

CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT

BISHAM

Planning Policy Manager

June 1995



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1. History

- 1.1 The earliest archaeological remains found in Bisham are a quantity of flint flakes and implements found in Town Field to the north-east of the abbey site. These indicate that there may have been a "flint factory" in the vicinity of the present village, dating to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. It is likely that the proximity of the River Thames and the occurrence of rich agricultural soil together with good supplies of naturally occurring flint attracted early settlers to this area and the archaeological evidence suggests there may well have been some trade in flint implements.
- 1.2 Although some Roman pottery has been found on the land to the north of the abbey, there is no other evidence available to suggest Roman occupation at Bisham. The first mention of Bisham in written sources is in the Domesday Book in 1086 when the settlement was known as "Bistesham" or "Bustleham". At this time the Manor of Bisham was in the lordship of Henry de Ferres and it was his grandson, Robert de Ferres who was responsible for granting the manor to the Knights Templar during the reign of King Stephen (1135-1154). The abbey was occupied by the order until their dissolution in 1307. The oldest surviving part of the house was constructed during the later periods of the Templar's tenure and include the great hall, used by the Templars as their preceptory, the stone roofed porch and other remains which may have been the kitchen block and attached offices.
- 1.3 In 1337 an Augustinian priory, dedicated to Jesus Christ and St Mary, was founded on the site and the priory remained Augustinian until its dissolution in 1536. It was then briefly refounded in 1537 as a Benedictine abbey but again surrendered in 1538, subsequently returning to lay ownership by becoming the home of the Hoby family in 1553. No trace of the Augustinian priory buildings survive above ground although they are visible as parch marks on the lawns in dry summers surviving as buried features to the north east of the main building.
- 1.4 Bisham Abbey is a rare example of a religious house occupied successively by three different monastic orders, followed by a succession of lay owners all of whom carried out their own individual alterations and additions to the buildings thus making them quite complex and not easy to understand. Within the grounds of the abbey are a series of impressive agricultural buildings, many of which have now been converted to residential accommodation, which symbolise the close relationship the abbey had with agriculture, as it operated as a farming community as well as taking up its manorial tithes. Many of the buildings date from the 15th and 16th centuries including the circular dovecote and stables attributed to the early 16th century when Margaret, Countess of Salisbury spent some time at Bisham. The Hoby family held Bisham for more than two centuries until 1766 and it is during this period that the majority of estate cottages were probably constructed in the main street immediately outside the abbey's main entrance, although it is likely that these replaced earlier buildings. After 1766 the estate was passed to Sir John Mills, the first cousin of Sir Philip Hoby, and on the death of Sir John, the estate was sold to George Vansittart. Following the death of George Vansittart's grandson the estate was passed to his cousin Edward

Vansittart-Neale who started selling off parts of the estate. In 1947 Miss Vansittart-Neale loaned the abbey to the Council of Physical Recreation and it is still in operation as the National Sports Centre to this present day. Many of the estate cottages are still in a single private ownership and are tenanted.

- 1.5 During its long history the abbey has had several visits from royalty and other eminent families. It is thought that Edward III laid the foundation stone for Bisham Priory in 1337, whilst Henry VIII played quite an influential role in the abbey's history in the 16th century, by conferring Bisham on his discarded wife, Anne of Cleves. It is also believed that after putting to death Margaret, the Countess of Salisbury, Henry may have used the manor as a hunting lodge. There is no evidence that Anne of Cleves ever resided at Bisham and in 1552 she was ordered to exchange the manor in order that Edward VI could confer Bisham on Sir Philip Hoby, a diplomat. Queen Elizabeth I is thought to have visited Bisham to watch a masque organised by Lady Russell in 1592 and later still James I may have been a guest of the Hobys. Queen Victoria once drove to the door of the abbey unexpectedly and the footman being unable to find the doorbell she drove away in disgust. A different variety of famous people now visit the abbey in the form of the country's leading sports players.
- 1.6 Although the abbey has played the dominant role in influencing the history and development of Bisham there are some other aspects of the village's history that should also be mentioned. All Saints Church, which sits on the banks of the River Thames was mentioned in the Domesday Survey, although the oldest part of the structure that now survives is the western tower which dates from the 12th century. Much of the remainder of the fabric was constructed over a period of time by the Hoby family including the fine chapel built by Lady Hoby in memory of her first husband Sir Thomas, and his brother Sir Philip Hoby. Another memorial to Lady Hoby and her children is nationally famous and many visitors go to the church to admire these memorials. There is a clear connection between the church and abbey which existed during the period when the abbey was in lay ownership. Much of the church has been restored during the 19th century, although the Hoby Chapel has remained relatively unaltered. Opposite the church is the village school which was established in the late 19th century. A single farmstead called Town Farm which possibly operated independently of the abbey's vast agricultural complex still survives at the northern end of the older part of the village.
- 1.7 Records indicate that there has always been a river crossing or bridge at Marlow since the medieval period. No physical remains of earlier structures are known to survive, however, the present bridge dates from the early 19th century and is a fine example of a suspended bridge. During the latter half of the 19th century and through into the 20th century, various properties were established along the Marlow Road to the north of the main village centre, effectively elongating the settlement and linking it up to the river and the bridge at Marlow. The most influential of these buildings is Stoney Ware, a late Victorian mansion set in its own extensive grounds along the banks of the river. The house remains, together with some of its original service buildings which have been converted into separate dwellings. The grounds have also been subdivided into smaller residential plots to provide several new houses. The Compleat Angler Hotel, a now predominantly mock-Georgian style building is also an influential

building dominating the river bank immediately to the north of Marlow Bridge. Other buildings of a variety of different sizes, and architectural styles but all generally detached characterised this end of the village which although it is not as old as the southern end of Bisham still plays a part in the village's evolution particularly with the settlement's relationship to the river.

2. Topography and Street Patterns

- 2.1 The settlement of Bisham is situated in an area of flat river flood plain abutting the south eastern bank of the River Thames. The flood plain area is approximately 500m wide and this meets the steep chalk scarp slope of Quarry Woods/Winter Hill which runs parallel to the river on the south/eastern side and rise to a height of 100m. The Quarry Wood escarpment is heavily wooded which is in contrast to the open fields of the agricultural land in the flood plain.
- 2.2 On the north/eastern bank of the Thames the village faces a wider flood plain area backed by the gentle rising slopes of the Chilterns. Marlow lies immediately north of the river bridge.
- 2.3 The settlement developed along what was the principal road leading from the bridging point of the Thames at Marlow towards the A4 Bath Road at Knowl Hill and thus routes to the west of the country. This function as the principal route and bridging point has now been taken over by the A404 Marlow Bypass constructed in the early 1970s which is now an extremely busy dual carriageway lying to the east of the village at the foot of the Quarry Wood slope. The road into the village now leads off a roundabout on the A404.
- 2.4 The form of the settlement is linear, although taking a series of bends, with a focus at either end; one around the abbey and at the northern end, around the bridge leading to Marlow.
- 2.5 At the entrance to the village from the south the land lying to the west of the road up to the river bank is occupied by Bisham Abbey and its associated buildings and grounds. A narrow lane known as Temple Lane leads off the Marlow Road and skirts the abbey complex leading to the settlement at Temple. The abbey is set in extensive grounds and the complex also includes some residential properties that are reached via Temple Lane and Abbey Way. These properties include a mixture of long established houses, properties formed by the conversion of former abbey outbuildings, and new houses. They are characterised by large secluded plots and heavily landscaped grounds.
- 2.6 As Marlow Road continues north past the abbey entrance the heart of the original village is reached. This comprises a range of small, principally terraced, cottages each side of the road. Those on the west side of the road include several terraces set back from the road edge with long front garden areas and low front walls, but other buildings including most of the east side of the road front directly onto the pavement edge.

- 2.7 Three roads/tracks lead off to the east of the principal road in this section. At the entrance to the village a track serves the small Bisham Green terrace and then continues east, now as a footpath, to the Under the Wood Cottages that are now separated from the village by the Bypass . Towards the centre of the village Bisham Court lies to the east of Marlow Road. This is a development constructed in the early 1970s which has continued the pattern of small terraced houses in this part of the village. The third road, Vansittart Road leads to a small group of semi-detached houses that lie to the rear of the main street and lie centrally within fairly large garden plots.
- 2.8 At the northern end of the 'village' section the road takes a 90° turn to run along the edge of the abbey sports ground. On the outer corner of the bend is Town Farm which is still a working farm complex, that farms most of the flood plain land.
- 2.9 The road turns from the Town Farm corner to run back towards the river with open land on each side bounded by hedges. The road turns through another 90° and at this point the village school and church lie along a track to the west of the road running down towards the river. The church has a prominent riverside site.
- 2.10 From the church/school corner the road continues almost parallel to the river to the Marlow Bridge. For about half this length the eastern edge of the road is bordered by open agricultural land while opposite there is the school playing field and then the Stoney Ware complex. The overall character of this area is of large houses set in extensive grounds. From the Marlow Road frontage the Stoney Ware site is enclosed by close boarded timber fences with the houses served off and fronting onto the internal road. Several of the houses in Stoney Ware have prominent riverside frontages and are particularly significant from the river and opposite bank of the Thames.
- 2.11 The final section of the settlement is the grouping of properties around the approach to Marlow Bridge. These properties are principally detached, those on the east side larger than those on the west . These properties are generally set back and are slightly lower than the level of the road, behind walls/hedges/fences. On the western side Marlow Bridge Lane leads off from the bridge foot to serve Rivermead Court, a modern riverside scheme on the site of a former boatyard, and several small cottages and large Edwardian houses that front onto the river edge. On the eastern side of Marlow Road, Quarry Wood road leads off from the bridge foot area, and in a prominent riverside location on its northern side are the extensive range of buildings of the Compleat Angler Hotel

3. **Chief Architectural Features**

- 3.1 Bisham Conservation Area contains a variety of different building types dating from the Norman period through to the late 20th century some of which are of particularly fine quality. The number of different periods of architecture are characterised by a series of different building styles and materials reflecting the various stages of the

village's development. The most important buildings belong to the abbey complex which stand alone as a unique group of buildings setting the standard of the form of vernacular tradition of the village.

- 3.2 The abbey building itself is a complicated structure reflecting the continuous occupation of it from the 13th century, its different uses and the different trends in architectural fashion through the years. It is constructed from a variety of locally produced materials but the oldest part of the building is principally constructed in chalk blocks from local quarries in the hills immediately to the east of the village. Clay tiles have been used to cover the many different roof lines.
- 3.3 In the immediate vicinity of the main building are a large block of stables, a dovecote, a boathouse, staff workshops, greenhouses and the modern indoor sports building. The modern sports centre was built in brick and concrete, its very stark and functional design cannot be seen outside the abbey precincts apart from the high brick east elevation which is glimpsed from the bypass outside the conservation area.
- 3.4 Many of the buildings originally forming part of the abbey complex are now in individual ownerships and these include several agricultural buildings once associated with the abbey. All the older buildings in this group are grade II listed and the most important, the Tithe Barn is grade II*. This is an impressive structure of massive dimensions, partially converted to residential use and built in timber frame with chalk and stone walls and a gabled clay tile roof. Non-agricultural buildings are also found in this group. The Grange, Middle House and Tithe Barn Cottage all represent a typical range of flint, chalk and brick dwellings. Unlike the residential element of this group, which are mainly of 2 to 2½ storeys with timber fenestration of normal domestic proportions, the converted agricultural buildings display more functional style fenestration typified by large undivided areas of glazing. These buildings are also generally single storey reflecting their original single volume function, but where a second storey has been inserted in the roof space this has necessitated the introduction of rooflights. The form of these conversions is reflected in the design of the group of modern houses to the south-east of the Tithe Barn, built in the 1970's which reflect the functionality of the agricultural buildings that surround them, but are relatively low key so that they do not conflict with the older buildings being constructed in predominantly dark materials. The Granary is a particularly unusual contemporary building which looks more like an oast house than its name would imply.
- 3.5 Immediately to the north of the main entrance to the abbey, is the core of the village and its series of estate cottages which line both the northern and southern sides of the Marlow Road. These cottages are generally 1½ + 2 storeys of brick and timber frame construction, in rows of terraces, some up to 13 dwellings in length, with old clay tiled roofs. The majority of these buildings are listed grade II and although individually different in age and structure have an overall unified appearance in the street suggesting that they may all have been upgraded to a certain standard in the 18th or early 19th century. Certain architectural features are special to specific groups whilst others are generally typical to all of them. General characteristics include construction in the local orange-red brick or its use in combination with timber-frame, casement

windows of mainly timber construction with thin glazing bars, simple solid timber planked doors without any porches or door hoods, brick chimneys of varying heights and shapes, small gabled dormer windows with weatherboarded or brick infill panels above the windows and they were all originally 2 bays in plan form (one bay to the front of the cottage and one to the rear). Some have external wooden shutters, whilst Nos 10 - 15 have unusual gothic headed wooden casements, and Nos 38 + 39 have partial rendering to the front gables and particularly high brick chimneys .

- 3.6 The best example of an externally visible timber framed building in Bisham is Town Farmhouse which is virtually square in plan and 2½ storeys high and displays very square frames with brick infill panels and a high hipped tiled roof. Tile as a roof covering is the dominant roof covering in the village, although most of the buildings including the abbey itself were probably originally thatched. Slate has been used on a few buildings particularly in the northern end of the village, whilst, thatch does occur on Thatch House and Little Croft, two modern buildings in the northern end of the village.
- 3.7 As the village spreads north towards the river crossing, different styles and forms of architecture relating to the later periods of development can be seen. In general, however, the materials used tend to be the same, brick; plain, rendered or painted and tiled roofs. Stoney Ware is a classic example of a late Victorian mansion, which although much altered still has a lot of the original features, different roof shapes, bay windows, decorative tile hanging, tall brick chimneys and mock timber frame on rendered surfaces. The same is true of its outbuildings which front onto the Marlow Road. Three large detached early 20th century houses at the northern end of Marlow Road, White Lodge, The Country House and The Bridge House display similar architectural features despite later extensions; white rendered walls, timber casement windows with multiple glazing bars and high ridged tiled roofs with tiny gablets in the gable apexes. Opposite these three buildings are four smaller 1½ storey detached cottages which were originally built identical with white painted brickwork, tiled gabled roofs of steep pitch with symmetrical front elevations with large central gabled porches and two small dormer windows and metal leaded lights. All these buildings typify the pattern of the northern end of the village which is of detached buildings within their own large grounds, set back from the road or turning their backs on the road and facing the Thames which is the main attraction in this area.

4. **Important Buildings**

- 4.1 Whilst the majority of buildings within the conservation area make a positive contribution to its character and appearance, it is appropriate to identify certain specific buildings that play a particularly important role in contributing towards that character. Their importance may be derived from their historic associations, architectural interest, technological innovations or a combination of factors. Bisham's two principal buildings - the church and the abbey are not visually connected even when seen from the Buckinghamshire side of the river they both border, however, they are both of similar constructional traditions but with different origins.

- 4.2 At the centre of the village is All Saints with its Norman west tower which is almost entirely constructed in chalk blocks apart from the red brick at its parapet, and is clearly visible as a radiant white structure when viewed from the other side of the Thames. The church is grade II* but apart from the late 12th century tower, much was overly restored by various Victorian architects including Benjamin Ferry in 1849. The main body of the church is constructed in flint in stone dressings and is an interesting contrast to the whiteness of the chalk tower. Apart from the important Hoby monuments internally, the church still displays an important example of an early heraldic window dating to 1609. The churchyard which wraps around the church lends a tranquil setting to the church which is amplified by the presence of the river and the rural banks of the Buckinghamshire side. A small 15th century lych gate forms the entrance into the churchyard, this is a simple timber structure with a small tiled roof and was restored in 1965.
- 4.3 Opposite the church is the village primary school with the old school room and attached school master's house, which have existed for just over 100 years. Despite an unattractive modern extension, this building is of characteristic Victorian design with tall multipaned sash windows in both the gable end facing east and the front elevation facing the church, reflecting the high ceilings of the school hall internally. The school hall is constructed from red brick with the typical clay tiled gabled roof and two large dormers next to each other and set into the roof in the front to accommodate the high hall windows with weatherboarding above them. In contrast the school master's house is possibly older, with smooth rendered and painted walls, small curved headed windows, a large off-centre chimney astride a high tiled roof and is of 2 storeys. Other smaller buildings within the school site add to an interesting collection of buildings especially a low single storey outbuilding to the west of the school, with a low eaved hipped roof which culminates in a square timber lantern. The Vicarage and Rosemary Cottage, originally one house, now divided into two are again typical Victorian buildings with tile hanging on gables. At the end of the lane, at its junction with the Marlow Road is a mile post of iron construction which is grade II listed. Two similar posts survive further along this road before it meets up with the A4 to the south of Burchetts Green.
- 4.4 Towards the older part of the village is Abbey Cottage which at one time used to be the village Post Office. Both Abbey Cottage and Bisham Cottage are detached buildings of possibly late 18th century or early 19th century build and are constructed from brick with tiled roofs. Opposite these houses is a small single storey building which sits on the roadside and may have served as a toll house sometime in the past. Next to this, on the northern corner of the Marlow Road, is a single pill box from world warII of concrete construction with eye slits directed towards the church and to the south along the main village street. Town Farm immediately behind these buildings is a working farm which has a grade II listed 17th century timber frame farmhouse as the focus to the farm group. Other older farm buildings that survive are generally timber frame with stained weather boarding and corrugated tin roofs. It is likely that these buildings would have been thatched originally. The cottages behind the tollhouse are of probable 1920's date with rendered exteriors and tiled roofs. This group forms an attractive cluster of buildings at the northern end of the older part of

the village and act as visual link connecting the church, which can be seen from this corner of the Marlow Road, to the village core.

- 4.5 The other major building complex in Bisham is the abbey and its associated buildings. The abbey is principally constructed of chalk blocks and flint walling with three distinctive brick gables with crowsteps and parapets at high level to the main front elevation, as well as some particularly fine chequer boarding patterns in chalk and flint. Other materials include brick work to the tower and some of the kitchen range buildings, exposed timber frame on the west elevation and render on the Vansittart and Warwick Room range with tiled double pitch and lead roof construction. Basically constructed in the 13th century, its present form represents phases of re-building, embellishment, extension and alteration, and the building is now occupied by the Bisham Abbey National Sports Centre. The original form of the building would have been close to a typical manor house of the period with a hall approached by a spacious vaulted porch and screens passage. The screens passage would also have provided access to the offices, solar and kitchen with buttery and pantry to the west of the hall. When in 1551 Edward VI conferred Bisham Abbey to Sir Philip Hoby, the new owner began to refashion it and his successor, Thomas, completed the work, changing the general appearance of the building. Accommodation was provided in 2 storeys on the main entrance side of the hall and a large semi-octagonal bay window on the east side of the Elizabethan Room was added. The north side of the hall was masked externally by a staircase and the Warwick Room and Vansittart Room above. The tower was built about 1560 of brick with stone quoins and dressings and finally a north range of rooms was added which is now the Lawn Tennis Association's range.
- 4.6 The buildings of importance within the grounds of the original abbey complex are numerous and are summarised below:

Dovecote grade I	15th C	Built in chalk & flint of circular plan with conical roof of tiles. Much of interior is intact.	Unused
Stable Cottage, Bell Cottage + Workshops + wall grade II	16th C	Originally built as stables. Built in random chalk and stone with some brick tile gable roof and timber lantern with clock and weather vein on ridge. 1½ storeys high.	Two houses and rooms for visitors and workshops for the Sports Centre.
Tithe Barn grade II*	15th C	Large aisled barn of timber frame and chalk and stone construction with a tiled gable roof. 7 - bays long with midstrey on north-east side.	One end of barn now converted to private residence. Remainder of barn is unused.

The Barn & Dairy grade II	16th C	Separate barn built of timber frame with chalk and stone and brick walls. 4 bays and aisled.	Converted into 2 dwellings.
The Grange grade II	16th C +19th C rebuild	Large house of brick construction with some chalk and flint in rear. Tile, gabled and hipped roof. 2½ storeys with brick stacks with octagonal shafts and moulded tops.	Dwelling.
Middle House grade II	16th C + Rebuilt in 19th C	Probably part of the Grange originally brick with old tile hipped roof 2 storeys with a cellar. Brick chimneys with octagonal shafts and moulded heads.	Dwelling.
Tithe Cottage grade II	Barn 18th C	Small house - built in brick and part tile hung with old tile hipped roof. Attached to the Tithe Barn.	Dwelling

Outside the main entrance to the Abbey itself on the north-east side, is a small lodge built of flint, with brick extensions and particularly decorative barge boards on the gable facing the main road.

- 4.7 Clusters of terraced cottages, dominate the village immediately outside the Abbey's entrance. These are characterised by appearing to be externally of primarily brick construction with some timber frame exposed and clay tiled roofs. They are also all grade II listed. This air of uniformity is synonymous with estate owned properties and it also means that little radical alterations has been carried out on individual buildings. Only where buildings have been sold to private individuals have any of these buildings had major refurbishment or alterations carried out. It is clear, however, that these cottages all vary in date and original form of construction. One clue to this difference in age is those cottages which display timber frame externally. Others only show their real age when looked at internally. One particular group is known to have the remains of a cruck frame inside, indicating a very early date, whilst two other pairs were almost certainly originally hall houses of early 15th century date.
- 4.8 In the northern end of the village, there are no listed buildings apart from Marlow Bridge which is grade I and is a fine example of an early suspension bridge dating

from 1831 - by William Tierney Clark. The iron chains are carried by a pair of stone Doric triumphal arches on rusticated piers and the overall effect provides a very slender structure over the river, providing a pleasing backdrop to other riverside properties like the neo-Georgian style of the Complete Angler Hotel to the east of the bridge. To the west of the bridge are two large Edwardian houses, Rivers Way and Waters Edge, of 2 and 3 storeys which dominate the riverbank in this area. They are both constructed in brick with areas of render and mock timber frame and massive clay tile roofs with ornamental ridge tiles and finials. The windows are timber sashes. Their presence on the river bank is accentuated by two smaller buildings lying between them, one having a roof ridge lantern with a clock in it and the other having an unusually high curved hipped roof on a small square projecting wing. A group of smaller, late Victorian houses are directly behind these two large houses, one of which Waters Edge, is now converted to flats.

5. **Archaeology**

- 5.1 As shown on the conservation area map, the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Bisham Abbey is an extensive area of land and is surrounded on 3 sides by roads and on the north western side by the River Thames itself. Within this scheduled area earthworks still survive of the rectangular moat that once surrounded the abbey and its buildings. The moat would have enclosed an area of some 300m - 400m square and although most of the moat has now been infilled, where it is still visible it is up to 10m wide and is steep sided with an earthen inner bank. The age of the moat is uncertain but it is possible that it belongs to the post Dissolution occupation of the site. Archaeological remains of timber buildings are known to exist within the interior of the site and large amounts of medieval pottery have been recovered from the site.
- 5.2 All the land within the boundary shown on the map is "scheduled" which means that it has significant archaeological interest and proposals to undertake any development which entail disturbing the ground, requires permission from the Department of National Heritage in the form of Scheduled Monument Consent. This is to ensure that the archaeological importance of the site is respected and may require archaeological investigation to be carried out before planning applications can be determined.

6. **Trees and Open Spaces**

- 6.1 The trees in Bisham play an important role in contributing towards the rural feel of the area. The majority of the trees are willow, horse chestnut and beech, and those which run along the bank of the river are particularly important as they provide a green edge to the river bank. Along the river bank adjacent to playing fields at Bisham Abbey there is a strong line of mature willow trees which provide a landmark along the river bank and soften the river bank. The majority of the rest of the trees are less thickly planted to allow glimpses of the buildings beyond. Marlow Road is enclosed by planting of various forms along the majority of its length. Along the stretch past Stoney Ware the greenness of this area is reflected by the use of low hedges along the road side edging the field, and high hedges and trees screen on the western side shielding the buildings. This high tree screen continues to hide the sports fields and new buildings at Bisham Abbey.

- 6.2 Trees also act as a backdrop to many of the properties in Bisham. The thickness and provision of these screens increases the feeling of privacy and seclusion many of the properties have. Many of the open spaces within the village are also screened by trees and hedges, shielding them and proving a backdrop to the rest of the village. There are some trees which stand alone as providing a landmark for the area. Many of the more interesting and magnificent species are found in the grounds of Bisham Abbey. These include a mature beech tree in the front of the Abbey, two beautiful evergreen trees adjacent to the tennis courts and mature wellingtonia and oak trees along the drive.
- 6.3 At the northern end of the village the only open space apart from that contributed by private gardens and the area of parking immediately in front of the Compleat Angler Hotel, is the river itself. Fields immediately to the east of this section of the village particularly at the rear of the Bridge House, the Country House and White Lodge, and opposite Stoney Ware, create a feeling of spaciousness and although they are privately owned, some public footpaths do cross them allowing public access to this open space.
- 6.4 There is a small village green which is dissected by a lane at the southern end of the village immediately to the north of a group of five terraced cottages, Bisham Green which form the entrance to the village from the south. More extensive areas of land to the north and east of the Green including an area of land used for a playground. A former orchard area has recently been acquired by the parish council. Some seats have been placed at intervals along the northern side of the lane but the area is generally left to grow wild which together with the water course running through part of this land contributes towards a rural character in this part of the village. Opposite this area is an island of land formed by the junction of Marlow Road and Temple Lane, and on the grassed area is a stone war memorial which is grade II listed. It was erected in 1917 and was designed by Eric Gill.
- 6.5 The only other area of open space within the old village core itself is the car park belonging to the Bull Inn and a small corner formed at the intersection of Vansittart Road and the Marlow Road where another bench is located. The Churchyard, is located on the banks of the river and not only gives the church an attractive setting but also provides a tranquil riverside area. The largest area of open space in the village is within the grounds of Bisham Abbey, much of which is allocated as sports grounds, tennis courts and hockey pitches which give the abbey building an open landscape setting.

7. Uses

- 7.1 Although the predominant use of the properties in the conservation area is residential, the dominant factor certainly within the older, southern. end of the village is the sports centre. Although the sports facilities are all kept within the grounds of the abbey and are therefore shut away from public views for much of the time, the activities often filter into the village centre through noise, traffic movements etc. The Bull Inn is the other principal commercial activity in the village and Town Farm is still a working

farm. The Church of England Primary School provides a focal point for activity during school term, with parents dropping off and collecting their children.

- 7.2 At the northern end of the village the River Thames provides an attractive setting for the Compleat Angler Hotel which has grounds which run along the banks overlooking Marlow Weir. On the opposite side of the road from the hotel is the Marlow Rowing Club Headquarters, a group of plain functional boathouses surrounded by concrete slipways and parking. The sports facilities within the boathouses are often in use and rowers can often be seen on the Thames. The annual Marlow Regatta is a colourful event which takes place on the Buckinghamshire side of the River but provides much river activity for the benefit of people on both sides of the river. There are numerous boat moorings on the Bisham bank outside Rivermead Court. Other commercially orientated properties include the Bed and Breakfast in The Country House and the nursing home at the neighbouring White Lodge.
- 7.3 The most unfortunate aspect of the village is the busy Marlow Road which provides a near constant flow of traffic and noise. During rush-hours there is often a lot of congestion, with vehicles queuing to cross the Marlow Bridge at the northern end of the village and get around the main by pass roundabout at the southern end. Temple Lane by contrast is a very quiet backwater with local traffic only.

8. Relationship to Countryside and Important Views

- 8.1 The proximity of agricultural fields on the south and east sides of the village and the river on the north and west sides underlines the strong connection the village has to the rural areas around the settlement. Views over the flat fields particularly between the northern and southern ends of the village, gives the visual link between the two parts of the village. Similarly there are some impressive views from the A404 of the village and the river and Marlow beyond it.
- 8.2 The flat topography of the village and the predominance of mature tree screen, means that views within the village itself are quite restricted. They are mainly provided along the Marlow Road and one particularly good view is that from just outside Toll House Lodge north-west along the Marlow Road, to see All Saint's tower over the top of the trees. Within the northern end of the village, the spire of Marlow Parish Church is quite a constant landmark which towers above most of the trees and high roof lines.
- 8.3 By far the best views of the conservation area, or at least of the river frontages, are from the Buckinghamshire side of the River. The Thames footpath runs through Marlow and along the northern riverbank, so that views of the abbey and its grounds, the church and its setting and individual private properties in their grounds can be viewed with the river providing an attractive foreground often with reflected images of the buildings..

9. **Enhancement Opportunities**

- 9.1 The main area of possible improvement is the land belonging to the Parish Council at the southern end of the village around Bisham Green. This land acts as an important rural space within the village, which requires careful management to maintain an appropriate environmental balance. The watercourse that flows through this area of land may also need some attention from time to time.
- 9.2 The area of land which forms a car park for the school and church and also serves as an access road for properties and a public footpath, can become quite dry and dusty in the summer with the constant movement of vehicles over it. Equally in the winter it can get quite muddy. Some improvement of drainage and resurfacing maintaining an appropriate surface for a rural setting should be considered.

10. **Boundaries**

- 10.1 North - The boundary starts from midway across Marlow Bridge and comes towards the river bank and boundary of The Compleat Angler Hotel, which it then follows.
- 10.2 East - The boundary follows the eastern boundary of The Compleat Angler Hotel until reaching Quarry Wood Road, it then follows the northern side of it until cutting across the road to follow the eastern side boundary of Little Weir Cottage and the rear boundaries of The Bridge House to Orchard House. Upon meeting the footpath adjacent to Orchard House it turns 90 degrees to head west towards the Marlow Road. It then follows the eastern edge of the Marlow Road. It continues to follow the road on this side around the corner until meeting Warren Cottage. At Warren Cottage the boundary heads north to follow the boundaries of Warren Cottage. It follows the northern edge of the track leading to Town Farm and then turns northwards again to follow the boundary around the buildings at Town Farm. It then follows the boundary around the farm heading southwards and including the field between Town Farm and Vansittart Road. The boundary then follows the rear boundaries of 4 Vansittart Road to 14 Bisham Court, and then follows the boundary of the field adjacent to Bisham Court. It then cuts across the track, which serves as the entrance to the Bisham Green properties.
- 10.3 South - The boundary follows the south eastern edge of the play ground and continues to follow the rear boundary line of the properties on Bisham Green. Upon meeting the Marlow road the boundary cuts straight across and follows the eastern edge of the road, running along the boundary of the neighbouring field northwards. It is this field boundary which it follows to the rear of the war memorial and then turns to head southwards along the edge of Temple Lane, around the bend by 90° and then heads towards the river. At the bend in the road where Grange Cottage is sited the boundary cuts directly across the road and the field, adjacent to Grange Cottage, to meet and follow the northern boundary of the boat houses on the river bank.
- 10.4 West - The boundary follows the eastern side of river bank from Grange Cottage up to Marlow Bridge. It follows the edge of Marlow Bridge to include half of the bridge closest to Bisham.