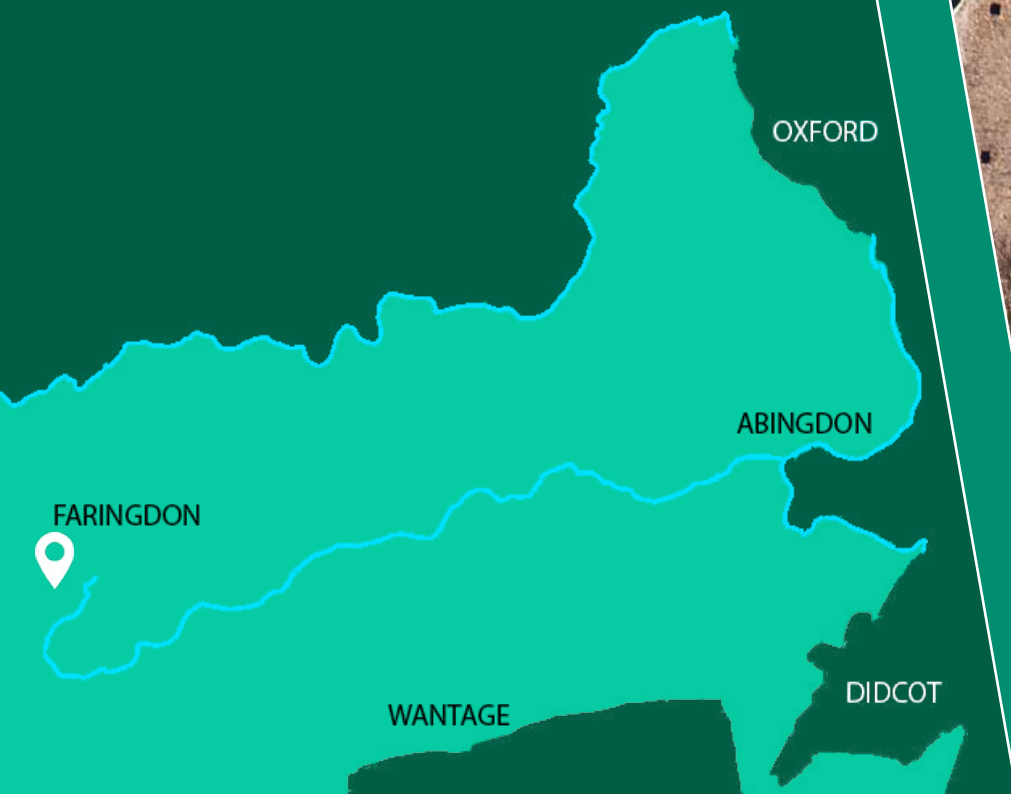




Great Coxwell Conservation Area Appraisal



September 2022 Vale of the White Horse District Council



Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction..... 3

Maps 4

2.0 Summary of Special Interest 7

3.0 Assessment of Special Interest 9

4.0 Historic Development 11

5.0 Spatial Analysis..... 12

6.0 Character Analysis 19

7.0 Boundary Review..... 26

8.0 Management Plan 27

9.0 References 30

Appendix A: Listed Buildings 31

Appendix B: Non-designated Heritage Assets 32

Acknowledgements

This document has been produced with thanks to members of the Great Coxwell Neighbourhood Plan team who provided photographs, field research, and text for this appraisal. Cover image by John Rounce.

Note

This appraisal seeks to provide a comprehensive assessment of the character and special historic interest of the conservation area. However, the reader should not assume that details which contribute to the character of the area, but are not mentioned here specifically, can be dismissed by reason of their omission.

Contact Us

For further information and advice on Conservation Areas contact:
Vale of White Horse District Council
Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE
Tel: 01235 422600
Email: planning@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Copyright

All maps are reproduced from, or based upon, Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty’s Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Vale of White Horse District Council 100019525 2021.

1.0 Introduction

What are conservation areas?

Conservation areas are areas of “special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” – in other words, they exist to protect the features and the characteristics that make a historic place unique and distinctive.

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. In addition to statutory controls, both National Policy and the Local Authority policies in the Local Plan help preserve the special character and appearance of conservation areas and their setting where it contributes to its significance.

What is the purpose of a conservation area appraisal?

- Identify the special architectural or historic interest and the changing needs of the conservation area;
- Define the conservation area boundaries;
- Increase public awareness and involvement in the preservation and enhancement of the area;
- Provide a framework for informed planning decisions;
- Guide controlled and positive management of change within the conservation area to minimise harm and encourage high quality, contextually responsive design.

How might living in a conservation area affect you?

- Most demolition works require planning permission from the local authority;

- Restrictions on permitted development and advertising;
- If you intend to cut down, top or lop any but the smallest trees you must notify the council so potential harm can be assessed.

Where can I find further information?

For further information on conservation areas, how they are managed and how this might affect you, please see the Vale of White Horse District Council's [website](#) and Historic England's advice on [living in conservation areas](#).

Planning policy context

Great Coxwell Parish Council adopted a revised [neighbourhood plan](#) in October 2020, based on the first neighbourhood plan adopted in 2015. The wider district development plan currently sits within the [Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031](#). Other material planning considerations include the [National Planning Policy Framework 2012 \(NPPF\)](#), [Planning Practice Guidance \(PPG\)](#), and the emerging Joint Local Plan 2041.

Methodology and Consultation

This appraisal was produced with current best practice guidance published by Historic England and information collected using publicly available resources and thorough on-site analysis from the publicly accessible parts of the conservation area. Public consultation took place from 6 April to 1 June 2022. The appraisal was then reviewed and changes made based on comments received. The appraisal was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by the Vale of White Horse District Council at a Cabinet meeting on 30 September 2022.

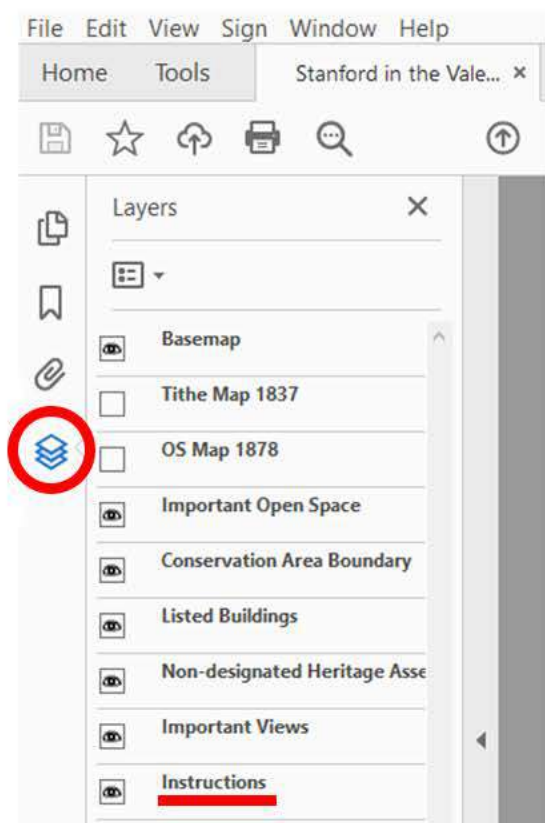
Instructions for Using this Map

Please note that the interactive features of this map will not work if you have opened this document with a web browser. You must download it and open it using a .pdf reading software such as Adobe Acrobat or Foxit.

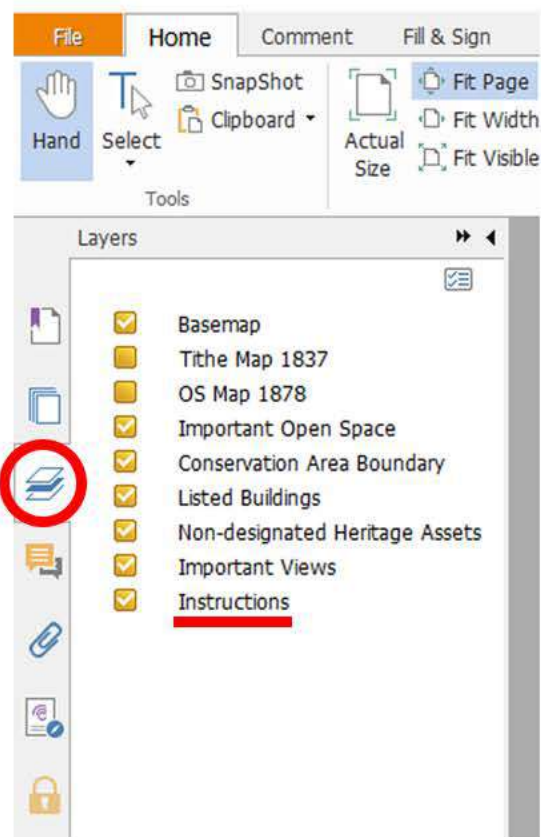
To turn layers on and off, please expand the left sidebar in your .pdf reader and click on the **Layers** icon, as circled below. All available layers will be listed there. Click the box next to each layer to toggle it on and off.

Turn off the **INSTRUCTIONS** layer to reveal the map.

Adobe reader

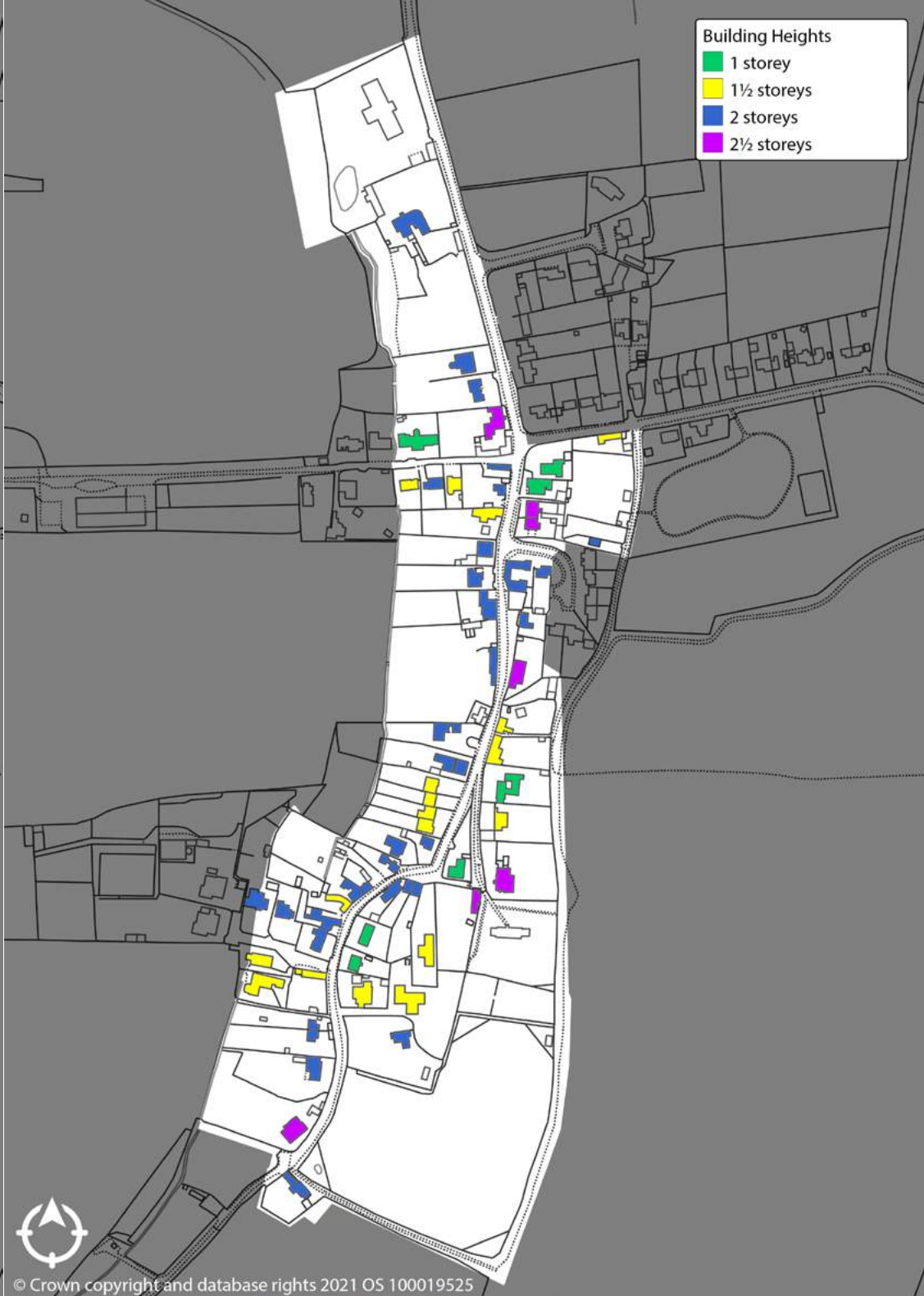
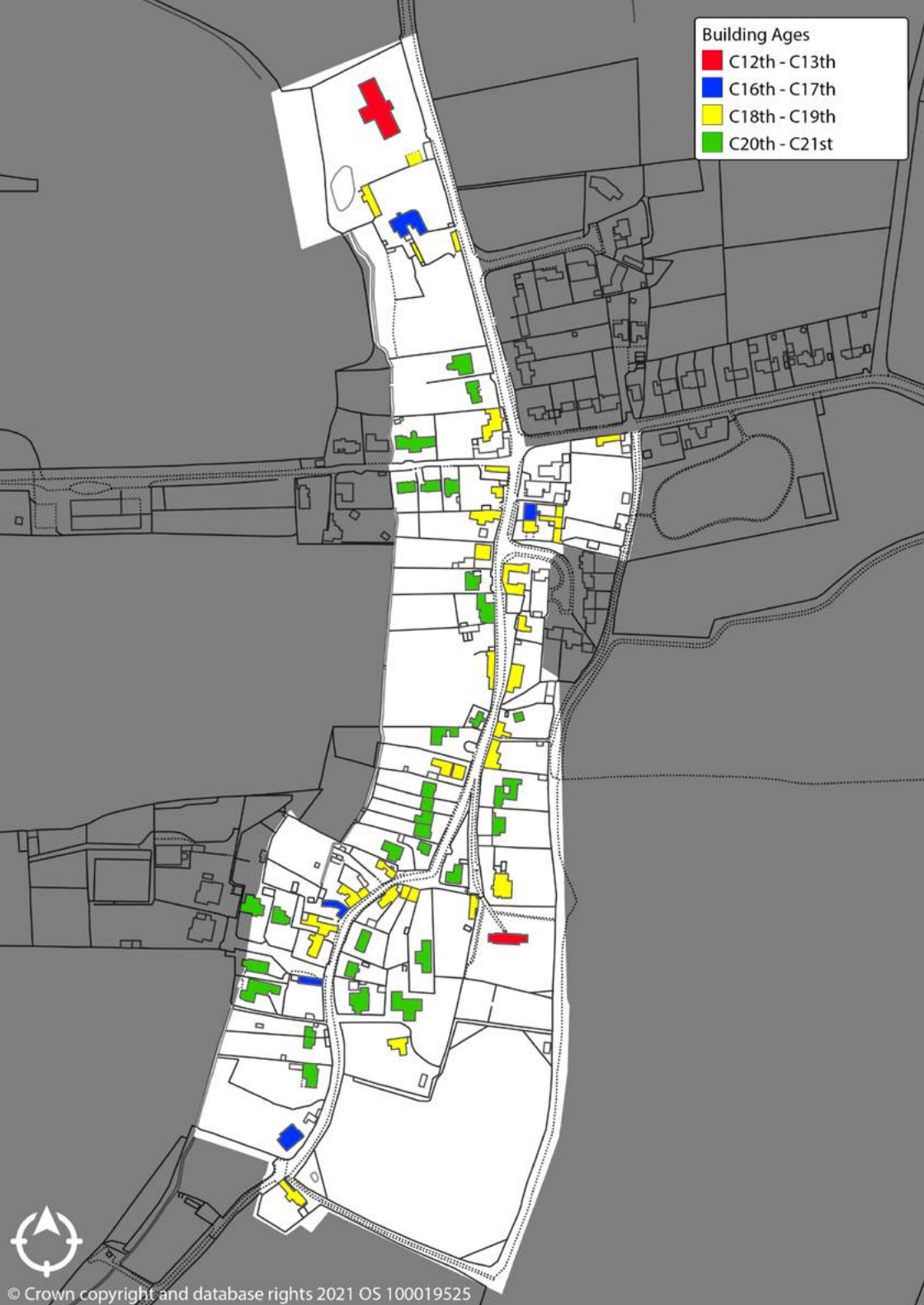


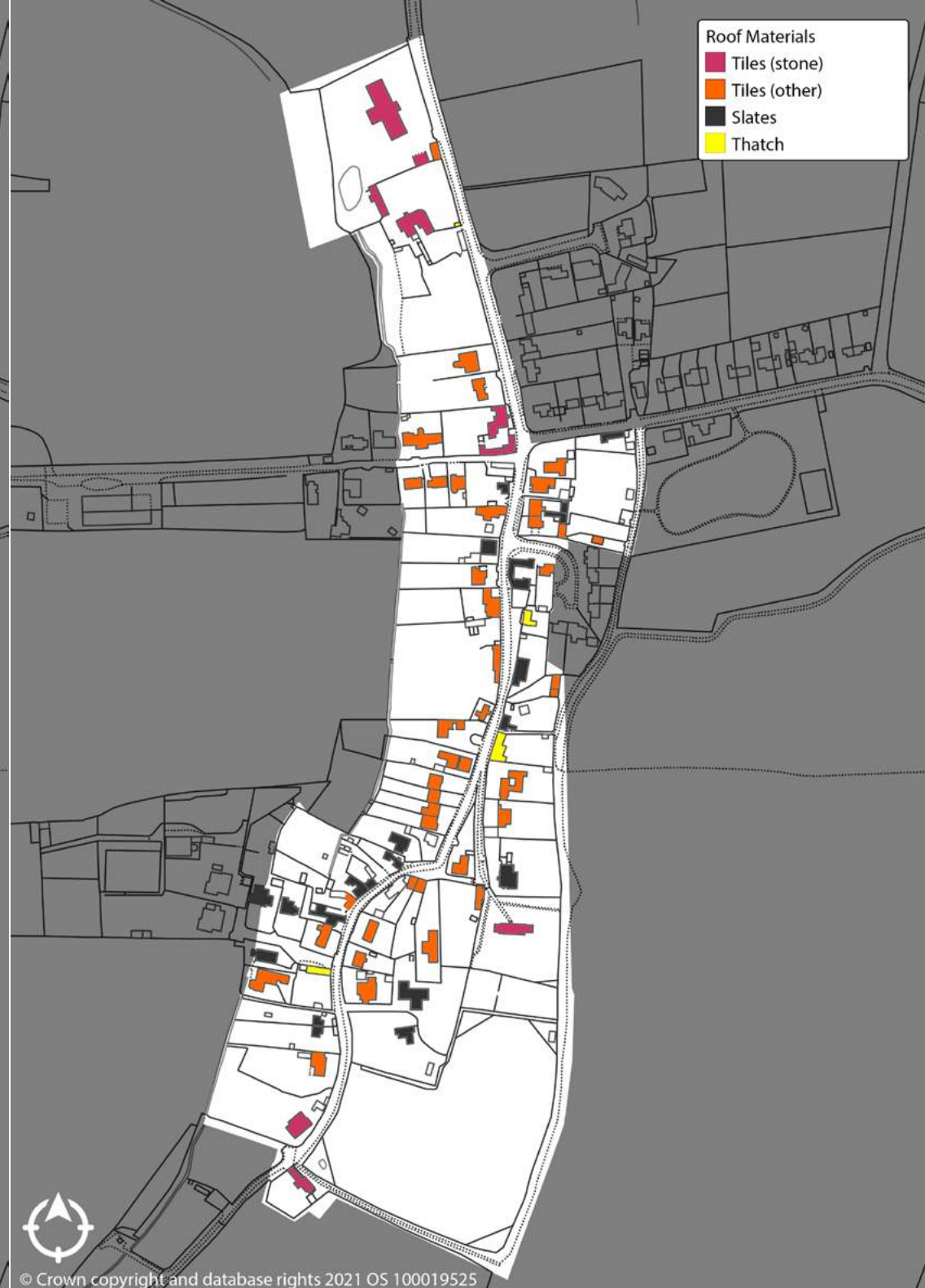
Foxit reader



You will find a **Go to Map** button at the bottom of every page which will bring you here. To return to your place in the document, click the button on the top left of the map labeled **Click Here to Return to Previous Page**

If you are having difficulty using this map, please contact us on 01235 422600 or e-mail planning@whitehorsedc.gov.uk





2.0 Summary of Special Interest

This assessment of significance follows the framework set out in Historic England's 2008 document Conservation Principles.

Primary significance:

- Tiny village, 2 kilometres south-west of Faringdon.
- Developed in prehistoric times on a narrow Corallian limestone ridge.
- Badbury Hill Iron Age hillfort (Scheduled Ancient Monument).
- Medieval monastic grange.

Elements of medium to high significance:

- Historic double nuclei of the village at the north and south ends of the conservation area.
- Cistercian Great Barn and site of the former grange to the north.
- Late Saxon church on an eminence above the medieval village to the south (see, *Figs 2, 3*).
- Stream (nameless) with monastic pond still at its head/source, running through the gardens of properties on the west side of the village's north-south street (nameless), creating a largely undeveloped verdant valley.
- Apparent survival of large parts of the medieval East field and the West field (National Trust, formerly the Radnor estate).
- Post-Dissolution establishment of individual farms with Yeoman farmhouses running north from the southern nucleus, with 17th/18th/19th century infill between them as well as up the eastern side of the street, resulting in a main streetscape of buildings of

local materials, of varied size, site type and architectural style, but always close to the road with gardens and green space stretching behind.

- Significant views exist from and to eminences in and outside the conservation area; from the conservation area to open and forested countryside; from and into green village spaces.



Fig 1. Sign advertising local heritage along Hollow Road.



Fig 2. Church of St. Giles.

Evidential value

There is high evidential value in village buildings listed at grade I and grade II* and medium value in the farmhouses and cottages listed at grade II, and in above ground and below ground archaeology.

Whilst no direct evidence for Roman settlement has yet been identified within the conservation area, finds of pottery and coins (see, *Map; 13303, 13305*) across its southern extents would attest to their presence. Further prehistoric to Roman settlement may be present in and around this area. Pottery fragments datable to prehistoric, Roman, Medieval and post-Medieval times continue to be made on house sites in and around the conservation area (see, *Map*).

Historical value

The close association of the Iron Age streamside settlement and the Iron Age hillfort above (ceramic finds of that period survive from both)

is of medium to high historical value. The Great Barn and associated Cistercian grange are of high historical value, given the link with the major monastic grange at Faringdon (where nothing remains above ground) and with Beaulieu Abbey. The documented visit of the Victorian artist William Morris to the Great Barn and St Giles church is of high historical value (he is quoted as calling the Great Barn 'as noble as a cathedral', and was struck by the brass of c1500 to William and Jane Morys at the church).

Dated by dendrochronology (tree-ring dating) to c.1292, the Great Barn is recognised as one of the largest and best-preserved in England. Archaeological monitoring of essential works has identified a wall and floor of a contemporary building on the west side of the barn, and stone surface on the north-west and the east sides of the barn.

Aesthetic value

Great Coxwell conservation area has medium to high aesthetic value owing to the Great Barn, the almost unaltered late Saxon church (Saxon work observable in the nave), and the series of listed farmhouses and cottages in the main street, an 18th century front wall, 19th century original iron railings and raised pavement, and local building materials including 18th century brickwork and Golden Ridge limestone rubble construction of houses and walls.

Communal value

In Great Coxwell conservation area the continued use of the little-altered c1900 parish Reading Room as the centre of village social life has medium to high communal value.

3.0 Assessment of Special Interest

3.1 Location and Geography

Great Coxwell is located approximately 2 kilometres (1¼ miles) south-west of Faringdon, and is the only settlement in Great Coxwell parish. The parish is bounded by the A420 carriageway and the parish of Little Coxwell on the east, and by the parishes of Great Faringdon on the north, Buscot, Eaton Hastings and Coleshill on the west, and Longcot on the south. Parish and village straddle the mid-Vale ridge of Corallian limestone with a more elevated cap of greensand centrally on Badbury Hill. From the Hill, arable fields and pastures descend towards the Thames valley to the north and to the western clay Vale to the south.

Located at low altitude between the Iron Age hillforts of Badbury Camp and Little Coxwell Camp to the north-west and south-east respectively, Great Coxwell is likely to have formed part of the agricultural hinterland of these important later prehistoric settlements. This is further evidenced by finds of prehistoric stone tools and a possible double-ditched enclosure (see, *Map; 12043*) less than 200m west of the conservation area, and the recovery of Iron Age pottery from within its southern extents (see, *Map; 13305*).

3.2 General Character and Plan Form

Great Coxwell is a small rural village based upon a linear main street and a cross street (to the west, Puddleduck Lane, a no through road, and Cherry Orchard leading east to the A420 carriageway) with houses and cottages ranged on one or both sides of the streets. This spatial pattern dates from the turnpike era and overlies the original medieval network of footpaths, which still exists.

Local building materials and vernacular styles of different dates, the relatively small scale of the settlement and its components, and the hillside topography, winding roads and the closeness of the houses to the roads, give the conservation area a distinctive character and unified appearance.

Two historic settlement nuclei at the northern and southern ends of the village were gradually joined together and this process was largely completed in the 18th and 19th centuries (when the school, and the Parish Reading Room on land donated by the Earl of Radnor, were built on the main street halfway between the village crossroads and the church, a non-conformist church was built, now demolished, on the opposite side, and a scattering of houses and cottages appeared in Puddleduck Lane).

20th century and later housing within the conservation area includes parts of two planned developments with specific design characteristics: one house of The Laurels of the 1970s, and parts of Pear Tree Close of the early 21st century (where houses are of stone to blend with the existing local stone houses).

A change to the conservation area boundary includes land to the rear of Corner Beeches, Stonevale and Danes Court, reaching on the east side to Dark Lane, and including Holloway Lodge; and land to the south of St Giles church with the adjoining L-shaped field at the south end of the village.

These areas form part of a network of historic tracks and footpaths radiating outwards from the village, towards Little Coxwell, Longcot, Coleshill, Highworth, Badbury Hill, the Thames and Faringdon. The village's rural character derives from the soft verges, roadside old walls and hedges and simply-designed cottages and houses constructed in the local Corallian rubble stone, a golden fossil-rich formation, with decorative brick quoins and coursing and stone, thatch, slate and tile roofs. There are outlooks across the village's medieval out-fields in the ownership of the National Trust.

The deeply hollowed lane (Hollow Way) at the north end of the village was made in 1756 to connect the village main street with the Faringdon to Highworth road.

Below the church a steep path (partly cobbled, partly with pitched stone pavement) leads down to the former site of the village well and pump, situated in a small green, tended by the occupants of Pottinger Cottage and Amberley. There is another small village green situated in front of Manor Cottage.

3.3 Landscape Setting

The village is set in the midst of the pasture and fields, below the woodland on the south slopes of Badbury Hill, descending from the 120 metre contour down to 90 metres at its southern end, a fall of some 30 metres to the south, following the flow of the stream and overlooked by the church on its 110 metres-high promontory with views across the Vale of White Horse. The south end of the village is a vehicular cul-de-sac, beyond which only footpaths, bridleways and fields continue into the clay Vale.

To the northeast, agricultural fields separate the properties along Cherry Orchard from recent urban-style development on the edge of Faringdon. To the south-east, the potentially beautiful environment of the former Chowle Farm (landscaped former golf course, ancient woodland copse, valued wildlife site, stream and pond) has become degraded.



Fig 3. Great Barn

4.0 Historic Development

Coxwell ('Cocheswelle' in the Domesday Book of 1086) probably refers to the surviving source or 'well' south of the sister village of Little Coxwell to the east, although the two places were already separate at Domesday: it had been held by King Harold. Prehistoric Roman and medieval pottery has been found in the village and the plan accompanying the 1659 Act of Enclosure shows a medieval 'toft-and-croft' type layout south of Puddleduck Lane (then called Burnham Lane), between the stream and the main village street. In 1205, Great Coxwell was granted, as a part of the manor of Faringdon, to Beaulieu Abbey and was held by the Abbey until the Dissolution, when it was first leased to, then bought by, in 1540, Thomas Morris, son of the first tenant, William Morris (Morys). In 1638, the Morris family sold the manors and rectory to George Pratt, the purchaser of the manor of Coleshill; in 1956 The Radnor estate, including its properties and agricultural land (most of the farmland to the west of the village, the Great Barn and Court House and their curtilages and other properties on the village street, and remnants of the East field) came into the possession of the National Trust.

The church was still in the hands of the abbey of Beaulieu in 1291. Before 1530 it had come into the possession of the Bishops of Salisbury, and was transferred to the Bishop of Oxford in 1836. The registers begin in 1557 and are continuous.

The Court House opposite the Great Barn is probably on the site of the monks' grange and later became a Morys residence; additionally, a listed 17th century large farmhouse at the southern end of the village is called 'Morys'. Farmhouses and cottages in post-medieval times continued to be built close to the village street (listed: Green's Farmhouse, 17th

century, possibly with milling on the stream; Dane's Court, late 17th century; Pear Tree Cottage, c1700, thatched roof with eyebrow dormers; Holloway, Dane's House and Wayside, 18th century; Manor Cottage, c1800; Chapel House, early 19th century, accompanying a demolished non-conformist chapel). Refer to page 5 for a map showing approximate building ages.

The street pattern that exists today can be recognised on the earliest known map of the village, the tithe award map of 1659. The village house plan of 1736, the field boundaries and field names map of 1843 and the four later OS maps (1876, 1899, 1912, 1978) all show the modern street plan. Following the creation of the turnpike road between Faringdon and Shrivenham in 1752, that became part of the A420 trunk road and the Faringdon by-pass in the 20th century, the eastern entry to the village has become the principal of just two points of entry for vehicles (the other being the Holloway to the north that is unsuitable for heavy vehicles).

In the 100 years since the 1912 OS map, the number of houses in the village has doubled. Outside the conservation area is the development along Cherry Orchard, with its spacious early 20th century former council houses in large plots, and the recent Maitland Close development in its wooded setting opposite the Court House. This area forms a 20th century extension of the village and is part of the setting of the conservation area but not within it.

5.0 Spatial Analysis

Summary Key Features

- Small village with a principal north-south winding street descending from forested hills to north to lower-lying agricultural fields to south.
- Cul-de-sac identity at a distance from main roads conserves the built environment.
- Historic Great Barn to north and St Giles church to south in dominant positions.
- Evident agricultural heritage in the form of buildings, setting and slight remaining evidence of ridge and furrow and headlands in the former East field.
- Green verges, a raised pavement, hedgerows, stone boundary walls, accentuate the rural character.
- Narrow village follows stream, small amounts of development on cross streets to east and west.
- Important views to and from fields and pasture on all sides with views of distant fields and hills between houses.
- All but one road/lane ending in tracks over farmland.
- Houses often on or close to road with gardens and green spaces fanning out behind.
- Large churchyard and Remembrance Garden, tree-lined tracks and

bridleway, valued village greens and open spaces

- Absence of standardisation of streets, footpaths and driveway widths and a minimum of signage, street markings and furniture



Fig 4. Small Green in front of Manor Cottage.



Fig 5. Puddleduck Lane.



Fig 6. Dark Lane.

5.1 Street pattern and layout

Introduction

The street pattern is a simple one of longer north-south main village road, running the entire length of the conservation area from the Great Barn to Green Lanes, gradually descending and winding. It is crossed from the west by Puddleduck Lane, leading to farm tracks, and Cherry Orchard, leading east to Faringdon.

There are two short paved drives to small modern developments leading east of the village main street. At the end of Cherry Orchard, a bridleway, Gipsy Lane, leads to Faringdon, and further south, a partly-paved footpath leads east from the village main road, under which the water-main to the village was constructed in 1947. A footpath leads from the Great Barn up Badbury Hill. The gravelled drive leading to Pear Tree Farmhouse continues as a public right-of-way west towards Coleshill. These routes are ones which extend the village street pattern but lie outside the conservation area.

Pedestrians can walk around the village conservation area on public rights-of-way and permissive paths, as shown on the map. Many of these are historic trackways as noted above and are proposed for inclusion within the designated boundary (left, Fig 6). The proposed permissive paths will remain permissive in nature and if required may be closed or altered in the future, if the management of the land in question so requires. Therefore, these paths will not become adopted public rights of way.



Fig 7. Triangular Green and pump.

Natural Environment

The natural environment is a streamside Corallian limestone ridge (the 'Golden Ridge' formation) sloping down from the forested Badbury Hill to the agricultural Vale clay lowlands. The main street follows the cleft of the village stream on its low eastern bank. There is more elevated land to the east, and the southern end of the village street skirts around a spur on which the Late Saxon St Giles church is built.



Fig 8. Pieman's Thatch.

Built Environment

Housing is most frequent, and apparently began early, in the south of the village near the stream and St Giles church. Most of the housing, especially the older houses, is built on sloping sites for this reason, and development happened organically. Later development was planned on higher, more level sites to the east of the main village street. The

built environment reflects powerful political influence in the positioning of the Cistercian complex of Great Barn, monastic grange and pond at a distance from the Late Saxon settlement to the north, alongside the same water source. Much of the subsequent development of the village lies between the two.

Key Features

- Surviving major early Medieval stone buildings with related structures and surrounding curtilages: the Great Barn with its monastic pond, cart shed, monastic grange, the Court House with its walled yards and outbuildings; and the 12th century church with its walled graveyard and Medieval stone-built tombs.
- Surviving 17th century stone and timber yeomen's houses on the east bank of the village stream, with curtilages including farm buildings, cart sheds, workshops and possible mill buildings (Morys, Green's Farm House, possibly Crowdy's).
- 18th century stone, brick and timber cottages on both sides of the village north-south street, including both presently and previously thatched structures (Pear Tree Cottage, Foxley, Pottinger Cottage, Wayside, Manor Cottage). This and the previous group include some one-and-a-half-storey houses.
- Three early 19th century 'gentlemen's houses' in prominent positions (Glebe House, Holloway House and Chapel House) two with elaborate timber front porches, one with brick raised pavement, associated stable structures)
- Small to medium 19th century brick and stone infill houses with a variety of decorative trim and brickwork along both sides of the village road, and at the lower end of the village in elevated positions.

- Victorian Gothic stone Old School (with stone carving) and School House.
- Brick-built Parish Reading Room (1901).



Fig 9. Looking South towards the Uffington White Horse, the village sits alongside the stream.

5.2 Views and vistas

Key views and vistas are noted on the map. These views can be enjoyed from footpaths surrounding the village and leaving it to the north, west, south and east, as well as from its green spaces (the churchyard, the Park, and the fields to the east, west and north of the Barn). Glimpses of these views can also be enjoyed from the village streets and lanes looking between the houses, from many gardens, and areas proposed for inclusion within the designated boundary, see Section 7.0.



Fig 10. West View across the Conservation Area.

One can appreciate the ancient setting of the village and Conservation Area on the lower slopes of Badbury Hill, from its summit and upper slopes.

The setting of the earliest, southern part of the village, with the early medieval church on its promontory, can be appreciated particularly well from the A420 to the southwest of the conservation area, where the road curves round the southwest part of the parish.

From the southern slopes of Badbury Hill above the Great Barn there are lateral views across the northern part of the conservation area including the medieval East Field, the medieval Great Barn at the northern end of the village street, and beyond the village's western fields to the Downs.

There are views along the winding village street, with its houses strung alongside the village stream to one side (see, *Figs 11,12,15*), and the most ancient, southern portion of the conservation area huddled around the old Village Green and pump, overlooked by the church and Glebe House, its former Rectory (see, *Fig 7*); from the footpaths west of the village, of the village stream running through the back gardens seen from the West Field; and from Dark Lane south across the medieval village's East Field ('Siberia') towards the Downs (see left, *Fig 10*).

The vista from the south end of the village street, across the Vale towards the Uffington White Horse ancient monument, shows that this earliest (Iron Age) settlement area within the conservation area was located between two significant Iron Age monuments (see, *Fig 9, cover image*)



Fig 11. Street-side stone walls and properties, grass verges interspersed with hedgerows and trees.

5.3 Trees and green landscape

A green impression of the conservation area is formed by soft green verges, open spaces such as the Village Green (fragments of which lie along the east side of the main road between Manor Cottage and Amberley), and both the mature trees and the plantings of small front gardens and the larger back gardens glimpsed between houses. Roads, tracks and paths run into the conservation area, where they are largely lined by vibrant hedges, which include mature trees. Tree and hedge planting has taken place in the churchyard, where there are yews and other trees, and Remembrance garden and more recently in the War Memorial garden. There are significant hedgerows near the crossroads,



Fig 12. Narrow footpath shared with vehicles, tall hedges, some properties set back behind wide verges, overhead electric cables.

in Puddleduck Lane, alongside Court House and in the National Trust nature reserve opposite, where there is public access.

Key areas of open space both public and private that enhance the historic built environment within the conservation area include open spaces around and seen from the Great Barn, the Court House (including the small reserve opposite it), the church with views to and from the churchyard and burial ground to the south and east, and the L-shaped field to the south and east of Spicer's, with views to and from historic buildings in the conservation area.

5.4 Biodiversity value

The pond and the stream running through the village are important habitats providing good conditions for protected species including healthy populations of bats and water voles. Remnants of historic orchards remain in the village and their importance is recognised in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan with Traditional Orchards being recognised as a priority for conservation.



Fig 13. Great Barn pond feeding into village stream.



Fig 14. Green's Farm House - Stream contained within channel - perhaps once site of a mill.

The bio-diversity value of the green and open spaces in the village including gardens and front gardens wherever there are older walls and hedges, cannot be over-estimated. Hedgerow surveys show hedges of up to 400 years old in and near the conservation area and a May 2013 bio-diversity study of the churchyard identified 44 different species of wildflower and 23 different birds and mammals.

Another positive element of the conservation area's green landscape is the recent increase in wildflower meadow planting

5.5 Public realm

There are two public bus stops used by villagers, both at some distance from the conservation area. Paving of roads and footpaths is generally in simple tar macadam, although stone and granite kerb stones of quality have been used in several places.

There is a minimum of street signage, and very limited street lighting in the conservation area, allowing the sky at night to be appreciated from most places in the village, which also benefits insect populations. There is a minimum of street furniture but an unsightly quantity of overhead electricity and telephone cables crossing roads, drives and gardens in the conservation area.

5.6 Boundary treatments

Walls of local limestone rubble of various heights are capped by cement or stone. These, together with coursed red brick and hedgerows provide the most characteristic boundary forms. Notable limestone walls include the side wall of Glebe House, bordering the path to the church; the churchyard walls; a series of newer tall limestone walls bordering the gardens of properties backing onto the East field; the Great Barn and Court House walls. A brick front wall at Danes House is listed and there are statuesque beech hedges on the southeast and northeast corners of the village crossroads. There are late Victorian decorative iron railings and pedestrian gates at Holloway House and the Parish Reading Room.

6.0 Character Analysis

6.1 Character of the Conservation Area

Key influences in shaping the distinctive character of the two conservation area sub-areas were the presence of a water source, the presence of economic and religious foci (the Great Barn and church), the resulting chronology and use of buildings in the two sub-areas, and the availability of land at different periods. The earliest buildings arose in the Southern area below the late Saxon church near the stream and the settlement increased northwards as population increased with time on Medieval style 'toft-and-croft' individual plots. The later Medieval Great Barn and grange occupied the large Northern area, which as a manor passed to a post-Dissolution tenant and remained free of other structures until about 1800. The North and South sub-areas are divided by Puddleduck Lane, a low lying lane, formerly crossed by the stream, which was developed slowly in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries.



Fig 15. Street scene along Holloway Road.

Southern

The older part of the village to the south of the crossroads comprises some more densely situated dwellings that depend for their rural character on the extended gardens and the open spaces, fields and paddocks at their backs.

In the village sub-area south of the crossroads on both sides of the main street, listed and unlisted buildings of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries predominate, with 20th century in-fill houses, mostly closer together, some close to the street in traditional fashion, and mostly with extensive back gardens which run towards the village stream on the west side, and to the East Field on the east side.



Fig 16. Holloway House.



Fig 17. Court House.

Northern

The area to the north of the central crossroads comprises properties, including the Great Barn and Court House, that have open views to the west and wooded areas to the east side of the road. Traditional farm buildings predominate and are owned by the National Trust. Several large detached houses of 19th and 20th century date have been built in the southeast corner of the sub-area.

Puddleduck Lane retains the strong character of a country lane, with high, irregular grassy banks. It is lined with 19th and 20th-century detached houses, in a variety of styles and materials, with front gardens.

6.2 Activity and prevailing or former uses and their influence on the plan form and buildings

Great Coxwell developed as a small settlement of modest dwellings clustered together below an elevated late-Saxon church. The manor then passed into monastic ownership, resulting in significant stone buildings. At the Dissolution, parcels of village land and farm land appear to have been allocated to yeomen/tenant farmers who built farmhouses in the 16th and 17th centuries. Roadside locations subsequently became 18th to 20th century infill cottage and house plots.

The influence of the continuity of ownership of the manor since Norman times (the Crown to Beaulieu Abbey, to the Morys, to the Earls of Radnor, to the National Trust) has had an undoubted influence on the village, which still retains its medieval and Early Modern character. The National Trust, the principal landowner in the parish, retains the ownership of lands and properties in and around the village.

In Victorian and later times, there were a chapel, two public houses, a post office, shops and a bakery, and a school. All have closed. Today, there are a number of businesses based in the village at residents' homes.

6.3 Prevalent Qualities of the Built Form

Examples of these details can be seen in Figs 18 to 33.



Fig 18. Green's Farm House 1650. Steep roof with narrow gable angle and tiny dormers, period 'diaper' brickwork, flush casement windows with segmental heads.

Qualities of buildings

Of about 70 buildings in the village conservation area, about one third, a high proportion, are either listed or of local interest. The two earliest surviving buildings, the Great Barn and church, are of high quality, and some listed 16th, 17th and 18th century buildings are of unusual interest.

Siting

The majority of buildings within Great Coxwell are distributed on the eastern and western sides of the main village street, the largest number in the southern sub-area, with a lesser distribution of buildings along the east/west axis of Puddleduck Lane to Cherry Orchard. Buildings are commonly sited parallel to the street, either directly onto the footpath or set behind brick or stone walls or railings. The Church and former vicarage (Glebe House) are situated off the main street in elevated positions within large plots. Few other houses seem to have been situated with a view in mind, or in elevated positions, Chapel House, Holloway House, Clayton's and Downsview, possibly being exceptions. Otherwise, village houses tend to be tucked into the contours of the village's topography.

Size types and storey height

Most village houses are of two storeys or of 'one-and-a-half stories', ie where a full first floor exists partly or mostly in the roof space). The variety in design (from lofty two storey house with loft bedrooms to chalet bungalows) results in a variety in heights. Outbuildings are single or one and a half storeys high. Building sizes range from relatively small and modest cottages and terraced houses to larger detached buildings set within larger plots. There is a map showing building heights on page 5. Historic buildings within the village tend to have gabled roofs and have often been extended to the rear more than once.

Building style and plan form

Many buildings in Great Coxwell are vernacular cottages of very simple and understated form. There are a few examples of symmetrical Georgian-style houses and Victorian houses interspersed. Some of the farmhouses have less regular forms having been altered and extended

piecemeal over many centuries. Much of the special character and appearance is derived from the vernacular or polite variety of style and plan form together with the local palette of materials. There is a fine example of early-modern diaper brickwork on an external chimney stack.

Dane's House (early to mid-18th century) preserves a number of interesting period architectural features, and several cottages of the Georgian period are charming examples of their kind (Foxley, Wayside and Manor Cottage). Victorian buildings of note include the Old School with its attached school house.

Many older buildings in the conservation area are of simple two-bay or three-bay plan forms, to which rear extensions and outshots have frequently been added. Older buildings have developed organically and tend to have asymmetrical plan forms.

There are several thatched buildings in the village and the steeply-angled roofs of some others suggest original thatched covering, eg Green's Farm House, Pottinger Cottage.

6.4 Non-designated heritage assets

Some buildings are not listed but add considerably to the special historic character of the conservation area. These are referred to in this appraisal as non-designated heritage assets (NDHA). These buildings meet the criteria for such identification as outlined in the Historic England document: Local Heritage Listing: Historic England Advice Note 7 (May 2016). These are listed and illustrated in Appendix B.

6.5 Local Details

Special features: A very few special buildings have ashlar stone quoins and decorative detail (the Great Barn, The Old School). Otherwise, decorative detail is subdued.

Walls, railings, gates and boundary structures: Boundary structures, even where new properties have been inserted, often remain of the local stone, capped by cement in which upright stones can be set; old stone walls can be older than the properties behind. Stone front walls are usually about waist height (an exception is the much taller front wall at Horslees); recently some much higher back and side walls have been well-built in local stone. Several Victorian brick walls have Victorian railings (Holloway House and the Parish Reading Room). Otherwise, building new brick or stone front walls is not habitual, and when front boundaries are renewed, this is often done with planting. One or two front boundaries use wooden fencing.



Fig 19. 'Parish Reading Room 1900'. Original iron railings and gate.



Fig 20. Berry Hill Cottage, 'AD 1854'. Unusual rat-trap header bond.

Windows and doors: The Medieval Great Barn and St Giles church have stone door mouldings and The Old School has Victorian Gothic stone or composite window and door mullions and mouldings. Otherwise, a distinctive feature of village windows is their relatively small size, often with small panes, with wooden painted surrounds, usually white, sometimes pale green, buff, grey or brown. There are many flush cottage casements and sash windows and segmental headed casements are features of the village. Another distinctive feature of the conservation area is the small and simple dormer windows in properties of the 17th to 20th centuries. There are 'eyebrow' features over upstairs windows on 18th century thatched cottages. Some plank doors on cottages and ancillary entrances, four & six panelled doors elsewhere. The majority of doors have at least one glazed panel.

Porches: Period or added porches are a significant feature of the village street scene, especially Court House, Holloway House, Glebe House (Victorian) and Manor Cottage (18th century), and there are small canopies over some front doors (18th to 20th centuries).

Masonry treatments: There are a few examples of dental corncicing at eaves (Crowdy's and Holloway House), more of brick arch window heads, and a number of examples of surviving lime wash, eg Morys, Wayside, Chapel House, Rosemary Cottage, Box Tree Cottage, Pottinger Cottage, Foxley.

Chimneys: Most houses have brick chimneys with terracotta pots, many with string courses and some with decorative detail.



Fig 21. The Old School '1864'. Bath stone Victorian Gothic with sculpted heads of a vicar and church warden.



Fig 22. Glebe House 1790. Timber and rendered half-hipped porch with stone tiles.



Fig 23. Pottinger Cottage 1790. First floor level stonework replaces a partial collapse caused by the removal of thatch. Limewash traces.



Fig 24. Crowdy's, 1801. Flemish bond variant brickwork with dentilation with vitrified headers below eaves.



Fig 25. Wrekin Cottage/Arnham View c 1900. These estate cottages share a chimney-stack. Trim in National Trust's Radnor Estate colours.



Fig 26. Jenner's Cottage c 1850. Leaded extension with 'Dutch' gable of the former public house.



Fig 27. Hillside c 1801. Brick quoins from first-floor level where house extended upward. Stone slate dripstones in three courses to the north-facing gable end below chimney.



Fig 28. Box Tree Cottage, c 1890. Details: stone quoins, flat segmental window arches, lime wash remains, projecting bakery oven.

Roofs: The basic form is a pointed gable with gable angle of less than 45 degrees on most pre-20th century houses; roofs of 20th century and later houses can be less steep (gable greater than 45 degrees) and be hipped or half-hipped, with hip tiles. Otherwise, simple ridge tiles only. Flat tiles are common. Refer to page 6 for a map showing roofing materials.

Paving: Surface paving in the village probably dates at earliest from the 18th century; earlier significant buildings, for example pedestrian entries to the great Barn and Court House, used rammed gravel. An individual, highly raised pavement for the use of the house only, survives in front of Chapel House (early 19th century). The footpath of pitched stones and cobbles leading to the church from the lower village was probably laid in the 18th century or later.

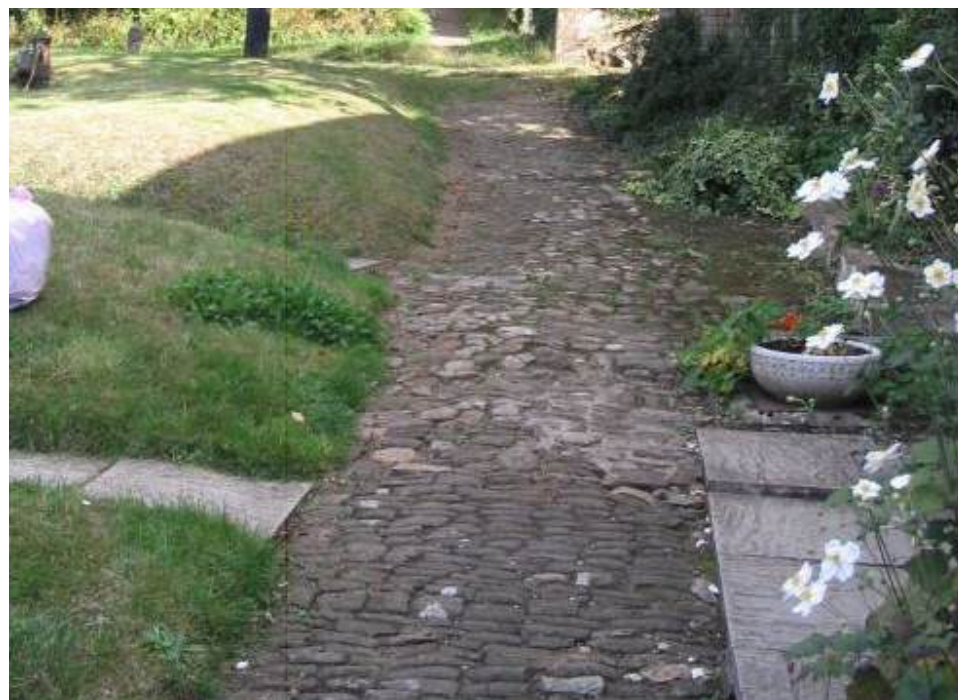


Fig 29. Cobble pathway joining the church above with the village well and oldest properties below.

6.6 Prevalent Local Building Materials

Buildings in the Great Coxwell Conservation Area are predominantly constructed in coursed and un-coursed limestone rubble or squared coursed limestone, many with brick quoins; or in local brick with decorative contrasting colours and various bonds. 'Buttered' lime mortar joints are found in coursed and un-coursed limestone rubble buildings. Slightly recessed or flush lime mortar joints are found in some buildings. The Great Barn is constructed partly using limestone ashlar, indicating its high status, but mostly in locally quarried limestone rubble. Imitation stone is the principal material for later 20th century building to blend with the natural stone of the older buildings.

Weatherboard is found traditionally on local farm buildings and on out-buildings in the conservation area. There is a trend towards the use of weatherboarding for house extensions (Chapel House and Churchlees).

Roofing materials on the earliest buildings include stone slate laid to diminishing courses or combed wheat thatch with ornamental block ridges. Slate is used as a roofing material from the 19th century onwards. 20th century roofing materials include concrete and clay tiles. Timber framing survives internally, for example inside the front range of Green's Farmhouse of 17th century date, and in Wayside. There is a fully timber-framed newly constructed garage/workshop at Pieman's Thatch.

Chimney stacks on many properties were originally constructed with stone bases and shafts; most shafts have now been replaced in brick.



Fig 30. Clayton Villa c 1801. On-street structures now below street level and evidence of former openings onto street.

Fig 31. Chapel House 1820. On-street raised pavement in front of house



Fig 32. War Memorial 1919. Base of the old village cross re-used in the architect's design.

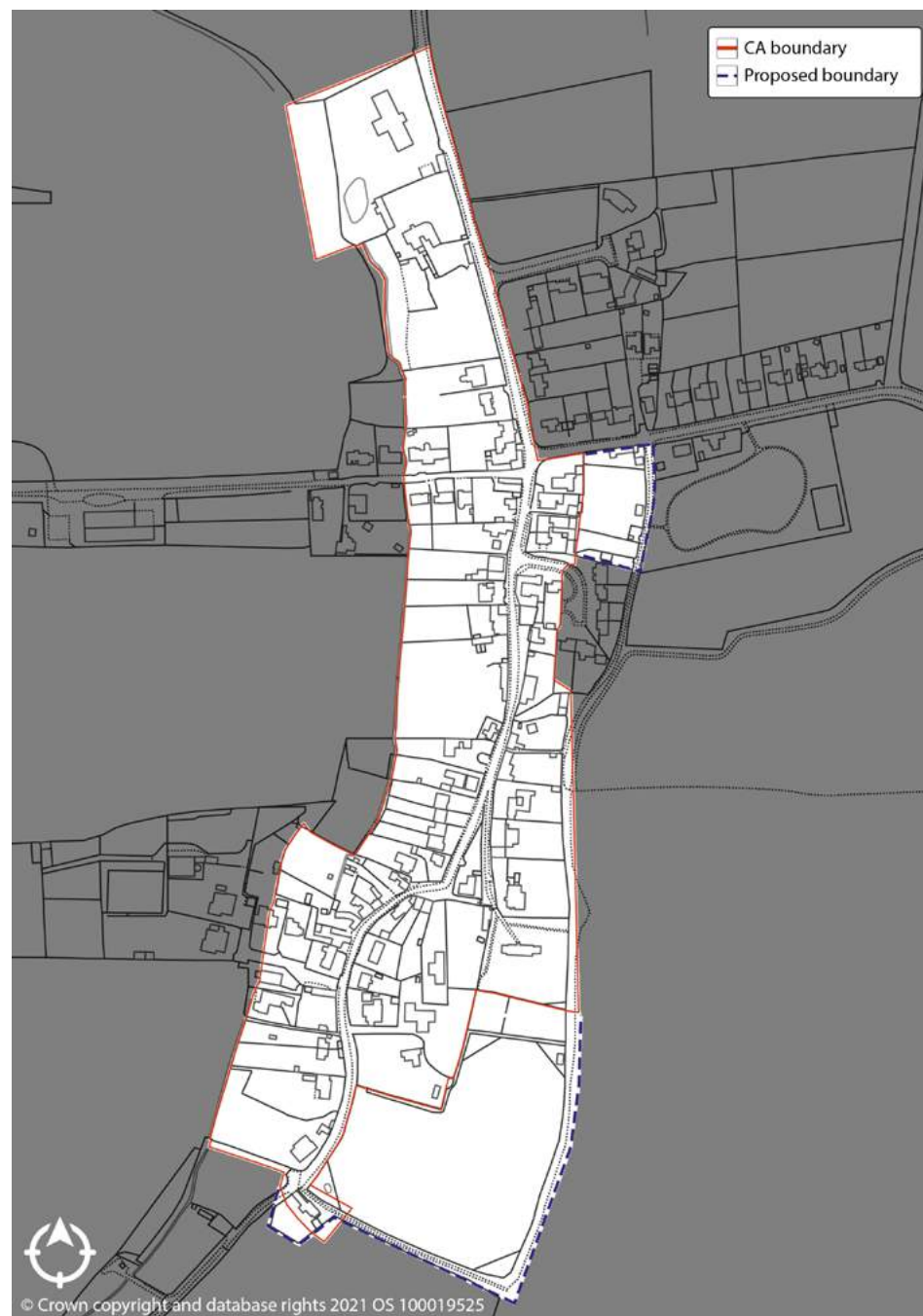
Fig 33. Warene House c 1820. A small vent of stone flags in lower wall on street.

7.0 Boundary Review

The previous conservation area boundary was tightly drawn around the village core. Following a comprehensive review of the conservation area boundary (2015 onward), two changes in the previous conservation area boundary were proposed (as shown on map, right).

Firstly, to the south of the village the boundary has been simplified to include the new burial area that forms part of the churchyard, part of which has been transformed into a remembrance garden, and an adjoining arable field including Green Lanes. This area is surrounded by one of the historic trackways present on the historic 1876 OS Map which are noted in Section 3.0 as an important feature that has shaped development of the settlement. The area contributes to the important rural vistas experienced within this part of the conservation area connecting the settlement to the Iron Age Monuments in the wider landscape as explored in Section 5.2. Inclusion of this area enhances our understanding of the development of the built form of Great Coxwell.

Secondly, the boundary has been extended eastwards along the south side of Cherry Orchard to Dark Lane, including Holloway Lodge, then south along Dark Lane to re-join the previous boundary at The Laurels. This boundary revision would specifically include the area of Dark Lane which remains surrounded by agricultural land consistent with the historic 1876 OS map and noted in Section 3.0 as an important feature that has shaped the development of the settlement. It continues behind the C20 development of The Laurels and re-joins the previous boundary which is defined by the historic trackway that frames the eastern edge of the built settlement. Inclusion of this area enhances our understanding of the development of the built form of Great Coxwell.



Following public consultation, this section has been updated to improve the references to the significance these newly included areas make to the area as identified elsewhere within this document. The boundary revisions were adopted by Vale of White Horse District Council on Friday 30 September 2022 and the new designated conservation area is effective from this date.

These changes and the adopted boundary can be viewed in greater detail using the map on page 4. Inclusion within the designated boundary results in some changes to permitted development rights and to tree protection. Details of these changes can be found on the Planning Portal online or by contacting the council.



Fig 34. Path to Dark Lane from the Holloway Road.



Fig 35. Part of the southern footpath now in the conservation area.



Fig 36. Cobbled path leading to St Giles church.

8.0 Management Plan

The council can initiate improvements and control development in the conservation area. However, the success of conservation area designation and its future management will depend upon the co-operation and enthusiasm of stakeholders including residents, statutory undertakers and business owners to work with the council in achieving common aims and objectives. These are listed below:

8.1 General

The council will aim to:

- 8.1.1 Promote awareness of the special value of the conservation area and encourage promotion of the special character and appearance through works of preservation or enhancement;
- 8.1.2 Encourage statutory undertakers to retain, repair and re-instate historic street surfaces, grass verges and banks, street furniture, signage and lighting; reduce street clutter including wirescape and rationalise street furniture;
- 8.1.3 Encourage high quality, energy efficient design which aims to: fit in with the established 'grain' of the conservation area and be sympathetic to it as well as combat climate change by reducing carbon emissions. Heritage Appraisals and Impact Assessments along with Design and Access Statements will assist this process;
- 8.1.4 Encourage the regular maintenance and repair of buildings and walls in the conservation area with appropriate traditional materials and finishes including the removal of inappropriate and harmful cement renders and plasters;

- 8.1.5 Seek to reinforce the special quality of historic buildings through the use of traditional materials and construction techniques, including the use of lime mortars, plasters and renders, combed wheat or longstraw thatch and painted timber windows and doors;
- 8.1.6 Encourage regular tree/hedge management with re-planting where appropriate;
- 8.1.7 Encourage proposals for development that enhance or better reveal the significance of the conservation area, including responding to views both in, out and around the conservation area and in its wider setting;
- 8.1.8 Encourage the retention of front gardens rather than their change to vehicle parking areas.

8.2 Specific

Stakeholders should jointly aim to:

- 8.2.1 Retain and repair historic street surfaces and preserve grassy banks, verges and raised pavements;
- 8.2.2 Maintain effective tree and hedge management, which continues to be sympathetic to the natural environment;
- 8.2.3 Preserve or enhance the panoramic views and views between houses from the conservation area;
- 8.2.4 Clear debris from the stream and maintain drains.
- 8.2.5 Preserve the rural character of Great Coxwell, through the retention of stone boundary walls, narrow streets and lanes and areas of green/open space.

8.2.6 Protect the setting of listed buildings.

8.2.7 Protect key views, into, out of and around the Conservation Area.

8.2.8 Liaise with statutory undertakers to preserve the individual character of the historically important roads, lanes and footpaths, including grassy banks and stone sett pavements and areas of stone kerb; ensure the maintenance of the pitched stone path from the village street up to the church.

8.2.9 Restore the village pump.

8.2.10 Encourage the repair of walls, replacing like-for-like in all cases.

8.2.11 Encourage the repair and maintenance of stone slate roofs.

8.2.12 Encourage the replacement of hard cement pointing with lime mortar.

8.2.13 Ensure that the informal rural character of the village streets (unlit, no road markings or traffic calming measures) works well and safely for the use of villagers and visitors, walkers, horse riders, and dog walkers.

8.3 Issues and Opportunities for Presentation and Enhancement

In general, the approach in Great Coxwell has been to maintain a good presentation of the conservation area while retaining historic features and approaches. This appraisal of Great Coxwell Conservation Area has so far identified features which contribute to the special architectural and historic interest of Great Coxwell. Opportunities exist within the settlement to enhance existing built development and enhance open spaces and landscape features which contribute to the architectural and historic interest of the area.

There are some specific areas within the Conservation Area that would benefit from some preservation or enhancement in order to reinforce the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area. These include:

Opportunities

- Keep boundary walls in a good state of repair, as they contribute significantly to the overall character and appearance of the conservation area. Repairs should be in matching brick, stone and lime mortar with appropriate original capping, rather than a mortar capping where possible;
- The conservation area would benefit from the disfiguring amount of overhead mains electrical cabling and poles being laid underground.

Issues

- Erosion of front gardens and kerbs even to the extent of undermining property walls by farm and other vehicles.
- Removal of boundaries for car parking.

The designation of a Conservation Area is intended to manage change not prevent it. Where policy permits development, it is important that new housing preserves or enhances the character of the area. As such, proposals should be of high quality, responding to the site context and ensuring that a holistic approach is taken to the site including landscaping, boundary treatments, together with enhancing the contribution of open space and enclosure. This document, the council's Design Guide, national guidance and the council's local plan policies should be referred to when bringing forward sites for development within and in the setting of the Conservation Area.

9.0 References

Brereton, C, The Repair of Historic Buildings, Principles and Methods, English heritage, 1995

Design Council, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, (Design Council CABE) Design and Access Statements, How to write, read and use them 2016

Ekwall, E, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Place Names, Repr.1984

Friar, Stephen, Batsford Companion to Local History, 1991

Historic England, Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1, 2016

Historic England, Conservation Principles, 2008

Historic England, Local Heritage Listing: Historic England Advice Note 7, 2016

Historic England, Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments: Principles and Practice, 2010

Historic England, Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments in a Planning and Development Context, 2012

Historic England, Valuing Places, Good practice in Conservation Areas, 2011

Hunt, R and Suhr, M, Old House Handbook, SPAB, 2008

IHBC, A Stitch in Time

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018

Oxfordshire County Council HER

Pevsner, Nikolaus, Buildings of England, Berkshire, reprint 1993, pp 147-8

The Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest via <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/>

The Victoria County History, Berkshire, Vol IV, 1924, pp 361-365

Wright, Graham, Great Coxwell, 2000 Years of Village Life (Oxford 1999).

Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (Adopted December 2016)

Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Adopted October 2019)

South and Vale Joint Design Guide, 2022

www.designcouncil.org.uk

www.english-heritage.org.uk

www.buildingconservation.com

www.planningportal.gov.uk

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Legislation

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Appendix A: Listed Buildings

Badbury Camp (Scheduled Monument)

Great Barn (Scheduled Monument, Listed Grade I)
and Shelter Shed with Granary (Listed Grade II)

Church of St Giles (Listed Grade II*)

Monuments in churchyard (Listed Grade II)

Carter monument

Chest tomb to William Whitfield

Chest tomb 4 metres north-east of the north-east corner of the church

Mobse monument

Swan monument

Tombstone (17th century) 2 metres east of the east end of the church

Houses (Listed Grade II)

Chapel House

Court House Farmhouse

Danes Cottage

Danes House and front garden wall

Green's Farm House

Holloway and attached railings

Manor Cottage

Morys

Pear Tree Cottage

Wayside

Other (Listed Grade II)

K6 Telephone kiosk

Milestone on A4019, 70 metres west of the turning to Great Coxwell

Appendix B: Non-designated Heritage Assets

This list of non-designated heritage assets (NDHA) has been compiled using the following criteria for selection as informed by [paragraph 197 of the NPPF \(2012\)](#) and [paragraph 40 of the Historic Environment government guidance \(2019\)](#), along with advice published by Historic England in [Advice Note 7 \(2nd Edition, 2021\)](#) on local heritage listing.

1. The decision to include a heritage asset on this list must be based on sound evidence of their significance. This significance may be defined by age, rarity, architectural and artistic interest, group value, archaeological interest, historic interest, or landmark status;
2. The heritage asset must make a positive contribution to the communities sustainability and their economic vitality; and
3. The presence of a heritage asset on this list must not prevent them from being put to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

Please note: A building identified as an NDHA is a material planning consideration, however, permitted development rights for NDHA's are no different than those of other non-statutorily listed buildings inside or outside of a conservation area.

What follows is a photographic record of each identified NDHA within the conservation area (also marked on the map on page 4) along with captioned summaries of their significance and justification for their inclusion.



Spicer's Cottage, c 1810

A nicely detailed house of coursed limestone blocks with brick quoins, decorative window trim and gable design resembling 'tumbling' brick. Position of original south-facing front door is unknown, perhaps a symmetrical design as in Downsview, which the house resembles.



Wrekin Cottage/Arnham View c 1900

Symmetrical semi-detached estate cottages with a shared six-flue brick chimney-stack, original side doorways in each gable end and trim in National Trust's paint colours specific to the Radnor Estate.



Foxley, 1756

Colour-washed, random rubble-stone cottage. Gabled pantiled roof with boarding at verges. Brick chimney stacks with string courses originally double- or triple-flue. Front door with timber lintel (wider than present doorway), two blank recesses for plaques/pub sign (part of the Royal Oak public house in the 19th/20th centuries).



Jenner's House, formerly the Royal Oak public house, c 1850

Painted brick and partly coursed rubble-stone decoratively random in stone size, wide jointed. A first-floor window in the north gable end was formerly elongated, and the extension, leaded, with 'Dutch' gable, are 'Industrial vernacular' features presumably relating to its period as a public house.



Crowdy's, 1801 with earlier internal features

Brick fronted in Flemish bond variant with string course, and dentilation with vitrified headers below eaves. Back and side house walls of uncoursed rubble-stone, part rendered and part lime-washed. Three chimneys unusually placed are within the house, an early feature. The house frontage appears to gentrify an older house of random rubble-stone.



Berry Hill Cottage, 'AD 1854' on date plaque.
Of brick in an unusual rat-trap and header bond.



Pottinger Cottage, 1790
Irregularly coursed stone rubble with irregular stone quoins, some butter-pointing. More regular coursing at first floor level replaces a part-collapse when the earlier thatch was removed. Wooden lintels over four three- and two-light casement windows (another blocked). Brick chimney stack through ridge within house, thus several features earlier than date given.



Downsview, 1812

The back walls of the house and its apparently near-contemporary out-buildings are all built into the hillside against the terraced churchyard; a rubble-stone wall with mortar capping surrounds the property to east and north. A fine symmetrical design of rubble-stone with brick-lin-telled casement windows and twin gabled dormers and brick chimneys.



Glebe House, formerly the Vicarage, rebuilt 1790

The rebuild incorporated an older (17th-century) core. Rendered rubble-stone, sash windows and yellow brick chimney stacks. Three tall three-flue chimneys with string coursing top and bottom. Deep eaves with exposed rafters. Variety of sash and casement window designs. Timber and rendered half-hipped porch with stone tiles; glazed; deep eaves with exposed rafters.



The Old School (date plaque 1864) and School House

Of part-coursed rubble-stone with Bath stone ashlar quoins and window casements. Wide eaves with painted weatherboarding. To front, three Victorian Gothic two-light windows with splayed stone mullions and drip-moulds, the central large one with sculpted head terminals. Gothic arch and blocked south former doorway with heavy Gothic revival mouldings.



War Memorial

A cross of Hollinton stone on three steps on an octagonal base of rough hewn stone with open joints. Interestingly the base of the old village cross was found in the rubble of a previous building on site, probably having been destroyed in Cromwellian times, and was re-used in the architect's design. The original inscription facing the road reads, 'To the glory of God and in honour of those who fell in the Great War, 1914 – 1919,' with the following names: Tom Titcomb, Tom C. P. Higgs, Walter J. Dyer, Herbert C. King, Reginald Pearce, Frank E. Robey. On the back follows '1939-1945': J.W. Edmonds, R.J. Edmonds, R.J. Hicks, J.L. Wearn, C.S. Webb.



The 'Parish Reading Room 1901'

Mid-village on a street-side plot donated by the Earl of Radnor. Four large four-pane sash windows with brick segmental arches, smaller four-pane sash window on south extension. In use as a meetings room. The village's only indoor public gathering-place.



Hillside, said 1801

Coursed rubble-stone, brick quoins from first-floor level. House has been extended upward and remodelled with a continuous hipped awning over door and bay windows. Identical three-light casement windows in two bays at ground floor level, and in three large first floor dormers. Stone slate dripstones in three courses to the north-facing gable end.



Clayton Villa, said 1801

Semi-coursed rubble-stone with brick quoins. House, extension, out-building and garden walls form a continuous street frontage with haphazard arrangement of windows and a number of features suggesting previous openings onto the street. Street-side rooms now below street level; blocked former openings onto street and the stone chimney suggest earlier building, perhaps pre-18th century.



Coxfield, said 1900

A late well-built example of a vernacular coursed rubble-stone house with brick quoins and casement windows. Blank date plaque, graduated clay roof tiles. Modern timber and lead vernacular awning with cut-scroll brackets.



Warene House c 1820

A series of buildings and connected farmhouse, surrounding a courtyard not visible from the street. Rendered and painted to north and south frontages with sash windows to south, brick quoins and timber lintels to west (street) side, and a small vent of stone flags in lower west wall on street.



Box Tree Cottage, said 1890

An unusually detailed late 19th former bakery of rubble-stone with stone quoins and flat segmental window arches, formerly lime-washed. Projection of large oven with flue on south side wall.



Rosemary Cottage, 1870

Attractive example of a later 19th C local village cottage of shaped rubble-stone with brick trim and string courses and segmental window arches.

For further information and advice on Conservation Areas please contact:

Vale of White Horse District Council
Abbey House
Abbey Close
Abingdon
OX14 3JE

Tel: 01235 422600
Email: planning@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

This document will be available in large copy print, audio cassette, Braille or languages other than English subject to reasonable requests.

Copies of this document can be downloaded from www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk