

East Hanney

A Study of Village Character

**East Hanney Neighbourhood Plan - Appendix E
Character Assessment**

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character





Allowing the past to help the design of our future

**31 December 2020
References updated to December 2021**

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. The Neighbourhood Plan and Village Character | 7 |
| 2. East Hanney - The Spirit of the Place and its History | 8 |
| Following the Stream | 8 |
| Vernacular Character Building | 9 |
| A Short History of East Hanney | 10 |
| Tracks, Spaces and Ghosts | 13 |
| 3. The Process for Assessing Village Character | 17 |
| Methodology..... | 18 |
| Selecting the Character Areas..... | 18 |
| 4. The Selected Character Areas of East Hanney | 19 |
| Map of the 8 Character Areas..... | 20 |
| Assessing Area Character Significance and Heritage Value | 21 |
| Recommendations for managing village character in future | 21 |
| 5. Character areas 1a and 1b | 22 |
| Overview | 22 |
| Character Area 1a | 22 |
| Area 1a Character assessment..... | 23 |
| Character Area Summary | 24 |
| 6. Character Area 1b..... | 27 |
| Overview | 27 |
| Area 1b Character assessment..... | 29 |
| Character Area Summary | 30 |
| 7. East Hanney Character Area 2 - Ashfields Lane and its Closes | 33 |
| Overview | 33 |
| Character Assessment..... | 33 |
| Character Area 2 Summary | 34 |
| 8. East Hanney Character Area 3 - Main Street - the Eastern Closes..... | 36 |
| Overview | 36 |
| Character assessment | 36 |
| Character Area Summary | 37 |
| 9. East Hanney Character Area 4 - Main Street - the Western paths and lanes | 39 |
| Overview | 39 |
| Character assessment | 39 |
| Character Area Summary | 40 |
| 10. East Hanney Character Area 5 - The Western Approach, the Mills, the Causeway, the Hall, | |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| the School and Letcombe Brook | 43 |
| Overview | 43 |
| Character assessment | 43 |
| Character Area Summary | 44 |
| The Letcombe Brook, Hanney wildlife and Ecology | 46 |
| 11. East Hanney Character Area 6 - Eastern East Hanney..... | 48 |
| Overview | 48 |
| Character assessment | 49 |
| Character Area Summary | 50 |
| 12. East Hanney Character Area 7 - Recreation, Footpaths and Amenity Areas and the wider parish 53 | |
| Overview | 53 |
| Character assessment | 53 |
| Character Area Summary | 54 |
| 13. East Hanney Character Area 8 - The Outer Parish – History, Archaeology and Agriculture.. | 56 |
| Overview | 56 |
| Character Area Summary | 57 |
| Hanney Before the Normans | 58 |
| 14. Contribution to character - agriculture in the East | 60 |
| 15. Contribution to character - village approaches and the Hanney Gap | 62 |
| Approaches to East Hanney and the Gap | 64 |
| 16. The Hanney Vernacular Style and appropriate future guidance | 66 |
| 17. East Hanney – Overall Issues for Planning Policies | 69 |
| 18. Moving Forwards – a Summary | 71 |
| Appendix 1: Villagers’ thoughts on the essence of East Hanney’s character - An overview..... | 72 |
| Summary of Villager’s Key Points | 76 |
| Appendix 2: Saving Hanney for future generations..... | 77 |
| Responses by Years 5/6 at Hanney School – March 2020 | 77 |
| Appendix 3: East Hanney – Summary of Listed Buildings 2020..... | 80 |
| Appendix 4: The Conservation Areas showing Listed Buildings | 81 |
| Appendix 5: Notable Unlisted Buildings with Possible Potential for Inclusion for listing? | 82 |
| Appendix 6: Page of statistics on Population Growth 1086 -2020 | 84 |
| | 84 |

Frontispiece: Jasmine Cottage – Grade 2 Listed building with 2018 extension – an excellent example of Hanney ancient and modern

**Dedicated to Jane Clarke (14/02/1945 to 07/07/2020) who lived in
and loved this village for over 40 years**



East Hanney from the South West– An aerial view – around 2015
Courtesy Dene Stringfellow

1. The Neighbourhood Plan and Village Character

Neighbourhood Plans enable communities to take a lead in producing part of the statutory development plan for their area. These plans must be used to determine planning applications in the area. In East Hanney, this area is the whole parish. The East Hanney Neighbourhood Plan (EHNP) was created to design policies for the future development and safeguarding of the parish. A long series of consultation events, questionnaires and surveys helped establish which features of village structure and daily life were valued by residents. These are summarised later in this review. This has allowed us to clearly confirm what type of village we wish to live in and suggest what size and style of new development will be appropriate in the future.

The aim of this document is to collate the findings of a large, independent, and diverse group of local residents. They identified those features within the built environment that contribute to the unique and distinctive character of East Hanney. They sought to define the aspects of the village that created a sense of place that was valued by villagers. Many of these residents also fought to defend these when faced with the many excessive and inappropriate development proposals of recent years.

Elements of character in EHNP include both the social and economic uses of the area as well as its physical aspects, such as building styles, construction materials, architectural details, and landscape features. Character also includes the more emotional and personal factors, such as the historical, cultural, and social associations of any place or building. This is why the many personal statements in this report add real value.

This Character Assessment will be used to design relevant policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and to help guide future development in the parish. These will concentrate on what aspects contribute to making the village a popular and pleasant place to live in, and how best to retain the architecture, behaviour and social organisations that support this environment.

Although it contains many memorable and often listed buildings in much loved settings, East Hanney has a complex community history that is reflected in a very varied architecture. This diversity is harder to classify than in some local villages that have a more unified building pattern. This report uses eight 'character areas' to help define the village's zones of difference, and to identify the features, themes and characteristics of each.

Nationally, Neighbourhood Plans have helped many villages in this way. Conversations to establish the character of whole communities have been rare in the past, with the debate usually concentrated on the finer architectural points rather than the way that building style and street design works in an organic and complex way to produce a better community and to preserve what is already operating well. This plan aims to highlight what is best in East Hanney and create a strategy for conserving it.

2. East Hanney - The Spirit of the Place and its History

The character of East Hanney is hard to evaluate objectively but most would agree that it is strong, convoluted, and usually positive. Even the Hanney Facebook page often takes a half full view of village life, with praise for others easily outweighing the grumbles. East Hanney has evolved through a complex blend of influences with none being especially dominant, save for the naturally underlying influences of the place of location, in the rural environment of the southern Vale alongside the presence of the Letcombe Brook, around which the area was first settled, and the village then grew. This growth of the broader village, both in environmental and human terms, has until recently been steady and organic. Times have often tested the villagers and this challenging history has built a sturdy culture. The village has suffered decline as well as expansion in its past. Recently the village has experienced a rapid expansion in housing much of which has been by developers, of which only a few have demonstrated any apparent feeling for the locality, this has resulted in some bland designs or designs which have only partially reflected the character of the village, both architecturally and socially.

The very rapid growth and change seen in the last 5 years, together with housing approvals still in process, mean that after a 1000-year history of organic growth and stability, the village has suddenly found itself needing to support a doubling of the population. It is important in light of the pace of change, that the character of the village is not lost and that future development embraces and reflects the character and sense of place. The rate of change has become too rushed, yet a refreshed Hanney spirit may still refine the efforts of the spirit level? A period of consolidation for the village to settle and to build new and endeavouring community relationships is needed.

Following the Stream

It is likely that the Letcombe Brook defined the size and shape of what is now the parish of East Hanney, and it certainly exerts a definite influence on its character. The name, ending in 'ey' denotes an 'island' – in this case a gravel platform that offered relative security in a marshy prehistoric landscape. The position of the initial settlements, mostly along the east side of the Letcombe Brook, makes it drawn out and etiolated. Main Street and its extensions confirm this direction. The brook also defines the Manor of Philberds, which runs along the western side and is part of the parish. The waters provided power over the years to up to five mills, producing materials as different as silk, wartime components and animal foodstuffs. At least three bridges crossed the brook - Dandridge's, a character stone bridge and corner turn by the Mill; Iron Bridge, a footbridge and place for shopping, socialising and playing 'Poohsticks'; and West's Bridge, leading to a bridleway to Poughley and West Hanney. A view of the Brook from the Iron Bridge below is seen overleaf.

Ditches and water systems were developed and became increasingly sophisticated as the village grew. They linked with the Brook and served farms, houses, inhabitants, water, stock and gardens; they overflowed into ponds, filled dipping holes outside cottages without wells, carved ditches to drain heavily watered arable fields and enrich water meadows - producing desirable land prized by its many landowners - medieval abbeyes at home and abroad, monarchs and rich Edwardian businessmen. Many of these control measures are still visible today and the recent improvements following the 2007 floods stressed their partly forgotten effectiveness and value.

Floods were common in earlier times, leading to characteristic physical features such as causeways and raised walkways, cottages on platforms above the road and flagstone paths. By the nineteenth century, water could be of a variable quality as industrial and agricultural waste and spills entered the watercourse, especially from upstream. There was even a village bathing place built to make up

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

for the lack of running water. This, however, was only for men!



The Letcombe Brook features throughout this narrative. It is a slow flowing chalk stream with special flora and fauna that makes it a rich and rare habitat. It is mostly unspoilt, having largely recovered from past pollution, mostly from the leather works in 'Black Wantage', but is still in need of conservation and forms part of the Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network. Otters and voles have returned. It is a critical pillar of the spirit of the Hanneys and was a dominant influence in its evolution. The view above is to the north from the Iron Bridge

Vernacular Character Building

The village reflects a succession of local materials in its older buildings. The simplest were built from the most easily accessible materials - local timber as a frame with panels made from wattle from the brook and daubed with clay and animal dung from around the building site. Such buildings breathe and have a natural empathy with the land around them. Thatched roofs are still found in most areas of the older village and many chimneys still show where tiles have replaced them in recent years. More important buildings used large beams from local sources. Wooden frameworks were laid out by local carpenters, often using timber from the huge elm trees which were characteristic of the area. The timber was cut by expert carpenters using sawpits, evidence for which can be seen on the village green or in-house names.

Good quality stone was scarce locally and was often used in more expensive buildings as a damp-proof foundation for the timber frame and at gable ends. Large stones were used for footpaths and causeways to keep people dry. Smaller stones made walls to define property boundaries.

At the end of the 17th century, brick reappeared, having been common locally in Roman times. Those from local brickworks differed slightly according to the clay variety used. Vitrified (overburnt) dark bricks, were prized for making patterns – with different versions around the village. Special bricks were used to emphasise features such as windows, needing special skills to create them or the

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

dentelle tile line defining a roof. Many Hanney buildings use red, blue, and black bricks' either overall or in details on the faces or on walls, as in Halls Lane.

The coming of the railway increased the use of brick and added more varieties to the local reds. Slate came from Wales by canal and rail to give an alternative to thatch roofs. There was significant re-use of materials, sometime making dating difficult. Buildings themselves were re-used well before the days of barn conversions. Dates, initials on particular buildings, insurance plaques all add to the historical patina.

Some ironwork railings, often of individual design and perhaps made by one of the blacksmithing families, have survived the wartime scrap collections. Unusually, some are listed: 'Robey Villa' is one. They can have the maker's name on. Current names of buildings reflect previous usage - 'The Old Bakery'. 'Sawpits', 'The Malthouse' 'The Crown'. Corrugated iron often adds atmosphere when used to repair/maintain old buildings, e.g. the lovely but dilapidated barn in Snuggs Lane. The barns in the ancient orchard to the south east of Dandridge's Mill have had rare archaeological features identified. [see photo below] The usual attitude of modernisers is to start again but brick bonds, rooflines, gables, porches, etc are all features that can be copied in modern buildings and offer a link to the past. The façade of the old barns hides many architectural features and designs lost in so many other buildings and these need to be protected.



A Short History of East Hanney

It is reasonable to assume that man had first settled in small farmsteads scattered through the site of East Hanney at least two millennia ago. Nomadic groups certainly passed through well before then: Neolithic pottery has been found near the causeway in 2016. Iron Age hill forts were located nearby, and the area was probably mostly cleared and farmed by that period. The Romans followed, attracted by the riches to be gathered, and many artefacts and some burials were found in the 2015 excavations south of Summertown. The road from Wantage north through Hanney may not have been a major Roman road but it was definitely a link to a significant farming area with villas and settlements. More farmsteads lay to the east, along the Steventon Road. The Saxons followed, and

the 'Hanney Brooch' burial was found in a metal detector rally in 2009, nearer to Denchworth. The village is first recorded in Saxon charter grants made to Abingdon Abbey in 956 and 968 AD. See page 59 for a fuller survey of these early periods.

After the Norman conquest, the 1086 Domesday Book records ownership by several important landowners. It is difficult to assess the total inhabitants of the various manors but in total there were up to 5 mills and 56 households. There was a mill just south of the current village, marked today by a definite loop in the boundary with West Hanney. The first recorded settlement may have been at the Manor of Southbury in the current area of Summertown which evolved earlier than the 14th century. The recently listed Orchard Cottage is most likely to be a remaining fragment of this estate.

At the opposite end of the village, the Manor of Long Hanney held a long area of land along the brook, perhaps through to the Greens. The manor belonged to Abingdon Abbey until the Reformation when it passed to richer members of the Court of Henry V111. Ebb's Lane at the top end of the village still shows the layout of its early street patterns with deserted settlements and fields to the north of present dwellings. Nowadays and further south, bungalows fill in some gaps where picturesque, but decaying cottages once stood.

Lands of this Manor were intermingled with those of the Manor of Herles Court, owned by the Dewe family. The manor house was completely demolished in 1816. All that hints of its earlier presence is the curve in Main Street, opposite Robey Villa, and the name of a modern House 'Lakeside'. The new estate by Bovis stands on the water meadows which surrounded the house. A third Manor was the Manor of Philberds, a separate tithing which filled the land between the Cow Lane route between Grove and Garford and the Brook. It consisted of three farms: Weir, Poughley and Bastables. The Manor had its own chapel first mentioned in 1170. This was probably sited alongside the Brook by the small bridge at West's Mill. The chapel ceased to function in about 1545 at the time of the Reformation, the village had to wait 300 years for a church of its own.

From an early stage the village had a shared land system, with four main arable fields divided into strips. The extensive meadows were also divided. Enclosure of the village mostly took place in 1803, although there had been an earlier phase in the 1520's. It could have been that this land was depopulated. The effects of the Black Death, animal diseases and a 'mini-ice age' weather caused a severe drop in population in the second half of the 1300s. Slowly the area recovered and, by the 1500's, local farmers became more prosperous gentlemen. Some of their fine burial brasses can be seen in West Hanney Church.

A turnpike was built in 1771 to link up existing turnpikes and to increase trade in the area. The A338 crossroads became more commercial, with pubs such as the Crown and the Plough catering for growing business. Shops increased in number and blacksmiths and waggoners were kept busy. The Wilts and Berks Canal helped trade when it was built nearby in 1810 and the Great Western Railway opened new markets in London from 1840. However, the agricultural market began to be overcome by imported goods and the large farms, serviced by many families, began to suffer from falling demand. Their paternal protective role appears to have declined. The workers were by this time packed into old farmhouses, which had been converted into poor quality accommodation. Disease and infant mortality became more common, and the population fell. In 1893, a Government Report examining rural poverty recorded the Hanneys as two of the worst villages in North Berkshire. In an attempt to create new markets, farmers planted orchards to supply the London trade. Walnuts were grown as well as fruit. Many orchards survived operationally until the 1960's and some of these old trees remain and are in ecologically sensitive areas that need to be both protected and enhanced. It is important for the character of East Hanney that these areas are safeguarded.

Farms grew and developed and by 1851, there were nine farms in the village. A collection of craftsmen grew up to service them and the village inhabitants. There were at least three pubs and other shops and tradesmen scattered through the village, not only at 'Four Shoot' where a busy forge stood. The villages developed a network of support services, organising the management of the poor as well as the parish assuming responsibility for charities, law and order, and the condition of the roads. The school opened in 1845 and parish councils started in 1884. East Hanney still had no traditional village church of its own. It only gained a Chapel of Ease in 1858 when St James the Less was built, partly as a response to the increasing numbers of non-conformist worshippers after the chapel. The Mission still prospered however but St James the Great in West Hanney remained the main church of the Parish; East Hanney inhabitants are still buried there and pay tythes today.

A large amount of land was given by Phillip Pusey, a local landowner, to East and West Hanney for use as allotments: it later provided space for the building of a new school in the 1840s. The land has continued to be of service as the site of the village hall, recreation grounds, playgrounds, tennis courts and when the last village shops and bakery closed in 1988, for the Community Shop and Post Office.

World War One brought a new and devastating experience to the village as men went to war. Women often stepped into the role of breadwinner during and after the conflict: 27 Hanney men fell for their country. Afterwards there was a demand for new homes 'fit for heroes'. In response to this, houses were eventually built along The Causeway in the 1930's.

James Holmes, a village philanthropist, bought up and renovated some of the decaying cottages within the village around this time, which fortunately we still can enjoy today. Mr Holmes' sons came home in 1919 and ran a famous 'Flying Circus' from the village, offering trial flights from locations across the United Kingdom until 1925. Inspired perhaps by the problems faced by the large families he knew, James Holmes also ran a postal contraceptive service from his home. His visiting friends included H.G. Wells and G.B. Shaw.

World War Two again called on villagers to help the war effort through activities such as offering accommodation to evacuees, employing land girls, forming a 'Dad's Army' Home Guard unit and working on armaments in the 'shadow' factories at Dandridge's Mill and elsewhere. The W.I. organised a canning operation. Life was also enlivened by U.S. airmen from Grove. Casualties were lighter than WW1 but still had a dreadful impact on the community.

Post war, fresh employment was offered just outside the village, especially at A.E.R.E Harwell, and new accommodation was built. A bus service opened up other job opportunities, but our nearby Wantage Road station closed. Mains water and electricity increased amenities. New residents with more free time resulted in clubs and societies, which brought both Hanneys together to work to improve facilities and offer a stimulating range of sports and interests for all. A village newsletter and a website still keep us all in touch.

Recent major responses have centred on countering plans for a potential reservoir in East Hanney and successfully opposing some of a stream of applications for new housing in the village. Concern about flooding produced an extremely successful Flood Group. And more recently still, COVID 19 is our latest challenge. Hanney villagers are still supporting each other!

Tracks, Spaces and Ghosts

These three elements are sometimes invisible and certainly ever-changing, but they make the village unique. They offer a canvas and a real sense of mystery: tracks to the south and Wessex; tracks from the north and the Thames crossings; echoes of old Roman and Iron Age routes rather than major roads. Tracks crossed to West Hanney and St. James the Great church, the main centre for worship and burial.

Lanes going towards the fields often ended in footpaths to field marks by the brook, marking old settlements lost to plague or 19th century depression and depopulation. Varying amounts of street space mark a complex and ever adapting early layout. There were few straight lines and many vistas. There are echoes of farmyards, in building layouts as well as by the conversion of old farm barns. The footpaths of Hanney track its history and must be preserved.

Our Greens linked the village at its heart, perhaps having been one large area broken into smaller parts such as Manor Green, still with a picturesque line of cottages and Manor Farm. The site of the Giant Elm, the village Swing, sawpits, and the Annual Village Fair; Church Green - with the village church, the village shop and post office.; Four Shoot Green with seats round Chestnut trees, recently excellently restored, facing the old Plough Pub [now La Fontana] and the village pound; a blacksmiths' shop stood on the corner where 'Holmes' Garden' now stands. This contains the ashes of J.R. Holmes, village benefactor. Our greens offer vital space for tranquil reflection.

Ancient Green Men carved in stone greet worshippers in the West Hanney church porch but lingering round this green area are subtler ghosts and memories of things past: the road saw many marching armies – from Roman to Royalist. In the 1930's and earlier, unemployed men waited here for offers of work. 'Gentlemen of the road' camped in traditional unenclosed spaces. In the 1940's the Home Guard patrolled the crossroads and the railway, and the U.S. airmen sampled warm beer in the pubs. On one occasion, an entire circus passed on its way to the station! All their spirits help define Hanney.

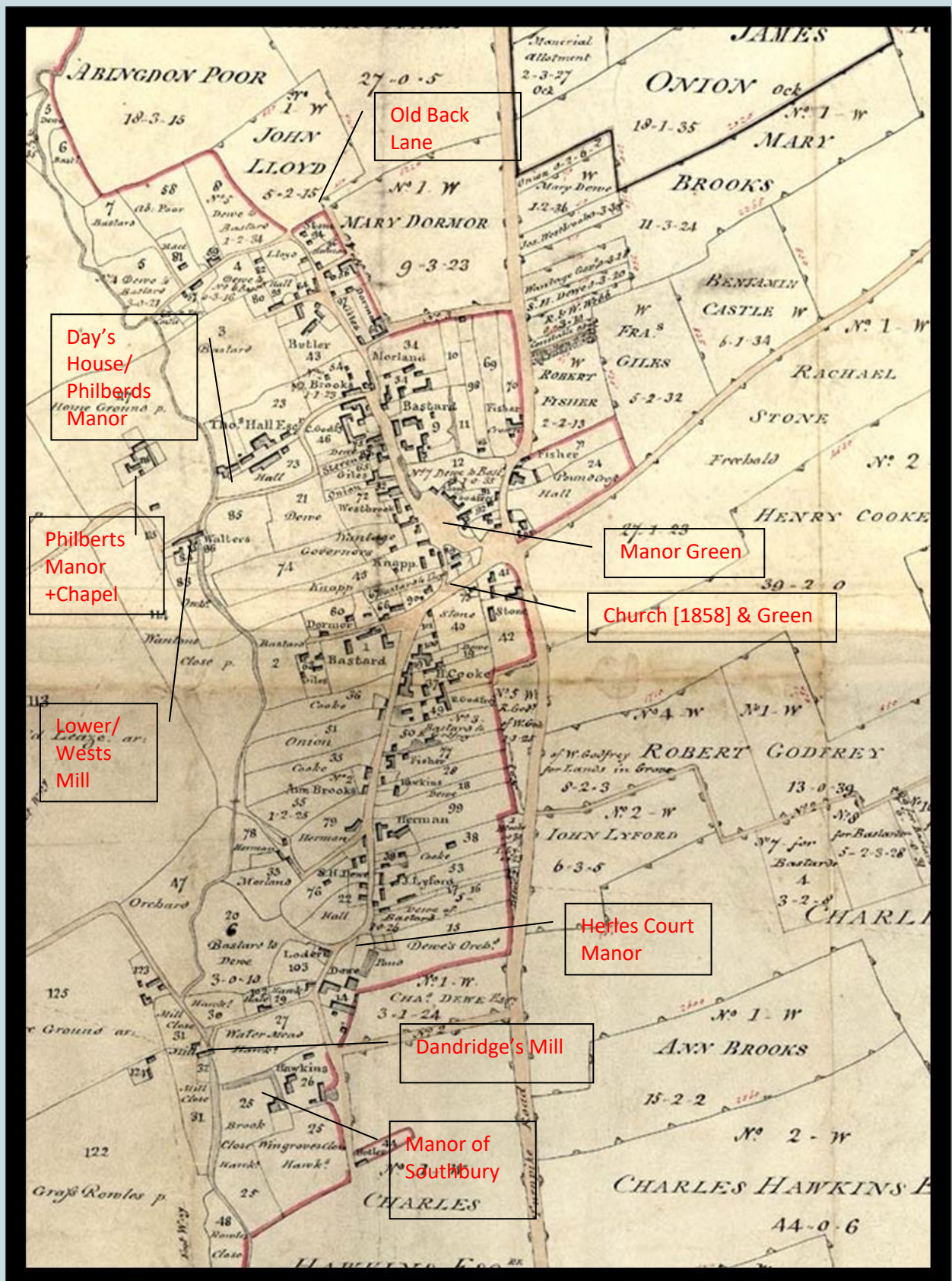
Over the last 200 years, Hanney society has shifted from a paternal presence to a more planned and organised structure, with more emphasis on improving the community and providing more general services. This has been carried out with a light touch and usually with the consent and understanding of the village. In a similar spirit, it rejected plans (with the support of the Housing Inspector) for a mass of housing (applications for some 520 additional dwellings have been refused in the last 5 years), that would have created an entirely different community. It still wishes to remain an Oxfordshire village rather than a mere suburb.

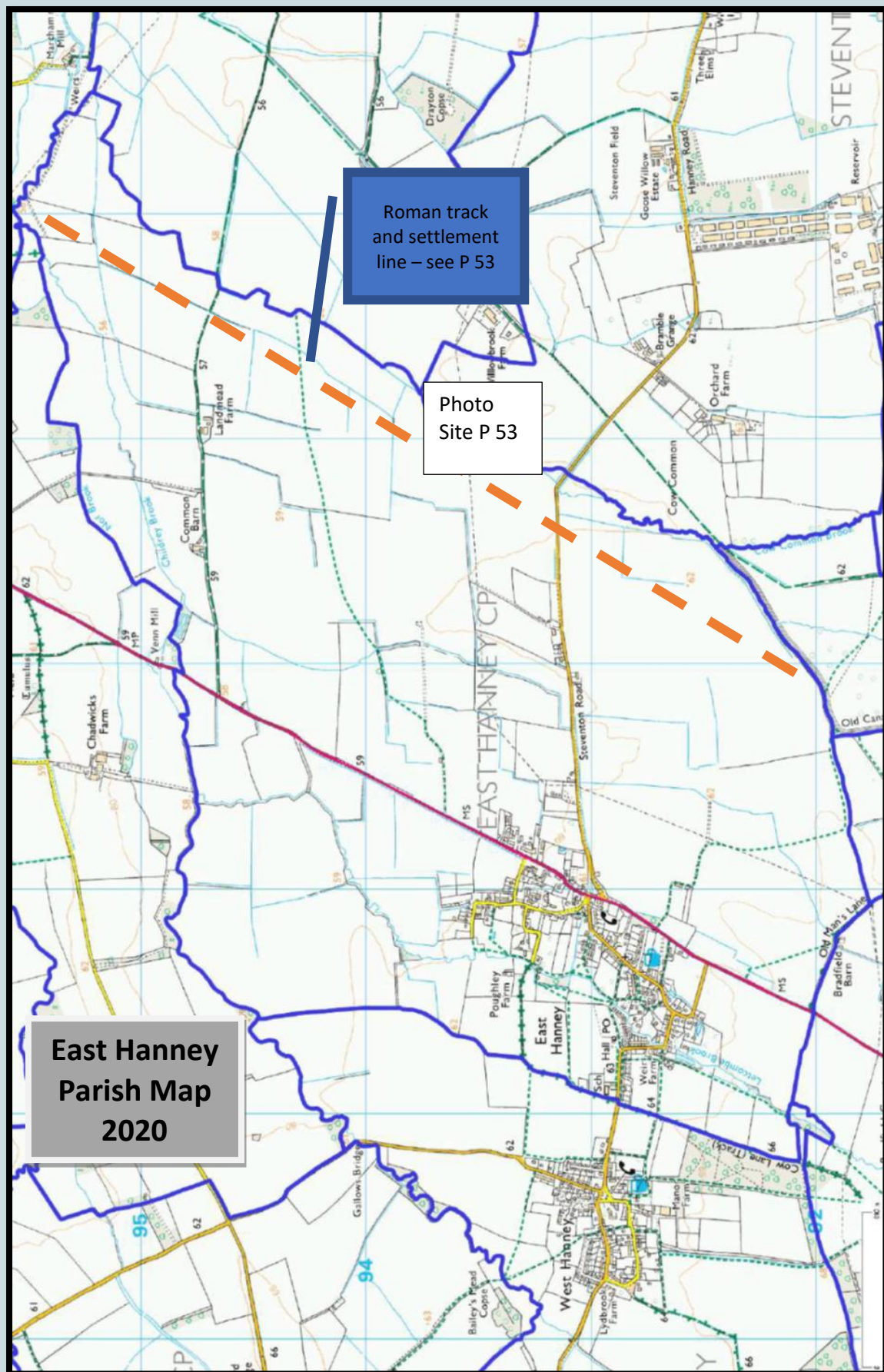
East Hanney has developed an ethos based on an assertive reaction to challenges, while maintaining an open and friendly spirit. It has in recent times dealt with issues such as a flood risk, fought off inappropriate development and handled COVID 19. It does much of this in concert with its neighbours in West Hanney, sharing many facilities but maintaining that well known pre-social distance phenomena, the Hanney Gap. Once a year, at the Michaelmas Fair, a tug of war decides the mightier village.



The Plough in about 1900
[Today this building is submerged within La Fontana]

The Enclosure Map of 1803 [detail] showing the village centre, the sites of the old manors, some of the Greens, and the main mills on Letcombe Brook. This map can still be used to navigate the village, apart from the recent estates.







2010 Lidar [ground mapping radar] Map of East Hanney showing the 1771 turnpike, other routes, the past and present ridge and furrow, ploughing 'headlands', old house plots in the north part of the village, and the route of the Letcombe Brook. Compare this with the earlier 1803 Enclosure Map.

3. The Process for Assessing Village Character

Methodology

The process has been based on the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit and has six elements:

1. Visual assessment: The main process used was the inspection of the village streets, vistas and landscapes. A core team* of six people were involved in this process.
2. Desk research was completed in Hanney and elsewhere. Visits have been made to the local history archives in the public record offices in Reading and Oxford.
3. Local consultation: An initial survey of residents was made, based on the Oxford Character Assessment questionnaire, adapted for East Hanney
4. Historic mapping search: Key maps were used to describe changes. These will start with Roque's Map of 1761, The Enclosure map of 1803, The Ordnance surveys from 1883 to the present.
5. Photography – current and historic: The report is illustrated by current [2017-20] photos and some earlier views. All are arranged by area and summarised. Current and earlier aerial/ satellite photography was also used to assess village changes.
6. Areas for analysis: 8 'character areas' were selected for walking inspections and for a thematic analysis. These surveys are described below and shown on a local map. Their heritage values were assessed under the Historic England Methodology.

The assessment provides a detailed description of the built form within East Hanney and identifies both the positive and negative aspects, thereby creating a list of features and design criteria to incorporate in future development

Selecting the Character Areas

Areas were selected which are broadly linked by common characteristics or geography. These were defined by:

- Their landscape situation or natural clustering on greens or critical streets
- The length of time a group of dwellings has co-existed
- Their architectural character and their conjunction with other buildings and natural landmarks
- Their history and their sense of place in the current community
- The village has a complex and irregular plan. It is split by the A338 and Letcombe Brook along which it has evolved. To keep the number of areas manageable and meaningful, some compromises were made, where these criteria overlapped. All the groups below reflect this. The conservation areas (it splits effectively into 2 areas) also offered an imperfect boundary, as it excluded key buildings and needed expansion at its extremities.

4. The Selected Character Areas of East Hanney

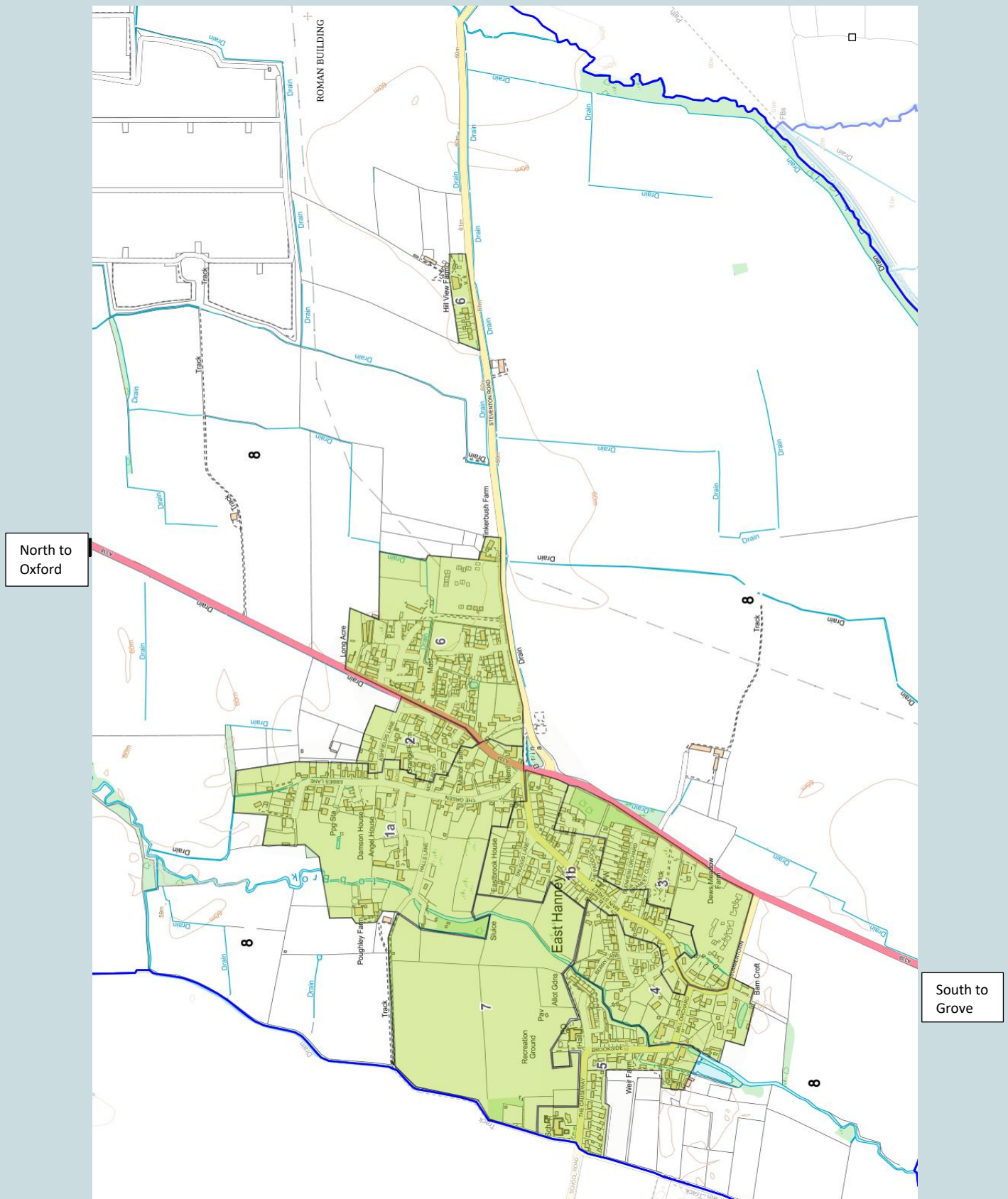
1. **The Extended Conservation Area:** the conservation area consists of the streets that constituted 'Long Hanney', the name used around 1700 when the separate parts of the village consolidated on the pre-Turnpike Oxford – Wantage road, running north and south from the Five Ways junction. This forms the spine of the modern village and contains much of the listed and other older property. This area includes all buildings facing onto Main Street, the Green and Ebbs Lane. These are effectively split by the A338 junction into north and south zones [1a and 1b]
2. **Ashfields and its neighbouring closes:** Ashfields and Morlands form the centre of a northern group of closes bounded by Green Lane and the A338
3. **Main Street: eastern closes area:** All this area has been infilled since WW2 and forms a mix of dwellings east of the Main Street conservation area and south of Fiveways.
4. **Main Street: western lanes area:** This is a diverse infill area between Letcombe Brook and the 2nd conservation corridor, centred on Berry Lane, Mill Orchard and Summertown.
5. **The west bank of the brook:** A mix of publicly constructed housing, the school, hall and shop, and the listed mill buildings and others on the western side of Letcombe Brook.
6. **The Eastern estates:** This comprises mostly 21st century building in several clusters to the East of A338, and north of the Steventon Road, including a small industrial estate.
7. **Managed recreation and leisure areas:** Green space with formal features such as pitches and footpaths adjoining the village.
8. **The Approaches and the Hanney Gap and the outer parish:** the critical and valued space between the two villages and a summary of the four main approaches. East Hanney also has a wide-ranging green area away from the village which contains several farms and other buildings. This area has a significant history with much to be discovered.

These eight areas form the basis for the Assessment of East Hanney, together constituting the Parish area, these are shown on the map on the following page although this does not show all of the outer parish, which is mapped separately on page 16.

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

Map of the 8 Character Areas

Side on view



Assessing Area Character Significance and Heritage Value

Understanding the values: Following the Historic England Methodology, heritage values are attached to the village character areas under the following headings:

- Evidential value - what historical and archaeological evidence may be present?
- Historical value - of what past historical significance is the site?
- Aesthetic value - is the blend of property in the area itself an exemplar or of critical value in the village street scenery?
- Communal value - how much is the building or area used or valued by the community?

Each area was assessed using these criteria. They should indicate the issues that future policies need to agree and incorporate to improve the structures and spirit of the community

Recommendations for managing village character in future

Section 17 of this report – **East Hanney: Overall Issues for Planning Policies** - lists recommendations to protect key aspects of the character of East Hanney

These include:

- Key buildings and spaces
- The design and nature of construction and materials used
- The identification of local landscape assets and their protection
- The preservation of the atmosphere and style of the community
- Identifying key trees and other planting that enhances the environment

The character assessment was carried out from May to November 2017 by a working group led by Steve McKechnie*. It was supplemented in 2018-20. The following villagers and others collaborated in the project:

Paul Sayers, Ann Fewins*, Stewart Scott, Bill Orson*, Robin Border, Roger Bett, Penny Iles, Clive Fewins, Andy Robertson, Clive Fewins, Gill Parry, Lorene Ashby, Paul Aram, Marion Carter, Keith Diment, Phil Manvell*, Catherine Armstrong, Julie Mabblerley, David Kirk*, Judy Long*, Guy Langton.

*Core team

Photographs: The photographs used were mostly taken in 2017-2020. The only exceptions are the few earlier historic images. There are no copyright issues on the 2017-20 images.

5. Character areas 1a and 1b

Overview

This zone is based around the main conservation area on the east side of Letcombe Brook. This core section is influential in defining the character of East Hanney and the other areas supplement this. It contains three quarters of the village's 28 listed buildings. The history and development of this area is the heart of the village's character and a journey through its past and present is central to understanding the growth and spirit of the village. The final part of the conservation area is focused around the Brook and Dandridge's Mill. This is dealt with in Character Area 5.

East Hanney extends both north and south from where the two old village roads intersected with the 1771 turnpike [or A338] running from Frilford to Wantage, and the cross-country route to Steventon. This junction is known as Five Ways, or Four Shoot Green. The other roads head northwards along The Green to Ebbs Lane and southwards along Main Street to its junction with Summertown and Mill Orchard.

Character Area 1a

We start this section at the north end of the village and follow The Green towards Five Ways. We are also roughly following the land of the well-named Manor of Long Hanney. In some ways this area has the traditional layout of a medieval village. Behind us is Ebb's Lane which it is easy to dismiss yet it has a hidden secret in that this is one of the oldest parts of the village. It had not one, but two main streets linked by a Cross Street. This has disappeared, appropriated over the years by the properties on the western side. To the eastern side lie other tracks leading to the earthworks of more lost village homesteads. Ebbs Lane has its own water supply – God's Ditch, which returns water back to the brook where it is likely a mill stood. There are three of these older cottages left in Ebbs Lane, but the plots of many others remain and together give a feeling of peace and tranquillity and times past. These working homes of the poorer members of past societies then give way to The Green with its larger houses and their medieval plots, which extend behind them through their water meadows to the Brook.

In earlier times the most northern entry to the village, Ashfields Lane, then called Poughley Lane, wound its way along Halls Lane, over West's Bridge and the Letcombe Brook, to the Manor of Philberds and its mediaeval Manor House and Chapel. The track could then join the ancient route between Grove and Garford or progress to West Hanney. Halls Lane then leads to Philberds Manor and its surrounding buildings, all set in spacious fields. Beyond this is the Victorian Lower [or West's] Mill, which adds an impressive element of past industry to the scene and is surely worth a formal listing. Across the brook is Poughley Farm, one of the few working farms left in the Hanneys. All are surrounded by a network of long-established paths.

With Ebbs Lane behind us, we face some of the more important houses of the old village. There are four old farm sites around the entrance to Hall's Lane and as a whole they together give an important indication of the prosperity of this area. Varlins with its Late-Victorian facade replaced a much older thatched farmhouse. The stone wall around it gives an idea of its previous importance. Opposite is the fine brick farmhouse, The Grange, which was a busy farm centre. Across the road is Grange Farmhouse and, hidden behind the hedge, is timber-framed Rose cottage. The last house in this grouping is The Manor Farm, a low, important looking building which was once thatched. In front are the possible remains of a moat. This site had some magnificent barns, the largest one of which was of vast dimensions and was where the harvest suppers were held. It was dismantled by the builders and fortunately saved by being re-erected in Buckinghamshire. Many properties are

surrounded by limestone or brick walls; there are mature trees, and these add to the ensemble effect: this area from Halls Lane is perhaps the richest overall selection of residential buildings in the Hanneys, without ever becoming overly ostentatious. Passing through it is a pleasure throughout the seasons.

This group of houses evolves effortlessly into the Green, still surrounded by old cottages. Others have been lost to fire or rebuilt into later buildings. The cruck beams of one of them gives an indication of their age. Many of the village cottages were over-populated in late-Victorian times and became ruinous and were demolished. There are signs of previous occupations- the sawpits, the site of the village Swing and the base of an enormous Elm Tree which actually had a seat inside. On the other side of the Green each house, although they today are of many ages and merits, stand on regular old plots planned to support a small farm holding with land stretching back to the Brook for meadows and grazing land. It is possible that the Green was a much larger area, joining up with Church Green and Five Ways Green.

One thing that is missing from this picture of rural England is a village church. East Hanney never had a church of its own until 1858 but, as it was only a township, and thus it was part of the mother church of St James the Great in West Hanney, where the inhabitants of East Hanney had to bury their dead and to which they paid church tithes. East Hanney however was a parish in its own right. It was politically spread across two Hundreds in its secular relationship with local and national government and landownership covered several manors. It is no wonder that the village still has many layers. Sadly, St James the Less lasted just over a century and closed in 1976. It is now a house.

You have now reached the starting place of this section, Four Shoot Green. There is a change in atmosphere and a feeling of a different stage in Hanney's history. This change was brought about by the increase in activity from the building of the turnpike, followed by the building of the Berks and Wilts canal and later the Great Western Railway. The introduction of these transport options widened horizons and grew links with a changing world. It was still the centre of the village to watch the world pass by and enjoy a drink at the ancient Plough Inn. Other signs of past history however remain to add depth of interest to this area. A further pub, The Crown, now a house, added additional drinking facilities to the main road. Pound Farm, previously Fishers Farm, stands on an interesting site on a bend in the A338, and, further towards La Fontana, the early Victorian Pound Cottage is on the site of the village pound where straying beasts were impounded. A further farm offered employment. This is now hidden behind mock Georgian pillars. The needs of at least nine farms in late Victorian times provided work for the blacksmith at the crossroads. A cordwainer built intricate Berkshire wagons nearby too.

Area 1a Character assessment

Architecture and Street Plan: this part of Hanney accounts for 12 of the village's 28 listed buildings [see list at rear of this document – Appendix 4]. There are others that should also possibly be listed. The walk from the end of Ebbs Lane to Five Ways, with a diversion down Halls Lane, is a continual visual delight. There are some duller buildings, new and old, but on the whole the entire journey is a pleasure, with a series of different vistas opening before the traveller in both directions, Gardens often make up for the less interesting architecture. Virtually every property offers a contrast in scale, materials or design while retaining an overall harmony, including most of the newer developments in this area. Recent development here has favoured larger properties/ family homes, in contrast to the previous overall mix where smaller homes for first time buyers, older residents and downsizing families, were available. This should be addressed in the requirements for future development.

The meandering route to Five Ways starts with Ebbs Lane, and contains a rich mixture of cottages, bungalows and larger detached homes. The road direction seems determined in part by the route of

the ditches and the housing pattern is varied with no harsh building line. It pivots around the well-restored Northend Cottage, the final building in the conservation area with a wonderful, thatched apple store presenting a picture of East Hanneys past prominent in the street vista. The new development at the southern end of Ebbs Lane occupies spacious plots and has protected a small green around a magnificent walnut, an echo of one of Hanney's key crops in Victorian times. The new houses here incorporating design and materials to integrate as fine village style homes. The bungalows opposite fulfil a valuable function but are an opportunity partly missed on a critical site. Overall, the green area offers a rich contrast of size and style with good planting throughout.

Landscape: The Brook and its flood plain determine the overall shape of older East Hanney on this side of the A338. There are few high points. The attractive bridge at Lower Mill is another focus, recently (2021) replaced due to structural weakness and which was subject to much lobbying to Oxford County Council (OCC) by residents for sympathetic restoration. On the roads, the varying spatial breadth, from the wide greens to the tighter lanes, creates a concertina effect of light, breadth, and shade.

As can be found in other older parts of East Hanney, the lanes feature water courses which run alongside the houses for distribution of water through the village and flood protection. With green verges and running water there is a feeling of peace and calm in these streets. As a rural village, these aspects and the green environment, lack of footpaths, and meandering street forms are key features of the village character.

Access: This area is perhaps the best served in the village, with easy access to the A338, as well as to bus routes and La Fontana restaurant. It is safe, and parking is adequate, while footpaths lead to the shop and village hall and pub, by the road or by the Brook. Traffic is minimal too and the road noise is acceptable, in contrast to Main Street, which still carries buses and much through traffic. Ebbs Lane is a dead end now and Ashfields Lane provides the main practical exit, albeit lightly used. Halls Lane offers access to the Brook and an alternative bridleway to West Hanney. You may need wellingtons in winter!

Character Area Summary

1. **Evidential – High.** The area offers evidence of at least four centuries in its current buildings, despite their mostly modern usage. The detailing of the architecture offers a rich field for discoveries and delight. The archaeological finds and future potential are similarly rich.

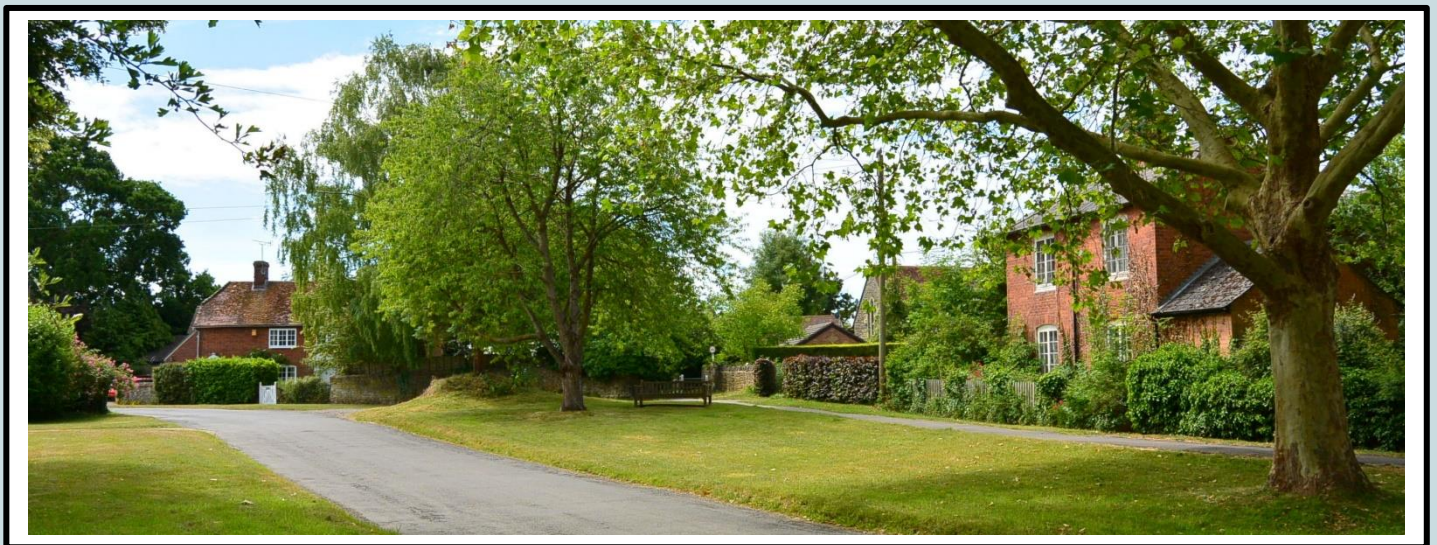
2. **Historical – High.** The area has been occupied since at least Norman times and there is ample reason to suppose for several millennia before that. A chapel was sited on the western bank of the brook until 1546. Many 'lumps and bumps' indicate past buildings. The current buildings in the conservation area display its agricultural past; the mill and its cottages link with this. The Brook supports this assumption too. Place names emphasise past uses and histories.

3. **Aesthetic – High.** Both individually and together, the sense of village history conferred by the buildings throughout this area is very strong. It is demonstrated by both the quality of individual buildings and their overall blend. They also stand out as a succession of spatial experiences, with many open aspects, especially to the north and west. The green landscaping is similarly rich. It is an English village community at its subtle best.

4. **Communal Value – High.** People value living here and demonstrate this by the care that is taken of the whole area. Others in the wider village gain satisfaction from it too and the streetscapes here have created a sense of local wellness for all. The conservation area has certainly helped to emphasize and protect this.



Green Space is Critical to the Character of East Hanney: Farmhouses, barn and church conversions, cottages, ancient walls and old shops are all featured in these northerly and southerly views of The Green, taken from about the same spot. Electricity wires are unfortunately a frequent feature throughout the Hanneys, but we are almost completely spared street lighting.



Ebbs Lane, the Green and Halls Lane



Northend Cottage & apple store –last house in village



New buildings and parking on the green



Philberd's Manor, previously Day's House



Well converted listed barns at Varlins



Protected railings and house at the Grange



Manor Fm. – one of 9 farms originally in East Hanney



26 Nethercot – tiles replacing thatch



Cruck Cottage – on the Green

6. Character Area 1b

Overview

This section describes the southernmost of East Hanney's pair of major street routes, the road from Five ways to Summertown along St James Way and then Main Street. This is equally rich but has a different character to Manor Green. It feels more active and perhaps more commercial. Once it had shops, a smithy, and a church, but today only a pub remains, although a bus stops regularly on Main Street, the main bus stop in the heart of the village. Traffic is busier and you are likely to see more passers-by. It feels more active, and the building variety is different. It is slightly straighter, feels wider and is more open. There are some grand properties from the past set back, some listed and others worthy of listing. The northern end seems more like a village centre despite the traffic on the A338.

To explore the history of Character Area 1b, it is best to approach it from the narrow passage which leads from the Green onto Main St past the old P.O. This walled cut through has itself a sense of history with solid walls creeping between property boundaries. The letter box marks the broad site of three previous Post Offices. To its right is an attractive group of artisan buildings which formed the busy commercial heart of the village in 19th and early 20th centuries. Here stood, at various times, apart from the Post Office, Long's Bakery, a rival to the Carter bakery at the corner of Ebb's Lane, a general store and sweet shop and newsagent. They are all now private residences, but together are still very much part of a village. On the other side of the cut through is the Church of St James the Less, one of G.E. Street's simpler Gothic designs for the Diocese of Oxford and typically Berkshire rural, built by public subscription, often using local artisan skills. Loaves of bread from the bakery were given away to worshippers in times of poverty.

You are now roughly entering a different manor, that of Prior's Court which first belonged to the Priory of Noion in Normandy. Over the centuries, however, the lands of the manor appear to have been broken up and become smaller land. In general, the farms and farmhouses were on the western side of the street, with meadows and later orchards on the Brook side. There is a great variety of buildings including the Lower Manor, a Georgian house with finely worked brick on the southwest side, but workaday finish on the farmyard side (where Aldworths Close has been built). Next to this close is the Old Malthouse, which reflects an early, probably manorial, usage. The actual malthouse has now gone, but was of definite commercial size, and the current Old Malthouse, its previous neighbour, is of some architectural importance. Opposite it is an area of land based on Snuggs Lane (previously Bath Lane leading to the village bathing place). There is a small cottage at its entrance, Chestnut Cottage, which has early timber detailing. At the entry to Snugg's lane is Darden House, another building which has a checkered history and at one stage contained a pub, but it is best remembered until recently as a veritable emporium, selling not only groceries, but home-slaughtered meat, coal, bean sticks and other garden requisites.

This area also has evidence of an earlier past as apart from the listed Sunnybank, Chapel Cottage, Lilac Cottage and Jasmine Cottage, there are other old cottages/farmhouses hidden in The Mulberries. There was also a continuing row of cottages adjacent to Lilac Cottage and also across the road in front of where the Old Housen now stands. Berry Lane, (once Nightingale Lane) wiggles its way past Nightingale Cottage to the Iron Bridge. The Manor of Herles Court/Priory Manor was later owned by the Herles and Dewe family. This Manor is difficult to track, as parts of other manors were absorbed into it, such as the Manor of Southbury at the southern end of the village.

Immediately south of the Black Horse pub is a row of mid - 19th century cottages. Some were occupied by families working for the bigger houses or as farm labourers. This area has interesting

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

layers of history typical of the village. The three cottages were once five. Behind them can still be found a row of privies and a communal wash house [not in current use!], which drained into Main Street's ditch. The attractive cottage 'Tamarisk', with an 1826 date on a brick, was once a pub, 'The Ramping Cat', in around 1900. It later housed Donny McDouall, the author of the village's best known 1939 evacuee memoirs. The cottages are built with a range of slightly different bricks from unidentified local brick pits. Lay Cottage was built about 1850 to accommodate staff from the gaunt Lay House, once a centre of village festivities. This larger home is currently being improved. The central site of Prior's Manor /Herles Court lies further along at a bend in Main Street and is now behind two modern houses. [see approx. site on map below.] It was sold in 1816 by the Dewe



The Southwest of East Hanney in March 1944 showing almost all of Character Area 1b [and much of 3,4, and 5]. The area in this photo will soon contain around 200 homes additional homes built between 1950-2021. Only around 50 are here at the time of this image. The blue star marks the approximate site of Herles Court.

family and demolished with all its materials advertised for sale in the Reading Mercury. A fine water meadow, with well-defined ridge and furrow behind the site of the house, was often visited by rare species. This has unfortunately been lost to development and is at present being built on by Bovis Homes. It appears that their estate has a distinctly suburban layout. And the Southern approach will require extensive landscaping to ensure the approach is more in keeping with a lowland Vale village

The southern part of the conservation area has fewer grand dwellings than its northern counterpart, but is substantive and offers buildings fine in character reflective of local design and materials. There are six listed buildings, plus one in Snuggs Lane. In terms of variety, however, it excels. Other properties could perhaps be included in a future listing? However, it has the appearance of an

interesting and active street. The pub is the large central feature, sitting at an uncertain angle, yet the chapel is doing well and can even cause a traffic jam when the service is popular. Main Street does seem to have a different character and that element of diversity adds to the Hanney mix. It seems to work too for the villagers. It is, after all, Main Street. Later on, when there is just one passenger in the light of the late Wantage bus, it becomes a dark, quiet and timeless village road.

Area 1b Character assessment

Architecture and Street Plan: Fiveways was the commercial and ecclesiastical hub. La Fontana restaurant was then The Plough and there were at least two shops and another pub. In Victorian times, agriculture dominated much of the street. There were at least three farms and their outbuildings on the eastern side. East Hanney would have housed at least 150 horses! The western side was fairly open and mostly orchards. This can be seen in the 6-inch ordnance survey map of the village of 1881 [page 32], which remained an almost valid document for the whole village due to lack of change, until just after World War Two.

The street [Main Street + St James View] follows an S curve from the A338 to the junction with Mill Orchard. Snuggs Lane leads off westwards near the top, and others follow on either side. [These other side ways are described separately]. The building line varies throughout and is never intrusive. The post war public housing at the northern end is built in broad alignment with a local style in its bricks, roof pitch and chimneys, and its relative starkness is softened by the generous front gardens and some angled frontages. The local authority did, however, ruin the corner of Blenheim Orchard by adding the bland block form bungalow structures, 'Ye Old Housen', in the place of old thatched cottages. The type of accommodation it offers is certainly necessary, but the block erected, made little contribution visually in a critical site, more disappointing because of its location next to the conservation zone.

The street starts well at the northern end with the green and small memorial garden. The gentle 19th Century terrace on the northern side, once old shops, is confronted by a collection of chalet bungalows and neo-classical pillars from the 1960-70's until reaching the old post office on the corner. After the corner, Main Street is a pleasing mixture of four listed cottages from around the 17th century, a Victorian Chapel, the old Malthouse, several Victorian red brick rows, the pub, and some infilling from the 20th century, all of which combine to make a very rewarding streetscape. It has much to offer, and nothing is pretentious. It feels a good place to live. The only tragedy is the fact that the central inn, The Black Horse, has had its fine Flemish bond black and red brickwork completely obscured by whitewash applied by a past landlord in about 2002, in the alleged spirit of village improvement. It did not gain them any extra customers.

At its end, the street's grand house, the 'Mulberries' sits in a rather brooding position on the corner, but offers real interest and certainly deserves its listing. As the home of one of the village's great benefactors, James Holmes, its historic status confirms this. It was apparently first built by a Wantage tanner, but later the Victorians deepened it with a cladding of brick and a colonnaded entrance. The gardens have much to commend them including a fine summerhouse. Nearby, Jasmine Cottage has a much admired garden too, but is notable for the quality of its 2018 extension. This is an excellent example of how character can be enhanced by the skilled use of more modern materials with real vernacular awareness. [see front cover]

Snuggs Lane offers a similar mix of agreeable buildings, with two contrasting delights: the listed Pryor House overlooks the flood plain of the Brook at the end of the street and halfway down is the magnificent, but decaying structure of Snuggs Barn. This should somehow be protected and saved. A similar West Hanney barn in North Green is now a listed home.

Landscape: The street is still relatively wide and open. The irregular building line never confines it until the junction with Mill Orchard. The curving entry from the south leads one past the Mulberries, small terraces and dispersed cottages, with good tree cover, until the street opens at the Black Horse pub, set at an intriguing angle, with an open view then towards Snuggs Lane. In Victorian times, there would have been many more trees to the left, but we today have front gardens.

One of the unique features of East Hanney can be found along Main Street, as it is throughout most of the older streets; this is the water course or channels which run along the front of the houses often by small verges, being the old means for distribution of water from the mills to the villagers. Another feature is the narrow width of the pavement, designed and intended for rural life, as well as the narrow width of the road. More practical for horse and cart, clearly part of the village historic and rural heritage.

Access: Most traffic is diverted via Summertown and parking, whilst not a major problem, is a cause of some grumbles. Most houses apart from those on the southern bend have spaces. This particular area can be dangerous when parking is careless. Pavements are however, generally good and offer several linking footpaths, which enable residents here to reach the shop and village hall via a peaceful stroll. Abingdon buses pass through here and it is hoped that the fast Oxford bus can be persuaded to do so. There seems no reason for it to stop only at Ashfields Lane, now the customer base is set to double in size!!

A footpath of note is the old link through from Main Street by Lay House through to Dews Meadow. This until it was updated recently by the Dews meadow developers comprised of large stone slabs which were originally laid by Italian POW'S. The slabs needed relaying but unfortunately have not been preserved to serve the village for the future.

Character Area Summary

Evidential: High. The listed buildings and past and present churches, together with the pub, point to the past of this area. There is much archaeology still to be discovered. The details in the small area around Lay House illustrate the complexity of Hanney history as a whole. Many houses in the street have comparable stories and their back gardens are often equally rich, whether it be old privies or grand summerhouses.

Historic: High. This area has been the village Main Street for perhaps over 1000 years. It has offered a route alongside the Brook for much of that and perhaps far longer. The echoes of its pubs, shops and churches can be heard and it continues to create history.

Aesthetic: High. Although not a classically beautiful street, the sheer diversity of Main Street helps it overcome the intrusive elements and it is never boring. Most newer developments have not spoilt this overall impression, but some could have been planned with more consideration. More trees and street art would help.

Communal: High. This is definitely 'Main' Street, despite the lack of commerce today. It is a key conduit and is seldom without activity, if not with as tranquil a feeling as that of the Green. It still has a bus service too and a very popular chapel. The pub, despite its whitewash, serves as a popular venue. Footpaths link it to the village hubs at Brookside and Fiveways.

Main Street, the old turnpike and St James View



Poundcroft amid the traffic on the A338



Fiveways – where the village met the old turnpike



A Snuggs Lane miscellany in winter



St James the Less by G.E.Street - in the spring



What lies beneath at the old Malthouse



The recently enlarged and popular Hanney chapel



Ruined by whitewash in a moment – the 'Black Horse'



The grand 'Mulberries' in an autumn glow

1883-inch Ordnance Survey Map



7. East Hanney Character Area 2 - Ashfields Lane and its Closes

Overview

Ashfields Lane currently sets the northern boundary of East Hanney on the West of the A338. In earlier times, the lane was an important way of entry to the village. It is named Poughley Lane on the 1803 Enclosure map [see page 15], as it led through Hall's Lane over the bridge to Poffley/Poughley Farm, then the centre of the ancient manor of Philberts, site of the only chapel at that time, first mentioned in 1310. Character area 2 is relatively small but is behind the northern corridor that forms character areas 1a, the conservation area line. There are approximately 45 houses, and the significant majority were built between 40 to 60 years ago. Most look inwards from the A338, but about 5 houses face this busy road. This area is known to have been occupied for over 1000 years, being part of one of the oldest manors in the village. It includes roads and pathways which linked the village historically, as well as rich agricultural land nearby, which help characterise the village and the sense of place.

Ashfields Lane eventually leads, after Poughley Farm, towards West Hanney and its church. It is named after the Ashfield family, blacksmiths once based on a plot on the lane. Despite recent building, the mix of styles and the uneven frontages give it a rural feel typical of East Hanney. A cottage, recently well restored, was the village policeman's house. At the west end of the lane is the old village bakery and two agricultural workers dwellings. Opposite was Morlands Farm. Barns from this farm and Manor Farm were converted in the 1970's into houses. These are intermingled with more modern buildings both here and in Morlands Close.

An old road leads northward off the lane near the bakery end. This is Back Street, a drift way that led farm traffic to the fields. The bakery closed around 20 years ago but retains its flour loft and is an important historical building. These roads and farms are clearly visible on the 1801 Enclosure Map.

Character Assessment

Architecture and Street plan: The area is a typical Hanney arrangement from that period of fairly large plots, a variety of designs and uneven building lines, caused by the fact that most road frontages follow curves. Ashfields Close offers in-demand bungalows and Morlands two storey houses with two barn conversions. There is a mix of styles, and the large plots display some well-tended gardens and trees. Ashfields Lane offers both older and new dwellings, all equally well presented. Some houses in this area have a slightly suburban feel in terms of frontage but are relatively low density and offer comfortable spacious plot sized accommodation, with good sized gardens and typical Hanney verges. Overall, the mix of housing is good with much traditional brickwork and roof tiling.

At the time of its construction, Morlands became the only residential development with street lighting. – why is a mystery. Elsewhere throughout, the lack of streetlights is a feature that people appreciate and respect. The final area is Crown Close, a group of well-presented modern homes with a traditional feel, if a little compressed on the overall plot. They are set behind a key historic building in this area, the old and well restored Crown Inn, which closed in 1996. The brickwork here is superb and the building is a well-designed and prominent landmark, albeit mostly for passing traffic. This contrasts with the 4 large new houses that have been recently constructed on Ashfields Lane (2020), using materials and a design which have little local affinity. This was an opportunity missed. The area has recently become threatened by an inappropriate application for some 80+ houses to the north as an allocation by the District Council under Local Plan Part 2, although the site floods annually. If there is to be development here at some point, surely this must reflect the rural nature of this part of the village in layout, structure and designs! Residents hope that this large, and unwanted extension of the village does not happen.

Landscape: Amenities and open spaces: the area is flat throughout and has a spacious feel. Most is sheltered from the increasingly busy A338. Most activities can avoid this road and there are generous gardens with wide verges, open aspects or no fencing. It is attractive throughout, with some open views and frequently changing vistas caused by the curved layouts.

Access: The fields and village facilities can be accessed easily and safely via The Green. La Fontana Restaurant and Black Horse pub are in easy reach too. Walking is safe, although some areas are without pavements. The A338 presents a very significant traffic issue, affecting the boundary of the area and currently does not have a pedestrianised crossing, although OCC have stated that they are committed to provide this. Thankfully, no streetlights exist, save for one pole on the A338. Bus stops are close on the A338.

Character Area 2 Summary

- 1. Evidential value – Medium** – the area has to its north a significant green landscape which has an impact on the character of the village and an old relationship with several of the buildings. There are many pre- 20th century architectural features seen. Examples are the Crown Inn (now a private house), the bakery, the barn conversions and the police house.
- 2. Historical value – Medium** – the area has only been populated permanently in the last 60 years. No known archaeology although there is thought to be archaeological interest along Ashfields Lane and to its north where the historic routes were.
- 3. Aesthetic Value – Medium – high.** the feel of the area is of a pleasant and well-tended community with attractive dwellings including several with historic pasts and a strong vernacular appeal overall.
- 4. Communal value – Medium-high** – The area has matured to set a high overall local benchmark for community living and property care – it is a good area to live in and has easy access to the village and public transport.



Key building: Redroof Cottage, the old police house, sits just past the entrance to Ashfields Lane from the A338. It has recently been saved from developers, and well restored. Beyond it are random and open plots, with their houses set well back from the road, until the junction with Halls Lane. The new buildings opposite are more regimented and a much less friendly modern solid red brick.

Ashfields Lane and its Closes



Excellent brickwork at the old Crown on the A338



Old bakery in Ashfields Lane



Open space and a barn conversion in Ashfields



Ancient barn and more modern lamp in Morlands



A blend of styles and timber in Morlands



Shrubs on the verges in Morlands



Strange red bricks and houses a little starkly aligned



Bungalows and flowers in Ashfields Close

8. East Hanney Character Area 3 - Main Street - the Eastern Closes

Overview

Four closes lead off Main Street in a broadly easterly direction and these have been joined by the current development of the Dews Meadow/Silk Mill site at the southern edge of the village. The majority of this area is bounded by the houses facing onto the Main Street Conservation Area to the west, and the old turnpike, the current A338, to the east. When the building work is finished, it will contain around 100 dwellings, virtually all of which will have been constructed since the 1950's. Their success in merging well with the broad East Hanney vernacular style mix is very variable. There is limited space for further infilling, which has already radically altered the character of the area. The space for this housing was initially created by the straightening of the main road in 1771 by the creation of the Turnpike Trust. This avoided the no doubt boggy area of Main Street and offered a far more direct wagon route from Wantage to Abingdon and Oxford. The infilling has taken over 200 years to accomplish. The 1803 Enclosure Map shows far more building on the eastern side of Main Street than the west, although most is along the street itself [in Area 1a/b]. A water supply flows on this side from the brook, allowing dipping holes to be created. Orchards cover much of the southern sector on the 1830 and 1881 Ordnance Survey maps.

Character assessment

Architecture and Street Plan: Most of this area is set back to the east of the conservation area. The main exception to this is the stark new southern approach to the village, which prior to very recent development offered a softer green edge. There are no outstanding buildings but there are some good attempts to incorporate the design of some of the four closes into the village. In most, the building layout has variety and aligns with the overall lack of formality in that part of East Hanney. The plot sizes are relatively generous, and the housing of relatively low density save for the new development at Dews Meadow (labelled as the Silk Mill by the developer) which has comparably small plot sizes. Generally, there is a good style mix in this area reflecting village vernacular.

Moving from North to South, the most recently completed road [2019] is Aldworth Close. This has eight well designed houses which are either of traditional brick design or are imitation black barns. There is an acknowledgement of local vernacular styles, and the site is definitely not overcrowded. A minor folly is the totally unnecessary set of entrance gates, and really not East Hanney! More trees will help considerably to soften outlines further. On the whole it is a creditable effort by the developer.

The next, almost hidden, close is The Paddocks. This ends in a peaceful, unadopted lane, after passing some conversions of old barns and individually designed bungalows, with the newer ones following a slightly ranch style. The planting is dense and camouflages most plots in summer. The barn buildings are from an earlier farm and are probably the oldest in this area. The secluded rural feel and an old well offer a complete contrast to the estate layouts of the other closes.

The oldest close is Blenheim Orchard. This leads directly past bleak local authority sheltered housing on Main Street, to a row of about 10 bungalows reaching almost to the A338. These bungalows were built after the World War 2 and offer a rather regimented procession of similar dwellings, typical of their period. More planting would help. The right-hand side of the road leads past the well-designed modern Bramley Cottage, and a rustic garage worthy of preservation, to Bramley Close. This too has about 14 houses of varying sizes and contrasting styles with an overall sense of quite careful design. Some have typical blue brick patterning, reflective of the village and others feature a very steeply

pitched roof pattern. It is on the whole a positive addition to the village and is inobtrusive.

The large and strangely named Silk Mill estate [the old mill being out of sight and far around a corner] on Dews Meadow, is in the process of construction. It will contain 46 dwellings. In contrast to the other infilling, it is overly dense and out of keeping with the surrounding village and the conservation area, to which it abuts. The estate has a mix of styles with very little local relevance, although there may be an attempt to include a water course. It would suit an urban suburb better than a Vale village and has sadly eradicated a good 'ridge and furrow' water meadow, which absorbed flood water quite well. The impression is that the planners could have done better in a critical site. The approach to the village from the south has been significantly degraded but will hopefully be camouflaged by tree planting. It has a distinctly uncompromising suburban feel. For comparison, the new estates delivered so far on the Steventon Road [see Area 6] are better. The two which are now being occupied have a good sense of space and there is variety in the size and style of houses. Whitfield Gardens uses bricks, which could be better matched to the local style but there are half hipped roofs and some chimneys, and an apparent attempt to blend with a broad rural style.

Landscape: The area is virtually flat and is drained by the ditch in Main Street. The built areas are all of a reasonable density that matches the village pattern. The only well planted close is The Paddocks, which also retains some of the old lane. Together with Aldworth and Bramley Closes, it also has some element of continuous discovery in its curved layout. Between Bramley Close and the new estate, there remains a large undeveloped plot, a final echo of the old orchards that once virtually covered most of this area, as can be seen in the OS map on page 26.

Access: All the closes are by definition dead ends, and none access the A338 directly. Pubs, clubs, shop and restaurant are all within easy and safe walking distance. Buses call in Main Street and there is no street lighting. Footpaths shorten access to the shop and hall. The footpaths are typically narrow, reflecting the smaller village and rural setting for which they were intended. Most closes have pavements, and the area feels safe throughout.

Character Area Summary

1. Evidential – Medium. There is little evidence of the past value and activities of the area. The barn conversions in the Paddocks are the only notable older buildings, albeit much modified. Much of this area was orchards until the mid-20th century. Nearly all the significant historic development here faces onto Main Street and is in Area 1.

2. Historical. - Medium. Apart from the barns, development has largely obliterated the orchards, farms and the manorial site of Herles Court. One old well exists, but most current historic buildings lie on Main Street. There is no doubt of the area's rich past although it needs imagination and research to discover it. There are no listed buildings.

3. Aesthetic- Medium – Low. The area has some well-designed relatively modern buildings and is pleasant throughout. It mostly still feels like a village. The layout is open and well planned in each close. Effort has been made in most areas to acknowledge past styles and activities. The final new estate, which is still in construction, the 'Silk Mill', has reduced the appeal of the area considerably.

4. Communal Value - Medium. The area is central to the village and its facilities. There is a sense of community in the earlier developments. Gated compounds do not help this as there is no acknowledged risk factor to justify them. On the whole, the newer developments have added reasonably priced homes with some attempts to include village style features, but, as elsewhere, the value is mainly only in jobs for passing bricklayers rather than the creation of a community heritage.

Thoughtful Design in most of the Eastern closes



Simple and in keeping in Aldworth and a chimney too



A darker half hipped barn in Aldworth close



The fine Bramley Cottage and beautiful sagging shed



Interesting in shape and detail in Bramley Close



A well shrouded ranch look in the Paddocks



A row of Blenheim Orchard bungalows



38 Stark lines in the Silk Mill Estate with few trees



Black dense bleak approach to Hanney from the South

9. East Hanney Character Area 4 - Main Street - the Western paths and lanes

Overview

This section describes the south-western area that lies between Letcombe Brook and the extended Main Street that runs into Summertown. It includes Berry Lane [the old Nightingale Lane], Orchard Close, Mulberry Orchard, Mill Orchard and Summertown itself. It is bounded to the north by the Iron Bridge and the Medway footpath. It contains 3 listed buildings: Robey House, Orchard Cottage and Nightingale Cottage.

This area was not as well populated as the eastern side of Main Street. There were relatively few houses and large orchards in the 19th Century. The 1944 photo on P.28 shows fewer than 20 buildings, some of them agricultural. The mill buildings were all on the western side of the Brook. On the opposite bank is an excavated area which has been identified both as fishponds and gravel pits. Geophysics has discovered no buildings here. The current bridges are at Dandridge's Mill and the Iron Bridge. A further one is shown on the 1883 OS map [p.32], crossing to an orchard on the opposite bank to Weir Farm. There is no current 'Weir' – possibly this indicated fishing in the stream as well as the mill pond, perhaps using a small fish weir with traps?

To the south of the current Mill Orchard, lay the Manor of Southbury. Orchard Cottage and its nearby barns certainly date from the Southbury years. There appear to be water channels, possibly leading to a square moat. The early OS maps confirm these. Other water courses cross the road to where the current Dews meadow building plot is situated and pass onwards to Main Street. The infilling here in the last 60 years has resulted in relatively few houses and bungalows on largish plots, some of which used to contain the Manor. No clear record exists of these mostly missing buildings. The recent listing of Orchard Cottage recognised the middle of the building as 16th century; it may well be part of the Southbury complex and consequently one of the oldest surviving homes in the village. Nearby are some barns which could be 18th century and should be listed, which have rare traditional Oxford agricultural design features. On the north side of Mill Orchard is the fine but unlisted Hale Cottage, possibly dating from the 17th century.

Character assessment

Architecture and Street Plan: The area described today contains about 55 dwellings; the majority of plots range from medium to large in size. The housing density in the past, shown on both the Enclosure map of 1803 and the OS map of 1883, emphasizes that number of buildings on this western side of Main Street was significantly lower than that on the east. This is reflected in the current numbers too. Most are detached houses with no terraces or cottages. Virtually all are very well maintained as are their gardens. Only one road, Mill Orchard, attracts significant traffic. Other lanes are virtual cul-de-sacs. The network follows the layout of the 18th century or earlier, slightly adapted to modern needs. Sadly, few of the old cottages remain. Two are listed with scope for a third to be added to the record. Certain of the properties built since the 1970's have design, intended to achieve a village feel and integration into Hanney, set back, with use of exposed timbers, cottage style windows, roof lines and porchways.

The 1944 aerial photo shows this area as largely empty of housing. The majority of building has happened since the Second World War and mostly occurred in the 1950s-1980's, mostly by infilling along the old lanes. Orchard Close is the only close in which about 10 houses form a coherent group with a similar design. Most other houses in this area are on a range of scattered plots and exhibit a

mix of styles and no straight building lines. The effect is village-like overall, helped by the mature planting, although it lacks the variety of scale and age in older areas such as Main Street. There seems to have been little attempt to adopt any consistent local building style except in very general terms. Dwellings such as those in Mulberry Orchard seem to be examples of designs and layouts intended to ensure a village feel.

The remaining part of the area lies along the road from West Hanney to the A338, and the Summertown Close. The density is generous and is a mix of two storey dwellings and bungalows. The most recent listed building, Orchard Cottage, contains a possible hall house in its centre section. On Mill Orchard itself, the central Hale Cottage seems a fine candidate for listing?

The only other significant building here is the British Legion Club. It enjoys a critical central site and is an area worth preserving from inappropriate development. The main village hall is well used, and, with the rising population of both Hanneys, this club provides a useful annex. It also offers a useful element of open space in a fairly tight street corner. The car park also forms a mini-green here and could be improved in this respect.

Landscape: The area was once a combination of meadows and orchards. This is evident still today in the area which is open to the Brook and still floods. This area of old ponds or pits is lower lying and forms a central paddock. The space is again a real landscape asset. The old orchard which remains alongside the Brook between Summertown and the Mill is a sensitive open green space which has been farmed organically and is home to rare species. It is the last standing of the traditional orchards which were a characteristic of the pre-war village.

Access: The wider Berry Lane area enjoys good access to the entire village. The traffic is slow and safe. The bus stops at the bottom of the road and there are no parking problems. Footpaths connect with all village amenities.

Character Area Summary

1. Evidential – Medium – potentially High. This area has clearly a rich history as it sits at the main bridging points of the Brook. Geophysics mapping has recently taken place at the ‘fishponds’ in Garstane Paddock. The conclusion so far is that they are probably gravel pits. There have been many finds within the wider area, from Neolithic to Roman and mediaeval, and further investigation is worthwhile if any development is suggested. The brook is the key feature in the shape and purpose of the area but could be made more evident by better access and planting?

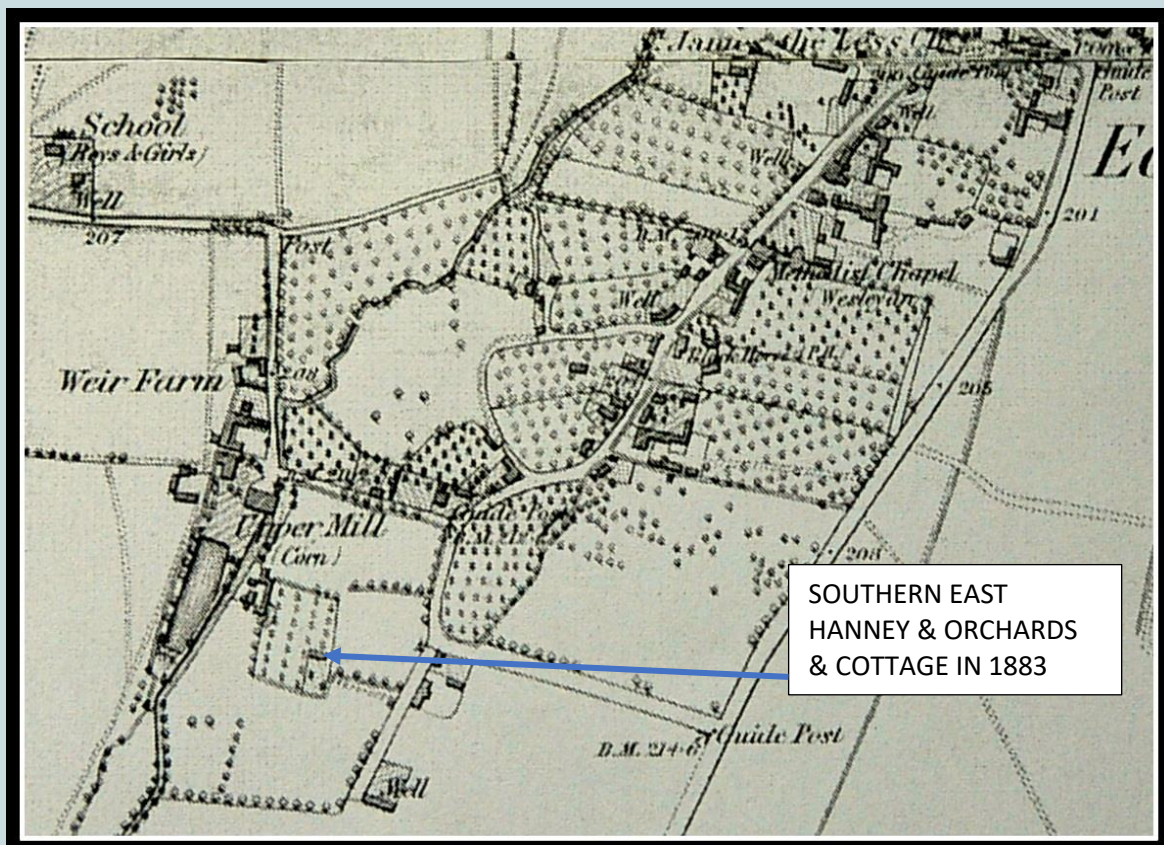
2. Historical – Medium – potentially High. The area is still the conduit between East and West Hanney for traffic, worship, and burials. A back lane is recorded as passing between the rear of the Mulberries and the brook. The existence of listed buildings, traditional streets/lanes, and the old orchard make this an area of high interest.

3. Aesthetic - Medium. Although there are few memorable buildings, the area is attractive to live within. Improvements have been well conducted. Residents clearly look after their plots. There is much open space and some good tree planting. The network of paths and drives offers safe walking and varying vistas. There are particularly good views towards the Brook in the Garstane area, and south from Summertown to the Downs. Mill Orchard and the through routes are similarly attractive.

4. Communal Value - High. The area forms the southern village centre, perhaps based around one of the village cores of the original East Hanney, with the Manor of Southbury and the mills nearby. Pub, club, hall, playgrounds and shop are within walking distance.

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

Key Building: Orchard Cottage, a C17 dwelling extended in the C19, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * Architectural interest: a pre-1700 cottage of good-quality construction surviving largely intact, with features and materials suggesting a high status dwelling; * Interiors: contain good-quality pegged ceilings, a number of historic doors with ironmongery, a C19 stair and the complete roof structure. Much additional history came to light in 2015-17 when helping to build the case to refuse 200 houses in an adjacent plot. This added evidence for the listing process.



The South Western Paths and Lanes



Nightingale-name of cottage and old lane



A scenic drive off Berry Lane



Spacious plot above the paddock



Mediaeval fish ponds, or gravel pits?



Orchard Close in early summer



Tradional 60's bungalow in Berry Lane



At the back of the Mulberries



Hale Cottage – surely worthy of listing?

10. East Hanney Character Area 5 - The Western Approach, the Mills, the Causeway, the Hall, the School and Letcombe Brook

Overview

The early 19th century maps show little on this side of the brook, although the West Hanney footpath was well travelled by parishioners from their christening to their burial party due to the absence of a church before 1840. The building of the expanded mill, now called Dandridge's, and its attendant mill house at the end of the 18th century was the core of the newer community although there is map evidence of earlier mill buildings on the site. The listed Weir Farmhouse, dating from about 1600, was perhaps the first current building here. There may also have been at least 3 bridges, at the existing sites of the mill, the Iron Bridge, and another crossing between these to access the orchards where Brookside now stands. These lead to the causeway that stretched to the church and West Hanney although the current Lidar record shows a clear path crossing Kings Lease field from the second mill, Lower Mill. [see photo page 17]

The building of the school on the parish boundary in 1840, to serve both villages, added a new dimension. It perhaps led to the building of a ribbon of public housing on the opposite side of the road in the late 1930's on the Causeway. This, and a smaller development in West Hanney on the school side of the road at that time, made the reduced Hanney Gap a concept worth protecting. Shortly after the Second World War, the Village Hall was developed and followed by the public housing in Brookside, that now fills the old orchards that used to line the brook. The fields around the hall were donated to the village in 1869, as allotments. Records indicate these were not fully used and space was allocated for sports fields, recreation, as well as the hall, shop and parking.

This section also includes a summary of the current and past significance of Letcombe Brook, as it appears most prominently at this main crossing point, which is also the start of many of the paths that follow the stream.

Character assessment

Architecture and Street Plan: The plan of development here essentially follows the road across the stream. Until 1937, the last buildings would have been Weir Farm and the old Victory Hut on the north side, where the Village Hall now stands. Apart from the final houses, most of the other homes on the west side of the brook were built in the early 19th century, after the reconstruction of the mill and its house. In recent years, the mill has been successfully preserved, by its conversion into three large flats, with their own Archimedes screw power plant.

The solid row of detached and semi-detached houses on the causeway are of their time and age. The ribbon development seems to have been stopped only by Cow Lane and the parish boundary. West Hanney also stretched slightly into the gap at this time too and it seems a united Hanney was almost probable after a thousand years of separation. Fortunately, it didn't happen, and the exact reason is uncertain. For the last 50 years, the space offered by the gap has been appreciated, and protected.

The post war infilling has provided useful housing and remains well cared for. The area in the Brookside cul-de-sac includes over twenty starter and retirement homes. Their partly prefabricated architectural design has few features that link it to the Hanney vernacular and is generally heavy handed. However, the landscaping of the site is effective and has matured to form a successful community around the shop and the hall. It remains a pleasant and popular place to live.

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

The housing towards Dandridge's Mill, on the east bank of the brook between the shop and the bridge, is mostly solid local authority work, which has also made little attempt to match its diverse neighbours on the opposite side of the road, where the quality of the infilling has been better and more varied. Parking is in short supply and is usually crowded. The gardens offer some solace.

The village hall replaced the post WW1 Victory Hut in the 1960's. Its rooms and stage host many village events and sports, including the Christmas Panto. It also contains the village shop. The hall is broadly in the local style and fits reasonably well into a critical site. A playground is nearby.

Landscape: The old part of Brookside is a row of well screened and spaced houses. The Old Mill House offers a critical visual foil to the industrial mill building and the corner works well in both contrast and spacing, helped by the planting. All have notable rear aspects which deserve protection too. The opposite side of the road is a denser layout but is helped by the long well-tended front gardens. The area of tennis courts and allotments on the north side of the causeway has provided a successful buffer between the school and the Hall and lies behind a magnificent row of trees.

Access: The area is a choke point for both pedestrians and cars. This has the benefit of slowing the latter while still putting the people at risk. The Iron Bridge offers essential safety for many more nervous shoppers and the back lanes help ensure the survival of the shop. Escape is also offered by the footpaths access by the side of the Old Mill House to West Hanney, Grove and through the Local Wildlife site, and off Brookside along the Brook through the green spaces linking the village.

Character Area Summary

1. Evidential – Medium – Potentially High. Although there is little current evidence before the 19th century, apart from Weir farmhouse, this area has clearly been a critical crossing for millennia and the mill site has at least Saxon origins. The footprint of the past is compressed here. Recent floods have shown the value of the causeway. People canoed between the Hanneys in July 2007.

2. Historical – High. Recent archaeological finds include Neolithic pottery and Roman burials. There is a huge amount of past and present history on this locality. The listed farm and tool shed offer evidence of centuries of farming here. The stream probably had a weir as well as a mill and old manorial fishponds remain a possibility. Both mills were built in the early 19th century. They were not as successful as hoped for, but then went on to have useful lives before their final domestic conversion. Mosquito parts were manufactured in the war, and modern sculpture was made here too. The Old School house, Weir Farm, the Old Mill House, the Mill complex and the old barns are all historical buildings worthy of note. The second part of the conservation zone also falls in this area.

3. Aesthetic – Medium- High. The buildings are not especially distinguished, but four are listed. The group is strong, and their juxtaposition is impressive, especially at the busy mill corner. The planting also softens the geometry here. The space offered by the dissimilar and low British Legion building opposite, provides light and contrast to the high walls of the mill complex. All clearly shine a light on the less exciting buildings around them. The present rush of the powerful brook gushes under the excessive traffic and helps subdue it. At the northern end, the big tent roof of the village hall is again forgiven by its surroundings – open fields, the friendly buildings of the nearby close, the colour and details of the allotments, and the buzz around the shop.

4. Communal Value – High. This is quite clearly the confluence point of village life in terms of water, traffic, and human contact. All paths really lead here, children and adults meet and play and the postman calls. Most villagers from both Hanneys visit frequently, to shop or play, socialise or both.

The Mill and the West Bank of the Brook



The School path trees in Summer – pure Monet?



The School – the original 'Tudor style' core building



Brookside – a good green corner to live in



Hanney Community Shop-part of an active village hall



Weir Farm and well restored barn – listed 16C



Old Mill House – listed and early 19C Georgian



Handforth's Listed Mill and its Bridge



Listed if wobbly 18C shed and Old Mill House Cottage



Key Building: Lower [West's] Mill

Lower Mill is the third of Hanney's known mill sites on Letcombe Brook. It is the only five storey building in the Hanneys and is a striking echo of the village's past. It was briefly a silk mill before being converted to grain. It is rumoured that Napoleonic prisoners helped run the silk business in the early 19th century. It was built originally in 1812 and was converted for domestic use after a fire in 1903. Mr West owned it at the time.

It is adjoined by Lower Mill Cottage and Rainsford cottage. Mr Rainsford was then the mill owner but was bankrupted in about 1820. Its industrial purpose is still very clear, and although within the Conservation Area, the mill is unlisted which is a significant omission on historical, architectural and group grounds.

Nearby, West's Bridge leads to Poughley Farm and West Hanney and beyond. The area is one of the most ancient parts of Hanney and has a timeless feel. The bridge fell into needs of repair. It was rumoured that OCC would replace the current old limestone bridge with a wider concrete structure but fortunately a more sympathetic reconstruction which is clad in original stone has recently been installed.

The Letcombe Brook, Hanney wildlife and Ecology

The location of the village is mostly determined by the course of the brook, the need to bridge its occasionally difficult waters, and the opportunities it offers for agriculture, energy, nourishment and industry. The stream has been central to the founding, survival and development of East Hanney. This remains true today and the Brook still offers possibilities, not only for the disruption of the community, but also for its growth. The Hanneys are in an area where the rainfall is around 28 inches, little more than the plains of East Anglia. The management of the supply of adequate and clean water has been a critical factor throughout the history of the village.

Letcombe Brook has also been a constant and determining factor throughout this study. The village is blessed with a green and natural environment arising from the Brook. Wildlife are attracted here and are fundamental to the village way of life; Hanney even has a pair of swans who visit to nest annually. The existence of green spaces and back lands, together with the brook, give the village a calm and peaceful feel. It is easy to identify a green corridor aligned to the Brook as it

runs through the village. These natural amenities are important in the formal evolution of the character of East Hanney and create the rural feel. Various may qualify as areas of Local Green Space, essential for the village.

The improvement of the quality of the brook and the increasing diversity of the wildlife that now inhabit its course has been a very positive change in recent years. The damaging July 2007 floods focused attention on the need to better manage the Brook. The Flood Group was an immediate outcome and has significantly improved the state of the brook, both in its ability to cope with high flow events and also in the better management of the vegetation above and below the water. This care has increased the light which reaches the stream, and this has benefitted both fauna and flora. The group has started to regain a body of knowledge in how to manage our chalk stream which had been greatly lost as older generations with this local expertise have passed on. The help of the Letcombe Brook Project Officer has also been significant in growing this area of ecological learning and improvement. The success of this blend of village initiative and public support has provided an example for others to become involved in the upkeep of the stream.

There remain challenges: as an example, Letcombe Brook currently fails the Water Framework Directive, due to the lack of coarse fish, such as roach, dace and chub, which are present in other reaches. These fish find it difficult to overcome natural or man-made obstructions, unlike larger fish such as trout. This project will remove some of these barriers, to enable those fish to travel further upstream and access *'the fantastic habitat provided in East Hanney. This stretch has some wonderful areas of gravel that will provide ideal spawning grounds and ranunculus (water crowfoot) beds that will provide plentiful food and shelter for smaller fish. If we are able to provide fish passage around Dandridge's Mill at some point in the future, those fish will be able to swim all the way up to Grove – now that would be a great result!'* [Letcombe Brook Project Report Winter 2020].

Letcombe Brook has been possibly the constant determining factor throughout this study. The Brook, while a central feature for many villagers, is also easy to overlook and this has led to past neglect. It needs care and maintenance and has been taken for granted too often, by the village and the wider Vale. This also offers a metaphor for the village, as an interconnected community. The rich picture created by the past is evident on any walk through East Hanney but is the result of the skills and sheer effort of many villagers, past and present. The village offers an engaging community, a blend of people, place and habitats that echo the vibrant stream that flows at its core. The character of the Brook and the harmony of the village offer complimentary examples in successful development, and the overcoming of obstacles, that Hanney needs to take account of in the future.

11. East Hanney Character Area 6 - Eastern East Hanney

Overview

The 1771 turnpike allowed traffic to avoid East Hanney's main streets, probably creating a road with a stone base. Tolls were collected at Grove. The Enclosure Acts of 1803 confirmed many of the changes. After that period, until the end of the Second World War, the village scarcely grew and there was little need for any major eastern developments on the Wantage or Steventon Road apart from enlarging the inns to cater for travellers. The area being on the A338 did, however, see the building of a small office block, a small industrial estate and a garage circa 1970/80. Until very recently, the only development was an isolated group of 9 dwellings built by local builder's Barrett's in about 1932, almost on the parish boundary and now mostly owned by Thames Water, and a pair of bungalows at the village's northern entrance. The garage was demolished in the early 2000's. Alfred's Place was built on its site about 2010-13, followed by Dandridge's Close over the next five years. More recently, two closes, Whitfield's and Priors Leas, have been built on the Steventon Road. These will each contain over 40 houses when complete. A further development under the Local Plan Part 2 allocation, at 'Rosie Bees' has also now (2020) been approved for yet a further 46 dwellings.

Currently, the village is waiting for a pedestrian crossing to be built across the ever more dangerous A338. It is hoped that this will be provided in 2021/22. This may slightly mitigate the feeling of a split community that is caused by this road, and the fact that the homes are all new and still being occupied. Some of the sites remain in construction. It is therefore understandably difficult for the new to integrate with the existing, when the growth has not been organic, there is no crossing/route into the village and there has not been time for the community to establish and settle. It is difficult to avoid the sense of a separate commuter settlement at present. This does not seem to be in sympathy with the subtleties of small village change and development. In the Hanneys, this happens relatively slowly and has never been based on the instant large estate model until recently! The result so far appears to be a separated community, with little cohesion in terms of layout or architectural style, and very dependent on the car. This is entirely different from the well-established and integrated older Hanney villages on the opposite side of the A338 where development has been organic and, until recently, gradual. The existing community does however welcome the new, and the many clubs and societies look forward to increased membership and new friends.

As is related in 'Hanney before the Normans' on page 57, this area saw occupation by the Romans and Saxons, which has been identified in much archaeological work. Recent geophysics has identified a long range of small villas and other buildings in a line, that parallels the current A338. This housing declined to a few farms following the Conquest and was possibly reduced further by the Black Death. The proposal by Thames Water to site a major reservoir for South East England in this area, has effectively blighted the eastern edges of the East Hanney Parish for the past 25 years and looks likely to continue to do so. Solar farms now cover much of the neighbouring area, possibly for this reason.

This area is at the point of an ancient east/west and north/south crossroads, now suffering from the highest traffic volumes it has ever experienced. These will inevitably increase. Development here therefore has visual impact on travellers into the village from all directions. The results up to now have been mixed and disappointing for such a critical site. Much tree screening and far more careful planning is needed.

Character assessment

Architecture and Street Plan: Dating perhaps from Tudor times, the only known domestic buildings on this side of the road were the listed Poundcroft, once a children's home, and The Plough, the inn that became the Fontana. Others have no doubt disintegrated with time. Traffic would have been mainly north-south on the Wantage to Oxford route, until the coming of the canal and railway. This cluster at the eastern side of the junction has developed slightly, but still numbers only five houses and the Fontana restaurant.

The main development of eastern East Hanney has in recent years followed six key stages:

1. The Alfred's place estate – 9 Houses. These houses replaced a fairly tatty garage and are mostly of a smaller size that suits first time owners or tenants. Their style blends fairly well with the village.
2. Dandridge Close and Stevenson Close – this larger development of 28 houses, of varying sizes, again seems to attempt to integrate with the village despite being more urban in scale and feel.
3. Andersons Place – 21 Houses.
4. Whitfield Garden – 40+ Houses
5. Priors Leas 40+ Houses
6. Site of Rosie Bees – 46 Houses have planning permission and is under construction.

Landscape: This area is an extremely flat old flood plain. The new developments benefit from a few trees planted by earlier occupiers and the area will no doubt soften as planting continues. The additional planting so far has been sparse, and work is necessary from the developers to complete the open space green area in Whitfield Gardens, the planned play areas in Priors Lea and the newly approved site. In Priors Leas, there has been intelligent integration of existing mature birch and conifers. Little has been done to design in features of character to create a village feel to the estates, potentially because linkage is poor. Despite efforts to the DC, there has unfortunately been little co-ordination by the planners and developers to provide walkways between the closes, which does not help the connectivity.

There is very little presence of the characteristic and slightly random features evident throughout both of the Hanneys, which is a shame as village features could easily have been designed in. The result is a distinctly more urban and modern feel.

The landscape beyond the development extends East, North and South on a flat plain. The area being land reserved for the new potential reservoir planned by Thames water.

Access: The estates are split from old East Hanney by the A338. A footpath links the Steventon Rd estates to the bus stops on this main road. A new crossing for the A338 is planned and hoped for during 2021/22. The delay on the crossing has been unfortunate, as the road has become increasingly dangerous.

There is another stop, newly built on the Steventon – Didcot route. Some traffic calming measures have been built on the Steventon Road access in the form of a chicane, which is not in keeping with

the village. Softer, less obtrusive measures would have been preferred, and streetlamps accompany the traffic calming.

Character Area Summary

Evidential Value: Low-Medium. The only listed building on the site is Poundcroft. There is no doubt an older building exists within the outer shell of the Fontana, which appears to have been developed with little regard for its heritage as the old Plough Inn. This appears to have been at least 200 years old.

Historic Value: High. There is much to be discovered here. It has undoubtedly been occupied for at least 2500 years. Poundcroft and the Fontana both have interesting, more recent histories. The area is discussed more fully in Area 8 and on page 58.

Aesthetic Value – Medium. Apart from the pressure imposed by the A 338, these are largely pleasant and apparently reasonably well-built houses benefiting from open layouts and the attractive landscapes around them. The earlier estates have established themselves and appear sound and well maintained overall. Their planting has improved their outlook. There is no classic, interesting or really attractive architecture, but the overall impression is above average, and the available space for socialising and play is good, providing the developers meet their obligations and the green areas for community use are delivered and maintained. There has not been, as noted above, any real attempt to create a rural feel to the estates apart from the fortuitous mature trees.

Communal Value – Medium. Arrivals in Hanney are normally welcomed warmly and seem to integrate rapidly. The geography and distance issues surrounding the newer estates clearly makes this less easy. The fact that the growth is not organic, nor the developments yet fully settled, means that some effort is needed by all involved. This is also not helped by the ongoing lack of a crossing on the A338.

However, it is difficult to assess how real this divide is. There are already new members of the community looking to join clubs and support the village, although some clubs have reported not being able to interest members from these new areas. The relations within the new communities seem normal to such 'new estate' situations. The problem may lie more in the perception of the normally friendly 'old Hanney' community, who have not been practised in welcoming large groups of newcomers. Possibly too, the average age of the host community may be significantly different, with many of the new families having perhaps two workers, and less time for socialising.

A further issue for the village generally is the lack of infrastructure to support the increased population, meaning limited meeting space for new and expanded clubs and social groups and a lack of parking to be able to attend the sports fields, for example. Practically speaking, the issues of reaching the core buildings of the school, shop and hall all demand a car, although footpaths offer alternative access. This makes interaction less easy and changes the nature of the largely pedestrian Hanney community. Some settling in time may be all that is needed for social groups to form, both in the new developments with their new neighbours and across the wider village communities.

THE A338 DEVELOPMENTS AND THE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE



Northern boundary house – a gentle pre-war setting



2010 - Alfred's Way's solid village frontage



The industrial estate office block



Solid and traditional in Alfred's Way



Maturing site in Dandridge Close



Parking sheds and some smaller dwellings



Mature & well tended planting and wide paving



Half – hipped village style but a little too tidy?

The Steventon Road Developments



Unfinished open space in Whitfield Gardens



Do pedestrians still own the village pavements?



Parking a priority with car dependency?



Slight break in the building line tidiness?



Newly occupied and lacking maturity



Village colonial look and a chimney too



Solid Houses affected by the reservoir plan



Roman and Saxon dwellings once stood here

12. East Hanney Character Area 7 - Recreation, Footpaths and Amenity Areas and the wider parish

Overview

East Hanney is fortunate in the amount of exercise opportunities that surround it, both for leisure pursuits and in having the freedom to move into several contrasting landscapes during everyday activities. A casual walk to the shop might include the flash of a kingfisher's plumage or even a sense of an otter in the brook. Red kites are spotted more often than not; these partly offset the exciting, but intrusive, low flying helicopters. It is hard to be more than a few hundred yards away from open space and big skies. Despite the rush hour 'rat runs', and steadily increasing traffic volumes, once away from the A338, the roads are generally still safe enough to encourage cyclists, horse riders, runners, and walkers, even some of the Nordic variety. However, developments outside of the village too are adding to the peak hour traffic.

During the Covid period, the numbers of exercisers of all ages has appeared to at least double. Most of these activities were of the casual type but formal village groups exist for most types of sports enthusiasts. The allotments offer others the chance to stay fitter while 'growing their own', and dog walking is a major social pastime for Hanney dogs and even their less athletic owners. Many years ago, the village was lucky to have been donated land, which provides sports space for many teams and individuals, as well as for the school and the village hall and its shop. The Kings Lease project, being the lease of open land by the Parish for recreation, is a new initiative and will add many acres to these facilities for recreation and other sports. Additionally, the Nigel Eady Community Woodland, although in West Hanney, is accessible and offers a different type of landscape exercise and opportunities for studying wildlife for young and old – the school's Forest School is very popular. Although technically owned by West Hanney, the woodland forms the boundary for about half a mile and is maintained by a working party from both villages.

Footpaths are abundant and tend to radiate from the Letcombe Brook, which is also maintained by a team of expert flood preventers, again from both Hanneys. This was founded, following the floods of July 2007. At the Five-Ways crossroads, there is also a small memorial to two villagers, Ted Carter and Fred Harris, who spent a good deal of time in their retired years maintaining ditches, fences and paths, and offering many other acts of kindness, entirely sustained by their love of the village and its communities. Since their deaths, their example seems to have partly encouraged many others to take similar actions, rather than wait for an increasingly delayed response from the public services. Many villagers were willing volunteers during the early Covid crisis too.

Character assessment

Architecture and Street/ Footpath / Plan: The architecture of this area is based around a functional village hall, a small pavilion, and some storage sheds. The allotments sprout constructions of their own, which suggest function and energy, rather than architectural prowess – some are seasonal, and others succumb to wild weather – the whole process is suitably organic and entertaining if agreeably untidy.

The numerous footpaths offer connections to nearby villages, but most walkers follow one of the loops that connect the brook to the school and the shop and the main streets. These usually offer an equally peaceful place to stroll. It is easy to create a varied combination of different journeys to regular destinations, with the vistas changing through the seasons, and a rich selection of flora and fauna to enjoy. The Kings Lease project has recently added more colour and options to this resource.

Letcombe Brook is encountered on many of these trips and forms the spine of many village journeys. The Brook, its surrounding green environment and the wildlife it attracts, is essential East Hanney. The footpaths along it, allow villagers and others to understand more fully how the waters have been a formative element in the history of the village. It is possible to follow the stream throughout the village, from the site of the southernmost and long disappeared mill to beyond Philberds Manor. As is related elsewhere, the stream was diverted to serve most properties and much evidence exists of wells, steps, culverts and dipping holes.

The three current bridges are all visual assets. The Mill bridge, which suits the site well, does slow traffic slightly although it is damaged occasionally in this role. The Victorian Iron Bridge offers a glimpse of centuries past and an occasional kingfisher. The limestone West's Bridge has recently been replaced (2021) by Oxford County Council with a more modern concrete replacement, although some effort has been made to reuse the original stone, which goes some way to helping retain the history and historic look of this part of the village.

Landscape: The landscape within this area 7 is mainly flat and as it comprises to a large extent of grounds used for leisure, and recreation is therefore open space, creating a feeling of openness, with wide views, surrounded by hedge rows, tree lines, and a backdrop of the rural scene with views extending out into the open fields, particularly to the west and north. The area close to the village hall houses the recreation and play areas, outside of this the land is generally away from roads, open and quiet. Safe for families and walkers to enjoy.

The area also forms part of the Letcombe Brook green corridor, with pathways running from the sports field and along the edge of Kings Lease to the banks of the Brook. As part of the green corridor the area is also home to and provides habitat for some of the village wildlife. Generally, the area can be considered to be green, with a rural feel, open and tranquil.

The landscape of the footpaths extending from the sports field and Kings Lease areas are infinitely various. There are few straight lines, and the pavements also mostly meander in a similar way. One is treated to a succession of changing views every minute. The curves of the stream dictate much of this pattern. The lumps and bumps of many fields hint at past usages but apart from the 'ridge and furrow' that still remains in places, it is often difficult to be precise about their cause. Some farmers, and all long-standing villagers, still respect this heritage asset and have experienced its importance in flood protection. This was evidenced in the community survey. The management of the waterside paths is allowed to remain as natural as is feasible. The Kings Lease field is responding well to its new recreational purpose and activity design. The users all appreciate the quality and variety of these village assets and most treat them accordingly.

Access: The area is open and safe for most users. There are no significant access issues and older residents can enjoy most routes apart from particularly cold or wet days. Some paths do get muddy in winter, but they can be avoided, if appropriate footwear is not available. Parking is adequate and averting the use of the car is a wise choice, when busy events are scheduled at the hall. Improved parking is, however, being planned.

Character Area Summary

1. Evidential – High. All of the bridges are over a century old. There is much scope for archaeology across the whole area. A recent metal detector survey of the new field extension resulted in over 400 finds. The area is also the site of the old Philberds Manor and there is considerable potential for further finds here. There have been many Roman finds in the eastern part of the village, and much

geophysics evidence of dwellings and farms.

2. Historical – High. This is a rich area with some key buildings nearby [described in section 6] and a stream that has been a central part of village history. The mills and crossings offer the best remaining evidence of this. It is fundamentally unspoilt and offers many interests to villagers. Old maps record past agriculture, especially the orchards, and many fewer buildings.

3. Aesthetic – High. The routes along the Brook, and the fields alongside them, offer the most stimulating scenery in the area, enjoyed by many outside the East Hanney community too. Nature is symbolised by the return of the otter and the more frequently seen bank vole. The thoughtful and gentle management of these resources adds to their aesthetic appeal considerably. The allotments and sports fields offer a different experience, but all combine to provide a relaxing central focus for both villages.

4. Communal - Very High. Most Hanney villagers, young and old, belong to at least one club. Some seem to attend almost all of them! The Victory Hut, which has morphed into the War Memorial Hall, provided the impetus and facilities for many. Nearby are pitches, tennis courts, and running routes. Exercise/trail equipment is planned for the future. In the evening the same facilities host bowls, table tennis, yoga, cinema, choirs, Beavers and Guides, many villages' clubs, and a prize-winning panto troupe. The outdoor area has almost doubled in size following the acquisition of a lease on Kings Lease's Field. Prior to this East Hanney really only had minimal space at the sports field which was below guidance for the size of the pre-growth population! Half of the sports field belongs to West Hanney. Allotments are available for both villages and all sports and clubs are open to members from both Hanneys.

There are about 25 different activities available, mostly run by villagers, although a few operate on a commercial basis. All ages take part, from toddlers to pensioners. The main sports are football, tennis, cricket, badminton, bowls, running and cycling. Rugby is to start soon. Football dominates the activities with 12-13 teams and over 130 players at senior and junior level, plus 15 coaches, and even an under-5 group! They train most nights and play at the weekend. Hanney has a long and proud tradition in the sport, a famous side winning the Berkshire League from 1947 to 1949. Covid has seen a huge rise in cycling, as it is possible to travel at least 20 miles very safely without crossing a busy main road, using a different route daily if you wish. Many runners use the sports fields and footpaths and there is also a Nordic walking group. The village helps host a couple of local half-marathons.

The open flat fields to the north have space for a private airstrip and model flying area. This part of the parish also has several footpaths/bridleways leading to Garford, Drayton and Marcham. The village monthly newsletter, Hanney News, itself a significant communal feature, lists over 30 groups and activities for villagers to partake in. Some are free, but most charge a small subscription. A few have a session fee. Additionally, the joint villages and both parish councils have websites, as do several of the clubs. The community shop also acts as a virtual club for its many helpers. Both church and chapel have successful congregations too. Finally, Facebook offers alternative contacts and information. It appears to offer a forum for the younger folk of Hanney, but age is relative and the older users seem to be building their web confidence.

13. East Hanney Character Area 8 - The Outer Parish – History, Archaeology and Agriculture

Overview

The village of East Hanney occupies the southwestern corner of the parish and its focus is along the Letcombe Brook, the source of water and power. The village is also centred around several bridging sites, as this small stream can often swell into a more formidable barrier. As mentioned elsewhere, the village's ecclesiastical needs were for centuries met by St James the Great in West Hanney, also across the water for most. This character study focuses on the village of East Hanney, but the significance of the wider parish should be considered, including a review of an early period of history, which relates to all the wider Hanney area and with relevance to the largely agricultural zone which broadly follows the paths to Steventon and Drayton.

Area 8 is effectively all of the land surrounding the village and forms a large part of the area of the Parish. As East Hanney is a settlement, surrounded by a green and open rural landscape, much of this area 8 is rural. The landscape is predominantly flat and forms part of the lowland vale. It is recognised as being of specific lowland vale character and of value in a number of aspects, including for agricultural use, the land being fertile and rich, as a particular habitat and with areas within it, particularly where associated with the waterways (Letcombe brook and the River Ock), a rich biodiversity. The landscape is open with excellent views and a big sky, the corillion ridge to the south clearly being visible.

East Hanney, having developed as a settlement aligned to the Letcombe Brook, is separated and different from neighbouring settlements, the open landscape between neighbouring settlements enabling different village characteristics to form. Although close to West Hanney, there are many different aspects between the villages, East Hanney being particularly influenced by the Letcombe Brook and its early location on north /south trading route. East Hanney continues to have a strong, rural linkage, located in a rural landscape with a long and established history. It is very different for example to Grove, which neighbours it to the south, and is now just 2 fields away and which has a distinctly urban feel, compared to the rural village essence of East Hanney.

Although area 8 is mainly rural, it contains a number of important features and has a history, very relevant to East Hanney of today. As mentioned, this area also has the Letcombe Brook and the River Ock running through it, sustaining areas rich in biodiversity. It is a landscape, which in addition to its important agricultural use, is also home to ancient hedgerows and pathways, some early settlements of interest, and early trading routes which historically linked East Hanney to other parts of Oxfordshire. There are also a number of important drainage channels and ditches, which perform an important function, helping take water away from East Hanney in times of flood, or perform storage functions when water levels in the area are high, as well as the course of the old canal.

Under the current DC Local Plan to 2031, much of the land to the east of the village, which is low lying and contains important drainage ditches, is 'reserved' for a reservoir. This is a potentially huge structure which Thameswater are seeking to develop, as part of their infrastructure plan. It is thought to be proposed to be at a height considerably above the surrounding land level. Its impact on the landscape and on village character could be devastating. Thames water continue to try and progress their plans and are engaging again on this with strategic authorities during 2021.

To the north east of the village, in land potentially forming part of the reservoir, there are currently solar farms. There is interest in further solar farms, close to the existing facility.

Examples of early settlement, role of the extended parish, and reflections on areas such as the Hanney gap in order to prevent coalescence is given below.

Character Area Summary

1. Evidential – High: There is much scope for archaeology across the whole area. With significant finds such as the Hanney Brooch, saxon artifacts and settlement evidence nearby, close to this area, bronze age artifacts were also recently discovered at a site on the edge of the village. At various places across this area 8, there is Roman settlement evidence and findings that show East Hanney was a settled location on a potentially popular trading route. There is the course of a Roman track, understood to have run through the Parish between Wantage and Oxford, with its path close to the brook, not far from what is the A338 (see below for further detail). There have been many Roman finds in the eastern part of the village, including what is thought to be the remains of a settlement along the Steventon Road. Although today much of the landscape is agricultural, there is significant opportunity for more finds. The area immediately to the south of the village, is also thought to be the location of one of the old manor houses of the village, just south of Summertown, alongside the brook, close to the ancient orchard.

2. Historical – High: As a large area surrounding and close to the vicinity of the village with many tracks and an early trading route running through it, this outer East Hanney area provides high historical interest. There is evidence of very early settlement, ancient field systems, and routeways extending to and from the village. It is also at a point of a crossroads, where the main north /south trading route meet with east /west, extending aspects of historical interest across the wider Parish. Much of the landscape remains fundamentally unspoilt and offers many interests to villagers. Old maps record past agriculture and routeways, including those linking the village with neighbouring rural settlements and for trade. Within this area, there is also the route of the old Wilts and Berks canal which abuts the eastern parish boundary.

3. Aesthetic – High: Although an outer area, the fields alongside the brook offer stimulating scenery in a natural and undisturbed setting. The distance from the village centre, means that, for wildlife, the habitat is peaceful and rich. The community is able to access parts of this area, which is effectively remote countryside, along established footpaths and byways. Many of the footpaths run alongside ancient hedgerows and often connect the village to other settlements, such as the footpath to Drayton which offers tranquillity and peaceful enjoyment of the openness of the field systems. The eastern area on the Steventon Road offers a mostly tranquil approach to the village. Another example are the pathways, south of the village from Cow Lane to Grove which offer the option of either following the main track amongst hedgerows, or through open fields, starting from the county wildlife site, which offers magnificent rural scenery, in a peaceful and tranquil setting, full of rare flora and fauna.

This is fundamentally an extensive green landscape, mostly flat, which upholds the characteristics of the lowland vale, includes pockets of priority habitat and areas of essential habitat for wildlife and is rich in biodiversity. Aesthetically, area 8 provides the green backdrop and generally open rural setting for the village. As an extensively flat landscape with hedgerows set against big open skies, the views of this area from the village are impressive and valued.

4. Communal - Medium: Whilst most Hanney villagers, are able and do enjoy the views across this area from all directions, typically the area is best enjoyed by walkers and horse riders, as well as by road, by all those passing through either north/south or east/west from Steventon.

The importance of the area to the village is significant as it provides the setting and backdrop to the

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

village which is appreciated and enjoyed by all. There has been much concern about planning applications that have been made which have proposed to extend the village into this area. As a location typically beyond the edge of the village, such applications can only have a negative and adverse effect on East Hanney, its setting, the community, and the environment. It is essential, if East Hanney is to retain its character and independence, that such development is not permitted, and that East Hanney retains its rural roots and does not find itself in coalescence.

Hanney Before the Normans

People have been living in the Hanney area for around 8,000 years, from the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age. Although there are no written records before 956 AD, archaeological evidence, particularly from studies on the proposed reservoir site, undertaken between 1992 and 1999, and during the last 10 years on proposed development sites in East Hanney, Grove and Wantage, builds a picture of the earlier history of the area. Two large metal detector rallies in 2009 and 2010 add further information.

The earliest finds are Mesolithic stone tools found in small numbers throughout the area but with no evidence of where these people lived. We have some evidence of Neolithic settlement (around 3000 B.C.) from land south of The Causeway in East Hanney, where fragment of two pottery bowls had been deliberately buried in a pit.

By the Bronze Age (2000-750 BC), there are more signs of people living in the area with settlements south of Bellinger's Garage and at two locations on the proposed reservoir area. A Bronze Age cremation cemetery was found on the St Mary's School site in Wantage. The nearby Uffington White Horse is also of late Bronze Age date.

We know that people were in the area during the Iron Age, 750 BC - 43 AD, from the Waylands Smithy long barrow, and hill forts at Uffington Castle, Segsbury Camp and Cherbury Camp. But they were living and farming in the Vale, with roundhouses found south of Williams Racing and at Crab Hill and eleven settlement sites in the reservoir area. The metal detector rallies found many iron Age items including brooches and coins, particularly from the century before the Roman invasion.

In the Roman period, AD 43-410, there was a settlement at Wantage and a religious centre at Marcham/Frilford. The A338 is believed to follow the route of a Roman Road from Cunetio, near Mildenhall in Wiltshire, to Alcester, near Bicester, via Wantage. The metal detector rallies recovered many Roman finds, but these were particularly concentrated in fields alongside this road. Archaeology in advance of a proposed housing scheme to the south of Summertown in East Hanney revealed evidence of widespread habitation surrounded by paddocks and enclosures, but these people were of fairly modest status. There were also burials of at least five adults plus a child. Further afield in East Hanney parish, to the east of the present village, there is evidence of a higher status villa site and of a trackside settlement around 1.5 km long. Much remains to be discovered here.

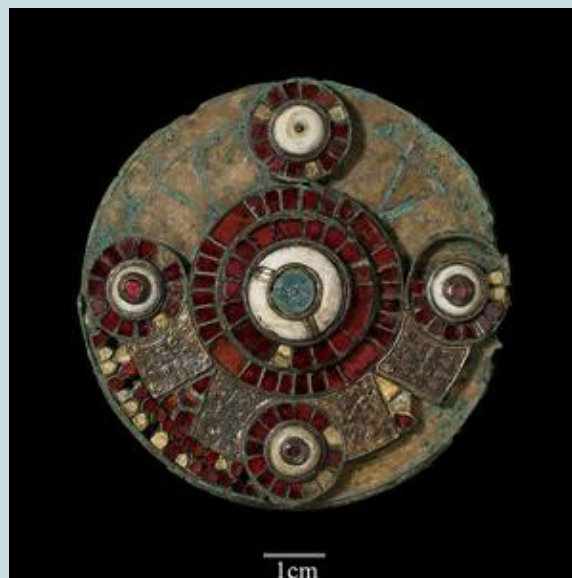


Part of Roman linear settlement, track, and probable villa site just north of the Steventon Rd [Lidar + geophysics traces]. Track leads towards Drayton. Site shown on map on page 12.

Photo courtesy William Wintle.

Archaeological evidence is relatively scarce for the time between the end of the Roman period in the early 5th century, and the arrival of the Normans in 1066. We know from documentary and other evidence that by late Saxon times the area was well settled. King Alfred was born in Wantage and most of the village names are Saxon in origin, but even in Wantage itself there is relatively little archaeological evidence of the Saxons. It seems likely that their settlements are largely lost beneath later villages. One notable exception to this lack of archaeological evidence is the Hanney brooch, found between West Hanney and Denchworth during the 2009 metal detector rally. Further excavation revealed the grave of a woman in her mid-20s, who had been buried in an isolated location, with the brooch and other grave goods.

It is not until 956 AD that we start to see written evidence of Hanney. By a charter of this date, King Eadwig grants land at East Hanney to Abingdon Abbey. From a description of the boundary in this and a subsequent charter, we know that this was the area stretching from the Letcombe Brook, as far as Marcham Mill, a large part of the present East Hanney parish boundary follows the same route.



The Hanney Brooch circa 600 A.D.
Found between Hanney and Denchworth in 2009.
Courtesy Wikipedia Commons

14. Contribution to character - agriculture in the East

East and West Hanney are located in the wider Upper Thames Clay Vale. The area has contrasting landscapes, including enclosed pastures of the clay lands with mixed farming, hedges, hedge trees and field trees and more settled, open, arable lands. Mature field oaks give a parkland feel in many places. This area is an old flood plain, characterised by level lowland farmland growing wheat, barley, oil seed rape, with some grazing on Jurassic and Cretaceous clay soils. Land surrounding East and West Hanney is predominantly flat grade 3 arable and grazing land of the clay vale [Grade 3 is good to moderate quality land, perhaps with limitations on the timing and type of crops to be sown]. The main feature is the Letcombe Brook chalk stream, which flows through the middle of East Hanney. Chalk streams are characterised by their crystal-clear waters, water crowsfoot and wild brown trout. The brook is surrounded by arable fields, water meadows and the remnants of the mediaeval and Victorian orchards. [Source: Natural England National Character areas NCA profile 108.]

The current major crop in the north of this eastern extension is currently clearly electricity. The 2014 Landmead Solar Farm covers 220 acres and generates about 45 MW of electricity, enough for over 10,000 homes. The area has now been blighted for at least 20 years by the Thames Water reservoir proposal to build the second largest UK reservoir, in a large part of the fields between Hanney, Drayton and Steventon; this seems to have resulted in a further blot on the landscape in the form of solar panels, as there is little incentive for longer term investment until the water issue is decided. While clearly a benefit to the wider environment, locally and visually, this new feature is harder to appreciate. At present the reservoir seems unlikely to go ahead for at least another twenty years, but the blight it causes will remain. The adverse effect may be to encourage new development proposals to focus to the south of the village as the reservoir map indicates work will start just beyond the current and future eastern estates.

East Hanney also has its own private airstrip at Landmead farm. This has 3 grass runways and a hangar, although a certain amount of confidence is needed to land alongside the solar farm! There is also a model plane flying field on the site.

There is almost a Fenland quality in the very large flat fields, that make this eastern area so attractive to a water company, and no doubt to the earlier canal builders. The huge embankments proposed for the reservoir, would totally destroy this openness and overshadow the eastern part of the village. Even sunrise would be later! It has been farmed for around 3000 years at least. As related above, there is also much archaeological potential. Only a few square miles are within the parish boundaries, but the plain here has an appeal of its own, as well as a rich wildlife. No other part of South Oxfordshire has a comparable landscape, and it deserves protection.

Recreation and Leisure Opportunities



Spreading tree along Letcombe Brook path



Footpath and a fine building in Halls Lane



Footpath, with stile and horses in paddock



Beside the Brook in high summer



Allotments, hall and sports pitches



Taking a ride in the Hanney Gap



61 Rare empty tennis court at the club



Children's play area on a quiet day

15. Contribution to character - village approaches and the Hanney Gap

Only 10 years ago, the approach to the Hanneys from all directions was subtle, rural and tranquil; they left you in no doubt that you were approaching a village rather than a housing estate. The 'gap', between East and West Hanney, though reduced in the 1930's, seemed a clear divide between the villages that was likely to be preserved. It would be fair to say that all now give cause for concern, including encroachment from other directions, and the views of the village that one has when approaching.

From the North, new developments have created a modern and stark red brick approach and, from the South, a mix of random styles and colours. Neither harmonise with the original village. The east has to some degree improved and tidied itself, using natural vegetation, but has seemed, during this early period of growth, to have created a separate community. Better development control planning could have helped with all three, as it has in several other Hanney developments. All of these alleged improvements have degraded the prospects of the village and the visual approaches. Intelligent planting to camouflage the damage is now the best option.

In comparison the approach through the western route, the 'Gap,' is much the same today as in 1939, although the trees have grown, and the new 'luxury executive fake manors and barns' in West Hanney have squeezed it in visual and practical terms. Hopefully, the 'gap' will be safeguarded by both villages, despite being technically on West Hanney land, for it is very important to all, as is ensuring against encroachment from each of the other directions. This includes Grove to the south, which is rapidly expanding and is now effectively only 2 fields apart from Hanney. It is important that East Hanney maintains its independence and sense of place from all of its neighbours.

The separation and space offered by the Hanney Gap is greatly valued by the clear majority of the inhabitants of both villages [see data below map]. The gap is only a few hundred metres wide. It was originally twice as big, but the Pusey gift of land gave a central site for the school which was equally convenient for both villages. This retained its isolation for the next century. It sits alongside Cow Lane, which was clearly an important trackway and forms part of the boundary between the villages. The latest Pevsner guide complimented the building ['pretty 19th century Tudor'], but placed it in West Hanney. It sadly reduced the openness of the Gap, but both villages had an abundance of gaps in 1840!

A century later, a row of public housing was erected along the East Hanney part of the causeway and ended opposite the school. It was perhaps at this point, that the possibility of the gradual merging of the villages was acknowledged, and the gap became more highly valued. A recent housing application behind the causeway was rejected. Neolithic pottery was found in the archaeological survey – the earliest so far in the Hanneys.

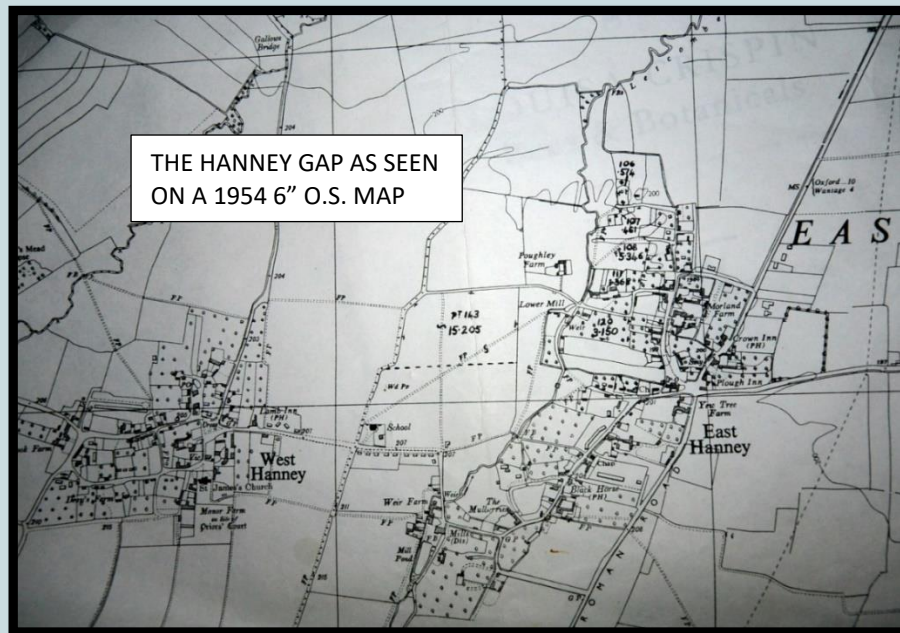
East Hanney stretched out along the turnpike and other earlier north-south paths, whereas West Hanney may also have also focused towards Garford along Winter Lane between the brooks, despite having a more nucleated overall shape. Before the turnpike in 1771, Cow Lane formed a significant track from Grove to Garford via the Hanneys, and perhaps further north, still serving both Hanneys during its decline, probably caused by the new road diverting traffic towards East Hanney.

At present, the value of the gap is mainly a spatial one. It offers a real sense of openness across flat fields, more like Norfolk than Oxfordshire. To the north, there is no visible obstruction for several miles until the Corallian ridge, whereas the growing Community Woodland trees to the south, offers

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

more of a backdrop, limiting the view a little although it remains a very open vista. The woodland also provides a real village owned wedge to the south, but no such protection is in place to the north.

The gap is a clear symbol of what the safeguarding of village character is about. It represents the freedom of the two villages to determine their own preference to remain as they have been for centuries. Being separate is simply how the Hanneys have always been, and this basic fact is appreciated by most, even those unaware of their history. The relationship between both villages is partly defined and even strengthened by the existence of the gap. Developers and planners must understand this too.



In the 2017 Neighbourhood Plan survey of West Hanney, over 95% of respondents (140 out of 147) were in favour of maintaining the green gap, out of 64% of all inhabitants. In the corresponding 2017 East Hanney NP survey, 89% of respondents (219 out of 247) thought there should be a green gap between East and West Hanney, out of a response of 63% of residents. The view of the gap below was taken on the causeway in July 2020, showing the open view stretching for about 4 miles to the Corallian Ridge. It is a view and an uplifting experience that should not be lost.



East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

Approaches to East Hanney and the Gap



The western approach along the causeway on entering the gap – a still quite rural feel from here



Planting has softened the final yards into East Hanney with tall limes and good gardens. Turn around here and the 'gap' to West is in front. It's a vital 300 metres of space-riders and cyclists love it too.



East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

The journey from the north used to offer an almost invisible arrival with the roof of an excellent 1940's bungalow just showing on the left .



Now the open northern approach (below) to the right of the sign has been plugged by ill matching red bricks and a rather lumpen design. Hopefully, big trees will be planted soon.



The new view from the south (below) is perhaps even worse, but hopefully someone can invent a hedge preservation order to soften this approach. Bovis clearly needed an architect with rural awareness.



16. The Hanney Vernacular Style and appropriate future guidance

A disappointing feature of recent new building has been the inability of some developers to model their new homes on the local and slightly random styles that define the village landscape of East Hanney. There are exceptions to this: the new estate at Aldworth Close has made a definite effort to match local building characteristics and has not crammed an excess of buildings onto the plot. The arrangement is pleasantly irregular and will look even better when tree planting is complete. Another building that harmonises well is Bramley Cottage, at the entrance to Blenheim Orchard. On the other side of the road however, the unimaginative 'Ye Old Housen' demonstrates that this problem of integration is not new. In the 1950's, a fine thatched cottage stood in this critical site.

It is difficult to define a set Hanney style in a village with such a complex group of older houses, but there are some clear characteristics that are repeated from the various ages of Hanney housebuilding before World War Two. Virtually all of these can be seen in the Character Area 1 journey from Ebbs Lane to Fiveways and then via Main Street and Mill Orchard to Summertown and Brookside. Most of these properties were built before 1970. There are just over a hundred houses in this sequence, and they offer a style dictionary for any developer wishing to build in the Hanneys.

The oldest were built between 1550 and 1700. Many are still thatched. There are still around 15 thatched properties in East Hanney, and several more where the thatch has been replaced by handmade tiles. Sadly, it seems unlikely that any more will be built although fortunately the skills to maintain them are still available. Timber has been used to match the listed barns in Halls Lane in some new plots and many barn conversions exist in East Hanney. The largely timber Burnaby provides a very strong echo of the old Malthouse that adjoined the current house of that name. The roof pitch is very close in style. Two of the new houses in Aldworth Close have adopted a very dark wooden barn look, which should weather appropriately in time. One feasible challenge still left however is to save the memorable Snuggs Barn from collapse.

The distance from good sources of high-quality limestone, together with cheaper and more convenient alternatives, seems to have reduced the use of stone, although many robust stone walls exist in both Hanneys. Stone based and brick topped boundaries are not uncommon. Good use of stone and local bricks in new developments and associated infrastructure, with village type designs, would intrinsically improve building styles and appearance, enabling integration and reflect the village setting.

From about 1700, brick became more readily available in the Vale. Initially a variable deep red was used with some blue/black header patterning from over burned bricks. These seem to have been the dominant local hues but as rail transport became possible, other colours and also slates were introduced. There appears to have been a significant economic upturn in the early 19th century which coincides with the building of two working mills and their residential properties, the rebuilding of The Mulberries, and Lower Manor. There are several brick cottages from the 19th century. Most appear not to have been thatched. The main group is at the southern end of Main Street and includes Tamarisk, Lay Cottage and Gilbert's Cottage. In some homes, such as Lilac Cottage, brick replaced wattle infills. Brick was not used in the building of the Congregationalist Chapel and the C of E Chapel of Ease, where brick was clearly insufficiently grand, and stone was used. Today many new buildings have introduced some bizarre brick shades, often with very harsh sharp edges. The four new houses in Ashfields Lane are an example of this incoherent approach.

Slate was available as a cheap substitute for thatch from the early 19th century. Welsh slate came to dominate the many local smaller producers of split stone roofing, such as the Stonesfield mines near Woodstock. Standardised sizes were soon a major feature too. Tiles for roofs were available from

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

the 15th century although they were not common until much later. Concrete tiles were introduced late in the 19th century. Today the random texture of handmade tiles has been too often replaced with geometric severity. Although, some new developments have included slate roofs.

The layout of the closes in the conservation area is complicated by the fact that many were farmyards and farmhouses until the 20th century. This has fortunately left an unpredictable footprint in many places. Many timber framed thatch cottages declined in the agricultural depression of the late 19th century. Some were saved by James Holmes and others, but many burned down or were demolished or just collapsed, as they had done for hundreds of years. In the Victorian and Edwardian times, the shift to the residential use of older farm buildings started. This forms the basis for much of the interesting street plan today.

The features of the conservation area are the basis for the architectural character of the village and form the area most residents and visitors will pass through and relate to. Many of the buildings in the closes and other areas seem to emphasise these themes too. The key features seem to be:

- A curving street pattern with only one relatively straight stretch, in Main Street. Side streets often follow old access routes to fields and orchards.
- An opening and closing of the width throughout, with visual gateways throughout
- The use of large trees and other foliage to soften the vistas, particularly in the northern Green areas.
- The Greens themselves and other smaller informal open spaces, e.g. around the Black Horse
- The relatively even spread of the remaining thatched houses throughout the streets
- The mix of housing sizes, and clusters of large and small dwellings, and period styles, e.g. the Victorian red brick row at the southern end of main Street, and the converted farmhouses around Halls Lane.
- Only a very few areas where a regular building line introduces regimentation
- Large front gardens which offer diverse planting [others have sadly been converted into car parks.]
- Varying plot sizes and the unpredictable orientation of houses and gardens
- The varied drainage ditches that introduce, and drain away, water within the street scene
- A variety of layouts and spaces added by crossings, e.g. Snuggs Lane and Ashfields /Halls Lane
- The unusually grand elevations of the two big old mills and their supporting buildings
- Very few post-World War 2 buildings that jar the view
- Many modern houses do include some vernacular features to match their location
- Open lateral spaces to the sky all along the main streets
- Virtually no street lighting and safe open walkways, when using a torch.
- Unrestricted road access to side streets and no gates across estate roads

And importantly for new developments in order to integrate:

- Using materials that link to older styles and forms in their type of stone, brick, slate or tile.
- A building design that shares characteristics with similar structures from the more common older village housing stock, e.g. Aldworth Close
- Detail features that align with earlier best practice [see below]
- A sense of conservation rather than preservation – a feel of a working village still?

Some details that characterise typical East Hanney Houses

1. Red and black 'burnt end' bricks in patterns or layers
2. Stone footings for very old buildings and mixed brick and stone walls
3. Elm/Oak planking on barns
4. Some richly patterned tiling arrangements

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

5. Muted colours on older plaster walls
6. Half hipped roofs
7. Use of stone in gable ends
8. Use of slates
9. Porches
10. Windows reflective of a village, often small, sometimes with boarding or angled design (typical wantage estate styles).
11. The use of chimneys with their implicit variety
12. Running water from the Brook along many streets.
13. Houses set back from the road with gardens not parking plots
14. Provision of space between properties, avoidance of high density and mass.
15. Provision of green backdrops and planting to achieve this

Character Problems – Seen particularly in the new estates/closes

1. Lack of pavements
2. Over wide streets without gutters in some new estates
3. Predictable curves and right angles create a lack of mystery
4. Plastic guttering in unsuitable places
5. Inappropriate bricks – texture and colour
6. Harsh tiles and slates, especially in new estates
7. Insufficient parking leading to pavement parking and other congestion
8. Angular shaped roofs with no chimneys, ridge tiles or other visual interest
9. Overuse of board fencing, rather than hedgerows and stone walls
10. Removal of trees and hedgerows, depleting naturally provided green vista
11. Lack of pathways and routes through to neighbouring areas
12. Houses too tightly laid out, too dense meaning that the open village feel is not achieved, and potential unnecessary congestion and crowding issues caused.

17. East Hanney – Overall Issues for Planning Policies

The character of East Hanney has been established by the application of a number of largely unwritten, and never formally agreed, key principles. This section attempts to start this definition process. The goal will be to see most new development, being aware of these features and utilising any that are appropriate.

Although the conservation area contains most of the listed buildings and defines much of the character, these characteristics will also be useful in preserving the overall feel of the community, and thus can be applied more widely if appropriate. The village generally displays a high standard of building and upkeep which always looks natural rather than manicured.

- Conservation of the defined area and other village assets needs to be more active. The conservation areas are core to the village and essential for ensuring character. The area needs protection and active improvement. Definition and mapping alone are insufficient. Is the conservation area ever actively reviewed and regularly conserved by the Parish Council and the DC?
- Is there a village conservation representative?
- The village is predominantly two storey and this height should be used as a general benchmark. A few exceptions add interest but should be restricted.
- The varied mix of plot sizes and surrounding space is a key contributory feature of character. The same is broadly true of the use of materials. Architectural monoculture should be avoided, e.g. repeated use of the same brick, as recently in Ashfields Lane, even if pleasant.
- Simply adding a jumble of styles with the label of diversity, as seen in the Silk Mill estate, is not sufficient.
- The variety of Hanney housing makes creating a language of form difficult, but perhaps a list of encouraged and discouraged practices could be drawn up jointly by villagers and specialists, based on the current vernacular styles and detailing. Use of designs immediate to an area and adoption of village styles and design characteristics would naturally help integration.
- Information on how to source appropriate materials could be made available to both developers and home improving residents.
- In the older parts of the village, the variety of each plot boundary is a common feature, mixing walls with fences, shrubs and hedges. This is missing in some of the new estates. Front gardens are a pleasing feature of many older houses and more attractive than a parking space. Some areas are rich in trees, whereas others are not.
- Ask the gardening club to create help sheets and offer gardening coaches. Why not try a competition for improved gardens and tree and shrub planting?
- Parking is currently only a limited problem but is slowly becoming an issue. Parking on pavements is already common on some of the new estates. Are enough spaces being planned into newer building sites? Are footpaths too wide?
- Is a cycling strategy being developed? Are there sufficient bike racks?
- Speed control by better road design and technology appears to be having an impact. This needs to continue. Good planting and street art can all calm or slow motorists. Is 30 too fast?

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

- The quality of drainage to offset flood plain building needs to be further improved. The old well tried and proven systems are under pressure and these methods need to be retained and managed.
- New greens are a welcome feature, and the current historic greens should be protected.
- Existing spaces should be better resourced and used – e.g. Brookside, British Legion, Ebbs Lane mini-green
- Hanney's three historic bridges should be better protected and not replaced by crude concrete.
- The dark streets should be retained, and street lighting avoided on new developments.
- A more planned policy of tree planting should be encouraged, with villagers actively involved.
- The village is fortunate in having many natural view 'windows' which open up streets and vistas and usually encourage interesting vegetation, tidy or confused, wildlife and offer a change of scene. These should be protected from infilling and the spaces themselves acknowledged for their value and contribution. It is seldom really just 'empty'?
- The use of artworks and historic objects to enrich the scene, e.g. Dandridge's Mill turbine and Fiveways seating.
- Information to raise awareness of the richness of the village scene and its history. Even a mini-museum should be considered
- The approaches to the village, from all four directions, should be reconsidered. Could each scene be better managed? At present the new developments have unfortunately had a negative impact on the approach to East Hanney from the south and north; these have become more suburban than rural, with the soft green edge to the village gaining a hardened look.
- The signage in the east seems confused as to where the village starts, but at least the new estates are camouflaged by existing trees.
- The 'gap' approach is still much the same, but the planting could be improved, and old signs removed – a West Hanney PC task, I think.
- The quality of information signs and other features [such as speed awareness displays] should be considered, rather than their volume and density. This is a village and not an urban centre.

18. Moving Forwards – a Summary

The division of East Hanney into eight-character areas reflects well on the varying styles that have developed over many years. We perhaps all do hark after the halcyon days and believe that character will only emerge when buildings are a couple of generations old? As we have seen in this study however, age is only one factor, and it is the richness of a much more complex set of interactions that underpin a village's character. The essence of Hanney is perhaps more difficult to define than a Cotswold limestone village, but maybe the resulting mixture is more interesting? It does not however make guidance for development any simpler!

A key element is that we wish to preserve, in the built character of East Hanney, the fact that it is a rural, and not a urban space we live in. Some elements we wish to preserve are the lack of street lighting, the reduction of over-powering signage and features which reflect a village environment. As opposed to excessively dense developments with little variation in style. This is as well as ensuring that future development has integral features of East Hanney and village styles, featuring local materials, and is cognisant of a rural village setting and green environment. We need the understanding of the Hanney 'Gap' and its retention, as well as our surrounding landscape heritage, especially the protection of the Letcombe Brook and Community Woodland, with their unique landscape and footpaths. The Hanneys are both definitely distinct villages and have no desire for any form of conglomeration. Their history is in part defined by their separation and this is a key part of the character that should be retained.

The newer village developments east of the A338 have tended to follow a national housebuilder profile and consequently have more features of urban development and less variety in design forms and space. Consequently, these do nothing to build on the character of the adjacent established village. There is no future chance of any adding to the listed buildings of the older Hanneys from these new estates. Is this such a bizarre ideal? Future developments should reflect the diversity of the older streets, rather than formal 'off the shelf' solutions. Importantly the building of monotonous estates must be avoided, and high-quality design should be the prerequisite. Forty homes at a time is too many, and not reflective of the village, causing unnecessary dense living and urbanisation. Any single development of that size is also over 10% of the size of the village at the last census: we would suggest a lower maximum number of homes per site.

Any development from now on should reflect the loose density and style of the older village, including any new building to the east. This will help to give new residents the sense of belonging to a rich and vibrant existing community, rather than have to start afresh. Sadly, a by-pass seems an impossible dream, but communities can build bridges in many other ways. Development should look to ensure there will be a sense of community and pride of being in a village, through design. It is imperative that the character of East Hanney is preserved for future generations. This will offer them the identity that we currently share, rather than allow the Hanneys to become an extension of Wantage or Grove. Overwhelmingly, the two villages of East and West Hanney wish their individuality to be protected by green buffers and no further coalescence should be permitted.

This acknowledges, as has been described in this report, that character is a complex blend of multiple elements, many of which are fragile and take time to emerge. Recovery from damage takes even longer. The Brook, which is again becoming a wildlife oasis, was long ruined by pollution, poor knowledge and neglect. It is now a metaphor for growth. This has only been achieved by building a deep understanding of its ecosystem. The wider village is similar and perhaps we need to deepen our knowledge of the inherent complexity which forms the basis of its character. The community seems very willing to join in the development of a richer space for us all. The councils should all now

work together to build this richer society as opposed to the current bidding to ‘build, build, build’ and the national mantra to ‘get things done’ – regardless of quality and cost to the community.

Appendix 1: Villagers’ thoughts on the essence of East Hanney’s character - An overview

General

- I moved to this village because it was a village. I like the fact I can walk the whole length of the Hanneys in 25 minutes. I like the fact that there are no late-night convenience stores. I like the fact that I know a significant number of people in the village. This way of life will be challenged with more houses (and hence people). For those that claim everyone has a right to live in Hanney and who can decide, I would say, if you want to live in a town, go and enjoy one. Unless it is protected, Hanney will become Grove, which is already merging to become an estate on the outskirts of Wantage.
- We appreciate the size of the village, small enough so you can really get a sense of community and belonging. Know people and be known.
- I think we have a very mixed economy with a large number of attractive cottages, some newer houses added in well over the years and then some really unattractive 50’s and 60’s additions. In general, I think we are short of very small starter homes or flats for youngsters and similarly I think we are short of houses for downsizers. Overall, I see no evidence of the housing crisis with the exception of my foregoing comment. In the last year or so we seem to be getting many expensive houses in the villages and I wonder if we perhaps now have enough.
- The things that I value about East Hanney are the compact size of the old village and the distinct gap between East and West Hanney. It is a friendly village with limited amenities. The playing fields, children’s play area, village hall and community shop are well placed and well used. The new developments to date have been in scale and I was pleased that three large developments were refused. We have accepted enough expansion. The views from both villages to the countryside reflect the rural scale and location and should be cherished.
- We liked the size of East and West Hanney and their populations, making friends, joining in the many activities and clubs that we helped to run, and really feeling part of the community
- The quiet, the open spaces, the rural setting, the places to walk and jog, a calming place to relax and enjoy after school or work

Local Architecture

- There is a harmonious mix of buildings, currently well scattered, the new blending in well with the old.
- Our village has grown organically over more than 500 years. The country needs houses, and that, almost certainly, seems to mean large estates. Housing estates are by nature NOT organic creations. Therefore, when built in or near villages, there should be every attempt to reflect the variety of materials and styles that characterise the rest of the village. After all, the historic buildings are always a large chunk of what gives a village its sense of place!
- Mixed housing types of different style, age and materials showing how village has grown. Very few houses are the same, except for the undesirable newer larger developments. Houses and bungalows interspersed with buildings of special interest, e.g. manor, old shop/PO, pub. Medium to low density of housing with lots of gardens and other open spaces between properties. Not all fronting directly onto the roads.
- It would be very easy for villages like the Hanneys to coalesce and for the old centres to be swamped by new developments (as has already happened at Grove). The character of any village

which has grown over the centuries depended on no one century creating an imbalance. New and old (residents as well as architecture) fit together and work together for the benefit of both.

- The variety of buildings in the Hanneys, and the spaces between them, demonstrates a subtle balance in how they have evolved, giving the villages their character, which is, in essence, a measured transition over time from the past to the present.
- A split has occurred in East Hanney. Apart from a few houses, when you cross over to the east of the A338 you may as well be in a suburb of any English town rather than a Vale village. This is sloppy and careless 'town planning' – in a village setting.

The Street Scene

- The vista when approaching the Hanneys from the South and West is fundamental to their character. Green fields in the foreground, hinting at archaeological interest from times gone by. Wildlife on view, trees rising above the rooftops. The cluster of settlements forming a natural shape, historically unspoilt by the addition of large intrusive red brick developments. The tower of St. James The Great, provides a focal point for West Hanney, which is perhaps something East Hanney does lack. [Written before the Dews Meadow estate intruded!]
- There is little crowding of houses, although it seems as though any spare plots are seized on and built upon! The roads are in as parlous a state as most of Oxfordshire. The pathways are little better though usable. There is little street furniture but what is there is fine.
- Largely linear layout of village, but based on a winding road, with small side turnings as cul-de-sacs, variously linked by unsurfaced tracks and footpaths. Lots of gardens and hedges. Main Street becoming too much of a cut through with too much traffic made more dangerous by increasing number of cars parked on the streets. Pavements limited in some parts but lots of opportunity for footpath walking – either for pleasure or to get around the villages.
- Sites of old ponds, dipping holes opposite old cottages. Keeping dry! Big flagstones, water in old meadows and furrows of arable fields. Buildings - mixture of house sizes including houses with sufficient land to hold unifying village events (these gardens all too easily lost via development.) Houses round village greens, mixed organic materials, use and re-use of same. Clues to former usage, ownership,
- Community. Hanney shop, the school, meeting people for a chat. delayed returns from the shop for this reason. Village playground, acknowledging or being acknowledged by people you pass. Activities and clubs, new groups, growing up to meet changing needs - e,g Flood Group, Nordic Walking, Bridge. A sense of taking and giving. Awareness of happiness and the reverse...loss and bereavement. Neighbours to water plants and put bins out when on holiday.
- Footpaths redolent of age. Used for centuries. Old stiles and kissing gates. Village water system distributing needed water. Sites of old ponds, dipping holes opposite old cottages.
- In addition to the array of gardens in the Hanneys, green spaces between properties also provide a pleasing environment for residents to live in, damping down noise, pollution and adding a calming effect. If the Hanneys are to retain their semi-rural character in future, the addition of unbridled, stark red brick developments, squeezed between tarmacked areas and given ironic pastoral names such as "Fields", Paddocks" "Meadows" etc. should be avoided.
- Twisting roads through the villages reflect the character of a by-gone age. The rather narrow, curving roads often necessitate a lack of frontage for some properties and a lack of pavement. Meandering streets form part of the character of the villages however they now struggle to accommodate the increasing levels of traffic. Frontages and grass verges are regularly churned up by vehicles trying to squeeze by, whilst the characterful bridges in East Hanney are under threat from heavy loads. Passage through East Hanney near the Black Horse is often blighted by on-road parking. The road surfaces in both villages are eroding significantly, causing dangers to cyclists.
- The lack of street lighting provides both advantages and disadvantages for the Hanneys. The disadvantages can be viewed from a health and safety perspective, but a lack of lighting allows a

clear, unpolluted sight of the heavens and discourages unwanted night-time gatherings. To introduce street lighting would be to destroy the character of the village as there is something endearing about torchlight bobbing along the Hanney streets on winter evenings. Any thoughts of traffic management through the addition of traffic-lights within the village would be inappropriate and undesirable in terms of the character of the villages.

- The Hanneys retain their character as historical island villages because their natural, non-linear shapes rise impressively from the surrounding countryside. The causeway provides a tangible connection between the two villages, whilst at the same time allowing each village its identity and individuality, all of which are presently untouched by the spread of development along its length. The villages both display a mix of the old and the new, the large and the small, brick, stone and wood, thatch and tile rooves, in terms of the character of their buildings, whilst the traditionally generous garden sizes. Do the planners understand all this?

Landscape qualities

- This should highlight the nearest viewpoint over the village, from the top of the hill on the Denchworth track, particularly important to walkers, horse riders and off-road cyclists. This is the best overview of the Hanneys albeit from a height difference of less than 50 feet.
- We value the green spaces, particularly the Gap, the space between the two Hanneys, and the trees which frame the village and the churchyard.
- Hanney is above all green. It can hardly be seen from the A338 in either direction because of the trees and I think this is essential to its character. I would like to see this feature developed with more planting wherever it becomes possible – Kings Leases for instance.
- Hanney is also about water – sometimes too much of it, but Letcombe Brook is fundamental to it. I particularly like the pathway between Iron Bridge and Lower Mill and wonder if more could be made of it and others.
- Being a flat area, views are always going to be somewhat unspectacular in my opinion. Saying that there are some lovely ones around, but they are limited. What we do have though is a HUGE sky with spectacular sunsets and stunning displays of stars at night because we do not suffer from light pollution. In my view, we should do everything we can to discourage street lighting to preserve this situation
- We are very fortunate with some of our wildlife in and around the village, but Hanney is also about dog walkers. There are dozens of them, and they all know each other (or at least their dogs do) and it is a great form of exercise and a great way of getting to know people and bind the community. It is also safe to walk at all hours and everywhere.
- Greens, common land, wide verges, sports field, allotments etc throughout village in various places add to character; village edges open directly to open countryside and rural views; lovely views to the downs and the landscape changes with the seasons as crops change and trees/ wildflowers grow.
- Village hidden amongst trees on approach roads (A338 and road from Denchworth); Roof lines not too high so do not rise above tree tops; higgledy piggledy sky line with roofs and chimneys silhouetted against open skies, lovely sunsets and starry skies; within village roads/ lanes are also gently curving so views change as one travels along - few straight open stretches other than gap between east and west. The Hanneys achieve a characterful blend in this respect. Allotments are generally well maintained and add an additional dimension to the gardening tradition in the villages. The iconic village green areas in both villages provide a focal point for interesting walks and lead walkers towards both manor houses. The management of water courses around the villages has been exemplary of late and should be encouraged into the future, to avoid the ever-present threat of flooding. Letcombe Brook provides an oasis of nature within East Hanney and to date the walks along its banks, linking the historical mills, provide pleasure for many. The development of both mills into residential properties appears to have been carried out tastefully and provides an example of how to retain character by harmonising the past and the present.

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

- Entry to Hanney from A338...seat with trees. Glimpses of Green. Site of old elm. Peace Oak. Holmes memorial garden: site of old forge. Choice of roads, bends, and twists
- From the main road...distant views of church in W Hanney, dominating the village across low fields marked by years of agricultural usage.
- Fields of wildflowers (rapidly disappearing) buttercups, cowslips, occasional orchids.
- The wonderful gift of the community woodland and the care the village is taking of it.
- Birds - field fares en-passant, buzzards nesting, breeding swans

Traffic

- Traffic impact is becoming quite a menace; many seem to use Winter Lane as a short cut. There is one notice 'No HGVs' on one of the roads into East Hanney but not the others. As far as I am aware there is not one at the West end of West Hanney, so they come through regardless!
- A lot of Hanney is now East of the A338 and I think we need to do everything we can to integrate. In the absence of a Bypass then I think we need to lobby for measures to allow safe crossing over this road and traffic calming at the same time. What I do note is that heading north looks like a long straight road and a lot of traffic is accelerating furiously long before it leaves the built-up area.
- Undesirable noise throughout the villages is generally provided by methods of transportation – particularly the sound of traffic along the A338 and within the village along the main streets. Speeding vehicles are a regular and noisy feature, whilst the roadways need repair.
- We value the general calmness and peace, apart from when the traffic roars through, and love the darkness.

Future Developments

- I do not want street lighting in the village. This is a very important issue for me. I love the dark nights and clear skies. I am concerned that new developments require street lighting as any new developments will impact on our currently wonderful night views. I know the village off by heart with my eyes closed. For those that do not, there are torches. There are not many safety concerns in the village for which street lighting would be required (especially as that ditch on The Causeway has been filled in!).
- Among all the new housing developments taking place in East and West Hanney we have been disappointed to find no retirement flats or similar accommodation being proposed, so we have been forced to look elsewhere. Wantage is not far away, and we hope to maintain contact with our many village friends. We are, therefore, one more small example of the general feeling that the villages are expanding too quickly and failing to provide the accommodation that existing residents would like.
- Please keep the look of the village. Cloned housing estates and houses looming onto the road with no trees to offer seclusion impacts the feel of the village. Enough damage has been done since the 70's.
- We like the size of Hanney, making friends, joining in the many activities and organizations that we helped to run, and really feeling part of the community.

Comments collated from a village character questionnaire – August 2018

Summary of Villager's Key Points

The villagers' points underline with accuracy and intelligence, what they feel are the essential features and actions necessary to maintain the balance of the community in East Hanney. Balance is the key issue. Virtually all villagers were happy with the village that ended the first decade of the new millennium. It felt balanced and had a mix of respect for the past and the needs of the future. In the last 5 years, the pace of change has accelerated worryingly, and the priority has shifted to meeting the needs of distant communities rather than those of the residents of this village.

These are expressed throughout this verbatim feedback and the summary below is not a substitute for those valid points but merely an overview. Readers should consider both.

| Features of East Hanney we value | Threats to current village life |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is a village and not a small town• Having many contacts in the village• The gap between the Hanneys• A very mixed community – of house styles and residents – that works• A harmonious mix in many ways• The size and scale of the village- small and manageable• Lots of activities and clubs• Well-spaced and diverse buildings – large and small, rich and poor together• Neighbours who care for and help others• A subtle balance throughout• Meandering streets and residents• The lovely dark night skies• Safety when walking about• The pathways that link everywhere• Abundant wildlife• Still space and open skies• Exercise opportunities, e.g. woodland• We are above all a Vale village | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Becoming part of Grove• Over enlargement• Infilling near the gap• A housing shortage for the young and the retired especially• Too many expensive new houses• Undesirable newer larger developments• On the east of the A338 it looks like a town suburb – sloppy planning in a rural village/setting• Increased parking on main streets• Strangers who find it hard to join in• Overdevelopment• Cars threatening people• Stark bricks and tiles in newer buildings• No retirement flats and fewer bungalows• Cloned soulless estates• Speeding vehicles• State of the roads +daily rat runs• Not enough 'No HGV' signs |

Appendix 2: Saving Hanney for future generations

Responses by Years 5/6 at Hanney School – March 2020

The Hanney History Group gave a short talk on 'Life in Hanney during World War Two'. At the end, we held a conversation with about 26 pupils, from years 5/6 [ages 10-11], about what was important to them about Hanney today. No comparison was drawn with the war years, but the previous session seemed to help their reflection, albeit indirectly. There was a sense of being glad of what the Hanneys offered them today. Their replies were thoughtful and conscientious. These answers are shown below absolutely verbatim but may have had their introduction [e.g. 'I like being in Hanney because...'] truncated. The overall quality and consistency of their answers seemed worth including in these thoughts on village character. This is the immediate generation for whom we are preserving these villages, and their wishes seem to be both clear and very positive. Lockdown occurred the following week!

A. What do you like about being in Hanney?

1. It is nice and peaceful compared to my old house in Wantage and I can go on walks
2. I like the scenery around Hanney
3. All of the people, the sunshine, the places.
4. It is a nice village, and my school is here
5. I like being in Hanney because it's got lots of fun things to do and the woodlands are really interesting
6. I have lived in Hanney since I was born and love it because its lovely and calm.
7. The countryside, the feeling of knowing most people,
8. I like going to the woodlands.
9. I like the older style houses
10. I like being in Hanney being in Hanney people are nice and it's peaceful
11. I like it because most of my friends live here
12. It is peaceful
13. I like living in Hanney because it's a very nice place with lots of nature.
14. I really like Hanney – I like the fact that I can go to the park with friends and to the events the village hosts.
15. I like Hanney because its small [that's good!] because then it's easy to get around without a car e, g. so I can walk home without walking for miles.
16. I like that there is a park
17. I like being in this nice school
18. I like waking my dogs with my mummy
19. I like the forest in Hanney and the park
20. It's peaceful
21. It's very peaceful
22. I like spending time with my friends and learning in school
23. Calm, safe, fun, nice people.

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

24. I like Hanney because it's a calm and nice place.
25. I love the wildlife and fun things you can do; I live near the brook and go there in summer and my friends live near. I love the history and the great walks you can do.
26. Going in the village sweet shop

B. Can you describe your favourite place in Hanney?

1. Pub [for the meals] and home
2. The brook because it is really calming and quiet
3. The Park and brook of West Hanney
4. Our school but I also like the brook
5. Going down to the village shop and the park
6. School
7. The fields outside my house in the meads. The flowers in the spring near the cross.
8. Playing with friends in the woodland
9. I like the iron bridge and Letcombe Brooke
10. The wood because it is calm
11. I like the park
12. Priors Court Farm because it has lots of horses and feels safe
13. The farm, the park, and the woodland area
14. The library box
15. The park
16. The forest school
17. The brook
18. School
19. The iron bridge – I like listening to the water
20. My House
21. The park because I have lots of good memories
22. The big field behind the park
23. My favourite places in Hanney are the brook and the allotment, as my mum and I grow stuff on it!
24. Park - on a swing
25. I do not really have a favourite place because I like all places, but I love the school hall where the disco is!

Common Themes

The quality of the children's' reflections was impressive overall. A few broad areas stood out as common themes and the spiritual element in many was encouraging and mature. [They were not

East Hanney – A Study of Village Character

told of any link with the character study.] Clearly it would be wrong to draw too much from this sampling, but we offer the following list for consideration. The topics are listed as they occur:

1. Peace / Peaceful /Calm - 10 mentions
2. Woodland, Forest, Forest School -10 mentions
3. Countryside/Nature/wildlife -6 mentions
4. The Park – 11 mentions [taking the park to be the playground and its wider area?]
5. Water/Letcombe Brook/Iron Bridge – 11
6. There is a wide sense of appreciating the rural feel of the Hanneys and the School activities. I found myself impressed by the maturity of this feeling of closeness to the villages and their surrounds and traditions.
7. Amazingly computer games were not mentioned once, but the school disco did get a couple of comments!

Appendix 3: East Hanney – Summary of Listed Buildings 2020

1. GREEN STREET (East side) 12/24 Nos.1 and 2 The Green GV II. Cottages *
 2. GREEN STREET (West side) 12/27 Barn and cart shed GV II Barn. *
 3. HALLS LANE (North side) 12/32 Barn 25m E Philberd's Manor GV II. Barn.
 4. HALLS LANE (North side) 12/30 Barn approx. 5m W of Varlins GV II. Barn.
 5. MAIN STREET (East side) 14/34 Chapel Cottage GV II. House.
 6. GREEN STREET East side) 12/25 Cruck Cottage GV II. Cottage.
 7. GREEN STREET (East side) 12/21 Grange Farmhouse GV II Farmhouse,
 8. GREEN STREET (West side) 12/28 King's Farmhouse GV II Farmhouse,
 9. MAIN STREET (West side) 14/36 Lilac Cottage GV II House.
 10. GREEN STREET (East side) 12/22 Manor Farmhouse GV II Farmhouse
 11. A338 (East side) 4/19 GV II Milestone. Probably early C19. Painted stone. Square. Inscribed "Oxford 11, Wantage 3".
 12. A338 (West side) 4/20 Milestone GV II Milestone. Probably early C19. Painted stone. Square. Inscribed "Oxford 10 Wantage 4".
 13. MILL ORCHARD (South side) 14/42 Mill approx. 10m. SE Old Mill House GV II Mill
 14. BERRY LANE (Northeast side) Nightingale Cottage GV II Cottage,
 15. MILL ORCHARD (South side) 14/41 Old Mill House GV II Mill House
 16. HALLS LANE (North side) 12/31 Philberd's Manor 24/11/66 GV II House.
 17. A338 (East side) 4/18 Pound Croft House GV II House.
 18. SNUGGS LANE Pryor House 1708-0/12/10000 GV II House.
 19. MILL ORCHARD [North side) 14/40 Robey House GV II Railings and gate.
 20. MILL ORCHARD (North side) 14/39 Robey House GV II. House.
 21. MILL ORCHARD (South side) 14/43 10m. Old Mill House GV II Shelter shed.
 22. GREEN STREET (East side) 12/23 NE Manor Farmhouse GV Stable.
 23. MAIN STREET (West side) 14/35 Sunnybank GV II House.
 24. MAIN STREET (West side) 14/37 The Cottage II you House.
 25. GREEN STREET (West side) 12/26 The Grange + attached railings GV II House *
 26. MAIN STREET (West side) 14/38 The Mulberries II House.
 27. BROOKSIDE 14/17 Weir Farmhouse and attached small barn GV II Farmhouse *
 28. SUMMERTOWN Orchard Cottage, originating C17, +C19 extension. House
- * = Multiple sites

Numbers 1 & 2 The Green



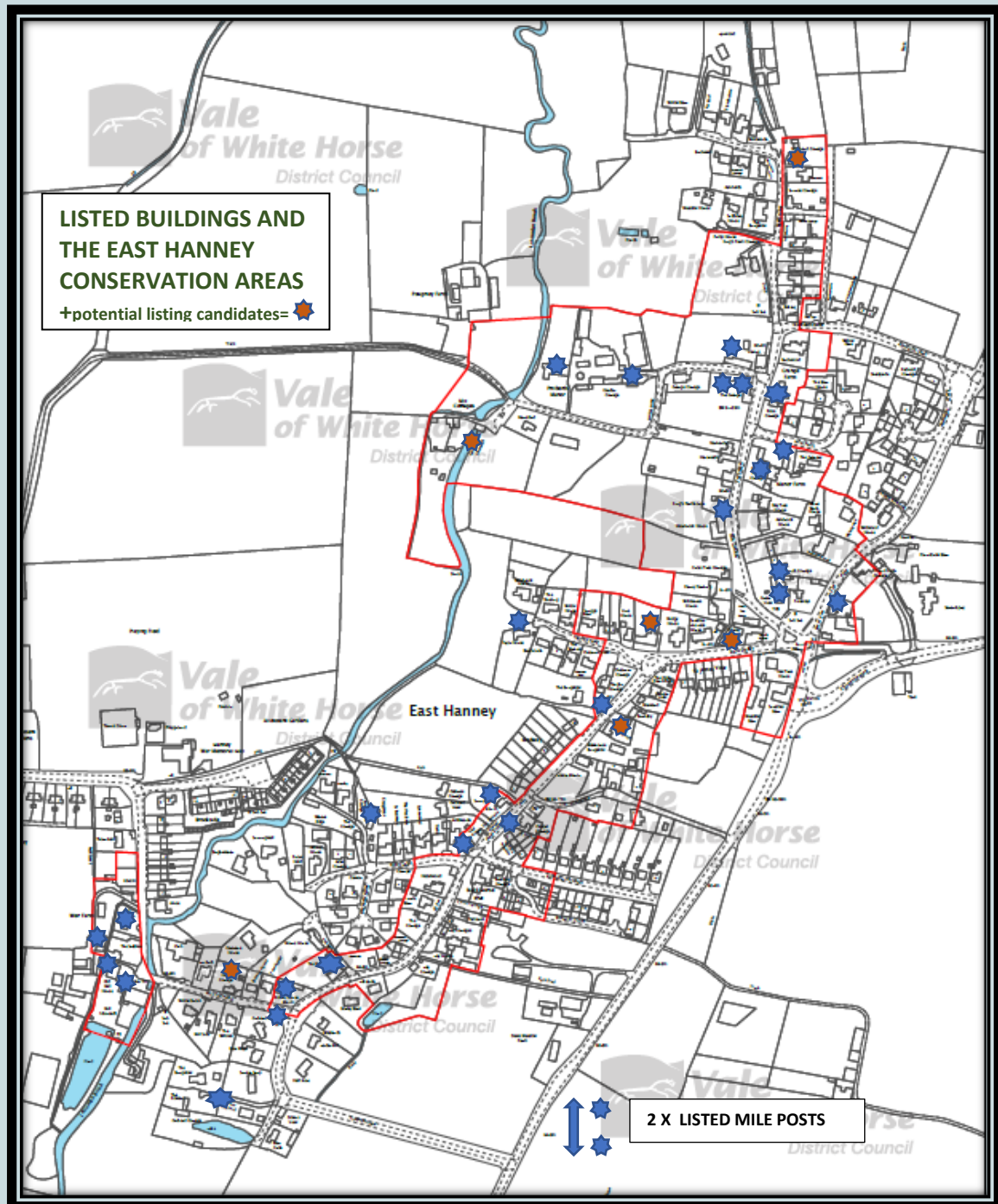
12 Smaller Contributions to 'Character' from the Streets of East Hanney



Top to bottom: 1 Letter box – St James Way 2. Victorian bricks -Halls Lane 3. Empty East Window, St. James the Less 4. Iron Bridge, Letcombe Brook 5. Blacksmiths Shop, St James Way 6. Redundant Turbine – Dandridge’s Mill 7. Restored seats – Five Ways 8. Memorial to Ted and Fred – Five Ways 9. 19th century tiling, Manor Farm 10. Restored stack and Hanney Kite – Ashfields Lane 11. 1822 brickwork 12. Library Box 2019 The Green

Appendix 4: The Conservation Areas showing Listed Buildings

The aim here is to include a short note on the conservation areas and whether or not they need any modification. The bigger issue seems to be if several key buildings need protection or listing as well as at least one listed building – the shed at Weir Farm.



Appendix 5: Notable Unlisted Buildings with Possible Potential for Inclusion for listing?

There is a story that the listing of the Hanneys was done by some surveyors, who were in a bit of a rush. In fairness they did list 26 more structures in East Hanney than the esteemed 'Buildings of England' author Nikolaus Pevsner, who must have paid a very brief visit to record just 4 lines on St James the Less in the first edition! Clearly there are other buildings, which are such an integral part of the street scene, and of village history in general, that are a critical part of village character and often seem worth including, if only in a group value sense. Milestones are clearly historically very significant on a turnpike, but to include them and not Lower Mill or several of the key cottages and farmhouses seems a strange choice.

The listed buildings criteria are complex and a little prone to subjectivity but essentially, they are based around the following simplified core principles:

- Architectural interest based around design, decoration or craftsmanship.
- Historic interest – linked to an event or an individual or a trend e.g. Industrial Revolution
- Group value – based around a design e.g. a square, common group features, or blending but diverse buildings and other objects. Non – grouped cottages are often overlooked.
- Fixtures and fittings and/or the overall character of conservation areas
- Age and rarity – the minimum being 30 years

This list is not an immediate plea for inclusion in the national list but an acknowledgement of the importance of certain buildings to village overall. Some may have important internal features which have not been inspected. The ranking is broadly geographical, north to south.

- Northend Cottage and thatched apple store, sited at a key point of the vista on Ebbs Lane. *
- September cottage
- The Old Crown
- Lower/West's Mill and associated cottages *
- Nethercot
- St James the Less*
- The Old Malthouse *
- Hanney Chapel
- The very old barn in Snuggs Lane
- The Black Horse and the shed to the north
- The barns near Orchard Cottage (these are located alongside the brook behind Dandridges Mill*)
- Old House at the northern of the Mills
- Mill Cottage
- The original School Building
- The Iron Bridge
- Darden House*
- Lower Manor*
- Hale Cottage*

*Significant candidates for listing

Appendix 6: Page of statistics on Population Growth 1086 -2020

Note: an incomplete record but given to provide an indication of the organic growth rate which the village infrastructure has developed to sustain. Compared to the rapid forced growth currently being experienced for which there is no additional infrastructure in the village and therefore by nature adverse impact on the character and form of East Hanney.

| Date | Households | Population |
|----------------------|------------|------------|
| 2020 | | 1052 |
| 2011 | | 748 |
| 2001 | 305 | 746 |
| 1981 | 262 | 759 |
| 1951 | | |
| 1931 | | |
| 1901 | | 459 |
| 1881 | 120 | 493 |
| 1851 | 140 | 591 |
| 1800 | | |
| 1700 | | |
| 1300 Pre black death | | |
| 1086 | 56+ | 200? |

End