



# Horton

## Conservation Area

# Contents

Introduction .....	3
Policy Context .....	3
Setting .....	5
History.....	6
Character.....	10
Summary map .....	12
Contacts .....	13

# Introduction

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'. Once designated, 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.

South Gloucestershire has 30 conservation areas. Horton was designated a conservation area on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1985 and an appraisal leaflet was published following designation.

This document is not a review of Horton Conservation Area, but sets out the information as produced in an accessible format supported by current policy context, pictures and mapping.

## Policy Context

Local authorities have had the ability to designate areas of 'special architectural or historic interest' as conservation areas since 1967 when introduced as part of the Civic Amenities Act. Section 69 (2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation) Act 1990 legislates that authorities are to carry out reviews of existing conservation areas from 'time to time'. Section 72 also states that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area' in the exercise of planning functions. Guidance on conservation area appraisals and the management of conservation areas is produced by Historic England.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out national planning policy and must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF defines conservation areas as 'designated heritage assets' and sets out in paragraph 202 that local authorities should 'recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance'. Paragraph 204 states that when designating conservation areas local planning authorities should ensure the area justifies this status because of its special architectural or historic interest.

South Gloucestershire Core Strategy 2006-2027 sets out in CS9 that the 'natural and historic environment is a finite and irreplaceable resource', and expects that new development will conserve, respect and enhance heritage assets.

South Gloucestershire Policies, Sites and Places (PSP) Plan policy PSP17 states that Development within or affecting the setting of a conservation area will be expected to:

- preserve or, where appropriate, enhance those elements which contribute to their special character or appearance; and
- pay particular attention to opportunities to enhance negative parts of conservation areas and to draw on local character and distinctiveness.



# Setting

The 'old' settlement of Horton lies to the north east of the existing hillside village, it nestles below the Cotswold escarpment near the Iron Age hill fort known as 'The Castles'. Within the settlement a number of fine listed buildings including Horton Court and the Parish Church of St James provide a picturesque focal point within the conservation area, further enhanced by the expanse of woodland (see figure 1) to the east and the surrounding open fields (see figure 2) which are traversed by several footpaths including the Cotswold Way.



Figures 1. Top, Woodland to East of settlement Figure 2. Bottom, Views South of Horton from Horton Road

# History

The Parish Church of St James (See figure 3) is 12<sup>th</sup> century in origin and predominately perpendicular in style. It was rebuilt in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and altered in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was further restored in 1865. The Church still retains a Norman font and Jacobean pulpit (see figure 4). The Churchyard contains a good collection of 18<sup>th</sup> century local and classical chest tombs, contributing greatly to the setting of the Church.



Figure 3. Left, St, James Church Figure 4. Right, Jacobean Pulpit

Adjacent to the Church is Horton Court (see figure 5), a 16<sup>th</sup> century Manor House built in 1521 by William Knight, However, the Manor incorporates a far older Norman Hall (see figure 6) which was built c1140 as property of the church.



Figure 5. Left, Horton Court Figure 6. Right, Norman Hall



About 1125 Agnes and Hubert de la Rye gave their estate to the Cathedral of Salisbury and thus it became one of the prebendal estates. Historically, Horton was one of the parishes that gained the title of Golden Prebend. The first known holder of the Horton Prebend was Robert De Beaufeu c1140, and it is thought that he or his successor built the earliest element of the existing house, the Norman Hall mentioned above.

The Hall is a one storey building, the north and south doorways (See figure 7) being original and the timbered roof of 14<sup>th</sup> century origin. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Hall was divided horizontally into two and the upper floor made into a Roman Catholic Chapel. It was restored to a single room at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Figure 7. North doorway of the Norman Hall

William Knight was prebendary of Horton from 1517 until his appointment as Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1541. He presented Henry VIII's case for divorce from Catherine of Aragon to the Pope in 1527. His foreign tours, especially to Rome, made him familiar with Renaissance architecture and this is reflected in his work at Horton Court. The entrance door case is flanked by bands of arabesque work suggesting a classical entablature with an interesting frieze providing a magnificent entranceway. Inside the Manor the Renaissance flavour is continued. The hall's chimney piece has fluted Corinthian columns supporting a flat lintel decorated with mermaids and Knights' Coat of Arms. These features are some of the earliest Renaissance details in any English country house. Horton Court is now owned by the National Trust.

The garden is also noteworthy having a six-bay arcaded loggia or ambulatory (see figure 8), dating from 1527-29. It is Gothic in form but its conception derives directly from the Italian Renaissance gardens as observed by Knight, further emphasised by the existence of four plaques decorated with the heads of Roman Emperors.



Figure 8. Six bay arcadia loggia

Horton Cottages, lying to the South West of Horton Court also date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century and were formerly the farmhouse to the Court (See figure 9). Further afield, there is also evidence of archaeological remains of a lost part of the village, rabbit warrens, deer park, and to the north a large fairly complete set of fishponds which provided the Court with fresh fish.



Figure 9. Horton Cottages





Circa 1880 Ordnance Survey map Horton

Source: <http://maps.bristol.gov.uk/knowyourplace/>

# Character

This small settlement, nestling below the Cotswold escarpment, is highly picturesque in its setting. Entering from the south the view as one reaches the brow of the hill is superb both westwards (see figure 10) towards the Severn, and directly southwards onto the village (see figure 11).



Figures 10. Left, View looking westwards from the brow of the hill on Cotswold Way. Figure 11. Right, View looking south into the village from Cotswold Way.

The narrow winding road lined with mature trees adds an element of surprise to the area, ensuring that the Church and Horton Court remain obscured from the roadside until the last minute (see figures 12 and 13). The small number of buildings that make up the settlement create its unique



charm especially with the use of local Cotswold stone (see figure 14 and 15) which emphasises the vernacular architectural style. The areas of woodland and clumps of trees add variety whilst to the east the land rises to Walk Wood which dominated the skyline, acting as an attractive backdrop to the historic core of the village.



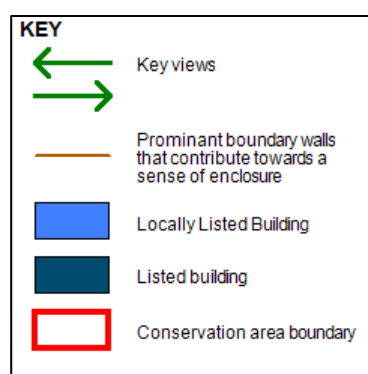
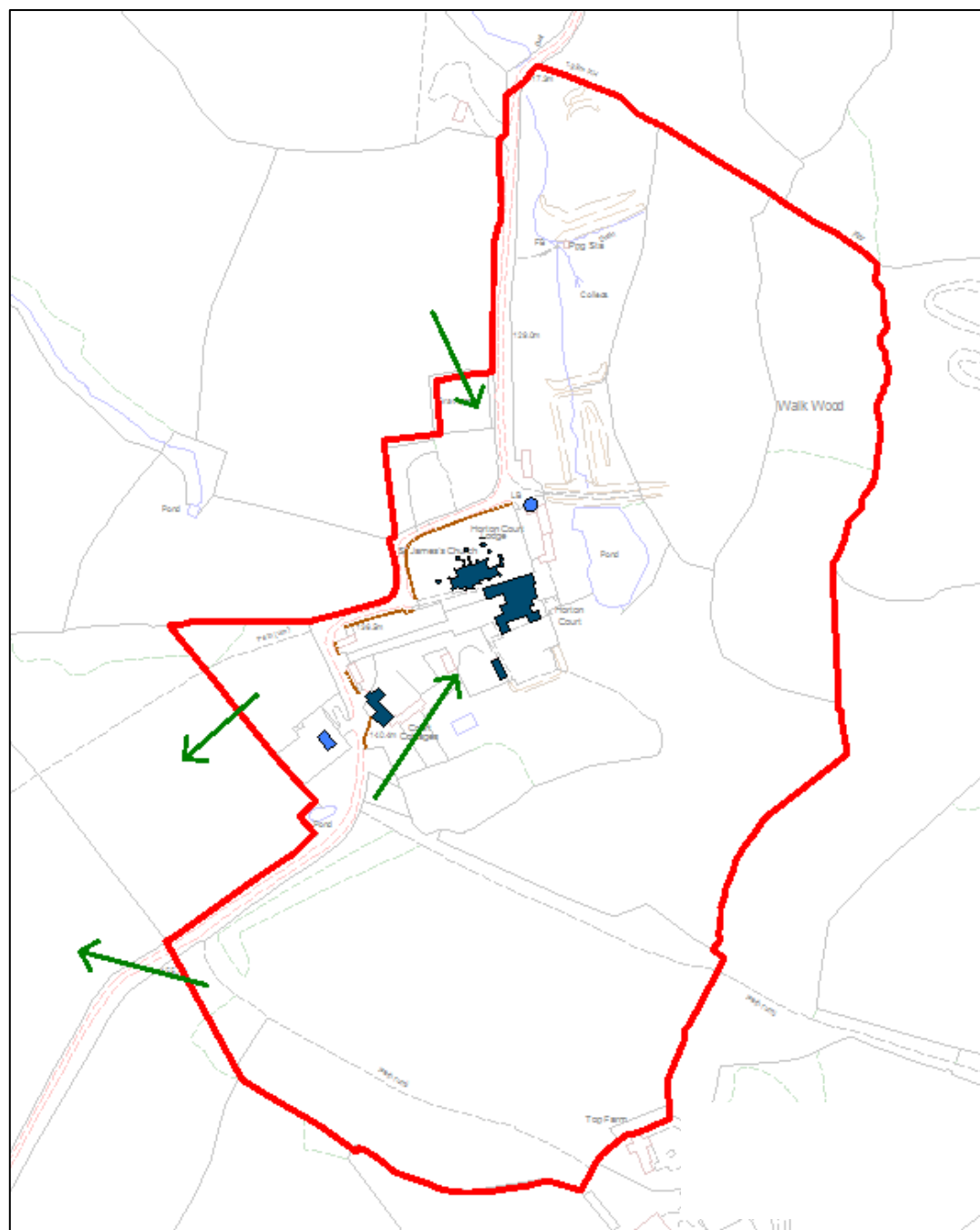
Figures 12. Left, View west from Horton Cottages. Figure 13. Right, First glimpse of Horton Court and church from Cotswold Way.



Figures 14 and 15. Examples of Cotswold stone walls in Horton



## Summary map



# Contacts

The council is keen to work with the local community and other parties to help preserve and enhance this special area. If you wish to assist in any manner or have any further suggestions, please let us know.

For further information or advice please contact:

**Conservation Officer**  
**Strategic Planning Policy and Specialist Advice Team**  
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