

Upper Wanborough

Conservation Area Appraisal



Historic rural village

designated as a conservation area 1 May 1973 re-designated 23rd May 2006

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Introduction

This document assesses the special interest, character and appearance of Upper Wanborough Conservation Area. Prepared by Swindon Borough Council's Design, Conservation and Development Section, it should be read in conjunction with policies in the current Swindon Borough Local Plan and with national planning policy guidance, especially Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment.

The information in this appraisal was collected during late 1999. To be concise and readable, it does not record all features. The omission of a feature from the text or accompanying maps does not, therefore, mean that it must not be of interest or value.

The appraisal and map has been prepared in collaboration with Wanborough Parish Council and was adopted by Swindon Borough Council as “a proper assessment of the special interest, character and appearance of Upper Wanborough Conservation Area” on 28th March 2000 and readopted on 23rd May 2006



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Location

Upper Wanborough is situated in mainly rural surroundings in the Borough of Swindon in north-east Wiltshire. It is located 6 kilometres from Swindon town-centre and is 3 km from junction 15 of the M4 motorway. The main road through the village is the B4507.

Upper Wanborough is less than one kilometre south-west of Lower Wanborough, a village with a separate and distinct identity which also has a conservation area¹. The Wanboroughs are locally considered as one village community and are surrounded by open countryside.

Origins of the settlement

Upper Wanborough sits astride The Icknield Way, an ancient track following the contours along the chalk scarp. There was a Roman settlement near Lower Wanborough (Durocornovium) and the Roman road, Ermin Street, runs 1 km to the east.

The Domesday Book of 1086 refers to the settlement of 'Wemberge' and Wanborough is one of the few settlements in north-east Wiltshire that has documentary claim to Anglo-Saxon origins². In the 14th century Wanborough, was still one of the most important villages in north-east Wiltshire and the Church of St. Andrew was largely recast at about this time.

Upper Wanborough's prosperity in the 18th and 19th century is indicated by the four large houses in the village which date from this time: The Lynch House, Southdown, 8 Church Road and the Calley Arms - all four are listed buildings.

¹See 'Lower Wanborough Conservation Area Appraisal', Swindon Borough Council

²The Early Charters of Wessex, H P R Finberg. 1964. Leicester University Press.

Setting in landscape

Upper Wanborough stands in open countryside on a promontory overlooking the low-lying clays of the Upper Thames valley plain. To the south lies chalk downland and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)³, one of the most extensive and least spoiled downland tracts in southern England. In Upper Wanborough, Church Road forms the AONB's boundary and thus the southern half only of the conservation lies within the AONB.

By car, one enters the village along one of four roads: Pack Hill, Kite Hill, Ham Road and the B4507 from Bishopstone. All are unkerbed, narrow lanes with grass verges bounded by field hedges and trees⁴. They retain their leafy character to the very edge of the settlement and the conservation area includes these well tree'd and leafy entrances precisely because of their contribution to the village's rural ambience. The presence of these areas make a direct contribution to the character of the conservation area. Any attempt to make changes through the implementation of pavements etc would not be encouraged. Realignment of existing mature hedgerows would also not be acceptable in terms of improving access for driveways etc.

Views out of the conservation area reinforce Upper Wanborough's distinct location between rolling chalk downland and level plain. There are good views to the north from the public footpath between Wheelwrights and The Cottage, and from the western end of Church Road (in particular, from beside the Grade II listed property The White House, No 46 Church Road). Southwards there are open views of Liddington Castle and the downs from the environs of the church.

From outside the conservation area the church is a landmark, especially as one approaches along Pack Hill and Ham Road. It is also a prominent feature viewed from the north-east along Stratton Road, Lower Wanborough. Within the village it is highly visible from parts of Church Road and The Lynch Field. A Planning Inspector has observed, "inspection showed that the church provided an attractive, interesting

³As designated under section 87 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.

⁴ An appeal was dismissed in relation to the development of a new property (Kite Hill). The new access formed would involve considerable excavation of the existing grassed banks and this would impact negatively on the conservation area in relation to the rural character and setting of the Village. APP/U3935/A/99/1035233/P9

and prominent skyline feature when viewed at long-range from a number of positions within the south-west quadrant. Given that its silhouette is of considerable interest it seems to me essential to ensure that its present outline is maintained⁵."

Whilst the Wanboroughs can be said to lie in open countryside, modern suburban-type housing built on the sloping land between Upper and Lower Wanborough has begun to physically link the two historic settlements and, in a limited way, affect their landscape setting. Within Upper Wanborough Conservation Area, the development generally isn't seen because the new development is below the village but it is visible in the foreground of views from the footpath that runs from Wheelwrights to The Cottage.

Views from within the conservation area to the wider landscape testify to the area's setting in the landscape and thereby make a significant contribution to its overall rural character. This rural character is being given further protection within the recently adopted local plan. Various policies acknowledge the importance of both the AONB area to the South of the village and the landscape character area to the North.

Designation as a conservation area

Wanborough Conservation Area, covering parts of both Upper and Lower Wanborough, was originally designated by Wiltshire County Council in 1973. The Upper Wanborough Conservation Area was re-designated, with boundary adjustments, by Thamesdown Borough Council in 1990 and covers almost all the small village of Upper Wanborough.

Designation of Upper Wanborough Conservation Area reflects the Council's commitment to preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of this once rural village whose architectural and historic interest distinguish it from later new development.

⁵Appeal decision re: Land to rear of Old School, June 1994 (T/APP/X3920/A/93/229590/P2).

Extent and boundaries of the conservation area

The conservation boundary has been drawn to enclose the historic core of the village and other buildings and spaces that contribute to the area's historic character. Land that forms part of the settlement's rural setting, especially to the north, is also included.

In effect, the conservation area covers land on either side of the B 4507 as it winds through Upper Wanborough west to east_- i.e. Church Road from the top of Pack Hill to The Croft - the historic spine of Upper Wanborough.

The conservation area's western limit extends some way down Pack Hill in order to include, and protect, the leafy, well tree'd entrance to the village. For similar reasons, the top of Kite Hill, a historic lane that leads from Church Road to Lower Wanborough is also included. Here, the boundary stops just beyond Wheelwrights⁶, one of the village's notable historic buildings.

The boundary is drawn widely around sloping land north of The White House and Disney Cottage to safeguard the hilltop setting of the village. Similarly, the open space between Kite Hill and Stacey's Lane is essential to the village's rural setting and serves as a buffer between historic Upper Wanborough and late 20th century modern development to the north-east that sadly contrasts with the architectural quality of the upper and lower villages.

To the east the boundary encloses The Croft, a fine example of a late Victorian villa, and grounds which contain mature trees from the same era. Both house and trees are prominent in the view as one approaches from Bishopstone.

There has been a significant amount of late 20th century development inserted into the village, for example The Lynch Field and Mayfield. To create a meaningful boundary it has been necessary to include some modern development within the conservation area even though it has not always been in keeping with the area's special character. However, two modern cul-de-sac housing developments, Warneage Green and Southdown, and a row of modern houses on the west side of Ham Road are omitted.

⁶ Now known as Cherry Trees

Present day

Upper Wanborough is part of the larger community of Wanborough which comprises Upper and Lower Wanborough and the 1990's developments between the two.

The settlement's one-time agricultural character has today been superseded by a largely residential one, although the rural setting is still apparent.

Collectively the Wanboroughs contain a church, post office and stores, primary school, village hall, surgery, three businesses and four pubs. Only the Church of St. Andrew, The New Calley Arms pub and the Surgery (3 & 5 Ham Road) are within Upper Wanborough. The Victorian village school has been converted to a dwelling. Southdown, 17 Church Road, is a residential nursing home. This property has been Listed Grade II by English Heritage.

Traffic levels are relatively low and the village has a quiet atmosphere reflecting its rural character despite being so close to the urban environment of Swindon.

General character

The special interest that justifies designation of Upper Wanborough Conservation Area derives from a number of architectural, historic and environmental factors including:

- the historic street pattern and layout of the village on either side of Church Road including the roads leading in and out of the village.
- the rural setting of the village on a promontory above the Upper Thames valley with significant views of both Liddington Castle to the south and the low-lying plain to the north
- the architectural and historic interest of the village's buildings and other structures - in particular St Andrew's Church (grade I);
- the prevalent use of local materials, notably thatch and local stone; (Greenstone and chalkstone)
- the area's trees, especially individual yews, and other greenery where this bounds a road or footpath.

Highways and streetscape

Entering the village from Pack Hill, the historic nature of the village is not readily apparent until the thatched roofs of Disney Cottage and The White House (both listed grade II) come into view. The Lynch House, an imposing early 19th century brick farmhouse, is hidden behind a hedge and a line of mature yews. A bend in the road gives undue prominence to Mayfield, a small 1980s housing development. Though pleasant and set behind well maintained landscaping of grass and trees this suburban type cul-de-sac development is uncharacteristic of the village as a whole.

Turning the corner, The Malt House is the first of a trio of historic buildings leading to a short lane to St Andrew's Church. The area around the entrance to the church is one of the village's most characterful areas, best viewed from the east from where the medieval church, vernacular red brick cottages (23/25 Church Road) and The Old School⁷ present an attractive historic frontage to the street scene.

Proceeding east, two historic buildings, numbers 16 and 17 Church Road, face each other across the road. Southdown Nursing Home (17 Church Road, listed Grade II)

⁷ Since converted to residential accommodation

is a large early 19th century house set well back from Church Road. Opposite, on the north side of the road, Number 16 has a date stone of 1765 but has been much altered, having lost its thatch and original windows. Next, the entrances to two uncharacteristic housing developments, Warneage Green and Southdown, neither of which lie in the conservation area. As Number 8 Church Road (listed grade II), another large early 19th century house beside an old yew tree, enters the view, one approaches a second area of considerable historic character.

From here to Pond Farm, the historic identity of the village is at its strongest, characterised by historic buildings overlooking unusually spacious junctions (by modern standards) where Kite Hill and Ham Road meet Church Road. Number 8 Church Road and The Calley Arms are examples of formally designed architecture with well proportioned symmetrical facades, Georgian sliding sash windows and roofs of slate imported from Wales. Beside these two 19th century buildings there are examples of simple vernacular architecture of the 18th, or possibly 17th century: Number 1 Ham Road and numbers 2, 10 and 12 Church Road. (No 12 is one of the few properties that retains its thatch roof covering) These cottages are constructed of locally available materials, stone, brick and thatch, which give the village its distinctive North Wiltshire character. The careful selection of materials should always be considered in future developments and should always aim to use naturally occurring materials that are local and characteristic of the area.

Ham Road leads to Liddington. After The Calley Arms, the area's historic character rapidly diminishes but the trees, green embankments and view to open fields add to the rural ambience of the village. Forge Cottage (2 Church Road), a vernacular cottage with typically small windows in a large area of walling, 'stops' the view on the approach from Liddington. Kite Hill descends the scarp from Church Road, its contribution to the conservation area derives from its green verges and trees. As one climbs Kite Hill, 3 Church Road (The Ropers) and the adjacent 'barn' stand gable-end on to Church Street. This type of varied architecture (gable end and full elevational frontages) adds to the character of this area of the Village. This variation in architectural styles and use of materials makes a positive contribution to the character of this village. Future applications for development must concentrate on the design and architectural form. It should compliment the existing built heritage of this area whilst at the same time not copy it directly.

Continuing eastwards, a stone wall in front of Pond Farm gives way to field hedges with open space beyond and, after a short distance, the well tree'd curtilage of The Croft.

Local details and features

Special features which have local interest and contribute to the area's character and appearance include:

Trees: Mature and growing trees, hedgerows and other greenery add significantly to the rural ambience of the area with particularly fine specimen trees to be found around St. Andrew's Church and The Croft, at the eastern limit of the conservation area. Elsewhere, garden and hedgerow trees enhance the area. Of particular note are several old yews - beside Number 8 Church Road, Southdown, The Lynch House and at the top of Kite Hill.

Some of the more recent properties along Church road have been set back from the main highway with large front and rear gardens. With the marked increase in car usage, sections of Church Road have become quite congested with parked vehicles. Requests have recently been received to convert front garden areas into driveway accesses. As with any application, it will be measured on its own merits, but any loss with regards to vegetation and landscaping to these areas will be viewed as detrimental to the conservation area.

Those trees which make a particularly positive contribution to the conservation area are identified on the attached map. In such a well tree'd area, it has not been possible to identify every notable tree and lack of a specific reference does not imply that it must not be of value.

Architectural and historic character

The conservation area is characterised by historic buildings of traditional construction dating mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries. Eleven buildings in the conservation area are listed for their special architectural or historic interest: St Andrew's Church (grade I), five typical vernacular downland cottages, four 19th century houses and an unusual pair of stone gate piers.

St Andrew's Church is a grade I listed building. The main body of the church, the nave, aisles and spire, was built between 1380 and 1400, and the tower in 1400. St Andrew's is one of only three churches in England to have both a tower and spire. The combination of the two features gives the church an unusually interesting silhouette. There is one preserved 15th century fresco. The font is Norman, cut from a single piece of stone.

Three grade II listed vernacular cottages are to be found along Church Road. Numbers 12, 46 (The White House), and 54 (Disney Cottage) are 18th century, stone-walled, thatched cottages. No' 1 Ham Road no longer has its thatched roof but its plain exterior conceals a building with 17th century origins. A fifth grade II listed cottage is The Cottage in Stacey's Lane. Also thatched, it is a one-and-a-half storey dwelling, painted rubble with brick quoins and two eyebrow dormers.

Numbers 8, 17 (Southdown), and 33 (The Lynch House) are substantial early 19th century houses constructed of brick with Welsh slate roofs. The Calley Arms (No' 2 Ham Road) is a similar early-19th century red-brick building with a stone plinth and Welsh slate roof. All are listed grade II.

The cast iron gates and stone gate piers to 8 Church Road are listed separately. The piers have moulded cappings with carved lions. These are an important feature in the character and setting of the house. The red telephone kiosk, beside The Old School, is also a listed building.

The characteristic walling material is chalkstone, Greensand or rendered walls often with red-brick window and door surrounds. Although only four thatched buildings remain, thatch would have once been more prominent - as can be seen in early photographs. Welsh slate is common, sometimes used as a replacement for thatch. Building form is simple, usually two or one-and-a-half storey (with eyebrow dormers in thatch). Red brick chimneys and timber windows with small panes of glass are the norm.

Key buildings of interest⁸

English Heritage advice is that "most of the buildings in a conservation area will help to shape its character in one way or another."⁹ and, in addition to the area's listed buildings, there are a number of other buildings which make a strong contribution to the architectural and historic interest of the area.

The Malt House, Forge Cottage (2 Church Road), and 10 Church Road are humble buildings, formerly thatched, constructed of local stone with small window openings. Pond Farm is a large farmhouse built in the characteristic rubble stone with red-brick window surrounds, standing behind a high stone wall. These buildings, and other historic buildings prominent in Church Road, contribute to the area's historic character and appearance through their historic form and display of traditional building materials. Wheelwrights on Kite Hill, though altered and extended, presents a lively historic facade to one of the four approaches to the village.

The Old School a good and typical example of a Victorian school built in local stone. In contrast, Numbers 23/25 Church Road, beside The Old School, are a pair of late 18th century red-brick cottages with tiled roof and gable end brick chimneys. In the grounds of The Vicarage is a chalkstone outbuilding with slate roof - a good example of its type. These, and other key buildings, are identified on the attached map.

Walls

There are a number of old stone and brick walls within the conservation area which, through their use of a local material, contribute to the area's distinctive identity. Beside Number 8 Church Road are a pair of grade II listed mid 19th century gates and gate piers. Other notable boundaries are identified on the attached map.

Negative factors

To a limited extent the village has been adversely affected by new housing out of character with the historic development of the settlement and constructed with materials alien to the area. Much of this housing lies outside the conservation area but its impact is seen in the uncharacteristic kerbed vehicular accesses off Church

⁸See Swindon Borough Local Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance: 'Buildings, Structures and Facades of Local Importance'.

Road - to The Lynch Field, Mayfield, Southdown and Warneage Green. However, the old street pattern remains and this, with the village's historic buildings, give the area its predominant historic character and appearance.

During certain periods of the day the junction of Ham Road and Church Road can become congested with parked cars. This is in part due to the overspill from the adjacent Surgery in Ham Road.

Scope for enhancement

The area around the bus shelter is unkempt and the shelter itself is unsightly. Bright yellow litter bin, red post box, bus information post and water hydrant lack any unity and detract from the appearance of this key area in the village. A co-ordinated approach to signage could improve the appearance of this area.

Long term tree management needs careful consideration.

⁹ 'Conservation Area Appraisals' - English Heritage, June 1997. Paragraph 2.2.

Useful publications

Victoria County History of Wiltshire

Wanborough in pictures.E.Wilson, 1987

Wanborough - A village in all seasons.C.Hinton, 1987

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Swindon Borough Local Plan (1999).

Supplementary Planning Guidance: 'Good Design: House Extensions' (Thamesdown Borough 1990).

Supplementary Planning Guidance: 'Buildings, Structures and Facades of Local Importance'. (Swindon Borough 1999).

Conservation Areas (Swindon Borough Council 1997).

Planning Policy Guidance 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment.

Conservation Area Appraisals, English Heritage, June 1997.

Conservation Area Practice, English Heritage, October 1995.

LISTED BUILDINGS WITHIN UPPER WANBOROUGH (GRADE II UNLESS STATED)

CHURCH ROAD

- Parish Church of St Andrew; (Grade I)
- No 17
- No 33 – Lynch House
- No 12
- No 8
- Gates and Piers to No 8
- No 46 The Whitehouse
- No 54 Disney Cottage
- K6 Telephone Box

Ham Road

- No 1 – Knowle House
- No 2 – Calley Arms

Stacey's Lane

- The Cottage.

BUILDINGS OF LOCAL HISTORIC INTEREST

Church Road

- No 2 Forge Cottage
- No 3 (Including garage/outbuilding)
- No 4
- No 10
- No14
- No 16
- No 19 The Vicarage – Outbuilding
- No 23
- No 25
- School House
- No 27 Malt House
- No 48
- No 52
- No 56 Myrtle Villa

Kite Hill

- Wheelwrights
-

Ham Road

- Nos 3 - 5 Doctors Surgery
- West View
- North View
- Pond Farm

Callas Hill Lane

- The Croft.

UPPER WANBOROUGH MANAGEMENT PLAN

MANAGEMENT ISSUES	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	ACTIONS REQUIRED
Planning & Design		
<i>Existing Modern Development</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some modern dwellings impact on the conservation area in terms of inappropriate materials and design in contrast with the historic character of the village. • Over development of some sites has lead to inappropriate densities set within small plots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure future development proposals are strictly controlled in terms of design and materials 	Consultation with:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & conservation department
<i>Future Development</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad-hoc planning applications, for alterations, conversions and refurbishment of properties. • Proposals for infilling of sites have been received in the past. • Development of modern domestic property alongside listed & historic buildings within the conservation area must satisfy the demands of appropriate design and materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure future development proposals are strictly controlled in terms of design and materials. • Proposals for new build domestic properties need to be considered in relation to older listed properties that are set directly onto the street • Reference to SBC's new Design Guide is essential. ie 	Consultation with:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & conservation department
Public Realm & Amenity		
<i>Signage & street furniture</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street signage limited to mandatory speed signs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all existing signage is maintained in good order. 	Consultation with:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & conservation department • Liaison and co-operation with SBC traffic management & highways & utility companies.

MANAGEMENT ISSUES	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	ACTIONS REQUIRED
Public Realm & Amenity		
<i>Shops, Retail & Community</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Pub is present within the village but no shops are present within boundary of conservation area – Nearest shops located within Swindon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is unlikely that a shop would be viable in this location due to the limited number of properties in this area. 	
<i>Parking</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street frontage parking to Church Road especially, creates bottle necks and slows traffic. (this could be viewed as a positive measure) Junction of Ham Road and Church becomes congested at peak times due to overflow from Surgery Off Street parking is provided to modern properties. Some development seen to provide parking within front gardens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals to develop front gardens for parking will be regarded as having a negative impact on the conservation area. Narrow width of carriage way means that traffic is forced to comply with speed limits in this village Further controls and traffic regulations may improve flow of traffic at junctions to roads during peak hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closer liaison and co-operation with SBC traffic management & highways safety.
<i>Traffic</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village is generally quite and levels of traffic vary during the day in relation to normal peak hours Village does lie in close proximity to A419 and M4 junction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that current road surfaces are maintained to useable standard. Ensure grass verges are maintained and repaired where necessary. Future monitoring of increased traffic flows to ascertain impact on conservation area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued liaison and co-operation with SBC traffic management & highways safety.

Wanborough (Upper) Conservation Area

Key to map

Given the complexity of the area, the omission of any feature from this map should not be interpreted as evidence that it is not of interest or value.

-  Boundary of conservation area
-  Listed building
-  Key building of interest
-  Significant tree or trees
-  Area of water
-  Important green space
-  Wooded area
-  Significant wall or boundary
-  Area with distinct identity
-  Important view



