

# Cookham

## Village Design Statement

### Supplementary Planning Document



**May 2013**

**Joint Sponsors: The Cookham Parish Council and The Cookham Society**

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## Foreword

The preparation of this Village Design Statement has been led by local residents; it has been sponsored by Cookham Parish Council and the Cookham Society and has been written by residents.

This is the first time that elected representatives, interest groups and residents have come together in this way and shows that the Borough Council is leading the way in encouraging residents to be instrumental in policy making. I would encourage others with an interest in their environment to follow this excellent example.

**Cllr Mrs C Bateson**  
**Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead**  
**Cabinet Member – Community Partnerships**

## Note from the Sponsors

Cookham Parish Council and the Cookham Society are proud to have jointly sponsored the first Village Design Statement for Cookham.

We are grateful to Dr. Courtenay-Smith and the rest of the Working Group for their efforts in producing this comprehensive depiction of Cookham Parish and we must acknowledge the valuable contribution made by many residents and visitors.

We also offer our thanks to Officers of the Planning and Property Service at the Borough Council for their guidance and to Borough Councillors for their continuing support.

The Parish Council and the Cookham Society have endeavoured to ensure that the contents of the document represent the views of the residents.

We hope that this Village Design Statement, with subsequent updates, will provide continuing significant reference material in its use as a Supplementary Planning Document.

**D Fry**  
**Chairman**  
**Cookham Parish Council**

**D N Ashwanden**  
**Chairman**  
**Cookham Society Planning Sub- Committee**

# A message from the VDS Working Group

## *Dear Reader*

It was for us a great privilege to be granted the major role in the development of this document.

The aim of the Village Design Statement (VDS) is to provide local guidance for those seeking to make changes to their property or land to help ensure that change is in keeping and protects what people most value.

Throughout its preparation we have been keenly aware that, quite apart from its formal role in support of planning processes, this document will form a small piece of history. The VDS captures Cookham parish as it is today. We have also been reminded how past and present residents have sought to protect what is best and most important about the parish whilst addressing the issues of the day.

There is no doubt in our minds that Cookham parish is an exceptional place to live. Cookham parish is very pretty in built terms and already has two conservation areas and numerous listed buildings. However, the outcomes of consultations left us in no doubt that the three settlements of Cookham cannot be satisfactorily described without invoking the many facets of their relationship with the countryside and riverside setting, which so positively enhances the sense of well-being of residents and visitors alike.

Our grateful thanks go to each and every person who contributed to this VDS - also to our joint Sponsors, Cookham Parish Council and the Cookham Society, and to the Borough Council, whose invaluable advice and support was greatly appreciated. Whilst it would be impossible to acknowledge everyone whose thoughts and ideas we have managed to glean, some of the key contributors are recognized on pages 1 and 2.

**The Cookham Village Design Statement Working Group**

# 1 Introduction to the Village Design Statement

## 1.1 About the Village Design Statement (VDS)

The Village Design Statement (VDS) for Cookham parish has been produced by residents. It describes the character and setting of Cookham's three settlements, with particular reference to the physical and tangible qualities that residents most value. The VDS provides local guidance to those seeking to make changes to their property or land and, where planning permission is required, assist the Borough Council in considering whether the proposed development is sympathetic to the local character.

The VDS does not guide where development should take place in principle and does not designate land for particular purposes. These matters are currently considered through the Borough Council's adopted Local Plan. The Borough Council is currently reviewing the Local Plan.

The VDS provides guidance to support existing planning policy, most notably Local Plan policies DG1 (Design Guidelines), N1 (Areas of Special Landscape Importance), N2 (Setting of the Thames), and H10 and H11 (Housing Layout and Design). The VDS will also assist the implementation of Section 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework which expects developments to respond to local character and history."

## 1.2 Status of the VDS

The VDS provides design guidance to support existing planning policy. The VDS was adopted by the Borough Council as a Supplementary Planning Document on 23 May 2013. This means that its content and guidance will be part of the suite of local planning policy documents that guide decisions on planning applications within Cookham.

## 1.3 Duration, Sponsors and Working Group

The preparation of the VDS began in December 2008 as a result of a recommendation made in the earlier Cookham Plan. The project was jointly sponsored by the Cookham Parish Council and the Cookham Society.

The VDS was drafted by a Working Group of residents. The Working Group and its advisers or supporters included all those in the table below. The names of those engaged at any point in elements of VDS drafting and/or review are marked with a red asterisk. Where special support was provided by an individual who was not a member of the Working Group, the nature of the support is indicated in italics.

## 1.4 VDS early consultations and statutory Public Consultation

The drafting of the VDS was preceded by and interleaved with consultations with Cookham residents, visitors, local businesses and other organisations. Information gathered and assembled for the earlier 'Cookham Plan' (Reference 2), was also extensively consulted. In sum, the VDS consultations prior to formal Public Consultation included:

- Review of information from earlier 'Cookham Plan'
- 'Village characterisation' public workshops.
- Analysis following collection of around 500 completed questionnaires of various types.
- In-depth consultations with 22 members of the Cookham community, each representing a key perspective (see Acknowledgements, page 2).
- Professional surveys of all streets in Cookham parish, each to a prescribed format.
- Additional surveys covering the major areas of green space inside or close to the settlements.
- 'Informal consultations' on the initial draft VDS (individually with all members of the Parish Council and of the Cookham Society Committee – the Sponsoring Organisations).
- Formal Public Consultation on the revised draft VDS, as notified to prescribed organisations, and to residents of Cookham Parish, via press publicity together with local posters and leaflets.
- Consultations with Planning Officers of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead throughout, with modifications and change to drafts as advised.

The draft VDS was published for a 5-week period of statutory Public Consultation from 23<sup>rd</sup> November to 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012. Comments received were considered by the Working Group and the Borough Council. Where appropriate, amendments were made to the VDS. The amended VDS was passed to and endorsed by Cookham Parish Council and the Cookham Society as project sponsors before being adopted by the Borough Council. A summary of the consultation process, including the representations made and how they have been addressed in the amended VDS is set out in a separate consultation statement.

## 1.5 The VDS and 'Sustainability'

At an early stage in the VDS project, a 'Sustainability Scoping Report' was published for consultation (Reference 1). The report, and comments received on it, have helped guide the work of the project.

Dr Shez Courtenay-Smith*, Church Gate, Cookham (Chairman, lead writer/ page designs)	Management consultant	Ms Fiona Hewer*, High Road, Cookham Rise VDS Flood plain and Sustainability Adviser	Environmental scientist
Mrs Jane Davey*, Poundfield Lane, Cookham	Barrister	Mr Tim Downes (non resident in Cookham parish) Street and green space professional surveys contractor	Chartered surveyor
Mrs Lynne Peperell*, Wessons Hill, Cookham Dean	Researcher	Mrs Janet Wheeler, Southwood Road, Cookham Rise (no longer resident in Cookham Parish) Secretariat to the Working Group until January 2010	Clerk to Parish Council until January 2010
Mrs Pam Knight*, The Pound, Cookham	Local historian	Mr Brian Clews, Broomhill, Cookham Rise Special adviser to the Working Group, on ecological matters	Wildlife author and consultant
Mr Nigel Topping, Roman Lea, Cookham (no longer resident in Cookham Parish)	Statistician	Mr Robert Acker, High Road, Cookham Rise Questionnaire analyst. Recorder/ administrator for informal consultations	Qualified audit professional
Mr Roger Davies, Sutton Close, Cookham	Chartered surveyor		
Mr Tom Denniford*, Winter Hill Road, Cookham Dean Initial advice and drafting assistance	Chartered surveyor		

# 1 Introduction to the Village Design Statement continued

## 1.6 Guidance Points, Recommendations and Advisory Notes

Guidance Points, Recommendations and Advisory Notes appear in boxes at appropriate points throughout the text, with the following forms and significance.

**GUIDANCE** Guidance Points in yellow boxes under this heading (all commencing with the letter 'G') are those that should be considered by people contemplating changes to their property and those reviewing planning applications.

**RECOMMENDATIONS** Recommendations in light green boxes (and commencing with the letter 'R') relate to aspects affecting Cookham parish more generally. Whilst there is an emphasis on the built environment, these Recommendations do not supplement existing planning policy but are provided as suggestions.

**ADVISORY NOTES** Advisory notes (in light turquoise boxes (and commencing with the letter 'A') provide additional information, usually naming further documents as sources of guidance.



**Red roofs of Cookham: clay tiles are prominent throughout the three settlements, although slate dominates in certain areas.**

## 1.7 Nomenclature of the VDS

The following nomenclature applies to areas and place names in the VDS.

- The name '**Cookham parish**' is used to designate the entire area within the parish boundary: that is the three settlements and the surrounding green spaces.
- The name '**Cookham**' is used as the collective term for the built areas that include all three Cookham settlements and outlying properties.
- The phrase '**The Cookhams**' is not used in the VDS. Where it might otherwise occur it is replaced by the name, 'Cookham' or '**the three settlements**'.
- Cookham in its entirety is occasionally referred to as '**the village**', whilst Cookham village is always referred to as '**Cookham village**'.
- The three settlements are designated as follows. All three are seen as part of 'one Cookham'.
  - Cookham village
  - Cookham Rise and the Station Hill area
  - Cookham Dean

The rationale for all nomenclature decisions is provided at Annex A.

**Note** At all points in the VDS where an individual's role or position is stated, it is their role or position held at the time that they made their contributions to the VDS.

## Acknowledgements

Those who have provided contributions to the VDS are too numerous to name. Whilst the few are mentioned here, our thanks to the many are particularly important.

The VDS is fundamentally a document that seeks to represent the views of the community and, without the weight of shared opinion of all who participated in the Consultation Programme, the Working Group would not have been in a position to seek and attain the right balances in the document as finally produced.

We should like to thank the Borough Council for giving their support to the project, dedicating time to review processes, and ultimately providing to the VDS the status of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). In particular, we thank our key representative, Principal Planning Officer, Mr Ian Bellingier.

We thank our two Sponsors, the Cookham Parish Council and the Cookham Society, each of whom contributed significant funding and provided an invaluable first round of comments.

Our grateful thanks are due to all those who took special roles in support of the Working Group, as are named in the box on page 1. Both individually and collectively, they have made enormous contributions as did the photographers named on page 80.

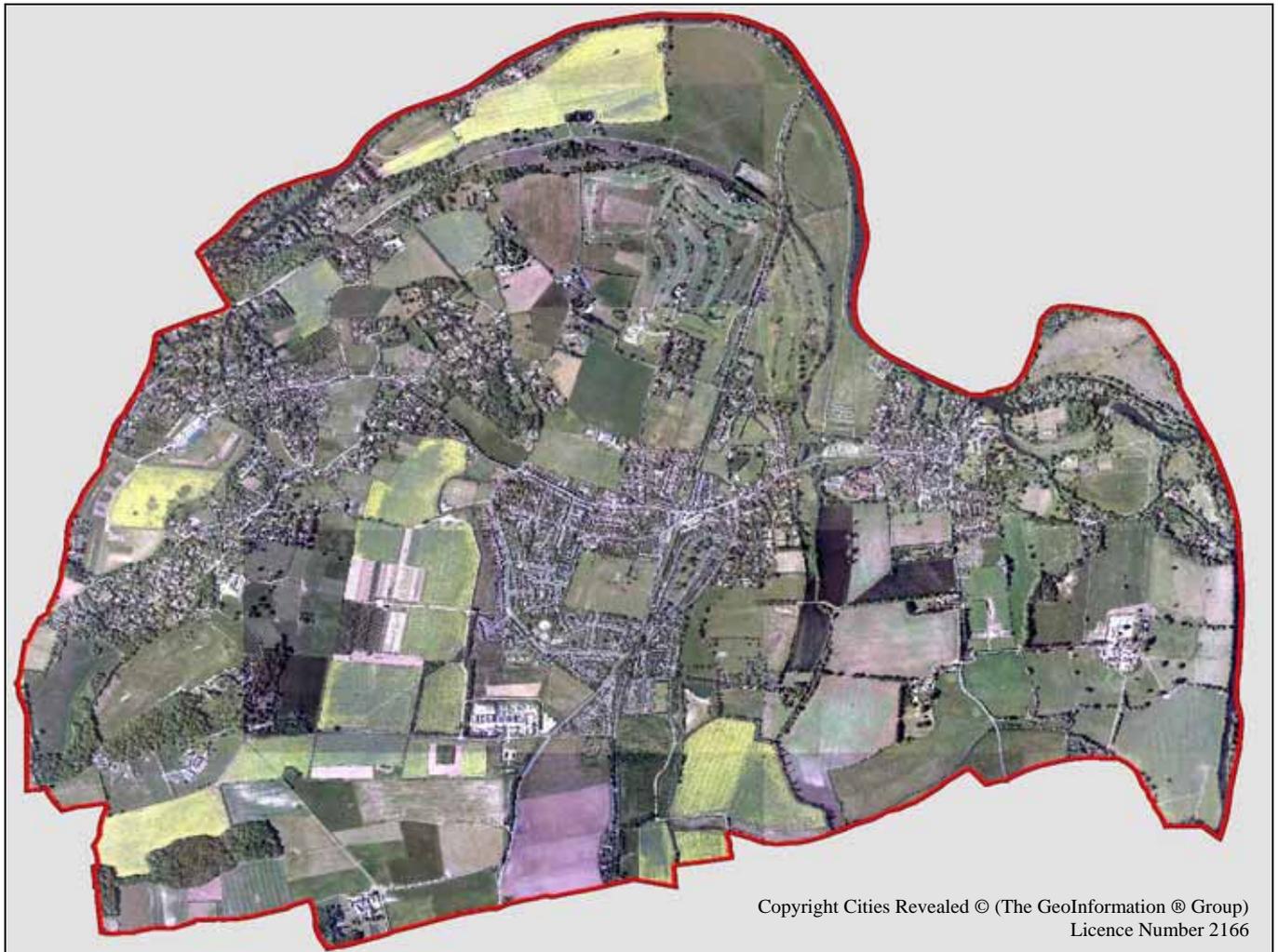
We are particularly grateful to those who participated in the Individual Consultations and provided important insights into Cookham parish as it is seen from widely differing perspectives. The names of these individuals are listed to the right.

So illuminating was much that was conveyed to us during those consultations that we have, where possible, included memorable, pertinent quotations within the VDS text.

### Participants in the Individual Consultations for the VDS

- Mrs Carol Austen, Chairman of the Maidenhead and Cookham Commons Advisory Committee
- Mrs Cindy Barnes, for knowledge of 'Transition town' principles
- Mr Colin Berks, Chairman of the Marlow Archaeological Society
- Mrs Amanda Beard, Property Manager for Basildon Park and Berkshire, National Trust
- Ms Sue Bickle, Manager, Odney Club and Winter Hill Golf Club
- Mr Curly Carver, Warden-in-Charge, Maidenhead and Cookham Commons
- Mr Brian Clews, Head, Berkshire County Ornithological Services
- Mr Geoffrey Copas, Head of Copas Farms
- Ms Tanya Copas, Director, Copas Partnership
- Mr Ian Davis, for knowledge of Cookham's sporting activities
- Simon and Pat Davis, Rivertime Boat Trust Charity
- Mr Jon Fisher, Director of Facilities and Events, Chartered Institute of Marketing
- Mr Duncan Gibson, Head of Divisional Planning, Shanly Homes
- Mrs Arlene Kersley, Rural Housing Enabler, Community Council for Berkshire
- Mr Michael Johnson, Chairman of the Friends of the Stanley Spencer Gallery
- Mr Daran Jones, Owner of Country Store and Managing Director of the Station Parade management company
- Ms Liz Kwantes, Cookham Youth Project Leader
- Mr Richard Poad, Chairman, Maidenhead Heritage Centre
- Mr Richard Simmonds, Cookham Dean farmer and Chairman of the Cookham Plan project
- Mrs Jean Stretton, President, Cookham Society
- Mr Michael Wellman, Lifetime resident of Cookham Rise and Member of the Parish Council
- Mr Reg Willsher, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Elizabeth House

## 2 Introduction to Cookham's location and setting



An aerial view of Cookham parish with the parish boundary marked in red.

### 2.1 Parish location

Cookham parish comprises the northernmost part of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Its northern and eastern boundaries are formed by the River Thames, with Buckinghamshire lying on the river's opposite bank. To the south are the northern outskirts of Maidenhead, while to the west lies the parish of Bisham.

### 2.2 Bounded by a curve of the Thames

The River Thames bounds the north and east of Cookham parish for nearly four miles and is fundamental to the history and character of the area. There is little commercial traffic on the river nowadays, but it is widely used by leisure craft, including sailing boats, rowing boats and canoes. The riverside meadows and Thames Path are in constant use for recreational purposes.

After turning to the south-east and flowing beneath Cookham Bridge, the river divides into four channels. The northern channel leads into the privately owned Hedsor Water. The central channels are the lock cut, passing through Sashes Island, and the weir. The southern channel is known as Lulle Brook. It runs adjacent to Mill Lane, bounding the southern flank of Odney Common. All four channels rejoin to the south-east of Cookham Lock, where the river turns south towards Maidenhead.

### 2.3 Dissected by lesser streams and waterways

A second system of waterways runs across Cookham Moor and southwards towards Maidenhead. This system includes the Fleet Ditch, Strande Water and White Brook.

The Fleet Ditch has links to drainage systems on Cockmarsh and then passes southwards across Cookham Moor, becoming Strande Water. From here it connects to White Brook, which crosses Widbrook Common before joining the Thames to the north of Maidenhead. The stream also continues southwards to Maidenhead's town centre and thence to Bray.

### 2.4 Three distinctive settlements within a unified whole

Cookham parish includes three significant settlements named as the village, the Rise and the Dean. Parts of the built environment extend beyond these specific nodes and are known simply as Cookham.

Cookham village lies in the north-east corner of the parish. The A4094 road (Sutton Road) passes through it to link Maidenhead with Bourne End. This part of the parish is mostly flat and low-lying, situated as it is within the Thames flood plain.

## 2 Introduction to Cookham's location and setting continued

To the west of the flood plain, the ground rises towards the north and west and becomes more hilly, culminating in Winter Hill, which is the north-eastern extremity of a chalk formation running along the south side of the Thames. The open landscape gives way to a mixture of woodlands and small fields, the heart of which contains the widely spaced settlement of Cookham Dean.

Cookham Rise is the rising land to the west of the railway branch line. Together with the Station Hill area of Cookham (east of the railway line) these two areas form a settlement at the centre of the parish, providing its commercial centre and largest residential area.



Cookham village lies to the east, close to the southern bend of the river at that point. Historically it includes the Cookham High Street area and the Pound, with the low-lying and flood-prone Cookham Moor between the two.

### 2.5 Green and waterside setting

Few built environments so close to London and major national motorways can boast the 'glory of greenness' that is Cookham. The expression '**Cookham is defined by its green spaces**' was used by one of the VDS Working Group's Individual Consultees, ecologist Mr Brian Clews. The VDS Working Group thought this expression to be so apt a description of Cookham that Section 4 of the VDS is named accordingly. In that section, many aspects of Cookham's green spaces are discussed: its Green Belt, its farms, its common land, its woodland and wooded hillsides, and its 'fingers of green' stretching to the heart of the built environment, imbuing the community with a sense of peace and calm.

Just as green spaces not only surround the Cookham settlements but also thread through them, so does water in the form of the River Thames and its secondary waterways. Such was the extent to which the flow of water was seen as a characteristic of Cookham that the state-of-the-art extensions to Moor Hall (Section 7.3) incorporated bubbling water flows into the heart of the resulting building complex to echo the 'feel' of Cookham.

Cookham is very pretty in 'built' terms (see the descriptions especially in Sections 7, 8 and 9), and already possesses two Conservation Areas. (*Section 15 highlights the possibility of creating additional Conservation Areas within Cookham Rise and the Station Hill area*). Cookham's architectural value is complemented by the attractive riverside and countryside setting

Cookham is not, and must not be, immune to change, but the best of what Cookham has to offer should be protected and where possible enhanced. As was found during the early VDS consultations, the importance of Cookham's character weighs not only with its resident community but with many who live elsewhere in the Borough, who love to visit Cookham, and also with many more living further afield (Section 16.1). Cookham offers refreshing, peaceful and healthy enjoyment to the visitor. Its major amenities are personally uplifting and largely free of charge.

#### **GUIDANCE:** Cookham's location and setting

**G2.1** Development should not be allowed to detract from the sensitive inter-relationships between Cookham's built environment, green environment and river or waterways.

Examples of Cookham's built environment.

Top of page: The Holy Trinity Church dating from the twelfth century.

Centre: Varied architecture in Cookham High Street.

Base of page: The junction of Dean Lane and Alleyns Lane in Cookham Dean.

# 3 Cookham's historical & archaeological heritage

## 3.1 Early settlement in Cookham

With its steep hills, woodland and fertile soil, all in close proximity to the river and giving access to fresh water, prehistoric Cookham was an attractive place to live. The evidence of occupation has been found in concentrations of stone tools and weapons. During the Bronze Age, Cookham's dead were buried at Cockmarsh and some of the barrows, which would originally have stood on low islands above the water, are still visible.



A late Bronze Age burial mound on Cockmarsh. A missing 'chunk' indicates that this mound has been dug into in the past, probably in the nineteenth century.

Until the beginning of the Roman occupation in 43AD, Cookham was in the territory of a tribe based at Silchester. The Thames marked the boundary with a rival tribe occupying south Buckinghamshire and beyond.

The Romans brought their roads through Cookham. An important military road, now known as the Camlet Way, ran between Colchester, Essex and Silchester, probably crossing the river in the area of Sashes Island. A stretch of another reputedly Roman road ran north-south between Braywick and Cockmarsh. The two roads may have intersected on Cannon Down, where excavation has revealed evidence of a Roman villa or farmstead.

## 3.2 Cookham's Anglo-Saxon importance

Cookham continued in its role as border territory in the Anglo-Saxon period but, by this time, it was on the boundary between Wessex and Mercia. The high-status graves of six Anglo-Saxon warriors, accompanied by their swords and shields, were discovered buried at a high point in Noah's Ark field on the hill at Rowborrow in 1854, when the railway was under construction.

Historical records show that Anglo-Saxon Cookham was of national importance. By 740 AD, an early royal 'minster' or monastery, had been established, probably close to where Holy Trinity Church stands today. A royal minster was a cultural retreat and the focal point of an economic market, as well as a religious centre, with jurisdiction over a wide area.

Over a century later, Alfred 'the Great' established a large fort in the area of Sashes Island. This was one of a group of thirty-one 'Burghal Hidage' forts which surrounded Wessex as protection against Viking raids.

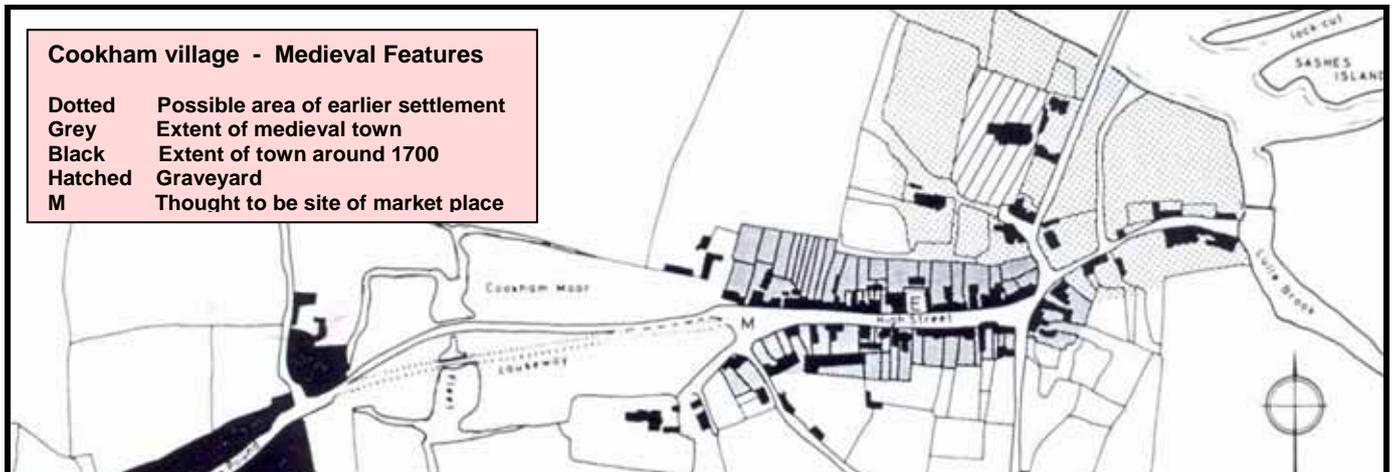
Cookham continued as a royal manor and, in 997AD, a meeting of the King's Witan, convened by the Anglo-Saxon king, Aethelred II (the 'Unready'), was one of three recorded as being held there. A royal manor house, probably close to the minster, would have been a likely venue. Saxon occupation spread to Cookham Rise where there are field names such as Coxborrow, Ham Field and Halldore.

## 3.3 A thriving medieval market town

After the Norman Conquest of 1066, Cookham's church, along with other churches and lands, was granted to Reinbald, once Chaplain to Edward the Confessor and later Chancellor to William I. In 1133, Henry I granted all Reinbald's holdings to Cirencester Abbey and Cookham's church was largely rebuilt soon afterwards. The ecclesiastical manor of Cannon Court and its lands - some still surviving as Cannon Court Farm - remained the property of Cirencester Abbey until Henry VIII dissolved the Monasteries.

Cookham (now Cookham village) had become a thriving market town and, in 1225, was recognised by the shire court as a borough. The town was formed to a plan typical of the period, where the houses, some being occupied by merchants, had narrow frontages with long rear plots, known as 'burgage plots', to provide space for workshops and stables. Outlines of these plots are recognisable in property boundaries on the north side of the High Street, with traces of a former back lane and ditch.

The main court house for Cookham was at The Lee in Cookham Dean. It served the Manor and Hundred Courts. Another court house, believed to have been in



### 3 Cookham's historical & archaeological heritage continued

the High Street, may have been used primarily for market disputes. A 'new market' for Cookham, listed in the Domesday Book of 1086, was probably held at the east end of the village, later moving close to the Moor.

The raised ground on which Cookham church was built forms an island, protected from the perennial flooding of the Thames. The adjacent settlement, in the High Street and Odney Lane areas, was also less prone to flooding than were the surrounding meadows. Development of the medieval town progressed westwards, as far as the Moor, but the flood risk on the Moor and marsh was an obvious constraint.

Archaeological evidence suggests that, as far back as the Saxon period, the continuation of Cookham's main street was developed on higher ground, now known as The Pound, on the western side of the Moor. Grocer, baker and butcher shops, two pubs and a forge still existed among older cottages there until the later nineteenth century. Most of these buildings now survive as residences.

#### 3.4 Royal manorial estates

The other areas of the northern part of Cookham parish comprised a mixture of woods, farmsteads and common land, with only the agricultural open fields bordering the long stretch of road between the Pound and Dean Farm. Cookham was on a medieval packhorse trade route with at least two river crossing points, at My Lady Ferry and White Place.

Even in the Middle Ages, location was crucial to economic success and the mid-thirteenth century construction of a bridge over the Thames at Maidenhead, as part of the route from London to Bristol, spelt the beginning of Cookham's decline as a prosperous town. Maidenhead acquired a thriving wharf for barges, and a degree of wealth from the new passing trade.

Cookham's royal associations had continued, as the manor remained with the Crown. The Manor of Bradleys, including Stone House in Cookham Dean, was part of Anne of Cleves' divorce settlement from Henry VIII. Elizabeth I temporarily leased Widbrook with grazing rights to the villagers, who fought hard for its permanent retention, and won.

When Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries in 1536, Thomas Weldon, the king's cofferer, was granted the

Manor of Cannon Court. The estate of Harwoods, on the Mount, was granted by James I to his Secretary of State, Sir John Herbert. The grand house that Thomas Weldon had built there, known as The Place, was briefly occupied by Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland and a former maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth 1. The royal manor was sold into private hands in 1818, although the Bisham Abbey estate continued to hold lands in Cookham Dean.

#### 3.5 The advent of change

The eastern end of Cookham parish had long attracted the gentry and those with aspirations. Grander new houses there began to take on a more classical look. Several Cookham buildings are earlier than their frontages suggest, having been 'gentrified' to raise their status.

Two examples of this are the Kings Arms and East Gate in the village, which have high, rebuilt front walls with parapets and enlarged sash windows, following the fashion of the Georgian period. The Old Farmhouse, formerly Pound Farm, is timber framed throughout but bears a similar high wall. Moor Hall grew in stages from a farm to a grand Victorian country house.

On the west side of the Moor, Melmott Lodge still shows the medieval gabled end of a house which was enlarged in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to become a gentleman's residence.

The elegant Regency Cottage and West Lodge (now Pound House) also reflect the wealth and social standing of incoming Cookham residents of this period, as do several other later houses built within the curtilage of the medieval village settlement.

Cookham Dean's rural, agricultural community had remained largely unchanged and had always been rather scattered, with no central focal point. The Dean was seen as a somewhat lawless place, as a parish constable's record of the early nineteenth century confirms. However, a religious revival spurred by the growth of Methodism encouraged a proposal for the establishment of a Methodist chapel in Cookham Dean. This, in turn, led to the construction of the St. John the Baptist Church in the 1840s on the advice of the Reverend Thomas Whateley, a Poor Law reformer, who was vicar of Cookham from 1797-1837.



Far left: The Crown Hotel, Cookham village, around 1900. Left: 1833 drawing of the old cottage, still present and just recognisable (photo, page 29), on the corner of Moor Lane and School Lane. School Lane was then the back lane, closed by a cattle gate.

*"Cookham residents should be encouraged to develop a deep awareness of our rich local heritage in order to appreciate the positive role it plays in our lives and share in the responsibility for its protection and enhancement."*

**Extract from Individual Consultations  
Mr Colin Berks MIFA, Chairman of Marlow Archaeological Society**

We would like to thank the private owner of the drawing, above right, who permitted use of the image for VDS purposes.

## 3 Cookham's historical & archaeological heritage continued

### 3.6 'Opening up' in the nineteenth century - new bridges and a railway branch line

Despite its relative decline from the later medieval period onwards, Cookham was by no means an isolated community. Historical records show that Cookham's residents have always been in touch with the world outside the parish. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, coaches to Oxford, Reading and London called at the King's Arms. Cookham's farmers sent fruit and vegetables, packed into locally hand-made baskets, to London markets on barges which also carried passengers. Horse manure from London's streets came back on barges, to enrich Cookham's fields, and rags arrived for local paper mills.

Since the early medieval period, Cookham people had crossed the river to Wooburn parish by ferry near the church. The last ferry boat, with its chains, was purchased by the new Cookham Bridge Company and the first bridge was built in 1840 as a toll bridge, in anticipation of the railway. Clearly, this represented a major opening-up of Cookham. However, the new oak bridge was lost within twenty-five years, the result of general decay and the force of the river in spate. It was replaced by the present iron bridge, completed in 1867.

The most important industry in nineteenth century Cookham was shoe-making. A shoe factory, run at The Elms in Odney Lane (now part of the Odney Club), employed numerous outworkers, including children. Some of Cookham's public houses were supplied by breweries located beside the river and in School Lane. There was employment for several men at the paper mill - paper was made in Cookham from the early seventeenth century - but most Cookham men and boys were agricultural labourers.

The year 1854 brought the greatest change Cookham had seen for centuries, the arrival of the railway branch line from Maidenhead to High Wycombe. The trains brought numerous London visitors to Cookham. By 1900, two cottage public houses, The Gate Hangs High and The Crown, were rebuilt as three-storey hotels.

The river became a recreation area and crowds watched as boats with their finely dressed passengers passed through Cookham Lock. Regattas were held and swimming became popular at Odney, despite neighbours' complaints of indecency.

The railway led directly to the construction of terraced cottages along what is now Lower Road and, in High Road, on the hill to the west of the railway line, known as 'the Rise'.

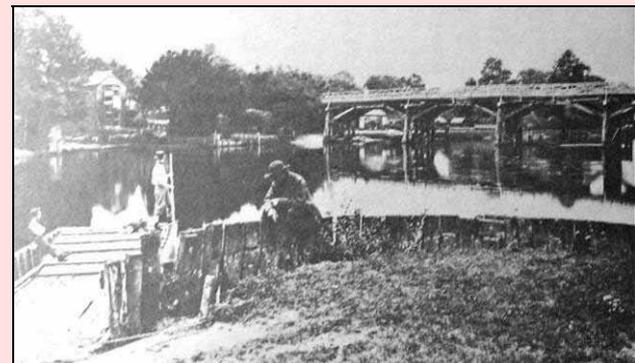
The land surrounding the original village and Rise remained mainly agricultural. Cookham people had fought and held off the threat of land enclosures until the early 1850s, also succeeding in permanently retaining the parish's commons. Seasonal grazing on the low-lying meadows at Cockmarsh, the Moor and Widbrook meant local farmers could use their upland fields largely for arable purposes. Cherry growing in Cookham Dean's orchards became so extensive that people arrived by train to admire the beauty of the cherry blossom.

#### Cookham's bridges

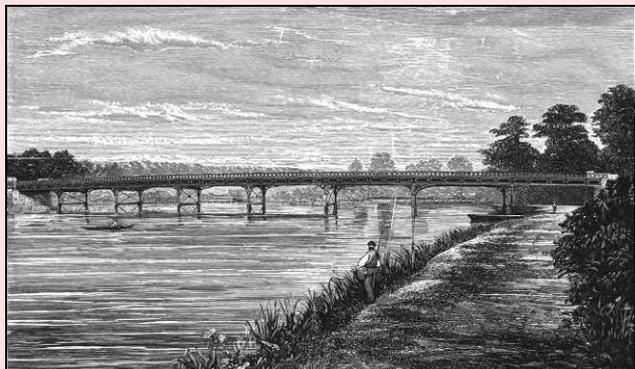
Box 1



A view of the Holy Trinity Church and the ferry in 1834, before Cookham's first 'modern' bridge was built.

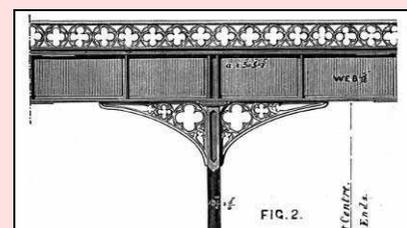


The first 'modern' Cookham Bridge, commissioned by the Cookham Bridge Company and constructed in English oak, was "opened for travack" in 1840 at a cost of £8,274 including £2,565 for buying out the ferry. This was the scene in 1865 however - only half a bridge was left - and the ferry was back in action!



The current Cookham Bridge, erected in 1867, was remarkable for its low cost. It was chosen from 37 designs submitted to the Cookham Bridge Company, with prices from £1,900 to £27,000. The selected offer was from Pease, Hutchinson & Co, Darlington, long-established iron manufacturers and bridge builders. The price was £2,520, complete as the bridge now stands, including the removal of the old structure which it replaced. An offer from Brunel was rejected.

A fragment of the original drawing for Cookham Bridge shows the decorative cast iron quatrefoil motifs topping the superstructure, with ornamental cast iron brackets beneath.



### 3 Cookham's historical & archaeological heritage continued

Workers' cottage rows were built to support the cherry growing activity. Homes were also built in the area east of the Station, now Station Hill and Station Road.

Not only did the railway make Cookham more accessible to visitors, it also presented potential for commuting to London businesses. Quarry Wood Road was opened, leading from Marlow into Cookham Dean. From the Edwardian period through to the 1930s, this easier access led to the development of larger houses in Cookham Dean, on sites chosen for their views.

#### 3.7 The twentieth century and onwards

Church primary schools were built at each end of the parish in the mid-nineteenth century. Cookham Rise School provided secondary education from its founding in 1908, eventually becoming a third primary school for Cookham's increasing population.

A Methodist chapel was built in Cookham village (now the Stanley Spencer Gallery) as well as a 'tin chapel' in Cookham Rise. In 1905, they were succeeded by the opening of the Wesleyan Church in Lower Road. Nearly sixty years later, further along Lower Road, a Catholic Church was built.

Throughout the twentieth century, the original village settlement continued to grow, but slowly, because of the inherent constraint of the flood plain. Scattered housing increased in Cookham Dean as local farmers sold off land due to economic conditions. Cookham Rise remained relatively static from the Edwardian era until inter-war and post-war periods, when substantial housing development (especially in the latter period) almost doubled its size. The peripheries of Cookham village were also subject to development. A shopping parade was constructed east of the railway station.

In the same period, Maidenhead has expanded, and more rapidly than Cookham. The green gap between the two is now narrow and needs to be retained to protect the separation of Cookham from Maidenhead (see Box 8, page 14).

Employment in agriculture gradually declined, but was mitigated by the growth of jobs in Maidenhead, at Moor Hall and the Odney Club in the heart of Cookham village and across the river.

In 1947, Cookham's toll bridge was sold by the Cookham Bridge Company to Berkshire County Council for £30,000, and the tolls were abolished.

The last forty years have seen major shifts in Cookham's commercial life, reflecting trends in society as a whole. These include the end of convenience shopping in Cookham village, with shop units now occupied by specialist retailers. Also, several redundant farm buildings have been converted into business premises.

*"Decisions about the future of a village cannot be soundly based unless they stem from knowledgeable answers to questions such as, 'How did we get here?', 'Why does our village look like it does?'"*

*Extract from Individual Consultations  
Mr Richard Poad, Chairman of Maidenhead Heritage Centre*

#### Cookham's railway station **Box 2**

In July 1846, The Wycombe Railway Company was incorporated by an Act of Parliament authorising construction of a single line broad gauge railway from the original Great Western Railway station at Maidenhead to High Wycombe. Construction began in 1852, and the completed line was opened on 1 August 1854. The line had stops at Maidenhead, Cookham, Marlow Road (Bourne End), Wooburn Green, Loudwater and High Wycombe.



Cookham's railway station originally had a main track, passing loop and pedestrian footbridge as seen above.



In this 1902 photograph, signal box, level-crossing gates, sidings and a traffic jam are all evident.



Cookham's railway station today. Following severe cutbacks in the 1970s, affecting track, facilities and services, the Marlow to Maidenhead Passengers' Association (MMPA) works to ensure that present arrangements will not be compromised.



The Millennium Clock on the north elevation of the Station building (and enlarged in the inset) is another small piece of history and a notable 'design offering' for twenty first century Cookham.

## 3 Cookham's historical & archaeological heritage continued



Left: 'The Boating Party' a painting by Hector Caffieri shows a fashionable scene by Cookham Bridge in the late nineteenth century.

Below: An unfortunate planning decision some years ago allowed the attractive and historic gable-end profile of Coombe Cottage in Cookham High Street to be obliterated from view by a new building. Errors of this type need to be avoided in the future.



### 3.8 Cookham's archaeological heritage

From the finds of recent years, there is no doubt that Cookham has an important archaeological heritage. As already indicated, there is documentary evidence of Cookham's significance in the late Saxon era as the location of the King's Witan and a fort of King Alfred 'the Great'. There are many more historical trails to be explored, including the early Anglo-Saxon royal minster, river crossings, battles, a Roman farmstead and Roman roads. All around the river and the three settlements are traces of Cookham's past. If any archaeological site should be built upon without recognition of its possible importance, then the opportunity to investigate it further would almost certainly be lost, as everything that might have been uncovered would have been sealed beneath the new development.

**ADVISORY NOTE:** Cookham's archaeological heritage

**A3.1** A well-established set of documents protects the historical and archaeological heritage of a town or village. Not all documents that would contain full information on Cookham's historical and archaeological assets have yet been prepared in connection with Cookham. It is unfortunate that their continued non-availability to planning decision-makers could result in the erosion of some of Cookham's heritage assets. In the absence of these documents, planning approvals must be granted on the basis of advice from 'Berkshire Archaeology', consultants to the Borough Council in such matters.

Details of the documents that should be created or enhanced appear in the Recommendations on this page.

Policies in the Royal Borough's existing Local Plan set out a number of provisions for dealing with Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance when these locations may be affected by development proposals. A revised draft Local Plan is anticipated in early 2014. Local Plan policies are important in the protection of archaeological assets, but a critical precursor is the ability to **recognise** that a site is one of archaeological significance, in order that the relevant policies can be triggered.

Cookham, therefore, needs to possess as much information as can be collated to aid in the identification and preservation of archaeologically and historically important sites and buildings. The main body of information is now held within the statutory Historic Environment Register (HER), but this requires expansion and can also be better supported by a 'Local Asset Register', compiled and held within Cookham parish. Such a Register may further be supported by an account of land and buildings in terms of current and historic use, which is known as 'Characterisation'. Without such information, planning authorities cannot always know that archaeological investigation is needed before development proceeds or that there is a particular historical significance to protect. Neither do applicants themselves have the information needed to check the archaeological or historic sensitivity of the site and to tailor their proposals accordingly. This in turn means that the appropriate conditions, such as a preliminary archaeological investigation, or a 'watching brief' for archaeologists, may not be included when planning approvals are granted. Remedies to this situation are proposed below.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:** Cookham's archaeological heritage

**R3.1** Cookham is now served by a Historic Environment Register (HER), a minimum requirement of existing planning policy. The HER is intended to be wider-ranging and with better information dissemination than has been available on previous statutory records. However, the HER still needs to be expanded in respect of Cookham at the earliest possible opportunity, ensuring that there is no omission of any relevant archaeological and historical assets.

**R3.2** Cookham has no 'Local List': that is, a local register of all historical assets and matters of heritage-related importance to a parish, so that they are taken into account in any planning decision. English Heritage now encourages communities to organise their own Local List, whose information will later be transferred to the HER. This is an initiative that has now been put in place within the Cookham community.

**R3.3** The Local List may be further supported by a 'Characterisation' document - a survey of land and buildings in terms of current and historic use, often of great importance to planning decision-making.

**R3.4** Guidelines should be available showing how to operate the HER. These guidelines are not currently in place for respect to Cookham and need to be prepared.

**R3.5** It is helpful to devise a plan that sets out how the above matters are to be progressed. Once again, this can be organised within the community.

## 4 “Cookham is defined by its green spaces”

### 4.1 The pattern of Cookham’s countryside

One of the principal attractions of Cookham, both as a place to live in and to visit, is the extent of the ‘open space’ surrounding, and interspersed with, the three settlements. This is borne out by the surveys carried out by the VDS Working Group, which have consistently shown that the countryside, both River Thames and green spaces, ranks very highly in the affections of those consulted. Across the parish, the countryside is impressively and rewardingly diverse. It includes:

- The river and riverside meadows
- Flood plain marsh and farmland
- Chalk downland
- Common land
- Streams and wetland
- Hillside woodland
- Upland arable land and orchards
- Accommodation land
- Minor waterways

But it is not only the rich variety of the countryside which is important to Cookham. Also of very great significance is the way in which Cookham’s green spaces inter-relate with its built environment. Even in the more developed parts of the settlement the influence of the countryside is ever-present. Green fingers of land, green corridors, common land, orchards, and often large roadside verges, intertwine with the built environment. ‘Glimpses of green’ are seen between and beyond properties and from numerous vantage points throughout the settlements. Green hillsides curve to the east and west.

A large part of the parish, forming an arc which runs from the Bisham parish boundary around the southern flank of the river down to Marsh Meadow and the edge of

of Cookham village, has been defined by the Royal Borough as an Area of Special Landscape Importance. This means that it possesses exceptional landscape qualities and is protected from any development that would harm its rural character.

### 4.2 Changes in agricultural practice

In 1950 the parish, and Cookham Dean in particular, were characterised by a patchwork of small farms, each with its buildings and neighbouring fields.

Changes in agricultural practice, in particular increased mechanisation, have resulted in larger fields and a need for different forms of building. In parallel, changes in farming subsidies have introduced rewards for environmental stewardship.

It is widely recognised that one of the best ways of ensuring a healthy long-term future for the countryside is the maintenance of a viable agricultural industry. This means, on the one hand, an acceptance that changes in farming practice will have an impact on the land that farming uses and, on the other hand, responsiveness by farmers to the fact that people can be concerned with how the countryside is changing, particularly if the reasons are not understood.

One of the ways in which a ‘covenant’ between farmers and the community can be maintained is through the continuity of land-owning operations in the hands of family businesses, helping to ensure that farm localities are properly understood by farmers and that change is sensitively integrated.

Good communications and positive understandings between farmers and the community are essential in order that countryside can be protected wherever possible, whilst allowing farm businesses to modernize progressively and to thrive.



Part of the tranquil setting of White Place Farm between Sutton Road and the Thames.

**4.3 Modern diversified farm and land management businesses**

Only three major farms now operate in Cookham Parish, each of which has become a modern diversified farm and ‘land management’ business. These are: White Place Farm, between Sutton Road and the River Thames; Lower Mount Farm, extending from the Maidenhead Road and Long Lane area around the south western perimeter of Cookham Rise and towards Cookham Dean; and Kings Coppice Farm between Grubwood Lane and Kings Lane in Cookham Dean.

White Place Farm belongs to the Edwards family, who have worked the farm since the late 1960s. Lower Mount Farm and Kings Coppice Farm each form part of larger operations, respectively owned by two branches of the Copas family, who have farmed in Cookham since 1890.



The pick-your-own operation at Lower Mount Farm just off the Maidenhead Road, showing the green swathe of farmland beyond the parking point.

**White Place Farm**

**Box 3**

White Place Farm is approached from Sutton Road, Cookham and borders one of the most scenic stretches of the Thames. The farm includes arable, grassland and woodland - a total of around 120 hectares (300 acres). It runs a beef herd, but also diversified into equine livery over 25 years ago, and later added bed and breakfast services.

The farm includes 100 acres of permanent pasture fields forming riverside meadows, of which just over 80 acres are grazed throughout the year. During spring and autumn months, when grass can become too abundant for some of the horses, a suckler herd of cattle is run to eat off the new growth before the horses are rotated to their new fields. The livery yard provides stables with modern facilities. On-farm hacking is provided, with certain routes being of a permanent nature and others varying, depending on which fields cattle are grazing and where crops are being grown.

The history of White Place Farm includes a number of planning applications for gravel extraction. At a 1969 appeal (Reference 8.1) the Inspector said, “The appeal site should not be excavated in the foreseeable future ...” and that it should “... go on playing its present role as part of the natural landscape wealth of the county. The site forms an excellent example of green wedge which in my view should be kept open to prevent the coalescence of the two communities” (of Maidenhead and Cookham). Similar comments were made by the Inspector in relation to more recent applications.

**Copas Farms (including Lower Mount Farm)**

**Box 4**

Copas Farms is a modern, diverse and award-winning farm business with a landholding of some 1280 hectares (3,160) acres in and around the Chilterns and Thames Valley.

Of this area, approximately 2,600 acres is under arable rotation and 90 acres is allocated to two Pick Your Own Farms providing seasonal fruit and vegetables - one of these being at Lower Mount Farm, Cookham, and the other at Iver in Buckinghamshire. 140 acres of the landholding is grass, mainly grazed by horses.

An additional 100 acres is made available as public open space and 90 acres is woodland. The centre of operations is at Hedsor Park Farm, Hedsor, near Taplow.

Copas Farms routinely collaborates with Cookham residents in devising arrangements that work for both. Illustratively, Copas Farms has let redundant farm buildings as business units at Lower Mount Farm in Cookham under temporary planning permissions linked to the provision of Marsh Meadow as an area of Public Open Space.

Planning permission was renewed for a third time in December 2005 for a further 10 years in conjunction with an arrangement to make Marsh Meadow available as an area of Public Open Space until 2015. The local community is involved in the management of this 50 acre riverside field, in the form of the Marsh Meadow Management Committee, which includes representation from diverse elements of the community.



Marsh Meadow, the beautiful riverside land currently made available by Copas Farms as a public amenity until 2015.

## 4 “Cookham is defined by its green spaces” continued

*“Diversification activities are only really possible with the support of neighbours. After a period of consultation with the local Cookham community in 1992, Copas Farms developed a Farmland Management Strategy for land farmed in and around the village. Its purpose was to be ‘a strategy for the management of Copas Farms in a manner which is both beneficial to the local community and compatible with maintaining a viable and sustainable farming business. Copas Farms reviews its Farmland Management Strategy on a regular basis.”*

*Extract from Individual Consultations  
Mr Geoffrey Copas, Head of Copas Farms*

### **The Copas Partnership (including Kings Coppice Farm) Box 5**

The Copas Partnership operates over 240 hectares (600 acres) of arable land, half of which is farmed in partnership with others, and the other half of which is ‘set aside’. In addition, the Partnership owns approximately 10 acres of woodland, meadows and conservation areas, where stewardship projects include planting of hedges, trees, buffer strips, and provision of beetle banks and wild bird mixtures to enhance the natural environment of its property.

Although The Copas Partnership enterprise was once exclusively of a farming nature, it has grown into a modern diversified land management business, offering locations and facilities in support of the Henley Regatta and other events through the year. It also owns and lets converted farm properties, including the Courtyard Barns on the edge of Cookham Dean, the Old Barn and the Old Stables.

In Cookham Dean, The Copas Partnership rears some 40,000 slow-grown, free-range turkeys per year at Kings Coppice Farm. Produce is now sold to more than 300 retail outlets and many local customers. Commendations have been extensive, both in the national press and in specialist food magazines.



**Turkeys free-ranging in historic orchards at Kings Coppice Farm, Cookham Dean. Some of the turkeys are housed in barns, others in demountable buildings which have been the subject of much local debate. See also Section 13.2.**

### **4.4 Cookham’s smaller farms**

**Sutton Farm** is an arable and pasture farm of some 80 hectares (198 acres) between the A4094 and the railway line and forms a significant part of the narrow band of unspoilt open countryside between Cookham and Maidenhead (see Box 8, page 14). It is currently farmed as part of White Place Farm. The farm lies fully within the Green Belt. It was recently purchased by adjacent owners, Summerleaze Ltd., who operate a gravel pit off Summerleaze Road, on the north side of Maidenhead. Summerleaze’s existing holding includes a substantial area of land with planning permission for gravel extraction, which has yet to be worked.

While it seems likely there are significant reserves of gravel at Sutton Farm, proposals to extract gravel from from areas within Cookham parish met with considerable local resistance some years ago and were rejected at

*“Whilst all of the Copas farmland is in the Green Belt, it cannot, for that reason be regarded as ‘park land’ or a theme park. Nevertheless, farming is a way of preserving the Green Belt - even though occasionally buildings have to be erected which may not be universally popular.”*

*Extract from Individual Consultations  
Ms Tanya Copas, Director, The Copas Partnership*

a public inquiry (see Box 3, page 11). Whilst it is outside the remit of the VDS to suggest whether commercial minerals extraction should, or should not, take place in the parish it is difficult to see how such extraction could avoid a highly damaging effect on Cookham’s countryside during the extraction process, with possible ecological damage extending well into the future. For this reason Guidance Point G4.3, page 13 is focused on the minimisation of damage and subsequent remediation.

Watercourses through Sutton Farm include Fleet Ditch, Strande Water and White Brook. All of these water courses and the land immediately at the edge of them are areas of ecological importance (see Section 17).

**Woodlands Farm**, owned by Mr Richard Simmonds, is situated off Spring Lane in Cookham Dean. Its red brick, gabled farmhouse dates back to the 1800s. Activities include the stabling of horses and the letting of small units to local businesses.

**Winter Hill Farm** is a mixed use farm with around 27 hectares (66 acres) of land, situated between Winter Hill and Dean Lane in Cookham Dean. It includes the last cherry orchard to remain in Cookham, designated in the VDS as an orchard of Special Local Significance (see Section 15 and Annex C). The farm has recently changed hands and is now owned by Mr Peter Phillips.

#### ADVISORY NOTE:

#### Mineral Extraction

**A4.1 The Borough Council is responsible for preparing minerals policy. The current minerals plan is ‘The Replacement Minerals Local Plan’ which aims to ensure that there are enough planning permissions in place until the end of 2013 to contribute towards industrial demand.**

**4.5 The John Lewis Partnership  
- another large landowner in Cookham**

The John Lewis Partnership owns two estates of significant size, the Odney Estate and the Winter Hill Golf Club. Together, these estates occupy 106 hectares (260 acres) of land in Cookham Parish. Both contribute to the local economy by employing large numbers of staff locally and bringing visitors to Cookham.

**The Odney Estate Box 6**

Situated off Odney Lane at the eastern end of Cookham village, the Odney Estate comprises some 48.5 hectares (120 acres) of land adjacent to the Thames. The Estate runs alongside the river and is bounded at its southern edge by Mill Lane. The Estate’s main buildings are situated in the north-west corner of the site and comprise the former Lullebrook Manor, several properties on the east side of Sutton Road, and properties on both sides of Odney Lane.

The most recent addition to the north west corner area is the Sir Bernard Miller Centre, a state-of-the-art training facility, built to reflect the latest developments in environmentally friendly construction methods (see also Box 19, page 41).

To the south and east lie 100 acres of magnificent gardens (see also Annex C, page 78. The gardens have been identified in the VDS as gardens of ‘Special Local Significance’, a designation which is explained in Section 15.

The Estate also includes Odney Common (whose continued availability to Cookham residents for amenity purposes mirrors the villagers’ historic rights – see also Section 4.8). Situated to the north of Odney Common is Grove Farm, recently redeveloped and converted to create a new John Lewis Heritage Centre.

**The Winter Hill Golf Club Box 7**

The land for the Winter Hill Golf Club, which lies off Terry’s Lane, was acquired by the John Lewis Partnership in the 1930s.

The land was purchased to create a golf course but, due to the war, it was at first used for arable farming. Development as a golf course commenced in the 1970s.

The Club occupies about 56 hectares (140 acres) of land in an elevated position at the eastern end of the Winter Hill ridge and enjoys extensive views over the river towards Bourne End, Hedsor and beyond. Like the Odney Club, the Club is a John Lewis staff facility, but the course and club house are also open to local golfers.



A glorious view across from the Winter Hill golf course to the River Thames.



View from Odney Common to Odney Bridge and across to Lullebrook Manor, owned by the John Lewis Partnership.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Farm businesses and major land owners**

**R4.1** The maintenance of a viable agricultural industry in combination with the application of relevant planning processes should be recognised as one of the best ways of ensuring a healthy long-term future for the countryside of Cookham parish. It is important that farmers should continue to farm if existing green environments are to be retained. It is recommended that modernisations of agriculture are supported as far as possible to help maintain the commercial viability of farming businesses and avoid some of the piecemeal development of the countryside which might otherwise ensue. However, modernisations need to be proposed with careful attention to VDS provisions, and with specific regard to the content of Reference 17 or successor statements on ‘sustainability’.

**R4.2** Farmers and the community should continue to work together to share knowledge and develop mutual understandings that will allow the needs of each to be recognised and met to the greatest possible extent. Compromises on each side have traditionally been necessary. Planning decisions should be taken in the best interests of Cookham parish as a whole.

**R4.3** In the interests of creating and sustaining mutual understandings, it should be very much welcomed if farm businesses or major landowners publish farm or land management strategies to share and discuss with the community.

**R4.4** All large landowners or land users in Cookham should have a special role to play in enhancement of the countryside through conservation and biodiversity projects.

**GUIDANCE : Farm businesses and major land owners**

**G4.1** Offers to remove redundant buildings should be recognised as a positive factor in relation to planning proposals made by farm businesses or large landowners. This is particularly true in connection with applications that relate to buildings and installations in the open countryside.

**G4.2** Offers to donate needed community facilities may be recognised as a positive factor in relation to planning proposals made by farm businesses or large landowners. In such situations, positive and negative factors should be carefully considered. Whether positive factors are sufficient to outweigh harm should be judged on the circumstances at the time of the planning application.

**G4.3** If mineral extraction is to take place in Cookham parish, the process should be designed to minimise damage to the scenic beauty and ecology of Cookham’s countryside setting during extraction, and to institute effective remediation post-extraction.

## 4 “Cookham is defined by its green spaces” continued

### 4.6 The Green Belt and the countryside

All of the land in Cookham parish outside the settlement areas of Cookham village and Cookham Rise, including the whole of Cookham Dean, lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. National planning policy (Reference 4) lists the purposes of Green Belts as set out below.

- To check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another.
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- To preserve the setting and character of historic towns.
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Reference 4 also states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt with exceptions as below:

- Buildings for agriculture and forestry.
- Provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
- The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.
- Limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan.
- Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

Interpretation of these policies in relation to Green Belt land within the Royal Borough is set out in Reference 3.1. References 3 and 4 both emphasise ‘openness’ as a primary attribute of Green Belt land.



The narrow strip of countryside between Cookham and Maidenhead is of great importance in maintaining the separation between the two settlements.

### Between Cookham and Maidenhead Box 8 - a narrow and sensitive green gap

Local people consider the narrow band of countryside between Cookham and Maidenhead as being of utmost importance, both as a crucial element of the ‘green swathe’ that exists all around Cookham and as a separator between the two settlements. It is only some 700 metres wide at its narrowest point.

This intervening land is part of the Green Belt, as outlined in Section 4.6. It fulfils the first three purposes set out in that section and enables a clear transition to be made from the urban environment of Maidenhead to the village ambience of Cookham. In so doing it signals the unique, separate identity of Cookham and differentiates it from its larger neighbour.

Since this area of countryside is so narrow, it is important not only that it is not encroached upon, but also that activities within it do not require the erection of buildings that would compromise its openness or damage the setting of Cookham, unless such buildings are absolutely necessary for the continuation of the existing agricultural operations.

This also means that there is a case for the removal of buildings, which are longer required - to avoid the proliferation of redundant structures and the accretion of buildings in a manner which compromises countryside vistas (see Guidance Point G4.1, Section 4).

#### ADVISORY NOTES:

Green Belt

**A4.2** The term ‘Green Belt’ is a planning designation that makes no judgements about existing uses in Green Belt areas. The purposes of Green Belts are not necessarily compromised if land within them is derelict.

**A4.3** Land within Green Belt is afforded a considerable level of protection, only limited development being permissible.

**A4.4** Planning policy is supportive of farm diversification in the Green Belt, provided that openness is maintained.

**A4.5** Readers who wish to check the details of the Borough Council’s local interpretation of national Green Belt policy are referred to Section 2.1 of the Local Plan (Reference 3.1)

**A4.6** Whilst the whole of Cookham Dean is within the Green Belt, Cookham village and Cookham Rise have the status of ‘excluded settlements within the Green Belt’.

#### GUIDANCE:

Countryside

**G4.4** The countryside of Cookham parish is highly valued and must be protected from development which detracts from its attractive appearance generally and in accordance with its status as Green Belt.

The narrow strip of countryside between Cookham and Maidenhead is especially important and should not be compromised.

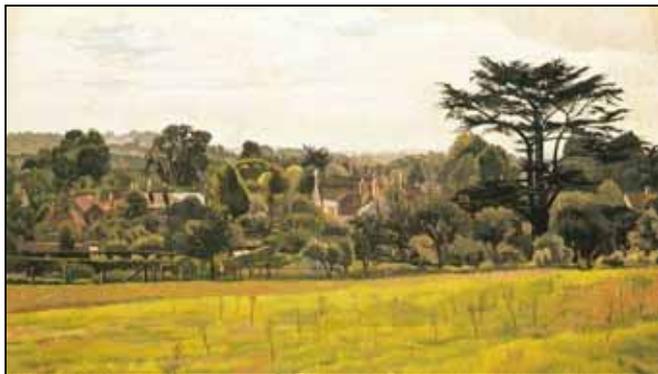
# “Cookham is defined by its green spaces” continued

## 4.7 Green fingers, green corridors

A key characteristic of all three settlements, especially Cookham Dean, is the manner in which built development is interspersed with substantial areas of woodland, fields, commons and other green spaces. This greenness at the heart of the community means that all residents have open land near their homes, a feature of Cookham that was revealed during early VDS consultations to be particularly highly prized and should be carefully protected.

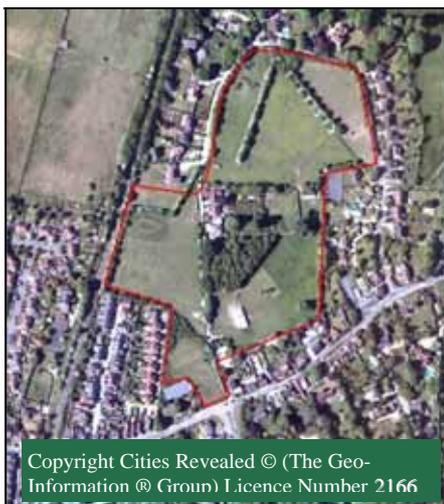
*“Specific ‘green corridors’ within Cookham include open and wooded environs (for example, the Commons, the Moor, Poundfield, Rowborough and the old sewage works, plus larger gardens, hedgerows and grass verges, which form a natural chain for wildlife through the parish). It is the continuing maintenance of these natural corridors which allows everything about the landscape and its habitat to flourish. If the existing green chain is significantly blocked by development, then much of our wildlife and landscape in Cookham, as we know it at present, will be lost for ever.”*

*Extract from Individual Consultations  
Mr Brian Clews, Wildlife Author and Consultant*



‘Pound Field, Cookham’, a southerly view over Poundfield towards The Pound, painted by Stanley Spencer in 1935

© The Estate of Stanley Spencer. All rights reserved. DACS.



Left:  
Poundfield stretches between Station Hill, The Pound, the railway line and Terry's Lane.

This aerial view shows blocking, by planted trees, of the line of sight used in the Stanley Spencer painting above.

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### **GUIDANCE:**

**G4.5** The role of Poundfield in providing a green wedge separating The Pound from the Station Hill area and Cookham Rise, together with its provision of a setting to the historic environment and the related Stanley Spencer paintings, should be recognised. Proposals should not compromise this role.

### **Poundfield**

### **Poundfield**

### **Box 9**

The fields to the north and west of The Pound are known as ‘Poundfield’ and are shown in the aerial photograph on this page. Cookham residents have fought long and hard to defend this green area, which has been the subject of several major planning applications and appeals.

Poundfield was added to the Green Belt in the 1990s through the Royal Borough's Local Plan process. However, a Court of Appeal decision partly quashed this action, thus confirming that most of the land had never legally been within the Green Belt. Subsequently, Poundfield was incorporated into the adjacent Conservation Area, affording it a considerable degree of renewed protection.

Poundfield's importance derives from a unique combination of ecological, rural, heritage, conservation and culturally-related factors, as follows.

**Ecological and rurality-related factors** From the south at Maidenhead Road, Poundfield's undeveloped frontage facing Maidenhead Road, and the glimpse of its more distant slope rising to the north are signals of the rural character of Cookham. Poundfield forms a green wedge at the heart of Cookham, dividing the picturesque narrow roadway of The Pound (the edge of Cookham village) from Cookham's more commercial areas (the Station Hill area and Cookham Rise). It is also visible in views from the Moor and from the eastern end of the Causeway. Poundfield is considered to be a valuable wildlife area.

**Heritage, conservation and cultural factors** Current legislation (Reference 7) refers to the desirability of “preserving the setting” of Listed Buildings and also to the desirability of “preserving or enhancing the character” of Conservation Areas. These points are strongly echoed in national policy documents (References 4 and 5), which offer guidance to Local Authorities and members of the public, and again in the Royal Borough's Local Plan (Reference 3.2). Requirements for Conservation Areas in the Local Plan make plain that any development must “enhance or preserve the character or appearance of the area”, including “the protection of views that contribute to the distinctive character of the Conservation Area”. It is also stated that the Council will “ensure that development proposals do not adversely affect the grounds and/or setting of Listed Buildings”.

In relation to the factors outlined in the above paragraph, Poundfield provides:

- The setting for Englefield, a Grade II Listed Building with strong Stanley Spencer connections, standing in the centre of the area.
- The backdrop to five Listed Buildings on the north side of The Pound.
- The backdrop to several unlisted historic buildings, also located in The Pound, all forming part of the character of the Conservation Area in that locality.
- The foreground to the view, from the Maidenhead Road, of the charming row of Edwardian buildings in Roman Lea, designated in the VDS as a street of ‘Special Local Significance’ (Annex C).
- The subject of several Stanley Spencer paintings, including a series of scenes at Englefield and a panoramic view stretching towards The Pound.

In a 1991 public enquiry (Reference 8.2), the then Secretary of State made clear his position that the setting of listed buildings could be harmed by development within Poundfield and that views inside and across the site were important, both for their amenity value and also for their specific connection with the paintings of Stanley Spencer.

## 4 “Cookham is defined by its green spaces” continued

### 4.8 Common land

Few villages in the Thames Valley are blessed with quite so much common land around them as Cookham. The commons of Cookham Dean are collectively major contributors to the open aspect of the built environment and in some instances extend beyond Cookham parish into surrounding areas. They include Cookham Dean Common, the Cricket Common, Bigrith Common, Hardings Green and Tugwood Common, as well as considerable lengths of roadside verge.

In the flood plain, south of the Thames, lies Cockmarsh with the chalk escarpment of Winter Hill rising steeply above. Cookham Moor forms the entrance to the most historic part of Cookham village. Odney Common provides a green setting on the eastern side of Cookham village, and also the link to the lock and Sashes Island. Widbrook Common is an expanse of pasture on either side of the Lower Cookham Road as it approaches Cookham from Maidenhead.

The provision of commons is deeply embedded in the history of the area, arising as it does from the manorial structure of the historic feudal society. The commons were nearly lost many times through the centuries and were saved largely as result of the efforts of local people, who enjoyed ancient rights to graze animals and collect wood for fuel - rights that they were determined to preserve.

There was a strongly contended historic court case during the reign of Charles II, which the villagers won. Later, in 1799, Cookham villagers formed a resistance movement to ‘enclosures’ and established a fighting fund. Again the villagers triumphed.

After many further skirmishes over the years, the Maidenhead and Cookham Commons Preservation Committee (now redesignated ‘Advisory Committee’) was formed in the 1920s and funds contributed by public subscription secured the purchase of the Cookham and Maidenhead commons at a price of £2,800. Title was then passed to the National Trust in 1934, thus protecting the commons into perpetuity\*.

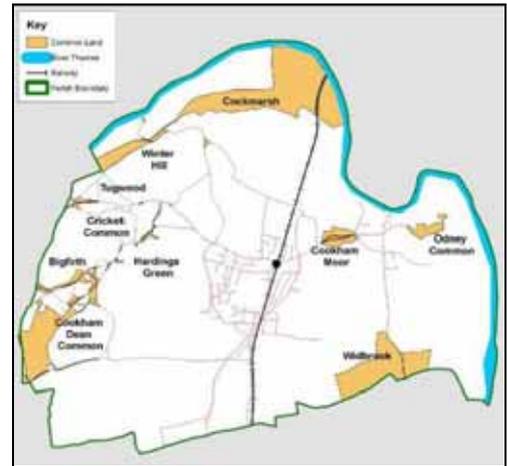
The complexities attached to present day common land include the relationships between land ownership, the separate rights of grazing and other usage belonging to commoners, and the more general rights of public access which have gradually emerged.

Ancient grazing rights are retained by around a dozen properties. It is their owners, including local farmers, who continue to graze their cattle on Cockmarsh and Widbrook, and take hay. There remains, also, a deep-rooted proprietary local interest in the way that the common land is managed

The principal public use of the commons now is for low intensity recreation - walking and horse riding. The commons are available to everyone and are part of the public realm. For this reason, what happens adjacent to them is a legitimate matter of public interest.

\* *Odney Common was not included in this purchase. It is now owned by the John Lewis Partnership and maintained by Cookham Parish Council.*

**Right:**  
**Major areas of common land around Cookham are shown in orange.**  
**There are numerous additional small areas, mostly in the form of wide grass verges.**



### Winter Hill and Cockmarsh **Box 10**

The Winter Hill ridge extends north-eastwards for about 2 km (1¼ mile). It defines the southern side of the Thames and is a landmark from the Buckinghamshire side of the river since it can be easily seen from places such as Flackwell Heath and, more generally, the southern flanks of the rising Chiltern Hills.

Although the north-eastern part of the Winter Hill slope remains much as it was thirty years ago, the south western end has gradually changed as vegetation has matured and species establish themselves. Whilst larger vegetation helps bind the soil, it also has the effect of both reducing the visual impact of a notable landmark and of blocking some of the panoramic views from Winter Hill Road.

In recognition of all the factors mentioned above, a management plan for the area has been put in place by the National Trust. This will reduce scrub and improve chalk grassland and associated views over a 10 year period.



**A beautiful vista showing the Winter Hill escarpment, the wetland grazed commons of Cockmarsh and an arable field, with the river just visible amid the tree line beyond. Two distinct habitats, the steep chalk slope and flat marshy meadows, are rarely found so close together and part of the area has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.**  
**Water fowl breed on lower ground whilst kestrels, sparrow hawks and red kites soar above.**

## 4 “Cookham is defined by its green spaces” continued



Cookham Moor forms a defining landscape element in the setting of Cookham village. This view, as seen from the Moor, was consistently identified during early VDS consultations as one of Cookham’s most important.

### Cookham Moor

Box 11

The Moor is a most striking area of common land, where the edge of the built environment forms a gentle curve in the distance, that draws in the onlooker. Cookham’s built-colour palette of weathered red, beige, white, brown, grey and black (see Section 6.8) is fully exhibited.

The Moor comprises low-lying land and remains prone to flooding. It was this factor that made the Moor unsuitable for building, such that the historic village was extended into The Pound. The ‘Causeway’, historically the major vehicular access route to the heart of Cookham village in times of flood (see Section 5), is also a popular link in the routes used by walkers.

To the north, the Moor allows views towards the river across Marsh Meadow whilst, to the south, footpaths lead towards Maidenhead.

The Moor is the main point of arrival for many tourists. Its car park is regularly full, as families, couples and dog walkers descend on the village. Predominantly, as it emerged during early VDS consultations, they arrive for a stroll along the riverside, though many also seek the countryside generally, or enjoy the shops and hostelryes of the High Street.



‘The Causeway’ across Cookham Moor



Above left: Tugwood Common at the junction of Dean Lane and Winter Hill Road, Cookham Dean. One of Cookham’s many attractive ‘green fingers’.



Below left: The Cricket Common forms a strong visual focus in Cookham Dean. It is also a gathering point for the community, being the scene of numerous festivities.

### RECOMMENDATIONS: Cookham’s Common Land

**R4.5** The Moor car park is in poor condition and unsightly. It is a National Trust principle that a car park of this nature should not be ‘urbanised’ with hard standings. However, there are modern materials which might be explored with a view to providing an improved surface. Low hedging or rustic perimeter fencing might also be considered as both of these soften the appearance of parked cars whilst leaving a car park open to public view (see Section 6.20).

**R4.6** Winter Hill and Cockmarsh are important parts of the natural assets of the parish. The management of these areas should seek to maintain public views whilst recognising the importance of vegetation to wildlife, erosion and rainwater run-off. It is understood that the current National Trust management programme, approved by Natural England, is in cognizance of all these issues

### GUIDANCE: Cookham’s common land

**G4.6** The commons are available to everyone and are part of the public realm. Proposals which would adversely affect their amenity value or their setting should not be permitted.

## 4 “Cookham is defined by its green spaces” continued

### 4.9 Woodlands, trees and hedgerows

Trees play an important part in creating the ambience of Cookham parish, but the parish cannot be described as ‘wooded’. Its mainly agricultural history led to a predominance of open arable or pasture land through many generations, although the wide green sweeps of this land were often softened by individual trees and extensive orchards, some of which still exist (Section C.3, Annex C).

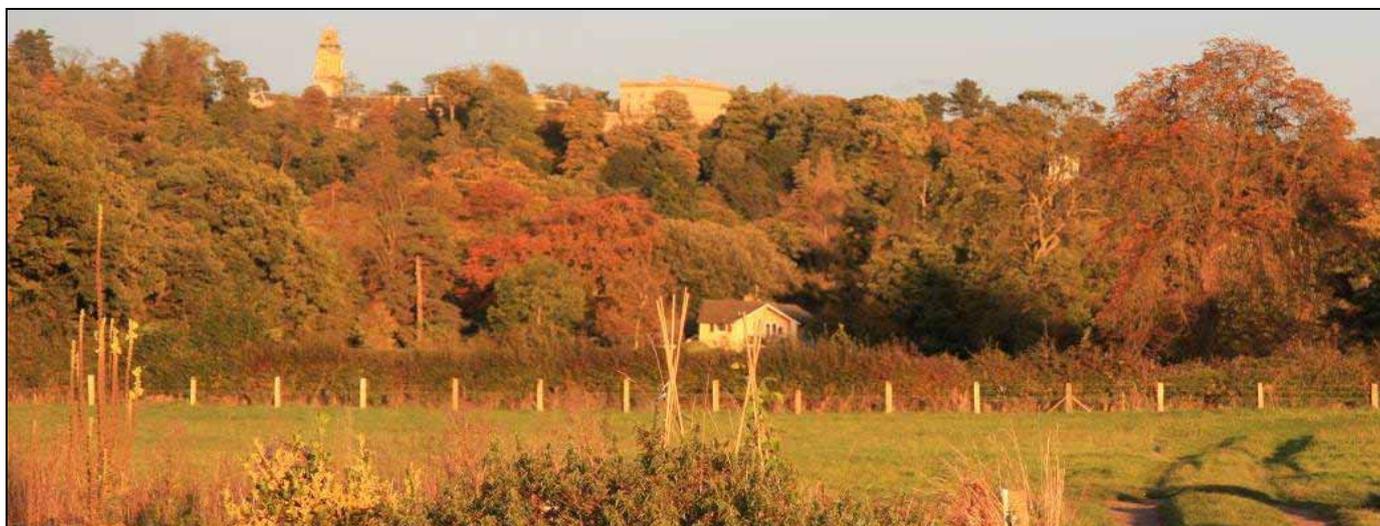
The largest area of wooded land - the Bisham Woods - lies just outside the western boundary of the parish and is part of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation.

The Quarry Wood, which adjoins Grubwood Lane, defines the south-western end of Winter Hill and provides a visual backdrop to the western part of Cookham Dean. Both of these lie within the Area of Special Landscape Importance (see Section 4.1). A magnificent easterly arc is created

by the wooded cliff on the northern bank of the Thames, topped by Cliveden. Again, not part of Cookham parish, but this important landscape feature frames the view from several approach roads to Cookham, from the Winter Hill golf course and from many other parts of the village.

Elsewhere, the parish is defined by separate blocks of woodland, mainly comprising broadleaved species with a large quantity of oaks and beeches, which thrive on the local soils. Beeching-grove Wood, Pigeonhouse Wood and the wooded areas around The Mount and the eastern side of Cookham Dean Common signal the higher land in the south-west of the parish.

Hillgrove Wood, off Bradcutts Lane, provides a backdrop to the open area between Cookham Dean and Cookham Rise and conceals much of the housing that was built there in the early twentieth century.



The Sutton Road allotments in the evening sun looking towards Cliveden and the wooded cliff beneath it.

There have been significant areas of new planting in recent years by local farmers, on the southern side of Winter Hill and at Lower Mount Farm in particular. These provide a sanctuary for wildlife, but as they mature those of linear character will break up the open appearance of the adjoining countryside and will block specific vistas. Whilst tree planting is to be welcomed, care should be taken not to harm landscape character and views. In contrast it is difficult to think of situations in which hedgerows would not be deemed an asset, provided they are well-managed and kept at appropriate heights.



Tree plantings at the edge of Long Lane.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Woodlands, trees and hedges  
**R4.7** We recommend that farmers and land owners should give careful thought to the impact of planned or existing tree lines on the open countryside. Where farm or land strategies are produced, inclusion of factors relating to tree lines and their future impact on important vistas would be helpful.

**ADVISORY NOTES:** Woodlands, trees and hedges  
**A4.7** Reference 4 declares the fundamental aim of Green Belt Policy as being to “prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open” and goes on to say that “the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”.

The policy is not directed at tree planting issues, which are not a planning matter except where landscaping of new developments is concerned. However, it is important to note here that ‘openness’ of the countryside is valued and that planting which maintains this and does not block vistas is preferred.

**A4.8** Guidance Point G13.5 in Section 13 concerns tree lines around new agricultural building developments and there are related comments and Guidance Points in Section 6.23.

## 4 “Cookham is defined by its green spaces” continued

### 4.10 An abundance of green verges

Cookham is not urbanised and only parts of the village have a semi-urbanised character, where the roads are defined by kerbs and paved footways. Significant areas of the village are characterised by their rural street scene, especially in Cookham Dean.

Wide and ‘very wide’ verges predominate, together with the presence of areas of scrub, small copses and a lack of hard edging. Many such verges form parts of the historic common lands.



Above and below: Characteristic wide grass verges of Cookham Dean. The photos also show the scrub and small copses which help to convey the rural nature of the environment.



### 4.11 Accommodation land

In the VDS, the term ‘accommodation land’ denotes land on the periphery of the Cookham settlements that was once in use for agricultural purposes, but is now used for the keeping of horses, play areas and other non-farming purposes.

The term also covers land which has been purchased simply to ‘maintain a view’ as a perceived amenity against the possibility of development.

Intended usage is important to the value of land and accommodation land is valued at prices exceeding those for farmland. Although all such land is now used for non-agricultural purposes, it is still in most instances part of the open countryside. While accommodation land may sometimes be relatively hidden from adjacent roads, it is often overlooked from a distance.

To maintain the rural character, accommodation land should integrate with the wider farmland. This can be achieved by avoiding change which introduces features of an urban appearance and, where buildings or other change are necessary, seeking to ensure that their, design and materials are sensitively integrated into their location.

**ADVISORY NOTE:** Accommodation land  
A4.9 The Borough Council’s Local Plan (Reference 3.3) contains policies relating to equestrian uses.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Accommodation land  
R4.8 The use of tape and wire or plastic fencing to mark the boundaries of accommodation land, or to segment areas within it, should be avoided when this is visible from the public domain. The use of barbed wire, in particular, should be avoided along footpaths and bridleways.

R4.9 The availability of accommodation land to a household may in some cases create an opportunity to implement excellent sustainability projects with low visual impact, such as water storage or ground source heat pumps. All such projects are to be encouraged.

**GUIDANCE:** Green verges and accommodation land

G4.7 Green verges are characteristic of parts of Cookham. Proposals should not lead to an unacceptable loss of green verges. Opportunities should be taken to reinstate green verges in areas where they are characteristic.

G4.8 Accommodation land should be integrated into the countryside character. In general the use of kerbs, metalled surfaces and solid gates at access points should be avoided or their impacts minimised. Temporary buildings, installations and parking areas should be screened as far as possible. Hedging or post and rail rustic fencing is a preferred boundary.

## 4 “Cookham is defined by its green spaces” continued

### 4.12 Green spaces and the community

A point frequently made to the VDS Working Group during the early VDS consultations, concerned the strong link between Cookham’s green spaces and the sense of peace, uplift and community spirit that is shared by residents and visitors alike. The key to this was succinctly expressed during one Individual Consultation (below) and there is little need to say more. This page shows just a few of the many ways in which the internal green spaces of the village encourage and facilitate the strongest possible sense of community.

*“The green and diverse environment of Cookham is just fabulous. It creates the most amazing walks, retreats, event and activity areas and it is of huge importance that it is preserved. ‘Greenness’ continues from the surrounds of the village to its very heart. Careful attention should be paid to the specific ‘functionality’ of green spaces. Through the varied activities and events that they support, green spaces play a very significant role in drawing together the community and in bringing in visitors. Existing functionality should not be diminished by any new development. There are possibilities for new and extended functionalities, cycle tracks, for example, but cycles should be kept to agreed spaces, just as horses should.”*

*Extract from Individual Consultations*

*Mrs Carol Austen, Chairman of the Maidenhead and Cookham Commons Advisory Committee*



**Clockwise from top right:**  
A mobile leisure unit attends for two weeks at the Alfred Major Recreation Ground.



Allotments create community activity in all three of Cookham’s settlements. The winning Cookham Rise allotment in 2011.



Odney Sculpture Gardens in April 2009, open for the duration of the Cookham Festival.

Football at the Alfred Major Recreation Ground.

Doggie show at the annual Scout Fayre on Cookham Moor 2010.

Multiple recreational uses of Marsh Meadow, spring 2010.

Cookham Dean fete on the Village Green, Cookham Dean, March 2012.



#### RECOMMENDATIONS: Green spaces and the community

**R4.10** The green environment of Cookham creates activity areas of all types and it is of very great importance that it is preserved.

**R4.11** The *diversity* of the green environment also needs to be preserved. In this process, particular attention should be paid to the continuation of ‘greenness’ from the surrounds of the village to its heart.

#### GUIDANCE: Green spaces and the community

**G4.9** Careful attention should be paid to the ‘functionality’ of green spaces. Existing community uses should not be prejudiced by any new development.

## 5 The River Thames and Cookham's flood plain



As described by the Maidenhead Advertiser, "Cookham Village became an island for two days (in 1974) ... the route to Bourne End from Cookham bridge was under water and the road across Widbrook Common resembled a sea."

### 5.1 Frequency, causes and impacts of flooding

Significant Thames floods occurred in Cookham in 1894, 1897, 1904, 1947, 1974, 1990, 2000 and 2003. Flow capacity at Cookham is determined, at first, by the various river channels, including the sluice gates on Cookham and Odney weirs (which are managed by the Environment Agency and are normally fully opened at times of flood). Once the river has overflowed, secondary factors come into play, including the capacity of culverts under the B4447 at the Moor and under Lower Cookham Road and, in an extreme event, the capacity of the arches under the Causeway bridge. The construction of the Maidenhead and Windsor Flood Alleviation Scheme made Cookham flood risks rather more severe, a situation which the Environment Agency's 'Cookham Flood Remediation Works' (Reference 9.1) has been designed to remedy.

The course of the river and its waterways was outlined in Sections 2.2 and 2.3. A large proportion of land within Cookham parish is liable to flooding, All flood events are progressive, the following being the stages which typically occur.

- Flooding at Marsh Meadow.
- Flooding of the northern side of Cookham Moor including the National Trust car park.
- Flooding of the B4447 across the Moor. The Causeway has then traditionally been opened for vehicles, but see Section 5.2.
- Flooding of Widbrook Common.
- Flooding of A4094 to the north of Cookham Bridge.
- Flooding of Strande Lane and nearby properties.
- Flooding of A4094 at Widbrook Common.
- Flooding at Odney Lane and Mill Lane.



Environment Agency "Risk of flooding from Rivers and Sea" map.

#### Key

- Parish boundary
- Flood defences
- Area benefiting from flood defences
- Flood zone 3 (Risk of flooding is 1 in 100 years or greater)
- Flood zone 2 (Risk of flooding is between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 years)

The most striking and dramatic feature of recent floods has perhaps been the sight and sound of water flowing at a considerable pace across Cookham Moor, submerging the B4447 and reaching as far as the Pound. Numerous properties in Cookham (in parts of nearly thirty streets) are likely to be inundated at such a time, though there is a 'dry island' around the Holy Trinity church and at the eastern end of the High Street.

The RBWM Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Reference 9.2) suggests that the intensity and frequency of floods is currently increasing due to climate change (though floods in the last half century have been considerably lower than those shown in the historic photograph on the following page). Modern flood defences that were built to a 1-in-100 or 1-in-60 year specification, may in the future be expected to overtop with increasing frequency.

## 5 The River Thames and Cookham's flood plain continued



Flood water surrounding the Old Farmhouse and the White Hart public house (now White Oak) in 1894, one of the worst known floods on the non-tidal Thames.

In those days the Thames was not engineered and managed as it is today.

### 5.2 Flood defence, recovery and escape routes

To alleviate the increased flood risk caused by the Maidenhead and Windsor Flood Alleviation Scheme, additional flood defences were built in Cookham in 2009/10 (see also previous page). These form a long grassy bank around Lightlands Lane.

The nature of the catchment geology and weather is such that warnings of river flooding should be available from the Environment Agency three days ahead. However, water can take ten days to drain away, much longer than is typical of many other rivers.

A Highways Safety Audit (Reference 10) conducted by the Borough Council in 2010 concluded that it would be unsafe to open the Causeway across the Moor to

general vehicular traffic in the event of a flood. As this is the only access route for Cookham village in times of deep flood, the decision has caused great concern.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS: Flood resilience measures

**R5.1** It is recommended that any development in areas at risk of fluvial or other forms of flooding should incorporate flood resilience measures such as:

- The use of stone or tiled flooring (unharmable by flood water) throughout ground floor levels
- Electrical wiring placed at raised levels.
- Raised flooring areas where kitchen units and appliances are to be installed
- Tanking of property elements below ground level
- Waterproofing of lower walls and closeable air bricks
- Doorways equipped with demountable flood barriers

#### ADVISORY NOTES:

The River Thames and Cookham's flood plain

**A5.1** Information on the extent of flooding and on access to early warning systems is available on line from the Environment Agency's website. Information on emergency planning is available from the Borough Council's website. A Cookham Community Flood Plain Summary is available from the offices of the Cookham Parish Council. A fuller account of successive flooding stages, as they apply to Cookham parish is contained in Reference 2.1, together with various important recommendations beyond the remit of the VDS.

**A5.2** There is national guidance and local planning policy relating to development where there is flood risk. The Borough Council planning policies are set out in the Local Plan (Reference 3.4) and a related Supplementary Planning Guidance document. Additional advice is provided in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Reference 9.2).

**A5.3** In general, development should be directed away from areas at flood risk, but where development is necessary, it should be made safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Illustratively but not exhaustively proposals that affect the flow of water in, or maintenance access to, lesser waterways in and around Cookham parish, will need to demonstrate that flood risk in Cookham will not be increased. Such waterways include Maidenhead's North Town ditch or York Stream, White Brook (from Strande Water to the York

Stream), Fleet Ditch and Strande Water, Lulle Brook, and the North Town ditch from Strande Water to the parish boundary at North Town.

For all such proposals, a Flood Risk Assessment will need to be submitted alongside the planning application. Proposals that affect pedestrian or vehicular access routes in times of flood should offer draft amendments to existing flood emergency plans to take account of changes to muster areas and evacuation routes.

**A5.4** The Borough Council's planning policies balance flood risk with an individual's right to improve their property by allowing small extensions of up to 30m<sup>2</sup> to properties which have not been extended since 1974.

**A5.5** Landowners whose property adjoins a watercourse are responsible for its maintenance, including maintaining the bed, banks and adjacent vegetation, and clearing any debris. Further information is available in the Environment Agency publication 'Living on the Edge' (Reference 9.3).

**A5.6** The Environment Agency seeks to ensure a minimum 8m green buffer strip alongside a watercourse to enable access for maintenance and provide a wildlife buffer. Any proposed works and structures in, under, or within 8m of the watercourse require Environment Agency consent.

**A5.7** In addition to flood risks from the River Thames, there may also be flash flood risks in parts of Cookham Dean and Cookham Rise (see Reference 2.2) and Guidance Notes G8.4, page 50 and G9.5, page 58).

## 6 Cookham's built areas - general guidance

### 6.1 Introduction

The three settlements of Cookham have their own characteristics, which the VDS addresses in subsequent sections. There are, however, certain themes, which affect all of the built-up parts of the parish and these are dealt with in the present section.

### 6.2 Key objectives

There is no single unifying design characteristic in Cookham, but the intention behind the general guidance expressed in this section is to:

- Provide guidance to help ensure that change reflects and complements the built character found in Cookham parish, including building, settings, scales, styles, features and materials.
- Provide guidance to help ensure that changes reflect the rural and semi-urban character of Cookham, each where it currently exists.
- Provide guidance to help ensure that change has regard to sustainable design factors (see also Reference 17) with priority being given to the need for energy and water efficiency

### 6.3 Context

Most of Cookham village and Cookham Dean lie within Conservation Areas, whose extent is shown in Section 7.2 and Section 9.2, respectively. Many other areas in and around Cookham village are situated within the Thames flood plain. Most of the green areas surrounding Cookham village and Cookham Rise, and also the whole of Cookham Dean, are designated as Green Belt. In line with national planning policy, Conservation Areas, flood plain and Green Belt statuses all influence the nature and opportunity for development.

Over the last 10 years the type of development that has occurred in Cookham parish has been small scale changes which include:

- Extensions and other alterations to existing buildings.
- One for one replacements of existing houses.
- Redevelopment of existing houses/gardens to provide a greater number of homes.
- Redevelopment or conversion of local offices or commercial premises.

Whatever the scale of future change, it is important that development takes into account the general character of Cookham and the immediate area.

**Right : Clay tiles, red brick, exposed timbers, areas of flint and white washes or render - Cookham's characteristic building materials (see following page), illustrated on four of its community buildings, from top:**

**The Ferry Public House**

**The Railway Station**

**The Jolly Farmer,**

**Uncle Tom's Cabin**



## 6 Cookham's built areas - general guidance continued

### 6.4 Building form and context

New buildings, of any kind, should **sit comfortably within their surroundings**. The permissible size of buildings must relate to their context. The most important criterion is they should not appear to be over-dominant, or to possess too great a mass vis-à-vis their surroundings, whether that may be neighbouring buildings or the open countryside. **Scale is of the essence in Cookham**. In Cookham Dean, where individual homes are often larger than those elsewhere in the parish, so also is their separation and seclusion characteristically greater, such that over-dominance has usually been avoided. In general, where larger buildings are essential, and the context in which they will be situated is appropriate to their proposed size, their lines and contours should be varied to create the effect of groupings of smaller buildings.

#### GUIDANCE:

#### Building form and context

**G6.1** The size of proposed buildings and their plots should be considered in relation to their context. New buildings should sit comfortably in their surroundings.

- The width of frontage, depth and height of a proposed building should be in keeping with other buildings in the area.
- A new building should respect the general building line / set back from the road and the spacing of buildings which characterise the area.

### 6.5 Roofs

The roofscape is an important contributor to the characteristic appearance of Cookham. In various sections of the VDS, reference is made to the attractiveness of roofs and there are many related photographs, including those on the following page.

**Pitched and gabled roofs** overwhelmingly predominate, which means that caution should be exercised in the selection of other forms. The importance of reflecting **existing roof depth and pitch** in certain instances is also highlighted (see, for example, Box 20, page 41), as is the merit in other instances of **variation to complement existing harmonies** (Box 13, page 37). For larger buildings, **contrasting roof heights** within a single building may be appropriate. Caution should be exercised, however, over resulting mass where a wide roof pitch angle is proposed in order to increase living space within an upper storey. Extensive **unrelieved areas of flat roofing** should be avoided.

#### GUIDANCE:

#### Roofs

**G6.2** New buildings should generally use pitched and gabled roofs, incorporating chimneys if characteristic of the area, and should create good harmonies with the appearance of nearby roofs, by subtle matching or by attractive variations.

### 6.6 Building materials

**Red brick and clay tiles** are the dominant building materials in Cookham parish. It is important to note that local clays give distinctive colours to brick and tile.

A characteristic 'weathered red' is most typical of Cookham, used as plain brick colour or sometimes melded with bricks of darker hue. Red bricks with grey ends or 'headers' are sometimes used. Decorative tiling patterns are commonly seen, occasionally with tiles also hung vertically. **Victorian yellow stock bricks** are also present on certain houses and walls in the village. What is not traditional for Cookham is a pinkish-beige hue in brickwork, or a pink tone mixed either with red or yellowish hues, seen in certain recently built properties. The traditional hues should, in general, be preferred.

**White washes and rendering** are very common wall treatments throughout Cookham.

**Flint** has been used fairly extensively in the parish, as is evidenced on its churches and various other public places, together with certain houses and walls. Despite the availability of local flint, the cost of local extraction and likely objections to that process may dictate that any flint used in future building would have to be brought in from elsewhere or imported from overseas. Given current environmental demands, flint should not be brought from great distances. A compromise might be the use of local flint for decoration only.

**Exposed timber framing** is very common throughout Cookham, but 'faux' timber framing should not be over-utilized. Timber cladding is not a major characteristic of buildings in the parish, other than black-stained boarding on converted barns and other properties, especially in Cookham Dean. Natural wood finishes are not, in general, characteristic of Cookham, but are seen in certain contemporary riverside buildings.

Cookham has a number of **Welsh slate roofs**, which tend to be limited to particular locations. Slate is now a very expensive material in the UK and in future would probably have to be sourced from overseas. Clay tiles are the preferred material for Cookham's roofs, except where there is a particular case for the use of slate.

**Thatch** is not a common roof treatment in Cookham, although there are fine decorative thatches to be seen on certain larger properties.

**Natural surfacings at ground level** are also much preferred, with careful attention to sustainability in respect of drainage issues. Where paving is required and justified, small **stone setts**, which are already used to good effect in parts of the village, may be suitable. Tarmac and modern paviers are not preferred for Cookham's driveways or hard-standings.

The use of **reclaimed materials** is preferred for most situations within Cookham's Conservation Areas, and may also be best suited to other contexts within the parish, depending on the immediate vernacular styles.

For contemporary buildings with a degree of seclusion, **sympathetic use of modern materials** in combination with more traditional materials may be permissible.

#### GUIDANCE:

#### Building materials

**G6.3** Materials should complement those most commonly used throughout Cookham, i.e. red brick, clay tiles, exposed timbers, white washes or rendering and natural surfacings.

## 6 Cookham's built areas - general guidance continued



Above and right:  
Differing locations, differing periods - but attractive, pitched, gabled, and 'varying' roof lines are to be seen in all parts of Cookham.



### 6.7 Rural (or semi-urban) character of Cookham's built areas

The rural character of Cookham's built areas is a significant factor constraining the nature of new development. Cookham village and Cookham Dean are both rural in nature. Cookham Rise is also rural in nature to a very great extent, though in parts it may be designated semi-urban. The Station Hill area is semi-urban. No area of Cookham should in future take on a more urbanised appearance that it currently possesses. Changes from rural to urban character often occur in small steps and may then be known as 'creeping urbanisation'. Most of the following attributes are mentioned elsewhere in the VDS, but it is helpful to bring them together at this point, since they all play a role in the maintenance of rural character.

- The need to maintain spaciousness of housing layouts together, where possible, with a certain individuality or irregularity, either of which may suggest spontaneity or historical accident.
- The preference for continuing provision of front gardens to new homes, as well as rear gardens, together with green surrounds that include hedged and tree-studded boundaries.
- The need for new housing to be of modest sizing, relative to the neighbourhood and to its plot.
- The need for natural surfacings at ground level and discreet parking arrangements. Correspondingly, the avoidance of tarmac and kerbing except where absolutely essential, and the avoidance of visually dominant hard-standings at the front of new properties.
- The need to ensure that exterior lighting is used only where it is essential and is subdued.

- The avoidance of tall, solid gates that block the glimpse of the attractive house or garden beyond.
- The preservation of old walls and the avoidance of harsh modern boundaries.
- The need to retain existing green spaces and green fingers of land that are present throughout the built areas of the parish, together with wide green verges, the latter especially in Cookham Dean. The need to retain natural appearances, where suitable, in such spaces and the avoidance of 'manicuring'.

#### **GUIDANCE:**

Rural and semi-rural

**G6.4** New development should respect the rural or semi-rural character of Cookham, and avoid 'creeping urbanisation'.

### 6.8 Built-colour palette

Cookham's built-colour palette is referred to at various points in the VDS. The colours cited are weathered red, beige, white, brown, grey and black.

Complemented by the ever-present backdrop of green, these colours result in a particularly calm and attractive appearance. Clearly, there has been nothing 'enforced' about such a colour palette in Cookham parish. It is simply the way things have evolved. However, once identified, it is very striking that these colours are almost universally adhered to, and there is no doubt that they play a major part in unifying Cookham's diverse architecture.

#### **GUIDANCE:**

Built-colour palette

**G6.5** New development should adhere as far as possible to Cookham's built-colour palette of weathered red, beige, white, brown, grey and black.

## 6 Cookham's built areas - general guidance continued

### 6.9 New development involving several dwellings

It is important that new developments involving several dwellings should be **well-spaced**, with **attractive layouts**. They should relate in a **vernacular** manner to the appearance of the neighbouring parts of Cookham. Proposals deploying **off-the-shelf house designs** are unlikely to be suitable for Cookham parish.

It is characteristic of Cookham for a variety of building types and styles to be present in any one location, and proposals that provide **variations in the size, features and orientation of individual homes** within an overall vernacular scheme may prove very suitable in order to help provide character and **avoid harsh linear effects**. This does not preclude repetition of a single size and style of building in appropriate instances: where, for example, a theme relating to a Victorian cottage row is proposed. **Roof heights** of a group of new dwellings should not normally exceed those of adjacent and nearby dwellings.

To ensure that new estate developments are consistent in size with those estates built in Cookham parish over the last twenty years, any new estate should be **modest in size**, consistent with its locality.

The positioning and design of dwellings in a proposed new estate should be chosen carefully in order to provide a **proper and integrated approach to home security**. Every opportunity should also be taken to minimise the **subtle signifiers of an urban space**. **Identifiable gardens** are preferred in front of houses and **hard surfaces in front of properties should be kept to a minimum**. **'Community space' and focal points** are desirable in larger schemes.

**Adequate car parking arrangements** for all needs must be provided within the boundary of any new development. This may be a mix of garaging, parking bays and discreetly arranged front-of-house parking.

Proposals for **'garden grabbing'** (the use of existing gardens) for the development of new dwellings must be evaluated with caution, especially because of the difficulty, in such locations, of providing suitably spaced housing layouts, characteristic of the vicinity. It is also necessary to ensure that there is **minimal adverse effect upon neighbouring properties** (see also, for example, illustrative material in Box 24, page 46).

#### **GUIDANCE:** Several dwellings

**G6.6** New developments involving several dwellings should be adequately spaced, with attractive layouts and building designs that relate in a vernacular manner to the appearance of the neighbouring parts of Cookham. Adequate car parking arrangements for all needs should be discreetly provided within the boundary of any new development.

### 6.10 Apartment buildings and conversions

The development of new apartment buildings or the redevelopment of existing buildings as apartment buildings requires particularly careful consideration in the

setting of Cookham parish. The key issues relate to the **size of such buildings in relation to their surroundings** and **associated parking needs**. (The amount of additional traffic that would be generated is outside the scope of the VDS).

Issues of **scale and visual harmony** within an immediate locality mean that new apartment buildings will need to be of a modest size. The built form of new apartment buildings should, where appropriate, be **articulated in a manner which reduces the impact of mass** vis-à-vis neighbouring properties. Both new apartment buildings and conversions should exhibit a **subtlety of design**, especially in respect of external door positioning, vehicular access and car parking arrangements, that does not render them instantly and unmistakably identifiable as apartment buildings. **Parking provision** within the boundaries for new or converted apartments must be **adequate for the predicted number of occupants** and their visitors. Parking areas must be **discreet, with appropriate landscaping**.

#### **GUIDANCE:** Apartment buildings and conversions

**G6.7** New or converted apartment buildings should adhere to modest scale and discreet design, with fully adequate landscaped or screened parking space, and should harmonise with their immediate locality.



Groves Way and Bridge Avenue in Cookham Rise illustrate well-spaced layouts for modest housing in varied types. Note the green frontage to the four-apartment building in the foreground.

### 6.11 Visible spacing of buildings

Housing density, though a familiar term, is not a useful measure for the purposes of the VDS, since the inclusion of apartments or other forms of multiple dwelling within a single building can produce seeming discrepancies between the visible spacing of buildings and the figures for housing density. In Cookham, the best yardstick for the spacing of new development is usually the **pattern of the immediate and nearby locality**. Outside of areas characterised by terraces or small plots, there should be room for gardens around the property to maintain green space, see also Section 6.24. Achieving this requires a gap between the property and the boundary similar to that characteristic of the area. As a normal minimum the gap should be no less than 1.5m.

#### **GUIDANCE:** Visible spacing of buildings

**G6.8** Development should be designed to provide gardens and green space. The spacing of buildings should follow the pattern of building in the immediate and nearby area. As a normal minimum the gap between a building and the property boundary should be no less than 1.5m."

## 6 Cookham's built areas - general guidance continued

### 6.12 Extensions

Care should be taken to ensure that extensions reflect the design of the original building and use matching materials. In general extensions should **avoid resulting in an overbearing appearance**, either by **creating undue height or mass** or by **un-neighbourly impacts**. The extended appearance of the property should remain consistent with size and scale in the locality. The **conversion of garages should be resisted** if this would be likely to lead to the loss of gardens to hard-standing, or additional cars being parked on the street. Extension of residential space that is likely to lead to an **increased number of occupants**, for whom **adequate on-site parking** cannot be provided, should also be resisted.

#### **GUIDANCE:**

#### **Extensions**

**G6.9a** Extensions should be subordinate in scale, should not result in an overbearing appearance or un-neighbourly impact, and should sympathetically reflect the design of the original building.

**G6.9b** The conversion of garages should only be allowed where there is adequate on-site parking.

### 6.13 Traditional terraced properties

Any new development affecting rows of traditional cottages, including, but not exhaustively, those designated as being within an area of Special Local Significance (Annex C) or 'especially noteworthy' (Section 9.3), should accord with the following.

In order to retain the traditional appearance of the terrace, there should be no building in advance of the façade apart from the addition of porches, front lobbies, or modest bay windows where such features already exist elsewhere in the terrace. Such additions should be constructed in materials sympathetic to the existing and should be proportionate to the property into which they are to be placed. **Pitched roofs should be covered with slates or tiles** to match the existing main roofs. In terms of general appearance, front gardens should be maintained intact as far as possible. The **painting or rendering of exterior brickwork should be resisted**, except as maintenance work on existing treatments.

#### **GUIDANCE:**

#### **Terraced properties**

**G6.10** The visual integrity of traditional cottage terraces should be protected in the following ways:

- No building in advance of the façade, except for porches, front lobbies and bay windows where such features already exist in the terrace.
- All additions should be proportionate, and sympathetic in style and use of materials.
- Front gardens should remain intact as far as possible.

### 6.14 Primacy of original

Additional to 6.13 above, any new development affecting terraces or other areas of housing possessing consistency in original design, should be sensitively

treated to **ensure that the original design intentions remain dominant**. In general, integrity should be preserved by avoiding the addition of porches and other forms of front extension, by copying through design features and using matching features and materials.

#### **GUIDANCE:**

#### **Primacy of original**

**G6.11** Where there is general uniformity, new building designs or extensions should match the style of other buildings in the terrace or area.

### 6.15 Affordable housing

'Affordable housing' is a generic term, which includes social rented housing, key worker housing and shared ownership housing, amongst other categories. There are more than 200 affordable housing dwellings of various types in Cookham Parish. The provisions of Right-to-Buy legislation do not apply to Cookham and, therefore, the level of the existing stock is unlikely to reduce significantly in the short term.

In January 2011, Cookham Parish Council, through the Community Council for Berkshire, commissioned a Housing Needs Survey across the parish to ascertain the extent of local needs and any special requirements of those who qualify. The questionnaire acknowledged that new housing might have to come forward through a special planning process relating to 'Rural Exception Sites': that is, small sites which, for Cookham parish, might be within existing Green Belt on the edge of built-up areas, and as such would not normally receive planning permission. The survey findings suggested that, contrary to expectations, it was young people who most were seeking low cost housing in Cookham. Many Cookham residents, however, believe that pressing needs for additional affordable housing for Cookham's elderly will soon emerge.

It is not within the remit of the VDS to suggest whether more affordable housing should be built in Cookham. However, in terms of design, it is essential to point out that **the criteria of the VDS apply as much to affordable dwellings as to any other type of housing**.

#### **GUIDANCE:**

#### **Affordable housing**

**G6.12** Affordable housing development in Cookham should have regard to the design guidance in this VDS. The need to avoid 'creeping urbanisation' applies equally to affordable housing developments.



Cookham's only Rural Exception Site development to date, in Arthur Close, Cookham Rise. Whilst these designs pre-date VDS guidance, they do exemplify the way in which a modest four-apartment building (left) can harmonise with semi-detached housing (right).

## 6 Cookham's built areas - general guidance continued

### 6.16 Contemporary, iconic and 'eco' buildings

Cookham has a small but notable history of architecture that is 'new' for its time. This includes the Studio House (Box 15, page 39), the Nursery School (Box 21, page 44 and Annex C) and a number of developments on the river bank in Cookham Dean. Also at the edge of the river in Cookham Dean, Noah's Boathouse, now Grade II\* listed, is one of the oldest surviving works by architect Colin Lucas, a pioneer of reinforced concrete in the building of homes.



**Noah's Boathouse, an early British example of 'Modern Movement' architecture**

Further contemporary buildings are to be found within the boundaries of the Chartered Institute of Marketing and the Odney Club (Section 7.3)



Another notable building is a large 1960s flat-roofed house in Poundfield Lane, built within a small quarry from which chalk was extracted in the 1870s for the development of the railway. Screened

for the most part from public view, this dwelling would have been both novel and experimental when first built.

In general, there is not a great deal of opportunity within Cookham parish for the introduction of contemporary homes that will complement their particular locality. It is notable that the relatively few such buildings that have been constructed over the years tend to be positioned in rather discreet locations. The river bank is an exception, addressed in Section 10 and related photographs are on pages 55 and 59.

Proposed buildings where building form is highly contemporary, or where **glass, steel or other contemporary building materials** are visually prominent, or that are otherwise 'new' for their time, must **harmonise with existing buildings in the vicinity, and with the landscape**. To this end, the design characteristics discussed elsewhere in the VDS are relevant and should be noted. This is of particular importance for any building intended to stand in a prominent position and/or **against a backdrop of the countryside**.

There may be little appetite in the community for contemporary building of dramatic scale and striking appearance. However, it is recognised that a 'second gallery', for example, might be sought within Cookham parish at some point to represent Cookham's wide and considerable historic and artistic legacies and/or to reflect contemporary artistic vibrancy in the parish. The

VDS does not, therefore, rule out the possibility of a new '**iconic development**' at a future point. It is important to point out that '**iconic must be understood as a building of the highest quality design**' whose line, form and materials are expected to stand the test of time and delight future generations of residents and visitors.

In recent years there has been a push to develop buildings which are to be close to, or fully attaining, a **carbon-neutral** standard. The technology is moving very fast, as are the standards and regulatory timescales being imposed.

Many low-energy buildings offer designs which would not readily sit alongside the traditional structures in Cookham or the village's built-colour palette. Not all, however, are, or would be, unsuitable. The design images below are simply illustrative of the 'softer end' of current eco design and should not be taken as VDS endorsements.

**Eco-building need not be stark. This innovative low carbon 'Natural House' has been built by the Prince's Foundation at the Building Research Establishment.**



**Its pioneering design is said to offer a successful fusion of low energy technology and traditional building styles.**



*"Cookham currently possesses very substantial architectural variation. New development may add even more variation, but a useful guiding principle would be, 'Design to impress the community, not to impress other architects'."*

**Extract from Individual Consultations  
Mr Michael Johnson, former Chairman of the Cookham Festival and Chairman of the Friends of the Stanley Spencer Gallery**

#### **GUIDANCE:**

#### **Contemporary and eco**

**G6.13a** Proposed buildings where building form is contemporary, or where glass, steel or other contemporary building materials are visually prominent, or that are otherwise 'new' for their time, should harmonise:

- with the existing character of Cookham
- with existing buildings in the vicinity
- with the landscape.

**G6.13b** Any 'iconic' building which may be proposed in the future should be of very high standard in both design and build, such as to stand the test of time.

## 6 Cookham's built areas - general guidance continued

### 6.17 Boundary walls

Cookham possesses many old brick and flint walls, showing a wide range of building techniques, which it is important to preserve. There are also some attractive, recently-built walls that faithfully copy older styles using reclaimed materials.

**Old walls adjacent to roads which are part of the village character should be retained** and proposals for their renovation or repair welcomed.

New walls which **reflect the neighbouring design vernacular** especially those using **suitable reclaimed materials** should be a welcome feature of planning proposals, provided they will not have the effect of unduly shutting the property off from the street (see also Section 6.21) or unacceptably urbanising the street scene. Many of the roads in the parish are still essentially country lanes, especially in Cookham Dean, where their size, layout, hedges and greenery are fundamental to the sense of rural charm. Stark new walls should be avoided.



A recent extension to a striking decorative wall in Gibraltar Lane links to the gateway (left), very successfully matching the original wall (left again). The extended section is further enhanced by a reclaimed historic door.

#### **GUIDANCE:**

#### **Walls**

**G6.14** Historic walls are a very important feature of Cookham and should be treated with respect.

- Proposals for the renovation or repair of historic walls should be welcomed, as should plans for faithful copies using reclaimed materials.
- Proposed new walls need sensitive design and should not unduly shut the property off from the street or urbanise the street scene.



This old brick and flint wall provides a perfect foil to historic homes on the corner of School Lane.



Blind Gothic arches set into red brick, infilled with flint, and surmounted by a tiled roof create a charming boundary wall to a Victorian house on Winter Hill.



Above: The attractive, buttressed wall of the Old Pottery, once part of The Grove Farm, borders Odney Common.



Left: Ancient flint walls lining the road, together with historic brick walls, are a major feature of the Pound.

*Others of Cookham's historic walls are shown elsewhere in the VDS as follows.*

*Page 36, Ferry Lane. One of Cookham's earliest garden walls which contains bricks dating from the sixteenth century.*

*Page 39, School Lane. Historic walls surrounding the former brewery.*

## 6 Cookham's built areas - general guidance continued

### 6.18 Commercial and retail premises

Modest commercial premises are to be welcomed in Cookham, as a village where people both live and work. There are, however, many parts of the parish where commercial operations would not be appropriate because of their proximate impacts (for example the need to accommodate employee parking in otherwise residential areas).

Commercial and retail premises in Cookham should be in **suitable locations** and in styles that **complement this historic village**, whilst acknowledging the business needs that the premises must satisfy. Signage should generally **adhere to Cookham's built-colour palette**, though consideration of those retail and commercial signs currently in use around the village suggests that 'green' is a muted and very acceptable addition to the colour palette for such signage. Not all of the retail outlets in the village, are currently in accordance with the above in terms of styles and signage but opportunities for enhancement may emerge in the future.

Should there be any new development or re-development involving **multiple retail outlets** (Station Parade is an obvious candidate), proposals should achieve **gentleness of form**, which is likely to **include varying roof lines** and **exclude extensive, unrelieved flat roofs, stark linearity and disproportionately large unrelieved areas of glass**. Smaller buildings forming individual parts of a common theme should be preferred to large blocks.

Care should be taken when designing the layout of a commercial building or retail site to ensure minimal **impact of car parking on the street scene**. The appearance of **'urbanisation' should be avoided** as far as is reasonably possible. The use of **natural surfacing wherever possible**, and the division of parking areas into small bays separated by **green fingers of land**, can be very helpful in this respect. The retention of existing **trees of merit**, and provision of **suitable planting**, will be an important element in the design of parking spaces.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS: Commercial and retail

**R6.1** Local employment should be welcomed where appropriate as contributing to Cookham's status as a village where people live and work but any development to support this objective should be in accordance with Guidance Point G6.15a to G6.15c.

#### GUIDANCE: Commercial and retail

**G6.15a** VDS guidance for building form, materials and colour palette is equally applicable to commercial and retail premises, whilst recognizing the functional needs that these buildings must satisfy.

**G6.15b** Parking provision for commercial and retail premises should be discreet with generous screening or landscaping and the avoidance of undue urbanisation.

**G6.15c** Signage should generally accord with Cookham's built-colour palette, though 'green' is an acceptable addition to the palette for commercial and retail signage purposes.

### 6.19 Car parking in new development

All new development of whatever type should be expected to provide sufficient car parking space within the site's boundaries to accommodate the requirements of the development. In the case of new housing, this means **provision for residents and their visitors**.

The design of car parking requires particular sensitivity so that **vehicles and unscreened hard-standings do not become a dominant feature**. **Boundary treatment is particularly important** for car parking in new development, such that neighbouring properties do not have to overlook car parking and service areas.

#### GUIDANCE: Car parking in new development

**G6.16** Car parking in all new developments should be sufficient for residents and their visitors. Car parking should be arranged discreetly, avoiding visually dominant hard-standings at the front of houses and providing adequate screening at boundaries.

### 6.20 Village car parks

Cookham's car parks serve residents and visitors alike. They need to be **rural rather than urban in nature** wherever possible, yet maintainable in good condition (see also R4.5 in Box 11, page 17).

Tarmacadam may be inevitable where there is particularly heavy usage, but **natural surfaces** will be suitable in most instances, as may **modern, durable, porous surfaces which permit the growth of grass**. **Trees and shrubs** help to create a softened appearance, especially when studded around the boundary.

**Low hedging** can be a suitable boundary for village car parks. **Rustic perimeter fencing** is also a particularly useful technique to soften the harsh appearance of parked cars, whilst at the same time keeping the cars in public view for **security** reasons.

**Lighting should be avoided where possible**, but if essential should be soft.

#### GUIDANCE: Village car parks

**G6.17** Cookham's village car parks should follow VDS guidance for rural rather than urban character.



An attractive model for Cookham's village car parks is situated at the Odney Club. Here, rustic fencing, intermittent trees at the perimeter and a gravelled surface all soften the appearance of parked cars.

## 6 Cookham's built areas - general guidance continued

### 6.21 Gates

During the VDS Consultation Programme, a recognised and appreciated aspect of Cookham was found to be its **open and unthreatened appearance**. It was noted that, in Cookham Dean in particular, there is often a complete absence of gates within otherwise bounded properties, and those gates that do exist are typically constructed in **attractive open work** that does not unduly block the view.

Many gates routinely stand open and though it is not a planning issue as to whether gates are open or closed, the matter is clearly indicative of the general character of a neighbourhood. A similar situation, though less marked, exists throughout the Cookham settlements.

There has been much adverse comment in response to a recent trend for the erection of tall, solid, gates. Local people have expressed the view that this has an anti-social effect, is unwelcoming and eliminates the good feelings caused by a glimpse of an attractive property, garden, or distant view beyond. From the particular perspective of the VDS, any trend towards tall, solid gates also tends to **urbanise the street scene**.

#### **GUIDANCE:**

#### **Gates**

**G6.18** Gates should generally be of an open design to create a welcoming impression and allow views through to the property, garden or landscape beyond. The use of tall solid gates should be avoided.

### 6.22 Hedgerows, fencing and trees within residential areas

Many of Cookham's existing residential boundaries are based upon hedgerows, often studded with trees. It is generally **undesirable to uproot existing 'living boundaries', or fell mature trees within such a boundary. Hedgerows are a very suitable boundary, also for new developments in Cookham and are to be preferred over solid board fencing or modern brick walls.** Young hedgerows may usefully be backed by wire fences if they will initially form an insufficient boundary. **Wooden picket** or **post and rail** fencing both form alternative attractive boundaries that are seen in various parts of Cookham parish, either standing alone or forming a low frontage to a taller hedgerow.

Tree-planting in residential areas is wholeheartedly supported in the VDS, provided the **size of the tree concerned (or line of trees) when mature, is taken into account.**

Although native species such as oak, beech and ash grow well in particular local conditions, there is a strong history of planting non-native species in local gardens, which can help to add interest.

The VDS also refers to situations where the planting of trees may currently, or in due course, **block important views** (see, for example, Section 4.9 and the photograph above right). The planting of trees that will in due course block important views does not contravene planning policy, but it is poor practice and should be resisted where possible.



**Above:** The row of trees planted along the approach to Moor Hall is a concern. This was previously an open location and should have remained so, since it is part of the Moor. In summer the trees unbalance the view from the west, by blocking half of the 'welcoming arms of Cookham village' from the gaze.



**Above right:** An avenue of cedar trees in Cedar Drive, south of the Pound. The wide spacing between opposite residences was designed to accommodate this very tall row of trees.

#### **GUIDANCE:**

#### **Hedgerows, fencing and trees within residential areas**

**G6.19a** Existing hedgerows forming residential boundaries should in general be retained.

**G6.19b** Hedgerows are a very suitable boundary for new developments in Cookham and are preferred over solid board fencing or modern brick walls. Hedgerows may be attractively combined with wooden picket or post and rail fencing in certain instances.

### 6.23 Screening new development

The screening of new development should not be regarded as a self-evident need. It is far **preferable that the development should be sufficiently attractive not to require screening**, but this must depend upon the particular circumstances. Where screening is contemplated, a **careful balance needs to be struck** between the true need and the risk of creating screening that is over-solid and unattractive. Similar considerations apply to decisions between **evergreen and deciduous trees**. Evergreens can be forbidding in appearance and ecologically unfriendly, but deciduous trees will provide less effective screening in winter. The use of **leylandii and similar** should not be permitted for screening of residential properties.

#### **GUIDANCE:**

#### **Screening**

**G6.20** Where screening is used it should be carefully designed, with due regard to its seasonal and future mature appearance.

## 6 Cookham's built areas - general guidance continued

### 6.24 Gardens

Even in Cookham's most built-up areas, gardens have, for the most part, been provided **at the front and rear of houses** consistent with a village environment. It is also relatively unusual in Cookham to find tightly cut boundaries to the sides of houses. Therefore, except in special circumstances, **front and rear** gardens should be included within new developments. To each side of a house, space for greenery should be characteristic of the neighbourhood and proportionate to the building frontage. Generous areas of hedge, shrubs and trees are of particular importance throughout Cookham.

#### GUIDANCE:

#### Gardens

**G6.21** Except in special circumstances, front and rear gardens should be included within new developments. To each side of a house, space for greenery should be characteristic of the neighbourhood and proportionate to the building frontage.

### 6.25 Sustainable Design

The Borough Council's 'Sustainable Design and Construction' Supplementary Planning Document (Reference 17) provides a wealth of information on measures that could be incorporated into new development to enhance environmental performance. The information is also useful for improving existing properties.

A very real challenge in Cookham, most particularly but not exclusively in its Conservation Areas, is that of incorporating sustainable design whilst minimising adverse visual impacts outside the property. In supporting sustainable design and technology, suitable balances must be achieved between the advantages of sustainable design and the need to retain the visual attractiveness of Cookham's character. 'New generation' technologies designed to provide greener energy are, therefore, particularly relevant to Cookham. Many of these are specifically focused on the reduction of visual intrusiveness. It is expected that this trend will continue into the future.

#### GUIDANCE:

#### Energy efficiency

**G6.22** The incorporation of sustainable design and construction techniques and technology is welcomed but care must be taken to balance the advantages of environmental performance with the need to avoid negative impacts on the visual attractiveness of a building or its surroundings.



Already the appearance of photo-voltaic cells can be softened by embedding into clay tiles. It is to be hoped that technological development will further advance the provision of energy saving installations that conserve the appearance of historic tiled roofs.

### 6.26 Lighting (exterior)

Street lighting is barely compatible with the maintenance of a rural appearance and such lighting could become a form of 'creeping urbanisation' wherever installed in Cookham parish. It is therefore generally discouraged in the VDS, but it is recognised that there may be particular locations at which soft and shielded lights may be suitable or where lighting might usefully be triggered by the movement of a person.

Care needs to be taken when installing lighting for external areas, such as car parks and sports grounds. Lighting columns should be avoided unless there is no viable alternative and should not be installed where there is the possibility that they will be silhouetted against the skyline. There should be no spillage of light outside the area to be lit.

#### GUIDANCE:

#### Exterior lighting

**G6.23** Exterior lighting should be used only when necessary. Lighting columns, where essential, should be in keeping with the locality and the lighting provided should be discreet.

### 6.27 Note on traffic and its consequences

The problems of traffic congestion and insufficient public parking provision, though of major importance in Cookham, are outside the scope of the VDS.

Any works which may be considered necessary to alleviate traffic problems should, however, respect VDS guidance, both generally and in the area concerned, and any works to create car parks should follow specific guidance in the relevant sections of the VDS.

The severity of parking problems around Cookham, especially in Cookham village and Cookham Rise, is a reason for very strict adherence to VDS guidance that, for all new developments or conversions, all parking needed for whatever reasons should be inside the boundaries of the development.



The presence of parked cars along Cookham High Street may now be irrevocable, but its outcome is sadly in contrast to the spacious original layout of the High Street.

### SUMMARY OF GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR COOKHAM'S BUILT AREAS

#### Building form and context

**G6.1** The size of proposed buildings and their plots must be considered in relation to their context. New buildings should sit comfortably in their surroundings.

- The width of frontage, depth and height of a proposed building should be in keeping with other buildings in the area.
- A new building should respect the general building line / set back from the road and the spacing of buildings which characterise the area

#### Roofs

**G6.2** New buildings should generally use pitched and gabled roofs, incorporating chimneys if characteristic of the area, and should create good harmonies with the appearance of nearby roofs, by subtle matching or by attractive variations.

#### Building materials

**G6.3** Materials should complement those most commonly used throughout Cookham, i.e. red brick, clay tiles, exposed timbers, white washes or rendering and natural surfacings.

#### Rural and semi-rural

**G6.4** New development should respect the rural or semi-rural character of Cookham, and avoid 'creeping urbanisation'.

#### Built colour palette

**G6.5** New development should adhere as far as possible to Cookham's built-colour palette of weathered red, beige, white, brown, grey and black.

#### Several dwellings

**G6.6** New developments involving several dwellings should be adequately spaced, with attractive layouts and building designs that relate in a vernacular manner to the appearance of the neighbouring parts of Cookham. Adequate car parking arrangements for all needs should be discreetly provided within the boundary of any new development.

#### Apartment buildings and conversions

**G6.7** New or converted apartment buildings should adhere to modest scale and discreet design, with fully adequate landscaped or screened parking space, and should harmonise with their immediate locality.

#### Visible spacing of buildings

**G6.8** Development should be designed to provide gardens and green space. The spacing of buildings should follow the pattern of building in the immediate and nearby area. As a normal minimum the gap between a building and the property boundary should be no less than 1.5m."

#### Extensions

**G6.9a** Extensions should be subordinate in scale, should not result in an overbearing appearance or un-neighbourly impact, and should sympathetically reflect the design of the original building

**G6.9b** The conversion of garages should only be allowed where there is adequate on-site parking.

#### Terraced properties

**G6.10** The visual integrity of traditional cottage terraces must be protected in the following ways:

- No building in advance of the façade, except for porches, front lobbies and bay windows where such features already exist in the terrace.
- All additions should be proportionate, and sympathetic in style and use of materials.
- Front gardens should remain intact as far as possible.

#### Primacy of original

**G6.11** Where there is general uniformity, new building designs or extensions should match the style of other buildings in the terrace or area.

#### Affordable housing

**G6.12** Affordable housing development in Cookham should have regard to the design guidance in this VDS. The need to avoid 'creeping urbanisation' applies equally to affordable housing developments.

#### Contemporary and eco

**G6.13a** Proposed buildings where building form is contemporary, or where glass, steel or other contemporary building materials are visually prominent, or that are otherwise 'new' for their time, should harmonise:

- with the existing character of Cookham
- with existing buildings in the vicinity
- with the landscape.

**G6.13b** Any 'iconic' building which may be proposed in the future should be of very high standard in both design and build, such as to stand the test of time.

#### Walls

**G6.14** Historic walls are a very important feature of Cookham and should be treated with respect.

- Proposals for the renovation or repair of historic walls should be welcomed, as should plans for faithful copies using reclaimed materials.
- Proposed new walls need sensitive design and should not unduly shut the property off from the street or urbanise the street scene.

#### Commercial and retail

**G6.15a** VDS guidance for building form, materials and colour palette is equally applicable to commercial and retail premises, whilst recognizing the functional needs that these buildings must satisfy.

**G6.15b** Parking provision for commercial and retail premises should be discreet with generous screening or landscaping and the avoidance of undue urbanisation.

**G6.15c** Signage should generally accord with Cookham's built-colour palette, though 'green' is an acceptable addition to the palette for commercial and retail signage purposes.

#### Car parking in new development

**G6.16** Car parking in all new developments should be sufficient for residents and their visitors. Car parking should be arranged discreetly, avoiding visually dominant hard-standings at the front of houses and providing adequate screening at boundaries.

### SUMMARY OF GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR COOKHAM'S BUILT AREAS continued

#### Village car parks

**G6.17** Cookham's village car parks should follow VDS guidance for rural rather than urban character.

#### Gates

**G6.18** Gates should generally be of an open design to create a welcoming impression and allow views through to the property, garden or landscape beyond. The use of tall solid gates should be avoided.

#### Hedgerows, fencing and trees in residential areas

**G6.19a** Existing hedgerows forming residential boundaries should not in general be uprooted.

**G6.19b** Hedgerows are a very suitable boundary for new developments in Cookham and are preferred over solid board fencing or modern brick walls. Hedgerows may be attractively combined with wooden picket or post and rail fencing in certain instances.

#### Screening

**G6.20** Where screening is used it should be carefully designed, with due regard to its seasonal and future mature appearance.

#### Gardens

**G6.21** Except in special circumstances, front and rear gardens should be included within new developments. To each side of a house, space for greenery should be characteristic of the neighbourhood and proportionate to the building frontage.

#### Energy efficiency

**G6.22** The incorporation of sustainable design and construction techniques and technology is welcomed but care must be taken to balance the advantages of energy efficiency with the need to avoid negative impacts on the visual attractiveness of a building or its surroundings.

#### Exterior lighting

**G6.23** Exterior lighting should be used only when necessary. Lighting columns, where essential, should be in keeping with the locality and the lighting provided should be discreet.

# 7 Cookham village

This section should be read in conjunction with the Cookham High Street Conservation Area Statement (Reference 6.1)



Cliveden overlooking Cookham Village, a much-loved Cookham view which is restricted to certain seasons of the year.

## 7.1 The growth of Cookham village

The original settlement was compact, its size constrained by the river to the north and the low-lying land on its other three sides. The only direction in which the medieval village could easily grow was westwards, siting its new buildings on the slightly higher ground beyond the Moor and the Fleet Ditch. Thus, there were two distinct parts to the early village settlement. The concentration of buildings in the area of the church and High Street was followed by the construction of various buildings fronting The Pound. Other buildings which are now of historic importance were added at a later stage and include properties in Mill Lane, White Place Farm, School Lane and Sutton Road.

More recent development has included the construction of large, detached, family residences in Berries Road around 1900, bringing housing closer to the river. The Blackbutts Cottages off Sutton Road were built in the 1930s, the first privately-built 'affordable' rented housing estate in Cookham village. A cul-de-sac of detached houses was built at Sutton Close and, subsequently, small housing developments were laid out at Vicarage Close, at Woodmoor End off Mill Lane, and also to the south of The Pound with access from the Maidenhead Road. Across the village there was considerable infill, with the development of separate properties in larger gardens, together with sub-division of some of the larger properties.



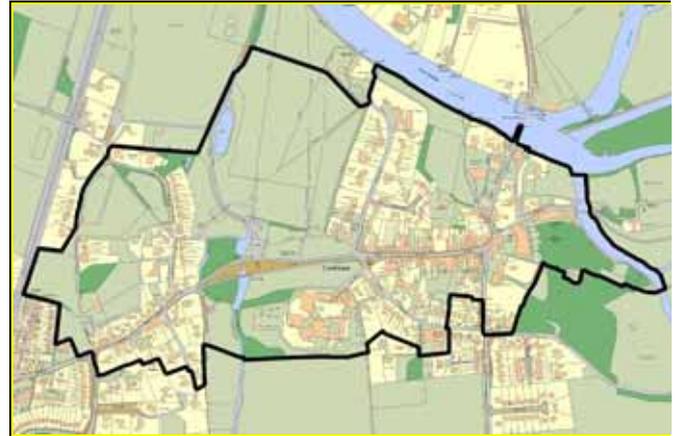
A high-mast view of the High Street and School Lane, together with the area of the War Memorial.

It can be seen that pitched, clay-tiled roofs are particularly important to the character of Cookham village.

## 7 Cookham village continued

### 7.2 Cookham High Street Conservation Area

The Cookham High Street Conservation Area was originally designated in 1969 by Berkshire County Council and subsequently extended by the Borough Council. The Conservation Area now includes both parts of Cookham village (that is, the High Street area and The Pound). In the High Street area, most of the streets close to the High Street are included: namely Churchgate, Odney Lane, Mill Lane, School Lane (except for its south east end), Berries Road and that part of Sutton Road that extends from Cookham Bridge to the junction with School Lane. Further west, the Conservation area includes The Pound, Poundfield and the southern part of Terry's Lane. All development in a Conservation Area is subject to special constraints and processes (see Reference 3.2).



The Cookham High Street Conservation Area.

### From Cookham Bridge to Church Gate, Odney Lane and Ferry Lane

Box 12

Four interconnected roads forming a vibrant network at the north eastern end of Cookham village display a rich historic and architectural character. The original buildings were constructed over several hundred years and have been subject to many alterations. A high proportion of original architectural detailing nevertheless survives throughout.

The Church Gate precinct, gateway to the Holy Trinity Church from Sutton Road is especially picturesque. The precinct is part of the Thames Path as well as an important centre of activity for church and local community functions. The current church dates from circa 1100, but has been extended and refurbished in each century since then. Churchgate House, backing onto the churchyard, may be the oldest house in Cookham, with evidence to suggest that it was built in the fourteenth century. All houses in Church Gate are timber-framed to a greater or lesser extent, and white-washed or white-rendered, with attractive clay-tiled and timbered porches and deep clay-tiled roofs. Individuality of buildings combines with a common look and feel which it is important to retain. Beyond these houses the precinct becomes a private road to the former vicarage, a red brick Grade 2 listed building which is now the home of the Parish Office and Parish Centre community rooms.

The Odney Estate, owned by the John Lewis Partnership, includes a number of buildings along Odney Lane as well as Lullebrook Manor (see also Box 6, page 13 and Box 19, page 41). Odney Lane and Ferry Lane are both dominated by red brick building lines directly to the street. Stretches of boundary wall link directly to the brick fronts or sides of individually characterful properties, providing a coherent red brick frontage which needs to be respected. Odney Common, off Odney Lane, is an important amenity for Cookham Village and a delightful walker's entrance to the picturesque Sashes Island and Cookham Lock. At its Western end is the former Odney Pottery, now refurbished and extended as the John Lewis Heritage Centre.

On the corner of Odney Lane and Sutton Road is a significant local landmark, a large boulder known as the Tarrystone (see also Box 49, page 71). Tarrystone House, opposite the Tarrystone, is an unusual and prominent red brick building.



Above: Church Gate precinct with Churchgate House at centre right.

Below: Ferry Lane, narrow, brick-walled and rustic.



Left: Opposite the Tarrystone and facing the High Street from Sutton Road is Tarrystone House, an imposing building of both Georgian and Regency character.

## 7 Cookham village continued

### Cookham High Street

Box 13

Cookham's High Street is the result of medieval town planning, in which properties were set out in close proximity on each side of the road, backed by long 'burgage plots' (see Section 3.3). Almost all buildings in the High Street appear to be old, but some are much older than they look. Keeley's Cottage, for example, had several successive floor levels, found on excavation, and may actually date back to the Middle Ages. The Kings Arms has a skin of Georgian brick concealing an ancient timber frame, while Clomburr Cottage is known to have Tudor origins.

The High Street has no single architectural style, although exposed timber framed buildings with white infill, and red brick buildings predominate, as do pitched roofs topped with clay tiles. The street forms a charming assemblage of buildings of differing designs, reflecting their many and varied uses over the years. Few of the buildings stand out by virtue of size - the King's Arms is one of the exceptions. The overall scale of the street is domestic, with many of the properties, especially at the western end, still being in residential use. As the street curves towards its eastern end, the buildings become more substantial and the view is arrested by the imposing buildings facing the High Street from the far side of Sutton Road. On the southern corner of the High Street and Sutton Road is the Stanley Spencer Gallery, a beautifully restored former Methodist chapel. All along the street, individual properties either abut each other or are separated by small entrances that often provide visibility of historic side elevations. Where there is such visibility, it should be protected.

The High Street now comprises a mixture of residential properties, restaurants and specialist retailers, having once been full of local traders, including grocer, greengrocer, chemist and butcher. This shift of business emphasis has probably helped the village avoid many of the brash signs of competitive retailing. It should continue to do so.

Much of the High Street's charm lies in its contrasts. There is no single 'building line', some of the buildings being set slightly forward and others slightly back, with the occasional building set behind low walls or railings. Pavement widths vary considerably; small cottages provide a foil to large villas; white painted or rendered elevations contrast with local brick. Roof depths, heights and pitches also vary, such that attractive transitions prevail, with no long run of unchanging roof lines. This unity in diversity must be closely guarded.

It is unsurprising that in a street containing seventeen Listed Buildings there has been little modern construction. But certain more recent buildings sit uneasily amongst their neighbours and their further visual integration by modest alteration, as and when the opportunity arises, would be a positive step. This is not to say that any future developments should be merely pastiches of the older properties in the street, but new buildings should acknowledge the character and scale of the street as a whole, employ traditional materials and be integral to Cookham High Street rather than a part of an anonymous townscape.

*"The atmosphere and commercial vibrancy of Cookham High Street are exceptional and must be retained. The Odney Club depends on these things, but can also contribute greatly to them, not only through its social responsibility policies but especially by virtue of its 120 or so guests each day and night, who love to explore the shops and hostellers."*

**Extract from Individual Consultations  
Ms Sue Bickle,  
Manager, The Odney Club and the Winter Hill Golf Club**



Left: Cookham High Street looking eastwards from the Kings Arms towards Sutton Road.

Right: Timber-framed buildings including Bel and the Dragon, dating from the fifteenth century.



At the west end of the High Street, charming residential properties (above) are seen to the north of the War Memorial, whilst to the south (below) is a backdrop of fine period properties, including Moor End and The Maltings.



Left and right above: These attractive 20<sup>th</sup> century windows installed in the facades of Cookham High Street retail outlets are in good harmony with more historic building elements.

## 7 Cookham village continued

### The Pound, Poundfield Lane and the southern end of Terry's Lane

Box 14

The Pound is a narrow road running west to east forming part of the link between the Station Hill area and Cookham village. Poundfield Lane runs from the western end of The Pound directly north, becoming a footpath, then a gravelled track cutting in front of residential properties whose vehicular access is through Terry's Lane. The southern end of Terry's Lane runs north from the eastern end of The Pound before bearing west, meeting Poundfield Lane and continuing upwards. The three roads form an approximate triangle through and around Poundfield - which falls in a southerly direction from the top of Poundfield Lane towards Station Hill (see also Box 9, page 15). Collectively these roads display many of the characteristics that give Cookham its appeal - a unique mix of historic and modern architecture within a rural setting that provides both calm and vitality.

The Pound is a particularly narrow through-route possessing two distinct characters. On its north side are some of the oldest buildings in Cookham, of which five are listed. All except the Old Farmhouse face the street, mostly behind low walls. The properties on this side of The Pound exhibit a variety of architecture, which ranges from a modest cottage-style to the somewhat more substantial elevations of The White Oak. A recent Victorian-styled apartment building at the Maidenhead Road roundabout replaced 'The Gate Hangs High' public house (with its once enchanting notion of 'hindering none'), and now defines The Pound's western entrance. A pavement runs along the north side of The Pound, but is not wide enough for two people to pass without one stepping into a gateway or into the road.

The contrast with the opposite side of the road is marked. On the southern side, most of the houses are larger in scale, set behind unusually high walls from which their entrances give onto courtyards and driveways. One gateway leads to a discreet cul de sac of separately designed mature detached homes, scarcely visible from The Pound itself.

Architecturally, The Pound is possibly one of Cookham's most interesting areas, particularly for historic and period buildings. There are examples from each century from the 15<sup>th</sup> through to the 19<sup>th</sup>. The principle material is brick, but it comes in different forms with varying colours and detailing. Flint is also used liberally, especially within boundary walls.

The narrowness of The Pound slows the flow of two-way traffic and can cause inconvenience, such that various additional routes have been considered with the goal of eliminating bottlenecks. However, there is a counter-argument, which is that the removal of bottlenecks in Cookham's through-routes would be destructive to the heritage, rural character and visual appearance of the village, since it would inevitably result in larger and faster traffic flows. 'Olde world charm', in other words, may often be linked to a degree of inconvenience, which acts to sustain it. This view is rather supported in the VDS. The inadequate pavements of The Pound do, however, remain a concern and, whilst the relatively slow movement of traffic reduces the risks to some degree, these pavements are not entirely comfortable or safe for the pedestrian.

The construction of a new footpath behind The Pound appears to be ruled out on incontrovertible grounds (Reference 2.3). There remains the possibility, however, of discreet re-positioning of certain walls on the north side of The Pound to provide a small amount of added pavement space. This has kindly been offered by at least one current resident. With suitable resolution of Conservation Area issues, this type of solution may yet be attainable.



Upper right: The Old Farmhouse at the junction of The Pound and Terry's Lane. Above: View looking west along The Pound.



Above: Old Cookham Fire Station, Terry's Lane.



Above left: The view looking north along Terry's Lane. Above right: Edwardian properties in Poundfield Lane.

Poundfield Lane has a mix of mostly twentieth century architecture, including several large Edwardian homes. Houses are set back in generous plots. Large front gardens provide leafy boundaries to the lane. The Grade II listed 'Englefield', painted by Stanley Spencer (see Box 9, page 15, Section 14.2 and Annex B), is of Georgian style and is thought to have been built in 1791.

At the commencement of Terry's Lane there are period properties on both sides, providing a strong visual link to The Pound whilst transitioning to a tree-lined country lane. Further along the southern end of the lane, there is a mix of properties, mostly twentieth century, and most being characterised by 'traditional' features such as gables and leaded windows. On the eastern side of the land there are wide grass verges.

## 7 Cookham village continued

### School Lane

Box 15

School Lane forms an arc from the High Street to Sutton Road. With its many historical buildings, the lane reflects elements of village trades dating from the Middle Ages. At the High Street end of the road, on the eastern side, the Maltings, Brew House, Tannery House, Gantry House and Malt cottage are the oldest buildings - all very distinctive and imbued with rich character. Opposite these properties are small Victorian terraced cottages and villas, tucked behind picket fences and low walls.

Interspersed amongst the historic properties are several that were much more recently built. The notable Studio House, one of few single storey buildings in the lane, was featured as 'ultra modern' in a 1930s Ideal Home Exhibition.

The buildings of the Holy Trinity Primary School, present enthusiastic modern extension around an imposing mid-Victorian, and highly decorative, structure. At the Sutton Road end of School Lane are six more recent, detached houses outside of the Conservation Area boundary.

Most of the houses in the lane are detached, with medium to large plots. Frontages to the street include half timbered gables, dormer windows and hipped roofs. Brick predominates, but is whitewashed in some instances. Decorative flint is also used. Roofs present a variety of styles and heights, predominately topped with clay tiles. The lane is narrow in some places, enclosed by characterful old walls



Above right and below: Historic buildings and distinctive walls, characteristic of the older part of School Lane.



(see also Section 6.17) which form a common building line with the sides of certain of the older properties. In contrast, new buildings have been set back behind hedges and trees, lessening their impact. The lane carries a lot of traffic but at quieter times it reflects country village tranquillity, enhanced by the absence of street lighting. Whilst no single style of building predominates, new development must respect the character, history and relatively low building density of this area.

### Berries Road and Vicarage Close

Box 16

Berries Road is a tree-lined cul-de-sac which runs north towards the River Thames from the junction with Cookham High Street and the Moor. At the northern end of the road is Cookham Riverside, a residential care home facing the river, and also the Cookham Reach Sailing Club, built in 1954.

The first homes in Berries Road were Victorian, followed by substantial Edwardian properties, some built on three floors and intricately detailed. Since then, development has occurred steadily in each decade up to and including the 1990s. At present, the unadopted road mostly comprises large, detached family properties, set back about 20 metres from the road, secluded by trees and hedges. The housing is widely spaced, with most of the properties also having large rear gardens. The older houses frequently have rendered upper storeys or gables, together with attic second floors in the roof slopes. In recent years it is the large Edwardian houses with substantial gardens whose redevelopment has been most frequent, such as Glenore, on the west side of the road, where a former nursing home was replaced with an apartment building that successfully replicates the Edwardian styling of its neighbours.

The houses on the west side of the road have a total rear boundary of more than 230 metres to Marsh Meadow, which is greatly used both by local people and visitors (see also Box 4, page 11). The view towards the characterful, mostly Edwardian, rear elevations of Berries Road properties is therefore well within the public domain. Moreover, these houses are clearly visible in the views which Stanley Spencer painted from the higher ground to the west (see also Section 14 and Annex B).

Accordingly, any further redevelopments that may occur in Berries Road need to be sensitive to factors which include spacing, seclusion, sympathetic design, landscaping and views from the west. Depending on styles present in the immediate vicinity, designers should consider the use of



multiple roof slopes and the possible inclusion of verandas, together with attractively featured windows and balconies.

The Crown public house, on the edge of the Moor beside the entrance to Berries Road, was built in the 1930s, replacing earlier versions of the building, which burnt down. With gabled roofs, mock Tudor timbering and white infills, it is an attractive building. The site of the former Fire Station building, adjacent to The Crown, now has planning permission for a large family home.

Vicarage Close is a small residential cul-de-sac developed in the 1970s and running east off Berries Road. Properties are characterised by red brick walls at ground floor level with hung tiles above. Leaded windows add character to the properties and modest front gardens help maintain a rural feel.



Substantial Edwardian homes in Berries Road, showing architectural detailing characteristic of the period together with maturity of trees and seclusion of front gardens and their parking areas.

## 7 Cookham village continued

### Mill Lane and east to the Thames, with Woodmoor End and Sutton Close

Box 17

Mill Lane runs east off Sutton Road towards the River Thames. It is a quiet, tree-lined rural lane and, as part of the Thames Path, a picturesque and important route for walkers. It is significant as the location of Mill House, one of Cookham's former watermills, and also for the historic collection of buildings, Formosa Court, Formosa Place and the renovated Formosa Barns. The nearby Formosa Meadow is a well known Scouting location in Cookham.

The character of Mill Lane benefits greatly from the influence of agricultural land and the close proximity of the Odney Estate, both of which provide high quality landscape views. Buildings are intermittent and all are residential.

At the western end of the road are sizeable 1970s properties built in reclaimed brick, complementing the rural and historic character of the road. Mill House and Mill House West, both adjacent to the mill stream, date to the seventeenth century and display Georgian features. There are several twentieth century properties adjacent to and opposite the Mill buildings, some of which echo the nearby historic building features. Close to Mill House, Mill Lane becomes a private road to be used for access only. At the eastern end of the private road element of Mill Lane is its picturesque crossing of Lulle Brook, on the approach to the Formosa cluster of buildings.

Meanwhile, opposite Mill House, the Thames Path exits from the lane and heads eastwards. Where it arrives at the edge of the river, the view of the Thames and the richly varied treescape of the Cliveden escarpment is spectacular.

There is a small cul-de-sac called Woodmoor End on the south side of Mill Lane with two rows of terraced houses facing each other across a leafy central area. These houses form a striking 1960s scheme combining red brick with dark window frames and a white horizontal linearity - all well within Cookham's built colour palette.

Sutton Close is a 1950s cul-de-sac of substantial detached houses running parallel to Mill Lane. The houses are of



A newly built lodge house alongside the mill stream.



The old Mill, dating to circa the seventeenth century.



The sympathetically converted Formosa Barns

varying size, but share a prominent design theme encompassing features such as mock-Tudor timbered front elevations and leaded windows, all giving a highly individual character to the Close, which should be carefully protected.

### South of The Pound and the south along the Maidenhead Road

Box 18

The large houses on the south side of The Pound form the northern end of an area of low density development which extends some 400 metres southwards along Maidenhead Road. The area includes Danes Gardens and Cedar Drive, and is characterised by detached houses standing in large plots, sometimes in groups, which are accessed by private roads and driveways and punctuated by mature and specimen trees. It is important to ensure that this area does not become degraded by over-development in the future.

Further to the south, areas of housing, though outside of Cookham village, are included here for the sake of descriptive convenience. Lightlands Lane and Strande Lane contain intermittent housing, mostly using Cookham's traditional forms and materials (see Sections 6.4 - 6.6), with a very rural aspect as these lanes overlook open farmland. Accessed from Lightlands Lane, Gainsborough is a small higher intensity development of modest homes, built in a pinkish-beige brick, slightly unusually for Cookham. Barnfield Close, of a similar era, is a small, well-spaced estate of largish homes, which has been designed with clear attention to Cookham's traditional building styles and materials. Bass Mead is a small neo-Georgian development of terraced and semi-detached homes, deploying red brick and white infills. All three developments have open plan front



Gabled homes in Barnfield Close, with varying designs in red and yellow brick plus decorative flint.

gardens. At the southern end of Lightlands Lane, Strande Park provides affordable housing in the form of pitched-roof 'park homes' on a well-presented site.

Further south again, on the western side of the Maidenhead Road is Southwood Gardens, a triangular and broadly uniform grouping of red brick homes, mostly semi-detached.

## 7 Cookham village continued

### 7.3 Cookham's large developed sites

Cookham village includes two large sites in single ownership, the Odney Club and Moor Hall. Each site possesses a mix of historic and contemporary buildings. The Odney Club is a holiday, training and conference centre for John Lewis Partnership staff. Moor Hall is owned by the Chartered Institute of Marketing and is used as a training and conference centre.

#### The Odney Club

Box 19

The Odney Club lies between the eastern end of the High Street and the Thames on a site which includes not only the listed Lullebrook Manor, but also the majority of the properties along Odney Lane, together with some properties on the east side of Sutton Road. The size of the site has enabled new development to be accommodated without affecting the historic street frontage or the setting of the Thames.

The newest building on the site, the Sir Bernard Miller Centre, illustrates various positive ways of integrating contemporary with traditional architecture. The building has been joined to existing stables both externally and internally by the retention of tall, wide and visually striking historic doorways. Its front elevation features horizontal lines in a muted grey, combined with glass and red brick. Externally, any 'stark modernity' of the façade is now being softened by greenery.

Capped with a grass roof for insulation, the Sir Bernard Miller Centre collects and re-cycles rainwater and possesses many other energy saving features.



Above: The muted façade of the Sir Bernard Miller Centre at the Odney Club is now being further softened by climbing plants and other greenery.

Right: A contemporary design hidden from public view at Moor Hall. All of the new buildings are individually designed to form part of a unified whole whose overall size is not evident from the Moor or the village.

#### Moor Hall

Box 20

Moor Hall is situated on the south side of Cookham Moor and is approached from School Lane, close to the War Memorial. It was purchased by The Institute of Marketing (now Chartered) in 1971 and later developed with a series of extensions and new buildings: Cookham Court and Thames House in the 1980s, and the Edinburgh Suite Restaurant, Marlow Court, Cookham Centre, Berkshire Suite and Redgrave Centre at points in the 1990s.

As planning applications came forward, there were certain objections from Cookham residents. However, CIM was recognised as a major Cookham employer and one whose 300 delegates per day contributed significantly to the local economy. Moreover, the proposed new buildings replaced redundant large wooden dormitory billets, were sympathetic to existing buildings, largely hidden from public view and a model for eco-friendliness. The various additions to Moor Hall have in fact proved to possess some exemplary characteristics, fulfilling the opportunity presented to combine traditional with new without compromising external views across the Moor to the CIM site.

- Because modest scale is so important in Cookham, it would have been inappropriate to extend Moor Hall by means of large blocks of new buildings. The array of smaller buildings has allowed individuality, together with some creativity in the design of each addition.
- All of the newer buildings echo the distinctive clay-tiled roof and decorative ridge of the original Moor Hall, most of these matching both its unusual depth and its angle. This prominent harmonizing feature gives a unity to the entire site, which is further enhanced by covered walkways and landscaping.
- Identifying with the significance of the river and lesser waterways in Cookham, the linked ponds, streams and bubbling water of the Moor Hall's landscaping plan help ensure a peaceful and calming environment.
- A further aspect of the Moor Hall complex becomes apparent at dusk. Lighting is present for security reasons, but is subtle and adds to the welcome on approaching the village from the Moor.



The original deep-roofed Moor Hall to the centre and left. The extension to the right fronts Cookham Moor. It is wholly within Cookham's built-colour palette (Section 6.8) and its roof echoes the depth and decorative ridge of the original.

## 7 Cookham village continued

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cookham village

**R6.1** It is recommended that opportunities should be taken, as and when possible, to bring replacement signage for retail outlets, businesses and other purposes, into closer harmony with Cookham's built colour palette (Sections 6.8 and 6.18). This applies especially to signage within Cookham High Street.

**R6.2** It is recommended that, as and when opportunities present, those few buildings in Cookham High Street that sit uneasily in relation to the general character of the area should be further integrated by modest alteration.

**R6.3** It is recommended that the High Street, Church Gate and Sutton Road should be treated as 'floral areas' of Cookham village. Residents or business owners would continue to contribute as far as they deem appropriate to the floral decoration of their own street frontage, whilst those who had not previously provided floral decorations to their frontage might also choose to engage with this initiative.

**R6.4** It is recommended that owners should give consideration to the provisions of the VDS when making changes to properties that may have visual impact but do not necessarily require planning permission.

### GUIDANCE:

Cookham village

**G7.1** Any proposals for development in Cookham village should:

- Have regard to the General Guidance of Section 6 and all other relevant Guidance Points in the VDS.
- Have regard to the impact of the proposal on the specific locality with reference to any description of that particular locality in the VDS, including any special constraints noted.

**G7.2** The use of cutting edge architecture may be suited to larger self contained sites, provided that the General Guidance of Section 6 is followed and that:

- The proposed architecture will complement the street scene or public realm if visible from these locations.
- The proposed architecture is not of a scale or massing which would increase the impact of the property as a whole upon its surroundings.
- Related development such as car parking, delivery bays and exterior lighting is designed to ensure that it has little or no visual impact beyond site boundaries.



*Varying styles and building lines in Cookham High Street.*

*An understanding of Cookham's unifying built colour palette of weathered red, beige, white, grey, brown and black (Section 6.8) can aid decisions regarding external décor colours.*