

Character Area: Holmlea Road, Talbot Place, Holmlea Walk, Marshfield, and Cobb Close

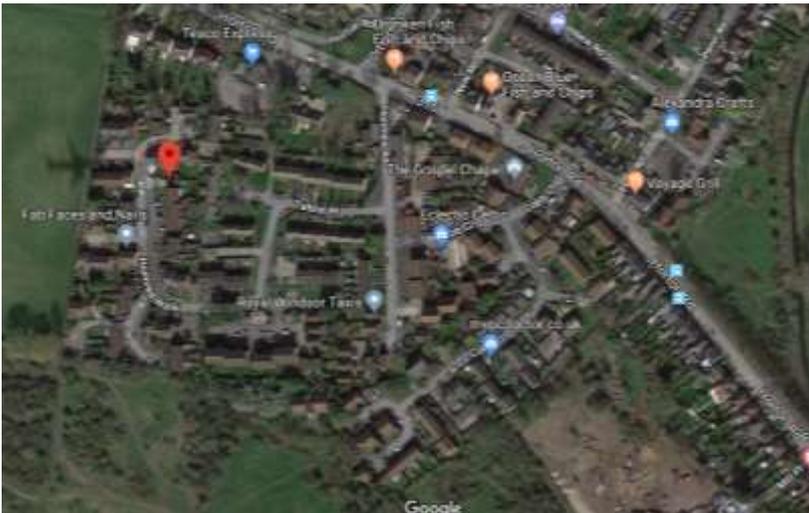
Assessors: FC, MC, JSt, JS, EL, AC, plus residents met en route. Saturday, 27 January 2018, 10.30am

### 1. Setting

Holmlea Road runs south off the B376 Horton Road, one of the main roads into Datchet. It is a no-through-road which leads to Talbot Place, Holmlea Walk and Marshfield. Cobb Close is also a no-through-road which runs off Horton Road. Access from Holmlea Road to Cobb Close has been blocked off.

This area is bordered by Horton Road to the north, the recreation ground to the west, and green belt ('The Land at Mill Place') and the railway line to the south. To the east there is another residential road, Cobb Close.

It takes about 10-15 minutes to walk from here to the village centre with its pub, cafes/restaurants and shops, and rail links. Local amenities nearby on Horton Road include a small supermarket, two fish and chip shops, and a restaurant. The supermarket and the restaurant are on the sites of former public houses, and some years ago, there used to be a post office in this area. There are now no social meeting places such as pubs or cafes in this area. The Gospel Chapel on Horton Road is currently (February 2018) for sale. Further on Horton Road, to the east, is an aqua park, Liquid Leisure, and Windsor Lakes (fishing).



Left: Google maps satellite imagery dated 2018.



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## 2. History

From [www.DatchetHistory.org.uk](http://www.DatchetHistory.org.uk), Janet Kennish's website:

### 1899 map



The lane which became Holmlea Road used to be called Old Workhouse Road as it led to the parish's Old Workhouse (at the far end), built about 1790. By 1868 there were already two short terraces of Talbot's Cottages on the west side of Holmlea Road, and by 1899 another row had been added further west, in a lane which has become the modern Talbot Place. Further up Holmlea Road on the same side, two old cottages owned by Atkins had been replaced by another terraced row called Atkins' Cottages. On the opposite side of Holmlea Road, the **parish gravel pit** had changed in shape and size by 1899, so that it occupied a considerable stretch of Horton Road as well as one side of Holmlea Road. By the time it was worked out, a great deal of land-filling was needed before anything could be built on its site.

The farmhouse at Alfred Talbot's Home Farm, right, was built on the site of the Old Workhouse at the end of Holmlea Road. From 1911-14, the farm sheds and barns were used as motor workshops by Lee Kenelm Guinness, and GWK light cars and motor cycles were built here.



### 1960s map:



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### 1970s

#### Buckinghamshire County Council's 1970 Plan for Datchet.

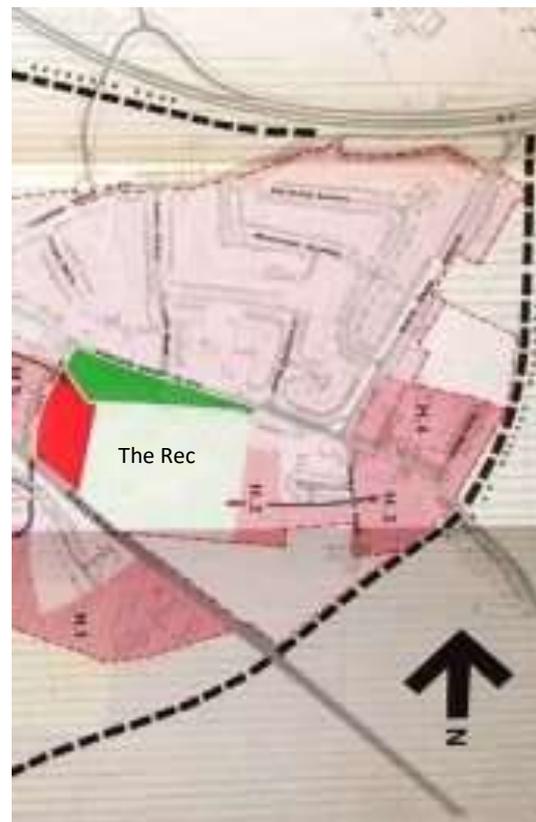
Almost 60 years ago, Buckinghamshire County Council drew up a plan for the development of Datchet, similar to the Royal Borough's current (2018) Local Plan. (Datchet has only been part of Berkshire since the reorganisation of local authorities in 1974.) Although the development was carried out over several decades, all the proposed housing was eventually built.

#### The 1970 plan included: Area H2 West of Holmlea Road, adjacent to recreation ground

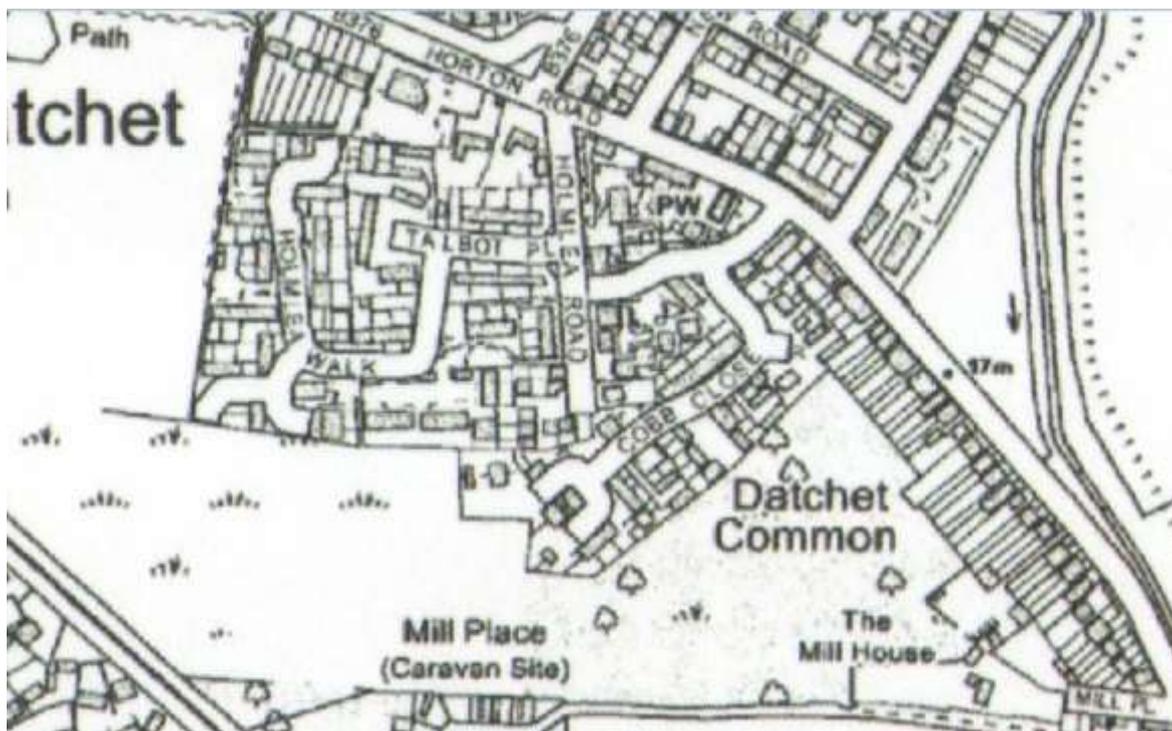
5 acres of unused land and allotments; can house 250 persons; adjoins recent Local Authority development to the north (*Talbot Place*), and should be of a similar density. Development should be oriented to look out over Recreation Ground with footpath links provided.

#### Area H3 East of Holmlea Road (now Cobb Close)

6½ acres, variety of uses but mostly unused; can house 310, density to be as Local Authority housing on other side of Holmlea Road. Access to be from Holmlea Road, not Horton Road.



#### Parish Online Map (printed 2017)



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### 3. Topography & Zones

- The land is flat. It is in Flood Zone 3 with a 1:100 risk or greater. It is not in the Conservation Area.
- The Green Belt adjoins the area to the south, with Willowfields, The Land at Mill Place and a plot of land known as 'Datchet Common' which has been cleared (see aerial view on page 1).
- Holmlea Walk is adjacent to a public recreation space.
- The area is under the flight path to Heathrow.

### 4. Land uses

The land is used for residential housing. There is a variety of houses, maisonettes and flats, most with gardens. Radian has approximately 77 rented social-housing units in this area. The 53 houses in Holmlea Walk were nearly all social housing c1988 when it was built.

There used to be a post office and some other shops at the corner of Holmlea Road and Horton Road.

### 5. Layout



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### HOLMLEA ROAD

This road is straight with a small cul-de-sac leading west from its southern end. There is little consistency in plot form.

**Eastern side:** The layout of buildings is mainly linear but the building line (ie distance from the road) is not consistent. Large spaces between the buildings are filled with parking areas (different surfacing materials).

**Western side:** Apart from a Victorian building at the north end of the road, the houses are arranged in two clusters: a terraced row and a compact group of detached houses. They are arranged in a fairly linear format, following the line of the road, in small narrow plots. They are all set slightly back from the road with small front and rear gardens.



### TALBOT PLACE

The entrance to Talbot Place is about half-way down Holmlea Road. Talbot Place is a straight road.

**North and south:** Talbot Place is flanked to the north and south side by rows of terraced maisonettes. The layout is linear, although building lines are slightly staggered. The buildings are set back from the road with small front garden areas, which gives a feeling of space. The plots are small and

narrow. Where there are parking bays on the road, the frontages of adjoining plots are reduced in size.

**West:** At the western end of Talbot Place, the terraced blocks of maisonettes are set in a square U-shape around a large central lawn area with trees. The rear areas of these properties are small – there are two concreted areas either side of these maisonettes.

### HOLMLEA WALK



Holmlea Walk leads south off Talbot Place and forms a U-shape cul-de-sac. There are no houses facing onto the first section of Holmlea Walk. On the eastern side, there is a parking area and on the western side, there is a row of garages, set perpendicular to the road.

There are then two rows of similar terraced houses.

- The row on the eastern side of Holmlea Walk is perpendicular to Holmlea Walk. The building line is linear but slightly staggered and the plots are small and narrow. There is a footpath in front of these houses and an open, shared green space consisting of a lawn (cut by RBWM) with a border of trees and shrubs. (This area used to have children's swings and seats.)
- The row on the western side backs on to the row of garages and faces onto Holmlea Walk where it bends in a 'U'-shape. The building line is linear but slightly staggered and the plots are small and narrow. These houses have small individual front gardens, the size of some is reduced by the existence of a parking bay. They also have small rear gardens.

**SPRING PARK:** This walled development at the bottom of the 'U'-shape of Holmlea Walk, south side, comprises four three-storey blocks of flats. These are built closely together along a staggered building line. Most of the area at the front of the flats is given over to garages and parking. To the east of the flats, still within this walled development, there are five detached houses, built close together on compact plots with small rear gardens. To the rear is The Land at Mill Place.



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**HOLMLEA WALK (continued):** The houses in the remaining part of Holmlea Walk are arranged in small, terraced clusters. Some of these face onto the main section of Holmlea Walk, others are built on spurs leading from Holmlea Walk, with large expanses of brick wall facing onto the main section of the road. Their layout is linear in that the terraces face either north-south or east-west. The plots tend to be narrow but their length, and so the size of their front and back gardens, is determined by their location and orientation. They all have an area at the front used either as a garden or parking space. A few houses have garages. There are also parking bays at the roadside.



**MARSHFIELD:** As in Holmlea Walk, the houses in Marshfield are arranged in terraced clusters. The plots tend to be narrow with their length determined by their location and orientation. Some of the houses have garages but there are also parking bays. Most of the front garden areas here have been retained. The Willowfields are to the rear.



**COBB CLOSE:** Mixed types of housing without a noticeable pattern to layout. The building plots seem slightly more generous although still relatively compact. Some of the houses to the south-east of this area back onto The Land at Mill Place and also the plot of land known as Datchet Common.



## 6. Buildings

### HOLMLEA ROAD

Eastern side, north to south:



At the entrance to Holmlea Road, there is a much-modernised (19<sup>th</sup>-century) two-storey building, rendered, with slate-style roof tiles. It hints at the area's Victorian heritage and was, until recently, flanked on the opposite side of the road by a Victorian villa. Its main entrance is on Horton Road but the side of the building forms the boundary with the footpath on Holmlea Road. There is a parking area behind this house, accessed via Holmlea Road.

### Numbers 3-9

Residential flats, c1990.



**Description:** This modern two-storey block takes up most of the plot. No open or communal space has been designed into this development. There is a small 2m strip at the rear of the premises for tenants to use.

**Construction:** Simple block form with minimal architectural detailing. Two main sections are set either side of a recessed entrance area with a lower roof line. One main section is brick, the other is brick and render.

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There are dark-brown window surrounds and modern grey-coloured roof tiles. The main roof line is of similar height to that of the neighbouring 19<sup>th</sup>-century building.

**Boundary:** The building is set very close to the footpath but separated from it by railings and a security gate.

**Parking:** Parking is provided in a communal bay which is part tarmac, part paved. Access is via a lowered kerb from Holmlea Road. There is not a similarly lowered kerb for pedestrians. The raised kerb around the parking area interrupts the pedestrian footpath.

**Facilities:** The rubbish bins are untidy and it is not apparent whether there is a dedicated bin store.

### Numbers 11-19

Residential flats and two bungalows, c1990



**Description:** Set back from the road, behind numbers 3-9 and its parking areas, a block of four flats adjoins two, single-storey bungalows. There is a small, overgrown, raised-bed of shrubs in front of the shared entrance to the flats, but no other green, communal, or open space other than the parking bays which dominate the area in front of the buildings. There is very little space to the rear. These properties have their own access drive from Holmlea Road. There is rear access to a garden inside a

fenced and gated area.

**Construction:** The modern two-storey block of flats is constructed in a simple block form. It is red brick at ground-floor level with contrasting lighter-red brick stripes. There is shingle tile cladding at the first floor and gable levels. The shared entrance is sheltered by a wooden awning with tiled roof. The 'half-hip' roof has terracotta-coloured tiles. The window frames are dark brown. The adjoining two small bungalows are terraced with a staggered building line. They are built of red brick with a timbered entrance (?), and also have terracotta-coloured roof tiles and dark-brown window frames.

**Parking** There are parking spaces to the front and south side of the flats and in front of the bungalows.

**Facilities:** There are no dustbin facilities, the bins are lined up behind the wall.

### Numbers 19-21

Late 20<sup>th</sup>-century residential bungalows



A terraced block comprising two garages then two modern, single-storey, semi-detached bungalows, c1990. There is no amenity green space at the front or opportunity for planting. The rear gardens are paved, with garden furniture and plants in pots.

**Description:** A similar construction to the bungalows at 11-19.

**Construction:** The bungalows are red/brown-brick buildings with a recessed, timbered entrance area to each, terracotta-coloured roof tiles and dark-brown window frames. The eaves are low so the roof predominates. There is a decorative stripe of contrasting lighter red bricks close to ground level. The two garages have a lower roof line and are set back from the building line of the bungalows.

**Parking:** There is space for additional parking on the driveway in front of the garages. The raised kerbs around this driveway interrupt the pavement.

**Boundary:** The bungalows have a tarmac and brick paved frontage with railings and single shared gate. The garages have an open paved frontage. Access to the garages is via the front gate.

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**Facilities:** The dustbins are on these frontages which suggests that the bin storage facilities are not being used.

A resident said Chiltern Property Company is supposed to maintain the communal areas for an annual fee, c£360, but they felt they weren't being properly maintained.

#### Entrance to Cobb Close



There are bollards across the road preventing vehicular access from Holmlea Road to Cobb Close. There remains a vehicular entrance to Cobb Close on Horton Road. (The 1970 Bucks Plan indicated that access to Cobb Close should be via Holmlea Road rather than Horton Road but this route has subsequently been closed off.) Compared with other parts of Datchet, there is a striking lack of greenery.

#### Number 23

Residential flats.



**Description:** On the corner of Cobb Close and Holmlea Road, number 23 is a modern, three storey block of 12 flats, c1990s. Communal amenity green space is limited to low-walled raised beds filled with shrubs at the rear.

**Construction:** A simple block form with peaked roof. The ground and first floor levels are a coffee-coloured brick with contrasting red-brick stripes, and there are terracotta-coloured shingle tiles at second-floor and gable level. The roof, which has a steep peak and skylight windows, is covered with modern, brown tiles. The communal

entrance at the front is via a small brick porch with tiled roof sloping in the same plane as the main roof. The windows are small and narrow. Most of the window surrounds are dark-brown though some are white. There are some square-fronted bay windows at first- and second-floor levels which are also decorated with shingles.

**Parking:** There are parking areas to the side and rear of the building, accessed via Cobb Close. (There is also a parking area on Holmlea Road adjacent to number 27, see below.)

**Boundary:** The large communal frontage area is tarmac and brick paving, with railings at the boundary. This area is not used for parking. There is no greenery contributing to the streetscape or adding to the amenity. There is no outdoor seating or communal leisure area.

**Facilities:** A wooden bin store at the side was full of rubbish, including mattresses, when we did our assessment and the bins were left on the frontage area.

#### Numbers 25 and 27

Late 20<sup>th</sup>-century residential houses



**Description:** On the same plot as number 23, there are two modern two-storey, semi-detached houses.

**Construction:** Built in a similar style to 23, these houses are constructed of light coffee-coloured brick with contrasting stripes of red brick. There are square bay windows at ground floor level with dark wood cladding. The window frames are also dark-brown. The entrances are covered by a tiled awning which extends over the bay windows.

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**Boundary:** The railings from the neighbouring block of flats extend around these houses. There are two, small, individual entrance gates. The large frontage area is covered in tarmac and brick paving with no opportunity for planting. There is no greenery to contribute to the streetscape.

**Parking:** Next to number 27, there is a concreted, open, residents' parking area for approximately 10 cars. The rear boundary of this parking area comprises the gable end of a building in Cobb Close and a high wooden fence.

**Facilities:** The dustbins were on the frontage area by the front doors. There is no bin store.

### Number 29

Early to mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century bungalow.



**Description:** This low-rise bungalow and garden offer a distinct contrast to the nearby late-20<sup>th</sup>-century development.

**Construction:** Possibly 1930s-50s? This white-rendered, single-storey building is set with its gable end oriented towards the road. It has a side entrance.

**Boundary:** The front garden is surrounded by a hedge. There is a driveway with a wooden gate.

**Parking:** The property has onsite parking.

### Plot

At the end of Holmlea Road there is an overgrown plot with a planning application notice 16/03808 (for a three bedroom house with access off Cobb Close) which was refused. Google maps 2012, right, shows the plot before it was overgrown:



### HOLMLEA ROAD

Western side, from north to south



### Brownfield site

The corner of Horton Road and Holmlea Road was once the site of a detached Victorian house, Datchet Cottage, 138 Horton Road. This was demolished c2014 and although planning applications have been made for this site, they have not been approved. The site remains untidily boarded and overgrown.



### Number 2

Converted Victorian coach house

**Description** Next to the Datchet Cottage site is a Victorian coach house which has been converted into a dwelling and sympathetically modernised. This brick building has been painted white, with dark-framed windows. It retains some period features including a dovecote. It has a slate-tiled roof. The frontage is paved providing off-road parking space. There is a tall brick wall

along its boundary.

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### Substation

Next to number 2 is an electricity sub-station with wire-mesh fencing and gravel frontage. The area is untidy, unsightly, overgrown and neglected, and the doors of the building are open.

### Numbers 4-12

Mid 20<sup>th</sup>-century terraced houses



**Description:** South of the entrance to Talbot Place, there is a row of five terraced houses. (See 1960s map.) The building line is slightly staggered so the individual houses are stepped back from one another.

**Construction:** They are constructed from light-beige brick at ground-floor level and a darker brick at first floor level. There are flat concrete awnings above the front doors, although two have been replaced with pitched awnings. They have white-framed windows and low-pitched roofs

with modern tiles.

**Parking:** There is no onsite parking although there is a parking bay set into the footpath.

**Boundary:** The houses are set back from the road. They have front gardens, with planting and lawn areas, and have low-fenced or low-walled boundaries.

**Facilities:** The dustbins were on the footpaths.

**Footpath:** There is a fenced footpath/cut-through on the south side of these houses which leads into Holmlea Walk/Spring Park.

### Numbers 14-28

Late 20<sup>th</sup>-century detached houses



**Description:** A group of eight, detached, brick-built houses on compact plots with small front gardens, attached garages and driveways. Set around a 'cul-de-sac' at the far end of Holmlea Road.

**Construction:** They are brick-built with the gable-end facing the road. They are of a similar design but all slightly different, for example, some have shingle tiling or render at first floor level, others are built in a lighter-coloured brick with a contrasting red-brick stripe. All

have small entrance porches to the front. The window frames are dark coloured and roofs are constructed of dark modern tiles.

**Boundary:** The gardens are open fronted with planting.

**Facilities:** Rubbish bins were not in evidence

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## TALBOT PLACE

Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century terraced maisonettes



Talbot Place leads off the west side of Holmlea Road. The entrance to the road is wide and open, bordered by garden hedges. The green amenity of Talbot Place provides a stark contrast to the built environment of Holmlea Road. On the day of our visit, there was rubbish on the pavement.

There is a CCTV camera at the corner which points down Talbot Place.

**Description:** The terraced maisonettes on the north and south sides of Talbot Place were originally developed by the Local Authority in the 1960s. Radian retains approx. 22 tenanted units. There is a consistency here in plot form and size, density and building scale.

### Construction:



The houses are terraced but the building line is slightly staggered. The houses on the south side, above left, are a red/brown coloured brick with contrasting brickwork patterns near the porched doorways. The houses on the north side, above right, are constructed of a lighter coloured brick with a green shingle/tile decorative strip between the windows at ground and first-floor level. The doorways are recessed. Some have been enclosed.

The window frames on both sides are white. The roof tiles are modern and light-mid brown.

**Boundary:** These houses have front gardens though some have been paved. There is a variety of boundary treatments (hedges, walls, or open). There are no street trees but the planted front gardens make a valuable contribution to the streetscape.

**Parking:** Parking is mainly at the roadside, with small parking bays, although some houses have introduced hard standing at the front for cars.



At the end of Talbot Place, there are 15 maisonettes set in a 'U' shape around an open lawn area with trees. These are red-brick, two-storey buildings. The building line here is also staggered. At ground level, there are protruding brick-built entrance porches. Above these, the upper floor walls are recessed, with some rendered in a cream colour. This recess is not reflected in the line of the eaves. The windows are white-framed with dark-brown wooden cladding between the main windows at ground and first

floor level. The roof tiles are modern and light-mid brown.

**Parking:** There are parking bays on the road in front of these houses. Behind the houses on the north side of this set, there are 15 garages, managed by Radian, which are reached by a driveway between

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numbers 16 and 18. (A sign indicates that some garages are for rent.) There is also a parking area opposite which is for 'authorised parking' only.

### HOLMLEA WALK



**Description:** Holmlea Walk leads off the south side of Talbot Place. It is a 'U'-shaped road with side roads, including Marshfield.

At the entrance to Holmlea Walk, left, there are the side views of houses in Talbot Place. Beyond these, there are two parking areas to the east, and an access road to the west, leading to a row of garages. There are some grass verges along on the west side of the road, and around the parking areas on the east side. The flats at Spring Park can be seen in the distance.



**Construction:** On the east side, left, set back from the road behind the parking area, there is a row of five terraced houses, built in the mid 20<sup>th</sup>-century. (They appear on the 1960s map). Their orientation is perpendicular to Holmlea Walk so their rear gardens back on to those of the houses in Talbot Place. The

houses are built in two shades of brick, a lighter shade at ground-floor level, and darker shade at first-floor level. The windows are white framed and the low-pitched roofs are constructed of modern tiles. A footpath separates the front of these houses from a shared lawn area with some planting on the south side. (On our visit, there was rubbish among the bushes here.) There is some green amenity here, with grass verges, but vehicles and parking areas are the most predominant features of the streetscape.



At this point, Holmlea Walk turns west. On the north side of the road here there is a set of terraced, two-storey houses built as two adjoining sets of three, one set slightly further back than the other. These also appear on the 1960s map. They are built with light-coloured bricks at ground-floor level, and darker bricks at first floor level. They have white window frames and low-pitched roofs

with modern tiles. There are some open garden frontages and some have been paved to accommodate cars. There is a small parking bay set into the pavement. There is also a parking area opposite.



### Spring Park

Opposite these houses, a private drive leads into Spring Park, a 1980s' walled development which includes four, three-storey blocks of six flats. Within this development, there are also five two-storey detached houses similar in design to

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14-28 Holmlea Road but more compact and without attached garages.

The blocks of flats at Spring Park have a staggered building line. They are built of a light-colour brick, with a contrasting red brick stripe, on the first two storeys, with brown shingle tiles cladding the third storey. In the centre, at the front of each block, there is a two-storey central entrance/stairwell. The window frames are dark-brown and the modern roof tiles are grey.

There is a tarmac and paved area for parking and also 16 garages within this development which is separated by a high brick wall from the open-plan garden areas of properties on Holmlea Walk. There are some shrubs at the front of the flats and small lawn areas to the rear. Outside the development, there are green verges and some tree planting along the perimeter wall. These could be better maintained.. (These properties are looked after by Holmlea Road Management Company.)

### Holmlea Walk (continued)



The houses in the rest of Holmlea Walk are all of a similar design. This area was developed in the 1980s as a result of the 1970s' Buckinghamshire Plan. There are a number of side roads off Holmlea Walk which allows the housing to be arranged in small clusters, perpendicular to the main road. This also means that the fronts of some houses overlook the side or rear walls of others.



The houses here are terraced with two storeys and are built either of a light brick with contrasting red-brick stripe, or of a red brick with contrasting light-brick stripe. They have a tiled, pitched awning over their doorways, brown window frames and dark tiled hipped roofs. The gable ends of these roofs include a decorative diamond pattern in a contrasting brick.



There are some parking bays set into the footpath. Only a few houses have garages. Frontages are a mixture of gardens with some planting or paved areas for parking. The front boundaries tend to be either low-fenced or open. The fences are higher at the sides and rear

of the houses. A number of waste bins were seen in the front gardens. At the furthest end of Holmlea Walk the road is paved in a herringbone pattern rather than tarmacked.

**Substation/pedestrian access** There is a pedestrian access gate to the Rec from one of the side roads/spurs of Holmlea Walk. From the Rec, there is a footpath to Horton Road, or pedestrians can cross the recreation ground to reach the footbridge over the railway line. Near the gate, there is a substation building which appears neglected and untidy, with grey-steel fencing and a concreted area surrounded by weeds. There was an amount of rubbish here on the day we visited.



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### MARSHFIELD



Marshfield leads off the southerly section of Holmlea Walk, next to Spring Park. It starts as a single road and then forks into two spurs which back on to the Green Belt Land at Mill Place. The boundary with the green belt is formed by grey metal railings, unkempt shrubs and trees.



There is a parking area against the boundary with the Green Belt in both spurs of Marshfield. The houses are a similar design to those nearby in Holmlea Walk. Some of the properties have garages. Front gardens are small but tend to be green with lawn and planting and the boundaries are either open or have a low wooden fence. Rear boundaries tend to have higher fences. There is a grass verge in the easterly spur. The road is paved in a herringbone pattern.



A resident said that during the 2014 floods there was some pooling of water in Marshfield but that a temporary channel was dug to allow water to flow out into the Green Belt land behind.

### Orientation of houses

It was noted that many houses were sited with their gable end to the road, presenting large areas of inactive blank wall facing the public realm. This was presumably intended to maximize space and so that views of the Rec were not obscured but it has also meant that areas of the road are not overlooked.



### COBB CLOSE

There is vehicular and pedestrian access to Cobb Close from Horton Road, and pedestrian access from Holmlea Road (where the road is blocked with bollards). Buildings here are of red and yellow brick with contrasting decoration and brown-framed windows and brown tiled canopies. There is a mixture of different types of housing including some bungalows with white render and red string courses. Generally the buildings appear in good condition, although some alleys to garage areas would benefit from more maintenance. The mixed orientation of houses



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meant that the wooden boundary fences of back gardens were often on display as well as inactive brick walls/gables.



## 7. Streetscape

**Greenery:** In Holmlea Road, the streetscape is dominated by buildings, tarmac roads, car parking areas and cars, with the ratio of built form to green space weighing heavily towards the built form. In the other roads, the streetscape is slightly softened by greenery provided by private planting in gardens, although there are very few mature trees. There is a notable absence of street trees and only a very few grass verges. Further into Cobb Close and in Holmlea Walk, there were more garden trees and one or two street trees. Some hedges to private properties but little evidence of community green spaces/landscaped areas.

**Boundary treatments:** These vary. There is scarcely any planting around the flats in Holmlea Road to soften their boundaries. The detached and terraced houses had a variety of different boundary treatments, some were open, some fenced, walled, some frontages were left as garden, others had hard-standing to provide parking. In contrast, the flats at Spring Park had a high-walled boundary with some planting on the exterior side. In some areas, rear gardens 'front' onto the road which impacts not only on residents' privacy but also on the streetscene.

**Benches and seating:** There are no longer any benches and seating in this area. There was a notable lack of outdoor space available to residents at the flats in Holmlea Road.

**Street-surfacing material:** Mainly tarmac with some herringbone paving in Marshfield and the upper reaches of Holmlea Walk.

**Street signage:** Adequate except it is not clear where Holmlea Walk starts.

**Road markings:** These were noticeable by their absence. Apart from at road junctions, there were very few road markings.

**Lamp posts/lighting:** A resident said that the street lighting had improved since the LED bulbs were installed and they felt that the estate had enough lighting.

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**CCTV:** There is a CCTV camera at the entrance to Holmlea Road and also at the corner of Talbot Place.  
**Solar panels:** About a dozen houses in Holmlea Walk and Marshfield have solar panels on the roofs which were installed by Radian. The tenants do not benefit directly from these.  
**Dustbins:** There were a large number of bins on house frontages or in parking areas.

## 8. Road use (non-motorised)

The pavements, although patched in places, appear to be generally in a good condition. The lowered kerbs were mainly for car access. Some of the parking bays have high kerbed edges which can be difficult to navigate with prams or wheelchairs. A resident from Holmlea Road said she found it difficult to walk on the footpath with a pram, because of the kerbs, and preferred to use the road.

There are pedestrian short cuts from Holmlea Road to Spring Park, and from Holmlea Walk onto the Rec. There is also pedestrian-only access from Holmlea Road to Cobb Close.

### Key pedestrian routes:

From Talbot Place

- It takes 3-5 minutes to walk to Tesco and/or the fish and chip shops.
- It takes about 10-15 minutes to walk to the shops in the village centre
- It takes about 12 minutes to walk to the local primary school, and 17 minutes to walk to the secondary school, either via Horton Road, or a traffic-free route across the Rec.
- It takes about 15 minutes to walk to Datchet Railway Station (via Horton Road). There is also an alternative route across the Rec and the railway bridge then via Montagu Road.
- There is an infrequent bus service on Horton Road.
- It takes 10-15 minutes to walk to the Aqua Park on Horton Road.
- It takes about 45-50 minutes to walk to Windsor.

On Saturday morning, there were very few pedestrians.

## 9. Traffic and parking

The only vehicular entrance/exit to Talbot Place, Holmlea Walk and Marshfield is via Holmlea Road. At peak times, there is congestion at the junction with Horton Road, with traffic backing up in Holmlea Road. The only entrance to Cobb Close is now from Horton Road as the Holmlea Road entrance has been closed.

Parking appears to be easily available with no parking restrictions or yellow lines on the roads and a number of communal parking areas. A resident commented that they thought there was enough parking at the moment but as more households have more than one car, parking could soon become an issue. It wasn't always clear to the assessors which parking areas belonged to which properties, and which was public/visitor parking.

No electric car charging points were noticed on the assessment.

## 10. Green and natural features

The nearest green spaces are at the recreation ground and the Land at Mill Place/Willowfields which is in the green belt. Greenery was provided mainly by planting in private gardens with very few green verges and no street trees. Holmlea Walk had a distinct lack of natural features. There are signs saying 'no ball games'.

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## 11. Views

There is a view from the pedestrian gate in Holmlea Walk across the Rec and towards the village centre and the church spire. The castle is not visible from the pedestrian gate onto the Rec but it is visible from the footpath between Holmlea Walk and the Rec, further towards Horton Road. Apart from this, there are no significant public views. The views tend to be internal, short and terminated by the buildings.

Medium and long-distance views may be available from the upper floors of some houses (ask residents), eg from Marshfield to the Green Belt, from Holmlea Walk over the Rec, from Spring Field over the Green Belt to Southlea Farm, and from Cobb Close to the Willowfields and the Land at Mill Place.

The derelict site at the junction with Horton Road dominates the view into Holmlea Road. In this area generally, there is a noticeable lack of greenery compared with the rest of the village. The road and pavements are relatively wide but the lack of greenery, the presence of parked cars, and bins stored in front of the houses detract from the overall appeal.

## 12. Spaces

The nearest playing fields and play areas for children are at the Rec. (There were a number of signs forbidding ball games particularly around Holmlea Walk.) There are also tennis courts here, a basketball court, and a green gym. The Rec is also used by dog-walkers. There are no picnic benches or tables here, although there are some benches around the perimeter and next to the play areas.

## 13. Landmarks

Nearby, there is the recreation ground and Tesco.

## 14. Summary of key defining characteristics/other observations

- The assessors felt that Holmlea Road lacked the architectural rhythm or harmony of other streets in the village. Contrasting styles of architecture jarred rather than blended, and there was no softening of the streetscape with street trees, landscaping, or shared amenity green spaces or play areas. No, or very little, communal open space has been designed into the developments of flats on Holmlea Road. Outdoor spaces were predominately paved and designated for parking. There appears to be nowhere for residents to sit outdoors.
- Talbot Place, with its terraced houses and consistency in plot form, felt more architecturally harmonious. Plots set back from the road added to a feeling of space. The planting of private gardens and hedges softened the built environment, although there was some loss of front gardens for hard-paved parking areas. It has a quiet, suburban character.
- Holmlea Walk, a more modern development, also has a quiet suburban character. The layout, a U-shape road with short subsidiary side roads culminating in dead-ends, allows for houses to be arranged in small terraced clusters, perpendicular to the 'main' street, with only a few buildings presenting their fronts to the main street. To some extent, this impacts on the harmony of the streetscape character, with frontages adjoining side or rear fences. This results in the views from some houses being the high-fenced boundaries of the rear or side of other houses. This also leaves areas of road which are not overlooked.
- There are quite a number of blank walls facing into the public realm, particularly on Holmlea Walk but also in Cobb Close. There are also back gardens fronting the road which impacts not only on

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residents' privacy but also the streetscene. Some of the most attractive areas are the ends of cul-de-sacs where houses and gardens cluster together and surround a grass verge.

- Originally the houses in Holmlea Walk were open-fronted but, over time, fences of different heights, colours and materials have been erected which are now in various states of repair.
- The high walls of Spring Court appear incongruous in an area where the front boundary walls are mostly low. The scale of the apartment buildings at Spring Court was also quite a contrast to the surrounding development of small terraced houses.
- There is quite a lot of affordable/social housing in this area. (Radian has approximately 77 rented social-housing units in this area. The 53 houses in Holmlea Walk were nearly all social housing c1988 when it was built.)
- It appeared to the assessors that the primary objective of the developers had been to maximize space, ie build as many houses as possible within the available area, with presentation and design a secondary consideration. However, the variety of house sizes and flats gives a range of choice to single people, older people and families. Most houses have gardens.
- There were previously gravel pits and a landfill site in this area which was later covered with topfill. The residents of Cobb Close are advised not to grow vegetables as a result of this.
- There were some issues with rubbish bins and litter. Many dustbins were left at the front of properties. Electricity sub-station areas were full of litter.
- A resident complained about the property management company, Chiltern Property Company. The resident was paying about £350 a year for maintenance but felt that more could be done, for example, the bin store was unusable which is why their bins were at the front of the property.
- Another resident in a social-housing property mentioned some anti-social behaviour including a broken window and cruelty to cats.
- A resident said they thought it was a quiet area, with the main problem being the minibikes being illegally driven on the Rec.
- Another resident thought that this area felt 'isolated' from the rest of Datchet, partly because of the circuitous route to get to Holmlea Walk. This area is bounded by the Recreation Ground on one side, the busy Horton Road on the other, The Land at Mill Place and Willowfields and the railway line. Although some of the houses in Holmlea Walk are geographically close to Tesco, the takeaway shops and restaurant, the pedestrian route there is long and winding.
- Although there once used to be a small commercial area on Horton Road, including a post office and two pubs, there is now just Tesco Express, two fish and chip shops and a Turkish restaurant. There are no real community services available here or places to meet socially apart from the restaurant.

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- The large plot owned by the Gospel Chapel, on the corner of Cobb Close and Horton Road, is now up for sale. One potential purchaser was considering turning this into a used car sales yard.
- There are rather unsightly bollards across the road preventing vehicular access from Holmlea Road to Cobb Close. There remains a vehicular entrance to Cobb Close on Horton Road. (The 1970 Bucks Plan indicated that access to Cobb Close should be via Holmlea Road rather than Horton Road but this route has subsequently been closed off because it became a rat run.)
- Compared with other parts of Datchet, there is a striking lack of greenery at the Holmlea Road entrance to Cobb Close, and at the entrance to Talbot Place. The appearance of the area would benefit generally from more trees, verges and planted areas.
- Traffic – both congestion and speeding – is a problem.