
Conservation Area Character Survey

Fingest



WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA?

Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest which are considered worthy of preservation or enhancement. They are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Within conservation areas there are special controls on some alterations to buildings and their demolition or partial demolition, and on works to trees. The Council's Heritage Guidance Note on conservation areas gives further details of the specific controls that apply.

Designation of a conservation area does not preclude the possibility of new development, but such development must be designed positively to enhance the special character of the area.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SURVEY

This conservation area character survey describes the main features of special architectural and historic interest which justify the designation of Fingest as a conservation area.

The survey is intended to complement the approved policies for conservation areas in the Council's Wycombe District Local Plan. These policies are the primary means of safeguarding the special character of our conservation areas. The survey is also intended to be used as an aid in development control decision making. Proposals for schemes positively to enhance the character and appearance of Fingest conservation area will be produced in the future in consultation with councillors, local residents and other interested parties.



HISTORY

Excavations have shown that the Romans were established in this part of the Hambleden valley, but nothing is known of their occupancy, other than the remains of villas in nearby Skirmett and Hambleden and evidence from burial mounds of a Romanised material culture. Danish Settlers in the 9th century are thought to have named the village from two words, "Thing" - a public assembly, and "Hurst" - wooded hill, and the name means the wooded hill where the assembly met - a public gathering. Skirmett, just along the road, has a similar meaning and it is possible the place names reflect a single assembly or meeting place. No doubt the village came into being because of the several springs in the location.

The Manor of Fingest, although not mentioned in the Domesday book, formed part of the Demesnes of Edward the Confessor and was presented by Henry I to the Abbey of St Albans. Following a disagreement between the Bishop of Lincoln and the Abbot of St Albans during the reign of Henry II, the Manor and Church became part of the Diocese of Lincoln, and the Bishops of Lincoln occasionally resided here. One built a palace for himself in the village, the remains of which lie near the church on private property, and another, Bishop Henry Burgwash, Lord Treasurer, Chancellor and Ambassador to Bavaria, a man described as "neither good for church nor state, sovereign nor subjects", enclosed some of the common land of the village in 1330 to form a deer park, causing great complaint amongst the villagers. After his death it is said his ghost haunted the estate in penance for his misdeed, until his successors returned the common land to the people of Fingest.

The present Fingest Manor is relatively recent in construction and lies outside the conservation area. At its gates lie the old village pound.

The Church of St Bartholomew, the most outstanding building in the village, is thought to date from the early 12th century. It has a Norman tower, with a twin saddleback roof dating from the 14th century. There is a local custom whereby, after marriage services, the bride-groom has to lift his wife over the church gate, which is locked for the ceremony, thus ensuring luck in married life.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

Within the conservation area itself there are no identified sites of special archaeological interest or significant ancient monuments. However northwest of the churchyard in the grounds of Fingest Manor, lie the remains of a former bishops palace which is identified as a site of special archaeological interest.

Given the ancient history of the village there may be areas of archaeological interest within the conservation area. In the event of archaeological deposits being found the Council may require archaeological conditions attaching to planning permissions where appropriate, including watching briefs, excavation or similar recording procedures.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Fingest lies at the head of the Hambleden valley which is one of the most delightful valleys in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is sheltered by Beech hangers for its whole length from the sharp wooded bluff at Fingest, down to the River Thames.

The surrounding farmland is basically chalky, with some sand and gravel close to water sources. Arable farming, sheep and cattle flourish here much as they have done for the past 400 years.

Fingest is a fine example of a harmonious English village. Largely

unspoilt, the whole of the conservation area can be seen by standing in the churchyard. It is the church, dedicated to St Bartholomew the Apostle, that is the outstanding building of the village, with its massive Norman tower crowned by its twin saddleback roof. The churchyard is square and open, with fine yews and shrubs within its confines and a line of Lime trees alongside the low brick and flint churchyard walls. Around the churchyard walls stands a pleasing assembly of ancient cottages and some Georgian houses, including the former rectory, and the Chequers Inn public house.

The churchyard acts as a central focus for the conservation area and the village. The shape of the village closely follows the road pattern and has a variety of types of buildings on different sized plots. Fingest has escaped pressure for new housing development within the conservation area, and therefore in terms of authenticity and scale the settlement is very much intact and compact.

The conservation area runs along two main roads in the village. Chequers Lane lies to the east of the churchyard, and runs in a northerly direction past Fingest Manor. The conservation area encompasses the church yard and all buildings to the east of it on Chequers Lane, starting at the semi-detached Thistledown and Sundawn cottages which lie to the northeast of the churchyard. Immediately south is a small grouping of cottages of widely differing ages and styles, including the listed timber-framed Church Cottage. This creates a pinchpoint in the road, which then opens out to the south to include an area of open space, which appears to extend the open characteristics of the churchyard. Attractive barns and The Old Rectory frame this area, creating an important group within the conservation area. The cluster of the various styles of dwellings and interesting alignments of their roofs, which appear to huddle beneath the backdrop of the beech hung hillside beyond, greatly adds to the coherence of this part of the conservation area. The variety of traditional materials used within this little group is important here, ranging from brick and flint, chequer brickwork to wood.

The other main road within the conservation area is Fingest Lane. Here the dwellings are in a more linear pattern, and include a farmyard, the imposing village public house and some larger houses along the road. The properties along Fingest Lane front harder onto the road than along Chequers Lane, and there is more walling between the houses, creating a feeling of containment, and reflecting the churchyard wall on the other side of the road. The majority of the buildings along Fingest Lane are listed and form a loose-knit group, with interesting vistas down the Hambleden Valley opening up unexpectedly between buildings.

The western part of the conservation area includes the impressive Georgian Fingest House, which sits on the junction of the road to Turville, creating an instant impression when travelling up the road from Skirmett. It is somewhat separate from other buildings in the conservation area, due to an area of open space between the churchyard and the dwelling, and a screen of vegetation. It is also different in style and appearance from the smaller houses that make up the conservation area, being on a grander scale.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

There are nine listed buildings within the Fingest Conservation Area. St Bartholomew's Church is listed Grade I, all other listings are grade II.

The church and churchyard are the heart of the conservation area. The Church is justly famous, and is visible from nearly every point within the conservation area. It is Grade I listed, and is thus classed as being of exceptional interest. The church has its origins in the early 12th century. The western tower and nave are Norman, the

chancel thirteenth century.

The tower is the most distinctive part of the church. Sixty feet high, it is also wider than the nave, and is constructed of roughcast flint with stone dressings. It has a M or saddleback roof, added in the 14th century. Below this, on either side of the bell chamber, are pairs of Romanesque openings with semi-circular roll-moulded arches. Smaller openings lie below these impressive Norman windows. The church tower once held two bells. The one remaining was cast at Lane End and is inscribed "J Hobbs, Lane End, 1830"

The nave and chancel are, by contrast to the massive tower, narrow. It is thought that the nave was the original chancel, being of a similar age to the tower, with the existing chancel added later. The roughcast nave and the chancel are both dwarfed by the tower but combine to make one of the most delightful churches in the Chilterns.

The church sits squarely in a large open churchyard, surrounded by low flint walls and Lime trees. Within the churchyard are groups of tombs, notably to the Batting family, a brick table tomb, and a memorial to Wilken Bridges which incorporates a sundial. There are a number of yew trees within the churchyard.

To the east of the churchyard, and separated by a low brick and flint wall and wide verges, lies Chequers Lane. The conservation area stops north of the churchyard boundary, but incorporates all the houses across the road from the churchyard.

The northernmost building within the conservation area is a pair of early 20th century semidetached estate-style cottages, Sun Dawn and Thistledown. The pair are unlisted, but are significant to the conservation area, having a traditional appearance. They consist of a brick ground floor, with a colourwashed rough-cast first floor in a mellow cream. The roof is of tile with decorative finials and a single central chimney stack. Both cottages have half-glazed doors with porches and replacement white casement windows. The pair are set back from the road at an angle, and face the north-east corner of the churchyard. They form a visual boundary to the conservation area, and are partly screened by roadside hedges.

Immediately south of the pair is a public footpath leading eastward between hedges up to the surrounding hills, and south of this, set hard to the road, is the listed Church Cottage. This is late 17th - early 18th century with later additions and comprises a timber frame with diagonal braces and brick infill with part of the ground floor rebuilt in flint with brick dressings. The roof is of old tiles, with two south facing dormers. The cottage frontage faces south towards the Chequers public house, with its gable end to the road. To the rear of the cottage, along the road boundary, is an outshot with its old tile cat-slide roof. Windows are 20th century barred wooden and metal casements of varying sizes. Modern additions and a conservatory are screened from the road and do not impinge on the historic character of the cottage. Church Cottage forms a pinchpoint in the road and, moving south, the area opens up, as properties are set further back from the frontage, with open space opposite and adjacent to the churchyard walls.

A private footpath across the frontage of Church Cottage leads to Chequers Cottages, a small terrace of workers' cottages, hardly visible from the road. These date from the mid-19th century and consist of four single bay cottages of chequer brick with flared headers, and slate roofs. The left hand pair have been converted into a single dwelling. They display a pleasing uniformity, set to the back of the plot, despite some inappropriate replacement windows in the central pair. The terrace has a deep front garden, probably a former vegetable plot, but the rear of the properties backs straight onto farmland. They form part of the eastern boundary to the conservation area.

Beyond the private access to the terrace of cottages, and close to the frontage of Church Cottage, lie 1 and 2 Chequers Lane. These are semi-detached single bay cottages in plain brick with a tile roof. They have little exterior decoration save flat arched headers over the ground floor windows, dentil eaves and a decorative chimney stack and pots, but their puritan appearance adds to their charm, and contrasts with the adjoining dwellings. They are considered important within the conservation area. The pair are set back from the road, and have partly-hedged front gardens.

Opposite these cottages lies the northern boundary of the churchyard, which runs down to the junction with Fingest Lane.

A gap in the frontages is created by the access to Glebe Croft, a modern detached dwelling set well back from the road. Partly screening this property is a long dark stained weatherboarded barn with an old tiled roof, converted into dwellings: Barn End and Barn Fields. The windows of the conversion, each consisting of two bays, have white-painted segmental arched mock 18th century sashes, with white painted shutters. To the front of the barns is an old brick and flint wall encompassing well-stocked gardens. In front of this wall is an area of grassed open space on which is sited a listed K6 telephone box.

The southern part of the barn complex, Glebe Barn, is an earlier conversion which incorporates what may have been stables originally, and retains original timberframing on low brick and flint walls. It was converted into a cottage in the 1920s. There is a large modern dormer on the frontage, and a range of modern windows within the structure. It also has a tiled porch. Continuity with the other barn conversions is ensured by the front garden enclosed by brick and flint walling.

Joined to the barn complex, but set forward from it, is another listed building. This is the attractive The Old Rectory, mainly Georgian in character. It consists of two wings, dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. The Chequers Road frontage (18th century) consists of four bays of chequer brick with vitreous headers, and red dressings and dentil eaves. This part has a tiled "M" roof. Fenestration consists of white-painted sashes and casements. There is a six-panelled door with wooden architrave frame and segmental pediment on reeded brackets. The older wing, which projects forward of the 18th century part, has brick facing to the front gable and left return, part-rendered and whitewashed on the ground floor, with flint and brick dressings to the remainder. There is a 17th century brick chimney between the wings. Fenestration in the older section of the dwelling consists of casements. The older part of the dwelling is enclosed by a garden, with high hedges, and an attractive porched gate.

Opposite The Old Rectory, just outside the churchyard walls, is a George V pillar box.

At this point Chequers Lane joins Fingest Lane. The conservation area continues to the east, incorporating the grounds of the Old Rectory, some outbuildings, and a modern detached house, Lowlands House, which is the last house on the village on the northern side of the road. This is in brick, and although not of particular importance to the conservation area, is not out of keeping with the village.

On the southern side of the road lies Fingest Farm. The unlisted farm house lies close to the road, and dates from about 1870. It is red brick, with a hipped tiled roof, and scalloped timber eaves with an ogee gutter. The chimney caps are cogged. Fenestration is of sashes in each of the two bays and there is a low picket fence enclosing the shallow front garden. To the rear of the property there is a cat-slide roof.

West of the farm cottage lies the old farmyard. Close behind the cottage is a modern agricultural building. Located in the centre is a

Fingest Conservation Area Character Survey Map

LISTED BUILDINGS

Grade I - Buildings of exceptional interest

Church of St Bartholemew - Roughcast and render over flint with stone dressings. Early 12th century western tower with Norman windows to bellchamber, and nave. Chancel added 13th century with 15th century windows, 17th century saddleback or M roof, mid 19th century restoration and porch.

Grade II - Buildings of special interest

Church Cottage - House circa late 17th century, timber framed with diagonal braces and brick infill, old tile roof. Later additions to rear.

The Old Rectory - House circa 1730, earlier cross wing refaced in 18th century. Red and vitreous brick with red dressings and dentil eaves. Cross wing part rendered. Old tile roof. Wooden six paned door with wooden architrave frame, segmental pediment and wooden brackets.

Barn at Fingest Farm - Late 18th century, timber frame and weatherboarding on a brick and flint plinth, old tile roof. waggon porch. Later extension.

Ivy Cottage - 17th century with rear chamber ring, originally timberframed, front now externally refaced with brick and flint and whitewashed. Old tile roof, gables to first floor, shingle hung end gable.





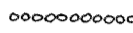
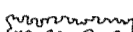
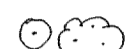
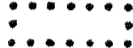
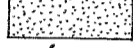
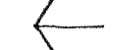
The Chequers Public House - Early 18th century. Red and vitreous brick to front elevation with finely bonded rubbed brick band course and gauged flat arched window headers. Remaining elevations and side extensions brick and flint. White painted casement windows with later shutters. Old tile roof with white painted covered eaves.

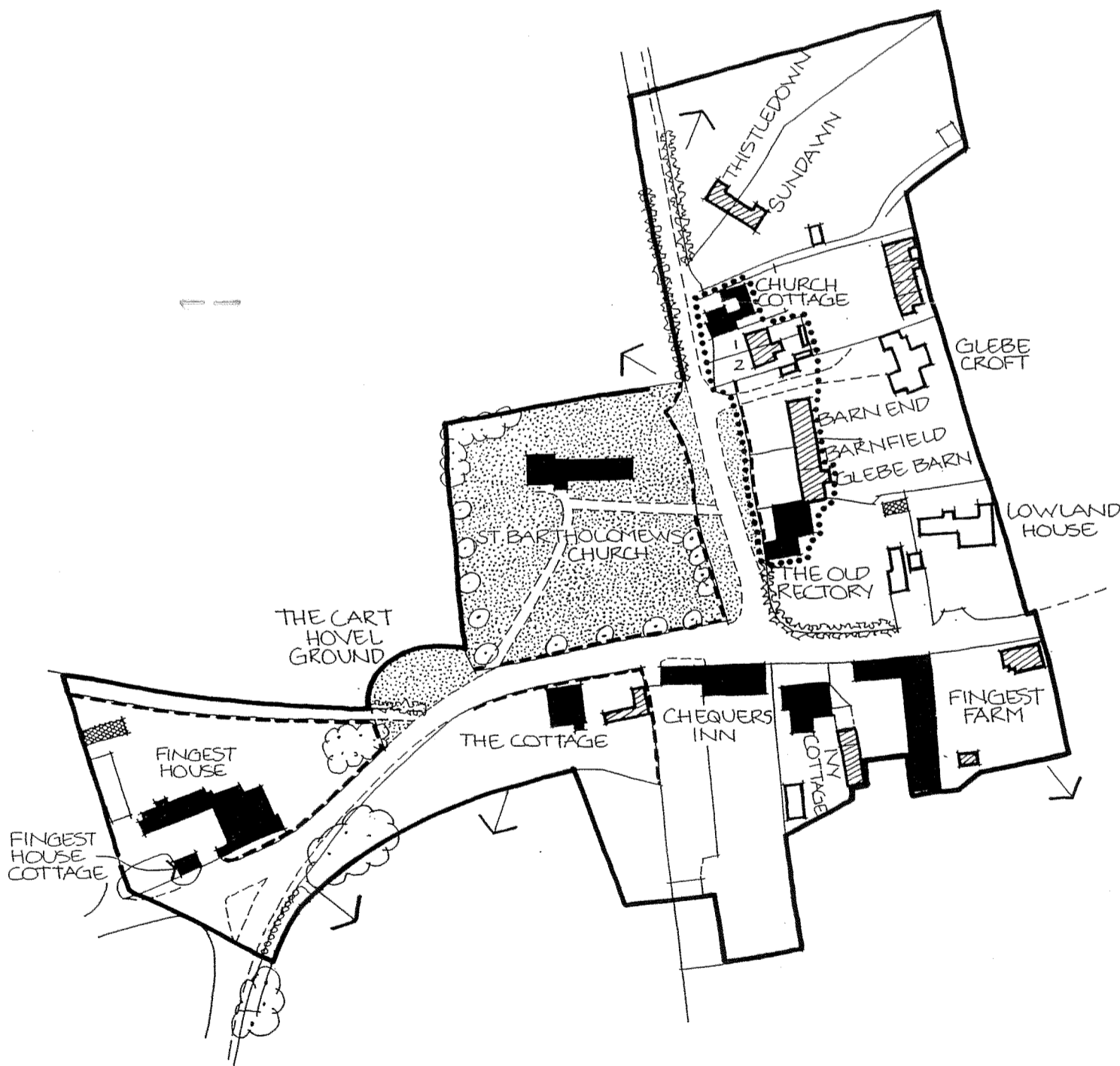
The Cottage - Mid 18th century house with brick front, remainder brick and flint, M roof in tile, with flanking chimneys. Various attractive brick and weatherboarded outbuildings to rear of house.

Fingest House - House, late 18th century, remodelled and extended mid 19th century, whitewashed render and hipped old tile roof. Late 18th century wall of knapped flint with brick quoins and band course below. White painted blind roundels with brick and flint surrounds. Gate piers with similar bands of brick and unknapped flint with stone caps. Pale blue painted wooden gates with inverted semi-circular arch and wickets.

Fingest Cottage - Attached to the south west corner of Fingest House. Late 18th century with 20th century alterations, knapped flint to front, with brick quoins and band course at first floor level.

FINGEST

-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Buildings
-  Other Significant Buildings
-  Important Walls
-  Important Railings
-  Important Hedges
-  Important Trees & Tree Groups
-  Important Group
-  Important Open Space
-  Important Views



nine staddle weatherboarded granary with a gabled slate roof. The granary could possibly date from the same time as the listed barns which make up the western boundary of the farmyard on the road frontage. Beyond the granary lie open fields to the sides of the valley.

The barns, which are listed for their group value, are late 18th century, consisting of a timber frame with dark-stained weatherboarding, on a brick and flint plinth. The roof is of tile. There are four bays remaining, with a waggon porch on the western side and catslide looseboxes along the remainder of the western elevation. The roof timbers show mortice holes, suggesting that they have been re-used.

Along the road frontage is a lower extension of 19th century date, of chequer brick and brick and stud walling, and weatherboard cladding. This has a half-hipped old tile roof. To the rear of this extension is a three bay wooden cartshed with a corrugated iron roof, unlisted, but adding to the character of this group of historic agricultural buildings.

Next to the farm complex lies the listed Ivy Cottage, which is thought to have been the original farmhouse for Fingest Farm. This dates from the 17th century and consists of two wings, a one and one and a half storey five bay front wing faced in brick and flint that has been whitewashed, and a rear chamber wing which has exposed timber framing with whitewashed brick infill, with a brick end gable. The roof is of tile, with a shingle-hung gable at the side, and two chimneys. The narrow right hand bays on the front wing have small brick gables with 20th century leaded stained casements. At one stage the house was subdivided into three cottages. There is a small sunken front garden enclosed by a chainlink fence.

Next comes the imposing early eighteenth century Chequers public house, a two storey and attic building of three bays. The frontage has a brick plinth with red and vitreous chequer brick. As was usual, the frontage displayed the more expensive materials; the side and rear elevations are of brick and flint. The front elevation also has a first floor band course of finely-bonded rubbed brick, with gauged flat arched rubbed brick window headers. The roof is of old tile with white-painted coved eaves, and brick chimneys at each gable end. There are two small flat-roofed dormers on the front elevation with white-painted two pane casements. The windows on the front consist of paired barred white-painted casements with nineteenth century shutters on the outer windows. The central half-glazed doors have a flat wooden hood on brackets above. The building has a pleasing symmetry, and fronts onto the road. To the left of the main building is a single-storey brick extension around the chimney, and to the right is a single-storey flint extension with dentil brick eaves and a hipped tiled roof. To the rear is a central projecting extension with a catslide roof.

A narrow gap to the right of the Chequers public house allows access to the gardens. On the right of this access a brick and flint wall shows a variety of techniques of construction and creates a sense of enclosure. Part of this wall forms the side of an outbuilding with a hipped tiled roof set within the grounds of The Cottage.

The rear gardens of The Cottage run parallel with the road and have a number of attractive brick and weatherboarded outbuildings, very much in keeping with the historic character of the area. The Cottage itself is a listed mid-eighteenth century two storey and attic house. The front of the house faces west and is of brick, and the elevation along the road, together with the remainder of the building is of brick and flint. The property has an old M roof in tile, with flanking brick chimney stacks. The building has two bays of white-painted sash windows in moulded box frames. The white-painted half-glazed central door has an attractive moulded wooden cornice hood on shaped brackets. The front gardens of the property are enclosed by a brick and flint wall which follows the curve of the road up to the junction with the Turville Road.

Just before the junction, old black iron railings form the boundary between the road and the farmland beyond.

At this point the conservation area boundary crosses to the other side of the road to enclose the grounds of Fingest House, which sits hard upon the T-junction of Fingest Lane and the road towards Turville. Set slightly higher than the road, the property is very visible when approaching from Skirmett.

It consists of a late eighteenth century house with a high wall with gates and gate piers to the road frontage. The house was remodelled and extended in the nineteenth century by J S Gwilt, a London architect and grandson of George Gwilt (1746-1807) former architect to the County of Surrey, who is best known for his rebuilding of three major bridges at Leatherhead, Cobham and Godalming. The appearance of the house is utterly different from anything else in the conservation area, being almost Italianate in character. The exterior is whitewashed render with stucco masonry scribing, which contrasts with the pale blue-painted shutters to the first floor casements on the eastern elevation.

Extending from the road frontage a high brick and flint wall and pale blue-painted wooden gate (the same shade as that on the house) enclose a courtyard and the remainder of the house, which consists of the earlier Georgian parts of the building. The house has a hipped tiled roof. The pale blue paint on the shutters is echoed in matching paintwork on the gutters and drainpipes, and contrasts with the white stucco walls. A service wing is just visible above the top of the gate with four gabled semi-dormers, casements and bellcote with ornamental bargeboard all painted white, contrasting nicely with the old tile hipped roof.

The high brick and flint wall along the frontage is of late eighteenth century date. Within the wall are two white-painted blind roundels. Detailing on wall, piers and surrounds is of brick quoins alternating with knapped flints. Along the wall and extending along the road frontage of the house is a topiary hedge. The grounds of the house are enclosed by brick and flint walling of various heights. This flint rustication contrasts with the classical lines of the house itself.

Attached to the southwest of Fingest House, and inserted onto the back of a screen wall which was once symmetrical to that described above, is Fingest Cottage. This is also listed, and has been altered this century. It consists of a brick and flint frontage continuing the detailing of the wall and piers. It has matching blind roundels to the main house wall, and has paired leaded casements flanking the central front door. A central gabled semi-dormer protrudes from the old tile hipped roof. The cottage has a small front garden enclosed by iron railings.

This cottage lies at the westernmost edge of the conservation area. Returning along Fingest Road back towards the churchyard there is an area of open space, which is registered common land, and joins the church yard at its south-western corner.

MATERIALS

There is a range of building styles and materials in the conservation area, which adds to its attractiveness.

The church consists of roughcast and render over flint - the render on the nave and chancel painted a mellow ochre colour. Dressings are of stone. The church roof is old clay tile.

Along Chequers Lane, the predominant building material is brick. This is used as vitreous brick for decoration on The Old Rectory. The terrace of estate cottages at the rear of Church Cottage also displays chequer brickwork to the frontage. Elsewhere, red brick is more predominant - mixed with flint and timber framing on Church

Cottage, forming the ground floor material at Sundawn and Thistledown. Plain red brick is used in the construction of Nos 1 and 2 Chequers Lane. The dark weatherboarded barns provide a contrast to the Chequers Lane grouping, but the low brick and flint wall to the front of these unites the area and ties the buildings in with the Old Rectory. They also mirror the churchyard walls opposite. A sense of coherence is also provided by the use of clay tiles for many of the roofs in the area.

A recurring theme throughout the conservation area is the use of brick in a chequer pattern using vitreous headers. This is best seen on the Chequers public house. Brick is also an important building material along the Fingest Lane part of the conservation area. Fingest Farm House and the walls of the barn along the road frontage are constructed of brick and much of the walling along Fingest Lane is brick. The exception is Ivy Cottage which has been whitewashed. The effect of the brick frontages along this road creates a sense of containment.

Fingest Farm Barn is weatherboarded in parts, but also has a fair amount of brick, and brick and timber materials. The wooden boards have faded with age and the whole building has a harmonious appearance.

Fingest House, to the east of the main village group is also an exception. This is whitewashed stucco, with high walls of rusticated brick and flint. The use of colour in this building also makes it stand out - pale blue paint on the shutters and metalwork. The high walls around the gates and Fingest Cottage revert to brick and flint. The blue-painted gates contrast with the white-painted dormers of the stable block beyond, and the blind roundels in the wall and cottage frontage.

Windows throughout the conservation area consist of mainly small-pane casements on the cottages, with sliding sashes on the larger buildings. The Chequers Inn, Fingest House and the Glebe Barn conversion also have shutters which contrast nicely with the material of the building. The majority of the windows are white-painted, though metal casements are seen on some buildings, and there are some inappropriate windows. Overall, though, the majority of windows are in keeping with the conservation area. Doors are also mostly appropriate to the conservation area, with fine examples seen at The Old Rectory, The Chequers public house, and The Cottage.

The majority of the houses in Fingest front directly onto the roadway or areas of open space, and driveways are not particularly prevalent. Those that occur are generally shingle, a material that works well in rural conservation areas of this type. Large areas in concrete, tarmac and even setts, can appear discordant in an informal rural setting, and can tend to give a more urban appearance.

TREES AND VEGETATION

The most important trees in the conservation area are the Limes that line the churchyard walls. These are particularly significant in enhancing the rural appearance of the Conservation area. Scattered around the churchyard are a number of yew trees, a group of which form a backdrop to the church.

Outside the churchyard, there is an important group of trees to the east within the garden of Fingest House, where a fine group of yews adds to the sylvan character of this particular area. Across Fingest Lane, where the Turville Road joins the main road, there is another grouping of yews.

Elsewhere in the conservation area, smaller trees and hedges are important in the more expansive grouping along Chequers Lane. Here too, front gardens make an important contribution to the

character, particularly outside the Glebe Barn conversions, where the gardens are only separated from open space by low walls. To the north, tall roadside hedges add to the rural quality.

OPEN SPACE

There are a few areas of open space in the conservation area. The village green (historically known as The Cart Hovel Ground) lies between the churchyard and Fingest House, creating a little oasis of grass surrounded by vegetation. This is registered common ground. It is adjacent to the main road and is not therefore particularly peaceful. A key function of this open space is as a link between the main centre of the conservation area and Fingest House.

Along Chequers Road and adjacent to the church walls is a wide well-maintained verge, which is echoed on the other side of the road outside Glebe Barns. These areas are also registered common ground and serve to open up the conservation area. There are seats here, and a listed telephone box.

Important private open space is found in the churchyard itself, which continues this feeling of openness, and behind it the grounds of Fingest Manor, the open countryside and the beech hangers on the hillside provide a fine rural setting for the village.

GROUPING

The whole village can be seen as a group, clustered around the churchyard, and as such is visually coherent. However, within this a loose-knit group can be identified. This consists of Church Cottage, Nos 1 and 2 Chequers Lane, the Barn conversions and the Old Rectory. Although displaying a diversity of styles and materials, the houses are tied together by the open space and front gardens opposite the church walls and make a coherent and visually pleasing group.

The alignment of these properties and their relationship to each other, their similarities of scale and the range of building styles all serve to contribute to the character of the village.

Along Fingest Lane, although the houses are aligned and are of similar sizes, no particular grouping can be identified. This is because the houses cannot be viewed as a coherent group, due to the line of the road and the layout of the buildings.

VIEWS

There are many attractive views within the conservation area, some of which are marked on the conservation area survey map. Looking south from the churchyard views down the Hambleton valley can be glimpsed between the buildings. Looking east across to the identified grouping at Church Cottage, a fine view of the buildings with the range of roof shapes is enhanced by the backdrop of the wooded hillside and fields. Other views of the surrounding countryside are visible from the road outside Fingest Farm, through the farmyard itself, and from outside Fingest House, across the valley floor where there is a particularly fine copper beech tree.

Views within the conservation area are equally important - the fine church can be seen from most of the conservation area, with a backdrop of cottages. Looking down Chequers Road towards the public house, the view opens up as the road widens, taking in Church Cottage, the barns, the Old Rectory and the area of open space, with the bright red phone box providing a focal point.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ADVICE

The policies and proposals of the Wycombe District Local Plan are the primary source of reference for development control advice. In addition, the Council's approved Heritage Strategy is seen as a supporting document to the plan.

This character survey is also intended to provide broad guidance of an informal nature in considering new development in the conservation area. Below is a brief check-list taking account of the above text.

To safeguard, preserve and enhance the appearance and special character of Fingest Conservation Area:-

- In the conservation area, higher standards of design are required, as it is the function of the planning authority to consider all applications as to whether they preserve or enhance the special character as identified in this appraisal.
- Listed and other significant buildings are identified on the survey map, and their specific qualities are described in the text above. Any new development must not harm their integrity or visual quality, and it should be recognised that new development may always not be acceptable.
- Applications for development adjoining but beyond the conservation area boundary will be assessed for their effect upon it, and may be refused permission if this is considered adverse.
- Any new building works, such as extensions, must be designed not as a separate entity, but should be sympathetic in form and scale with the existing buildings and the conservation area as a whole.
- Materials for any new building works must be sympathetic to the character of the conservation area. In Fingest there is a predominant use of red and chequer brick and clay tile. There is also use of flint with brick dressings.
- Surfacing within domestic curtilages for driveways and the like should be in keeping with the rural nature of the village, and of an informal type. Large areas of tarmac and concrete are out of place in this rural setting. Regular paving, pavements and setts may also look discordant, and may not always be appropriate.
- Inappropriate replacement windows and doors can damage the character of the conservation area. Traditional natural materials should be used in order to safeguard the special character of the conservation area. Generally speaking, painted timber, small-pane windows and timber painted doors, either vertical plank or panel doors, are appropriate to historic dwellings while modern substitute materials such as uPVC and aluminium are not.
- Areas of open space, and gaps between buildings will be carefully considered for protection from development or enclosure in order to protect the character of Fingest Conservation Area, the setting of listed buildings, and any important views, particularly those identified in the text and on the map.
- All trees in conservation areas are protected, but special consideration should be given to those trees indicated on the conservation area to ensure that they are not harmed. New development should recognise this, and not present a risk to their continued future growth and habit.
- Although hedges cannot be specially protected through legislation, those hedgerows indicated on the character survey map should be retained and, where possible, enhanced.
- Special care must be taken to ensure that views looking into and out from the conservation area are not spoilt. Those of particular importance are marked on the survey map.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Wycombe District Council's Planning, Transport and Development Service has a number of publications which offer further guidance. Ask the Conservation Officer for information on which Heritage Guidance Notes are currently available and appropriate.

The **Conservation Officer** is always pleased to give advice on all heritage matters and can be contacted on 01494 421578, or seen by appointment in the Council Offices or on site.

Development Control matters within the Fingest Conservation Area are the responsibility of the **West Team**, who can be contacted on 01494 421531.

Planning Policy matters are the responsibility of the **Policy Unit**, who can be contacted on 01494 421545.