



SPEEN CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Introduction

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.

Speen was designated as a Conservation Area in 1989 by Buckinghamshire County Council. The conservation area boundaries were altered in 1994 by Wycombe District Council. Government Guidance states that conservation areas should have an up-to-date appraisal.

Within Conservation Areas there are special controls on some alterations to buildings and their demolition or partial demolition and on works to trees. More details on the specific controls that apply can be found in the Council's guidance note on conservation areas.

Designation of a conservation area does not preclude the possibility of new development, and preservation should not be thought of as a purely negative process or as an impediment to progress. New development, where appropriate, must however be carefully designed to positively enhance the appearance and special character of the area

The designation of a conservation area imposes specific duties on local authorities to formulate and publish proposals to ensure that the special characteristics of the conservation area are preserved and enhanced. This conservation area appraisal describes the main features of the special architectural and historic interest that justifies the designation of Speen as a conservation area.



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CONTACT DETAILS

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

There are additional **planning controls** on non-listed buildings within conservation areas, in addition to usual planning permission requirements.

Wycombe District Council Contacts

For general planning enquiries contact the Duty Officer on 01494 421219.

For policy issues contact the Policy team on 01494 421568.

For queries regarding this appraisal contact the Conservation section on 01494 421158.

Most new development requires **Building Regulations Approval**.

For further information on Building Regulations please contact a Building Control Surveyor on 01494 421403, or see the District Council Website www.wycombe.gov.uk



CHAPTER 1 Planning Policy Context

Speen Village Hall, a building with fine flint work and arched sash windows.

The designation of a conservation area influences the way in which a Local Planning Authority applies its planning policies to the area. It ensures that any alterations or extensions to buildings within or adjacent to the conservation area respect the special characteristics identified in this document, and in local planning policies.

National policy and guidance is contained in:

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994)
- Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning, (1990)
- Draft Planning Policy Statement 15: Planning for the Historic Environment (2009)
- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable development (2004)
- English Heritage: Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals (2005)
- English Heritage: Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas (2005)

Regional guidance on design issues is contained in the **Chilterns Building Design Guide**. This guidance has been supplemented by Advice Notes on Flint, Brick and Roofing materials. It provides useful guidance on materials which can be applied to Speen Conservation Area as it is within the AONB.



The Old Dairy, previously called Elmdale, that used to provide a service delivering milk in the village.

Glossary of architectural terms:

Some architectural description requires the use of specialised terms and phrases to describe particular details of a building. A useful glossary can be found in Pevsner's "The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire"

Local Policy: The Wycombe District Local Plan was adopted in 2004 and as a result of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act is gradually being replaced by a series of new planning documents that make up the Wycombe Local Development Framework (WDF). In 2008 the Council adopted the first part of the WDF - the Core Strategy, which replaces a number of policies. The Council is in the process of producing the rest of the WDF and until this is complete the following policies relating to Conservation Areas in the Local Plan are still in place: HE 6,8,10,11,12,13, 14 and 15.



The William IV has recently re-opened to continue the long standing tradition in the village of a pub on this site.

More information on the status of the Local Plan and production of the WDF is available on the Council website.

CHAPTER 2

Summary Of Special Interest

Speen is a small village to the north of High Wycombe and approximately four miles south east of Princes Risborough. The conservation area covers the central section loosely delineated by Studridge Lane and Hampden Road. The buildings are a mix of 17th to 19th century, mainly brick built. They tend to lie to the front of the plots, however, the local characteristic of trees and high front boundary treatments shield them from casual view.



Kildare House and Westwood built close to the site of one of the village ponds.

CHAPTER 3

Assessment Of Special Interest

1 LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING:

Location and Population

Speen is located high in the Chiltern Hills between three arms of Grims Dyke to the north. The village developed on a high spit of land overlooking valleys to the south east, south and east. It is a small village without a defined centre to the north of Walters Ash and south east of Princes Risborough.

The conservation area covers 6.23 hectares and includes 61 main buildings and various ancillary structures.

General character and plan form

Although Speen is not mentioned in the Domesday Book in its own right, it was part of the manor of Risborough and it is not known when people first lived here. It is likely that the village began as huts in the woods for herders and woodsmen. As woodland was cleared dwellings sprang up in an ad hoc manner, principally as farm complexes and even as late as 1800 there were only 29 cottages and 4 farms at Speen.



The rear of Orchard Cottage from the playing field. A dwelling that shows on the 1823 enclosures map and probably dates to the previous century.

The current layout emerges from the land enclosures of the 19th century which are still discernible in some plot layouts today. Building plots are set facing the original road layout of Studridge Lane; Hampden Road and Chapel Hill with dwellings generally to the front of the plots. One aspect of the village is that it has no medieval church as the central focus, reflecting its non-conformist history.

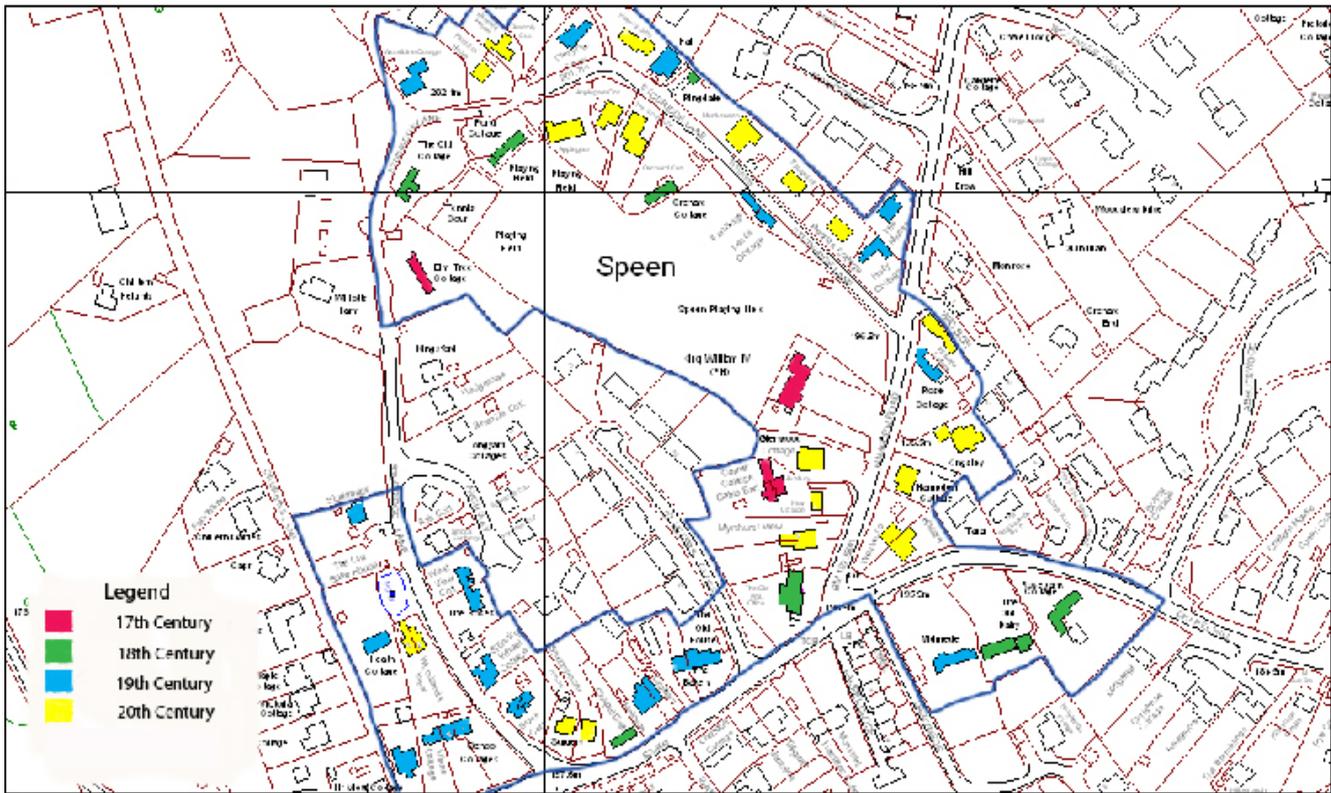
Today the buildings are mostly detached houses with occasional terraces of up to three cottages. Today Speen is a commuter village but with a strong community spirit that centres around the playing fields.

Landscape Context

The Bucks Landscape Plan classifies the area around Speen as Chilterns: Incised Dip Slope (Z10). This classification is typified by

Chapel Hill curves through the heart of the village, forming the southern boundary to the conservation area. The long range views are cut off by the brow of the hill.





Map showing stages of development of Speen.

harmonious landscapes of valleys and ridges and rolling farmlands; a high level of woodland cover including 'hanging' beech woodlands; intensive arable farming with woodlands contrasting with small scale, intimate and enclosed mixed farming; remnants of historic landscape patterns; narrow lanes; large commons or greens with public access and suburban developments. Speen demonstrates most of these characteristics, and is an example of a non-nucleated hilltop settlement as defined in the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide.

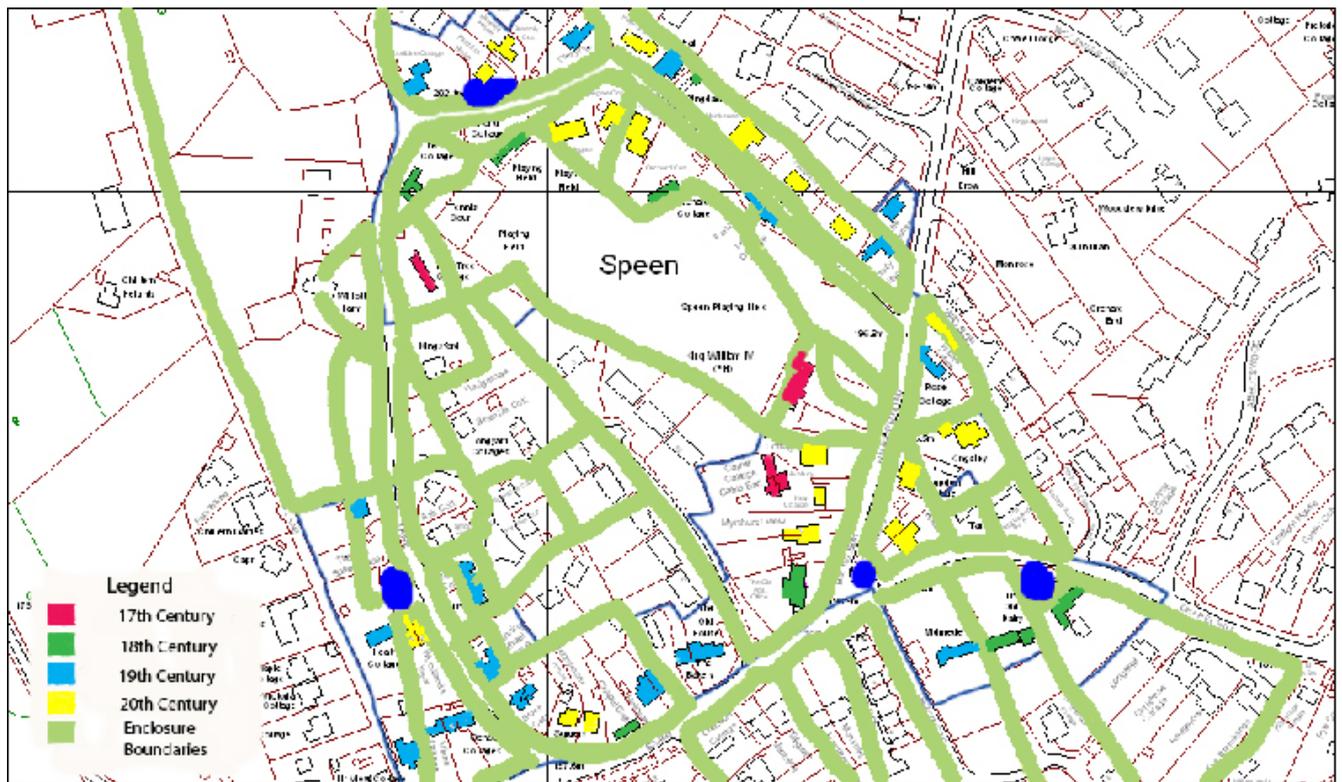
Speen is also classified as a built up area in the Green Belt; the surrounding countryside provides a wooded back-drop to the more built up development of the village.

2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Origins and Historic development

Local studies show that Speen developed from the activities of isolated workers living in huts managing the woodland by coppicing, herding pigs and clearing the area of trees as an upland 'daughter-settlement' to Risborough. It has been suggested that these people could have been convicts punished by working in these inhospitable conditions. The workers then stayed on and slowly developed the area into a hamlet; the name could be taken from the Latin 'spinae' meaning thorn bushes or from the Old English 'spon' meaning splinter and referring to the wood working that went on.

Speen was in the manor of Princes Risborough and within the



ecclesiastical parish more recently of Lacey Green. The boundary of the Monks Risborough Charter of 903 AD runs to the east of the settlement along the 'Black Hedge'. The village was noted for its non-conformist religious faith, having no church in the village centre but a Baptist Chapel on Chapel Hill. It is possible that Chapel Cottage may have got its present name after the dwelling was registered as a place for dissenters to worship in the 18th century.

The map overlays the enclosure boundaries and shows how the present village layout has respected the old plan form.

Following the enclosures of the 19th century four ponds were left in public ownership, one still in evidence next to the Old Bakehouse. These are shown on the map that shows the enclosure boundaries, the ones that have disappeared were to the front of Rosebank Cottage; on the corner where the millennium sign now stands opposite Old Post Office and the most recent to be filled in was opposite Pond Cottages. The 1823 enclosures set a pattern of development that is still in evidence today. The layout can be seen on the map above and how later building has fitted into the old boundaries.

Farthings is one of two properties that front Studridge Lane, hard on the roadside. These were, perhaps, encroachments into land originally owned by John Free.

From 1850 to 1880 the majority of the trees were cleared from the current area of the village to supply the furniture factories of High Wycombe and a flurry of building increased the village to approximately 80 dwellings. At around this time the employment in the village consisted mainly of agriculture, woodworking of





various kinds and lace making for the female population. There were however other occupations in the area such as straw plaiting, stone cutting, a blacksmith, dressmakers, tailors and shoemakers, publicans and shopkeepers that were necessary for the day to day life of the hamlet.

The factory building that used to belong to William Plumridge in the early part of the 20th century when chair backs were made here.

Archaeology

The Historic Environment Record is held by Bucks County Council.

There is a significant potential for important archaeological discoveries within the conservation area. Grim's Dyke (or Ditch) that lies to the north of the village is thought to have divided to great estates and is a scheduled ancient monument. Areas of known archaeological potential are identified on an "archaeological notification map" supplied to the local planning authorities and regularly updated. Where development may affect archaeological remains the Councils may request the applicant to supply an archaeological evaluation report as part of their planning application and may seek preservation in-situ or impose a condition requiring archaeological investigation in accordance with national and local planning guidance and policies.

A glimpse of the Old School House through the trees and high hedges which are a feature of Speen.



Historic Maps

Ordnance Survey mapping: 1883, 1876, 1895 and 1925.

3 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

The relationship of buildings, spaces and gaps between them and resultant views, and how these create special character:

The Character and interrelationship of spaces within the area

The distribution of buildings within the conservation area is a arbitrary placing of structures with relatively wide spaces between; the streets are a combination of wide roads and narrow lanes both predominantly without footpaths and private spaces are generally in the style of cottage gardens. These spaces enhance the relaxed rural impression of the village, giving a low key feel to the development and a lack of rhythm to the built street scene.

The large playing field is the main public green space in the centre of the village giving a focus to the community. The playing field also provides a play area and tennis courts.

Important views and vistas

Although Speen sits high on the Chiltern Hills it is closely covered by trees which limit any views across the Buckinghamshire countryside. Within the village there are also an abundance of tall trees and high hedges allowing only glimpses of gardens, houses and views. The main views are provided by the roads through the village and across the playing fields. Even from the surrounding fields and lanes the buildings of Speen are not visible due to the thick tree cover.

4 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Activity and land use, and the influence of these on the plan form and building types

The conservation area illustrates a variety of dwellings built at different times over several centuries demonstrating the slow development of the village and the diversity of economic activity in the area.

Architectural and historical quality of buildings and the contribution they make to the special interest of the area

The map on page 6 shows the ages of the buildings within the conservation area, there is a range of scales and heights and a range of styles of gables, plainness and roofscape scattered around the village.

Listed Buildings:

The Speen conservation area has six buildings on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest, all Grade II, dating from the 17th to 19th century.



The view along Hampden Road, past the King William IV public house.



The front gates to The Manse and Elm Tree Cottage illustrate the characteristic screening common within Speen and give glimpsed views of the dwellings beyond.



Elm Tree Cottage was originally 2 cottages built in the 17th or 18th century on Studridge Lane, now backing on to the playing field. A one and a half storey dwelling with three gabled dormer windows to the front helping to define the four bays. To the extreme left is a later addition of a stable bay whilst the main block consists of irregular wooden casement windows. The cottage was rebuilt in brick in the 18th or 19th century. There are two intermediate brick chimneys and the right hand bay is blank, with no door or windows. The cottage is almost hidden from view by the fencing and trees to the front, illustrating a common feature of Speen which is the private nature of the village.



The rear of Rosebank Cottage showing the later additions and how they fit with the character of the area.

The King William IV public house is probably the oldest of the listed buildings in Speen with documentary evidence dating from 1668; however, the building was altered or rebuilt in the 18th century. Originally part of John Free's farm, the building is now a two storey chequerwork brick built structure with a dentil band course at first floor level, the pub also has a tall, central chimney. There is a central brick built gabled porch and paired casement windows to the attic gables. There is a single storey addition to the right in brick and weatherboard and a lean to at the rear.

The view along the driveway towards Gable End, Corner Cottage and Aveluy.

Gable End, Corner Cottage and Aveluy are originally late 17th century but appear much altered over the years. The group of three small houses are set back from Hampden Road accessed along a driveway. Essentially a two storey building with old tile roofs and a brick chimney between the original left bays, the front projection is of early 19th century construction with vitreous headers and red brick dressings. This section also has hipped roofs and off-set eaves. To the rear is a single storey range with an attic and a two storey projection.



The Old Post Office is sited on a prominent plot overlooking Chapel Hill and has two bays to the right that were built in the mid 18th century. The building was extended to the left in the late 18th century/early 19th century in two stages the earlier part displaying chequer brick with a chamfered plinth and a first floor band course. There is a later projecting cross wing of flint, brick and Denner Hill rubble with some timbering, it has a hipped roof. The whole roof is 20th century tile and encloses the rebuilt chimneys that would both have been external originally. The building

is now wholly residential but has previously been a bakery, doctor's surgery and shop as well as a post office.

Opposite the junction with Studridge Lane in Hampden Road is **Rose Cottage** on the right. At the time of the enclosures several plots were assigned to Joshua Ward who built Rose Cottage. This two storey house is set on an angle to the road and built of brick and flint with Denner Hill stone quoins, brick eaves and window surrounds. It has a slate roof, possibly Welsh which would illustrate the improvements in transportation at a time of canal building in Britain. There is a central blind roundel with a rubbed brick surround at first floor height above a central wooden door which has a flat wooden hood on brackets.



Rose Cottage set at an angle to the Hampden Road.

Set apart from the other listed buildings in the village, at the top of Chapel Hill is **Rosebank Cottage**. This dwelling dates back to 1794 and is of chequer brick work with a flush line of blue headers at first floor level. Above the 20th century gabled porch there is a blue brick panel with a red diaper pattern. The cottage has a hipped roof with a brick built chimney to the left of the main building. There is a single storey weatherboard bay to the left and 20th century additions to the right rear of the original house. A general store was run from this building for some time from 1930.

The contribution of key unlisted buildings

To the north, on Studridge Lane, is **The Old Cottage** built probably in the 18th century which was home to the novelist Rumer Godden from 1948. A brick and flint building with brick window surrounds originally of two bays, it has had another bay added to the left at some time, built in the same style. The cottage is a single storey with attic, wholly brick built from the first floor level with gabled windows in an old tiled roof. To the rear a two storey projection has been added in red brick, cutting into the roof of the main range which dips down to almost the tops of the ground floor windows. The windows are barred wooden casements, to the ground floor there are

Chapel Cottage is evidence of a nonconformist past in the village. It used to have a more traditional wooden picket fence to the front.



sectional heads to the windows but not to the first floor. There is a weatherboard single storey addition to the right side with an old tile roof.

Continuing along Studridge Lane there is an old furniture factory building that belonged to the Plumridge family. William Plumridge made chair backs from this building until the 1930's. This is a two storey weatherboard building with irregular casement windows and a slate roof. Although this building is in need of some attention it is a reminder of the history of Speen and the legacy of the chair making trade in the area.



A view of Ashton on the corner of Studridge Lane and Chapel Hill, a late Victorian house that has been well looked after and altered over the years.

Next to the factory building is **Spinning Wheel Cottage** which was home to the Plumridge family when the factory was in use. The side addition to the front of the cottage was a general store and post office run by Mrs Eliza Plumridge. The cottage is rather overgrown now but beneath the ivy it is a brick built two bay, two storey dwelling with sash windows and a slate roof. The cottage was probably built in the 19th century and the shop finally closed in 1935. Spinning Wheel Cottage was also the home of Joyce Coleman who ran Speen Weavers and Spinners from the end of the Second World War until the 1980's. Miss Coleman sold her products, which included table linen and rugs, all over the world.

Chapel Cottage on Chapel Hill is a three bay dwelling with a single story addition to the right. It has a hipped tiled roof and brick built chimney. The chimney was originally external with the left bay a later addition. The front door has had a 20th century enclosed porch built on with a tiled, gabled roof. The windows are irregular wooden casements, the first floor windows each having a single horizontal bar. The house is rendered and painted white but appears to be late 17th or early 18th century construction. One theory is that the house was registered for nonconformist worship at some time and has retained the name Chapel Cottage ever since.

Ashton as it was in the 1930's. The porch has been remodelled in the intervening years.

Photograph courtesy of High Wycombe Library and SWOP.

The current **Village Hall** was built in 1874 as a Temperance Hall but was purchased by the village in 1924. Built of brick and flint, there are dressed flint details surmounting the brick window heads of the two round headed



sash windows that dominate the front elevation. There is a brick built porch to the front and kitchen addition to the right that were added in 1970. The porch hides the round headed door that would compliment the windows. There are wrought iron gates to the front that commemorate the silver jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 1977.

Local details

The most notable feature of the village is the prevalence of substantial boundary treatments to the front of many of the properties. High hedges and walls provide a private, secluded feel to the area. The hedging also contributes to the verdant nature of the village but deprives the casual visitor of any long distance views through the conservation area to the countryside beyond. The green verges also contribute to the rural feel of the village.

Prevalent and traditional building materials

The fact that Speen has developed slowly over time has meant that only a few buildings from each century are present and each has its own specific building materials.

There are no thatched roofs in the village; tile, a locally produced vernacular material, is used on older buildings. Welsh slates were introduced later due to 19th century improvements in the transport network.

Most buildings are of local red brick, some with their own variations. Rosebank has vitrified headers at the front and weatherboarding above a brick ground floor to the rear; The Old Cottage, Rose Cottage and Pond Cottages have brick and flint in varying amounts while Aveluy has a header bond to demonstrate the wealth of its original owner. Local Denner stone is an important and now rare material that has been used occasionally.

Flint has been used as a vernacular building material on the unseen sides and rears of buildings as this was available locally and often free. Flint has also been used to great effect on the facades of some buildings, the Village Hall displays fine coursed flint, for example.

Windows are generally traditional, the vernacular cottages tend to have small paned casements, with only more modern houses having uPVC. Ashton and The Manse both have sash windows, while Holly Cottage combines both traditions with small paned sash windows.

Doors are generally plain timber, some enlivened with porches and porticos.



An oblique view of The Old House on Chapel Hill now sporting a brick porch that has replaced the ornate door hood and Tuscan pillars shown in the photograph below.

A photograph taken around 1970 of The Old House and The Bakery Cottage before the tall hedge obscured the view.

Photo courtesy of Bucks Free Press and SWOP



Local materials are preferred for all features as they complement the existing buildings.

Contribution made by the natural environment

Green Spaces

Speen is surrounded by beautiful countryside and has many trees within gardens throughout the village. These, together with the hedges provide a leafy, shaded aspect to parts of the village contrasting with the open feel of the wide main roads. The only green space within the conservation area, however, is the public playing field which is vital in providing a location for community activities and is greatly valued for that role.

Chapel Hill is wide enough to allow space for a wooden bench opposite The Bakery and another at the junction with Hampden Road, encouraging people to stop for a moment to enjoy the scenery. The playing fields in the centre of the village are a community asset and are fully supported and maintained by the residents. They provide a focus for the local events and are very much appreciated.

The extent of loss, problems and pressures

Parking to the front of buildings creates visual blight. As there are few pavements in Speen this can make it very difficult for pedestrians to negotiate their way around. Speen is fortunate in not having busy roads that would exacerbate the problem.

Loss of historic fabric, particularly windows, is a concern. Modern windows of uPVC cannot replicate the original fineness of detail that traditional windows have. Small changes to local houses can have an incremental effect and, over time, degrade the character of the area. The tighter controls on changes to buildings within a conservation area should provide some protection to the local heritage.



The entrance to and view of the playing fields from Hampden Road. This key open space lies at the heart of the community.



Midmead at the top of Chapel Hill an attractive vernacular cottage in traditional materials.

CHAPTER 4

Recommendations

1 The Conservation Area Appraisal and possible boundary amendments:

No proposed boundary alterations at this time.

2 Buildings that make a positive contribution to the conservation area:

A number of buildings have been identified on the conservation area map which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area, by virtue of their age, design, massing, scale,



A mid 19th century dwelling characterised by a shallow slate roof and rendered elevations, Holly Cottage (previously Fulwood Cottage) occupies the corner of Studridge Lane and Hampden Road.

and enclosure. Where possible these buildings should be retained.

3 *Proposals for the enhancement of the Conservation Area*

Residents have indicated that they feel that the existing pond should be restored and this could be a community project. Unfortunately the Council does not currently have a budget for conservation enhancement schemes and so the resource implications of proposals relating to enhancement and management will need careful consideration. Proposals may be implemented by local bodies and others within the Conservation Area, including the Parish Council.



The millenium sign designed by a local villager to celebrate their heritage.

CHAPTER 5

Further Information

1 *Public Consultation and Community Involvement*

Following publication of the draft Speen Conservation Area Appraisal in October 2009 six weeks were allowed for public consultation. Each household/business within the conservation area had an opportunity to comment on the draft. Copies of the draft were available on the Council's website, and at the Princes Risborough Area Office.

Public consultation identified proposals for preserving or enhancing the conservation area, and any further work required in order to implement the recommendations above.

Following the period of public consultation, comments received during the consultation exercise were assessed, and the draft Conservation Area Appraisal revised as appropriate. The Appraisal was then formally approved by Wycombe District Council.

2 *Monitoring*

Changes in the appearance and condition of the Speen Conservation Area should be monitored regularly. A photographic survey was undertaken at the time of the appraisal work, and this could be updated every two years or so. From time to time an update on the progress of the management strategy should also be published.

3 *Design Guidance*

The policies and proposals of the Wycombe District Local Plan/LDF are the primary source of reference for development control advice. In addition the Council's approved Conservation

The Old Cottage provides an attractive feature to the north west edge of the conservation area.



Areas guidance note is seen as a supporting document to the plan.

The Chilterns Conference published the Chilterns Building Design Guide in 1999, this guidance is being re-issued in February 2010. The Chilterns Conservation Board, which superseded the Conference, has published Supplementary Technical Notes concerned with the use of flint and brick and, more recently, roofing materials. These



all provide guidance aimed at conserving the outstanding qualities which make the Chilterns a landscape of national importance. Copies can be inspected at the District Council Offices and Risborough Area Office. It is used as a supplementary planning document.

Spinning Wheel Cottage where the Plumridge family lived. The block to the left was the shop which is now bricked up.

Appended to this document is a series of development guidelines (**Planning**), covering both new development and the protection of existing character, and identifying sites for improvement. This forms the base of a management plan for the conservation area.

Most new development requires **Building Regulations Approval**. For further information on Building Regulations please contact a Building Control Surveyor on 01494 421403, or see the District Council Website www.wycombe.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix A Conservation Area Map

The attached map illustrates and clarifies the text and describes and shows where development control policies will apply.

The Appraisal map defines the extent of the area which is regarded as possessing those qualities of townscape, character or historic interest which designation is intended to protect. It identifies particular areas, vistas, views, buildings etc, that are considered essential to character.

It has not been possible to gain access to all areas within the conservation area boundary. There may be individual structures, features, trees or views of importance which are not visible from the public domain and which have therefore not been annotated on the conservation area map or referred to in the text. However these may also warrant protection in the evaluation of individual development proposals. The listed buildings are shown on the designations map.

The wooden sign outside Spinning Wheel Cottage created when Joyce Coleman ran her business from here.



As it has not been possible to gain rear access to the properties there may be inaccuracies in the recording or the extent of their curtilage. If you own a listed building and are considering undertaking alteration works, please ensure that you contact the Conservation Officer at Wycombe District Council to find out whether you require listed building consent. Where buildings are shown on the conservation area map as being of local importance, they are considered to make an especially positive contribution to the historic interest or architectural character of the conservation area. Other buildings within the conservation area also play a key role in the character of the settlements, and although they are not individually identified on the map, this does not necessarily mean that they are not of interest.



Pots Cottage with Farthings in the distance. These were probably four farm workers cottages originally.

Appendix B: Listed Buildings:

These are indicated on the conservation area map. Further information on listed buildings can be obtained from the English Heritage website www.english-heritage.org.uk

Appendix C: Bibliography:

Victoria County History of Buckinghamshire 1925

Stockley, M. & Johnson, B. *The Leaves of Time*, 2000, P.K. Graphics, High Wycombe.

Hepple, L.W. & Doggett, A.M. *The Chilterns*, 1994, Phillimore, Chichester.

The Landscape Plan for Buckinghamshire, Part 1.
Buckinghamshire County Council

Appendix D: Development Control Guidelines:

The following guidelines have been drawn up for the management of change in the Speen Conservation Area to allow for development and alterations that keep the conservation area vital, without losing the characteristics that make it special.

In conservation areas, the Council has an overriding duty to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. Many seemingly minor alterations, if insensitively carried out, can have a cumulative and highly damaging effect on the overall appearance of the area. Such alterations not only damage appearance, but reduce the value of houses as historic features and attractive areas, all of which are highly desirable in today's property market.

Preservation of existing character - The maintenance of historic buildings in Speen Conservation Area

- 1 The use of traditional materials and detailing can have a considerable positive effect in enhancing the conservation area. The owners of historic and prominent properties should be encouraged to remove unsympathetic modern materials, such as concrete tiles and plastic rainwater goods, and to reinstate traditional materials such as plain clay tiles, local Bucks brick, painted timber windows and cast iron guttering.
- 2 Repointing should only be carried out when structurally necessary, be kept to a minimum and use traditional lime mortar. Variations in colour and the application of excessive amounts of mortar in a non-traditional manner can detract from brickwork and obscure it. Cement rich mixes can cause brickwork to deteriorate.
- 3 A variety of window types can be seen across the conservation area including wooden sliding sashes, casements, and metal windows. They all add to the charm and character of the area. Original windows should generally be retained as they have a character of their own which derives both from the proportions of the frames and glazing bars and from the charm of old glass which has a 'wobbly' or rippled effect. Original single glazed windows can be draught proofed and upgraded by specialist companies and secondary glazing installed to improve heat retention. UPVC windows should not be installed as their proportions, opening methods, modern shiny plastic appearance and the reflection of the double glazed units are all very much at odds with the character of historic buildings. Modern windows can appear very out of place, particularly if surrounded by more traditional types. Dark staining of timber is a modern technique which does little to enhance windows, and can look out of place when juxtaposed to traditionally painted windows.
- 4 The use of modern machine made roof tiles should be avoided as a replacement for traditional handmade plain clay tiles. Concrete or artificial slate should be avoided as these materials are visually detrimental.

The maintenance of trees and green spaces

- 5 Trees make a significant contribution to the village and property owners should continue to manage existing trees sensitively. Within the conservation area, formal notification must be given to the Council to fell, lop or top trees. Consideration should be given to the setting of historic buildings when planting or undertaking tree works.

All trees in conservation areas are protected but special consideration should be given to those trees indicated on the conservation area map to ensure that they are not harmed. New development should recognise this and should not present a risk to their continued growth and habit.

- 6 The green space in the conservation area is the playing field. This area is a valuable resource and will be protected.



Hampden Cottage, an attractive brick and flint house in the village.

Design Guidance for new development

- 7 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. The sides and rear of buildings, where visible to the public, must be of equally good design and materials.
- 8 Since 10 August 2006 most planning applications within the conservation area are required to be accompanied by Design and Access statements, in order for local authorities to evaluate the impact of the scheme on the wider locality, and understand the design process behind the proposal. Applications for listed building consent also require a Design and Access statement
- 9 Listed and other significant buildings are identified on the survey map and their specific qualities are described in the text above. Any new development must not harm the buildings or their settings or any special architectural or historic features that they may contain. It should be recognised that new development may not always be acceptable
- 10 Applications for development adjoining but beyond the conservation area boundary will be assessed for their effect upon the conservation area's character, appearance, and setting, and may be refused permission if this effect is considered adverse.
- 11 Special care must be taken to ensure that views looking into and out from the conservation area are not spoiled. Those of particular importance are marked on the survey map, and where numbered are referred to in the text.

Contextural design

12 Within Speen new development or proposals should respect the character of this small village and respond to the immediate environment, particularly in terms of scale, density, form, materials and detailing. Building works such as extensions must be designed not as a separate entity but relate to the original building. Care should be taken not to fill gaps between buildings which then give the appearance of continuous development.

13 Whilst there is some variation in the characteristics of the buildings, there are key features as described in the accompanying text in relation to the individual buildings which new development proposals should take account of.

These key features include:

a) The height and scale of buildings, including the location of windows and doors within the elevations. One and a half to two storeys is the traditional vernacular scale in this area.

b) The form of buildings, e.g. detached, terraced

c) The siting of new buildings, e.g. in relation to the highway and spacing between buildings.

d) The density of development.

e) The style and materials of doors and windows

f) Detailed design features, e.g. gables, brick course, treatments around doors and windows, bay windows, decorative features, etc.

g) Roof styles and chimneys.

h) Buildings materials

1 Pond Cottages facing one of the old village ponds that provided the water for residents before mains water was available.



i) Garden boundary treatments.

The intention of this guideline is not that new development should automatically replicate buildings in the locality but that important features set out above should be taken into account where appropriate, and in relation to the individual circumstances of each case.

- 14 Development opportunities in Speen Conservation Area are limited, unless sites come up for redevelopment. Proposals for new development within the conservation area should include a detailed analysis of the locality and townscape, and show how the proposals have been drawn up in relation to this (see Design and Access Statements above). Proposals on backland sites should always be secondary to the more important buildings that face Hampden Road, Chapel Hill and Studridge Lane.

Scale and density

- 15 Scale is the combination of a building's height and bulk when related to its surroundings. The scale of any new buildings should respect surrounding development. Some modest changes of scale may be appropriate as this reflects the variety of form in the village centre, where buildings have developed over time. Applicants should provide accurate elevations of surrounding buildings showing how new development will relate to them.
- 16 Density is the amount of development related to the site area. Government guidance states that high density development can make good use of land, provided it is carefully chosen and sensitively sited, although in conservation area a balance must be sought between the sensitive historic environment, and the requirement for developers to ensure that sites are not overdeveloped.

Height and massing

- 17 Within the conservation area there are a number of buildings that are already prominent because of their height or location within the streetscene. Vernacular buildings are historically of lesser importance within the streetscape and new development should reflect this hierarchy. Generally the height of new development should match that of adjoining buildings – in Speen this is usually two storeys.
- 18 Where extensions to existing buildings are proposed, the extension should be subservient to the main buildings, with a lower roofline.

Appearance, materials and detailing

- 19 The emphasis in conservation areas is to provide high quality design. Conservation area status does not preclude good modern design provided that it takes account of the prevailing form of existing development, scale, density, height and massing. Innovative modern design can be successfully integrated into historic areas and can provide vitality and interest to the streetscene. Natural materials and high quality detailing should be incorporated into any proposals.
- 20 Where a more traditional approach is appropriate buildings should be designed in a traditional form (including plan form, roof spans etc) and include pitched roofs. Dormers and rooflights

should be modestly sized and situated on rear facing roof slopes. Use of historic detailing such as string courses, eaves details, fenestration pattern 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 facades of buildings. Chimneys are essential in roofscapes and should be incorporated into designs.

- 21 Materials for any new building works must be sympathetic to those prevailing in the area. Where possible local traditional material should be used – good quality traditional brick for walling and sand faced clay roof tiles, and slate. Although some of the buildings within the conservation area are rendered or have painted brickwork, modern interpretations and techniques are not always visually successful and should thus be used with care. Where traditional materials survive they should be retained. The Chilterns Buildings Design Guide gives general information on Chiltern building materials; specific advice will depend on the immediate locality.
- 22 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. Windows should be timber, painted, not stained, and their design should reflect local styles, usually sliding sashes or side hung casements. If windows are to be double glazed these must be carefully designed to reduce the bulkiness of glazing bars. Joinery details should be submitted with planning applications. Top hung lights and modern materials such as uPVC and aluminium are inappropriate in the conservation area. Doors had traditional wooden panels or vertical matchboard on vernacular cottages.

Extensions to existing buildings

- 23 Extensions to existing buildings require the same approach as to new build in that they must take into account the prevailing forms of development and complement the form and character of the original house. This is of particular importance when designing extensions to listed buildings. Design should be of high quality, and take account of roof lines and shape, eaves details, fenestration patterns, architectural detailing and the creation of new chimneys. Extensions should not dominate the original buildings or result in the loss of historic plots. Gaps between buildings delineate their separate identity and care should be taken that these are not filled, creating a continuous line of development.



Stone Cottage, although modernised, dates back to the early 19th century.



Nells Cottage, one of a run of three that form the School Cottages.



Minns Cottage another of the School Cottages.



The cricket pavilion opened in 1988, although cricket is no longer played on the playing field.

Boundary treatments

- 24 Most of the front boundaries in the conservation area are defined by high hedges and brick walls. Some properties have no formal front boundaries and are accessed directly off the pavement. Where new boundaries are proposed in the public realm these should be in keeping, and the use of panelled fencing should be avoided.
- 25 Some agricultural hedges are protected by the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations. The majority of hedges are not covered by these Regulations. However in this conservation area the hedges are an important element of the area's character, and should be retained and where possible enhanced.

Public realm

- 26 Street furniture, lampposts, CCTV camera mountings and posts, telephone boxes 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, and the English Heritage publication "Streets for All" (2005). Within Speen the granite kerbstones, finger signposts combined with a lack of street clutter and street lamps to enhance the village atmosphere.
- 27 Surfacing within domestic curtilages for driveways, paths and hardstandings should be in keeping with the semi-rural nature of this village. Large areas of tarmac and concrete are out of place in this setting. Regular paving, pavoirs and setts may also look discordant and not be appropriate. Gravel is preferable, particularly in large areas of parking. Paths to front doors were historically surfaced with clay tiles or brick, and this is a tradition that could be encouraged.
- 28 Satellite dishes and solar panels are unsightly especially when they are poorly sited on front elevations. Care should be taken to site these in back gardens or on roof slopes that are not visible from a street. Satellite dishes and solar panels are generally not acceptable affixed to listed buildings.



The inscription at the base of the millenium sign opposite The Old Post Office. The base in made from local stone.

SPEEN CONSERVATION AREA

