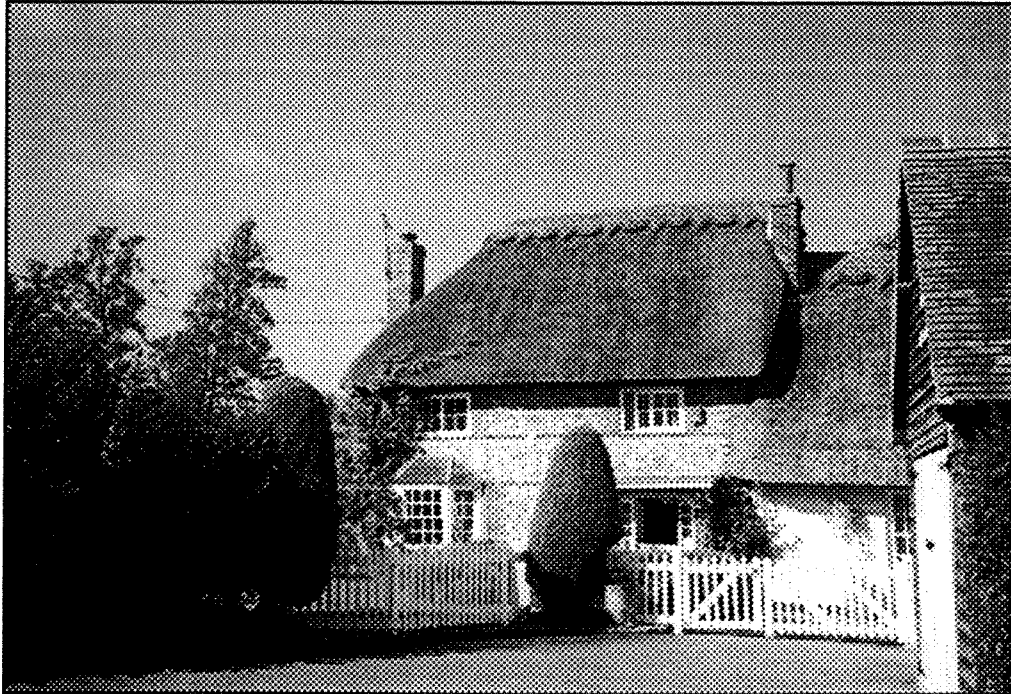

Conservation Area Character Survey

Meadle



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 Meadle 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 Meadle conservation area will be produced in the future in consultation with councillors, local residents and other interested parties.



HISTORY

The name Meadle comes from the Old English 'maed-hyll' meaning meadow-hill. The hamlet is recorded as Medell in 1541 and Madhulle or Medhulle in 1227. The hamlet lies to the north of the ancient Lower Icknield Way.

Meadle is well known for its connection with the Quaker movement. Quakers Farm is so named as it was once the home of John White, a noted Quaker. Close by the house is an oblong patch of ground which is thought to be the site of the Quaker meeting house. There is a Quaker burial ground behind Horseshoe Cottage which dates from 1670. It is now a paddock and has never been cultivated. Twelve marriages were recorded at Meadle between 1670 and 1724.

Horseshoe Cottage was once a public house named The Three Horseshoes which was converted to a private residence in 1954. The pub must have had its license granted after the Quaker movement was active in the area. The cottage still has a restrictive covenant restraining the sale of beer imposed by the Aylesbury Brewery to protect the business of their house at Kimble. Opposite Horseshoe Cottage at a position in what is now the front garden of Appletrees was an old blacksmiths shop, a small thatched building. Horseshoes are still dug up in the garden of Appletrees. In front of the blacksmith's shop was Meadle Green. The open grassland that abuts the stream leading to Brook Cottage was also known as a village green. The drive leading to Brook Cottage was once a route to Armour Farm and Stockwell Lane. A village pound is recorded and was located at the bend of the road by Cobblers.

John Nash (1803-1977) the war artist and younger brother of the painter Paul Nash lived at the house named Lane End from 1922 to 1944 and painted many views in and around the Meadle village. Lane End was part of the Duke of Buckingham's estate until 1874.

Meadle once included many productive orchards in the farmsteads, the remnants of some remain. There was also duck farming here as at nearby Askett. In the 1920s the farming community suffered greatly from the storms which resulted in the loss of thatch on the barns. These were replaced with corrugated iron which remains today. Some residents of longstanding in the village recall a sawpit by the garage at Dove Cottage. The family at Quakers Farm have owned the property since 1910. The present owner recalls that Three Cottages, Meadle Cottage and Brook Farm where not painted until the 1950s.

The conservation area was first designated in 1982.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

There are no known sites of special archaeological interest or Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the conservation area. However, 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 other similar recording procedures.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The conservation area boundary encompasses virtually the whole hamlet of Meadle. The hamlet is situated a few miles to the north of Princes Risborough in a remote and rural part of the District on a no-through road. There is no church, meeting hall, shop or public house here nor is the hamlet on a public transport route, consequently Meadle is a quiet, isolated hamlet.

This peaceful conservation area has a wealth of characterful listed buildings which are well spaced throughout the conservation area and many can only be glimpsed in their secluded positions.

The presence of mature trees and other vegetation adds to the rural qualities of the conservation area, and the large areas of private open space, gardens, orchards, paddocks and the like, endow the conservation area with a spacious feel. One of the special qualities of this conservation area is the balance between the natural and the built form, neither appears to dominate. Whilst the buildings are evident with in the landscape they do not appear in most cases to over dominate the scene.

The stream which ambles around the conservation area can be seen as an essential part of its character. As with most streams its flow level fluctuates and at the time of the survey the stream appeared at a low level. However, the stream makes a considerable contribution to the qualities of the area and its value is reflected in many of the names of the houses.

The wide grass verges on either side of the roadway, particularly at the entrance to the conservation area, add to the feeling of openness and spaciousness. Around Meadle Farm barns and Meadle Farm Cottage there is a greater feeling of enclosure as the barns and trees are much closer to the road, then the scene opens out again by Bank Farm where there is the greatest feeling of spaciousness as dwellings are set within large grounds and open fields.

The listed buildings within the conservation area are clearly an essential part of its character and the frequent use of thatch as a roofing material is a particular attribute to the individuality of Meadle.

The loose-knit and scattered arrangement of the historic buildings is another essential characteristic of the conservation area. This dispersed composition is formalised to a degree near the entrance to the conservation area where the modern infill properties are aligned by the roadside. The expansive pattern of development should be maintained as a particular feature of the conservation area which was essentially a grouping of farms. This characteristic results in there being no discernable centre or

nucleus to the hamlet which sets it apart from many other small conservation areas in the north of the district which are often seen as groups of dwellings either closely grouped or arranged around a central point, usually a village green.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

There are 15 listed buildings in Meadle, one of which is grade II*, all the others are listed grade II. Of the District's 60 conservation areas Meadle has one of the highest proportions of listed buildings.

On entering the hamlet the first cottage on the left is the listed Horseshoe Cottage. This very picturesque house is of flint with brick dressings under a thatched roof. The house dates from the late 18th century. The small barn to the right has been incorporated into the house and is also thatched. There are 20th century extensions to the rear which have been successfully and discretely incorporated. The weatherboarded garage to the front is also attractive in its styling and use of materials.

Next door is Old Thatch a listed mid 18th century house, which is mostly hidden from view behind a frontage hedge and is set well back in its gardens. The house has a splendid thatched roof which is swept down over the porch projection. The house like its neighbour has successfully incorporated 20th century extensions which retain the integrity of the listed building.

Rose Bank is an unpretentious modern, infill house circa 1960 almost hidden behind a frontage hedge. Quakers Farm to the rear of Rose Bank is dated as early 18th century in the listing description, however the deeds of the farm date it as 1640 when John White lived there. The chequer brick is exposed to the rear and right gable but the frontage has been roughcast over, possibly soon after the Second World War. The tiled roof and windows are 20th century replacements. For a while the five bay house was reduced to three bays with concealed, blocked windows but these have recently been reopened by the present owners. Just behind the house can be glimpsed a small out-building of brick with an attractive tiled roof incorporating scalloped tiles.

To the north of Quakers Farm, at the end of a long drive is Brook Cottage. A mid 18th century house with a two bay 20th century extension to the left and other extensions to the rear. Of chequer brick with an old tiled roof the listed cottage is a handsome sight in its open setting.

Opposite Quakers Farm is Meadle Farm an attractive late 16th century-17th century listed house. The house is mostly hidden from view within its courtyard and behind large barns to the front. The ground floor of the house was rebuilt in brick probably in the 18th century. The upper

stories are timber framed with brick infill. Inside there is an inscription on the fire place lintel bearing the date 1609. The barns to the front of the farmhouse are also listed. They are timber framed and weatherboarded mostly on a brick and flint plinth. The whole is under a corrugated iron roof which at one time was thatched. To the right is a residential unit which received permission in 1995 and is now called Meadle Farm Cottage.

Further along the road and heading north-east Dove Cottage can be glimpsed behind shrubs and trees. Although not listed the cottage makes a positive contribution to the conservation area and has been identified as a significant building. It is of whitewashed brick under a clay tiled roof and dates from 1939/40. Continuing on to the end of the lane is the appropriately named Lane End. The house is unlisted but significant to the conservation area. Thought to date from the early 19th century this pretty house is colourwashed brick under a tiled roof.

Orchard Farmhouse can just be seen in the distance at the end of a long drive, its charming thatched roof the most distinguishing feature. This listed house has two 16th century bays with a lower 17th century wing to the left forming an L-plan and 17th century extensions to the rear gable. The house is timber framed with colourwashed brick infill and has an original thin 17th century chimney with pilaster to the centre. A 19th century chimney of flint and brick is seen to the left. The out-buildings to the north of the house have been converted to residential. The two storey section of the out-building has a frontage of chequer brickwork with a flint and brick gable elevation. Large sash windows with gauged brick arches have been introduced to the frontage. The building is topped with a slate roof. To the east of Orchard Farm House are single



Meadle Conservation Area Character Survey Map

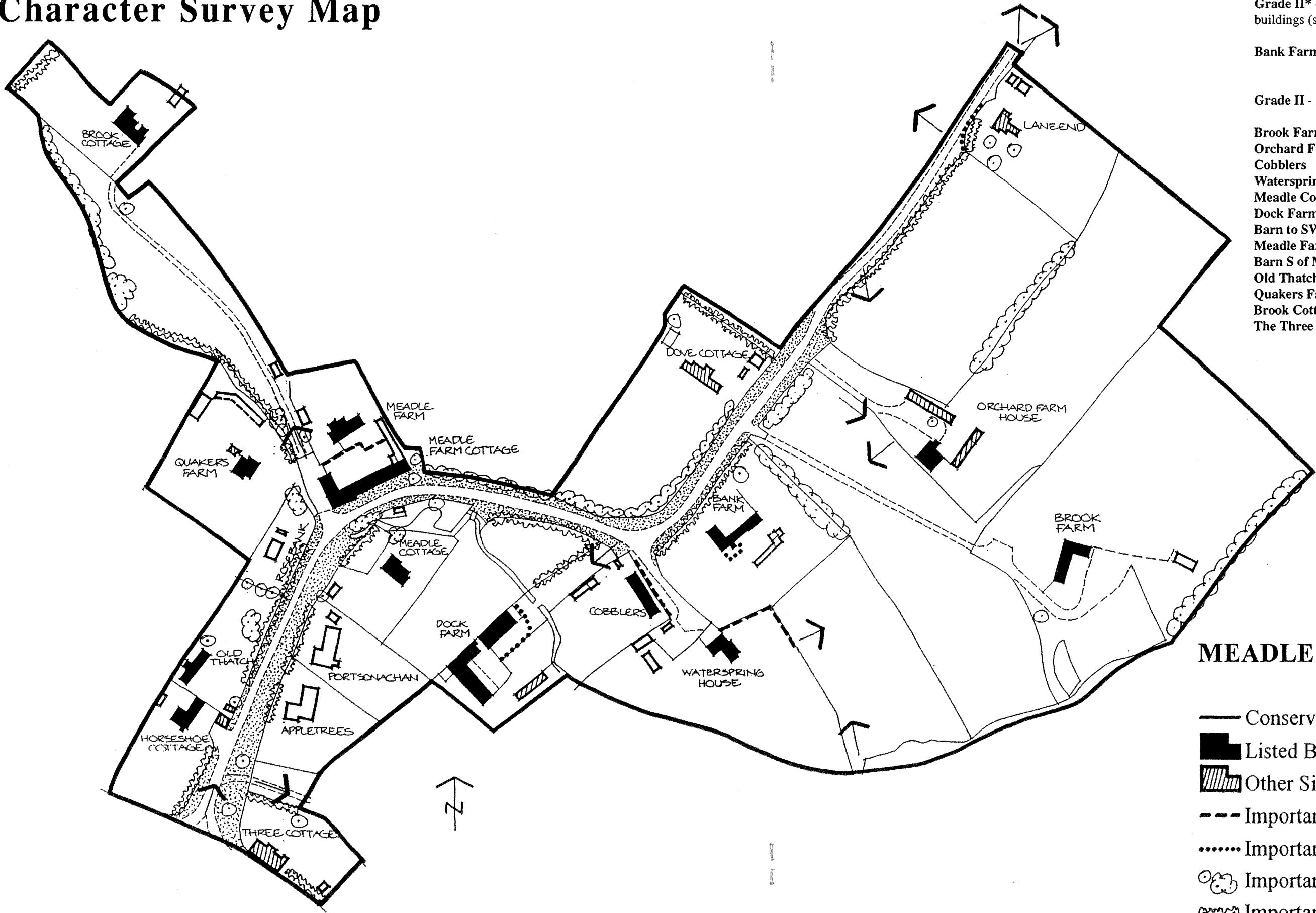
LISTED BUILDINGS

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

Bank Farmhouse

Grade II - Buildings of special interest.

- Brook Farmhouse
- Orchard Farmhouse
- Cobblers
- Waterspring House
- Meadle Cottage
- Dock Farmhouse
- Barn to SW of Dock Farmhouse
- Meadle Farmhouse
- Barn S of Meadle Farmhouse
- Old Thatch
- Quakers Farmhouse
- Brook Cottage
- The Three Horseshoes



MEADLE

- Conservation Area Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- ▨ Other Significant Buildings
- Important Walls
- Important Railings
- ☼ Important Tree & Tree Groups
- ~~~~~ Important Hedges
- ▤ Important Open Space
- ← Important Views

storey out buildings, perhaps stables, of red brick and slate. Both out-buildings are characterful and complement the conservation area.

To the north east of Orchard Farm House lies Brook Farm a very picturesque residence in an open setting at the end of a long drive. This listed 17th century farmhouse is timber framed with colourwashed brick infill. The original 17th century part of the house is the central two bays. There is a 17th-18th century narrow extension to the left and 20th century extension to the right.

Progressing south the next dwelling close to the road is the Grade II* listed Bank Farm. The original house, probably three separate cottages, is of three bays and 17th century which has been rebuilt in brick and flint with brick dressings in the early 19th century. To the front right of the dwelling is a 20th century wing projection with re-used timbers and features from Park House, Elmley Castle, near Pershore including an old board and stud door with 16th century moulded stone architrave. To the left is part of a 15th century hall which was moved from nearby Askett and re-erected in the early 1970s. The hall has timber framing with 20th century thin brick infill which is rendered and colourwashed at the gable. The hall incorporates windows in the 15th century style. The hairpin railings enclosing the 20th century porch to the rear of the dwelling are an unusual but characterful feature of this eclectic house. To the rear of the house are old out-buildings; weatherboarded under a painted corrugated iron roof and supporting an old rick ladder the buildings add to the history of the house.

Waterspring House is set well back from the road behind rather urban style iron gates and brick walling. The listed house is of a brighter red brick than its neighbours and is dated 1627 by John Trip on a fire place lintel. The house was partly rebuilt in the 19th century and there is a 20th century wing to the rear. The house has an attractive old tile roof. The dwelling once contained a crude wall painting of Adam and Eve standing on each side of a tree and with text inscribed on scrolls.

Next to Waterspring House is Cobblers. This charming listed house is originally 17th century, altered in the early-mid 18th century and extended in circa 1930. The two older bays at the north end have some timber framing in the gable whilst other walls are in chequer brick. The third bay is 19th century and of red brick. An appealing feature of the dwelling is its irregular leaded and wooden casements.

To the west of Cobblers is the listed Dock Farm and adjoining barn and stable. The complex is virtually hidden from view. The house is late 16th-17th century altered in the 18th century and retains its timber framing with brick infill. The barn to south-west is 15th-16th century and of cruck construction. It is timber framed and weatherboarded with a hipped, corrugated iron roof which like the Meadle Farm barn was probably once thatched. The stable to the south of the house is unlisted but is an attractive complement to the house and barn.

Meadle Cottage is early 18th century, once three separate cottages, it has been much renovated in the 20th century. At the time of this survey the house was undergoing a further renovation which appears to have been carefully and sympathetically planned.

Returning to the entrance of the conservation area Portsonachan, built in 1973, and Appletrees, built in 1962, are modern, infill bungalows set in large gardens fronting the main roadway. Appletrees has a copper roof which now has a green patina. On the southern most edge of the conservation area, fronting on to Causters is Three Cottages. The dwelling is unlisted but makes a positive contribution at the entrance to the conservation area. The house is of whitewashed brick under an old clay tiled roof which was once thatched until the 1950s. The house at one time was three separate dwellings which were sold for no more than £600 in 1959, and were then renovated and enlarged as a single dwelling.

MATERIALS

As there is a concentration of historic buildings in the conservation area traditional building materials dominate. There is a use of dark red bricks throughout the conservation area in some cases attractively set with blue headers to form a chequer pattern, for example at Brook Cottage, Quakers Farm, Cobblers and the two storey out building at Orchard Farm House. There is also white/colour washing throughout the hamlet at Three Cottages, Old Thatch, Meadle Cottage, Dove Cottage, Orchard Farm House and Brook Farm. Some cottages have exposed timbers remaining with brick infill which is attractively set at Bank Farm and Cobblers. There is a limited use of knapped flint which occurs most obviously at Horseshoe Cottage. The barns associated with the farm houses as at Dock Farm and Meadle Farm have traditional weatherboarding. Where garages have been introduced they are often weatherboarded in mimicry of a farm out-building which works well in this rural conservation area.

Roofing materials are predominately thatch and old clay plain tiles which are particularly attractive in the conservation area. Some of the historic barns have regrettably lost their thatch and have been re-roofed with corrugated iron. Buildings that have survived with thatched roofs should be safeguarded and recapped when necessary, but there is no compelling case to introduce thatch in new buildings. The reintroduction of thatch for the listed barns in the conservation area would be welcomed. Complete stripping of thatch should always be avoided, for often the lowest layer of thatch is of considerable antiquity and sometimes as old as the building. Thatched buildings should be recapped in long straw or combed wheat reed, water reed being an alien material in Buckinghamshire and one whose use requires complete stripping down to the rafters, thus risking the loss of the historic thatch base coat which can be of Tudor date.

Throughout the conservation area small pane casements are

prevalent and are appropriate to the area. However there is some later insertion of sash window in the historic properties such as at Horseshoe Cottage and Cobblers. the mix of window styles adds character to these attractive dwellings. Fortunately there has been use of traditional materials for replacement window and doors. The use of modern materials would be wholly inappropriate and out of place in this prestige conservation area. Many historic dwellings retain their original windows and where they have been replaced this has been achieved sympathetically with the use of traditional timber frames which should be painted rather than stained. Many of the cottages also retain simple board doors for example at Old Thatch.

Walling is not a major feature in this conservation area but there are attractive sections worthy of note at Meadle Farm, in front of Cobblers and a high brick wall to the east of Waterspring House. The main form of boundary treatment is hedging.

Driveways and the like are predominately shingle surfaces which is fitting to this rural conservation area. Some forms of hard surfacing, particularly when in large areas, can jar with the informality of the rural area and with the historic dwellings themselves and tends to have an urbanising effect.

TREES AND VEGETATION

Trees, hedges and garden plants all make an important contribution to the leafy, rural character of the conservation area. Trees and hedges of particular importance are marked on the survey map.

Hedging to the sides of the central roadway makes an important contribution throughout. It begins as a trimmed garden hedge and winds its way through Meadle gradually transforming into a field boundary hedge. In front of Bank Farm there is evidence that the hedge has been laid. Often interspersed with trees the hedge is a prominent and vital feature in the character of the conservation area.

To the south-west of Brook Cottage is a newly planted hedge which follows the line of the stream. The hedge was planted by the present owners of Brook Cottage.

There are some significant tree groupings marked on the survey map, but of course all trees in conservation areas are protected. There were once extensive stands of Elm trees in Meadle which gave a significantly different landscape. These trees died as a result of Dutch Elm disease in the 1970s. There are fewer trees identified to the east of the conservation area where the emphasis now is on openness.

Although gardens are mainly hidden from view, the glimpses of front gardens that are available reveal well tended but informal gardens appropriate to the informality of the area. Particularly appealing is the rose lined path to the front door of Old Thatch.

OPEN SPACE

Open space is an important aspect of the Meadle conservation area and endows the hamlet its characteristic of spaciousness, particularly to the east of the hamlet. Private gardens, paddocks and open fields are of particular importance both to the character of the conservation area and to the setting of the many listed buildings.

As semi-public open space grass verges at the roadside have been marked on the map as important, as it is considered they add to the spacious feel. However, due to the nature of the conservation area there is no central open area such as a village green.

VIEWS

There are a number of attractive views throughout the conservation area. Those of particular importance are marked on the character survey map.

From the entrance to the conservation area there is an attractive view along the road way with its treed and hedged boundaries allowing glimpses of the thatched dwellings to the left and the weatherboarded barn in the distance. From the path to the rear of Three Cottages there is a view eastward to Pulpit Hill and Whiteleaf Cross.

The view north-west near Meadle Farm allows a particularly pleasant vista of Brook Cottage in its open setting whilst to either side are the listed Quakers Farm, Meadle Farm and Meadle Farm Cottage and barns.

The view south-west by the entrance to Dock Farm allows a glimpse of the listed building and of Meadle Cottage to the right through the trees and Cobblers to the left.

The footpath to the right of Bank Farm permits views of Bank Farm, Cobblers and Waterspring Houses and further along there is an attractive view across the fields to the thatch of Orchard Farm House.

There are many attractive views from the footpath near the entrance of Orchard Farm House. The view of Orchard Farm House and its out buildings and of Brook Farm in its open setting are notable, as is the view across to Bank Farm and its 15th century wing.

On the way to Lane End there are delightful views across the fields to the east to the groups of listed farm houses and north-west across the Vale of Aylesbury. Views from the end of the lane looking north and east are across the open countryside.

Taking the footpath north of Dove Cottage beyond the conservation area boundary there are pleasant views west to Brook Cottage and Meadle Farm.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ADVICE

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

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

To safeguard, preserve and enhance the appearance and special character of the Meadle 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.
- Listed and other significant buildings are identified on the survey map and their specific qualities are identified 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 new building works or surfacing must be sympathetic to the rural character and quality of the conservation area.
- Applications for development adjoining but beyond the conservation area will be assessed for their 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. Expanses of tarmac and concrete are out of place in this rural setting. Regular paving, pavements and setts may look discordant and may not always be appropriate. Paths to front doors historically were surfaced with clay tiles or brick and this is a tradition that could be encouraged, particularly for the historic dwellings.
- 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.
- Areas of open space and gaps between buildings will be carefully considered for protection from development or enclosure in order to protect the open character of Meadle conservation area and any important views.
- All trees within conservation areas are protected but special consideration should be given to those trees indicated on the conservation area survey map to ensure that they are not harmed. New development should recognise this and not present a risk to their continued future growth and habit.
- Although hedges cannot yet 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 map.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

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

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

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

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