



*Basingstoke  
and Deane*

# Conservation Area Appraisal **Overton**



...making a difference



*Winchester Street, east side*



*Crossroads, looking south up  
Winchester Street*

## Introduction

The Overton Conservation Area was first designated in 1971 by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council in recognition of the village's special architectural and historic interest. At that time the area designated related only to the medieval core of the village, located to the south of the River Test.

The Conservation Area boundary was extended in 1987 to encompass St Mary's Church and Court Farm, the settlements of Southington to the south-west, and Quidhampton and Polhampton to the north-east. All are linked to Overton by the river, visually and historically.

Having designated the Conservation Area, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that those elements which form its particular character or appearance should be preserved or enhanced, especially when considering planning applications.

It is therefore necessary to define and analyse those qualities or elements that contribute to, or detract from, the special interest of the area and to assess how they combine to justify its designation as a Conservation Area. Such factors can include:

- its historic development;
- the contribution of individual or groups of buildings to the streetscene and the spaces that surround them; and
- the relationship of the built environment with the landscape.

They can also include the less tangible senses and experiences such as noise and smells, which can play a key part in forming the distinctive character of an area.

The Appraisal takes the form of written text and an Appraisal plan. In both respects, every effort has been made to highlight those features that are important to the special character of the area. Where buildings, structures or features have not been specifically highlighted it does not necessarily follow that they are of no visual or historic value to the Conservation Area. The document is intended to be an overall framework and guide within which decisions can be made on a site specific basis.

This Appraisal of the Overton Conservation Area follows its review in 2003 by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and explains what its designation means for those who live and work in the area.

This document was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane on 17 July 2003 and complements the policies of the Borough Local Plan (review).

It has been subject to consultation with Councillors, the Parish Council and local amenity groups. A full list of consultees, copies of their responses, and details of the Council's consideration of the issues raised during the consultation period are available for inspection, by appointment, at the Civic Offices, during normal office hours.

## Location and Population

The village of Overton is situated mid-way between Andover and Basingstoke, along a road that follows the line of the valley of the River Test. The settlement is 20km north of Winchester, linked to the city by the B343. The historic focus of the village is formed where this intersects the Andover to Basingstoke road. The village lies mainly to the south of the River Test, and the church stands on a slight rise to the north. The land rises onto chalk downland to the north and south of the village and the river.

The population of the Conservation Area in 1998 was approximately 1133 (projection based on the Hampshire County Council Planning Department Small Area Population Forecasts 1995).

## Historic Development

### Settlement Origins

The name Overton means 'higher farm' and is thought to refer to the position of the settlement in the upper reaches of the River Test. The first mention of Overton is in 909, when King Edward confirmed the earlier grant of the estate of 'Uferantun' to Frithestan, Bishop of Winchester. The manor was held by the Bishop at the time of the Domesday Survey, which also records a church at Polhampton.

Although it is speculated that an early settlement may have stood on the north bank of the River Test, it is also thought that the grant of a market charter by Henry III to the Bishop in 1218, may represent the foundation date of the current settlement to the south of the river. A map of 1615 (HRO copy 566/1-3) shows no record of a settlement near the church, apart from Court Farm. The Bishops of Winchester remained Lords of the Manor, except for a short period in the mid-17th century until the 19th century.

The development of the village also relates to its key location in terms of transport links and employment. It was an important staging post on the route from London in the 18th and early 19th centuries, and employment was generated by the river. The existence of mills in the area is recorded from the time of the Domesday Book to the present day. Town Mill, also known as Burrough Mill or Overton Mill, is recorded in the 1301-1302 'pipe roll' of the Bishop, as was Lynch Mill. New Mill, (also known as Silk



*View north on Kingsclere Road*



*Tithe Cottage, Southington*



*Red Lion Lane, east side*



*B3400 at Southington*

Mill) had been built by the beginning of the 16th century. Silk production began in the 18th century with a silk factory on the river Test to the north of Southington. Overton Mill continued working until the 1980s and there is still a large working paper mill to the north of Overton.

## Settlement Development

The 'new town' of Overton was one of several founded by the Bishop of Winchester in the 13th century (another example is New Alresford in the east of Hampshire). The new settlements were built around a similar rectilinear plan, with a wide main market street and back lanes.

The early street pattern, of three north/south streets and two east/west streets, still forms the basis of the village. Until the 19th century, development was focused on the two principal roads, namely High Street and Winchester Street. Development then spread along other roads, formerly rear access to burgage plots, with the construction of small rows of 19th century cottages. Settlement also continued along Bridge Street and Red Lion Lane. Although the lane was used as a back lane, it pre-dates the present village road pattern.

The settlements of Quidhampton and Polhampton declined from the medieval period, and today encompass very few buildings. Quidhampton consists of the redundant mill on the River Test, a farm, the remains of a chapel, and a detached cottage. Polhampton consists only of a large farmhouse, with associated agricultural buildings, and two sets of terraced cottages.

Southington, to the west of Overton on the B3400, was first recorded in a taxation record of 1334 and is still a fair sized hamlet. It had a mill to the north on the River Test. Watercress was a minor industry in the valley and two large sets of beds to the east and west of the village were farmed under local ownership until the mid-1950s. The water area, formerly the watercress beds, still forms a prominent feature in the Conservation Area.

## An Appraisal of the Conservation Area

### An Overview

The Appraisal plan identifies those buildings, views, and key features considered essential to the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area. In addition to listed buildings, it also includes unlisted buildings of particular individual or group value, which are indicated on the plan as notable. This is not to undermine the value of other unmarked buildings or structures, which reflect the historic development of the village without detracting from its special qualities.

Individual hedgerows have not been included on the Appraisal plan. However, their contribution to the character of the Conservation Area should not be underestimated and their significance is implicit in the Appraisal.

The Overton Conservation Area clearly encompasses areas of differing character and appearance. These are identified on the plan as 'sub-areas' and will be appraised separately.

### **Area 1: Overton**

The essential appearance of this sub-area is the tight knit arrangement of buildings around a rectilinear street pattern. Buildings mainly date from the 18th and 19th centuries, and are punctuated by individual earlier properties. The appearance of the village is given cohesion by the vernacular materials and domestic scale of the buildings, and common building lines of street frontages. The character is derived from a variety of individual commercial uses at the core of the area, surrounded by predominantly residential areas.

The special interest of the streetscape, is derived from the combination of intimate glimpses and long range views resulting from the local topography. The church spire of St Mary's dominates the village in both these respects.

### **Area 2: Southington**

The appearance of this sub-area is principally a varied group of buildings in a semi-rural environment. The relationship of the buildings and spaces between them is a loose one, given some cohesion by the structure of the road pattern. The character is essentially residential, yet the landscape and river penetrate the area, creating a strong 'pastoral' scene. The river's form and appearance is still reflected in its former managed function. This visual association is important to the historic character of the area.

### **Area 3: Quidhampton and Polhampton**

These settlements comprise principally of two farm complexes set in a rural landscape. There are a few other buildings dispersed along the river course. Given the undulating and verdant character of the area, the roofs and chimneys of the buildings are key features in contributing to its distinctive appearance.

The character of the Conservation Area is also derived from the combination of narrow intimate lanes with a strong sense of visual enclosure, interspersed with open spaces and long range views.



*Winchester Street, west side*



*The Rectory from Church Road*

## Built Form

### Area 1: Overton



*The Post Office and Hyde's Store, High Street*



*Southington Cottage*

Within the urban settlement of Overton there are twenty-six buildings included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Of these, St Mary's Church and Court Farmhouse are Grade II\* listed, as being of national importance. The remainder are Grade II (of local or regional special interest).

There are a variety of building types, mainly dating from the 16th and 19th centuries, dispersed throughout the village. Often located at key visual points within the streetscene, they make a significant contribution to the special qualities of the Conservation Area.

Some of these older buildings have been altered over successive periods to accommodate changes in their use or contemporary architectural fashions. The re-fronting in brick of existing timber-framed buildings and insertion of carefully arranged sash windows, to produce a polite elevation, was particularly common in the 18th century. Examples of this are Nos 67, 73, 75 and 77 on the east side of Winchester Street, and Nos 7 and 13-21 on the south side of High Street.

Other buildings have retained more completely their vernacular form and materials. No 88 Winchester Street is a good example of a 17th and 18th century building, with timber-framing, brick infill and thatched roof.

On the edge of the village, to the north of the river, is the area centred around the sports ground. This is historically an open area serving as a focus for the principal individual buildings of architectural quality and scale in the Conservation Area, including the church, Court Farm, and The Old Rectory. The individual setting of these buildings, particularly in the wider context of views from Bridge Street, Church Road and Kingsclere Road, is essential to the character of this part of the Conservation Area. It contrasts with the concentrated urban appearance to the south.

The church has a medieval core but was heavily restored in the 19th century. It is a prominent landmark in all views over the village. Adjacent to the church, on a slight rise, Court Farm House dates from the 16th century with modifications in the early 18th and 19th centuries. The 18th century brick facade, with pediment and characteristic symmetrical arrangement of sash windows dominates the view north up Bridge Street. Contemporary with the early phases of Court Farm House is a large manorial barn. Although clad in modern materials it retains its original timber-frame construction.

The Rectory is built on the site of an earlier vicarage, and is of 19th century Gothic design. In streetscape terms, its particular quality relates

to the prominent gables, octagonal Tudor chimney stacks, and the use of architectural detailing to windows, door-frames and wall planes. This contrasts starkly with the simpler architectural qualities of most other buildings in Overton.

High Street, London Road, Kingsclere Road and Winchester Street meet to form the focal point of the Conservation Area. This important node is defined by five prominent buildings. These are the White Hart public house, Nos 2-6 High Street, the 19th century primary school (now the library and community centre) and No 1 Winchester Street. Nos 4-6 Winchester Street is a three-storey, early 20th century building that also imposes on this node.

Although unlisted, the 19th century shopfronts to No 23 High Street, and the 20th century shopfronts to Nos 4-6 High Street are good examples of traditional commercial premises. They contribute significantly to this aspect of the character of the Conservation Area.

The special character of Overton is also derived from the contribution made by groups of buildings. The row of red and yellow brick 19th century terraced cottages on Kingsclere Road is important to the streetscape. Their position on the curve in the road deflects the view to suggest further visual interest beyond.

The row of properties on the western side of Station Road creates a similar villagescape effect. This is also the case with properties on the south-western end of Bridge Street, when viewed from Red Lion Lane, and looking north up Waltham Road on the western side of the street.

Nos 57 - 67 Winchester Street are a good illustration of a group of buildings, listed and non-listed, having a strong cohesive appearance. However they also have a subtle variation in their roof pitches and window arrangements.

The principal streets - Winchester Street and High Street - contain significant groups of buildings which, although sharing similar scale, form and materials, create a streetscene of very different character. The wide market street of Winchester Street has an open, but strong, linear quality. It contrasts with the intimate 'serpentine' streetscape of the Lower High Street, in which the next group of buildings is gradually revealed (rather than the landscape beyond).

## Area 2: Southington

Southington contains six listed buildings of varied form and construction. Southington Mill dates mainly from the 18th century, and is of brick construction with a tiled roof. Within the hamlet are Southington Cottage which dates from the 17th century with exposed timber-frame; No 9, an 18th and 19th century mellow red brick house with a symmetrical front and red tile roof and Tithe Cottage which dates from



*High Street looking east*



*Cottages at Polhampton*



*Quidhampton Farm*



12 and 14 London Road, Southington



Court Farmhouse

the 17th century, its thatched roof reaching down to the top of the ground floor windows. Nos 12 and 14 London Road are important in the villagescape where they punctuate the end of the tree-lined views in the approach to Overton.

There are a number of unlisted buildings which also contribute to the character of the area. The brick estate cottages in Vinn's Lane and Nos 26 and 28 London Road have prominent chimney stacks and simple vernacular detailing. This is sympathetic to the semi-rural character of this part of the Conservation Area.

### Area 3: Quidhampton and Polhampton

The shrunken settlement of Quidhampton has four listed buildings, including the remains of a Norman Chapel (Grade II\*), abutting 19th century agricultural buildings at Quidhampton Farm. The main 19th century façade of the farmhouse is framed by flanking agricultural buildings. The brick stable is notable, retaining its original openings and architectural integrity.

A 17th century thatched timber-framed building and Quidhampton Mill follow the river course and Station Road. They are important in providing tangible links to the former habitation and use of the settlements. They also enhance the existing rural character of the area.

All that remains of the settlement at Polhampton is a large square 17th century farmhouse (Grade II\*) and farm buildings. The farmhouse is constructed of mellow red brick, with a steeply pitched clay tile roof and prominent, substantial chimney stack. The building is the sole reminder of what could have been a once thriving settlement, set on the upper reaches of the River Test. It again portrays the more rural character of the area.

On the road to Polhampton are a pair of rustic style, semi-detached estate cottages. Their decorative chimney stacks, porches and tile hanging make a picturesque contribution to the rural character of the Conservation Area.

## The Character and Importance of Public and Private Spaces

The integration of the river and the spaces along it are essential components in the distinctive character of the Conservation Area.

To the south of Southington Mill and the River Test, and extending to the east of Southington Lane, are extensive areas of former watercress beds. They now form large undeveloped spaces, with thick vegetation on the banks. The character is both rural and tranquil.

The river course runs to the north of the built-up area of the 'new' town, forming a boundary to this pattern of development. The 'open' corridor created by the river, frames views of a distinctive mix of public and private spaces with the buildings and gardens that line its southern bank.

Between Overton and Quidhampton is the River Test and its extensive flood plain. The main character of the area is that of enclosure, the area affording no long range views. Its undeveloped rural character reinforces the overall relationship between the river and the historic pattern of development in the Conservation Area.

Quidhampton is also situated on the banks of the River Test. Views are provided along the river and across water meadows to the south and east. Following the road to Polhampton, the meadows open out to the south before the land rises to the north, above the river, which runs through an overgrown area.

Between Southington and Overton, to the south of the main road and adjacent to No 3 London Road is a long open strip of land. This area is extremely important as it is the only remaining undeveloped space on the south of the road, separating Overton from Southington. The Sports Ground to the north is also important for the same reason.

In the village of Overton itself, are several open spaces, perhaps the most important of which is the survival of the wide main market street. The Sports Ground extends from the west to below the church, and is bisected by Bridge Street. This area allows the south and north banks of the River Test to remain undeveloped and helps to maintain the original 13th century plan of Overton.

There is a smaller recreation ground between Red Lion Lane and Winchester Street that is important within the community. The open area of rising land behind the church is also important in maintaining the juxtaposition of the villagescape and open countryside so essential to views in, and out of, the Conservation Area.



*View north along Winchester Street*



*Polhampton Farm House*

## Other Features of Architectural and Historic Interest



*26 and 28 Southington*

Flint and brick walls define and contain several historic curtilages in the Conservation Area. The most notable wall is that fronting the pavement along Kingsclere Road, and associated with the White Hart public house. Another significant structure is the brick boundary wall and Gothic arch gateway onto the river at the back of St Mary's Hall. There are a number of other walls, noted on the Appraisal plan, that greatly contribute to the texture and grain of the area (for example, a chalk cob wall that forms the boundary to Parsonage Farm House in Southington).

In the market square is a traditional style Hampshire cast iron signpost, acting as a focal point for the village. Adjacent are two listed red telephone boxes that help define this important public space.



*Shadwell's, Southington*

## Building Materials

Overton is characterised by a variety of vernacular building materials and traditions. These include mellow red brick, timber-frame, flint, chalk cob and stone, rendered or painted façades, and orange/red roof tiles, and thatched roofs. These follow no single pattern throughout the area.

Much timber-framing is still apparent, particularly on side and rear elevations, although brick is the predominant material. The use of flint as a building material increased in the Victorian period. This is demonstrated on the former village school and on the rear elevations of the Victorian cottages fronting London Road.



*Community Centre (Old School)  
at main crossroads*

Given the domestic scale and simple provincial architecture of the buildings in the Conservation Area, historic joinery (such as sash windows, doors and door hoods) are often the features that define the appearance of properties. Where buildings are close-knit in continuous street frontages the relationship of these features and their historic arrangement becomes a significant factor in the overall special character of the area. Although some groups of buildings have been modernised, the use and overall effect of inappropriate replacement windows and doors is limited.

## Green Spaces, Trees, Spaces and Other Natural or Cultivated Features

The existence of predominantly landscaped spaces, especially to the west, north and east of Overton, helps to maintain the original plan form of the 'new' town. Hedges are scattered throughout the area, both in gardens and in agricultural areas. However, the road along the north border above Southington is characterised by high verges and hedges. Trees of all species, forms, and heights, can be found in the vicinity of the River Test, with some very large specimens on the meadows between Quidhampton and Polhampton. Verdant areas around the river also provide a haven for wildlife. In the village, in gardens and at the roadside, is a mix of predominantly ornamental trees with some scattered native species. One or two large mature dominant trees can be found along the frontage of Overton Sports Ground and behind some of the properties to the north of the High Street.

Southington can be characterised by reasonably large and extensive gardens. Some plots in the village of Overton itself still reflect the original long burgage plots. However, most are relatively small in comparison to the houses, particularly where the 19th century rows infilled the former plots. Most buildings front directly onto the pavement, except to the west side of Winchester Street, where the wide grassed verges still survive.



*Quidhampton Mill*



*Southington Mill*

## The Setting of the Conservation Area



*Glebe House*



*View of River Test and Station Road from the north*

The Conservation Area extends along the base of the river valley, following the meandering of the River Test, and then climbs to the north and south. The ridge lines to the north and south afford extensive views over the Conservation Area, drawing the eye to features, such as the church spire, and the small rural hamlet of Quidhampton.

When approaching Overton from the south, the impact of the medieval village plan remains, with the church forming the focal point in the distance. From the north, travelling along Kingsclere Road, there are extensive views across the village, including the church and the great barn at Court Farm.

The visually intrusive Portals Mill to the north of the village dominates the skyline on the approach to Overton from the east. It can also be seen from the southern side of the valley and from the Quidhampton area.

The approach from the east, along London Road, is perhaps the weakest of the views into the Conservation Area. The area to the rear of properties fronting Winchester Street is currently an informal car park and refuse area. It creates an uncomfortable visual gap in the tight-knit streetscape of the historic settlement. However, one major landmark overlooking the valley from the east is Berrydown Court, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. Although not in the Conservation Area, it is a significant local landmark. There are long views from here towards Quidhampton and Polhampton, into Overton, and along the valley of the River Test.

## Areas of Archaeological Significance

Every settlement contains within it archaeological evidence of its origins and development, of the economy and industry of the community and of the lives and lifestyles of past inhabitants.

It is in the Areas of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP) that it is most likely that such archaeological remains will be encountered.

Where a development is proposed, the impact that it might have on these remains is a material consideration within the planning process. This may, occasionally result in the need for archaeological recording in the case of some developments.

There are two Areas of High Archaeological Importance (AHA) within the Conservation Area. The first is centred on the burgage plots along both sides of Winchester Street, and the possible burgage plots on the south side of High Street. These may contain evidence of the original buildings of the 'new' town, and also former trades or industries located to the rear of these plots. As significant areas in these plots have not been developed, it is possible good archaeological deposits have survived. The late medieval buildings in this area are also of archaeological importance.

The second AHA covers the high ground to the west of Court Farm, above the flood plain of the River Test.

The southern part of Winchester Street and the western part of High Street have been designated Areas of Archaeological Importance (AAI). They are areas of post late-medieval suburban development and may hold evidence of the fluctuating economic fortunes of the village since medieval times. Development in these areas in the 19th and 20th centuries reflect the continuing economic fortunes of the village.

Southington also lies within an AAI with medieval and post medieval buildings surviving in the hamlet.

Polhampton and Quidhampton lie within 'Areas of Archaeological Potential', and were recorded in the Domesday Survey. Both settlements were listed as having a church, with the remains of a chapel surviving at the farm in Quidhampton.

In order to preserve this special archaeological inheritance, future development in the village of Overton should respect the historical footprint of the Winchester Street/High Street crossing, with their associated back lanes. The disruption of any surviving property boundaries, perhaps indicating burgage plots, should be avoided, therefore, preserving as much as possible the medieval plan of the village.



*Old Chapel, Quidhampton Farm*



*73-77 Winchester Street*



*View north along Waltham Road*



*Battens Avenue*



*View west from bridge at Bridge Street*

## Conservation Area Planning Controls

The following controls apply within the Conservation Area in addition to normal planning controls:

- Conservation Area Consent is normally required for the demolition of buildings or structures over a certain size within a Conservation Area.
- The Council must be given six weeks notice of any intention to undertake works to cut down, lop, prune or uproot any trees over a certain size in the Conservation Area.
- Planning applications which, in the opinion of the Borough Council, would affect the special character of the Conservation Area must be advertised and the opportunity given for public comment. This may include proposals outside the Conservation Area which nevertheless affect its setting.

Statutory policies relating to Conservation Areas and listed buildings are set out in the adopted Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan. These policies reflect the statutory duty on the Local Planning Authority to have regard to the preservation of historic buildings or their setting, and to the enhancement of areas designated as being of special interest. These policies seek to ensure that particular attention will be paid to the scale, height, form, materials, and detailing of proposals including boundary treatments and other features of note. In order to consider the implications of development and given the detail required, the Borough Council will normally require proposals within the Conservation Area to be submitted in the form of a full, and not outline, application. The Borough Council's Conservation Officers are available for advice and information on all matters relating to development proposals in the Conservation Area.

## Grants

The Borough Council provides grants for various types of work. These include Historic Buildings Grants, Environment and Regeneration Grants, and Village and Community Hall Grants. Leaflets are available explaining the purpose and criteria for each grant and an approach to the Council is recommended for further information on any grant.



# Conservation Area Appraisal

## **Overton**

...making a difference

**Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council**

Civic Offices London Road Basingstoke Hants RG21 4AH

**Telephone 01256 844844 Fax 01256 845200**

[www.basingstoke.gov.uk](http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk)

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