

WEST HANNEY CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



Final Version – August 2018

Frontispiece – Castleacre in Winter Lane. A Grade 2 listed building from at least 1600.

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1. Illustrations and Maps

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West Hanney Character Assessment

2. Objective of the West Hanney Character Assessment

The West Hanney Neighbourhood Plan (WHNP) sets out policies for future development in the parish. There was a strong desire expressed by the village throughout consultation events and surveys to ensure that new development was 'in keeping' with the well-loved village space.

The aim of this document is to collate the findings of an independent and diverse group of local residents which identified those features within the built environment that contribute to the unique and distinctive character of West Hanney.

The Character Assessment, as well as being a document setting out the historic evolution of West Hanney as a settlement, will set out key findings which will be used to inform relevant policies of the WHNP and to help guide future development in the parish.

3. West Hanney's character – an introduction

If you take the old road from Denchworth, today a farm track across the fields, you reach the crest of a rise about a mile from West Hanney. It is perhaps our highest local point and from it you have a view of the village just beneath you. The scene is little different from that which would have greeted a traveller in early Victorian times and perhaps far earlier. It is clear why Saxons chose to bury a young noblewoman nearby. The church of St James is just seen above the few trees and farms that surround the village. Yet there is no mass of housing encroaching onto the fields. These are larger and flatter than those our earlier visitor may have seen, with tractors in place of oxen, but there remain good ridge and furrow fields from this earlier work too. The buildings sit in irregular plots and do not form the tight barriers of commuter estates. Most of the approaches to Hanney from the western Vale of the White Horse still offer this tranquil open view, partly shown in the photos on page 12. It remains a Vale village and this document will explore and set out that village character.

West Hanney's character is subtle, diverse and complex. Until recently, growth has been slow and organic. It is a blend that is difficult to assess objectively. Each of the two villages of East and West Hanney has almost thirty formally listed structures. Not all of them are grand or spectacular, and perhaps others have been overlooked? The mix of styles is subtle and successful. We are not on many tourist itineraries although many years ago Francis Frith found numerous views and buildings for his postcards and many of these sights remain as attractive today. This quiet and casual beauty is easy to overlook.

This character assessment is a view of what makes West Hanney so special to its inhabitants. The link between our surroundings and our contentment is not always self-evident, but it is clear from the comments and activities of villagers that our environment is a crucial element. It is why we enjoy the Hanneys in many individual ways and take a diverse view when defining its character. The decision not to have street lighting is one where the village has chosen to remain in a tranquil mediaeval state, although torches have replaced lanterns. Similarly, many roads have avoided highway engineering and excessive 'street furniture'. They have soft edges rather than hard shoulders and residents cope with a little mud on some footpaths.

This document largely deals with our physical surroundings. It does not limit itself to the housing aspect of architecture. Each Hanney street has a shape and texture that is its own, with few views that are predictable, and infrequent straight lines. Each is imbued with village history. Those with more uniform recent housing lack the historic sense of the village core but all West Hanney still feels like a small rural community, typical of the Vale, mostly lacking the urban extensions that have been added to many larger local villages. The spaces are as important as the structures and the diversity of the plot boundaries is critical too. Walls and

paths repeat the habits of centuries. There is an abundance of variety which lessens the impact of the few less congruent structures that have appeared. The rhythm of the frontages is mostly irregular, and the gardeners have added their creative diversity too. We only have yards to walk to visit different street scenes or an open view of memorable landscapes. In West Hanney we live on the edge of a remarkable area of peaceful rural survival and it is this we seek to record here, and then preserve for others.

4. The Setting and History of West Hanney

West Hanney is situated on a low gravel platform slightly above the wider landscape of the Ock Valley in the eastern Vale of the White Horse. Several villages in the area are located on these elevated positions and are still referred to as the 'island villages', as they occupy positions which spare them from most of the winter floods. Most have '-ey' endings to their names. Causeways still raise vulnerable paths above low roads and they also form a link to East Hanney along School Road. The lower road still floods occasionally to separate the villages and these causeways prove their worth. In July 2007, all roads were impassable to cars for 48 hours. The separation of the two villages, and the mostly gentle rivalry it has engendered, is still a critical part of their physical and spiritual history and character. The short 'Hanney Gap' between East and West has been eroded but still offers definite sense of openness with wide views to north and south. The 2017 Neighbourhood Plan survey suggested that around 90 % of villagers wanted to protect this valued separation space and threatened asset.

The name Hanney is thought to derive from the Saxon 'hanena-ey', meaning 'the island frequented by wild cocks'. West Hanney appears to have been centred around the church and manor, with a nucleated east – west axis. The roads circle around the central area of higher ground, separate from the rise upon which the church has been built. This pattern is still clear today. East Hanney, separated by lower land and Letcombe Brook, is spread in a more linear agglomeration of at least two sub-settlements and several manors along the old Roman road: an older name used was Long Hanney, a prefix applied to several Oxfordshire villages with a roadside housing pattern. The wider West Hanney parish, seen in the enclosure map on page 7, is a very irregular shape which contains three farms and extends to the borders of Denchworth in the west. Childrey Brook forms a significant part of the western boundary and Cow Lane divides the two Hanneys. The recent development boundary for West Hanney has been set to allow some infilled plots but also to protect the current character and shape of the village and the 'gap'.

West Hanney still has a definite focus around its main green. This forms the centre of the current conservation area. It also has a smaller western green, previously around an old pond, which is the site of the possible second conservation area. There has been only scattered new building in the parish in recent years apart from a number of developments in the early 21st century. More recently the central Church Farm site was developed in a much less sensitive manner.

An historical overview

The recent discovery of Neolithic pottery in the fields between the two Hanneys confirms the early habitation of this fertile area. These early hunter- gatherers were followed by Bronze Age and Iron Age tribes and then the Romans. The many finds in both East and West Hanney indicate the use of the current Wantage to Oxford route as a Roman road in its pre-turnpike years. There was certainly some settlement to support this route and the local agriculture. There have been many finds of pottery and some burials from the Bronze Age to the Roman period but no significant dwellings that link with the current layout of West Hanney.

The find of the Hanney brooch in 2009 is the most significant recent discovery, on a raised position between Hanney and Denchworth. It is dated 600AD and is of a pattern found elsewhere in the Thames Valley. The tribe most often associated with the area are the Gewisse. The village almost certainly was a Saxon site of worship although two stone coffins are the only current evidence of any possible pre-conquest church. Their early history is unclear. The first documentary mention of the Hanneys is in a charter of Abingdon Abbey of AD 956 and there is an earlier mention of Lyford being granted to the abbey by King Edmund in 944.

Although East Hanney had a small chapel before the reformation, West Hanney would have served both villages from then until St James the Less was consecrated in 1856. It still does so today, although the non-conformist chapel in East Hanney also attracts a large congregation. The Norman foundation church is sited on Church Street, alongside the old main road from East Hanney to Denchworth. This was superseded by the current Main Street. These two roads now encircle a wider area of slightly higher ground, upon which most of the main buildings of the pre-1945 West Hanney stood. This pattern is very evident from the enclosure map on page 7 and a good quality aerial photo taken at the end of the war [see page 31]. The similarity is striking with perhaps more houses on the earlier map! The population was probably higher then too. This oval shaped road pattern, about 500 yards long, formed the nucleus for much of the old village housing. It was surrounded by at least four farms and had several large houses and farmhouses on its outer edges. The farms linked to the rich fields that surrounded the 'island' village. The layout suggests a possible Iron Age settlement here, which seems likely, although there is no detailed evidence to support this. There have been finds clusters from this period nearby. Camps existed at nearby Cherbury and Segsbury. Ditches also follow the oval pattern but the water management evident in East Hanney is less visible in West.

Despite modern developments, the village still is centred on this area, both historically and socially. It contains the church, the village inn, most of West Hanney's listed buildings, the village greens and the sites of the old ponds. The views out of the central area also remain similar to their mediaeval equivalents, with the open roads running north and west along the Vale, and many glimpses to the south of the Berkshire Downs, as far as the White Horse itself. Approaching the village, the church and its original rectory, West Hanney House, remain the highest buildings. Few West or East Hanney houses exceed two storeys. At the quieter times of the day, the village still has a peace and remoteness that is significant and worthy of protection. On approaching West Hanney from the Vale, one enters the village with almost surprise at the easy transition from fields to streets.

The history of Hanney has greatly stimulated village character. It will remain an influence. Aspects that have caused the village to evolve into its present shape are mentioned in this report. They have significantly affected the architecture, land use and population growth.

The church would have been perhaps the only dominant building before West Hanney House was built. It is large for a small village and may have been a minster church, acting as an evangelical centre. The name of the priest, Tuold, is recorded in Domesday in 1086. St James the Great was responsible for the township of East Hanney and the tithings of North Denchworth and Philberts. East Hanney had to wait until 1858 for a church of its own. On the western boundary, just within the parish, stands what is left of the now deserted medieval village of North Denchworth, the original destination of Main Street. Grange Farm is believed to be the site of the old manor, though a moat down by the Childrey Brook may have enclosed the medieval house (this is in Denchworth parish). This was a home of the Fettiplaces, a famous Berkshire family.

At the time of the Domesday Survey, West Hanney was tenanted by the son of Walter Giffard, a close supporter of King William at Hastings, who had one estate here in his own hands, while another was held of him by undertenants. Of these the former had been held in the reign of Edward the Confessor by Earl Tosti. It was assessed at 7 hides in 1086 and contained a mill and the church; the whole was worth £14. This second manor was later subdivided into Seymour's Court and Andrew's Court, and the Fettiplace and Yate

families were the key owners in the 15th and 16th centuries. The church was acquired by the Bishop of Salisbury in 1352 but transferred to the Oxford diocese in 1837.

The buildings of Prior's Court [Manor Farm], the Dower House and Hanney House's early Tudor predecessor, the kitchen of which is still attached to the current 1727 house, were probably all in their present positions by 1520. In 1731 the 'Parsonage of West Hanney' was granted a new lease by Salisbury, presumably when it was rebuilt. The house passed into private hands, and lost its tithes, in 1887. The current Prior's Court, a fine Jacobean stone farmhouse, is the central building of Manor Farm, and presumably the site area of Giffard's original manor. It was presented by Henry VI to New College in 1441 and sold by them in 1956. Records of the leases of all these key buildings exist in Oxford and Trowbridge.

The history of Hanney in the 17th and 18th century is little known. The Civil War would have seen troop movements but there were no local skirmishes. Hanney House was rebuilt from about 1722. The local agricultural economy continued until the enclosures of the early 1800's. The maps and records of these enclosures are held in Reading. The growth of turnpikes led to the modernisation of the old road which is now the A338. The opening of the new road in 1776 brought custom to the tradesmen and inns along its route.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars gave entrepreneurs the stimulus to rebuild what is now Dandridge's Mill as a silk throwing mill. This production did not last long, but feed products succeeded this phase. The fine Mill building, and Mill House, remain on the edge of East Hanney. Lower Mill was also rebuilt about the same time. East Hanney, and the stronger stream of Letcombe Brook, was always the main milling centre and had at least three mills at one point.

The beginning of the nineteenth century gave promise of prosperity. A canal had been built along the eastern boundary of East Hanney linking the village to the canal system. In 1840 the railways followed. This allowed the export of milk and fruit by express train to London and its markets. Many orchards were established at that time. These are clearly seen on the early OS maps. Walnuts were especially successful and walnut orchards were a local characteristic.

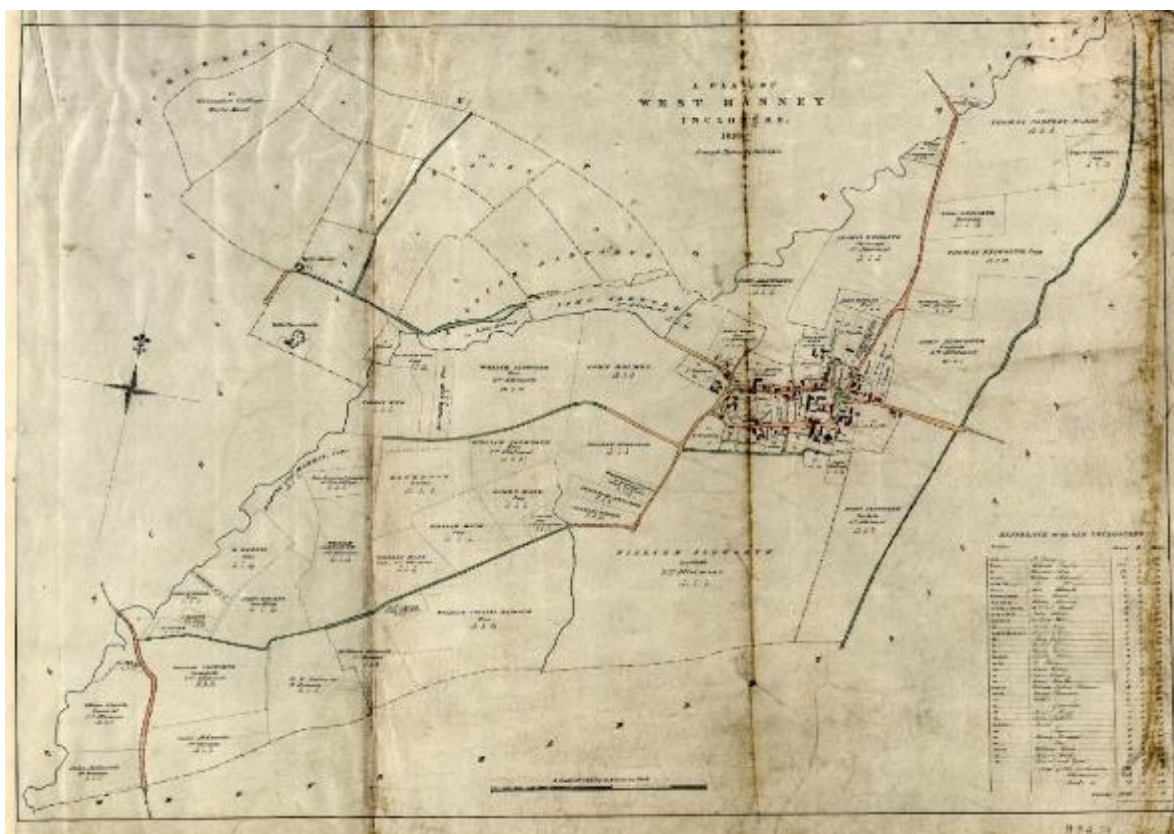
Farming continued to be an important part of the economy. Village populations grew, and farmers expanded their interests. New workers were taken on and old farmhouses were divided into tenements into which were squeezed large families. The Agricultural Depression which arrived in the late 1800s caused a Government Report of 1893 to comment on the very poor living and working conditions and the high incidence of disease and high mortality. They highlighted East Hanney as one of the poorest in the area. Property owners could not afford to repair houses and many old timber-framed cottages were lost. James Holmes of the Mulberries in East Hanney was a noted philanthropist in both villages and rebuilt several cottages. Into the empty spaces came new cottages made with brick and slate which now could be obtained more cheaply via the new railway. Repairs were sometimes completed, and stone seems to have become less available or affordable. This provided Hanney with a rich mix of building materials but with the village vernacular style still running through. As in the past houses were built only on well-drained sites. The census results for this period [see page 8] show the depopulation that occurred, probably from the combined effects of disease, poverty and migration to the cities. Population has remained fairly level, with smaller and ageing households offsetting the small increase in houses. Children find less work on the farm or elsewhere in Hanney today.

Some more positive things did happen such as the opening of the village school in the 1840s and the provision of village allotments by a benevolent landowner. It was difficult at first to persuade parents to let their children attend school and to pay for this as it meant that children's labour was lost. The records from the school logbook form a fascinating record of the effect of harvest and other issues on attendance!

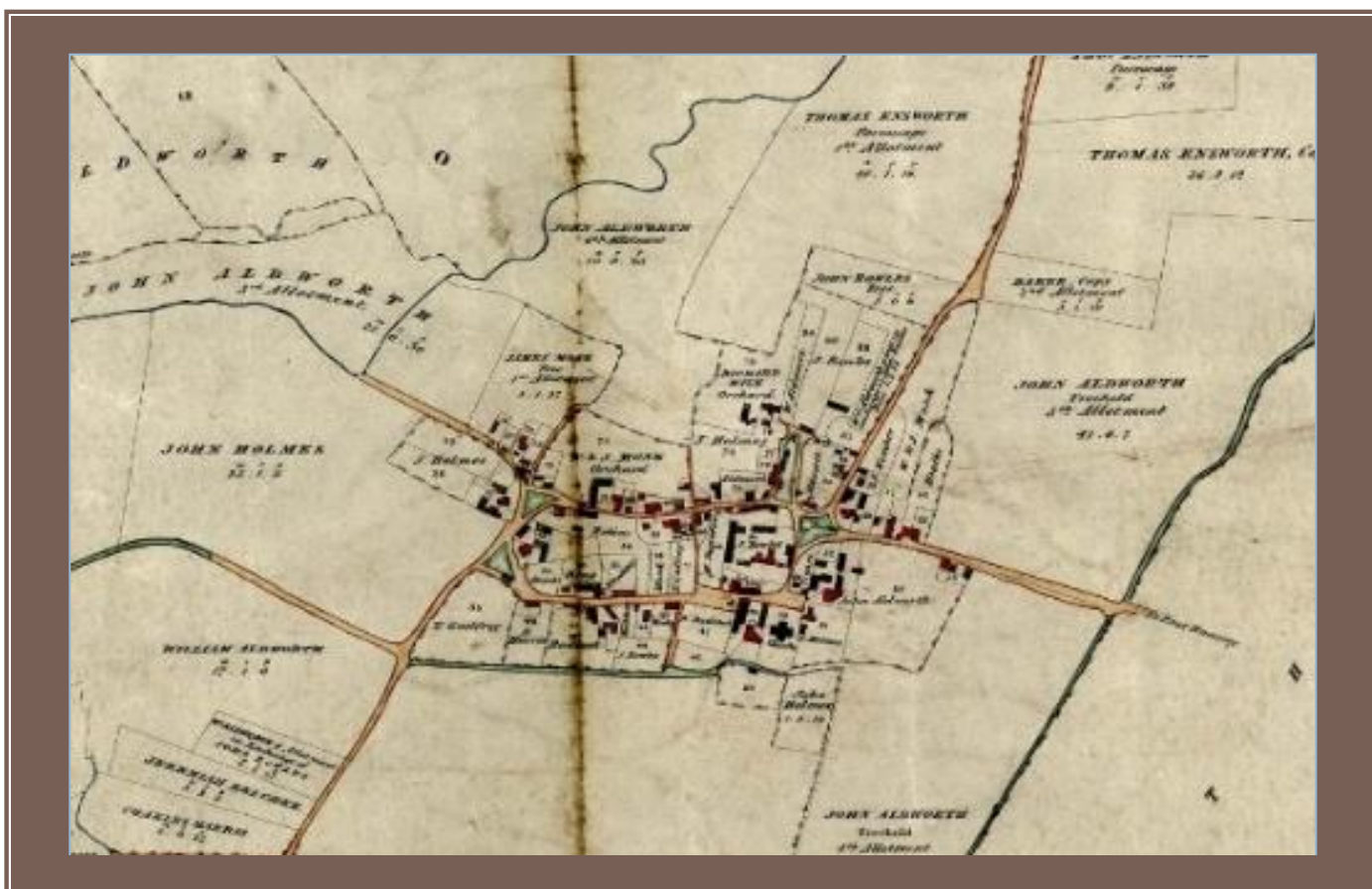
27 men and boys from the parish died in the First World War. This no doubt affected the economy and the birth rate. The village population was static. Limited building took place between the wars and some council

houses were built in School Road and Church Street in about 1942. The main influx was after 1950. There was also a need for housing to support Harwell and Culham science areas. Hanney was a good choice for those who wanted a rural setting rather than a town estate.

West Hanney reflects its history in the village layout, its key buildings and the rural atmosphere that pervades it. The new housing largely follows the footprint of the older buildings they are succeeding. Some styles seem a little awry, but they are becoming the new norm, and none are excessively intrusive. It still has the sense of being a farming village in the Vale, which is what it still is. Mechanisation has replaced most of the agricultural labourers but fields are still easily accessible, and the new Nigel Eady Community Wood has created a wooded space that is also safe from development. Hopefully those who drew the enclosure map below would be pleasantly surprised at how relatively unspoiled it all is, and how easy it still is to find your way round.



The parish and village of West Hanney
at the time of the 1839 Enclosures



Detail of the Village Centre 1839

Year	Population	Households	Household Size	Notes
2017 (est.)	530 est.	236*	2.24	Current building surge
2011	490	216	2.27	
2001	496	208	2.37	
1971	443			
1961	342			
1951	351			Harwell growth? WW2 housing
1921	285			Casualty effect?
1911	323			
1881	369			Rural depopulation
1861	384			

5. The Assessment of Village Character

Methodology

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

1. Visual assessment: The main process used was the inspection of the village streets, vistas and landscapes. A team of three people were involved throughout this process.
2. Desk research in Hanney and elsewhere. Visits have been made to the local history archives in the public record offices in Reading and Oxford.
3. Local consultation: An initial survey based around a version of the Oxford Character Assessment questionnaire adapted for West Hanney has taken place both with 25 selected residents
4. Photography – current and historic: The report is illustrated by current [2016-17] photos together with a small number of parallel historic views. All will be arranged thematically and clearly attributed. Current and earlier aerial/ satellite photography will be used to illustrate village changes.
5. Historic mapping search: Key maps will be used to describe recent change. These will start with Roque's Map of 1661, The Enclosure map of 1839, The Ordnance surveys from 1883 to the present.
6. Sub- areas for analysis: 7 'character areas' were selected for walking inspections and for a thematic analysis. These surveys are described below and shown on a local map. They conclude with their heritage values assessed under the Historic England Methodology.
7. The assessment provides a detailed description of the built form within West Hanney and identifies both the positive and negative aspects, concluding with a list of features and design criteria to inform future development.

The character assessment was carried out from May to November 2017 by a working group led by Bill Orson from the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group. The following villagers and others collaborated in the project:

Paul Sayers, Ann Fewins, Stewart Scott, Hilary Cakebread-Hall, Angela Cousins, Robin Border, Roger Bett, Jean Sutherland, Penny Iles, Clive Fewins, Alan Trinder, Andy Robertson, Lorene Ashby, Keith Diment, Jenny Diment, Phil Manvell, Catherine Armstrong, Susan Brandon, Julie Mabblerley, Liz Orson, T.W. Bradshaw, Paul and Galina Appleby. Eddie Wilkinson, Chris Surman, Angie Miller.

Villagers were also asked for their opinions on the character of West Hanney via a survey that was distributed in December 2016 and these can be found in Appendix 5.

Photographs: virtually all the photographs used were taken in July- August 2017. The only exceptions are the few historic images and the aerial photo. There are no copyright issues on the 2017 images.

The Choice of the Character Areas

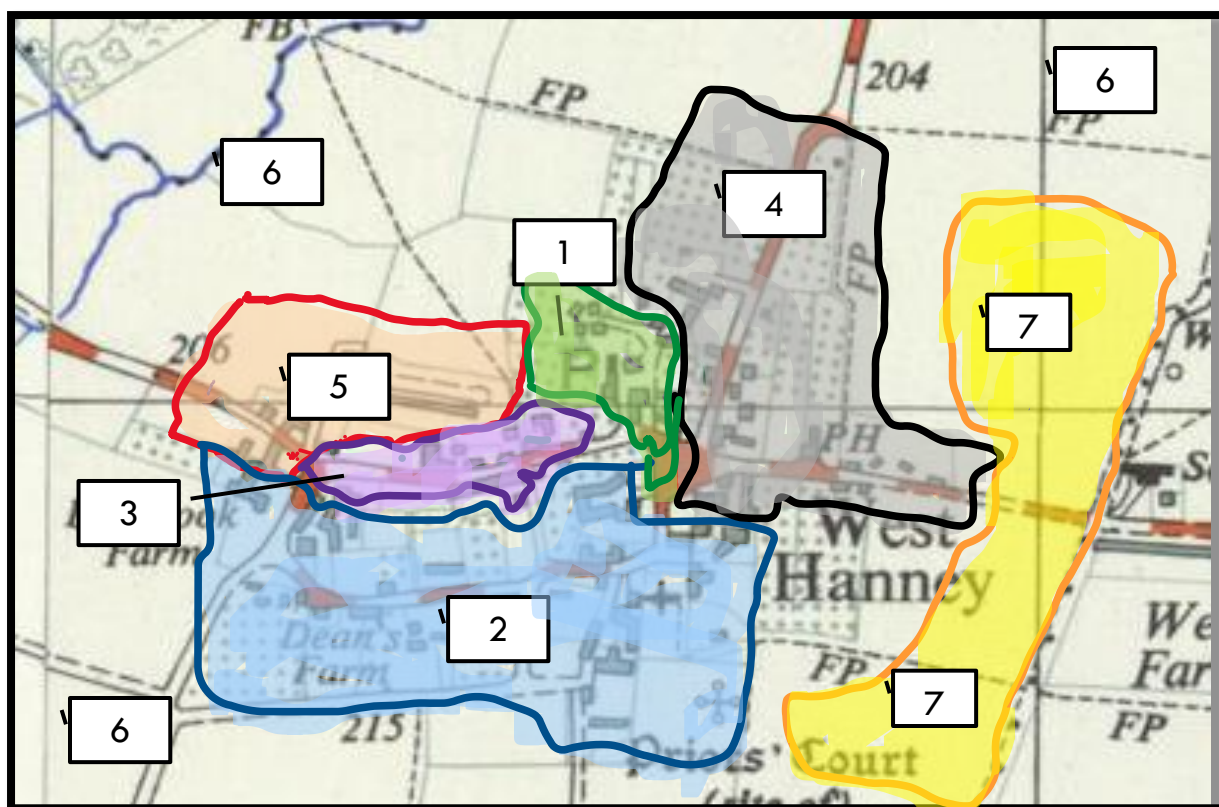
Areas which were selected which are broadly linked by common characteristics or geography. These were defined by:

1. Their landscape situation or natural clustering on greens or critical streets
2. The length of time a group of dwellings has co-existed
3. Their architectural character and their conjunction with other buildings and natural landmarks.
4. Their history and their sense of place in the current community

To keep the number of areas manageable and meaningful, some compromises were made where these criteria overlapped. All the groups below reflect this. The conservation area was another possible choice but proved an imperfect one, as it excluded key buildings and cut across three clear streetscapes. There is also a debate ongoing about a second western conservation area. After consideration, it is proposed to broadly review the village using the following areas:

The Character Areas of West Hanney

- 1 **The Central Greens' area:** To link North Green to the houses that surround The Green as central zone of larger properties, including Hanney Forge, Castleacre and the north of the conservation area. These are an area of mostly medium to large dwellings linked by their location and size, plot layout and character. The new houses on Church Farm and the Old Workshop are modern exceptions.
- 2 **Church Green and Church Street area:** The old Denchworth road through Church Street from Church Farm, The Dower House and the church forms a linear if curved procession to the Meads crossroads. The houses diminish in age, character and size after The Plough, but the area includes two greens at either end and again offers a winding scene with irregular frontages until it reaches the proposed new western conservation area and culminates at Lydbrook Farm. This area also includes the new housing to the south in Chestnut Close and that in Monk's Close and the Chaffinch site development.
- 3 **Main Street area:** Main Street from The Villa to the crossroads at the Meads is treated as a single entity unified by its orientation along West Hanney's main through street, with no side turns. The properties are diverse in age, building line and design but do form a reasonably coherent winding streetscape of mostly one and two storey dwellings.
- 4 **The northern and eastern approaches' area:** To treat Winter lane and its side streets, the Croft and all Hanney houses east of the village green as a post WW2 series of developments [with a few date exceptions] seemed logical. The area is large and diverse in character but fundamentally contains mostly detached post-war dwellings on sizeable plots.
- 5 **Western approaches' area:** The area of The Meads and Townsend form a relatively coherent group of houses mostly built since WW2. All enjoy the benefits of a village edge aspect. There was the option of joining these to Area 1 and forming a large northern banana shape across the whole village. This seemed incoherent and this small zone of about 30 houses is a distinct area, with its own character and western outlook.
- 6 **The outer parish area:** The sixth area consists of the scattered homes, mostly farms, outside of the village boundary.
- 7 **The Hanney Gap:** the critical and rich space between the villages, much valued by villagers.



Map of Village Character Areas

Assessing Area Character Significance

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

1. Evidential value - what historical and archaeological evidence may be present?
2. Historical value - of what historical significance is the site?
3. Aesthetic value - Is the property itself an exemplar or of critical value in the street scene?
4. Communal value - how much is the building or area used or valued by the community?

Recommendations for managing village character in future

The main intent of the Character Assessment is to contribute to planning policies to guide new development in West Hanney. In order to best evidence, underpin and present the West Hanney Neighbourhood Plan Character and Design Policy, the key features of each character area will be clearly summarised. These will include:

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

In addition, section 7 of the report - Input to Planning Policies- will set out features that been identified from an analysis of the character assessment as a whole which collectively contribute positively to the character of West Hanney and to good design in keeping with the nature of the village.

Again, these general features will be presented as part of the West Hanney Neighbourhood Plan Character and Design Policy.



Photo Group 1 - The approach from Denchworth: August 2017

6. The Character Areas

Introduction

The village is still characterised by a road plan that would have been recognized by our early forebears. The additions since 1945 have been assimilated without destroying the spirit of the place. Those buildings currently under construction should not be over intrusive but the open spaces, a key part of the village, are now much diminished. West Hanney remains a classic nucleated village in a still largely unspoilt rural area. It contains a rich collection of buildings and streetscapes within downland surroundings that is highly valued by its inhabitants.

There are many fine buildings, gardens and surrounds, but it is the overall style and rhythm of the entire village that is equally important. In general, house designs and materials have been chosen thoughtfully, properties are well-maintained and skilfully considered planting has added significantly to this mix.

Character Area 1 - The central green – a tale of two spaces

1. West Hanney Green

West Hanney is centred around its Green and the mediaeval Buttercross. The cross was rebuilt from fragments in 1908 and is the informal hub of the current Conservation Area. This large open space has been the main village crossroads for many centuries. It also leads into the third green outside the church of St James the Great, Church Green, to which it was once linked directly. Since the construction of what was then the Vicarage, but is now known as the Old Vicarage, in the second half of the eighteenth century, which partly blocked the view, this green now aligns more naturally with Church Street and has been included in Character Area 2.

No direct evidence has been found as to the original location of the village centre in pre-Roman times. It is assumed, based on two coffins found, that a Saxon church, possibly of timber construction, occupied the current church site before the Normans built the original St James from about 1150 AD. The church sits on higher ground, as does West Hanney House opposite, escaping much of the frequent flooding that occurred before the local streams and field drainage were controlled. The road to Denchworth originally went past the church rather than down the current Main Street, and this may also have been the drier route. The oval area bounded by the two roads forms a natural enclosure, based on ground a few feet higher, which may have held most dwellings that were linked to the church and growing village. This elevation is seldom more than ten feet, but it is perhaps significant that there was virtually no flooding of buildings during the 2007 floods in West Hanney despite canoes on the village streets. The central island and the church stayed dry.

The Green remains as an entry and dispersal point for West Hanney today. It no longer has any commercial or employment purpose, unlike the time when it had direct access to two or three farmyards and a forge, with The Lamb Inn just along the road. It also formed a cattle pound in the late 1700's. West Hanney House and the Vicarage would also have employed several staff then. A post office operated in the Rectory Farm area of North Green, and after that in Church Green. There was at least one shop in Main Street. Now more of a traffic island, the green still has a sense of being the village hub that it has always been and remains relatively peaceful. Commerce is limited however to a portable pub sign for the Plough and the occasional jumble sale notice.

The Green only had two houses that faced directly onto it. Castleacre, a fine 17th century house with a stone slate roof, possibly from the Stonesfield mines, and the thatched village forge, which sat alongside the entry

to North Green. It clearly would have done good business as a smithy in this location. The forge burned down in the 1930's to be replaced by The Old Forge, a reasonably sound 1930's neo-Tudor half-timbered villa that fills the site today. The south edge of the green was occupied for many years by a collection of barns and sheds that were part of the declining Church Farm. These have now been replaced by a set of barn conversions and executive homes which have filled the site adequately but do not appear either rural or aligned with the local building styles. In many ways, this development sets the question for village character. How tidy do we want it to be? When does smart character become fake or intrusive? The Green with its re-built ancient cross still acts as a village hub and a base for the community speed camera. The space it offers is as vital as the buildings, walls and tall trees that surround it.



West - The rear of West Hanney House [1727 & earlier]



North – The Green, The Old Forge and Castleacre [17C]



South – the causeway to the church



East – the Buttercross and the new 'barns' in an old farm

Photo Group 2: views from West Hanney Green:
July 2017

The south west corner of the Green leads to the causeways that support the twin footpaths that progress to Church Street. A prominent feature on the west of the Green is the vehicle entrance to West Hanney House. Several of its ancillary buildings are also listed, including stables and a barn. The walls beside the path are constructed from materials that are at least two centuries old and includes large sarsen like limestone slabs. The surface is a rich jigsaw of stone albeit one that demands your attention when walking. Despite the size of its rear access, West Hanney House is designed to face onto Church Green and will be reviewed in that

section. It does however have a most splendid rear aspect, both rich and complex, and dominates West Hanney Green too. The photographs on page 14 show the four views from the Green today

The green is surrounded by some typical Hanney walls: brick in a mix of layers and additions; stone, often limestones of varying types and commonly mixed with brick; some drystone walling and a good selection of recycled brick in some new houses. The mixtures are often puzzling or beguiling. West Hanney Green contains few buildings and only one, The Old Forge, really faces it directly. There is a solid wooden bus shelter at which few buses now call apart from the school shuttles. It serves today more as a noticeboard and meeting place than a transport hub. Despite this shortage of major architectural features, the contrasts this village scene offers are valued by many. It is a rich and rewarding space made up from an agglomeration of many blending if mismatching parts and as such, it symbolises the village well.

2. North Green

North Green was once called the Old Green but earlier still there was no differentiation and there was just one Green, incorporating all three current spaces. There is little actual 'green' left today but once you are north of the entrance to Main Street, this road opens out and remains spacious, with its own set of footpaths and lanes. North Green led to Rectory Farm past the one village pond that remains partially open, if full of rampant vegetation and known by locals as 'the rat patch'. It links visually with the main village green and even Church Green. It would have done so more effectively before the view south was partially blocked by the new Vicarage in the early 19th century, and then by the villa which replaced the village smithy.

North Green contains five listed buildings and some thoughtful later arrivals. The entrance from Main Street is partly blocked by The Villa, a gentle 1930's house made of an orange tinged brick that glows brightly in the evening light. Until about 2005 there was a carpenters' timber workshop behind this which echoed the mix of commerce and residence once to be found on the main green. It was then replaced by a large brick dwelling with some local features which added little but does not offend greatly either. The 1980's had earlier seen a small estate added to the east of the green that blends better with the listed buildings of Rectory Farm cottages and the small 18th century barn, listed as 'Farm Cottages', that faces the main green. The grouping works well and the cottage gardens in the corner of this area add a definite village feel. Too much driveway parking, a seemingly inevitable village-wide feature, does detract a little from this effect.

Opposite this row on the western edge a small lane runs along a second set of listed and noteworthy dwellings. This has a few of the village sarsen paving stones showing through the grass. Manor Cottage dates from the 17th and Old Dunsdons from the early 18th century or earlier. These are followed by a row of cottages that turn to the left to where the main farm and old post office once stood. This was once indeed Post Office Lane. Just into Main Street the new garage for Rascarrel offers a well thought out example of a functional building using good local architectural language and adds a bonus to the view from the Green.

At the head of North Green is an estate of large executive homes. They even merit a mention in the 2010 Pevsner volume of 'Berkshire': 'a well-designed group of modern brick houses with half-hipped roofs and other vernacular features.' They replace another set of workshops and hopefully block the Green's future extension into open fields. The detailing is carefully done and much matches the village. Time needs to add its effects overall and the perfect road paving need a little erosion to match the village streets.



Photo group 3: The Villa - North Green's gatekeeper and a fine new garage
& the 1930's Tudor Old Forge

Character Area 1 – Summary of significance

Evidential Value – based on the documented histories of the village and the large number of listed buildings in this area [10]. Earlier maps from the 1661 Roque's Map onwards show a similar road pattern around the greens. These match 1944-6 aerial photos and later satellite images. Several buildings in this area are worthy of recording but appear not to have been inspected. Village photos are available of many current and earlier features.

High evidential value.

Historical Value –there are good records for most of the pre – 20th century buildings that surround the greens. There are also records of the changing use of many. The old farm areas of both greens, while now subsumed under residential property, can be seen in early records and maps. The cross is at least 15th century in origin and now acts as the war memorial and Remembrance Day meeting place in its restored state. The forge acted as a key village centre for many years before 1930.

High Historical Value

Aesthetic value – Both greens are critical areas for their historic buildings. The modern additions have mostly made efforts to maintain the atmosphere of their locations. There are virtually no uniform plots and their average size is quite generous. In North Green, this gives a sense of space and hints at small mysteries to be solved around each corner. Although the overgrown pond is not an entirely positive aspect, it acts as a buffer and an ecological resource. It could be a useful improvement project. West Hanney Green has more trees, but both are also softened by seasonal vegetation large and small. There is a considerable sense of space in both areas, and although West Hanney Green is a major traffic hub, it acts as a natural brake to most vehicles and the sense of intrusion is lower than could be expected. Parking here is an insignificant issue although North Green suffers more in this respect. Here more parking allowance has been made in the large new houses and in some off-green areas. Several owners have made efforts to plant cottage schemes in their front garden spaces and there is much casual planting that softens older areas. Litter is mostly non-existent and the greens, apart from the pond's natural charms, are well managed.

High aesthetic value

Communal Value – apart from the Michaelmas Fayre and Remembrance service, few communal activities occur on the greens. In North Green, there is little space to carry out much activity. The main communal function of the two greens, especially the larger West Hanney Green, is the funnelling of villagers into a

central space on many local journeys. This includes trips to the shop and village hall, the school, the Nigel Eady Community Wood, the Hanney Spice restaurant and the Plough pub. It is a space that is perhaps overlooked in its significance and is highly valued by nearly all villagers.

High Communal Value.

In summary, the whole Green represents West Hanney well, in both its halves. The greens have no current formal function but enable a good deal of interaction and are valued for their sense of being informally owned by village. They are an open and shared space in every sense and have served as a hub and forum for many hundreds of years. There is no dominant architecture but instead a rich glimpse of many styles, each with its own heritage, even including the instant vernacular of the new 'barns'.



A Slighted Tower for St. James the Great

The church tower was deemed unstable before the Second World War. It briefly had a corrugated iron cowl in a slightly Germanic manner. This was then removed, and the current belfry installed. It functions well for the bells but the village would be better served with a proper restoration, as the pre-war photo above suggests. Toilets are now the priority sadly and this could take time. The good news is that the magnificent listed tomb in the graveyard has just been fully restored.

Character Area 1 – Summary of character

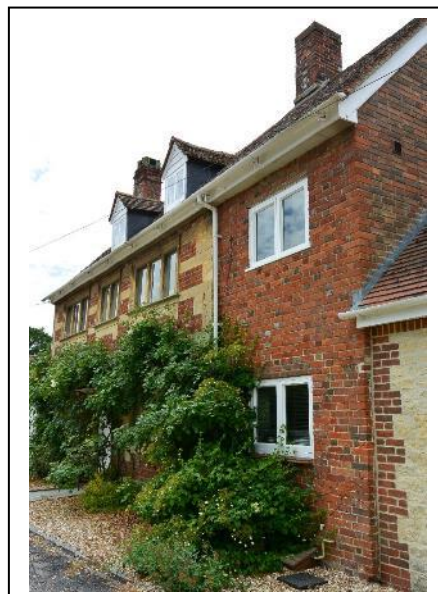
- the historic heart of West Hanney with many historic buildings
- informal hub of the Conservation Area
- an area of mostly medium to large dwellings. The new houses on Church Farm and the Old Workshop are modern exceptions.
- varied, traditionally designed houses similar in size, plot layout and character
- generously spaced buildings separated by gardens
- mature trees with a variety of hedges and walls around front gardens
- attractive hedges, walls and spacious gardens
- a strong sense of openness
- important views to the south and north
- predominately 2 storey buildings
- no street-lighting

IN CONCLUSION - Any proposal for planning permission would need to avoid blocking open views to the south and the north, use natural materials and a mix of dwelling types and address all of the bullet points above (particularly the conservation area statement) in any planning statement. Any infill development should be limited in number to avoid a significant change in the overall open character of the area and ensure complementarity with nearby densities, designs and styles.

Photo group 4: North Green- a blend that works



Manor Cottage [C17] hidden behind its walls



Old Dunsdons [C18 or earlier?]



Rectory Farm Cottages [Early 18C] and new neighbours



The Old barn -listed [C18]



Vernacular features and modern paving



'A well-designed group with half hipped roofs' [Pevsner]

Character Area 2 – Church Green and Church Street

Church Green offers the most memorable collection of buildings in the Hanneys. Virtually all are listed, and the scene here has changed little in the last two centuries apart from the felling of the elms and the unfortunate truncation of the church tower. It remains a perfect and peaceful place, no longer on the main road to Denchworth, and offers a wonderful architectural variety and quality. It has not changed and has a timeless atmosphere.

Church Street continues westwards until it curves north to join Main Street. Its buildings are more diverse than the area around the church and their quality much more variable, but the street offers a continuation of the character set by its green. The spacing of the dwellings is variable and never dense. The street ends in another collection of listed and notable buildings which could potentially form a second conservation area for West Hanney. The tranquillity of this area matches that of the opposite end of the street and surrounds the space left by Heading's Pond, once part of the village water management system, which became increasingly neglected until infilled in the 1980's. This corner was the point where the road headed over the hill to Denchworth in the past and this remains a much-used bridle and walker's path.

Church Street still forms the southern agricultural edge of the village and contains two farmyards and the remains of two others. There are many views of the Berkshire Downs, just three miles away, and this side of the village has again changed little since the first Ordnance Survey maps were drawn in 1883. The orchards that were common then have left just a few remnants. Church Street itself has become infilled to a significant degree. Few buildings are memorable but the most recent buildings to the south, in Walnut Court, are of high quality and have made a real attempt to fit the village scene. They also offer some lower cost houses although their affordability may still be hard for many.

This street flows from its green in a gentle curve around the south of the old village. The street scenes change constantly as you progress either east or west. There are two side turns, one leading to Walnut Court and the footpaths to Grove and elsewhere, and the other, Monks Close, offering a coherent group of houses that were built in the 1980s and provide lower cost accommodation. A footpath crosses to Main Street at about the halfway point and can be followed north to Lyford. It is shown on most early maps.

The area is again representative of the subtle mix of style and purpose that makes West Hanney so pleasant a place to inhabit or visit. It is never overbearing, and its character remains essentially that of a working village. The growth has been organic and relatively slow. Church Street certainly contains the best of the Hanneys, and a few of their least attractive buildings too, but it never loses its sense of quiet community. This is worth defining and protecting.

Church Green

Church Green forms a remnant of the large Hanney Green which stretched from Rectory Farm to Manor Farm and the church. The building of the vicarage has partly divided it from the northern area to form a space of its own and this seems to be a beneficial result. The green itself contains around half a dozen buildings, but each offers a unique contribution. The range of original purposes was equally diverse, and their imprint remains despite the slow shift to residential use.

The church of St James the Great formed the only centre of worship for both villages until the arrival of the non-conformists and the building of a chapel of ease in East Hanney in 1865. The latter became a house in 1977 and St James the Great remains the Church of England centre of worship for both parishes. It is a significant building in both its location and its history. It is one of five major listed buildings at the eastern end of Church Street that surround the Green. Each has a significantly different style and use of materials. There can be few areas in England where such a rich contrast is offered and where a lack of uniformity

works so well. There is a blend of grass, stone, brick, iron, slate, tiles, gravel and even tarmac. The buildings that inhabit the green are like old friends engaged in a long conversation. They respect their differences and seldom come into conflict.

West Hanney House was once the village Rectory. It was built by an unknown architect around 1727 but is occasionally linked with Vanbrugh, Blenheim and Christopher Kempster, one of Wren's master masons. Pevsner describes it as 'one of the best local examples of Georgian Baroque'. The main house is grafted onto a much older current kitchen. It sits on one of the higher points in the Hanneys. The gardens contain more listed buildings: some former stables and a barn. The walls that surround the property are a key element of village character too and are a mix of mostly stone and brick in an eclectic combination. The house faces the church in a formal sense but as has been noted, its rear aspect and outbuildings offer real interest from the Green too. It is possibly the first major use of bricks in the Hanneys, which lie some way from the nearest high-quality limestone quarries near Burford. Some of these were owned by Kempster and demand from Blenheim at the time may have affected both the cost and supply of stone.

The later vicarage also faces the church from the north. It has a small adjoining coach house. The red and blue brickwork glows well in the sunlight and the house forms a contrasting partner to neighbouring West Hanney House, on the opposite side of the causeway that leads to the northern greens. It is an early 19th century property which is well balanced and sits centrally on its side of the upper green. Its fine garden walls also complement the causeway and the green.

Church Farm is a 17th century listed limestone house that faces the green. It adjoined the farm which was dispersed after the death of its owner in 2010. It has recently been restored reasonably well as the only listed building on the farm site. The barns within the old farmyard at least retain the pattern of their previous use but have been significantly modified and much atmosphere has been lost. The timber structure that exists within The Timber Barn has a little of the barn framework from the 18th century or earlier. Sadly, it is now enclosed in a structure of machine cut slates and modern timber which echoes nothing of its past. Until one enters the property, history has been lost. Other barns have been restored in part, but fake doors have been added to some that serve no purpose and the detailing is not very successful. The barns were in the conservation area but were sadly unlisted. There was much atmosphere and group character to conserve. It could be worse but is an opportunity largely missed.

The Dower House rests between the church and the farmhouse. It has in the past been a bakery and post office. It has been tree ring dated to 1518 and has the remains of a smoke -bay in the roof. It is now a house and has been thoughtfully restored in recent years.

On the far side of the church is Manor Farmhouse, another 17th century limestone rubble building with additions, formerly known as Prior's Court. It is solid and unspoiled and fits the street well in its recessed position. Opposite Manor Farm is the Plough, now the sole village pub, which has been part restored in recent years although earlier modifications reduced its internal character somewhat. Oak Tree Cottage sits between the Plough and the entrance to West Hanney House. It is well maintained small cottage which adds a perfect foil to the grand group that surrounds it.



The Vicarage and coach house – early 19C



Church Farmhouse from the North -17C



West Hanney House South View-1727 and earlier



Manor Farmhouse – North Front – early 18C



Post Office/Dower House –17C or earlier



The Plough and Oak Tree Cottage – mid 17C

Photo group 5: Domestic Buildings on Church Green – most listed Grade 2 and in the Conservation Area



'The Barn' and listed tool shed* -facing West



Lydbrook Farm from the East - late 18C*



Aldworths - West Front*



Rose Cottage 17C* – North Front & Church Street



Shepherd's Cottage*/S.E. Corner early18C*



Old Road to Denchworth - at Headings Pond

Photo group 6: Houses from the possible second Conservation Area* – some listed Grade 2



An open space to the south – Deans Farm*



Solid houses with interesting roofs and fences



Monks Close A public/private blend



Walnut Court –spacious



Church Street and its trees



Compressed plots replace the orchard

Photo group 7: Variety in and off Church Street

Further down Church Street

A photo exists from circa 1940 showing some run down half-timbered cottages which fronted the street being demolished. Their completed council house replacements are seen sitting in their rear gardens. These still stand and are typically solid 1930's suburban semi-detached homes. The middle of Church Street contains a mix of houses mostly built from 1930 -1980. Many sit on the old plots and these are generous. There are few memorable buildings, but the irregular building line, established hedges and gently curving street make it work. The little close of Monks Court is a good effort at accommodating several mixed dwellings into a larger plot of what was an old orchard. The middle oval of West Hanney shows 4-5 orchards on the 1883 map. At the time, the station at Grove, built about 1840, had made fruit growing one option for defeating the agricultural depression. Monks Court is a good use of an earlier orchard. It's neighbour, Chaffinch Court, shows how to build less sensitively. 4 executive dwellings have been built into the space previously occupied by one bungalow in another old orchard. The buildings have few local features.

On the opposite side of the road is a terrace of 2-storey public housing with a large parking space fronted by a solid zinc coated steel fence. The roof pitch is far flatter than the average for the street. Their chimneys do break the line. There are views of the Berkshire Downs through the many gaps in the house fronts.

The end of Church Street contains a group of about a dozen excellent buildings that line the road and form a fine mixed series. They loosely encircle the old site of Headings Pond, which now forms an ideal green. Only three appear to be listed but others could be. They undoubtedly should be conserved as a loose unit. All but four appear to have been in place since 1883. One, Jubilee Cottage, is a spirited replacement for an earlier building and the other newcomer is a small bungalow that fits well into a corner.

The group starts with a row of 19th century cottages that face the listed half-timbered Shepherds Cottage and continues to Rose Cottage. Behind them lies the house and farmyard of Deans Farm and its scattered outbuildings, until recently the site of non-conformist gatherings which have been a feature of village life for almost a century. This site offers a valuable open space in the middle of the street with a broad garden in front of the house. Aldworths, a stone farmhouse, lies further on opposite the old Headings Pond and Rose Cottage and forms the focal building of the area. Further north the late Georgian Lydbrook Farm faces a less successful barn conversion. Both houses could be considered for listing. The thatched tool shed at Aldworths is rightly listed on rarity value! The two large houses appear much more critical to the scene and worth protecting.

Church Street offers a considerable diversity. The two ends of the road offer one of West Hanney's most interesting housing groups. The curve of the street causes the street scene to slowly reveal itself in both directions. It falters halfway but the variety of style, space and vegetation sustains it. The openness to the light from the south keeps the aspect bright. The church and the public house offer the social dimension too. It also avoids the rush hour traffic peaks that use Main Street and Winter Lane, and thus has its own quiet isolation. This is a key part of the character of the street and needs safeguarding. It is one of the Hanney's special places.

Character Area 2: Summary of Significance

Evidential Value: Although there is little archaeological evidence within the village, the records support the church having existed at Domesday, almost certainly on this site. The layout of the village confirms these higher 'islands' have supported West Hanney for millennia, and the first Neolithic finds in Hanney were

recently made on the western edge of East Hanney. Archaeological results from the Church Farm excavations have confirmed this rich heritage.

High Evidential Value

Historical Value: Village records from before Domesday provide ample evidence. The sheer variety of the listed and other buildings, and the records of their development, offer more. In recent times Christopher and JRR Tolkien lived at Lydbrook Farm. The church records and tombstones, one of which is listed, supplement this. The relatively recent baptism ceremonies of the visiting nonconformists, known locally as the Dippers or Nazarenes, were held in Letcombe Brook. They are remembered by many villagers.

High Historical Value

Aesthetic Value: Church Street offers a continuing aesthetic experience from either direction. There are 12 listed buildings. The eastern end clearly contains the grander and more historic buildings in a superb setting but its western neighbour has an equally balanced and more domestic group barely a furlong away. The Downland scenery is very visible along most of the street. At night, and in good moonlight, the lack of street lighting can create an even more memorable experience, especially as the clock strikes in Church Green. The power lines alone give away the century.

High Aesthetic Value

Communal Value: The area is valued for its recreational routes around the village and out to the open countryside and the Community woodland, which is best approached from the churchyard. The church, its active graveyard and The Plough public house are all critical local assets.

High Communal Value

Character Area 2 – Summary of character

- large number of listed buildings
- important views to the south downs
- rich architectural variety
- varied, traditionally designed houses with new housing to the south
- winding street-scenes with irregular frontages
- low-density spacing of dwellings
- includes southern agricultural edge of the village (Church Street)
- sense of openness, especially to the south
- many recreational routes to the open countryside
- predominately two storey buildings
- no street-lighting

IN CONCLUSION - Any proposal for planning permission would need to avoid blocking views to the south and avoid damaging hedges and spaces, use natural materials and a mix of dwelling types and address all of the bullet points above in any planning statement. Any infill development should be limited in number to avoid a significant change in the overall open character of the area and ensure complementarity with nearby densities, designs and styles.

Character Area 3 – Main Street

Main Street never quite lives up to its description but is still a memorable village street. It comes into sight as a slight surprise as you enter it from The Green, when the view is obscured by the bend. The road curves on, to the right, the left and then right again. When the street flooded in 2007, it looked a very natural stream. This serpentine character is clear from old maps too and helps dissuade speedy motorists from taking excessive chances with hidden opponents around the bends. An existing winter stream or ditch may have determined its original shape. As with Church Street, the road reveals itself as you progress in either direction, and its character changes with both journeys.

There is only one listed building in Main Street and no others that justify serious consideration. Several houses at the eastern end form part of the Conservation Area, and one at the far end, Jubilee Cottage, would fit well into the suggested second Western Conservation Area. This lack of apparent grandeur does not detract significantly from the character of the street. The sheer variety does however make it hard to suggest what that character is. It may in part be that architectural diversity is a key characteristic of the Hanneys.

Compared with Church Street the street is shorter, and the building density is quite loose at the eastern end. The 1945 aerial photos show about 23 dwellings, mostly concentrated in the eastern half. Fields touch the road on both sides at the western end. The orchard that is now the Meads would have been a background feature along half of Main Street's northern side. Only three houses were added in the inter war years and several were demolished. Today there are 44 houses and the plots are mostly full. No houses have been added since 1996.

The West Hanney Conservation Area in Main Street

The Conservation Area includes Main Street from the Green until it reaches the footpath that crosses the central area and progresses northwards on the other side of the street. This covers nine dwellings with some included for group value. This end of the street has a diverse character with no two houses being the same. Three come from the interwar period but the others are much older.

The Villa, on the edge of North Green, is the first house. Originally this northern route may have led to the now deserted village of North Denchworth while Church Street led to the main village of Denchworth. After the Villa, there is Rascarrel House, a large 1930's dwelling which faces Bankside cottage, which may date back to the 16th century. Further on, Idian Cottage is of a similar age and was a village shop until the 1980's. It is opposite Delling, a solid bungalow built in the 1930's at the time of the vogue for homes for heroes. It replaced at least one decayed cottage. Across the road from here is the street's one listed building, Carter's Close, which is an amalgamation of two or more dwellings under the one thatched roof. This subdivision was common during the agricultural depression and served to house labouring families. Far more buildings in the street were originally thatched but only three remain, with the thatch only covering half the roof in one case. Carter's Close is a substantial and well-maintained cottage set back some way from the road. This break in the building line opens out the view and is a feature that is repeated further along the street. Some houses have front gardens while others abut the pavement. Some sit at right angles to the road. The final house in the conservation area is Elm View, a half-timbered villa with a jettied first floor. The large elm in question sadly succumbed with most others in the 1970's. This weathered house was built in the 1930's but sits in a critical point in the street scene. It is an important and interesting building in the streetscene but is decaying from neglect and needs some urgent restoration. The north pavement is supported by a causeway in the conservation area while a small ditch occupies the south side of the road. This connects at length with Childrey Brook and flows on up Winter Lane. In 2007 the floods filled the street, but no houses flooded. Most stand at least a metre above the road surface on the old gravel terrace and many a good deal higher. Although many houses had wells, water was probably better managed than today and perhaps the stream that runs along Main Street and Winter Lane flowed more consistently. It may have had dipping

holes such as those that some villagers remember in East Hanney. Both villages probably managed this resource more effectively than today but the exact stream pattern in West Hanney has never been definitively investigated. A restoration of the ditch would be a significant and achievable improvement.

Beyond the Conservation Area

Main Street had a good number of older buildings about a century ago. The population of the Hanneys was affected by the 1930's depression and the First World War and was actually static or in decline for most of the early 20th century, only reviving in the 1960's. A few buildings in the lower half of the street survive from that period. All are of brick construction with slate or tile roofs. Very few of those in the photos below actually survive, although some, such as Moss Edge on the left, have been replaced by namesakes. It is now a bungalow on the corner with the Meads.



Moss Edge looking west to just visible Townsend Cottage



Main Street looking east, with the elm standing - 1920's?

The area to the west contained fewer dwellings and this final part of the street was cleared by the 1950's. A series of similar 1950-60's homes was built by the local builders, Barratts. The plot size was generous, and the building line was more regular than the east end of the street. Most houses are semi-detached. The styles are mixed and many of the roofs have a flatter pitch than is typical locally. The plots have matured and there are several trees. This lower part of the street has a harmony of its own despite being an architectural mismatch. The final building on the south side, Jubilee Cottage, is complex collection of extensions that form a home that suits the street and the plot well. It sits diagonally across the turn into Church Street and creates an entry feature for both roads. The bricks and the roof pitch suit the site well and it makes an interesting and unpretentious building.

Despite the single formal listing, Main Street offers a rewarding vista throughout its length. It has a definite dual character. The houses in the conservation area are more mature in their walls and gardens. There are however several buildings further down the street that have existed for several centuries and these interject their gravitas in an unpretentious but helpful way. The new homes are sufficiently varied in their style, gardens and curving irregular frontages to have blended well into the street. The trees at the western end also make a mature contribution. The open character is different here from the slightly constricted eastern end, but Main Street concludes well around its final crossroads with four houses of very contrasting ages and styles marking its end.

Character Area 3 – A summary of significance

Evidential Value: Photos show Main Street's evolution from the turn of the 19th century. Maps and census data plot the houses occupied for the last hundred years.

Medium to high evidential value

Historic Value: Main Street does not contain any major buildings that are central to the history of the village. There are however probably eight buildings that survive from the 1883 OS map and were probably in existence before 1800. Four more pre-date the second world war but the remainder are probably post war. The street has almost certainly existed for over 500 years and perhaps twice that. Much remains to be discovered about the detailed history and archaeology of Main Street. Did it, for example, form a continuous path around the central mound, linking with the present Church Street. A small non-conformist chapel was built in the 19th century on the approximate site of the car port in photo 5 overleaf. It was demolished about a century later.

High historic value

Aesthetic value: As well as the listed Carter's Close, many houses in the street are valuable elements of the village's historic past. A great many exhibit a strong individual architectural character. The more recent infill houses also help create a sense of visual interest and variety throughout the street, although few are strong individually. This is greatly helped by the meandering nature of the street itself. The trees and gardens offer a strong background too. Water in the ditch on a regular basis would be a welcome asset.

High aesthetic value

Communal Value: The looping nature of the Hanney streets and their paths offer many ways to explore this area. The street attracts many pedestrians and dog exercisers. There is no meeting place in the street but a good many walkers and cyclists use it. Despite this lack of a core feature, Main Street is an important village thoroughfare.

High Communal Value

Photo Group 8: Main Street west to east

Entering Main Street at the western end, [1] its sinuous curves pass 16th century Bankside, and then the old shop at Idian Cottage [2]. It passes 1930's Elm View and 18th century Woodcot [3] as well as set back Carters Close. [4] 17th century Hall Cottage [5] leads on to the Barrett's houses [6] and trees [7] at the crossroads before arriving at Jubilee Cottage [8].



Character Area 3 – Summary of character

- winding, looping road
- houses are diverse in age, building line and design but a reasonable coherent winding streetscape
- mostly 1 or 2-storey dwellings
- several houses in in conservation area at eastern end
- 1960s homes with generous plot-size and a more regular building line
- dual character to Main Street: conservation area homes mature in walls and gardens, newer homes more varied with irregular frontages
- varying density of housing
- varied architecture, including brick and slate
- varying degrees of openness (especially on Main Street)
- mature trees with a variety of hedges and walls around front gardens
- an important village thoroughfare attracting many pedestrians and dog walkers
- no street-lighting

IN CONCLUSION - Any proposal for planning permission would need to use natural materials and a mix of dwelling types and address all of the bullet points above in any planning statement. Any infill development should be limited in number and ensure complementarity with nearby densities, designs and styles.

Character Area 4 – The Post War Developments

On approaching West Hanney from the east in the early 19th century there was little to see until almost at the edge of the village green. Here, as they still do today, Lamb Cottage would have almost faced the Lamb Inn. There was no school building. This was added in 1854, and the Hanney gap was well established between the two village communities of East and West and remains so today. It is a reduced, and threatened, but still critical space, with a view to the Downs to the south and the Corallian ridge that leads to Boars Hill to the north. Apart from a few rural buildings, this clear green corridor runs from Wantage to Southmoor. The effect of trees in screening any small dwelling makes it a virtually open view from the southern to northern horizons and a marked contrast to the enclosed village streets. It is a vital space in every sense and needs positive protection. It also separates the two communities, and they have enjoyed a healthy rivalry for centuries.

In the mid-war period, both villages carelessly added an estate of public housing at each end of the gap, with that from the east reaching as far as the Hanney School. This had been built near the midway point almost a century earlier. The sense that had kept the gap fully open until then, and the villages thus still separated, prevailed at that point and no pressure to add more housing was felt until the 21st century. There is now a definite need to protect this space and its views in order to maintain its historic character.

This third character area consists mostly of houses built since 1935, with the majority after 1950. There are two excellent listed exceptions: Lamb Cottage and Castleacre, and a memorable unlisted building in Gigha cottage, built around 1910 for the retirement of the well-known Hanney headmaster, Mr. Edwards. There is a considerable variety in the buildings included in this area, but it is united in the fact that it occupies an eastern area of the village that had little building before 1930 and this can be seen in the aerial photo from 1944 shown below. Today about 70 newer houses have partly replaced the 25 dwellings seen on the photo.



Winter Lane

Winter Lane is the northerly route out of the village and ends in Southmoor, just under four miles to the north. The path it follows has a slight meander suggesting it has been partly adjusted by the topography or the ditch that accompanies it northwards. As it leaves the village it turns quite sharply to the right and this has the effect of creating a green gateway at the top of the lane.

Winter Lane now contains around 35 dwellings whereas there appear to be fewer than 10 in the 1944 aerial photo. The farmyard that existed between the lane and North Green, Rectory Farm, is now Rectory Farm Close (approx. 1989) which now has its own annex, Elderberry Close, occupied in 2015-16. Apart from one plot on the Lane itself, the potential for infilling in this area now seems complete. The overall effect on these three roads is one of appropriate houses on a mix of good sized plots with some variety in the layout and a general adherence to the local housing styles. There are contrasting house sizes with several smaller properties. Brick is the predominant material with a small amount of weatherboarding. The result at Elderberry Close is pleasing; there has been a real attempt to create a social area on a small green and there is more spaciousness than is found on many contemporary housing developments. This avoids an 'estate' feel; there is also a good initial planting scheme that will help the new layout blend quite rapidly. Rectory Farm Close now exhibits this maturity and is a generously spaced, small, coherent group of 7 houses.

Winter Lane itself offers a much less homogenous parade of housing than either of the quite tidy closes and echoes in part the mix of the other two major village streets. There appear to be few linked developments and most plots have been filled with different designs along a building line that is agreeably changeable. Most houses between Rectory Farm Close and the Green are of a lower cost pattern, and there are several semi-detached pairs. Some have their original brick walls, but others have created drives in much of their front space. Some still allow for garden space but there are few trees. Overall however this area is well maintained and there is some planting to soften the driveways. The ditch is a significant feature along much of the lane but is seldom in water and could perhaps make a fuller contribution to both the landscape and to effective flood prevention.

The style changes at Rectory Farm House which faces the close of the same name. This is a substantial brick villa from about 1940. This pattern is followed as the street progresses out of the village by several larger if more modern dwellings on both sides of the road. These include several well designed and interesting larger homes including the new vicarage. There are more trees and other planting and the plot sizes are generous. These do offset West Hanney's ever-present overhead cables.

Overall Winter Lane, when not suffering the rush hour traffic that uses it as a short cut, has a pleasant air; it offers a series of contrasting and mostly well cared for homes throughout its length but saves the best until last with its one listed building at the entrance to the Green, Castleacre. This house is probably 16th century or earlier. It is one of the few pure stone houses in the village and has a fine stone slate roof. Its main aspect is onto the Lane, but it also presents a face into the Green, its limestone creating a magnificent glow at sunset. It has a pivotal position on the corner and is a perfect foil to West Hanney House opposite. It also has a small stockyard wall and a few surviving orchard trees in a rear garden that opens onto the road. Castleacre is a memorable building.



Lamb Cottage – 16th century and listed



Hanney Spice – previously two earlier Lamb Inns



Public housing on School Road



Looking towards the open skies of the Hanney Gap



The top end of the Croft



The entrance to the Croft

Photo group 9: School Road and the Croft - The eastern approach to West Hanney with housing old and new



Castleacre – the listed link to the Green 16C



Entrance to Winter Lane – brick and a broken building line



Rectory Farm faces its close



Elderberry Close



Postwar housing



Gigha Cottage

Photo group 10: Winter Lane – a mixture for all

The Croft and School Road

The Croft runs north of School Road for a few hundred yards only. It forms a contrast with Winter Lane in many senses. It is a tranquil dead-end, not a motorist's short cut. It is virtually straight, aligning almost exactly with the northern part of Winter Lane that leaves the village. The kerbs echo this and were it not for the fulsome shrub planting of a few houses it would be a very formal street for West Hanney. There are 19 houses. They are all brick, seldom large and mostly of different designs. The road offers a good mix of contrasting homes, some of which appear to have been built with affordability in mind. It is a quiet cul-de-sac.

Most of the designs seem to come from the 1950-70 period and the street does not exist on the 1944 aerial view. The pub at the entrance to the Croft does show then in an isolated plot: The Lamb replaced an earlier namesake which burnt down in the 1930's. It has now become the popular Hanney Spice Indian restaurant:

Hanney Spice almost faces the one listed building in this part of Hanney, Lamb Cottage. This sits alongside another pre-war pair of semi-detached houses, presumably built at the same time as the council houses opposite [about 1939]. It is a robust 17C cottage and was presumably originally thatched. It is easy to overlook in its position sitting up on the causeway. It would have escaped the regular floods there which may partly explain its excellent condition. This also applies to the old local authority homes on the northern side. These are a group of four pairs of houses on ample plots. Their large front spaces are not dominated by car parking and the build-quality of these homes is good.

On the south side of the road, the gap between Lamb Cottage and the Green has been filled in the 1950-60's by four two-storey homes. Their features match few of the older Hanney houses. They are similar to several in Main Street which are also little out of place, the design being incongruous in its setting (and, likewise, the imitation barn built next to them). The village vernacular is hard to define but these buildings largely ignore it. The nearby council houses were a better match.

Character Area 4 – Summary of Significance

Evidential: There is some good data available from maps and a few early photographs. More may be present in local deeds. Little archaeology appears to have been carried out in this part of the village apart from that done before the Church Farm estate was completed.

Medium evidential value

Historic: The scene in Winter lane leading past Castleacre and up to Rectory Farm would have been less congested and probably much more rewarding before the 1950's. This shows clearly on the aerial view and in the relatively few historic photos of the Lane. There is a supposed mill site in the south-east corner of the parish. There is clearly still much to discover in the history of this area.

Medium historic value

Aesthetic: This area has few aesthetic pretensions. Apart from the listed Castleacre, there are only a few buildings that are unique but the whole works well as a village environment mostly built at a time when planners were perhaps less scrupulous in the vernacular sense. The new houses in Elderberry Close redress this to a degree. Parking intrudes but not to excess. Planting often helps balance this. The diverse scene makes it an agreeable area, outside of the traffic peaks. It still feels like a village. Traffic management is becoming an issue, especially around the school, and reduced speed control seems a wise option to adopt for safety reasons.

Medium aesthetic value

Communal: Hanney Spice is the only social venue in this part of the village. The restaurant does not cause any intrusion into this area. The footpath network is well-used and informal enough to suit the surroundings but still needs completion. Traffic can be a risk to pedestrians and others during the rush hours. The social space in the new Elderberry Close is a well-placed and thoughtful addition. The Green too offers space for residents to meet but is a little exposed at present.

Medium communal value

Character Area 4 – Summary of character

- houses mostly built since 1935, with the majority after 1950
- mostly detached dwellings on sizeable plots with a changeable building-line
- forms a 'green gateway' to the village at the top of Winter Lane
- considerable variety in building style
- limited potential for infilling
- suffers from rush hour traffic (Winter Lane)
- traffic management an issue around the school
- Strong sense of openness
- Views to the north, west and the Hanney Gap
- Mix of single and two storey buildings
- no street-lighting

IN CONCLUSION - proposal for planning permission should avoid blocking views to the west, north and the Hanney Gap, use natural materials and a mix of dwelling types and address all of the bullet points above in any planning statement. Infill development should be limited and ensure complementarity with nearby densities, designs and styles.



The curving approach to Hanney from the west



The Meads - a mix of styles



Open country at the bend on the road



The Meads – their own woodland to the north



This was once three homes – Townsend Cottage



Escape route at the end of the lane to Lyford

Photo group 11: open country off the western approach to West Hanney
with housing old and new

Character Area 5 – The Western Approaches

This is the smallest village character area. It has a feel of its own and enjoys close contact with fields beyond it. Apart from one building, Townsend Cottage, all others have been built since 1950. A few older buildings existed along the Denchworth Road, but these have been demolished or replaced. The approach into Hanney from the west is flat and softened by the bends in the road and high hedges and small trees. The church is invisible from here. The houses in Townsend and in the Meads all have an open aspect to the edge of the village. Their younger age and this outward view seems to put them in a small group of their own. The streets here seem to have slightly brighter skies than those enclosed by the older village streets, an openness provided by the low bungalow roofs or meadow fields opposite.

The area contains 28 houses. One may be 300 years old, but the others are all post war. There are three differing streets. The oldest group is the row of council-built houses that follow the second turning of the Meads. These are a solid group of well-maintained semi-detached dwellings with large gardens facing open countryside. Each pair has slightly different detailing. They lack many trees but are provided with a virtual wood across the road. Their site was a significant 1883 orchard, so the lack of fruit trees is sad from a historical perspective.

The farm track that existed before the building of a road into the Meads passed Townsend Cottage and then entered open countryside. This has been replaced by bungalows on either side of the road, with a gateway to the fields at the crown of the bend. The area is again well-maintained with pleasant gardens and a sense of community. Solar panels are a new ecologically sound feature on a few roofs.

Townsend Cottage's history is not fully clear but an early 20th century photo shows this quite small dwelling further divided into a thatched terrace of three houses. The structure beneath this is still shown today by the position of the three dormers. It is a reminder that in the second half of the 19th century this area suffered a significant agricultural depression and such accommodation was not uncommon.

Townsend itself consists of about six two-storey dwellings which line the entrance to Main Street, which is just around a few small bends that slow speeding motorists without the need for heavy traffic management. The road floods frequently beyond this point and this will hopefully ensure the village stops its development here. The buildings to the east are still mostly perched on the higher 'islands' that caused Hanney to become located here many centuries ago. The Meads as a road name reflects the lush river meadows that still exist to the north west.

Overall this area is mostly characterised by houses on generous plots. The layout is perhaps more orderly than the organically developed central area of the village but it still contains a good variety of dwellings. None is particularly distinguished, but they form three sub-groups that work well together. The Meads and the western approaches have a character of their own.

Character Area 5 – A Summary of Significance

Evidential Value: The earlier use of the Meads area is evident from the Ordnance surveys. These show a large orchard here which villagers can recall, with pasture to the north. Photos of Townsend Cottage and other buildings also exist. It is uncertain what deeds cover this area at present.

Medium Evidential Value

Historic Value: The area is close to Childrey Brook, is lower lying and thus attracted little building. The enclosure maps show this too. There has been little archaeological investigation of this area. There have however been significant Saxon finds a little to the west. Townsend Cottage and Lydbrook Farmhouse in the area opposite are the sole remnants of the small cluster of houses that were gathered on this corner.

Low historic Value

Aesthetic Value: The Meads area does not have the historic appeal of the central zone. Most of the architecture is more workmanlike than picturesque. The area does however have an open aspect and peaceful character that causes villagers to visit it frequently. Artists have also recorded its views.

Medium Aesthetic Value

Communal Value: This area is without any communal hub. It does however have two access points to the field paths that are well used and there are links into the village path network. It is accessible and safe and a popular walking destination. The spacious views offer local walkers a chance to see open fields close to the village centre and there is a small recreational stable. Dog walkers are also drawn to the open grassland.

Medium Communal Value

Townsend Cottage and others in the 1920's



Character Area 5 – Summary of character

- adjacent to open countryside
- a relatively coherent group of houses mostly built since 1950
- a strong sense of openness provided by low bungalows and adjacent fields
- the approach to the village is softened by curving roads, high hedges and small trees
- characterized by houses on generous plots
- a more orderly sense of housing layout than central areas of the village
- a variety of dwelling types and designs
- view of the western approaches to the village
- a mix of single and two storey buildings
- no street-lighting

IN CONCLUSION - proposals for planning permission should avoid blocking views to the western approaches to the village, avoid damaging hedges and spaces, use natural materials and a mix of dwelling types and address all of the bullet points above in any planning statement. Infill development should be limited to avoid a significant change in the overall open character of the area and avoid impacting on the soft approaches to the open countryside.

Character Area 6: The Wider Parish

West Hanney has an irregularly shaped parish boundary that almost reaches Denchworth in the west. It contains farmhouses and associated agricultural buildings. Most appear to date from the early 20th century. A map can be found on page 48.

The area is much used recreationally as the roads carry relatively little traffic and are safe for cycling, running and riding. The landscape is used for a mix of arable and livestock farming.

The most recent addition has been the building of a barn conversion at Botney Meadows Farm which has replaced an earlier bungalow and forms an attractive addition to the parish. It uses materials that broadly match the local vernacular and is an unobtrusive overall design.

Character Area 6 – Summary of Significance

Evidential: Covered in many historic maps but little other evidence recorded. Some sites on the Historic Environmental Record and many waiting to be discovered. Many finds recorded in a 2009 detector rally, including an important Saxon burial.

Low evidential value

Historic: The discovery of the Hanney Brooch in 2009 was the most significant archaeological find of recent years. Many smaller finds were made in the same metal detector rally. Aerial photos suggest significant prehistoric use.

Medium current historic value

Aesthetic: Pleasant varied still peaceful countryside with many byways and paths with rich wildlife and agriculture. It offers a buffer for the village of little special aesthetic significance but is very special to villagers and therefore of high value.

High aesthetic value

Communal: Only used for farming and much countryside recreation such as riding, cycling, shooting and walking. Many villagers, and their innumerable dogs, enjoy it greatly.

High communal value

Character Area 6 – Summary of character

- adjacent to open countryside, mostly outside the village boundary
- mostly farmhouses and agricultural buildings with some recent conversions
- varied countryside with rich biodiversity and of archaeological importance
- popular recreation space
- a 'green buffer' to the village
- views to the lowland Vale

IN CONCLUSION - Any proposal for planning permission would need to avoid encroaching on open countryside, to avoid impacting on views to the lowland Vale, and avoid damaging hedges and spaces.

Character Area 7: The Hanney Gap

The separation and space offered by the Hanney Gap is greatly valued by the clear majority of the inhabitants of both villages, despite the cordial relations that exist between the communities.¹ All the village clubs, shop, school and churches offer a shared membership between the Hanneys and only the Parish Councils operate independently but also often in concert.

The gap is only a few hundred metres wide. Originally it was twice as big, but the school and the headmaster's house were built at the halfway point between the villages, in open country, presumably out of political sensibility and for the convenience of the pupils. Technically, the school sits just on the East Hanney side of the boundary. Pevsner commented favourably on it. A century later, a row of public housing was erected along the East Hanney part of the causeway and ended opposite the school and at the parish boundary on Cow Lane. It was perhaps at this point that the possibility of closure was acknowledged, and the gap became valued more highly. The more recent possibility of housing in the adjoining fields has amplified this concern.

There is no trace of a building in the gap area before the school and the public housing were built despite the higher ground seeming suitable. Long Hanney [East] was happy to extend along the turnpike and earlier north-south roads whereas West Hanney remained focused on its circular centre, with Lamb Cottage and its neighbouring inn as outstations. Before the turnpike in 1771, Cow Lane formed a significant track from Grove to Garford and perhaps further, serving both Hanneys until its decline, probably caused by the new road switching more traffic to East Hanney. Upkeep may have been shared and it formed a natural boundary too. It is now mostly an attractive green lane, mostly between hedges, used by people, horses and dogs.

The church and graveyard are both in West Hanney and this has encouraged traffic between the villages. The existence of St James the Less for just over a century was only a brief interval in this ecclesiastical dominance. The need to walk to church from East to West may have caused a little resentment, especially with a heavy coffin.

At present, the value of the gap is very much a spatial one. The sense of openness in the flat landscape is significant. This is especially so to the north where there is no visible obstruction for several miles whereas the trees of the Community Woodland limit the southward view although it remains an open vista.

The rivalry that existed between the two communities when most inhabitants were employed locally has lessened today but these historic differences are still a feature at village events where trophies are contested. Many current Hanney families have roots that can be traced over at least two centuries. The gap also represents the freedom of the communities to determine their own preference to remain as they have been for centuries. Being separate is simply how the Hanneys are, and this simple fact is appreciated by most, even those totally unaware of their history. The relationship between both villages is partly defined and even strengthened by the existence of the gap.

¹ In the 2017 Neighbourhood Plan survey of West Hanney, over 95% of respondents (140 out of 147) were in favour of maintaining the green gap, out of a survey response of 64% of all inhabitants. In the corresponding 2017 East Hanney NP survey, 89% of respondents (219 out of 247) thought there should be a green gap between East and West Hanney, out of a survey response of 63%.

A historical perspective on the Gap – by Ann Fewins, Hanney historian

I have a strong feeling that the two villages were separated by the trackway by the school (Cow Lane) which runs right along the boundary and has been called 'The Roman Road' and 'The Ancient Way' amongst other things. This track continues north along the Lyford boundary with the Garford boundary on its east side. The East Hanney side of this track follows the western edge of the Manor of Philberds, part of East Hanney now but also with a separate air of its own. I think the feeling of separation/rivalry runs deep and the Hanney gap perpetuates this to the benefit of both villages. From time to time the rivalry rears its head with accounts of turnip fights between village factions at school or barbed comments in the parish minutes.

I am sure that the Church has much to do with this or even perhaps some pre-Christian situation. One has only to look at the church of St James rising above West Hanney, even now without its tower, to see how it dominates the view when walking across the fields from East Hanney. The position of tithes which support the Rector and Vicar spells out the medieval pecking order. West Hanney is a Parish, East Hanney a mere township, Lyford a chapelry and Philberts and North Denchworth both tithings. East Hanneyites had to attend church, get married and buried in West Hanney until they finally were allowed a church of their own to keep them in order in the 19th century. Burials still take place in West Hanney. Even Philberds had an ancient chapel of its own, first mentioned in records in the 13th century. The gap today still has symbolic and spatial importance but there may be deeper strands to this separation of the Hanneys. Research may still uncover some of these.

Photo group 12: four views of the Hanney Gap



a. The Gap: looking north from the edge of the community woodland adjacent to Cow Lane. This forms the boundary between the two parishes. The Gap spans between the right-hand house in the group of former council houses to the left and the right-hand group of telegraph poles by the extension of Cow Lane hedge. A temporary developer's road crosses the field.



b. Looking south from School Road towards the Community Woodland, with Cow Lane hedge to the left.



c. The Gap – Looking South east from the graveyard corner in West Hanney



d. Looking north from School Road towards distant Southmoor with Cow Lane to the right.

Character Area 7 – Summary of Significance

Evidential: The gap has existed on all earlier maps and was only populated by the school until the public housing was built at both ends in the 1940's. Until recent development proposals were made, it has remained unthreatened. Until recent ploughing the northern field had been fallow for some time and older plants had begun to re-establish themselves. A recent survey of West Hanney villagers indicated that over 95% of respondents [140 out of 147] were in favour of maintaining the separation, out of a survey response of 64% of all inhabitants.

High Evidential importance

Historic: The ridge and furrow fields visible to the south indicate the earlier land use. Recently Neolithic pottery was found in the adjacent fields in East Hanney and Roman finds and burials have been made in the area. The church school is the only significant building adjoining the site, marred lately by a necessary temporary classroom.

Medium historic importance

Aesthetic: Apart from the distant views, the aesthetic benefits are purely spatial and assessed under the community heading. As has been discussed elsewhere this area offers a simple but cherished aesthetic value.

Very high aesthetic importance

Communal: No activities take place in the gap other than farming and walkers using the inter-village paths and Cow Lane, which forms the eastern boundary. The Community Woodland forms a major part of the southern view from the causeway and this is used extensively by villagers. The main benefit is felt by those walking between the villages along the causeway and those parents from West Hanney who don't feel the need to drive to school! It is also an ideal length to maintain a light exercise regime for those using the village shop and hall or, in the reverse direction, the church. Whereas nowhere in the Hanneys is surrounded enough to give a sense of enclosure the Gap does offer its big skies as a welcome contrast. It is highly valued.

High communal importance

Character Area 7 – Summary of character

- open agricultural land between East and West Hanney
- the historic natural 'border' between East and West Hanney
- Significant sense of openness and 'big skies' in the flat landscape, particularly to the north but also to the south
- Used by residents for recreation

IN CONCLUSION - proposals for planning permission should avoid encroaching on the Gap, avoid impacting on views to the south and north, avoid a reduction in the strong sense of openness to the Gap, avoid increased coalescence between East and West Hanney, as well as addressing all of the bullet points above in any planning statement.

7. Input to Planning Policies – general principles

New development proposals will be expected to take full account of the characteristics of the character areas as set out in detail and summarised above.

In addition, the elements set out below have been extracted from an analysis of the character assessment as a whole as those that collectively contribute positively to the character of West Hanney and to good design in keeping with the nature of the village. These elements should also contribute to planning policies to guide new development in the village.

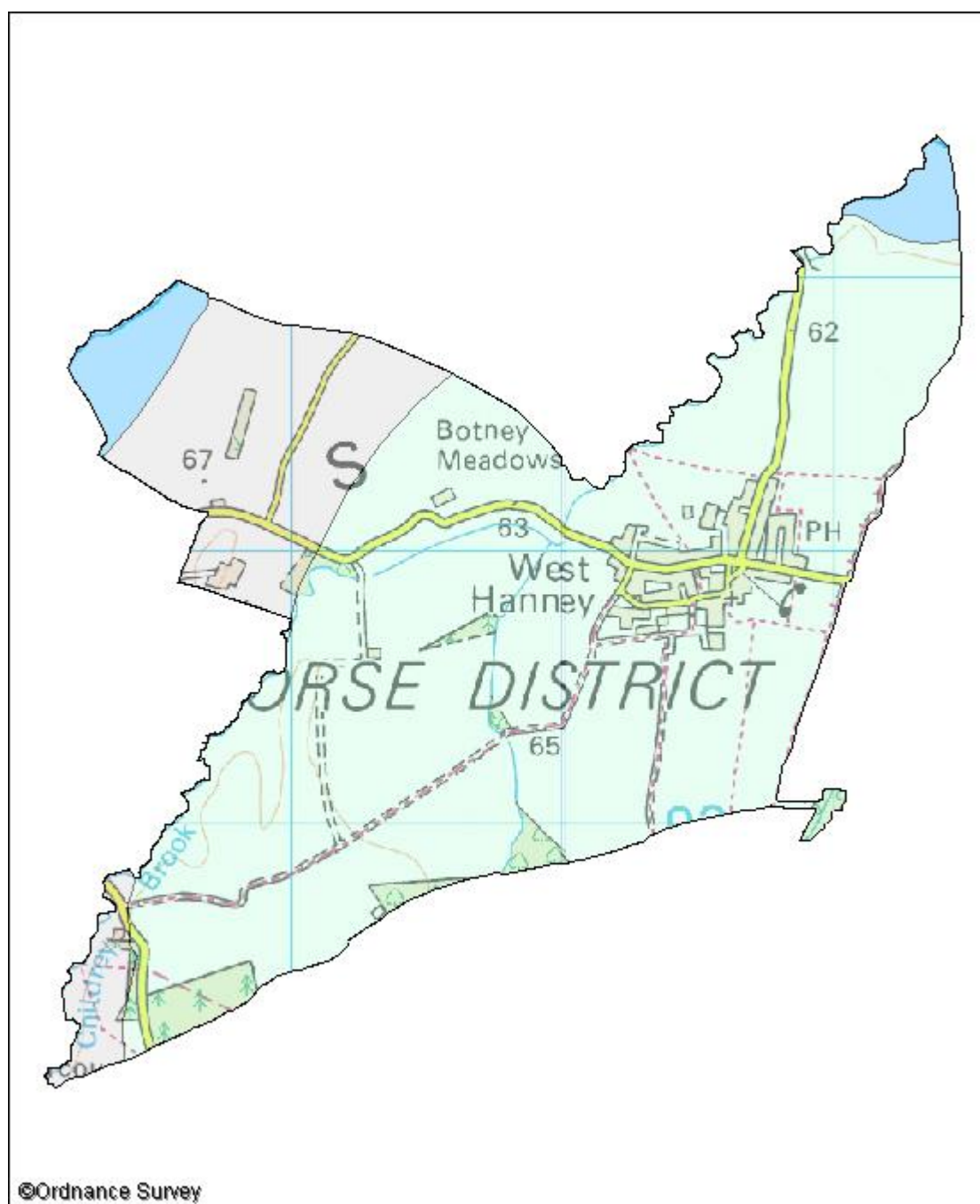
- The village needs to actively conserve its historic core and expand its areas of protection. The proposal to consider a second western conservation area is a possibility.
- Design and layout of new buildings should be based upon the current, low-rise housing mixture and should not exceed two storeys.
- The current overall density should be maintained, and the cramming of old larger plots resisted.
- The well-spaced and slightly irregular framework of the village should be retained. This layout was based on the original pattern of the village around its irregular greens, following mostly curving roads. This allowed enough gaps to provide open views. Some new building developments such as Elderberry Close have respected this style but others appear more suburban in their influence.
- Materials and colours should complement the traditional materials used in the village and respect traditional building plots, scale, form and materials, including building techniques and detailing
- Building lines should remain varied and echo adjoining plot patterns where feasible.
- Building design should maintain an overall congruence with both immediate neighbours and the overall mix of styles in the village. This allows a sufficient variety of choice for developers.
- Boundaries in West Hanney are defined with a rich mixture of styles which creates a broken pattern of hedges and walls. These match the plots they surround. Long rows of a monotonous nature should be avoided in both walling and fencing.
- Parking should be better integrated and be a critical design element of new proposals, avoiding the need for more on street parking
- Traffic volumes and speeds have now reached a point where more active management of both needs addressing. New designs need to help this moderation. Speed limits should also be regularly reviewed.
- The lack of street lighting should be maintained and not accepted on any new developments.
- The network of ditches and other drainage routes should be integrated into the overall village design and fully maintained to improve street views, drainage and flood prevention.
- The trees in West Hanney are a significant feature in softening the streetscapes and echoing the diversity of the buildings. The planting is agreeably informal but should be reviewed to ensure the design is optimized and key trees are identified and protected.
- The focal greens at the Green and Headings Pond should be managed to become significant public spaces without detracting from their informality.
- The remaining pond site in North Green should be restored and not left derelict.
- Consideration should be given for the provision of appropriate public art works
- The key views from around the village (see Appendix 3), seen from both within and without should be retained, protected and where possible enhanced or improved.

- The current planting and management schemes in open spaces and the community woodland should be maintained and sensitively expanded.
- Domestic refuse bins are currently a temporary distraction on collection days only. Their discrete storage should be made a feature of any new designs.

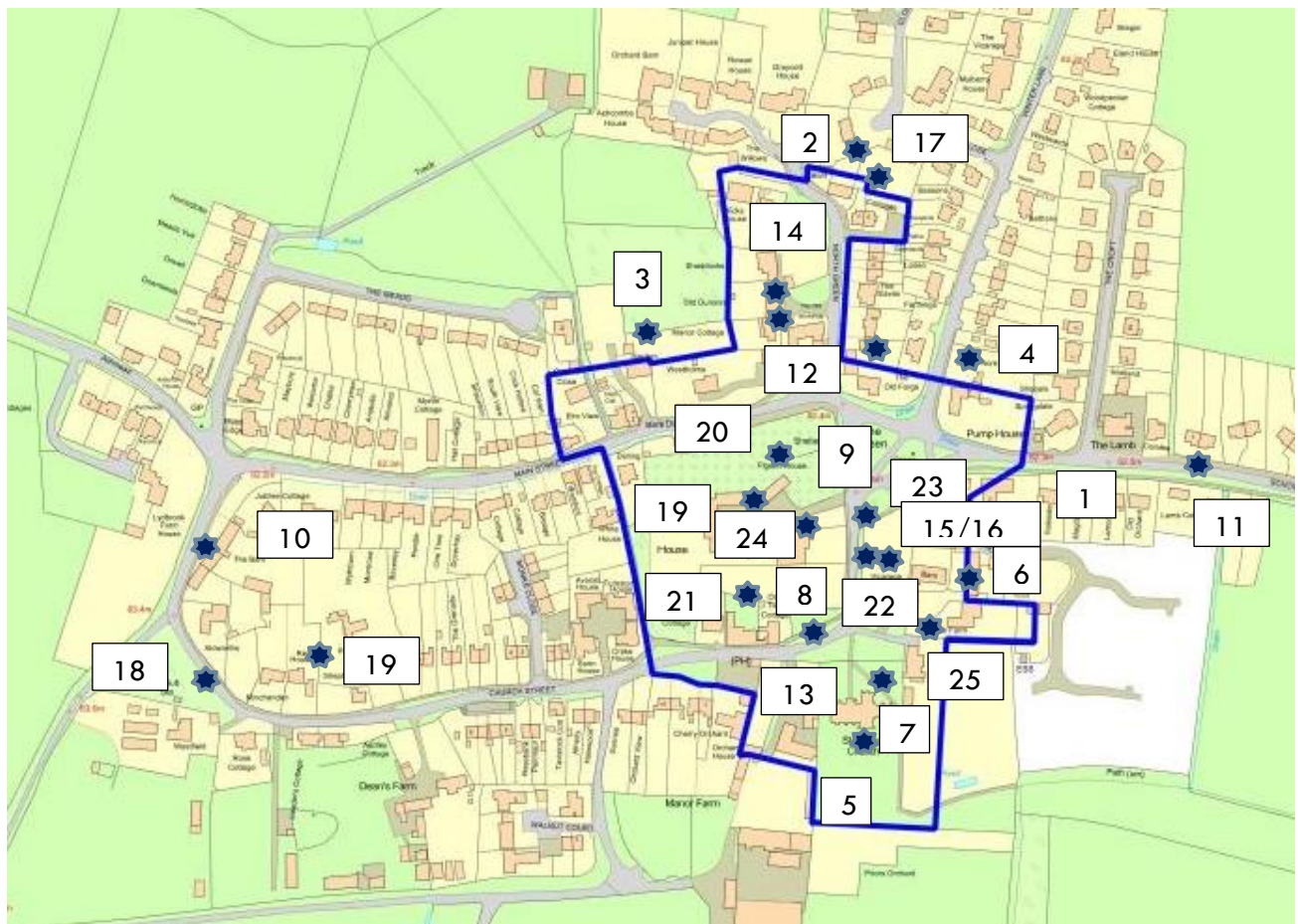
8. Appendices


APPENDIX 1: WEST HANNEY PARISH BOUNDARIES AND HABITAT DESIGNATIONS

The map below shows the extent of the parish and the three habitat types it contains. Blue defines river meadowlands (near the Ock), light pink is clay vale, and light green is alluvial lowlands. The odd extension in the south-east appears to have been to enclose a mill that once stood on Letcombe Brook. The old road to Denchworth parallels the southern boundary. Cow Lane forms the eastern border with East Hanney.



APPENDIX 2: MAP OF WEST HANNEY CONSERVATION AREA



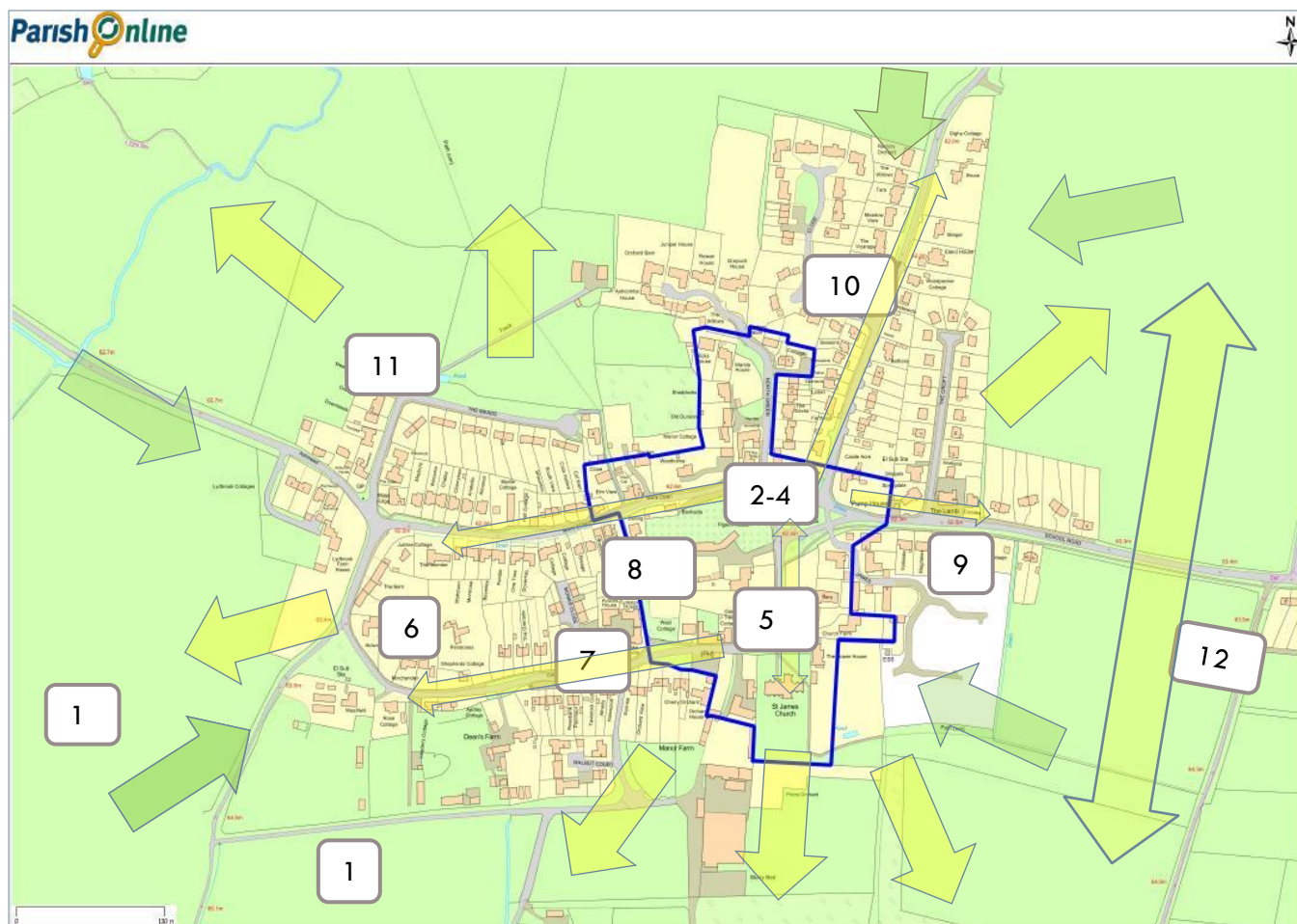
 Location of listed buildings/structures

APPENDIX 3: KEY TO WEST HANNEY LISTED BUILDINGS

Grade shown to left of entry.

1. II Barn and Stables Approximately 10 Metres North of Church Farmhouse
2. II Barn Approximately 10 Metres North West of Rectory Farm Cottages
3. II Carter's Close
4. II Castle Acre
5. II Chest Tomb to William Woodward Approximately 20 Metres South of Transept of Church of St James
6. II Church Farmhouse
7. II* Church of St James
8. II Garden Wall Approximately 30 Metres South of West Hanney House
9. II Granary Approximately 5 Metres North West of West Hanney House
10. II Implement Shed Approximately 20 Metres to North West of Aldworths
11. II Lamb Cottage
12. II Manor Cottage
13. II Manor Farmhouse
14. II Old Dunsdons
15. II Raised Footpath
16. II Raised Footpath
17. II Rectory Farm Cottages
18. II Rose Cottage
19. II Shepherd's Cottage
20. II Stable Block Approximately 30 Metres North West of West Hanney House
21. II The Plough Public House
22. II The Old Vicarage
23. II Village Cross
24. II* West Hanney House and Attached Archways
25. II The Dower House formerly West Hanney Post Office

APPENDIX 4: WEST HANNEY KEY VIEWS MAP



The arrows represent the respective main external [green] views of the village and internal [yellow] views from within it. Others indicate key views along the major streets. There are many more that could be included but the map seeks to show the general importance of the landscape to the village and open character of most of the approach paths. Finally, on the far right, the importance of the Hanney Gap is shown. The numbers refer to the sections of photo groups that cover these broad views.

APPENDIX 5: VILLAGERS VIEWS ON CHARACTER

The quotations below have been included with very little editing. They are mostly from the questionnaires we distributed but other respondents chose the free form reply option instead.

The exceptions are only those where the same point was being made in a very similar manner. Many commented on how complex the character of the Hanneys was, 'much more difficult than a picture-postcard village', and how hard the exercise of replying to the survey was. Our thanks go out to those who replied.

General comment

- *The view from the hill as you approach from Denchworth summarises the Hanneys. It is beautiful but unspectacular, changes with the seasons and contains the essentials of a Lowland vale village: the church, a screen of trees, an irregular array of houses with fields to surround them. Long may it stay so.*
- *I moved to a village because it was a village. I like the fact I can walk the whole length of the Hanneys in 25 minutes. I like the fact that there are no late-night convenience stores. I like the fact that I know a significant number of people in the village. This way of life will be challenged with more houses (and hence people). For those that claim everyone has a right to live in Hanney and who can decide, I would say, if you want to live in a town, go live in one. Hanney will become Grove, which will merge and become an estate on the outskirts of Wantage eventually.*
- *We appreciate the size of the village, small enough so you can really get a sense of community and belonging. Know people and be known.*
- *I think we have a very mixed economy with many attractive cottages, some newer houses added in well over the years and then some unattractive 50's and 60's additions. In general, I think we are short of very small starter homes or flats for youngsters and similarly I think we are short of houses for downsizers. Overall, I see no evidence of the housing crisis with the exception of my foregoing comment. In the last year or so we seem to be getting many very expensive houses in the villages and I wonder if we perhaps now have enough.*
- *It would be very easy for villages like the Hanneys to coalesce and for the old centres to be swamped by new developments (as has already happened at Grove). The character of any village which has grown over the centuries depended on no one century creating an imbalance. New and old (residents as well as architecture) fit together and work together for the benefit of both.*
- *The things that I value about East Hanney are the compact size of the old village and the distinct gap between East and West Hanney. It's a friendly village with limited amenities. The playing fields, children's play area, village hall and community shop are well placed and well used. The new developments to date have been in scale and I was pleased that the two large developments were both refused. The views from both villages to the countryside reflect the rural scale and location and should be cherished.*
- *We liked the size of East and West Hanney and their populations, making friends, joining in the many activities and organizations that we helped to run, and really feeling part of the community*
- *West Hanney is smaller with even more limited amenities centering around the pub and church. The scale of expansion so far has been in keeping with the size of the village, much more would swamp the existing character.*
- *..... "the quiet, the open spaces, the rural setting, the places to walk and jog, a calming place to relax and enjoy after school or work"*
- *We moved to West Hanney about 19 years ago because of the rural location but since then we have appreciated so much more, in particular the history associated with an ancient village and the many areas to walk around the local countryside. Around the village there are several areas for walking, using the many paths, and the views are outstanding; in particular the Lowland Vale landscape, which is very distinctive and something that we need to keep and protect.*

Architecture

- There is a harmonious mix of buildings, currently well scattered, the new blending in well with the old.
- There are still many attractive buildings in Hanney, some of the newer not so (though my daughter when she saw some of the new ones for the first time thought how lovely they were and I think they are ugly, just shows how very subjective one's views can be). There are one or two older ones that are in a sorry state. It is a shame that some of the very old ones have gone but I suppose they were beyond saving.
- The Hanneys are not "pretty, pretty" villages, but present a good mix of buildings from across the centuries, which seem to "get along" with each other. The mix is more important than the individual buildings, and it would be sad if the village was overwhelmed by any one particular style or age
- Our village has grown organically over more than 500 years. The country needs houses, and that, almost certainly, means housing estates. Housing estates, particularly large ones, are by nature NOT organic creations. Therefore, when built in or near villages, there should be every attempt to reflect the variety of materials and styles that characterise the rest of the village. After all, the historic buildings are always a large chunk of what gives a village its sense of place!
- The Hanneys are architectural mongrels and are the better for it in many ways. There are few perfect views but a range of contrasts that reflect how architecture has adapted with the economy, changes in materials being available and local style. This evolution demonstrates history in the making and creates a sense of being living communities, happy to adapt to organic change but at risk from planning overkill. The community can probably make better judgements than bureaucrats. This is why the Neighbourhood Plan is important.
- The age and related history of the church is a central focal point and always impresses visitors to the village. There are also many historic buildings, most located in the conservation areas centred on the church and village pub however others towards the west end of Church Street
- Mixed housing types of different style, age and materials showing how village has grown. Very few houses are the same, except for the undesirable newer larger developments. Houses and bungalows interspersed with buildings of special interest e.g. manor, old shop/PO, pub. Medium to low density of housing with lots of gardens and other open spaces between properties. Not all fronting directly onto the roads.
- Among all the new housing developments taking place in East and West Hanney we have been disappointed to find no blocks of retirement flats or similar accommodation being proposed, so we have been forced to look elsewhere. Wantage is not far away, and we hope to maintain contact with our many village friends. We are, therefore, one more small example of the general feeling that the villages are expanding too quickly and failing to provide the accommodation that existing residents would like.
- Ensure that bricks, mortar, concrete etc. do not predominate. The variety of buildings in the Hanneys demonstrates a subtle balance in how they have evolved, giving the villages their character, which is, in essence, a measured transition over time from the past to the present.
- We need to avoid the type of split that has occurred in East Hanney. Apart from a few houses, when you cross over to the east of the A338 you may as well be in a suburb of any English town rather than a Vale village. This is sloppy and careless town planning.
- It is unfortunate that the character of the primary school has recently been compromised by the need to accommodate more children in a temporary classroom in its front playground.
- Many period buildings define much of the character of the village. Importance of evidence of the village evolving over centuries. Low density, well-spaced. A true 'patchwork' of styles, spaces, materials combined with use of spaces (individuals need to grow family food juxtaposed with less dependence now and introduction of more recreational use)
- The listed buildings and conservation areas both need revisiting. The original listing was rushed and there is certainly scope for a second conservation area in West Hanney.

Streetscapes

- The vista when approaching the Hanneys from the South and West is fundamental to their character. Green fields in the foreground, hinting at archaeological interest from times gone by. Wildlife on view, trees rising above the rooftops. The cluster of settlements forming a natural shape, unspoilt by the addition of large intrusive red brick developments. The tower of St. James The Great, provides a focal point for West Hanney, which is perhaps something East Hanney does lack.
- There is very little crowding of houses although it sometimes seems as though any spare plots should be seized on and built upon! I deplore the use of leylandii for enclosure. The roads except for a few exceptions are in as parlous a state as most of Oxfordshire. The pathways are little better though usable. There is very little street furniture but what is there is fine.
- I could add to this the attempt (successfully resisted in E Hanney but not in Steventon) to introduce an illuminated electronic bus timing sign on a post alongside the bus shelter in Main St E Hanney. It is still (I hope!) a rural village.
- Largely linear layout of village, but based on a winding road, with small side turnings as cul-de-sacs, variously linked by unsurfaced tracks and footpaths. Lots of gardens and hedges. Main Street becoming too much of a rat run / cut through with too much traffic made more dangerous by increasing number of cars parked on the streets. Pavements limited in some parts but lots of opportunity for footpath walking – either for pleasure or to get around the villages.
- Sites of old ponds, dipping holes opposite old cottages. Keeping dry! Big flagstones, water in old meadows and furrows of arable fields. Buildings - mixture of house sizes including houses w sufficient land to hold unifying village events (these gardens all too easily lost via development.) Houses round village greens, mixed organic materials, use and re-use of same. Clues to former usage, ownership,
- Community. Hanney shop, the school, meeting people for a chat. delayed returns from the shop for this reason. Village playground, acknowledging or being acknowledged by people you pass. Activities and clubs, new groups, growing up to meet changing needs - e.g. Flood Group, Nordic Walking, Bridge. Automatic sense of taking and giving. Awareness of happiness and the reverse...loss and bereavement. Neighbours to water the plants and put bins out when on holiday. Footpaths redolent of age. Used for centuries. Old stiles and kissing gates. Village water system distributing much needed water. Sites of old ponds, dipping holes opposite old cottages.
- In addition to the array of gardens in the Hanneys, green spaces between properties also provide a pleasing environment for residents to live in, damping down noise, pollution and adding a calming effect. If the Hanneys are to retain their semi-rural character into the future, the addition of unbridled, stark red brick developments, squeezed between tarmacked areas and given ironic pastoral names such as "Fields", Paddocks" "Meadows" etc. should be avoided.
- Twisting roads through the villages reflect the character of a by-gone age. The rather narrow, curving roads often necessitate a lack of frontage for some properties and a lack of pavement. Meandering streets form part of the character of the villages however they now struggle to accommodate the increasing levels of traffic. Frontages and grass verges are regularly churned up by vehicles trying to squeeze by, whilst the characterful bridges in East Hanney are under threat from heavy loads. Passage through East Hanney near the Black Horse is often blighted by on-road parking and although the 31 Oxford bus is a boon to the village, there is very little room to manoeuvre for vehicles coming the other way. The road surfaces in both villages are eroding significantly, causing dangers to cyclists.
- The lack of street lighting provides both advantages and disadvantages for the Hanneys. The disadvantages can be viewed from a health and safety perspective, but a lack of lighting allows a clear, unpolluted sight of the heavens and discourages unwanted gatherings on the streets at night. To introduce street lighting would be to destroy the character of the village as there is something endearing about torchlight bobbing along the Hanney streets on winter evenings. Any thoughts of traffic management through the addition of traffic-lights within the village would be inappropriate and undesirable in terms of the character of the villages.
- The Hanneys retain their character as historical island villages because their natural, non-linear shapes rise impressively from the surrounding countryside. The causeway provides a tangible connection between the two villages, whilst at the same time allowing each village its identity and individuality, all of which are presently untouched by the spread of development along its length. The villages both

display a mix of the old and the new, the large and the small, brick, stone and wood, thatch and tile roofs, in terms of the character of their buildings, whilst the traditionally generous garden sizes.

Landscape qualities

- This report should highlight the nearest viewpoint over the village, from the top of the hill on the Denchworth track, particularly important to walkers, horse riders and off-road cyclists. [This is the best overview of the Hanneys albeit from a height difference of less than 50 feet.
- We value the green spaces, particularly the space between the two Hanneys, the trees which frame the village and the churchyard.
- Hanney is above all green. It can hardly be seen from the A338 in either direction because of the trees and I think this is essential to its character. I would like to see this feature developed with more planting wherever it becomes possible – Kings Leases for instance.
- Hanney is also about water – sometimes too much of it, but Letcombe brook is fundamental to it. I particularly like the pathway a between Iron Bridge and Lower Mill and wonder if more could be made of it and others.
- Being a flat area, views are always going to be somewhat unspectacular in my opinion. Saying that there are some lovely ones around, but they are limited. What we do have though is a HUGE sky with spectacular sunsets and stunning displays of stars at night because we do not suffer from light pollution. In my view, we should do everything we can to discourage street lighting to preserve this situation
- We are very fortunate with some of our wild life in and around the village but Hanney is also about dog walkers. There are dozens of them and they all know each other (or at least their dogs do) and it is a great form of exercise and a great way of getting to know people and bind the community. It is also safe to walk at all hours and everywhere.
- In addition to the array of gardens in the Hanneys, green spaces between properties also provide a pleasing environment for residents to live in, damping down noise, pollution and adding a calming effect. If the Hanneys are to retain their semi-rural character into the future, the addition of unbridled, stark red brick developments, squeezed between tarmacked areas and given ironic pastoral names such as “Fields”, Paddocks” “Meadows” etc. should be avoided.
- Greens, common land, wide verges, sports field, allotments etc. throughout village in various places add to character; village edges open directly to open countryside and rural views; Lovely views to the downs from West Hanney; (WH)Landscape changes with the seasons as crops change and trees/ wild flowers grow.
- Village hidden amongst trees on approach roads (A338 and road from Denchworth); Roof lines not too high so do not rise above tree tops; Higgled Piggly sky line with roofs and chimneys silhouetted against open skies, lovely sunsets and starry skies; within village roads/ lanes are also gently curving so views change as one travels along - few straight open stretches other than gap between east and west. The Hanneys achieve a characterful blend in this respect. Allotments are generally well maintained and add an additional dimension to the gardening tradition in the villages. The iconic village green areas in both villages provide a focal point for interesting walks and lead walkers towards both manor houses. The management of water courses around the villages has been exemplary of late and should be encouraged into the future, to avoid the ever-present threat of flooding. Letcombe Brook provides an oasis of nature within East Hanney and to date the walks along its banks, linking the historical mills, provide pleasure for many. The development of both mills into residential properties appears to have been carried out tastefully and provides an example of how to retain character by harmonising the past and the present.
- Entry to Hanney from A338...seat with trees. Glimpses of Green. Site of old elm. Peace Oak. Holmes memorial garden: site of old forge. Choice of roads, bends and twists
From the main road...distant views of church in W Hanney, dominating the village across low fields marked by years of agricultural usage.
- Fields of wild flowers (rapidly disappearing) buttercups, cowslips, occasional orchids.
- The wonderful gift of the community woodland and the care the village is taking of it.
- Birds - fieldfares en passant, buzzards nesting, breeding swans, kites overhead.
- Winding lanes and roads – creates sense of enclosure / entry (in particular some access entries [e.g. Denchworth Rd]. Footpaths – well signed and to various local villages. Easy sight of Berkshire

Downs. Area of Church Green in WH very important and ancient centre of a village to be guarded at all costs.

Traffic

- The main issue for me is that there is a rat run between Southmoor and the A338 via the Hanneys. We should do whatever we sensibly can to make this “non-viable” (Chicanes etc.) and we certainly need to stamp out on the size of some of the lorries entering the village. At the A338 Summertown junction there is a sign saying: “unsuitable for HGV’s” I think this needs much more prominence and it needs putting on other entry routes to the village with similar prominence.
- Traffic impact is becoming quite a menace, many seem to use us a short cut. There is one notice ‘No HGVs’ on one of the roads into East Hanney but not the others. As far as I am aware there is not one at the West end of West Hanney, so they come through regardless!
- A lot of Hanney is now East of the A338 and I think we need to do everything we can to integrate. In the absence of a Bypass then I think we need to lobby for measures to allow safe crossing over this road and traffic calming at the same time. Perhaps Roundabouts, Pelican crossings, Speed Cameras, Traffic Islands etc. What I do note is that heading north looks like a long straight road and a lot of traffic is accelerating furiously long before it leaves the built-up area.
- Undesirable noise throughout the villages is generally provided by methods of transportation – particularly the sound of traffic along the A338 and within the village along the main streets. Speeding vehicles are a regular and noisy feature, whilst the roadways need repair.
- Litter can be an issue, however the annual litter pick is helpful in this respect and the council refuse collection service is adequate for domestic needs.

Future developments

- I do not want street lighting in the village. This is a very important issue for me. I love the dark nights and clear skies. I am concerned that new developments require street lighting as any new developments will impact on our currently wonderful night views. I know the village off by heart with my eyes closed. For those that don’t, there are torches. There are not many safety concerns in the village for which street lighting would be required (especially as that ditch on The Causeway has been filled in!).
- West Hanney is smaller than East with even more limited amenities centring around the pub and church. The scale of expansion so far has been in keeping with the size of the village; much more would swamp the existing character.
- Among all the new housing developments taking place in East and West Hanney we have been disappointed to find no blocks of retirement flats or similar accommodation being proposed, so we have been forced to look elsewhere. Wantage is not far away, and we hope to maintain contact with our many village friends. We are, therefore, one more small example of the general feeling that the villages are expanding too quickly and failing to provide the accommodation that existing residents would like.
- Please keep the look of the village. Cloned housing estates and houses looming onto the road with no trees to offer seclusion impacts the feel of the village. Enough damage has been done since the 70’s.
- Village is part of rural landscape. Small intimate community. Safe place for children and care in considerate and caring environment for the elderly and more vulnerable. Villages such as the Hanney’s have been part of the British way of life for hundreds of years and are part of our history and identity. We are all but custodians of what we have – whether by choice a rural community or part of a vibrant and exciting city. It is our responsibility to safeguard and nurture these for future generations.

Other most important character features

- I think the most important feature of the Hanney’s character is the sense of community and the friendliness of most people
- It is still a community and we should celebrate and treasure that.

- Neighbours and village community spirit – lots of activities and lots done by volunteers
- Good balance of separation of East from West in terms of built up areas but good feeling of integration and working together and sharing at a personal level
- A harmonious balance of appropriate housing and green spaces.
- Not becoming a thoroughfare for increased traffic
- An active community enjoying a pleasant and friendly environment, empowered to mould the character of the villages
- We value the general calmness and peace, apart from when the traffic roars through, and love the darkness.
- We liked the size of East and West Hanney and their populations, making friends, joining in the many activities and organizations that we helped to run, and really feeling part of the community.

And finally, village humour

I have always had a 'soft spot' for the village as I remember the name from a very early age. In the 1940s when any petrol was available we would drive in Dad's Ford Eight to Poole to stay with grand-parents. We travelled by the A338 (although I don't think the road was so designated then) and when we reached Hanney, Dad would inevitably come out with the phrase "Any onee (onny) seen our Annie any onee?". So far as I know there was no-one in our family called Anne so how the phrase came about I have no idea.



Castleacre and Winter Lane at the beginning of the Twentieth Century

Postscript

One of Hanney's smaller listed buildings is the tomb of William Woodward immediately to the south of the south door of St James the Great. It was erected around 1727 in memory of a 16-year-old carpenter who presumably died nearby. Both West Hanney House and Kingston Bagpuize House were constructed about that time, and Blenheim was underway, so work for skilled tradesmen was clearly available. William's life and early demise is still a mystery. It is a grand memorial and a costly 2018 restoration has saved it from near dereliction. The tomb seems unusually fine for an artisan of the period. Local historians are trying to discover more of the young man's family and his past. In the meantime, it symbolises the care the Hanney community has often taken of its heritage. It offers hope for maintaining the tranquillity found in both the graveyard and the wider village. The views below show the tomb before and after the stonemasons' work, in 2016 and 2018.

