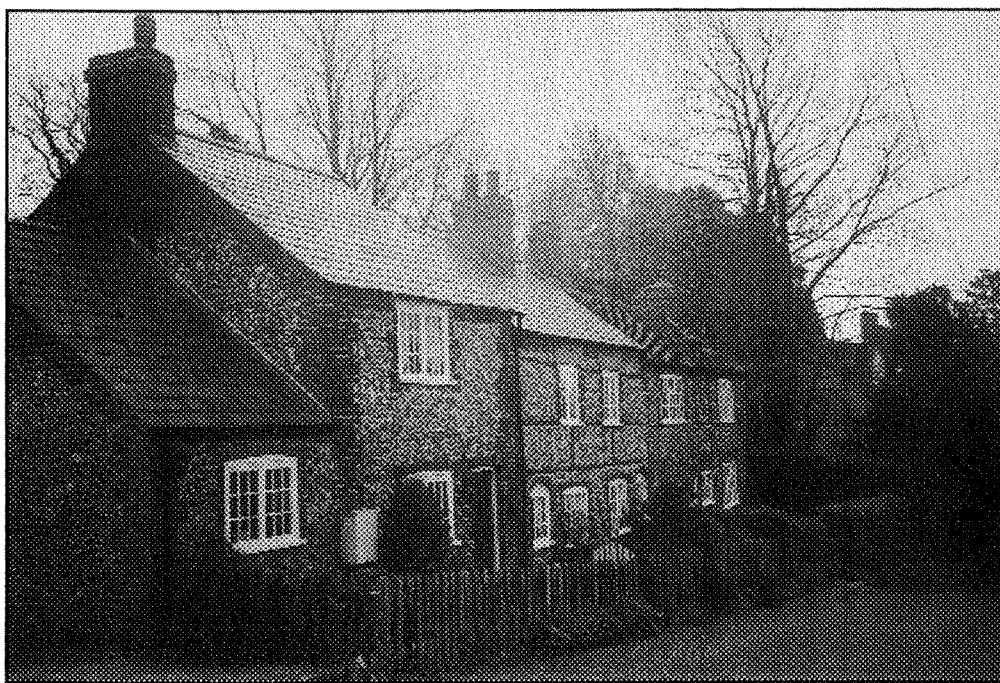

Conservation Area Character Survey

Loosley Row



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 justify the designation of Loosley Row 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 Loosley Row conservation area will be produced in the future in consultation with councillors, local residents and other interested parties.



HISTORY

Turville Heath has a long history as part of Turville parish. Loosley Row is situated in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Beauty and the Metropolitan Green Belt. Close to the Western edge of the Chiltern Hills, the village is set on the side of a hill and commands a magnificent view over the flat expanse of the Vale of Aylesbury. This form of scarpface or valley side village is very rare, and Loosley Row is unique in the Chilterns due to its settlement pattern.

The hamlet originally lay in the parish of Princes Risborough and would have fulfilled a similar function to Lacey Green, providing summer grazing and pasture, and linked to the springline settlement of Princes Risborough.

The village, or hamlet, began as a small farming settlement. Loosley probably derives its name from “hlose-leah”, the old English spelling for “the pig-sty clearing”. This could be a reference to a time when it was commonplace for swineherds to let their pigs roam free in the woods to feed on the beech-masts. By 1482, when the village was mentioned in the Fine Rolls, it was known as “Lousele-rowe”. It was mentioned during this time, as messuages and lands in this parish of Princes Risborough, which were passed between Thomas Kytwyld and Richard Redhole. The hamlets of Loosley Row, Lacey Green, and Speen were amalgamated in 1851, to form one ecclesiastical parish.

To the east of the conservation area lies Lacey Green windmill, a Grade II* listed smockmill of 1650. Restored by the Chiltern Society, it plays a role in views from Loosley Row. It is too far removed from the conservation area to be included within the boundaries.

Loosley Row was renowned in the 19th century, along with Lacey Green, for its sequin and beadwork, a cottage industry carried out by local women. Another local industry was lacemaking, with both women and children involved.

Loosley Row also had an industrial base - the foundry that lies towards the bottom of the scarp. This had been owned by the same family for the past 200 years or so, and once employed as many as 16 men. The oldest recorded industry in the District, it originally manufactured agricultural and household implements; it now specialises in wrought iron work.

The layout of the village is dictated by the roads that pass through it, and is draped over the brow of the ridge. The buildings have developed in a loose-knit fashion, positioned to take full advantage of the views.

The conservation area was designated in 1988. It comprises only a small part of the wider village, which has grown in modern times and spread to join neighbouring Lacey Green.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or any sites of archaeological interest identified within the conservation area. However the hamlet is clearly of an historic nature,

and in the event of archaeological deposits being found, the Council may require archaeological conditions attaching to planning permissions where appropriate, including watching briefs, excavation, or similar recording procedures.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The old part of the village, around which the conservation area is located, runs down the side of the Chiltern scarp. The conservation area is small and has no real centre to it. This in itself is unusual for a conservation area, which would usually have strong linking threads in terms of character and relationship of buildings to each other. Another anomaly is the separate boundary drawn around the foundry - a compact self-contained area of historic significance. However there are no obvious architectural links between the areas, which has resulted in the two separate designations.

The buildings appear to have grown up around the road pattern. The main road down the hillside may have once been a medieval holloway, used for bringing livestock up to the pastures on the ridge. The houses here relate more to the road than they do to each other, and they also relate to the view across the vale - even the humblest foundry cottages are aligned to benefit.

The character of the conservation area changes as one moves up the scarp. At the foot and along the hillside are smaller workers cottages, some associated with the foundry. Further up the hillside the houses, although still in the vernacular, tend to get bigger, until at the top are larger houses perched on the scarp edge, taking full advantage of the views. The architecture gets comparably politer as the buildings increase in size, in line with architectural fashions, culminating in the elaborately designed Loosley Dene. Beyond Loosley Dene the character of the area changes again, as the road is set back from the edge of the scarp and has wide verges. Some buildings still straggle down the hill, but the houses are much more widely spaced, and the appearance more rural. The exception is the two pairs of workers cottage set opposite Collins Farm - the only houses on this side of the road to be incorporated into the conservation area, likely due to their relative antiquity (Victorian) rather than their relationship to neighbouring properties.

There are no listed buildings in the conservation area

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

The Foundry and associated cottages

This part of the conservation area provides a unique settlement form within the wider conservation area. The foundry buildings have been much altered and extended over time, and what is now the showroom has been rebuilt

in brick. Some of the original buildings remain at the rear, and are built of chalk block, believed to have been dug out of clay pits nearby.

Surrounding the foundry buildings, are what were once workers cottages, small in scale and in the local vernacular. These form a yardlike effect, heightened by the small car park to the front of the forge. Immediately adjacent to the foundry building is Foundry Cottage, linked to the showroom, and in the same ownership. This is of brick and flint, echoed in materials elsewhere in the group, and has some good original low windows openings on its upper storey. Nos. 1 and 2 Prospect Cottages (1872) and Grannies are of brick although altered. Grannies appears to be an older building with an interesting extension to the front. Yew Tree, Rose and Corner Cottage, together with the set back Well Cottage display a variety of materials and detailing which adds to interest in this small enclave of historic dwellings, and the extension of buildings onto the rear of the plots adds an interesting variety of roof shape and scale in this location.

Loosley Hill to crossroads

From the foundry part of the conservation area the road winds steeply up the hill, flanked by hedges and walls. The houses are all situated to the east of the road and face over the vale, the roofs rising above each other up the hill. It is this pattern of buildings seemingly above each other, built onto the curve of the road, which makes this part of the conservation area unique.

The houses range in scale and age. Towards the lower part of the hill, the Salmon, South and North Sprat are substantial houses, The names originate from when these two buildings were public houses. They are built in a vernacular style, with much Edwardian detailing, although the cores of the buildings may date from earlier. All display fairly typical Edwardian features, particularly in the glazing patterns, with dormers constructed to face the views across to Bledlow Ridge. The Sprats are an unusually shaped semi-detached pair, rendered in cream - they sit within a plot on the hillside so that from the road above views of the rooftops are seen. The Salmon is of brick. All sit within fairly large plots.

Further up the hillside a group of what would have been workers cottages form a built face to the roadside. They are built in the vernacular and date from the early 19th century. Steep Hill Cottage has been sensitively extended, and is of flint with slate roofs. The lower Omega Cottage is also of flint with brick dressings, and has an old tile roof, and the rhythm of the roofs and the scale of these properties down the hillside makes a pleasing picture. These properties are prominent in the conservation area. Behind them again are steep gardens, and outbuildings accessed from Lower Road, and another cottage, Bergamot, which is a pleasing white rendered cottage, with slate and tile roofs. This has some modern alterations, and has consent for further more sympathetic extensions.

Sitting on the brow of the hill, and forming a loosely knit group around the crossroads are three more substantial houses. Horseshoe Cottage is of flint and brick with a slate and tiled roofs and white painted windows, enclosed to the east by a flint and brick wall, but more open on the west side. Across the road, the Old School has been much extended, so little of the original building can be seen - its white painted gabled front is prominent in the street scene coming up Loosley Hill. The school closed in 1916. Loosley Dene, right on the crossroads, is an imposing building, although somewhat screened by vegetation in the summer. The frontage is of brick, the rest of the building of brick and flint, and the house incorporates some unusual detailing, with elements of the gothic revival style in the fenestration. It has an unusually large vaulted porch which reaches forward to the roadside; and has a strong impact in the conservation area because of its detailing, particularly the windows and chimneys. The fenestration woodwork on the building is painted a bright aqua blue.

Lower Road - north


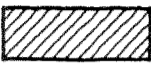



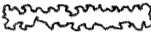



Once at the crossroads the character of the conservation area changes. The road, running north, is cut into the side of the hill, but the relief is much less significant, and the road gently undulates along the contours. To the east of the road the houses are at a higher level, but apart from 2 pairs of cottages are not included in the conservation area, being more modern. The cottages, 1 and 2 Sunnybank and 1 and 2 Hill View are set closer to the road and date from the 19th century - they originally would have been workers cottages, possibly associated with the farm. Sunnybank is of flint with brick dressings, with some alterations. Hillview is of brick on a flint plinth and may be later, although the style is similar. Both pairs of properties have lost some of their original windows, and are rendered on their south elevations. The houses form an important group, creating almost a pinchpoint in the road.

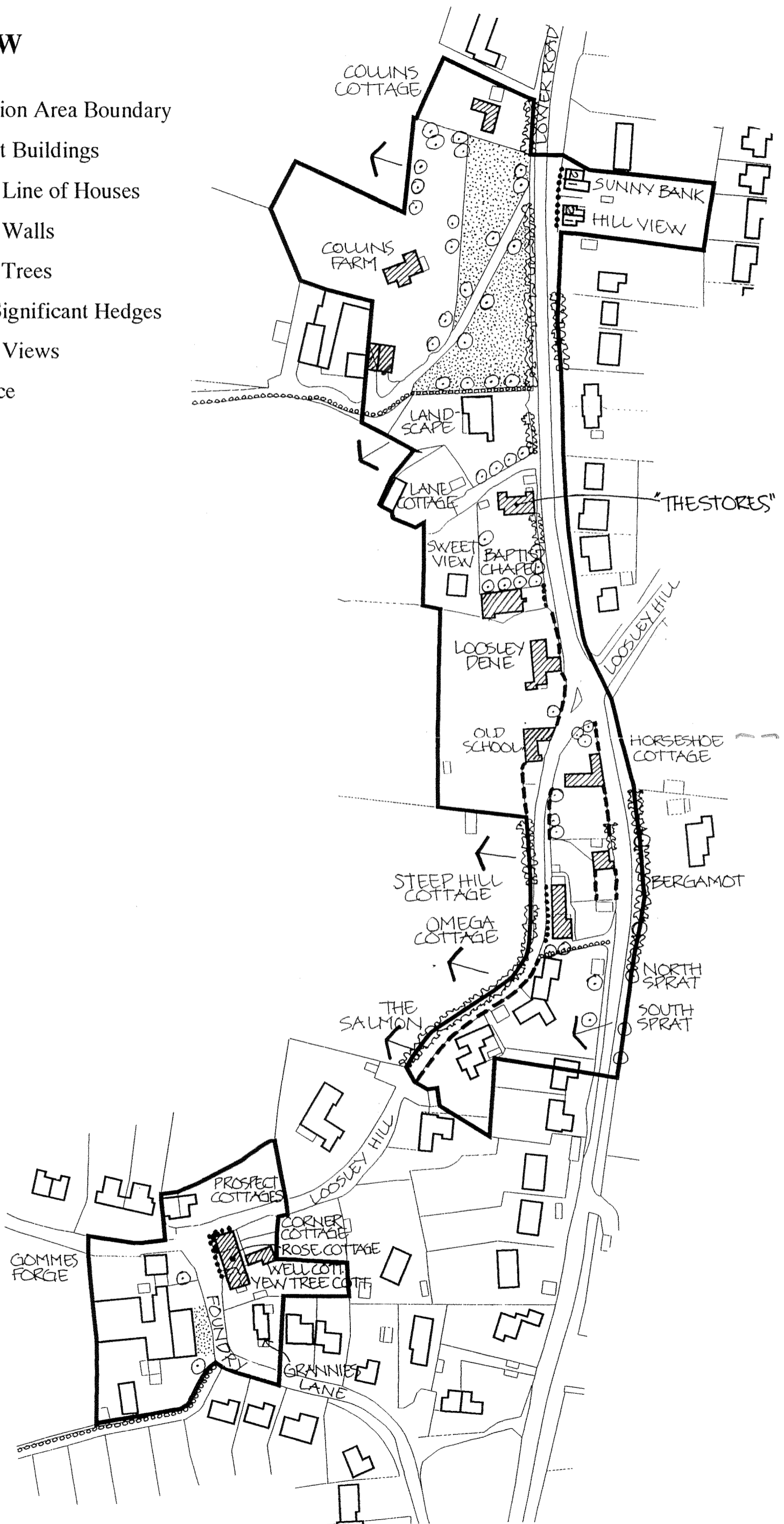
To the west of the road, and for the most part below it, the character of the houses varies, but they are linked by their relatively large plot sizes. The Loosley Row Baptist Chapel is an exception. Built in 1905 it is a plain and simple building with some simple yet attractive gothic detailing on the windows, and sits tight within its plot, the forecourt enclosed by iron railings. To either side are walls and vegetation. It replaced an earlier chapel dating from 1862.

Adjacent is a tumbledown cottage of flint and brick dressings, which is known locally as The Stores, reflecting its former use as a shop, and also as a site for the village post office for a few years after the Second World War. It has shutters in places, and original Yorkshire sliding sashes on the ground floor. There are various associated outbuildings attached to it. The plot is a contrast to the neatly clipped hedges across the road and gives a rural air to the area. Down a lane next to the cottage are two properties - a modern bungalow, Sweet View, tucked away out of sight in what appears to have been an orchard, and Lane Cottage which sits exposed on the hillside with excellent views. This

Loosely Row Conservation Area Character Survey Map

LOOSLEY ROW

-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Significant Buildings
-  Important Line of Houses
-  Important Walls
-  Important Trees
-  Visually Significant Hedges
-  Important Views
-  Open Space
-  Footpaths



is again in the local tradition of flint with brick, and has a cottage garden. An important wall confirms the boundary at the rear of the cottage. Lane Cottage is tucked away, and not immediately visible from the road, although both it and Sweet View are visible from the footpath adjacent to Collins Farm. Lane Cottage is unusual in the conservation area in that it does not appear to have been positioned to take advantage of the view. In front of it, accessed from Lower Road is a large 20th century dwelling, Landscape. This is of brick, and screened by trees and hedges

Finally the largest plot in the conservation area is reserved for Collins Farm. This is set well down the hillside, almost at the foot of the scarp, behind an area of well treed green space (private). The farmhouse itself is early to mid 19th century, with later additions such as window bays looking over the view. White rendered with a slate roof, it has painted sliding sash windows and decorative bargeboards on the gable ends. The windows to the front are in a more vernacular style with curved headers on the ground floor.

There are a number of associated farm buildings lower down the hill, and what appears to have been a coach house, although the origins of this building may be older, Collins Farm was painted by the artist Samuel Palmer in 1845, one study being in the Victoria and Albert Museum and a further in the Ashmolean. He spent a month in the area, and wrote “The bask of beautiful landscape in glorious sunlight is in nature perfectly delicious and congenial with the mind and heart of man....” The Victoria and Albert painting shows a



delightful scene with children herding sheep through dappled shade down the hillside towards the farm buildings, with a distant view of hills in the background.

The farm building shown in Palmer’s pictures is a thatched and tiled barn with a wagon porch. It appears to be in the location that the coach house now is; some of the original structure may remain or have been reused.

To the north of Collins Farm lies Collins Cottage; the name suggesting there was once a connection between the two. This too is set down from the road, but is more visible. It is an attractive flint dwelling, again in the Chilterns Vernacular, with brick quoins, of 4 bays, with white painted casement windows and an off centre door. Originally two cottages, the left known as Collins Cottage and the right believed to have been Deep Vale, the house has been extended to the rear in the past. The oldest part is believed to date from the 1790s. A detached garage building with a pitched roof adds to the building line of the property. A beech hedge screens the house.

MATERIALS

A unifying theme in the conservation area is the use of flint, on both small vernacular buildings and larger houses such as Loosley Dene. Flint is a traditional Chilterns material, being readily dug out of the scarp along with chalk. Flint buildings have brick dressings, although brick is also apparent in its own right in the locality. What is more unusual is the use of slate - it appears far more on roofs than is common in

Chiltern villages, which are more likely to have plain clay tiles. Clay tiles are used in the conservation area, but slate dominates, which may indicate a Victorian building boom, when this material became more widely available.

Some properties are rendered and generally employ cream or white, which visually enhances the buildings and makes them stand out.

Generally windows and doors are white painted casements or sashes, except where they have been replaced with inappropriate modern frames; Loosley Dene has some fine window details, also of wood. Leaded lights are common on the Edwardian buildings.

A key feature in the conservation area is brick and flint walling, which creates a sense of enclosure. Flint walls abound and the key visually important ones are marked on the survey map. Walls are highly visible and it is advisable that a good lime mortar is used when these are repaired, as inappropriate mixes can harm the visual appearance.

Iron work is also in evidence within the conservation area. The Chapel, the cottages across the road from Collins Farm, and parts of the farm boundary have iron railings, North Sprat has a variety of ironwork on its façade, and there are various pieces of interest associated with the foundry. Given the existence of the foundry in the village it is not surprising that this material is used locally.

TREES AND VEGETATION

The varying character of the conservation area is aided in part by the vegetation. At the foot of the scarp, where open land appears, the main vegetation is hedging; this is also important up Loosley Hill with hedges on the frontage of the property plots, trees behind the buildings further up the hill. Along Lower Road, which runs just below the ridge of the scarp, trees are more important, and there is a more sylvan feel to the area. This is particularly prevalent along the southern section of Lower Road, and in the area around Collins Farm, where the trees screen properties further down the hill. The tree line is very pronounced, and buildings beyond it appear exposed. The eastern edge of the conservation area, behind the tree line, is neater in character, with clipped hedges fronting the verge.

OPEN SPACE

There is no public open space in the conservation area, although the verges along Lower Road are quite wide giving an appearance of openness in this location. The open area in front of Collins Farm enhances this.

The Foundry carpark and a small area adjacent also create a feeling of openness at the foot of the hill, although the lack of mature trees and the built up surroundings give this more of a courtyard feel.

GROUPINGS

The Foundry Cottages create one group, linked physically and visually by their distinct location away from the remainder of the conservation area. Further up Loosley Hill the workers cottages (Steep Hill Cottage and Omega) form an important line which is visible from the valley floor. They sit quite hard to the road creating a sense of enclosure as one travels up the road. Sunnybank Cottages and Hill View Cottages are another grouping.

SETTING AND VIEWS

The views from the conservation area are one of its most important qualities. It is rare to find a settlement that drapes over the hillside given the difficulties of building across the contours, but as a result Loosley Row has some of the finest views in the District. All face west down the scarp and across the Vale towards Bledlow Ridge. In some places, particularly on Loosley Hill, the views are wide open; in others such as from the elevated Lower Road the valley can only be glimpsed through gaps. The entire conservation area is orientated towards the views and is unique as a result. Some of the best views from the conservation area are identified on the survey map.

The settlement is built on the slope as opposed to valley bottom or plateau, and as a result of this it is highly visible from greater distances than usual for a Chiltern Village, and the long distance views from across the Vale are correspondingly important. Development in Loosely Row will need to take into account the impact on these longer distance views.

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 checklist taking account of the above text.

To safeguard, preserve and enhance the appearance and special character of Loosley Row 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.
- 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.
- Significant buildings are identified on the survey map and their specific qualities are described in the text above. Any new development must not harm their integrity or visual quality, and it should be recognised that new development may not always be acceptable.
- Materials for any new building works or surfacing must be sympathetic to the rural character of the area.
- Applications for development adjoining but beyond the conservation area boundary will be assessed for its effect upon it, and may be refused permission if this is considered adverse.
- Surfacing within domestic curtilages for driveways and the like should be in keeping with the rural nature of the hamlet and of an informal type. Large areas of tarmac and concrete are out of place in this rural setting. Regular paving, pavements and setts may also look discordant, and may not be appropriate. Paths to front doors historically were surfaced with clay tiles or brick, and this is a tradition that could be encouraged.
- 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.
- Flint and brick walling is a particular feature of the Loosley Row Conservation Area. New sections of walling or repairs to existing walling should respect and be equal in quality to the workmanship of original sections of walling. In particular the use of an appropriate lime mortar will enhance the appearance of walling.
- Areas of open space, and gaps between buildings will be carefully considered for protection from development or enclosure in order to protect the character of the Loosley Row Conservation Area, the setting of listed buildings, and any important views.
- All trees in conservation areas are protected but special consideration should be given to those trees indicated on the conservation area 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 looking into and out from the conservation area are not spoilt. Those of particular importance are marked on the survey 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 Chilterns Conference have recently published the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide, which provides guidance aimed at conserving the outstanding qualities which make the Chilterns a landscape of national importance. Copies can be inspected/or purchased at the District Council Offices. It is used by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance

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 Loosley Row Conservation Area are the responsibility of the East Team who can be contacted on 01494 421531.

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