

# Finchampstead Church Conservation Area



Finchampstead Church Conservation Area was designated on 29th April 1993. This leaflet explains the responsibilities of Wokingham District Council and property owners within the Conservation Area.

## Conservation in Wokingham District

Wokingham District Council wishes to preserve and enhance those parts of the District that are of special architectural or historic interest; certain areas are worthy of special protection and are therefore designated as conservation areas.

### What is a conservation area?

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 are important in creating the character 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 it's special character can be protected and enhanced.

Once a conservation area has been designated it is a requirement that the local authority formulate and publish positive proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the area.







## What does designation of a conservation area mean?

### ❖ Control of demolition

Buildings within the conservation area cannot be demolished without the consent of the planning authority.

### ❖ Control of works to trees

Apart from those trees already protected by Tree Preservation Orders, no works can be carried out on trees within the conservation area without giving notice to the planning authority six weeks prior to the work being carried out.

### ❖ Advertisements

A high standard of control on the display of adverts is in force. New advertising must be in keeping with the character of the area.

### ❖ Local Plan Policies

Additional control is also applied through the local plan policies. These state that all the features making up the character of the conservation area will be preserved and enhanced. The design of new development within the area, must be sympathetic, and in keeping with the existing character, giving special regard to the setting of listed buildings.

### ❖ Listed Buildings

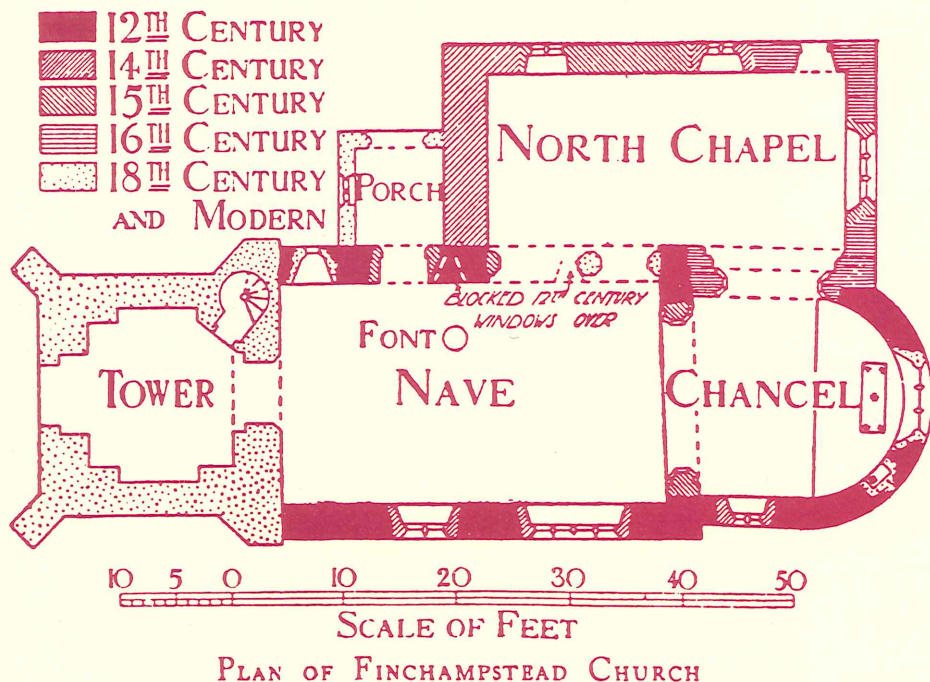
Conservation areas usually contain a number of listed buildings. These are buildings that because of their special architectural or historical importance are placed on a nationally recognised list. Listed Building Consent is required to alter or demolish a listed building.

## History of the conservation area

The conservation area contains some ancient features of the settlement of Finchampstead. The mound on which the Church sits is a man-made earthwork, thought to be medieval or possibly Roman construction. However, its date has yet to be confirmed by excavation.

There is evidence of a Roman Road; the 'Devils Highway' at the northern edge of the conservation area. Excavation has shown that the course of the road is slightly south of the line shown on the Ordnance Survey map; a small stretch falls within the conservation area.

The Grade I Listed Church of St James forms the focal point of the conservation area. It has been altered and extended many times to keep pace with the growth of the village. The plan below shows the various periods of the main fabric of the Church.



The oldest parts of the Church are the Chancel and the Nave which date from 12th Century; the Chancel was widened in the 15th Century. The transept was lengthened in the 15th and 16th Century. The date over the door of 1590 indicates when it was last enlarged. The Tower was added in



1720. Built in English bond brickwork, it replaced an earlier tower which was probably wooden. Another of the main features of the conservation area is the green to the north east of the Church. It contains an Oak that was planted in 1877 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. The tree gives its name to the pub, which is also a listed building dating from the early 17th Century. The pub may have formerly been part of Church Farm which served Finchampstead Manor.

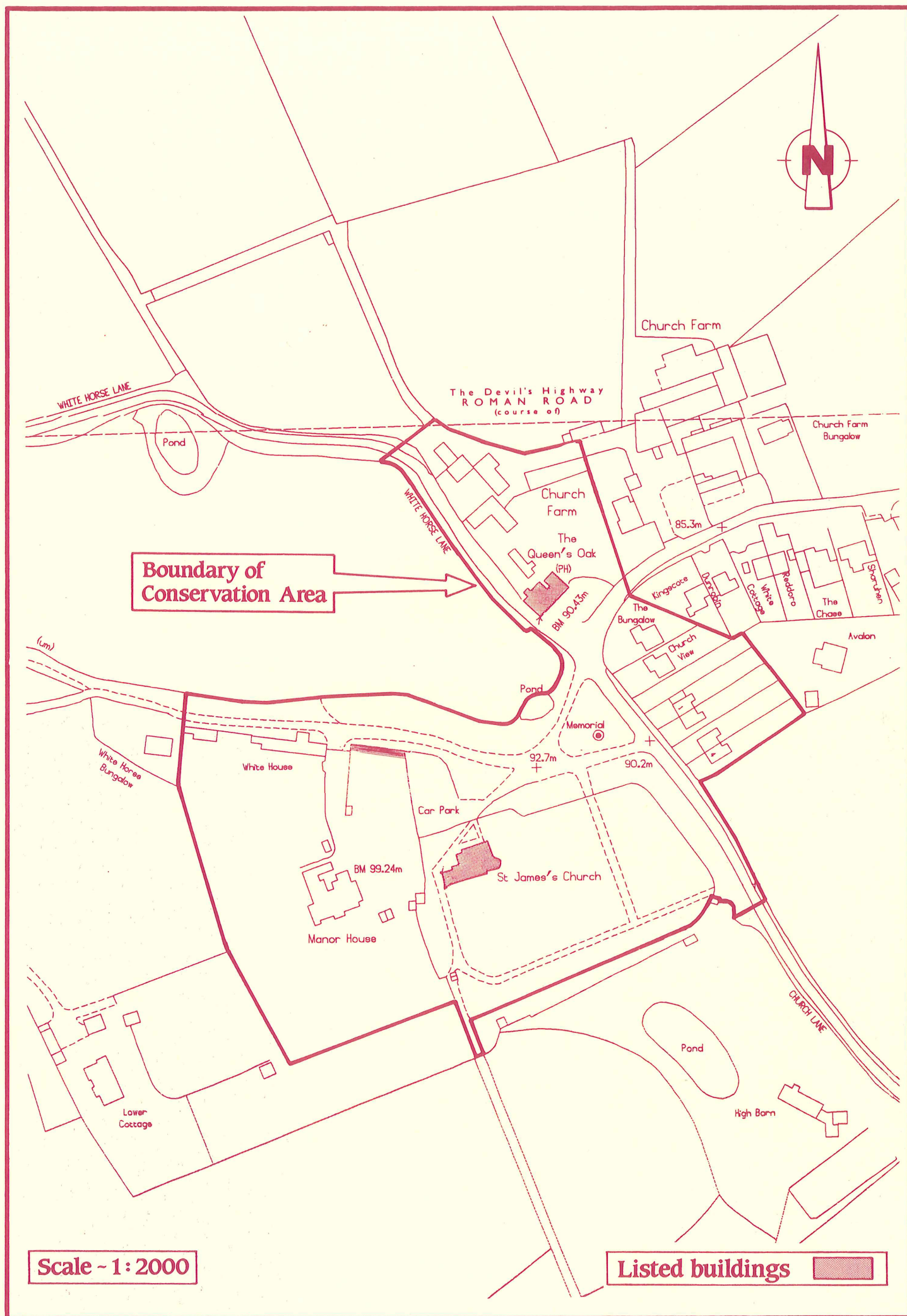
A wall, with a 17th Century doorway, with double four-centred arch and hood mould over, is reputed to be the remains of the former Manor House East Court. This wall is also listed. The Manor of Finchampstead, and the manorial rights were divided into East and West when Sir William Bannister left the Manor to his two daughters: Constance was left East Court, and Agatha West Court. Thereafter the Manor was always divided in two.

### **Improvements to the Conservation Area**

What can owners/occupiers of buildings within the conservation area do, to help preserve and enhance it?

- ❖ Seek advice from the Planning Department on any changes proposed to buildings/front boundaries.
- ❖ Keep gardens tidy and trees and shrubs trimmed.
- ❖ Retain existing front walls and repair sensitively - Removal of walls may require conservation area consent, check first with the Planning Department.
- ❖ Keep buildings in good repair, including regular painting of exterior woodwork and rendering.
- ❖ Keep out-buildings in good repair.
- ❖ Seek advice from the Planning Department on the erection of new out-buildings; these include sheds, garages, greenhouses, conservatories; these may require planning permission and listed building consent.

In addition to works that individuals can carry out, the Planning Authority has a duty to prepare proposals for enhancement of the conservation area. For example, small improvement works around the greens.



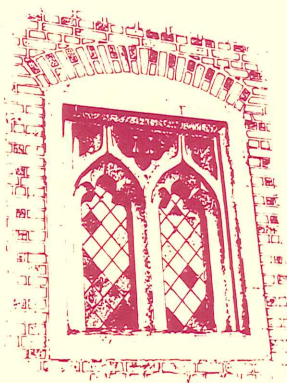
## Works to Listed Buildings

It is an offence to carry out unauthorised works to a listed building. This would include alterations or extensions, full or partial demolition of the building.

To authorise works to listed buildings, Listed Building Consent is required, this is obtained from Wokingham District Council's Planning Department.

## Local Plan Policies

Just as conservation areas are protected by policies in the local plan, so are listed buildings, these seek to control the appropriate use of listed buildings, if a change of use is being considered.



*Door  
and  
Window  
details  
from  
Finchampstead  
Church*

Further information is available from:

The Urban Design & Conservation Officer for WBC.  
Email: [development.control@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:development.control@wokingham.gov.uk) or  
Tel: (0118) 974 6282

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