

4.0 The Individual Character Areas

To understand the character of the parish in more detail and to identify those aspects that are of importance to the character at a more local level, the area has been divided into 17 character areas these are shown in Figure 21. The divisions are based on an initial assessment of character and largely based on the historical phases of development.

This was then refined through consultation with officers from the Parish Council and tested through further observations on the ground.

In defining the individual character areas, we can identify three strategic Character Areas that have a significance at the whole parish level and in some instances Milton Keynes (and in the case of Bletchley Park - national and international) significance.

These are:

- 1. Central** - which contains a concentration of services and facilities used by the whole parish including 2 of the main local centres, the only secondary school, a local hospital and 2 of the key local parks;
- 2. Bletchley Park and Station** - which also includes the main employment areas in the parish; and.
- 3. Old Bletchley** - is an area associated with the historic settlement and contains the Parish Church of St. Mary's with late 12th century origins and a concentration of listed buildings and historic street pattern.

The second type of Character Areas are local character areas that have a significance at a parish level and include the 12 residential character areas we have identified.

There are two other areas of distinctly dfferent characters, one associated with the undeveloped land on the Parishes southern boundary and the employment area on the northern tip.

Evaluation of individual Character Areas

Each character area is assessed in turn and the character evaluated in terms of the way it has developed and the elements that give the area its distinctive character and qualities, and also the features that detract from its character.

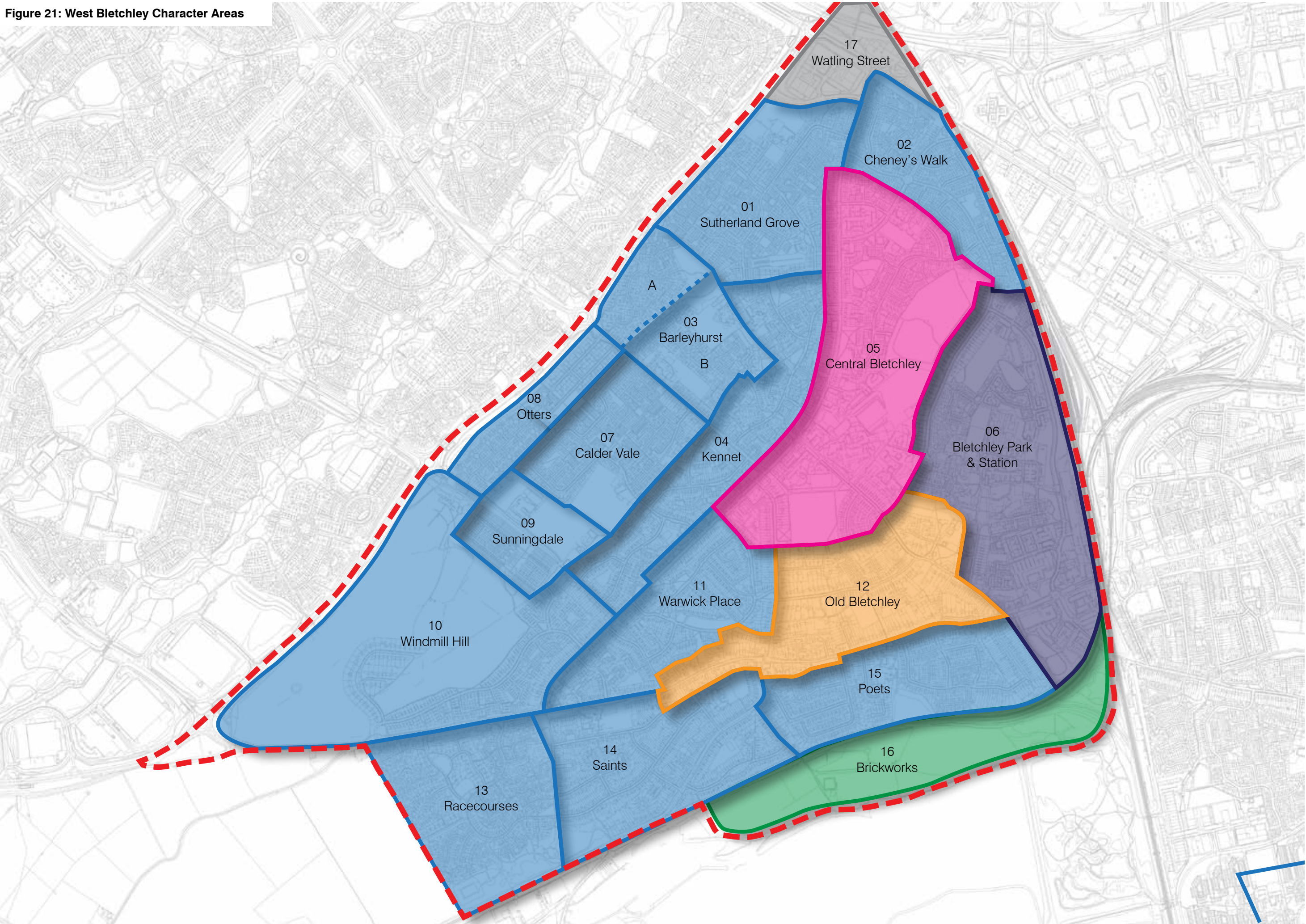
The assessment aims to determine the key features and influences on each area to help establish priorities for protection, enhancement and interpretation.

This is necessarily a broad scale assessment that aims to identify the key issues and opportunities within different areas but in many instances further detailed work and community engagement will be required to enable decisions to be made and projects to be taken forward.

As well as looking at the character of the built form, streetscapes and open spaces, the assessment also considers the ease of accessing each area on foot and by bike. Our perception of places is strongly influenced by how we arrive and move through them. If an area is hostile to pedestrians and cyclists then it changes the character of an area for the worse. The aim is to provide an initial appraisal of the issues for pedestrians and cyclists associated within each area to be investigated in further follow up studies, such as the proposed Green Infrastructure Study.

The final section of the appraisal of each area considers its location in relation to recognized wildlife corridors and makes a initial appraisal of the main vegetation types within the area and suggests areas that might offer the potential for enhancing habitat diversity and the opportunity to help strengthen adjacent wildlife corridors.

Figure 21: West Bletchley Character Areas



01 - Sutherland Grove

This area is named after the road that meanders through the core of the area.

Location and Landform

This is a triangle of gently sloping ground in the northern corner of the Parish. It is bounded to the east by Waddon Way and the West by the Grid Road – H8 Standing Way A421.

History

This area was developed as a residential area in the 1970s. The majority of the housing was developed at this time with a planned road network giving a consistency of character across the area. There is a small area of later 20th century housing close to the school.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

This is a predominantly residential area with a local school and children’s centre.

Layout

The layout is very complex with a large proportion of properties having access at both the front and backs with numerous pedestrian access routes between houses. In the centre of the area houses face onto small communal green spaces.

The success of this layout and the character of the area varies significantly, with the most successful areas being associated with small secluded pedestrian green spaces with houses facing onto them. However, achieving this often required unattractive solutions in other areas with regular use of garage courts including the largest and most intimidating, garage court in the whole of the parish behind Berwick Drive. (Photo 11).

Building Type

The predominant building style is characteristic 1970s, 2 storey housing with hanging tile and timber details. The housing form includes detached, semi-detached and short terraces with front and rear gardens.

Character of the Streetscape

The complex pattern of roads and paths and open spaces creates a rich visual character with much variety. The main roads tend not to have many street trees in verges but where verges widen, or there are small areas of green space, they are planted with large trees that enhance the streetscape (Photo 6 and 12). In some areas without highway or amenity trees the quality of the visual character of the streetscape relies heavily on trees within front gardens.

The path network and green spaces are a very important part of the character. Most of the hard surfacing and street furniture looks tired and in need of restoration. In some areas, the poor damaged quality of the paving and other built features were visual detractors (Photos 7 and 10).

The grass and trees were generally in better condition but there are key locations where trees have been lost and not replaced. Some of the smaller trees were notably mature/over mature and will need replacing in the near future. There were infrequent areas of shrub planting scattered through the area and these were generally quite overgrown with weeds.

There are occasional views out of the area to the south towards the wooded slopes of the Greensand Ridge.

Character of Open Spaces

The layout gives a spacious feel to the streets, there are regular small areas of open space, that are predominantly grass with mature trees. No play areas were seen and the open spaces were generally not suitable for ball games or children’s more natural play activities. The open spaces did not have seating. The areas of open space are however very important in enhancing the visual quality of the area.

Some of the open space behind residential properties is bounded by garden fencing. The mixed variety, type and condition of this fencing tends to reduce the visual quality in comparison to areas with planted boundaries or views into well-planted front gardens or brick walls. (Photos 3,4,5 and 6).

Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

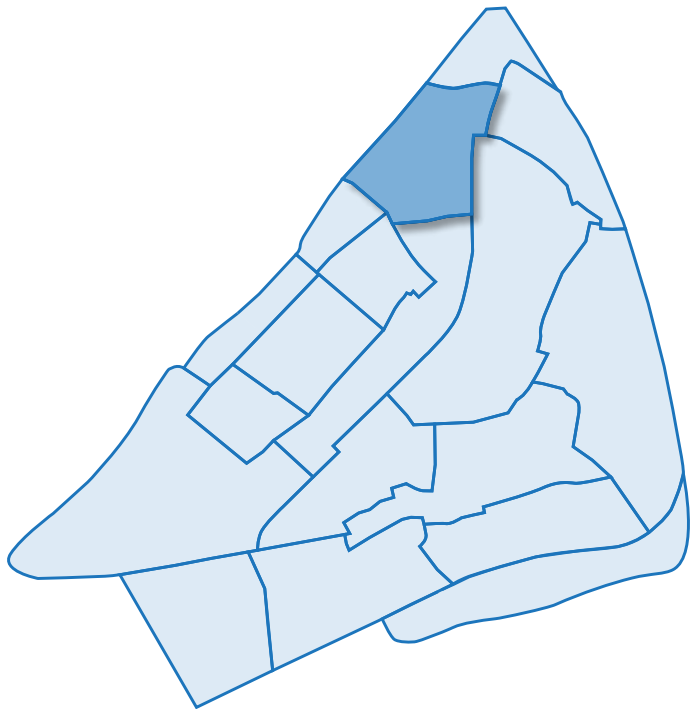
This area has a good network of pedestrian routes weaving through it that create a variety of interesting walks. It also benefits from having the Redway along Standing Way H8 immediately to the north, which gives direct access to the wider network of access routes and parks through Milton Keynes and the local facilities at Furzton.

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Diversity

Standing Way H8 grid road on the character areas western boundary is identified as a wildlife corridor. It has a strong line of planting along this boundary, which wraps around Denbigh Hall and along Denbigh Hall Drive and Cold Harbour School. This then connects through to the wildlife corridors associated with the railway line giving strong wildlife corridors around the edge of the area.

The area does not have areas woodland and no areas of meadow were seen. The small area at the back of the garage courts on Berwick Drive (Photo 11) has been allowed to develop as scrub alongside a land drain. This is one of the few areas of unmanaged land in the parish and should be assessed to establish its existing wildlife value. There is an opportunity to enhance people’s understanding and enjoyment of it. It currently has a negative impact on the character of the area as it is surrounded by broken chain link fencing, unattractive pedestrian routes and has fly tipping associated with it. (Photo 9 and 10).

The residential streets, housing, gardens and incidental open spaces which make up the majority of this character area, have few areas that aren’t managed in a municipal or domestic way. The planting around Cold Harbour School and adjacent area appears less managed and provides the strongest area of semi-native tree and shrub planting. This included what might be the remnants of a historic hedgerow (Photo 12) close to the Redway access and under the V8 on the north-western edge.



01 Sutherland Grove



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Area developed for residential development in the later1970s.
- Quiet meandering roads with no through traffic.
- Unattractive garage courts.
- Largest area of garage courts in the parish and adjacent unmanaged area of scrub adjacent to land drain.
- Lack of street trees but important small areas of green space with mature trees. Street trees and planting in front gardens important to character of streetscape.
- Housing is generally of good quality and well-maintained.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- Distinctive housing layout characteristic of 1970s with strong Radburn influence including housing facing onto small areas of green space, strong network of incidental open space and footpath routes.
- Attractive small areas of open space with large mature trees.













Visual Detractors

- Garage courts tucked away behind housing are in poor condition and reduce the landscape quality of the area.
- Public realm features in need of refurbishment.
- Small areas of open space in need of refurbishment.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Garage courts are in poor condition, visually unattractive and intimidating in places;
- Lack of access to play equipment, active play and areas for more informal play activities except from the southern part of the area;
- Insufficient management of open space areas, lack of planting and habitat diversity, no benches;
- Hard surfacing of front gardens is reducing the landscape quality of the streetscape and biodiversity of the area; and
- Lack of pedestrian and cycling access out to the east and north of the area.

Key

-  Parish Boundary
-  Local Park
-  West Bletchley Key Local Park
-  Green Space Important to Local Character
-  Significant Local Feature
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Community Benifit
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Habitat Diversty
-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

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02 - Cheney's Walk

This name derives from the roads around the open space which provides the key green space and orientation point for the area.

Location and Landform

A triangle of gently sloping ground in the north-east corner of West Bletchley. Its eastern boundary is formed by the mainline north-south rail line on embankment and to the west Whaddon Way.

History

This area was developed as a residential area adjacent to the railway line in the late 1960s. The housing appears to be all of a similar date with housing in the far north-east appearing to be developed last. No older properties were observed. Mature / Veteran Oak trees are dispersed through the area they pre-date the housing and add significantly to the character.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

This is a residential area with no local schools or shops and two small areas of open space but with no play facilities.

Layout

The curving route of Whalley Drive provides an access route through the area. There are regular residential roads, which interconnect to it and a small roundabout in the centre of the area. The routes off form short circuits or cul-de-sacs. Footpath links have been provided between roads to enhance pedestrian access around the area. Melrose Avenue has a pedestrian link to Watling Street and Spenlows Road provides access to a footbridge over the railway line.

Building Type

The predominant building style is characteristic of late 1960s brick housing of red and yellow/red colouring with hanging tile, rendering and timber details.

The housing is predominantly 2-storey semi-detached, detached and short terraces with small areas of bungalows. In the north east corner there is a later development of a few small blocks of flats at 3 storeys.

Character of the Streetscape

The visual character is that of a quiet residential area where properties generally have good sized front and rear gardens. The character of the streetscape is enhanced where there are good quality street trees and where front gardens have been retained (Photo 8). In some places where street trees have been lost views out to visually intrusive elements are more noticeable. Street parking is not visually dominant except in the northern tip of the area close to the flats.

Character of Open Spaces

The layout gives a spacious feel to the streets, but there is little public open space. The Leys park is a short walk to the south.

The two open spaces within the area are both grass with trees and have no play facilities and very limited seating with locations where benches have obviously been removed and not replaced.

The northern area is hidden behind houses and although valued by local residents, does not enhance the streetscape or the general character of the area (Photo 3).

The open space adjacent to Cheney’s Walk on the other hand is a significant part of the character of the area and is enhanced by some fine mature/veteran oak trees (Photo 10).

Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

This area was developed without links to the wider Redway network. The layout provided links between residential roads in the area. These are in places associated with the slightly menacing garage courts (Photo 11) which makes them unattractive routes to walk. Routes out to the east are limited by the main line railway.

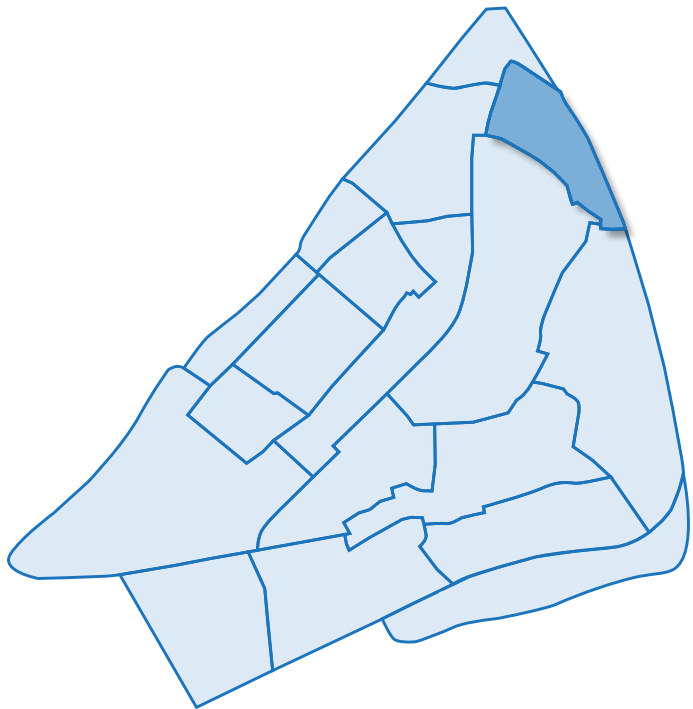
There are two direct routes across this, but neither are attractive. In the north there is access from Melrose Avenue to Watling Road and the tunnel under the railway with a very narrow path at the access point which makes using the route very precarious with fast moving traffic speeding past on Watling Street. Improved access across Watling Street would enable access to MK1, less than a mile away.

The second access from Spenlows Road is via a bridge over the railway with steep steps (Photos 5 and 7). It is a rather intimidating closed-in route, which comes down into an industrial area. Other pedestrian and cycle links out of the area are provided along the local road network.

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Diversity

The railway line on the eastern boundary is identified as wildlife corridor. It currently has fairly mature tree cover along it but this is vulnerable to removal for maintenance or as part of upgrading works. This wildlife corridor does not link to any well-planted areas within the character area.

The character area has no streams and the small areas of public open space are almost entirely cut grass with trees. The grass is most regularly mown but noticeably the roundabout on Whalley Drive appears to have been established as a wildflower meadow.



02 Cheney’s Walk



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Area developed for residential development in the late 1960s.
- Quiet roads.
- Mainly off street parking.
- Some garage courts are poor quality.
- Street trees and planting in front gardens important to character of streetscape.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- Cheney's Walk Green Space is important focal and orientation point as well as providing primary open space for the area.
- Mature/Veteran Oak trees add significantly to the streetscape character.

Visual Detractors

- Larger garage courts tucked away behind housing are in poor condition and reduce the landscape quality of the area.
- Rail line on embankment encloses the area.
- Railway pedestrian bridge is unpleasant to use.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Pedestrian access to Watling Street is currently dangerous and unattractive and improvements could provide attractive cycling links and access to MK1 and other facilities in under 1 mile.
- Pedestrian links between residential roads and the garage courts are in poor condition.
- Opportunity to improve Cheney's Open space for the benefit of the whole community.
- Opportunity to improve open space behind Calluna Drive for local residents.
- Hard surfacing of front gardens is reducing the landscape quality of the streetscape and biodiversity of the area.
- Opportunity to increase biodiversity potential and habitats with a greater variety of planting and alternative grassland management and wildflower meadows in some open spaces.

Key













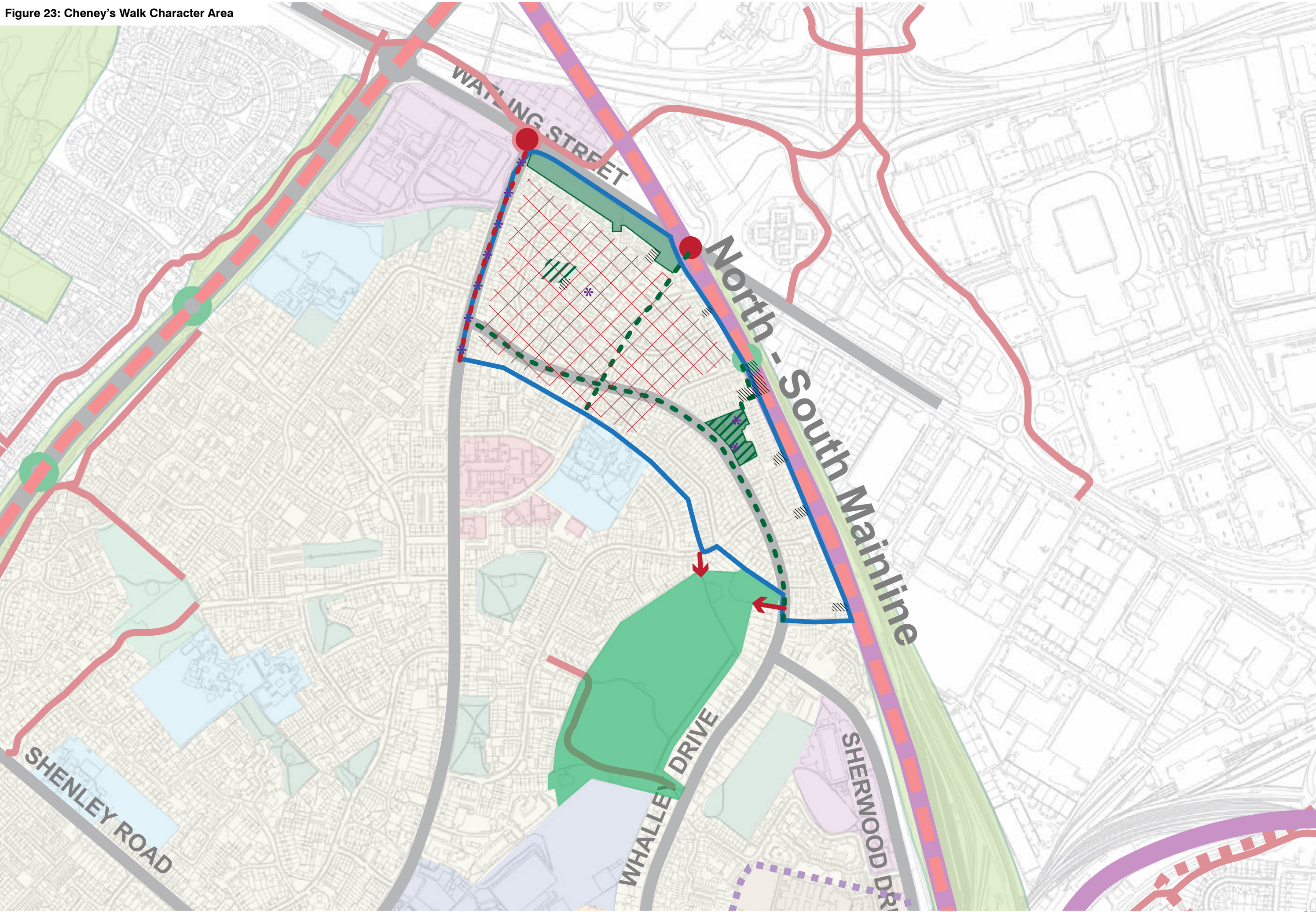
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-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

Figure 23: Cheney's Walk Character Area



03 - Barleyhurst

This area is named after the local park and school, which are key features within the character area.

Location and Landform

Gently sloping land on the north-western edge of West Bletchley with its western boundary adjacent to Standing Way H8.

History

The residential development in this area was built in the last part of the 20th Century and the first few years of the 21st Century, so it is the character area with the most recent development.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

The area is predominantly residential but also has two primary schools and one of the five main local parks in West Bletchley.

Layout

This area has a more fragmented layout than most of the residential areas with the earlier housing in the north (A) having no road connections through to the later housing in the south (B). The housing in the north emulates a more traditional village type layout than most residential areas in West Bletchley. Barleyhurst Park unites areas (A) and (B) with footpath and cycling links to both. Each area has access roads with cul-de-sacs off. Both areas are generally free from through traffic.

Building Style

Both the north and south of the area are predominantly detached and semi-detached brick houses with some rendering and timber and brick detailing. There is an area of flats in the very south of the area and more 3-storey houses.

Visual Character of the Streetscape

In area (A), the network of cul-de-sacs have pedestrian links between routes which encourages walking through the area. The housing is laid out to frame and create views to enhance the character of the streetscape and routes through the area. Front gardens make a significant contribution to the streetscape and where they have been hard surfaced the character becomes bleaker.

In area (B), there are no verges adjacent to the road and little incidental open space. This means that the only trees and planting are within private spaces. This area is generally well managed and attractive but a notable number of gardens have been hard surfaced, to provide more off street parking. If this trend continues it will have a significant negative impact on the streetscape.

Barleyhurst Park has an open boundary with Kinross Drive in the north which adds visual interest to the streetscape and an attractive open view over sloping ground.

Character of Open Spaces

Barleyhurst Park has a play ground (Photo 1) and an area of shrub and tree planting in the centre (Photo 2). The area has some areas of semi-natural vegetation, formal play facilities and space for ball games (Photo 12).

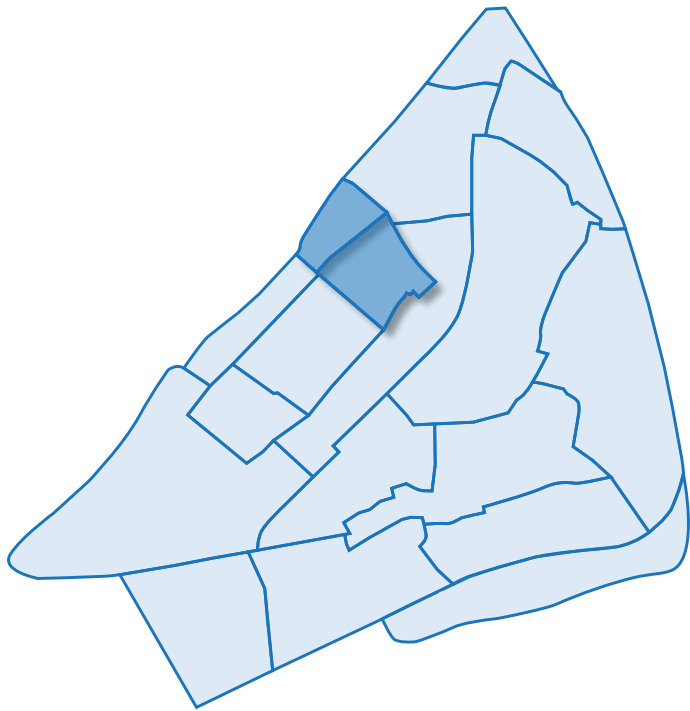
The area therefore has a better diversity of open space in this character area than generally found in the parish. Although are concentrated on the eastern edge of the area with little incidental open space along roads.

Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

The northern part of the area is connected to the Redway network (Photo 10). Other access through the area is generally limited to footpaths adjacent to roads. Although greenspace in the south-eastern corner provide a pedestrian link through to neighbouring areas and Central Character Area facilities

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Diversity

The area has no wildlife corridors within it. The parks some stronger areas of planting and more semi-natural planting than found in most character areas.



03 Barleyhurst



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Quiet residential area.
- Housing of late 20th Century and early 21st Century with more 3-storey buildings and flats in the south.
- Barleyhurst Park provides a good variety of play opportunities.
- New park accessed from Yorkshire Close provides important meeting place at junction of popular footpath routes.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- The hornbeam trees at the junction of Trafalgar Avenue and Kinross Drive.
- The view down over Barleyhurst Park from Kinross Drive.

Visual Detractors

- Loss of front gardens to hard surfacing.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Retaining planting in front gardens is very significant to retaining the character.

Key













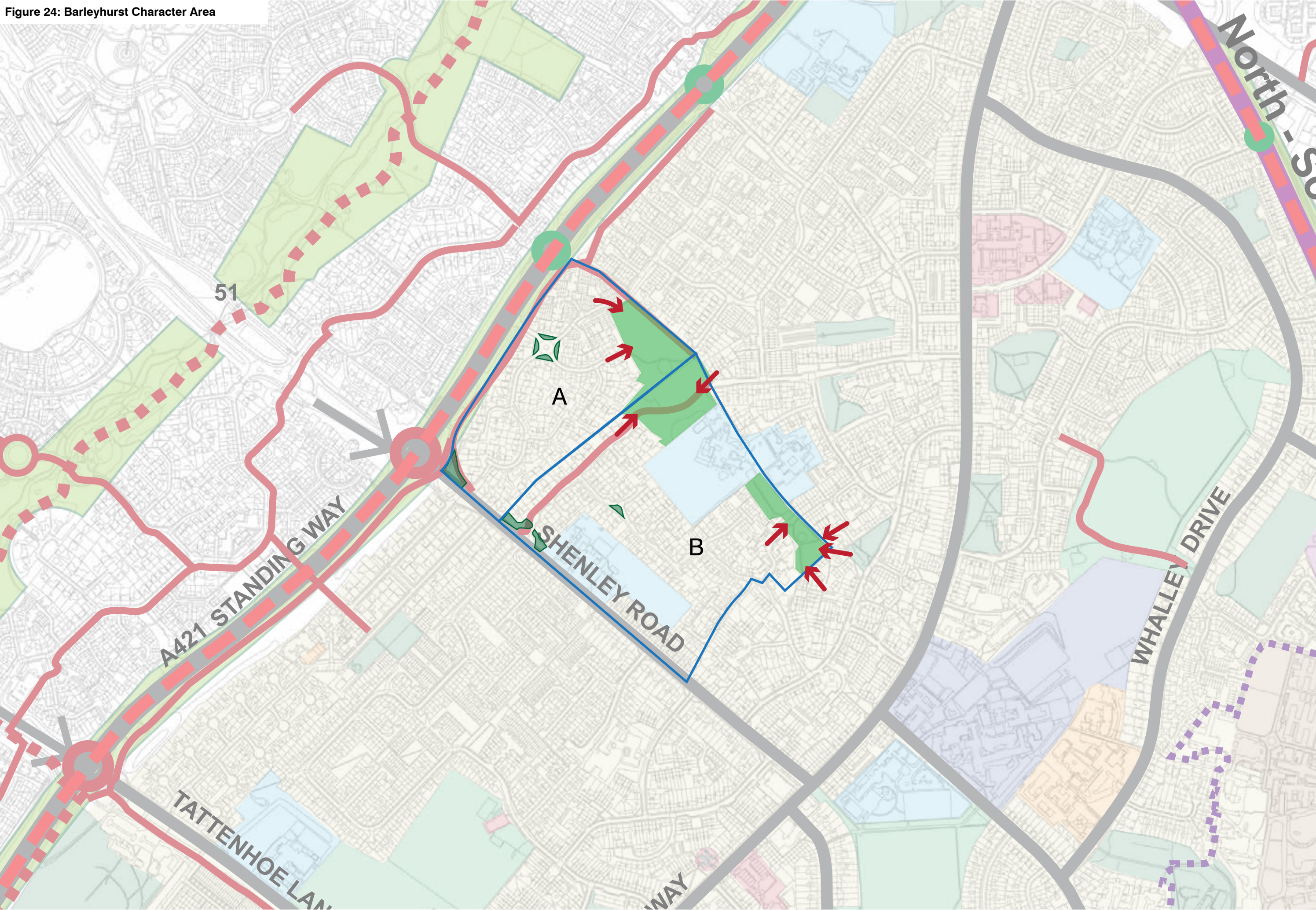
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-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

Figure 24: Barleyhurst Character Area



04 - Kennet

This area includes roads named after both counties and rivers. The name Kennet has been assigned as this is one of the primary access roads close to the centre of the area.

Location and Landform

This area is located immediately to the west of the Central Character area. It is a strongly linear area with several roads forming a central spine along its length.

The landform is gently sloping with the highest ground to the south west.

History

This area was part of the plan for Bletchley developed after the second World War as part of Bletchley Urban District Council. It encompasses parts of both the Rivers and Counties estates but is unified by having very a similar layout and housing types.

It’s location immediately behind Whaddon Way and Central West Bletchley features also gives it a distinctive character.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

This is a predominantly residential area with a greater proportion of flats than anywhere else in West Bletchley. The flats do not have access to private or communal gardens making access to parks and good quality open space very important.

Layout

This area runs parallel to Whaddon Way which is the key access road through Central West Bletchley. Its layout primarily consists of a spine road running parallel to Whaddon Way with short spurs and cul-de-sacs off this.

Building Style

There is a wider variety of housing styles in this area than seen in the rest of West Bletchley.

The most distinctive buildings are the 1960s 4-storey blocks of flats constructed of concrete panels. They have been refurbished with replacement windows but still looked tired and dated (Photo 8). They are often located at prominent locations within the streetscape and so their condition has a significant impact on the overall character of the whole area.

Another characteristic housing type in this area is 2-storey brick blocks of flats which are built at right angles together with streetscape with courtyard behind which is hard surfaced that provide visually unattractive communal drying areas (Photo 6). These flats have small balcony areas at the front but no access to private gardens.

Other buildings in the area are predominantly short terraces of 2-storey housing, semi-detached housing and bungalows. Some of the bungalows are more recent developments possibly rebuilding within garage courts.

Garage courts that remain are often small and facing onto the street. Although untidy and unattractive, these are not intimidating spaces like the larger areas of garage courts that are cut off from view and behind housing (Photo 10).

Character of the Streetscape

Although the area has a predominance of flats, the layout of the area is spacious with properties set back from the roads and surrounded in swathes of grass with some planted beds.

The prominent location of the blocks of flats means that the quality of their setting in the streetscape has a significant impact on the character of the area. The areas of grass are well maintained by regular mowing but the area immediately around some of the entrances and building edges is often poorly maintained and lacks general maintenance. Where occasionally residents have improved this area with narrow bands of planting, it makes a positive contribution to the streetscape (Photo 9).

The taller and larger buildings within this area sit best in the streetscape when surrounded by large mature trees. The area contains several majestic trees that make a significant contribution to the character of the streetscape and help reduce the impact of otherwise visually intrusive elements. The identification and protection of these trees is important. In several places, the housing links through to Whaddon Way (central Area) sometimes with pedestrian access with bungalows facing onto path routes. The bungalows generally have well managed front gardens creating an attractive transition between the two areas (Photo 5).

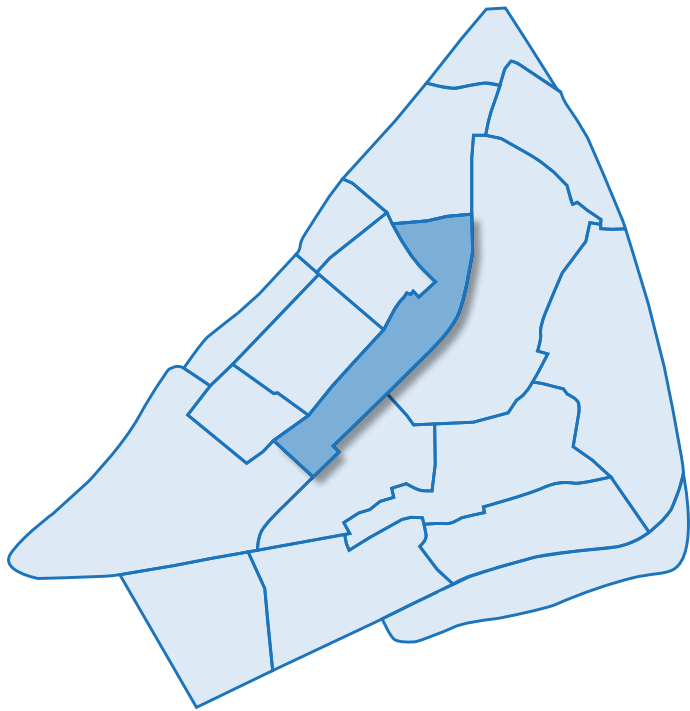
Throughout the area, elements of public realm were in poor condition that makes a significant negative visual impact and should be addressed (Photos 1 and 3).

Character of Open Spaces

This area has an open character with housing set back from the roads behind managed areas of grass. This enhances the setting of the buildings but no seating was seen and there are no play facilities or spaces for more natural play. This suggests that these areas are walked through but not used as places to spend time within.

This area is notable for its lack of direct access to parks. The only small park with any facilities is in the south. This has play equipment and what appears to be a redundant area of tarmac where a play area may once have been. There is considerable scope to enhance the area to provide a park for local residents without access to gardens (Photo12).

The linear nature of this character area means that this park is only likely to be used by residents in the south of the area with those in the north more likely to cross Whaddon Way to access the Leys.



04 Kennet

Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

This area was developed without links to the wider Redway network or obvious pedestrian and cycling routes out of the area. The layout is however, quite permeable with a network of pedestrian links between the flats and blocks of housing enabling a variety of walking routes with generally good access through to Whaddon Way and associated facilities.

Routes out of the area in other directions are less clear but a route through behind Glamorgan Close seems to be being well used to access the recently provided new play facilities in Barleyhurst by Yorkshire Close.

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Diversity

Being towards the centre of the parish the area is not adjacent to any of the boundary wildlife corridors. The character area consists entirely of planted and managed areas with no streams or areas of more natural vegetation.

The areas of public open space are almost entirely mown grass with trees with a few beds of shrub planting that were rather overrun with weeds. The grass is regularly mown and is of limited wildlife value.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Spacious layout with flats and houses set well back from residential roads;
- Flats and particularly 4-storey blocks look dated and have a negative landscape impact;
- Some fine large mature trees along streets; and
- Lack of seating and play facilities.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- Large mature trees.

Visual Detractors

- Unattractive 4-storey blocks of flats;
- Garage courts; and
- Public realm in poor condition.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- 4-storey blocks of flats appear to need significant refurbishment or redevelopment;
- Poor quality garage courts and spacious layout suggest opportunity for regeneration;
- Evaluate play and open space provision and information about routes to enhance access for residents living in the flats;
- Opportunity to enable residents to improve areas immediately around flats or create management strip; and
- Explore opportunities to change the management of open spaces to provide greater habitat diversity and natural play environments.

Key













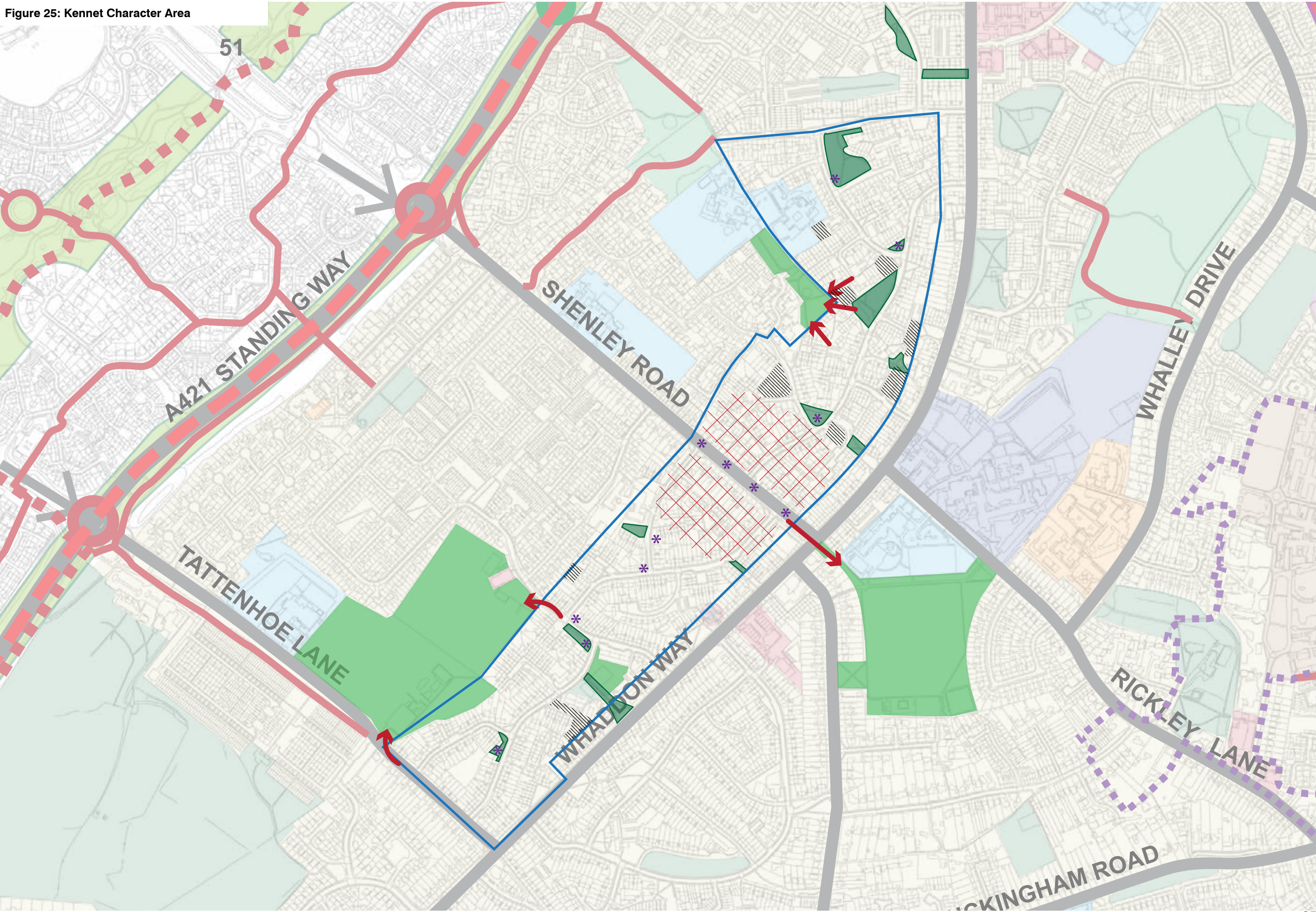
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-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

Figure 25: Kennet Character Area



05 - Central

Introduction

This area is close to the centre of the parish and contains the facilities and services that are most likely to be used by the community as a whole. This includes the Parish Offices, the Secondary School, the local hospital, the two larger local centres and two of the five local parks. It also includes housing with a variety of housing styles including individual houses and blocks of flats and a large tower block.

History

This area was agricultural land until it was developed as part of the expansion of Bletchley from the 1950s onwards. Most of the development in this area appears to relate to the 1960s and 1970s expansion.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

This is complex area with a wide mix of land uses.

Layout

The main road through the area is Whaddon Way which is also a key spine route through the whole of West Bletchley. It has been successfully traffic calmed and restricted access ensures it is not used as a ‘rat-run’. The layout of spaces adjacent to the road is generous particularly on the northern side where the footpath is set back from the road behind a wide verge. Along much of its length housing faces onto the road and in several locations pedestrian access is gained via small public spaces between the housing at right angles to the road.

Shenley Road, Tattenhoe Lane and Rickley Lane form key intersections with Whaddon Way. The main parks are hidden behind residential housing and have little impact on the wider streetscape. The smaller areas of incidental open space are therefore very important to the character of the area.

The two local centres are accessed off Whaddon Way. Their visual character has a strong impact on the character and perception of Central West Bletchley

Building Style

Although the buildings were primarily built around the same Time, their scale and treatment of the spaces around them varies considerably.

A key feature of the area and orientation point is Melrose Tower (Photo 3 and 10) which is the only residential tower block in West Bletchley. This, along with the local centres (Photo 2) are typical of the designs of their time but without high levels of management and careful modernisation now look dated, visually harsh and unwelcoming.

There are several other blocks of flats in the area (Photo 4) as well as 2-storey housing often in short terraces (Photo 5 and 11).

Character of the Streetscape

The character of the area is spacious with most roads having good verges between traffic and footpaths. Tree cover is generally good with a few gaps where trees have been lost. The verge between the Melrose Centre and Whaddon Way is noticeably lacking in trees or other planting.

The quality of the frontages of larger land uses onto the street has a significant impact on the character of the area. This varies significantly between different land uses. The schools have defensive boundaries with high fencing and strong hedges. Other sites have no fencing and very large areas of car parking without any landscape planting, which has a negative impact on the streetscape.

Street parking is provided but not visually dominant. Traffic calming measures increase street signage and clutter on Whaddon Way and Rickley Lane but also make the roads safe and easier for pedestrians to cross.

Well maintained front gardens with large shrubs and small trees add considerably to the character of the streetscape. Where there are visual links through to green space adjacent to the main roads, this enhances the visual character of the area.

Character of Open Spaces

The layout gives a spacious feel to the streets and well-maintained front gardens enhance the character of the area. The area contains two of the 3 larger parks in West Bletchley which due to their location and size offer the potential to provide valuable open space and facilities for the parish as a whole.

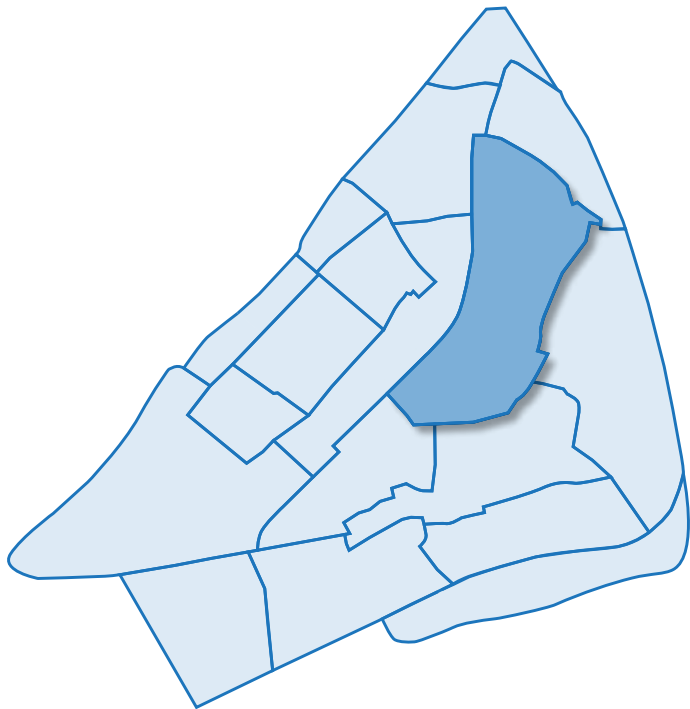
The Leys is the largest park in West Bletchley. Its attractive slightly domed landform gives an elevated feel and the open views out in all directions. The majority of the park is open mown grass with good play areas and some notable trees including a fine group of pine (Photo 9). Around the pine group and in an area in the south of the park where the grassland is managed to create a meadow with long grass with paths cut through. At the time of the survey, the long grass was in seed and golden in colour and full of noisy crickets which significantly enhanced the diversity and visual interest in the park (Photo 8), as well as creating a great wildlife habitat.

Rickley Park (Photo 1) has a bowling club in its south east corner with the remaining ground being car parking, grass and trees with one football pitch still marked out. There is a path that runs around the perimeter of the area. There are no play facilities. The park is used for the West Bletchley Carnival and as the primary space in the parish for other community events. It has the potential to act as a destination in the parish for community activities and the provision of park facilities to be enjoyed by the whole parish. It’s location close to Central, and Kennet, where many residents are in flats without access to gardens, means that it is well placed to provide enhanced facilities for these residents, in particular.

Smaller incidental areas of open space are very important to the visual character of the central character area. Particularly notable areas are adjacent to Whaddon Way and provide pedestrian links from Whaddon Way to neighbouring residential areas.

Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

This area was developed without links to the wider Redway network. Road routes provide main access for walking and cycling. Whaddon Way is traffic calmed and generally wide footpaths often set back from roads behind wide verges provides fairly attractive routes with some pedestrian links to adjacent housing areas. Little cycling on the road was observed with cyclists preferring to use the footpaths than negotiate pinch point traffic calming. Improved cycling routes to the secondary school are needed. The footpath set back from the road on Whaddon Way appears to have space that could upgraded to a Redway to enhance cycling links to the secondary school and across the parish to Bletchley town centre, the railway station and MK1.



05 Central Bletchley

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Diversity

This area is centrally located and well away from any of the boundary wildlife corridors.

The majority of open space is managed as grass with trees. There are some small belts and groups of trees associated with the parks and a recently introduced area of wildflower meadow at The Leys Park. Both The Leys Park and Rickley Park have ample space that could be planted to provide a greater diversity of habitats and more natural and informal play environments.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Dispersed community facilities.
- Whaddon Way main through-route and key part of West.
- Bletchley character and identity.
- The Leys open character and meadow planting
- Rickley Park enclosed and lacking facilities.
- Street trees and planting in front gardens important to the character of the streetscape.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- The Leys Park has an open almost ‘common’ like character not seen elsewhere in parish; and
- The Leys Park wildlife meadow enhance the landscape character and provide valuable wildlife benefit.

Visual Detractors

- The entrance and parking area in front of Melrose Tower
- Block is unwelcoming.
- Parking and pedestrian areas around local centres are poor and the centres generally unattractive.
- Poorly maintained public realm.
- Poorly maintained garage courts.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- The Character Area is the focus for community activity and offers the opportunity for improvements to have the greatest impact in enhancing the identity of the parish as a whole;
- Whaddon Way as the primary route through the area and offers particular opportunities to enhance the character between the road and the local centres;
- Improving the entrance area and parking around Melrose Tower Block would enhance the identity of area as a whole.
- Opportunity already initiated to improve entrances to Rickley Park and to provide facilities for the whole parish to enjoy including a community events space.
- Habitat diversity is poor across the area but The Leys provides a great opportunity to provide a more diverse range of habitats and interpret these for greater public enjoyment.
- Enhancing cycling routes through this area to encourage cycling within Parish and provide safer access for cyclists to secondary school.

Key













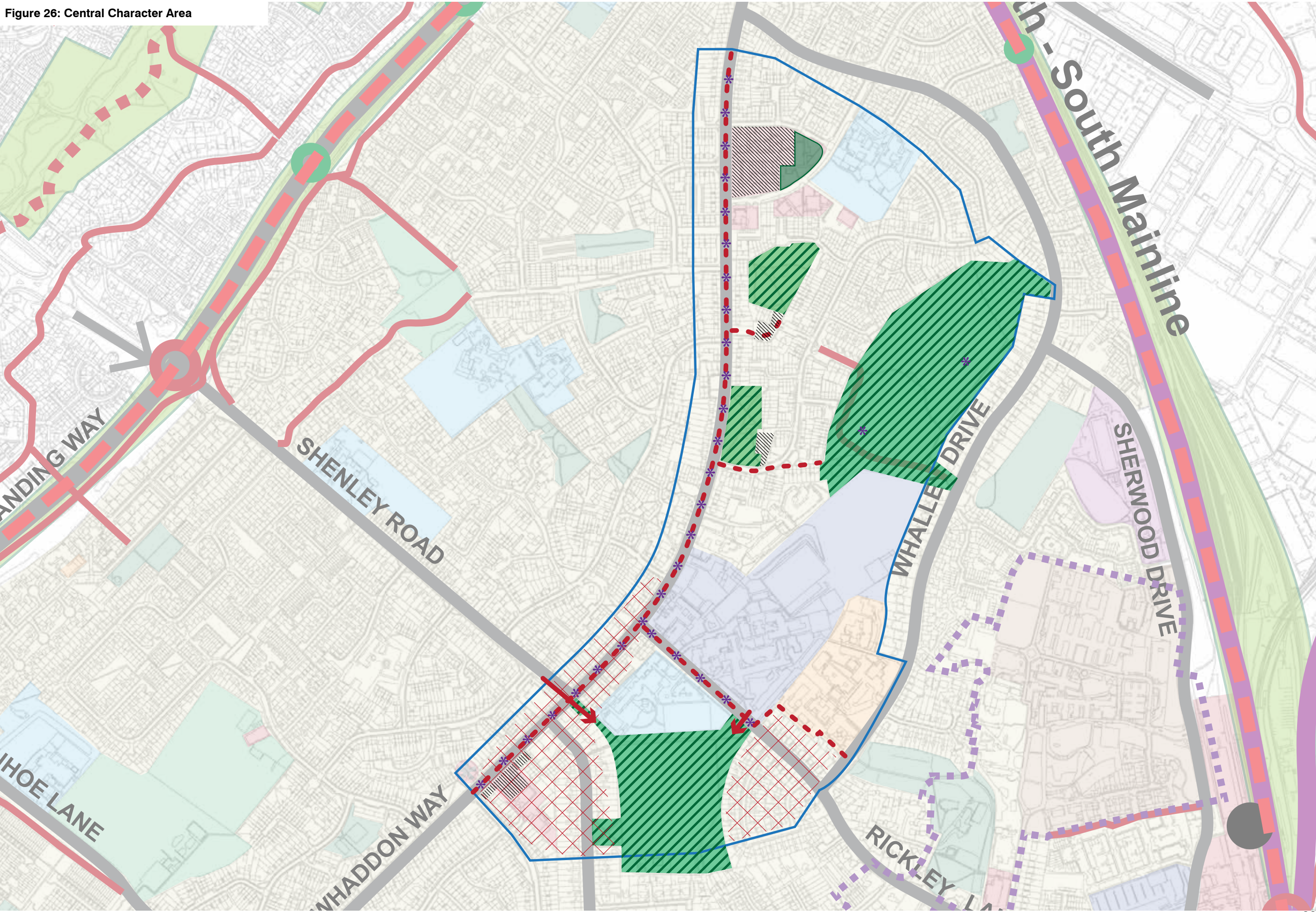
-  Parish Boundary
-  Local Park
-  West Bletchley Key Local Park
-  Green Space Important to Local Character
-  Significant Local Feature
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Community Benifit
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Habitat Diversty
-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

Figure 26: Central Character Area



06 - Bletchley Park

The area is named after the historically significant site of Bletchley Park and Bletchley Railway Station, which form the core of this area.

Location and Landform

Gently sloping ground on the eastern edge of West Bletchley. Its eastern boundary is formed by the West Coast mainline north-south rail line and Bletchley Station, and to the west the area runs across to Whalley Drive and to the south down to Church Green Road.

History

This area is most significant for containing the site of Bletchley Park. Developed as an intelligence base in the Second World War and establishing significant breakthroughs in intelligence and the development of computing. In the last 10 years, its role has been widely revealed and interpreted and the park is now established as a visitor attraction of worldwide interest. Bletchley Park (Photos 1 and 2) was established as an intelligence base as its location next to the railway junction provided excellent links to both to the north and London and east and west to Oxford and Cambridge. The park and the area around it were not considered to be of significance until relatively recently and much of the original character around the park including the Bletchley Station and the setting for the cricket pavilion and other buildings associated with the site has, unfortunately, now been lost.

Character of Built Environment

Land Use

The area has more varied land uses than in most of West Bletchley. Bletchley Park is a major land use at the core of the area. Bletchley Station has since the east west rail line was largely decommissioned been a small station of little strategic significance. The proposed re-establishment of the East-West rail line and Bletchley’s intersection with this and the north-south West Coast mainline will once again make Bletchley a strategically important station. The other land uses in the area include several large business employment buildings, recent residential developments and Further Education buildings, along with the local police station and fire station.

Layout

Most of the land uses in this area are accessed off Sherwood Drive, which runs parallel to the parish’s eastern boundary adjacent to the rail line. Sherwood Drive intersects with Buckingham Road in the south and provides the only direct access point for pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists between West Bletchley and Bletchley Town.

Building Type

The building type within this area reflects the buildings styles and requirements of the time they were developed. Bletchley Park contains Sir Herbert Leon’s opulent house and associated stable buildings juxtaposed with the sheds and utilitarian buildings of WW2 necessity. The original Victorian station buildings built in 1846 were rebuilt in 1966 as a modern flat roofed block that lacks the presence of the original building which was so much part of the life of war time Bletchley Park.

The office developments are in scale with the surrounding area and are both visually interesting buildings that are sited well. Along Water Eaton Road the buildings are more modest in scale and have poorer street frontages.

The more recent late 20th century and early 21st century housing developments are built in brick and predominantly flats and individual houses set within what was the parklands of Bletchley Park. They benefit from the setting provided by mature parkland trees but their high-density development and road layouts and poor parking areas have lost all sense of the original parkland quality.

This is perhaps the most complex and mixed area of built development in West Bletchley with a wide variety of periods of development, varying scales and types and A mix of local and strategic land uses.

Bletchley Station and the access under the railway line is the principal access point to the whole parish and is visually very prominent, and requires very careful consideration of any rebuilding proposed.

Character of the Streetscape

This area has a few busy main through-roads and several cul-de-sacs little seen by most people. Sherwood Drive and Buckingham Road are the most used routes and have a strong impact on how the area is perceived. Sherwood Drive is wide, with development generally set well back from the road often behind large mature tree. Buckingham Road is very busy with traffic and people but still has good planting alongside. Recent improvements under the railway bridge has enhanced walking and cycling routes as far as the College.

Wilton Avenue was originally a main access to Bletchley Park House. It is now outside the park complex and un-interpreted. A derelict building (the former canteen) adjacent to the gates detracts significantly from the visual character of the area and without explanatory interpretation, the fencing with barbed wire there creates a harsh boundary adjacent to an important footpath link to the FE College (Photo 8).

Water Eaton Road running south and under the railway is in poor condition and has unmanaged planting and buildings in poor condition next to it. It creates a forgotten and neglected character to this entrance.

The visual character of the streetscape within the newly developed housing areas relies strongly on the residents maintaining small areas of planting within their ownership as there is little public open space fronting the street and few street trees (Photo 9).

Bletchley Station, its forecourt and parking is publicly accessible space and is a principal entrance point for locals, visitors and tourists to the area generally and Bletchley Park. The station buildings and forecourt are in a very poor condition and are unattractive dated and have a poor and badly maintained public realm (Photo 5). Given that this is such a prominent entrance to Milton Keynes, Bletchley and to Bletchley Park (and therefore for visitors from outside the area, gives them the first impression of the city and local area), it is very unfortunate that the station gives such a poor impression.

Character of Open Spaces

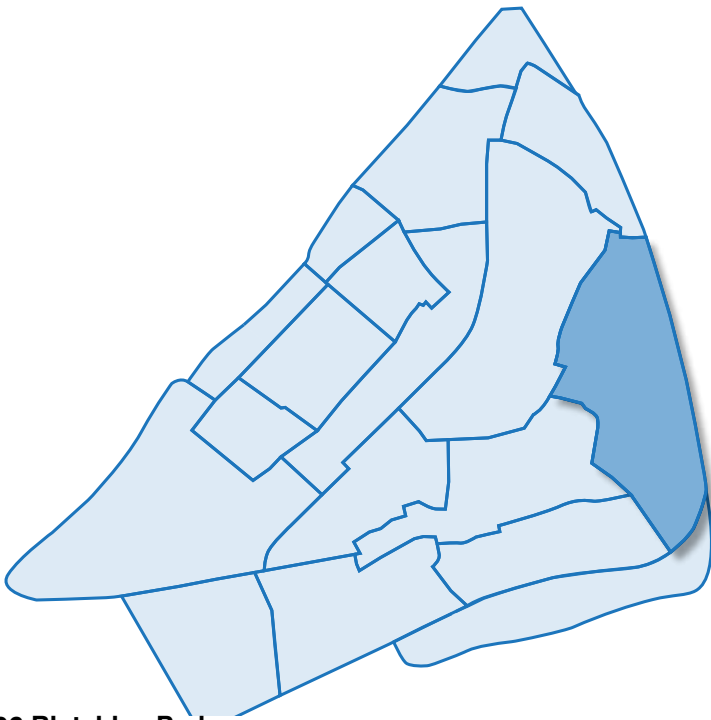
The area contains much less incidental open space than much of the parish, but the green space along Sherwood Drive is particularly important to the character of the whole area (Photo 3).

There are two small parks of which both are hidden from view. In the north, the small park off Sherwood Drive has good surrounding planting and football goalposts. In the south, Eight Bells Park (Photos 6 and 7) is nicely laid out but has poor access from adjacent residential areas.

Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

The location of this area between the main residential areas and the key facilities of Bletchley town centre and railway station and the volume of movement on foot and by bike through the area is very important to the overall impression of the parish.

This area was developed without links to the wider Redway network. Access through the area for pedestrians and cyclists is mainly limited to using the road network. Pedestrian and cycling routes from Bletchley Town and the station to Bletchley Park area are used by large numbers of visitors to the Park and sixth form students. Road improvements have also improved pedestrian and cycling access between Bletchley Town and Bletchley Park but no further.



06 Bletchley Park

There is a need to enhance links from the rest of West Bletchley to the station and Bletchley Town. At the moment, there is no dedicated cycle route across this area and pedestrian routes are not marked or defined. There is a route through the new housing area to the north of Bletchley Park and a route south via footpaths from Church Green. Enhancing and promoting these routes for both pedestrians and cyclists would enable West Bletchley residents to have better access to the station and associated developments and employment and Bletchley town centre. Recent road improvements have enhanced pedestrian and cycling access to Bletchley via Buckingham Road. Other access out of the area relies on the road network.

There is a footpath route adjacent to Water Eaton Road giving access under the railway to the south. The path however, is narrow and the route is generally unattractive for pedestrians and cyclists.

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Diversity

Planting adjacent to the railway and along Sherwood Drive provides a valuable green corridor linking the area for wildlife. The railway currently has some tree cover along it but this is vulnerable to removal for maintenance or as part of upgrading works. There is a small stream (sometimes dry) between Sherwood Drive Road and Network Rail security fence and down to the Fire Station. This is fed from Bletchley Park under the road.

Most of the public open space in the parks is closely mown grass with trees. There is an opportunity to Easily increase habitat diversity in these parks by varying the management regimes.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Bletchley Park Historic House and WW2 Buildings.
- Bletchley Station.
- Primary access point in parish under railway to Bletchley town centre.
- Wide variety of land uses in a few large sites.
- Larger buildings than elsewhere in the parish.
- Mature trees along Sherwood Drive.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- Bletchley Park.
- Historic Significance of Bletchley Station as an important reason for the establishment of Bletchley Park as an intelligence-base.
- Mature trees associated with Bletchley Park add significantly to the streetscape character.

Visual Detractors

- Derelict building adjacent to disused entrance to Bletchley Park.
- Bletchley station and public realm.
- Poor frontages to Water Eaton Road.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Ensure any redevelopment is well integrated with West Bletchley and enhances the character of the area and pedestrian and cycling movements.
- Improving pedestrian and cycling across area to provide better access to station and Bletchley town centre.
- Enhancing boundaries to Bletchley Park for local community benefit and providing interpretation of features.
- Redeveloping the station and station area including adjacent uses to create a new enhanced gateway to the area.

Key













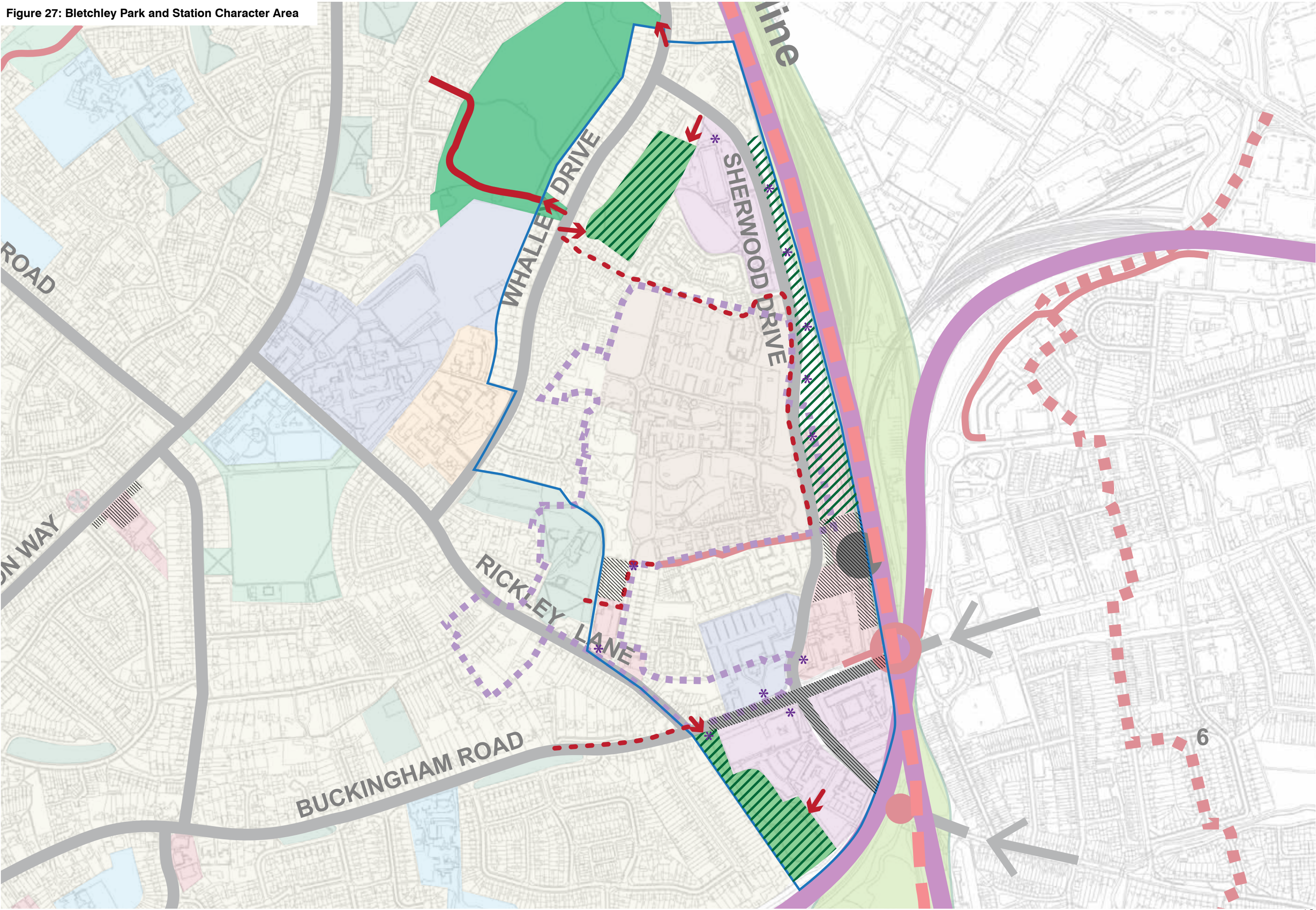
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-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

Figure 27: Bletchley Park and Station Character Area



07 - Calder Vale

The area is named after the walkway and area of green space in the core of this area.

Location and Landform

This area is located to the north west of the Central Character area on ground gently rising towards the west.

History

This area appears to date from the late 1960s and early 1970s period of expansion.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

This is a residential area with about one sixth of the area devoted to open space, a community youth centre and football ground.

Layout

The area has a distinctive layout with a strong ‘Radburn’ style influence with housing set within generous areas of open space with interconnecting pedestrian through routes. The layout often provides access to both front and rear and within the central area, properties have front gardens facing on to community green space with parking provided in courts to the rear.

Building Type

The housing is characteristic of the late 60s and 70s of brick with hanging tile and some wood details. The majority of the houses are 2-storey and are detached, semi-detached or in short terraces. Many have had later porches added and garages converted to provide additional living accommodation.

Visual Character of the Streetscape.

The design of the area has created a marked contrast in character between the areas accessible by vehicle and the network of incidental open space accessible only by foot.

The roads are generally wide with the primary roads flanked by houses with off street parking. The provision of street trees is quite variable with notable sections having no trees and narrow verges (Photos 4 and 11). The character is sometimes enhanced by the planting of trees and large shrubs in generous front gardens.

Footpath routes along the primary routes through the area are in a poor state of repair and uneven enough to prohibit access for the less mobile (Photo 12).

Small courtyard areas provide garaging and parking for houses, which front on to communal space. These courtyard areas appear congested and swamped by the requirements for more car parking than they were designed to accommodate (Photo 7). This along with variable fencing and garage materials make these areas look unattractive. There appears to be enough space to redesign the areas to make better provision for the required parking.

Character of Open Spaces

The spacious intricate layout of this area has been very consciously designed to provide a network of incidental open space of varying size and character.

Paths feed through the housing area and provide good links without crossing roads. Many houses face onto small areas of communal open space (Photo 9). The success of this relies on a high level of management and maintenance of the areas and for people to embrace this and not to feel a need to defend themselves from the public space with high fencing and walls.

In general, the open space throughout this area seems to work successfully with attractive front gardens facing out onto small areas of grass with trees (Photo 5). Calder Vale the key spine pedestrian route through the area is attractive to walk on with young children playing happily in front of their houses in a way which does not happen on the trafficked streets. The public realm fabric is notably in need of some restoration. No benches were seen within these areas (Photo 2).

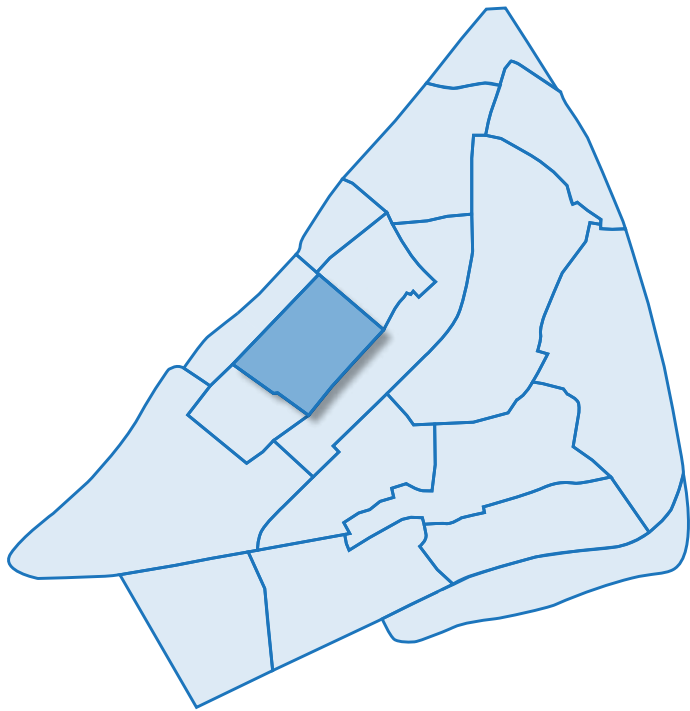
No play areas were seen within the residential area. Traffic free routes through the housing provided attractive places to walk and for young children to play.

Adjacent to the southern part of Severn Way in the south western corner of the area there is a small local park with playing fields and a youth centre.

Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

This area was developed without links to the wider Redway network.

The network of footpaths provides good links through the area. These routes were observed to be quiet enough to be also comfortably used by cyclists without causing problems. At the moment, these routes through the area are not signed and only provide local access but they have the potential (if signposted and well maintained) to help enhance cycling and pedestrian routes across the parish.



07 Calder Vale

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Diversity

Being towards the centre of the parish, the area is not adjacent to the existing wildlife corridors on the parish boundaries.

The majority of the green space is managed as closely mown grass with trees. There is a strong hedgerow in the green space between Tees Way and Tweed Drive which may be the remnants of an historic hedgerow through the area. The recreation area also has strong hedgerow boundaries particularly on its southern edges.

The open space in the area appears to be fairly-poor for habitat diversity.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Radburn style layout.
- Extensive small areas of grass with trees.
- Network of pedestrian routes.
- Lack of through traffic.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- Calder Vale's Green Space is a significant element of the character of the area.

Visual Detractors

- Courtyard parking areas in need of redesign to accommodate greater than predicted car numbers.
- Public realm paving and street furniture in need of some refurbishment.
- Shrub planting in public spaces over grown with weeds.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Significant opportunity to redesign courtyard parking areas to provide additional parking spaces and make them more attractive to enhance the character of the whole area.
- Opportunity to promote greater use of traffic-free routes through the area to enhance links across West Bletchley.
- Path surfacing across the area is in poor condition which has a negative impact on the character and restricts access for the less mobile.
- Local residents appear to appreciate the network of community open space that this layout provides. There would appear to be an opportunity to enable residents to take greater responsibility for the management of the planted areas. Particularly those immediately around their properties.
- Opportunity to replace/place benches at carefully chosen locations to enhance community use and enjoyment of the open space.
- Opportunity to increase biodiversity and habitats with a greater variety of planting and alternative grassland management and wildflower meadows in larger open spaces. Ponds within agricultural fields were lost when the area was developed pond creation would also promote greater biodiversity.

Key













-  Parish Boundary
-  Local Park
-  West Bletchley Key Local Park
-  Green Space Important to Local Character
-  Significant Local Feature
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Community Benifit
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Habitat Diversty
-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

Figure 28: Calder Vale Character Area



08 - Otters

This area is named after one of the main roads within the area.

Location and Landform

The area is located on the northern edge of the parish adjacent to the H8 Standing Way A421. The ground slopes from higher ground in the west to lower ground in the east.

History

This area dates from the post 1970s and was developed as part of the New Town plan.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

This is a predominantly a residential area with a small local medical centre towards the centre.

Layout

The layout of the area consists of three distinctive sections on the south western side. The residential housing is positioned on short cul-de-sacs off Muirfield Drive. The road itself doesn't have any housing facing onto it (Photo 1). The short cul-de-sacs form small courtyard areas these are linked together by a ribbon of planted open space and without a path (Photo 2 and 10).

The central section has the medical centre, sheltered housing and another small building accessed off the main road (Photo 9).

The north eastern area consists of two parallel roads of detached housing in a courtyard layout.

Building Type

The housing within this area was predominantly detached houses built from the 1970s onwards, with later housing and flats in the central area.

The style was typical of the period and predominantly brick with timber details. Many have been significantly altered and enlarged in recent years.

Character of the Streetscape

This is a quiet residential area which does not appear to suffer from through traffic. Parking is primarily off road.

The south western section has a layout which produces a distinctive character to the streetscape. As properties are all accessed off side roads, there are few windows onto the road so the road and tree lined verges are bordered by walls rather than the fronts of houses (Photo 4). The access cul-de-sacs do not have verges or street trees and rely on front gardens and the ribbon of open space running through the development to enhance the visual character (Photo 2).

The central area has a spacious character with attractive planting around parking for local facilities.

The layout of the north eastern section has individual houses set back from the road. The area has well established young trees in verges that add considerably to the streetscape. Some planting in front gardens has again, unfortunately, been removed to create large expanses of hard surfacing.

Character of Open Spaces

There are no main local parks within this area. It does have a small young children's play area off Otter Close and direct access to a play area on the northern edge of Sunningdale. The Tweed Drive open space is visually an important area of open space providing relief from the dense layout, but has no seating or other facilities, although there is a strong boundary hedge. There is a small ornamental garden opposite the medical centre specifically designed for the blind.

Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

The area has access to the Redway route running adjacent to Standing Way H8 and via this to facilities and parks within Milton Keynes. The south-eastern edge is also adjacent to the Redway running east to Barleyhurst Park. The area is not connected to the Central area or Bletchley town centre and Station via the Redway networks.

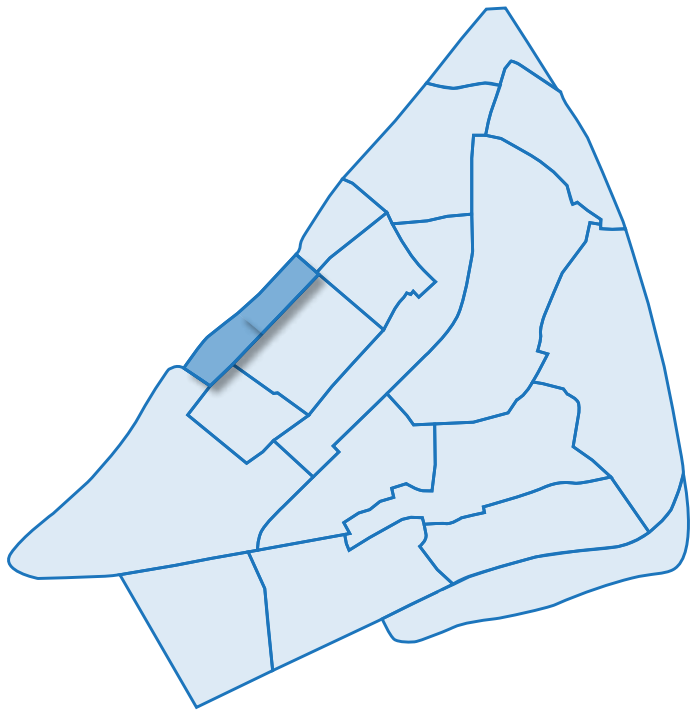
The south western area has a network of pedestrian links via open spaces between the cul-de-sacs. There is no path but it provides an attractive route between the housing, probably only used by local residents who know the route (Photo 10).

The Tweed Drive open space provides an important and well used link between this area and Calder Vale (Photo 6).

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Diversity

The area benefits from being adjacent to the wildlife corridor adjacent to the H8 Standing Way.

The area has little open space within the layout and the open space that do exist is are of limited habitat diversity. One feature identified that is of interest is the hedge that divides Otters from Calder Vale which appears to be the remnants of an historic hedgerow and therefore of landscape and biodiversity importance.



08 Otters



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Quiet residential area.
- Distinctive housing layouts and well-designed homes.
- Small areas of incidental open space away from roads.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- Small local garden for the blind.
- Tweed Drive open space.
- Well-designed housing area.













Visual Detractors

- Elements of public realm in poor condition.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Limited access to park or open space of any size from north of area.
- Opportunity to enhance the open space along Tweed Drive for greater community benefit.

Key

-  Parish Boundary
-  Local Park
-  West Bletchley Key Local Park
-  Green Space Important to Local Character
-  Significant Local Feature
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Community Benifit
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Habitat Diversty
-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

A detailed map of the Otters Character Area. The map shows a network of roads, including A421 Standing Way, Tattenhoe Lane, Shenley Road, and Whaddon Way. A red dashed line runs along the top left, and a green dashed line runs along the bottom left. A blue hatched area is located near the intersection of A421 Standing Way and Tattenhoe Lane. A red arrow points to a specific location on Tattenhoe Lane. The map also features various colored overlays: green for parks or open spaces, blue for water bodies, and pink for residential areas. The number '51' is visible in the upper right corner.

09 - Sunningdale

This area is named after Suningdale Way, one of the main routes within the area.

Location and Landform

This area is located on the western side of the parish between Windmill Hill and Calder Vale. The ground slopes from higher ground in the west to lower ground in the east.

History

The area dates from the post 1970 expansion and was implemented as part of the New Town Plan.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

This area contains one of the main five main parks in West Bletchley, a section of Tattenhoe Lane and the housing area accessed off Sunningdale Way and Hunstanton Way.

Layout

This area is visually divided by strong planting between different land uses. To the north-east, the playing fields and Milton Keynes Preparatory School are set behind hedges and to the south west the residential area is screened from the road by a strong planting belt.

Building Type

To the north east, the school and playing fields have redbrick buildings with sloping roofs. The majority of the housing is of a distinctive character, similar to several estates throughout Milton Keynes developed in the 1970s. Built of block work with pitched roofs in linear terraces of one or two-storey buildings. There are small areas of more recent infill housing within the area.

Character of the Streetscape

All development is set well back from Tattenhoe Lane and it is bordered by strong tree and shrub planting, making for an attractive green access route.

The streetscape of the residential area is set within generous incidental green space on the perimeters but the areas immediately adjacent to properties are bordered by car ports in front of small front gardens. This tends to limit the impact the front garden planting has on the streetscape. There are attractive mature trees along the roads. The visual character is also influenced by the management and maintenance of the car ports, which varies in quality (Photo 7).

Character of Open Spaces

The Tattenhoe Lane Park is primarily set out for use as playing fields and doesn’t have any perimeter paths, benches or ornamental trees. There is a small skate park adjacent to the car park. The pavilion is used by the Royal Air Force Association as its social club.

The small park to the north of Milton Keynes Preparatory School appears to be mainly used by residents of Otters and Calder Vale, as they have the most direct access to it. The landform of the park appears to have been altered from the natural landform with a large raised platform.

The residential area is set within an open space and includes a small play area and grass with trees reaching maturity. Access routes are primarily limited by providing access to properties and facilities rather than creating recreational routes (Photos 3,4 and 9). No benches were seen and there appeared to be areas where benches may have been removed.

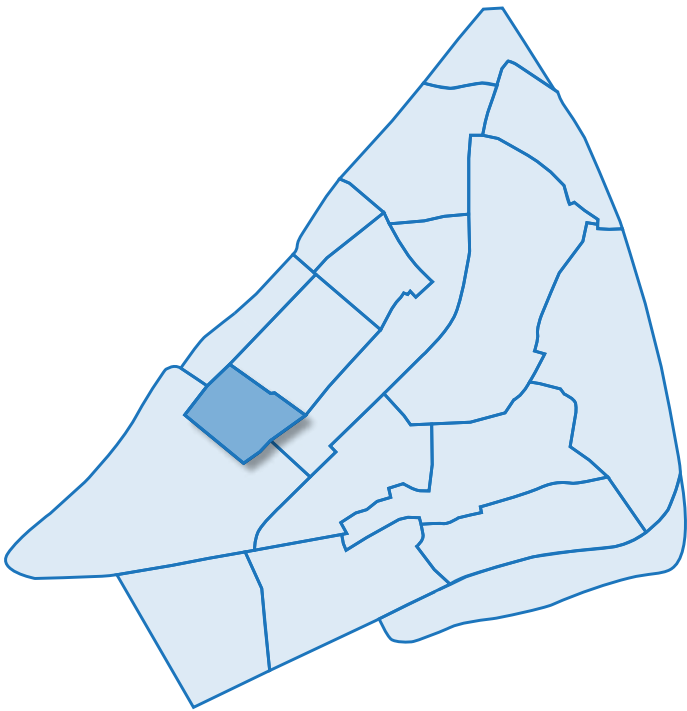
Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

The area has a Redway route running adjacent to Tattenhoe Lane. This connects the area to parks and facilities to the north of the parish but does not extend to promote access to the Central area of the parish or to the railway station and Bletchley town centre. Pedestrian routes run through the residential area and connect to the footpath route around the golf course. There is a pedestrian access to bus stops on Tattenhoe Lane and an access point but without traffic control or a central refuge to gain access to the park.

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Diversity

This area benefits from large areas of open space and tree planting that is now reaching maturity. It also benefits from being close to the golf course and the wildlife corridor along Standing Way to the north.

It also has the remnants of historic field hedgerows around Tattenhoe Park.



09 Sunningdale



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Area of park and high density housing set within open space.
- Good mature trees.
- Primary access road set in a generous green corridor.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- Local park access.
- Direct access to attractive footpath route around golf course.

Visual Detractors

- Loss and lack of maintenance of public realm features.
- Un-interesting open spaces/parks.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- The area has the space to create more diverse habitats.
- Enhancements to public realm adjacent to housing and within park could enhance enjoyment for a greater range of people.
- Extending Redway network would enhance connections from the area to the rest of the parish, Bletchley town centre and the railway station.

Key













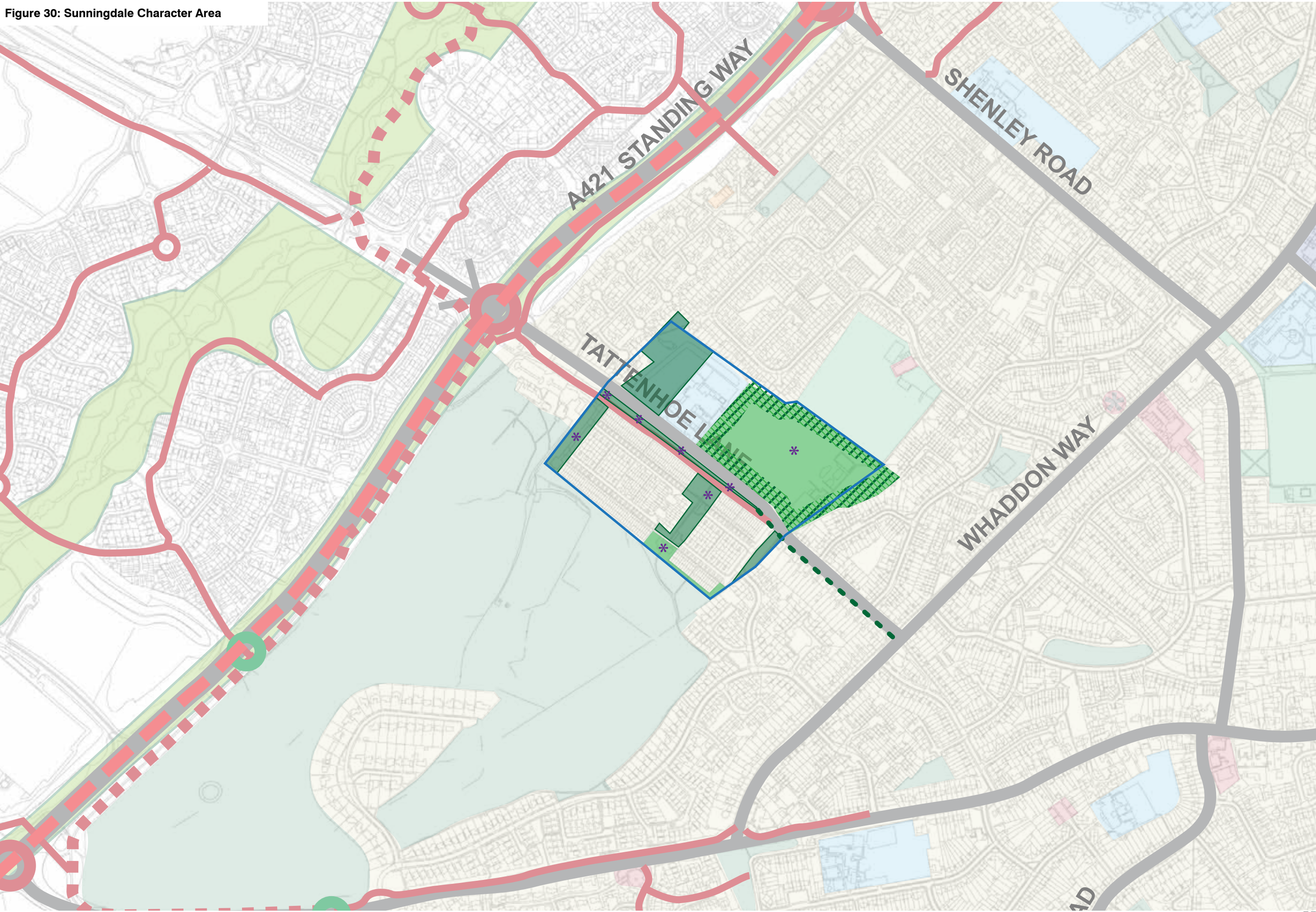
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-  West Bletchley Key Local Park
-  Green Space Important to Local Character
-  Significant Local Feature
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Community Benifit
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Habitat Diversty
-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

Figure 30: Sunningdale Character Area



10 - Windmill Hill

This area is named after the golf course within the area, and we assume its name derives from a windmill that may have occupied the site historically.

Location and Landform

Situated on the north-western edge of the parish, on higher gently sloping ground.

History

It was developed primarily in the 1970s. The largest part of the area devoted to a municipal golf course which was part of the New Town Plan for Bletchley.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

There are 2 key components of this area; the golf course and its setting, and a large swathe of 1970s housing to the south and east of this.

Layout

The golf course is generally hidden behind housing and strong boundary planting and is not visible from the surrounding area. There is a footpath route around most of the edge of the course set back behind rough grass.

The housing is on gently curving roads or short cul-de-sacs. Many of the cul-de-sacs are linked to each other by short pedestrian routes.

Building Type

The housing style is typical of 1970s development, with predominantly brick buildings with sections of timber or hanging tile cladding. Roofs are often on shallow gradients and sometimes extended to span garages.

On Wentworth Way, there are large detached houses in good sized gardens with the other roads being detached houses and noticeable areas of chalet style bungalows and other bungalows.

Character of the Streetscape

This is a quiet residential area with wide roads and predominantly off-street parking. The distributor roads through the area generally have verges and street trees which are important to the character of the area. There are noticeable areas with few street trees (Photo 11). The front gardens make a considerable contribution to the streetscape and where they have been lost and the whole area hard surfaced it has an urbanising impact on the character of the area (Photo 3). There are some areas requiring better maintenance but these are fewer than some other character areas.

There were good views from the edge of Turnberry Close south to the Buckinghamshire countryside (Photo 11).

Character of Open Spaces

The golf course represents the largest area of open space within the parish. Whilst the majority of the space is only open to golfers, there is a path around most of the edge of the course but no signage promoting access. This means that the open space is probably only used by local residents. The path is very uneven and in places seems to have been lost under grass cover. It is, however, an attractive walk with good views out over the golf course. There is a good margin of rough grass/meadow adjacent to the path which adds to the visual interest and aids separation from the golf course (Photos 5 and 6).

There are no areas set out as parks within this area. There are small areas of incidental open space along Windmill Hill Drive and green links through to the footpath around the edge of the golf course. In the south of the area, residential roads are linked together by small areas of green space with tree planting (Photo 10).

Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

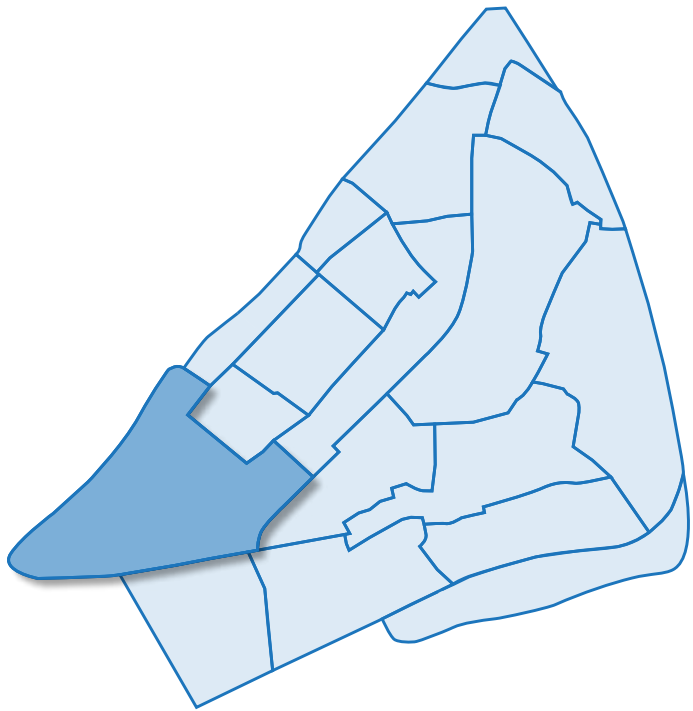
This area has Redway routes around all but its most eastern edge. This route provides good links to parks and open space on the southern edge of Milton Keynes and down to Chepstow Park. There are, however, no cycle route links to the Central area or through to the station and Bletchley town centre.

Footpath routes along quiet roads and using the links between residential roads provides attractive places to walk within the area. There are, however, poorer links out of the area. Access to Weasel Lane has the potential to provide good access for both walking and cycling to the countryside.

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Diversity

The golf course is the largest area of open space within the parish. The core area is intensively managed to provide for the course but the generous boundaries, pond and planting across the site provide good biodiversity and a variety of habitats for different species.

The northern edge of the area is already identified as a wildlife corridor and the initial assessment of the southern boundary suggests that the site is being managed to promote habitat diversity and wildlife interest.



10 Windmill Hill



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Quiet residential area adjacent to golf course with attractive boundary walk.
- Mature trees along key access roads.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- Planting, rough grassland and pond on the golf course provide largest and strongest areas of semi- natural habitat within the parish.













Visual Detractors

- Public realm requiring renewal in places.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Improving and promoting footpath route around the edge of the golf course.
- Working with golf course to use natural habitat areas around the golf course as wildlife walk with prominent interpretation
- Trees are disappearing from main access roads.
- Replanting should be a priority for the area.
- Promoting retaining and managing planting within front gardens.

Key

-  Parish Boundary
-  Local Park
-  West Bletchley Key Local Park
-  Green Space Important to Local Character
-  Significant Local Feature
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Community Benifit
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Habitat Diversty
-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

This map illustrates the Windmill Hill Character Area, which is a large green space with a diagonal hatching pattern. The area is bounded by a blue line. Surrounding the area are various planning boundaries, including a red dashed line and a red solid line. Key roads shown include A421 S, TATTENHOE LANE, WHADDON WAY, and NEWTON ROAD. The map also features a green area to the west and a blue area to the east. A red dashed line runs along the bottom and right sides of the area, with several red arrows pointing downwards. A red solid line runs along the top and left sides of the area, with several red circles and arrows pointing inwards. A green area is located to the west of the main area, and a blue area is located to the east. The map is overlaid with a grid of red dashed lines and a grid of red solid lines.

11 - Warwick Place

This character gets its name from the prominent street within the area.

Location and Landform

Warwick Place is on the southern side of West Bletchley and immediately south of Kennet and Central. The ground slopes from the highest ground in the west on the edge of Windmill to lower ground on the eastern side.

History

This area was part of the early Bletchley Urban District Council Plan from the mid 1950s to 1970.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

This is a mostly residential area bordered by two of the main access routes through West Bletchley.

Layout

The area is roughly triangular in shape and bounded by the key through roads of Whaddon Way, Buckingham Road and Shenley Road. The core of the area is made up of a layout developed in the 1950s. The key feature is Warwick Road, which forms a loop through the centre of the area with shorter link roads and cul-de-sacs off that. The only areas of open space of any size are adjacent to Warwick Place and an area of allotments hidden behind housing.

Building Type

The area contains primarily a mix of flats (mostly 4-storey and 2-storey), short terraces of housing and semi-detached houses. The majority were developed in the 50s and 60s. But there are notable areas of more recent housing. The largest of which is at Knarsborough Court at the Junction of Whaddon Way and Buckingham Road, developed in the first years of the 21st Century. This red brick development at a key focal point and junction and stands well forming a good gateway building into West Bletchley.

Character of the Streetscape

The character of the streetscape is that of generally quiet residential roads. The traffic is heaviest on Buckingham Road and Whaddon Way, but the other roads have little through-traffic.

Street trees are very significant features to the character of all the roads and are a particularly notable feature of Whaddon Way. Some minor roads rely solely on planting within front gardens and have no trees within verges (Photo 4). Where there are gaps or no street trees along a road the visual character is notably poorer (Photo 3).

The majority of houses and flats are set back from the road. Many gardens originally appear to have been surrounded by privet hedges in a 'Garden City' style. Where these have been retained (Photo 2) it adds to the character. As with all areas where front gardens have been completely surfaced over the character is diminished.

The early blocks of flats sit within areas of grass with planting.

There are several areas of garage courts and areas of parking which may have previously been garage courts within the earlier housing areas. These appear to be less derelict than in some character areas but still had a negative visual impact. There are fewer interconnecting paths and access routes than in many of the character areas but some were found to be in poor conditions (Photo 7). Access routes to blocks of flats could also be enhanced.

Many elements of the public realm were in poor condition (Photo 12). There were very few benches and man hole covers are often poorly maintained.

Character of Open Spaces

This area has a small children's play area at the back of Knarsborough Court and an attractive area of incidental open space with large mature trees between Warwick Place and Warwick Road. There are, however, no parks of any size within the area.

Views along Whaddon Way and Buckingham Road from the more elevated land looking downwards and east towards the Brickhills are a feature of the area, as are views from around Chester Close looking south over the Buckinghamshire countryside.

Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

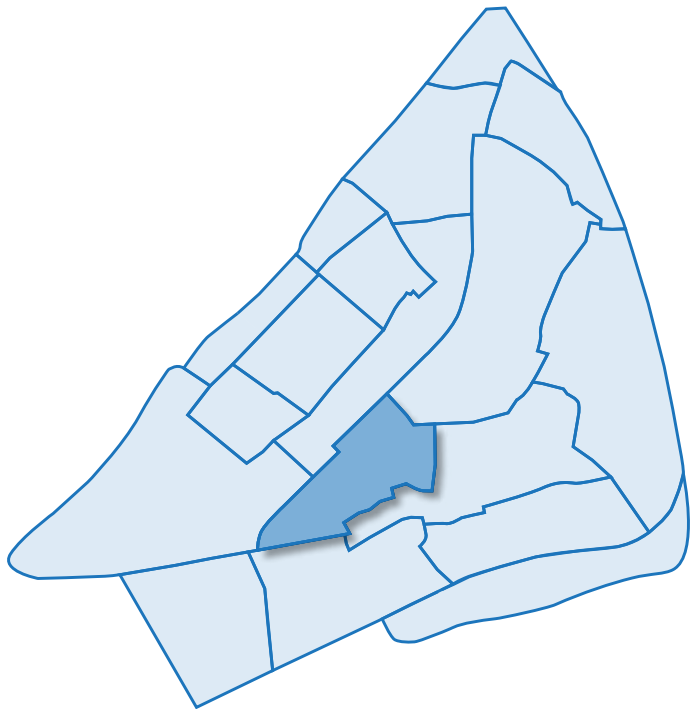
The area is not connected via the Redway network. However, on the western side of Whaddon Way, the start of the Redway system does give access to Chepstow Park and via the edge of Windmill Hill golf course, to the wider Redway network within Milton Keynes.

Access through the area is generally via footways adjacent to roads, as there are fewer interlinking footpaths than in the other character areas

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Diversity

Being towards the centre of West Bletchley, this area is some distance from the Wildlife Corridors running around the edge of the parish.

During the survey work all the areas seen were mown grass, with shrubs and trees with no areas of more semi-natural vegetation. The lack of large areas of open space within this zone limits the scope to enhance habitat diversity.



11 Warwick Place



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Residential area with more small blocks of flats than found in most of the parish.
- Boundaries to the key access routes through parish.
- Street trees along Whaddon Way.
- Green space in front of Warwick Place
- Views out to south and east

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- Notable fine mature trees dating back to when area was in agricultural use.
- Front garden bounded by privet hedges.

Visual Detractors

- Garage courts
- Public realm in poor condition

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Street tree planting strategy targeted at key access routes.
- Enhancing pedestrian and cycling links to neighbouring parks and facilities in the east.
- Providing benches to promote use of incidental open space, particularly for inhabitants of flats.
- Promoting retaining and managing planting within front gardens.

Key













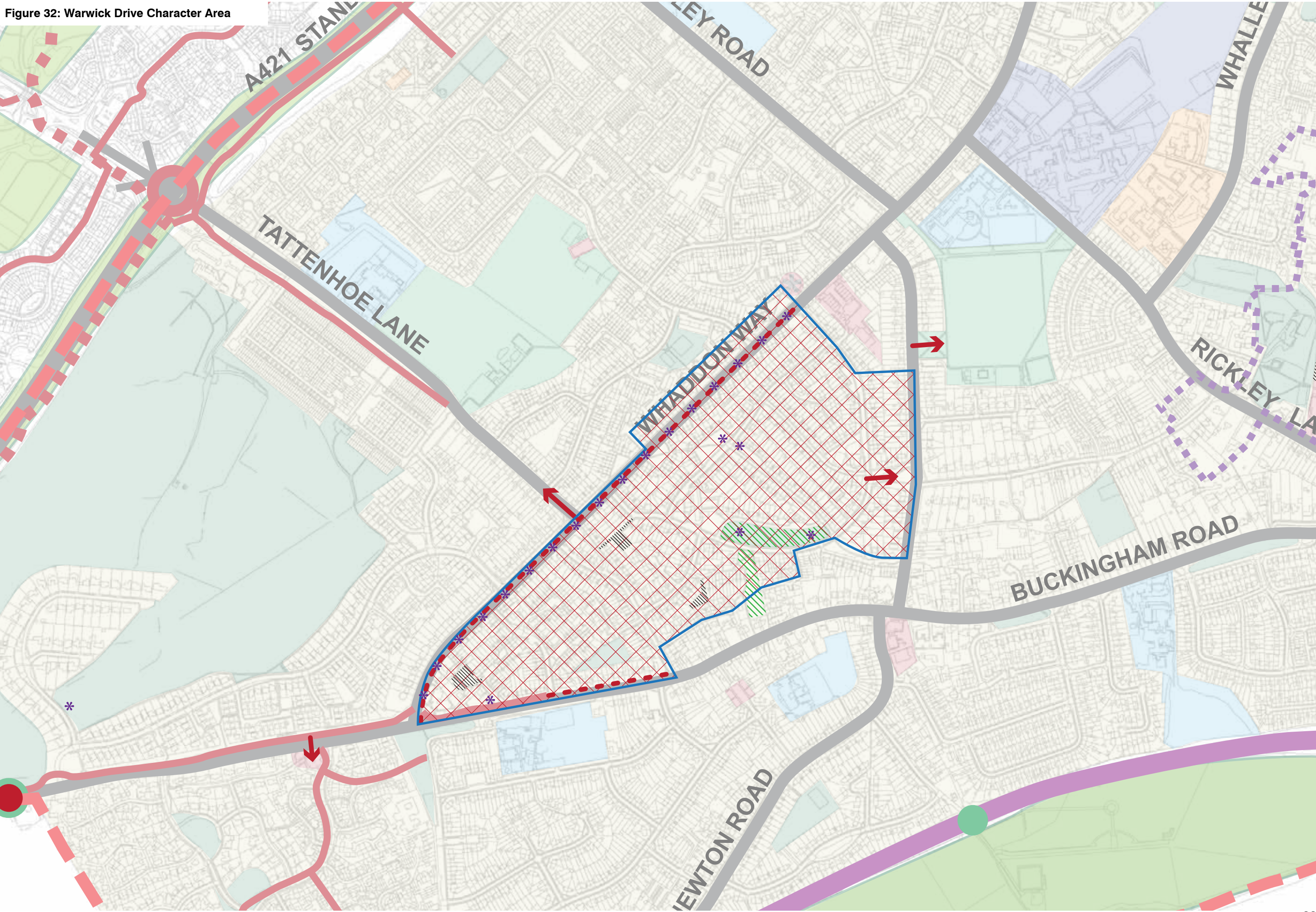
-  Parish Boundary
-  Local Park
-  West Bletchley Key Local Park
-  Green Space Important to Local Character
-  Significant Local Feature
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Community Benefit
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Habitat Diversity
-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunity for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

Figure 32: Warwick Drive Character Area



12 - Old Bletchley

The name relates to the oldest settled part of the parish at Old Bletchley, which has medieval origins, and perhaps earlier.

Location and Landform

Located towards the southern side of the parish this area contains the original settlement of Bletchley and the most historic buildings in the area.

History

The area has at least medieval origins, as the area borders the old Roman Road of Buckingham Way it may owe its origins to Roman settlement, perhaps firstly as a farm as elsewhere within the area, and later a group of dwellings.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

The land use is predominantly residential with St Mary’s Church and cemetery on the eastern edge of the area. At the junction of Shenley Road and Whaddon Way there are local shops and services, some within older buildings.

Layout

The layout in this area can be clearly seen to have evolved from the historic routes shown on early maps it has gradually evolved rather than having been designed as a whole, as most areas within West Bletchley have. The main roads through the area are Church Green Road and Buckingham Road the historic route to Buckingham.

Building Type

This area contains buildings of a wider age variety than anywhere else in the parish. Notable buildings include St Mary’s Church (Photo 11) and the rectory cottages (Photo 12) along with other historic buildings which add to the visual interest of the area.

Character of the Streetscape

The roads through the rea are fairly-straight and don’t generally have verges between the carriageway and footways. They are however, enhanced by notable trees with adjacent public space such as at Church Green and the open space alongside Buckingham Road. Large trees within private gardens also make a significant contribution to the streetscape. The blue cedar tree at the junction of Rickley Lane and Church Green Road being a notable example.

Throughout the area there are views to interesting buildings and well-planted front gardens that enhance the streetscape (Photo 5). The western end of Church Green Road would be enhanced with replacement tree planting within the grass verges.

Most of the houses have off-street parking in garages and on hard-standings. Areas of hard-standing have been expanded to areas that were once planted reducing the benefit the front gardens give the dwelling and also the wider neighbourhood.

Character of Open Spaces

The historic layout of this area provides less incidental open space than areas designed in the second half of the 20th century. The two areas of open space that do exist however are of good quality.

The first is at the historic heart of the whole of West Bletchley close to St Mary’s Church the Church Green area with mature trees (Photos 2 and 3).

The second is a local park between Church Road and Buckingham Road. It is hidden behind housing and does not enhance the surrounding streetscape but provides valuable pedestrian links between different parts of the area.

It is a pleasant park with mature trees, a football pitch and a children’s play area. There are opportunities to enhance it further with more seating and a greater variety of planting (Photo 6).

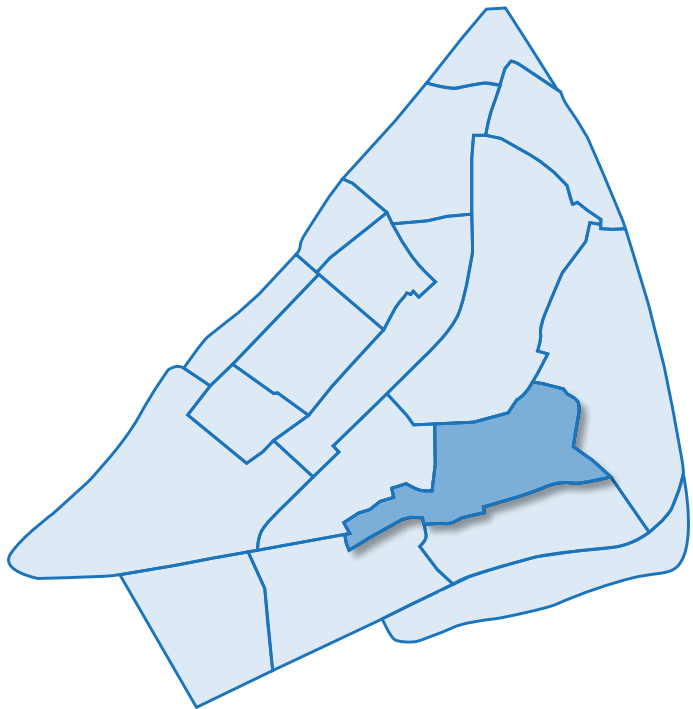
Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

This area was developed without links to the wider Redway network or obvious pedestrian and cycling routes out of the area. The layout of the streets at first appears quite impermeable with only pedestrian routes restricted to pavement footways along the main roads. There are however, several valuable pedestrian links both through and out to adjacent areas the use of which could be better encouraged (Photo 6).

Cycling links to the south are hampered by the busy Buckingham Road.

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Diversity

Being towards the centre of the area, Old Bletchley is some distance from the existing designated wildlife corridors at its periphery. There are no streams or ponds or areas of more natural planting or vegetation. The cemetery/churchyard and the western side of Buckingham Road however does have a strong belt of trees and many of the houses have large established gardens with mature planting and trees that provide valuable wildlife habitats.



12 Old Bletchley



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Historic layout and traditional housing.
- St. Mary's church and cemetery.
- Church Green garden and fine mature trees.
- Busy Buckingham Road.
- Hidden paths.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- The area has a great variety of built form and many features of strong visual interest and the most complex and attractive of all the character areas.
- More interpretation of the green space close to St Mary's Church could increase understanding and enjoyment of the area.

Visual Detractors

- Traffic on Buckingham Road and eastern part of Church Green Road.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Opportunity to enhance enjoyment of the area by producing guided walk leaflet interpreting history and identifying notable street trees.
- Need to improve pedestrian and cycling routes and signposting.
- Assess opportunities for additional/replacement street tree planting particularly on western end of Church Green Road.
- Entrances and access routes to Buckingham Road park could be made more welcoming.
- Entrance to pedestrian access route to Wilton Road could be enhanced.

Key













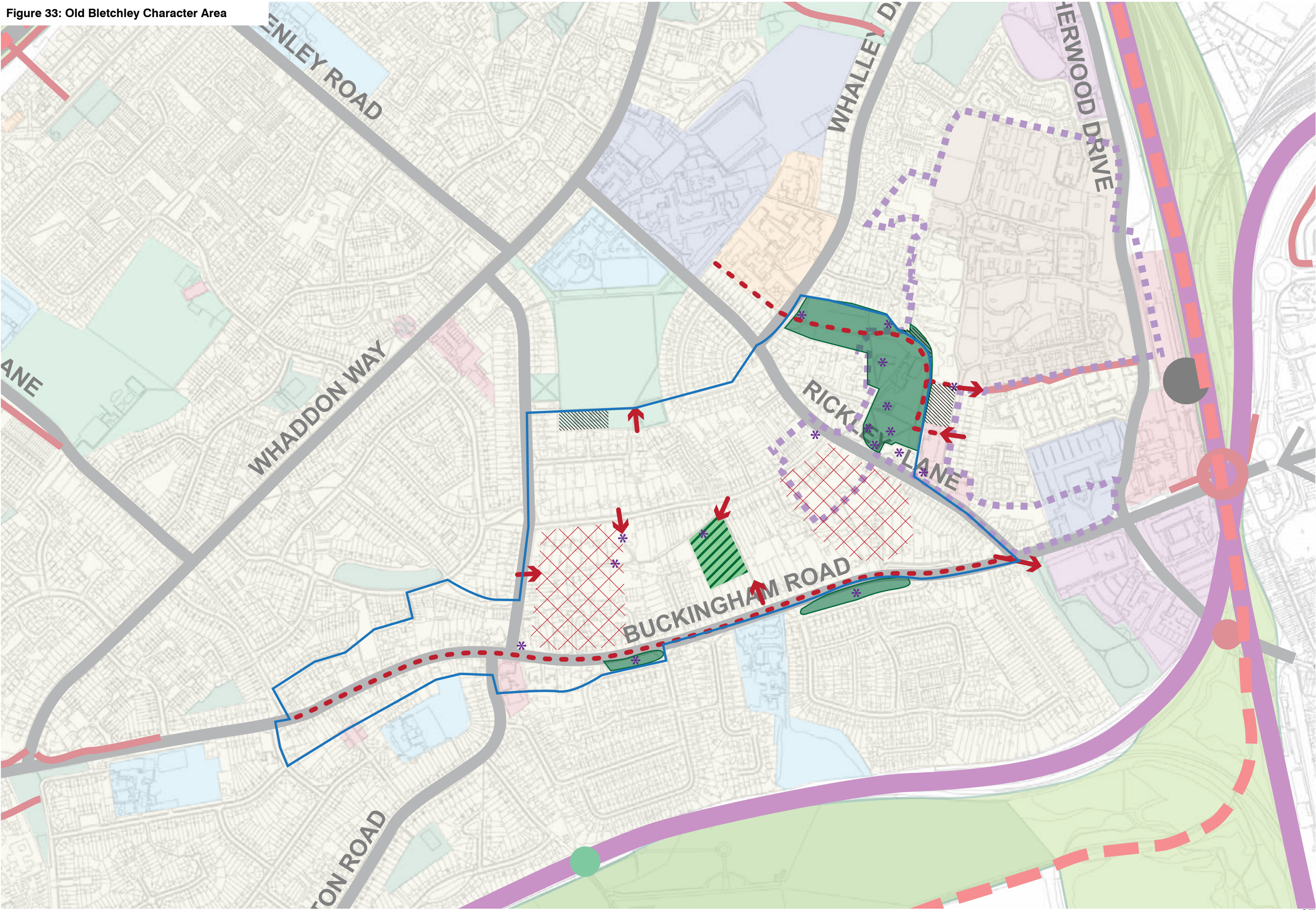
-  Parish Boundary
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-  Significant Local Feature
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Community Benifit
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Habitat Diversty
-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

Figure 33: Old Bletchley Character Area



13 - Racecourses

The name of this area reflects the fact that roads in this area are named after racecourses.

Location and Landform

Racecourses forms the south-western corner of West Bletchley on ground sloping down from Buckingham road towards the east-west railway line.

History

This was one of the last character area to be developed from the 1980s onwards. Prior to being developed as a residential area it was agricultural land.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

It is a predominantly residential area with a small local centre and community building adjacent to Buckingham Road Photo 10 and on the southern edge one of the 5 main local parks in West Bletchley. Which includes allotments and a good diversity of planting, a pond and sports pitches and play facilities.

Layout

The majority of traffic accesses this area from Buckingham Road with Chepstow Drive connecting to St John's Road and Saints Character Area in the south-east corner. The layout of the area is more typical of the layout found throughout Milton Keynes during this period. It consists of strongly curving spine roads providing access to numerous cul-de-sacs. The lack of through roads, curving nature of the primary roads with integral speed humps have created a quiet residential area free of through traffic.

Built Form

The housing is predominantly detached and semi-detached 2 storey housing with front gardens and integrated garages and hard standing. There are also a few bungalows. The front gardens are generally small but are generally well planted with small trees and large shrubs.

Visual Character of the Streetscape

Attractive streetscape with curvaceous roads on inclines, good verges and well planted front gardens. Parking is generally off road and area is pleasant to walk through. The character of the area is strongly reliant on the quality of front gardens where gardens have been lost to create additional parking areas it has a detrimental impact on the streetscape.

Character of Open Space

There are several small incidental areas of green spaces which have no facilities but enhance the visual character of the area (Photos 6 and 9). Their location on the main access roads makes them important to the visual character of the area, particularly as Chepstow Park is hidden from view on the southern extremity of the area.

On the southern edge, Chepstow Park provides one of the largest parks in West Bletchley. It runs adjacent to the railway line and has a good range of facilities within a strong planting layout which creates areas of different character and a more interesting park experience than found in other parks in West Bletchley. The park includes allotments, several children's play areas aimed at different age groups, football pitches and shelters (Photos 2,3,4 and 5). There is also a large pond with natural edge planting and recently established wildflower meadow planting.

The variety of paths around the park make it accessible and an interesting place, with people enjoying nature throughout the year.

Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

This area benefits from Redways connecting across the area and through the local park. Walking and cycling routes within the area are generally good because of these routes and the lack of through-traffic.

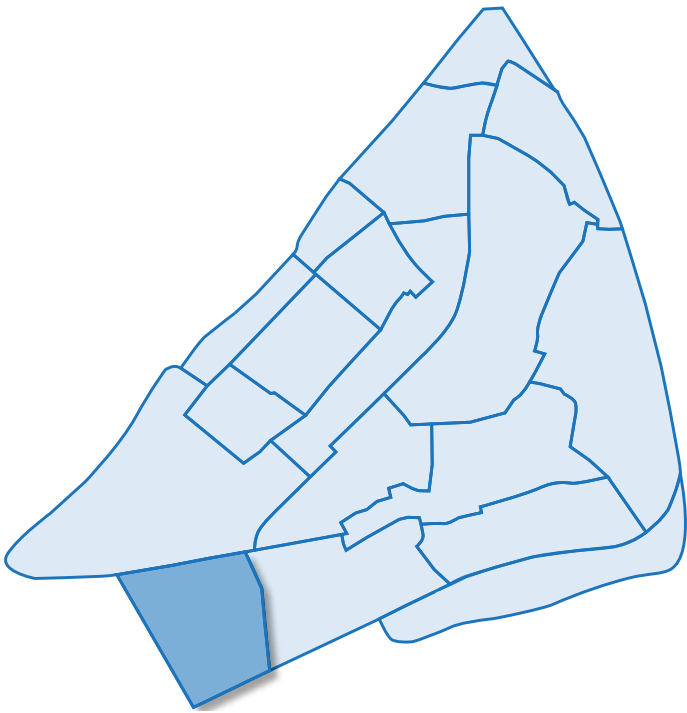
There is no access out of the area to the south or west. Access beyond the area to the north is facilitated by the underpass under Buckingham Road. To the east two Redway routes provide important access to the local primary school in Saints and to the south to Newton Road and via this access to the wider countryside. Road improvements might make it easier for families to use this route for cycling.

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Diversity

The railway line running along the southern boundary of the area is identified as a wildlife corridor. The park has strong planting of small copses that help extend this wildlife corridor into the residential area.

The large pond with natural edges and planting is a strong feature of the park. This was the only pond the assessment found in West Bletchley (the only other pond found in the map search being within the Windmill Hill golf course but not generally accessible). It adds to the wildlife diversity of the area and helps strengthen the adjacent wildlife corridor.

In the rest of the area, most of the open spaces are associated with private gardens. There is an opportunity to look at the management of the more incidental open spaces to identify if opportunities exist to vary management practices or new planting that might benefit habitat diversity.



13 Racecourses



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Quiet residential area.
- No access out on two sides.
- Generally good streetscape character with parking largely off road.
- Redways create good pedestrian and cycle routes through the area and connect out to the east and north.
- Good local park but incidental green space could be enhanced.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- Good sized pond in Chepstow Park only open water seen in a park during the survey work.
- Area has more strong structure planting with native species than other character areas with Chepstow Park being particularly good.

Visual Detractors

- Hard surfacing of front gardens.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Opportunity to increase biodiversity and habitats with more areas wildflower meadows in areas of open space and parks.
- Opportunity to promote Chepstow Park to the whole parish.
- Opportunity to create more surfaced paths through Chepstow Park to enhance access for all.
- Opportunities to make entrances to parks more welcoming with more information about routes and circular walks.
- Green space could accommodate recreational areas.
- Opportunity to provide information about value of front gardens to streetscape, to reduce flooding and enhance habitat diversity.
- Opportunity to increase provision of benches to enhance enjoyment and cater for a wider range of users.

Key













-  Parish Boundary
-  Local Park
-  West Bletchley Key Local Park
-  Green Space Important to Local Character
-  Significant Local Feature
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Community Benifit
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Habitat Diversty
-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

Figure 34: Racecourses Character Area



14 - Saints

This name derives from the original Bletchley Urban District Council name for the area. Many of the roads are named after Christian Saints.

Location and Landform

Land sloping gently south between Buckingham Road and the East-West Rail line on embankment.

History

This area dates from the 1950s and 1960s and was developed prior to the New Town Plan in 1970.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

This area is predominantly housing with two primary schools a small local centre and two small parks. Disconnected from the rest of the area to the south of the railway is some agricultural land and a small park with football pitch.

Layout

The layout is typical of the time this area was developed and consists of long gently curving roads with short interconnecting sections and a few cul-de-sacs. Newton Road (Photo 9) takes traffic through the area and extends south under the railway line to surrounding countryside.

The local centre and primary school are towards the centre of the area and away from through-traffic and accessed by minor residential roads and connecting footpaths (Photo 2). They have a distinct character and evoke ideas of Garden City style planning.

Building Type

The visual character of this area benefits from roads that have wide verges (Photos 4 and 5).. Street trees are generally small and a high proportion are assessed to be mature or over mature and therefore may have a limited life remaining.

The houses are wide fronted and generally accommodate additional parking whilst still retaining their front gardens. Most of the parking at the time of the assessment was off-road and through-traffic does not appear to be an issue, allowing a calm and tranquil character for most of the area. Newton Road is notably busier and to some extent divides the areas in two. Ascot rails on verges close to the local centre and school suggests that parking on verges has been an issue in this area in the past (Photo 3).

Visual Character of the Streetscape

The visual character of this area benefits from roads that have wide verges (Photos 4 and 5).. Street trees are generally small and a high proportion are assessed to be mature or over mature and therefore may have a limited life remaining.

The houses are wide fronted and generally accommodate additional parking whilst still retaining their front gardens. Most of the parking at the time of the assessment was off-road and through-traffic does not appear to be an issue, allowing a calm and tranquil character for most of the area. Newton Road is notably busier and to some extent divides the areas in two. Ascot rails on verges close to the local centre and school suggests that parking on verges has been an issue in this area in the past (Photo 3).

Character of Open Spaces

Wide verges and low density housing give a feeling of space to the area. Most of this is managed as mown grass with some trees. Where residents have taken on the management of some of the incidental open space, it has enhanced the streetscape (Photo 5).

The area has two small parks to the north of the railway line and less good access to park space to the south of the railway and Chepstow Park. The first park in the south is a triangle of land hidden behind housing. It has two narrow entrance pathways from adjacent streets but has no path around it or any planting. Although, it does contain a small play area. The boundaries of the park are made up of the fencing at the bottom of the gardens of properties boarding the park (Photo 6 and 7). This means that the visual character of the park is strongly influenced by the condition of these fences.

The second park is on the northern edge of the area adjacent to Buckingham Road (Photo 10). This also has a play area and good surrounding trees creating an attractive space. The boundary to Buckingham Road (Photo 11). suggests a strong pedestrian desire line to use the park for access from the north helped by the pedestrian island encouraging the road to be crossed at this point. An additional footpath link through the park from this point would help pedestrian movement away from main roads.

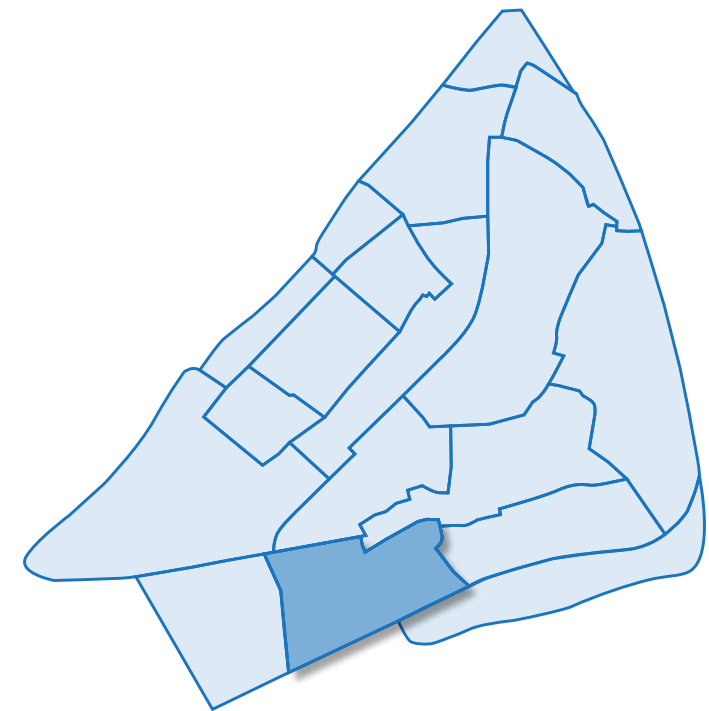
Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

This area is not connected to the planned Redway system. Buckingham Road to the north of the area is a main road link to Bletchley town centre and the station. It has sections of Redway to the west and east. Continuing the Redway along the whole of Buckingham Road would significantly enhance cycling links from this area.

Pedestrian links through the area are generally along quiet residential roads. However, Newton road and Buckingham Road are busy with traffic and crossings could be improved.. Access to Chepstow Park is an important link for residents of this area.

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Diversity

This character area includes the railway line and an area of open ground to the south.



14 Saints



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Mainly quiet residential area with mainly interconnecting roads rather than cul-de-sacs, some through traffic.
- Predominantly wide fronted semi-detached properties with front gardens retained.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- Strongly representative of an early 1950s phase of town planning and reflects elements of Garden City style planning. It has remained largely intact with little later 20th century development and the wide fronted properties manage to accommodate the escalation in car ownership and size of vehicles well.
- The local centre and St. Thomas Aquinas school are very much part of the key layout and designed to be walked to rather than driven.

Visual Detractors

- Verges close to school and local centre under parking pressure.
- Garage courts areas are poorly maintained in places.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Enhance areas where the landscape infrastructure is under greatest pressure.
- Opportunity to improve pedestrian access routes to local centre and make more welcoming.
- Redevelopment of some garage courts.
- Opportunity to improve local parks and enhance entrances from adjacent streets.
- Look at opportunities to enhance the small areas of incidental open space with benches and planting.
- Provide information about the value of retaining planting in front gardens.
- Prioritising enhance tree planting along Newton Road to enhance character of the area..
- Investigate opportunities to enhance recreational access to the area south of the railway.
- Opportunity for habitat enhancement projects south of the railway.

Key













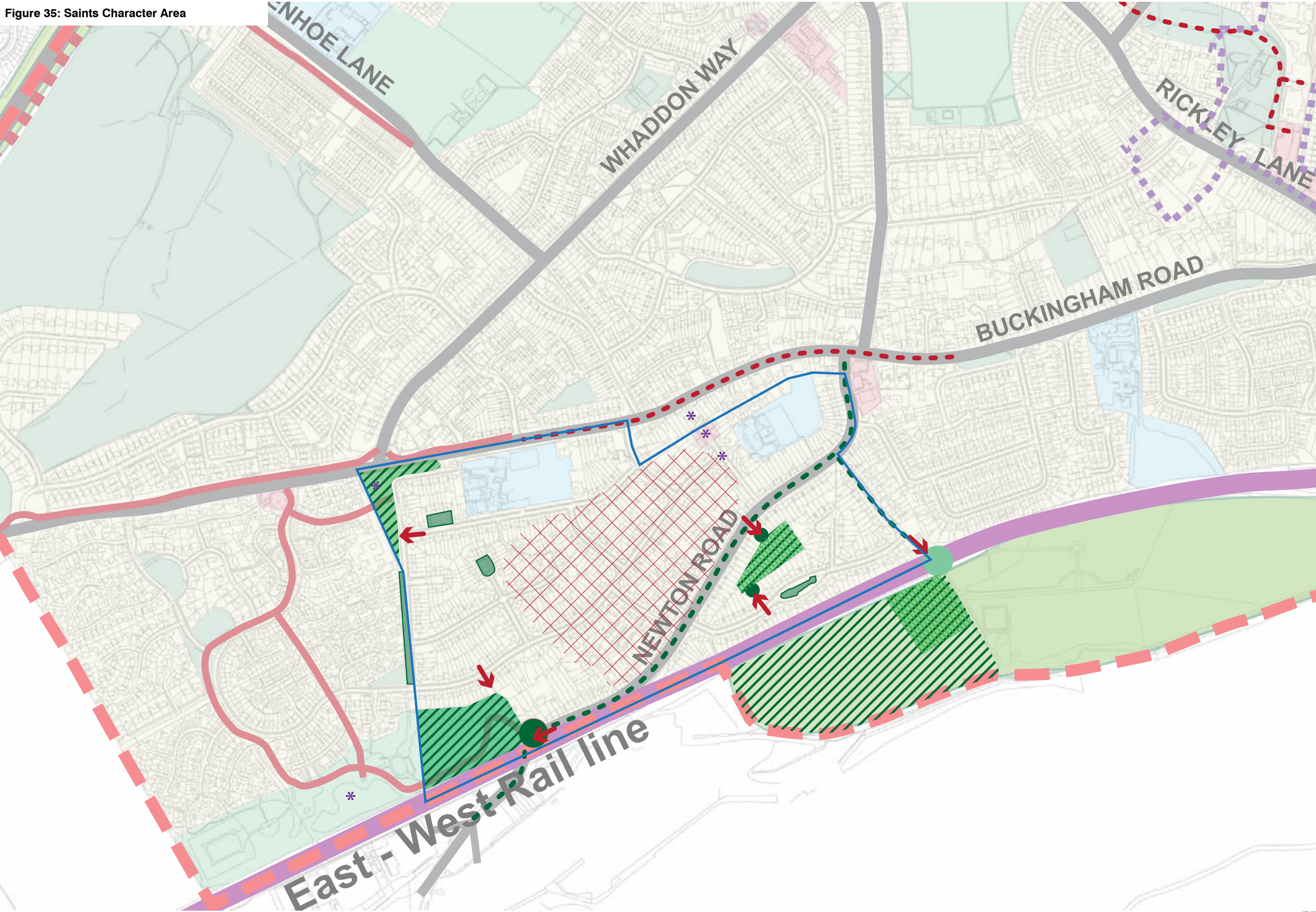
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-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Habitat Diversty
-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

Figure 35: Saints Character Area



15 - Poets

This primarily residential area was given the name when it was planned as part of the post-war Bletchley UDC’s planned expansion.

Location and Landform

This character area forms the south-eastern corner of West Bletchley. It is bounded to the south by the East West rail line and to the north by Buckingham Road, which provides direct access to Central Bletchley facilities. The ground slopes to the south and east towards the railway line. There is a more distinct fall to the ground in this area than in most of the parish.

History

Cottingham Grove on the eastern edge was one of the first new areas of expansion in the 1930s (Photo 6). The rest of the area dates primarily from the early post war expansion. Holne Chase School appears to occupy the historic site of Holne Chase house which in 1910 had a 9 hole golf course developed in its grounds.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

The area is predominantly housing with a school and local shops (Tesco Express and Co-op) at the corner of Newton Road.

Layout

The area is divided in two by Holne Chase School and grounds, which is accessed from Buckingham Road. The road network is formed by short stretches of roads with frequent turns and junctions. Mostly a dense network of interconnecting roads with a few cul-de-sacs. The area does not suffer from through-traffic, but has more street parking than most of the parish.

Building Type

The housing varies in age primarily from the mid to late 20th Century. With a predominance of detached and semi-detached housing estimated to be from around the 1950 and 1960s with narrow fronts and limited ability to accommodate car parking.

Cottingham Grove on the eastern edge is notable for earlier 1930s semi-detached housing with hipped (Photos 5 and 6) some of which retain original ‘Crittall’ style windows and unaltered front gardens.

Visual Character of the Streetscape

The roads, verges and footpaths are fairly narrow through parts of this area and many of the front gardens have been hard surfaced to accommodate additional parking. Where gardens retain large shrubs and small trees it adds considerably to the streetscape. The verges are often parked on which means cars can dominate the streetscape in places. The amount of street trees varies significantly where there are street trees they enhance the visual character (Photo 9). They also help reduce the impact of the large vehicle movements on the elevated ground of the landfill site immediately to the south of the railway (Photo 10).

Character of Open Spaces

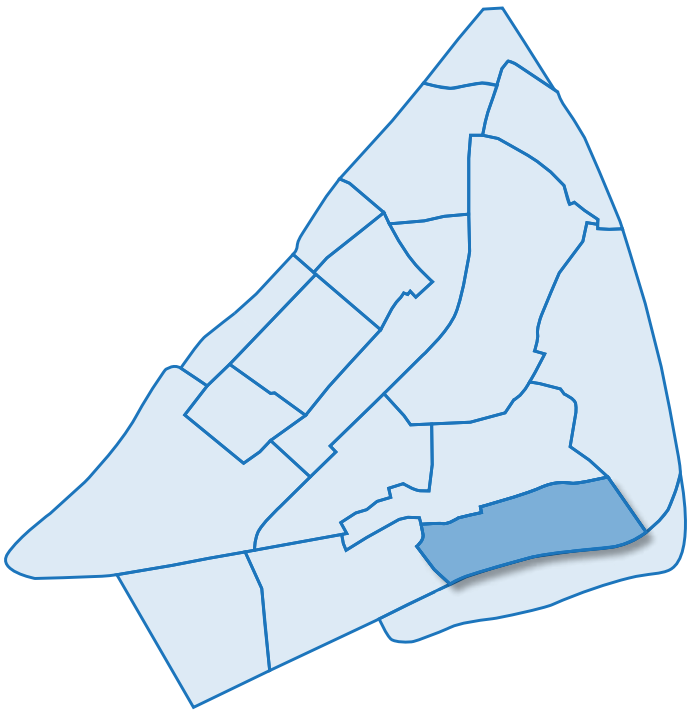
There are no parks or areas of open space of any size within this area. There are small areas of incidental space largely adjacent to end and houses at road junctions. These areas are generally laid to grass with no tree planting. The exception to this is the large strip of open space with trees on the northern edge adjacent to Buckingham Road. This is important for visual character of street but is not sufficiently large enough or away from roads to provide useable play space.

Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

This area is contained by the railway to the south with no pedestrian or cycling routes through. It is contained by housing on its eastern and western edges with only road access through at Shelley Drive in the west. Most pedestrian and cycling access therefore focuses on Buckingham Road to the north. This is a busy road to cross and has no cycle routes. It is only a short walk or cycle to the east from this area to access facilities of central Bletchley.

Wildlife corridors and Habitat Diversity

A wildlife corridor runs along the railway line adjacent to the areas southern boundary. The area has no public open space and the only area that has structure planting is within Holne Chase school grounds.



15 Holne Chase



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- A quiet residential area on sloping ground south of Buckingham Road.
- There is no access in or out of the area to the east or south.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- 1930s housing on Cottingham Grove has a distinctive character.

Visual Detractors

- Verges are often parked on.
- Views out to the south are dominated by elevated land fill site.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Within the residential area there is a lack of open space but immediately to the south of the railway line there is extensive open space.
- Investigate opportunities for improved pedestrian and cycle links; to access open spaces to the south of the railway line, and along Buckingham Road.
- Understand restoration proposals for landfill site and potential for community access and engagement.

Key













-  Parish Boundary
-  Local Park
-  West Bletchley Key Local Park
-  Green Space Important to Local Character
-  Significant Local Feature
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Community Benifit
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Habitat Diversty
-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

Figure 36: Poets Character Area



16 - Brickworks

Location and Landform

This area is on the southern edge of the parish and separated from the rest of the parish by the east-west rail line which is on embankment. It is gently sloping land with a small reservoir on the eastern edge at the junction with the north-south rail line. This area is known as “Newfoundout”. The southern and western boundaries of the parish were adjacent to large-scale brickworks. The brickworks have now closed. The brick pits to the south and west have been used as a landfill site and are currently being restored. Photo 2 shows the elevated landfill restoration level on the horizon. The former brick pits adjacent to the south-eastern edge have been retained as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) named Blue Lagoon.

History

Prior to the expansion of West Bletchley this area was agricultural land. It became divided from the rest of the parish when the east-west rail line was constructed on embankment. Although surrounded by large scale brickworks and brick pits, only a small part of the area was actually within the brickworks. The 1950s OS shows it was always intended as an area to provide recreational space for the parish, a sports ground, bowling green and pavilion had already been established by that time.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

This area includes a mix of agricultural, recreational land, allotments and a cemetery. The recreational land is primarily laid out to football pitches but also includes a bowling green. The reservoir at “Newfoundout” is fenced off from public access and used for fishing (Photo 8). The edge of a LNR on land, which was part of a brickworks, extends into the south-eastern edge of the area (Photo 10).

Layout

The public facilities are located close to the access road from Newton Road via a tunnel under the railway embankment (Photo 1). These include the football pitches (Photo 2), allotments (Photo 3), sports club (Photo 4), and newly established cemetery (Photo 11) to the east and west of these facilities is land retained in agricultural use (Photo 12). On the far eastern edge, Water Easton Road gives footpath access to a path adjacent to Newfoundout area (photos 7 and 9).

Building Type

The only buildings are small utilitarian buildings associated with the sports club and crematorium.

Visual Character of the Streetscape

The only vehicular access on the western side to the area by vehicle is via the lane from Poets under the railway. This is a very narrow pinch point access, which appears to be on the alignment of an earlier farm track. To the south of the railway it is bounded by hedgerows which helps strengthen the countryside character. Where there is no boundary hedge, adjacent to the allotments, the character is poorer.

Water Eaton Road (Photo 7) where it crosses the eastern edge of the area has a character dominated by traffic and the looming railway embankments. It has narrow footpaths and the pinch point access through the railway tunnel is controlled by traffic lights.

Character of Open Spaces

The location and mix of open space land uses create a more rural character and provide more expansive views over open landscapes than found in the rest of the parish. Views are however, contained by the elevated landfill site and the railway lines on embankment. The boundaries of the area are associated with strong lines of trees and shrubs, which enhance its character significantly. The open agricultural land and remnant hedgerow pattern strengthen the rural edge character.

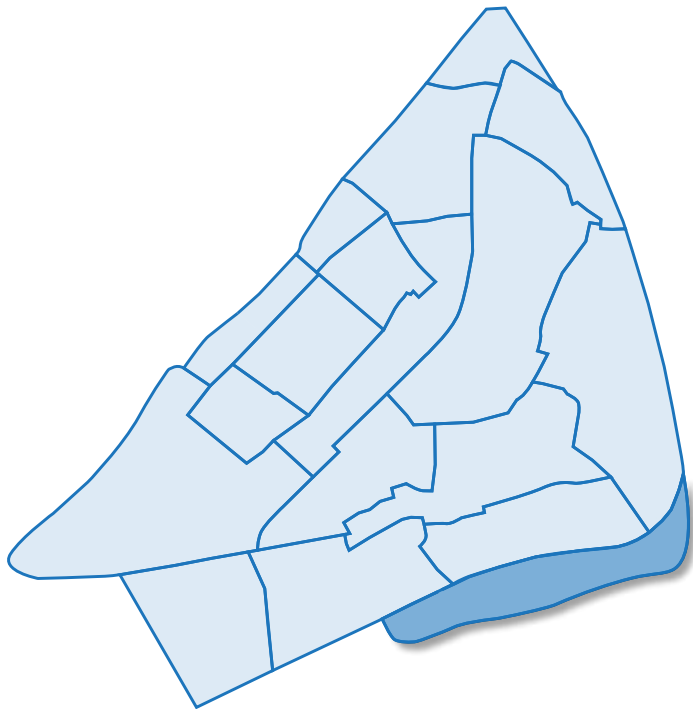
On the western side the public open space has a very quiet, forgotten and slightly neglected character most of the time. Although when the football pitches are fully in use the area becomes busy and the pinch point access causes congestion. The sports club notices limit access to part of the recreational area. The allotments are only open to allotment users so people looking for general recreation space are limited to walking around the field with two football pitches or heading off on the longer route towards Blue Lagoon LNR. There is now signage or interpretation encouraging people to explore this route.

The eastern open space is accessed by an unattractive footpath from Water Eaton Road, which is contained by high chain-link fencing (photo 9). This along with the containment of the adjacent railway lines on embankment creates a hemmed in, and slightly intimidating character. Beyond “Newfoundout” the path connects to the rough grassland and scrub natural regeneration on the edge of the “Blue Lagoon” LNR former brick pits (Photo 10). This wilder character is distinctly different, more varied and rich in biodiversity than anywhere else in the parish.

Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

There are no designated cycle routes to, or through, this area.

Pedestrian access is officially limited to a couple of footpaths and the Local Nature Reserve. Field marking suggests, that there is considerable demand for wider pedestrian access. The footpath access route from Whitely Crescent on the western edge is currently not signed and overgrown vegetation makes it difficult to use (Photo 6).



16 Brickworks

Wildlife corridors and Habitat Diversity

This is the richest character area for semi-natural habitats and habitat diversity in the parish. The eastern area of “Newfoundout” and the Local Nature Reserve are of particularly rich habitat diversity. MK Council own and manage the LNR and MK Natural History Society provide information about the reserve and an online map and information for a self-guided walk. The site is particularly rich in Damselflies, Dragonflies and Butterflies. The “Newfoundout” reservoir is a valuable water feature in a parish with so little open water. The strong vegetation along the railway line and the boundary to the adjacent landfill site to the south provide good connections as wildlife corridors.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Largely undeveloped area separated from the rest of the parish by the east west rail line on a high embankment and then viaduct.
- Open space includes agriculture, public facilities and semi-natural habitats on former brick workings.
- Poor accessibility by vehicle, bike and foot.
- Larger areas of semi-natural habitats than anywhere else in the parish.
- Only agricultural land in the parish.
- Visually intrusive fencing.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- Newfoundout Reservoir.
- Local Nature Reserve.
- Large areas of scrub and semi-natural vegetation.
- Open views.
- Remnants of hedgerows and agricultural field pattern.

Visual Detractors

- Landfill restoration works.
- Chain-link fencing and railway palisade fencing.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Opportunity to improve access through the area, to create a linear park linking different parts of the parish and provide new recreational opportunities.
- Opportunities to further strengthen and extend wildlife corridors and enhance habitat diversity.
- Opportunities to encourage access to open countryside and local nature reserve with interpretation and signage.
- Opportunities to open up western access point from near Newton Road.
- Opportunities to establish cycle access to and through the area.

Key













-  Parish Boundary
-  Local Park
-  West Bletchley Key Local Park
-  Green Space Important to Local Character
-  Significant Local Feature
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Community Benifit
-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Habitat Diversty
-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

Figure 37: Brickworks Character Area



17 - Watling Street

Location and Landform

A small character area on either side Watling Street at the north-eastern tip of the parish. The landform slopes generally from north to south.

History

Watling Street is an ancient trackway, which was developed and paved by the Romans. This section remained a strategically important national route until the A5 was improved to its current alignment, slightly to the east, in the later part of the 20th century.

Character of Built Form

Land Use

The land use in this area is predominantly employment including a specialist building related retail park Bletchley Trade Park in purpose built units (Photo 3). Road and rail links and their associated embankments verges and path requirements are also a significant land use in the area (Photo 8).

Layout

This area is bounded by road and rail lines and Watling Street is a key access route and MK grid road running north-south through the centre of the area. Between Watling Street and the new A5, ‘Bletchley Trade Park’ is an area of retail units and associated parking and service area. To the west of Watling Street Whaddon Way provides a gateway entrance into West Bletchley. An employment area occupies the land at the corner site between Watling Street and H8 Standing Way (Photo 6). Throughout the area infrastructure routes and land uses are enhanced by boundary landscape structure planting.

Building Type

The retail and large-scale employment buildings in this area were all constructed in the later part of the 20th Century. They are simple utilitarian buildings (Photos 7 and 4). At Bletchley Trade Park, the signage on the buildings is more visually dominant than the buildings themselves.

Visual Character of the Streetscape

The Watling Street is a very busy route with fast moving traffic creating a poor environment for pedestrians. Whaddon Way (Photo 5) and Denbigh Hall Drive are less busy with traffic and have good footpaths set back from the road edge. Tree and shrub planting enhances all the streetscapes.

Character of Open Spaces

The open space within this area is very important for providing the setting for buildings and infrastructure routes and helps screen the visual impact of large buildings, traffic and parking from the wider environment. The area around the rail line is fenced with unattractive palisade fencing (Photo 10) and unmanaged semi-natural planting.

There is no recreational open space.

Pedestrian and Cycling Routes

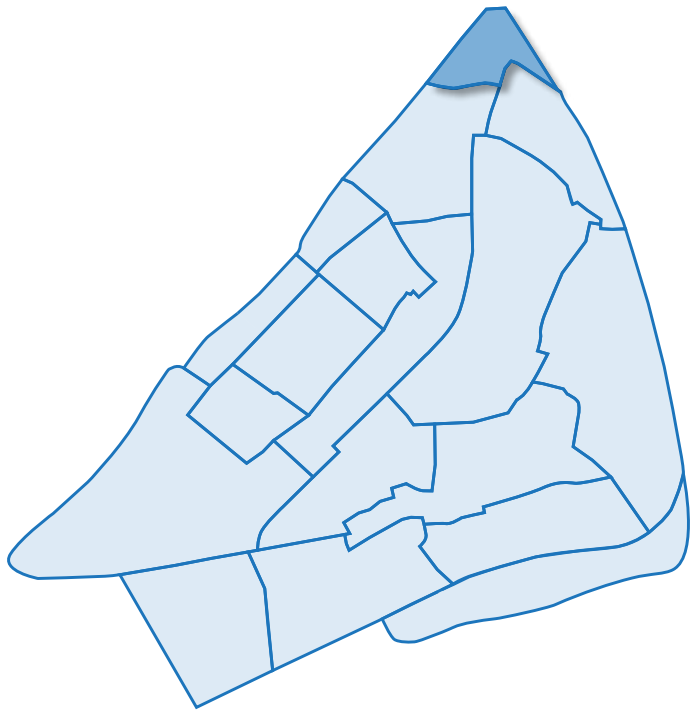
There is a notable difference in the provision for cyclists and pedestrians on either side of Watling Street. To the east of Watling Street the Redway access provides good safe access under or over main roads and rail lines to enable pedestrians and cyclists to cross the area in a safe traffic free environment (Photo 2). To the west of Watling Street there is no segregated cycling provision. There are however, footpaths adjacent to the roads.

The main issue for pedestrians and cyclists in this area however, is crossing Watling Street itself. There is a central reservation but no traffic control measures to allow pedestrians and cyclists to cross. There are Redway routes on the north-east side and good access from here to the rest of Milton Keynes and MK1 (Photo 11) which is less than 1km away. Without a crossing, Watling Street remains a significant barrier to movement out from the residential area. This is the same issue as from Cheney’s Walk to the south.

The path along the western edge of Watling Street is immediately adjacent to the moving traffic and pended in by overhanging vegetation making it an unattractive route, which feels unsafe (Photo 12). As the path leaves the parish where it goes under the railway bridge, it is a particularly poor narrow path right next to heavy traffic (Photo 1).

Wildlife corridors and Habitat Diversity

The strong lines of tree and shrub planting adjacent to the infrastructure routes also provide valuable habitats and wildlife corridors through the area.



17 Watling Street



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

Key Characteristics

- Watling Street a busy route through the area.
- Poor access across Watling Street for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Poor access along western side of Watling Street for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Large units for employment and retail in purpose designed settings.
- Strong lines of tree and shrub vegetation.

Features of Local Significance and Distinctiveness

- Strong tree and shrub planting provides good setting to Denbigh Hall.
- Watling Street ancient route and Roman Road.

Visual Detractors

- Heavy traffic on Watling Street.
- Signage dominates Bletchley Trade Park.
- Palisade fencing and rough unmanaged ground adjacent to railway.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Poor unsafe provision for pedestrians and cyclist from West Bletchley to cross Watling Street and access Redway network and MK1.

Key













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-  Greenspace with Potential to Enhance Habitat Diversty
-  Area with Poorer Access to Good Park
-  Route to Local Park
-  Pedestrian and Cycling Links Needed
-  Opportunty for Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Link
-  Visual Detractor

Figure 38: Watling Street Character Area



Section 05 Review

5.1 Introduction

The Assessment has identified that there are areas within the parish with ‘strategic’ (or wider than the parish) significance and in the case of Bletchley Park and Station, of national significance. This review identifies key issues and opportunities associated with the three strategic areas as priority areas within the parish. It then looks at issues and opportunities that occur throughout the parish.

5.2 Three Strategic Priority Areas

The Character Assessment identifies that the structure and land uses within the parish means there are three key strategic areas that have a significance to the whole parish and to the rest of Milton Keynes.

The three strategic priority areas are:

- 1. Central Area;
- 2. Bletchley Park and Station; and
- 3. Old Bletchley

Improvements in these areas will provide parish wide benefit and help enhance the wider understanding and perception of West Bletchley as a place.

Central Area

The Central Area encompasses a wide range of facilities including two local shopping centres, two of the five key parks in the parish, the secondary school, hospital and parish council offices. It is therefore the area that most people in the parish will visit and be familiar with and identify with as influencing their perception of the area.

The character of this area therefore has a much greater impact on the perception of the parish as a whole than any other area. Therefore prioritising and addressing the issues and opportunities identified in this area will achieve the most impact in enhancing the character of the parish as a whole. In particular:

Suggestions:

- Prioritise the enhancement of the two local centres and the entrances, bin store and parking areas to Melrose Tower Block.
- Enhance the character of the whole central area with features that add to the local identity such as sculpture, more ornamental planting and places to sit, to enhance the sense of place, so that people can enjoy visiting and stay longer in this area.
- Prioritise improving park facilities in this area and facilitate and encourage access on foot and on bike from other areas, particularly neighbouring areas with a high proportion of flats without access to gardens.

Bletchley Park and Station Area

The train station is how many visitors arrive and leave West Bletchley and Milton Keynes. The poor quality of the building and forecourt area have an impact on people’s perception of the parish as a whole. The station and station environment gives a very poor impression and is well overdue a complete overall/redevelopment.

Suggestions:

- Ensure proposed rail improvements include improvements to the built character of the station and promote this to include interpretation of the important relationship to Bletchley Park.
- Improve pedestrian and cycling links through the parish to the station and Bletchley town centre.
- Investigate opportunities to provide interpretation of Bletchley Park and increase its visibility beyond its boundaries for wider public understanding and enjoyment.

Old Bletchley

The historic core of the area is Old Bletchley, with historic buildings and the settlement pattern are of wider than local interest and provide an experience that is much richer and more diverse compared with the remainder of the area. This special character should be conserved and promoted, and the opportunities explored to enhance the area and promote the enjoyment of the area more widely.

Suggestions:

- Establish a way-marked walking route around the area to promote a better understanding of its history and features.
- Provide a leaflet to interpret the history of the area and the key historic features seen on the walk.

5.4 Parish-Wide Issues and Opportunities

The Character Assessment has identified that there are a number of issues and opportunities throughout the parish that are important to maintaining and developing its character, and factors that detract from its character, that should be addressed, if the character is not to be eroded.

We identify these key issues and opportunities below.

The Importance of Street Trees

Throughout the parish, street trees are one significant factor that consistently provides the greatest enhancement to the built environment. In some prominent locations and in small areas of green space, large trees have been conserved which predate the expansion of West Bletchley. These are important features of the streetscape and of local significance which need to be identified individually and preserved. Many will not individually merit Tree Preservation Orders but are nonetheless, important to the overall character of the area, and any loss should be resisted, and where loss cannot be avoided, they should be replaced with trees of stature.

Street trees are often difficult to establish and once established can struggle to survive in difficult conditions with poor compacted soils, limited access to water and air pollution. This can make them all the more susceptible to disease. Different trees also have different life expectancies and some trees such as thorns, cherries and birch are relatively short-lived. Street trees tend to disappear from our streets gradually with the replacement of each one not being considered a priority, but ultimately the character of the whole area is degraded by their loss.

Suggestions:

- Prepare a Green Infrastructure audit and strategy that can properly assess the significance and potential of street trees and other significant trees, throughout the area.
- Identify priority areas within each character area for street tree replanting. Normally in the first instance, targeted at the primary road routes.
- Assess existing tree condition and age structure to determine where significant tree loss is going to change character in near future. Target these areas for replanting programme.
- Identify important veteran trees within each area.
- Consider opportunities to enhance understanding, enjoyment and interpretation of these trees.

Hidden Parks and the Importance of Incidental Green Space

In West Bletchley, the larger parks and open spaces are often hidden behind residential properties and are not visible from the main street network, and therefore contribute less to the visual character of the area than they might. They do benefit the park users, as they are away from the traffic and in more tranquil locations and provide important recreational opportunities. In some instances, the extent to which the park is hidden makes it also feel, however, rather unwelcoming and sometimes slightly intimidating.

Suggestions:

- Review all park entrances and assess what could be done to make them more welcoming including signing and ornamental marker planting at entrances.
- Resist development proposals, which further cut parks off from visible street frontages.
- Consider developing a walking route connecting the 5 main local parks and part of the Golf Course perimeter route to increase local knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of West Bletchley’s Parks.
- Consider varying the management regimes on smaller parks and open spaces to introduce more biodiverse planting, such as trees, shrubs and wildflower grasses, as well as benches to sit and enjoy the open spaces.

Front Gardens and Parking

A large proportion of the housing in West Bletchley is made up of two-storey houses with front gardens of various sizes. Where these gardens are maintained with shrubs and small trees they make a considerable contribution to the character of the streetscape and the biodiversity of the area. The assessment has shown that the use of garages for other purposes and the increase in car ownership and size, and the desire for off-street parking has led to many front gardens becoming paved over for vehicle parking.

This irrevocably urbanises the streetscape and reduces the colour, texture and visual interest brought by the lost planting. The assessment also suggests that there was a significant difference to the visual impact of the hard surfacing depending on the materials used and whether some areas of planting were retained or not.

Suggestions:

- Provide links to information to support good design standards for front gardens. e.g RHS Gardening Matters Front Garden Guide: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/communities/pdf/Greener-Streets/rhs-frontgarden-guide.pdf>
- Consider providing a local design guidance leaflet with more information about suitable permeable surfacing guidelines. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7728/pavingfrontgardens.pdf
- Initiate an annual competition for the best front garden – with and without parking.

Garage Courts

Issues associated with garage courts are already well understood in the parish. The Character Assessment revealed that the size and location of the garage courts was a significant contributor to their impact on the character of an area.

Small areas of garaging overlooked by neighbouring properties are often better maintained and in use with little negative visual impact associated with them. Whereas large garage courts hidden behind housing were often in a very poor condition with fly tipping, broken doors and an intimidating character. Their visual impact on the wider area was generally limited by their location away from the main thorough fares, but when seen had the most significant negative visual impact on the character of any element seen in the assessment.

Suggestions:

- Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the future of the garage courts and prioritise redevelopment where no viable future exists.
- Continue to encourage redevelopment of larger garage courts for brownfield housing sites.
- Continue to encourage maintenance of better used garage courts to ensure they do not deteriorate.

Public Realm and Parking

In all the older areas across the parish the condition of many of the features of public realm were found to be in poor condition. This included most notably:

- unreadable road name plates;
- broken and uneven paving; and
- benches which had been lost and not replaced.

In many areas, car ownership today is far greater than the areas were designed to accommodate. This has put pressure on the public realm as well as the use of front gardens. The public realm has suffered, with cars being parked on verges and footpaths, which cause physical deterioration of the features and no doubt, frustrates residents. West Bletchley is fortunate that in many areas the generous open space around housing means that fairly simple design solutions can address the issue.

It is now 50-years or more since many areas were built. Some areas now require a more comprehensive refurbishment and refresh.

Suggestions:

- Encourage a general facelift programme of public realm renewal in residential areas developed in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s to restore the public realm and address parking issues.
- Explore if road signs and other important signs and way marks can be replaced as a first step in this enhancement process.
- Identify key areas (such as in Calder Vale) where small parking court areas can be redesigned and the public realm restored to allow them to accommodate more cars.

Management and Maintenance

West Bletchley includes many areas where incidental open space is a key component of the character. The quality of the management and maintenance of these spaces has a significant impact on the overall character of the area. In general, the grass is kept well-mown and trees are well maintained.

The survey suggests it is the shrub beds and the boundaries between the open public space and adjacent private space that are the hardest to maintain to a high standard.

Where residents have taken on board the planting and management of these areas, it results in a significant improvement to their character.

Suggestions:

- Promote increased input from local residents to support the management of incidental open space.
- Investigate and pilot projects to support this, perhaps by helping with planting suggestions or supply and helping set up local residents gardening groups for each area.

Children’s Play Provision

West Bletchley has a number of children’s play areas with a variety of play equipment, most of which is metal. Access to these areas is variable across the parish, with some areas being some distance from a park with play equipment. Access to open areas of green space for informal games and activities such as kite flying and ball games was also variable. A feature of the parish is that many areas have lots of small incidental open space but few areas large enough to run about and play more boisterous games.

The type of play space most notably lacking was that within more natural areas such as woodlands, natural grasslands, streams or small watercourses and such like, where children can play in natural surroundings

Suggestions:

As part of the proposed Green Infrastructure Strategy:

- Review the current park provision and facilities including provision of areas for play within more natural environments.
- Review park facilities in relation to location within the parish. Initial assessment of distribution of flats and existing parks suggests that improvements for play facilities in the central area should be a priority.
- Consider providing a West Bletchley Parks Plan leaflet(s) which identifies the parks in the parish, the facilities they have and shows good routes to them from areas with poorer access to parks.

Improving Habitat Diversity

The Character Assessment has highlighted that West Bletchley has no wildlife corridors across it and fewer areas of semi-natural habitat than found elsewhere in Milton Keynes. This is illustrated by the distribution of Wildlife Corridors and wildlife sites shown on the Local Plan and the lack of these features in West Bletchley. This is because the area has generally been developed intensively, if sometimes at lower densities, but without much regarded to creating a variety of types of open spaces. This contrasts with the rest of the New Town area, which has abundant natural open space, particularly along the river and brook corridors.

Suggestions:

As part of the proposed Green Infrastructure Strategy:

- Investigate opportunities to enhance the habitat diversity of green spaces across the parish.
- Investigate opportunities to establish Wildlife Corridors across the parish to achieve a similar network of wildlife corridors as found elsewhere in Milton Keynes.
- Investigate opportunities to work in partnership with wildlife groups to establish wildlife enhancement and interpretation projects. Including for instance investigating the opportunity to promote and interpret the route around the edge of the golf course.
- Create small pocket wildlife parks with ponds and ecological areas to encourage wildlife within the area, perhaps managed by resident’s groups.

Cycling and Walking

The parish has limited access to Redway routes that are a key feature of the layout of Milton Keynes and therefore access by bike and on foot is more limited and less safe than the rest of Milton Keynes. As part of the Green Infrastructure Strategy there is a great opportunity to establish the key additional links through the parish which would make it a safer and more enjoyable to cycle through.

The parish is generally an attractive place to walk through with footpaths often set back behind tree lined verges on quiet residential streets. There are however some key links across the parish to Bletchley Station, Bletchley town centre and MK1 that should be investigated further to establish how they could be enhanced and promoted. Additionally, enhancing some of the visual detractors and areas of poor public realm would improve the walking environment.

Walking and cycling links to parks are also not always clear. There is an opportunity to enhance signage and road crossings to improve access to local parks across the whole parish.

Suggestions:

As part of the proposed Green Infrastructure Strategy:

- Investigate key links to enhance Redway routes through the parish.
- Investigate key walking links out of the parish and how they could be enhanced.
- Consider links from all residential areas to parks and identify any improvements to facilitate them.
- Consider creating a walking route linking all the most interesting parks and open spaces. This could be an extension to the proposed historic trail around Old Bletchley.

Section 06 Conclusion

Conclusion

This Character Assessment aims to provide the public, policy makers and decision makers with a better understanding of the character of West Bletchley.

The Character Assessment is a key piece of evidence informing the Parish-wide Neighbourhood Plan, and other studies that are to be undertaken such as the Green Infrastructure Strategy

This Assessment should be used to help:

- engage the local community in appreciating their area better, in understanding how it came about and what is valuable and worth conserving;
- provide an understanding of the context to help inform ideas on new development proposals;
- better aid decisions on the likely impacts of new proposals;
- identify the priorities for tackling those aspects that diminish the quality and character of the area; and
- provide a baseline against which to measure change.

The better understanding of the existing character of West Bletchley should allow the area to respond to the strategic challenges and opportunities it will face, such as the opportunity of East West rail and the continued success and growth of Bletchley Park, and the need to address local challenges and opportunities that affect individual neighbourhoods.

