
Conservation Area Character Survey

MARLOW



What is a Conservation Area?

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. Marlow Conservation Area was first designated on 10 March 1969 by Buckinghamshire County Council and extended and revised in 1987 and 1991 by Wycombe District Council.

Within conservation areas there are special controls on some alterations, the demolition of buildings or parts of buildings and on the felling, uprooting, lopping and topping of trees. The Council's Heritage Guidance Note on Conservation Areas gives further details of the special controls that apply.

Designation of a conservation area does not preclude the possibility of new development. However such development must be designed to preserve or enhance the special character of the area.

Planning and Major Projects - 2004

What is the purpose of this Survey?

This conservation area character survey describes the main features of special architectural or historic interest that justify the designation of 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 and these are the primary means of protecting the special interest of conservation areas.

The survey is also intended to be used as an aid to making decisions on planning and related issues and has been adopted by Wycombe District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Proposals for schemes to enhance the character and appearance of Marlow Conservation Area will be produced in the future in consultation with local residents and the Town Council and as funding permits.



MARLOW CONSERVATION AREA'S LANDSCAPE DESIGNATION

The Landscape Plan for Buckinghamshire (adopted by the County Council in 2000 for supplementary planning guidance as part of the County Structure Plan) places Marlow in Character Area 115, The Thames Valley and in Landscape Character Zone Z11, the Valley Floodplain (Map 1 Landscape Character and Designations). The backdrop to the town are the wooded chalk hills of Character Area 110, the Chilterns, and the Landscape Character Zone Z10, the Incised Dip Slope. Geologically the town sits on the Brickearth River Gravels (Map 4, Geology of Buckinghamshire). Opposite the town on the Berkshire Bank the equivalent Landscape Strategy classification of 1995 places that bank in category BK2, the Thames Woodland, chalk hills that include Winter Hill which gives good views over Marlow and its landscape setting.

HISTORY

Marlow is an ancient settlement with an Anglo-Saxon name, 'merelafan', appearing in a 1015 document, although this had become Merlaue by 1087 when it appears in the Domesday Book. The name appears to mean the area left behind at the edge of lakes, a poetic Anglo-Saxon convention in which a shore line is the area that water has left behind. It is reasonable to assume that the settlement grew up on an area of higher ground close to the river where the road or track from Reading to High Wycombe could effectively cross the River Thames: an area of higher ground flanked by

meres or lakes. There is a reference to a river bridge warden in 1227, so the bridge has been an important part of Marlow life for many centuries. The town was granted a market around 1227 and by 1278 has nearly two hundred burgesses or townsmen and from 1299 the borough sent two burgesses to Parliament. This is not the place for a detailed history of the town and two current books are commended for more detailed information - Marlow: A Pictorial History by Rachel Brown and Julian Hunt (1994), and Marlow Through the Ages by John Evans (1998).

For the purposes of this survey the town plan itself is of considerable interest. The town grew up first near the river crossing which was at the south end of the present St Peter Street, for some years known as Duck Lane. The parish church came later and was placed near the river but to the west of St Peter Street. Some time in the early thirteenth century, if not before, the planned town was laid out along what are now High Street, West Street, Spittal Street and probably Chapel Street. The layout has all the characteristics of a planned medieval town extension with long narrow plots for the burgesses or merchants set at right angles to the road, these plots being known as 'burgage plots'.

Thus the historic core of Marlow has two distinct layouts, the more irregular one along St Peter Street and the river frontage, the other the classic planned medieval layout of High Street, West Street and Spittal Street. As with so many other towns, the original layout set the pattern for future development and there was relatively little expansion from the medieval core until the nineteenth century. Marlow

was a market town with two sources of trade and traffic. The river played a crucial role in its development, much as it did in the comparable riverside town of Henley. By the 17th century river barges carried the area's corn and produce far and wide. Marlow became the port for the export of the High Wycombe area's malt and meal, that town being until the 19th century an extremely important corn market. Marlow had its own watermills and the barges were laden with timber, (mostly beech wood and also firewood for London), flour, corn and malt. Much of the latter stayed



in the town for brewing, eventually coalescing into the former Wethered's Brewery on the west side of the High Street.

Marlow was thus very much a working riverside town well into the nineteenth century with many cottages occupied by river workers: bargees, wharfingers, fisherman, eel-men and brewery workers. Many of these cottages which were tenements and slum-like, have been demolished, including those in St Peter Street, Chapel Street and Dean Street. During the 18th century new houses spread to the south and the west of the town, and there are many examples of fine Georgian buildings in the town. The merchants, traders and gentry in the High Street and West Street also refronted their houses at this time, although the building cores remain medieval. Many fine buildings remain, ranging from the aristocratic Marlow Place, Court Garden, Remnantz and Western House to Cromwell House and Brampton House. During the late 18th and early 19th centuries the town became a popular riverside resort, and a number of riverside houses were built, with lawns sloping to the river. Its popularity as a resort has meant that Marlow has had its fair share of distinguished residents, including Thomas Love Peacock, Jerome K Jerome, Percy and Mary Shelley, and the artist Edward Gregory.

The Victorian expansion of the town coincided with the decline in river trade and the flowering of pleasure boating during the later nineteenth century. Marlow gradually changed to a character more akin to its present one and the eastward and northern expansion at this time filled out the town and gave it some fine Victorian and Edwardian housing, ranging from villas to artisan terrace housing. The best of this, east of High Street and surrounding the Riley Road recreation ground, was included within the conservation area boundary. The eastward area grew partly as a result of the arrival of the branch railway line from Maidenhead via Bourne End in 1873 and several of the houses here have date plaques from the 1880s onward: Marlow became a commuter town.

This changing pattern of the town's residents meant that the densely occupied workers cottages were replaced by more spacious housing out in the surrounding fields

so the population growth of the town as recorded in official censuses grew more slowly than the spread of the town. For example in 1801 the population was 3240, rising to 4240 by 1831 and 4423 in the 1851 Census. The spectacular growth of the suburbs after the railway arrived raised the population to 5650 by 1901, counterbalanced by the demolition of many of the overcrowded near-slum cottages and tenements in

the old core of the town. Indeed the population of the town did not double from its 1801 figure until the 1951 Census, a very slow rate compared with virtually any town elsewhere in England.

The only area of later development within the conservation area is found on Lock Island which is mostly twentieth century. Bearing in mind however that the River Thames has played a crucial part in the evolution of the town, Lock Island and the Buckinghamshire bank are all within the conservation



The Crown, formerly the Town Hall



Houses in Glade Road

area boundary.

The conservation area was first designated by Buckinghamshire County Council on 10 March 1969. Its boundaries were revised in July 1987 when the Victorian and Edwardian expansion to the east of the town centre was added as was Colonel's



*Marlow Lock and Three
Gables, formerly Thames Lawn*

Meadow, along Oxford Road and the area around Riley Recreation Ground, together with other minor changes. The detached area to the west focused on the Hare And Hounds on Henley Road was deleted. In 1991 the boundary along the river was amended to follow the new county boundary along the middle of the River Thames, the major change being the inclusion of the whole of Lock Island within the conservation area. The revised statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest for the former Urban District of Marlow was issued in January 1974 by the Department of the Environment, who also provided a list of buildings for inclusion in the non-statutory Local List.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Conservation Area. However, Marlow being a historic market town of medieval origin and plan form is known to contain archaeological features and deposits within the conservation area boundary, particularly along the older roads at the core of the town: High Street, West Street, Spittal Street, Chapel Street, St Peter Street and West Street. The medieval plan form is particularly apparent along High, Spittal and West Streets where there is an extensive survival of burgage plots which should be safeguarded. Where building work is approved within these burgage plots the Council will expect archaeological considerations to be fully taken into account and may require trial or full excavation in important cases. For example archaeological trial and full excavation was carried out on the site of the former Wethered's Brewery on High Street and this resulted in valuable information on the history of the town being brought to light.

The Council will take archaeological advice from the County Archaeological Officer on applications for planning permission in the town centre and will require archaeological conditions attaching to planning permissions where appropriate, including watching briefs, excavation or similar recording procedures. If archaeological deposits come to light during building work or development, either in the burgage plot areas or elsewhere in the historic town, provision should be made to investigate and record them as such evidence contributes to the history of the town.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Marlow is a very attractive town which benefits greatly from its setting on the River Thames. The historic core is a conservation area. It has a basic grid layout that overlies the older medieval street pattern. The layout is dominated by the High Street, which focuses at the southern end on the Grade I listed Marlow Suspension Bridge (Tierney Clark 1831), which is a key landmark in the town. The core of the town, High Street, West Street, Spittal Street, and Chapel Street, is compact and densely developed, with the western side of the High Street particularly tightly knit. The majority of buildings front directly onto the pavement, grander houses being the only significant exceptions. To the immediate east in St Peter Street and Station Road, the grain is looser until the Victorian phase of development is reached, where densities again become high, with a traditional pattern of terraces, villas and semi-detached dwellings.

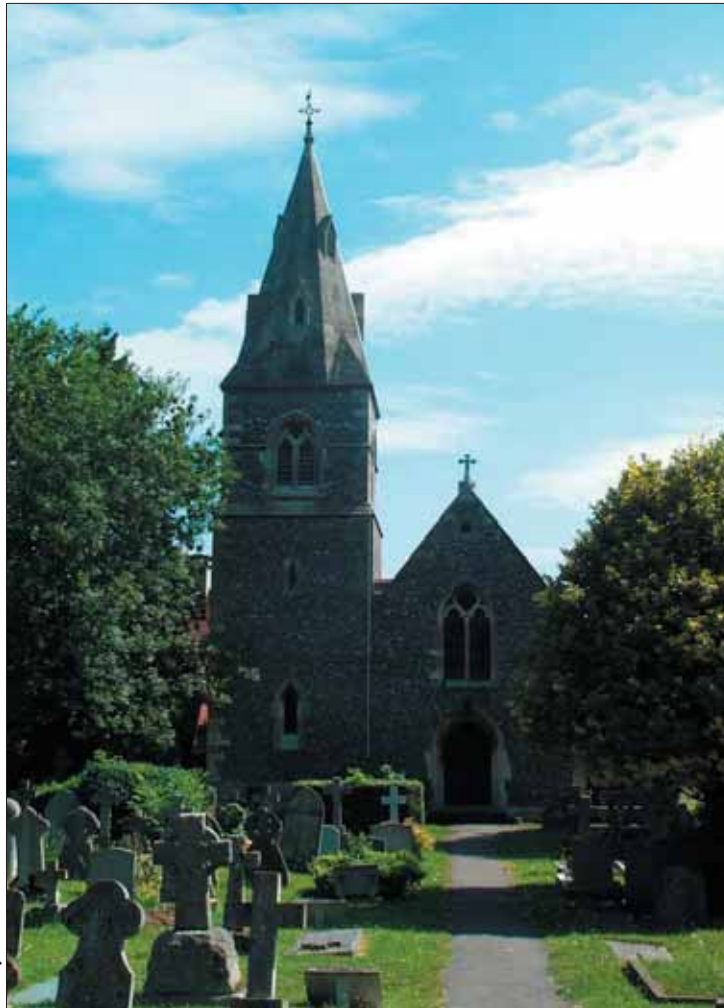
Marlow shares many characteristics with other small market towns along the River Thames including Henley, Wallingford, Abingdon and Cricklade but it is closest in character to Henley, albeit smaller: also an important river port serving an agricultural hinterland and with a significant brewing industry. All these towns have their historic cores designated as conservation areas and contain numerous statutorily listed buildings. Besides the medieval and Georgian core these towns evolved with later suburbs as social aspirations changed and the railways arrived. These phases are of equal interest, and the best areas of Victorian and Edwardian expansion in Marlow contribute to the Town's historic interest

The current built environment of Marlow is a product of three distinct and clearly readable phases of development which each combine to produce a town of considerable historic interest and character which

justify the designation of the town's historic areas as a conservation area.

Area 1: The medieval core lies along the original street pattern of St Peter Street to the east, High Street, and the T-junction at the northern end of this created by Spittal Street and West Street. These are the oldest established routes of the town, and with the exception of St Peter Street they remain the main traffic routes through town. St Peter Street became a cul-de-sac when the new suspension bridge was opened to the west of the church in 1831 and the St Peter Street timber bridge rebuilt as recently as 1789 was pulled down. The street retains many fine historic buildings, including the 14th century remnants of a medieval hall at the Deanery, and the Grade I listed Marlow Place at its northern end.

The church, originally medieval, was rebuilt in 1832 after prolonged periods of flooding. The buildings of the causeway adjacent date in part from this period also, although the George and Dragon inn is 18th century. This cluster is tightly knit in comparison to the rest of the river frontage. The buildings in the historic core are highly varied, the majority are of historic interest, and they exhibit a wealth of architectural characteristics, indicating the changing architectural fashions up until the mid 19th century. These streets all have a medieval layout, characterised by burgage plots with development of the principal buildings to the street frontages. Gaps through the frontages lead to lower scale development on the rear of the plots. Most of the buildings are between two and three storeys high, and the variety of roofline, detail and appearance of these buildings is pleasing to the eye. Several buildings retain timber-framed cores with later re-frontings.



St Peter's Roman Catholic Church, St Peter Street

The historic core also includes the areas to the west of the High Street which include the former Wethered Brewery, a key historic employer in the town and whose main buildings, dating from the mid 18th century to the early 20th century, were retained in the 1990s residential conversion scheme. To the west of Portlands Alley, (the former west boundary of the brewery site) lie the grounds of Remnantz, now with a crescent of 1990s housing in its south-west quarter. The grounds are very important historically and

were once the parade ground for the Royal Military College during its sojourn in Marlow during the Napoleonic Wars.

Area 2: Riverside. The river frontage plays a key role in the character of Marlow, and is important not only as a crossing place, but was also lined with wharves where goods and materials came ashore, and thus a major source of employment. As Marlow gained in popularity during the Georgian period, many fine houses were built along the riverbank, including Court Garden (now a leisure centre and public park), which in some cases replaced the old wharves. The characteristics of this area

tend more to large plots with single dwellings, making the most of the river frontage. To the east, north of Lock Island, the industrial past with its watermills is echoed in the white weatherboarded Marlow Mill housing redevelopment of the site (after the mills were demolished in 1965). This housing pattern is repeated to the west of the town centre, where houses and now blocks of flats, (replacing an ancient tithe barn and wharf buildings), give way to the Higginson Park and then open countryside, here mostly meadows.

Area 3: Residential areas. Most of this development

is Victorian and Edwardian, and ranges from large houses in single plots to the west of the town to denser, more traditional middle and lower class houses to the east. These filled in the fields between the old town and the railway station from the mid-1870s and northwards towards the Marlow Road. Generally of red brick, they tend to be laid out in typical perimeter block pattern. The houses vary in style from the High Victorian villas and late Georgian style terraces to Domestic Revival Queen Anne style houses. Interspersed is later development from the mid to late 20th century such as Parsonage Gardens and Nos 20-28 Claremont Road which it would be impractical to exclude from the Conservation Area



Medieval timber-framing: 24 High Street

richness of architectural form in Marlow is such that standardised comparisons between buildings are not possible. Instead it is suggested that a series of features common to the architecture provide some kind of unifying theme:

- **Roofline** is particularly important. In Marlow



Shelley's house, West Street

without producing a highly convoluted boundary.

Although predominantly residential there are other buildings of historic value within Area 3, such as the former cottage hospital opened in 1915.

Despite the relative uniformity of material and detailing these areas present an attractive living environment close to the commercial centre of the town, only somewhat marred by the predominance of on-street parking. In particular gardens, trees and roadside planting are fundamental to the attractiveness of these areas.

Around the Riley Recreation Ground are terraces of late 19th century houses, facing the open space on its north and east sides and with rear gardens to the west. West of Oxford Road are large houses and the open spaces of Colonel's Meadow and the former grounds of Quoittings, the 18th and 19th century house recently replaced by flats.

Key townscape features: The variety and



Victorian terrace houses: Beaumont Rise

it is generally varied and irregular. Variety in roof form is a key characteristic, with both plain gable and hipped roof forms used. Gables particularly dominate the north side of West Street. The roofline is not dominant in all buildings—the classical proportions of the Georgian refrontings are often parapetted, and partially hide the roofs. This is particularly marked in the High Street.



- Fenestration** Window openings are the key elements which determine the character of an elevation and reinforce the vertical rhythm of a street. They range from the humble casement to more complex window styles but are more commonly sash – from horizontal sliding sashes to the more usual vertical hanging sash. There are examples of more unusual styles – Venetian windows and Diocletian or thermal windows in some of the grander buildings.
- Dormers:** The dormer is a common roof feature throughout the town centre. Dormer detailing provides visual interest to the roofscape. These dormers are mostly two light and occupy the middle third of the roof slopes, as in correct traditional practice. Modern box dormers which increase floorspace are to be seen as unfortunate interlopers that detract from the roofscape.
- Doors:** The variety of door shapes and character reflects the range of architectural quality in the town. The politer buildings of the 18th century tend to have classically inspired doors and doorways and are embellished with columns, pediments and the like. On the more vernacular buildings doors are not as conspicuous architecturally. There are many shop façades as well, and traditional shopfronts are relatively numerous (signage on these is often poor). There are relatively few early shopfronts but there are sufficient to justify their safeguarding and these date from the early 19th century to the early 20th.
- Boundary Walls:** The use of brick or brick and flint boundary walling is a characteristic feature throughout the town, and is a significant townscape element. These include the significant brick boundary walls to the eastern grounds of Marlow Place along both Station Road and Institute Road, those along Mill Road to the former grounds of Thames



Lawn, and the walls on both sides of Portlands Alley, the west side being the boundary to Remnantz (now Wethered Park) which returns north to include Georgian bee-boles. Walls define, enclose and edge the public space. Coping detailing is of particular importance.

Pediments, string courses, dentil courses, eaves details are all features of the building facades, creating considerable interest and detail at upper floor levels. Along West Street, for example, Western House of 1699 has a fine timber modillion cornice and Remnantz has a good parapetted cornice. Applied cornices are particularly prevalent on some of the late 18th and early 19th century buildings along the High Street, and are often



High Street: Stucco rustication and sash windows

emphasised by the use of a different material to that on the facing of the building

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

Within the conservation area there are one hundred and sixty three statutorily listed buildings (as at January 2000). Two are listed at Grade I, (buildings of national importance): the Suspension Bridge and Marlow Place, while seventeen others are listed at Grade II*, (buildings of regional significance as well as being of exceptional importance to the conservation area). These Grade II* buildings include the Parish Church of All Saints, actually grade B, (the approximate ecclesiastical equivalent of Grade II*), Remnantz, Western House, the early medieval hall house of The Old Parsonage and Court Garden House. The other one hundred and forty four list entries are graded II

and are focused on St Peter Street, High Street and West Street with a few in Spittal Street, Chapel Street, Quoittings Square and Oxford Road.

Marlow also has a Local List which was compiled by the then Department of the Environment for the assistance of the local planning authority in its decision making. These buildings have no statutory protection in themselves but, being within the conservation area, are protected from substantial demolition. The local list dates from the 1972 statutory list fieldwork and it is hoped that it can be updated as soon as resources allow. Certainly every effort will be made to safeguard their contribution to the conservation area and that of any other buildings within its boundaries that contribute to its character as an historic settlement.

This section of the Survey will be divided to cover the three areas of distinct townscape found within the conservation area boundary.

Area 1: This area, comprising the medieval core, has tightly knit townscape with most properties fronting directly onto the road. In terms of scale most are two or two and a half storeys high, but the grander buildings tend to be more imposing at three storeys.

Comparatively few of the buildings present gables to the street, but the historic plot sizes are emphasised by the variety of architectural detail and treatment of materials.

The most important building in the town architecturally is Marlow Place, Grade I listed and thus of national importance. The building dates from 1720 and is often attributed to Thomas Archer. Local tradition has it built for the Prince of Wales (later George II), although in fact it was the Earl of Portsmouth who commissioned it and the prince was only a visitor from Cliveden. It is a piece of pure Baroque, from the symmetrical facades to the piano nobile, the pediments on each façade and Mannerist Doric Giant Order detail. This architectural highlight is located away from the main heart of the town on Station Road and forms a visual stop to arguably the oldest part of town – St Peter Street, the original route up from the river crossing.

St Peter Street itself has some extremely interesting buildings. The Grade II* Old Parsonage dates from the 14th century, altered in the 18th, and is part timber-framed, part stone built (rare in Marlow). It includes 14th century traceried open hall windows. The attached



Marlow Place, Station Road

Deanery includes part of the medieval building as well as a fine late 17th century brick block with cross windows. Many of the other listed buildings along St Peter Street are on a vernacular scale, and date mainly from the 18th century. Exceptions stylistically include Marlow Ferry, the Old Weir House, the Dial House (all attractive Georgian villas) and the Two Brewers. There are also some buildings associated with



No 57 Chapel Street

the Roman Catholic Church of St Peter, which is by the important architect A W N Pugin. This has been extended by virtue of a link to a larger modern church by Francis Pollen. The schoolmaster's house and former school are of flint and red brick and are probably by EW Pugin, Pugin's son. The ecclesiastical buildings are set back from the road and are only tenuously linked with the medieval core.

The grandest houses are found along the High Street and West Street, many with Georgian fronts of high quality. Timber framed buildings survive throughout the town but most are obscured by Georgian and Victorian refacing and cladding, indicative of the economic success of the town. The majority of the buildings on the High Street are Grade II listed, and show a variety of architectural form, some of which is based on the earlier buildings beneath – in particular No 24, a 16th century 2 storey property, retains its exposed timber frame and jetty. while within the shop is a medieval timber doorway. Some key buildings include the Grade II* listed Cromwell House, a Georgian house in vitreous brick with red brick dressings of three storeys and cornice and central pediment, and the White House, a stuccoed 1730s building with Regency three storey bow windows to the frontage, and a landmark building when viewed from Institute Road. Adjacent to this, and linked by an arch is the Grade II* Brewery House, home and later offices for the owners of Marlow Brewery. At the end the High Street are two more fine examples of Georgian Town mansions, both listed Grade II*: Brampton House and The End House, each with a railinged front area. To the rear of the High Street many burgage plots survive, together with the site of the former Wethered's Brewery which mostly lies beyond the burgage plot limits, with associated courtyard buildings along the plot boundaries. The

Brewtower, an important landmark in the town, and other brewery buildings have been retained in new residential development on the Brewery site.

The top end of the High Street is also interesting architecturally. The area known as Market Square contains the former Town Hall (1807, by James Wyatt and now The Crown), the Obelisk at the intersection of the three streets and the former Crown Hotel (now Boots).

To the west and east of Market Square are Spittal Street, West Street and further to the east (and with smaller scale houses, Chapel Street). Of the three, West Street is the most imposing, a more complete example of Georgian street scene than High Street in places, and certainly there is a predominance of three storey buildings here. There are more listed buildings along this stretch of road, although arguably less grand (except at the western end). Along this road there are some fine architectural details – fenestration at Nos: 27, 37 and 37a, brickwork at Nos: 29 and 47 (both II*), and exposed timber framing on No 50.

The finest buildings on West Street are Remnantz, the Borlase School and Western House. Remnantz and its former stable blocks are Grade II* listed mid-18th century buildings, which were at one time the home of the Royal Military College. The fine cupola-turreted stables are separately listed, as are the railings and gates. Remnantz marks a change in the character of the street at its western end. There are some vernacular houses on the north side of the road, but elsewhere the buildings are quite grand, in some cases set in grounds, such as Western House of 1699 with its cluster of ancillary buildings including barns, and a gazebo. The original flint William Borlase School was founded in 1624 and, with its Victorian and 1990s extensions dominates the north side of the road, but there is other high quality architecture here, including the picturesque “Gothick” terrace of Shelley and Albion House, with their ogee-arched windows and historical association with the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley and his wife Mary, the author of Frankenstein. Beyond the school the scale of the buildings becomes more vernacular and cottagey.

Spittal Street itself only contains four statutorily listed buildings, although there are some locally listed in



Court Garden House

the area. Generally buildings here are later – 18th and 19th century - and tend to be two storey. Most now have shopfronts. Spittal Street runs into Chapel Street which contains a mixture of business and residential vernacular buildings, including a particularly picturesque terrace of 18th century chequer brick cottages on the north side, some dated 1788.

Area 2:

The second distinct area of the town is the Riverside. Parts of this area blend seamlessly into the historic core and the boundary is unclear. For convenience's sake some older areas have been included as "Riverside". Fundamental to this zone is The Thames, and naturally the Suspension Bridge. This is the town's most famous landmark, a Grade I listed structure by Tierney Clark, the chains being carried by a pair of stone Doric triumphal arches on rusticated piers.

Close to the bridge, on the riverbank, is All Saints Parish church, rebuilt in 1832-5 by C Inwood to replace the medieval structure. Later alterations were by Street and J Oldrid Scott, who also replaced the spire, in line with Victorian Ecclesiological taste. The picturesque churchyard fronts the river.

North of the churchyard lies an area of open space, with buildings along the eastern side, known as the Causeway. These include the former vicarage (not listed) by Street, and the 18th century George and Dragon Inn. A drinking fountain commemorating Charles Frohman, the theatrical impresario who was drowned in the torpedoing of the liner, the Lusitania, stands on the Causeway. To the west of the road lies Higginson Park, a public open space, and at the end

of this Court Garden, a Grade II* 18th century house built for a Dr Battie. The House and Park were purchased by the people of Marlow by public subscription in 1926 and ceremonially presented by Princess Mary to General Higginson who immediately handed it back to the town.

Downstream of the church are further large houses, mostly associated with the riverbank. These include The Old Bridge House which is immediately adjacent to the churchyard. This is an elaborate 19th century flint and stone-dressed Jacobean style mansion, with an ogee-capped tower. Across the road is a fine example of Victorian Tudor

Domestic Revival, The Bothy, which served as a Lodge for Thames Lawn. The original Thames Lawn building, demolished in 1991, has now been replaced by a fine stone faced house with a Palladian ground plan.



The Garth, 31 Mill Road

Beyond Thames Lawn three pretty Georgian villas face over Mill Lane to the riverside. The Sycamores, The Garth and Weir Cottage are earlier 19th century and, although altered, are an important riverside group. Beyond these villa lies the Lock, with its keeper's cottage, Lock Island, the three gabled Thames House and, below the weir, the location of the town's Mills (now redeveloped).

Area 3:

The remainder of the conservation area has, for convenience's sake, been classed as residential. This is essentially the later Victorian and Edwardian development that grew up around the historic core as the town expanded, although within this 19th century

development there are pockets of older architecture – terraces of artisans cottages along Station Road, and South Place. There are, of course, also grander houses scattered around but the overwhelming architecture is that of detached and semidetached middle class homes set out in traditional Victorian grids, and smaller terraced development, all embellished with then popular details.



Nos 4-14 Mill Road, dated 1846

The character survey map indicates a number of walls and railings that contribute to the character of the conservation area which should be retained and safeguarded.

MATERIALS

There is a wealth of local materials and textural finishes that make up a Marlow “palette”. Red stock brick and tile are the predominant building materials of the town, interspersed with slate roofs and the occasional rendered or painted fronts.

The brickwork in the town includes a number of more prestigious buildings using a header bond of more expensive flared or vitrified grey-blue brick for their facades, dressed with red brick. These include Nos 15 and 17 High Street, Nos 29/31 West Street and No 47 West Street (a very fine example). Nos 59-63 High Street, on a smaller scale, also have header bond facades. Chequer brickwork, where the stretchers are red and the headers are grey-blue, is also quite common, and this can be seen on Cromwell House in the High Street. Here the vitrified brick is used as headers in the more usual Flemish bond. Vitrified blue bricks with their glassy faces that sparkle in sunlight are a particular feature of the Thames Valley, and are found in many nearby towns such as Henley and Thame. Yellow London stock bricks can be seen on 65 High Street, and also the United Reformed



Zizzi Restaurant, former Wethered Brewery boardroom

Church at Quoiting Square, indicative of the move away from local vernacular materials. Plain red brick has also been used to great effect in the town, and is particularly evident on the flamboyant New Court (1877 by RW Edis). This range of buildings also makes considerable use of terracotta and tile-hanging for the decorative neo-Elizabethan detailing.

Variety in appearance of the buildings along the major routes is emphasised by the use of render or stucco on a number of the buildings. Some of these buildings stand out by virtue of their architecture – the White House on the High Street dating from the 1730s is particularly attractive, by virtue of its full height bow windows. A fine range of stuccoed buildings is located on the east side of the High Street (Nos 23-35).

Exposed timber-framing is relatively uncommon, being mostly found in buildings which escaped the rigorous updating of the Georgians and Victorians. Some is visible at 24 High Street which is 15th century, and it can also be seen at the less public rear of buildings such as No 9, and Nos 8-12 West Street. The timber-framed tradition survives mostly in Marlow as internal features. 18th century brick and stud is visible at 50 West Street.

Flint is used more as a decorative material, particularly for walls, as can be seen adjacent to the West Street public car park. There are, however, some notable exceptions, in particular the 1624 Borlase School, the churches of St Peter and Holy Trinity, and houses such as The Old Bridge House. It was intended that the remodelled All Saints Church would be clad in flint – only the stone window surrounds were completed.

Stone is a relatively rare building material in Marlow. The Suspension bridge has Bath stonework. The Crown

(formerly the Town Hall) is of Denner Hill Stone and Nos 9-11 St Peter Street are also built of stone, albeit on a less grand scale. Stone is also used for dressings on various buildings, notably Marlow Place. There are also occasional uses of local chalkstone or clunch but these were mostly for internal walls.

Windows, doors and other external joinery are under threat from modern substitute materials. Plastic (PVCu) windows of ill considered form and design have seriously eroded historic character, particularly in Area 3. It is to be hoped that this study will lead to a more caring attitude to historic joinery. The other materials that are poor are the modern shopfronts, particularly those flat aluminium types such as No 34 High Street, that represent the nadir of modern inappropriate design and materials. Many fascia signs unfortunately do not require permission when unlit and examples such as No 60 High Street do nothing for the genius loci of the town. There have been some better replacement shopfronts in Marlow in recent years, showing that good modern design has a role to play in the historic environment. Examples include those at Caffé Uno, Jaeger, Zizzi and Costa Coffee.

There are areas of traditional surfacing surviving in places and these should be safeguarded in any re-paving schemes. There has already been too much loss of the Denner Hill sett crossovers and pavings in recent improvements and the survey map identifies those areas where it survives in useful amounts in streetscape terms. The best stretch of Denner Hill setts is in Draymans Lane between the High Street and Brewery and this must be safeguarded, including the stone waggon tracks.

TREES AND VEGETATION

Of critical importance are the trees within the green spaces in the town – The Causeway, The Churchyard, Higginson Park, surrounding Colonels Meadow are some examples. In particular the grounds of Higginson Park and Thames Lawn contain some quite outstanding plane trees, mostly of 18th century date, and these must be safeguarded.

Elsewhere street trees and trees in gardens make vital contributions to the conservation area's character. There are some hedges that are significant in the Victorian and Edwardian suburbs of Area 3, while within the grounds of Remnantz in Area 1 there is a very large and significant hedge dividing the former

kitchen garden from the parkland.

There is no attempt on the conservation area map to mark all trees but there is little doubt that the plane trees and others in locations such as Higginson Park, Wethered Park or the grounds of Thames Lawn are of great townscape and historical value.

OPEN SPACE

Open space, both public and semi-private, is critical in the Marlow Conservation Area. Of greatest importance undoubtedly is the public Higginson Park, which includes the 18th century house, Court Garden. The park was given to the town at the turn of the 20th century and has been retained as a park ever since. Prime river frontage is thus available to the residents of the town and the park not only allows access from the heart of the town directly to the river, but provides a buffer of vegetation when viewing the centre from the water. The Causeway to the east of this is another area of green space, albeit on a much smaller scale. Also of vital importance is the area known as Colonel's Meadow, which comprises the playing fields of Borlase School. This vital green lung in the heart of the built up area is important for views from West Street and to a lesser extent Oxford Road, and provides a setting for the School Buildings.



There are other areas of green space that are equally important. Riley Recreation ground at the rear of the service yards to West Street is associated with the Victorian phase of development and provides an attractive and useful public space in this part of town. A further park, Rookery Gardens (formerly the grounds to the demolished house, The Rookery), to the rear of Chapel Street delineates the medieval from later phases of development. The former grounds of

New Court, off the High Street, are now partly public open space and May Balfour Gardens off Institute Road give fine views of the north front of Marlow Place.

Hard surfaced open spaces are significant, in particular some of the courtyard developments such as New Court, and Draymans Lane, the former brewery yard. However there are other spaces that are the product of demolition, road widening or highway lines which have led to unwelcome changes and opening up of the town. Quoiting Square on West Street is currently a sea of car parking but somewhat improved recently by the United Reformed Church's landscaped garden. The public car parks on West Street, Spittal Street and on the rear burgage plots behind Waitrose do little to assist the character of this historic market town.

Other incidental unmarked private spaces are considered very important to the character of the conservation area.

GROUPINGS

Much of the historic centre's character derives from the totality of the streetscape. However there are a few areas of focus within the wider street pattern. To the south The Causeway creates an attractive group around the green and is physically separated from the High Street both by the road pattern and by virtue of land use. To the north there is the grouping around the Market Square, with the landmark building of The Crown and the Obelisk creating a focus. A further diluted grouping is located on Quoiting Square, and there is the opportunity to improve this area and recreate the original feeling of enclosure should the north side be redeveloped in a sympathetic manner. Removal of the cars from the Square could also create some attractive open space.

The architectural qualities and integrity of these major groupings should be carefully safeguarded as they are integral to the special interest of the conservation area.

VIEWS

There are important views within the conservation area and some of these are indicated on the survey map. The views indicated are by no means exclusive and there are very many other lesser ones that deserve

safeguarding. Notable views include those up St Peter Street to Marlow Place, down the High Street to The Church and Bridge, and across Colonel's Meadow from West Street. Curving views along both High Street and West Street are key in terms of townscape.

There are also some significant views out of the conservation area,

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ADVICE

The policies of the Wycombe District Local Plan are the primary source of reference for development control advice. In addition the Council's adopted Heritage Action Plan is seen as a supporting document to the Plan. This character survey has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance for the consideration of 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 Marlow Conservation Area:-

Within High Street, West Street, Spittal Street and parts of Chapel Street any new development or proposals should respect the character of this small market town

The current standard of **shop fronts and signage** is generally reasonable in Marlow town centre. When shopfronts and signage are not appropriate every effort will be made to secure improvements to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area's commercial heart.

Traditional and historic shopfronts should be conserved and safeguarded. Preference will be given to schemes that involve painted finishes and sign written signage. Projecting signs should be avoided with traditional hanging signs adopted as the norm. Signage should be kept within the existing fascias and stall risers and mullions safeguarded. On traditional shopfronts any illumination should be provided externally.

Modern and replacement shopfronts and signage should respect the character of the town. It may be that some corporate styles are inappropriate and designs should be individually tailored to respect the character

of the town. Internally illuminated projecting signs and fascia signs with the whole fascia emitting light are contrary to policy and will be refused. Traditional hanging signs are to be regarded as the norm for the town to harmonise with its historic character. External illumination of fascias and hanging signs is to be preferred but policy does allow for individual illuminated letters, or for metal fascia signs with light emitted only through the shop name in some locations.

Form: Layout of new buildings should respect the width of existing plots in the town centre, particularly on frontage sites. If a number of plots are being redeveloped comprehensively, vertical emphasis should be retained by referring the built form to individual plot widths. Narrower form is preferable to the rear to allow access through the plot. New buildings should be directly on the street unless there is a historical precedent.

Scale: new buildings should generally be no more than three storeys high. Landmark buildings designed as part of a comprehensive redevelopment of larger sites may have an additional attic storey.

Use of historic detailing such as string courses, eaves details, fenestration patterns etc. will be acceptable if they are appropriate to the design of the new building. Such detailing (or a modern interpretation of it) can do much to break up the facades of buildings. Chimneys are essential in roofscapes and should be incorporated into designs.

Development that threatens, merges or destroys surviving **burgage plots** will be resisted.

Any new building works, such as extensions, should be sympathetic in form and scale with the existing buildings and the conservation area as a whole. The predominance of the original building in an architecturally unmarred form is paramount and extensions should not detract from this characteristic.

Listed and other significant buildings play a key role in the character of the town. New development must not harm their quality or visual integrity and it should be recognised that some new development may not be appropriate.

Materials for any new building works

or surfacing must be sympathetic to those prevailing in the area. Where possible local traditional material should be used – good quality traditional brick and sand-faced clay roof tiles, render and slate are the predominant materials in the town. Where traditional materials, including Denner Hill setts, survive they should be retained.

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 PVCu and aluminium are not. Conservatories are a particular development pressure, the majority in Area 3, and these should conform to policy, be well designed for their locations and built of timber.

All trees in conservation areas are protected and special consideration should be given to those trees that have a significant townscape role or are within public open spaces to ensure that they are not harmed. New development should recognise this and allow for safe long term retention.

As a **boundary treatment** traditional hedges, brick or brick and flint walls, traditional cast iron railings and even wrought iron park-style railings will generally be preferred to timber fencing.

Areas of open space and gaps between buildings throughout the town will be carefully considered for protection from development or enclosure in order to safeguard the character of Marlow and any important views.

Applications for **development adjoining** but beyond the conservation area boundary will be assessed for their effect upon it and may be refused if this is considered adverse. Special care must be taken to ensure that **views** looking into and out of the town are not spoilt. Those of particular importance are marked on the survey map.

Street furniture, lamp posts, CCTV camera mountings and posts, telephone boxes, pavings and other public works which are beyond planning control can have a disproportionate

impact on the streetscape and character of the conservation area and those responsible need to bear in mind the advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, Section 5.13 to 5.18.

In the conservation area **higher standards of design** are required in planning applications for it is the function of the planning authority in considering all applications to assess whether they preserve or enhance the special character identified in this appraisal.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Wycombe District Council's Planning and Major Projects service has a number of publications which offer further guidance. Ask the Conservation Officer or Heritage Officer for information on which Heritage Guidance Notes are currently available and appropriate.

The Conservation Officer and Heritage Officer are always pleased to give advice on all heritage matters and can be contacted on 01494 421578/421527 or be seen by appointment in the Council offices or on site. The Council also has a small discretionary historic buildings specialist repair grant scheme for domestic

and other non-commercial buildings, again with details available from the Conservation Officer.



Nos 23 and 25 Institute Road, dated 1887

Listed Building Consent is required for works to the listed buildings in the conservation area, while planning permission is needed for all changes to their fences, gates and other means of enclosure.

Development Control matters are the responsibility of the West Team which can be contacted on 01494 421517.

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



APPENDIX 1

Listed Buildings

Grade I - Buildings of national importance

- 1/60 Marlow Bridge, The Causeway
1/54 Marlow Place, Station Road

Grade II* - Particularly special and important buildings [some 4% of all listed buildings]

- 1/59 Parish Church of All Saints, The Causeway (graded B)
1/19 Cromwell House, 41 High Street
1/27 The White House, 72 High Street
1/28 74 and 76 High Street
1/32 Brampton House, 100 High Street
1/33 The End House, 102 High Street
1/34 The Crown, Market Square
1/122 Court Garden, Pound Lane
1/41 The Old Parsonage, St Peter Street
1/48 The Old Malt House, St Peter Street
1/66 The Old House, 27 West Street
1/67 29 and 31 West Street
1/70 47 West Street
1/72 Remnantz, West Street
1/72a Former Stable Block to Remnantz, West St
2/74 Western House, West Street
2/80 Borlase School central block, West Street

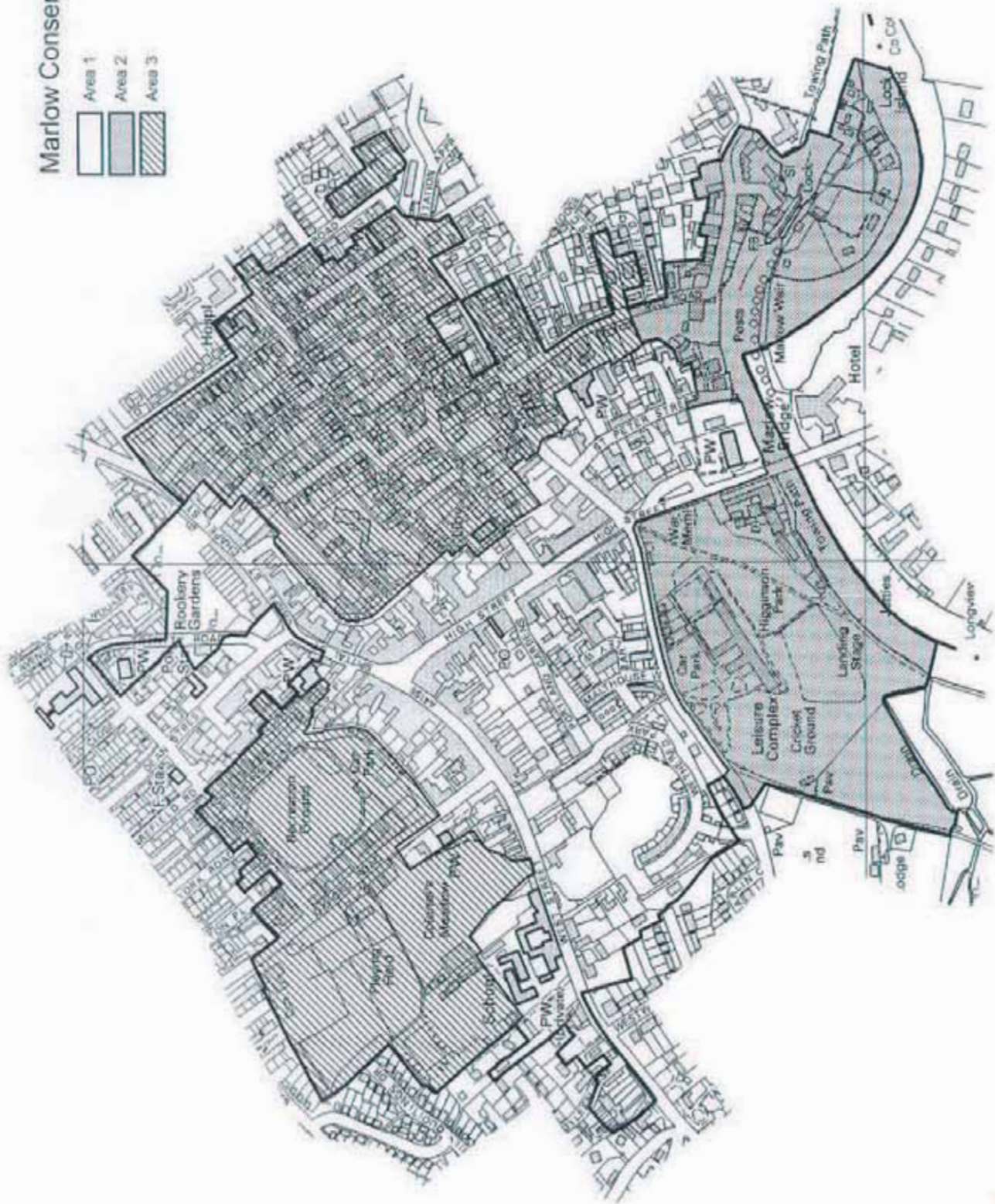
Grade II - Buildings of special interest

- Cambridge Road: Nos 21 and 47-83 (odd)
The Causeway: Nos 83-87 (odd), The George and Dragon with Nos 91 and 93, K6 Telephone Kiosk, Frohman Statue and the Churchyard Walls,
Chapel Street: Odd Nos: 5-11, 15, 23, 25, 39-57;
Even Nos: 4-12, 40, 42, 46, 48, 60 and 66.
Crown Lane: Farmhouse, Farm Cottage, Barn on east side.
Glade Road: Cedar House, Cedar Cottage
High Street: Odd Nos: 1, 5, 9-13, 19, New Court frontage building and gateway, 21, 35, 43-49, The Chequers, 59-65, 71 and 101-105.
Even Nos: 10, 24, 50-54, 78, 80 and 88-94.
Market Square: The Obelisk, Nos 4-7 consecutive.
Mill Road: Nos 4-14 (even), The Sycamores and Garden Wall, The Garth, Weir Cottage.
Oxford Road: Oxford Cottage and Garden Wall, Tilecotes, Tilecotes House.

- Portlands Alley: Park Wall at Remnantz
Pound Lane: Garden Wall at Court Garden.
Quoiting Square: Nos 4-8 (even), 3, 5, United Reformed Church.
St Peter Street: The Deanery, St Peter's Church, Lych Gate and Master's House, Nos 7-17 (odd), The Minnows, Marlow Ferry, Old Weir House, The Two Brewers, The Bothy, St Peter's Hall, The Dial House, The Sundial Gateway, Old Bridge House and Garden Wall and Gateway.
Spittal Street: The Carpenter's Arms, Nos 10, 12, 18, 20
Station Road: Marlow Place gate piers and wall, Burgers Café
Trinity Road: Old Police Station and Magistrates Court, Former Church of Holy Trinity, Nos 23 and 25.
West Street: Odd Nos: 3-21, Ship Inn, 33, 37-45a, 49, 51, 81/83, Railings and Gate at Remnantz, Chanters and Stratton House, Stratton Cottage, Little Westerns and Garden Wall, Western House Gazebo and garden wall, and Barn House.
Even Nos: 4-36, 42, 48 and 48a, 50, Queen Cottage, 64, 66, 76-92, Colonel's Meadow Gates and Railings, 104-110, Town Farmhouse and Outbuilding, 118, 124-128, 140, 142, 162-168, 172-176

Local List Buildings (Non-statutory buildings of local architectural or historic interest)

- Merefleet, No 9 Beaumont Rise
Nos 59 & 61 Chapel Street & Stable at The Rookery, Chapel Street
Nos 56 & 64 Chapel Street
No 25 High Street
Nos 20, 26 & 28, 32, 48 & 48a High Street
The Prince of Wales PH, Mill Road
The Crown & Anchor & No 47 Oxford Road
The Clayton Arms PH, Oxford Road
Nos 22 & 24 Oxford Road
Nos 5, 7 & 9 Spittal Street
Nos 45-61 (odd) Station Road
Nos 63-73 (odd) Station Road
The Coach & Horses PH, No 1 West Street
The Red Lion PH, No 57 West Street
Nos 44-46 (even) West Street



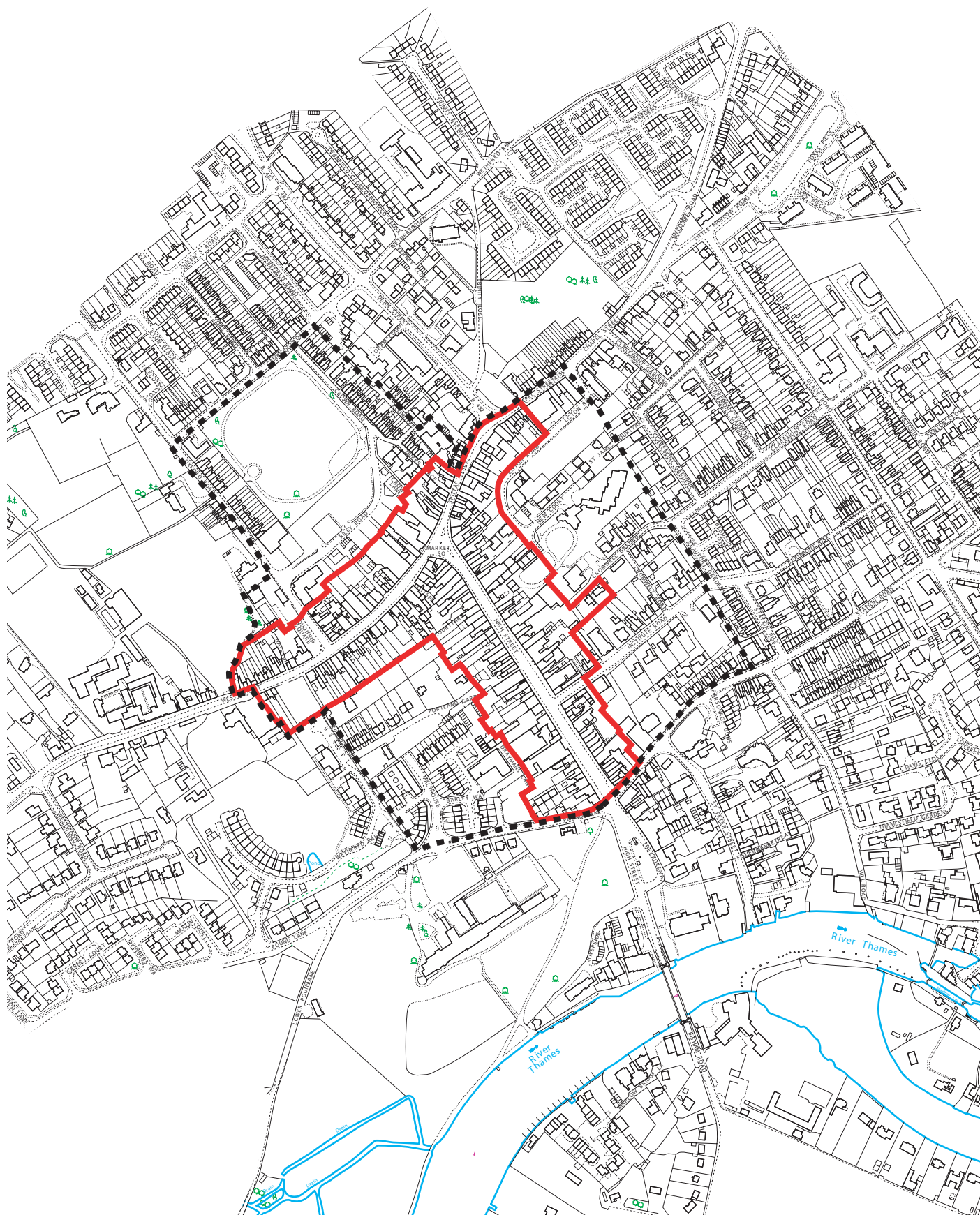
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Original Extent of Burgage Plots

**Remaining Burgage Plots Safeguarded
in Conservation Area**

APPENDIX 3 BURGAGE PLOT PLAN



APPENDIX 4 AREA 3 DETAIL

Public & Semi-Public Open Space

Other Significant Open Space

Listed Buildings

Significant Buildings

Listed Walls

Significant Walls

