

Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Rapid Community Character and Distinctiveness Statement

Revised September 2020 for Submission with the Neighbourhood Plan

Contents

Introduction	3	Historic Maps reproduced with kind permission of Wiltshire and Swindon Archives
Section A Heritage	4	Photos by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Place Studio and extracted from Google Maps
Introduction	4	Thank you to Visit Melksham and Melksham and District Historical Association who have contributed to this document.
Heritage Policy Context	4	
Historic Development and Settlement Form	5	www.visit-melksham.com
Melksham Conservation Area	10	www.melkshamhistoricalassociation.org/index.asp
Listed Buildings	11	
Locally Important Heritage Assets and Areas	12	
Section B Built Form: Positive and Distinct Characteristics	18	
Introduction	18	
Policy Context	18	
Settlement Form	21	
Landscape and Green Space	22	
Building Layout and Design	23	
Gardens and Boundaries	27	
Open Frontages, Green Space and Trees	28	
Rural Settlements	29	
Appendix 1 Heritage	32	
Appendix 2 Character Area Surveys	34	

Introduction

This document forms an appendix to the Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan (2020-2030) and supports the delivery of Policy 16 Landscape Character, Policy 17 Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design, and Policy 18 Local Heritage.

Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council jointly support development within their parishes that protects, conserves, enhances and extends the positive and distinctive characteristics and attractiveness of the town and its surrounding settlements.

The document has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with the support of plan consultants, Place Studio.

It is written to help and inform successful distinct development design. It should be read by those promoting development and those assessing proposals. Its two sections provide the reader with information specific to Melksham and Melksham Without about:

- Section A The history, heritage designations designated and locally treasured heritage assets
- Section B The positive and distinctive characteristics of the built and natural environment that the community consider

to make Melksham a special place for its residents.

The assessment methodology used in section B gives a broad-brush overview of townscape characteristics and heritage assets across the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Character areas and types were identified and assessed using survey forms that were then prepared enable Steering Group members to undertake rapid assessments of character areas, to identify positive and distinct transferable characteristics across the Neighbourhood Area.

Development applicants should demonstrate how their proposals have referenced and interpreted positive townscape characteristics highlighted in this report to achieve positive locally distinct development.

The document should be read together with other reports in the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base, notably the Green Infrastructure Evidence Base Report and Local Landscape Character Evidence Base Report.

Section A Heritage

Introduction

Section A focuses on the heritage value of Melksham and Melksham Without.

Much of the text in this section is extracted from the Melksham Tourist Information website, the Melksham and District Historical Association website (<http://www.melkshamhistoricalassociation.org/contact.asp> and <http://www.visit-melksham.com/melksham-information/history-melksham>), and 'Around Melksham in old Photographs' by the Melksham and District Historical Association.

More detail and information on history is included in Appendix 1.

Heritage Policy Context

Section 16 of the NPPF – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment - sets out how heritage assets are "an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations" (para 184).

Further guidance is contained in the Planning Practice Guidance Note – Historic Environment (July 2019).

Heritage assets are defined in the Wiltshire Core Strategy as:

- listed buildings
- conservation areas
- scheduled ancient monuments
- registered parks and gardens
- registered battlefields
- world heritage sites
- non-designated heritage assets such as buildings and archaeological sites of regional and local interest.

Wiltshire Core Policy 58 - Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment Assets - states development "should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment." All heritage assets are covered as well as 'non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity' will be conserved, and where possible enhanced.

Historic Development and Settlement Form

Melksham

Historic Development

The origins of the settlement lie in its location at the fording point of the river, fertile land and elevation above the river flood level. The name 'Melksham' is believed to come from the old English 'meoloc' meaning 'milk'. As the name implies, the area has long been associated with pasture and dairy farming.

From its beginning Melksham focused around Church Walk and the Market Place, the town of Melksham initially grew and infilled along its arterial roads such as Lowbourne, Forest Road and Spa Road, responding to its position on the coach route between London and Bath. These routes still reflect this linear, organic and informal form of Melksham's historic development, containing buildings ranging in age from former farms and rural cottages, Georgian town houses and terraces, Victorian villas and cottages, to infill development of the 20th and 21st centuries.



Figure 1: Melksham Town Historic Map Regression

20th & 21st Century Development

Later public and private 20th and 21st Century housing estates have added a further development form to Melksham. These are largely constructed in clusters that individually or in groups form distinct neighbourhood groups located between the arterial routes to the south and east of the town centre, Bowerhill to the south and Roundponds to the north-west.

Settlements in the Rural Parish of Melksham Without Whitley and Shaw

The parish of Melksham Without was created under the Local Government Act of 1894 which divided the ancient parish of Melksham into Melksham Within (the town or urban district council area) and the rural Melksham Without. Parts of Melksham Without, adjacent to the town, were subsequently transferred to Melksham Within in 1914 and 1934, 1964, 1991 and 2017. In the past, the three villages in the north; Beanacre, Shaw and Whitley were ancient centres of population.

Whitley was probably settled around the same time as Shaw and the origin of both names means a white clearing or wood / copse. There would appear to be three settlements - Upper, Middle and Lower - linked together by the route from Atworth to Lacock. Although Whitley is mentioned as a manor in 1546 it is unlikely to have been one and was probably an estate. Whitley House dates from the 17th century and it could have replaced an earlier building.

Medieval Shaw was a small community centred on its manor house and the chapel here seems to have had more to do with the barony of Castle Combe than local needs. The settlement remained small and rural but by the 17th century there were a reasonable number of houses.

In the mid-17th century it became a stronghold of the Society

of Friends with Quakers travelling from around the area to meetings here. The population grew during the 19th century and a church and school were provided. In Shaw in the 1870s there was a post office, a grocer, a brewer and two coal merchants and the postmaster also made shoes. In the latter part of the 20th century there was more building on and around Shaw Hill.

Beanacre

Beanacre [Bennecar/Benecar] (bean field) is the ribbon development, interspersed with open frontages, along the busy, main A350 between the northern boundary of the town of Melksham and the village of Lacock.

It is one of the oldest settlements in the area, first mentioned in estate records of 1275, the earliest surviving dwelling is the Grade I listed Old Manor which lies off the Old Road. Its wooded grounds screen it from the railway, which came in 1848, running to the West roughly parallel to the main road. Adjacent are the Manor, Manor Farmhouse and associated structures which are all Grade II listed. On the East of the A350, and hidden by the tall trees and hedgerows of its extensive grounds, is the Grade II listed Beechfield House, built in 1870 for a local gentleman farmer and now converted to a luxury hotel. The valley of the winding River Avon with its floodplain is beyond on this Eastern side.

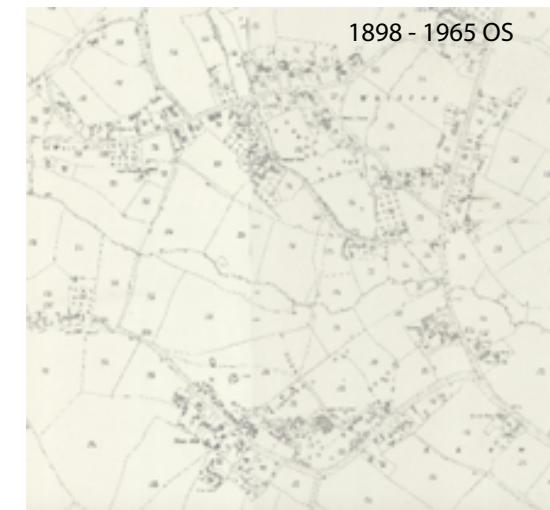
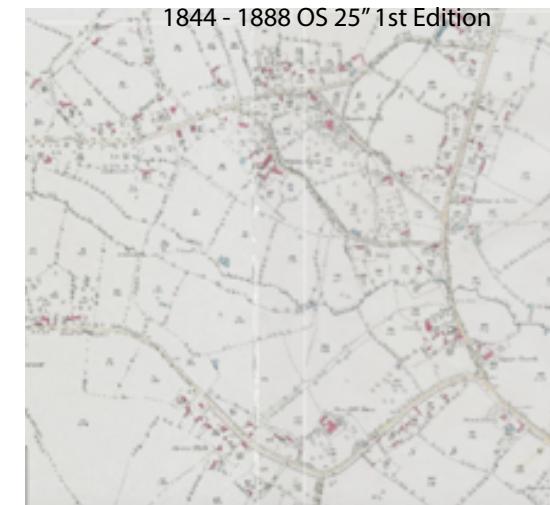


Figure 2: Whitley and Shaw Historic Map Regression

There are few common features in Beanacre's housing except that most is in natural stone. Different in material, uniformity and scale is the isolated terrace of 19th Century 'Burnt Cottages' at the South end, and a second, similar redbrick terrace of cottages, also on West side, but in the village centre opposite the former public house building. Next to the field beyond the Old Road is 'The Walnuts', a substantial Grade II listed former doctor's house behind a massive wall & hedge. The small, also Grade II listed, Beanacre Church, built in 1886, lies just past this and has an unusual front churchyard wall, built in part stone and part brick, with a playground plus wild area adjacent and cricket field behind.

Berryfields

Berryfields lies west of the A350 running south and consists of the old A350 road named Semington Road which runs for 600 yds north south from Western Way to Outmarsh. Along its sides are around 150 houses built between 1800 to 2019. A current development of 150 Bellway homes on the eastern side of Semington Road commenced in October 2018. Halfway along Semington Road by the New Inn pub built to cater for the navvies that constructed the Wilts. & Berks. canal you find a right turn into Berryfield Park, Winston Road, Padfield Gardens, Berryfield Lane, Berryfield Close, Elizabeth Close and Holbrook Vale.

There are significant views around Berryfields with rolling countryside on three sides. Holbrook Vale draws your eye west to the river Avon and its medieval Pack Horse bridge and the ancient Hide of Whaddon. The end of Semington Road(south) looks out across unbroken green fields to the heights around the city of Bath, particularly pleasing to see the lights at night.

Bowerhill

Bowerhill is the largest of all the settlements in Melksham Without Parish and was a rural area until early in 1940 when work began on a new RAF station. Towards the end of the Second World War a large number of Royal Naval Air Service mechanics were trained here and after the war, RAF Melksham resumed its Electrical and Instrument courses and continued with these and other education programmes until the early 1970s.

After the departure of the RAF, the site saw a mixture of industrial, commercial and residential use, with much development in the 1980s. Its history is remembered in the area's street names, many of which are taken from historical aircraft. These include Falcon Way, Lancaster Road and Fulmar Close.

It has a population of around 3,000 people and continues to grow with the most recent developments including Hunter's Meadow and Pathfinder Place.

Detailed observations of the rural settlements and neighbourhoods of the Plan Area can be found in appendix 2 in detailed surveys that were undertaken as part of preparing this document.

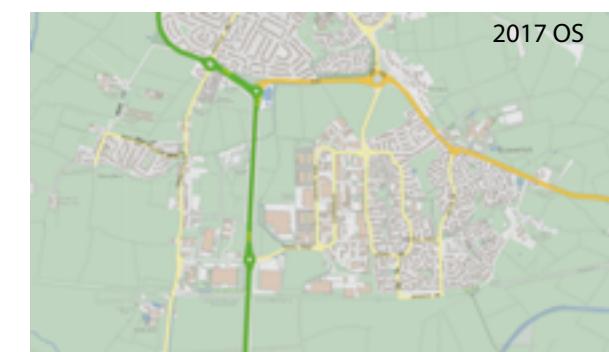
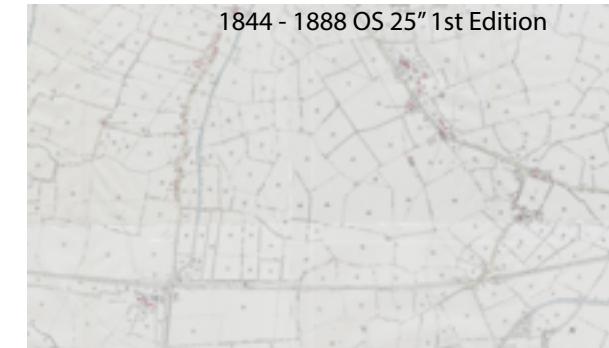


Figure 3: Bowerhill Historic Map Regression

Melksham Conservation Area

Since the Civic Amenities Act 1967, over 9,000 Conservation Areas have been designated as areas of special architectural or historic interest in England, and the centre of Melksham Town is a designated Conservation Area. A Conservation Area is, in law, an area of special architectural and historic interest. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Planning Authorities to pay special attention to the 'preserving or enhancing the character or appearance' of a Conservation Area.

A study of the key features of character was undertaken in 2006 as an Urban Design Study. This study which identified the special characteristics of the Town by looking at vistas, distinguished buildings, groups of buildings and the spaces between buildings. It also included suggested enhancements and improvement projects.

The earliest buildings to be found in the town are of the 17th century with many examples in Church Walk. The other key area is the Market Place which is thought to be medieval in origin dating to 13th Century when in 1219 the first recorded market and fair was granted. The Town Hall is located in the Market Place which was recently the subject of investment and public realm improvement works.



Above: Market Place and the Town Hall – a key space in the Conservation Area



Above: The War Memorial, Canon Square – a key space in the Conservation Area

The Conservation Area of Melksham has no associated Appraisal or Management Plan. This would provide a record of an area's special architectural or historic interest, and set out how the area or place has evolved and identify the key features of its character that have helped to justify its designation as a Conservation Area.

Listed Buildings

Listing marks and celebrates a building's special architectural and historic interest, and also brings it under the consideration of the planning system, so that it can be protected for future generations.

- Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest, only 2.5% of listed buildings are Grade I
- Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest; 5.8% of listed buildings are Grade II*
- Grade II buildings are of special interest; 91.7% of all listed buildings are in this class and it is the most likely grade of listing for a home owner.

There is one grade I listed building in the plan area – Beanacre Old Manor house, a late C14 to early C18 building. Other listed buildings and structures in the Plan area are generally

grade II. There are over 70 listed buildings and structures in the Parish and over 150 in the town - the majority of which are in the Conservation Area. See Figure 4 and the Historic England website (historicengland.org.uk/listing) for more



14 Church Walk



Hightfield House, 23 Union Street



14 Church Walk

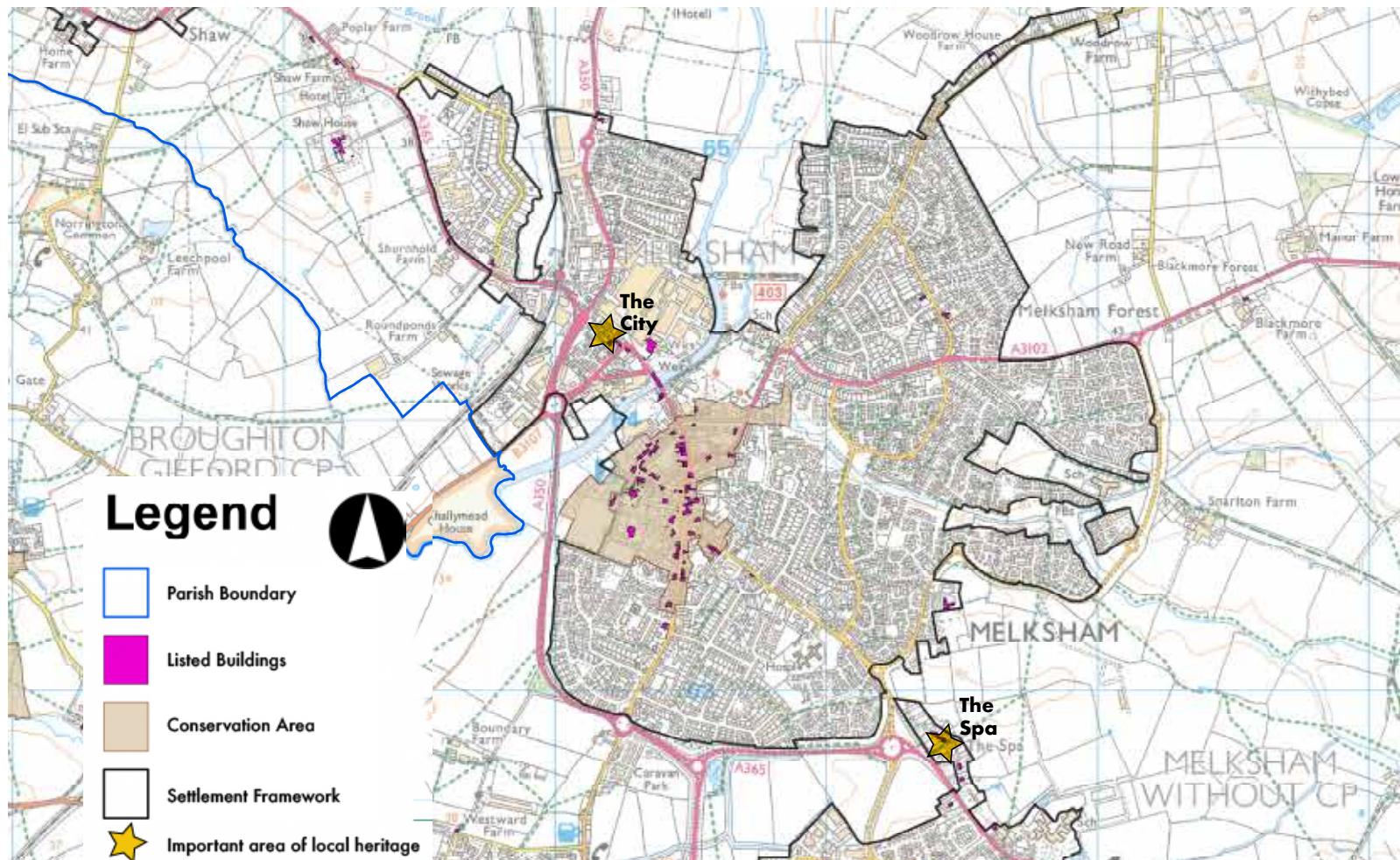


Melksham Conservative Club, Bank Street

Above: Selection of Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area, taken from Melksham Urban Design Study 2006

Locally Important Heritage Assets and Areas

Figure 4: Conservation Area and Important Areas of Local Heritage outside of the Conservation Area



Important Areas of Local Heritage

Important areas of local heritage interest are defined by their historical and architectural interest and their area or group integrity.

The Spa

The Spa is about 1 mile from Melksham town centre on the A365 Devizes Road. Its name originated from the discovery of saline springs on the Devizes road out of Melksham in 1813 and the water was found to have properties thought to cure various ills. In 1815, the Melksham Spa Company was formed which led to the building of a pump room and three prominent boarding houses in preparation for an influx of visitors to partake of the claimed medicinal benefits. The crescent of six houses on the north side of the road show the original attempt to rival nearby Bath. People came to take the waters for a while but the fashionable Bath meant that the efforts at Melksham were doomed to failure.

An early nineteenth century book entitled The Melksham Guide prophesied that Melksham "... will increase in extent and respectability and soon become a celebrated watering place and a resort of beauty, wealth and fashion" However, efforts to imitate Bath were short lived and by 1822 interest



Figure 5: Listed Buildings in The Spa, shown in pink

in the waters had declined. This area has been surveyed by the Neighbourhood Plan steering group as part of the work to prepare this statement. Key points from the survey are set out below.

Key Characteristics

- This is one of the most distinctive parts of Melksham, and there have been calls for The Spa to become a conservation area.
- A single straight street partly a cul-de-sac having been “by-passed” in the 1970s. It has footpath/housing on one side only and has trees / green verge on the other side.
- Houses are enclosed with hedgerows and are a mixture of 1930’s semis and Georgian detached and semis detached with some 1970’s bungalows.
- Houses are set back from the road with gardens and driveways.
- Although the Georgian semi-detached houses are unusual (in this area), the buildings very much demonstrate the archetypal architecture of their period, with ashlar front and sides; rubblestone to rear, Welsh slate hipped roof, ashlar and brick stacks. Three of the pairs are over 4 storeys, there are 4 windows to each storey and there is a further 2 storey building

- The three pairs of attached Georgian buildings are highly distinctive, grade II listed with very long verdant front gardens
- The area might be termed very “leafy” in comparison to Melksham generally
- Very little vehicular traffic within the cul-de-sac, but busier on the A365. Some parking within the cul-de-sac, but most properties have driveways/off-street parking.
- There is high level of pedestrian traffic at school start and



Above: 'The Spa' taken from The Melksham Guide, 1814. The image above is an architectural rendering produced before the buildings in The Spa were built.

The City

The area of housing for industrial workers known as 'The City' is likely to date from the 17th century when the town expanded to the north of the river for the first time. A few buildings still survive including an old pub (The Red Lion), now vacant, and a row of attached cottages, built in early 18th century of rubblestone with a stone slate roof. The Red Lion Public House building is Grade II listed.



Figure 6: The City Historic Map Regression

Wilts & Berks Canal

The historic alignment of the Wilts and Berks Canal through Melksham is no longer suitable for reinstatement as a canal, and an alternative route has been identified (see Wiltshire Core Policy 16: Melksham Link Project – this is a live planning application). However the historic line through Melksham can still be followed, and the identification of the route and historical significance is underpinned by a local walking routes (Walking Melksham's Lost Waterways). Figure 2 to the right is extracted from the 1844 – 1888 OS 25" 1st Edition and shows the canal to the right of the core of the town centre.



Figure 7 (left above): The W&B Canal can be seen to the right of the core of the Town Centre

Locally Significant Undesignated Heritage Assets

Alongside of the buildings that are listed as being of national heritage or architectural importance, there are many buildings that are of local importance. There are many buildings built of local stone in a traditional style and when seen together they make a 'high contribution to the whole character of the street scene and give the town centre a feeling of completeness'

Melksham Urban Design Study 2006.

The 2006 Study identified a number of buildings in the town centre as noteworthy stone buildings. These are mapped in Figure 8 to the right and include The Bear Public House, buildings in Bath Road adjacent and the Alba Italian restaurant building.

Note: Extensive detail about the historic environment is contained within the Historic Environment Record (HER) which includes detailed information about listed buildings, historic landscape and heritage assets of archaeological interest. This can also be found in the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base.



Figure 8: Listed and noteworthy buildings within the Conservation Area
(taken from Melksham Urban Design Study 2006)

Section B

Built Form: Positive and Distinct Characteristics

Introduction

This section draws out the key positive and distinct characteristics that have been highlighted through local level character assessment work.

It provides those wishing to promote development and those guiding and assessing development with direction and guidance about what the community consider to be the positive and distinct characteristics of the built and natural features of the built environments of Melksham and Melksham Without.

Method

An initial assessment of the Plan area was undertaken based on:

- Local knowledge
- Desk top survey using the maps and the online historic mapping system - know your place

As a result of the initial assessment a number of character areas and types across the Plan area were identified.

A rapid survey of a range of character areas that were thought to embody positive transfereable characteristics was undertaken by Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group members.

Full Character Assessments are found in Appendix 2.

Policy Context

Part 12 of The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) sets out importance of design in the planning and development process “Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.” (NPPF, Para 124, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019).

In the NPPF the government sets out the role of communities in realising this aim: “Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development” (NPPF, Para 125).

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on Design (MHCLG 2019) takes this further in reinforcing the importance of design, the value of guidance such as this Statement and the role of

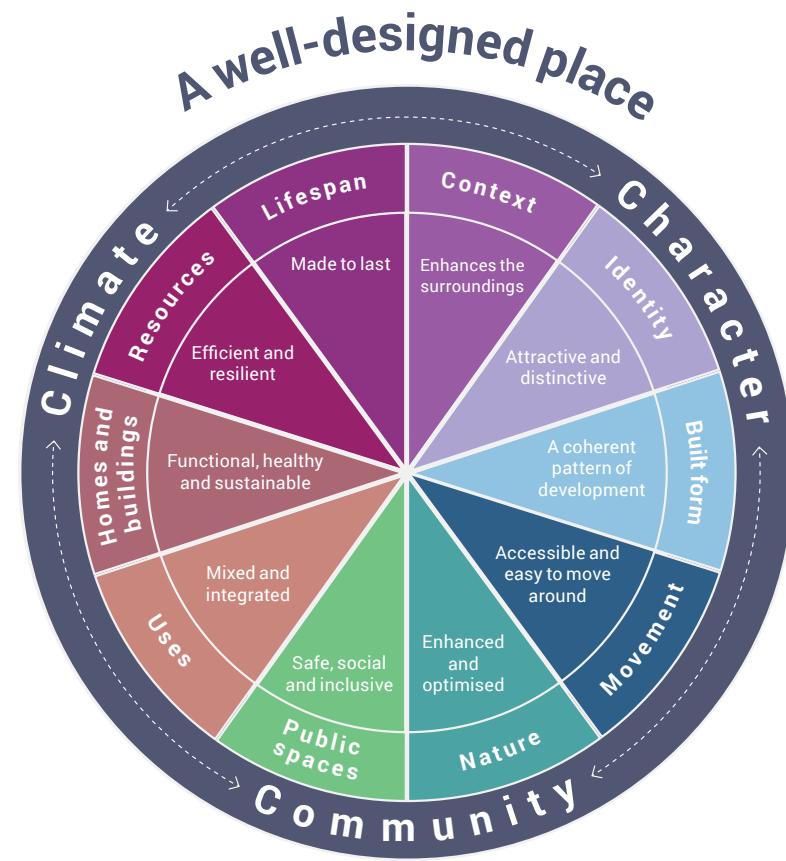
communities in ensuring good design.

In parallel with the new PPG, the government also published a 'National Design Guide'. Though targeted at developments of all sizes, it places great emphasis on the importance of understanding and responding to local character (in many senses) and on community engagement.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the importance of achieving 'well-designed places' and asserts that "policy and decisions should ensure that developments... are visually attractive... (and) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change" (NPPF, para 127).

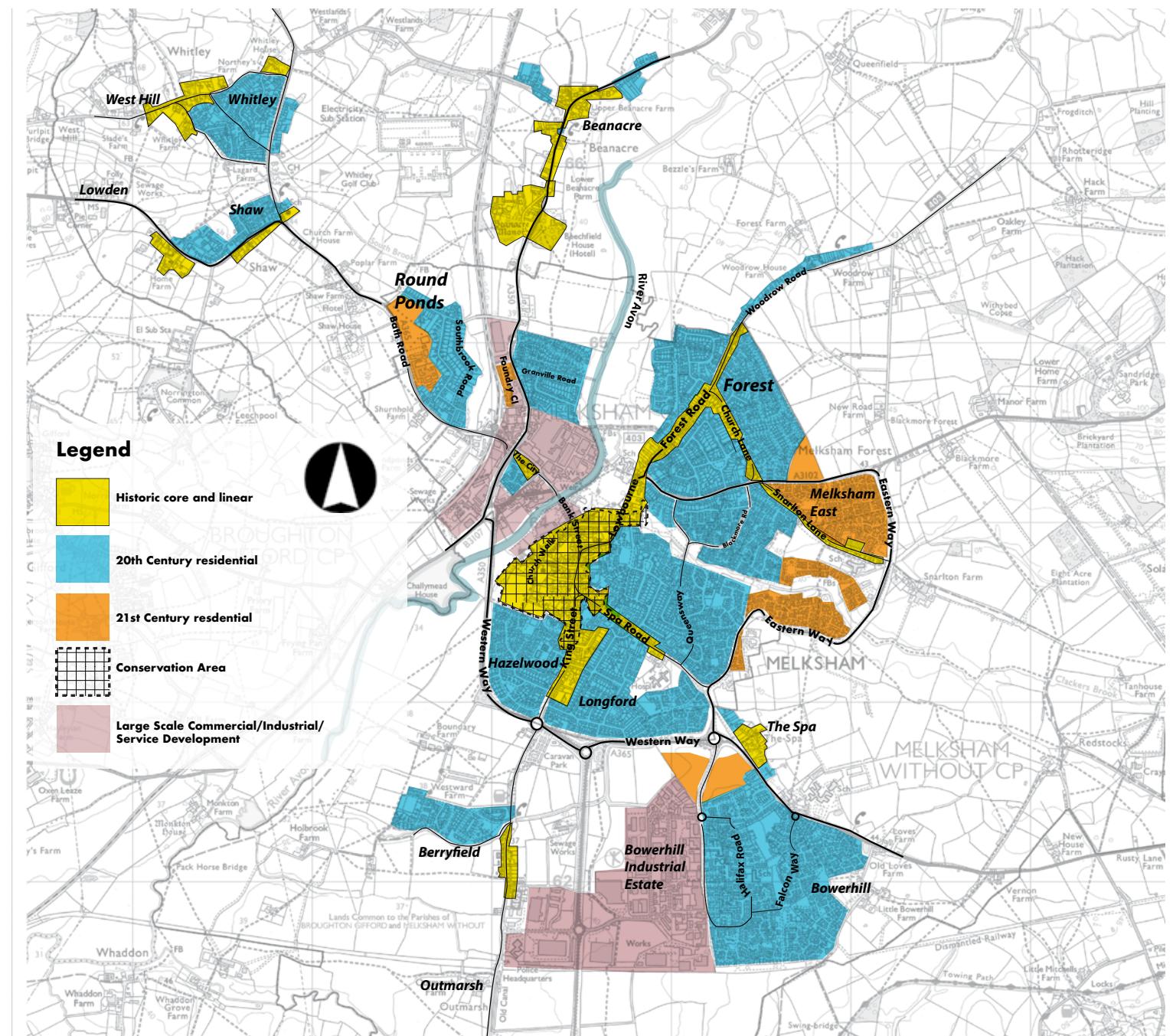
It is recognised that any design guidance should strike a balance between promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness and allowing for innovation and originality.

Wiltshire Council Core Strategy Core Policy 57 - "Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping" - provides a detailed high-level policy which sets out how development is expected to make a 'positive contribution the character of Wiltshire'. The content of this Statement aims to relate directly to the aims of Core Policy 57 at the local level of the joint Neighbourhood Plan.



Above: Ten characteristics of a 'well designed' place, taken from the National Design Guide

Figure 9: Character Areas



Settlement Form

Historic Linear Development in Melksham Town

Housing development along Melksham's historic road network develops out from the town centre. Along Lowbourne, Forest Road, Church Lane, King Street, Spa Road and to a lesser extent Snarltion Lane, there is a variety of building forms, line, orientation and materials, reflecting its organic pattern of development and infill from rural beginnings. This informal and varied characteristic of Melksham is one that has been observed as a positive characteristic across the town.

Twentieth Century Residential Neighbourhoods and Estates – Melksham Town and Bowerhill

During the 20th Century, and continuing into the 21st Century, Melksham has experienced significant housing development. This has largely been in the form of municipal and private housing developments. Whilst some of these have created large neighbourhoods of a similar form (e.g. Longford) the neighbourhoods that reflect incremental development of smaller clusters and infill, creating a more varied character (e.g. Forest, Hazelwood and Snowberry (see photo to the right)) in Melksham town and Bowerhill in Melksham Without, are considered to provide preferred cues to inform future growth.



Photos above from left:

1. Varied plot, building form and materials on King Street
2. 3 and 2 storeys with a varied roof form and building line on Spa Road
3. Key building addressing the junction of Forest Road and Church Lane



Landscape and Green Space

A characteristic common to Melksham's most valued neighbourhoods is the relationship with a communal green space and network of linking green space and tree-lined roads. Where development addresses the rural edge or River Avon valley, successful housing layouts and routes link to and address communal green space and allotments positioned at the rural edge to provide links and views into the open countryside.

The neighbourhoods that are considered most successful continue an informal layout which include the following features:

1. Varied building orientation and building line
2. Off street car parking in a range of arrangements
3. Linking green routes combining grass verges, tree-lined avenues and informal communal green spaces with trees.

Photos to the right, clockwise from left:

1. Churchill Avenue
2. Dorset Crescent, Queensway
3. Granville Road looking toward Riverside Drive and the River Avon



Building Layout and Design

Plot Size and Coverage

Regardless of density, residential neighbourhoods that are identified as having a positive contribution to the quality of place are where houses are nearly always set within a garden plot. This enables the landscape to become the setting for the building and collectively, the neighbourhood. This contributes significantly to the overarching positive character of linked green routes and spaces, which themselves, link to the countryside and river. The photo to the right is Riverside Drive and housing facing on to shared greenspace and the River Avon corridor.

Height and Form

Building height is predominantly two-storey across the residential neighbourhoods. Within the centre of Melksham, and out along some of the arterial routes, taller buildings of 3 storeys can be found. Taller development should therefore be related to the town centre, arterial roads or buildings with community value and carefully located at nodal points within neighbourhoods.



Photo above: Riverside Drive and housing facing on to shared greenspace and the River Avon corridor



Photo above: a recent development on Lowbourne, close to the town centre

Roof Forms

There are a range of roof forms for domestic buildings from the simple pitched roofs with gable ends as well as cross gabled roofs, and hip roofs.

Materials

Melksham's distinctly informal character is strengthened by the varied use of:

1. Stone
2. Red Brick (Stretcher and English Bond)
3. Render (White / Cream)

Roofs are predominantly clay tile, although slate is also evident.



Photos above: Hip roofs in Roundponds and simple gable and cross gabled in Hazelwood.

Use of Stone

Stone is a commonly used material for Melksham's older and more prestigious buildings. It is also used significantly as window surrounds, lintels and as quoins at corners, often marking a transition between stonier and brick faces.

The variety of stone dressing and bonding found within the towns, often within single buildings and walls, adds significantly to local distinctiveness, interest and legibility.

- Ashlar stone: Used to face civic and focal urban buildings, lintels and window surrounds and boundary wall pillars
- Blockwork: Used on façade panels, boundary walls and industrial buildings
- Coursed Rubble: Predominant material and bonding found in Melksham's 17th and 18th Century development and used in frontage and side boundary walls, often with "cock and hen" coping.
- Random Rubble: Used to construct and face buildings reflecting Melksham's rural settling and past. Also found in boundary walls and more recent stone-faced panels.



Details

Across the eras of Melksham's development, housing has distinct elements of detailing that create further variety, richness and interest within neighbourhoods. In the examples, these details relate to individual or small groups of housing, within frontages of more differently or simply designed frontages.



Photos to the left, clockwise from top left: Timber framed gables in buildings from the 18th Century (The City), 20th Century (Sorrel Close), and the 19th Century (Forest Road)



Above: Tile hung upper storeys on buildings of different ages along Forest Road

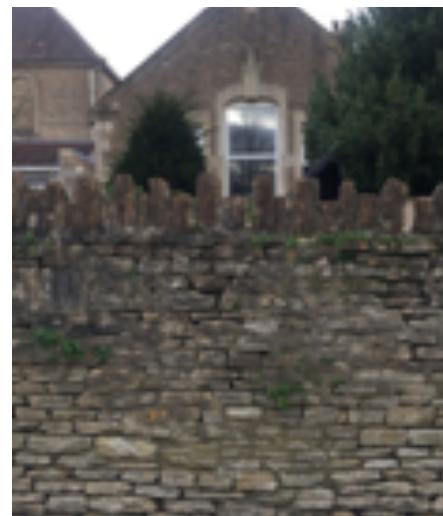
Below: Decorative English Bond brickwork of the early 20th Century Blackmore Terraces on Forest Road



Gardens and Boundaries

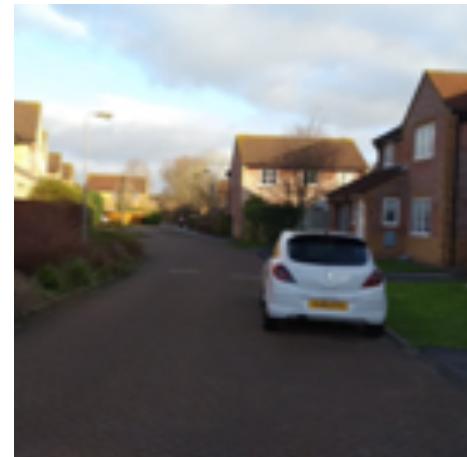
Analysis of the town's neighbourhoods recorded that good sized front gardens were a prevailing characteristic across the town. Whilst a significant number had been given over to car parking, retained front boundaries and frontage landscape added significantly to the quality and distinctiveness of streets and neighbourhoods.

Typical approaches to Boundaries within Melksham shown in the three photos opposite.



Open Frontages, Green Space and Trees

Where housing estates have been designed with frontage parking hard standing, the sense of enclosure and balance between hard and soft landscape is lost. Well designed neighbourhoods provide parking within a range of solutions including side and courtyard bays. Communal landscape and tree planting helps to rebalance the environment (see Landscape and Green Space above). Bowerhill is an area with a significant presence of trees – many of the with Tree Protection Orders (TPOs). Trees and green verges contribute positively to character across the area, notably along Forest Road (see photo above) and as gateways to areas, such as Longford Road and Lambourne Crescent.



Photos to right, clockwise from top left: 1. Homes in Snowberry 2. Parking in Queensway 3. Mature pairs of trees and green space as neighbourhood gateway / focal area at Lambourne Crescent 4. Mature Chestnut tree and green verge forms a gateway to Longford Road.

Rural Settlements

Melksham Without Parish surrounds Melksham urban area and creates the gently undulating rural setting for the town as well as the parish's four main settlements of Beanacre, Shaw, Whitley (villages) and the large settlement of Bowerhill.

Melksham Without's villages are have distinct development forms which should inform any future development of growth proposals.

All are set within their own rural landscape, separating them from each other and Melksham town. This important quality is essential to conserving the distinctiveness and individuality of each village. The villages share common qualities of built form and landscape which unite them within their wider landscape and development character.

Settlement Form

Organic linear development of the villages' historic road networks has produced loose building lines and varied building orientations similar to that in Melksham. Where villages have expanded in the 19th and 20th Centuries, infill housing, small terraces and groups have added to the historic linear form



Photo top left: Shaw Church, a landmark on the Bath-Melksham road looking south east
Photo below: Former Officer's House in Berryfield



as in Beanacre, and Berryfield (photo to the right) or formed intimate clusters and cul-de-sacs as in Whitley. Dwellings maintain an informality of layout. Gardens and landscape continue to be an important element of placemaking.

Landscape Character

Larger garden plots with more dense and extensive tree cover reinforce the rural character of the settlements, distinct from Melksham's settlement character. The informal arrangement of development along village edges create gaps that retain countryside boundaries within the villages, as at Beanacre and Shaw. Such rural gaps are an important asset in village character and sense of place. Landscape gaps between the villages and the town are also important for maintaining a distinct identity.

Boundary treatment employs higher stone and brick walls through to rubble and ashlar lower stone and hedge front gardens boundaries.

Roads and Pedestrian Links

Roads are not formal or straight, increasing the informal rural character of the settlements, distinct from that in Melksham.

Traffic volumes and poor quality of pavements are issues particularly in Beanacre. However, villages are well served by connecting footpaths linking to the countryside beyond.

Building Form

Each village has its own focal and historic buildings, recorded in analysis sheets, around which the villages houses have expanded. Buildings nearly all range between one and two storeys with tile hung pitched and gable end roofs. The architecture is also varied, enabling the villages to authentically represent their development over the centuries.

Materials

Course rubble limestone, ashlar coins and details and tiled roofs are a common feature of Melksham Without's villages' historic farms and houses. More recent development has added red brick and painted render to add to the variety of layout and form of the settlements.

Full Character Surveys

Character Surveys were undertaken of areas within the joint Plan Area that are considered to have positive characteristics that are transferrable to new development. Surveys were undertaken of:

- Beanacre
- Berryfield
- Bowerhill
- Forest
- Hazelwood
- Queensway
- Roundponds
- Shaw
- Snowberry & Campion
- The Spa
- Whitley

Full surveys are found in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1 Heritage

The following is an amalgamation of information from Lisa Ellis, Cllr Baines and by the Melksham and District Historical Association (including from their book 'Around Melksham in Old Photographs' and website: <http://www.melkshamhistoricalassociation.org/index.asp>).

A Royal medieval forest covered part of the parish which, combined with Chippenham Forest, covered 33 square miles. It extended from Calne in the east to Semington in the west and was administered by the Constable of Devizes Castle. William I gave the local manor and lands to Britric Aloeric a descendent of a Norman knight. Today, the name is carried by Aloeric Primary School close to the Town centre.

In 1219 a weekly market and Michaelmas Fair was granted to the town. Medieval settlement was probably concentrated in the Church Street, Church Walk, High Street and Market Place area. The cloth industry was active by this time and Fulling Mills were in operation. By the next Century the area to the north of the river known as The City was occupied and expanding. The cloth industry finally came to an end when the last mill, Matravers Mill, closed in 1888, and was taken over by the Avon who moved from Limpsey Stoke the following year.

In 1847 a private company built the Cheese Hall (now the

Town Hall) where the sale of the cheese and local farm produce was traded. Prior to the construction of the Market Hall, Chippenham was becoming very popular with the sale of cheese and it was feared that people would not make the additional trip down to Melksham to buy the local farmers' cheese; after all, Melksham was renowned for its milk. Building the cheese market encouraged the train line to be extended down to Melksham. You could say cheese brought the train to Melksham. And Melksham's train line was especially important to Isambard Kingdom Brunel, who gave a rousing speech in the Town Hall. The Assembly Hall nearby was used for many purposes and is perhaps overlooked in its importance to the town. Originally built for food storage for the cheese market, it also had both military and entertainment use; the latter bringing some very well known acts in the 1960s and more recent years.

In 1848 the Wilts, Somerset & Weymouth Railway came to the town which kick-started a wealth of industry development. An engineering works was started in Bath Road by C J Spencer; this moved to Beanacre Road in 1903. 1889 saw the Avon India Rubber Company move from Limpley Stoke producing rubber goods and later tyres, a business which continues to this day. Sawtell's feather factory, Hurn's, Coombs carbonated beverages business and Co-op Creamery also opened. What

became Wiltshire Farmers started in Atworth in 1916. Charles Maggs, grandson of the ropeworks founder, started a milk depot and butter factory at West End Farm before moving to New Broughton Road in 1888. The business grew into the Wilts United Dairy Company, later to become part of Unigate.

The ropeworks (and later coir matting) business was in a former cloth mill next to the W&B canal on Spa Road, having moved from the gardens of Place House in the Market Place in 1803.

The Post Office Telegraph Service was introduced in 1870 followed by the National Telephone Company in 1898, and Trowbridge Water Company provided a public water supply at this time. Electricity came to the town in 1924, eventually becoming Wessex Electricity by Nationalisation of the industry.

The now defunct Wilts and Berks canal linking the Kennet and Avon canal with the Thames opened in 1819. It ran almost through the centre of town and traces remain such as the Wharf House adjoining the hump that was the canal bridge in Spa Road, and the relics of a bridge at the junction of Forest and Sandridge roads. The canal was abandoned in 1914, and the area redeveloped.

At the beginning of the 20th Century dairy farming continued

to be a major industry and businesses were expanding. The population continued to expand as a result, leading to many housing developments. The Wiltshire Agricultural Co-operative Society started up and became Wiltshire Farmers in 1942.

The onset of World War 2 gave rise to the establishment in 1940 of the R.A.F. No 12 School of Technical Training at Bowerhill. This facility was used until the abolition of conscription in the early 1960's.

Appendix 2 Character Area Surveys

CHARACTER AREA ...**BEANACRE** Surveyor Alan Baines **February 2020.....**

STAGE 1: OBSERVATION OF A CHARACTER AREA'S DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER

What makes this area recognisable and distinct? Below are some prompts to help you consider different aspects of local character – they may or may not be relevant so please do use them just as a prompt for completing your own notes.

<p>STREETS</p> <p>Are streets straight, irregular or curving?</p> <p>Are there different types of routes? Eg footpaths, pedestrianised streets or cul-de-sacs?</p> <p>Does traffic dominate the environment?</p> <p>What is parking like? On-street/front drives/varied? Congested/well organised?</p>	<p>Your notes:</p> <p>Beanacre [Bennecar/Benecar] (bean field) is the ribbon development, interspersed with open frontages, along the busy, main A350 between the northern boundary of the town of Melksham and the village of Lacock.</p>
<p>BUILDINGS</p> <p>What is the main land use? Housing, shopping, employment or mixed?</p> <p>How are the buildings arranged? Detached, semi's, terraces or mixed?</p> <p>Are the buildings close to the road, set back with gardens or varied?</p> <p>What are the boundary treatments generally? (hedges / low or high walls / railings / grassed area etc</p> <p>Are there any distinct architectural features? Eg porches / bays and window shapes / chimneys/ decorative features</p>	<p>It is one of the oldest settlements in the area, first mentioned in estate records of 1275, the earliest surviving dwelling is the Grade I listed Old Manor which lies off the Old Road. Its wooded grounds screen it from the railway, which came in 1848, running to the West roughly parallel to the main road. Adjacent are the Manor, Manor Farmhouse and associated structures which are all Grade II listed. On the East of the A350, and hidden by the tall trees and hedgerows of its extensive grounds, is the Grade II listed Beechfield House, built in 1870 for a local gentleman farmer and now converted to a luxury hotel. The valley of the winding River Avon with its floodplain is beyond on this Eastern side.</p>
<p>DISTINCTIVE FEATURES</p> <p>Does any feature make this area special or instantly recognisable? (these landmarks could be buildings / statues / trees and natural features)</p> <p>Are there any green spaces or water features? Street trees & or verges?</p> <p>Are there any particular street details that you notice, such as lamp posts, benches or signage?</p>	<p>There are few common features in Beanacre's housing except that most is in natural stone. Different in material, uniformity and scale is the isolated terrace of 19th Century 'Burnt Cottages' at the South end, and a second, similar redbrick terrace of cottages, also on West side, but in the village centre opposite the former public house building. Next to the field beyond the Old Road is 'The Walnuts', a substantial Grade II listed former doctor's house behind a massive wall & hedge. The small, also Grade II listed, Beanacre Church, built in 1886, lies just past this and has an unusual front churchyard wall, built in part stone and part brick, with a playground plus wild area adjacent and cricket field behind.</p>

<p>SPECIAL VIEWS</p> <p><i>Are there any significant views in or out of the character area?</i></p> <p><i>Please make location & direction of the view on a map and take a photo.</i></p>	<p>The Church and Burnt Cottages have lay-bys, and houses on Old Road are in their own cul-de-sac, as a result of road improvement schemes through the years. Otherwise, parking/accessing properties is somewhat hazardous due to the high volume of traffic and vehicles not adhering to the speed limits. The central bus stop on the West side is between the access to several post-war bungalows & houses and Westlands Lane, which is the route to Whitley half a mile or so beyond the railway.</p> <p>Development along Westlands Lane is a medley of modern homes mixed in between older cottages up to the narrow railway bridge. Beanacre Halt was on the railway North of the bridge between 1905 & 1955. The most recent development is the cluster of 7 detached houses in a cul-de-sac on the North side of the lane. Just beyond the junction with the main road is the old Baptist Chapel of 1846, now converted into a dwelling, and Chapel Lane with a few more modern homes. Notable at the Lacock end of the village is a row of 8 very substantial, detached 1930 – 40 homes which are set back and mostly well screened, but most can be seen from the road over their hedges.</p> <p>Like many dwellings on the East side, they also enjoy views of Sandridge Hill across the fields over the river. Photograph...</p> <p>No properties in the village have mains drainage and this has limited any further development.</p>
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STAGE 2A: Identify the key positive features

Drawing from your comments above - please highlight any characteristics and features that you've noted, that you think make a positive contribution to the character of the Plan area, that ought to be, or could be woven into new development that it complements and strengthens local distinctiveness of the Melksham area.

The variety of housing, its 'higgledy-piggledy' disposition with open interludes, the beautiful rural hinterland and plentiful tree cover make an otherwise unremarkable settlement quite attractive. In the past, it has been successful in the West Wiltshire section of the Best Kept Village Competition, coming 1st in 2007 and 2nd in 2011. It is fortunate to be particularly well served by pathways and bridleways.

STAGE 2B:

Are there any issues that harm or detract from the positive character of this area, that should be avoided or addressed in future?

The proximity of Beanacre to the National Grid Electricity Control Hub, off Westlands Lane beyond the railway, make it advisable for residents to be alert to, and be proactive concerning, opportunities for energy generation in their vicinity. The recent increase in traffic on the A350 (a major strategic N-S route) makes it important to provide screening (to minimise both noise and air pollution) for all properties not either set back from the road or already screened by high walls/hedges

CHARACTER AREA... BERRYFIELD ...Paul Carter...24/10/2019.

PREAMBLE:

BERRYFIELDS lies west of the A350 running south and consists of the old A350 road named Semington Road which runs for 600 yds north south from Western Way to Outmarsh. Along its sides are around 150 houses built between 1800 to 2019. A current development of 150 Bellway homes on the eastern side of Semington Road commenced in October 2018 with 10 occupations so far. Halfway along Semington Road by the New Inn pub built to cater for the navvies that constructed the Wilts. & Berks. canal you find a right turn into Berryfield Park, Winston Road, Padfield Gardens, Berryfield Lane, Berryfield Close, Elizabeth Close and Holbrook Vale. This area has around 200 houses making a combined total of around 350.

STREETS.

SEMINGTON ROAD meanders between the Mobile Home Park (existing for 70 years) south to Outmarsh Farm. There is no conformity of housing design because of the wide time scale of building, 1800 to 2019. Each era of building speaks for its self. There are intermittent pavements on both sides of the roads to which cars come in and out from garages or open driveways, some cars park on the road. There is a regular bus service to Melksham Town with connections to Bath, Chippenham and Trowbridge. Traffic is on the average 150 cars per hour (Community Speed Watch) within a 30mph speed limit.

BERRYFIELD PARK(built 1945/50) and the other streets exit left off Berryfield Lane. The park is a collection of roads in a circle with around 100 houses, there are pavements along all the roads with intermittent green spaces and mature trees. Traffic is minimal with on and off street parking with few garages. There is a 30mph speed limit.

WINSTON ROAD(built 1960) is a collection of 24 houses and bungalows in a quiet Cul de Sac. All the properties have either a garage or a driveway with little car parking on the road. There are pavements all the way round with 1 tree within a small green space.

PADFIELD GARDENS(built 1960) is a collection of 28 houses and bungalows in a quiet Cul de Sac with driveways but few garages. Very little parking on the roads with pavements all the way round and 2 trees within a green space.

BERRYFIELD CLOSE(built 1970), is a quiet street of 5 semi detached houses with a pavement along its front overlooking a green space with no trees and no traffic flow. Parking is to the rear.

ELIZABETH CLOSE(built 1980s) is a quiet Cul de Sac of 7 bungalows with off street parking. Pavements all the way round with no green space or trees.

HOLBROOK VALE(built 1950s) is a quiet Cul de Sac of 10 semi detached `prefab` houses with some garages and off street parking, very few cars parking on the road. There is a small green space but no trees.

BERRYFIELD LANE starts at the rear of the New Inn and continues west/north for a mile exiting onto the A350 northbound. Along its way are high hedges with trees and footpath stiles, mainly used by traffic from the scattered farms with a 30 mph speed limit.

BUILDINGS.

SEMINGTON ROAD has a mixture of houses along its length with styles from 1800 to 2019. Most are semi detached with a few terraces and bungalows, the buildings are close to the road, some have hedges or low stone walls. The 1800 buildings are of Bath Stone with chimneys that work. They are small by today's standards with lower roofs. Many later houses are red brick, wider and higher and set farther back from the road. The houses are between 2 and 4 bedrooms.

The numbering of the houses is a unique feature in that the numbers can reach 650 but there are only 150 houses. This dates back to the early Post Office in Melksham where from a given point the houses(much less then) were numbered 1,2,3 and so on in a circle. So Semington Road being at the end(or start) of the circle had numbers 648, 649 and 650.

At that point in time there were 650 houses in Melksham Within and Without.

BERRYFIELD PARK houses are semi detached 3 bedroom of all of the same design with small gardens and very few garages and built close to the connecting roads. Built just after the war to house married airmen for the nearby RAF Technical Training Station at Bowerhill. The area is wide and open with low density housing and many older trees. You can see these types of developments all over the country by military bases that appear to be built to a set pattern and design with 'cycling' to work as there were few cars.

The other roads have distinctive styles of semi detached houses and bungalows between 2 and 4 bedrooms from 1950, 70, and 80. Its difficult to list every feature as nothing really stands out but you know what year it is when you see it. The 1950 houses in Melksham Town are the same as in Melksham Without! The roads and Cul de Sacs are built close to the connecting roads with 1950 gardens being longer and the 80s much shorter. The 1950s have very few garages where as the 80s have them or driveways.

BERRYFIELD PARK and its other roads are purely residential with no shops or industry apart from farming.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES.

SEMINGTON ROAD has different periods of building which draws the eye to 1800 or 2019 and the different styles which portray a way of living. Outside the New Inn you could imagine a horn announcing a 'Coach and Four,' at 495 a 'Buck Board' carrying a wealthy resident and at 549 an Aston Martin roaring off into the countryside for a picnic.

The most distinctive feature of BERRYFIELD PARK is the openness of the estate, low density housing with plenty of trees and lack of through traffic. A quiet place to hear nature and for children to run around and play.

The other roads are only distinctive in that they represent a particular period of building that would be instantly recognisable to any visitor. A walk down any of these roads might trigger a memory of a special event in 1950(my birthday!) in 1965 the fashions of that era and what you wore when you were young. Or perhaps 1989 and the fall of 'The Wall'.

SPECIAL VIEWS.

There are significant views around Berryfields with rolling countryside on three sides. Holbrook Vale draws your eye west to the river Avon and its medieval Pack Horse bridge and the ancient Hide of Whaddon. The end of Semington Road(south) looks out across unbroken green fields to the heights around the city of Bath, particularly pleasing to see the lights at night.

STAGE 2A: IDENTIFY THE KEY POSITIVE FEATURES:

Preserving the characteristics I have identified above must be carried over to new developments in the plan area. In Berryfields and Bowerhill pre planning meetings with developers ensures they know from the locals the history of the area and how it connects to other areas. In Berryfields, Bellway Homes have named their roads after the canal builders and with their art contribution we hope to have a statue of a `Navvie` standing with a shovel outside the village hall to enable the new arrivals to see how the Wilts. & Berks. Canal led to the development of Melksham. In Bowerhill similarly the history of the RAF Station.

The other characteristic to preserve is the `Village feel` by trying to have mixed housing for all ages centred around a vibrant village hall to cement your identity. Keeping as much open green space as possible and close by bus stops to enable wider travel without cars, connecting walk and cycleways between estates as at Bowerhill and Sandridge Road. Perhaps it means going back to an earlier time of walking, cycling and using the bus and talking to each other. This is certainly in keeping with the latest Wiltshire Councils commitment to climate change and new developments.

STAGE 2B: ISSUES THAT HARM OR DETRACT FROM THE POSITIVE CHARCTER TO BE AVOIDED OR ADDRESSED IN FUTURE:

This is a difficult one, the wider problem of the sheer number and density of houses to be built between now and 2036 with the accompanying infrastructure is a problem beyond our control. However, small scale interventions by the councils with developers could help to keep their estates related to our local history.

The wider issue of `Infrastructure` is one that is beyond the scope of the plan as doctors surgeries, hospitals, schools and road building are really long term matters for government. As our local doctor said at one of our public health meetings; “We have the money, we can build a surgery or a local health unit but we don’t have the staff to man them. It takes 6 years for a doctor to be trained and there are not enough coming forward”.

These comments made by me Paul Carter for the village of Berryfields are my own observations and another person may come to a completely different summary.

CHARACTER AREA...BOWERHILL...Paul Carter...25/10/2019.

PREAMBLE:

BOWERHILL lies south east of Melksham Town on the site of the former RAF Station built in 1940 as No 12 Technical Training School. The A365 Devizes Road that passed the guard room bore witness to the gate guard, a red Hawker Hunter WB188 flown by Sqd Ldr Neville Duke who on 7th September 1953 broke the world airspeed record of 727.63mph (mach 0.92) very near the sound barrier.

Upon the station closure in 1967 WB188 went to Duxford Museum with the hangars and open spaces in between forming an industrial estate with the large green space of Hampton Farm being used for housing. Between 1972 and 2000 the residential area gradually expanded east to the present shape that you see today.

Bowerhill residential has 3 distinct architectural areas, Halifax Road(1972), Blenheim Park 1950s and 70s and Hornchurch Road 2000. Its 1,433 houses has a population of around 4,300 covering an area of just under 1 sq mile. Its many attractions would be the abundance of small, medium and large open green spaces, with footpaths to their wildlife picnic area, Giles Wood with 25,000 privately planted trees, but open to the public, and the Kennet and Avon Canal. It is well served by buses to Melksham town with connections to Bath, Chippenham and Trowbridge.

STREETS.

BOWERHILL is dissected by 3 main roads. Halifax(built1970/75) is tree lined with some green open spaces within a circle with pavements all the way round. Most of the streets leading off the circle are Cul de Sacs and set back from roads, many houses have garages and driveways and there is a 30mph. There are very good bus connections to Melksham Town.

FULMAR(built 1980) is a long curved road with some wide open green spaces with trees. Most of the streets leading off this road are Cul de Sacs and set back from the roads with pavements all round, have garages and drive ways and there is a 30mph speed limit. There are very good bus connections to Melksham Town.

HORNCHURCH(Built 1990/2000) which runs through this very dense estate with many other roads and Cul de Sacs are running off like spider webs, all have pavements but are set close to the roads. Right in the middle is a large park with a pond and many trees and shrubs surrounding the perimeter with play equipment for all ages.

All three roads are conducive to walking and cycling, although you can leave the area at the south boundary through the industrial estate for all intents and purposes the whole of residential Bowerhill is one huge Cul de Sac.

BUILDINGS.

HALIFAX ROAD and associated roads consists of 2 bedroom flats, 2 and 3 bedroom bungalows, 3 bedroom semi detached houses with a small proportion of detached 4 bedroom houses catering for all age groups built over a 15 year period, 1970 to 1985, many are red/brown brick. All the houses have small gardens back and front, most are open plan though some have fences and stone walls.

FULMAR ROAD and associated roads consists of 3 and 4 bedroom houses with some very striking 3 bedroom houses with large gardens in Blenheim Park that were used by the officers from the RAF Station and built around 1948. Most of the other houses were built between 1980 and 2000. Many of the houses are open plan though some have low fences or stone walls, all the houses have small

gardens with garages or drive ways.

HORNCHURCH ROAD and associated roads consists of 3 story terraces, semi detached 2/3/4 bedroom houses and detached 4/5 bedroom house mostly built of red brick and generally finished in one time period hence their uniformity. Mostly open plan with small gardens but with some black metal fences, all have garages or designated parking areas.

Residential Bowerhill has a pub called The Pilot(naturally) and a small Tesco shop. To the west is the industrial estate containing 150 small and medium size businesses.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES.

Built over the last 50 years each of the streets and buildings can be recognised by the period in time when built, 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000. A visitor knowing nothing of the history of Bowerhill will instantly be educated by the street names, Hurricane, Halifax and Lancaster.

Trenchard, Portal and Bader leading them to conclude that the area was once an RAF Station. Several other features stand out such as the abundance of large green spaces and the striking officer houses in Blenheim Park all connected by paths with plenty of seating.

One cannot but mention the 6 huge RAF hangers recently refurbished that dominate the industrial estate sky line. Built in 1940 with the expectation soon to be bombed flat by the enemy they have survived 80 years and are still proudly standing as a testament to their builders and the greatest generation that ever lived.

SPECIAL VIEWS.

The view as you enter Bowerhill looks towards a rising landscape capped by housing(once dominated by the RAF water tower) inviting you to explore the area via the very aptly named Pathfinder Way.

Arriving at the south end on Brabazone Way you can see the rolling fields raising up to Seend Cleve further inviting you to walk the foot path to Giles Wood, the wildlife picnic area and the Kennet and Avon Canal.

Looking east from this position you see the heights of Roundway Down and the Devils Ditch at Devizes. This imposing escarpment marks the site of the civil war battle of Roundway Down where at the ditch the Royalist infantry parted to allow the Parliamentary cavalry charge to sweep on, over and down the ditch to their deaths!

STAGE 2A: IDENTIFYING THE KEY POSITIVE FEATURES.

The key feature of Bowerhill is the retention of its history through the naming of its roads with RAF Marshall's such as Trenchard the father of the Royal flying Corp and the RAF and Bader who developed the 'Big Wing' concept and was a fighter ace. Yes, your right, he had artificial legs after losing them in a plane crash.

The Plan should endeavour at all times to perpetuate the history of Melksham through its continual naming of roads after historical figures and highlighting the importance of connecting developments by buses, walking and cycle ways.

I asked the Bowerhill Residents Action Group(BRAG) secretary this: Yes, you have the your history, village hall, school, hangers and green spaces but what is it that makes you want to spend 22 years

living in Bowerhill? She pondered and replied thus: Yes, we have all that but its something else, “ Its a community who know and speak to each other, with many different groups using the village hall which connects them together with a general sense of belonging.” I could not have put it better.

STAGE 2B: ISSUES THAT HARM OR DETRACT FROM THE POSITIVE CHARACTER TO BE AVOIDED OR ADDRESSED IN FUTURE.

This is a difficult one, the wider problem of the sheer number and density of housing to be built between now and 2036 is beyond our control. Like wise the lack of provision for surgeries and health units, schools and roads impact on the character of a place to which the plan may have no control over. The best we can do is to speak to developers at the start and insist on the provision of the things mentioned above, green space, play areas, connecting communities with buses, walk and cycle ways.

These comments made by me Paul Carter for the village of Bowerhill are my own observations and another person may come to a completely different summary.

CHARACTER AREA...FOREST...Paul Carter...2/11/2019.

PREAMBLE.

MELKSHAM FOREST lies north from the centre of Melksham with the A3102 Calne Road forming its southern boundary and its northern boundary looking out across the open fields of Woodrow known as Lower Forest. Between the reigns of King John and George 1 when the forest began to be cleared this area was part of a greater forest called Blackmore stretching from Trowbridge in the south to Chippenham and beyond to the north. The forest was a royal hunting ground with King John keeping a hunting lodge at Lacock.

The area is bounded by 3 roads, at its junction with Lowbourne Road Forest Road cuts through the area south/north towards Lacock. At its junction with Forest Road Church Lane travels south east to Sandridge Road which in turn travels south west to link up again with Forest Road forming a triangle. It is off and in between these roads that the community lives. The original estate of Barnwell and sister roads consisting of council houses was started around 1935 with LittleJohn in 1950, with the other estates of private and council houses popping up over the years until 1990. There is a large Village Hall adjacent to a football field bounded by trees, shrubs and allotments within the area of LittleJohn.

STREETS.

FOREST ROAD which is lined with trees and houses set well back from the road built from 1900 onward and at the junction with Church Lane the estate of LittleJohn Avenue, Philips Close, Glenside, Bowden Crescent, The Friars, Meadow Road, Lincoln Green, Methuen Avenue, Loxley close, Awdry Avenue, Bowmans Court and Murray Walk are small winding roads or Cul de Sacs all joined together by pavements. There is a mixture of houses and bungalows some have garages but many have driveways, there is little through traffic as most is to your house and back. There are several large green open spaces with a few trees in a well ordered estate. Most of the houses were built as council houses from 1950 with the later ones as private.

For the purpose of description I may refer to this area collectively as LITTLEJOHN.

The triangle bounded by Forest Road, Church Lane and Sandridge Road contains the estate of Craybourne Road, Barnwell Road, Heathcoat Road, St Andrews Road, Montague Place, The Crays, Fairway, St Margrets Gardens, Wilkinson Close, Chalfield Crescent and Fullers Close. Most of the roads are straight with a few curving Cul de Sacs mostly houses and the odd bungalow set back from the road. All are joined by pavements there are a few garages but most have drive ways. There is a large green space with no trees in the middle of a well ordered estate.

For the purpose of description I may refer to this area as BARNWELL.

The third of the estates is bounded by Woodrow Road, Church Lane and Sandridge Road and has the largest number of roads. The names are too many to list here so I will name a few and highlight their characteristics. Savernake Avenue off Church Lane is a long road that comes back on itself with some small Cul de Sacs branching off, nearly all are bungalows with a few houses set back from the road. Most have garages and connecting pavements with little through traffic. Very little green space or trees.

Churchill Avenue is a collection of small roads and Cul de Sacs with an equal number of houses and bungalows, all have garages or driveways connected by pavements and set back from the road, there is some through traffic. Not much green space or trees. For the purpose of description I may refer to the estate as CHURCHILL.

At this point I want to make you aware of a part of LITTLEJOHN. Bowden Crescent, The Friars, Lincoln Green and Meadow Road were all originally built as 'prefabs' in 1950.

All were 3 bedroom houses with the mod cons of the day, no central heating, one coal fire in the front room whilst the rest of the house froze, an inside toilet and outside with spiders and unlagged pipes which burst every winter. However, a huge improvement on 2 adults and 3 children occupying a 2 bedroom house that I came from with a toilet at the bottom of the garden and an outside stand pipe shared with a neighbour for collecting your water in a bucket.

By the 1980s the 'prefabs' succumbed to concrete cancer and began to fall down and were eventually demolished. This I feel is the unique part; a committee of the residents was formed and led by a well known Town Councillor they drew up plans for a new estate with flats, bungalows and 2 & 3 bedroom houses all mixed together and they chose which homes they wanted to go back to. The product of that endeavour is the mini estate you see today.

BUILDINGS.

With so many developments over 50 years Forest has many different styles of buildings. FOREST ROAD for instance has 2 distinct long terraces, one built around 1930s and on the other side in 1890s. These are 2 and 3 bedroom houses set back from the road with the 1930s having small front gardens enclosed by low fences or walls, whilst the 1890s have a longer garden/walk to their front doors with their frontage bounded by a long low stone wall with entrance paths. Along the road to lower forest there are old farmworker houses with a particularly pleasing old farm house instantly recognised as in the style of a manor house once used as an expensive restaurant.

A large white painted house so close to the road you could nearly touch it from a car stands out because of all its extensions. My wife's uncle Jim lived in this house all his life with his mother and father likewise. The story goes that around 1920 after a lifetime of service to the farmer and living in this tied cottage Jim's father was allowed to buy the cottage for £1.

Jim took over the house on the death of his father renovated it and lived there until he died. When the cottage was sold the new owner doubled its size and sold it for £450,000!!

LITTLEJOHN (1950) has a mixture of houses, flats and bungalows of 2 and 3 bedrooms built over 40 years set back from the roads with small front gardens and longer back ones for when you used to grow your own vegetables and keep chickens. The 1950s houses are of a standard 2 story square building typical of utilitarian low density council houses of the period. The newer builds (1980s) are of different shapes and styles with circular roads and Cul de Sacs of houses and flats with a higher density surrounded by small open plan gardens.

At the junction with Church Lane there is a chapel now housing a vet. Looking at the photos of 1900 this chapel stands out in that it was in open countryside with just a few farm cottages near by but is now surrounded by hundreds of houses. The Chapel was built to minister to the many farm workers that lived and worked in the area.

BARNWELL (1937) has the same house shapes and styles and low density as LittleJohn though it has some higher density ones built in the 1970/80s. The estate is built mainly along straight lines forming squares with the occasional Cul de Sac. These houses are set back from the road and have exceptionally large gardens at the back with smaller front ones bounded by fences, shrubs and low walls.

CHURCHILL (1970s) this estate built over 15 years was private housing consisting of many 2 bedroom bungalows and 3 bedroom houses set back from the roads. It has a mixture of straight and circular roads with a higher number of Cul de Sacs than other estates in Forest. The front gardens are small and open plan with backs being twice the size of the front.

Opposite the estate is St Andrews church built over 100 years ago with its imposing high sided roof. Barnwell Road is named after the Rev. Barnwell its vicar for many years.

The Forest area has a convenience store and repair garage on Forest Road and a Fish and Chip shop in Church lane. There is a regular bus service to town.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES.

At the junction of Lowbourne and Forest Road you see a large red stone wall which was once the left hand parapet of the bridge over Wilts. & Berks canal (1810) which cut through Melksham. Along Forest Road you turn left into a Cul de Sac named Murray Walk where the houses are built around an open square, this square once housed one of the many wharfs along the canal. Looking West across the river Avon you see the Half Penny bridge (toll) which led to the now demolished Spencers Iron Foundry.

Between the wharf and the bridge the land forms a valley and along its length are 6 concrete foundation piers with nothing on them. What were they? The foundry needed huge amounts of coal to fire the furnaces and the only way to get the coal was from the canal wharf. So, across the valley the foundation piers held up a viaduct which transported the coal by train to the foundry.

LittleJohn and Barnwell are recognised by the year of their build, you know it when you see it. Churchill has a lovely bungalow estate along the Savernake Avenue, unusual I would say.

The visitor to FOREST will instantly recognise the historical importance of the royal Forest of Blackmore by the constant use of forestry road names. Forest Road, Woodrow Road, Bowmans Court, Lincoln Green, Savernack Avenue.

SPECIAL VIEWS.

Looking north from the high ground of Forest Road and Murray Walk you see Sandridge and Bowden Hills, a magnificent escarpment that runs several miles north towards Chippenham. Standing on Half Penny bridge looking to the north west you see the meandering river Avon coming from Lacock, look to the south west and you see the Avon Rubber Factory bounded by the wide curve of the river Avon populated by swans and ducks, with the Adventure Centre and the town park occupying a commanding view.

The curve mentioned above is not natural. In 1955 the Avon Rubber Company wanted more land and with the Avon running beside it the only way was to divert the river 200 yds east to create the land for the larger factory we see today. After school and weekends I watched the new river bed being dug out, what a sight for a young boy!!

STAGE 2A: IDENTIFY THE POSITIVE FEATURES.

I would suggest that many older people think of Forest as a distinct area apart from the town with its own identity through its historic connections to the Forest and dare I say it 'working class'. I certainly did when I lived there. Further, around Melksham Within and Without many other estates

have been named after and connected to its historical locations, such as the RAF Station at Bowerhill and the Wilts. & Berks. Canal along Semington Road.

Therefore I would suggest that the Plan should always take into account the history of the area that a developer wishes to build on, and by the buildings and names of the roads reinforce the idea that the new community belongs to their 'distinct' area.

STAGE 2B: ISSUES THAT HARM OR DETRACT FROM THE POSITIVE CHARACTER TO BE AVOIDED OR ADDRESSED IN FUTURE.

This is where we come up against the old problem of housing before infrastructure and the many complaints about the sheer number of houses and people swamping the existing facilities. The government has the responsibility for providing surgeries, hospitals and schools, all the plan can do is lay out what we all want, that being, estates are well connected by walk and cycleways, wide open green spaces with play areas and served by a good regular bus service to the town and train station.

These comments made by me Paul Carter for the Forest area of Melksham are my own observations and another person may come to a completely different summary.

STAGE 1: OBSERVATION OF A CHARACTER AREA'S DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER

What makes this area recognisable and distinct? Below are some prompts to help you consider different aspects of local character – they may or may not be relevant so please do use them just as a prompt for completing your own notes.

<p>STREETS</p> <p><i>Are streets straight, irregular or curving?</i></p> <p><i>Are there different types of routes? Eg footpaths, pedestrianised streets or cul-de-sacs?</i></p> <p><i>Does traffic dominate the environment?</i> <i>What is parking like? On-street/front drives/varied? Congested/well organised?</i></p>	<p>Your notes:</p> <p>Irregular and curving</p> <p>Area is a mixture of cul-de-sacs and footpaths.</p> <p>Traffic is limit to estate traffic only. Whilst the older part of Hazelwood Road is dominated by on street parking, the newer part (1980s early 90s) is less congested. However in contrast the roads leading off Hazelwood on the older part tend to be less congested with on street parking, whereas the roads leading off the newer part of Hazelwood Road tend to be more congested with on street parking.</p> <p>The A350 a major traffic route to the South Coast borders the Southern and Western boundaries of this estate.</p> <p>Housing</p>
<p>BUILDINGS</p> <p><i>What is the main land use? Housing, shopping, employment or mixed?</i></p> <p><i>How are the buildings arranged? Detached, semi's, terraces or mixed?</i></p> <p><i>Are the buildings close to the road, set back with gardens or varied?</i></p> <p><i>What are the boundary treatments generally? (hedges / low or high walls / railings / grassed area etc</i></p> <p><i>Are there any distinct architectural features? Eg porches / bays and window shapes / chimneys/ decorative features</i></p>	<p>A mixture of 1960's semis and bungalows on the older part of Hazelwood. With a mixture of semis, detached and terraces on the newer part of Hazelwood (1980s/90s)</p> <p>Houses are set back from the road with gardens and driveways</p> <p>Boundary treatments are varied ie hedges, low, high walls and grassed areas.</p> <p>Features are typical for the period.</p> <p>No</p>

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES	
<i>Does any feature make this area special or instantly recognisable? (these landmarks could be buildings / statues / trees and natural features)</i>	There is a wooded area stretching along most of the Western side of this area, separating housing from the main road.
<i>Are there any green spaces or water features? Street trees & or verges?</i>	There are various green spaces, with a play park and MUGA to the north of the area.
<i>Are there any particular street details that you notice, such as lamp posts, benches or signage?</i>	
SPECIAL VIEWS	
<i>Are there any significant views in or out of the character area?</i>	
<i>Please make location & direction of the view on a map and take a photo.</i>	

CHARACTER AREAHazelwood Road.....

STAGE 2A: Identify the key positive features

Drawing from your comments above - please highlight any characteristics and features that you've noted, that you think make a positive contribution to the character of the Plan area, that ought to be, or could be woven into new development that it complements and strengthens local distinctiveness of the Melksham area.

Your notes:

Most of the houses are set back from the road with plenty of parking.

There is variety in the type and style of houses.

The area is well maintained.

STAGE 2B:

Are there any issues that harm or detract from the positive character of this area, that should be avoided or addressed in future?

You notes: No

Traffic noise from the A350 for those on the Western/Southern boundaries, however this is dissipated somewhat by the bund/wooded area on these boundaries.

STAGE 1: OBSERVATION OF A CHARACTER AREA'S DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER

What makes this area recognisable and distinct? Below are some prompts to help you consider different aspects of local character – they may or may not be relevant so please do use them just as a prompt for completing your own notes.

This report covers Queensway South, which is to the south of the bridge over Clackers Brook (north of the bridge has different characteristics).

Queensway is an area of Melksham developed in the 1960's primarily for social housing. At the time of development it would have been on the eastern outskirts of the town. The housing is mostly semi detached and small terraces of up to 6 houses.

STREETS <i>Are streets straight, irregular or curving?</i> <i>Are there different types of routes? Eg footpaths, pedestrianised streets or cul-de-sacs?</i> <i>Does traffic dominate the environment?</i> <i>What is parking like? On-street/front drives/varied? Congested/well organised?</i>	Your notes: Queensway is a curving road which is a busy thoroughfare, although perhaps less so since Eastern Way was been opened. There is some public open green space with a number of good sized trees. Housing in the Queensway South area was not designed for car ownership, and many front gardens have been turned over to parking, including along Queensway. There is also parking on Queensway itself, which can cause traffic issues with inadequate space for two vehicles to pass parked cars. Housing in this area is generally of brick with classic tiled hipped roofs for the semi's. Many houses still display the feature 1960's concrete canopy, but there is very limited variation in house design.
BUILDINGS <i>What is the main land use? Housing, shopping, employment or mixed?</i> <i>How are the buildings arranged? Detached, semi's, terraces or mixed?</i> <i>Are the buildings close to the road, set back with gardens or varied?</i> <i>What are the boundary treatments generally? (hedges / low or high walls / railings / grassed area etc</i> <i>Are there any distinct architectural features? Eg porches / bays and window shapes / chimneys/ decorative features</i>	The residential roads off Queensway include Wiltshire, Dorset and Somerset Crescents. These are relatively narrow roads with mostly semi detached houses and the occasional small terrace. In these roads, where housing is set back, off-street parking areas have been created by reducing the green space. Dorset Cres has vehicular access to the rear,

<p>DISTINCTIVE FEATURES</p> <p><i>Does any feature make this area special or instantly recognisable? (these landmarks could be buildings / statues / trees and natural features)</i></p> <p><i>Are there any green spaces or water features? Street trees & or verges?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any particular street details that you notice, such as lamp posts, benches or signage?</i></p>	<p>whilst Somerset Cres has a large garage block, which may not generally be used for car parking?</p> <p>The 1960's housing was generally provided with reasonable garden space at the rear, but most houses have relatively small front gardens with just enough space for the length of a car. There is much evidence of front gardens being paved/gravelled for parking.</p> <p>Some houses still have privet and other hedging, often neatly maintained, but the likelihood is that these will diminish over time with a trend towards paving over and replacing hedges with fences.</p>
<p>SPECIAL VIEWS</p> <p><i>Are there any significant views in or out of the character area?</i></p> <p><i>Please make location & direction of the view on a map and take a photo.</i></p>	<p>In many ways this area is defined by the car. Housing which was designed with the assumption that the residents would never own cars means that the car, or provision to park the car, is the dominant feature with private frontage greenery and landscaping being replaced by concrete and gravel.</p>

CHARACTER AREAQueensway South.....

STAGE 2A: Identify the key positive features

Drawing from your comments above - please highlight any characteristics and features that you've noted, that you think make a positive contribution to the character of the Plan area, that ought to be, or could be woven into new development that it complements and strengthens local distinctiveness of the Melksham area.

Your notes:

There is some provision of open green space in the area, with some grassed areas and mature trees.

STAGE 2B:

Are there any issues that harm or detract from the positive character of this area, that should be avoided or addressed in future?

You notes:

The key issue with Queensway is the lack of space for car parking other than by taking over front gardens for this purpose. This means that green hedges and landscaping have been lost and will continue to be lost, which detracts from the character and appearance of the area.

Unimaginative uniform design of housing is also an issue, and whilst there are areas of public open space with trees, Queensway itself lacks landscaping with little evidence of trees in private front gardens. Tree planting within the public realm (within the relatively wide footpaths) would make a significant improvement to the aesthetics of the area.

Character Area: Roundponds, Melksham.

This site is located NNW to Melksham town centre lying snuggly between two main roads, the A365 from Bath and Corsham and the A350 from Chippenham heading directly south.

Access to the estate can be achieved by both roads, the A365 offering two access points, one being via Dunch Lane with the second most direct route being a sharp turn off the junction near Victoria Motors. The third access to Roundpond is, again, via Dunch Lane but instead comes from the A350 leading through a single track road and over a narrow railway bridge.

Topographically, the area is flat and cannot offer any views of note.

The distinctiveness of Roundpond must be its layout being predominately a square made up of housing and a small green space, with further housing on the perimeter on the four sides, enhancing the square shape. There are four roads (one being a cul-de-sac) which converge on the four corners of “the square”.

The housing design is both interesting and varied. The first properties there were built at the turn of the century with further development in the 1930's. One or two more recent additions have been built and they fit in well with earlier build. The estate offers a good mix of both semi detached and detached properties, most having dropped kerb access to driveways.

Most properties have small front gardens with larger gardens to the rear. The frontages are either hedged, fenced or walled. Most houses have a green verge in front. Many houses display bay windows. There are a few extensions visible from the road.

Most properties are stone built with Bath stone whilst several offer an alternative red brick build .Many properties have garages, usually, but not always, attached.

The roofing material is mainly of slate.

There are few solar panels visible on Roundpond itself.

The front gardens are mainly laid to shrubs with only a very few larger trees impacting on the area.

The roads through the estate can be quite busy at peak periods but at the time of reporting , midday, was reasonably quiet. Parking has sometimes been an issue with some driveways becoming partially blocked by other vehicles.

There are no public parking areas or shops in Roundpond although there is a local gym located on the perimeter. The one small green space offers no more than a bench and waste bin but ball games can be played there.

Lying directly east to the estate is the watercourse known as Southbrook which may have influenced the title, “Roundpond”.

STAGE 1: OBSERVATION OF A CHARACTER AREA'S DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER

What makes this area recognisable and distinct? Below are some prompts to help you consider different aspects of local character – they may or may not be relevant so please do use them just as a prompt for completing your own notes.

STREETS <p><i>Are streets straight, irregular or curving?</i></p> <p><i>Are there different types of routes? Eg footpaths, pedestrianised streets or cul-de-sacs?</i></p> <p><i>Does traffic dominate the environment?</i> <i>What is parking like? On-street/front drives/varied? Congested/well organised?</i></p>	Your notes: Shaw (meaning copse) dates back to the 13th Century and is now a well-kept village on the A365 Bath to Melksham Road. The road is slightly elevated from the fields to its South before it twists and dips to the main village's Eastern boundary; the B3353 road North to Corsham. However, there are varied established buildings from the imposing Grade II listed Church Farm house, through the Old Brewery, Old Malthouse and Shaw Farm to Shaw Country Hotel beyond this junction on the South side, towards Melksham, either along the main road or up drives. These now accommodate homes and businesses such as animal boarding, turf suppliers, Shaw Logs and building firms. Shaw House (the original manor) standing at the end of its own tree-lined driveway with impressive gate piers is the last property on the South upon entering Melksham. The house is Grade II listed along with all the associated structures around it and was used for many years until 2000 as a County Welfare Home. The stables were sold off in 1990, becoming a dwelling known as Shaw Court, the main house and other buildings were sold as private residences and one is now Shaw Grange.
BUILDINGS <p><i>What is the main land use? Housing, shopping, employment or mixed?</i></p> <p><i>How are the buildings arranged? Detached, semi's, terraces or mixed?</i></p> <p><i>Are the buildings close to the road, set back with gardens or varied?</i></p> <p><i>What are the boundary treatments generally? (hedges / low or high walls / railings / grassed area etc</i></p> <p><i>Are there any distinct architectural features? Eg porches / bays and window shapes / chimneys/ decorative features</i></p>	Housing does not line all of the southern side in the main part of Shaw; short stretches just East and West of Norrington Lane are undeveloped and offer pleasant views across fields to the South. The dozen or so houses in Shaw on the South side of the Melksham Road are sited off individual drives and are not too close to the variable traffic. Besides, their orientation to the road is also varied and their sites are lower than the roadside verge, where there is no pavement. The sizeable, detached dwellings range from period farmhouses in local stone with stone tile or slate roofs, through Victorian/Edwardian to 20th century styles, mainly in local stone. The Northern side, by contrast, has a small hinterland of curving roads or tracks (some of which are cul de sacs/unmade) with, almost exclusively, detached, individual dwellings or limited batches of homes. Most
DISTINCTIVE FEATURES <p><i>Does any feature make this area special or instantly recognisable? (these landmarks could be buildings / statues / trees and natural features)</i></p> <p><i>Are there any green spaces or water features? Street trees & or verges?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any particular street details that you notice, such as lamp posts, benches or signage?</i></p>	

SPECIAL VIEWS

*Are there any significant views in or out of the character area?
Please make location & direction of the view on a map and take a photo.*

are of natural stone or various industrial versions thereof. The range is from the few stone farmhouses dating from the 17th Century or earlier, to Beltane Place, built around 2000 on the site of a garage business. The biggest single development is the Beeches which dates from the 1960s, but even there the housing is mixed, except for the very plain bungalows and semi-detached houses around/near the magnificent playing field (where the village hall is also situated).

Photograph

Privacy and individuality is achieved/enhanced through Shaw's splendid range of hedges, particularly lining the front gardens of the houses on the narrow-paved Melksham Road. A significant length of original high wall has been utilised for the same purpose there with the addition of a substantial buttress. Shaw seems to be almost exclusively residential; Mavern House Nursing Home and the School being the only opportunities for employment outside the home (apart from the businesses listed above). Nearing the junction with the Corsham Road from the West, is a striking view of the 1905 stone Church (which, unusually, has both a spire and tower). **Photograph**

Shaw School was founded as a church school in Victorian times so is situated beside 'its' Church. The School has a mix of more recent, single-storey buildings both along from its original building and in the fields behind. Continuing North from the junction, traditional, heavy wooden telegraph poles line Corsham Road in front of the Church and School, changing to the left side beyond. No houses front the road and on the left side, after side-on houses, comes School Lane (an almost hidden track with houses of various ages surrounded by their own gardens) and a second track is the entrance to the Nursing Home.

Development stops as it does on the right, either side of a stream, with fields containing a row of pylons. These narrow fields mark the boundary between Shaw and Whitley.

STAGE 2A: Identify the key positive features

Drawing from your comments above - please highlight any characteristics and features that you've noted, that you think make a positive contribution to the character of the Plan area, that ought to be, or could be woven into new development that it complements and strengthens local distinctiveness of the Melksham area.

Shaw has a sense of peace, safety and community, partly engendered through the clustering and lack of regimentation in the housing. The integration of so many building styles, from so many eras is, presumably, down not only to the prosperity that ensures all is in good order but also to the settlement not being dominated by any one type (in terms of materials, size, orientation, etc). Though relatively dense for detached housing, the organic nature of Shaw's growth and the privacy afforded by its beautiful gardens makes it imperative that no new building detracts from such benefits which have made Shaw a very desirable place to live.

STAGE 2B:

Are there any issues that harm or detract from the positive character of this area, that should be avoided or addressed in future?

Having a primary school with a long frontage on a main road near a junction is obviously not ideal. Although measures have been put in place to minimise risks, with demand for school places outstripping supply, radical solutions to the mixture of current accommodation may need to include solutions further from the road and more off-road drop-off places, which would be desirable even if more walking and bicycling to school is fostered. The pavements along all main roads are particularly narrow in this village and the cosy scale of almost intertwined tracks must make vehicular access challenging. The overall declivity from Whitley down Corsham Road and from Shaw Hill to the junction has given rise to flooding around the School in recent years. Flood alleviation measures have been taken, but any new development must take account of the serious water management issues.

STAGE 1: OBSERVATION OF A CHARACTER AREA'S DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER

What makes this area recognisable and distinct? Below are some prompts to help you consider different aspects of local character – they may or may not be relevant so please do use them just as a prompt for completing your own notes.

Snowberry & Campion are areas on the south eastern fringe of Melksham which were developed for housing in the 1990s. Both areas display a variety of designs having been built by a number of developers. The Campion area to south of Spa Road comprises mostly detached houses, many of which might be labelled "executive homes", with well tended and good sized gardens. Whilst Snowberry in general has more modest housing, both areas have attractive well designed traditional brick built housing.

<p>STREETS</p> <p><i>Are streets straight, irregular or curving?</i></p> <p><i>Are there different types of routes? Eg footpaths, pedestrianised streets or cul-de-sacs?</i></p> <p><i>Does traffic dominate the environment?</i></p> <p><i>What is parking like? On-street/front drives/varied? Congested/well organised?</i></p>	<p>Your notes:</p> <p>Snowberry Lane is a curving road which was once a cul-de-sac, but has now become a busy road following the development of Eastern Way linking to the A3102 to Calne. Snowberry has good wide grass verges and a combined cycle/foorpath.</p> <p>There is no housing accessed directly off of Snowberry Lane, which may have been designed to become a dual carriageway. No parking is permitted.</p>
<p>BUILDINGS</p> <p><i>What is the main land use? Housing, shopping, employment or mixed?</i></p> <p><i>How are the buildings arranged? Detached, semi's, terraces or mixed?</i></p> <p><i>Are the buildings close to the road, set back with gardens or varied?</i></p> <p><i>What are the boundary treatments generally? (hedges / low or high walls / railings / grassed area etc</i></p> <p><i>Are there any distinct architectural features? Eg porches / bays and window shapes / chimneys/ decorative features</i></p>	<p>The residential roads off Snowberry comprise Sweetbriar Road, Marigold and Foxglove Close, Heather Avenue and Primrose Drive. These are mostly detached houses with some semi detached and the occasional terrace of 3 or 4.</p> <p>Almost all houses have garages, set back to varying degrees with space to park one or two cars off street, and with a front garden area.</p> <p>Some houses have evergreen hedging or shrub areas to delineate boundaries and provide a sense of "ownership". Some even have good sized trees within quite small front gardens. Others have open</p>

<p>DISTINCTIVE FEATURES</p> <p><i>Does any feature make this area special or instantly recognisable? (these landmarks could be buildings / statues / trees and natural features)</i></p> <p><i>Are there any green spaces or water features? Street trees & or verges?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any particular street details that you notice, such as lamp posts, benches or signage?</i></p>	<p>boundaries at the front where frony parking areas effectively merge with the neighbour.</p> <p>In the Snowberry area the designers have put in some effort to provide distinctive designs with traditional chimneys and quoins and soldier courses of contrasting brick colours.</p>
<p>SPECIAL VIEWS</p> <p><i>Are there any significant views in or out of the character area?</i></p> <p><i>Please make location & direction of the view on a map and take a photo.</i></p>	<p>Unlike Snowberry, Campion Drive remains a quiet access road with little traffic. It is tree and shrub lined, and fairly open to the south east where the a brook runs parallel with the road. A green corridor follows the brook throughout the length of the Campion area, and includes a good amount of public green space inclung two play areas. Some of the housing is also designed around an attractive "village green", with good landscaping.</p> <p>The residential roads off Campion comprise Speedwell and Burnett Close, Pennycress Drive Clover and Sorrel Close and Cornflower Way.</p> <p>The architecture is different here; mostly detached houses with examples of "mock Tudor" elements, some large porches, double garages, larger front gardens and more landscaping with many residents having planted trees. There are also some more modest semis and small terraces.</p> <p>In both areas it is clear that many residents put in a lot of effort to maintain their houses and gardens in good order.</p>

CHARACTER AREA**Snowberry & Campion**.....

STAGE 2A: Identify the key positive features

Drawing from your comments above - please highlight any characteristics and features that you've noted, that you think make a positive contribution to the character of the Plan area, that ought to be, or could be woven into new development that it complements and strengthens local distinctiveness of the Melksham area.

Your notes:

The key positive features of the Snowberry and Campion areas is that these are well designed residential developments providing a mixture of house types, albeit mostly detached houses. There is good off-street resulting in a pleasant environment not dominated by parked cars and enhanced by well tended front gardens.

Green space is less prevalent in Snowberry (although it has the Primrose drive open green space to the north), but Campion has a relatively large amount of open green space and good landscaping generally. Campion is a good example of an attractive medium density development, and is it clear that some of the developers did go to some lengths to not only build attractive individual houses, but also to consider the "setting", particularly around the "village green" area. Campion might be a good model for future housing developments, but perhaps one which would be difficult to emulate in a time when high density is national policy.

CHARACTER AREA ...**The Spa.. Surveyor(s) ... Tony Watts ... 18th October 2019.....**

STAGE 1: OBSERVATION OF A CHARACTER AREA'S DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER

What makes this area recognisable and distinct? Below are some prompts to help you consider different aspects of local character – they may or may not be relevant so please do use them just as a prompt for completing your own notes.

STREETS <i>Are streets straight, irregular or curving?</i> <i>Are there different types of routes? Eg footpaths, pedestrianised streets or cul-de-sacs?</i> <i>Does traffic dominate the environment?</i> <i>What is parking like? On-street/front drives/varied? Congested/well organised?</i>	Your notes: A single straight street Part is a cul-de-sac having been “by-passed” in the 1970s. It has footpath/housing on one side only. Very little traffic within the cul-de-sac, but busier on the A365. Some parking within the cul-de-sac, but most properties have driveways/off-street parking
BUILDINGS <i>What is the main land use? Housing, shopping, employment or mixed?</i> <i>How are the buildings arranged? Detached, semi's, terraces or mixed?</i> <i>Are the buildings close to the road, set back with gardens or varied?</i> <i>What are the boundary treatments generally? (hedges / low or high walls / railings / grassed area etc</i> <i>Are there any distinct architectural features? Eg porches / bays and window shapes / chimneys/ decorative features</i>	Housing A mixture of 1930's semis and Georgian detached and semis detached with some 1970s bungalows Houses are set back from the road with gardens and driveways Mostly hedges Although the Georgian semi-detached houses are unusual (in this area), the buildings very much demonstrate the archetypal architecture of their period, with ashlar stone/sash windows, grand Georgian features and proportions, and 1930s bay windows, stucco etc
DISTINCTIVE FEATURES <i>Does any feature make this area special or instantly recognisable? (these landmarks could be buildings / statues / trees and natural features)</i> <i>Are there any green spaces or water features? Street trees & or verges?</i> <i>Are there any particular street details that you notice, such as lamp posts, benches or signage?</i>	The Georgian semis are highly distinctive with very long verdant front gardens The area might be termed very “leafy” in comparison to Melksham generally No

SPECIAL VIEWS <i>Are there any significant views in or out of the character area? Please make location & direction of the view on a map and take a photo.</i>	No
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CHARACTER AREAThe Spa.....

STAGE 2A: Identify the key positive features

Drawing from your comments above - please highlight any characteristics and features that you've noted, that you think make a positive contribution to the character of the Plan area, that ought to be, or could be woven into new development that it complements and strengthens local distinctiveness of the Melksham area.

Your notes:

This is one of the most distinctive parts of Melksham, and there have been calls for The Spa to become a conservation area.

The semi-detached Georgian Houses are immediately noticeable to traffic passing on the adjacent A365

STAGE 2B:

Are there any issues that harm or detract from the positive character of this area, that should be avoided or addressed in future?

You notes:

Traffic noise from the A365 is very apparent. An A350 by-pass to the east would alleviate much of this.

STAGE 1: OBSERVATION OF A CHARACTER AREA'S DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER

What makes this area recognisable and distinct? Below are some prompts to help you consider different aspects of local character – they may or may not be relevant so please do use them just as a prompt for completing your own notes.

STREETS <p><i>Are streets straight, irregular or curving?</i></p> <p><i>Are there different types of routes? Eg footpaths, pedestrianised streets or cul-de-sacs?</i></p> <p><i>Does traffic dominate the environment? What is parking like? On-street/front drives/varied? Congested/well organised?</i></p>	<p>Your notes:</p> <p>Whitley (from white leah or wood-clearing) nestles a field's distance North of Shaw in the rough quadrant formed by the C220 road between Beanacre and Atworth and the B3353 road North to Corsham. (see map). This latter road forms the village's spine and eastern limit, with well-spaced, individual houses ranged off either side, of very varied ages and styles. The houses are set well back from the pavement and verge.</p>
BUILDINGS <p><i>What is the main land use? Housing, shopping, employment or mixed?</i></p> <p><i>How are the buildings arranged? Detached, semi's, terraces or mixed?</i></p> <p><i>Are the buildings close to the road, set back with gardens or varied?</i></p> <p><i>What are the boundary treatments generally? (hedges / low or high walls / railings / grassed area etc</i></p> <p><i>Are there any distinct architectural features? Eg porches / bays and window shapes / chimneys/ decorative features</i></p>	<p>Though the road looks level, in fact the whole quadrant is on an incline, all the way from Goodes Hill in the North to the stream which separates it from Shaw; hence past flooding. Looking North, the winding, tree-lined drive to Whitley Golf Club precedes the housing on the right.</p> <p>The turnings left off Corsham Road are First, Middle and Top Lane. The first 2 join Top Lane at the North-Western edge of the village. Off these, small, uniform developments (of detached bungalows, chalet bungalows and some houses of industrially-produced local stone with red tile roofs) curve in short cul-de-sacs. First Lane has the countryside boundary with Shaw to its South but also Lagard Farm and Whitley Farm (the oldest surviving farmhouse) which are 2 of Whitley's 6 or so beautiful, very old stone farmhouses with stone roofs.</p>
DISTINCTIVE FEATURES <p><i>Does any feature make this area special or instantly recognisable? (these landmarks could be buildings / statues / trees and natural features)</i></p> <p><i>Are there any green spaces or water features? Street trees & or verges?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any particular street details that you notice, such as lamp posts, benches or signage?</i></p>	<p>Many farmhouses were rebuilt in the 17th Century and, as with Shaw, several are situated behind more recent homes, up narrow drives. The other side has mixed housing plus 3 1960-70s cul de sacs of houses and bungalows.</p> <p>Middle Lane is very narrow in places, with a mix of development but also includes Pocock's Poultry (meat wholesalers) well screened up a curving drive. Whitley Reading Room, provided in 1904 by a local landowner, is situated in Middle Lane. One of the side roads, Grange Close, built in the early 1960s, was the first of the detached bungalow/chalet bungalow developments. Sizeable front gardens with low stone walls give an air of</p>

<p>SPECIAL VIEWS</p> <p><i>Are there any significant views in or out of the character area?</i></p> <p><i>Please make location & direction of the view on a map and take a photo.</i></p>	<p>openness. Top Lane marks the edge of the village and on its Northern side has very varied development, beginning with recent, prestige conversions of outbuildings of a 19th Century manor (Whitley House) hidden up a drive and, after fields, Northey's Farm.</p> <p>Housing density increases approaching the heart of the village; the Pear Tree Pub with origins in the 12th Century. Roughly opposite is the extremely popular coffee house/café 'The Toast Office', which was previously simply the Village Shop & Post Office.</p> <p>Photograph ?</p> <p>These facilities don't just serve Whitley (The Pear Tree accommodates some community activities) but attract custom from far afield. Though the Pub has an extensive car park, the popularity of the relatively new café does bring parking challenges on such a narrow lane. Eden Grove, a curving turn off the South side of Top Lane, which was built as post-war "Cornish" pattern Council Housing, is notable for its Mansard-style, semi-detached, tile-hung design and sizeable front gardens Photograph here?</p> <p>Just after the point where Middle Lane joins, is situated the Methodist Church, now having a tasteful modern entrance addition. A terrace of 19th Century cottages stands just after the junction with First Lane, with a few modern properties beyond in Pear Tree Close accessed over a cattle grid. On the opposite side of Top Lane, after the Pub and a field, is Littleworth Lane and further housing which is mixed to the point of randomness. Many frontages have been converted for parking, storage or semi-commercial or industrial purposes. One such is Daisy Chain Nursery; an adaptation of a rendered 1950s-style Working Men's Club, with a large car park in front. Opposite is the telephone kiosk library. Photograph ... A redbrick home and some Victorian or Edwardian concrete-rendered villas also stand out. Top Lane meanders westwards over West Hill, with a few bungalows on the South side amidst fields, onto the next settlement of Purlpit on the edge of Atworth.</p>
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STAGE 2A: Identify the key positive features

Drawing from your comments above - please highlight any characteristics and features that you've noted, that you think make a positive contribution to the character of the Plan area, that ought to be, or could be woven into new development that it complements and strengthens local distinctiveness of the Melksham area.

The single most common type of housing in Whitley are bungalows constructed in the 1960s of industrially-produced local stone under a tiled roof. Though whole roads of such were built at one time, the large gardens and some variation in orientation together serve to convey individuality. There are no straight roads except the B3353 Corsham Road. All lends the village a comfortable air, which needs to be preserved. The predominant type of home offers the opportunity for retrofitting as insulation standards were not high at that time, but they would have been built with cavity walls. The overall impression is of well-maintained homes and most have double glazing.

STAGE 2B:

Are there any issues that harm or detract from the positive character of this area, that should be avoided or addressed in future?

New development must take account of the serious water management issues. The proximity of Whitley to the National Grid Electricity Control Hub to the East, off Westlands Lane, mean that residents need to be alert to, and proactive concerning, opportunities for energy generation in their vicinity.