
Conservation Area Character Survey

WOOBURN GREEN



What are Conservation Areas?

Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest which are considered worthy of preservation or enhancement. They are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Within conservation areas there are special controls on some alterations to buildings and their demolition or partial demolition and on works to trees. The Council's Heritage Guidance Note on conservation areas gives further details of the specific controls that apply.

Designation of a conservation area does not preclude the possibility of new development, but such development must be designed positively to enhance the special character of the area.

The Purpose of This Survey

This conservation area character survey describes the main features of special architectural and historic interest which justifies the designation of Wooburn Green as a conservation area.

The survey is intended to complement the approved policies for conservation areas in the Council's Wycombe District Local Plan. These Policies are the primary means of safeguarding the special character of our conservation areas.

The survey is also intended to be used as an aid in development control decision making. Proposals for schemes positively to enhance the character and appearance of Wooburn Green Conservation Area will be produced in the future in consultation with councillors, local residents and other interested parties.



HISTORY

The name Wooburn is said to derive from 'Wyeburn', the bourn or streamlet of the Wye which runs through it. Before the Normans came to England, Wooburn was a Saxon settlement with its meeting place at the Green. A smaller settlement was at Wooburn Town. 'Waburne' was held by Earl Harold before the Norman Conquest but afterwards William the Conqueror granted it to Remigius, Bishop of Lincoln. Walter D'Eyncourt, a relative of King William, held about half of it as a manor under the Bishop, and the parish therefore became separated into two parts: Bishop's Wooburn and the Manor of Wooburn D'Eyncourt. The two manors continued to co-exist until about 1580 when they became united by marriage.

Wooburn became a favourite residence of the Bishops of Lincoln during the 16th century and its illustrious visitors included Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. Later when the Whartons owned the estate 'the good Lord Wharton' entertained William III.

His grandson, created Duke of Wharton in 1718, lived in great magnificence and spent money freely on the estate, also giving generously to local causes. The old bishop's palace remained the core of a greatly enlarged Wooburn House, but after his death it fell into disrepair and in 1750 all but the stable wing was demolished. This was converted in 1756 into a substantial mansion and sold to the Du Pre family who let it to various tenants.

The house was used as offices by the War Graves Commission during the second World War. In 1964 the house was demolished and the present Wooburn Park estate was built within the moated former grounds first laid out by the Bishops of Lincoln in the late Middle Ages.

Wooburn Green Conservation area was first designated in 1971.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

There are no identified sites of special archaeological interest or Scheduled Ancient

Monuments within the conservation area. However, the area has clearly been important in early history and it seems likely that archaeological remains will at some stage be uncovered. There are some identified sites of archaeological interest nearby as well as the possibility of others connected with the Bishop's Palace and the Whartons' mansion and estate.

In the event of archaeological deposits being found the Council may require archaeological conditions attaching to planning permissions where appropriate, including watching briefs, excavation or similar recording procedures.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Wooburn Green is at the south end of linear development that has over the years straggled along the valley of the River Wye. The valley setting is an important characteristic of the conservation area and there are views out from The Green to the bare hill sides, wooded slopes and water meadows.

The focal point of the conservation area is the central green, a well kept tree lined grassed open space which is well enclosed by buildings. In the main these form a close knit pattern and, whilst individually many are not of outstanding architectural merit, clustered around The Green they form an attractive grouping. The continuity of the building line is broken in four places by road junctions, but the positioning of some of the buildings and trees, and the curvature of the roads themselves prevent any large gaps being created at these points.

The buildings overlooking The Green display a variety of styles and ages, but the whole group harmonises well and is unified by the common function of defining the central space. The overall character is an urban one especially on the western side of The Green where the commercial and residential premises front directly onto the pavement. Elsewhere there are some cottage properties with small front gardens and foliage climbing up the walls.

In the south-east corner of the conservation area Manor Farm (now known as Manor House) stands in a more open setting beyond an orchard and a meadow. In this pleasant and picturesque area old and new buildings are linked together by their setting through which winds the river. This backwater provides a striking and less formal contrast to the main area around The Green.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

There are 17 listed buildings within the conservation area, all of which are listed Grade II.

Forge Cottage next to The Red Lion Public House on the west side of The Green is one of the oldest buildings in the conservation area. Of 16th century origins it retains its jettied upper storey. Exposed timber framing can be seen at the side of the building. The Red Lion Public House next door has a 16th century gabled cross wing to the right. The 17th century wing to the left was formerly the forge. The main part of the building is late 18th early 19th century. Together the properties present an attractive roof line of old clay tiles, particularly when viewed from the rear.

Past the parade of modern shops is a Victorian terrace now converted to shops with an old tiled roof. Beyond these is an attractive unlisted terrace of houses with decorative timber framing applied to the frontage and decorative ridge tiles. Further along in contrast is a pair of cottages set well back from the road with an almost rural feel. The Post Office is different again in style, in red brick with stucco dressings of the mid-19th century.

On the north side of The Green lies an attractive row of buildings mainly commercial in their use and set back from the road frontage. The first two, Spicers Cottage and Apple Tree Cottage are both listed, formerly a single house dating from the early to mid 18th century. Exposed timbers are evident on the west elevation and the pair display an attractive old tiled roof. The shops adjoining have been much altered, but the funeral directors and doctors surgery retain original features, including attractive sash windows ornate ridge tiles and porch.

The east side of The Green has an array of visually interesting buildings. The listed Red Cow Public House is late 16th-17th century. The adjoining building has a date stone of 1901 and has charming detailing. The listed Working Mens Club next door is an 18th century house remodelled and extended in 1879 at the expense of Alfred Gilbey, as recorded on the plaque. The ornamental half-timbering and bargeboards are a particular feature of the building. The neighbouring pair of cottages are pretty with original sash windows in the first of the pair.

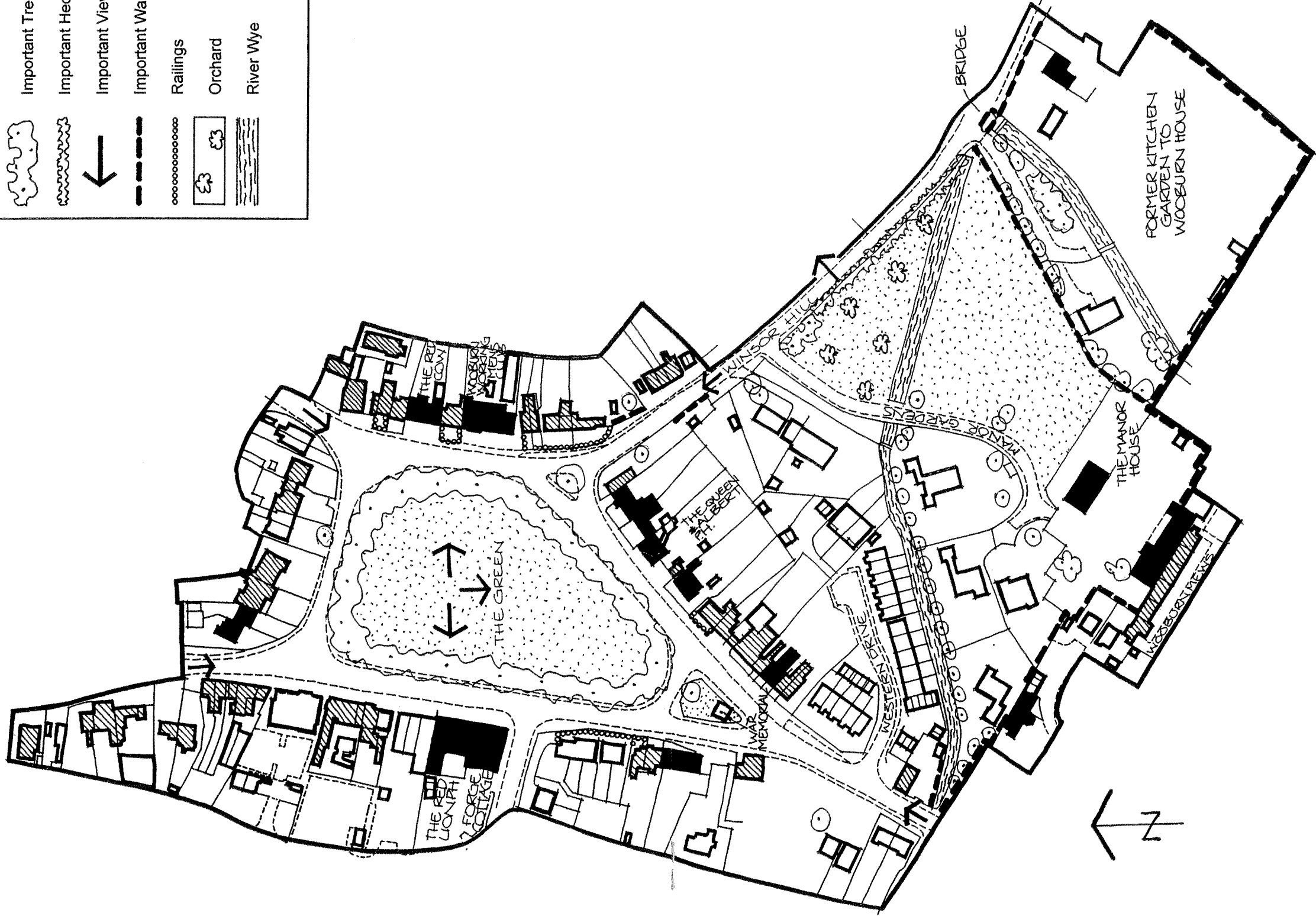
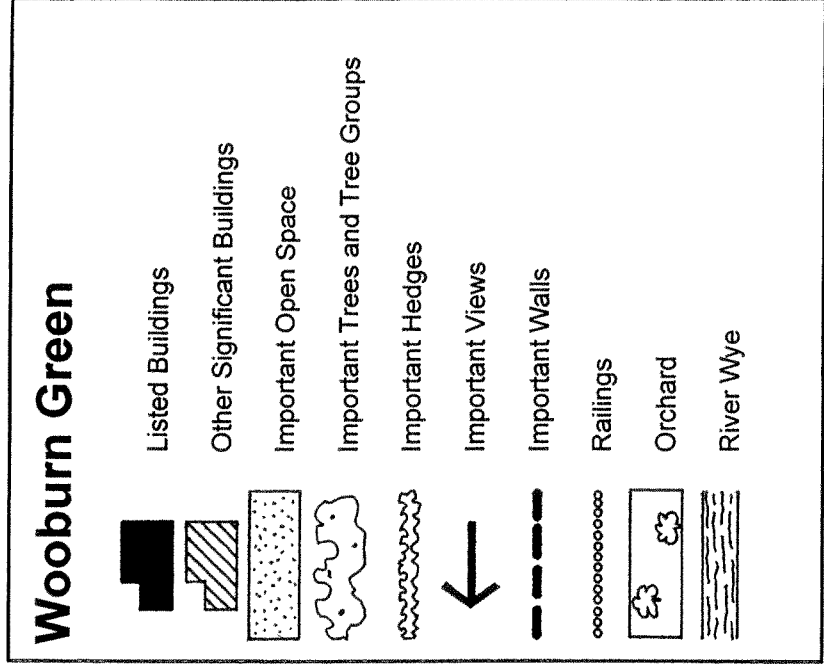
Progressing to the south side of The Green the feel is more residential. The listed 16th century Minions Cottage is white washed with exposed timber framing and old tiled roof. Next door, no.23, also listed is 17th century, white washed render with timber framing and old tiled roof. The Queen and Albert Public House, also listed, is of early to mid 19th century date and is of colour washed brick with attractive fenestration and a slate roof. (It is thought to have been the Poor House at one time). The 17th century listed Grove Cottage is again white washed render with half timbering. The hipped porch on wooden posts is a charming feature. Next is a row of Victorian buildings. An old Victorian shop front remains at number 27. Next is a row of terraced cottages of which number 30 and 31 are listed. The terrace as a whole is in need of repair.

Continuing on the west side of The Green is the listed early 19th century Clematis Cottage of white washed brick under an old tiled roof. The modern housing development further along has successfully drawn upon the architectural features present and has resulted in a pleasing addition to the conservation area and replaces a former scrap metal yard.

To the south of The Green lies the listed Manor House and its associated buildings. The Manor House itself is enclosed behind high walls to the west and can only be glimpsed, but the new road, Manor Gardens, gives more views of it.

The Manor House, formerly the home farm to Wooburn House, is a late 18th century brick house under a hipped old tiled roof with tall tapering

Wooburn Green Conservation Area Character Survey Map



chimneys. It groups with a fine Tudor barn and a hipped roofed granary.

Of Wooburn House and its grounds a former octagonal garden pavilion remains, converted into a dwelling and now listed, together with the former 18th century stable mews backing onto the Tudor barn and now houses. Both are accessed from the modern Wooburn Manor Park estate.

On the edge of the conservation area at Windsor Hill is a small listed house of 17th early 18th century. Longacres has timber framing exposed with whitewashed rendered infill and an old tiled roof above. The dwelling is sited within the huge former kitchen garden to the now demolished Wooburn House and is virtually obscured by the kitchen garden walls surrounding it.

MATERIALS

The 16th and 17th century buildings are predominantly timber framed and white washed over brick or render. These features have been imitated in later buildings where decorative timber has been used and colour wash or rendering applied. Later 18th, 19th and 20th century buildings are of brick. The modern cul-de-sac, Western Drive, is the only development which does not make any concessions to its location within an historic area in terms of its design and use of materials.

Old tiled roofs and the use of plain clay tiles is a particular feature of this conservation area although there are a few instances of Welsh slate.

The embellishment of buildings adds to the character of this conservation area and are evident on most buildings. Decorative bargeboards and ridge tiles are frequently used, as are chimneys complete with decorative pots. Ornate porches full of character are also to be found.

Generally speaking there has been little intrusion of substitute materials for windows and doors, with painted timber casements or sliding sashes predominating. Much of the fenestration is attractively styled and individual.

Surfacing materials are rare around the Green as buildings are mostly close to the pavement edge. However on the north side where commercial properties predominate and are set back tarmac has been used to create parking areas. However this does not jar too greatly with the traditional material of the buildings. As a rule tarmac and concrete as a surface for driveways should be avoided in historic areas.

The area around the Manor House and the properties in Manor Gardens have an informal type of surfacing which is more in-keeping with the environment.

Railings to the frontages of dwellings facing The Green appear in some instances, a feature which has been included in the modern development to the south of the Whitepit Hill junction.

Flint and flint rubble walling along Windsor Hill makes the transition from countryside to a more urban environment. The high walling around the old kitchen garden in the area of the Manor is mainly of 18th century red brick, although there may be earlier brickwork incorporated.

TREES AND VEGETATION

Significant trees are marked on the survey map. There is little vegetation around The Green itself as it provides the balance between the built and the natural environment. Clearly, those trees surrounding The Green are of importance to the character of the conservation area.

To the south of the Green in the vicinity of the Manor House the treed landscape is central to the character of this part of the conservation area an many of the large mature trees are individually protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Trees lining the River as it winds its way through this part of the conservation area make an important contribution.

The old orchard fronting on to Windsor Hill is an important part of the historic landscape and setting of the Manor House.

The use of laurel, box and privet species for hedging is appropriate in this conservation area with traditional native hedge species such as thorn, hazel and holly most effective in the eastern and more rural part of the conservation area.

Coniferous hedging, mostly planted for its fast growing nature for screening purposes is visually out of place in this type of environment and should be firmly discouraged.

OPEN SPACE

The Green as an open space is central to the character of the conservation area.

To the south of The Green the more open environment complements its more rural character. Although not public domain the open gardens of the houses in this area add to the quality of the environment and are important in this respect. A plethora of garden buildings or over large extensions should therefore be avoided.

The old orchard and the adjoining meadow are important both in the historical context of the Manor and in containing the village in its compact form.

VIEWS

There are a number of important views within the conservation area and some of these are indicated on the survey map.

Views from The Green out towards the hills are particularly attractive. Views into the conservation area from roads leading out are also important to the approach on the conservation area.

Views east from Windsor Hill out over the water meadows with the mill chimneys in the distance give a context to the conservation area.



FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

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

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

Development Control matters within Wooburn Green are the responsibility of the **West Team** who can be contacted on 01494 421517.

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

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ADVICE

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

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

To safeguard, preserve and enhance the appearance and special character of the Wooburn Green conservation area:-

- In the conservation area higher standards of design are required in planning applications 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 the appraisal.
- Any new building works such as extensions, must be designed not as a separate entity, but should be sympathetic in form and scale with the existing buildings and the conservation area as a whole.
- Materials for any new building works or surfacing must be sympathetic to those prevailing in the area.
- Raditional materials should be used for replacement windows and doors in any publicly visible elevations in order to safeguard the special character of the conservation area. Generally speaking painted timber windows and doors are appropriate and modern substitute materials are not acceptable.
- All trees in conservation areas are protected and many individual specimens are further protected by Tree Preservation Orders. There are many fine mature trees and important groups which are indicated on the conservation area survey map. These trees contribute to the character of the conservation area and new development should recognise this and not present a risk to their future growth and habit.
- Areas of open space throughout the village will be carefully considered for protection from development or enclosure in order to safeguard the character of the village and any important views. Those open spaces identified on the survey map are of particular importance and will be strongly protected from any new development.
- Special care must be taken to ensure that views looking into and out from the village are not spoilt. Those of particular importance are marked on the survey map.