

## CHURCH STREET AND PUMP LANE

From the oldest maps it would appear that the area bounded by Church Street and Pump Lane is the oldest part of today's village. A cart-way from Warleigh would have been the only route through this part of the village. The principal building from the earliest dates would be St Swithun's Church, with Church Farm dating from 1680.

Church Street runs between Bathford Hill and the A363 Bradford Road, with Pump Lane linking Church Street and Bradford Road. The tiny Court Lane links Pump Lane and Church Street at the boundary of the Conservation Area.

Entering the village from the main Bradford Road, into Church Street, the quieter atmosphere is suddenly obvious. This is one of the finest views into the village, with trees and garden shrubs immediately in view. Here there are two fine Victorian houses, one the Old School House. Trees in front of this are an important sight at the entrance to Church Street. There is a fine view back along the Street towards Bathampton Down.

Further along the street on the right is a small close of modest modern houses with natural stone fronts and beech hedges. Opposite is Lower House Farm, reputedly the oldest house in the village. Its barn has been converted to a dwelling and is called High Barn. Also on the left is the site of Bathford House, destroyed by fire in 1913, with its stable block now converted to a dwelling, and lovely gates showing the remains of various structures beyond. A modern house, 'Bidston' lies behind the high curved stone wall which is typical of the stone walls of this area. Ostlings Lane starts here and beyond the junction is Briscoe House with its fine windows and glass and iron, stone gabled porch. Briscoe House was probably designed by Frederick Preedy. He was also the architect for the rebuilding of the present church in about 1870. Opposite, elevated within its green churchyard, is St Swithun's church itself, dominating this area with its landmark square tower. The retaining wall is collapsing slowly but the grassy bank is splendid. The wooden lych gate with its sloping path, railings and fine stone post are all typically Victorian, like the church itself. The lamp posts in this area are attractive but would maybe have been better painted black. Here is the tranquil footpath (The Church Drum) connecting Church Street and Pump Lane and has a strong rural character, reinforced by the churchyard to one side and the orchard with its livestock on the other side of the stone wall. There are lovely views of the church and the valley from here.

Next to Briscoe House is the simply designed modern vicarage with a fine magnolia tree in the garden. Next door is the former vicarage, unseen behind the high stone garden wall but with an interesting wooden garden door and trees beyond. Next is the former Coach House to Eagle House, sensitively converted into a dwelling with fine gateposts and door and then Eagle House itself. This is a fine 18<sup>th</sup> century mansion, possibly by John Wood the elder. The house presents a modest and dignified elevation to Church Street, with a high stone wall and gateway and fine mature copper beeches in the background.

This side of Church Street is dominated by fine large detached historic buildings, high stone walls and dense overhanging foliage, but on the other side of the street are close groups of comparatively modest stone built dwellings, both older and modern. There are also some fine stone walls on this side, a feature of the whole of Church Street. This gives interesting contrast to the character of the street as it moves from rural lane to village street.

Church Street opens out into the 'Square' in front of Sycamore House where beeches and yews make an impact, but the fine curved ashlar walls and gate posts at the entrance to Manor Drive dominate. The Square is over-used as a car park and would benefit from a better surface treatment. Sycamore House is the most important building here with its fine well-proportioned ashlar elevation and clay pantile roof. The house has recently been renovated and is more visible since the removal of several large trees.

The narrow and attractive Pump Lane leads from the Square. Close by is the masonry of the pump itself set into the roadside stone wall. This is clearly part of the history of the village and would have been used at least until the 1900s. Pump Lane is one-way so suffers little from traffic congestion. Attractive old stone cottages, which side or front on to the lane lend a very rural character. Some oolitic limestone paving can be seen.

The principal group in Pump Lane is the historic Church Farm, a charming collection of old stone buildings. The old farmhouse is of oolitic limestone random rubble with a stone tile roof. There is an old barn, stable block and former cowshed and a chestnut tree. There are paddocks front and back and shrubs soften and frame the farm buildings. Beyond the farm is the rear gate to the church and this area

is dominated by mature oak, lime, poplar and horse chestnut trees. This whole area is extremely pleasant and has a very rural character with stone walls and overgrown wildflower verges. Further along Pump Lane are a pair of cottages, formerly farm buildings but the character is retained. There are more walls, a modern dutch barn and an organic farm. Here also is the entrance to the modern estate of Mountain Wood and a splendid view across the meadows up towards the eaves of Bathford Woods.

At the junction with Court Lane, the last house in Pump Lane is the large detached house called Monkton Wyld mostly hidden behind stone walls but with some fine trees in view in its large garden. There are panoramic views here of Bathampton Down, Solsbury Hill and the river valley into Bath. At one time, Court Lane ran on to the river and marked the end of Church Street, but is now a short rural lane. More trees planted at the top and bottom would increase its attractiveness. Pump Lane continues as a completely rural way flanked by grass banks and hedges with pasture beyond until it meets Bradford Road.

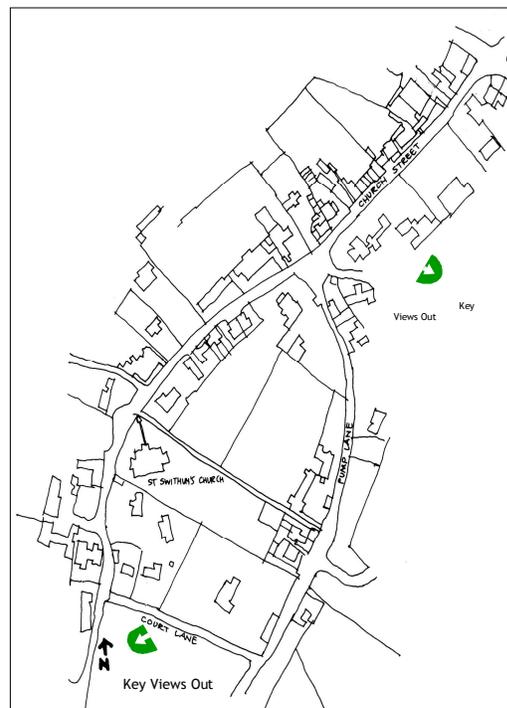
The part of Church Street between the Square and Bathford Hill is different in character. Beyond St Cuthbert's, a fine Georgian house set back behind a high stone wall, the mostly terraced dwellings and outbuildings are much smaller and set close to the roadside. These form a charming articulated group of dwellings with traditional detailing and steep roofs, some with dormers. Several of the dwellings have attractive stone door heads and some have pretty stone walled cottage front gardens. The street is very well contained as a space with the dwellings on one side and the very high stone wall of Bathford Manor on the other side, with virtually no view except of the tall trees beyond and the very top of the Manor House. These include two large firs and some poplars, which can be seen from a great distance. There are attractive views along the length of this straight section.

This part of Church Street is narrow but busy. It has an unusual historic and valuable oolitic stone pavement to one side. Because this is at the same level as the tarmac surface, it is often used as part of the carriageway and is prone to traffic damage. Most houses have no garages so cars are usually parked alongside the manor wall which narrows the road further.

About halfway along this part of Church Street is the well used and familiar, if rather utilitarian, Parish Hall of ashlar stone with a sheeted roof. Although updated during its life, the shell is now over eighty years old. The step at the pavement junction makes wheelchair use difficult. Beyond the hall is the old butchers shop with its external hanging rack and then the entrance to Badgers Lodge with its interesting outbuildings. Near the junction with Bathford Hill are two old cottages with pretty stone frontages and a stone built modern house. There are glimpse views here to the river valley beyond and a good view of the mature trees across the road at Whitehaven. On the opposite side is an overgrown verge in front of the wall, which makes an untidy entrance to the street, and a quaint street name sign!



A view of St. Swithuns Church



Sketch map of Church St and Pump Lane areas.

## SIGNIFICANT FEATURES of the Church St. and Pump Lane area

- Topography:** Mainly level, gentle inclines toward south. Ground rises towards Bathford Woods to south. Generally straight routes with some gentle curves. Long views from extreme ends of routes, otherwise well contained.
- Access:** Attractive historic village street with limestone pavements. Rural lanes connecting main routes. No road markings and minimal signage. Historic street lighting. Church Street used as short cut to Bradford Road. Rural footpath connection.
- Street Pattern:** Historic ribbon development along historic village road with some modern replacement and infill development. Some conversion of farm buildings.
- Morphology:** Old established part of the settlement with core of historic buildings mixed with minority of discreetly sited modern buildings. Several important landmark buildings.
- Activities:** Mostly residential with Parish Hall as important community and social facility. Parish Church as focal point of area. Farming activities have declined over time but still part of character.
- Space:** Rural edge at Bradford Road and south west part becoming more contained by buildings and walls towards Bathford Hill. Picturesque long views towards Bathampton Down and Solsbury Hill and glimpse views between buildings. Mature foliage in gardens very important to character of area.
- Buildings:** Completely contained within the Conservation Area. Strong mix of important large and more modest dwellings. The Church dominates the lower part of the Street. Several landmark historic buildings with large gardens and smaller close knit stone cottages retaining character of Bathford, mixed with few modern buildings. Parish Hall stands out in street scene as different architectural language.
- Materials/Detail:** Older buildings of local stone with steeply pitched roofs. Traditional details to older buildings, including some fine stone door heads. Modern buildings in real or reconstructed stone, mostly lacking in traditional details.

### GUIDANCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure retention of traditional village features such as the pump and stonework to Manor Drive entrance.
- Protect and maintain stone boundary walls
- Protect and maintain limestone pavements
- Resist new building unless of very high architectural quality
- Encourage extensions to be designed respecting village character using natural materials
- Ensure retention and management of existing mature trees
- Ensure retention of glimpse views between buildings.
- Ensure setting of existing landmark buildings is retained.
- No new development between Bradford Road and Court Lane to preserve rural character of entrance to village at this point.

### POTENTIAL ACTIONS & ENHANCEMENT SCHEMES

- Consider improvements to parking facilities to Church Street and the Square to avoid damage to pavements.
- Monitor traffic safety at junction with Bradford Road
- Encourage retention of mixed uses
- Lobby for Local Authority grant aid for repairs to stone walls
- Possible Article 4 directives to protect original features on unlisted buildings of village character within the Conservation Area



High stone walls on Church St.



A Masons mark in Church Street



The village pump by Sycamore House

Church Street and Pump Lane area pictures



The square dominated by Sycamore House (and a telegraph pole!).



Rural Pump Lane and cottages.



Church Farm with its stone roofed barn.



Cottages and cars on Church Street.



A mix of old and 'newer' on Pump Lane.



Rural Court Lane – looking toward Church St.



Bathford Parish Hall.



Footpath and Lych Gate with 'Bidston' beyond.



Briscoe House at the junction with Ostlings Lane.



Glimpse view to east at Badgers Lodge – note the cobbled stone pavements.