

Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2033

Pre-Submission Version

Appendices

- **B: Bledlow and Pitch Green Settlement Area Design Statement and Bledlow Conservation Area Character Survey**
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Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2033

Appendix B: Bledlow and Pitch Green Settlement Area Design Statement and Bledlow Conservation Area Character Survey

The purpose of this Settlement Area Design Statement is to provide planners, architects, design technicians and applicants with a framework to assess the design priorities of future physical development in the Bledlow and Pitch Green Settlement Areas. It seeks to inform users which aspects, and features of special architectural and historic interest are considered by the community to make a positive, important and special contribution to the physical characteristics of the Settlement Areas. It is hoped that this Statement will also encourage all residents to continue an active interest in the future shaping of the built and natural environment of Bledlow and Pitch Green.

This Statement is a material consideration for applications in the Bledlow and Pitch Green Settlement Areas and immediately adjacent areas of the wider locality and forms an integral part of the Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan. Its use will aid the delivery of development proposals which protect and enhance the character and appearance of Bledlow and Pitch Green.

The Statement incorporates the Bledlow Conservation Area Character Survey and was produced as part of the Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan by the Design Task Group and Working Group following visual surveys of the Settlement Areas and the input of local residents via the parish survey and the consultation feedback received following the two community consultation events in February/March 2016.

What are Conservation Areas?

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest which are considered worthy of preservation or enhancement. They are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Within Conservation Areas there are special controls on some alterations to buildings and their demolition or partial demolition and on works to trees. Wycombe District Council's Heritage Guidance Note on Conservation Areas gives further details of the specific controls that apply. Designation of a Conservation Area does not preclude the possibility of new development, but such development must be designed positively to enhance the special character of the area.

Landscape Overview

The historic core of Bledlow village occupies a slightly elevated position amongst chalk foothills of the scarp slope of the Chilterns on the edge of Longwick Vale. Pitch Green is the largest of a number hamlets located in Longwick Vale that have formed part of the wider ancient parish of Bledlow. The Wain Hill Chalk Escarpment is prominent to the South.

Historical Overview

The name Bledlow is derived from Old English and means "Bledda's burial mound". Whilst the village origins can be traced back to the 10th century, when it is recorded in a document as Bleddanhloew, there is evidence of much earlier occupation nearby; scatters of Neolithic artefacts have been found around the Upper Ickniel Way and on the escarpment above Bledlow is a Bronze Age Barrow known locally as The Cop. There is evidence for a Roman villa in the fields immediately to the west of the Bledlow Settlement Area.

After the Norman Conquest, William I granted the Manor of Bledlow to his half-brother Robert, who held it in 1086. In the reign of Henry VI, it was granted to Eton College but in 1650 James Black became owner and he built the original Manor House. Records show that the present Manor was sold in 1801 to Lord Carrington whose successor holds it to the present day.

Cut in to the steep side of Wain Hill is Bledlow Cross, a turf-cut Greek cross, generally considered to have post-medieval origins, which along with its neighbour Whiteleaf Cross are the only known surviving turf cut figures in the County.

The Watlington and Princes Risborough Railway opened in 1872 and the railway line runs on an embankment crossing West Lane between Manor Farm and The City. The line was closed in the 1957 as a passenger line but has been reopened as a tourist attraction from Chinnor to the Thame Branch Junction.

Bledlow was first designated as a Conservation Area in 1971 and the survey was last updated in 1996.

1. Essential Characteristics: Bledlow (Inset Map 2)

Bledlow is small with an air of peaceful isolation, and contains a wide variety of building types and architectural styles scattered unevenly along a series of roads.

Bledlow consists of a mixture of building types in terms of age, size, form, style, construction and history. The houses are generally spread along a series of roads which are visually quite divorced from each other. There is a modest number of mid to late 20th century properties which, whilst not in keeping with the older properties in the village, are generally set well back from the road and have only a minimal impact on the streetscape or essential characteristics of the Conservation or Settlement Area.

The centre of Bledlow, in terms of layout, is Church End where the church, village green, pub and the Manor House are located. The heart of the village is dominated by the Grade I Listed church and the grounds of the Grade II* Listed Manor House, which is hidden from public views by high garden walls with only glimpses of the building visible from public areas.

To the west of the church small picturesque cottages, some dating back to the 16th century, are clustered on either side of the road. This historic group of cottages at the heart of the village make a cohesive and visually coherent association. Of similar styles and materials they provide a sense of enclosure and are the essence of the

historic character of the village. Architecturally and historically the group makes a vital contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

Manor Farm and its old farm buildings formerly stood in an open setting and made a particularly significant contribution to the Conservation Area, bringing the countryside close to the heart of the village. They have since been enclosed by non-native hedging stock and new walls, and as a result the buildings are no longer part of the street scene.

The Lions PH is a notable building at the western end of Church End, the colour-washed inn is particularly important because of its setting and its function as a terminal building when approaching along West Lane.

East of the Church a cluster of later 20th century houses opposite the Manor House designed by Aldington, Craig and Collinge won an architectural award and now sit comfortably in the streetscene alongside the group of older properties. The 18th century brick built Bledlow Homes, a former Union School, forms an important and substantial terminal focus at junction of Church End and Perry Lane.

A linear development of largely small scale 20th century development lies a short way to the north of Church End in Perry Lane, a narrow winding lane enclosed in part by high banks and hedges that is characteristic of this area.

The important group of historic buildings within the Conservation Area in West Lane (marked on **Inset Map 2**) are a compact and very attractive cluster of cottages in an orchard setting. Although a wide variety of materials has been used for walls and roofs of the old buildings they harmonise well together to provide an important architectural narrative of the development of the village. Outside the Conservation Area there is a small number of larger 20th century properties set well back from the road. Closer to the junction with Chinnor Road more modern development lies close to the road but mixed in with this is important medieval cruck-framed cottage which gives a strong sense of the historical character of Bledlow as you enter the Settlement Area.

Whilst the widespread use of hand-made red bricks, sometimes in herring bone pattern and with timber framing, and mellow red/orange plain clay tiles on roofs gives a good sense of unity in the core of the settlement the use of colour-washing or flint-work, thatch or slates demonstrates a pleasing mix in the peripheral areas.

Some of the essential characteristics of the Conservation Area are its simplicity in layout, use of materials and styles of buildings and the rural, informal nature of the open spaces and gardens. Trees, hedges, gaps and views of Longwick Vale play a key role in the character of the Conservation Area, particularly around Church End.

2. Essential Characteristics: Pitch Green (Inset Map 4)

Pitch Green is located around a staggered cross roads on the otherwise straight parliamentary enclosure road that runs between Chinnor and Princes Risborough (B4009). This busy road acts as a strong linear division between Bledlow village and the outlying hamlets to the north. The area around the junction of Perry Lane and Sandpit Lane with Chinnor Road and the Lower Icknield Way has little immediate

development around it and is dominated by an important stand of mature trees in the garden of Rosedene. The brick and flint Corner House and the pleasing mixture of outbuildings of Brewhouse Farm are all located immediately on the roadside and indicate the presence of a wider historic settlement in this area to those passing through the Settlement Area.

To the west of the road junctions a late 20th century development, set well back from and running parallel with Chinnor Rd and the village hall, located at the western edge of the settlement, feel slightly divorced from the wider Settlement Area.

The majority of the Settlement Area is located along Sandpit Lane and Chapel Lane to the north of the Chinnor Rd. These no-through roads immediately give this area a sense of quiet rural tranquillity despite the relative proximity of the busy Chinnor Rd. In general Pitch Green is a palimpsest of mixed architectural styles, materials and boundary treatments that act as a narrative of its generally more recent (post-enclosure) development. With the exception of the roadside brick and flint Hawthorn Cottage and the set-back Pitch Green House development, this area of Pitch Green is dominated by relatively anonymous modern development, although this is generally set-back and does not impact negatively on the streetscape. Beyond the junction of Sandpit Lane and Chapel Lane older developments assert themselves in the dispersed collection of 17th to early 19th century buildings and the small collection of later 19th century roadside development in Chapel Lane focused on the Methodist Chapel (c.1869).

Architectural Character and Quality of Buildings

There are 21 listed buildings in the Bledlow Settlement Area, including one Grade I and one Grade II* (19 of these are within the Conservation Area). There are 6 listed buildings and 1 locally listed building in the Pitch Green Settlement Area.

Bledlow

The Grade I listed **Holy Trinity Church** dominates the heart of the Conservation Area. The church is of Norman origin with two Norman doorways one of which is blocked. The aisles were added c.1200 and have simple arcades and the tower is late 13th century. There is an early 14th century porch which is a comparative rarity and a fine 14th century south window. The roof was altered in the 16th century and was totally restored in 1909. This Early English church built in the traditional flint of the Chilterns with stone dressings stands in an extensive churchyard which contains the listed remains of a cross erected in the 15th century.

The former vicarage now known as **Bledlow House** lies just behind the church and is mid to late 18th century. The splendid, formal frontage is of vitreous header brick with red brick dressings and an ashlar plinth. All openings on this elevation have segmental heads with painted key stone blocks. The rear wall is of rubble stone.

The Manor House is a Grade II* listed building and can be glimpsed behind its garden walls from Church End. This house was originally built in 1648 to replace an earlier Tudor property. The house was extended in circa 1702 as dated on the

chimney and altered circa 1800 for the Carrington family. The house has considerable architectural quality and grandeur.

Lyde End, a group of dwellings by Aldington, Craig and Collinge opposite the Manor House won an award from the Royal Institute of British Architects. The Committee was impressed with the quality and detail of the design and the simplicity of the materials. A pleasant sense of scale and enclosure is created and the interesting silhouette does not jar with the surrounding traditional types of houses.

The **Old Cottage** a little to the east is a listed 17th century dwelling altered in the 18th and 20th centuries. The unlisted Holm Lodge has unusual tiled cladding.

At the eastern end of Church End is the listed Old Wycombe Union School, now known as **Bledlow Homes**. This U-shaped, late 18th century building provides a strong terminal focus to the Conservation Area.

To the west of the church at the heart of the Conservation Area is a cluster of listed 16th century cottages, **Piggots**, **Church End Cottages**, **Church End Cottage** and **Manor Cottage**. This cluster, together with other later buildings forms an attractive grouping and is an outstanding feature in the street pattern as all have similar styles and are constructed of similar materials. The early 16th century listed **Manor Farmhouse** sits back from the road hidden by modern walls and hedging. At the westernmost point of Church End is the village inn, "**The Lions**", a quaint and rambling listed building of the 17th century.

Going north along West Lane just beyond the railway bridge is a pair of cottages known as **The City** dating from the 16th – 17th century with some 19th century rebuilding. The old tile roof presents an attractive picture.

Further north are two groups of farm buildings on either side of the lane. On the east side are **Bakehouse Farm** and **Whitakers**. Bakehouse Farm dates from the 17th century, the front range is late 18th – early 19th century. Whitakers was originally two cottages and probably belonged to Bakehouse Farm.

On the west side are **Westfield Farm**, **Westfield**, **Westfield Cottage** (converted from the old coach house and stables but not listed), and **The Barn Cottage**. Westfield Farmhouse was built in the 17th century and displays a timber framed north elevation with later brick infill. The house was re-fronted in the early 19th century in flint with brick dressings. The barn adjacent to Westfield Farmhouse is dated 1760 on a beam. The main part of the barn has trusses with queen posts, curved principals, braced tie beams and double purlins. Both Whitakers and The Barn Cottage date from about 1740 and both still have thatched roofs.

In West Lane north of the Conservation Area are two more listed buildings; the most significant of these is **The Cottage** a 15th – early 16th century cruck-framed building with a thatched roof with a number of interesting features, **Cross Lanes Cottage** c.1600 is of timber frame construction with brick infill and half-hipped tiled roof and, although hidden behind large hedges, gives an early indication to those entering the village the rich architectural history of the Settlement Area.

Pitch Green

Prominent in the street scene at the junction of the Lower Icknield Way and Perry Lane is the Grade II listed **Brewhouse Farm House and barns** c.1767 in brick with off-set eaves and old tile roof, half-hipped to the right. Attached to left end is an irregular T-plan range of barns, all timber-framed with weatherboard cladding, combined with the later brick and back painted corrugated-iron additions these present an interesting palette of materials to the viewer. Opposite in Perry Lane is the late 16th – early 17th century, Grade II listed, **Mill House** a timber framed with brick infill, mostly herringbone. The rear wing is of brick with first floor band course.

At the junction of Chinnor Road and Sandpit Lane **The Corner House**, a three bay brick and flint fronted, slate gabled, former public house facing immediately at the roadside is an important focus in the streetscape. On entering Sandpit Lane the 19th century brick and flint **Hawthorn Cottage** is an important focus that helps reinforce the historical character of the settlement.

Further along Pitch Green Lane **The Rookery, Rookery Cottage** and **Meadow Bank** make an attractive group. The Rookery and Rookery Cottage are a former 18th century brick-built, tiled gabled farmhouse with a gabled cross-wing on the right hand end. Meadow Bank is an 18th/early 19th century brick and flint gabled cottage with later brick additions at either side.

At the edge of the Settlement Area is **Coram House** a Grade II listed house with 2 17th century bays with 19th century extensions on either end. The original part is timber framed with whitewashed brick and render infill. There are flint and brick extensions at each end, the right rendered to the front and completely whitewashed. Tiled roof, hipped to the left.

In Chapel Lane the **Former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel** (c.1869) of three bays built in red brick with white brick dressings and slate roofs behind coped parapets, to the designs of R Pierce of High Wycombe, has tall arched windows with white brick arches. Various plaques on the schoolroom (added 1913) are inscribed with names of benefactors. Associated with the chapel is a short terrace in matching red brick with white dressings set at right-angles to the road.

Beyond this **Flint Cottage** and **Westway**, a pair of brick and flint cottages with matching brick and knapped flint lozenge detailing, both have slate gabled roofs. Both have porches with decorated barge boards.

Opposite from the chapel are two listed buildings; **Pitch Green Cottage** an early 18th century timber framed cottage with colour-washed brick and plaster infill and a half-hipped thatch roof and **Pitch Green Farmhouse** a part timber-framed, part brick, part brick and flint, 17th century farmhouse, altered and extended in the 18th century, with a gabled, tiled roof. The whole house, with the exception of the brick and flint ground floor work, is colour-washed.

3. Materials

Throughout both Settlement Areas there is extensive use of hand-made red bricks, their use is particularly common in Bledlow, especially in Church End. In Bledlow they are sometimes seen in a herringbone pattern or with timber framing. Red/orange

clay tiles many of which have mellowed to a warm red/brown give a good sense of unity throughout the Bledlow Settlement Area.

Outside of the Church End area of Bledlow there is a greater variety in the building fabric; there is only limited use of brick and flint within the Bledlow Settlement Area but it is common in Pitch Green, timber framing is used throughout both Settlement Areas, and where weather-boarding it is present is overwhelmingly restricted to ancillary buildings. There are a number of buildings in the peripheral areas of the Bledlow Settlement Area and in Pitch Green that have been colour washed.

There are a few instances of slate roofs, mainly on 19th century developments, particularly in Pitch Green, and more widely on ancillary outbuildings. Historically thatch would have been more common and is still present on a small number of buildings in both Settlement Areas.

There is a wide variety of window and door styles and materials in both Settlement Areas although, generally speaking there has been little intrusive use of substitute materials for windows and doors in Bledlow. Painted timber casements or sliding sashes predominate throughout the historic buildings. The core grouping of historic buildings in Bledlow display attractive casement windows, either leaded or with glazing bars and small panes. Bledlow House has late 19th century sashes. The Manor House has sashes on a larger scale on the north-east front from the early 19th century. The historic dwellings in West Lane have predominantly small pane casement windows. Whitakers has small, cross latticed, leaded-light casements. In Pitch Green the use of more modern window materials, including UPVC, has had a generally negative impact on the streetscape.

There are a number of important walls identified in the survey (**Inset Map 2**) which contribute to the character of the Bledlow Conservation Area; the red brick walls surrounding the Manor House are visually important as an historic characteristic of the village and for the setting of the Manor House, the brick and flint low wall to the churchyard is also an attractive and prominent one. The spearhead metal railings outside the Methodist Chapel and picket fencing associated with later 19th century cottages are integral historical elements of the streetscape in Pitch Green. Elsewhere however, native hedging is the most appropriate as a boundary treatment in this rural area.

Surface treatment in the gardens is generally of an informal type which is fitting for the rural setting of the Conservation Area and the historic buildings. Some use of modern surfacing materials is evident particularly to the more modern properties, however this does not appear overly discordant due mainly to the extensive vegetation throughout the Settlement Areas.

4. Trees and vegetation

Trees and hedges all make an important contribution to the leafy, rural character of both areas. There are many fine trees within gardens of properties in the settlement areas and collectively these trees provide a setting for the listed buildings and the Conservation Area as a whole.

All trees within Conservation Areas are protected and some trees of particular importance are identified on the Bledlow Conservation Area map (**Plan X**). Of particular significance are the mature Lime trees fronting Church End from the Church to Piggots in Bledlow and the stands of mature trees in the garden of Rosedene in Pitch Green. Other road side and path side trees contribute to the character of the Settlement Areas.

Similarly to the south of Church End trees within the grounds of the Manor House, although not all individually marked on **Inset Map 2** or **Plan X**, collectively make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and to the setting of the listed Manor House.

Hedges too contribute to the character of both Settlement Areas and those of particular significance are marked on the **Inset Map 2** and **Inset Map 4**.

The Lyde Gardens, Bledlow, and the stream flowing through it to the east of the church make a significant contribution to the setting of the village and to the individual properties within it. It is important not just as an undeveloped space but the presence of trees also provides an appropriate setting for the listed buildings in the vicinity, in particular the church, and contributes positively to the rural and tranquil nature of the Conservation Area.

5. Open Space

Within the Settlement Areas significant open spaces are marked on the area maps (**Inset Maps 2** and **4** and **Plan X**);

- The green in front of The Lions PH provides a focus at the western end of the village and a setting for the 17th century inn.
- The churchyard serves the same function for the church whilst also providing a sense of openness after the enclosure provided by the historic core grouping.
- The Lyde Gardens is a romantic dell, covered with trees, from which rises the Lyde Stream. Its lower part contains formal paths and board walks leading through specimen trees and bushes. The Gardens are provided by Lord Carrington for the enjoyment of the community.
- At the junction of Church End and Bledlow Ridge Road the tree planted grassed area is a fitting open entrance to the Conservation Area and contributes to the setting of the Manor House and its ancillary buildings.
- Within Pitch Green the initial broad verge of Sandpit Lane and the open junction with Chapel Lane give an important sense of openness at this point of the Settlement Area.

Private spaces although not in public view may also contribute to the character of the Settlement Areas by affording a backdrop of vegetation or setting for individual buildings or contributing to the setting of the village as a whole. As private spaces these are not identified although their openness contributes to the character of the Settlement Areas.

Views

There are a number of important views within the Settlement Areas. Some of these are indicated on **Inset Maps 2** and **4**.

In Bledlow these include:

- Views of the important groups and the principal buildings (the Manor House and the Church) from public view points.
- Panoramic views from the edge of the village to the countryside from the footpath to the north, from The Lions and from Church End by Old Cottage which demonstrates the village's close links with the countryside.
- Two further views indicated on **Inset Map 2** highlight the view of modern development at Lyde End sitting comfortably alongside older developments and the view north into the Settlement Area in Perry Lane; highlighting the linear nature of roadside development and the characteristic high banks either side of the road.

There are also significant views of Bledlow from the surrounding countryside, particularly from Wainhill and the Upper Icknield Way.

Three key views are identified on the Settlement Area map for Pitch Green (**Inset Map 4**). These show:

- the juxtaposition of the important group of 19th century development set close to the road in a wider more rural setting
- the key stand of mature trees at the junction of Chinnor Road and Sandpit Lane with views to the mix of building materials at Brew House Farm beyond
- the entrance to Sandpit Lane dominated by The Corner House with other older properties beyond demonstrating the presence of a wider historic development to passers-by.

Views into Pitch Green from the immediately surrounding area are limited because of the low-lying nature of the surrounding Landscape.

6. Design Guidance

To safeguard, preserve and enhance the appearance and special character of the Bledlow Conservation Area, Bledlow Settlement Area and Pitch Green Settlement Area the following guidance should be followed when preparing and assessing the appropriateness of, not only planning applications, but any development that may impact the visual characteristics of the Settlement Areas and particularly the Bledlow Conservation Area:

- a. In the Conservation Area, higher standards of design are required as it is the function of the planning authority to consider all applications as to whether they preserve or enhance the special character as identified in this appraisal.
- b. Important groups of buildings and their specific qualities are identified and described in the text above. Any new development must not materially harm the integrity or visual quality of these important groupings. It should be recognised that in some cases, particularly within the Bledlow Conservation Area new development may not be acceptable.
- c. Development should in all regards be in compliance with Policy 2 of this Plan and respect the historic pattern of existing building lines and building orientation of the immediately adjoining plots where a consistent pattern is prevalent. Where a pattern is not clear proposals should reflect the wider mix of historic

- building lines and building orientation in the relevant Settlement or Conservation Area. The building heights of any such developments should not exceed the prevailing roof line of the adjacent plots
- d. Any new building works should be designed not as a separate entity, but should be sympathetic in form and scale with the existing historic or traditional buildings within the relevant Settlement or Conservation Area.
 - e. Any new building works should use materials that complement those used in the adjoining or adjacent buildings, particularly when such buildings are listed, include features of particular visual interest or are listed as key buildings in the text above. In all instances of new building work:
 - i. Where brick is to be used as a building material it should be done in accordance with the *Chilterns Building Design Guide – Brick, Supplementary Technical Note (2006)* and with regard for the particular local traditions of; hand-made orange/orange-brown bricks, the use of vitreous bricks as headers or in chequer patterns, herringbone brickwork as infill on timber framed buildings and dentil eaves.
 - ii. The use of flint should be restricted to ancillary buildings only in Church End. Where flint is proposed as a building material it should be done in accordance with the *Chilterns Building Design Guide – Flint, Supplementary Technical Note (2003)*.
 - iii. Within the Bledlow Settlement Area weatherboarding should only be used on ancillary buildings or subservient extensions.
 - iv. Where tiles are proposed as a roofing material their use should be in accordance with the *Chilterns Building Design Guide – Roofing Materials Technical Note (2007)*.
 - v. The use of slates should be restricted to ancillary buildings only in Church End. In all cases the use of slates or thatch should be done in accordance with the *Chilterns Building Design Guide – Roofing Materials Technical Note (2007)*.
 - f. Traditional natural materials should be used for new or replacement windows and doors in the Bledlow Conservation Area in order to safeguard the special character of the Conservation Area. In the Settlement Areas painted timber windows and doors are more appropriate – the use of more modern materials such as UPVC and aluminium must be considered with care to ensure that they are sympathetic to the character of the area.
 - g. Modern surface treatments which represent a single visual mass such as tarmac or expansive areas of tarmac should not be used as they will visually jar against the natural materials of nearby historic or traditional buildings.
 - h. When replacing existing boundary features on a like-for-like basis low brick and flint walling may be acceptable in the Bledlow Settlement Area and picket fencing in the Pitch Green Settlement Area.
 - i. Although hedges cannot be specially protected within the Conservation or Settlement Areas, existing tracts of native or traditional hedging, including those hedgerows indicated on the policy maps should be retained and where possible enhanced.
 - j. All trees in Conservation Areas are protected. New development should recognise this and not present a risk to their continued future growth and habit.
 - k. Areas of open space, and gaps between buildings which contribute to the character of the Settlement Areas should be protected from development.

- I. There should be no development that negatively impacts the character of an important view into, out of or through the Settlement Areas as shown on Bledlow Settlement Area and Pitch Green Settlement Area maps.

Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2033

Appendix C: Bledlow Ridge Settlement Area Design Statement

The purpose of this Settlement Area Design Statement is to provide planners, architects, design technicians and applicants with a framework to assess the design priorities of future physical development in the village. It seeks to inform users which aspects of the village are considered by the community to make a positive, important and special contribution to its physical characteristics. It is hoped that this Statement will also encourage all residents to continue to take an active interest in the future shaping of the built and natural environment of Bledlow Ridge.

This Statement is a material consideration for applications in the Settlement Area and immediately adjacent areas of Bledlow Ridge village and forms an integral part of the Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan. Its use will aid the delivery of development proposals which protect and enhance the character and appearance of Bledlow Ridge.

The Statement was produced as part of the Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan by the Design Task Group and Neighbourhood Plan Working Group following visual surveys of the village as a whole and the input of local residents via the Parish Survey and the consultation feedback received following the two Community Consultation events.

Historical and Landscape Overview

Bledlow Ridge village is concentrated along the long stretch of roadway which runs between West Wycombe and over the Chiltern Hills towards Chinnor in Oxfordshire. It is entirely within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Metropolitan Green Belt and is defined as a "Built-up area within the Green Belt". On account of its location along the ridge-top the village occupies a highly sensitive position in terms of its visibility from the surrounding valleys and hills. The village is located in the Bledlow Ridge Dipslope and Dry Valleys Landscape Character Area (LCA).

Whilst there are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or archaeological notification areas in the Settlement Area there is a great deal of evidence for prehistoric activity in the area to the north and west of the village; there are at least two round barrows on Lodge Hill, six barrows which form a cemetery to the south and west of Saunderton Lee (round barrows were constructed in the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age to cover burials) and Iron Age hut circles surrounded by an enclosing bank have been excavated at Lodge Hill. There is also thought to be a Roman villa at Lodge Hill Farm and a Saxon or medieval cross-dyke was surveyed at Slough

Bottom Farm. There is documentary evidence for a medieval chantry chapel and manor near Rout's Green.

There are only three listed buildings in the Settlement Area; these date to the 18th and 19th century. The lack of 16th and 17th century development evidences the fact that the settlement was mostly common land during this period. An area at the south end of the Settlement Area called 'City' may refer to refugees fleeing from the City of London who sought protection there from the Great Plague of 1666.

The majority of extant pre-war buildings in the village can be evidenced to date to the 18th century. There is more limited expansion during the first two thirds of the 19th century, with very little in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This demonstrates the growth of dispersed settlement along the ridge during the period of 18th century enclosures and the rural character of the area prior to World War II. The growth of the village was sufficient that a chapel was built in 1834 for the inhabitants of the hamlet of Bledlow Ridge and it was formed into the separate ecclesiastical parish of St. Paul's in 1868 with a village school provided in 1874. There is little evidence for significant further expansion of the village until post-1945.

Essential Characteristics of the Settlement Area (see Inset Map 3)

As outlined above, Bledlow Ridge lies along the dip slope ridge that runs from West Wycombe to the scarp slope of the Chilterns above Chinnor; the ridge gradually rises from SE to NW and as a result it has extensive views in all directions except to the NW. Until well into the 20th century the area was very rural in character with scattered clusters of development situated along the ridge. Since 1945 there has been significant development in the village, concentrated around Haw Lane and along Chinnor Road to the north and south of this. Little of this later development had a regard for the historical character of the village.

Whilst in some parts of the village the older properties play an important part in defining the character of the area, in many places this has been diluted, and overwhelmed by more modern development. As result of this very mixed architectural character, it is the green spaces, sense of openness and views of the surrounding landscape that are considered paramount by residents in terms of defining the character of the village.

As a consequence of the ribbon-type development that has occurred in the village, there is not a strongly identifiable centre to the village. However, the area between the Grade II listed St. Paul's Church in the north and the junction of Haw Lane and Chinnor Road to the south can generally be considered the core of the village today, containing the village hall, church, school and village shop. At the southern end of this central core is a triangular open space adjacent to the junction of Haw Lane and Chinnor Road. This core area includes several important older buildings; the Grade II listed Old Rectory and associated Rectory Cottages, the Old School House and Kiln Cottage.

To the north of this central area, with the exception of a few cul-de-sacs of later 20th century development, the village is essentially a linear settlement with a diverse development history. The road here appears relatively broad, lined largely with hedges on both sides and should have an open green feel. The tracts of hedgerows, combined with a small number of older properties (No's 1 and 2 Light Dragoon, The Old Chapel, Maytree Cottage and Lilybank Cottage) located immediately at the roadside, give the sense of being within an older rural village. In some parts of this area, the open ridge top character of the village has been lost as a result of non-native tree and hedge species growing to substantial heights in recent history.

Along Chinnor Road to the south of the central core, building is less dense than in the area to the north. Within the settlement boundary, the sense of space is more confined with boundary hedges growing close up against the roadway. As with the area to the north the sense of being in a rural village is maintained by the small number of 19th century properties set close up against the road (Seymour Place, The Laurels and April Cottage). Straddling the southern boundary of the Settlement Area is the 'City', a small collection of c. late 17th century brick and flint cottages set just back from Chinnor Road.

Haw Lane is dominated by post-1945 development. The topography of this area contrasts with Chinnor Road. Its location on the hill means that it has a more open feel, and both public and private spaces have extensive views across the valley towards Slough Hill and Bradenham beyond. At the upper end of Haw Lane, it is defined by very wide verges and a greater sense of openness but gradually narrows and becomes more enclosed by the trees from private gardens. This area of the village feels distinctly different from Chinnor Road; lacking the tracts of boundary hedges and with extensive modern development giving it a less traditional feel although this is countered by the sense of openness and extensive views of the surrounding rural landscape. No's 4 and 11 Haw Lane are good examples of how modern architectural design has been incorporated amongst the existing mix of architectural styles without negatively impacting the essential characteristics of the street scene.

The essential characteristics of the village can be summarised by the following:

- A linear core running between the junction of Haw Lane and Chinnor Road and St. Paul's Church with an important open space at 'The Crest'.
- Relatively modern development mixed with occasional clusters of older 18th/19th century properties, either former farm complexes set back from the road or smaller properties, typically at the roadside, which help to give a sense of place and history to the village.
- Expansive views of the wider AONB from open areas of the village with "snapshots" and framed views of the wider landscape between buildings and through gateways.
- Tracts of native hedgerows and relatively wide verges

Architectural Character and Quality of Buildings with the Settlement Area

Whilst there are only three listed buildings within the Settlement Area, a number of buildings, or groups of buildings, are considered important to the architectural character of the village:

Whilst modest in scale the Grade II listed, flint with stone dressings and slate roofed, **St. Paul's Church** (c.1868) is prominent in the streetscape. Its bell turret is prominent on the skyline for the length of Chinnor Road from the northern end of the Settlement area and from the open area at the junction of Haw Lane and Chinnor Road to the south. The modernist west window of the church designed by John Piper and made by Patrick Reyntiens c.1968 evidences the more modern development of the village.

Immediately to the south of St. Paul's Church is the **Old School House** c.1874. The brick, flint and rendered Victorian school building (now subdivided into private residential dwellings) adds considerable architectural and historical interest to the street scene. Slate roof formed from numerous gables with simply detailed barge boards. Decorative brick/plaster/Bath stone mouldings around windows. There is a bell-cot facing Chinnor Road.

100m to the south an important group of older buildings adds significant interest in the core of the village; the two-storey, three bay Grade II listed **The Old Vicarage**, c.1830 is of knapped flint with un-knapped flint dressings; flanking pilasters with brick quoins and hipped slate roof, brick chimneys at each end. Sash windows to the front have raised flint 2-storey surrounds. Centre of upper storey has blind panel in similar surround above door with radiating semi-circular fanlight. Wooden lattice porch with hipped lead roof. To the right immediately adjacent to the road is a later 19th century gabled bay of flint with brick dressings with a slate roof. An associated timber-framed outbuilding with brick infill and weatherboarding not included in the listing adds further interest. Map evidence suggests that **Vicarage Cottages**, a pair of gabled, slate roofed, semi-detached cottages, immediately adjacent to The Old Vicarage, with a central chimney stack and timber casements, are of a similar date. Just the north of these is **Kiln Cottage**, an 18th century set of brick and flint gabled cottages, roofed in slate with timber casements, now combined into a single dwelling, is set well back from the road through a hedge archway which adds interest to the street scene.

In the area immediately north of St. Paul's Church development is generally relatively modern, dominated by Ford's Close c.1950 to the NE and larger post war properties to the SW. A significant exception to this are No's **1 and 2 Light Dragoon** a three-bay, slate gabled pair of cottages, c. mid-19th century, formerly the Light Dragoon PH. Bay windows at ground floor on the left and middle bay sash windows on left and middle bays with casements on right hand bay. Render over brick with un-rendered chimneys. Situated behind No's 1 and 2 Light Dragoon and out of the sight of the road is the Grade II listed '**Pound Scots**', a mid-late 18th century, red and brown brick cottage with red brick dressings, flint plinth, dentil eaves and tiled roof with flanking brick chimneys.

North-west of Ford's Close is small group of earlier properties. **The Orchards**, a large three-bay two-storey gabled house set well back from the road with a hipped bay to the SE, extensively remodelled in the 1920's but with earlier 18th century origins.

Small projecting wing over porch. Rough rendered walls and chimneys. Slate roofing and sash windows. Immediately opposite The Orchards are a pair of modest cottages with late 18th or early 19th century origins located close to the roadside which play an important role in defining the characteristics of the streetscape in the Settlement Area. **Lilybank Cottage** is a white-painted, brick built, half-hipped cottage orientated with its end wall immediately adjacent the pavement. Modern clay tile roofing with modern casements. **Maytree Cottage** has been significantly extended during later 20th and 21st centuries but is formed from a collection of simple tiled gables, rough cast render over brick with casement windows. **Elm Tree Cottage** and **Pear Tree Cottage** both have 18th century origins but are set back from the road and hidden from the road by modern extensions or garaging. Opposite these is **The Old Chapel**, a former Wesleyan Chapel situated closed to the road, now converted to a residential property, which maintains much of its original external character. Dark brick with red brick quoining window surrounds. Slate roofed gables with 3 lancet windows in south-east side and lancet windows flanking the north-east door. Bath stone moulding around the double lancet window in the north east facing gable.

On the western side of Chinnor Road at the northern end of the Settlement Area **Studmore Farm** is a brick farmhouse with clay tiled roof, tile-hung 2-storey bay window. Black weather-boarded single storey to side. Rendered chimneys. Opposite Studmore Farm is **The Boot** PH an 18th/e.19th century public house formed from a collection of slate roofed gables with deep eaves and bargeboards. Rendered (previously tile hung) first floor is slightly jettied over brick (flint panel on SE elevation) ground floor with a ground floor bay window in the roadside gable end. With the exception of a hipped roof single-storey extension to the north much of the original external character has been retained.

South of the central core development in the Settlement Area is more sparse with a few large modern houses set back behind hedging. Providing an important break in the streetscape are a group of 19th century semi-detached cottages; **1 and 2 Seymour Place** (c.1871) a gable roofed pair of brick-built, coarse rendered cottages have both been extended during the 20th century, with a hipped roof added at the southern end. **Laurel Cottage** and **April Cottage** are a pair of brick-built, rendered, tiled hipped roof late 19th century cottages with a central shared chimney stack.

At the southern end of the settlement area, with a frontage onto 'City', **Dragons** is a small late 17th century gabled brick and flint cottage roofed with tiles that has been significantly extended. The other dwellings in 'City' are outside the Settlement Area. As is **Pankridge Farm**, however, this Grade II listed 17th century property, prominently set back from the roadside on the north-western side of the Settlement Area, is considered an important building in defining the architectural character of the village.

Although there are no historical properties in Haw Lane which are considered important in terms of the architectural character of the village a small number of properties demonstrate how less traditional designs can contribute positively to the character of the area. **Orchard House (No.58)** is mid-20th century with a hipped slate roof, white rendered with un-rendered raised moulded brick pillars on the corners.

The central brick bay and porch project slightly and is topped with a stepped gable and has a recessed Norman lancet window with moulded brick surround matching that around the Norman doorway. There is a subservient hipped addition to the north, also rendered white. **No. 11, Haw Lane** (c.2008) is a recently completed Huf Haus, regularly commented on as being an example of modern development considered of a high standard by the community. **Greenhill (No.4)** is an example of a redevelopment and extension of an existing post-war property that is also regularly commented on for its high standard of design.

Materials

Brick and flint is the predominant construction material amongst earlier buildings in the village. Plain **handmade brick** and **rendered brickwork** is also prominent. Some 19th century buildings such as The Old Chapel and the Old School House and formerly Old Forge, Chinnor Road all demonstrate the use of **decorative brickwork**. There are few examples of **colour-washed brick** (Grade II listed Morland's Farm, Chinnor Rd). The Old Vicarage and the Grade II listed Loxborough House, Chinnor Road are examples of where **flint** has been used more extensively on higher status buildings with knapped flint and un-knapped flint dressings. Evidence for **weather-boarding** of domestic properties in this area is scarce, notable exceptions being the 18th/e.19th century North and South Cottages, Chinnor Road. It is more common on subsidiary buildings and outbuildings. Likewise there is very limited use of **tile-hung** facades. The post-war period has seen a significant increase in the range of non-traditional materials utilised; with a large number of properties constructed from modern bricks, particularly non-local yellow stocks and the partial use of weatherboarding on domestic properties has also become common place.

The use of **clay tile** as a roofing material predominates on the 18th century building stock but welsh **slate** is far more common on the 19th century building stock. In a few cases of subsidiary buildings and outbuildings such as at Wayside Farm, Rout's Green Farm and Ridge Cottage **corrugated iron** has been used as a roofing material. Many later 20th century and new buildings have used non-traditional roofing materials such as concrete tiles or pan tiles, in one instance thatch has been used.

Whilst small pane casement windows are common on the older buildings in the village, sash windows are common on some higher status 19th century buildings. The 20th century has seen a significant increase in the use of UPVC windows, including the replacement of timber frames in older buildings. Whilst barge boards are uncommon on the earlier vernacular properties they add significant architectural interest to some 19th century properties such as the Old School House and The Lodge, Chinnor Road.

Key views

The following views (marked on **Inset Map 3**) have been identified as key views within and from the Settlement Area which are important in defining the character of the village. When the location and massing of new development is being

considered it should not have a negative impact on these views. Regard should also be given to the fact that development in the village is highly visible from the surrounding hill tops and valleys.

1. Entrance to Settlement Area from N. shows The Boot PH demarcating the N. terminus of the Settlement Area.
2. View N. from exit of Settlement Area – significant views across Lodge Hill SSSI and Saunderton towards Loosley Row, Whiteleaf and the Vale of Aylesbury.
3. View SE. from Capel Farm – bell turret of St. Paul's Church visible in distance marking centre of village, older buildings of The Old Chapel, Maytree Cottage and Lilybank Cottage punctuating the mature native hedging stock.
4. View NW. from Bledlow Ridge Village Hall – The Boot PH forms a strong terminal feature in distance marking the end of the Settlement Area. The sense of a rural village is strong with extensive tracts of native hedging punctuated by older buildings (No's 1 & 2 Light Dragoon and Lilybank Cottage).
5. View SW. from N. end of St. Paul's Churchyard/Chinnor Rd – Windmill Cottage demonstrates older development at a distance from the modern road, important view of St. Paul's Church with Old School House beyond, stand of listed trees on right of view.
6. View down Church Lane from Chinnor Rd – Old School House gives considerable architectural interest in the core of the village and view down Church Lane indicates a deeper penetration of development in this area away from the generally linear development of Chinnor Rd.
7. View N. from junction of Chinnor Rd and Haw Lane – A number of key buildings are visible including The Old Vicarage, Vicarage Cottage and the bell turret of St. Paul's Church. The important stand of trees opposite St. Paul's Church forms a strong terminal to the street scene which is dominated by the open space which allows for extensive views across the valley towards Lacey Green.
8. View NW. from Meadow Styles/City – Pattern of native hedgerows interspersed by 19th century properties at the roadside.
9. View E. from S. end of Settlement Area – Open views across dewpond towards Lacey Green. At this point the pattern of hedging continues into the distance though the scale of development is visibly much sparser in this area than within the Settlement Area.
10. Indicative view from upper parts of Haw Lane E. towards Slough Bottom, Slough Hill, Butler's Hangings, Bradenham Woods and Lacey Green – Extensive views of the AONB both over and between existing buildings.
11. The lower reaches of Haw Lane has extensive views both N. towards Loosely Row and SE. towards Bradenham Manor and Woods.
12. and 13. Indicative views of the SW. edge of the Settlement Area from The Chiltern Way and from Radnage Bottom NW – Existing development within the proposed Settlement Area is already prominent and careful design considerations are needed in order to ensure any development in this area does not detract from this important views within the AONB.

Key Design Guidance

Building design

New development should be designed and located in ways which are sensitive to the character of the village so the bulk, layout and orientation of the building should become part of the landscape and complement older buildings. Applications for new development should:

- identify the essential architectural form and scale of the traditional buildings in the wider Settlement Area of the proposed new building, and interpret these in the design.
- use simple building layouts at right angles or parallel to the road.
- avoid floor plans which create large roof spans likely to be either unacceptably shallow in pitch or overly large for the landscape setting.
- The use of hipped roofs on all but the largest developments should be avoided. Half-hipped roofs should be avoided.

This does not mean that all new designs should be a copy of buildings from a previous era or match existing materials. Flexibility should allow for new designs and innovation, which respect the distinctive qualities of the village. Architectural trends, new building techniques and the introduction of different materials have changed the appearance of buildings from generation to generation, introducing what were considered to be modern designs in their time. Innovative and imaginative architecture must be allowed to continue. Those designs, which are generally acceptable and have been the most successful, owe much of their appeal to the way in which they fit into the landscape and reflect the building traditions of the area.

Where designs are proposed that are intended to follow the vernacular style, these should be executed in line with the guidance set out in the relevant CBDG Technical Supplements. Where development of more modern character is proposed it will need to be demonstrated that the materials proposed reflect and complement local traditional materials.

Impact on surrounding landscape and street scene

- Development should not adversely impact views of the village from the surrounding hills and valleys of the AONB.
- Any new development must not materially harm the integrity or visual quality of the important buildings or groups of buildings as defined in the above text.
- New buildings need to be sensitively integrated into the landscape and streetscape, regard should be given to the balance of nearby buildings in terms of scale and distance from the roadside.
- The rural character of the roads and streetscape in the village should be maintained.
- The network of dense native hedgerows which form an integral part of the streetscape should be managed and preserved. Consider replacing native hedgerows where they have been lost.

- Where non-native trees or hedging stock have been allowed to grow resulting in the closing off of views of the wider landscape from public areas, consideration should be given to their removal/reduction.
- Landscaping of new or existing development, including boundary treatment, access roads and driveways should ensure that:
 - entrance gates are simple, visibly permeable and rural in character.
 - security measures are discreet – high and solid gates and entrances incorporating security systems are out of place in the countryside.
 - 'gardening' of the road verge is avoided.

Extensions

- If the house is of architectural merit, extensions should be subservient to the main dwelling.
- Where the original dwelling is being extended in order to remedy earlier poor quality work or creates an improved overall appearance, there is no need for an extension to be subservient.
- In all cases extensions should not overwhelm the original dwelling.

Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2033

Appendix D: Bledlow cum Saunderton Design Checklist

This checklist is designed to inform those working on, submitting, or assessing proposals for development in the parish a brief overview of the issues that need to be addressed within such proposals in line with **Policy 6** of the Bledlow cum Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan. It has been developed and refined from the set of checklists as published by the Chilterns Conservation Board within the Chilterns Building Design Guide, taking into account the local traditions relevant to Bledlow cum Saunderton, and the input from the Parish Survey and Consultation feedback.

1. Location of new buildings should:

- avoid skylines and prominent spurs
- avoid open slopes
- be in harmony with the landscape when considered from all views
- not extend ribbon development
- make maximum use of a site's contours without major earthworks and the need to excavate basements
- make maximum use of existing trees and landscape features

2. Designs for any new development or extension should consider:

- the setting of the village or individual building in the landscape
- the nature and pattern of development in the settlement
- features which contribute to the character of the surrounding settlement and older buildings, or the locality of an older building (many of these characteristics are identified in the relevant Settlement Design Guides).
- the location of the site within the settlement
- the nature of the site itself and its existing landscape features
- the relationship of the site to its neighbours and the street
- the existing street pattern and the relationship of the proposed building to the road
- materials used and design details of traditional buildings
- scale and form of the proposed building in relation to the site and neighbouring surrounding buildings adjacent and opposite

3. To ensure the quality of landscape and setting is protected proposals should:

- carry out a survey of all the landscape qualities and features of the site, identifying those which should be retained or removed
- retain as many of the positive features as possible, especially those which link the site to the surrounding landscape
- protect these features during the construction phase
- take note of any local patterns in terms of garden size and layout
- ensure gardens are big enough to allow some shrubs or trees to mature and help landscape the development
- identify local landscape and design features which help the building blend in with the surrounding countryside.

4. Designs for individual or groups of houses should:

- identify the main architectural features of the traditional buildings in the immediate area of the proposed new building, and interpret these in the design when building between existing properties
- respect the size, shape, siting and, where appropriate, variety of adjacent buildings
- avoid excessive earth works – step buildings down slopes instead
- take care over the treatment of doors and windows which can dramatically alter the appearance of a building

5. Roofs:

- generally avoid unequal pitches, unless there is a strong design case for not doing so
- plain uncoloured mortared verges and third round ridges are preferred
- consider using a double roof with valley gutters and parallel ridges for larger roofs to minimise their bulk
- deep projecting boxed eaves on 'traditional cottage' designs are not appropriate, barge boards should be used only where this can be justified by local circumstances
- solar renewable energy installations (hot water and PV) should be kept low on the roof and prominent elevations of buildings should be avoided
- Dormer windows should typically be small and designed to let in light rather than to create additional space in an attic room
- avoid flat roofs where they will be overlooked (acceptable exceptions to this would be green/sedum roofs)

6. Walls:

- when using brick this should be done in-line with the guidance in the relevant Settlement Design Statement and/or the Chiltern Building Design Guide – Chilterns Brick, Supplementary Technical Note (2006).
- do not use pre-cast flint blocks or token flint panel
- hanging wall tiles, colour washing and weather-boarding should be avoided, unless characteristic of the locality.
- consider using black-stained weather-boarding for garages and other out-buildings – use wide boards.

7. Porches:

- the design of the porch should complement the main building.
- for new buildings consider adding a porch or canopy as it can create interest, especially on a flat fronted detached building, though it should not be added to a traditional building or a terrace of houses simply for ornamentation
- the porch must be in proportion to the house
- the materials and roof pitch should match the existing building.

8. Landscaping of development:

- don't treat the spaces between buildings as simply 'leftover' – design them into the whole development
- locally common, locally sourced native species are preferred for landscaping, especially within and adjoining open countryside; avoid fast growing exotic species, especially cypress and laurel.

9. Access, parking and garages

- parking areas/driveways should be located at the side of buildings
- drives down the side of the building, with the garage located to the side or rear of the dwelling, help to reduce the prominence of the garage and parked cars
- avoid creating parking areas which dominate the front of the building, in full view of the street
- front gardens should not be turned into parking areas
- consider alternatives to standard garages such as 'cart shed' designs
- integral garages should be avoided
- avoid building large double garages with pyramid shaped roofs or dormers
- screen parking areas
- keep visibility splays to a minimum

10. Conversion of buildings:

- do not radically alter appearance of a building
- ensure extensions reflect/compliment the design of the original building
- retain existing openings and limit new openings
- avoid breaking roof slopes with dormer windows; retain as much of the original structure as possible; limit the sub-division of internal and external spaces.