

Sonning Parish Design Statement

Autumn 2004



CONSERVING SONNING

The Parish Design Statement is intended to highlight the characteristics of the parish so that any future developments will be carried out in such a way that its existing values and character will be preserved and enhanced. It is based on information gathered by extensive consultation with those who live in Sonning and represents their views. People are attracted to Sonning because they like living in the parish and we believe that the special character of the area should be conserved and respected.

The central part of the parish is designated as a Conservation Area and encompasses not only many listed buildings dating back before 1910, but also considerable open areas given over to sports and recreation grounds and also farming land. In the current Local Plan, adopted in March 2004, all residential areas in Sonning are classified as Category B settlements. Under this classification only limited infilling and small windfall developments will be permitted. Consequently the potential for significant new development within the parish is limited. There may be some scope for new developments, both residential and commercial, but it is important that any changes should be managed and controlled so as to conserve the character of the village that is both cherished and admired.

The Parish Design Statement is an important document to be used by the local planning authority, the Sonning Parish Council, developers and their architects, residents and others. It will help to ensure that the design of any new developments and re-developments are of high quality and in sympathy with and complement existing buildings, many of which are listed. It will also help ensure that consideration is given to the balance of space between the open and built features of the surrounding area. It is for use in conjunction with the Development Plan which encompasses the following relevant policies:

- Berkshire Structure Plan policy EN4 : Historic Environment
- Wokingham District Local Plan policies: WOS3 : Development Control Principles, WOS10 : The Historic Environment, WBE 1 : Design and New Development, WBE4 : Landscape and Planting, WBE5 : Trees and New Development, WHE1 : Demolition in Conservation Areas, WHE2 : Development in and Adjoining Conservation Areas, WHE5 : Demolition and Alteration to Listed Buildings, WHE6 : Retention of Setting of Listed Buildings, WHE7 : Change of Use of Listed Buildings, WHE8 : Extensions/Alterations to Listed Buildings, WH7 : Housing Density Guidelines, WH11 : Design Guidance – Residential Development and WCC2 : Green Wedges and Gaps. The Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes entitled 'The Design of New Residential Schemes' and 'Landscape Character Assessment' adopted in April 2004 are also relevant.

[The aim of this Design Statement is for it to be adopted by Wokingham District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance, to be used when consideration is given to any future planning applications. The statement will be updated periodically to ensure that it remains in accordance with the Local Plan.] [To be amended if and when adopted]

The map included on page 4 highlights the area designated as a Conservation Area and also the parts of the parish that are included in the Category B Settlement Area.

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SONNING LOCK



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH

HISTORY

Sonning originated as a settlement by the Thames, named after the Saxon tribe of Sunna. It was always an important crossing point of the river. The first Sonning Lock was constructed in the 16th century and there were ferries and a succession of wooden bridges until the present brick bridge was built between 1780 and 1790.

The early development of the village was influenced by its importance as a religious centre. The first church in Sonning was most probably of very early foundation in the Anglo-Saxon period, possibly as early as the 7th century soon after King Cynegils of Wessex was converted to Christianity by St. Birinus in 635. The church is first mentioned in the late 11th century and it formed part of the initial endowment of Salisbury Cathedral (then at Old Sarum) in 1091. From the 12th century the Bishop of Salisbury maintained a palace in Sonning. The earliest part of St Andrew's, the Parish Church, is from that period. The Manor of Sonning covered a very large area and at one time stretched from Sonning Common in the north to Wokingham in the south. The Bishop's Palace and the lands of the Manor were transferred to the Crown in 1574 and acquired by Sir Thomas Rich in 1654. Thus the principal landowners for over 500 years were the Church, followed by the Crown (from Elizabeth 1 to Charles 1) and then the Rich family. All were based in Holme Park on the western side of the village.

Until well into the 20th century the village was concentrated in the small area of Thames Street, High Street and Sonning Street (now Pearson Road). This is the heart of the Conservation Area established in 1971 and extended in 1980 and 1996. There are many listed buildings dating from the 15th to 19th centuries.

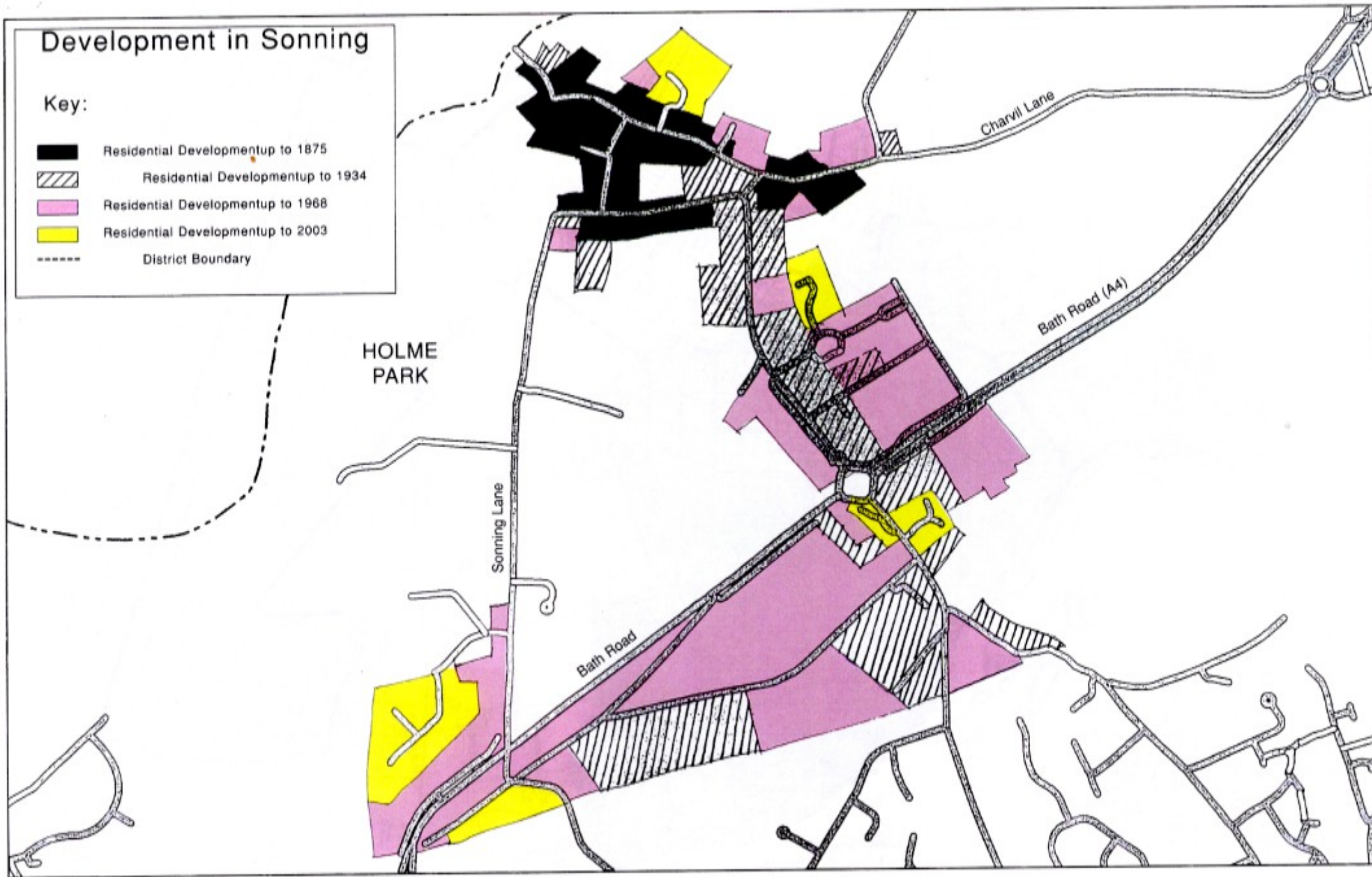
After the First World War the village began to expand southwards. Many houses were built along Pound Lane, in the area between the A4 and the railway line (now the southern boundary of the Parish) and later in Sonning Meadows. However, the western (Sonning Lane) and eastern (Charvil Lane) approaches to the old village from the A4 remain predominately rural, forming green gaps of playing fields, farmland and trees.

The present population of Sonning is about 1,400 who live in approximately 600 residences. There are two established hotels, a village hall, two schools, a nursery and a Post Office-cum-restaurant but no longer a village shop.

Development in Sonning

Key:

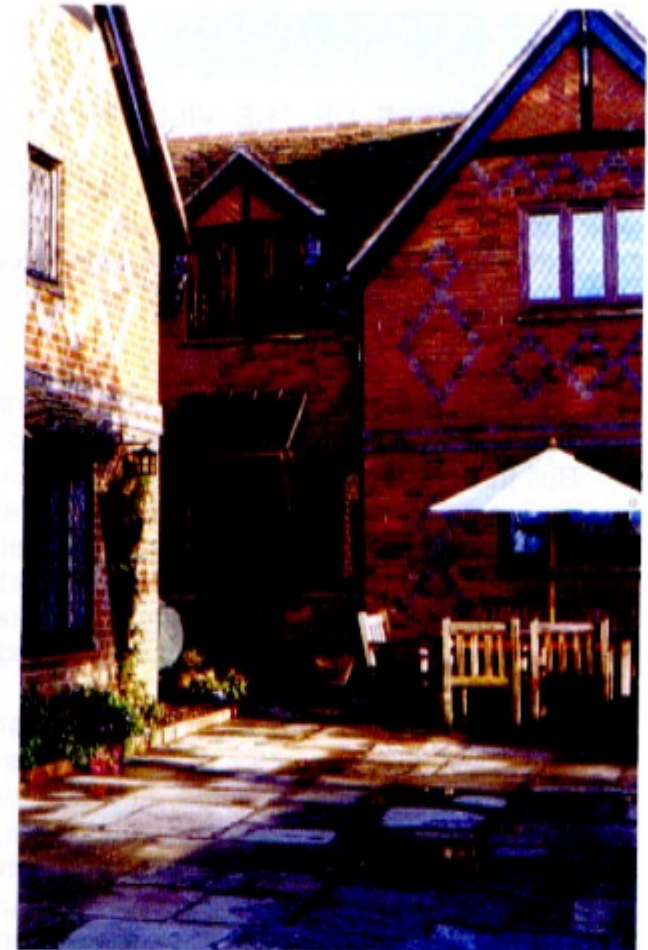
- Residential Development up to 1875
- Residential Development up to 1934
- Residential Development up to 1968
- Residential Development up to 2003
- District Boundary



SETTLEMENT AREA

The architecture of Sonning is very diverse with properties dating from pre 1700 to modern day. For the purposes of considering the style and types of buildings in the parish it is therefore appropriate to divide up the Settlement Area into a number of sub areas as follows:

- The centre of the village contained within the Conservation Area where many of the buildings date back to the 19th century or before and where most of the parish's listed buildings are situated. This area can broadly be identified as the area around Thames Street, High Street and Pearson Road
- The Settlement Area around Pound Lane north of the A4
- The Settlement Area south of the A4 but including South Drive and Sonning Meadows



A FINE EXAMPLE OF A 21ST CENTURY
DEVELOPMENT
WHICH RESPECTS ADJACENT BUILDINGS
IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

THE CENTRE OF THE VILLAGE

The oldest part of the village lies at the heart of the Conservation Area and consists of three quite narrow streets – High Street, Thames Street and Pearson Road – plus the northern end of Sonning Lane and the western end of Charvil Lane. This concentrated settlement contains over 50 buildings listed as of special architectural or historic interest.

High Street

The High Street is at the heart of the Conservation Area, linking Pearson Road with Thames Street and providing access to the Bull Inn and churchyard beyond. The Street, which for part of its length is one way only for vehicular traffic, is extremely narrow and has an equally narrow footpath down one side. The earliest recorded dwellings in the street date from the Domesday Book and of the fifty or so listed buildings within the Conservation Area, seventeen are located in the High Street.

No single architectural style dominates and much of the charm and distinctive character of the street is due to this diversity. There are recurring features, however, which include old brick and tile detailing to elevations and roofs, black timber framing with white painted brick infill, and white painted rendered buildings, some with slate roofs. All buildings are two-storey but building periods and styles range from the late 16th century to early 19th century so overall heights of buildings vary. In contrast, there is a small modern development of four terraced houses (The Mews) with gated, secure access to a courtyard and two houses behind. These are standard modern-style houses with brick elevations and tiled roofs and natural, hardwood frames, windows and doors. Unfortunately this development does not blend in too happily with the surrounding area and lacks reference to distinctive details of nearby properties.



SOUTH END OF HIGH STREET

Thames Street

Thames Street is the busiest thoroughfare in the Conservation Area, providing access to the only bridge across the Thames between Henley and Reading. The street runs from the foot of Lee's Hill, west to east, on the north side of the Village and joins Charvil Lane on the eastern outskirts of the Conservation Area. There is a wide architectural range of properties on Thames Street with those dating back to the 17th century alongside those built in the 18th and 19th centuries and some early 20th century houses.

The character of the steep ascent of the street up Lee's Hill from the river is defined by high old brick walls on both sides. From the crest of the hill at the junction with High Street up to Charvil Lane, no single architectural feature dominates and there is a broad cross-section of (mostly) two-storey buildings and building styles represented. These include 18th century old brick and tile cottages, 19th century terraced white painted rendered houses, 17th century black timber framed cottages with white painted brick infill and a number of large 19th century and early 20th century detached houses set back from the street. The majority of roofs are old clay tile with some slate. A narrow tarmac pavement runs the full length of the north side of the street and part of the south. The principal features at the bottom of Thames Street include the cottages and boundary walls of the Great House (hotel) and an 18th century two-storey rendered house belonging to Deanery Gardens. Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and built between 1899 and 1902, Deanery Gardens is a Grade 1 listed house constructed in red brick, with gardens designed by Gertrude Jekyll. The surrounding wall, which runs up the whole of the south side of Thames Street from the bottom of Lee's Hill to the junction of the High Street, incorporates many unique design features which reflect the neo-Tudor style of the house. Behind Deanery Gardens is the churchyard and church of St Andrew's (Grade II*) which originally dates back to the 13th century but was largely rebuilt in the mid 19th century by Henry Woodyer who also reconstructed Holme Park. Beside St Andrew's is the St Sarik room, a fine example of late 20th century construction in full harmony with its much earlier surroundings.



18TH CENTURY COTTAGES



ST. SARIK ROOM

Sonning Lane North and Pearson Road

The approach to the village centre via Sonning Lane is lined by trees and then an 18th century brick and flint wall on the west side and an old brick wall on the east. The Victorian Gothic North Lodge and gates (both listed) mark the junction with Pearson Road and some much earlier buildings, a high proportion of them listed. The western half, as far as the entrance to the High Street, consists of quite small two-storey dwellings, most of them fronting on to narrow pavements, with very few gaps. Most date from the 16th to 18th centuries, with some usually sympathetic later extensions. They are typically built of brick, sometimes rendered, with tiled roofs and in some cases tall chimneys and casement windows. The Grove dominates the High Street entrance – a three-storey 17th century house of great historic interest gabled, painted stucco on timber frame. The eastern half of Pearson Road is more varied in appearance. Very attractive 15th to 17th centuries timber-framed cottages on the south side face larger 18th century brick-built houses on the north, which continues with a row of six mid 19th century red brick almshouses, set back from the road, and the Victorian village hall. Opposite, the south side ends with four large detached houses, two of them 21st century construction, the latter being the most significant exceptions to a village street of great character and antiquity.



SONNING LANE/PEARSON ROAD



THE ALMSHOUSES IN PEARSON ROAD

POUND LANE AREA NORTH OF THE A4

On either side of Pound Lane, at the northern end and within the Conservation Area, are a number of large detached double storey houses set back from the road. Most are in extensive gardens and were built around the beginning of the 20th century but with some extensions and modernisation since then. The designs and materials used are both varied and distinctive and include a thatched cottage, a Tudor style residence as well as some more conventional properties.

Moving south and on the western side lie the recreation grounds of King George's Field. This land, which is owned by a registered charity, extends to approximately 10 acres and is now under the management of the Sonning Parish Council. The deeds contain a covenant that it be used only for communal and recreational purposes. Together with a modest wooden pavilion it forms the home of the Sonning Cricket Club. Adjoining King George's Field is the Sonning Primary School and off a slip road, which runs up to the A4, a number of modest detached houses built mainly in the 1930s with designs and materials typical of the time.

Along the eastern side of Pound Lane, and also on one of the original glebe fields accessed by Glebe Lane and Little Glebe, are more than 100 dwellings. They include detached, semi-detached houses and around 50 single storey retirement homes. Many of the properties date back to the mid 1930s but some, including the retirement homes, were built in the 1970s. Red brick predominates but there are a number of white rendered houses.



COTTAGE WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA



EARLY 20TH CENTURY STYLE COTTAGE

SOUTH OF THE A4, SOUTH DRIVE AND SONNING MEADOWS

Development of the area began in the 1920s with the majority of houses being built in the 1950s and 1960s. The main exceptions to this generality are Sonning Meadows built in the 1970s, a number of large detached houses in Pound Lane (South) and the West Court apartments in West Drive which were built more recently.

Because house styles and the general nature of properties vary considerably in the area it is appropriate to sub divide it as follows:

- Holmemoor Drive and the Old Bath Road
- South Drive and Sonning Meadows
- West Drive
- Mustard Lane area (including the triangle between Duffield Road, Pound Lane (South) and the Railway embankment.)

HOLMEMOOR DRIVE AND THE OLD BATH ROAD

These houses were generally built in the 1950s and 1960s although some houses in the Old Bath Road were built later. They are individually designed detached houses built on plots generally of between a quarter and half acre although a few houses on the Old Bath Road east of Pound Lane have much larger gardens. Apart from the individual designs the properties, which are mainly double storey residences, employ a variety of materials and finishes. Holmemoor Drive is a tree lined quiet road with no through traffic which adds to the character of the area.

SOUTH DRIVE AND SONNING MEADOWS

South Drive is a secluded cul de sac with access onto the A4. A variety of mature trees provide an effective screen from the busy A4 road. The houses were built in the 1950s and 1960s and in many respects are very similar to those in Holmemoor Drive – a mixture of individually designed double storey houses and bungalows with a variety of finishes.

Sonning Meadows is a discretely located development of 32 medium to large detached houses off Sonning Lane. All are of red brick but of various designs. Adjacent, but outside the Settlement Area, are a number of original Holme Park Farm buildings some of which have been sensitively converted to residences.



HOLMEMOOR DRIVE



SOUTH DRIVE

WEST DRIVE

West Drive runs between Pound Lane and the Old Bath Road with large individually designed family houses all fronting onto and set back from the Drive. The houses are predominately double-storey although they are intermingled with a few bungalows. This diversity adds to the overall character of the area. Most of the properties were built in the 1930s and 1950s but over the years many have been extended and improved. It is a very low density area with most plots in excess of three quarters of an acre.

West Drive is a private street with the freehold title held in a private company owned by the residents. The Drive is lined by a variety of mature trees growing in the grass verges including oak, lime, beech, sycamore and horse chestnut. There are no pavements and few light standards. All of the above combine to make this a unique, leafy, suburban area with a feeling of spaciousness.



WEST DRIVE

MUSTARD LANE AREA

Mustard Lane, which exits onto Pound Lane, is a narrow tree lined cul de sac with soft verges and no pavements. There are fewer than 20 dwellings here and like West Drive many were built in the 1930s and 1950s with relatively large gardens. The houses are predominately double storey dwellings of red brick with tiled roofs and virtually all have dormer windows. The road is not adopted although it has a tarred surface.

In the area between Duffield Road, Pound Lane (South) and the Railway Embankment there are a small number of detached houses in a variety of styles and designs all set in relatively large gardens.



POUND LANE (SOUTH)

LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT

Overview

Sonning lies along the south bank of the River Thames at the southern end of the Chilterns chalk escarpment. The central part of the village is situated on a low plateau of river gravels overlying the upper chalk bedrock. In the floodplain areas along the northern boundary of the parish, alluvial soils predominate. In wildlife habitat terms, the parish is dominated by woodland, improved grasslands, large and well-established gardens, and the aquatic and wetland habitats associated with the Thames corridor. The key features of these habitats are described below.

Woodlands

Significant blocks of woodland occur along the escarpment overlooking the Thames on the western side of the parish, along the slopes of the railway embankment of Sonning Cutting, which forms the southern boundary, and near St Patrick's Bridge in the north-east corner of the parish. None of the woodlands are considered to be ancient, but they are nevertheless of considerable wildlife interest and diversity. Two of the woods near St Patrick's Bridge are designated by Wokingham District Council as part of a Wildlife Heritage Site. The latter lie within the floodplain and thus have a ground flora which includes the nationally rare Loddon lily and the now uncommon ragged robin.

Grasslands

The grasslands within the parish are predominantly either amenity and recreation areas within the core of the village or agricultural grazing areas around the fringes. In the centre of the village there is the recently established meadow in Ali's Pond Local Nature Reserve.

Gardens

Sonning has a large number of contiguous and extensive gardens, some of which contain paddocks and small pockets of woodland. These provide valuable oases for a wide range of wildlife. The gardens and paddocks surrounding Ali's Pond and King George's Field are particularly important because they provide valuable refuges for the five species of reptile and amphibian which breed in the nature reserve pond and other ponds in those gardens.

Thames Corridor

The River Thames and its immediate environs form the northern boundary of the parish and the landscape character of the corridor can broadly be split into two. The western (upstream) section is dominated on the south bank by the wooded slopes of the chalk escarpment mentioned above and on the north bank by extensive groundwater-filled gravel pits. At the western extremity of this stretch, the parish encompasses part of the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve, which is also a Wildlife Heritage Site. Here the river escarpment veers away from the river and the floodplain between is a mixture of swamp and willow scrub. By contrast the eastern (downstream) section runs through open floodplain on either bank.



THE THAMES FROM SONNING LOCK

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

Sonning owes its existence to its strategic location at a natural crossing of the River Thames. Sonning Bridge, which dates back to around 1790, is single lane controlled by lights. It is the only bridge across the Thames between Reading and Henley. More than 14,000 vehicles a day now use it and this has become the single most important issue that affects both the character of the village and the environment.

For historical reasons the roads and any footpaths that exist in the centre of Sonning are relatively narrow. On-street car parking, particularly in Pearson Road, adds to the traffic congestion, puts at risk the limited bus service upon which the elderly depend for access to services and shops and the young for education and entertainment, and exacerbates the inconvenience and danger to pedestrians. Consequently, any new developments or re-developments, particularly within the Conservation Area, should ensure that:

- potential new footpaths and cycleways are not prejudiced, with specific reference to Charvil Lane
- adequate on-site car parking is provided wherever possible
- development proposals should have no significant adverse effect on road safety or cause highway, traffic generation or traffic related environmental problems as referred to in Policy WOS3 (d) - Development Control Principles.



SONNING BRIDGE

EDUCATION AND RECREATION

There are three educational establishments in Sonning. By far the biggest is Reading Blue Coat School, an independent secondary school situated in the former Holme Park and covering an area of approximately 49 acres. The school is built around an 18th century building remodelled in the 19th century in the Gothic style. There is also the local primary school and a private nursery (Inglewood).

There are a number of sporting clubs including the Redingensians Sports Club, the Sonning Golf Club the Reading Rugby Club and the Reading Cricket and Hockey Club. All of these provide the parish with large areas of green fields which complement the Settlement Area and enhance the general character of the parish. Whilst the existing sporting facilities should wherever possible be retained, any proposed additions or extensions to the present buildings will require careful consideration and justification. Any future development should not threaten the essential function of the green gap and wedges which maintain the physical and visual separation of settlements that are close together in accordance with Local Plan Policy WCC2.

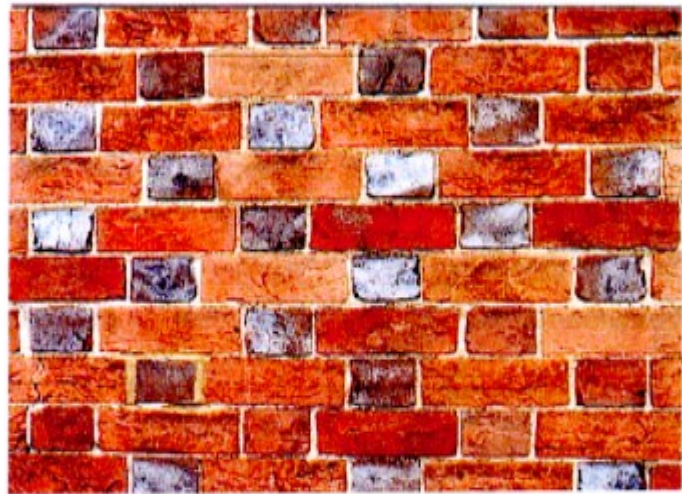
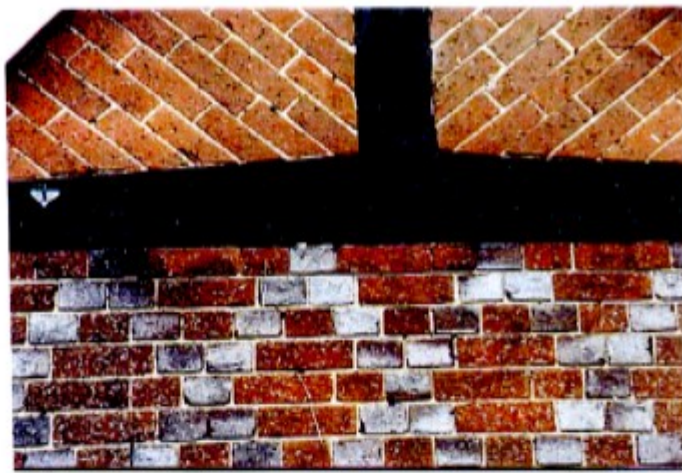
DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

These guidelines are intended to apply to all proposed development and re-development within the parish, but particularly in the Conservation Area, where most of the parish's listed buildings are situated. When considering any development or re-development in the Conservation Area, it is essential that the historic massing, scale and proportions of surrounding buildings, and the space around buildings, are respected. Much of the charm and distinctive character of Sonning is attributable to the diversity of architectural and building styles represented, so it is not feasible to apply a general rule. The guiding principle therefore should be that any proposed development or redevelopment should respect that to which it is adjacent in terms of scale, style, materials and detail.

All proposed developments should have regard to the following broad principles which supplement policies WOS3, WBE1, WBE4, WBE5, WHE2, WH11 and the adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance B1 'The Design of New Residential Schemes in Settlements'. Where appropriate regard should also be given to the adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance on Landscape Character Assessment. These, and all other policy documents referred to in this Design Statement, can be obtained from Wokingham District Council and its web site.

GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- *Respect the historic layout pattern of the parish within the Conservation Area.*
- *Seek to conserve the setting of Sonning, in particular its Thameside environment.*
- *New buildings should respect the scale, massing and height of neighbouring properties and seek to create an appropriate balance between building scale and plot size.*
- *Reference should be made to locally distinctive details, with interest and variation in elevations. For example, the use of recesses, brick patterning, flint-work and corbelling between courses on brick elevations.*
- *Chimneys, many with decorative brickwork, are prominent in the village. They should continue to feature on new buildings.*
- *Where brick is the chosen material for walls, the colour and texture should respect the local material which sets the tone for much of the village. Care should be taken to ensure that joints on new brickwork reflect the thickness, pointing style and colour to those to which they are adjacent.*
- *Modern usage of traditional materials should be encouraged in particular to match with existing slate and clay tile roofing. The roof pitch, if practical, should also harmonise with those of neighbouring properties.*
- *Where it is appropriate to build terraced or three-storey houses, care should be taken to ensure that their appearance is in keeping with the character of the village.*
- *Care should be taken to preserve or replace existing hedges and trees.*
- *Any landscape provision should provide for planting locally native broadleaf species of trees where they can grow to maturity.*



JUXTAPOSING DIFFERENT
NATURAL MATERIALS AND
VARYING THE COLOUR AND
STYLE OF BRICKWORK
(FLEMISH, HERRINGBONE
AND ENGLISH BONDS)
CREATES RICH DESIGN
OPPORTUNITIES

REDEVELOPMENTS AND EXTENSIONS

In addition to the above general principles the following guidelines should be taken into consideration in the refurbishment and extensions to properties. This is particularly important within the Conservation Area where there are more than fifty listed buildings.

These guidelines supplement policies WOS3, WHE1, WHE2, WHE6, WHE7 and WHE8 of the Wokingham District Local Plan.

- *Brickwork should be retained in its original style, and consideration should be given to the use of matching second-hand bricks where these are obtainable. Re-pointing should be carried out to match the original in style and colour.*
- *When windows or doors are replaced it is important to retain the design and glazing pattern corresponding to the period of the house.*
- *New walls, hedges, gates and fences should reflect the existing boundary treatments and should not dominate the building beyond. They should be in scale with the property and conform to its style, period and situation within the parish.*
- *Roof lines and styles should match the existing and respect those which are adjacent. The use of second-hand clay tiles (or slates where appropriate) should be considered. Care should be taken with details such as soffits, bargeboards and guttering.*

SPECIFIC AREAS

In addition to the broad design principles that apply to all developments and redevelopments, additional criteria should be applied in specific areas.

SETTLEMENT AREA

THE CENTRE OF THE VILLAGE (CONSERVATION AREA)

High Street

- *There are few opportunities for development in the High Street but it is important that any proposed extensions, refurbishments or repairs to existing properties should reflect the special character of the area.*
- *Since the High Street characterises the historic heart of Sonning its unique features should be used as a guide to any development or re-development that takes place elsewhere in the surrounding area.*

Thames Street

- *Although there is no cohesive architectural style to Thames Street, the entrances to it from east and west have a distinctive character which should be conserved. At the eastern end this character is defined by the (largely) rural nature of Charvil Lane and by the black and white timber framing of Spring Cottages as one enters Thames Street. At the western end the brick walls of The Deanery and Great House grounds define the character as does the open access to the Vicarage and Churchyard.*



FLINT AND BRICK ARE WIDELY-USED TRADITIONAL BUILDING MATERIALS

BUTTRESSES AND STRING-TOOTH BRICK COURSES
CREATING STRONG VISUAL INTEREST IN A BOUNDARY WALL



SUPERB EXAMPLE OF A 19TH CENTURY
ORIEL WINDOW



Sonning Lane North and Pearson Road

- *Sonning Lane north has changed little since the late 19th century. Much of its character is vested in the boundary structures, hedges, walls and fencing. Particular care should be taken to preserve and enhance these features in line with Policy WBE4 and Planning Guidance B1. This applies in particular to the long hedged and fenced boundary to Thatched Cottage and Russell's Field, on the east side of Sonning Lane. All these features are well established and form a core element in the character of the street scene.*
- *Within this area consideration should be given to preserving the brick and flint garden wall to North Lodge and the brick wall to Old Walls which are a feature of the area.*
- *Any potential new development within the properties of Sonning Lane should enhance and preserve this rural lane in the Conservation Area.*
- *Pearson Road is already quite densely built and includes 19 listed buildings. It has some examples of new development that are dominant in scale with materials that are out of harmony with adjoining houses and in future materials should be more closely matched.*

POUND LANE AREA NORTH OF THE A4

- *Any new developments, particularly in the Conservation Area, should have due regard to the particular character of this part of Pound Lane and the materials used in any such developments should harmonise with the existing properties.*
- *Any developments elsewhere in this area should pay particular attention to car parking and adequate on-site parking should be required in line with the parking guidelines in Appendix 8 of the Local Plan..*

SOUTH OF THE A4, SOUTH DRIVE AND SONNING MEADOWS

(HOLMEMOOR DRIVE, OLD BATH ROAD, SOUTH DRIVE, SONNING MEADOWS, WEST DRIVE AND THE MUSTARD LANE AREA)

- *Proposals for extensions or additions should maintain the general scale of the existing dwellings and the materials used should harmonise with the surrounding properties.*
- *All of the above are low density or very low density areas with mainly large houses in substantial gardens. In any future developments careful consideration should be given to maintaining the individual characters of the various areas. In particular there is a need to ensure that any new developments respect the existing building lines and that the massing should be in scale with neighbouring properties and have regard to the special character of the particular areas.*

PARKING AND OTHER FACTORS

- *Any new developments in Sonning should have regard to the problems of on-street parking and wherever possible adequate on-site parking, in line with the parking standards in Appendix 8 of the Wokingham District Local Plan, should be required.*
- *Make provision for cars away from the front of houses. Garages and car parking, whether singly or in blocks, should not obscure house fronts*



MUCH OF THE CHARACTER OF THE VILLAGE IS DEFINED BY ITS OLD RED BRICK WALLS AND CHIMNEYS and clay tile roofs



UNPAINTED BRICK AND TIMBER RESPECTS THE INTEGRITY OF NATURAL MATERIALS



GOOD EXAMPLE OF A MODERN BRICK WALL USING TRADITIONAL MATERIALS AND DESIGN DETAILS



PARKING AND OTHER FACTORS (CONTINUED)

- *Where appropriate future planning consents should maximise positive contributions from approved developments in respect of non-obtrusive measures to assist in the provision of improved footpaths, the provision of off-street parking and the maintenance of and improvements to public transport, bus shelters etc.*
- *Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) should be incorporated where possible.*
- *Although not provided for in the Local Plan the use of underground cables should be encouraged and the character of the parish should be considered in the design and siting of installations.*
- *Proposals for the erection of communication masts should be in accordance with Policies WOS3 and WIC12 of the Local Plan. In particular, it is important that any masts should not have an adverse visual impact on the environment and that consequently the siting of any new masts or apparatus should wherever practical be co-located with existing masts, flood lighting standards or other tall structures.*

LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT

- *The existing woodlands, grasslands and large gardens which provide a habitat for a wide range of wildlife should be carefully preserved and should not be destroyed or diminished by development, in accordance with the Supplementary Planning Guidance Note on Landscape Character Assessment April 2004, adopted by Wokingham District Council.*
- *All development proposals should seek to:*
 - (i) *incorporate opportunities for the creation, expansion, management and interpretation of Sonning's two nature reserves and it's many, but small and fragmented wildlife habitats.*
 - (ii) *protect and enhance existing wildlife corridors, such as hedgerows, road verges and the banks of the Thames and St Patrick's Stream, and to seek opportunities to create new corridors which will improve the network of links between existing wildlife habitats.*
 - (iii) *incorporate appropriate landscaping schemes which should respect and reflect the local landscape character and should incorporate native planting appropriate to the Sonning area, wherever possible.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are indebted to the Countryside Agency for the grant they gave the Sonning Parish Council towards the cost of producing a parish plan and design statement and our thanks are also due to the Community Council for Berkshire for the help and assistance given by them in this work.

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This design statement could not have been produced without the collective efforts of a group of dedicated Sonning residents which included: John Edmonds, Robert Baldwin, Alastair Driver, Rosemary Digby, Michael Hart, Nigel Rose and Pam Byrne.

Some of the group had specific responsibility for producing part or complete sections of the document but everyone had an individual input in one way or another. Although it is difficult to single out any one person I would like to make special mention of John Edmonds. Apart from writing the History section he spent a great deal of time co-editing the statement with me and his attention to detail was invaluable.

Although not officially a member of the Design Group I would also like to acknowledge the very significant contribution made by John Van Went. He was not only responsible for many of the excellent photographs which appear throughout the publication but he spent many hours on his computer editing the photographs we wanted to use to make sure that they were exactly what was needed and then produced them to the correct size.

Finally I should like to express my grateful thanks to Jane Ireland at Wokingham District Council. The design statement was produced in close consultation with her and the suggestions, general advice and assistance that she gave are greatly appreciated.

Allan Williams
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