



S w a l l o w f i e l d
Village Design Statement



Swallowfield Village Design Statement – Notification of Amendments (August 2009)

This note serves as an amendment to those planning policies within the Swallowfield Village Design Statement that have been updated or replaced since its adoption. Subsequent notes will be issued as Wokingham Borough Council continues to progress with its Local Development Framework. New Regional or National Guidance will also be included within these amendment notes.

Local Plan policies which are still valid:

- WH6 - Existing Residential Uses

Local Plan policies, SPGs and Regional Guidance which are longer valid:

- WBE1- Design and New Development (Superseded by PPS1)
- Residential - Design Guide SPG B1 (Replaced by the Borough Design Guide SPD)
- RPG9 RSS Policy EN1

Local Plan policies that have been replaced by Core Strategy Policies:

None

Policies that have revised numbering in the Core Strategy:

None

Introduction

The Village Design Statement highlights the characteristics of the village that make it so distinctive. It has been produced in consultation with the villagers of Swallowfield, professional interested bodies and statutory undertakers. Its purpose is to ensure that any change to the village and its surrounding area is done in sympathy with the essential character of the village. It is therefore a reference document for anyone wishing to make changes that effect the village or its buildings, and to guide any future developments so that the village and its setting remain as individual and attractive as they are today.

The Design Statement relates to 290 properties in Swallowfield and its outlying areas. 200 of these are within the village envelope, of which 90 have been built since 1985. The compact village has retained many local amenities and services lost to other villages, and these act as a focus for the vibrant village life.

The Village Design Statement is for:

- the local planning authority making decisions that affect the character and design of the village
- developers and their architects and designers contemplating new buildings
- the Parish Council when assessing proposals and formulating comments on planning applications
- residents and local businesses thinking about alterations and extensions to existing buildings
- local community groups wanting to make provision for their interests

The Design Statement is for use in conjunction with the District Local Plan and provides additional guidance. The Council will expect that all planning applications achieve a high quality of design in accordance with the policies contained in the existing development plans.

- Structure Plan policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Environment of Built-up areas
- South East Area Local Plan policy SBE1: Design of New Development, SBE2: Inappropriate Design
- The emerging Wokingham District Local Plan policies WBE1: Design and new development and WH6(a) the new Design Guidance policy

This village design statement has been adopted by Wokingham District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance, and is to be used in conjunction with all relevant local plan policies. It will be updated to ensure it stays in accordance with the Local Plan.

Acknowledgements

Produced with the help of the villagers of Swallowfield, with particular thanks to Chris Partridge for the watercolour used on the front cover and Joan Colyer for her delightful wildlife sketches.



Swallowfield



Swallowfield Park

of only a few medieval moated buildings in England linked to a river. Swallowfield Park has been the site of habitations since the Norman Conquest. It was rebuilt in 1689 by the Earl of Clarendon, and the exterior, remodelled in 1820 when it became the seat of the Russell Family, is still largely as we see it today.



Parish Hall

The village of Swallowfield lies south of Reading at the confluence of the rivers Loddon and Blackwater in the Royal County of Berkshire. It was known as *Sonesfelt* at the time of the Norman Conquest, and is recorded in Domesday Book as Sualefelle, which translates as *open land on the rushing stream*. It was a royal domain, part of the Great Forest of Windsor, and part of the village was actually in Wiltshire.

Swallowfield and its outlying areas have no fewer than 19 listed buildings dating from the 12th to the early 19th centuries, of which Queen Anne's Mead is an excellent example. The most ancient surviving buildings are the Church of All Saints, which was built in 1256 and later restored by Sir Charles Russell in 1871, and Sheepbridge, one



Queen Anne's Mead

For centuries Swallowfield was mainly a farming community. This changed with the introduction of mechanisation, the consequent reduction in manpower requirements, and later constraints on land usage. The population has, however, continued to grow steadily. A significant amount of house building over the last 20 years has increased the size of the village by over 80% and brought a variety of new residents. Although a majority of these commute from the village to their place of work, the proportion of retired inhabitants is on the increase.

Historically, Swallowfield has always been a sociable and integrated community based on Swallowfield Park. Although these links remain strong today, the social focus has moved to the new Parish Hall, where more than 30 organisations and clubs make use of its facilities to offer a comprehensive choice of activities to their members. The village shop/post office, the pub and the medical surgery also fulfil an important role in the life of the village.

Landscape Character and Wildlife

The ancient village of Swallowfield lies in open countryside south of Reading and west of Wokingham. It is set on the edge of the alluvial floodplains of the rivers Blackwater, Whitewater and Loddon, the rivers providing homes for a variety of waterfowl, birds and mammals such as kingfishers, spotted flycatchers and water voles. These river valleys to the north and east of the village comprise pastoral fields that regularly flood, woodland belts and parkland that rise gently from the rivers to the main road.

The village is set back from the B3349 Basingstoke road with a stretch of open land between the two principal roads, Swallowfield Street and The Street, which enter the village from the main road. This provides a rural border between the village heart and the main road to the west, and offers a view of the red brick houses that typify Swallowfield. Further to the west continuous copses of trees protect the flora and fauna along the banks of the Loddon as it winds through the countryside.

The southern edge of Swallowfield village overlooks the farmed clay lowland that stretches to Riseley. Here the landscape is predominately large open arable fields bounded by hedgerows and fences. The rural character is emphasised by single track rural roads lined with deep ditches and often edged with mature trees including 'cricket bat' willows. This area provides a vital habitat for wildlife including bats and free roaming deer. To the east, the village is approached via a country lane and several hump-backed bridges over the rivers.



Swallowfield Park



Trowes Lane



This rural setting for the village, with its variety of landscape types and wildlife habitats, gives the village its distinctive individuality. The historic lake and open parkland of Swallowfield Park are valuable national heritage sites that have greatly influenced the character of the village over the centuries. The open nature of the eastern side of the B3349 with its myriad footpaths, plus the river walks, copses, coverts and wooded areas, is not only a haven for the proliferation of wildlife but also supports a diverse range of leisure activities, including fishing, rambling, horse-riding, shooting, cycling, bird, butterfly and mammal watching, picnicking, nature studies and general enjoyment of quiet rural countryside.

Buildings

Swallowfield is centred around The Street and Swallowfield Street, which meet at the War Memorial, giving the village a sense of unity and traditional character. The designated conservation area lies here, dominated by the striking Red Lodge with its distinct steeply pitched roof and diaper pattern decoration.

There are isolated houses dating from the 15th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, but predominantly 20th century. Over the last ten years there has been significant new development in Foxborough and Curly's Way between The Street, Trowes Lane and Part Lane. This followed a number of small backland developments between The Street and Swallowfield Street.

The older village dwellings are mostly local red brick with clay tiled or slate covered roofs. Many of the houses have been extended over the years, adding to the high proportion of larger properties. There are relatively few one/two bedroom houses. The extensions that have been constructed in a rural style are particularly pleasing.

In the conservation area, period street lamps have been chosen. Block paving is a feature in some of the new developments and in the conservation area.

Industrial and commercial areas (Winkworth, Brookside and Wyvols Court) are located at the fringes of the village and this appears to reduce the impact on the village of traffic that businesses necessarily attract.



Wyvols Court



Curly's Way

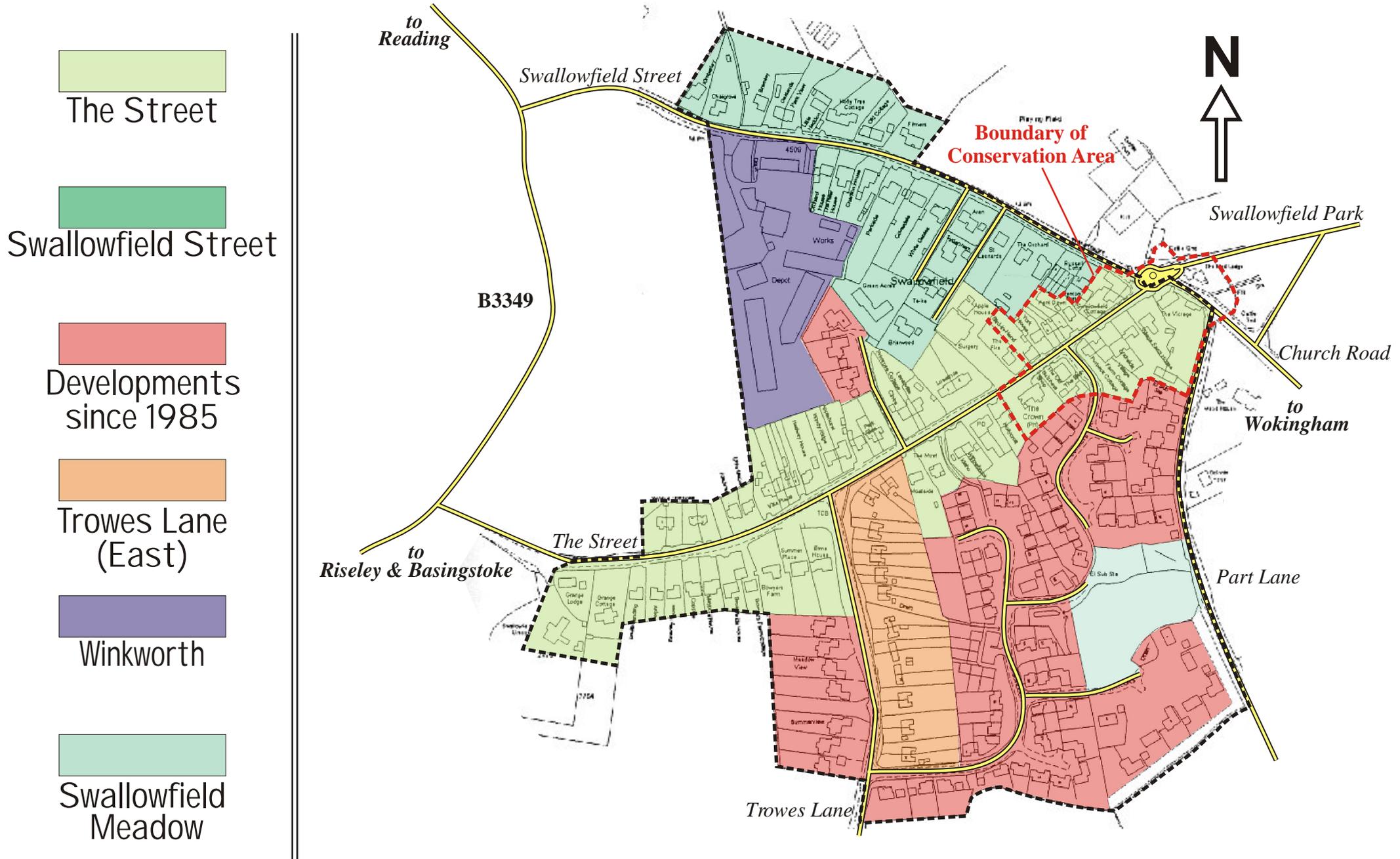


The Crown



Girdlers

Swallowfield Village Outline



Swallowfield Street

The houses are set back and many are surrounded by hedges with occasional picket fencing. This creates a rural ambience and distinguishes this part of the village from the more built-up feel of The Street. Brickwork is predominantly red, and most roofs are of red plain tiles.

Many dwellings on the southern side were originally small cottages or bungalows. Over the years, some of these have been altered, creating a varied look to the road.

Several single storey dwellings set behind Swallowfield Street provide infill and are accessed by two separate drives.

Towards Basingstoke Road there is development on both sides. Every dwelling is individual, varying from Tudor, through Victorian to the 20th century. Swallowfield Street has evolved with individual properties being built and altered over the years so that, while few properties are of major architectural significance, the variety and scale create a village atmosphere.



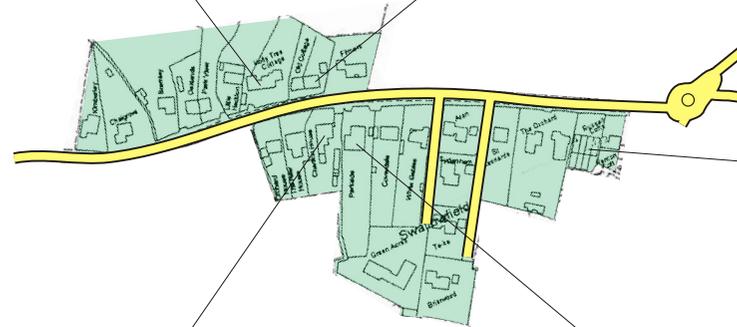
Hollytree Cottage



Coles Cottage



View to the west from Filmers



Russell Cottages



Charlton House



Parkside

The Street (East)

Buildings are randomly set in relation to the road without a rigid building line. Brick boundary walls prevail.

The core of the village comprises a conservation area running from the eastern end of The Street to The Crown public house. The houses are predominantly Victorian, with more modern housing built as infill. The older buildings mainly have slated or plain tile roofs. Hips are a common feature.

All dwellings are two-storey and in a variety of styles, terraced as well as detached properties. The majority are red brick, with occasional tile cladding - a typical style for this part of the country



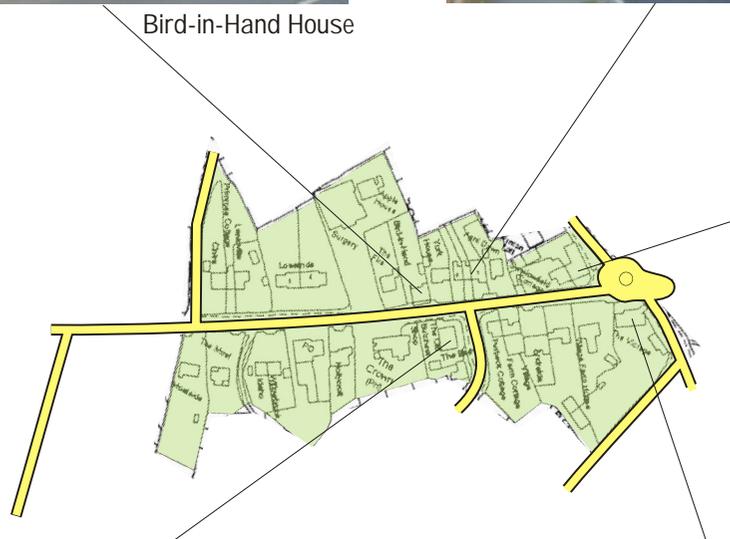
Bird-in-Hand House



Garlinge



View to the east from Trowes Lane



The Old Post House



Old Butcher's Shop



The Vicarage

The Street (West)

Older properties, including a listed building, are spaced at irregular intervals and have been infilled with more modern dwellings throughout the 20th century.

This end of The Street provides a more rural aspect than the eastern end as most properties are set further back from the road, with hedges, fencing and brick walls forming boundaries to the road.

All housing types are present: one and two storey single houses, together with short terraces. Red brickwork continues to predominate although more recent properties, mainly on the south side, are in a wider range of hues. Plain tiling or slates are the usual roofing form. Older properties, together with sympathetic extensions, often have attractive features such as cream or blue brickwork banding, decorative bargeboards and finials.



1 Wyvols Cottages



1 Villa Place



View to the east
from Swallowfield Grange



Halfway Up



Swallowfield Grange



Bowyers Farmhouse

Recent Estate Developments

There are four distinct estates built in the 1980s and 1990s.

Foxborough phase 1

The overall impression is of a suburban estate. The materials of the two-storey detached houses, similar in appearance, are not sympathetic to the older parts of the village. Recent extensions and alterations have increased the variety.

Foxborough phase 2

This area, similar to phase 1 with more variety of building materials, includes a terrace of six attractively designed single storey cottages for elderly people.

The Naylor's

The spacious house designs in larger plots are similar, with variation in building materials.

Curly's Way

This more recent housing complements older parts of the village and is the best integrated of the modern developments. It is an attractive mix of two-storey houses with different designs. This coupled with a variety of building materials gives each house an individual look with picket fenced or open plan borders. Attractive features include brick banding and shaped bargeboards.



Foxborough 1 & 2



The Naylor's



Curly's Way



Other Building Groups

Trowes Lane (West)

Built as a modern development of similar two-storey dwellings, the majority are set back behind the original hedgerow, which preserves the character of the lane. The dwellings are red brick, with some tile hung and part rendered elevations.

Trowes Lane (East)

Originally semi-detached council houses, these are red brick or rendered, all with plain roof tiling. Set well back from the road, they are defined by hedges and fences. Over the years extensions and alterations have been made to some of the properties by owner-occupiers adding variety.

Hornbeams

A small modern development of three secluded chalet bungalows of identical design and materials.

Winkworth Factory

This complex is situated on the edge of the village and accessed from Swallowfield Street. A two-storey brick structure commands the entrance, effectively shielding industrial units behind and is softened by mature planting.



Winkworth Factory



Trowes Lane (West)



Hornbeams



Trowes Lane (East)



Approaches to the Village

There are three distinct groupings of dwellings outside the boundary, which historically and geographically relate directly to the village.

Dwellings around Handpost Corner (Basingstoke Road, Charlton Lane, Spring Lane)

This area comprises all types of dwellings dating from a listed Queen Anne property through Victorian to the present day. All have been built separately, providing a pleasing variety in materials, design and size of property.

Sheepbridge Hamlet

This attractive cluster of properties includes several listed buildings, mostly hidden from the main road. They developed round the medieval moat, a scheduled ancient monument fed by the river Loddon.

Dwellings around The George and Dragon (Church Road)

Forming the eastern gateway to the main village, there are several listed buildings and some farm workers' cottages.



Sheepbridge Court



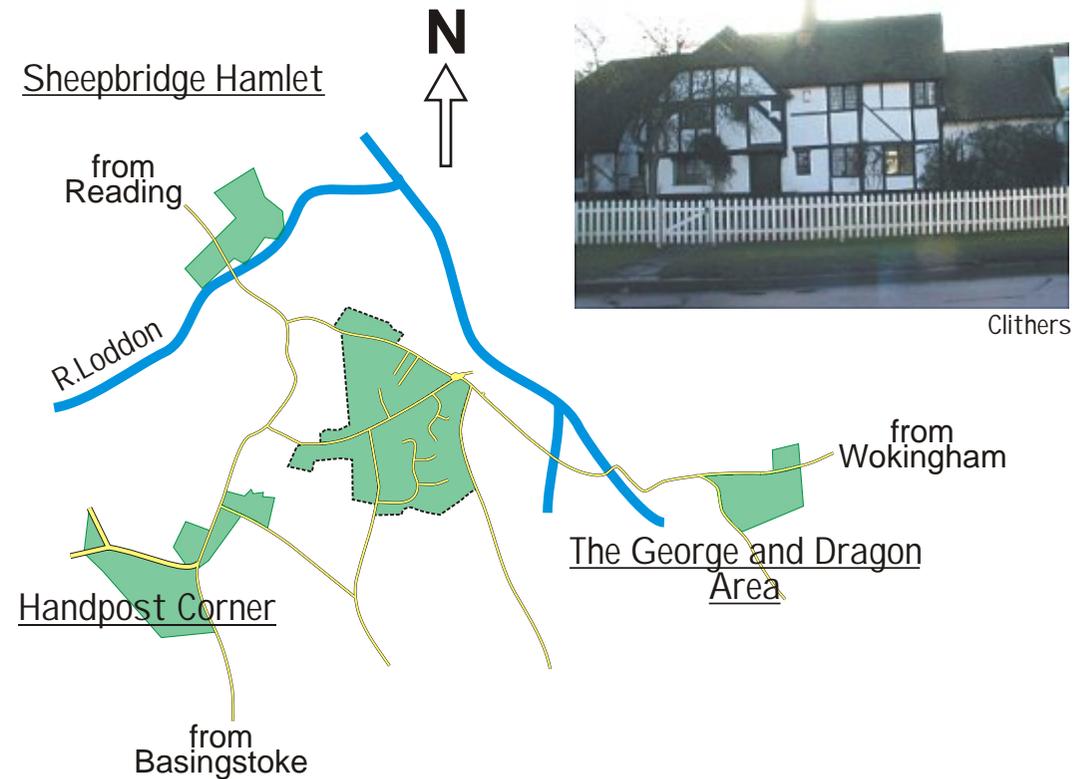
The George and Dragon



The Millhouse Hotel



Handpost



Good Design Features of Buildings

Extensions

The most pleasing extensions are those that reflect the features of the original dwelling but are distinguished from them, perhaps by slight stepping of elevations.

Bricks and Tiles

The use of slate, plain clay tiles, and red bricks with stringer courses and hipped roofs has been successful in creating the village character, as have brick colours and textures that are sympathetic to neighbouring properties.

Window detail

Attention to details in windows and their surrounds (sills and courses at the window head) serves to distinguish buildings.

Dormer Windows

Where dormer windows have been constructed, most have pitched roofs and are of appropriate scale.

Delineation of properties

Hedges, walls and fences form attractive boundaries to properties

Building Styles

The diversity of building styles sits well within the rural village atmosphere

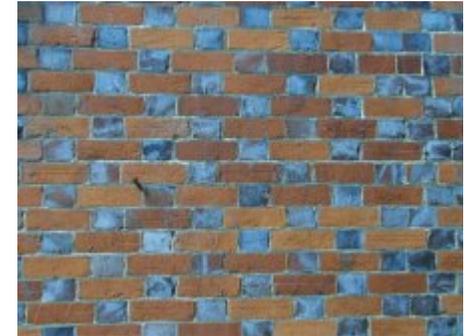
The Street



The Street



The Street



Extensions

The Street



The Street



The Street



Window Details

The Street



Swallowfield Street



The Street



Bricks and Tiles

Dormer Windows

Good Design Features of Buildings

Listed buildings

The listed buildings blend with and are not dominated by the adjacent buildings, but provide an historic focus for the village.



Decorative Features

The use of brick banding and decorative bargeboards and finials add interest to many houses.

Brick Walls

Where there are brickwork walls, these are particularly pleasing when they have coping (e.g. tile creasing) piers and decorative panels.



Industrial Development

Driveways

Pebble, shingle and paved drives give a more traditional feel than tarmac.



Footways

Footways in the conservation area are brick paved with granite kerbs and setts.

Footways

Industrial Development

The industrial development (Winkworth) is on the fringe; the traffic generated does not generally pass through the village.



Decorative Features

Shingle Drives

Our Village.....



Pitt Bridge



This design statement has been prepared by a group of volunteer residents in consultation with the community itself - the villagers of Swallowfield.

It reflects the features of Swallowfield that the residents appreciate, from the fact that it has still managed to remain an identifiable village, outside the urban growth of Reading, to its major contribution to the wildlife features of the area.

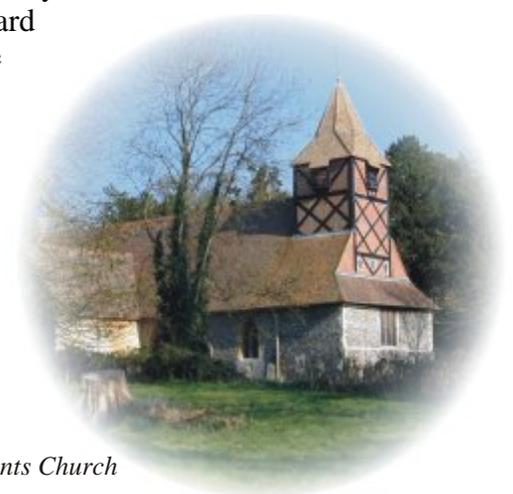
The community, at its present size, is well supported by the local shop and post office, the surgery and a pub, the Crown, all in the centre of the village. Buildings vary widely in style and reflect well the periods in which they were built. Within the identified settlement of Swallowfield, excluding the industrial area encompassed by Winkworth Factory, there are 14 dwellings per hectare.

Residents and the local Councils have worked on a number of wildlife sanctuaries to provide support for endangered species such as barn owls, water voles, glow-worms and the Loddon lily, with the creation of new hedgerows, trees and ponds.

Sanctuaries include the re-establishment of fritillary meadows; the restoration of the decoy pond in Swallowfield Park and the churchyard, which has received a Living Churchyard award from the Diocese of Oxford. Swallowfield Meadow, a new public open space acquired by the Parish Council during housing development, has been granted Local Nature Reserve status by English Nature.



The Red Lodge



All Saints Church



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(reflecting consultations during 2001-2003)
The Statement of Consultation is published separately