

HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN
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HIGH WYCOMBE: CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

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HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

This section provides information about what Conservation Area designation means and its implications for development. It also gives an overview of the High Wycombe Conservation Area, sets out the purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and outlines the consultation process that has been undertaken to prepare it.

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What is a Conservation Area?

1.1 A Conservation Area is defined as an area 'of special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.'⁰¹

1.2 Designation of a Conservation Area recognises the unique quality of the heritage of that area as a whole. This quality comes not only from individual buildings but also other features, including (but not limited to) topography, materials, thoroughfares, street furniture, open spaces and landscaping. These all contribute to the historic character and appearance of an area, resulting in a distinctive local identity and sense of place.

1.3 The extent to which a building, or group of buildings or structures, positively shape the character of a Conservation Area is derived from their exteriors, principally those elevations which are street-facing but also side and rear elevations, the integrity of their historic fabric, overall scale and massing, detailing and materials. Open spaces can be public or private, green or hard-landscaped and still contribute to the special interest of an area.

1.4 Furthermore, the spaces between buildings, such as alleys, streets and paths all contribute to appearance and character.

What does Conservation Area Designation Mean?

1.5 Conservation Area designation aims to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of an area which is of special architectural or historic interest. Therefore, changes to the external appearance of buildings in the Conservation Area may require planning permission from the Local Planning Authority as certain permitted development rights are curtailed. For example, demolition or substantial demolition of a building will require planning permission and planned work to a tree must be notified to the Local Planning Authority six weeks in advance. There are sometimes further restrictions in place in Conservation Areas through Article 4 Directions, which remove certain permitted development rights. For further information see [page 88](#).

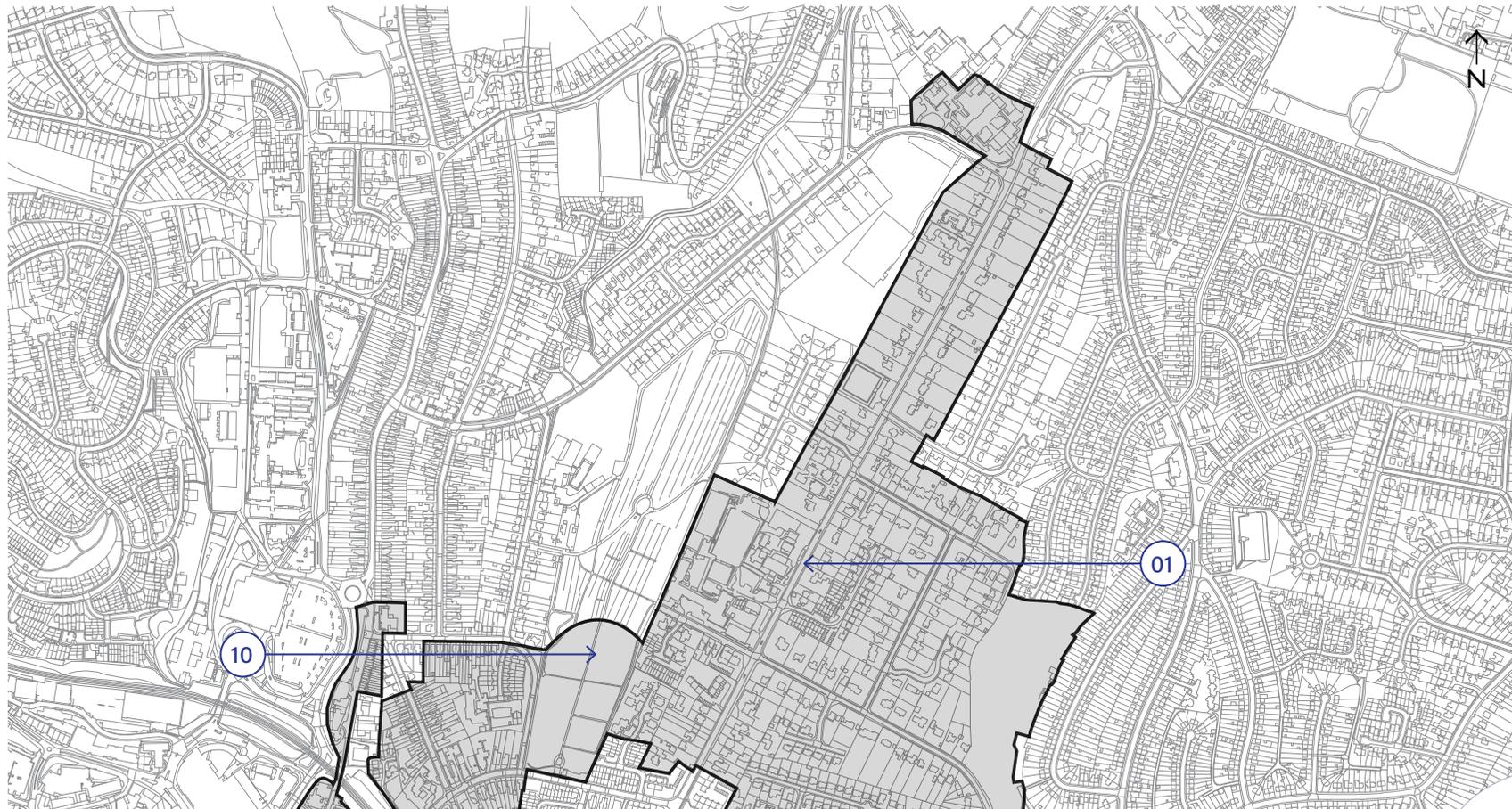
High Wycombe Conservation Area

1.6 The current High Wycombe Conservation Area includes the historic core of High Wycombe and stretches east along the Rye. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century developments along Amersham Hill and Priory Avenue are currently separately designated as Conservation Areas, as is the historic estate of Wycombe Abbey, now a school.

1.7 This Conservation Area Appraisal revises these designations to combine them under the single Conservation Area boundary of High Wycombe. This will allow for the provision of a comprehensive management plan for the area. Leigh Street Conservation Area to the west of the town will remain separately designated due to its distance from the town center. The Victorian cemetery to the north of Amersham Hill, terraced workers' houses along Temple End and further late nineteenth and early twentieth century residential developments along London Road, Totteridge Avenue and Totteridge Road are proposed for inclusion within the boundary. For more information on proposed inclusions see [Section 7.0](#) of this report.

⁰¹ *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990, section 69 (1)(a)*

SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION



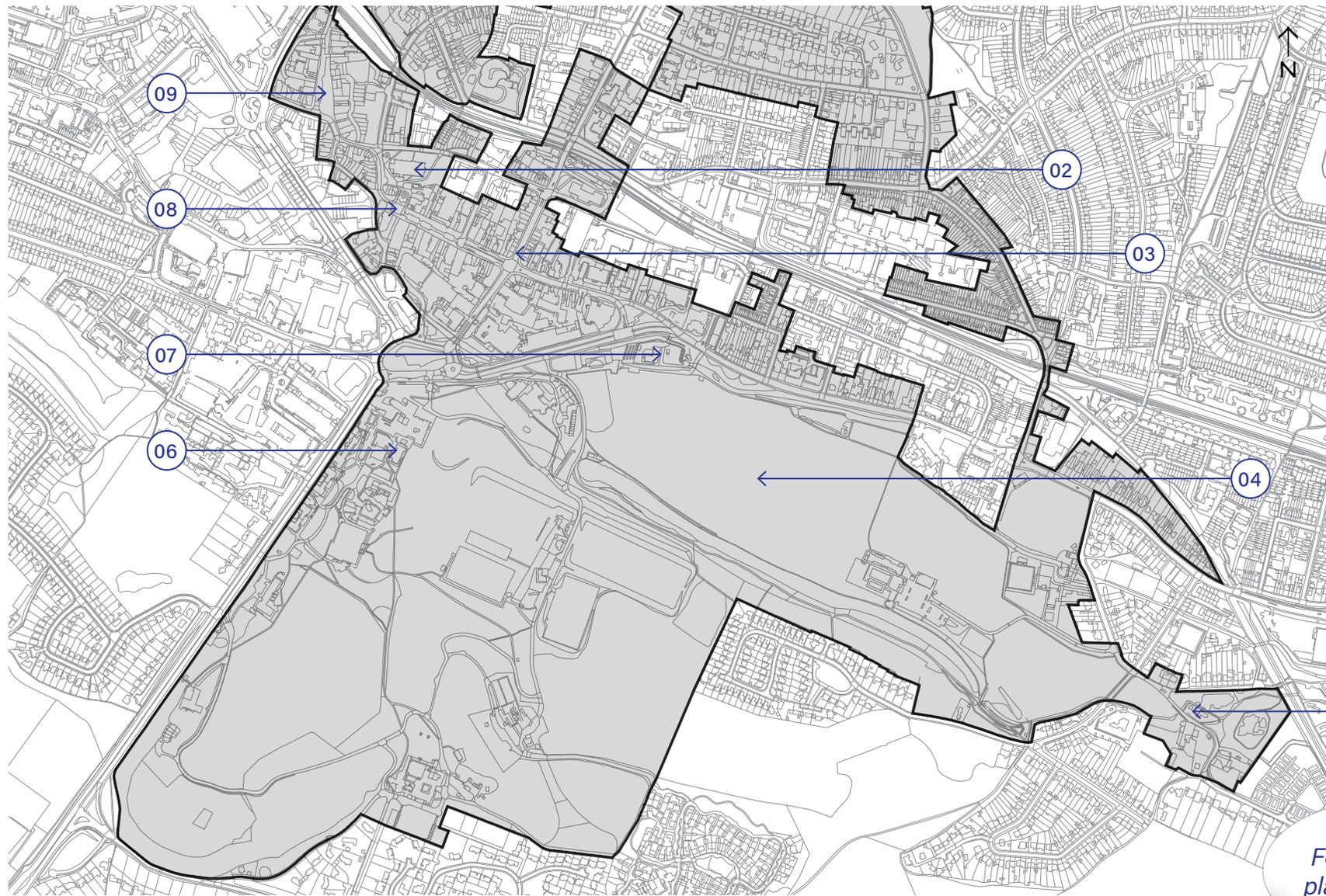
- Proposed High Wycombe Conservation Area Boundary
- 01 Amersham Hill
- 02 All Saints Parish Church
- 03 Crendon Street
- 04 The Rye
- 05 Bassetsbury
- 06 Wycombe Abbey
- 07 Pann Mill
- 08 The Guildhall
- 09 Frogmoor
- 10 High Wycombe Cemetery

Note that the boundary shown on this map includes proposed changes to the boundary as detailed in [Section 7.0](#) of this report. The boundary may be subject to change following consultation.

This plan is not to scale

For a full size plan click here

SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION



- Proposed High Wycombe Conservation Area Boundary
- 01 Amersham Hill
- 02 All Saints Parish Church
- 03 Crendon Street
- 04 The Rye
- 05 Bassetsbury
- 06 Wycombe Abbey
- 07 Pann Mill
- 08 The Guildhall
- 09 Frogmoor
- 10 High Wycombe Cemetary

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This plan is not to scale

For a full size plan click here



Purpose and Scope of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

1.8 Understanding the character and significance of Conservation Areas is essential for managing change within them. It is therefore a requirement under the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* that all Local Planning Authorities 'formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement' of Conservation Areas within their jurisdiction and that Conservation Areas are periodically reviewed.

1.9 The proposals are normally presented in the form of a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP), which defines and records the special interest of a Conservation Area, (see [Section 2.0](#)), analyses the characteristics that make it special (see [Section 5.0](#) and [Section 8.0](#)), as well as setting out a plan for managing change to ensure its ongoing protection and enhancement (see [Section 6.0](#)).

1.10 This CAAMP has been prepared in line with current best practice guidance published by Historic England, the government's heritage advisor and the public body which manages the care and protection of the historic environment.

1.11 The document is intended to be comprehensive but the omission of any building, structure, feature or space does not imply that the element is not significant or does not positively contribute to the character and special interest of the Conservation Area. The protocols and guidance provided in Section 6.0 are applicable in every instance.

1.12 The assessments which provide the baseline information for this CAAMP have been carried out using publicly available resources and thorough on-site analysis from the publicly accessible parts of the Conservation Area.

Consultation

1.13 In preparation of this CAAMP, consultation has included discussion and site visits with members of Buckinghamshire Council. Local stakeholders will be consulted, including the Town Committee, Community Board, High Wycombe Society, High Wycombe Bid Co. and the Bucks Culture Team.



SECTION 2 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

This section provides a summary of High Wycombe's special interest, justifying why it merits designation as a Conservation Area.



2.1. The High Wycombe Conservation Area principally has special interest derived from:

- a The archaeological interest derived from evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation in the setting of the Conservation Area, as well as the location of a Roman villa complex on the Rye.
- b The reflection of different phases of development in its street pattern, from the Saxon and medieval periods through to the twenty-first century.
- c The variety of architecture resulting from the town's changing social and economic factors. These include the town's importance as a strategic coaching stop midway between London and Oxford, successful milling and paper-making industries and subsequently a prolific chair making industry. This variety of high-quality architecture from different periods and in different styles, with distinct phases of development share consistent palettes of materials which creates attractive streetscapes with visual interest and cohesion.
- d Historic, visual and aesthetic links with its setting, particularly the green backdrop of woodlands up the sides of the valley, some of which originates from historic parkland. This includes the wider context of the rolling hills of the Chilterns and vantage points across the town allowed by the topography.
- e The philanthropy of major landowners such as the Dashwoods, Earls of Shelburne, the Carrington Family and Disraeli which influenced the development of the town centre in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This includes Wycombe Abbey, now a world leader in girls' boarding education but formerly home to the Carrington Family which retains its open landscape yet secluded character.
- f Its green spaces and waterways with the river Wye running through the town, positive trees, important open public spaces and remnants of the historic public realm such as Denner Hill Setts and passageways from main streets through to rear yards.
- g Its character today as a lively market town with residential streets, all rooted in its commercial and industrial heritage, and its continuation of local traditions such as the Mayor weighing ceremony.

2.2. These features are expanded on below.



2.3. High Wycombe's Conservation Area has important archaeological interest and potential due to evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements in the setting of the Conservation Area. Significant evidence has been excavated of a Roman villa complex on the Rye which revealed a mosaic, bathhouse and pottery fragments, indicating a large Roman estate within the town.

2.4. The street pattern in Frogmoor and the High Street provides evidence of the layout of the medieval town. These include narrower streets, narrow burgage plots and surviving passageways to rear yards. The surviving inns and public houses on the High Street and in Frogmoor provides a tangible reminder of its early commercial importance as a stopping point between London and Oxford and of its milling heritage. The grand Parish Church of All Saints reflects the high status of the town in the medieval period. The town's former milling heritage is also reflected in Bassetsbury where the winding rural lane has offshoots into yards and former mills are focussed around the waterways. Bassetsbury, a separate manor from the early thirteenth century, has retained a very rural character compared to the more urban and suburban areas in its periphery. The redevelopment of the Crendon Street junction and Queen Victoria Road with

larger, wider buildings in the early twentieth century is an important visual marker of the philanthropy of the Carrington family, owners of Wycombe Abbey who funded much of this civic redevelopment and gifted land to the north of the Abbey for its construction. The straighter, planned street pattern of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century developments provide reminders of the prosperity and expansion which the town experienced due to the chair making industry during this period. Priory Road, Amersham Hill, Totteridge Road and Totteridge Avenue exemplify this period of expansion.

2.5. The significant phases of development within High Wycombe are clearly visible in the variety of architectural styles within the Conservation Area. The high-quality architecture ranges in style and include the medieval parish Church and narrow timber framed buildings within burgage plots, (long narrow plots of land with narrow street frontages) most now re-faced with polite eighteenth century red brick fronts. Also notable is the distinctive eighteenth century Guildhall, uniform rows of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century fashionable terraces and villas integrated with smaller workers' terraces. The twentieth century civic and residential developments in

the town centre are also a prominent phase of development.

2.6. The architectural styles, scales, materials and detailing provide visual interest, variety and appeal, adding to the Conservation Area's special interest. Notable local landmarks of larger scale and with more architectural detailing such as All Saints Church and the Guildhall are visually striking alongside the small scale and close knit two to three storey commercial buildings around them. The larger scale and cohesive design of the early twentieth century civic buildings such as the Old Town Hall and former District Council offices reflects the redevelopment of the area at this time. Pann Mill and mill buildings in the Bassetsbury area have a rural character and record the milling which took place along the Rye, a key part of High Wycombe's early heritage. In residential areas, the rows of terraced houses and villas are indicative of the speed with which High Wycombe expanded. The houses are similar in style and materials but vary in scale and level of architectural detailing. This rapid expansion was due to both the furniture industry and the arrival of the railway, the infrastructure of which contributes to the character of the Conservation Area through the monumental viaduct in Frogmoor. As very few factories survive within High Wycombe, and few within the



Conservation Area boundary, the fashionable and grand houses, alongside small workers' terraces, provide a significant reminder of this prosperous phase of High Wycombe's heritage.

2.7. The Conservation Area has strong historic links with its immediate setting of the Chiltern woodlands which line the sides of the valley within which High Wycombe is situated. These provided materials for the prosperous chair industry and were the key reason the furniture industry developed in High Wycombe. The woodlands form a prominent green backdrop from many viewpoints within the Conservation Area and are a significant reminder of the town's heritage. Long views from high points outside the Conservation Area allow an appreciation of the built heritage of the town, particularly the historical dominance of the parish Church tower within the historic commercial core.

2.8. Verdant green spaces, most prominently the Rye but also the churchyard of All Saints' Church and the Cemetery, as well as mature trees throughout the Conservation Area, add to the special interest of the area through providing pockets of nature and tranquillity within the dense urban street pattern and bustling town. The river Wye, running through the town and experienced most prominently on the Rye, also contributes to the special interest of the area. The large, landscaped grounds of Wycombe Abbey are not accessible to the general public but contribute to the open and green character of the Conservation Area when viewed from Amersham Hill and points within town. Public squares within the Conservation Area are important for preserving the historic commercial and market functions of the town. Also significant is their provisions of significant amenity space for the public in an otherwise tight-knit urban area. This is particularly true of Church Square where a market is still held. The retention of Denner Hill Setts (Saracen stone locally quarried from Denner Hill) in carriageway entrances, and reference to them in modern paving schemes in the centre enhances the character of the streets.

2.9. Today, High Wycombe is a vibrant market town that retains abundant evidence of its historical phases of development closely linked with the industry of the town. The town has busy streets in the town centre and still hosts an active market. Traditions such as the weighing of the Mayor and beating the bounds contribute to the unique character of town. The residential streets have a more peaceful atmosphere and the green spaces within the Conservation Area provide a secluded and tranquil environment from the bustling activity elsewhere in the town.



SECTION 3 HERITAGE ASSETS

Heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places or landscapes 'identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of [their] heritage interest.'⁰¹ This includes designated assets, such as listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, and registered parks and gardens. They also include non-designated assets, which are those identified by local planning authorities, such as locally listed buildings, as contributing to the character and appearance of the local area.

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⁰¹ The National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024.





Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets

3.1 Within the High Wycombe Conservation Area there are many listed buildings and one Registered Park and Garden. These are grouped within three categories:

- a Grade I: Buildings that are of exceptional special interest, e.g. All Saints Church and the Guildhall.
- b Grade II*: Particularly important buildings of more than special interest, e.g. The Little Market House.
- c Grade II: Buildings that are of special interest. This includes most listed buildings in High Wycombe and nationally.

3.2 Listing is not intended to prevent change. Rather, it means that when changes are proposed these need to be carefully considered so that the alterations do not negatively impact the special interest of the building. These changes are controlled through listed building consent applications. Descriptions of listed buildings are available on the National Heritage List for England, accessible via [Historic England's website](#).

3.3 High Wycombe Conservation Area contains two scheduled monuments: St John the Baptist's Hospital ruins and a motte and bailey castle and Saxon burial 50m west of Castle Hill House. Scheduled Monuments are nationally important archaeological sites, designated under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979. Whilst some changes may be possible, there is a presumption that they will be handed on to future generations in much the same state that we have found them.

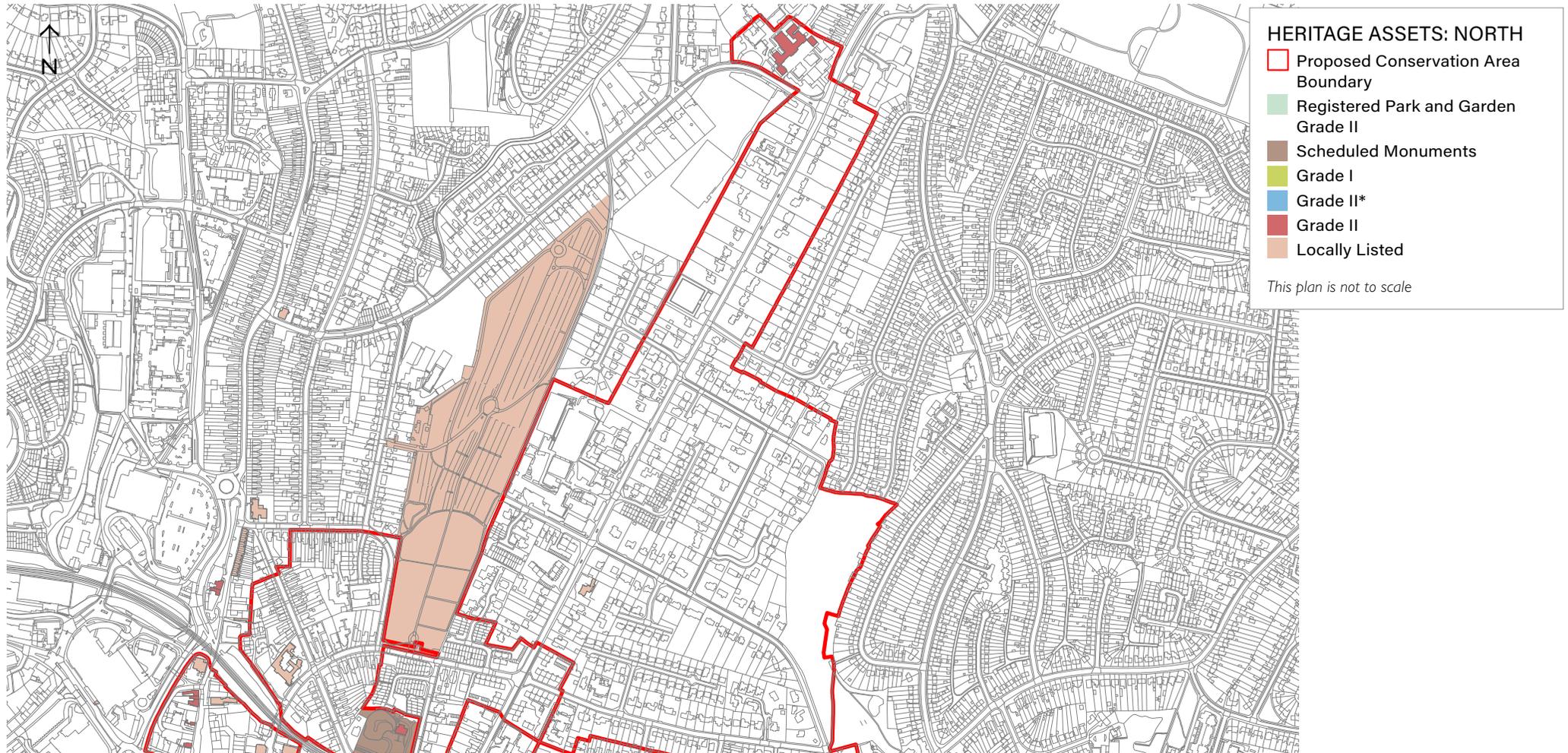
3.4 Buckinghamshire Council have compiled a Local Heritage List of buildings, parks and gardens, archaeological remains and public art that are considered to contribute positively to local character and identity but do not meet the threshold for national designation. These sites are referred to as Non-Designated Heritage Assets and are described on the council's [Local List website](#).

3.5 A large portion of the High Wycombe Conservation Area is identified as 'archaeological notification areas'. Although not offering statutory protection, archaeological notification areas are a tool for planning control as they highlight areas that are of known or suspected archaeological potential to planners.

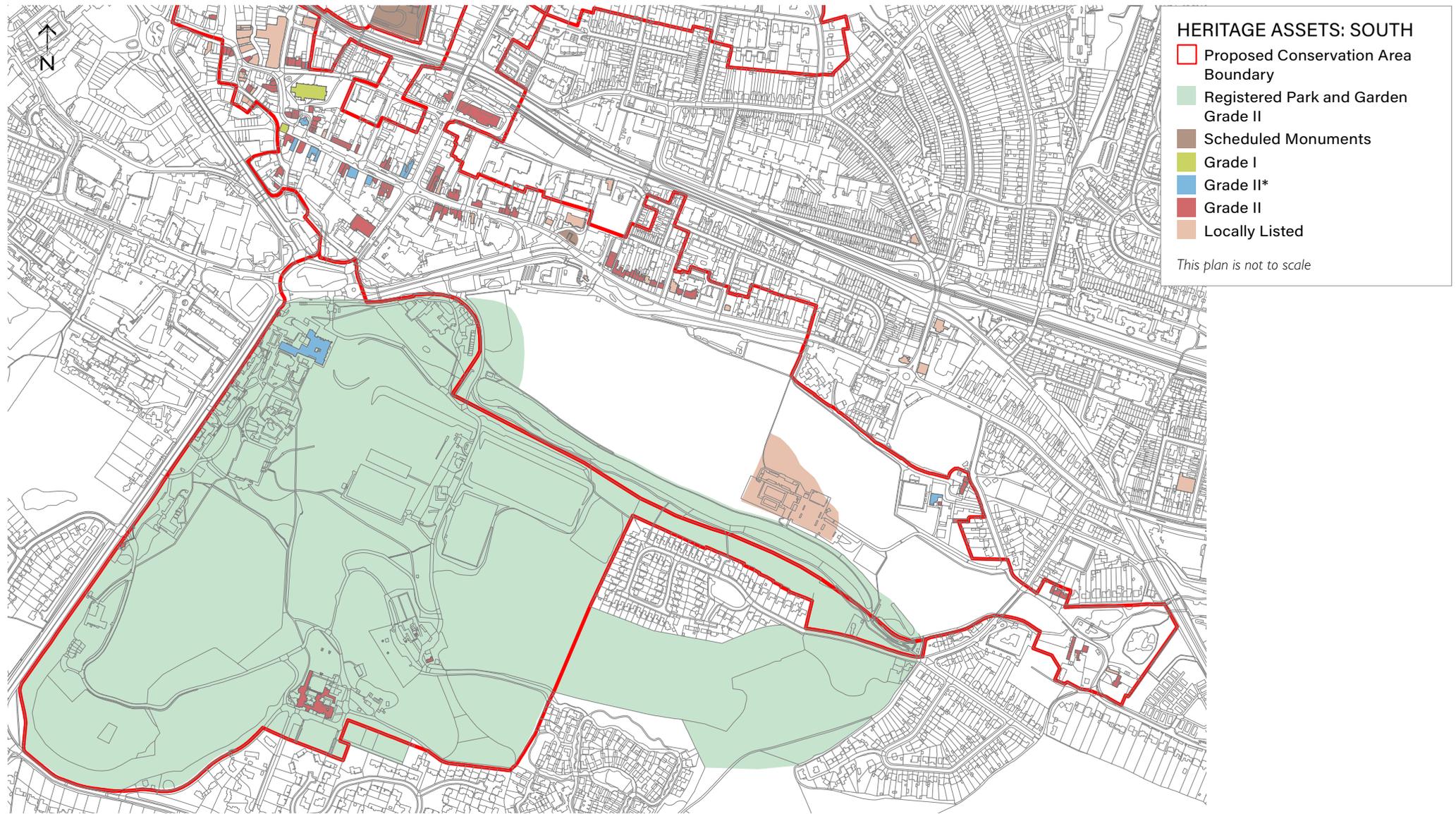
3.6 A map showing designated and non-designated heritage assets within the High Wycombe Conservation Area is included overleaf.

3.7 Where planning permission is sought for development affecting a designated or non-designated heritage asset, the Local Planning Authority will consider the impact of the proposals on the heritage assets' special character and give great weight to their conservation.

SECTION 3.0: HERITAGE ASSETS



SECTION 3.0: HERITAGE ASSETS





SECTION 4 ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

This section provides a brief timeline summary of the historic development of High Wycombe. It identifies the key events, features and associations which make the town and Conservation Area what it is today. The necessary brevity of the section cannot do justice to the area's complete history and comprehensive histories have been prepared by others. Some of the key works can be found in [Further Information and Sources](#).

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Summary

4.1 This is a brief history of High Wycombe and its development. For more comprehensive histories and works, please see the Further Information and Sources section of this report.

4.2 High Wycombe originated as a medieval market town built along the river Wye. Owing to its midway position between London and Oxford, it prospered as a market town, later providing an ideal stop off point for passenger and mail coaches between the two cities in the eighteenth century. The town benefited significantly from investment by the third Lord Carrington of Wycombe Abbey, seeing High Wycombe's townscape develop and expand with the construction of civic and educational buildings in the nineteenth century, alongside significant industrialisation and population growth with the success of the chair industry. The twentieth century witnessed extensive slum clearances to the west of the town, with infill developments and further residential expansion up the valley hills. Industrial development stagnated in the latter half of the century with the decline of the chair industry.

Timeline

4.3 This timeline outlines key dates and periods that affected the development of high wycombe, particularly in relation to the

Conservation Area and its immediate setting. For a more comprehensive history of High Wycombe and its development please consult the High Wycombe Historic Town Assessment (2011).

Prehistoric

- **(4000BC - 2351 BC): Neolithic**
4.4 Possible flint mine excavated in the early 1900s, in the vicinity of the present Railway Station.⁰¹
- **(3200-350 BC): Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age**
4.5 There was activity in this period on what is now the Desborough Castle Site, located to the west of the present town centre. Evidence of a prehistoric lynchet (portion of raised earth) and varied flintwork indicate the presence of a hill fort or hilltop enclosure.⁰² The site is a scheduled monument (SM19055).

- **(1000BC to 701BC): Late Bronze Age**
4.6 Further finds in Keep Hill Wood (to the east of Wycombe Abbey), which include a bronze axe and fragments, indicate some form of early settlement during this period.⁰³
- **(20BC-10AD): Iron Age**
4.7 Coins excavated in 1827 indicate some developed activity in the Wycombe area during the Iron Age.⁰⁴ Multiple burial sites in and around High Wycombe are suggestive of some form of settlement.⁰⁵

⁰¹ Buckinghamshire's Heritage Portal, 'Monument record 0037700000- Railway Cutting, SE Wycombe', [Buckinghamshire Council](#), [Accessed 30 June 2025].
⁰² Mark Collard, 'Excavations at Desborough Castle, High Wycombe, 1987', [Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society 30 \(no.1\): 15,37](#), [Accessed 3 June 2025]; Buckinghamshire's Heritage Portal, 'Monument record 0001801000- Desborough Castle', [Buckinghamshire Council](#), [Accessed 30 June 2025].

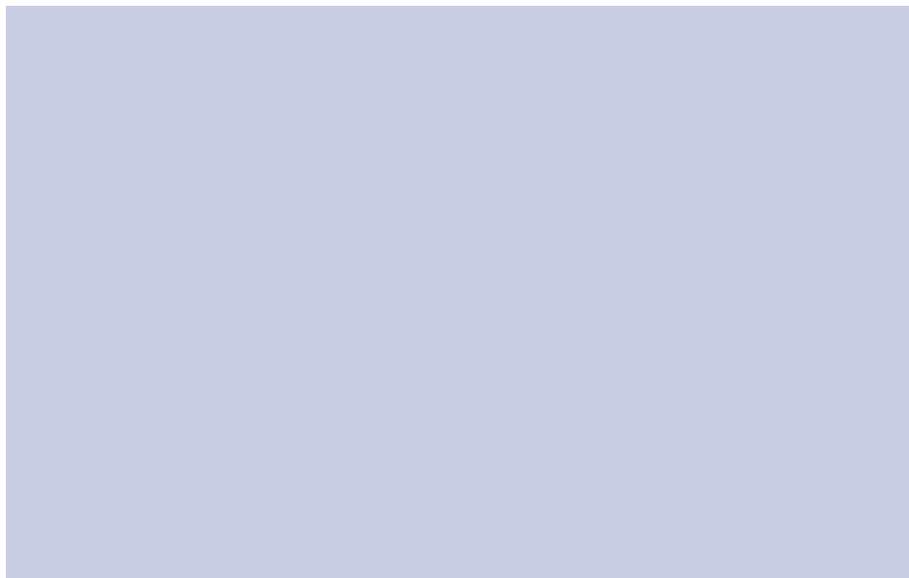
⁰³ Buckinghamshire's Heritage Portal, 'Monument Record 0228600000- Keep Hill Woods, NR Footpath', [Buckinghamshire Council](#), [Accessed 30 June 2025].
⁰⁴ The British Museum, 'Coin: EH,p41.41.Brit', [The British Museum Online Collection](#).
⁰⁵ Buckinghamshire's Heritage Portal, 'Monument record 001400000- Wycombe Rye', [Buckinghamshire Council](#), [Accessed 30 June 2025]; Buckinghamshire's Heritage Portal, 'Monument Record 0121301000- E side of Coningsby Road', [Buckinghamshire Council](#), [Accessed 30 June 2025].; Buckinghamshire's Heritage Portal, 'Find Spot Record 0122101000- Wycombe Cemetery', [Buckinghamshire Council](#), [Accessed 30 June 2025].



Roman

c.150

4.8 A Roman villa was located on the Rye, first discovered in the mid eighteenth century. Further excavations in the 1930s and 1950s revealed a mosaic fragment, complex bathhouse and pottery fragments.⁰⁶ It is thought that the villa was the centre of a large estate with outlying farms buildings - aerial photography from 2003 suggests there are further unexcavated villa buildings on the Rye. Evidence of Romano-British farms and settlements extend to the west along the Wye valley, particularly at West Wycombe.⁰⁷ Aerial photography from the early 2000s suggests there is a further unexcavated villa on the Rye.⁰⁸



A 1932 photograph showing the remains of the mosaic floors with London Road in the background. (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.) (RHW:08114, SWOP. <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 08114))



Location of the excavated Roman Villa site under the present Wycombe Lido.

⁰⁶ B.R. Hartley, 'A Romano-British Villa at High Wycombe', *Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society 16 (no.1)*

⁰⁷ Collard, 'Excavations at Desborough Castle', 26.

⁰⁸ David M.R. Green, 'A potential new Roman villa at the Rye, High Wycombe', *Buckingham Archaeological Society 52 (no.1): 209-212.*



Saxon

4.9 Anglo-Saxon settlement remains within the town center will have been disturbed or destroyed by later buildings and industry. Surviving evidence for the Anglo-Saxon period includes the 7th century burials found in the grounds of Castle Hill House in the 18th century and in 1901.⁰⁹ Further possible Saxon burials were found in the late 1930s during building alterations at Church Square. Outside the Conservation Area an Anglo Saxon cemetery was found in Loudwater in the early 20th century and a large number of finds of metalwork are known, particularly around West Wycombe.¹⁰ The area to the north formed part of an Anglo-Saxon Royal estate, but regular settlement or land use did not appear to extend beyond what was Wycombe Heath.¹¹

970AD

4.10 Wycombe is first recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Charter. It is likely that the large-scale organisation of the landscape into manorial estates with small settlements surrounded by agricultural land, meadows and managed woodlands occurred in the 10th century, along with centralised ecclesiastical and legal administration. The presence of six watermills is exceptional and would suggest that the landowner was sufficiently entrepreneurial to make the most of the advantages the River Wye offered, perhaps providing milling services for neighboring manors without access to water-power.

⁰⁹ Buckinghamshire's Heritage Portal, Monument Record 0048800000n, <https://heritageportal.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/Monument/MBC1621> [Accessed 23/09/25] and Buckinghamshire's Heritage Portal, Find Spot record 0060700001, <https://heritageportal.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/Monument/MBC1975> [Accessed 23/09/25]

¹⁰ Buckinghamshire's Heritage Portal. Monument record 0062400000, <https://heritageportal.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/Monument/MBC2025> [Accessed 23/09/25]

¹¹ Miles Green, 'Wycombe Heath and the Londoners' Chase', *Buckingham Archaeological Society 53 (no.1)*: 151- 161,

Medieval

4.11 High Wycombe's planform crystallised in the medieval period and would remain roughly the same until the early nineteenth century. From the twelfth century, an essentially rural settlement expanded into a town which began to prosper from its trade in corn and cloth. The present central-town layout in the Frogmoor area is of medieval origin, with the town expanding eastwards during this period. On a central trade route between Oxford and London, High Wycombe became the largest town in Buckinghamshire.

Looking Northwards down Frogmoor towards The Clock House ([permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image](#)) (MHW: 24850, SWOP, High Wycombe Museum) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 24850)



Medieval (cont'd)

1080s

4.12 According to the *Vita Wulfstani* ('The Life of Wulfstan' by William of Malmesbury) Bishop Wulfstan performed two miracles at High Wycombe between 1072 and 1092.¹² He consecrated the newly built All Saints Church in 1080. Wulfstan was the Bishop of Worcester from 1062 until his death in 1095. As the Bishop of Worcester, he owned the manor of West Wycombe.'

1086 (Domesday book)

4.13 In the hundred of Desborough, High Wycombe manor was the land of Robert d'Oilly. It was recorded as having 60 households, 30 ploughlands and 6 mills, including Pann Mill.¹³

¹² William of Malmesbury, *The Vita Wulfstani of William of Malmesbury*, (London: Royal Historical Society, 1928), 32-33.; 'Parishes: High Wycombe', in *A History of the County of Buckingham: Volume 3*, ed. William Page (London, 1925), [British History Online](#). [Accessed 30 June 2025].

¹³ Anna Powell-Smith, '[High] Wycombe', [Open Domesday](#). [Accessed 11 June 2025]

c.1100

4.14 Owing to its valley position, a castle or fortification was built overlooking High Wycombe on Desborough Hill.

1180s

4.15 Hospital of St John was built. Ruins remain visible today on Easton Street (SM1017854).



The remains of the Hospital of St John in the grounds of a former grammar school.

c.1200

4.16 The medieval market was formalised creating Bull Lane, Queens Square and Church Street. The wide High Street was created, with narrow burgage plots lining either side. Burgage plots, typical of medieval urban centres, were tightly packed long narrow plots of land at right angles to the street. The buildings constructed on burgage plots are characterised by narrow façades and long ranges stretching back from the street

1226

4.17 Alan Basset, Lord of Bassetsbury Manor, was forced to grant the burgesses rights to the borough, market and fair. Burgage plots were rented by 'burgesses' for a fixed annual fee, offering significant freedom to individual tradesmen, leading to economic, political and social growth.



Medieval (cont'd)

1237

4.18 Borough status was granted to High Wycombe to allow for local self government. This allowed the borough council to better oversee the production of corn and the burgeoning cloth industry, processed from the fulling mills, which included Pann Mill.¹⁴ Fulling was the process of beating newly woven woollen cloth to thicken and shrink it. Weavers, dyers and wool merchants began to settle in the town—wool production was an important industry in medieval England.

1273

4.19 The present All Saints Parish Church was constructed, replacing the original eleventh century structure. It is the largest parish church in Buckinghamshire.¹⁵



All Saints Parish Church

¹⁴ Stanley and Pauline Cauvain, 'Investigations at Pann Mill, High Wycombe', *Buckingham Archaeological Society* 39 (no.1)

¹⁵ 'Parishes: High Wycombe', in *A History of the County of Buckingham: Volume 3*, ed. William Page (London, 1925), [British History Online](#).

1300s

4.20 The town was known as Chepping Wycombe, 'chepping' meaning market.

Early 1300s

4.21 A 'Gild' Hall was built to the west of the church, later replaced by Market House (later Guildhall), constructed at the western end of the High Street in the 1470s. A Guildhall is a meeting place for members of a 'guild' for administrative purposes, but more often served as a town hall and general meeting place.

1312

4.22 First reference to the 'Red Lion' Inn and The Saracens' Head..

Mid-1300s

4.23 Lack of documentary sources might indicate that the area suffered badly from the Black Death (1346-1353). West Wycombe was also badly affected.

1400s

4.24 Numerous early inns and taverns begin to appear.

1414

4.25 Thirteen men from Wycombe were arrested in 1414 for having Lollard sympathies. The Lollards encouraged translation of the Bible into English and disapproved of the lavishness of the Church. All services at this time were in Latin, in accordance with the Catholic faith, and a tithe payment (10% of earnings) was given to support the church by everyone in the community. The Lollard movement was centred around Wycombe, Chesham and Amersham.



Sixteenth Century

4.26 High Wycombe experienced relative decline in this period due to trading competition from neighbouring towns Chesham and Amersham but remained the largest town in the county and relatively wealthy.

1558

4.27 A Charter for Incorporation was procured from Queen Mary for the borough. This was a governance document formally establishing the town as a corporate body, providing for its regulation. This slowed decline caused by the purchase and subsequent exploitation of chantry lands by non-resident gentry, allowing the town to regain some control over its governance.¹⁶

Mid-1500s

4.28 Textile trade continued to prosper and reached its height with production of cloth and wool in the Tudor period. The town experienced modest growth.

¹⁶ Robert Tittler, 'The Incorporation of Boroughs, 1540-1558', *History* 62 (no. 204): 38-39.

Later 1500s

4.29 Medieval buildings begin to be replaced with substantial timber framed buildings. Around thirty of these survive, though in highly altered forms, centred around the Corn Market, High Street, Castle Street and Pauls Row.



Evidence of highly altered timber framed buildings on Easton Street, to the east of the High Street.

Seventeenth Century

1604

4.30 A new guildhall was built, though it was later destroyed by fire in the eighteenth century.

1627

4.31 The cloth industry began its decline which saw many mills revert to corn. Some, however, took advantage of a new industry- papermaking. Glory and Hedge Mill produce paper by 1627 with Rye Mill converted by the start of the eighteenth century. The rags used to make the paper were blamed for an outbreak of plague in 1631.¹⁷

4.32 Paper Making Paper mills could have been set up as early as the 1590s to supply legal professions in London. The chalky waters of the Wye made it ideal to bleach pulp. The trade therefore flourished until the end of the twentieth century, with mills located outside of the borough. The lace making industry in Wycombe began at a similar time but remained a cottage industry.

¹⁷ SWOP, 'Brief History of High Wycombe', [Sharing Wycombe's Old Photographs](#).



Seventeenth Century (cont'd)

1643

4.33 Thirty Cavaliers plundered the town and kidnapped four townsmen and the Mayor's wife.¹⁸ A small skirmish was said to have taken place on the Rye. No evidence of permanent defences has been found, suggesting the town was never fortified by Parliamentary forces.

1656

4.34 A new borough charter was obtained from Cromwell's Council of State at a cost of £150.

1660s

4.35 The Restoration saw the 1656 charter publicly burned as a show of loyalty to the Crown. A new charter was issued in 1663, the powers of which remained largely unchanged until the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835.

¹⁸ The Battlefields Trust, 'British Civil War Memorials', [The Battlefields Trust](#)

Eighteenth Century

4.36 Many buildings were re-fronted during this period, so many sixteenth and seventeenth century buildings survive under greatly altered façades. This includes No.21 High Street which behind its eighteenth century façade retains a sixteenth century character with wall paintings dating to c.1600. At the end of this century, the cottage industry of chair making begins to formalise and expand.

1718

4.37 The turnpike road from Beaconsfield to Stokenchurch was introduced. In 1768 the Reading and Hatfield Turnpike Trust was set up with responsibility for the Marlow and Amersham Roads. The improved road network around High Wycombe enhanced its prosperity.

Early 1750s

4.38 Sir Francis Dashwood, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1762-1763, and who founded the notorious Hellfire Club, burrowed chalk out of West Wycombe Hill to straighten the West Wycombe to High Wycombe road (A40). This led to the creation of the Hellfire Caves.¹⁹

1757

4.39 The present guildhall was built, funded by the Earl of Shelburne.



High Wycombe's eighteenth-century Guildhall.

¹⁹ Chilterns National Landscape, 'Sir Francis Dashwood', (accessed 25 September 2025), https://www.chilterns.org.uk/map_marker/sir-francis-dashwood/.



Eighteenth Century (cont'd)

4.40 Earls of Shelburne The first Earl bought the Jacobean manor Loakes House in 1700 but little was altered until the 1750s when it was remodelled by Henry Keene, a Gothic Revival and Neoclassical architect, whose work includes the initial design for the Radcliffe Observatory in Oxford, and other college buildings.²⁰ When the second Earl, William Petty, inherited the estate in 1761 he had the park enclosed and landscaped, possibly by Capability Brown²¹, creating the Dyke along the Rye, planting woodland, laying out paths and drives, with gates to the estate along the High Street.²²

Numerous buildings in High Wycombe were constructed by the first Earl, including a new town hall, later the Guildhall, in 1757 (by Keene), as well as changes to the Parish church, including a marble baroque monument.²³

Gates leading to Wycombe Abbey to the left of the image, taken circa. 1890 (BFP: 03284, SWOP) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 03284) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image)

²⁰ Geoffrey Tyack, 'The making of the Radcliffe Observatory', *The Georgian Group Journal* 10 (no.1): 123-129.

²¹ 300 years Capability Brown, 'Wycombe Abbey', (accessed 25 September, 2025), <https://competitions.landscapeinstitute.org/capability-brown/garden/wycombe-abbey/index.html>

²² David Snoxell, 'Wycombe in the Social and Political Life of the Earl of Shelburne, 1761-1798', *High Wycombe Society* (Autumn, 2007), 5. Historic England 'Wycombe Abbey', <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000609>, [Accessed 25/09/25].

²³ David Snoxell, 'The Contribution of the Earls of Shelburne to the Development of High Wycombe in the Eighteenth Century', *High Wycombe Society* (Spring, 2007), 4

Late 1700s

4.41 Clearing of beech wood for cornfields expanded the chair making industry. Small workshops become factories where chairs were hand crafted until mechanisation in the 1860s.

1760s

4.42 Thomas Jeffery's survey of Buckinghamshire shows buildings in High Wycombe concentrated along the High Street and in the Frogmoor area. Watermills are indicated to the north-west and south-east of the centre of the borough.²⁴



Jeffreys survey of Buckinghamshire, 1770, showing High Wycombe. Reproduced with permission from Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.

²⁴ Yale University Library, [Digital Collections](#),



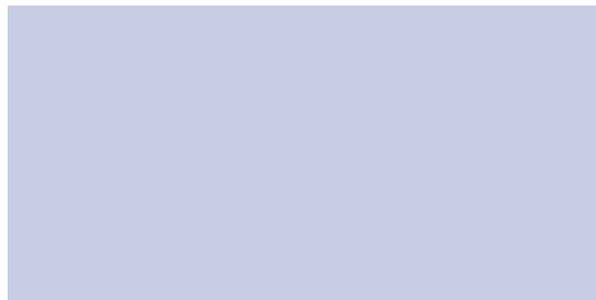
Eighteenth Century (cont'd)

1799

4.43 The first Royal Military College was located on the High Street at the Antelope Inn. Officer training took place in the surrounding landscape. The college eventually relocated to Surrey, then as part of the Sandhurst Royal Military College in 1820. A plaque on the Antelope Inn commemorates its original location.

1799

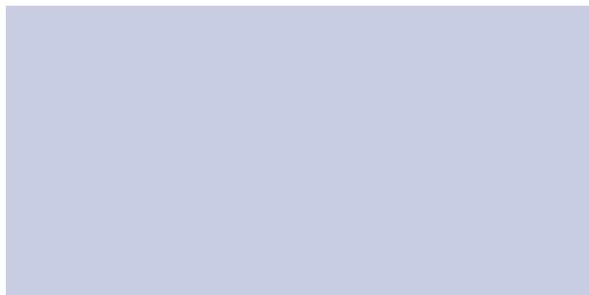
4.44 Loakes Manor was purchased by Lord Carrington and renamed Wycombe Abbey.



A westwards view down the High Street, copy of a lithograph produced in 1772, with the Guildhall in the background. (BFP: 04526, SWOP) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 04526) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)

Nineteenth Century

4.45 By the end of the century High Wycombe was expanding rapidly due to the success of the chair industry, facilitated by the arrival of the railways, with furniture factories appearing across the town.



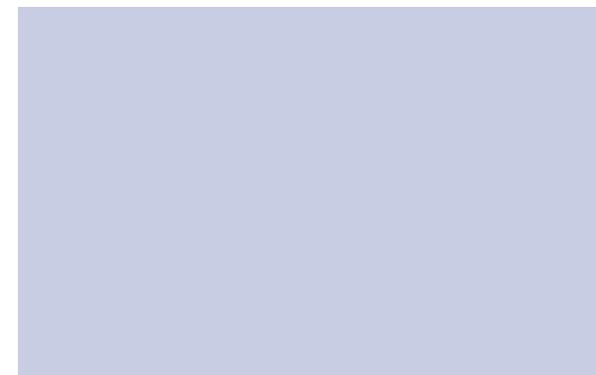
c.1846 Westwards view along the High Street (BFP: 04573, SWOP) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 04573) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)



A former furniture warehouse to the north of Frogmoor

1854

4.46 High Wycombe railway opened from Maidenhead. The railway shed and terminus were designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel.²⁵



1860s- Looking East from the Guildhall along the High Street. (BFP: 04580, SWOP) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 04580) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)

²⁵ Historic England, 'High Wycombe Railway Station', 1389150,



Nineteenth Century (cont'd)

1873-75

4.47 The Parish Church was restored by G.E. Street (1824-1881), a leading Gothic Revival Architect. Street was appointed architect to the diocese of Oxford by Bishop Samuel Wiberforce in 1850 and is best known for his design of the Royal Courts of Justice, completed a year after his death and who had been appointed architect to the diocese of Oxford by Bishop Samuel Wiberforce in 1850.²⁶

1875-1923

4.48 Ordnance Survey mapping shows significant expansion of the town towards the end of the century. Expansion was concentrated to the west of the town centre but included expansion along Amersham Hill and Priory Avenue, as well as infrastructure development to the east of the town, including a new railway mainline and industrial complexes.



Expansion of the town between 1897 and 1923. Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland. <https://maps.nls.uk/>

²⁶ AHRnet, 'Street, George Edmund 1824-1881', *Biographical Dictionary of British and Irish Architects 1800-1950*. [Accessed 30 June 2025].



Nineteenth Century (cont'd)

1892: Mayor Weighing Ceremony

4.49 The Mayor Weighing Ceremony is a tradition unique to High Wycombe thought to date back to the medieval period but that fell into disuse before being revived in 1892. After an election, the Aldermen, Councillors and Officers of the Borough, including the mayor, would be weighed on large scales outside the Guildhall. As their weight was recorded, the Macebearer would call out the weight along with 'and some more' or 'and no more' to the crowd. If they had gained weight, it was thought they had grown fat at the expense of the townspeople, and were jeered or cheered accordingly. The tradition was once again stopped during World War I but revived again in 1917 and continues to be an annual tradition, taking place on the third Saturday in May outside the Guildhall.²⁷

²⁷ Mayor and Charter Trustees of High Wycombe, Mayor Making, (accessed 25 September 2025), <https://www.mayorofhighwycombe.co.uk/mayor-making/>; Isabella Harris, 'High Wycombe Mayor and MP on weighing-in tradition', Bucks Free Press, 24 May, 2025, (accessed 25 September, 2025), <https://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/25189442.high-wycombe-mayor-mp-mayor-weighing-tradition/>.

1895

4.50 Over 100 chair making factories were in the town, employing over 5000 people. This resulted in the construction of a wealth of artisan housing and cottages on the outskirts of the borough. Newlands was a working-class suburb where terraces grew up to the east and west, including along Saffron Platt and North Town. The middle class moved to villas along Amersham Hill along the old turnpike road, with the fine town centre houses being taken over for business use.



Locally listed fine brick building on Amersham Hill, built for the furniture manufacturer William Birch in 1900, now used as an independent secondary school.



Saffron Platt



Priory Avenue, to the west of Amersham Hill



Nineteenth Century (cont'd)

1896

4.51 Wycombe Abbey was sold to the Girls Education Company. The Carringtons move to Daws Hill.

4.52 **The Carrington Family:** Loakes Manor was purchased in 1799 by the first Lord Carrington and renamed Wycombe Abbey. He gave it its present castellated appearance, remodelled in the Gothic style by James Wyatt. The third Lord Carrington developed High Wycombe's health and education buildings: Amersham Hill Cottage Hospital opened in 1875, Central Board Elementary (now Hamilton School) on Priory Road in 1875 and the science and art school (now Clock House) in Frogmoor, in 1893. Notably, in 1896, he sold Wycombe Abbey to the Girls Education Company and it became the first independent boarding school for girls in the country. He is also responsible for Queen Victoria Bridge and Road which was allocated for the erection of public buildings, the first of which was the Town Hall, opened 1904.²⁸ This led to the relocation of the Wycombe Abbey gates from what is now the area outside the library to Marlow Hill.



The Town Hall on Victoria Road

²⁸ David Snoxell, 'The Carrington Contribution to the Development of High Wycombe', *High Wycombe Society* (Summer, 2006), 8-9.

Arthur Vernon- Local Architect

4.53 Arthur Vernon (b. 1846) trained with the Gothic Revivalist E.B. Lamb and became land agent to Benjamin Disraeli in 1870. He was elected mayor of High Wycombe five times between 1882 and 1906.²⁹ He is responsible for several notable buildings in High Wycombe, including the Clock House, St John's Place on Easton Street, built in a Neo-Norman style, as well as a number of other schools in the area, and Vinter House, a rare Italianate Style Victorian survival on the High Street.³⁰ His distinctive white house stands prominently at the bottom of Amersham Hill, and can be seen on the surrounding hillsides.



Arthur Vernon's house on Amersham Hill is centre right in this photo (indicated with an arrow) taken from Tom Burts Hill.

²⁹ Archiseek, 'Arthur Vernon (1846-)', [archiseek](#) [Accessed 11 July 2025]

³⁰ Buckinghamshire's Heritage Portal, 'Building Record 0037601001- St Johns Place', [Buckinghamshire Council](#), [Accessed 11 July 2025]; Buckinghamshire's Heritage Portal, 'Vinter House, 4 High Street, High Wycombe', [Buckinghamshire Council](#), [Accessed 11 July 2025]



Nineteenth Century (cont'd)

01

High street, late 1800s (pre 1891) (RHW: 27044, SWOP) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 27044) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)

02

Priory Avenue, c. 1901 (RHW:23021, SWOP) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 23021) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)

03

South down Amersham Hill, c.1900 (RHW:01256, SWOP) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 01256) (permission pending)

04

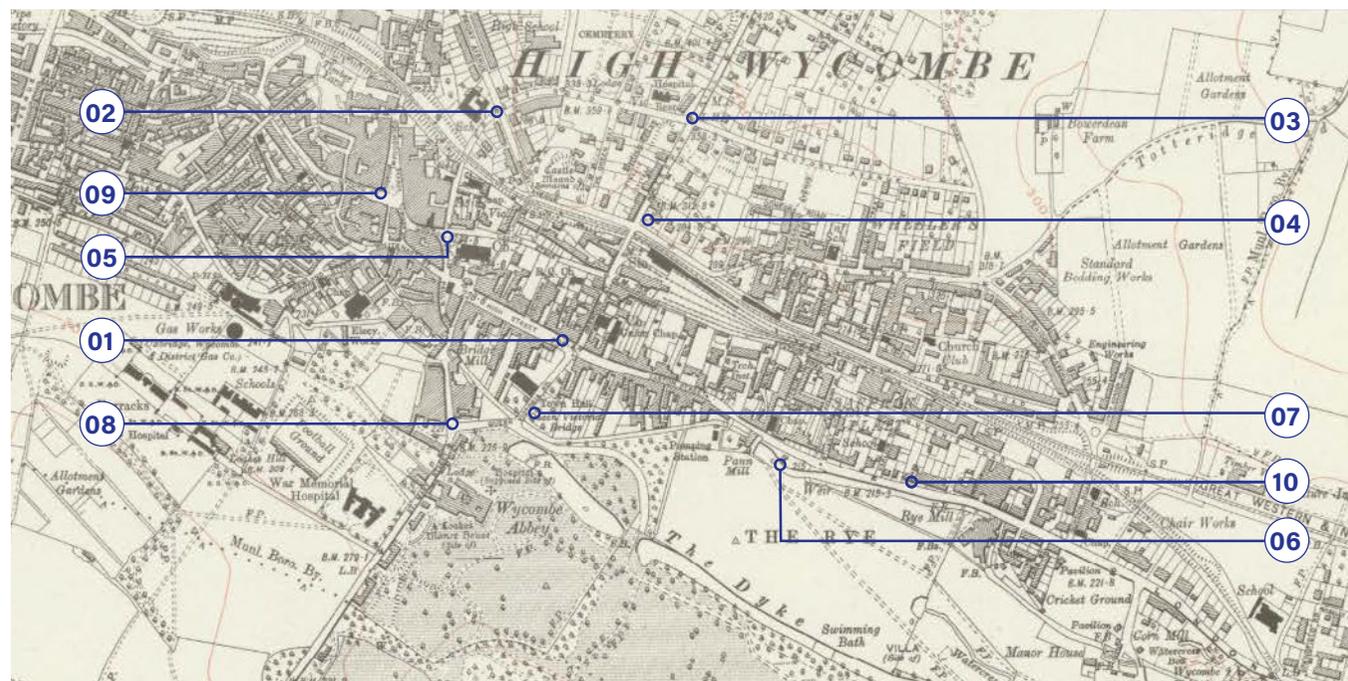
North up Amersham Hill, c.1900 (MHW: 35201, SWOP) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 35201) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)

05

All Saints Parish Church, c.1880 (RHW: 15080, SWOP) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 15080) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)

06

Looking NW from the Rye, showing the eighteenth century Pann Mill, one of seven mills along the Wye. c.1880 (MHW: 46224, SWOP, High Wycombe Museum) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 46224) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)



07

Town Hall on Queen Victoria Road, c.1904. (RHW: 14049, SWOP) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 14049) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)

08

Wall of Wycombe Abbey, c.1890. (RHW: 35012, SWOP) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 35012) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)

09

Frogmoor, c.1890 (MHW: 24850, SWOP, High Wycombe Museum) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 24850) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)

10

London Road, c.1903 (RHW: 12091, SWOP) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 12091) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)

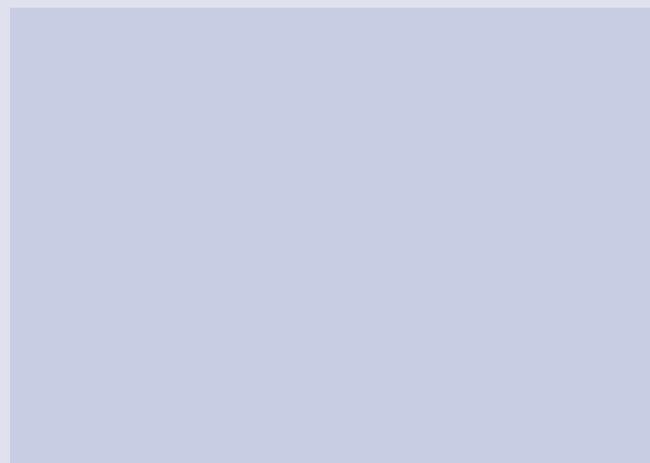
Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland. <https://maps.nls.uk/>



Twentieth Century To Present

4.54 High Wycombe continued to expand significantly in the early twentieth century, notably to the north along Amersham Hill and Priory Avenue, where large villas were built to accommodate the middle classes. The population increased from 13,000 in 1881 to 29,000 in 1928, largely due to commercial success and rail connection. It was not until the 1960s that High Wycombe experienced a decline in chair manufacture and prosperity.

4.55 **The Windsor Chair** High Wycombe is famous for its production of Windsor-type chairs. The surrounding Chiltern hills provided an abundance of Beech woodland, giving 'bodgers' easy access to timber. A cottage industry until 1800, by 1877, 4,700 chairs were being made daily. By 1900, other types of furniture were being produced, with the industry declining throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.³¹ Most of the surviving factories date from the 1920s. Several impressive chair arches were erected to celebrate royal visits to High Wycombe. A full list of chair manufactures can be found in the Further Information and Sources Section.



A chair seat being made in one of High Wycombe's workshops, c.1930 (RHW: 12243, SWOP) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 12243) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)



Chair Arch erected for a visit from Queen Victoria to nearby Hughenden Manor, c.1877. (MHW:46389, SWOP, High Wycombe Museum) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 46389) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)

³¹ Wycombe Museum, '[Chair and Furniture Collection](#)'



Twentieth Century To Present (cont'd)

The Mitford Family

4.56 Marsh Green Cottage to the far east of the Rye was leased to Sydney Mitford in 1911 by Lord Carrington. She was the wife of the Honourable David Mitford, later Lord Redesdale. It was then sold to them in 1925 with the water mill and stable loft. Their children: Nancy, Pamela, Tom, Diana, Unity, Jessica and Deborah all stayed at the cottage between 1911 and 1949. During the war, Unity spent her time in High Wycombe, dying in 1948.³² The sisters were honoured with a plaque on the cottage, unveiled in 2008.³³

1901

4.57 The population stood at 17,683. Developments along Amersham Hill were extended further north, as far as Tinker's Wood and the borough boundary was extended to 1,670 acres (676 in 1880).

³² David Snoxell, 'Old Mill Cottage- The Mitford Era', High Wycombe Society (Summer 2005), 9-10.

³³ Andy Carswell, 'Notorious ex-residents to be honoured', *Bucks Free Press*, (2008) [Accessed 11 July 2025].

1911

4.58 Five stained glass windows were installed in the Red Room of the Old Town Hall as a gift from Charles Walter Raffety, known as the 'Grand Old Man of High Wycombe'. Designed by Aurthur J Dix, they commemorate 22 local people in total, with four windows in specific dedication to four notables; John Hampden, Parliamentarian famed for his opposition to Charles I; William Penn, writer, theologian and Quaker; Edmund Burke, statesman and political thinker; and Benjamin Disraeli, twice prime minister and who lived at the nearby Hughenden Estate. The central window commemorates High Wycombe's chair industry together with a depiction of Progress.³⁴

³⁴ Buckinghamshire's Heritage Portal, 'Building Record 0942600000- Town Hall, Queen Victoria Road', *Buckinghamshire Council*, (accessed 25 September, 2025), <https://heritageportal.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/Monument/MBC24746>.; Ivor, 'The buildings of Wycombe: The former Town Hall', *Bucks Free Press*, 23 April, 2011, (accessed 25 September 2025), <https://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/8991370.the-buildings-of-wycombe-the-former-town-hall/>.; Editors, 'John Hampden', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (accessed 25 September, 2025), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Hampden>.; Frederick B. Tolles, 'William Penn', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (accessed 25 September, 2025), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Penn-English-Quaker-leader-and-colonist>.; Charles William Parkin, 'Edmund Burke', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (accessed 25 September, 2025), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edmund-Burke-British-philosopher-and-statesman>.; Robert Norman William Blake and Baron Blake, 'Benjamin Disraeli', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (accessed 5 September, 2025), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Benjamin-Disraeli>.



Twentieth Century To Present (cont'd)

1914-1918

4.59 Furniture factories were largely converted to war production. Following the war the factories were reconverted, and furniture production experienced a boom.

1923

4.60 Ordnance Survey maps reveal significant development along Amersham Hill, as well as industrial development to the east with the opening of the Great Western and Northeastern Joint Line, opened in 1899.³⁵



OS survey showing industrial developments along the new rail line. Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland. <https://maps.nls.uk/>

³⁵ F.G. Cockman, 'The Railway Era in Buckinghamshire', *Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society* 19, 167-8.



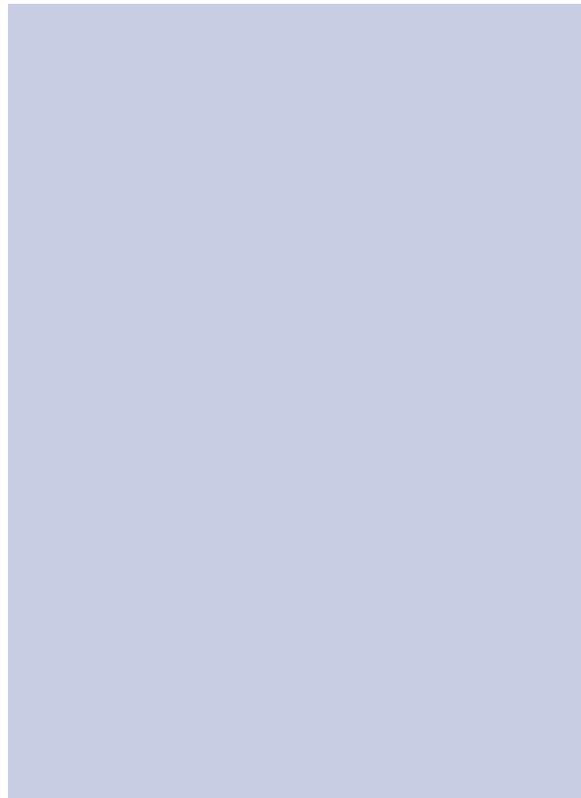
Twentieth Century To Present (cont'd)

1930s

4.61 Crendon Street was largely rebuilt. This was part of a series of slum clearances in the 1930s which saw 233 sixteenth and seventeenth century buildings in St Marys Street and White Hart Street pulled down.³⁶ Further rapid housing developments took place throughout the 1920s and 1930s.



Crendon Street, Developed in the 1930s.



A view down White Hart Street from the Guildhall, c.1900. (RHW:01063, SWOP) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 01063) (permission pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)

1937

4.62 Aerial photography of the Newlands area, which lay to the northwest of Wycombe Abbey, shows industrial development and workers cottages.

1940s

4.63 Chair manufacturers shifted production to aircraft and aircraft components during World War II.

1942

4.64 The Air Ministry requisitioned Wycombe Abbey, which was used by US forces, with servicemen camped at Daws Hill. During this time, in July 1944, Glen Miller performed to the servicemen in the grounds during a War Bond rally.

1956

4.65 The Ministry bought Daws Hill. It remained an operational Air force site until 1993 and remained occupied until 2012.

³⁶ Buckingham Towns Assessment, High Wycombe (2012), 88.



Twentieth Century To Present (cont'd)

1960s-70s

4.66 Slum clearance programmes swept away much of the development to the west of White Hart Street and Pauls Row, making way for a series of shopping complexes. Newland Street was comprised of largely post-medieval development which was lost in these clearances.

1971

4.67 The 1759 Pann Mill buildings were demolished for a road widening scheme, leaving only the wheel and supporting wall remaining.³⁷ A restoration project begun in the same year by High Wycombe Society sought to restore the last remaining water mill on the Wye. A mill had existed on the site since 1086.



Pann Mill on the Wye.

³⁷ Cauvain, 'Investigations at Pann Mill, High Wycombe', *Buckingham Archaeological Society* 39 (no.1): 18

1990

4.68 Wycombe Swan theatre was built, opened in 1992. Modern buildings began to be developed on the fringes of the town.

1998: Tradition of Beating the Bounds

4.69 Mayor Frances Alexander reintroduces the 'Beating the Bounds' ceremony. Commemorative marker stones were laid to mark the revival of the centuries old custom. Prior to any formal mapping being produced that marked parish boundaries it was necessary to re-mark them every year. The custom died out throughout the nineteenth century and stopped in High Wycombe in 1920. Unique to High Wycombe, the 'bumping box' is brought out from the Mayor's parlour and two children are 'bumped' to mark the boundary. This tradition continues today.³⁸

³⁸ Paul Leat, 'Beating the Bounds at High Wycombe', *Bucks Free Press*, 10 July 2006, (accessed 25 September 2025), <https://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/825419.beating-the-bounds-at-high-wycombe/>; Andrew Colley, 'The annual Beating of the Bounds ceremony event was held in High Wycombe on Sunday', *Bucks Free Press*, 18 May 2015, (accessed 25 September 2025), <https://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/12956081.the-annual-beating-of-the-bounds-ceremony-event-was-held-in-high-wycombe-on-sunday/>; Mayor and Charter Trustees of High Wycombe, *Beating the Bounds*, (accessed 25 September 2025), <https://www.mayorofhighwycombe.co.uk/beat-the-bounds>.



Commemorative boundary stone to mark the revival of the tradition, laid 1998 in Birdcage Walk.



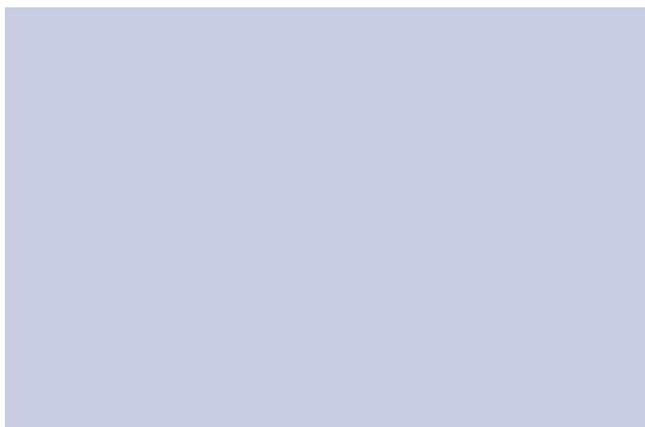
Twentieth Century To Present (cont'd)

Early 2000s

4.70 Development was focused outside of the Conservation Area with redevelopment of former industrial sites. This included Glenister's Furniture Factory which closed in 1990, was demolished in 1997 and redeveloped as a commercial site. A gasworks was demolished in Newlands to make way for the Buckinghamshire New University. Numerous mill and factory sites were also redeveloped for housing to the northwest and southeast of the Conservation Area

2006

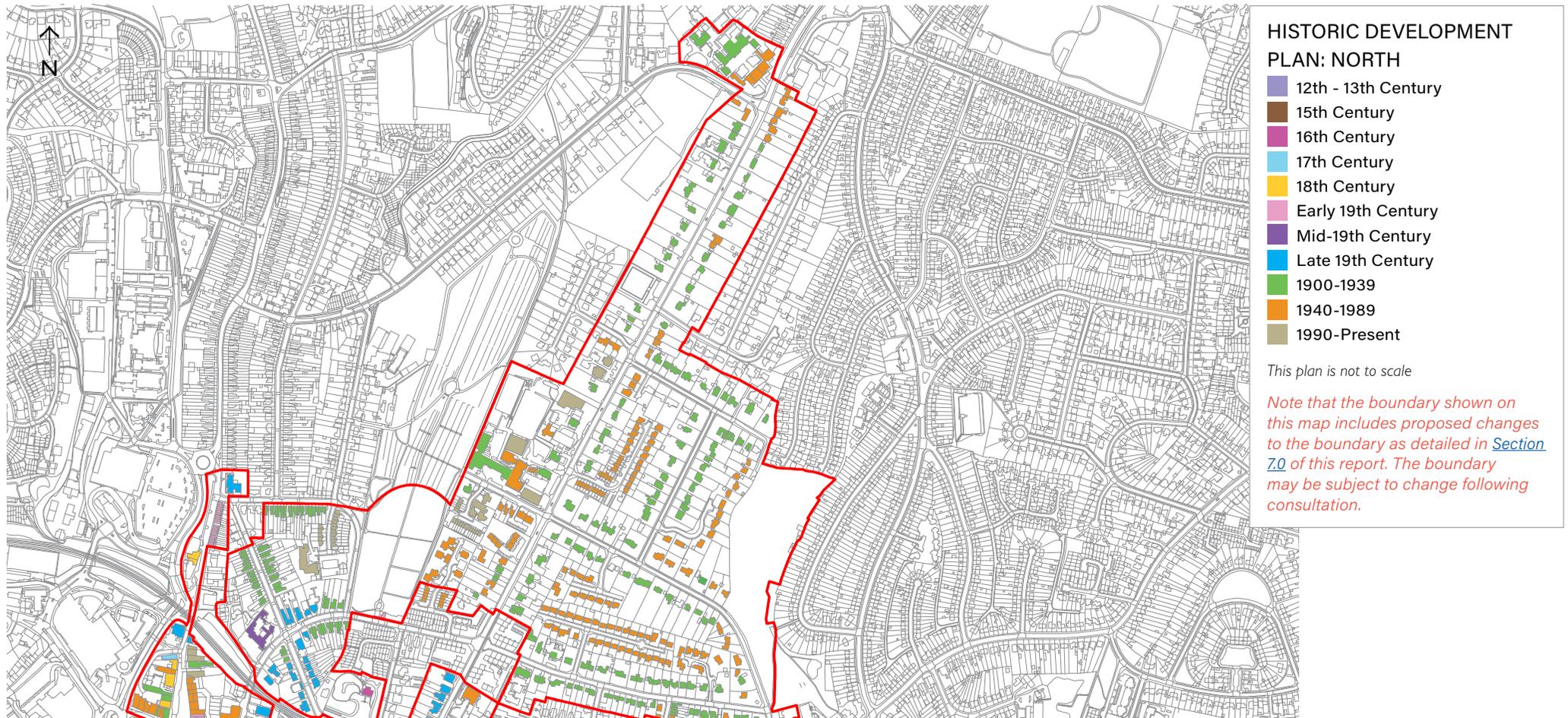
4.71 Eden Shopping centre was developed, expanding the Octagon Shopping centre built in the 1970s with a bus station and new shopping areas. The Chilterns shopping centre remains in Frogmoor but lies vacant. They form the bulk of larger modern developments that directly abut the historic core of the town to the east of the Parish Church.



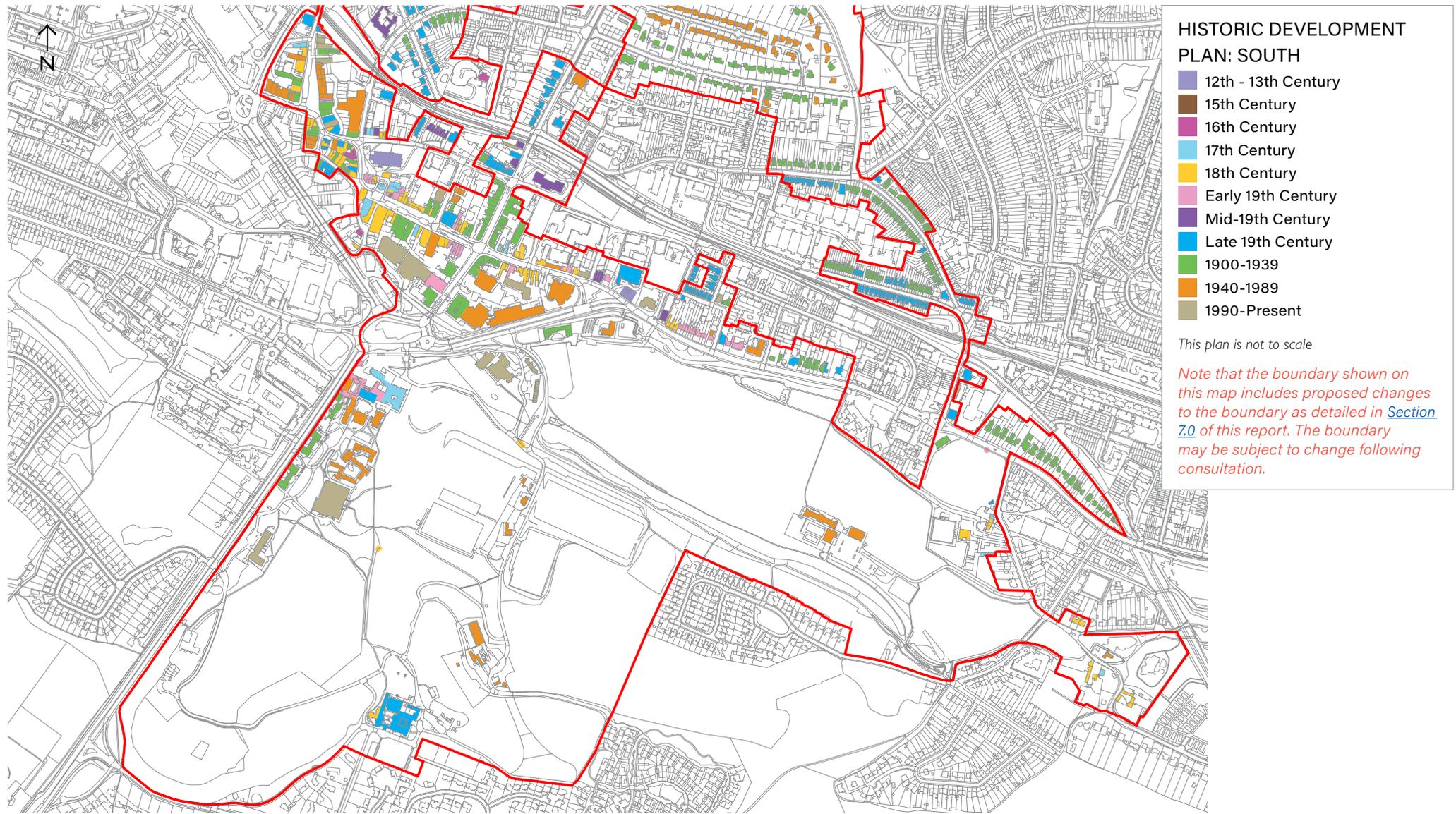
Present day view of Frogmoor

A view of Frogmoor in 1900 compared to the present day. (MHW: 24849, SWOP, High Wycombe Museum) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 24849) (pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image. pending).

SECTION 4.0: ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY



SECTION 4.0: ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY





SECTION 5

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

This section provides analysis and assessment of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the way in which these contribute to its special interest. It considers the character of the Conservation Area as a whole, covering different elements of character including views, spatial analysis, materials and architectural details, public realm, important views and setting.

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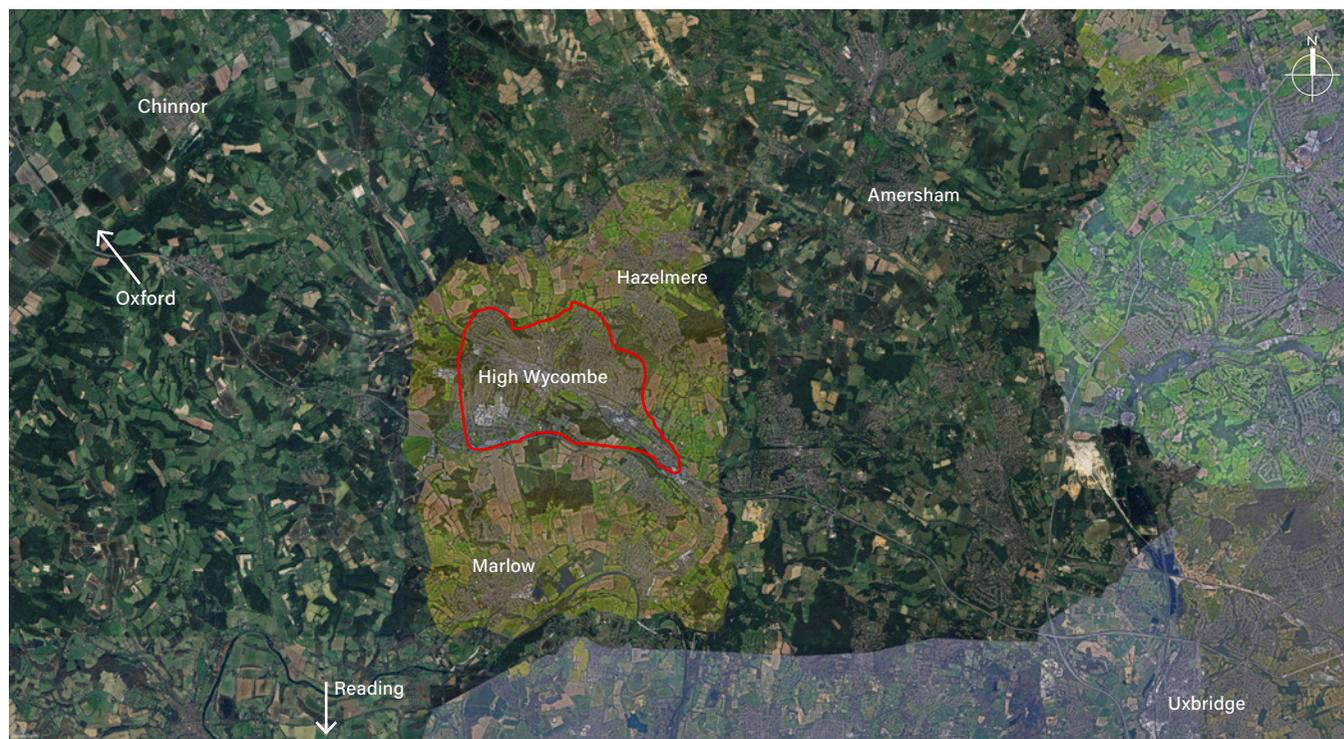


Location and Setting

5.1 High Wycombe is situated at the base of the valley of the River Wye, surrounded by the rolling Chiltern Hills, a designated National Landscape. It is encircled at a distance by larger urban centres, with London to the south-east, Oxford to the north-west, Reading to the south-west and Watford to the east. It lies approximately 10 km south-west of Amersham, linked directly by the A404. The closest town to High Wycombe is the smaller town of Marlow, approximately 6km to the south.

Location

5.2 The proposed Conservation Area boundary encompasses most of High Wycombe's historic centre. Beyond these to the south, the M40 creates a dividing line between Wycombe's commercial developments and farmland. The surroundings to the north encompass the historic village of Hazelmere and Hughenden Park, the home of Benjamin Disraeli. The Conservation Area's immediate setting is characterised by twentieth century urban and suburban development and twenty-first century commercial centres.



— Boundary of High Wycombe's wider urban area. Base plan © GoogleEarth



Setting

5.3 The Conservation Area is framed and defined by 'hanging' woodlands that surround the valley, giving the area a predominantly leafy green character. These appear to 'hang' over the town due to the rising topography, giving High Wycombe an overall green backdrop. Several high-rise modern developments along Easton Street and to the north of the railway mar views of the surrounding woodlands from within the Conservation Area, particularly when viewed from the Rye. Long views over the Conservation Area are possible from high points in its wider setting, particularly to the west at the Disraeli Monument which offers a view of the wider suburbs of High Wycombe and the smaller historic town of West Wycombe. The fast and busy A40 roadway is a prominent feature both visually and audibly, running east to west through the centre of High Wycombe, diverting to the south round the historic core. The M40 forms a border on the southern side of the town, separating modern residential developments from expansive farmland to the south. Roads to the north appear more rural and connect High Wycombe to smaller towns and villages. Late twentieth and early twenty-first century residential developments surround the centre, punctuated by commercial and industrial hubs.

The southernmost extent of the Conservation Area is bordered by Keep Hill Wood, which serves to mask the area from further suburbs and the busy M40, providing an expansive green area alongside the Rye to the south of the town.

5.4 Although not currently within the Conservation Area boundary, several significant buildings and structures adjacent to the boundary contribute to the overall character of place. These include the Old Courthouse; a late nineteenth century structure built in 1876 of yellow stone and used as a magistrate's court and police station bordering Priory Avenue; and, directly to the south, a late nineteenth century row of 22 terraced houses - one of the last surviving complete terraces of workers or artisan cottages built prior to 1876, clearly linking it with the areas' chair making industry. Both are proposed for inclusion within the Conservation Area boundary.⁰¹ To the south of these terraces is a furniture warehouse, sandwiched between modern developments but a rare survivor of the town's industrial past.

⁰¹ <https://local-heritage-list.org.uk/buckinghamshire/asset/3820> and <https://local-heritage-list.org.uk/buckinghamshire/asset/3822>.

5.5 High Wycombe cemetery commands spectacular views over the town and Chiltern Hills, and is a prominent feature of the Priory Avenue and Amersham Hill areas (proposed for inclusion within the Conservation Area boundary). Isolated amongst modern infill development is the Frank Hudson and Sons Furniture Factory. Built 1920, it is one of the last remaining utilitarian chair factories in the area and is architecturally typical for buildings constructed for the furniture industry.⁰² Framing the Frogmoor area is the Temple End railway viaduct, constructed in the early twentieth century. Encroaching on the Conservation Area are large office and parking blocks which do not respond well materially or architecturally to the historic local character within the Conservation Area.

⁰² <https://local-heritage-list.org.uk/buckinghamshire/asset/8518>.



SETTING

- Proposed Conservation Area Boundary
- Railway
- - - Arterial route into High Wycombe

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 01 Hanging woodlands on the Rye, prominently Keep Hill Wood 02 High rise modern offices and parking blocks 03 The M40 04 Residential and commercial infill to the east and southwest 05 Shopping centres and car parks to the south west | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 06 Disraeli Monument 07 West Wycombe 08 High Wycombe Cemetery 09 Frank Hudson and Son Furniture Factory 10 Temple End railway viaduct |
|--|---|

Note that the boundary shown on this map includes proposed changes to the boundary as detailed in [Section 7.0](#) of this report. The boundary may be subject to change following consultation.

This plan is not to scale

SECTION 5.0: CHARACTER ANALYSIS



Large office blocks disrupt the view over the Chiltern Hills from the Rye



Large shopping complexes visible from the Conservation Area



Spectacular views of the wider town from High Wycombe Cemetery



Row of Terraces along Temple End (proposed for inclusion in the Conservation Area boundary)



Viaduct over Arch Way to the north-west of the Conservation Area boundary (proposed for inclusion in the Conservation Area boundary)



A view across to High Wycombe from the Disraeli Monument



Shopping centres and car parks to the southwest



Encroaching high-rises populate the setting of the Conservation Area



Geology

5.6 The historic centre of High Wycombe lies at the bottom of the Wye valley on a bedrock of Chalk with an Alluvium deposit, and gravel heads. The river Wye is one of 200 chalk streams globally, of which 85% globally are in England, making it a very rare habitat. The Wye powered Wycombe’s early industry, with a wealth of mills situated along its banks. Beechwood forests are abundant along the higher chalk banks and provided the timber for Wycombe’s chair industry, allowing the town to develop and expand throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁰³



Proposed Conservation Area Boundary	Gravel Head	<i>Note that the boundary shown on this map includes proposed changes to the boundary as detailed in Section 7.0 of this report. The boundary may be subject to change following consultation.</i>
Alluvium	Chalk Bedrock	
Clay with flints formation	<i>This plan is not to scale</i>	
Sand and Gravel		

03 <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>



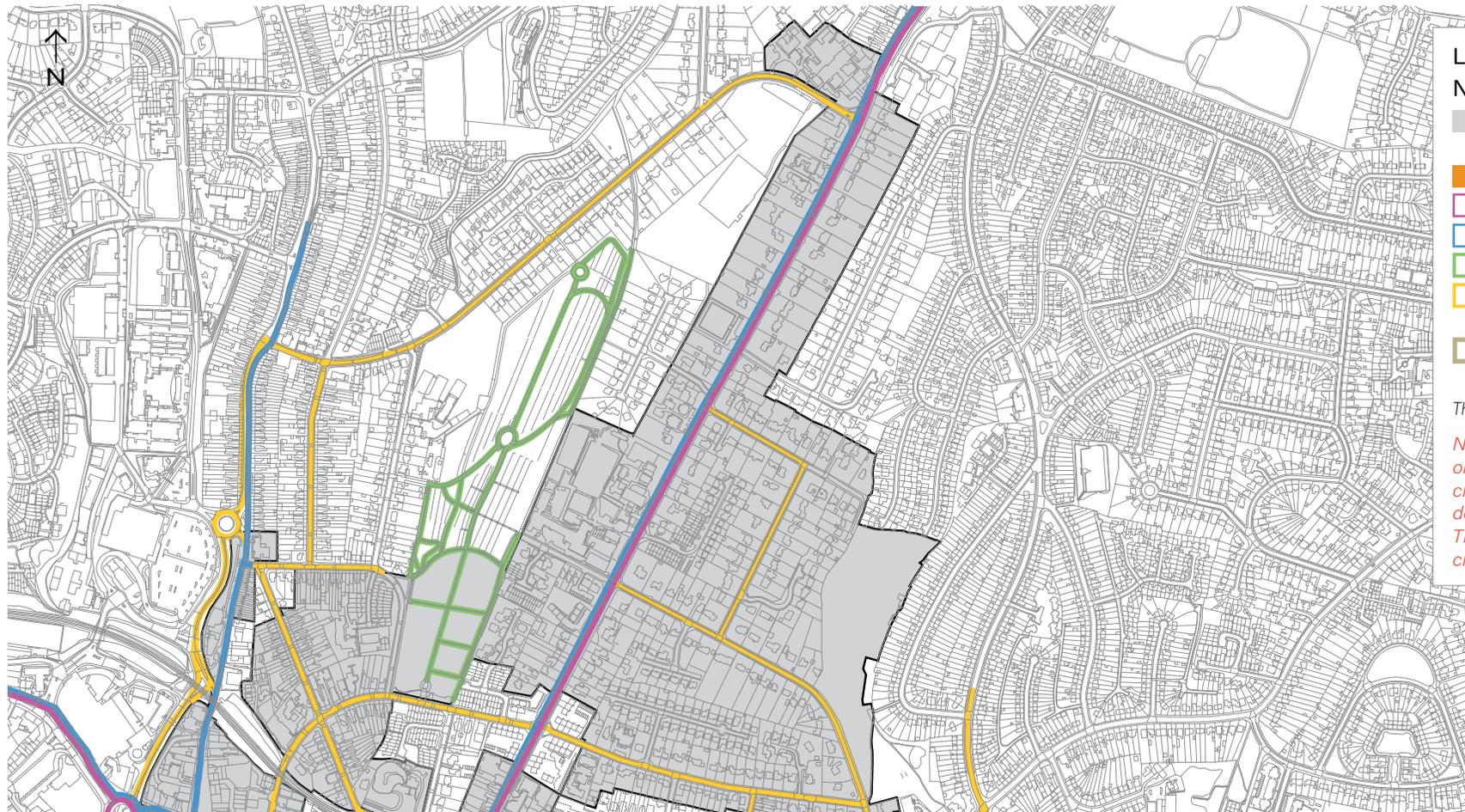
Layout, Planform and Permeability

5.7 The historic core of High Wycombe, focussed towards the west of the Conservation Area, largely follows a medieval street pattern, with the High Street, Church Street, White Hart Street and Paul's Row all pedestrianised, allowing for high permeability on foot. The wide, open High Street plan has remained largely the same since the thirteenth century. Some historic alleyways remain, which lead to yards to the rear of buildings on the High Street and Easton Street, though many have been lost to modern expansion and infill development. Pathways across the Rye follow historic routes along London Road and the landscaped Dyke with a more modern tree-lined pathway leading to the Lido. The A40 to the north of the Rye follows a historic through route, though this has been diverted from its route through the High Street by the Abbey Way roundabout and ring road.

5.8 The three-lane carriageway of the A40 results in a high level of visual and audio disruption along the Rye, detracting from the otherwise peaceful open expanse of parkland and waterways. Pedestrian movement is made difficult in the outer reaches of the town, especially to the west of the Frogmoor area where the A40 becomes a four-lane carriageway, and along the A40 to the north of the Rye, where fast moving traffic makes it difficult and slow to navigate on foot. Amersham Hill is a busy road with narrow pavements which do not experience a high footfall. The nineteenth and early twentieth century houses along Amersham Hill are set back in large plots, mostly with tall fences blocking them from the road noise. In some cases, tall walls and mature hedges act as boundaries. The solid fence boundaries create a denser environment which emphasises the road noise, detracting from the sensory experience of these areas.

5.9 The Wycombe Abbey site is inaccessible to the public, with high boundary walls acting as a strong barrier between the A404 and the secluded atmosphere of the school site. The landscaped grounds slope gently towards the house, with a double tree lined avenue flanking the historic approach to the house from the Rye, a route now no longer in use. Marlow Hill and Amersham Hill are historic entry routes into the town which continue to be heavily used by traffic today.

SECTION 5.0: CHARACTER ANALYSIS



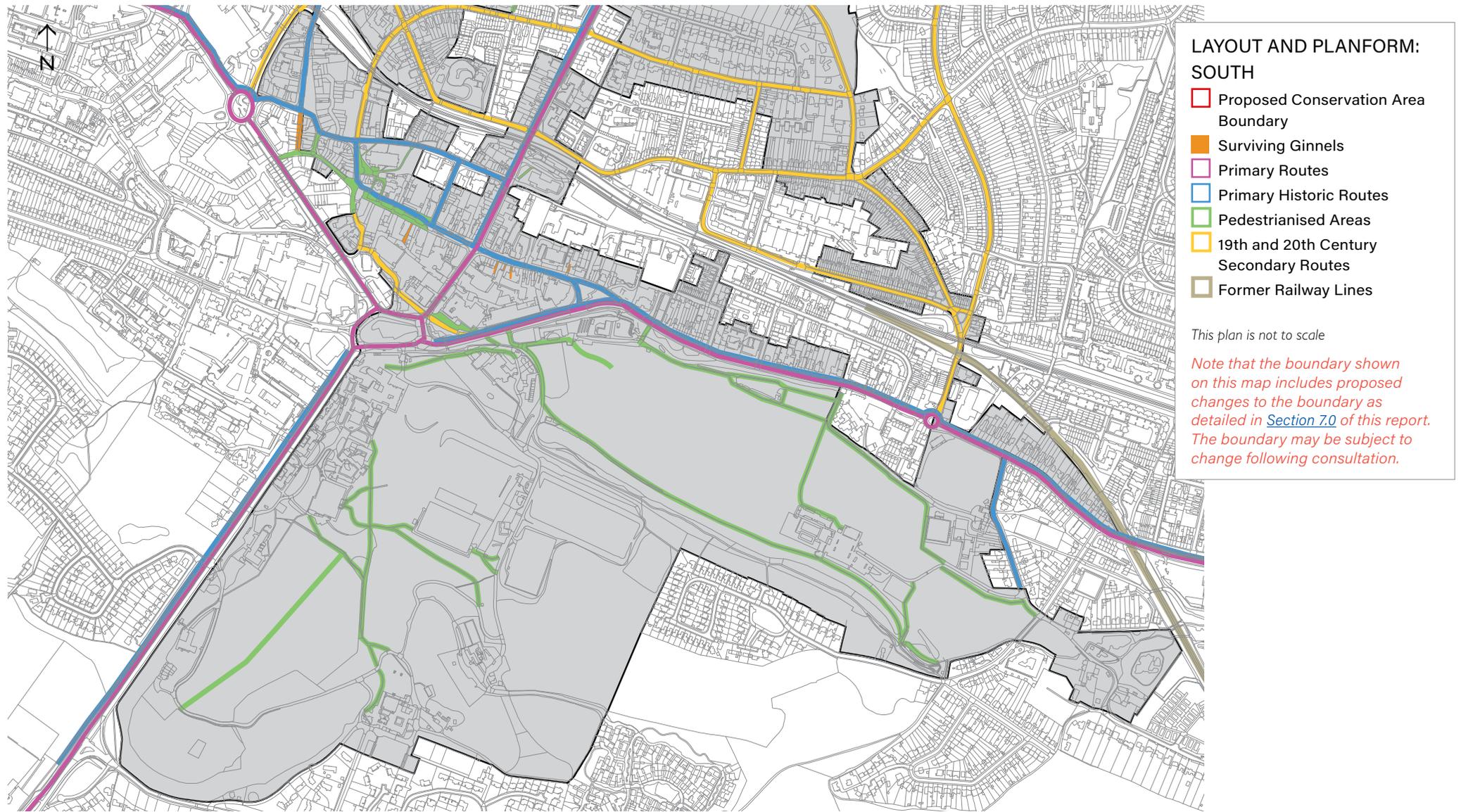
LAYOUT AND PLANFORM: NORTH

- Proposed Conservation Area Boundary
- Surviving Ginnels
- Primary Routes
- Primary Historic Routes
- Pedestrianised Areas
- 19th and 20th Century Secondary Routes
- Former Railway Lines

This plan is not to scale

Note that the boundary shown on this map includes proposed changes to the boundary as detailed in [Section 7.0](#) of this report. The boundary may be subject to change following consultation.

SECTION 5.0: CHARACTER ANALYSIS





Public Squares

5.10 High Wycombe has two primary public squares both located in the town centre. Church Square is the central historic hub of High Wycombe, where a regular market is held, and is located near the site of the medieval marketplace, which evolved into the present High Street. It is bordered by a number of important civic buildings, namely the eighteenth-century Guildhall and encompasses the Little Market Place, and is primarily geared towards hospitality, with The Falcon, a former coaching inn, in a prominent position beside the Guildhall. Its location at the fore of the High Street gives it a lively, busy character. The modern paving in this area is historically appropriate, reminiscent of the traditional Denner Hill Setts which were a common feature of the town, though they now only survive sporadically throughout the centre.

5.11 To the north-west of Church Square is Queens Square, situated between the historic centre to the east, and the developed Frogmoor commercial centre to the west. It extends from a junction with White Hart Street, north to the junction with Oxford Street and Church Street. Due to its location at a junction this forms more of a crossing point than a place to pause. It is dominated by hospitality but does contain some retail outlets. It is of a mixed character, with its historic form disrupted by modern development to the west. Historic structures cohabit alongside modern development and street furniture.

5.12 A large teardrop shaped open area in Frogmoor is on the location of a former public garden. Patterned paving is reminiscent of the Frogmoor fountain that was a defining feature of the area in the early twentieth century, prior to its removal in the 1940s. This open space is flanked by the Chilterns Shopping Centre to the east and the remaining historic core of Frogmoor to the west. Benches along the west side of the square and public artwork encourage people to stop and spend time in this area, though parking spaces to the west and modern and garish shopfronts to the east detract from the character of the square.

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Modern development to the west of High Wycombe visible from the end of White Hart Street. Queens Square extends to the north.



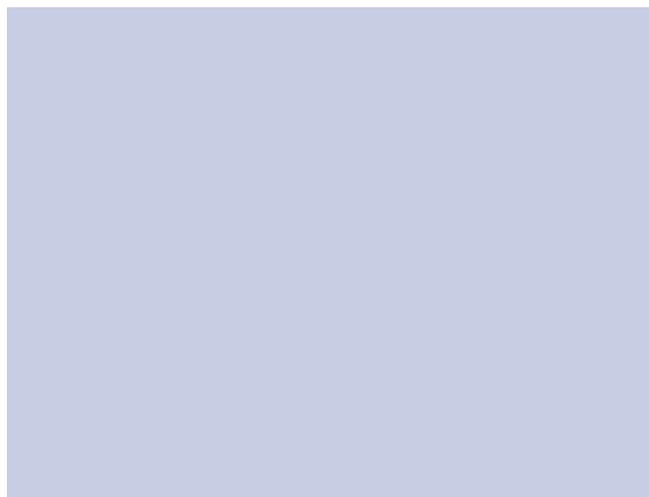
Church Square from the east, looking west. Church Square extends to the north behind the Little Market House.



The rear of Little Market House, taken from the north of Church Square



The Clock House dominates the skyline of Frogmoor



The Frogmoor fountain, c.1895 (BFP: 03211) <https://swop.org.uk/swop/swop.htm> (Search ref 03211) (permissions pending, please follow link and search reference provided to see the image.)



The North of Queens Square, looking towards Frogmoor at the junction with Oxford Street and Church Street



Green Spaces and Waterways

5.13 High Wycombe has an abundance of green spaces and waterways, the most prominent being the Rye, a public park situated to the southeast of the centre. It contains numerous leisure facilities, including two play parks for families and Wycombe Rye Lido, built in the 1950s, but consists largely of open parkland with mature trees dotted around the perimeter and bordering the Dyke. Within it sits Pann Mill, surrounded by a small, landscaped garden. Within the town is the small Library Garden, used to display commemorative planting schemes. It is in a prominent location at the junction of High Street, Crendon Street and Easton Street. Centrally located, the churchyard is a green space at the heart of the historic core, with mature tree growth that gives it a sheltered and peaceful character and benches to encourage its use as a public space.

5.14 Wycombe Museum has a semi landscaped garden which include the underground remains of a potential motte fortification. They have a private and secluded character due to the mature foliage around its boundary, though piecemeal views across the town from within the grounds are possible. They are used to host several community events and include a sensory garden. The

landscaped parkland of Wycombe Abbey is not accessible to the general public, but the expansive woodland that surrounds it frames much of the view southwards from the town and is therefore a very prominent feature of the landscape. The rolling Chiltern Hills are visible from the highest elevations of the Conservation Area, creating a verdant atmosphere for the suburbs of High Wycombe.

5.15 High Wycombe Cemetery is a large expanse of open land in an otherwise built-up suburb. It is bordered with a range of mature trees which fits with the leafy character of the wider Amersham Hill area which serves to visually shield development in the area when viewed from viewpoints along the Rye and Marlow Hill (proposed for inclusion in the Conservation Area boundary).

5.16 Within the Conservation Area, waterways are a central feature along the Rye but disappear under the A40 only to reemerge along West Wycombe Road. The Wye runs alongside the north side of the Rye, but is not a prominent feature, bordered by iron railings along a paved walkway. In 1761, the grounds of Wycombe Abbey were relandscaped and enclosed and the Wye was partially diverted into a man-made lake known as the Dyke which runs parallel at the rear of the parkland, ending opposite Wycombe Abbey. It is

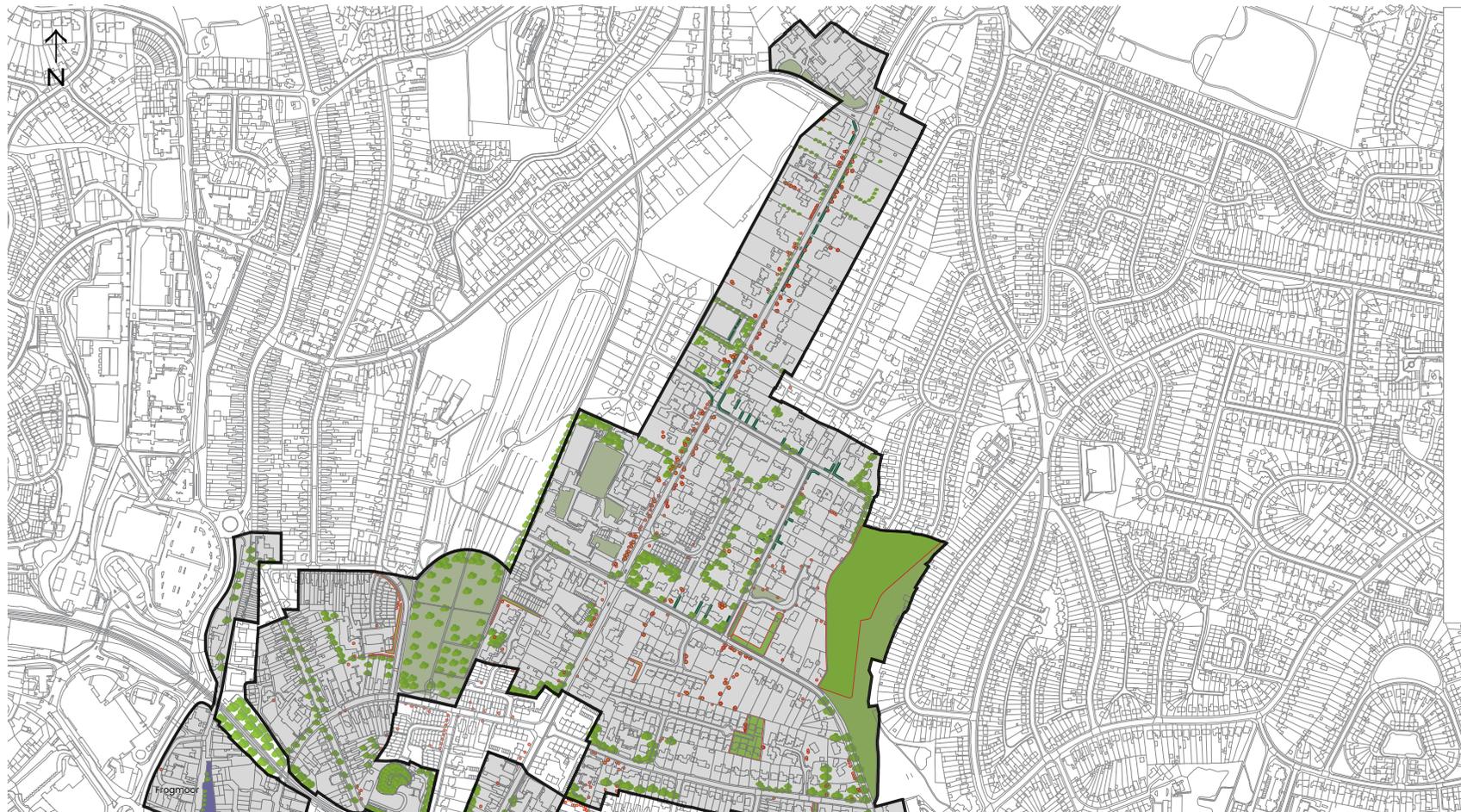
accessible from the south side of the Rye and creates a calm and refreshing atmosphere particularly in the summer months.

5.17 The Dyke continues to the west of the Conservation Area where houses and former mills along Bassetbury Lane have built up around the network of waterways which contribute to the rural and tranquil character of this area. There exists variegated green space, punctuated by historic mill buildings of Bassetbury Manor and bordered by Funges Meadow Nature Reserve. This meadow and large pond are not open to the public but is made available to school groups.



The museum gardens surrounding Wycombe Museum.

SECTION 5.0: CHARACTER ANALYSIS



GREEN SPACES PLAN: NORTH

- Proposed High Wycombe Conservation Area Boundary
- Tree Coverage
- TPOs
- Water/Waterways
- Green Spaces
- Woodlands
- Hedges
- Church Square
- Queens Square
- Frogmoor Open Area

This plan is not to scale.

Note that the boundary shown on this map includes proposed changes to the boundary as detailed in [Section 7.0](#) of this report. The boundary may be subject to change following consultation.

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Open expanse of the Rye looking towards the 'hanging' woodlands



Looking west over Wycombe Cemetery



Mature tree growth along the shallow water of the Dyke



The small library garden on the junction between the High Street and Queen Victoria Road



View east across the greenspace adjacent Lucas Wood.



The culverted Wye opens to an area of hard landscaping to the south of the former Buckinghamshire Council Offices.



5.18 Landscaping consists of small, isolated areas of organic and water landscaping, concentrated in the civic area.

Views

5.19 Views within, into and out of the Conservation Area help to define its townscape character and setting. Views into the Conservation Area are divided into long, medium and short distance, with each category having considerably different character. This is not a comprehensive study of views, and the exclusion of a viewpoint does not mean it is not important.

5.20 Views within the Conservation Area have a great range and character. Many consist of wide vistas owing to High Wycombe's position in the Chiltern Hills, with views up the valley slopes to the surrounding 'hanging' woodlands and across the Wycombe Abbey grounds and across the town from the surrounding hills. The medieval street pattern of the historic core results in channelled views either opening to the wide, open plan street layouts and squares or ending in views towards prominent landmark buildings like the Church, Guildhall and The Clock House. Residential roads offer channelled views defined by built form or plot boundaries. Views

out to the west of the Conservation Area are of a different character altogether as encroaching high-rise modern developments dominate the setting, offering narrow and insular views.

5.21 The rising topography of the valley that surrounds High Wycombe offers wide-ranging and panoramic vistas of the town and the Chiltern Hills beyond. Long distance vistas across the town are possible from raised locations on Amersham Hill, Tom Burt's Hill, Wycombe Abbey grounds and, in the winter months when the trees are not in leaf, views from the Disraeli Monument. These views afford long vistas over the historic core which would historically have revealed the tight grain of the buildings in the core with the skyline defined by the Church Tower. Although modern commercial developments are becoming increasingly prominent, the Church Tower remains a striking feature of the vista, albeit diminished from its historical prominence. Whilst the dominance of the Church Tower is still decipherable, these views are now interrupted by large modern developments which include the Fire Station, Swan Theatre and Car Park, Thame House, and the Sword building. Similarly, the views towards the historic core from Amersham Hill are partly obscured by a large office block on the junction of Birdcage Walk and Amersham

Hill and the roof of a large modern building further into the town to the south.

5.22 At a medium distance, expansive views of the Conservation Area and its setting are found to the east, with the Rye offering important vistas of 'hanging' woodlands both to the north and south, as well as views along the main historic route into High Wycombe along London Road. Views are more confined to the west due to the more densely built-up historic core. To the south, medium distance views are possible across Wycombe Abbey's landscaped grounds and its associated buildings are visible in longer distance views from the north, although these are diminished by the large encroaching building of Buckinghamshire University which borders the Conservation Area.

5.23 Views into the town centre approaching from the west along the A40, the primary arterial route into and out of the town, are framed by expansive rural landscape to the south and attractive eighteenth and nineteenth century houses to the north. Narrow, glimpsed views of the historic core are visible from the raised overpass leading north-west from the Wycombe Abbey roundabout. The main thoroughfare of Amersham Hill allows views down into the historic core. The road itself

SECTION 5.0: CHARACTER ANALYSIS



is characterised by long channelled views of a largely green character, where glimpses of nineteenth and early twentieth century housing can be seen. These are set back from the road behind boundary walls, tall fences, and mature growth which create restricted views and give the road an enclosed character. The linear roads that branch off Amersham Hill end in vistas of the surrounding suburbs to the east and west, as well as the hills beyond. Wycombe Cemetery has green and leafy views throughout, with longer distance views looking west over the modern suburbs that rise across the sloping hills and to West Wycombe beyond.

5.24 The junction between the High Street, Crendon and Easton Street offers framed views up the valley slopes and along the historic High Street. These views are framed by the attractive and cohesive buildings on three corners of the junction which were constructed during the early twentieth century redevelopment of the area. The medieval planform at the western end of the town centre offers unfolding views around relatively narrow winding streets, opening to wider vistas. Views are framed by commercial buildings of varying character either side of the street. Their varied heights, architectural styles and character associated with their piecemeal development over time contributes positively to these views. Some historic ginnels

remain, offering glimpsed views into enclosed courtyards and breaking up the continuous lines of buildings. Looking south along Frogmoor, views terminate in the monumental early twentieth century railway viaduct and the attractive Clock House. The three converging streets of White Hart Street, Paul's Row and Church Street, all lead to the central landmark buildings of the Church and Guildhall and the wide High Street beyond. Significant views of these buildings, both direct and unfolding, occur on the surrounding streets and in views across Church Square. Large vehicles such as buses and lorries routed through the town centre can mar views of the Church when travelling along Church Street.

5.25 Local landmarks define many of the views within the Conservation Area, particularly within the town centre. The domed cupola of The Clock House defines views through Frogmoor, with the early twentieth century viaduct looming behind. The Parish Church is the oldest local landmark and forms the central convergence point for the remaining medieval street pattern when viewed from within the town, alongside the Guildhall which dominates views along the High Street from both the east and west. Wide-ranging views of the Church from the valley slopes are disrupted by modern commercial buildings that dwarf the Church Tower, reducing its prominence in the town

vista. Shorter distance views of the United Reform Church from the west end of the Rye and London Road are also a defining feature of the area.



White Hart Street leading to modern development, marking the end of the historic core to the west.



Channelled view down church street ending in the Guildhall.

SECTION 5.0: CHARACTER ANALYSIS



Wide planform of Easton Street offering a wide streetscape.



The Rye offers views of the hanging woodlands that line the valley slopes.



The Clock House is a prominent feature of Frogmoor with its domed cupola and is framed by the viaduct behind.



Modern commercial development encroaches to the west of the boundary.



Views into the historic core and the Parish Church beyond from the raised overpass of the A40 heading northwest.



Large villas and mature growth characterise the views in the nineteenth and early twentieth century suburbs.

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Mature foliage and boundary fences characterise views along Amersham Hill, giving houses a secluded feel.



From within the grounds of Wycombe Abbey, the Buckinghamshire University building can still be seen quite prominently in the background, and Wycombe Hospital just over the tree line.



Looking north across Wycombe Abbey's grounds to the wider town beyond. Amersham Hill can be seen to the right of the view.



View from Tom Burt's Hill, the Church Tower is less prominent than larger modern developments.

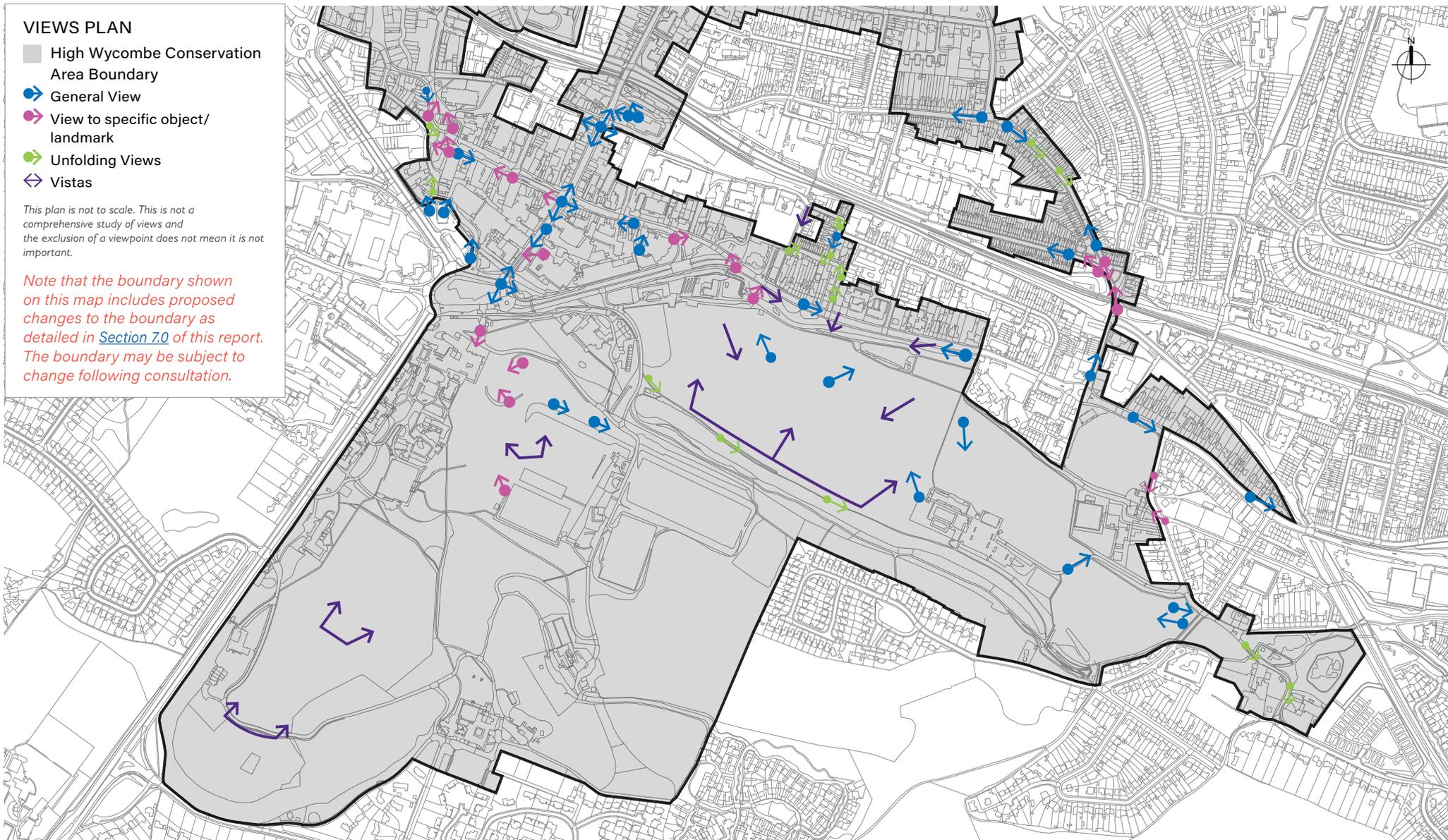


Looking south from the Disraeli Monument, a more expansive view of the wider townscape is obscured by summer foliage.

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Atmosphere

5.26 The High Street of High Wycombe has a busy character, the wide pedestrianised street layout offering plenty of space for shoppers and outdoor seating for hospitality that populates the area surrounding the Guildhall and Little Market House. A market is held regularly in this area. Retail largely consists of chain stores and lacks a local character, and a number of shopfronts stand empty which detracts from the otherwise bustling atmosphere. The main commercial area along White Hart Street and into Queens Square has a busy and modern feel, with recent public realm improvements in the area and a number of modern infill developments. Although an open space, Frogmoor lacks a social atmosphere, with the majority of pedestrians passing through, though redevelopment plans are likely to improve the atmosphere in this area.

5.27 Areas of green space within the Conservation Area have a tranquil character compared to the bustle of the town. These include the Churchyard, the Cemetery to the north and the Rye. The mature trees and benches in the Churchyard create a calm and welcoming atmosphere, and the space feels secluded but social, with lots of people utilising the area whilst the graveyard has a secluded and peaceful atmosphere. The Rye is a rural and expansive area which encourages relaxation with the peaceful meandering Wye, landscaped Dyke and expansive woodlands creating a positive calming atmosphere. The sheltered social hub of Wycombe Museum and gardens plays host to several community and education events throughout the year and encourages an atmosphere of community. Bassetbury and the surrounding buildings have a quiet and rural atmosphere created by mature foliage, trickling streams and agricultural style buildings.

5.28 Heavy traffic around the town and on the main thoroughfares into the town detract from the atmosphere because of noise and fast-moving vehicles. The busy traffic to the north of the Rye is at odds with the calm atmosphere of the Rye itself. Similarly, the busy traffic of Amersham Hill Road impacts the suburban leafy atmosphere of the large set-back twentieth-century villas and the quieter linear residential streets that branch off it, leading to the quiet expanse of Wycombe Cemetery to the west. Priory Avenue is similarly characterised by a quiet suburban feel, which experiences a rush of activity around school drop off and pick up times due to the Hamilton Academy on the junction of Priory Road and Priory Avenue.

SECTION 5.0: CHARACTER ANALYSIS



The wide High Street with good footfall



A characterful café at the north end of Frogmoor



Secluded café area behind the eighteenth-century Little Market House on the High Street.



The wide expanse of Easton Street with minimal vehicular or pedestrian traffic



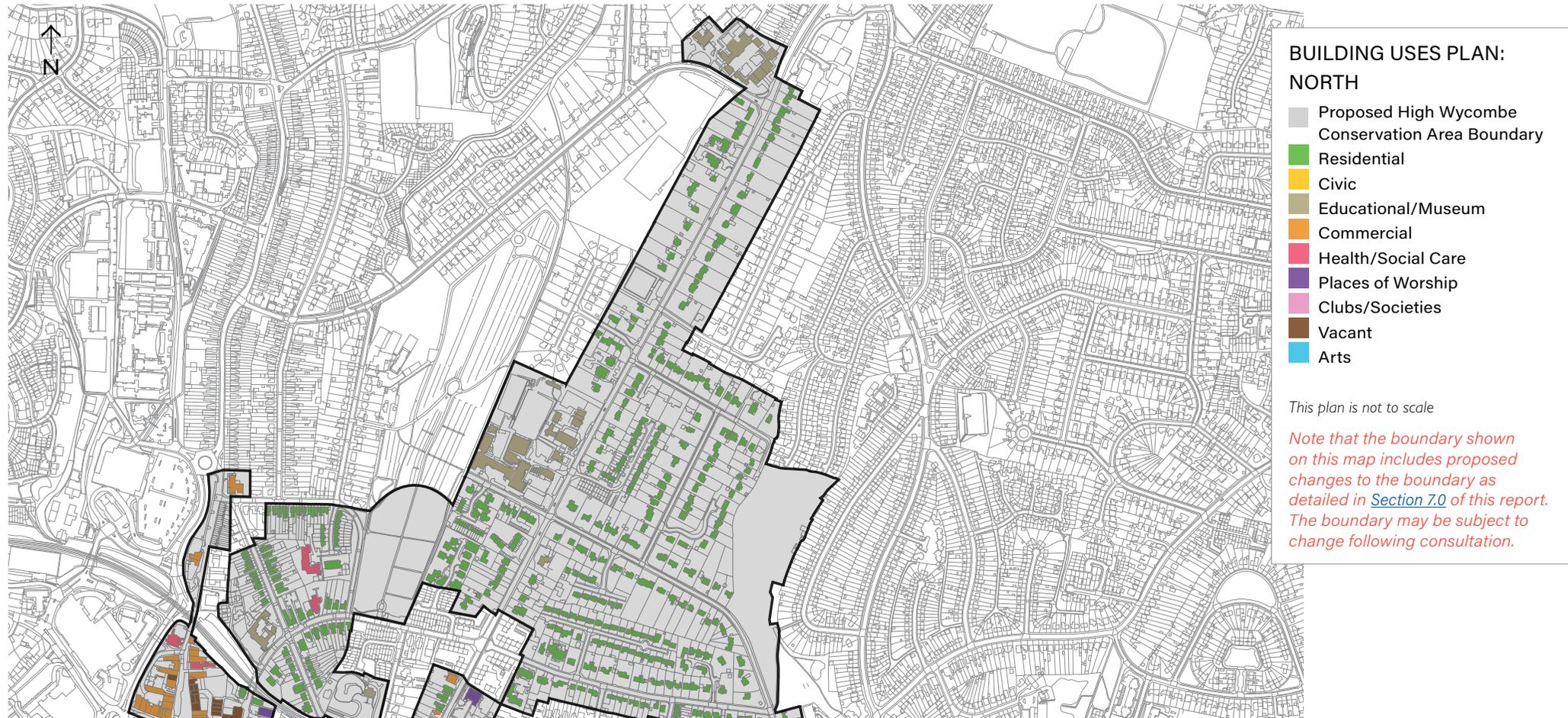
Priory Avenue has a quiet suburban character



The busy inclined road of Amersham Hill dominates the atmosphere



Building Types and Uses







Commercial

5.29 The town has lost most of its historic shopfronts with most of them being replaced. There are a few exceptions found in banks and public houses, some of which were historic coaching inns, although isolated historic shopfronts survive along Easton Street and the High Street, discussed further in [paragraphs 6.39-6.46](#) of the management plan and are located in [Character Area 1](#). Some sixteenth and seventeenth century buildings survive behind eighteenth-century façades, but most commercial buildings along the High Street date from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with later twentieth century infills. Some later twentieth century commercial buildings located in Frogmoor are vacant, with older eighteenth century buildings having lost their historic façades. Some commercial premises have been converted to residential use along Easton Street. Commercial buildings are concentrated in [Character Area 1](#).

Residential

5.30 The residential areas of the Conservation Area are concentrated to the north, extending up the valley slope, although some early development remains bordering London Road and the railway as well as in Bassetbury ([Character Area 2](#) and [Character Area 4](#)). Late nineteenth and early twentieth century developments along Amersham Hill and Priory Avenue ([Character Area 2](#)) remains primarily residential. [Character Area 1](#) has some converted commercial premises nearer the centre of town and with some in educational use and [Character Area 4](#) remains principally residential.



Early twentieth-century villas along Priory Avenue



The development of Saffron Platt is an example of early twentieth century workers terraces



Civic and Arts

5.31 The development of Queen Victoria Road was designated for the construction of civic buildings, such as the Old Town Hall, built in the early twentieth century, and subsequent civic buildings were constructed around this site, which is to the east of the High Street. The former public library, now a community hub, was built in the 1930s, with the former Buckinghamshire Council offices also constructed in the same decade. (see [Character Area 1](#)).

5.32 High Wycombe has two main arts centres, located next to each other. The Old Town Hall is now used primarily as an arts venue, partnered with the Wycombe Swan Theatre to its rear, opened in 1992 (see [Character Area 1](#)).



Former Buckinghamshire Council Offices, built 1932



The Wycombe Swan Theatre to the rear of the Old Town Hall



The Old Town Hall, now an arts venue



Religious Buildings

5.33 Religious buildings are scattered throughout the town. The oldest is the Anglican All Saints Parish Church, constructed in 1273 with nineteenth-century gothic alterations. Wesley Methodist Church and Union Baptist Church also lie within the town centre. St Augustine's Catholic Church, Trinity United Reformed Church and a Quaker Meeting House are in more residential areas and are discussed in more detail in [Character Area 2](#) and [Character Area 3](#).



All Saints Parish Church in the historic centre



St Augustine's Catholic Church on Amersham Hill

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Trinity United Church on London Road



The Union Baptist Church on Easton Street



Wesley Methodist Church on Priory Road



Quaker Meeting House on London Road



Education

5.34 There are multiple prominent schools in the Conservation Area, notably Wycombe Abbey boarding school (see [Character area 5](#)). There are a number of historic schools set up by the third Earl Carrington, and Godstowe Grammar School is prominently located along Amersham Hill (see [Character Area 2](#)). The Hamilton Academy is a nineteenth century school on Priory Avenue.

Other

5.35 There is one large nursing home located on Priory Avenue, and discrete assisted living residences scattered across the area. The Riverside Club and High Wycombe Liberal Club are the only private members clubs in the area.



The rear of Godstowe School on Amersham Hill.



The east front of Wycombe Abbey boarding school for girls



Vacant Buildings

5.36 There are a number of notable vacant historic buildings in High Wycombe at present. There are a significant number of empty retail units in the town centre, although their appearance has been enhanced by a public art project in some cases. Along the High Street, both No.1 and the twice jettied No.3 have long stood vacant in a prominent area of the street. Easton Street also features historic buildings with deteriorated street frontages. To the north of the railway line, on the west side of Amersham Hill stands multiple vacant early twentieth century terraces which presently have an untidy character, with their front gardens overgrown.



Painted shutters on empty retail units in Frogmoor



An empty re-rendered early-twentieth century terrace on Amersham Hill.



Prominent historic buildings on the High Street stand vacant.



Listed building, numbers 89 and 90 on Easton Street are both vacant and in need of repair



Architectural Quality

5.37 High Wycombe contains a broad range of architectural styles, each concentrated in different areas of the town. The thirteenth-century All Saints Church is flanked by some timber-framed buildings, but the overall character of the High Street derives predominantly from eighteenth and nineteenth century façades. Victorian and Edwardian villas line the valley slopes along Priory Avenue and Amersham Hill and continue east along London Road. Workers' terraces survive scattered throughout the area. There are some examples of early twentieth century art deco, such as along Crendon Street, as well as Arts and Crafts designs along Amersham Hill. The area is punctuated with post-war commercial and residential developments.

5.38 Civic buildings consist of the early nineteenth century Old Town Hall, built in the Queen Anne style, and interwar buildings like the neo-Georgian police station. Post-war developments include the council offices and the Magistrates' Court. All are located to the southeast of the High Street.

5.39 Pann Mill is the only remaining industrial building (entirely reconstructed in the 1970s) in the Conservation Area, though modern areas of development just outside the boundary would once have been populated by a higher concentration of furniture factories and warehouses.

Palette of Architectural Styles



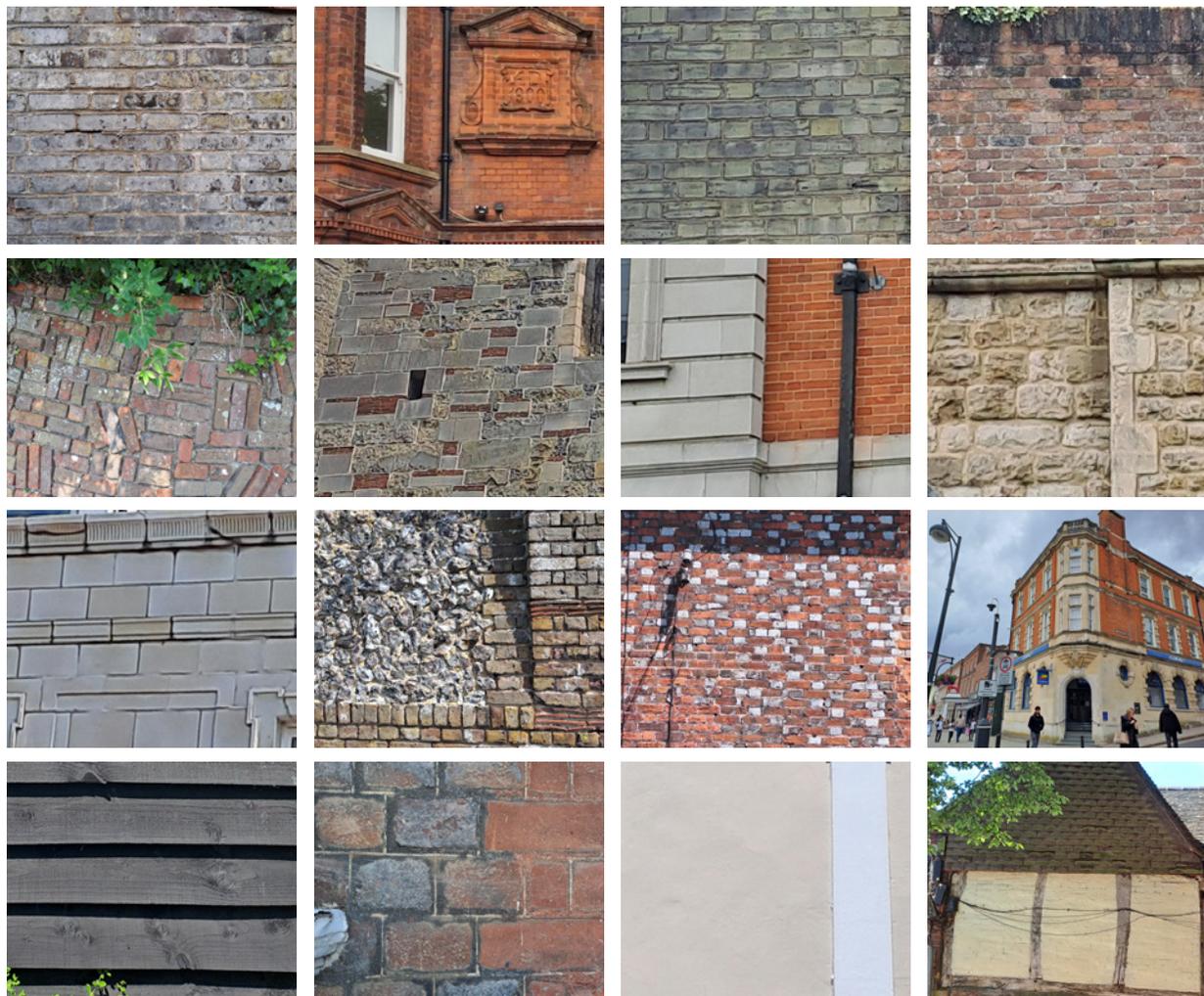


Materials and Detailing

Walls

5.40 High Wycombe has a broad array of architectural styles, yet continuity is found in its building materials. Older buildings are timber framed, but most nineteenth century buildings are of a red or gault brick finish, laid in English or Flemish bond. There are some examples of penny-struck pointing, terracotta detailing and carved brickwork. Early twentieth century buildings are in a darker brick, including those along Crendon Street and the Buckinghamshire Council Offices, and are in English and Flemish bond. An unusual header bond using vitrified bricks is used along Easton Street—a finish that would have been expensive to produce and desirable in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Other finishes include a simple plasterwork or painted render, and knapped flintwork on prominent and important buildings and walls. Modern boundary walls use brick in a simple Stretcher bond. All Saints Parish Church is one of the few buildings constructed out of stone in the Conservation Area, but stone detailing can be found on prominent buildings like the Old Town Hall. Pann Mill is one of the only weatherboarded buildings in the Conservation Area.

Palette of Wall Styles





Roofs

5.41 Roof forms vary considerably within the Conservation Area. Steeply pitched medieval and seventeenth century hipped roofs with gable ends remain on some of the older buildings in the town centre alongside traditional gabled and flat roofs of twentieth and later twentieth century developments. Paired gables at right angles to a pitched roof are characteristic of the Victorian and Edwardian suburbs. Modern developments tend to have a simple pitched or flat roof. The roofscape and chimneys are visible from both the street and in long-distance views owing to the valley within which High Wycombe is nestled.

5.42 Roofs largely consist of clay roof tiling, with the occasional use of natural slate and pantile along Amersham Hill and Priory Avenue. Clay tile is most commonly used and is noticeably found on pre-nineteenth century buildings along the main historic thoroughfares into and through the town, and on Arts and Crafts style buildings along Amersham Hill. Pantile is less common—its most prominent use can be seen on the 1932 historic Public Library on Victoria Road, now used as a community hub. Slate tile is used frequently on gabled terraces along Priory Avenue, and large villas in residential areas. There are some examples of slate replacements, where only one property in

the pair has redone the tiling, resulting in a two-tone appearance of old and new slate. Some have been replaced with detracting concrete tiles. Modern buildings have flat roofs that are not visible from street level.

5.43 Lead domes are an eye-catching feature of prominent buildings within the townscape. This includes Little Market House (eighteenth century), the cupola of The Clock House to the north of Frogmoor, and the small protruding clock tower dome on the Old Town Hall.

5.44 The gothic tower of All Saints Parish Church is a significant tall structure at the heart of the town, dominating the roofscape from within the historic centre. This is a common nesting site for a pair of Peregrine Falcons, a bird which is commonly seen soaring around High Wycombe and which adds to its distinctive sense of place. Large flat roofed modern developments, however, feature more prominently when surveying the townscape from the valley slopes.

Palette of Roof Styles





Windows

Palette of Window Styles

5.45 There are a variety of historic windows throughout High Wycombe, but sash windows are the predominant form throughout the Conservation Area. These range from the eighteenth through to the early twentieth century, with the earliest examples having a shallow arched head. Historic sash windows are predominantly smaller paned, although there are some examples of four light and two light windows, especially in the residential suburbs that climb the valley slopes, although these are largely modern replacements in uPVC rather than historically appropriate timber. The popular Arts and Crafts style of projecting tall casement windows can be found predominantly along Amersham Hill, alongside Victorian and Edwardian villas with two-storey projected bay windows. Multangular towers (multi storey towers with multiple faces) can be found on the larger villas along Amersham Hill, featuring small sash windows. There are a limited number of elaborate decorative windows, found on important buildings in the town centre, as well as decorative Art-Deco style panes. Modern dormer extensions are a common feature on buildings throughout the Conservation Area in both the town centre and suburbs. Unfortunately, recent window replacement with uPVC has been widely adopted, particularly in residential areas, which is discussed in [paragraphs 6.25-6.27](#) of the Management Plan.





Doors

5.46 The older residential buildings in the suburbs of the Conservation Area have largely retained their historic doors, dating from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. This is particularly visible on terrace houses on the western end of London Road. Doors along Amersham Hill are rarely visible from the street, owing to the extensive foliage growth and the set-back nature of the plots. Where visible, some doors are of an obviously modern character. Many early twentieth century villas along Priory Avenue have plain fanlights with contemporary or historically sympathetic doors below.

5.47 Classicised door cases are found on both commercial and residential premises on London Road and Easton Street. Doors and doorcases along these roads are generally original although some are in a bad state of repair, particularly on Easton Street. Doors of important buildings are large and of panelled dark wood, which give a striking effect.

Palette of Door Styles





Building Scale, Form and Massing

5.48 Buildings in the medieval core of the town, centred around the Parish Church and west towards Frogmoor, have a commercial ground floor rising only two or three storeys with roof design and height varying from plot to plot owing to the variance in design. Older buildings tend to have pitched or cross gable roofs. The Church Tower projects above these smaller scale buildings. The buildings along the High Street are all largely three-storey constructions, predominantly eighteenth-century in date with parapets (walls on a roof) disguising pitched roofs behind. There are some early twentieth century buildings which maintain the same building height but span multiple plots with a horizontal linear emphasis compared to the vertical emphasis of earlier buildings on narrow burgage plots. There is a single narrow jettied sixteenth century timber-framed building that stands out amongst these classical fronts, a visual reminder of the original burgage plot layout of the High Street. Most of the upper storeys retain a grand, wide frontage, but the lower shopfronts are highly varied. Buildings constructed along the High Street in the twentieth century have decreasing levels of architectural detailing throughout the century, with later twentieth century buildings having a flatter and less compartmentalised appearance compared to earlier, more decorative styles.

Significant extensions and alteration to the rear of the long narrow plots of the High Street has occurred, largely of a flat roof design. This does not carry through onto Easton Street, where rear extensions are largely pitched roof single storey extensions, extending horizontal to the street along historic burgage plot lines (narrow land plots typical of the medieval period). Jumbled small modern infills characterise the rears of buildings along the High Street, with a few small courtyards used for parking.

Civic buildings along Queen Victoria Road occupy wide plots with grand symmetrical building façades of 7 to 11 bays wide. The early twentieth century Old Town Hall dominates the streetscape. The red brick Art Deco former Buckinghamshire Council building, erected in the early 1930s, presents an attractive 11 bay façade to the street set back within a large plot with large later twentieth century extensions tucked away to the rear.

Building massing differs considerably along the late Victorian and early Edwardian suburbs of High Wycombe, where large Arts and Crafts style villas on Amersham Hill are set back from the road in wide plots. Buildings along the hill all largely consist of two to three storey detached residential of varied Edwardian and Arts and Crafts design, although many have been greatly altered in

the modern period. Amersham Hill's older architecture is punctuated with post-war housing developments often set at right angles to the main street. Larger buildings along London Road have a similar form to houses in Amersham Hill and Priory Avenue. Priory Avenue is more linear in its form, consisting of large three-storey semi-detached gabled symmetrical villas with later rear extensions. There are some grander detached Edwardian villas in prominent positions such as at junctions to roads. Attic extensions are indicated by the addition of rear dormer extensions and roof light windows.

There are a number of smaller eighteenth and early nineteenth century terrace houses along the east end of London Road, on Saffron Platt, Gordon Road and along Temple End. Whilst those on London Road are higher status and set back from the road with long front gardens and those on the other roads are workers cottages often fronting directly onto the road, all are characterised by their two storey, two bay scale with pitched roofs.

Within the Conservation Area are a number of large scale Victorian schools. Although built in one phase these have a variety of ranges with pitched roofs, turrets, towers and projecting bays which create an undulating roofscape and characterful form to the building.



Commercial Premises and Shopfronts

5.49 Most commercial premises in High Wycombe consist of shops, cafés and restaurants, with public houses centred around the Guildhall, and several former bank premises occupied by other businesses.

5.50 Very few historic shopfronts remain visible in the town centre. Ground floor shop fronts generally follow traditional composition with large windows, fascia signage above and doors located centrally or to one side (for more details on the features which make up a traditional shopfront see the [Shopfront Terminology](#) section of the Management Plan). There are isolated examples of bow-window shopfronts that remain along the High Street and Easton Street, although in most cases the glass has been replaced. Often, however, shops have excess modern signage that covers architectural features, unbalanced proportions, intrusive roller shutters, or overly bright colour palettes, which detract from the appearance of the historic host buildings and character of the area. Many commercial premises stand empty, particularly in the Frogmoor area which detracts from the atmosphere of the street. Hanging signage is common, attached to upper floors on brackets above shopfronts.

Examples of Hanging Signs



SECTION 5.0: CHARACTER ANALYSIS



Examples of Traditional and Historic Shopfronts



Front of the former Red Lion Hotel

SECTION 5.0: CHARACTER ANALYSIS



5.51 Banks tend not to have shopfronts, with architectural styles more comparable to civic buildings. This is still evident in Halifax, still in use as a bank, and the former Wycombe Bank. Public houses are typically of a residential style, with small windows and doors, although modern eateries tend to have large glass fronts and outdoor seating. Commercial streets have mixed signage of varying form and colour.



A modern eatery compared with more traditional style public houses

General Views of Commercial Streets



The former premises of Wycombe Bank.





Public Realm

Street Surfaces

5.52 Street surfaces vary considerably throughout High Wycombe. Residential areas on the valley slopes are largely tarmacked on both pavement and road. In the town centre, modern paving reminiscent of Denner Hill Setts are commonly found on the wide pedestrianised streets. Historic examples of this paving can be found in isolated areas throughout the town. There are significant public realm improvements along White Hart Street and the Queen Square area featuring wide modern paving slabs, and small areas of landscaping outside prominent buildings. Frogmoor has patterned brick paving in the main square, with infills marking the location of a now disused fountain. Stone paving slabs are used throughout the town centre, as well as resin bound gravel, although both are marred with tarmac infills and blemishes in discrete areas. In side streets off main thoroughfares in this area the street surface is often degrading, lifted by roots or breaking away, revealing concrete road surfaces below.



Common concrete paving slabs



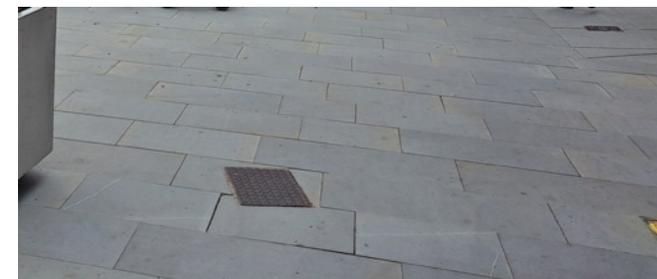
Example of resin fixed gravel paving



Small area of landscaping outside the library



Modern setts along the High Street



Modern public realm improvement paving



Tarmac in the wider residential suburbs



Historic Denner Hill setts, some of which have been covered with tarmac



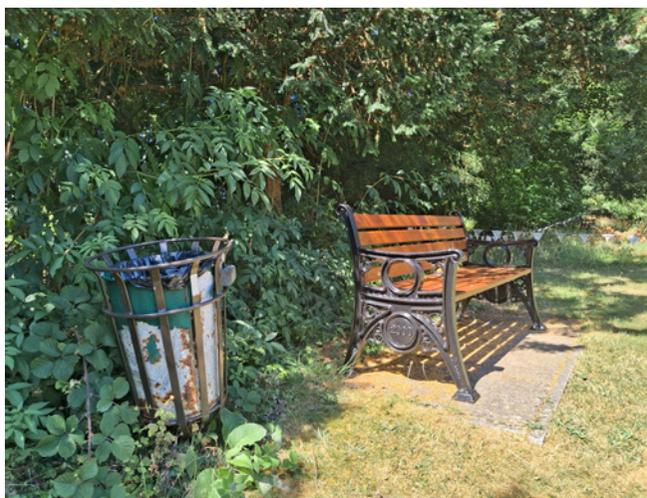
Street Furniture and Lighting

5.53 Iron bollards line the largely pedestrianised High Street, Church Street and into Frogmoor, to prevent parking in these areas. Spherical stone bollards segment Church Square. Street seating in the town centre consists of mainly wooden benches with metal frames, positioned outside the churchyard—the benches in the areas of public realm improvement are reminiscent of this design, although are in better condition and often modernised. In the town centre bins tend to be black with gold detailing. There are a number of freestanding red letterboxes which contribute to the character of the town centre. Streetscape improvements in the town centre feature large hexagonal metal planters which provide a neat seating area in the commercial centre. A wide range of colourful street decoration dominates the High Street, with advertising banners attached to black metal freestanding street lighting with large circular lights, and bunting strung across the street.

5.54 In public green spaces, simple wooden benches are common and placed along the primary routes through these spaces. Poured concrete waste bins are a feature of the Amersham Hill area. **G**are also extant, **rey** Royal Mail bag drop boxes, used briefly by the

service to store letters prior to delivery, before being taken out of service, and traditional small red post boxes also populate the street. There

is a singular example of a historic lamppost by Pann Mill.



Street furniture across the Conservation Area

SECTION 5.0: CHARACTER ANALYSIS



Banners across the High Street on historic-style lampposts



Hexagonal planters



Colourful bunting criss-crossing the High Street



Small red post boxes can be found throughout the Conservation Area



Grey Royal Mail bag drop box



Historic lamppost next to Pann Mill



5.55 Street signs in the Conservation Area are generally consistent but are largely modern street signs of metal banners and large capitalised black block-print font, with older signs of a similar style. These are predominantly attached to the side of the building in the town centre but are standing signs in residential areas.



Traditional metal signage mounted on the side of a building



Predominant style of signage in High Wycombe





Public Art and Monuments

5.56 There exists a limited range of permanent artwork in High Wycombe, with the most prominent monument being a war memorial. There is also a small war memorial located in the Library Gardens on Queen Street. There is a small modernist sculpture in the centre of Frogmoor, which is surrounded by a plinth often used as seating, serving to diminish its presence. Dominating this area is the colourful street art, generated by community projects. A large swan mural can be found on the wall of the Swan Theater. This provides visual interest when glimpsed from the High Street down a small lane.



The only prominent statue in High Wycombe, located in the Frogmoor area.



High Wycombe war memorial outside of All Saints Church.



Street art populating utilitarian street furniture

SECTION 6

MANAGEMENT PLAN

This part of the document opens with overarching management principles for the High Wycombe Conservation Area. It then provides brief background on the legislation and control measures which Conservation Areas are subject to. The issues and opportunities within the Area are then assessed in more detail and recommendations provided for managing change in a way that is sensitive to the special heritage interest of the Conservation Area.

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Overarching Management Principles for the High Wycombe Conservation Area

6.1 The main aim is for change within the High Wycombe Conservation Area to be planned and carried out in a considered way which is sympathetic to its special heritage interest.

6.2 The historic environment of High Wycombe should be maintained in good condition.

6.3 Proposals for extension, alteration, new development and demolition within or in the setting of the Conservation Area should preserve or enhance its special interest through high quality design and construction which is sympathetic in terms of scale, massing, proportions, materials, detailing and response to local context.

6.4 Open green spaces and bodies of water are important to the character of the town and should be conserved. Trees and greenery in private gardens visible from the public realm make a positive contribution to the rural nature of the town and should be maintained.

6.5 Changes in response to climate change are encouraged but should take into consideration the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.6 Removal of inappropriate and unsympathetic elements of buildings, roof clutter, street surfaces and the street scene is encouraged (details of inappropriate elements are discussed in [paragraphs 6.25-6.30](#)). Breckland Council do not have specific guidance on Streetscapes. Reference should instead be made to the AVDC Highways protocol (2012).

6.7 Reinstatement of lost historic features, such as timber windows, is encouraged.

6.8 The viability of an Article 4 Direction within the Conservation Area should be considered and, if implemented, should be reviewed periodically.



General Management of Conservation Area

Understanding Special Interest

6.9 All Conservation Areas have special architectural and historic interest. The reasons why the High Wycombe Conservation Area has special interest are set out in [Section 2.0](#). In order to achieve Management Principal 6.1 above and preserve the Area's special heritage interest, change must be grounded in an understanding of why a place is special or 'significant'. This special interest may be derived from the appearance of a building, its design, group value, historical use and the contribution it makes to our understanding of the history of High Wycombe, or its importance to people. The Summary of Special Interest in [Section 2.0](#), the Character Analysis in [Section 5.0](#) and the more detailed review of different parts of the Conservation Area in the Character Areas [Section 8.0](#) should be referred to in order to provide those planning change with an understanding of what the special interest, character and appearance of the Conservation Area is so that changes respond appropriately to it.

6.10 More detailed analysis may be required on a specific building or site in order to understand a place in more detail and the impact changes may have. Heritage Statements or Heritage Impact Assessment reports will set out information about the history and special interest of a site, as well as provide advice on whether a scheme will preserve or enhance significance. The process of assessing the impact of a scheme on the special interest of the Conservation Area, the heritage assets within it and their setting is important as it will highlight where schemes may be harmful, as well as highlight opportunities for positive changes, so that designs can be reviewed and updated to reduce harm.

6.11 These reports and advice, usually prepared by specialist heritage consultants, are typically a requirement of planning applications within Conservation Areas and are always required for Listed Building Consents. These reports should be proportionate, so that a small change within a less important building in the Conservation Area would not require such a detailed study as a large-scale redevelopment.

Planning Policy and Guidance

6.12 As well as guidance in this Conservation Area Appraisal, Buckinghamshire Council has planning policies set out within the Wycombe District Local Plan, at time of writing due to be replaced by the Buckinghamshire Local Plan, which relate to heritage. Anyone planning change within the Conservation Area should refer to these policies and ensure their proposals comply with their aims. Policy DM31 regarding heritage assets (which would include the Conservation Area, Listed Building and Locally Listed Buildings) is summarised below:

- a All development should seek to conserve and, wherever possible, enhance the significance of heritage assets and their setting.
- b Proposals which affect the significance of either a designated or non-designated heritage asset and/or its setting will need to be assessed to determine whether the impact on the special interest of the asset will be affected. Where development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, or harm the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, consent will be refused unless this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposals, including securing its optimum viable use.



6.13 BC's Heritage Team offers a pre-application service, which can be useful for any application. This is a chargeable service, but the feedback received can enhance the design quality of a scheme and reduce the likelihood of refusal of planning permission through early-stage identification of issues. This service can also be used to check the suitability of repair work or whether planning permission is required for proposed alterations of repair: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/conservation-heritage-and-archaeology/heritage/get-heritage-advice/>. Other Planning Pre-Application services are also available to cover specialisms such as Planning or Environment.

6.14 In addition to legislative and policy requirements there is the wealth of best practice guidance and advice available from Historic England and other heritage organisations. Links and details can be found in [Further Information and Sources](#).

Restrictions On Permitted Development In Conservation Areas

6.15 Permitted Development Rights are works which can be undertaken without the need to gain planning permission. Some

Permitted Development Rights are removed in Conservation Areas meaning that you will need to gain planning permission for certain works that materially affect the external appearance of buildings. This includes, but is not restricted to:

- a the total or substantial demolition of buildings or structures (including walls over 1m in height, gate piers and chimneys);
- b other partial demolition including new openings in external elevations;
- c works to trees with a diameter of 75mm or greater, measured at 1.5m from soil level;
- d changes to the external finish of a building (including rendering, painting unpainted brickwork, pebble dash or other cladding);
- e changes to the roof shape including installation of new dormer windows and chimneys;
- f any extension other than a single-storey rear extension of 4m or less (3m or less if the house is terraced or semi-detached);
- g extensions to the side of buildings;
- h any two-storey extensions;

- i erection of an outbuilding to the side of a property;
- j aerials and satellite dishes on chimneys or elevations visible from the street;
- k putting up advertisements and other commercial signage (Advertising Consent may also be required);
- l changing the use of a building (e.g. from residential to commercial); and
- m installing solar panels that are wall-mounted on a wall or roof facing the highway (note that solar panels on a roof not visible from a public space or highway may not require planning permission – see [paragraph 6.86\(d\)](#) for more details).

6.16 For further information and advice about when planning permission is required within a Conservation Area, see the guidance on the Government's Planning Portal: <https://www.gov.uk/housing-local-and-community/planning-and-building>



Article 4 Directions

6.17 When a Conservation Area is at risk through the loss of historic features and elements which make up its character, specific controls called Article 4 Directions can be put in place to ensure that specific elements of Conservation Area are protected from harmful changes. The application of an Article 4 Direction to a property does not mean change cannot happen but that it must be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.18 Article 4 Directions remove certain permitted development rights in addition to the list in the previous section, meaning planning permission will need to be sought before work can be undertaken. Buildings usually covered by Article 4 Directions are unlisted or Locally Listed dwellings. The sorts of things that can be covered include changing windows and doors, erection of porches, adding a hard surface such as a driveway, changes or demolition to boundary treatments, or painting the exterior of a property where it has not previously been painted.

6.19 The benefits of Article 4 Directions are that they ensure the special historic character and appearance of a Conservation Area is not further eroded and that gradually changes will be made to properties which reverse any trends where inappropriate alterations have been made, leading to the Conservation Area being a more beautiful place to live. The Directions encourage good design and use of materials which enhance special historic areas.

6.20 Should the Council choose to do so, the process of implementing any new Article 4 Directions will be undertaken at a future date, separate from the adoption of this CAAMP.

Issues, Opportunities and Recommendations

Condition and Maintenance

6.21 Although the majority of buildings within the Conservation Area are in good repair, there is localised evidence of limited maintenance and disrepair which detracts from the special interest of the Conservation Area. The most common problems in this respect are the growth of foliage and shrubbery on building frontages, the discolouration of render and stonework, peeling paintwork particularly on timber doors and windows, and rotting timberwork.

6.22 All buildings require maintenance and repair regardless of their age, designation (or lack thereof) or significance. In Conservation Areas it is important that such works are carried out sensitively to protect the historic fabric of buildings and respect and preserve the established character of the wider area. Regular maintenance ensures that small problems do not escalate into larger issues, lessening the need for repair and is therefore cost effective in the long-term. Regular maintenance tasks could include but are not limited to:

- a Regularly clearing gutters and drain grilles of debris, particularly leaves;
- b Clearing any blockages in downpipes;
- c Sweeping of chimneys;
- d Removal of vegetation growth on or abutting a buildings; and
- e Repainting or treating timber windows and other external timberwork.

SECTION 6.0: MANAGEMENT PLAN



Timber framed window with peeling paint and rotting wood, detracting from the appearance of the street and likely causing long-term damage to the historic window through lack of maintenance.



Peeling paint and plasterwork on a historic doorcase.



Peeling decorative paintwork on the gable of a building.



6.23 Repair is work beyond the scope of maintenance, to fix problems caused by decay, damage or use. Identification of repairs may arise during regular inspection of buildings or following extreme weather events and could include repairing damage to roof coverings, repointing of brickwork or repairs to windows. It is important to understand and fix the cause of the damage or defects so that the repair is long-lasting and the problem does not happen again, such as fixing a leaking gutter rather than just painting over an affected part of the building to disguise water damage. Consent may be required for some types of repair work, so it is advisable to discuss with the Local Planning Authority before any work is undertaken.

6.24 Opportunities and Recommendations relating to condition and maintenance include:

- a Carry out regular maintenance to retain the condition and appearance of buildings.
- b) The following should be considered when planning repair works:
 - i Repairs should always be considered on a case-by-case basis. A method of repair which is suitable for one building may not be suitable for another.
 - ii Repair is always preferable over the wholesale replacement of a historic feature.
 - iii Use materials and construction techniques to match the original to maintain the appearance and character of the building.
 - iv Like-for-like replacement of a historic feature when it has degraded beyond repair is usually the correct approach. This means replacing the element with the same materials and construction techniques.
 - v However, when previous repair or replacement has occurred using inappropriate materials or techniques (see [paragraphs 6.25-6.31](#)) reinstatement of the original historic material is encouraged, such as replacing modern cement mortar with a traditional lime mortar when repointing brickwork.
 - vi Repairs should be carried out to the minimum area possible to fix the issue, so that as much historic fabric as possible is retained.
 - vii Repairs should, where possible, be reversible as better alternatives may become available in the future.
- c For more detailed information on maintenance and repair, Historic England and other heritage bodies provide a wide range of advice and guidance on how to care for and protect historic places (see **Further Information and Sources**).
- d Various legislative options are available to the Council to service notices within Conservation Areas and on owners of Listed Buildings to secure their appropriate conservation and repair if they are at serious risk due to their condition or neglect, such as Urgent Works or Repair Notices.



Inappropriate Alterations

6.25 There are certain alterations to historic buildings that are inappropriate in terms of either their compatibility with historic fabric or in terms of their visual appearance.

6.26 A key example is the replacement of historic timber doors and windows with modern uPVC. Typically, these replacements have less refined details, can be chunkier in profile and can change the original type of opening (for example a sash window being replaced with a top-hung casement). These changes mean the original visual intentions of the windows and doors are eroded, with a negative impact on the building's visual appearance and integrity. Additionally, the service life of these windows is short (around 25 years) compared to well-maintained traditional windows (often 100+ years) and they can be difficult to repair. These windows are not widely recycled and often end up in landfill sites. It can therefore take many years to offset the energy and carbon used to produce the uPVC windows, compared to appropriately upgrading traditional windows, meaning that over their whole lifespan uPVC windows are not better for the environment. The use of plastic windows and doors also reduces the breathability of traditionally constructed buildings, by trapping moisture within the building, potentially causing damp problems.



Example of uPVC windows detracting from the appearance of the windows on the right hand house and ground floor of the left, compared to the timber framed sash windows on the first floor of the lefthand house. The retained boundary wall and greenery on the left makes a positive contribution compared to hardstanding for car parking on the right. The roof material on the right hand house has also been changed from the original slate to concrete roof tiles.



Cementitious pointing on a wall. Cement mortar can be harmful to the historic wall and appear less refined than the original.



6.27 Similar to the use of uPVC windows, cement-based mortar or render on historic buildings also lacks the 'breathability' of historic lime-based mortars which can also lead to trapped moisture and decay. Replacement cement mortar to pointing can often be less refined than the original, with thicker bands and raised surfaces to pointing which detract from the appearance of the surrounding brick or stonework. Rendering over the exterior of a historic building also means the loss of attractive brick or stonework originally designed to be seen and appreciated. The same principles also apply for the use of modern non-breathable paints.



Example of cementitious render causing cracks and leading to trapped moisture and detracting from the appearance of the building.



Example of decayed brickwork due to cement mortar pointing.



6.28 Loss of traditional materials and details detracts from the overall appearance of buildings and street scenes as the consistent historic character is lost. Examples include replacement of original slate or tile roofs with concrete tiles, loss of decorative ridge tiles and finials and loss of chimneys, replacement of metal gutters and downpipes with plastic. Other modern additions visible throughout the Conservation Area are alien in a historic street scene, adding visual clutter and detracting from the appearance of the Conservation Area. These include satellite dishes and television aerials, electricity, gas and broadband boxes, security alarm boxes and security cameras. On elevations fronting public streets or spaces these can have a detrimental impact, though if located more discreetly they are normally acceptable. Rooflights on historic buildings can also look out of place, especially when located on elevations fronting public streets and spaces, so will not normally be acceptable. Where discreetly located they may be acceptable but should be flush fitted conservation style units.

6.29 In general, many buildings in High Wycombe front onto the street with either large or small front gardens. Where front gardens exist, historic boundary treatments have often been lost or added to with large fences. In a number of examples, hardstanding

has been introduced into gardens, removing earlier boundary treatments (See [paragraph 6.63](#)).

6.30 Changes to historic boundary treatments harms the area's character, as new boundaries are in a variety of materials, styles and heights, meaning consistency in

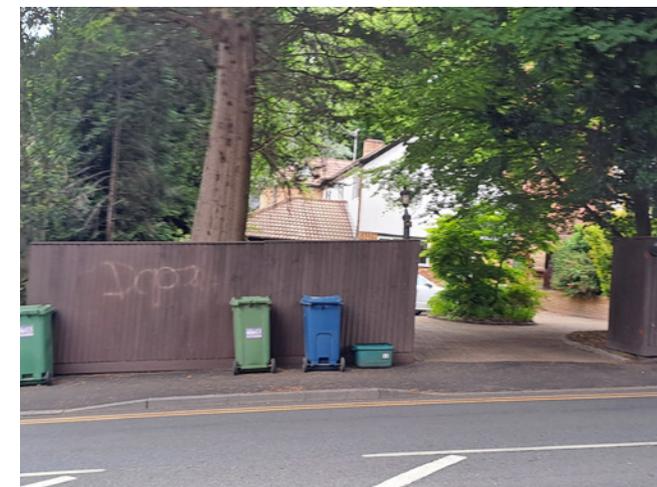
appearance is lost. Brick walls, hedges and metal railings are preferable over timber fences, though low boundary fences with greenery above to soften the fences is acceptable. Retention of historic boundary treatment is strongly encouraged and the reinstatement of lost boundary treatment is encouraged.



Numerous satellite dishes and television aerials clutter the frontages of historic buildings.



Modern fencing around more traditional metal gate dilutes the historic character of the road.



Tall boundary fencing Along Amersham Hill is less attractive than traditional walls and boundary hedges and creates an enclosed feel to the road.



6.31 Opportunities and Recommendations relating to inappropriate alterations include:

- a Replace uPVC windows and doors with traditional timber units in designs to match as far as possible what would have originally been in place. Future change of traditional timber windows to uPVC should be resisted. Aluminum windows are also discouraged in favour of timber of appropriate frame patterns.
- b Remove modern additions, such as television aerials, especially when the technology becomes redundant.
- c Where new television aerials and satellite dishes are proposed on a wall, chimney or door slope that faces onto, and is visible from, the public realm of the Conservation Area (principally front and side elevations), this requires planning permission and is generally not acceptable. Site any necessary utilities additions discreetly to be less visually intrusive, such as on a side or rear elevation where possible.
- d Rooflights should be located on roof slopes that do not face public streets or spaces. They should be flush fitted conservation style units to reduce their visual impact.
- e Retain or replace original architectural details and features with designs and materials to match as far as possible what was originally there, in order to retain and re-establish historic character.
- f Where buildings have unpainted external finish, commonly brick, this should remain unpainted. Where brick finishes have been previously painted, there is a preference for the removal of the painted finish where practicable. Any paint used on water permeable traditional buildings should be breathable. Paint colours on external walls should draw upon their context; within High Wycombe painted walls are largely of light-tinged white, cream and earthen colours. Painted timber doors are an architectural feature capable of receiving more bold, individual colour palettes, and a variety of colours and tones can enliven a street scene.
- g Historic boundary treatments should be retained. Inappropriate replacement boundary treatments should be replaced when opportunities arise. Further detrimental alteration to or loss of historic and traditional boundary treatments will be discouraged. Retaining and adding to greenery in front gardens would have a positive impact on the appearance of the Conservation Area.
- h Plastic rain water goods such as gutters and drainpipes are discouraged in favour of cast iron. Plastic fascias are discouraged in favour of traditional timber detailing.

Examples of appropriate external wall colours





Demolition, Extension, Alteration and New Development

6.32 Changes to buildings within the High Wycombe Conservation Area must be well designed and be high-quality in terms of materials and construction. Changes must have regard to the setting of the building or site, therefore reflecting the character of the individual part of the Area in which it is set (see [Character Areas](#) section for more detail) in terms of scale, massing, historic street pattern, and materials.

6.33 If designed and constructed poorly, new buildings, extensions and alterations can detract visually from the Conservation Area. There are modern buildings, particularly in the form of tall and large scale buildings in the Conservation Area's immediate setting and to the north and south in the hanging woodlands, that detract because they have poor-quality design, inappropriate scale and massing that is out of context with the historic grain, no or low-quality design, scale and massing that is out of context with the historic grain, no or low-quality detailing and a general failure to reference or integrate with the surrounding street scene.



Late twentieth century development on Easton Street which, while broken up with regularly spaced windows, has a horizontal massing which does not respect the smaller scale vertical massing of surrounding buildings.



Later twentieth century flats constructed just outside the Conservation Area boundary on Amersham Hill. Their flat three storey façades in a long plot fronting directly onto the road contrasts with the detached houses on Amersham Hill.



Flats within the setting of the Conservation Area on Amersham Hill, the use of a variety of materials appears cluttered and does not reflect the predominantly red brick materiality and detached houses on Amersham Hill.



6.34 Good quality modern buildings should respond to local materials and massing, while using contemporary design and techniques. An example of design that fits well into the Conservation Area include Carrington House Surgery and other detached villa developments along Priory Road which references architectural form, material and detailing of surrounding houses. Better recent design is clearly new, while picking up on forms and materials of the historic environment. Bad design is often blocky and unimaginative, repetitive, or creates imitations of historic buildings that fail to have a sense of identity.



Example of good modern development responding to local material and massing

6.35 There are a no notable detracting buildings within the Conservation Area, there are a number of notable detracting buildings within its immediate setting. See further details in [paragraphs 6.35-6.36](#)) Modern buildings within the Conservation Area tend to be neutral to the area's character. In future, new or developed modern buildings have the potential to enhance the Conservation Area through good quality design as laid out above. Twenty first century development has resulted in the redevelopment of former industrial sites in the setting of the Conservation Area. Any remaining furniture factories and evidence of High Wycombe's significant industrial heritage within or in the setting of the Conservation Area should be preserved.

6.36 Opportunities and recommendations relating to demolition, extension, alteration and new development include:

- a All extensions, alterations and new buildings must be high-quality in terms of design and construction, and should be planned with reference to historic context. They should consider:
 - i The relationship with any adjacent buildings or open spaces;
 - ii The potential to draw inspiration from the historic use and character of a site;

- iii The contribution of any gap site (i.e. is it a historic gap within the street frontage or does it detract);
- iv The materials and architectural detailing characteristic of the area. The Character Analysis (Section 5.0) and individual Character Area assessments (Section 8.0) should be used as a reference to inform the choice of materials and detailing for new design;
- v The texture, articulation and weathered surface appearance that gives the surrounding historic fabric visual complexity;
- vi The scale and grain of the surrounding area, including historic plot boundaries;
- vii Its height in relation to its neighbours and surrounding context (see more specific guidance for individual Character Areas in Section 8.0);
- viii The potential impact on local views and village-wide views;
- ix The potential impact of the new design on the setting of any neighbouring Listed Buildings or Locally Listed Buildings; and
- x The potential impact of the new design on known or potential archaeological remains.



- b Gap sites can detract from the character of the Conservation Area and therefore demolition of whole buildings will only be permitted where rebuilding is guaranteed, or where the site was historically open and this remains appropriate.
- c The appropriateness of demolition, extension or new building will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as what is appropriate in one location will not necessarily be acceptable in another.
- d Extensions should normally be subordinate to the existing buildings in their scale, massing and design and should not be designed as a separate entity; but be sympathetic and integrated in from and scale with the whole building..
- e Extension to the side and front of buildings is unlikely to be appropriate as this may infill historic gaps between buildings and change the visual appearance of the streetscape, whereas extension to the rear is more likely to be acceptable.
- f Current identified green spaces and trees should be protected and retained (see paragraph 6.55 for more details).
- g Refer to the [Householder Planning and Design Guidance SPD](#) and the [Chilterns Building Design Guide](#) for High Wycombe when planning alteration, extension or new development, which includes guidance on how to respond to historic context, including local vernacular and distinctiveness, reiterating that development within or adjacent to a conservation area must respect the special character of the area. Other planning guidance and design guides are also available on Buckinghamshire Council's website, including guidance relating to parking, travel and biodiversity: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-development-plans-and-guidance/local-planning-guidance/>.
- h New and replacement development should take account and comply with Policy DM35 Placemaking and design quality.
- i Whilst the design of extensions, alterations and new development should typically use materials and finishes which are characteristic of the Conservation Area, including local brick and plain tiles, there may be scope for use of a wider, less traditional material palette where these are part of a high-quality, sensitively designed scheme that complements or enhances the appearance of the original building and the Conservation Area. Machine or artificial tiles are inferior to handmade or clay tiles as they have less texture.
- j The designed of new roofs should consider the roofscape of the Conservation Area due to the typography. Designs could add interest with the inclusion of chimneys and, where characteristic of nearby buildings, appropriate scaled dormers.
- k Any new bin enclosures should be integrated into landscape design to prevent eyesores and clutter.



Setting and Views

6.37 The rural woodland setting of the Conservation Area in High Wycombe is being increasingly eroded, particularly by the introduction of larger scale tall buildings up the valley to the north. This does not respect the towns heritage which relied upon these hanging woodlands during the nineteenth and twentieth century industry focussed on furniture production. The setting is further diluted by larger scale commercial development such as the Wilkinson Sword building on Totteridge Road which detract from the areas of historic character and scale within the Conservation Area. Larger scale developments within the town centre, just outside the Conservation Area boundary serve to dilute the historic grain of the centre and overshadow the church tower, historically the most prominent structure in views through and across the town from a distance. Such change is inevitable given pressures on housing and infrastructure, but new development should be of high-quality and respect the historic form and character of the locality. Where there are views towards the hanging woodlands and towards the church from higher up the valley these should be preserved. An area where the setting of the Conservation Area could be improved is to the south where the River Wye

has been covered over with hard landscaping, disguising a key natural feature within the town center. The Abbey Way bypass to the south off the Conservation Area boundary, heading north-east from the A40 magic roundabout, is another modern intervention which detracts from the setting of the Conservation Area.

6.38 Opportunities and Recommendations relating to the setting of the Conservation Area include:

- a New development within the setting of the Conservation Area should take account of and be sensitive to:
 - i Its location within the setting of the designated heritage asset and enhance rather than harm its special interest.
 - ii Be of the highest quality design and execution, in order to preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area and, where relevant, help phase out ill-considered and unsympathetic interventions from the past.
- b Retention and conservation of the rural woodland setting to the north and south of the Conservation Area, as a significant contribution to the character of the historic core. Trees which contribute to the surrounding streetscape should also be retained.
- c Respect views out of and into the Conservation Area which contribute to the character of the historic core.
- d Opportunity for enhancement of the area to the south of the Conservation Area through restoring the visible route of the River Wye, providing a natural feature within the center which will enhance the character of the area and better reveal a key historic water source in the town.

SECTION 6.0: MANAGEMENT PLAN



View across the Rye towards Wilkinson Sword, a tall office block to the north of the railway which breaks up the mostly uninterrupted views towards the hanging woodlands.



View west down Castle Street with the Thame House building looming over smaller scale historic buildings within the Conservation Area.



View from Tom Burt's Hill to the south across the Conservation Area, demonstrating how tall buildings in the setting of the Conservation Area dwarf the historically prominent church tower and block views of historic roofscapes.



View from within Wycombe Abbey grounds towards the Abbey with Buckingham new university building detracting from the view behind.



Shopfronts and Advertising

6.39 Retail is an important part of the Conservation Area and has been for centuries due to High Wycombe's historic status as a county market town. It retains few good examples of historic shopfronts. Those which survive are located in the historic core of the town centre focusing on Easton Street, the High Street and Frogmoor. Shopfronts help define the character of commercial buildings and create a sense of place, particularly at a pedestrian scale. The design of individual shopfronts may vary from building to building depending on age, architectural style, scale and type of commercial premises. Pilasters, corbels, cornices, fascias, signage and stallrisers are all important elements in traditional shopfronts, creating the visual proportions of the shopfront.

6.40 However, where development pressures are most intense, many historic shopfronts are in poor condition, have been eroded by modern interventions, have been replaced by entirely modern shopfronts or converted into residential properties. The design and appearance of shopfronts is therefore important to preserving and enhancing the appearance of the Conservation Area. Key issues with interventions into historic shopfronts are:

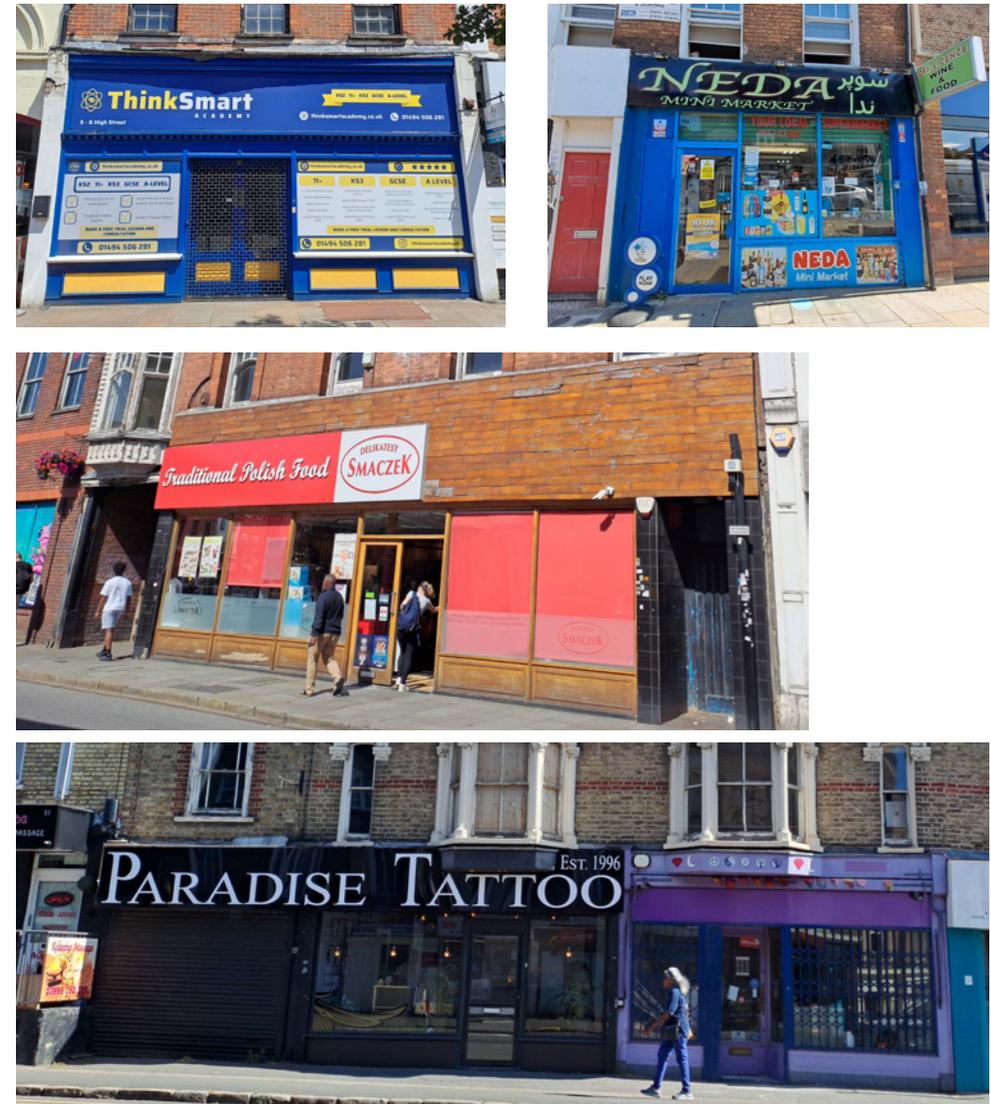
- a The use of oversized, poorly positioned fascia signs which obscure historic features and are out of proportion with the whole shopfront.
- b The use of inappropriate materials for fascia boards. Where plastic or metal are used, instead of timber, and garish colours are selected fascia boards do not respect the character of either the building in which they are located or the character of the historic street scene as a whole.
- c The use of excessive advertising in the windows or on the building above shopfronts.
- d Removal of traditional glazing, which is replaced with larger windows that have no subdivision, or traditional stallrisers removed or downsized.
- e Inappropriate lighting, such as internal illuminated signage, flood lighting, bright white lighting, coloured and colour changing lights, flashing lights and halo lit signage. Unnecessary lighting of premises which are not part of the night time economy is also not appropriate.
- f Removal or infilling of historic shopfronts to convert to residential.
- g Use of large banners on walls or railings.



Examples of Positive Shopfront Design in High Wycombe



Examples of Detracting Shopfront Design in High Wycombe



SECTION 6.0: MANAGEMENT PLAN



Example of a historic shopfront being infilled for residential use, creating a flat and unwelcoming façade to the streetscape

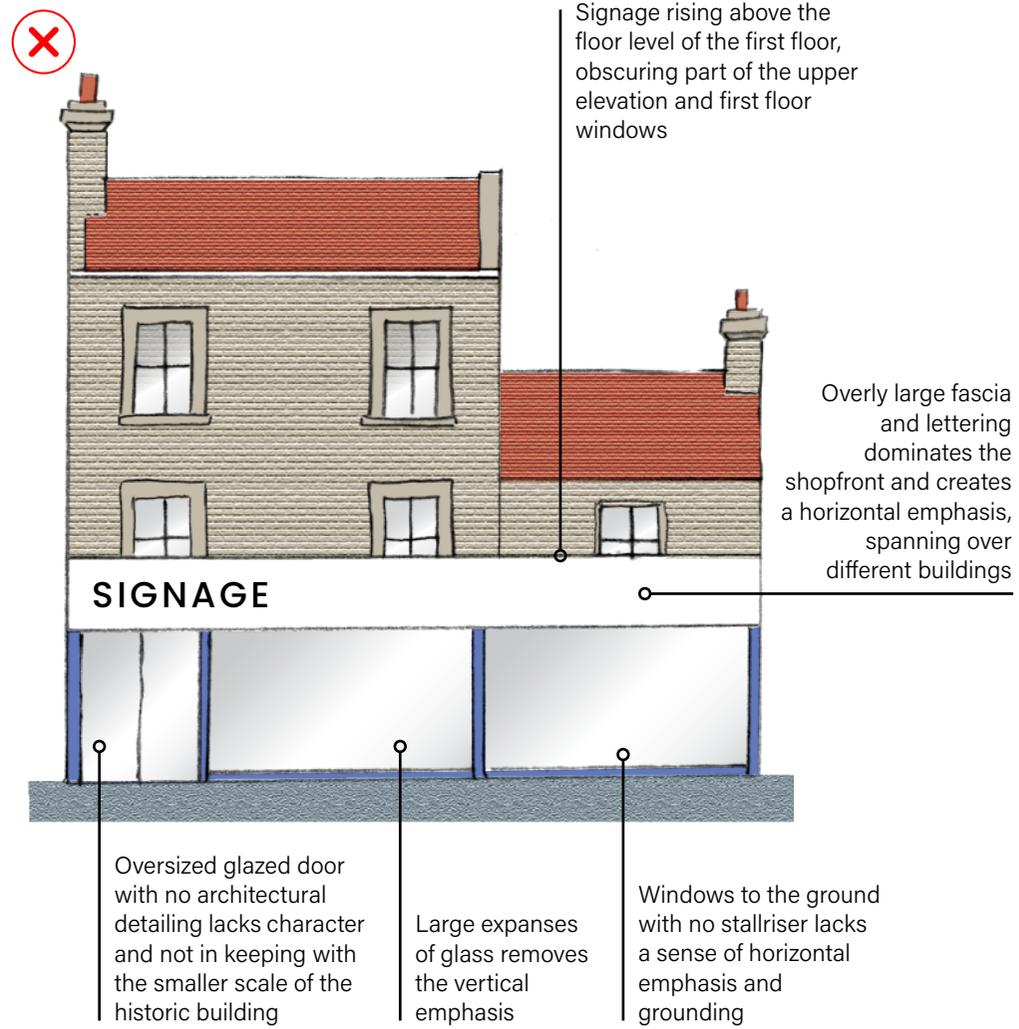


Overly large banner on railings



A-boards clutter the street and are often unsympathetic in design.

SECTION 6.0: MANAGEMENT PLAN





6.41 Opportunities and Recommendations relating to shopfronts include:

- a** Where historic shopfronts or shopfront features survive or existing shopfronts contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, these should be retained and enhanced where possible.
- b** Use the detailed guidance on individual shopfront features provided on the following pages to guide alterations to or reinstatement of shopfronts.
- c** Where historic features, such as corbels and pilasters, have been lost and vestiges of their original design remain, opportunities should be sought for their reinstatement.
- d** Whenever opportunities arise, inappropriately altered shopfronts and shop signage should be returned to a more traditional appearance, employing features or patterns that are in keeping with historic shopfront design and materiality.
- e** Where it is appropriate to replace all or parts of a shopfront, traditional styles (or designs that retain the same proportions and materiality) are likely to be most appropriate in historic buildings, but non-traditional, sympathetically designed shopfronts would be appropriate in modern and new buildings.
- f** The design of shopfronts needs to reflect the style, proportions, symmetry, vertical or horizontal emphasis and detailing of the rest of the building, particularly the principal elevation, rather than reading as a separate entity; columns for example should be carried down to the ground level.
- g** Historic photographs should be used as a point of reference where shopfront alteration or restoration is proposed for historic retail units.
- h** Changes to shopfronts will require planning permission, and, if part of a Listed Building, Listed Building Consent. Changes to signage and advertising, including display of an A-board, will require Advertisement Consent.
- i** The colour palate of a shopfront should respond to the colour palette of the built heritage in its vicinity and should be of traditional, muted colours.
- j** When opportunity arises, replace inappropriate lighting should be removed and, where necessary, replaced with subtle, heritage appropriate lighting in warm tones.



Shopfront Terminology

6.1 Shopfronts are typically composed of the elements outlined on this diagram. Further guidance on changes to shopfronts or design of new shopfronts is given on the following pages.



A Fascia: The space above the window used to promote the name of the shop, which is often the predominant element of the shop front.

B Cornice: A moulded element across the top of a fascia designed to throw water away from the building.

C Pilaster and Plinth: Pilasters (half-columns) frame the shop front at either edge and provide visual support to the fascia and upper floors. Sometimes these were ornamented. The plinth is a wider element at the base of the pilaster.

D Console/Corbel: These sit on top of the pilasters and protect the end of the fascia.

E Stall Riser: The solid base to the window, helps to protect against damp and damage to the glazing. It also forms a solid base to the shop front, providing it with balanced proportions.

F Sill: The moulded element sitting on top of the stall riser, designed to throw water away from the building.

G Windows: The large area of glazing used to display the shop's goods to the public. Traditionally these were divided up into smaller panes using glazing bars.

H Recessed Doorways: Doors in historic shops were typically recessed to allow for an increased window display area. There were either located centrally or to one side of the shop front.



Guidance on Specific Shopfront Features and Signage

6.42 Fascias:

- a Should be in proportion to the rest of the shopfront and not overly large.
- b Should not extend above cornice level (or, where there is no such feature, should be well below the cill of the window above) or beyond the corbels on either side.
- c Box fascias are not appropriate.
- d External roller shutters deaden a streetscene and are not acceptable. Security features should be sympathetic to the historic appearance of the area.

6.43 Glazing:

- a Full height glazing is a modern feature and does not reflect the character of historic buildings.
- b Smaller windows with stallrisers, transoms and mullions are typical traditional features and more appropriate in historic contexts. Some of the earliest shopfront windows in High Wycombe feature multi-paned bow windows.
- c Historic shop doors typically feature fanlights above.

6.44 Stallrisers:

- a Where historic tiled stallrisers remain, for example on the High Street, these should be retained and repaired where necessary.
- b New shopfronts should incorporate a stallriser which provides a solid base for the shopfront, giving it balanced proportions and providing protection from kicks and knocks.

6.45 Signage:

- a The design and detailing of advertising and signage content, both on fascias, hanging signs and any freestanding signage should complement the design of the shopfront and building, conveying a sense of permanence and quality. This would include consideration of colour palettes, lettering style and illumination. Signage on fascias should minimise text and logos.
- b Proposals to alter signage and shopfrontages should use traditional and characteristic materials, specifically painted timber and glazing. The use of plastic and metal is not considered to be appropriate in historic contexts. Box signage, internally lit or halo lit signage should be avoided as it is not appropriate within a Conservation Area. Where nighttime uses require lighting, subtle external lighting is more impactful and appropriate.

- c Careful consideration needs to be given to the appropriateness of freestanding signage such as A-boards as these can cause visual clutter and physical impediment to pedestrian movement. This includes freestanding signage for bus shelters.

6.46 Canopies:

- a Historic photos show some of the shopfront properties in public squares featured fabric canopies. Onsite analysis also reveals the remains of associated canopy ironwork mechanisms. These have been lost over time and such features can add interest to the street scene if of an appropriate design suitable for use in the Conservation Area.
- b Canopies should avoid obscuring historic features, should be retractable and made of canvas. Dutch-style canopies, which are visible when retracted are not appropriate.
- c Canopies would have traditionally been positioned above fascia signage and this is therefore the most appropriate position for replacement or new canopies; projecting hanging signage will allow the shop name and advertising to remain visible when the canopy is down.



Vacancy

6.47 Whilst there are few vacant residential buildings in High Wycombe, there are many vacant commercial buildings which are notable for their lack of use. Empty buildings communicate an air of neglect, accelerate the dilapidation of old buildings and cost money.

6.48 Where buildings are necessarily vacant for any time, consideration must be given to their appearance while unoccupied, so that they do not detract from the street scene and proliferate a sense of decline. Obviously boarded windows and doors are unappealing and will attract vandalism and fly-posters.

6.49 Buckinghamshire Council maintains a list of land and buildings which are of value to the local community. These are called Assets of Community Value (ACVs) and are nominated by local voluntary and community organisations and parish councils. When ACVs come up for sale, community interest groups are able to trigger a six-month window of opportunity or “Moratorium” – a delay before the owner can dispose of the ACV. This enables the community interest group to prepare a business case and secure funding to bid for or buy the ACV on the open market. **At the time of writing there are no active ACV's in High Wycombe, although this is under**

review. The list of ACV is available to view on Buckinghamshire Council's website: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-and-safety/community-right-to-bid-assets-of-community-value/>

6.50 Opportunities and Recommendations relating to vacancy include:

- a Working with building owners and developers, viable new uses for vacant buildings should be secured where these opportunities arise.
- b Maintain the list of Assets of Community Value.
- c In the short-term, ‘meanwhile’ uses for vacant buildings and retail units should be secured. This will bring immediate activity to the area and pave the way for more permanent changes of use. Examples of meanwhile uses that will be considered are:
 - i community spaces
 - ii temporary art exhibitions
 - iii immersive theatre or music performances

- iv climate hub providing education and workshops on sustainable living
- v affordable space for local small businesses
- vi pop-up shops and markets
- d To counteract the unappealing appearance of vacant buildings, measures can be taken to improve the appearance of buildings in their transitional phase. These include:
 - i Window vinyls depicting local scenes, landmarks, or traditional shop interiors
 - ii Introducing local art commissions into the windows of vacant units it should be noted that graffiti on listed buildings is a criminal offence and any local art commissions must obtain the necessary permissions from the council.
 - iii If a future use is planned, posters explaining redevelopment plans
- e Where a listed building has experienced graffiti, care should be taken to ensure the method of removal is appropriate to the historic fabric of the building.



Positive introduction of local art to vacant shopfronts to liven up the street.



Vacant building on poor repair on Easton Street, putting the historic fabric of the building at risk and detracting from the character of the street.



Open Spaces and Public Realm

6.51 The public realm, namely publicly accessible streets and open spaces, is the area from which the majority of people will experience the Conservation Area. Preserving and enhancing its character and appearance is therefore of considerable importance for maintaining the special interest of the area. The public realm consists not only of surface treatments but also street furniture, street signs and interpretation.

Street surfaces

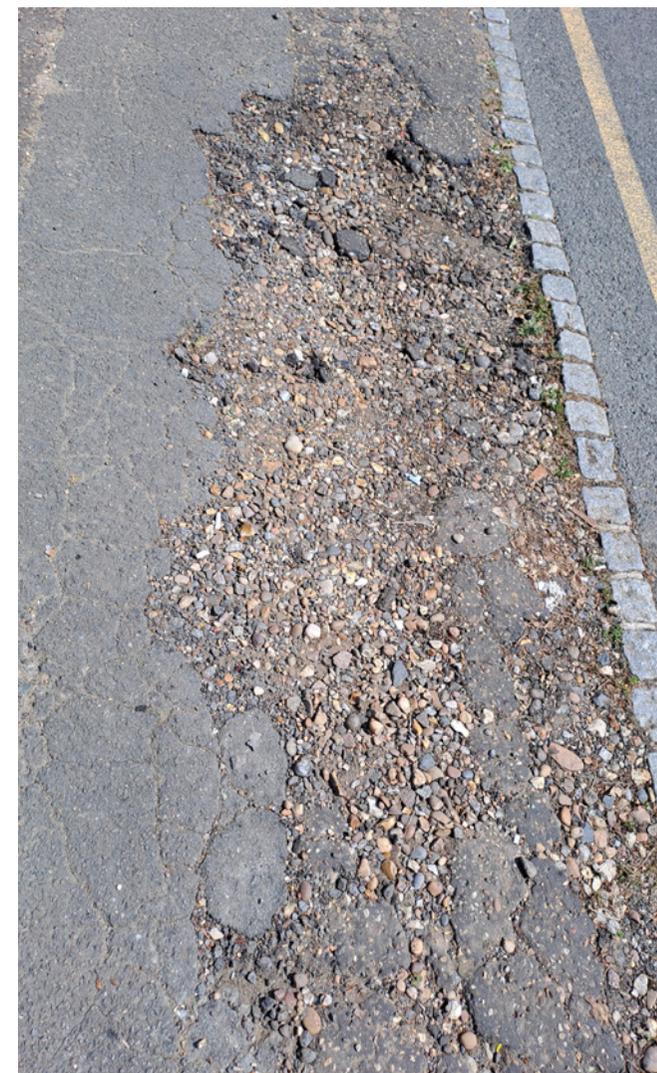
6.52 Traditional and historic paving survives in fragments in High Wycombe, discussed in [paragraph 5.52](#). Where large areas of paving in the town have been replaced, such as the paving of Church Square, this has been done in a sympathetic and appropriate manner. The wide variety of modern surface finishes throughout the town centre, though mostly of sympathetic materials and smaller paving sets to reference the traditional Denner Hill sets, does create a cluttered appearance. Traditional surfaces often provide challenges in terms of accessibility, being uneven and slippery. The desire to conserve these can conflict with improved accessibility. Surface treatment outside of the town centre tends to

be in tarmac and/or concrete though some traditional granite kerb stones and rows of setts both across driveways and to form gutters do add some texture and visual interest to otherwise utilitarian streetscapes. Some asphalt road surfaces are in poor repair and they can lead to a feeling of neglect.

6.53 Where feasible, in instances where historic setts have been tarmacked over it is desirable that they be uncovered.



Granite kerbs contribute to the historic character of this verge with historic wall and hedge.



Damaged paving on Stuart Road. Historic sett kerb stones contribute to the historic character of the street.



Seating

6.54 There is good provision of public seating throughout the Conservation Area, in a variety of styles, most in good condition. These tend to be concentrated around open and green spaces, contributing to a sense of liveability and community.

Traffic Calming

6.55 Where traffic calming measures have been introduced, the use of varying kinds of bollards and projecting modern curbs is piecemeal and interrupts the historic street scene. Intervention could be achieved by a unified approach, with less visually intrusive measures, discussed in [paragraph 6.72](#).

Streetlights

6.56 Streetlight design varies throughout the conservation area with larger, more stylised streetlights along the High Street and Frogmoor compared to the more utilitarian streetlights elsewhere in the Conservation Area. All streetlights are modern with the exception of one traditional 'lantern' form streetlight in the grounds of Pann Mill. Work to harmonise the use of street lighting, with the introduction of lights appropriate to the historic setting of the town, is encouraged.



Historic streetlight by Pann Mill.

Other Streetscape Features

6.57 Public bins are typically of a sensitive design of black metal within the town centre, although there are a variety of designs throughout the Conservation Area which lack consistency. In residential areas, lack of storage space for wheelie bins can result in their unattractive storage in front of buildings. Commercial refuse is usually tucked to the rear of buildings, although in some cases this is prominent and unattractive in back streets, such as along Bull Lane. Visual shielding should be used wherever possible



Metal Bin on the Rye.



Modern bollards interrupt views of the historic street scene.



6.58 Street signage is generally limited to street names, which come in a variety of styles from different periods. The most effective are in a traditional style, embossed with serif fonts and muted background colour. Large signs for through traffic detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.59 Overhead wires are highly visible in some streets, as are prominent junction boxes. These modern additions distract from views of the historic street scene.

6.60 Prominent historic red freestanding post boxes are positive features that add to the town's historic layering, as are post boxes built into walls.

6.61 Temporary lighting and decorations such as bunting within the Conservation Area can contribute to the lively atmosphere within the Conservation Area. Care must be taken to ensure that these features are installed appropriately if fixed to listed building and are removed after their use is no longer required.

6.62 When installing more permanent banners and flags within the Conservation Area, such as those found on the High Street, consideration should be made to maintain an attractive, consistent collective colour scheme and avoid a cluttered appearance within the town.



Post box built into church wall adding to the character of the street.



Freestanding post box which contributes to the character of the streetscene.



6.63 Installation of CCTV poles in the town centre have been inventively placed and interrupt views of the historic streetscene.

6.64 Installation of e-charging points are likely to become a feature of the street scene in the coming years. Although these are relatively unobtrusive, they are likely to increase visual street clutter to a degree and should therefore be integrated with existing street furniture and considered alongside other reductions in street furniture.



Large and cluttered CCTV pole out of scale with the historic streetscape and interrupts views of the historic centre.

Green Spaces, Trees and Greenery

6.65 Green spaces are abundant in High Wycombe, with the Rye and Wycombe Abbey grounds being the largest areas of greenery to the east of the Conservation Area, though small areas of greenery such as the churchyard, cemetery and area to the east of Lucas Road are spaced throughout the area. Mature treelined streets and within gardens contribute to the green character of the Conservation Area.

6.66 The main threat to areas of open green space tends to come in the form of car parking.

6.67 As areas of recreation, greens and areas of water attract street furniture such as bins, benches and bike parking. Where these are introduced, they should be carried out in a planned and consistent manner, using high quality natural materials and design that blend well with the historic character of the spaces, unifying them across the area.

6.68 Trees within private gardens visible from the public realm form an important part of the settlement's rural character and should be conserved. The Local Authority should be notified about intended work to trees in the Conservation Area.



Heritage Interpretation

6.69 There is some heritage interpretation within the area, such as an interpretation board on Glenister’s Furniture Factory on Temple End. More interpretation would be beneficial for presenting the town’s history and engaging the community with its heritage. This may take the form of interpretation boards, framed views

with historic photographs of the same vantage, such as that seen in the Wycombe Museum gardens, and potential digital interpretation. When new interpretation is considered, it should be designed with an awareness of the style, materiality and character of existing signage.



Glenister’s Furniture Factory information board



High Wycombe historic view



Detracting Areas

6.70 Within the Conservation Area, on-street car parking causes the most common detracting feature within the street scene, often in close proximity to buildings which commonly have a pavement-fronting aspect close to the street, such as along the High Street. Within the setting of the Conservation Area, larger scale modern buildings are at odds with the small-scale historic character of the area, as rigidly planned modern developments and blocks of flats.



Parking along the High Street detracting from the historic character of the street



Poorly placed street furniture creating a cluttered appearance on the high street with heavy traffic in the background.

6.71 Opportunities and Recommendations relating to opens pace and public realm include:

- a Applications associated with features within the public realm will be carefully considered to ensure that the public streets remain pleasant and attractive places to be, whilst ensuring that commercial activities can continue successfully.
- b A sensitive and holistic approach needs to be taken to changes and improvements to the public realm within an overarching, cohesive strategy.
- c Care should be taken to ensure future public realm works are considered for the long-term and materials both for the street furniture and surface treatments are durable and high-quality.
- d Any additions or amendments to the public realm will also need to take account and comply with [Highways Development Management Guidance 2024](#).



- e Historic street surfaces should be retained and conserved. If below-ground work is necessary, historic surfaces should be retained and relaid in a timely manner as found. Improvement to the accessibility of historic surfaces may be made by relaying them more evenly and using bedding mortar to reduce variation in levels.
- f Where historic items of street furniture and surface finishes do survive, these should be retained and repaired in situ.
- g Maintenance of public seating should be encouraged as part of creating an inclusive and accessible public realm. A co-ordinated strategy to seating and other street furniture would also provide coherency of appearance across the town centre.
- h If opportunities arise to relocate cables below ground, where this would not be harmful to historic surface treatments, this would be beneficial to the appearance of the Conservation Area.
- i The use of a consistent style of streets signage in the Conservation Area should be encouraged.
- j
- k Maintaining green infrastructure will protect the visual appearance and amenity of built features and areas, as well as the setting of the Conservation Area.
- l There is the opportunity for more historic interpretation, to ensure that the public appreciate the heritage and special interest of the Conservation Area. This may take the form of interpretation boards, framed views with historic photographs of the same vantage, and potential digital interpretation. When new interpretation is considered, it should be designed with an awareness of the style, materiality and character of existing signage.
- m The High Wycombe regeneration plan contains a number of principles relating to the public realm that should be followed which include:
 - xiv Transforming the high streets to encourage people to spend more time locally
 - xv Providing a high-quality, well-maintained and managed environment; and
 - xvi Enhancing Buckinghamshire’s cultural and heritage legacy, celebrating the unique characteristics, diversity and identity of the towns and communities.

Traffic and Parking

6.72 On-street parking, speeding vehicles and heavy through traffic cause a negative impact on the experience of the Conservation Area. Cars cause visual clutter and act as obstacles for both foot and vehicular traffic, exacerbating issues of accessibility and safety.

6.73 Street parking is commonplace in the town centre of High Wycombe to provide easy access to the shops. Some property owners have converted areas of garden into hardstanding to accommodate off-street parking which, while reducing street parking, has instead resulted in a negative aesthetic impact and the loss of historic boundary or garden treatments. There are a number of car parks outside the Conservation Area which suitably concentrate cars into discreet areas.

6.74 Multi storey car parks both within the Conservation Area and in its immediate setting, such as the Easton Street car park, are detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area due to their poor quality design and scale. Future development should look to relocate to less sensitive areas and provide better quality design solutions to parking.



6.75 The main thoroughfare of London Road as well as Amersham Hill are subject to heavy and fast-moving traffic. Efforts to reduce vehicle speed has resulted in an excess of street clutter such as large signage and plastic bollards. Examples of sympathetic measures to control traffic speed include visual narrowing, removal of white lines and the widening of pavements and pedestrian routes to change the behaviour of drivers and improve the town's appearance.



A busy junction in High Wycombe

6.76 An issue particularly on London Road is the lack of crossing points for pedestrians wishing to access the Rye, with only one crossing point opposite the Trinity United Reform Church. Additional crossing points spaced along the length of the Rye would improve pedestrian safety and regulate traffic speed.



Gardens converted into inset car parking spaces eroding the raised boundary wall and gardens of these houses

6.77 Traffic within the town center, such as the traffic which runs along Castle Street and into Frogmoor is detrimental to the atmosphere of the town center causing noise, pollution and making the area less pedestrian friendly. This is exacerbated by the large vehicles including buses which frequently use this route.



Front gardens converted to parking with loss of historic boundaries on Gordon Road eroding the historic streetscape.



6.78 Opportunities and Recommendations relating to traffic and parking include:

- a Unifying and enhancing the treatment of traffic calming measures, car parking and pedestrian routes both into and through the town center.
- b The quality of street environment should be a paramount consideration in designing parking spaces into the street. The inclusion of landscape and street trees as well as the provision for pedestrians should be integral to the design.
- c The creation of parking in front gardens, particularly where it involves the loss of historic boundary enclosure, will be discouraged.



Numerous traffic lights and bollards can add to the cluttered appearance in the town

Sustainable Development and Climate Change

6.79 The current climate crisis means there is a focus on improving the energy efficiency of our buildings, including historic buildings, in order to reduce carbon emissions, particularly from heating which uses fossil fuel sources. Maintenance and continued use of historic buildings is inherently sustainable and historic buildings in Conservation Areas such as High Wycombe can play a significant role in reducing carbon emissions. However, the conflict between upgrading historic buildings for sustainability reasons and the importance of retaining and enhancing the special interest of those historic buildings and the Conservation Area needs to be considered. In making sustainability improvements care therefore needs to be taken to find the solutions most appropriate to historic buildings, ensuring breathability is maintained (see [paragraphs 6.25-6.31](#) for more details) and that changes are sensitive to the historic building in question and to its setting within the Conservation Area.

6.80 'Retrofitting' is the introduction of new materials, products or equipment into an existing building with the aim of reducing its energy use. However, a rush to retrofit

carries many risks, particularly when it comes to Listed Buildings and buildings within Conservation Areas. The consequences of getting it wrong could cause lasting damage and unnecessary expenditure as there is no 'one size fits all' solution to retrofitting older buildings and what works on one property may not work on its neighbour.

6.81 A 'whole building approach' is therefore recommended for historic buildings, where the different parts of a building, as well as its use patterns and the materials it is built with, are considered in terms of how they interact with each other. This approach is founded on the principle that the greenest (and cheapest) energy is the energy we do not use: much can be achieved by changing behaviour, avoiding waste, using efficient controls and equipment and managing the building to its optimum performance before more major changes like installing solar panels or changing a heating system needs to be considered. This way the risk of making inappropriate changes to historic buildings is reduced and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and any heritage assets within it is more likely to be preserved.



6.82 The diagram adjacent illustrates a process of understanding a historic building in order that changes are made appropriately.

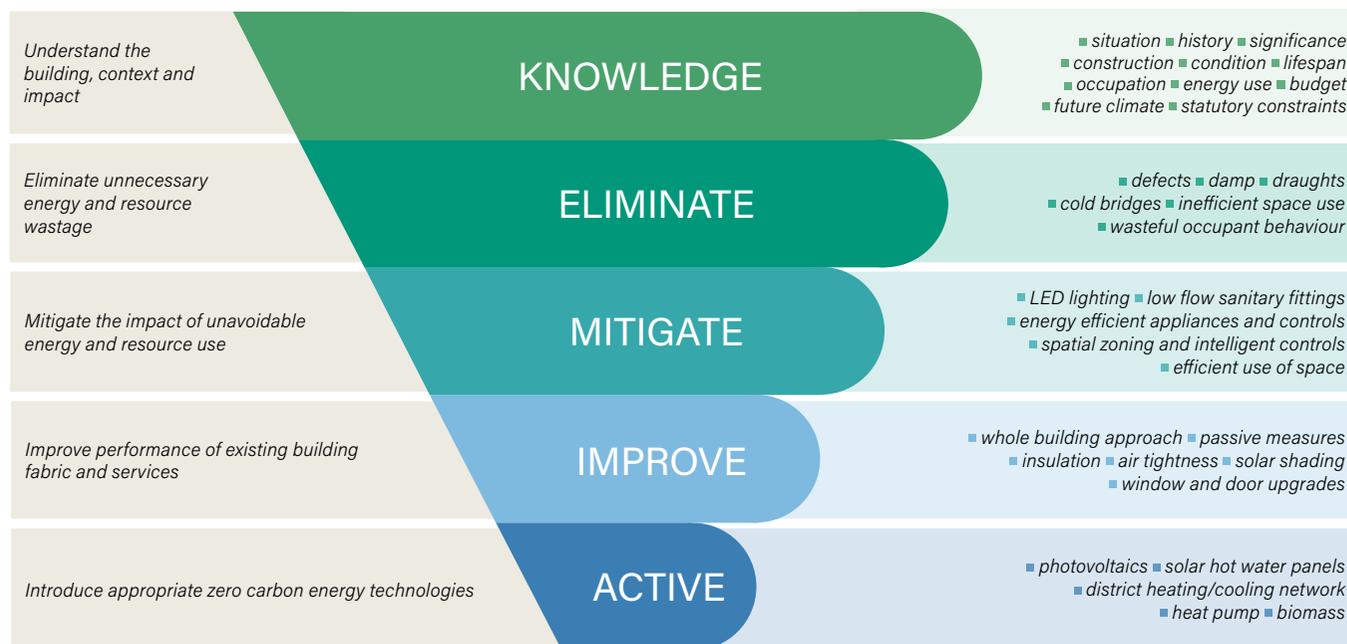
6.83 **Knowledge:** Understand the context of your building is the first and most important step: its surroundings and situation; its history, construction, and condition; its energy use and impact; its occupation and patterns of use. Understand the financial context of the project, what is the budget, are there grants or funding opportunities available? Allowing time to properly understand the building, how it is used, and where energy is being wasted will save time and money later.

6.84 **Eliminate** unnecessary energy use: Addressing issues like damp, draughts and other defects can be a cost-effective way of saving energy. Look at how a building is used: is a space constantly heated but only occupied once a week for example?

6.85 **Mitigate** the impact of things that are unavoidable. For example, lighting and electrical appliances are essential items so these should be as efficient as possible (LEDs etc). What is the most efficient way of using the spaces?

6.86 **Improve** the existing building's fabric to reduce energy use further through passive means. For example, sensitively upgrading windows, insulating the roof, walls, and floors, while considering that traditional buildings need to be 'breathable' by using vapour-permeable materials. Incorporating materials that enable this permeability is crucial to avoiding unintended consequences like moisture buildup and damp. Consider occupant comfort, effective ventilation and minimise risks of overheating.

6.87 **Active:** Lastly, introduce appropriate 'active' energy technologies that are zero carbon and renewable. This could include solar panels or heat pumps. This final measure is an essential part of addressing the climate emergency but jumping to this step too early could risk implementing the wrong solution. If you do not take steps to reduce energy demand first, the new energy source will need to be larger and work harder, and ultimately cost more to install and to run.





6.88 Landscaping, trees and greenery also play an important role in climate change, with trees playing an important role in urban cooling and the reduction of the 'heat island' effect. Trees in urban areas also reduce surface flooding and the reduction of windspeeds (therefore resulting in reduced heat loss in houses from draughts).

6.89 Key issues relating to sustainability and historic buildings in High Wycombe include:

- a Pressure to replace important historic windows with inappropriate uPVC;
- b Pressure to install solar panels and heat pumps which may be visually intrusive to important historic settings;
- c Pressure to externally insulate historic buildings, potentially covering over important original finishes, or introducing inappropriate non-breathable modern material;
- d The potential for e-charging points for electric vehicles to cause clutter within streetscapes;
- e Issues with vehicular traffic and parking demonstrate the predominant use of cars in the area.



Overly prominent and large area of solar panels fronting onto the street on Bowden Lane, just outside the Conservation Area but impacting its character and appearance.

6.90 Opportunities and Recommendations relating to Sustainable Development and Climate Change include:

- a Physical changes to historic buildings to improve energy efficiency need to be carefully considered in terms of a 'whole building approach', so as to mitigate against harm to the significance of both individual buildings and the Conservation Area, as well as ensure that works are effective and sustainable in the long term.

b Many improvements to thermal performance of buildings will have no impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and should be considered first, including improving the thermal performance of the building stock through:

- i Adding insulation to lofts and below suspended ground floors.
- ii Draft exclusion around windows, doors and vents.
- iii Installing secondary glazing, thick curtains and internal shutters (if appropriate to the period of the property).

c If windows are beyond repair, modern or insensitive later alterations, replacement could be with slimline timber double-glazed units to improve a building's thermal efficiency. For Listed Buildings proposed replacements should be in timber (or metal if this was the original material) and reflect historic joinery and glazing types. The visual character of the design, materiality and detailing of uPVC windows makes them unsuitable for older buildings and Conservation Areas;



- d** Solar photovoltaic or solar thermal panels must not detract from the historic character of the building and are likely to be only acceptable when positioned on rear roof slopes and not readily visible from the public realm. The topography of High Wycombe also needs to be taken into account as many rear roof slopes are visible. Well-integrated solar slates or tiles may in some circumstances be more visually acceptable, where solar panels are not appropriate.
- e** Other renewable energy sources could be considered, such as ground, air or water sourced heat pumps as long as they are not installed on a wall or roof which fronts a highway and do not detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area.
- f** Where possible, e-charging points should be integrated into existing street furniture, such as in lampposts, and be considered alongside other reductions in street furniture in order to reduce visual and physical clutter.
- g** Materials used for building and landscaping projects should be chosen from sustainable, low-carbon sources and from the local area where possible.
- h** Tree planting should be considered both as a way to improve visual amenity of the Conservation Area and its setting, as well as a tool to help combat climate change. It will be advantageous to encourage the planting of non-native species, which have a similar form and structure to those which are native. Non-native trees have a higher tolerance of reflective heat and have lower water requirements, increasing their longevity and safeguarding the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in the longer-term, whilst minimising conflict with existing infrastructure.
- i** Encourage biodiversity of flora and fauna appropriate to the character of historic open spaces. Specialist advice should be sought to explore how new development and changes to the built environment can best support ecology through introduction to specific trees, flowers and fruit to provide appropriate habitats for wildlife. This could also include the sensitive introduction of ecological features onto buildings in appropriate locations such as bird or bat boxes. Consideration should also be taken to how alterations to buildings may affect potential roosting places for bats or nesting birds.
- j** Measures should be taken to reduce or calm vehicle movement in the Conservation Area to improve air quality, make active travel more pleasant and safer and improve the character of the Conservation Area. For example, non-motorised methods of travel could be encouraged by creating more infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling, such as pedestrian routes and cycle paths, as well as appropriate signposting. There is also potential to introduce discrete, well-integrated bike storage. These measures should take care not to add to visual clutter.
- k** More detailed guidance on historic buildings and sustainability has been produced by organisations such as Historic England. Links to these can be found in the Further Information and Sources section.



SECTION 7

BOUNDARY REVIEW

This part of the document provides details of the review of the boundary of High Wycombe Conservation Area, identifying proposed changes.

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Proposed Additions to the Conservation Area	124





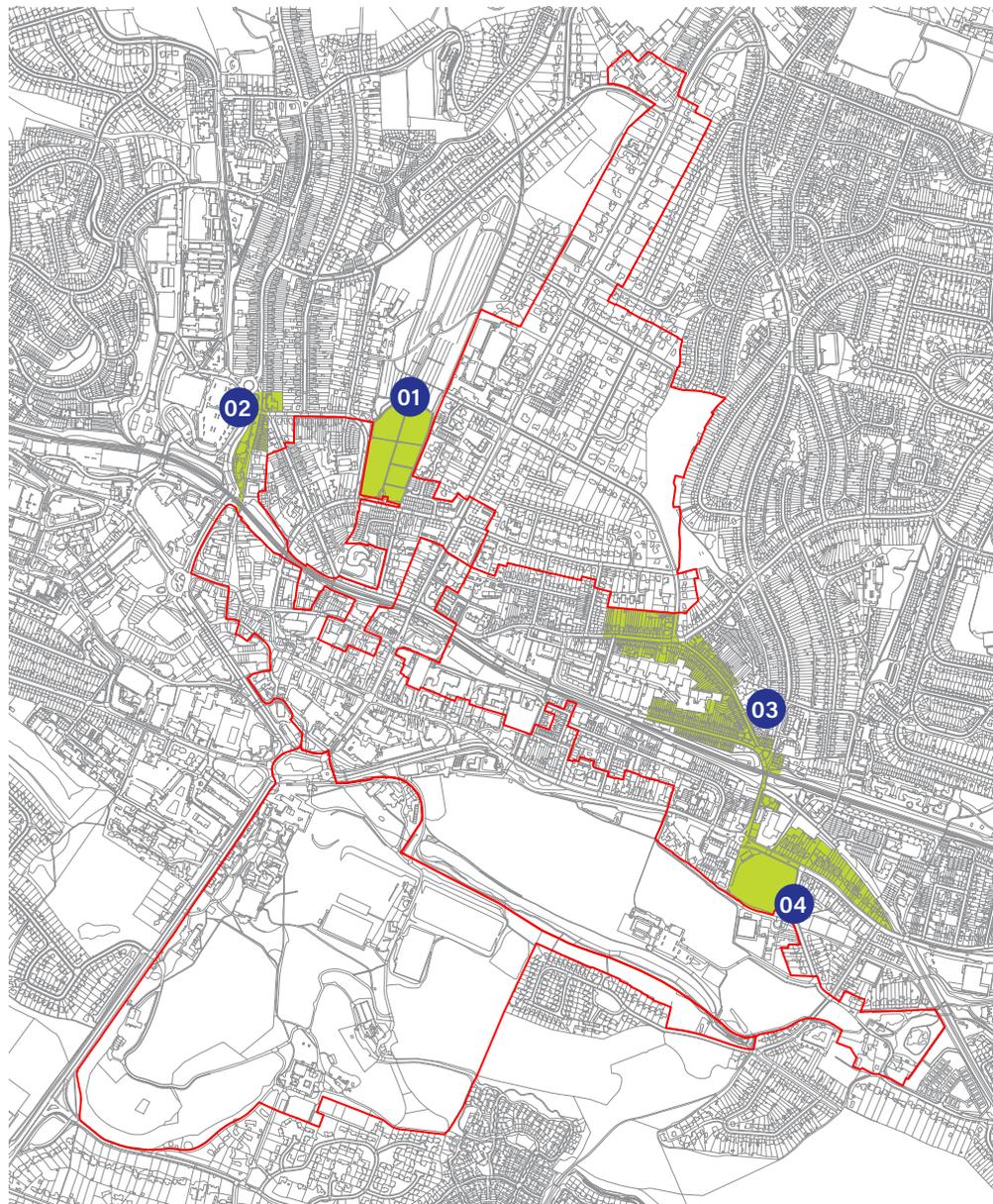
Introduction to the Boundary Review

7.1 Over time, Conservation Areas evolve and the characteristics which underpin their special interest may evolve or decrease in their integrity because of gradual alteration. It is therefore important to review and take stock of the character of a Conservation Area at intervals to ensure designation is still suitable and that the proper management of change is in place. Furthermore, our understanding or appreciation of what is special about an area can change over time, meaning that it is important to review the boundaries of Conservation Areas and include/exclude buildings and spaces which do/do not contribute to and reinforce the Conservation Area designation.

7.2 As such, best practice prescribes that Conservation Area boundaries are periodically reviewed to ensure that the original reasons for designation are still relevant and evident. A review of the boundary, as well as any accompanying guidance and assessments, should generally take place every five to ten years or in response to a notable change (positive or negative), including any changes in policy or legislation. The boundaries of the High Wycombe Conservation Area were last reviewed in 2011, Amerhsam Hill was reviewed in 2012, Priory Avenue in 2012 and Wycombe Abbey in 1986. These areas are therefore due for review. These four separate Conservation Areas are now being combined into one Conservation Area as part of this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

7.3 Following public consultation, this part of the Conservation Area Appraisal will become the Designation Report for any boundary revisions to the Conservation Area and will be adopted at the same time as the final version of the Conservation Area Appraisal. The changes to the boundary will be incorporated into this document. There are four proposed inclusions in the boundary and no proposed exclusions.

SECTION 7.0: BOUNDARY REVIEW



BOUNDARY REVIEW PLAN

- Previous Conservation Area Boundary
- Proposed Inclusions
- Proposed Exclusions

01 South End of High Wycombe Cemetery
02 Temple End and Former Police Station
03 Totteridge Avenue and Gordon Road
04 London Road Extension East and Cricket Club

This plan is not to scale



Proposed Additions to the Conservation Area

1: South End Of High Wycombe Cemetery

7.4 High Wycombe Cemetery is a typical early Burial Board cemetery opened in 1855 following the 1853 legislation making it compulsory for councils to provide adequate burial space. By this date the town's increasing population meant All Saints graveyard was overflowing and land was purchased on Amersham Hill from the Carrington estate for use as the graveyard. The southern end of the cemetery contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area with attractive flint walls and mature well-managed greenery in abundance. The Victorian lodge and ornamental gates at the entrance are attractive and contribute to the built heritage of the Conservation Area, as does the war memorial. Already locally listed for these values, its proposed inclusion is due to its historic links with the development of the town and the attractive green backdrop it provides this area of the Conservation Area. The northern area of the Cemetery is not proposed for inclusion as it is a later phase of the Cemetery development which contributes less to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as it is situated further from the built development of the Conservation Area.





2: Temple End and Former Police Station

7.5 It is proposed to extend the boundary to the north, along Temple End to capture a number of buildings which represent the phased development of High Wycombe and which contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This includes the monumental brick viaduct crossing Frogmoor and Temple End, a visual record of the Town's industrial heritage, and a row of attractive early eighteenth century houses on the west side of Temple End which have attractive classical elements of design including decorative timber doorcases, timber sash windows and large Italianate dentilled eaves.

7.6 As one of the last surviving rows of workers' cottages built prior to 1876 in High Wycombe, numbers 28-70 are a row of terraced houses which contribute to our understanding of the historic development of High Wycombe, representing a prosperous phase of the town's history in the furniture industry. They were likely built for the Temple Works chair factory to the west of the terrace, now redeveloped. These are already locally listed but are intrinsically linked to the development of the town captured in the Conservation Area.

7.7 The late nineteenth century police station at the north end of Temple End, built in 1876, is a building which has played a key role in High Wycombe over the years, first as a police station and later as a magistrates' court. Its rich architectural detailing created with red and gault brick alongside carved stone elements make it a striking focal point for this junction. This building is locally listed. Its inclusion within the boundary allows the Conservation Area to capture the more comprehensive historical development of High Wycombe.





3: Totteridge Avenue and Gordon Road

7.8 Houses along Totteridge Avenue, Totteridge Road and Gordon Road were developed in the late nineteenth century in response to the expanding population due to the arrival of the railway and the success of the furniture industry. The Gordon Arms pub was also built in this late nineteenth century phase of development and is an attractive building with distinctive detailing such as the double height bow window, standing at a prominent junction. This expansion also includes some early twentieth century shops and the impressive viaduct. Two small early twentieth century furniture factories, one of which may still be in use, are included to the rear of the houses fronting onto Totteridge Avenue and Gordon Road. These furniture factories are a particularly significant survivals of the furniture making heritage in High Wycombe where many factories have been lost to development. There is a relatively high level of inappropriate alterations on the terraced houses along Gordon Road, and on the grander semi-detached villas which principally include the introduction of uPVC windows, inappropriate doors and conversion of front gardens to driveways. However, these roads contain attractive buildings of varying scales which reflect both the requirement for smaller scale workers' houses and public houses due to the high increase in population and the prosperity the town experienced with a high number of larger semi-detached villas.





4: London Road Extension East And Cricket Club

7.9 This proposed boundary extension continues the current boundary further east along London Road to capture attractive late nineteenth and early twentieth century detached villas which extended along London Road as the town prospered and expanded during the furniture industry's heyday.

7.10 High Wycombe has a history of cricket dating back to the early nineteenth century. A cricket pitch and pavilion are recoded on this site on late nineteenth century Ordnance Survey maps, though it is likely to have been used for cricket earlier in the century. The current pavilion dates to the later twentieth century. Though fenced off from the public, this area contributes to the character of leisure, the historically refined character of the Rye and the large expanse of greenery. Viewed from the road there is opportunity for improvement to enhance the appearance of the entrance to the club which has tall wooden fencing and a large expanse of tarmac out the front. The inclusion of the Cricket Club within the Conservation Area does not prevent positive improvement within the site which preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in order for it to continue its historic function as a cricket ground.





SECTION 8

CHARACTER AREAS

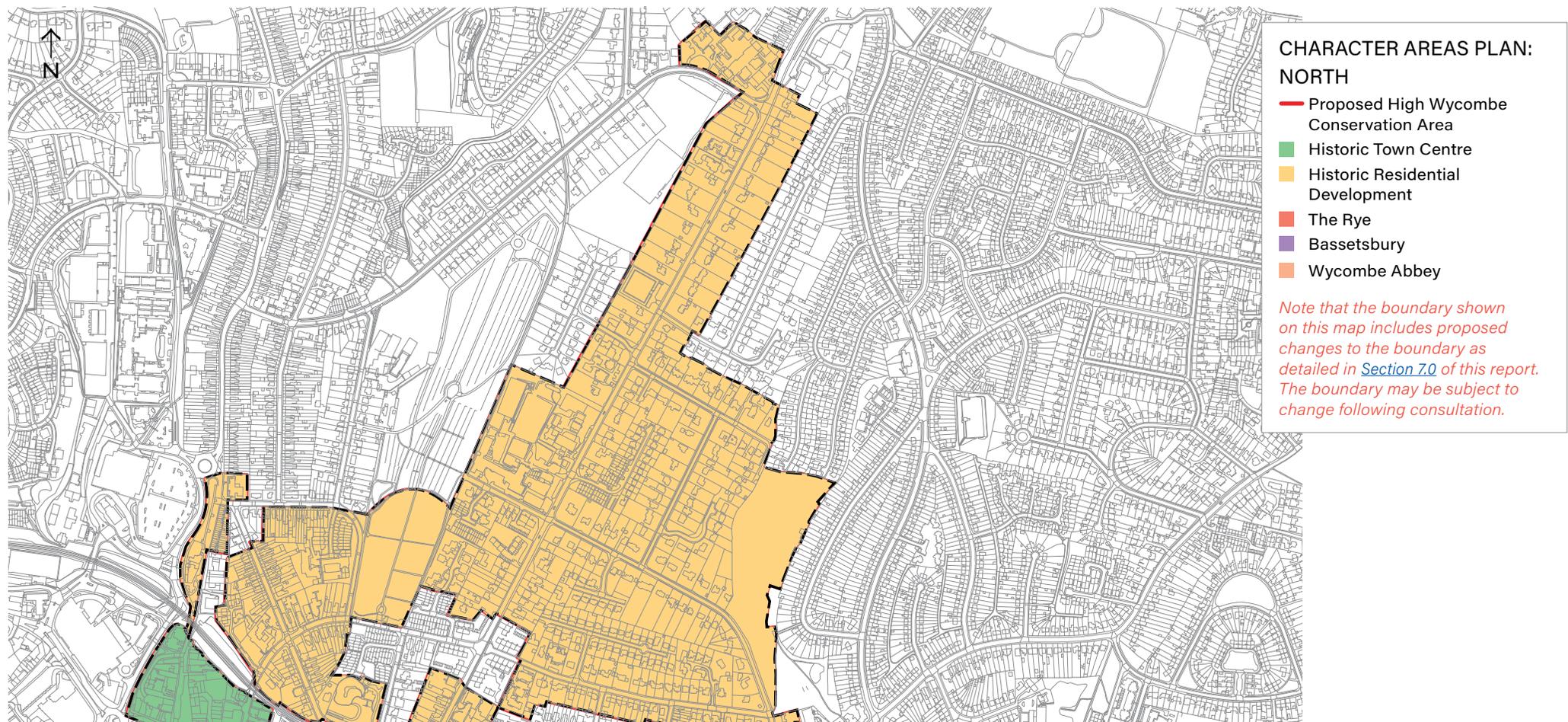
This section divides up the High Wycombe Conservation Area into smaller character areas. Each area has a different atmosphere and character depending on building types, design and use. The descriptions of each character area summarise their individual characteristics, and provide area specific issues, recommendations and opportunities.

This is to provide more detail on variations in character throughout the Conservation Area, in order to inform proposals for change so that they are sensitive to the specific area in which they are located, as what is appropriate for one character area may not be for another.

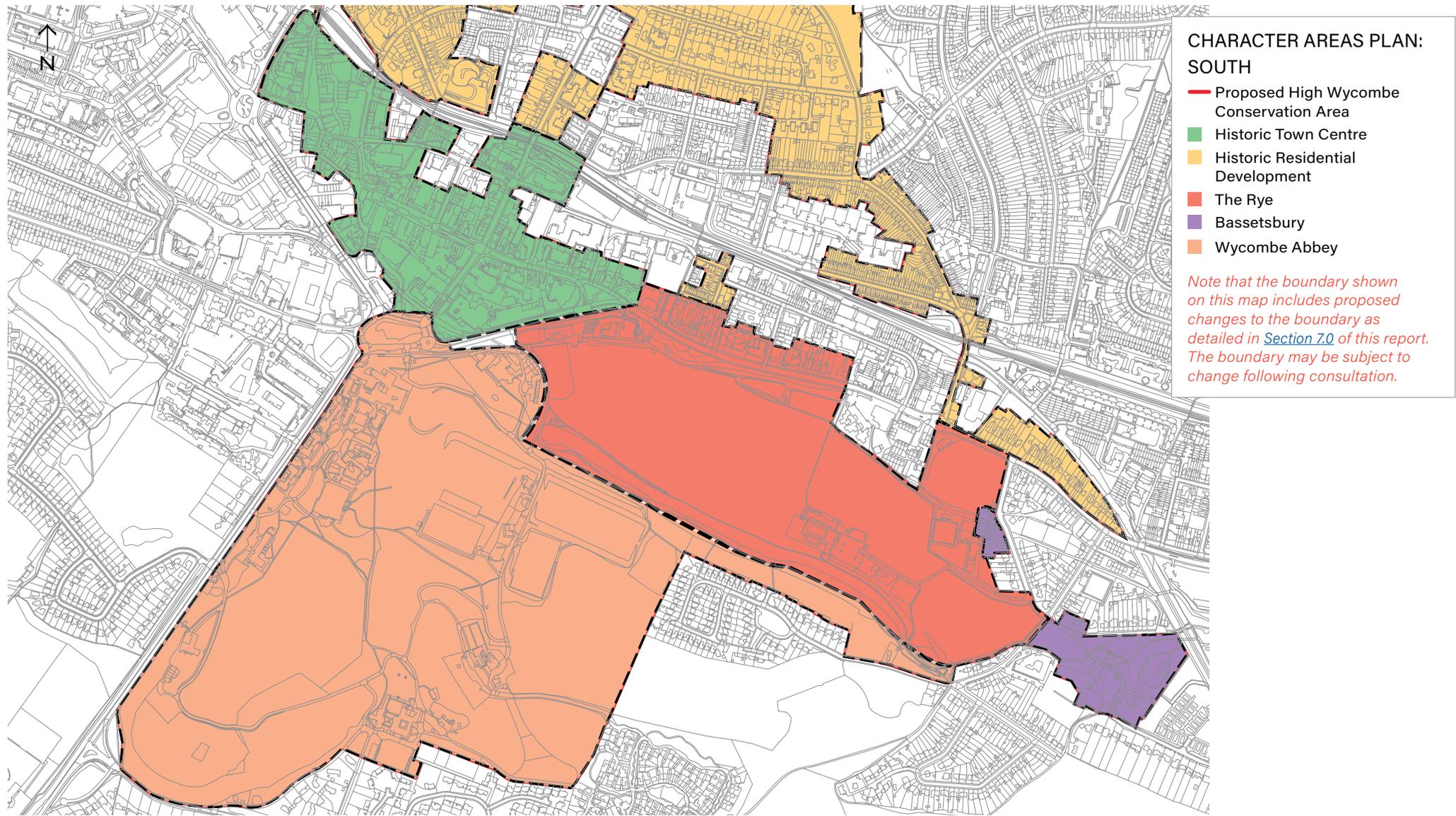
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SECTION 8.0: CHARACTER AREAS

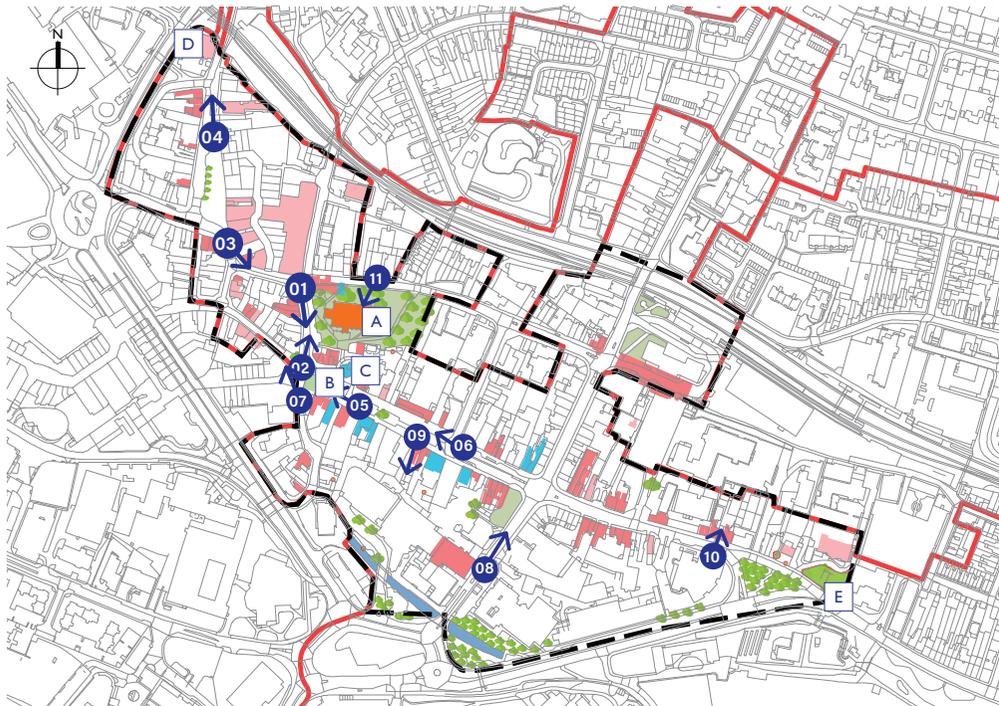


SECTION 8.0: CHARACTER AREAS





CHARACTER AREA 01: HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE



CHARACTER AREAS PLAN

- Proposed High Wycombe Conservation Area
- Character Area
- Green Spaces
- Tree Coverage
- TPOs
- ➔ Street Views
- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II
- Locally Listed

Local Landmarks:

- A All Saints Parish Church
- B Guildhall
- C Little Market House
- D The Clock House
- E Ruins of St John's Hospital, Scheduled Monument

Note that the boundary shown on this map includes proposed changes to the boundary as detailed in Section 7.0 of this report. The boundary may be subject to change following consultation.

Summary of Significance

8.1 The historic Town Centre character area is important in its high historic and communal value, as the centre of commercial, religious and civic activity in High Wycombe for over eight hundred years. The town's location between Oxford and London made it a busy stopping point for coaches and encouraged its growth into a thriving market town. Its early importance as a market town is highlighted by the ruins of the early medieval St John's Hospital located on the historic approach into the town, London Road. It illustrates clear phases of the town's development and expansion as a centre for commerce and industry through the piecemeal character of the medieval street layout to the west, opening out to the planned civic character of the former Cornmarket square at the end of the High Street, through to the wide, open plan of the Crendon Street junction and the civic buildings to the south. This later expansion was fuelled by the prosperity and expansion brought to the town by the railway in 1854, the burgeoning furniture industry and the philanthropy of the Carrington family. This area continues to have high communal value today as the commercial hub of High Wycombe, with a regular market still held in Cornmarket, at the west end of the High Street. Eighteenth and nineteenth century frontages dominate the area, with early twentieth century planned developments lining the north-south route through the Crendon Street junction. Views unfold through the medieval street planform before opening to wide planned streets framed by local landmarks. All Saints Church, particularly its tower, is a focal point in the area and its churchyard offers an important pocket of tranquillity and greenery amongst the bustling commercial streets. The rare survival of historicised street surfaces and a small number of surviving historic alleys are significant to this area.



CHARACTER AREA 01: HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE

Green Space

8.2 Green space is isolated in this character area, as it is the built-up commercial core of High Wycombe, and is therefore significant where it occurs.

8.3 The churchyard of All Saints offers a quiet oasis of calm away from the busy streets, with lots of seating placed around footpaths that cross the space. Mature tree growth effectively frames the historic Church Tower and offers welcome shade in hot weather.

8.4 A well maintained and colourful garden sits on the corner of Crendon Street junction, marking the boundary of the civic area and providing a refreshing element of greenery at the otherwise built-up junction. The neat ornamental planting scheme is consistent with the overall formality of the civic buildings along Queen Victoria Road.

8.5 Isolated trees on streets throughout the area contribute positively to the overall character of the streetscape.

Street Pattern and Topography

8.6 This area is located at the bottom of a valley, with the valley sloping upwards to both the north and south. As a result, views north along Crendon Street and south along Queen Victoria Road end in walls of greenery looking towards the hanging woodlands.

8.7 Streets are bustling and narrow in the Frogmoor area, largely following an unplanned medieval street pattern that leads to local landmarks and public squares. A market in Cornmarket is still held regularly, close to the location of its medieval precursor.

8.8 Towards the east the streets are wide, reflecting the planned nature of later medieval and early modern development. The wide, straight streets of the High Street, Crendon Street, Queen Victoria Road and Easton Street create an open character within this built-up historic area.

8.9 Narrow alleys are characteristic of the High Street and Easton Street and reflect its historic street pattern of closely packed burgage plots with narrow openings through to yards at the rear.

Buildings

8.10 Frogmoor's oldest buildings date from the sixteenth century, but the most prolific extant buildings are from the eighteenth century, with later nineteenth century buildings in between, resulting in a pleasing eclectic mix of historic character.

8.11 Most buildings are two or three storeys, varying in roof design, resulting in a linear character throughout Frogmoor and the High Street. Both consist of largely commercial shops punctuated with landmark buildings.

8.12 Crendon Street consists of largely a single development from the 1930s, punctuated with sympathetic modern buildings which blend in with the overall character. The character of Crendon Street complements the civic buildings along Queen Victoria Road which date from a similar period.

8.13 The Brunel railway shed, once the Great Western Rail station building and engine house, is a historically notable building to the north of the area, standing amongst modern railway buildings. This building, alongside the viaduct to the north of Frogmoor provide an important reminder of the industrial heritage of



CHARACTER AREA 01: HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE

High Wycombe.

Local Landmarks

8.14 The oldest standing building is All Saints Parish Church, built in the thirteenth century, and is the tallest structure in the area. It is a focal point alongside the eighteenth-century Guildhall and Little Market House. The late nineteenth century Clock House stands out architecturally in Frogmoor with its domed lead cupola (rounded top to the clock tower), amongst buildings of similar height.

Style, Material and Detailing

8.15 There is a wide range of materials used for walls in this area, although red brick is the prevalent material. Stucco or stone detailing is often used and there are some isolated examples of exposed timber framed buildings.

8.16 Exceptions can be found along Easton Street where notable buildings are finished in knapped flint, ceramic tiles or, strikingly, vitrified bricks (blackened bricks) laid in a header bond and the Parish Church is in stone.

8.17 Buildings in the Art Deco style are concentrated along Crendon Street and Queen Victoria Road.

8.18 Roofs are predominantly covered with clay or slate tiles, with the use of lead on local landmarks.

8.19 Windows are mostly timber sash windows on the upper storeys of commercial buildings. There are some examples of historic dormer windows and casement windows. Shopfronts largely consist of wide and tall glass panes.

Boundary Treatment and Street Surfaces

8.20 Most buildings along the High Street and Frogmoor directly abut each other, originally situated on narrow burgage plots, and directly front onto pavement, therefore not having any delineated (detached) plots with boundary walls, fences or hedges. This is with the exception of the churchyard wall that separates it from the street and surrounding buildings.

8.21 Denner Hill Setts are significant where they survive, often in former carriageway entrances, and historic and modern recreations create a harmonious finish through the pedestrianised High Street, Church Square and Cornmarket.

8.22 Other surfaces consist of stone paving slabs for pavement and tarmac for vehicular roads, with some examples of resin set gravel from the east end of the High Street, laid in different shades to mark out crossings and entranceways, which is overall complementary to the character of the area, highlighting the remaining historic alleys.

8.23 Traditional style metal bollards line the predominantly pedestrianised Church Street, leading to stylised sett kerbs with decorative stone spherical bollards marking the boundary, all of which is complementary to the character of the area.



CHARACTER AREA 01: HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE

Issues, Opportunities and Recommendations

8.24 This area is generally well-conserved, though several issues remain that are common throughout the Conservation Area, which provide opportunities for improvement as outlined in the Management Plan. For this area specifically, issues include the poor condition of some buildings (See Condition and Maintenance), large new development within the setting of the Conservation Area (see Demolition, Extension, Alteration and New Development and Setting), poorly designed shopfronts and lack of a coherent colour palette for advertising within the public realm (see Shopfronts and Advertising), vacant shops and buildings (see Vacancy), a wide variety of street surfaces lacking coherence (see Open Spaces and Public Realm) and heavy traffic and on street parking detracting from the atmosphere of the area (see Traffic and Parking).

Key Views and Character

This area is defined by views along predominantly wide streets framed and channelled by commercial buildings, opening onto wider squares where local landmarks are the focal point. The historic street pattern of this area is visually perceptible through the retention of alleys and carriage openings, which point to Wycombe's past as an industrial hub and coaching route.



View 1: The Guildhall forms a central focal point down the medieval Church Street



View 2 and 3: The tower of All Saints is a prominent feature of the streetscape from both open squares and narrower streets towards Frogmoor



CHARACTER AREA 01: HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE



View 4: The Clock House is a prominent local landmark across the open area of Frogmoor with its lead cupola.



View 5 and 6: Key views of the wide High Street are defined by historic buildings lining the street and the eighteenth-century Guildhall terminating the view at both a short and middle distance.



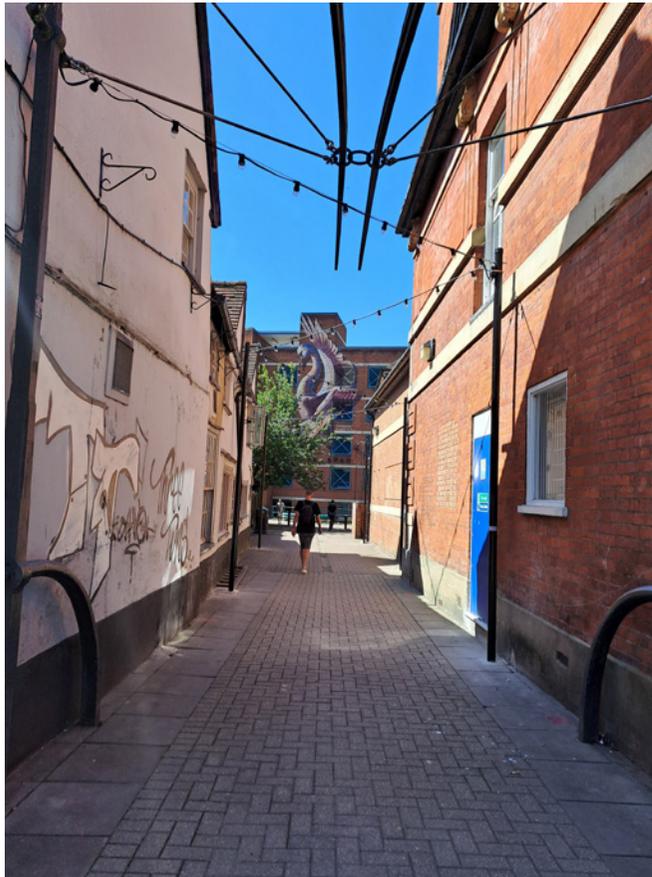
View 7: The bustling commercial and communal character of the area is demonstrated in this view where narrower streets open to wide squares with attractive planters.



View 8: This view from outside the 1930s Buckinghamshire offices highlights the large and planned early twentieth century developments that define the streets to the north and south of the Crendon Street junction. Trees in the background highlight the location within a valley.



CHARACTER AREA 01: HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE



View 9: A channelled view down one of the few remaining historic ginnels along the High Street.



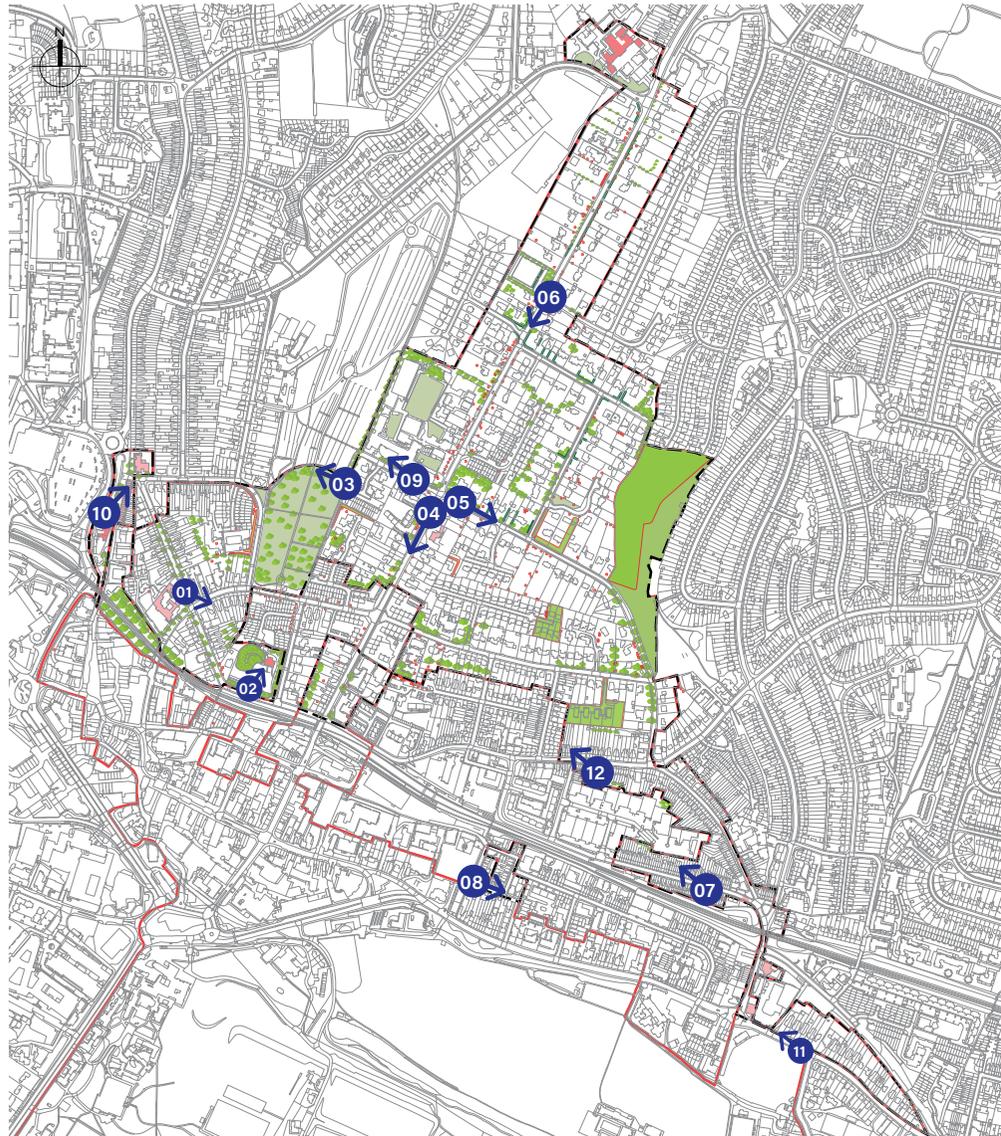
View 10: Historic cartways punctuate buildings along the historic primary route into the town centre, reflecting its heritage as a coaching stop.



View 11: The peaceful historic greenspace of the Churchyard.



CHARACTER AREA 02: HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



Summary of Significance

8.25 This area is important as it reflects the residential expansion of High Wycombe as a result of the thriving chair industry in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, an expansion which was accelerated due to the coming of the railway in 1858. As almost all historic furniture factories have been lost, the late Victorian villas built by the prosperous factory owners, as well as bank managers and other professionals prospering in High Wycombe, are important reminders of this significant part of High Wycombe’s industrial heritage. The area encompasses both middle class and working-class housing, although fewer examples of the latter remain. The grand detached and semi-detached villas built in a cohesive style, as well as smaller rows of terraced houses, are aesthetically pleasing and contribute to the historic, planned, character of these residential streets. Streets are linear with views of the larger villas characterised by extensive tree growth and defined boundaries. Plots are large along Amersham Hill and London Road with an abundance of vegetation, key to the character of this area. Expansive vistas from high points in this area situate it visually within its valley context. This area also contains the Wycombe Museum, a significant archaeological site with Norman defensive earthworks as well as a large villa with seventeenth century origins.

CHARACTER AREAS PLAN

- Proposed High Wycombe Conservation Area
- Character Area
- Green Spaces
- Hedges
- Tree Coverage
- TPOs
- Woodlands
- ➔ Street Views

- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II
- Locally Listed

Note that the boundary shown on this map includes proposed changes to the boundary as detailed in Section 7.0 of this report. The boundary may be subject to change following consultation.



CHARACTER AREA 02: HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Green Space

8.26 High Wycombe Cemetery, opened in the mid nineteenth century, offers a peaceful open expanse of green space in the heart of the residential suburbs, with expansive vistas across to the west of the Wycombe Valley. It is a locally listed landscape

8.27 Lucas Wood provides a verdant border to the east of the nineteenth century residential area, also commanding excellent views across the wider valley slopes.

8.28 The Museum Gardens provides a sheltered oasis in former landscaped gardens. There exists extensive tree coverage and a sensory garden which adds to the communal character of the area. It sits on the site of a Scheduled Ancient Monument; the remains of an early medieval fortification and Anglo-Saxon burial site, although much is lost to later nineteenth century re-landscaping.

8.29 Amersham Hill has a pleasant, secluded character, with mature tree growth and large hedges giving the area an overall green feel.

Street Pattern and Topography

7.30 This character area rises up the valley to the north and north-west and stretches along the base of the valley to the east.

8.31 Streets are linear and well planned, with mostly large plots set back from the road. Houses along London road look out across the open expanse of the Rye.

8.32 The isolated workers cottages that are extant are primarily terraces that front directly onto the road or have small front plots. Some, such as on Saffron Road, have small front gardens with low brick walls.

Buildings

8.33 This character area is primarily residential in character, although there are a number of educational buildings developed at the same time, namely the Royal Grammar School, Godstowe School and Hamilton Academy. These are larger in scale with multiple ranges in larger plots of land.

8.34 Priory Avenue, Amersham Hill, Totteridge Road and Totteridge Avenue are lined with grand nineteenth and early twentieth century villas of varying scales, designed to house the middle classes who moved out of the town centre following the success of the chair industry. The house of Arthur Vernon, a local architect, stands prominently at the base of Amersham Hill.

8.35 These developments built in distinct phases are aesthetically pleasing with each street having a distinctive style of building and material palette.

8.36 Wycombe Museum stands out architecturally in the area, being entirely clad in knapped flintwork (flint shaped and laid to be flush with the wall) and nestled in landscaped gardens. Cemetery House is similar but less striking, being partially finished in red brick.

8.37 St Augustine's Catholic Church sits at the base of Amersham Hill, built in red brick laid in a Flemish bond.



CHARACTER AREA 02: HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Style, Material and Detailing

8.38 Many of the linear sub roads that branch off from Amersham Hill are lined with houses of the Arts and Crafts style, predominantly finished in red brick. The villa houses on Priory Avenue are predominantly in gault brick with carved brick and terracotta detailing. Stucco and stone carved details are also prevalent.

8.39 Grand Victorian and Edwardian terraced villas in this area are characterised by front-facing gables and double canted bay windows. Windows are primarily of a sash design, though some timber casements are also used.

8.40 The workers cottages of Temple End and Saffron Platt and Gordon Road have linearly spaced sash windows and shallow pitched roofs. Originally of red brick with gault brick detailing, or red brick with contrasting brown brick detailing, some are now painted and rendered.

8.41 Roof materials vary between slate, clay and pantile, with grand villas predominantly using slate and Arts and Crafts residential buildings more commonly using clay. Pantile is used in isolated cases.

8.42 Chimney stacks are a defining feature of the roofline along descending rows of terraces, where they create a linear profile. Chimney stacks on houses along Amersham Hill are varied, as characteristic of Arts and Crafts style.

Boundary Treatment and Street Surfaces

8.43 Street surfaces are all tarmac, on both the pavement and road. There exists some isolated grass verges on branching residential streets and along Amersham Hill, as well as granite kerb stones. Setts are used to mark the entrance to driveways, as well as brick and rough gravel surfaces.

8.44 Boundaries are marked along Amersham Hill with low walls with hedges or railings above, fences with hedges above or tall close boarded fences. These provide residential plots with a clear boundary but block many from view.

8.45 The smallest workers' terraces front directly onto the pavement; others have small front gardens with low brick walls. The smaller villas, particularly along Totteridge Avenue, are bounded by elevated or ground-level front and side brick walls, with small plots at the front of each terrace.

8.46 High Wycombe cemetery is bounded by a distinctive wall of knapped flint and brickwork, topped behind with a neatly kept hedge.

Issues, Opportunities and Recommendations

8.47 This area is generally well-conserved, though several issues remain that are common throughout the Conservation Area, which provide opportunities for improvement as outlined in the Management Plan. For this area specifically, issues include the condition of some houses, particularly peeling paintwork (see Condition and Maintenance), replacement windows with uPVC to inappropriate designs (see Inappropriate Alterations), busy roads detracting from the residential setting of the streets and front gardens converted to parking (see Traffic and Parking), and solar panels placed prominently on roofs (see Sustainable Development and Climate Change).

Key Views and Character

Views in this area are characterised by mature tree growth lining linear residential plots, occasionally opening to large educational buildings. Main streets are sloped, reflecting the valley topography that characterises the wider area that surrounds High Wycombe.



CHARACTER AREA 02: HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



View 01: A grand villa in the late nineteenth century development of Priory Avenue, viewed from the junction with Priory Road.



View 02: The knapped flint building of High Wycombe Museum, surrounded by tranquil enclosed landscaped gardens.



View 03: View through the green and tranquil High Wycombe Cemetery with expansive vistas over the suburbs of High Wycombe and to the hills beyond.



View 04: Views channelled by greenery down Amersham Hill with the town in the distance.



View 05: A view east along Lucas Road, capturing the greenery of the historic residential area.



View 06: A view from further up Amersham Hill, capturing the overall character of the area of enclosed residential plots with tall fences and mature hedges.



CHARACTER AREA 02: HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



View 07: An example of semi-detached buildings along Gordon Road with brick walls forming a boundary to the property and greenery within the garden contributing to the character of the street.



View 08: Saffron Plat is a remaining development of workers cottages located to the northeast of the character area.



View 09: The rear of Godstowe School, founded in 1900, is one of three early twentieth century school buildings in this area.



View 10: Linear workers cottages in a terrace façade along Temple End, fronting directly onto the road.



View 11: Looking northwest along the eastern end of London Road at large early twentieth century residential villas, built as part of the industrial expansion.



View 12: Raised villas are characteristic housing along Totteridge Road, featuring high boundary walls that separate them from the road.



CHARACTER AREA 03: THE RYE



CHARACTER AREAS PLAN

- Proposed High Wycombe Conservation Area
- Character Area
- Green Spaces
- Waterways
- Hedges
- Tree Coverage
- TPOs
- ➔ Street Views
- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II
- Locally Listed

Local Landmarks:

- A Trinity United Reform Church
- B Pann Mill

Note that the boundary shown on this map includes proposed changes to the boundary as detailed in Section 7.0 of this report. The boundary may be subject to change following consultation.

Summary of Significance

8.48 This character area finds its significance in the historic, ecological and economic importance of the expansive Rye, an open expanse of common land, framed by the peaceful waterways of the Wye, a rare Chalk stream, and the Dyke. Today it is characterised as a space for leisure. The historic Pann Mill, located on the site where mills have operated since at least 1089 and substantially restored in the twentieth century, is a visual reminder of the town’s milling activity which encouraged the development of the marketplace to sell the goods being produced. London Road still forms one of the main thoroughfares into the centre of High Wycombe and attractive eighteenth and early nineteenth century houses overlooking the Rye contribute to the polite and refined character of this area.

Green Space

8.49 This area is mostly green space, with the expansive fields of the Rye open to the public, with playgrounds and Wycombe Lido contributing to the overall character of leisure. The Wye runs to the north of the character area and has ecological importance as a chalk stream. The Dyke is a decorative landscaped waterway to the south, created as part of the eighteenth century landscaping of Wycombe Abbey lined by an avenue of trees and overlooked by hanging woodlands. This runs into the Wycombe Abbey Character Area. Contributing significantly to the character of the Rye is the Red Kite population which can usually be seen circling above the woodland.



CHARACTER AREA 03: THE RYE

Street Pattern and Topography

8.50 This area is located in the bottom of the valley and is flat, running east to west through the valley.

8.51 London Road is the current and historic route into the centre of High Wycombe. It is bordered by the Rye to the south and eighteenth and nineteenth century residential buildings to the north. A series of footpaths cross through the Rye.

Buildings

8.52 The buildings in this area are of a mixed character, forming an eclectic mix of uses and scale. Their uniting feature is their relationship to the Rye.

8.53 Pann Mill is a late twentieth century reconstruction of the historic mill house, with the earlier mill machinery contained within it. It is located on the site of a mill dating back to the late Saxon Period. It is located on the site of a mill dating back to the Saxon Period.

8.54 Eighteenth and nineteenth century terraced houses and villas as well as religious and educational buildings, including a modest

Quaker Meeting House, line the north side of London Road, set back from the road with small front plots.

8.55 Larger scale buildings to the west of the character area include Trinity United Reform Church. To the east is Crown House School.

8.56 Leisure buildings consist of Wycombe Rye Lido, built in the 1950s and situated in the southeast of the Rye, and High Wycombe Cricket Club pavilion, which is to the northeast.

Landmark Buildings

8.57 Trinity United Reform Church is a visual focal point along London Road with its stone-faced twin turrets and is architecturally distinct within this area.

8.58 The site of Pann Mill is of significant historical importance, with mill buildings on its site since at least 1089. The present building is largely modern but derives its significance from the eighteenth-century mill machinery it houses, taken from the mill house demolished in the 1970s. It is sheltered from its surroundings by a landscaped garden and tree growth.

Style, Material and Detailing

8.59 There are a wide variety of materials, architectural styles and detailing around the Rye. Pann Mill is finished in weatherboards, which is distinct from the rest of the buildings in the area. Trinity United Church is a red brick building in Flemish bond, fronted in stone. The houses along London Road are also brick laid in Flemish bond, with the occasional use of vitrified brick, laid as the header. Roofs are predominantly clay, with occasional use of slate.

8.60 Most buildings are residential with pitched roofs. Schools tend to have a larger, varied roofscape and the Lido has a flat roof and low, elongated profile, typical of 1950s design.

Boundary Treatment and Street Surfaces

8.61 London Road has a tarmacked road and stone slab pavement with concrete kerb stones, with most of the narrow footpaths that lead into the Rye also laid in tarmac. The Rye consists of neatly cut grass, with some patterned and safety surfaces for playgrounds. Boundaries within the Rye are marked with trees, with high hedges that shelter Wycombe



CHARACTER AREA 03: THE RYE

Lido. Visually appropriate metal safety railings line the south of London Road, separating the pavement from the river. The buildings to the north of London Road have brick walls that mark their boundaries, interspersed with hedges and quality metal fencing above the walls.

Issues, Opportunities and Recommendations

Several issues within this character area are common throughout the Conservation Area, providing opportunities for improvement as outlined in the Management Plan. For this area specifically issues include the busy traffic on London Road with a lack of crossing points (see Traffic and Parking), large buildings constructed in the setting of the Conservation Area and visible in views from the Rye (see Setting), and the poor condition of some buildings (see Condition and Maintenance).

Key Views and Character

8.62 Views in this area are characterised by the sweeping expanse of the Rye and the hanging woodlands beyond. Views of buildings are framed by greenery, highlighting the overall green character of the area.



View 01: Large villas along London Road set back behind boundary walls.



View 02: The Rye from London Road, looking across to the hanging woodlands



View 03: A channelled view from the Rye towards Trinity United Church, framed by greenery



CHARACTER AREA 03: THE RYE



View 04: Pann Mill, surrounded by trees and hedges; there has been a mill on this site since at least 1089



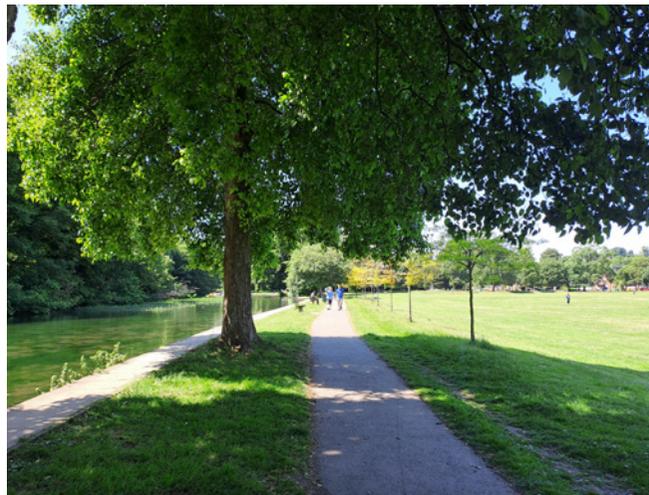
View 05: London Road from a footpath on the Rye is largely hidden from view, with only rooftops visible



View 06: Wycombe Rye Lido, built 1957, does not feature prominently in the green landscape, but adds to the overall leisurely character of the area



View 07: The open expanse of the Rye, looking southwest towards the grounds of Wycombe Abbey.



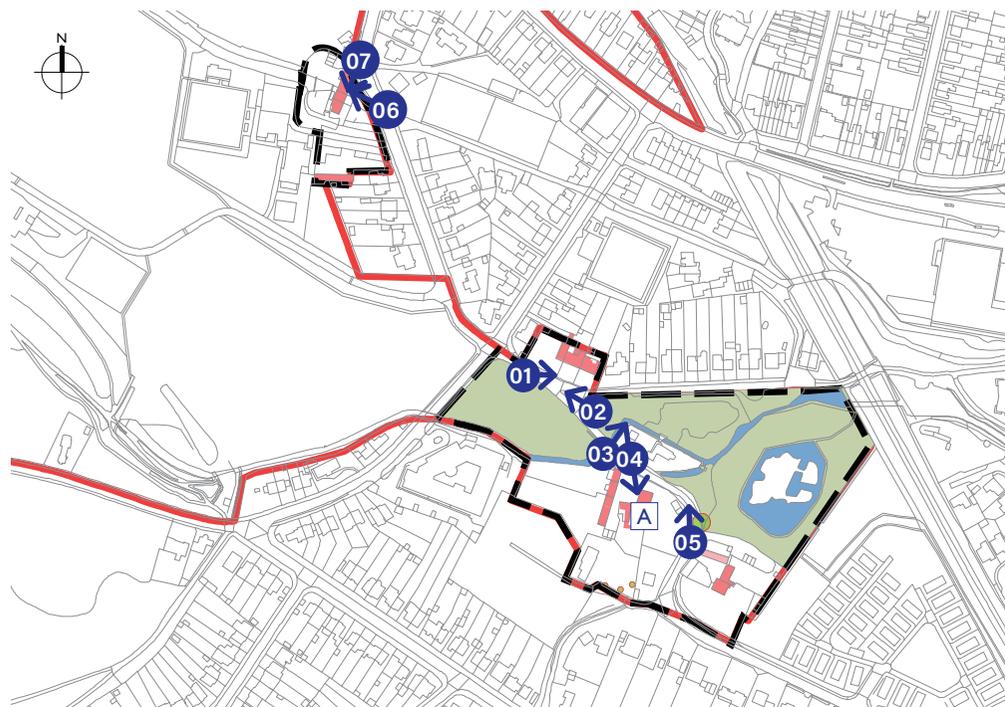
View 08: The landscaped Dyke to the left of this view is lined by an avenue of trees of varied maturity.



View 09: Looking north from the Rye to the rising valley slope. A large office block protrudes over the treeline.



CHARACTER AREA 04: BASSETSBURY



CHARACTER AREAS PLAN

- Proposed High Wycombe Conservation Area
- Character Area
- Green Spaces
- Tree Coverage
- TPOs
- ➔ Street Views
- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II
- Locally Listed

Local Landmarks:

- A Marsh Green Cottage Complex

Note that the boundary shown on this map includes proposed changes to the boundary as detailed in Section 7.0 of this report. The boundary may be subject to change following consultation.

Summary of Significance

8.63 Bassettsbury is a rural corner of High Wycombe, with a distinct rural feel compared to the urban centre. The presence of the Wye and former mills is significant to the character of this area. Although many mills have been converted to residential use, they retain their historic character and reflect High Wycombe’s long milling heritage. The winding nature of Bassettsbury Lane creates a secluded, agricultural feel, emphasised by the buildings and barns set within large plots of land and around yards, positioned back from the road and sheltered by high green borders.

Green Space

8.64 Bassettsbury has a decidedly rural feel with open green space and a nature reserve called Funges Meadow to the east. Funges Meadow consists of a large pond and wetland and is not open to the general public. It is used for schools and is managed by the Chiltern Rangers. High ecological diversity extends outside of the reserve, with road signs indicating the presence of migratory toads. The winding Bassettsbury Lane is framed by vegetation and high hedges, with footpaths and grass verges, and the river weaves its way around the former mill buildings.



CHARACTER AREA 04: BASSETSBURY

Street Pattern and Topography

8.65 The Bassetsbury character area consists of one winding lane that branches off London Road. Small private roads run from this lane to individual properties and yards surrounded by buildings open off the road. It lies at the bottom of Wycombe Valley and is therefore flat.

Buildings

8.66 The earliest structure in Bassetsbury dates from the seventeenth century, but mostly eighteenth-century buildings are extant, some with much older cores. Buildings are a combination of two storey farmhouses and elongated single storey barns, all with pitched roofs. Most buildings are set back from Bassetsbury Lane, giving them a secluded feel.

Local Landmark

8.67 Marsh Green Mill was a former eighteenth century mill in operation until the 1950s and is of whitewashed brick, recording the early mill heritage of High Wycombe. It is part of the Marsh Green Cottage complex which was bought by the famous Mitford family in 1925.

Style, Material and Detailing

8.68 Most buildings are one or two storeys with gabled roofs. Some historic barns have a partial weatherboard finish at the gable. Buildings have clay roof tiles and are built of red brick. The structures around Marsh Green are whitewashed. Windows are often simple timber sash windows.

Boundary Treatment and Street Surfaces

8.69 Most buildings are set back from the road, orientated along small private roads or courtyards. Boundaries are defined by tall tree growth, hedges, brick walls and fences that border the lane, but boundaries are of an overwhelmingly organic character, with some marked by waterways. Bassetsbury Lane is tarmacked with granite kerbs to the north and sections of pavement on one side of the road, occasionally bordered by grass verges. Setts are used across some driveway openings or laid as gutters.

Issues, Opportunities and Recommendations

8.70 There are few issues within this character area though there are instances of uPVC replacement windows of poor design (See Inappropriate Alterations).

Key Views and Character

8.71 Views in this area emphasise the rural, historic and secluded character of Bassetsbury, with unfolding views down Bassetsbury Lane and glimpsed views of historic farms and mill buildings, now residential.



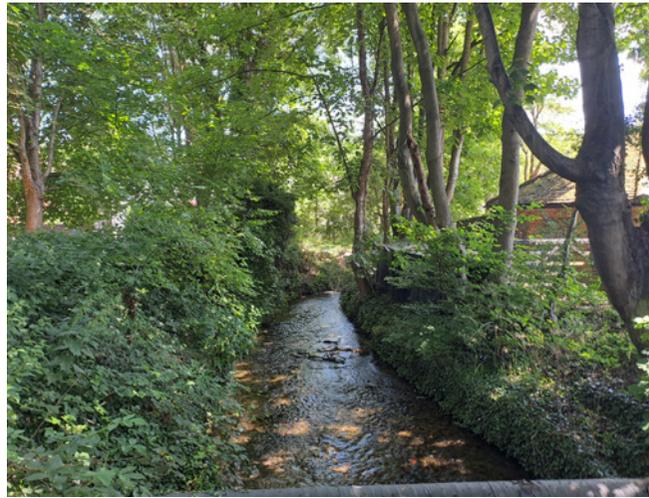
View 01: Large eighteenth century buildings, now residential, set back in large plots from the road.



CHARACTER AREA 04: BASSETSBURY



View 02: Bassettsbury Lane looking north, bordered by greenspace and mature trees.



View 03: The river Wye runs through Bassettsbury, past old mill buildings now converted to residential use, but which retain much of their historic character.



View 04: Marsh Green Cottage and mill buildings, owned by the Mitford family from 1925.



View 05: This view is looking north down the winding Bassettsbury Lane and is indicative of its rural character.



View 06 and 07: Eighteenth century Bassettsbury Mill and the seventeenth century Chequers, formerly Bassettsbury Mill Cottage. Isolated from other mill buildings but still illustrative of the character of the area.





CHARACTER AREA 05: WYCOMBE ABBEY



CHARACTER AREAS PLAN

Proposed High Wycombe Conservation Area	Grade I
Character Area	Grade II*
Green Spaces	Grade II
Tree Coverage	Locally Listed
TPOs	
Woodlands	
Street Views	

Note that the boundary shown on this map includes proposed changes to the boundary as detailed in Section 7.0 of this report. The boundary may be subject to change following consultation.

Summary of Significance

8.72 Wycombe Abbey and grounds has layers of historic significance, as the principal manor of the town since the original Jacobean manor on the site was purchased by the Earl of Shelburne in 1700. It is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden landscaped in the eighteenth century, with possible influence from Capability Brown and later possible consultation with Humphry Repton. The subsequent lords of the manor then made numerous financial contributions to the town, gifting land and funding the erection of public buildings. Wycombe Abbey and its grounds became a private girls' school in 1896, with the then owners, the Carringtons, moving up to Daws Hill, which later became a military base during WWII. Wycombe Abbey's elevated location on the south side of the valley means the house and grounds make a prominent contribution to the setting of the town.

Green Space

8.73 The grounds of Wycombe Abbey are not open to the public and partially form the sports and recreation space for the school. The grounds retain much of their original landscaping, with a distinctive double tree lined avenue marking the original entrance to the manor from the Rye. The grounds gently slope southwards up Marlow Hill, offering expansive views across the wider town from certain vantage points. The site includes kept grass and wilder meadows with footpaths through them.



CHARACTER AREA 05: WYCOMBE ABBEY

Street Pattern and Topography

8.74 The grounds rise slowly to the south up Marlow Hill, with the main road lying outside the Conservation Area. A network of winding service roads covers the grounds, connecting educational and residential buildings across the site, including Daws Hill.

Buildings

8.75 Wycombe Abbey is the primary building of the site, and is surrounded by numerous educational buildings, including a modern arts centre that fronts onto the portion of the Dyke that runs into the area. Modern student residential buildings are situated up Marlow Hill. Daws Hill house is another prominent building on the site, converted from an eighteenth-century farmhouse for the third Lord Carrington in 1899, also used as residential halls.

Style, Material and Detailing

8.76 The earlier seventeenth century manor was remodelled in the Gothic style in 1804 by James Wyatt, for the first Lord Carrington, and is finished in pointed stone, with galletting (where small pieces of stone are pushed into wet mortar). It has crenulated decorative parapets (top of the roof line) and corner turrets. In contrast, Daws Hill House is finished in brick of a Flemish bond with knapped flint panels. Modern buildings also utilise brick, with most roofs of sheet metal. Older residential buildings, including Daws Hill, use clay roof tiles.

Boundary Treatment and Street Surfaces

8.77 A tall boundary wall of brick topped with pebble stone separates the area from the wider Conservation Area and the road up Marlow Hill. Footpaths and landscaped areas around the school are of a light gravel, with most roads through the site tarmacked, but setts mark the entrance road into the site. Grass footpaths cross the wider grounds and parkland. The double tree lined avenue leading to the Abbey forms a clear boundary between the road and sports pitches to the south.

Issues, Opportunities and Recommendations

8.78 A full Opportunities and Constraints plan has been produced by Walters & Cohen Architects and Land Use Consultants Ltd (LUC) in 2003. This should be referred to for specific alterations within the Wycombe Abbey Grounds. Issues in relation to the Conservation Area include large buildings in the setting of this area, such as Buckinghamshire New University which looms over the Abbey from views within the site (See Setting).

Key Views and Character

8.79 Key views of this area are characterised by historic views towards Wycombe Abbey, and wider views across the grounds to the town beyond from high vantage points.



CHARACTER AREA 05: WYCOMBE ABBEY



View 01: The front entrance of Wycombe Abbey School, built in the distinctive Gothic style



View 02: This view appreciates the secluded character of Wycombe Abbey set within its lower grounds, with a limited view of High Wycombe in the background.



View 03: A view of the mature double tree lined avenue, looking towards the Abbey, which would have once formed the historical entrance route from the Rye



View 04: The rising topography of Wycombe Abbey's grounds begins to offer views across High Wycombe further from the Abbey itself. All Saints Parish Church can be seen through the trees.



View 05: The highest vantage point to the far north of the grounds visually situates the character area with the wider town.



View 06: Daws Hill also has a secluded character, surrounded by woodland at the top of the hill.



FURTHER INFORMATION AND SOURCES

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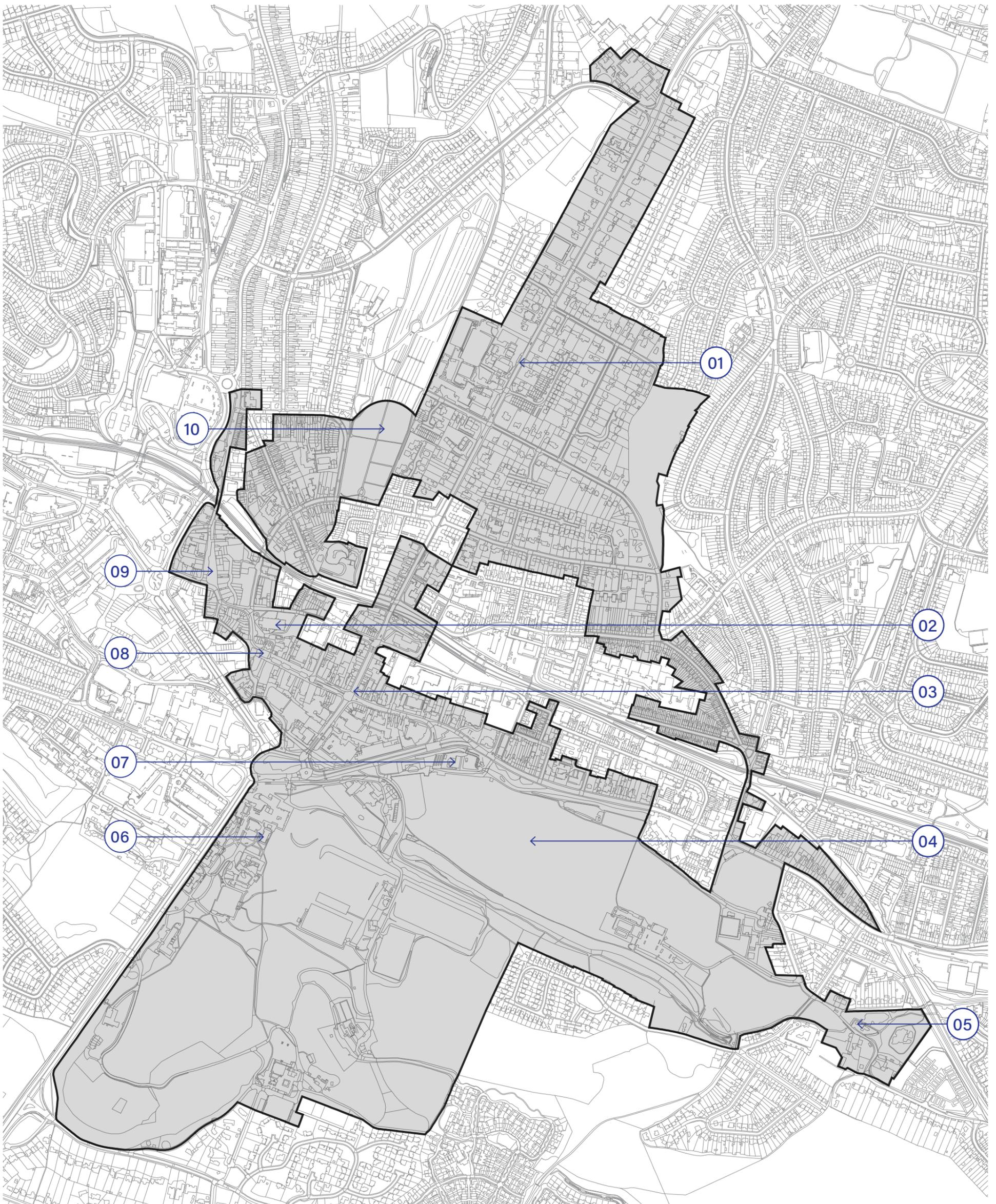
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Proposed High Wycombe Conservation Area Boundary 01 Amersham Hill 02 All Saints Parish Church 03 Crendon Street 04 The Rye 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 05 Bassetsbury 06 Wycombe Abbey 07 Pann Mill 08 The Guildhall 09 Frogmoor 10 High Wycombe Cemetery 	<p><i>Note that the boundary shown on this map includes proposed changes to the boundary as detailed in Section 7.0 of this report. The boundary may be subject to change following consultation.</i></p> <p><i>This plan is not to scale</i></p>
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