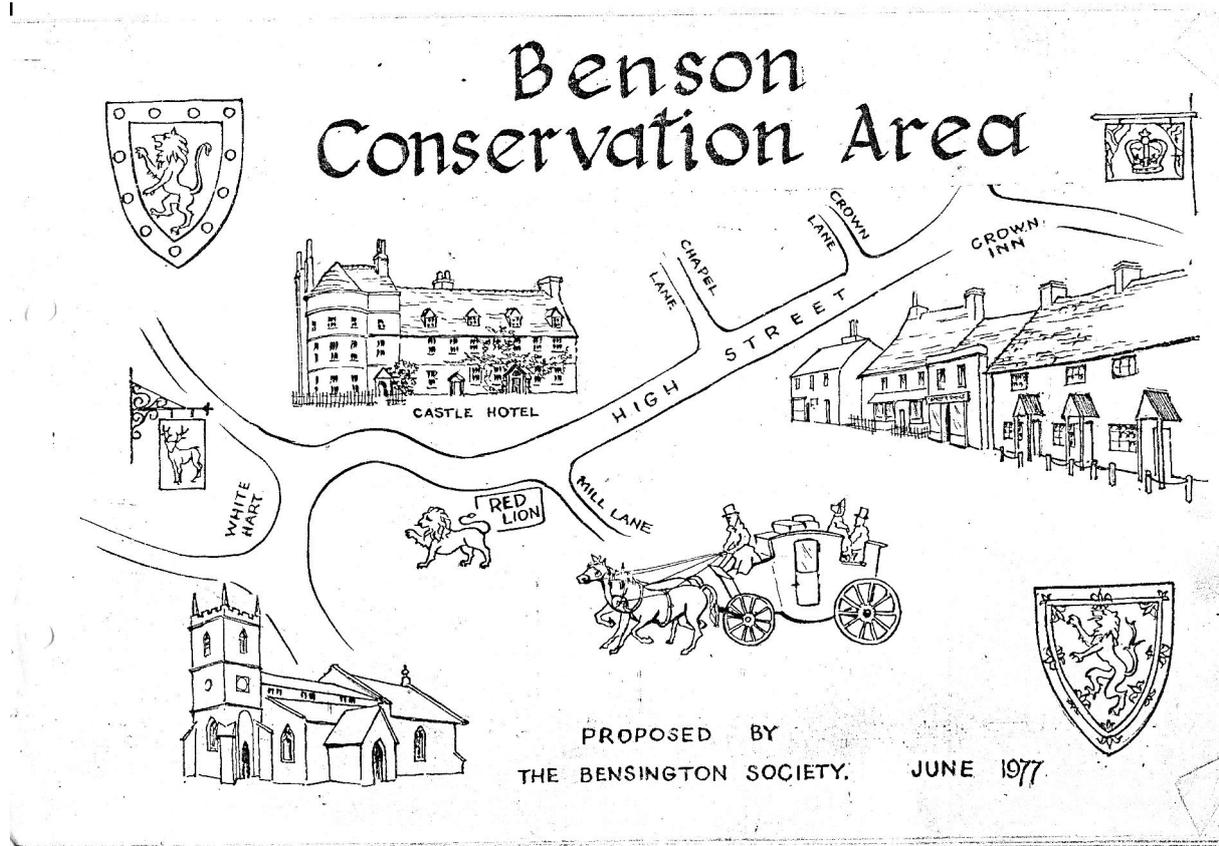


BEHSON - CONSERVATION AREA AS PROPOSED BY THE  
BENSINGTON SOCIETY



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As Chairman, I would like to express my appreciation for the assistance given by various members of the Committee and the Society and, in particular, to the following:-

Reverend A.E. Barton for his Foreward to this booklet and his encouragement

Miss E.M.R. Ditmas for her condensed History of Benson

Miss M. Saunderson for the illustrations used in this booklet

Miss D. Kitt and Mr. J. Johnson for their assistance in checking and updating the list of Listed Buildings

South Oxtordshire District Council Conservation department staff

Benson parish Council

Finally, and perhaps most of all, to my wife Anne for all her typing, checking and general assistance without which this booklet would not have been produced.

Michael I. Byard  
Chairman

FOREWARD By the Reverend A.E. Barton B.A., President of the Bensington Society

Every generation has produced those whose interest in local history has caused them to research, to record local events either in writing, drawing or painting, and to comment on the day to day life of a community. We are indeed grateful, for such care and comment enables us to build up a picture of our heritage. We are concerned, not only with the past, but with the present and future. One aspect of this concern has been the formation of the Bensington Society, whose aims are described in the introduction.

Concern for the conservation of Benson has led the Bensington Society to produce this document, and we are indebted to those who have contributed their skills and knowledge to its compilation. The Chairman of the Society, Michael Byard, and his wife Anne have been unsparing in the time and energy they have devoted to it, which reflects not only their administrative ability but also their detailed interest and deep feelings about history, architecture and natural beauty. The members of the Society are at one with them, and the contents of this brochure reflect our desire and plea that the good things of the past should be handed on to successive generations, and that in planning for the present and the future imagination, good taste and sensitivity should enrich our heritage.

We are also indebted to Benson Parish Council for the co-operation and encouragement so readily given in the undertaking of this task.

Benson Vicarage  
Oxford.  
5 September 1977



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### THE BENSINGTON SOCIETY

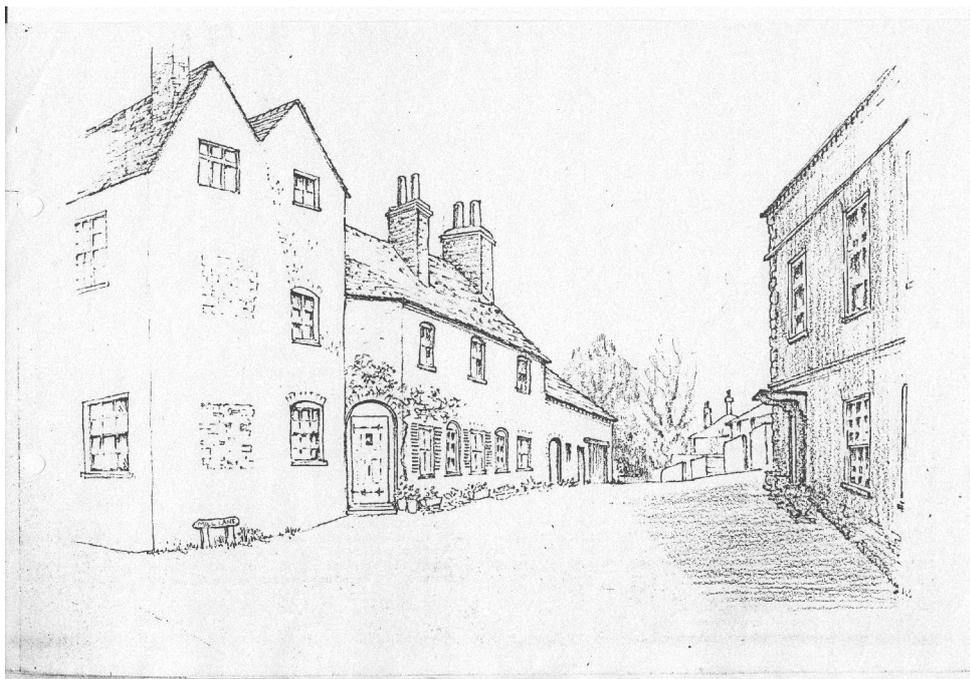
The Bensington Society was formed in October 1972 in order to stimulate public interest in the local history, architecture and amenities of Benson village, formerly called Bensington. And to take an active and positive interest in the heritage and future development of the village, to discover, preserve and publish local records both past and present.

Further aims are to encourage high quality in architecture and planning, preserve buildings of distinction and historic interest, protect the beauties of the countryside, eliminate ugliness in the environment and to inspire a sense of civic pride.

The Society is registered with the Civic Trust as well as being a member of the Council for the Protection of Rural Land and is also in close contact with the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council.

### SOCIETY OFFICIALS

Rev, A.E. Barton B.A.	President
R.S. Nickson, Esq., M.A. (Cantab) RThA ERSA AADip	Vice President
Miss E.M.R. Ditmas M.A.	Vice president
M.I. Byard Esq,	Chairman
C.H. Morgan Esq., B.Sc.	Treasurer
Mrs. A. Byard	Secretary
H.R.V. Chapman Esq.,	
J.D. Johnson Esq., Dip.Ed.	
Miss J.M. Warren	
Mrs. H, Morgan	
Mrs. R. Warwick	
AH. Taylor Esq.	



## 2. HISTORY OF BENSON

Benson is a very old village although the fact may not be apparent to the casual visitor. Benson was never an isolated village for it stood on a trackway from the north which passed southwards to meet the ancient Icknield Way. The river Thames was a boundary between British tribes and later between the kingdoms of Mercia and Wessex, and fighting at Bensington, to give it its earlier name, is recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 571 and 777.

Historically, it is important to remember that Bensington was a royal manor for over 800 years from the days of Offa the Mercian, who built the first stone church here, to 1628 when it was sold by Charles I. Before Offa the land had belonged to Cynegils, first Christian king of Wessex and this property had extended over a very wide area including Henley and Littlestone. The Saxon church at Bensington therefore became the mother church of Henley, Nettlebed and Warborough.

After the Norman Conquest Bensington church with its dependencies was given to Dorchester Abbey by the Empress Maud about 1141 during her war with King Stephen. Thus began a period of 400 years when Benson church was attached to Dorchester until Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries in the sixteenth century. It was the Dorchester canons who replaced the Saxon church with a Norman building. The font, the foundations of the chancel, and the lancet window now at the east end of the south aisle, are relics of this earlier rebuilding. The present structure is the result of extensions, renovations, and rebuilding through the centuries.

Because it was the King's land and only granted to various lords at the King's pleasure, Benson never had a castle or manor. Nevertheless, it produced a revenue that made it a property with which to reward a royal favourite or a loyal supporter. Famous people such as Richard of Cornwall, the Black Prince, Alice Duchess of Suffolk and Sir Francis Knollys, were granted the lordship of Benson, but they lived elsewhere.

After the Norman conquest, no major battle was fought on Benson soil but it was inevitably involved in the struggle between Stephen and Maud in the twelfth century and between Charles I and Cromwell in the Great Rebellion. King Stephen signed a charter 'in the camp at Bensington' when he was besieging Wallingford; King Charles held 'his court' at Benson in 1642 when he sent a letter to the mayor of Reading demanding passage for his troops over the bridge at Caversham.

The inhabitants of Benson were sturdy free farmers. Much wheat and barley was grown and there were noted flocks of sheep on the slopes of Beggarsbush Hill. A bustling prosperity came to the village with the growth of the stage-coach services when it became an important stop on the London to Oxford road. There was stabling for two hundred horses, smithies, coach-builders and saddlers, together with a number of coaching inns and the catering services. At least twelve inns and ale houses were in the village at the end of the nineteenth century. When the stage-coaches were ousted by the railways, Benson folk turned their skills to the building of the new railway carriages.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Benson had shrunk to a quiet country village, popular for boating or fishing holidays, till the growth of the motor car traffic and housing developments made parts of it a dormitory for workers in near-by towns. The establishment of the adjacent airfield and the coming of the Royal Air Force helped to develop local trades

and services but the airfield, now the home of the Queen's Flight, does not in any way dominate village life.

Benson used to attract the interest of antiquaries because of the early British earth-works between the church and the river, now destroyed by the modern by-pass. In later years Jerome K. Jerome the novelist made his home at Grove near Benson and Thomas Henry Dines, the pioneer meteorologist, built his small observatory in the village (now a small housing development, the site being called Observatory Close) and carried out much of his exploration of upper air conditions from this area.

### **3. LOCATION**

The village of Benson, together with the hamlet of Preston Crowmarsh, lies some twelve miles south-east of Oxford and one and a half miles from Wallingford, and is situated beside the Thames, although the entrance to the village is separated from the river by the main Oxford to London road (A423).

Up until the 1930's (from about 1824) the main through road passed along the high street then the old by-pass was constructed which completely divorced Benson from both Preston Crowmarsh and the river.

The parish of Benson extends from Berrick Salome, in the north (including parts of Roke and Rokemarsh) to Turners Court, in the south and from the Thames in the west to Mogpits Wood and Potters Farm in the east.

### **4. PHYSICAL DETAIL**

Most of the land in the parish is grade II agricultural land, with some grade III, the landscape being essentially rural and agricultural.

Flowing through the village is Benson Brook, which is visible from Braze Lane and runs beside the road towards the village centre until it passes through a culvert at Old London Road and re-appears on the other side of the road and meanders along the back of the village past the allotments until finally joining the Thames near Battle Bank.

### **5. PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA**

This has been based, initially, on the approximate extent of population of the village in 1883 which is marked on the outline map in heavy black. This starts, for convenience sake, at the Thames in a continuation of Littleworth road across the A423. The northern boundary follows Littleworth Road, into Watlington Road and bends round to join Crown Lane and stops at number 15 Crown Lane. The line then follows the old northern part of the village, through the beginning of the modern development of the Blacklands estate and along the rear of the houses fronting Brook Street until Braze Lane is reached. The line is brought down to the Brook Street junction, crosses the road for a few yards before being changed to an approximate west-south-west direction to follow behind the scrap-yard to join the Old London Road. At this point the line is laid along the footpath from Old London Road, passing allotment gardens and crossing St. Helen's Avenue, Oxford/London road, until it meets the road at Crowmarsh Mill. Finally the line is taken across to the Thames far bank (Wallingford side) to follow the river back past Benson Lock to link up where it started.

The actual area proposed by the Bensington Society is marked in a red dotted line which follows the northern boundary as mentioned above, until number 81 Brook Street is reached, then the line comes down to Brook Street, and turns back towards the village centre including, on its way, some of the outlying listed buildings. The southern boundary, for this is now what it becomes, links with Benson Brook at Mill Lane and follows the brook until it joins the Thames, after which it turns south along the bank till the entrance to the mill race, at Crowmarsh Mill is reached whence it crosses the river at Benson Lock and continues along the Wallingford side bank to a point opposite footpath 8 (i.e. extension of Littleworth Road). It is the Society's hope that the stretch of river shown should be included, together with Benson Lock, which we feel is of natural beauty and should be preserved. Where possible natural boundaries have been followed with the exception of Roke and Rokemarsh, the latter will be the subject of separate application as will the other hamlet of Preston Crowmarsh.

## **6. SURVEY OF THE VILLAGE**

In this survey members of the Society personally visited every building in the proposed Conservation Area, to take special note of the type and condition of those that are listed buildings. In this regard the society decided to clarify the list by showing street numbers or house names in order to identify each building instead of the present situation which is apt to be confusing to the casual observer.

The following sub-headings are used:-

i) Trees ii) Open Spaces iii) Community complexes iv) Schools v) Shops and facilities  
vi) Visual Aspects vii) Listed Buildings viii) Footpaths

### **(i) Trees**

There are at present very few trees that are officially considered preserving in the village, with the following exceptions

A. at Castle Square at the junction of Oxford Road, the group of robina and horsechestnuts which are situated in the grounds of the White Hart Hotel and No. 5 Oxford Road. These have been, in fact, the subject of a preservation order, and are now confirmed as preserved trees.

B. The trees situated in the churchyard of the Parish Church of St. Helen.

C. The large firs adjoining the White House, close to the A423 and

D. Horsechestnut tree by Rivermead apposite the entrance to the village i.e. Church Road.

### **(ii) Open Spaces**

The main open spaces are situated at Rivermead, on the banks of the Thames, Littleworth- the school playing field, Sunnyside - the main playing field which caters for football, cricket and tennis. There is also a small area off Green Close, which is part of the new Blacklands estate.

### **(iii) Community Complexes**

Under this heading is included the Parish Hall, which is very regularly used; the Youth Hall, in London Road, Scout Hall in Littleworth, Benson Library off Castle Square, tennis courts on the Watlington Road side of Sunnyside playfields.

(iv) Schools

The village has two schools, the County Infants School and the Church of England Primary School. Older children must travel outside of the village for further education, either to Berinsfield, Oxford or Wallingford.

(v) Shops and facilities

The village has its shops spread along the High Street and these consist of a supermarket, bakers, hardware shop, greengrocer, grocer, wool and babywear shop, self-service laundry, sub Post Office, ladies hairdresser, dress shop and licensed betting shop. There are also antique shops. Motorists are catered for by two garages at each end of the main street, one only (Benson Garage) sells petrol but both provide repair facilities. The remaining garage, which is on Watlington Road, is the largest and besides the usual garage facilities also has a large spare parts stores, as well as carrying new and used vehicles for sale.

Two Doctors are in residence and have their surgery in Mill Lane, they have their own pharmacy to dispense prescriptions, but a Health Centre is badly needed in this growing village.

The fact that most of the shops are along the High Street, does give rise to parking problems at times.

(vi)

Visual Aspects

Benson has been divided into three areas

(a) that bounded by the Thames/Littleworth Road/Chapel Lane - with a continuing line to join the footpath no. 1 at the junction of footpath no. 6

(b) Chapel Lane/Watlington Road/Crown Lane/Old London Road to join footpath no. 1 down to junction of footpath no 6

(c) Crown Lane/back of Brook Street/Braze Lane thence along 1883 designation line to Old London Road.

These are now taken in order:-

6(a) The attractive stretch of the River Thames, from a point adjacent to Crowmarsh Mill up past Benson Lock, Battle Bank, Rivermead and Benson Cruiser Station to a line drawn as a continuation of Littleworth Road, forms a natural boundary. Good views can be obtained at Rivermead and at footpath no. 5, the latter overlooking Benson Lock.

Benson Lock, which has on many occasions, been chosen as one of the Best Kept Locks on the Thames, should be included in any Conservation Area and indeed the planting of additional trees along the banks should be encouraged.

Littleworth Road, adjacent to open farmland, links Oxford Road to Watlington Road as a continuation of the B4009. There are good views to Warborough, as well as to the Sinodun Hills. Prior to entering the B4009, from A423, the village presents a very pleasant picture, with the church tower showing up above the surrounding trees. This fact was mentioned in the recent (1976) Littleworth Development public enquiry held by the Department of the Environment when a local developer wanted to build 300 houses on this farmland.

The older houses along Littleworth Road can only be seen to advantage by walking along the footpath no. 13 in front of these houses, a good vantage point is obtained opposite the public house (Sun Inn) where the footpath joins Watlington

Road.

Open views are obtained across the airfield towards Beggarbush Hill from the allotment gardens.

In the centre of this area lies three very striking views; the first seen from Oxford Road, close to the Three Horse Shoes Inn, shows the superb group of robina and horsechestnut trees, the second, the same group this time viewed from the War Memorial, the third from Church Road, with the trees in the churchyard on the viewers left, towards the Castle Inn.

The varied architecture of the village can be seen to advantage from Castle Square. There are some twenty four listed buildings in the above area which will be covered under the section on listed Buildings.

6(b) Here lies the main commercial centre; and the old mingles with the new, not always easily. The view from the junction of Chapel Lane and High Street is one of great character, and it is in this section that the complete restoration of a group of cottages has recently taken place. The Bensington Society was founded, initially, to save them, and thereby to retain the character of the High Street, that this has now happened is to the Society's credit. Here there are some eight Listed Buildings.

6(c) This covers the east end of the village and again there is a view of varied architecture, when viewed from Wychwood Close. This section covers fourteen listed buildings. Open views are seen across the airfield which forms a border to this part of the Conservation Area.

## **LISTED BUILDINGS**

The following buildings are listed in numerical order and are shown on the map, enclosed with this application, followed by the Grade, address (for easier identification where only a reference is given as to the number of yards s.e, from....etc.), together with the description.

<b>NO.</b>	34
<b>GRADE</b>	II
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Church of St. Helen
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Nave arcades late C12, 3 capitols to west have good foliage carving. Plain font of the same date. The chancel is C19. The west tower is 1765-1781. The church stands in a large, well kept graveyard with many C18 stones and two good C18 altar tombs with vase finials which both need repair. Old brick and flint walls along Church Road and side track to vicarage.
<b>NO.</b>	35
<b>GRADE</b>	II
<b>ADDRESS</b>	The White Hart
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Late C18 early C19. Three storeys, painted stucco, projecting plinth, frieze and cornice over 1st floor windows, 2nd floor carried up as deep parapet with frieze and coping, slate roof. An 8 bay front - 2nd floor windows square. Modern half glazed door with plain rectangular fanlight in 3rd bay from L.H. Contemporary half glazed door with rectangular radiating and wreathed fanlight in 5th bay from L.H. under wire and wrought iron porch with pitched roof with scalloped edge. Sun burst design in tympanum. The sides of the porch are made up of panels of overlapping circles. South elevation - 7 bays with 3 french casements in centre. Wrought iron scroll bracketted sign between the 4th and 5th 1st

floor windows. Has old brick and flint wall as boundary between the Three Horse Shoes public house.

**NO.** 36  
**GRADE** III  
**ADDRESS** The Three Horse Shoes  
**DESCRIPTION** C17 north part - one storey and attic, rough case, old tile roof. 1 gabled dormer window with one casement window under and plain door to R.H. South part C18, two storeys, flint with brick quoins, stuccoed on road front. One upper casement window, angular bay on ground floor and plain door to L.H.

**NO.** 37  
**GRADE** II  
**ADDRESS** The Round House  
**DESCRIPTION** C18, three storeys, vitreous brick, red window arches and stripes carried the whole height framing the windows, 1st floor string and moulded brick cornice at 2nd floor level, both red brick, plain parapet, old tile roof. The main part of the front to L.H. is formed of a large semi-circular bow with 3 windows. 1 bay to R.H. with 1 window and C19 half glazed door on ground floor with arched radiating fanlight under C19 gabled brick porch. Original staircase with turned balausters and moulded handrail. Early C19 railing and gate across front. Old brick and flint wall adjacent and running along Watlington Road.

**NO.** 38  
**GRADE** III  
**ADDRESS** The Castle Inn  
**DESCRIPTION** C18 probably a rebuilding, two storeys and attic, ragstone with brick plinth, 1st floor string and window dressings, moulded wood cornice old tile roof. 4 steep pedimented dormer casement windows, 7 windows and 2 doors on ground floor. L.H. door 6 panelled in modern doorcase is just out of centre in 2nd bay from L.H. The window to R.H. of this door has the glazing bars altered. The remaining four ground floor windows are 4 panes wide in square frames. 6 panelled door in 3rd bay from R.H. with upper panels glazed, arched radiating fanlight in doorcase of doric pilasters on plain plinths supporting heavy, plain scroll brackets, modern cornice and open pediments. Interior may be of interest. Elaborate rough iron inn sign on post with scroll frame for sign.

**NO.** 39  
**GRADE** II  
**ADDRESS** Castle Cottage  
**DESCRIPTION** C18, three storeys, vitreous brick, red brick quoins and dressings, projecting plinth, 1st and 2nd floor strings, plain parapet and coping, old tile roof. A symmetrical front with central arched 2nd floor window, two windows in architrave frames on 1st and ground floors and paneled central door with panelled reveals, architrave frame, scroll brackets supporting cornice and pediment. Restored 1976.

**NO.** 40  
**GRADE** II  
**ADDRESS** Elm House & shop, 19-25 Castle Square  
**DESCRIPTION** C18, two storeys, vitreous brick, red dressings, quoins, 1st floor string and moulded cornice over 1st floor windows, parapet and brick coping, hipped old tile roof. Three upper windows. One storey angular bay to L.H. with dentil cornice but glazing bars altered. 6 panelled door with wreathed radiating rectangular fanlight in doorcase of architrave, scroll brackets supporting fluted frieze and dentil cornice broken forward over the brackets. Shop to R.H. two windows, glazing altered, central half glazed door all under small entablature. A lower stable to R.H., colourwashed brick with old tile roof. One upper casement window and two yard doors on ground floor.

**NO.** 41  
**GRADE** II  
**ADDRESS** 10 Castle Square  
**DESCRIPTION** Early C19, two storeys, chequer brick, dentil eaves, old tile roof. 5 irregular windows.

**NO.** 42  
**GRADE** III  
**ADDRESS** Lane House 4 Castle Square  
**DESCRIPTION** Early C19, two storeys, red brick, string 1st floor, cill level, dentil eaves, slate roof. Two windows and half glazed flush central door. One bay extension to R.H. segmental headed stable door with one window over. Contemporary railings - spear heads and urn standards.

**NO.** 43  
**GRADE** III  
**ADDRESS** Corner Castle Close/Castle Square  
**DESCRIPTION** Early C19, two storeys, chequer brick, string at 1st floor cill level, hipped slate roof. Two windows and 6 panelled central door with rectangular fanlight in door case of panelled pilasters, double scroll brackets, flat hood. Similar railings as no. 42.

**NO.** 44  
**GRADE** III  
**ADDRESS** Birmingham Yard  
**DESCRIPTION** Two groups of cottages, C18 to L.H. 1 storey and attic. Ragstone and brick, old tile roof. Irregular casements and doors, continued to R.H. in block of early C19 cottages, chequer brick, old tile roof with 4 casements and 2 doors, both blocks are continuous.

**NO.** 45  
**GRADE** III  
**ADDRESS** West Farm House  
**DESCRIPTION** C17 two storeys, part ragstone with brick quoins, part timber frame with brick infilling all colour washed, old tile roof. Gable end cement rendered to road has one 3 light C18 sash window, glazing altered, in older

surround of brick quoins and head with moulded brick cornice. The remainder is irregular.

**NO.** 46  
**GRADE** III  
**ADDRESS** Laurel Cottage  
**DESCRIPTION** Formerly two cottages, the L.H. recessed ragstone with brick dressings, old tile roof. 4x3 pane windows with brick dressings. R.H. part is brick faced with half hipped old tile roof. 2 upper, 3 pane irregular sash windows. Central modern 4 panelled door. 2 ground floor windows. R.H. in angular bay.

**NO.**  
**GRADE**  
**ADDRESS** Myrtle Cottage  
**DESCRIPTION** Formerly 2 cottages, now the right hand of which is Myrtle Cottage, originally known as Littleholme. Two storey chequer brick with old tiled roof. 4 upper casement windows, 2 lower casements. Central modern half glazed door in modern brick porch. To right 2 lower casements, 1 upper.

**NO.** 47  
**GRADE** II  
**ADDRESS** Barclays Bank and adjoining house  
**DESCRIPTION** A C18 refronting to road of C17 building, Two storeys, vitreous brick, red window dressings, quoins, 1st floor string and string over 1st floor windows. Parapet and hipped old tile roof. North elevation to road on a curve, of 9 bays, all windows have square frames and segmental heads . A 6 panelled door with flat hood, 3 pane rectangular fanlight in 3rd bay from L.H. A 6 panelled flush door with flat hood and panel fanlight in 3rd bay from R.H. East elevation C17, two storeys and attic, ragstone and brick plinth, string at 1st floor level and over 1st floor windows, brick dentil eaves, chamfered rusticated quoins, and old tile roof.

**NO.**  
**GRADE**  
**ADDRESS** Monarch's Court House  
**DESCRIPTION** One gabled dormer, 4 bays, the upper windows are 4 light mullioned and transomed wood frames with C19 lights. The ground floor windows also altered irregularly C19. half glazed (modern) door to L.H. Lower C18, two storey extension at back, ragstone brick dressings, 1st floor string, hipped old tile roof.

**NO.** 48  
**GRADE** III  
**ADDRESS** 3 High Street  
**DESCRIPTION** C18, two storeys and attic, ragstone with brick dressings and 1st floor string, old tile roof. Half hipped to L.H. and on gable end to R.H. which has brick dentil eaves. Gable end has one window to L.H. of centre, ground and 1st floor sliding casements and plain door to R.H. The

remainder has two 3 light upper casements, two wide sliding casements on ground floor and central half glazed flush door.

<b>NO.</b>	49
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	7 High Street
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	C18 front to C17 building, two storeys roughcast brick dentil eaves, old tile roof. Two 3 light sash windows and 6 panelled door to L.H. of centre with C19 hood and double scroll brackets. The back wing at right angles is one storey and attic, colour washed with old tile roof. Irregular windows and doors.
<b>NO.</b>	50
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	9 High Street
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Early C19, two storeys, brick, boxed eaves, old tile roof. 3 bays with C19 central door with arched fanlight of concentric circles and curves. Low wall with contemporary wooden gate.
<b>NO.</b>	51
<b>GRADE</b>	II
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Ashcroft
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	C18 two storeys, colourwashed ragstone and brick, string at 1st floor windows, offset eaves, old tile roof. Two wide windows with heavy glazing bars in square frames and 8 panelled modern door. Flanking two storey wings, similar materials, with gable ends to road, one window altered C19 and C20. Between the wings is a balustraded fence enclosing a small garden.
<b>NO.</b>	52
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Old Malt House, 17 High Street
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Late C18 and early C19. Two storeys, with brick dressings, old tile roof. A 3 bay front, windows 4 panes wide, and 4 panelled central door with flat C19 hood on cut brackets.
<b>NO.</b>	53
<b>GRADE</b>	II
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Ivy House
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	C18, two storeys and attic, vitreous brick with red dressings above the ground floor which is stuccoed, 1st floor string, moulded brick cornice over 1st floor windows, parapet with red brick stripes carried up to coping which is dropped in front of 2 irregular dormer windows. Old tile roof and flanking chimneys. A 3 bay front with 4 pane windows and 6 panelled central door with 4 pane rectangular fanlight in architrave frame, with cut brackets supporting flat hood. The end elevation ragstone and flint, in bands.

<b>NO.</b>	54
<b>GRADE</b>	II
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Stage House, 8 - 12 High Street
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Probably a former Inn, C18, two storeys, ragstone with brick dressings, part to L.H. has 1st floor string, old tile roof. 6 upper windows of which: the three L.H. are 3 light sashes, 5 windows on ground floor and 3 doors, one stable door, all irregularly spaced. Doors 6 panelled, the two R.H. flush, with flat hood on cut brackets.
<b>NO.</b>	55
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	1 Mill Lane
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Early C19, two storeys, chequer brick, old tile roof, 3 casement windows and modern door with glass panels, lower stable block on south end.
<b>NO.</b>	56
<b>GRADE</b>	II
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Kingsford House
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Early C19. Three storeys, vitreous brick divided vertically by red brick stripes framing the windows and red quoins, boxed eaves, hipped Westmorland slate roof. A 3 bay front with windows 4 panes wide, those on 2nd floor are square. half glazed modern door. A two storey lean-to extension to the R.H. with parapet swept up, of similar materials - 1 bay. The south elevation repeats the elevation to the road but has a light cast-iron verandah across the ground floor. Interior may be of interest.
<b>NO.</b>	57
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	20 - 22 High Street
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	C18, two storeys, roughcast, old tile roof. The L.H. cottage has 2 semi-dormer windows with 2 windows under on ground floor - all 5 panes wide - and half glazed modern central door under C19 hood. The L.H. gable end of this cottage has a 2 storey rectangular bay with a gabled head. The remainder of the block has 3 irregular casement windows and one plain and one half glazed modern door. Was a salt warehouse 200 years ago.
<b>NO.</b>	58
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	College Farmhouse
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	North elevation - C17 two storeys, roughcast old tile roof. Irregular casement windows and doors. South front - C18 refronting, two storeys rough-cast, hipped old tile roof. A 3 bay front with upper 3 light sash windows (central one blocked) and C19, 1 storey angular bay on ground floor flanking a 4 panelled flush central door with arched radiating fanlight over. All windows have the glazing bars altered. On the west front there is a large C17 chimney stack with rectangular base and two diamond shafts with offset heads.

<b>NO.</b>	59
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Outbuildings - College Farmhouse
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	These were demolished in order to make space for the new shops and houses which now stand beside College Farmhouse, facing the High Street.
<b>NO.</b>	60
<b>GRADE</b>	II
<b>ADDRESS</b>	26 – 32 High Street
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	C18-C18, two storeys, ragstone and flint in bands with brick dressings, all colourwashed, offset eaves, old tile roof. Brick chimney stack with 2 diamond shafts between the two R.H. cottages. L.H. cottage. 1 upper 3 light casement windows, 1 lower 4 pane sash and 1 small casement window to R.H. C19 door and hood in L.H. corner. C. Lester & Son (butchers) 3 light upper casement windows (2 shuttered) and a fixed light, C19 shop in ground floor. 3rd cottage - two 3 light casement windows and 6 panelled central door under gabled board hood. 4th cottage - one upper 3 light casement window, flat angular bay on ground floor, 7 panes wide, 3 panes high with cill. Door to R.H. wooden (modern) with two glass panes.
<b>NO.</b>	61
<b>GRADE</b>	II
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Smith's Cottages, 34 – 40 High Street
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Originally 4 cottages and outhouse, converted 1976 into 4 cottages only. Facade maintained but extended at rear. Each cottage has one casement window upper and lower. Modern doors under small porch. Extension to R.H. has been demolished.
<b>NO.</b>	62
<b>GRADE</b>	II
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Nash - 42 High Street, Calnan - Butchers shop
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	C18 refronting of C17 building. Two storeys vitreous brick with red dressings, quoins, and flush string at 1st floor level, plain parapet old tile roof. Two windows 4 panes with architrave frames. Early C19 shop on ground floor, two windows and central door under entablature. Windows and doors altered C19.
<b>NO.</b>	63
<b>GRADE</b>	II
<b>ADDRESS</b>	The Crown, High Street
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	C18, two storeys and attic, ragstone and brick colourwashed, ground floor stucco, strings above and below 1st floor windows, old tile roof. Two dormers. The main block has 6 bays on 1st floor of which the 4th and 6th windows have been altered and the 3rd and 5th blocked. The ground floor has 4 irregular windows L.H., 4 panes wide and door, in 2nd bay from L.H. Half glazed with arched fanlight and central headed lamp. Extension to R.H. end under the same roof. Yard entrance and 2 upper windows. Modern extension to L.H. This building is under renovation at the present time.

<b>NO.</b>	64
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	"Fairseat"
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Late C18 - early C19, two storeys, colourwashed, rubble and brick, old tile roof. Two upper windows. One door to L.H. on ground floor, 1 window with shutters and small shop, 9 x 4 panes with half glazed door to L.H.
<b>NO.</b>	65
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	1 Crown Lane
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	C18, one storey and attic, roughcast, half hipped old tile roof, square central chimney. East front has two dormers with sash windows, two windows and 4 panelled central door with 2 pane rectangular fanlight, flat hood on double scroll cut brackets. The gable end has 1 upper window and the south face 1 upper and 1 lower window.
<b>NO.</b>	66
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	"Crossways" -1 Brook St.
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	C18, two storeys, ragstone and flint in bands with brick dressings, brick string at 1st floor, brick dentil eaves, old tile roof. Two 3 light casement windows with contemporary lights, the ground floor windows with segmental arch over. 6 panelled flush door with 2 glass panes at top, simple open pediment hood on double scroll cut brackets. Stone panel showing date between the upper windows. One storey extension to L.H. with hipped old tile roof. This building incorporates cruck construction.
<b>NO.</b>	67
<b>GRADE</b>	II
<b>ADDRESS</b>	a) 15 Brook Street, b) 17 Brook Street
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	a) C17, two storeys, old tile roof. West front ragstone with 6 irregular windows and 2 dormer windows right of door. Double door, small glass panes under tiled porch roof. b) East front - timber framed with brick infilling (cement rendered) a 3 bay front with C18 windows including a central arched upper window. Modern half glazed central door.
<b>NO.</b>	68
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Paddock House
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Early C19, three storeys - a square block, the south and east fronts vitreous brick with red dressings - the north and west red brick, string at 2nd floor cill level, flat eaves and hipped slate roof. Each front except the north (1 bay) has 3 bays. The west front has 2 later angular bays on the ground floor and a 6 panelled central door.
<b>NO.</b>	69
<b>GRADE</b>	III

**ADDRESS** 18 Old London Road  
**DESCRIPTION** C18, two storeys, ragstone with brick dressings, old tile roof. 2 windows on south front, 3 upper, 4 lower windows, door under tiled porch roof.

**NO.** 70  
**GRADE** III  
**ADDRESS** 20 Old London Road  
**DESCRIPTION** C17-C18, L shaped block, two storeys, ragstone with brick dressings, old tile roof. West front has 3 irregular windows including 1 window in gable C18 lights in older openings - two with brick cornices. 6 panelled modern door adjoining gable. South front (not visible) has 3 windows and 2 doors.

**NO.** 71  
**GRADE** III  
**ADDRESS** 16 Brook Street  
**DESCRIPTION** C18, L shaped block, two storeys, part vitreous brick, part ragstone with brick dressings, old tile roof. West front double gabled, each gable has 1 window. North front has one large 2 light casement window, Lower two storey wing at right angles, ragstone with brick dressings, old tile roof and modern extension to L.H. irregular.

**NO.** 72  
**GRADE** II  
**ADDRESS** Brook Lodge, 26-28 Brook Street  
**DESCRIPTION** Originally one house, now two. C18 three storeys, stucco carried up to parapet, coping, old tile roof, flanking chimneys. A 3 bay front, the outer windows 3 light sash. The outer sashes of the 2nd floor windows are blocked. 2 central doors with glass panels. A small garden in front with dwarf wall and C19 railings is divided from the road by a stream spanned by a simple bridge.

**NO.** 73  
**GRADE** III  
**ADDRESS** 30-32 Brook Street  
**DESCRIPTION** Late C18, two storeys, ragstone with brick dressings, hipped old tile roof. Three casement windows- the upper sliding, and 2 doors, 4 windows ground floor.

**NO.** 74  
**GRADE** II  
**ADDRESS** 63-65 Brook Street  
**DESCRIPTION** C17-C18, two storeys, ragstone with brick dressings, hipped old tile roof. Large spreading chimney at sw end. Remainder of sw elevation has 3 casement windows each upper and lower. Modern wooden door under tiled porch roof.

<b>NO.</b>	75
<b>GRADE</b>	II
<b>ADDRESS</b>	67—69 Brook Street
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Road front - main block all ragstone with heavy moulded stone eaves, flanking chimneys. Strings above ground and 1st floor windows with key blocks over windows. 2 upper, 1 lower window to left of L.H. door. 3 upper, 2 lower windows to right of R.H. door. Two C19 doors in centre to replace original central entrance. Formerly one house. Modernised 1977.
<b>NO.</b>	76
<b>GRADE</b>	II
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Barn adjoining 75
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Small barn adjoining R.H. cottage. C18 ragstone with brick dressings and half hipped old tile roof.
<b>NO.</b>	77
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	75-81 Brook Street
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Late C18, two storeys, ragstone with brick dressings, half hipped old tile roof. 4. windows and 4 ledged doors. No. 78 Brook Street has two bays added, both 77 and 81 have glass porches added.
<b>NO.</b>	78
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Brook Farmhouse, 66—68 Brook Street
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	C17 L shaped block, two storeys and attic, colourwashed brick and flint in bands, old tile roof. Road front - double gabled with roof carried down on R.H. side. Large brick chimney at back, two square shafts linked by wall with vertical offsets in centre and offset head broken round. 3 irregular windows, early C19 and later. Window in former doorway in R.H. gable under concave lead hood. Interior may be of interest. (Note:- the chimney is a fine example but the remainder of the house makes it impossible to grade it higher than III- although a note has been made that it should be upgraded.)
<b>NO.</b>	79
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Brookside Cottages, 74-76 Brook Street
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	2 dwellings. C17, two storeys and attic, roughcast, old tile roof, carried down on road front flanking two storey staircase projection - brick with hipped old tile roof. Flanking chimneys. No. 74. has modern extension to west. Small irregular casement windows. South front – 4 casement windows and 2 doors in centre. Modern door linking extension to original building.

<b>NO.</b>	80
<b>GRADE</b>	III
<b>ADDRESS</b>	Old Mill House, Mill Lane
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	C18 north block - two storeys on two different levels - north part ragstone with brick dressings, the south part brick, old tile roof, relaid. 4 bays with C19 windows. A lower extension at south end, ragstone, old tile roof with 1 casement window and ledged door, forming lean-to against early C19 block in south-east corner. 2 storeys, chequer brick hipped slate roof. 2 bays on south front including a 4 panelled door to L.H. with arched radiating fanlight. 1 wide window on east front.

(vii) Footpaths

Within the projected area there are seven footpaths, in varying states of repair. These are as follows:-

FP 3 - Running from St. Helen's Avenue and across the A423 (Oxford/Henley Road) to link up with FP5.

FP5 - runs along the river bank from Rivermead to FP8. This joins Churchfield Lane, near the junction of Littleworth and Oxford Roads, after crossing the A423.

FP12 - Connects Brook Street with Watlington Road, by running to the side of listed building 74/75.

FP13 - This runs parallel with Littleworth Road and in front of the houses backing onto the road. This starts from a point on Watlington Road opposite the Sun Inn. The footpath is in turn joined by two small FP's, 13a from Watlington Road and 13b from Oxford Road along the side of the Church of England Primary School.

Radiating from, or adjacent to, the area boundaries are seven footpaths, some bearing the same numbers as those within the area and therefore being merely extensions. But in order to present a complete picture, the Society has decided to include them as follows:-

FP 1 - This runs from Old London Road close to (and opposite) listed building no. 69, crossing the A423 at the back of the allotments (passing listed building no. 98 to Crowmarsh Mill in the hamlet of Preston Crowmarsh).

FP2 - runs between FP's 1 and 6 through the allotment gardens on both sides of St. Helen's Avenue.

FP3 - from St. Helen's Avenue, as previous mentioned, crosses the projected boundary of Benson Brook and joins the Preston Crowmarsh road.

FP5 - joins FP3 and runs between two houses (Bitterns and Wychmead) to the river bank opposite Benson Lock.

FP6 - is the continuation of Mill Lane, starting at FP1, crossing St. Helen's Avenue, also A423 terminating at Preston Crowmarsh.

FP9 - starts adjacent to the area at Elm Bridge and ends at Gallows Leaze, where it joins FP17, which in turns ends at FP16 (to Warborough).

FP12 - continues from the boundary line and runs along the back of Blacklands Road crossing Watlington Road to join FP11 from the back of Sands Way to Rokemarsh.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

It is the considered opinion of the Bensington Society that with so many rapid changes in villages generally, with the addition of houses without due regard to their surroundings, in that the materials used more often than not do not blend with the existing village character, that some sort of control be exercised in the village of Benson before what little that is left vanishes forever. To this end the Society has embarked on this programme of having Benson declared a Conservation Area.

We are perhaps fortunate to have still a number of listed buildings, most of which are situated on each side of the main street. There are other buildings which we feel should be included on any future list of listed buildings e.g. the original Vicarage, now called the Old Vicarage, which is situated on the corner of Church Road and Oxford Road, which although built during the last century is, nevertheless, a good example of local building. Other examples are the thatched cottages in Brook Street, part of the Farmers Man public house, although lately much altered, together with several old cottages in Littleworth and which could be the subject of investigation by the Society, South Oxfordshire District Council and the Department of the Environment.

**The purpose of designating a Conservation Area is to preserve and to enhance the special architectural and historical interest of that area.** This we feel meets the aims completely of the Bensington Society and indeed forms one of the criteria for which the Society was formed and which is mentioned in the introduction to this application booklet. The Society is in full agreement with the aims contained in the South Oxfordshire District Council's Policy Statement III of September 1975 for Conservation Areas and for good orders sake, and with due acknowledgement to the S.O.D.C., we take this opportunity of quoting the relevant statement:-

1. The Council will use ail their powers under the relevant Acts to ensure that the character of the Conservation Area is maintained.
2. Where new development is involved the scale and materials used shall be in keeping with the surrounding development.
3. (a) Where change is necessary it should be carried out by adapting existing buildings (with possible extensions) in a manner which will be in keeping with the scale and character of the area and by using traditional materials sympathetic to the immediate surroundings.  
(b) Where appropriate, opportunity must be allowed for archaeological investigation of development and redevelopment sites.
4. Outline applications will not be considered in these areas.

5. Careful consideration will be given to changes in elevation of existing buildings and all existing walls and hedges should be retained and maintained in good condition. The Council will encourage the owners and occupiers of all the properties within the area to consult the Planning Department for advice and agreement on any change in elevation or means of enclosure.

6. Council will take all available steps to ensure:-

- (a) control of excessive traffic generation
- (b) strict control of advertisements
- (c) that the existing buildings and major acceptable land uses remain, for the most part, undisturbed.
- (d) control of the introduction and intensification of any commercial uses
- (e) the retention of existing important buildings.

7. The Town and Country Amenities Act, 1974, requires anyone intending to cut down, top, lop, uproot, willfully damage or willfully destroy, any tree in a conservation area to give the District Council 6 weeks notice of his intention. This provision enables the Planning Authority to give early consideration to the making of a Tree Preservation Order. Where appropriate the Council will use this control to ensure that existing trees shall not be removed or destroyed unless diseased or dangerous. Planting and replanting will be encouraged.

8. Anyone wishing to demolish a building within a conservation area must first apply for listed building consent to the District Council. This control, also under the Town and Country Amenities Act, 1974, applies to all buildings in a conservation area, whether listed or not. In considering any application account will be taken of the importance of the building to the character or appearance of the conservation area and, if its site is to be redeveloped, the quality of the proposed development.

9. The alteration, extension or demolition of statutory listed buildings, whether in a conservation area or not, is controlled under Section 55 of the Town and County Planning Act 1971. This requires the issue of a specific listed building consent by the Planning Authority before work is carried out. The term 'listed building' includes stone walls and other features as well as roofed buildings. It is hoped that the lists will be updated and individual cases added when appropriate.

Successful conservation cannot be achieved by the use of town and planning and development controls only. Much depends on the goodwill and co-operation between those involved: the land and property owner, the statutory authority, the local amenity society, the individual and the Planning Authority. It is hoped that this co-operation will be obtained since it is in their mutual interest to ensure that an environment of great value is not only maintained and preserved, but enhanced.

During the two years that this booklet has been in preparation, the Society has at every opportunity during village functions, always publicised our aims by showing the proposed area on a display map as well as additional publicity by way of the Society's own newsletter, the Bensington News, and the Parish Magazine which is delivered to every family in the village monthly.

**FORMAL APPLICATION**

May I, therefore, on behalf of the Bensington society, formally present this booklet entitled "Benson Conservation Area" as our official application to the Conservation Officer of South Oxfordshire District Council for his favourable consideration and may we hope that he will see fit to declare Benson a Conservation Area in 1978.

Michael I. Byard  
Chairman - Bensington Society  
Benson, September 1977.