



**Mill Lane
Conservation Area Character Appraisal
& Management Plan**

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PART 1 – CHARACTER APPRAISAL

1. Introduction to Conservation Areas

1.1 Definition of a Conservation Area

Conservation Areas are defined as:

Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Such areas can be rural, urban or mixed but all have special character. Once designated the local planning authority has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area, in the exercise of its planning functions. Over 9000 conservation areas have now been designated in the UK. The responsibility for the designation of such areas and their protection lies primarily with the local planning authority.

1.2 Planning Policy Context

1.2.1 National Planning Policy

The concept of conservation areas arose from the 1967 Civic Amenities Act and is now contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (P(LBCA)Act 1990). Section 71 of this Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the future preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas and for this to be reviewed from time to time. As part of the conservation area designation, local authorities are required to produce a character appraisal. For existing conservation areas, the provision of up to date character appraisals are advised as a matter of best practice. A clear, comprehensive appraisal of the character of a conservation area provides a sound basis for development management, guiding action and for developing initiatives to improve the area if required.

Additional government guidance regarding the management of historic buildings and conservation areas is set out within the *National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)* which has superseded *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPS5)*. This states that “*When considering the designation of conservation areas, Local Planning Authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural and historic interest and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.*” (paragraph 127) The current proposal for reviewing the Conservation Area Character Appraisal has been considered against this test and is thought to comply with it.

The Core Principles (Para 17) of the National Planning Policy Framework also lay great emphasis on conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Para 126 lists the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring and the desirability of new development to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

1.2.2 Local Planning Policy

Local planning policies are set out in the Local Plan and other planning policy documents. The Local Plan currently comprises the Local Plan (Core Strategy) and the Local Plan (Allocations). Conservation area documents such as this Appraisal will form part of the portfolio of planning policy documents which act as a material consideration in planning decisions.

1.2.3 Conservation Area Character Appraisals

English Heritage has produced various guidance on conservation areas. The most recent 'Understanding Place; Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' (March 2011) has been consulted in the preparation of this Appraisal.

The key features of a character appraisal are to:-

- Identify the significant features which contribute towards its character
- Provide a clear historical and visual assessment of the place and generate awareness of the area's significance to key stakeholders.
- Provide residents with a clear understanding of what is important about the conservation area
- Provide the Council with valuable information which can guide and inform planning related decisions in that area.

1.2.4 Management Proposals

An important outcome of character appraisals will be to inform appropriate management proposals for the area, which English Heritage advise should be set out in a specific document called a Management Plan. The objective of the Management Plan is to identify actions for the preservation or enhancement of the particular conservation area, such as proposals to address buildings at risk, environmental enhancement etc.

2. Location and Context

2.1 Location and Setting

Mill Lane lies approximately three quarters of a mile to the south of Havant town centre and the A27 bypass which leads to Chichester. It is situated between the main road (A3023) to Hayling Island and the coast on a low lying plain, at the confluence of Langstone and Chichester Harbours. Langstone Bridge (leading to Hayling Island) lies immediately to the south of the conservation area. Away from the main traffic arteries, areas of tranquillity can be found, in particular adjacent to the harbour edge.

Mill Lane was first designated in March 1985 and is one of four conservation areas in the Borough which border Chichester and Langstone Harbours – see Map. Two of the Conservation Areas at Emsworth and Langstone recognise and seek to protect the townscape quality adjacent to the waterfront. The designations of Mill Lane and Warblington protect the more open, historic landscape adjacent to Langstone and Chichester Harbours. The coast defines the southern boundary of the conservation area.

The conservation area encapsulates what was part of the historical hamlet of Langstone that evolved around the harbour, but is now divided by Langstone Road (A3023). To the east and immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area lies the popular path, known as the Hayling Billy Leisure Trail which follows the route of the former railway that connected Havant with Hayling Island. The western boundary of the conservation area is formed by the Lavant stream that runs south to Langstone Harbour; the land adjacent to the stream is largely undeveloped.

The conservation area straddles two types of topography including the low lying shoreline to the south and the flat green fields which lie beyond the conservation area to the north and west. The conservation area therefore is generally flat and as a result of its proximity to the harbour, most of the conservation area is situated within Flood Zones 2 and 3 as identified by the Environment Agency. This means that the area is more susceptible to a risk of flooding. In terms of providing means against the impact of flooding for individual properties, further information can be sought from the Council or the Environment Agency.

2.2 National Significance

The southern portion of the conservation area has a unique coastal setting, with the harbour and its wetlands having national and international significance for their environmental and nature conservation interest. This is recognised through a number of designations, including the International Wetlands (RAMSAR) convention, European designated Special Area for Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area, and nationally designated Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI).

3.0 Historical Development of Mill Lane Conservation Area

3.1 Archaeology

This area of Langstone Harbour has evidence of human activity from prehistoric times to the present day. Finds of stone tools show that people were living in the harbour and were probably hunting and gathering food and resources. Neolithic stone tools have been also found to the south of the conservation area. In the Bronze Age this area appears to have been a focus for burying the dead with a number of cremation burials found during excavation for a pipeline in the garden of a property on Mill Lane.

In later pre-history the production of salt became an important aspect of this area and within the conservation area Iron Age/Romano-British pottery has been found associated with evidence of salt production to the south of Mill Lane. There is a historic Saltern known to be located where the stream that runs to the west of Mill Lane runs into the Harbour. The origins of this are unknown but it may be a continuation of salt production that was taking place in this area for over 2000 years.

Langstone was an important area in the Roman period and the A3023 follows the line of the Roman road that ran from Hayling Island to Havant. While there is no record of Roman remains in the Mill Lane Conservation Area there is the potential for previously unidentified Roman remains to be present, particularly relating to salt production.

3.2 The Development of Mill Lane

An aspect of the character of the Mill Lane Conservation Area is its historical association with Langstone Village. In 1817 Butler wrote in the 'Hundred of Bosmere' the "The hamlet of Langstone stands at the entrance to the ford or wadeway and contains three mills, twelve houses and a public house". The section of Langstone Road from Langstone High Street southwards did not exist at this time and Mill Lane was a western extension of the High Street giving access to the 'third' mill, known as West Mill, and beyond to South Moor.

The construction of the first road bridge to Hayling Island in 1824 bisected the hamlet and separated Mill Lane from Langstone Village. This separation was reinforced in 1865 when the branch railway line was constructed from Havant to Langstone Shore. Unlike the earlier road link between Hayling Island and the mainland, which followed Langstone High Street to the wadeway, these newer communication routes bypassed the area and both Langstone High Street and Mill Lane were spared the consequences of increasing traffic remaining largely unspoilt.

Significant residential development has followed the construction of the main road creating a largely linear suburban townscape of very different character to the historic (Langstone)village core. The most significant recent development within the conservation area is Harbourside, first approved in the 1960's but not completed until the early 1990's.

4.0 Area Definition - Entrances & Boundaries

The conservation area is well defined by the immediately adjacent Hayling Billy Trail to the east, the Lavant Stream to the west, fields/meadow to the north and harbour to the south forming distinct physical boundaries.

4.1 Entrances

The approaches to conservation areas are always important in defining the boundaries and establishing the special characteristics of the area. There is one main vehicular entrance into the conservation area, which is from Langstone Road (A3023).

There is a pedestrian entrance into the conservation area, via the Hayling Billy Trail which follows the route of the Havant to Hayling Island railway line. The Wayfarers Walk / Solent Way also bisects the Conservation Area from the harbour to the west to Langstone / Warblington to the east.

4.1.1 Vehicular entrance into Mill Lane

The only vehicular entrance into the conservation area is characterised by wide visibility splays on either side. The entrance is demarked with mature trees on either side with mature hedging stretching to the south that also bounds the Hayling Billy Trail.

The wide, defined entrance into the conservation area is a transition point between the suburban housing along the busy main road, and a more tranquil environment with houses set in larger plots. This is further emphasised by the trees and hedging which act as focal points to entering a more rural area.

4.2 Boundaries

4.2.1 Eastern boundary with Langstone Road

Langstone Road physically separates the Mill Lane conservation area from Langstone conservation area to the east. The physical separation is reinforced by a mix of mature hedging and trees that form the boundary to the Hayling Billy Trail. This feeling of green boundaries continues from the entrance into Mill Lane to the properties at Harbourside; a number of the individual trees adjoining this route are protected by tree preservation orders.

4.2.2 Southern, Northern and Western Boundaries

The southern boundary of the conservation area fronts onto Langstone Harbour. This is characterised by the strong shoreline and back drop of the large rear gardens of 5 – 9 Harbourside. The northern and western boundaries adjoin the open land which forms the rural backdrop. The land to the west forms part of South Moor and lies beyond the Lavant stream; that immediately to the north is an open field which is separated from the conservation area by a well defined urban edge comprising a mix of brick wall and boundary fencing/planting. These adjacent open areas form an important component of the setting for the conservation area.

The present conservation area boundary embraces the well defined historically significant area of Mill Lane. The robust boundaries form an appropriate visual containment to the area. It is not considered that any changes are required to the present conservation area boundary.

5.0 Spatial Analysis

The spatial analysis looks in detail at the components that help define the area's special characteristics.

5.1 Development Pattern

The conservation area is dominated by large houses set within generous plots. These plots often have dense hedgerows and front garden vegetation that retain a semi-rural character. The later development of Harbourside although of a more suburban design maintains this pattern of development and is not particularly prominent from Mill Lane. It is enhanced by the mature trees, many of which are the subject of a tree preservation order.

The garden sizes and green boundaries of the properties in the conservation area help to retain a rural feel to this area. Mill Lane in particular with its hedgerows and trees retains the character of a rural lane and although now the focal point of a cluster of detached houses, these generally occupy spacious well landscaped gardens and sit comfortably within this rural character.

5.2 Use and Activity

The Conservation Area is now wholly residential although its history with the now demolished mill relates to a more commercial past. The coastal setting of the Conservation Area makes it a prime location in which to live and also a popular destination for leisure activities. Popular pursuits include walking, cycling, rowing or sailing.

Due to its coastal location, the character of the area can change significantly depending on the season and weather. On crisp winter days it is often a tranquil back water. In contrast balmy summer days will often see people cycling or walking along the Hayling Billy line or the Wayfarers Walk/Solent Way coastal path.

For those visiting the area there is very little parking available within the Conservation Area itself. Free parking is available in an area adjacent to the Ship Inn within the Langstone Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is connected to Havant town centre by Langstone Road, which is used by local bus services. The former Hayling Billy line is now a pedestrian walkway and cycle path which also links the conservation area to the town centre.

5.3 Open Spaces & Trees

There are no formally laid out or purpose built open spaces in the conservation area. The area does, however, benefit from the open fields and network of public footpaths, including two long distance footpaths (Solent Way & Wayfarers Walk) that follow the shoreline to Portsmouth or the Hayling Billy Trail from Havant to Hayling Island. These features, together with the shoreline (particularly revealed at low tide) and the harbour itself, provide opportunities for informal recreation.

Trees make an important contribution to the areas semi-rural character and have interim protection by virtue of the conservation area designation. The more important specimen trees within Mill Lane and Harbourside are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. There are a number of fine specimen's visible framing the street scene, front gardens and forming a backdrop to the buildings where trees are located to the rear. Views from within the Conservation Area are enhanced by the constantly changing colour and form of the trees

5.4 Views and Vistas

From within the heart of the Conservation Area the flat topography, built form and natural features limit views across the landscape to the harbour edge and beyond. However, from the harbour side, there are footpaths where the views are long and open to the surrounding harbour landscape.

Looking outwards from the harbour itself, there are significant views west towards South Moor and onto Portsmouth in the distance. To the south the rural shoreline of Hayling Island can be seen.

Despite the newer of development of Harbourside, the Mill Lane Conservation Area still makes an important contribution to the open sweep of land, when viewed from the harbour running from marshland at South Moor to the west and Hayling Island to the South.

5.5 Building Types, Styles, Materials and Local Details

Buildings are generally of a medium to large domestic scale, with fully pitched roofs, mainly detached two-storey and set in generous sized plots. Roof types are mostly gabled or hipped with plain tiling or natural slate being the noticeable materials. Buildings are usually orientated with the ridge running parallel to the road, and many are set back from the front boundary.

Generally red brick and plain clay tiles predominate as the principal building materials, although some buildings have tile hanging and others slate roofing. There

is also the use of well executed flint work on Flint House and the associated Flint Lodge. With some notable exceptions (see 5.6 below), the area is not architecturally rich. Its character is derived more from the way the buildings nestle in the landscape.

There is relatively little punctuation of roofs by dormers. Where such features do prevail they are of a scale and proportion that does not dominate. Chimneys are an important architectural feature both in relation to individual buildings and also as part of the wider built townscape.

Window openings are generally side hung casements which are well proportioned adopting a vertical emphasis. The vast majority of the windows in the area are double glazed with a mixture of UPVc and timber frames. Due to the 20th century style of housing that is prevalent in the Conservation Area, double glazing can be more readily assimilated without compromising character. The use of UPVc windows is a more negative feature, particularly on the older properties and could be considered as an area for further control in the future.

5.6 Particularly notable unlisted buildings and buildings which have positive streetscape value

The area contains no buildings on either the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest or the Council's Local List. There is nevertheless a number of buildings which make a strong and positive visual contribution to the character of the area. Their style, character, historical form, association and/or building materials are all examples of what can make these buildings locally distinctive. These include:

- West Mill

West Mill is situated at the western end of Mill Lane and is a two storey red brick building with blue headers and a clay tiled roof. This building and the two other buildings within its curtilage, now used as a garage and studio are clearly identified on the 1865 Ordnance Survey Map and on the Lewis' 1833 Parish Map as part of the building group associated with West Mill. The Mill building itself, an imposing five storey brick structure was demolished in 1936 although the mill race, mill pond and quay can still be seen. The Lavant Stream, rush of water and associated sound, adds to the ambience of this part of the Conservation Area.

- Flint House & Flint Lodge

Flint Lodge (now divorced from Flint House) is situated at the eastern end of Mill Lane, and forms a distinctive feature at the entrance to the conservation area. Flint House is a more imposing building once served by the Lodge, and is partially concealed by tall boundary trees and hedges. Both were constructed in the late 19th century. The buildings are faced in knapped flint with stone window bays, brick dressings and natural slate roofs.

5.7 Important Walls and Boundary Features

Walls, hedgerows and low timber fences provide a strong definition of property boundaries throughout the conservation area. Walls of particular note are those that would have formed the original boundary of Flint House to the north and west. Both walls are constructed of red brick and are fairly high. The north wall delineates the northern boundary of the conservation area from the open field. This has a strong

visual presence in views from Langstone Road separating the different character of these land uses.

Other significant walls are on the boundary of Sweetwaters with an access driveway that leads to Tulip Tree House, and the flint and brick walls leading to West Mill.

5.8 Public Realm (Roads, Pavements & Street Furniture)

The public realm comprises those features which contribute to the publicly visible and accessible landscape. It is the treatment of the spaces between the buildings, made up of elements such as pavements, surfacing, street furniture, street lighting, signage and trees.

Other than buildings, boundary walls and hedging, due to the rural character along Mill Lane, there is little in the way of street furniture. Street lighting only exists in Harbourside which consists of black, cast iron poles topped with glass lanterns specifically selected in recognition of the Conservation Area.

In terms of paving there is very little due to the rural nature of the Conservation Area. A small section of tarmac pavement exists, leading from Mill Lane to Harbourside. However, the remainder is characterised by grass verges and hedging.

6.0 Review of positive and negative features and opportunities for enhancement

6.1 Positive features

- Trees

A varied and abundant selection of trees, largely in private ownership but clearly visible from the public realm are a great asset contributing to the character and appearance of the conservation area

- Rural character

The conservation area is dominated by large houses set within generous plots. These plots often have dense hedgerows and front garden vegetation that retain a semi-rural character.

- Views

Views into and out of the Conservation Area add to the character of the area - open and long views out from the harbourside; large gardens and vegetation when looking into Mill Lane.

- Water

The location adjacent to the coast and open nature of the foreshore. The Lavant Stream, bridge crossings and the sound of water, particularly over the old mill race.

6.2 Negative features

- Loss of architectural features

It has been noted that some of the unlisted 'positive' buildings in the Conservation Area have been adversely affected by the insertion of Upvc windows or doors. These changes are usually 'permitted development'.

- Roofs and Dormers

The installation of solar panels on the front or otherwise prominent roofslopes has interrupted what was a simple receding roof form.

6.3 Opportunities for enhancement

In Mill Lane most opportunities for enhancement will occur through the careful implementation of local and national planning policy in relation to planning permission and conservation area consent applications.

- Quality of New Development

The Mill Lane Conservation Area has enjoyed success as a settlement over many years and as a result has developed an attractive high quality built environment, well connected to and reflective of the surrounding landscape. However, pressure to develop land and provide housing is ever-present in today's society and there is likely to be continued pressure in the medium term to find and develop sites adjacent to the Conservation Area. Such proposals can produce both opportunities and threats and would need to be considered very carefully in order that the community benefits and importance of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are given sufficient weight and are not compromised by the desire for commercial and financial gain.

- Article 4 Direction

Under the auspices of the 1990 Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act there is a mechanism to remove permitted development rights by way of an Article 4 Direction. An Article 4 Direction could be implemented in the area to promote the retention of timber framed windows

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Part 2 – Management Plan

1. Introduction

Part 1 of this document, the Character Appraisal, has identified the special positive qualities of the Mill Lane Conservation Area which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. Part 2 of this document, the Management Plan, aims to build upon the positive features and assess the negative features and issues which have already been identified, in order to provide a series of Issues and Recommendations for improvement and change.

The structure and scope of this document is based on the suggested framework published by English Heritage in Understanding place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2011). Both the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Management Strategy will be subject to monitoring and reviews on a rolling work programme.

2. Issues and Recommendations

The following section details proposed actions to address some of the principle positive and negative features which were identified as part of the Character Appraisal process in Bentley in order to ensure the continued protection and enhancement of the conservation area.

Issue 1 Erosion of Character

a) The loss of original architectural details

Within the conservation area there are buildings which have been unsympathetically altered with solar panels prominently situated on principle roof slopes. These currently fall outside of planning control, classed as “permitted development”. Cumulatively this can have a significant negative effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Whilst solar energy has many positives in an historic asset such as a Conservation Area they should be sited in less prominent positions: on rear roof slopes, in roof valleys, behind parapets, within the perimeter of flat roofs, on ancillary buildings etc.

Recommendation 1

Implementation of a selective Article 4 Direction within the Mill Lane Conservation Area, removing permitted development rights to replace windows and doors in the positive buildings as outlined in the appraisal.

Consideration should also be given to a wider Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for the removal of chimneys and the introduction of solar thermal/photovoltaic equipment. This will ensure control of elements that could cause potential of harm to the character of the conservation area.

Issue 2 Impact of New Development

a) Setting of the Conservation Area

Mill Lane is an attractive residential area. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal has identified the significance of views into and out of the conservation area, and the rural character as an important component of its setting. There are very few if any small sites within the boundary of the conservation area that could be re-developed, however there are some larger sites close to the boundary which could in the future come under pressure for development and may detrimentally impact on its setting.

b) Significant Buildings

Buildings individually and collectively contribute to the area's special character. Their impact depends on their visual presence, quality of detail relative to the intended use and character. As part of the appraisal process, buildings have been assessed for the contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. As recommended by English Heritage and in the NPPF positive buildings have been identified and are marked on the Appraisal Map. Generally, these are individual buildings which retain some original character and architectural detailing, adding strong interest and vitality to the character and appearance of the conservation area. By flagging up the buildings in this way it is hoped their value will be more widely understood and appreciated. An appropriate robust approach is required to their retention and to avoid unsympathetic alterations.

There are no buildings that significantly detract from the character of the area. Many of the buildings have a more passive neutral role, neither having a significantly marked impact in enhancing or detracting from the quality of the area. These buildings are left unmarked on the Appraisal Map.

c) Trees and Landscape

The importance of trees and the rural character within which the conservation area is set are identified as key contributors to the area's special character. Poorly considered development which poses a threat to trees within the conservation area, or those outside which nevertheless may make a significant contribution but not necessarily be afforded protection, could be detrimental to the conservation area.

Recommendation 2

- a) New development which does not respect or preserve the traditional spatial form of historic development should be resisted.
- b) The overriding presumption is for the retention of the 'positive' buildings and enhancement of the established streetscape. There will need to be a compelling justification for total demolition and redevelopment.
- c) Encourage the retention of hedgerows as boundary features around dwellings and retain/encourage new tree planting within rear gardens to conserve the appearance of the area

3. Monitoring and Review

Both the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Management Strategy will be subject to monitoring and reviews on a rolling work programme. This should entail:

- Periodically review the effectiveness with which the service addressed pressures for change;
- Update the baseline photographic survey of the Mill Lane Conservation Area on a four yearly basis;
- Review the Mill Lane Conservation Area Character Appraisal on a five-year basis.

Bibliography/Sources of Information

- Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment
- Existing Conservation Area Leaflet for Mill Lane
- Chichester Harbour Conservancy's Design Guidelines
- Havant Borough District Wide Local Plan (2005 -2011)
- PPS5 Practice Guide
- NPPF
- Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management
- Langstone Village Design Statement