



Broxtowe
Borough
COUNCIL

Positive People - Positive Leadership - Positive Partnerships

Attenborough Barratt Lane Conservation Area Character Appraisal



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas were first introduced following The Civic Amenities Act 1967 to protect the attractive historic character of towns and villages. Today the main protection of these areas comes under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 [the Act] and Planning Policy Guidance note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment [PPG 15].

Section 69 of the Act imposes a duty on the local planning authority to designate as a conservation area any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'¹. Designation introduces a control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides a basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest. Designation further enables a control over the lopping or felling of trees; advertisement control and a restriction on development rights. Local planning authorities can also withdraw certain permitted development rights, such as the replacement of windows and doors and the alteration of boundary walls, by the imposition of an Article 4(2) direction, if they feel these minor alterations would erode the special character or appearance of the area².

15 conservation areas have been designated by Broxtowe Borough Council.

1.2 The purpose of this appraisal

PPG 15 states: 'Section 71 of the Act places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. It is important that designation is not seen as an end in itself: policies will almost always need to

be developed which clearly identify what it is about the character or appearance of the area which should be preserved or enhanced, and set out the means by which that objective is to be pursued. Clear assessment and definition of an area's special interest and the action needed to protect it will help to generate awareness and encourage local property owners to take the right sort of action for themselves'.³

This appraisal will aim to assess and define the special character of Attenborough Barratt Lane conservation area by the methods described in the different sections below. Briefly, these will cover: an investigation of the historical development of the village; an analysis of its current appearance and character; a discussion of positive, negative and neutral factors which are having an effect on that appearance and character; and suggestions for the preservation and enhancement of the area.

The appraisal will further try to identify whether or not the existing area boundaries are still justified in the light of physical changes since their initial designation. If the character of an area has been seriously eroded by unsympathetic alterations and new developments, it might be necessary to reduce its size or even de-designate. On the other hand, early designations did not consider many 19th century elements of a settlement, particularly industrial areas and buildings, to warrant inclusion. Over the last 25 years these elements of our social and industrial heritage have become more valued, and so should be reconsidered in any appraisal process. This might lead to extensions that include such elements within an existing conservation area, or the designation of an entirely new area.

¹ Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 s.69

² Planning Policy Guidance note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment 1994 s.4

³ *ibid.*

1.3 Planning Policy Framework

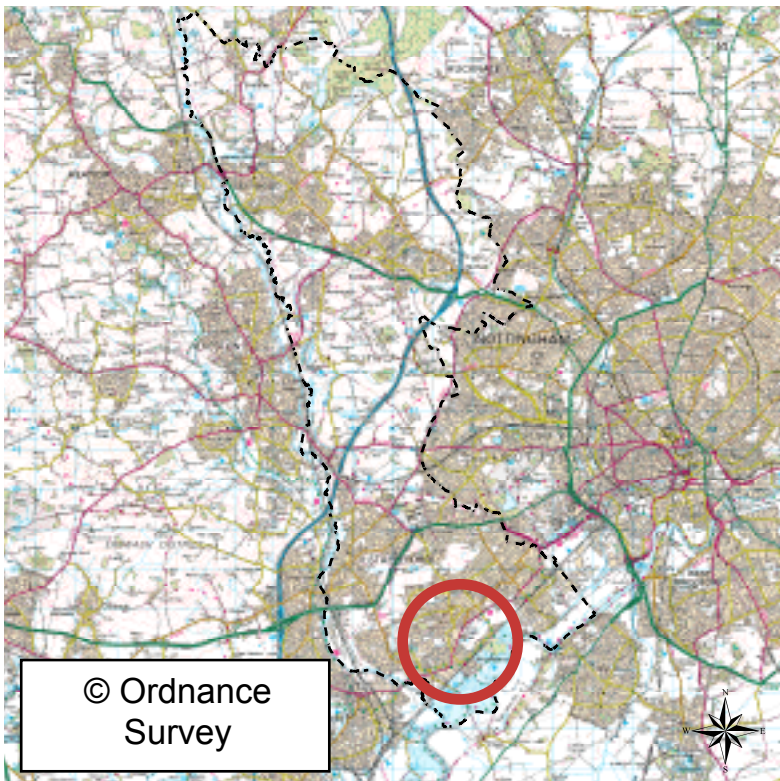
The saved local plan policies set out the current framework of conservation policy (Policy E3). The Local Plan is due to be replaced by a new Local Development Framework (LDF). This conservation area appraisal will be used to support the conservation policy that will form part of the core strategy development plan document (DPD) and primary development control policies.

2.0 Barratt Lane Conservation Area

2.1 Location and Setting

Attenborough lies approximately six miles to the south-west of Nottingham city centre on the gravel terrace of the River Trent, which passes close by to the east. It is separated from the densely developed suburban mass of Beeston and Chilwell by the A6005 Bye-Pass Road to its north-west. Barratt Lane lies to the north-west of Attenborough's old village core and the conservation area comprises most of the lane, along with short sections of Attenborough Lane and Long Lane, where they form a crossroads.

Location of Barratt Lane



2.2 Historical Development

In order to describe successfully the character of the conservation area, and to devise a suitable management strategy for it, it is essential to understand its historic dimension. By looking at the historic development of the area we can understand how it came to be the way it is today. From this understanding we are better informed to make the right decisions regarding change to its physical

fabric in relation to the effect on its historic character.

Barratt Lane did not begin to be developed until the late 19th century. Up until this time it was a quiet lane running through fields to the north of the village, in an area known in the 19th century as "The Butts". Development here was as a direct result of the coming of the railway.

The Midland Railway laid its line south of, and parallel to, Barratt Lane and Long Lane in the 1830's and opened a station here in 1864. Development was not rapid, only two buildings appear on the OS map of 1884, either side of the old crossroads, which were probably extant prior to the railway. They are low cottages that differ from the other dwellings, and are the oldest buildings in the conservation area, but do not appear to be earlier than the mid 19th century.

By the time of the 1901 OS map there were nine buildings within the area, six of these along Barratt Lane, all to its south side and facing the railway line rather than the lane, with long, narrow garden plots to their fronts. This orientation would not only have given the properties south-facing gardens, but also would have provided them with fine views south towards St Mary's Church in the old village, and the river Trent beyond, from their slightly elevated position. It is this orientation which also gives the south side of Barratt Lane its unusual appearance, with the backs of the buildings, and their outbuildings, seen from the street.

The OS map of 1921 shows the remainder of the plots to the south have been developed and the 1938 map shows the beginning of development to the north of the lane. The houses built between the late 19th century and the 1920's are large, high quality detached and semi-detached homes, undoubtedly for wealthy workers in Nottingham city, who utilised the railway.

3.0 Character Analysis

3.1 Barratt Lane conservation area

Along with a consideration of the history and development of the area, an investigation of its character today is necessary in order to draw out those special qualities that warrant its conservation area designation. This is done by employing spatial analysis and character analysis.

These techniques can be used to describe a “sense of place” by analysing physical aspects, such as the scale of buildings and trees, and their relationship to open spaces; the materials used for buildings and border treatments; routes through the area; views and vistas into and out of the area; and the less tangible factors that help make up how the different areas are experienced, such as particular sounds, ambient noise and activity. These factors inter-relate to form an experience special to the area and give it its character.

The conservation area can be approached by road from four directions: along Attenborough Lane, from the north and south; via Barratt Lane from the north; and via Long Lane from the east. The distinctive historic character of the conservation area lies along the south side of Barratt Lane, between Barratt Close and Attenborough Lane, and in the immediate area of the Attenborough Lane crossroads. The north side of Barratt Lane has a number of bungalows which do not contribute to its historic character.

The Barratt Lane part of the conservation area is characterised by the substantial tall brick boundary walls and outbuildings which face the south side of the street, and by the large properties behind these walls, set within spacious garden plots. The character is enhanced by tall sycamore trees on the north side of the lane that overhang the road.

Boundary walls & outbuildings



Trees overhang the road



The substantial Victorian villa of Attenborough House sits at the sharp bend towards the western end of the lane and is a key character building. The late 20th century development of Barratt Close forms a cul-de-sac to the east of this important building. It houses a small group of bungalows which do not support the character and appearance of the conservation area. The choice of boundary materials in this area also erodes the appearance of the conservation area and does not reflect its general character, for these reasons Barratt Close should be considered for exclusion from the conservation area.

Attenborough House





Barratt Close

The area around the crossroads with Attenborough Lane has more of a village feel to it. The historic buildings that border this area are the oldest in the conservation area and are of a smaller cottage scale than those along Barratt Lane. The very small village green and tall trees contribute to the village feel, but the roads here are quite busy and have to accommodate large lorries that visit the quarry site on Long Lane. The result of this is a great width of roadways and junctions, complete with a traffic island with 'keep left' bollards, which have combined to seriously harm the character and appearance of this historic part of the area.

Small cottage on Attenborough Lane



Wide road junction



There is also an abundance of signs on posts at this crossing point that further detract from the village character. Too many signs have been employed to inform people of cycle paths that pass through the village, and their highly visible design and location obscure the low key Attenborough Village sign, which is set back from the road edge.

Too many signs create clutter



More signs nearby



3.2 Public realm

A wide expanse of concrete between the roadway and the footpath to the east of the Attenborough Lane junction harms the village appearance, giving the area a hard, urban character. Further urban treatment is apparent to the front of an historic property bordering the level crossing on Attenborough Lane, where concrete bollards have been employed to deter the parking of cars.

Concrete expanse urbanises village



Streetlamps throughout the area are unsympathetic to its historic village character. Their columns are of concrete construction, topped by galvanised steel lamp supports which seem more suited to an urban environment than an historic conservation area.

3.3 Boundary treatments

The traditional boundaries are walls of brick construction, many being tall: red brick being used on the Victorian/Edwardian properties and pebble-dashed walls for the 1920's villas. The older cottages would probably have had low hedges or stone walls. These traditional treatments have been replaced, or altered in some cases, to materials such as tall, close-boarded fencing which is tending to erode the character of the area.

3.4 Replacement windows

There is a high proportion of UPVC windows within the conservation area: roughly 50% of the buildings have had them installed. Seven of these buildings are historic properties which would have had painted timber or steel windows originally. A further three properties have had dark stained timber windows fitted, one of these is a historic building. The use of these types of windows in historic properties erodes their character and devalues the quality of the conservation area as a whole. They are the most harmful factor on the character and appearance of Barratt Lane conservation

area.

3.5 Gap sites

The obvious gap sites that might come under pressure for development in the future are to the north-west and south-east of Attenborough House. The north-west site appears to be a vacant holding fenced off from the neighbouring properties of 21 (Attenborough House) and 23 (Harold Wilson House) Barratt Lane.

Number 23 is a commercial property of yellow brick construction that does not preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. Any further commercial development should be resisted at this location in order to prevent further erosion of character. The gap site to the south-east of Attenborough House falls within its own spacious garden plot with frontage to Barratt Close.

3.6 Suggestions for extensions or reductions of the conservation area boundary

Further historic villa style dwellings exist along Long Lane. These houses exhibit a high survival of their original features, such as timber windows, roof coverings and boundary treatments. Three of the houses are large 1920's villas of a similar style to those along Barratt Lane, and appear to be by the same builder or architect. These housing styles and the character of this part of the street compliment those on Barratt Lane and an extension to the conservation area as shown on Map 2 to include these properties should be considered.

The modern cul-de-sac development of Barratt Close does not reflect the historic character and appearance of the conservation area. The style of the architecture, materials of construction, and boundary treatments appear alien in this location. A reduction to the conservation area as shown on Map 2 to exclude these

properties should be considered.

3.7 The impact of individual buildings and boundary treatments on the character

Map 1 illustrates the impact made by individual buildings and their boundary treatments on the character of the conservation area. The buildings are shown as having either a positive, a negative or a neutral effect on the area's character, and have been compiled using the English Heritage guidance reproduced in Appendix 1. The boundary treatments are similarly illustrated as making either a positive, negative, or neutral contribution.

- Buildings described as positive, either positively enhance or support the character of the area, or are significant to its historic development. They may, however, be degraded because of minor, easily reversible, alterations.
- Buildings described as negative, erode or detract from the character of the area. They are either historic buildings whose appearance has been seriously damaged by unsympathetic alterations, or modern buildings which exhibit few of the characteristic elements that make the area special. They cannot be easily enhanced.
- Buildings described as neutral do not enhance the character of the area. It might be possible to improve their contribution to the character of the area by undertaking minor changes.
- Positive boundaries are those which follow the historic boundary lines of a property or area and retain the traditional methods of construction, such as: stone walling; native hedgerows; painted cast metal railings.
- Negative boundaries are those which have been lost altogether; have had their traditional construction replaced by unsympathetic alternatives; or are new boundaries of unsympathetic design which have eroded the historic layout of the area.
- Neutral boundaries do not greatly erode the character, but could be improved easily to make a positive contribution.

4.0 The key characteristics of the conservation area and current issues affecting them

Traditional architectural materials and features:

- Red brick boundary walling
- Pebbledash
- Tall eaves
- Orangey-red machine made brick
- Decorative terracotta ridge tiles
- Roof coverings of natural Welsh slate and plain tile
- Cast iron rainwater goods
- Painted timber windows

Summary of special interest (strengths)

- A variety of large, high quality historic villa dwellings
- Unusual 'back to front' orientation of historic housing along Barratt Lane
- Tall brick walls and outbuildings face the street
- Small old cottages and green at Attenborough Lane crossroads
- Mature tree cover and leafy hedges and gardens are important contributors to village appearance
- Boundary treatments of tall brick walls provide local character and continuity to street frontages

Summary of erosive factors (weaknesses)

- High proportion of UPVC replacement windows erode the character and appearance of the historic buildings
- Uncharacteristic materials of some boundaries and driveways harm the character and harmony of the conservation area
- Too many highway signs and posts at the green clutter this most historic part of the conservation area
- Wide road junctions and associated bollards at Attenborough Lane junction has harmed the village character
- Designs and condition of street lighting columns lowers the quality of the area
- Patch repair work to roads and footpaths harms the quality and appearance of the area

Threats to the character of the conservation area

- Potential for further intrusive highway works to cope with increasing road traffic
- Loss and replacement of traditional boundary treatments
- Unsympathetic development of gap sites
- Piecemeal loss of traditional architectural materials and features
- Loss of mature tree cover

Opportunities for enhancement

- Reinstatement of traditional front boundary treatments to repair rhythm of street frontages
- Simple regular property maintenance, such as the annual clearance and repair of rainwater guttering and a 5 yearly repainting of the timber windows, doors etc.
- Provision of guidance publications on designs and materials suitable for the conservation area
- Reinstatement of lost characteristic architectural features such as timber sliding-sash windows

5.0 Sources Consulted

Beeston and Stapleford Official Guide. 1962 Urban District Council of Beeston and Stapleford

Barsby, P. J. 1972 Bye-gone Days at Attenborough. Long Eaton Advertiser

D.o.E. List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

D.o.E 1994 Planning Policy Guidance note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment

English Heritage 1996 Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals

English Historic Towns Forum 1998 Conservation Area Management – A Practical Guide

English Historic Towns Forum 1992 Townscape In Trouble – Conservation Areas The Case For Change

Maps:

Chapman's map of Nottinghamshire 1774;

Sanderson's map of Nottinghamshire 1835;

25" OS Maps of the Attenborough area (SK 45/3): 1885; (SK 45/4): 1900, 1914, 1938

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Pevsner, N. (rev. Williamson, E.). 1979 The Buildings of England – Nottinghamshire, Harmondsworth, Penguin

Attenborough Conservation Area Reviews 1995 Directorate of Planning & Development, Broxtowe Borough Council

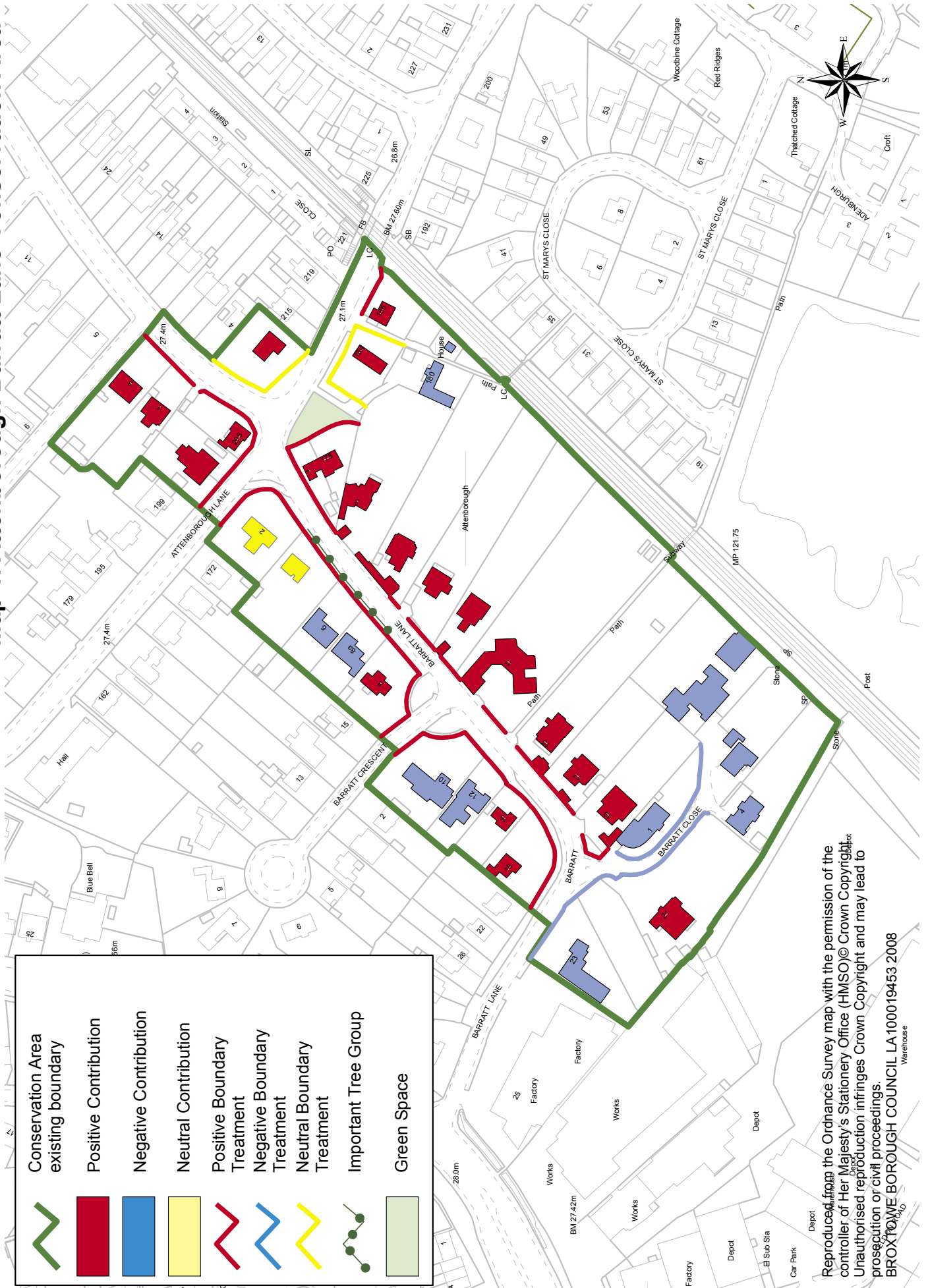
www.nottinghamflooddefence.co.uk

www.nottshistory.org.uk – Nottinghamshire History

www.picturethepast.org.uk – Historic pictures of Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire

6.0 Maps

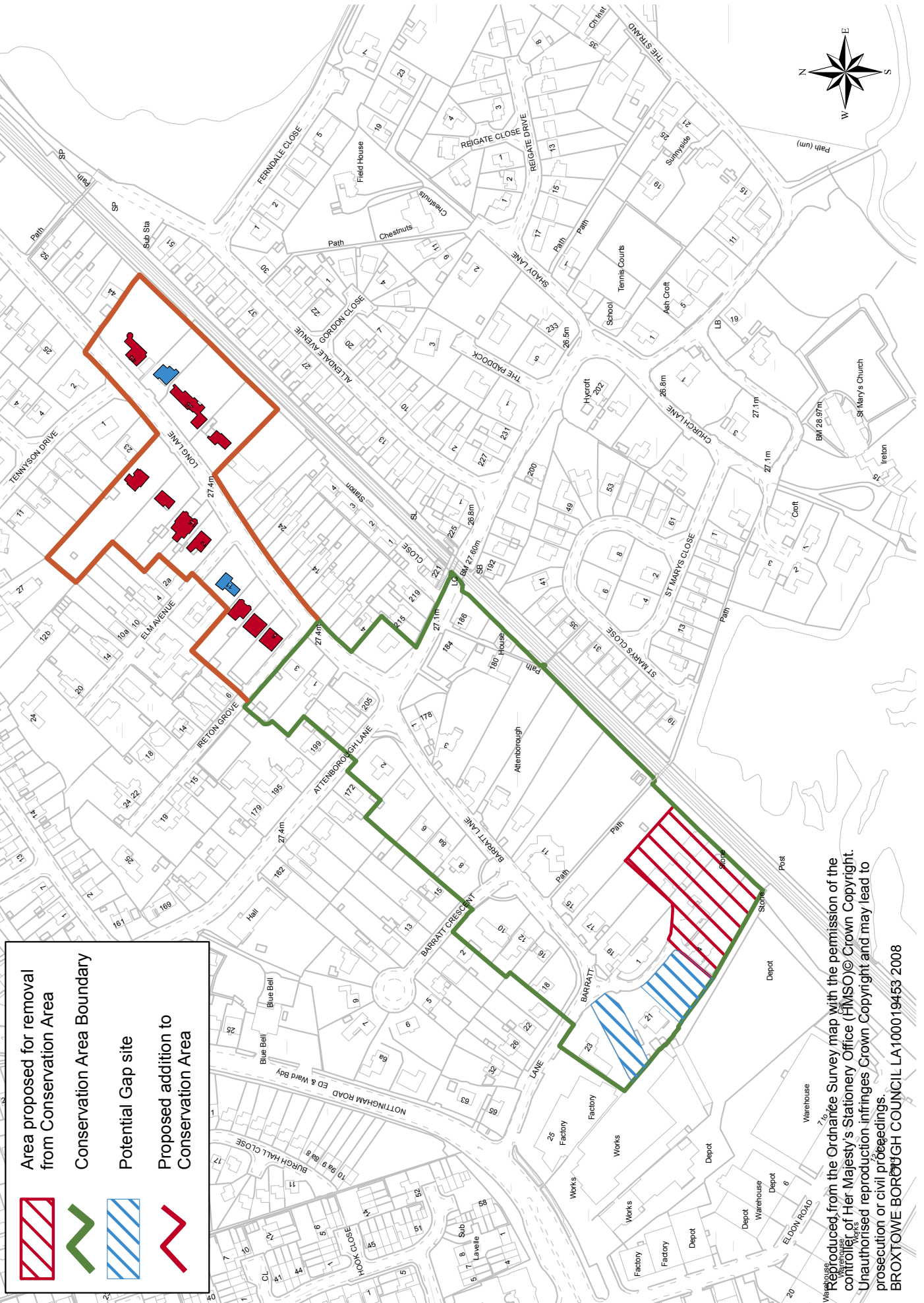
Map 1: Attenborough Barratt Lane Conservation Area



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Map 2: Suggested Changes to Conservation Area and Potential Gap site



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7.0 Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Criteria for assessing the contribution made by unlisted buildings in a conservation area⁴

1. Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local note?
2. Has it qualities of age, style, materials or any other characteristics which reflect those of at least a substantial number of the buildings in the conservation area?
3. Does it relate by age, materials or in any other historically significant way to adjacent listed buildings, and contribute positively to their setting?
4. Does it individually, or as part of a group, serve as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement in which it stands, or of an earlier phase of growth?
5. Does it have significant historic association with established features such as the road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
6. Does the building have landmark quality, or contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces, including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?
7. Does it reflect the traditional functional character of, or former uses within, the area?
8. Has it significant historic associations with local people or past events?
9. Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area?
10. If a structure associated with a designed landscape within the conservation area, such as a significant wall, terracing or a minor garden building, is it of identifiable importance to the historic design?

Any one of these characteristics could provide the basis for considering that a building makes a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area, provided that its historic form and values have not been seriously eroded by unsympathetic alteration.



This report has been produced by Broxtowe Borough Council Planning Department and Nottinghamshire County Council Building Conservation Team

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