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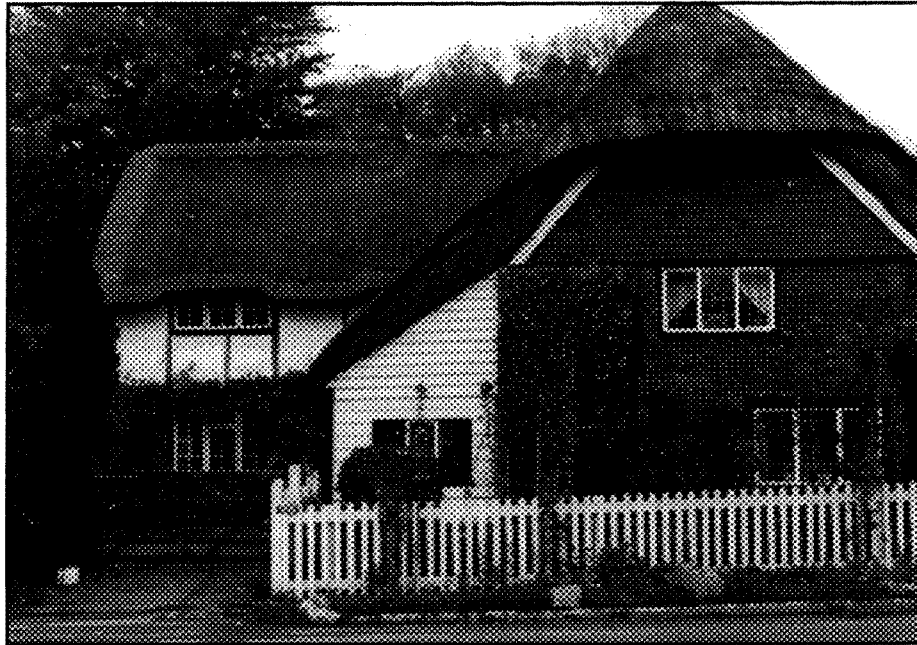
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# Conservation Area Character Survey

# ASKETT

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## What are Conservation Areas?

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

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

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

## The Purpose of This Survey

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

The survey is intended to complement the approved policies for conservation areas in the Council's Wycombe District Local Plan. These policies are the primary means of safeguarding the special character of our conservation areas.

The survey is also intended to be used as an aid in development control decision making. Proposals for schemes positively to enhance the character and appearance of Askett Conservation Area will be produced in the future in consultation with councillors, local residents and other interested parties.



## HISTORY

Askett may owe its name and its site to a farm occurring at the extreme east of the then parish, known as East Cot which was sited in the crossing of two or possibly three roads.

The earliest reliable reference to a hamlet appears c1250 as Astcote but it is thought possible that the farm was there in the 10th century. The spelling Ascot still remained in the 1830s.

In 1291 there is record of a large dwelling, possibly the beginnings of the Manor House which stood on the site of Old Manor Close. The dwelling was added to in the 14th century to become a hall house and altered to a more sophisticated version in the later part of the 15th century. Further alterations were made to the Manor during the Renaissance period. The parlour of the Manor House was converted to a room of greater decoration and comfort. The ceilings were decorated with mouldings and the central fireplace was replaced with a decorative stone fireplace.

In the mid 16th century the Bell family took over the Manor House and again more alterations for comfort were made. The Bell family continued in Askett for a number of generations. The last recording of the name was in 1743 when William Bell died without a son. His daughter Susan had married the son of the Reading family from Risborough. By the early 19th century the Bell/Reading family had become the largest land holders in Askett.

The 15th century hall of the Manor was moved from Askett circa 1970 and re-erected at Bank Farmhouse, Meadle.

Aylesbury ducks were once reared here in large numbers for the London market in the early 1900s. Horace East's poultry farm now Pyrtle House, outside the conservation area, was a large establishment employing local ladies to pluck the birds. Lacemaking was also an important occupation for the ladies of the village many specialising in pillow lace. There are references in the 1841 census to fifty-one lace makers in Askett between the ages of eight and sixty-six and between fifty-eight families.

A thriving wheelwrights and blacksmiths occupied sites at the centre of the village. These trades can be traced back to the mid 17th century. A modern bungalow now stands between the two and an old cartwheel has been hung on the wall as a reminder of the previous trades.

In the mid 1800s Askett Farm was also a shop run by the farmers wife Mary Baldwin who was also a lace dealer. The shop selling ham and dairy farm produce closed in 1911. There was also a village green in front of Askett Farm now occupied by Little Askett which was built by Henry Baldwin of Askett Farm shortly before he died. Corner Cottage was built on orchard land claimed to belong to Old Rose Cottage. There was also a shop at Lilac Cottage which opened at the beginning of the 19th century and closed in the mid 1900s. In the late 1920s there was a shop at White Cross which closed in the 1970s.

Askett had a chapel until 1960 when it was converted to a dwelling. Old Chapel Cottage still has some old gravestones left in the garden.

At one time there were two inns in the village the White Cross Inn converted to a residence in 1976 and the Three Crowns. There has been an inn at the site of the Three Crowns since the 15th century. The White Cross was a notable coaching inn where it is believed teams of horses were kept for assisting the coaches to tackle the hill at Cadsden.

The history of Askett is exceptionally well documented in detail in a book entitled 'Askett' by E M Cureton which is available in Wycombe Reference Library.

The conservation area was first designated in 1977.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

On the site now occupied by Old Manor Close archaeologists found the original manor foundations and some small relics which are housed in Aylesbury Museum. The site of the old Manor House is still indicated as a site of special archaeological interest. Due to the long history of the village care must be taken when any new development occurs to observe the site for archaeological remains. In the event of archaeological deposits being found the Council may require archaeological conditions attaching to planning permissions where appropriate, including watching briefs, excavation or similar recording procedures.

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the conservation area.

## ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Askett is an attractive small, rural settlement which lies within the Green Belt and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Although there has been some modern infilling in the village many of the historic dwellings remain scattered throughout the conservation area. They endow the village with a sense of place and bring considerable character and history to Askett. The conservation area is of considerable charm and antiquity.

The original development of Askett is spaciouly and irregularly sited along the highway framework. The buildings include many listed buildings and although varying widely in size, nevertheless have an appreciable affinity which may be recognised in their period of origin, the use of materials and fenestration proportions. The character of Askett is derived primarily from the historic nature of many of its buildings and the space which exists between them giving rise to a fairly loosely structured layout. The spaces around the listed buildings in particular lend emphasis to their individual characteristics.

Although having a definite unity there are discernable areas of differing merits within the whole. Askett has a central historic core along the east-west section of Askett Lane encompassing The Three Crowns, Askett Farm, Chiltern Cottage, Horseshoe Cottage, Sumach Cottage, Lavender Cottage, Clapgate and Penn Cottage. These listed cottages mostly dating from the 17th century would have faced a central green. The wide grass verges at the road side are a reminder of the larger village green once existed here.

There are two ribbons of development, one extending along

the north-south section of Askett Lane. Here there are a number of listed buildings (again mostly of the 17th century and earlier), and historic buildings scatted irregularly along the lane. Of exposed timbering with whitewashed infill, some of the cottages retain their thatched roofs whilst others have attractive old tiled roofs. The buildings are sited spaciouly and over-look an open paddock.

The second ribbon extends along Crowbrook Road and has a number of attractive historic buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries. All are of brick some with flint panels or blue headers for decoration, others are colourwashed. Here we find The White Cross the former Inn which still retains its road side sign, and next door but one the Old Chapel House.

At the edges of the village are located Askett House to the north, Hook Cottage to the east and The Bell House to the south. All are set slightly apart from the village in a countryside setting.

## ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

There are fourteen listed buildings in the conservation area, all are grade II.

On entering the conservation area from the east Hook Cottage stands on the right obscured by roadside trees/hedge. Set amidst fields with an old orchard to the front this early 19th century house is of colourwashed, dressed chalk blocks to the front with flint and chalk rubble to the right gable and to the rear. The left gable is colourwashed render. There is a slate roof with a moulded eaves below and four pane sash windows to the front. Opposite and closer to the road are two pretty thatched cottages. The cottage to the right is modern, built in the 1980s. The original cottage to the left is of the 18th century. Ahead is the Public House, The Three Crowns with its stable block at right angles to it. Circa 1830 the house is of red and vitreous brick under a hipped slate roof. The railings to the central door are original wrought iron. The stable block uses traditional flint with brick dressings with an old tiled roof; more usual materials for a functional building. The upper gable is weather boarded.

Askett Farm opposite is a picturesque 17th century house, with exposed timber framing, colourwashed brick and plaster infill and a large thatched roof. The casement windows, some semi-dormers set into the thatch, are mostly 20th century but traditional materials have been used which retain the historic quality of the building.

Next along Askett Lane is Penn Cottage also 17th century and of the same materials. Again the replacement 20th century windows use traditional materials and in this case are paired leaded casements. Windows in the upper storey are set into the thatch. Simple board doors are used which are appropriate to the period of the house. Both Askett Farm and Penn Cottage have been sympathetically extended.

Almost opposite Penn Cottage is Old Rose Cottage (unlisted). This house, built in the mid 20th century is on the site of a 17th century thatched cottage. The new dwelling has reused some of the old timbers and bricks.

Further along Askett Lane is Well End, also 17th century

with exposed timber framing and whitewashed brick infill. The house was originally thatched but this was replaced by tile after the thatch caught fire in circa 1910.

Behind is The Old Wick an unlisted historic dwelling of character which has a large and delightful old tiled roof.

At the end of Askett Lane is another group of listed buildings. Beech Cottage (named after the hedge that was planted around it in the mid 1900s) and Brook Cottage are both of the 17th century and share the same characteristics. Both are thatched with timber framing and whitewashed brick, render and flint infill and have casement windows with glazing bars. Brook Cottage was at one time three separate cottages which were joined together in 1945.

The building which closes the view along Askett Lane, Meadowcroft Cottage, is typical of the historic dwellings already encountered along the lane. This 17th century building has the expected timber framing with whitewashed brick infill, barred wooden casements and an old tiled roof. Meadowcroft Cottage was originally two dwellings. The wall between was demolished and one front door blocked in the mid 20th century. An extension was added in 1982. However, to the rear is an early 19th century block with classic Georgian proportions. The frontage is colourwashed render with 4-pane sash windows flanking a 3-pane and the central door; above is a slate roof. As a house of some refinement a walled garden was included to the south of the house. The wall is much over grown by ivy on the west section but to the south the wall with its half round brick copings and arch over the garden gate can clearly be viewed from the public footpath. After the rustic nature of the previous dwellings encountered along the lane Meadowcroft Farm House has a certain impact and is equally attractive in its formality. As the formal frontage is visually separated from the timber framed 17th century buildings it does not adversely affect the rhythm and scale of the traditional vernacular cottages along Askett Lane.

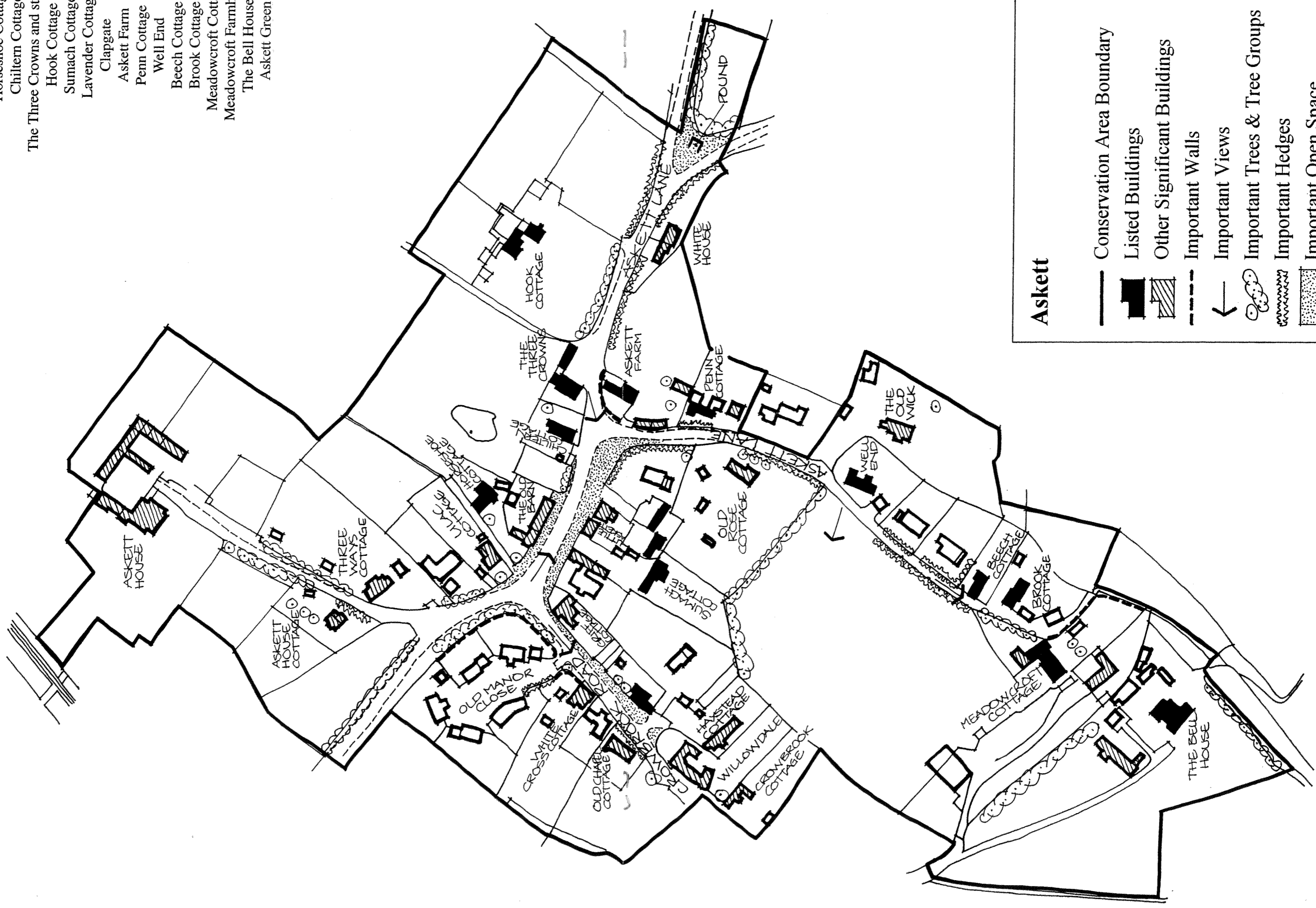
The Bell House at the southern most part of the conservation area is an attractive listed building in a picturesque setting. The house has a 16th century cross wing with hall range rebuilt in the early 17th century and a mid 18th century extension to the rear forming an L-plan. The 16th century and 17th century bays are timber framed with brick and render infill. The hall range has a large external chimney. There are barred wooden casements throughout which in the 16th century part of the house at first floor level have a moulded sill on an elaborately moulded central bracket.

Returning to the top of Askett Lane on the north side of the road next to The Three Crowns is Chiltern Cottage at one time a bakery. Originally 17th century the house has been altered in each successive century. The rear part has some timber framing with brick infill to ground floor with roughcast whitewashed to upper storey. The front gable was rebuilt in the early 19th century and is of red and vitreous chequer brick with upper part tile hung. The far bay is flint with brick dressings probably added late 18th-early 19th century. The hipped thatched roof sweeping down to the single storey weather boarded extension is a splendid feature. The cottage has mostly leaded light windows.

# Asket Conservation Area Character Survey Map

## LISTED BUILDINGS (All Listed Grade II)

- Horseshoe Cottage
- Chiltern Cottage
- The Three Crowns and stable block
- Hook Cottage
- Sumach Cottage
- Lavender Cottage
- Clapgate
- Askett Farm
- Penn Cottage
- Well End
- Beech Cottage
- Brook Cottage
- Meadowcroft Cottage
- Meadowcroft Farmhouse
- The Bell House
- Askett Green



**Asket**

- Conservation Area Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- ▨ Other Significant Buildings
- - - Important Walls
- ← Important Views
- Important Trees & Tree Groups
- ⋈ Important Hedges
- ▤ Important Open Space

In 1978 a large 18th century barn was converted to two homes, The Old Barn and Askett Barn. Although not listed the barn contributes positively to the historic core of the conservation area with its expanse of thatch. The simple weather boarded exterior is a reminder of its agricultural origins.

Behind the converted barn is the listed Horseshoe Cottage, the oldest in the village, a cruck framed house originating in the 15th century although the outer walls were rebuilt in brick in the early 19th century. The cottage is only single storey with an attic under an old tiled roof. The large chimney appears to dwarf the cottage. The wooden casements have single glazing bars.

On the opposite side of the road the listed buildings occur behind other later dwellings. Sumach Cottage and Lavender Cottage both dating from the 17th century have exposed timber framing, barred casement windows and have part thatched part tiled roofs. Clapgate is a 19th century house of colourwashed render over flint and chalk under an old tiled roof. This beautiful trio of cottages, half hidden from view, has been little altered and they are an essential contribution to the historic heart of the village.

In front of Lavender Cottage is Little Askett an ornate Victorian villa. Representative of the period the villa has two large sash windows, one of which is a bay, flanking a central doorway. The slate roof is topped by decorative ridge tiles.

Crowbrook Road has no listed buildings but many of historic interest and character. The White Cross still retains its old pub sign. Willowdale terminates the view along Crowbrook Road and was once two houses as is still evident. It is an unpretentious and attractive dwelling of brick under a tiled roof the left part being rendered and colourwashed.

Haxstead Cottage next door, three separate cottages, is of whitewashed brick under a slate roof. It is a little hidden away but also presents a pleasant picture complementing Willowdale.

On either side of the driveway leading to Askett House are two interesting cottages. Three Ways Cottage, once two cottages has an unusual chalk block front elevation with brick dressings. The rear elevation is of the traditional and more commonly found flint with brick dressings. The roof is of old tile. Askett House Cottage, opposite is a charming, simple, rural cottage of brick with blue headers in the roadside elevation. In the past it was occupied by farm labourers to Askett House.

Askett House is at the northern most edge for the village. Built in the 19th century the house is of brick with whitewashed render to the first floor under a slate roof. The house has large 16 pane sash windows in the south elevation. To the west are a group of attractive barns, weather boarded under slate or old tile roofs. Those to the far west have undergone conversion to residential.

Old Manor Close built in the early 1980s is an inward looking group of five dwellings, all brick under tiled roofs. The Close is enclosed on the west side by a brick wall. This modern development which lies close to the heart of the historic village has attempted a separation from its

surroundings by its design in order not to intrude into the historic character of the village.

## MATERIALS

There is a variety of materials throughout the village. Typical of the 17th century dwellings is the use of thatch which is concentrated at the heart of the conservation area. These early dwellings also have exposed timber framing with brick or render infill usually colourwashed. Again these materials are found at the centre of the conservation area and along Askett Lane. For the 19th century dwellings red brick is more commonly used often with a vitreous brick for decoration, for example at The Three Crowns, Willowdale, Haxstead Cottage and the rebuilt gable of Chiltern Cottage. Some dwellings are whitewashed.

Slate is the most commonly used roofing material for the 19th century dwellings. Old clay tile roofs are also used particularly where old thatch has been replaced. Modern 20th century dwellings are of brick and tile some are colourwashed.

There are a few instances of the use of chalk block for instance at Three Ways Cottage, the wall opposite Rose Cottage, Hook Cottage where it has been whitewashed and at Clapgate where it has been rendered over. It is thought that chalk was brought in from Cadsden.

Windows in the historic dwellings are mostly timber casements with glazing bars or leaded lights. For 19th century dwellings at The Three Crowns, Little Askett and Meadowcroft Farm House larger sash windows are used. Unfortunately, some use of inappropriate materials for replacement windows has occurred within the village although this is limited and has fortunately not greatly harmed the character of the conservation area.

Walling is not a particular feature of this conservation area. Although as already mentioned the high wall opposite Old Rose Cottage is of an interesting material as is the walled garden at Meadowcroft Farm House. Of greater character to the village is the use of low picket fencing which occurs with great effect at the centre of the conservation area and is also found at Askett Lane and Crowbrook Road. As one of the essential characteristics of the conservation area is its openness and the space between dwellings, open, low fencing or low walling is most appropriate to the character of the conservation area.

Along Askett Lane surfacing for driveways and paths is predominately shingle which is appropriate for its rural location, giving softer edges. Some forms of hard surfacing can tend to jar with the rural nature of the surroundings and with the historic dwellings themselves.

## TREES AND VEGETATION

Trees and vegetation are an essential part of the characteristics of the village. Some individual trees and groups of trees have been indicated on the survey map. However it should be recognised that other garden trees although not as visible for the public domain collectively make a contribution to the greenery of the village and its rural appeal. Orchard trees also augment the rural origins of

the village and most notably occur to the south of Hook Cottage and Askett House.

Hedgerows often including trees line the main routes into the village at the west and east of Askett Lane. Lower hedgerows often of Beech occur in association with the domestic properties.

## OPEN SPACE

Private open spaces, such as garden areas and the wide roadside verges play an important part in the character of Askett. Although infilling has occurred in the past the openness of the village has been retained. This characteristic has been preserved by Green Belt policies and the village's conservation area status which has sought to halt infilling which would be detrimental to the character of the historic village.

Not only infilling but extensions to existing dwellings and additional out-buildings may well be resisted in order to preserve the character of the village. In some cases the design of extensions or the siting of new outbuildings can be organised in such a way as to minimise the impact on the historic dwellings in the conservation area and its special characteristics. For example many of the listed dwellings along Askett Lane have been successfully extended and new outbuildings such as garages added without damaging the character of this part of the conservation area. In most cases this has been achieved by setting extensions well behind the frontage of the dwelling and siting outbuildings similarly and in the least obtrusive area.

The open space in front of Hook Cottage is important to the setting of the listed buildings including Hook Cottage itself, the Three Crowns and Askett Farm, and is also important to the setting of the historic core of the conservation area.

The undeveloped land between Chiltern Cottage and The Old Barn is important to the setting of the listed dwellings, Chiltern Cottage and Horseshoe Cottage and also contributes to the greenery and spaciousness between buildings at the centre of the conservation area.

Due to the irregular pattern of development throughout the conservation area, in particular at its centre and to the east of

Crowbrook Road, garden areas are of importance and inappropriate infilling may result in a cramped appearance.

The paddock to the west of Askett Lane is a very important open feature reinforcing the rural nature of the conservation area and providing an appropriate setting for the listed and historic dwellings along Askett Lane. The appearance of the paddocks could be improved by a more visually attractive style of fencing.

At the centre of the conservation area are the remnants of the village green which now appear as wide grass verges. The houses Cornerways and Little Askett were built on the green.

At the eastern edge of the conservation area is the site of the village pound. The pound was last used in 1920 and was pulled up for firewood during the second world war. It was replaced by a local benefactor.

## VIEWS

There are a number of attractive views throughout the conservation area. Those of particular importance are marked on the character survey map.

From the Three Crowns looking west there is an attractive view of the heart of the conservation area. The roofs of the 17th century cottages can be glimpsed behind Corner Cottage and Little Askett.

The view east from the footpath near Lilac Cottage includes the attractive Askett Farm and surrounding historic buildings.

The view south-west along Crowbrook Road is also very appealing and includes many historic dwellings. The view is closed by the picturesque Willowdale and Haxstead Cottage.

The cluster of listed dwellings at the south end of Askett Lane including Beech Cottage, Brook Cottage and Meadowcroft Cottage make a pleasing view.

There are many views out to the countryside from the footpaths leading out from the village. From the footpath at the southern end of Askett Lane there are attractive views out to Whiteleaf Hill.

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

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

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

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

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



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## DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ADVICE

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

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

To safeguard, preserve and enhance the appearance and special character of Askett conservation area:-

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