

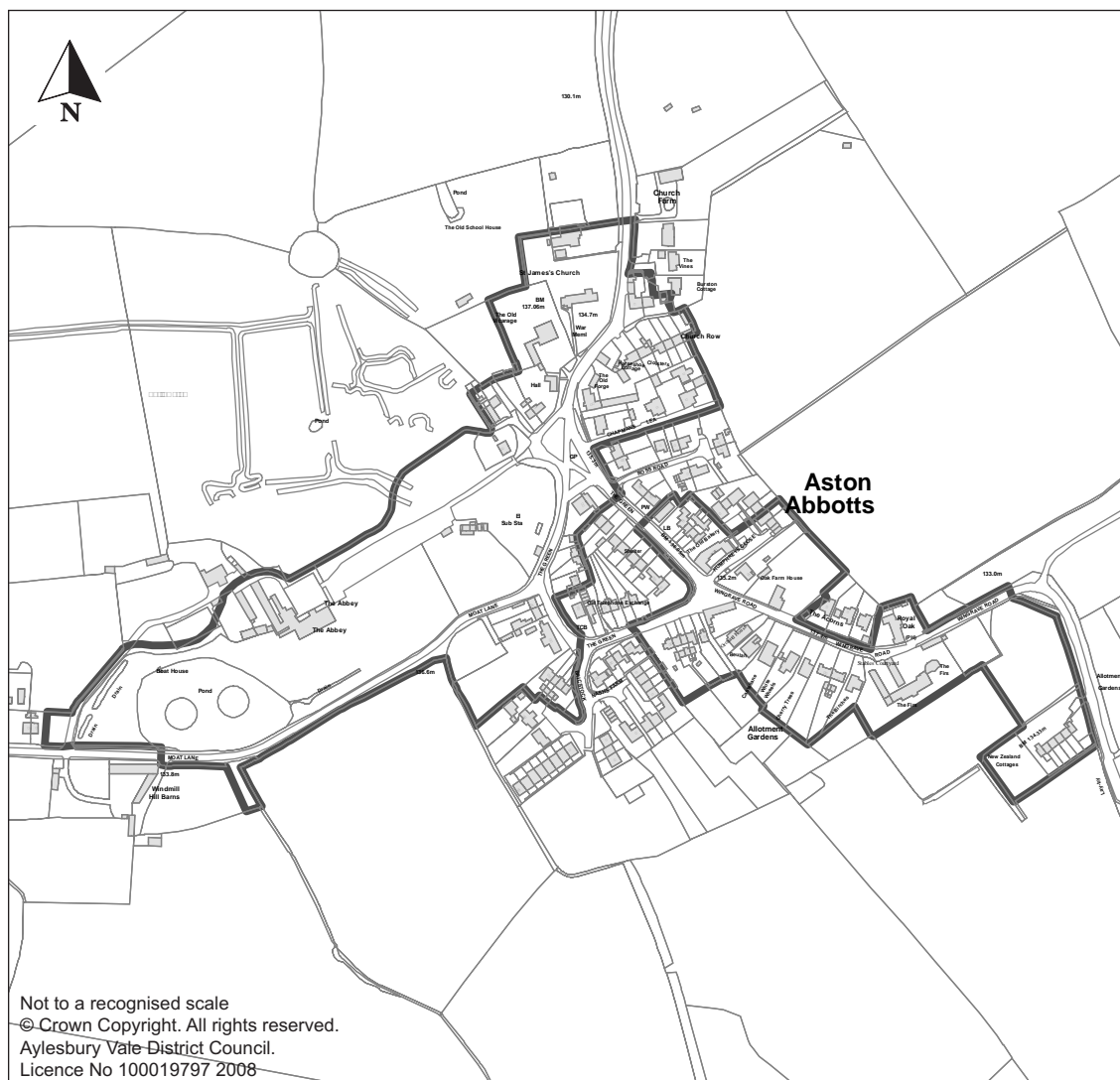
ASTON ABBOTTS CONSERVATION AREA

Designated 19th July 1989

Aston Abbots is situated on elevated ground half a mile west of the A418 Aylesbury to Leighton Buzzard trunk road, five miles north north west of Aylesbury. Originally dating from pre-Norman Conquest times, the present village is essentially Victorian in character and is a relatively good example of a nineteenth century “High Farming” settlement.

The village is broadly triangular in shape and centres upon the original Green, known simply as The Green, which is now infilled with housing and a smaller Green immediately north of The Green. The village is entered from one of three roads: Cublington Road, from the north; Moat Lane, from the south west; and Wingrave Road from the south east.

The northern entrance, along with the winding hedgerow lined Cublington Road, enters between the twin listed buildings of Church Farm and the Church of St. James. The tight enclosure afforded by the tall hedgerows in the lane gives way to iron railings in front of the Old School House and a one metre high, brick retaining wall around the elevated site of the Church.



The Church, (which is Grade II* listed), does by reason of its scale and elevated setting, command the northern approach to the village. Although retaining its fifteenth century tower, the remainder of the Church was rebuilt by G.E. Street in 1865. Alongside the Church and the adjacent Old Vicarage, stands a magnificent line of beech and sycamore trees.

Fine townscape views are obtained between the Church and the thatched, half timbered Church Farm, of a group of Victorian dwellings dated 1854, comprising The Old Forge and two terraces of former labourer's cottages known as The Haven, Cloisters and Church Row.

Turning south westerly from Cublington Road, the road opens out to reveal what remains open of The Green. It is here that some of the finest townscape views in the village are obtained of: the entrance to The Abbey, with its thatched gatehouse; the former Chapel, erected in 1861 but now converted into a pair of dwellings; a further block of Victorian cottages and Home Farm. This Green is enclosed by neat box hedges and contains a number of fine trees.

The bulk of the former green has been infilled with modern dwelling houses but despite this, its outer ring retains much of its essentially Victorian character. Three blocks of distinctive red brick terraces, each dated 1854, face inward across The Green, as do the similarly distinctive properties The Old House, The Methodist Chapel and The Bull and Butcher Public House. Perhaps the most striking of all properties fronting The Green is that at the junction of Wingrave Road, the fifteenth century thatched and timber framed Old Cottage, part of which contains the village shop.

The south east approach, along Wingrave Road is again characterized by wide grass verges and neat hedgerows. Having passed a small ribbon of modern dwelling houses on the right, ones vision is attracted to another terrace of Victorian cottages known collectively as New Zealand and its backdrop of magnificent sycamore and copper beech trees. The road then turns left to reveal The Royal Oak, a part thatched and timbered seventeenth century public house. Opposite The Royal Oak, behind a tall and imposing brick wall and two very fine fir trees, is The Firs with its stable yard and workers cottages. Swinging right towards The Green there is, on the left, another of the Victorian terraces built in 1854 and on the right is the partly thatched Oak Farm House.

The south western approach, along Moat Lane, affords fine commanding views south and south east over the Vale of Aylesbury towards the Chiltern escarpment. In similarity to both of the other approach roads into the village, Moat Lane is bounded on either side by hedgerows, with the exception of a small stretch on the southern side of Windmill Hill Farm where the enclosure is provided by a brick wall. The hedging along the southern side of the road tends to be lower and less dense than that on the northern side, which defines the southern boundary to the extensively landscaped and private ground of The Abbey (formerly known as Aston House). Originally the country seat of the Abbot of St Albans, only geometrically shaped earthworks indicate the site of the original buildings. The present house is a Grade II listed building built in the late eighteenth century and subsequently altered in the nineteenth century. During the second World War, it was the official residence of the exiled President of Czechoslovakia Dr Edward Benes.

Off the southern end of The Green is a short, cul-de-sac known as Bricstock which leads to the Recreational Ground, across which are fine views over the Vale of Aylesbury. A couple of modern dwellings and a terrace of old people's bungalows are sited at the end of this road.