

Great Missenden Parish Village Design Statement

A community-led project



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Section 1

Introduction

The Parish of Great Missenden lies at the heart of the Chilterns and includes the largest settlement within the boundaries of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. AONBs are designated as being 'the equal of the National Parks in terms of their beauty and importance'. Residents and visitors value the beautiful scenery, tranquil woodlands and historic character. The varying landscapes of the Chilterns give the villages their unique identities. The historic centre of Great Missenden is recognised and protected by the Great Missenden Conservation Area.



Missenden Abbey

The aim of the Village Design Statement is to ensure that future developments within the Parish reflect the views of local people. The intention is not to prevent change but to foresee and divert the pressures which put the local environment at risk.

This Design Statement contributes to this objective by:

- providing guidance to developers, architects, planners and residents by identifying those key characteristics which need consideration in their proposals
- ensuring that any development is sympathetic to its setting, particularly in the conservation and enhancement of the locality
- facilitating the management of change, whether large or small in scale, throughout the Parish.

Each section presents, first, a description of the character of the villages and identification of the key issues and, second, a set of guidelines printed in blue which should be used by those wishing to embark on any development in the Parish. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Chiltern Conservation Board's AONB Management Plan and their other guidelines and technical notes.



Prestwood



Great Missenden

Section 2

History

There is evidence of human activity in the Parish in the Stone Age but the first known settlements were in the Iron Age. Grims Dyke, which runs through part of Prestwood is an example of earthworks from this time. Many artifacts from this period have been found across the whole Parish.

It is thought that the Saxon village of Great Missenden, which is mentioned in the Domesday Book, was probably clustered around the church. At that time the village lay on the route between the royal estates of King Harold in High Wycombe and those of Queen Elgiva in Chesham. This route followed a path close to the site of the church. The present church of St Peter and St Paul dates from the 14th century and replaced an earlier wooden structure.

In 1133 an Augustinian Monastery was established at Missenden Abbey. It remained a religious house until the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII. A Charter granted by the King in the 13th century allowed an annual fair to take place in Great Missenden.

This was a first step towards becoming a borough. Burgage plots were laid out along the High Street and to this day the frontages of the houses to the north of The George reflect their original width. The Court House is the oldest secular building in the village located by The George, which also dates from this period. By this time, the coaching route between the Midlands and London had become important and the village grew as businesses were established to cater for travellers needs; the high entrances at the Dahl Museum and the George indicate their former roles as coaching inns. These businesses continued to develop until Victorian times when there were twelve inns along the High Street and in Church Street.



Great Missenden High Street



The Old House and cottages Church Street



Old Toll House

The other villages in the Parish were no more than hamlets, such as Potter Row and Martins End. The nucleus of what is now Prestwood was called Stoke Hamlet.

In 1637 John Hampden refused the demand of Charles I for a payment of Ship Money on the lands in the Hampden valley and this helped provoke the English Civil War. A memorial commemorating Hampden's stand against the King can still be seen in Honor End Lane.



Hampden Memorial

Maps show that there were clusters of cottages around the edge of Prestwood Common including Stoke Row (now Kiln Road), three or four houses around the Chequers Inn, and the hamlet of Martins End at the junction of Broombar Lane with a track winding up from Great Missenden. Many of these houses still exist.

In the 18th and 19th century bodgers worked in the beechwoods to produce components for the furniture industry in High Wycombe, and Prestwood was famous for its cherry orchards.

In 1892 the railway arrived and changed the whole area and economy. Great Missenden grew to accommodate those seeking to live in the country but work elsewhere. Prestwood, Ballinger and South Heath became identifiable villages with their own amenities, and the area evolved from being primarily agricultural to being part of the London commuter belt.

Despite the many changes over the years the Parish retains its character as an outstandingly beautiful area, surrounded by hills and beechwoods and with a wealth of historic sites and buildings.



Section 3

Landscape and Environment

Most of the Parish is within the Green Belt and wholly within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Its landscape is typical of the Chilterns, a tapestry of small settlements, fields bounded by hedgerows, and woodland. Rounded clay-capped chalk hills are cleft by steep-sided dry valleys that provide scenic charm. The River Misbourne runs through Great Missenden.

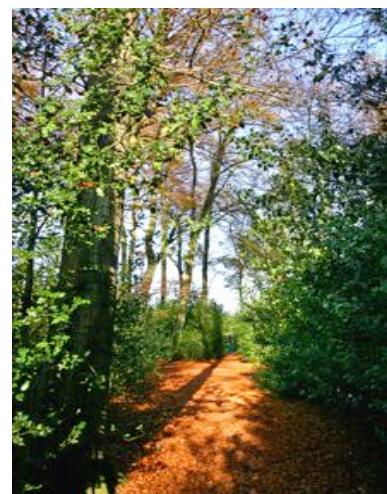


The **historic landscape** has yielded many archaeological finds in the Parish which range from the Mesolithic through to a 19th century brickworks. Landscape features include mediaeval enclosures, Iron Age workings, fish pits and a moated farmhouse. In all there are more than 200 sites recorded in the County Heritage Archive.

The **present landscape** is essentially one created by man. While none of the habitats are therefore properly “natural”, where there has been relative continuity and stability over time, natural communities of plants and wildlife have evolved. These communities are now threatened by rapid change and eradication, with a loss of biodiversity.

Farmland still accounts for 75% of the landscape in the Parish. Of this farmland, 66% is now pasture and 33% arable. Equiculture is a major growth area in the local economy.

Woodland is about 15% of the landscape and most is formally semi-ancient. Due to the slump in demand for timber, most has become neglected and lost a lot of its environmental value. Because of high populations of grey squirrels and deer there is little regeneration of beech and a risk, increased by climate change, that the beech woods could disappear over this century.



The remaining 10% of the landscape is made up of **human settlements** which have their own environmental value. About half is occupied by gardens which vary considerably in their biodiversity according to their use and management. Allotments, usually close to housing, have a role in supporting plants displaced from intensively managed farmland. Green spaces in the villages are valuable in relieving the monotony of the built environment and can support native flora and fauna.

There are **wildlife sites** in the Parish, many of which receive protection or are subject to environmental planning. However some remain without statutory protection despite having been identified as having special importance for nature conservation; these include Angling Spring Wood and Stockings Wood (at South Heath).

The **River Misbourne**, and adjacent land, is an important example of a chalk-stream, with its unique ecology. The river runs from a spring at Mobwell, opposite the Black Horse pub, through Great Missenden, Little Missenden, and Amersham to eventually join the River Colne at Denham. It has a highly variable flow and the “winterbourne” part of the river (where water only flows according to seasonal rainfall) runs from its source to Deep Mill pond. The river is an important part of the landscape supporting unique wildlife, and providing recreation opportunities. It once supported mills and fish ponds, but over the past 100 years the water level and flow have been severely reduced by water abstraction. It is in the top 25 rivers in the country affected in this way and it should be protected both from water loss and pollution.



Misbourne River

Landscape and Environment Guidelines

The character of this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty should not be jeopardised. With regard to **landscape**:

- 3.1 Any development (including agricultural and equicultural) should be sympathetic to the existing landscape. Its impact (including the effect of scale and colour) should be carefully assessed against the natural beauty of its surroundings in the AONB
- 3.2 Landscaping schemes should be included as part of all planning applications. Existing trees, hedgerows and gardens are an important part of the landscape and should be preserved. The choice of new trees should conform to the indigenous species in the local area

3.3 The role of farmers, as custodians of the landscape, is fundamental to the conservation of the AONB and they deserve the greatest possible support whilst recognising that agricultural buildings must be sited to minimise their impact on the wider landscape

3.4 The demand for **water** in the area must be minimised; water consumption can be reduced by:

- The use of water meters and grey water systems, which should be encouraged
- Where appropriate, the use of septic tanks and reed beds for effluent treatment should be encouraged to improve water table levels while reducing the stress on main sewage systems
- The use of impervious surfaces in any development should be discouraged. Their use results in a loss of rainwater to the water table, both through evaporation and drainage systems.

Section 4

Community

The Parish of Great Missenden comprises the communities of Great Missenden, Prestwood and Heath End, Ballinger, and South Heath, each with its own individual needs.

Great Missenden

Great Missenden village has a population of approximately 2000 served by a good range of shops and services, including doctors and dentists, hairdressers, restaurants, public houses, a post office, library, plus two banks and a super-market. There are several churches and a range of local societies and clubs. The Memorial Hall in Great Missenden is well used and the Buryfield is used regularly for football and other events, such as fairs and Lighthouse. There are also two children's play areas, a skateboard ramp, tennis courts, as well as tennis and cricket clubs, each with their own facilities.

There are three schools in the village – a maintained secondary and primary school and a private preparatory school. There are playgroups and a nursery school.



Great Missenden High Street



Great Missenden Skate Park

Great Missenden Guidelines

- 4.1 The full range of community facilities should be retained and improved to provide for the changing needs of residents of all ages and abilities. Great Missenden is a local centre and its facilities cater for people from all the surrounding villages.

Prestwood

Prestwood has a good variety of shops, businesses and services. These include two primary schools, medical facilities, a farm shop, dairy, garden centre, and a weekly farmers' market. The village hall, churches, Prestwood Common, and schools all facilitate the many voluntary groups, clubs, and societies; together they provide a wide range of social, educational, cultural, leisure and sporting activities.

The village has a diverse population of nearly 8,000 with the highest proportion of children and young people in the Chiltern district. Many residents travel elsewhere for their work, shopping, education, social and leisure activities. This daily exodus, coupled with the significant rise in the population with the building of Wrights Lane in the 1960s and the Lodge Lane estate in the 70's, means that Prestwood struggles to impart a distinct identity. This large increase in population has not been matched by an equivalent degree of investment in infrastructure and improvements in community facilities.



Chequers Public House Prestwood



Chequers Corner, Prestwood



Prestwood Village Hall

Prestwood Guidelines

- 4.2 Additional community facilities are needed to provide more bookable space for activities, especially for children and young people – either to extend the existing village hall or provide a purpose built community centre on Prestwood Common to replace the existing wooden structure of the Youth & Community Centre
- 4.3 Sprinters Leisure Centre should be encouraged to become more involved in village life and local clubs, with the provision of a swimming pool and affordable activities, especially for local children and young people
- 4.4 Continuing co-operation with the social housing provider for ongoing improvements to create a better environment
- 4.5 Enhancement of the centre of the village to help bring cohesion to the community.

Ballinger and South Heath



Village Church

The ridge top villages of Ballinger and South Heath are mainly residential with a growing number of younger families, many of whom moved into the area to benefit from the rural lifestyle and the education system. The villages have very few amenities.

South Heath has a village shop and post office, a thriving garden centre, a fitness gym and a restaurant located outside the village.

Community activities in Ballinger mainly revolve around the War Memorial Hall, which was donated to the village by the Liberty family, and is well used. The playing field is used by a football club and a cricket club; there is also a children's play area.

Guidelines for the whole Parish

4.6 New developments and changes to existing buildings should respect the special character of the villages in the Parish and their position within the AONB and the importance residents attach to this

4.7 The expansion of social, recreational, cultural, educational and sports facilities within the villages should be encouraged

4.8 Care for the elderly is provided by several sheltered housing sites, but provision for nursing care also needs to be addressed

4.9 New development should aid and promote good neighbourliness and reduce the fear of crime by providing open, shared, safe spaces, connecting paths and a degree of privacy

4.10 New development should provide a variety of housing types to suit people with different needs

4.11 The shortage of affordable housing needs to be addressed.

Section 5

Business

Agriculture and forestry predominate in terms of land use but, whilst vital to the landscape, make a relatively small contribution to the local economy, particularly in terms of employment. There has been a gradual loss of commercial and industrial land and property because of the demand for housing and its consequent effect on the value of land.

A high proportion of the working population travel out of the area to work and many now work from home; thus the high prosperity of the area has little relationship to the local economy.



High Street Shop, Great Missenden

Competition to small businesses serving local needs is increasing. The presence of large stores within 10 miles, home delivery from grocery supermarkets, and the growth of internet shopping have had and can be expected to continue to have a serious effect on the viability of local shops.

The main economic activities in the Parish are:

- services to residents and other small businesses
- agriculture and forestry (which employ few people)
- tourism.

There are no manufacturing or production facilities of any significant scale.



Peterley Manor Farm Shop, Prestwood

All these activities need 'protected' space and sympathetic local regulation to ensure their continuation and to provide scope for growth. Local services, which primarily serve the community, need conveniently situated premises for small businesses. Healthy tourism needs cafes, general stores and quality niche shops, while farms need to be able to change the use of redundant buildings in order to diversify and develop additional income and possibly to create employment.

Without a clear policy to promote retail and other businesses it is possible that the further loss of shops, in particular, will result in a vicious circle of reducing viability for those remaining and leave a less vital streetscape. This applies to Great Missenden High Street in particular, and the combined needs of both residents and visitors could help in its continued regeneration. The change of use of retail shops to other commercial and residential space does not support the revitalisation of the village centre.



Church Street/High Street junction Great Missenden



High Street Shop. Great Missenden

The other settlements within the Parish have different problems with regard to the provision of retail space.

The larger population of Prestwood gives the village's retailers the benefit of greater stability. There is a good variety of shops and services catering for local needs although this does not prevent occasional business failures and consequent voids. Whilst currently there is sufficient retail space in the smaller villages for local needs their survival will depend on future local support.



Prestwood shops

The loss of industrial and commercial sites to house building has resulted in a reduction in employment in the area. The balance between employment opportunities and the local workforce should not be allowed to deteriorate further, and existing employment sites should be protected.

A visitors' centre needs to be established in Great Missenden to build on the success of the Roald Dahl Museum by encouraging visitors to visit the Conservation Area and the AONB, which would help the economic health of the villages.



Roald Dahl Museum, Great Missenden

Business Guidelines

- 5.1 No further loss of retail shop space (Use Class A1) in Great Missenden High Street. The change of use of existing shop premises to A2, A3 or other uses, including residential, should not be permitted. There should also be a presumption against A2 or A3 premises in the High Street being permitted to change their use to residential
- 5.2 No net loss of employment floor space in the Parish
- 5.3 Measures to encourage new small scale businesses in the villages
- 5.4 The change of use of redundant farm buildings to small-scale commercial or industrial purposes should be permitted provided they are carefully assessed in terms of the impact they will have on highways (including traffic volumes) noise levels, pollution and on the local environment. Changes should not be permitted if they would adversely affect the amenity of adjoining residents
- 5.5 Support should be provided for the retention or establishment of shops in the smaller villages where a community initiative is presented
- 5.6 Encourage the creation of a visitors centre in Great Missenden.

Section 6

Settlement Pattern

Great Missenden Parish consists of four major settlements – Great Missenden itself, Prestwood and Heath End (which is the largest), Ballinger and South Heath. There are also scattered pockets of houses such as Potter Row, Nags Head Lane and Perks Lane, together with individual houses and farms. Great Missenden dates back to the Middle Ages but the other settlements were small hamlets until the early 20th century.

Great Missenden's expansion following the arrival of the railway in 1892 was principally to the north of the High Street, as the Missenden Estate blocked development to the south. The 1950s saw the building of the by-pass, the Misbourne estate and school, and the Winslow Field estate to the north. Later, the village expanded south to Wychwood Rise and Rook Wood Way. More recent housing development has included Abbey Walk and Wrights Yard.

In the 1890s **Prestwood** consisted only of a few scattered houses, including the vicarage and Holy Trinity Church. Similarly **Ballinger, South Heath and Heath End** were hamlets of a few houses.

In **Prestwood** the Honor Road area was developed in the 1960s to cater for London 'overspill' and, adjoining this, a later development was the Lovell estate around Lodge Lane in the 1970s. These large estates, because of their size, significantly altered the nature of the village. Apart from these estates, Prestwood has a good deal of infill house building and without the relative abundance of trees and hedges the high density of building would be exposed.

Settlement Pattern Guidelines

Different parts of the Parish exhibit distinctively different characteristics. New development and improvements or extensions to existing buildings should take these differences into account.

Great Missenden

A vital element in the protection of the historic centre of Great Missenden is its designation as a Conservation Area. This is particularly important as the village is at the centre of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its railway station acts as a gateway for visitors.

This protection must be maintained and enforced, as should existing planning policies. The unique characteristics of the village must not be lost, and the views from the surrounding

countryside of, and into, the village should be preserved as well as the views of the countryside from within the village.

It is apparent that any material development within the boundaries of Great Missenden could have a major impact on the village. In particular, rising ground levels to the west of the High Street, towards the railway, mean that almost any development in this area would be at the ridge height of most of the buildings in the High Street.

Without affecting the general nature of existing planning and other protection the following guidelines should apply to any material development within the village:

- 6.1 The use should be residential with the intention that the present retail and commercial uses within the village be confined to Station Approach and the High Street
- 6.2 No structure within the Conservation Area should exceed the ridge height of the existing buildings on the land affected and should not exceed the ridge height of adjoining buildings
- 6.3 Existing building lines should be retained
- 6.4 Vehicular access directly onto the High Street should not be increased in size, nor should any development be permitted if it would result in an increase in the number of vehicles using those access ways
- 6.5 To protect the historic buildings in the Conservation Area from structural damage, developments should not be permitted if they would intensify vehicular use of the High Street
- 6.6 Extensive landscaping should be incorporated to ensure that any new buildings blend into the landscape and do not affect the views into the Conservation Area from surrounding areas, or views from the historic High Street to the countryside
- 6.7 Applications for planning consent in the Conservation Area should be accompanied by a "Street View Plan" showing the proposed development in the context of adjoining properties.

Prestwood

Prestwood, having grown from a few houses around the Common, is now a large village (possibly the largest in England) in the Chilterns AONB. It has not had the benefit of either a coherent development plan in recent times, or the natural evolution of a traditional village over the centuries. These guidelines are to ensure that the impact of future development is minimised:



Hazell Road, Prestwood

- 6.8 Every available opportunity should be taken to improve the character and quality of the village and in particular all proposals for development should be assessed against the need to rectify the existing lack of a coherent shape and focus to the village. Those that fail to satisfy this or the following criteria should be rejected
- 6.9 Development in the locality of Chequers Parade and the Village Hall (the *de facto* village centre) should reflect the need for improved community facilities and to foster community cohesion

The Whole Parish

- 6.10 Developments that override normal Green Belt planning policy (e.g. schemes for affordable homes) should have their impact more rigorously assessed against other planning constraints, such as the effect on Conservation Areas, neighbouring listed buildings, existing community facilities and increased traffic
- 6.11 Developments within the AONB should conserve and/or enhance its natural beauty
- 6.12 Subject to the above, no new building should be permitted outside the existing built-up envelope of each of the villages
- 6.13 New housing developments should be of small scale (typically less than 6 units) so that they integrate into the surrounding community and in any event should be conditional on trees and hedges being retained or planted
- 6.14 New buildings proposed near to older, traditional, buildings should be sympathetic to the style and scale of the existing buildings.

Section 7

Buildings

Great Missenden

Great Missenden has a rich variety of building styles and materials with no single style predominating. The old and the new generally intermingle harmoniously. The variety of shapes and styles in the High Street represent the way the village has developed. The buildings are diverse but are comfortable together. There is a total of 50 listed buildings in Great Missenden, mostly in the Conservation Area with a further 50 listed buildings elsewhere in the Parish.

Walls in the village are predominantly red brick. Many buildings are constructed of a mixture of brick and flint. Tile hanging is also in evidence. There are some good examples of authentic exposed timber framing and other, less convincing, examples of applied timber framing. Many walls are rendered and painted and there is some pebbledash. There is also some dark-stained weatherboarding.

Roofs in the historic core of the village are generally finished with either plain clay tiles or natural slates. Interlocking tiles have been used on many post-war developments. There is a variety of gables, the pitch varying with the roofing material. There are some hipped roofs but few half hips. Gables with scalloped bargeboards are a feature in some parts of the village.

There are many examples of older dormer windows throughout the village.



The attractive skyline created by the roofs can be seen from vantage points such as Frith Hill, the Parish church and popular walks above the village.



Doors and porches of

domestic buildings are generally typical of the period in which they were built. Doors are mostly plain, some are partly glazed and others have fanlights. Porches and canopies are usually small and can be a decorative feature of the house.

There is a large range of doors and porches on modern houses, some of them based on traditional forms.



Windows are generally small-paned in wood frames, with vertical sash, horizontal sash and casement windows in evidence. Some have leaded lights. Most frames are painted but, in a few older buildings and some new ones, stain finishes are also seen. Plastic framed sealed unit windows are found in many new buildings and, unfortunately, as replacements in some older buildings.

Chimneys are a feature of the skyline, although the relatively narrow streets can reduce their prominence at street level. Modern chimneys have been used successfully, notably in barn conversions.



Prestwood

Over the years there has been a great diversity of building styles in both size and shape to create the present village. The village contrasts older areas of development such as the High Street, Wycombe Road and Moat Lane with development in more recent years in the Lodge Lane area to the south of the village. This brings a more suburban element to development within an area that was originally common land. On the fringes of the village the areas of special residential character retain openness and a green boundary between the built up area and the Green Belt.

Overall the village has traditional design but given the great mixture of styles, ridge heights, roof pitches, elevation materials and brick types used there is little cohesion of buildings in the village or a particular 'Prestwood style'. The Chilterns method of brick and flint elevations is in evidence throughout and should continue as a vernacular method of construction, using only hand crafted flint work in preference to prefabricated flint block work. Features such as dentil courses to brickwork reflecting local Chiltern style, using locally sourced bricks and rendered painted wall finishes are preferable to other treatments. There are also a number of dwellings with timber framing with painted rendered panels.



Roofs are generally finished either with clay tiles or slate but again no particular style predominates. There is a variety of gable styles, some with bargeboards and a number of roofs have pitched dormer windows which again create a 'village' feel to the settlement.

Ballinger and South Heath

The position of these villages on the ridge top has contributed to the development of their own unique character. Whilst there is an eclectic mixture of architecture this blends into a rural whole.

There are few pockets of undeveloped land but where this occurs development should be appropriate and sympathetic to its environment.

Building Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure the retention of the character of the buildings and the built environment of the individual villages that make up the Parish. They are of particular importance in the context of the historic village of Great Missenden. They should be read in conjunction with the Chiltern Conservation Board's Building Design Guide and the supplementary technical notes on Chiltern Building Materials.

7.1 Style

The overall quality of a building and its design is more important than the style adopted.

- Design should be functional and practical. Where possible, construction methods should be appropriate for the building's use
- Architectural detail should be restrained. Copying features of older buildings can enhance a new design but slavish or exaggerated imitation of older features can give rise to a building that is little more than pastiche
- No individual architectural feature should be designed in isolation to other details; the importance is in the overall composition of the elevations, particularly on the public side(s) of a building
- Good modern design will be encouraged but it is vital that new buildings and extensions enhance their surroundings



7.2 Size and proportion

- The overall proportion of a development will be an important factor in determining its suitability
- New buildings should not dominate neighbouring buildings and ridge heights must respect the existing skyline

7.3 Construction materials

Suitable construction materials for **walls** include:

- Flint: using only hand crafted flint work. See the Chiltern Conservation Board's supplementary technical note on Chiltern flint
- Brick: red mixtures, hand cut or of rustic nature. See the Chiltern Conservation Board's supplementary technical note on Chiltern Brick. Local bricks are from a wide variety of types
- Dark-stained feather edged boarding. This is not a traditional construction material for domestic buildings, but it has been used successfully in conversions and some new houses and may be used to add variety and 'soften' developments

7.4 Roof construction should reflect the Chiltern Conservation Board's supplementary technical note on Chiltern's Roofing Materials and, additionally, respect the historic shapes and materials in the Great Missenden Conservation Area, namely:

- Brown or red mixture plain clay tiles
- Black slate

7.5 Designers of new buildings should also note that:

- Decorative bargeboards are a feature of a number of buildings
- Traditional plaster rendering is evident on many historic buildings
- Dormers should preferably be above the gutter line and pitched, reflecting the pitch of the main roof and subordinate in scale
- Flat roofs are usually not appropriate, and rarely enhance the skyline

7.6 Doors & porches are an important design element and should generally be in keeping with the style and construction of the building:

- Doors are traditionally panelled, sometimes including glazing
- UPVC doors are usually not appropriate, particularly when used to "improve" older properties



7.7 Windows are the eyes of a building and window detailing, particularly in proportion, is critical to the overall design and appearance. New designs and alterations should take into account the following:

- On new buildings, the frame material is of less importance than the style of window, although timber windows are preferred in the historic parts of the Great Missenden village. Where frames are plastic, the frame and glazing bars should not be too thick. False glazing bars should not be used but where they are essential, applied or bonded bars are preferable to glazing bars sandwiched in sealed units
- In older buildings, the traditional style and materials of the windows should be retained wherever possible. UPVC windows can be appropriate if they fully match the form and proportion of the originals

7.8 Chimneys should reflect the character of neighbouring properties, and enhance the skyline. The use of chimneys will be encouraged where appropriate.

7.9 Garages and parking

- Car parking should not predominate. Garages should not overshadow houses
- Garages must not be converted to living accommodation unless there is sufficient off-road parking
- Open parking sensibly landscaped must only be surfaced with permeable materials

7.10 Satellite dishes and aerials are increasingly visible in the Great Missenden Conservation Area and this has an adverse impact on the skyline. This observation is equally applicable to other villages in the Parish. Existing regulations should be enforced

7.11 Solar Panels

- should be sited on a building so as to minimise the effect on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area
- where solar panels are free standing. i.e. not mounted on a building or other structure, or, where the building on which solar panels are to be sited is in a Conservation Area, no part of the solar installation should be visible from any highway or open space bounding the property

7.12 Future development should harmonise not only with the current dwellings but also with the rural location of the area

7.13 Development plans should avoid urban and suburban uniformity and should be kept to small numbers, whilst utilising styles and materials that are in keeping with the villages

7.14 Landscaping is of particular importance and will help soften hard landscaping and integrate them into their surroundings



Example of soft landscaping

7.15 Grass verges should be retained and encouraged to create a more rural appearance

7.16 Development should be restricted to infill as is Green Belt policy. This should avoid overcrowding and preserve the openness of the area

7.17 Green Belt boundaries should be actively retained

7.18 Extensions should be subordinate in their bulk and form to the main building

7.19 Permitted Development should be carried out sympathetically to avoid contributing to sub-urbanisation of the countryside.



Section 8

Open and Connecting Spaces

Open spaces, and the views to the surrounding countryside, contribute greatly to the visual character of our villages. The open spaces are also a valuable recreational and social amenity to residents and visitors, as is the extensive network of public footpaths which provides ready access to the surrounding countryside.

Great Missenden

Buryfield is the principal open space in the village, is popular with local people and visitors, and is frequently used for special events. It provides a safe play area for children, as well as tennis courts, a football pitch, and a skate board area.



The attractive and historic High Street has many open spaces between its buildings. These provide a strong visual connection with the wider AONB within which Great Missenden sits. There are many vantage points in the surrounding hills that provide views of, and into, the village.



Prestwood

Prestwood Common is the village's main open space and provides a children's play area, a youth activity wall, football pitches, and several small club buildings. There are many smaller open spaces in the village including a number of ponds (mostly restored by Prestwood Nature) and several well-used allotments.

There is a considerable network of public footpaths leading beyond the village and alleyways within it, many of which are ancient rights of way.



The main "focus" of the village is in the area of the village hall and the shops along Chequers Parade. It is fairly open in character but, because of the piecemeal nature of its development, needs a plan for improvement.

Ballinger and South Heath

These hilltop villages have an open feel because development has been predominantly linear and so most properties have a rural outlook. The main community open space is Ballinger Playing Field which provides facilities for football and cricket as well as a small play area for young children. There is also a small play area in South Heath and several allotment sites in the area.

As elsewhere in the locality there are many public rights of way, leading into the wider AONB.



Open and Connecting Spaces - Guidelines for the whole Parish

8.1 Open spaces are an essential local amenity and provide important visual links throughout the villages to the open countryside beyond.

8.2 Developers should recognise and respect that:

- All the open spaces in the villages, whether large or small, must be retained to ensure the villages' rural and historic character (and their value to flora and fauna) is not diminished
- Any future development should include green open spaces incorporating suitable planting schemes. Landscaping is of particular importance and will help to soften developments and integrate them into their surroundings. The planting of trees is particularly encouraged
- Important vistas must be protected, particularly those which allow views of the countryside from within the villages; where possible, new vistas should be created.

8.3 Footpaths, public rights of way and bridleways are an important recreational and social asset for the villages:

- All existing footpaths, rights of way, and bridleways should be kept open and maintained sensitively in a condition appropriate to their rural setting
- Schemes to promote awareness and use of the rights of way that give access to the countryside should be supported
- Proposals to provide additional public access to the countryside, particularly circular routes and links to existing paths, will be encouraged.



8.4 Boundaries are an important characteristic of open spaces and can impair or enhance their appearance:

- Boundary materials should be in keeping with the construction style of the immediate surroundings
- Hedges should generally be retained and encouraged in preference to fences and walls
- Quick-growing conifers such as *cupressus leylandii* are inappropriate in this largely rural environment. Native broadleaf species are preferred.

Section 9

Highways and Traffic

The Parish benefits from good rail services to London and Aylesbury. However, for those wishing to travel elsewhere, limited bus services make residents very dependent on private transport.

As a consequence, local roads are heavily used, particularly the High Streets of Great Missenden and Prestwood, the A4128 and the A413. As few roads were designed to meet the needs of modern traffic, this leads to a number of problems. In particular:

- Speeding, particularly through the narrow roads in the villages. Great Missenden has a 20mph speed restriction which is not enforced and rarely observed
- Heavy goods vehicles using unsuitable roads and ignoring weight restrictions
- Some junctions are dangerous, such as that on the A413 by the Chiltern Hospital which needs to be improved

Another consequence of the dependence on private transport is that the provision of car parking and charges are important to residents and local businesses.

Highways and Traffic Guidelines

9.1 Traffic

- Speed limits throughout the area including the outlying villages should be enforced - in particular the 20mph limit in Great Missenden High Street, the 30mph limit in High Street Prestwood and on the Wycombe Road. 20mph speed limits should be introduced around local schools
- More effective measures to warn motorists of 20mph speed limits are necessary
- The speed limit on that part of the A413 which is within the Parish should be reduced to 50 mph
- The signage of existing weight and length restrictions for heavy goods vehicles should be improved and then enforced. Routes avoiding the main streets and bridges should be clearly identified so that traffic can choose alternative routes

- New weight and length restrictions should be introduced and enforced on roads unsuitable for heavy goods vehicles, particularly the High Streets and narrow lanes
- The requirements of pedestrians in the High Streets should have priority
- School buses to the Misbourne School should be required to use the Link Road and the A413 and avoid Great Missenden High Street
- Specific provision for cycle routes should be encouraged - especially linking Great Missenden to Prestwood via Martinsend Lane
- The recommendations in the Jacobs Babbie A4128 Route Strategy Survey report (2005) to the Bucks CC on the A4128 Great Missenden-Prestwood - High Wycombe should be fully implemented.

9.2 Parking

The current subsidised parking by the Parish Council for the first free hour in the car parks in Prestwood High Street and at Buryfield Great Missenden should remain, not least to assist in the economic regeneration of both High Streets.

Appropriate parking provision should be included in each Planning Application relevant to the proposed use to avoid parking spreading into nearby roads.

9.3 Public Transport

- The existing train service should be retained
- Existing local bus services must be retained and every effort made to expand the available destinations and frequency
- Additional bus shelters should be provided in a style appropriate to their setting and existing shelters properly maintained.

9.4 Highways

- Roadside verges, roundabouts and drainage should be regularly maintained, treated and cleaned including those on approaches to the villages
- Verges should continue to be only partially cut back to encourage wild flower seeding
- New kerbs should be of granite rather than concrete

- Street signage and lighting in the villages should continue to reflect the village setting
- Account should be taken of the Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Highways in the Chilterns.



Sources and Links

Section 1 refers to the Chiltern Conservation Board's AONB Management Plan and their other guidelines and technical notes. Copies can be found at:

www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/what-we-do/planning-development/buildings-design-guidance.html

Section 3 includes facts sourced from the Environmental Audit prepared by Prestwood Nature for an area of the mid-Chilterns that includes most of the Great Missenden Parish. A copy can be found at:

www.prestwoodnature.org.uk/images/PrestwoodDocuments/envaud.pdf

Section 3 was also written with reference to:

- VH Wooton "To rescue a River" Chiltern Society, 1987
- VH Wooton "Misbourne Miscellany" Chiltern Society, 1990
- Community Vision for HP16 – Environment Group report
- Conversation with Allen Beechey, Chalk Streams Project Officer, March 2010.

Section 6 refers to the Great Missenden Conservation Area details of which can be found at: http://www.chiltern.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?downloadID=631&fileID=1964

Section 7 refers to the Chiltern Conservation Board's Design Guide and the supplementary technical notes on Chiltern Building Materials. Copies can be found at: www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/what-we-do/planning-development/buildings-design-guidance.html

Section 9 refers to the A4128 Jacobs Bابتie Report. A copy can be found on the Great Missenden Parish Council website: <http://www.greatmissendenpc.co.uk/>

Section 9 also refers to the Environmental Guidelines for Management of Highways in the Chilterns. A copy can be found at: www.buckscc.gov.uk/Chilterns_Highway_Environmental_Guidelines

Many local groups and organisations make efforts to conserve and enhance the landscape and environment in the Great Missenden Parish. The following list is non-exhaustive:

- Chilterns Conservation Board: <http://www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board.html>
- Sustainable Development Fund: <http://www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/sustainable-development-fund.html>
- Chilterns Society: <http://www.chilternsociety.org.uk>
- Woodland Trust: <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk>
- Forestry Commission: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk>
- Prestwood Nature: <http://www.prestwoodnature.org.uk>
- Chiltern Woodlands Project: www.bucksinfo.net/woodland-trust-chilterns-group/
- Chilterns Historic Environment Group: <http://www.chilternsociety.org.uk/activ-historic.php>

Community Involvement and Consultation

The Great Missenden Village Design Statement, covering Prestwood & Heath End, Great Missenden, Ballinger and South Heath, has been drafted by a group of volunteers from the local community.

This was in response to a recommendation from the Community Vision for HP16, a community survey published in 2009. The Great Missenden Parish Council agreed to take the lead in preparing the Design Statement and in the May 2009 edition of The Link asked for volunteers.

The draft copy of the statement was submitted to the Great Missenden Parish Council in September 2011 before being presented for public consultation.

Posters, throughout the Parish, advertised the period of public consultation, during February and March 2012. Copies of the draft Statement were distributed to various locations, including the Library, Dentists' and Doctors' surgeries and Prestwood Post Office and village hall. A copy of the draft Statement was also sent to the Chiltern Conservation Board, the Chiltern Society and to the Chiltern District Council. It could also be accessed on the Parish Council website www.greatmissendenpc.co.uk and at the Parish Office (Mon-Thurs 9.30-3.30)

The Source, a community newspaper distributed free to all households, ran a full-length feature on the Village Design Statement, during the consultation stage.

There was an opportunity to discuss the draft Statement at a drop-in session at Great Missenden Library on Saturday 10th March 2012 (1.30-3.30pm)

Comments on the Statement, during this public consultation, were to be submitted to the Parish Office by Saturday 17th March 2012 either by email to parishclerk@onetel.net or by written response to The Parish Office, GMPC, Buryfield, Link Road, Great Missenden HP16 9AE

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the Great Missenden Parish Council, the Great Missenden Parish Revitalisation Group and to all members of the community who have contributed to the preparation of this statement.

Map of the whole Parish

