

# AVENING CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT

Planning guidance  
for owners,  
occupiers and developers



*Avening is a large, busy village whose character has been profoundly influenced by the exceptionally attractive valley in which it has developed.*

*The village, which is typical of the Stoud Valleys' "cloth settlements", has grown along a complex network of roads and lanes that radiate outwards from the valley floor to climb the surrounding hillsides.*

*The conservation area comprises the two older parts of Avening, including the landscape setting of certain parts of the village.*



Cotswold District Council

March 2000

CARING FOR THE COTSWOLDS





*The High Street is the main thoroughfare through the village, used by horses and cars alike.*

*Set in a valley fringed by fields and woodlands, much of Avening nestles well within the landscape.*

Avening Conservation Area was first designated on 21 March 1989, and the boundary was altered on 28 May 1998.

A conservation area is *an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance* (Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). This Statement provides guidance on how the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the Avening Conservation Area can be achieved.

Local planning authorities are required to *formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas* (Section 71 of the Act). This Statement fulfils this statutory duty.

In making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, *special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area* (Section 72 of the Act). While this should ensure that harmful change is not allowed, some changes, normally not requiring planning permission

(known as permitted development), could still damage the special qualities of the area. Local authorities have special powers to issue directions removing certain permitted development rights from properties if it can be shown that this is necessary. A direction to this effect has been made covering part of the Avening Conservation Area.

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the most recent versions of the *Cotswold District Local Plan*, the *Gloucestershire County Structure Plan*, and national planning policy guidance, especially Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) - 'Planning and the Historic Environment'.

This Statement has been prepared by Cotswold District Council in close collaboration with Avening Parish Council and Avening Parish History Group. A draft was circulated at a public meeting held on 17 February 1998 in Avening, and any comments or suggestions were taken into account in the final published version. The Statement was adopted by Cotswold District Council as supplementary planning guidance on 28 May 1998.

# THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

## HISTORY

The medieval village of Avening grew around the Norman Church of the Holy Rood (or Holy Cross). The church, which was built on the site of an earlier Saxon church, is said to have been built in 1080, although much of the present structure dates from 1105. It still retains many of its early features, which can be seen in parts of the nave and chancel arch.

Although nothing survives of the village from before 1600, the earliest cottages were probably grouped around the crossing post on the Avening stream, just to the north of the church, and to the east along what is now called New Inn Lane. The old route of the Tetbury to Minchinhampton road crossed the stream at this point, where an early route to Nailsworth, running high on the southern side of the Avening valley, branched off. The first part of this old route is now called Woodstock Lane.

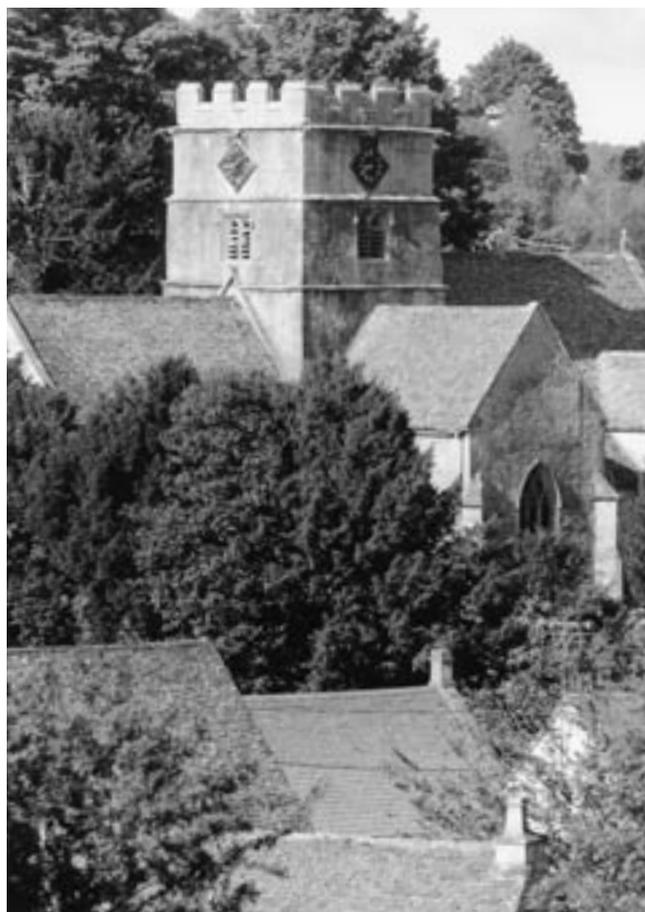
Cloth mills and the associated cottage industries of weaving and spinning expanded rapidly in the seventeenth century. It is that era which provided historic Avening with much of its present character.

The older village's complex road network is a consequence of a series of improvements to turnpike roads. The final phase, in the early nineteenth century, was intended to ease the steep gradients of earlier roads. Left behind by major road improvements, these earlier roads have become backwaters of historic character.

Seventeenth-century wealth brought with it large houses, such as The Rectory (1685) on the northern side of High Street, although it is thought that this replaced an earlier building. During this period the village developed to the east, away from the church, finding a new focus around the junction between the turnpike and Hampton Hill. The Cross Inn, standing just to the east, dates from the eighteenth century and is contemporary with some of these highway improvements.

The early nineteenth century saw the construction of two substantial houses near the church. Avening House, a two storey building, was built by 1803 - although later enlarged - and Old Quarries, a larger house built in the mid nineteenth century for the rector of the time, T. R. Brooke. The house was extended in 1938 to provide a gallery to house the picture collection of the owner, Arthur Lee (Viscount Lee of Fareham), together with many important paintings from the National Gallery which were brought there for their safe storage during the Second World War.

The nineteenth century was a period of considerable building in Avening, including the construction of a Baptist chapel in 1805, which was enlarged in 1818. Many cottages of this date were built to house weavers following the boom in the cloth industry. However, later in the century, the trade



*The tower of the Norman Church of the Holy Cross is a prominent feature within the village.*

became concentrated on the large Longfords Mill complex just over a mile down the valley, near Nailsworth.

The Avening stream powered a number of cloth mills, the highest being Avening Mill to the east of the village centre. A mill complex existed in this location in 1708 and was described as two fulling-mills and a gig-mill. Following the mid-eighteenth century depression in the cloth industry, the mill became used for baking and malting. It was then converted to a corn mill, a use which continued until 1800. By 1833, the mill had a steam engine and returned to help supply the revived cloth industry in 1838 for the partnership of William Playne, John Wise and Peter Playne Smith of Longfords Mill. The building reverted to a corn mill and was in use until 1959, when it was still driven by a water wheel. There were two smaller mills lower down the stream, but most traces of them have disappeared.

Avening's village hall was designed as a war memorial to the Great War by Thomas Falconer in Arts and Crafts style, and built on land donated by various individuals. The hall was built "for the purpose of a Public Reading and Recreation Hall for the Parishioners of the Parish of Avening and in memory of those who were killed in actions during The Great War".

## AVENING IN THE LANDSCAPE

Avening is dominated by its outstanding valley setting. The steep-sided, fairly broad valley is scenically quite spectacular, particularly compared with the flatter, open landscape of the surrounding uplands.

The open, sloping meadows on the hillsides surrounding the village are interrupted by occasional tree groups and copses. These, together with hedges and dry-stone walls, are particularly evident alongside lanes, farm tracks and ancient bridle-ways.

When approaching Avening down the steep Tetbury Hill, one is initially aware of scattered stone cottages perched on the side of a wooded valley to the right of the road. Further down Tetbury Hill, views of the village open up and something of its present size is revealed. The scene across the valley, to the north, is dominated by the rows of modern houses at Lawrence Road, Rectory Lane and Sun Ground, ranged along the contours of the south-facing hill side.

From the Nailsworth direction, the approach is flatter, the road twisting its way along the floor of a densely wooded valley. The valley opens out just before the village is reached, and immediately one is conscious of dry-stone walls, meadows and mature trees. Straight ahead, only a small part of the village is visible, with houses stacked up the hillside in a pleasingly random fashion. Pike House Garage, in the foreground, detracts somewhat from the view.



*This tranquil scene characterises the rural approach to the village around Old Hill.*



*Buildings are often subservient features within Avening's dramatic landscape setting.*

Descending the steep Hampton Hill, one is immediately conscious of the distant skyline, and the Lawrence Road housing estate in the right foreground. Development on the far southern hillside is less dense than the ordered, modern housing estates which are being passed on the right. The former appear random in layout, the cottages and other buildings sitting comfortably in the landscape.

At the foot of Hampton Hill, the road curves abruptly to follow the valley, after crossing a stream. This is a particularly attractive corner of Avening where countryside with a 'parkland' character enters the village to provide a pastoral setting for the historic buildings around Old Hill. This 'green corridor' continues into Avening before it is interrupted by the modern housing estate known as Sandford Leaze.

Within the village, Avening's setting in the landscape is probably best appreciated from a viewpoint in Rectory Lane, which overlooks sloping, open ground above Sandford House. From here, it is possible to see the importance of the valley in shaping the growth of the village. It is also clear how much more successfully the incremental development on the southern valley-side complements the landscape than the larger-scale housing developments of the twentieth century. Rectory Lane is one of the few points in Avening where two of its most important buildings - Holy Cross Church and Avening Mill - are visible, nestling in the valley bottom.

## AVENING'S CHARACTER

Avening, by Cotswold standards, is a large village with a comparatively 'busy' atmosphere. It is reasonably well provided with local facilities and services, including a primary school, playgroup, post office and general store, petrol filling station, village hall, social club and recreation ground.

The B4014, which passes through the village, gives the High Street a lively, almost urban, character. Fortunately, compared with many B-class roads, the volume of traffic is relatively moderate, with a below-average proportion of heavy goods vehicles.

Much of Avening's intrinsic character derives from its position near the head of a Stroud valley. Compared with most Cotswold rivers (which drain eastwards towards the Thames), those heading west into the Severn tend to cut deeper valleys and are swift-flowing. This makes them ideal for the location of water-powered mills. The manufacturing of cloth and, subsequently, the grinding of corn, has given Avening an industrial legacy, which was the major influence on its development. The village has a character more in common with Stroud valley settlements, such as Woodchester or Chalford, than it does with the more typical Cotswold villages.

Certain areas of Avening, particularly those parts of the conservation area that lie away from the High Street, are quite rural in character. Trees and open spaces often dominate the scene more than buildings, even though they lie within the confines of the village.

Avening Mill, formerly the hub of the community, has continued in employment use and today houses a number of small businesses. These companies draw employees into the village from a wide area. Most local people, however, commute out of Avening to their place of work, particularly to the Stroud valleys. In its heyday, the mill would have been set largely in meadows and seen in relative isolation; today, it is surrounded by modern housing.

The village has a complex pattern of development, based historically, along successive lanes and roads whose alignments were invariably dictated by the topography. Much of the village, particularly on the southern side of the valley, seems higgledy-piggledy, the result of gradual additions of individual or small groups of houses. Each of these has been positioned either to follow the contours of the valley or stepped down it. This has resulted in a jumbled roofscape of steeply pitched, predominantly stone slate roofs. More recent infill development has generally maintained this theme.

## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE VILLAGE

There are both densely built-up and landscape-dominated areas in each of the two parts of the conservation area. The valley meadows and landscaped gardens of large houses contrast sharply with rows of cottages and terraced houses along the High Street and the lower lengths of Woodstock Lane and New Inn Lane. To a certain extent, this is mirrored in the eastern part of the conservation area where there is dense development around Tetbury Hill and Star Lane, while Hampton Hill and Old Hill lead out into the valley landscape. The resulting four character areas are:

- 1: The north-western approach, including Steps Lane and the western end of Rectory Lane
- 2: High Street from its junction with Woodstock Lane, the area around Holy Cross Church, New Inn Lane and the western part of Point Road
- 3: The western part of Hampton Hill leading to High Street, Star Lane and Tetbury Hill
- 4: Old Hill leading towards Mays Lane, part of Hampton Hill and the eastern part of Star Lane



*At the foot of the valley, the High Street widens at a point where open spaces and landscape features are more dominant and mark the transition between the built-up village and the open countryside beyond.*

*Rectory Lane, to the north of the village offers spectacular distant views of the valley.*



### **1: The north-western approach, including Steps Lane and the western end of Rectory Lane.**

This substantial part of the conservation area contains very few buildings. There is, however, an abundance of trees, hedges, open spaces, dry-stone walls and other attractive landscape features. Collectively, these provide an important setting and backcloth for the western part of the village.

At the northern end are low-lying meadows, through which flows the Avening stream. A well-maintained, part-retaining dry-stone wall separates these meadows from the B4014 Nailsworth road. The far boundary of the meadows is marked by impressive rows of trees, which line a raised lane leading to Old Quarries.

As the village is approached, there are increasing numbers of trees alongside the stream. Despite the presence of stables and post and rail fences, which create a series of paddocks, the meadows remain a most attractive feature of this approach to the village. Opposite the meadows is the lodge to Avening House which, although not listed, is an attractive building that has retained its original features. Avening House itself is a grand building set amidst fine, landscaped grounds in an elevated position. The secluded parkland, which contains many mature trees is bounded by high stone walls.

Shortly beyond the point where the B4014 crosses the stream, the built-up area of Avening begins to take over from the open landscape. However, on the northern side of the road, where the meadows give way to rising, wooded, and more secluded ground, there are still relatively few buildings. The first of these is the splendid Rectory, which has a fine backdrop of mature trees and is set behind tall dry-stone walls.

Just beyond here, Rectory Lane climbs fairly steeply away from High Street. The first 100 metres of the lane is dark and partly sunk in a stone-wall lined cutting, overhung with trees. At the junction with Steps Lane, the gradient levels off and views quickly open up. A bench has been positioned near the junction and, from here, there are spectacular views across the open ground of the former orchards. There is a particularly fine panorama to the south-west, taking in the Church and a magnificent, deep valley curving away into the distance. There are also good views of the southern half of the village, including most of the opposite side of valley. Unfortunately, concrete lamp standards and dilapidated fencing detract from this important vantage point.

Further along, and to the north of Rectory lane, are the playing field and children's play area. The higher ground above this flat area is predominantly rough ground, apparently used for informal recreation and crossed by an unofficial footpath linking Sun Ground and Steps Lane. A utilitarian children's playgroup building occupies the north-eastern corner of this area.

Although these areas have minimal landscape merit in their own right, they do have a rich variety of flora and fauna. There is also a mature belt of trees behind the rough ground, near the skyline. This vegetation makes a positive and significant contribution to the appearance of this part of the valley side. Moreover, it provides natural screening for the housing developed at the western end of the Sun Ground in 1997, helping it to blend into the surrounding landscape. If similar vegetation existed further to the east, the earlier developments at Sun Ground, Rectory Lane and Lawrence Road would be far less obtrusive.

There is scope, however, for improving the appearance of the playing field by removing or replacing the unsightly litter bins and other unnecessary paraphernalia alongside Rectory Lane. This could be complemented by reinstating the hedge which has been partly removed along this boundary, and incorporating a small gated entrance to the recreation ground.

To the west of Steps Lane, at its southern end, is a rambling Grade II listed building known as Old Quarries. Set in spacious wooded grounds, the extensively extended property is now a residential care centre for people with learning difficulties. New buildings, some of which are of a semi-permanent nature, have been erected within the grounds to provide additional accommodation and therapeutic workshops for residents. Burial chambers, moved from the Cherington Lane long barrow, lie within the grounds of Old Quarries.

Steps Lane is a very steep, narrow lane which peters out to become an un-metalled farm track. After the entrance to Old Quarries, the lane soon becomes dark and enclosed by dense tree cover and a high stone wall to the left. Shortly after Lee Cottages, the lane's gradient slackens and trees give way to the characteristic open countryside of the plateau that surrounds the Avening valley.



## **2: High Street from its junction with Woodstock Lane, the area around Holy Cross Church, New Inn Lane and the western part of Point Road.**

The High Street, which is the main thoroughfare of Avening, becomes increasingly more enclosed and hemmed-in by buildings and stone boundary walls as it enters the village. In this part of the village, trees are an important feature, forming settings and backdrops for the buildings, and framing views to the countryside beyond.

Entering the village from the west the scene is somewhat dominated by the modern filling station. While this is a valuable facility, the canopy, sign, bright garish colours and the open forecourt are incongruous in the historic street scene. Behind it are a loose grouping of cottages and outbuildings, generally set well back from the road. Just before the filling station there is a tightly-packed group of cottages at the junction with Woodstock Lane, curving round the corner into the lane and forming a foreground to the grounds of Avening House behind .

Going east, beyond the filling station and its associated buildings, the High Street narrows to a pinch point opposite the junction with Rectory Lane, only to open out again beyond it. Here the open space on the southern side of the street, bounded by low stone walls, looks rather like a village green. From the High Street this green area, which partly comprises private gardens, provides the foreground to views to the church, the school, the village hall and a house called Mullions (a listed building at the entrance to the churchyard). The village green appearance of this area is completed by the small, traditional village sign. The northern boundary of this intimate space is formed by the high stone wall and trees at Sandford House.

The attractive, Gothic-style lodge building at the junction with Rectory Lane and 56 High Street - a cottage set into the wall - are distinctive features of this part of the conservation area. The school is on the southern side of the road, together with the village hall, built in a Cotswold Arts and Crafts style. Both buildings help to maintain a lively village atmosphere by providing crucial facilities for Avening.

Continuing east, the High Street narrows again to a pinch point at the south-eastern corner of this open area, widening beyond at the junction with New Inn Lane. Another focal point is formed here, enclosed by the cottages at the foot of New Inn Lane, the frontage of the Bell Inn, and the continuing garden wall to Sandford House on the opposite side of the street. The Bell is a prominent white-washed building with characteristic public house advertising.

Further eastwards the High Street becomes more enclosed with a classical terrace on the northern side, and a high stone retaining wall to the south. The wall is very tall and, in parts, rises from about 2 metres high to a maximum of 4 metres.

*The narrow Woodstock Lane is lined by trees, buildings and their boundary walls, all of which create a heightened sense of enclosure.*

Glimpses upwards of houses to the south are just possible through trees above the wall. Beyond the terrace, in the gaps between a group of detached cottages, there are clear views across to the northern side of the valley from this gently rising street. Also, Avening Mill can be seen standing in its housing-estate surroundings.

Returning to the junction with High Street, Woodstock Lane climbs gently alongside the high garden wall of Avening House. On the opposite side of this lane, near the junction with High Street, a branch of the stream emerges from a side valley and flows through the cottage's front gardens. There is a mixture of modern buildings and detached cottages on the southern side of the lane. Neither their architectural quality nor their location, well back from the lane, create a strong character here. The modern Avening Social Club looks particularly out of place. The lane is narrow and lined by cottages tight up to the road with houses set behind high stone walls. There is a strong sense of enclosure in this part of Woodstock Lane. Moving up the lane, the greenery of Avening House begins to overhang the boundary, while the lower wall on the southern side of the lane has been punctured to create driveways and parking spaces. Views back towards the east are dominated by the trees at Old Quarries.

At the highest point of Woodstock Lane, the lane opens up to reveal views to the south and south-east across open fields, towards Church Farm on the opposite side of the hill and, in the distance, cottages along Point Road. From here, the lane descends into the valley, with views back towards the church and village to the east. Cottages on the western side of the lane, said to have been built as almshouses, tumble down the hill, whilst their gardens on the opposite side of the lane fade into the open fields. The lane becomes a footpath at a small bridge crossing the stream, and this heads southwards up the meadow to Church Farm.

Returning to the churchyard, Holy Cross Church is impressively solid, and dominates many of the views in the western part of the village. While great care has been bestowed on the northern part of the churchyard, the upper part is rather more unkempt, comprising a few tended graves and many trees, some being ancient yews. There are panoramic views from the top of the churchyard, west towards Woodstock Lane with hills behind, north west towards Avening House and its grounds, and north east towards Old Quarries.

A narrow footpath between tall dry-stone walls passes between the northern edge of the churchyard and Mullions. It leads out into the meadows and links up with the path from Woodstock Lane.

Climbing from its junction with High Street next to the Bell Inn, New Inn Lane has an uneasy mixture of old and new dwellings. Cottages tend to be built tight to its western boundary, while the eastern side has tall stone retaining walls with land rising behind. The modern cul-de-sac estate at Orchard Field breaks up the traditional building patterns. This development is quite prominent in distant views of the village. Running on up the hill from Orchard Close a high



*Mullions, a listed building, is situated at the entrance to the churchyard.*

stone wall links with Glebe House and Glebe House Cottage, which have a small forecourt in front with picket fence.

A spring emerging from a high retaining wall is a characteristic feature to be found opposite Glebe House. Land rises to the south to form an open area, giving this part of the lane a more rural, less enclosed character. At the junction of New Inn Lane and Point Road, No 25, a listed building, closes the view.

From the junction with New Inn Lane, Point Road rises up the hillside to the east with views across the village to north and west. To the south a collection of random, informally positioned cottages stand high above the road on Pound Hill; Point Road itself being bounded by high retaining walls. Levelling out and heading west, New Inn Lane narrows and is enclosed by stone field boundary walls tight to the road.

New Inn Lane continues west to Farm Hill, becoming more open and rural in character. To the south of the road are a group of informally arranged, traditional cottages in a countryside setting. The hillside rises steeply to the south without any retaining wall, while views to the north are impeded by high conifer trees at Farm Hill House. At Church Farm, the highest point along the road within the conservation area, views northwards across the valley towards Woodstock Lane, open up. The converted farm complex here retains much of its original character, although the west-facing part is less sympathetic with a very manicured, suburban-style garden.



*Avening's rural lanes are enjoyed by walkers and horse riders.*

### **3: The western part of Hampton Hill leading to High Street, Star Lane and Tetbury Hill.**

Ascending Hampton Hill in a westerly direction, a sense of enclosure soon becomes evident as one nears the village. Although the road is wide, a sense of intimacy is provided on one side by a continuous dry-stone retaining wall and grass verge sloping down to the roadside. On the other side, a tall dry-stone boundary wall is punctuated by formal gate piers and short lengths of iron railings, to form frontages of buildings.

A group of traditional buildings stand directly onto the pavement on the northern side of Hampton Hill as it reaches the junction with Tetbury Hill. Here, the tall, cliff-like elevations of the eighteenth-century Cross Inn act as a focus. The juxtaposition of scale between the Cross Inn at the brow of Hampton Hill and the cottages peeping from below the descending road beyond its crest, heightens the experience of the undulating landscape.

As one passes the Cross Inn on the left, the roads widen at the convergence with Tetbury Hill, the main road into and through the village. The silhouette of the nineteenth-century Baptist Chapel dominates the skyline as it rises above the smaller cottages that line the main roads. The highly contrasting vistas, and the mixed scale of buildings, accentuated by dramatic level differences, contribute greatly to the character of this part of the conservation area.

From this point, one is reminded of the unfortunate, incongruous appearance of the houses which dominate the hillside to the north of the valley. The Gothic memorial font

to William Fowles is an attractive landmark, the setting of which is spoilt by the development directly behind.

The Cross Inn, which stands slightly raised on a spur separating Hampton Hill and Star Lane, closes the view from the High Street. The oblique position of The Forge accentuates the narrow, intimate character of Star Lane. It angles sharply towards the lane, with its gable end jutting out, providing a visual break, and obscuring views beyond as the lane turns and rises.

The narrow lane continues to ascend gently, with a mixture of boundary treatments on both sides, but predominantly low dry-stone walls which hug the lane and unite the buildings. Cottages here are generously spaced and the pattern of development tends to be rather more sporadic than on High Street. The relationship between the buildings and the lane varies greatly. Most of the cottages are orientated to enjoy the view and this reinforces the character of the meandering lane as it gently rises and changes direction. A small farmhouse stands gable end onto the lane and partially conceals the traditional farm buildings and cottages behind. The development of this part of Avening contrasts dramatically with the open valley countryside beyond the boundary wall of the lane.

Looking back down the lane, the rural context of this part of the village is emphasised by views out into open countryside and the sides of the valley opposite. A large open space to the west of the farmhouse which is used as an allotment garden, allows interesting views of the roofs below and is a reminder of the valley. This open space also provides an unimpeded foreground to the traditional cottages that immediately border it.

At the top of Star Lane, looking back towards the village, the modern housing to the north is prominent. The boundary of the conservation area continues around the rear of the cottages in Star Lane which have only been built on the western side and includes a large area of trees and rough grassland situated on a high bank.

The upper part of Star Lane is characterised by generously spaced traditional one and a half storey buildings facing directly onto the lane. Most are built of natural stone but with a variety of roofing materials and window styles. Although some of the buildings form groups, there are large gaps between them, which allow glimpses of the trees beyond. One new house has been built in the gap between two of the older cottages and, uncharacteristically, is set well back from the lane, blocking out views of the trees behind.

Leaving Star Lane and turning left up Tetbury Hill, one is immediately aware of a steady flow of traffic and of vehicles and pedestrians visiting the post office and village stores. This is very much the social centre and hub of the village. The bold colour scheme of the post office makes it stand out from the plainer buildings adjacent to it. The unobtrusive graveyard to the side of the Baptist Meeting Room provides a pleasant break between the otherwise continuous built frontage.

Tetbury Hill rises steadily behind the post office and Baptist Chapel, and is bounded on both sides by a dry-stone wall, occasionally punctuated by driveways and buildings. Apart from the traditional cottage on the eastern side at the foot of the hill, the buildings tend to be positioned obliquely to the road with small angular frontages bounded

by walls and clipped hedges behind. On the western side of the road, an attractive detached cottage (No 6, Tetbury Hill), stands alone and is fronted by attractive wrought iron parkland railings. Looking down the hill, one is very much aware of the height of the road at this point and there are spectacular views out into the open countryside to the north and west.

Further up the hill, the road forks left into a short cul-de-sac, bounded on all three sides by groups of three-storey weavers' cottages. Beyond this, the boundary of the conservation area follows the small, sharply angular garden to No 31, Tetbury Hill, bounded by a low, dry-stone wall.

Going west from the junction with Tetbury Hill, the conservation area boundary follows the northern edge of the High Street along the line of an attractive dry-stone wall. Unfortunately the wall is punctuated by overtly modern, unsympathetic buildings and wide, suburban vehicular accesses, which look out of place. The street-scene opens out again to take in the attractive terrace of cottages (Nos 10 to 16, High Street) on the northern side before following the roadside boundary walls once again. The latter terrace has been designed in the Cotswold tradition but with nineteenth-century influences. These buildings are three storey in height with the third storey well into the roof-space, therefore, reducing the visual impact of scale. The Gothic-style windows with iron casements are particularly attractive. A low, dry-stone boundary wall encloses small, attractive front gardens, punctuated by wrought iron pedestrian gates. A line of tall close-boarded fencing enclosing the garden to the east side of No 10 is unattractive and spoils the setting of this important historic building.

*At the top of Star Lane, the character is distinctly rural with long distance views across the valley.*





*Creich Cottage, although not a listed building, is interesting both architecturally and historically and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the village.*

On the opposite side of the street, the terrace of buildings to the west of the Baptist Chapel are unmistakably industrial in origin and still retain the character and appearance of mill buildings. All have long since been converted to residential use, but in a sensitive manner. The tall, austere frontage of this terrace is a dramatic contrast in scale and emphasises the linear pattern of development of buildings along the High Street.

Beyond the mill buildings, a wide tarmac parking area and a modern, flat-roofed garage with galvanised steel up-and-over doors introduce a suburban feel into what is essentially, a well preserved part of the village. A dry-stone wall acts as a retaining wall to the sloping gardens rising up the hill and continues the previously disrupted enclosure of the road.

A traditional K6 red telephone kiosk is sited at the end of a triangular shaped grassy promontory. Its rough grassy bank, sloping down to the path, provides a welcome contrast to the expanse of tarmac and is a pleasant setting for the kiosk.

As the road veers to the right, the Georgian terrace (formerly a bakery) on the southern side, facing directly east and with a large tarmac forecourt, visually closes off the High Street vista. On the southern side of

this forecourt, the narrow lane of Point Road climbs up the valley side and is characterised by the closely-knit, almost continuous frontages of buildings, which have been developed along both sides of the lane. The elegant architecture of the former Butchers Arms Inn stands proudly next to the simple architectural style of the Old Post Office. Beyond these, an attractive row of traditional one and half storey buildings marks the conservation area boundary. The slight set-back of these buildings from the lane has left enough space for the construction of a pair of attractive enclosed porches. Unfortunately, modern reconstructed-stone boundary walls spoil the traditional setting of these natural stone cottages.

From the junction between High Street and Point Road, the conservation area boundary follows the rear boundary wall of No 4, Point Road then runs across the High Street to a dry-stone boundary wall on the northern side. Beyond this point, the path follows a wide angled splay which marks the entrance to the modern housing estate of Sandford Leaze. The wide entrance contrasts with the sense of enclosure to the High Street. The modern buildings are a regrettable intrusion, although they are partially screened behind a Leyland Cypress hedge. If one stands on the northern side of the High Street looking west, almost uninterrupted distant views out into the countryside can be enjoyed.

#### **4: Old Hill leading towards Mays Lane, part of Hampton Hill and the eastern part of Star Lane.**

The character of this part of the conservation area is very different from the centre of the village and is characterised by narrow lanes containing widely spaced buildings linked by a variety of stone walls. These features contribute to the open and rural character of this eastern end of the village.

On the eastern side of Old Hill stands Rose Cottage, an attractive one-and-a-half storey cottage, built of natural stone with a stone slate roof. Rose Cottage is set back from the lane and sits on slightly higher ground. There is a historic well in front of its boundary wall and hedge. The grass verge to the front of the cottage continues around to the side of the building, leading the eye to a narrow lane which rises gently behind the cottage.

The rear of Rose Cottage and the adjoining cottages are sunk into the hillside, which means their back roofs are at eye level when passing along the rear lane. As a consequence, the craftsmanship of these natural stone slate roofs contribute much to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The well-spaced cottages allow views across the valley to Star Lane, where a backdrop of trees breaks the horizon. The roofscape of buildings lower in the valley are also visible from this elevated position. These views are framed by a pair of very striking yew trees.

Moving back down Old Hill towards Hampton Hill, at its junction with Mays Lane, low dry stone walls and traditional one-and-a-half storey cottages sit on either side of the lane (which narrows markedly at the junction with Powis Lane). At this point the buildings on the western side of the lane, such as Brookside and Lennard's Cottages are positioned gable end on to the road and are larger and more dominant in character. Both are constructed of natural stone and retain their stone slate roofs.

As the lane flattens out, the view opens up unexpectedly to reveal a large sloping area of grassland which contributes to this attractive and tranquil scene. The lane climbs gradually to the east and is bordered by a low, dry-stone wall and many attractive mature trees. The Avening stream meanders through the centre of the meadow, passing under the later pike road to the east, which stands on an embankment. A fine stone bridge of simple and elegant design, crosses the stream, the best view of this being from Old Hill to the west. The meadow, stream and bridge are a crucial focal point in this part of the conservation area.

To the west, the formal dry-stone boundary wall of Brook House encloses its elegantly-planted grounds. The house itself is a fine early eighteenth-century, small country house, and forms a group with its associated coach house and stables.



*Traditional boundary features such as dry stone walls and gates line the buildings along Mays Lane.*

The centre of the village to the west can be glimpsed from where Old Hill joins Hampton Hill. Mays Lane continues the meandering line of Old Hill, climbing gently up the southern side of the valley, and is characterised by high banks and trees which create an enclosed tunnel-like effect.

At the entrance to Mays Lane, immediately on the right, is a bus shelter which is out of character with the conservation area. Hopefully, it can be replaced or improved by a proposed enhancement scheme. On the eastern side of the lane is a close boarded fence, which although well maintained, is nevertheless not the ideal boundary treatment for this location. A traditional dry-stone wall of a similar height to the existing fence would be much more appropriate to the appearance of the conservation area.

The cottages in Mays Lane are well spaced and linked by dry-stone boundary walls. A row of mature trees serve as a backdrop to the cottages and also mark the boundary of the conservation area.

Beyond the point where a cottage stands gable end onto the north side of the lane, views start to open out as the trees become less evident. Although the bank is still quite high on the western side, the higher end of Star Lane can be glimpsed over the ridge.

The boundary of the conservation area is beyond the curtilage of the last cottage in Mays Lane and, from this elevated position, the field dividing Mays Lane and Star Lane can be seen, cutting into the heart of the village at its northern edge.

A footpath leads from the bottom of Mays lane southwards up the hill and across a field to Star Lane. As the path is climbed, there are quite spectacular views across the valley to the east.



*Rose cottage is a good example of local architecture and craftsmanship.*

## ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDING MATERIALS

Throughout Avening, houses, cottages and mill buildings have been built almost exclusively from locally-produced Cotswold limestone, mostly from quarries within a mile of the village. The freshly-quarried stone is a pale cream colour which mellows eventually to a creamy, greyish-brown tone.

Most buildings are built from roughly dressed and squared rubble stone, creating a homogeneous texture which unifies the historic parts of the village. Conversely, finely-dressed ashlar stone is used to face the grander buildings, for example the facade of the elegant Georgian terrace on the north-western side of the High Street.

As the stone is relatively soft, it is susceptible to decay through freeze and thaw action, particularly when the stone becomes saturated. To overcome this, it was traditional in this area to apply either a lime-wash or, in some cases where the stone was particularly poor, a coat of lime-rich render. Examples of surviving render can be seen on the terraced cottages at the top of Woodstock Lane, the house south of the Cross Inn in Star Lane, and on the Bell Inn, which also has part of the building coated with lime-wash only. These surviving instances of a once-widespread, traditional practice, and the variety in appearance it gives to groups of cottages, is an attractive feature of the village. It is an aspect of its architectural character which the designation of the conservation area seeks to preserve.

The almost complete survival of traditional Cotswold stone roofs is exceptional in Avening. Again, the designation of the



*The Cotswold style is easily recognisable - as with this terrace of former almshouses at the end of Woodstock Lane.*

conservation area, and the associated use of a Direction under the General (Permitted Development) Order 1995, seek to prevent the loss of these roofs. The Cotswold style is so often characterised by steeply pitched roofs, with features such as diminishing courses of stone slates, generous overhanging eaves, and swept valleys. These features are all to be found on many of the traditional buildings in the village. The roof on the rear of No 4 Old Hill is one of the best examples of roofscape in the village, and because of its close proximity to the footpath, its form and features can be readily appreciated.



*Well detailed and crafted Gothic style windows are a key feature of this attractive 19th century terrace in Avening's High Street.*



*The weathered natural stone slate roofs and gables, topped by tall, stone chimneys, produce a varied and interesting roofscape.*

Brick is comparatively rare in the village and until recent years, stone continued as the main walling material. Where brick - a cheaper alternative to stone - has been used, it has been restricted to smaller out-buildings and, very frequently, on chimneys. Some of the nineteenth-century cottages have brickwork facings to window and door openings, and brick quoins.

Welsh slate was another building material which became a popular import after the expansion of the railway network from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Despite being very different, the slate has blended with the more prevalent stone slates roofs. As with brick, Welsh slate is often found on smaller extensions to original stone buildings.

Rough, random rubble stone is used for the majority of boundary and retaining walls in the village. Walls vary in height and are finished in either flat coping stones or large 'toppers' on end, often called 'combers'. The former can be found on the fine boundary wall along the northern side of Hampton Hill; 'combers' are generally found on the smaller boundary walls in the rural fringes of the village.

Railings enclose the front gardens of the more important houses, such as Hanslo House, the fine Georgian building on Point Road. A mixture of stone and wrought ironwork can be found bounding the front gardens of Creich Cottage on Hampton Hill. Horizontal parkland railings with decorative wrought iron gates are a particular feature of the buildings opposite the Old Rectory.

Most of the buildings in Avening have simple front-to-back pitched roofs and gabled ends. In the centre of the conservation area, and along most of the lanes leading out of the village, the cottages face onto the street and have small frontages. Further from the centre they tend to have more variety in their relationship with the road as buildings jockey for the best aspect across the valley.

Throughout the village, the types of buildings vary greatly. The majority of cottages are one-and-a-half storey high, with the first floor partially in the roof space and lit by dormer windows or windows in the gable ends. The more important houses are either two or three storey, while the historic mill buildings in High Street and Tetbury Hill can be as high as four storeys. There is a distinct architectural hierarchy in the buildings of Avening and it is this that creates much of the variety and interest in the conservation area.

Traditionally, service accommodation, such as the wash house and pantry, was provided in a single-storey rear outhouse. This important feature can be appreciated from some of the high-level vantage points along Rectory Lane. Where more space exists, buildings have sometimes expanded in all directions. However, the scale of these has not usually compromised the character of the original building and invariably harmonises in terms of materials and architectural detailing.



*An interesting stone-mullion window with diamond shaped tracery. Windows are often referred to as the 'eyes' of a building and therefore should be an important design consideration.*

The earlier cottages, dating from between 1660 and 1730, have stone mullioned windows, such as those found on Mullions, in the western part of the village adjacent to the church. However, by the middle of the eighteenth century, wrought-iron leaded casement windows in timber frames predominate, usually under segmental arches.

With the introduction of classically-inspired Georgian architecture, from the mid eighteenth century, windows became more uniformly proportioned, sliding sash windows becoming the most fashionable type. Creich Cottage, on the northern side of Hampton Hill, with its early sashes, is a good example of this historical development. The later, more humble, timber casement is now the most common type of window found in cottages and simple outbuildings. Openings for these are formed with rough dressed quoins, with either timber or stone lintels and cut stone sills. The interesting arched timber lintels to No.4 Woodstock Lane reflect the styles of both the simple flat timber lintel and the more decorative stone segmental arch.

Roofs and chimneys in Avening are very important aspects of its architectural character, many low-lying roofs being over-looked from higher level lanes. Cottage rows have ridge-mounted chimneys which give an indication of the size of each cottage, even if two or more have been combined more recently to form a larger dwelling. Most chimneys are simple in design and rectangular in plan, although some have classical mouldings. Many cottages and houses have dormer windows, which are usually gabled and no wider than two lights.

The distinctive traditional Cotswold style, which gives villages such as Avening a cohesive identity, is characterised by relatively simple detailing, without ostentation. These buildings have followed local vernacular traditions and have not been influenced by national styles. On later buildings (after around the third quarter of the eighteenth century) such as Sandford Lodge, a more flamboyant approach can be found. The roof of the building is embellished with decorative barge boards and generous overhanging verges in a picturesque Gothic style. The fine row of Gothic cottages in the High Street (Nos. 10-16) are another example of this nineteenth-century architectural fashion.



*A pair of decorative wrought iron gates 'guard' the entrance to the Baptist Chapel and its small graveyard.*

# THE PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

## PRESERVATION

It is the aim of the District and Parish Councils that the existing character and appearance of Avening Conservation Area should be preserved or enhanced.

Preservation will be achieved by refusing permission for the demolition of any building or structure if its loss would damage the character or appearance of the area.

Extensions and alterations will be expected to follow the design guidance set out below.

Neglected buildings, where these spoil the character or appearance of Avening, will be investigated. In critical cases, action will be taken to ensure repairs are carried out. As part of a survey of all listed buildings in the District, the listed buildings in Avening Conservation Area were surveyed by the District Council during October 1993. No listed buildings in Avening village were found to be in such poor condition that they were considered at risk from neglect, although several of the listed churchyard monuments were in poor condition.

Some open spaces and trees have been identified as being crucial to the character of the village and should be preserved. Cotswold District Local Plan Policy 6.2 aims to protect the following areas:

- a large area either side of the bottom of Old Hill, including the grounds to Brook House, and;
- the area to the west of No's 20 to 22, Point Road.

The above policy also encourages minor works of benefit to the community (provided there is no adverse affect on the character of the area or the setting of the surrounding buildings), on the open area between the school and the High Street. These areas are indicated on the map accompanying this Statement.

Avening Conservation Area lies entirely within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Local Plan Policy 19 sets out guidance for the protection and enhancement of the AONB and also presumes against any developments that could damage it's character or appearance.

## DESIGN GUIDANCE

The designation of the conservation area is not intended to prevent change, especially that which would enhance the character of the area and ensure Avening's continued economic vitality.

The general design guidance for any work requiring planning permission in the conservation area is that the character and appearance of the area should be preserved or enhanced. In particular:

- New buildings or extensions should reflect the general pattern of building in Avening, especially in scale and proportion. However, there is scope for some architectural invention provided that this echoes Avening architecture.
- Materials should accord with those traditionally used in the particular part of the conservation area, and should maintain a similar mix.
- Any new building or extension should be located on its site in a similar way to the general pattern of building in that part of the area.
- Boundary walls and railings should be incorporated in the development in a similar way to those already in existence in that part of the area, and these should use similar materials and detailing.



*Flamboyant, decorative barge boards add character to the picturesque Gothic Style of this lodge building.*

*A listed building prominently located within the village. Any change to this building will need to be handled very sensitively if the special architectural or historic interest, or its setting, is to be protected from harm.*



## **LISTED BUILDINGS**

Some historic buildings are ‘listed’ by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport because of their exceptional interest. Listed building consent is required from the District Council for any work that would affect the special interest of a listed building, whether inside or outside. More information about listed buildings is available from the District Council.

There are 22 buildings in the Avening Conservation Area that are listed and thus merit the tightest control over any changes to them (six of these are churchyard monuments, and one is a church). While the aim of the listed building legislation is to preserve these buildings for their own sake, any changes affecting them should also be considered in terms of the effect on the conservation area and the design guidance already referred to.



## **THE PROTECTION OF OTHER BUILDINGS**

There are several buildings and features in the conservation area which are not listed, but which contribute to its character and appearance. While these are subject to some increased planning controls brought by the designation of the conservation area, changes could take place to them that would damage the character of the conservation area.

In Avening, there are many unlisted buildings that have retained much of their historic character through the survival of original, or appropriate installation of replacement window and door designs. Stone walling remains unspoilt by modern renders or cladding, and other changes that could damage the conservation area have not taken place. This is a credit to the owners of these properties. Normally, on dwellings, many such changes could be made without the need for planning permission.

*Although most of the important buildings in the village are listed, many other buildings of character can only be protected through the use of an Article 4(2) Direction.*

With the support of the local community, a Direction has been issued removing permitted development rights from certain unlisted buildings. This introduces control over changes to front elevations, boundaries, and any part of the building facing a public open space or highway. A list of these properties is attached to this statement. On these properties, planning permission will be required for the following:

- Any extension or enlargement facing the highway.
- Formation of any new window or door openings.
- Removal or replacement of existing windows and doors.
- The replacement of painted finishes with stains on any woodwork or joinery.
- The addition of render or claddings.
- Painting previously unpainted stonework.
- Installation of satellite dish antennae
- Addition of porches, car ports and sheds.
- Changes of roofing materials (front roof slope only).
- Installation of rooflights (front roof slope only).
- Demolition of, or alteration to, front boundary walls or railings.

## **ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS**

Inevitably, there are a number of areas or features in the Avening Conservation Area which are out of keeping with the character of the area, and whose replacement or improvement would be beneficial.

This Statement lists the scope for improvement as a series of proposals for enhancement, although no timescale is set on when they will be achieved. As most involve utilities or local authorities, the District Council will take the lead in encouraging their implementation.

The District Council has a Grant Fund which is designed to assist with enhancement projects of the kind listed opposite:

### **1: Bus shelters at foot of Mays Lane and on the High Street.**

The present shelters have become an eyesore and detract from these otherwise attractive parts of the village. If the bus shelter on Mays Lane is redundant it could be removed altogether. If still needed it could be redesigned and possibly relocated to a more convenient spot. The one on the High Street stands in a wide lay-by and lends itself more to a collection point for public transport, particularly as it is quite close to the village hall, church and school. This shelter could also be redesigned in a more sensitive way in order that it harmonises with its surroundings. The District Council's Countryside and Conservation Section would be able to provide advice on an appropriate design.

### **2: Close boarded panel boundary fencing fronting public highways to No 1, Mays Lane and No 10, High Street.**

The boundary fencing on both these properties are well built but the type and colour used makes them stand out rather incongruously in the conservation area. A more appropriate boundary treatment in both locations would significantly improve the appearance of the area.

### **3: Street lighting and boundary fencing along Rectory Lane.**

There are commanding views from Rectory Lane towards open countryside and of landmarks within the conservation area, such as the church and Avening House. A bench has been sited at this fine viewpoint. However, this area suffers from poor maintenance of verges and inappropriate street furniture. The immediate environment could be significantly enhanced by replacing the dilapidated fencing with hedges, or with a better type of fencing, and replacing the concrete lamp posts on the south side of Rectory Lane. The latter could be re-sited to the northern side of the lane and perhaps even reduced in number.

The clutter of waste bins and lamp posts adjacent to an opening in the hedge leading to the playing field is an eyesore which needs to be tidied up and re-located in a less conspicuous position.

### **4: Landscaping in Rectory Lane.**

The existing hedge along the northern boundary of Rectory Lane has been breached to allow access to the field, and the wide gaps spoil the sense of enclosure and character of the lane. By planting new hedging and creating a new access, by means of a timber gate for example, the rural character of the lane could be enhanced.

## FURTHER READING

### Planning policy

*Gloucestershire County Structure Plan*, copies available from Environment Department, Gloucestershire County Council, Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester GL1 2TH.

*Cotswold District Local Plan*, copies available from Cotswold District Council, Trinity Road, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 1PX.

### Government guidance

*PPG15 - Planning and the Historic Environment*, copies available from branches of HMSO.

### Guidance on procedures

*Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas*, copies available FREE OF CHARGE from Cotswold District Council.

*Protected Trees*, published by the Department of the Environment, copies available FREE OF CHARGE from Cotswold District Council.

### Design guidance

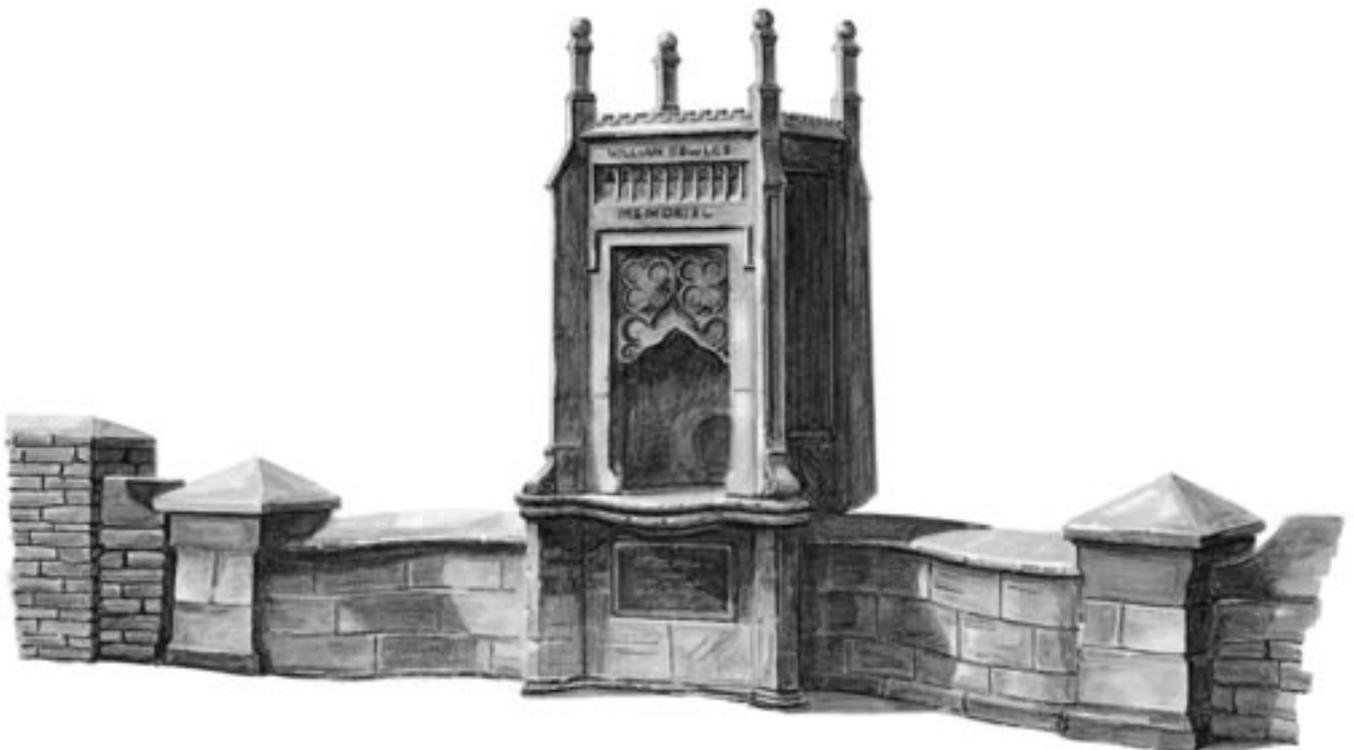
*Traditional Casement Windows, Traditional Dormer Windows, Traditional Chimneys and Cotswold Stone Slates*, copies available FREE OF CHARGE from Cotswold District Council.

### Village history

The most authoritative source on the village is the section written by WJ Sheils in the relevant volume of *The Victoria History of Gloucestershire*. This is best consulted in major libraries.

A T Playne, *A History of the Parishes of Minchinhampton and Avening, 1915*, although concentrating on the cloth industry, remains a very useful account of village history.

Further guidance leaflets are to be published by Cotswold District Council.



*The Gothic memorial font to William Fowles*

## PROPERTIES COVERED BY THE ARTICLE 4(2) DIRECTION, REMOVING CERTAIN PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

### HAMPTON HILL (NORTH SIDE)

No 1  
No 3  
No 5, Creich Cottage

### HIGH STREET (NORTH-EAST SIDE)

Nos 10 to 16 (even)  
No 38, Foxes Cottage  
No 40  
No 42, Millstream Cottage  
No 44  
No 48  
No 50, Harebell Cottage  
No 52  
No 58, Sandford Lodge

### HIGH STREET (SOUTH-WEST SIDE)

No 7  
No 9, Lolaire Nead  
No 11, Calder Cottage  
No 59  
No 61  
Coach House

### NEW INN LANE (SOUTH END)

No 27, Fox Hollow

### NEW INN LANE (WEST SIDE)

No 39  
No 43, Ayres Cottage

### OLD HILL (EAST SIDE)

No 2  
No 6, Rose Cottage

### POINT ROAD (NORTH SIDE)

No 2

### POINT ROAD (SOUTH SIDE)

No 1, The Shoe Box  
No 7, Millers Cottage  
No 11  
No 13  
No 15, The Butchers Arms

### STAR LANE (SOUTH-WEST SIDE)

No 2

### TETBURY HILL (NORTH-WEST SIDE)

No 6

### TETBURY HILL (SOUTH-EAST SIDE)

No 1, White Rose Cottage  
Hill House  
No 19, Gartway Cottage  
No 21, Avonway  
No 23  
No 25, Springfield  
No 29, September Cottage

### WOODSTOCK LANE (NORTH SIDE)

No 2, The Maltings  
No 4

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