

ARBORFIELD CROSS



CONSERVATION AREA STUDY

I. INTRODUCTION

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL DESIGNATE NEW CONSERVATION AREAS AND REVIEW EXISTING CONSERVATION AREAS IN RECOGNITION OF, AND IN ORDER TO PROTECT THEIR ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE. IN ADDITION THE COUNCIL WILL IMPLEMENT SCHEMES OF ENHANCEMENT FOR CONSERVATION AREAS.

(Deposit Draft District Plan 1996-2006)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA ?

"A Conservation Area (as defined in section 69 (1) (a) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990) is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

The character of conservation areas can vary considerably, but they are normally historic areas centred on a concentration of listed buildings. All the elements of the area will be important in creating the character of

the conservation area, including street patterns, open spaces, trees and groups of buildings. The designation of a conservation area means that the planning authority can exercise stronger control over the development of the location, so that its special character can be protected and enhanced.

2. LOCATION

The Arborfield Cross Conservation Area is focused on the crossroads and extends to the south along the A327 Eversley Road. It includes Newlands farm to the north of the intersection.



The Swan Public House

II. CONTEXT



Eversley Road, prior to surfacing with tarmac

II. CONTEXT

1. THE NEED TO REVIEW THE CONSERVATION AREA

In 1995 English Heritage (Oct. 95) produced guidelines for the designation of a Conservation Area and which recommended that a detailed analysis of the area be undertaken to include possible enhancement aimed at not only preserving but also enhancing the Conservation Area. The need to review the qualities of the Conservation Area is evident in other examples in the District. A five-year action plan is proposed for all Conservation Areas in the District after discussions with the Parish Council to co-ordinate any enhancement proposals.

To support and provide a record of the special character of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area, a detailed photographed and physical survey has been carried out by the District Council.

This provides archive information to monitor change in the future, whilst at the same time recording the character which makes Arborfield Cross special.

This record will be held at the District Council offices.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

The local authority is able to enhance, preserve and protect its conservation areas through the following planning law and policy documents.

a) *Designation*

The Arborfield Cross Conservation Area was designated on 21 September 1998 to preserve the village qualities of the settlement. This designation allows controls on development which do not apply elsewhere in the Planning Acts and includes the control of demolition, work on trees and advertisement boarding within the designated area.

b) *The Local Plan*

The protection of Arborfield Cross Conservation Area is undertaken by the District Council's planning policies outlined in the Loddon Area Local Plan (adopted 1995) and the District Local Plan Deposit Draft 1997. The adopted and draft plans include both site specific and general policies for preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area and other historic parts of the district.

c) *Supplementary Guidance*

More detailed information and the council's recommended approach to the treatment of elements such as shop frontages, listed buildings, landscape schemes and disabled access to listed buildings is outlined in the council's planning guidelines. This is an ongoing programme of supplementary guidance notes.

3. OTHER AREA BASED STUDIES/INITIATIVES

A number of studies were carried out in the preparation of the Local Plan which provide recommendations which directly relate to the Conservation Area. These include the Built Environment Studies which outline the characteristics of the built form within areas of traditional local character within the district. Areas which are considered to possess special townscape qualities were identified and considered as possible new conservation areas or additions to existing ones.

III. APPRAISAL

1. HISTORICAL AND MORPHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

The name Arborfield is derived from the Saxon word for settlement or clearing. The recent discovery of Roman pottery and the fact that the Devil's Highway (London to Silchester) is less than a mile away from the crossroads suggests links with a Roman settlement.

The original settlement of Arborfield was established near the River Loddon approximately 1km to the north west of the present crossroads.

The settlement included a manor house and wooden church dating from Saxon times, both were later re-built, the church in c13 in flint and chalk, the house much later in 1842. A mill using power and water from the river produced high quality paper.

The ravages of fire has resulted in the loss of Arborfield Hall, which replaced the manor, the mill and Newlands Farmhouse, which was the home of the Simonds family, bankers, brewers and benefactors of Arborfield.

A group of buildings had already been established at, or near the crossroads by the c15, with the two coaching inns creating a centre for trade for the local farming community and travellers.



Lych Gate and Little Gable

III. APPRAISAL



Birch House

2. VISUAL ANALYSIS



he conservation area is focused on the space at the crossroads with the Bull Inn and war memorial creating the visual elements in contrast to the open

farmlands to the north and new housing to the south.

The two Inns provide the historic links to the important coaching route, with the c16 cottages and Post House reinforcing the architectural and historic significance of this hamlet, tightly grouped along the road edge. The crossroads are located at the high point of an elevated plateau with the land to the north and west falling towards the River Loddon

3. EXISTING FABRIC

The Conservation Area is centred around Arborfield Cross and the Eversley Road.

The old street pattern is reinforced by listed buildings dating from the c15 along the road edge including the former coaching inns with later Victorian and contemporary infill.

The Bull Inn, duck pond and later war memorial established the visual focus at the intersection of two historic tracks. This area has now lost its pond and is dissected by a principal distribution road, linking north Hampshire to Reading

and the Midlands. A busy network of minor roads lead from The Cross to Wokingham, Swallowfield, Winnersh and Twyford.



Farm Cottages

III. APPRAISAL



The Bull Public House

4. CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER

The buildings vary in appearance from timber framed c15 cottages and Inns to red bricked larger houses with greater decorative detailing, mostly with Berkshire red clay roof tiles.

The area is tightly contained by the boundaries of Eversley Road housing to the south, the crossroads at the centre and Newlands Farm to the north.

The buildings of special architectural and historic interest which establish the character of this area are;

- ◆ *The Bull Inn* - an early c17 part timber framed with thin timbers and painted brick in-fill with old clay tiled roof.
- ◆ *The Old Post House* - Hall house, now cottage c15 with timber frame and painted brick infilling, with old tiled clay gabled roof.
- ◆ *Birch House* - c17 house, re-fronted in c18,

brick faced with diaper pattern at first floor, irregular plan with flanking chimneys.

◆ *Magnolia Cottage* - late c16, rebuilt in c18, decorative brick front with part timber frame to gable ends with painted render infill. Central chimney on ridge.

◆ *The Swan Public House* - Hall house late c15 with c17 extensions. Timber framed with painted plaster and brick infill, old tile gabled roof. 3 framed bays front part with one bay hall now floored.

In addition, the following buildings are of traditional local character and reflect the farming and reference to the area at the turn of the century;

- ◆ *Newlands Farm*
- ◆ *cottages north of the green (former duck pond)*
- ◆ *nos. 1-3 School Road*
- ◆ *Sunrise*
- ◆ *group of cottages immediately to the north of the Swan Inn.*



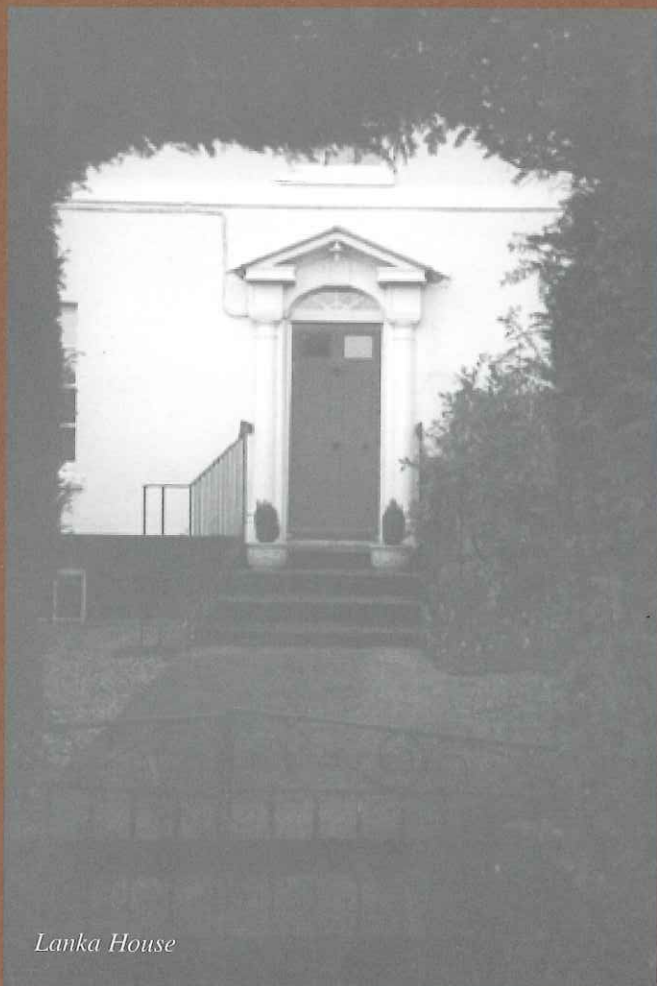
The Old Post House

IV. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

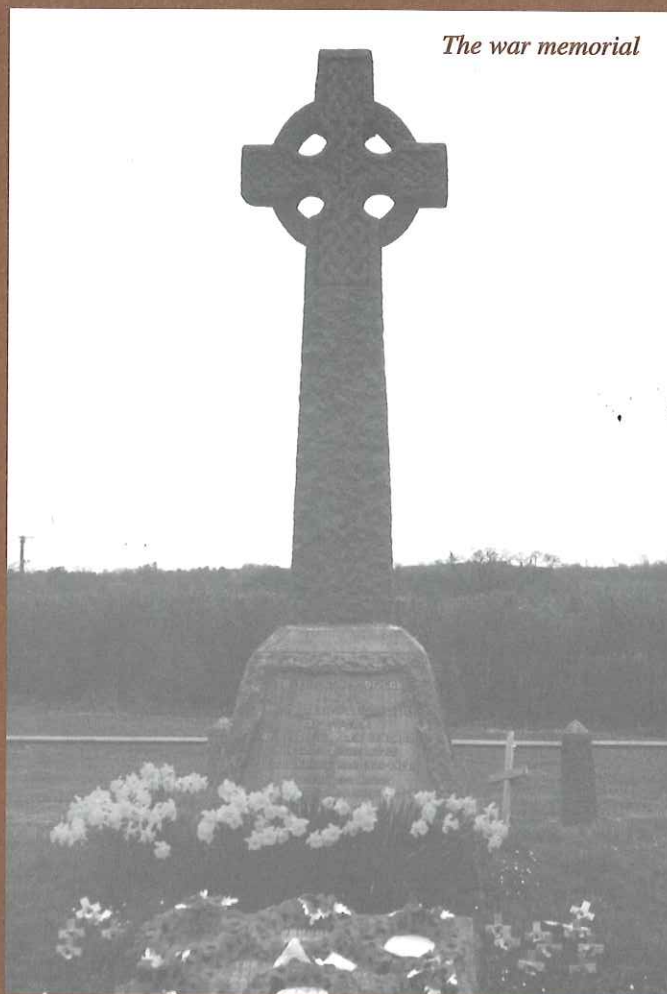
Arborfield is acknowledged to be one of the best kept villages in Berkshire and the Parish Council and residents are dedicated to its continued improvement to retain this accolade.

Issues to enhance the Conservation Area include;

- ◆ Reduce speed and level of through traffic.
- ◆ Landscape frontage to Village Hall
- ◆ Redesign the crossroads to include the integration of an improved highway intersection.
- ◆ Improve Eversley Road garage forecourt
- ◆ Re-site the war memorial
- ◆ Enhance the landscaped edge to recent housing development
- ◆ Re-introduction of the village pond.



Lanka House



The war memorial

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Further information is available from:

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II. CONTEXT

