



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Ducklington

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. Ducklington Conservation Area was designated in 1988, 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 Ducklington accompanies this Character Appraisal and describes strategies for the future maintenance and improvement of Ducklington, as well as providing development advice and guidance on conversions, extensions and the design of new buildings within the Conservation Area.



Location and setting

Ducklington is located in the southern part of the District, approximately one and a half miles to the south of Witney town centre. The village sits on a slightly raised terrace in the flood plain of the River Windrush, which runs just to the east in twin meandering courses. The landscape remains predominantly agricultural, with arable fields stretching to the west and with pasture land in the flood plain, made fertile by alluvial deposits.

The village lies along the old road running from Witney through Hardwick and Standlake to the Thames crossing at Newbridge, part of the historic Gloucester to London route. Minor roads run from Ducklington to Curbridge and Aston and there is also a track to Cogges. Whilst the modern suburbs of Witney stretch virtually to the northern extremity of the village, Ducklington nonetheless retains a distinct and separate identity.



Historical development

The area has attracted occupation since the earliest times. Evidence of Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement has been found in the landscape to the west, and a Romano-British settlement of the 2nd to 4th centuries was excavated during road construction immediately to the south-east of the village. The discovery of 7th-century graves just to the north of Church Street and also near Windrush Cottage indicates that there was a substantial Anglo-Saxon presence on the current site – and it is notable that the name Ducklington (which is first recorded in AD 958), may well be derived from the Anglo-Saxon name ‘Ducel’s Tun’, meaning the manor or mansion of Ducel.

The village seems to have been originally concentrated around the site of the current church, where many of the oldest buildings are found today. It is known that there was a medieval manor house here, which was probably located just to the north of the church, and that a later manor house stood on the south side of Church Street. In the 11th century a mill was recorded on the Windrush immediately to the north of The Square, and it is also thought that The Old Rectory occupies the site of a medieval predecessor.

From this nucleus the village appears to have spread along the main route towards Witney, reaching almost to the junction with the Curbridge Road by the 17th century. There was a separate outlying group known as ‘Little Ducklington’ further still to the north; surviving houses here date from the late 17th century. By the early 19th century there was also an outlying group of cottages to the south-east at Ducklington Mill, itself probably of medieval origin.

The older buildings suggest that the main route once ran along Church Street, whilst the current route to the south-west of the church was probably originally a back lane. Shifting of the priorities defined a green between the new route and the church, and a new focus: the school building of 1857 faces the green, which also provided a natural site for the village war memorial. In recent years this new route has itself been superseded – a bypass running to the south-west of the village was completed in 1975.

Settlement pattern

Whilst it appears that Ducklington began as a nucleated settlement, subsequent spread along what was once an arterial road had established a strong linear character by the 17th century.

Along the original main route buildings are set in close proximity with the road and some are set gable-end on. There are some small front gardens, but many buildings are located immediately adjacent to the road. Around the green the village has a second, quite different character, with buildings set in rather more open spaces.

20th-century infill development on gardens and former farmyards has tended to subvert the linear form within the Conservation Area itself, although the original main route and its flanking buildings remain very significant, as does the village green and its peripheral buildings. There has also been extensive modern development between the Conservation Area and the bypass, although this has no strong overall ordering form and the relationships with the earlier fabric appear somewhat arbitrary.

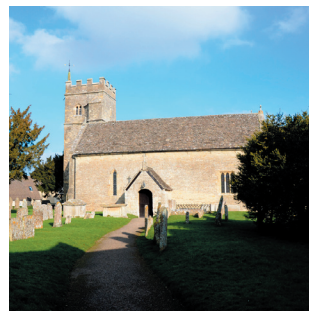
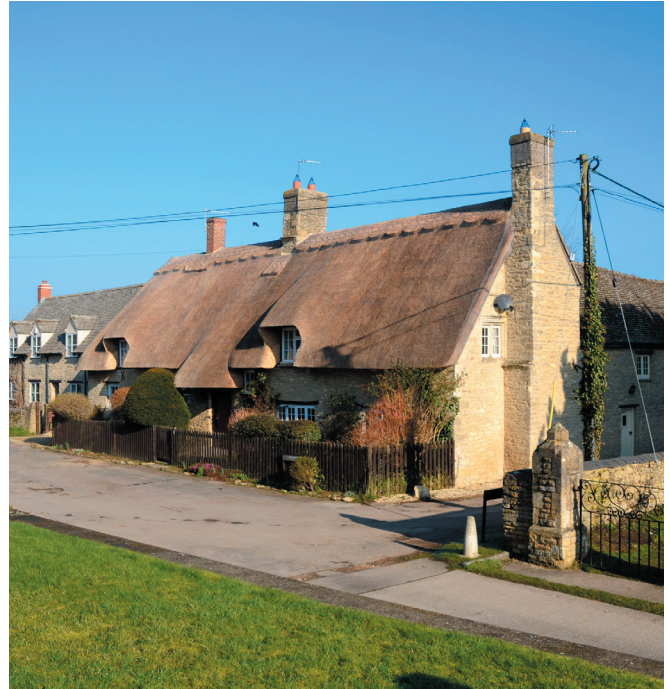


Architectural character and quality of buildings

Within the Conservation Area, pale limestone walling, of local origin, is common to all of the older buildings, with coursed rubble for humbler structures and with ashlar and/or worked stone dressings for structures of higher status. Red brick walling begins to appear in the 19th century. Roofing materials include thatch, plain tiles, stone slates and blue slates, mostly used at steep pitches, with roofs featuring red brick or stone chimneys.

The church, dedicated to St Bartholomew, has 12th-century origins. The south arcade survives from this earliest 'Transitional Norman' campaign, together with much of the walling. Many openings were reworked in the 'Early English' style of the 13th century, and the north aisle was extensively remodelled in the 14th century, when its windows were reformed with delightful, sinuous tracery in the 'Decorated' style. The main east window, a south aisle window and the tower west window date from the 15th century, with tracery in the less flowing 'Perpendicular' style. Furnishings and much of the stained glass date from the 19th century.

The earliest surviving secular buildings appear to date from the late 16th or early 17th centuries. They include first-floor attic forms such as those of Windrush Cottage and Church Farmhouse, and also grander two-storied forms such as those of Lynden House and Ducklington Farmhouse. No exclusively 18th-century larger buildings survive, although from the 19th century there is the Italianate Yew Tree Farm, the old school, and the little Baptist Chapel of 1868. 20th-century development includes the new school, of 1962, and much housing, mostly located immediately to the south-west.



Boundary treatments

The most significant boundaries lie along the original main route, nowadays Witney Road, Church Street and Standlake Road. Here green verges are rare and the edges are mostly defined by the elevations of buildings and stretches of stone walling between: these walls are of varying heights, and they are usually, but not invariably, of dry-stone construction, with copings of rough-racked rubble, mortar or dressed stone.



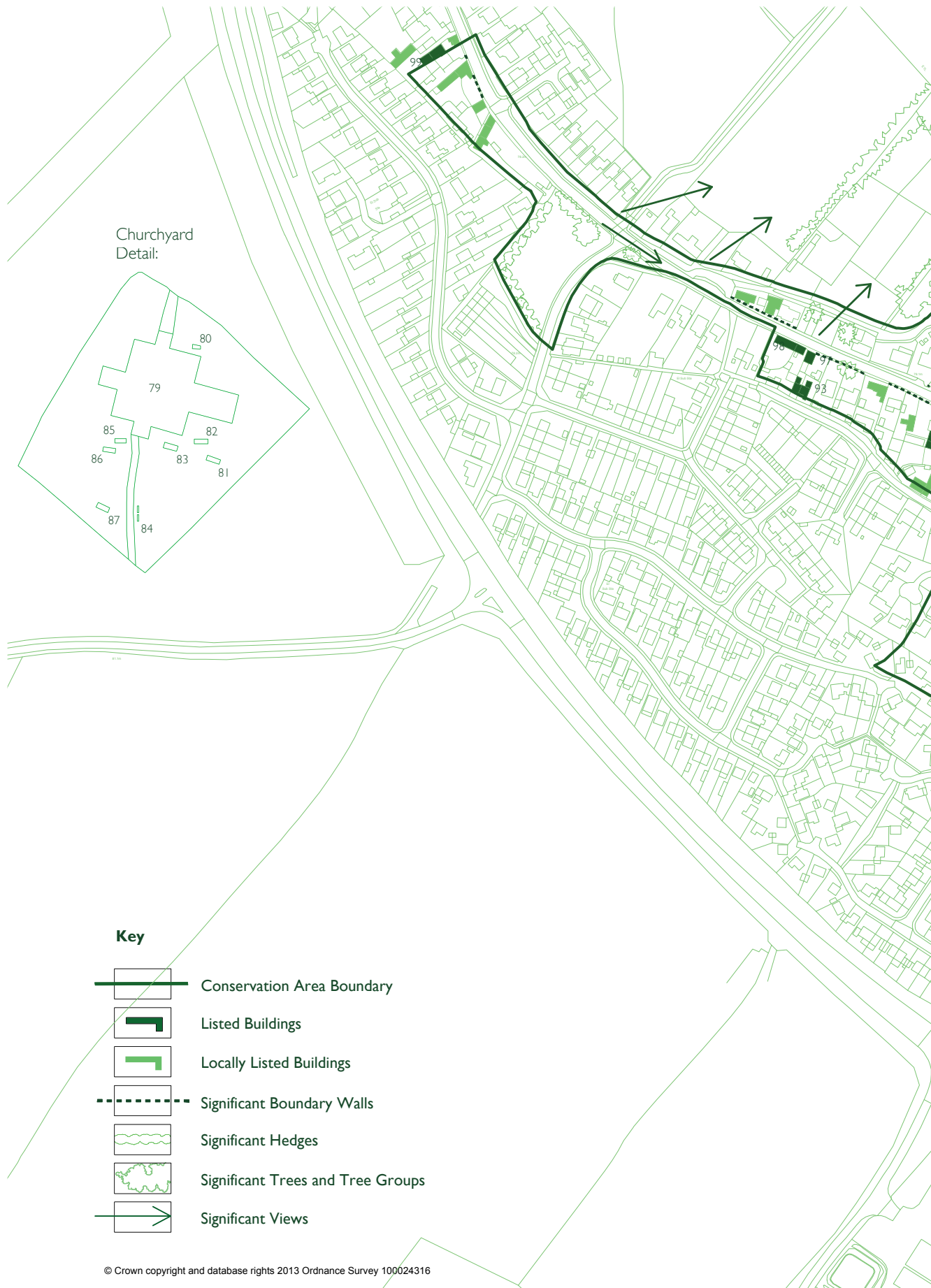
Landscape, trees and views

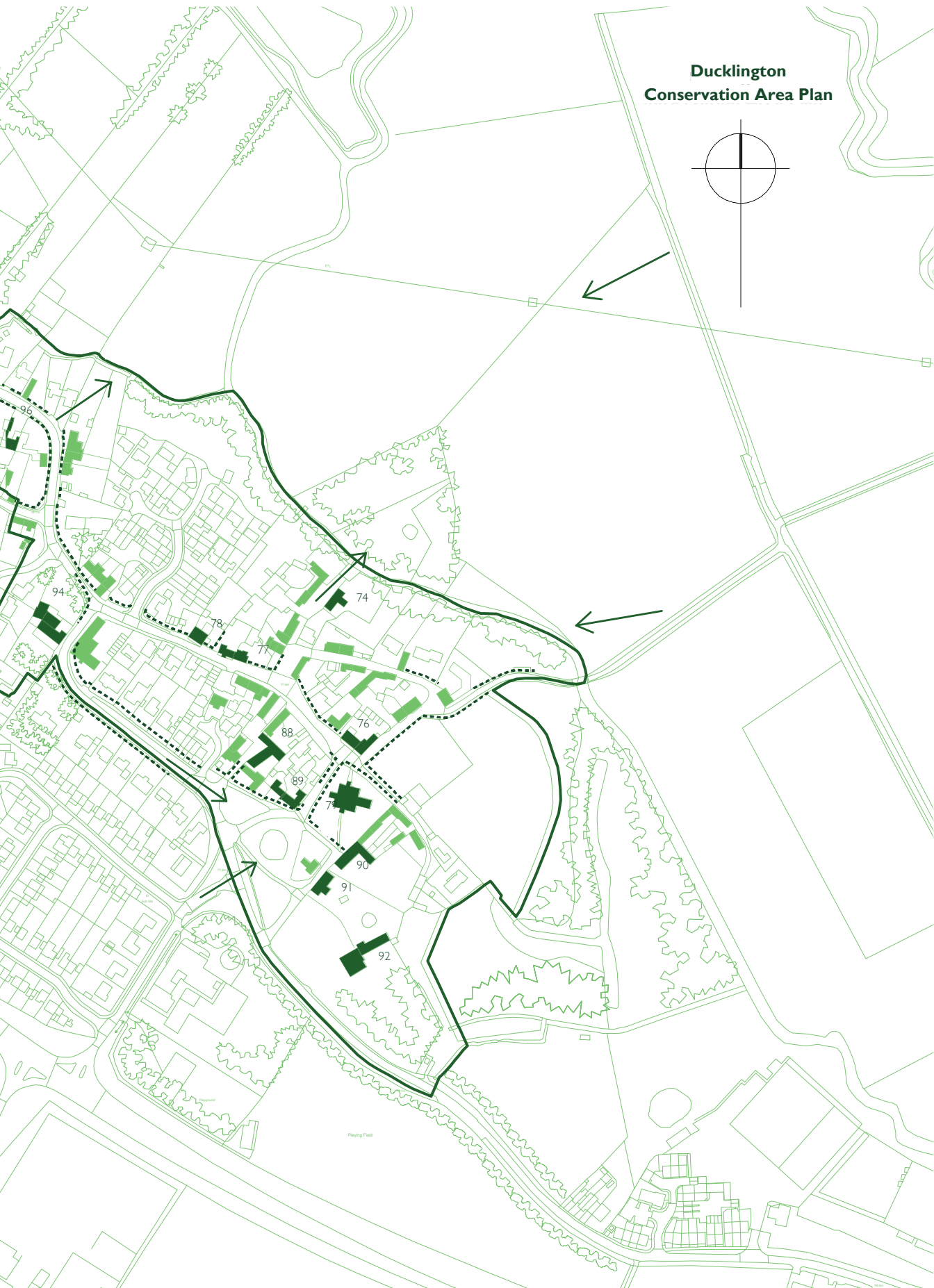
This is a tranquil, flat landscape of large fields and prominent hedgerows. The courses of the Windrush are marked by willows and other indigenous trees, which are glimpsed between buildings in views from within the village, and which partly screen the village in views from the north and east.



Along the original main route, views are successively closed in and opened out in a characteristic manner as the road winds through the village. Around the green, however, views tend to be longer and they embrace much of the modern development to the south and west, as do views near the Curbridge Road junction.







Listed Buildings

There are 24 listed structures of architectural or historic interest in the Conservation Area. Listed buildings are classified in grades of relative importance, as follows:

Grade I – buildings of national importance and exceptional interest

18/79: Church Street, Church of St. Bartholomew

Grade II – buildings of special interest

- 18/74: The Square, Windrush Cottage
- 18/76: Church Street, Church Farmhouse and Church View
- 18/77: Church Street, Nos. 9 (Lynden House) and 11
- 18/78: Church Street, No. 7
- 18/80: Church Street, grave slab, approx. 1m. N. of N. aisle of church
- 18/81: Church Street, chest tomb, approx. 8.5m. S. of chancel of church
- 18/82: Church Street, chest tomb, approx. 6m. S. of chancel of church
- 18/83: Church Street, chest tomb, approx. 1.5m. S. of S. aisle and 2.5m E. of porch of church
- 18/84: Church Street, two headstones, adjoining path and approx. 12m. S. of S. porch of church
- 18/85: Church Street, chest tomb, approx. 3m. SSW. of S. porch of church
- 18/86: Church Street, chest tomb, approx. 5m. SSW. of S. porch and 8m. S. of nave of church
- 18/87: Church Street, chest tomb, approx. 16m. SSW. of S. porch of church
- 18/88: Standlake Road, The Bell Inn Public House
- 18/88: Standlake Road, Ducklington C of E School and Nos. 25 and 27
- 18/90: Standlake Road, No. 29 (Manor House)
- 18/91: Standlake Road, former barn, now village hall, approx. 10m. S. of No. 29 and 40m. NW. of The Old Rectory
- 18/92: Standlake Road, The Old Rectory and Old Rectory Cottage
- 18/93: Tristram Road, No. 10 (Brecon Cottage) and No. 8 (Peartree Cottage)
- 18/94: Witney Road, Manor Farmhouse
- 18/96: Witney Road, The Strickland Arms Public House
- 18/97: Witney Road, No. 27
- 18/98: Witney Road, Nos. 29 and 31
- 18/99: Witney Road, Nos. 61 and 63

NB In Ducklington there are no buildings of Grade II classification, which is intended for buildings of local importance, but of particularly special interest. Note also that the numbers are the unique reference by which listed buildings are identified. The first number relates to the parish; the second number to the individual building. The individual building numbers are shown on the map.*

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General planning enquiries and application forms
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