

# Bramcote Conservation Area Character Appraisal



# Contents

1.0	Introduction
1.1	Conservation Areas
1.2	The purpose of this appraisal
1.3	Planning Policy Framework
2.0	Bramcote Conservation Area
2.1	Location and setting
2.2	Summary of Special Interest
2.3	Historical Development
2.4	Economy
3.0	The Different Character Areas
3.1	Character Zone 1: Church Street & Chapel Street (Map 2)
3.2	Character Zone 2: Old Village core (Map 3)
3.3	Character Zone 3: South of Cow Lane (Map 4)
4.0	The Key Characteristics of the Conservation Area and Current Issues Affecting Them
5.0	Suggestions for boundary changes to the conservation area
6.0	References used and contact details
Maps	
Map 1	Bramcote Conservation Area
Map 2	Impact of Buildings in Character of Zone 1
Map 3	Impact of Buildings in Character of Zone 2
Map 4	Impact of Buildings in Character of Zone 3
Map 5	Suggested Boundary Changes
7.0	Appendices

# 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'<sup>1</sup>. 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 area<sup>2</sup>.

14 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.'<sup>3</sup>

This appraisal will aim to assess and define the special character of Bramcote's conservation area by the methods described in the different sections below. Briefly, these will cover: an investigation of the historical development of the town; an analysis of it's 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.

## 1.3 Planning Policy Framework

The saved local plan policies set out the current framework of conservation 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.

<sup>1</sup> Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 s.69

<sup>2</sup> Planning Policy Guidance note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment 1994 s.4

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

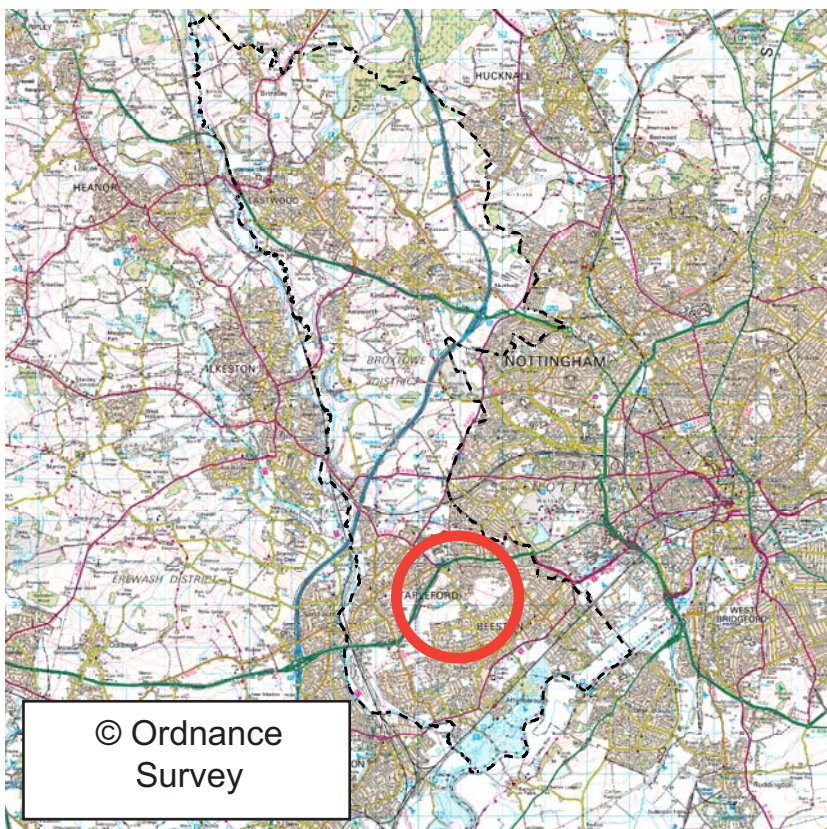


# 2.0 Bramcote Conservation Area

## 2.1 Location and Setting

Bramcote is a linear village lying approximately six miles to the west of Nottingham city centre, astride a wooded sandstone ridge which contributes considerably to the local character of the area. The north and east edges of the village are on lower ground and now about the urban sprawl of the Nottingham/Beeston conurbation, but on the higher ground to the south and west, open countryside is still apparent with far-reaching views.

- Considerable tree cover, which falls mainly in the southern part of the village.
- The local topography, which allows far-reaching views.
- A number of large, mainly 19<sup>th</sup> century, houses that originally had extensive grounds which have contributed to the morphology of part of the village.
- A rare survival of rural appearance along Cow Lane, when approaching from the east



*Location of Bramcote*

The conservation area was extended in 1986 to cover a number of properties fronting Derby Road, which include former framework knitters cottages. The present boundary is shown in Map 1, along with significant views into and out of the conservation area, important tree groups, and green spaces.

## 2.3 Historical Development

In order to describe successfully the character of Bramcote, and to devise a suitable management strategy for the conservation area, it is essential to understand its historic dimension. By looking at the historic development of Bramcote 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.

### The Early Settlement

The earliest known record for Bramcote is from Domesday Book (1086) where it appears as Brunecote/Bruncot. The name is thought to mean 'Cottages in the broom'. The settlement here was very small at the time of Domesday and there is no mention of a church. The old church, of which only the tower remains today, dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, although it is thought that a chapel stood in the same location in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. A manor

## 2.2 Summary of Special Interest

Bramcote conservation area was designated in 1970 and was the first one in Broxtowe. Its special interest derives mainly from five factors:

- The local sandstone walls, often laid in a distinctive herringbone fashion. Seen to their most dramatic effect when approaching from the south, where they form a gorge-like entrance to the village.

house is first mentioned in 1564: the present Manor House dates ostensibly from 1625 but contains remnants from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The hearth tax return of 1674 included 21 dwellings for Bramcote. John Throsby wrote that Bramcote consisted of 40 or 50 dwellings in 1796.

Chapman's map of 1774 shows Bramcote church; Town Street, zig-zagging south (with a western extension to Southfield House) to become Chilwell Lane; Cow Lane leading into Bridle Road (a track); and Common Lane and Peache Way forming a crossroads with Chilwell Lane to the south of the village. Apart from the church, buildings are shown in the vicinities of Southfield House; the Manor House; and the Grange, along with a cluster of structures in the core of the village, either side of Town Street to the north of Cow Lane.

Bramcote contains two known buildings dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century: The White Lion Inn on Town Street and number 101 Town Street, south of the Grange. Some of the smaller cottages along Town Street, however, might contain evidence of much earlier structures within their altered exteriors.

### Post 18<sup>th</sup> Century Development

Sanderson's map of 1835 shows the village expansion to the north, including the creation of what was to become Church Street, and dwellings have already begun to infill the resultant triangular enclosure. Small delineated plots have appeared along the top of Town Street and Derby Road. Another cluster of buildings is shown to the north of Cow Lane, and Moss Drive has appeared opposite the top of Cow Lane. The extensive gardens of Bramcote Hall and Bramcote Grove are also apparent.

The 1846 tithe map for Bramcote shows further development in the 'Church Street triangle'. Chapel Street has appeared,

further sub-dividing the triangle, and small dwellings with long, narrow plots to their rear are already established on both sides of the street. The planned, rectilinear format of this part of the village is clearly emerging and contrasts sharply with the earlier, more randomly shaped plots along Town Street. Four small rectangular plots, containing two semi-detached cottages, bearing a similar planned layout to those of Chapel Street have appeared further down Cow Lane but the rest of the village has no noticeable addition since the 1835 map.

Part of Bramcote's economic past is represented in the survival of a pair of early 19<sup>th</sup> century framework knitters cottages facing the busy A52 Derby Road. 'Broom Hill Terrace' exhibits the characteristic multi-windowed top storey of these structures, designed to let in as much light as possible to illuminate the frame-knitting machines that were worked there. Bramcote, along with the surrounding villages, had many more of these buildings but they have been lost over the years, making those few which have survived all the more valuable for their social, economic and architectural history.

The early 19<sup>th</sup> century also saw the erection of the large houses, and their associated grounds, which would have such a significant effect on the character of the southern part of the village: Bramcote Hall, The Grove, Southfield House, and The Grange effectively prevented high-density development of the south of the village throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and probably stunted its economic growth. The parish church was relocated in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The old 14<sup>th</sup> century church at the southern end of the village was demolished in 1861 (apart from the tower) and the new gothic styled church of St Michael and All Angels, with its tall spire, was constructed alongside the newly named Church Street to the northern end of the village.

The almshouses at the top of Cow Lane were constructed in 1852 from an endowment by Frances Jane Longden, the sister of John Sherwin Gregory, owner of Bramcote Manor. These buildings were renovated and modernised with the help of a grant from Broxtowe Borough Council in 1984-5. Further along Cow Lane small cottages were constructed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, set back from the road on the north side.

The OS 25" map of 1914 shows very little development in the village. Some of the plots have been amalgamated and some have changed orientation within the Church Street triangle but there is still open area behind the street-frontage dwellings. The southern half of the village is still dominated by the grounds of The Grange, Bramcote House, Bramcote Hall, Southfield House, the Manor House, and The Grove; and the layout of their respective formal garden designs are well illustrated.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, development occurred to the east of the village, effectively connecting it to neighbouring Beeston. To the west of Town Street, though, the village remains largely unchanged from that depicted on the Tithe map of 1846. The former grounds of Bramcote Hall are now owned by the University of Nottingham, which has built the small "Lawns" development of 14 luxury flats accessed from Moss Drive. The Hall itself was demolished in the 1960's.

The original, extensive grounds of both the Manor House and the Grange now contain housing and at the time of this survey, luxury housing was under construction along The Home Croft to the south of the village. Southfield House still retains some of its grounds, which will undoubtedly come under pressure for development in the future.

## 2.4 Economy

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, sections of the population of Bramcote began to move away from their traditional agricultural employment towards the developing industries of framework knitting and coal mining.

White's Trade Directory of 1832 gives the population of Bramcote as 562 and among the village inhabitants were 7 farmers, 8 boot and shoemakers, and 7 bobbin net makers. The 1851 census reveals 10 lacemakers, 31 framework knitters, 45 farm labourers and 20 coal miners, along with some 'ironstone getters'. By 1901 the number of coal miners had increased to 49; 18 of whom lived in Chapel Street, and there were still a few lace hands and shawl makers. In the 50 years from 1851 to 1901 the village only increased in size by 6 houses and 18 people.



# 3.0 The Different Character Areas

Along with a consideration of the history and development of Bramcote, an investigation of its character today is necessary in order to draw out those special qualities that warrant designation as a conservation area. 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 village; views and vistas into and out of the village; 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 village can be divided into three main character zones:

- The extreme northern part of the village, within the triangle formed by Derby Road, Town Street and Church Street, is characterised by houses tightly packed onto small plot sizes in a fairly regular rectilinear pattern.
- The central part of the village runs south from the Church Street junction, along Town Street up to Cow Lane. This area forms the core of the village and is characterised by small cottages, gardens and contains the village pub, almshouses and the remains of the old church.
- The southern part of the village, travelling south from Cow Lane along Town Street, contains the major areas of mature tree cover and distinctive stone walling. Detached houses are more prevalent, some of which sit within large grounds.

## The impact of individual buildings and boundary treatments on the character of a zone

Maps 2-4 illustrate the impact made by individual buildings and their boundary treatments on the character of each zone. The buildings are shown as having either a positive, negative or neutral effect on the character of the zone. The boundary treatments are illustrated as making either a positive or negative contribution to the character of the zone.

- Buildings described as positive, either positively enhance or support the character of the zone, 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 zone. They cannot be easily enhanced.
- Buildings described as neutral, neither enhance nor seriously erode the character of the zone. It might be possible to improve their contribution to the character of the zone 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 zone.

### 3.1 Character Zone 1: Church Street & Chapel Street (map 2)

This zone covers approximately the area encompassed by the triangle formed by Town Street and Church Street from Derby Road to the point where they intersect; the properties facing Derby Road; and St Michaels and All Angels Church.

This end of the conservation area has the highest density housing and the fewest trees and hedges. It has a planned rectilinear appearance which is, in the main, a result of the 19<sup>th</sup> century expansion of the village. As such, it is a contrast to the more “organic” nature of the rest of the conservation area. It has developed an urban character in some places. Many of the plots which front the west side of Church Street and the south side of Chapel Street appear unchanged from those shown on the Tithe map of 1846. Elsewhere, amalgamation and reorientation of plots has occurred.

#### *Derby Road*

Derby Road exhibits a variety of housing stock dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The buildings are set back from the road with small gardens to their fronts. Some of the houses have lost their front boundary walls and have had their gardens converted to parking areas. The wide asphalt footpath is also used for parking. This short stretch of the conservation area suffers from its close proximity to the busy and noisy dual-carriageway of the A52 but includes some characterful buildings.

On the corner of Church Street stands a two-storey building with a three-storey octagonal tower, which acts as a landmark to the Church Street entrance to the village. This building also has an attractive low, rubble stone boundary wall to its Derby Road elevation, part of which has been marred by the addition of

tall, close-boarded fences, with concrete posts, fitted behind it as a privacy screen. A more suitable treatment would perhaps have been the use of native hedging plants like those used elsewhere in the conservation area.

*Buildings of historic character, Derby Road*



*Framework knitters cottage, Derby Road*



The listed framework-knitters cottages are along this section as well as other interesting buildings with cellar-storeys for garaging. The appearance of this area could be much improved by the use of an agreed palette of driveway materials; boundary walls; and hedging plants. In this way the design continuity of the 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces could be extended easily to their parking bays.

#### *Church Street*

Church Street also has a variety of housing of different periods fronting its west side, with the Church and community hall on its east side. The older and more varied housing lies to the northern end of the street, between Chapel Street and Derby Road. These are mainly late 19<sup>th</sup>



or early 20<sup>th</sup> century detached properties with small gardens to the front and frontages of various widths. One property in particular stands out because of the striking treatment to its front boundary wall (see photo). Although unusual in design, it has been well executed using good quality materials and has retained within its fabric the characteristic herringbone coursed stone walling of the village.

*Village character, Church Street*



*Unusual boundary wall, Church Street*



The east side of Church Street has three main structures: The 19<sup>th</sup> century spired church, which dominates the view; the late 20<sup>th</sup> century Parish Centre, connected to the church; and the Memorial Hall to the north of these. The only other buildings within the conservation area on this side of the street, are two 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages at the southern end. This fact, coupled with the wideness of the road, gives an open aspect to the street, with views between the buildings to the middle distance. The church is set back from the road behind a grassed area; a low stone wall and a line of silver birch trees. These features, along with the light vehicular use of the street,

preserve a village atmosphere, despite the close proximity to the busy A52 trunk road.

Both the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Memorial Hall, with its complimentary late 20<sup>th</sup> extension, and the Parish Centre enhance the street. Both are low buildings with pitched roofs of slate which sit comfortably with the domestic buildings. The Parish Centre is an attractive hexagonal, chapterhouse-like structure with tall slit-windows which echo the lancet windows of the church.

The two cottages at the south end of this side of the street have both had their walls rendered and painted in pale colours. The first is built close to the street and has white PVC windows and doors, which erode its historic character. The second sits in a mature garden, behind a tall old red brick wall and has retained its original sash windows.

The housing south of Chapel Street, on the west side, is of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and is more uniform in appearance, with regularly sized plot frontages and small front gardens. The houses are constructed from a variety of brick colours and exhibit a mix of window styles. Their design and appearance make no positive contribution to the conservation area. Further tree planting and improvement works to their front boundaries could help to mitigate their impact.

Front boundary walls along Church Street help to create continuity and are of either stone construction or of red brick with blue brick copings.

#### *Town Street (from Derby Road to Church Street)*

The northern end of Town Street is the main northern entrance to the village today. On entering from this direction the character of the environment quickly changes from the wide-open, noisy and busy highway of the A52 to a narrow and gently curving, tree-lined street.

### Northern entrance, streetscape and boundary treatments

The actual entrance to the village from the large A52 roundabout at this point warrants further consideration. On the left-hand side of the entrance is an attractive, well designed piece of soft landscaping. Field maples set in a raised grass area behind a low stone wall, with informal native hedging of hawthorn and blackthorn as a backdrop, provides a rural touch and is a fine introduction to the village.

*North entrance to village, Town Street*



*Attractive landscaping to east side of Town Street entrance*

This landscaping scheme should be mirrored on the west side of the street to enhance the entrance to the village. At present this has tall leylandii-type conifers, straggly hawthorns and weed-covered ground. If this process was combined with wide-spaced planting of tall, native trees to each side of the northern end of Town Street, particularly the barren eastern side between the Chapel Street and Church

Street entrances, it would help merge this end of the village to the more leafy area to the south.

The majority of the housing stock along this part of Town Street is inter-war detached and semi-detached dwellings with small gardens to the front, the exception being numbers 19-23 which date from the late Victorian or Edwardian period. Most of the housing within the conservation area falls the east of the street. A Victorian school dominates the west side of the street, next to the public car park. A short length of low stone walling topped by a native hedgerow survives on the east side immediately north of the Chapel Street junction. There are a few remnants of low stone boundary walls on the west of the street, otherwise the traditional boundary treatments have been lost.

Landscaping treatments to the front of properties on the east side, between the entrances to Chapel Street and Church Street have eroded the village character. The houses themselves do not detract from the character of the area but the gardens to the front of some of the properties, particularly 19-23 and 29, have been lost or shrunk to accommodate off-street parking. Their front and side boundaries have also been lost creating a hard and wide open area. This has given the properties an urban character and if the process is allowed to spread to neighbouring houses, will have a dramatic negative effect on this part of the village.

The car park on the opposite side of the street similarly has an urbanising effect on the area. It is a plain expanse of asphalt behind a low, poor quality railing. The car park could be easily improved if the railings were changed to match the traditionally styled ones surrounding the neighbouring Victorian school building. This, however, would not break up the uninterrupted flow of asphalt between road, footpath and car park, and perhaps

some form of soft landscaping here would improve the appearance.

*Loss of boundaries and urbanisation, Town Street*



*Low quality treatment to car park, Town Street*

### *Chapel Street*

Chapel Street has a narrower roadway than Church Street and has a row of mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces which line the footpath on the south side. These are probably some of the dwellings which housed the 18 miners listed in the 1901 census. Late 20<sup>th</sup> century semi-detached housing is also evident on this side of the street. These modern houses break the building line by being set back from the footpath with parking to the front and so dilute the historic character.

The north side of Chapel Street has lost the terraces depicted on the 1914 OS map and with them the 'closed in' character that the two terraced facades, facing each other across the street, would have provided. The new development to the west end of the street, along with the open area around the single storey childrens' nursery and the flat roofed construction of both the nursery and the modern extension to the front of the Methodist

Chapel, have seriously eroded the historic character of Chapel Street as a whole.

Front boundary treatments here feature low brick walls with concrete copings, sometimes with railings, but not the characteristic blue brick copings seen in Church Street. No stone walls are evident. Three properties feature white picket fences on the street frontage, not seen anywhere else within the conservation area, and not a vernacular detail.

### Summary of the character of zone 1

- Planned housing developments dating from early 19<sup>th</sup> to late 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which create a densely packed and regimented character.
- Properties face the street, either directly fronting the footpath or behind small front gardens.
- Church Street is most 'village-like', owing to the church, memorial hall, older cottages, trees and quietness of the road.
- Town Street is more suburban, owing to 1930's detached and semi-detached housing.

### Architectural materials:

- Low boundary walls of red brick with blue brick copings.
- Low boundary walls of local stone with hedging behind.
- Painted cast iron railings.
- Dentilated or dog-toothed eaves details.
- Red or brown brick
- Slate or red plain tile
- Decorative tile
- Ornate ridge tile
- Cast iron rainwater goods
- Stone mullioned windows
- 8 over 8, timber sliding sash windows
- Timber, small-paned casement windows
- Stone lintels and cills



### Negative factors which devalue Character Zone 1

- Traditional styles of windows and doors replaced with items of unsuitable design and material.
- Loss of boundary walls, hedges and front gardens to parking areas.
- Houses of unsympathetic design on both Chapel Street and Church Street.
- Use of wide areas of block paving, tarmac and concrete for parking areas has an urbanising effect: particularly in Town Street.
- Cheap, standard railing designs at front of car park and Memorial Hall; standard buff coloured anti-slip paving outside Memorial Hall; and standard concrete or galvanised street lamp columns all give a 'municipal feel' to the public realm.
- Extensive and untidy asphalt and concrete patching works to the footpaths and roads gives the area an 'uncared for' appearance: particularly in Church Street.

### **3.2 Character Zone 2: Old village core (map 3)**

This zone covers the older domestic dwellings, dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup>/ early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, with small gardens along Town Street and Cow Lane and includes the White Lion public house, the almshouses and the old church tower. It is the old village core. The development has been piecemeal, the cottages are small, and there are mature trees, particularly to the west of the area.

#### *Town Street*

Town Street appears narrower southwards from the White Lion, owing to the lack of footpath and the nearness of the houses to the street. Along this stretch, a small group of early 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages on irregularly shaped plots lie on the west side of the street. To the east side sits

the village pub and running south from this there are a number of 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages, fronting the street. A small number of mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century houses break up the historic continuity before the almshouses are reached at the top of Cow Lane.

The small group of cottages on the west side of Town Street sit within small gardens with outbuildings, high above the road on a bank with a steep rise behind them to the much higher recreation grounds that lead off to the south west. They sit opposite the village pub and are an attractive feature of this part of the street. Unfortunately, of the five cottages, two have lost original features and have had UPVC windows fitted.

Between these cottages and the entrance to Moss Drive further south, is a steep bank topped by tall trees and covered in vegetation, which rises behind a low stone wall with black painted railings. giving a rural feeling to the streetscape.

*Village core, public house, Town Street*



*Village core, small cottages & stone walling*



The listed public house, to the east of the street, is an attractive building and focal point. It features an unusual covered walkway fronting the street, which gives it a unique character. The pub has a car park behind it which is reached from Town Street.

The car park is on elevated ground and features a tall, curved retaining wall which is visible from the street. The wall is quite a dominant structural feature which has been pebbledash rendered. A more suitable treatment would have been plain local brick, like the adjoining wall in Church Street. If it were finished in a local stone it would contribute more to the local character.

#### *Ash Tree Square and Henson's Square*

These two squares have a character quite distinct from the rest of the conservation area, and although one of them falls outside the present boundary they should be considered together. Both are modest inter-war developments, facing inward onto small private gardens, divided by privet hedges, and accessed via a narrow central footpath.

The squares exhibit a character reminiscent of a "Garden City" such as Letchworth or a garden suburb like Bourneville, and survive largely as designed. They illustrate how the problem of providing high density attractive community housing was approached during a distinct historical period and as such add interest to the conservation area.

*Intimate, privet-hedged gardens of Ash Tree Square*



Ash Tree Square is the most unharmed of the two and lies within the present boundary. It is accessed via a narrow entrance from Town Street which serves its six semi-detached houses. The atmosphere within the square is very intimate and cosy, despite its close proximity to the busy Town Street.

Henson's Square is outside the present boundary and is accessed via The Courtyard, off Cow Lane. Its central path serves three buildings: a semi-detached at the end of the square; and two blocks that contain three dwellings each, which flank the square.

*Tall fencing erodes the character of Henson Square*



Sadly, a large extension has been added to number 8 which has destroyed the symmetry of the square. The low privet hedging around number 7 and 8 has been replaced by tall close-boarded fencing which has also divided the square. The openness and unity of the space has been damaged.

Extending the conservation area boundary to include Henson's Square would enable control to be extended to protect its remaining character, and perhaps to enable reinstatement of the original design at some point in the future.

#### *Moss Drive and Cow Lane*

A crossroads is formed by Cow Lane and Moss Drive running off Town Street to the east and west respectively. This location is an important nodal point of the village,

bordered by the striking architecture of the almshouses, the imposing feature of the old church tower on its elevated ground, and the distinctive, large stuccoed presence of the Grange.

Tall, sandstone boundary walls, some of which are laid in the locally distinctive herringbone pattern, dominate Moss Drive and border the old church yard. The elevated and grassy church yard with its tower and tall, mature trees is an attractive feature which dominates the area. The tower and the almshouses provide a strong historic character to this section of the village.

*Herringbone stone walling, Town Street*



*Almshouses and old churchyard, Town Street*

Looking north from the front of the old church tower at the Cow Lane junction, Town Street zig-zags its way down hill and the view is of the roof-tops of the houses lower down, with the spire of St Michaels church rising behind them, and tree covered higher ground in the distance. Because of the tall tree cover and topography, this view still retains a very rural character, despite looking in

the direction of urban development to the north of Derby Road.

Moss Drive leads off west to the extensively wooded grounds of Bramcote Hall, where the high quality “Lawns” development of modern apartments is concealed. The dominance of the woodland here creates a strong feeling of enclosure.

Cow Lane slopes down to the east. To its southern side is tall hedging with mature trees beyond, within the grounds of the Grange. To its north side the almshouses mark the entrance followed by detached and semi-detached dwellings which are set back from the road, behind gardens with tall trees and vegetation, which helps to retain a “country lane” character. To the lower part of the lane, small 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages are evident. Between these and the almshouses, 20<sup>th</sup> century detached dwellings have been built.

The small cottages sit comfortably with the leafy character of the lane but the later detached dwellings have been subject to modifications, such as extensive block paved drives, which have an urbanising effect on the lane.

When entering Bramcote via Cow Lane from the busy Derby Road to the east, the “country lane” character of Cow Lane is striking. After passing the entrance to The Pines/Close Quarters, the narrow road, with no footpaths, climbs gradually and becomes a cutting with high banks, topped predominantly by Hawthorn hedgerows and deciduous tree cover.

Because of this cutting, and the fact that many of the houses are set back from the road, the view is very enclosed and dominated by the vegetation, which has a pleasing “un-manicured” appearance, that adds to the rural feeling. Unfortunately this enclosed and un-manicured character has been lost in places, owing to the introduction of wide property entrances, and the replacement of the hedgerow



with fencing or clipped hedging, which gives parts of the lane a more suburban character.

The rural nature of the Cow Lane entrance to the conservation area is an unusual historic remnant that deserves conserving. Special consideration should be given to any highway works; border treatments; and access ways to properties bordering it. The reintroduction and management of the Hawthorn hedging where it has been lost or is deteriorating, would greatly conserve and enhance the special character of this part of the conservation area.

*Wooded character, Moss Drive*



*Rural nature of Cow Lane*



### *Public Realm*

The installation of street lights, litter bins and bus stops has been undertaken with little respect to the character of the area. They are either standard issue items or, in the case of the bus stop, a corporate design that does not harmonise sympathetically with its surroundings. In three cases along Town Street the bus

stop posts have been erected within a few inches of street lamps, causing unnecessary street clutter. The sign and timetable could have been affixed to the lamp post.

### Summary of the special character of zone 2

- More “organic”, piecemeal feel to the development than in zone 1
- A tall wooded bank to the west of Town Street which provides a green backdrop to the narrow, cottage-lined road
- “Garden Suburb” design in Ash Tree Square and Henson's Square
- Historic “nodal point” around the Cow Lane/Moss Drive crossroads, focussed on the old tower and almshouses
- Enclosure provided by woodland around Moss Drive
- The “country lane” nature of Cow Lane
- High quality architecture of varied design

### Architectural materials:

- Sandstone walling, sometimes with herringbone coursing
- Un-coursed rubble walling
- Privet hedging
- Hawthorn hedging along Cow Lane
- Brown local brick
- Roof coverings of: plain tile, fishscale tile, pantile or natural slate
- Black painted cast iron railings
- Cast iron rainwater goods
- Painted stucco
- Dentilated brick details
- Stone mullioned windows
- Large, finely detailed timber sliding sash windows
- Venetian window details
- Small-paned timber casement windows
- Diamond leaded casement windows



*Unattractive street clutter degrades historic character*

### Negative factors which devalue Character Zone 2

- Heavy traffic damages the village-like character and makes crossing Town Street hazardous
- Asphalt road and footpath surfaces are badly worn and unsightly patching works mar the area
- Unsympathetically designed or located signage, street lighting, grit containers and litter bin around the Cow Lane/Moss Drive crossroads devalues the historic buildings



*Unsympathetic design, unnecessary clutter*

- Block paved drives along Cow Lane erode its “country lane” character
- White plastic coated double garage door behind almshouses conflicts with the surrounding natural materials of the historic buildings
- Window and door designs and materials unsympathetic to the historic buildings, particularly along the east side of Town Street
- Dormer window insertions facing the street on cottages in Town

Street spoil the otherwise attractive roof-scape  
Erosion of the rural character of Cow Lane through loss of the Hawthorn hedgerows and development too close to the lane

### **3.3 Character Zone 3: South of Cow Lane (map 4)**

The OS 25” map of 1914 shows this part of the village dominated by the six grand houses of: The Grange; Bramcote House; the Manor House; The Grove; Southfield House; and Bramcote Hall and its grounds to the west. The grounds of these houses had an open and spacious character containing formal gardens, wooded parkland and fields.

This open character has changed as these spaces have been filled in by various periods of housing development, so that today the character of this zone is provided mainly by topography, road layout, boundary treatments and tree cover. This character is experienced most dramatically when the village is approached from the south, along Chilwell Lane.

#### *Chilwell Lane/Town Street*

The southern entrance to the conservation area begins at the point where Common Lane and Peache Way form a crossroads with Chilwell Lane. The road enters a cutting and becomes “canyon-like”. Very tall stone walls appear to the left and right with tall trees behind, which reach over and touch to form a tunnel. The road begins a slight ascent and the view ahead is lost because of a very sharp right turn. The tall walls and trees continue to border the road on the left around a sweeping left-hand bend, until the summit of the hill is reached, and the view opens out as the almshouses and old church tower come into view, before the road descends again through the snaking road of the old village core.



Arriving at Bramcote from the south, the tall walls and trees play a very important role in defining this distinctive and unusual entrance to the village. For this reason they should be considered key features in the conservation area.



*Attractive canyon-like south entrance to village*

Between Moss Drive and the entrance to Bramcote House on the west side of Town Street the stone boundary walling is very overgrown with ivy and self seeded saplings. Although this appearance adds to the leafy character of the area, the saplings will cause damage to the walls if they are not removed.

#### *Southfield House and Harley House*

The listed buildings of Southfield House are hidden behind tall walls at the end of a quiet, leafy cul-de-sac to the west of Town Street. One of its listed outbuildings, which fronts the road, is in poor repair and appears on the County Council Buildings at Risk Register. The existing grounds of Southwell House are likely to come under pressure for development in the future. Any proposals for development should be handled sensitively with regard to the high quality of the existing buildings, their leafy setting, and particular access arrangements.

At the top of the cul-de-sac is Harley House. This is a large detached house with high quality detailing, behind tall brick walls and set in spacious grounds. Its design appears to date from the 1920's or 30's.

*Large, high quality house and tall brick walling*



#### *Hall Gardens and the Home Croft*

The most recent housing developments within the conservation area are Hall Gardens and on The Home Croft.

Hall Gardens form a cul-de-sac, leading off Common Lane, to the west of the Chilwell Lane entrance to the village. This road was newly formed to provide access into the former grounds of Southfield House, within which the development has been built. The road serves five large houses, set back from the road behind wide lawns. The development backs onto the gardens of both Southfield House and Harley House. The houses are individually designed and are hidden from view behind the tall walls which border Chilwell Lane and so do not detract from the dramatic view when entering the village from this direction. However, the style of the architecture makes no positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.



*Hall Gardens cul-de-sac development*



The development on the Home Croft has more of an impact upon the conservation area because of its central position on elevated ground and its close proximity to a public footpath.

The Home Croft was once open ground filling the “knee” of the dog-leg of Chilwell Lane/Town Street, with a diagonal footpath running through it. Development in the form of small bungalows has occurred to the east of it, up to the Manor House. Further development is currently underway to the west of the footpath, infilling up to Chilwell Lane.

The current development is of large detached houses of fairly similar, universal design and quality which can be seen anywhere. Their style, layout and detailing do not make much positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. Unfortunately the footpath has been widened and asphalted to form vehicular access for the development, which has further eroded the rural character of the village.

Unlike Hall Gardens this development is not so well screened from the Chilwell Lane entrance. During the summer, when the tall trees lining the lane are in full leaf, the impact of these large houses on the view from Chilwell Lane is softened. During the winter months though, they will be clearly visible and will tend to erode the rural character of the views from Chilwell Lane.



*Home Croft development*

### *Peaches Way and St John's College (The Grove)*

Peaches Way leads down to the entrance to St John's College, which occupies the early 19<sup>th</sup> century building listed as The Grove. Its north side is lined by tall, wild-looking, hedgerows from The Home Croft, down to the entrance to Manor Court and the Manor House. After this point it is lined by tall close-boarded fencing which forms the rear boundary of Manor Court.

The south side of Peaches Way has a row of Silver Birch trees which line the road. To the north of the road lie the grounds of the Grove, which now contain the various buildings that make up St John's College.



*Peaches Way, red brick boundary wall of 'The Grove'*

The many additional buildings constructed as part of the college oppress the setting of The Grove and this part of the conservation area. The materials used in their construction are of low quality and have not weathered well.

*Peaches Way, unsympathetic design of college buildings*



The grounds to the south of the buildings form the college playing fields. These are bordered by tall, mature trees and form an important open green area. These grounds along with fields to the west of Chilwell Lane provide a green buffer between Bramcote village and Beeston and Chilwell, and form the edge of the conservation area.

### *Manor House and Manor Court*

The listed Manor House retains its character but its setting has been compromised by housing development, particularly on the higher ground to the north and west. The house feels very “hemmed in”.

Manor Court is a U-shaped, single-storey, residential block made out of the ancillary buildings of the Manor House. They are ranged around a colourful garden and have had their walls painted white, along with a neighbouring cottage and garage block. They form an attractive group which has retained much of its historic character. Unfortunately, this is under threat because of the loss of original features and the installation of UPVC windows to the whole of the east range.



*Manor Court*

### *Public Realm*

Tall wooden fencing along the south side of Town Street from Bramcote House corner to Harley House corner lacks quality and dilutes the distinctive border treatments of this zone.

The long, sweeping crash barrier around the bend near Bramcote House is fairly unobtrusive and is preferable to the larger, standard highways type. Regular maintenance, in the form of painting, is probably all that need be required.

### Summary of the special character of zone 3

- “Canyon-like” entrance from the south
- Tall stone boundary and retaining walls
- Extensive mature tree cover
- Organic, piecemeal development
- Large detached houses of distinct historic character
- Open, rural views to the south and west from Common Lane

### Architectural materials:

- Sandstone walling, sometimes with herringbone coursing
- Plain tile or slate roofing
- Red brick walling
- Stucco/smooth render
- Red or brown brick
- Painted cast metal railings

### Negative factors which devalue Character Zone 3

- Suburban style new development on The Home Croft erodes village character
- St John’s College developments south of Peache Way of low quality
- Setting of The Manor House has been eroded by visibility of surrounding development
- UPVC windows have harmed the historic character and appearance of Manor Court
- Border treatments on south side of Town Street erode village character

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

## Summary of special interest (strengths)

- Topography and heavy tree cover combine to give a very rural, distinctive appearance to Bramcote
- The twisting, gorge-like, enclosed nature of Chilwell Lane/Town Street in the southern half of the village
- The elevated, wooded grounds formerly belonging to Bramcote Hall which provide long views out to the north, west and south
- The historic core of the village where the almshouses and old tower flank the main street
- Traditional sandstone boundary walling, often laid in a distinctive herringbone pattern
- A number of listed “grand houses”
- A rare survival of rural appearance along Cow Lane, when approaching from the east

## Summary of erosive factors (weaknesses)

- The northern part of the conservation area (zone 1) weakens the quality of the conservation area as a whole, owing to relatively large amounts of uninspired development in the late 20th century. This development has heavily eroded the late 19<sup>th</sup> century historic character of this zone.
- In zone 2 the continuity of the rural character of the old village has been disrupted by unsympathetic piecemeal development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This has created “islands of character” separated by areas of incongruity. For instance, The White Horse pub and the cottages opposite are divorced from the

cottages, the old tower and the almshouses further south.

- The extensive, low quality new development of St John’s College affects the conservation area, and the setting of The Grove listed building.
- In the public realm, unsympathetic designs of street lamps, railings, bus stops and the poor quality of some areas of roadway and footpath erode the quality of the conservation area as a whole.

## Threats to the character of the conservation area

- At present the historic core of Bramcote still retains a village-like character. The scale of the housing on the Home Croft has eroded this character. If developments like this continue in the village, its special character will be lost.
- Incremental changes to the buildings in the form of the loss of original features and their replacement with new designs and materials unsympathetic to the character of the conservation area will continue to degrade the area as a whole.
- The heavy traffic which uses Chilwell Lane and Town Street is having a detrimental affect on the village. Standard highway improvements to counter heavy traffic levels would be likely to urbanise the highway and damage the rural character of the village.
- A piecemeal change to Cow Lane from a rural to a suburban character, through a lack of sympathetic development



## **Opportunities for enhancement**

- Resurfacing of the roads and footpaths and repaired kerbs would improve the appearance of the area a great deal. Also a creative approach to dropped kerbs/non-slip paving.
- A design of items within the public realm that is more sympathetic to the historic character of the village i.e. streetlamps, railings, litterbins, signage, bus stops.
- Tree planting to border the streets of zone 1 to link this part of the area to the more leafy southern part.
- Landscaping scheme to the western side of the northern Town Street entrance to the village, to mirror that already established on the eastern side.
- An agreed design for border treatments and materials for the three character zones, to establish continuity throughout the village. E.g. zone 1, red brick with blue brick copings, painted railings, privet hedging; zone 2 and 3, sandstone, painted railings, Hawthorn hedging.
- An agreed palette of roofing materials; windows and doors. E.g. plain tile/natural slate; painted timber.

# 5.0 Suggestions for boundary changes to the conservation area

Described below are some suggestions for possible changes to the conservation area boundary. They are illustrated in Map 5. These have been suggested either to bring additional areas under control or to remove areas to which designation seems unnecessary.

- Draw in the boundary behind The Grange. At present the boundary runs through half of the modern development of Grangelea Gardens. It should be changed to run around the present back boundary of The Grange, but should still encompass the properties that have a boundary to Cow Lane.
- Extend the boundary to encompass Cow Lane as far north as The Pines. This would protect the rural character of Cow Lane from unsympathetic highway works, border treatments and oversized access ways. The natural steep verges and stone walls lining the edges of this road are mainly within the large plots of detached houses, thus it is proposed that all properties with a boundary to Cow Lane on this section should be included within the conservation area. The school should also be included for its setting and the mature trees in its grounds.
- Extend the boundary to include The Courtyard driveway and Henson's Square. At present The Courtyard is un-surfaced. Control could be taken over any resurfacing proposals to retain the rural nature of the Cow Lane area. Ash Tree Square is already within the boundary but its sister development of Henson's Square lies outside. As explained in zone 2, both of these inter-war developments exhibit a particular character of their own which enhances the conservation area.
- Extend the boundary to the north of zone 1 to include the remaining at the northern end of Town Street, to enable a more logical control over this main entrance to the conservation area. It is suggested that this extension should also take in St Georges Park, which has an historic character, and adjoining fields.



## Areas suggested for inclusion in the Conservation Area



*Town Street 'Gate Way'*



*Hensons Square*



*School grounds, Cow Lane*



*Cow Lane*



*Cow Lane*



*Cow Lane*



*St George's Park*



*St George's Park: field to the west*



# 6.0 References

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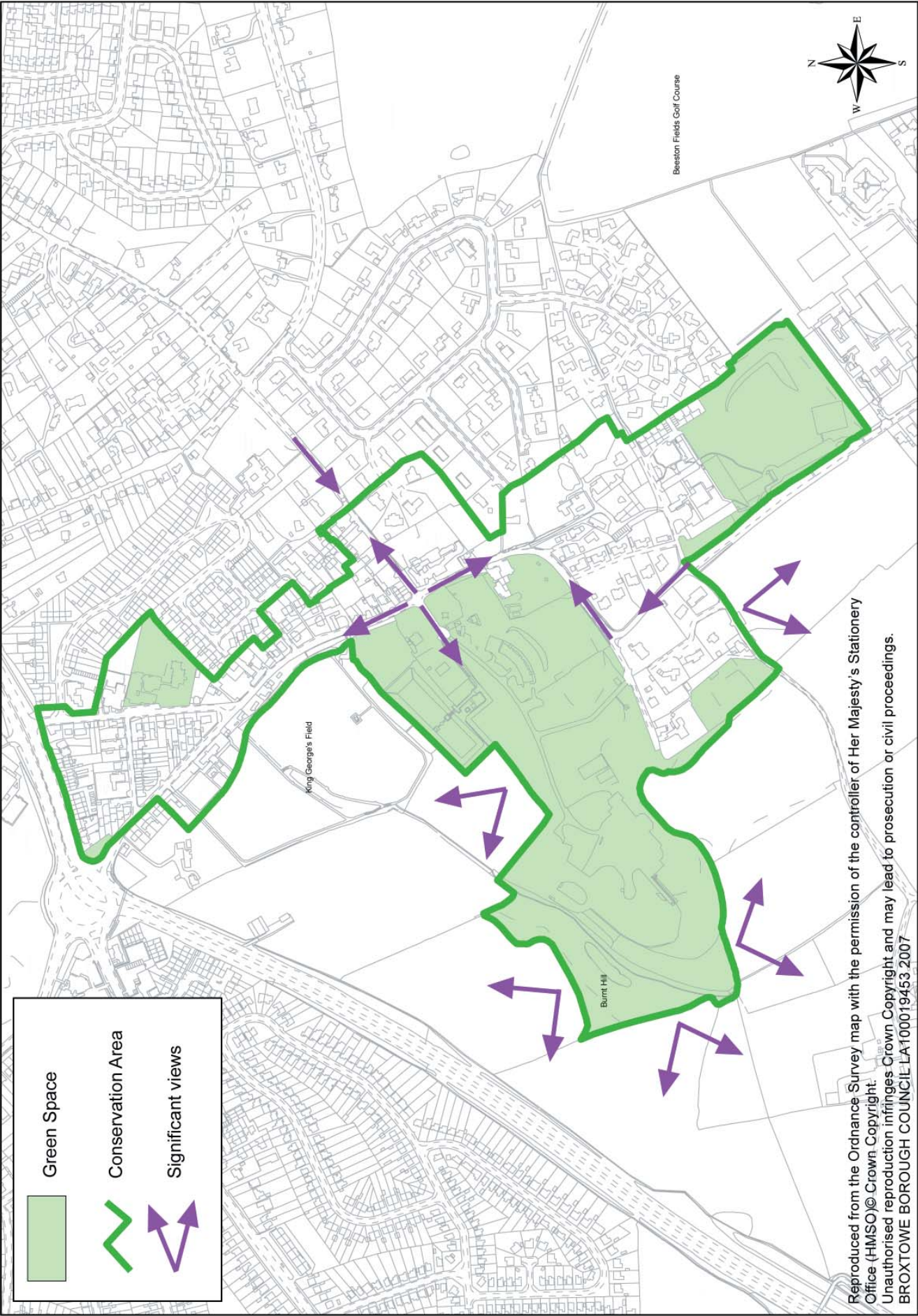
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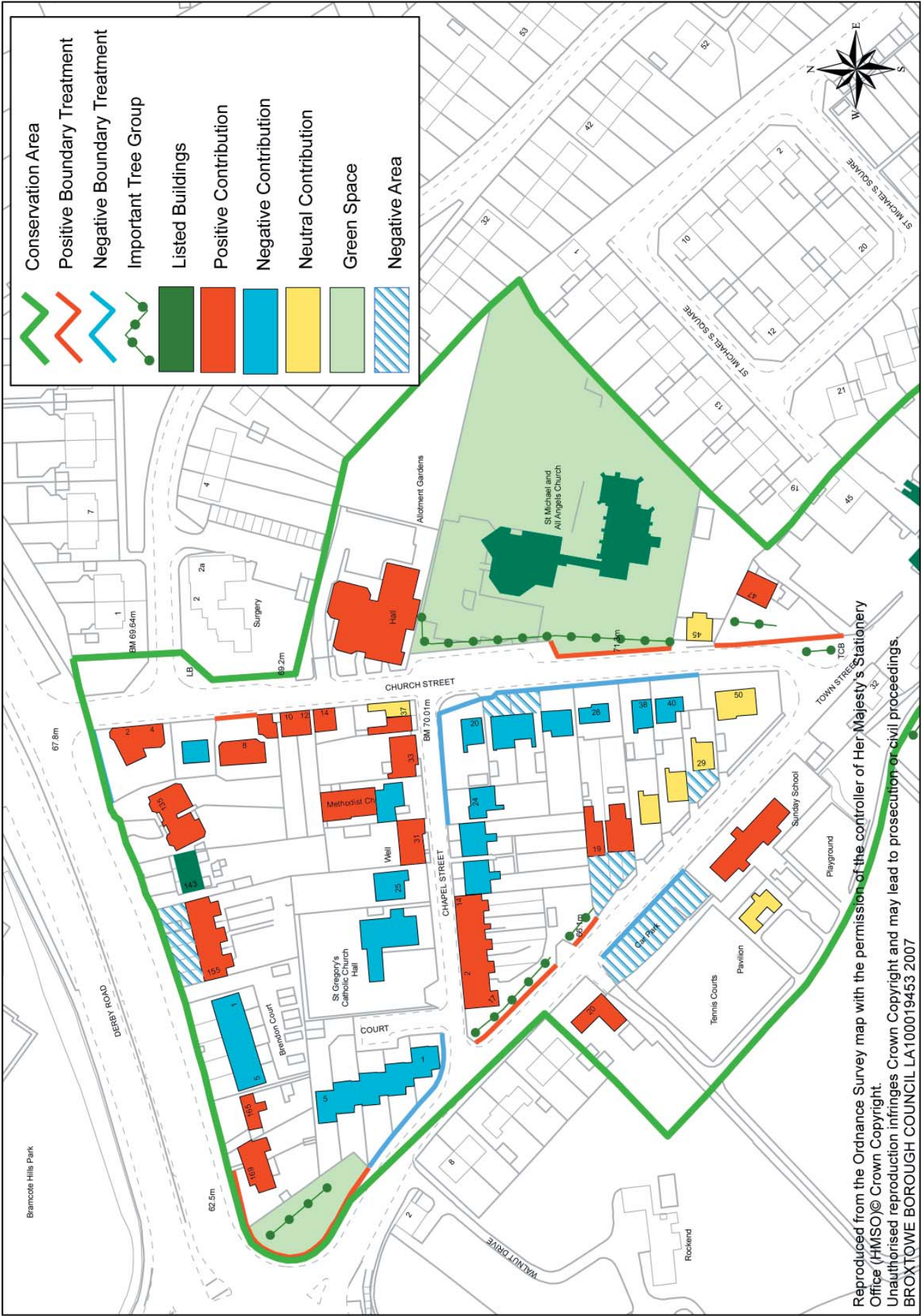
# Maps

Map 1: Bramcote Conservation Area

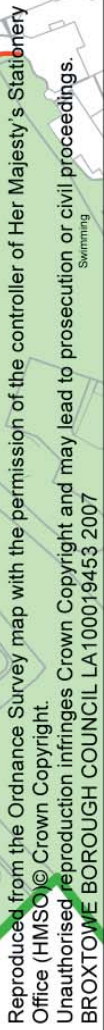




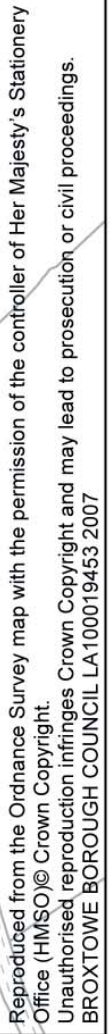
Map 2: Impact of Buildings in Character of Zone 1





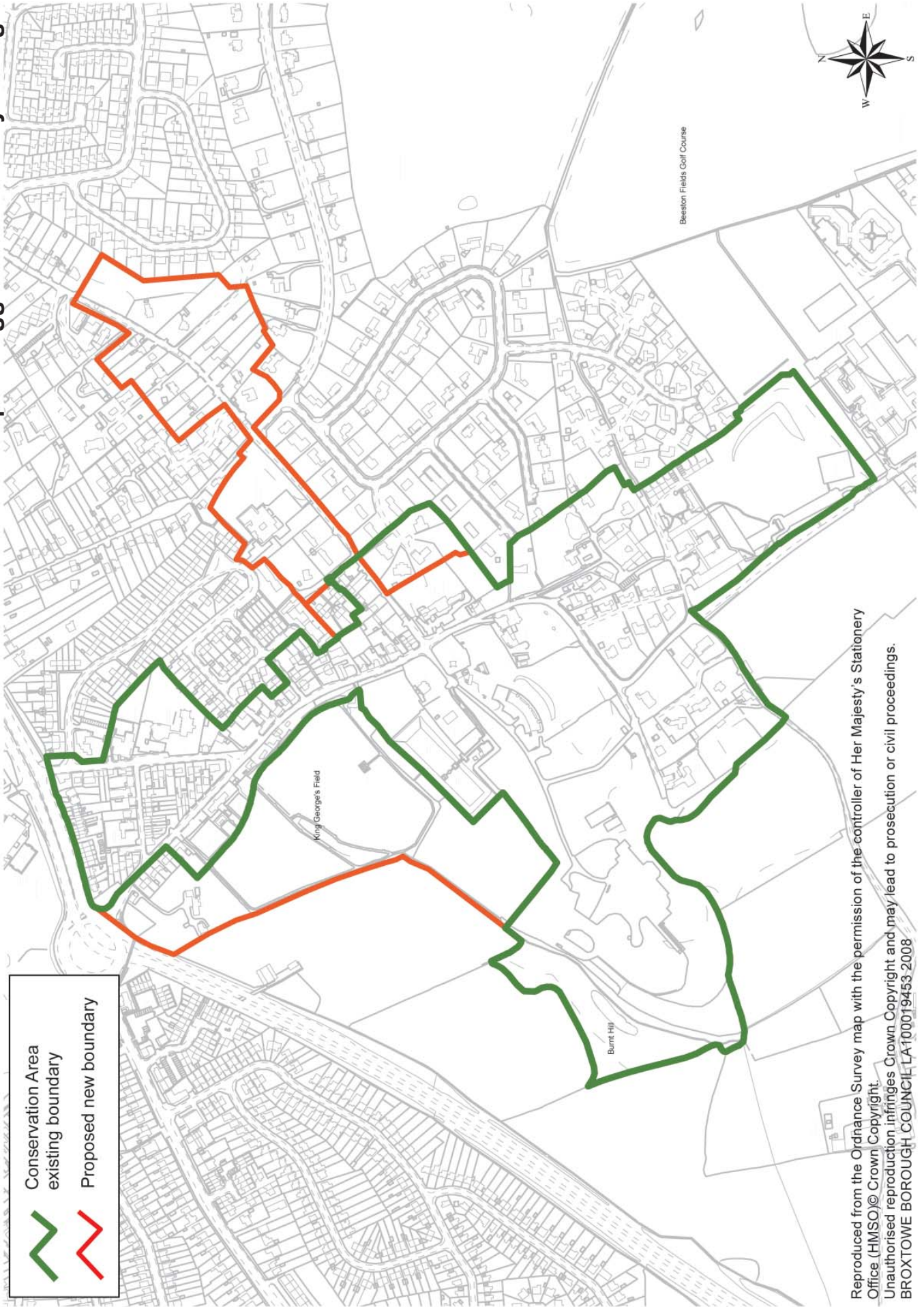








Map 5: Suggested Boundary Changes



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# 7.0 Appendices

## APPENDIX 1

### Listed Buildings

- Parish Church of St Michael & All Angels, Church Street.
- 1-7 odd (The Almshouses), Cow Lane.
- 139 & 143 (Broom Hill Terrace) Derby Road.
- 1 (The Manor House) & adjoining terrace (Manor Court), Town Street.
- Gateway & boundary wall (of Manor House), Town Street.
- Southfield House & The Cottage & boundary wall, Town Street.
- Stables & coach house of Southfield House.
- Tower of Church of St Michael, Town Street.
- 49 (The White Lion) Town Street.
- The Grange & Conservatory, Town Street.
- 101 Town Street.
- The Grove, Chillwell Lane.

## APPENDIX 2

### Criteria for assessing the contribution made by unlisted buildings in a conservation area<sup>4</sup>

- Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local note?
- 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?
- Does it relate by age, materials or in any other historically significant way to adjacent listed buildings, and contribute positively to their setting?
- 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?
- Does it have significant historic association with established features such as the road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
- 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?
- Does it reflect the traditional functional character of, or former uses within, the area?
- Has it significant historic associations with local people or past events?
- Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area?
- 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.

<sup>4</sup> English Heritage 2006 Guidance on conservation area appraisals, Appendix 2

