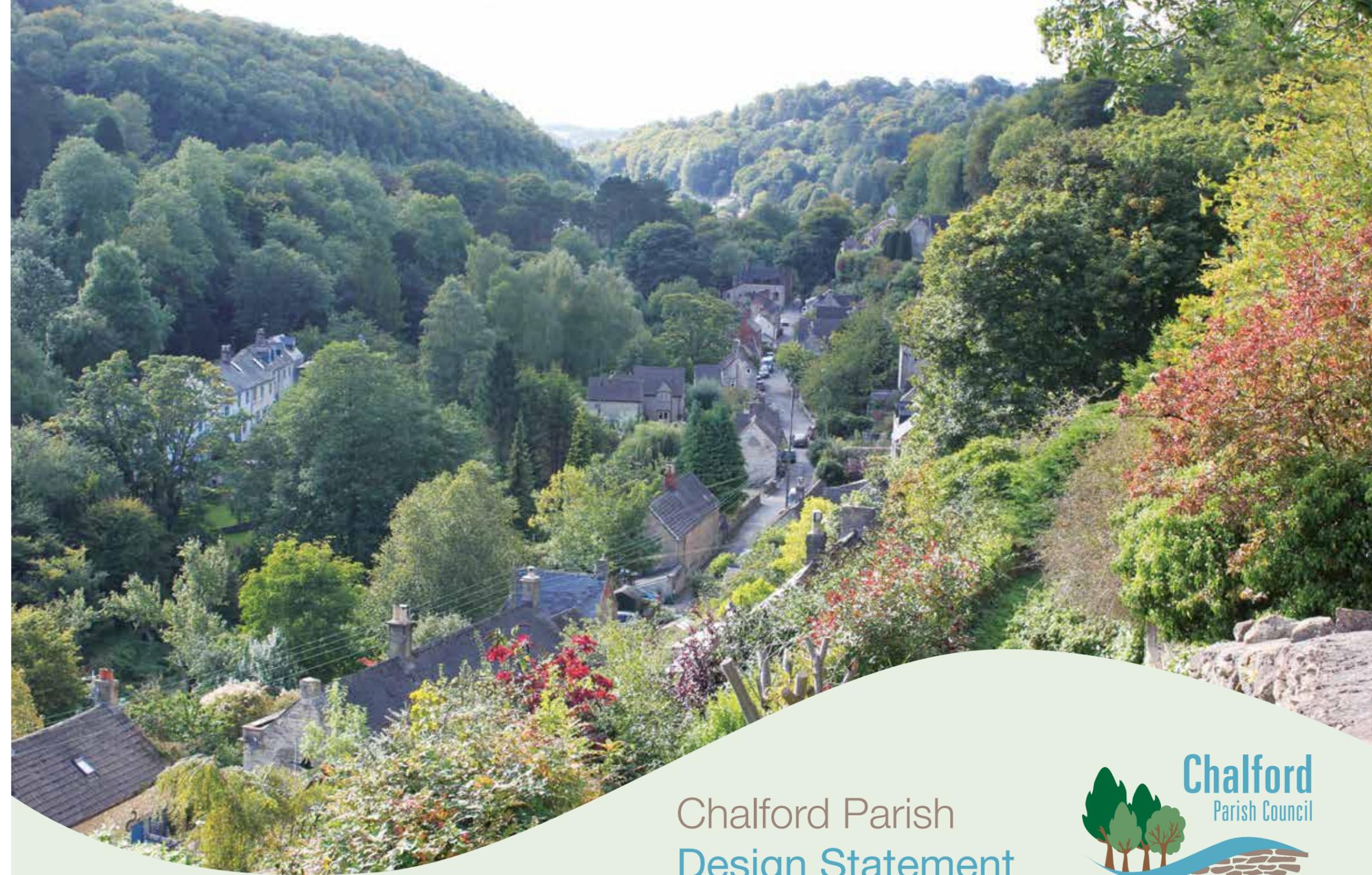




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## Chalford Parish Design Statement

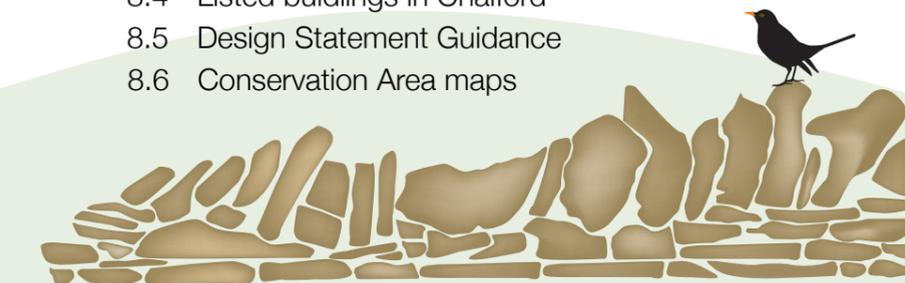


# Parish of Chalford



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 What is a Design Statement?

The Chalford Design Statement has been produced by the community of Chalford to:

- Describe the distinctive character of its parish and villages
- Identify the landscape setting, the shape of the settlements and the nature of the buildings
- Provide design guidance based on that distinctive local character and sense of place valued by local people
- Encourage all designers of new constructions to ensure that the new build enhances the area in which it is built

- Ensure similar standards are applied to alterations, repair and maintenance of existing properties.

## 1.2 Why a Design Statement for Chalford?

This Design Statement is necessary because, although the parish is not facing any major developments, the large number of minor changes in recent years (extensions as well as new buildings) have had a cumulative and negative impact on the character of the various settlements.

The main problems are the height of new buildings in relation to their neighbours, and the extensive use of render and

timber in an area where stone is dominant. These are beginning to threaten the important landscape setting of the settlements and the Parish of Chalford as a whole.

The Parish of Chalford is unquestionably distinctive. The older settlements are separate and are set in a variety of strong landscape settings with an interesting geology that can affect building construction. With the exception of the Manor Village development, Chalford Parish settlements are built on steep gradients and have a network of lanes and footpaths that create an area which is confusing to navigate.

This Design Statement has been created to supplement the policies in the adopted (2015) Stroud District Local Plan. In the future it is anticipated it will part of the Chalford Neighbourhood Development Plan and will provide householders (present and future), architects, developers and council officers with particular reference points when considering any building work within the Parish.

In addition, Stroud District Council has in place a Protocol for Pre-Application Community Involvement to which Chalford Parish Council is a signatory. Though pre-application involvement cannot be compulsory, early contact by potential applicants with the Parish Council, using this Protocol, is a proven way to ensure mutual benefit for all parties involved in the development process.

## 1.3 How the Design Statement has been produced.

This document has been produced by the Parish Council. It has been drafted by the parishioners themselves under the guidance of staff from Gloucestershire Rural Community Council and consultants Place

Studio. Open meetings were held in 2013 to obtain parishioners' concerns for the future, and area surveys were carried out to establish existing settings and building designs in February 2016. Stroud District Council has been involved regarding compliance with the Local Plan policies.

It has been prepared to be in compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 which states that:

“Developments should respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.”

(NPPF Paragraph 58)

It is also in compliance with Stroud District Local Plan (2015), in particular:

- Core policy CP4 Making Places: a Spatial Vision for the Stroud District
- Chapter three: Shaping the future of the Stroud Valleys
- Delivery Policy ES12: Better design of places

These set out good design principles and requirements that all new developments will be expected to follow. In particular, Delivery policy ES12 states that all new development:

“must be based on thorough site appraisal including reference to any Design Statements... be sensitive to its context as well as contributing to sustainable living. Design quality, reflecting a thorough understanding of the site context, must be demonstrated as part of any proposal.”



## 2. The Parish of Chalford

### 2.1 Location

Chalford Parish is located in Gloucestershire and covers an area of 120 hectares. It was formed mainly from enclosures of the common land of the ancient Parish of Bisley in 1894, incorporating the five villages of: Chalford, Chalford Hill, Bussage, Brownhill and France Lynch. The Parish lies mostly to the north of the A419, four miles east of Stroud and eight miles northwest of Cirencester. The land form rises quite sharply from the Golden Valley in the south and Toadsmoor Valley in the west until it reaches the upper plateau.

The whole of the Parish is contained in the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Beauty. The control of the landscape and planning issues are set out in their Management Plan (2013-18).

### 2.2 Access

The main A419 is an important highway in Gloucestershire and carries vehicles up to 44 tonnes. It has two major pinch points: at the bottom of Cowcombe Hill and at St. Mary's Corner.

From this highway, there are three roads that take vehicles into the Parish:

- Chalford High Street - a narrow, level, single-track road with vehicle passing places.
- Old Neighbourhood - with steep, narrow corners managed through a 7.5 ton lorry limit.
- Toadsmoor Road - narrow, steep in places with a traffic light controlled section as it negotiates the scarp edge. This is the only route into the Parish for HGVs.

There is a minor road access from/to the Parish via Bisley. This is mainly used for commuters to/from Cheltenham and Gloucester or the M5 motorway.



Chalford High Street.



Old Neighbourhood.



Toadsmoor.

View looking east over the roof tops of France Lynch towards Avenis and Oakridge.



### 2.3 Topography and geology

Chalford occupies part of the northern flank of the valley of the river Frome, which runs roughly east-west from the Cotswolds down through Stroud and empties into the river Severn. This is one of several steep-sided heavily wooded valleys incised into the main scarp slope of the Cotswolds that faces towards the Severn.

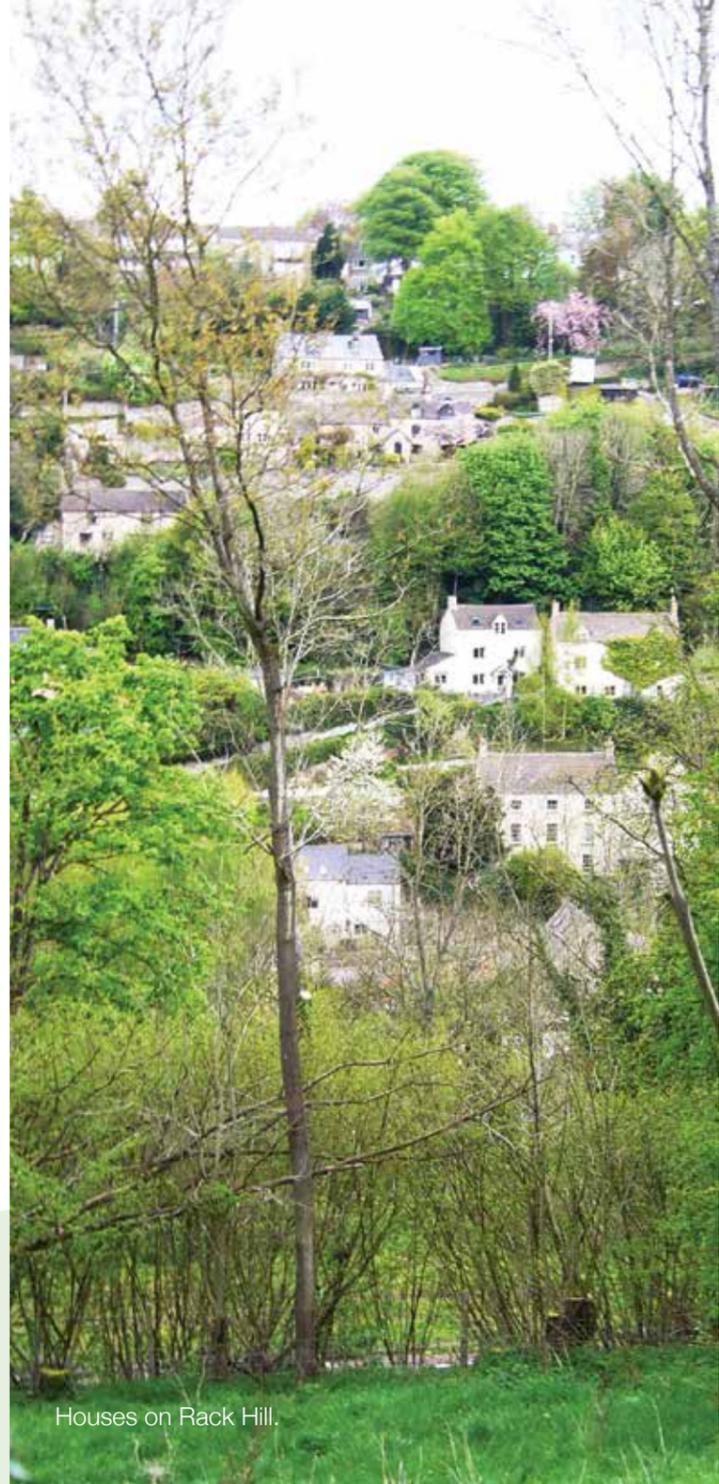
Landscape assessment by the AONB divides the Parish into three main areas - Settled Valleys, Escarpment and High Wold. The Parish is renowned for its steep hillsides and scarp edges as well as its narrow roads and footpaths many of which have a gradient between 10% and 25%. Rack Hill has been likened to a quarry with sheer drops and narrow platforms running parallel to the valley bottom. The geology of the area consists mainly of inferior oolite and great oolite limestone layered with lias clay. This gives rise to spring lines running across the landscape.

Many quarries existed in the past to supply both building stone and roof tiles.

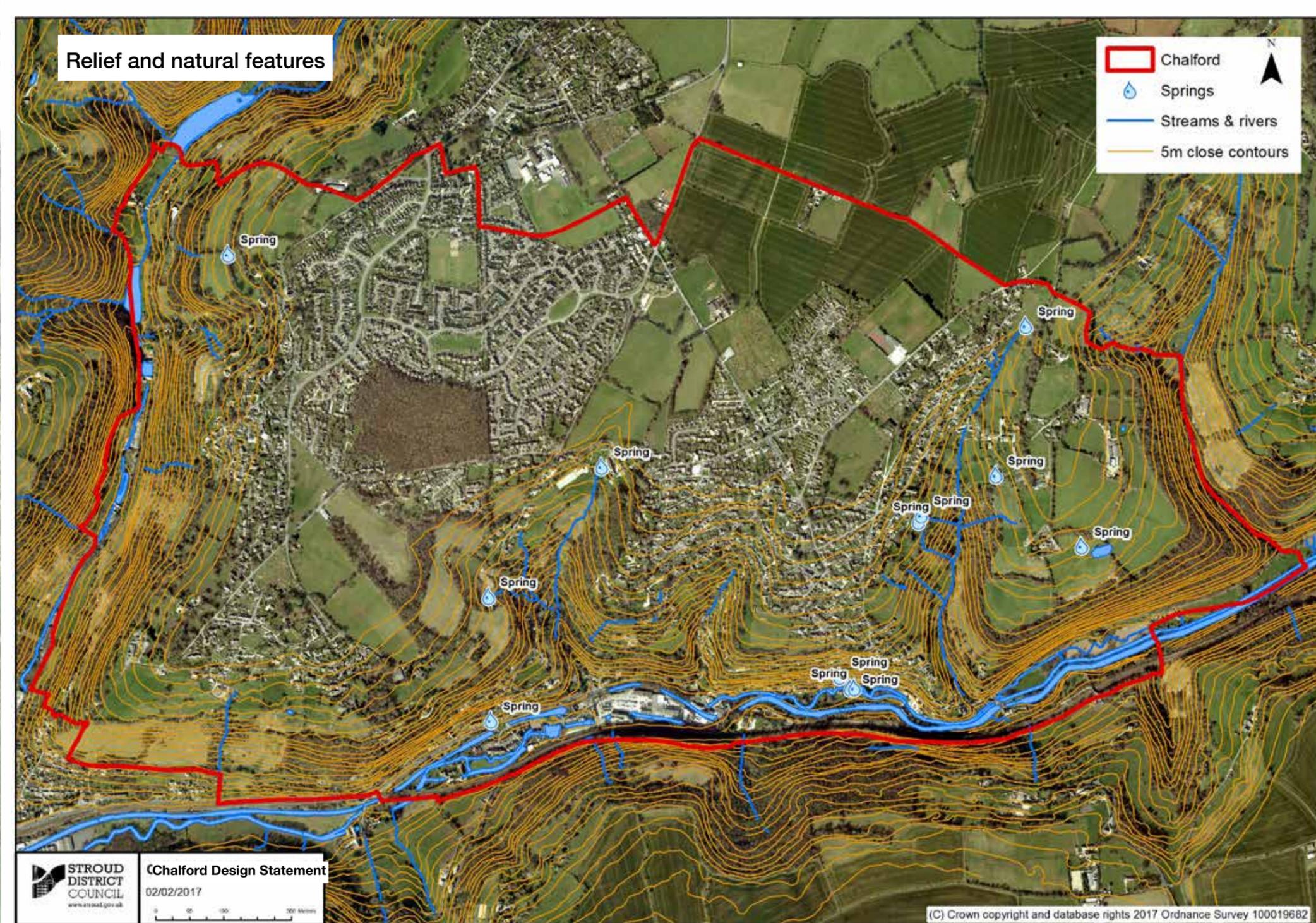
The combination in some places of unstable fuller's earth and solid limestone has often affected the building work, e.g. houses sliding downhill and a need for substantial excavation or underpinning for new and old buildings. Modern houses have been built mainly in the upper plateau to overcome these problems. Water courses are common within the Parish, both above and below ground. The whole Parish is a reactive catchment area in terms of surface water. This is controlled by the use of sluice gates in the Toadsmoor and Frome valley.



Waterspouts and wells are a feature of the Parish and were the only source of water prior to the 1950s.



Houses on Rack Hill.





Iles Mill.

## 2.4 Historical development

The original villages of Chalford, Chalford Hill, France Lynch, Bussage and Brownhill were squatter settlements for handloom weavers and other cloth workers as a result of the expansion of the woollen industry in the early Middle Ages.

The growth of Chalford itself, based on mills on the River Frome, had begun by the late 12th century. With the establishment of other mills along the valley bottom, this produced a long, straggling settlement.

The valley road through Chalford was first developed in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. From the later 18th century,

when the valley bottom offered no further sites, cottages were built on the hillsides above, an area sometimes referred to as Little Switzerland.

However, the valley bottom remained the location of larger houses for mill owners and others. The area called Rack Hill was named because of the many racks used to dry the cloth, including the “Stroud Scarlet”, used for the red coats of the British Army.

As the wool trade ebbed and flowed, so did the population and prosperity of the area, though the opening of the Thames and Severn Canal in 1789 helped to create further, if different, jobs, at least

for a time. The next important change was the opening of the Great Western Railway line in 1845, built along the valley beside the canal. A station was opened in Chalford village in 1897 and there was also a halt west of the village. Both stations closed in 1964.



The Round House, Chalford.

The original winding and narrow roads were, in many cases, by-passed by the new Stroud-Cirencester turnpike in 1814 (now the A419).

Although there are records of habitations at Bussage from the 13th century, Chalford Hill, France Lynch and Brownhill started later on the edges of commons on the higher slopes just below the rim of the central plateau. By about 1810 many cottages had been built on the commons.

The long fingers of common which remained, snaking between the cottages, were largely taken in as gardens at the enclosure of 1869, leaving the network of narrow paths that is so distinctive today.

The cottages seen today mostly date from the late 18th century. Despite a strong base of non-conformism, all the settlements were liberally provided with public houses. Most have now gone, with the buildings either demolished or converted to houses.

By the mid-19th century, with the decline of the cloth industry, the villagers fell on

hard times and by mid-20th century many of the cottages were deemed unsuitable for habitation. Several parts of the Parish were without mains electricity, water, gas and sanitation until after the Second World War. The arrival of utilities in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in a degree of infill building.

In the 1970s, the historic value of the villages and dwellings was recognised and many cottages were sold for renovation and extension. The result is a collection of houses and cottages that can still be matched to their original period, along with many buildings that were originally merchants’ houses, pubs or meeting rooms.

In the late 1970s, development began on the plateau belonging to the Manor Farm in Bussage. This resulted in the Manor Village development of approximately 1,000 homes, completed between 1980 and 2008.

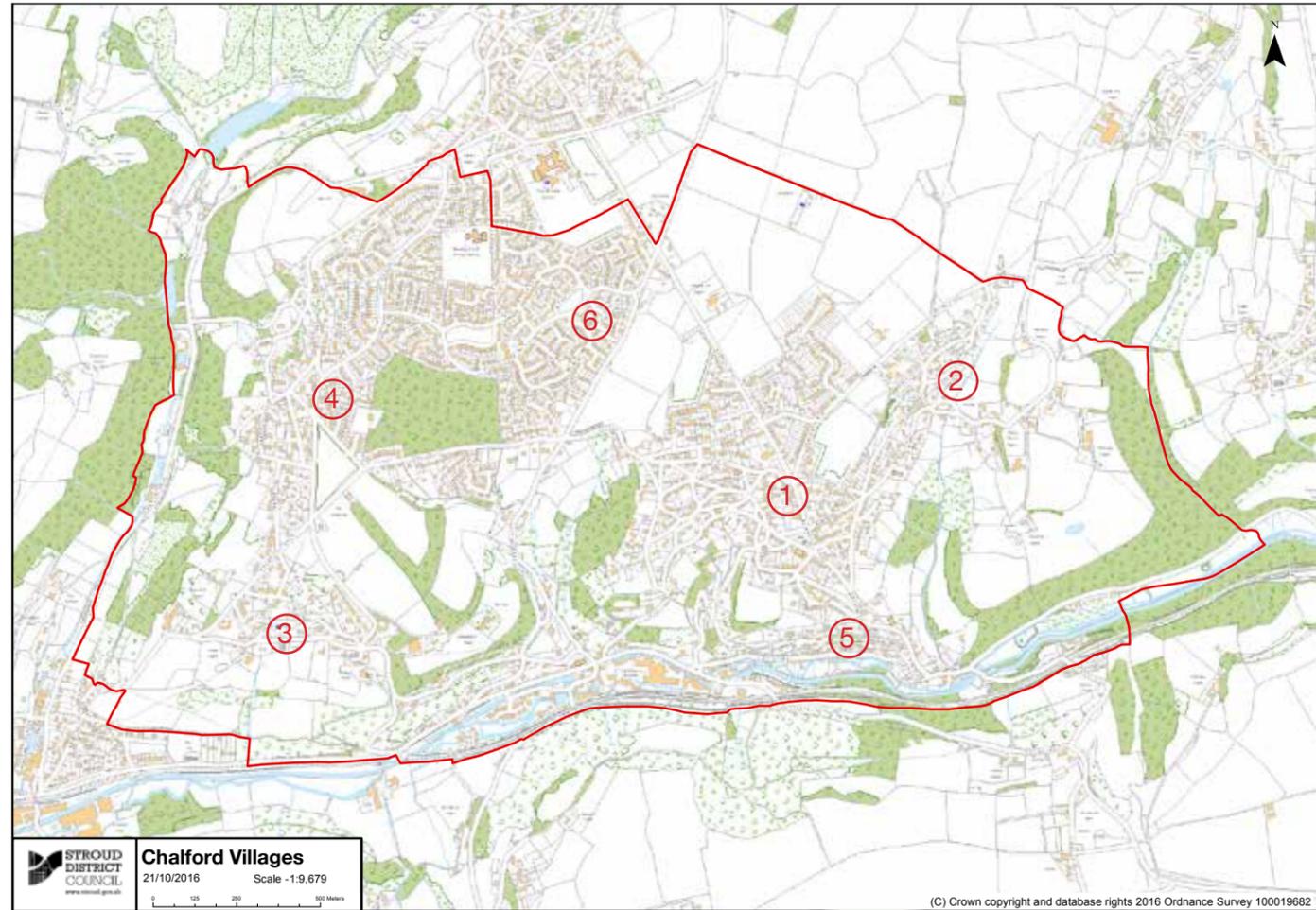


Typical old cottage.

# 3. Chalford's Villages

Chalford parish is composed of five historic settlements, plus the newer Manor Village. All five historic settlements have Conservation Areas at their cores which require sensitive design when new building plans are proposed.

Chalford Vale is of special interest to Industrial Heritage followers. It was recognised by Heritage England in the late 1990s, and as a result became part of the large Industrial Heritage Conservation Area. This has its own policies for change and development, which must be consulted for any changes in the Vale area.



- 1. Chalford Hill
- 2. France Lynch
- 3. Brownshill
- 4. Old Bussage
- 5. Chalford Vale
- 6. Manor Village

## 3.1 Chalford Hill

The settlement of Chalford Hill is arranged in a crescent shape on the side of the Golden Valley and two secondary valleys. It is the largest of the five villages. The majority of the houses and cottages are in the Cotswold Vernacular style, being built of local Cotswold stone with steep sloping roofs. Windows are small with narrow cross-glazing bars. Sash windows are present in later additions to cottages and larger houses. Many properties have porches, which are of varying designs. A few are original to the cottage, but most are later timber additions. Chimneys are present in all older properties, often made of stone slabs, but are now redundant or housing a metal flue. (Old stone fireplaces with a stone flue often leaked smoke into upper rooms.)

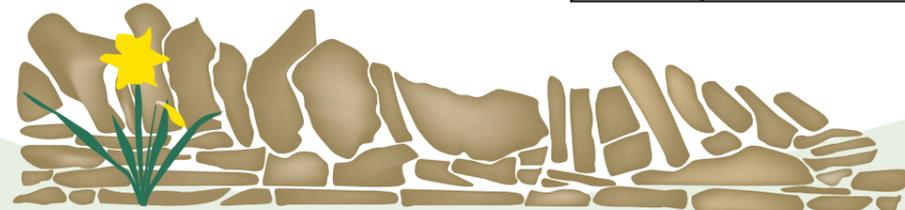
The village originally had a centre with a post office and several shops, but these have now largely become dwellings, and the focal points are now the flourishing primary school and the

popular pub. The narrow lanes form a network along the contours of the land with links up and down the hillside, some wide enough for cars but others only for pedestrians. These were initially used for workers to walk from their homes to the mills in the valley. Because of their steep gradients, donkeys were used to transport goods and wool products.

In most areas, cottages are aligned alongside the roads and lanes. Plots are smaller than those in the more outlying villages. The lower parts of the village drop sharply over the scarp edge to Marle Hill and Rack Hill, where cottages and their gardens are perched on narrow strips of level ground previously used to dry cloth. These are retained by high walls. Though access for cars is difficult or non-existent in places, the views compensate for this and these are popular areas in which to live.



Cottage on roadside in Chalford Hill.



The village contains many listed properties, which are mainly on its outer edges. These were built mainly by wealthy clothiers. Many were extensively added to in the 19th century and are still being modernised.

Property boundaries were built in dry stone construction to contain animals and to mark property ownership. Most are still in place, ranging in height from 1.5 to 3 metres though in many places in the lower part of the village, walls retain land of 3 to 4 metres, and some even higher. (Rack Hill and Marle Hill). In a number of places home owners have been allowed to re-route a boundary wall to allow for off road parking.

A particular feature of this village is its water spouts and troughs from which water runs all year round. Many houses were built near the spring line and have wells in their gardens.

The views from this village are highly valued. Being on the south facing slope of the scarp edge, views across to the opposite side of the valley can be seen in a wide arc, and walking along the edge,

valley views are especially beautiful in spring and autumn.

Chalford Hill has a somewhat limited range of facilities. As noted, many pubs and shops were converted into residences in the 20th century. There are now four shops: a butcher; an electrical sales and repair shop; a fish and chip shop, and a hairdresser. The main leisure establishments are the Old Neighbourhood Inn, and the Sports and Social club, the latter being a home to a range of sports and social activities.

The Methodist Church Rooms as well as the rooms of St John's Church in France Lynch offer more venues for clubs and meetings.



View of Chalford Vale.

A playing field, known as the Pleasure Ground, and allotments are on the outer fringe of the village. On the outskirts of the older part of the village on the plateau small estates, Down View and Tylers Way were built in the post war era. These provide single and two storey homes with generous gardens. On the main routes out of the village there has been a certain amount of ribbon development, council and private. Though this is the largest of the settlements it retains a separation from the other villages by strips of pastureland and woodland.



Chalford Hill Primary School.

### 3.2 France Lynch

France Lynch is situated in a small valley to the north east of Chalford Hill. It is served by two narrow roads which run along the contours of the valley, both of which have HGV vehicle exclusion. Some cottages are arranged alongside these roads with generous gardens and open aspects. The majority of the village is in the Conservation Area, with a few homes on its outer edges. The settlement boundary is quite small with little opportunity for development.

All the older properties within the settlement area were built in the Cotswold Vernacular style as in Chalford Hill, but the presence of fuller's earth on the lower slope has caused a few cottages to need under-pinning, and some later bungalows to be demolished.

Additional living space added to small cottages and bungalows has led to unsympathetic building height and style in several places, making the Conservation Area less obvious on the ground.

Within the Conservation Area there are two rows of bungalows built in the 1960s which provide accommodation for people aged over 55. Other later homes have been built both inside and outside the Conservation Area.

The only through roads are narrow lanes leading to small hamlets in the adjacent parish of Bisley with Lypiatt which means the village has a quiet atmosphere welcomed by residents.

The village is well provided with allotments on the upper area. There is a recreation ground and other sports facilities on Highfield Way. A well used church, church rooms and pub are also in the higher part of the village.

The village has good views in and out, particularly from Avenis on the northeast boundary.



Church Rooms of St. John's Church.



France Lynch allotments.



View of Brownshill from Hyde.

### 3.3 Brownshill

This historic village is probably the smallest of the five. It is on the south facing side of the main Chalford valley, with beautiful views to Minchinhampton and Burleigh. It has a network of small lanes and no through traffic. The land drops down steeply with properties scattered on the slopes. It has a general feeling of openness and separation. The style of the cottages follow the Cotswold Vernacular, and in most cases they were small but with large gardens.

Large parts of this village were owned by the Roman Catholic Church for many years. It had a convent home and church

at its centre and many cottages housed members of the faith. Up to the 1990s, this led to very little development taking place. Since this use has ceased, cottages have been bought privately and extended, but the settlement retains its feeling of peace and quiet.

It has a small area of allotments and recreation ground on the upper level. It has no pub now but the Railway Tavern once provided refreshment for workers in the steep valley below. One or two larger houses and a farm can be found at the far end of the village.

Brownshill is outside the settlement boundary and therefore any new building

has to be considered in principle as being appropriate to the countryside and in relation to the surrounding agricultural landscape character.

The views across the valley mean that Brownshill could be regarded as a public vantage point and in the past planning applications have been refused on the grounds that the opposite view from across the valley could be spoilt by an unsuitable development in Brownshill. The small Roman Catholic Church of St. Mary of the Angels is set on the lower edge of the village overlooking the Frome Valley.

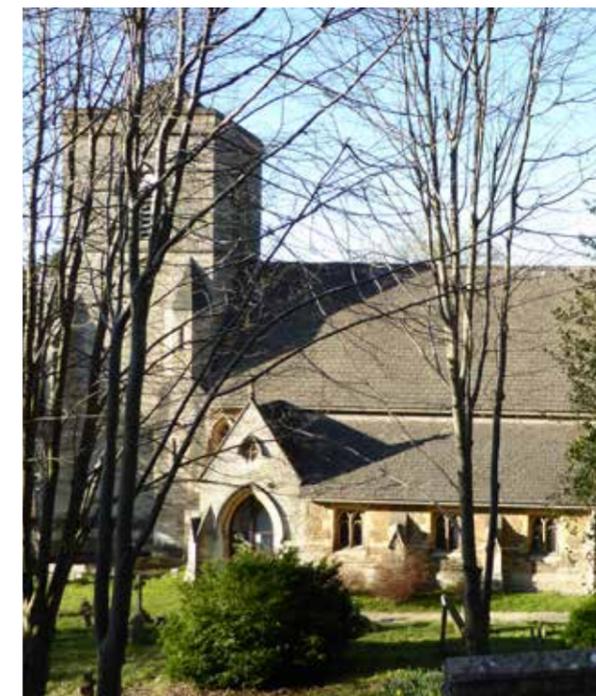
### 3.4 Old Bussage

Old Bussage is still identifiable, regardless of the large development of houses on its doorstep. It has a small central green area, off which lanes radiate in all directions.

The Conservation Area of vernacular properties follows the linear layout of the village and it includes all the older properties spilling down the scarp. The mix of large houses and small cottages, some bordering the lanes creates a confusing place to navigate. Trees dominate the landscape, more so than in other villages.

A popular recreation ground and skate ramp are on the plateau next to The Frith Youth Centre which offers a variety of clubs for all ages. Frith Wood lies to the east of Bussage, between Old Neighbourhood and the recreation ground. This original area of woodland is part owned by a private company, with its eastern strip owned by the Parish Council. It is a much valued local wood which is classified as 'ancient woodland' with a high wildlife value. It used for recreation and dog walking.

The church of St. Michael and All Angels lies on the lower slope of the village. A popular pub lies just near the top of the slope. A village hall offers space for meetings, playgroups and clubs. A primary school, built within the Manor Farm development, provides education facilities for the young.



The church of St. Michael and All Angels.



Frith Wood.

### 3.5 Chalford Vale

This area is different from the hillside villages, having a considerable valley area with a strong industrial heritage. Part of the area is in the Stroud Industrial Heritage Conservation Area with its special controls and planning guidance.

Chalford Vale stretches roughly from St. Mary's Corner to beyond the Valley Playing Field at the east end of the High Street. It has its own distinct identity being a narrow strip of land filled with historic mill buildings, cottages and clothiers' houses, a river, a canal, and the main line railway which runs along the northern side of the valley.

High Street, towards the east of the Vale, is narrow but filled with properties built on the edge of the road. The gradient rises steeply to the north, and cottages and houses cling to the slope, giving rise to the term "Little Switzerland". Because of the steep hill and scattered cottages, donkeys were used to navigate the steep footpaths and alleyways. Gardens of the roadside properties spread between the road, canal and river. Water is a feature of the

High Street, with two ancient spring troughs supplying water to the inhabitants in the past. Flooding continues to be a hazard. High rainfall causes banks between the river and canal to give way.

The environment agency monitors river levels and a local group carries out river clearance at least once a year fulfilling their riparian responsibilities. Because of the narrow road, parking is a constant problem, which can make it very difficult for access by large vehicles. Some parts of the high retaining walls have been pushed back and rebuilt to allow for parking.

Again, the design and materials of the properties follow the Cotswold Vernacular, but in this area it has been applied to much larger properties than in the villages. Though the majority were built



River Frome.

in the 18th and 19th centuries, grander frontages have been added at a later date. Listed properties abound, both residential and industrial. A row of brick-built cottages was built in the 19th century just below the canal to house railway workers.

Rack Hill, on the steep slope to the north of the High Street, provides good views across the valley, although trees intrude in places. The best views can be obtained from the east end of Rack Hill, looking towards Stroud.

Two areas of open fields separate the villages of Chalford Hill and the Vale. They are privately owned and are used as pony paddocks.

The Vale is well supplied with facilities, including a primary school, community shop, public house, café and recreation ground. There is easy access to the river,



Bank rebuilt for parking.

especially in the recreation ground. Buses on the main road carry passengers to Stroud, Cirencester, and even London.

London Road, the main A419, runs through Chalford Vale parallel to the main railway line, the River Frome, and the mostly unrestored canal. Alongside the main road and river are some substantial houses set in their own grounds.

These are from a variety of periods but most originated as a result of the wool trade. A few terraces of old stone cottages cling to the northern face of the hillside. Christ Church and its adjacent village hall act as a fulcrum point at the junction of Old Neighbourhood, with the Primary School tucked into the side of a small offshoot valley, with large period houses built on the valley side beyond the school.

The main road is supported by a high retaining wall at St. Mary's Corner, a pinch point on the A419. More mill buildings are also present along the river.

A busy industrial estate lies between the A419 London Road and the railway. It includes the Pangolin Foundry, situated between the river and the canal, builders' merchants, garage services, farm supplies

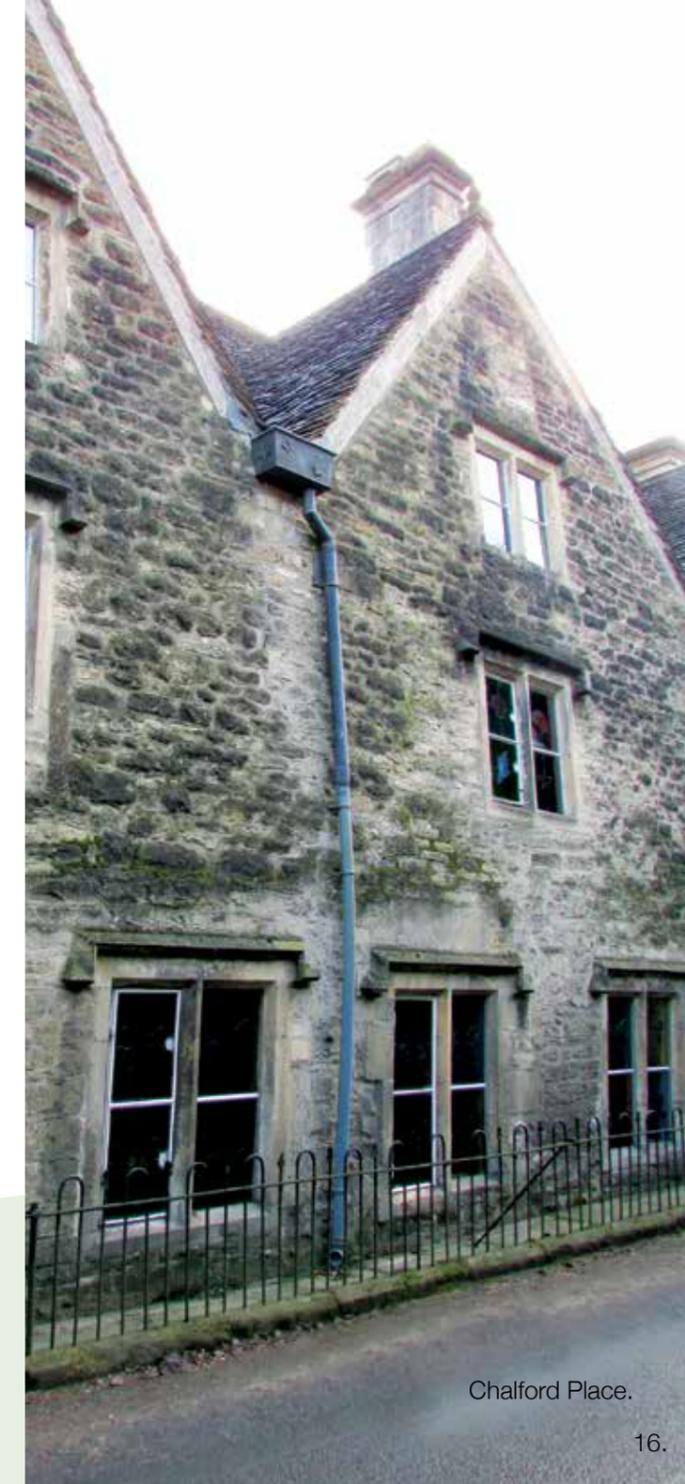
and artists' studios, which all make use of old mill buildings. This industrial estate is the main centre of employment in the Parish.

Peter van der Waals' famous workshop producing Arts and Crafts fine furniture was housed in Halliday's Mill, close to where the A419 crosses the River Frome.

The reclaiming of Thames and Severn canal in this area has commenced in one or two places, creating an area of open water near the Round House and a re-laid towpath. This is used as a walking and cycle route in both directions all the way to Stroud and beyond as well as along the former canal eastwards.

The two waterways create a wildlife haven and corridor. Kingfishers, herons, otters and water voles together with the common moor-hens and coots flourish here. The flow of the river and canal is by sluice gates when water levels are high.

Tree cover is extensive on the southern slope of the valley causing regular tree management to prevent "leaves on the line". Trees have also grown up on either side of Old Neighbourhood, creating a tunnel in midsummer.



Chalford Place.



Manor Village.

### 3.6 Manor Village

Large scale house building took place on Manor Farm land from the late 1970s to the late 2000s, led by a number of developers. Manor Village has a coherent and harmonious architectural style, using the Cotswold Vernacular as a basis of its design. There are over 1,000 houses and bungalows built of a limited palette of reconstituted stone and tiles. The village is well laid out on the plateau above Old Bussage, with street lighting and pavements. The homes cover a full range of dwellings, including small terraces, two, three and four bedroom houses. All have at least one parking area and most have average sized gardens. Boundaries vary

but are mainly of dry stone finish, especially on the main routes.

There are strict conditions covering this development from what can be parked on driveways to a limit on new builds. Houses can be enlarged and conservatories added, but gardens are limited in size, which offers little opportunity for new detached buildings.

Through roads link the estate to surrounding areas, and facilities include a primary school, a convenience store, chemist, takeaway and a doctors' surgery.

On the eastern outskirts of the village a petrol station, car workshop and small shop provide essential items for the traveller.

Bus services from Stonehouse and Stroud run through the development and on to Chalford Hill and France Lynch.

There are several open green spaces for ball games and recreation. As noted, Frith Wood on the edge of the estate is an ancient deciduous woodland with rare species and valuable wildlife habitat.

### 3.7 General characteristics of the historic settlements

The five historic villages all show some common characteristics.

#### 3.7.1 Layout of buildings

In most cases, cottages and houses were built in an apparently random pattern, taking advantage of level patches of ground, access to water and a southerly aspect. In all the separate villages there are one or more large properties that were built by clothiers or the church. These are surrounded by large areas of garden which, in some cases, have been used for development over the years. In all the villages there is evidence of later additions



Views and sense of space.

and separate developments - Victorian, Edwardian and small post-war estates, some for the elderly. In the Vale, houses are mainly arranged along the lines of the road and river.

#### 3.7.2 Roads and lanes

Internal roads are mainly narrow and mainly bounded by mainly dry stone walls, with no discernible verges. In some areas cottages are built right up to the road edge. Drainage is sometimes a problem on the steep inclines, drains getting blocked with fallen leaves.

#### 3.7.3 Footpaths

All the villages, old and new, have networks of footpaths. In the older villages, the paths



Narrow lanes, bounded by dry stone walls.

were used by mill workers to walk to work. They are often very steep, with many having a considerable number of steps.

The paths are maintained by Gloucestershire County Council and the Parish Council.

#### 3.7.4 Views

Most villages have open spaces from which views can be seen, often across roofs and out into the surrounding countryside or hillside (and in some cases back to the village from across the main valley). In many areas, such as Rack Hill, large unregulated trees have grown on the steep hillside, obscuring some acknowledged historic views.



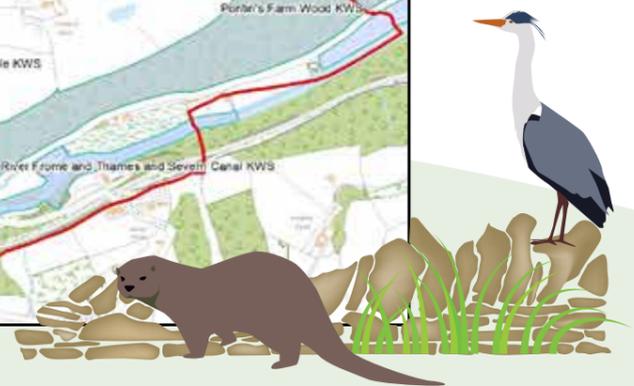
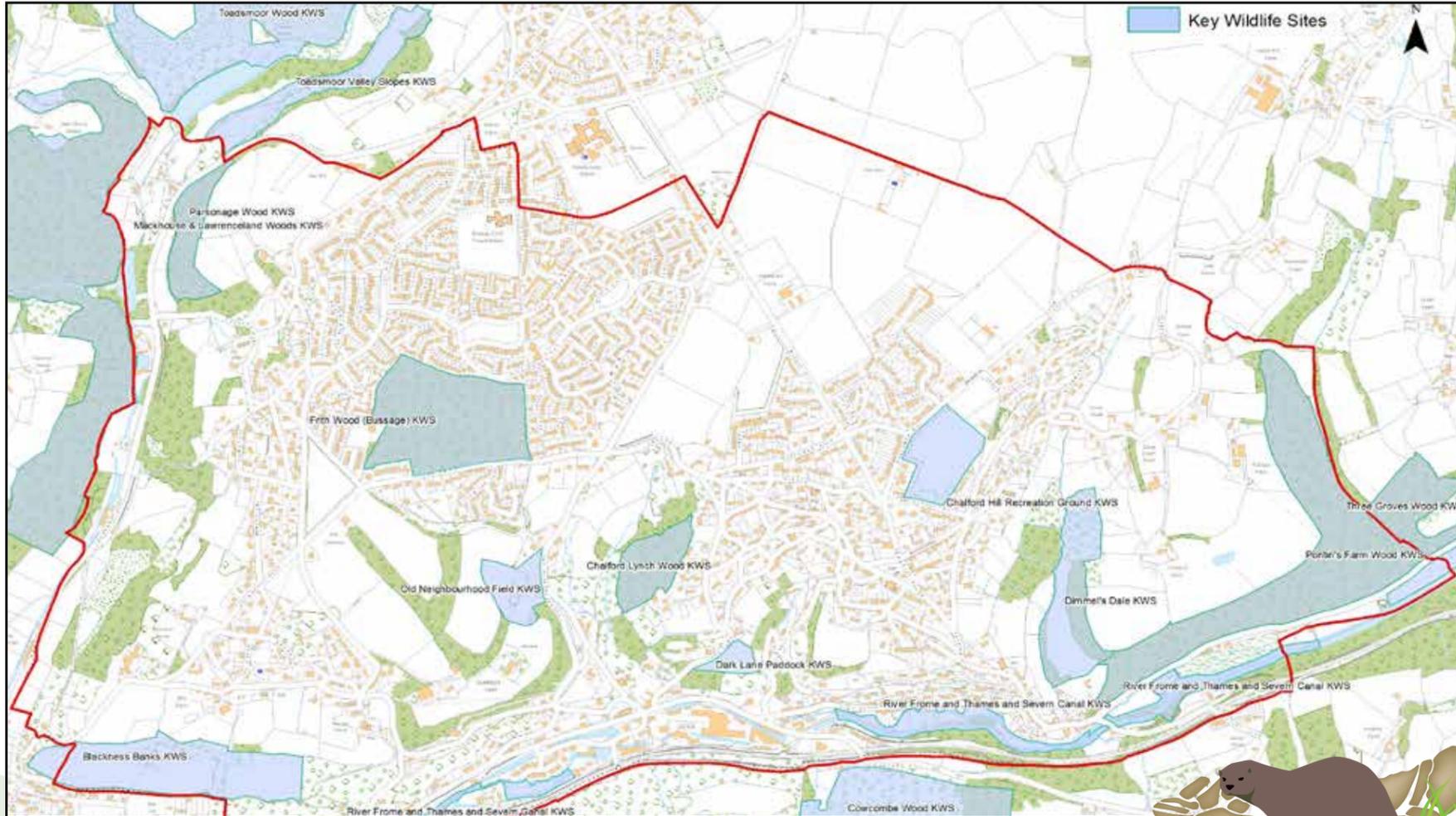
Footpaths crisscross the valley sides.

### 3.7.5 Wildlife

The whole area is full of wildlife; this includes deer, foxes, badgers, frogs, toads,

bats, butterflies and other insects. A wide range of large and small birds can be found all year round, including buzzards and jays.

### Chalford Key Wildlife Sites



### 3.7.6 Green spaces

The historic villages have at least one small open space in the main part of the village, on which there are at least one or two trees. In some cases smaller green areas have been commandeered for parking. This is a great problem in all the villages. Some home owners have re-routed their boundary walls to accommodate their vehicles.

### 3.7.8 Churches and pubs

All the villages have at least one church, all Victorian or later. Apart from small chapels, all are still in operation. The pubs have not fared so well, many having been converted to dwellings, but the majority

of the villages have retained at least one public house.

### 3.8 The countryside and undeveloped areas

The rural areas of the Parish can be divided into steep wooded hills, valleys and open agricultural land. The wooded valleys are: Toadsmoor, Skiveralls Wood, Parish Wood and Oldhills Wood. Other heavily wooded areas are Rack Hill and the Old Neighbouring area. Open scrubland can also be found on the hillside of Toadsmoor, Dimmer's Dale and Blackness. When grazed by sheep or horses, steep hillsides can remain open, but when grazing ceases scrubland and trees soon take over. The agricultural areas

on the higher plateau to the north of the parish are laid down to crop rotation. On the land that provides the "green belt" that separates Chalford Hill from Manor Village development and Eastcombe (in Bisley Parish), the fields are farmed sensitively for grazing animals, being too steep for arable land. The Avenis Green area above France Lynch also has open fields, but the gradients are still fairly steep and are usually grazed.

Open fields between Chalford Hill and Old Neighbourhood and above Rack Hill contribute to the separation of the villages. The fields are important in maintaining the distinctions between and the definition of the individual settlements.



Farmland above Chalford Hill.



Wooded Hillside.



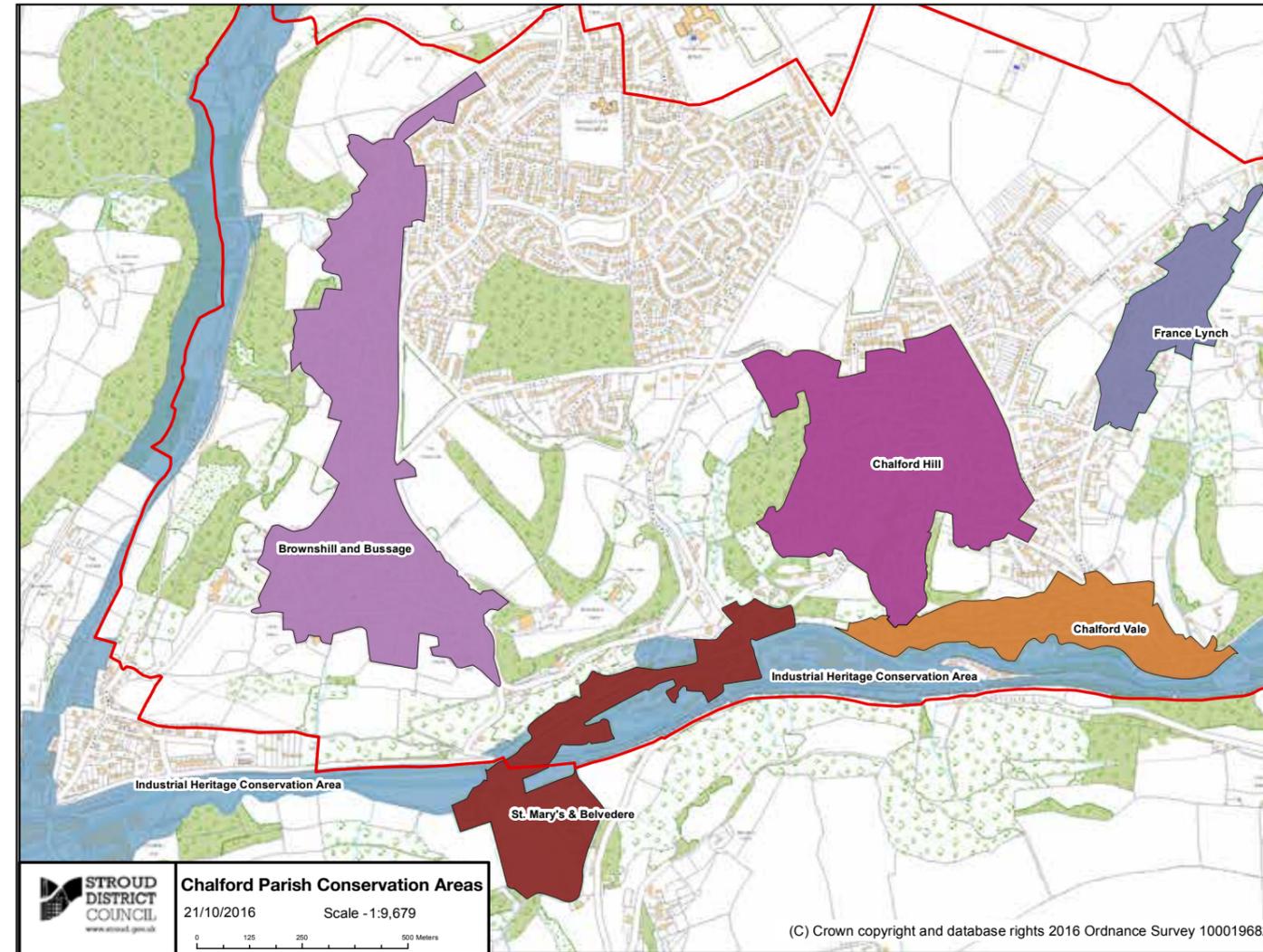
Saint Marys Catholic Church.

# 4. Conservation Areas

The Parish has six Conservation Areas, covering the core of the historic settlements and the industrial area along the valley.

- Chalford Hill**  
- designated in 1986
- France Lynch**  
- designated in 1986
- Brownshill and Old Bussage**  
- designated in 1991
- Chalford Vale**  
- designated in 1986
- St. Mary's and Belvedere**  
- designated in 1986
- Stroud Industrial Heritage Conservation area**  
- designated in 1987

Detailed maps of all conservation areas can be found in Appendix 8.6.



The first five of these Conservation Areas have no Stroud District Council Conservation Area Statement. Chalford Hill, France Lynch and Bussage and Brownshill Conservation Areas have had no boundary changes since their original designation. St. Mary's and Belvedere Mills was subsumed into the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area, which runs along the valley bottom. A detailed Conservation Area Statement and Design Guide were adopted 2008 for the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area. A small part of the Chalford Vale Conservation Area was included in the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area Review (2006-8), resulting in small boundary changes to the original Chalford Vale Conservation Area.



Stone boundary walls provide sense of enclosure.

## 4.1 Key characteristics

Features of the Conservation Areas in the five historic villages are very similar because originally they all developed as a response to the needs of the woollen industry and developed as self-sufficient working communities with one or two shops, a post office, trades people and builders.

### 4.1.1 Setting

The five historic villages differ mostly in their setting. Chalford Hill covers the steep scarp edge as well as part of the plateau, whereas France Lynch sits on the side of a small upper valley. Bussage and Brownshill are set just below the ridge. The Vale is all



2 storey stone houses predominate.

in the bottom of the Frome valley. The cottages were usually built near springs or had wells in their gardens or kitchens. (See page 5 for a map of springs in the area) The arrangement of dwellings in places appears as a scatter across the landscape, while others are arranged alongside the narrow, winding lanes. This creates a variety of plot size. Brownshill and France Lynch tend to have larger gardens.

### 4.1.2 Design

Most of the cottages are built in what could be called "Cotswold Vernacular" style, that is steeply pitched roofs with ridge tiles and coping, tall chimneys, symmetrically balanced design with evenly spaced windows, large internal window sills of



Original details and features.

stone or wood and detailed window surrounds of stone. There are no barge boards or eaves fascias. They all have a sense of proportion, place and “rightness” that seems to have been intuitive throughout the generations of local builders. This was a result of technologies and materials available at the time. The majority of cottages have been added to over the years, some more sensitively than others. Originally many would have been single story with an attic, but there is plenty of evidence of an additional storey being added at a later date. Dormer windows often break up the steeply pitched roofs. Because original inhabitants often had weaving looms installed on upper floors, these rooms had large windows for better light.

In all the Conservation Areas, more modern houses have been built with the design and materials of the majority successfully blending in with the older properties. These provide exemplars of what is achievable and appropriate.

#### 4.1.3 Materials

The majority of older houses and cottages are built of Cotswold limestone quarried locally. There is evidence that many were

painted with a lime wash for extra protection, but this lime washed appearance is no longer visible. Modern property walls are either real stone, reconstituted stone or finished with a cement render. At a time when bricks were cheaper than mined stone small terraces were built to accommodate rail or other workers. Rack Hill has several brick cottages. (Stonehouse and Ryford had brickworks until the 1970s.)

Most roofs have been replaced over time so it is rare to find original Cotswold tiles. Some have been replaced with reconstituted tiles or slate, mostly blending in with the colour palette. In some cases stone and timber porches are found, some original, some added at a later date.

#### 4.1.4 Boundaries and Driveways

The majority of boundaries are traditional Cotswold dry stone walls built to an approximate height of 90cm. In many cases walls were built to retain animals and land and are a feature in all of the areas. Some owners have re-routed their boundary walls to accommodate their vehicles. This can improve the movement of traffic but, in many places, such as the High Street, parked cars still pose a

problem for emergency and other service vehicles. Where driveways are present, surfaces vary from loose gravel, Cotswold chippings to pavements.

#### 4.1.5 Listed Buildings and other Heritage Assets

There are 105 listed buildings within the Parish (see appendix 8.4 p37). They are mainly the large merchant houses or those which have a particular historic feature such as Grey Cot in Chalford Hill which has an engraved window. Other features such as a special porch are also listed. Industrial mill buildings and churches are included in the lists. Any development of or near these buildings must be of special architectural merit, and conform to the requirements of Heritage England.



Organic building form.

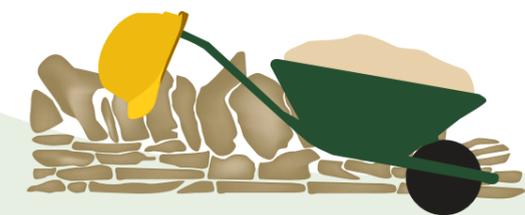


Sympathetic extension to an old cottage.

## 4.2 Design guidance for development within the Conservation Areas

(village cores)

The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act requires that special attention is paid to the protection and enhancement of a Conservation Area and places additional development control on new works, as well as seeking to minimise the loss of the existing built and natural environment.



### 4.2.1 Setting and Design

**C1:** New buildings and extensions should reflect the character of their surroundings, enhance the overall appearance of the Conservation Area and be sympathetic to the existing pattern of development in terms of bulk, scale and massing.

**C2:** Planning applications for new development and for alterations and extensions to existing buildings should clearly show how the proposed development relates to its neighbours in terms of height, scale and massing. Photomontages, spot heights and three dimensional sketches can help demonstrate this.

**C3:** Modern room heights and building regulations mean that new buildings tend to stand higher than original cottages. To mitigate this, on sloping sites in particular, buildings should generally be designed to sit in the landscape rather than be raised above it, in order to minimise visual impact and overlooking of neighbouring properties.

**C4:** Views into and out of the hillside villages from public vantage points are a key element in the character of the conservation areas. The impact of new development on this wider 'villagescape' should be taken into consideration.

**C5:** Extensions to existing properties should not overwhelm or obscure the original building or result in overdevelopment of the site. Differentiation in terms of height or setback can be helpful to distinguish a later addition from an original property. Loss of off-street car parking space should generally be avoided where there is a lack of parking space in the immediate area

**C6:** Contemporary design is acceptable but it should complement and not overwhelm in its form, scale, massing and use of materials within the context of surrounding buildings.

**C7:** Particular attention should be given to the location of natural watercourses and springs which are common in this area. Diversion or blocking of watercourses can cause flooding or other problems for surrounding properties and should be avoided.

### 4.2.2 Materials

**C8:** Natural Cotswold stone is the preferred material for external walls fronting roads and footpaths. Existing local character and materials will be an important consideration. Where stone is used it should be sourced to match the colour of existing stone frontages. Other walling materials, such as reconstituted stone, render and timber cladding may be acceptable, particularly on other elevations, or to match existing materials. Render should be coloured to harmonise and blend with the local palette.

**C9:** Roof materials and pitch should be in keeping with existing and surrounding buildings. Tile and slate have been widely used to replace the original stone tiles. Good quality reproduction stone tiles laid in decreasing courses may be used to match original stone tiles. Pitched roof as opposed to flat roof dormers are usually more in keeping with the local building style. Conservation style or similar small roof lights are preferable where roofs are visible from the road. Stainless steel and concrete flues should be sited so as not to be visible from the road or flues should be incorporated within masonry stacks.

**C10:** In the Conservation Area, replacement windows and doors should be constructed using traditional materials, detailing and design. UPVC is not generally appropriate. It is important that replacement windows and doors give a similar visual appearance to those in the existing house in terms of overall shape, colour and size of frame.

### 4.2.3 Boundaries

**C11:** Dry stone boundary walls are an important part of the character of the villages and should be retained, repaired and reinstated as appropriate. New boundaries to roads and footpaths should also be built using Cotswold dry stone construction to blend with existing boundaries.



## 5. Outer Village Areas

### 5.1 Key characteristics

Most of the villages have experienced subsequent development outside the conservation areas, some more than others. Village maps show that Chalford Hill and Old Bussage have had the most, particularly Bussage.

The later building in Chalford Hill tends to be alongside routes leading to the central part of the village, such as Middle Hill, Dr Middletons Road and Highfield Way. Small estates such as Down View, Tylers Way and Aston View were built post-war.

Houses can be found from all periods, and most have been built in the Cotswold style in generous plots of land. Brick has been used for one particular terrace near the school.

France Lynch has a few later dwellings built within the Conservation Area, including two rows of bungalows, originally for the elderly. A few infill developments took place in the 1970s in the centre of the village, most noticeably one opposite the church. Bungalows on Highfield Way are outside the Conservation Area.



Due to its mainly Roman Catholic residency over the years, Brownhill has virtually no post-war development, and since it is outside the settlement boundary, no new builds are allowed, unless for agricultural purposes.

Bussage is the village that has most new development on its boundaries. There has been some infill, mainly bungalows built in grounds of bigger properties. The main new build has been built on the upper plateau where the land is relatively flat. This is Manor Village development, as described earlier in this document.

The Vale area has a range of later dwellings, either replacing mills or old buildings associated with the mills. This is evident on the land of Belvedere House and Mill. A small riverside group of terraced houses was built in the 1980s.

The Industrial Heritage Statement of 2008, makes any development in the whole of the Vale subject to strict control.

### 5.2 . Design guidance for development in areas outside the village cores but inside the settlement boundaries.

**C12:** Planning applications for new development and for alterations and extensions to existing buildings should clearly show how the proposed development relates to its neighbours in terms of height, scale and mass.

**C13:** The impact of any new development on the character and setting of an adjoining Conservation Area should be taken into account.

**C14:** The height, scale bulk and massing of buildings should respect their surroundings and not be overbearing or have a material adverse impact on the privacy and amenity of neighbours.

**C15:** The use of materials that reflect those used in surrounding buildings is to be preferred.

**C16:** The Manor Farm development has a cohesive design, style and use of materials. Extensions and new developments should respect and maintain this sense of harmony and cohesion.

**C17:** Extensions to existing properties should not overwhelm or obscure the original building or result in overdevelopment of the site. Materials should be sympathetic to those used in the main building. Loss of off-street car parking space should generally be avoided where there is a lack of parking space in the immediate area.

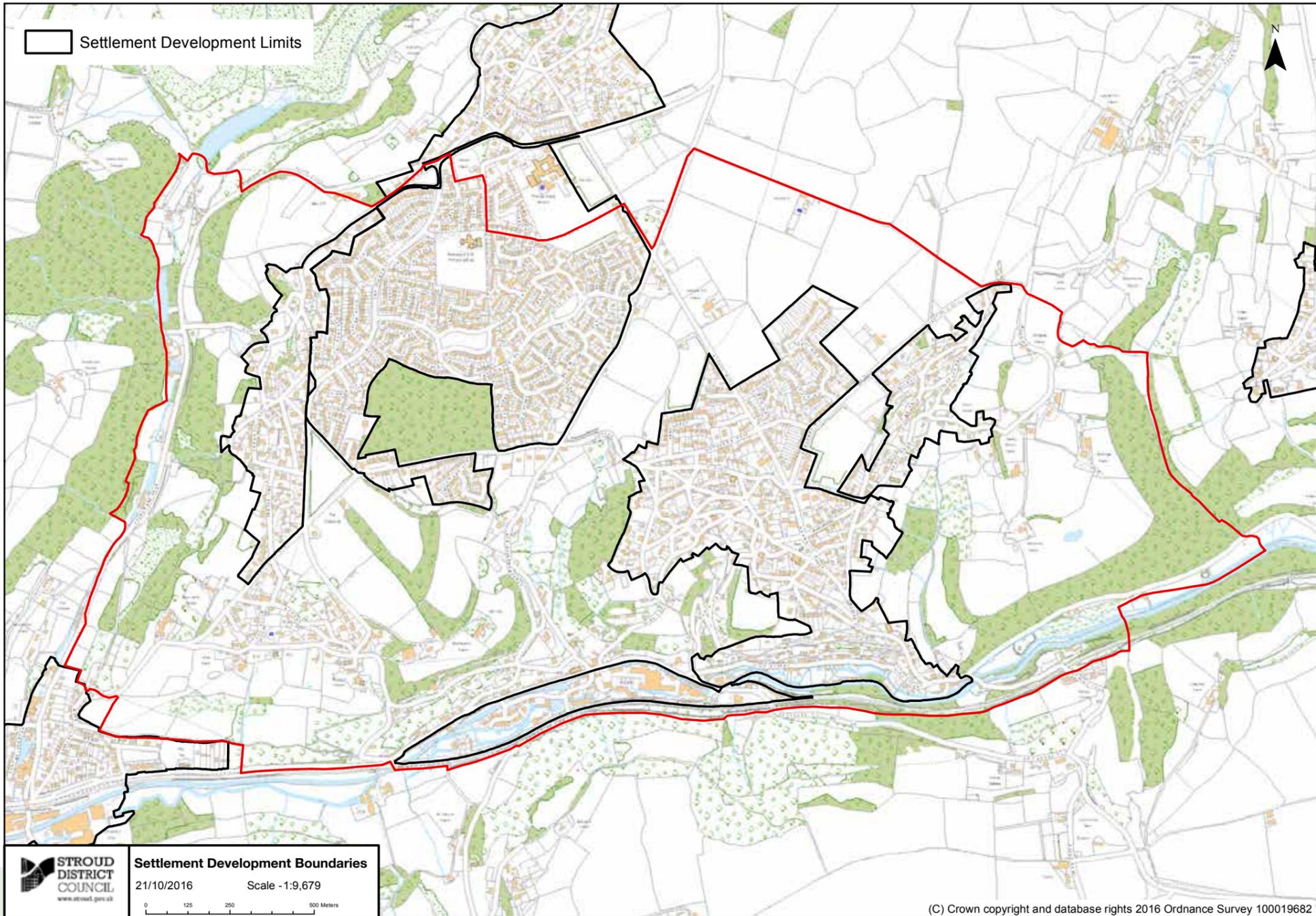
**C18:** Stone boundary walls should be retained or reinstated where possible and a commitment given to ongoing management and maintenance in the design statement.

### 5.3 Design guidance for new development within the curtilage of existing dwellings inside the settlement boundaries

**C19:** Planning permission for new separate dwellings within existing residential plots may be granted according to the following conditions in addition to the design guidance relevant to the location of the proposed site.

- The site must be large enough to allow for adequate private amenity space to be created for each dwelling.
- The development must allow for the minimum number of off-street parking spaces per dwelling as set out in the Local Plan parking standards.

**C20:** The character of the villages, and Conservation Areas in particular, is as much determined by the pattern of space between buildings as the buildings themselves. The setting of the original dwelling within the landscape and street scene should not be adversely affected and the density of projected development should reflect that of the surrounding area.



## 6. Areas Outside the Settlement Boundaries

### 6.1 Landscape characteristics

This is primarily countryside and hillside with isolated dwellings. The landscape assessment undertaken by the AONB divides the Parish into three main areas – Settled Valleys, Escarpment and High Wold. Stroud District Council's Landscape Assessment is only slightly different, locating most of the Parish within a type described as 'Secluded Valleys' and a small area to the north as 'Wold Tops'.

Surveys of the landscape across the Parish were carried out in February 2016 by local residents, again using nationally adapted versions of accepted methodologies. For the purpose of this exercise the Parish was divided into several areas, solely to make the surveying practical. Bringing local survey results and the AONB and District analysis together, the following is a summary description of the Parish landscape.

The five Landscape Areas, shown on the map overleaf are:

- Toadsmoor valley and Blackness
- Old Neighbouring and Chalford Lynch (Chalford Hill)
- Upper Wold area
- Dimmel's Dale
- Old Hills Wood and Avenis Green

#### 6.1.1 Toadsmoor and Blackness

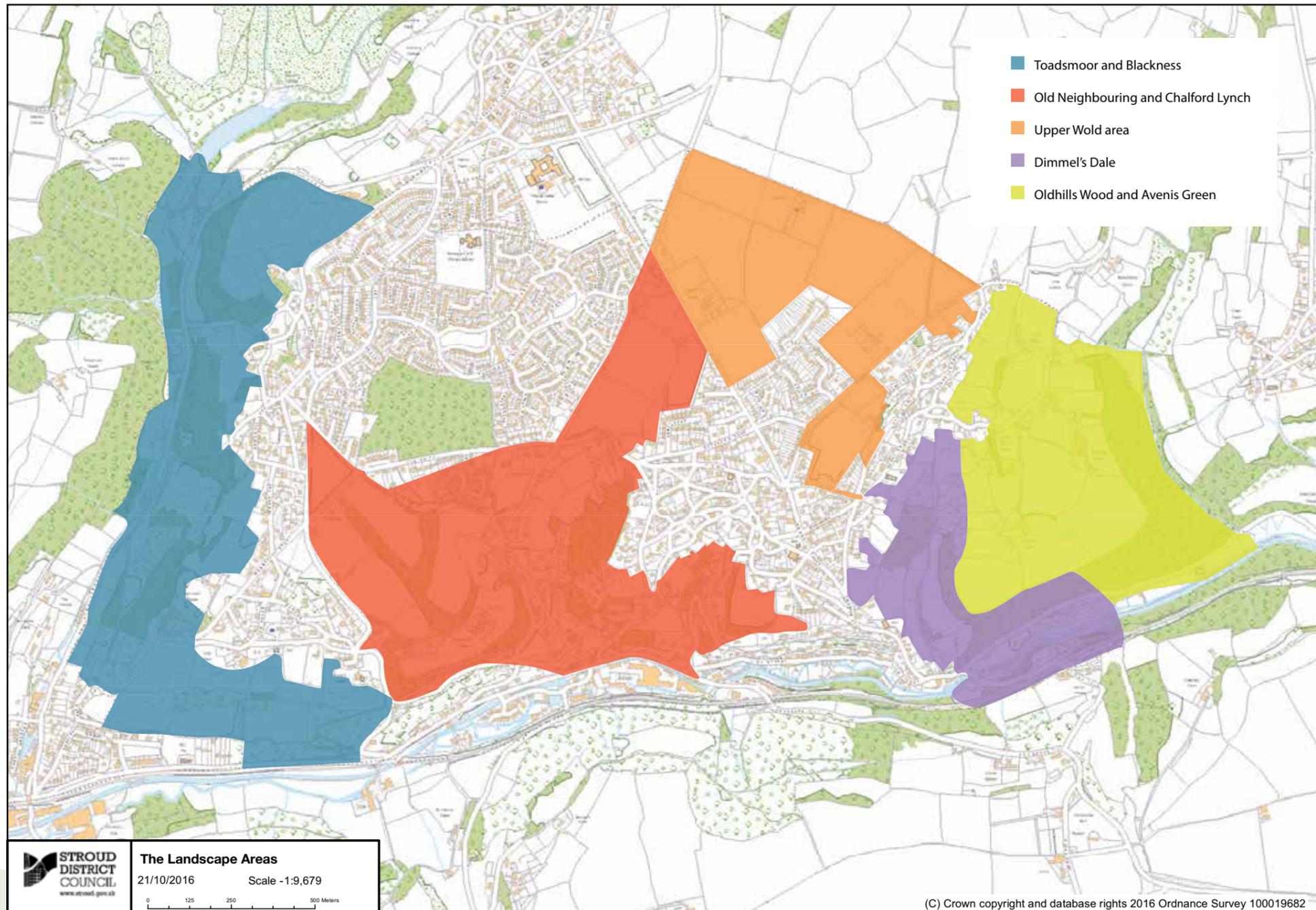
This steep-sided valley area is mostly tree covered, except for some open grassland above Blackness. The only buildings are some cottages alongside Toadsmoor Road and above Blackness. This area is particularly good for views, looking down and across the valley.

#### 6.1.2 Old Neighbouring and Chalford Lynch

This is one of the main uncultivated strips of land that has great importance, providing road access to the parish.

The main access road runs up across the scarp hillside. The land on either side is mainly wooded, as is the land on the far side of this small valley. This wood is classified as Ancient Woodland. In the valley below, rough pasture and sheep-grazed land leads down to a number of large listed dwellings. A stream runs down the centre, entering the Frome in the valley. Higher up this small valley, crossed by the access road, lies more uncultivated grassland. This area is essential to maintain separation of Chalford Hill from Bussage, as well as being an important wildlife corridor.

A number of dwellings are alongside the Old Neighbourhood road, and two listed houses are present in Abnash. Boundaries are mainly of dry stone but apart from property boundaries, are in poor repair. In the higher area hedges have replaced walls.



Chalford Lynch. This wood is classified as Ancient Woodland.

### 6.1.3. Upper Wold area

Gently undulating open farmland is the main land cover. Crops are rotated on a regular basis. Isolated groups of trees can point to small quarry excavation in the past. A few isolated houses, farms and farm buildings are scattered across the area. Boundaries are mainly dry stone walls in bad repair supported by posts and wire.

### 6.1.4 Dimmel's Dale

The small narrow valley leads off from the end of the High Street northwards to France Lynch Church. It is wooded on its eastern slope and scrub grazing and on the western side. Footpaths criss-cross the valley making it popular for walkers.

The lower part includes the Valley Playing Field and the small area of woodland used by bikers, making an interesting rise and fall course!

There is a clutch of large listed houses at the junction of the High Street and Dimmel's Dale, most in large plots of land.

Coppice Hill forms a boundary to this Dimmel's Dale area. Over more recent years there has been considerable development alongside this road. Old properties are present near the top and bottom, but the intervening land has been challenged for development. Open fields drop down to Dimmel's Dale.

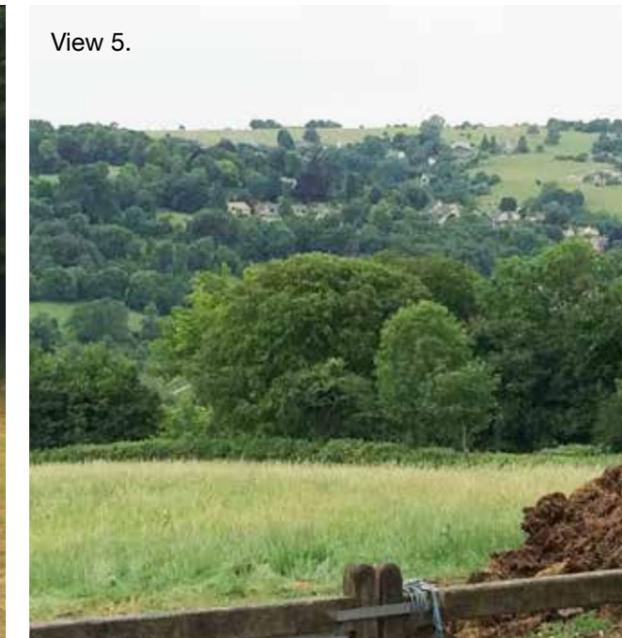
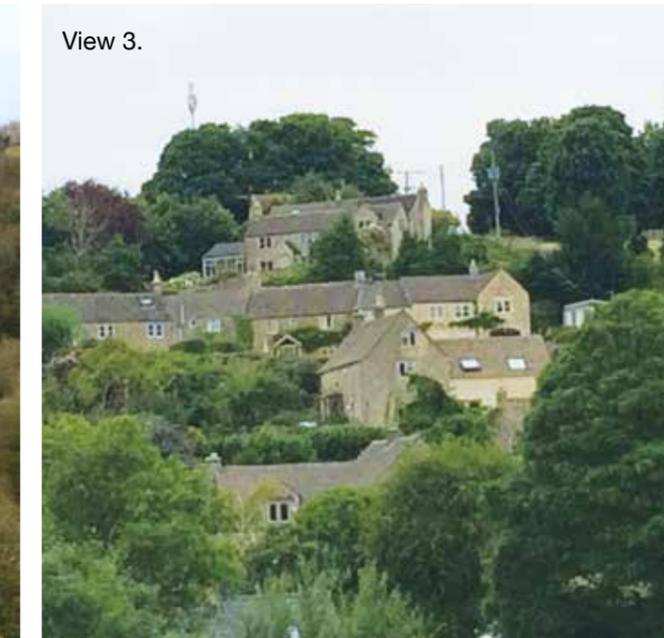
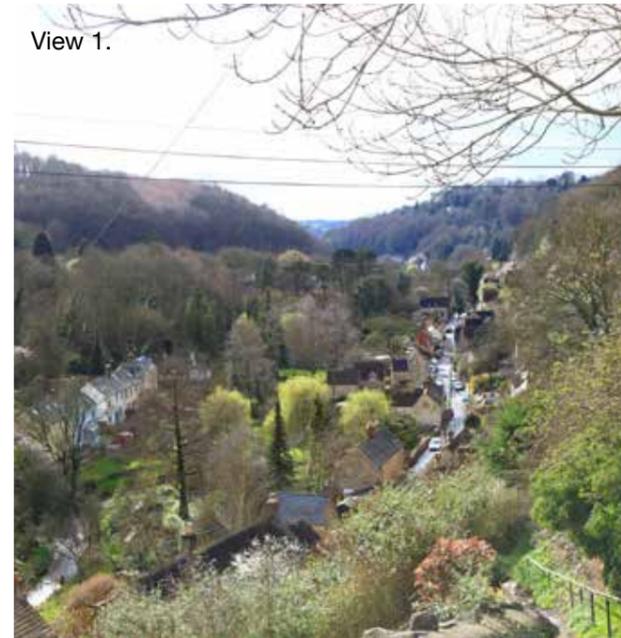
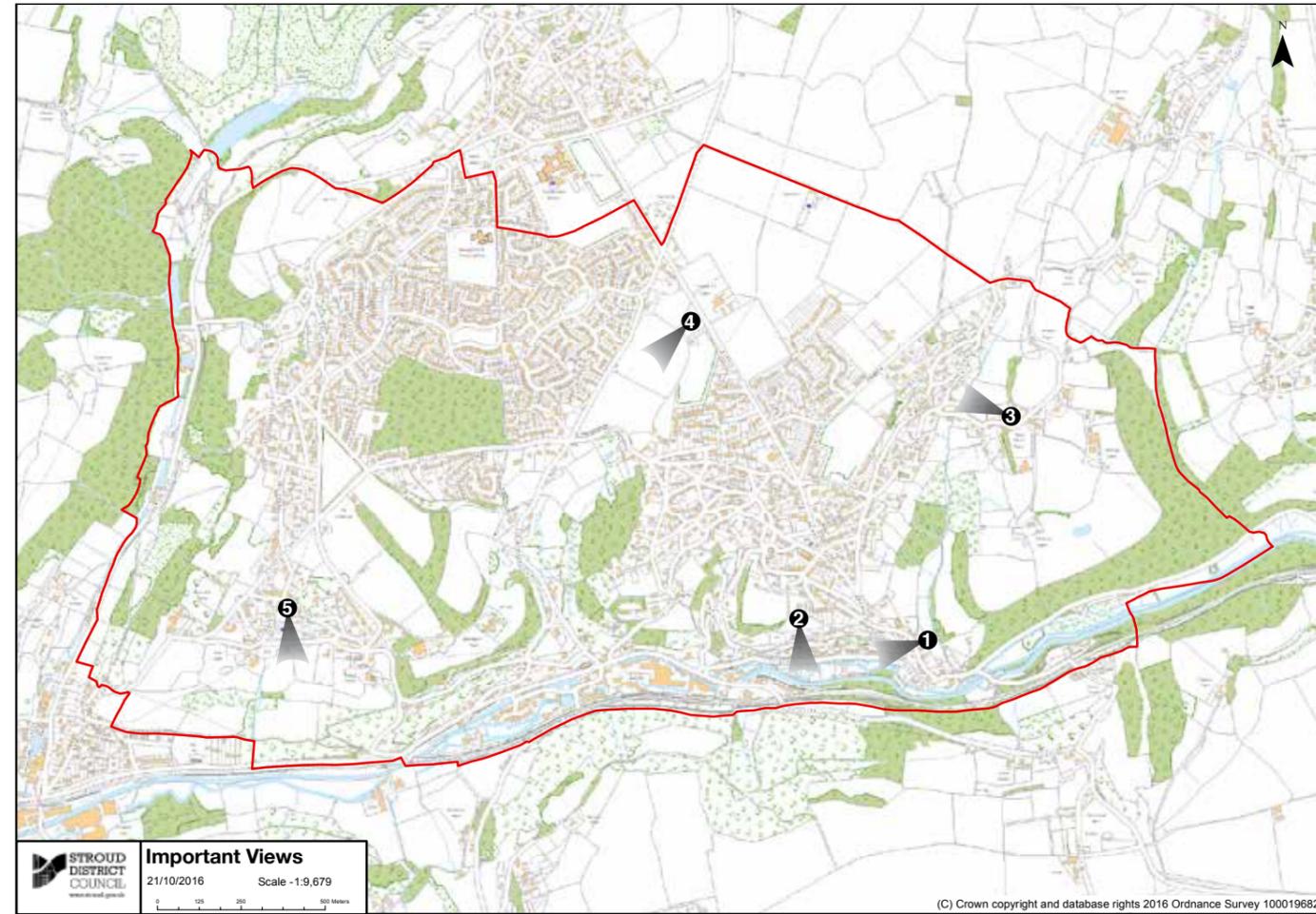
### 6.1.5 Oldhills Wood and Avenis Green

Oldhills Wood is one of the large wooded areas of the parish. It extends from the valley road to the top of the plateau area above France Lynch. All the steep slopes are heavily wooded beech trees. As the ground rises to the plateau, trees give way to pastureland for cattle, sheep and horses. Hedges are the main form of boundaries.

Along the narrow lane in Avenis Green, houses and cottages have been built over a long period. Land bordering Coppice Hill has been continuously built upon to the present day.

### 6.1.6 Views

Due to the topography of Chalford, views across the valleys and over the villages are an essential part of the character of the area. Parishioners, when carrying out surveys, highlighted many important views both out and into the landscape as a whole and to and from the villages. Some key views are highlighted here which will be protected from unsightly and inappropriate development.



**View 1:** From Coppice Hill looking west over the High Street and along the Golden Valley.  
**View 2:** Looking south from various vantage points from the network of footpaths on Rack Hill across the Golden Valley.  
**View 3:** From Avenis, near the Court House, looking across France Lynch Village and the valley bottom.  
**View 4:** From Middle Hill by Middle Hill Farm, looking Southwest through an unbroken stretch of countryside separating the village settlements and an important wildlife corridor.  
**View 5:** From various vantage points in Brownhill looking South across the Golden Valley to Minchinhampton.

## 6.2 Design guidance for development outside the settlement boundaries, countryside and hillside.

**C21:** Subject to the exceptions set out in Local Plan policies, new build will not be allowed in these areas unless it is an extension to or re-build of an existing property.

**C22:** The scale, form and footprint of a replacement building should be of the same size or smaller than the original building, allowing for minor enlargements as set out in Local Plan policy.

**C23:** Extensions to existing properties should not overwhelm or obscure the original building or result in overdevelopment of the site. Loss of off-street car parking space should generally be avoided where there is a lack of parking space in the immediate area.

**C24:** New buildings or alterations should not demonstrably harm the landscape character of the valley when viewed from public vantage points. The design and materials should not detract from the setting of existing or surrounding buildings.



# 7. Delivering High Quality Design

## 7.1 Using the Design Statement

This Design Statement will gain most value if used at the earliest possible stage by potential applicants in developing their designs.

Pre-application engagement is the stage at which all the aspects of local distinctiveness can best be used to shape appropriate designs because of the intricacy and diversity of housing in the Parish.

Whether or not the Statement is used during the evolution of designs, it will be used by Stroud District Councillors and Planning Officers in assessing each application. The Council will also normally require the submission of a Design and Access Statement which, among other things, should clearly demonstrate the appropriateness of the design and its conformity with this Design Statement.

## 7.2 Pre-application community involvement

The National Policy Framework (paragraph 66) states the following:

“Applicants will be expected to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Proposals that can demonstrate this in developing the design of the new development should be looked on more favourably.”

At a District level, the Stroud District Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) encourages pre-application community involvement. It includes some overall principles of good practice, and stresses how open and well-structured working between communities, applicants, developers, the Parish Council and the local authority in advance of planning applications can help to deliver better quality development for all:

“Through planning we identify what changes we need to make for new homes, places to work, transport, leisure and education and where these should be... The community has a vital role to play in this...”

This emphasis on pre-application involvement or engagement has been taken further by Stroud District Council's collaborative production of a district-wide Pre-Application Community Involvement Protocol. The aim of this Protocol is to enable open, agreed and well-structured working between communities, applicants/ developers, local authorities and elected members in advance of planning applications, helping to deliver better quality development for all.

The potential applicant is expected to:

- Contact Stroud District Council and the Parish Council as early as possible.
- Agree the consultation approach.
- Lead and pay for the consultation in

line with the Protocol's principles.

- Prepare a final audit report to submit with the application.

The Parish Council will:

- Provide any potential applicant with a single point of contact. In the first instance this is the Parish Clerk.
- Agree who needs to be consulted and provide help in contacting them.
- Provide any further background information to this Design Statement relevant to a particular site.

The District Council will:

- Ensure that contact has also been made with the Parish.
- Agree the consultation approach.
- Provide information and support as appropriate.
- Use and value the submitted report.

# 8. APPENDICES

## 8.1 References used for defining the Cotswold Vernacular style

- Cotswold Design Code published by Cotswold District Council 2000.
- Traditional Casement Windows Design Guide by Cotswold District Council.
- Keeping it in Style leaflet by Stroud Civic Society 2002.
- Cotswold Stone Homes by Michael Hill and Sally Birch 1994.
- The Cotswold House by Tim Jordan and Lionel Walrond 2014.
- The Vernacular Architecture and Buildings of Stroud and Chalford by Nigel Paterson.

## 8.2 Acknowledgments

**Project Leader:** Chalford Parish Council

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Peter Oakley

**Maps:** Vince Warwick,  
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**Photography:** Paul Lilly, Chair of Chalford  
Parish Council

**Design:** Melanie Wood Design

**Printed by:** Severnprint

## 8.3 Links between Chalford Design Statement Guidelines and other policies

The table on page 39 illustrates how the Design Guidelines relate to policies in the Stroud Local Plan and AONB Management Plan.

Note that all the Design Guidelines are aimed at achieving Stroud Local Plan Core Policy CP4 - Place Making, and also consistent with AONB Management Policy HEP3, recommending the use of design guidance to support conservation of the historic environment.

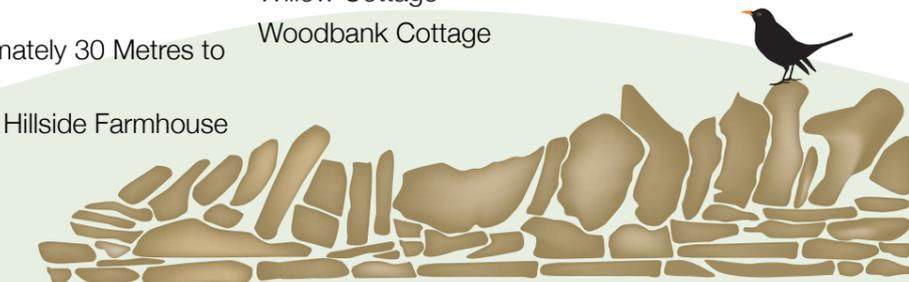
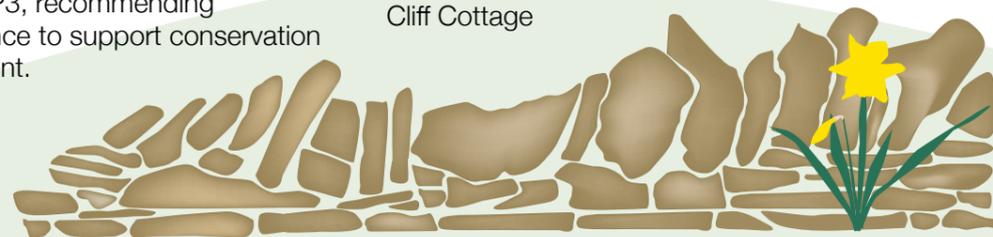
## 8.4 Listed Buildings in Chalford

Abnash House and Retaining Wall  
Alcove Seat Approximately 18 Metres to West of The Corderries  
Baptist Chapel  
Belvedere House  
Belvedere Mill  
Boundary Wall with 2 Gateways to West of Church of St John the Baptist  
Brendan House  
Brookside (Iles's Mill) Including Garden Wall to North  
Brownhill House  
Bubblewell House  
Byways  
Canal Overflow Weir in Garden to West of Canal Round House  
Canal Round House  
Chalford Church Room  
Chalford Grove  
Chalford Place  
Chalford War Memorial  
Chestnut Lodge  
Church of Christ Church with Railings  
Church of St. John the Baptist  
Church of St. Mary of the Angels (Roman Catholic)  
Church of St. Michael and All Angels  
Clayfields Mill  
Cliff Cottage

Clows Bridge  
Coach House Approximately 10 Metres to North of the Weaving Barn  
Coach House Approximately 10m South of Millswood  
Coach House Approximately 30m North East of Skaiteshill House  
Conduit and Vaulted Culvert Approximately 60 Metres to South of Prospect Terrace  
Corner Cottage  
Cotswold Place  
Cuckooland Cottage pathways Prospect Terrace  
Cyprus House  
Dark Lane House  
Duke of York  
Firwood  
France Congregational Church and Hall  
France Corner  
France Cottage  
Franklin and Suffield Cottage  
Gate Piers Immediately South West of the Mount  
Gates, Gate Piers and Boundary Railings to South East of Sevilowes and to East of Dark Lane House  
Gateway Approximately 100 Metres North East of Skaiteshill House  
Glen Cottage  
Green Court  
Grey Cot  
Halstead  
Hillside Farmhouse  
Homestead  
Iles Mill Cottage  
Iles's Mill Lock and Canal Bridge

Laurel Dene  
Little France Corner and Fernleigh  
Marle Hill House  
Merlins Mill  
Millswood  
Mount Cottage  
New Mill at Bliss Mills, Chalford Industrial Estate  
Noah's Ark  
Offices (Building No2) at Chalford Industrial Estate with Boundary Wall  
Old Chapel  
Old Glebe House the Old Vicarage  
Prospect House  
Quail Cottage  
Retaining Wall Including Steps, sundial and Doorway Approximately 40m West of Skaiteshill House  
Ridley Mill Cottage  
Road Bridge over Mill Stream Approximately 50m East of Belvedere Mill  
Saddlers Cottage  
Sevilles House  
Sevilowes  
Skaiteshill House  
Skiveralls House  
Springfield House Hotel  
St Michael's Garth Including Gates and Gate piers  
Stable and Cartshed Approximately 20 Metres to South East of Vine Farmhouse  
Stable and Coachhouse Approximately 30 Metres to North West of Firwood  
Stable and Outbuilding to East of Hillside Farmhouse  
Tankard House  
Tankard Spring House

Terrace Walls and Gazebo to North of Sevilowes  
Thanet House  
The Corderries  
The Corner House  
The Cottage  
The Court House  
The Glen  
The Haven  
The Mount  
The Old Builder's Arms  
The Old House  
The Old Valley Inn  
The Rock House  
The Weaving Barn  
Toadsmoor Mill  
Two Houses Approximately 20m to South West of Quail Cottage  
Upland House Including Boundary Wall with Doorway and Spring Outlet  
Vale House  
Valley Cottage  
Vine Farmhouse  
West Wickham  
Wharf House and Adjacent Workshop  
Wickham Cottage  
Wickham Grange and Wickham House  
Willow Cottage  
Woodbank Cottage



8.5 Design Statement Guidance	Stroud Local Plan Policies	Cotswolds AONB Management Plan Policies
C1	CP8, CP14,HC1,ES10	DTP1,HEP1
C2	HC1,HC8,ES10	
C3	CP14,HC1,ES10	
C4	CP14,ES7	LP1,DTP1,HEP1
C5	HC8,ES10	HEP1
C6	HC1,HC8,ES10	DTP1,HEP1
C7	CP14,ES3,ES4	
C8	HC1,HC8,ES10	DTP1,HEP1
C9	HC1,HC8,ES10	DTP1,HEP1
C10	HC1,ES10	DTP1,HEP1
C11	CP14,ES10	DTP1,HEP1
C12	HC1,HC8	
C13	HC1,HC8	DTP1
C14	HC1,HC8.CP14	DTP1
C15	HC1,HC8	
C16	HC1,HC8	
C17	HC8	
C18	CP14	DTP1
C19	CP14,HC1	
C20	CP14,HC1,	DTP1,HEP1
C21	CP15,HP4	LP1,BP1
C22	HC5	
C23	HC8	
C24	CP14,HC8,ES7	DTP1,HEP1

## 8.6 Conservation Area Maps

