

5. Landscape analysis

- 5.1 This chapter identifies and describes aspects of distinctive landscape character in and around Masham. The findings make judgements about the key landscape characteristics, which make the town distinctive and provide guidelines to help manage landscape change within the Conservation Area.
- 5.2 Masham is situated on the west valley side just north of the confluence of the River Burn with the River Ure and is the major settlement in the area. The Ure corridor is recognised as an historically important link across the Pennines between Cumbria and the North York Moors.
- 5.3 The area around Masham, to the east of the town is dominated by the course of the River Ure as it meanders north to south in its broad and shallow valley. The scale of the landscape is medium to large up the valley sides becoming smaller close to the river in the flat valley bottom.

Key views

- 5.4 The major view into the town are from high ground above the town from Nutwith Common and the A6108 East of the Town. (See earlier comments). On entering the town the character changes dramatically: the historic core is densely packed and there are only restricted views out into the surrounding countryside.
- 5.5 Some private properties, particularly those on Little Market Place and Silver Street have an elevated position giving them spectacular views from the rear elevations

over open countryside. The lower reaches of Millgate has a view over the floodplain to the Mill House and the Old Mill.



Views towards the floodplain and 'Shooting Holme' from the rear yards of properties on the North side of Little Market Place.



Open countryside south of St Mary's church

Significant Field Boundaries

- 5.6 The landscape is diverse and reasonably well-balanced with a mix of arable and grassland use. Fields are generally rectilinear, medium to large and bounded by hedges many of which are fragmented and post and rail fencing is used for stock proofing.

Geology

- 5.7 The geology of Masham comprises millstone grit overlain by glacial till, with river terrace and alluvium deposits along the Ure valley bottom.
- 5.8 Typically, the soil composition includes: brown soils, deep well-drained fine loamy soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging with patches of deep, stoneless, permeable, fine, loamy river alluvium over gravel in places.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- 5.9 The rural character and setting of Masham is sensitive to change. Development has impacted upon approaches to the town, with small industrial units along Fearby Road on the western approach to the town and a large feed mill to the south. There is a wide range of activities in the area that impact upon landscape character, in particular the continued pressure for the expansion of gravel extraction and quarrying in the river corridor. Intensive farming practice has resulted in larger fields and large scale modern farm buildings and there is an increased pressure for tourist facilities. Some of these - specifically caravan parks in the countryside - can have a detrimental impact. These activities impact on the wildlife value and natural beauty of the river corridor.

The Flood Plain

- 5.10 The floodplain runs in a wide strip to the east and west of Masham Bridge. The fields to the south of Masham Bridge, the 'Shooting Holme' has an avenue of mature lime trees and has recently been planted with a row of young oaks.
- 5.11 The flood plain has a mixture of flat recreational well maintained outdoor amenity space, rolling meadows and a small number of agricultural and residential buildings, notably the Old Mill House and sewage works to the east. The land is well serviced by public footpaths and regularly used by dog walkers. There is a cricket pitch and bowling green and a children's play area.
- 5.12 The River Ure is wide at this point and is dominated by Masham Bridge, which is a major vehicular route into the town. The river level and flow changes in character according to the seasons and levels of rainfall and the area is prone to flooding.

Trees Woodland & open spaces

- 5.13 Tree and woodland cover are critical to the character of the Conservation Area, linking the harder historic core with its rural surroundings. There are few trees within the historic core of the town. Those that do exist make a significant contribution to the character of the space.
- 5.14 The approach to the town from the east is dominated by the character of the flood plain and the swathes of native trees to the banks of the River Ure, views into the town are masked with the exception of views of St Mary's Church spire.



Landmark trees within the Market Place and environs of St Mary's Church

- 5.15 The area in the town near the Brewery, Red Lane and Church Street is considered to be at a low risk of flooding according to the Environment Agency. At the boundary of the Conservation Area to the southwest Swinney Beck flows through residential areas of the town, running in a ditch with frequent pedestrian footbridges. This area appears to have a low risk of flooding.
- 5.16 **The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin:** it is thought that Saint Mary's was originally founded in the seventh century. The main entrance to the Parish Church is through a gate in a stone wall to the south east of the Market Place. In the churchyard past the war memorial and Norman doorway is a Saxon cross. On the north side of the church is the grave of Julius Caesar Ibbetson, a seventeenth century local artist.
- 5.17 Two paths lead into the churchyard to the east and west of the well-kept, neat graveyard gardens. To the south, east and west are open views to the countryside through simple timber stock fences. To the west is an undulating field with specimen decidu-

ous trees and a mixture of hedges and fencing. To the east, through the kissing gate is "The standing tree" (This is one of six sculptures located as part of the Masham Leaves trail.)

- 5.18 There are sheep grazing in the field and a public footpath to the east. This is the field where sheep racing takes place at the annual Masham Sheep Fair.
- 5.19 **Spatial Quality of the Church garden:** The garden is basically a well-maintained operational graveyard and burial ground with a number of specimen trees and headstones in neat rows. There is seating around the south side of the Church, which offers a tranquil sunny resting place. The large trees in the churchyard allow glimpses through to the countryside but as you follow the paths the views open out beyond the stock fencing.
- 5.20 **The 'Masham Leaves' trail:** In the early 1990s Rural Arts North Yorkshire (RANY) offered funding to Harrogate Borough Council for community arts promotions and Masham Parish Council devised a project for the town. The sculptor Alain Ayers was commissioned to design and carve leaves using huge slabs of locally quarried limestone reclaimed from the former railway station platform.
- 5.21 The walk is about three miles and the route follows public footpaths on level and gently sloping ground through open land, woods and along two riverbanks. There are stiles along the route, which can be muddy in the flood plains and where the paths cross working agricultural land.

6. The form & character of buildings

6.1 There are 68 buildings and structures in the town included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. The **Church of St Mary** is **Grade II***, the remainder are Grade II as follows:

Low Mains Farmhouse

Bank Villa, Burton Road

Masham Bridge

in College Lane:

College Grove

College House.

Low Burn Bridge

in the Market Place:

Market Cross

Churchyard Cross

The Old Rectory

House (10m west of Old Rectory)

Stanhope

Brooklyn House

Radleigh House

Kings Head Cottage

Kings Head Hotel,

Nos. 36 & 38

Cogden House

Deepdale

The Croft

Waterloo House

No. 26

No. 24

No. 22 (Barclays Bank)

Nos. 19, 21 & 23 (Lyth Cottage)

Lingdale

Nos. 10, 12, 14

The Spinning Jenny

Avon House

Nos. 2 & 4

Cottage W of Crowham House

Crowham House

Nos. 3 & 5

Through the Looking Glass (No. 1)

Rudston House

The School

South View

No. 9

Bordar House

Ivydene.

in Little Market Place:

No. 11

Town Hall

K6 Phone Box.

In Millgate:

Old Gaol & Carriage Rise

Mill House

The Old Mill

Glebe House

Nos. 8, 10 & 12

Nos. 2, 4 & 6.

in Park Street:

Nos. 14, 16 & 18

(Morton House) No. 24

The Poplars (Nos. 26 & 28)

Nos. 42 & 46

Methodist Church

No. 21

Nos. 23 & 25

No. 27.

Park House, Park Square

in Silver Street:

Nos. 1-3

Bay Horse Inn,

Fayre Enough Restaurant

No. 6

Shop (No. 8?)

Silverdale

No. 21

Nos. 25 & 27

No. 29.

High Burn Bridge, Swinton Road

6.2 In addition to the numerous listed buildings and structures within Masham there are a number of unlisted historic buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and are of particular interest locally. These buildings have been identified on the Analysis & Concept map as being of local interest. There is a general presumption that buildings of local interest within the Conservation Area will be protected from demolition and the Borough Council will be especially vigilant when considering applications for alteration or extension.

6.3 The traditional buildings of Masham are predominantly eighteenth and nineteenth century in origin. They are two or three storeys in height and of a simple vernacular form. What is most striking is the limited palette of materials used in their construction.

6.4 There are two distinct elements to the town. Those buildings, which face onto the towns open spaces (Market Place, Little Market Place) and main arterial routes (Silver Street, Park Street). These buildings, although in a robust, vernacular style, are more imposing and grander reflecting their original uses as retail or commercial properties.

6.5 In contrast there are numerous alleyways and ginnels whose buildings are smaller in scale housing originally numerous residences and workshops. There are still a small number of businesses operating in these areas.

General Form

- 6.6 Most buildings are orientated with main frontages aligned along the open spaces of the Market Place, Little Market Place or main arterial routes. They are built up directly off the pavement line, giving the town a hard edge, softened only by the occasional tree or planter.
- 6.7 Roof pitches, ridge heights and eaves vary but are unified by the limited palette of materials used throughout the town.
- 6.8 Archways through to developments behind the road frontages are a particular characteristic of Masham.

Materials

6.9 Stone and render are the predominant walling materials. Coursed square stones are utilised in the primary facades with cobble and render interspersed through the town. Stone quoins are a common feature together with stone dressings to windows.

Roof Details

6.10 The majority of roofs are finished in either graduated stone slate or Welsh slate (for those later or re-roofed buildings). There are very few clay pantiles and even fewer modern, interlocking tiles. Great care should be taken to ensure that this limited

palette of materials is encouraged in any future development.

- 6.11 There is a mixture of ridge or gable chimney stacks predominantly in stone although there is evidence of brick in some lower status buildings.
- 6.12 Stone verge coping and kneelers are a common feature throughout the town, although become less apparent behind the major facades and on the lower status buildings.

Windows

6.13 The predominant window style is vertical sliding sash (two over two, or six over six). Yorkshire sliding sashes are also in evidence. PVCu has appeared in the town, however, many buildings retain original timber windows. Most windows have stone heads and cills with the higher status buildings having dressed details.



Vertical sliding sashes

6.14 There are a few examples of inappropriate styles of windows and materials. Priority should be given to ensuring that a high standard is maintained throughout the town by retaining traditional styles, details and materials of windows.



Yorkshire horizontal sliding sashes

Floorscape

6.15 Like most towns and villages bitmac has taken over from what was hoggin (compacted aggregate) and cobble. In Masham some areas of cobble are still in evidence in particular around the Market Place. These areas should be retained and enhanced where possible.



Expanses of bitmac in the Market Place



High quality floorscape enhancement is evident throughout the town

Comparison of styles & construction details in the Market Place:

- 6.16 **15-23 Market Place**, examples of seveneenth century construction and style.
- 6.17 Roof detail: the roof pitch of this building is much steeper than many in the town and may well have been thatched at one time. The gables are typically treated with shaped stone kneelers and copings. This example displays what appears to be an original end stack to the gable and a renewed or later addition brickwork ridge stack. The roof material is diminishing (graduated) stone slates.

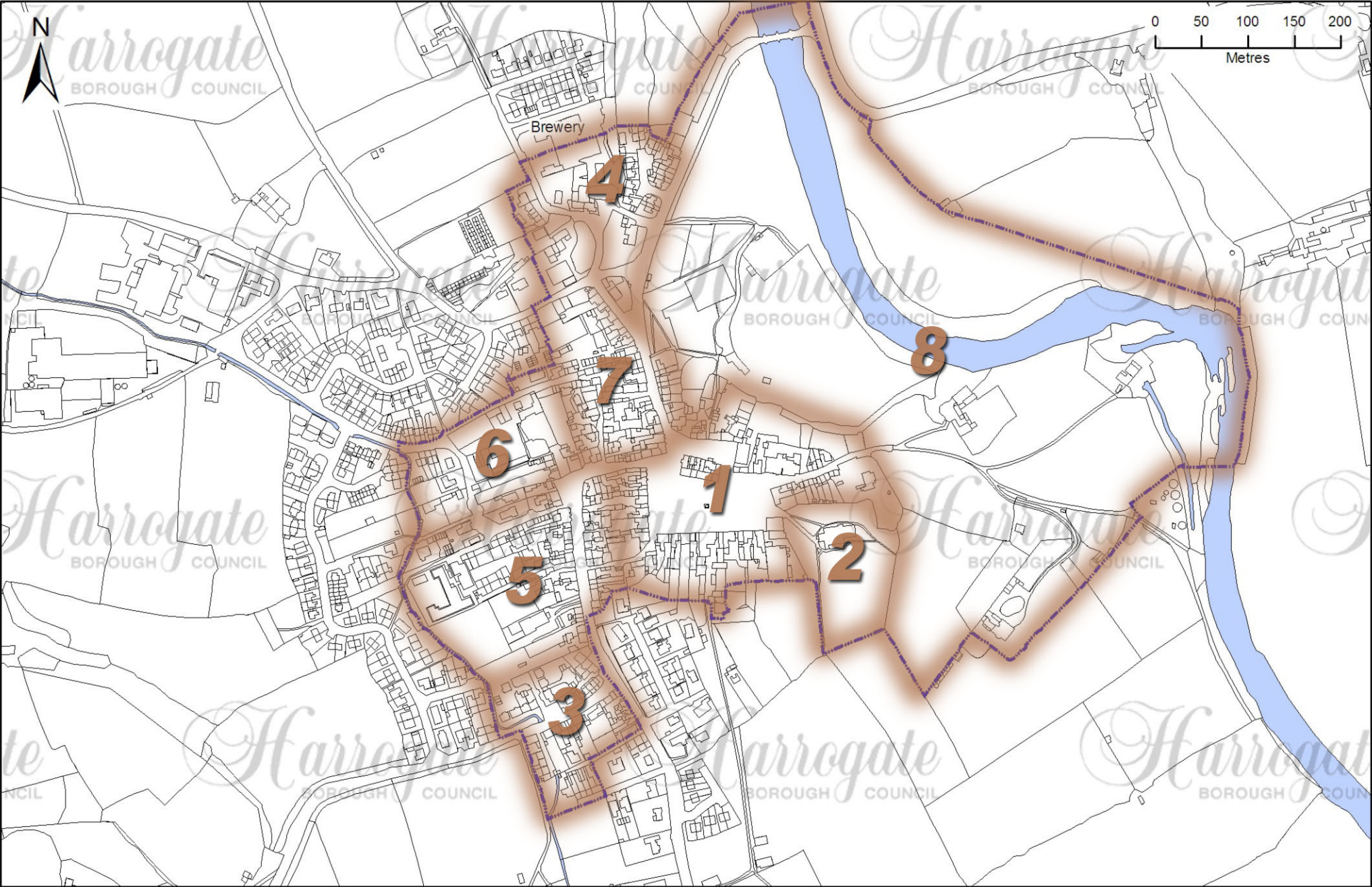


- 6.18 Walls: in a course rubble stone, which is often of a superior quality on later buildings within the town. This method of construction, due to the quality of the stone, is often associated with dressed stone quoins.
- 6.19 Windows: the window to wall ratio on an earlier building of this type is much lower than later buildings.
- 6.20 **7-9 Market Place**, examples of mid-eighteenth century construction and style.
- 6.21 Roof detail: By this time roof pitches had become much shallower. Although this, and the earlier example, uses graduated stone slates, the advent of the railways in 1875 saw Welsh slate being introduced. Stone kneelers

and copings were still in common use at this time but, as seen in No. 9 Market Place, a straightforward clipped eaves had also been adopted.

- 6.22 Walls: Rubblestone and coursed rubblestone. Early photos of these buildings show a covering of render - a common solution to disguising a build in inferior stone.
- 6.23 Windows: these buildings were constructed during Masham's heyday as a commercial centre and more impressive facades were designed. This often meant larger window openings and higher quality stone dressing and surrounds. Vertical sliding sashes became more commonly used.

Map 4: Character area analysis: Zoning



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7. Character area analysis

7.1 This section examines the buildings and spaces within the Conservation Area in greater detail looking at sub areas. The aim is to identify the special character of the area that provides Masham with its particular 'sense of place' and to summarise the details and features that are important. The sub areas can be defined according to historical development, building form and uses and location. These areas are:

- 1 Market Place & Environs
- 2 St. Mary's Church
- 3 Swinton Terrace
- 4 Black Sheep Brewery (North end)
- 5 Park Street (West to Conservation Area Boundary)
- 6 Theakston's Brewery & Environs
- 7 Silver Street & Environs
- 8 River Ure Floodplain

1. Market Place & Environs

7.2 The historic core of Masham, that is, Market Place, Little Market Place, Millgate and St Mary's Church, forms what was the commercial heart of Masham, housing many of the towns public buildings and commercial properties.

7.3 In the Market Place many of the buildings have grander proportions and are constructed with superior materials and details.



The Kings Head - eighteenth century former posting Inn and surprisingly Excise Office within the heart of the Market Place (Grade II listed). A coaching arch leads through to Kings Head Yard and open farmland beyond.

7.4 Historically, the buildings around the Market Place were low thatched structures, but as Masham developed as an important commercial centre, these buildings were upgraded to reflect their new status (major re-building and remodelling took place in the eighteenth century).

7.5 All the buildings around the Market Place are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. They are of two and three storey and without exception are built off the back of the pavement line. A dominant feature of these buildings and

in general those in Masham is the limited pallet of materials with which they are constructed. Local stone or render with stone or slate roofs predominate within the town, and great care should be taken to use this restricted palette of materials when dealing with new build or extensions.

7.6 Those buildings which enclose the southern and western boundaries of the Market Place incorporate several passageways through to buildings at the rear. Historically, these would have housed small scale industries and workshops as well as smaller houses and cottages which serviced the town.

7.7 The northern boundary is more fragmented, with the built form being broken by access through to Church Street and Little Market Place.

7.8 The properties 3-13 Market Place form an island separating Market Place from Little Market Place consisting in the main of 2-3 storey stone properties dating from, the eighteenth century with their frontages addressing Market Place.



3-13 Market Place



The Medieval Market Cross (Grade II listed) subdivides the Market Place. It is laid out for parking to the west and space for events (market stalls) to the east which is used as additional parking space when events are not taking place. Mature trees around the cross serve to further divide and soften this large hard landscaped space.

7.9 Little Market Place includes the Community Office and former Police Station and is dominated by the Town Hall - a grade II listed structure built in 1913 of coursed square stone with ashlar dressing. Although only two storeys this building has a commanding presence within this compact space.

7.10 The Square itself is disjointed, the northern and eastern sides, comprising the Community Office, Police Station and Town Hall, address the Square and are built off pavement level, whilst the southern side presents the rear of the properties of 3-13 Market Place and the bus shelter.



The Town Hall (Grade II listed) commanding Little Market Place



The southern side of Little Market Place is an untidy mix of the rears of properties, street furniture, shelters and hard landscaping.

7.11 An important pedestrian route up from the 'the Shooting Holme' emerges between 7&9 Little Market Place (northern side), although presently this is very understated. This route also gives access to the public toilets behind No.7 Little Market Place and descends steeply down to the cricket ground. This is a restricted path which would benefit from better signage and improvements to hard landscaping in particular the floorscape.



The Community Office, Little Market Place: a late eighteenth century building of coursed, dressed stone with a Welsh slate roof. (Grade II listed)

7.12 Millgate is a former packhorse route which leads to the lower levels of the floodplain, site of a former ford and the old mill. The western end of Millgate is marked by the school (former Grammar School) dating from the mid-eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century of coursed square stone with ashlar dressings and stone slate/machine tile roofs.

7.13 Ivydene marks the entrance to Millgate from Market Place - an imposing mid to late eighteenth century house. Ashlar stone, Welsh slate and graduated stone slate roof.

7.14 Millgate is constricted by the stone terrace (2-12 Millgate) on the southern side and the former gaol to the northern side. Typically all properties are built off the back of pavement which gives emphasis to those limited views through to the distant countryside.

7.15 Nutwith House marks the sharp descent of Millgate towards the flood plain and open countryside and stand apart by the nature of its tall stone boundary walls built up to the edge of the carriageway and its landscaped gardens surrounding this detached residence.



The school house originally used as a the grammer school was built by William Danby and was improved by Admiral Harcourt. This building dates from the mid-eighteenth century with nineteenth century additions (Grade II listed)

2. St Mary's Church

7.16 St Mary's Church and its environs forms a welcome break from the built up form of Market Place in general. Located in the south-east corner of Market Place and dating from the twelfth century with alterations and extensions from the fourteenth, sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Church is constructed of coursed squared sandstone and ashlar with a lead roof.

7.17 The Church's four stage tower dominates the skyline from all approach roads. However, this dominance is reduced immediately on entering the town because of its constricted and built up nature. The Church's visual impact returns when one enters Market Place, its spire being well framed by specimen trees both around the Churchyard entrance and at the Old Vicarage. The Churchyard to the south borders onto open countryside while the eastern boundary is in the main contained by the boundary walls of Glebe House, the former vicarage.



The entrance to St Mary's Church from the Market Place is framed by mature trees.

3. Swinton Terrace

7.18 The Swinton Estate has influenced the appearance of the whole town, but especially Swinton Terrace where Ann Danby, the second wife of William Danby (owner of Swinton and Lord of the Manor), funded the building of twelve almshouses, a school and schoolhouse in Swinton Road (Terrace). Limited development has taken place along Swinton Road despite it being an important access road to Swinton Park and beyond.



The southern extent of Swinton Road/Terrace with the higher status properties 11-19 in the distance. The almshouse is just visible on the right.

7.19 On entering Swinton Road from Park Street the residential properties to the southern side of the road are two storey stone properties built off the back of the pavement with slate roofs while the bays of Nos. 11-19 project to the ground floor.

7.20 The northern side of the road has a less formalised layout which is visually dominated by landmark buildings, specifically the Almshouses and school (now a private residence).



2-8 Swinton Terrace: the almshouses, although presently unlisted are without doubt 'landmark' buildings within Masham. Formalised front gardens and decorative railings demarking the boundaries are not common features in Masham.

7.21 The character of the northern side of Swinton Road is defined by the stone walls and railing demarking the small front gardens to the almshouses and schoolhouse, an uncommon feature within the historic core of Masham.



The western end of the Conservation Area is defined by new development around Swinburn Court. The general materials and details are sympathetic with Masham's vernacular and the open space in front is dictated by Swinney Beck which crosses in front of the properties (before eventually joining the River Burn).

4. Black Sheep Brewery - north end

- 7.22 The zone designated as 'Black Sheep Brewery (North End)' includes: The Avenue including Avenue Bank, the Wensleydale Garage and the Renton Well junction.
- 7.23 This area, because of its location on the periphery of the developed town, is rather fragmented in nature. It is a mix of old and new development, the key features of which are the Black Sheep Brewery site, Bank Villa and the Renton Well junction.



The Black Sheep Brewery

- 7.24 The Conservation Area boundary bisects the brewery complex - with the modern phase of construction outside the Conservation Area.
- 7.25 The brewery site is a mix of nineteenth and twentieth century buildings predominantly two storey. The older buildings are of coursed stone with slate roofs. This range of industrial buildings has developed organically continuing to the present day with new ranges of industrial steel framed

buildings; there is no established building line and limited scope for expansion on the existing site. One of the landmark buildings among the group is the former Lightfoot Brewery maltings building which was later bought by Theakstons Brewery before being purchased by the Black Sheep Brewery in the 1990's. This maltings building dominates the high ground, being visible from the approach road into Masham from Masham bridge, and is made distinctive by the 'Black Sheep Brewery' sign painted onto the stonework.

- 7.26 'Bank Villa' is the only listed building within this zone of the town, an early nineteenth century two storey residence of coursed square stone with ashlar dressings and a graduated stone slate roof. This building dominates the junction of the A6108 and Silver Street, and is distinguished by a large area of garden surrounding the property.
- 7.27 The junction at Renton Well marks the point at which the road rises up to the higher ground where the historic core of the town is situated. The period "colonial style" bungalow (18 Silver Street) is distinctive situated above the well on the high ground. Development in this zone is disjointed as is style and materials (not uncommon of the periphery of many historic towns and villages).
- 7.28 Renton Well marks the road junction with the A6108 and Silver Street, built in 1887 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

- 7.29 The new development of housing to The Avenue is not typical of the majority of buildings in the town, set back from the road with small front gardens which disappear as you progress further into the heart of the town.



Towards the junction at Renton Well where the A6108 leaves the town towards Masham Bridge and the Shooting Holme. The new housing of The Avenue is visible in the background and the gardens to Bank Villa immediately on the junction.

5. Park Street (west to Conservation Area boundary)

- 7.30 Park Street follows very much the seventeenth and eighteenth century development pattern in the town of two storey, stone-built, short terraced properties built off the back of the pavement.
- 7.31 The street patterns and plot configurations suggests evidence of Medieval crofts and garths which is further reinforced looking at older maps of the town, aligned east to west from Park street.
- 7.32 There is a mixture of roof pitches along Park Street reflecting the age range of properties from the seventeenth century onwards.