

# Appraisal of Colesbrook, Gillingham

## Conservation Area Report

Adopted by North Dorset District Council on 26 September 2017  
following designation by the District Council of the  
Colesbrook Conservation Area on 26 September 2017



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Front page – top image: © Gillingham Museum and bottom image © 2017 Google

# **Introduction**

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## **The Purpose of this Report**

At a Full Council Meeting of Gillingham Town Council held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2016, it was agreed that North Dorset District Council should be asked to consider the designation of Colesbrook in Gillingham as a Conservation Area. This report was produced by Gillingham Town Council, with subsequent amendments, in support of a designation. With the assistance of North Dorset District Council, a public consultation was undertaken from 10 February to 24 March 2017. During this period, information events were held at Gillingham Town Hall. The results of the public consultation were reported to the District Council's Cabinet on 18 September 2017 and Cabinet decision to designate the Colesbrook Conservation Area and adopt the designation report came into force and were implemented on 26 September 2017.

## **The Aim of this Report**

The aim is to identify the special architectural and historic interest of the Colesbrook Conservation Area, as shown on the Conservation Area Map (Figure 1).

## **Executive Summary**

The Executive Summary contains an overview of the main points of the Conservation Area report. Reference to the report as a whole is necessary for greater detail.

1. There are strong unifying themes evident in Colesbrook that substantiate a Conservation Area designation. It is important that these themes are recognised and that every attempt is made to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Colesbrook through managing any change and achieving sensitive enhancement as necessary. The strong themes identified are:-
  - A) The rural setting, character and appearance of Colesbrook that defines its identity and retains separation from the expansion of Gillingham.

- B) The milling legacy that is Purns Mill together with its associated features and structures and relationship with Shreen Water and countryside setting.
- C) The connection with the C19 artist John Constable.
- D) The social, visual and historic relationship between the listed Grade II Purns Mill House and the adjacent mill.
- E) The social and historic connection between workers cottages and the farms and mill.
- F) Shreen Water and its visual and historical relationship to Purns Mill.
- G) The U shaped road layout of Colesbrook with its attractive river crossings and single connection to the B3092.
- H) The hedgerows, single trees, tree belts and tree groups that aid the rural setting, character and appearance of Colesbrook and in the main, define the fields, lanes, mill leat and race, Shreen Water and property plots.
- I) Relative tranquillity, especially in the area of the ford.
- J) Spacious property plots indicative of rural character, allowing important views within Colesbrook and out to its country setting.
- K) Potential archaeology through milling and farming both in Colesbrook and around it.

2. In Colesbrook, the Local Listing of non-designated heritage assets is being considered by the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan. Further information on Neighbourhood Plans is available at <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning/north>
3. With reference to the unifying themes, the following guidelines summarise the Conservation Area report, and in particular the Management Strategy, in terms of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

A. Setting

- 1) Preserve or enhance the setting of the Conservation Area and the views to and from the Conservation Area and across it.
- 2) Preserve or enhance the green open space or buffer between Colesbrook and Gillingham.

B. Archaeology

- 1) Consider opportunity to increase the archaeological understanding of Colesbrook.

C. Settlement Character and Layout

- 1) Preserve the historic road layout of Colesbrook and the character of its ford.
- 2) Preserve the landmark character of Purns Mill from within Colesbrook and from its setting; and preserve the mill's grouping and social and physical relationship to Purns Mill House. See also local listing in the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3) Preserve the locally important The Fir Tree (former public house and focal point), Northmoor House (interesting and attractive group of farm buildings) and Colesbrook ford and bridge (interesting and attractive grouping). See also local listing in the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4) Preserve the spaciousness of property plots and the associated rural views that the spaciousness allows. See the reference to Article 4 Direction below.
- 5) Preserve the dispersed pattern of development. See the reference to Article 4 Direction below.

- 6) Preserve the traditional position of dwellings within their plots and their orientation to a lane. See the reference to Article 4 Direction below.
- 7) Safeguard the traditional boundaries of property plots, which are mainly hedges and hedgerows, but occasionally stone wall, some with tile capping. Where enhancement to a boundary is proposed ensure that it is supportive of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. See the reference to Article 4 Direction below.
- 8) Ensure that any new or widened vehicular opening, or new garage or hard paving preserves the rural character and appearance of the Conservation Area. See the reference to Article 4 Direction below.
- 9) Safeguard the local amenity provided by the trees in and around Colesbrook and where expedient consider the need for a Tree Preservation Order.
- 10) Ensure that the position of any satellite antennas and solar panels preserve the character and appearance of the area. See the reference to Article 4 Direction below.

D. Historic Buildings and Building Traditions

- 1) Colesbrook's unlisted, historic dwellings contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the area. Safeguard the historic dwellings in terms of their traditional design, form, scale, massing, proportions, arrangement of windows, doors and chimneys and local detailing; encourage the retention or use of the traditional materials and finishes, for example, the foremost and characteristic clay tile roofs (mainly uncluttered by roof lights) and local natural stone walling; and encourage the retention or use of wooden doors and windows - sash windows are predominant. Slate and brick is scarcely evident, as are dormer windows. Render and painted wall surfaces are uncharacteristic. See the reference to Article 4 Direction below.

- 2) The national heritage significance of Purns Mill House is recognised in its Grade II listing, which is a statutory protection.
- 3) The local heritage significance of Purns Mill and its associated features is recognised and will be given locally listed designation in the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan.

#### 4. **Article 4 Direction**

Properties in Colesbrook can make certain material changes, called Permitted Development Rights, without the need for any form of planning permission (although Purns Mill would require Listed Building Consent). The character and appearance of Colesbrook are particularly sensitive to certain changes allowable under Permitted Development.

It is possible, through the making of an Article 4 Direction, to restrict the application of these Permitted Development Rights. The Direction means that the works cannot be carried out without planning permission being granted by the planning authority, allowing the planning authority opportunity to assess the affect on the character and appearance of Colesbrook,

With the designation of the Conservation Area, it is the intention to seek Cabinet authority to make an Article 4 Direction in Colesbrook removing certain Permitted Development Rights, which may include (but not limited to):

1. Enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling;
2. *Additions to the roof of a dwellinghouse;*
3. *Alteration to the roof of a dwellinghouse;*
4. Construction of a porch;
5. Provision within a dwellings curtilage of a building, enclosure or swimming pool and hard surface;
6. Provision within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse of a hard surface



7. The installation, alteration or replacement of a chimney, flue or soil and vent pipe on a dwellinghouse;
8. The installation, alteration or replacement of a microwave antenna (satellite dish) on a dwellinghouse or within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse;
9. Erection, construction maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall, or other means of enclosure to a dwelling and its curtilage;
10. The painting of the exterior of any building or work;
11. Installation of solar panels on domestic premises.

All the above Direction would apply to the area defined as the Colesbrook Conservation Area.

# What is a Conservation Area?

A Conservation Area is defined as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ – Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The purpose of a Conservation Area is not to prevent all development but rather to enable its careful management. As Historic England state in their guidance note on Conservation Area appraisals:

*The contribution that historic areas make to our quality of life is widely recognised. They are a link to the past that can give us a sense of continuity and stability and they have the reassurance of the familiar which can provide a point of reference in a rapidly changing world. The way building traditions and settlement patterns are superimposed and survive over time will be unique to each area. This local distinctiveness can provide a catalyst for regeneration and inspire well designed new development which brings economic and social benefits which are valued by both local planning authorities and local communities in the almost 10,000 Conservation Areas which have been designated.*

*Change is inevitable, however, not necessarily harmful and often beneficial...Conservation Areas can contribute to sustainable development under the NPPF in all its three dimensions (NPPF, paragraph 7).*

Various factors contribute to the special character of a Conservation Area. These include:

- The quality of buildings, the historic layout of roads.
- Paths and boundaries.
- Boundary treatments and patterns of enclosure.
- Characteristic building and paving materials.
- Uses and associations.
- The quality of the public realm and contribution made by trees and green spaces.

A strong sense of place is often associated with Conservation Areas. It is the function of Conservation Area Appraisals to assess and evaluate ‘character’ as a means of assisting the planning process.

# **Owning and Developing Land and Property within a Conservation Area**

While subject to normal planning controls a range of additional controls and considerations also apply within Conservation Areas:

Unlisted buildings and structures are protected from substantial works of demolition (as defined by case law this means the whole of a building or structure, or whole of a building minus the façade). Qualifying works of demolition affecting unlisted properties will require Conservation Area Consent.

Proposals to demolish buildings or structures that are deemed to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area will not usually be looked upon favourably. An approved scheme for redevelopment will normally be required before consent to demolish will be granted.

Before felling, topping or lopping trees and shrubs (with branches 75mm or more in diameter at 1.5 metres above ground level) in a Conservation Area, six weeks written notice must be provided to the District Council's Tree Officer in each instance during which time a Tree Preservation Order may be served.

Other additional planning restrictions affect householder permitted development rights.

More information on what it means to live in a Conservation Area is provided at <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/384644/Conservation-Areas>

There is a "Suggested Management Strategy" (page 50) for any Colesbrook Conservation Area designation which you should also read. The strategy refers to government legislation and guidance and District Council policy that are relevant to a Conservation Area and the means to safeguard the character and appearance of a Conservation Area, including an Article 4 Direction (page 64).

A study of the effects of Conservation Areas and published in a document called *An Assessment of the Effects of Conservation Areas on Value*<sup>1</sup> summarises findings as follows, that:

- People value living in/near Conservation Areas
- Conservation Areas have had stronger house price appreciation than other areas
- Properties closer to the centre of Conservation Areas sell for more
- Home owners who had applied for planning permission were generally more likely to have positive attitudes toward planning controls and there was overall no universal negative attitude toward planning regulations.

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<sup>1</sup>An Assessment of the Effects of Conservation Areas on Value (English Heritage and carried out by the London School of Economics (LSE) in 2012)  
<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/research/social-and-economic-research/value-conservation-areas/>

# Designated Conservation Area

Figure 1 shows a map of the designated Conservation Area for Colesbrook, Gillingham. The boundary of the Conservation Area is highlighted in black. The main features, structures, buildings and the listed building of the area have been included within the boundary.

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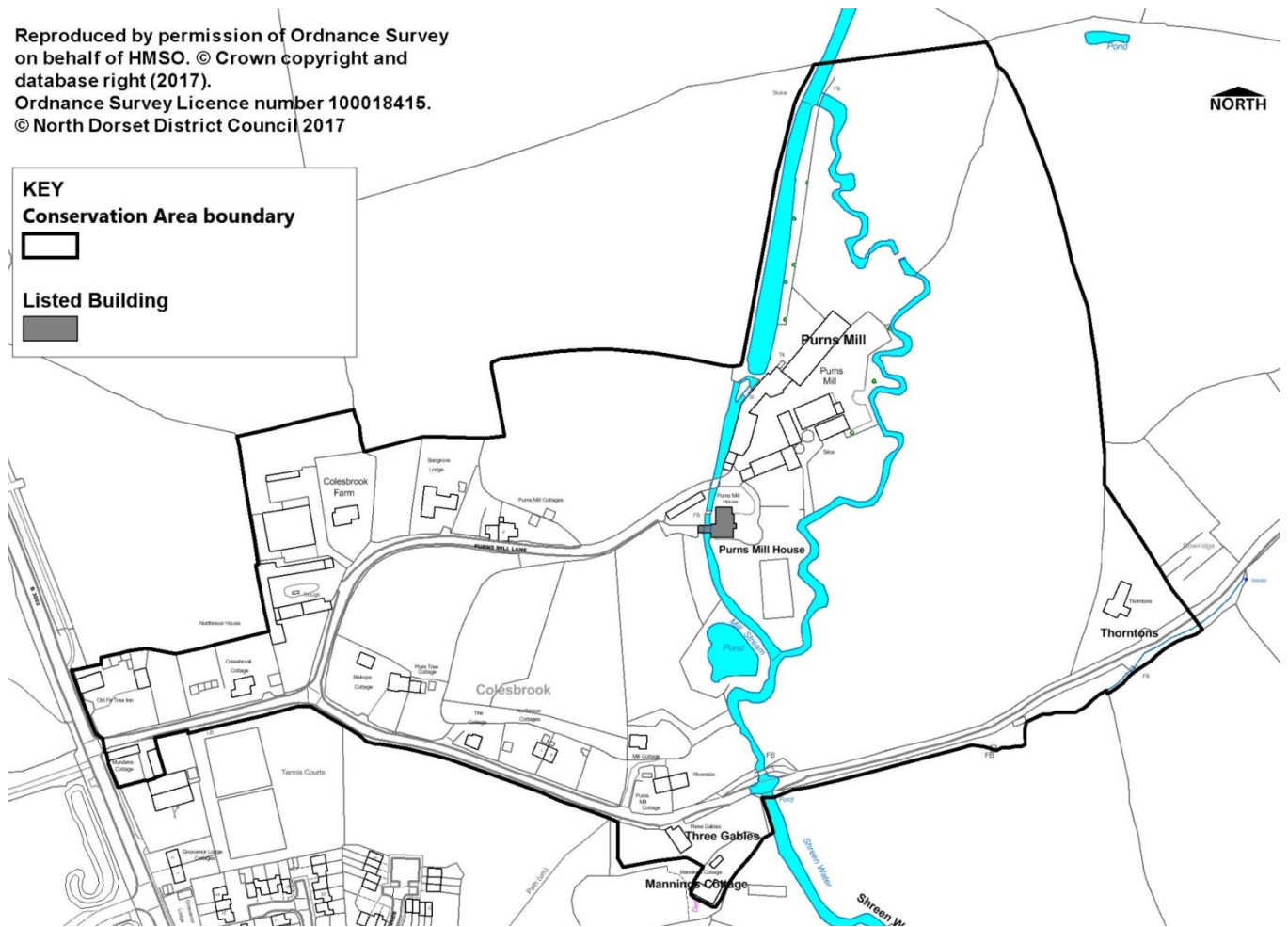
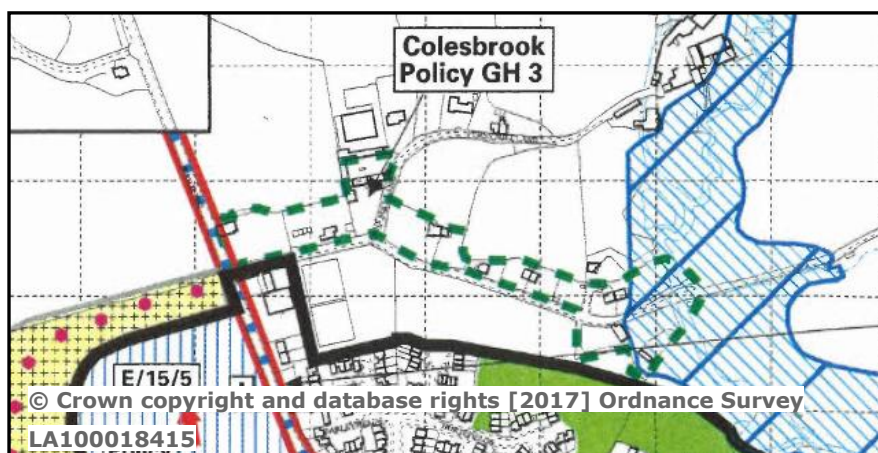


Fig 1. Map of the designated Colesbrook Conservation Area – not to scale

# Colesbrook, The Setting

Gillingham is Dorset's most northerly town set amid the Blackmore Vale countryside. The area of Colesbrook is situated to the East of the B3092 and South of Milton-on-Stour. Colesbrook contains traditional properties and still retains its individual character. The area is slightly detached from the town; although, modern housing estates have been developed to the south of Colesbrook.

The 2003 North Dorset District Wide Local Plan identifies Colesbrook as an 'area of local character' (Policy GH3) and this policy was retained in the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 in January 2016.



*Fig. 2 Shows a map of Colesbrook taken from the District Wide Local Plan for North Dorset, identifying it as an Area of Local Character*

Dominant structures in Colesbrook include:

- The Fir Tree, a former public house.
- Purns Mill, famous for its association with the painter John Constable.
- Northmoor House
- Colesbrook Ford and its beautiful Victorian Bridge.

<sup>2</sup>North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan to 2011 <http://www.northdorsetlocalplan.co.uk/text/book.htm>



*Fig. 3 Old Fir Tree Inn*



*Fig. 4 Purns Mill*



*Fig. 5 Northmoor House*



*Fig. 6 Colesbrook Ford*

The area is characterised by modest rural dwellings, generally traditional in terms of their scale and fenestration. Colesbrook has had very little modern intrusion and nothing too disruptive in visual terms. There is a mix of worthwhile buildings built mainly from local natural stone, interspersed with rendered properties. Colesbrook has a real sense of place, the appearance of a finite settlement and is worthy of Conservation Area designation.

**In 2003 NDDC published a report on the landscape and open spaces around Gillingham,** with suggestions for their future use. The main purpose of the study was to look at the landscapes of the areas around Milton, Bay and Ham which had been acting as buffers to the town's growth, and assess their possible amenity and recreation potential. It also examined other opportunities to improve open space in the town. Among the ideas put forward was Conservation Area status for Colesbrook.



The Gillingham Landscapes and Open Spaces Assessment Report<sup>3</sup> for North Dorset District Council by Richard F Burden (2003), describes Colesbrook as follows:

*'The buildings at Colesbrook are a traditional stone style, with either slate or tile roofs. There have been some modern additions in the area but these are generally sympathetic to the prevailing styles and blend in well. There is a definite village feel to the area, due to the similarities between the buildings and the relatively large spaces surrounding them. As with Bay, the village feel is probably emphasised by the single line of houses along the road and the open spaces around it. It should be noted that the designated character area covers the southern road and not Purns Mill Lane, and therefore does not include the mill. There are no Listed Buildings within the Colesbrook character area, however Purns Mill House [Grade II] is just outside. It would make sense for the character area to include this building and its immediate context.'*

In 2005, the Three Rivers Partnership produced an Open Spaces Group Report for Gillingham. The report describes Colesbrook as follows:

*Colesbrook is another settlement that is set apart from Gillingham proper but recent development means that the separation is very slight indeed. The uncertainty about the buffer zones suggests that this fragile environment of real quality is worthy of further protection, consideration for Conservation Area status as soon as possible.*

In 2006, the residents of Milton-on-Stour, together with Huntingford and Colesbrook, decided to produce their own village plan, so that they could assess the needs of the village for the future, and make their views known to the local councils. The Milton-on-Stour Village Plan<sup>4</sup> was published in 2009. It included an action plan for the immediate concerns, and a vision statement for the future which quotes 'Residents of Milton, Huntingford and Colesbrook are anxious to preserve the quality of their environment and the village life'.

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<sup>3</sup> Gillingham Landscapes and Open Spaces Assessment (RF Burden, 2003) <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/396816>

<sup>4</sup> Milton On Stour Village Plan (Local residents, 2009)  
<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media.jsp?mediaid=151942&filetype=pdf>



# A Brief History of Colesbrook

Maps and photographs of Colesbrook throughout recent history:

Fig. 7 OS Map of Colesbrook, Gillingham in 1811

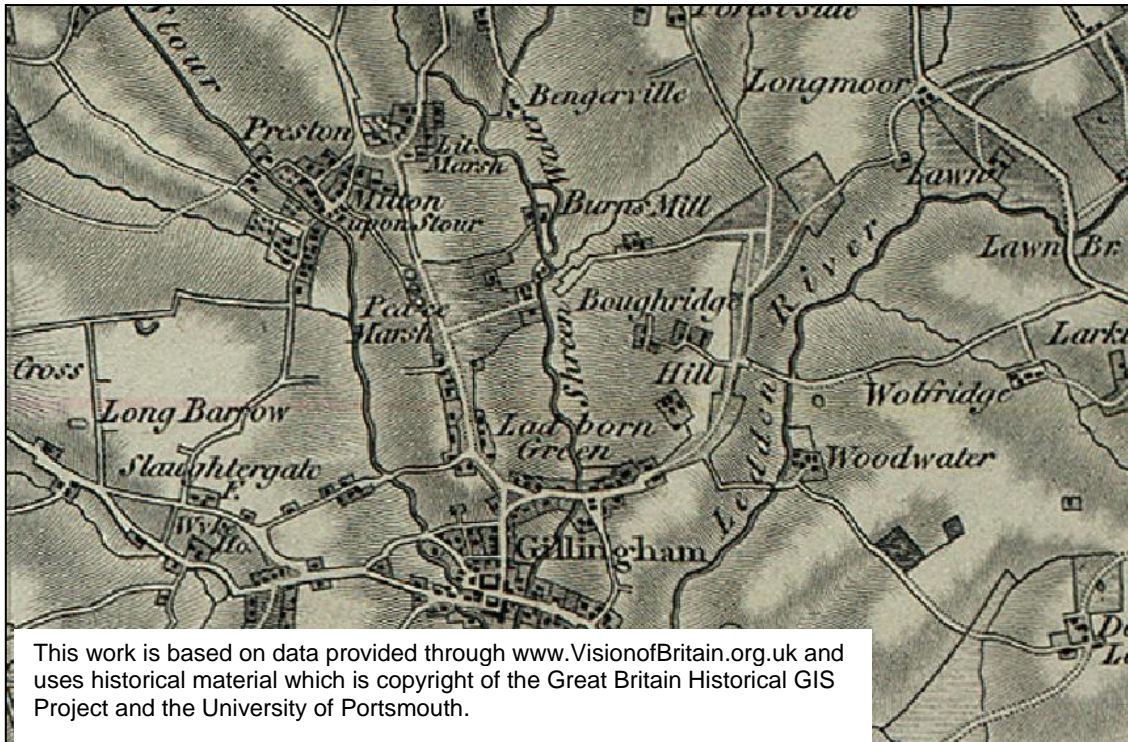
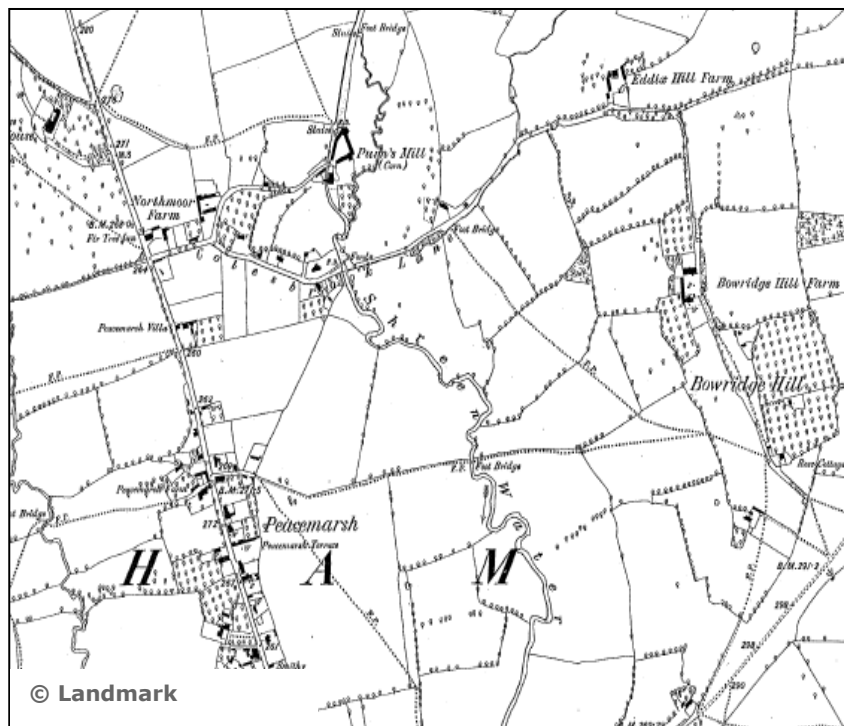


Fig. 8 OS Map of Colesbrook, Gillingham in 1886



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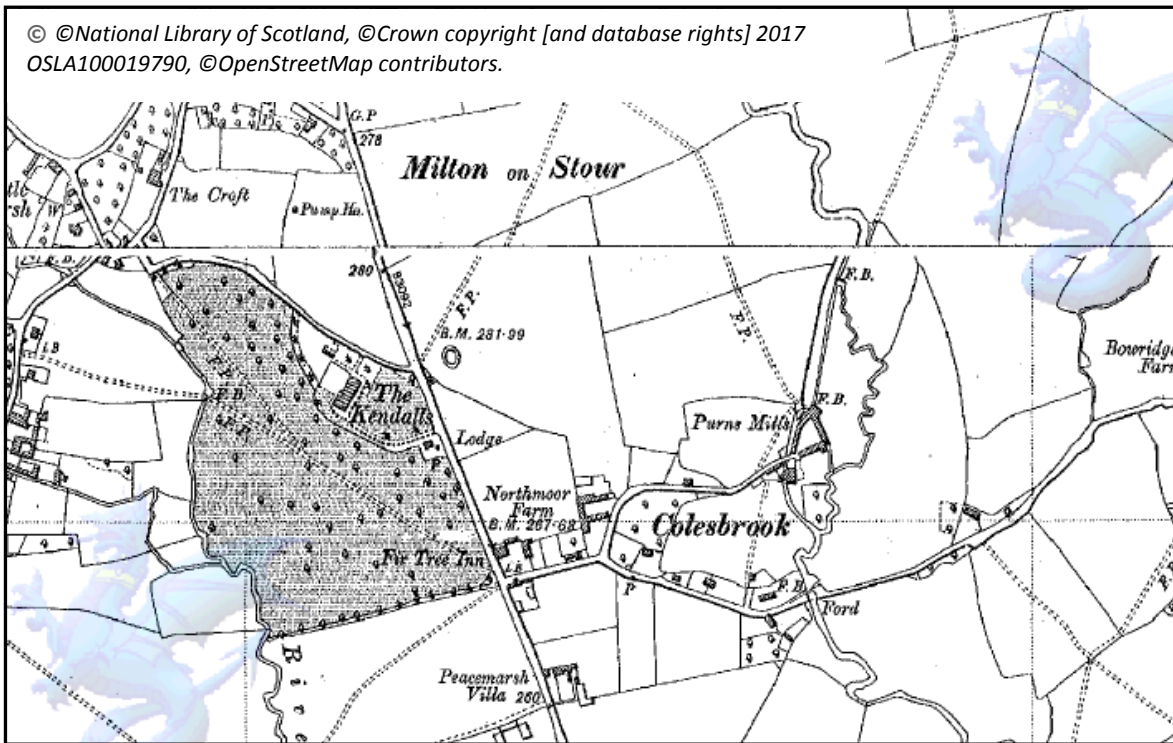
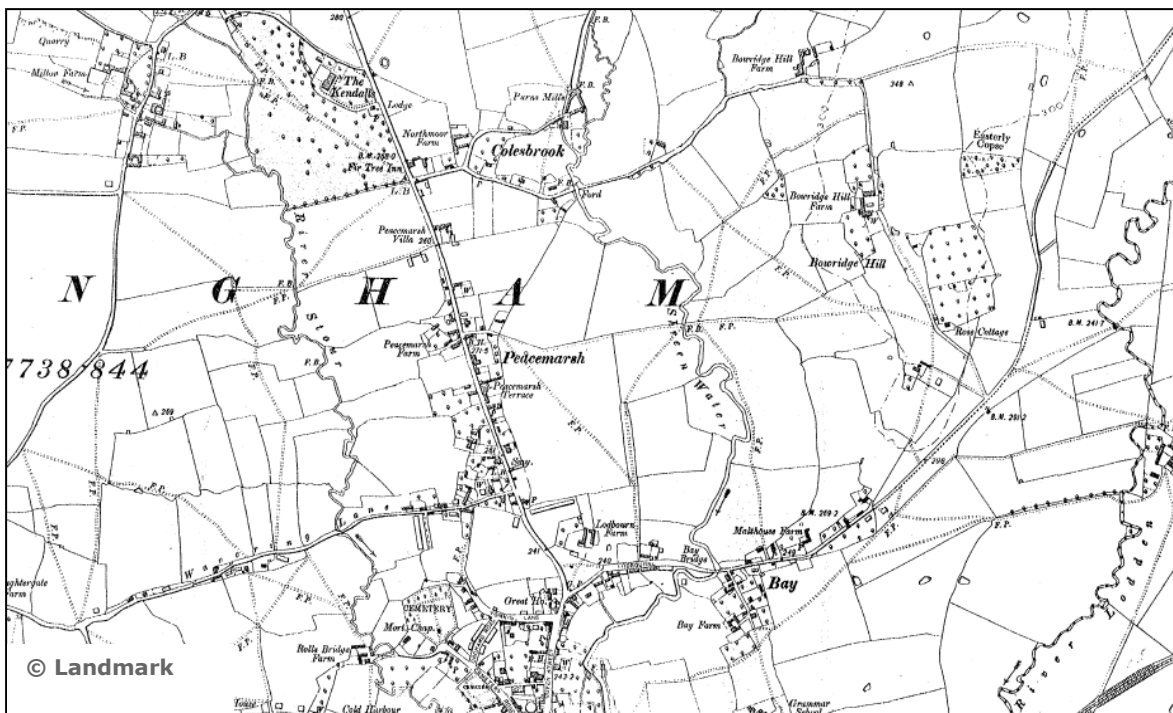


Fig. 9 Map of Colesbrook, Gillingham from the early 1900's

Fig. 10 Map of Colesbrook, Gillingham in 1902





*Fig. 11 Aerial photograph of Colesbrook, Gillingham in 1946 (Colesbrook shown within the red box)*



*Fig. 12 Map of Colesbrook, Gillingham in 1997*



*Fig. 13 Aerial photograph of Colesbrook, Gillingham in 2009*



Colesbrook was part of the Northmoor open commons (Porter, 2011). Remaining common is shown on the OS 1811 map (fig 7), as is a track travelling from the Mere road over the common to properties near Shreen Water. Access to Purns Mill was across the common and down an arm or track off it.

Before 1841 (date of Tithe Map) the common was enclosed and by 1886 (fig 8), the U shaped Colesbrook created with a new connecting road linking it to the turnpiked Mere road (B3092) and the turnpike house of Munden's Cottage. The U shaped layout was formed by a new stretch of road (Purns Mill Lane) to Purns Mill passing new North Moor Farm and another new length of road (Colesbrook Lane) to the properties near the Shreen Water, crossing the river (ford and footbridge) and linking up with a possibly existing road that led eastwards towards the Bowridge Hill area. These changes may have resulted either wholly or in part from enclosure of the common, the rebuilding of the mill (following a fire), the aspirations of the mill owner or the turnpike works between Gillingham and Mere.

The U shaped road layout of Colesbrook with the single road access to the B3092 is an important characteristic, as is the road layout's relationship to Shreen Water at the mill and the ford crossing. Sparsely populated, the rural character of Colesbrook is expressed in the green open space inside and outside the U shape with Shreen Water with its milling legacy flowing through.

The growth of Gillingham is shown when the 1946 aerial photograph (fig 11) and the 2009 aerial photograph (fig 13) are compared. The rural identity of Colesbrook is dependent on maintaining the remaining, mainly green open space between the village and Gillingham.



# Dwellings

## List of Addresses and Map

Number	Address
1	Munden's Cottage, Peacemarsh, Gillingham, SP8 4EU
2	Old Fir Tree Inn, Peacemarsh, Gillingham, SP8 4EU
3	Colesbrook Cottage, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HH
4	Northmoor House, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HH
5	Colesbrook Farm, Purns Mill Lane, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HJ
6	Bangrove Lodge, Purns Mill Lane, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HJ
7	1 Purns Mill Cottages, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HL
8	2 Purns Mill Cottages, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HL
9	Purns Mill House, Purns Mill Lane, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HJ
10	Purns Mill, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HW
11	Bishops Cottage, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HH
12	Plumtree Cottage, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HH
13	The Cottage, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HH
14	1 Northmoor Cottages, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HN
15	2 Northmoor Cottages, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HN
16	Mill Cottage, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HH
17	Purns Mill Cottage, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HH
18	Riverside, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HH
19	Three Gables, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HH
20	Manning's Cottage, Colesbrook, Gillingham, SP8 4HH
21	Thorntons, Bowridge Hill, Gillingham, SP8 5QS

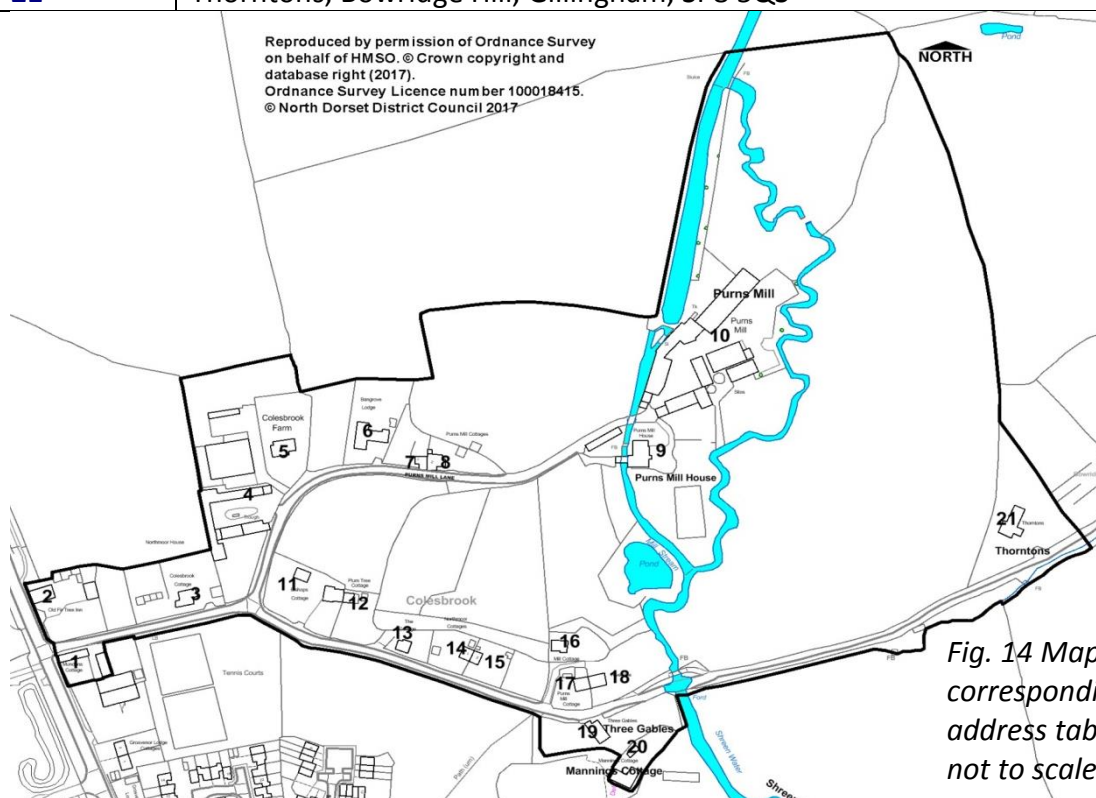


Fig. 14 Map corresponding to address table – not to scale

## Purns Mill

The artist John Constable completed in total four oil sketches/paintings of the earlier Purns Mill between 1820 and 1824. It is believed that the fields east of the mill provided Constable with views of the mill”.



*Fig. 15 Parham's Mill, Gillingham. From the collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England*

The mill known today as Purns Mill was formerly known as Parham's Mill from an earlier owner, Matthew Parham, although in the 19th century at least it was also known as Perne's Mill. Constable probably first saw the building during his 1820 visit; certainly in subsequent correspondence with John Fisher he several times expressed his desire to come back "to do something at the mill we went to, that famous mill a mile or two off". In a letter to his wife dated 29 August 1823 Constable records that he had made "one or two attacks on an old mill" which probably is a reference to the

studies (pencil or oil sketches) which would have formed the bases for his later studio works depicting Parham's Mill.

Constable is known to have completed four oil sketches/paintings of Parham's Mill, three from the elevation shown here and one other from a different angle.

The mill was lost in a fire in 1825 and Fisher wrote to Constable, “The news is that Matthew Parham’s (alias Perne’s) mill is burnt to the ground and exists only on your canvas. A huge misshapen, new, bright, brick, modern, improved, patent monster is starting up in its stead” (Porter, 2011). The Matthews family bought the new mill about 1850 and flour milling continued, although a malting floor was added. The mill supplied Wyke brewery with malt. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the mill concentrated on animal feed manufacture until its closure circa 2003. The Mills Archive has photographs of the mill dated 1949 and 1960, available to view at <https://millsarchive.org/>

*Fig. 16 Aerial Photograph of Purns Mill taken in 2009.*

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Fig 17. Purns Mill 2009

Purns Mill is a dominant industrial complex. The mill buildings are grouped around a triangular yard. The main mill is four storeys high, built of stone and slate. To the SE, a long range that once joined the main mill was partially demolished in the late C20 to provide access to a warehouse on the north side. Other, smaller warehouses were added to the back of the east range.

On the west side is a large external wheelpit, (rendering on the mill building wall marks the shape of the long-since removed wheel). A sluice and the mill pond behind provided a head of c10ft. The wheelpit had been rebuilt with a brick lining when a turbine was installed in the late C19. In 1999, this turbine survived in the wheelpit with the name “C. CADLE ENGINEER DUBLIN” and gearing was in place for transferring the motion into the mill building, although the turbine was no longer in use – mains electricity was then the source of power. Cornelius Cadle patented a turbine in 1888, a date which perhaps fits with improvements at Purns Mill. This was a rare survival of a turbine manufactured outside Dorset and neighbouring counties, which were dominated by turbines and mill equipment from J Armfield of Ringwood, Hampshire. The gearing has now been cast aside and the location of the turbine unknown.



Shreen Water has been diverted to become the mill leat, which was widened to create a long, straight millpond, giving a good head of water at the mill. Lined with very tall trees this is now the main course of the river, which tumbles over the bypass next to the wheelpit into the tailrace.

At the top end of the leat/pond is a sluice which acts as an overflow into the old meandering course of the river. A survey of the sluice may find the manufacturer's name.

The tailrace runs beside a long wall of the mill complex before passing under a stone bridge in Purns Mill Lane and an extension at the back of the listed Purns Mill House. The underside of the bridge's skewed arch is in brick. The tailrace may have provided the house with some sort of machinery for domestic use.

The mill buildings and associated features and structures should be fully recorded and their history investigated. This should also help in understanding the phases of development and the position and types of machinery installed. There is photographic evidence of the stump of a large chimney, so it is possible steam was once used to supplement water power.

The stone stile in Purns Mill Lane is an attractive feature.

# Old Fir Tree Inn

Formerly a public house dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was for many years the residence of the Light family who over several generations were the publicans. The building was owned by Matthews & Co Brewers of Gillingham and later owned by Hall and Woodhouse who held it until its closure in 1979. The Fir Tree sits on the B3092 at the junction with Colesbrook and is a well-know land-mark.



*Fig 18. The Fir Tree 2015*



*Fig 19. Old Fir Tree Inn C1990*  
© Gillingham Museum



*Fig 20. The Fir Tree C1970*  
© Gillingham Museum

## Munden's Cottage

Originally comprising two semi-detached cottages, the brick extension nearest the Gillingham road was part of the original Purns Mill Turnpike House. Toll gates would have blocked Purns Mill land and also the Gillingham to Mere Road. The actual Toll Gate Tariff Board may still be seen in Gillingham Museum.



*Fig 21. Munden's Cottage today*



*Fig 22. Alternative view of Menden's Cottage*



## Colesbrook Cottage

A small early 19<sup>th</sup> century artisan's cottage, over the years occupants have ranged from farm workers, sawyers and mill workers. Many were of the Light family – probably related to those living next door at the Fir Tree.



*Fig 23. Colesbrook Cottage today*



*Fig 24. Alternative view of Colesbrook Cottage*

# Northmoor House

Originally, a two-up two-down rural worker's cottage built over 200 years ago. At some point it became a farm. There are old flag stones in the kitchen and dining room with a gully through the middle of the kitchen. There are no ceilings, just floor boards.



*Fig. 25.  
Northmoor  
House  
today*



*Fig. 26.  
View of  
Northmoor  
House*



*Fig. 27 View of road  
from Northmoor House*



## Colesbrook Farm

Colesbrook Farm was built in the early 1990s as an agricultural works dwelling. It is situated adjacent to agricultural buildings adjacent to Northmoor House.



*Fig. 28 Colesbrook Farm*

## Bangrove Lodge

A 1970's bungalow originally built by the then owners of Northmoor farm for their family use.

*Fig. 29 Bangrove Lodge*



## Purns Mill Cottages

A pair of 19<sup>th</sup> century semi-detached cottages with modern extensions that were originally built to house mill workers.



*Fig. 30 Purns Mill Cottages*



*Fig. 31 Purns Mill Cottages*



# Purns Mill House and Buildings

A Grade 2 listed Georgian House. It may have originally been built for the mill owner, but for many years it was used as accommodation for the manager or chief miller of Purns Mill.



*Fig. 32 Purns Mill House*



*Fig. 33 Purns Mill House*

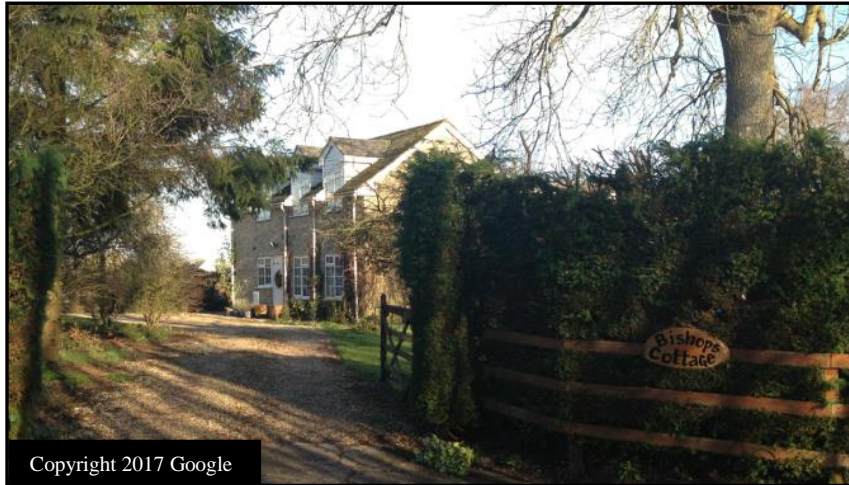


*Fig. 34 Purns Mill Barn*



## Bishop's Cottage

Situated at the junction of Purns Mill Lane and Colesbrook Lane, Bishop's cottage is surrounded by dense hedgerows and boundary trees. A two storey extension was added in 1978 and a garage was built in 1988; however, this property still retains its original character as an agricultural worker's cottage.



*Fig. 35*

*Bishops Cottage*

## Plum Tree Cottage

Plum Tree Cottage is virtually hidden from any public viewpoint along Colesbrook Lane by roadside and boundary trees and dense hedgerows adding to the seclusion and contributing further to its character.



*Fig. 36 Plum Tree Cottage*

## The Cottage

A typical late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century dwelling, like Bishop's Cottage, it was probably built for agricultural workers employed on the nearby Northmoor Farm.

*Fig. 37 The Cottage*



*Fig. 38 The Cottage*



## Northmoor Cottages

As the same suggests, these cottages were also built to house farm workers. Such workers would include not only the men labouring in the fields but also many women and girls employed in the dairy and domestic work.



*Fig. 39 Northmoor Cottages*

## Mill Cottage

An early 19<sup>th</sup> century mill workers cottage with modern extension.



*Fig 40.  
Mill Cottage*

## Purns Mill Cottage and Riverside Cottage

Another 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century cottage built to house mill workers. Originally, it was a terrace of three cottages .

*Fig 41. Purns Mill Cottage and Riverside Cottage*





## Three Gables

An 18<sup>th</sup> century cottage with modern extensions, which may once have been a small farm.



*Fig. 42 Three Gables*

## Manning's Cottage

Manning's Cottage was re-built in 2015 at the end of a private driveway in a pleasant and secluded garden setting. It is virtually hidden from any public viewpoint along Colesbrook Lane by roadside and boundary trees and dense hedgerows. There is more tree cover around the ford and along Shreen Water, adding to the seclusion and contributing further to the sylvan character in the vicinity.

# Thorntons

Originally, a small farm workers cottage probably connected with Eddix Farm. Considerable extensions to the house and grounds have been made in recent times.



*Fig. 43  
Entrance to  
Thornton's*

# Trees and Landscape



Fig 44 Colebrook Ford

The Trees and Landscape chapter was researched and compiled for the purposes of the 'Colesbrook Conservation Area'. It is written from an observer's point of view travelling along both Purns Mill Lane and Colesbrook Lane. Entry into private gardens or fields was not undertaken for this report.

The photographs referred to throughout this chapter or report, are assembled in **Appendix A**, and there is also an accompanying map, **Appendix B**, that indicates the location of views and tree features referred to in the chapter. For more detail on individual trees, a Tree Survey, including photographs, compiled over a two year period, 2013-2014, is available upon request.

## The Hamlet of Colesbrook

Colesbrook is a settlement set apart from Gillingham proper, situated to the north of the town between the B3092 to the west and Bowridge Hill to the east, but recent development means that the separation is very slight indeed. (*see Figure 45*) The hamlet lies in a west-east orientation, with the river valley of the classified chalk stream, Shreen Water, twisting and turning its way from north to south through the area. The topography is relatively gentle, flattish ground, reflecting the underlying clays (underlying geology is Kimmeridge clay), ranging from 80 metres within the

settlement and rising in a concave slope to 107m on Bowridge Hill, to the east. (*see Figure 46*) The hamlet lies within the Blackmore Vale Landscape Character Area and the part of it lies within a Designated Area of Local Character. The Designated Area of Local Character only covers part of the hamlet, mostly the north side of Colesbrook Lane and part of Purns Mill Lane and does not include either Purns Mill or Purns Mill House. Within the local character area, there are no Listed Buildings, however Purns Mill House (Grade II) is just outside. (*see Figure 47*)

## **Approaching Colesbrook from the north**

From a northerly direction, travelling along the B3092 between Milton-on-Stour and Gillingham, the landscape character is largely pastoral, with open fields enclosed by hedges and a few obvious hedgerow trees. Looking in an easterly direction, views can be glimpsed of the northern fringes of the settlement of Colesbrook through gaps in the trimmed hedgerow (*photos 1-4*) and noticeably the dominance of evergreen and deciduous trees enhancing the rich rural character of the settlement (*photos 5 & 6*). The settlement is reached by a narrow lane from the B3092 which forks into Purns Mill Lane to the north and Colesbrook Lane to the south, enclosing a central field with Shreen Water defining the eastern field boundary. (*see Figure 48*) From the air, it can be seen that this central field is divided into four compartments by hedgerow and fencing; the west field being more rough grassland, containing an orchard and noticeably more trees within; the middle and east fields being of pastoral quality with hedgerow to the north and a significant tree lined boundary to the south. (*see Figure 49*)





Google earth

feet 5000  
km 1



FIGURE 45 - The hamlet of 'Colesbrook' to the north of Gillingham



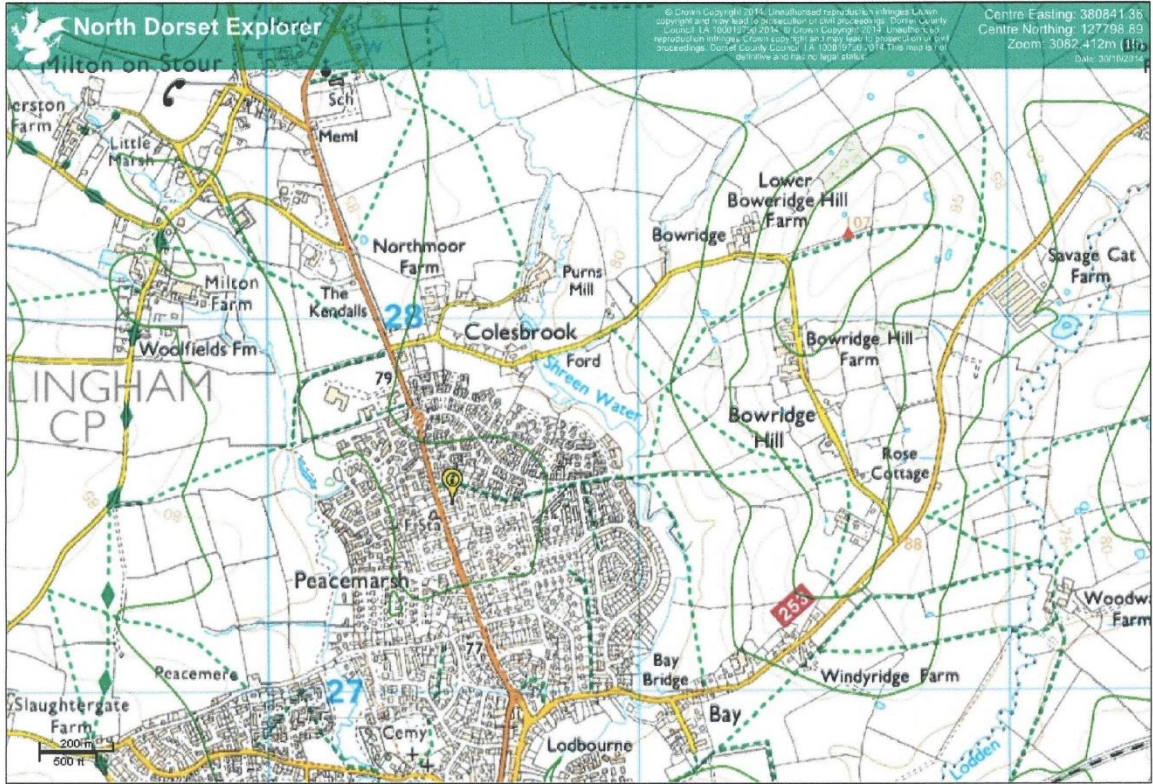


FIGURE 46 - OS Terrain - 10m contours

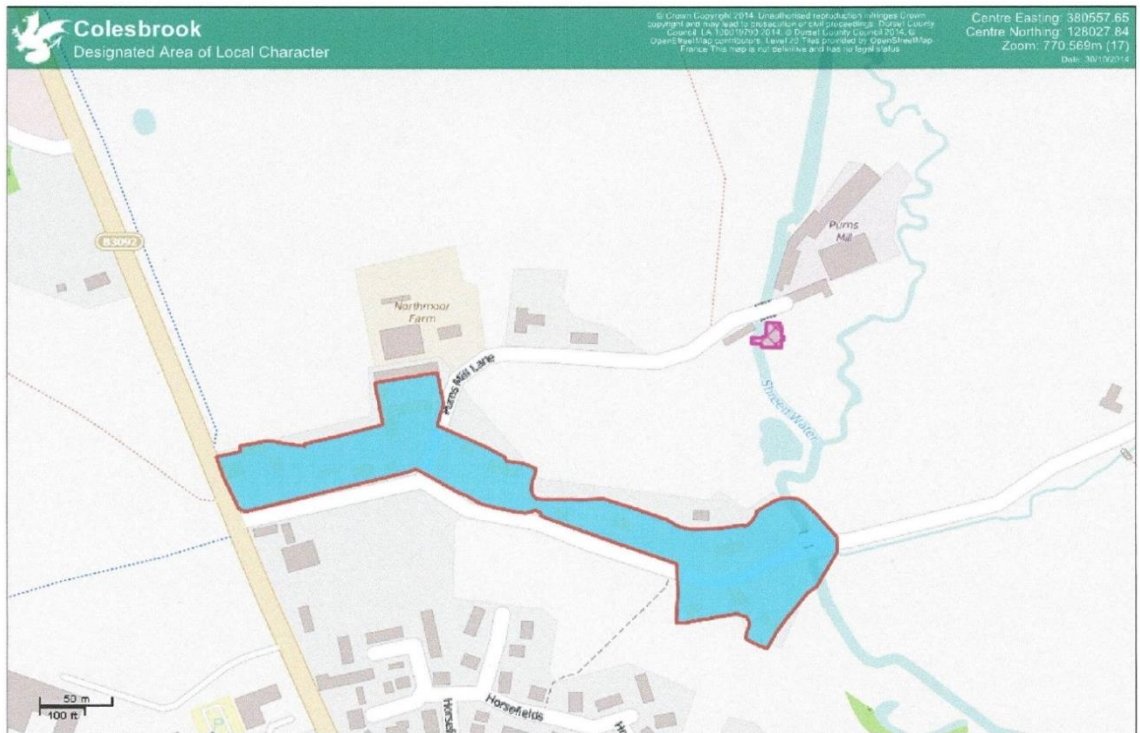


FIGURE 47 - Blue Area - 'Designated Area of Local Character' covering 'Purns Mill Lane' west and 'Colesbrook  
 Pink Area - 'Purns Mill House' - Listed Building (Grade II)







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FIGURE 49 - The enclosed central fields of 'Colesbrook'

## Purns Mill Lane

The main approach into the settlement of Colesbrook from the B3092 is a 90 degrees turn east into a narrow lane known as Purns Mill Lane between the neatly trimmed conifer hedge and garden of Old Fir Tree Inn to the north and Munden's Cottage (the old toll house), to the south of the junction (*photos 7 – 9*). Nonetheless, turning down into Purns Mill Lane, the rural character of the area soon becomes apparent with significant vegetation on both sides and the road narrowing as it approaches the fork in the lane, where Purns Mill Lane continues in a north-easterly direction towards Purns Mill; and Purns Mill House and Colesbrook Lane begins its journey eastwards through the southern part of the hamlet and continuing over Bowridge Hill to join Bay Road heading out to the Lawn Crossroads junction with Shaftesbury Road.

The neat hedge of the roadside boundary of Old Fir Tree Inn on the north side of the junction, abruptly changes to a mixed hedgerow, including Hawthorn, Hazel, Bramble, Blackthorn, Ash and Elder, coming to an end at the private access into Colesbrook Cottage, which is lined both sides by a significant group of conifers (*Leylandii*) at 90 degrees to the lane (*photos 10-12*) – the west side comprising of approximately 15 trees and the east 4 trees. These trees are of little value individually, but as a group they are a significant feature of the Colesbrook skyline and can be extensively viewed from all round but particularly from the north (*photos 5 & 6*).

From the abandoned forecourt on the south side of Purns Mill Lane, a ditch and hedgerow of Hawthorn and ivy interspersed with a mix of Sycamore, Field Maple, Ash, Horse Chestnut and Hawthorn trees, form the boundary with a private tennis court. Opposite is Colesbrook Cottage, which has a significant Ash to the rear garden and copious vegetation overhanging a mixed native hedgerow combined with privet hedging, merging on the bend as the lane forks with trees on the boundary of Northmoor House, including Sycamore, Yew and Ash. Ash trees on the opposite side also considerably overhang the lane at this point and combine to form a very

attractive and shady passage through which to travel before setting off in different directions at the fork in the lane (*photos 13-15*).

Continuing along Purns Mill Lane from the fork, it is very noticeable that this stretch of the lane has a much more open aspect, which has been brought about by the farming activity of the former Northmoor Farm (now known as 'Northmoor House') and that of Colesbrook Farm, characterised by open fields enclosed by hedgerows to the west and north and an enclosed field to the east between Purns Mill Lane and Colesbrook Lane. (*photo 19*)

From the fork in the lane, the hedgerow continues along the west side of Purns Mill Lane with a mixture of Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel, Ash and Elder forming the front garden boundary of Northmoor House, in which there are some noticeably good specimens of mature trees including a Silver Birch, Rowan and a Weeping Willow near the roadside. The hedgerow stops at the natural stone walling belonging to Northmoor House and then continues, intersected by driveways to the farm and dwelling on the bend. (*photos 16 - 18*)

The hedgerow on the east side is a mix of native species and privet hedging, but predominately a mix of Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Ash with a number of significant trees and groups of trees visible in the rear and side garden of Bishop's Cottage, including Conifers, Ash, Cherry and Plum. Where the dwelling boundary ends the hedgerow continues as a mixed native species, predominately Hawthorn and ivy, following the boundary of the enclosed fields between the two lanes, where an old and somewhat neglected apple orchard follows the hedge line (*photo 20*) of the west field and evidence of former mature willow trees lie decaying on the ground to the south, to the rear of Bishop's Cottage and Plum Tree Cottage, along Colesbrook Lane (apparently brought down in recent storms).

The open aspect continues with the lane following an easterly direction towards Purns Mill. The most noticeable and prominent feature on this bend is a mature Ash tree in the front garden of Colesbrook Farm (*photo 18*). The northerly hedgerow is

predominately Hawthorn along the field boundary and continues as a neatly trimmed hedge along the boundary of Bangrove Lodge, giving way to other domestic hedging at 1-2 Purns Mill Cottages (*photo 21*) and then resuming as a Hawthorn hedge along the field boundary towards Purns Mill. There is a distinct lack of mature trees along this stretch of the lane, apart from a young Eucalyptus but evidence can be seen of former significant Willows in the gardens of Purns Mill Cottages.

Views in front are then principally of the parkland trees located in the extensive gardens of Purns Mill House, including amongst many others, significant Pine and Willow, through which Shreen Water runs its course. (*photo 22*) The lane takes a left hand bend and two Horse Chestnuts frame a gateway on the south side through which a good view can be seen of the enclosed field between the two lanes.

There is the first glimpse of a Horse Chestnut from the bend on the north side. This is the first of five trees set as an avenue along the field boundary, some with fence protection. (*photo 27*) At this point the Hawthorn hedge gives way to a post and wire fence with copious brambles for a short distance and then resumes as a Hawthorn hedge mixed with Hazel and Ash down to the outbuildings of Purns Mill. Along this stretch, there are open views of the fields to the north, which set the scene for the historic Purns Mill itself, amongst the spreading willows and columnar Lombardy poplars (*photos 23-26*). The southerly hedgerow continues with a mix of Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Hazel until reaching the outbuildings of Purns Mill House but not before an attractive stone slab stile.



## Colesbrook Lane

Returning to the fork in the road, and continuing in an easterly direction along Colesbrook Lane - this lane has a very different character than the more open aspect of Purns Mill Lane.

It is embraced with vegetation from both sides, compounded by a significant Ash tree (recently reduced) and Weeping Willow in the front garden of Bishop's Cottage on the north side; the latter overhanging a sizeable conifer and mixed species hedge into the road. (*photos 28 & 29*) Mature plum trees in the front garden of Plum Tree Cottage, similarly overhanging a tall mixed species hedge, combined with a recently reduced conifer, significant Pine and Yew, contribute to the shade and dominance of the vegetation at this left hand bend.

The lane straightens from Plum Tree Cottage and the dwellings of The Cottage and Northmoor Cottages open up the north side of the lane with their manicured domestic garden frontages, followed by an abandoned plot of land (*photos 30-32*).

The only significant trees to be seen at this point on the north side are within the gardens of Northmoor Cottages, with a conifer (*Leylandii*) group to the rear garden and young Ash and Beech to the front garden. The north side continues with domestic garden frontage and a mix of cultivated and Hawthorn hedging of adjoining Purns Mill Cottage and Riverside Cottage.

However, despite the manicured frontages to the north side of the lane, the south side has no development along this stretch until the left hand bend at Three Gables because the hedgerow and land beyond is designated public open space, which will all eventually come under the ownership and management of Gillingham Town Council. Therefore a continuous hedgerow of dense vegetation (*photo 30*), predominately Ash, Hazel, Hawthorn and Blackthorn with bramble and ivy undergrowth, continues along the northern fringe of the open space land to the bend at Three Gables, interspersed with numerous Ash and Hazel trees. A shallow ditch follows this hedgerow from The Cottage to Three Gables.

The relevance of conserving the setting of Areas of Local Character couldn't be better demonstrated than along this stretch of Colesbrook Lane. It is very apparent that the existence of this substantial hedgerow plays a very important role in enclosing the landscape and screening the hamlet from the northerly expansion of Gillingham and gives some separation and enclosure to the urban fringe fields on the southern side. The public open space land acts as a buffer between the development of Horsefields and the tranquility of Colesbrook Lane and despite the development along the north side, the rural character is still intact. (*see Figure 50*)

Beyond the bend, the character of the lane changes again and immediately in view is a dense canopy of mature trees which conceals the enchanting area around the ford across Shreen Water on Colesbrook Lane (*photos 33 & 34a*). The actual river channel is quite narrow either side of the ford, with dense vegetation on both sides, offering seclusion for wildlife (a Kingfisher was observed on more than one occasion during tree observations) and a wildlife corridor, linking town to countryside.



On Shreen Water there are bankside trees just south of the ford, (*photo 37*), though to the north in the open countryside area, these are rather more sporadic with a higher willow content. A tree group just outside the scope of the Conservation Area is already protected by an Area Tree Preservation Order. (*see Figure 51*)

The garden and mixed native species hedgerow (predominantly Hawthorn and Blackthorn) of Riverside continues to the ford on the north side with significant Ash, Maple, Sycamore and Willow merging with mature Ash and Sycamore trees along the field boundary with the ford, with Hazel undergrowth. (*Photos 33, 34a/b, 35a/b*) Likewise, the garden of Three Gables extends down to the ford on the south side along with, most noticeably, a very tall and overgrown mixed hedgerow, including Ash, Conifer, Hawthorn, Hazel and Sycamore. (*photo 33 & 34a*)

The canopy at the ford area is essentially a mix of native species, predominately Ash and Sycamore, with two significant trees, an Ash and a Sycamore, growing between the bridge and the ford, which gives this area leafy shade during the summer months (*photos 34b, 35a & 36*).



FIGURE 50 - Public Open Space Land acts as a buffer between the hamlet of 'Colesbrook' and the northern expansion of Gillingham

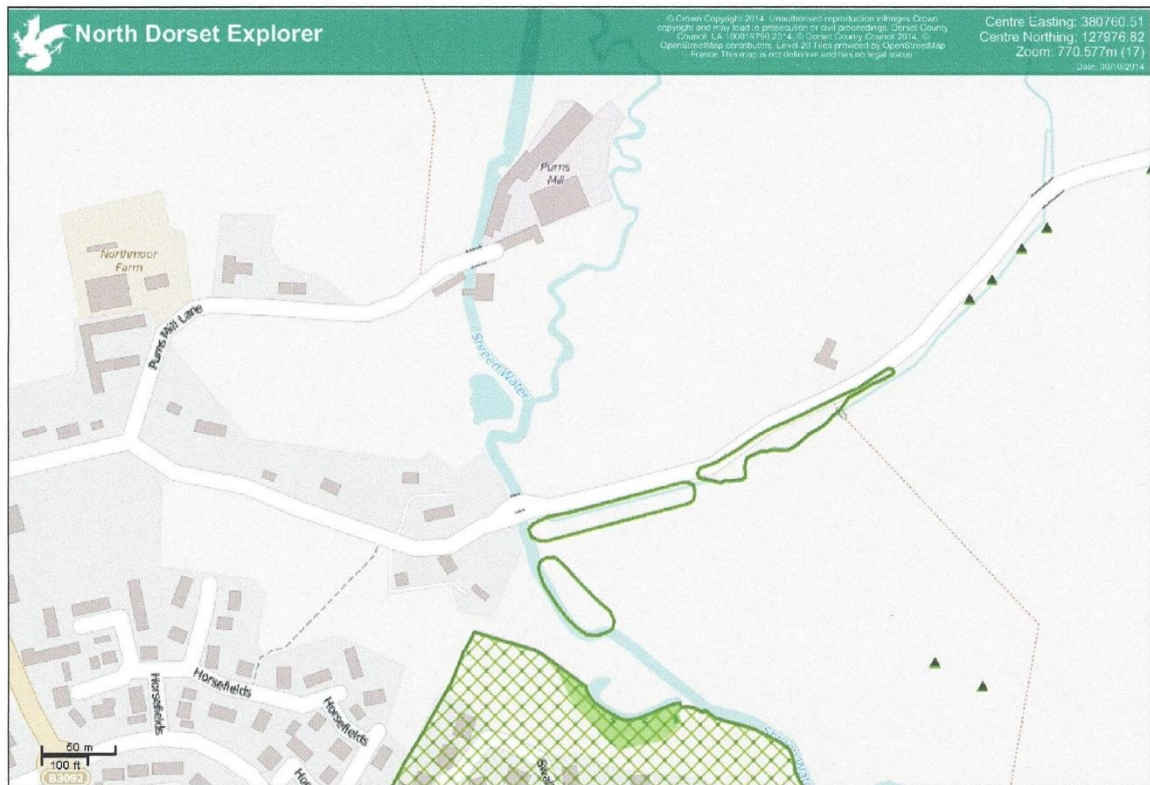


FIGURE 51 - Area Tree Preservation Orders

Colesbrook Ford is an attractive feature, with a narrow road bridge on the northern side. The bridge was a stone-arched footbridge on earlier maps but widened during the C20 (see the front page of the report for a pre-widening photograph of the bridge) to allow narrow vehicles to avoid the ford. The bridge is worthy of recording. The trees around the ‘ford’ provide shade and channel the view along the lane. The lane turns gently either side of the ‘ford’, providing it with seclusion and providing an element of surprise for the traveller.

Just beyond the ford on the south side, a native mixed hedgerow continues along the lane, interspersed with a group of significant Grey Poplar trees (*photo 38*) and mature Willow, Hazel, Field Maple and Hawthorn (*photo 39*). These trees are within an Area Tree Preservation Order which extends from the ‘ford’ to just before the left hand bend in the lane. (*see Figure 51*) On the north side a predominately Hawthorn and Blackthorn hedgerow with some Hazel continues to border an open field

through which views of significant mature trees in the grounds of Purns Mill House can be seen (*photo 40*).

A left hand bend in the lane finds another group of trees overhanging the lane from both sides comprising Hawthorn, Field Maple and Ash, dominated by a significant Grey Poplar to the south and two Ash and a Field Maple to the North (*photo 41*). The trees on the south side are within the second elongated area covered by an Area Tree Preservation Order which extends to and incorporates the copse opposite Thorntons House, as described later. (*see Figure 51*) A field gate offers a view of agricultural grazing land to the south at this point. (*photo 42*)

The lane continues straight with a dense hedgerow on the south side comprising of Hawthorn and Hazel and numerous Field Maples interspersed with very tall Grey Poplar and other trees overhanging the lane, which gives the lane a secluded aspect (*photos 43 & 44*). All these trees are protected by an Area Tree Preservation Order as described above. The dense hedgerow and trees give way to a narrow grass verge and a post and wire fence protecting a copse of mixed trees running alongside the lane, opposite the garden of Thorntons House. The copse includes Ash, Poplar, Willow, Field Maple, Hawthorn and other unidentified trees, the Grey Poplars in particular being of towering height, with dense undergrowth including Hawthorn and Blackthorn. This copse is included within the Area Tree Preservation Order as described above. (*photos 45 & 46*).

The copse can be accessed by a simple wooden gate. A public footpath marks the easterly edge of the copse with a foot bridge over a deep ditch next to a very good example of a mature Field Maple (*photos 47 & 48*). A wide grass slope opens up in front of the ditch with overgrown hedgerow behind. A group of five grey Poplars rises from the slope. (*photo 47*) The ditch continues nearer to the lane with overgrown native hedgerow behind, predominantly Hawthorn and Blackthorn interspersed with Ash, Hawthorn, Field Maple and Willow trees. (*photos 49 -51*)

On the north side, a Hawthorn hedgerow on a raised bank continues to the boundary of Thorntons House, with two significant Ash trees, giving the sense of a sunken narrow lane. A Grey Poplar on the field boundary rises from the predominately Hawthorn, well-manicured, garden boundary hedge and two Silver Birch adorn either side of the access. A mixture of native and ornamental trees is visible in the garden. *(photo 51)*

The east garden boundary of Thorntons House marks the edge of the Colesbrook Conservation Area. *(photos 50 & 51)*

## **Colesbrook viewed from the East**

Colesbrook Lane then continues from the edge of the Conservation Area, *(photo 52)*, through a more open pastoral landscape with bushy hedges crossing cattle grazed pastures on the concave slopes of Bowridge Hill as Colesbrook Lane makes a steady climb to the brow of Bowridge Hill, from which more general views of Colesbrook can be seen. *(photos 56-57)* From this easterly viewpoint It is very noticeable that the Colesbrook landscape is characterised by pastoral land with abundant hedgerow, interspersed with significant mature trees and groups of trees, predominately Ash, and the course of Shreen Water is marked by twisting lines of tall bankside trees (predominantly Alder, Ash, Oak and Willow), making this landscape predominantly green and lush. The large grey buildings of Purns Mill and outbuildings dominate the landscape and only glimpses of roofs and gables along Colesbrook Lane can be seen amongst dense vegetation, whilst looking beyond to the surrounding west and north of the settlement, the wider landscape is intensely rural as far as the eye can see. *(photos 53-55)*

It is also very noticeable from this viewpoint that the settlement of Colesbrook is very close to more recent expansion of Gillingham, buffered only by the public open space land between Colesbrook Lane and the developments of Horsefields, Swallowfields and Cherryfields. *(see Figure 50)*



*Fig 52 – view of Colesbrook from Bowridge Hill*



## Conclusion

Colesbrook itself retains a rural and rustic aspect, partly due to the form, scale and disposition of the older buildings, the proportions of their gardens and the ford and its approach. There have been some modern additions in the area but these are generally sympathetic to the prevailing styles and more recent renovations and alterations to dwellings have sought to respect this heritage.

There is a definite 'village feel' to the area, due to the similarities between the buildings and the relatively large spaces surrounding them, with copious vegetation. The 'village feel' is emphasised by the single line of cottages along the lanes and the open spaces around it.

Significant trees and hedgerow continue to be a constant feature, particularly the tall and substantial hedge on the south side of Colesbrook Lane which provides a strong visual and physical separation from the open area on the northern side of the new development in Gillingham.

Colesbrook is a rural hamlet within a sweep of countryside and to remain as a separate and distinct hamlet will conserve its tranquil rural character, especially that of Colesbrook Lane and the ancient ford.

It is clearly apparent that this fragile environment of real quality is significantly benefited from being further protected by Conservation Area status.

# Management Strategy for the Conservation Area

## Planning Policy Context:

Section 69 1(a) and 2 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') defines Conservation Areas as:

*'Areas of special architectural and historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'*

In addition, the Act puts particular emphasis on specific duties:

*'It shall be the duty of the local authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as Conservation Areas...'*

Further, the NPPF states at paragraph 126:

*Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:*

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*

- *the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- *opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.*

At paragraph 127 it states:

*When considering the designation of Conservation Areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest*

Of particular relevance is paragraph 137 and 138 of the NPPF which state:

*137. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.*

*138. Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.*

In order to undertake works of enhancement, the character of a Conservation Area needs to be clearly defined and understood (i.e. the Character Appraisal). This is in line with government guidance on the management of the historic environment, it also seeks to utilise some of the principles used in characterisation techniques promoted by Historic England.

North Dorset District Council has encapsulated the broad principles of this Government Guidance in its adopted local planning policies. The plan recognises that much of North Dorset's unique character is derived from the interaction between people and places over time, giving us the historic environment we have today. This character is rich and varied, for example, with different and distinctive architectural and vernacular styles in towns and villages reflecting the age and function of settlements and locally available building materials. As a result, the District's rich historic environment is one of its key strengths, which needs to be conserved and enhanced for future generations. National policy indicates that local councils should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. Central to any strategy is the conservation of 'heritage assets'.

The plan states that National policy indicates that planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. Also any positive strategy to secure the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment should recognise that heritage assets are irreplaceable.

With the designation of the Conservation Area, District Council Policy has a special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. Proposals for any new development, alterations and changes of use of existing buildings and land which have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area will not generally be permitted.



## **Heritage Assets**

The historic environment includes many individual ‘heritage assets’, which contribute to local identity and distinctiveness. A heritage asset is: a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets, for example listed buildings, and non-designated assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listings).<sup>1</sup> Local listing will be considered by the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan, which includes Colesbrook, and forms part of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

The Council’s approach to the conservation of heritage assets is the cornerstone of its positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.

The Council’s policy is as follows:

### **POLICY 5: THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

#### **Assessing Proposals That Would Harm a Heritage Asset**

Any development proposal affecting a heritage asset (including its setting) will be assessed having regard to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of that asset and securing a viable use for it that is most consistent with its conservation.

For any designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to its conservation when considering any proposal that would have an impact on its significance. Clear and convincing justification for any development that would cause harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset will be required however slight and whether through direct physical impact or by change to its setting.

#### **Justifying Substantial Harm to or the Loss of a Designated Heritage Asset**

Development that results in substantial harm to or the loss of a designated heritage asset will be refused unless it can clearly be justified that there is substantial public benefit resulting from the development, outweighing the harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;
- and

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<sup>1</sup> Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

- b no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is not possible; and
- d the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

In all cases substantial harm (whether through direct physical impact or by change to its setting) to, or the total loss of, a grade II listed building or a registered park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm (whether through direct physical impact or by change to its setting) to, or total loss of, grade I or II\* listed buildings and registered parks and gardens, scheduled monuments and undesignated archaeological sites of equivalent importance to scheduled monuments should be wholly exceptional.

### **Justifying Less Than Substantial Harm to a Designated Heritage Asset**

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

### **Justifying Harm to a Non-Designated Heritage Asset**

Where a development proposal will lead to harm to the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, regard will be had to:

- e the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the asset; and
- f the scale of any harm or loss; and
- g the significance of the heritage asset.

### **Hidden and Unidentified Heritage Assets**

Remains or hidden features or fabric, which contribute to the significance of a designated heritage asset (or which suggest that a non-designated heritage asset is of demonstrably equivalent significance), should be recorded and preserved in situ. The recording and excavation of remains or hidden features or fabric of less heritage value may be permitted, if recording and preservation in situ is not a reasonable or feasible option.

### **Enabling Development**

In exceptional circumstances, a proposal for enabling development that would not otherwise be permitted may be supported if it can be demonstrated that this will secure the long term preservation and enhancement of a designated heritage asset considered to be at risk, or other heritage asset on a local risk register maintained by the Council. Such development will only be permitted if:

- h it has been demonstrated that reasonable consideration has been given to other options for securing the long-term preservation and

enhancement that are more consistent with the policies of the Local Plan and these are not available; and

i it has been demonstrated that the enabling development is the minimum necessary to secure such long term preservation and enhancement; and

j the benefits of the enabling development outweigh the dis-benefits of departing from other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

Enabling development will not be permitted where the Council considers the current condition of the heritage asset is the result of deliberate or reckless neglect or actions designed to secure a benefit from this exception to policy.

Living in or owning a property in a Conservation Area clearly whether listed or not places certain responsibilities on residents, the Town Council, wider community and the Local Planning Authority. The following policies will assist the consideration of any application required for planning permission or consent which may impact on the Colesbrook Conservation Area. They also provide guidance to property owners and residents in encouraging attitudes and methods which will assist the conservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, whether or not statutory permission is required. The policies are specific to the Colesbrook Conservation Area, although reflecting policies detailed in the North Dorset Local Plan.

## **Demolition**

In addition to the general presumption against the demolition of statutory listed buildings, there will also be a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings or structures (both principal and service buildings and structures e.g. outbuildings or walling) which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. These include statutory listed buildings, those considered to be of special architectural or historic interest at a local level (the local list) or others that contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of the area. It is expected that proposals to demolish such buildings will be considered against the same criteria as proposals to demolish statutory listed buildings. For cases where a building makes little or no such contribution the District Council will require a heritage statement outlining the value of the building to be demolished in

architectural or historic terms together with clear information about what is proposed for the site after demolition. In such instances and for new development sites consent will not be given unless acceptable and detailed plans are submitted.

## **New Development**

### **Siting and layout**

Whilst opportunities for new development will be extremely limited within the Conservation Area, primarily due to the need to safeguard its rural context and setting, proposals for new development should respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of listed (both statutory and locally listed) buildings and those considered to make a positive contribution to the area. The siting and layout of all new buildings will need careful consideration and will need to reflect the scale, form, common roof heights and the detailing and materials of the contributory or adjacent buildings. Spaces around and between built development allow views into and from the open countryside and are important to the character and appearance of the area and the setting of buildings. Where it is evident areas or buildings are characterised by open settings including large gardens and agricultural land, the introduction of additional substantial buildings are likely to be inappropriate particularly where it is evident that the spatial characteristics of the locality will be reduced, diminished or harmed.

To be able to assess the impact of a development on the character and appearance of the Colesbrook Conservation Area the District and Town Councils will need to be provided with detail of the proposal and it is expected that planning applications will be submitted with sufficient detail on the siting, layout, design, use of materials, landscaping and any other details necessary to allow a full understanding of the proposals and the likely effect on the area.



### **New building Design**

The District and Town Councils expect all new development within the Colesbrook Conservation Area, both free standing buildings and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest architecture quality. Overly assertive, uncompromising or insensitive contemporary design or poorly informed, inappropriate references to more traditional and vernacular forms can soon dilute the special characteristics and local distinctiveness of the area and will be resisted. The adaptation of local vernacular styles including form, scale, massing and design, including the use of local materials, will normally be expected within the Conservation Area to reinforce the underlying rural vernacular character and appearance of the area. The main elevation of new buildings and general orientation will be expected to have regard to those of the immediate area and be positioned to help integrate new development into the existing dispersed pattern of development.

### **Alterations and Extensions**

It is acknowledged that the Conservation Area is not a museum, but a living historic rural landscape. Changing lifestyles and expectations together with the general growth of Gillingham will result in pressure for changes to existing buildings and spaces. Requirements can sometimes be met without diminishing the character and appearance of an area, but care is required to ensure that new developments preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Even what appear to be minor changes such as the installation of external plumbing fixtures or ventilation stacks and chimney flues can have a detrimental impact on the external character of a building and therefore the area.

### **Locations and form of extension**

Any extension or addition should reflect the design, form, materials, textures and finishes of the existing building. These constraints will vary between individual buildings in the Conservation Area, and any proposals will need to respond to the specific building and local environment/context. In general, extensions should be subservient to the original building and not dominate or compete in visual terms with that building. The primacy of the original building will be required to be

maintained and the special characteristics of the Conservation Area, including the separation, landscaped framework and spatial relationship between buildings (including views between them to the landscape beyond) will need to be protected.

### **Materials and methods**

Given the underlying rural and vernacular character and appearance of buildings within the Conservation Area, the palette of materials is relatively limited. The predominant material is local stone with plain clay tiled roofs. There are also examples of the use of brick and slate, but to a lesser extent. Later alterations have seen the application of paint or render or use of artificial stone although these do not reflect the underlying vernacular character. Reference for the construction of any new works should be informed by the host or principal building and underlying principal materials. This is particularly important to safeguard vernacular buildings or those which have used natural stone in their construction. The use of natural stone and plain clay tiles in particular provides the opportunity to reinforce local distinctiveness and character. The use of other complementary materials such as painted weatherboarding will be considered but only where it can be demonstrated that their use preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Care should be taken to take note of local details such as string courses, eave projections and lintels etc. and incorporate them in local development where appropriate. The matching of bonds and styles of walling material and pointing style will be encouraged. Windows and doors should also aim to reflect local character and appearance and the use of sustainable materials will be sought.

### **Exterior Details**

Many historic buildings in the Colesbrook Conservation Area are as already mentioned vernacular in nature. Other buildings reflect a particular age or style of construction (e.g. 19<sup>th</sup> Century polite architecture). Typical details, which are characteristic of these buildings, should be retained wherever possible. Alterations to the exterior form and detailing should respond sensitively to the significant elements of the building. In particular attention should be paid to protecting and

reflecting elements of the original design and detailing, such as chimney stacks, ridge tiles, lintels and string courses

The personalising or improving of houses through replacement windows and doors, rendering and timber cladding and the creation of hard surfaces or placing of garden buildings and equipment can have a dramatic and adverse effect on the character and appearance of an area. This is particularly apparent within those areas with public views into and across a particular site. Although many such alterations may not require planning permission or listed building consent, if it is evident that the character and appearance of the conservation could be harmed by cumulative change then the Council could consider issuing an Article 4 Direction under the relevant planning legislation in order to prevent the loss of special interest of the Conservation Area.

### **Windows**

Windows constitute important elements of a building. Given the vernacular nature of buildings within the Conservation Area, timber and sometimes metal casements are common together with timber vertical sliding sashes are most common type. Where repair or replacement is necessary any new work should match the existing material and character of historic windows. Insensitive replacement of windows can seriously detract from the character of the building and the Conservation Area. Mass produced windows including those made from PVCu, can alter and involve the loss of historic proportions and detailing of originals windows and will be generally resisted and in particular not allowed within listed buildings.

### **Doors**

Historic front doors, door cases, and porches are important feature of the Conservation Area, adding to both the character and appearance of the area, reflecting the age of construction and these should be retained wherever possible. Mass produced doors, including those made from PVCu, can lead to changes to the design and proportion, involve the loss of historic detailing and fabric as well as harming the appearance of the building. The removal of original doors and their

replacement with inappropriate doors in timber, PVCu or other material will be discouraged and where permission is required, not allowed.

### **Cladding and Rendering**

In the Conservation Area, the cladding of existing walls with artificial stone, timber or plastic would require planning permission and where relevant, listed building consent. Given the limited pallet of materials within the Conservation Area, such alterations can have an adverse effect on the character of the building and the wider area and therefore any applications for changes to remove historic fabric and replace with more modern materials will not be supported.

There is also a danger of using inappropriate materials on historic buildings or structures. For example significant damage to the cob walls of the cottages within the street can be caused through the replacement of the existing lime based render and replacement with a cement based product which can lead to increased moisture levels, damp problems and structural failure.

### **Dormers and roof lights**

Dormer windows are not a common feature within Colesbrook, however where they form part of an original composition they are an important component of the architectural style of the building. In some case the introduction of dormers and roof lights will be inappropriate, in other cases dormer windows can be a more suitable insertion into a roof than a roof light although they should always be of a size, scale and design appropriate for the appearance and age of the building and the character of the area. Where it is possible to insert roof lights, only those which reflect traditional forms are considered appropriate in buildings pre-dating the mid-twentieth century.



### **Ancillary Works**

Alterations to, or the introduction of, outbuildings, walls, paved areas, particularly to the front or side of properties can all impact on the character and appearance of the Colesbrook Conservation Area. In isolated situations where hard standings are considered acceptable, minimisation of the width of the opening in a front wall and/or hedging, while retaining some screening of the front garden by shrubs or mature trees may reduce the impact upon the streetscape. Paving may be addressed as a component part of a comprehensive design treatment, so visually remains part of the garden, rather than appearing as a separate area.

### **Garages**

Any new garages should be constructed in materials and adopting details and forms that are compatible with host and adjacent buildings whilst safeguarding existing trees and hedgerows.

### **Satellite Antennas and Solar Panels**

The installation of satellite dishes on to the front elevations or other walls facing the public realm, together with chimneys of buildings in the Conservation Area requires careful consideration. Where permission is required, the Local Planning Authority will usually resist granting planning permission for dishes where it is evident that they will cause harm to the special character or appearance of the area.

### **Fences, Boundary Walls, Gates and Front Hedges**

Hedges, mature trees, tile capped walls and other enclosures form important features in Colesbrook and the presumption will be to resist their removal. The retention of existing boundary treatments and gates will be encouraged wherever practical.

Pursuant to the above, the reinstatement of known earlier boundary treatments will be encouraged provided there is clear archival evidence of their existence. Historic materials and detailing should be accurately reinstated. The creation of new or widened openings through existing boundary structures or plantings can erode the

streetscape, and should only be undertaken where alternatives or more modest arrangements are not available. Where new or replacement boundary treatments are proposed, these should reflect the height, scale, materials and detailing used historically. The planting of hedges of traditional native species will be supported given the rural nature of the area. Where security is a concern, the selection of native thorny species such as hawthorn and blackthorn will be encouraged, and can be protected while establishing by temporary wire mesh fencing set discreetly within the hedge.

### **Trees and Gardens**

A detailed survey has been carried out of important trees within Colesbrook and the document can be provided upon request. In light of the survey it is evident that trees form an integral and vitally important component of the area. Areas of mature trees exist both within the Conservation Area and in the surrounding landscape together with mature specimen trees within gardens. The local authority will have particular regard to preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and will place a tree preservation order on a tree or trees where it is expedient.

### **General**

This appraisal and management guidelines will be used in judging the way in which individual development proposals will affect the special character of the area. Any proposal that has an adverse effect on this character will not be permitted. Proposals that can be seen to enhance the Conservation Area, subject to other prevailing planning policies, will be supported.

## **Article 4 Direction**

The character of the Colesbrook Conservation Area is a combination of the rural nature of the area, range of vernacular and traditional buildings and landscape framework all of which make a positive contribution to this traditional English settlement. In this respect the area is sensitive to change and alterations such as those involving extensions or alterations to windows, doors, roofs, chimneys and boundary enclosures, hard standings have the potential to undermine the intrinsic qualities of the area.

Following a survey of the area in preparation of this document and concerns expressed by the Town Council following harm caused to other Conservation Areas within the vicinity, has highlighted the fragility of Colesbrook and threat from works normally permitted under existing planning legislation.

### **The Problem**

Within the present planning system, there is a duty placed on local authorities to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas through the implementation of the planning system. The problem as identified within the preceding paragraph was the undertaking of works which did not require listed building consent or planning permission because of their scale or location and where the building in question was a private dwelling house (in other words not a flat or commercial premises or combination of these two). In essence this meant that owners of buildings which make a positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the Colesbrook Conservation Area could construct garden buildings, alter fences or enclosures (in some instances) or create new or larger hard standings using inappropriate materials and finishes which greatly impacted upon the character and appearance of buildings and wider area, destroying the very features which give the individual buildings and Colesbrook its historic character and heritage value.

## **Solution**

If it can be demonstrated that the area is at risk from permitted development, an appropriate tool to prevent harm to heritage assets is via the introduction of an Article 4 Direction. This is made under existing legislation known as the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended).

An Article 4 Direction enables a local planning authority to restrict permitted development rights covering one or more properties and can restrict one or more classes of permitted development. The result is essentially the need for planning permission for specified works which would previously have been permitted development. This does not necessarily mean that the planning authority will refuse permission, but it does enable it to retain some control over design and detailing, and possibly grant permission subject to appropriate conditions.

In light of the harm that could be caused to the character and appearance of Colesbrook the following works could be controlled by requiring planning permission from the Council following formal implementation:

12. Enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling;
13. *Additions to the roof of a dwellinghouse;*
14. *Alteration to the roof of a dwellinghouse;*
15. Construction of a porch;
16. Provision within a dwellings curtilage of a building, enclosure or swimming pool and hard surface;
17. Provision within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse of a hard surface
18. The installation, alteration or replacement of a chimney, flue or soil and vent pipe on a dwellinghouse;
19. The installation, alteration or replacement of a microwave antenna (satellite dish) on a dwellinghouse or within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse;
20. Erection, construction maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall, or other means of enclosure to a dwelling and its curtilage;
21. The painting of the exterior of any building or work;
22. Installation of solar panels on domestic premises.



All the above Direction would apply to the area defined as the Colesbrook Conservation Area.

***References:***

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*With thanks to Mr Sam Woodcock, Gillingham Museum, Gillingham Local History Society and the late Mrs Jackie Kemp.*

## **Colesbrook Conservation Area Report**

Historical facts and evidence compiled by Gillingham Town Council

October 2016 with amendments, February 2017 with amendments, adopted by North Dorset District Council 26 September 2017 with amendments, following the designation by the District Council of the Colesbrook Conservation Area 26 September 2017

