



**South Bucks**  
District Council

*Directorate of Planning Services*

# **Dorney**

## Conservation Area



Dorney Court

**Designated 1996**

*Conservation Area Document*

## Introduction

This document focuses on Dorney, a small village in the south west of South Bucks District that was designated as a Conservation Area on 31st July 1996. The text provides a brief introduction to the concept of Conservation Areas and then offers a detailed analysis of the special architectural and historic interest which Dorney possesses. The area appraisal plan on pages 4 and 5 shows the important buildings, tree groups, open spaces and views into and out of the settlement.

Whilst the Local Plan sets out detailed policies against which development proposals will be considered, this document is a "material consideration" and will be taken into account when planning decisions are made.

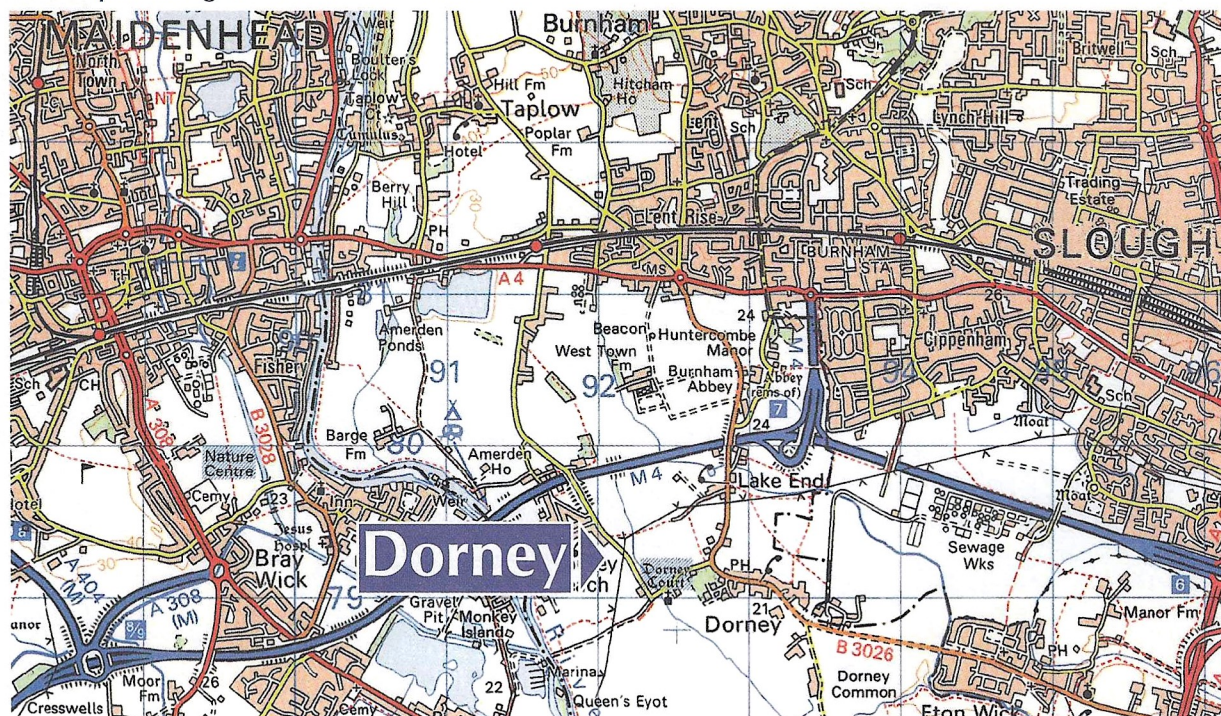


Figure 1. Dorney - Location Map 1:50,000

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## Conservation Areas

Under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, local planning authorities have a duty to designate areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which they consider should be preserved or enhanced. It is the architectural quality and historic interest of the area rather than of individual buildings, that is the prime consideration when designating a Conservation Area.

Conservation Area designation has the following effects:

- (a) the demolition of a building within a Conservation Area (regardless of whether that building is a Listed Building) will in many cases require the consent of the Local Planning Authority;
- (b) there is a lower threshold of "permitted development" rights within a Conservation Area, and therefore development which might not have required planning permission outside a Conservation Area may now require planning permission;
- (c) anyone proposing to cut down or carry out work to a tree in a Conservation Area must give the Local Planning Authority 6 weeks notice in writing of his/her intention

- to do so before actually carrying out the work. Certain trees may be exempt from this requirement;
- (d) once designation has taken place, the Council has a duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area from time to time.

## Dorney

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Dorney lies to the north west of Windsor on the road between Burnham and Eton. The settlement is located on the typically flat alluvial floodplain of the River Thames, an Area of Attractive Landscape. Located side by side in a secluded area on the south west fringe of the village lies the 15th Century manor house Dorney Court and the 12th Century St. James's Church. Surrounded by open pasture land, the area is characterised by its tranquil, rural nature.

Within the Conservation Area, a large proportion of the buildings and related structures are listed as being of architectural importance. In addition, there are a number of buildings and other features that are not listed but which add significantly to the village's character, these are highlighted in the appraisal plan on pages 4 and 5.

## A Short History of Dorney

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There has been a settlement at Dorney since the late Anglo Saxon times. References to Dorney as an estate of around 360 acres are to be found in the Domesday book of 1086. However, the settlement as we know it today is understood to have grown up from the 15th Century onwards. Dorney Court is a gentry house where, most famously in 1670, the first pineapple in England was said to have been cultivated. The estate was once owned by the Garrard family, one of whom, Sir William was Lord Mayor of London in the late 16th Century.

Although there are no archaeological sites within the settlement, the village is surrounded by significant archaeological finds, particularly to the south west where recent excavations for the Eton Rowing Lake have uncovered many interesting finds. Of the key discoveries along the old course of the River Thames have been at least seven bridge like structures which originally spanned the river and appear to have been used for the ritual disposal of bodies. It is believed that these structures are the remains of the River Thames', and possibly Britain's, oldest bridges.



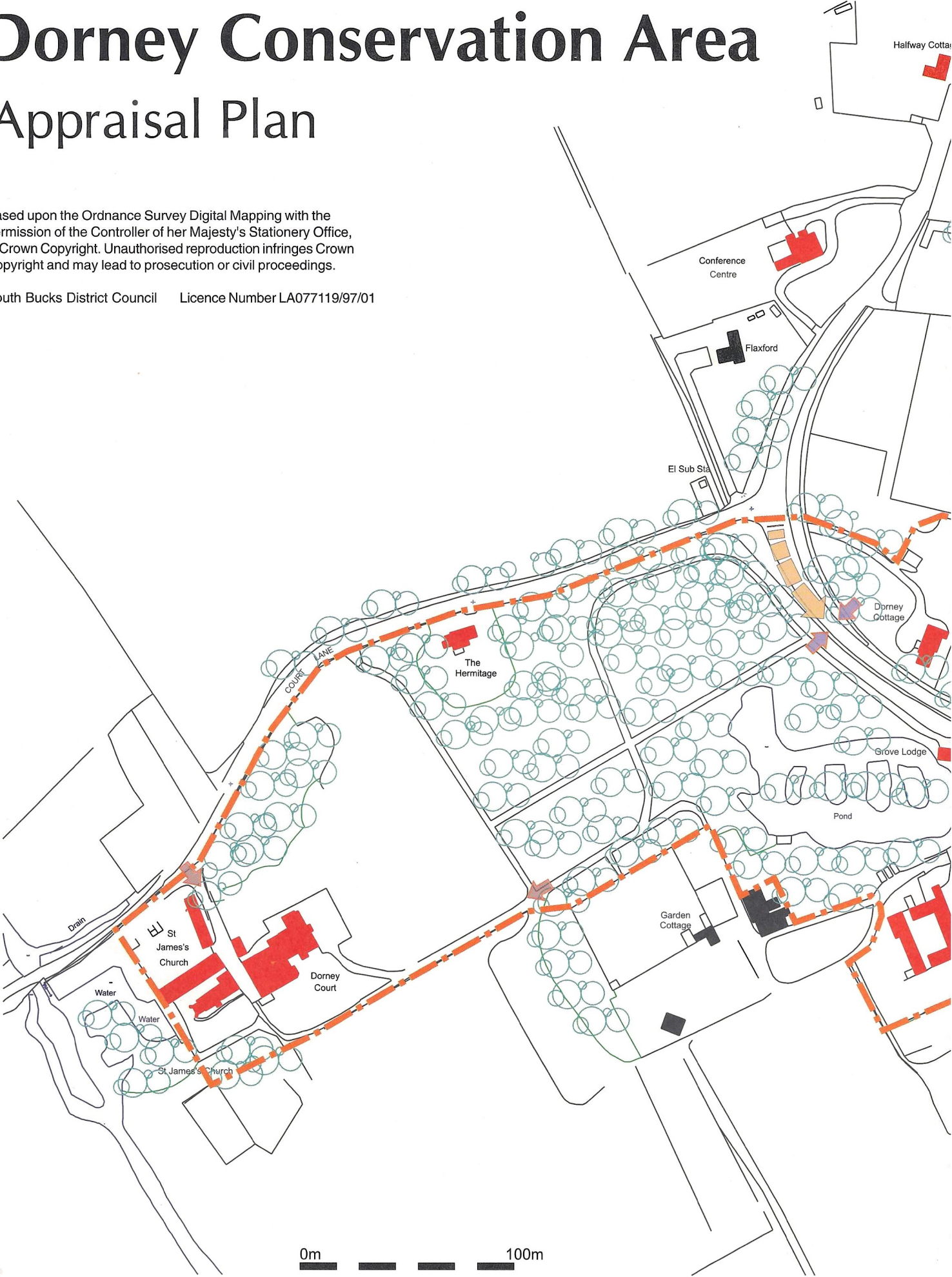
Figure 2 St. James's Church dates from the 12th Century

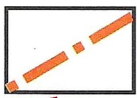
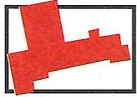
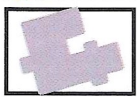
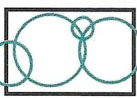
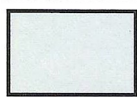
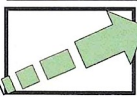
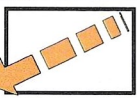
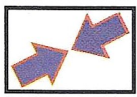
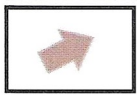
# Dorney Conservation Area

## Appraisal Plan

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-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Building or Structure
-  Important Unlisted Building
-  Important Tree Group  
(shown diagrammatically)
-  Important Open Space
-  Landscape Views
-  Views Into Settlement
-  Visual Pinchpoint
-  Glimpse/Surprise View



## Character Analysis

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This section offers a detailed analysis of the special historic and architectural character that Dorney possesses. The analysis focuses upon the features of the settlement which merit protection because of the contribution they make to the special architectural or historic interest. The areas and features considered important are highlighted, along with areas and features considered both neutral and negative.

### Architectural Character and Coherence of Buildings

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The Conservation Area's listed buildings mostly date from the 16th and 17th Century and are clearly defined by their construction of timber frames and brick nogging with old tile roofs, projecting gables and overhanging eaves. However, this prevalent style, which provides visual cohesion to the village, is interrupted by more recent developments with different styles and materials. From the late 19th Century onwards, the infill development that has occurred has increased the density of the settlement. The majority of the buildings in Dorney are in residential use. However, Dorney is not entirely residential, and other uses such as the small village garage, contribute to its character.



Figure 3 Priors Croft dates from the 16th Century and is a fine example of a timber framed building with red brick nogging

Dorney Court was built in late 15th Century, partly rebuilt in the 18th Century and has recently been restored. The building was built on an L-shaped plan, with wings running north and west. In the south west of the block lies a small courtyard. Externally, the walls of the older parts are, in places timber framed with an infilling of thin bricks.



Figure 4 The similarity of materials in Dorney Court's buildings helps to create a coherent group set against mature landscaping

To the south west of the house lies the church of St. James. The stone and flint galleted chancel and nave of the church date from the 12th Century. Also within the curtilage of Dorney Court lies The Hermitage; a former lodge or folly dating from the 18th Century that is cruciform in plan with a central octagonal tower which is also rendered in flint.

## Hierarchy of Space

Because of Dorney's low density residential layout, there is very little hierarchy of space within the village (for example, there are no squares or spaces enclosed by buildings). The settlement is linear in shape with a small public open space at the eastern end of the village. The linear space through the settlement is defined by the walls, hedges and plot frontages of the properties on either side of Village Road.



Figure 5 The listed wall and the trees along the frontage of The Gate House create a feeling of enclosure along Village Road

Entering the village from the north, along Village Road however highlights the changes in the types of spaces. When one

moves from the relatively open character of the surrounding countryside one enters the enclosed space between Dorney Cottage and the curtilage of Dorney Court. At this point there is a deflected view, where one's eye is led around the corner into the settlement. The space opens out through the centre of the village and is then partially enclosed at the eastern end of the settlement. This contrasts strongly with the open expanse of Dorney Common. Through the centre of the settlement there are glimpses, on either side of the road, of the important listed buildings which define the character of the Conservation Area. The deflected view into the settlement, is also a key feature when one enters the village from the eastern end.



Figure 6 The gateway to Old Dimmings

## Trees, Hedges, Landscaping and Other Features

Trees and other soft landscaping features have a positive impact upon the character of the Conservation Area. As the previous section highlights, trees have a significant impact upon the spaces at the entrances to the settlement by providing enclosure at these points. A number of trees at the western end of the settlement do have Tree Preservation Orders. These are mature trees that significantly add to the character of the area. Conservation Area designation provides extra protection for all the important trees in Dorney. The mature landscaping of the village's private gardens reinforces the established rural character of the village.

Other features such as the pillar box, traditional telephone kiosk and the entrance gates to Dorney Court on Village Road are key elements of the Conservation Area that can easily be overlooked.

## Relationship between the Built Environment and Landscape

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From a number of points within the settlement, there are views out into the surrounding countryside. These are particularly attractive from the eastern edge of the settlement where there are views across Dorney Common to Windsor Castle. Dorney's character is defined by its setting within the floodplain of the River Thames and the transition from the enclosure of the settlement into the surrounding countryside is reinforced by the landscape's open nature.



Figure 7 The view into Dorney from Dorney Common highlights the transition from the open landscape to the enclosure of the settlement

## Negative Features and Other Factors

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A large amount of infill development has taken place in the latter half of the 20th Century. Much of this does not display appropriate sensitive design and detailing and although excluded from the Conservation Area, detracts from the village's historic character.

The Council is concerned to ensure that traffic flows through the village do not increase above their current levels and that the problem of speeding traffic is ameliorated. In addition the materials used for kerbing and surfacing along Village Road are not suited to this rural/historic setting and there is a proliferation of signage at both entrances to the village that detract from the village's character. At an appropriate time, the Council will come forward with proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the Dorney Conservation Area.

Sponsored By:



**South Bucks**  
District Council

**BAA Heathrow** 

*Heathrow in the Community*

BAA Heathrow have had no input into the designation of Dorney Conservation Area