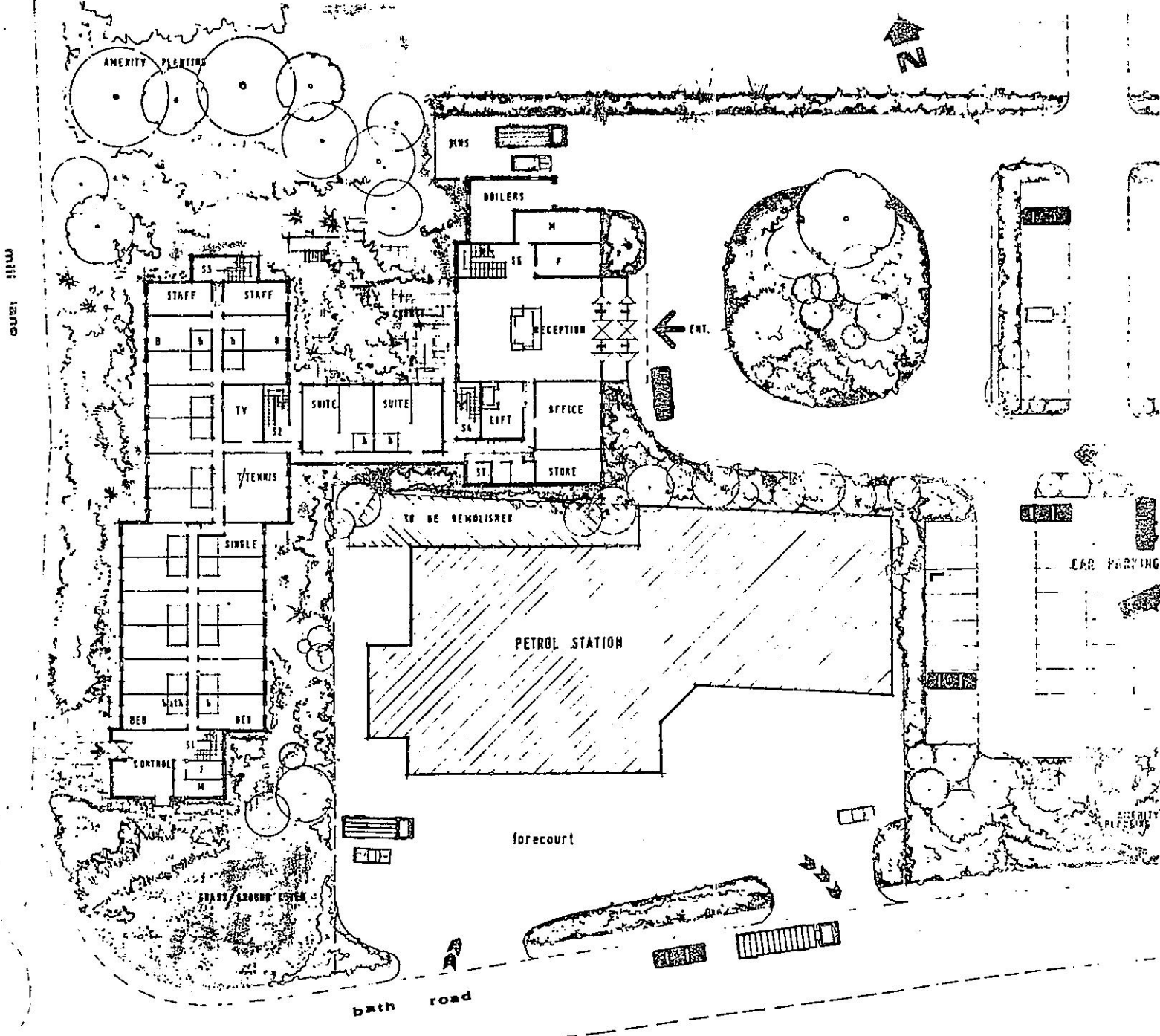


HITCHAM and TAPLOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY



PLAN of PROPOSED ADDITIONAL HOTEL at SKINDLES

HITCHAM & TAPLOW PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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EDITORIAL

There is a change of theme in this Newsletter; apart from the usual Recent Planning Developments, which was omitted from the previous Newsletter, we have had a look at some of the recent building in the area to see what has happened to it since the Planning Application was granted.

Also there is an interesting quotation dug up by one of our Members on what Taplow was like in 1895 and we have a piece on Skindles itself.

NEW BUILDING IN HITCHAM & TAPLOW

Maryfield, High Street

This house, the home of the Mialls until 1979, is to be the residential UK base of an international company. Its main function will be to serve as a pied-a-terre for company visitors from overseas countries whilst they are in the UK. To this end, interior decorators have been given something of a free hand in modernizing the interior.

The house is in the charge of Tony and Caroline Shapley who have taken up residence in the wing. They expect Maryfield to be the scene of occasional director-level conferences and dinner parties. Alterations inside the house mean that it now has a sauna and six bedrooms, three of which have bathrooms en suite.

Elibank, Rectory Road

Alan and Susan Senior have divided Elibank into two and a new five bedroomed house is being built in the grounds. The reconditioned part of the main house is now called "The Dower House", and Sandy and Steve Randall from Bray are living there.

Work on the main house is in progress and suitable matching tiles for the roof have been obtained from The Grange, Templewood Lane, now being demolished. Rhododendrons and azaleas, planted for Judge Bancroft's wedding anniversary in 1938 have been replanted on the boundary of the new house, and are reported to have taken successfully. Materials for building have been carefully chosen to blend with the older parts and sympathetic landscaping is being carried out.

Springfield Cottage, Berry Hill

The stable block behind Springfield cottage has been sold for conversion as one house. A bungalow is to be built at the back of the plot for Mr. Whitlaw and the cottage sold.

West Side of Hitcham Road

The fencing had been put up at the request of the local Council and all the old hedge and trees were moved by the Burnham Gardening Society. In addition new trees had been planted inside the fence. It is thought that this is a great improvement.

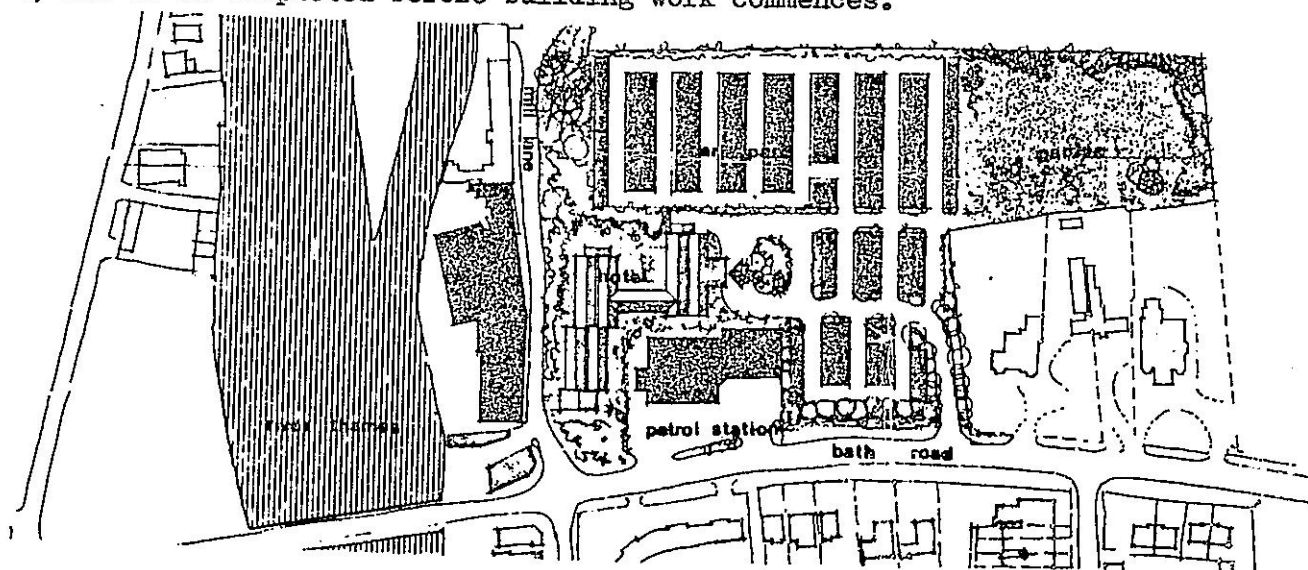
Extension to Skindles

The plan of the front cover shows the ground floor lay-out of the new 70 bed Hotel for which Skindles Limited received planning consent in November last year. There is to be an access roadway from the Bath Road at the east end of the Site. The Hotel's main entrance is facing the car park behind the existing garage. There will also be an entrance opposite the present building. The new Hotel is to be constructed of brick with pitched roofs, partly two storey and partly three with dormer windows.



WEST

There will be a large new car park which, as a condition of the planning consent, has to be completed before building work commences.



It is not clear how visitors will get from the car park to the existing building as there is no access from Mill Lane. The Local Authority may well have dictated traffic requirements but I would have thought that a one-way system with an entrance to the Hotel and car park from Mill Lane with a controlled exit near to the garage would have given better circulation.

I am assured that great care will be taken with planting to provide screening and I hope that steps will be taken to nurture the existing trees and to supplement them so that, when the buildings are complete, the planting will be well established.

It is interesting to note that the length of the proposed new building along Mill Lane is roughly the same as that shown on the 1899 Ordnance Survey map.

Hitcham House, Hitcham Grange and Hitchambury

There are conflicting reports about whether Hitchambury is being sold or not.

Berry Hill Country Club Flats

These will be available for sale in June/July this year and should be completed.

Bapsey South

This new house, over which there was so much controversy, is now going ahead again after a period last year when work was stopped and it looked a mess! It has 3 reception rooms and 4 bedrooms and will be finished to purchasers' specification; completion of the structure is expected in June/July.

RECENT PLANNING DEVELOPMENTS

The list below gives details of all items of particular interest to the Society or where it has objected since this was last reported on a year ago.

Berry Hill Farm. Gravel extraction by Summerlease Gravel Co. Accesses to Boundary Road (BD/258/79), to which the Society objected, and to Approach Road (BD 259/79) are both still under appeal. Application for removal of tree bank (BD 260/79) was withdrawn.

Heathfield Road, Hedsor. Gravel extraction by Redland Aggregates Ltd (W 6982/79). The Society objected and the application was refused on appeal.

Old Coach House, Hillmead. Conversion to dwelling. The second application (BD 102/80) was refused on appeal.

Hill Farm. Erection of one detached bungalow (BD 99/80). The Society objected and consent was refused.

New Taplow Paper Mills.

- (a) Change of Dunlow Lodge from residential to office use (BD 97/80). The Society objected. An Inquiry due Oct 1980 was cancelled pending negotiations.
- (b) New access bridge (SBD 465/80). Conditional permission was given.
- (c) Committee members of the Society visited the Managing Director in July 1980 and discussed the condition of Mill Lane.

Taplow House Hotel. Three storey 19 bedroom extension (SBD 308/80). The Society objected; this is now under appeal by written representation, which will include the Society's objections.

Licensed Victuallers Association.

- (a) Land off Approach Road, adjoining the sports ground and formerly used as a tip, has been bought by the L.V. Association for Slough School. There are no proposals for its use at present; its use is for the future as the School is growing. It is still very messy and the Society is in correspondence with the Divisional Surveyor at Beaconsfield.
- (b) Erection of two double garages on the sports ground (SBD 921/80) given conditional permission.

Boundary Road Stables. Extension by six new boxes etc (SBD 710/80). The Society objected but conditional permission given.

Old Cottage, High Street. Erection of double garage (BD 370/80). The Society objected to a rather obtrusive development. Conditional permission given.

Taplow Court. Oil storage and building at riverside from Thames Water standby generation etc (SBD 583/80). Consent refused.

Station Supreme, Bath Road. Parking of 12 cars for Daimler Hire Ltd (SBD 1134/80). Permission given.

Hales Cottage. Two storey extension (SBD 441/80). The Society objected. Consent refused.

Silchester House School. Brick single storey detached classroom building (SBD 1216/80). Conditional permission given. Apart from merely painting to match the existing buildings, the Society would have liked to see a suitably integrated extension.

Maalesa, Station Road. Double Garage and new access to Station Road (SBD 1246/80). The Society has pointed out dangers in this new access and questioned the size of provision. Not yet determined.

Springfield Cottage, Berry Hill. Conversion of existing stable block, flat and cottage to form 4 mews cottages and 4 garages to be built (SBD 329/80). The Society objected suggesting a smaller scheme. Consent refused.

Hitcham Grange. First floor extension at 3 Stable Cottages (SBD 1096/80). Conditional permission given.

AMENITY MATTERS

Bath Road lay-by. The Society has written to the Parish Council and the County Engineer about the condition of the lay-by near the railway bridge. The Bucks Planning Officer's report (Oct 1980) on restoration of derelict land also mentions its unkempt appearance and the SAGA restoration award for the Summerleaze pit adjoining.

Footpath, Boundary Road to Hitcham Road. The Society has asked for reinstatement of signs prohibiting bicycles and also for the end of horse-riding along the footpath, which is damaging the surface. This is still in hand but it is clear that horse riding is not allowed as it is a footpath. South Bucks District Council have told us that proceedings will be taken against any person they find out about who is in charge of a horse using this or any other footpath.

Editor's Note. This particular path is far too narrow for horses and I know of one serious accident where a rider was thrown off and hit her head on one of the concrete fence posts.

SKINDLES

Skindles was built towards the end of 17th Century. The old Inn that held the first license was known as the Orkney Arms, so named after George, Earl of Orkney, one of Marlborough's generals.

In the 19th Century it was purchased by William Skindle, a former postillion to Lord Cottesloe with aspirations to become a King's Messenger but who became instead a waiter. On acquiring the property, William Skindle made several additions which necessitated his applying for a new licence. On making his application he was asked by the Magistrate what he now proposed to call it - a consideration he had completely overlooked. Mr. Skindle was without reply until somebody whispered, "Call it Skindles", so it has been to this day. In fact, in the Edwardian era, Skindles was Maidenhead and its reputation grew and was sealed with Royal approval by the patronage of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra and a bevy of names from Debrett.

An elegant of its age, Skindles became famous enough for a second establishment to be built and to be called Skindles in Poperinge, Belgium. However below this surface respectability ran an undercurrent of the risqué, with the Gaiety Girls and devoted husbands and fathers coming down from London for clandestine weekends.

With the retirement of William Skindle in 1876 the Hodgson Brothers owned the Hotel until 1934 when it was sold to a Company, Skindles Limited. In 1947 the Hotel was blighted by a severe fire and the famous floods of that year invaded the ballroom, thus necessitating the laying of a completely new floor. The Hotel changed hands again in 1950 when it was purchased by Mr. Giulio Trapani who started the tea dances and a visitors' roll of honour including Bette Davis, Boris Karloff, the Marx Brothers, Vice-President Richard Nixon, and King Hussein of Jordan who became one of the Hotel's regular customers.

The character of the Hotel began to change when, in 1966, it was bought by Rambuttan Limited. An attempt was then made to put Skindles within reach of the middle classes but with standards usually associated with exclusive hotels. An elegant gambling casino, to be known as Skindles Sporting Club, was one of the innovations and this was launched with a glittering Charity Ball only to close two years later as an uneconomical proposition. This closure was followed by a live music and cabaret night spot that also opened briefly and then closed.

The most recent change occurred in the late Seventy's when entrepreneur, Louis Brown, having been in the business for many years, purchased Skindles. £1,500,000 was spent on restoration in order to return Skindles to its former majesty and when the Hotel emerged from under the dust sheets, to its renewed glory, there were champagne luncheons, river trips and visits by Royalty and celebrities of stage and screen.

TAPLOW THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD

During the nineteenth century, Taplow was known best as being the home of the Grenfell family. William Grenfell, the finest sportsman of his day, who later became Baron Desborough, lived at Taplow Court, and owned most of the parish.

In 1895 his second son Billy decided to keep a diary. As he was only four years of age, he dictated to his mother, who copied it down carefully. Here are some extracts:-

"We live at Taplow Court, that is the name of the place. Taplow is a very big house, it looks red outside, and the flower beds are some in the shape of stars and others round-pieces. Taplow has also very kind gardeners. The woods are very dear, they end at the river Thames. The river Thames runs into the North Sea through Taplow and London".

"Max has got a little place under a pair of bushes in the shape of a hut, and Billy in the shape of a long little passage, and at the end there is a little path into the church-yard where all the graves are: and there is a mound in the middle where they often scramble up. It is a grave too, of a great Sea King; and there is a lot of archways as you go out of the west door of Taplow Court each leading into the churchyard, and a gate at the end. There is some trees in the churchyard - in the summer it is near where we scramble up and Billy digs in his bushes. There is a path near to the dairy, and as you come out of the other side of the house you see a lot of cedar trees. We all play under them and miles and miles in the woods. We play Enemies, and tonight before we came down to Mama we had an enemy fight....."

"The company who often comes here, we like George Curzon best, what gives us fruit under the table. We like him very much, he gives us more than we ought to have of fruit. He is merry and very fond of travelling".

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Churchyard cleaning at St. Nicolas. In the event about 20 people turned up to start cleaning the churchyard on Saturday 7th March. They all worked steadily until nearly lunchtime when the increasing rain made progress rather slow and only a small portion of the churchyard had been cleared. We were, however, pleased to receive the thanks of the Rector at the services on the following Sunday. In view of the slow progress two more dates were made for Saturday 2nd May and Saturday 23rd May both at 9.45 a.m. As we go to press I am able to report that the effort on Saturday 2nd May, when again about 20 people attended, has made a very good impression at the West end but there is still a great deal of work to be done at the East end stretching right through into the part of the churchyard round the War Memorial. (Editor's note . Incidentally if it seems a little odd that this item comes under the main heading of Social Activities, many people came up to me after Saturday 2nd May and said what an enjoyable occasion it had been!)

Wine & Cheese Party at Cliveden. The party this year will be on Friday 19th June 1981; a letter giving full details is enclosed with the Newsletter. Although final arrangements have yet to be made by the Committee, we hope that the area that Phillip Cotton will cover will be the Water Gardens and include the place where the trees presented by the Society are planted. May we hope for better weather than last year!

Dorneywood Gardens - Saturday 1st August. Arrangements have been made for a visit to Dorneywood at 3.p.m on Saturday 1st August. The Gardens are found by going North from Burnham High Street up Dropmore Road for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile and forking right along Dorneywood Road; the entrance drive to the Gardens is 1 mile up on the right. Members and friends who want to go on this visit should arrive at the car park, located off the Drive, by 3.p.m.; there is a charge payable to the Head Gardener of 60 pence per head (except Members of the National Trust who go free). Please note there are NO lavatories on the premises.