



South Gloucestershire Council

Olveston Conservation Area

Supplementary Planning Document

Adopted January 2013

www.southglos.gov.uk

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides an appraisal of the Olveston Conservation Area. It sets out the main features contributing to the distinctive character and appearance of the conservation area. It also suggests a strategy for preservation and enhancement. The SPD supplements the policies of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan and future Core Strategy and will be a material consideration when assessing development proposals.

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Introduction

The Olveston Conservation Area was designated in 1975 as a way of safeguarding its special architectural and historic character. Olveston has a well preserved historic village core, centred on the church of St Mary. It contains a rich variety of historic buildings, of which perhaps the most important is the former fortified manor house of Olveston Court with its associated grounds that are of national architectural and archaeological significance. The village occupies a sheltered position within an attractive rural setting.

Despite substantial growth within the last 40 years and its proximity to the city of Bristol and the motorway network, Olveston retains a distinctly rural and traditional, yet vibrant, village character. The Conservation Area boundary is shown on plan 1. The local planning authority has a statutory duty to ensure that any proposed development will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting. The council also has a duty to periodically review all Conservation Areas and this draft supplementary planning document sets out the results of the review.

Purpose of the document

This guidance seeks to identify those elements of architectural and historic significance that contribute to the special character or appearance of the Olveston Conservation Area. It then provides a strategy for its preservation and enhancement. Defining the special character of the conservation area, will help to ensure that future development respects this special character and preserves or enhances the conservation area and its setting.

The adopted leaflet will supplement Policy L12 (Conservation Areas) of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan by providing additional guidance against which development proposals will be assessed. This guidance should also be read in conjunction with the Council's Core Strategy, which include planning policies for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment and landscape character, as well as the Parish of Olveston Design Statement, which has been produced by an independent community group in consultation with the Parish and endorsed by South Gloucestershire Council.

Applicants are expected to provide an assessment of significance demonstrating how their proposals will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and maintain significance. Proposals having a harmful impact will be refused.

Please note: This Conservation Area appraisal sets out the main elements contributing to the character of the Conservation Area. It is not intended to be comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

What is a conservation area?

A Conservation Area is an area of “**special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance**”. A Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset. Designation recognises the collective value of buildings and their settings and emphasizes the need to protect not just the individual buildings, but the distinctive character of the area as a whole and the sense of place. Many features contribute to this special character including trees, hedges, boundaries, walls, gardens, open spaces, groups of buildings, land use, the degree of enclosure and the size, scale, and detailing of the buildings.

The conservation area boundary

The boundary of the Olveston Conservation Area generally follows the outline of the historic core of the village, encompassing The High Street, The Green and the lanes, as well as the buildings and land associated with Olveston Court. More modern development at Denys Court between the High Street and Olveston Court also falls within the conservation area, in order to protect the relationship and spaces between these two historic areas.

The character areas

The special character of Olveston has been shaped by its agricultural origins, its links to important trade and transport routes, as well as its religious and social history. The village of Olveston contains a number of different areas, each with their own distinctive character reflecting the various functions and development of the settlement.

The characteristics of these areas are described on pages 11-26. They include:

- 1) **The village core** - The Street, New Road & the crossroads at St Mary's Church
- 2) **Olveston Court and surrounding rural areas and Denys Court**
- 3) **The Green**
- 4) **The Lanes** – Church Lane, Vicarage Lane, Ley Lane and Elberton Road
- 5) **Haw Lane**

Olveston Conservation Area Map 2 - shows boundary of Olveston Conservation Area and character areas.

Olveston character assessment

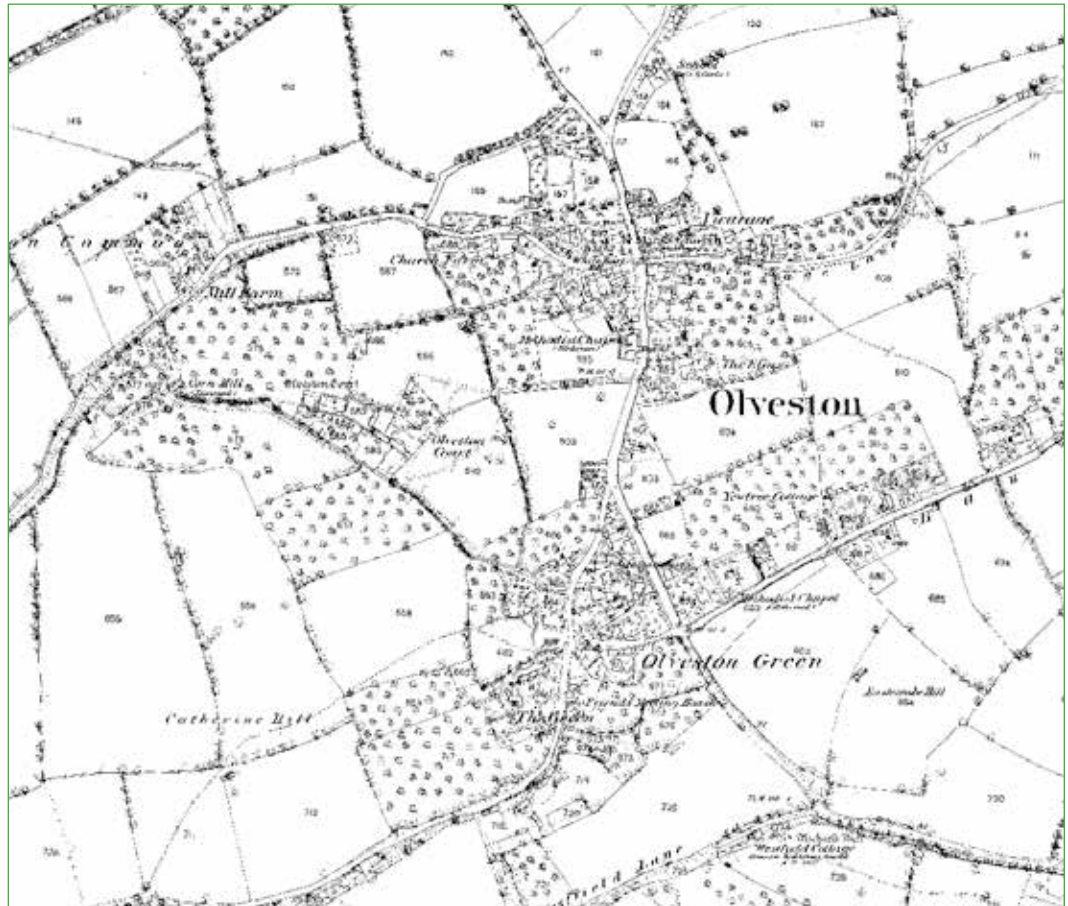


The landscape setting

The village of Olveston lies in an attractive rural landscape within a sheltered valley between a backdrop of the prominent wooded limestone ridge to the east and the extensive alluvial plain of the Severn Estuary to the west. A series of low hills including Eastcombe Hill and Catherine Hill extending westwards from the scarp slope ensure that some areas feel sheltered and contained whilst others feel exposed and open, offering extensive views towards the Severn levels.

The Severn Levels to the south west of Olveston are predominantly flat pasture fields bounded by water courses and rhines marked by hedges, with some trees and copses. These rhines not only serve to drain the land, but historically provided essential transport links to the River Severn and beyond. The proximity of Olveston to the Severn made it an important centre for transport and communication – up until the 18th century it was easier to transport goods by river and sea rather than by road. The Tockington Mill Rhine and Olveston Mill Rhine would have been used to bring goods inland from the Severn to Olveston and Tockington, which were the first areas of higher land and therefore the end of the navigable route.

Although much of the wider landscape around the village is not included within the conservation area boundary, this landscape context provides an important sense of place, as well as an attractive and tranquil rural setting, and is an essential element of the conservation areas significance.



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1880 OS Map

The historic context

The Olveston Parish Historical Society can provide more information on the fascinating history of Olveston. Visit their pages on the Olveston and Aust Community website www.olveston.com

The parish of Olveston has been inhabited since Pre-Historic times, as evidenced by the Bronze Age Round Barrow at Vattinstone Lane and the string of Iron Age forts along the limestone ridge and on higher ground within the levels at Elberton, Oldbury, Knole Park and Rockhampton. During the 1st millennium AD higher water levels meant that the lower land to the west of Olveston and Tockington flooded, leaving Ingst and Aust cut off as Islands surrounded by marshland, with only seasonal settlement on higher ground. However during the Roman period ditches and embankments were built to protect settlements from floods, and Aust is known to have served as a crossing point of the River Severn since at least this time.

The name Olveston has its origins in Anglo-Saxon, meaning Aelf's (proper name) tun (farmstead). One of the most important legacies of the Saxon occupation is the reclamation of several thousand acres of alluvial pasture land via a system of drainage of the marshland, involving a network of rhines and increased bunding of the River Severn. Many of the rhines and watercourses were re-engineered during the 19th century, and they remain an important historic feature of the village and the wider landscape.

Although Olveston and Tockington now form one parish, in Saxon times they were separate estates – the Manor of Tockington, and the estate of Olveston. This implies they were the two most important settlements in the area, largely due to their location on the edge of the marshland, and at the termination of important navigable watercourses used for shipping goods inland. There were two manors at Olveston, one owned by Bath Abbey associated with the Church, and the other was at Olveston Court which was rebuilt in the 15th century by John Walshe. Today the buildings at Olveston Court are split in to four residential properties, and provide a unique and important historic and archaeological asset to the conservation area.

Olveston and the surrounding area have strong associations with the Quaker Movement, which developed in the district in the 17th century in response to Civil War, at a time when many villages, including Olveston, were without a resident vicar. Joseph Sturge, a wealthy and prominent Quaker and abolitionist, lived for some time at Hill House, The Green. The Sturge family were heavily involved in village life, and built many of the houses in Olveston during the 19th century, to house the growing population which at this time was largely employed in agriculture or associated crafts and trades.

Olveston was situated on the coach road from Bristol to Aust Ferry and provided overnight accommodation when poor weather prevented sailings. In 1805 New Road was constructed as one of a series of improvements to the coaching route. The second half of the 19th century saw a large increase in the population in the village as it provided housing for labourers working on railway construction and the Severn railway tunnel project which opened in 1886. During the 20th century Rolls Royce and the air industry provided large scale employment in the area, and the agricultural importance of the village declined.



Top left: Olveston Court—a section of the crenellated curtain wall

Above: The Old Meeting House, The Green

Bottom left: St Mary's Church—the spire was lost during a thunderstorm in the early 1600's, and never rebuilt.

The special features

Residential development within the village increased significantly during the 1960s and 1980s, however traditional buildings predominate along the principal historic routes and at the core of the village, providing a distinctive and special character. The traditional buildings, which are of both formal or 'polite' and vernacular architectural styles, have a wide variety of uses including residential, agricultural, commercial, educational and religious. The original Victorian school remains in use and the businesses and community facilities impart a vibrancy and sense of community that is so important to Olveston's character. Some buildings, such as those at Olveston Court and St Mary's Church, include Medieval fabric however the majority of traditional buildings date from the 17th – 19th centuries.

Traditional structures such as the war memorial, water pumps, stiles and gates also contribute greatly to the character of the conservation area.



Top right: Traditional stone porch, vicarage **Top left:** The War memorial outside St Mary's Church **Middle right:** A traditional pump on Church Hill **Bottom left:** Traditional stile at The Green **Bottom right:** Lias stone walling

Building Materials

Carboniferous limestone has been quarried around Olveston for centuries and used for building material and lime making. The stone has a warm grey colour with occasional pinkish/orange accents. Many 'polite' buildings of the 18th & 19th centuries have a lime render finish over rubble stone, and this makes an important contribution to their character and aesthetic. The render can be smooth or roughcast, often incorporating classical features such as lining-out, expressed pilasters, voussoirs and window surrounds.

Roofs

Roofs are predominantly covered in historic natural clay pan-tiles and double Roman pan-tiles, with natural slate reserved for more important buildings, for example St Mary's Church, The Old Rectory and the Old Post Office. The majority of the dwellings of the 'polite' architectural style (with rendered formal elevations) have roofs terminated with raised parapets and coped verges, whereas the vernacular cottages and farm buildings tend to have simple mortar verges. Chimneys, built of brick or stone, are an important feature of most buildings in the conservation area adding visual interest to the roofscape.

Windows

Traditional windows within the conservation area can be broadly separated into two types: timber sliding sashes and timber side hung casements. Metal casement windows with leaded lights are seen in some of the very oldest buildings. Generally speaking, 'polite' buildings have sliding sashes, either of Georgian multi-sash design or the Victorian large pane format, while vernacular buildings, such as farmhouses and cottages, generally have flush-fitting, side-hung casements. Windows are traditionally painted. There are a variety of window surround and head details on buildings within the conservation area. There are also examples of blind windows and false, painted windows, which can be either intended architectural features or illustrate the historic development of a building. Both forms should be retained. Modern uPVC, storm-proof windows and 'open out sashes' are seen on some historic buildings in the conservation area, as well as modern 'wood-stain' finishes. These non-traditional window forms, materials and finishes have a damaging impact on the traditional character of the area, and should not be used



Historic six panel door

Traditional flush timber casement

During the period of the glass tax (1747-1851) windows were blocked up and false windows painted in their place.

Boundary treatments

Stone walls are a common and extremely important feature within Olveston Conservation Area. The tradition for high stone walls was established at Olveston Court, where they were built around the site for practical purposes of containment, and also as a visual expression of status. Although built to appear as a fortified site, these walls were an architectural and social statement rather than actually being defensive. The boundary walls of Olveston Court can now be seen within later phases of development within the village and are an important physical record of the original extent of the Court grounds.

Many other properties within the village also have boundary walls constructed from the local limestone. Modest cottages tend to have relatively low walls, whereas the larger, more elite buildings commonly have walls over two metres in height. A variety of coping details are found, often depending on the status and architectural style of the property, including the traditional cock and hen, dressed stone, black copper slag blocks and mortar flaunching. Some of the very large, prestigious buildings in the village such as Hill House, The Vicarage and The Elms are largely concealed from public views by high stone walls, emphasising the status and wealth of previous occupants. Native hedging and planting is also used in conjunction with walling to form boundaries, and adds a softer, green element to the conservation area.

The retention and maintenance of stone boundary walls with traditional lime mortars is very important. The introduction of boundaries of inappropriate modern materials or detailing is seen in a minority of cases and erodes the traditional character.

Archaeology

Due to the history of the village, in particular the area around Olveston Court, it is a valuable source of archaeological information. Where development is proposed applicants will be expected to assess the archaeological significance of the site and assess the impact of proposals on that significance.



Traditional slag coping to wall top

Green Infrastructure Assets including rhines and water features & planting and open spaces

Green Infrastructure assets contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area as well as the wider social wellbeing of the community. Water features such as rhines and ponds are important historic elements of the conservation area and its landscape setting. They are also of ecological value, providing habitat for a variety of wildlife species. As well as its important landscape setting, Olveston conservation area contains a number of green and open spaces including private gardens, orchards and fields and public areas such as verges, footpaths, and allotments. They contain a rich variety of planting. These areas not only provide an understanding of the historic pattern of development of the village, but also enhance the rural and tranquil character and intrinsic beauty of the village.

It is important to maintain and sustain these special features which contribute to the character and appearance and setting of the conservation area.

The character areas

Area 1 - The village core - The Street, New Road and the crossroads at St Mary's Church

This character area includes the principal route through the village, which follows the historic coaching route from Bristol to the Aust Ferry. Until the early 20th century the village of Olveston comprised two distinct clusters of development, one to the north which centred on the crossroads at the church and that to the south around the village green, with only limited development in between. New Road, constructed in 1805 to improve the coaching route, served from this time on as the principal route in to the village from the south. Modern infill along New Road and The Street has served to link the two historic areas and created the predominantly linear form of the village we see today.



The street - looking towards The Old Post Office and the White Hart Public House



The village core centres around the crossroads where there are several significant historic buildings including St Mary's Church, The White Hart, Churchill House, The Old Post Office and The Old Vicarage. This part of the village has developed in response to centuries of trade and transport as well as social activity, and is the heart of the village. The White Hart, which is reputed to have 15th century origins, served as a coaching inn until the late 19th century. St Mary's Church, a grade I listed building dating from the late Norman period, is an important and impressive focal point within the village. The Old Post Office is a formal and elegant grade II listed building dating from the 18th century. Its classical detailing including lined out render, expressed voussoirs and sash windows illustrate its status. The attached 17th century, grade II listed cottages have an elegant simplicity which complements the post office. Their flat slate hoods supported by sandstone brackets are features of particular interest.

Along The Street and New Road, many of the historic buildings are quite densely clustered, often attached and predominantly built fronting the road. Only the larger properties such as The Elms and The Old Vicarage, are set back from the road in their own private and substantial plots, reflecting their higher status. Buildings are generally two storeys, rising to three storeys at major road junctions. Much of the modern infill development along The Street is largely screened by the tall historic stone boundary wall parts of which originally belonged to Olveston Court. This stone walling provides cohesion to the street and reinforces the linear plan form and strong sense of enclosure. Where the wall has been breached or lowered such as to the south of Cromwell House, this has eroded the traditional character and sense of enclosure. High stone walls around the church and the Old Vicarage create a narrow pinch point at this part of The Street. The Old Vicarage is a handsome grade II listed building set in substantial grounds. It is largely 18th and 19th century in style but may have earlier origins and originally faced west towards the church but was remodelled to face Vicarage Lane.



Old vicarage

Within the grounds of The Vicarage and the churchyard are many important mature tree species including an Atlantic Blue Cedar. The cottage known as 'Greengates', situated opposite the church and adjacent to The Old Vicarage, is a well preserved traditional cottage which retains simplicity and charm. It is located prominently within the village within a large garden. In conjunction with the churchyard the grounds to The Vicarage and Greengates provide a more open and green character to this part of the conservation area in comparison to the dense pattern of development further south around the crossroads.

Other buildings along The Street include more simply designed vernacular cottages, as well as The Methodist Chapel – with distinctive profiled gable. The conservation area boundary extends along New Road to encompass historic and characterful buildings including Paddock House, which is a grade II listed building.

Natural limestone and render finishes predominate although some of the 20th century infill housing incorporates uncharacteristic brick and 'jumper' stones and some traditional lime renders have been removed and either replaced with modern cement alternatives or left exposed. Inappropriate modern detailing and materials should be avoided in future development as they detract from the traditional character. The roads are relatively free from street clutter such as signs, traffic calming measures or road markings, which helps to maintain the traditional character and appearance of the village.

This area of the village remains the hub of commercial and social activity. The church is in regular use, and there are a variety of well used amenities and businesses on The Street including a public house, bakery, shop and post-office, workshop, hairdressers, butchers, garage, and community hall. These amenities bring a vibrancy and vitality to this part of the village, which is an important characteristic of the conservation area. However, it is recognised that these facilities generate quite a high level of traffic movement as well as on-street parking along this principal route through the village. Any future highways improvements aimed to address this should be sensitive to the historic character.



Top left: A section of the distinctive high stone walling on The Street

Top right: Traditional cottages on The Street



Bottom left: Traditional cottages on New Road and the Methodist Chapel.

Bottom right: St Mary's Church

Preservation and enhancement strategy

In addition to the preservation and enhancement strategies included from page 27 the following specific strategies are relevant to the village core character area:

- Ensure signage to the various commercial buildings is appropriate.
- Ensure highways improvements and road signage is sensitive - retain simplicity of kerbs and verges and avoid inappropriate modern materials, street clutter or lighting.
- Maintain stone walls in good repair, using traditional mortars. The removal or reduction in height of the historic walls shall be resisted.
- New development should be of an appropriate scale, design and materials and respect the historic urban grain, building lines and architecture.
- Maintain and enhance trees and planting.
- Protect open spaces which contribute to the character of the conservation area and maintain important views in to and out of the conservation area.



Views to the open countryside at the end of Denys Court

Area 2 - Olveston Court and surrounding rural areas and Denys Court

Dating in its current form from the 15th century, Olveston Court is one of the earliest buildings within the village, and an extremely important element of the conservation area. A large number of the original buildings and structures are still standing and the extensive earthwork remains indicate the extent of what has been lost. The surviving buildings are of stone construction, with clay tiled roofs and have a strong and solid appearance. The site was subdivided in the 1970's to form four separate dwellings. The buildings at Olveston Court are listed and a significant area of the surrounding land is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument for its archaeological significance.

The Court is located on the north-east slopes of Catherine Hill, to the south west of the village. The present building includes a massive, crenellated, moated curtain wall with a gatehouse at its eastern end and a further stretch of wall east of the gatehouse incorporated into later buildings. A further 10 metre stretch of crenellated wall returns north at the western end and is all that remains of a curtain wall to the outer court which would originally have enclosed a large area of land to the north of the gatehouse. These fortifications were a symbol of status rather than having defensive value. The Court was originally approached from the south, but after the Green was enclosed in the 19th century access became via the service courtyard from the main village street, and now from Denys Court. The impressive gatehouse no longer forms the grand entrance to the site which it once did.



Olveston Court viewed in an open setting

Within the high stone boundary walls extending from Olveston Court and The Bee Garden - a former fifteenth century barn now converted to a dwelling - are over 21 bee-boles, the second highest number recorded in England. These are triangular headed recesses approximately 45 centimeters high, built within the wall to hold wicker baskets or skeps for bees, a traditional form of hive.

Apart from the inherent architectural, archaeological and historic interest of the fabric of Olveston Court, one of the principal characteristics of the site, and its contribution to the conservation area is its comparative isolation from the village, and its open landscape setting. Although intended to be prominently visible and impressive in scale, the isolated location seems to have been deliberately chosen to enhance the status and privacy of the owners. The curtain walling and moat would have reinforced the intended impression of wealth and separation. The historic functions and activities of the Court would also have necessitated space and land, for example tilting is understood to have taken place in the field to the north of the Court and evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation and enclosures is visible in the fields to the east. This landscape setting of the Court is extremely important, and provides an understanding of the site's historic significance and context. Water features were also historically important components of the design and development of the Court, and some of these survive as earthworks including part of the moat, the rhine running along the former entrance route (now the public footpath).

The open setting of Olveston Court on the edge of the historic village has been compromised quite significantly by the development of Denys Court, with many views from or around the site dominated by this housing development. In addition, there are areas of residential landscaping and planting around the Court Barn which are inappropriate to the historic landscape setting of the Court, and the creation of small enclosed paddocks and stabling introduces visual clutter.

The cumulative impact of seemingly small changes such as additional sub-division of open fields, the erection of small outbuildings, non-native planting or unsympathetic extensions and alterations to buildings can harm the unique character of the area. Due to the site's fragmented ownership, the



The distinctive bee boles at Olveston Court



The open landscape setting around Olveston Court

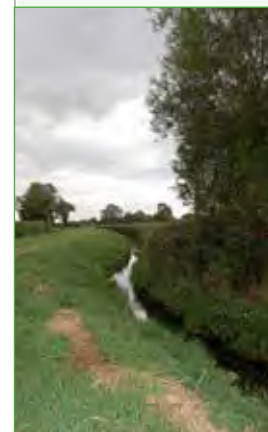
pressure for development is increased, however it is important that future developments in and around the site do not compromise the open setting or harm its archaeological or architectural importance. Where development is proposed, applicants will be expected to assess the archaeological or architectural significance of the site, and the impact of proposals on that significance.

Denys Court, a 1960s housing development is built on formerly open land which separated Oveston Court from the main part of the village. Large sections of the ancient boundary walls of the Court run through the development evidencing the physical extent and dominance of the manor house. Denys Court has introduced a visual barrier between Oveston Court and the village although glimpses of the Court and the surrounding open fields are still possible between the houses, and the attractive, well maintained garden planting helps to soften the visual impact of this development. The northern end of Denys Court allows views out to the open countryside beyond, providing a visual connection to the rural context of the village. However, the large expanse of tarmac at the end of the cul-de-sac is unfortunate and spoils this more rural vista.

Preservation and enhancement strategy

In addition to the preservation and enhancement strategies included from page 27 the following specific strategies are relevant to the Oveston Court and surrounding rural areas and Denys Court area:

- Carefully consider proposals for the change of use of land in order to minimise the impact of stables, fences and other structures etc on the character of the landscape and setting of Oveston Court.
- Carefully consider the subdivision of land and new development which could further compromise the open setting of the Court or its sense of unity.
- Resist inappropriate landscaping and planting where this would be damaging to landscape character and setting and also archaeology.
- New development should be of an appropriate scale, design and materials and respect the historic urban grain, building lines and architecture.
- Maintain public footpaths.
- Ensure alterations to the buildings preserve their architectural, historic and archaeological interest.
- Encourage appropriate repairs to walls using lime mortar.
- Ensure that development preserves or enhances the landscape setting and sense of openness, tranquillity and remoteness.
- Encourage the increase of screen planting to the west of Denys Court to enhance setting of Oveston Court.



Rhines are important landscape features and also of ecological value, providing habitat for a variety of wildlife species.



Bee Garden at Oveston Court

Area 3 - The Green

This character area centres on what was originally the village green, an open communal area of land, surrounded by a number of properties including farms, houses, and an important Quaker Meeting House. Up until the early 19th century, the main route into Olveston from the south had been via St Catherine's Hill and Port Farm, along a road that passed through the village green into the main village street. This route was heavily used during the coaching period for the mail route from London to South Wales, and the green would therefore have been a busy entry point to the village. The construction of New Road in 1805 provided a more direct route through the village and severed the historic route reducing the Green to a quiet backwater.

The Enclosure Act of 1844 significantly reduced the size of the village green giving much of the formerly open common land to individual properties for spacious front gardens. Originally two acres in size, the green was reduced over time to a grassy triangle at the centre of a road junction with wide grass verges. On one of these verges is the former village pump, which is an attractive traditional feature as is the village duck pond which is understood to have once served as the header pond for the mill at Olveston Court. Ponds and rhines are important elements of the history of the village as well as attractive landscape features.

The Green now feels quite isolated from the core of the village, and has a distinctly rural and tranquil character. Many of the properties are set back from the road within large gardens, enclosed by high walls, distancing them from the public realm, of which Hill House is a good example. The visual detachment of the buildings contributes to the relative tranquillity of this area compared to the more vibrant and bustling High Street.



Top left: Hill House, The Green. **Top right:** Traditional coach house doors and shutters.
Bottom left: The duck pond. **Bottom right:** The Green.

There are a rich variety of traditional buildings in this area, which have been sensitively maintained. Many of them are listed for their architectural and historic interest. Very little modern development has occurred, which further reinforces the traditional charm and integrity of the area. Hill House is an important building dating back to the 13th century. It was substantially altered and extended in the 16th century. The gardens contain specimen trees and some of the yew trees are understood to be 700 years old. There are a number of architecturally 'polite' buildings to the northern side of The Green, which contribute a more formal element to the character. Their refined architectural design is expressed in the use of rendered parapet elevations, sash windows and decorative porches. To the southern side of The Green, Green Farm and Port Farm, are located on what would have been the very edge of the village.

Green Farm is now visually separated from the rural landscape by modern development to the east, although the sensitive barn conversion allows the historic association between these two buildings to remain clearly evident. Port Farm, a grade II listed building, retains a strong visual association with the open landscape beyond. The historic barn has been converted to a dwelling but maintains an agricultural character which contributes to the setting of Port Farm, and the rural character of this part of the conservation area.

A public footpath follows the route of the original entrance to Olveston Court and is lined by an attractive high stone wall and a narrow rhine. This footpath provides a pleasant and tranquil route through the conservation area and important views of the Court.

Other than some views of the modern development extending from New Road, The Green has very few negative elements. However this means that it is very sensitive to change and it is important that further modern development does not impinge on the well preserved and tranquil character of this area. Development within these open spaces will be strongly resisted, and alterations to existing properties must preserve the traditional character and integrity of the buildings and spaces in this area.



A well preserved example of a 'polite' building



A high quality barn conversion has retained the agricultural character at this part of The Green.

Preservation and enhancement strategy

In addition to the preservation and enhancement strategies included from page 27 the following specific strategies are relevant to The Green area:

- Maintain the sense of space and openness and the rural character.
- Maintain the high level of planting and trees.
- Maintain the informal grass verges and central Green.
- Maintain the historic features such as well, stile and pump.
- Maintain the important traditional water features such as rhines and ponds.
- Maintain traditional boundary treatments – stone walls and hedge planting of appropriate species.
- Maintain links and views to open countryside beyond and protect the surrounding landscape character.
- Resist infill development and development on front gardens or forward of building line.
- Encourage appropriate repair of walls along the public right of way.
- Ensure alterations to buildings maintain their traditional character. Alterations should also respect the architectural distinctions between agricultural buildings, those built in the local vernacular and the refined elegance of buildings of polite architectural style.
- Ensure that new development is of appropriate materials, scale, form and design.



The large front gardens provide an important sense of space and tranquillity to the area and should not be developed or harmed



Features such as the pump, informal verges, stone boundary walls, trees and simple gateway contribute to the rustic character

Area 4 - The lanes – Church Lane, Vicarage Lane, Ley Lane and Elberton Road

Extending from the main village street are a number of smaller lanes. Those which radiate from the crossroads at St Mary's Church are Church Hill, Vicarage Lane, Ley Lane and Elberton Road. Haw Lane and The Green are discussed under separate character areas.

Each of the lanes has their own character, however they are all of a secondary nature, and distinct from the principal village street. They possess a greater informality than The Street, with houses built in a more haphazard arrangement, not always set parallel with the road. The pattern of development is less regular or consistent - Ley Lane and Elberton Road being quite sparsely developed - whilst Vicarage Lane and Church Hill are of greater density, with a variety of small open spaces. Whilst each of the four lanes has a different appearance, they share some common characteristics which reinforce their simple and rural character. These include natural hedge and tree planting, simple grass or cobble verges, the predominance of exposed natural stone in boundary wall and building construction, the simple vernacular style of architecture and limited road markings and street clutter.

In comparison to the level route through the village, the lanes follow the sloping ground. Church Hill drops steeply towards the flood plain of the River Severn at its lower end, whilst Vicarage Lane rises gradually at first, before a steep climb up Fern Hill. It is thought that there may historically have been a quarry on the site of Church Hill which would explain the steepness of the slope here. The meandering nature of the lanes, their varied levels and the seemingly random orientation and layout of buildings results in a variety of spaces and a mixture of short and longer distance views. From elevated positions on Church Hill interesting framed views out to the levels can be glimpsed. The variety of both high levels of enclosure and open views also adds interest and character to the lanes. For example the wide road and verge at the top of Church Hill gradually reduces to the narrow and enclosed pinch point half way down at its steepest point, and beyond this the character changes dramatically at the bottom of the hill where extensive views towards the Severn Levels are achieved across the open fields.



Maintain traditional stone sett verge



Preserve views to St Mary's Church



Ley Lane characterised by stone wall, informal verges and tree planting

The majority of buildings on the lanes are modest, traditional vernacular cottages, of simple design incorporating exposed stone elevations and clay pantile roofs with simple mortared verges. Many of these properties are of relatively low two storey height and have simple wooden casement windows. There are some larger, more important buildings which are of 'polite' architectural design such as The Laurels, which is of three storeys. This building is assertively positioned and orientated to face up the hill, towards the church.

Members of the Sturge family built many of the cottages in the centre of Olveston including several on Church Hill and Ley Lane. The row of cottages at the top of Church Hill, attached to the White Hart, are some of the oldest in the village dating from the 16th century. They are listed for their architectural and historic interest.

Olveston's farmsteads were all located at the fringes of the village backing on to open countryside and so are accessed via the lanes. Vicarage Farm and its setting has been altered by modern development, however the other farms retain their edge of village location, and rural context.

The agricultural buildings associated with Church Farm enhance the traditional rural character and the informality of this character area. The modern cul-de-sac development at the lower end of Church Lane as well as the water pumping station, have however diminished the traditional rural character and it should be ensured that further development does not further detract from its rural character and open landscape setting. The overhead power lines on Church Hill are also particularly prominent and detract from the rural charm.



The cottages opposite St Mary's Church are reputed to be some of the oldest buildings in the village

The narrowness and subsidiary nature of Vicarage Lane distinguishes it from the main village street. The buildings and the high stone walls of the Old Vicarage area located directly at the back edge of the pavement create a strong sense of enclosure. The outbuildings to Churchill House are of a simple, traditional character. The Olveston and Elberton National School House dates from 1836 and School Masters House is twenty years older. They represent an important element of village life in the Victorian period as well as historic expansion of the village, and their importance to the village remains today. From the elevated position of Elberton Road, views over the allotments to the open fields beyond are an important aspect of the setting of this area of the village, which has a more open and rural character than the main street.



Preservation and enhancement strategy

In addition to the preservation and enhancement strategies included from page 27 the following specific strategies are relevant to The lanes – Church Lane, Vicarage Lane, Ley Lane and Elberton Road area:

- Ensure any highways improvements or signage is appropriate.
- Maintain traditional cobbled and informal grass verges - avoid modern materials and the temptation to plant up verge areas.
- Maintain rural and open landscape setting at village edge.
- Encourage removal of overhead power lines.
- Ensure development is appropriate to the traditional character of the area and the traditional buildings ie. of appropriate materials, design, scale and location.
- Maintain boundary walls.



Area 5 - Haw Lane



The Methodist Chapel (now the doctors surgery) is one of five methodist chapels built in the area by the wealthy Thomas Johnson Ward.

Haw Lane contains buildings and features which are of architectural and historic significance. It is also understood to be an ancient route between the Pilning Levels and Thornbury. The lane is characterised by its strong linear form and development pattern, with dwellings located within spacious plots predominantly to the northern side of the lane overlooking Eastcombe Hill. Some of the earliest buildings on the lane such as Granville Lodge and Hawkfield House date back to the 18th century. Hawkfield House, originally Haw Farmhouse, was the residence of the Turton family who owned all of the land on Haw Lane. On the death of Mr Turton the land was subdivided in to plots for each of his six daughters, which were gradually developed throughout the 19th century.

These 18th and 19th century buildings share stylistic characteristics of the polite style of architecture which is seen elsewhere in the conservation area. They are set back from the road within large garden plots, enclosed by high stone walls. The front elevations are often symmetrically arranged and rendered, with sash windows. Many also have ornate canopied porches and coped parapets to the buildings and the boundary walls. Granville Lodge, Hawkfield House and Hawleaze are statutory listed for their architectural and historic interest and Longleaze is locally listed. Whilst some minor modern alterations have taken place, the historic buildings on Haw Lane have well preserved traditional exteriors and contribute positively to the street scene. The front gardens and planting provide a green and leafy character, and the stone boundary walls at the road frontage create a strong boundary edge and sense of enclosure, although this is interrupted at the access to Orchard Rise.



Haw Lane—characterised by it's high level of enclosure and greenness provided by the walls and tree and hedge planting

Interspersed between the traditional buildings is modern housing. While some of the later infill buildings on the northern edge of Haw Lane are not of particular architectural or historic merit, these modern properties do generally respect the urban grain of the lane and follow a relatively consistent building line. The location of the lane at the rural edge of the village, and its strong framework of vegetation distinguishes this area from the village core. Eastcombe Hill provides both an attractive setting and a sense of shelter and containment to the conservation area, and views to the open fields are gained from many various points along Haw Lane.

The historic iron kissing gate opposite Orchard Rise provides access to the historic footpath across Eastcombe Hill and is an important feature. The sense of remoteness and transition to the rural countryside gradually increases further up the lane.

To the southern side of Haw Lane there are far fewer properties, and these mostly date from the 20th century, although the dwelling known as The Yard was originally a barn which belonged to the Haw Farm. It is important that the rural setting and tranquil character of Haw Lane is protected and views to Eastcombe Hill are maintained and therefore proposals for further development on the south side of the lane will be resisted where this would not achieve this aim. The regular development 'grain' and building line, and the spacious and green garden plots to the northern side should also be maintained.



Historic kissing gate on Haw Lane at the entrance to the Eastcombe Hill PROW.



Hawkfield House is a grade II listed building of 'polite' style

Preservation and enhancement strategy

In addition to the preservation and enhancement strategies included from page 27 the following specific strategies are relevant to The Haw Lane area:

- Encourage the maintenance of traditional detailing of 'polite' style houses such as render, sash windows and porches.
- Resist new development to the south of Haw Lane or infilling to the north where this would be contrary to the traditional development pattern or grain.
- Ensure that new development, including extensions and alterations are appropriate to the traditional character of the buildings and the area.
- Maintain and enhance sense of enclosure to the road by maintaining stone walls and appropriate hedge planting, including native hedges.
- Maintain the green character of the lane.
- Maintain views to the open countryside, and rural setting of the conservation area.
- Maintain building lines.
- Maintain rural informality of lane and traditional features such as gates.
- Resist creation of parking and access to front gardens where this would have a harmful impact.



The tree planting and landscape setting contribute to the character of Haw Lane

Keeping and enhancing the character

Great care needs to be taken when considering changes within the conservation area and beyond where it's setting may be affected. The cumulative impact of often quite small changes by property owners such as using wrong details or materials, unsympathetic extensions or planting, erosion of walls or loss of trees can harm the unique character and downgrade the area. Similarly, insensitive changes to the verges, open spaces and roads or the surrounding landscape character can detract from the pleasant informal character and sense of place. Collectively, residents, landowners, local and parish councils can help protect the unique character of Olveston by ensuring any works they do are sensitive to the character. A strategy for the preservation and enhancement of the area – including both general and more specific guidance—is set out below and on the accompanying plan.

Preservation and enhancement strategy

The overall aim is to preserve and enhance the historic character and appearance of the conservation area, including its historic buildings, features, landscapes and their setting. A strategy for the preservation and enhancement of the area is also set out on the accompanying Map 1.

1) Preserve and reinforce the historic character

- Ensure repairs are carried out sensitively and that any works to both the listed and unlisted buildings, features and surroundings are considered in relation to the historic context and use appropriate materials and detailing.
- Seek the retention and reinstatement of traditional details such as windows, doors, chimneys.
- Maintain traditional stone walls and native hedges and resist the introduction of inappropriate boundary treatments or materials.
- Maintain traditional road signs.

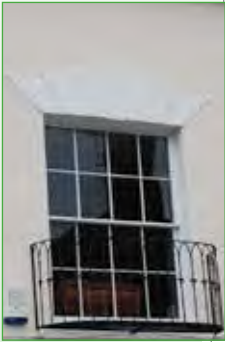


Inappropriate verge treatment

Visually inappropriate fencing – encourage replacement fencing

2) Ensure that any new development (or alteration) respects the historic context

- Encourage good quality design in all new development (or alterations) that is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- Proposals should have regard to the historic grain and pattern of development, scale, form, massing, building lines and open spaces that contribute to the character of the conservation area.
- New development should not adversely harm the setting of historic buildings, views or archaeological remains.
- Encourage the use of traditional materials and construction details that have regard to the distinctive character and appearance of the conservation area, and ensure that the architectural distinction between polite and vernacular buildings within the conservation area is maintained.
- Encourage sensitive redevelopment of visually intrusive or poor quality buildings when opportunities arise and promote high quality design that enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- Retain gardens, open spaces and landscapes which contribute to the setting of historic properties and resist new development or uses harmful to the character and setting of the conservation area.
- Ensure that the change of use of land or buildings preserves the important character of the conservation area and its setting.



Below Left: Hawkfield House - a well preserved example of a polite building, listed for its architectural and historic interest.

Below right: The high stone boundary walls of The Old Vicarage



3) Minimise the impact of existing modern development

- Enhancement proposals should seek to reduce the impact of modern development and soften the impact of intrusive features by using native planting and natural stone walls.
- Encourage the relevant utility companies to tackle the damaging and detrimental appearance of the overhead wires by routing them underground.
- Seek to maintain front gardens and resist introduction of parking on front gardens, or loss of front boundaries.

4) Preserve and reinforce the vitality of the historic village

- Ensure alterations, new development or changes of use are appropriate and enhance the community function and vitality.



Planting is an important part of the conservation area and helps to soften the impact of new development

5) Preserve the Green Infrastructure (GI) Assets

- Ensure that GI assets, including gardens, public open spaces, fields, public rights of way, rhines, ponds, trees, hedgerows etc are planned, delivered, managed and enhanced in a way that maintains and enhances the character and significance of the conservation area and its setting.

6) Preserve and reinforce the historic landscape setting of the conservation area

- Resist new development or uses harmful to the landscape character and setting of the conservation area or those which would reduce, remove or harm important landscape views.
- Recognise the importance of the views to the Severn Levels and crossings.
- Encourage the retention (or replacement where appropriate) of trees, native hedges, stone walls, field patterns and other landscape features.
- Maintain public rights of way.

7) Maintain the character and quality of the public realm

- Ensure the treatment of the public realm - roads, footpaths, open spaces, verges, trees and boundary walls - is sympathetic to the historic character and that street furniture, lighting, signs and road markings are appropriate and kept to a minimum.



What happens now?

This leaflet was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on the 30 January 2013. The amended Olveston Conservation Area boundary was also designated on the 30 January 2013. The contents of this document will be taken in to account when assessing the merits of planning applications and other proposals in the area. Applicants will need to provide an assessment of the character to demonstrate how their proposals will preserve or enhance the character of the area. Proposals that fail to have regard to the guidance in this SPD and which will have a harmful impact will be refused.

In the preparation of this document the views of local residents and other interested parties were sought. Consultation on the draft document and preservation and enhancement strategies took place between August and October 2012 by way of an advertisement, publication on the Council's website, notification placed in the Parish magazine and circulation of the leaflet at local libraries and Council offices. Comments and proposed amendments to the document were subsequently reported to the Planning, Transportation and Strategic Environment Committee prior to adoption. (For details see Statement on Consultation Report available from the council).

The Council is keen to work with the local community and other parties to help preserve and enhance this special area. The strategy sets out way we can help to achieve this. If you wish to assist in any manner or have any further suggestions, please let us know.



Land to the south west of Olveston Court

How to contact us

If you have any queries or suggestions contact:

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Further information from www.southglos.gov.uk/ConservationAreas

If you need this information in another format or language please contact 01454 868004

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