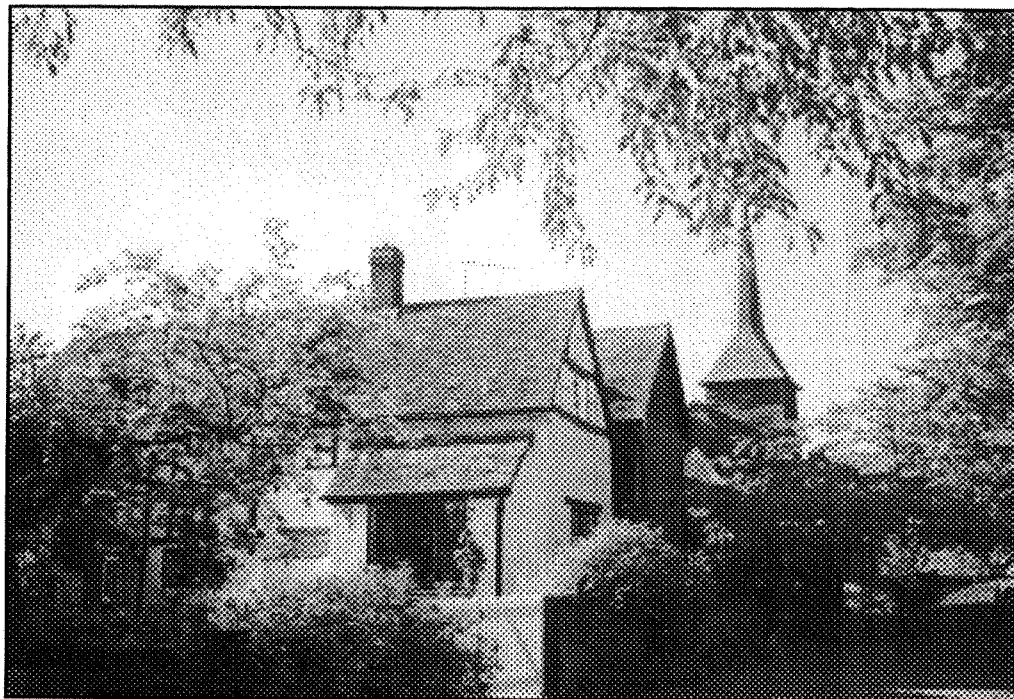

Conservation Area Character Survey

Ilmer



What are Conservation Areas?

Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest which are considered worthy of preservation or enhancement. They are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Within conservation areas there are special controls on some alterations to buildings and their demolition or partial demolition and on works to trees. The Council's Heritage Guidance Note on conservation areas gives further details of the specific controls that apply.

Designation of a conservation area does not preclude the possibility of new development, but such development must be designed positively to enhance the special character of the area.

The Purpose of This Survey

This conservation area character survey describes the main features of special architectural and historic interest which justifies the designation of Ilmer as a conservation area.

The survey is intended to complement the approved policies for conservation areas in the Council's Wycombe District Local Plan. These policies are the primary means of safeguarding the special character of our conservation areas. The survey is also intended to be used as an aid in development control decision making. Proposals for schemes positively to enhance the character and appearance of Ilmer conservation area will be produced in the future in consultation with councillors, local residents and other interested parties.



HISTORY

The derivation of the name Ilmer is unclear. It possibly meant the 'boundary or mere of Ylla'. There does not appear to be a mere here although the parish lies so low that one might be assumed. Ylla was most likely a personal name although it has been suggested that this first element is derived from 'igil, il' the old English word for hedgehog. The name of the hamlet has varied from time to time. A tithe map in the Bucks Record Office refers to the hamlet as 'Illmire', but a survey of the church lands dated 1607 refers to 'Ilmer', the present-day spelling.

Ilmer is mentioned in the Domesday Book and the entry depicts a thriving community but in 1349 the population was wiped out by the Black Death. The community was a farming one and a considerable part of the parish was arable land. In 1905, 172 acres were arable while 580 acres were under permanent grass. However in an early date the parish was ill-provided for pasture. Royal licence to inclose the woods of Ilmer and La Sale and to make a park was granted to John de Moleyns (Lord of the Manor 1338 - c1358) in 1336.

The manor house and land was held in 1086 by the Bishop of Bayeux, Odo. In the 12th century it was in the possession of the family of Rumenel (Romney). The office of Marshal and Keeper of the King's hawks and other birds was held by the Rumenel family as lords of Ilmer. In 1538-9 the manor was sold to Sir Robert Dormer. Sir Robert also held the manor of Wing, with which Ilmer then descended passing to the Earls of Carnarvon and Chesterfield, and being held by the latter until the 19th century.

The Manor House now known as Ilmer House had a moat but not surrounding the house. The moat surrounds part of a field and was used to prevent the cattle from straying at night.

A mill was included in the appurtenances of the manor in 1086. In 1306 there was a windmill out of repair. In 1328 the water-mill was also found to be broken down and valueless, but it was repaired in 1342-3. There is no further mention of either mill after these dates.

A church was built in the 12th century and traces of this original building may be seen in the old doorways of the nave. The church was granted in 1203 to the Priory of Studley by Aubrey, daughter of David

Rumenel, and was held by the nuns until the dissolution. In 1230 the church was appropriated by the nuns. Around 1350 the church appears to have been substantially rebuilt in the Perpendicular style. After the Dissolution in 1539 the King sold the rectory and church to John Croke Esq of Chilton. The Dormer family who bought the manor house at this time later purchased the advowson to the church which continued with the lords of the manor until 1858. Some restoration of the church took place in 1859 by Street.

The Reverend W E Partridge (also Rector of Horsenden) was appointed rector by the Earl of Chesterfield in 1834 and in 1858 he became patron and benefice of St Peter's. The church by this time had become in urgent need of repair and the Rev. Partridge was committed to its restoration. In 1860 work on rebuilding the chancel began the full cost of which was borne by the vicar himself. The nave was also restored mainly at the Rev. Partridge's expense with an exception of £20 from the principal landholders in the parish and £15 from the Diocesan Church Building Society. The church was reopened by the Bishop of Oxford in 1860. In 1979 the spire was reshingled and restored and the bells restored by proceeds totalling £8000 raised by an appeal committee.

The railway arrived close to the hamlet on its east side in Edwardian times and there was a halt here on the Haddenham side of the bridge. A railway map circa 1933 shows that it was possible to travel anywhere in the Chilterns, with patience.

Lower Farm at the eastern edge of the conservation area was occupied by Shellstar from circa 1960 to 1985 who used the premises as a demonstration farm and grew experimental crops in the surrounding fields.

The conservation area was designated in 1982.

ARCHEOLOGICAL INTEREST

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the conservation area however there is a identified site of archeological interest which encompasses the moat and field in the grounds of Ilmer House and extends beyond the boundary of the conservation area.

In the event of archeological deposits being found the Council may require archeological conditions

attaching to planning permissions where appropriate, including watching briefs, excavation or other similar recording procedures.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Ilmer is a hamlet situated about 2 miles north of the Chilterns. It is a small group of dwellings, providing only a small church which seats about 100 people and a village green of about 1/4 of an acre. The hamlet is located along a no-through road, there is no shop, pub, village hall, or even a bus service which emphasises its remote seclusion.

One of the main characteristics of the hamlet is its open feel. This is achieved by a number of characteristics. The dwellings are well spaced and scattered along the winding road. They are often set well back from the roadside with low boundary hedging or unobtrusive fencing to the frontage. Open post and rail fencing is used extensively throughout the conservation area along the road side and for field boundaries. The winding roadway through the hamlet has grass verges to its sides along most of its length. The houses surrounding the central green allow their gardens to extend visually the open area of the green by unobtrusive boundary treatment. There are views out to the open countryside beyond and as the hamlet is located on the edge of the Vale of Aylesbury the landscape is fairly flat which further emphasises the openness of the hamlet.

The central green and the church are the focal point of the hamlet. At the edge of the hamlet are a number of barn complexes at Lower Farm, near Ilmer House,



and at Manor Farm, which mostly retain their agricultural or stabling use. These clusters of barns of brick and weather-boarding are particular features of this conservation area and add to its attractiveness.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

There is only one listed building in the conservation area, this is the grade II* listed parish church dedicated to St Peter. Originally 12th century it was rebuilt in the 14th century and the bell-tower was added in the 16th century. The church was much restored in 1860. The south door which is now blocked has a 12th century semi-circular arch. The bell tower has heavy timber framing with curved and cross braces and a carved boss to the nave. The octagonal stone font is possibly 14th century and the oak carved rood screen is 15th-16th century.

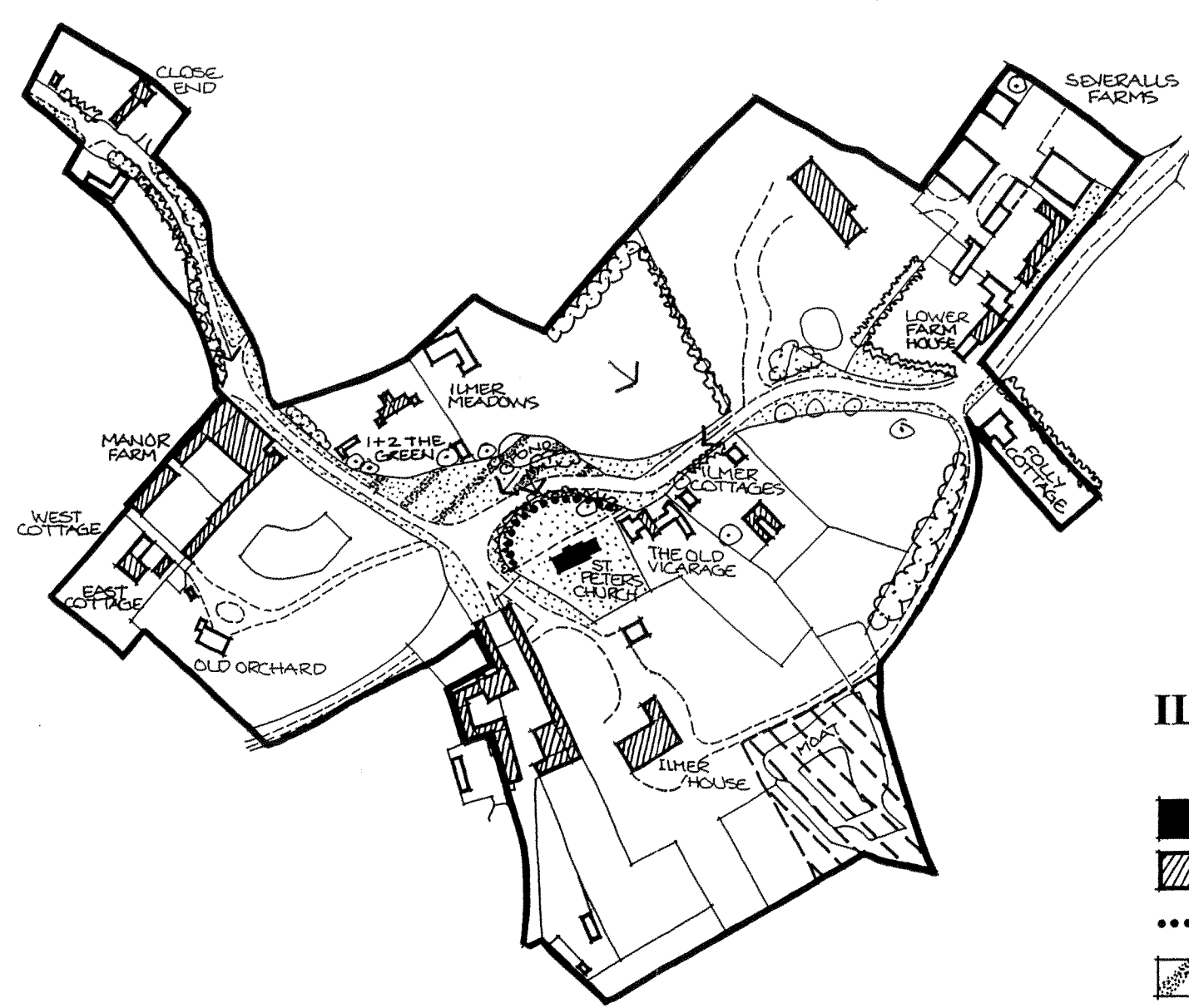
Other buildings although not listed are important to the character of the conservation area and are identified as significant buildings on the conservation area survey map.

East of the church is The Old Vicarage. The central part of this building is the oldest and the timber framing remains exposed with whitewashed brick infilling. There is an attractive old tiled roof above and old clay tiles have been used for the modern extension to the west. Next to The Old Vicarage are Ilmer Cottages, a pair of very picturesque farm workers cottages probably 18th century in origin. Set well back from the road the pair of cottages are whitewashed with decorative timber framing applied










to the frontage. The pair has an attractive old tiled roof. The windows to the frontage are simple yet characterful and add to the attractiveness of the dwellings. On the side elevations there is a variety of different types of window including a distinctive casement with glazing bars in a diamond pattern. The modern garages to the front of the dwellings have decorative timber to match.

Further along the road is the modern dwelling Folly Cottage which replaced a semi-detached pair of farm workers cottages in 1991.

Ilmer Conservation Area Character Survey Map



ILMER

-  St. Peters Church Grade II* Listed
-  Other Significant Buildings
-  Church Railings
-  Area of Registered Village Green
-  Site of Archaeological Interest
-  Important Open Space
-  Important Trees & Tree Groups
-  Important Hedges
-  Important Views

LISTED BUILDING

Grade II* - Particularly special and important buildings (some 4% of all listed building)

Church of St Peter - Originally 12th century, rebuilt 14th century, bell tower added 16th century. Much restored 1860. Coursed stone rubble, old tiled roofs. Timber framed bell tower with weatherboard cladding and narrow shingled broach spire. South doorway, now blocked, has 12th century semi-circular arch. Inside bell-tower has heavy timber framing with curved cross braces, and moulded arch with carved boss to nave. Rood screen is 15th-16th century. Late 18th century panelled pulpit. Octagonal stone font possibly 14th

Opposite Folly Cottage is Lower Farm House, a white rendered building under an old tiled roof. It has modern extensions on either side. The barn complex to the north east of the house is very smart and well kept in appearance. The barns are whitewashed to the lower part with dark stained timber weather boarding above.

To the north of Lower Farm House is a modern building of brick with large flint panels and large barn doors. The clay tiled roof has a diamond pattern using darker coloured tiles. This interesting building which can be glimpsed from the road was built in 1992 and replaced an unsightly group of flat roofed prefabricated buildings erected in the 1960s as offices and lecture rooms for Shellstar farm.

Further west is a modern bungalow situated well back from the road behind the village pond and barely visible. Next door is a pair of semi-detached estate cottages known as The Green. These attractive cottages are of brick with small pane casement windows to the front and an old tiled roof above. They present a delightful view from the green in front set within their well tended gardens and date from the late 19th century.

Further down the lane at the northern most extremity of the conservation area boundary is Close End an interesting property set at right angles to the road. The house has mock Tudor features: the first floor is jettied with timber framing and to the ground floor random stone blocks have been used. The dwelling has traditional wooden framed casement windows and an old clay tiled roof. The house is thought to date back originally to the 17th century.

Back towards the centre of the conservation area to the west of the lane is Manor Farm. Its impressive collection of barns front closely on to the lane. All are of brick and those above single storey level are weather boarded to the upper part. Most have old tiled roofs which are particularly attractive. One of the barns has a slate roof with decorative clay ridge tiles. The building closest to the lane has pantiles, a material that arrived here and in surrounding villages when the railway was built early in the 20th century. To the rear of the barns is the original farm house which has been extended and divided into two dwellings, East Cottage and West Cottage. East Cottage is the older, a Victorian cottage with many pleasant decorative features. The chimneys have

elaborate brick work and there is detailing around the windows and a dentil course at first floor level.

The next dwelling along is Old Orchard set within extensive grounds which front on to the green. The house itself is modern built in 1967-8.

East of Old Orchard is the third barn complex in the conservation area. Traditional materials have been used, brick to the lower part with weather boarding to the upper part and all have old tiled roofs. Like the barns at Manor Farm they continue in the use for which they were originally constructed in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The heavy timber framing can be seen in some of the open fronted buildings and the original wooden stalls remain in the stable building at the southern end.

Ilmer House to the east is a late 19th century-early 20th century dwelling, a replacement for the original old manor house. Of a much larger scale than the surrounding buildings its dominance is lessened by its position set slightly apart from the core of the conservation area behind the church.

MATERIALS

The church is of coursed rubble stone with an old tiled roof. The bell tower has modern weatherboarding covering the original timber framing. The pyramidal roof and narrow spire are covered with oak shingles.

There is a variety of materials used throughout the conservation area although dark red brick and whitewashed plaster or brick are most common, as are old clay tiles for roofing.

The central part of The Old Vicarage has exposed timber framing with white washed brick infill. On either side the modern extensions differ. To the right the brick extension is weatherboarded to the upper storey; to the left the extension is of brick and slate. Ilmer Cottages are whitewashed with decorative timber applied to the frontage and slate hung on the left-hand side. Lower Farm House at the eastern extremity of the conservation area is whitewashed render. The neighbouring barn complex (partly converted to residential) is of white washed brick with white painted weatherboarding to the upper levels.

Flint appears as a modern introduction into the

conservation area and can be seen as large panels in the storage building to the rear of Lower Farm House. Ilmer House behind the church is of red brick with blue headers. The first floor is rendered and white washed. The roof is of slate and along with a section of stables at Manor Farm are the only slate roofs in the conservation area.

To the west of the church brick and clay tile predominate. The barn complexes near Ilmer House and Manor Farm are weather boarded with brick below.

Close End to the north of the conservation area is of a mock Tudor design complete with a jettied upper storey, mock timber framing and stone rubble to the ground floor.

Window types also vary throughout the conservation area although casements predominate. Ilmer Cottages have a very distinctive style of windows to the frontage which enhance the character of the dwellings. The side elevations have a mixture of windows which, including a small window with diamond patterned glazing bars. Far from detracting this feature adds more individuality to the Cottages.

Ilmer House has attractive, large, sash windows appropriate to the style and period of the building.

Surfacing throughout the conservation area is mostly informal which is appropriate to this rural hamlet. Shingle is most appropriate whereas tarmac and concrete would appear out of place.

There is use of pavements in the hamlet but their extensive use can have an urbanising effect in a domestic curtilage. It is important that hard surfacing is balanced with soft landscaping to retain the hamlet's rural appeal.

TREES AND VEGETATION

Important trees, tree groups and hedges are indicated on the survey map.

At the heart of the conservation area the hedge enclosing the church in front of the railings and the trees and vegetation around the pond make an important contribution to the character of this part of the hamlet.

In general the trees and vegetation along the roadside and within private garden areas contribute to the rural ambience of the conservation area.

During the mid 1970s all of the Elm trees in the hamlet were lost, approximately 40 trees, some over 100 years old. Many of the existing trees were planted as replacements.

OPEN SPACE

The central green and churchyard are the focal point of the conservation area. As open spaces they are paramount to the character of Ilmer in their own right and in their contribution to the feeling of spaciousness to the conservation area as a whole.

The grass verges along the road side are also indicated as important open space on the survey map as these too add to the openness of the conservation area.

Many of the dwellings are set within large gardens or grounds, mostly with very open and unobtrusive boundaries. In particular The Green and Old Orchard allow their gardens to visually merge with the green which adds to the open character of Ilmer. To the east of the conservation area the fields in front and to the side of Ilmer Cottages provide an appropriate setting for the Cottages themselves and for the heart of the conservation area.

VIEWS

There are a number of attractive views within and out from the conservation area and those of particular importance have been marked on the survey map.

From the central green there is a very appealing view of the church set within the churchyard with the barn complex behind. To the west of the barns there is a lovely view of the open countryside beyond.

Midway along the public footpath in the field next to Ilmer Meadows there is an attractive view of Ilmer Cottages. Views of the central green and church from the east are also important. At the northern spur of the conservation area near Close End there is a pleasant view of the Manor Farm barn complex looking back towards the centre of the conservation area.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ADVICE

The policies and proposals of the Wycombe District Local Plan are the primary source of reference for development control advice. In addition the Council's approved Heritage Strategy is seen as a supporting document to the plan.

This character survey is also intended to provide broad guidance of an informal nature in considering new development in the conservation area. Below is a brief check list taking account of the above text.

To safeguard, preserve and enhance the appearance and special character of the Ilmer Conservation Area:-

- In the conservation area higher standards of design are required as it is the function of the planning authority to consider all applications as to whether they preserve or enhance the special character as identified in this appraisal.
- Materials for any new building works must be sympathetic to those prevailing in the area and surfacing materials should be appropriate to a rural area.
- Any new building works such as extensions, must be designed not as a separate entity, but should be sympathetic in form and scale with the existing buildings and the conservation area as a whole.
- Inappropriate replacement windows and doors can damage the character of the conservation area. Traditional natural materials should be used in order to safeguard the special character of the conservation area. Generally speaking painted timber windows and doors are appropriate and modern substitute materials such as UPVC and aluminium are not.
- New development should not intrude into the landscaped setting of the conservation area. Areas of open space, and gaps between buildings will be carefully considered for protection from development or enclosure in order to protect the open, rural nature of the conservation area.
- All trees within conservation areas are protected but special consideration should be given to those trees indicated on the conservation area survey map to ensure that they are not harmed. New development should recognise this and not present a risk to their continued future growth and habit.
- Although hedges cannot be specially protected through legislation those hedgerows indicated on the character survey map should be retained and where possible enhanced.
- Special care must be taken to ensure that views within the conservation area are not spoilt. Those of particular importance are marked on the map.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Wycombe District Council's Planning, Transport and Development Service has a number of publications which offer further guidance. Ask the Conservation Officer for information on which Heritage Guidance Notes are currently available and appropriate.

The **Conservation Officer** is always pleased to give advice on all heritage matters and can be contacted on 01494 421578 or seen by appointment in the Council Offices or on site.

Development Control matters within the Ilmer Conservation Area are the responsibility of the **West Team** who can be contacted on 01494 421531.

Planning Policy matters are the responsibility of the **Policy Unit** who can be contacted on 01494 421551.