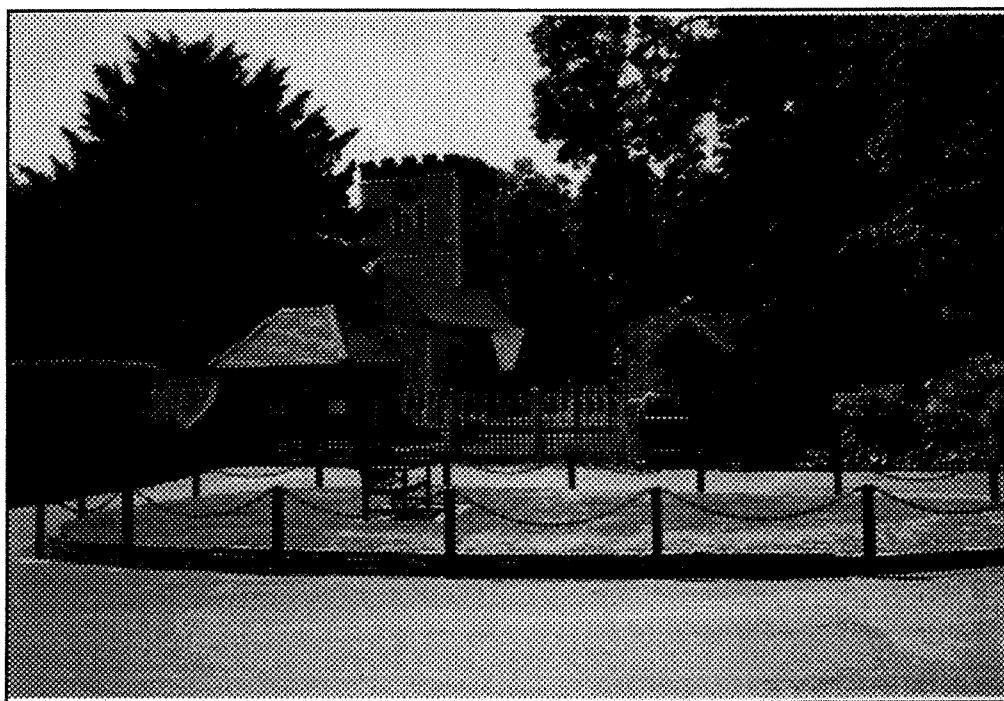

Conservation Area Character Survey

LITTLE MARLOW



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 Little Marlow 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 Little Marlow Conservation Area will be produced in the future in consultation with councillors, local residents and other interested parties.



HISTORY

The village was among the first conservation areas designated by the Buckinghamshire County Council in what is now Wycombe District on 14 September 1970. In 1991 the boundary was amended by Wycombe District Council following public consultation to include more of the area of the Manor House landscaped grounds and to remove a strip of field south of School Lane.

The village is situated just above the flood plain of the River Thames in a parish that climbs into the Chilterns as far as Handy Cross. After the Norman Conquest the manor was held first by Odo, the warlike Bishop of Bayeux, then the Earls of Gloucester and the prioress of Little Marlow Priory. This small Benedictine nunnery, founded in the 13th. century and dissolved in 1535, was situated in what is now the Abbotsbrook Estate in the east of the parish.

The parish church dedicated to St.John the Baptist is the oldest building in the village with 12th. century parts but much rebuilt and added to in the 13th., 14th. and 15th. centuries. The Manor House, The Old Cottage and the Queen's Head are partly 16th. century while there are several buildings with 17th. century elements including Manor Farmhouse, The King's Head, Summer Cottage and Old Barn Cottage. The Old Vicarage of circa 1770 and the early 19th. century south range of the Manor House were the most important Georgian additions to the conservation area with other work consisting of small cottages, such as Wayside and Westover and Greengates, the last completed in 1796. Victorian architecture added the school and the estate cottages in Church Road while this century saw little expansion of the village.

The Old Forge opposite the King's Head has 18th. and 19th. century work and was a working forge into the 1930s.

Ivor Novello, the composer and song-writer, lived at Walnut Tree Cottage.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

Despite the age of the village there are no known sites of archaeological interest or Scheduled

Ancient Monuments within the village itself, though the site of Little Marlow Priory and several in the woods in the north part of the parish are of archaeological interest. Bronze Age remains have been found in the fields west of the village.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Little Marlow is a compact village that runs south from the Marlow to Bourne End road as far as the stream that flows east towards Abbotsbrook and parallel to the River Thames. On the north bank of this stream the parish church and manorial complex formed the focus of the village with development along the road north and west along Pound Lane. The village lies above the 30 metre contour line and above the flood plain. It is essentially a single street village with little development off this spine, except along Pound Lane, and along the main Marlow road.

Later expansion along School Lane produced firstly the school at the east end of the lane and housing along its south side. The village is remarkably compact and coherent and is widely regarded as one of the most attractive ones in the District with a character that should be jealously safeguarded.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

There is a high proportion of listed buildings in the conservation area, 20 in all. One is particularly special (listed grade II*), this is the fine medieval parish church of St.John Baptist. The Manor House, north of the church and in substantial grounds, dates from the 16th. century and, together with the church, forms the architectural focus of the village.

The main axis of the village is Church Road which runs south from the main Marlow Road and is terminated by the timber-framed Manor Farmhouse in front of which is a small green. Beyond the lane continues to the stream within woodland.

Halfway down Church Road the crossroads with School Lane and Pound Lane has a small triangular green with a Grade II listed telephone kiosk. To the south of the crossroads there are generous grass verges with houses on the east side, including the late 16th. century Old Cottage behind walls at the

north end, and a group of Victorian estate cottages. At the south is the Old Vicarage, built in brick in the 1770s for the then incumbent and set in large grounds. To the west of the road is the high-walled churchyard behind its tile-roofed lychgate and then the grounds of the Manor House which occupy the whole of the remainder of the south-west quarter of the conservation area, behind high brick and brick and flint walls with glimpses into the gardens and the service yard with its hipped roofed dovecote at the centre.

Beyond the crossroads the north-east quarter of the conservation area is occupied by the open space of the recreation ground with cottages in the area next to the Marlow Road/Church Road junction and the architecturally interesting Victorian school at the far east corner. Pound Lane has the Manor House grounds to its south with their high walls and the restored village pound opposite the Queen's Head public house. The lane continues as a track, formerly a road, which leads to Westhorpe and Marlow with the Manor House boundary brick wall becoming a thorn hedge.

The north-west part of the conservation area is the most built up one with an interesting mix of buildings from the timber-framed Queen's Head and Old Barn Cottage to the 1920s terrace of Arts and Crafts inspired houses including High Chimneys. At the north end the King's Head and the Old Forge make an attractive entrance to the village proper.

MATERIALS

Houses and Buildings

The parish church is built in flint with chalkstone dressings and has large Denner Hill stone blocks as tower buttress pad stones.

The rest of the village has a wide mix of building materials which contribute to its character with red brick predominating and sand-faced plain clay tiles the main roofing material. Some brickwork is colourwashed, such as the front elevation of The Old Forge. Most of the roof tiles are hand made. Unusually there are only two building of visual

significance that have slated roofs, The Coach House and Storrs.

There is considerably more diversity in walling materials and several buildings have exposed timber-framing, some with colourwashed infill including Manor Farmhouse, Old Barn Cottage and Saltings House, others with brick infill panels such as the 17th. century north block of the Manor House or the Coach House. Others have been clad in brick and the framing is only seen at the sides or rear, such as the Kings Head, or rendered and roughcast to conceal the whole timber-frame such as The Old Cottage or The Queen's Head in Pound Lane.

Otherwise local red stock brick predominates in buildings and flint is relatively uncommon in buildings, the exceptions being Greengates, the Coach House and, colourwashed, in Corner Cottage and Old Barn Cottage where the barn is also in flint with brick dressings.

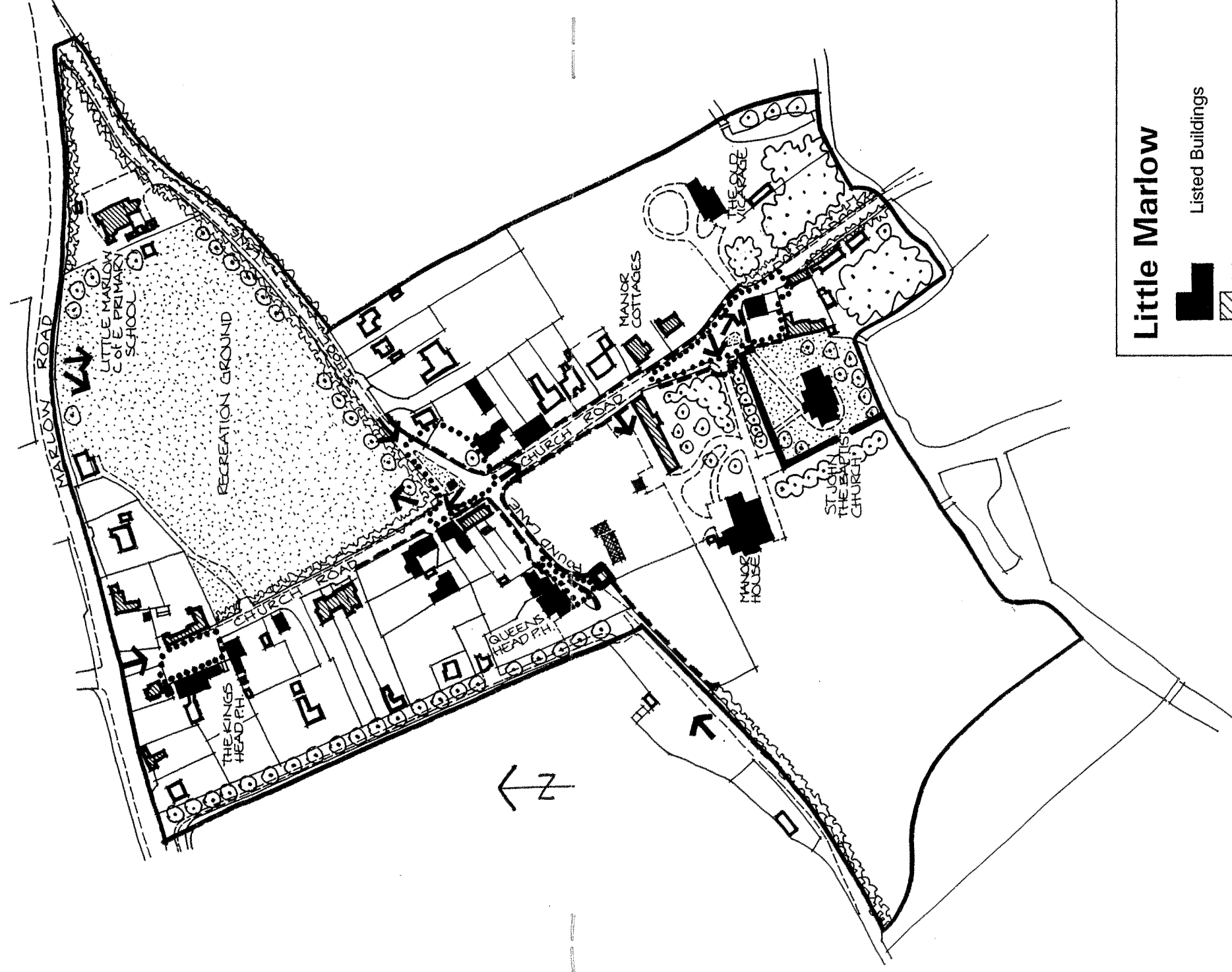
Flint and Brick Boundary Walls

Flint is commoner in outbuildings, as at Manor Farm, but it is in walls where it comes into its own and that archetypical Chiltern building material dominates and unifies the centre of the village with brick-dressed flint walls along both sides of Pound Lane and the south part of Church Road, as well as on the west side of Church Road north of the crossroads. The section north of the Manor House service range is very high indeed. The Pound is also flint walled.










South of the stable range to the Manor House, around the churchyard and west of the Queen's Head the boundary walls are in brick only. At the south-west corner of the crossroads are giant gate piers that formerly flanked an entrance into the Manor House grounds, but now blocked by brick and flint.

There is also some weatherboarding, particularly on the farm buildings at Manor Farm. Within the conservation area are a few modern bungalows and houses whose design and materials make little contribution to its character.

Little Marlow Conservation Area Character Survey Map



Little Marlow

	Listed Buildings
	Other Significant Buildings
	Important Groups
	Important Walls
	Important Trees and Tree Groups
	Important Hedges
	Important Public and Semi-Public Open Spaces
	Important Views
	Boundary of Conservation Area

TREES AND VEGETATION

Trees and woodland play a very important role in establishing the character of Little Marlow. Of particular note and marked on the map are the woods south of Manor Farm and the old Vicarage with their willows and poplars and the thorn hedge along both sides of the lane. Here water also plays a significant role and the stream forms the southern boundary of the conservation area. A group of lime trees at the entrance to the Old Vicarage grounds and the horse chestnuts, limes and yews within the Manor House grounds east of the house are visually very important, as are the yew trees in the churchyard. Good trees, mainly horse chestnuts, are also along the Manor House side of the churchyard north and west walls.

The other trees making a vital contribution to the conservation area’s character are the lime trees along the south side of the recreation ground and those along the west boundary of the conservation area where there are some fine mature oaks. The most important individual tree is the large mature Wellingtonia at the corner of School Lane and Church Road within the garden of The Old Cottage.

Significant hedges are those along the west and south sides of the recreation ground, along the north boundary of the Manor House grounds, along the south side of School Lane, around the School grounds and on both sides of the lane south of Manor Farm house.

OPEN SPACE

Areas of important open space are marked on the survey map. These are areas which are significant to the village as a whole, to its character and to the setting of its buildings. There will be other areas of open space throughout the village, such as garden areas, which will be important to the setting of an individual building (for example the grounds of The Old Vicarage) or to the character of the conservation area as a whole (for example the Manor House grounds).

Collectively, such unmarked open spaces are considered very important to the character of the conservation area.

There are essentially three areas of important public

open space within the village which positively contribute to the setting of buildings and the overall character of Little Marlow. The first of these is the recreation ground, secondly the green at the junction between Church Road and School Lane, and thirdly the small green in front of Manor Farmhouse at the south end of Church Road. The wide grass verges to Church Road south of the Pound Lane Junction are also visually important. The fine parish churchyard is an important publicly accessible open space of very high visual quality.

GROUPINGS

There are four major groupings or foci within Little Marlow conservation area, two enclosing open spaces referred to in the section above. At the south end of Church Road the group around the small green terminates views south and has the church yard, Manor House and old vicarage boundary walls enclosing this triangular area, with the Lych Gate and Manor Farmhouse. Further north the houses on the west side of Church Road, the north-east corner of the walled Manor House grounds, the Old Cottage boundary walls and the Recreation Ground hedge and lime trees enclose a space of high visual quality with the listed telephone kiosk as its focus.

The third grouping is along Pound Lane where the Queen’s Head and Saltings House face the high Manor House grounds walls and the historic pound. Further north the Kings Head, the Old Forge and Greengates form a tighter knit group before the village opens up to face the Recreation Ground.

VIEWS

There are important views within the conservation area and some of these are indicated on the survey map. There are also significant views of the village from the countryside, particularly from the west along the public footpath from Westhorpe direction of the well-treed west boundary of the conservation area north of the path and of the beautifully landscaped grounds of the Manor House to the south. Other attractive approaches into the village from the south are along the footpath from Coldmoorholme Lane which skirts the south boundary with its stream, pond and willow and poplar woods, or along the path from the River Thames.

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 development within 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 village:-

- 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.
- Materials for any new building works or surfacing must be sympathetic to those prevailing in the area.
- All trees in conservation areas are protected but special consideration should be given to those individual trees and tree groups 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 survey map should be retained and where possible enhanced. As a boundary treatment hedges will generally be preferred to walling or fencing.
- Traditional native hedge species such as thorn, hazel and holly work most effectively. Coniferous hedging, mostly planted for its fast growing nature for screening purposes, is visually out of place in this type of environment and should be firmly discouraged.
- Areas of open space and gaps between buildings throughout the village will be carefully considered for protection from development or enclosure in order to safeguard the character of the village and any important views. Those open spaces identified on the survey map are of particular importance and will be strongly protected from any new development.
- Important groups of buildings are identified on the survey map and their specific qualities are described in the text above. Any new development must not harm the integrity or visual quality of these important groupings and it should be recognised that new development may not be acceptable.
- Special care must be taken to ensure that views looking into and out from the village are not spoilt. Those of particular importance are marked on the survey map.
- Inappropriate replacement windows and doors have already damaged 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.
- Surfacing within domestic curtilages for driveways and the like should be in keeping with the rural nature of the village and of an informal type, predominantly shingle. Tarmac and concrete are out of place in this rural setting. Regular paving and setts can also look discordant and may not always be appropriate.
- In the conservation area higher standards of design are required in planning applications as it is the function of the planning authority to consider all applications as to whether they preserve or enhance the special character identified in this appraisal.

NOTES

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 Little Marlow are the responsibility of the **West Team** who can be contacted on 01494 421517.

Planning Policy matters are the responsibility of the **Policy Unit** who can be contacted on 01494 421545.
