

- CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT -

# CONSERVATION AREA NO. 1

## WOTTON UNDER EDGE



*Wotton-under-Edge is an attractive and historic small market town, with little set-piece architecture, but a fine heritage of vernacular buildings of the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.*



**STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
[www.stroud.gov.uk](http://www.stroud.gov.uk)

ADOPTED NOVEMBER 1999

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b><i>PART I: INTRODUCTION</i></b>	What is a Conservation Area? Purpose of this document
<b><i>PART II: ANALYSIS</i></b>	History of Wotton-under-Edge Wotton-under-Edge in the Landscape The Character of Wotton-under Edge Sub Areas:  Sub Area I: The Buildings The Open Spaces Sub Area II: The Buildings The Open Spaces  Building Materials and Architecture
<b><i>PART III: STRATEGY</i></b>	A review of the Conservation Area Boundary Proposals for the Preservation and Enhancement Of the Conservation Area Policies and Design Guidance Listed Buildings The Protection of Unlisted Buildings Breaches of Planning Control and Enforcement Proposals affecting Neutral Zones
<b><i>MAPS</i></b>	1. Existing Conservation Area Boundary 2. Proposed Conservation Area Boundary 3. Sub Area I 4. Sub Area II 5. Neutral Zones 6. Listed Buildings – Article 4 Direction Buildings

## PART I: INTRODUCTION



Photo 1 - Looking across the town in a north westerly direction from the Wortley Road towards Jubilee Clump, Wotton Hill on the skyline. This view clearly shows how the town centre steps gently up the hillside.

Wotton-under-Edge was first designated as a Conservation Area in August 1972, and this was extended in 1988.

### WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA?

The legal definition of a Conservation Area is set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (hereinafter called the Act), as being:

*“an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”*

Conservation Areas are primarily concerned with the built environment. They are not appropriate as a means of protecting landscape features except where they form an integral part of the historic built environment.

This statement has been prepared by the Conservation Section of the Directorate of Development and Leisure, Stroud District Council, in close collaboration with Wotton-under-Edge Town Council. A draft was circulated at a public meeting held in the town on 24 August 1999, and relevant comments and suggestions have been taken into account in this final published version. The statement was adopted by Stroud District Council as supplementary planning guidance on 16 November 1999.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the most recent versions of the Stroud District Local Plan, the Gloucestershire County Structure Plan, and national planning policy guidance, especially Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 “Planning and the Historic Environment”.

## PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The Act requires Planning Authorities to review their Conservation Areas from time to time. This is the main function of this document. Within Stroud District there are 42 Conservation Areas, some of which were first designated 27 years ago, and the approach to designating Conservation Areas has changed greatly in this time.

Firstly, Planning Authorities are now required, in carrying out their planning functions to, “pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area” (Section 72 of the Act).

Secondly, Planning Authorities should publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their Conservation Areas (Section 71 of the Act).

In this review we will look at the existing Conservation Area and the land immediately adjacent to it to see if it is appropriate to amend the boundaries of the Conservation Area.

We then aim to identify what makes up the “special interest” of the area and to analyse and define its “character and appearance”. This will

provide a firm basis for planning decisions within the Conservation Area, based on Development Plan policies.

It also provides the groundwork for the preparation of policies and proposals intended for the preservation or enhancement of the area, such policies being aimed at specific sites within the Conservation Area, or more general guidance relevant to the whole Conservation Area, such as the use of appropriate materials.

Normally some minor changes to houses do not need planning permission (this is known as “permitted development”). Some of these minor changes could harm the special character of the Area. Local Authorities have the ability to remove certain permitted development rights from properties, where it can be shown that such changes might harm the Conservation Area. This is known as an Article 4 Direction. Such a Direction was made in the Wotton-under-Edge Conservation Area in April 1993, and it remains in force today. It applies to certain small scale development on selected buildings. The details of this Direction are included in Part III, and the affected properties are shown on Map 6.

## PART II: ANALYSIS

### HISTORY OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE

There is evidence of a settlement at Wotton-under-Edge as far back as the Roman period. This involved finds in Tyley Bottom, where a spoon has been recovered, and near Symonds Hall where pieces of a mosaic have been found. An important Roman Villa has been excavated at Wortley - it is also widely thought that the Old London Road is Roman in its foundation.

The first recorded appearance of the town is in AD 940 in the form of a Saxon Royal Charter in which King Edmund of Wessex leases to Edrick four hides of land in Wudetun. The name Wudetun meaning, the enclosure, homestead or village (tun) in or near the wood (wude). It is also known that Wudetun had a church at this time.

The next recorded entry follows the Norman invasion. The hamlet of Wotton is named in the Domesday Book of 1086 being called Vutune, one of the 24 dependencies of the Royal Manor of Berkeley, ruled by the Earls of Berkeley.

The Berkeleys continued to rule the manor throughout the Mediaeval period and by 1243 Thomas Berkeley had built a manor house near the church. The gatehouse stood at the entrance to the road now known as Manor Lane. His widow Jone de Somery secured confirmation of the manor as part of her dower and she subsequently became one of the most important people in influencing the development of the town.

In 1252 Jone obtained a Royal Licence from King Henry III for herself, her son Maurice and his heirs to have a market in Wotton every Friday and an annual fair on the Eve, Day and Morrow of the Feast of Exaltation of the Holy Cross (11th September). With the profits of the market and fair, the market house and place were founded.

In 1253 Jone granted a charter which resulted in a borough being set up beside the old settlement around the Church. A small borough was

already in existence having been established in the reign of King John, and Jone continued and extended on this.

The establishment of the borough meant that its inhabitants were able to earn their living in industry or commerce, free from the obligation of working on the Lords's estate. Instead they paid rent for a burgage plot on which their homes and industries were erected.

Each of Jone's burgage plots were of approximately one third of an acre "to hold according to the customs and usages of Tetbury" which in turn were based on the Norman town of Breteuil. Each burgess paid an annual rent of 12 pence and had a right to pasture a horse and a cow on one of the three fields of the manor after Michelmas Day, by which time the crops had been harvested.

The Berkeleys retained control of the area of Synwell, Church and Manor House and limited the grant of land to undeveloped areas. As a result Wotton expanded beyond Old Town with new streets being built to the south. The new town was built on an early grid iron pattern with a High Street running east to west, dropping gently eastward down to the Tiley Stream or Dyers Brook. Parallel to this is the Old Town connected to the High Street by two cross streets. Four cross streets leave the High Street southward, one leading to The Chipping. The better houses were constructed in the High Street with smaller buildings lining the side streets. The streets at this time were lined by timber framed houses with either thatch or Cotswold stone tile roofs. Though these buildings still largely exist most have been gentrified, especially in the Georgian period, and now display significantly altered facades.

The rise of Wotton from a small hamlet to a borough in the 13th century was largely as a result of Jone de Somery and her creation of the burgages which attracted merchant families from Bristol and Gloucester, and to the growth of the

wool trade. Weaving and cloth making were the main occupations of the inhabitants of Wotton from the 13th century onwards, with the work being carried out in the cottage homes. By the 17th century half of the population were employed in the cloth trade.

The appearance of Wotton today is essentially a creation of the 18th century. Change came to the Tudor town as an expanding woollen industry brought wealth. In 1763 the Earl of Berkeley was still the proprietor of 151 plots, and 112 were owned by individuals. The Tolsey and 31 other properties in the Market Square and the Green Chipping belonged to the town on a perpetual lease granted by Lord Berkeley in 1659. The Church Glebe consisted of 12 plots, which was established by Katharine Lady Berkeley in 1384, 26 belonged to the Grammar School and 7 belonged to the Crown.

The 1763 Borough and Terrier map of Wotton-under-Edge shows a town of some 60 acres containing the High Street, Sow Lane, The Chepping or Market Place, Chepinge Lane, Bradley Street, Haw Street, Church Lane, Sym Lane and other undeveloped land. It does not include the Green Chipping.

Sow Lane no longer exists but was probably in the area of open land in Old Town accessed by Church Street. An 1871 reference to the 'Pig Park' near Church Street suggests that the communal sties were in this area.

Good communications were severely lacking before the advent of the turnpike roads. In 1726 a House of Commons Committee recorded that the roads were so narrow that two horsemen could not pass. A subsequent Act of Parliament gave power to create toll roads between Bristol and Gloucester - the Roman highway - and the same Act authorised turnpikes linking Wotton to Bristol, Gloucester, Tetbury and Bath. By 1763 these had been built.

*Photo 2 – The Hugh Perry Almshouses in Church Street, date from 1638. The stone dressings to the windows stand proud of the wall face, suggesting that this was originally a rendered building.*

However, most of the transport was still by packhorse. In Haw Street the Pack Horse Inn stood on the corner of the entrance to Stokes Bakery, formerly called Packhorse Lane. The 1763 map shows extensive buildings, probably stables, behind the Inn.

In 1826 the road from Haw Street to Bushford Bridge and Charfield was constructed with a toll gate at the junction to Howley Road. The branch road to Kingswood was also constructed at this time.

In 1840 a new road was constructed up Rushmire Hill leading out of Old Town, and past the Church. Where it linked with the Old London Road a tollhouse was erected. The road to Wortley and Alderley was improved and a turnpike constructed at Tor Hill. However, Lisleway was never turnpiked, being too rough and steep.

Notable benefactors to the town, other than Katharine Lady Berkeley, include Hugh Perry, a merchant and Alderman of the City of London who bequeathed £300 for the building of the Church Street Almshouses in the early 17th century. The Hugh Perry Almshouses complete with their own chapel in the courtyard, were subsequently constructed in 1638 and extended around 1720.



Further almshouses were constructed in 1837 by Miss Ann Bearpacker and in 1887 in memory of Rowland Hill of Tabernacle Pitch. The Reverend Rowland Hill was responsible for the religious revival in the 18th century when he established the Tabernacle Church.

The cloth industry eventually became a factory or mill based enterprise with the onset of the industrial revolution. New Mill, owned by the Austin family, employed 195 people in 1801, yet by 1825, competition from abroad and Yorkshire led to the decline and eventual closure of many Gloucestershire Mills. Between 1831 and 1841 the population of the town fell by 780 people as a direct consequence of the decline in the industry.

During the 19th century industries were developed which took over from the cloth trade. Many survive today and still employ large numbers of the local population.

These industries include Engineering, Printing and many commercial and retail enterprises. A notable resident of this period was Sir Isaac Pitman who, in 1834 invented shorthand (known as phonography). His former residence can be found in Orchard Street, and is still called Pitman House.

Today the overriding character of a working town still exists although many commuters also reside in the town due to its close proximity to Bristol, Gloucester and the Nuclear Power Station sites along the Severn Estuary.



*Photo 3 – Pitman House in Orchard Street, the home of Sir Isaac Pitman, the inventor of shorthand. A good example of an early C19 modest town house.*

## WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE IN THE LANDSCAPE

The town of Wotton-under-Edge is, as its name suggests, a settlement under the edge of the Cotswold Hills. Valleys and coombes cut into the western facing scarp slope of the Cotswold Hills, and the town sits partly in a coombe, and partly on a shelf on the lower scarp overlooking the Severn Vale.

The plateau on which most of the historic central part of the town sits, rises gently from east to west from around 65 metres to 120 metres. The Dyers Brook or Tyley Stream, rises in the hills to the north west of the town, flowing south westwards through Coombe and Holywell, turning roughly north – south through the Dyers Brook part of the town, before turning south westwards towards Kingswood.

The western scarp edge of the hills closely surrounds the town on its northern and eastern sides, sheltering the town from the colder winter winds. Conversely, the plateau area is open to the south and west allowing rain bearing winds

that track up the Severn Vale an unobstructed access to the town.

On many of the main upland approach roads, especially from the north, the town is well hidden behind and below the scarp edge. Glimpses of the town only occur at quite close quarters, such as from the bottom of Lisleway Hill and from the viewpoint on the Old London Road. From the North Nibley Road, (B4060), the houses start on the right hand side only, giving the appearance of a village street, and it is not until the road turns round the southern end of Wotton Hill at the end of London Road, that a panorama over much of the town opens up. Coming into the town from the Rushmire direction along the B4058 there are again glimpses of the sporadic settlement in the Coombe Valley and this continues with houses dotted amongst the green fields. It is not until Adeys Lane is reached that a more urban feel starts with buildings continuously on both sides of the road.

*Photo 4 – The Tabernacle Chapel, Tabernacle Pitch dates from 1850. This former Congregational Chapel, now an Auction Rooms, is a key “landmark” building featuring prominently in views across the town*





The approaches on the southern side continue to create the impression of a secret town, out of sight. Only the road from Hillesley offers more panoramic distant views of the town. From the very edge of the town, Wotton Hill with its clump of pine trees is conspicuous to the left, with the old chapel at Tabernacle Pitch prominent above the surrounding buildings. A little nearer to the town, there is a glimpse of the Church tower, and the development spreading up the Coombe Valley with its encircling ring of wooded hills.

The roads from Charfield and Kingswood combine just outside the town and from here, the only impression of a settlement is the fire tower. Only when the brow of the hill is reached does the town appear, but even from here, the view is quite tightly constrained along the length of Haw Street. Again the Chapel at Tabernacle Pitch and the wooded hills form a backdrop to this view. From the Kingswood Road, the entrance to the Katharine Lady Berkeley School offers good views, with the houses of Merlin Haven dotted along the edge of the hill and Wotton Hill on the skyline. A low hill obscures much of the town centre although the newer housing off the Wortley Road is visible to the east, where the gentler slopes just above the stream have been built on.



*Photo 5 – Looking north along Church Street with the hills rising to the Old London Road in the background*



*Photo 6 – Looking east from the Rowland Hill Almshouses on Tabernacle Pitch*

## THE CHARACTER OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE

Wotton-under-Edge is an important local centre in the southern part of Gloucestershire and Stroud District. Historically it was a market town, and although the market no longer operates, it has developed into a small country town (population around 5,500), with a wide range of community facilities serving not only the town, but also the surrounding rural area. These facilities include a good range of shops, post offices, local health care, library, primary and secondary level schools, cinema, swimming pool, civic centre, heritage centre, public houses and cafés.

Modern industries have replaced the traditional woollen trade as sources of employment. There are two major employers, a printing company and a company manufacturing specialist measuring equipment. Smaller industrial estates exist at Tabernacle Road, and Water Lane and, as is usual in a small town, there is employment in services such as estate agents, solicitors and of course the wide range of shops.

Wotton is primarily a residential town, surrounded outside the Conservation Area by various twentieth century estates. Within the historic town centre, there are still some houses mixed amongst the shops, and the town provides many flats above the shops. Wotton is however to some extent a dormitory town, a popular commuter centre for the Bristol area and to a certain extent, the Stroud area and Gloucester.

The town is not especially important as a communications centre. The M5 motorway and the Bristol - Gloucester railway line pass the town by, several kilometres to the west. No Class 'A' roads approach the town, although several 'B' roads converge on Gloucester Street/Old Town. These are local roads connecting the small towns of Southern Gloucestershire.



*Photo 7 – High Street, looking east into Long Street. The roads widen here into one of the former Market sites for the town.*

## SUB-AREAS

The built environment of the Conservation Area can be very simply divided into two main elements, namely:-

1. the buildings themselves.
2. the spaces adjacent to and surrounding the buildings.

The next part of this document uses these two simple headings to examine what makes up the “special architectural and historic interest” of the area.

### 1. THE BUILDINGS

Whilst some buildings may be individually important in a Conservation Area, it is the relationship of buildings one to another, their layout in relation to the streets and footpaths, and their density which so often define the character of the area. The architectural style and materials of the buildings will be important factors in determining what makes the areas “special”.

### 2. THE SPACES

The land around buildings falls into a variety of types including roads, streets, footpaths, gardens, parks, fields, watercourses - the list is almost infinite. Widths and alignments differ, some contain green features such as trees and grass, some are public and some are private spaces.

Within a Conservation Area, it is sometimes possible to identify parts of the Area which differ in character. Density of buildings, their relationship to one another, and to the highways are key factors in defining where one part of the Conservation Area differs from another. Where clear differences do exist, these are identified as sub-areas and the Conservation Area is examined using those sub-areas. The sub areas for the Wotton-under-Edge Conservation Area shown on Maps 3 and 4.

### THE SUB AREAS OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE

Two Sub-Areas can be readily identified within Wotton-under-Edge. These are:-

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Sub Area 1 | This covers the majority of the Conservation Area, being located to the west of a line along Culverhay, School Road, and Dyers Brook. |
| Sub Area 2 | This covers the remainder of the Conservation Area being the land broadly to the north and east of the Culverhay-Dyers Brook line.    |

Perhaps not surprisingly, these sub areas reflect the historical evolution of the town. Sub Area 1 is the planned town of the Middle Ages, whereas Sub Area 2 is the earlier settlement, centred around the Church.

## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE TOWN

### SUB AREA 1: THE BUILDINGS

Over this area the pattern of building creates a strongly urban feel. The buildings directly adjoin one another presenting an almost unbroken frontage to the street. They are usually sited immediately on the back of the footpath or the edge of the highway, with relatively narrow frontages, although they may stretch well back into their plots. Glimpses of the land behind the buildings are rare, being confined to the occasional narrow lane such as Rope Walk, or doors with alleyways under the buildings. Within the town centre, the close-up view from the street is of total built environment, although more distant views to outside the town exist along the streets.

Moving outwards from the centre there are places where the street frontage breaks down such as the upper part of Bradley Street, parts of Gloucester Street and Old Town, where some buildings are set back from the street, but these are the exceptions, rather than the rule in this Sub Area.

Two storey buildings predominate throughout this part of the Conservation Area, although many of the older buildings, measured against modern standards, appear as a storey and a half rather than two storey. In the most central area, particularly Long Street, High Street, Orchard Street, Haw Street and Ludgate Hill, there are many two and a half and three storey buildings, and exceptionally some four and five storey buildings.

The variety in height of buildings is often quite marked especially in Long Street and High Street, with tall three storey buildings standing cheek-by-jowl with modest two storey buildings. The variety of buildings in Long Street/High Street stems not only from the heights of the buildings, but also the orientation of buildings, their basic massing and materials. A number of buildings present themselves gable on to the street, or with cross gables at right angles to a main range and the gables are usually paired. The predominant form is however, buildings with flank walls and roof lines parallel to the street.



*Photo 8 – The junction of High Street and Haw Street. The five storeys of No. 12 High Street on this conspicuous junction site make this a real landmark quality building.*

Further away from the more central area, more humble low scale two storey cottages either as informal terraces or groups are to be found in Bear Street, Bradley Street, Old Town and Culverhay. However, even in the more outlying parts of the area, the scale of buildings is sometimes interrupted by the intervention of larger three storey houses. Some short terraces of three storey houses exist in Haw Street, Orchard Street, Gloucester Street and Symn Lane.

Houses are the predominant building type in this sub-area. In the central part of the town, in High Street, Long Street and Market Street and part of Church Street, houses have living accommodation above. The problem of vacant space above shops seems to be virtually unknown in Wotton, the flats over the shops being a popular place to live. Mixed amongst the shops are the usual collection of public houses, small cafés and houses converted to offices. There are two garages off Gloucester Street and a large industrial concern off Old Town, and the Bakery on the site of the Packhorse Inn in Haw Street. Two very distinctive (and quite differently styled) groups of almshouses make significant contributions to the streetscape of Church Street and Tabernacle Pitch. There are three Chapels, a Church and one former Chapel (now an Auction House), and a junior school in this Sub-Area, although the school is about to re-locate to a site outside the Conservation Area. The Church is the Roman Catholic Church in the converted engine room of the Old Town (Steam) Mill.



*Photo 9 – Bear Street, looking towards Haw Street. An area with a more unified approach to the size, shape, and height of buildings, compared with the variety of Long Street and High Street.*



*Photo 10 – Rowland Hill Almshouses, Tabernacle Pitch. One of three very fine groups of almshouses in the town, these late C19 buildings, whilst using traditional Wotton materials of timber framing and render, have an appearance almost akin to seaside chalets!*

## SUB AREA 1: THE SPACES

In this sub area, there are just two types of open space, namely the streets, and the private land and gardens associated with the buildings. This is the planned town of the Middle Ages and the street pattern has a regular almost grid-iron character. Gloucester Street/Old Town, Long Street/Bradley Street and Symn Lane/Merlin Haven run roughly East-West and Church Street, Market Street, Haw Street, Bear Street and Orchard Street run roughly North-South. All the streets are relatively straight, and any changes in direction are slight and subtle. Consequently, long views are to be had along the lengths of road particularly those running east west. In the main, the streets are narrow, being no wider than the heights of the buildings fronting them. There are however some local widenings of the streets, the most notable being the High Street, Market Street in front of the Town Hall and the Star Inn, and Old Town around the War Memorial. The latter two are former market sites within the town, although the War Memorial may simply be a former village green.



*Photo 11 – Town Hall. This C17 building underwent major reconstruction in 1872. It was formerly an open sided market hall beneath an upper floor town hall. The open sides have now been fully enclosed, but the originally freestanding columns are still clearly visible.*



*Photo 12 – the War Memorial and No.1 Old Town – Edbrooke House. An imposing mid C18 house, with a strong formal composition. The parapet cornice with hipped roof behind is typical of the larger Georgian houses in the town.*

The Chipping, historically known as The Green Chipping, is the only large publicly accessed space in this sub area. It is believed to have been created as a Market site when the two other sites were felt to be too small. Today it is not green, but grey and liberally splashed with the shiny metal of cars; a busy car park for the town centre. On its western edge a token area of grass remains and the space is edged with several large old buildings. On its southern edge is arguably one of the finest groups of C18 buildings in the town - a terrace of three relatively humble houses, with a sense of unity in their architectural decoration, especially the broken pediment door heads. With the exception of Well House all the surrounding buildings are low in scale, allowing views out of the surrounding hills, especially to the north and east. Even when filled with cars, there is a feeling of space here, that is not present anywhere else in this sub area.

From the north east corner of the Chipping running roughly North-South is Rope Walk, a pedestrian footpath through to Long Street. The path narrows as it approaches Long Street becoming tightly hemmed in by buildings before diving under them to suddenly emerge on the footpath on the south side of Long Street. Although this is the only public right of way of this type, several other alleyways under the buildings exist in Long Street.

In Old Town, a broad raised pavement on the south side of the street acts as a foreground to an informal row of houses. With many properties set back within gardens on the north side, Old Town has a more spacious feel than any other continuous length of street in the Conservation Area.

*Photo 14 – Old Town, looking towards the junction with Bear Street. The raised pavement on the south side of the road creates a more open feel to this part of the town.*



*Photo 13 – No. 9 The Chipping – the central house in an informal terrace of three, dating from the early C18. The render has recently been limewashed, the traditional finish for rendered buildings. This group is vital to the visual enclosure of The Chipping*



The principal factor defining the character of the non public spaces around the buildings is the burgage plots to the north and south of Long Street. They stretch back a considerable distance from the street and are usually narrow, reflecting the width of the building fronting the street. Collectively they form long parallel strips of land, usually separated by garden walls. Their form is not always visible to the eye but is immediately apparent from the maps of the area. Their similarity is a strong defining characteristic of the town. Many survive still as private gardens, although many have become rear service yards and car parking for the shops. In some areas, the boundaries between individual plots have been lost, especially where 20th century development has intervened in the historic plan form.

Many of the gardens in this part of the Conservation Area are well hidden behind the buildings which directly adjoin the streets. Front gardens are rare, confined to a few in Old Town and Bradley Street. Gaps between the buildings become more common further away from the central area immediately round Long Street, affording glimpses into the private spaces. A good impression of the mix of buildings, and the spaces around them, can be had from the viewpoint on the Old London Road.

## SUB AREA 2: THE BUILDINGS

The pattern and density of buildings here is more irregular than is found in the town centre with a higher proportion of large gardens and other open spaces. Although the general alignment of the buildings still accords with the historic road layout, here are a greater number of exceptions to this rule, with a larger number of broken frontages contrasting with the long terraced rows of Sub Area 1. Terraced houses and closely knit buildings are found only in localised groups and larger buildings in more extensive grounds are found in between. The buildings in The Cloud, School Road and Coombe Road are either terraced or in closely spaced groups and are brought forward right up to or near to the road. Other buildings such as The Court, The Manor House and the Vicarage are large. These are placed individually and are either set back from or at angles to the road. These buildings are normally within more generous grounds. Most are found near the church corresponding with the oldest part of the settlement, the layout of which has its foundations in the Mediaeval period as the site of the original town inhabited by the Berkeley family, who had their manor house near the church.

The Parish Church of St.Mary the Virgin is arguably the town's most important architectural feature. Its very fine C15 six stage tower dominates in many views of the town, although the earliest parts of the church date from the late 13th century. Typically of many English Parish Churches, St.Mary's has been altered and added to over the centuries with major works in 1658, 1780 and 1848. Like many churches in wool producing areas, the architectural detailing, and workmanship are of the highest quality, and the whole building has considerable presence. Not surprisingly the church is the burial place of members of the Berkeley family, with Thomas IV, the 10th Lord Berkeley and his wife Margaret being buried here.



The Almshouses off Adeys Lane are in two closely sited terraced rows but, because of their large communal gardens have an open and spacious quality about them. Contrastingly in Valley Road the pattern of development is predominantly of smaller individually placed buildings in less generous plots. These are set at various angles to the road.

The buildings were normally built individually hence their plot widths are irregular, although exceptions to this rule do exist where terraces are found. As the buildings are generally well spaced there are frequent glimpses between or behind them giving an open feeling to the area. There are two overriding types of style and scale of the buildings. The small vernacular cottage types and the larger house types are often more elaborate and display much of the Georgian influences of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is due to the prosperity of the town brought about by the woollen industry at this time. As a result of these variations there

are few uniform roof lines as the building heights vary even though they are most commonly two storey.

Almost all of the buildings in this sub-area, with the exception of the church, are houses, although some have been converted from commercial uses.

While the primary construction elements of the buildings such as the walling and roofing materials display a good survival rate, unfortunately the secondary elements such as the doors, windows, guttering and chimneys have not been so lucky. Most of the buildings in this sub area have been affected by the replacement of at least some of these features. Many of the replacements are inappropriate in either their design, materials or finish and this has resulted in a weakening of the traditional character of the conservation area in this sub area.

*Photo 15 – St Mary the Virgin, Culverhay. The six stage tower, with the two upper stages dating from around 1371, is described in Pevsners "The Buildings of England" as "one of the most splendid perpendicular towers in the county".*



## SUB AREA 2: THE SPACES

There is a significant awareness of open space in this sub area which is afforded by a variety of types, both public and private. There are a number of visible private gardens, two significant areas of public open space, being the churchyard and the entrance to Parklands Estate opposite, two wide main roads and the car park in Potters Pond. The haphazard open nature of the area has provided for a large number of long or short views through it which give a spacious feel.

The high level of undeveloped land has allowed for the growth of a large number of trees, these being most densely situated in the Churchyard, although the whole area has sporadic tree cover.

The presence of trees contrasts with the buildings in the area by giving a variation in colour.

Open spaces are also created by the need for pedestrian and vehicular movement. The widest roads are those of Coombe Road and Potters Pond which are the busiest areas for vehicular movement. Potters Pond is also frequently used by lorries servicing the industrial estate. Immediately adjacent to Potters Pond is Church Walk and The Cloud which are almost a total contrast in terms of movement. These roads have either no or very little vehicular movement making them tranquil open spaces in comparison. The churchyard is also a tranquil area with pedestrian access only.

There are a number of landmark features in this area including the Church, and The Court on Culverhay and the Almshouses in Adeys Lane. In Potters Pond the Ancient Ram Inn is a conspicuous building of the late mediaeval period which is brought forward to and actually overhangs the public highway.

Although tarmacadam is a common ground cover in this sub area, its impact is significantly softened by the presence of the public and private open spaces which are generally covered by natural vegetation or other forms of hard surface such as gravel or slabs. The presence of the vegetation helps to give a less urban appearance to the area.

## BUILDING MATERIALS AND ARCHITECTURE

Wotton has a rich mixture of building materials yet has one strong local tradition in walling materials, i.e. the use of rough cast or dashed render, traditionally coloured with lime wash and more recently, modern masonry paints.

The town is sited completely within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, although the boundary runs just to the south and west of the town. This reflects the town's position at the edge of the Severn Vale and the foot of the Cotswold Scarp. Not surprisingly Cotswold limestone is an important building material in the town, both in the walls and roofs. There is however a strong materials influence from the Severn Vale and there are many timber framed buildings particularly in the mediaeval planned town.

Many roofs survive with natural Cotswold Stone slate or tiles, laid in the traditional way, diminishing in size from the eaves of the building to the ridge. The infinite variety of size, shape and texture of the individual slates produces roofs with rich visual interest. In roof coverings the parentage of Vale and Hills is also

evident. Many roofs are covered in mottled red profiled clay tiles from works further south in the Vale around Bristol, Highbridge and Bridgewater. These are of two main profiles; the double Roman and the Pantile. Welsh slate puts in an appearance, especially on the clearly 19th century buildings such as the terraces in Bradley Street and Old Town, reflecting better transport facilities for heavy materials over greater distances. Modern concrete tiles have made their mark as a replacement roof covering throughout the Conservation Area. Interestingly, many of these are the more profiled varieties reflecting the appearance of the Clay Double Romans.

Many timber frame buildings survive in the town centre although not all are immediately apparent. No. 13 Market Street is perhaps the best example with exposed framework dating from around 1500. Other 16th century and 17th century buildings are timber framed, and presumably this was once exposed. Today however the timber frame is hidden behind a rough cast render face, the relative thinness of the walls clearly visible at window reveals. Careful examination of some buildings can reveal ground floor infilling of jettied or projecting upper floors. Traditionally these rendered buildings were lime washed, the wash often incorporating a natural colour pigment. Ochre was a common pigment in Gloucestershire, found naturally with Iron Ore in the Forest of Dean. Today modern masonry paints have largely replaced limewash, and the range of colours is more varied, with blues and greens mixing with the more traditional yellows and brown reds.



*Photo 16 – Market Street looking towards Long Street. Many of the buildings on the west side of the street are timber framed, although some are now rendered over. No. 13, nearest the camera, dates from the C16.*

Stone is usually, locally quarried Oolite Limestone. Ashlar stone is rare in Wotton, confined to the Parish Church and one or two more important houses. Both coursed and squared rubblestone and random rubblestones are widely used, not only in the buildings, but also boundary walls.

There is an important local variation in stone, this being a soft dark brown stone, containing many shell fossils. This stone is called clay rag and was quarried in the Taitshill area of Cam and probably in other places immediately under the scarp. In Stroud District it is used in buildings from Coaley south to Kingswood. It is soft and friable and weathers badly, which may be the original reason for the very high number of rendered buildings in Wotton-under-Edge. The most notable building in this material is No. 31 Long Street, once called Berkeley House.

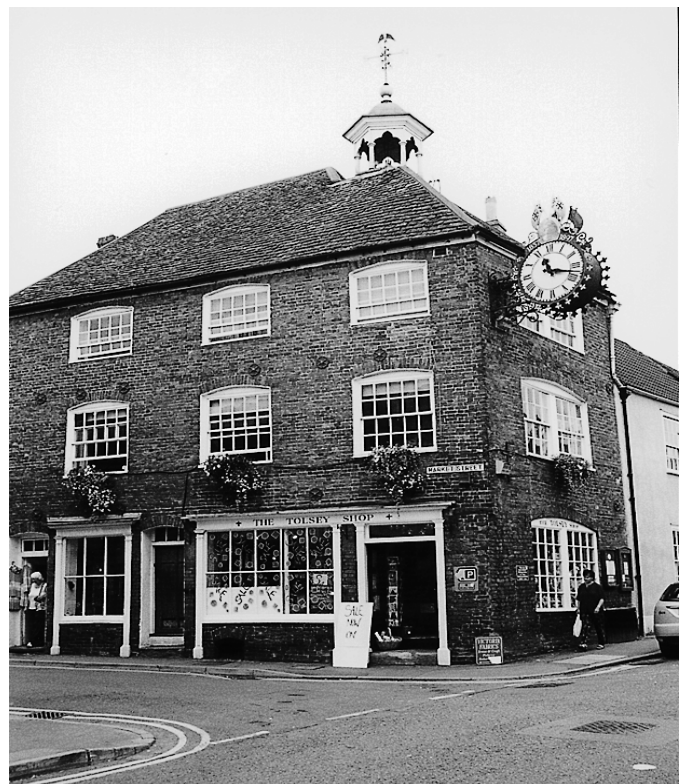
Brick as a principal walling material does not appear until the late 18th century/early 19th century. Notable buildings are the Tolsey on the corner of Market Street, terraces in Orchard Street and a pair of houses in Haw Street. More humble 19th century terraces in brick are to be

found in Old Town. In Bradley Street and Long Street, there are a number of hard dark red smooth faced brick buildings, probably from the Stonehouse works. The earlier brick is more plum red and has a softer more textured face.

The architecture we see in Wotton-under-Edge today has much to do with the materials, and the way fashion evolves the appearance of buildings. Probably the most notable change was from the mediaeval buildings with their strong roots in English vernacular style to the polite architecture of the 18th century onwards, with its roots in classicism of Italy.

The stone mullioned window, which is so characteristic of much of the Cotswolds, scarcely features in Wotton-under-Edge, although No. 30 Long Street is a notable exception. Wotton is a town of the 18th century and 19th century sash window. The rendering over the earlier timber frames goes hand in hand with a period of prosperity, and the development of the new classical style of architecture with its symmetrically disposed sash windows. Buildings were radically altered to bring them in line with prevailing fashion, and render neatly covered a multitude of alterations.

*Photo 17 - The Tolsey, Market Street with its distinctive Jubilee Clock of 1897, and ornamental cupola dates from the C16. The former jettied upper floors are concealed behind C18 brick cladding.*



Some buildings in Wotton have been stripped of their cloaking render exposing poor quality stone, alterations intended to be hidden and leaving stone dressings and timber surrounds standing proud of the wall face.

There are a number of buildings within the Conservation Area which can be defined as landmark buildings. These buildings are generally well known, easily recognisable and have significant historical associations with local people and/or past events. For this reason landmark buildings make an important contribution to the quality of the area and help people to form a personal recognition of the town. Typical landmark buildings are The Tolsey in Market Street, The Ram Inn in Potters Pond, The Tabernacle, Tabernacle Pitch, No. 12 High Street and the Parish Church in Culverhay. Probably the oldest non-ecclesiastical surviving building in Wotton is the former Ram Inn in Potters Pond with deeds dating back to 1350 although the present building with its fine

timber frame jettied gable facing the road is late mediaeval. Of similar date are No. 13 Market Street and the Tolsey at the corner of Market Street and High Street, although this building is now clad with 18<sup>th</sup> century brickwork. In Long Street most of the buildings set gable to the street are timber framed and date from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and 17<sup>th</sup> century. These buildings often have very narrow frontages, but a deep plan form, stretching well back from the street into their burgage plots.

Many of the purpose built 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century houses have dignified formal elevations, with symmetrically arranged doors and windows. Examples such as Edbrooke House in Old Town and Chipping Manor in The Chipping admirably display this characteristic. The hipped roof becomes an important characteristic at this time, often tucked behind a decorative cornice or parapet such as No. 4 The Chipping, or in a less grand manner as a means of turning a corner such as the Falcon Inn on Church Street.



*Photo 18 – The Ram Inn, Potters Pond. Deeds dated 1350 survive, although the present building probably dates from around 1550.*

Doors and doorcases are important decorative features with good examples surviving from the various periods in the development of the town. Late mediaeval plank doors with large nail heads and ornamental strap hinges survive at Nos. 13 and 36 Long Street, and rather incongruously at 13 Ludgate Hill. More decorative door cases and surrounds are a feature of the 18th century and 19th century houses, both in stone and painted timber. Good examples are to be found at 6 Long Street and Nos. 4 and 6 Haw Street. Decorative fan lights over main entrance doors with radiused glazing bars or fan tracery survive well, with numerous examples, especially at Nos. 4 and 6 Long Street and Nos. 4 and 5 The Chipping.

The town centre has a number of good 19th century shop fronts, notably No. 18 Long Street with its fine curved return into Orchard Street. No. 30 Long Street, a lower and more modest solution, and the wrap around the corner solution at the corner of Church Street and Old Town, now unfortunately partly damaged by a car crashing into the building.



*Photo 19 – Ludgate Hill looking towards Dyers Brook. No.13, in the foreground, dates from the late C18 with C19 bays, and rather oddly, a heavy plank and nail head door with strap hinges. Ludgate Hill is the only steeply graded street in the Conservation Area.*



*Photo 20 – An early C18 six panelled door set within a broad frame and underneath a highly elaborate broken pediment with finial and ball, are important decorative features of this building.*

## PART III: STRATEGY

### A REVIEW OF THE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

The character appraisal has revealed that the boundary of the Area would benefit by some changes. These are either by way of additions to it or realignment because of physical changes to the existing boundary, or because the original boundary was indecisive. The Planning Authority proposes to re-define the boundary to incorporate the modifications shown on Map 2. The modifications are detailed as follows:-

#### Additions

1. The area of grass and car park to the rear of the Old Bluecoat School, Culverhay, because of its historical relationship in terms of rear access to the former school and cottages in Culverhay.
2. The derelict mill building at the east end of Manor Lane. This is included as it is an historic building which conforms to the identified character of the area.
3. The school site adjacent to The Chipping. This is a large site requiring enhancement the nature of which will have an impact on the character of the conservation area.

#### Deletions

1. The 20th century development to the south of Gloucester Street will be removed as it has no architectural or historic interest, in Conservation Area terms and is unlikely to be redeveloped in the foreseeable future.
2. The 20th century sheltered housing in Haw Street will be deleted as it does not conform to the character of the conservation area.
3. Land in Clarence Road. Here the original boundary line is no longer definitive due to redevelopment of the area.

### PROPOSALS FOR THE PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

It is the aim of the District Council that the existing character and appearance of Wotton-under-Edge Conservation Area is preserved or enhanced and proposals have been prepared which will enable this to be achieved.

Preservation will be achieved by refusing permission for the demolition alteration of any building or structure where this work would result in damage to the character or appearance of the area. Enhancement will be achieved by the use of development control powers and by design guidance to owners and occupiers in the area.

#### **Policies and Design Guidance**

The designation of the Conservation Area is not intended to prevent all changes. Change can be a positive force especially those which would enhance the character of the area. As a general rule however, it will be expected that works requiring permission, will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The following proposals for preserving or enhancing the character of the Conservation Area will therefore be applied by the Local Planning Authority when applications for works are considered.

1. New buildings, or the extension of existing buildings will be required to reflect and respect the existing pattern of development especially in terms of scale, proportion and massing, and in their relationship to the highways.
2. Materials should accord with the type and mix traditionally used in the area.

3. Proposals to erect fences, railings or walls will only be allowed where they are incorporated in the development in a similar way to those already in existence and where they are sympathetic to the building on the site and its immediate surroundings. The demolition of, or alteration to, walls or fences in or around the historic burgage plots and other private spaces will not normally be permitted.
4. The formation of new openings for windows and doors shall accord with the scale, and style of the building. Replacement windows and doors should be constructed in traditional materials, detailing and design. The use of PVCu will be strongly resisted along with the use of modern stains in contrasting and/or inappropriate colours.
5. Constructional features including, for example, rainwater goods, colour and type of external paints, detailing of the pointing, the number and positioning and rooflights, etc., are significant contributors to the character of buildings. Only traditional repairs to, or replacements of these features should be carried out.
6. The poorly thought out introduction of services to buildings such as satellite dishes, meter boxes and alarm boxes can be harmful to the character of the buildings. Where these fall under Planning Controls the locations of these elements will be carefully controlled.
7. Signs and signage play a vital role in contributing to the character of the town, especially in the commercial centre. Poorly designed signs in inappropriate materials can detract from the character of the area. Hand painted signs on timber remains one of the most adaptable and effective forms of advertising and this will be encouraged. The introduction of plastic signs is normally considered to be inappropriate.
8. Lighting units for advertising need to be designed to ensure that they are not obtrusive and both respect the building in terms of siting and colour. Internally illuminated signs will rarely be acceptable.
9. Traditional hanging signs make an important visual contribution to the character of the area, but these also need to be carefully designed and sensitively located on the building.

### LISTED BUILDINGS

At present there are some 189 buildings (not including monuments) within the Wotton-under-Edge Conservation Area which have been listed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport as being buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Once a building has been listed, consent from the Local Planning Authority is required for any works of demolition, alteration or extension which would affect its character. Any changes to these buildings should also be considered in relation to the effect they would have on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The entire building is listed and controls apply to all works, both internal and external and whether or not a particular feature is specifically mentioned in the list description. Consent is also required where routine repairs would involve alterations and consent may be required for the painting or repainting of the exterior or interior of a listed building.

Additionally the curtilage of a listed building (which is normally considered to be the land, buildings and structures which go with and are subordinate to, the principal building and would normally be conveyed as a single holding, or may have a historical association), are also considered to be part of the listed building. For example, the curtilage of a town house would normally include any later workshops or wash houses and perimeter wall or fence of the garden. Any proposals to alter curtilage features would be subject to prior consent from the Local Planning Authority.



## TREES

Trees contribute significantly to the character and quality of the landscape. Prior to carrying out any works to a tree which grows in a Conservation Area, except in certain circumstances, 6 weeks written notice of the proposed works must be given to the Local Planning Authority. This is to enable the Local Planning Authority to protect the tree with a Tree Preservation Order if appropriate in the circumstances. This restriction does not apply to trees which have a trunk diameter of less than 7.5cms measured at 1.3m above ground level.

## THE PROTECTION OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS

There are a number of unlisted buildings and structures in the Conservation Area which are important contributors to its character and appearance. The additional controls brought about by the designation of the Conservation Area cannot sufficiently prevent many changes to these buildings and structures. If unchecked, a successive number of such changes could damage the character of the Conservation Area.

For this reason a Direction was issued by the Secretary of State on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1993 which enables the Local Planning Authority to apply controls to works of alteration to dwellings that were previously allowed through the use of Permitted Development Rights. These are set out by the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) – hereinafter called “the Order. The Direction is known as an Article 4 Direction. The development to be controlled includes:

### Development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse

Class A	The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse.
Class B	The enlargement of a dwellinghouse consisting of an addition or alteration to its roof.
Class C	Any other alteration to the roof of a dwellinghouse.
Class D	The erection or construction of a porch outside any external door of a dwellinghouse.
Class H	The installation, alteration or replacement of a satellite antenna on a dwellinghouse or within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse.

The above five classes being development comprised within Part 1, Classes A, B, C, D and H referred to in Schedule 2 to the said Order and not being development comprised within any other part. Any works which fall into the above categories will need Planning Permission.

#### Minor operations:

Class A	The erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure.
Class C	The painting of the exterior of any building or work.

The above two classes being development comprised within Part 2, Classes A and C referred to in Schedule 2 to the said Order and not being development comprised within any other part. Any works which fall into the above categories will need Planning Permission.

The schedule of properties included in the Order appear overleaf on Page 24.

A schedule of properties included in the Direction is as follows:

	<b><u>Bear Street</u></b>	
Bear Street Garage 4-5		6a 7-8
	<b><u>Bradley Street</u></b>	
1	27-29	14
7	31-53	20-36
Wotton United Church	57	
	<b><u>The Chipping</u></b>	
6-7		
	<b><u>Church Street</u></b>	
5-7	11	12
9	13-15	14
11	19	16
	<b><u>The Cloud</u></b>	
1-3		Church Cottage
Church Lodge		
	<b><u>Coombe Road</u></b>	
3	9	
	<b><u>Culverhay</u></b>	
1-5		
	<b><u>Dyers Brook</u></b>	
1		
	<b><u>Gloucester Street</u></b>	
23-25		29a-41
	<b><u>Haw Street</u></b>	
12-14		27
	<b><u>High Street</u></b>	
9-13		
	<b><u>Long Street</u></b>	
1-3	The White Lion	27
5	28	43
11 & 11a	30	45
21	21a	
	<b><u>Ludgate Hill</u></b>	
9		
	<b><u>Manor Lane</u></b>	
Lisle Cottage		
	<b><u>Market Street</u></b>	
17	2	6
19	4	8-10
12		
	<b><u>Old Town</u></b>	
5-7	45 Wotton Royal British Legion	
39-43	Congregational Chapel	
39-44	16-24	

8	<b><u>Potters Pond</u></b>
3-4	<b><u>School Lane</u></b>
Tamarisks	<b><u>Symn Lane</u></b>
1	<b><u>Valley Road</u></b>

## DEMOLITIONS

Works for the demolition of an unlisted building that has a volume over 115 cubic metres needs Conservation Area Consent. Demolition is defined as the total or substantial destruction of the building concerned. Many works which involve the destruction of only part of the building will not be classed as demolition and will not require consent.

The total or substantial demolition of any wall or other means of enclosure which is more than one metre high where fronting a highway, and is more than two metres high in any other situation, will require Conservation Area Consent.

## BREACHES OF PLANNING CONTROL AND ENFORCEMENT

A photographic record of all the buildings in the Conservation Area was compiled at the time of the making of the Article 4 Direction. This has been, and will continue to be used to monitor any irregularities in planning controls in the Area. The Planning Authority will consider using its enforcement powers when breaches are discovered.

Furthermore, it is a criminal offence to execute, or cause to be executed, without first obtaining Listed Building Consent, any works for the demolition of a listed building, or any works of alteration or extension which would affect is special interest, or to fail to comply with the terms of any condition attached to a consent. This includes theft of architectural fixtures, for example, chimney pieces, wall panelling, plastered ceilings, doors etc.

A survey of all the listed buildings in Wotton-under-Edge was also carried out in early 1993. The purpose of this survey was to obtain the information necessary to analyse the condition of the listed buildings and to provide a register of those considered to be at risk. This is known as the Buildings at Risk Register which is periodically updated and amended. In order to prevent the deterioration of poorly maintained listed buildings, the Local Planning Authority has powers to serve a Notice to carry out urgent repairs to an empty or partially occupied building, the cost of which can be recovered from the owner. In severe cases it can serve a Repairs Notice requiring the owners to carry out suitable repairs, following which if the Notice is not complied with it can compulsorily purchase the building from the owners.

### PROPOSALS AFFECTING NEUTRAL ZONES

A neutral zone is an individual site, or group of sites, which do not entirely conform with the identifiable character of appearance of the Area, but where there might be some potential for enhancement. Wherever possible, the Local Planning Authority will encourage the replacement or improvement of buildings in these areas.

There are four sites in the Conservation Area which are regarded as neutral zones. These are the Renishaw's site in Old Town, the garage site in Bear Street, the garage site in Gloucester Street and the Bluecoat School site in The Chipping. These sites are identified on Map 5.

1. Renishaw site in Old Town. This site is identified in the Local Plan, Deposit Version 1999 as key employment land where the needs of industry take precedence and where redevelopment or changes of use will not normally be permitted. It is a large site incorporating extensive car parking which has been created from the demolition of former burgage plot boundaries and the merging of the

and holdings. Proposals for new buildings here will be expected to conform with the inherent character of the conservation area, incorporating local detailing, designs, materials and scale. Any redevelopment should respect the historic layout of the area and incorporate landscaping within the overall design which will preserve the setting of the Conservation Area.

2. Bear Street and Gloucester Street Garage sites. These sites are relatively small and their use is not protected by any Planning Policies. Any proposals for the redevelopment of these sites will be taken on their merits and of course, subject to conforming the inherent character of the Conservation Area as set out in 1 above.

3. The Bluecoat School site in The Chipping is a large site close to the town centre which offers significant potential for redevelopment. It is however, somewhat constrained by both the existing poor access arrangements which will need improvement, and by the adjacent listed buildings whose setting will need to be preserved. The site is allocated in the Local Plan (Draft for Deposit 1999) for a small housing development. This should reflect the inherent character of the adjacent buildings in terms of layout, type, size and design.

**For further information and advice,  
please contact:**

**The Conservation Team  
Development Services  
Stroud District Council Offices, Ebley Mill,  
Westward Road, Stroud, Glos. GL5 4UB**

**Switchboard: 01453 766321  
Planning Enquiries: 01453 754442**

**[www.stoud.gov.uk](http://www.stoud.gov.uk)**



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Ebley Mill, Westward Road,  
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Telephone: 01453 766321



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