

*Conservation Area*



**SELBORNE**

## Introduction & Brief History

Selborne Conservation Area was originally designated in 1970. It was one of the earliest Conservation Areas to be designated in the District.

The Conservation Area has been extended twice, in 1976 and 1993, following public consultation.

The Selborne area has a long history of settlement. A scatter of worked flints found near Grange Farm in Gracious Street suggest Neolithic or earlier settlement. Excavations carried out at Grange Farm have revealed the foundations of an early medieval building, possibly the grange to Selborne Priory, an Augustinian Priory which was in existence until 1486. The Priory was at the end of the "Via Canorum", which now forms part of Huckers Lane.

The current Church of St. Mary stands on land believed to have been given for a church by Edith wife of Edward the Confessor. A church was recorded as being there in the Domesday Book of 1086 west of the church. A market was held on The Plestor from 1271. The name 'plestor' derives from the name 'pleystow' - a play space.

In 1830 Selborne was involved in the agricultural riots which swept Southern England. The labourers of the area attacked and burnt the poor house (Fishers Buildings in Gracious Street); many were arrested and five were transported to Australia. One of the rioters, John Newland, is buried in the churchyard.

## Character of the Conservation Area.

Selborne is one of the most attractive villages in Hampshire. It is famous as the home of The Reverend Gilbert White, the 18th century naturalist. Many of the scenes recorded by Gilbert White can still be seen in and around the village today.

The setting of the village, between the steeply rising wooded hangers and the slopes Lythes (pronounced "Liths") which run down to the Oakhanger Stream, is quite dramatic. Yet once within the village the small scale historic buildings, set close up to the winding streets, create a strong sense of enclosure and tranquillity.

The combination of a strong landscape setting, many historic buildings, narrow winding streets the use of local materials and varied viewpoints and spaces combine successfully to create the attractive character and setting of Selborne.

- *Historic buildings are set deep in the valley between the rising trees of the Hangers and the Lythes. It is an impressive setting.*



- *The curves of the street provide a series of unfolding views.*



- *The local ragstone cobble pavements which survive as a feature of the village are thought to have been provided by Gilbert White. ▼*



- *Views from the churchyard towards Dortons, and Huckers Cottage (Cover, show the buildings in a splendid setting against the steeply rising backcloth of the Lythes.*
- *The Wakes its garden and overall setting in the landscape. The exterior is an interesting mixture of 18th and 19th Century buildings, with steep pitched roofs and tall chimneys.*

### Gracious Street.

Leading away from The Plestor is Gracious Street, which forms part of the narrow winding lane from Selborne to Newton Valence. Originally the road formed part of the old road to Alton (via Worldham). Many historic buildings line the street but there are also good views of Selborne Hanger from the gaps between the buildings.

**Old Thatch** is a thatched, listed 17th century house with a late 18th century refacing. The front wall is of red brick with blue headers; some timber framing can be seen on the west gable. Nearby is **Deep Thatch**, another thatched, timber framed, listed 17th century cottage with painted brick walls. **Bell's Cottage** has a stone tablet inscribed "TB 1845" after Thomas Bell, who once owned The Wakes.



*Bellevue Cottage, includes an Edwardian shopfront typical of the small shopfronts in the village, several survive. A characteristic of the street are the malmstone and brick walls with mature hedges. These form roadside boundaries.*

Further down Gracious Street is an attractive group of listed cottages. Included in the group are Wheelwrights Cottage a 17th century building with painted stone rubble walls, a central chimney stack and a shingled roof with curved eyebrow dormer windows; it has a stone tablet with the inscription "AS TRA 1697".

**Newman, No 2 and Waterman Cottages** form a small terrace which was refaced in the late 18th century. Their walls are of ashlar malmstone with brick dressings and the roofs are tiled. **Jasmine Cottage** was added in 1870.



**Seale View and Seale Cottage** are a pair of mainly late 18th century semi-detached cottages. The walls are of malmstone blocks. On the upper wall is a tablet inscribed "STE 1793 Seale View". Seale is the name of the river, now partly culverted which runs opposite the house. The interiors and rear of the building suggest it may be of an earlier date.

Towards the end of the village are **Trimmings, Grange Farm and Fishers Buildings**. Trimings is an earlier building refaced in the late 18th century in ashlar malmstone with brick dressings.

Grange Farm once belonged to the Priory and there has probably been a farm on this site from the 13th century, if not earlier. The present building has an 18th century exterior with ashlar malmstone walls with brick dressings and a tiled roof; the interior has many much older features. The manorial courts were held at Grange Farm until the 1920s. In the 1970s a fire destroyed a fine 16th century barn and the remaining farm buildings have since been converted into dwellings. A small thatched cartshed remains at the entrance to the old farm yard.

Fishers Building was originally a 17th century timberframed farm house with later outbuildings. These together with the farmhouse extend round three sides of a square and were probably altered when they were converted into the Poor House in 1794. They are now four separate homes. The walls of the outbuildings are of ashlar malmstone with galletting in the joints.

### High Street.

Selborne's long, winding High Street contains a wealth of historic buildings, many of which are listed as being of architectural and historic interest and so have special status and protection attached to them.

Opposite The Plestor, the first group of buildings in the High Street is formed around **The Wakes**, the home of Gilbert White for many years.



*The Wakes a Grade I Listed Building was originally a timber framed house from its C16th origins it has been extended several times to create an irregularly shaped building which fronts close onto the High Street. The roof is tiled and rambling with an assortment of Tudor style chimneys. The building is now a museum to Gilbert White and also to the Oates Family, including the Antarctic explorer Lawrence Oates.*

Inside The Wakes there is a central hall with a low, 17th century beamed ceiling. Beyond it is the original dining room probably later the kitchens. The new dining room is dated 1794. North of the hall is the Great Parlour, which Gilbert White had built in 1777.

The grounds and gardens of The Wakes are recognised as being of Special Historic Interest. The garden is a classical late 18th century informal landscaped garden but on a small scale. The garden includes a haha (a walled ditch which acts like a fence to keep animals out). The Museum's Trustees are currently restoring the grounds to recreate the features which Gilbert White recorded in such detail.

In the service and stable courtyard of The Wakes is a mid-18th century brewhouse which was built by Gilbert White. It has malmstone walls and a pyramidal tiled roof. Above the door is a tablet inscribed: "GW 1765".

Immediately to the north west is **Wakes Cottage**, which was built in about 1840 mainly red brick with blue headers. The roof is tiled and the windows and door surround are Gothick in style. To the south east of The Wakes is a cottage once the Selborne Bookshop; to the rear is a stable range.

Beyond this 18th Century former bookshop are **Cobbler Cottage** and **No. 4, Wakes Cottages**. Cobbler Cottage is a 17th century timber framed building which was refaced in the late 18th century with roughly coursed malmstone. The half hipped roof is thatched and has eyebrow dormers; there is exposed timber framing in the gables. Inside there is a massive fireback to the 17th century fireplace.



*No. 4, Wakes Cottages is also a thatched, 17th century building with a massive, exposed timber frame. The infilling between the framing is mainly of wattle and daub, although there are also some brick and stone infill panels.*



*The Old Butcher's Shop, an 18th century building is sited opposite. The walls are of ashlar malmstone with brick dressings; the original window openings survive. The hipped roof is tiled and brought forward towards the street as a pentice canopy supported by four posts.*

In front of the building are two lime trees, the only survivors of the four which Gilbert White planted in 1756 "to hide the sight of blood and filth" from his house opposite.

An important group of historic buildings are situated in Huckers Lane. Dowlings is a 17th century building with late 18th and 20th century alterations and additions. The front is of three continuous sections, the central part of which has exposed massive timber framing with brick nogging on a stone base. The roof is tiled and there is a large central chimney stack. Adjacent to Dowlings is a small 18th Century thatched timber framed barn.



*Huckers Cottage is a 19th Century malmstone building with tall gable end chimneys. It has an attractive setting against the trees of the Lythes.*

Further down Huckers Lane is **Dortons**, a delightful early 17th century timber framed cottage set close to the Oakhanger Stream at the bottom of the Lythe. Behind are the steep slopes of the National Trust beech woods. The cottage was added to in the early 19th century and 1914. The north side has some ashlar malmstone walls and the central and southern sections are of brick. The northern end has much 17th century oak panelling and a 17th century staircase.

**Forge Cottage**, on the junction of Huckers Lane and High Street, is an 18th century painted brick cottage with a tiled roof and has a Victorian doorcase with a moulded cornice. Nearby is **Rose Cottage**, which was originally two 17th century cottages. The cottage has a timber frame origin and was refaced in the late 18th century with bricks and malmstone. **The Queen's Hotel**, which lies on the opposite side of the road on the site of the earlier Compasses public house.

In the centre of the village is **Yew Tree Cottage**, a 17th building which was refaced in the late 18th century. The walls are of ashlar malmstone with brick quoins. The roof is tiled and has a steep catslide to the rear. Above the doorway is a stone tablet inscribed "1708 AJM". Attached to the cottage is a late 19th century shop which retains its small Victorian shopfront.

The **Selborne Arms** is a listed 18th century building which was altered in the mid-19th century. It has a symmetrical front of two storeys with an attic. Nearby is **Lassams**, an attractive listed 17th century house with exposed timber framing and some brick infilling. The roof is tiled and the windows mainly casements with leaded lights. The southern end retains its original early C17th windows.

Further south along the High Street, near Honey Lane, is **The White House**. Built in about 1700. The walls are of painted malmstone rubble with box timber framing and a slate roof. Almost opposite is **Box Cottage**, a 16th century cottage which is also timber framed with brick and malmstone infilling.



Set on the junction of Honey Lane and High Street is **Pleasance Cottage**, a 17th century timber framed cottage which was refaced in the 18th century. The walls are of malmstone with tile hanging on the first floor. This building is a focal point from both North and South and creates a narrow sharp bend in the road.

Set on the valley edge east of the High Street is **The Old Mill**. Built in 1837 of ashlar malmstone with brick quoins and a slate roof, the house has a stone plaque inscribed "F.Fitt, 1837". Close to it is a small water mill (now a store) which is also of an early 19th century date. It is a tall 3 storey block built of ashlar malmstone with brick quoins and a tiled roof; it is set against the steep valley side. There are the remains of the sluice channels.

Near to the Southern entrance to the village is an area known as **Under the Hill**. Here are several cottages constructed in traditional local materials: **Nuthatch**, **Memoriam Cottage** and **Uphill Cottage**.



The Old Bakehouse the Plestor a recent conversion to provide workshops.



Views eastwards across the valley emphasise the importance of trees to the setting of Selborne's Conservation Area, and the roofscape of traditional pitched roofs of slate, clay tiles and thatch, and the importance of chimney stacks.

Right at the southern entrance to the village, opposite Ketchers Farm, is a most unusual feature: a cast iron water spout and trough which has the water coming from a lion's mouth. This was erected in 1894 and is an interesting example of industrial archaeology. It formed part of the water supply to the village until 1934.

### Building Materials and Details.

As the description of the buildings of Selborne has shown, there is considerable use of local building materials in the village which helps to create its character and visual interest. Timber framed and malmstone buildings with brick dressings can be found throughout the village, the malmstone is ashlar coursed, cobbles or polygonal with localised detailing occurring in different streets as the village gradually expanded. Some of the stone is believed to have come from the quarry behind Maltby's in the High Street.

The malmstone varies in colour from a grey-white chalk through to the blue grey Ragstone to an almost yellow sandstone. Lime wash and render is generally very muted in colour and painted walls are either white or in a pastel palette. The Victorian brickwork is invariably rendered or in a red and blue brick pattern. The roofs are either thatched, tiled or of slate.

Buildings in Selborne are generally domestic in scale - that is, of one or two storey with attics. Nearly all are set close up to the pavement or onto the street edge and help create the sense of enclosure and intimacy in the village.



### Description of the Conservation Area

The Conservation Area covers most of the village of Selborne and some of the surrounding fields and woods which create the setting to the village.

Within the Conservation Area are five main areas of interest:

- The Plestor,
- Gracious Street,
- High Street,
- Huckers Lane, and
- Under the Hill

The following paragraphs describe some of the main buildings in each area; for further information please contact the Conservation Officers at the District Council.

#### The Plestor.

The Plestor is an attractive grassed open space leading from the High Street to the church; it is where the market was held in the Middle Ages. Buildings surround The Plestor on three sides, giving a sense of enclosure to the area.

There are two trees on The Plestor: the sycamore is believed to have been planted by one of Gilbert White's brothers whilst the oak was planted to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

**The Church of St. Mary** lies to the north of The Plestor. It is a Grade 1 listed building which dates from the late 12th century (about 1180). There were further alterations and extensions in the late 13th century and early 14th and restorations between 1730 and 1890.

The walls are built of polygonal malmstone with stone and brick dressings. The solid main door still has its original iron strap work. Inside the church is a magnificent late 12th century nave, the roof of which is supported by large, cylindrical stone pillars.

The reredos to the High Altar is formed by a tryptich painted in about 1510 by Jan Mostaert. The tryptich was given to the church by Benjamin White in memory of his brother Gilbert. Inside the church is a Flemish wood carving dated about 1520 depicting the Descent from the Cross, a 15th century bench and several 18th century monuments.

The south aisle has a stained glass window representing St. Francis of Assisi; birds recorded by Gilbert White are shown in the window, as are the church, the famous Selborne Yew and the Old Vicarage where White was born. This window was designed and executed in 1920 and paid for by public subscription, a second window commemorating Gilbert White's life and ministry was dedicated in 1993, the bicentenary of his death. It depicts local animals and plants.

Key buildings in The Plestor are **Plestor House** and **Plestor Cottages**; all three are listed buildings. **Plestor House**, is an imposing mainly 18th Century house built of coursed malmstone with brick dressings and galletting (Galletting is a local tradition of pressing ironstone chips in the mortar joints). **East and West Plestor Cottages** were once three dwellings and their exteriors have changed little since the mid 18th century. They have painted brick walls and tiled roofs; the end walls are of malmstone. Together these form an attractive group on the south side of the Plestor. ▶

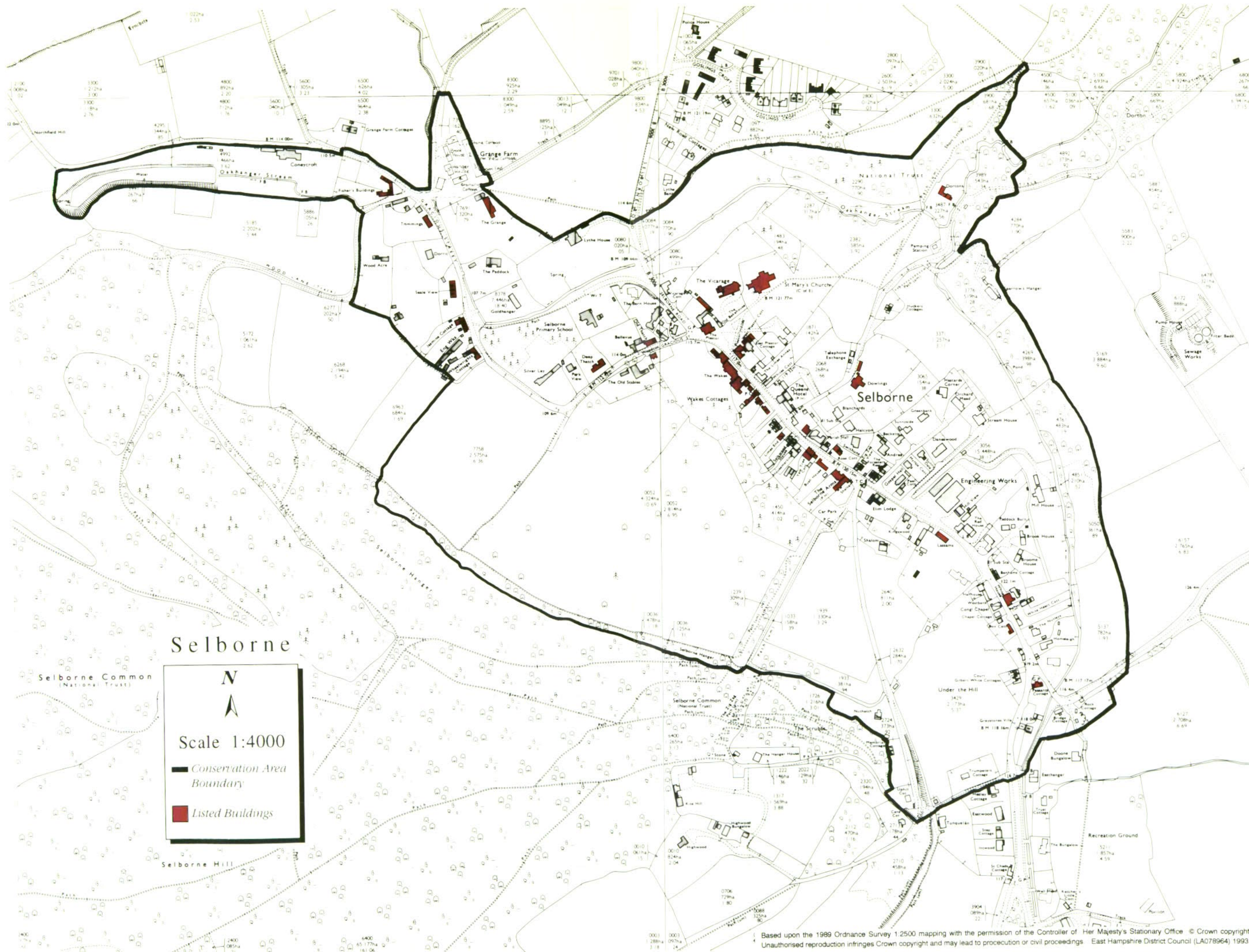
On the North West side of The Plestor, *The Old Vicarage with its steep gables and decorative bargeboards, The Church of St. Mary, the Old Bakehouse and The Plestor house and shop, combine to create an attractive group.*

**The Old Vicarage** was rebuilt in 1845. The walls are of ashlar malmstone. ▼



The shop on the Plestor dates from the early 19th century. Again, the walls are of ashlar malmstone, although the west side is rendered. *The shop has an attractive Edwardian shopfront and closes the north view to the bend at the junction with Gracious Street and the Selborne Road.*





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There are various local details which characterise the cottages and houses, particularly those constructed before 1920,

- Chimney stacks are 'solid' and placed centrally, particularly on older houses or later at the gable ends.



- Cottage windows are normally pairs of timber or iron casements of 8, 6 or 4 panes with a central mullion, some are vertical sliding sashes.
- Cottage types in the Conservation Area are either two storeys with symmetrical facades, and a solid central door ('baffle entry' by the chimney piece), or 1 1/2 storeys with attic dormers.



- First floor windows are tucked under the eaves or as dormers sitting on the wallplate or just below it.
- The dormers are commonly the raking cat slide type, although on some later houses they are gabled or hipped.
- Where the roofs are thatched, swept dormers are used.
- The doors and door cases are solid boarded, panelled, or late Victorian style and partially glazed with a central muntin.

## *New Developments in the Conservation Area*

The design of new buildings, extensions or alterations to existing buildings and new uses within Selborne Conservation Area will all affect its character. Development will need to respect the details, materials and pattern of existing buildings in the village and seek to blend in with them.

Further advice is given in the following leaflets which have been published by East Hampshire District Council as part of the Conservation Directory :-

- Conservation Areas in East Hampshire.
- Caring for East Hampshire's Conservation Areas and Historic Buildings.

### Further reading and references

- The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne. Gilbert White.
- Gilbert White and his Selborne. A. Rye.
- A Bibliography of Gilbert White. E.Martin.
- A Selborne Handbook. W.S.Scott, 1950.
- The Domestic Buildings of Selborne. G.Meirion-Jones. Hampshire Field Club Proceedings, Volume 29, 1972.
- One Morning in November. John Owen Smith. 1993. (About the Selborne and Headley Agricultural Riots of 1830.)
- Buildings of England - Hampshire. Pevsner and Lloyd. 1967.
- Victoria County History.
- P.53 The Pattern of English Buildings. A Clifton Taylor 1989.

### Further reading

For further information about the Conservation Area and its buildings please contact :

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