Cuxham
Conservation Area Appraisal

2022 Consultation Draft South Oxfordshire District Council

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction. 3

2.0 Location 4

Map 5

3.0 Summary of Special Interest 6

4.0 Historic Development 8

5.0 Character Assessment 11

6.0 Spatial Analysis. 16

7.0 Management Plan 21

8.0 Selected Bibliography 24

Appendix A: Listed Buildings 24

Appendix B: Historic Environment Record Summary. 25

Appendix C: Non-designated Heritage Assets 26

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to P.D.A. Harvey, whose comprehensive understanding of medieval Cuxham and its associated Merton College records have been an invaluable resource.

Note

This appraisal seeks to provide a comprehensive assessment of the character and special historic interest of the conservation area. However, the reader should not assume that details which contribute to the character of the area, but are not mentioned here specifically, can be dismissed by reason of their omission.

Contact Us

For further information and advice on Conservation Areas contact:
South Oxfordshire District Council
Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE
Tel: 01235 422600
Email: planning@southoxon.gov.uk

Copyright

All maps are reproduced from, or based upon, Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. South Oxfordshire District Council 100018668 2021.

1.0 Introduction

What are conservation areas?
Areas of "special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" – in other words, they exist to protect the features and the characteristics that make a historic place unique and distinctive.

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. In addition to statutory controls, both National Policy and the Local Authority policies in the Local Plan help preserve the special character and appearance of conservation areas and their setting where it contributes to its significance.

What is the purpose of a conservation area appraisal?

- Identify special architectural or historic interest and the changing needs of the conservation area;
- Define or redefine the conservation area boundaries;
- Increase public awareness and involvement in the preservation and enhancement of the area;
- Provide a framework for informed planning decisions;
- Guide controlled and positive management of change within the conservation area to minimise harm and encourage high quality, contextually responsive design.

How might living in a conservation area affect you?

- Most demolition works require planning permission from the local authority;
- Restrictions on permitted development and advertising;
- If you intend to cut down, top or lop any but the smallest trees you must notify the council so potential harm can be assessed.

For further information on conservation areas, how they are managed and how this might affect you, please see the South Oxfordshire District Council's website and Historic England's advice on living in conservation areas.

Planning policy context
Cuxham does not currently have a neighbourhood area or plan. The wider district development plan currently sits within the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. Other material planning considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and the emerging Joint Local Plan 2041.

Methodology and Consultation
This appraisal was produced with current best practice guidance published by Historic England and information collected using publicly available resources and thorough on-site analysis from the publicly accessible parts of the conservation area.

A draft of this appraisal will undergo public and stakeholder consultation with resulting feedback incorporated prior to its adoption as supplementary planning guidance.

2.0 Location

2.1 Overview

The village of Cuxham is located in the central South Oxfordshire district in an area known as the Vale Fringes. It sits at the foot of the Chilterns halfway between Oxford and Henley-on-Thames.

A charter of 887 labels *Cuceshaema gemaere* (Cuc's farm boundary) as the edge of a nearby estate. Later medieval records refer to the area in shortform as "Cuces hamm" which eventually became Cuxham. The 2011 Census recorded a population of 135 within the parish bounds. The conservation area covers just over 20 hectares and contains 22 individually listed buildings.

The road going through Cuxham is today known only as the B480 but was historically referred to as Oxford Road. These terms may be used interchangeably. The brook running through the village is not named on modern maps but is known locally and historically as the Marlbrook.

2.2 Relationship to Other Settlements

Cuxham is about halfway between Chalgrove, 2km north-west, and Watlington, 2km south-east. Of the nearby settlements, Watlington historically has had and still has the greatest economic and cultural influence on Cuxham.

Cuxham is joined in a combined civil parish with the village of Easington, about 2km north, a relationship beginning in 1853. The nearest settlement geographically is Brightwell Baldwin, about 1km due west, connected by a spur off the B480.

Fig 1. The Marlbrook flowing past Middle Farmhouse.

Click Here to Return to Previous Page

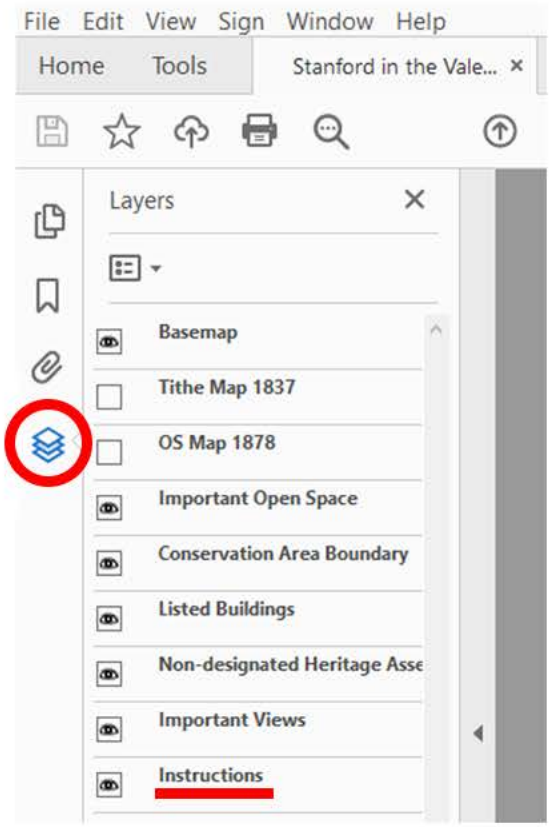
Instructions for Using this Map

Please note that the interactive features of this map will not work if you have opened this document with a web browser. You must download it and open it using a .pdf reading software such as Adobe Acrobat or Foxit.

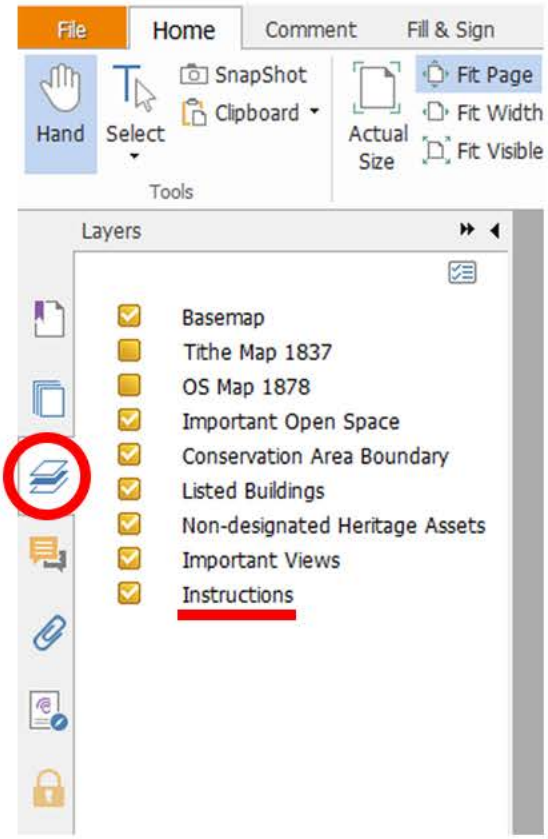
To turn layers on and off, please expand the left sidebar in your .pdf reader and click on the **Layers** icon, as circled below. All available layers will be listed there. Click the box next to each layer to toggle it on and off.

Turn off the **INSTRUCTIONS** layer to reveal the map.

Adobe reader



Foxit reader



You will find a Go to Map button at the bottom of every page which will bring you here. To return to your place in the document, click the button on the top left of the map labeled Click Here to Return to Previous Page

If you are having difficulty using this map, please contact us on 01235 422600 or e-mail planning@southoxon.gov.uk

3.0 Summary of Special Interest

Cuxham is one of many examples of shrunken medieval villages that exist in this part of England, but it is unique in that its manorial record is one of the oldest and most intact in the country. It is the combination of records and surviving settlement pattern which gives Cuxham a high level of special interest.

In 1271 the manor of Cuxham and much of the surrounding land was acquired by Merton College in Oxford. To this day Merton College remains a major landowner in Cuxham; a holding last recorded in 2012 as 429 acres. The administrative records of Cuxham held in the Merton College muniment-room are some of the most complete and comprehensive for any small manor in England after 1200. Thorold Rogers, who reprinted many of the records in 1866, said of them: "Out of the many thousand accounts which I have investigated none equal those of Cuxham for intelligence, accuracy, and order." The records are referenced in a number of academic works on medieval agriculture and are the subject of a comprehensive publication in the Oxford Historical Series[1].

That said, a full appreciation of these records would be impossible to achieve without a visit to Cuxham itself. The variety of enclosure and interwoven function between manor, rectory, and tenement remain legible. Still today records are entered into the archives at Merton College as Cuxham continues to develop. These records show periods of steady growth and gentle decline over centuries; these have resulted in a settlement which is about the same size as it was in the medieval period.

1. Harvey, P.D.A. (1965) A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham, 1240 to 1400. Oxford University Press.

Fig 2. The Half Moon Pub, 2021.

Fig 3. The Half Moon Pub, c.1900. (Townley, 2016).

Fig 4. The Old Row House.

Besides its high evidential and historic interest, Cuxham is a charming and idyllic small village with all the hallmarks of a productive agricultural settlement. A walk down the village road inspires visions of horse drawn carts trundling along the thoroughfare towards Watlington or Thame; between the trees, glimpses of open fields spread across overlooking hills. Ever present is the faint trickle of the village brook as it makes its long and unhurried journey through the shallow valley. Indeed, the path of the Marlbrook offers a convenient walking companion through the village. Following upstream from its exit at the village mill, it flows down through a channel past the pub, former tenement housing and laps at the foundations of the Old Row House before crossing under the road towards the historic common in the north-west. Here it meanders through pasture in the shade of twisted willows before disappearing into a thick copse of trees.

In these pastoral settings it is no surprise that Cuxham has fostered a close-knit community of residents who take pride in their historic village. Locals often come together to celebrate holidays, host the local cricket club, pitch in for charity collections, and volunteer for gardening projects.

This appraisal will attempt to capture all of the above qualities of special interest in greater detail, and in doing so demonstrate Cuxham as a fine example of medieval village typology which continues to be worthy of designation and protection.

4.0 Historic Development

4.1 Ancient and Medieval Eras

Though it is known that the area around Cuxham was settled in Roman times, little archaeological exploration has been carried out in the village to determine its extent. The earliest evidence uncovered, in fields nearby the manor house, are pottery sherds dated to between the 2nd and 4th centuries CE (see, *Appendix B*).

Medieval settlement and concentration was established by the 9th century, but could have begun centuries earlier. Early development began around the church and expanded in the 12th and 13th centuries with the creation of several cottage smallholdings north of the Marlbrook. The population recorded in 1086 shows 15 households; an estimated 70 people. The population dropped with the Black Death, down to 38 in 1377. Cuxham would not recover to pre-plague numbers until the late 17th century.

The first reference to a manor house at Cuxham is in 1244, possibly pre-dating the construction of the church. Merton College records map and detail the extensive manorial demesne as it was in 1315, which covered over 8.8 hectares, one of the largest in the Ewelme Hundred. Tragically the original Manor House was pulled down and rebuilt after it was damaged by fire ca. 1900. Most of its historic agricultural outbuildings were demolished and its moat partly filled in by the end of the 20th century. The only surviving listed structure on the manor farm is an early 18th century granary (Grade II). That said, the attractive stables and rebuilt manor house also make a positive contribution to the area (see, *Appendix C*).

Fig 5. Church of the Holy Rood.

Built in the 12th century, the Church of the Holy Rood (see, *Fig 5* and below, *Fig 7*) is the oldest standing building in Cuxham. Though refurbished and partly rebuilt in the 18th century, the church retains the majority of its Norman fabric.

Cuxham Mill (below, *Fig 6*), at the eastern end of the village, is mentioned in the Domesday Book along with the Cutt Mill (north of the conservation area) and one other now lost. The brick wheel house of Cuxham Mill dates from the mid-18th century, though the stone rear block could be earlier.

Due to the sharp turn of the Marlbrook north-west, the village expanded in this direction over several centuries. The fields and forest surrounding the brook leading to the Cutt Mill made up the village common as well as a number of tenant farms, the longest surviving of which, Greenwich Piece and Wallridge, appear in a map of 1767 (see, *Fig 11*). The Wallridge farm buildings are still visible in OS maps up until the 1980's. Today, nothing remains above ground. The irregular north-westerly extension of the conservation area was drawn in recognition of the significant contribution this area made to the development of Cuxham, as recorded in the Merton College archives, and further helps to protect its identity as a shrunken medieval village.

Fig 6. Cuxham Mill

Fig 7. West entrance, Holy Rood.

Fig 8. Manor farm fields, looking south from Oxford Road.

The village shrunk steadily in the late middle ages as a result of environmental and economic decline widespread across this part of the country, possibly due to a decrease in soil fertility[2]. Many cottages and tenements were abandoned and had fallen into ruin by the mid 15th century.

2. Newman, E. and Harvey, P.D.A. (1997) "Did Soil Fertility Decline in Medieval English Farms? Evidence from Cuxham, Oxfordshire, 1320-1340." The Agricultural History Review Vol. 45, pp. 119-136.

4.2 Early Modern Era

Most of Cuxham's oldest surviving structures date from a time of limited development and rebuilding in the 16th and 17th centuries. Many of these buildings, such a Yew Tree House and College Farm House, were originally timber framed, having been piecemeal replaced or re-faced with masonry when repairs and refurbishment were needed or desired.

The Half Moon Pub began operations by the mid 18th century. It still today operates in the same premises in a largely unaltered form. It is by this time that the tenement farms near Cuxham common began to decline and were gradually replaced by larger farms. Nearby Orchard, Rose, and Lower Green cottages were built as the land was put to more domestic use.

Fig 9. The Old Rectory.

Fig 10. Church Hall, as seen from the Holy Rood churchyard.

4.3 Modern Era

The agricultural boom in the mid 19th century saw an influx of new residents with a recorded population of 244 in 1841. The major additions of this period include the Old Row House; a row of six cottages built to house the poor (see, *Fig 4*). Nearby, and contemporary to the row house, is the former National School, today the church hall (above, *Fig 10*). Both buildings are sited on what was once the Upper Green. The contrast between these two buildings exemplifies the difference between the vernacular and national architectural styles of the period.

The only fully realized 'polite' example of architecture in the village is the Old Rectory (left, *Fig 9*); rebuilt in its current form in 1823. The late 19th century saw the addition of four handsome semi-detached brick homes in the western end of the village, opposite the Manor House.

In the 20th century Merton College continued to develop land in the village with modern housing. The conservation area boundary has been drawn to exclude these later developments.

5.0 Character Assessment

5.1 Pattern and Plotting

Cuxham is difficult to characterise into one definitive settlement pattern. For most visitors the village is experienced linearly along the Oxford Road; its main axis. The historic nucleus, containing the manor farm and church, is off-centre down a side road. There was once a central village green called Upper Green, between the church and the road, which would have made the church and manor farm more legible as the village centre. The parish must have felt that the provision of housing on the site was a greater need than the continued availability of the green; likely underutilised by the time it was built upon.

The form of Cuxham is unusual in that most of its common land was located north-west in a long stretch following the Marlbrook up to Cutt Mill, far from the church and village centre. This area once held a second green, Lower Green, and several tenement farms, contained within the present boundaries of the conservation area. Part of the historic common continues further north of the conservation area (right, *Fig 11*).

In plan, the Manor Farm dominates the village. The nearby church of The Holy Rood appears like a private chapel within the grounds of the manor, perhaps a result of its construction after the earlier establishment of the manor farm. The only other notably large residence is the Old Rectory, which has historically always been occupied by a wealthy fellow of Merton College. Other buildings are mostly detached, with a few later semi-detached properties. Residential plot sizes on the colder north side of the road are compact; evidence of the relative poverty of the cottage tenements established there. The other plots in the village are middling to large, with the largest given to Yew Tree Cottage and

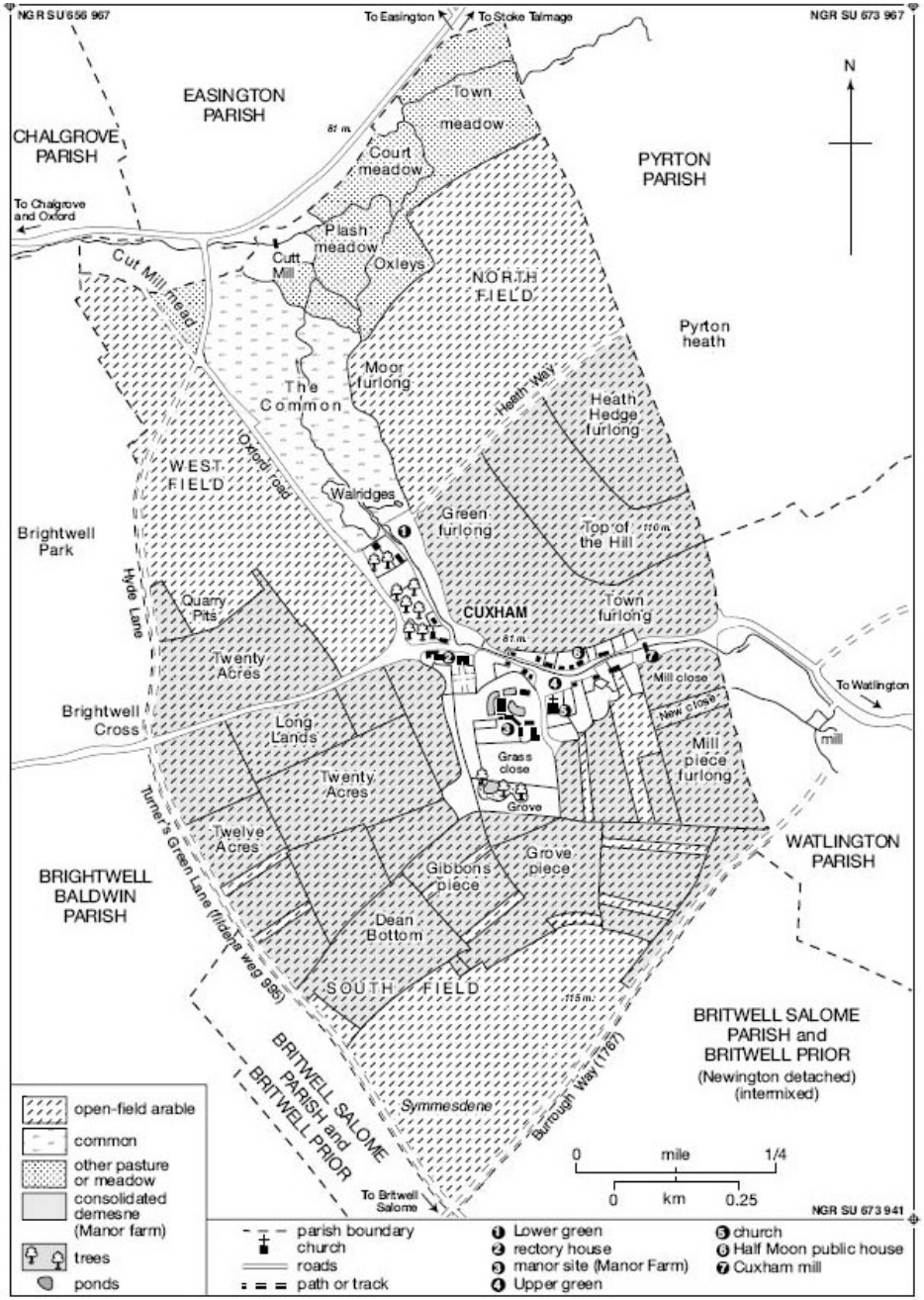


Fig 11. A redrawn 1767 estate map. Note the location of the common (Townley, 2016).

Fig 12. The turning into Manor Farm, advertising "Pick Your Own" sunflowers.

College Farm House. The most dense housing was located in the Old Row House, once a terrace of six one-up-one-down dwellings. Five of these were converted into a single residence in 1963.

5.2 Activities and Prevailing Uses

Medieval Cuxham had three actively operating mills; evidence of the heightened agricultural activity of the area. Cuxham, as captured in meticulous detail in the records of Merton College, specialized in the cultivation of cereals, namely wheat and oats. For a relatively small area (~200ha) the demesne produced an unusually high yield and was by all accounts highly profitable. By the mid 19th century corn had replaced oats as the secondary crop to facilitate sheep-corn husbandry. Today many acres have been converted to permanent pasture for beef cattle. The arable land around Cuxham still produces mostly wheat; still sold at grain markets in Thame as it has been for many centuries.

The Holy Rood, despite services presently being reduced to a monthly schedule, has provided Cuxham with refuge for at least eight centuries. Likewise, the Half Moon Pub, having had that name since the mid 18th century, has provided a different kind of refuge in the village for nearly three hundred years. The Manor Farm hosts Christmas markets and offers a variety of "Pick Your Own" events throughout the year (left, *Fig 12*). A community group exists which tends to the recently established Cuxham meadow, winning a regional Silver Gilt award in the 2017 Britain in Bloom competition.

Click above to hear Cuxham native, Mr. Tapping (b. 1876) describe an average working day on the farm (1966, Survey of English Dialects) You can also follow this link to hear the audio clip.

5.3 Traffic and Movement

The main route to and through Cuxham is Oxford Road (aka. B480), a moderately busy distributor road. Most traffic on this road is travelling from Chalgrove and Brightwell Baldwin towards Watlington and onwards into the Chilterns.

The stretch of Oxford Road in Cuxham has no pavement bar a few small isolated sections. This is typical for older villages where houses were built right up against a road shared equally by all forms of traffic which had no need for dedicated lanes. As a result, the village is challenging to navigate as a pedestrian in the present. Cuxham struggles with this specifically due to the Marlbrook flowing along the south side of the road, leaving no room for widening. Despite this, the arrangement is historically significant and should be preserved. The recently introduced traffic calming measures, reducing the speed limit to 20mph and adding planters to narrow wider parts of the road, are a positive step towards reintroducing the more pedestrian friendly and historic shared functionality of the road.

The Manor Farm and The Holy Rood can be accessed by a short paved drive crossing the Marlbrook. Much of Cuxham common is today private land but can still be viewed from an accessible track along its east side (right, *Fig 13*). This public footpath stretches from Lower Green Cottage up to Cutt Mill.

Fig 13. The track through Lower Green towards the common. Lower Green Cottage on the left.

5.4 Materials and Palette

Cuxham is situated on the border between the Lower Cretaceous Gault formation (clay, mudstone) and the Upper Cretaceous Grey Chalk subgroup. This placement results in a local abundance of chalk clunch (right, *Fig 15*); plentiful but notoriously difficult to use as a building material. The stone cannot be easily shaped and weathers very poorly. Most masonry constructions in Cuxham use chalk clunch in tandem with brick dressings which provide greater stability and erosion resistance. The listed road-facing coach house and boundary wall of The Old Rectory displays an exemplary array of locally employed chalk clunch masonry techniques (below, *Fig 14*). The Holy Rood is built primarily in chalk clunch (both rubble and coursed) but affords the use of Portland and marlstone dressings instead of brick. The Half Moon Pub and the Old Rectory Cottage are the only chalk buildings with unreinforced corners and reveals; stability to openings is instead provided by embedded timber lintels. Several stone buildings, especially those in the eastern end of the village, are whitewashed.

Fig 15. Chalk clunch wall and lime mortar.

Wheelwrights (below, *Fig 16*), likely the largest half-timbered building in Cuxham, has had all of its panels replaced with brick infill, some laid in herringbone. Not to be missed is the similarly brick infilled Lower Green Cottage, which has an attractive eastern facade visible from the track leading towards Cuxham common (see, *Fig 13*).

Fig 14. The Old Rectory coach house and boundary wall.

Fig 16. Wheelwrights.

Fig 17. A variety of building materials and techniques on the road facing gable end of The Thatch.

There are several buildings entirely of brick, most notably the village hall, which dates from the 19th century. Brick façades are decorated with flared headers, and, in the case of the semi-detached villas in the west of the village, have large panels composed entirely of these. The village hall has some decorative gothic terracotta detailing around reveals and a ridge finial on the porch gable; typically Victorian revival features not found elsewhere in Cuxham.

Middle Farm House has several timber clad and brick gable ends. Cuxham Mill has a patchwork combination of all of the aforementioned wall types, as well as areas of timber cladding.

Cuxham should be especially noted for its high proportion of thatched roofs. The buildings sporting these, west to east, are: The Thatch, The Old Rectory Cottage, Old Row House, Wheelwrights, Brook Cottage, and the Half Moon Pub. Of these, The Thatch has an ornamental scallop block ridge, the others are flush (left, *Fig 17*).

The other roofs in Cuxham, including that of the Holy Rood, are plain clay tiled. Slate roofs are found in a few later extensions and outbuildings but should not be considered vernacular. Most of the farm buildings at the Manor Farm are roofed with corrugated iron.

Many of the buildings have timber sash and casement windows, with a few unfortunate replacements in uPVC. Most of these are white or cream coloured. There is almost no stylistic uniformity with regards to exterior doors, though many are part glazed in some manner.

6.0 Spatial Analysis

6.1 Open Space Assessment

Cuxham features several key open spaces which are in this section described and summarized for their special contribution to the area. Each of these spaces is marked on the map by its corresponding letter in the below subject headers. This list is not comprehensive but highlights key examples of open space in the village.

A. *Manor Farm*

- The fields visible here from the road to the horizon are the historic demesne of Manor Farm. The fields closest to the road (today used as cattle pasture) are within the conservation area.
- A number of historic enclosure walls around the space are built in a style common to the area: clunch rubble walling reinforced with brick piers and copings.
- The position of the gate through the northern boundary wall and the alignment of the track through the field from the manor house (as marked on OS maps) is revealing of its purpose as a passage north towards the historic common.
- The area hosts a number of archaeologically interesting features such as the remains of a medieval moat and fish ponds, as noted in the HER and OS maps. The southernmost pasture has a series of spring fed sluice ponds which may have at one time fed the fish ponds and moat.
- Evidence provided by its form and the arrangement of remains therein is core to the understanding of Cuxham as an agricultural hub with medieval origins.

Fig 18. Manor Farm fields looking southeast with the stables and Holy Rood in the distance.

Fig 19. Manor Farm fields looking southwest. The Old Rectory chimneys peek over the trees.

Fig 20. The verge showing an attractive variety of trees and a small iron bench.

Fig 21. A small part of the former common. The tree line marks the path of the Marlbrook.

B. *Old Rectory Verge*

- The narrowness of the road through Cuxham, caused by the crowding of buildings and flanking brook up against the road, results in precious little public open space in the centre of the village. The only exception is a small triangular verge between the brook and road at the western end of the village, across from the Old Rectory.
- Despite being the site of an underground water pump, effort has been made to beautify the small verge. It features a colourful variety of trees and a park bench facing the Marlbrook.

C. *Cuxham Common*

- The historic common, former tenant farms, and former Lower Green, located in this offshoot from the main body of the conservation area have a strong connection to the history and development of Cuxham as a medieval farming community.
- The historic boundaries of the field system, bounded in the west by the B480 and a hill to the east, are still well defined.
- What was once the Lower Green is today the site of Lower Green Cottage. This area would have been the focal point of the tenant farmers once active in this part of the village.

6.2 Important Views

Cuxham has a special diversity of important views thanks to its origins as a medieval tenant farming community. Summarised and illustrated below are several important views in the village. This list is not comprehensive and serves primarily as a means to showcase the legibility of the Cuxham conservation area as a place of high group value and special interest.

6.2.1 Oxford Road Dynamic Views

The route along the main road through Cuxham snakes gently through the village, resulting in attractive unfolding views. Beginning in the east heading west, one passes first the old Cuxham Mill, guarding the entry to the village core. This dense and leafy part of the village, of which the Half Moon pub is its centre, has the atmosphere of a quiet forest dell. This is in noted contrast to the surrounding open countryside glimpsed beyond the trees and buildings.

Passing the pub on the right, the vegetation begins to thin and a view into the former Middle Farm complex to the south is revealed, with the half timbered and thatched Wheelwrights house sitting proud at the head of the close. Looking carefully this is also the first place where the steeple of the Holy Rood comes into view, peeking out from along the thatched gable of the Old Row House.

With our eyes now guided to views along the south side of the road, next comes the crossing into Manor Farm, where we are greeted with a picturesque view of the Holy Rood alongside the village hall, both opposite the Manor Farm stables. Rising fields in the distance tempt visitors to follow this footpath into the southern hills beyond.

Continuing further west down the road one comes upon the impressive 16th century Old Rectory Cottage, the tallest stone residence in Cuxham. Further along we enter a later period of development with a pair of handsome Victorian semi-detached brick buildings built on higher ground to make the most of the surrounding views and to take advantage of the fresh countryside air.

Finally we come upon The Thatch which, like the Cuxham Mill, guards the roadway into the village. From here to the Old Rectory we are flanked on either side by expanses of fields stretching across the nascent Chiltern foothills.

Fig 22. View along Oxford Road looking west.

Fig 23. The steeple of the Holy Rood among the treetops.

Fig 24. A view across Manor Farm fields towards the Holy Rood.

6.2.2 The Holy Rood Long Views

The steeple of the Holy Rood is visible from a number of vantages, most notably across the pastures of Manor Farm in the west of the village. The steeple is also visible from the north-west footpath along the former common, its squat orange tiled roof marking it among the treetops.

6.2.3 Manor Farm Long Views

Views across Manor Farm fields to the back of the stone stables and farm house, with the Holy Rood and rolling hills in the distance, makes for an idyllic country scene, exemplifying the close relationship between manor and village.

Fig 25. Panorama of the former common, looking west.

6.2.4 Cuxham Common Panoramic Views

All along the track, part bridleway, part footpath, north towards Cutt Mill are an unfolding series of panoramic views across Cuxham common. The brick-infilled half-timbered Lower Green Cottage, visible over the hedge near the track, greets visitors to this special area of historic Cuxham.

The former common is situated in a shallow valley through which the Marlbrook carves its path. The track is therefore situated on an upper slope and allows for wide sweeping views. The path of the brook is easily identified by trees and brush growing along its banks.

The topography of the common, especially at its northern end, undulates irregularly, which may evidence historic pit mining activity. Though none of the original medieval tenement buildings remain, a small clearing at the south end of the common, near the footbridge, marks the former location of Wallridge farm; a reminder of the larger farming community that once grew around Cuxham.

7.0 Management Plan

The Council can initiate improvements and control development in the conservation area. However, the success of conservation area designation and its future management will depend upon the co-operation and enthusiasm of stakeholders including residents, statutory undertakers and business owners to work with the council in achieving common aims and objectives. These are listed below:

7.1 General

The council will aim to:

7.1.2 Promote awareness of the special value of the conservation area and encourage promotion of the special character and appearance through works of preservation or enhancement;

7.1.3 Encourage high quality, energy efficient design which aims to: fit in with the established 'grain' of the conservation area and be sympathetic to it as well as combat climate change by reducing carbon emissions. Heritage Appraisals and Impact Assessments along with Design and Access Statements will assist this process;

7.1.4 Encourage the regular maintenance and repair of buildings walls, railings and means of enclosure in the conservation area with appropriate traditional materials and finishes including the removal of inappropriate and harmful cement renders and plasters;

7.1.5 Seek to reinforce the special quality of historic buildings through the use of traditional materials and construction techniques, including the use of lime mortars, plasters and renders and painted timber windows and doors. Historic walls of soft limestones or bricks should be re-pointed in lime mortar using locally sourced aggregates. Pointing should generally be flush and not struck unless evidence suggests otherwise.

7.1.6 Encourage regular tree/hedge management with re-planting where appropriate;

7.1.7 Encourage proposals for development that enhance or better reveal the significance of the conservation area, including responding to views both in, out and around the conservation area and in its wider setting.

Fig 26. Yew Tree Cottage.

7.2 Specific

Stakeholders should jointly aim to:

7.2.1 Ensure that the historic stone walling of Cuxham that encloses lanes, pavements and fields are appropriately maintained and conserved to preserve its historic group value and protect public safety. Re-pointing and re-bedding of stones, clearance of rooted vegetation, the ensuring of good drainage, and consideration of how nearby development (such as road re-surfacing) can harm the walls should all be employed as strategies to combat decay;

7.2.2 Preserve those features of consistent historic detail, pattern and character that contribute positively to local distinctiveness. This includes the repair, retention, or reinstatement of original windows, doors, stained glass, paving tiles and boundary treatments;

7.2.3 Specify appropriate stone materials. As explained in section 5.4 the Cuxham vernacular employs a grey chalk limestone (aka. clunch) for most of its historic construction. This stone should be matched like for like in repairs or rebuilding of any and all parts of existing historic buildings. That said, the council recognizes that clunch is a very difficult material to work with and would therefore be amenable, especially in the case of new buildings, to the specification of harder limestones with greater durability provided they weather to a similar gradient as the historic vernacular.

7.2.4 Locate new or replace existing external equipment such as satellite dishes, electricity and telephone wires or meter boxes discretely away from the principal street frontage elevations, especially on pairs and terraces;

Fig 27. Dharwar Villa, which has had its original casement windows replaced.

Fig 28. The Merton College Cottages (built 1976) are outside the CA but feature in the streetscape. An innapropriate iron-rich facing stone was used which has weathered to a dark yellow.

7.2.5 Carefully consider the addition of rooflights. Where they are used, they should be located on rear roof slopes in order to preserve the special uncluttered appearance of front roof slopes.

7.2.6 Ensure that views across the historic common as seen from the public footpath and bridleway alongside it are not blocked by the overgrowth of the hedgerow on its eastern side. This is especially important as the historic common is now entirely private land which can only be enjoyed by the public from the perimeter.

The designation of a conservation area is intended to manage change not prevent it. Where policy permits development, it is important that new housing preserves or enhances the character of the area. As such, proposals should be of high quality, responding to the site context and ensuring that a holistic approach is taken to the site including landscaping, boundary treatments, together with enhancing the contribution of open space and enclosure.

This document, the council's Design Guide, national guidance, and the council's local plan policies should be referred to when bringing forward sites for development within and in the setting of the conservation area.

Fig 29. Crescent House.

7.3 Areas of Opportunity

The following is a brief set of specific recommendations within the Cuxham conservation area which would require special attention.

7.3.1 Crescent House

Situated between the Half Moon pub and Rogers Hill Farm House on the main road through Cuxham, Crescent House features prominently in the streetscape; its frontage abutting the roadway. Due to its highly visible position and positive contribution as a building of age and good proportion it has been included in the appended list of locally interesting buildings as a non-designated heritage asset.

As of the time of writing the building is in need of remedial works and maintenance to ensure it continues to contribute in a positive way towards the special character of Cuxham. Vegetation should be cleared, timber features repainted, and areas of brickwork and render repaired.

8.0 Selected Bibliography

Harvey, P.D.A. (1965) *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham, 1240 to 1400*. Oxford University Press.

Horsfield, B. (2011) *Strategic Stone Study: A Building Stone Atlas of Oxfordshire*. Historic England.

Mileson, S. (2017) "Openness and closure in the later medeival village." *Past and Present No. 234*. The Past and Present Society, Oxford.

Newman, E. and Harvey, P.D.A. (1997) "Did Soil Fertility Decline in Medieval English Farms? Evidence from Cuxham, Oxfordshire, 1320-1340." *The Agricultural History Review Vol. 45*, pp. 119-136.

Stone, D. (2014) "The impact of drought in early fourteenth-century England." *The Economic History Review Vol. 67*. Wiley on behalf of the Economic History Society. pp. 435-462.

Survey of English Dialects (1966) "Cuxham, Oxfordshire." University of Leeds. Web. 11 August 2022. https://sounds.bl.uk/Accents-and-dialects/Survey-of-English-dialects/021M-C0908X0017XX-0500V1

Townley, S. (2016) "Cuxham." *A History of the County of Oxford: Vol. 18*. Ed. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer for the Institute of Historical Research. pp. 158-179. British History Online. Web. 11 Sugust 2022. https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol18/pp158-179

Appendix A: Listed Buildings

The Cuxham conservation area does not contain any scheduled monuments, nor does it contain any Grade I or Grade II* listed buildings.

Grade II

Barn approx. 8m. E of Middle Farmhouse
Brook Cottage
Church of the Holy Rood
College Farmhouse
Cuxham Church Hall
Cuxham Mill
Granary approx. 10m. E of Manor Farmhouse
The Half Moon Public House
Outbuilding approx. 1m. N of The Half Moon Public House
K6 Telephone Kiosk outside Middle Farm House
Middle Farmhouse
The Old Rectory
Stables and coach house and attached walls approx. 25m. NNW of The Old Rectory
The Old Rectory Cottage
Orchard House
Roger's Hill Farmhouse
Rose Cottage
Stone Cottage
The Thatch
Wheelwrights
Yew Tree Cottage
Granary approx. 15m. NW of Yew Tree Cottage

Appendix B: Historic Environment Record Summary

The following was produced on request by the Historic Environment Record (HER) team at Oxfordshire County Council to capture in greater detail the archaeological interest of the Cuxham conservation area. Records mentioned in the text below may be cross referenced with the Map on page 5 by activating the HER data layer.

Archaeological understanding

Few archaeological investigations have been conducted within Cuxham and its environs to enhance our understanding of past settlement and landuse. Geophysical surveys at Manor House to attempt to identify building remains and on land to the north-east of the conservation area to identify an enclosure ditch have both reported negative results.

Prehistoric to Roman

The earliest evidence recorded on the Oxfordshire Historic Environment record dates to the Roman period. Sherds of C2nd-4th pottery, part of a wall and fragments of roof tile were reported from south of Manor Farm in 1936 during drainage works (PRN3204). These limited finds may indicate a building associated with an enclosure identified on aerial photographs <200m to the south (PRN27497) and suggest agricultural landuse rather than settlement during this period.

Early Medieval to Medieval

A small settlement was established by the late Saxon period. The Domesday book of 1086 recorded a population of 15 households, of which 4 were smallholders, with a dominance of ploughland and meadow, suggesting a primarily agricultural economy at this time.

Settlement expanded during the Medieval period. The Church of the Holy Rood (PRN3961) dates to the 12th century and will have been the religious focus of the shrunken Medieval village (PRN982) represented by earthworks visible on aerial photographs and LiDAR imagery. The village extended down-stream to the north-west of the present village until the 15th century and was largely occupied by villeins or tenant famers (VCH vol.18, p.158). One arm of the moat associated with the original manor remains to south of Manor Farm (PRN1119), while two dams and fishponds to the west of the manor which were documented in the C14th, are visible on aerial photographs (PRN11283). There is a suggestion that the site of the manor house (PRN11284) may have been located to the south of the present Manor Farm (a modern built after the manor farmhouse burned down c.1900) but geophysical survey was unable to confirm this. Good documentary evidence does however locate associated farm buildings between the church and current Manor Farmhouse. These included barns, carthouses, henhouse, pigsty, byre, stable, granary and hay/strawhouses dating to the C13th-14th (PRN11286) with two C14th dovecotes just to the north (PRN11287) of this group.

Post Medieval to modern

The settlement further expanded through the 17th-19th Centuries, with many of the present houses originating during this period, most of which are designated. The C17/18th post office (PRN11302) is not listed but is recorded as a heritage asset on the HER. There has been relatively little modern development in Cuxham or the surrounding area.

Appendix C: Non-designated Heritage Assets

This list of non-designated heritage assets (NDHA) has been compiled using the following criteria for selection as informed by paragraph 197 of the NPPF (2012) and paragraph 40 of the Historic Environment government guidance (2019), along with advice published by Historic England in Advice Note 7 (2nd Edition, 2021) on local heritage listing. The criteria are:

1. The decision to include a heritage asset on this list must be based on sound evidence of their significance. This significance may be defined by age, rarity, architectural and artistic interest, group value, archaeological interest, historic interest, or landmark status;

2. The heritage asset must make a positive contribution to the communities sustainability and economic vitality; and

3. The presence of a heritage asset on this list must not prevent them from being put to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

Please note: A building identified as an NDHA is a material planning consideration, however, permitted development rights for NDHA's are no different than those of other non-statutorily listed buildings inside or outside of a conservation area.

What follows is a photographic record of each identified NDHA within the conservation area along with captioned summaries of their significance and justification for their inclusion. These are marked **orange** on the Map.

Chestnut Cottage, late 17th century
This cottage, built on the corner of the Manor Farm near Oxford Road, bears all the hallmarks of late 17th century vernacular construction in Cuxham: a central chimneystack, rubble coursed chalk clunch and brick dressings. The long sloping eyebrow dormers indicate the building was once thatched. Added for historic and group value.

Old Row House, early 19th century

This building, formerly five terraced cottages, was built for the housing of the poor until 1850. The building features prominently in the dynamic views of Oxford Road through Cuxham, owing to its long thatched roof. The grey slate covered lean-to extension along its length, visible above, is a later addition from the late 19th century. This extension is notable as its footings extend into and below the waterline of the adjacent Marlbrook. Added for historic, group and communal value.

Marlbrook Cottage, early 19th century

This cottage, joined with and contemporary to the Old Row House, was the former church cottage for the housing of the parish clerk, and later sexton. It was sold off as a private residence in 1978. The lean-to was extended to make a more spacious kitchen around the same time. The extension to the south, identified by its clay tiled roof, appears to date from the early 20th century. Added for historic, group and communal value.

Manor Farm House, parts 13th century, rebuilt 20th century
Though very little of the once impressive 12-hearth Manor House remains, the current iteration still offers the conservation area an idea of the arrangement of the manor farm complex. The present facade (above) post-dates an extensive fire at the turn of the century which saw most of the structure rebuilt, the latest alteration in a series of 19th century rebuilding work. The property would benefit from an archaeological study to understand which parts of the historic manor house are buried in the garden and remain behind later rebuilding. Added for historic value and archaeological potential.

Manor Farm Stables, mid 19th century
These stables, which are the oldest extant agricultural outbuildings besides the listed granary, have been partly rebuilt, but appear on the earliest OS maps of the manor farm. They are still today used as stables. The rear elevation is an attractive feature of the manor farm when viewed from Oxford Road (see, *Fig 24*). Added for group and aesthetic value.

Brightwell Villas, 1874

These four semi-detached villas, all built in the same year, were constructed for the housing of servants employed at Brightwell Park. They are especially unusual for their size and style in contrast to the rest of Cuxham; a reflection of their non-agricultural intentions. Added for historic value.

Lower Green Cottage, mid 18th century

The cottage appears on early OS maps as two semi-detached properties with separate gardens. It was likely inhabited by smallholders when it was first constructed around the time of enclosure. The cottage gets its name from the former Lower Green which once existed here. This area of Cuxham once had many more farms and structures for tenant farmers; none of these survive. Added for high historic, aesthetic, and group value.

Crescent House, parts late 17th century

The house was once part of the farm complex which the Half Moon Pub was once also a part. Plans indicate the oldest part of the building, fronting the road, has exceptionally thick walls which may be stone, refaced in brick. Parts of the building could be contemporary with the 17th century Half Moon Pub. What is historically known as "The Cottage" is today the rear annex of Crescent House, and likely dates from the period of refurbishment which gave Crescent House its current Georgian appearance. The original front door has been bricked up. Further study into its significance should prove fruitful. Added for historic, evidential, and group value.

For further information and advice on Conservation Areas please contact:

South Oxfordshire District Council
Abbey House
Abbey Close
Abingdon
OX14 3JE

Tel: 01235 422600
Email: planning@southoxon.gov.uk

This document will be available in large copy print, audio cassette, Braille or languages other than English subject to reasonable requests.

Copies of this document can be downloaded from www.southoxon.gov.uk

South Oxfordshire District Council

Listening Learning Leading