

# BIBURY CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT

Planning guidance  
for owners,  
occupiers and developers



*Bibury's charm was first widely advertised by William Morris in the 1870s, who called it 'surely the most beautiful village in England'. While the best-known part of the village is Arlington Row and its water-meadow setting alongside the River Coln, this is really only a link between the two villages that now form the modern settlement: Bibury proper and Arlington.*

*Today Bibury is a very popular tourist destination, where strolling past gabled cottages, looking at ducks and spotting fat trout in the river, are among the available pursuits. Coping with this large influx of visitors, while preserving the essentially peaceful character of the place is today's principal challenge.*

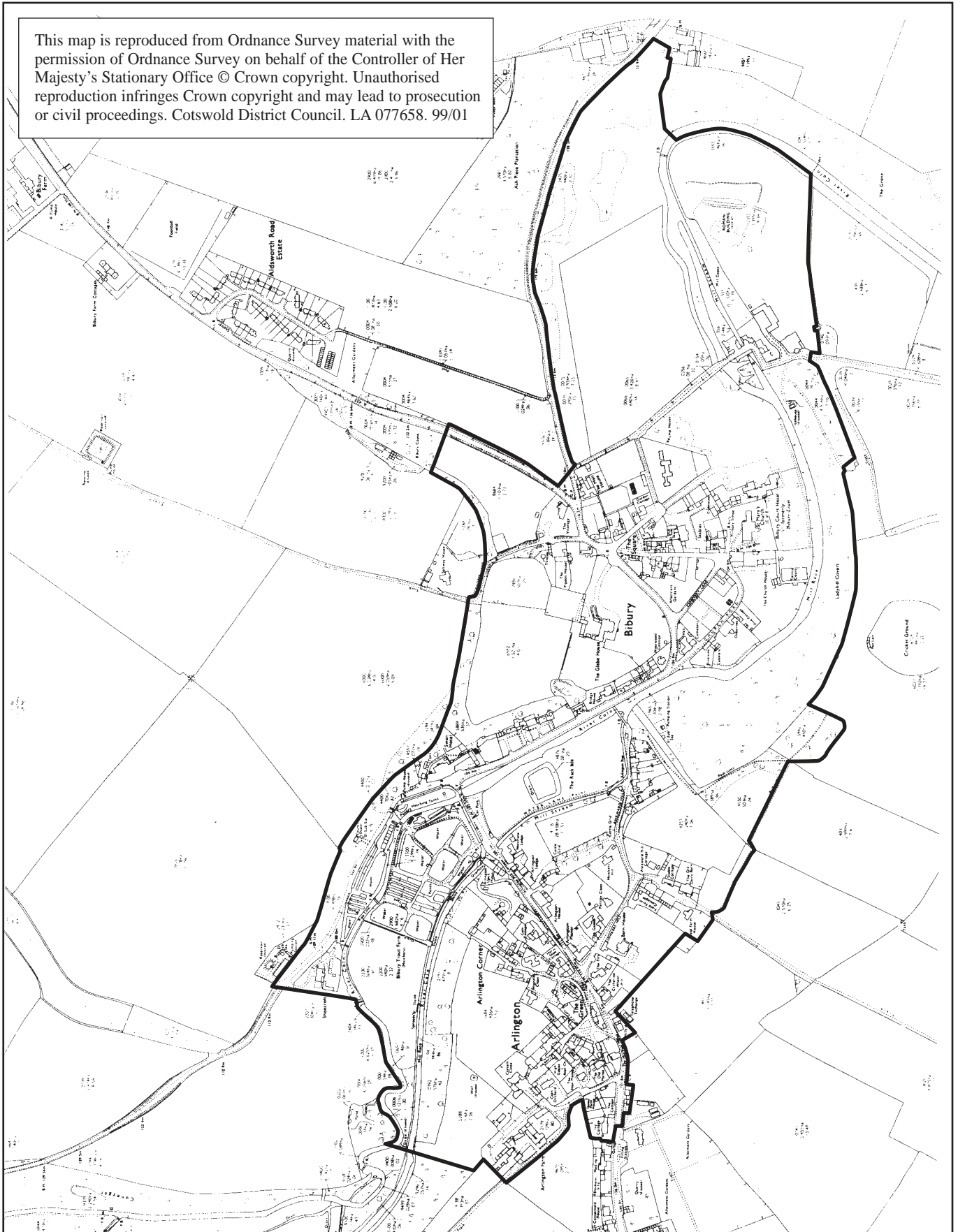


Cotswold District Council

January 2000

# BIBURY CONSERVATION AREA

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*A traditional row of cottages in a quiet part of Bibury village. Although opportunities for new development in and around Bibury are very limited, it is crucial that any new building follows its traditional architectural character, using traditional building materials.*

Bibury Conservation Area was first designated on 17 November 1971, and the boundary was altered on 25 September 1990 and 28 May 1998.

A conservation area is *an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance* (Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). This Statement provides guidance on how the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the Bibury Conservation Area can be achieved.

Local planning authorities are required to *formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas* (Section 71 of the Act). This Statement fulfils this statutory duty.

In making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, *special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area* (Section 72 of the Act). While this should ensure that harmful change is

not allowed, some changes, normally not requiring planning permission (known as permitted development), could still damage the special qualities of the area. Local authorities have special powers to issue directions removing certain permitted development rights from properties if it can be shown that this is necessary. A direction to this effect has been made covering part of the Bibury Conservation Area.

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the most recent versions of the *Cotswold District Local Plan*, the *Gloucestershire County Structure Plan*, and national planning policy guidance, especially Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) - 'Planning and the Historic Environment'.

This Statement has been prepared by Cotswold District Council in close collaboration with Bibury Parish Council. A draft was circulated at a public meeting held on 10 February 1998 in Bibury, and any comments or suggestions were taken into account in the final published version. The Statement was adopted by Cotswold District Council as supplementary planning guidance on 28 May 1998.



# THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA



*A turn of the century view of Bibury Bridge. This placid scene contrasts with today's crowds of tourists, filling the streets with cars on a hot summer's day. Note the small size of the Swan Hotel, since greatly expanded into a flourishing business. (Photograph: Oxfordshire County Council Photographic Archive)*

## HISTORY

Bibury and Arlington owe their origins to the importance of the River Coln. This provided water to power the early corn mills recorded in the Domesday Book, and Bibury was the crossing point for the important Cirencester to Oxford road which is first known to have existed in the medieval period. While Bibury is the earlier settlement—growing up around the Saxon church built by 899, and the ruins of a Roman villa, with the growth of the woollen industry along the Coln from the medieval period, Arlington took over as the more populous settlement.

The prosperous seventeenth century saw the building of many cottages in both villages, together with Bibury Court, the grand country house of 1633 built for Thomas and Barbara Sackville as their new centre for the Bibury estate. Eventually it became part of Lord Sherborne's estate and in 1968 was converted to a hotel to cater for the ever-growing tourist trade in the Cotswolds.

Both Bibury and Arlington villages cluster around central open spaces, that in Bibury now being called The Square, while that in Arlington is The Green. Both were bypassed

by the improved turnpike road through Bibury which was completed in 1790, although an earlier alignment for this road took it directly up the hill behind the Swan Hotel after crossing the present bridge (built in 1753 but probably reconstructed on several occasions since). It then joined the route of the road from Ablington.

Another ancient track led into Arlington from Ready Token and passed down Awkward Hill in front of Arlington Row, while the earliest river crossing seems to have been upstream from Arlington Mill, near Shoecroft Barn, reached by a track passing through Arlington Corner and using a long disappeared bridge built before 1527. Cottages had spread along the riverside linking Bibury with Arlington by the seventeenth century, with the turnpike being built later between them and the river.

Corn milling and, to a lesser extent, the manufacture of woollen cloth, have been the principal industrial activities in the village, Arlington Mill having been a combined corn and fulling mill since the medieval period. Bibury Mill was used for corn milling from the earliest recorded

date. Fulling was a water-powered process where heavy hammers beat the newly-woven cloth thickening out the texture. However, by the eighteenth century, corn was taking over from cloth as the main use of the mills, and by the end of the century the cloth trade had disappeared from Bibury entirely. Corn milling continued at Arlington Mill until 1913 (a steam engine had been installed in 1859), and at Bibury Mill well into the 1920s. Arlington Mill was rescued from dereliction by David Verey in 1965 and converted to a folk museum.

The Swan Inn was always an important institution in Bibury's history, not only functioning as an inn but also serving as a court house, for which the hexagonal lock-up nearby was built in the eighteenth century. Rebuilt in the nineteenth century and considerably enlarged in 1930, it is now a very busy 'honey-pot' for present-day visitors, as

is the nearby trout farm, established in 1906. Arlington Row was subject to a plan by Henry Ford to re-erect it in the United States, but fortunately it was bought by the Society of Arts and is now owned by the National Trust, which also owns the Rack Isle, named after the racks that once stood there for the drying of cloth. The area is managed by the Trust to protect the wildlife and complex system of waterways.

Bibury was first acknowledged as worthy of visiting in the eighteenth century when in 1726 the poet Alexander Pope referred to 'the pleasing prospect of Bibury'. William Morris greatly appreciated its beauty in the nineteenth century, and J Arthur Gibbs wrote extensively about Bibury and other nearby villages in *A Cotswold Village* in 1898. Oddly, the village was called 'Bywell' in the eighteenth century.



*In this photograph, from the turn of the century, the stone slate roofs of Arlington Row are being repaired. These cottages have evolved over centuries - there have even been some minor changes since this photograph was taken.*

## **BIBURY IN THE LANDSCAPE**

The village of Bibury nestles either side of the valley of the River Coln. Although one of the most popular and well-known villages in the District, its setting in the landscape is discreet and secluded. Distant views are limited and the full extent and character of the village is only appreciated once it is entered.

The landscape around Bibury is a gentle undulating and open plateau, dissected by the intimate valley of the River

Coln. The dominant use is arable farming and, for the most part, the area is sparsely wooded except for the valleys.

The main road through the village is the Cirencester to Burford Road (now the B4425). Approaching the village from the west, the flat expanse of arable fields recedes from view as the road descends into the valley among the buildings of Arlington. In contrast to the open character

of the plateau, the road is enclosed by high retaining walls, banks and buildings, and is overhung by the canopies of large trees.

Lying above this road to the north is the centre of Arlington. Public views into this area are limited, primarily because of the dense jumble of randomly sited buildings. Views out are equally limited and only glimpses can be obtained of the rest of the village.

At the bottom of the hill views open out to the south east to reveal a broad river valley, fringed with buildings. Behind these is a steep backdrop of mature, seasonally lush woodlands of beech, lime, sycamore and willow which enclose the valley scene.

Essentially a man-made feature, the Rack Isle area brings the countryside right into the heart of the village, and its

wildness acts as an effective counterfoil to the picture-postcard perfection of the terraces that surround it. It also provides a distinct contrast to the formal gardens north of the bridge belonging to the Swan Hotel.

The remainder of the village lies on gently rising ground to the south east, between the B4425 to the north and a crescent of woodland which follows the line of the river. Once again, this part of Bibury is tucked away out of public view, only to be revealed if specifically sought out.

As the B4425 leaves the village on the north-eastern side of the valley, its incline becomes less steep and just before reaching the isolated Aldsworth Road Estate, the open rolling fields of the plateau come into view once again.



*Much of Arlington and Bibury tuck down into the landscape, the valley being fringed by woodlands.*

## **BIBURY'S CHARACTER**

The essential character of Bibury today is that of a residential village, where commercial pressures from tourism have had only a limited impact. With extensive modern tree planting and a constant backdrop of woodland, seldom do the buildings impose themselves upon the landscape—rather the reverse. The natural environment seems to have shaped the built environment of Bibury in a more dramatic manner than in many other Cotswold villages.

The settlement of Arlington, whose heart is centred slightly to the north of the main road around The Green, is

a secluded area that seems almost to have turned its back on the main road. It is a preserved backwater of unpretentious traditional cottages, narrow country lanes, an unexpected chapel and an almost forgotten graveyard.

This contrasts with the hive of activity around Arlington Mill, the Swan Hotel, the bridge, and the long line of parked cars alongside the River Coln—the centre of the village as perceived by visitors. It is perhaps surprising that, despite the pressures the influx of tourists bring to bear on Bibury, its essential character does not seem to have been badly compromised. Few facilities have been



provided for visitors apart from the modest tearooms and gift shops.

The exception to this is the trout farm which is, however, mostly out of sight. A problem for the conservation area character is that recent additions to the trout farm appear sporadic, and harmful to the setting of the nearby Arlington Mill.

Commerce is not found in Bibury proper which has taken on the character of an estate village and is completely unspoilt by modern development. To its eastern side, two country houses are closely juxtaposed. One (Bibury Court) mellow and well weathered in its mature-treed grounds, the other (Court Farm) still somewhat stark and fresh.

*The area around Bibury Bridge is now a hive of activity, pedestrians and traffic often weaving amongst each other in an uncomfortable, and potentially dangerous way. There are also a large number of signs spoiling the appearance of this area.*



## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE VILLAGE

Bibury is a combination of two close-knit villages that have developed together in time to create the much larger modern village. There is more in common between Bibury proper and Arlington, with their tightly-packed groups of cottages, than between these and the more spacious riverside development linking them along the Coln valley. The three distinct character areas are:

- 1: The parish church, Bibury Court, Bibury Mill, Court Farm and Bibury village
- 2: Arlington Row, Awkward Hill, the River Coln and riverside cottages, and the Swan Hotel
- 3: Arlington Mill and the village of Arlington

### **1: The parish church, Bibury Court, Bibury Mill, Court Farm and Bibury village**

Bibury village, the older of the two settlements, is clustered around the parish church of St Mary, and The Square. Both of these spaces have the character of backwaters, by-passed as they are by the B4425.

Entering along Church Road, the low-lying village hall marks the junction with the main road. Church Road edges away from the river and the cottages on this side back directly onto the road and are linked together by high stone walls. This becomes a crucial enclosing feature on the outside of the curve as the road leads into the open area by Church House. On rising ground behind

dry-stone walling on the north-east side of the road is a small cemetery and allotments. The openness of this space gives Church Road and Cemetery Lane an undeveloped quality which contrasts with the more densely built-up area around The Square, and provides something of a buffer zone between this part of the village and the main through road, reducing the impact of the traffic.

The distinctive area to the north of Church House, enclosed by Sherborne Cottage, the Primary School, and the stables forming part of the former Bibury Stud, has a particular quality resulting from a mixture of modest buildings in an informal arrangement. An important glimpsed view of the church and tower, with the more bulky form of Bibury Court forming a backdrop to the churchyard, may be obtained by looking to the south east, through the gap between the school and Church House.

The churchyard itself is hemmed in on the west by Church House, and on the east by the rear of Bibury Court. The high wall along the south side and the school to the north complete the sense of enclosure, although the important wooded southern bank of the Coln River, together with the Cedar tree in the north-east corner of the churchyard, makes this a particularly tree-dominated space.

A lane leads up the gently rising gradient towards The Square, with a row of picturesque cottages to the left, each cottage having a front garden open to view behind low walls. The row is terminated by a three-storey tower-like house acting as a visual full stop. The high, blank



*A corner at the heart of Bibury. The church with its prominent tower is tucked behind Church House, while the thriving village school is off to the left.*

rear wall of the Bibury Stud and the cottages built directly onto the road on the opposite side, increasingly hem in the street-scape as one heads northwards, an effect continued in The Square itself, with its wedge-shaped plan.

In The Square, the cottages are simple in character and, on the south and west sides, are built directly onto the open space without gardens. Between the two blocks of cottages on the south side a small lane leads down towards the former barn at Bibury Stud, past picturesque cottages on the right (one together with its outbuilding in poor condition). There is an important glimpse of the church tower down this lane. The cottages on the east side, built along the lane leading down to Bibury Court Hotel, have small frontage gardens behind low stone boundary walls.

The north end of The Square, past which rises the main road, is discreetly cut off from the traffic by trees and a low wall. The red K6 telephone kiosk marks the end of the building line on the west side, while the cottages on the east side continue right up to the bend in the main road. This road brushes past the last cottage, which has an angled corner to accommodate the footpath and, incidentally, a curious tiny window under the eaves.

Although once visually very much part of The Square, due to the growth of the trees, the Vicarage and Pigeon

House seem to drift off into the countryside. Packhorse Lane (which leads to the Pigeon House) is set in a hollow-way and feels very ancient.

The extensive park-like grounds to Bibury Court Hotel are entered down the lane past the east side of The Square, this opening out on the west side with views into the formerly associated Bibury Stud with the church behind. Passing through the gateway, the approach is enclosed on the left by the walled garden, although the scene opens out on arrival in the front courtyard, this being dominated by large Cedar trees. The landscaped grounds have an important uninterrupted open aspect to the east, resulting in fine views of the house from the Coln St Aldwyn road and views out over the enclosing wooded valley sides.

Further east is the group of buildings around Bibury Mill, a scene now dominated by the new country house at Court Farm, standing on a plateau behind the mill. This, and its attendant lodge-style garden pavilion, provide an effective focus to this part of the conservation area, and their setting is protected by the extension of the conservation area into the surrounding meadow land. To the east of Court Farm there are the remains of a Roman villa, first recorded in 1670.



To the south of Bibury village, the vista is enclosed by the well-wooded Ladyhill Covert on the steep slopes of the south bank of the river, while to the north, behind a high garden wall, there is an early Victorian former rectory (Glebe House), its clusters of octagonal chimneys being silhouetted by the wooded hill behind.

*A view of Bibury Mill and Court Farm from the road to Coln St Aldwyns. The almost park-like character of the landscape at this end of the village is very important, and should be protected from development.*



## **2: Arlington Row, Awkward Hill, the River Coln and riverside cottages, and the Swan Hotel**

Distinct from the settlements of Bibury and Arlington, the wetland of the wide river valley exhibits the remnants of water-powered milling. The once wide open vista of the valley has, to a great extent, been transformed by more modern tree planting (mostly willows), screening the trout farm at the north-western end of this area and resulting in a slightly suburban character.

Arlington Mill juts out into the valley area, although the once more open views of it are now no longer possible, while the more recent features of the fish-farm kiosk and stalls have exerted themselves on this once traditional scene. The latter, together with the clutter of signing and parking around the road bridge, are all aspects of this part of the conservation area that need improvement. The conservation area extends up the valley to encompass the whole of the fish farm area, and finishes at Shoecroft Barn.

Once, the road bridge itself stood proudly among the water meadows giving the road crossing something of the character of a causeway. This is no longer the effect as the Swan Hotel water-garden on one side, and a rather incongruous pedestrian bridge on the other, compromise the setting of the main bridge. While the water garden is very well maintained, and many would find it a pleasant and attractive feature (indicating the increased importance of the Swan Hotel to the village), the pedestrian bridge is something that could be radically improved, or possibly replaced in its entirety. In many ways, whatever happens at the river crossing provides a key to the character of Bibury as a whole, and it is certainly this area that demands most attention today.

On crossing the bridge from the west the view is closed by the Swan Hotel. While enlarged at various times this century, it retains something of its old coaching inn character, although this could easily be lost by over-signing or inappropriate light fittings. Again, as this building holds such a key location in the conservation

*The footbridge over the River Coln is much used by visitors, providing a perfect vantage point to view the riverside scene. Unfortunately, its stark modern design rather spoils this otherwise idyllic part of the village, and this statement proposes its replacement if funding can be found.*



area, small changes here would have a profound influence on the character of the area as a whole.

The length of main road alongside the river is another of Bibury's key areas although today it is usually sadly cluttered by parked cars. While this is a very convenient stopping point, it does harm much of the natural charm of the place, and suggestions for improvements are set out below. Alongside the river are a series of traditional gabled cottages well set back under the hanging woodland of the valley and fronted by well-tended gardens. One or two have garages jutting forward of the general building line, but any further construction impinging on the front gardens is likely to spoil their setting.

Further along the road (travelling down-stream) the cottages break forward to sit directly on the pavement. Several have been converted to shops and, with carefully controlled signing, provide modest commercial activity without spoiling the appearance of the place. The row ends with the fine Jesus Almshouses and the entrance to Bibury village. Just before this cottage row is reached, on the opposite side of the road a small stone bridge crosses the river at a point where the mill leat from Arlington Mill joins the main stream. There is none of the more recent tree-growth at this point, with the woodland immediately behind Arlington Row pushing down to and overhanging the riverside.

The present pedestrian route past Arlington Row and returning along the line of the mill leat to the car park opposite Arlington Mill provides a convenient circular route much enjoyed by visitors. Arlington Row itself has become emblematic of a 'perfect' Cotswold village scene. Its very special character is as much a product of its unharmed stream-side setting as its built form, and the protection of its foreground is of vital importance. Fortunately, both the Row and the Rack Isle are owned by The National Trust and we must assume that their survival in their present form is assured.

Piling up Awkward Hill at the west end of Arlington Row are a picturesque grouping of traditional cottages that add greatly to the setting of Arlington Row itself, and have, as an important feature, high dry-stone retaining walls forming their garden boundary onto the lane. Opposite them at the bottom of the hill, and standing at the junction between the lane and the footpath to Arlington Mill, is another small cottage (known locally as 'The Doll's House') in a key location. While parking for many of these cottages has been provided to the rear of Arlington Row, one distraction from the quality of this part of the conservation area is the parking of one or two cars in front of the mentioned small cottage. This spoils the setting of the Row as a whole, especially the distant view of it from the main road.



*Opposite Arlington Row is a very small cottage known as 'The Doll's House'. It stands in a very important position at the junction between the public footpath and Awkward Hill.*



*A wintry view of Arlington Row.*

*Two houses on the west side of Arlington Green. The overhead wiring that spoils this part of Bibury is also prominent in this view.*



### **3: Arlington Mill and the village of Arlington**

Arlington is a close-knit hamlet which forms the western limb of Bibury's conservation area. Lying primarily to the north of the B4425, it occupies a slightly elevated position above the road and, as a result, is generally concealed from public view.

The area is served by a small network of narrow lanes and footpaths. These criss-cross the grass banks leading from the main road, entering and dissecting The Green, an area of open space and focal point in this part of the village. Leading from The Green, another lane passes round a bend on an embankment and a row of cottages to Arlington Corner.

Development around The Green does not follow any formal or structured pattern. Terraces and groups of cottages are sited in an irregular and random fashion and provide enclosure on the south and west sides, although the area is more open to the east. Densities are high,

particularly where several cottages jam together on the west side, and the already intimate relationship between buildings is increased by small front and rear gardens hidden by outbuildings and high walls. Development becomes a little more sporadic towards Arlington Farm and Arlington Corner but its overall character remains the same. Apart from The Green, hard landscaping is the dominant feature in the area, but this does not lessen its attraction.

This area contains some fine buildings, including a more formal early eighteenth-century house (now two cottages) at the end of the row on the north-west side of The Green, a house up a short lane leading off the north side (now called High Gables and The Bakehouse), and the Baptist Chapel which is tucked away up another lane. However, it is the contribution of the groups of terraces and clusters of cottages, standing on several levels of lane, which contribute most to the physical character of Arlington.

*Cottages in Arlington viewed from across the small forecourt of Arlington Manor.*





When entering the conservation area from the west, the first cottages on the left are eighteenth century and well set back behind low stone garden walls, that to Ivy Cottage having piers with curiously Moorish finials, presumably contemporary with its odd ogee-arched classical porch. The next row of cottages are angled back, taking up the alignment of the buildings at the west end of The Green and the view is now closed by a very well-built outbuilding extension to The Long Cottage. The road has to bend sharply to the right around the Old Post Office before sweeping back to the left, but just before it does so there is a group of sheds and garages on the right-hand side of the road (together with a K6 telephone kiosk) which completes this tightly enclosed village entrance.

This part of Arlington has a natural 'organic' unstructured appearance, in contrast with the rest of the village. It is a tranquil backwater which has retained much of its privacy, despite the number of tourists who find their way to it. This is particularly evident in the lanes leading off The Green, that leading to Arlington Corner is where one feels more akin to an intruder than a visitor.

The character of the area which lies to the south of the B4425 differs considerably—resembling a suburb. Properties are generally much larger and are sited in generous gardens. Hawkers Hill leads from the B4425 to a small number of such houses which are well set back from the road, before it descends steeply via Awkward Hill to Arlington Row. Fronting directly onto the main road, three substantial houses also stand in large grounds, the first of these is Arlington Manor, holding a prominent position on the street corner. It can be glimpsed from The Green, through the gap between a row of cottages and a high boundary wall. Arlington House is overhung by a large tree, while Arlington Lodge is set back a little, but still provides visual enclosure to the main road.



*Arlington Manor viewed from the lane leading out from The Green. The mix of grassy banks and narrow lanes, seen in the foreground, are an important part of the character of this part of Bibury. Arlington Manor is of two dates and architectural styles, the gabled part dating from the mid-seventeenth century, and the larger formal part to the right being of about 1720.*

## ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDING MATERIALS

Most buildings in Bibury are constructed with walls in the local Cotswold rubble stone, often laid to courses, but equally often built as random rubble. The small course heights of this local rubble give a fine overall texture to the stonework without individual stones 'reading' through. A finely-dressed ashlar was used on the more important buildings, such as Bibury Court and Arlington Manor, and most cottages have dressed stone-mullioned windows and door surrounds.

Local stone has a creamy yellow hue straight from the quarry, but this weathers a mid grey colour. Due to the comparatively poor quality of much of the local stone, most buildings, especially cottages, were originally lime-washed. There is much evidence of lime-wash surviving under the eaves and on the more sheltered walls of cottages. This finish seems to have almost always been a cream colour, matching the colour of the lime mortar. Roughcast render is not a common finish in Bibury (except on parts of Bibury Court) and there is little use of brick in the village except for the very occasional chimney.

The original historic Cotswold stone slate roofing largely survives in the conservation area, with few buildings having any form of replacement material. Many houses and cottages retain swept valleys, the technique whereby the slates are taken around a change of direction in the roof. There are also upturned ridge tiles at the junction between lower roof ridges and the main roof slope. Both of these once-common craft details have now almost disappeared elsewhere in the Cotswolds.

Rubble stone walls provide the most common boundary in the village although more important houses, such as Arlington Manor, have ashlar frontage walls with dressed stone gate-piers. The wall running alongside the River Coln is typical, although this is capped with thick dressed stone copings. In many parts of the conservation area random-rubble stone retaining walls are an essential character-giving feature.

The traditional architectural character of Bibury is somewhat enlivened by buildings of other styles. More formal early-eighteenth century facades mingle with simple contemporary estate cottages, the latter often in pairs or short terraces. Earlier cottages are more likely to have gabled frontages, although these rarely rise the full height of the roof pitch, examples being Arlington Row and the cottages in Bibury village. Again, exceptions to this are the grander buildings such as Bibury Court and Arlington Manor. While Bibury Court is a fine example of an early seventeenth-century country house, its grandeur has not been copied on the lesser buildings. Coped gables, continuous string courses and large mullioned and transomed windows are not found elsewhere in the village. A clear architectural hierarchy exists which, in all future building, should be respected.

Many cottages of lower architectural status have very simple window and door openings without stone surrounds or mullions. Timber casements, or iron opening lights hung off a timber fixed frame, set under a timber lintel, are very common in the village, many



*The main part of Bibury Court Hotel was built in 1633 as a country house for Sir Thomas Sackville. The projecting wing to the right is part of an earlier building.*

windows in Arlington Row being of this type. Some later buildings have sash windows, a curious example being the very small Victorian sashes on Ivy Cottage in Arlington. This building, incidentally, also has a rather odd example of ostentation in the form of an ogee-pedimented porch on Ionic columns.

Roofscapes, especially where Arlington is developed on several levels, are important in the village. Runs of roof ridges are broken up by chimney stacks, in cottage rows these clearly marking the extent of each cottage. Most chimneys are simple ashlar designs with plain caps. Some chimneys have been rebuilt in rubble stone (many on Arlington Row are of this type). The grandest chimneys in the village are on Bibury Court and The Glebe. Dormer windows are a common feature. These are usually gabled and always two lights wide.

While the pavements in Bibury mostly have tarmacadam surfaces today, there remain many areas of compressed stone hogging which, as the traditional surface material in the village, ought to be retained. These survive well around The Square in Bibury proper and greatly add to its unspoilt character. One modern material that, to a certain extent, mimics hogging is called 'Ultramac'. Used to good effect in Burford, this may be a suitable surface for pavement improvements in Bibury.

Apart from Glebe House, the nineteenth century seems to have had little architectural impact on the village, while

the twentieth century has principally brought with it a welcome period of repair and sensitive adaptation of existing buildings. Two recent buildings require special mention: the house built in the walled garden of Bibury Court, designed by Oswald Brakespear, and Court Farm by Quinlan Terry, both dating from 1986. The latter is a competent essay in classical country house design, confidently imposing its stature on the south-eastern end of the village.



*Ivy Cottage, Arlington, has a very sparse window arrangement and a most unusual porch.*





*These cottages in Arlington date from the nineteenth century and are very simple in character. They have timber casement windows and red-brick chimneys.*



*A scale drawing of part of the front elevation of Arlington Row, one of the most famous buildings in the Cotswolds. The cottages were adapted from a large medieval barn-like building, thought to have been used as a wool store. Gabled dormer windows and chimneys were added at around 1600 when the cottages were created - perhaps the first barn conversion!*



# THE PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

## PRESERVATION

It is the aim of the District and Parish Councils that the existing character and appearance of the Bibury Conservation Area should be preserved or enhanced.

Preservation will be achieved by refusing permission for the demolition of any building or structure if its loss would damage the character or appearance of the area. Extensions and alterations will be expected to follow the design guidance set out below.

Neglected buildings, where these spoil the character or appearance of Bibury, will be investigated. In critical cases action will be taken to ensure repairs are carried out. As part of a survey of all listed buildings in the District, the listed buildings in the Bibury Conservation Area have been surveyed by the District Council, the work being done during June 1997. Two buildings in Bibury village (No 29 and the adjoining outbuilding) were found to be in such poor condition that they were considered at risk from neglect, and several of the listed churchyard monuments were in poor condition. Bibury Parochial Church Council has recently instigated a very careful scheme of conservation on these monuments which is a model for other churches to copy.

Some open spaces and trees have been identified as being crucial to the character of the place and should be preserved. The Cotswold District Local Plan includes a policy on Bibury for the protection of four open areas. These are:

- Swan Hotel gardens, Arlington
- Bibury allotment gardens



*Two of the listed buildings in Bibury found to be in such poor condition as to be considered 'Buildings at Risk'. The Council will seek the proper repair of these buildings.*

- Bibury Court Hotel grounds
- Rack Isle

These areas are also indicated on the map accompanying this Statement. In order that the impact of visitors should not increase, the Local Plan also includes a policy resisting the creation of additional visitors' car parking spaces.

The Local Plan includes a development boundary on the south side of the B4425 adjacent to the boundary of the conservation area in Arlington. Any development here would have to be very carefully designed to ensure that the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area is preserved.

Bibury Conservation Area also falls within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Local Plan includes a policy intended to protect and enhance the landscape, and prevent any developments that could damage its character or appearance.

## DESIGN GUIDANCE

The designation of the conservation area is not intended to prevent change, especially that which would enhance the character of the area and ensure Bibury's continued economic vitality.

The general design guidance for any work requiring planning permission in the conservation area is that the character and appearance of the area should be preserved.



*The recent extension to this listed building in Arlington has been sympathetically designed with appropriate local materials. Officers of the Council gave advice that led to this successful solution.*



*All of the buildings in this view of The Square, Bibury are listed. However, much of the character of the other buildings can only be protected through the use of an Article 4(2) Direction.*

In particular:

- New buildings or extensions should reflect the general pattern of building in Bibury especially in scale and proportion, although there is scope for some architectural invention provided that this echoes Bibury architecture.
- Materials should be in accordance with those traditionally used in the particular part of the conservation area, and should maintain a similar mix.
- Any new building or extension should be located on its site in a similar way to the general pattern of building in that part of the area.
- Boundary walls and railings should be incorporated in the development in a similar way to those already in existence in that part of the area, and these should use similar materials and detailing.

## LISTED BUILDINGS

Some historic buildings are 'listed' by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport because of their exceptional interest. Listed building consent is required from the District Council for any work that would affect the special interest of a listed building, whether inside or outside. More information about listed buildings is available from the District Council.

There are over 90 buildings in the Bibury Conservation Area that are listed and merit the tightest control over any

changes to them. While the aim of the listed building legislation is to preserve these buildings for their own sake, any changes affecting them should also be considered in terms of the effect on the conservation area and the design guidance above.

## THE PROTECTION OF OTHER BUILDINGS

There are several buildings and features within the conservation area which are not listed but which contribute to its character and appearance. While these are subject to some increased planning controls brought by the designation of the conservation area, changes could take place to them that would damage the character of the conservation area.

In Arlington and Bibury there are a few unlisted buildings retaining much of their historic character through the survival of original, or appropriate installation of replacement, window and door designs. Stone walling remains unspoilt by modern renders or cladding, and other changes that could damage the conservation area have not taken place. This is a credit to the owners of these properties. Normally, on dwellings, many such changes could be made without the need for planning permission.

With the support of the local community, a Direction has been issued removing permitted development rights from these buildings, allowing control over changes to front elevations, boundaries, and any part of the building facing a public open space. A list of these properties is attached to this statement. On these properties, planning



permission will be required for:

- Any extension or enlargement facing the highway.
- Formation of any new window or door openings.
- Removal or replacement of existing windows and doors.
- The replacement of painted finishes with stains on any woodwork or joinery.
- The addition of render or claddings.
- Painting previously unpainted stonework.
- Installation of satellite dish antennae.
- Addition of porches, car ports and sheds.
- Changes of roofing materials (front roof slope only).
- Installation of rooflights (front roof slope only).
- Demolition of, or alteration to, front boundary walls or railings.

## ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

Inevitably, there are a number of areas or features in the Bibury Conservation Area which do not conform to the character of the area, and whose replacement or improvement would be beneficial.

This Statement lists the scope for improvement as a series of proposals for enhancement, although no timescale is set on when they will be achieved. As most involve utilities or local authorities, the District Council will take the lead in encouraging their implementation.



*Sales kiosks and signs around the well-designed main trout farm building spoil this otherwise attractive part of the conservation area.*

The District Council has a grant fund which is designed to assist with enhancement projects of the kind listed below.

### **1: Simplification and improvements to the road signing around the bridge next to the Swan Hotel, and improvements to the car park opposite the trout farm.**

In one of the key locations in the conservation area, this bridge is cluttered up with an accumulation of road signing that causes great harm to its appearance, and which harms the setting of the adjacent listed buildings. If these signs were combined together on fewer posts, and some removed altogether, a significant improvement would have been achieved.

The parking here is a very valuable facility, but is rather scruffy in appearance. If tidied up, the car park could look much more attractive. In particular, the mix of bollards should be removed.

### **2: Reducing heavy traffic passing through the village.**

Although there is a weight limit on the road bridge opposite the Swan Hotel, some heavy lorries still pass through the village. These are a potential danger to visitors and residents alike, and if control is lost, could cause substantial damage to historic buildings.

Opportunities will be sought to discourage this traffic, and in particular, the signing at the Cirencester end of the road, indicating it as a through route to Burford, will be changed if possible.

### **3: Improvements to the appearance of the kiosks at the trout farm.**

Comparing present-day views of Bibury with old photographs it is clear that the biggest change to the appearance of the village has been the area around the trout farm. In particular, while the substantial stone kiosk appears in keeping with the character of the village, the other timber constructions do not. Simplifying and improving these would greatly improve the character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole.

### **4: Replacement of the existing pedestrian bridge with one built in a more traditional Cotswold style.**

While it is very important that there is a pedestrian bridge near to the existing road bridge, the appearance of the present structure is very out of character with this special place. If a new bridge were constructed of local stone to a more suitable design, the whole grouping of bridges and buildings could be much more picturesque and in keeping with the character of the conservation area. One possibility would be for the new bridge to copy that leading to Arlington Row.

### 5: Removal of some car parking from alongside the River Coln and provision of a wider pavement.

Whether carried out along the whole length of the riverside, or only in part, this would be a great visual gain for the village, and enhance the experience of walking alongside the river. However, some parking will still be required here and it is suggested that this should be concentrated at the south-east end, opposite the public toilets and conveniently located for the small shops nearby. While there is no proposal in this Statement for any overall increase in visitor car parking in Bibury, consideration should be given to compensating for any reduction in visitor parking alongside the river by creating a few new spaces away from the centre of the village, if a sensitively-located site can be found.

### 6: Removal of car parking and improvement to area in front of Arlington Row.

It seems most unfortunate that this very picturesque scene is often spoilt by cars parking in the lane between the Row itself and the small detached cottage opposite. Car parking has already been provided to the rear of Arlington Row and, while this no doubt could be improved, would seem adequate to serve occupants of all of these cottages.

It is proposed that measures to prevent parking in this key location should be put in place. Part of this scheme could include the removal of yellow lines from Awkward Hill and their replacement with a restricted parking zone where yellow lines are not required. An opportunity should also be sought to improve some of the path and road surfacing around Arlington Row.

### 7: Removal of overhead wires in and around The Green, Arlington.

The overhead wires in this part of the village seem unusually intrusive and look out of place with the otherwise traditional character of The Green. Increasingly, the various utilities are placing their cabling underground and this would be of great benefit to this location in the conservation area.

### 8: Buildings at risk in Bibury.

The decaying listed buildings in Bibury village let down the otherwise well-maintained character of the place. The Council will investigate ways to ensure the proper repair and re-use of these buildings and, if necessary, consider using its powers under the Planning Acts to require work to be carried out.

## FURTHER READING

### Planning policy

*Gloucestershire County Structure Plan*, copies available from Environment Department, Gloucestershire County Council, Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester GL1 2TH.

*Cotswold District Local Plan*, copies available from Cotswold District Council, Trinity Road, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 1PX.

### Government guidance

*PPG15 - Planning and the Historic Environment*, copies available from branches of HMSO.

### Guidance on procedures

*Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas*, copies available FREE OF CHARGE from Cotswold District Council.

*Protected Trees*, published by the Department of the Environment, copies available FREE OF CHARGE from Cotswold District Council.

### Design guidance

*Traditional Casement Windows and Traditional Dormer Windows and Traditional Chimneys*, copies available FREE OF CHARGE from Cotswold District Council.

### Village history

The most authoritative source on the village is the relevant volume in *The Victoria History of Gloucestershire*, the section written by A R J Juřica. This is best consulted in major libraries.

J Arthur Gibbs, *A Cotswold Village*, first published in 1898 but still available, is one of the best historic accounts of Bibury and Ablington.

Further guidance leaflets are to be published by the District Council.

## PROPERTIES COVERED BY THE ARTICLE 4(2) DIRECTION, REMOVING CERTAIN PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

### ARLINGTON

1, Arlington Cottage  
2, Arlington Cottage  
Home Farm

Hillside

Owl Cottage  
St Michael's Cottage  
Horse Shoe Cottage

The Old Forge

### ARLINGTON CORNER















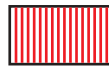




1, Arlington Corner  
Corner Cottage

### CHURCH ROAD (SOUTH-WEST SIDE)

Riverside  
Cobblers  
Osbornes

**For full details of the Article 4(2) Direction affecting the above properties, please contact the Conservation and Design Section in the District Council's Directorate of Development and Heritage. Copies of the formal Direction may be sent on application.**

## KEY TO MAPS

	Conservation area boundary		Important hedges, walls and banks
	Character boundary		Significant footpaths
	Important approaches		Tree Preservation Orders
	Important views		Important trees and tree groups
	Terminal features		Areas of landscape value, important green open space and significant verges
	Focal Features		Significant areas of water
	Listed Buildings		Local plan policy
	Article 4(2) Direction		Article 4(1) Direction
	Buildings of special character		Buildings or areas in need of improvement
	Important building lines		



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