

CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT

DATCHET

Planning Policy Manager

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CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT - DATCHET VILLAGE

1. History

- 1.1 The place-name, Datchet, is agreed to be of Celtic origin, though there is no satisfactory etymological explanation of it. Many bronze and iron weapons have been recovered from the Thames, and it is possible that there has been continuous habitation because of the river crossing point. There is crop circle evidence for an Iron Age settlement at Southlea Farm, further down river from the present village centre.

River, ferry and bridges

- 1.2 The earliest documentary reference is in a 10th Century Saxon land charter. In 1086, significant fisheries and woodlands are recorded, and the village was included in Windsor Forest. By the 13th Century there was royal provision of a barge and documented use of the river crossing. From the establishment of the castle at New Windsor, and possibly from much earlier times, Datchet was the crossing point for the London - Colnbrook - Windsor route, being shorter than the route using Windsor bridge and Eton. From 1707 to 1852, various bridges replaced the ferry crossing. The present private castle grounds on the west side of the river were formerly public. With the coming of the railway and the building of the Windsor Road, the Victoria and Albert bridges replaced the central Datchet bridge, so that the castle grounds could be closed in exchange for public use of the present Home Park area. Thus, Datchet has always been a through route for traffic, and particularly royal traffic. The ferry and bridges ran from the end of the High Street, which was built up at least by the 16th Century. Several houses date from this time, and four are known to have been inns of some kind. The present Queen's Road was the back lane running from the riverside and returning up behind the typical long thin properties which fronted on to the High Street. There was no road to Windsor from the riverside until 1852, though the house on the corner "The Willows" is an early site.

Manors

- 1.3 The ferry rights were attached to the Manor from at least mid 16th Century (the earliest manor records date from then). Three manors, Datchet, Ditton, and St Helen's of Bishopsgate at Southlea, eventually became united in the late 18th Century. The manors were in royal hands from 1472 until the mid 17th Century.
- 1.4 Datchet Manor was based in the village, on the south side of what is now The Green, but was until the mid 19th Century a watercourse running through the centre of the village. The whole range of dwellings from the Manor Hotel on the corner, eastwards to the Old Council House, were manorial holdings, together with several at the top of the High Street, and they existed by the late 16th Century/17th Century. They remained in manorial hands until the last Lords of the Manor (Montagus) sold up and withdrew to Beaulieu in about 1895. The large central house (now two dwellings) appears to have been the Manor House, but once Datchet was linked with Ditton,

Ditton Park became the seat of the Lord of the Manor and the Datchet Manor House was let to tenants and lost its status. Land at the foot of the High Street, now Datchet Lodge, was attached to the ferry rights.

Church and Rectory

- 1.5 The north side of The Green, from the church to Hall Cottage, and also the grounds of Churchmead School, once plantation woodland, belonged to the church authorities and to charities. The church was built on the only high ground in the village centre and has been clear of floods in recent times. The churchyard extended further across the London Road until the mid 19th Century, again on high ground. The church was given as an endowment to the new St George's Chapel in Windsor in 1350, and the College of Deans and Canons remained a major influence through to Enclosure, when they were one of the three greatest landholders. The house now called "The Old Priory" was the Rectory from the 14th Century, leased to a lay Rector who collected the tithes due to St George's. (There never was a priory, only a 19th Century owner called Mr Prior.) The College was responsible for the upkeep of the chancel of the church, but not for the nave, accounting for essential rebuilding in the mid 19th Century, which partly preserved the old chancel. The Royal Stag (as the Bridge House) was given to the inhabitants of the village by Queen Elizabeth 1st for the upkeep of the bridge across the watercourse in the centre of Datchet, and this charity still exists. On this side also, next to the Stag, was a cottage, 24 The Green, which from the mid 16th Century was for the use of the poor, controlled by the churchwardens. It has recently been returned to community use after renovation.

Early development beyond the centre

- 1.6 The present main routes, London Road and Slough Road, were local lanes only until the turnpiking of London Road (very late in the 19th Century), and the 19th Century growth of Slough. London Road was a lane to Ditton Park and on to the Bath Road, but the main connection to the Bath Road at Colnbrook was via the Horton Road, directly east from the village. This road was the early axis of development, and at least from the 16th Century to the 19th Century there were high status building lots and houses on its north side. These are represented by the Astracot group near the village, and by Cedar House further east, but the only other remains are at The Lawns, once a very grand 18th Century house. This house and the later Leigh House swallowed up other properties to create private grounds, which in time were sold off for recreating small modern houses.
- 1.7 Datchet House on London Road was a 16th Century property, as was Church Cottage on the corner opposite the church, but no further buildings existed along here until the 19th and 20th Century.
- 1.8 Datchet Common once extended from the Datchet/Horton borders, narrowing westwards along the Horton Road almost to the village. There were houses there by the 16th Century, but its character was confirmed, or changed, by the building of a late 18th Century workhouse in what is now Holmanlea Road. Ditton Road was a new public road made at enclosure, which gave The Common a centre at the cross-roads

thus formed. The village's mill was further east on the common at Mill Place, where The Shrubberies is the old mill owner's house. 19th Century cottages and terraces along the Horton Road from the cross-roads housed the working class population of Datchet in a very clear distinction which still lives on in memory.

Victorian developments

- 1.9 By 1840, the settlement as described above was still surrounded by agricultural land which had been enclosed in 1832. (Act of Parliament 1810). No industry or local occupations existed apart from agriculture and fishing, except the trades supplying the community. By the mid 19th Century, the centre of the village had been transformed by the culverting of the watercourse and infilling of the ground to produce the characteristic wide Greens. The South West railway was constructed through the heart of the village in 1852, but it was not until the 1889's and 1890's that enclosed chunks of agricultural land were sold off for speculative building. By 1900, The Avenue, Montagu Road, Buccleuch Road and Slough Road were newly built as middle class residential roads. Churchmead House was built in the old plantation and gardens which is now occupied by Churchmead School.

2. Topography and Street Patterns

- 2.1 Datchet lies on the east bank of the River Thames. Its topography is flat with a slight rise to the east, and the area lies within the River Thames flood plain. To the north of the village is the M4 motorway, and to the east, the Queen Mother reservoir forms an imposing landscape feature. Home Park of Windsor Castle is on the opposing river bank, creating an attractive back drop to the centre of the village and the conservation area. The railway line linking Datchet with London and Windsor comes through the centre of the village and imposes on the village in terms of noise and forming a physical division.
- 2.2 It is the transport routes; road, rail and the river, which have shaped the form of Datchet. The commercial centre which is focused either side of a long green, runs parallel with the River and railway. The main residential area spreads mainly in two directions from this centre. South westwards, the residential growth flanks the River and spreads up to the railway line. Eastwards the built up area is between the main Horton Road and London Road until reaching the Queen Mother Reservoir. There also is some residential growth westwards along the Slough Road.
- 2.3 The Green lies north of the Railway and is approximately 30 metres wide and over 250 metres long. It is now dissected with the main roads which meet at The Green. The buildings are an interesting mix of styles and ages and most front directly onto the Green, with no private space. The buildings are predominantly 3 storey, including gabled attic space, and a mix of red brick and painted and timber framed/fronted.
- 2.4 To the North of the Green lies a large mainly residential area. These properties are of a mix of ages, but all tend to be large properties lying within large plots. The buildings being generally of no more than two storeys and lying on a slight rise up away from

The Green, give the area some key views of the Church spire. The area includes modern infill dwellings, which are low and well screened and therefore do not impose themselves within the Conservation Area.

- 2.5 The High Street and Queens Road join The Green to the Windsor Road. The High Street being historically the main street has the highest concentration of listed buildings. It is characterised by red brick 2/3 storey buildings fronting directly onto the street, or with a small set back enclosed by walls and hedges. Queen Street, historically the back lane now supports a mix of residential properties, much of which is infill development. Two recently developed cul de sacs now come off Queens Road, one containing 12 small terraced dwellings and the other containing 3 large detached bungalows.
- 2.6 The Avenue, Buccleuch Road and Montagu Road to the south of the railway, are characterised by Victorian 2 & 3 storey residential properties. Montagu Road is a good example of a Victorian residential street, with narrow fronted brick built properties, mainly semi-detached, with small front gardens enclosed by fences and hedges, and long thin rear gardens. The Avenue and Buccleuch Road have larger detached and semi-detached dwellings.
- 2.7 Windsor and Southlea Road have much larger dwellings set well back from the main road. These large 2/3 storey buildings have large front gardens and, wide road frontages and it is the high boundary walls and hedges along this road which provide an edge to the street. The high red brick wall and gateway which surround Datchet Lodge give an enclosed edge to Windsor Road leading into the High Street.

3. Chief Architectural Features

- 3.1 Datchet Conservation Area contains a mix of styles and ages of buildings ranging from 15th Century timber framed buildings, 18th Century red brick buildings to 19th Century decorated brick buildings and 20th Century infil. The diversity is increased by the range of sizes from small terraced Victorian dwellings to much larger detached and wide fronted plots.
- 3.2 One of the most striking architectural details of the buildings around The Green is the use of timber facing particularly to gables facing The Green. Many buildings, including the Old Council House and the Manor House, have timber frames dating from the 16th and 17th century, several of these have been refaced in the late 19th or early 20th century in a 'Jacobean' style. In addition to these refrontings, other buildings, such as the Chemist Shop, have been built in this style and this detail has continued in the 20th Century development on the corner of The Green and the High Street.
- 3.3 The timber facing is found on both red brick, and rendered and colour washed buildings which provide further variety in colour and texture. Other buildings are faced solely in red brick or have a plain rendered finish.

- 3.4 Roofs of properties around The Green are mainly steeply pitched and clad in orange/red tiles. Roof shapes vary from simple gables and half hipped details to more elaborate roofs with projecting attic gables. The Manor House roof also incorporates a distinctive tile patterning. There are some slate roofs including the Mansard style roof on the Morning Star Public House.
- 3.5 Windows are mostly wooden casement and sash windows, with some variation including the leaded windows in Church Cottage. The Stag Public House has examples of 4 Gothic arched casement windows and Yorkshire casements with glazing bars, which are sited on the wall adjacent to the churchyard.
- 3.6 The majority of buildings found on the High Street are two storey redbrick. These are roofed with clay tiles. The roof in numbers 6 and 8 the High Street has a square mansard roof with clay tiles and a distinctive central chimney. The majority of the rest of the roofs are gabled and half-hipped tiled roofs. Datchet Lodge is an example of a larger brick property with 3 storeys and hipped slate roof.
- 3.8 The residential area along Buccleuch Road, The Avenue and Montagu Road contain good examples of Victorian brick residential properties. The majority of the properties are 2 storey buildings with some larger 3 storey buildings along the Avenue with some gabled attic space. The materials used are a mix of red and yellow brick, in order to produce some decorative brick patterning. Windows are wooden casement and sash windows. Montagu Road is a well preserved road of Victorian dwellings, with small front gardens, many with bay windows giving the street a feeling of enclosure. The roofs are gabled with slate tiles, many of the gable ends have decorated barge boards.
- 3.9 Other distinctive architectural styles include St Mary's Church, Ormonde House and Mordenholt, which are stone built. The church was partially rebuilt in Gothic revival in the mid 19th Century.
- 3.10 Several shops in Datchet have shop fronts of merit. The Chemist on the Green has a fine example of a Victorian shop front, and numbers 6 & 8 High Street have examples of early 20th Century wooden shop fronts.

4. Important Buildings

- 4.1 The earliest surviving buildings in Datchet are Church Cottage, The Royal Stag Public House, Manor Cottage and Manor Green Cottage. These range from late 15th Century to late 16th Century, remains of timber frames being evident behind 18th and 19th Century refronting.
- 4.2 There are many significant timber faced buildings. These include the Manor House which is significant in terms of its size and a good example of late 19th Century refacing in the "Jacobean" style. Others include the Chemist shop with its well preserved late 19th Century shop front.
- 4.3 The Church of St Mary, Datchet Lodge and the Post House are some of the larger buildings providing landmarks in Datchet. St Mary's dates back from the 13th

Century, but the building was re-built and enlarged between 1857-1867. It is the distinctive octagonal broach spire that provides a landmark that can be seen from The Green and surrounding areas.

- 4.4 Many of the houses along the Southlea and Windsor Road are on a large and impressive scale. Old Bridge House/Post house on the corner of the High Street a cream painted rough cast building, overlooking the River, is a 19th Century refronted timber framed house, reputed to be built in 1558. The cream bow front with cast iron balcony has a high visual impact in the street scene. Datchet Lodge is a large 18th Century red brick, 3 storey house. Its position overlooking the river and its former stable courtyard and tall red brick wall adds an important feature to the corner of the High Street and Windsor Road. White lodge and the Yew Trees are a pair of 19th Century semi-detached houses which are white rendered buildings with large front gardens. The building has wooden sash windows with decorative pediments, a slate hipped roof with projecting cornice supported by decorative brackets. On the first floor the projecting balcony has a decorative balustrade surround, which also serves as an emphasis for the front doors.
- 4.5 There are also the interesting groupings of buildings, especially around the Green which give Datchet a unique character. Along the southern edge of The Green the mix of roof lines with gable ends and 2 and 3 storey heights and contrasting building styles creates an aesthetically pleasing group.
- 4.6 The collection of small buildings on the corner of Horton Road and London Road, from No. 1 London Road, to St James Cottages creates a strong line emphasising the corner of the road. They are a collection of white rendered and brick built, small scale residential properties, with tiled roofs and gabled dormer windows.
- 4.7 Along the Horton Road, historically the oldest main route from Datchet, are The Nook and Astracot buildings. These 2 storey residential dwellings overlook the open space and London Road. They are 16th Century timber framed buildings refaced in the 18th Century and white rendered. The building has wooden sash windows, and an old tile roof, with hipped ends.

5 Trees and Open Space

- 5.1 The focus of Datchet is The Green. This is an important and very busy open space. Queen Victoria's Jubilee Oak in the centre of the Green provides a strong visual focus and extra height to the centre of the space. The Green is a spacious grassed area containing many points of interest including, memorials and a drinking fountain. The Green also contains large amounts of signage and other street furniture, and expanses of tarmaced road area, but retains a rural feel to its edging with granite sets and painted post and rail fencing. The activeness of the space creates a sense of being the village centre and the main commercial uses front onto The Green. The Church yard of St Mary's contains some important Yew trees, which can be seen from the Green. The traffic flow through the village to Windsor, Eton, Slough and the M4 is stopped by the frequent closure of the High Street and Queens Street at the level crossings.

- 5.2 The tree-planted open space along Horton Road not only provides a pleasant open space on entry into Datchet, but the trees also add a backdrop to views along the Green.
- 5.3 The access to the River frontage in Datchet is predominantly privately owned making the small stretch of public space adjacent to the boat yard an important one. The views of Home Park and Windsor Castle beyond are enjoyed from this space.
- 5.4 Visually important tree groupings provide the Conservation Area with important back drops to several views and buildings. These are found along the river frontage, lining the edge of Montagu Road towards the eastern end of the road, lining the west side of Priory Way, and the group of trees on the east side of Queens Road.
- 5.6 There are some individually important trees which act as landmarks within the area. On The Green, apart from the Jubilee oak, there are other trees which add height and focus to The Green. Other important trees to be found around the Conservation Area include, two very tall Wellingtonia trees along the frontage of Southlea Road and a large Cypress tree to the rear of 20 The High Street.

6 Uses

- 6.1 The Green, and the High Street are the focus of commercial activity in Datchet, whilst the surrounding area is predominantly residential. The Green is the main shopping area containing a range of small shops and other services such as estate agents, antique dealers, restaurants, public houses, and school. The railway station is sited off the High Street. This draws the commercial centre down along the High Street and also includes a small number of light industrial units. These commercial premises are interspersed by some residential usage.
- 6.2 Datchet's historical base, from the passing of transport into Windsor, is still continued, being the focus of many transport nodes. The railway has a major impact on Datchet. The railway station is heavily used by commuters to London, bringing the need for a large car park to the south of the railway line and also supports the recent development around to station to provide more commercial space on the corner of the High Street and Station Road. The road network in Datchet links Windsor, the M4 Slough and has a constant flow of traffic. The River Thames still supports some activity, although mainly for pleasure, and has a small boatyard on the Windsor Road.

7. Relationship to Countryside and Important Views

- 7.1 The Green is the most important focus of Datchet. Views lead into this space from the link roads such as London Road, Horton Road, and the High Street. Many of the views contain an element of surprise as they provide glimpses of a Green space and it is not until reaching the Green that the size of the space is seen. Views across The Green are also important. The views from west to east are well preserved with a backdrop of trees provided by the space along Horton Road. From East to West across the Green

the views include the Garage, which is a 1930's Art Deco purpose built garage, this is also viewed from Priory Way.

7.2 The views out of the conservation area across to the expansive Home Park, and along the River Thames have important historic and aesthetic merits. This view, is little unaltered from the early 17th century when it was the public route across from Datchet to Windsor and glimpses of this tree lined route can still be seen.

8. Enhancement Opportunities

8.1 Datchet is generally a well kept village. It has had some modern infill most of which has blended well with the village and does not detract from character of the village. The car dominance of The Green creates problems for Datchet in terms of parking and pedestrian priority. Attention is needed to address this problem whilst retaining the character of The Green open space. Walls and boundary hedges are an important street feature, often neglected. Encouragement will be given to retain and enhance these features.

9 Boundaries

9.1 North - The boundary follows the northern boundary of the tree planted open space from Priory Way, to the rear of Priory Cottage until Churchfields House. It then follows the eastern boundary of the space and then cuts across the grounds to the rear of Datchet House to follow the northern boundary of the houses along Deepfield to Datchet House Cottage.

East - The boundary runs from the northern edge of Datchet House Cottage, along the eastern edge of the property, across London Road and along the road edge to the western boundary of number 24 London Road. It then runs south to follow the eastern boundary of No. 25 Horton Road, and then cut across the Horton Road and runs east along the edge of the road. It turns 90° and continues South along the western boundary of No. 18 Horton Road, turning 90° again to run along the northern boundaries of number 16, the car park and to the meet the eastern boundaries of the school. It then runs south along the school boundary to cut through the school to include the older buildings and to run south to meet northern boundary of the Portland Business Centre. The boundary then turns 90° to run east along the Northern boundary of the business centre to meet the end of Station Road. It then turns 90° to follow the eastern boundary of the Business Park then across the street to meet the eastern edge of the station building and continues across the railway track and turns to follow the southern edge of the railway, to the rear of the car park. On meeting the rear boundary of the plot adjacent to number 17 High Street, it turns to run southwards to follow this boundary line and then follows Number 17's rear boundary and the rear boundaries along the High Street until meeting The Avenue. The boundary then runs directly along the northern side of the Avenue along the northern edge of the property number 1 The Avenue to 43a Montagu Road. It turns 90° along the eastern boundary of 43a Montagu Road and directly across Montagu Road to meet the corner of The Drive. Continuing along the northern edge of The Drive it turns to follow the rear boundaries of Nos. 32a

to 8 Montagu Road. Turning 90° to run along the rear boundary of number 5a Southlea Road and then 90° again to follow the rear boundaries of number 1 to 3 The Paddocks. It then turns 90° once more along the eastern boundary of number 5 The Drive.

South - The southern boundary runs on from the corner of number 5 The Drive, along the southern boundaries of the riverbank properties directly across Southlea Road. It then turns 90° along to follow the edge of the road and then turn to follow the northern boundary of the River Gate property.

West - From the corner of the Rivergate property the boundary follows the eastern bank of the River Thames up to the northern boundary edge of the most northern private plot. It then turns 90° along the northern edge of the river plot across London Road and along the western boundary of the plots at the end of Buccleuch Road. The boundary turns 90° to follow the southern edge of the railway line to meet Queens Road, turning to cut across The Green to meet the western edge of Green End, The Green. It continues along the eastern edge of Priory Way up to the corner of the private wooded open space to the rear of Priory Cottage.

Acknowledgement:

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