



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Conservation Area Character Appraisal

# Millwood End

### What are Conservation Areas?

Conservation Areas are places of special architectural or historic interest, which have a particular character or appearance worthy of preservation or enhancement. Groups of buildings, walls, trees and hedges, open spaces, views, and the historic settlement patterns all combine to create an individual sense of place. It is this character, rather than individual buildings, that Conservation Area status seeks to protect. The first Conservation Areas in the District were identified in the late 1960s. Since then, there has been a rolling programme of designations. Recent Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Millwood End Conservation Area was designated in 2004, following a process of public consultation.

### The purpose of this document

This Conservation Area Character Appraisal describes the main aspects of character or appearance which contribute to the special interest and quality of the area. This document is intended to complement the approved policies for Conservation Areas contained in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan. In Conservation Areas there are controls over the demolition and minor alterations of unlisted buildings, and on works to trees. Full details can be obtained from the Planning Service. The Preservation and Enhancement document for Millwood End accompanies this Character Appraisal and describes strategies for the future maintenance and improvement of Millwood End, as well as providing development advice and guidance on conversions, extensions and the design of new buildings within the Conservation Area.



## Location and setting

The Millwood End Conservation Area comprises the westernmost portion of Long Hanborough; its boundary encompassing Millwood End; Bolsover Close and Swan Hill. Long Hanborough is located in the east of the District, five miles east of Witney and seven miles north-west of Oxford. It is linked by Church Road to the existing Conservation Area of Church Hanborough to the south-east.

Millwood End forms a villagescape largely characterised by 20th-century housing, but interspersed with a number of buildings from the 17th and 18th centuries. Significantly, the modest nature of each of the many recent developments means that no one house design dominates; and the area, for all the variety in date and style of its architecture, retains a pleasing sense of visual coherence. Noteworthy aspects include the western limb of Millwood End, with its strongly linear form, its semi-rural character and - at its western end - the views over the adjoining farmland; and the junction with Swan Lane, where a terrace of period cottages clusters before the public house.

Millwood End occupies a ridge or T-shaped hill at the intersection of three distinct landscape types: to the north, valley-side farmland (which lies within the Cotswolds AONB) slopes down to the river Evenlode; to the west are semi-enclosed limestone wolds; while to the south lies an area of semi-enclosed rolling vale farmland. The underlying geology of the parish comprises Thames gravel, the northern part of the Hanborough terrace, the southern part of the Summertown-Radley terrace and the flood plain. In the centre of the parish and along its western boundary the soil is predominantly clay.



## Historical development

The earliest evidence for settlement in the parish dates from the Bronze Age, when a barrow cemetery and a henge monument were constructed on the Summertown-Radley gravel terrace at the southern tip of the parish. Flints of the same date have been found at Long Hanborough, along with a Palaeolithic hand-axe. This and other evidence points to scattered and intermittent settlement in the area from an early date.

Hanborough takes its name from the T-shaped hill or ridge on which the villages of Church Hanborough and Long Hanborough sit: *Hagen's*, *Hanna's*, or possibly *Cock's*, Hill. A total of 26 unfree tenants and five servi were recorded on Hanborough manor in 1086. By 1279 the numbers had risen to 91 customary and free tenants, 34 of whom held only assart land (in other words, land wrested from Wychwood forest, which covered much of the area until well into the 19th century). A number of these inhabitants lived in Long Hanborough, and a few of these had homes in Millwood End. All were customary tenants holding land in the common fields, and most of their holdings are likely to have been established by 1086.

Henry I stayed at Hanborough, presumably in the manor house, in 1105. Traces of the fish pond created at his behest (or that of Henry II), on Eynsham Abbey's land, survive in a field south-west of the village. Manorial and religious power was clearly centred on Church Hanborough from the 12th century or earlier (making a coeval settlement here certain and an earlier one here probable). Evidence confirms scattered settlement over much of the north and west of the parish by the 13th century.

From an early date the community was heavily reliant on agriculture. The free-draining soils of the higher ground, and the extensive meadow fed by the wide bands of alluvium adjacent to the river Evenlode below, are well-suited to cultivation and livestock farming. During the 16th and 17th centuries local farmers travelled to Witney and Woodstock to sell their produce. During this period (and into the 18th century) the parish began to take on the appearance still discernible today, with the earlier timber structures replaced by cottages and houses built using the local limestone - many of which still survive today.

## Settlement pattern

Two routes have played a significant role in the early settlement pattern of the area. The current Witney to Bicester road, running on an east-west axis near to the northern boundary of the parish (and skirting the southern tip of the Conservation Area) follows the course of an ancient route referred to as 'Port Street' in the neighbouring parish of Eynsham in 1005. It has been suggested that the road through Millwood End (which continues up a bridle path to North Leigh) and the road from Long Hanborough to Church Hanborough (which continued to Eynsham until Enclosure in 1773 when it became a footpath) together formed part of a prehistoric route from the North Oxfordshire iron fields to Uffington on the Berkshire Ridgeway.

The discovery of Bronze Age flints at Long Hanborough demonstrates that the Hanborough gravel terrace was one area within the parish which attracted early settlers. Besides proximity to at least one major trackway, the forgiving topography, favourable soils and ready water sources of the area (in both river and spring form) must have been factors persuading early settlers of the area's viability.

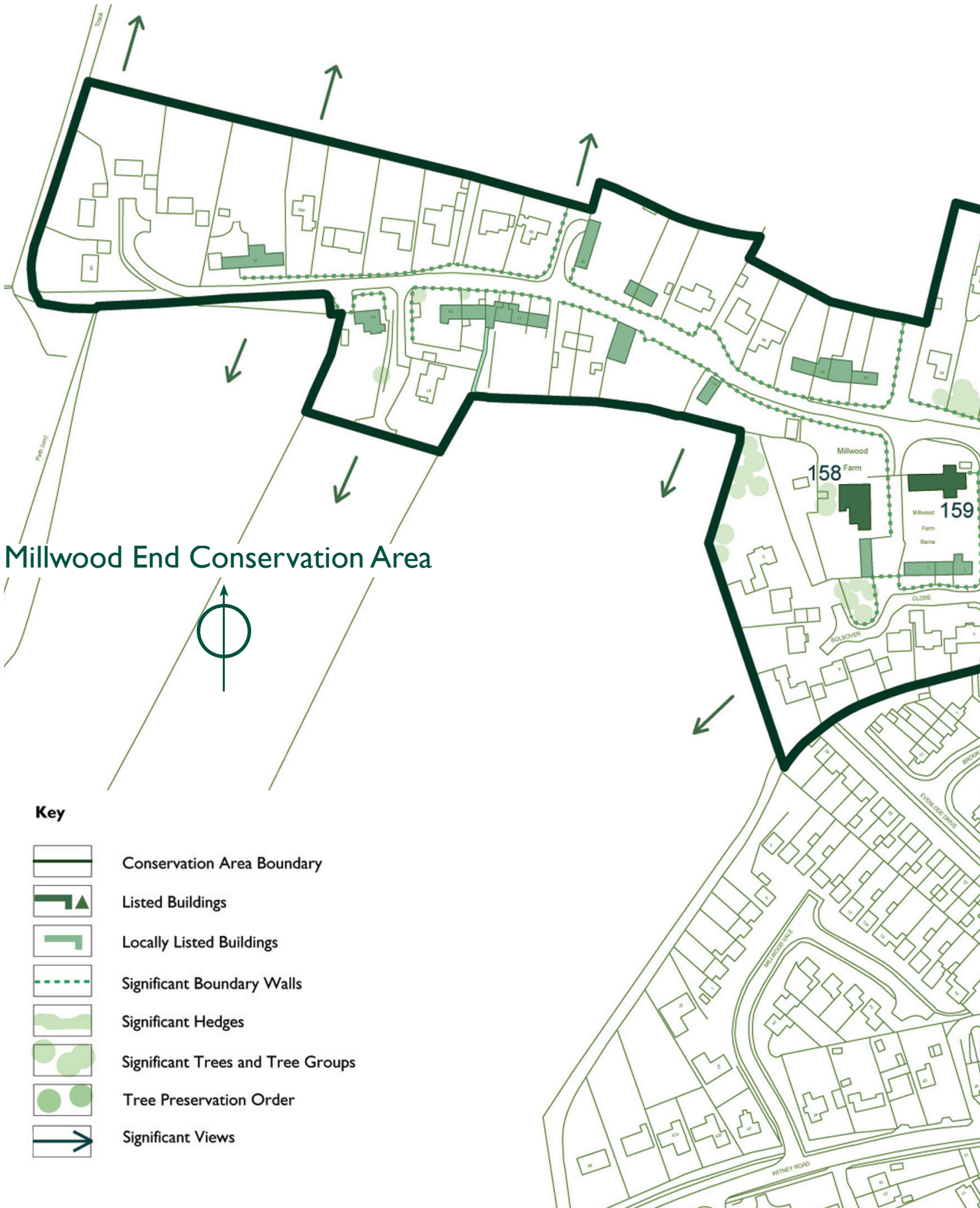
During this period, Millwood End lay within the eastern portion of Wychwood Forest, and with the establishment of a community, forest clearance for cultivation could begin. Two Iron Age farmsteads, one occupied in the 2nd or 3rd century BC, and the other in about the 1st century AD, were established near the Eynsham boundary and provide clear evidence of early agricultural activity in the area.

Continuous settlement at Millwood End was established by the 13th century, and despite Church Hanborough forming an early core close by, Long Hanborough became the dominant settlement. In 1609-10 there were 52 houses or cottages in Long Hanborough, but only 16 in Church Hanborough. Long Hanborough was subsequently divided into two 'Ends': Burleigh End, first recorded in about 1535 and centring on Burleigh Green at the eastern end of the village; and Wood End, first recorded in 1610, which later became Millwood End.

The population, which had remained steady from the mid-14th century to the early 17th century, rose slightly in the later 17th century and early 18th century. In 1738, the curate reported a total of 130 houses in the parish, 110 of which were located in Long Hanborough.









The settlement pattern of Millwood End, clearly visible in the distribution of 17th- and 18th-century houses and cottages, was once wholly linear in nature. This is a typical feature of settlements developing along valley sides, and is discernible in other villages nearby, such as Ascott-under-Wychwood and Fawler. Developments in the 20th century have been piecemeal and haphazard in nature, however, and whilst the linear character of Millwood End remains intact along its western arm, the eastern half is less well-defined, owing to its proximity to these later asymmetric developments. Since 1921 Long Hanborough has grown rapidly as a dormitory for Oxford, and the decade 1961-1971 saw the population of the parish almost double.

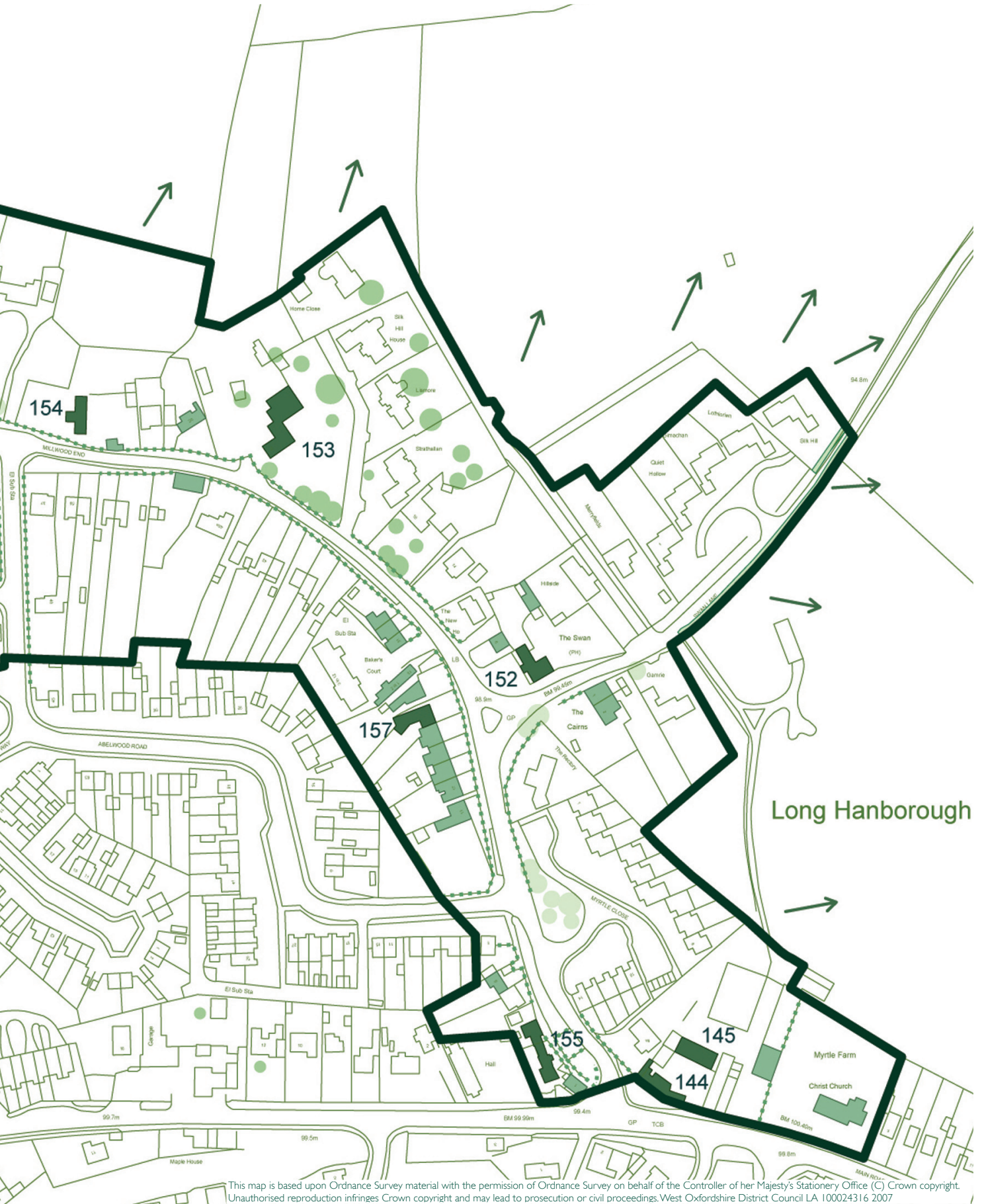




## Millwood End Conservation Area

### Key

-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Buildings
-  Locally Listed Buildings
-  Significant Boundary Walls
-  Significant Hedges
-  Significant Trees and Tree Groups
-  Tree Preservation Order
-  Significant Views



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## Listed Buildings

There are 9 Listed structures in the parish. Listed Buildings are classified in grades of relative importance.

### Grade II – Buildings of special interest

18/144	MAIN ROAD (North side) Myrtle Farmhouse
18/145	MAIN ROAD (North side) Barn approx. 15m NE of Myrtle Farmhouse
18/152	MILLWOOD END (North side) The Swan Public House
18/153	MILLWOOD END (North side) No. 18 – The Malt House
18/154	MILLWOOD END (North side) No. 24 – Eastwards
18/155	MILLWOOD END (South side) Nos. 3 and 5
18/157	MILLWOOD END (South side) No. 25 – Medmarsh Cottage
18/158	MILLWOOD END (South side) Millwood Farmhouse
18/159	MILLWOOD END (West side) Barn and stable range approx. 15m E of Millwood Farm

*Note: The numbers indicate the unique identification number by which Listed Buildings are referenced*



## Architectural character and quality of buildings

The early buildings of Millwood End, which belong predominantly to the 17th and 18th centuries, conform to a humble vernacular type indicative of the community's agricultural past. These buildings – which include farmhouses, barns and cottages (the latter typically forming short terraces) – employ coursed limestone rubble, locally sourced and grey in colour. Simple plan forms and stone slate roofs are typical (though it should be noted that period windows and doors are conspicuous by their absence, having been largely usurped by 20th-century examples).

Of the nine Listed buildings in Millwood End The Malt House is arguably of the greatest interest (if not architecturally then certainly historically). The house was once the property of Edward Henmarshe, warden of Durham College, Oxford. It dates from the mid-16th century and was probably built as a refuge from Durham College in time of plague in Oxford.

The house was altered later in the 16th century, and greatly extended in the 17th and 18th centuries. The irregular plan form of the current house is the result of its convoluted building history. The interior of The Malt House is of greater interest than the exterior. Of particular note is the period structural timberwork visible throughout, which includes a collar-truss roof with heavy principals at attic level.

The majority of houses in Millwood End belong to the 20th century, and while it can be argued that no individual property merits special regard, either architecturally or historically, the happy co-existence of a variety of recent vernacular housing deserves recognition. The pattern of 20th century development in Millwood End was set in motion by the Blenheim estate, which began to sell building plots in Long Hanborough in 1910.

## Boundary treatments

The Conservation Area features a range of boundary treatments, by far the most notable of which is the extensive drystone walling seen throughout the area. This feature, which complements the stone-built houses and cottages found in this part of the village, contributes significantly to the overall cohesion of Millwood End. The majority of the houses here are set back from the road behind gardens varying in size and shape. Grass verges are also conspicuous, while most of the area is well served by roadside paths. The houses located in the western limb of Millwood End, together with those found on the north side of the Conservation Area, back onto farmland, and here a variety of fences and hedges delineate the extents of these properties.

## Landscape, trees and views

The Conservation Area lies immediately against the southern edge of the Cotswolds AONB in an area of large-scale fields, mainly under arable cultivation but with occasional pasture. Views here vary, but the principal visual characteristic is one of containment provided by blocks and belts of woodland, which create a distinctive semi-enclosed character. Significant views over the surrounding landscape can be gained from the western tip of the Conservation Area. Trees are also conspicuous throughout, while intervisibility tends to be moderate, lending Millwood End a tranquil and intimate 'village' character that contrasts with the urban character of adjacent development to the south. Much of the surrounding landscape was wooded in the Middle Ages.



**West Oxfordshire District Council - Planning Service**  
Elmfield, New Yatt Road, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 1PB

General planning enquiries and application forms

List entries and grant enquiries

Trees and landscape enquiries

Architectural and technical enquiries

**01993 861683**

**01993 861666**

**01993 861662**

**01993 861659**

