management Plan in draft form in July 2004. Following a period of public consultation, including a public meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2005, the Council approved the Management Plan and the conservation area extensions on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2005.

## **Possible areas for enhancement and design guidance for new development.**

### **Introduction.**

The established character of the Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe Conservation Area must be protected in order to maintain its special architectural and historic interest. Any alteration or extension of existing buildings in the villages should be carried out in a sensitive fashion, which takes account of the established character and there are no sites which could accommodate substantial new development. Infilling existing open space within the conservation area would alter the historic and locally distinctive form of the village. Some improvement or enlargement of the existing buildings may be possible subject to very rigorous controls. In the conservation area, where the quality of the general environment is already acknowledged by designation, the community expects the Council to insist on good quality schemes which respond positively to their historic setting, this extends to garages and ancillary buildings.

The following guidance will apply to most schemes, including the creation of parking areas, extensions to existing properties and new houses or commercial buildings. It is based on central government advice, contained in PPG 1 and PPG 15, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide and the Chilterns Building Design Guide (1999).

### **The need for contextual design.**

All development, but particularly in the Aston Upthorpe and Aston Tirrold

Conservation Area, must respond to its immediate environment, its context, in terms of scale, density, form, materials and detailing. Applicants for planning permission must provide a "Design Statement", to justify the design decisions that have been made as the scheme was developed and to show how proposed alterations relate to their context.

Many sites on the edge of the village have an open character and long views of and from the site must be taken into account. It is also vital to respect the agricultural character of the margins of much of the village.

The following are general principles that should be adopted for all development in all parts of the conservation area:

### **Grain of the village.**

Although Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe are villages rather than towns, they still have a distinct "grain", or built form, of historic development. This gives the village great individuality, characterised by the pattern of historic buildings following ancient footpaths and highways and by the compact nature of the village with its clearly defined boundaries. This "grain" is an important part of the character of the conservation area and should be protected. Proposals for development must include a detailed analysis of the locality and demonstrate that there is a full appreciation of the local streetscape and how it has developed, including prevailing building forms, materials and plot ratios.

### **Appearance, materials and detailing.**

The emphasis in any proposed alteration, new or replacement building

must always be on the need to provide a high quality of design. There may be scope for innovative modern design, however a dramatic contemporary statement would probably be unlikely to be appropriate in this conservation area and a more traditional design is likely to be more suitable. Good contemporary design can be used to create positive change in historic settlements and may be appropriate in listed buildings provided it respects their scale, form and historic development.

The materials that characterise the conservation area can be used to help alterations to respect its established character. Roofs should be pitched and covered in handmade clay tiles, or natural slate. Local features such as full or half hips may be suitable. Dormers and rooflights should be avoided, unless modestly sized and away from the public viewpoint. Chimneys may sometimes be required in certain locations.

Walls are brick, tile-hung, rendered or black/dark brown weather-boarded with traditional feather-edged boarding (not modern ship-lap). Occasionally tile-hanging is used and the use of knapped flint is not uncommon. This can be painted or stained an appropriate colour. The depth of board is typically at least 200mm. Painted brick or render are more modern alternatives which are rarely appropriate. The inclusion of small decorative details, such as string courses, shaped cills or lintels, recessed panels and other features can add interest and a sense of place but must be based on local precedent and used correctly.

The commonest window type within the conservation areas is single, glazed, painted timber windows, either in the

form of side hung casement windows to many of the older and more modest dwellings or vertical sliding sashes such as those associated with higher status eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings within the conservation area. Listed Building Consent is always required to alter the form of fenestration in listed buildings. It should be emphasised that the presence of windows of traditional design which are in keeping with the building they belong to and respect the historic nature of the villages make a very important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Windows should not be stained. If windows are to be double glazed, then these must be carefully designed. Avoidance of glazing bars can assist in achieving a satisfactory solution. 'Stick-on' glazing bars should be avoided at all costs. Consideration should be given to alternative ways of complying with Building Regulations if traditional windows are to be used. In all cases joinery details must be submitted with planning applications. Modern top-hung lights and modern materials, such as uPVC or aluminium, are generally unacceptable in the conservation area. Front doors should also usually be painted timber, again reflecting local historic styles.

Rainwater goods should only be used where appropriate to the building. Barns, for example, historically would not have had guttering or down pipes.

### **Boundary treatments.**

Traditionally, brick or flint walls, with trees and soft hedging define most boundaries in the conservation area. There are few footpaths to the roads in the conservation area and the boundary with the highway in most

cases is a steep grass verge. For new or replacement boundaries in the conservation area it is important that local materials and detailing are used. To respect the established character of the conservation area the historic precedent of brick and flint in the more built up parts of the village and post-and-rail type fencing in the more rural margins should be followed. Modern alternatives, such as concrete blocks, ranch-style timber fencing, are not acceptable.

### Scale.

Scale is the combination of a building's height and bulk when related to its surroundings. Most of the buildings in the conservation area are of one or two storeys and are of a modest character. For proposals for new or replacement buildings, such as garages or out buildings, applicants must provide accurate elevations of the surrounding buildings, showing how the new structure will relate to them. Proposed house extensions must take into account the scale of the existing building, and must not dominate or overwhelm the existing building.

### Extensions to existing buildings.

Extensions must respect the form and character of the original house and its locality and use high quality materials and detailing. For listed buildings this is particularly important. Design should be of high quality, whether modern or traditional. Roof lines, roof shape, eaves details, verge details and the creation of new chimneys are important considerations. Extensions should not overlook neighbouring properties, lead to an unacceptable loss of garden space, or result in the loss of historic plot boundaries. Extensions should not dominate the original building

### Repairs

Repairs to existing historic structures must be undertaken sensitively to ensure that the appearance and condition of their fabric is not harmed. The regular maintenance of historic buildings can help to avoid the costly repair work required to rescue a building from dereliction. It is especially important to ensure that historic buildings are kept weather and water tight to prevent further deterioration and for this reason it is necessary to keep roofs in particular in a good state of repair.

### Negative elements

The presence of standard UPVC windows in several otherwise traditional buildings detracts from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Attempts should be made to repair traditional windows where possible in order to conserve the historic character of the Conservation Area, and in many cases to prevent the loss of historic fabric.

There are a number of thatched roofs with patterned block cut ridges but the local thatching tradition in South Oxfordshire is to leave the ridges plain and flush to the slopes of the roof. The re-introduction of plain ridges when buildings are being re-thatched would enhance the traditional character of the Astons and reflect local tradition.

### Services

Thick, telephone cables detract from several important views within the Conservation Area, especially in Baker Street; laying them underground would enhance the traditional character of the Conservation Area.

## Street Furniture

The narrow, enclosed nature of the highways within the Astons does not allow many opportunities to enhance the conservation area with street furniture. At the site of the War Memorial, at the junction of Fullers Road and Baker Street, the existing bench is of a modest design. It complements this valuable, peaceful green space within the heart of the villages. The bench is made from traditional materials, timber panels and black painted cast iron supports, (originally from the Great Western Railway Company), which will mellow with age and should provide a long lasting and attractive feature within the conservation area. Similar benches are found elsewhere in the village at Hagbourne Road, the Burial Ground and in the recreation ground. The modern telephone kiosk on Baker Street, beside The Manse, however, lacks any local character. More sensitive solutions need to be found to accommodate modern amenities within the villages. Standard solutions more suited to town centres are not acceptable.

## Proposed extensions to the Conservation Area

Several areas for extension are proposed:

- The burial ground - this is of special architectural and historic interest and contains old memorials and well established yew trees. It provides important views out of the village.
- Aston Upthorpe Stud - the stud has a strong architectural character which contributes to the villages' well established association with horse racing so the area is of special architectural and historic interest.

- Blewburton Hall - The house and its grounds have a strong association with a prominent local family and make a historical and architectural contribution to the conservation area.
- Land to the south west of the existing conservation area between Rose Barn and Spring Lane - this is an area of open space including a paddock and a former orchard which has a closer relationship to the village than to the open fields beyond. The predominantly rural character of the land provides an appropriate setting for the listed agricultural buildings adjacent to the site.
- In addition there are three small areas where the boundary is proposed to be slightly extended to provide a more logical one i.e. to the east of Filberts, one to the east of Skirmers and one to the east of Manor Farmhouse.

## Existing Conservation Policies

### South Oxfordshire Local Plan adopted by Council, April 1997

#### LISTED BUILDINGS

##### POLICY CON 1

Proposals for the demolition of any building included on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest will not be permitted except in most exceptional circumstances.

##### POLICY CON 2

The council will make full use of its powers to serve repairs notices to prevent the wilful neglect of listed buildings.

#### ALTERATIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS

##### POLICY CON 3

The use of modern materials such as aluminium and UPVC will not normally be permitted for the doors or windows of listed buildings. Sealed double-glazed timber windows will not normally be permitted unless their mouldings precisely match those of traditional windows. The use of secondary glazing will normally be acceptable.

##### POLICY CON 4

Listed building consent will not normally be granted for proposals which involve the use of cement-rich mortars, abrasive cleaning methods and chemically-based sealants, nor for the painting of unpainted brickwork and stone or the use of unsuitable colour schemes on listed buildings.

##### POLICY CON 5

The alteration or removal of historic internal features in buildings included on the statutory list of buildings of

special architectural or historic interest will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

#### CHANGES OF USE AND EXTENSIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS

##### POLICY CON 6

Any change of use of a listed building must be appropriate to its character, and any extension must be sympathetic to the original structure in design, scale and materials and must not dominate or overwhelm it.

#### THE SETTING OF LISTED BUILDINGS

##### POLICY CON 7

Proposals for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will normally be refused.

#### CONSERVATION AREAS

##### POLICY CON 8

The council will use all its powers under the relevant acts to ensure that the character of individual Conservation Areas is preserved or enhanced.

##### POLICY CON 9

Consent to demolish a building in a Conservation Area will normally only be granted if the loss of the building would not adversely affect the character of the area, and if there are detailed and acceptable plans for the redevelopment of the site.

##### POLICY CON 10

When considering proposals for development in Conservation Areas, the council will require:-

- (i) the design and scale of new work to be in sympathy with the established character of the area;
- (ii) the use of traditional materials, whenever this is appropriate to the

- character of the area;
- (iii) the retention of existing walls, hedges, or any other features which contribute to the character of the area.

### **THATCHING STYLE**

#### **POLICY CON 11**

In order to protect the traditional thatching style of South Oxfordshire the District Council will generally promote the use of long straw and resist the introduction of patterned block-cut ridges on thatched buildings.

### **ADVERTISEMENTS IN CONSERVATION AREAS AND ON LISTED BUILDINGS**

#### **POLICY CON 12**

The council will not normally permit the display of signs on a listed building or in a Conservation Area which are in any way harmful to the character and appearance of the building or area. Where it is accepted that a sign is needed, its design and materials should reflect the best traditional practice.

#### **POLICY CON 13**

The installation of blinds or canopies of untraditional form or materials on buildings within Conservation Areas will not normally be permitted.

### **BURGAGE PLOTS**

#### **POLICY CON 14**

In the historic towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford the burgage plots to the rear of the principal streets will generally be protected from amalgamation and from development which would diminish their historic interest and value.

### **PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS**

#### **POLICY CON 15**

In Conservation Areas, the council will take all available steps to ensure:

- (i) that the introduction or intensification of uses which conflict with the special character of the area is resisted;
- (ii) that existing walls, buildings, trees, hedges, open spaces and important views are retained, where they contribute to the character of the area;
- (iii) that whenever the opportunity arises, unsightly overhead wires and unnecessary signs are removed. The statutory undertakers will be urged to site their services underground;
- (iv) that where necessary, improvements are made to the visual quality of the floorspace, street furniture, lighting and signs; and
- (v) that development outside a Conservation Area would not have a detrimental effect on the Conservation Area.

### **ARCHAEOLOGY**

#### **POLICY CON 16**

The council will not normally permit development which would adversely affect the sites or settings of nationally-important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, or those of monuments of special local importance.

#### **POLICY CON 17**

Before the determination of an application for development which may affect a site of archaeological interest or potentially of archaeological importance, prospective developers will be required, where necessary, to make provision for

an archaeological field evaluation, in order to enable an informed and reasoned planning decision to be made.

#### **POLICY CON 18**

Wherever practicable and desirable, developments affecting sites of archaeological interest should be designed to achieve physical preservation in situ of archaeological deposits. Where this is not practicable or desirable, the district planning authority will impose conditions on planning permissions, or seek legal obligations, which will require the developer to provide an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication by a professionally qualified body acceptable to the district planning authority.

### **PARKS AND GARDENS OF SPECIAL HISTORIC INTEREST**

#### **POLICY CON 19**

Proposals which would damage the character, setting or amenities of a park or garden of special historic interest, especially those contained in the English Heritage Register, will not normally be permitted.

### **COMMON LAND**

#### **POLICY CON 20**

Proposals for development on or affecting common land, village greens and other important spaces within settlements will not normally be permitted.

## **2011 Second Deposit Draft Local Plan**

### **Demolition of Listed Buildings**

#### **Policy CON1**

Proposals for the demolition of any listed building will not be permitted.

### **Alterations and extensions to listed buildings**

#### **Policy CON4**

Any extension to a listed building must be appropriate to its character, must be sympathetic to the original structure in design, scale and materials and must not dominate or overwhelm it.

#### **Policy CON5**

Any alteration to a listed building must respect its established character and not diminish the special historical or architectural qualities which make it worthy of inclusion on the statutory list.

#### **Policy CON6**

A change of use of part or the whole of a listed building will be permitted only if its character and features of special architectural or historic interest would be protected. Proposals for a change of use should incorporate details of all intended alterations to the building and its curtilage, to demonstrate their impact on its appearance, character and setting.

#### **Policy CON7**

Proposals for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will be refused.

### **CONSERVATION AREAS**

#### **Proposals affecting a conservation area**

#### **Policy CON9**

Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only if the loss of the building would not

adversely affect the character of the area and, where appropriate, if there are detailed and acceptable plans for the redevelopment of the site.

#### Policy CON10

The Council will not grant permission for development which would harm the character or appearance of a conservation area. When considering proposals for development in conservation areas, the Council will require:

- (i) the design and scale of new work to be in sympathy with the established character of the area; and
- (ii) the use of traditional materials, whenever this is appropriate to the character of the area.

The Council will also take account of the contribution made to a conservation area by existing walls, buildings, trees, hedges, open spaces and important views. Proposals for development outside a conservation area which would have a harmful effect on the conservation area will not be permitted.

### **Advertisements in conservation areas and on listed buildings**

#### Policy CON13

The Council will not grant consent for the display of signs on a listed building or in a conservation area which are in any way harmful to the character and appearance of the building or area. Where it is accepted that a sign is needed, it should generally be non-illuminated, made of natural materials and to a design and scale reflecting the best traditional practice.

### **Blinds and canopies in conservation areas**

#### Policy CON14

The Council will not grant permission for the installation of blinds or canopies

of nontraditional form or materials on buildings within conservation areas.

### **Burgage plots**

#### Policy CON15

In the historic towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford the burgage plots to the rear of the principal streets will generally be protected from amalgamation and from development which by its nature would detract from their historic interest, amenity and nature conservation value.

### **Archaeology and historic building analysis and recording**

#### Policy CON16

The Council will not permit development which would adversely affect the sites or settings of nationally-important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, or those of monuments of special local importance.

#### Policy CON17

Before the determination of an application for development which may affect a site of archaeological interest or potentially of archaeological importance, prospective developers will be required, where necessary, to make provision for an archaeological field evaluation, in order to enable an informed and reasoned planning decision to be made.

#### Policy CON18

Wherever practicable and desirable, developments affecting sites of archaeological interest should be designed to achieve physical preservation in situ of archaeological deposits. Where this is not practicable or desirable, the Council will impose conditions on planning permissions, or seek planning obligations, which will require the developer to provide an

appropriate programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication by a professionally-qualified body acceptable to the Council.

#### Policy CON19

Before the determination of an application which affects a building of archaeological or historic interest, applicants will be required, where necessary, to submit a detailed record survey and analysis of the building. In some circumstances, further survey and analysis will be made a condition of consent.

### **Historic battlefields, parks, gardens and landscapes**

#### Policy CON20

Proposals which would damage the character, setting or amenities of a battlefield, park or garden of special historic interest, especially those contained in the English Heritage Registers, will not be permitted.

### **Common land**

#### Policy CON21

Proposals for development on or affecting common land, village greens and other important spaces within settlements will not be permitted.

## Acknowledgements and Bibliography

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compiled the notes from which the  
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