

# Appendix 1

## Character Assessment

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## 1. Executive Summary

This character assessment examines the building styles which have accumulated over the years indicating how they have evolved to give Lewknor Parish its unique character. This information forms part of the analysis feeding into the development of the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Lewknor Parish is a rural strip parish with three settlements. The countryside is dominated in the south-east by the Chilterns National Landscape (previously the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), which includes the Chiltern escarpment and several embedded SSSIs, and further west by the agricultural landscape of the Oxford Plain.

The three settlements of the Parish are distinct from each other and differ in their size and pattern of development over the centuries.

Lewknor, classified as a “small village” under the SODC plan, is the larger of the three settlements in the parish; it has a nucleated core, largely historic, with some later infill and linear developments. The historic core reflects how the village has evolved over time with a variety of building styles some of which are very old and some newer but each with their own characteristics. The core is contained and protected within a Conservation Area. A feature of this area is that no buildings are dominant, other than the church, and all sit comfortably with each other. In order to conserve the distinctive nature of this part of the village any development in the conservation area or adjacent to it would need to blend in with the existing buildings in terms of design, style, size, density, plot-placement and materials.

The village has grown around the core at various stages with linear extension taking place along Watlington Road and Beacon View in the inter-war years, followed by further social and private housing being added in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s on Weston Road, Barley Close and the High Street respectively. In the 1980s a site which contained a large house and an agricultural machinery and haulage contractor in Watlington Road was developed into private housing. Another small housing development was built on the Town Farm yard in the 2000s. More recently, Church Farm yard was developed in 2011, while housing on Weston Road has been further extended with a Rural Exception Site of another small group of six social housing properties in 2017. The latest development of nine houses in Manor Close in 2019 nears completion at the time of writing.

Postcombe is classified as an “other village” and sits either side of the A40. Its development from a few farm houses, some labourers’ cottages and a coaching inn on the main road has been by the addition of a mix of social and private housing development. The current village presents a variety of styles with old, new and redeveloped properties in close proximity. The area between the A40 and the motorway along Salt Lane has seen the most recent small-scale development of eight houses, which is nearing completion (2019).

South Weston is the smallest of the three settlements and differs from the other two in that it has seen little growth over the last century. Sympathetic redevelopment of individual properties has resulted in a coherent quality to the settlement whilst presenting a range of styles accumulated through the ages.

## 2. The Assessment Process

### 2.1. Methodology

This document is an overview of Lewknor Parish, covering the three settlements of Lewknor, Postcombe and South Weston together with their surrounding landscape. It is the product of a series of assessments undertaken to provide a detailed description of the built form and key environmental areas within Lewknor Parish. The assessments identify the area, the vernacular style, predominant building materials and natural or man-made features of local interest, detailing both the positive and negative features. This overview is intended to assist in defining what is of architectural, historical and environmental importance, what should be protected and to give guidance as to the form, style and location of any potential future changes.

Detailed assessments of all areas of the Parish were carried out by a working group of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group members over the period November 2017 to April 2018 (Peter Gardner, Jon Knight, Sabine Schreiner, Kayti Foster, Peter Freeman and Lesley Peel). The assessments were completed using local knowledge, direct observation and additional research, particularly maps, census data and planning documents. Supporting photographs were taken by working group members.

For the purposes of this analysis the Parish was divided into a number of areas, each of which were surveyed using the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit, which considers all elements making a contribution to the village character. Key elements include spaces, buildings, views, greenery and landscape features, and qualities such as light and dark and noise and smell. Each assessment concluded with a paragraph that aimed to capture the 'spirit of the place'.

## 2.2. Introduction

The parish of Lewknor is a rural and historic strip parish, much of which is in the Chilterns National Landscape and includes the Chiltern escarpment, Chiltern valleys and several Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve, despite its name, lies within Lewknor Parish.

The Parish contains two villages, Lewknor and Postcombe, and the hamlet of South Weston. Historically they have been farming settlements although the A40, previously the turnpike from London to Oxford, goes through the Parish resulting in coaching inns in Postcombe and at the Lambert Arms (now the Thame Lambert Hotel).

The two villages have grown in the last hundred years as small groups of houses were built; the largest development was 28 social houses at Barley Close in Lewknor built in the 1960s.

The M40, which opened in 1974, goes through the Parish from east to west. This has taken traffic off of the A40 London Road which runs through Postcombe, but has increased traffic on the B4009 which, prior to the building of the M40, went through Lewknor but now bypasses close by it. Further developments south of Lewknor risk local traffic increasing further.

## 2.3. Evolution of the Parish

There is evidence of habitation in the area as early as the Iron Age. Archaeological investigations in the early 1970s, prior to the building of the M40 motorway, documented evidence of a Romano-British settlement near the village of Lewknor and a Romano-British cemetery near the Icknield Way. Another excavation at a site near Postcombe found three Saxon graves. A bronze buckle in one of the graves dated the burials to the 7th century. Traces of a large Medieval farmhouse were found at the top of the Chilterns in the south-east of the Parish.

Important features of the parish are the routes which run through it. The Icknield Way (now forming part of the Ridgeway long distance path) dates back to at least the Iron Age and leads through the parish along the foot of the Chiltern escarpment at about 500 feet above sea level. Further into the plain, the Lower Icknield way follows a roughly parallel route and may date from Roman times. Resting places for travellers on these routes were followed by developments at the foot of the escarpment, generally attracted by useful natural resources such as the spring which continues to rise in the allotments at Lewknor.

An open field system prevailed in the parish until the Georgian era when the Inclosure Act for the parish was passed and consequently put into effect in 1815.

Lewknor Parish sits within the Lewknor Hundred, which also included the parishes of Chinnor, Emmington, Sydenham, Crowell, Aston Rowant, Adwell and Britwell Salome. A hundred is an administrative area of nominally 100 hides dating from the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries although some have earlier origins.

The strip parish of Lewknor was once far larger, including three townships or divisions: Lewknor, Postcombe and Lewknor Uphill. Lewknor Uphill consisted of three detached parts in the Chiltern Hills: Ackhampstead, Cadmore End and Studdridge. Ackhampstead was transferred to Buckinghamshire by the Counties (Detached Parts) Act 1844. Cadmore End became a separate parish in 1852 and Studdridge was transferred to Stokenchurch, but both places remained in Oxfordshire until they were transferred to Buckinghamshire in 1896.

In 1954 South Weston was merged into Lewknor parish.

Nowadays, the B4009 is the route motorists travelling along the edge of the Chilterns will be familiar with. It is crossed by the A40 road from Oxford to London which runs through Postcombe and for part of its route forms the northern boundary of the parish. With the opening of the M40 in 1974 the new through-route diminished the importance of the A40, thereby reducing the traffic through Postcombe, while the B4009 gained importance due to the motorway junction which allowed access to the villages in adjoining parishes.

### Lewknor

An indication of the age of Lewknor comes from 'Leofeca', an Anglo-Saxon owner and 'ora' meaning a flat-topped hill with a convex shoulder, referring to Beacon Hill - a reference

point for travellers on the Icknield Way. The first reference to the name Lewknor is circa 990, recorded at that time as the home of a witness involved in a lawsuit.

Lewknor village started as a Saxon spring line settlement near the foot of the Chilterns chalk escarpment. In the 11th century the manor of Luvechenora was held by Edith of Wessex, who in 1045 became queen consort of Edward the Confessor. The manor then passed to a Danish thegn of King Edward named Tovi, who bequeathed it to Abingdon Abbey. For most of the middle ages the abbey leased out Lewknor manor, until the abbey was suppressed in 1538 in the dissolution of the monasteries. All Souls College, Oxford became involved with the Parish when in 1440 it acquired the patronage of the church previously held by the abbey. It became a major landowner and benefactor in the Parish before the end of the 17th century and remains a major landowner in modern times.

Documentary and architectural evidence indicates the parish church, now a Grade I listed building, was built sometime between 1146 and 1200 at the centre of the village. It was dedicated to Saint Mary but at a later date was rededicated to Saint Margaret. It was originally a cruciform building with a chancel, nave, north and south chapels and a west tower. The chancel arch, north chapel, two lancet windows in the nave, the font and some other features survive from this time.

The village had 43 houses recorded for the hearth tax in 1662. In 1685 the village consisted of yeomen's houses, a few farmsteads, the main farms being the lord of the manor's Town Farm and the rector's Church Farm, some cottages, a smithy, and the inn called the 'Leather Bottle'. There may well also have been some lesser cottages which would not have been rated for the hearth tax.

The village acquired a school in 1836, when All Souls College provided two cottages to become the school buildings.

The major houses of Lewknor were north-west of the current centre of the village; Nethercote House and Moor Court can both be traced back to the Domesday Book, whereas the Manor House, of which only a largely rebuilt wing remains, is not mentioned until 1598. Nethercote House burnt down in 1871 and was not rebuilt; the sizeable hamlet, which had provided homes for the estate workers, disappeared.

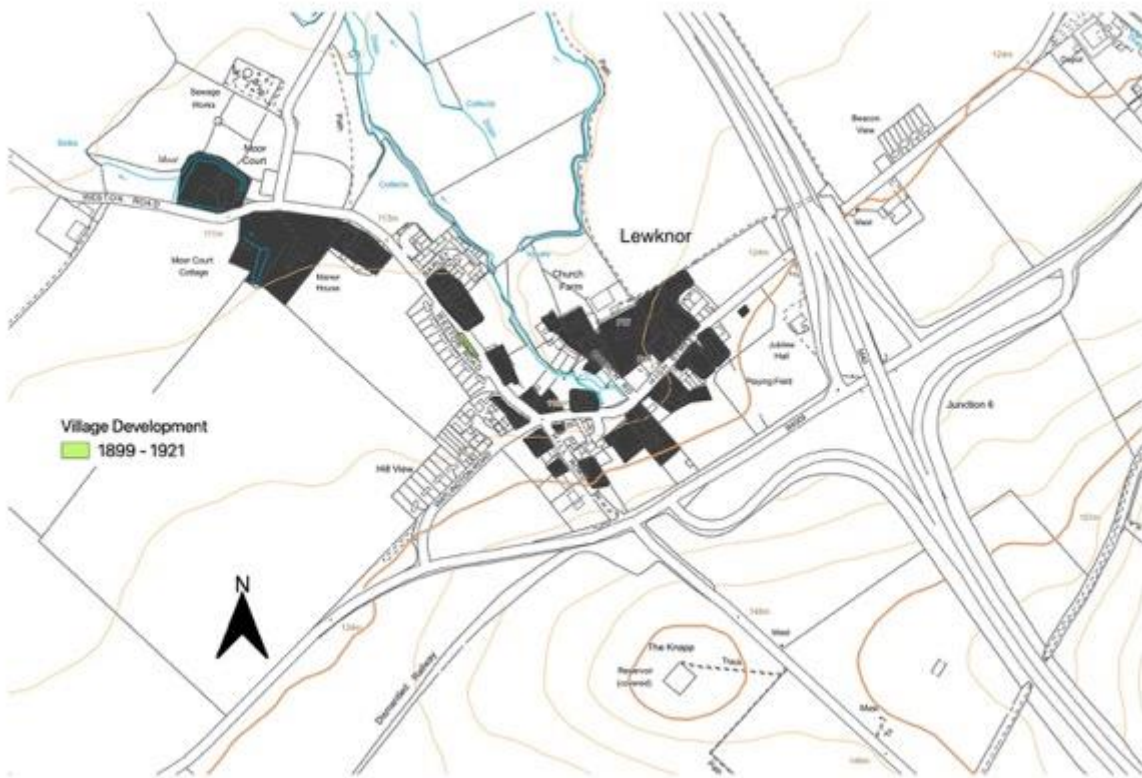
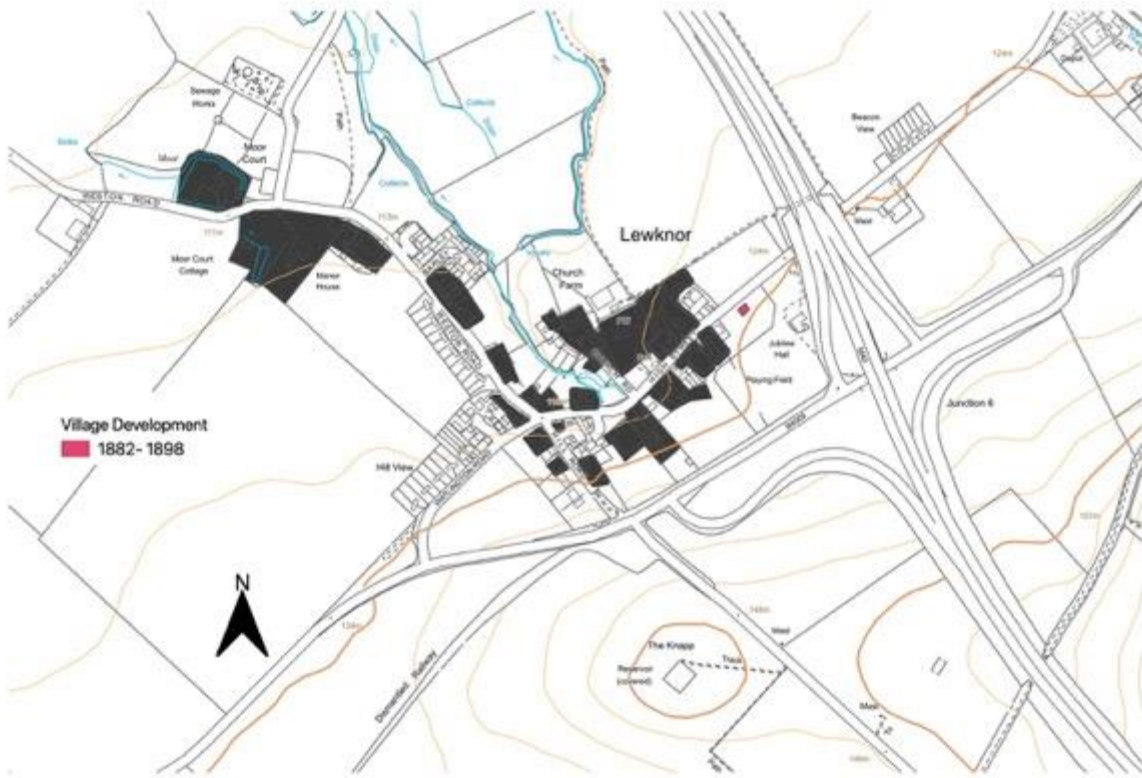
Between 1869 and 1872 the Watlington and Princes Risborough Railway was built through the parish. It ran directly past the village but Lewknor Bridge Halt was not built until 1906. British Railways withdrew passenger services and closed the halt in 1957. When the motorway was being built, circa 1974, part of the former railway track bed was used to divert the B4009 to bypass the village and provide space for a motorway junction; at which time the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundary (now the Chilterns National Landscape boundary) was redrawn along the new line of the B4009 replacing the old boundary which ran through the centre of the village along the High Street and Watlington Road.

Figure 1 shows the stages in the development of the village sourced from a variety of maps dating back to 1830. The coloured areas are the additional buildings that were added during the stated period

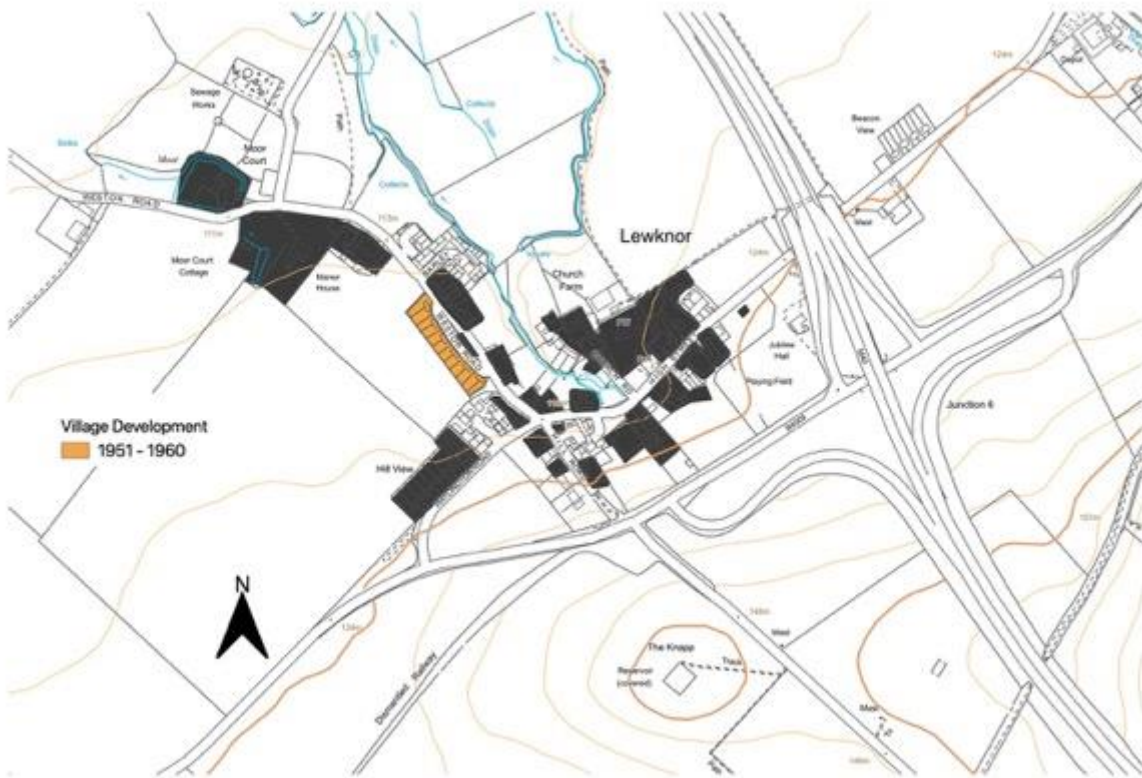


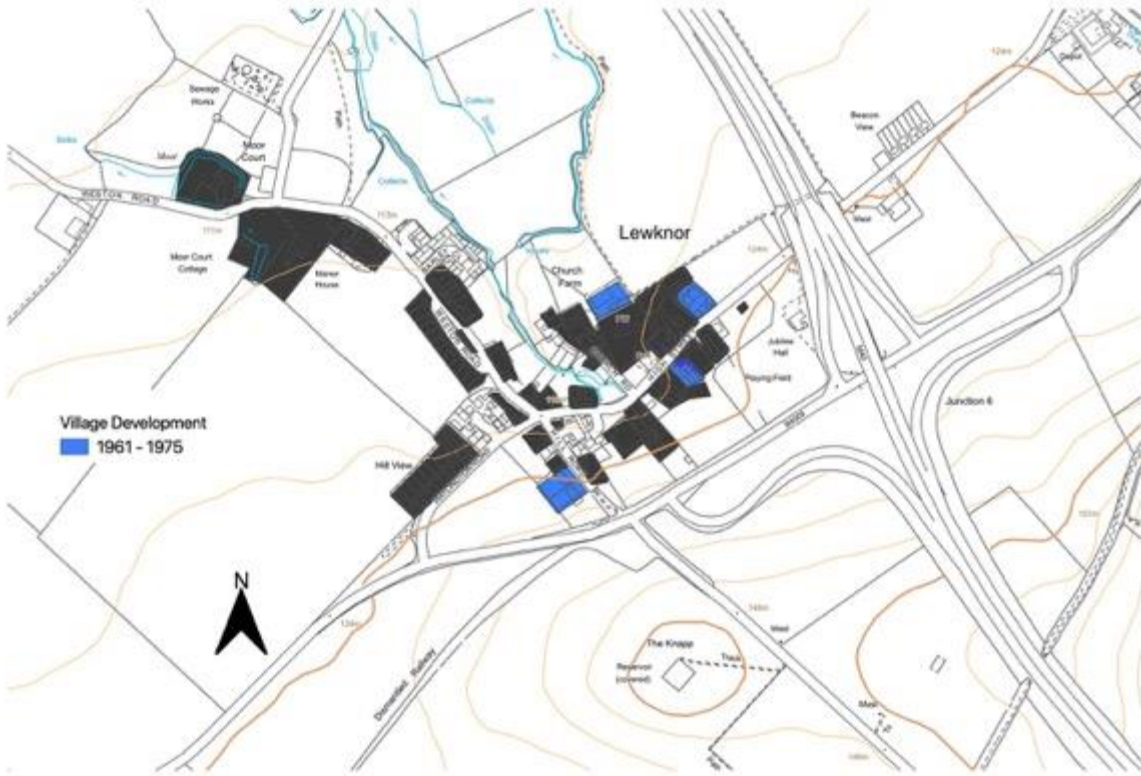
FIGURE 1 DEVELOPMENT OF LEWKNOR VILLAGE THROUGH TIME COMPILED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES SHOWN ON ELEVEN MAPS (THERE WAS NO DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN 1938 AND 1950)



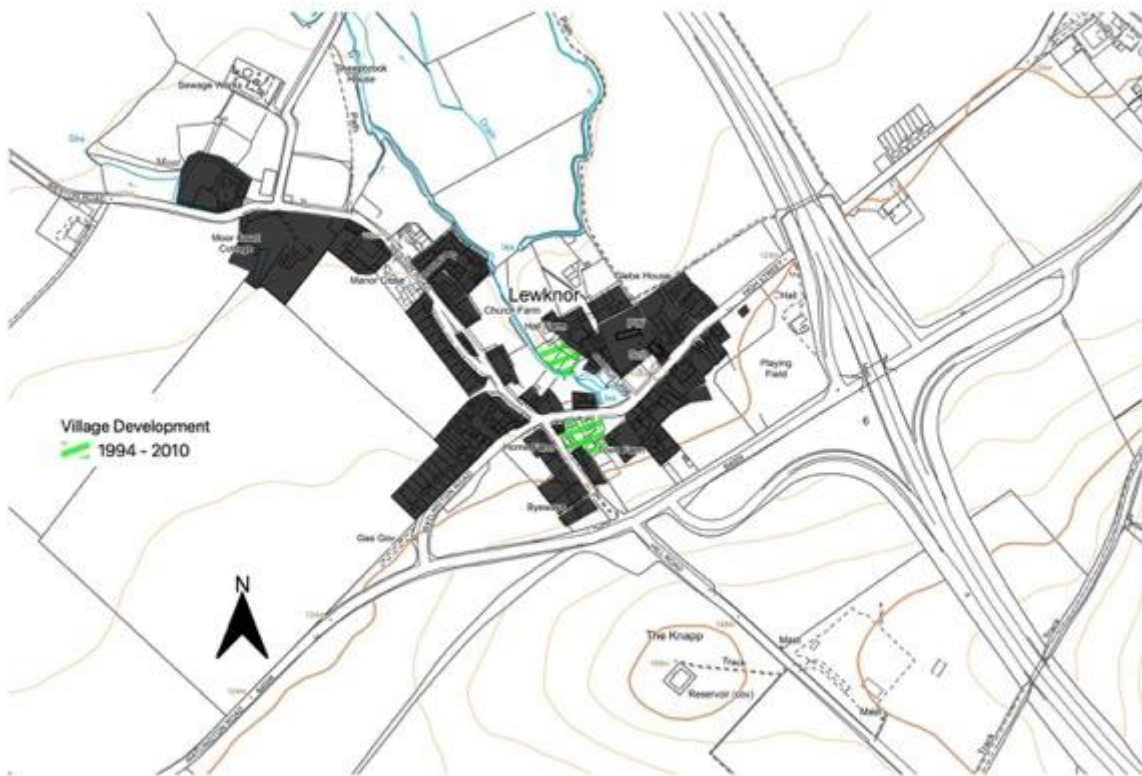
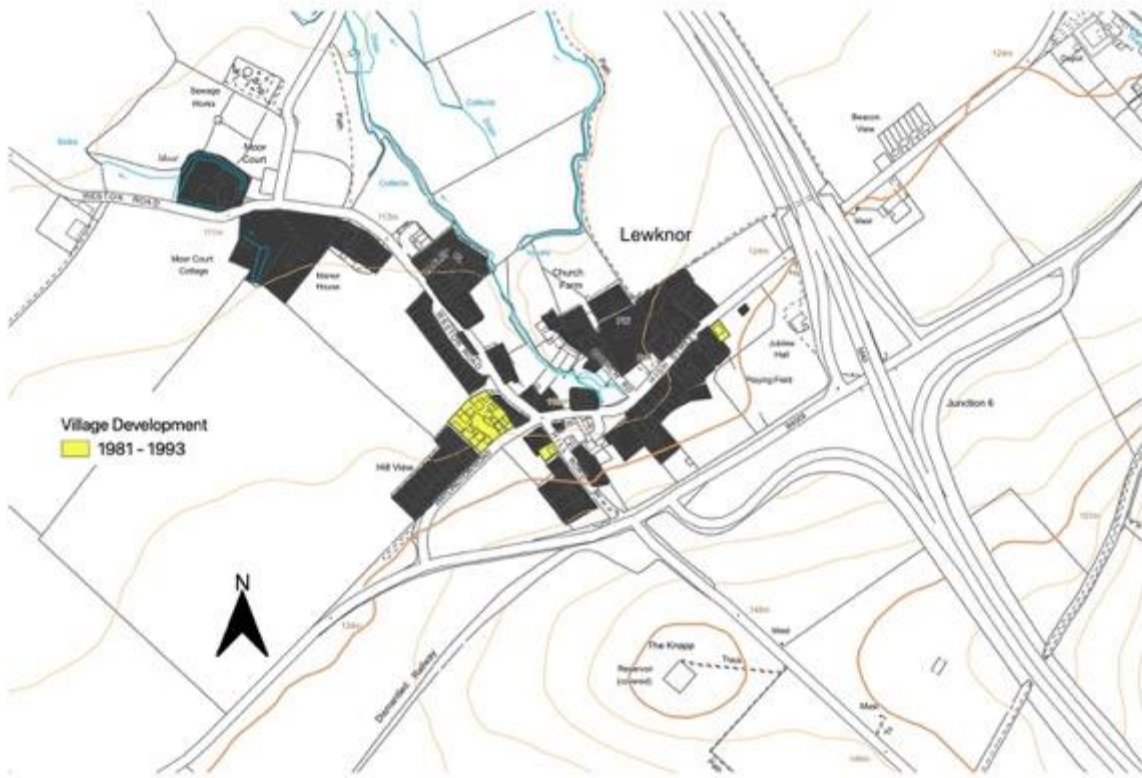


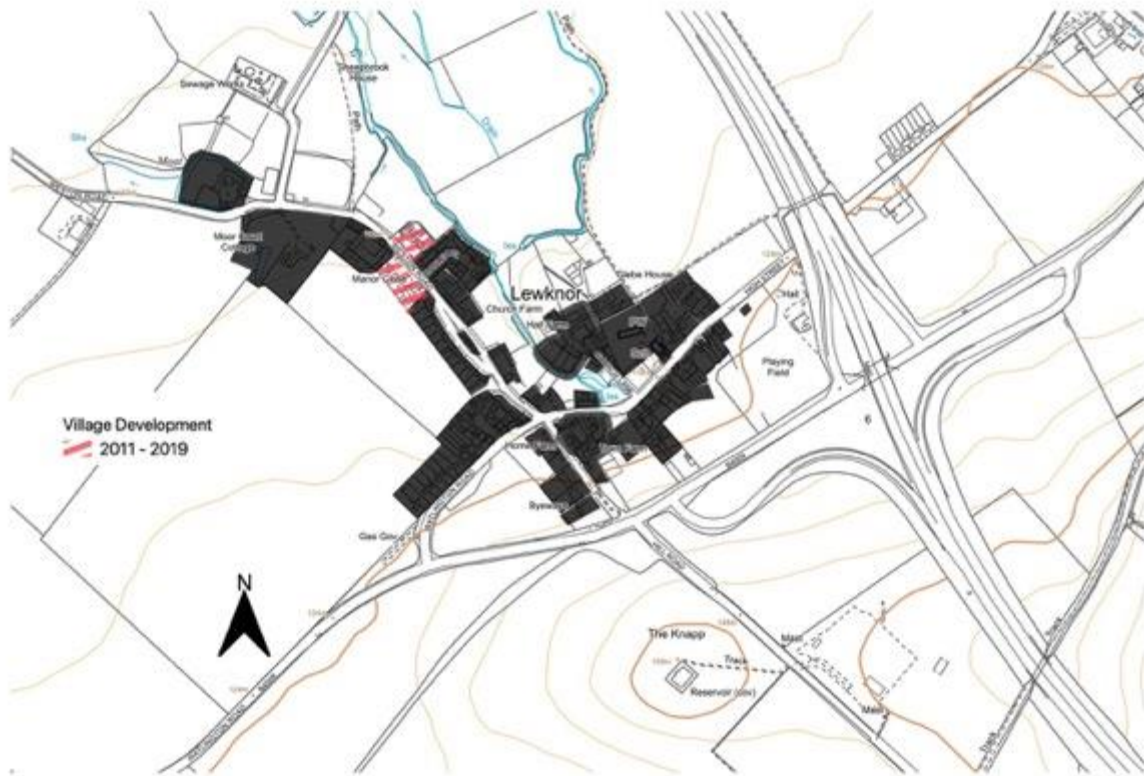












The designation of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1965 (renamed a National Landscape on 22 November 2023) meant that any development in Lewknor had to take account of the village's proximity to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Another important influence on the village's recent development occurred in the 1970s with the definition of the Conservation Area.

### Postcombe

Postcombe was called Postelcumbe in 1279.

Postcombe has always been smaller than Lewknor. Originally it consisted of several large farms and housing for their workers. In 1662 the village was recorded as having 10 houses, some of which, although in Postcombe, were situated in detached parts of Adwell parish. In 1734 a public house called The Feathers was recorded which has since been renamed the England's Rose. Current house names indicate that in the past Postcombe had a bakery and a post office. The 1920s saw expansion of the village alongside the London Road.

Figure 2 shows the stages in the development of the village sourced from a variety of maps dating back to 1830. The coloured areas are the additional buildings that were added during the stated period

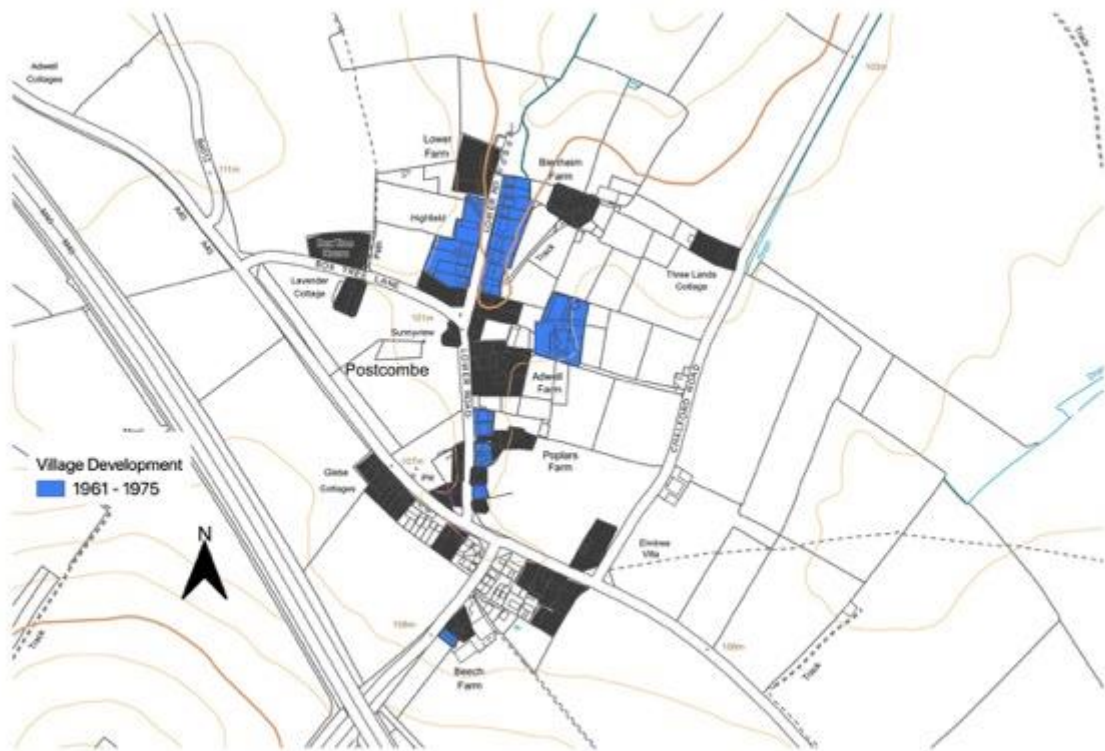
FIGURE 2 DEVELOPMENT OF POSTCOMBE VILLAGE THROUGH TIME COMPILED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES SHOWN ON NINE MAPS (THERE WAS NO DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN 1882 AND 1898, 1921 AND 1938 OR 1994 AND 2010)

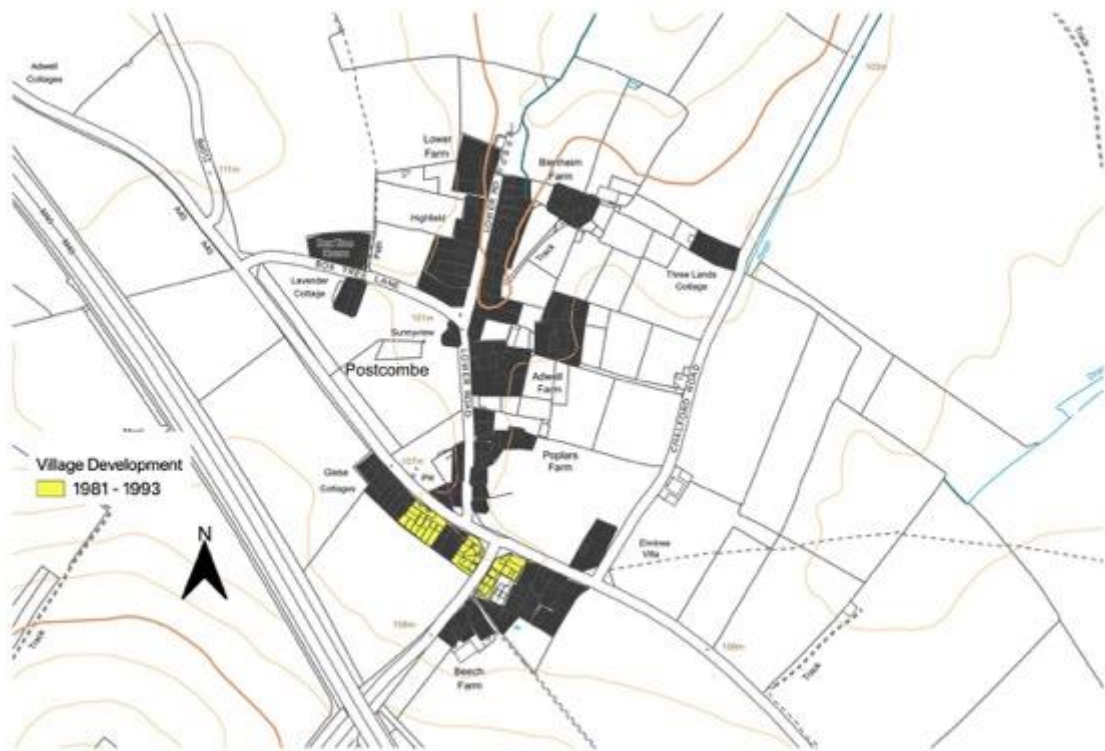
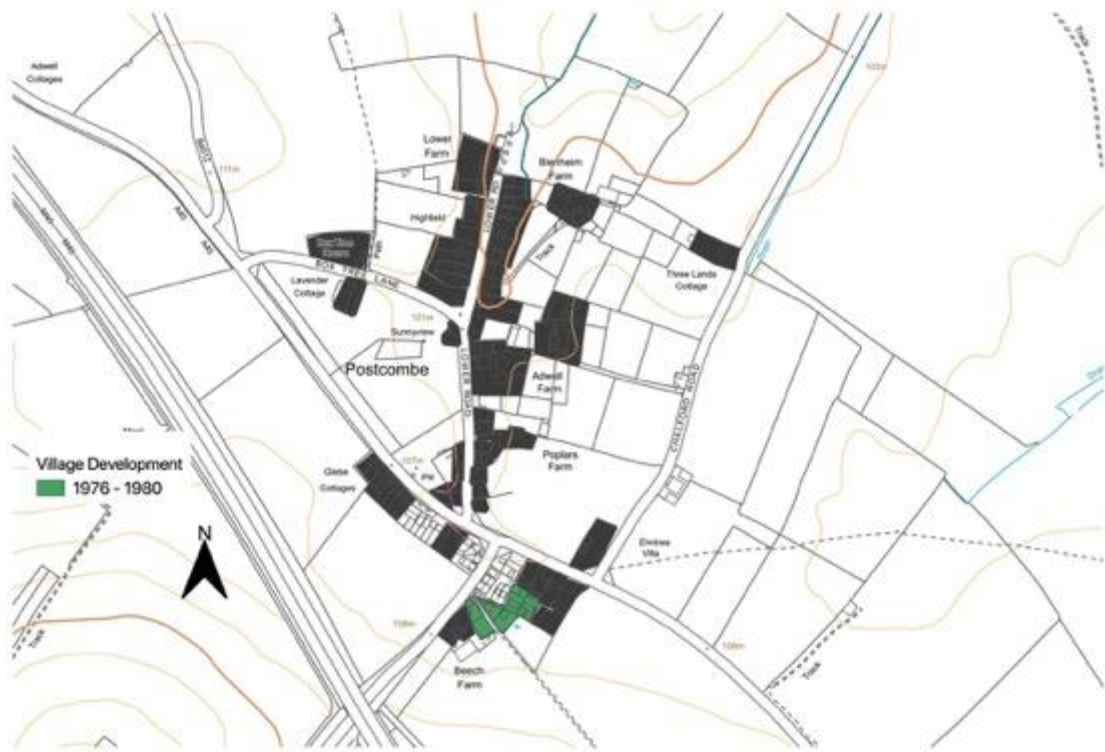


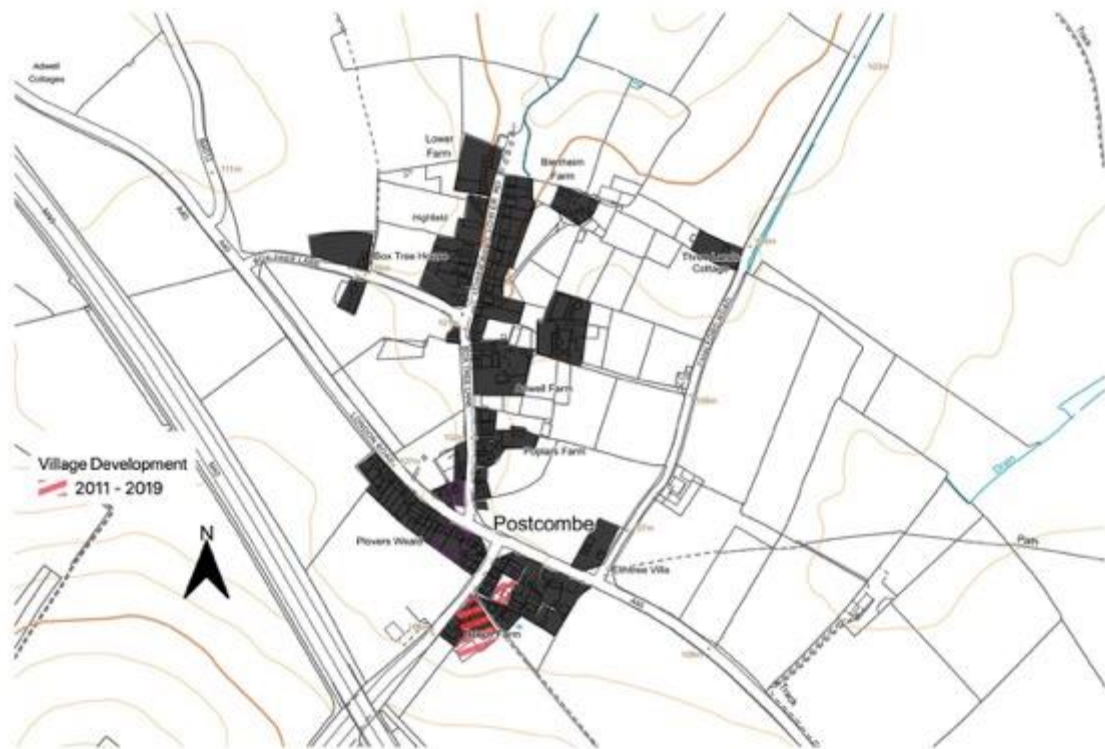












## South Weston

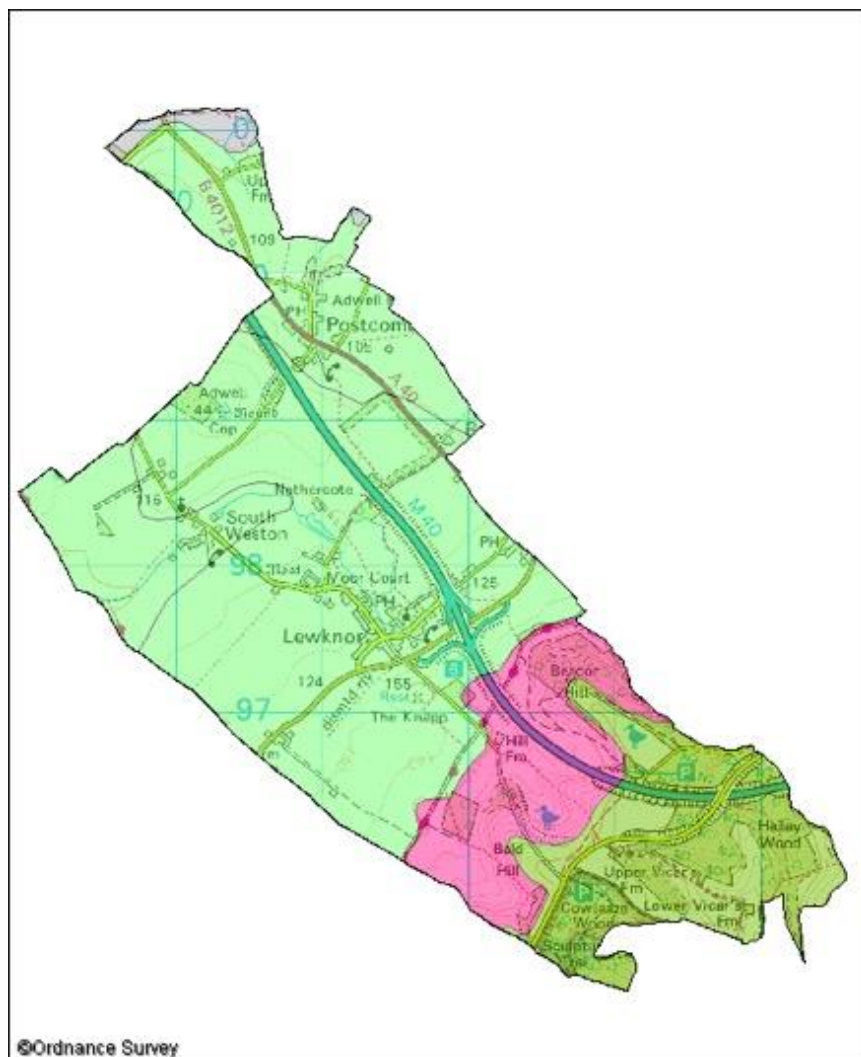
South Weston Parish was assessed in the Domesday Book of 1086, in which a mill was recorded, and also in the Hundred Rolls of 1279. In the 17th century there was a manor house, rectory, four large farmhouses and four other houses according to the hearth tax records. A non-conformist chapel and a public house, later named the Salisbury Arms, were built circa 1600. After the chapel became unused, it was converted into a barn for the use of the public house owners. The church of Saint Lawrence was built in 1860, incorporating some elements of the previous Norman church. The font dates from the 13th century, and there is a 14th-century tomb recess in the north wall of the chancel. Until the mid 19th century the church had strong links with The Queen's College, Oxford. At the end of the 18th century there were 24 houses recorded in the village, but the population declined and by 1960 several of the old houses had disappeared.

South Weston Parish was merged into Lewknor parish in 1954. The public house was converted into a house in 1982.



## 2.4. The Parish Today

The current Parish of Lewknor is long and narrow, typical of strip parishes which run up into the Chilterns. At its broadest it is two miles wide and it is five miles in length from the south-east in the Chiltern valleys north-west to the rolling countryside of the Oxford plain. The major roads in the Parish are the M40, A40 and B4009. Various other minor roads, lanes, bridleways and footpaths link the settlements of the Parish.



The total area of the Parish is 1,313 hectares, but fewer than 40 hectares are within the settlements, therefore the parish is predominantly rural.

The Parish's three settlements, Lewknor, Postcombe and South Weston, have 175, 89 and 18 dwellings respectively, equating to 92% of the residential addresses of the Parish. The majority of properties, 73%, are privately owned, either wholly or in part; 46% of housing is detached, 34% semi-detached, 18% terraced and 2% flats. A majority of properties, 68%, have a rural view to either front or rear from within them.

Commercial sites in the Parish include two pubs, an hotel, a shop (currently supplying soft furnishings), a petrol station selling basic groceries, two office sites and three sites related to the motor trade.

In total there are only seven street lights in the Parish, centred around the B4009 crossings. Within the settlements there is no street lighting and relatively little light pollution from either residential or commercial properties. It is a key characteristic of the settlements and allows for magnificent views of the night skies. Despite the absence of lighting, the settlements feel safe at night; hand torches are used to light the way when necessary.

Public transport facilities are better for those travelling into Oxford or London or accessing international airports than for those needing to access local facilities. For this reason, car ownership is practically essential, indeed census returns show that multiple car ownership per household is common. As a result, traffic varies according to time and day of the week however outside commuting and school start and finish times the level of activity in the villages is generally low and the impact of traffic is fairly limited.

The westerly end of Lewknor village bears traffic needing access to the nearby hamlets of South Weston and Adwell via Weston Road. Other roads in the village are no-through way and tend to service vehicular access to properties only. Users of the village hall, church and school generate some non-residential traffic along the High Street. Postcombe has through traffic on the A40 but only local traffic on its side roads. Some drivers use South Weston as a short cut.

The motorway which bisects the parish provides good access to the Midlands and to London, adding to the area's popularity, despite traffic noise from the motorway, the A40 and B4009.

### 3. The Character of the Parish

Lewknor Parish has three identifiable settlements and a number of properties spread throughout the surrounding countryside, part of which is within the Chiltern National Landscape. It is a landscape which is dominated by the Chiltern escarpment to the southeast and the gently rolling Oxford plain to the northwest. Lewknor is classified as a small village in the South Oxfordshire District Council local plan. Postcombe is classified as an “other village” and the hamlet of South Weston is unclassified. The mix of settlement features and their surrounding countryside gives the area its distinctly rural character which many are keen to conserve.



*Across the Parish from Bald Hill with Lewknor in middle distance on right, South Weston further away in the middle of the view and Postcombe to the right in the distance*

#### 3.1. General Description

##### Lewknor

On entering Lewknor from the B4009 along Watlington Road there are 1920s built houses on the left and dense hedging to the right. The land dips toward the village centre with mature trees and the church tower rising above the rooftops of buildings in the Conservation Area. From the central crossroads, the High Street, Weston Road and Hill Road radiate outwards.

The view into the Conservation Area along the High Street is of an attractive flat, curving, tree-lined road with houses from several eras on both sides. On the left in a dip before Church Lane there are allotments where, in the past, watercress beds were fed from the spring that rises there. Church Lane leads to the original 14th century Church Farm buildings and barns. As the High Street straightens under an arch formed by the older, preserved trees on either side of the road the 12th century Church of St Margaret is visible to the left

across the school playground. Facing the church is the 19th century Old Rectory and 18<sup>th</sup> century Old Vicarage and the Old Coach House. Past the part-thatched school, the conservation area continues along the High Street with an 18th century terrace of brick and flint cottages, one of which housed the former post office and telephone exchange. Facing these is the Old Fox, a former public house. Amongst the final houses in the conservation area is the regency-styled Wyckham House.

Over time, infill developments have been built, some of which are within the Conservation Area. Some properties built shortly before the Conservation Area was designated were excluded due to their unsympathetic styling, which followed the design trends of their time rather than the local vernacular.

Prior to the M40 being built, the High Street continued on past 1930s housing at Beacon View to exit onto the A40 at the Lambert Arms. The building of the motorway created two no-through roads linked by an underpass with restricted use.

From the crossroads, Hill Road leads east between the 17th century Old Forge and the listed Home Farm. It rises past a recent terrace of sympathetically styled infill houses which face the Old Bakery and then past houses of varying ages and styles. At the end of the road steps continue through a small wooded area to the B4009. Hill Road was divided by the B4009 rerouting and its route now continues into the Chilterns National Landscape and ascends the Chiltern Escarpment.

Weston Road leads off of the crossroads opposite Hill Road and passes, on its right, two 19<sup>th</sup> century brick and flint cottages and Knapp Farm before going past Knapp Farm orchard which faces a crescent of houses on the left hand side of the road. On the right there follows a row of Victorian houses before the turning for Barley Close. Opposite Barley Close Lewknor's newest housing development, Manor Close, is nearing completion. A recent development of new social housing is on the right just before the village boundary. Along the road toward South Weston is a detached part of the conservation area which includes the Manor House and Moor Court. Nethercote Lane, leads off to the right past Nethercote before becoming a bridleway which passes under the motorway and on towards the A40. Slightly further along Weston Road, there are barns used for commercial rather than agricultural purposes.

On the four main roads in the village, where buildings are on one side of the road there are either none opposite or those that tend to be set back giving a sense of space and openness to the road. This gives a subtle yet defining character to the village that adds to its attractiveness and timelessness.

## Postcombe

Postcombe sits astride the A40. There are a few business premises along the A40 which result from its former importance as the main road from London to Oxford prior to the construction of the M40 in the 1970s. Property styles along the A40 range from the 17th century public house through 1920s social and private housing to more recent developments. Most of Postcombe's older buildings are to be found on Box Tree Lane and

Lower Road to the north of London Road; the properties are of a wide variety ages and styles. Salt Lane on the south of London Road has seen the majority of recent development with the Beech Farm site still under construction.

### South Weston

The hamlet of South Weston is made up of small groups of houses interspersed by fields, giving it a very open feel. Arriving in South Weston from the direction of Lewknor, Manor Farm is to the right, opposite its farmyard. Rectory Lane then leads off to the left whilst Weston Road continues uphill past Salisbury Lodge, further housing, and St Lawrence's Church. Two further properties are situated past the junction with Salt Lane.

### Countryside

The Parish of Lewknor is a rural strip parish; historically Chiltern strip parishes contained a cross section of countryside types and resources, from the clay vale through downland and seasonal pasture on the Chiltern hills to valleys in the Chilterns. Much of the Parish is in the Chilterns National Landscape which includes the Chiltern escarpment, Chiltern valleys and several Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve, which is also a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the European Union's Habitats Directive, lies within the Parish, despite being named after the neighbouring parish. Below the Chiltern escarpment the Parish is rural farmland with what were, and to an extent still are, three farming settlements.



## 4. Detailed Assessment

### 4.1. Lewknor

#### The Lewknor Conservation Area

Unusually, Lewknor's Conservation Area is divided into two sections; the main section, which is detailed initially, is the nucleated core of an historically important Chiltern village, separated by properties in Weston Road which do not form part of the Conservation Area, from a smaller area of three properties of historic interest, dealt with below.

The quintessential village scene includes many visually interesting residential properties, a 12th century church, a medieval barn, a thatched primary school and a country pub at the heart, retaining the rural character and special sense of place.

The Conservation Area is nestled in a dip, therefore the longest views into the village are limited to those of the tallest buildings, trees and varying levels of roof-lines.

The long view along the High Street is of an attractive flat, curving, tree-lined road with houses from several eras. As the High Street straightens past the school there is almost an arch formed by the older trees on either side of the road before it continues past further brick and flint houses.

The church is visible from most of the village. The oldest properties in Church Lane have excellent views of the Church but of little beyond, whereas many of the other properties also enjoy views of open farmland and countryside.



*St Margaret's Church, Lewknor*

Immediately behind many of the properties in the Conservation Area are grazing pastures and fields. These are as important to the character of the Conservation Area as the properties themselves as they provide reminders of the farming history of the village.

A stream rising from springs bisects the Conservation Area which includes low lying allotments bordered by water cress beds; this watercourse is an important habitat for all manner of waterfowl and other wildlife.

The centre of the Conservation Area is fairly flat and, as it is lower in level than other areas of the village, it collects run-off, occasionally resulting in excess surface water. Periodically, rising groundwater levels cause flooding to the cellars of two of the oldest properties.

The housing is generally well spaced and low density. The roads are wide and gently curving and the area is mainly light and open with some gentle shade provided by the many and various deciduous trees, hedges, and a dominant Scots pine. Mature horse chestnut and beech trees overarch parts of the High Street by the primary school. Church Lane and the first stretch of Weston Road are narrow and overhung with trees. Birdsong is clearly audible throughout the Conservation Area.



*High Street*

There is no street lighting and therefore no light pollution which allows for magnificent night sky views. The village feels safe and quiet at night; hand torches are used to light the way when necessary. Bats are a common sight in the village after dark.

Although the traffic varies according to day of the week and time of day, the level of activity is low and the impact of traffic is fairly limited. The western end of the village bears traffic needing access to nearby villages of South Weston, Adwell & Postcombe, and provides continued access, from both Watlington Road and Weston Road, into the heart of the village. The High Street beyond the church provides vehicular access to properties but

allows no through traffic heading eastwards; users of the village hall generate the only additional non-residential traffic. Parked cars can cause passing issues. Low to medium level noise from M40 traffic can often be heard within the area, depending on wind direction.

The Conservation Area is predominantly residential, with only a pub, a soft furnishing shop, the church, and primary school on the High Street and a small area of office space occupying a single storey converted barn and a converted Grade I listed barn in Church Lane.

The Conservation Area is used by villagers, those using the church or school facilities, and those enjoying recreation such as cyclists, ramblers, dog walkers and customers of the Leathern Bottle pub.

The Conservation Area is well maintained. Houses are generally in a good state of repair and none are derelict. The buildings have been built gradually over the centuries and occupy varying plot sizes according to era and original use. The alignment is somewhat haphazard in places due to organic growth and infill over time. Rear gardens within the Conservation Area range from very small to large.

The buildings significantly contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. The area has a charming higgledy-piggledy appearance which has evolved from the organic growth through the ages and now provides a framework to the heart of the village. Some areas do not have any pavements.

The buildings in the Conservation Area predominantly follow the Chiltern design model of brick and flint and most are in the region of 200 years old. The Leathern Bottle pub is, however, 17<sup>th</sup> century albeit with alterations made in the Victorian era. Parts of the Church of St. Margaret date from the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Roofs are pitched and are typically clay tiled, occasionally slated or thatched. The roofline is haphazard and characterful in places due to the age of the buildings and the irregular alignment on plots.

Newer infills have been built sympathetically using brick and flint and blend well with the many historical buildings. The buildings within the Conservation Area are of two storeys, other than the Old Vicarage which has three storeys, and are a blend of terraced, semi-detached and detached.





*Modern brick & flint infill properties*

The buildings within the Conservation Area are predominantly cottagey and modest in size and in keeping with each other. Buildings which have formerly been places of trade, work, or tied to a profession such as the Old Forge, the former rectory (now divided into The Old Vicarage at the front and The Old Rectory to the rear), the Old Post Office and a former public house have been sympathetically converted into homes. An old bakery now serves as a garage to a home built in the 1980s.



*Vernon Cottage was once a row of cottages*

Although it is generally apparent where a building has been altered, these alterations have been made sympathetically in most cases, such as where bricked up doors and windows are visible and doors have been converted into windows. Some properties show evidence that they have previously been small cottages knocked together into one larger property.

Only along the High Street does the size of building give a hint as their bygone value to the community, the former rectory being significantly larger than one might expect to find in a parish the size of the current Lewknor parish. Farmhouses usually recognise the prosperity of the farms and those within the conservation area are neither small nor hidden from view.

The first building you notice on entering Lewknor's Conservation Area is the 17th century Leathern Bottle pub (grade II listed); built of colourwashed brick with clay tiled roof, it retains many of its original features.



*Leathern Bottle Pub*

On the opposite corner of the crossroads is Home Farm (grade II listed); previously three cottages and dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it has a timber frame with brick and flint rubble infills and a thatched roof.



*Home Farm*



The Old Forge is a 19<sup>th</sup> century brick and flint building opposite the pub, opening directly onto the street.



*The Old Forge*

Further along the High Street on the right, an early 2000s terrace of three cottages and a shop, now selling soft furnishings, form part of the development of the Town Farm yard. On the other side of the road is a Victorian terrace of four brick houses dating from around 1880.



*High Street just past the Leathern Bottle*

Town Farm (grade II listed) is early to mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, and was extended circa 1790, with rendered front and sides and is set back from the road on a slight elevation. Three more

houses can be found on this side of the road with three more up a small lane. Two of the houses on the High Street face onto the village allotments.



*Town Farm*

Along Church Lane the first house on the right is No 2, a small early 19<sup>th</sup> century cottage (grade II listed). Next are a pair of semi-detached brick cottages followed by a block of white rendered properties. On the other side of the road is a brick and flint house behind a fence.

On the left in what was the Church Farm yard there are a pair of semi-detached houses and one detached house built around 2011. On the right is Hall Barn (otherwise known as the Great Barn or Church Farm Barn), a 14<sup>th</sup> century barn with 20<sup>th</sup> century weatherboarding (grade I listed). It is believed to have originally been built as a house and later converted to a barn. It was probably built by Abingdon Abbey and acquired by All Souls College in 1440 together with other land. It and other adjoining barns are used as offices. Next to these barns is a wood barn with slate roof on staddle stones. Straight ahead is the brick faced Church Farm (grade II listed), which probably has a 16<sup>th</sup> century core. Beyond that is an L shaped house, built in 2011.



*Hall Barn*

The earliest building in the Conservation Area is the 12th century Church of St Margaret (grade I listed). The church was enlarged in the decorated gothic style in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and has had various changes since then. The building is built of flint rubble with limestone ashlar dressings.



*St Margaret's Church*

Facing the church and dating from the 18th Century is the Old Vicarage with the Old Rectory behind (both grade II listed). This has a colourwashed brick front with sides of brick. To the south of this is the early 18<sup>th</sup> century Old Coach House (grade II listed), built of flint rubble with brick dressings.





*The School*

Funding from All Souls College in the early 19th century allowed for the conversion of two old cottages (grade II listed) into the school. This is built of flint rubble with brick dressings; part of the roof is thatched, while the rest is tiled. A wooden extension has been built next to the road.

There is a slightly more recent terrace of cottages on the High Street immediately beyond the school, one of which housed the former post office and telephone exchange. Facing this is the Old Fox, a former public house. Further along the High Street are early 20th century additions which have been built in a sympathetic style.



*Lewknor school and playground*



*Row of 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages and the Old Fox*

Beyond the Church there is a more linear feel to the Conservation Area, however the historical area is interspersed with unsympathetic infill around which the Conservation Area boundaries are drawn. An example of appropriate infill would be that on the former Church Farm yard, where a small development of new houses was built around 2011. There are two semi-detached, and one detached house before the Farm and one L shaped detached house just beyond it. All are of brick construction, but the materials blend well with their older surroundings.

The spaces to the fronts of the residential properties vary in size but are in the most-part fairly modest; some front doors open directly onto the pavement. The area has many pretty gardens many planted with shrubbery and trees. Brick and flint walls, and low fencing and hedging are most evident means of enclosure. Traditional builds mean that many properties lack garages and private driveway space which leads to street parking.

From the crossroads the view of Hill Road rises to a small wooded area towards the east. The view along Watlington Road leading out of the village has dense hedging on the left with brick and flint houses on the right.

To the west of the crossroads in Weston Road, Vernon Cottage, originally a row of workers cottages dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is constructed of brick and flint and its back wall shows examples of bricked up windows and doorways.





*Weston Road from the crossroads*



*Weston Road looking towards the crossroads*

Number 8 Weston Road is another 19<sup>th</sup> century brick and flint property converted from two semi-detached properties.

Knapp Farm (grade II listed) which dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century is in colourwashed brick with some timber framing. Its late 18<sup>th</sup> century weather boarded barn and brick stables (grade II listed) sit in the large grounds, while its former orchard is now a paddock allowing views towards the church.



*Knapp Farm*



*Knapp Farm Barn*

#### *Summary of significance*

This section of the Conservation Area forms the historic core of the village and contains many attractive buildings, including those which are listed.

#### *Development in the area*

Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan aim to ensure that any development in the area should be in keeping with the historic buildings in its vicinity and not impact on the overall low density feel of this area of the village.



### The smaller part of Lewknor Conservation Area - Manor House and Moor Court

On either side of Weston Road, just past the Lewknor village entrance sign, the second part of the Conservation Area encompasses Moor Court and the Manor House (both grade II listed). In comparison to the majority of properties in the main Conservation Area, these two are fairly typical country houses due to their large plots with private gated driveways and wide views of the countryside. The Manor House dates to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and was remodelled and refronted in 1866. It is rendered with a tile roof.



*The Manor House*

Moor Court is a late 17<sup>th</sup> century brick building, probably with earlier origins. It is a former farmhouse in a courtyard partially bounded by an early medieval moat, which is visible along the side of the road passing the property. Within the property boundaries are pastures and well-maintained gardens containing mature trees.

The third residential property in this area is the brick and flint Moor Court Cottage. The rural feel of this area is enhanced by the grass banked verges with ditches before the boundary hedgerows.



*Moor Court*

In the corner of the farmyard on the Lewknor side of this area is a barn, which is the only part of the farmyard in the conservation area. This building has been unsympathetically altered in the past.

#### *Summary of significance*

This small section of the Conservation Area contains some of the most important historic houses in the village which are set in large plots surrounded by open farmland.

#### *Development in the area*

Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan aim to ensure that development in this area will only be supported if they accord with policies of the Local Plan that manage development in the countryside as the area is outside the Lewknor Settlement Boundary, due to the historic nature of these buildings and their settings, and the fact no other houses in the village adjoin them.

#### **Watlington Road**

Watlington Road is the main road into the village from the B4009 and contains houses built over an 80-year period. The houses are set back in large plots and are only on one side of the road giving a rural feel to the entry to the village.

As you enter the village you first pass, on the left, eight semi-detached mock-Tudor 1920s houses with red tiled roofs which were originally built as council houses although some are now privately owned. These are set back from, and below the level of, the road therefore reducing the impact on their surroundings.



*Watlington Road looking towards the village*

Next there are four semi-detached houses built in the 1920s by the owner of the house where Lewknor Close is now sited. These were built for his four sons and are in red brick with slate roofs.

Each of these houses has an open outlook over a field in front to the Chiltern Hills and over a field behind towards the Manor House and South Weston. The properties are sufficiently spaced that the fields can be viewed from the road, further enhancing the rural feel.

Between these properties and the edge of the Conservation Area a development of 14 houses, a mix of detached and semi-detached, were built in the 1990s. Some facing onto Watlington Road are faced in brick and flint while others situated around a short close, Lewknor Close, are in various styles of brick and flint or brick and black wood cladding. Some have attached garages while others have garages in separate blocks, and all have tiled roofs. The road surface of the main part of the close is in herringbone block paving. Although the development tends to be more suburban in appearance it has been considerably designed and the use of brick and flint on Watlington Road fits the style of the village.



*View from in Lewknor Close looking towards far end*



*View up Watlington Road from crossroads*

#### *Summary of significance*

Although of varying styles, the spread out nature of the older houses and the sympathetic design of the newer houses on Watlington Road gives a pleasing entry to the village.

#### *Development in the area*

Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan aim to ensure that any development in the area should not impact on the rural low density feel of this entrance to the village and should be sympathetic in design to adjoining houses.



## Hill Road

Hill Road is an informal village road part of which is single track, a no thoroughfare of approximately 140 metres, bounded by 12, predominantly detached, homes of varying age, individual style and scale; occupying plots of varying size, shape and elevation with a feeling of green space around them. The building materials are a mix of traditional brick and flint and straight brick with colour variations to both the brick work and roof tiles. All properties have gardens to the front and rear, some relatively large, contained by fencing, vegetation or brick walls; most have driveways and garages. There is secondary traffic noise from the M40 and B4009.



*The Old Forge and Hill Road from the crossroads*

The first 40 metres of the road sits within the Conservation Area with Home Farm (grade II listed), a thatched brick and flint property, taking up a sizable corner plot.

There is a cul-de-sac entrance to part of Town Farm Close as a result of 21<sup>st</sup> century infill which added three terraced properties to Hill Road. The brick and flint design of these houses generally integrates well with the older houses and the Conservation Area. At the top end of the road, which is the highest point in the village, is a footpath which provides access to the B4009 and, having crossed that, to a detached part of Hill Road which runs up into the Chiltern National Landscape and the Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve.

### *Summary of significance*

The properties are of varying styles, sizes and ages, there is a low density feel with low activity as it is a no through road.

### *Development in the area*

Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan aim to ensure that any development in the area should not impact on the rural low density feel of this quiet road.

### Rectory Court, The Glebe, Jubilee Hall and Beacon View

On the right-hand side of the High Street heading north-east, after the Old Vicarage in whose former garden it was built in the 1970s, lies Rectory Court, which is a terrace of four houses, of red brick with tiled roofs in a design fairly typical of that period. Rectory Court is set back 15 metres from the High Street in a small close with separate garages. These houses were rightfully excluded from the conservation area due to their unsympathetic styling, but are fortunately set back so as to appear detached from the conservation area.



*Rectory Court*

Further up the High Street on the left-hand side, in front of Glebe House, is The Glebe, a terrace of six 1970s houses, built in a dark sand brick with cement tile roofs, set back at the end of 10-metre-deep gardens. Garages are in three blocks hidden behind the houses. This terrace is also excluded from the Conservation Area.



*The Glebe*

Opposite The Glebe, again outside the Conservation Area, is a modern single L-shaped bungalow built in red brick.

Just before the motorway there is a recreation ground with a children's playground, and the village hall, named Jubilee Hall, which was built in the 1990s in red brick with a tiled roof. The Jubilee Hall backs onto the motorway embankment.

This end of the village is close to the M40 and endures the full effect of the traffic noise which home owners have tried to mitigate by growing tall conifer hedges. Quality of life would be enhanced by schemes to further limit motorway noise.

Beacon View, a row of four pairs of pastel coloured semi-detached houses was separated from the rest of Lewknor High Street when the motorway was created. Vehicular access is now gained by turning off the A40 at the Lambert Arms. Pedestrian access to Lewknor village is possible using the agricultural underpass under the motorway. The M40, to the west of the houses, is a source of constant noise and is visible and dominant to the west of the field to the rear. Perhaps compensating for their close proximity to the motorway junction these properties have a clear view of Beacon Hill across open fields to front of property and a clear view of Glebe Farm fields to the rear. The outlook is very rural.

#### *Summary of significance*

These houses are in contrasting styles to the houses in the conservation area.

#### *Development in the area*

Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan aim to ensure that as these houses in Rectory Close and The Glebe are in small, discrete groups any new development in the area should be sympathetic in design to the Conservation Area. Beacon View is separated from the rest of the village by the motorway and in open countryside below Beacon Hill, so any development in that area would be inappropriate.

## Weston Road & Barley Close

Along Weston Road heading towards South Weston after Knapp Farm, the last property within the main part of the Conservation Area, there is on the left a crescent off of Weston Road. This runs behind a slim raised green plot, on which a single bungalow sits behind high wooden fences. Along the outer side of the quiet crescent are twelve semi-detached houses built in 1954 as council houses, set back from the road behind front gardens. Several properties have transferred into private ownership, some have been re-clad with a red-brick facia including some which have been extended. All have a pitched tiled roof, off-road parking spaces and enjoy open field views at the back towards Shirburn. To the front, many also have views across Weston Road across open fields.



*View down Weston Road with Victorian Villas*

Opposite the bungalow on Weston Road are eight gabled late Victorian cottages in two terraces of four, with one modern single building in matching style in the middle. The solidly built row has small front gardens but large back gardens. Some have off-street parking. The first terrace looks out over open farm land, whereas the single house and the second terrace back onto Barley Close.

Barley Close, a relatively high density development of several terraces totalling 28 dwellings around a short right-angled suburban style street, leads off of Weston Road after the Victorian houses. There is an enclosed feeling in the street as there are clusters of buildings around the close. All are red brick buildings of similar design, built in four stages during the 1960s. Despite the provision of small parking areas, the high level of vehicle ownership necessitates street parking. Some houses have small front gardens, other have communal green space in front. All houses have small back gardens. The majority of houses enjoy rural views, many overlook open fields and the brook at the back.





*Barley Close from the entrance*



*View within Barley Close*

Nine new houses, in Manor Close, on the left side of Weston Road opposite Barley Close are being built mostly in red brick with red tiled roofs. One detached and two semi-detached two storey houses will face onto Weston Road, two detached and four semi-detached dwellings will face onto a cul-de-sac and open fields. The houses which face Weston Road have been built unnecessarily close to the roadside and, due to their slight elevation, loom over the entrance to Barley Close. Next to the development site is the entrance to a farmyard with one breeze block built barn and one steel-framed barn with wooden sides and corrugated roof, and a further small barn to the back.



*Manor Close*

On the other side of the road, and well set back from the roadside, are six affordable housing association dwellings – four houses and two flats, all of which were built in 2013/14 in red brick with red tiled roofs around a small private cul de sac with parking provisions. Two pairs of semi-detached houses face towards Weston Road, as does the gable of the block of flats. All have a rear outlook over open fields.



*Rural exception site in Weston Road*

### *Summary of significance*

The houses along Weston Road are of varying styles, with an open feel to the road. Barley Close, once past the entrance from Weston Road, is more built up with a more urban appearance.

### *Development in the area*

Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan aim to ensure that any development in the area should not impact on the rural low density feel of Weston Road, as an entrance to the village, and should not clash in style with the rest of the area. Being near to the Conservation Area it should be sympathetic to that area.

## 4.2. Postcombe

Postcombe is located along both sides of London Road (A40), with the older part along Box Tree Lane turning off to the north.

### Box Tree Lane and Lower Road

The original centre of Postcombe lies to the north of the London Road and has now grown organically with the addition of buildings throughout the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. This area has two roads, Box Tree Lane and Lower Road with most houses fronting these roads with some agricultural properties set back from the road. The entrance to this part of the village is via Box Tree Lane which has a wide opening at its junction with the London Road surrounded by large hedges, amenity planted trees and shrubs with several metres of grass verge on both sides. There are no footpaths in this part of the village nor street lighting and the character is that of a small rural village. Box Tree Lane and Lower Road are only used for accessing the properties and land within this part of the village. There are a number of listed buildings within this section of the village along with substantial areas of farm and other land adjoining the road.

Most of the buildings along the lane are bungalows with some houses many of which have been built in the latter part of the last century (1960-80), all have garages or off-road parking. Properties are generally well spaced along the lane and are separated from each other by hedges, wooden fences or walls, some of brick and flint. Properties in the main are detached and are a mix of single and double storey.

At the entrance to Box Tree Lane is a detached house, probably built in the 1950s, which sits back from the lane in large garden behind a concrete block work wall. A row of terraced cottages occupies an elevated position on the right-hand side and are reached by steps with a grassy bank to the front with a low brick and flint wall. There are small cottage gardens to the front of these properties and opposite is a detached cottage of similar age and a modern bungalow.





*Terraced cottages*

Further along the right-hand side of Box Tree Lane there is Poplars Farm (grade II listed), which is an 18<sup>th</sup> Century building of brick with a tile roof and set back from the road behind four modern bungalows. There are open fields to the left-hand side and a small area of former orchard to the right.



*Poplars Farm and bungalows*

Close to the junction with Lower Road is Adwell Farm, comprising three buildings (all grade II listed) all dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The substantial house is of flemish bond red brick with Welsh slate roof, together with its weather boarded barn and weather boarded granary on staddle stones. Other buildings in an open courtyard have been converted into houses. Any future conversions should be sympathetic to this vernacular.





*Adwell Farm*

One house, Elsdale Cottage (grade II listed), was formerly two cottages, the one on the left dating to the 16th century, while the one on the right dates to the 18th century. Built with rectangular heavy timber framing with colourwashed brick infill and partly clad by 20<sup>th</sup> century weather boarding to left and colourwashed chalk rubble to right. The infill properties are set further back from the road, on one side rising above it, meaning the oldest properties are dominant.



*Elsdale Cottage*

Box Tree Lane curves to the left by a small green and continues rising slightly up a narrow country lane for about 300 meters before re-joining the London Road. Large deciduous trees overhang the lane. This part of the lane forms an alternative access to the village of Postcombe and is generally semi-wooded and gives a sense of being shaded and tunnel like.

This part of the lane has four properties of varying ages and styles which sit in close proximity to each other about two thirds of the way up the lane. They sit centrally in generous plots and are enclosed by a mix of fences and hedges. The properties have very rural outlooks and are embedded in the countryside in an elevated position adjoining the lane. There are extended views back across fields, the village and beyond to the Chilterns escarpment.

Lower Road branches off Box Tree Lane at a small triangular green where there are a number of older cottages. Beyond this there are sixteen modern properties, predominantly bungalows, to both sides of the road leading to a farmyard containing recently converted farm buildings and the original farmhouse. The lane ends here with a gated field containing a Dutch barn. There are two properties that are set some way back from the road, Blenheim Farm off to the right, which is actually more visible from another road, and a new build or conversion set behind the farmyard at the end of Lower Road on the left-hand side.



*View from the end of Lower Road*

In general, the modern properties are well and regularly spaced along the road and separated from each other by hedges, fences or walls. Those on the left-hand side are set higher up a bank of about 2 metres with some of these screened from the road. The road ends at a pair of metal gates leading onto agricultural land. Land falls away to a small stream and old culvert (the Cuttlebrook).

The area suffers from poor drainage with water, at times, running down the road.



There is low local traffic noise but continuous motorway noise.

### *Summary of Significance*

This section of the village is quiet by virtue of the road leading only to the village. It is of mixed character and distinctly rural in nature.

### *Development in the area*

Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan aim to ensure that any development should be consistent and sympathetic with the general style of the area and also maintain the mixture of fields and housing. An area of land on Box Tree Lane as it rises out of the village, which contains the large trees, has been proposed as a children's play area in the past and is now proposed as green space.

### **London Road and Salt Lane**

Almost all buildings along the London Road (A40) are set back from it, many behind trees and hedges aiding an open, rural feeling. The size of the village is not immediately apparent, as the majority of the village is not visible from the main thoroughfare. As much of the recent development has been concentrated in one area, the older village features have not been affected by newer surroundings.

The village expanded south-west of London Road in small groups of houses, mainly of red brick, over the last hundred years and now constitutes approximately half of the village.

Heading along the London Road towards Oxford, the first house is a 19th century detached house on the corner of Chalford Road which faces onto a petrol station. Behind the petrol station are a number of buildings mainly related to the motor trade. A white rendered detached house, probably dating from the 19th century, faces onto the garage forecourt. Next to this stands the former Old Inn, previously a pub, which now offers office space. Tucked away behind it, down a driveway, are three terraced red brick houses built in the 2010s.

A detached house set well back from the road precedes a terrace of four red brick houses from the 1970s, which are raised and also set back from the road, and are bordered by Salt Lane on the north.





*View west along London Road towards Salt Lane*

Turning into Salt Lane, on the right-hand side, there are four detached houses built in red brick in the 1980s. On the left-hand side there are four detached red brick houses with five houses and bungalows on drives behind. Next, on the former Beech Farm yard, a development of eight houses of varying sizes is being built, followed by the farm house with several farm outbuildings, close to the underpass under the M40, which runs parallel to the A40 along this stretch.



*Looking up Salt Lane towards M40*

Beyond the Salt Lane junction, on the London Road are two 1930s detached houses, one of which was the old post office for the village, and both of which are pebble-dashed and painted. Two short cul-de-sacs lead to six 1980s detached houses, built in red brick, partially hidden from the road by hedges.

Opposite these is the England's Rose public house (grade II listed), which sits on the London Road close to the entrance to Box Tree Lane. This public house with a large garden, formerly the Feathers, was built circa 1810 and has a stucco facing and a slate roof with a single storey barn attached.



*England's Rose*

Beyond these are six semi-detached mock Tudor 1920s houses with red tiled roofs, sitting slightly raised back from the road, originally built as council houses. None of these have drives or parking to the front. The final buildings on this side of the London Road, as it rises out of the village, are a pair of 1930s semi-detached rendered houses, also originally council houses, which occupy a position above road level.



*London road looking east in the direction of the England's Rose*

### *Summary of Significance*

Red brick dominates this side of the village, and almost all buildings along the road are set back from it, aiding a rural feeling. The majority of the village is not visible to the passer-by, which belies the size of the village.

*Development in the area*

Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan aim to ensure that any development should be consistent with the predominant red brick style of the area.

### 4.3. South Weston

The rural hamlet of South Weston lies about 1.5km from Lewknor and has just two roads. Weston Road which leads into the hamlet, curves and climbs out again heading towards Adwell and Postcombe. Rectory Lane is a single-track no-through lane, used only to access the properties along it, land adjacent to it, and the public footpath towards Pyrton which begins where the lane ends. The lane which is to the left off Weston Road, has open farmland on the right-hand side.

Agriculture dominates the landscape of South Weston. Views are entirely rural to surrounding fields, a blend of pasture and arable crops. Properties to the north-west of the hamlet are slightly elevated and have long views towards the Chilterns. Views over fields between houses and through hedges are plentiful. The area is open and light in most places. There are large mature trees dotted throughout. There is low local traffic noise and the M40 whilst being close by is inaudible.

There are no facilities other than St Lawrence's Church. There is no street lighting in South Weston and the roads do not have pavements. Rather they are lined with a combination of grass verges, some of which are planted with trees, with agricultural gates and fencing in wood, metal and wire, long vernacular brick and flint walls, low residential brick walls and garden gates, hedging and shrubbery. There is a stream which leads under a period brick and flint wall and then under Weston Road. There is also a letter box and notice board located centrally.

Properties are well spaced often with fields in between and most properties back onto farmland. The majority sit close to the road but some are set back and are accessed by tracks. All are either one or two storeys and the majority are detached. Many homes do not have garages due to their era; a combination of on and off-road parking is therefore evident.

South Weston is home to several buildings of architectural interest built predominately of brick and flint.

The dominant mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian fronted Manor Farm (grade II listed), built of flint rubble with brick dressings is situated on the right at the entrance to the hamlet, with its side to Weston Road. It has an early 18<sup>th</sup> century granary in its grounds built of brick with flint infills on staddle stones. Associated farmyard and agricultural buildings from various later periods are close by on the left-hand side of the road. A farm cottage (grade II listed), built partly in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century of flint rubble with brick facings and partly in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century of brick, is sited within the farmyard area but is not visible from the road.





*Manor Farm*

Set back from the road up a long track and next to a stream is a mill cottage, there are a number of outbuildings at the rear of the property.

Single track Rectory Lane has four semi-detached farm workers' cottages, a mid 20<sup>th</sup> century bungalow, a detached cottage, and a large country house which was once a rectory with vast landscaped gardens. The Old Rectory (grade II listed) dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was remodelled in circa 1820. It is rendered with a Welsh slate roof. The lane is low-lying and moves from being open to rather more sheltered by large hedges.



*Cottages in Rectory Lane*



*Old Rectory*

Beyond the junction with Rectory Lane on each side of Weston Road there are several characterful properties of mixed sizes including a former public house. Most would appear to date from 18<sup>th</sup> century. Some have been sympathetically extended or amalgamated.



*Weston Road in the centre of South Weston with the Chilterns in the distance*

The Church of St Lawrence and its graveyard is set back on the right-hand side of Weston Road on a small hill. Originally Norman it was rebuilt circa 1860 and is bordered by a hedge with wrought iron gates.



*Church of St Lawrence*

A substantial mid-20<sup>th</sup> century house is located opposite the church with open rural views on its three sides.

Just outside South Weston there are two properties which have rural views towards Adwell Cop at the rear, the Shirburn estate at the front and the Chiltern Hills to one side.

The hamlet is distinctly rural and there is little noise or light pollution in this area of the parish.

#### *Summary of Significance*

This hamlet is very quiet with small groups of housing separated by fields. It is of mixed period character and is extremely rural in nature.

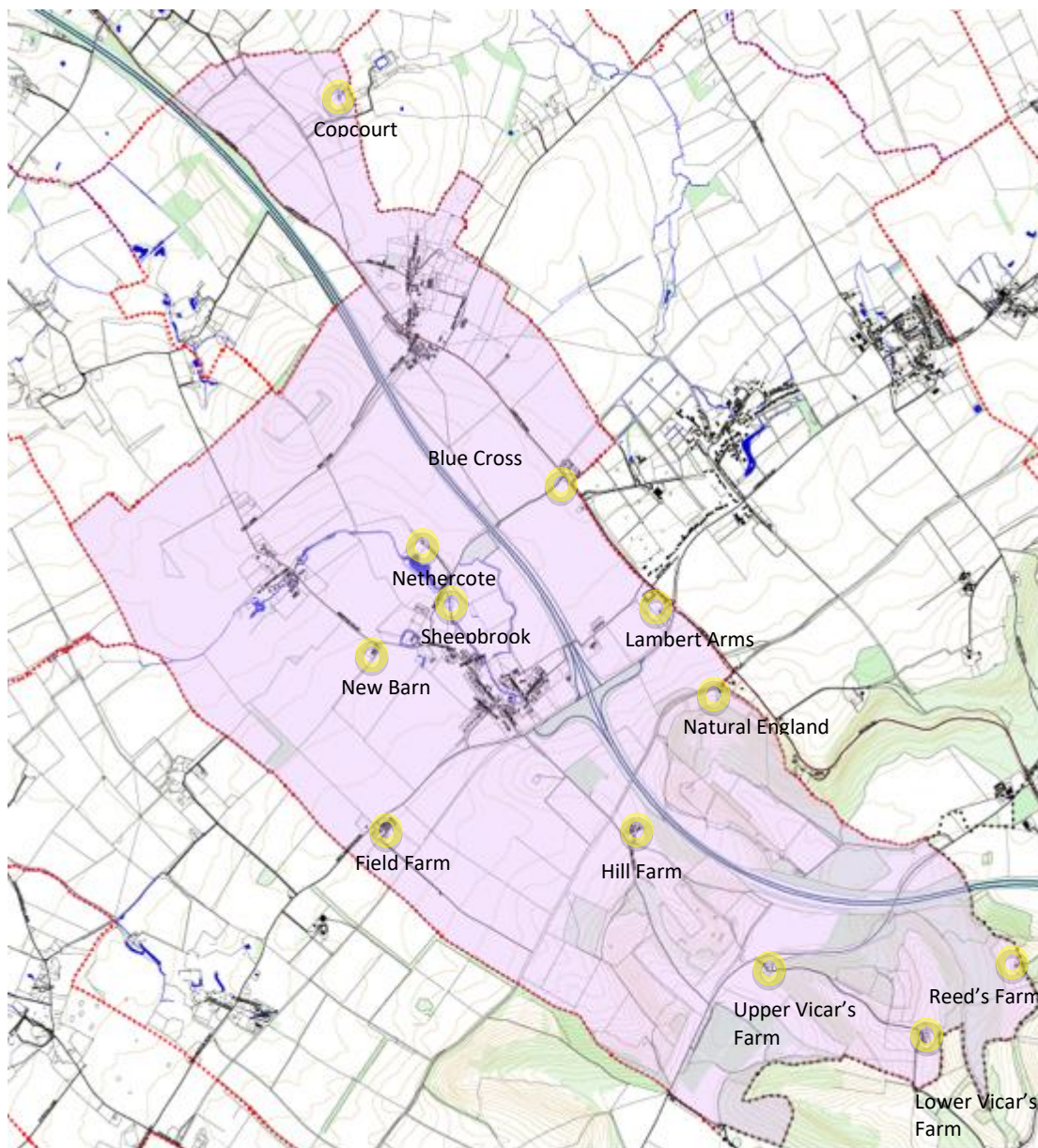
#### *Development in the area*

Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan aim to ensure that development in this area will only be supported if they accord with policies of the Local Plan that manage development in the countryside as the area is outside the Settlement Boundaries for Lewknor and Postcombe. Any development should be restricted to sites of existing properties and businesses. It should be consistent with and sympathetic to the general historical and rural style of the area and also maintain the mixture of fields and housing.



#### 4.4. The Outlying Properties Within the Parish

The properties are highlighted in the map below:



On the Chilterns, largely surrounded by woods within the Wormsley estate, sit the five properties of Upper and Lower Vicar's Farm and Reed's Farm.

Upper Vicar's Farm is a brick and flint built property in the middle of its large plot surrounded by hedges. There are small paddocks adjoining the garden bordered by beech woodland.

The large farmhouse at Lower Vicar's Farm (grade II listed) dates from circa 1730 and is built of brick with some exposed timber framing. The adjacent barn (grade II listed) has a date 1730 inscribed on a tie beam and has 20<sup>th</sup> century weather boarding with clay tiles. It has recently been converted to a dwelling from its original purpose and has a pond to the front.





*Lower Vicar's Farm and outbuildings*

The farmhouse has a range of converted buildings around a courtyard garden. The third property is a detached estate worker's cottage probably built in the 1950s, of brick construction, with a small garden.

Reed's Farm, a brick and flint building, lies in an isolated position adjoining the parish boundary approximately one third of a mile north-east of Lower Vicar's farm, amongst pasture and beech woodlands at the bottom of a valley approximately two thirds of a mile from Stokenchurch, from where the property can be accessed.

The overriding spirit of the area is one of wooded hills and fields in the valleys containing permanent pasture with grazing sheep. It is generally isolated with no traffic other than estate vehicles and the private roads which only give access to the houses themselves. Being private roads there is no street lighting and there are no pavements. Whilst it is rural the fields and woods are well managed and productive.

Hill Farm sits at the base of the Chilterns between Hill Road and the motorway embankment. It is set in large grounds mostly laid to grass with a large pond. The farmstead consists of a detached farmhouse, rendered, and a variety of farm buildings of varying ages and styles from Victorian brick built with slate roof through to general purpose cement fibre-clad barns. The Victorian farm buildings have been converted to domestic accommodation. The Farm now hosts a number of businesses from its outbuildings and has no agricultural activity. The land is generally surrounded by hedges along the road, the Ridgeway and other fields.



*Hill Farm*

Just east of the Ridgeway and just inside the Lewknor parish boundary on Aston Hill there is a compound of three wooden buildings owned by Natural England and used in relation to the Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve which also lies within the parish.

There are five properties in close proximity to Field Farm on the B4009 near to the western edge of the parish. One is a working farm with a modern house; the second is the original farmhouse, now a separate property; the third is a redevelopment of an existing property on a sizeable plot. Facing them across the road are two newly built (2015) properties which replaced a pair of derelict farm cottages. The views in this part of the parish are mainly open countryside with deciduous trees and hedgerows. Landscape rises to the Chilterns or undulates gently in all other directions.

A number of properties lie along the A40 between the B4009 and Postcombe. Lambert Cottage is closest to the B4009 and sits behind a high fence. Stabling and paddocks complete the plot which has views toward the Chilterns.

Next door is the Thame Lambert Hotel (previously the Lambert Arms – the name by which many locals still refer to it), a hotel with 59 rooms as well as bar and restaurant. The main building is mock Tudor but dates to about 1834. In recent years red brick extensions have been added. With carparks and semi-enclosed courtyards the site covers 13,000 square metres.



*Thame Lambert Hotel*

Peel House is a single detached dwelling situated on the west side of London Road. Initially built in late 1970s as a police house, the building is constructed primarily of brick with a pitched-tiled roof and gable ends. The site has arable fields to the rear and sides and with no immediate neighbours.

The Blue Cross (small animal) Re-homing Centre is located in a rural area on the eastern side of London Road. The site contains a number of small, predominantly of single storey, kennels and other buildings. The external finishes are a mixture of red brick, painted render with pitched tiled roofs. There are no hard lines to the site which is largely hidden from the road due to the number of mature trees.

Possibly the smallest plot and residential property in the parish is a former telephone exchange which has been converted into a very small house. It sits just off the A40 along the Lower Icknield Way.

Nethercote Lane, just outside the Lewknor village boundary, is part of the historic Lower Icknield Way.

The first facility in the lane is Lewknor sewage works. 250 metres further on is a brick shed close to the road on the right-hand side and Sheepbrook Cottage, a brick built house with tiled roof set back in its plot. There is a stream along the far boundary of the property flowing into a lake behind trees on the left-hand side of the lane.

After another 100 metres there is the entrance to a long gravel, tree-lined drive leading to Nethercote, a five bedroom brick built house converted from redundant buildings in 1992. There is a thick line of hedging on the north side of the drive and house, between the property and the motorway. The front view from the property is of the lake and surrounding fields.

Shortly after the entrance to Nethercote the lane becomes a bridleway which leads under the M40 and joins the A40 opposite the Blue Cross Centre.

On the road from Lewknor to South Weston are two buildings. The first building, New Barn, is behind a line of trees along Weston Road and is of green corrugated metal construction. Currently it houses a sports car repair facility.

The second building, Moor Court Barn, is parallel to the track off Weston Road. It also has green metal cladding. There is planning permission to convert the majority of it to a single story three bedroomed house. Permission has also been given for the house to have a separate, new entrance onto Weston Road just after New Barn.

At the extreme north-western end of the parish on a no-through road, off the B4012, are two properties which are isolated in a rural surrounding of mixed arable and pasture. The buildings are a 1960s/70s bungalow of stone and render which has a garden around it and the other is Copcourt House (marked as Upper Copcourt Farm on the Ordnance Survey map) (grade II listed) along with its adjoining buildings some of which have been converted for residential use. The house is attached to farm buildings and is surrounded by substantial gardens with additional modern farm buildings further from the house.

Upper and Lower Vicar's Farm, Reeds Farm, Hill Farm, the Natural England buildings and the properties at Field Farm to the east of the B4009 fall within the Chilterns National Landscape.

#### *Summary of Significance*

The majority of these outlying properties, many of which sit within the Chilterns National Landscape, add to the rural ambience of the parish, as their previous or current use was involved with the management of the surrounding land or countryside.

#### *Development in the area*

Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan aim to ensure that development in this area will only be supported if they accord with policies of the Local Plan that manage development in the countryside as the area is outside the Lewknor Settlement Boundary. Any development should be limited to alterations to existing properties and be in keeping with the property and its rural setting.



## 5. Input to Planning Policies

The character assessment of the parish highlights a rural area of contrasting land uses impacted by varying property densities and styles. There are many attractive buildings within the parish, some of which are listed. There are, however, a number of properties which could have been built in a manner more sympathetic to their surroundings.

The parish has been willing to find small infill sites as and when there has been sufficient local demand for new housing, social or private. As there have been no large developments around the settlements, the rural character of the area has not been adversely impacted.

Development in the Lewknor Conservation Area and its environs has, since its designation, has been informed by design styles which emulate those already within the Conservation Area. Whilst there is a documented Chiltern design vernacular, there are also local design trends. Lewknor has tended toward brick and flint and Postcombe has made more use of brick. Elsewhere in the parish, proximity to listed buildings has informed design cues for new buildings and barn conversions.

Changes in planning rules and their application have led to new builds merging into their surroundings rather than imposing themselves upon it, these trends should continue.

The Neighbourhood Plan should, therefore:

- a) recognise the need for ongoing infill on small sites
- b) ensure that any infill is complementary to its surroundings
- c) maintains the rural characteristics and views
- d) conserve the best of the parish whether buildings, landscapes or views
- e) maintain or improve the biodiversity and sustainability of the parish