

# CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT

## HURLEY

Planning Policy Manager

June 1995



## CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT - HURLEY

1. History
  - 1.1 Hurley village has developed as a direct result of its close association with the River Thames. From its earliest beginnings as a small farming community in the pre-Roman period, through to the establishment of the Saxon church founded in 635 AD which may have been partly or fully destroyed by the Vikings, but was certainly altered by the Normans to form part of the Benedictine priory in 1086 AD, the Thames has played a major role in the economic and cultural development of the village to the present day.
  - 1.2 Saxon chronicles record the existence of a ford crossing the Thames at Hurley, as early as the sixth Century and this may have been defended by an earthwork which is still visible in the grounds of Danesfield House on the Buckinghamshire side of the river. It is known that a church or chapel also existed at this time as archaeological evidence has been uncovered in the present church and it may have been built as the result of the Saxon King of Wessex, Cynegils, being converted to Christianity by St Birinus who was the first Bishop of Berkshire. It is also thought that some of the bricks and tiles built into the priory walls which were found during excavation may have been Roman although there is no archaeological evidence of a Roman site in Hurley. The place name Hurley was documented in the Domesday Book as Herlei meaning "Wood or clearing in a recess in the hills." The Domesday Book also mentions a church and neighbouring mills, fisheries, meadows, woods and swine and the Manor held by Geoffrey de Mandeville, a Norman Knight, having been confiscated from Esgar, the Saxon Lord of the Manor, in 1066 AD.
  - 1.3 It was Geoffrey de Mandeville and, in particular his second wife, who were responsible in founding the monastery at Hurley. Following the riches which were bestowed on him his wife felt that her husband's first wife, Athelais, should be remembered and founded a cell of the great Benedictine Abbey of Westminster, and endowed it with tithes and land from her husband's possessions. In 1086, on the invitation of Geoffrey de Mandeville, Bishop Osmund from Sarum, dedicated the Church of St Mary as a church of the priory. The extent of the manor covered a wide area including the settlements of Burchetts Green, Knowl Hill, Warren Row and Cockpole Green. The manor had been owned by Osgar (or Esgar), Master of the Horse to King Edward the Confessor, up until the Norman Conquest after which it was passed onto Geoffrey de Mandeville. There is no direct evidence that Geoffrey himself fought in the Battle of Hastings, however he must have been one of Duke William's principle supporters as he was rewarded by a gift of a hundred or so manors and lands in eleven different counties. It was this wealth that lead Geoffrey de Mandeville's wife, Leceline, to start the priory at Hurley.
  - 1.4 Hurley Priory is an excellent example of a moated Benedictine monastic complex. The site has a well documented history and limited early excavations have demonstrated good survival of archaeological deposits. Parts of the monument still survive to this day including the rectangular moat, fishponds and various buildings. A stone archway next to St Mary's Church leads into the quadrangle of the old

monastery, now called the Cloisters. Along the north wall of the church, about 9 feet above the ground, the ends of the beams which supported the roof of the corridor around the cloister remain. On the east side of the quadrangle there are the remains of a doorway to the Chapter House, excavated by Lieutenant Colonel Rivers-Moore, in the 1930's. The Refectory occupies the east end of the north side of the quadrangle, the lower part of it dating from 1087 and the upper part from the late 13th century or early 14th century.

- 1.5 The priory precincts extended over 20 acres and survived 450 years until 1536 when the complex was dissolved by Henry VIII. The monks carried the charter and deeds to Westminster Abbey where they are still preserved today. In 1540 when Westminster Abbey was confiscated by the Crown, Hurley Priory was given to Charles Howard who sold it on to Leonard Chamberlyn. In 1544 he in turn sold it to John Lovelace who built a mansion in the precincts of the priory, called "Ladye Place" The Crypt, originally part of the priory, lies to the south east of the church and is all that now remains of this house after its demolition in 1837. The present Ladye Place, including Chapter House and Priory Close, are built on the site of the former priory. Ladye Place was formerly a farmhouse belonging to the original Tudor "Ladye Place", and Chapter House and Priory Close, now separate dwellings, once formed part of the later Ladye Place.
- 1.6 The site adjacent to the Thames was the main factor in the location of the early development of the settlement. The river has consistently provided a source of economic stability to the settlement allowing barges to pass up and down stream transporting coal, timber and brick between inland ports. Hurley had a quay on the south side of the lock cut where these barges could be loaded and unloaded. Whilst trade flourished along the river in peaceful times, during some periods of upheaval the Thames may well have allowed the passage of unwanted visitors. It is possible that the Vikings in the 9th century may have visited Hurley and ransacked the Saxon church and neighbourhood.
- 1.7 From the ancient heart of the village, Hurley has developed along the High Street in a "ribbon-like" growth southwards towards the main A4130 the Henley/Maidenhead Road. Along this axis, in general terms, the earliest buildings are situated closest to the priory monument. Of special interest in historical terms is Church House, which dates from 1494 and has performed many village functions over the years including a village meeting room and poor house. A school is also known to have been founded in the Gatehouse, part of the priory complex, in the 19th century although this was closed in 1921. Another notable building, Ye Olde Bell dates from the 12th century, was originally used as a guest house for the monastery offering a resting place for travellers. Apart from residential properties, a small number of farmsteads evolved along the High Street, some of which are still actively farming to this day. In other cases the occasional farm building still survives, sometimes converted, as in the case of the barns that now belong to Ye Olde Bell but probably once formed part of the Lee Farm complex until the 1930's. The tithe barn, now known as Tithecote Manor, to the west of Ladye Place, was built for the monks in about 1400 and was converted to a private dwelling in 1950.

1.8 As the High Street widens slightly, going southwards, more contemporary residential buildings can be found lining the road. Intermittently roads have been taken off the High Street leading into small housing estates, of post 1950's construction. Properties in the main at this point are either detached or semi-detached in form reflecting the growing affluence of this settlement in the 20th century. At the southern end of the High Street are a group of older properties including, Hill View, Rozel, and Rose Cottage and Nos 1 + 2 Traddles and the East Arms itself which has been the site of a posting inn on the main route from London to Oxford since the 13th century. A toll house opposite the East Arms was demolished in the 1960's. This part of Hurley is known as Hurley Bottom.

1.9 Hurley in the 20th century has undergone great changes. The large gap in the High Street between the top end of the village around the priory site and Hurley Bottom, on the main road, has been infilled with a lot of mainly inter and post war development which has resulted in giving the settlement a more cohesive whole by linking the two smaller and older groups of buildings together. Ladye Place and the whole of the priory site including the Tithe Barn (now Tithecote Manor) and its fields remained in one ownership until 1947 when the building and land were bought by John Timberlake who fragmented the land and buildings and started the process of the subdivision of the priory land into new housing plots of Mill Lane and Lovelace Close. The river has also actively contributed towards a change in the village's character by becoming a major recreational attraction so that weekend and general holiday accommodation in the form of caravan and camping sites have developed on the fields adjacent to the river banks.

(Please Note For more detailed history of Hurley, its Priory and Manor, read Mary Howarth's historical booklets on the area. These are gratefully acknowledged as a source for much of the above information).

## 2. Topography and Street Patterns

2.1 The settlement of Hurley is situated on an area of flat agricultural land formed on the river gravels which provide a rich soil for farming. The boundaries to both the north and south of Hurley are formed by natural features; the river Thames to the north, and the steep hills forming the first plateau above the river basin to the south. These natural features have acted as barriers preventing development spreading further north and south whilst the rich farming land to the east and west of the settlement has again contained development to the linear area immediately to each side of the High Street.

2.2 The Thames itself is formed into a number of channels at Hurley which was known to be a hazard to early navigators. However, once it was tamed by the construction of timber and rubble weirs and flash locks, the Thames became an important trading route for boats. Other water courses coming off the Thames, some of which are connected to the moat and fishponds of the priory, form an interesting array of water environments providing a range of natural habitats that contribute towards the rural character of the village.

- 2.3 The flat areas of rich agricultural land on the river gravels to the east and west of the village, form an extremely attractive rural backcloth to the village with intermittent bands of trees and hedgerows contributing towards this character. Hurley Farm on the west side and Temple Park Farm on the east of the village are the remnants of the farm complexes that managed these areas of land.
- 2.4 The principal road within the village is the High Street which runs north-south meeting the main A4130 to the south, whilst to the north the road splits into two with Mill Lane coming off towards the east following the curtilage to the priory grounds before ending at the Old Mill complex by the river. Mill Lane is a very narrow road which is bounded on the former priory side by the tall listed brick wall which forms the edge of the priory site and on its eastern side by the fence and trees belonging to the caravan park, and a flint wall towards the High Street junction. The High Street itself continues northwards past the flint barn before coming to an end in the village car park. A footpath then continues from this point to the banks of the Thames and helps to contribute towards a relatively undeveloped character to this end of the village. A footpath link to the riverside also continues from the northern end of Mill Lane.
- 2.5 At the junction of the High Street and Mill Lane is an area of grass bisected by Mill Lane which lends a feeling of space to this part of the village and this continues in front of the church and churchyard on the eastern side of the top end of the High Street. The grass areas are framed by walls which form a backdrop to these areas and provide an attractive setting to both the church and the priory buildings.
- 2.6 At the entrance to the village the High Street has pavements on each side and the houses are relatively well set back from the road side. This character gradually changes, however, as the older core of the village starts about halfway down the High Street. The road gradually narrows with only one pavement and the buildings and boundary walls begin to form a hard edge to the roadside producing a tunnel effect before this opens out at the junction of High Street and Mill Lane.
- 2.7 There are a number of roads, footpaths and smaller lanes that come off the High Street at right angles along its length. Most of the lanes and closes are cul-de-sacs apart from Shepherds Lane on the western side of the High Street which runs off towards the A4130 passing the village cricket ground which is immediately outside the western boundary to the conservation area. Shepherds Lane has a more rural feel than the High Street as it is bounded by hedgerows and evergreen vegetation over walls giving a less built-up feeling than other parts of the village. New Road, which is accessed directly off the main A-road, is as the name describes, a modern private road to the east of the High Street, which serves thirteen dwellings. A footpath at the northern end of New Road links into the High Street.
- 2.8 Some of the footpaths towards the northern end of the village, near the river, have low-arch brick footbridges which act as crossing points over the watercourses. A further two of these footbridges, which are believed to be 18th century in date, are within private grounds belonging to the Refectory and are grade II listed. On the river itself, there are three modern timber footbridges that link Lock Island to the main

land. These high arched back structures are quite attractive and a dominant feature of this part of the river.

### 3. Chief Architectural Features

- 3.1 Hurley Conservation Area contains a variety of buildings dating from the Norman period through to the late 20th century which are, in general, of particularly fine quality. The number of different periods of architecture are characterised by a series of different building styles and materials reflecting the various stages of the village's development. This is most clearly distinguished by the buildings within the priory complex which set the form and style of the village's earliest vernacular tradition.
- 3.2 Hurley is relatively unusual within the Royal Borough, for demonstrating the use of chalk and flint in buildings and the majority of the earliest buildings within the priory enclosure are constructed in these materials. The complex of buildings contains the Church of St Mary, the Refectory and the Cloisters which are all survivals of the 12th century Benedictine priory, and show this use of flint rubble and knapped flint (worked flint) in association with stone dressings. Blocks of chalk have also been incorporated into these building's fabrics particularly used for quoins or providing a chequer board decoration in the walls. Although these buildings are now roofed with hand made clay tiles, it is likely that the original buildings would have been thatched possibly using local reed. Later examples of the use of stone, chalk and flint can also be seen in Tithecote Manor, originally a 16th century barn, the adjacent medieval Dovecote and the roadside barn to the south of the church, all of which were part of the original priory complex. The latter building is relatively unaltered from its original construction, although it was likely to have been thatched, and shows how the hard black flint material used in conjunction with the soft white chalk gives a very distinctive texture and colouration to a building. It is not known whether this was the final finish for these buildings or whether a lime render coating would have been applied to this surface. Two buildings in Hurley are now thatched and they are Merlins and Hurford House, both 1930's mock Tudor houses situated at the bottom of the High Street on the north side of the main A4130.
- 3.3 Timber frame would also have been an important construction technique in Hurley, although today only a few buildings still have any frame exposed externally. In the High Street the row of small cottages known as Church Cottages including Hurley Post Office and the Old Farmhouse have some timber frame exposed whilst Ye Olde Bell Hotel and the associated barn, now a conference centre belonging to the hotel, are also mainly of timber frame construction. Timber frame construction of a later period has also been used in the construction of the boathouses which are strung along the River Bank within the conservation area. The Old Boathouse is a good example of timber frame and weatherboarding used to great effect in achieving a low-key building that sits well within the very rural setting of the Thames. Ladye Place Boathouse is also an attractive building, although a little neglected at present, it displays all the characteristics of a 19th/20th century boathouse style; low pitched, with decorated bargeboards, low eaves, dark stained timber weatherboarding on the elevations, with few windows and a large boarded timber door in the gable end.

- 3.4 The predominant building material is, however, the local orange-red brick which is used in buildings of different ages and function. Brick became a popular material around the early 17th century and it is possible that because of the trading links that the Thames provided for river transportation that locally made bricks from Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead would have been transported into Hurley for trade and in this way brick would have been readily available and relatively cheap. Nos 1 + 2 Traddles, at the bottom end of the High Street are good examples of the early use of bricks for construction purposes, and although one of the gables fronting onto the High Street is a modern extension the earlier brickwork is easy to distinguish. Later 18th and 19th century buildings are in the main constructed from the same orange/red brick and these are generally used in conjunction with locally made clay tiles. Ladye Place, Manor Cottage and Manor House Cottage are all fine examples of 18th century symmetrical facade houses constructed in brick. Brick is also found in smaller dwellings such as the group of cottages known as Hill View, Rozel and Rose Cottage at the bottom of the High Street and at the northern end in the Mill House and associated buildings. Some decorative brickwork is also found at the Old Vicarage and Florence House, where a Dutch style gable has been constructed on the gable facing onto the High Street. This building dates from 1850.
- 3.5 By far the most prominent brick structure in the Conservation Area is, however, the high wall that runs around the boundary to the priory monument, creating a central focus to the older village centre. This wall is a 17th century structure although it is not known whether it replaced an older boundary to the priory and it has been altered and repaired since that time. The wall in total is about 765m long and runs around the boundary in a rough square shape. The brickwork itself is formed in a variety of different bonds, reflecting the different periods of alteration and rebuild and is capped by a large ramped weathered coping of brickwork. Some gatepiers and blocked arches have also been installed within sections of the wall and in some areas, particularly in the Mill Lane section, openings have been formed this century for access to new properties. Other walls forming boundaries for other properties are also found in the older end of Hurley. A low flint wall runs on the southern side of Mill Lane, which is in a state of neglect, and this runs into a higher brick and flint wall as it meets the High Street junction forming a backdrop to the southern-most green on the High Street. Boundary walls of varying constructions, but predominantly of knapped flint are then found at various intervals along the High Street as far as the Rising Sun public house after which hedges and some timber fences become the prevalent type of boundary. The northern side of Shepherds Lane, has a high brick wall, which has been partly overgrown with vegetation and forms the curtilage to Hurley Manor.
- 3.6 A small number of the older buildings in the village are rendered. The earliest example is Church House, which dates from the 15th century. Hurley House is externally finished in a smooth render presenting a small symmetrical facade onto the High Street, whilst its main front elevation faces south into the private grounds surrounding the building. The late 19th century group of Arts and Craft style cottages known as Mandeville Cottages, Rosette and Clematis Cottages are rendered with superimposed mock timbers in their gables and are attractive and relatively unaltered examples of this particular style of architecture.

3.7 A rich variety of 20th century properties can be found within the village both within the priory site, like the Lovelace Close properties and the one-off developments along the west side of Mill Lane and again in infill development along the High Street and New Road. These buildings are typically built of brick which is left exposed or rendered, with clay tile or pantiled roofs, and are mainly two storey detached dwelling houses. One or two properties like Alpine Lodge in Mill Lane, and Green Shutters and Willow Loft in the High Street display more unusual designs, and in these instances the boundary details and planting are important to preserve the overall character of the conservation area. Mock Tudor or neo Georgian designs seem the most popular styles typified with timber casement windows often divided by glazing bars, and panelled doors. Simple brick chimneys are normal roof features. The best example of a group of mock Tudor houses are the three large dwellings at the southern end of the village, known as Merlins, Tudor Cottage and Hurford House. The group of large houses on the south side of Shepherds Lane are also examples of mock Tudor design with mock timber gables and eyebrow dormer roof windows, as are the group of houses in Prospect Place, to the west of the High Street at its southern end. The buildings within Lovelace Close and individual properties inside the priory precincts, tend to be set well back behind the priory wall, and particularly at the western side are low level/single storey so that they are relatively unseen from outside the priory wall.

#### 4. Important Buildings

4.1 Whilst the vast majority of buildings within the conservation area make a positive contribution to its character and appearance, it is appropriate to identify certain specific buildings that play a particularly important role in contributing towards that character. Their importance may be derived from their historic associations, architectural interest, technological innovations or a combination of factors.

4.2 There is a large concentration of listed buildings within the older part of Hurley, the most important in terms of age and uniqueness being St Mary's Church and the priory buildings now comprising the Refectory, the Cloisters and the Gate House. St Mary's Church is 12th century with 15th century alterations and was then much restored in 1852 by the Victorian architect Hakewill. It is constructed from flint and stone with a clay tile gabled roof, with a timber bell turret at the west end. Its most prominent and architecturally important feature is a Norman round headed arch to the west door which is decorated with chevrons and above it a 19th century round headed window with 12th century surrounds. Internally the church has an early 15th century octagonal font and an early 17th century monument to John Lovelace and his wife of Ladye Place. A simple modern single storey extension built of flint and dressed stone detailing has been added to the southern elevation of the Church. Within the churchyard, which runs immediately to the south of the church behind the high brick wall of the priory site, are a series of important gravestones and monuments dedicated to various 17th century and 18th century local families including the Pitts and Benwells. The boundary wall to the east side of the church yard is also mainly of brick construction but does have some flint and chalk in parts of it.



- 4.3 The remainder of the buildings which form an open quadrangle with the Church are part of the Refectory and other buildings belonging to the Benedictine priory. Like the church the predominant building material is flint and chalk rubble with brick dressings and clay tiled roofs. The buildings display a variety of different periods of window surrounds including 14th century moulded pointed head arches and round headed arches. The whole group are grade II\* listed. The inner courtyard that is formed by this group of buildings is laid down to lawn and gives a tranquil setting enhanced by a general absence of cars. Behind these buildings (to the north and east) are extensive grounds, once part of the ecclesiastical monument, now private gardens within which is one end of the fishponds to the priory together with two listed footbridges dating from the 18th century and remnants of another listed wall attached to the Refectory.
- 4.4 Immediately to the western side of this ecclesiastical group is Ladye Place, a large 2 storey house built in brick and tile probably 16th century in date whilst behind it are two now separate properties Chapter House and Priory Close, again constructed from similar materials, with casement windows and decorative leaded lights in lozenge shapes. Further to the west is the Tithecote Manor, which was originally a barn belonging to Hurley Priory but is now converted to a single private residence. This structure is probably medieval and is again built from flint, chalk and stone with a half-hipped tiled roof. In the extensive grounds surrounding this building is the grade I listed dovecote which has recently undergone some repairs and is almost certainly medieval in origin, again once belonging to the priory. The dovecote is the conventional circular shape again constructed from chalk and flint and buttressed, with a conical tiled roof and an open timber turret at the top. Also within the grounds, to the north of the barn, is another round structure of much later date built of brick. This structure houses a 19th century water pump which is still in working order. Surrounding this site is a high brick and flint panelled wall which was constructed in the 1970's and demonstrates a continuation in this particular tradition of constructing boundary walls.
- 4.5 The next group of significant building is the chalk/flint roadside barn which is grade II listed and adjacent group of cottages which form a long "throat" of development opposite the boundary wall to the priory at the top end of the High Street. The cottages are of brick construction with clay tiled roofs and one and a half storeys in height with low eaves and the occasional dormer window. Their low-key vernacular appearance fits in well with the general character of this part of the village and marks the transition from flint to brick as a building material.
- 4.6 Church House, Church Cottages and Hurley House and its outbuildings form another attractive group, this time on the eastern side of the High Street and display a range of building period and typology. Church House apparently dating from 1494 is a timber framed building of some architectural interest which following recent repair and restoration works has been re-rendered in a smooth finished lime based render. The house is two and a half storey and has leaded light casement windows with an off-centre projecting gabled entry porch. From the top of the High Street, looking south, the sweeping cat-slide pitch of the rear part to Church House roof is quite a striking feature whilst to the northern end of the house, in a separate field, is a single

storey former Victorian apple store with a small slate mono-pitched roof. Adjacent to Church House is the village post office with two separate cottages all of timber frame construction. These buildings are not only significant in historical terms, dating from 17th century but also have a strong visual impact in the street scene as they are built right onto the road. When viewed from the north looking southwards the gable dormers and scalloped shaped clay tiles on the main gable end are significant features in the High Street. Hurley House completes this group, representing the 18th century with a symmetrical painted and rendered facade facing onto the High Street and its sash windows being framed by simple slatted wooden shutters. Between Hurley House and Church Cottages is a small outbuilding belonging to Hurley House which is probably 18th century and may well have been the coach house or stables to the large house before being converted to garages and a small flat. This building stands out quite strongly against the painted buildings on either side of it, as it is brick built. At the northern end of this group the red telephone box is a 'K6' style that is grade II listed.

- 4.7 Hurley Manor House is a large 20th century brick building probably of Edwardian origin in extensive and very mature grounds. Both the house itself and part of the grounds have now been divided up so that the large house is now in 3 separate residences and the grounds now have several individual detached properties dating from the 1970's. It is unknown whether an older large house stood in these grounds although at the entrance to the private grounds stands the older and more architecturally important Manor Cottage and Manor House Cottage. This 18th century building was possibly an ancillary building or group of buildings to a large house for which little evidence now remains.
- 4.8 Ye Olde Bell Hotel together with the converted barns on the opposite side of the High Street and the old maltings, now Malt House and Malt House Cottage all belonging to Ye Olde Bell, form a very attractive group roughly midway along the High Street. Ye Olde Bell is grade II\* listed and the present structure is dated to the 15th century although there is likely to have been a building on this site since at least the 12th century, possibly acting as an inn for pilgrims visiting the priory. Again this as a timber-frame structure of rectangular form with a jettied first storey fronting onto the High Street. The building has a mixture of leaded light casements and timber sashes all painted black against the white rendered walls with particularly fine oriel windows next to and on the projecting front porch which is topped by a decorative bargeboard and is repeated on one of the other gables. Other significant features of this building are the high-backed timber settle which sits beneath the jetty on the pavement, the narrow timber benches inside the porch and a small water pump to the southern end of the building. By contrast to the black and white hotel, the Malt House and Malt House Cottage, are predominantly of brick construction and although they are now part of Ye Olde Bell complex, it is likely that these buildings were built as maltings. The brick building that runs along the edge of the High Street immediately to the south of Malt House is quite functional in its design displaying few residential characteristics although it has been converted for the hotel.
- 4.9 The street continues south from Ye Olde Bell as a narrow throat bounded both sides by brick and flint walls and buildings fronting onto the roadside. Of note is the old

cattle shed (now garage/store) belonging to Ye Olde Bell which forms a square court yard with the two barns on the west side of the High Street and a little further south the Village Hall which is an 18th Century building once probably an outbuilding belonging to Lee Farm. The former cattle shelter and village hall both back directly onto the High Street and their brick walls continue the enclosure of the street. Lee Farmhouse itself is well set back from the road in its own attractive grounds. Its distinctive features being its symmetrical brick facade with timber sash windows with timber shutters on the 1st floor and a date plaque of 1793. The Secret Garden, a small two storey cottage with mock timber frame, and the Rising Sun public house, which is likely to be 18th century in origin, are the final buildings of particular age and character in this central part of Hurley and they are separated from the remainder of the southern end of Hurley by a small stream or watercourse which crosses underneath the High Street just to the south of the the Rising Sun. The pub has a particularly large chimney stack on its southern gable end. At this point all the boundary walls which characterise the older part of the village make way for hedgerows and tree lined curtilages. The High Street also begins to widen and modern 20th century houses now tend to predominate with the occasional exception such as the group of cottages dated to 1898, to the south of the Shepherds Close entrance and the group of 18th century cottages further south known as Hill View, Rozel and Rose Cottage. These buildings comprise 3 terraced 2 storey cottages and are built from the local traditional orange-red brick. All present relatively narrow frontages onto the High Street with clay tiled roofs.

- 4.10 Dominating the corner of the junction of the village High Street to the Henley Road is the East Arms, a large range of interconnecting buildings which have evolved over time. The earliest part of the existing building is probably 18th century although, the site has probably had some form of inn on it since the medieval period. A low brick wall that runs along the curtilage of Nos 1 + 2 Traddles extends southwards to form the eastern boundary to the East Arms, reflecting the characteristic of boundary walls found in the older part of the village. The East Arms not only dominates this part of the village because of its overall size but also acts as a landmark advertising the start of Hurley village. To the west of the East Arms are a group of low key buildings built around a rough concrete courtyard fronting onto the Henley Road. The central building of this group, has a very prominent clock tower on its roof. Opposite the East Arms, on the eastern side of the High Street junction is another quite prominent building known as Merlins. This building not only dominates this important corner plot in the conservation area, but also typifies the general character and appearance of the 1930's - and later development that took place in Hurley. Substantial residential dwellings within large plots characterise the south eastern end of the village both along the High Street and New Road. These demonstrate the domestic architectural styles of the period but do sit reasonably comfortably into the village with the use of traditional materials - brick, timber, clay tiles. The extensive gardens and planting also help to soften their appearance.

## 5. Archaeology

- 5.1 As shown on the conservation area map, the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Hurley Priory is an extensive area of land and is surrounded by the distinctive brick wall

which dominates this part of the village. All the land within this wall is "scheduled" which means that it has significant archaeological interest and proposals to undertake any development which entail disturbing the ground, requires permission from the Department of National Heritage in the form of a Scheduled Monument Consent. This is to ensure that the archaeological importance of the site is respected and may require archaeological investigation to be carried out before planning applications can be determined.

## 6. Trees and Open Spaces

- 6.1 The Thames at the northern end of the Conservation Area is the dominant natural feature of this part of Hurley. The mass of tiny islands provide a haven of trees and wildlife and form an attractive rural backdrop to the village. Apart from the lock and lock keepers house, these islands are devoid of any major structures and devoted to recreational activities such as camping, fishing and picnicing. The river naturally attracts visitors both on foot from the village or along the Thames footpath or by boat. Particularly during the summer season numerous boats use the river and moor against the banks. Lock Island is the most open in terms of both public accessibility and vegetation of all the islands and is reached by three separate footbridges from the village. On the southern banks of the Thames, there is a great deal of open space, much of it privately owned, with trees of various types including some particularly fine beech, weeping willows and horse chestnuts, producing a very rural feel to the river bank and helping to screen the few buildings that are located on the banks.
- 6.2 Other water courses and ponds, mostly manmade, can be found within the village itself. At the northern end of the village the water features within the gardens belonging to the Refectory and the Cloisters are the remains of the priory's moat and fishponds and the gardens of these properties are in the main relatively open flat areas of lawn and flower beds with only the occasional tree. Immediately outside the walls to the northern end of the priory is a water inlet which was once probably navigable. It is a somewhat neglected backwater which is now a haven for all sorts of vegetation and wildlife. The eastern end of the moat feeds into this watercourse just outside the priory wall in the grounds of Ladyeplace Boathouse. This water course may well have been the cut for the mill house years ago.
- 6.3 Within the heart of the older settlement, immediately around the church and priory buildings, are a series of open spaces. These are small grassed strips of land cordoned off by low post and chain fences and interspersed with some fine specimen trees including two Cypress trees. These areas provide an attractive setting to the groups of listed buildings and the priory wall and also provide amenity space. These areas are remnants of the original manorial holding, now common land. Hurley Parish Council purchased these areas of land from the last owner in 1976 to preserve them in perpetuity for the benefit of the village. The village car park opposite these greens provides an extremely large area for visitors to park, but can be considered to be an open space which contributes towards the feeling of openness in this part of the village.

- 6.4 Trees play an extremely important role in the character and appearance of the conservation area. There is a predominance of trees mainly Beech, Willow and Horse Chestnut around the river banks, which reinforces the rural characteristics of the area. Along the eastern side of Mill Lane trees act as a green backdrop screening the caravan park off from the remainder of the village. The grounds of the priory complex, Hurley House, Hurley Manor and the rear of Ye Olde Bell all have particularly outstanding examples of trees of varying types, which are generally tall mature specimens which make a positive contribution to the conservation area. Further south along the High Street, there are still a large number of mature trees particularly around Orchard House and the Vicarage, Ascot and Richmond Cottages. The other houses fronting onto the east side of the High Street all are heavily screened by trees and hedgerows.
- 6.5 The backcloth of open agriculture land to the east and west and beyond the Henley Road to the south also contributes to the spacious feeling around the village whilst the boundary walls and buildings along the High Street have the opposite effect of constricting the road into narrow pinch points. The recent paving scheme has reflected the restriction in the High Street forming a very narrow single pavement at certain points along the Street. The materials used in this paving scheme in the older village core have been carefully chosen to enhance the setting of the various buildings alongside which it runs. By contrast the pavements at the southern end of the village are a simple tarmac detail.
7. Uses
- 7.1 Although the predominant use of the properties in the conservation area is residential, there is a more overriding "use" in the village which does not affect the building uses themselves but does have a strong influence on the character of the village. Visitors are attracted to the village because of its river attractions, large caravan and camping parks and "old-world" charm of its buildings, and tend to give an atmosphere of a holiday resort without any excessive tourist "paraphernalia." During the summer, particularly at weekends, the village car park is normally very busy and visitors explore both the village area and riverside. During the week, particularly in winter, the village returns to a relatively sleepy, tranquil settlement.
- 7.2 The River Thames provides a range of recreational activities and the boat activity at the Lock is itself an attraction. Activity associated with river pursuits includes the boatbuilders at the end of Mill Lane which plays a role in contributing towards the liveliness of this part of the River.
- 7.3 Other commercially orientated activities, apart from the two pubs and Ye Olde Bell are the two shops, one of which still operates as a post office, and the Hurley Farm and Temple Park Farm complex which still operate as agricultural holdings. The former manages the caravan and camping parks on each side of the village core.
- 7.4 The High Street is usually quite busy with local residential traffic and visitors which can be problematic where the High Street constricts outside the Rising Sun and the Malt House causing cars to slow down and sometimes wait to drive around parked

vehicles. Mill Lane tends to be a less busy road particularly at the northern end, where it narrows down to a footpath. Vehicles often park on one side of Mill Lane at the end around the boatyard which can cause problems to cars wanting access to the Mill Lane complex and Ladyeplace Boathouse and can also lead to conflict with vehicles wanting to turn.

## 8. Relationship to Countryside and Important Views

8.1 Because of the flat topography of the village and the built up nature of the development coupled with the heavy vegetation and tree cover, the views within the conservation area are quite limited. Most of the long distance views are along the river banks and on Lock Island itself, looking south towards the "main land" and the priory precincts. Entering the village from the south glimpses of various parts of the older villages can be gained especially within the constricted part of the High Street which heightens the anticipation of the approaching historical core. As the High Street widens out just before the junction with Mill Lane an attractive view of the villages "greens" and the priory walls behind can be seen. In Mill Lane there is an attractive view from the south side of the lane looking south over a small group of agricultural fields which emphasise the rural quality of the village. Equally from the footpath which comes off the High Street to the north of Ye Olde Bell Hotel and runs eastwards eventually connecting with Mill Lane, there are numerous view points of the fields surrounding the east side of Hurley.

8.2 Views from outside the conservation area are again difficult to establish particularly in the spring and summer when the tree screen is at its most impressive. Views are also impeded by high walls, such as the one on the north side of Shepherds Lane. One particularly important view is that from the western boundary of the conservation area, at the west side of Hurley Manor grounds, which gives a stunning view of Danesfield House on the northern banks of the Thames, overlooking the river and the fields beyond. To the south of the A4130, directly opposite the entrance to the High Street is a footpath which climbs up the hill to High Wood. From here a view of the whole village can be seen. Likewise, a brief glimpse of these hills and woodland can be gained from various points along the High Street including just outside the church yard.

## 9. Enhancement Opportunities

9.1 The numerous footpaths that run along or towards the Thames are in quite good condition but there is a need to ensure regular maintenance. The footpath running off the High Street opposite Shepherds Lane is for the first 50m or so in quite bad condition and the fencing on Ye Olde Bell side (south) is in need of repair and some limited 'opening up' of the tree cover might improve the attractiveness of the route.

9.2 The car park in Hurley is presently mainly a grasscrete surface with gravel at its most westerly end. At times, in the winter, the surface can get quite water-logged and muddy. Some improvement of drainage and resurfacing maintaining an appropriate surface for a rural setting should be considered.

10. Boundaries

- 10.1 North- The boundary starts from the western point of the rear boundary of the Old Boat House. It then cuts directly across the river in a north easterly direction to touch the bank of the island adjacent to Lock Island and the cuts across the river to follow the northern bank of Lock Island. It follows the line of the bank until it reaches the most easterly of the footbridges.
- 10.2 East- The boundary goes across the footbridge returning to the main land. It follows the bank, westwards until meeting the east boundary of the boat yard. It then runs due south, following the boundary of the boat yard, and the east side of Mill Lane. It continues south down the footpath adjacent to Kumara then turning west to continue following the footpath until meeting the rear boundary of the land to the rear of Ye Olde Bell Hotel. Here it turns south to run along the boundaries of the land to the east of Ye Olde Bell and the Ranch. It follows the southern boundary of the Ranch until meeting the eastern boundary of Windsor Cottage, which it turns to follow. The boundary runs due south to follow the rear boundaries of Temple Court and Long Reach, and then turns to run south east to follow the rear boundaries of Lowlands to Hurford House which is adjacent to the A4130.
- 10.3 South- The boundary follows A4130, on the northern edge, to include the properties from Hurford House to East Arms Hotel and the adjacent Clock Tower and offices.
- 10.4 West- The boundary runs north following the western boundary of the East Arms Hotel, the properties in Prospect Place and Morella Cottage. It then turns east to follow the boundary of Morella Cottage, until meeting and following the rear boundaries of Mandeville Cottages. The boundary runs north following the rear boundaries of Rosette Cottage and Clematis Cottage, and the rear of 1 & 2 Shepherds Close. It cuts directly across Shepherds Close to follow the western edge of 78 Shepherds Close turning 90 degrees to follow the boundary of 12 Bell Court, and turning again to follow the eastern boundaries of Nos. 12 to 9 Bell Court. Upon meeting the southern boundary of the Vicarage it turns 90 degrees to run east along the boundaries of the Vicarage and Bisham Brook House. It follows this boundary northwards along the boundary of Bisham Brook House to the western boundary of Dane's Cottage. It cuts directly across Shepherd's Lane and then follows the western edge of the grounds belonging to Hurley Manor, Shepherd's House and some of the Hurley Farm Buildings. It turns 90 degrees east to follow the boundary line between the farm buildings along a farm track and runs up to Bag End. It then turns 90 degrees north to follow the western boundary of Hurley Farm, Tithecote Manor and the land adjacent to the Old Boat House.