



South Bucks District Council

Taplow Conservation Area Character Appraisal

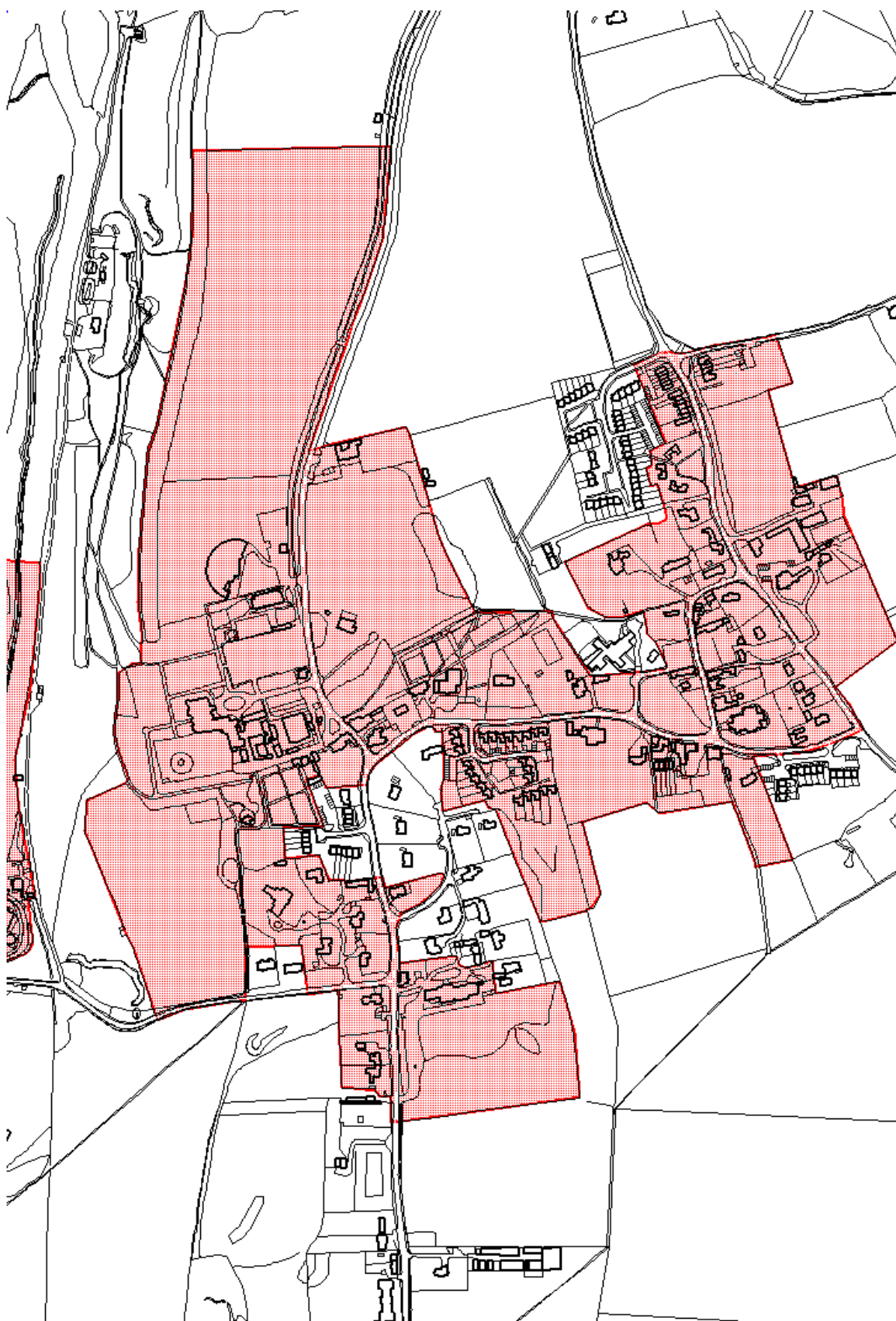
Draft for consultation

March 2007



South Bucks
District Council

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Taplow Conservation Area

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

The Taplow Conservation Area was originally designated by Beaconsfield District Council on 25th June 1975. As part of its programme to review all its conservation areas South Bucks District Council formulated proposals for amendments to the boundaries of the Taplow Conservation Area, having taken into account changes within the area and recent archaeological investigations as well as current legislation and guidance on conservation areas. Local residents were consulted on these proposals and invited to submit their comments by way of a questionnaire. Additional information on the proposals was provided by way of an exhibition in the Village Centre in February 2006. Taplow Parish Council, Hitcham and Taplow Preservation Society and local Residents' Associations, English Heritage and the County Archaeologist were also asked for their views. Following a largely positive response to the consultation the Taplow Conservation Area was re-designated with amended boundaries on 12th September 2006.

The extent of the re-designated conservation area is shown edged red on the map opposite.

The re-designation has involved the inclusion of certain areas which were not in the original conservation area, as follows:

- the remainder of the grounds and buildings of Taplow Court
- Upper Lodge in Berry Hill Road
- Priory Cottage in Rectory Road
- premises to the east of Hill Farm Road including Hitcham Grange, Hill Farm and Hill Farm Cottages
- the remainder of the garden of 3 and 4 Desborough Cottages, Hill Farm Road
- Wickenden and the Cricket Ground in Cliveden Road.

A small piece of pasture land to the south of, but no longer within the boundary, of Taplow House Hotel has been excluded from the re-designated conservation area.

The purpose of this appraisal is to define and record the special architectural and historic interest of Taplow Conservation Area. It has been prepared on the basis of a survey of the area undertaken from public roads and paths, historical research, information from residents and the other sources mentioned in the "Sources" section of this document. This appraisal will inform local planning policies, development control decisions and any future proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of the conservation area.

CHAPTER 2 - PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

What is a conservation area?

Local planning authorities have a statutory duty to designate as conservation areas any "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" (section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

Effect of designation

Conservation-area designation imposes additional controls over demolition, minor development and a measure of protection for trees. The Council has produced a leaflet "Guidance for Residents" which is reproduced in the Appendix. In exercising their planning powers, local planning authorities must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

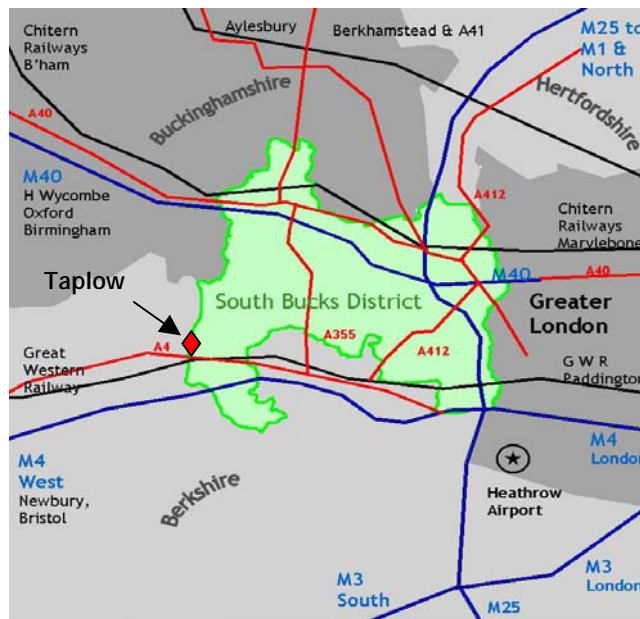
Planning in South Bucks

The Council's current policies relating to conservation areas are contained in the South Bucks District Local Plan which was adopted in March 1999. As the new Local Development Framework emerges the Local Plan policies will gradually be replaced by Development Plan Documents. Conservation Area appraisals will not become Supplementary Planning Documents but their provisions will be a "material consideration" when the Council is exercising its functions as the local planning authority.

CHAPTER 3 - LOCATION AND SETTING

Taplow lies on the borders of Buckinghamshire and Berkshire close to the River Thames, on the western edge of the Burnham plateau. The parish of Taplow has roughly three divisions; the Thames river plain in the south, the wooded plateau in the north (which includes the Cliveden and Dropmore estates) and the village built on the slope between the two. The most significant architectural feature of Taplow village, and the historic focus of this settlement, is Taplow Court, a large country house set in 85 acres of grounds leading down to the river. Much of the surrounding land, including the neighbouring village of Taplow, has strong historic links to Taplow Court, which stands imperiously on the headland overlooking the Thames Valley.

LOCATION MAP



Taplow Court was designed to impress when viewed coming up the Thames.
This is the view from the south over the Jubilee River.

CHAPTER 4 - ORIGINS, DEVELOPMENT and USES

Evidence points to Taplow having been continuously occupied for at least 10,000 years, the longest period for any settlement site in Buckinghamshire, and among the longest for any site in England. However, the centre of Taplow has moved over time. From the Middle Stone Age, through to the early 19th century the core was close to the present site of Taplow Court. Subsequently, the settlement came to be focused on a new church, built half a mile to the east. The present visual focus is the village green close to that church.

Taplow Court stands on a promontory overlooking the Thames Valley. The grounds contain the remnants of Iron and Bronze Age hill forts which were built on land that had already been occupied for many thousands of years. Other archaeological finds also provide evidence of Roman occupation in Taplow.

The area's dominant strategic position overlooking the Thames Valley provided good defence as well as access to fishing and transportation, resources which have been valued throughout the ages. Natural springs in the locality provided fresh, clean drinking water and watered the verdant hillside.

By 650 AD a Saxon burial mound had been constructed close by. The barrow, which still stands today, may have contained the remains of Taeppa, a Saxon lord or Thane. This gave the place-name to Taplow: Taeppa's Low ("hlaw" is the Old English word for a burial mound). The location became famous in 1883 when local antiquarian James Rutland excavated it, unearthing treasures that are now displayed in the British Museum. It is still the third richest early-medieval burial ever excavated in Britain.



Similar burials discovered in Essex and Kent indicate the existence of a connected series of Saxon power bases stretching along the river. The River Thames has been an important communication and trading route throughout history. The treasure hoard found in Taplow Mound proved that whoever had been buried there was a noble with Saxon connections.

Local tradition cites St Birinus, the first Bishop of Dorchester, as baptising his Saxon converts at Bapsey Pond, a short distance to the south of the mound. This lower field is undeveloped and other earthworks, possibly the southern extent of the hill fort ramparts, can be found on the brow of the escarpment. The flourishing Christian religion led to the construction of a church within sight of the mound. The church would serve as a new focus for this community and represents the fusion of pagan and early Christian beliefs in the 7th century.

By the time of the Norman Conquest, a manor house stood close by. It was on, or close to, the manor house site on which Taplow Court would eventually stand. The manor passed to King William I's half-brother, the Bishop of Bayeux. In 1197, William de Turville sold the manor to the Prior of Merton and it was passed to successive priors until the reign of Henry VIII when the land came to the Honour of Windsor. In 1700, George Hamilton, the 1st Earl of Orkney acquired the estate from the Hampson family to add to his portfolio, which already included Cliveden.

Successive Earls of Orkney adapted and rebuilt Taplow Court before the fifth Earl of Orkney sold Taplow, without Cliveden, to Charles Pascoe Grenfell in 1852. It was Grenfell who pulled down the last remains of the old church of St Nicholas as he embarked on his ambitious plans to rebuild Taplow Court in a grand Tudor style, turning a manor house into a country house. His grandson William Henry, who was created Lord Desborough in 1905, was the last lord of the manor.

The focus of Taplow village, which had originally been around the manor house and original church, shifted to the east with the construction of a new church on the site of the present St. Nicolas's church in 1828. The old church had fallen into disrepair under the Hampsons and Earls of Orkney and remained as a romantic ruin until it was finally dismantled after Charles Pascoe Grenfell acquired Taplow Court in 1852.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries this change of focus towards the new church was consolidated by new development. A handsome Victorian school was erected on the current site of the village centre car park, part of which, the "Reading Room", now serves as the village hall itself. St. Nicolas's church was rebuilt to the designs of George Fellowes-Prynne in 1911-12, incorporating the tower of the 1828 church.

During the latter half of the 19th century many influential people of the day chose to live in the area, attracted by the large houses and the village's rural and riverside location with direct rail links to Paddington. Many of these large houses have now been replaced by modern residential development.



The east-west orientated Rectory Road links the present church and Taplow Court and the village is now focused on a village green which was created out of farmland in the 1960s. A modern school also serves the community and its playing field, along with the adjoining cricket field, provides open space that

was given to the village by Lady Gage (Lord Desborough's daughter) in 1959.

Street pattern and village layout

Old maps indicate that, whilst street names have changed, the historic street pattern has persisted relatively unchanged. Some enclosure had already taken place before the enclosure award of 1787. The 1787 enclosure map shows the village centred on a staggered crossroads where a small triangular green now stands in front of East Bapsey. The road, which then led to the old church next to Taplow Court, is now a public footpath giving access to the Saxon burial mound. The cliff on which Taplow Court stands would have been too steep for carts so Mill Lane provided an easier route to and from the Thames and Taplow Mill. A footpath (now closed) ran north from Mill Lane to Bapsey Pond and the old church. Rectory Road, formerly called Church Street, ran eastwards from this crossroads towards the open fields. Boundary Road, formerly Green Lane, appears to have formed the eastern boundary of the open field. Berry Hill Road, once called Town Lane, provided a more gentle ascent from the river-crossing and the turnpike road which became the present A4. Common Lane, now Cliveden Road, led to what little then remained of Taplow Common, near the Feathers Inn. High Street, formerly Pightail Lane, followed its present course although the site of the present church was then meadow.

The 1787 enclosure map and an 1875 map (showing water pipes serving Taplow) illustrate the historic layout of roads and paths in the conservation area. Copies are reproduced in the Appendix.

Uses

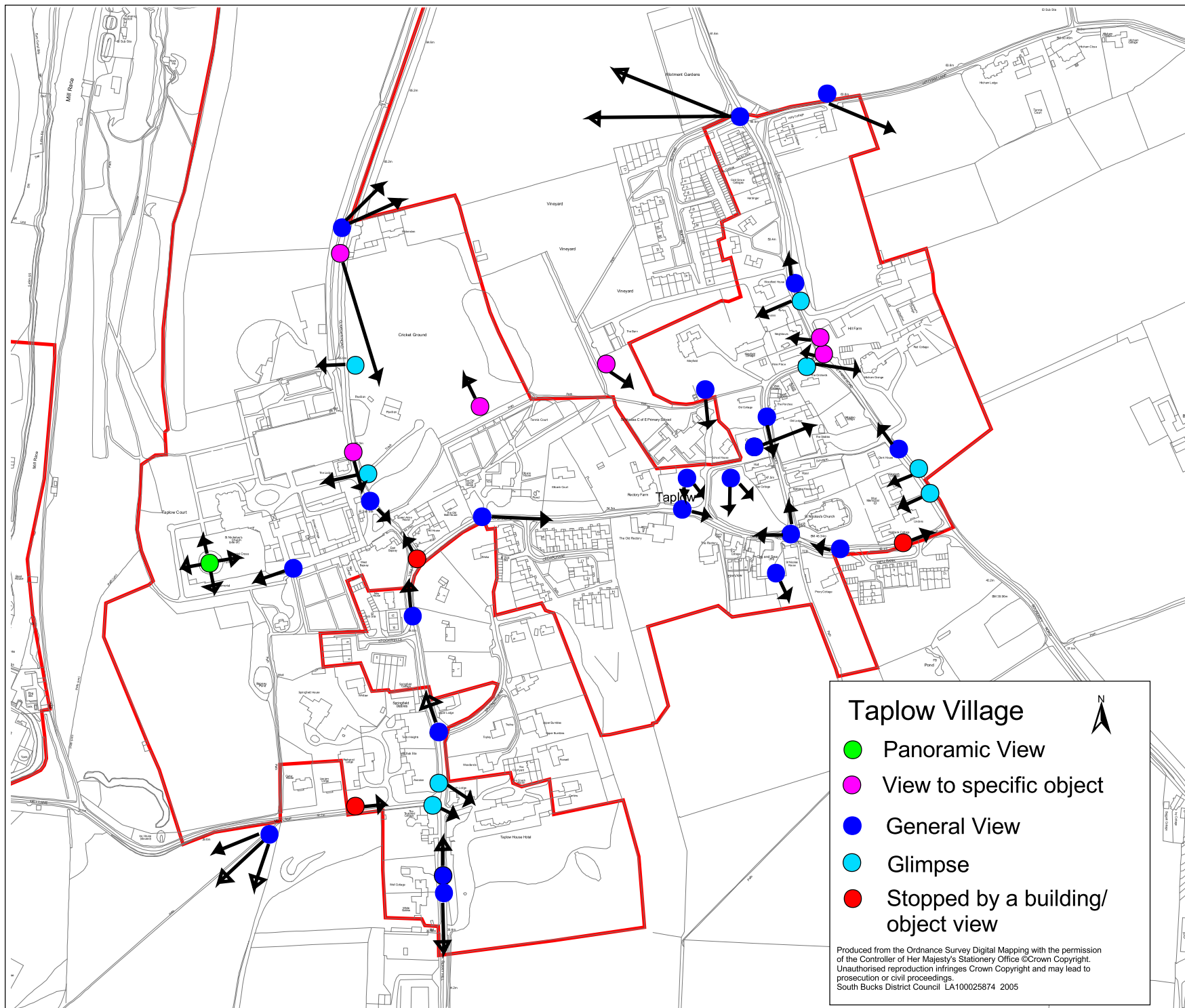
Crop marks show evidence of extensive Neolithic, British, Roman and later farming. There are no working farms left in the conservation area and pasture land has been given over to horses. There is documentary evidence of mineral extraction and quarrying since the 16th century. Hampton Court account books for the 1530s show burnt lime and bricks having been brought down the Thames from Taplow Quarry. Gravel extraction continues to the south of Taplow village. Historically, woodland provided pasture for pigs and game for hunting as well as wood for fuel and building.

The river, or the relationship to it, has always been the primary feature of Taplow, socially and economically. The Thames formed the boundary of parishes, counties, and Saxon kingdoms. It was a vital resource in the area and the focus of much activity and by the medieval period its power was harnessed to drive mills. Over the years Taplow's water mills have been used for grinding corn, fulling cloth and making paper. The Domesday Book of 1086, records one thousand eels from the fisheries in Taplow Manor. This stretch of the river was crowded with eyots, which could have provided temporary crossing until a bridge was constructed. In 1768 an Act of Parliament prohibited the mooring of boats at Taplow Mill stream in response to trespassing in the gardens of Taplow Court. Fishing disputes were numerous throughout the centuries and indicate the importance of fishing rights.

During World War II, Taplow Court accommodated evacuees and was later used as a girls' school. Plessey Communications then occupied it as a research centre until SGI bought the property in 1988. Taplow Court is now a centre for Buddhist education. On certain days during the summer the house and grounds are opened to the public.

The predominant use in the conservation area is now residential, although a growing number of residents work from home. The social life of the village is centred on the green with the church, school, village hall and public house (The Oak and Saw named after emblems on the Orkney Coat of Arms) all in close proximity. In the 19th century many of the buildings around the green were shops and businesses but the last village shop, a small general store in High Street, closed in the early 1980s. The village green and the cricket ground are used for communal activities. A listed K6 red telephone box survives next to St. Nicolas House.

Taplow's location near a mainline railway station connected to London remains an attraction for those seeking a semi rural life with access to wide-ranging employment opportunities.



CHAPTER 5 - LANDSCAPE AND VIEWS

Taplow's wooded hillside location makes a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. The terrain affects the views in, out and across the conservation area. Some larger properties are shielded from view by trees and hedges, contributing to the feeling of privacy and seclusion. The green copper-clad church spire is visible from all directions outside the conservation area and within the area it can be glimpsed through trees and gaps between buildings. It forms an important landmark and anchors the village centre. The slopes and curves of all the roads lead the eye to provide views within the conservation area which are stopped by buildings, boundary walls, trees or hedges. There are views across the village green, which slopes from north to south, with glimpses between buildings into the distance beyond the boundaries of the conservation area.

Significant views are shown on the views map opposite.



There are five seats on the green. This one is well placed for enjoyment of views down the slope. The narrow entrance to the village between the church and St. Nicolas House affords a distant vista to the south-east.

The cottages, which line the south side of the green, (to the right in the above photograph) appear to nestle in a hollow since they are below the level of the green. By contrast the hilltop position of Taplow Court emphasises its importance.



Cedar Chase, a 1960s Span development on Rectory Road, uses the natural slope as well as green landscaping to provide an intimate and secluded setting appropriate to a rural area. The mono-pitched roofs slope north-south to follow the hillside whilst the road leads downhill into the well-landscaped and heavily planted communal gardens.

Other important views in and out of the conservation area are in a southerly direction across the Thames Valley: from the car park of The Oak and Saw public house towards Windsor Castle, from the Saxon mound across the Jubilee and Thames Rivers towards Bracknell Forest, and from the southern approach along Boundary Road.



◀ Looking south from the footpath behind Rectory Road

Looking north from Berry Hill Road. ▶

Even in winter many of the buildings are obscured by trees, an important consideration where there may be inappropriate development on settlement edges.



◀ Looking north up High Street. Trees, walls and hedges, the narrowness of the street, and the closeness of the buildings, all contribute to the feeling of intimacy and enclosure.

There are many significant historic boundary walls within the conservation area. They increase the sense of enclosure and help to integrate modern developments into the historic built-environment. Their sinuous curves also serve to emphasise the contours of the landscape and the winding character of the lanes. These are dealt with in more detail in the Appendix.

CHAPTER 6 - STREETSCAPE AND SPACES

Regardless of the direction of approach, a feeling of enclosure and seclusion is experienced on entering the conservation area. The factors which contribute to this are the sloping site, the winding streets which are particularly narrow in the village centre (High Street and Rectory Road), the closeness of buildings to the roads and the prevalence of boundary walls, hedges and trees.

The busiest route through the village runs in a south-north direction from the A4 - Berry Hill Road, which becomes Cliveden Road at its northern end. This southern entrance to the conservation area has urban looking bollards and a metal street barrier on the pavement. However a village character soon asserts itself with historic brick walls, trees, hedges and buildings flanking the road. The road becomes steeper and there is a triple bend before the entrance to Taplow Court at the top of the hill.

Boundary Road, which becomes Hill Farm Road to the north, has a more rural character since there are fewer buildings on its eastern side. It also feels more open because of the verge or bank (uncharacteristic for Taplow) between Hill Farm and Hill Farm Cottages, and the lay-by and green space in front of the former council bungalows, Desborough Cottages.

White mock-entrance gates have been erected on the grass verges at the northern exits from the village on Cliveden Road and Hill Farm Road as a traffic-calming measure. There is no evidence that such gates were historic features of villages in this area.



There is another traffic calming measure in the form of a road-hump in Rectory Road, suitably restrained in its design, materials, and lighting.

The lack of wide splays at junctions in the conservation area helps to retain its rural character.

After entering Rectory Road from Boundary Road the planted verges on the south side of the road in front of and beyond Wellbank (outside the conservation area) make an important contribution to the rural character and help the modern houses to blend-in. The bend next to St. Nicolas's parish church is an important node. The narrowness and angle of this entry point engenders a sense akin to that of arriving at a secret place as the road opens out at the junction with High Street. In front, the village green, which is a 1960s creation, gives the impression of an ancient, natural open space at the heart of the village. It is flanked by Rectory Road and High Street to the south and east respectively and bisected by a small road giving access to the school, village hall and car park. Despite the size of the green the sense of intimacy is retained thanks to the presence of mature trees and other

planting, the sloping and uneven surface and the village buildings surrounding the green. Farm buildings were removed from the site when the green was created but the retention of the red brick outbuilding in the north-eastern corner provides an attractive focal point and a link with the historic farming tradition in the village. Five wooden seats reinforce the welcoming character. The green is a valuable public space used for communal gatherings.

Other spaces in the public realm are either privately owned or too small to be used for communal activities but have value in enhancing the rural character of the village. They include the small greens at the historic village-core in front of East Bapsey and next to Merryfield in High Street (pictured right).



The churchyard of the original church next to Taplow Court is of national importance. There are panoramic views from the Saxon burial mound and the churchyard is of great historic interest since it contains a restored memorial cross and many important tombs. The cricket ground, originally Ten Acre Field, whilst not in the public realm has communal value as a venue for village events and provides a large green space at the northern entrance to the conservation area. The graveyard of the present St. Nicolas's church provides a quiet space. Birdsong – including the invasive cries of non-native parakeets – is particularly noticeable when walking around the village.

The preponderance and variety of trees and hedges make an incalculable contribution to the rural character of Taplow. Their importance is demonstrated by the extent to which tree preservation orders apply within the conservation area and to its setting. The tree and hedge map in the Appendix shows the affected areas as well as some of the tree-groups and hedges which can be seen from the public realm and contribute to its special character. Since many of the trees are evergreens the area is overwhelmingly green even in winter. Tall cedar trees are a notable feature of the skyline when viewed from the south. Mature specimen trees, which survive from the grounds of the demolished large houses, help to integrate modern developments and give a sense of historical continuity. Trees in gardens as well as hedges help to create a feeling of enclosure. The Parish Plan refers to a “green tunnel” along Berry Hill Road.

Pedestrians are reasonably well-served with pavements along the village roads (with the exception of Hill Farm Road between its junctions with High Street and Rectory Road). Front boundaries are generally marked with walls or hedges right up to the highway. Picket fences are also characteristic of the area. Iron railings, where used in the formal setting of St. Nicolas's churchyard atop the stone wall, contribute to the Victorian character of this part of the conservation area.

The number of large undeveloped spaces within the conservation area has diminished over the years as the sites of large historic houses have been redeveloped following demolition or their gardens have been subdivided for modern housing. Undeveloped spaces on the edges of the conservation area are important in enhancing the rural setting of the village. These include the paddock to the north of Hill Farm, the field to the south of Taplow House Hotel and the old orchard/wood to the south of Wellbank. The grounds of Taplow Court have national archaeological and historic significance as yet not fully understood since the results of various excavations over the years have not been published in detail. The field next to Bapsey Pond also has religious significance. The wooded cliff-side when viewed from the Thames forms a dramatic foreground not only to Taplow Court but also further north towards Cliveden.

Buildings in the conservation area contribute to the character of the streetscape by the variety in their size, style, age, and materials. These will be outlined in more detail in Chapter 7. The historic lack of planned development has also resulted in diverse rhythms. Any large-scale plan confirms this irregularity with buildings being set at varying distances from each other and the village roads. Vernacular cottages were set hard-up against the south side of Rectory Road and along High Street and this pattern was repeated with houses built around the end of the 19th century. Larger houses were generally set further back from the road, for example Elibank, the Old Rectory, Rectory Farmhouse and Maryfield, and shielded by gardens. By contrast Queen Anne's house (a former public house) and Hill House in the historic core of the village are close to the street. The steep gradient of Berry Hill Road exaggerates the size of these buildings whilst buildings below the level of the road, such as the cottages to the south of the green, appear smaller.

Most buildings within the conservation area are of two storeys but being built at different times are still of varying heights, giving rise to an interesting roofscape. Some houses have dormer windows whilst gables are a common feature of vernacular as well as late 19th century houses. Porches are also a feature of historic cottages, such as the eponymous The Porches, Victorian villas and terraces as well as modern houses. They usually have gabled roofs. All these features lend verticality and interest to the streetscape.

Entrances also have a significant effect on the village streetscene. In keeping with the secluded and enclosed feel of Taplow those houses with drives usually have discreet entrances, flanked by historic walls or hedges. Some have incorporated stone setts in their driveways. Gates are of either wrought iron or timber.

Roads and pavements are covered with black tarmacadam, some retaining their granite kerbs. Some traditional setts of Denner Hill stone can still be seen in the pavement crossing in High Street (near Dunvegan and Rozel), in front of the church lych-gate and on part of Rectory Road.

CHAPTER 7 - BUILDINGS

The relatively large proportion of listed buildings indicates the high level of architectural and historic interest within the conservation area. Several unlisted buildings also make a positive contribution to the area's character. Please refer to the Appendix for a map and tables with more details of these buildings.

None of the standing buildings, with the possible exception of Old Cottage, appears to date from before the 17th century. Owing to the organic development of the village no one style predominates but buildings can be divided roughly into groups which reflect the social and economic history of the settlement: mansions and associated estate buildings, vernacular buildings, villas or larger houses, and modern housing.

Mansions and estate buildings

Taplow Court



A former manor house on the site was rebuilt after a fire in 1616 and there have been several subsequent remodellings. Most of the present building is the result of a rebuilding in the 1850s by Charles Grenfell to the designs of William Burn. The current owners, SGI (UK), a Buddhist educational foundation, carried out a sensitive and thorough restoration between 1988 and 1990. With red and vitrified bricks, stone

dressings and Gothic ornamentation the house is a striking example of Victorian exuberance. The verticality of the windows, turrets and ornate chimneys exaggerate the height of the four-storey building on its hill-top site.

Other buildings in the grounds, such as the dairy are simpler and in character with the rural setting. The building which may have been Lord Desborough's real tennis court, converted to a canteen, is an interesting rustic timber construction which is echoed in the detailing of the listed former estate manager's house with its timber garage and ornate barge boards. The 1990s semi-circular Chanting Hall of timber and glass with a clay tile roof, blends in well with the parkland setting away from the formal gardens. The grounds, which extend over 85 acres, are graded II in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.



Taplow Court itself is set well back from the road and so is not easily visible from within the village, but is a landmark from the south, especially at night when it is floodlit. The Lodge at the eastern end of the drive acts as a marker for the mansion and is a significant building in its own right with its red brick and interesting clay tiled roofscape produced by its many half-timbered gables with ornate tile ridge crests and finials. It bears an 1887 date stone with the WHG (William Grenfell) inscription.

The WHG inscription and a datestone of June 1887 also appear on the front gable of Hill Farm Cottages, presumably built to house farm workers on the Taplow Court Estate. This row of four cottages built of yellow stock brick is in a prominent position above the road at the north-eastern entrance to the conservation area and on the highest point of Taplow village. Later alterations have robbed the cottages of some of their character.

Directly opposite this row are the listed Church Cottages. These have an 1853 datestone and were originally almshouses built by the church on land acquired from the Grenfells in exchange for land near the old church next to Taplow Court. This row is in an important location at the northern entrance to the conservation area on Hill Farm Road close to the junction with Hitcham Lane.



Taplow House Hotel

At the southern end of the conservation area the former Taplow House is now a hotel. The original 1751 building was much altered in the 19th century and has had a succession of notable owners. The white walls appear to be stuccoed but on closer inspection the whole building is of red brick, much of which has been painted white. The main vehicular entrance is from the south, presumably a reversal of the original arrangement, although the grand porte cochere at the rear is still in use and can be glimpsed from the road. A conservatory appears to have been lost since the building was listed in 1973 leaving a rather untidy terraced area at the front. The castellated parapets make for an interesting roofline and can be seen from Berry Hill Road. The grounds are noted for their important trees, and in particular a splendid large tulip tree.

Parts of the original grounds of the mansion have been sold off and redeveloped. The former stables and servants' accommodation (outside the conservation area) have been converted into residences. Two small lodges survive on Berry Hill Road, although Upper Lodge has lost its physical connection with the mansion since the sale-off of the intervening land. Although a rear extension looks modern its original front facing Berry Hill Road lends character and makes a positive contribution to the conservation

area. South Lodge is much closer to the mansion and is significant since it is directly opposite the junction with Mill Lane and serves to stop the view when entering the conservation area from Mill Lane. There is also an interesting roofscape with the fishscale tiles of South Lodge behind which can be seen the rather dramatic battlements and porte cochere of the mansion.

Taplow Court and Taplow House Hotel are the two surviving examples of grand houses which would once have dominated the village, both physically and socially. Other large houses such as Berry Hill, Springfield and Taplow Hill House have been lost through fire and demolition in the 20th century creating space for smaller modern houses and increasing the density of development within the village. Berry Hill has been excluded from the conservation area although its grounds are historically significant.

Vernacular buildings

Most of the surviving vernacular buildings are close to the village green, although there are two significant vernacular or, at least vernacular style, houses in Berry Hill Road.



◀ The Thatched Cottage, with the appearance of a lodge, is a cottage ornée of white painted brick and with recently replaced thatch, standing next to the junction with Mill Lane.

Bapsey is in the historic village centre on Berry Hill outside the entrance to the old church. It was formerly called the Thatched Cottage and old photographs show it to have been substantially altered. Its thatch was replaced with a clay tile covering around 1915 and the house was later divided into two.

The cottages along Rectory Road to the south of the village green form an attractive vernacular grouping contributing to the archetypal English village scene of the church, pub and cottages nestling around a village green. Only two storeys high they appear smaller because of the slope of the land to the south and the higher green with its bank directly opposite their frontages. The Cottage (with a modern date-plaque of 1756) and Farm View, both listed, date from the 18th century and have clay tile roofs and white/cream painted brick frontages. Their gabled porches are a common feature within the conservation area. Further to the east, Mysteria, which has a higher roof line and ornate ridge crest tiles, and the Old Manor House are attached to the Oak and Saw, still a traditional public house. This row has a slate roof. These cottages had commercial uses over the years as shops and a bakehouse. Their appearance indicates a 19th century date but they may have earlier origins. An attractive white picket fence separates the cottages from the street.

The oldest standing buildings in the conservation area are found at the northern end of the narrow High Street and around the corner into Hill Farm

Road. Wee Cott and Rose Cott are timber framed although, unlike The Porches, the timber frame is not exposed.

▼ The Porches is particularly interesting with its gables and ornamental barge boards and two storey porch with carved balusters.



All these cottages date from the 17th century, have been painted white and restored with diamond leaded lights.

Opposite is another timber-framed cottage, Old Cottage, above the level of the road and now hidden from view by an uncharacteristic close-boarded wooden fence. Its list description dates it to the 17th

century but the Taplow Parish Plan ascribes Tudor origins to the building.

To the north in Hill Farm Road are the listed Neighbours and Losuces, which probably originated as a row of six cottages. When listed in 1984 there were three but Elmbank has now been absorbed. The list description gives a date of late 16th or early 17th century. They form a charming group with their irregular roofline, small gabled dormers, tall chimney stacks, white painted brick walls and exposed timber frames. The difference between traditional hand made and machine made clay tiles is evident when comparing the northern and southern ends of the roof.



Other cottages which make a positive contribution to character include Victoria Cottage (next to Wee Cott), and Wellbank Cottage. Both, but particularly the latter, are close to the road in prominent positions at entrances to the village and help to establish the historic and rural character of the village.

Villas and larger houses

Most notable amongst these is the early 18th century Elibank House on the north side of Rectory Road, once part of the Taplow Court estate. It is barely visible from the road behind its fine brick wall and trees. The antiquarian James Rutland described it as being in the "style of Sir John Vanbrugh" perhaps because of its assertiveness. Stone quoins contrast with the red brick. The centre bays project slightly under a pediment and the upper floors still have their Venetian windows. Lord Elibank, a loyal Jacobite and instigator of the Elibank plot to restore the Stuarts to the throne, died in Taplow in 1778.

Hill House occupies the most prominent position on Berry Hill, the busiest through road in the village, on a bend next to the junction with Rectory Road. Its famous occupants included Walter de la Mare and Bram Stoker. Built hard-up against Berry Hill it looms over the steep road and the entrance to the narrower Rectory Road, appearing to be taller than its three storeys. This dominant appearance is exaggerated by the cream colourwash over the red bricks and the bay windows. The red brick bay on the Berry Hill elevation appears to be a later addition. It has not been painted and the finely moulded bricks are a very attractive feature.



Immediately to the north is the unlisted Queen Anne's House (in the middle of the photograph), a former inn, also in a prominent position and within the historic village core. Its patterned brick work, interesting roofscape and tall chimneys make this a particularly attractive part of the village streetscape. The wife of the first Earl of Orkney was a favourite of Queen Anne. The Queen gave four garden urns to the Earl, three of which are in the grounds of Taplow Court (the fourth is at Cliveden).

Farther down Berry Hill Road is the pretty pink stuccoed Regency style Springfield Cottage.

In Rectory Road, other historic large houses are hidden from public view by hedges and/or walls. On the south side is the Old Rectory, now a private house, whose sense of seclusion is heightened by the door set into the historic boundary wall. Modern ceramic tiles add interest to this wall and introduce a continental flavour to the village scene.

Opposite and set above the level of the road and behind its garden is Rectory Farm, built slightly later in the early 19th century and of stock brick. There is an interesting green metal clad addition at the rear visible from the village green.

Next to this and on the green is the sole surviving farm building left from the clearance which created the village green in the 1960s. Although unlisted it is an important and highly visible reminder of the historic importance of farming within this community.

Hitcham Grange on Hill Farm Road has been converted into flats. Largely obscured from view by walls and trees but, similar in style to Hill House, its white walls can be glimpsed from the road as well as the village car park. It is still set in large grounds and the boundary wall appears to be suffering from lack of maintenance, a common consequence of multiple occupation.

A disused icehouse remains in the grounds. Other buildings in the grounds have been converted to houses which contribute character, not reflected in the modern garages. Hill Farm is also hidden from view above the level of Hill Farm Road and behind uncharacteristic timber fencing and gates. The farmhouse is modern although some Victorian barns and stables survive.

Maryfield is another large house, late 19th century with a half-timbered upper storey, set in a large garden to the north of the High Street, next to Taplow Vineyard. It was the headquarters of the Dutch General Staff during World War II (*Taplow at the Millenium*, p. 17).

Remaining historic houses date from the late Victorian/Edwardian period. They are characterised by irregular shapes, red brick, stone detailing, gables, some black and white half-timbering, ornate barge boards, hanging clay tiles, bay windows, varying windows (some sash, some casement), use of stained glass and other decorative features. St Nicolas House is the most prominent of these occupying a site at the entrance to the core of the present village, opposite the green and the church and the junction with High Street.

The houses on the east side of High Street are built right up to the pavement increasing the sense of enclosure. Whilst all different they make a satisfying and harmonious composition when viewed from the green and the street. The roofscape of Mulberry House (datestone 1868) is particularly interesting when viewed from the church yard. Its eastern wall is very “active” with many windows overlooking the churchyard.



Other houses along High Street make use of rather long, narrow plots and have windows in their sides.

The long historic boundary wall of Old Lodge unifies the street frontage. This building, now subdivided, was the home of James Rutland, the antiquarian who excavated the Saxon mound. Photographs show that the street frontage was much more ornate in his day. Nonetheless it still makes an important contribution to the streetscene. Some of the High Street houses were formerly used as shops and Dunvegan retains its shop-front with some attractive old tiles on the ground in front of the shop window.

Modern buildings

The built envelope of Taplow village was established by the end of the 19th century. Because of green belt restrictions there has been minimal encroachment outside this envelope into the surrounding countryside. Buffins, which is outside the conservation area, is the largest “modern” development. Other modern buildings which have been excluded from the

enlarged conservation area include the 1960s school and the School House which lack architectural interest and, indeed, detract from the character of the conservation area with their prominent position at the top of the village green.

The Village Hall, which incorporates part of the 19th century Reading Room has been sympathetically extended.

As large houses, which were typical of 19th century Taplow, have been demolished they have provided the opportunity for piecemeal modern housing development. This has been at low density by today's standards, and the larger than average gardens help retain a rural character. The retention of mature trees, in particular large cedars which are common in Taplow, and historic boundary walls has helped to preserve the historic continuity and allow the modern houses to blend-in.

These modern houses are mainly of two storeys (Desborough Cottages and a few other bungalows are exceptions), and constructed from traditional materials. Some are one-off designs. Wickenden next to the Cricket Ground, built in Lutyens style, is an example of a particularly good quality design in the tradition of Taplow large houses. Most modern developments were speculative, of traditional design and materials with some repeat designs on the small developments.

The award-winning 1966 Span development of Cedar Chase has been included in the conservation area because of the high quality of its design and the way it blends in with the landscape. Built on the site of Taplow Hill House, the monopitched roof design of the 24 houses respects the hillside setting as it slopes to the south. Part of the old garden walls have been retained and the grounds have lush planting. The timber cladding reflects the rural character. The beige brick, which is not within the traditional local palette, was controversial when the development was first built but has weathered nicely and appears to assume different shades as the light changes.

Modern developments which have been excluded from the conservation area include Wellbank and Stockwells although both have been well-integrated into the village setting by landscaping and preservation of historic walls.

Materials and Details

A few timber-framed buildings survive but they are not always obvious since some have been rendered. Most buildings are of brick construction using local red brick and have clay tile roofs. This is the traditional local palette. Some yellow stock brick can also be found and slate was used for some roofs from the mid-19th century. Historic brickwork is generally in the traditional Flemish bond. Several properties are rendered or painted, usually in white or cream. The church is faced in limestone with a copper spire that gives a suitably green landmark. Modern "estate" developments, such as Cedar Chase, have tended to use non-locally manufactured materials not in the local palette of colours. Most individually designed houses, such as The Old Malt House, have used the local palette of red brick and clay tile to replicate

historic styles. Below are photographs of a few building details and features which contribute to the special interest of the conservation area.



CHAPTER 8 -NEUTRAL AND NEGATIVE FEATURES AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Some modern buildings have been included in the conservation area which are neutral; they make neither a positive nor negative contribution to the special character of the area. They include the houses to the west side of Hill Farm Road between its junction with Rectory Road and High Street. They are set back from the road and partly obscured by hedging. Being of either one or one and a half storeys they allow pleasant glimpses of the church spire and trees to the west. The turning to Mill Lane is flanked by Orchards and Pans Place. Orchards is an arts and crafts style house with attractive clay tiles, set in a secluded site below the level of the road and behind a hedge. Pans Place is also mainly hidden from view by a hedge but of a less appropriate design with its modern non-local materials and wide, low frontage. Being a bungalow, it permits a view of Maryfield which stands in an imposing position on higher ground to the north-west.



Some modern houses to the north of Mill Lane have been built on the site of one of the large 19th century houses, Springfield. Whilst the gardens are large by modern standards, their open plan design is not characteristic of Taplow. However, the mature trees which survive from the historic estate provide a link with the past - they have an instant ageing effect - and help to integrate the development into

the village. Hedges screen the houses from Berry Hill Road.

The modern village school and the School House (originally the headmaster's house) have been left out of the conservation area. Their design is not sympathetic and their position at the top of the village green means that they visually intrude on the conservation area. This applies particularly to the two-storey School House which is not so well-shielded as the school.



Thirty years on, the garages on the High Street (as identified in the original Conservation Area Document) still look rather incongruous in their position in front of the houses and on a sensitive site opposite listed timber-framed cottages and close to the imposing half-timbered Maryfield. Whilst efforts have been made to make them look as neat as possible their character is not in keeping with this historic village setting.

Road traffic is a negative feature, especially along Cliveden Road /Berry Hill, with its high volume of heavy goods traffic, but Hill Farm Road is also a commuter's "rat-run". Parked cars along High Street, Rectory Road and Hill Farm Road and around the small green on Berry Hill detract from historic character; many of the old cottages here have no parking provision.

Free parking is available behind the village hall (on the site of the former village school) but the twice daily "school-run" as well as evening events at the school mean that the roads around the village green are sometimes clogged with cars.

Taplow is not unique in suffering such problems but imaginative solutions are required if traffic-calming measures are not to detract from the special character of the conservation area. The road hump on Rectory Road is a good example, unlike the urban bollards and metal barrier at the southern entrance to the conservation area on Berry Hill Road.



Road paint on Hill Farm Road also detracts from the rural character.

Parked cars, narrow roads and trees or hedges close to the road are all recognised as means of reducing speed.

Boundary treatments which are within the public realm have a considerable impact on the character of an area. In Taplow the many historic brick walls make an important contribution to its special interest. They were the usual boundary treatment for the large houses and many have survived despite the demolition of the houses which they protected. Many are softened by trees, planted in front or behind and some are covered in ivy. Hedges are also common within the conservation area, sometimes in combination with a wall, fence or railings. They too add character and preserve a rural feel to the village. Picket fencing for cottage boundaries was often an historical feature in this district. Other modern forms of timber fencing, interwoven, lapped or close-boarded, are not historic. Whilst they may be appropriate for back garden boundaries, their utilitarian and unattractive appearance makes a negative impact on the streetscene. They have been erected in some parts of the conservation area to provide privacy to back or side gardens which would otherwise be visible from the road. This is particularly noticeable in Berry Hill Road with the long close-boarded fence behind houses in Saxon Gardens (outside the conservation area), in Mill Lane. A modern fence at Taplow Court contrasts unfavourably with the historic wall next to it. Fences can be particularly visually intrusive when above the level of the road, such as in High Street and opposite the junction of Berry Hill Road and Rectory Road.



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Plan of Taplow almshouses attached to an order of exchange 1855.

Historical notes compiled by Miss Marie Pearce Serocold of Taplow.

Notes for a history written, but never published, by James Rutland.

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Wellbank Residents Association

SGI-UK, especially for consent to photograph within the grounds of Taplow Court

English Heritage

Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service

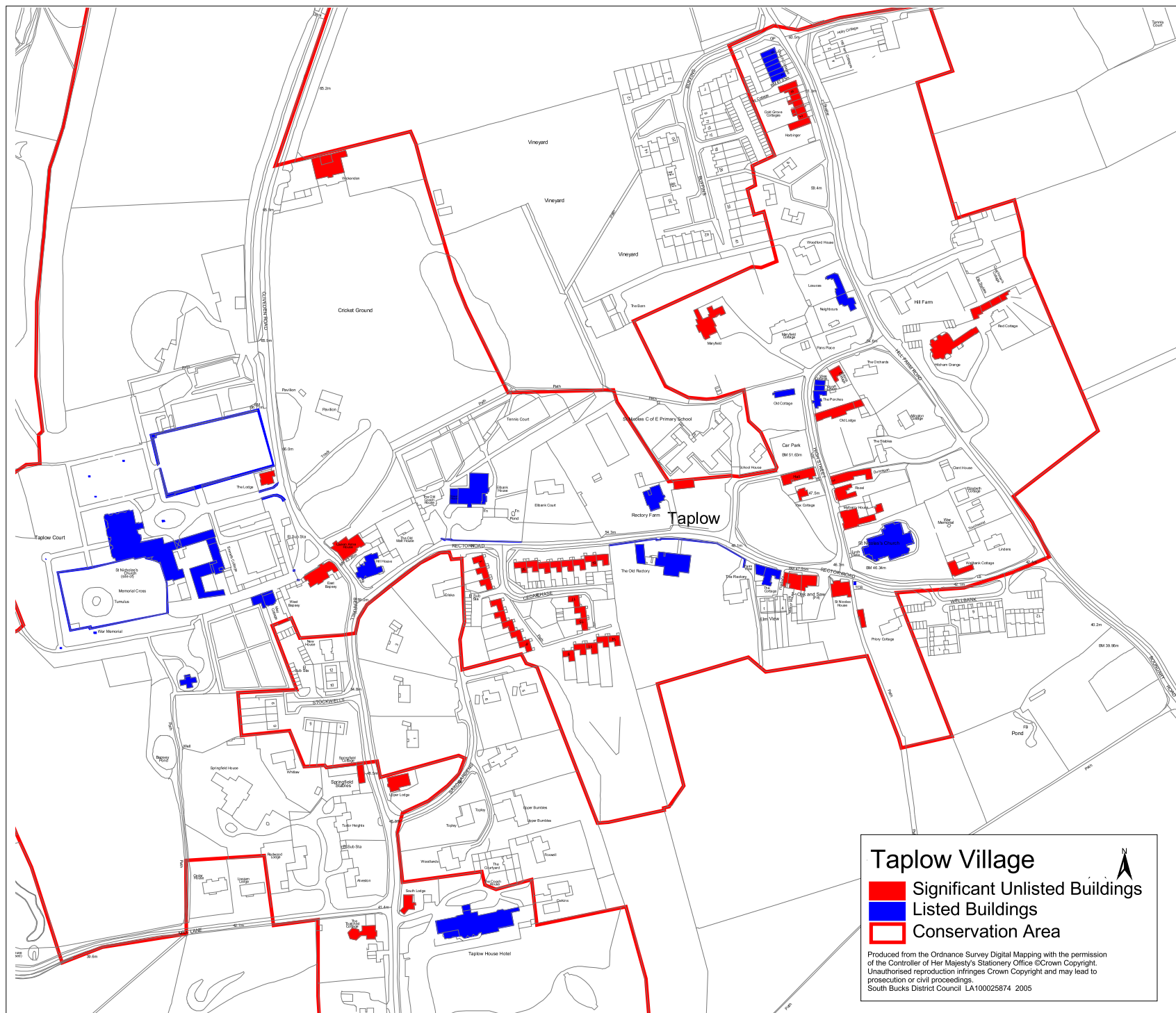


TABLE OF LISTED BUILDINGS				
Road	Address	Grade	List no.	Short description (This is not the list description)
Berry Hill	Taplow House Hotel	II	7/646	Formerly called Taplow House and built in 1751 as a three-bay house. Remodelled and extended c.1840 by <i>Basevi</i> . Part brick and part stuccoed. The Roman cement porte cochère at the rear can be glimpsed from the road.
Cliveden Road	Taplow Court (SGI-UK)	II	16/649	On the site of the original manor house. Dated about 1855, of red brick and vitrified brick with stone dressings in what Pevsner describes as a Tudor-cum-French Gothic style.
Cliveden Road	Taplow Court Walls of the old parish church of St. Nicholas	II	16/650	Red brick, C17. Wrought iron gates. The ruined church near the site of the Saxon burial mound was demolished.
Cliveden Road	Taplow Court Walls of former kitchen garden to north-east of Taplow Court.	II	16/651	Red brick, C17. There are carved stone dogs on top of the piers. The former kitchen garden is now used as a car park.
Cliveden Road	Taplow Court Statue in forecourt of Taplow Court	II	16/652	1804 Coade stone statue of a Roman emperor.
Cliveden Road	Taplow Court 4 urns in garden to east and north of Taplow Court	II	16/652A	Three of the urns are part of a set of four presented by Queen Anne in 1705. The fourth is a marble vase, C18 or C19.
Cliveden Road	Taplow Court Grenfell Memorial south of the old churchyard	II	16/652B	Stone monument, 1920, to A and G Grenfell.
Cliveden Road	Taplow Court Gate piers to churchyard of the old parish church of St. Nicholas	II	16/653	Back gates at lane to former churchyard. 1799, of red brick. Coade stone urns dated 1799.
Cliveden Road	Taplow Court Dairy.	II	16/654	Mid C19. Brick and ashlar.
Cliveden Road	Taplow Court Former estate office and the adjoining cottage.	II	16/647	c. 1890. The former estate office is half-timbered with brick infill. The adjoining cottage is of yellow, with some red, brick.

Road	Address	Grade	List no.	Short description (This is not the list description)
High Street	Church of St. Nicolas	II	17/701	Parish church largely rebuilt in 1911 which replaced the ruinous church next to Taplow Court. The architect was G.H Fellowes Prynne.
High Street	The Porches	II	17/690	A restored C17 timber framed house with brick nogging painted white.
High Street	Wee Cottage and Rose Cottage	II	17/691	Restored C17 timber-framed with two-storeys.
High Street	Old Cottage	II	17/692	C17 timber framed with brick nogging.
Hill Farm Road	Neighbours Cottage and Losuce	II	17/693	Formerly three cottages listed as Neighbours, Elmbank and Losuce. Late C16 or early C17 row of timber framed cottages with dormer windows.
Hill Farm Road	Church Cottages (1-6 consecutive)	II	17/694	Terrace of brick cottages with 1853 datestone.
Rectory Road	Hill House	II	16/697	C18 and C19 three storey brick house.
Rectory Road	Elibank House	II	16/698	C18 red brick two storey house.
Rectory Road	Wall and gate piers to Elibank	II	16/699	C18 red and blue brick buttressed wall. The gate piers have been rebuilt.
Rectory Road	(south side) K6 telephone kiosk	II	17/707	
Rectory Road	The Rectory Farmhouse	II	17/700	Stock brick two-storey house. Early C19.
Rectory Road	The Cottage and Farm View	II	17/702	Pair of C18 cottages.
Rectory Road	The Old Rectory	II	17/703	C18 and C19 two storey house.
Rectory Road	Stables of the Old Rectory	II	17/704	C19. Stock brick with loft door over the entrance.
Rectory Road	Garden wall and entrance of the Old Rectory	II	17/705	Red brick; C18 and C19.
Rectory Road	Garden wall and gates of the Rectory	II	17/706	C18 and C19 red brick wall restored in places with stock brick. Wrought iron gates on modern square brick piers.

Schedule of monuments compiled and maintained by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under section 1 of the ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as amended.

The Saxon barrow, church and cemeteries in the old churchyard at Taplow Court have been entered in the schedule under National Monument number 19050.

English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England.

The grounds of Taplow Court have been registered Grade II under number GD1597.

More information on these entries and their effect can be obtained from:

English Heritage

www.english-heritage.org.uk.

Or:

English Heritage
Heritage Protection Team
English Heritage
1 Waterhouse Square
138 - 142 Holborn
London EC1N 2ST

Buckinghamshire County Council's Sites and Monuments Record:

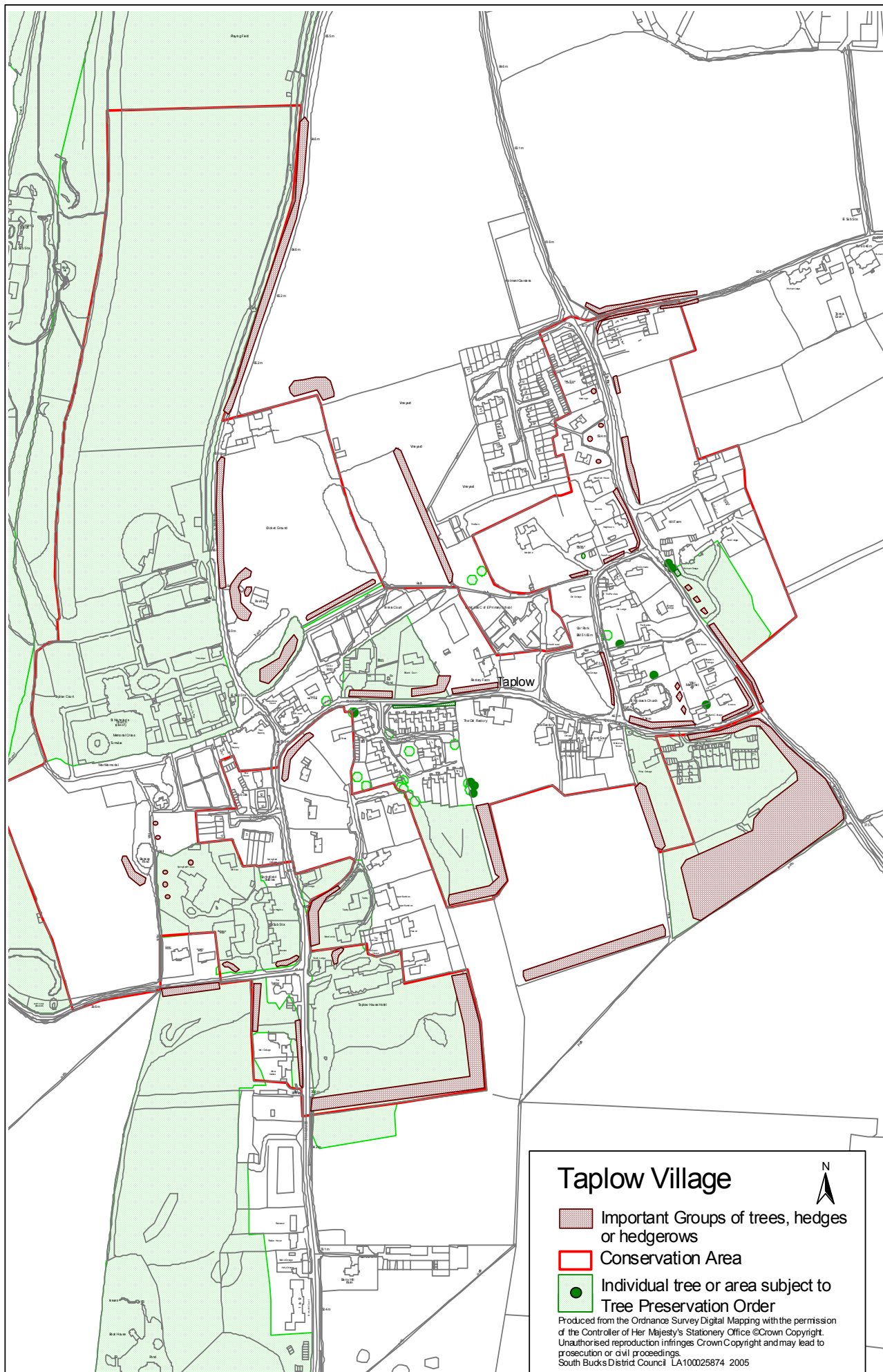
Telephone number 01296 382072

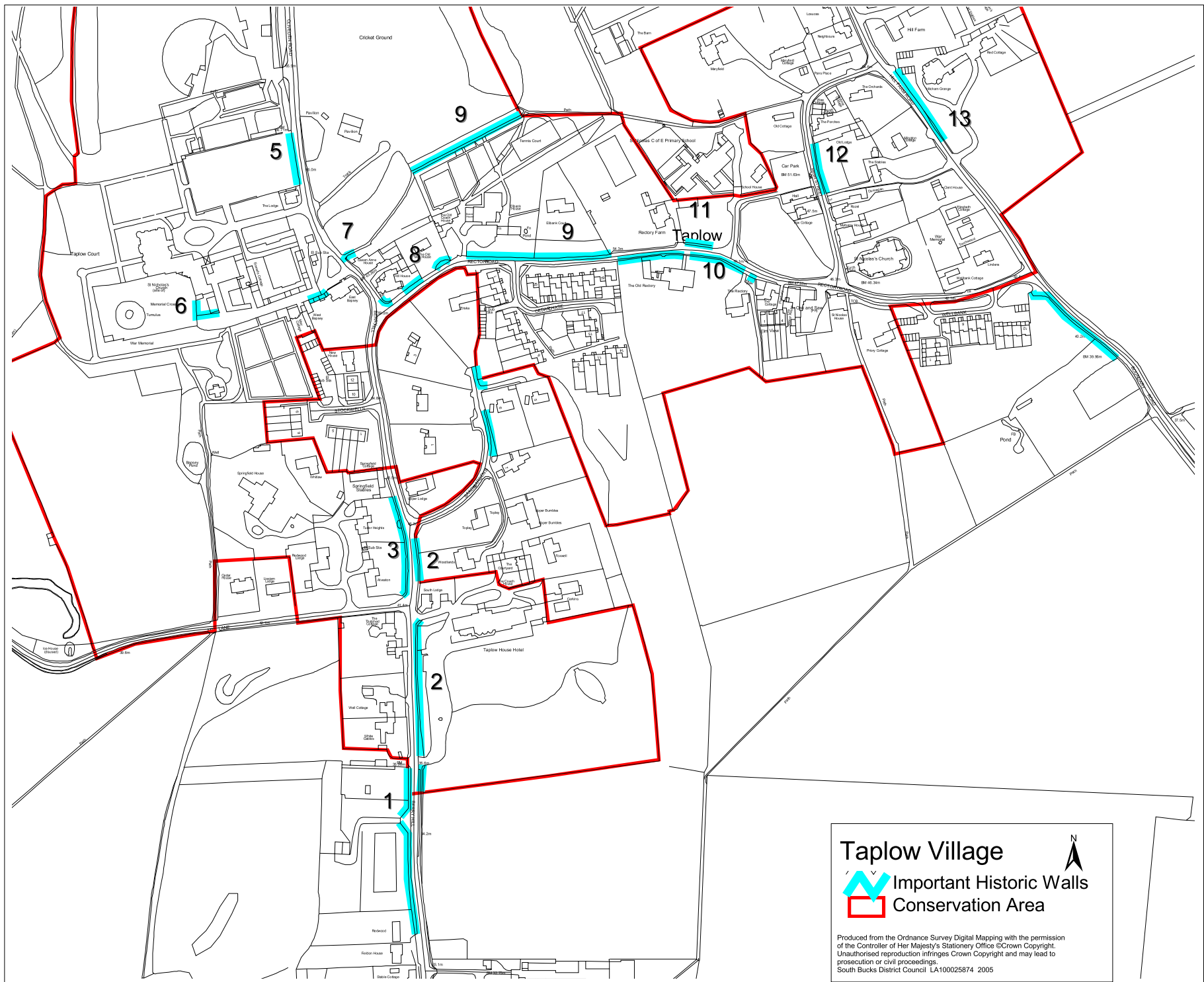
National Monuments Record Centre

Kemble Drive
Churchward
Swindon
Telephone number 01793 414600

TABLE OF SIGNIFICANT UNLISTED BUILDINGS		
Road	Address	Short Description
Berry Hill Road	The Thatched Cottage	Cottage ornée (probably a former lodge). White painted brick and thatched roof. Possibly 18C. Important position on junction with Mill Lane.
Berry Hill Road	Springfield Cottage	Detached Regency style cottage - assumed to have been part of the Springfield estate. 19C.
Berry Hill Road	South Lodge	Former lodge to Taplow House. Painted white and modernised but with fishscale roof tiles. Significant position at road side and a view-stopper from Mill Lane. Probably 18C.
Berry Hill Road	Upper Lodge	Another former lodge to Taplow House. Extended and modernised at rear. Probably 18C.
Berry Hill	Queen Anne's House	Former Queens' Head public house. Fine patterned red/grey brick work.
Berry Hill	East and West Bapsey	Formerly one house. Old photographs show it has been much altered.
Cedar Chase		1966/7 award winning Span development of 24 houses.
Cliveden Road	Lodge to Taplow Court	Red brick, clay tile roof with several half-timbered gables. Date stone WHG February 1887.
Cliveden Road	Wickenden	Recent Lutyens style house - brown brick and clay tiled roof. Focal point at the north end of the cricket field.
High Street	Maryfield	Called the Knowle on the 1899 OS map. Large red brick, half-timbered 19C house. In an elevated position, it can be seen from several parts of the conservation area.
High Street	Mulberry House	Prominent position next to the church, at the entrance to the High Street and fronting the green. Date stone 1868. Red brick - clay tile roof. Interesting doorway with coloured glass.
High Street	Rozel	Has "group value" with Mulberry House and Dunvegan.
High Street	Dunvegan	See above. Former shop which adds historical and visual interest by retaining its shop window and some tiles on the pavement.
High Street	Old Lodge	The street front retains interesting barge boards. The half-timbered southern elevation can be seen from the street and car park. Historical interest as the home of the antiquarian James Rutland who excavated the Saxon mound.
High Street	Victoria Cottage	White painted cottage which completes the group at the northern end of the High Street.
High Street	Pax Cottage	Red brick and clay tile roof. In a prominent position on the green.
Hill Farm Road	Hitcham Grange and associated buildings	Shown as "The Grange" on historic maps. White painted Regency style house with canted bays now converted to flats. Associated outbuildings have also been converted to houses.

Road	Address	Short Description
Hill Farm Road	Cold Grove Cottages	Terrace of 19C cottages - brick and slate. Most windows altered.
Rectory Road	Wellbank Cottage	White painted cottage in prominent position at village entrance and next to the church. Close to the road behind a picket fence. Historic maps indicate a date between 1838 and 1875.
Rectory Road	Outbuilding at Priory Cottage	Black weatherboarded outbuilding presumably a relic from the former Taplow Priory. It borders a public footpath and gives rural character.
Rectory Road	St Nicolas House	A landmark building dated 1883. Ornate with red brick, clay tiles hanging on elevations as well as on the roof. Entrance porch with good glass.
Rectory Road	Barn on the green	Red brick farmbuilding/stables. Relic of the outbuildings belonging to the former Rectory Farm which were cleared to create the village green.
Rectory Road	Oak and Saw public house/Old Manor House/Mysteria	Terrace of brick cottages- part painted - which appear to have been built at different times (18-19C).
Rectory Road	Village Hall	Incorporates part of the 19C Reading Room. Red brick with half-timbered gable. Well-used community facility.





HISTORIC WALLS

Taplow still has significant lengths of historic brick boundary walling. They are the surviving legacy of the large houses built during the 18th and 19th century. The map in this appendix shows only those walls in the conservation area which can be seen from the public realm. There are other walls outside the conservation area or in private gardens, such as walls in Cedar Chase, which originally belonged to the demolished Taplow Hill. Whilst mainly of red brick, some yellow brick was also used. There is a small area of brick and flint wall at the entrance to the old church yard next to Taplow Court. There are traces of blocked-up openings in some walls, whilst others still have doors and gates in them. Lack of repair is evident in some stretches of wall perhaps because, with the sub-division of large plots, walls are now in multiple ownership. The use of cement mortar will exacerbate damage. It is important that soft lime mortar is used for historic brickwork. A survey of Taplow's historic boundary walls to investigate their history and survival would be advisable with a view to preparation of a plan of rolling repairs. Loss of these historic boundary walls would seriously damage the special interest of the conservation area.

Historic boundary walls have been marked on the map in red. Please refer to the key below. The numbers given to the walls on the map correspond to the house or estate to which it is thought that the wall originally belonged. There are also photographs of a small length of each wall.

Key to historic walls shown on the map:

1. Berry Hill
2. Taplow House (now Taplow House Hotel)
3. Springfield (Berry Hill Road)
4. Bapsey
5. Taplow Court
6. Old churchyard next to Taplow Court
7. Queen Anne's house
8. Hill House
9. Elibank
10. The Old Rectory
11. Rectory Farm
12. Old Lodge
13. The Grange - now Hitcham Grange

1. Berry Hill





◀2. Taplow House

3. Springfield ▼



4. Bapsey ▼



5. Taplow Court ►



6. Old churchyard ▼



7. Queen Anne's House



◀8. Hill House



9. Elibank▶

10. Old Rectory▼



11. Rectory Farm▼



◀12. Old Lodge



13. Hitcham Grange▶



Conservation Areas

Guidance for Residents

What is a Conservation Area?

An area with special historic or architectural character.

Who designates a Conservation Area?

The local planning authority has the power to designate Conservation Areas under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

What does Conservation Area designation mean for residents?

Owners of properties within a designated Conservation Area are unable to carry out certain works unless they get planning permission or Conservation Area Consent.

What are these works?

- Demolition of the whole or a substantial part of the property
- Demolition of boundary walls over a certain height
- Side or rear extensions over 50 cubic metres or 10% of the original volume up to a maximum of 115 cubic metres
- Alterations to the shape or size of the roof
- Cladding of the exterior of the property
- Erection of a satellite dish in certain locations
- Buildings (eg sheds, summerhouses) or enclosures (eg swimming pools) within the curtilage of a house, which exceed 10 cubic metres in volume.

Also, notice must be given to the authority at least 6 weeks prior to any works to **trees** within a Conservation Area. For further information please contact the Tree Officer on 01895 837376 or 837207.

Are extensions allowed in Conservation Areas?

Yes.

Planning applications in Conservation Areas, like any other location, are considered on their merits. Should a proposal to extend a property be regarded as in keeping with the character of the area by the Conservation & Design Officer it would gain permission (this, of course, is subject to Planning Officer approval based on the usual planning criteria). If the proposal is deemed not to be in keeping with the character of the area efforts can be made by the applicant to improve the proposal on the advice of Officers so that it can become acceptable and be given permission. It is through this

process that Conservation Area legislation acts to protect the special character of these areas.

Are satellite dishes allowed in Conservation Areas?

Yes.

If you ensure that only one satellite dish per property (of less than 90cm in diameter) is installed in a permitted location then you are free to carry out the installation without planning permission. Dishes should be sited below the roofline and away from the front of the house and the chimneys.

Further advice

Should any further information be required on any aspect of the implications of living in a Conservation Area or local planning regulations please contact Planning Admin or the Conservation Section at the Council's Capswood offices on 01895 837200.

Taplow Inclosure Map (award dated 8 February 1787 (held by the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies ref. IR70R)

Reproduced by kind permission of the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies.



Map used to show water pipes serving Taplow based on the Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1875 and reprinted 1888.

(held by the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies ref. Ma/203 2)

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