

## CHESHAM BOIS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: APPENDIX II

### Chesham Bois – The Development of the Village – its History and Heritage

The Civil Parish of Chesham Bois (pronounced 'boys') with a population of c 2,963, according to the 2021 Census, covers just over 1 square mile and lies between the towns of Amersham and Chesham in the Chiltern Hills, South Buckinghamshire. The village stands on a plateau rising to over 500 ft above sea level, between the Misbourne and Chess Valleys.



*The Woodlands, off Long Park*



*c 1914 Drawing of **Woodland Court** by Raffles Davison*

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## Glossary

- **NDHA** – Non-Designated Heritage Asset, locally listed by Buckinghamshire Council
- **ERASC/ASC** – Established Residential Area of Special Character now Area of Special Character (ASC)
- **CBCA** – Chesham Bois Conservation Area

## **1 Development of Chesham Bois**

For centuries Chesham Bois was a thinly populated area with a scatter of farms, common land and woodland, crossed by ancient tracks and drovers' routes to London. There was no village centre, and the area remained completely rural until the 1890s and the arrival of the Metropolitan Railway which extended into the Chilterns from Marylebone in West London. Until well into the twentieth century, when Amersham-on-the-Hill developed, Chesham Bois was much more strongly connected to Chesham and its fairs and market than to Amersham.

A small manor in the parish of Cestreham (Chesham) was first recorded in the Domesday records, and by 1213, in the reign of King John, it was held by a William du Bois, giving the settlement the name of Chesham Bois. The oldest building in the village is the parish church of St Leonard, founded in 1215 as the chapel of Bois Manor. Until 1934 the parish boundary extended to the river Chess.

The 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century saw little development with a population of around 130 but the arrival of the railway brought rapid change to the area and farmland was suddenly far more valuable as building plots with local landowners making substantial profits. The most desirable land was around Chesham Bois Common.

In 1903 the Lord of the Manor was based in the village for first time since 1730s as landowner John William Garrett-Pegge had bought the common land and the title from the Duke of Bedford.

By the time of the 1911 census the population had increased to 1,253 and the parish church had to be expanded to seat 200. The majority of new houses were either in the style of traditional Edwardian villas or in the newly fashionable Arts and Craft Style. The completion of the Coleshill Water Tower in 1915 meant that mains water could be supplied and the building boom that occurred between the wars became known as Metroland, a term coined by the marketing department of the Metropolitan Railway. Amersham-on-the-Hill expanded rapidly during this time providing shops, a cinema and other amenities in easy walking distance of Chesham Bois.

Since WWII, new development in the parish has been fairly limited. The largest recent development is Laurel Court which stands on the site of the former Ken House Hotel. In 1992 Chiltern District council designated part of the parish The Chesham Bois Conservation Area and three further areas as Areas of Special Character. Chesham Bois Common is at the heart of the conservation area and since 1979 this has been owned by the Parish Council and managed as amenity land for the village. In addition to the 19 listed buildings in the parish, 22 buildings have recently been locally listed as Non-Designated Heritage Assets.

## 1.1 Early History

### 1.1.1 Bois Manor

Initially a small hamlet in the parish of Cestreham (Chesham), the manor was assessed at 1½ hides (around 180 acres) with two free men holding the land in the reign of King Edward the Confessor. In 1066 the estate belonged to Leofwin, a brother of King Harold, who was killed with him at the Battle of Hastings. William the Conqueror awarded the land to his half-brother, Odo, the warrior bishop of Bayeux.

The early parish boundary, which corresponds to the current ecclesiastical boundary of St Leonard, extended down to the river Chess and included Chesham Moor. In 1934 the Chesham Bois parish boundary was changed to follow the line of the Chesham branch of the Metropolitan railway to the north-east of the village. What was formerly known as Lower Bois became incorporated in Chesham Urban District Council. Many of the men listed on the Chesham Bois War Memorial, who fell during World War I, lived in Lower Bois.

Pudding stones can still be found in the parish which used to mark the route of a prehistoric trade route along Bois Lane and Holloway Lane. Some pudding stones line the drive to The Warren, Grade II Listed (19) and Chesham Bois House, Grade I Listed (3) (Map 4 The Church). This drive was the approach to the earlier manor according to the Duke of Bedford's map of 1735.



*The Warren c 1910*

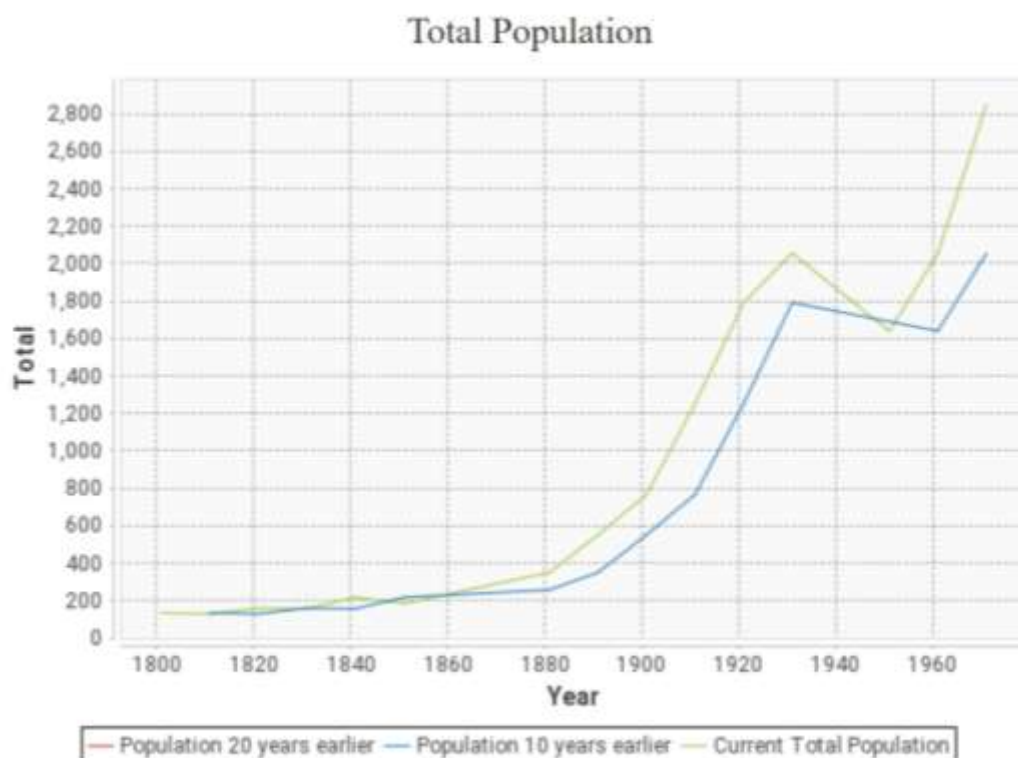
Following the Wessex Archaeology investigation in 2006/7, which featured in an episode of Channel 4's *Time Team* in 2007, the first Bois Manor is now believed to have been incorporated into The Warren. The Cheyne family (lords of the manor from the 1430s until 1735) built a later manor house to the south of The Warren. This fell into disrepair during the 18<sup>th</sup> century when it was one of the many manors of the Duke of Bedford. Little remained of the old house by the early 1800s although part of it was incorporated in the Georgian villa, Chesham Bois House built on the site of the earlier manor. Traces of the manor and the estate can be found in local place names such as Long Park.

### 1.1.2 Settlements:

Before the arrival of the railway, to Chesham in 1889, and Amersham in 1892, the history of Chesham Bois was principally the history of the manor and its church and the farms and mills on the manor estate. Chesham Bois was a thinly populated area with a scatter of farms, common land and woodland. The 1811 census recorded a population of 130 and the

1821 census, 160. 100 years later, according to the 1911 census the population had increased to 1,253 and was recorded at 1,792 in 1921.

Year	Population 20 years earlier	Population 10 years earlier	Current Total Population
1801			135
1811		135	130
1821		130	160
1831		160	157
1841		157	218
1851		218	185
1881		258	351
1891		351	552
1901		552	767
1911		767	1,253
1921		1,253	1,792
1931		1,792	2,055



[Chesham Bois Ch/CP through time | Population Statistics | Total Population](#), University of Portsmouth, date accessed 25 February 2025

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the village was still relatively small and consisted of the following principal buildings: the 1893 schoolhouse (now Chesham Bois CofE Combined School) in the north-east corner; St. Leonard's Church, with The Warren, and Chesham Bois House close by (see Map 4 The Church); the 1833 Rectory, now Grade II Listed (18), some distance south of

the church on the common; Manor Farm (the farmhouse is now The Manor, Grade II Listed (13)) on the northern edge of the common; and The Old Schoolhouse to the south east (Map 1 The Common); and Bois Farm (now part Grade II Listed (8,9), Map 3 Bois Farm) and Mayhall Farm (now Grade II Listed (6,7,10,14,16), Map 2 Mayhall Farm) to the west. Scattered between these principal residences were a handful of farm workers cottages.

Most of the population lived to the north of the railway line in the terraced cottages of Lower Bois. Also found in the old parish were Ivy House Farm, the mills on the river Chess, Chesham Bois Manor (the home of the then Lord of the Manor, J W Garrett Pegg), three shops, the Mission Hall and the village pub. The Unicorn was only half in the village as the backroom was in Chesham with different licensing laws!

### **1.1.3 Businesses:**

There was a bakery shop at Anne's Corner (Map 1 The Common) which was replaced by the current U-shaped terrace of three properties, built c 1910, also known as Anne's Corner, now Grade II Listed (1). This belonged to William Aris who baked the bread at his home, Fern Cottage on North Road.

The village wheelwright (William Gomm) and blacksmith (Bill Ayres) lived in a small hamlet of cottages, known as Hives Farm on the southwest corner of the common, now the corner of the main Amersham Road and Copperkins Lane (Map 2 Mayhall Farm)



***Gomm's Yard**, and the Gomm house next door was recently purchased by Heatherton House (the shed has recently been reclad in wood)*

## **1.2 Development after the Railway**

### **1. 2. 1. Building plots:**

The arrival of the railway brought rapid change to the area and farmland was suddenly far more valuable as building plots. Arthur Lazenby Liberty from Chesham (the founder of the Liberty department store) purchased 60 acres of Manor Farm land from landowner John Hailey Morten in 1896 and designed the current village layout with village shops and artisan cottages along Bois Lane with larger plots for gentleman's residences to the north of the common (now North Road). Liberty sold this land at auction later in 1896, which was followed by John William Garrett-Pegge's 1903 Bois Farm sale of building plots either side of

the main road between Amersham and Chesham. This new road was completed around 1830. The earlier road followed the line of the footpath at the back of the Beacon school along Will's Field (Map 3 Bois Farm).



#### *Map of the 1896 Manor Farm Estate Auction*

Estate agents were promoting the local air as “proverbially salubrious and bracing” (*Bucks Examiner*, September 29, 1905). The rural nature of the area was particularly valued: “The Common, with its long, level, grassy rides, gorse-covered stretches, shady trees, picturesque Rectory, and fine bracing air, has long been recognised in the neighbourhood as a true Health Resort” (Sales particulars of the 1896 Manor Farm Estate). Soon London doctors were advising their patients to move to Chesham Bois for the benefit of their health.

By the time of the 1911 census the population had increased to 1,253. There was a housebuilding boom in Chesham Bois from the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (at least 10 years earlier than the neighbouring Amersham-on-the-Hill) because of the desirability of having a house close to the common.

The completion of the Coleshill Water Tower in 1915 meant that mains water could be supplied to Amersham-on-the-Hill and Chesham Bois allowing for a further increase in housing. The building boom that occurred between the wars became known as Metroland, a term coined by the marketing department of the Metropolitan Railway.

#### **1. 2. 2. Builders and Architects**

**George Darlington**, a builder based in Old Amersham High Street (who also owned the brickworks at the Hyde Heath end of Copperkins Lane) built some of the first cottages on Bois Lane before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.





*Late Victorian cottages by William Gomm and George Darlington on Bois Lane c 1920*

**William Gomm** (1866-1932) the son of the wheelwright William Gomm and Mary Ayres, the daughter of the blacksmith, founded William Gomm and Sons Ltd. At its peak the firm employed around 100 men and built most of the Edwardian villa style houses (ie not Arts & Craft style) in the village. His first houses included Heathfield House (Bois Lane), Mowbray Dene (Long Park) and Mapledene (North Road) financed by his friend George Pearce, a Chesham builder. These houses were constructed with materials recycled from houses in Marylebone, demolished for the new railway. After serving in WWI, Gomm's sons, Thomas (1900 – 1966) and William James (1896 – 1952) joined the firm. William James Gomm qualified as an architect and became a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (FRIBA).



***Orchard House North Road built by William Gomm c 1906***

From the early 1900s, other architects and builders saw the opportunity to develop the village or were commissioned by local landowners. These included:

**Alfred Gee** (1848-1936) a farmer and landowner at Hill Farm Latimer, and his son **Ernest James Gee** (1879-1959), an architect. They built a mix of housing include the terrace of houses adjoining the shops on Bois Lane and larger properties on Bois Lane and Amersham



Road in the style of C F A Voysey. It is believed that Ernest J Gee worked with Voysey, but this is not proven.



*St Teresa's on Amersham Road is an almost exact copy of Voysey's Holly Mount at Knotty Green, Beaconsfield*

**Kemp & How** of 4 Bloomsbury Square WCI, were founded as an architectural practice in the early 1900s as a partnership between William James Kemp Snr (1853-1903), William James Kemp Jnr (1882-1959) and William Murthwaite How FRIBA (1873-1957) who was from Chesham. They were best known as school architects but acted as Arthur Lasenby Liberty's architects for his developments in Great Missenden and The Lee, often working with Chesham builders Rust & Ratcliffe. They designed Pipers, at The Lee, for Liberty's heir, Ivor Stewart-Liberty. Around 1902 they designed High Bois House (NDHA 15 Map 4 The Church) close to St Leonard's Church for physician Arthur Pearson Luff. This has now been divided into two separate houses. Kemp & How also extended St Leonard's Church in 1911 and built the village's social housing at Bois Moor which is no longer in the parish. In the 1920s they designed the small chapel in Chesham Bois burial ground (NDHA 12 Map 4 The Church). They were the main architects for Chesham Urban Council (Chesham Cottage Hospital) and Amersham Rural District Council designing most of the social housing in the area during the 1920s and 1930s. Kemp & How may have also designed some of the houses in Long Park (reference *Bucks Herald* Saturday 22 June 1912). William Murthwaite How lived at The Summeries (Mayhall Lane) Chesham Bois, the house he built for his family.



*Façade of High Bois House c 1950 and more recently*

Kensworth, North Road was built c 1899 for solicitor John Gibbon How, of Francis & How in Chesham. He was the older brother of architect William Murthwaite How, later of Kemp &

How, so presumably, William designed the house. To increase the size of his garden Gibbon How purchased additional land from Dr Frederick Mott who had bought the adjoining lot 6 in the 1896 auction. This meant that the so called 'New Road', now Long Park, was diverted from its planned route straight to the common. Instead, it turns sharply around what was the Kensworth garden following the original hedge line of 'Batchelor's Parke Field'.

After WWII it became the Ken House hotel. In the late 1970s the hotel was run by Vivian and Joan Sakal and was the largest employer in the village (today it is the Beacon School). It closed in the 80s and was left empty for many years until it was vandalised and severely damaged in a fire in 1987. It was demolished in 1987 and replaced by Laurel Court.



*Kensworth built 1899, demolished 1987 and replaced by Laurel Court*

**John Harold Kennard** FRIBA (1883-1926) was a young London architect who saw the opportunities here. He settled in Chiltern Road in a house, now called Blackdown, which he designed and built for his family. He became the area's most prolific architect and builder in the Arts & Crafts style and designed and built most of the outstanding Arts and Crafts properties in Amersham-on-the-Hill and Chesham Bois. Local historian Julian Hunt described Kennard as follows: "Whilst not a famous architect, Kennard made a far greater contribution to the local landscape than any other builder or architect".



*Killaspy (NDHA2 ) by Kennard, built c 1911 for Thomas Alcock Cambridge Grubbe*

**Abel Mead** (1858-1916) was a prolific Chesham Builder who also worked with his brother **Jesse Mead** although they had separate building firms. The earliest houses on Bois Avenue and Copperkins Lane (Map 2 Mayhall Farm) designated an Established Residential Area of Special Character (ERASC) now known as an Area of Special Character (ASC), were designed by Kennard and built by Abel Mead. Each house in Bois Avenue is unique, with individual, artistic detailing. However common features such as the red brick construction, steep tiled roofs, the use of white roughcast, and gables with black half-timbering create a cohesive feel to the road. Most houses retain their original oak front doors, leaded-light casement windows, and decorative metal window latches. The distinctive black diamond motif decoration on many of the houses is particular to local properties built by Kennard and Mead such as Oakfield Corner in Amersham-on-the-Hill, and houses on North Road.



*Abel Mead House, Bois Avenue*



*Distinctive diamond motif, Bois Avenue*

**Forbes & Tate:** James Edwin Forbes FRIBA (1876 - 1955) was an architect primarily based in London from 1905 to 1930 in partnership with John Duncan Tate. Locally they designed much of the Harwood Downs and Pollards Park Estates in Chalfont St Giles (where Forbes built his own house The Sheiling) and converted Pednor House into a fine country estate c 1911, working with Gertrude Jekyll on the garden design. In Chesham Bois they converted the large barn at Manor Farm (now Manor Barn, Grade II Listed (11)) for Victorian Artist and celebrity, Louise Jopling and her family. They designed The Dial House (NDHA South Road 7), on the corner of Chestnut Lane and Sycamore Road (just across the parish boundary) c 1910 for artist William Monk.



*The Dial House by Forbes and Tate c 1910*

**Swannell & Sly** were Rickmansworth auctioneers and estate agents who opened an early estate agent in Amersham-on-the-Hill on Hill Avenue (they also had branches in Northwood and Chorleywood). The firm was run by Joseph Townson Sly (1872-1950) of Northwood and later Burtons Lane, Little Chalfont. He started in partnership with William Henry Swannell but the partnership was dissolved in 1900 although Sly kept the name. In partnership with surveyor Ernest W Margetts and architect Charles William Richardson, he formed Swannell & Sly Architects before this partnership was also dissolved in 1927. Sly continued to work with his son Alec Townson Sly (of Glebelands, Nairwood Lane, Prestwood) who ran the Amersham office. Swannell & Sly were prolific architects designing housing along the developing Metropolitan Line area from Middlesex through to Buckinghamshire. Their best-known works, tend to be larger detached houses exhibiting use of heavy timberwork both internally & externally such as the 20s houses in Devonshire Avenue. In Chesham Bois they worked mainly with Chesham builders, Rust and Ratcliffe (Chiltern and Clifton Road Map 3 Bois Farm) and the Chesham Bois based Matthews Bros (Homefield, North Road (NDHA 1) and Manor Drive, Map 1 The Common).



*Lindisfarne (NDHA 8) Clifton Road designed by Swannell & Sly, built by Rust & Ratcliffe*

**Rust & Ratcliffe** were Chesham builders, founded in 1907 when Frederick George Rust and Frederick George Ratcliffe merged their existing building and brick making firms to develop the Bois Farm estate. However, they also worked nationwide and built everything from police stations (Chesham), shops and banks, to social housing and to grand country estates. Working with architect Harold Trimnell they built Woodland Court (NDHA 14 Map 4 The Church) in Chesham Bois. In 1911 they worked with Forbes and Tate to extend Pednor House (now Grade II listed) described by Pevsner as the “most extensive and successful conversion”.

**Matthews Bros.** was founded around 1912 by the eldest of four brothers, Denis and William, known as Bill, although the younger brothers George and Alfred also joined the firm. George later founded the brickworks H G Matthews. All served as apprentices with Jesse Mead, William Gomm and Rust & Ratcliffe. Their first houses were built on Long Park, on the common and Bois Lane. Denis lived at Laurel Bank, one of two substantial Matthews houses on Bois Lane which are still there, tucked behind some later houses. Three of the brothers saw active service in WWI and Denis was killed in 1918. Bill, who was profoundly



deaf, continued to run the firm with the yard at his home, Thornview, Chestnut Lane, until his tragic death on the railway crossing in 1934. Working with architects Swannell & Sly, Matthews Bros. built Arts & Craft style houses on Devonshire Avenue, Weedon Lane, Copperkins Lane and Manor Way.



*Early Matthews houses in Long Park including Chilcot, the home of Alfred Matthews*



*Holmfild (NDHA 1) designed by Swannell & Sly and built by Matthews Bros*

### **1.3. Demographics**

#### **1.3.1 The Manor**

The earliest known demographic mix of the village had the Lord of the Manor and his family, based at Bois Manor at the top of the society, followed by the parson, a yeoman class of tenant farmers, with labourers and servants at the bottom. The earliest housing from the now demolished Manor House to the farm buildings and labourers cottages reflects this structure. When the lords of the manor no longer lived in the village the rector became the most important personage, and defacto Lord of the Manor.

#### **1.3.2 Gentleman's residences**

As gentleman's residences such as Chesham Bois House were built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century they added a gentry class which expanded after the railway when large country estates were built in the parish such as Elangeni, Woodland Court and Chesham Bois Place, often used as weekend homes.

### 1.3.3 Multi-occupancy boarding houses

After the railway many of the new houses around the common were built for affluent commuters from London, often as weekend homes. However, some of the large properties on North Road (eg Orchard House) and Bois Lane (Kia Ora (later known as Penkridge) and Sunnyholme) were multi-occupancy from the start with rooms rented individually. These were occupied by clerks and office workers commuting into London or the neighbouring towns of Amersham and Chesham.

### 1.3.4 Cottages and terraces

The smaller Victorian and Edwardian properties built on Long Park and Bois Lane are also a mix of terraced housing and cottages with many built as investments and initially rented out to local tradesmen (many employed by the building firms) and their families. Liberty's original plan marked parts of Bois Lane for 'artisan' dwellings.



*Anne's Corner c 1910*

Anne's Corner, Grade II Listed (Map 1 The Common) a terrace of three cottages was built c 1910 for landowner Ernest Harrison Forwood of Bendrose Farm. The architect is unknown although they also designed Bendrose Grange and Bendrose Lodge at Amersham Common. Forwood was a shipowner in the City of London and built Anne's Corner as an investment. Whilst appearing to be one large house, it was designed as three separate properties with one, a shop and dairy as an outlet for the milk produced by Forwood's Friesian cows. Close to the recently built parade of shops on Bois Lane, Anne's Corner became the landmark building at the centre of the new village. This was particularly true after WWI when the Parish Council, (created by the Local Government Amendment Act in 1894) decided to locate the parish's War Memorial opposite, on the corner of Chesham Bois Common.

The Woodlands (NDHA 13 Map 4 The Church), off Long Park, designed by Kennard c 1915 was a joint venture between local businessmen (principally solicitor Alfred Ellis and Kennard as Rural Homes Ltd) and Gertrude Crosfield of Woodland Court to build decent housing for workers. Inspired by the Garden City Movement the cottages surround a communal green. After WWI, Kennard completed The Woodlands with more cottages in a less Arts & Crafts, more functional style.





*Arts & Crafts style cottages built in 1915, known as The Woodlands.*

Later developments of smaller housing included Woodside Avenue, Milton Lawns, The Farthings and Hollybush Lane (Map 6 Elangeni) but this is explored further in the Housing Mix report.

### **1.3.5 Flats and Social Housing**

There are a small number of low-density blocks of flats in the village including a block of four, Bois Gate on Bois Lane which replaced an earlier Victorian house, Leazefield. There are also flats next to the village shops and some conversions such as 11 Bois Lane opposite which is divided into 2 flats. A development of 14 2-bedroom apartments and one bungalow, Laurel Court, was completed by Prowting Homes in 1987 (Map 1 The Common).

Some social housing was designed by Kemp & How for the village and built in Bois Moor Road after WWI. but this is no longer part of Chesham Bois following the 1934 boundary change. However, after WWII, a former soldiers' camp around the Beacon School (Map 3 Bois Farm) was used as temporary social housing. As the war ended, the Nissan-huts and wooden huts were taken over by families made homeless by the war. Eventually Amersham Rural District Council took responsibility for the site and added basic facilities to the huts until all families were rehomed in social housing at Amersham Common or further afield by the mid-1950s.

## **2 St Leonard's Church and church buildings**

### **2.1 St Leonard's Church**

The oldest building in the parish is the Grade II Listed Church of St Leonard (Map 4 The Church) founded in 1215, which is faced with knapped flint and stone dressings. It contains 16th century brasses, monuments to the Cheyne family and some fine stained glass including a Morris & Co. window designed by Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones. After the church suffered bomb damage in 1941, the renowned stained-glass artist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Martin Travers remodelled several windows including the large East and West Windows with rare medieval glass.



St Leonard's was originally built as the private chapel of the neighbouring manor of the de Bois family. By the 1880s the church had fallen into disrepair and was renovated and extended in 1884 when a new square tower was added. The congregation started to grow with the arrival of the railway and the development of new housing. Consequently, architects Kemp & How added a vestry and lengthened the nave and north aisle to add additional seating for up to 200 people in 1911.

## 2.2 The Old Rectory



*Front façade of the Old Rectory today*

The Old Rectory Grade II Listed (18) (Map 1 The Common) is an attractive and richly detailed brick building, built for the Duke of Bedford, in 1833. The front gables bear the Duke's crest. The 1833 Rectory replaced a much humbler parsonage and itself tells an interesting story as the small population of Chesham Bois (only 157 in 1831) probably did not merit such a grand building. However, the Hon Lowther Barrington, a young relation of the Duke, had been appointed as the new rector in 1830, following his ordination that year. He was perhaps attracted by the excellent reputation of the school established by a previous incumbent, Thomas Clarke and that without a resident lord of the manor, the Rector was in fact the leader of the community. The building of such a grand rectory reflects the status of the Duke of Bedford and the Church of England in Chesham Bois in 1833. The distinctive individual-cut brick chimneys, unique in the village, echo the Tudor chimneys of nearby Grade I Listed Chenies Manor, also part of the Duke of Bedford's estate at this time. The Duke probably funded the building by selling off some of the Chesham Bois Manor land in

the late 1790s/early 1800s including Manor Farm to the north of the common. The stables, which are also Grade II Listed (17) were part of the earlier parsonage.

### **2.3 Current rectory**

The rectory (and garage) (Map 1 The Common) has a gross area of some 1897 sq2 ft. It was built in 1982/83 in an Arts and Crafts style designed by architect D T Rathbone of Leamington Spa, who had worked at Basil Spence's practise and designed the new rectory for St Mary's Amersham. Both the house and adjoining garage were set back approximately 40m from Glebe Way to minimise light pollution and minimise visibility from North Road, Bois Lane and Glebe Way. To ensure a satisfactory external appearance, and in the interests of the character and amenities of the locality, named types or samples of the facing bricks and roofing tiles used in the external construction had to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval.

### **2.4 Current Parish Centre**

The current Parish Hall (Map 1 The Common) was built in 1937 after many years of fundraising by the village and subscriptions ranging from 6d to £50. It replaced an earlier, smaller building known as the Rectory Rooms by John Harold Kennard. The earlier building was built at the expense of the incumbent, Rev T H Fitzpatrick and his wife in the Rectory grounds and then "generously bestowed upon the parish by the free conveyance of the hall". The new hall was designed by architect John Wade and the builders were Messrs H. J. & A. Wright of Great Missenden. According to the Bucks Examiner of 30 July 1937, the building "built of brick and tile, will consist of a main hall, stage, dressing rooms, committee room, and usual offices with modern heating and lighting. The floor of the main hall will be of Oregon Pine, and the general appearance will be very pleasing, and in perfect harmony with the general surroundings".

The current hall, including an extension in 1989, is about 1100 sq2 ft. It is domestic in scale and was designed to blend into the common and to be true to the local vernacular and surroundings. It was built in an Arts and Crafts style and does not jar in any way with its environment. Both the Parish Centre and the Rectory adhere to the prevailing architectural character of the Conservation Area.

### **2.5 The Catholic Church**

The Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour (Map 3 Bois Farm) was built in 1915 and extended in 1953. It replaced an earlier metal hut. Designed by Arthur Young, of South Square, Gray's Inn it consists of a nave, sanctuary, and sacristy, rough-cast walls, and tiled roof, surmounted by a wooden bell turret. Stained glass includes a copy of the famous image of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour in the round east window, given by parishioners in 1953; and window in memory of John Jackson, killed at Hooge in 1917 and Arthur Bouchier, killed at Fronelles in 1915. The adjoining presbytery was built in 1924.

### 3 School buildings

#### 3.1 Chesham Bois CofE Primary School



The first school in Chesham Bois was founded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the rector Thomas Clarke at the parsonage, for local boys and young gentleman intending to enter the Church. The first schoolhouse (on the corner of Chestnut Lane and Bois Lane Map 1 The Common) was built between 1841 and 1846 on part of the common donated by the Duke of Bedford, who also made a gift of £60 to establish the school which was built for £150. It was also the home of the schoolmistress, Miss Rance. By 1873 there were 62 pupils, but an adverse inspection report forced the community to relocate the school, initially to the Mission Hall in Lower Bois.

Chesham Bois School moved to the current building (Map 4 The Church) in 1894 after £1,202.2s.7d was raised by local subscription and Lord Chesham had donated the land in Bois Lane.

#### 3.2 Chestnut Lane (3-7) and Elangeni (7-10) Primary Schools

In September 1973 Elangeni School and Chestnut Lane School (Map 6 Elangeni) opened on the site of the Colenso family country estate, Elangeni. Following the death of his wife, Irma Colenso, Angelo Crovo sold the house and land to Buckinghamshire County Council in 1967. Work began on demolishing the house in 1972 and Margaret Thatcher opened the new schools when she was Minister for Education. Both buildings have been nominated as NDHAs and a decision is pending (25 February 2025).

#### 3.3 Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School (Map 3 Bois Farm) was founded as a convent school by the Poor Servants of the Mother of God in 1941, when four nuns of the order and their 40 pupils were evacuated from London during the Blitz. A 5-bedroom house, Top O'The Hill (possibly by Kennard), in gardens of three quarters of an acre was purchased for the convent and the pupils were initially taught in the convent's living room. The convent closed at the end of the 80s but the school continued. The original house is now boarded up and falling into disrepair.

### 3.4 Heatherton House School

Heatherton House School (Map 2 Mayhall Farm) was started in 1912 by Miss Harrison and Miss Walters after they purchased Dr Shaw-Mackenzie's Edwardian Villa, on the corner of Copperkins Lane. The original house was built by Matthews Bros. who were now engaged to build new school buildings in the garden.

### 3.5 The Beacon School

The Beacon School (Map 3 Bois Farm) was founded by Stanley Fieldhouse in 1933 in the rented farmhouse of Bois Farm with just five pupils. The farm was then owned by businessman and insurance broker, Daniel George Hayman of Cape Lodge, Amersham who claimed to be the richest man in Amersham. Hayman planned to turn the rest of the farm into a country club and theatre with hotel rooms and a restaurant. The Tudor barn was converted to include a stage, a dancefloor, and seating for 200 people. The Bois Farm Residential Club Theatre only lasted for a year as it was not a commercial success. During the war the site became a soldiers' camp with the barn as the Officer's Mess and dance hall. Homeless families sought refuge in the barn at the end of war when the site, known as Beech Barn Camp, became home to several displaced families. In the 1950s the barns and what remained of the farm was sold to Philip Masters, the then headmaster of the Beacon School. The Grade II Listed Tudor barn is now the school dining room.



*Interior of the Beacon School's Tudor barn (Grade II Listed (8))*

### 3.6 Other Schools

Private 'kindergartens' were also a feature of the area. Monk's Barn, opposite the Beacon was an independent kindergarden before it was incorporated in the Beacon School. Principal Miss E F Higgins ran Kendrick School at Redland, Clifton Road during the 1940s. During the 1950s and early 1960s there was a small school located at Blackwood, Bois Lane, at the corner of Holloway Lane, Stubbs Wood and Bois Lane. The school was called The Chiltern School and catered for local girls and boys aged 3 to 8 years old from the Chesham Bois village area.

## **4 Other Buildings**

### **4.1 Pioneer Hall**

The second, and present Pioneer Hall (Map 4 The Church) in Bois Lane, was built for the 1st Chesham Bois Scout Group in 1932 after a fire burnt down the original 1921 hall. The group was formed back in 1908, the same year as Scouting itself came into being under Robert Baden-Powell. It has continued uninterrupted ever since so it is one of the oldest groups in the world. The hall contains a bronze Memorial plaque to the eight 1st Chesham Bois Scouts killed in WWI which was saved from the fire.

### **4.2 Tithe Barn**

The Tithe Barn (Map 1 The Common) Bois Lane, is a barn conversion of an early dilapidated, agricultural barn, believed to be the Amersham rector's tithe barn. Dr Mott relocated the barn from an orchard in the then Amersham Rectory, to the field behind his home, Downash (the Old Schoolhouse). From 1908, the barn was used for the first meetings of the 1st Chesham Bois Scout Troop. In 1915, artist Caroline (Car) Richardson purchased Downash after seeing it from a bus. She was not aware of the existence of the barn when she purchased the property. She later extended and renovated the barn to provide living accommodation and an artist's studio. At the south end was a substantial stable for up to three ponies and space for a stable lad to live in the loft above. The loft was later integrated into the house and a staircase was added. Car, with her sister Josephine, lived in The Tithe Barn until her death.



*Drawing of the Tithe Barn by Car Richardson*

## **5 The Chesham Bois Conservation Area and Heritage Assets**

### **5.1 Chesham Bois Conservation Area**

Thanks in large part to the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act and the designation of the Chesham Bois Conservation Area (CBCA) in 1992, the special character of Chesham Bois has been retained. Chesham Bois Common, part of the CBCA,



marks the boundary between the more urban Amersham-on-the-Hill and the semi-rural village of Chesham Bois. It is this boundary which ensures the village's separate identity.

The CBCA covers an area of 34.4 ha (around 84 acres) and includes Chesham Bois Common, North Road, Manor Drive, Glebe Way, most of Bois Lane and extends north-eastwards to St Leonard's Parish Church and surrounding buildings in High Bois Lane.



#### *Analysis of the Special Character of the Conservation Area with listed buildings in red*

There are three broad types of buildings which are particularly important to the special character of the Conservation Area.

These are described in the Chiltern District Council documentation as follows:

1. The historic buildings which pre-date the growth of the village
2. The small closely developed terraces and semi-detached cottages from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century
3. The larger and more elaborate detached and semi-detached houses of the same period.

However, the CBCA has not been reviewed since 1996 which means the Bucks Heritage Environment Record for Chesham Bois is outdated. Such a review could consider extending the conservation area to include Woodlands Court. This is a NDHA (14) and the most important Arts and Crafts house in the parish, yet it is just outside the CBCA boundary. The CBCA could also be extended to include all the remaining common land on Chestnut Lane, Copperkins Lane, and Amersham Road. Many of the finest Arts and Crafts houses have been listed as NDHAs, with a concentration of these houses along Bois Avenue and Copperkins

Lane so incorporating this area into the CBCA could also be considered. However, the heaviest density of NDHAs is along South Road, just across the CBCA boundary, and the parish boundary into Amersham. Consideration could also be made of including South Road in the CBCA.

## **5.2 Heritage Assets: Listed Buildings**

There are 19 listed buildings in Chesham Bois with 9 clustered around the common and 10 scattered across the remainder of the parish. All are Grade II Listed, except Chesham Bois House which is Grade I.

1. II 1919 Anne's Corner – Arts & Crafts style
2. II C17 Barn at Manor Lodge including cottage at Manor Barn
3. I Chesham Bois House - late Georgian Gentleman's Villa
4. II 1919 Chesham Bois War Memorial (Kennard)
5. II Church of St Leonard – 13<sup>th</sup> century
6. II Cottage and attached Stable Mayhall Farm
7. II Granary to North of Mayhall Farmhouse
8. II Gymnasium to the Beacon School
9. II House and attached Dining Hall to the Beacon School
10. II Large Barn at Mayhall Farm
11. II C18 Manor Barn
12. II C17 Manor Farm Cottage
13. II Manor House with attached Stables (C18 and early C19 refronting)
14. II Mayhall Farmhouse
15. II C17 Rectory Cottage
16. II Small Barn and Attached Cowshed
17. II C18 Stable Block to East of the Old Rectory
18. II 1833 The (Old) Rectory
19. II The Warren

## **5.3 Non-Designated Heritage Assets**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) made funds available to twenty-two Local Authorities, including Buckinghamshire, as part of a national initiative to improve the provision and standard of locally held Lists of NDHAs.

Buckinghamshire Council's funding ended in January 2024 although some assets are still waiting for committee approval. Volunteer Christopher Collier submitted the majority of the entries for Chesham Bois.

NDHAs Chesham Bois

1. Homefield, North Road - Arts & Crafts style by Swannell & Sly
2. Killaspy, North Road- Arts & Crafts style by Kennard
3. El Ezbah, Copperkins Lane – Arts & Crafts style by Kennard
4. Greeba, Copperkins Lane - Arts & Crafts style by Kennard

5. Michaelmas House (originally Gorselands), Bois Avenue - Arts & Crafts style by Kennard
6. Penwarne, 13 Bois Avenue - Arts & Crafts style by Kennard
7. Woodmuir, 10 Clifton Road - Arts & Crafts style by Kennard
8. Lindisfarne, Chiltern Road - Arts & Crafts style by Swannell & Sly
9. Englewood, Amersham Road
10. Caer Sidhe (formerly Three Gates), Chiltern Road – Arts & Crafts style by Kennard
11. Halvorsen, Chiltern Road – 1990s modernist style by Gail Halvorsen
12. Chesham Bois Burial Ground Chapel – Kemp & How
13. The Woodlands 1-10 inclusive, off Long Park- Arts & Crafts style by Kennard
14. 1, 2 and 3 Woodland Court - Arts & Crafts by Harold Conybeare Trimnell
15. High Bois House, High Bois Lane - Arts & Crafts style by Kemp & How
16. 89 Bois Lane – coach house to High Bois House, Arts & Crafts style by Kemp & How
17. Holloway Lane – Voysey Arts & Crafts style by Ernest Gee
18. The Beeches, Stubbs Wood – Arts & Crafts style possibly by Kemp & How
19. Stubbs End, Stubbs Wood – 1920s villa
20. 92 & 94 Bois Lane - Voysey Arts & Crafts style by Ernest Gee
21. 88 Bois Lane - Voysey Arts & Crafts style by Ernest Gee
22. 72 & 74 Bois Lane - Arts & Crafts style

In total 35 individual houses have been locally listed in these 22 assets.

Houses on South Road are not currently included in the Chesham Bois Conservation Area and are in fact in Amersham. They are in the area adjacent to the Conservation Area. They fall into the third category of “larger and more elaborate detached and semi-detached houses of the same period”. Most of the early 20th century houses were built in the Arts and Crafts style by John Harold Kennard.

NDHAs South Road:

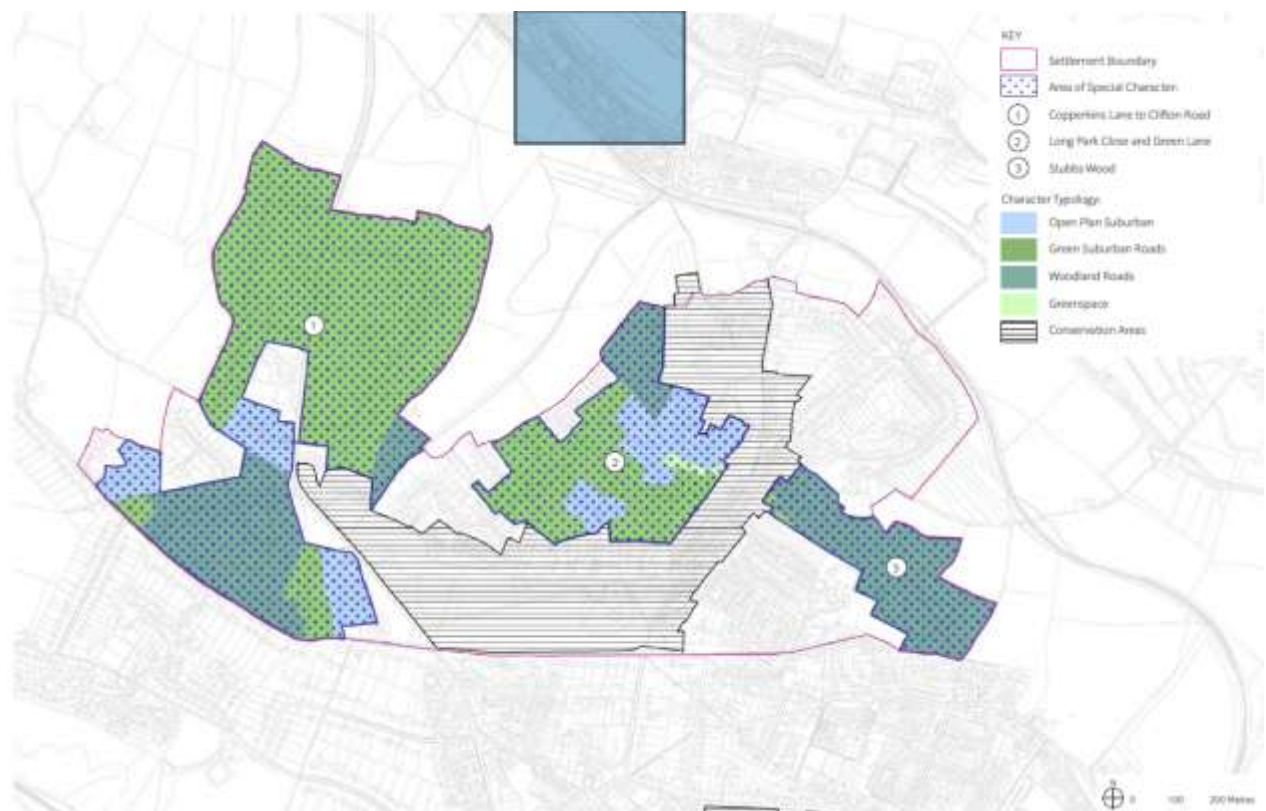
1. Bois Gate and St Stephens Cottage, 13 and 14 South Road - Arts & Crafts style by Kennard
2. Bents Cottage, 15 South Road – Arts & Crafts style
3. Greenbank House and Greenbank, Cottage South Road - Arts & Crafts style by Kennard
4. Danesway, 21 South Road - Arts & Crafts style by Kennard
5. White Ladies, 23 South Road – Arts & Crafts style
6. Punch Tree House, South Road - Arts & Crafts style by Kennard
7. The Dial House, Sycamore Road – Arts & Crafts style by Forbes & Tate

## 6 Established Residential Areas of Special Character/Areas of Special Character

In addition to the CBCA the village has three areas which have been identified as Areas of Special Character:

1. **Copperkins Lane to Clifton Road**
2. **Long Park Close and Green Lane**
3. **Stubbs Wood**

According to the *Chiltern & South Bucks Townscape Character Study Part 3* (Chris Blanford Associates, November 2017), These areas have been identified due to their high-quality townscape, and because they are particularly well preserved and maintained. They are considered particularly vulnerable to change as a result of their distinctive low-density pattern of detached and semi-detached houses with a variety of architectural styles set within large gardens plots associated with mature vegetation fronting onto well-treed green streetscape.



**Chesham Bois: Areas of Special Character**  
CHILTERN & SOUTH BUCKS SETTLEMENT STUDY – PART 3

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