



# EYE AND DUNSDEN PARISH SETTLEMENT CHARACTER APPRAISAL

V3.5 August 2025



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# Introduction

The aim of the report is to provide evidence regarding the character of the Parish and how it is perceived by its residents.

In order to successfully plan for the future growth and development of the Parish it is imperative that there is a clear understanding of its character and what makes it unique.

## What is a Character Appraisal?

A character appraisal is a document which sets out the special interest, character and appearance of a particular place to highlight its local distinctiveness and identity.

The Appraisal itself is a factual and objective analysis, which seeks to enable an understanding of the wider qualities of distinctiveness of place by defining those physical elements that contribute to its special characteristics. Essentially it identifies those qualities that help to define and make the place unique: such as open space, materials, property type, maintenance, age of the structures.

In this instance, the study will define the character of the Parish’s settlements as a series of character areas. Each area is described against a series of common physical characteristics.

Whilst this appraisal seeks to assess the area’s special interest as comprehensively as possible, it cannot cover the minutiae of all issues. Consequently, any omission of a particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it has no value or interest. The appraisal is the starting point; any development proposals should fully consider the appraisal, having regard to national and local policies. Such proposals should be informed by an individual assessment commensurate with the scale of the project proposed.

The information within the appraisal will comprise descriptive text supported by photographs, maps and other graphical material. It will also identify opportunities for future enhancement if considered necessary.

## Purpose of the Study

The study has been produced for a number of reasons, but most importantly to inform the preparation of the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Identification of important issues will help shape the content and direction of that plan. In addition to the above, it could also be used as a development management tool to secure better quality development appropriate to its surroundings. Such a document can be used by residents and developers when preparing a planning application, or for anyone wishing to comment on a current planning application.

The Localism Act 2011 introduces the right for communities to shape their local areas by creating their own Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

## National and Local Planning Policy and Guidance

This appraisal should be read in conjunction with the wider national and local planning policy and guidance

### National Policy Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted by the Government in March 2012 and revised in December 2023. All the policies in the NPPF constitute the Government’s view of what sustainable development in England means in practice. One of the key dimensions of sustainability is that of design. This is supplemented by a second dimension of protecting and enhancing our historic environment. Development that fails to adhere to both the design and the historic environment policies is therefore not considered sustainable development.

The NPPF sets out how the Government intends to deliver sustainable development through the planning process. It expressly states that sustainable development is about achieving positive growth, balancing economic, environmental and social considerations.

Whilst there is a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development, the framework also recognises the finite nature and value of our built heritage and the natural environment.

Section 12 of the NPPF sets out the main policies in respect to the importance of design in the planning process:

Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Policies should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities presented by a site.

Great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

Specifically with regard to the historic environment, the key messages are:

There should be a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.

When considering the impact of proposals on a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. Substantial harm should be exceptional, whilst less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the development.

### The National and Local Design Guidance

The National Design Guide was published in 2019 and sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in principle and in practice. It supports the NPPF as referred to in the previous section as well as sitting alongside the NPPG in regard to design process and tools.

It is intended to be used by local authorities, applicants and local communities to establish the design expectations of the Government.

It identifies ten characteristics which underpin good design:

- Context,
- Identity,
- Built Form,
- Movement,
- Nature,
- Public Spaces,
- Uses,
- Homes and Buildings,
- Resources and Lifespan.

The National Model Design Code (NMDC) was published in 2021 to expand on the above and give more guidance to those producing Design Codes at a Local Authority or a more detailed level. This document has also been updated since the publication of the Joint Design Guide (JDG) in 2022, between South Oxfordshire and Vale of



White Horse District Councils.

This appraisal will draw on the principles of these Design Guidance to help inform locally specific recommendations.

## Context

The Parish lies to north east of Reading, near to the suburb of Caversham, and to the south west of Henley-on-Thames. These urban areas are in steep contrast to the rural nature of the Parish which largely comprises agricultural land, woodland and current/disused gravel pits. The Parish consists of 1040 hectares of land.

The eastward flowing River Thames forms the southern boundary of the Parish, which is also characterised by the extensive area of lakes relating to gravel extraction. These are gradually ceasing, with the area now used for water based recreation purposes, as well as quieter areas designated for wildlife.

The terrain is undulating and gains height from the river. Ancient woodland is located in the Chiltern Hills and a part of the Parish is within the designated Chilterns National Landscape (CNL). The chalk bedrock is partly exposed in the river valley and is otherwise covered by superficial deposits of gravel, clay and sand.

Whilst a lowly populated Parish, the area contains three distinctly different settlements:

- Sonning Eye
- Playhatch
- Dunsden Green and the cluster of houses at Littlestead Green

The wider area is also interspersed by small pockets of development usually related to farmsteads.



1.

Figure 1 - Parish in context



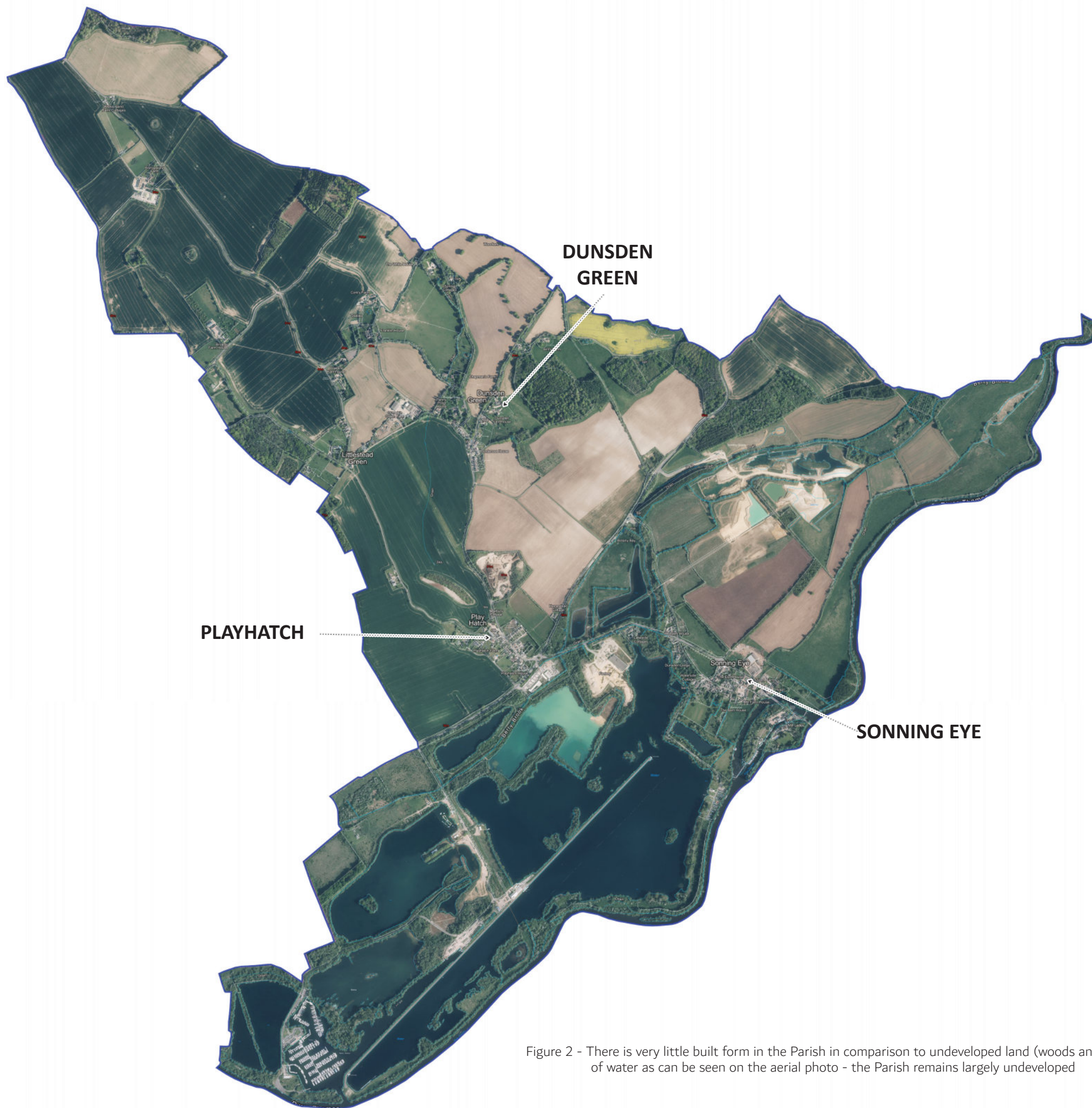


Figure 2 - There is very little built form in the Parish in comparison to undeveloped land (woods and bodies of water as can be seen on the aerial photo - the Parish remains largely undeveloped



Figure 3 - Sonning Eye



Figure 4 - Playhatch



Figure 5 - Dunsden including Littlestead Green



# Historic Development

Eye and Dunsden Parish was created in 1894 and originally formed part of the wider Sonning township. There have been numerous changes to the parish over time, in terms of boundary alterations, with the final change in 2003, which saw the western half of the village of Binfield Heath removed from the Parish, thus giving today's Parish of Eye and Dunsden.

The historical development of the Parish has been influenced by its natural setting, with the River and wider landscape of river meadows, open fields, enclosures, woodland and commons.

The Parish was historically dominated by its main tenant farmers, with manor landowners such as the Bishop of Salisbury based in Sonning.

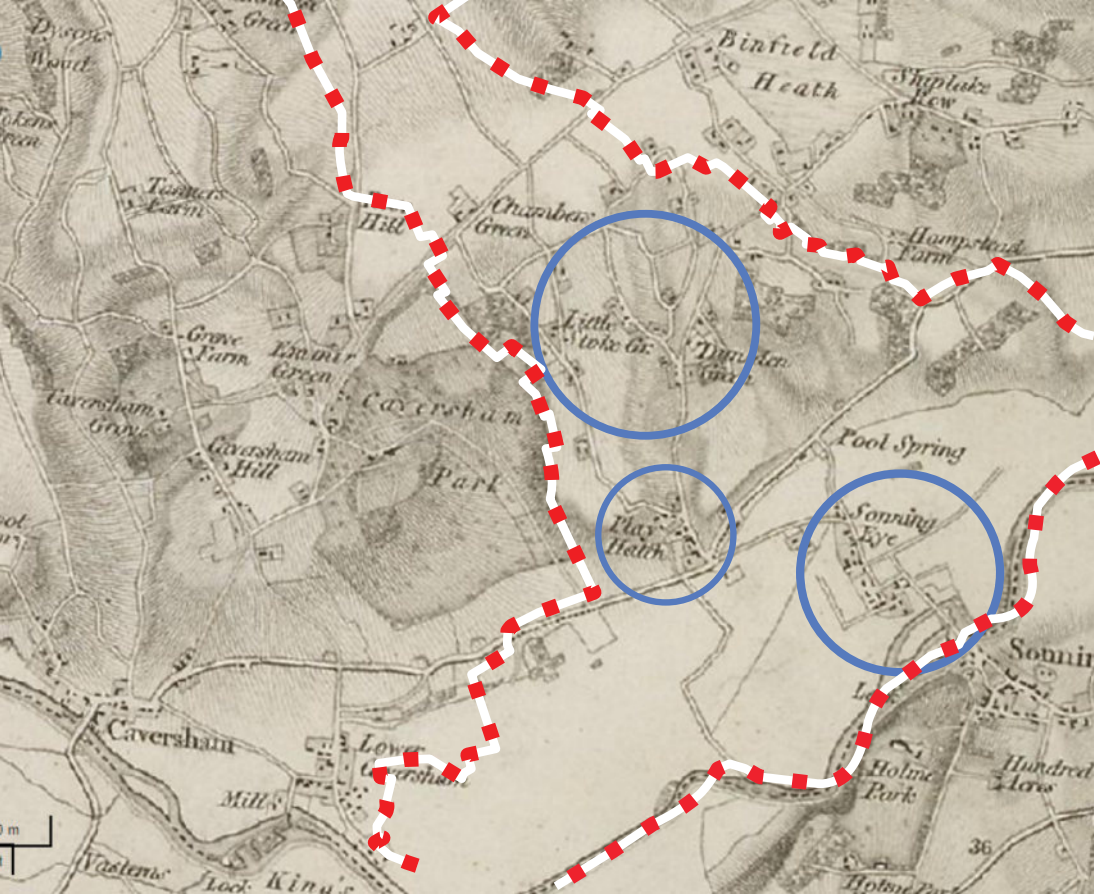
The settlement pattern was, and still is, characterised by scattered settlements, which historically formed separate communities.

The earliest settlement of Dunsden (meaning 'Dyne's valley') is included in the Domesday Book. In the 13th Century, when Eye, meaning 'island', was recorded. It is thought that Sonning Eye and Playhatch existed in medieval times, as did clusters of houses on the edge of commons and isolated farmsteads. Many of these farmsteads still exist today. The maps highlight Corks Farm, Bishopsland Farm, Comp Farm, Bryants Farm and Rowlane Farm.

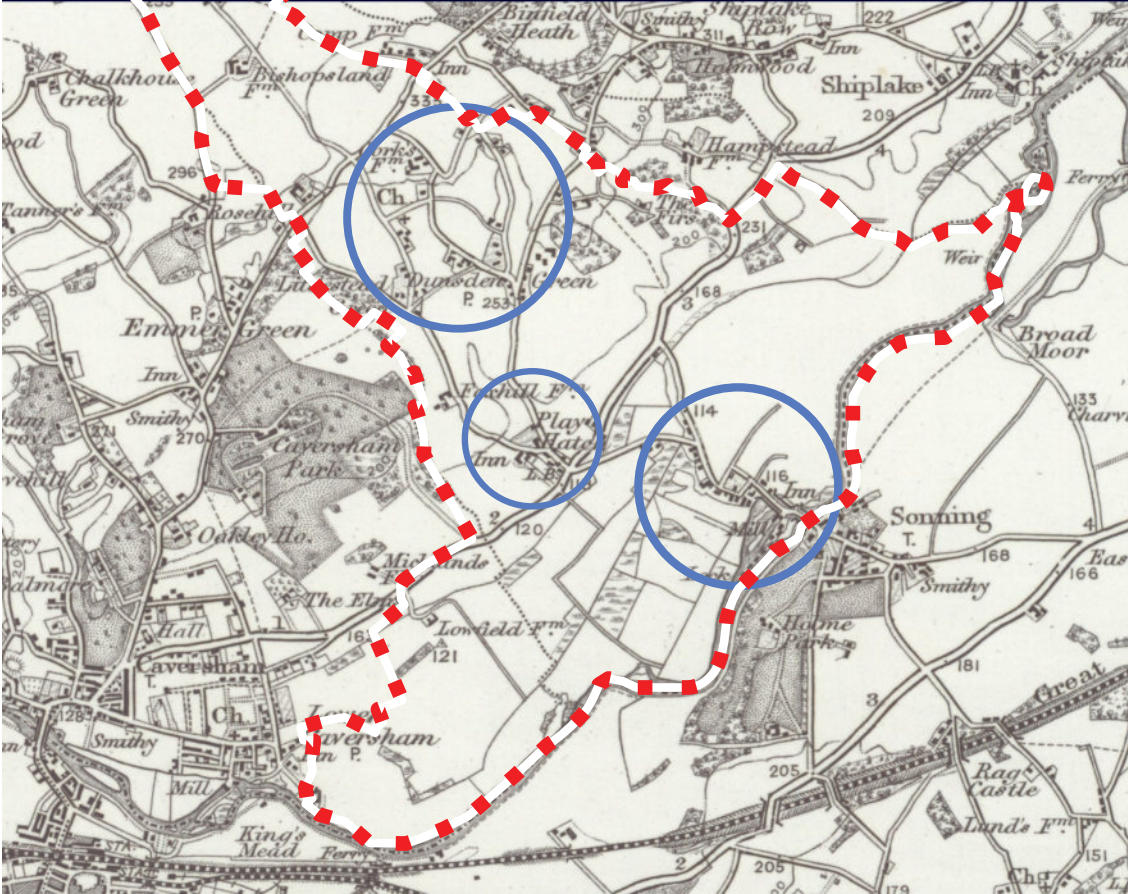
Larger farms dominated intensive mixed arable farming in the 16th to 18th centuries, with the construction of impressive farmhouses, associated with the farmstead above.

In 1841, Sonning Eye contained 25 houses, Playhatch 18 houses, Dunsden Green 17 houses and Littlestead Green had 7

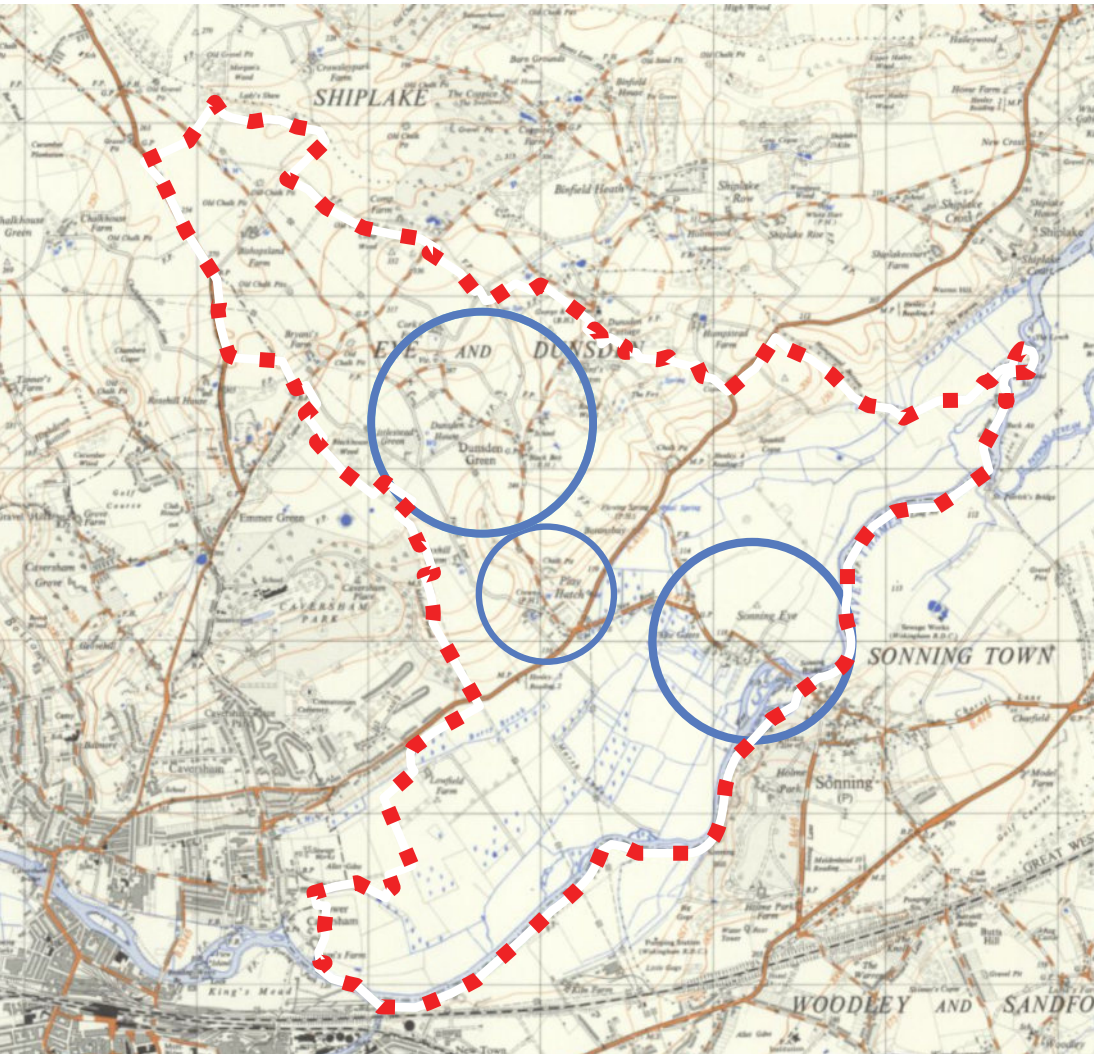
Sonning Bridge provided a river crossing for merchants and traders from London to the west. The nearby Mill (milling corn and malt) and Mill House are of a similar date.



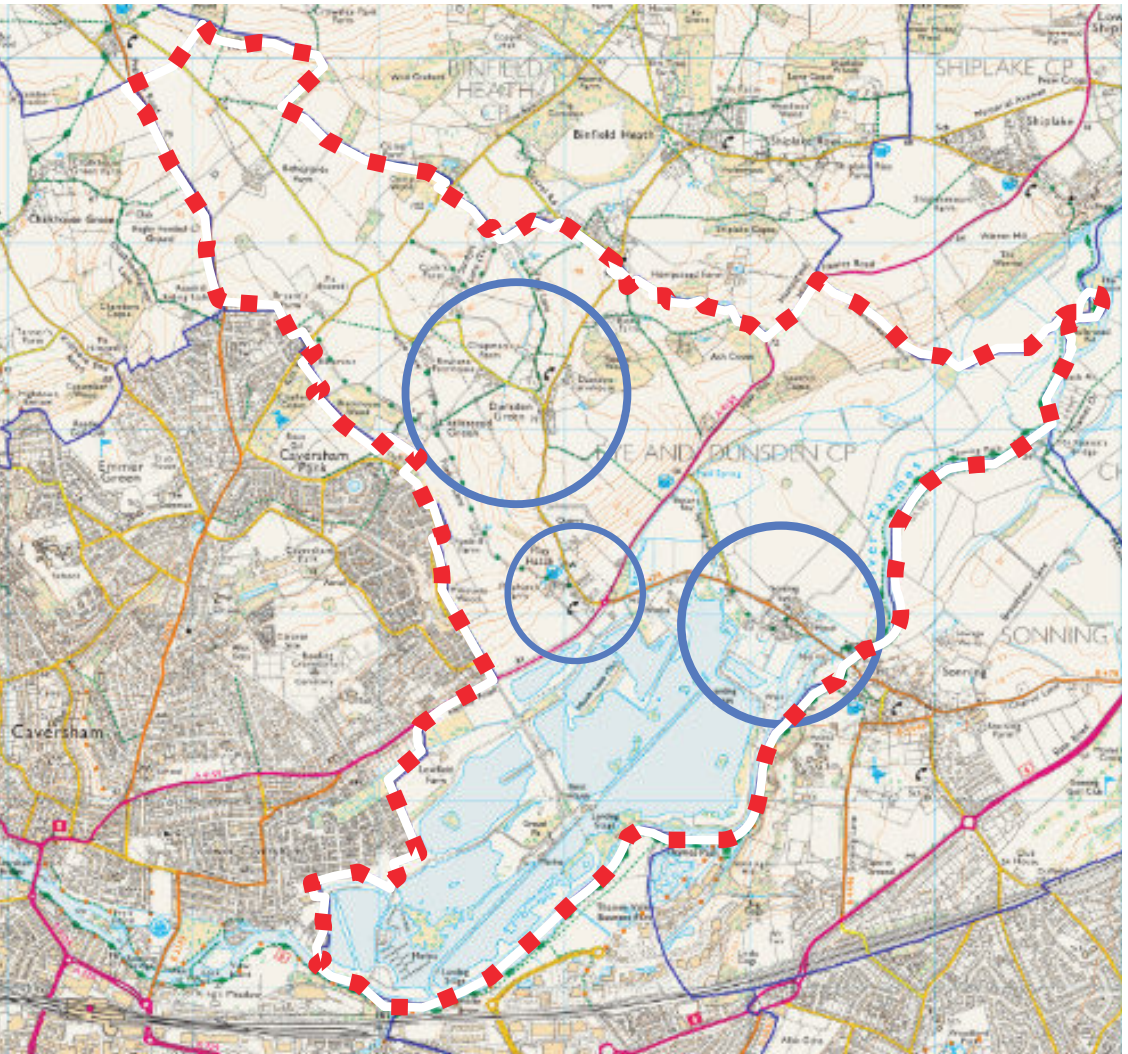
Parish Map 1840 - the limited development in and around Caversham is apparent as are the road connections . The present A4155 is clearly visible



Parish Map 1897 - by this time Caversham has expanded significantly -coalescing with Lower Caversham. The introduction of the railway has taken place to the south



Parish Map 1947 - the Parish itself remains largely unchanged in terms of settlement form, but show the Reading, Caversham and Woodley areas expanding



Parish Map Present Day - by this current point in time, the Parish is now under pressure from development on the boundaries to the south and west. The most significant change are the Lakes, which occupy much of the southern Parish



The adjacent maps highlight the periods of change from this time onwards.

Road changes have been most evident as has the introduction of the railway. Development pushing out from Reading has caused coalescence with many former villages and hamlets

Large-scale 20th-century gravel extraction substantially altered the southern Parish, with the flooded workings forming recreational lakes and a nature reserve (see p28).

The Parish historically connected by road from Wallingford to Reading via Caversham bridge. The route from Reading and Caversham (the modern A 4155) was turnpiked from 1768 to 1881, and passes through Playhatch. Here a large urban roundabout was built at the junction with the Sonning road in the 1990s (7). This busy route links to Shiplake and Henley beyond, old inns such as the Flowing Spring are still in existence (2).

Lesser routes serving the Parish's hamlets and scattered farms are also long established (3,5,6), amongst them north–south roads linking Sonning Eye and Dunsden Green (4) with Sonning Common. These remain rural in character with limited paved footways

At Sonning Eye, the Playhatch Road (B 478) was rerouted and a mini-roundabout constructed c.1980 (8). Such works radically change the character of the area with the introduction of modern lighting and signage.

The road from Sonning Eye to Sonning is crossed by bridges spanning the Thames's. A crossing has existed since prior to the medieval period. The bridge has remained secondary to that at Henley, which carried the main medieval (and later) London–Bristol route. Pressure from modern traffic flows (as discussed below) has led to demand for an additional crossing.

The decaying timber bridge was replaced in the 1650s and the present bridge, with its eleven brick arches, was erected in 1773. Further widening work has subsequently taken place, with the last work on the whole crossing carried out in the 1980s and 1990s The bridge is Grade II listed (1).





# Modern Movement Patterns

The closest railway station to the Parish is in Lower Shiplake, 2.7 miles to the north east of Dunsden Green. The main railway station in Reading is some 3.3 miles to the southwest of Sonning Eye.

In terms of bus provision, this differs depending on settlement. The 800 service travels from Reading to High Wycombe approximately every 45 minutes and passes through Playhatch (with a reduced service of four buses a day passing through Dunsden Green) Whereas Sonning Eye is poorly provided for without travelling into Sonning.

There is a level of dependency on the car in many locations, which is reflected by the high vehicle presence on the B478 from Sonning, as well as the A4155 Reading to Henley Road.











The bridge over the Thames is a particular congestion point especially during peak rush hour periods when the single carriageway traffic light controlled bridge causes long tailbacks.

There are significant issues exists between pedestrian, cyclists and HGV movements, where the proximity of vehicles makes walking along the narrow road intimidating.

In terms of connecting the Parish with the surrounding countryside, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are abundant and important in maintaining this relationship with the wider landscape.

The long distance Thames Path National runs through the Neighbourhood Area.

The movement network can be understood within a street hierarchy as below. Each street has different characteristics and functions. These are discussed in more where relevant in each character area.

- Main A Road 
- Primary B Road 
- Minor C Road 
- Rural lanes 
- Public Footpath 
- Bridleway 
- Restricted Byway 
- Byway 
- Long Distance Path 
- Permissive Path 

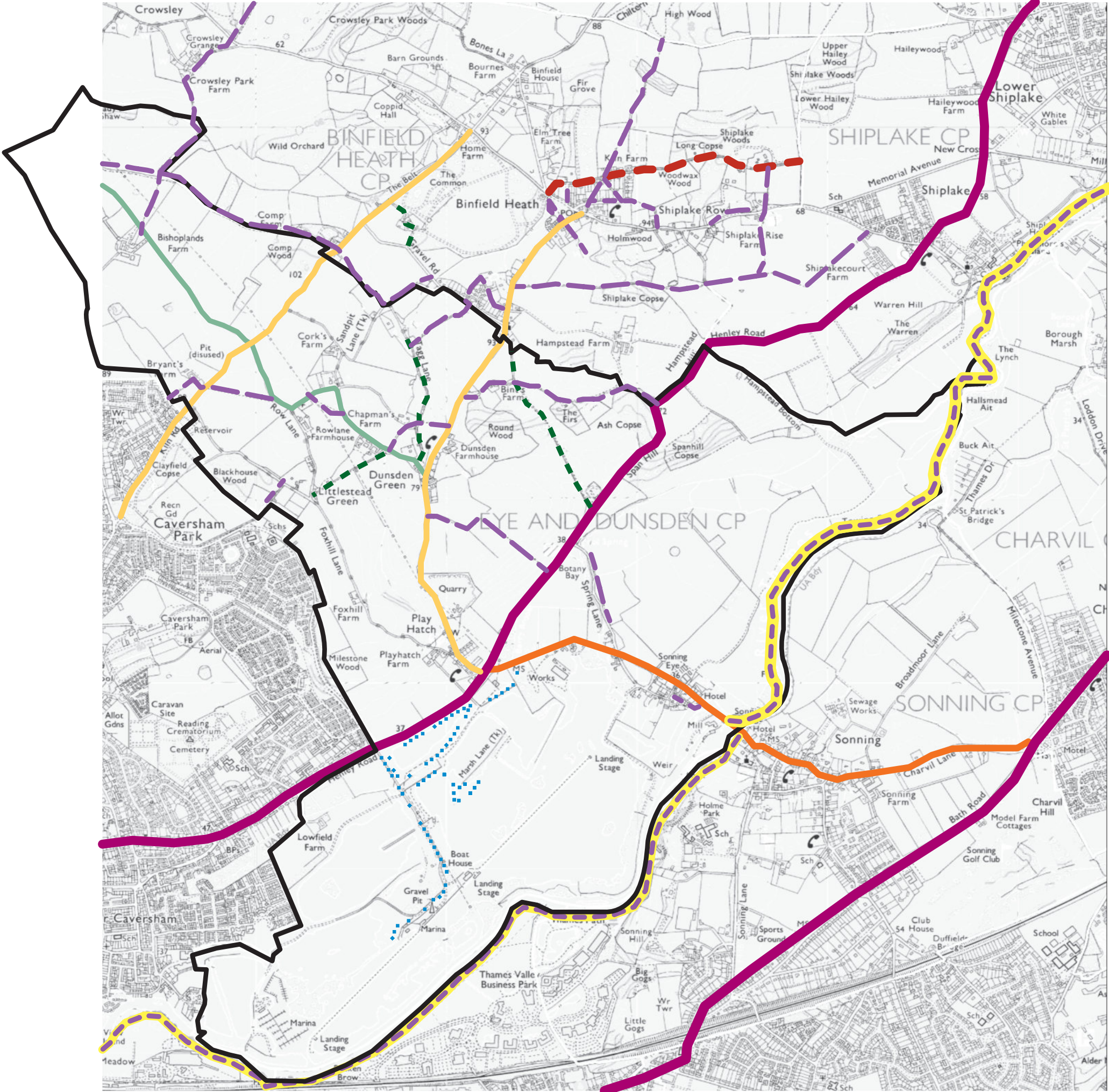


Figure 6 - Road and Paths



## Local Planning Policy & Guidance Considerations

### Local Plan

The development plan for the Parish currently comprises the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. The Local Plan identifies the development strategy to be delivered in the District in the period to 2035 and includes policies of relevance to Eye and Dunsden Parish.

Due to its rural location, the Parish is subject to a number of environmental designations:

- Northern part of the Parish is within the Chilterns National Landscape (CNL) (Policy ENV1)
- There are several areas of ancient woodland (Policy ENV2)
- Sonning Eye is designated as a Conservation Area (Policy ENV8)
- Southern part of the Parish is a Minerals Safeguarding Area (Policy EP5)

There are no housing or employment site allocations within the Parish's boundaries.

For a full list of relevant policies, please see appendix A.

### The Influence of Reading

The Parish is located adjacent to Reading Borough, on the edge of Emmer Green and Caversham Park. There are a number of policies within the Borough Local Plan (2019), which are of direct relevance and influence upon the future of the Parish.

In particular, these relate to potential for new Park and Ride sites on the edge of the town, but within the Parish (as shown on the figure 7), as well as the potential (or not), for a new River Thames crossing. These either in isolation or cumulatively have the potential to completely change the Parish and to urbanise these areas.

## National Design Guidance

The National Design Guide was published in 2019 and subsequently followed by the National Model Design Code, which was published in July 2021. The guidance expands on the ten characteristics of good design as set out below. It goes on to provide clear design parameters to help local authorities and communities decide what good quality design looks like in their area

Ten characteristics which underpin good design



As set out in the National Design Guide 2019

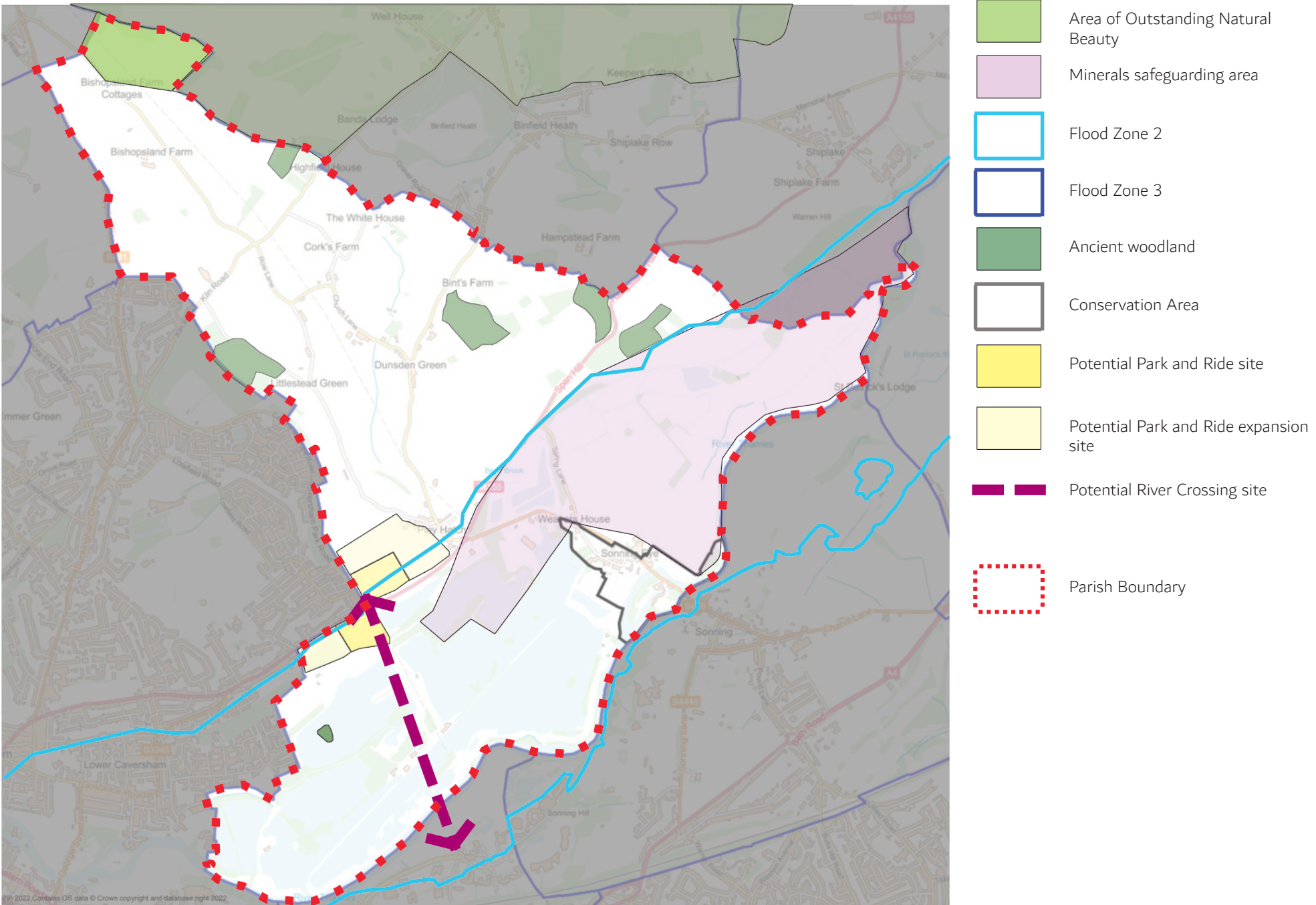


Figure 7- Local Plan Designations and Potential Designations in Emerging Plans

## Local Design Guidance

### Joint Design Guide SPD 2022

The Joint Design Guide (JDG) now supersedes the original South Oxfordshire Design Guide (SODG). The latest design Guidance SPD provides detailed advice on the Council's expectations for high quality development and how the design policies should be interpreted. It identified how designs can respond and complement the existing local character and identity of the District. Where relevant to the Parish of Eye and Dunsden, parts of this guidance have been extracted and incorporated in to this Appraisal.

### Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 (Schedule of Amendments June 2025)

The Management Plan contains a comprehensive summary of the key issues facing the CNL and the management policies and actions needed to conserve this special place. Reference has been made to this plan within the Appraisal, where relevant to Eye and Dunsden Parish.

### Chilterns Buildings Design Guide SPD 2010

The Design Guide contains practical advice on how to build or restore properties in keeping with the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB. Parts of this guidance are of relevance to Eye and Dunsden, which have been included in this Appraisal.



# Character Areas

The following section identifies the differing features and design notes present across the Parish’s built character areas. These should not be confused with settlement boundaries or the landscape character areas shown in Figure 8.

Understanding the character areas will be key the comfortable integration of any future windfall and infill housing development which sits comfortably beside its context.

The Parish has been divided into various zones which are defined by differing characters (see figure 9).

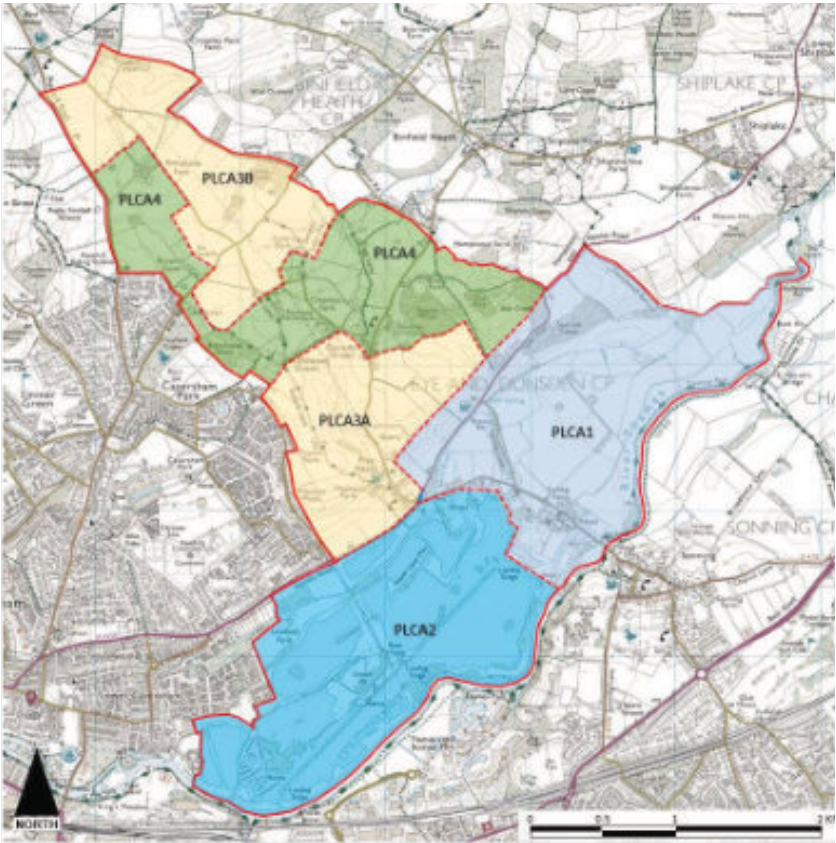


Figure 8 - Comparison with the Landscape character areas within the Parish - see separate Landscape Character Assessment

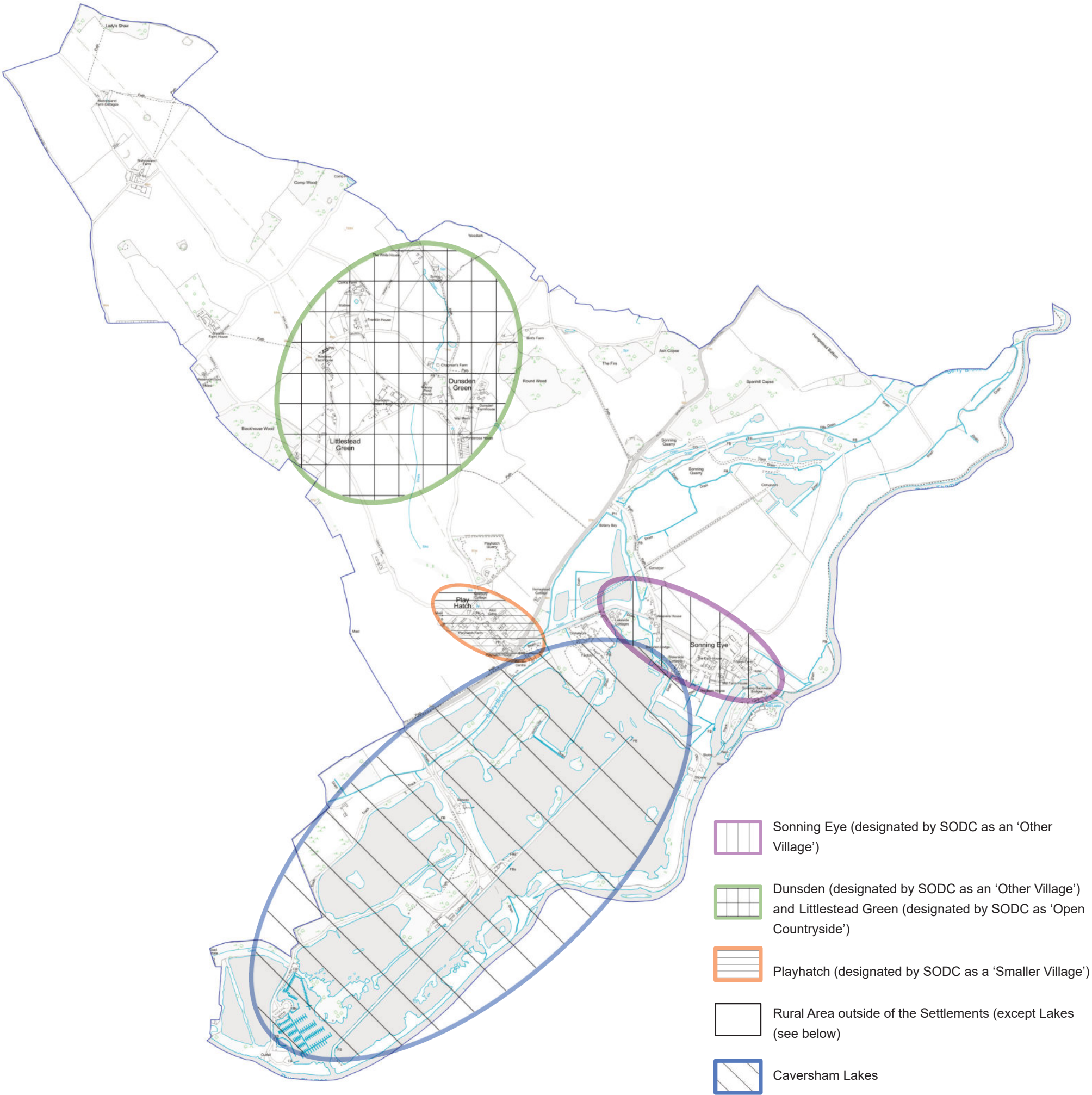


Figure 9 - The character areas within the Parish







# Character Area 1: Sonning Eye

The village follows a linear development pattern along the main road leading from Sonning to Playhatch and on to Henley.

This character area is defined by its historic origins, with buildings sitting close to the Playhatch Road (4), but a much looser knit urban grain with buildings sitting within good sized plots alongside the lanes.

The character area encompasses all of the conservation area and the generally adheres to a palette of red/ orange Berkshire brick/tile hung buildings (sometimes painted) with plain clay tile roofing (2,5,7).

There are a mix of Victorian Villas and decorative cottages, with a number of older farmsteads and cottages containing timber framing (7).

The focal point is the River Thames and the views to and from the bridges (3,8).

Sonning Mill (6) is located upon the river and is now a theatre converted from an 18th-century flour mill. This popular venue is glimpsed from the main road and sited down a tree lined gravel driveway.

The French Horn Hotel is an important building in the settlement and highly visible given its location on the main road. It is also apparent as a key view from the paths and bridges on the Thames (3,5).

The River defines the settlement and divides into three here, with the mill race forming the middle branch. Little has changed from that shown on the 1870s map (4) and the 1930s aerial photo (1).







Sonning Mill - Grade II Listed



Long Gardens - Grade II Listed



Eyot House - Grade II\* Listed



The Centuries - Grade II Listed

The Parish contains 32 listed buildings and structures, 30 are listed as Grade II, with Eyot House and Row Lane Farmhouse listed as Grade II\*. Within Sonning Eye alone, there are 14 listed properties as shown on figure 10.

Given the number of heritage assets and the strength of the local vernacular within the Conservation Area (designated in 1981), it is essential that assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance and the contribution they make to their environment. This Design Code identifies both designated assets and locally important buildings, to enable decision makers to support proposals which will maintain this distinctive character of Sonning Eye for future generations.

Of particular prominence are the following properties in the settlement.

- Eyot House is a Grade II\* listed building built in 1902, by Halsey Ricardo. Constructed in pebbledash brick with a clay plain tile roof. The interior of the property is of key interest containing chimney pieces with Delft and De Morgan tiles, detailed original joinery including ledged doors, dresser, cupboard, and staircase.
- Sonning Mill - as discussed above is a timber clad mill of an imposing 4 storeys in height, with further attic space in addition. Although now it is much altered there are a number of original aspects remaining.
- Mill House - is a Georgian, 2.5 storey substantial property, shown on the 1870s map as Aberlash House constructed in Bath stone ashlar with a plain clay tile roof.
- Mill Farm Cottage is thought to date from the 16th Century and is a timber framed building with brick infill. As is the adjacent Long Gardens, although this is dated later from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and was originally a row of cottages.
- Centuries is believed to be the oldest house in the Parish, but is formally recorded from 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

A separate Heritage Assets Evidence base document contains full detail of each designated heritage asset as well as the non designated heritage assets.



Figure 10 - Sonning Eye - Heritage Assets



## Buildings, Views and Open Spaces

- (1) River Views from within the settlement
- (2) Important open and undeveloped areas forming the setting to the conservation area and listed buildings
- (3) Local Green Space Designation - Allotment gardens
- (4) Commercial Yards and Car parks
- (5) Thames Path river views
- (6) Agricultural buildings and yards

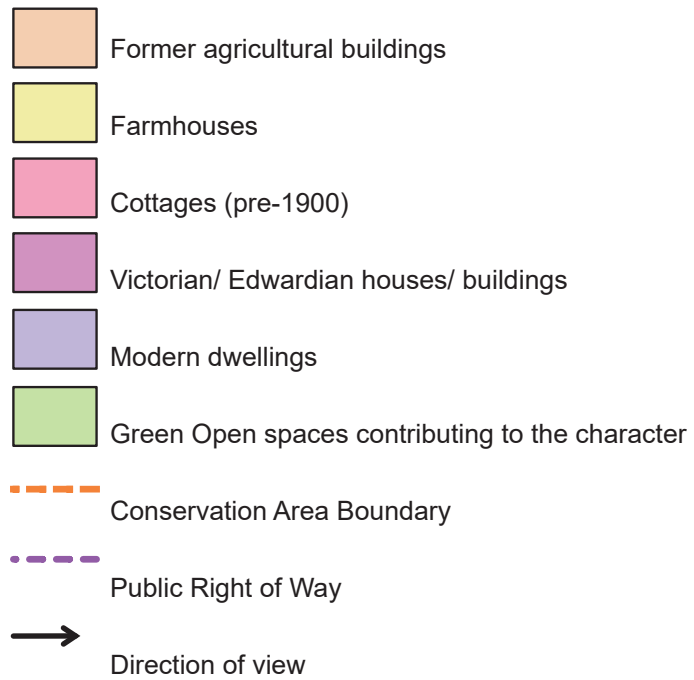


Figure 11 - Figure ground plan showing form of development



Figure 12 - Buildings, Views and Open Spaces-



# Amenity Space and Gaps

The Joint Design Guide (JDG) sets out that for front Garden Areas

“An adequate amount of enclosed front garden should be provided to separate the parking from the houses.”

The analysis undertaken for Sonning Eye shows that the majority of properties are set deep into their plots and enjoy a good sized front garden which is set back at least 3 metres from the road, with many properties in excess of 10 metres. All rear garden are in excess of the 12.5 metre length specified in the original SODG.

The JDG recommends for general amenity space that:

“All dwellings should seek to provide private outdoor amenity space. This should be appropriate to both the location of the proposal and the type and size of dwelling.

Awkward size gardens should be avoided in order for them to be usable and enjoyed. Think about the orientation of these spaces. Make sure that gardens are not overshadowed by outbuildings or garages, making the most of the light available.”

The Guide also sets out distances between buildings as shown below:

Figure 13 highlights that there only few instances where there are direct overlooking between front elevations of buildings. The minimum distance between front elevations is in excess of 15 metres (17 metres).

Gaps between buildings differ between the more modern properties and those pre 1900. Older dwellings are generally sited at least 10 metres apart, except for where buildings formed part of one original group such as farmyards. Whereas more modern properties are less than 5 metres apart. This decreases further again where there is modern infill development.

Sonning Eye is currently designated as an ‘Other Village’ in the Adopted Local Plan.



Figure 13 - Assessment of Amenity Space and Gaps

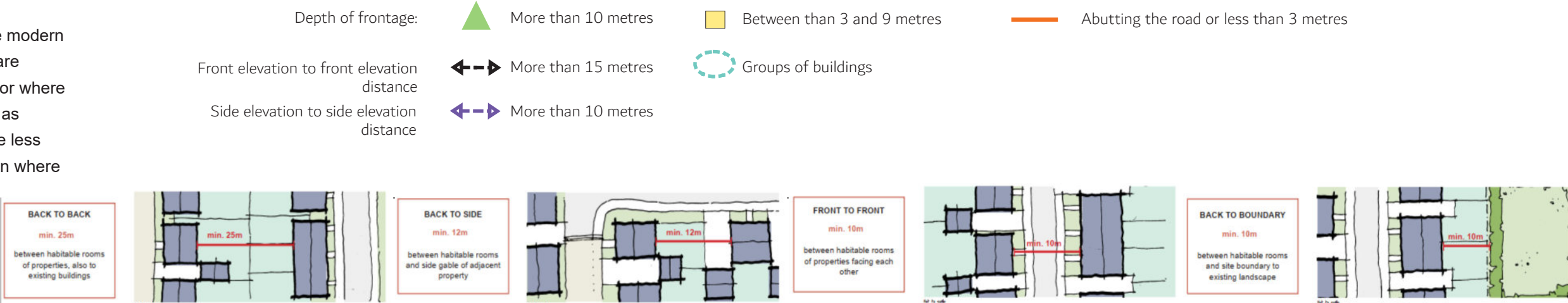


Figure 14 - Overlooking Distances, as previously set out in the SODC Design Guides, which should be adhered to in the Parish



## Density

Density is the number of buildings per unit area - in this case, based on the built up area of Sonning Eye. It is an important consideration in planning and design, as it can dramatically affect the visual appearance of an area, which is important where there is a conservation area. Rapidly increasing density can also have an impact on various factors such as traffic movements, infrastructure, and quality of life.

The density is reflected in the Parish Area Type as highlighted below, with Sonning Eye being a low density village, with a very limited amount of modern, suburban development.

The character area identified contains 32 dwellings set out at a density of 6.2 dph or dwellings per hectare (5.097 hectares).

## Plot Ratio

Plot ratio is the ratio of the building footprint to the total site area of each property. It is a measure of how much of a site is covered by buildings. This is important when determining whether a new dwelling will have an appropriate sized plot, which is in keeping with the wider area.

Appendix B highlights the range of properties in Sonning Eye and their appropriate plot size. Whilst plot size itself is helpful in identifying the pattern of development, the coverage of development or ratio of built form to the plot size is a key indicator. This has been assessed by calculating the extent of built form ( building footprint including permanent outbuildings) against the overall plot size.

The table shows that there are numerous large plots with low levels of built form coverage under 10%. The overall average is 18.1%. The diagram on page 27 illustrates how this may appear in plan form.

## Materials Palette

A materials palette is the range of materials used in construction of buildings within the character area. Materials which are significantly different can have a substantive impact on the character and appearance of a settlement. Notwithstanding the above, it is not to say that modern / contemporary materials cannot co-exist alongside traditional, such materials need to be justified and based in an understanding of the context.

The table in Appendix 2 is colour coded to highlight the range of materials within the character area. It is clearly identified that handmade local red/ orange brick and plain clay tiles predominate. Other colour bricks are used decoratively.

Exceptions to this are some modern buildings and structures, where red or red/ brown multi, machine made bricks are often used and are often discordant features. Bricks are used as infill within timber framing.

Victorian properties are often highly decorative with tile hanging and decorative woodwork.

There is limited render, but a number of brick properties are painted.

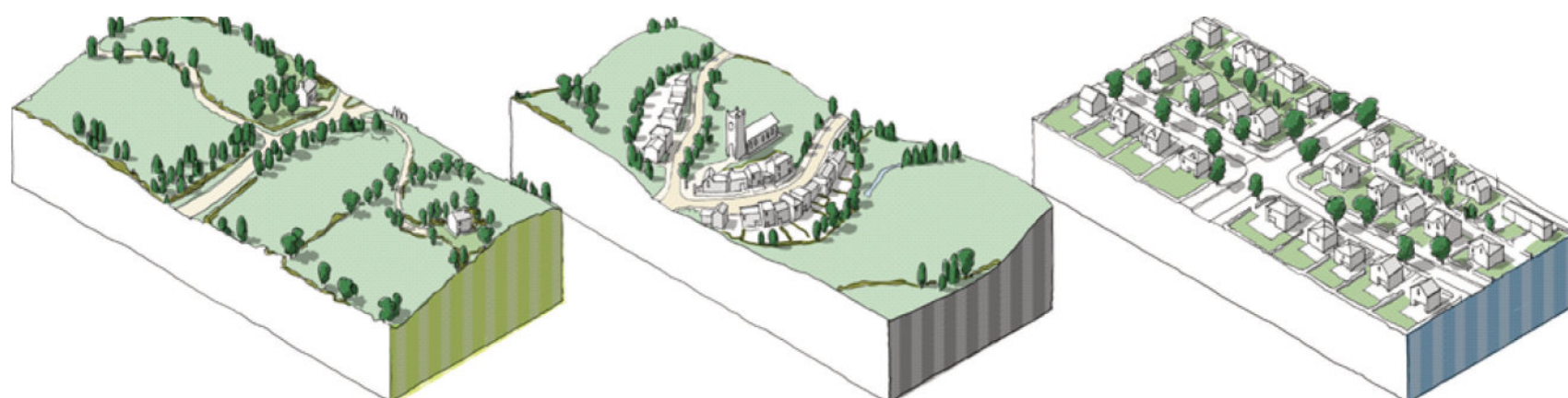
Timber cladding is found on converted agricultural buildings and outbuildings.

## Scale

Scale is the relative size of buildings and other elements in a settlement. It is important to consider scale when designing buildings and public spaces, so that they are comfortable and inviting for people to use. Whilst it may be appropriate for some large scale buildings, these are landmark features and usually have specific function.

There is a equal occurrence of small 1.5 storey dwellings as there are 2 storey buildings. 2.5 storey buildings are focal buildings.

## Area Types Found within the Parish (images amended from the National Model Design Code (2020))



### Rural Areas of Open Countryside

Sporadic pockets of development, usually agricultural development and are classified as countryside for planning purposes.

### Villages and Hamlets

Dunsden Green, Playhatch and Sonning Eye have their own individual and distinct character which should be retained. These include both smaller and other villages for planning purposes.

### Lower Density Village Suburban Development

Modern estates and smaller scale development from the 1950s only occur in limited areas in the Parish.







# Playhatch - Settlement

Playhatch is mentioned in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century onwards. Today it contains 35 dwellings which is a significant increase from the 18 houses in 1841 **(4,5)**. Growth took place in the 1930s with the construction of Foxhill Close and then again recently with 5 new properties of a generic design in Dene Close. It is currently designated as a ‘Smaller Village’ in the Adopted Local Plan.

The area currently contains three public houses - The Flowing Spring (off plan to the north-east), The Crown and The Shoulder of Mutton. To the south of the original historic settlement, is a garden centre and a builder’s merchant. These are large scale dominant uses and highly visible from the A4155.

The residential area is separated by a roundabout on the A4155 with Playhatch extending to the northwest. The aerial photo on the preceding page highlights the contrast between the large scale commercial uses and those within the original settlement area.

The narrow lanes leading from Playhatch as well as the lack of pavement or formal footway and street lighting all contribute to the rural feel **(1,2)**.

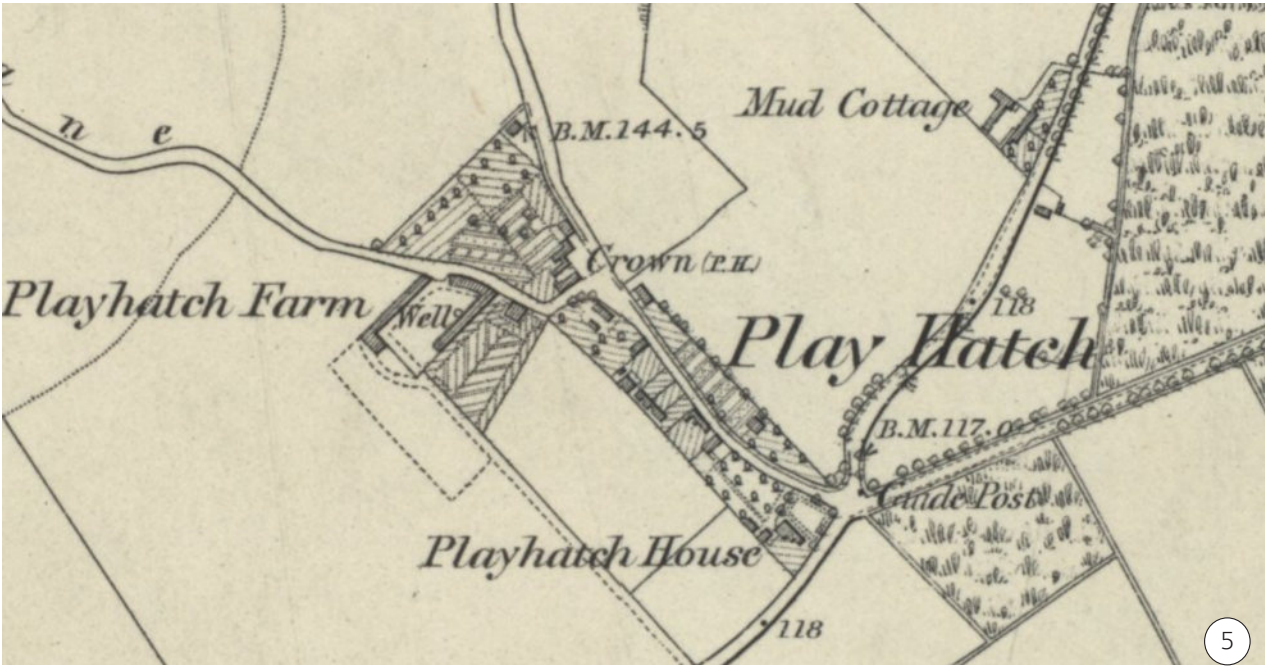
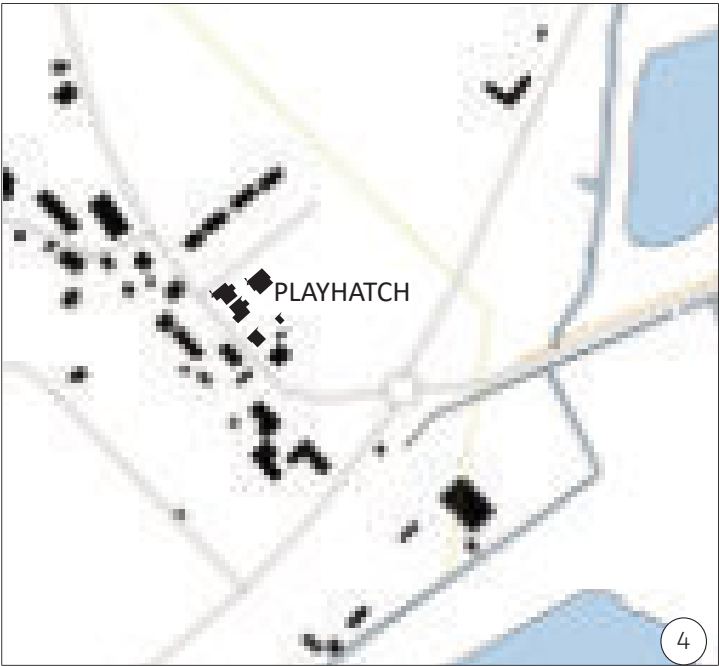
The original settlement is of a much looser grain and a lower density than the urban area of Caversham Park to the west. Playhatch has its own identity and is separated by a distance of some 500 metres. Whilst the landscape is characterised in a separate evidence base document, it is clear that a narrowing of the gap between settlements is likely to lead to coalescence and the loss of this village with its distinct rural character.

The buildings historically adhere to a local red/ orange brick palette and roofs tend to be covered with plain clay tiles **(1)**. An overview of the materials is set out in Appendix B below. The dwellings are a mix of simple cottages **(1,3)** and larger farmhouses. Evidence of some of the commercial uses of certain properties is still in existence.

The form of buildings consists of a wide plan form fronting the road, often with later additions to the rear. Any projecting features often relate to attached outbuildings.

This character area also includes modern properties, which don’t typically conform to the architectural style and historic character of the settlement or wider area. Generic house types and plan forms are rarely appropriate. The area is at risk of losing its individual identity should this trend continue. Whereas, high quality infill development can be integrated, provided the design, scale, form and layout of the new buildings respect the traditional street scene and character of the area as described in this document.

The area is also characterised by a high level of landscaping between properties and along the boundary frontage.





# Heritage Assets



Post Cottage - Grade II Listed



The Crown Public House - Grade II Listed



Playhatch House - Grade II Listed



Playhatch Farm Cottages - Grade II Listed

Playhatch has 5 listed Buildings as well as Playhatch Farm (5), which is considered to be a Locally Important Building within the parish.

Playhatch Farm House (3) appears to be largely of the early 18th century, but presumably has earlier origins since a house of the same name was mentioned in 1628.

The Crown Inn (2) dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and contains the original 2 storey brick building with single and two storey attached elements. A later thatched barn dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century provides a function room. A contemporary accommodation building has been constructed in the garden area to the west of the building.



Playhatch Farm House - not listed, but locally important

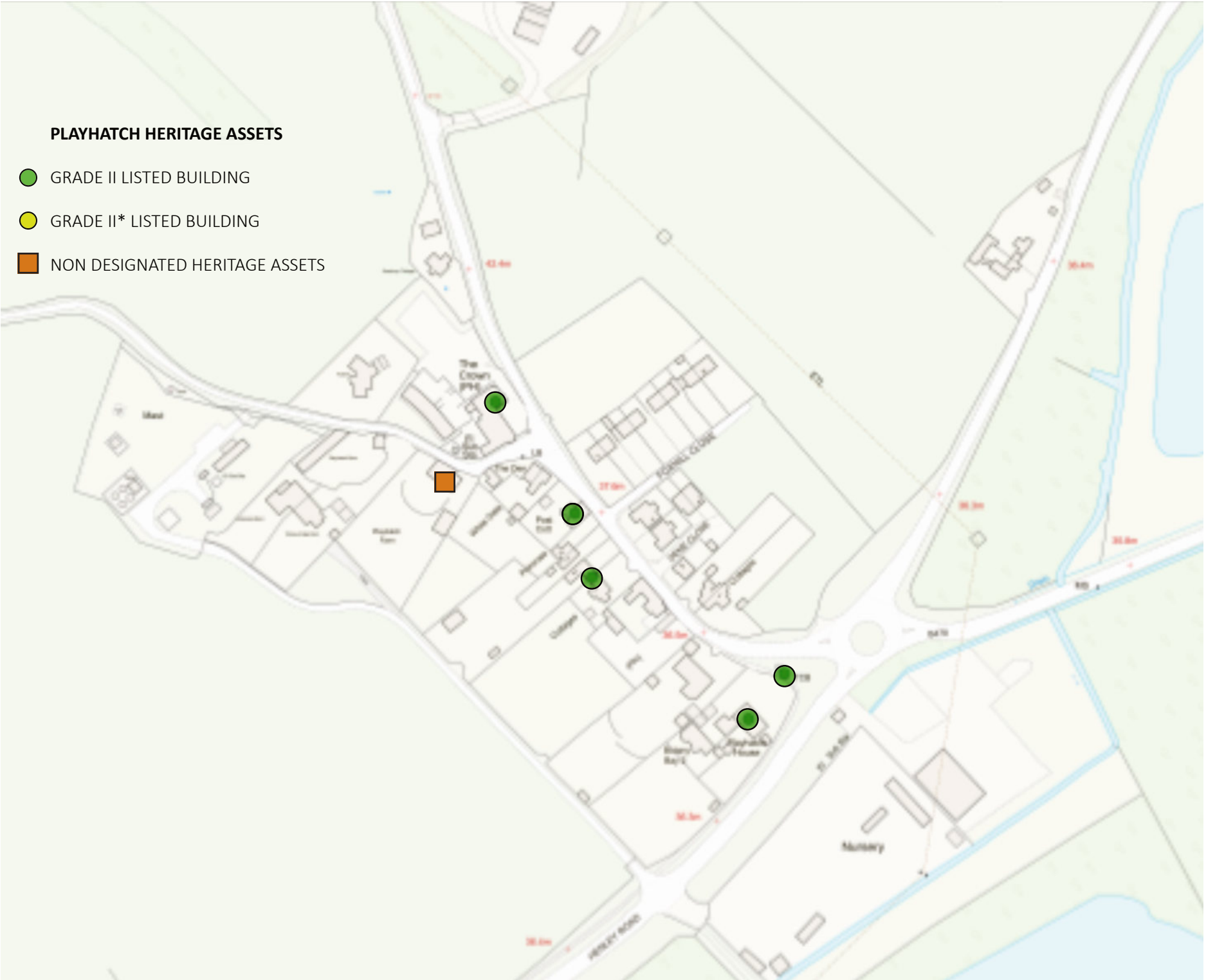


Figure 15 - Designated and non designated heritage assets within Playhatch



# Buildings, Views and Open Spaces

- (1) Countryside views from within the settlement
- (2) Open countryside views - edge of settlement.
- (3) Local Green Space Designation - Allotment gardens
- (4) Commercial Yards and Car parks
- (5) Important undeveloped areas outside of the built form
- (6) Garden Centre and Builder's yards

Former agricultural buildings

Farmhouses

Cottages (pre-1900)

Victorian/ Edwardian houses/ buildings

Modern dwellings

Narrow rural lane

Direction of view

Publicly accessible land

Important open space defining the setting of the village

Sensitive edge of settlement



Figure 15 - Buildings, Views and Open Spaces



# Amenity Space and Siting

The original settlement is of a linear form, which has only changed due to the modern development at Foxhill Close and two plots to the rear at Dene Close.

The conversion of the barns to the west of Playhatch Farm, has introduced residential use to the rear of the main street frontage, but these were existing buildings and not new built form.

Further in-depth development, which does not front a road, would likely be out of keeping with the character of the area and would urbanise the settlement and erode the rural feel.

The area is characterised by properties set in large gardens and associated land.

A number of buildings either abut the road, are enclosed by walls and planting or have outbuildings on the street frontage. This adds to the more intimate feel and sense of enclosure.

The Joint Design Guide (JDG) sets out that for front Garden Areas:

*“An adequate amount of enclosed front garden should be provided to separate the parking from the houses.”*

The analysis undertaken for Playhatch shows that many properties are set deep into their plots and enjoy a good sized front garden which are set back at least 10 metres from the road, With the exception some of the new properties at Dene Close (where a minimal amount of landscaping has been implemented), the plots are not dominated by parking without some form of enclosure. Block paved driveways and minimal vegetation are

not appropriate and urbanise the area.

The JDG recommends for general amenity space that:

*“All dwellings should seek to provide private outdoor amenity space. This should be appropriate to both the location of the proposal and the type and size of dwelling.*

*Awkward size gardens should be avoided in order for them to be usable and enjoyed. Think about the orientation of these spaces. Make sure that gardens are not overshadowed by outbuildings or garages, making the most of the light available.”*

All rear garden are in excess of the 12.5 metre length specified in the JDG with two exceptions; those properties in Foxhill Close, where these properties enjoy 23 metre front gardens and on average have approximately 300m + sq. Metres of external amenity space.

In Dene Close, properties have rear gardens under 7 metres in depth, which are considered to be sub-standard depth and is not representative of properties in the settlement and therefore out of character. Such low standards are not to be encouraged, particularly where there is no accessible public open space close by.

In terms of overlooking and overbearing, the properties at Dene Close are also below the recommended guidance for rear elevation to side elevation distances of less than 12 metres. This has lead to a cramped form of development which in not in keeping with the prevailing development pattern and should not be replicated.

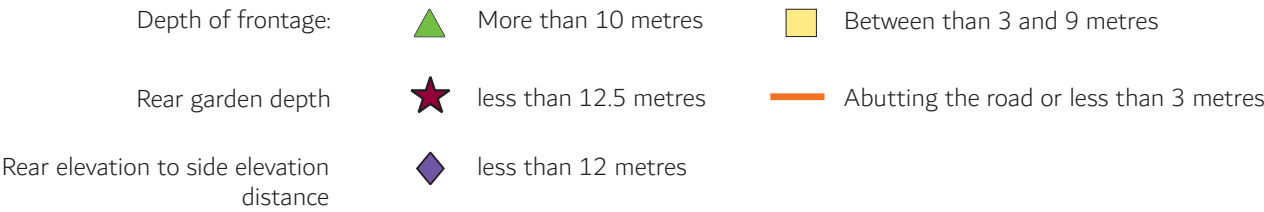


Figure 16 - Assessment of Amenity Space and Gaps



### Density

Density is the number of buildings per unit area - in this case, based on the built up area of Playhatch. It is an important consideration in planning and design, as it can dramatically affect the visual appearance of an area, which is important where there is a conservation area. Rapidly increasing density can also have an impact of various factors such as traffic movements, infrastructure, and quality of life.

The density is reflected in the Parish Area Type as highlighted below, with Playhatch being a low density village, with a small amount of modern, suburban development.

The character area identified contains 34 dwellings set out at a density of 7.7 dwellings per hectare (dph).

### Plot Coverage

Plot ratio is the ratio of the building footprint to the total site area of each property. It is a measure of how much of a site is covered by buildings. This is important when determining whether a new dwelling will have an appropriate sized plot, which is in keeping with the wider area.

Appendix B highlights the range of properties in Playhatch and their appropriate plot size. Whilst plot size itself is helpful in identifying the pattern of development, the coverage of development or ratio of built form to the plot size is a key indicator. This has been assessed by calculating the extent of built form ( building footprint including permanent outbuildings) against the overall plot size.

The table shows that there are numerous large plots with low levels of built form coverage under 10%. The overall average is 15.5%. The diagram on page 27 illustrates how this may appear in plan form.

### Materials Palette

A materials palette is the range of materials used in construction of buildings within the character area. Materials which are significantly different can have a substantive impact on the character and appearance of a settlement. Notwithstanding the above, it is not to say that modern / contemporary materials cannot co-exist alongside traditional, such materials need to be justified and based in an understanding of the context.

The table in Appendix B is colour coded to highlight the range of materials within the character area. Older properties are constructed of handmade local red/orange brick and plain clay tiles predominate. Other colour bricks are used decoratively. Brickwork is often set within timber framing

Modern buildings and structures, utilise red or red/ brown multi, machine made bricks. These materials are generic and not locally specific and generally do not enhance the local identity and character of the area.

There are some rendered properties often over brickwork as well as painted brick.

### Scale

Scale is the relative size of buildings and other elements in a settlement. It is important to consider scale when designing buildings and public spaces, so that they are comfortable and inviting for people to use. Whilst it may be appropriate for some large scale buildings, these are landmark features and usually have specific function.

The majority of properties in Playhatch are 2 storey buildings with some 1.5 storey.

### Scale Example

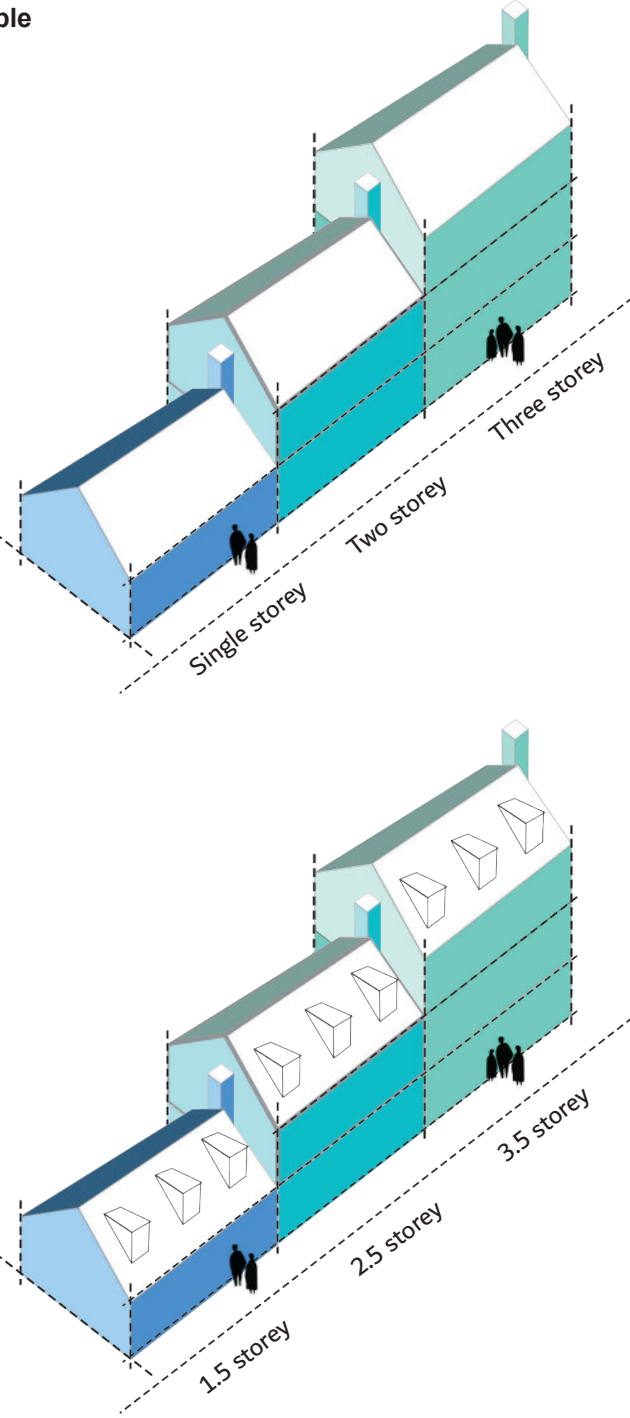


Figure 17 - Scale of buildings







# Settlement - Dunsden and Littlestead Green

The character area contains the settlement of Dunsden Green (classified by SODC as an ‘other village’), with the outlying cluster of houses known as Littlestead Green to the west (classified by SODC as open countryside). Further farmsteads are found to the north and west.

It is an unusually dispersed settlement area characterised by the significant gaps between the settlements and farmsteads.

Dunsden Green itself has seen some development with the construction of Ash Copse, but as you can see from the comparison of the aerial photo on the preceding page and the historic map from 1877 below, there has been little significant change over time.

New residential properties have largely been the result of a few infill plots and the conversion of form agricultural buildings and other residential outbuildings.

The focal point for Dunsden Green is the village green itself, which has now been extended in terms of a focal feature and community benefit, by the creation of the community orchard to the north. The old maps of the area clearly highlight that the area was originally a single parcel of land extending up to the public right of way.

The former village school is now the village hall and is an important local building.

The former Black Boy public house is now Brewery Cottage and the Parish hall originally sited on the green itself has been demolished.

Dunsden Green Farm is still in operation, though part is sublet to a brewery operator. The brewery has become a successful enterprise with a farm shop/off sales and a tap room for patrons to use. Access is encouraged by those walking or cycling as well those travelling by bus. The lack of a formal car park has meant that the rural lanes can

become congested particularly at weekends in the summer season or when events are held though generally the use remains low key and appropriate to the agricultural setting.

Development is of a linear form alongside the lanes with no in-depth development found except for any conversion of existing buildings.

Littlestead Green is a small cluster of dwellings in the open countryside, entirely separated from Dunsden Green containing 7 dwellings in the mid 1800s and 9 dwellings in the early 1900s. These were all cottages centred around Littlestead Green Farm. Today there are 7 dwellings, with the smaller cottages being combined into single dwellings. As you can see from the old maps below, the area was categorised by tree and orchard planting between the dwellings. It remains well enclosed by vegetation today and is an important characteristic.

All Saints church is situated to the northwest of the village and was built in 1842. Due to the date of construction it is unlisted, but remains a locally important building. A further cluster of houses exists here and includes the vicarage, which is considered a locally important building as well as the imposing Grade II\* Listed Row Lane Farmhouse. Corks Farm further north with its Grade II Listed farmhouse has had the agricultural barns converted to dwellings.

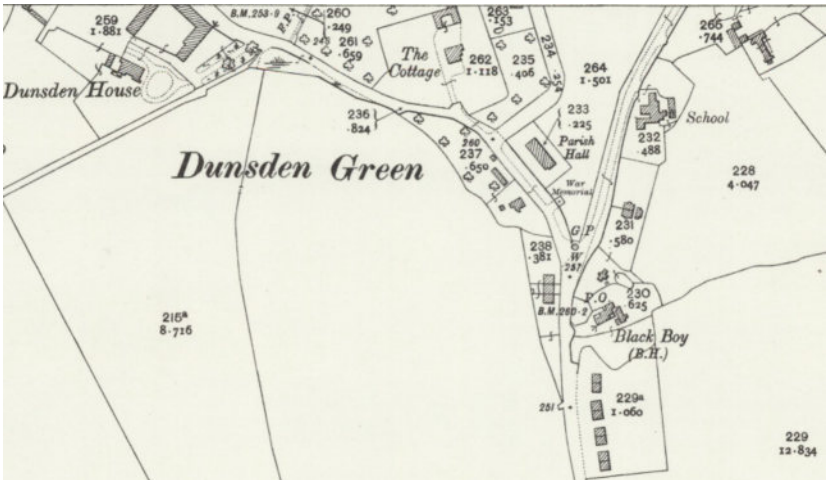
For planning purposes, the Littlestead Green area and the Church is designated as open countryside by SODC, whereas Dunsden Green is classified as an ‘Other Village’.



Aerial photo of Dunsden Green looking south



1877 map of Dunsden and Littlestead Green



1934 map of Dunsden Green



1934 map of Littlestead Green



Heritage Assets



Rowlane Farmhouse - Grade II\* Listed



Corks Farmhouse - Grade II Listed

The area benefits from a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets. Dunsden and Littlestead Green have 7 listed Buildings as well as the Village Hall, Dunsden Green Farmhouse and the former vicarage which are considered to be a Locally Important Building within the Parish.

Of particular significance is Row Lane Farmhouse (Grade II\*) adjacent to the church. An impressive 2.5 storey late 17<sup>th</sup> Century building of grey/ flared brick with red/ orange dressings and detailing.

The village hall dates from 1846 and was the former school. First world war poet Wilfred Owen was on the school board and wrote about the school in 1912. The school closed in 1973, before reopening in 1980 as the village hall.

For full details of the listing and further information please see the evidence base (Appendix III to the NDP).



Chapmans Farmhouse - Grade II Listed



Dunsden Farmhouse - Grade II Listed



Old Thatched Cottage - Grade II Listed



Village Hall - Locally important building



The former Vicarage - now Glebe House - Locally important building



Figure 17 - Designated and non designated heritage assets within Dunsden Green



# Buildings, Views and Open Spaces

- (1) Views from within the settlement
- (2) Important open and undeveloped areas forming the setting to the settlement
- (3) Local Green Space Designation - village green
- (4) Commercial/ Agricultural yards
- (5) Local Green Space Designation - Community Orchard
- (6) Route of former cart wash

Former/ current agricultural buildings (now dwellings)

Farmhouses

Cottages (pre-1900)

Victorian/ Edwardian houses/ buildings

Modern dwellings

Sites with permission for redevelopment

Public Footpath

Bridleway

Direction of view

Lack of footway or path connecting the public rights of way and the Loddon Brewery

Gates into Community Orchard

War Memorial

Important open space



Figure 18 - Buildings, Views and Open Spaces



# Amenity Space, Gaps and Siting

The village is laid out around the village green in a linear form set between the farmsteads of Chapman’s Farm, Dunsden Farm and Dunsden Green Farm.

Buildings are well spaced out with clear gaps between dwellings allowing views through to the countryside beyond.

There is a clear building line, with only farm buildings being the notable exception.

Properties are set in large plots as can be seen overleaf, with few exceptions. Where the rear garden is more limited in depth, it is often compensated for by a larger front or usually a side garden area.

The Joint Design Guide (JDG) sets out that for front Garden Areas, developers should ensure that the scheme:

*“has front gardens that contribute positively to the street scene, and has planted or permeable areas that are no less than 1m in depth on higher order streets. Front gardens should reflect the street hierarchy, density and sense of enclosure. Awkward size gardens should be avoided, in order for them to be usable and enjoyed. Consider the orientation of these spaces and sunlight. The scale of plots and their gardens within the context of the development should be considered. New development should be proportional to the size of neighbouring plots, particularly in lower density areas with larger plots and gardens or where adjacent to burgage plots.”*

The analysis undertaken for Dunsden Green shows that the majority of properties are set deep into their plots and enjoy a good sized front garden which is set back at least 5 metres from the road.

Such gardens are well landscaped and contained by hedgerow planting with little evidence of formal fencing.

The JDG recommends for general amenity space that developers should ensure that the scheme:

*“has an adequate amount of quality private amenity space provided for each residential unit, including apartments, or a robust justification why private amenity space cannot be provided to the standards.”*

*“has gardens that are rectilinear and in the orientation of the buildings flank walls. Awkwardly shaped, or impractical, garden areas should be avoided.”*



Figure 19- Assessment of Amenity Space and Gaps



# Plot Sizes, Scale of Built Form and Materials

## Density

Density is the number of buildings per unit area - in this case, based on the built up area of Dunsden Green. It is an important consideration in planning and design, as it can dramatically affect the visual appearance of an area, which is important where there is a conservation area. Rapidly increasing density can also have an impact of various factors such as traffic movements, infrastructure, and quality of life.

The character area identified contains 28 dwellings set out at a density of 6.5 dwellings per hectare (dph).

## Plot Coverage

Plot ratio is the ratio of the building footprint to the total site area of each property. It is a measure of how much of a site is covered by buildings. This is important when determining whether a new dwelling will have an appropriate sized plot, which is in keeping with the wider area.

Appendix B highlights the range of properties in Dunsden Green and their appropriate plot size. Whilst plot size itself is helpful in identifying the pattern of development, the coverage of development or ratio of built form to the plot size is a key indicator. This has been assessed by calculating the extent of built form ( building footprint including permanent outbuildings) against the overall plot size.

The table in Appendix B shows that there are numerous large plots with low levels of built form coverage under 10%. The overall average is 14.9%. The diagram opposite illustrates how this may appear in plan form.

## Materials

A materials palette is the range of materials used in construction of buildings within the character area. Materials which are significantly different can have a substantive impact on the character and appearance of a settlement. Notwithstanding the above, it is not to say that modern / contemporary materials cannot co-exist alongside traditional, such materials need to be justified and based in an understanding of the context

The table in Appendix B is colour coded to highlight the range of materials within the character area. Older properties are constructed of handmade local red/orange brick and plain clay tiles predominate. Other colour bricks are used decoratively, particularly on higher status buildings.

Modern buildings and structures, utilise red or red/ brown multi, machine made bricks. These materials are generic and not locally specific and

generally do not enhance the local identity and character of the area.

Cottages are often simple and quite plain in appearance. There are some more decorative features, but fewer than those found in the Victorian properties in Sonning Eye for comparison.

There is some render often on original brickwork as well as painted brick.

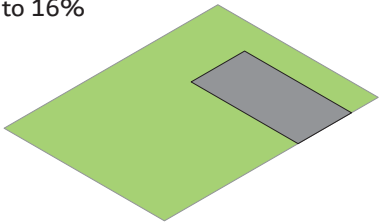
## Scale

Scale is the relative size of buildings and other elements in a settlement. It is important to consider scale when designing buildings and public spaces, so that they are comfortable and inviting for people to use. Whilst it may be appropriate for some large scale buildings, these are landmark features and usually have specific function.

The majority of modern properties are 2 storey buildings. Older cottages are generally 1.5 storey, with farmhouses at 2 storey. 2.5 storeys are not commonplace.

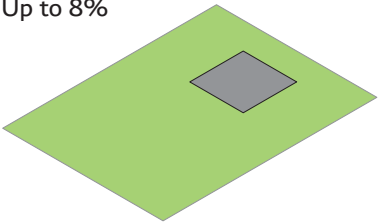
## Plot Coverage Examples

Up to 16%



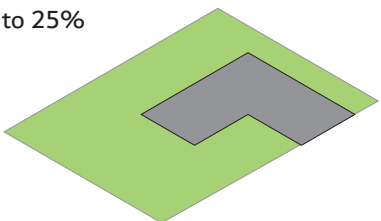
Semi-detached - Very low ratio of plot coverage - significant green space to the side. Excellent garden depth for property size

Up to 8%



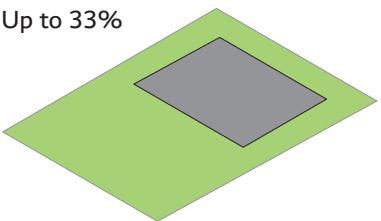
Detached - Very low ratio of plot coverage - significant green space on all sides. Excellent garden depth for property size

Up to 25%



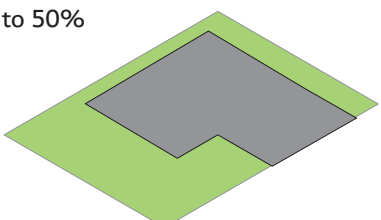
Semi-detached - low ratio of plot coverage - significant green space on to the side. Acceptable garden depth for property size

Up to 33%



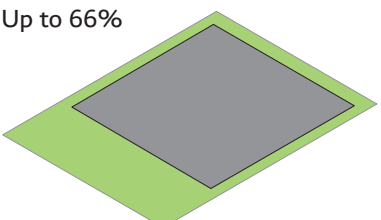
Detached - mid ratio of plot coverage - significant green space on all sides. Good garden depth for property size

Up to 50%



Semi-detached - high ratio of plot coverage - limited green space to the side. Limited garden depth for property size

Up to 66%



Detached - very high ratio of plot coverage - limited green space on all sides. Poor garden depth for property size

Figure 20 - Plot Coverage





The large-scale 20th-century gravel extraction substantially altered the southern Parish, with the flooded workings now forming recreational lakes and a nature reserve.

The aerial photograph above illustrates the array of uses on the lakes.

The Landscape Character Assessment considers this area to be a distinctive character area with high scenic quality, providing numerous views across the lakes.

It is rare to find such an expansive area of the River Thames which is undeveloped or has such limited development and certainly the adjacent lakes form a unique area, when combined with the Thames.

It provides a very valuable space for recreation, as well as areas which are tranquil and as such are designated as a local wildlife sites.

Community consultation has highlighted that residents wish to protect the landscape and character of the lakes and River Thames.

At present there is an appropriate balance between permitted recreational lake uses and businesses, in addition to the preservation of wildlife sites.

There has latterly been development which does not have planning permission, which has disrupted this balance. Concerns regarding urbanisation and inappropriately designed buildings, landscaping and the significantly increased vehicle traffic and parking are of concern, as are many other factors.

The Design Code section below addresses such issues to enable the area to flourish in the future.









# EYE AND DUNSDEN PARISH DESIGN CODE

V2.3 August 2025



# Parish Wide Design Code including the Rural Area outside of the Settlements (also see individual areas for further details)

## PW1.0 - Appearance

New building frontages should propose a level of detail based on the detail used on existing original buildings within the area. Where period details are proposed it is advised they are based on a local historical precedent.

## PW2.0 - Replacement dwellings

Replacement dwellings can alter the character of a village if not carefully designed. Care should be taken to ensure:

- The scale of development is in keeping with the street and appropriate to the size of the plot.
- There is a positive relationship between the building and the street.
- Reference should be taken from the local vernacular to determine the most appropriate proportions for the replacement dwelling.

Where replacement dwellings are proposed, these should be as a proportionate replacement to the plot size, with plot coverage in accordance with this character area.

Additional dwellings - In exceptional cases, it may be appropriate to replace with a small group of dwellings - each application is to be assessed individually.

## PW3.0 - Restoration

Restoration of existing buildings of non listed, historic buildings in the Parish is preferable to demolition and replacement. Where buildings are modernised, it is advised existing proportions of doors and windows should be considered.

Non-listed buildings, particularly within conservation areas may be subject to additional scrutiny in the interest of preserving the special character of the area.

Use appropriate materials and techniques for extensions. A mix of modern and traditional materials can be appropriate and allows for greater innovation in design.

## PW4.0 - Scale, Height, Massing

New development will be more likely to integrate successfully with the settlement, if the scale, height and massing of new buildings demonstrates consideration for the context of the existing buildings within the area.

Buildings should not be designed in isolation.

Whether they are of traditional or contemporary design, buildings should be part of a design concept for the whole site. This will need to be explained in a Design and Access Statement accompanying the planning application.

## PW5.0 - Natural Surveillance

Natural surveillance takes place when people can see what is happening where they live. Crime rates are lower in locations where people believe they are being watched. Maximise opportunities for new development to become self-policing.

## PW6.0 - Parking

The design of parking areas should be appropriate to the scale and location of the residential development, but should not be a dominant feature. Parking areas should be surfaced using a permeable material to provide adequate natural drainage

## PW7.0 - Accessibility

Small scale developments that enhance accessibility through the settlement, incorporate enhancements to the public realm or provide communal green space should be encouraged.

Create pedestrian and cycle friendly environments to reduce the need to travel by car.

## PW8.0 - Public realm & Street furniture

Public realm enhancements or communal green space should be provided in new development to contribute to the provision or enhancement of open space in the area.

Avoid open spaces that lack character or purpose Identify opportunities to make a positive contribution to character

Street furniture such as benches and bins required for public realm should complement the local vernacular. Design and location should be carefully considered.

Seating areas encourage people to gather and as a result should provide adequate space.

## PW9.0 - Storage

Provide secure storage for cycling equipment to encourage ease of access and greater use.

Cycle and bin stores should be integrated into the garden and screened from the street.

## PW10.0 - Green Infrastructure

New development should reinforce the well-managed network of grass species rich verges, hedgerows and woodland lining the routes through the area, which are characteristic of the rural landscape.

Native vegetation can be used to blend buildings into their surroundings and draw the natural landscape into the settlement.

## PW11.0 - Trees

Mature trees should be retained where possible or replaced at a ratio of 3:1 in line with Woodland Trust guidance. Any tree lost to development should be replaced with an appropriate species.

Retention of all trees and hedgerows, especially along property boundaries is vital. If trees and hedges need to be removed, they should be replaced on the site.

## PW12.0 - Windows and Doors

Windows in new buildings should complement the vertical and horizontal pattern and scale of windows reflected in local architectural detailing.

Doors can be noticeable features and, as with windows, they can have a dramatic impact on the appearance of a property.

In more traditional designs, the positioning of windows within their reveals is important to add visual interest. See design palettes below and for each area.

Use doors that reflect the design approach see design palettes below. Doors should be simple and well proportioned. A pastiche of historical designs should be avoided.

## PW13.0 - Materials and Detailing

A typical palette in Eye and Dunsden Parish includes:

- red/ orange bricks,
- red/ orange hanging tiles,
- Contrasting door and window surrounds with brick quoins.
- Decorative brick banding, details and bonds
- timber framing with brick infill,
- timber painted windows and doors,
- Plain clay roof tiles, with some decorative features
- Plain ridge tiles with decorative ridges and finials on focal buildings,
- External porches
- Timber clad barns on brick plinths
- Prominent chimneys

Materials used for the repair or alteration of buildings, for new buildings, and for surfacing and boundaries shall complement the existing high quality palette of materials that typifies the character of the area.

Proposals for innovative and complementary material options should also be encouraged, but must be well justified as to why they are appropriate. Materials that are durable, high quality and easy to maintain are preferable. See materials palette below

Differing materials on an extension or a different design approach may result in a development appearing incongruous. Whilst, exceptionally, an extension may intentionally be designed to be contrasting, such an approach will need to be carefully justified and its success will rely on a high quality design.



# Sonning Eye - Design Code

## New Development

Infill plots can alter the character of the settlement if not carefully designed. There is limited scope within Sonning Eye for infill development due to the floodplain. There may however be opportunities for replacement dwellings. Where any development opportunity exists the following factors should be taken into account.

### S1.0 - Siting and Layout

The siting of new buildings should respect the existing building line along the street or rural lane (figure 13). In this instance only those properties along the Playhatch Road have a defined building line, whereas the remainder of dwellings are set well back into their plots and often surrounded by outbuildings which form the boundary. Buildings are either detached or semi-detached, with few terraces (these usually relate to older cottages often converted to single dwellings).

Gaps between buildings are of key importance (figure 13). There is a clear distinction between buildings lining the main road to that of the rural lanes. In the former, building enclose the road with minimal gaps between properties, forming a clusters of continuous built form. Within the rural lanes, it can be seen that dwellings have significant, visible gaps between each allowing views through the boundary treatments.

### S2.0 - Density

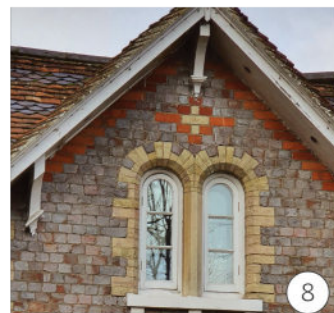
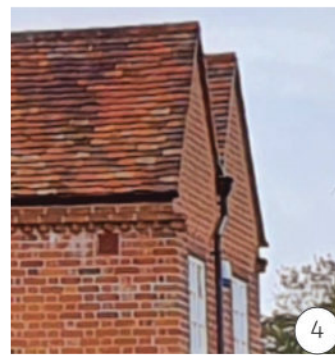
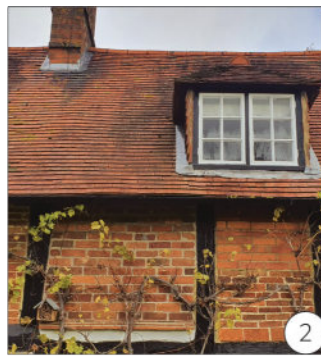
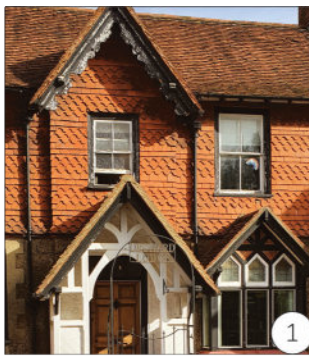
The density level of the character area has been defined as approximately 12 dwellings per hectare, such density should be respected. A higher density may be accommodated, but only where buildings can be successfully subdivided without appearing too dense and discordant. A property giving the appearance of a single dwelling, could be dividing internally into apartment blocks for example. The key to successful development in this regard is to look at the ratio of built form to plot size and to ensure that the proposal remains in keeping with the surroundings.

### S3.0 - Building Heights

New dwellings that respect the existing height and follow the roofline and form of adjacent houses should be encouraged. Similarly proposed extensions are more likely to be successful if they remain subordinate to the height of the original building.

### S4.0 - Roof Form and Detailing

Roof forms should be designed to reflect the streetscene and wider context (see page x for building form and design). The majority of buildings are of relatively simply form and have gable ends, particularly those dating from



Victorian period. These can be steeply pitch with decorative barge boards (1,8,15). Earlier properties often have more simple brick detailing under the gable (4,14). The majority have plain clay tiles.

Careful attention should be paid to roofing materials, pitch, eaves and verge details and the inclusion of chimney stacks or other features that project above the ridge line. Prominent and decorative chimneys are a feature of the area (6,11,13,15).

Dormer windows are commonplace and usually set on the eaves line or wholly within the roof (2,3,11,15). Prominent gable features are usually associated with Victorian properties (1).

### S5.0 - Appearance and Detailing

Building details should take reference from existing properties.

Buildings should be constructed using the local Berkshire red/orange brick, clay tiles (also can be used vertically), reclaimed where appropriate to provide differing tones and colours as demonstrated on the materials palette (1,2,4,5,7,8,9). Generally the elevations of buildings should adhere to the local colour palette, bonds and course detailing.

For developments of multiple homes, detailing will be key to ensure successful

integration and variation. Whilst Victorian properties have some limited paint and render to the front elevation, this is not commonplace.

### S6.0 - Windows and Doors

Window surrounds should have minimal detailing on cottages and are often contained within the timber frame (2,3,9,10,15). Arched brickwork and decorative features of Victorian properties using the vernacular material palette will be acceptable (8,9).

Window frames should be painted white, black or neutral coloured and preferably include multi-paned glazing. Cottage casements and sash windows are prevalent (1,2,3,8,9,10,11,15).

### S7.0 - Scale and Massing

The proportions of proposed houses should match adjacent houses of the same building type. Prominent farmhouses and Victorian Villas can be up to 2.5 storeys in height, with timber frame cottages at 1.5 storeys. Modern generic house types are generally not appropriate in this setting as they do not accord with the traditional form of buildings within the area unless these reflect the plan form of surrounding dwellings (see page 34 for building form and design).



## S8. - Garages and Outbuildings

Garages, cycle stores and bin stores are a feature of modern living, and should be included as an integral part of the overall design from the outset.

Numerous outbuildings are found within this character area and it is commonplace to have them along the frontage or along the side of plots forming boundary walls (20,21,22,24). The design of outbuildings and storage area should be subordinate to the dwelling and reflect the rural character of the area. Timber clad barns in natural colours with brick plinths are commonplace (12,20).

## S9. - Gardens - Front and Rear

Gardens and the mature native vegetation within should be retained where to ensure that each building has an attractive, verdant setting (15,16).

In a domestic setting, front gardens should not be dominated by car parking. Where sufficient space exists they should be provided native planting and only small areas of hard surfacing either aggregate or paving. Where hard-surfacing for car parking in front gardens is necessary, it should be screened from view of the street. Proposals that provide SuDS solutions and permeable paving are preferable.

Planting within the setting of private front gardens should be in keeping with the rural context of the character area.

## S10. - Parking

Parking should be provided for all dwellings on plot and should be located to the side or the rear of properties to reduce the visual impact of vehicles on the street, unless it relates to parking within an outbuilding or courtyard reflecting the surrounding agricultural character(17,21).

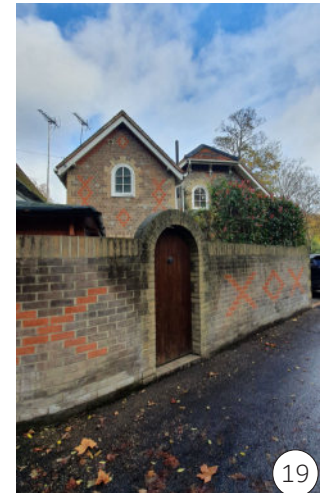
## S11. - Boundary Treatment

Where development affects the boundaries of a property, new development should consider boundary treatments which are common or complimentary to the character area.

Boundary treatments such as garden walls timber post and rail fences and formally maintained hedgerows are common (18,19,25,27).

Walls are usually in a brick style to match the dwelling, although flint is also commonplace. A modern interpretation that complements the street scene will also be encouraged provided it is in context with the local vernacular (19).

A careful balance needs to be struck between gated entrances providing security and dominating the street scene. Traditional timber gates site well with the former agricultural related buildings. Gates which do not offer a view through into a site, can often be oppressive and overbearing to pedestrians (22,26). Overly decorative metal gates can suit Victorian properties (23), but less so in more agricultural related settings (24).





S4.1 - ROOFING:



Plain Clay tiles - red / orange  
Concrete tiles are inappropriate due to poor colour match, form and variety

Simple roof forms - gables and half hipped

S9.1 - REAR & FRONT GARDENS

Rear gardens over 12 metres in depth

Size of garden should relate to the property and provide suitable amenity space for occupants.

Deep front gardens - average 5+ metres although many significantly larger. Well contained from roads and lanes, but visibility at eye level is not restricted.

SPACE BETWEEN BUILDINGS:

The historic settlement pattern of Sonning Eye features gaps between buildings which are at least 10m, this distance allows for the better protection of landscape and important views within the conservation area.

S2.1 - PLOT SIZES, COVERAGE & DENSITY:

Plot sizes should reflect those in the wider area - on average 1450sq m. There are numerous large plots with low levels of built form coverage under 10%. The overall average is 18.1% coverage of the plot. The average density in the area is 6.2 dph

S6.1 - WINDOWS:



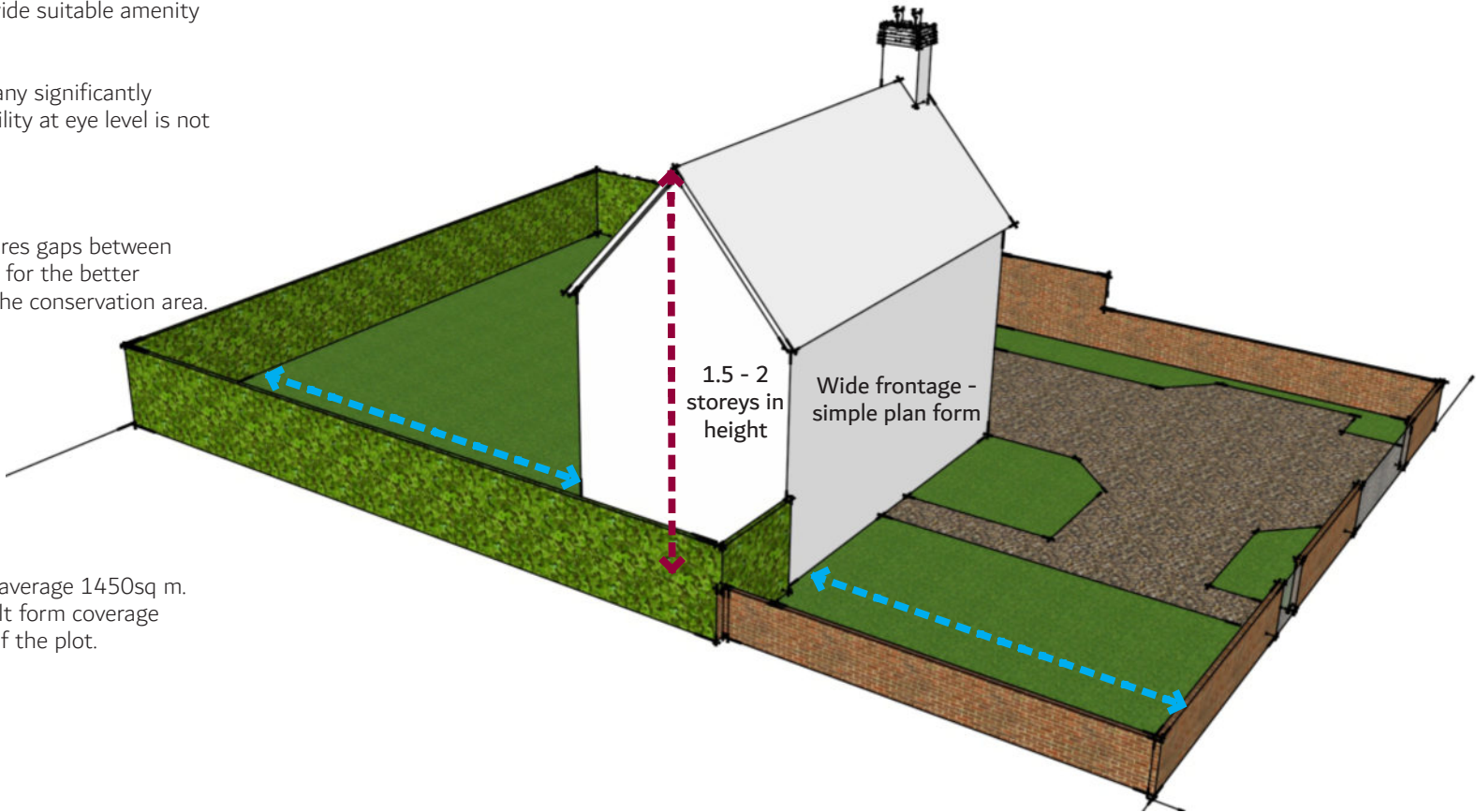
Timber windows - painted white or other muted colours.

Cottage casement windows predominate - triple pane, double pane - arch topped. Windows should be proportionate and detailed. Large single panes are not appropriate.

S6.2 - DORMER WINDOWS:



Small cottage casement dormer windows, generally set into the roof with some cutting of the eaves line. Simple form detailing or decorative bargeboards



S7.1 - SCALE, MASS AND FORM:

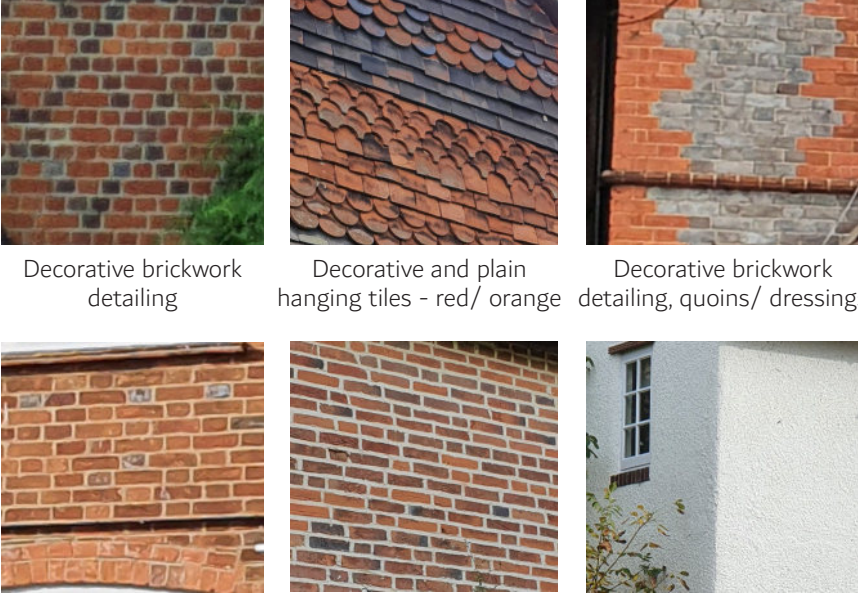
There is an equal occurrence of small 1.5 storey dwellings as there are 2 storey buildings. Any 2.5 storey buildings are rarely found and only as landmark properties.

Older properties are laid out in traditional forms relating to their intended use. Farm workers cottages for example are generally simple in layout, one or two rooms deep and often with wide frontages. Gable features should be subordinate.

Whilst farmhouses are generally more complex buildings with different subservient elements and extensions, many are found within a traditional courtyard of other outbuildings.

These outbuildings have then often later been converted to a residential use.

S5.1 - WALLING:



Decorative brickwork detailing

Decorative and plain hanging tiles - red/ orange

Decorative brickwork detailing, quoins/ dressings

Handmade facing brickwork - red / orange

Light painted render

handmade local red/orange brick predominate. Other colour bricks are used decoratively.

Exceptions to this are some modern buildings and structures, where red or red/ brown multi, machine-made bricks are often used and are often discordant features.

Bricks are used as infill within timber framing. There is limited render, but a number of brick properties are painted. Timber cladding is found on converted agricultural buildings and outbuildings.

S10.1 - PARKING & DRIVEWAYS

Off street parking in parking courtyards or driveways to the side of the property



hedged front boundary

GARAGES & OUTBUILDINGS:

Car barns or garage outbuildings to be separate and form boundary walls to reflect the agricultural nature of the area



Walled front boundary - brick or brick/ flint - red orange

S11.1 - BOUNDARIES & OUTBUILDINGS:

Bounded by walls or hedgerows.

Gates to reflect the agricultural character



Agricultural gated entrances



## New Development

New development within the settlement boundary can alter the character of the settlement if not carefully designed. This has been evident from recent development within Playhatch (4,5).

### P1.0 - Siting and Layout

The siting of new buildings should respect the existing building line along the street. Although in-depth development has been permitted, this is clearly an incongruous feature and linear development is in keeping with settlement pattern (as opposed to in-depth development as shown) (5).

Properties along the road running through Playhatch have a defined building line to be retained (3), whereas the remainder of dwellings are set well back into their plots and often surrounded by outbuildings, walls, fencing and planting which form the boundary.

Gaps between buildings are of key importance. There should be a clear distinction between individual and groups of buildings.

### P2.0 - Density

Infill dwellings - In exceptional cases, it may be appropriate to replace with a small group of dwellings - each application assessed individually.

The density level of the character area has been defined as approximately 8 dwellings per hectare, such density should be respected, but where a higher density may be appropriate, buildings could also be built to look like a single larger building which is then subdivided into apartments for example. The key to successful development in this regard is to look at the ratio of built form to plot size and to ensure that the proposal remains in keeping with the surroundings.

### P3.0 - Building Heights, Form, Scale and Massing

New dwellings that respect the existing height and follow the roofline and form of adjacent houses should be encouraged. Similarly proposed extensions are more likely to be successful if they remain subordinate to the height of the original building. Large or dominant front gable features are not in keeping with the local character and generally relate to more modern generic house types, which are not designed based on an understanding of the local context.

In the same regard, roof forms should be designed to reflect the streetscene and wider context.

Careful attention should be paid to roofing materials, pitch, eaves and verge details and the inclusion of chimney stacks or other features that project above the ridge line.

The proportions of proposed houses should match adjacent houses of the same building type.

### P4.0 - Garages, Outbuildings & Parking

Garages, cycle stores and bin stores are a feature of modern living, and should be included as an integral part of the overall design from the outset.

Numerous outbuildings are found within this character area and it is commonplace to have them along the frontage or along the side of plots forming boundary walls (1). The design of

outbuildings and storage area should be subordinate to the dwelling and reflect the rural character of the area. Brick or timber clad barns in natural colours with brick plinths are commonplace.

### P5.0 - Gardens - Front and Rear

Gardens and the mature native vegetation within should be retained where to ensure that each building has an attractive, verdant setting.

In a domestic setting, front gardens should not be dominated by car parking. Where sufficient space exists they should be provided native planting and only small areas of hard surfacing either aggregate or paving. Where hard-surfacing for car parking in front gardens is necessary, it should be screened from view of the street. Proposals that provide SuDS solutions and permeable paving are preferable.

Planting within the setting of private front gardens should be in keeping with the rural context of the character area.

### P6.0 - Boundary treatment

Where development affects the boundaries of a property, new development should consider boundary treatments which are common or complimentary to the character area.

Boundary treatments such as garden walls, picket fences softened by planting and formally maintained hedgerows are common (1). Close board fencing is urbanising and should be avoided where possible (5).

Walls are usually in a brick style to match the dwelling, although flint is also commonplace. A modern interpretation that complements the street scene will also be encouraged provided it is in context with the local vernacular.

Traditional timber gates sit well with the former agricultural related buildings and cottages (2). Gates which do not offer a view through into a site, can often be oppressive and overbearing to pedestrians.

### P7.0 - Appearance and Detailing

Building details should take reference from existing properties. Buildings should be constructed using the local Berkshire red/orange brick, clay tiles reclaimed rather than concrete to provide differing tones and colours as demonstrated on the materials palette (P36). Generally the elevations of buildings should adhere to the local colour palette, bonds and course detailing.

For developments of multiple homes, detailing will be key to ensure successful integration and variation.

### P8.0 - Windows and Doors

Window surrounds should have minimal detailing on cottages. Arched brickwork and decorative features of Victorian properties using the vernacular material palette are acceptable. Window frames should be painted white or neutral coloured and preferably include multi-paned glazing. Cottage casements and sash windows are prevalent.

Windows should not overlook other properties. Where this is not possible they should be obscured glazed and non-opening.





P7.1 - ROOFING:



Roofing materials should be plain Clay tiles - red / orange or slate. Concrete tiles are inappropriate due to poor colour match, form and variety. Any other material would need to be sufficiently justified as an exception.

P9.1 - REAR & FRONT GARDENS

Rear gardens should be over 12 metres in depth. where rear gardens are less than 12 metres, the overall level of amenity space on plot should be considered.

Size of garden should relate to the property and provide suitable amenity space for occupants.

Front gardens should be deep with an average 10+ metres. They should be well contained from the roads and lanes.

P1.1 - SPACE BETWEEN BUILDINGS:

Development to be loose knit, with sufficient space between dwellings to allow for landscaping to screen and soften, in addition to enable sufficient privacy and prevent overlooking.

P2.1 - PLOT SIZES, COVERAGE & DENSITY:

Plot sizes should reflect those in the wider area - on average 1100sq m. There are numerous large plots with low levels of built form coverage under 10%. The overall average is 18.4% coverage of the plot. Plot coverage should not exceed 18.5%.

The average density in the area is 7.7 dph.

S8.1 - WINDOWS:



Timber windows are preferable including cottage casement windows - triple pane/ double pane - arch topped and sliding sash windows. Lighter paint colours are preferable. Contemporary metal and timber windows and high quality UPVC with slim profiles.

P8.2 - DORMER WINDOWS:



Dormer windows should be small in scale - preferably cottage casement in style, generally set into the roof with or cutting the eaves line. Simple form detailing or decorative bargeboards. Flat roof dormers are only appropriate as part of a justified contemporary scheme

P5.1 - WALLING:



Timber frame with brick infill

Painted pebbledash and render

Handmade facing brickwork - red / orange with grey/ blue/ burnt

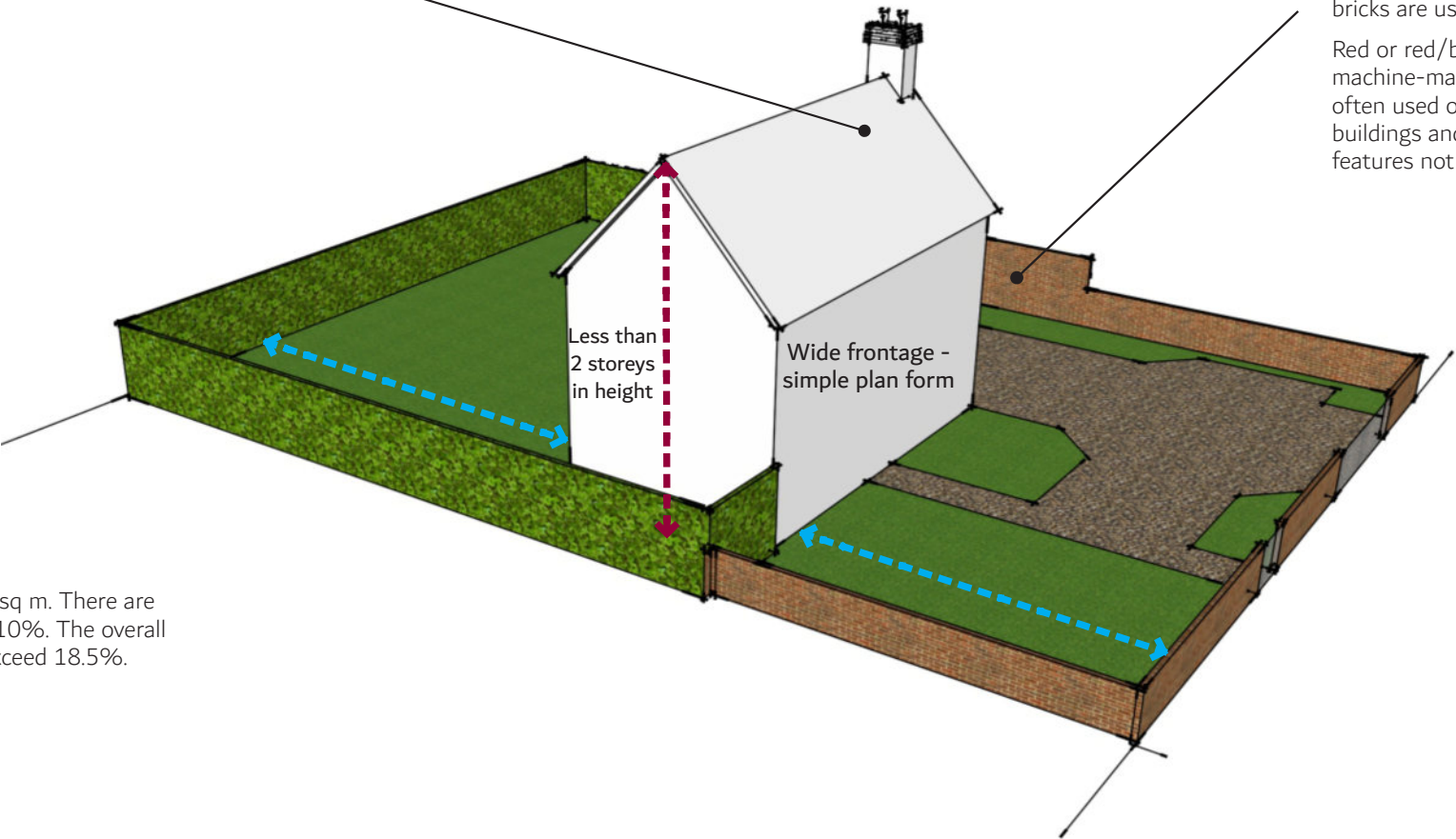
Local red/orange bricks are preferable. Other colour bricks are used decoratively. Red or red/brown multi, machine-made bricks are often used on modern buildings and are discordant features not to be replicated.



Decorative brickwork detailing, quoins/ dressings



Light painted render



P4.1 - PARKING & DRIVEWAYS

Off street parking in landscaped gardens or driveways to the side of the property. Open plan parking and driveways without enclosure are not appropriate. To be enclosed by walls or hedgerows.

P4.2 - GARAGES & OUTBUILDINGS:

Car barns or garage outbuildings to be set back behind the main dwelling and subservient in scale, form and appearance.

S6.1 - BOUNDARIES & OUTBUILDINGS:

Bounded by walls or hedgerows.

Gates to reflect the agricultural character

Close board fencing is suburban in nature and is not appropriate. Limited fencing may be acceptable with sufficient planting to screen

S7.1 - SCALE, MASS AND FORM:

Buildings to be 2 storey maximum. Any 2.5 storey or dominant scale buildings are rarely found and only as landmark properties such as Playhatch House and Playhatch Farm. It is unlikely that any new development would be of landmark quality, but would need to be justified.

Cottages are in keeping and are generally simple in layout, one or two rooms deep and often with wide frontages. Gable features should be subordinate. Simple roof forms - gables and half hipped.

Farmhouse style properties are common and are generally more complex buildings with different subservient elements and extensions, many are found within a traditional courtyard of other outbuildings.

The conversion of farm and other outbuildings should be sympathetic to the original form and appearance.

Modern generic house types, which are not designed based on an understanding of the local context are to be avoided.



Gated entrances with boundary walls. Open rural gates are preferable along the frontage



hedged front boundary



Walled front boundary - brick or brick/ flint - red orange



# Dunsden Green - Design Code

## D1.0 - New Development

Dunsden Green, the cluster of houses at Littlestead Green and surrounding area are rural in character. In accordance with the Adopted Local Plan, only Dunsden Green is considered to have limited scope for development as an ‘Other Village’. It is likely that development will relate to house extensions, building conversions and a small number of infill plots. Infill plots can alter the character of the settlement if not carefully designed. These should reflect the simple cottages and agricultural buildings of the locality.

## D2.0 - Siting, Layout and Density

The siting of new buildings should respect the existing building line along the street. In-depth development is not a feature of the village and would be out of keeping with the settlement pattern.

Dwellings are set well back into their plots and often surrounded by outbuildings and hedgerow planting which forms the boundary.

Gaps between buildings are of key importance. There is a clear distinction between individual and groups of buildings and countryside views are clearly visible.

The density level of the character area has been defined as approximately 6 dwellings per hectare, such density should be respected, but where are a higher density may be appropriate, buildings could also be built to look like a single larger building which is then subdivided into apartments for example.

The key to successful development in this regard is to look at the ratio of built form to plot size and to ensure that the proposal remains in keeping with the surroundings.

## D3.0 - Building Heights, Form, Scale and Massing

New dwellings that respect the existing height and follow the roof line and form of adjacent houses should be encouraged. Similarly proposed extensions are more likely to be successful if they remain subordinate to the height of the original building.

Plan forms should be largely simple for cottages and relate to the type of property proposed. On larger farmhouses and other important buildings, projections and dominant front gable features are in evidence, but only where these are key focal buildings such as Glebe House.

Modern generic house types, which are not designed based on an understanding of the local context are to be avoided.

Careful attention should be paid to roofing materials,



pitch, eaves and verge details and the inclusion of chimney stacks or other features that project above the ridge line.

The proportions of proposed houses should match adjacent houses of the same building type. The wider street scene should be considered and proposed dwellings should be well integrated.

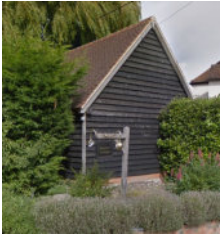
The majority of dwellings are two storeys in height except for landmark buildings. It is unlikely that any infill plot would satisfy requirements for a focal building.

## D4.0 - Garages, Parking and Outbuildings

Garages, cycle stores and bin stores are a feature of modern living, and should be included as an integral part of the overall design from the outset.

Numerous outbuildings are found within this character area and it is commonplace to have them along the side of plots forming boundary elements. Siting along the frontage is likely to be overly dominant in the street scene.

The design of outbuildings and storage area should be subordinate to the dwelling and reflect the rural character of the area. Timber clad barns in natural colours with brick plinths are commonplace.

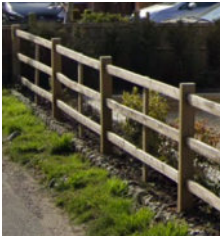


## D5.0 - Gardens - Front and Rear

Gardens and the mature native vegetation within should be retained where to ensure that each building has an attractive, verdant setting.

In a domestic setting, front gardens should not be dominated by car parking. Where sufficient space exists they should be provided with native planting and only small areas of hard surfacing either aggregate or paving. Where hard-surfacing for car parking in front gardens is necessary, it should be screened from view of the street. Proposals that provide SuDS solutions and permeable paving are preferable.

Planting within the setting of private front gardens should be in keeping with the rural context of the character area.



## D6.0 - Boundary treatment

Where development affects the boundaries of a property, new development should consider boundary treatments which are common or complementary to the character area.

Boundary fences should be low key and softened by planting. Where possible native hedgerows are preferable. Close board fencing is urbanising and should avoided where possible.

Walls are less commonplace as boundaries, but should be in a brick style to match the dwelling. The often link outbuildings to a dwelling. Front boundary walls should be low level and soften by planting.

Traditional timber gates site well with the former agricultural related buildings and cottages. Gates which do not offer a view through into a site, can often be



oppressive and overbearing. These also restrict views through to the countryside beyond.

## D7.0 - Green infrastructure

New development should reinforce the hedgerows lining the routes through the area, which are characteristic of the rural landscape. Vegetation can be used to blend buildings into their surroundings and draw the natural landscape into the settlement.

Any opportunity to enhance the footpath network here, particularly between the village green and the Loddon Brewery should be encouraged, since there are currently no paved footways.

It should be noted however that any new paths should be rural in character and new urbanising paved footways are not supported. It is recommended that new permissive paths could be accommodated inside existing field boundaries and hedge lines, without any formal surfacing.

Where a formal path is proposed, this could be accommodated in the form of bound gravel or appropriate loose surfacing similar as shown adjacent.



## D8.0 - Appearance and Detailing

Building details should take reference from existing properties. Buildings should be constructed using the local Berkshire red/orange brick, clay tiles reclaimed rather than concrete to provide differing tones and colours as demonstrated on the materials palette (P25). Generally the elevations of buildings should adhere to the local colour palette, bonds and course detailing.

For developments of multiple homes, detailing will be key to ensure successful integration and variation.



## D9.0 - Windows and Doors

Window surrounds should have minimal detailing on cottages. Arched brickwork and decorative features of Victorian properties using the vernacular material palette are acceptable. Window frames should be painted white or neutral coloured and preferably include multi-paned glazing. Cottage casements and sash windows are prevalent.



# Design Code - Dunsden Green

## D8.1 - ROOFING:



Roofing materials should be plain Clay tiles - red / orange or slate. Decorative tiles used to highlight Concrete tiles are inappropriate due to poor colour match, form and variety. Any other material would need to be sufficiently justified as an exception.

## D5.1 - REAR & FRONT GARDENS

Rear gardens should be over 15 metres in depth. where rear gardens are less, the overall level of amenity space on plot should be considered. Side gardens can be appropriate where this is in keeping with the general pattern of development.

Size of garden should relate to the property and provide suitable amenity space for occupants.

Front gardens should be deep with an average 5+ metres. They should be well contained from the roads and lanes.

## D2.1 - SPACE BETWEEN BUILDINGS:

Development to be loose knit, with sufficient space between dwellings to allow for landscaping to screen and soften, in addition to enable sufficient privacy and prevent overlooking.

Gaps between buildings should allow for countryside views to be maintained

## D2.2 - PLOT SIZES, COVERAGE & DENSITY:

Plot sizes should reflect those in the wider area - on average 1200sq m. There are numerous large plots with low levels of built form coverage under 10%. The overall average is 14.9% coverage of the plot. Plot coverage should not exceed 15%.

The average density in the area is 6.5 dph.

## D9.1 - WINDOWS:



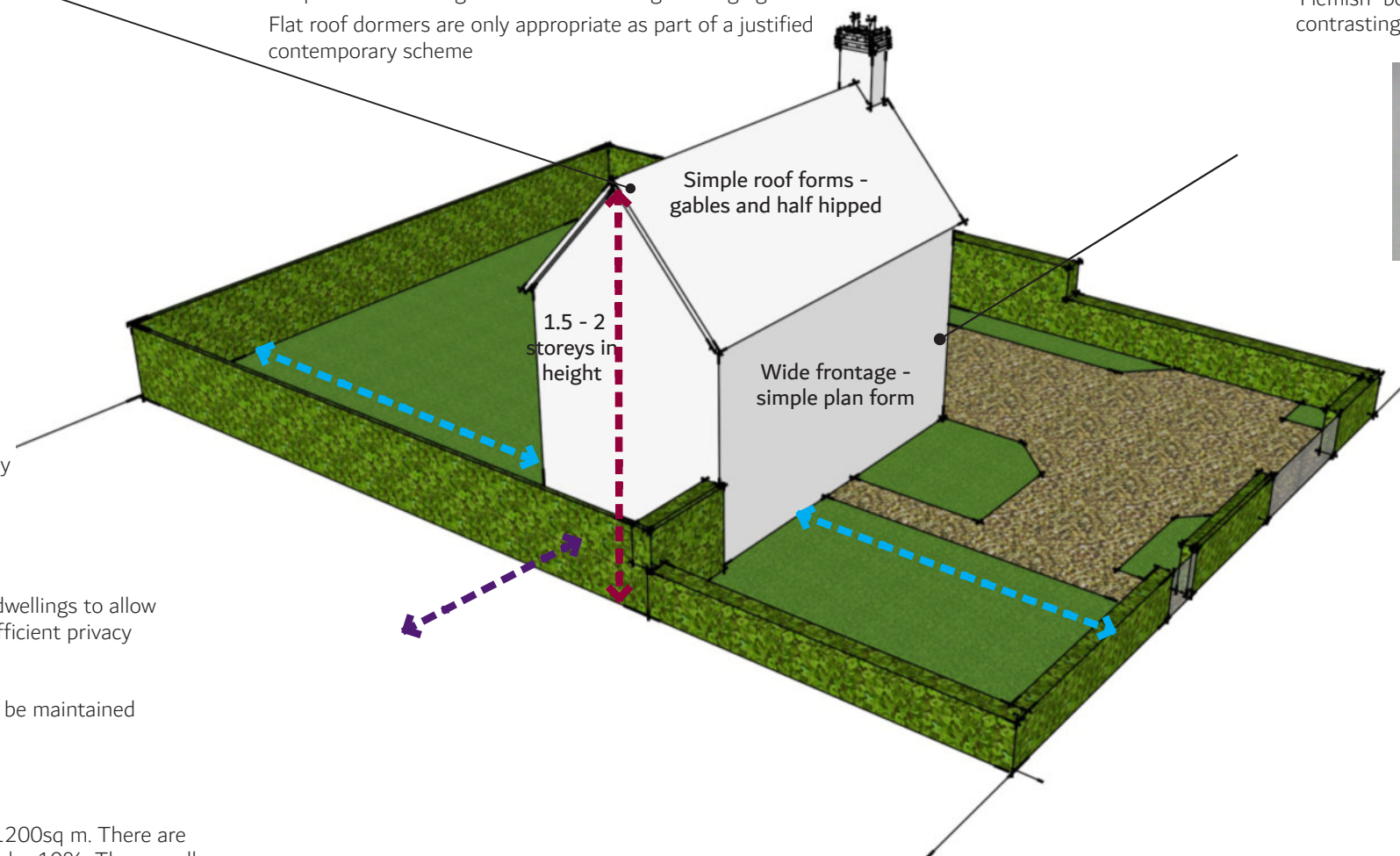
Timber windows are preferable including cottage casement windows - triple pane/ double pane - arch topped and sliding sash windows. Lighter paint colours are preferable. Contemporary metal and timber windows and high quality UPVC with slim profiles.

## D9.2 - DORMER WINDOWS:



Dormer windows should be small in scale - preferably cottage casement in style, generally set into the roof with or cutting the eaves line.

Simple form detailing with timber cladding or hanging tiles  
Flat roof dormers are only appropriate as part of a justified contemporary scheme



## D3.1 - SCALE, MASS AND FORM:

Buildings to be 1.5 to 2 storey maximum. Any 2.5 storey or dominant scale buildings are rarely found and only as landmark properties It is unlikely that any new development would be of landmark quality, but would need to be justified.

Cottages are in keeping and are generally simple in layout, one or two rooms deep and often with wide frontages. Gable features should be subordinate. Simple roof forms - gables and half hipped.

Farmhouse style properties are common and are generally more complex buildings with different subservient elements and extensions, many are found within a traditional courtyard of other outbuildings.

The conversion of farm and other outbuildings should be sympathetic to the original form and appearance.

## D8.2 - WALLING:

Local red/orange bricks are preferable. Other colour bricks are used decoratively. Red or red/brown multi, machine-made bricks are often used on modern buildings and are discordant features not to be replicated.



Flemish bond with contrasting headers

Decorative brickwork detailing, quoins/ dressings. Flint infill

Handmade facing brickwork - red / orange



Painted render

English bond Contrasting brickwork bands

Decorative brickwork

## D4.1 - PARKING & DRIVEWAYS

Off street parking in landscaped gardens or driveways to the side of the property

Open plan parking and driveways without enclosure are not appropriate.

To be enclosed by or hedgerows.

Extensive hard surfacing is not appropriate

## D4.2 - GARAGES & OUTBUILDINGS:

Car barns or garage outbuildings to be set back behind the main dwelling and subservient in scale, form and appearance. They can form boundary walls to reflect the agricultural nature of the area

## D6.1 - BOUNDARIES & OUTBUILDINGS:

Bounded by walls or hedgerows.

Gates to reflect the agricultural character

Close board fencing is suburban in nature and is not appropriate. Limited fencing may be acceptable with sufficient planting to screen



Gated entrances  
Walled front boundary - brick or brick/ flint - red orange



Post and rail fence only usually found in farms



hedged front boundary are commonplace



# Design Code - The Lakes

## TL 1.0 - Design and Appearance

From a visual context and design perspective, it is key that uses are granted which provides facilities or services that have a direct lake use function for recreation which are not detrimental to the landscape and character of the area.

### TL 1.1 Scale, Siting, and Design

The scale, siting, and design of the development should enhance or maintain the character of the lake and its lake shore location, including undeveloped stretches of lake shore.

Applications should be accompanied by sufficient information by which to assess any visual impact concerns.

### TL 1.2 Appearance

The appearance of any proposal should not dominate the existing surroundings or introduce uses which would result in wholesale change in the character of the area.

Any proposals including built structures, temporary features or proposed planting can be functional in appearance befitting their use, where this would be appropriate in a rural and waterside setting.

Poorly designed and sited car parks, large boat houses and sheds, for example are likely to have an adverse impact on the surrounding area.



### TL1.3 Planting

The use of non-native planting species is not supported, particularly in close proximity to the Local Wildlife Site.

### TL 2.0 Urbanising Features

Avoid any development which proposes or would lead to urbanisation, including pavements, tarmac car parks, street lighting, unnecessary signage, formal built gateway entrances, inappropriate surfaces etc. Any hard landscape proposals should be in keeping with the character of the area and be necessary for functional and or safety reasons.

### TL3.0 Quiet Enjoyment

Any development which would result in an adverse impact on the tranquil character of the area would not be supported.

Any increase in usage, including recreational and water-sports based uses needs to be balanced with ecological impacts and the encroachment into nature reserve areas (both physically and through noise and other pollution such as traffic).

The retention of this area as a quiet space is key to its underlying character.

### TL4.0 Access and Design of Permissive Paths

Where existing or permissive routes around the lakes area are implemented or proposed, Public access to the site shall be restricted to the marked routes as shown in the legal agreement appended to the NDP. This is to ensure sensitive wildlife areas remain undisturbed. Such paths are required to be kept relatively informal by mown way marked routes. Any attempts to formalise or surface these routes or upgrade them further will not be supported as this would result in urbanisation.

### TL 5.0 Floodplain Capacity

Any new development must be designed with consideration for appropriate drainage capacity from the outset. Due to flooding constraints, it is essential that floodplain capacity is increased where possible and new mitigation measures are incorporated. Non permeable surfaces and not supported.





# Blue Infrastructure, Flooding and Drainage

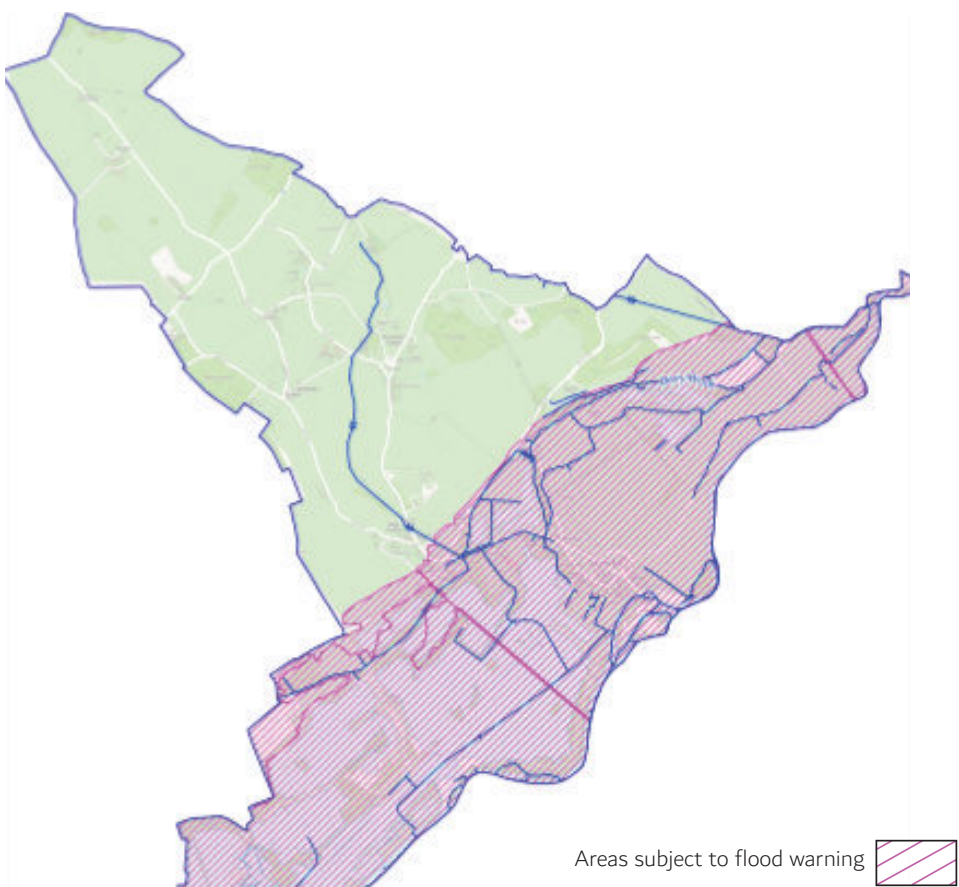
## Flooding

Fluvial flood risk is primarily from the River Thames that forms the southern boundary of the Parish. The southern part of the Parish is low-lying (approximately 50 metres). Superficial deposits of clay, slit and sand are present along the flood plain of the Thames.

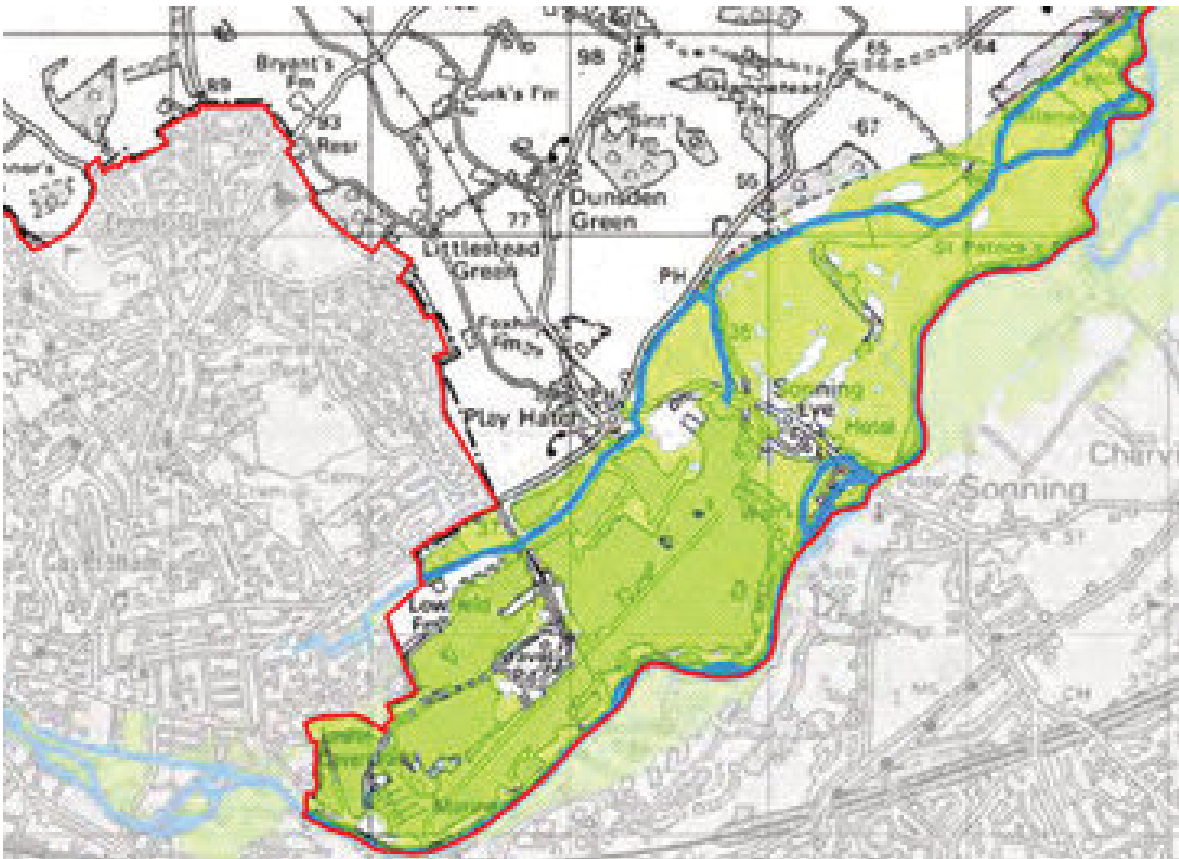
The Thames, Caversham Lakes/ Kennet Marina and the area to the north of the marina is located within Flood Zone 3. The settlements of Playhatch and Sonning Eye are located within the alluvial floodplain of the River Thames, much of which has extracted for gravel, forming a series of lakes. This area has experienced flooding, with events recorded in 1947, 2003, 2007 and 2014. Regular flooding has taken place since then, and the photos on this page are from 2021.

Whilst generally new residential development is limited within flood zone 2 and 3, there may be circumstance where it is appropriate (non residential development for example).

Any new development must be designed to take the extent of the local flood risk into account. Features designed to allow flood water to pass will be required.



Current flood warning areas



Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Map 3.1: Flood Zone 3B: The Functional Flood Plain (SODC)





# Native Trees and Hedgerows

Trees have an important role to play in the natural and man made environment. They provide shelter and contribute to reducing carbon emissions and cleaning the air.

The ecological benefits and connections should be maximised. Tree planting and maintenance of existng trees can increase biodiversity.

Consideration should also be given to planting the correct trees in right location, to ensure that any placement does not result in a loss of biodiversity units.

When choosing a species, designers must consider the following:

- **Use potential** - park, paved area, compatible with drainage, garden size, compatible with road type
- **Mature size** - small <10m up to extra large >25m - As well as height, think about root protection areas and to avoid issues with utilities and services
- **Crown form** - the shape of the crown can be aestheric but also determine planting distances and the effect of the canopy on the space below, would the planting overcrowd the street scene, would it create unacceptable shade?
- **Crown Density** - as above, look at whether a dense canopy provides the level of enclosure required or whether a light, open crown would be preferable
- **Natural habitat & Environmental tolerance** - choose the right tree for the location, given the soil type, levels of sunlight, water and potential for drought etc.
- **Aesthetic and Ornamental Qualities** - Does the tree flower or fruit in a way which does not cause a nuisance? Does the tree introduce a valuable aesthetic to the area? Does the seasonal variation add further interest?

A diverse mix of species should be sought to reduce the risk of passing on inter-species diseases.

New development must be designed around existing trees wherever possible. Where it is unavoidable that trees are lost, they should be replaced by native species. Wherever practical, three new trees should replace every tree lost

## List of Native Trees

- Acer campestre - Field Maple - (M) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Alnus glutinosa - Alder - (M) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Betula pendula - Silver Birch - (L) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Betula pubescens - Downy or White birch - (M) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Carpinus betulus - Hornbeam - (L) (D) (Loam, Sandy)
- Corylus avellana - Hazel - (S) (D) (Loam, Sandy)
- Crataegus laevigata - Hawthorn (Midland) - (S) (D) (Loam, Sandy)
- Crataegus monogyna - Hawthorn (common) - (S) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Fagus sylvatica - Beech (common) - (L) (D) (Loam, Sandy)
- Ilex aquifolium - Holly - (S) (D) (Loam, Sandy)
- Juniperus communis - Juniper (common) - (S) (C) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Malus sylvestris - Crab Apple - (S) (D) (Loam, Sandy)
- Pinus sylvestris - Scots Pine - (L) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Populus nigra - Black Poplar - (L) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Populus tremula - Aspen - (L) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Prunus avium - Sweet Cherry (M) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Prunus padus - Bird Cherry (M) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Quercus petraea - Sessile Oak - (L) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Quercus robur - English Oak - (L) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Salix caprea - Goat Willow - (S) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Salix pentandra - Bay Willow - (S) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Sorbus aria - Whitebeam - (M) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Sorbus aucuparia - Rowan - (S) (D) (Loam, Sandy)
- Sorbus torminalis - Wild Service Tree - (M) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Taxus baccata - English Yew - (M) (C) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Tilia cordata - Lime, small-leaved - (L) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Tilia platyphyllos - Lime, large-leaved - (L) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)
- Tilia x europaea - Lime, common - (L) (D) (Clay, Loam, Sandy)

(L) - Large >25m

(M) - Large >25m

(S) - small <10m

(D) - Deciduous

(C) - Coniferous

(Clay, Loam, Sandy) - Soil type





# EYE AND DUNSDEN PARISH SETTLEMENT CHARACTER APPRAISAL APPENDICES

V2.3 August 2025



# Appendix A - Relevant Local Plan Policy

## South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035

The development plan for the Parish currently comprises the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. The Local Plan identifies the development strategy to be delivered in the District in the period to 2035 and includes the following policies of relevance to Eye and Dunsden Parish.

**Policy STRAT1** sets out the overall strategy of the Plan, which development proposals will be assessed against. This includes supporting smaller and other villages by allowing for limited amounts of housing and employment to help secure the provision and retention of services, and enhancing the historic environment.

**Policy STRAT2** includes the District’s housing and employment requirements.

**Policy STRAT4** states that new development will be provided within Strategic Allocations and that proposals need to be supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment and an archaeological desk-based assessment to provide an assessment of archaeological significance.

**Policy STRAT5** outlines residential densities and aims to optimise the use of land and the potential of the site. Development densities should be informed by the need to achieve high quality design which respects local character. It should also consider local circumstances and constraints, including the need to protect and enhance the local environment, Areas of Outstanding Beauty, heritage assets, and important landscape, habitats and townscape.

**Policy H1** relates to the delivery of new homes in the District. Residential development will be permitted at sites that are allocated by Neighbourhood Development Plans.

**Policy H8** supports development within smaller villages in accordance with Policy H16, and housing allocation within Neighbourhood Development Plans.

**Policy H9** seeks affordable housing contributions in accordance with a set of criteria, and considerations for provision, including being indistinguishable in appearance from market housing on site.

**Policy H10** sets out requirements for exception sites and entry level housing schemes. Schemes should not generate unacceptable impacts on amenity, character and appearance, environment or highways.

**Policy H11** outlines appropriate housing mix.

**Policy H12** supports proposals for self-build and custom-build projects that are delivered in accordance with policies in the Development Plan.

**Policy H13** encourages the delivery of specialist housing for old people in locations with good access to public transport and local facilities.

**Policy H14** aims to deliver pitches for Gypsy and Travellers and plots for Travelling Showpeople.

**Policy H15** safeguards Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites.

**Policy H16** states that development within smaller villages and other villages should be limited to infill and the redevelopment of previously development land or buildings.

**Policies H17, H18, H20 and H21** permit the sub-division of dwellings and conversions to multiple occupation, proposals for the replacement of an existing dwelling located outside the built-up areas of settlements, the provision of a rural worker dwelling in the open countryside and extensions to dwellings or the erection and extension of ancillary buildings within the curtilage of a dwelling, subject to criteria.

**Policy EMP2** requires proposals for employment use to provide a range and size of premises.

**Policy EMP3** seeks to retain existing employment land in order to promote and grow a balances, sustainable economy and local services.

**Policy EMP10** supports proposals for sustainable economic growth in rural areas.

**Policy EMP11** encourages new development to advance the visitor economy for leisure and business purposes. Smaller and proportionately scaled development within built-up areas of larger and smaller villages, which are in keeping with the character of the settlement, will be supported. In rural locations, small-scale development to support the visitor economy, including farm diversification and equine development, will also be supported, provided they are in keeping with the scale and character of the locality and would not adversely affect heritage assets or their setting. Larger development will only by supported in exceptional circumstances, for example to sensitively re-use a historic building.

**Policy EMP12** permits touring caravan and camping sites provided that there is no adverse impact on the landscape, ecological, or historic characteristics of the site and its surroundings.

**Policy EMP13** aims to retain visitor accommodation.

**Policy INF1** sets out the requirements of infrastructure provision.

**Policy TRANS1b** supports strategic transport investment, including improvements in the Reading area, such as a new River Thames crossing, to ensure that any traffic and environmental impacts of those measures do not result in adverse impacts on South Oxfordshire.

**Policy TRANS2** promotes sustainable transport and accessibility.

**Policy TRANS4** requires proposals for new developments which have significant transport implications to include a transport assessment or transport statement, and where relevant a Transport Plan.

**Policy TRANS5** outlines the transport considerations for development proposals.

**Policy TRANS6** aims to improve rail services, access and facilities in South Oxfordshire.

**Policy INF2** promotes faster, more reliable and more comprehensive coverage of electronic communications.

**Policy INF3** relates to telecommunications technology.

**Policy INF4** requires all development proposals to demonstrate adequate water supply, surface water, foul drainage and sewerage treatment capacity to serve the whole development.

**Policy ENV1** provides the highest protection to the landscape scenic beauty of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB). Development in the AONB or affecting its setting will only be permitted where it conserves, and where possible, enhances the character and natural beauty of the AONB. South Oxfordshire’s landscape, countryside and rural areas will be protected against harmful development. Development will only be permitted where it protects and, where possible, enhances features which contribute to the nature and quality of South Oxfordshire’s landscapes.

**Policy ENV2** gives the highest level of protection to sites of international nature conservation importance (Special Areas of Conservation). Development that is likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Development that is likely to result in the loss, deterioration or harm of other designated sites, priority habitats and species will be restricted.

**Policy ENV3** supports development that conserves, restores and enhances biodiversity.

**Policy ENV4** states that development of land that contains or is adjacent to a watercourse must protect and, where possible, enhance the function and setting of the watercourse and its biodiversity. Development should include a minimum 10m buffer zone along both sides of the watercourse to create a corridor favourable to the enhancement of biodiversity. Culverting watercourses should be avoided and mooring states will not be permitted outside settlements.

**Policy ENV5** expects development to contribute towards the provision of additional Green Infrastructure and protect and enhance existing Green Infrastructure.

**Policy ENV6** requires proposals for new development that may affect designated or non-designated heritage assets to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of those assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Proposals for new development should eb sensitively designed and should not cause harm to the historic environment. Schemes that help to secure the long-term conservation of vacant and under-used buildings and bring them back into appropriate use will be particularly encouraged. Alterations to historic



buildings, for example to improve energy efficiency, should respect the integrity of the historic environment and the character and significance of the building.

**Policy ENV7** protects listed buildings and requires proposals for development that affect listed buildings, their curtilage or their setting to conserve enhance or better reveal those elements which contribute to the heritage significance and/or its setting. Features of special architectural or historic interest should be respected. Development proposals affecting the significance of a listed building or its setting that will lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance will be refused unless it is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits.

**Policy ENV8** states that proposals for development within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area must conserve or enhance its special interests, character, setting and appearance. Development will be expected to contribute to the Conservation Area’s special interest and its relationship within its setting. Important views within, into or out of the Conservation Area should be retained and not harmed.

**Policy ENV9** requires development to protect the site and setting of Scheduled Monuments or nationally important designated or undesignated archaeological remains.

**Policy ENV10** aims to conserve or enhance the special historic interest, character or setting of a battlefield, or park or garden on the Historic England Registers of Historic Battlefields or Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England.

**Policy ENV11** requires development proposals to be appropriate to their location and designed to ensure that the occupiers of a new development will not be subject to individual and/or cumulative adverse effect(s) of pollution.

**Policy ENV12** states that development proposals should be located in sustainable locations and should be designed to ensure that they will not result in significant adverse impacts on human health, the natural environment and/or the amenity of neighbouring uses.

**Policy EP1** aims to protect public health from the impacts of poor air quality.

**Policy EP2** relates to hazardous substances.

**Policy EP3** refers to waste collection and recycling.

**Policy EP4** aims to minimise the risk and impact of flooding through directing new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding and ensuring new development manages flood risk effectively, does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and ensures wider environmental benefits of development in relation to flood risk. A Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA should be provided for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3 and, in some instances, Flood Zone 1. All development is required to provide a drainage strategy.

**Policy EP5** directs development away from Minerals Safeguarding Areas to safeguard future potential extraction.

**Policy DES1** supports the delivery of high-quality development and lists design criteria which new development must adhere to.

**Policy DES2** requires all new development to be designed to reflect the positive features that make up the character of the local area and should both physically and visually enhance and complement the surroundings.

**Policy DES3** requires Design and Access Statements to demonstrate how the development proposal meets the design objectives and principles set out in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide. The Design and Access Statement should be proportional to the scale and complexity of the proposal.

**Policy DES4** advises that allocated sites and major development must be accompanied by a masterplan.

**Policy DES5** requires a private outdoor garden or outdoor amenity space, or alternatively a shared outdoor amenity area to be provided for all new dwellings.

**Policy DES6** states that development proposals should demonstrate that they will not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, when considering both individual and cumulative impacts.

**Policy DES7** requires new development to make provision for the efficient use and protection of natural resources where applicable.

**Policy DES8** promotes sustainable design and states all new development should seek to minimise the carbon and energy impacts of their design and construction, be designed to improve resilience to the anticipated effects of climate change and be built to last.

**Policy DES9** encouraged schemes for renewable and low carbon energy generation and associated infrastructure at all scales.

**Policy DES10** sets out carbon reduction requirements for new development.

**Policy CF1** aims to safeguard community facilities.

**Policy CF2** supports development proposals which provide new or extended community facilities and services.

**Policy CF3** encourages proposals for sport and recreation facilities.

**Policy CF4** seeks to protect, maintain and where possible enhance existing open space, sport and recreation, play facilities and land including playing fields to ensure their continued contribution to the health and well-being of visitors and residents.

**Policy CF5** requires new residential development to provide r contribute towards inclusive and accessible open space and play facilities having regard to the most up to date standards set out in the Open Spaces Study.

## Infrastructure

### Transport

The A1455 represents a busy through route from Reading to Henley-on-Thames. Sonning Bridge connects the Parish with Sonning and the suburb of Woodley to the south.

Reading Transport Strategy 2036 Consultation Draft (May 2020) proposes a new orbital route around the northern edge of Reading to link the A4074 to the A4155. The new route would enable the delivery of a Park and Ride network to the north of Reading, which would serve the town centre. As part of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan examination, Reading Borough Council identified a potential park and ride site on the A4155, immediately south of the junction of Henley Road and Caversham Park Road in South Oxfordshire.

South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policy TRANS1b states that South Oxfordshire Council will work with Oxfordshire County Council to plan for transport improvements in the Reading area, including a proposal for a new River Thames crossing, subject to ensuring that any traffic and environmental impacts of those measures do not result in adverse impacts on South Oxfordshire. There is no reference within the Local Plan to a park and ride provision on the A4155.

The proposed Third Thames Crossing would link the eastern side of Caversham and the northern end of the A3290. It is stated within the strategy that associated mitigation measures would be implemented to protect and bring benefits to local communities; At the time of writing these have not been clarified.

See page 8 for more details on proposals and designations.



## Appendix B - Character Appraisal Sheets for each Settlement -

### Dunsden Green

Below are the assessment sheets for each settlement area. These are undertaken from measuring plans and an on-site inspection.

Data has been anonymised for each property.

PLOT SIZE (residential only)	BUILT FORM (residential only)	RATIO	WALL MATERIALS				ROOF MATERIALS				OUTBUILDINGS	STOREYS
			BRICK	TIMBER FRAME/ CLAD	RENDER	CLAY TILE (HANG)	THATCH	CLAY TILE	CONCRETE TILE	SLATE		
637.20	115.49	18.1%	red/orange					Plain red/ brown				2
497.81	61.73	12.4%	red/orange						Plain red			2
412.19	60.73	14.7%	red/orange						red brown			2
432.80	80.64	18.6%	red/orange		Painted			Plain red/ brown				2
444.50	85.62	19.3%	red/orange		Painted roughcast			Plain red/ brown				2
504.20	90.6	18.0%	red/orange		Painted roughcast				Plain red			2
464.80	66.71	14.4%	red/orange		Painted			Plain red/ brown				2
660.80	95.58	14.5%	red/orange						Plain red			2
1157.60	233.97	20.2%	buff			red multi			plain light red			1.5
1660.60	324.57	19.5%	Painted					red/orange			timber and brick	2
991.60	255.87	25.8%	Grey / red					Plain red/ brown			timber and brick	1.5
475.30	98.78	20.8%			Painted			red/orange				1.5
154.32	59.74	38.7%			Painted			red/orange				1.5
946.00	70.69	7.5%			Painted			red/orange				1.5
763.64	77.66	10.2%	Grey / red					red/orange				1.5
813.42	51.77	6.4%	Grey / red					red/orange				1.5
								Plain/ detailed red/orange			brick	1.5
708.90	178.22	25.1%	red/orange		Painted							1.5 / 2
1017.10	114.49	11.3%							red brown			2
599.70	139.39	23.2%	red multi							grey		2
2750.89	245.92	8.9%	red					plain red/brown multi				2
2499.99	280.77	11.2%			Painted			red/orange				2.5
4146.10	342.49	8.3%	red/orange					red/orange				1.5
3756.30	239.95	6.4%	Painted					red/orange				1.5 / 2
1801.07	241.93	13.4%	red/orange	timber clad timber frame with red/orange infill				red/orange				2
5330.53	137.4	2.6%						roman red/ brown				2
477.90	47.79	10.0%	red					roman red/ brown				2
525.69	61.73	11.7%	red					red/orange			brick/ timber	2
8859.00	609.32	6.9%	red/orange									2
<b>1553.21</b>	<b>159.63</b>	<b>14.9%</b>										



# Playhatch

Below are the assessment sheets for each settlement area. These are undertaken from measuring plans and an on-site inspection.

Data has been anonymised for each property.

[illegible]



# Appendix B - Character Appraisal Sheets for each Settlement - Sonning Eye

Below are the assessment sheets for each settlement area. These are undertaken from measuring plans and an on-site inspection.

Data has been anonymised for each property.

PLOT SIZE (residential only)	BUILT FORM (residential only)	RATIO	WALL MATERIALS				ROOF MATERIALS				OUTBUILDINGS	STOREYS
			BRICK/ STONE	TIMBER FRAME/ CLAD	RENDER	TILE HANGING	THATCH	CLAY TILE	CONCRETE TILE	SLATE		
7957.10	383.6	4.8%	Bath stone ashlar						plain red orange plain red orange and decorative grey plain red orange and decorative grey			
118.00	24.50	20.8%	Grey with red details and buff dressings						plain red orange			
101.10	57.40	56.8%	Grey with red details and buff dressings						plain red orange			
1025.20	68.50	6.7%	red/orange with grey detailing	timber frame with red orange brick infill					plain red orange			
350.20	92.20	26.3%	red/orange with grey/burnt header chequer						plain red orange			
920.20	119.80	13.0%		timber frame with red orange brick infill					plain red orange			
1282.50	136.10	10.6%							plain red orange			1.
5157.70	149.20	2.9%	Mixed red orange with grey details and grey with red dressings			red/orange clay plain and decorative			plain red orange			
1878.40	82.90	4.4%	red/orange with eaves detailing						plain red orange			
2363.70	439.70	18.6%	red/orange with occasional grey/ burnt headers						plain red orange			2.
311.80	149.00	47.8%	red/orange with grey detailing						plain red orange plain red orange			1.5/
134.20	64.50	48.1%	Painted brick	timber frame with painted brick infill					plain red orange			
171.50	47.30	27.6%		timber frame with painted brick infill					plain red orange			
194.50	56.50	29.0%		timber frame with painted brick infill					plain red orange plain red orange			
611.90	81.40	13.3%	Painted brick									
5158.40	207.90	4.0%										
1400.10	138.10	9.9%		timber frame with painted brick infill					plain red orange			1.
4427.70	250.70	5.7%	timber clad dark stained					thatch				
603.70	106.80	17.7%	red brown multi dark detailing			Plain conc red/ brown				red/ brown		1.5/
555.00	92.70	16.7%	red/orange multi							red/ brown		
571.90	77.50	13.6%										
426.00	78.80	18.5%	red/orange						plain red orange plain red orange plain red orange			
5071.70	51.50	1.0%	red/orange						plain red orange plain red orange			
483.50	61.60	12.7%	red/orange red/orange with eaves detailing						plain red orange plain red orange			1.5/
261.90	64.40	24.6%	red/orange multi						plain red orange plain red orange			
960.50	82.90	8.6%			painted painted pebbledash brick				plain red orange			
2050.70	229.40	11.2%										
951.00	148.20	15.6%	red multi						red brown			1.
703.50	139.60	19.8%	red multi						red brown			1.
			red/orange							grey		
718.40	137.70	19.2%	red multi	timber clad dark stained					red brown			
852.60	142.00	16.7%	red multi	timber clad dark stained timber frame with red orange brick infill and part timber clad (waney)				red brown				
			red/orange with light mortar	timber clad dark stained timber clad dark stained			red/orange clay plain and decorative		plain red orange plain red orange plain red orange plain red orange			1.5/
375.20	99.20	26.4%		timber clad dark stained timber clad dark stained								1.
1468.80	176.60	12.0%							plain red orange plain red orange			1.
1427.90	144.90	10.1%							plain red orange plain red orange			1.
643.10	216.90	33.7%	red/orange						plain red orange plain red orange			1.
513.30	123.80	24.1%	red/orange						plain red orange			1.
1450.08	131.22	18.1%										
			Painted blockwork/ brick			red/orange clay plain and decorative			plain red orange			
			red/orange with occasional burnt headers						plain red orange			
			Grey with red/ orange dressings		pebbledash unpainted	red/orange clay plain and decorative			plain red orange			