
Conservation Area Character Survey

Owlswick



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



HISTORY

There is a place name recorded as 'Ulueswicke' in 1227 which is later recorded as 'Wulueswyk' in 1242, 'Ulveswyke' in 1541 and 'Owleswicke' in 1617. The name means the dairy-farm (wic) of 'Wulf' or 'Ulfr'. Ulf was one of the commonest personal names in the 11th and 12th centuries. It is probable that the name contains the Scandinavian Ulf, Anglicised for a time to Wulf by the surrounding English population. The name may be even later than the Conquest, by which time many men bearing Scandinavian names were holding estates in Buckinghamshire.

Owlswick was formerly a chapelry in the parish of Monks Risborough. The small hamlet lay 2 miles from the church at the western extremity of the parish. The 'chapel' was desecrated and destroyed in the civil wars, and there are no remains left of it. The present chapel was built in 1866 and was originally also a school. Although the school ceased to operate around the beginning of the 20th century, services still continue to be held in the building as a chapel of ease of the Parish of Monks Risborough.

The water pump (which is privately owned) in the conservation area is a decorative feature and was moved here from Boxers Farm, Longwick. The hamlet's well is situated in front of the Chapel, but is now covered and surrounded by railings.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

There are no known sites of special archaeological 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

Owlswick is a tiny hamlet on the edge of the Vale of Aylesbury just off the Thame Road. The conservation area has just five buildings and a small chapel. The buildings, which remain unspoilt and little changed, are clustered around a privately owned central green which is a large, grassy, sward encompassed by a low

post and chain fence. One of the main characteristics of the hamlet is its feeling of spaciousness and openness. This is provided by a number of attributes. The mostly low hedging or open style of fencing allows views of the open countryside beyond the conservation area boundary and enables the private garden areas to merge with the open central green. The buildings are also well spaced which adds to the open nature and the countryside surrounding is the start of the flat plain of the Vale of Aylesbury.

The stand of mature trees by Cozens Holding provide a welcome shady corner. Private gardens are also a feature of the hamlet being well tended in a traditional cottage style for flowers and vegetables.

There are two fine listed buildings in the conservation area, Rest Awhile remains little changed, whilst Cozens Holding has been sympathetically extended so that the historic core of the dwelling survives intact.

There is a wide variety of styles and use of materials for the buildings within the conservation area. However the spaciousness of their setting gives a simple, uncluttered appearance to the conservation area as a whole.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

Cozens Holding and Rest Awhile are both grade II listed. Cozens Holding is a mid 18th century house of considerable charm and character but is regrettably almost completely hidden from view behind a tall hedge fronting the house. The house has chequer brick to the front elevation and English bond brickwork to the rear. The mostly wooden casement windows, some 20th century replacements, have chequered segmental heads at the ground floor. The attractive old tile roof has two small gabled dormers.

Rest Awhile which was originally two cottages is a smaller house of the late 18th - early 19th century and is equally attractive as its neighbour. Again it is of chequer brick to the front elevation but with side elevations rendered. The simple wooden, casement windows have single horizontal glazing bars and those to the ground floor have cambered heads. The whole is under a delightful old tiled roof.

Other buildings enclosing the central green are not listed but contribute positively to the character of the conservation area.

The tiny chapel dedicated to St Peter stands close to the road frontage. The flint elevations with red brick dressings and steeply pitched old tiled roof make the building a prominent and appealing feature of the conservation area. Next door are The Cottages a semi-detached pair of farm workers dwellings. In an open setting The Cottages are also eye-catching but of a differing style to the chapel. The Victorian cottages are of an orange/red brick with several horizontal bands of darker brick. The eight four-pane sash windows to the front elevation are decorated with brick relieving arches and moulded brick square arches over. Lamb Cottage on the opposite side of the green has plainer elevations of white painted render with modern casement windows. Next door to Lamb Cottage is an attractive building with white painted render. It has small casement windows and a central porch under an old tiled roof. It was formerly The Shoulder of Mutton public house.

The post box bearing Queen Victoria's initial in front of the chapel is an interesting feature in the conservation area.

MATERIALS

There is a wide variety of building materials in this tiny hamlet, including the red and blue chequered

brick of the listed houses, the flint elevations of the chapel, the bright brick work of the Victorian cottages and the white rendered elevations of Lamb Cottage and its neighbour. A common theme throughout however is the old tiled roofs which are particularly pleasant in this small hamlet.

Fenestration in the conservation area also varies to a degree. Rest Awhile retains the original wooden casements, whilst Cozens Holding retains some original casements and where replacements have been inserted in the front elevation these are sympathetic to the character of the dwelling. St Peter's chapel has leaded-light windows perhaps reflecting in the simplest way the stained glass windows of more ornate churches. The Victorian cottages have the original sash windows typical of their period. Lamb Cottage and its neighbour have simple casement windows.

Simple board doors are evident throughout the hamlet and are entirely appropriate to this rural community. Standard, modern replacement doors or windows are likely to be out of keeping in this rural conservation area.

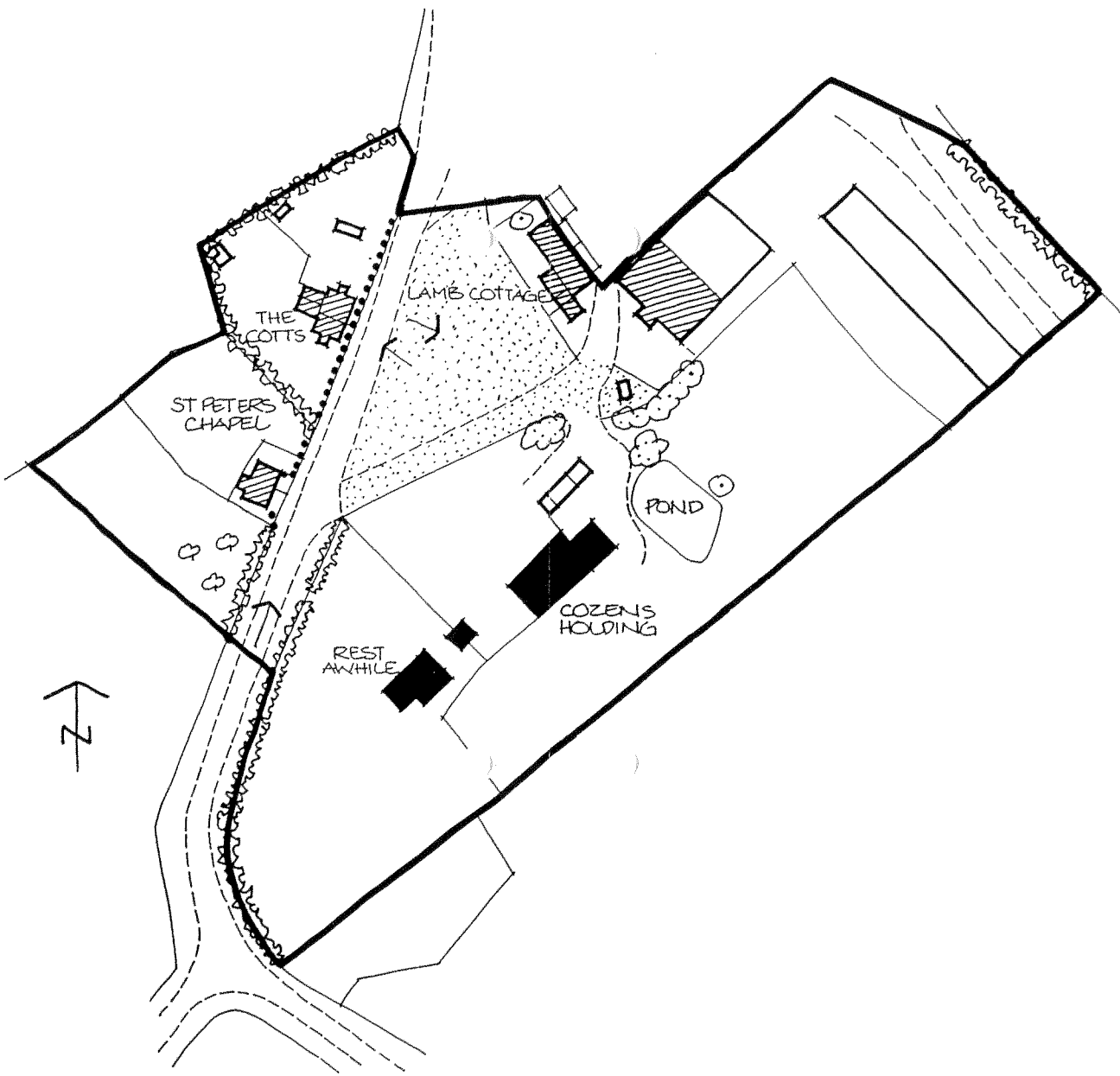
TREES AND VEGETATION

One of the essential characteristics within the conservation area is its openness and feeling of spaciousness and this is reflected in the vegetation and planting which is mostly low growing. The



Owlswick Conservation Area

Character Survey Map



LISTED BUILDINGS

Grade II -Buildings of special interest







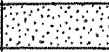

1/112 Rest Awhile

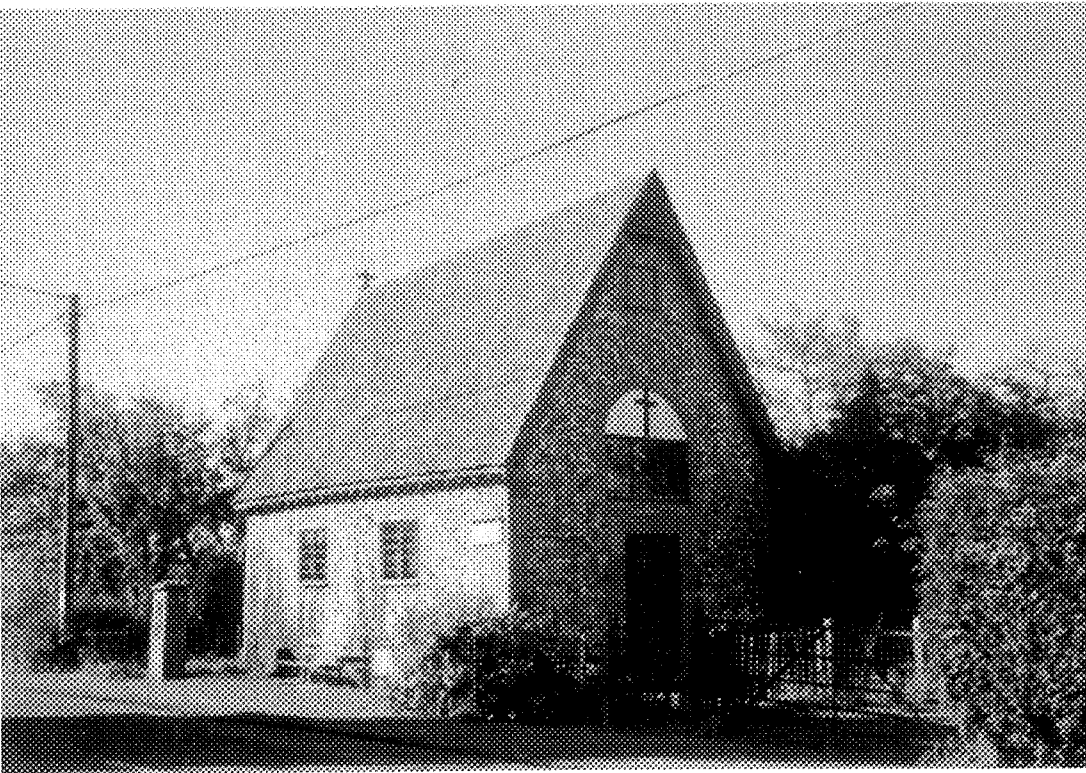
Late 18th century-early 19th century. House of chquer brick, rendered gables, old tile roof and flanking brick chimneys. Wooden casements with single horizontal glazing bars. Central door in 20th century gabled rustic porch.

1/113 Cozens Holding

Mid 18th century. House of chequer brick with plinth, first floor band course and off set eaves to front. Old tile roof, brick chimney between right bays. All ground floor openings have chequered segmental heads. 6 panel door with large 20th century wooden hood. 20th century brick lean-to to left.

OWLSWICK

-  Listed Bulidings
-  Other Significant Buildings
-  Railings
-  Important Trees & Tree Groups
-  Important Hedgerows
-  Orchard Trees
-  Important Open Space (Private)
-  Important Views



A particular characteristic of this conservation area are the private garden areas. The Cottages, Rest Awhile and Cozens Holdings all have traditional cottage style gardens. Flowers and vegetable plots coincide to great effect and all are well kept. The Cottages have open metal, field fences to the road side which allow views through and reinforce the open, rural nature of the conservation area. The low hedging to the frontage of Rest Awhile also allows views of the garden area.

OPEN SPACE

The central green (which is privately owned) is clearly an important open space around which the buildings are clustered. As already referred to the garden areas of the dwellings also contribute to the character of the conservation area and its open, rural nature.

VIEWS

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

The view north from the southern edge of the conservation area allows a vista of almost the whole conservation area. It includes the pretty flint church in the foreground with the green and other buildings behind. Rest Awhile can be seen to the right. There are important views both east and west from the edge of the green. To the west the view includes The Cottages set against a backdrop of open countryside. To the east is a more enclosed view with mature trees and historic buildings.

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 Owlswick 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 work such as extensions, must be carefully designed not as a separate entity, but should be sympathetic to the form and scale of the existing building and the conservation area as a whole.
- Materials for any new building works or surfacing must be sympathetic to the semi-rural character of the area.
- Inappropriate replacement windows and doors is likely to 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.
- Applications for development adjoining but beyond the conservation area boundary will be assessed for their effect upon it and may be refused permission if this is considered adverse.
- Areas of open space and gaps between buildings throughout the hamlet will be carefully considered for protection from development or enclosure in order to safeguard the character of Owlswick and any important views.
- Although hedges cannot be specially protected through legislation those hedgerows indicated on the character survey map should be retained and where possible enhanced.
- New development should preserve existing trees within the area and not present a risk to their continuation in the future as tree growth occurs.
- Special care must be taken to ensure that views within the conservation area are not spoilt. Those of particular importance are marked on the map.

cluster of mature trees at Cozens Holdings, as identified on the map, provide welcome shade for the pond and old water pump and are set impressively against the skyline yet do not disrupt the open feeling. The orchard trees at the south entrance to the conservation area by the chapel are more modest in size and provide an appropriate setting for the chapel and assist in defining the central green without imposing upon it.

Hedgerows of importance to the character of the conservation area are also identified on the map. The low hedging at The Cottages and Rest Awhile help to define the boundary of the conservation area whilst not disrupting views of the buildings themselves or to the surrounding countryside. The unity of the buildings within the hamlet is affirmed by the perimeter hedgerows yet its links with the open countryside beyond are still evident and visible.

There is a substantial hedge in front of Cozens Holding which due to its height has the effect of separating the dwelling from the central green and obscuring views of the house. An open frontage or a lower hedge would allow the building to become more of a visible part of the grouping of buildings around the green and would enable views of the finest building in the conservation area with its attractive cottage garden to the front.

NOTES

FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

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

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

Development Control matters within the Whiteleaf Conservation Area are the responsibility of the **West Team** who can be contacted on 01494 421517.

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