
Conservation Area Character Survey

Upper North Dean



What is a Conservation Area

Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, which are considered worthy of preservation or enhancement. They are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Within conservation areas there are special controls on some alterations to buildings, on their demolition or partial demolition, and on works to trees. The Council's Heritage Guidance Note on conservation areas gives further details of the specific controls that apply.

Designation of a conservation area does not preclude the possibility of new development, but such development must be designed positively to enhance the appearance and special character of the area.

The Purpose of This Survey

The designation of a Conservation Area imposes specific duties on local authorities to formulate and publish proposals to ensure

that the special character of the area is preserved and enhanced. This conservation area character survey describes the main features of special architectural and

historic interest which justify the designation of Upper North Dean as a conservation area.

This survey is in accordance with Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, Planning and the Historic Environment, complies with the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 12, Development Plans, and contributes to the Council's strategic Aim 4 The Environment. As supplementary planning guidance, it is intended to complement the approved policies for conservation areas in the Council's Wycombe District Local Plan, is a material consideration in deciding planning, conservation area and listed building applications, and is consistent with paragraphs 11.36 – 11.39 of the Emerging Wycombe District Local Plan.

This survey was the subject of public consultation prior to adoption as supplementary planning guidance. The views of the consultees were taken into account and in some cases changes were made. A copy of all representations made to the Council during public consultation and the Council's response to those representations is available from the District Council Offices

Context

North Dean is a small residential community five miles north of High Wycombe, in Hughenden Valley. Denner Hill, the highest point within the parish at 655 feet, lies to the north east of the village and is the source of Denner Hill stone, used in a number of buildings within the conservation area.

The village lies within the Chiltern dip slope, a landscape type identified in The Landscape Plan for Buckinghamshire. Characteristic features include ridge and valley topography consisting of Beech woodlands on the ridges and a mixture of arable fields and pasture lands in the valleys. Also characteristic is the linear nature of the village, following the road which runs through the bottom of the valley, and restricted from outward expansion by the valley sides. Further information regarding Chiltern village forms can be found in the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide.

The evolution of North Dean has thus been shaped by the surrounding countryside, a relationship that continues today by virtue of being within both the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Greenbelt designation.

Upper North Dean was first designated as a conservation area in 1982. Its boundaries encompass the core of 18th and 19th century buildings lining Speen Road south of Piggott's Hill and contain North Dean Farm and its associated buildings, the Old Sportsman's Arms, renamed Sportsmans Corner and now a dwelling, and the village hall, among others.

History

North Dean is first mentioned in 1205 when "Nich de la Nordene" is recorded as owing homage and service to "Rolf de Hughenden". Its name is derived from its location at the north end of Hughenden parish. The economy of

the village was based on agriculture and common fields of the village, farmed by bondsmen, were divided into strips of land known locally as slipes and marked by boundary banks. Some of these can still be seen in the valley behind the village hall. By the late 19th century the value of land for farming had fallen and greater emphasis was placed on the potential value of stone which could be quarried in the area. Denner Hill stone, frequently used as paving in local towns and utilised in an early 19th century extension and refacing to Windsor Castle, is seen in a number of buildings in the village.

In addition to farming, residents of North Dean held a number of occupations, making the village self-supporting. Due to lack of available housing, younger generations were forced to move elsewhere in search of accommodation and employment. Subsequently the village never grew large enough to support a church and residents travelled to churches at either Hughenden or Speen for worship.

North Dean has had a few notable residents over the years. Richard Sydenham from London, lived in the village in the early 18th century and became High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire in 1727. His memorial can be found in the Church of Saint Michael and All Angels in Hughenden Valley.

At the end of World War I, North Dean House was bought by George Holt Thomas, newspaper publisher and aircraft manufacturer. His company was involved in the manufacture of Allied aircraft in World War I and after the war he established the first commercial airline to fly between London and Paris. In addition to North Dean House, Holt Thomas bought several other homes in North Dean, and in 1921 built the black and white Village Hall and three bungalows outside of the conservation area.

In 1936 North Dean House was purchased by Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree, a philanthropist who worked in the



Upper North Dean Farm, formerly North Dean House



The Village Hall, built by George Holt Thomas

family firm H.I. Rowntree & Co. Seebohm and his father were pioneers in labour management and their firm introduced revolutionary changes to the workplace, such as the 5 day work week, profit-sharing and workers' councils. Joseph Rowntree, Seebohm's father, is remembered through the three charitable trusts he established in 1904: the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, and the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd. Seebohm Rowntree did a great deal of research on poverty and wrote the influential "Poverty, a study of town life." He died in 1954 at his home, then a wing of Hughenden Manor.

Archaeological Interest

There are neither scheduled ancient monuments nor sites of archaeological interest identified within the conservation area. The village is clearly of a historic nature and in the event of archaeological deposits being found the Council may require archaeological conditions attaching to planning permissions where appropriate, including watching briefs, excavation or similar recording procedures.

Essential Characteristics

North Dean is a compact group of cottages set against the rising slopes of the Hughenden Valley, glimpses of which are visible through small gaps between the cottages. The village is clustered around North Dean Farm and the barn, which although no longer a working farm remains a focal point in the street scene.

Development at the centre of the village hugs the road tightly, creating a sense of enclosure which is further enhanced by brick and flint walls, hedges, and surrounding trees. Moving from the core of the village the development pattern relaxes slightly, with deeper setbacks and glimpses of the surrounding countryside. Slight curves in the road restrict views through the village increasing the sense of protection and seclusion.



Development at the centre of Upper North Dean hugs the road tightly, creating a sense of enclosure

The village has remained relatively free of modern infill with only one example found within the conservation area, although a small amount of modern development has occurred along Speen Road south of the conservation area. Overhead cables make an unattractive addition to the village and placement of these services underground would be desirable.

Architectural Character and Quality of Buildings

Upper North Dean has been the focus of very little development since the 19th century. Of the thirteen buildings within the conservation area, nine of them are of such age and quality as to justify listing. These buildings are therefore the primary determinant to the character of the village.

Cottages and buildings in the village either overlook Speen Road or turn to the side, overlooking courtyards created by groups of buildings and surrounding walls. There are a variety of building types, from terraces and semi-detached cottages to farmhouse with attached barn. Roofs are gabled with a variety of hipped or cat-slide extensions and gabled dormers. The roofscape of the village is enlivened with simple corbeled chimneys and chimney pots. Detailing is minimal and unpretentious. Many of the properties are enhanced with brick and flint walls lining Speen Road or enclosing courtyards created by groups of buildings.

SMALL COTTAGES











Grade II Listed

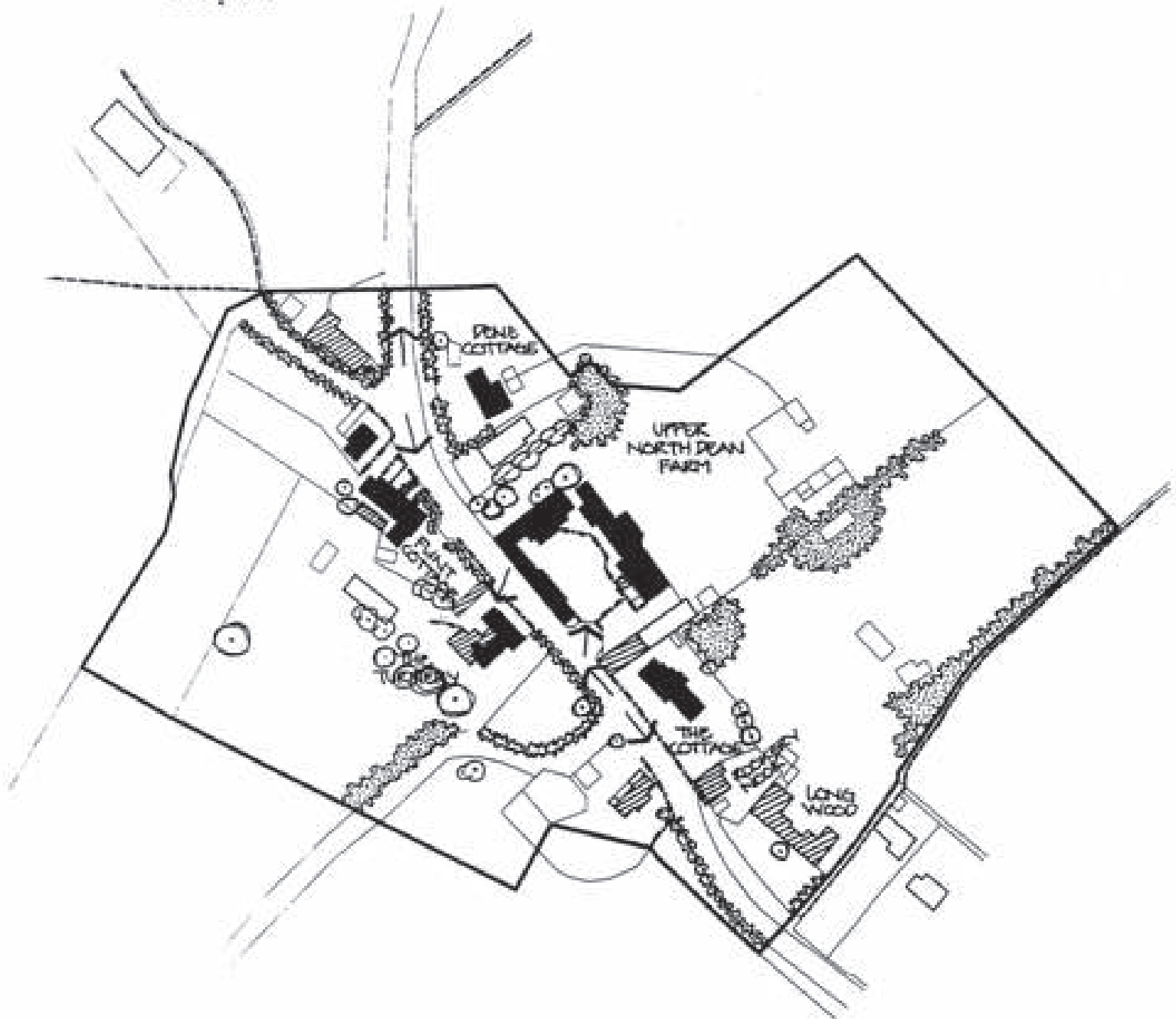
The Old Sportsman's Arms, now known as Sportsmans Corner, is a flint house with Denner Hill stone quoins, brick dressings and an old tile roof. It is of two parallel ranges, the first early 19th century and the second from the 20th century.



Verges at the edges of the hamlet are deeper, such as the one in front of Long Wood

Upper North Dean

-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Buildings
-  Other Significant Buildings
-  Important Trees or Tree Groups
-  Important Hedges
-  Memorials
-  Tree Cover
-  Significant Walls
-  Views
-  Footpaths





A number of cottages in Upper North Dean turn their sides to the road



Adam's Cottage (right) and numbers 1 & 2 Sportsman's Cottages

Adam's Cottage and **Numbers 1 and 2 Sportsman's Cottage** is a row of early 19th century cottages, Adam's Cottage having a modern but compatible extension to the right. They are built of flint with brick dressings, wooden sash windows, and a slate roof. To the rear of Adam's Cottage is an outbuilding said to have once been a Smithy, and still retaining its chimney. Number 1 Sportsman's Cottage is adjoined at the side to Flint Cottage, description following.

Flint Cottage is an early to mid 19th century flint house with Denner Hill stone quoins, brick dressings, and a slate roof. There is a 20th century bay slightly set back to the left.



Flint Cottage

The Turnery is a late 17th to early 18th century house with substantial yet sympathetic 20th century wings to the rear. It is built of brick with a chequer pattern of vitreous headers. It is set on a flint plinth with an old tile roof and central chimney stack. A brick band course with modillions divides the ground and first floor and extends through the 20th century lean-to extension to the right. A blocked opening, possibly once a door, is in the centre of the façade, above which on the first floor is a small oval window. It is named after the business which was established in the house at the beginning of the 20th century.

Dene Cottage and **Chilton Cottage** were two 17th century cottages built of red and vitreous brick with band courses at the sill of the ground floor and dividing the ground floor and attic storeys. The cottages have wooden casements, gabled eaves-line dormers and an old tile roof. These cottages have been merged and are now known simply as Dene Cottage.

Upper North Dean Farmhouse consists of a 17th century timber framed bay with whitewashed brick infill and wooden casements. To the right, the 19th century extension is of flint with Denner Hill stone quoins to the right, brick dressings, and wooden sash windows. A further extension dating from the 20th century links the Farmhouse to the 19th century weatherboarded barn, part of which has been incorporated into the dwelling, with a central gabled projecting cart entry, partially blocked

Farmhouse Buildings to west of Upper North Dean Farmhouse consist of a barn, a cowshed, a shed and a stable, all of early to mid-19th century. The **barn** is timber frame and weatherboard on a brick and flint plinth, with Denner Hill stone quoins and central projecting cart entry. The **Shed** is built of both weatherboard, facing the yard, and brick and flint, facing the road. The **Stable** is of brick and flint with Denner hill stone quoins and a central stable door to the yard. The **Cowshed** is weatherboarded, roof hipped with old tile, as are the other buildings in the group.



The Turnery



Upper North Dean Farm Barn

The Cottage is a late 18th century two storey brick dwelling with a tiled roof, and flanking chimneys. There is a narrow flint and brick extension and a weatherboard barn with a thatched roof at the right.

SOME OTHER SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS

As previously mentioned, the Village Hall was built in 1921 by George Holt Thomas. The site was chosen because of its proximity to the village public house, The Sportsman's Arms, the only pub in North Dean. It was closed in 1956, converted to a dwelling, and the licence was transferred to Stokenchurch. The hall has three matching black and white bungalows along Speen Road south of the conservation area.

At the south end of the conservation area, **Rookery Nook**, **Long Wood**, and **Meadow Cottage** all make a positive contribution to the conservation area, although the modern extensions to the latter detract somewhat.

Materials

Red brick and flint are the primary materials in the conservation area, although many buildings have Denner Hill stone quoins, quarried nearby. Upper North Dean Farmhouse contains the singular visible example of timber frame in the conservation area, and there is thatch on the weatherboarded barn annexe to The Cottage.

Slate and tile roofing are found in equal measure throughout the rest of the village. Doors are simple wood plank and windows are wood casement or sliding sash.

Although there is some wood picket or rail fencing, brick and flint walls are more common and make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Development Control Advice

The policies and proposals of the Wycombe District Local Plan are the primary source of reference for development

control advice. In addition the Council's approved Heritage Strategy is seen as a supporting document to the plan.

This character survey has been subject to public consultation and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance, and is therefore a material consideration when determining applications for new development affecting the conservation area. Below is a brief checklist taking account of the above text.

To safeguard, preserve and enhance the appearance and special character of the Upper North Dean Conservation Area:

- In the conservation area higher standards of design are required, as it is the function of the planning authority to consider all applications as to whether they preserve or enhance the special character as identified in this appraisal.
- Any new building works such as extensions must be designed not as a separate entity, but should be sympathetic in form and scale with the existing buildings and the conservation area as a whole. Respecting the existing scale of the buildings in the conservation area is of particular importance as the cumulative effect of development can over time erode the character.
- Listed and significant buildings are identified on the survey map and their specific qualities are described in the text above. Any new development must preserve the buildings or their settings or any special architectural or historic features that they contain. It should be recognised that new development may not always be acceptable. Materials for any new building works or surfacing must be sympathetic to the rural character of the area. Traditional local buildings materials will often be the most appropriate choice, further guidance can be provided on a case specific basis. In particular the use of on appropriate lime mortar can enhance the visual appearance of buildings.



Quoins of Sportsmans Corner are of Denner Hill Stone, a local material

The Chilterns Buildings Design Guide gives general information on Chilterns building types, specific advice will depend on the immediate locality.

- Applications for development adjoining but beyond the conservation area boundary will be assessed for its effect upon its character, appearance, and setting, and may be refused permission if this is considered adverse.
- Surfacing within domestic curtilages for driveways should be in keeping with the rural nature of the hamlet and of an informal type. Large areas of tarmac and concrete are out of place in this rural setting. Regular paving, pavements and setts may also look discordant, and may not be appropriate. Paths to front doors historically were surfaced with clay tiles or brick, and this is a tradition that could be encouraged.
- Inappropriate replacement windows and doors can damage the character of the conservation area. Traditional natural materials should be used in order to safeguard the special character of the conservation area. Generally speaking painted timber windows and doors are appropriate and modern substitute materials such as PVCu and aluminium are not.
- Flint and brick walling is a particular feature of the Upper North Dean Conservation Area. New sections of walling or repairs to existing walling should respect and be equal in quality and appearance to the workmanship of original sections of walling. In particular the use of an appropriate lime mortar will enhance the appearance of walling.
- Areas of open space, and gaps between buildings will be carefully considered for protection from develop-

ment or enclosure in order to protect the character of the Upper North Dean Conservation Area, the setting of listed buildings, and any important views.

- All trees in conservation areas are protected but special consideration should be given to those trees indicated on the conservation area map to ensure that they are not harmed. New development should recognise this and not present a risk to their continued future growth and habit.
- Some hedgerows are protected by the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations. The majority of hedges are not covered by these regulations, however in the conservation area the hedgerows indicated on the character survey map are an important element of the area's character, and would be retained and where possible enhanced.
- Special care must be taken to ensure that views looking into and out from the conservation area are not spoilt. Those of particular importance are marked on the survey map.

Further Information and Guidance

Sources used in the preparation of this document include The Buildings of England. Buckinghamshire 2nd edition 1994 By N. Pevsner and E. Williamson Penguin Books, The Preliminary Chronicle of North Dean, available in the local studies section of the library at High Wycombe, and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Website, <http://www.jrf.org.uk/about/history.htm>. Descriptions of architectural terms can be found in dictionaries, or in publications such as the Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture by C. Harris, editor in 1977, Dover Publications, or Illustrated Glossary of Architecture by J Harris and J Lever in 1966, Faber and Faber publishers.

Wycombe District Council's Transport and Major Projects Service has a number of publications which offer further guidance. Ask the Conservation Officer for information on Heritage Guidance Notes currently available. The recently published Chilterns Buildings Design Guide provides guidance aimed at conserving the qualities which make the Chilterns a landscape of national importance. Copies can be inspected/or purchased at the District Council Offices. It is used by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance

The Conservation Officer is always pleased to give advice on all heritage matters and can be contacted on 01494 421578 or seen by appointment in the Council Offices or on site. Development Control matters within the Upper North Dean Conservation Area are the responsibility of the East Team who can be contacted on 01494 421517. Planning Policy matters are the responsibility of the Policy Unit who can be contacted on 01494 421545.

Trees and Vegetation

Hedges run throughout the conservation area, following lines of walls and fences or defining new boundaries, while a number of trees rise behind the village and extend in places up valley sides. These features enhance the impression of enclosure created by the built form. Some of the more important trees, tree groups and hedges are indicated on the conservation area map, however all trees in conservation areas are afforded special protection and care should be exercised to ensure their maintenance.

Open Space

The only open space in the village is the Village Hall field. Otherwise, development hugs the road tightly at the village centre, with verges broadening slightly at the edges. There are individual areas of outdoor space in the form of private gardens and walled courtyards, which are important to the setting of the cottages. Surrounding open fields also contribute to the rural atmosphere of the village. Every consideration should be given to the preservation of these important features.



Brick and flint walls and hedges line the road through Upper North Dean

Settings and Views

There are a number of views within the conservation area which should be preserved, some of which are noted on the map. Attractive views of the surrounding countryside are visible from various points within the village, but views into the conservation area from its surroundings are restricted somewhat by tree growth. A particularly fine view of the of the village, nestled among the trees in the valley bottom, can be obtained by following the footpath up the side of the valley east from the village.



View of Upper North Dean from the eastern ridge