

# Martin Conservation Area



This remote picturesque village lies at the head of the valley of the Allen River in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The village street wends its way past old farms and small cottages up towards the old Roman road on the Downs. The Allen is a winterbourne - water used to pour down the street in winter and spring until it was diverted into an underground culvert draining into Bustard Pond. Martin has the greatest mix of building materials of any conservation area in the district. The church (Grade I) is tucked away behind the village street while the Manor House (Grade II\*) forms an important visual stop on the bend in the street. The many other listed buildings dating mainly from the 15th to 18th centuries are built with timber frames, brick, flint, greensand stone and chalk cob with roofs of thatch, clay tile and slate. The village green, the high verges either side of the street and the views between buildings to the surrounding countryside are also important in shaping Martin's pattern.

The surrounding area has been inhabited since prehistoric times and much of the parish boundary is marked by earthworks and ancient roads. There were two markets here every week granted to the Abbots of Glastonbury by charters from Henry III and Edward III. The names of many of the farms derive from those of the tenants of hundreds of years ago - John Swetapulle, William Harries and John Garrett. Until 1895 Martin was part of Wiltshire. The surrounding Downs have influenced the agriculture and life of the village; sheep played an important part in the local economy. Changes in farming practice have meant that the village like many others has undergone radical changes this century and now very few gain a living from the land. Working farms have left the village street, allowing old farmhouses to be used as domestic family homes. The school is now a private house, the village shops have closed down and the church is now part of a wider parish. In spite of all this Martin retains a special charm as the finely built buildings, including those in stone, give it an air of a place more important in times past than now.

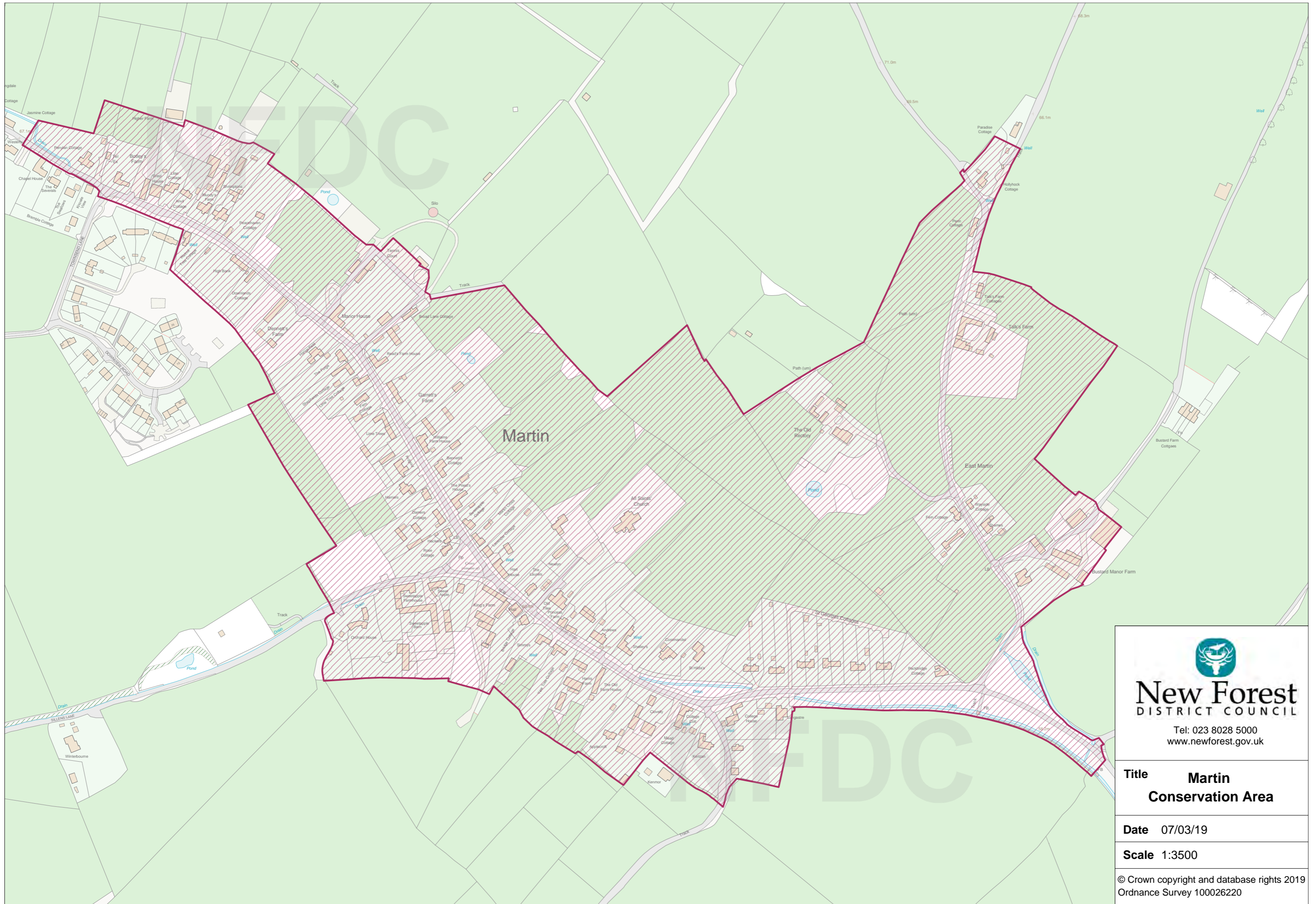
These are key features in the conservation area:

- The **Church of All Saints** probably dates from the 12th century. Built of rubble stone and flint with stone dressings its roof was probably originally thatched and later leaded before being tiled. The 14th century south transept was converted into a family vault in the 18th century by William Talk who was once Mayor of Salisbury and High Sheriff of Wiltshire.

- The **Manor House** is the remaining portion of a much larger house which was once owned by the father of the 1st Earl of Shaftesbury. The house shows some of the wonderful chequerboard patterns of stone and flint and brick that are common to Martin.
- **Hart House**, another stone building, probably dates from the 15th century. It was an inn, the White Hart, and the manorial court was held there occasionally until 1920
- The land on the south west side of the village street is intersected by four roughly parallel droves leading from the village street to the downs - **Middle(end), Townsend, Sillens (previously Southend or Sutland Drove) and Smallend Lanes**. Although primarily sheep droves they also served as access to the arable furlongs and were probably deliberately sited to divide the land into equal areas of approximately one ploughland (about 181 acres).
- **Chalk walls** are a particular feature of Martin. They need particular attention to ensure their protection from weathering. The base of flints protects the chalk from the damp ground so it is essential to keep the soil level below the joint between the two. Historically, the top is protected with a wide overhanging hat of thatch, frequently replaced by corrugated iron or tiles, which may not always be broad enough to give adequate protection. In the past they were sometimes protected with a lime render or regularly applied coats of limewash. Repair can be carried out using reconstituted original material or freshly dug chalk from nearby. Expert local help is available.

These are some of the things that make Martin special - they need to be looked after:

- **History**  
The pattern of field boundaries and footpaths.  
The names of properties which derive from the families who farmed here over the last 500 years.
- **Buildings**  
Stone - alone and in combination with flint.  
Timber frames originally filled with wattle and daub - replaced with brick nogging.  
Orangey red brick - alone, or as a facing over timber frames, or combined with bands of flint.  
Chalk cob especially as boundary walls.  
Simple thatch roofs sometimes replaced with clay tiles or slate. Later 19th century buildings have always had slate.  
Traditional two and three light casement windows and small paned sash windows.  
The early council houses at the south end of the village are good examples of their period.
- **Archaeology**  
It is important to remember that there may be the remains of earlier signs of occupancy in a village that is surrounded by so much prehistoric evidence.
- **Landscape/Townscape**  
The groups of agricultural buildings associated with the old farms, largely set back behind the houses - timber frames, weatherboarding, and corrugated iron.  
The high banks and green verges either side of the village street.  
The village green with the old market cross and water pump.  
The footpaths between the houses linking the street to the fields.
- **Setting**  
Views within the village particularly along the street towards the Manor House.  
Views along the footpaths between buildings to the downs beyond the village.




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**Conservation Area**

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