



South Bucks  
District Council

*Directorate of Services*

# Burnham

## Conservation Area



View North Towards The High Street

Re-designated March 2002

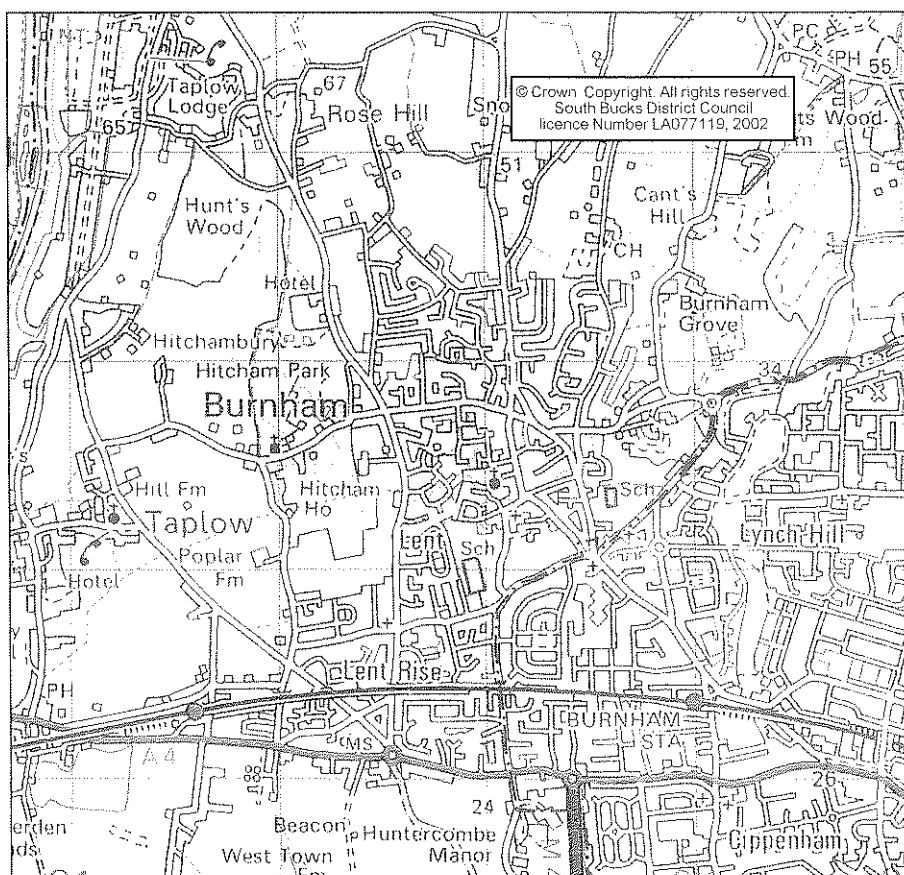
# Burnham Conservation Area Appraisal

## Introduction

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This conservation area appraisal focuses on Burnham, a village just outside Slough. Burnham Conservation Area (The Area) was designated in 1977. The text provides a brief introduction to the concept of Conservation Areas and then offers a detailed analysis of the special architectural and historic interest that Burnham possesses. The area appraisal plan on page 7 shows the listed buildings, the buildings of local importance, important trees and tree groups, important open spaces and important views into and out of the Area.

This conservation area appraisal is consistent with national and regional planning guidance, and with the policies in the Buckinghamshire County Structure Plan and the South Bucks District Local Plan. The Local Plan advises that the District Council will publish new and replacement conservation area documents for all designated areas, setting out information on the special architectural or historic interest which justifies their designation. This appraisal sets out that information in relation to Burnham. It provides supplementary planning guidance pursuant to the policies for conservation areas set out in the Local Plan, and as such it is a material consideration to be taken into account when planning decisions are made.



This appraisal has now been formally adopted by the Council. It has been prepared in consultation with the general public, businesses and other interested parties, and their views have been taken into account prior to its adoption. A statement of the consultation undertaken, the responses received and the Council's response to those representations is available separately.

## Conservation Areas

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Under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, local planning authorities have a duty to designate areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which they consider should be preserved or enhanced. It is the architectural quality and historic interest of the area rather than of individual buildings, that is the prime consideration when designating a conservation area.

Designation as a Conservation Area has a number of effects, including:

- (a) the demolition of a building within a conservation area (regardless of whether or not that building is a listed building) will in many cases require the consent of the Local Planning Authority;
- (b) there is a lower threshold of "permitted development" rights within a conservation area, and therefore development which may not have required planning permission outside a conservation area may now require planning permission;
- (c) anyone proposing to cut down or carry out work to a tree in a conservation area must give the Local Planning Authority 6 weeks notice in writing of their intention to do so before actually carrying out the work;
- (d) once designation has taken place, the Council has a duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area from time to time.

If you require further or more detailed information on whether you require permission to carry out works within the Conservation Area you are advised to contact the Council direct.

Burnham lies just to the north of Slough. Burnham is a compact historic village with ancient origins. The main High Street dominates with a historic pub at the north end and an attractive open green at the south end. There is an historically and architecturally very attractive collection of buildings around the ancient Church of St Peter, just off the High Street.

### History and archaeological notes

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The earliest information about land ownership is contained in the Domesday Book. Remains of the old field systems found around the Slough west junction of the M4 indicate that the area was a thriving agricultural community in Saxon times in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries.

The only surviving Norman architecture is the corner portion of the tower of St. Peter's Church dating to the eleventh century. It is thought that the remainder of the Church was built later and is contemporary with Burnham Abbey.

In medieval times, Burnham Village depended upon Huntercombe Manor and Burnham Abbey for its employment and financial stability. In 1271 the Abess obtained a Thursday

market which was held in the village with a yearly fair on St. Matthew's Day. The market, held at the junction of Church Street and the High Street where a few of the buildings of that time remain to the present day, was transferred to Maidenhead in the fourteenth century when the Bath Road was diverted from a route through the village to more or less its present alignment.



*St. Peter's Church*

The Reformation which culminated in the Dissolution of the Abbey in 1539, led to a disastrous recession in the village as employment opportunities were drastically reduced. The decline continued until the late seventeenth century when the Evelyns became Lords of the Manor, which led to a rejuvenation of the village centre and further building along the High Street during the eighteenth century.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Burnham was again to diminish in importance when the Bath Road used the new Maidenhead Bridge, which in 1722 replaced the old timber structure. By 1877 the three fairs formerly held in the village had ceased. The Abbey was in a period of decline and by 1878 was described as being in ruins.

In the late nineteenth century, the village benefited from the Boyle family who had become the new owners of Huntercombe Manor. They donated many gifts including a substantial sum for repairs to the church tower and much employment was created which led to a revival in village life. The twentieth century has been a period of continued rapid growth for Burnham.

## Character Analysis

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This section offers an analysis of the special historic and architectural character which Burnham possesses. The analysis focuses upon the features of the Area which merit protection because of the contribution they make to the special architectural or historic interest. The areas and features considered important are highlighted, as are areas of opportunity for enhancement.

### Architectural Character and Coherence of Buildings

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Burnham Conservation Area (The Area) comprises the entire length of Burnham High Street, together with the area to the south including Burnham Park Hall, The Priory, and other buildings. The Area's overwhelming character is of a village and this depends not so much on the design of individual buildings but rather on their intimate groupings and use of harmonious materials.

A sense of enclosure within this street scene is achieved by the generally narrow width of the High Street, together with its slightly irregular alignment, uneven gradient from north to south and near continuous frontage of buildings.

In total there are 39 individual list entries of buildings which are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest in the Area. These comprise a mixture of buildings, walls, and one K6 telephone box. There are also a number of unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Area. These are identified on the enclosed map.

The predominant uses of the buildings are either retail, small business or residential. Much of the High Street is predominantly in retail use, although this is interspersed by other uses including public houses, restaurants and small businesses. There are also a number of residential properties in the High Street, albeit that these are located in greater numbers at the southern and northern ends. This mixture of uses makes a positive contribution to the special character of the Area.

Building materials used throughout the Area are a mixture of mainly brick and tile with some timber framing and stone used around St. Peter's Church.

The prominent architectural character and coherence of the High Street is mainly dominated by closely spaced buildings. This character opens out as



*K6 Telephone Box*

one moves into Gore and Britwell Roads, Church Street and further south down the High Street into the open area around Burnham Park Hall. Many of the buildings are also of a relatively small or domestic scale, and this is an important contribution to the special character.

Although the majority of the High Street is architecturally compact, there are notable openings and views through to the back of buildings, and various notable carriage way features. These have been noted on the area appraisal plan.

Important views into and out of the Area include those to the south which are effectively completed by the turret of the Priory and the adjacent group of tall trees to the west. There are other important and attractive views around the Priory and the adjacent public park, around the Precincts and Stomp Road and Windsor Lane. Important views are detailed on the area appraisal map.

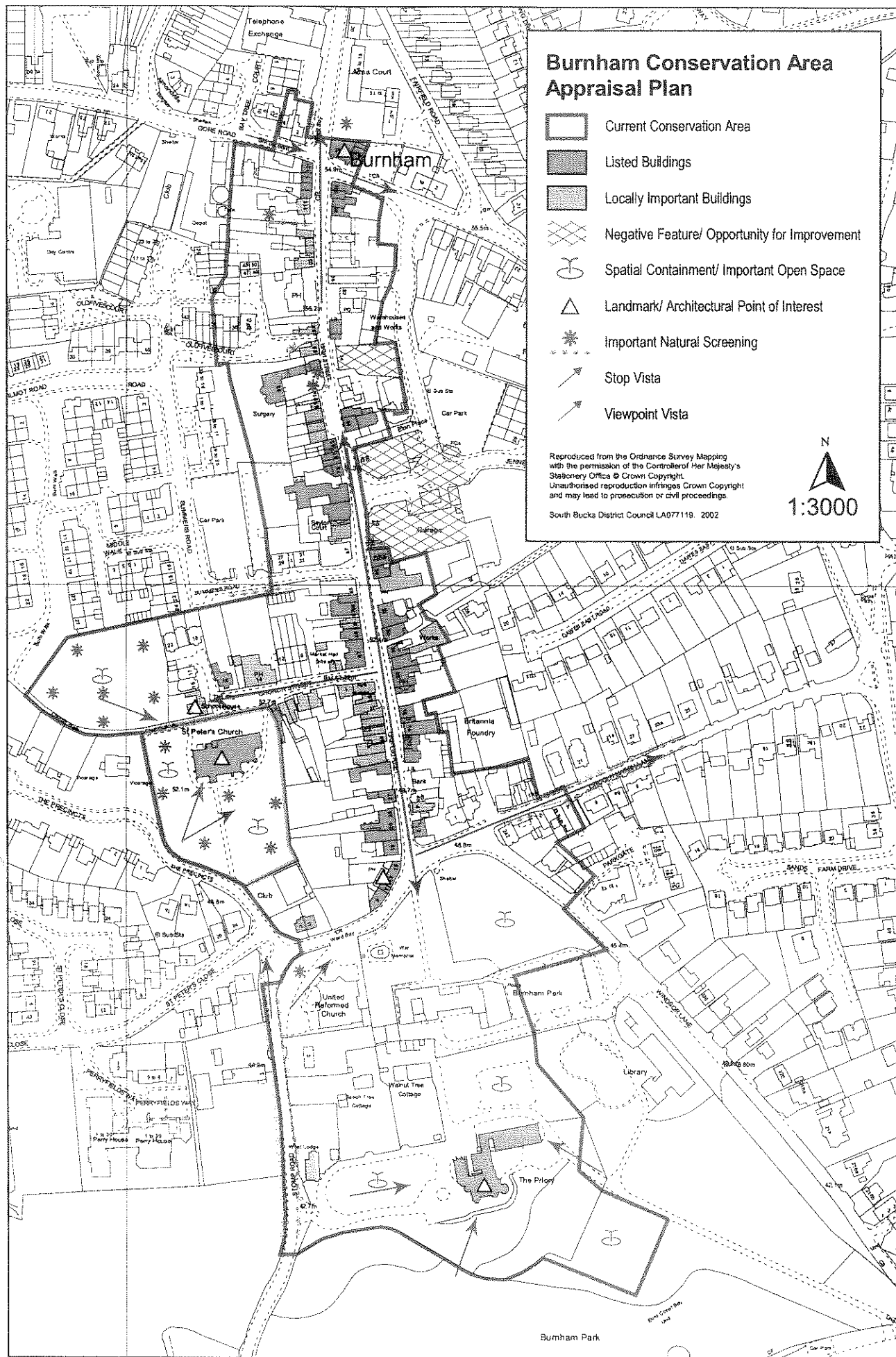


*The Priory*









Throughout the High Street, as well as being closely spaced without gaps in-between them, many of the earlier buildings immediately abut the footpath. This is a characteristic feature which makes a positive contribution. Notable buildings which do not follow this layout include the Red Lion public house, the grade II listed 93 High Street, the Old Swan public house and the old Lloyds Bank building. Where buildings do not immediately abut the High Street, there is often an attractive space in front.

Footpaths are generally of an irregular width; some wide and some narrow. This irregularity is visually attractive.

Church Street is just off the main High Street in Burnham and is an oasis of small domestic vernacular buildings with a picturesque public house. Church Street opens out at its west



## Burnham Conservation Area Appraisal Plan

-  Current Conservation Area
-  Listed Buildings
-  Locally Important Buildings
-  Negative Feature/ Opportunity for Improvement
-  Spatial Containment/ Important Open Space
-  Landmark/ Architectural Point of Interest
-  Important Natural Screening
-  Stop Vista
-  Viewpoint Vista

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end and is dominated by St Peter's Church, a fine grade II\* listed building, with its attractive open churchyard and separately listed churchyard walls. At the west end of Church Street, the boundary sweeps round to include a picturesque cemetery with many fine trees and some modern development around the Old Schoolhouse.

The area around Burnham Park Hall is dominated and characterised by some very fine open space, with many attractive views back towards the High Street.

Around the west end of Lincoln Hatch Lane there are a mixture of large Edwardian villas and smaller vernacular cottages and workshops. Along Windsor Lane and into Burnham Park around the Priory, the overwhelming sense of open space is very apparent. In parts of this area views are available of the High Street and this open space acts to visually "frame" the High Street. There are fine views towards St Peters Church, the High Street and of Church Street.



*High Street scene*

## Hierarchy of Space

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In architectural and historic terms, the visually more dominant area is centred around the High Street with its linear collection of historic buildings. Church Street acts as a visual foil to this. The High Street is busy and the buildings are closely spaced, whilst Church Street is quieter and more open, especially where it opens out around St Peter's and its adjacent churchyard. There are many valuable townscape views and these have been detailed on the area appraisal plan.



## Trees, Hedges and Landscaping

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The majority of the High Street is urban in character. There are a few notable trees in this area outside 93 High Street and around the Red Lion. This greenery does make a positive contribution and is detailed on the accompanying map. There are also many trees on the western side at the back of the High Street which act to “frame” the Conservation Area. There are also many fine trees around St Peter’s Church.

## Relationship between the Built Environment and the Landscape

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The relationship between the built environment and the landscape is most apparent around the western end of Church Street and the open area around Burnham Park Hall. It is also apparent in views north up Dropmore Road beyond The Bee public house.

The area around the western end of Church Street is particularly fine and is visually dominated by landscape and open space. This acts to frame both the Church and Church Street. It also funnels views into the built High Street.



*Attractive Open Landscape*

The area around Burnham Park Hall in the south is also dominated by landscape and this area frames views back towards the High Street.

Views north up Dropmore Road open out into fine open landscape.

All these three identified areas have separate characteristics and visual qualities. They all serve to frame the High Street, but certainly with the western end of Church Street and the area around Burnham Park Hall and the Priory, these areas are quite visually special, not only adding an important green setting for the Area, but also functioning on their own as important open spaces.

## Shopfronts

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Burnham Conservation Area incorporates a large amount of retail activity. There are many retail buildings along the High Street which are listed and many others which although unlisted, are nevertheless of local merit and contribute to the special character of the Area.



*Characteristic shopfront*

Retail premises are often subject to proposals for alterations to shopfronts and new signage. It will be important to ensure that proposals do not detract from the special character of the Conservation Area or from the character of listed buildings. An important part of the character of the Area is that many of the shopfronts utilise materials, and are of a scale and design which reflects the small scale of buildings. Applications for features which do not respect this character, such as Dutch blinds, will not generally be acceptable on either listed or unlisted buildings in the Area.

Whilst much of the High Street is in retail and commercial use, there is not a proliferation of signage to the extent that there would often be in larger commercial areas. This is also an important part of the special local character of Burnham. Some of the buildings have signs which are illuminated, whilst others do not. It will be important to ensure that illuminated signage does not increase to the extent that the special character of the Area is harmed, and that any new signage should be traditionally designed and detailed using traditional materials.



*High Street Scene*

### **Areas of opportunity and enhancement**

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The Council wishes to ensure that the special character of the Conservation Area is retained and enhanced in accordance with the policies in the Local Plan. It is also essential to retain a strong retail presence in the High Street together with the mix of uses which contribute to the Area's special character.

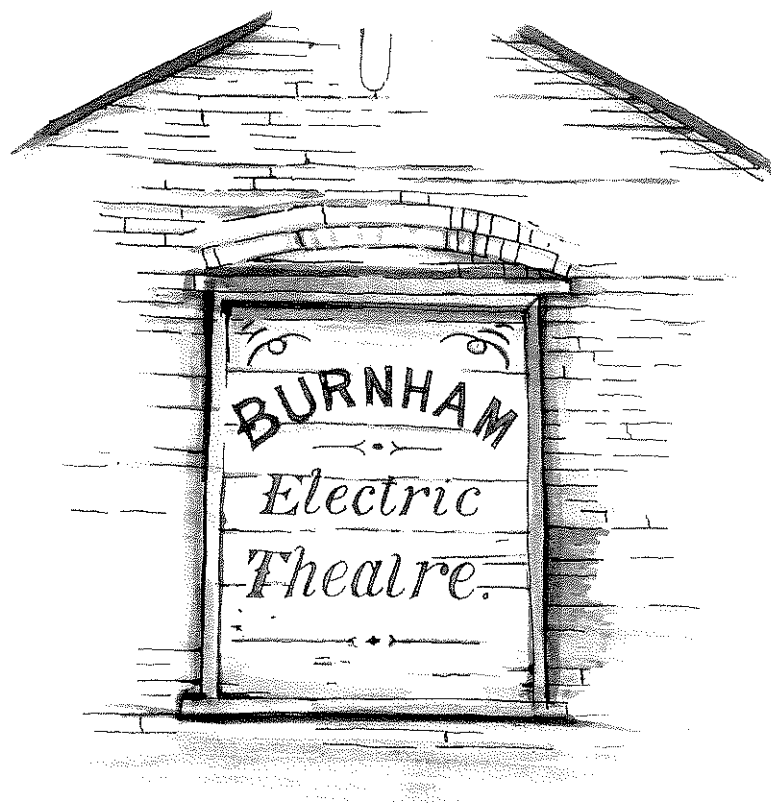
A study undertaken on behalf of the District, County and Parish Councils has identified a number of improvements that are warranted. In response to this the three authorities have been working with other local organisations to bring about improvements to the locality.

Improvements are being carried out to enhance the area, particularly for shoppers and pedestrians. At its junction with Britwell Road and Gore Road, the High Street has been narrowed with a raised carriageway to deter non essential traffic from using the High Street. Further improvements have been undertaken to reduce the width of the road and to make some of the footway a little wider for pedestrians.

The junction with Jennery Lane was bland and suffers from a relatively wide engineered road junction. Enhancements have recently taken place in this area. The road carriageway has

been narrowed and the junction realigned, thereby providing an area which will act as a focal point for the centre and which now incorporates a focal feature. The improvement proposals also incorporate a pedestrian link from the High Street via Eton Place to the car park

The local authorities intend to continue with a programme of improvements in the High Street to the south of the junction with Jennery Lane. It will be important to ensure that not



*Distinctive Signage*

only the design of proposals respects the special character, but also that appropriate materials are used which make a positive contribution. The recent improvements in Church Street have used good quality materials appropriate to the local character of the area, and these works have also introduced better parking arrangements.

Some parts of the Area suffer from unfortunate bland architecture and unimaginative materials, including particularly numbers 74, 60-62, 46-48, and the former Lloyds Bank, all located in the High Street. It is interesting to note that three of these are also the largest buildings in the locality, and their scale is not of a small or domestic scale. Proposals for these sites which would enhance their contribution to the Conservation Area would be welcome.



**South Bucks**  
District Council

*Artwork by Lynn Trigwell*