

# Initial Draft Conservation Area Appraisal – West Felton Conservation Area

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## West Felton Conservation Area Appraisal

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## 1. Introduction

### Background to the Conservation Area

The West Felton Conservation Area appraisal has been produced following local consultation over the designation of a Conservation Area for West Felton. An approach to the local authority was made by West Felton Parish Council along with their heritage consultant regarding consideration of this designation due to the historic significance of the village. A variety of information was supplied to the local authority including details of informal local consultation and a drop in exhibition. Historic Environment Officers visited West Felton following the submission of this information and concurred that the area was worthy of designation in this regard.

It is a statutory duty of local authorities to determine areas it is desirable to preserve and enhance and designate them as Conservation Areas, and part of this process is to produce a Conservation Area appraisal in order to set out the character and significance of the area designated.

The document therefore intends to set out the significance of West Felton (i.e. the value that the Conservation Area has to this and future generations because of its heritage interest) and its character and appearance, its historical development and those features which contribute to its special character. It also reviews the existing condition of the area and sets out some principles and actions for its future management.

### Policy and legal context

Section 69 of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (as amended) requires Local Planning Authorities to determine which parts of their area are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Following designation of the Conservation Area, the local authority has a statutory duty to ensure that those elements that form its character or appearance should be preserved or enhanced, specifically when considering planning applications under Section 72(1) of the same Act. It is therefore necessary to define and analyse those qualities or elements that contribute to, or detract from, the special interest of the area and to assess how they combine to justify its designation as a Conservation Area.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 sets out the overarching requirement for local planning authorities to identify and protect areas of special interest (Section 16) along with the appropriate consideration of new conservation areas (paragraph 191) such areas should justify its status.

Conservation area appraisals are based upon best practice guidelines set out by Historic England in their publication Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (Second Edition Feb 2019).

### Designated heritage assets

There are a total of 16 designated heritage assets located in West Felton. In the west village these comprise the Scheduled monument: Motte castle adjacent to St Michael's Church (NHLE no. 1019296) and the Grade II\* listed Church of St Michael, Woolston Road (NHLE no. 1367365). A further 10 buildings and structures are Grade II listed:

- Lodge Farmhouse with attached stables and malthouse, Fox Lane (NHLE no. 1307262)
- Old Farmhouse, Fox Lane (NHLE no. 1054235)
- Barn approximately 10 metres to the east of Old Farmhouse, Fox Lane (NHLE no. 1177812)
- Manor Farmhouse and attached garden wall, Manor Lane (NHLE no. 1307270)
- Outbuilding and privy attached to wall to right of Manor Farmhouse, Manor Lane (NHLE no. 1054237)
- Barn approximately 15 metres south west of Manor Farmhouse, Manor Lane (NHLE no. 1295248)
- Threadneedle Cottage, Threadneedle Street (NHLE no. 1054203)
- Threadneedle Well, Threadneedle Street (NHLE no. 1367364)
- Sundial and steps approximately 20 metres south of nave of Church of St Michael, Woolston Road (NHLE no. 1295213)
- Bentley memorial approximately 1 metre north east of north aisle of Church of St Michael, Woolston Road (NHLE no. 1054206)

A further fourth Grade II listed buildings are located in the east village:

- Felton Grange, The Avenue (NHLE no. 1177799)
- Wall approximately 20 metres north of Felton Grange and attached outbuilding at south west end, The Avenue (NHLE no. 1054234)
- The Brick House, A5 (NHLE no. 1054232)
- Old Plough Cottage, A5 (NHLE no. 1177790)

### Summary of the special interest of the area

To be completed.

## 2. Assessment of the special interest of the area

### Location and setting

West Felton is a village and civil parish located in the north-west of Shropshire, and approximately 5 miles to the south-east of the town of Oswestry. It is formed of two areas to east and west, divided by the modern A5 road which runs north to south. The west village is the site of the earliest historic core, whilst the east village straddles the Holyhead Road, formerly the principal route linking Shrewsbury and Oswestry, and beyond that London and Holyhead. Both areas of the village are bounded by open fields. The hamlets of Queen's Head and Rednal are nearby, along with the estates of Tedsmore, Woodhouse and Pradoe. The Pradoe Registered Park and Garden (grade II) is located approximately half a mile to the south-east of the village.

The topography is relatively flat with a gentle rise on the Holyhead Road on approach to the village, and gentle slope down towards the A5 and west part of the village where the Scheduled Motte and grade II\* listed Church of St Michael are located.

### Historic development

#### **Background**

The manor of West Felton is first mentioned in Domesday Book (1086), when it formed part of Merset Hundred. The placename means 'settlement in open ground', possibly a specific reference to open field agriculture (Gelling and Foxall 1990: 307). The placename infers there was a settlement focal point here by the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century.

At the time of the Norman Conquest the manor of West Felton was held by Siward, one of five manors in Merset Hundred held by him. Much of Merset Hundred was waste before 1086, probably the result of Welsh incursions under Gruffydd ap Llywelyn, and the Domesday Book records that it was still waste in 1086. By 1086 the manor formed part of the holdings of Roger of Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, being held from him by his Sheriff, Reginald Balliol, and from him by an unnamed man at arms (Hannaford, 1995; Thorn, 1986).

The Hundred of Merset ceased to exist in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century being broken up into a series of Marcher lordships or Welshries (Thorn 1986: Note 4). By 1160 West Felton formed one of the townships of Ruyton of the Eleven Towns, held by the Lestranges of Ness under the FitzAlan lordship of Oswestry. Three tenants are recorded in the manor are John Fitz Philip in 1255 and Thomas de Lee and Stephen son of Thomas de Felton in 1305 (Hannaford, 1995).

In 1536 the marcher lordship of Oswestry was restored to the county as part of the new Hundred of Oswestry. In 1580 the last FitzAlan died without male heir, and in 1603 the Lordship of Oswestry was granted by James I to Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk. West Felton passed eventually to the Lords Craven (Lords of the Manor of Ruyton). The Manor

House was bought from the Cravens in around 1771 by the Frank family, although it was possibly rented to the Fitzherbert family in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### **West village**

The substantial motte standing west of Manor Farm, likely dates to the late 11<sup>th</sup>–early 12<sup>th</sup> century, and the earliest fabric of St Michael’s Church lying immediately west of the motte dates to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Together the motte and church form the seignorial and spiritual heart of the post-Conquest settlement.

Manor Farm likely represents the site of a medieval manor house probably established following the abandonment of the motte. This is perhaps supported by the recent identification of a surviving 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed gatehouse during an historic building survey (Morriss, 2012). The present farmhouse dates to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the farm buildings comprise a mid-17<sup>th</sup> to early-18<sup>th</sup> century threshing barn and late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century stables and a cowhouse range (Morriss, 2012).

Within the remainder of the west village historic mapping suggests substantial change within the settlement between the late 18<sup>th</sup> and late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was probably driven by the significant improvements in agricultural practices at this time. These improvements are reflected in the built form of the agricultural working buildings. Several farmsteads were either replaced or remodelled during this period, especially along Threadneedle Street. The historic mapping also indicates settlement contraction along the eastern side of Threadneedle Street and the south side of Fox Lane between the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A new farmstead, Lodge Farm, was established to the south of Fox Lane during this same period. This was counterbalanced by the loss of what appears to have been a large farmstead at the junction of Threadneedle Street and Fox Lane, lost between the 1837 tithe map and the first edition 25” Ordnance Survey map of 1877.

By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the land between Old Rectory Gardens and Threadneedle Street to the south was principally occupied by The Rectory, a large, detached property standing within substantial grounds. The Rectory may have occupied this site from at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century or possibly earlier. It was rebuilt in the late 18<sup>th</sup>–early 19<sup>th</sup> century; photographs taken circa 1900 show a late Georgian brick building. It was demolished in circa 1970 and the site and its grounds were gradually redeveloped between the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. A range of working buildings, possibly stables, associated with The Rectory survive to the south-west on Threadneedle Street.

Documentary evidence suggests that a National School was built in the 1830s; this may be the former St Michael’s Hall, which certainly existed by the time of the 1837 tithe map. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was the Sunday School. It was built in the centre of the junction of what is now The Avenue and Old Rectory Gardens on what had probably been common land shown as an *outgang*<sup>1</sup> on the 1777 Craven estate map. The areas of common land shown on this map had all been enclosed by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>1</sup> *Outgang*: a holding area for stock before they were funnelled into the surrounding fields/common land/meadows designated for grazing

## East village

The earliest evidence for the development of the east village is the 1771 Craven estate map. This map shows two farmsteads sited on Holyhead Road. The first stood opposite Hickson's Lane (now Old Plough Cottage) and the second stood at the junction of Holyhead Road and Fox Lane/Tedsmore Road, now The Old Smithy and the site of The Fox and Hounds Public House, since demolished. The 1771 Craven estate map does not, however, include large sections of the eastern side of the Holyhead Road. It is possible that the Brick House which stands opposite Old Plough Cottage, and dates to at least the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, may have originated as a third farmstead standing on Holyhead Road. Similarly, it is not possible to determine whether settlement existed at this date to the south of The Cross, on the site of the present The Punch Bowl public house and Village Stores.

The establishment of the coaching route along the Holyhead Road during this period may have stimulated further development associated with the provision of refreshments and other accompanying trades such as a smithy and ~~wheelwrights~~ wheelwright's shop. Documentary sources indicate that wealthy farmers invested heavily in providing facilities in the form of Coaching Inns. The mid-17<sup>th</sup> century Old Plough Cottage had been a public house prior to 1819 (SRO 5216/2/F/2/1).

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, this part of the village came to be dominated by two minor estates, Orange Grove (latterly Felton Grange) and Dovaston. Dovaston House, originally known as The Nursery, was built or rebuilt in the mid-18<sup>th</sup>–early 19<sup>th</sup>-century in substantial grounds to the north-east of the village. The house was demolished, and the site redeveloped in the 1980s, although a number of structures and other features survive including a row of trees and a low stone wall marking the boundary of the estate with the Holyhead Road.

The Holyhead Road continued to be the principal focus for development throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century when several properties were built or rebuilt. These included detached properties such as Stone House and The Yews, as well as rows of brick cottages such as those to the south of The Cross and what is now the Village stores. The Punch Bowl public house probably also dates to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Several key public buildings were constructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This included the Hazelhurst Memorial Institute in 1908 and built in remembrance of W.C. Hazelhurst, the Rector between 1891 and 1905, for the purposes of promoting reading and education. In the aftermath of the First World War (1914–1918) a further two memorial structures were erected, the West Felton Public Hall dated 1923 and the War Memorial, both located on the west side of Holyhead Road.

### Archaeological significance and potential

Across the wider parish there is currently limited evidence for human activity prior to the Bronze Age. Eight Bronze Age burnt mounds<sup>2</sup> have been recorded associated with the former wetland areas to the north-east of the parish and to the south of the village. Bronze Age funerary activity has been indicated from aerial photography in the form of 12 ring ditches located on the elevated land towards the centre and at the southern edge of the parish. Three Bronze Age finds have been recorded from the village itself, these include an axehead (palstave) found in 1865 or 1867 as well as a spearhead whose find date is unknown. These two finds were reportedly found either on the Dovaston estate or just to its north. A Bronze Age perforated stone axe was also found at Manor Farm before 1958. There is consequently the potential for further stray finds, or possibly archaeological features, of later prehistoric date to be encountered within and around the village. Any archaeological remains present within the village itself are likely to have been truncated by subsequent agricultural and development activities.

There are numerous enclosures visible as cropmarks on aerial photography across the parish which are likely to relate to late prehistoric–Romano-British activity. There is currently no evidence for Iron Age or Roman activity focused within the village itself.

In the west village the earliest detailed map, the 1771 Craven estate map, shows the extant road pattern which forms a roughly oval enclosure (Rectory Gardens to the north, Threadneedle Street curving round to the east and the western extension of Fox Lane to the south). This enclosure is subdivided by a straight section of Threadneedle Street. This oval enclosure may have formed the focal point of settlement established in the early medieval period. The motte was constructed after the Norman Conquest, and alongside it stands the broadly contemporary St Michael's Church. These two structures represent the physical imposition of Norman lordship upon the local population. The motte and church appear to have been laid out over and adjacent to the north-western extent of the oval enclosure. The historic settlement is likely to have been dispersed across and/or around the enclosure. Archaeological investigations on the site of The Rectory in the north-western corner of the oval enclosure, found evidence for probable medieval ditches likely associated with agricultural activity (Taverner, 2002; Kenney 2003). This finding may be evidence of a dispersed settlement pattern within the village during this period.

Scholars have long suggested that at least one castle bailey was established adjacent to the motte, although to date no physical evidence has been found. The preferred location is given as east-north-east of the motte, which would have incorporated what is now Manor Farm. An alternative, or possibly second, bailey has been suggested to the west of the motte encompassing St Michael's Church. The limited archaeological investigations at Manor Farm in 2017 and 2020 did not identify any evidence for medieval activity associated with either a bailey or other medieval settlement activity (Frost 2017; Frost 2020).

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<sup>2</sup> Burnt mound: A mound of fire-cracked stones, normally accompanied by a trough or pit which may have been lined with wood, stone or clay. Their function remains uncertain but may have been used as hearths for cooking and/or as sweat lodges/saunas.



It is likely that the motte was abandoned at an early date in the medieval period and was probably replaced by more commodious accommodation. Manor Farm may be located on the site of a later medieval manor house. The recently identified gatehouse has been broadly dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and would lend support to the presence of a substantial property at this location by at least this date.

The land around the motte and St Michaels Church is of very high archaeological potential. The remainder of the old village is an area of high archaeological potential, particularly in areas which have seen limited development such as the area to the south of Fox Lane or east of Threadneedle Street. Archaeological remains associated with early settlement activity within the village core itself are likely to have been truncated by later development.

There is a low potential for later medieval and/or early post medieval settlement activity to be present along the Holyhead Road. It is possible that the three properties indicated on the 1771 estate map near the two junctions of Holyhead Road with Hickson's Lane and with Fox Lane/Tedsmore Road have earlier origins. Any archaeological remains present are, however, likely to have been truncated by subsequent development.

### Form and layout

West Felton comprises two historic settlement cores, that to the west focused upon the church and motte, and that to the east focused upon the Holyhead Road. The origins and development of the two halves of the village has shaped their differing character. The two halves are now physically separated by the construction of the A5 road in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. This road was constructed in a deep cutting and is not visible from either portion of the village. Its presence is indicated by a mature tree belt which flanks both sides of the cutting.

### **West village**

The historic character of the west village retains a sense of its origins as a farming community. It comprises clusters of farmsteads set within and around the old lanes forming the oval enclosure which makes up the historic core. Set around the groups of historic farmsteads are late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century houses, infilling on the site of former buildings and gardens.

The oldest building in the village is the Grade II\* listed St Michael's Church whose earliest fabric dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, with a late 18<sup>th</sup> century tower and further 19<sup>th</sup> century additions.

Most of the historic buildings date from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century onwards and comprise a mix of domestic and formerly agricultural buildings. The largest houses, The Court and The Hollies, date to the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Five large farmsteads survive, three of which have regular courtyard plan forms with one or more yards, suggesting they were built or rebuilt in the late 18<sup>th</sup>–early 19<sup>th</sup> century. These buildings reflect the agricultural improvements, which were occurring at this time. The latest of these is Lodge Farm built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The farmstead comprises large

stone built working buildings, including a malthouse. The red brick farmhouse stands to the south and east of the working buildings. Manor Farm and Old Farm display a more dispersed plan form perhaps indicating their early origins. Both contain surviving working buildings of at least 17<sup>th</sup> to early 18<sup>th</sup> century date.

Several lanes radiate out from this historic core including The Avenue and Fox Road, which leave the eastern side of the west village and cross the A5 road cutting to ultimately join the east village at Holyhead Road. The other lanes lead north, south and west into the surrounding rural landscape which is dominated by isolated farms and mixed arable and pasture fields, subdivided by hedgerows.

The southern side of The Avenue is lined by hedged paddocks whilst to the north there are four detached houses standing within extensive grounds. Avenue House stands immediately adjacent to The Avenue, but all the others are set back off the road.

### **East village**

The oldest part of the east village clusters around The Cross, although the remainder of the village reflects its origins as a piecemeal ribbon development. The section of Holyhead Road to the north of The Cross forms the main approach into the village from Oswestry. The eastern side retains a sense of open space lined only by a row of mature trees. These are just set back from a low wall, comprising one course of large sandstone blocks and coping stones, beyond which there is a grassed area.

The sense of enclosure intensifies, at least initially, to the south of The Cross where buildings on both sides of Holyhead Road stand either directly onto or just back from the roadside. These buildings comprise The Punch Bowl public house to the east, and to the west is the village shop and a row of brick cottages. Beyond The Punch Bowl is its car park and gardens where the sense of enclosure recedes. On the opposite side of the road are further 19<sup>th</sup> century houses (detached and semi-detached) as well as the West Felton Public Hall, built gable end onto the road.

Beyond these properties to the south the historic buildings were originally constructed at intervals and were surrounded by small fields. These fields have largely been lost to infilling on both sides of the Holyhead Road throughout the later 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Most of the modern houses and bungalows within the proposed Conservation Area are detached. They are generally set back at least 10m from the roadside, within sizable gardens fronted by very low stone or brick walls.

The principal surviving historic properties are the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed Old Plough Cottage and the late 18<sup>th</sup> century The Brick House, both Grade II listed, which stand opposite one another on the Holyhead Road. The Brick House is bounded to the north by Hickman Lane, now a footpath, which links Holyhead Road with School Road. The blank walls of its associated single storey outbuildings back onto Hickman Lane. To the south of The Brick House are two access lanes for mostly modern detached houses standing in

generous gardens. The most southerly access lane leads, after 115m, to the Stone House constructed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The eastern and southern sides of the house are enclosed by a stone wall. The property had originally been built towards the centre of a field with a wooded area to its north-east, which by circa 1900 may have formed a small orchard. The remains of the wooded area/orchard survive, and beyond them the remainder of the field forms part of the Stone House grounds where there is now a tennis court and lawns.

At the southern extent of the proposed Conservation Area is the Haslehurst Memorial Institute built in 1909 and the War Memorial erected in the 1920s. The latter is enclosed on its northern, western, and southern sides by a beech hedge with a low brick wall and iron pedestrian gate to the east.

The Avenue forms the principal road leading from the west village into The Cross. Just to the east of the A5 road cutting the southern side of The Avenue is initially lined by a mature shelter belt of trees, which historically form part of the landscaped grounds belonging to Felton Grange. This small country house is not visible from this part of The Avenue, being enclosed firstly by a stone wall and planting into which is set the principal gateway for the property and its grounds. To the north of the stone wall is a tall brick wall with stone copings. The wall curves round to the north of Felton Grange whose upper storeys and roofs can just be glimpsed.

Beyond the property boundary of Felton Grange are modern houses and the much altered 19<sup>th</sup> century Grange Cottage. These properties are all set back from the road within gardens mostly bounded by stone walls.

#### Architectural quality and built form

The historic built form of both halves of the village is dominated by red brick buildings of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century date. In the west village the built form reflects the rural origins of the settlement where there are a high number of surviving agricultural buildings, although the majority have since been converted to residences. There are very few agricultural or outbuildings in the east village; the exception being the small brick and stone outbuildings located to the rear of The Brick House.

The farmhouses in the west village, The Manor House, Lodge Farm, Old Farm and Felton Farm are all three bay, two storey red brick buildings with central doorways, although they all differ in their massing and architectural detailing. Felton Farm has a fourth bay set back from the main building line probably a later addition. The Brick House, on Holyhead Road, is a three-bay, three storey house with central doorway. The southern end bay may be an addition or rebuilding of an earlier bay. All these properties were built, or rebuilt, between the mid-18<sup>th</sup> and mid-19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Yews, at The Cross, is also a two-storey, three bay house albeit constructed on a more modest scale than the others. Only its frontage is of red brick, both gables are constructed of local sandstone. Historic mapping suggests it dates to the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of a similar period are the semi-detached red brick houses (The Hollies and Nesscliffe House)

located not far to the south of The Yews. To the north of The Yews there are two rows of red brick cottages. The first row comprises four houses although the northern two have been rendered. The second row, which terminates with the Village Stores, comprises a further four smaller houses set back from the predominant building line. Documentary evidence suggests that these properties may have existed by 1837 (Kenyon, 1904: 330).

The three largest red brick houses in the village are Felton Grange set to the west of The Cross, originally constructed in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, substantially extended in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and the late 19<sup>th</sup> century The Court and The Hollies in the west village.

Threadneedle Cottage in west village and The Old Plough on Holyhead Road, are the only domestic dwellings with substantial surviving timber-framing. The rear of one of the bays at The Brick House, also on Holyhead Road, comprises a light timber frame perhaps indicating an earlier origin. Church Cottage, located to the south-west of the Church, also reportedly retains half-timbering in its rear portion. The remaining timber framed buildings are all agricultural buildings of late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century date located at Manor Farm and Old Farm.

A small number of buildings constructed out of the local sandstone (Ruyton Stone) are also present dotted around the west village. The earliest, and largest, stone building is St Michael's Church. The most prominent stone-built property within the village is the large agricultural range, incorporating a former malthouse, part of the Grade II listed Lodge Farm. The remainder are mostly small buildings such as 'The Barn House' and the former St Michael's Hall. In the east village the most substantial stone building is the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Stone House, which is set back from the Holyhead Road behind modern houses.

There are three single storey public buildings located within both halves of the village; the former St Michael's Hall in west village, and the former Haslehurst Memorial Institute and the West Felton Public Hall on Holyhead Road. The Haslehurst Memorial Institute is the only example of an Arts and Crafts building in the proposed Conservation Area.

Stone and red brick boundary walls are a prominent feature of the west village and The Avenue, used to enclose gardens and some of the larger properties such as Lodge Farm, The Court and The Hollies as well as St Michael's church yard. A key feature of the stone wall on the west side of Threadneedle Street, now enclosing a modern house and garden, is the square opening to a Grade II listed well of probable medieval origin. The boundary wall enclosing Felton Grange is a significant feature on the southern side of The Avenue.

At the northern entrance to the east village the eastern side of Holyhead Road is lined by a low stone wall which demarcates the former Dovaston estate. It likely represents the remaining course of the original boundary wall. Low stone-built boundary walls are also occasionally present further south along Holyhead Road, often enclosing modern properties. Red brick walls are also present, although the majority are of modern construction.

## Landscape character and open space

### **West village**

The road network around the west village retains its rural settlement character with narrow winding lanes with limited street lighting and sections of narrow grass verges. There are very few hard kerbs and no footpaths, other than that leading down the south side of The Avenue and continuing for a short section of Threadneedle Street. The approach into the west village along Fox Lane from the A5 bridge and the lane, Old Rectory Gardens, which are both bounded by fields, are particularly evocative of this rural character. There are long views north from Old Rectory Gardens across the fields towards the hills to the west of Oswestry. There are also views into the surrounding countryside from various points along Fox Lane, and across the paddocks east of Threadneedle Lane where the views terminate at the tree belt flanking the A5 road cutting.

The key public open spaces within the village are the churchyard around St Michael's Church with the motte to its west, and the modern burial ground to the east. The fields to the north and west of Manor Farm are historically associated with this property and with the motte. The fields to the north may have comprised part of the former castle bailey. These fields, therefore, form a key part of the setting of this cluster of designated heritage assets which also includes St Michael's Church.

St Michael's churchyard contains many mature deciduous trees, and there are further mature trees within the gardens of The Court at the junction of Fox Lane and Threadneedle Lane. Several yew trees are present at the western end of Fox Lane two of which stand behind a stone boundary wall and may be associated with an episode of landscaping at Lodge Farm. Across the remainder of the village there are very few mature trees.

Several of the historic properties sit within gardens as do the modern houses. Many of these properties are set behind walls, sometimes topped by hedging, contiguous with the principal lanes. The majority of the historic farm buildings, even where converted, are not so frequently associated with spacious gardens, and these examples retain a greater sense of their origins as working buildings.

The four properties at the west end of The Avenue are situated within generous plots backing onto fields which enhance the rural character of this part of the road. On the opposite side of The Avenue are paddocks enclosed behind a mature hedgerow.

### **East village**

The Cross retains its character as the heart of the east village formed by the road junction and the presence of The Punch Bowl, and the rows of properties opposite. This cluster of buildings reflects the history of Holyhead Road as the former key route linking London with the port at Holyhead.

The key open space within the east village is located on the approach from Oswestry to the north. This comprises a grassed area set behind the low stone wall and is backed by a line of mature trees. To the south beyond The Cross the road is bordered by mostly modern houses

stood within generous front gardens. The War Memorial stands alone separated from the buildings to the north by the presence of a large yew. The War Memorial stands within in its own enclosure and there is a sense of space around it which is respected by the modern housing development to the south (beyond the proposed Conservation Area boundary). The sense of space around the War Memorial is further enforced by the field to its rear, which ultimately terminates at the tree belt flanking the modern A5 road cutting. This is the only section of the road where the wider rural landscape is experienced along the Holyhead Road section of the proposed Conservation Area.

From its western end The Avenue initially retains its rural character with fields enclosed by mature hedgerows to the north and south. Further east the lane is bounded by the stone wall enclosing Felton Grange which is topped by a hedge and backed by mature tree belts; beyond this the stone wall gives way to the tall red brick wall. Behind the wall the garden trees of Felton Grange are visible. On the north side of The Avenue there are modern single storey bungalows, standing beyond the proposed Conservation Area boundary, which are set back from the road behind front gardens. In views west along The Avenue the mature tree belt along the modern A5 road cutting is visible above the bungalows providing a treed backdrop to both the north and south sides of the road.

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## Abbreviations:

HER – Historic Environment Record

SRO – Shropshire Record Office