



# Watlington Conservation Area Appraisal



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## **Acknowledgements**

This document has been produced with thanks to Dr. Kathryn Davies, who research and wrote the body of this appraisal at the request of Watlington Parish Council and in collaboration with South Oxfordshire District Council. Cover image: Nicola Schafer.

## **Note**

This appraisal seeks to provide a comprehensive assessment of the character and special historic interest of the conservation area. However, the reader should not assume that details which contribute to the character of the area, but are not mentioned here specifically, can be dismissed by reason of their omission.

## **Contact Us**

For further information and advice on Conservation Areas contact:  
South Oxfordshire District Council  
Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE  
Tel: 01235 422600  
Email: [planning@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning@southoxon.gov.uk)

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# 1.0 Introduction

## What are conservation areas?

Areas of “special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” – in other words, they exist to protect the features and the characteristics that make a historic place unique and distinctive.

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. In addition to statutory controls, both National Policy and the Local Authority policies in the Local Plan help preserve the special character and appearance of conservation areas and their setting where it contributes to its significance.

## What is the purpose of a conservation area appraisal?

- Identify special architectural or historic interest and the changing needs of the conservation area;
- Define or redefine the conservation area boundaries;
- Increase public awareness and involvement in the preservation and enhancement of the area;
- Provide a framework for informed planning decisions;
- Guide controlled and positive management of change within the conservation area to minimise harm and encourage high quality, contextually responsive design.

## How might living in a conservation area affect you?

- Most demolition works require planning permission from the local authority;

- Restrictions on permitted development and advertising;
- If you intend to cut down, top or lop any but the smallest trees you must notify the council so potential harm can be assessed.

For further information on conservation areas, how they are managed and how this might affect you, please see the South Oxfordshire District Council's [website](#) and Historic England's advice on [living in conservation areas](#).

## Planning policy context

Watlington adopted a [neighbourhood plan](#) in August 2018. The wider district development plan currently sits within the [South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035](#). Other material planning considerations include the [National Planning Policy Framework 2024 \(NPPF\)](#), [Planning Practice Guidance \(PPG\)](#) and other relevant policy updates as identified on the Council's website.

## Methodology and Consultation

This appraisal was produced with current best practice guidance published by Historic England and information collected using publicly available resources and thorough on-site analysis from the publicly accessible parts of the conservation area. A draft of this appraisal and a boundary review underwent public and stakeholder consultation and the resulting feedback was then incorporated into this document. The revised boundary shown on the accompanying map and in Section 9 of this document was adopted at a meeting of the council's Cabinet on Thursday 18 December 2025. This document was finalised and approved in January 2026.

## 2.0 Location



View from Watlington Hill. Image credit: Nicola Schafer.

### 2.1 Overview

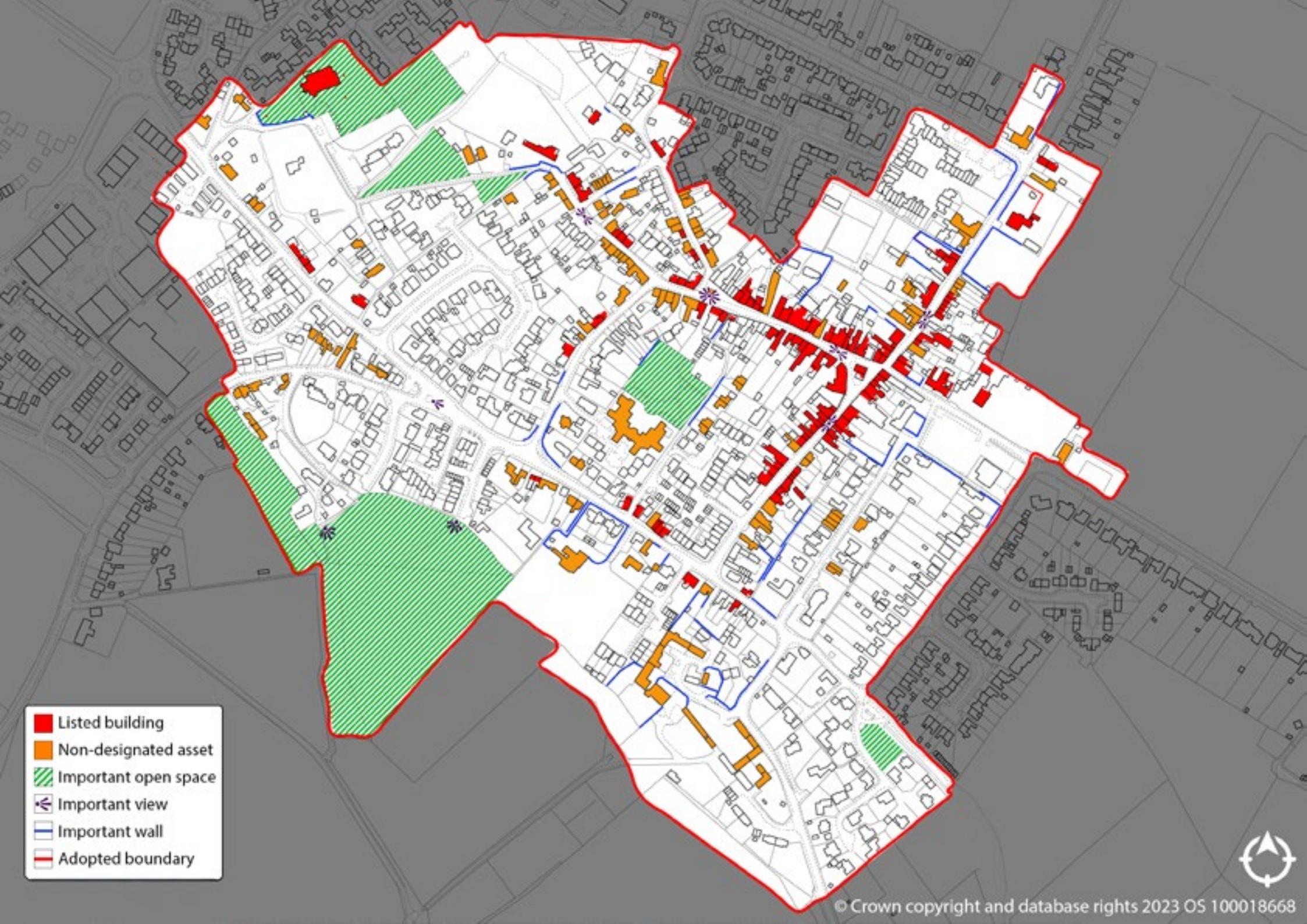
The town is located in the Chilterns in the north of the parish of Watlington, on the southern slopes of the escarpment about 235m up. It lies 11 miles from Henley-on-Thames to the south, 9 miles from Thame to the north, 8 miles from Wallingford to the south west and 21 from Oxford. Just 3 miles to the north east is the M40 motorway. It is surrounded by attractive countryside, mostly in arable use. The land to the east lies within the Chilterns designated 'National Landscape'. To the east is Watlington Hill, one of the highest points in the Chilterns National Landscape.

It is a small market town with a population of 2,439 recorded in the 2021 census. It has a few densely-developed streets in its historic core with development becoming increasing loose-knit towards the outskirts of the town. There is generally a clear edge to the town, the exception being Hill Road which has sporadic development along its length leading up to Watlington Hill.

The conservation area includes that part of the town which had been developed by the late nineteenth century, i.e. its historic core, the area around the church; the roads and lanes leading to the church, the former manor of Watcombe and the farms and cottages along the principal routes into the town.

The principal route through the town giving access to the M40 runs north-south along Couching Street and Shirburn Street in the centre of the conservation area. This is heavily trafficked.

The meadows to the south and arable land to the north east place the conservation area in its rural setting and provide links to the town's agricultural past. Views of open countryside, which can be seen from many parts of the conservation area, place the town in its historic rural setting.



### 3.0 Summary of Special Interest

- Archaeological interest lies in the survival of evidence for the development of the town from its origins near the church and the shift to High Street and around the Town Hall, associated with the junction on the north-south route through the town. There is some archaeological interest in Watcombe Manor, which was an important medieval manor but became much diminished as a farmstead.
- The layout of the conservation area largely follows historical routes and traditional field boundaries. The historic core has a planned layout largely unchanged since the medieval period. The street pattern, open spaces and many individual plots are clearly recognisable on the 1780 estate map.
- A network of historic, narrow, enclosed footpaths and alleys provide interesting links throughout the conservation area.
- The historic walls in brick, brick and flint or chalk and brick enclose some of these paths and historic plots boundaries.
- The predominant character of the historic core is that of a small eighteenth century market town with its Town Hall (built as a school in 1664) dominating the centre.
- The tight urban form of the historic core, creating intimate spaces, becomes increasingly less dense towards the edge of the conservation area.
- The area around the Church of St. Leonard, with its large churchyard, surrounding woodland and open space, part of which was pre-enclosure meadow, retains evidence of the earliest settlement of the town. This tranquil, largely traffic-free area provides a strong contrast to the historic core.
- The historic core has a high proportion of listed buildings as well as a high survival of other historic buildings and structures of local interest
- The prevailing building material is the local red brick building, with flared headers introduced for decorative effect. Evidence of the earlier settlement can be seen in the fine examples of early timber-framed buildings and many timber frames are concealed behind brick frontages. Some eighteenth-century houses are built of flint or vitreous brick with red brick dressings.
- The buildings illustrate aspects of life of the inhabitants from the late fifteenth century onwards. Successive alterations show how uses, living standards and building technology has changed over time.
- The juxtaposition of different building styles, dates, size and uses creates a lively, attractive street scene held together architecturally by certain unifying factors such as the continuous building line, limited palette of materials and the proportion of building elements. The only deliberately designed element of the historic core is the area around the War Memorial with its decorative planting and seating.

## 4.0 Historical Development<sup>1</sup>

The Watlington area is likely to have been settled at an early date, the evidence for this being a Bronze Age axe and Roman coins which have been found nearby. Settlement is likely to have been encouraged by the proximity of the Upper and Lower Icknield Way. The Upper Icknield Way (or 'Ridgeway') is an ancient and important cross-country track which runs along the dry, high ground to the east. The Lower Icknield Way that parallels the Ridgeway to the north-east emerged as an important routeway to Dorchester-on-Thames in post-Roman times. The place name means 'settlement of Walcel's people' and this indicates occupation from around the 6th century. A 9th century charter mentions eight 'manses' or major dwellings in Watlington and the Domesday survey of 1086 identifies the area as being an agricultural community valued at £10.

A wooden church was probably built in Watlington during the Anglo-Saxon period, although one is not specifically mentioned before 1129. It is likely that early medieval settlement was concentrated around the church and as recently as 1819 it was noted that the older buildings, reputedly built entirely of wattle and daub, lay on the north side of the town. These have subsequently been demolished. The manor house, which lay to the east of the church, is first mentioned in 1250. It was owned at this time by Richard, Earl of Cornwall, as part of the honour of Wallingford, but was demolished in the early 17th century, although part of its moat is still visible. In 1252 Richard obtained a grant of market for Watlington and in 1302 a fair and second market were instituted.

1. This section on historical development is largely based on information in the existing conservation area appraisal, historical research by Tim Horton and Terry Jackson, the Victoria County history and information from trade directories of the late nineteenth century.

Watlington was not granted a corporate charter in the Middle Ages, but there was an effort to lay out a planned street system, suggesting that the present settlement may have been one of the many 'planted' towns created in the 12th or 13th centuries. Certainly, the town seems to have grown away from the original settlement, leaving the church in isolation. The centre of the town is now well to the east of the church, around the fine town hall, which was built in 1664/5 at the expense of Thomas Stonor. This provided cover for the market and rooms above for a grammar school.

Watlington was rarely a town of great wealth. It had some connections with the wool trade in the middle ages and in Georgian times, when several of its finest buildings were built, it was a small commercial centre in the County, boasting several banks and other essential services for that time. Typical of many market towns, it was surrounded by open fields which remained until the parliamentary enclosure of 1815. To the south and around the church were meadows. Nearly all of the land in the conservation area was subject to early enclosure.

Historically there were no industries, apart from those supporting the local farming community, and in the 17th century the market, which was never large, lost most of its trade to High Wycombe and Henley. Trading links with the capital diminished when merchants favoured the Stokenchurch - High Wycombe route to London, (the turnpike was completed in 1719), instead of through Henley.

Watlington was involved in the Civil War (1642-49) and was in the middle of the fighting for many years. Royalist forces were quartered

nearby at Shirburn Castle and several skirmishes took place in and around the town. In 1644 Royalist troops considered fortifying the town but the king decided to move his garrison to Oxford instead, thereby preventing possible siege damage. The wider area between Watlington and Oxford was thereby subject to much attention from foragers particularly as each side sought to sustain its forces.

Watlington continued to grow very slowly and this has protected the historic core from redevelopment. Many medieval buildings were refronted in the 18th and early 19th centuries, often in brick or a combination of brick and flint. Watlington never benefited from the canal trade as the nearest river is six miles away. In 1822 this was described as 'a circumstance totally adverse to the prosperity of the place' and after 1852 a market ceased to be held in the town at all.

A branch railway line was built in 1872 by the Watlington and Princes Risborough Railway Company. However, this came too late to save the fortunes of the town. The fact that the line terminated at the parish boundary with Pyrton, away from the town, may also account for the lack of prosperity brought by the railway. The line was run by the company until it was taken over by the Great Western Railway in 1883. All speculative attempts to link the town to Didcot and the main Great Western line were resisted. The branch line from Chinnor was closed to passengers in 1957 and for freight in 1960 even prior to the Beeching Report in 1963.

In 1871, Watlington had a population of 1617. It had, by this time ceased to be a market town. The road connections were poor and it was noted in 1851 that the market was thinly attended. The surrounding towns of Henley, High Wycombe and Thame took most of the trade. Watlington

remained a small town only for local trade and business. The typical range of occupations included professionals, agricultural workers, craftsmen and shopkeepers and the town was largely self-sufficient. The principal industries were shoe making, referred to in 1842 as 'lately sprung up'<sup>2</sup>, and beer brewing and retailing and these served a wider area. The lace trade based on homeworking was significant as incomes from farming declined after the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846.

The map regression, see Appendix 1, shows the development of the town through the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Of note on the 1921 OS map are the watercress beds shown around the watercourse in the west part of the conservation area. This was an important commercial activity in the early twentieth century supplying demand in London.

The twentieth century has seen the inevitable growth on the periphery of the town, particularly to the north, east and west. Heavy traffic flows through the town towards the nearby M40 motorway and this causes problems in the narrow streets. However, the proximity to the motorway is likely to have been a factor in the late 20th century growth of the town. The extension of the M40 first to Stokenchurch then beyond to Birmingham, coupled with the demand for employment in the 'science' zone in Oxfordshire led inexorably to greater commuting from the community each day.

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2. Pigot's Directory, 1842

# 5.0 Character Assessment

## 5.1 Summary

This section on historical development is largely based on information in the existing conservation area appraisal, historical research by Tim Horton and Terry Jackson, the Victoria County history and information from trade directories of the late nineteenth century. Consequently, the character areas proposed do not have hard boundaries but are rather, amorphous areas overlapping at their edges.

## 5.2 Spaces

The historic core has the tight urban form of a typical historic market town. There is a more or less continuous building line along the edge of the footway with a few gaps to allow for carriageways and access to rear plots (right, *Fig 1*). Streets are narrow, opening out only at the central crossroads and at the west end of High Street. Streets become progressively less dense moving away from the historic core until, at the edge of the conservation area, there is a prevalence of detached or semi-detached houses set in more generous plots. The rectilinear form of the central streets suggests a planted medieval town. Beyond this, development is more haphazard and has been determined by ancient tracks, watercourses and field boundaries.

More recent development tends to be suburban in character rather than the tight urban form of the historic core or the semi-rural character of the historic buildings outside the centre. That is, buildings are set back from the road frontage and there are gaps between buildings. Most are detached or semi-detached and have private gardens. On the whole, the modern self-contained developments have very little impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area apart from



Fig 1. Shirburn Street

their bellmouth junctions with adjoining roads announcing the entrance.

At the edge of the conservation area to the south is a transitional area of loose-knit development which leads on to the meadows representing its southern edge.



Fig 2. 32-34 Couching Street

### 5.3 Buildings

The high number of statutorily listed buildings in the historic centre of the town reflects the quality and interest of the buildings here. In addition, many other historic buildings in the conservation area have been identified as being buildings of local note.

There is a range of traditional building materials found in the town including timber framing, weatherboarding, render, brick, flint and some clunch. Materials give an indication of age and status. The earliest buildings are timber framed, including some cruck buildings, and some retain original wattle and daub panels. On ancillary buildings and farm buildings weatherboarding was the usual finish and a few examples survive.

Whilst much brick had been produced at nearby Nettlebed from the Middle Ages it was mainly used in higher status buildings such as the Town Hall, 1664/5. It became more readily available at the vernacular level during the 17th century and widespread subsequently. There was a brick and tile works nearby at Christmas Common which is likely to have been the source of some brick for Watlington. It is this brick which is locally distinctive to Watlington, together with the flared headers, used for decorative effect. In some cases, the vitreous bricks form the main wall material with red brick dressings (left, *Fig 2*). Many early timber-framed buildings were refaced in brick or else rendered over, as timber framing became increasingly unfashionable during the late 17th and 18th centuries. Whilst more recent development is nearly all in brick, much of it is not local.

Thatch was the most common roofing material for vernacular buildings and it survives on a number of timber-framed buildings in the town. It was gradually replaced by the more durable, locally made, plain tiles. After the mid-19th century slate became more readily available as the rail network facilitated transport and this is found on a number of buildings. The limited use of slate reflects the historically poor transport links to the town.

The hearth was a fundamental element in historic houses, expressed externally by chimney stacks, providing information on date, plan form and status (overleaf, *Fig 3*). The survival of external stacks is therefore a crucial record of building type and date. Although some historic buildings in the conservation area have lost their stacks, many remain and provide evidence of past plan forms and ways of living. Some are central ridge stacks, some are end stacks and some are clearly flues relating to outbuildings. Many modern houses are without chimney stacks.



Fig 3. The Lilacs, Brook Street

Whilst much original detailing survives on traditional houses, most have had some details altered. Windows and doors in particular date from all periods. Early houses with lower storey heights generally have horizontal openings with small-paned windows. As glass became cheaper and more readily available from the late sixteenth century onwards, windows became progressively larger. Side hung casements are commonly found in cottages but where height permitted, vertical sliding sashes were the style of choice during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This is associated with greater storey height and better living conditions, as a result of more light and air penetrating the building. Several houses have evidence of roofs being raised, as storey height was indicator of status, which some sought through upgrading their homes. There is a high survival of original windows and doors in the conservation area illustrating changing fashions over the centuries. Replacement windows and doors are mostly sensitive and appropriate although there are some poor examples.

There were at different times over 30 properties in the town that were hostgeries, including inns, taverns, pubs and beer houses though only three are present today. Nonetheless many of the interiors of these buildings reveal traces of these past uses.

#### 5.4 Views

A principal characteristic of views in and around the conservation area is that of contrast. In the historic core, with its continuous built-up frontage views are channelled along the main streets with urban features as focal points. Glimpsed views of rear plots and down narrow paths provide an intriguing contrast. Outside the centre, views are more open and medium to long distance revealing the proximity of open countryside. Moving towards the edge of the conservation area, there are some extensive views of open countryside, particularly from Hill Road and by Stonor Green, which look on to Watlington Hill, and from the meadows to the south of the town (overleaf, *Fig 4*).

The White Mark is a feature of some of the views, it was dug into Watlington Hill in 1764 to give the illusion from a distance that St Leonard's Church had a spire.



Fig 4. View of Watlington Hill from Stonor Green

## 5.5 Greenery and landscape features

In the historic core, the dense urban form has very little greenery to relieve it. Apart from the limited planting and the trees at the war memorial, greenery is limited to some climbers, pots and rare glimpses of private gardens. The central open space of Davenport Place and The Paddock community garden is like a jewel set round with buildings. It is an attractive intimate area with native planting providing a welcome contrast to the dense built form around it (below, *Fig 5*). The Paddock is a designated Local Green Space in the NDP and now provides a 'village green' feel for the community. It can offer a locale for open air celebration throughout the year.

Moving out of the centre towards the edge of the conservation area there are more private gardens fronting on to the streets. These provide attractive and, in places, very picturesque compositions in conjunction with the historic houses. Mature trees, particularly in the west, in the area around the church, and in the meadows to the south, soften the townscape and are visible throughout most of the town in the distance rising above buildings.



Fig 5. View across Davenport Place

# 6.0 Character Area Studies

## 6.1 Area 1: Primary streets in the historic core

This dense and complex area of development is far from uniform. This comprises the main through routes developed more or less fully, by the time of the enclosure award in 1815 and the land associated with them. This includes Couching Street, Shirburn Street and High Street as primary streets. An overriding characteristic is the intimacy of the spaces here in the historic core and it is this which has determined inclusion in this area.

### 6.1.1 Key characteristics

- Historic town streets, narrow and slightly winding, enclosed by continuous built-up frontage. Narrow building plots typical of medieval burgage plots. Open space generally limited to the rear of building frontages
- Buildings are mostly domestic in scale, with mixed residential and commercial use, the latter mostly at ground floor level.
- A range of dates, forms, styles, materials and detailing result in an attractive townscape.
- Very little open space or greenery on street frontages
- Views are generally short to medium distance, closed by other townscape elements apart from those to the north which lead into open countryside
- Considerable through traffic, on the primary streets, including heavy goods vehicles, diminishes the enjoyment of the street.
- On-street car parking



Fig 6. War Memorial at The Cross

### 6.1.2 Special interest/significance

- The significance of this area lies in its survival of evidence from the early settlement of the town with development largely following historical routes and traditional field boundaries.
- Historic interest lies in the layout of the historic core, largely unchanged since the medieval period. The street pattern and open spaces are clearly recognisable on the 1780 estate map.
- The buildings illustrate aspects of life of the inhabitants from the late fifteenth century onwards. Successive alterations show how uses, living standards and building technology has changed over time.
- The juxtaposition of different building styles, dates, size and uses creates a lively, attractive streetscene held together architecturally by

certain unifying factors such as the continuous building line, limited palette of materials and the proportion of building elements. The only deliberately designed element of the historic core is the area around the War Memorial with its decorative planting and seating.

The historic core contains the principal historic streets in the town which developed from the Middle Ages onwards. Couching Street and Shirburn Street form the only north-south route through the town and High Street running east-west links to Gorwell and the main path to the Church. The streets are very narrow opening out only at the junction which forms the central space in the town. It is here that the Town Hall was built in 1664/5 forming a major focal point in the historic core. The only other focus in the centre is The Cross where High Street widens out at the site of the former market. This space accommodates the war memorial with its surrounding decorative planting and seating (previous page, *Fig 6*). A network of historic footpaths connects these streets with other parts of the town.

These narrow streets have a more or less continuous built-up frontage, with only a few gaps, for carriage entrances, access to rear plots and the narrow footpaths leading off the main streets. The exceptions are The Methodist Chapel, grade II listed, which is set right back from the footway with just a low wall and railings defining the footway boundary, and the garage forecourt on Couching Street.

Building plots are mostly typical burgage plots with a narrow street frontage and extending back from the street where rear plots accommodate ancillary buildings. The overall impression is that of a brick-built town centre dating principally from the eighteenth century. However, there is a mix of building types, scale, age, materials and detailing



Fig 7. St. Johns Hall

typical of a historic market town. These illustrate changes experienced in the town over the centuries. The historic core is the commercial centre of the town with small shops and businesses principally at ground floor level. Many of these have residential uses at first floor. Mixed in with these are houses which have remained in entirely residential use or have been converted to residential use. The former principal inn in the town, the Hare and Hounds just by the Town Hall, is now a business centre.

The streets of the historic core were fully built up to their present extent by 1780, though there was clearly some redevelopment in the 19th century, including the Methodist Chapel, 1812, and St. Johns Hall, 1888 on Shirburn Street (*above, Fig 7*). There are houses dating from at least the 15th century with good examples from every period since then.

The most striking late medieval buildings are the Old Greyhound and the Old Barley Mow, both grade II listed (right, *Fig 8*).

Nearly all buildings have pitched roofs parallel to the street with gables, many of which are exposed because of differing building heights. Notable exceptions are the chapel and St. John's Hall, both of which have decorative gables fronting the street. Despite the overall impression of a predominantly brick-built town, there is a wide range of traditional building materials found. The most common are timber framing, plain brick, brick with decorative flared headers, brick and flint and render. Some render is clearly concealing earlier fabric, probably timber framing. There is also flint on its own, clunch and weather boarding.

The majority of the roofs are covered with plain tile although there is some slate and thatch. Some of the steeper pitched roofs have dormers incorporated. Chimney stacks survive on most buildings and are universally of brick. There are end stacks and ridge stacks expressing the plan from of the house and giving a clue as to its date.

Eaves heights are quite low for the early buildings, increasing in height with 18th and 19th century buildings. This results in an interesting mix along the street, of scale, roofscape and exposed upper gables (right, *Fig 9*). Decoration at eaves level is usually a simple dentil course though there are some moulded cornices, signifying, along with other detailing, higher status.



Fig 8. The Old Barley Mow, the Old Greyhound is to its right.



Fig 9. View looking north towards Town Hall, Couthing Street.



Fig 10. High Street House

Window details vary with the date of the building with earlier buildings, with low eaves, having a horizontal emphasis and later buildings with higher eaves having window openings with a vertical emphasis. Some original vertical sliding sashes survive ranging from the smaller-paned six-over-six sashes to the large Victorian four-paned sashes.

That Couthing Street and High Street housed the leading citizens of the town is demonstrated in the high status building such as High Street House, grade II (above, *Fig 10*), dating from the 1720s exhibiting all the characteristics of a high status early Georgian residence and 20 High

Street, Watlington Club, dating from the mid eighteenth century. Eaves, windows and doors are usually the focus for decoration and examples of fine detailing can be found throughout the historic core.

Many of the buildings have evidence of alterations over the centuries. These multiphase buildings are important records of changing technology, living standards and fashion. Many apparently eighteenth-century brick houses have earlier cores. Timber framing can often be seen on the flank and rear walls of these. Other timber frames have been rendered over and some have this ruled out to imitate ashlar. The significance of this is that by the eighteenth century, not only was much timber framing in need of some repairs, at least to the infill panels but it was considered very old-fashioned and inferior to brick or ashlar. An associated improvement was raising the roof, at least on the front elevation, to give greater height to the first floor and allowing for the insertion of the fashionable, vertically-hung sash windows. 24 and 26 High Street and 9 and 11 High Street, illustrate the upgrading of buildings to have the more fashionable brick frontage (overleaf, *Fig 11*).

Of 20th century building, the garage is the site that stands out most. Being set back from the road it is of a totally different character and ancillary structures on the forecourt emphasise this. The 20th century Co-op building successfully continues the built form but the brick and detailing are not in the local tradition.



Fig 11. 24 and 26 High Street

Because of the narrowness of the streets, views are generally short to medium distance and channelled, closed by other townscape elements. The awkward staggered junction in the centre closes views toward the town centre, with the Town Hall forming a major element in these views (above right, *Fig 12*). The siting of the Town Hall right in the middle of the principal streets was clearly deliberate, dominating the historic core of the town. Interestingly, the exact plot was defined by the cartways around this junction. Making the best use of this irregularly shaped plot, the building is trapezoidal in plan, no two sides are of the same length and it has no square corners.



Fig 12. View towards Town Hall on High Street.

Views moving out from the centre are more varied. To the north, views of countryside open out at the edge of the conservation area. Similarly, views from the centre along Hill Road look entirely rural, with the car park and limited development screened by hedges and mature trees.

As a consequence of the dense development along these principal streets, there is very little greenery to be seen. There are glimpses of distant trees as a reminder of the surrounding countryside and of some private gardens towards the edges of the historic core but otherwise the hard urban landscape is relieved only by the planting by the war memorial, the garden in front of the Methodist Chapel, glimpses of private gardens in rear plots and a few trees and climbing plants.

A striking characteristic of the whole historic core is the traffic. Couching Street and Shirburn Street form the principal route to and from the M40 less than 3 miles away. Cars, heavy goods vehicles and farm traffic have to negotiate this narrow road and the very awkward junction where the principal roads meet. Heavy goods vehicles can barely pass through. Car parking and on-street servicing exacerbates this problem. At certain times of the day this is continuous. The narrowness of footways means that heavy good vehicles pass extremely close to pedestrians, seriously diminishing the enjoyment of this historic street putting the fabric of historic buildings at risk.

Road and footway surfaces are of weathered tarmac, which is appropriately fairly informal and works well with irregularity of the footways. Some kerbs are of granite and there are some setts, providing elements of historic character. Much of the tarmac, however, is in poor condition. It has been extensively patched, creating trip hazards in some places. Street furniture is almost entirely utilitarian.

## **6.2 Area 2: Historic Fringe**

This includes Chapel Street, Church Street, New Road, Gorwell and Davenport Place as secondary streets around the historic core and the central public open space. Notwithstanding the traffic on Gorwell, the overall ambience is that of a quiet, historic residential area in a semi-rural location.

### **6.2.1 Key characteristics**

- Quiet residential area
- Network of footpaths link to other parts of the town
- Intimate feel about spaces
- Historic streets with characteristics of historic core interspersed with more recent development
- Variety of interesting historic buildings
- On-street car parking dominates in places.
- Views area short – medium distance mostly closed by urban elements.
- Significant, well-used public open space in the centre provides a distinct contrast to the surrounding high-density development
- Attractive semi-rural area

### **6.2.2 Special interest/significance**

- Roads and paths follow historic routes and ancient field boundaries which is reflected in the layout of the built form
- Well-used footpaths link the present historic core to the area of the earliest settlement around the church

- The historical development of housing technology and changing fashions can be read in historic building stock
- The variety and juxtaposition of house types and detailing creates an attractive and in some places, very picturesque townscape.

The secondary streets share some of the same characteristics of the historic core only the tight urban form is broken down more. There is some modern housing on each of these streets which is more suburban in character. Church Street, Chapel Street and New Road are all very narrow with a narrow footway on one side only. Tarmac, generally in poor condition, prevails, though informal planting relieves this creating attractive incidents along the street. Gorwell is slightly wider and has a footway both sides, reflecting its function as a through route through the town. Historic houses are built right up to the footway edge but the continuous building line, which is a striking feature of the town centre, is interrupted here by some Victorian and twentieth century housing which is set back, to a greater or lesser extent, from the highway and has gaps between buildings. A strong boundary to the footway along Gorwell is created through boundary walls and railings. New Road is a nineteenth-century creation and it has a different feel. On the north side is a brick-built terrace fronting onto the highway comprising four Victorian houses with an obviously twentieth-century addition. A nineteenth century detached house is set back from the road on the south side. No other houses front onto this road. It appears that New Road replaced the earlier road from Church Meadows to Chapel Lane which ran just to the north, thereby explaining the rather haphazard arrangement of buildings in this area.

The tight urban form loosens up towards the outer edges of these secondary streets and marks the beginning of more suburban development. The area is almost entirely residential now. The exception is the public open space in the centre. This delightful park has footpaths linking it to High Street, Davenport Place, and Old School Place and no vehicular route running along any side (see, *Fig 5*) This creates an unusually secluded feel to the space. It has a childrens' play area, seating and natural planting creating an attractive contrast to the tightly built form of High Street just a few metres away.

The houses fronting on to Davenport Place are set back from the footpath behind a low brick wall. They look directly onto the public open space. There is no vehicular access which, together with their attractive gardens, adds a rustic charm.

The historic buildings share similar characteristics to those in the historic core. Eaves heights are generally low, with houses one-and-a-half to two storeys high. The exception is the east side of Gorwell which is lined with detached or semi-detached Victorian villas with much higher eaves heights.

Materials are similar to the historic core, with the earliest buildings being of timber-framed construction, later ones in brick, including flared brick and brick with flint, render, stone and weatherboarding, the latter on ancillary buildings. Tile is the most common roofing material with some slate, especially on Gorwell and there are some good examples of thatch on the early buildings, such as 42 Chapel Street, a fifteenth century open hall of cruck construction (overleaf, *Fig 13*).



Fig 13. 42 Chapel Street

As in the historic core, most chimney stacks survive on historic buildings, giving an indication of date and plan form of historic houses. More recent development is generally constructed in brick, though not locally distinctive brick. Plan forms tend to be much deeper than traditional houses and detailing is generic. Chimneys are noticeably absent from some modern development.

As a result, none of the modern development sits very happily with its historic neighbours. The most successful is the terrace on Chapel Street, as it provides a continuous frontage close to the footway edge, but the materials and detailing are inappropriate. The Housing Association development opposite these, not included in the conservation area but affecting its setting, detracts from the essential characteristics of the

street, again principally as a result of alien materials, form and detailing. The twentieth century terraced housing on Church Street is also at odds with the traditional character as it, too, uses alien materials and detailing and, possibly more noticeably, is set back from the footway to allow off-street car parking.

Only Gorwell has through traffic, and this is fairly continuous here. The other streets have limited traffic flows and speeds are low as a result of narrow carriageways and on-street car parking.

Views are generally short or medium distance, with the reminder of open countryside in the mature trees visible above buildings. As a result of the slight bend in all the streets, views are generally terminated by other buildings. The view looking northwards along Chapel Street has 42 Chapel Street, the very fine fifteenth-century thatched house, as its focal point. Its less attractive neighbours, being set back from the road, do not feature in this view, which remains almost unchanged since 1925 (overleaf, *Fig 14* and *Fig 15*). Similarly, the focal point of the view westwards along New Road is the clearly historic timber-framed gable of 23 Church Street with its thatched roof, rather than the twentieth century development, reinforcing the historic character of the street.



Fig 14. Chapel Street in 1920



Fig 15. Chapel Street in 2021

Gaps between buildings offer views of private gardens whose greenery contributes to the semi-rural character of the area. Some intimate views of historic cottages, attractive gardens, informal street layout and mature greenery create very picturesque moments (below, *Fig 16*). Particularly unfortunate is the view north up Gorwell terminating in the public WCs. Although well-kept and tidy, this is not a fitting focal point for such an important view.

Low brick walls form the curtilage boundaries to the highway for most houses set back from the footway. Here attractive front gardens make a positive contribution to the appearance of the area. However, a number of these walls have had close-boarded fences added on top to give a 2m high blank frontage, screening views of the house and garden. This detracts from the character and appearance of the area.



Fig 16. 17 Church Street

### 6.3 Area 3: Around the church

This includes the church, churchyard and the land adjoining stretching north to the boundary of the conservation area and including the paths connecting the church area to the rest of the town. It is near the edge of the town and forms a transition between the historic core and open countryside.

#### 6.3.1 Key characteristics

- Peaceful, almost traffic-free area
- Attractive, woodland setting
- The church is a dominating presence
- Footpath network connecting to other parts of the town
- Relatively little development
- 21st century housing stands out as an alien development by reason of its bulk, form and siting.

#### 6.3.2 Special interest/significance

- Evidence of the earliest settlement around the church
- Survival of historic field boundaries and watercourses
- Historical record of the town and its inhabitants in the past contained within the church and churchyard
- Historic houses illustrate the development of housing over the centuries
- Picturesque composition of historic houses and gardens



Fig 17. The churchyard

The overriding characteristic of this area is its tranquillity and almost rural setting. The church is seen against a backdrop of trees. The surrounding churchyard is typically planted with yews alongside other mature trees (above, *Fig 17*). A prominent feature of the setting of the church is Pound Close. Occupying the historic Pound Close is a twentieth century bungalow in extensive, well-kept gardens. Unusually, there is very little screening of the plot, only low hedges, which creates an open, and slightly incongruous, setting for the church.

The Church is accessed either by the unmade track or else by the footpath network. There is no vehicular through traffic, only access vehicles destined for the church or the very few houses here. One of the footpaths, Church Meadows, leads to Church Street, providing the most direct route between the church and High Street and the other connects to the Brookside/Meadows development via Prospect Place.

These footpaths follow ancient field boundaries which are still remarkably preserved both here and in the rest of the conservation area. The site of the moat of the long-demolished castle which lay to the north of the church, forms the south-eastern boundary to the churchyard and 10 and 12 Church Meadows, built on the site of the church hall. Between the moat and Church Meadows were allotments, which are now woodland. There is still a watercourse flowing along this boundary which appears in Pound Close. Historically important watercress beds were found here.

The footpaths are narrow and enclosed by hedges and trees either side. The woodland boundary to the northern edge of Church Meadows is supplemented by timber post and rail fencing. The woodland serves to



Fig 18. Mansle Gardens

screen the twentieth century development on Brookside and so retain the rural feel to the area. Approaching the church, these footpaths open out to give views over Pound Close. Approaching Church Street the path gives access to the delightful Mansle Gardens which provide some secluded public open space (below left, *Fig 18*).

The historic trees, hedges, gardens and adjoining woodland are the prime characteristic of this part of the conservation area. They contribute to the setting of the church and the semi-rural character of this part of the conservation area. The well-kept, but not over-managed, extensive churchyard is an important element in this and this greenery dominates views throughout this part of the conservation area. The housing development off Pyrton Lane and St. Leonards Close, which are in the setting of the conservation area, compromises these views, being visible from the churchyard. The more recent development of the two houses 10 and 12 Church Meadows are also prominent and detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area to a greater degree. The scale, form and bulk of these houses is at odds with the traditional characteristics of local housing.

The church car park, adjacent to these houses is also a bit out of place with a more urban feel, with its concrete pavers and kerbing and Sheffield bike stand. Likewise, Pound Close bungalow is out of character with the traditional buildings in the area, particularly the type of brick. The houses along Church Meadows and Church Close, grade II listed, near the junction with Church Street fit much more comfortably into the conservation area. They have many of the characteristics of traditional houses in the town including evidence of alterations over the centuries to accommodate changing needs and fashion.

All are set back from the public highway with attractive front gardens adding a picturesque element to the area. The frontage of Church Close, however, is marred by close boarded fencing atop a flint wall.

The significance of this area lies in its survival of evidence from the earliest settlement of the town around the church. Historically, the development of the town can be read in evidence of surviving field boundaries. The church and churchyard contain much of the history of the town and its people. The houses on Church Meadows illustrate the development of housing techniques and living standards expressed in alterations. Architecturally the more recent housing does not make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, nor does the treatment of the church car park. Despite this, predominant character of an attractive, peaceful, traffic free area prevails.

## **6.4 Area 4: 19th-20th century development to the south east**

This relatively diverse area comprises Watcombe Road, Spring Lane, Hill Road and Stonor Green. Developed from the late 19th century, first half of the 20th century and late 20th century, they share common characteristics of being of relatively low density with detached or semi-detached houses mostly set in generous plots. Watcombe Road and Spring Lane were developed on a plot of land referred to as Bowler's Piece on the 1780 map, the enclosure map of 1815 and the 1876 OS map.

### **6.4.1 Key characteristics**

- Transitional zone between the historic core and open countryside
- Openness and low density, with houses set in fairly generous plots, contrasting with streets in the historic core
- Town's main car park discreetly located within landscaped boundary
- Housing developments determined by historic plot boundaries
- Variety of house types and styles, mostly 20th century but using a traditional palette of materials
- Semi-rural with many mature trees featuring in views.
- Significant views of open countryside reinforcing its semi-rural character
- Fairly heavily trafficked Hill Road and Spring Lane contrasts with low traffic on Watcombe Road and Stonor Green

#### **6.4.2 Special interest/significance**

- Historic plot boundaries define the development pattern
- Improved standards for housing are expressed in the size of 20th century houses and gardens
- The Church of St Edmund Campion is a focal point for the community



Fig 19. View along Watcombe Road looking north

Watcombe Road has an informal layout, along a roughly consistent building line. It is an unmade road with informal edges to building plots, and some grass verges. It was developed from the late 19th century onwards, as individual plots or groups of plots. The lack of consistency in house type, design and materials reflects this. Boundaries are mixed: hedges, railings, brick and flint walls. Buildings are all residential apart from the Church of St. Edmund Campion at the southern end. Houses

are two storey in a variety of styles, materials and dates, although a number to the north end, dating from the latter part of the 20th century are identical. In addition to houses there are a number of ancillary buildings fronting on to the road. Materials are brick or render and there is a mixture of pitched and hipped roofs covered in either slate or tile. The church fits comfortably into the street scene. Its scale, form and materials reference the surrounding buildings. The informality of layout, open spaces, trees and hedges give it a semi-rural character.

The town's main car park is discreetly located off Hill Road, enclosed by a native hedge boundary, screening it from view. The narrow enclosed footpath running along the south side of this is typical of the footpaths throughout the town, providing intimate, interesting links along historic field boundaries.

Spring Lane, a relatively narrow, straight road was developed during the 1930s. It illustrates the expansion of the town in this period and the concern for better housing conditions and the need for gardens. It is now a one-way street providing an egress route from the main town car park back onto the road system. Apart from the telephone exchange at its northern end, the development is entirely detached or semi-detached houses.

Buildings are set well back from the road in a straight building line with generous gardens to front and rear and, even where there is no footway, the space feels quite open. The boundary to the highway is mostly brick and flint. Houses are two or two-and-a-half storeys built in a variety of typical 1930s styles, the exception being those to the north end which are later 20th century houses. They have quite high eaves, pitched and hipped roofs of slate or tile, some simple and some more

complex forms, a range of building materials including brick, render and roughcast and some have applied timbers. On the opposite side of the road are more houses, following a similar layout. These are outside the conservation area but provide a fairly neutral setting for the conservation area.

Stonor Green is a 21st century development on the former allotment gardens. Unlike Watcombe Road and Spring Lane, this has an informal layout, loosely based on a winding cul-de-sac and in part clustered around a green. The green is an attractive open area, and is the part most visible from the other viewpoints in the conservation area. The development overall has a neutral impact on the conservation area. It is low density with large houses on small plots. Although materials more or less fit in with the traditional local palette, other aspects of the development such as the layout, deep plan form and near uniformity in design and detailing are not locally distinctive.

All houses have front gardens and many of these are attractively planted, including some mature trees, making a positive contribution to the appearance of the conservation area.

Views within this area are fairly open and medium distance, terminating either in other townscape elements or open countryside, reinforcing its semi-rural location. Particularly important in this respect are views from Hill Road and the end of the narrow lane to the north of Stonor Green, a semi-rural lane leading into open countryside. These offer stunning views of Watlington Hill beyond (right, *Fig 20*).

In terms of traffic, being an unmade road Watcombe Road attracts very little traffic, only vehicles serving Watcombe Road itself. This, combined



Fig 20. Views to Watlington Hill

with its informality and extent of greenery, reinforce its semi-rural character. Similarly, Stonor Green, being a cul-de-sac, has very limited traffic. In contrast to these Hill Road and Spring Lane, which is a one way street, carry a considerable amount of traffic from the town's main car park.

The traffic, almost entirely cars, flows relatively freely, despite some on-street car parking and doesn't generally diminish the enjoyment of the lane. However, traffic can build up at certain times, at the junction with Ingham Lane and Brook Street and there can be gridlock backing up from the Couching Street junction as a result of volume of traffic, parked cars, heavy goods vehicles and narrow roads. The footway is very narrow at this point resulting in traffic dominating and overwhelming other, more positive, characteristics of the area.

## 6.5 Area 5: Outskirts of the town

This loose-knit area of low-density development broadly comprises the east-west route running to the south of the historic centre. It includes Cuxham Road and Britwell Road which join into Brook Street, Ingham Lane and Howe Road. Off this principal road are a number of small areas of development, some historic but most built within the last 50 years. To the south is open countryside. Brook Street takes its name from the watercourse which runs along the south side of the road, in some places exposed and in others it is culverted.

### 6.5.1 Key Characteristics

- Low density development to the south of the town centre, strung out along the principal through routes of Britwell Road, Cuxham Road, Ingham Lane and Howe Road interspersed with some more recent development of higher density.
- Lanes and paths off the principal roads have a semi-rural character with sporadic development and lead out into open countryside.
- Watcombe Manor is the principal commercial site with development based on former farmyards.
- The watercourses which supported the watercress beds remain, albeit culverted in parts.
- Variety of built form, with some modern housing developments based on culs-de-sac of distinct modern design.
- Traditional buildings, including some farm buildings, have similar characteristics to other historic buildings in the town in terms of form, materials, scale, detailing.



Fig 21. View along Brook Street

- Open views reminding of the proximity of open countryside.
- Most houses have front gardens which contribute to the semi-rural character of the area.

### 6.5.2 Special interest/significance

- The site of the medieval Watcombe Manor remains, as do many of the historic farm buildings.
- Historic routes and plot boundaries still legible.
- Historic buildings contain evidence of past uses, developments in the local economy, changes in housing fashion and technology.
- Very fine examples of historic buildings and some with attractive front gardens create picturesque, semi-rural views.
- Loose-knit development indicates the former agricultural character of this area marking a transition to open countryside.

The principal roads are lined with development. Some of the historic buildings are built right up to the footway edge and form a continuous line, (see, *Fig 20*). However, most buildings are set back from the road and are detached or semi-detached. There is a lack of consistency in siting reflecting the sporadic historic development of the area with its mix of farms and houses. Gaps between buildings in use as gardens or for ancillary buildings contribute to the edge of town character of this part of the conservation area. Low brick walls and hedges form the boundary to most plots, a notable exception being the high brick and flint wall in front of 36-38 Brook Street. Plot sizes vary considerably both in width and depth. The footway is generally narrow and in some places non-existent. Given the volume and speed of traffic this can make it uncomfortable for pedestrians and diminishes the enjoyment of the space.

Buildings along this route are very mixed, in date, storey height, scale, form, detailing and materials. The historic houses have a similar range of characteristics to those elsewhere in the town i.e built using traditional materials, plan form and detailing. Some are former farmhouses with farm buildings and contain evidence of changes in agricultural practice.

The more recent housing, with some exceptions, is not especially locally distinctive. There are a number of characteristics which are alien to traditional buildings in the town and more specifically the loose-knit edge of the town, such as high density, deep plan form, lower pitch to roofs, non-local materials, standard joinery details and a uniformity, for example the new housing at the junction of Cuxham Road and Brook Street.

That said, there are many characterful houses along this stretch of road of varying date, size, form, materials and detailing. The eccentric siting of some of these is evidence of the historical land use along this

route. The informal road boundaries, hedges and trees give the route a semi-rural character. In addition many front gardens are open to view, making a very positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area (below, *Fig 21*). The gardens to some of the historic buildings create a very picturesque composition. Key buildings include The Lilacs, grade II listed, an attractive late 16th century timber-framed building is a focal point in views along Couching Street.



Fig 21. Victorian cottage Brook Street

Leading off this route are a number of small modern housing developments, including Bucklands Piece, the mobile homes park on Cuxham Road. These are usually defined by historic plot boundaries. For the most part these are fairly self-contained. They are generally not locally distinctive. Uniformity of design, layout, form, scale, materials and

details are all typical of their time with little to distinguish them as local to Watlington. However, these fairly discrete developments are not prominent within the conservation area as a whole and so generally have a neutral impact on its character and appearance. There are exceptions, however. Those that front on to the principal roads do stand out as singularly alien to the building tradition in the town and they detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area. Also noticeable are the bellmouth junctions giving access to the culs-de-sac developments. These wide over-engineered junctions are particularly urban in character and significantly detract from the semi-rural character of the roads. Perhaps the most damaging development in terms of impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area is that at Quarrington Place. Looking from the fields to the south back towards the edge of town, this high density, three storey development appears quite out of place in its rural context (below, *Fig 22*).



Fig 22. View of Quarrington Place

Of a completely different character to the new developments is that of The Goggs, a small lane off Britwell Road which leads out into the meadows at the edge of the conservation area. It has a footpath loop, linking both ends of the lane, running almost parallel to it. This historic lane, with its watercourse running alongside, was sporadically developed by the late 18th century, probably associated with the two springs which surface here. By the late 19th century the terrace at the north end had been built but otherwise this has remained undeveloped apart from one bungalow on a large plot of land. This low density is an important element in the character of the lane.

Private gardens make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of The Goggs, added to by the quaint arrangement of the gardens of Britwell Road which open out onto the lane. The rural character is further enhanced by the greenery along the lane and unfolding views terminating in open countryside with Watlington Hill visible in the distance. Footpaths lead from the end of the lane across the fields on the edge of the conservation area and out into open countryside. This lane is particularly important for its transitional character between town and open country.

Whilst much of this transitional area is in residential use, there is an exception at Watcombe Manor, which now accommodates commercial uses as well as residential use. Centred on the former Watcombe Manor Farm this area includes a mix of historic and modern buildings. Based around the former farm yards are a number of historic farm buildings and some new development (see, *Fig 23*). The main yard is open with single storey buildings partially enclosing the space and brick and flint walls continuing this enclosure. They are fairly low key visually, occupying a mix of historic and 20th century buildings.



Fig 23. Recent development at Watcombe Manor

Mostly constructed of brick and flint with tiled roofs, they fit comfortably into views from the highway, though the signage is a bit intrusive. The site is used for commercial units and the yard is used for servicing and car parking. It leads on to another, smaller yard which is also enclosed by buildings and brick and flint walls. This contains the former farmhouse, which dates from the 19th century, a number of farm buildings, now converted to residential use and some new housing.

Modern concrete pavers cover the residential yard whilst the main yard remains as plain utilitarian concrete. These give a hard, unattractive feel to the space with little planting to mitigate it.

The transitional character of the area is reinforced by views of open countryside. Some of these are distant views, like that of Watlington Hill from Brook Street whilst others are glimpsed views through gaps between buildings of the fields on the edge of the conservation area. At the edge of the conservation area in all directions the roads offer views of attractive open countryside. The signpost in the middle of the junction of Brook Street with Britwell Road and Cuxham Road forms a focal point of views along these primary routes.

Whilst it has an attractive lamp standard and interesting signpost it is sited in a dull bit of townscape which would benefit from some enhancement.

Traffic from the town's main car park joins this through route at its junction with Spring Lane. At times this creates a very busy stretch of road. With two-way traffic impeded by on-street car parking there can be severe congestion. For the pedestrian, on the narrow pavements here, the enjoyment of the conservation area can be much diminished at such times.

## 6.6 Green edges

### 6.6.1 Key characteristics

- Southern edge to the conservation area
- It follows some historic plots of land but cuts across others
- Fields bounded by hedgerows and dotted with mature trees
- Paths link to Brook Street, Britwell Road and Howe Road
- Views south out to open countryside

### 6.6.2 Special interest/significance

- Illustrates the enclosure of common land between 1780 and 1815
- Includes the historic plots of Parslow's Charity and the Vicarial Close illustrating aspects of social history
- Represents the functional link between the built-up area and agricultural land surrounding it; a continuation of public access to what would have been a fundamental part of the town's agricultural hinterland.
- It provides an attractive rural setting to this historic market town

The rural setting of Watlington is an attractive and fundamental element in its character. This has been eroded by 20th/21st century development around the town to the north, west and south east. However, to the south the field pattern survives largely as that indicated on the 1780 estate map, where it is marked as 'West Meadow'. This meadow, used for grazing, is dotted with mature trees and crossed by public footpaths. Hedgerows with mature trees form the field boundaries, which can still be identified as those shown on the 1815 enclosure map. It is this meadowland that can be glimpsed in views from Brook Street (right, *Fig 24*).



Fig 24. Views of countryside from Brook Street

Only part of this is in the conservation area, i.e. the land shown on the 1815 Enclosure Map as Parslow's Charity and Vicarial Close. The former provided funds to support the poor and the latter, providing the setting for the former Vicarage, supported the vicar. There is also a narrow strip of land included which borders on the historic Watcombe Manor but this doesn't follow any obvious established boundary.

The northern boundary which abuts the modern development is unfortunately, thinly planted and does little to screen these developments. The view of the three storey houses on Quarrington Place is particularly intrusive (see, *Fig 22*). Views to in other directions, by contrast, are of attractive unspoilt open countryside.

The land is used for grazing and cattle and horses and it looks and feels entirely rural. It is crossed by several footpaths linking Britwell Road, The Goggs, Brook Street, Ingham Lane and Howe Road, which are very well used by local people.

# 7.0 Spatial Analysis

## 7.1 Layout

- Principal routes through the town have determined its layout.
- Tight urban form in the historic core is based on the form of the medieval planted town.
- Building line up to the back of the footway in the historic core.
- Main junction and The Cross open out slightly to create more generous public space, the latter well used in connection with the market and cluster of shops around the junction.
- Medieval street layout encloses the open space of Davenport Place.
- Narrow plot frontages of burgage plots in the historic core.
- Network of historic footpaths, many enclosed by walls, link all parts of the conservation area.
- Davenport Place and area around the church largely traffic free.
- Intimate spaces in historic centre.
- Increasingly loose-knit development towards the edge of the conservation area.
- Important gaps in development at countryside edge, allow the countryside in
- Ancient field boundaries still discernible.
- Important green spaces, formerly pre-enclosure meadows

- Layout of small modern housing estates within the conservation area generally alien
- Private gardens on rear plots are generally not visible in the centre which has few green elements
- Front gardens in areas of looser-knit development make a positive contribution
- Boundary hedges and historic walls run along historic plot boundaries, defining and enclosing spaces

## 7.2 Setting and views

- Countryside setting is crucial to understanding the development of the market town. Nowhere in the conservation area is far from open countryside
- Pre-enclosure meadow forms the southern edge to the conservation area
- Views of mature trees and open countryside are visible from many parts of the conservation area.
- Woodland and open space around the church, comprising pre-enclosure meadow, give a rural character to this part of the conservation area.
- Many mature trees mostly on the outskirts of the conservation area, reinforce its rural setting.
- Stunning views of Watlington Hill and the White Mark from Hill Road and the track adjacent to Stonor Green (see, *Fig 20*).

- Open views of farmland from the southern edge of the conservation area.
- Channelled views along narrow streets in the historic core.
- Short distant views along enclosed footpaths and alleys
- Picturesque, semi-rural views of historic buildings and gardens near to the town centre



Fig 25. Field west of the Goggs

# 8.0 Management Plan

## 8.1 Issues

The greatest threat to the special architectural and historic interest of the Watlington conservation area is the continued heavy through traffic. This not only puts pedestrians and cyclists at risk but it can physically damage buildings. It negatively impacts on the shopping experience in the town discouraging any leisure activity. It seriously diminishes the enjoyment of the special character and appearance of the conservation area.

When the Watlington Relief Road is complete there will be the opportunity to improve the pedestrian environment in the town centre. This could provide a significant economic benefit to the town in terms of attracting more visitors as well as encouraging locals to shop more within the town.

Whilst there is no opportunity for major development within the conservation area, there are some limited opportunities for development. Any development must be very carefully designed so as to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. There are a number of open spaces which would be inappropriate for development and these are particularly vulnerable.

Some inappropriately designed development has had a negative impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Landscaping schemes have failed to integrate these.



Fig 26. Impact of fences on green routes

With so many tracks and footpaths criss-crossing the conservation area, boundary treatments are particularly important. Close-boarded timber fencing is being erected quite widely, reflecting the desire for more privacy (above, *Fig 26*). However, some of these are unsightly and detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area. Some are possibly unauthorised, being over 1m high. Traditional boundary treatments are low walls, native hedging and railings.

There has been some inappropriate replacement of doors and windows on some historic houses.

## **8.2 General Aims**

### **8.2.1 Potential for major enhancement**

The greatest enhancement for the area as a whole would be the reduction in traffic through the centre of the conservation area. The planned Relief Road will therefore result in a major enhancement.

### **8.2.2 Development management**

When development is proposed within the conservation area, applicants should demonstrate they have acknowledged, understood and responded to the Character Assessment set out in Section 5. Reference to this should be included when preparing Design and Access Statements. Applicants for householder applications should also take account of this and should be encouraged to submit a short design statement in support of their application.

### **8.2.3 Development of a town centre enhancement strategy**

Completion of infrastructure projects that relieve pressure on the town centre could bring opportunities to improve the existing public realm. A comprehensive plan should look to include opportunities to enhance the historic environment. There will be the opportunity to widen footways, improve footway surfaces, remove inappropriate parking, provide more appropriately-designed street furniture and introduce new uses into the public spaces. A comprehensive plan prepared in advance would enable stakeholders to design and programme works and take advantage of funding as and when it became available to implement elements of the plan.

## **8.3 Specific Aims**

**8.3.1** Close-boarded fencing is not recommended but traditional post and rail timber fencing, railings or native hedging could enhance this important area within the conservation area.

**8.3.2** Consider increasing planting to the boundary of churchyard to protect and enhance the setting of St. Leonard's Church in the long term.

**8.3.3** Provide natural landscaping to the church car park to soften the urban character.

**8.3.4** Provide screening to the recycling bins in the churchyard, such as wattle hurdles.

**8.3.5** Replace existing utilitarian litter bins with ones of a more appropriate design.

**8.3.6** Replace the utilitarian pedestrian barriers with a more sensitive design.

**8.3.7** Provide bin storage at south end of Davenport Place.

**8.3.8** Consider additional planting at West Meadow to protect the important contribution it makes to the conservation area and enhance its context in relation to the adjacent buildings.

**8.3.9** Seek the removal of 2m high close-boarded fences where these abut a highway (including a footway).

**8.3.10** Provide some planting to mitigate the impact of air condition-

ing units and car parking at Watlington Business Park on High Street (though this could be part of a wider town centre strategy).

**8.3.11** Consider landscaping to the WCs on Church Street to enhance views along Gorwell and Church Street, whilst retaining historic cobbles.

**8.3.11** Introduce some planting to soften the visual impact of Watlington Garage and remove any unnecessary signage.

**8.3.12** Resurface patched and poorly repaired footways (some of this would fall within a town centre strategy).

**8.3.13** Rationalise signage at Watcombe Manor.

**8.3.14** Restore the network of chalk streams which runs through the conservation area.

**8.3.15** Encourage appropriate retro-fit energy efficiency measures.

**8.3.16** When the Relief Road has been completed, there will be the opportunity to widen the footways to create a more comfortable pedestrian experience and to ensure traffic speeds remain low.

**8.3.17** Consider enlarging the signpost island on Brook Street and designing an appropriate context to create a focal point as and when the opportunity arises.

**8.3.18** Some listed buildings within the conservation area are in poor condition and may become at risk. These should be monitored and action taken if the condition deteriorates.



Fig 27. Bin storage solutions would improve visual amenity



Fig 28. Opportunities to improve streetscape

## 9.0 Boundary Revisions

Following a review of the conservation area boundary, one boundary revision was consulted upon. This proposal is shown on the map, right. The consultation proposal is shown on the map to the right. The properties of 21 and 23 Britwell Road have not been included in the final boundary which is shown on page 5 of this document.

Whether deliberately or by chance, the boundary of the conservation area more or less coincides with the boundary of early enclosed land within the town. The main exception to this is the green fringe to the south. This was part of the West Mead, see the 1780 estate map, and at enclosure part of it became the vicarial glebe (i.e the vicar's land) and part was used for the support of the poor, shown on the enclosure map as Parslow's Charity. The latter area and a strip of the rest of this land lies within the conservation area and provides a crucial element to its setting.

However, there is an adjoining strip of land which has an equally important role in providing the green setting for the conservation area and which was also part of the early enclosure (see, *Fig 25*). This has not been included within the present boundary. This narrow field fronts on to Britwell Rd and lies between number 15 and 21 Britwell Rd, extending back from the road until it adjoins the field at the end of The Goggs. It provides an important extension to the green fringe which constitutes the immediate rural setting for the conservation area. The area is considered to represent the historic green edge to the earlier settlement and remains legible as such, meaning that it is worthy of addition to the designated conservation area.



The final revised boundary, which incorporated public feedback, was adopted at a public meeting of the council's Cabinet in December 2025 and the extended boundary now forms the designated Watlington Conservation Area boundary (see pg.5).

## 10. References

A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 8, Lewknor and Pyrton Hundreds, ed. Mary D Lobel (London, 1964), British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol8>

Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017-2033

South Oxfordshire District Council, Watlington Conservation Area – a character study, 2011

The Watlington Parish Council, The Town Hall, Watlington: a Brief History, c.1982

Kelly's Directories, 1883, 1907, 1939

Harrod's Directory, 1876

Pigot's Directory, 1842

# Appendix A: Historic Environment Record Summary

The following was produced on request by the Historic Environment Record (HER) team at Oxfordshire County Council to capture in greater detail the archaeological interest of the Watlington conservation area. Some records mentioned in the text below may be cross referenced with the map, right.

## Archaeological understanding

Evidence for Watlington's development is derived mainly from documentary sources and historic maps because development within the conservation area during the late C20th and early C21st has been limited to small scale projects only. These small-scale investigations have revealed only minimal evidence from the post-medieval to modern periods, even though the town is likely to have its origins in the 6th Century.

## Prehistoric to Roman

The town lies near the Icknield Way (PRN8929), an important prehistoric routeway that connects the Salisbury Plain to Norfolk. The earliest evidence found is a Bronze Age axe and Iron Age coin (PRN29884) which suggests transient activity rather than settlement at this time. The Icknield Way continued in use in the Roman period as an important thoroughfare, but no Roman finds or features are known within the conservation area.

Outside the conservation area cropmark ring ditches c. 1km to the west may represent Bronze Age Barrows (PRN29886). The lower Icknield Way (PRN8930) and Ridgeway (PRN9492) trackways traverse the landscape providing important communication routes. Numerous finds dating to



the Iron Age and particularly the Roman period have been recovered from the fields between these two roads, attesting to their importance, but there is no evidence currently to suggest a roadside settlement near Watlington.

## **Early Medieval**

No Saxon archaeological remains have been recovered from within or near the conservation area to date. However, the name probably means the 'ton of the people of Waecal', suggesting a Saxon origin. By the time of the Domesday Book in 1086, however, Watlington is described as a settlement in the hundred of Pyrton comprising 54 households. Also mentioned, but with no recorded population, is Ingham deserted medieval hamlet (PRN10550) which may have been located where Watcombe Manor now stands (PRN3988). To the north of the conservation area, the settlement of Pyrton is recorded as having 56 households.

## **Medieval**

An early settlement focus appears to have developed towards the northwest of the conservation area centred on St Leonards Church (PRN3983), which has its origins in the 12th century. The site of the medieval Manor House dating to the mid-13th century lies just to north-east (PRN3984). A medieval chapel (now a car park) was added to the south of St Leonard's church in the late 15th century (PRN2061). At this time the settlement focus expanded eastwards as several of the houses along High Street were built during the 15th-16th centuries. Indeed, in 1819, it was noted that the older buildings lay in the north part of Watlington and that the last of them had been recently taken down.

The hamlet of Pyrton c.900m north of the conservation area appears to have developed on a similar time frame with the medieval settlement centred around early 12th century St. Mary's Church (PRN3959) with Shirburn Park (PRN10940) to its east, which may have its origins in 1335 when Alice de Lisle received permission to enclose 50ha of wood. A medieval moat (PRN1121) lies between the church and Pyrton Manor (PRN3960) with which it is probably associated.

## **Post Medieval to modern**

Settlement expanded through the 16th-19th Centuries, particularly along the axes of High Street, Shirburn Street and Couching Street, with many of the present houses within the conservation area originating during this period. The land surrounding the town remained predominantly in agricultural use with some expansion to the west, north and south during the late 20th century.

# Appendix B: Listed Buildings

These are marked **red** on the Map.

The Watlington conservation area does not contain any scheduled monuments or grade I listed buildings.

## **Grade II\***

Church of St. Leonard  
East End House  
Watlington Town Hall

## **Grade II**

Abingdon House  
Apsley  
Blackhorse Cottage  
Blenheim House  
35 and 37 Brook Street  
Brook Cottage and Sleepy Hollow  
Bulrushes  
3 and 5 Chapel Street  
11 Chapel Street  
Cherry Pie  
Churchyard of St Leonard, chest tomb (x3)  
9 and 11 Church Street  
13 Church Street  
27 Church Street  
19-23 (odd) Couching Street  
22 Couching Street and barn to rear  
24-28 (even) Couching Street  
33 Couching Street

## **Grade II (cont.)**

35 and 37 Couching Street  
38 Couching Street  
39 Couching Street  
40 Couching Street  
52 Couching Street  
54 Couching Street  
58 and 60 Couching Street  
16 and 18 Cuxham Road  
Dropmore Cottage  
East End House garden walls  
The Fat Fox Inn  
Gate House  
11 Gorwell  
19 Gorwell  
The Granary  
Grove Cottage  
Hampden House  
The Hare and Hound Hotel  
2 High Street  
3 High Street  
5 High Street  
6 High Street  
7 High Street

**Grade II (cont.)**

8 and 10 High Street  
12 High Street  
13 High Street  
14 High Street  
15 High Street  
18 High Street  
22-24 High Street  
28, 30, and 32 High Street  
33 and 35 High Street  
34 and 36 High Street  
37 High Street  
46-52 (even) High Street  
Hill House and barn  
1-7 Hill Road  
Jessamine Cottage  
Jasmine Cottage  
The Lilacs  
Martha's Cottage  
Meadow Court  
Old Bank House  
The Old Greyhound  
Patchwork  
Pilgrim Cottage  
Porringers  
Sadlers and The End House  
1 Shirburn Street  
2 Shirburn Street  
3 Shirburn Street  
4 Shirburn Street

**Grade II (cont.)**

10 and 12 Shirburn Street  
19 Shirburn Street  
20 Shirburn Street  
22, 22A, 24, and 26 Shirburn Street  
28 Shirburn Street  
Stanstead and Weycroft  
Syria  
Tallows  
The Thatch  
Thimbles and Drapes of Watlington  
Watlington Memorial Club  
Watlington Methodist Church  
WHEELERS  
White Cottage  
White Hart House

## Appendix C: Non-Designated Heritage Assets

This list of non-designated heritage assets (NDHA) has been compiled using the following criteria for selection as informed by paragraph 203 of the [NPPF \(2024\)](#) and paragraph 40 of the [Historic Environment government guidance \(2019\)](#), along with advice published by Historic England in [Advice Note 7 \(2nd Edition, 2021\)](#) on local heritage listing. The criteria are:

1. The decision to include a heritage asset on this list must be based on sound evidence of their significance. This significance may be defined by age, rarity, architectural and artistic interest, group value, archaeological interest, historic interest, or landmark status;
2. The heritage asset must make a positive contribution to the community's sustainability and economic vitality; and
3. The presence of a heritage asset on this list must not prevent them from being put to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

**Please note:** A building identified as an NDHA is a material planning consideration, however, permitted development rights for NDHA's are no different than those of other non-statutorily listed buildings inside or outside of a conservation area.

What follows is a photographic record of each identified NDHA within the conservation area along with captioned summaries of their significance and justification for their inclusion. These are marked **orange** on the map on Page 5.



**The Spire and Spoke Pub, Hill Road**

Formerly Carriers Arms. Historic pub/inn at the eastern entrance to the settlement. Earliest phase near roadway of rubble and brick construction with later 20th century phases to the north. Added for communal value.



**25 Couching Street, Daisy Cottage**

Former shop, evidenced by surviving pilasters and fascia with later modern infill. Attractive vitrified brick upper storey. Double gabled plan. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**32-34 Couching Street**

Semi-detached pair of dwellings. Attractive vitrified brick panels, large ground floor sash windows, first floor casements. Slate roof. Typical of late 19th century development in the area. Added for aesthetic and group value.



**14 Couching Street**

Asymmetrical two-bay dwelling with bay windows with slate awning to ground floor. Typically late 19th century in design. Likely original sash windows with irregular glazing, original front door infilled. Perforated scallop detailing to ridge and north gable. Added for aesthetic and group value.



**16 Couching Street**

House, rough rendered, with York sliding sashes on the ground floor and casements above. Characteristic generous carriageway. Hipped gable roof. Unusual form suggests phased development with likely early origins. Added for aesthetic and group value.



**12 Couching Street, Yew Tree House**

Two-bay dwelling, likely of early 19th century origin. Attractive rubble gable wall to south. Features characteristic wrought iron Juliet balconies and fire insurance marker. Added for aesthetic and group value.



#### **8 Couching Street, Mulberry House**

Deep phased plan. Oldest phase being at the “centre” of the building which features a vernacular brick and rubble north wall, likely early-mid 19th century in origin. Road facing elevation is a later extension with an unusual shaped parapet gable. Attractive cast iron railings at the front. Added for aesthetic and group value.



#### **52 Brook Street**

Rubble coursed knapped flint and brick three bay cottage, likely early 19th century. Good example of heavy flint use in the area. Features attractively in views down Couching Street. Added for aesthetic and evidential value.



#### **10-12 Watcombe Road**

Pair of houses, late 19th century; brick with hipped slate roof; side entrance and central stacks. Bay windows to ground floor; original sash windows. Added for historic and group value.



#### **15-21 Watcombe Road**

Terrace of four cottages, in two pairs; late 19th century, brick with some render; slate roof, end stacks to each pair; side-hung casement windows with some modern replacements. Porch canopies to right hand pair. Added for historic and group value.



#### **18 Watcombe Road**

House, late 19th century, brick with buff brick dressings and pitched slate roof; two-unit, two-storey, end stacks. Small porch. Side-hung casements to ground floor, modern windows to first floor all in original openings. Added for historic and group value.



#### **1-2 Howe Road**

Formerly three dwellings, now two. Likely mid 19th century farm labourers cottages. Good example of heavy flint use in the area. Strong contributor to the remaining agricultural character of the wider Watcombe Manor estate. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



#### **Watcombe Manor Industrial Estate**

A range of former agricultural structures (barns and stables) historically part of the Watcombe Manor Farm. Earliest structures date from the mid 19th century with later phases as recently as 1984 when the site was renovated and converted to office use. All feature field or knapped flint walls, brick detailing/reveals and clay plain tile roofs. These buildings are important contributors to the historic understanding of Watcombe Manor, the development of Watlington as a whole and feature vernacular designs typical for the area.





**1-2 Wiggins Walk**

Former agricultural buildings (barns) to Watcombe Manor Farm, now converted to residential use. While these buildings were completely rebuilt, areas appear to have retained historic timber framing. They demonstrate the volume and scale of the farm operation at Watcombe Manor. The sense of openness of the former yard has been maintained. Added for historic value.



**12 Ingham Lane**

Likely early 19th century farm labourers cottage. Irregular fenestration and heavy use of flint. The building contributes strongly to the historic character of the former Watcombe Manor farmyard and is an excellent example of vernacular flintwork in the area. Added for aesthetic and historic interest.



**3-4 Wiggins Walk**

Former agricultural buildings (barns) to Watcombe Manor Farm, now converted to residential use. While these buildings were completely rebuilt, areas appear to have retained historic timber framing. They demonstrate the volume and scale of the farm operation at Watcombe Manor. The sense of openness of the former yard has been maintained. Added for historic value.



**Watcombe Manor**

Former manor house built in the late 19th century, likely replacing an older house. Fine brick walls and pre-cast lintels. The scale and relatively recent construction of the house demonstrate the increasing fortunes of the manor in the mid-late 19th century. Added for historic value.



**44 Brook Street**

Single dwelling, formerly two cottages. Likely early mid 19th century, parts older. Gable fronting Brook Street features roughly knapped flints to ground floor. Contributes positively to this part of the conservation area. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**44 Brook Street - outbuilding**

What is now only a shed was once part of a larger structure connecting it to the house. Typical flint masonry construction and adjacent stone and brick wall are positive historic features. Added for aesthetic and group value.



**42 Brook Street**

Former barn, converted to private house in the 1970's and an extension added. Though converted and mostly hidden from public view, the barn maintains its outward identity as a historic barn. Added for historic value.



**33 Brook Street**

Formerly The Black Lion Public House, now a private house. Vernacular flint and brick with later bay window. Added for historic value.



**Ingham House, 40 Brook Street**

Former vicarage now private home. Built 1841 and later much extended. Brick with stone detailing, diagonal chimneys, and substantial ranges to the rear. Largely hidden from view by later Brook Street development. Added for historic value.



**32-34 Brook Street**

Semi-detached dwellings of substantially brick with flintwork gable end walls. Likely built late 19th century. Details such as the roof and windows survive largely intact, preserving the attractive symmetry between the properties. Added for aesthetic value.



**17-19 Brook Street**

Semi-detached pair with polychrome effect brickwork using flared headers and stone detailing. Leaded light style casements are an unusual but attractive feature. Symmetry between dwellings is well preserved. Added for aesthetic value.



**26 Brook Street, Old Swan Dairy**

Name hints to former agricultural ancillary use. Previously divided into three distinct parts now all in single use. Gabled part features flared header brick walls and square bay window. East gable end wall is of flint. Likely mid 19th century with parts earlier. Added for aesthetic and historic value.

**Juniper Cottage, 20 Brook Street**

House, 19th century, two-unit, two-storey; rendered with slate roof; direct entry; end stacks; bay window to ground floor; modern windows. Added for aesthetic value.

**2 Gorwell**

Likely early C19 much altered. Possibly formerly a stables or other agricultural use, now a single dwelling. Flint panels set in brick grid. Added for historic value.

**18 Brook Street**

Former farmhouse, now house; 19th century; render lined to imitate ashlar; porch; horned sash windows. Added for aesthetic value.

**13-15 Britwell Road**

Much altered semi-detached pair with flint-built gable ends. Likely late 19th century farm labourers housing. Added for historic value.



**11 Britwell Road**

19th century, flint with brick detail, slate roof. Front door position still visible. Later extensions left and right. Likely built as farm labourers housing. Added for historic value.



**2 The Goggs**

Cottage, 18th century, rendered with slate roof; one-and-a half units with rear range, 2 storeys, end stack; at right angles to road. Small porch. Modern windows in original openings. Appears on 1780 estate map.



**4 The Goggs**

Much altered house, formerly a semi-detached pair. Attractive leaded gothic windows to first floor. Likely masonry with brick detail underneath render. Added for historic value.



**8-12 The Goggs**

Terrace of three 19th century houses in chequered brick, clay plain tile roof. Likely constructed for farm labourers. Houses extended at the ends. Added for historic value.



**22 Britwell Road**

19th century chequered brick built detached cottage, slate roof. Likely built as labourers housing. Added for historic and group value.



**16-20 Britwell Road**

Semi-detached brick built pair contemporary with No 22. Large forward extension. Added for group and historic value.



**14 Britwell Road**

19th century brick built detached cottage. Decorative polychromy in panels and bands. Likely built as labourers housing. Added for group and historic value.



**12 Britwell Road**

Early 19th century or possible earlier, built in limestone with brick reveals. Long narrow structure, likely former light industrial (blacksmith) use and later converted to residential. Spiral chimney pots to rear stack. Added for historic and aesthetic value.



**8 Britwell Road**

One of a semi-detached pair. "MAY" survives in brickwork with the rest covered by paint on No 6. Simple brick built vernacular cottage likely built for labourers. Added for historic and group value.



**5 Cuxham Road**

Other "end" of No 12 Britwell Road. Chequered brick with rubble panels down the side. Hipped gable end, plain clay tiled roof. Ditch runs alongside. Likely former agri-industrial use now converted to a private house. Added for historic and aesthetic value.



**6 Britwell Road**

One of a semi-detached pair. Simple brick built vernacular cottage likely built for labourers. Added for historic and group value.



**26-28 Cuxham Road**

Semi-detached pair, late 19th century. Brick built with flared headers. No 26 executed in an unusual Flemish/header bond hybrid. Largely unchanged from the front. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**32 Cuxham Road**

Formerly a semi-detached pair of houses. Structure survives in large part despite later alterations. Plain clay tiled roof. Likely constructed in the mid 19th century as farm labourers housing. Added for historic value.



**34 Cuxham Road**

Attractive example of decorative brickwork and masonry panels, though these were likely rendered. Slate roof. Multiple later extensions. Likely built as a small farmhouse. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**1-2 Pyrton Lane**

Semi-detached pair of 19th century brick built cottages. Set in unusual corner plot, possibly on land formerly belonging to St Leonard's with possible association. Added for historic value.



**13 Prospect Place**

Attractive flint and brick 19th century cottage, formerly a very small semi-detached pair which is still legible by the fenestration. Slate roof with timber casements. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



### **1 Prospect Place**

Formerly semi-detached pair of late 19th century houses. Brick built with flared header panels and diamond pattern to north gable. Good contributor to the collection of fine brick built cottages in Watlington. Added for historic and aesthetic value.



### **3 Church Meadow**

Early 19th century rubble built house with later 20th century brick extension. Contributes to the character of Church Meadows in this part of the conservation area. Plain clay tile roof. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



### **25 Gorwell**

Formerly semi-detached pair of 19th century houses, possibly divided into three dwellings in the early 20th century, now a single home. Timber casements and slate roof. Added for historic value.



### **17 Gorwell**

Early 19th century house brick built in Flemish bond with flared headers. Timber sash windows and two chimney stacks. Gable end built in masonry rubble and raised in brick, hinting at an earlier core structure. Added for historic and aesthetic value.



**15 Gorwell, The Old School House**

Early 20th century timber framed and weather boarded school house. Possibly a former Girl's School. Rare example of weatherboarding in the Watlington conservation area, another being The Granary on High Street. Added for aesthetic, historic, and communal value.



**6-7 Davenport Place**

One pair of three semi-detached houses in Davenport Place built in the late 19th century, possibly speculatively constructed alongside the school. Fine brickwork using flared headers. Single shared chimney stack. Added for historic and group value.



**4-5 Davenport Place**

One pair of three semi-detached houses in Davenport Place built in the late 19th century, possibly speculatively constructed alongside the school. Fine brickwork using flared headers. Single shared chimney stack. Added for historic and group value.



**2-3 Davenport Place**

One pair of three semi-detached houses in Davenport Place built in the late 19th century, possibly speculatively constructed alongside the school. Fine brickwork using flared headers. Single shared chimney stack. Added for historic and group value.



**7-11 Shirburn Street**

Formerly the Watlington Brewery Company, now converts to a dentists and private apartments. Constructed in mostly brick with elaborate use of flared headers, including on the north chimney stack. Surviving carriageway and shopfront to former brewery offices. Added for historic and communal value.



**15-17 Shirburn Street**

Semi-detached brick built pair built in the 19th century behind the Fat Fox Inn, an unusual siting. Fine flared header brickwork and brick reveals/bands. Gothic leaded casement windows. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**Hall to the rear of 18 High Street**

Ancillary structure, likely late 19th century featuring brick and stone walls. Few window and door openings, likely former use as a storage shed, possibly for the brewery. Today owned by Watlington Club with recent uses as Scout Hut and bakery. Added for communal and historic value.



**30-34 Shirburn Street**

Short and low terrace of three houses, likely early 19th century. Later bay dormer to No 30 otherwise relatively unchanged. Plain clay tile roof and red brick. Added for historic value.



**29 Shirburn Street**

Three bay house, likely early 19th century. Slate roof with yellow render to front, stone and brick visible on south gable. Historic boundary walls of flint and brick form turning to Letts Alley. Later porch and central chimney stack. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**31 Shirburn Street**

Large rendered five bay brick house, likely early 19th century with later extensions to the rear. Slate roof with cast iron railings to front. Added for historic value.



**52 Shirburn Street**

Former cottages with rebuilt/extended first floor and rear extensions. Handsome limestone with brick dressings to ground floor likely late 18th century, contemporary with 62 and 64 opposite. Added for aesthetic and historic interest.



**61 Shirburn Street**

Formerly Ivy House, with a double wide bay fronted late Victorian frontage featuring polychromy and terracotta details. Main body of house is likely 18th century in origin featuring four gables to the rear and a number of chimney stacks. Worthy of further study. Added for aesthetic and historic interest.



**The Chequers, Love Lane**

Public house, constructed in rubble stone and brick, whitewashed. Formerly a short of cottages, likely for tenant farmers. Red clay plain tiled wing likely late 18th century, slate roofed part is mid 19th century. Added for communal and historic interest.



**29 Chapel Street**

Cottage, much altered are partly rebuilt in the 20th century, parts dating from the 19th century. Brick construction, plain clay tiled roof and small casements. False windows to ground floor. Added for historic value.



**1-9 New Road**

Terrace of four small houses, likely mid-late 19th century built speculatively for artisans when New Road was laid out. Brick with flared headers, slate roofs. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**4 New Road**

Originally a semi-detached pair of cottages, now a single house with later alterations and extensions. Brick built with slate roof. Added for historic and aesthetic value.,



**32-34 Church Street**

Semi-detached pair. Originally a single house, No 32 was built around 1900, converting an ancillary structure. Brick built with plain clay tiled roofs. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**28-30 Church Street**

Semi-detached pair of brick built cottages with clay tile roofs. Possibly late 18th century with later extensions but largely unchanged. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**1 Church Meadows**

Formerly semi-detached pair now single house. Rubble stone walls to gable elevations, slate roof with white render. Likely late 19th century built on church land. Added for historic value.



**2 Church Meadows**

Formerly semi-detached pair now single house. Likely late 19th century. Added for historic value.



**21 Church Street**

Formerly semi-detached pair now single house. Unusual pilasters framing brick construction. Slate roof and bare brick gables, mid 19th century. Added for historic and aesthetic value.



**19 Church Street**

Mid 19th century cottage with Arts and Crafts decoration. Rendered brick with plain clay tile roof. 4 over 8 sash windows. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**17 Church Street**

House, set back from Church Street. Brick built with flared headers and slate roof. Attractive simple frontage, likely mid 19th century. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**15 Church Street**

Formerly semi-detached pair now single house. Rough rendered to the front and unusual brick rubble infill to gable end. Slate roof with one surviving chimney stack. Likely mid-19th century. Added for historic value.



**10-12 Church Street**

Semi-detached pair with complex phasing as suggested by brick types on front elevation. Attractive high quality field flint rubble gable end wall. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**4-8 Church Street**

Short terrace of three houses all featuring the same braided flared header pattern to the front elevation. No 4 is a later reconstruction while 6 and 8 appear original. 6 has its original windows and 8 its original door. Added for aesthetic and historic interest.



**2 Church Street**

House, likely early 19th century. Panels of high quality knapped flintwork and brick reveals. Early iron casement windows with gothic detailing. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**27 Gorwell**

Large house, briefly the Royal Oak public house and now a private dwelling. Unusually large roof in plain clay tile. Likely early 19th century brick and rubble, rendered. Added for historic value.



**43-49 High Street**

Short terrace of four houses. Brick polychromy and plain clay tiled roofs. Nos 45-49 are mid 19th century, No 43 is earlier and features a brick and rubble gable end. Added for historic value.



**39 High Street**

Large house, likely early 19th century. Brick built with flared headers, plain clay tile roof. Early western extension. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**High Street War Memorial (aka Watlington Memorial Cross)**

Erected 1920, commemorates First and Second World Wars. Added for historic and communal value.



**7 Chapel Street**

House, likely early 19th century. Knapped flint construction with brick reveals and cornice. Casement windows and plain clay tiles roof. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**2 Chapel Street, fmr. Black Horse Pub**

House; 18th century, possibly with earlier core; rendered with slate roof; central and end stacks; sash windows to ground and first floor. Morlands Brewery sign on front elevation.



**6-10 Chapel Street**

Short 19th century terrace, much altered/rebuilt. No 6 retains much of its historic fabric and has evidence of upward extension. Brick built with stone panels. Added for historic value.



**16-20 Chapel Street**

Terrace of three houses, formerly four. Nos 14 and 16 demolished and rebuilt into a single home in the 20th century. Nos 18 and 20 likely date to the mid 19th century. No 18 would have been the typical appearance. Brick with slate roof. Added for historic interest.



**13-15 Chapel Street**

Semi-detached pair of early 19th century cottages. Field flint construction with brick reveals and a clay plain tile roof. Timber casements. Added for aesthetic and historic value.



**16 High Street**

Likely built as a pub in the mid 19th century featuring a typical swept corner into the adjoining lane. Now a shop. Built in brick with flared headers and a plain clay tile roof. Added for historic, communal, and aesthetic value.



**26 High Street**

Shop, historically a bakery, with an exceptionally long burgage plot. Frontage in brick with rubble masonry walls. It should be noted that the carriageway and visible timber framing therein is part of the Grade II listing to 28, 30 and 32 High Street. Added for historic value.

For further information and advice on  
Conservation Areas please contact:  
South Oxfordshire District Council, Abbey House, Abbey Close,  
Abingdon, OX14 3JETel: 01235 422600  
Email: [planning@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning@southoxon.gov.uk)

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