



Listening Learning Leading

West Hagbourne Conservation Area Character Appraisal

April 2006

Introduction

This conservation area character appraisal has been undertaken to assist in defining the special character of the West Hagbourne Conservation Area. An appreciation of this special character is essential in order to manage change within the conservation area.

This appraisal is part of the duty placed on the local authority by the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act to determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The Act also states that the local planning authority should, from time to time, formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these Conservation Areas. These are the subject of a separate management plan.

As part of this exercise a plan of the conservation area has been produced which aims to identify the elements which contribute to the character. The plan includes the conservation area boundary, listed buildings (buildings identified by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport as being of special architectural or historic interest), former Grade III listed buildings (a now obsolete category but where the buildings may still be of architectural or historic interest) and other buildings of local note. This latter group consists of buildings that play a part in establishing the character of the street scene but have not yet been considered to be of sufficient importance to meet the current criteria for listing. Recent government guidance contained in PPG.15 - *Planning and the Historic Environment* indicates, however, that

there is a presumption against the demolition of such buildings. Important trees are also identified. These are usually highly visible from public places and/or they contribute to the setting of a listed building. Important open spaces are identified, as these are a vital element in the character of an area. Character is defined not just by buildings, walls and trees, but also by the spaces between them. These contribute to the setting of buildings. They allow views around the area and they are often an important element in the historical development of a settlement.

Important unlisted walls are identified. These are usually built of local materials and help to define spaces and frame views. Lastly, important views into, out of and around the Conservation Area are identified. It should be appreciated that a Conservation Area's character does not end with a line drawn on a map. Often the character is closely associated with attractive views out to surrounding countryside, sometimes via gaps between buildings. Views within an area such as that to a church or particularly attractive group of buildings are also important.

In addition, an Archaeological Constraint Plan is included. The character and history of an area are closely linked to its archaeological remains. A general area of archaeological constraint covers much of the conservation area; however, there are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The Historic Environment Record (HER), which is maintained by Oxfordshire County Council, contains no records of sites or find spots in the village. However, the locations of four buildings appear on the record and these have been shown on the plan

along with their HER reference number.

The appraisal sets out firstly the wider historical and geographical context of the village. A detailed appraisal of the village follows this, dealing with each part of the village in turn.

1. West Hagbourne - the History of the Area

Prehistory

There are two ancient thoroughfares near West Hagbourne; the Ridgeway and the Icknield Way. The Icknield Way dates from between 3000 and 1600 BC and probably originated as a trading route between East Anglia and Wiltshire. Although it has never been systematically excavated, nearby Hagbourne Hill has yielded both Bronze Age and Iron Age finds. It is not clear whether the artefacts are evidence for continuous settlement throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages or whether Hagbourne Hill was a special place in the landscape where items of significance were deposited. There is also archaeological evidence for a Romano-British burial ground and possibly a settlement on Hagbourne Hill. Within the village itself Roman coins have been found at Thatch Cottage and York Road, the latter dating from between 350 and 353 AD.

The medieval village

The name Hagbourne evolved over the centuries from the Saxon Hacca and the Old English burn, meaning a small stream. This produced Haccaburn. According to local tradition Hacca was the name of a soldier who arrived with the Saxon Army. Having sailed along the Thames he is said to have claimed the land near the stream that runs through the Hagbournes and out to the Thames at Wallingford. There is no direct evidence for this version of events but Hakka's Brook, as it is now known, was mentioned in a charter from around 895 AD, whereby King Alfred exchanged various pieces of land including Hagbourne, with the Bishop of Winchester. This document is

also the earliest written reference to the Hagbournes, then called haccburnan. The stream and the network of springs, brooks and ditches associated with it have played an important role in the history of West Hagbourne causing local flooding and mishaps with at least one fatal accident.

An early written reference to the village is found in Domesday Book, which refers to Walter fitz Other holding the manor of West Hagbourne in 1068. He was later made first constable of Windsor Castle and founded the Windsor dynasty, which continued to hold the manorial estate of West Hagbourne for nearly 600 years. As a result West Hagbourne came to be known as Windsor Hakebourne.

There is no evidence to support the myth that East and West Hagbourne were once one village before they were separated by the seventeenth century 'Great Fire' of East Hagbourne. The fire started to the east end of East Hagbourne and stopped at its church which is a substantial distance from West Hagbourne. Furthermore the two villages have separate entries in Domesday Book and were tithed and taxed separately as far back as the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066). No trace of buildings linking the two villages has been revealed by aerial photography nor have any physical remains been discovered on the ground.

From its entry in Domesday Book West Hagbourne appears to have been a typical medieval English village, organised around a manorial system based on Anglo-Saxon serfdom. The first manor house was built on the site of Manor Farm. Its location, slightly apart from the main settlement and the homes of villains and serfs, was

customary at the time. All that remains today on the site of the manor is the village pond and possible vestiges of a moat.

The more modest homes of the populace were probably small timber framed buildings utilising natural materials that were available in the locality such as wattle, daub and thatch. These homes would typically have had a small plot of land called a close.

In 1086 the lord of the manor of West Hagbourne held jurisdiction over 14 villagers and their families who were tied to the manor. There were also ten cottagers attached to the manor who depended on what they could grow on their close and on occasional employment. Working for the lord or providing produce paid the 'rent' on these smallholdings. This system was still in evidence in 1367 when a dowry document refers to one tenant providing the lord with a hen each year.

The presence of a mill in West Hagbourne is also known from Domesday Book. Although it is known to have been in existence in the reign of Henry VIII its location is not marked on any known maps of the village.

Before the Reformation a chapel of ease served West Hagbourne and St Andrew's Church in East Hagbourne was used as a parish church in the post-Reformation era. The site of the chapel was confirmed in September 2004 by a resistivity survey carried out by the Berkshire Archaeology Research Group (BARG).

There is an apocryphal story that the Lower Cross in East Hagbourne was originally located in West Hagbourne but at the turn of the 20th century was 'kidnapped' by some of the inhabitants of East Hagbourne. There is no hard evidence for this version of events; however, the presence of a medieval

cross in West Hagbourne is identified in a survey of 1410 or 1411. It recorded that Richard Wyndeford "holds one messuage with curtilage formerly of Elias Skynner at the High Cross in the vill of Westhakeborne". This indicates at least that the cross was within the village and next to a house. The base of a stone cross can be seen today on the edge of the nearby hamlet of Coscote. The presence of five farms within a mile of each other is testament to the village's historic farming practices. Medieval farm workers in the settlement were tied to two manors. Farming was a cooperative affair that concentrated on the three fields or open field farming system. Fields were used in rotation for spring wheat, winter-sown wheat or left fallow to allow the soil to recover and to provide grazing. The fields were divided into furlongs and distributed amongst the community according to status.

The post medieval village

In the late Tudor period corn, wool and cloth became important trading commodities in Berkshire (the village, now in Oxfordshire) was in Berkshire until the local government reorganisation of 1974). This influenced farming in the village as most farms developed a mixed economy with arable farming and sheep rearing. Sheep rearing was easier on enclosed land and from as early as 1517 there are records of the enclosure of land in West Hagbourne. A postscript to a Court Roll of 1660 for West Hagbourne records the enclosure of common land. During the Civil War West Hagbourne appeared on a list of villages accused of giving quarter to both Royalist and Parliamentary armies and probably suffered from plundering at the hands of each. The rate of

enclosure of common land slowed as a result of the unrest.

The Rocque map published in 1761 shows that, while some common land around Down Farm had been enclosed, the village was still surrounded by open fields, meadow land and commons. The three open fields were still in evidence in the later eighteenth century. They were called the City, the Lower and the Down Fields and are depicted on the 1775 Craven Estate Map. At this time Lord Craven was lord of the manor of East Hagbourne and the holder of tithing rights in West Hagbourne.

Common land, where villagers could graze their livestock, continued to be an important resource for villagers into the eighteenth century. During this time it comprised the Cow and Sheep Downs near Down Farm and the Wet and Dry Moors in Moor Lane. Beyond the commons was wasteland and at the edge of the manor woodlands provided materials for house building, utensils, fencing and fuel. The wastelands, despite their name, were an important source of gravel, turf, bracken and berries. Hay meadows were also of great importance to provide winter fodder for livestock. The eighteenth century saw further enclosure acts accompanied by increased efficiency in farming methods.

Throughout the nineteenth century the land continued to be the biggest source of employment in Berkshire. By the early 1840s as much as 114 acres had been enclosed in West Hagbourne, leaving 903 untouched. The 1843 'West Hagbourne Inclosure Award' (sic.) enclosed Cow Down and Sheep Down along with the remainder of the village's open fields.

By the mid-nineteenth century fruit growing had begun to be of special economic significance for West Hagbourne and the surrounding villages. The village lies in a rich fruit growing area and produce could be transported by rail to Oxford and Covent Garden. Upton station, which opened in 1882, was within easy walking distance. The 1843 Inclosure Award records more than twenty orchards in the village.

The 1843 Inclosure Award also mentions six farms, numerous cottages and gardens, two public houses, a malt house (next to Woodleys) and several houses serving as shops. Several buildings, which do not exist today, are mentioned including barns and a chapel attached to Moor Lane. A sale notice of 1897 recorded that one of the rooms of Thatch Cottage was used as a chapel. The 1851 census documents four thatched cob walls in Moor Lane, The Square and the High Street (now Main Street). Today only a section of cob wall remains in the High Street.

The Horse and Harrow appears on a map of 1754 but is probably older still. The 1843 Inclosure Award records that William Morland owned the inn. However, it is likely that the inn had an earlier association with the nearby Morlands Brewery in West Ilsley, which was established in 1726. The Harwell-Streatley turnpike once ran past the Horse and Harrow with a tollgate outside the pub and a small tollhouse on the opposite side of the road. The toll brought trade to the Horse and Harrow, it also benefited from its proximity to Cow Lane, an ancient driftway for taking cattle to the market in Abingdon.

Between 1846 and the 1870s landowners experienced a period of prosperity. However, agriculture in the

last quarter of the nineteenth century suffered from successive wet seasons, inflation and competition from cheap imports. Arable and livestock farmers were the most severely affected and a dramatic fall in the price of wool affected the sheep farmers of the Berkshire Downs. In response, those farms that could afford to, invested in dairy farming. The many farms that could not, stood vacant. The importance of fruit growing declined in later years of the nineteenth century and many orchards were built on in the twentieth century as fruit growing became less profitable.

The twentieth century saw increased mechanisation through the application of modern scientific understanding to farming. Hedges were grubbed up to accommodate larger machinery. In the 1930s cheap imports of corn from Canada and wool and lamb from Australia and New Zealand disadvantaged West Hagbourne farmers. During the 1930s some farmers, in common with other farmers nationally, responded to the changing economic climate by leaving the village to seek work in the New World. In recognition of this decline in rural population the burden of the tithe system was lifted by act of parliament in 1936.

The bus shelter was built in 1954 as a war memorial to the men from West Hagbourne who were killed in both world wars. For several centuries the village had two public houses, the Wheatsheaf Inn on the northern boundary and the Horse and Harrow, which is still a thriving village pub.

The village once boasted a bakery, a malt house, and several small shops. However, 1970 saw the closure of the last village shop and sub post office.

West Hagbourne's two manors

i. Windsor Manor

Evidence for the nature of West Hagbourne's first manor comes from a document relating to the dowry granted to Clarice de Windsor on the death of her husband, Richard de Windsor, in 1367. The manor house was evidently of high status having a chamber, more than one storey, a solar and an oratory or private chapel. Oratories were very unusual and were fashionable in very high status manor houses in the mid-fourteenth century. Other unusually high status features mentioned in the dowry document include chimneys and a cellar (then a storage room on the ground floor of the house), a kitchen garden and a kitchen. These would be in addition to the principal room of the house - the hall.

Clarice de Windsor went on to marry John York. Together they extended and rebuilt the south aisle and chapel of St Andrew's Church in East Hagbourne, leaving their family coats of arms on the front.

In 1403, however, Clarice's holdings are recorded as a 'ruinous message'. This probably reflects, and was exacerbated by, the transfer of rent to West Hagbourne's second manor. Clarice de Windsor held an important position in the social structure of West Hagbourne in the late fourteenth century and is buried in St Andrew's Church in East Hagbourne.

The Windsor family lost its connection with West Hagbourne when Richard Windsor sold the manor to Stephen Thompson of London in 1661 for £600. The land continued to change hands until it was acquired by the Pococks who held it for nearly two centuries and probably rebuilt the manor on the

original site in the latter half of the seventeenth century. When it was rented out to William Nelson in 1665 the manor comprised the house, a malt house, a 'foddening' house, ox house, dove cote, stables, three barns and gardens. By 1767 the dovecote was replaced by a pigeon house but otherwise remained much the same. In 1889 the manor was sold to Eli and Leopold Caudwell of Blewbury. The manor was eventually sold to Dennis Napper in 1909. In 1917 his daughter married into the Lay family who still own and farm the land to this day.

ii. Watlingtons Manor

West Hagbourne's second manor was called Watlingtons and concerned the area which is today known as Grove Manor Farm. Being less well documented than the Windsor manor the source of its name is unknown. The Victoria County History suggests that it could have been referred to in Domesday Book as a hide that was farmed independently from the manorial land. In 1355 Edmund de Chelrey acquired Watlingtons Manor; it was passed down through Sybil de Chelrey who married Thomas Beckingham. Watlingtons Manor was passed down through the remainder of the fourteenth century, the whole of the fifteenth century and the early sixteenth century through the intermarriage of the Chelrey, Beckingham and Windsor families bringing the two manors together. The Windsors held both manors through marriage in the first half of the sixteenth century and Mary Beckingham inherited both manors later in the same century. Both manors were passed down through her nephew Edward de Windsor who then conveyed Windsor Manor to Ann Newton.

Both Windsor and Watlingtons manors were sold in 1660s and over the subsequent 250 years Watlingtons belonged to a number of different families. John Sherwood bought the Watlingtons in around 1675; his granddaughter Mary married Dr Cooper, who also owned York Farm in 1754 and in 1919 it was sold at auction.

Farming history

i. Down Farm

Down Farm lies on what was once common land known as Hagbourne Down to the north west of the village. It was originally part of the manor identified in Domesday Book that came to be known as the Windsor Manor. The earliest written reference is a grant of land in around 1574 from the lord of the manor 'Thomas Wyndesor' and his family to William Dunche of 'Little Wytenham'. In 1642 the Down is referred to in an agreement which appears to enclose the common land on the Down, one of the earliest enclosures that took place in West Hagbourne. The enclosed land was later known as Hagbourne Down Farm being shortened to Down Farm in the 1930s (the farm's distance from the village precludes its inclusion within the conservation area).

ii. York Farm

York Farmhouse is the oldest in the village. The vernacular architect CRJ Currie in his article 'Larger Medieval Houses in the Vale of the White Horse' dates the oldest parts of the house to 1264 or 1265. Modernisation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries destroyed many of the older features but much of the timber frame remains and pre-1350 methods of construction

are still discernible. Tree ring dating suggests that both the hall and the wing were built in the winter of 1284-85 or soon after.

York Farm was a freehold of the Windsor manor for several centuries, the property became known as York Place after the York family who held it in the latter part of the fourteenth century. In the sixteenth century York Farm became part of the Dunch family's extensive estates. In 1684 it was purchased by the Lodgers who were a very successful local farming family. In 1754 the farmhouse was owned by Dr Cooper. Mary Cooper outlived her husband but at the time of her death was declared insane and intestate. Her property, which included York Farm and the Watlingtons, passed to her second cousin Sir John Pollen. York Farm was sold to the Aldworth family in the years preceding 1843 and became part of the Grove Manor Estate.

In the nineteenth century York Farm became known as Bullock's Farm after its long-standing tenant John Bullock. The farm was subsequently run by bailiffs before it was bought at auction by the Allens of Down Farm. The land purchased included two cottages, which are now known as York Farm Cottage and The Square. The Allens' farming activities included sheep farming, horse breeding and milk production and they continue to farm the land to this day.

iii. Manor Farm

The high status of Clarice de Windsor's manor house and its ruinous condition in 1403 have already been described. The oldest part of the house found today at Manor Farm dates from the late seventeenth century. In the nineteenth century the house was

enlarged, its tenants from 1805 were the Lousley family. They extended the land associated with the farm, which had come to be known as West Hagbourne Farm, by about 200 acres. Eliza Pocock inherited the farm lease and married George Harrison. The 1883 census records that they lived at the manor. Their son then sold the farm to Eli and Leopold Caudwell in 1889. In 1892 Eli bought out Leopold and substantially extended the farm, building a house called the Laurels in York Road. In 1904 he built another similar house next-door, which is now known as 2 York Road.

Following Eli Caudwell's death the farm was bought by Dennis Napper of Didcot, who gave a farm to each of his three children. Two of these farms were in West Hagbourne, the other being Grove Manor Farm. Manor Farm went to Eliza Napper who married John E Lay. At this time the farm was extended to about 300 acres. John Lay's special contribution to the community, which included raising money for fellow villagers and chairing the Parish Council, was widely recognised. During his time the farm was dedicated to arable farming. Cattle were reared for beef but there was never a dairy herd. The farm also produced free-range eggs, pullets and cockerels. In 1999 planning permission and listed building consent were granted to the Lay Family to convert several farm outbuildings to residential use.

iv. Grove Manor Farm

Grove Manor Farm is the site of Watlingtons Manor, whose history has already been outlined. The oldest part of the present house dates from the mid seventeenth century; however, it is encased in brick and was altered in the

eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century it was owned by the Aldworth Family. The extensive estate was divided into seven lots and sold at auction in 1919. The estate included nearly thirty orchards, fifteen cottages and York Farm. Grove Manor Farm and its cottages were bought by Dennis Napper. His successful business, selling horses to the Great Western Railway, was based at Grove Manor Farm and the GWR came to be a major buyer of local grain.

The character of Grove Manor Farm changed significantly in the twentieth century. The farm had been well known for fruit growing until the orchards surrounding it were dug up in 1952 and the gate lodge was demolished in the 1960s to allow the building of a new dwelling.

v. Ivy Farm

Ivy Farm was a small holding of two and a half acres with a farmhouse in the heart of the village and approximately 28 acres off the road which leads to Chilton. West Hagbourne's medieval chapel is believed to have stood on land behind the late twentieth house called Chapel Hayes, which until 1974 was part of Ivy Farm (See the Archaeological Constraint Plan).

Joseph and Hannah Lousley moved from Manor Farm to Ivy Farm sometime after 1881. In 1895 the farm was bought by Thomas Keep. From 1915 the Napper family owned Ivy Cottage, the barns, stables, garden, orchard and outbuildings. However, 26 acres known as Hagbourne land was sold off separately. The area of land associated with Ivy Farm shrank further in 1971 when Ivy Cottage and its outbuildings were sold to the Sages. In 1974 the Scotts bought the remainder

of the land that once made up Ivy Farm and built Chapel Hayes. Chapel Hayes today continues the tradition of fruit growing with free range hens roaming the orchards.

vi. Ragged Farm

Ragged Farm was a small holding by a pond on Moor Lane which is now just a ditch. Moor Lane may originally have been one of the tracks through the village that followed the baulks and headlands created by the medieval ploughing system. Ragged Farm included a cottage and its well, which were in existence in the eighteenth century. However, in the nineteenth century they were replaced by gardens and little evidence of the farm remains today.

2 The Established Character

Introduction

East and West Hagbourne are united by the Hakka's Brook but visually separated by a disused railway line whose embankment is a striking landscape feature, foreshortening views to the east of the village. Coscote is an isolated hamlet between the two villages. The high ground of Hagbourne Hill dominates views to the southwest of the village. From Moor Lane the paddock land and more open fields beyond characterise views to the south. From the heart of the designated conservation area, however, there are fewer views towards the wider landscape but equally important views along historic street scenes. Timber framing, together with plain clay tile and thatch, are characteristic building materials found in historic dwellings and larger barns in the conservation area. Red brick is used more commonly for boundary walls and outbuildings with some stone boundary walls and one notable cob and thatch wall in the heart of the village. Most historic dwellings have retained the painted timber casement or sash windows typical of historic building tradition. Simple post and rail fences and five bar gates contribute to the particularly rural character of the village with its farms almost outnumbering its historic houses.

York Road

The east - west section of York Road is characterised to the west by modern housing development and the architectural and historic value of these buildings is not sufficient to justify an extension to the conservation area. The easterly section of the road does,

however, have a very strong architectural character and is of great historic interest with the buildings of York Farm to the north of the road and those of Woodleys to the south.

The conservation area boundary, which runs to the north to encompass the historic farm buildings at York Farm, follows the line of a small brook flanked by thick mixed hedgerow and mature trees. The boundaries to York Road are characterised by simple grass verges and post and rail fencing that lend views along the street a distinctively rural appearance. Further in, towards the core of the village there are more robust brick and stone walls associated with historic dwellings (see Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 York Road

Rough grassland, paddocks and open space are an appropriate setting for the buildings of York Farm. The agricultural character of the farmstead remains apparent. The boundary here is a simple rural fence rather than the more robust garden walls or domestic hedges associated with dwellings on York Road. This agricultural setting enhances the contribution that the farm buildings make to the special character of the conservation area. The retention

of the buildings in their original use and setting enhances the rural character and appearance of the conservation area.

The historic farm buildings are built of locally available materials including timber, stone, brick and weatherboarding with plain clay tile roofs. The farm's corrugated metal roofs have weathered to a mottled green and are in keeping with their functional, agricultural setting.

The traditional buildings and boundary treatments found in this part of the conservation area, on the whole, successfully protect the village's past and present identity as a farming community. The farm remains on the edge of the village and, it still clearly defines the northern extent of the historic village.

From York Road there are glimpsed views of open fields and modern farm buildings to the north of York Farm.

The modern farm buildings form a separate group from the older buildings on the farmstead and appear to be more closely allied with the open fields beyond the village envelope. Views of the farmstead are possible from the road that links East and West Hagbourne and the open fields to either side of the road provide an appropriate setting for this farming village (see Fig. 2).



Fig 2. York Farm House

The close functional relationship of the farmhouse and the historic farm buildings is apparent. The high status of the farmhouse is evident from its jettied cross wing, which is an important focal point in the street. This early timber framed building's long plain tile roof sweeps down towards the street. There is a perception of space to the east of the farmhouse but views are screened by a tall redbrick wall. This wall connects York Farmhouse to York Farm Cottage whose early origins are also apparent and contribute greatly to the conservation area's historic interest. The rhythm of the cottage's timber frame and its large rendered infill panels contrasts with the solid, uninterrupted, redbrick walls of Woodley's outbuildings that dominate the street to the south. York Farm Cottage's thatched roof also contrasts with the neighbouring orange/red plain clay tile roofs of York Farmhouse (see Fig. 3).



Fig 3. Woodleys

Where York Road meets Main Street it widens to form a triangular space which accommodates what appears to be a village green in miniature. A focal point in the village, this area also accommodates the bus shelter, which is also a war memorial, a village notice board and a bench with a memorial plaque to Mr John E Lay (see history section), (see Fig. 4).



Fig 4. Bus shelter, bench and phone box

The space is also dominated by historic buildings. The Square fronts the green and is a building of local note. Its simple form is characteristic of traditional buildings in the locality and it was associated historically with York Farm. The Square sits slightly further back from the road than its neighbour York Farm Cottage, which is set back from the road by a grass verge. Views of paddock and orchard on the northern margins of the village are available between The Square and York Farm Cottage. The space between these buildings is characteristic of the older parts of the conservation area, which tend not to stand too closely together but to stand in reasonably sized garden plots (see Fig. 5).



Fig 5. York Farm Cottage and the Square

To the west of the green Woodleys, a seventeenth century thatched cottage with timber framing and large painted brick infill panels, echoes the construction and, to a certain extent, the appearance of York Farm Cottage, although the clay tile roof of Woodleys contrasts with the long sweeping thatch

of York Farm Cottage. Woodley's flank wall encloses York Road but its front elevation is set back from the green within a substantial garden.

On the green itself a mature horse chestnut at the centre of this open space is an important focal point in the small island of open space. The green is boarded by natural stone setts and in summer is decorated with wooden barrels containing flowers and shrubs. The importance of this open space within the community is apparent; it forms an attractive gateway to the historic village core (see Fig. 6).



Fig 6. York Farm Cottage and Woodleys

Important views are available from the green. Looking southwards views terminate in the duck pond and are characterised by the concentration of historic houses that flank Main Street. To the west views follow York Road and are also characterised by the concentration of historic buildings flanking the highway.

Views out of the conservation area along the eastern section of Main Street are dominated by substantial twentieth century red brick houses and bungalows of a variety of materials.

Moor Lane

Moor Lane branches off from Main Street passing the back gardens of twentieth century housing to its north and just two dwellings to its south. The lane is dominated by greenery. Its

informal character becomes increasingly rural and it eventually narrows to become a footpath. Today it appears to serve as a back lane to the twentieth century housing where its northern boundary is characterised by modern fencing (see Fig. 7).



Fig 7. Moor Lane

The lane's southern boundary is a brook culverted in places to allow access to the historic cottages and crossed by a simple timber footbridge to allow access onto the public footpath to the east of the village. Behind the stream the boundary to the paddocks to the south is a simple timber post and rail fence and its five bar gate contributes further to the lane's rural character and appearance. Wide views are available from the eastern extremity of the track which are dominated by the disused railway embankment. This is a continuous feature across the horizon and appears to enclose the village and its paddocks forming a physical boundary between land used in conjunction with the buildings of the village and the open fields beyond (see Fig. 8).



Fig 8. Enard Cottage

The scarcity of buildings to the south of Moor Lane is in striking contrast to the relatively close knit houses of Main Street. To the east of York Road the two thatched cottages which survive here are accommodated in relatively large garden plots. Both are thatched, of timber frame construction with rendered in-fill panels. Enard Cottage probably dates from the medieval period while Thatch Cottage is likely to have been built in the 17th century. It is Thatch Cottage that features in views from Main Street (see Fig. 9).



Fig 9. Thatch Cottage

Moor Lane narrows to a footpath, which leads out of the village to the south of Grove Manor Farm. Views of weather boarded and plain clay tile roofed buildings associated with Grove Manor Farm can be seen from the pathway and glimpses of the farmhouse itself are available (see Fig. 10).



Fig 10. View from footpath to the south of Grove Manor Farm

Only glimpsed views back into the village are available from the public footpath which runs southwards from Moor Lane. The path curves around

paddocks and orchards. A tall mixed hedgerow screens the buildings to Main Street but trees can be glimpsed which allow the perception of open space. At the junction of the path with the track way to Manor Farm the orchards and chicken houses of this important open space can be seen. The embankment still dominates easterly views from the footpath, where it severs the village from East Hagbourne (see Fig. 11).



Fig 11. The disused railway embankment

To the south, the buildings of Upton can be glimpsed in the distance. As the trackway leads into the village before being squeezed between the buildings of Manor Farm and Ivy Farm, it affords important views into the conservation area. Both the historic and modern agricultural buildings of Manor Farm can be seen on the edge of the village although the visibility of these buildings is dependant on the seasons. In summer views are partially screened by deciduous trees and hedgerow (see Fig.12).



Fig 12. Views eastward from the conservation area boundary

Main Street

Main Street from its junction with Moor Lane to the duck pond has a relatively enclosed feel. Buildings either front the highway or are slightly set back from it. Blissetts, Broomsticks and Wycherts are of a substantial size and their height relative to the width of the road begins in places to emphasis the narrowness of the street. The constricted nature of the road here is exacerbated by the frequency of traffic, which at times, is particularly high. The historic timber framed dwellings of Main Street form an important group of great architectural and historic interest. They are characterised by their more domestic appearance and their location in the core of the village in contrast to the historic farmsteads on the village periphery (see Fig. 13).



Fig 13. Broomsticks

Whilst there is a concentration of historic buildings Main Street does not have a built up or urban character. The boundaries of Wycherts and Broomsticks enclose the street but are relieved by mature trees, hedgerows, shrubs and the duck pond. Several boundaries are of historic interest with traditional redbrick walls at Ivy Farm and the eighteenth century cob wall at Wycherts (see Fig. 14).



Fig 14. Wycherts

The street is dominated by historic dwellings. Broomsticks, a painted brick and rendered building sits to the north of a large garden plot containing mature trees and is a building of local note. Wycherts probably dates from the late seventeenth century and is of large panel timber frame construction on a brick base with a plain tile roof. Its height makes it a focal point in the street scene. Blissetts to the south of Broomsticks is a mid seventeenth century timber frame house also with large infill panels on a rendered base but with a thatched roof. Blissetts is also of a substantial height and its location at the sharp turn in the road and the jettied west facing gable make it especially prominent in the streetscene. Its simple post and rail fencing, the glimpsed views of fruit trees in its curtilage, the duck pond opposite and the fields and farms to the south of the village give this part of the conservation area a particularly rural character (see Fig.15). Chapel Hayes is a twentieth century bungalow set well back from Main Street and screened by deciduous trees. Its orchards are of special significance being the only ones left in the heart of the village.

Ivy Farm appears to address the track leading past the duck pond to Manor Farm rather than Main Street. The farmhouse, its barns and outbuildings form a self contained group less closely aligned with the earlier



Fig 15. Blissetts

dwellings on the northern stretch of Main Street. The farmhouse was built in the early eighteenth century but its red brick frontage dates from the early nineteenth century. Its height and overall appearance give it a low-key, modest character. The relatively intact survival of the cottage and its small farmstead make a substantial contribution to the conservation area's wealth of traditional farm buildings (see Fig. 16).



Fig 16. Ivy Farm

After Main Street turns sharply at the duck pond the concentration of historic houses on the highway ends abruptly with Green Thatch, a seventeenth century cottage. It too is timber framed, with large rendered infill panels and a thatched half hipped roof. Seen across the duck pond it contributes greatly to the village's unique character and provides a focal point in views into the village from the track from the fields which enters the village between Ivy and Manor Farms (see Fig. 17).



Fig 17. Green Thatch from Main Street and across the duck pond

The farmstead to the east of the village is Manor Farm; its farmhouse dates from the late seventeenth century and dominates views from Main Street's southern extremity. Set further back from the road it is isolated from the group of timber-framed dwellings on Main Street and is now separated to a certain extent from its historic farm buildings, which are now used as offices. However, from the location of the house outside the main village core and from its proximity to the former farm buildings it remains apparent that it was once a farmhouse (see Fig. 18).



Fig 18. Lane between the buildings of Ivy Farm and Manor Farm

Despite conversion to offices, the historic barns' utilitarian appearance still contributes to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The parked cars, for example, have significantly altered the site's character. From the trackway between the buildings of Ivy Farm and Manor Farm, however, the simple, solid appearance of the brick buildings has survived. The boundary walls and buildings enclose the lane forming a visual gateway to the village.

To the south is a substantial wall of red bricks laid in a traditional garden wall bond with half round copings. Ivy Farm's barn faces onto the track way, its traditional boarded doors contribute to the solidity of this group of buildings and emphasises their agricultural origins.

To the south of Main Street the last buildings in the heart of the village are outbuildings that belong to Green Thatch and the transition from village to open field is sudden (see Fig. 19).



Fig 19. Green Thatch from Main Street

The boundary is a mixed hedgerow and the open fields and the buildings of Manor Farm house beyond can be seen across a metal five bar gate. The survival of the village's historic southern boundary is apparent, and the close relationship between the historic village and its farmland setting has been retained (see Fig. 20).

The road, which here runs north from Main Street, lies outside the conservation area but does affect its setting; views along it would be available from the fields to the south. There are wider views here towards Hagbourne Hill and the concentration of modern housing to the north is left behind, with more dispersed modern dwellings and the Horse and Harrow public house.



Fig 20. Manor Farmhouse across fields when viewed from Main Street

The Horse and Harrow is some distance from the village core but is very much felt to be an integral part of the village and forms a visually gateway point to the village when approaching from the west. The building is of historic and architectural interest and the long unbroken sweep of its tiled roof over a single storey out shut contributes to the street scene. The building benefits from an informal green setting, appropriate to its location on the edge of the village (see Fig. 21).



Fig 21. The Horse and Harrow Public House

Management proposals

Proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area are included in a separate document West Hagbourne Conservation Area; Management Plan. This includes details of the proposed extension to the conservation area, proposals for the maintenance of historic buildings, trees and open spaces, design guidance for new development and public realm works and relevant conservation policies. This document is available from South Oxfordshire District Council, Conservation and Design Team; tel 01491 823771 or email: conservation@southoxon.gov.uk

Acknowledgements and Bibliography

The history section relies on the invaluable information contained within:

Windsor Hakebourne Published by the West Hagbourne Village History Group in 2000.