

Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area Appraisal

Adopted December 2014



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Front cover: Parish Church of Great St. Mary's, Church Lane; The Corn Mill, Mill Lane; Orchard Works, Station Road (now 1 – 36 River Court); The Market House Hotel, 42 Knight Street from Bell Street

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 This appraisal of the Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area was carried out by BEAMS Ltd (the trading arm of the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust), in partnership with East Herts Council. The appraisal provides an up-to-date review of the character, appearance, special interest & significance of the buildings, spaces & the interrelationships that comprise this unique town.
- 1.2 Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area was designated on 10th June 1968. The boundary was modified on two occasions, 27th March 1981 and 20th January 1998 (Figure 1). An adjoining conservation area in Lower Sheering was designated in September 1975 by Essex County Council and centred on the 19th century maltings complex south of the station. This is included in the appraisal because of the close links to the town, although it has not been commissioned by Essex County Council (or Epping Forest District Council) and therefore has no status in respect of any planning applications or other proposals on the Essex side of the county boundary.
- 1.3 Designation of a conservation area introduces additional controls within the area, including control over the demolition of unlisted buildings, strengthening control over minor development and provides additional protection for trees. However, conservation area designation does not necessarily stop change -alterations, different uses & new development, which requires planning permission or consent, can be positive and are carefully considered to seek to encourage conservation of the intrinsic character, appearance & significance & a harmony in sympathetic new buildings and works of clear quality.
- 1.4 The purpose of this appraisal is to define the special interest and local distinctiveness of Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area by analysing its development, landscape setting, views and spaces, and the architectural and historic interest of its buildings. It is intended to assist and guide all those involved with development and change and will be used by the Council when considering development proposals. The approach used in preparing this document is based on current good practice guidance as set out by English Heritage in 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' (2006) and Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2011).

Objectives

- 1.5 The main objectives of this conservation area appraisal are:
 - To define the special interest of Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area, and Lower Sheering Conservation Area in as much as it affects Sawbridgeworth's setting, by analysing historic development, uses, landscape setting, views and spaces, and also through assessing the architectural and historic qualities of buildings.
 - To identify neutral areas, negative features and spaces, and the problems, pressures and capacity for change

Survey

- 1.6 A full photographic record of Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area was made in line with the recommendations by English Heritage (2006) to provide 'a baseline for measuring change and monitoring alterations / physical condition'. This will form part of the project archive for use / reference by East Herts Council. The omission in this report of any particular feature within the conservation area does not imply that it is of no significance or value.

Public Consultation

- 1.7 There is a strong emphasis on community involvement in the production of appraisals to ensure the documents are as accurate as possible by assessing local knowledge, to encourage local involvement and to give people the chance to influence the document. This appraisal and the associated management plan have been produced in line with the East Herts Council's Statement of Community Involvement adopted in March 2007. Further details regarding the Public Consultation exercise can be found in Section 8.0.

Status and Contacts

- 1.8 The appraisal will be used as a technical document to inform planning decisions and will be subject to a process of monitoring and review. This document is the adopted Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area Appraisal which replaces the draft document that was subject to public consultation between May and July 2014. There was a public meeting on 29 May 2014. Members considered the responses to this consultation at their Executive Committee and Council meetings on 7 October and 17 December 2014 respectively. Members resolved to adopt the document on 17 December 2014. The document now appears with any necessary boundary revisions and textural changes required as a result of consultation feedback and adoption. Updated references to National Policy are included.
- 1.9 General advice about matters relating to the historic environment, including conservation areas and listed buildings can be sought from the Council's Conservation Section, which is part of Planning Services.

Postal address: East Herts Council, Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford, Herts. SG13 8EQ

Telephone: 01279 655261

Email: planning@eastherts.gov.uk

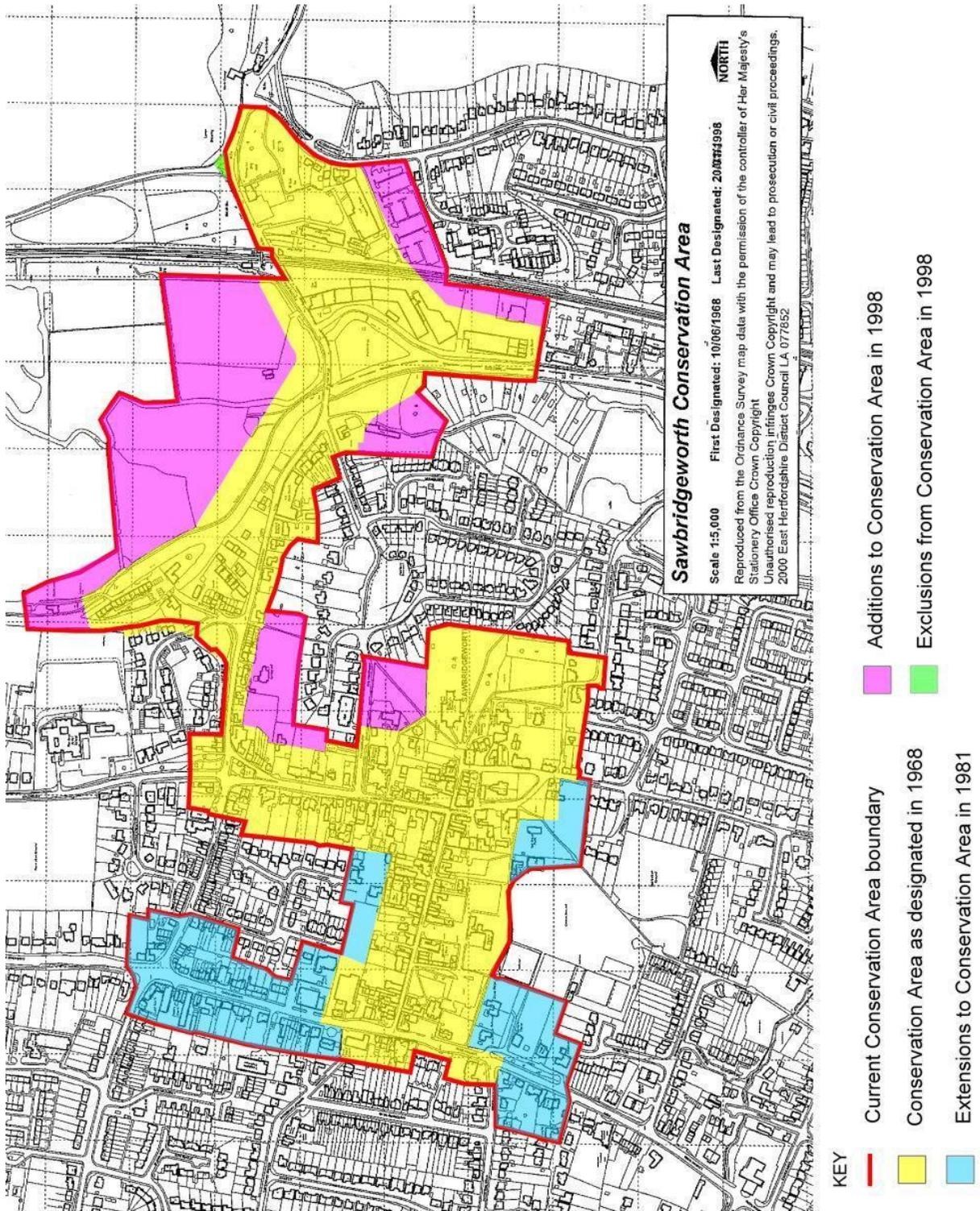


Figure 1. Alterations to Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area boundary since designation.
 Map courtesy of East Herts Council.

2.0 LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

2.1 A Conservation Area is defined under section 69 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as *'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.'* Each local planning authority is responsible for the designation of such conservation areas under the Act. Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities *'...to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement...'* of these conservation areas.

National Policy

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework advises as follows:

- There should be a positive strategy in the Local Plan for the conservation of the historic environment and up-to-date evidence used to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make.
- Conservation Areas. Such areas must justify such a status virtue of being of *'special architectural or historic interest'*.
- Heritage assets. A Heritage asset is defined as *'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listings).'*
- Considerable weight should be given to conserving such heritage assets and the more important they are the greater the weight. For example the effect of an application affecting a non- designated heritage asset should be taken into account and a balanced judgment reached. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II Listed Building should be exceptional whilst harm to heritage assets of higher status, e.g. a grade I or II* Listed Building should be wholly exceptional.
- Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance or better reveal their significance and proposals that preserve such elements should be approved.
- The use of Article 4 Directions to remove national permitted development rights should be limited to situations *'where this is necessary to protect local amenity or the well being of the area...'*
- Green Areas. Such areas of particular importance can properly be identified for special protection as Local Green Spaces in selected situations.

2.3 The East Herts. Local Plan was adopted by the Council in 2007. The 'saved' policies set out in the plan remain in force and are relevant in relation to Conservation Area and Historic Building considerations. The Local Plan and its policies can be viewed on the Councils website or a copy can be obtained from the Council.

2.4 In accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council is in the process of preparing a planning policy document which will replace the 2007 Local Plan. This will be known as the East Herts District Plan (DP). Once adopted the DP will contain the relevant Council planning policies. As currently drafted this emerging District Plan advises that development in Conservation Areas should, inter alia, conform with the content of the Appraisals

- 2.5 Chapter 7 of the Local Plan refers to retail and the policies seek to avoid out of town shopping centres having a negative impact on town centres. More specifically, policy STC 4 deals with change of use within retail shopping areas in small towns and seeks to avoid the loss of A1 retail to other uses where this would have an effect on the retail character.
- 2.6 Chapter 8 of the Local Plan refers to Environment and Design and many of these policies could also be relevant to the Conservation Area, including ENV.1, 3-6, 8-9, 1113, 16-21, 23 -28.
- 2.7 Chapter 9 of the Local Plan deals with conservation areas and related policies BH5, BH6, BH7, BH8, BH14 and BH15, which cover a range of issues, including the control of development within the conservation area, although BH4, which covered the demolition of buildings within the conservation area has not been saved. In addition, policy BH 17 refers to enabling development with respect to listed buildings, although all other listed building policies, BH9, BH10, BH11, BH12 and BH13 have not been saved. Policies BH1, BH2 and BH3 are relevant to sites of archaeological interest.
- 2.8 Chapter 14 of the Local Plan refers specifically to Sawbridgeworth. It has a list of three aims and six objectives, all of which are relevant to the character of the Conservation Area. A summary of these aims and objectives would be:
- To enable development to provide for the needs of present and future generations, whilst maintaining the town's pleasant character, ameliorating the problems associated with traffic, maintaining and enhancing the vitality of the commercial centre, protecting and enhancing the River Stort.*
- 2.09 The specific policies SA1-4 concern allocation of land for two housing developments both of which are outside the conservation area but could impact on its setting.
- 2.10 All relevant policies can be found in Appendix 3.

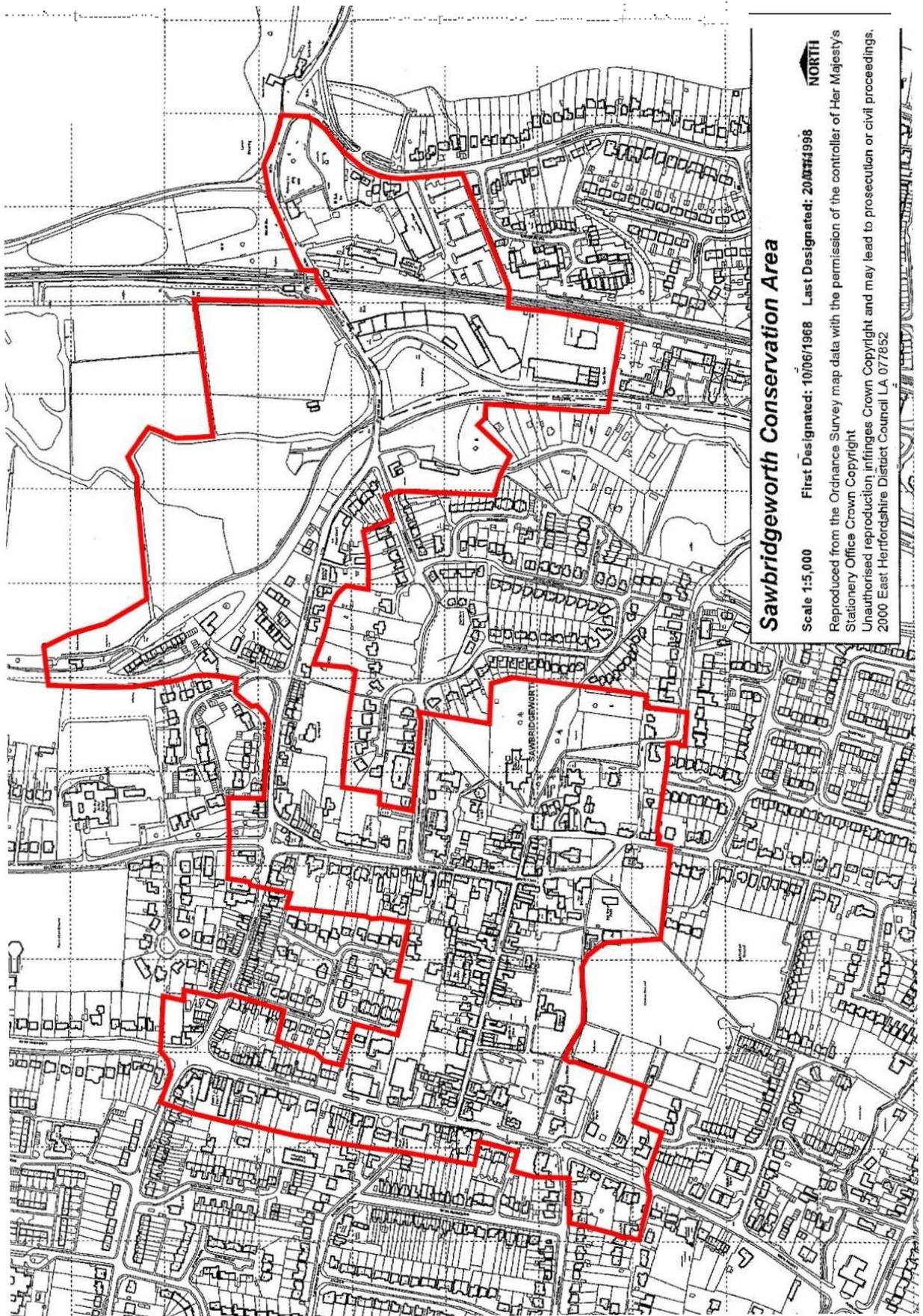


Figure 2. Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area (existing boundary marked in red).
Map courtesy of East Herts Council.

3.0 DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST

3.1 Every conservation area has a distinctive character, which is derived from its topography, historical development and current uses. Features such as streets, hedges, buildings and place names are all important contributors. The centre of Sawbridgeworth is situated on a plateau above the Stort River Valley. Although there are earlier signs of settlement, it is believed to have been a planned medieval town of the 13th century and that it grew through its agricultural wealth and good transport links.

3.2 The principle features of Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area are:

- The medieval core of the town as defined by Bell Street, Knight Street, Church Street all meeting at “The Square”
- The church and large sylvan churchyard in the centre of the town
- Fair Green, a sylvan and tranquil open space and Vantorts Road
- The river valley and canal side maltings, a significant example of early industry
- The Rivers Nurseries, an early specialised nursery, serving large country houses and developing through improved transport links
- The winding, semi-rural Station Road and the old mill group around the lock
- The rich vein of historic buildings of many eras throughout the town and their architectural quality. Including the inns which recall the importance of London Road and the coaching era, surviving agricultural and maltings buildings which recall the importance of these two industries to the town. Showing the local vernacular traditions adapted over time to different architectural trends and philosophies
- The many fine trees which contribute to the character whether in public or private space
- The archaeological significance of the area



Figure 3. 1970 aerial photograph of Sawbridgeworth viewed from the northwest (Beams Collection)

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST

- 4.1 Sawbridgeworth is located approximately two miles to the north of Harlow and four miles south of Bishop's Stortford on the A1184 which connects the three towns but was formerly the A11 trunk road and therefore still links south to London and northeast to East Anglia. The important east-west cross country route, now the A414, connecting Hertford and beyond to the west and Hatfield Heath and beyond to the east traverses the town. It has a railway station that also links to London to the south and to Cambridge and East Anglia to the northeast. It is linked with the smaller Lower Sheering, just across the Essex Border, at the important hub of the railway station and the river crossing. It is situated on a small plateau above a bend in the River Stort to the east and is surrounded by open fields, parkland and water meadows apart from the small intrusions of High Wych to the west and Lower Sheering to the east, to which it is tenuously connected. Pishiobury Park and the river valley have formed natural barriers to southward and eastward sprawl and both northern and eastern post-war expansion has been relatively restrained.
- 4.2 The underlying geology is of alluvium in the river valley with loam and gravel in and around the town itself, which especially for early farmers was an advantage compared with the London Clay that predominates in the area. The rolling countryside around is predominantly of arable farmland with small woods on higher ground.



Figure 4. 1948 aerial photograph showing the countryside around Sawbridgeworth (Beams Collection)

5.0 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

- 5.1 An extensive detailed assessment of historic development and archaeology was carried out by Hertfordshire County Council in 1999 (Bryant and Seddon 1999). This chapter draws on this report to create a brief summary with emphasis on the factors which bear on the present character of the conservation area.

Early Development

- 5.2 There is evidence of prehistoric settlement in the general area of Sawbridgeworth and specific Iron Age evidence of a hill fort on the Essex side of the River Stort, which could perhaps mark the boundary between two major tribes, the Catuvellauni to the west and the Trinovantes to the east of the river. There is more substantial evidence of Romano-British settlement, which is strengthened by its location, approximately halfway between the known Roman towns at Bishop's Stortford to the north and Harlow to the south.

Medieval

- 5.3 The early Saxon period (AD 400-700) is poorly represented generally in Hertfordshire and whilst there is no firm evidence of the settlement during the period, by the time of the Domesday Survey, there was a substantial town called *Sabrixte worde* here, which maintained a sizeable population and was valued amongst the richest manors in the County. This points to possible ecclesiastical importance or, more likely perhaps, a trading centre, which squares with its advantageous location having both good road and river transport links.
- 5.4 Although granted to Geoffrey de Mandeville after the conquest, the manor became known as Sayesbury after the de Say family who inherited it in 1189. Subsequently during the middle ages it was divided into several "sub manors" as was common during the period. Sayesbury manor house itself was believed by the 17th century historian Chauncy, to have been "situated upon the Side of the Hill between the Town and the River...tho' this House has been demolish'd for a long time, Yet Part of the Foundation thereof may be seen in a Field at this Day called Sayes Garden" (Chauncy 1700).
- 5.5 It is believed that the present layout of the historic core of the settlement is illustrative of deliberate planning during the early 13th century. Most medieval towns developed organically often around the main through route. However, here the surviving medieval fabric is more concentrated on present day Bell Street, Knight Street and Church Street which are straight and regular and meet at close to right angles at a cross roads. Furthermore, the market, chartered in 1222 was situated at this point and unusually not on the main through route. Its site remains as "The Square" which is. A remnant of the larger open area which was encroached upon from the 15th century onwards. This process is ironically thought to be indicative of dynamic and successful medieval markets, rather than loss of importance.
- 5.6 The market place was therefore set up close to the church, (whose fabric itself owes much to this period) and to the Manor House too if Chauncy was correct with regard to its location. The unusual location of the market may have been to enable close supervision by the Lord of the Manor and although not ideally situated for passing trade, may well have been specialised for the marketing of local agricultural produce, especially Saffron for which the town was famous. Indeed the only other known planned medieval town in the region was Saffron Walden founded in the 1230's. The Hertfordshire County Council Survey referred to above also analyses surviving burgage plot boundaries and the distribution of early surviving buildings to reinforce this thesis (Bryant and Seddon 1999). Figure 5 is reproduced from their publication to illustrate this evidence.

- 5.7 There is little doubt that the economy of the town in the medieval period was based on agriculture, certainly the very profitable saffron crocus but also cereals, which grew and still grow well on the upland soils and which had replaced saffron as the main crop by the 15th century. These could be transported relatively easily to the London market by river and their successful production then led to the symbiotic growth of the malting industry. Agricultural land here was worth twice the average for Hertfordshire in the 13th century and there was little permanent pasture, which conversely was valued at only half the value of the county average. The presence of early barns and evidence of arable land within the medieval core area are also indicative of the importance of agriculture to the town.
- 5.8 The river, although navigable until at least 1590 (and of course later canalised in the 18th century) also supported milling. Whilst the sites of all the mills are not at present known, the remaining mill buildings in Mill Lane (Sawbridgeworth Mill: the mill house and grain store. The mill itself was lost to fire c1978), are believed to occupy the site mentioned in the Domesday Book. There is also known to have been a Sheering Mill, which, although in Essex, would also have been part of the economy of the town.



Postcard of Sawbridgeworth Mill c1907 (HALS Photographic Collection)

- 5.9 Being situated halfway between Harlow and Bishop's Stortford and on the route between London and East Anglia, the inn trade was also likely to have been of importance to the town and the number, size and status of the surviving buildings which are known to have been inns gives credence to this view. Again the known early sites with one exception are not situated on the main route itself but within the medieval core and one senses again the probable hand of the Lord of the Manor in enticing travellers and thus passing trade into the town to benefit its economy. Indeed the exception, now The White Lion Hotel, 28 London Road, is situated on the corner with Bell Street and therefore marks the entrance to the medieval core.



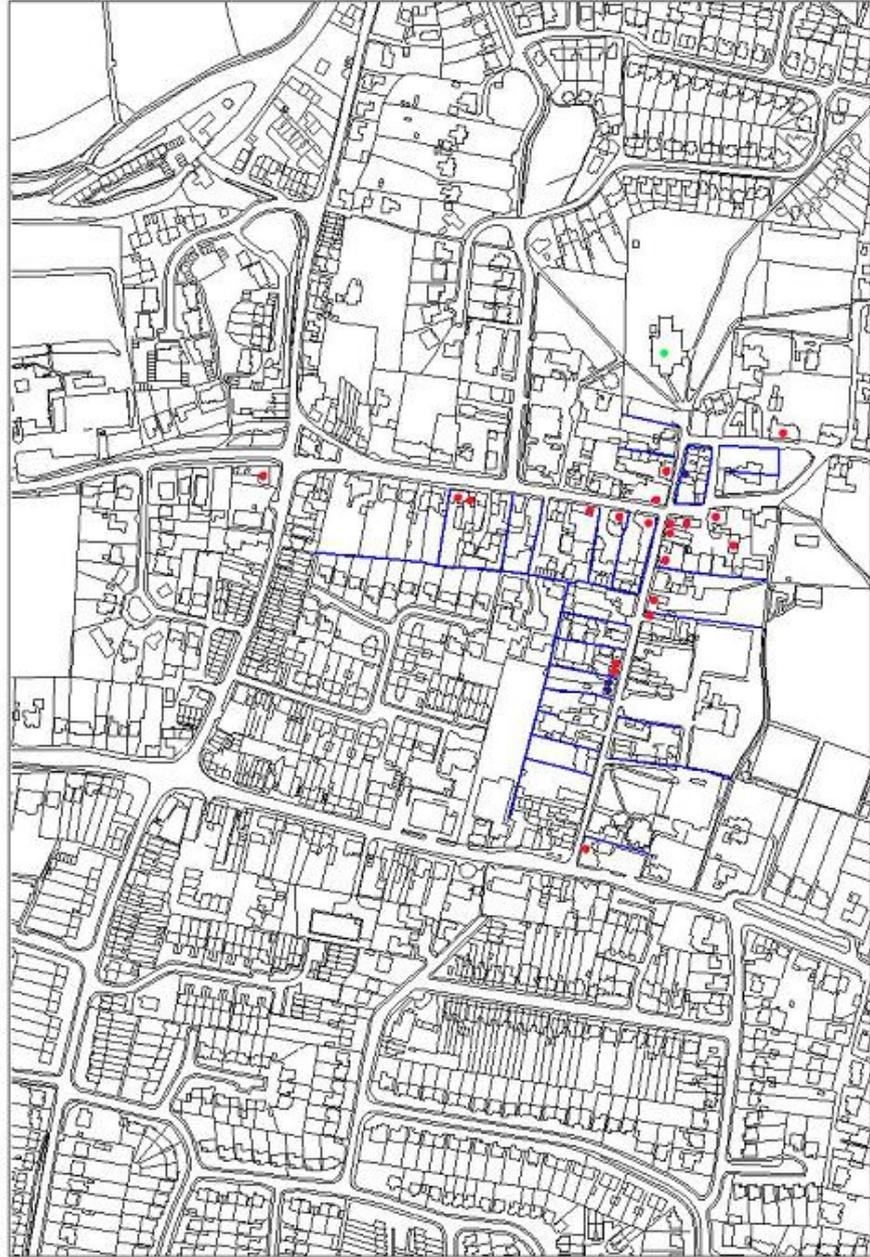
Sketch of Bell Street in 1834 up to the junction with Knight Street
The Market House is on the left at the former (Buckler 1834: Beams Collection)



The Market House, 42 Knight Street (LB G11*) of the 17th century.
Photographed in 1935 from Knight Street (Beams Collection)

- 5.10 The parish church and churchyard of Great St. Mary's and the earliest of the suite of surviving buildings subservient to it take up the important site close to the central crossroads and market and between the latter and the site of the former manor house. Whilst the Domesday Survey describes the presence of a priest in the manor and therefore the potential of a Saxon church, the present building dates from the 13th century. The great many high quality brasses and monuments from this period and beyond are again indicative of the importance and wealth of the town burgesses and the relative importance and large number of people that held the surrounding manors, created by subinfeudation during the period.

SAWBRIDGEWORTH MEDIEVAL TOWN: SURVIVING FEATURES



- Listed Buildings**
- 13th Century
 - 14th Century
 - 15th Century
 - 16th Century
- Surviving Burgage Plot Boundaries**

Figure 4

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Herfordshire County Council, LA 036078, 2005

Figure 5. Surviving burgage plot boundaries and distribution of earliest dateable surviving buildings (Bryant and Seddon 1999)

Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

- 5.11 During the 17th century the town began to develop beyond the medieval core and this can be traced by the surviving 17th century buildings that remain, although it is also clear that the core continued to be consolidated, updated and extended back into the burgage plots during the period. This is illustrated by Figure 6, which is again reproduced from the Hertfordshire County Council survey referred to above (Bryant and Seddon 1999). The expansion occurred in the Vantorts Road, London Road and what is now Station Road towards the river. It is likely that the importance of the latter two areas were in response to the growth of the national economy and therefore the importance of the road transport link and the increasing relative importance of malting in the town.
- 5.12 This trend continued into the 18th century and during this period many of the medieval and post-medieval buildings were given Georgian style facades and it can be assumed that the complete Georgian buildings within the medieval core probably replaced earlier buildings. It is also clear from the evidence of the significant building that took place during the period that the centre of the town remained of high status and quality. This is shown in the Dury and Andrews map of 1766 (Figure 7). Ironically, the demise of the market as such by the 18th century can be seen as indicative of the improvements to the town's transport links as much as the relative success of the Bishop's Stortford Market.
- 5.13 During this period agriculture continued in importance and cultivated fields and corn barns continued to prevail right into the centre of the town. However, malting increased in importance and the canalisation of the river from Bishop's Stortford, through Sawbridgeworth and down to the River Lee at Rye in 1769 would have been both promoted by the malting industry and a fillip to its continued growth. The location of the malthouses at this time seems to have been still within the burgage plots of the centre of the town (as indicated in Figure 6 reproduced from the Hertfordshire County Council survey) and it is not clear when the sites down by the river and along station road were established, although the surviving buildings in these areas date mainly from the 19th century or later. River traffic steadily increased throughout the 18th century and doubled between 1790 and 1807.
- 5.14 John Rivers set up his famous nursery in 1724. The land he chose to the northeast of the town was in part light and sandy in addition to the clay which is more prevalent in the area. His son Thomas took over the business, followed by his nephew, another Thomas. At this time they specialised in fruit trees, roses, shrubs, forest trees and conifers which were presumably aimed at the burgeoning interests in the great houses and estates for extensive landscaped gardens. The good road links to the capital and beyond were later supplemented by the improvement of the river in the latter half of the century (Figure 7).
- 5.15 The growth in road travel and particularly coaching into the 18th century and beyond and the improvement of the road through Sawbridgeworth (The London Road was turnpike in 1744), ensured the continuing prosperity of the inns, which is illustrated by the Georgian facades and 18th century outbuildings which grew into the rear of the burgage plots. The road was successively widened, straightened and improved throughout the century. The London to Norwich Mail coach is recorded as passing through Sawbridgeworth during this period.

POST-MEDIEVAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN: 1500-1900

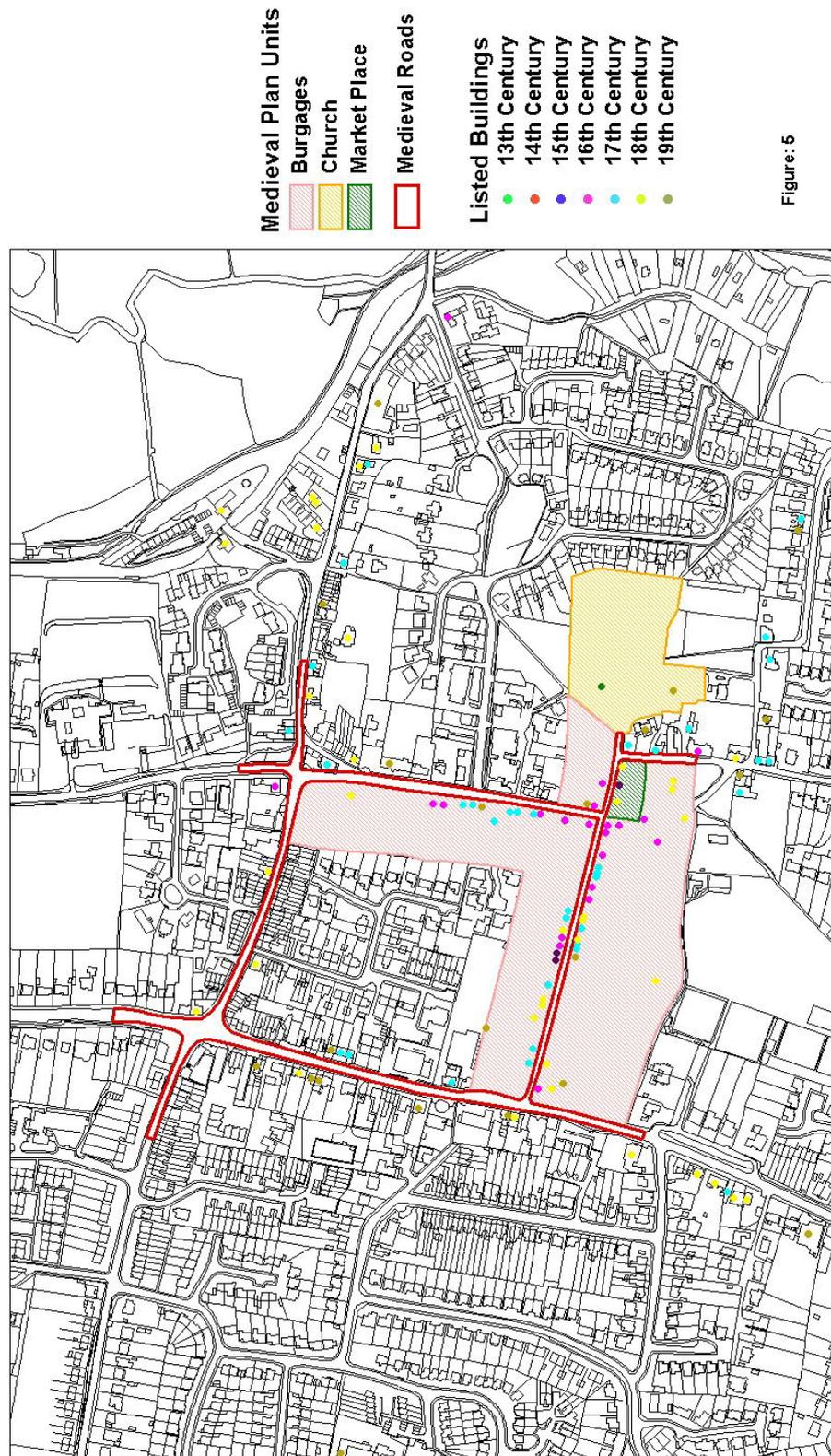


Figure: 5

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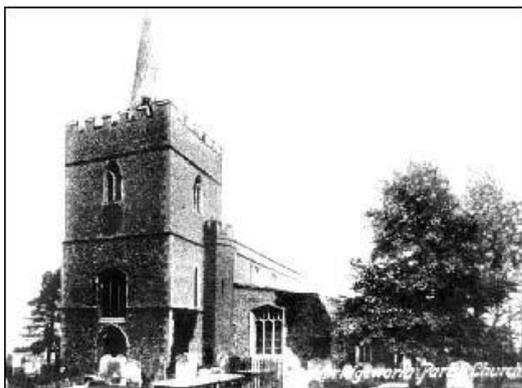
Hertfordshire County Council, LA 076678, 2003

Figure 6. Post-medieval developmen



Figure 7. Extract from the Dury & Andrews Map of Hertfordshire of 1766

5.16 The church and associated buildings continued to increase in the period. The original vicarage is first recorded in 1649 on the south side of the churchyard, as a substantial building complete with gatehouse, and was rebuilt in 1685 (it was replaced again in 1857). The original almshouses were recorded in 1652 (replaced in 1901) The Old Manse on Fair Green was built in the 18th century (now a private house). The church house / workhouse at 1 Vantorts Road was also formerly church property and recorded as “The Church House” in 1652. The church itself continued to be improved and extended throughout the 17th century and 18th century, it is clearly depicted on the Dury and Andrews map (Figure 7)



Great St. Mary's Church
(HALS Photographic Collection)



Fair Green
(HALS Photographic Collection)

5.17 Public buildings were established in this period and included 1 Vantorts Road (see above) which probably converted to this use following an Act of Parliament in 1722, although reverting to church use again in the 19th century. The Assembly Room (next to 28 London Road) was established on the London Road in the 18th century, adjacent to no. 28. This indicates the growing importance of London Road during the period.

Nineteenth Century

5.18 The continued improvement of the canalised river during the 19th century led to the growth of industry and particularly malting to the east of the town down on the river banks, initially in what is now station road and then eventually across the river onto the Lower Sheering side in Essex. George Fawbert and John Barnard were principal owners during this period and they assimilated themselves into the future life of the town by setting up a charity for children's education which led to the setting up of the infant's school which still exists today in Knight Street. While these buildings on the west bank are not shown on the Sawbridgeworth Tithe Map, the course of the river along side the mill is depicted (Figure 8). The Tithe Map of 1839 shows the extent of the town by the mid-19th century along with Sawbridgeworth Mill on the north side of the town that is believed to occupy the site mentioned in the Domesday Book.



Sawbridgeworth Railway Station, Station Road
(HALS Photographic Collection)



The Maltings at Sheering Mill, Station Road,
(HALS Photographic Collection)

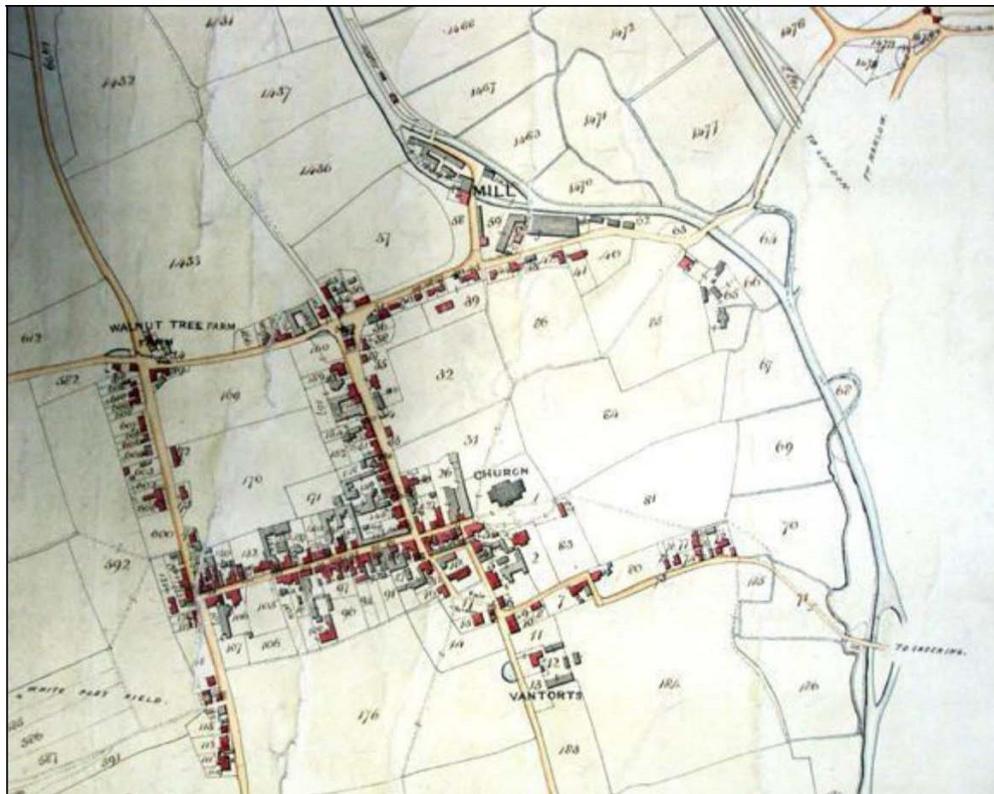


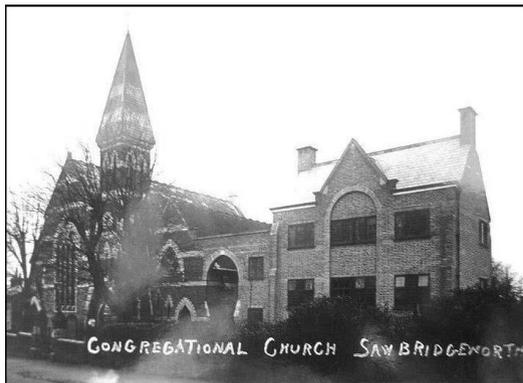
Figure 8. Extract from the 1839 Tithe Map of Sawbridgeworth

5.19 The first half of the century was the golden age of coaching and the inns continued to flourish and in some cases improve or expand. However, the railway age and in particular the opening of the Norwich to London main line in 1845 rapidly killed off long distance road travel and therefore substantially the inn trade and, whilst some still remain as public houses to this

day, others were converted to alternative uses. It can be seen at the corner of the Tithe Map (Figure 8). On the principle that one door closing opens another and in particular because the town got its own station, the overall effect, whilst undoubtedly dramatic, led to further growth in other industries, certainly benefitting the malting industry still further. The Rivers Nursery too would have been helped no doubt from better access to their markets and during the period the various descendants of the family expanded the business and were early exploiters of the new glasshouse technology.

5.20 The 1874-1894 Ordnance Survey Map further illustrates the growth of the town (Figure 9). The maltings on the west bank of the railway line can be seen to have been almost fully developed and there are large malt houses too in Mill Hill (now Station Road). However, the old malt houses on Cock Street (now Bell Street), Knight Street and Church Street are still shown and therefore presumably going concerns, whilst terraces of artisan cottages have been built on the south side of Barker's Lane (now part of Station Road), and within a segment making up the corner with London Road; this was known as New Town and is an example of several similar Victorian suburbs that developed in Hertfordshire towns during the period.

5.21 The other side of the road and the corner with Cambridge Road is still occupied by Walnut Tree Farm, and the area behind the original burgage plots of Knight Street and Bell Street is still open and presumably agricultural. Bridgefoot Farm on the west bank of the river by the crossing has fields still stretching right back up to Knight Street. The original site of the Rivers Nursery can be seen sloping down to the river to the northeast of the town, whilst a much larger area is spread on either side of the London Road to the south of the town.



Congregational Chapel, London Road
(HALS Photographic Collection)



Station Road c1890 looking west. The Railway
Hotel is on the left (HALS Photographic
Collection)

5.22 The growth of shops as we know them during this period is indicated by the number of surviving shop fronts from the period and recorded in the DOE lists of historic buildings. There are two schools within the town, one by the churchyard and presumably a church school and another in Barker's Lane (Station Road). A chapel for Independants and Baptists was certified in 1814 and the Congregational Chapel which still exists on London Road was built in 1863.

5.23 The 1897-8 Ordnance Survey Map shows very little difference, except that the addition of two further malting buildings down by the river indicates that the industry was still flourishing (Figure 10). The school on Knight Street was built during this period and seems to have replaced the church school.



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Address: Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area
 Reference: 1897 - 1898
 Scale: 1:5000
 O.S Sheet: TL4814NW, TL4814 NE, TL4815SW, TL4815SE, TL4914NW & TL4915

East Herts Council
 Wallfields
 Pegs Lane
 Hertford
 SG13 8EQ
 Tel: 01279 655261

Figure 10. Extract from the 1897-98 Ordnance Survey Map of Sawbridgeworth (supplied by East Herts Council)

Twentieth Century

- 5.24 The 1920-24 Ordnance Survey Map shows expansion of artisan housing to the west of London Road just outside the conservation area and the start of suburban development along the London Road to the south, with some infilling between the older larger houses on the west side (Figure 11). It seems that shops were now developing along the London Road, in the stretch north of the junction with Bell Street.
- 5.25 The malting industry is still expanding and whilst at least two were still shown in the centre of the town, together with those along Station Road, there are further new large maltings on the east side of the railway line and a large joinery works to the south of the conservation area boundary, also served by the canal and also with their own railway sidings (Figure 12). However, Walnut Tree and Bridgefoot Farms still remained and with fields hard up to the town, although the field in the centre of the town is partly given over to allotments, presumably a legacy of the First World War. The original Rivers Nursery site to the northeast of the town had also succumbed to this fate, although they had retained extensive grounds to the southwest of the town.
- 5.26 The centre of the town remains relatively unchanged and the older plots have not extended beyond the original rear boundaries. A couple of banks had appeared by this time and it is likely that there was now a greater diversity of shops as we know them, selling the greater range of mass produced consumer goods of the period. However, public wells were still in use in the town.
- 5.27 The 1938-51 Ordnance Survey Map shows little further expansion adjacent to the historic core but by this time the two farms seem to have gone and a new road (Figure 13); The Forebury, has been created on the line of an old footpath that formerly wound down the hill from the centre of town to the river bridge. From this two short curving spurs, Forebury Avenue and Church Walk were to form the basis of later post war development. Similarly, Walnut Tree Court had been created off Station Road next to the old Walnut Tree Farm buildings and over on the Lower Sheering side, Sheering Lower Lane was starting to be developed. Mains water however, did not reach the town until 1948 and until that time wells were still being sunk, repaired and cleaned.
- 5.28 The malting and joinery industry remain but there had been no further expansion. HA&D Taylor, Maltsters were still a major employer in the 1960's as was Walter Lawrence and Sons, joinery and aircraft manufacturing.
- 5.29 During the Second World War, RAF Sawbridgeworth operated at various times, Spitfires, Mosquitos, Lysanders and Mustangs. It was situated about 1 mile northwest of the town but Great Hyde Hall was requisitioned as it's HQ and it must be supposed that for the duration there would have been a strong relationship with the town.

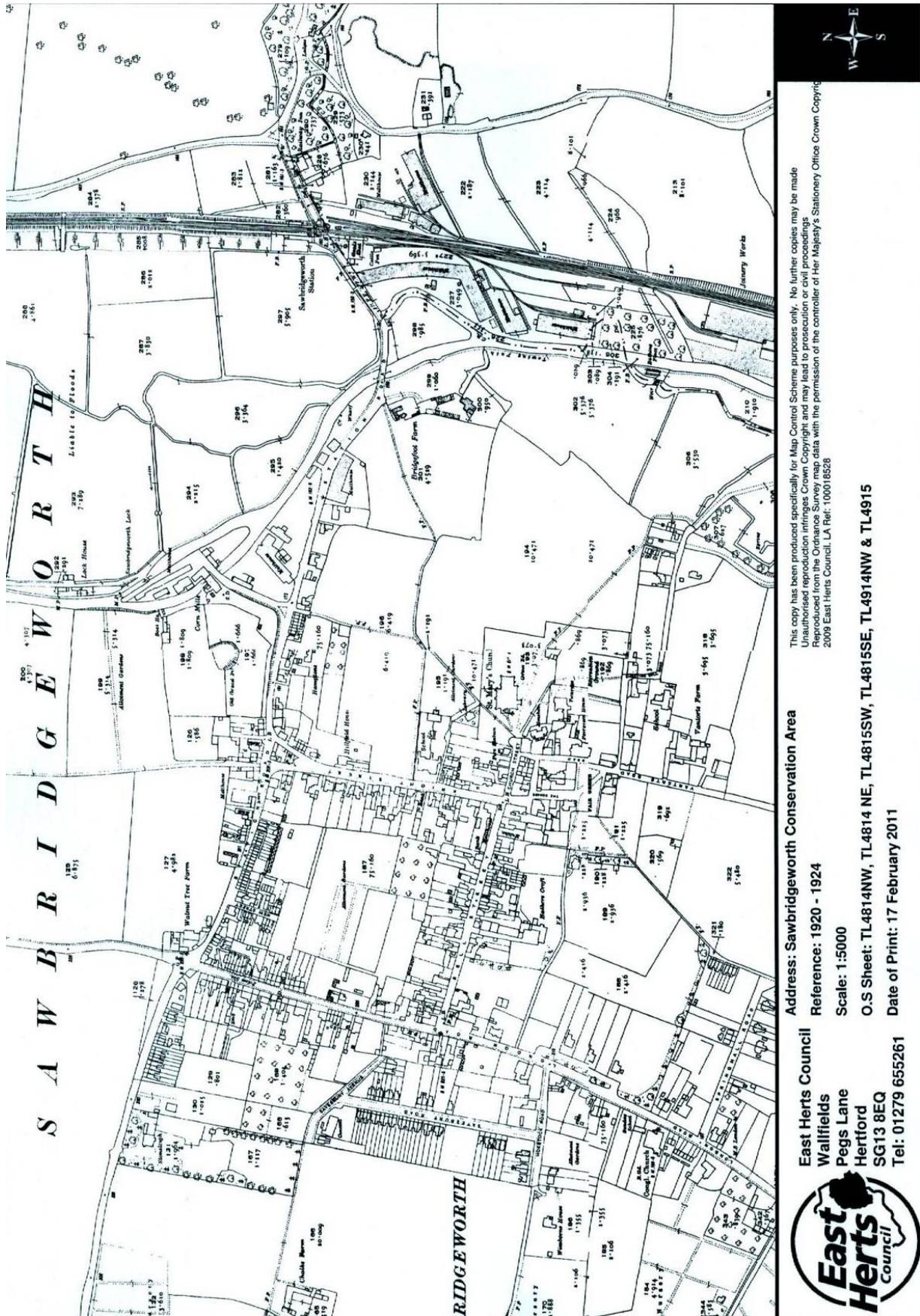


Figure 11. Extract from the 1920-24 Ordnance Survey Map of Sawbridgeworth (supplied by East Herts Council)

LOCATION OF MALTINGS IN SAWBRIDGEWORTH AND LOWER SHEERING, ESSEX

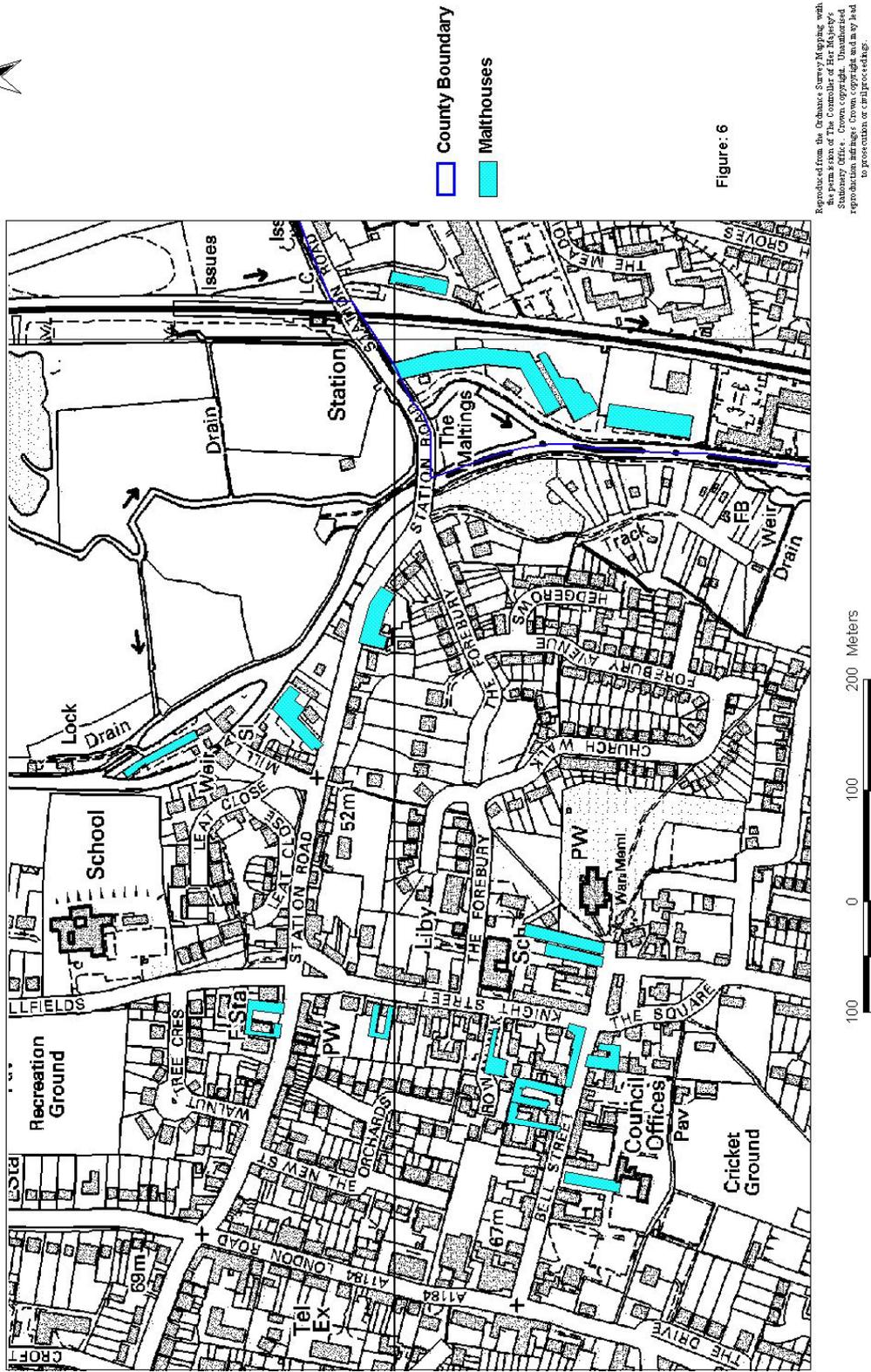


Figure 12. Location of Maltings in Sawbridgeworth and Lower Sheering (Bryant and Seddon 1999)

Figure 6

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- 5.30 The 1962-92 Ordnance Survey Map shows the massive development of the second half of the 20th century (Figure 14). The open space behind the burgage plots had finally been infilled with council housing and the area between the church yard and the river bank area finally developed along what is now Forebury, Church Close, Forebury Avenue and the spurs off of them. The former Vantorts Farm fields had now been developed to the south as had Sheering Mill Lane, whilst the cricket field open space has remained as a break between the old centre and other new expansion to the south. Further development and infill had taken place along the London Road to the north and south and to the east of it. And the petrol filling station and supermarket had been cut into the east side of it.
- 5.31 The malting buildings largely survive but have changed use, some to commercial and some to residential use. The large malting buildings on the Lower Sheering side of the river have been converted to residential use and suburban housing now encroaches up to them from the south.
- 5.32 The central core of the conservation area remained physically much unchanged through this period, although some of the old burgage plots to the south of Bell Street have been combined to create car parking and other former rear yards have been converted or redeveloped mostly for residential use.
- 5.33 Throughout the second half of the 20th century, road transport steadily increased, the London Road being the main A11 trunk road from London to East Anglia. Whilst the opening of the M11 some miles to the east of the town was initially a relief, traffic has again built up to high levels. The early decision to plan the medieval town off the main route has indeed been vindicated once again in that the historic core is relatively unaffected by traffic, although London Road is significantly affected.



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Address: Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area

Reference: 1962 - 1992

Scale: 1:5000

O.S Sheet: TL4814NW, TL4814 NE, TL4815SW, TL4815SE, TL4914NW & TL4915

Date of Print: 17 February 2011

East Herts Council
 Wallfields
 Pegs Lane
 Hertford
 SG13 8EQ
 Tel: 01279 655261

Figure 14. Extract from the 1962-92 Ordnance Survey Map of Sawbridgeworth (supplied by East Herts Council)

Archaeological Significance and Potential Significance

- 5.34 The Area of Archaeological Significance within the conservation area is shown on Figure 15. It occupies a significant portion within the conservation area boundary and roughly correlates with the extent of the medieval development of the town. There is a further small area that lies along the northern boundary, east of Mill Fields.
- 5.35 The area around Sawbridgeworth has produced archaeological finds from the Mesolithic, (c8000-4500BC). The most important Neolithic (c4500-2500BC) find is of a causewayed enclosure in Pishiobury Park, just to the south of the town (SMR 2605 & 7647). The function of causewayed enclosures is not precisely known and indeed they are currently thought to have been multi-functional and important as meeting places for both trade and ceremonial purposes. The site is a Scheduled Monument (No. 29391: *Springhall Lane Causewayed Enclosure*)
- 5.36 Additionally, in the Mill Fields just to the north of the town a possible long barrow from the period was uncovered during the 1960's (SMR 1387). The presence of these sites together suggests a possible Neolithic settlement in the area and a probable site for this was discovered but not properly recorded during housing development in the Rowney Farm area of Pishiobury Park in the 1930's (SMR 588) together with evidence of occupation in the Bronze Age too (c2500-800BC).
- 5.37 There is a known Iron-age hillfort at Wallbury, a Scheduled Monument (No. EX16: *Wallbury Camp*), on the east side of the river just within Essex and this may denote the importance of the location at a boundary between two ancient tribes in this period.
- 5.38 There have been substantial Roman and Romano-British finds and there is strong evidence for a Roman settlement in the Stort Valley area, especially given the proximity of the Roman Road to the river crossing at this point and it being roughly halfway between two other known Roman settlements at Harlow and Bishop's Stortford. There is a Roman villa at Little Hallingbury, on the Essex side of the valley, and a probable Roman villa or temple at Spelbrook Farm, 2 kilometres north of the town (SMR 6581). There is also a concentration of Roman finds in the (current) Pishiobury Park area. Closer to the limits of the modern town, two Roman bowls (SMR 2796) and a probable Roman coin (SMR 1752) have been found.

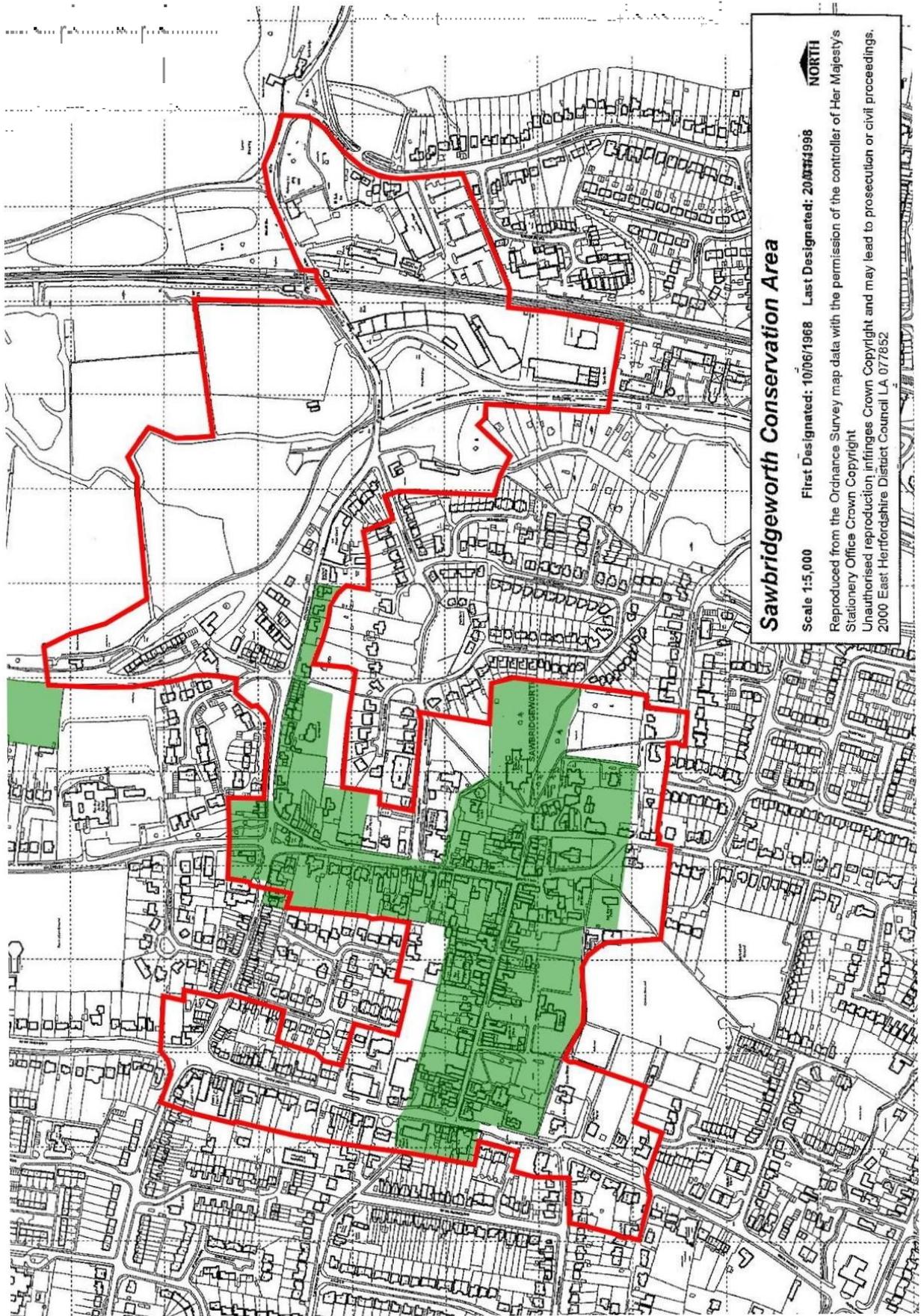


Figure 15. Sawbridgeworth. Areas of Archaeological Significance shaded green (conservation area boundary denoted by red line)

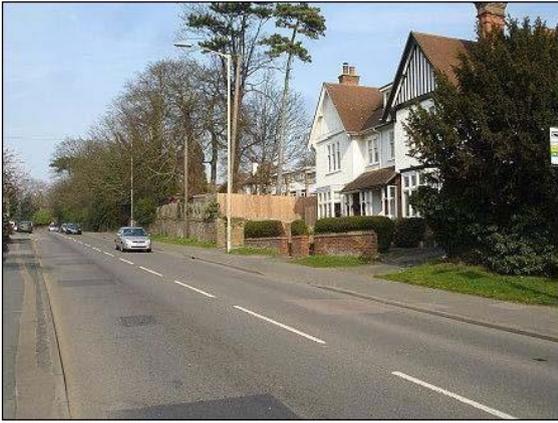
6.0 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

The Character and Interrelationship of spaces within the area

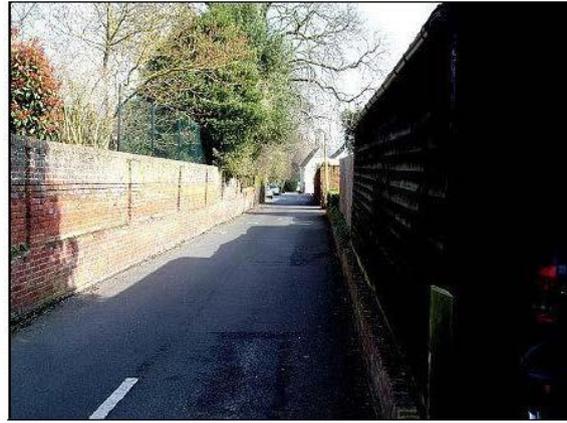
- 6.1 Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area is not completely urban. The tightly packed medieval core which sits on top of the hill is flanked by the open spaces of the car parks to the south and the green sward of the cricket ground, which separate it from the later suburban development.
- 6.2 Also, open spaces are contained within it including the green and restful Fair Green, the tiny “ The Square” and the little yards and precincts off Bell Street and Knight Street in the former burgage plots behind, some private, some public. The sylvan churchyard separates the centre from later development to the east. The open meadows and the river beyond this sweep round the valley to the east and northeast and separate the distinct early industrial area, centred on the railway, the canal and the former maltings.
- 6.3 To the east, the London Road is of an essentially linear character snaking up the hill from the south and flanking the medieval core, whilst to the north, Station Road begins straight and urban but becomes increasingly more rural as it bends and sweeps eastward down to the river crossing. The distinct mill area branches off and nestles low down into the bend of the river to the north.
- 6.4 The approach to the conservation area from the south is across rolling countryside, the broad parkland of Pishiobury Park and the rural winding River Stort, but whilst this latter route takes us right into conservation area at the early industrial enclave of the old maltings, elsewhere the approach uphill to the centre is through later suburban development.
- 6.5 The London Road route is important today as throughout history. The sylvan rural approach from the south through open countryside and with Pishiobury Park on the right is maintained somewhat by an informal avenue of trees until the junction with Brook Road, where suburban housing begins to intrude, although in low density with some good trees intervening and indeed, following the Burnside junction the tree and hedge screens become the dominant features, punctuated only by the corner buildings of the little Victorian and Edwardian suburb of Springhall Road.
- 6.6 The entrance to the conservation area is prefaced by the powerful image of the Congregational Church and from here the area is seen as a landscape of mature trees to the right and a picturesque group of historic buildings to the left fronted by the white stucco and brick chimney stack cluster of No. 29. The view out of the conservation area is to distant landscape dominated by the massive bulk of the church in the foreground, although the immediate setting of this is rather weak frontage adjoining to the north.
- 6.7 Across the wider southern boundary of the conservation area it is seen across the broad expanse of the cricket pitch, which is itself bounded by good mature trees, whereas the approach along Vantorts Road is uphill through a low density suburban area, punctuated by the splendid Georgian frontage and Tudor chimney stacks of Spring Hall. The entrance to the conservation area is then softened by a pleasant sylvan landscaped screen to the rear of the Fair Green houses and the cluster of historic buildings to the right hand side, (19-23), which gently curve to the left and lead the eye to the white stucco buildings within. A magnificent copper beech towers over the roofs to the right.
- 6.8 The view out from the conservation area is pleasant enough from the corner of Sheering Mill Lane, as it appears as landscape dominated but from the very edge the setting is of suburban housing well spaced and with some planting, which softens the view.

- 6.9 The approach into the conservation area from the west is amorphous, being largely through later development. Even the main route is inauspicious towards the weak mini roundabout at the north end of London Road. Three of the corners sites are too are weakly expressed. However, the former Walnut Tree farm buildings (Cambridge Road / Station Road) still enhance the north eastern corner, although the later extension and shopfront somewhat diminish the effect.
- 6.10 The approach from Hoestock Road is framed by the high quality polychrome brickwork and bracketed eaves details of the Victorian building on the southern corner, No. 39, and enhanced by the prospect of 43 London Road and its pleasant grounds. The view outwards to the west from this point is however cut off from the landscape beyond by the suburban development of the road although the prospect is closed by a good line of mature trees in the distance at the junction of Wimbourne Close.
- 6.11 From the north, the historic core of the conservation area is cut off from the open countryside by suburban development, whereas its eastern arm and the early industrial segment is approached through the curving sweep of the river valley and parkland of Hyde Hall.
- 6.12 The main approach down Stortford Road is lined with suburban housing up to the same weak cross roads as mentioned above, which gives little indication of the quality of buildings further down the London Road. The view out to the north is of suburban housing, softened by landscaping especially in the summer months.
- 6.13 There are views of the rooftops of the conservation area, including the church spire from across the recreation fields to the north of station road, although modern development intervenes between. The approach via Bullfields is across these fields on the right and is softened by the hedgerow and high trees to the school on the left. Although, there is a short stretch of modern housing before the entrance to the conservation area, this is set back somewhat and softened by tree planting on the verges.
- 6.14 The conservation area proper is announced by the low rear wing of the 17th century listed building, which takes up the northwest corner of the junction with Station Road, (No. 17). Opposite, is the entrance to historic Knight Street but unfortunately this is rather weakly framed by the car park to the George the IV pub, (albeit an attractive building in itself, listed grade II) and the rather plain flank of No. 2A and 2B which again in truth is a good simple 19th century semi detached pair in buff stock brick and low pitched slate roof.
- 6.15 The view out of the conservation area from this point is pleasing enough when the trees and plantings on the south side of Bullfields are in leaf.
- 6.16 Views into the conservation area from Leat Close are pleasantly framed by the abundance of planting around the junction with Mill Lane and the mock “malting like” residential building on the corner with Station Road gives a flavour of the early industrial character that is to follow. Beyond, one glimpses the little cottage at 92 Station Road whose low eaves and thatch, complete with eyebrow dormers, evokes the rural nature of Station Road at this point.
- 6.17 Next to this and separated by a little lane is a good simple row of 19th century cottages in buff stock brick with low slate roofs, with the large mature trees on the rising ground beyond towering above and framing the view.

Character and interrelationship of spaces



*South approach into the conservation area
View north along London Road by the
Congregational Church*



*East approach into the conservation area
View east along Sheering Mill Lane from
Vantorts Road*



*Approach into Knight Street from the junction with
Station Road, framed by the car park to the George the
IV pub*

- 6.18 Looking out of the conservation area the view is more prosaic as the suburban road curves gently away to the left, affording no view of the countryside just beyond.
- 6.19 Eastward, the conservation area boundary is within the open countryside of the river valley and from its water meadows there are pleasant views of the former mill with its two remaining listed historic buildings seen across the river and softened by the major trees to the south.
- 6.20 The great bulk of the former maltings (listed grade II) are glimpsed through gaps in the trees and from here there are good views out between the trees and across the river back to the water meadows beyond.
- 6.21 Further east the conservation area is bounded entirely by trees until the river itself affords views over the bridge to the former riverside malting complex beyond and the landscape reasserts itself up to the junction with the Hallingbury Road This is an entirely rural lane and the pleasant tree dominated view of the Railway Inn comes into play at the entrance to the conservation area.
- 6.22 From the east the Lower Sheering conservation area is approached through rolling countryside down a steep winding lane with hedgerows and trees either side. The group of former malting buildings which form the basis of the conservation area can be seen across the fields in splendid isolation. The approach is thence down Lower Sheering Lane, lined with abundant trees to the right but open to the fields to the left.
- 6.23 Closer views are of the listed buildings looming above a small group of brick cottages which emphasise their massive height. Views out from the conservation area here are over open countryside which enhances their setting.
- 6.24 Further south, the view out is onto suburban ribbon development and views in are across a massive car park which serves the development. The car park is screened by trees but not completely effectively.
- 6.25 Views into the conservation area from the southeast are from "The Meadows" a late 20th century housing development but there is a good and mature tree screen between this and the listed group. More distant views from "The Meadows" give a view of the maltings above the tree screen, and there are views across to the earlier malting buildings across the other side of the railway line to the west.
- 6.26 From "Ash Groves" further south, there are distant glimpses of the roofs of the malting above the distant trees.
- 6.27 The approach to the Sawbridgeworth part of the conservation area from the southeast is from Sheering Mill Lane, which winds attractively across the river and across the water meadows. Final entry to the town is through a small area of 20th century suburban housing, which includes two small historic cottages nos. 118 and 120.
- 6.28 There are views of the mature trees in the churchyard over roofs on the north side of the road. Finally the conservation area is entered where the road bends sharp north around a dense tree screen and narrows between two historic buildings, 132 and 123, and there is a good view between the buildings framing the churchyard beyond.
- 6.29 Views out from the conservation area to the southeast are across the roofs of the suburban housing to the trees by the river and beyond to distant fields on higher ground on the other side of the valley.

- 6.30 There is also good view into the conservation area from “Rushfield”, just to the south of Sheering Mill Lane. This is over the good high wall to 123 Sheering Mill Lane, onto the trees in the grounds and with a glimpse of the rear of the house.
- 6.31 To the east of the Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area, views are masked by the 20th century housing in The Forebury and roads leading off it. There is however a good view from just beyond the junction with Church Walk across the green to the church spire, the rear of the school and historic buildings in Knight Street.
- 6.32 From Sayes gardens there are views over the roofs of buildings to the mature trees in the rear of “Landguard” off Station Road.

Open Spaces

- 6.33 There are many areas of open space within and around the town and they are a distinctive part of its character.
- 6.34 The churchyard is in the southeast corner of the medieval core. It is a large space and extends down the slope to the east of the church and has an annexed area towards the south which is partly in use as a playground and at the north, there is a separate triangular green to Forebury, separated off by a fine diagonal yew tree walk. From here there are glimpses of the church tower.
- 6.35 The churchyard has many fine quality mature trees which can be seen above and sometimes between buildings in The Forebury, Knight Street, Church Street, Vantorts road and Sheering Mill Lane, from where there is an excellent view into the space across the play area. It is bounded by historic buildings around the southwest to which it has historic links. There are several footpath routes which cross the space and connect various parts of the town together.
- 6.36 Adjacent to the southeast corner of the medieval core is the delightful Fair Green, also a green space of irregular but roughly rectangular shape with Vantorts Road bounding it to the east and the road to The Square crossing it diagonally. Here too there are good mature trees within and around it in the spacious gardens of the historic houses that are spaced widely around its perimeter. Two public footpaths lead from it and connect to the cricket pitch to the southwest and London Road to the west. Fair Green has the character of a village green.
- 6.37 The cricket pitch, which also contains the bowling green, tennis courts and a recreation ground to the southeast, is not within the conservation area at present but is a very large and peaceful green space which butts up to the rear of the medieval burghage plots of Bell Street, although much of these are now taken over for car parking. There are good trees around the perimeter, particularly to the north, the south, and also in a fine diagonal avenue, which forms a separation between the pitch and the recreation ground and along which a footpath runs, connecting Fair Green with the Victorian/Edwardian suburb of Springhall.
- 6.38 The Square is the smallest open space in the town but of great importance as it springs from the junction between the medieval Bell Street, Knight Street and Church Street and originally formed the medieval market place. At the time of its formation it would have been much larger, extending closer to the church and conjecturally the medieval manor that controlled it, until later being partly built over by permanent market buildings. It is now an intimate space, hemmed in to south, east and west by historic listed buildings and issuing to all cardinal points. It can be regarded still as the secular the hub of the medieval tow.

Open spaces



Great St. Mary's Church: the medieval churchyard



Fair Green: the character of a village green



The Square: the smallest open space but was originally formed the medieval market place



Car park in front of Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street



Open space along the River Stort and its water meadows: view northwest from the road bridge on Station Road



Private space on the outskirts of town: Waterside Place and The Maltings (Priors Court), Station Road

- 6.39 There are several small courtyards or yards to the north of Bell Street which originate from the medieval burghage plots. Some of these have been converted for residential or retail use and some have been combined to a degree but these will be dealt with later in the description of Bell Street.
- 6.40 However, to the south of Bell Street the plots have been combined to a much greater degree to create a series of linked car parks, which can be regarded as an open space in its own right. There are three linked spaces. The first is to the west behind the very fine paraded Georgian front of 4 Bell Street and is masked from the street by the good brick wall and tree screen which presumably was originally part of its garden. At least half of the space, to the north, is still landscaped and contains a good number of fine trees making it an attractive space for the surgery to the west and the health centre within No 4 to be accessed. The car park area is also bounded to the south by a good screen of trees and softened to the west by a further clump of mature trees and a large group within the garden to "Eversley", a large property that fronts onto London Road.
- 6.41 The second car park in the centre of the group is linked across the front of Sayesbury Manor, which is now in use as council offices, it has its own forecourt behind a brick wall and the building has a Georgian front in stucco but this is actually the rear of the house as originally conceived. This car park also has access to Bell Street between the burghages of no.8 and no.10 and is relatively narrow. Nevertheless it is an unfortunate intrusion into the street frontage that is mitigated somewhat by a good street tree, which is therefore of great importance.
- 6.42 The third car park is further to the west and is again linked across the front of the outbuildings to Sayesbury Manor. It is the most utilitarian of the three spaces but does have a good tree screen to the south and west. The public footpath between Fair Green and London Road runs across the whole of the southern edge of all three spaces behind a good continuous line of mature trees. All the car parks are paved with utilitarian tarmac and with the exception of the western one are unattractive in appearance.
- 6.43 On the corner of Leat Lane and Station Road there is a triangular area of land which is full of mature trees and shrubs, which strongly reinforce the semi-rural character at this point and form an appropriate softening to Leat Lane leading to the Mill Lane quarter of the conservation area. Further to the east, the conservation area embraces the great open space of the River Stort and its water meadows which stretch to the northeast of the town.
- 6.44 Apart from the above publically accessible open spaces, there are several areas of private gardens which either in themselves or in combination with others are large enough to contribute to the open space of the town, particularly as they accommodate large trees which impact well beyond the confines of these sites. Examples of these are the large gardens behind the properties to the south and west of Fair Green, the gardens behind 19 Knight Street and Landguard (off Station Road), together with gardens behind The Forebury at this point, the area behind Bridgefoot House down by the river, the side garden to 43 London Road and the gardens to "Eversley", almost opposite that contribute as mentioned above to the landscaping of the town car parks as part of a virtually continuous green corridor right through to Fair Green to the east of the town. Landscaping in the front of the converted former maltings on Station Road (Waterside Place, Priors Court and Gainsborough House) is another example of private open space with trees.

Landmark Buildings

6.45 Within the conservation area are a number of landmark buildings; these are visually important structures that make a statement, form a full stop at the beginning or end of a view, hold an important corner position, can be seen at a distance, or stand above the general roof line of the surrounding buildings. Landmark buildings within the Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area:

- Parish Church of Great St. Mary's, Church Lane
- White Lion Hotel (corner of Bell Street and London Road)
- 29 London Road
- 39 London Road
- 43 London Road
- Groves House, London Road
- Former Walnut Tree farm buildings (corner of Cambridge Road and Station Road)
- 17 Bell Street
- The Market House Hotel, Bell Street
- 52 Bell Street / 3 & 4 The Square
- 2 The Square
- 1 The Square
- 33-35 Knight Street
- 40 Knight Street
- The Infants School, Knight Street
- 28 Knight Street
- The Queen's Head PH, Knight Street
- 19 Knight Street □ George IV PH, Knight Street
- 2 Knight Street (corner with Station Road)
- 1 Vantorts Road (corner with Church Street)
- 17 Vantorts Road
- 21 Vantorts Road (from Sheering Mill Lane)
- King William IV PH, Vantorts Road
- 123 Sheering Mill Lane
- 132 Sheering Mill Lane
- The Good Intent PH, 16 Station Road
- Fire Station Tower, Station Road (outside conservation area)
- 17 Station Road
- 27 Station Road
- 33-36 Burtons Mill, (corner of Leat Close / Station Road)
- Orchard Works, Station Road (now 1 – 36 River Court)
- Bridgefoot House, The Forebury
- The Maltings, Station Road
- Waterside Place / Prior's Court / Gainsborough House, Lower Sheering Lane
- Mill House, Mill Lane
- The Corn Mill, Mill Lane

Landmark buildings



The Market House Hotel, 42 Knight Street



Parish Church of Great St. Mary's, Church Lane



The Infants School, Knight Street



The Good Intent, Station Road



Orchard Works, Station Road
(now 1 – 36 River Court)



The Corn Mill, Mill Lane

Focal Points

- 6.46 The main focal point of Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area is the area of Great St. Mary's Church and The Square. The churchyard is a hub for footpaths leading to all parts of the town and the church dominates the churchyard. The Square, although small is at the point where the principal streets meet.
- 6.47 The focal point of the eastern part of the conservation area is the river crossing and former maltings buildings. These are massive structures that sit at the junction between the river, the road and the railway and in the case of those on the Lower Sheering side are exceptionally high and can be seen in the landscape for a great distance.

Key Views and Vistas

- 6.48 There are good long distance views of the former malting buildings at Lower Sheering from the fields to the east and glimpses between the hedgerow from Hatfield Heath Road and Hallingbury Road. There are also good long views of both sets of maltings from the river valley and there is also a good view of the former mill buildings from the river/towpath and from the valley to the north and east. There are good middle distance views from the bridge to the south at the moored boats and former malting beyond and to the north out into the river valley. Although the town is on a hill there are no particularly dramatic views of the church spire from distance, although it can be seen from the river near the western malting.
- 6.49 The key vistas within the town are:
- Down Bell Street and Church Street in both directions.
 - Looking down the hill in Station Road towards the former Orchard Works Maltings.
 - From the top end of The Forebury, looking across the green towards the church tower rising above the trees.
 - From just outside 22 Knight Street looking south along a group of mostly ancient buildings with the view closed by 2 The Square in the distance.
 - From the cross roads looking into Knight Street and Bell Street, The Square, with the glimpse of the trees and buildings of Fair Green beyond and Church Street, towards the trees in the churchyard beyond, each with an apparent unbroken run of historic buildings.
 - From the end of Church Street into the Church.
 - Between The William IV PH and the adjoining building, across above the almshouses to the church spire.
 - From 11 Vantorts Road looking south towards Fair Green and north towards Church Street, with fine buildings on the east and good trees and landscape enclosure to the west.
 - From the junction of Vantorts road with Fair Green south towards the last buildings in the conservation area and the illusion of open countryside beyond.
 - The views into Fair Green, particularly from the northwest corner, an idyllic harmony of trees, green and historic buildings, evocative of a village green.
 - Both up and down leafy Sheering Mill Lane.
 - From the junction of Maylins Drive with London Road looking north with informally grouped historic buildings to the left and a good tree screen to the right.
 - From 35 London Road looking south towards the Congregational Church, with historic buildings in the foreground and trees to the left and beyond.
 - From 87 London Road looking north; a good run of historic buildings on either side.

Trees and Vegetation

- 6.50 Sawbridgeworth is blessed with several areas of trees which contribute to its character. The major areas have been dealt with in the Open Space section and individual street trees will be dealt with in the Character Areas section below.

Focal points / key views / vistas



Focal point: Great St Mary's Church



Focal point: The Square



Focal point: the river crossing and the East & West Maltings from Station Road



View: south from 14 Knight Street to 2 The Square



View: east along Bell Street from London Road



View: into Fair Green towards Corner House

7.0 CHARACTER AREAS

- 7.1 The conservation area can be divided into two distinct character areas (Figure 16). Each area has a different character and appearance that relates to its past and current function, the design of the street layout and its buildings and the types of material used in their construction. These character areas are shown in Figures 17 and 18 and have been analysed separately.
- 7.2 There are 107 Statutory Listed Buildings in the Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area (Appendix 2); each is described within their particular character area along with any key unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

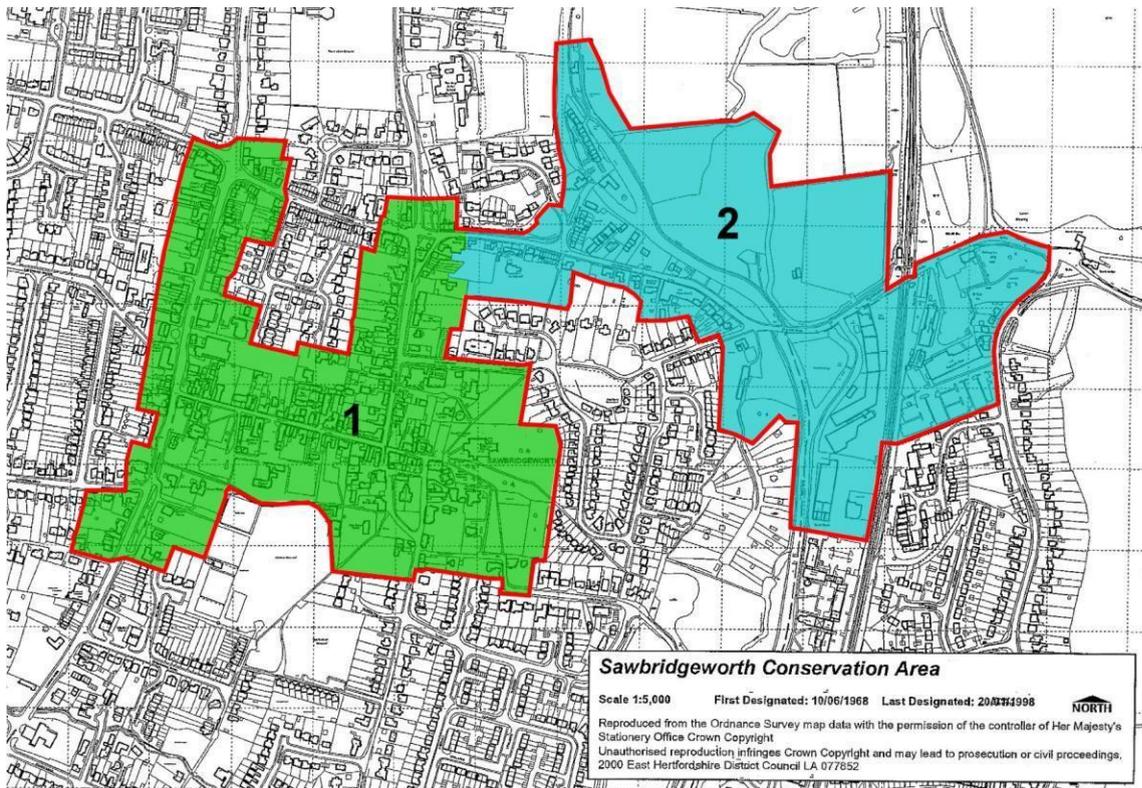


Figure 16: Map detailing the two character areas within Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area

CHARACTER AREA 1: The Medieval Core

- 7.3 Character Area 1 encompasses the main streets of the original medieval town and includes Bell Street, Knight Street, Church Street, Vantorts Road, Sheering Mill Lane and The Square, together with the open spaces of the Churchyard and Fair Green. It sits on top of the highest ground. London Road is also included because it defines the edge of the medieval town and was the main route to London at least from the post-medieval period.

Former uses, prevailing activity and their influence on plan form and building types

- 7.4 The town is believed to have been planned and controlled in the medieval period (see history above) and this is reflected in the straight and rectilinear form of the street pattern, to north, southeast and west of the former market square which now as “ The Square”, although very much reduced in size still remains the hub. Original medieval burgage plots can still be identified on the ground and some analysis has taken place of

these by Herts County Council in their Extensive Urban Survey Project Assessment Report of 1999 (Figure 5). However, the original regularity of these plots is somewhat disguised by the continual building, rebuilding and amalgamation of plots over the centuries and so the appearance of these streets and burgages owes as much and more to the organic growth of the town over time.

- 7.5 The original uses of the plots would have undoubtedly been a mixture of residential, in the form of merchants' houses together with inns, workshops, in the form of the various trades common to medieval towns but with an increasing emphasis on malting over the centuries. 19th century Ordnance Survey Maps show several maltings remaining within the town, despite the later growth of the industry down by the river, e.g. "The Market Hall" on the important corner of Bell Street and Knight Street. Malting was itself a product of the agricultural strength of the town. Right up to the 20th century there were still agricultural fields behind the burgage plots of Bell Street and Knight Street and for this reason the rear extent of these remains well defined, by the footpath between the car parks and cricket pitch to the south of Bell Street, the boundary with the churchyard and the Forebury properties to the east of Knight Street and the boundaries with the mid 20th century housing to the north of Bell Street and west of Knight Street. To this day there are remnants of agricultural buildings in the rear yards of these two streets e.g. barns to the rear of 17 Vantorts Road and 2 The Square. (Figure 12 is a map indicating where there is evidence of malting and agricultural use in the town.)
- 7.6 The residential element is of course still present, especially in the form of some grand houses, e.g. Nos. 4, 9 and 11 Bell Street, which sit cheek by jowl with retail premises now occupying the ground floors of most frontages properties, although this is less the case in Knight Street, which may well always have been more residential in nature. On shopping days, Bell Street gives the impression of a bustling high street, although at the time of this survey, there were several premises that were either closed or in uses as charity shops.
- 7.7 London Road did not appear to have been developed until the post-medieval period, (there are no surviving buildings from before the 17th century) and indeed there is little building to the south of the Bell Street junction and a significant gap on the east side between Bell Street and Station Road on the 19th century Ordnance Survey Maps. It would seem to have become more popular as a site for fairly large houses on the approach to the town from London from the 18th century onwards, whereas north of the Bell Street junction there are mainly smaller plots developed from the 19th century. It is likely that inns were not allowed to develop on London Road and this may well have been a deliberate policy to ensure that travellers and trade entered the town rather than bypassing it. However, there were undoubtedly a large number of inns in the medieval core and these are still represented by surviving buildings as follows
- 7.8 "The White Lion" (LB.GII) is on the corner of Bell Street and London Road and would have marked the entrance to the medieval town proper. The oldest part of the surviving building is a white stucco timber framed range of the 16th century which takes up the Bell Street frontage. It was recorded in the 18th century as the first inn to be reached by coaches from London and the London Road frontage is an impressive 18th century brick edifice of the highest quality, reflective no doubt of the improvements and relative importance of stage coach travel in that period.
- 7.9 "The Old Bell", 38 Bell Street (LB.GII). This has gone through several name changes and in 1719 was also known as "The White Lion", originally probably a 16th century house, it seems to have been altered, extended and adapted as an inn in the 17th century. It was given a polite pargetted frontage in the 18th century and was listed as the first stop for the

stagecoach running from Hertford to Harwich, as evidence of its continuing prosperity and function. Comparison of modern maps with the 1874-94 Ordnance Survey Map indicates that, whilst there was a little more in the way of rear outbuildings then, that the current form remains fairly true to its 17th century “U” shaped plan.

- 7.10 “King William IV”, 7 Vantorts Road (LB.GII). Although slightly off the track for an inn catering for travellers, it is very central and close to the former market place. It also has the form of an inn, with a carriageway (albeit very low) to a yard with 18th and 19th century outbuildings. However, it is recorded in the deeds as merely a “beerhouse” between 1770 and 1886 and described as a “malt office” in the 1839 Tithe Map.
- 7.11 “The George IV”, at the junction of Knight Street with Station Road (LB.GII). Although of 17th century origin this appears to have been altered and adapted to inn use later and by 1822 (when the stagecoach era was at its height).
- 7.12 “The Bull”, Cambridge Road (LB.GII). This is believed to have at one time occupied 3 Church Street (LB.GII) and was recorded as such in 1720, although no. 3 is described as “a special purpose building” in the DOE list. The form of the building and the carriageway at the side could certainly be indicative of a former inn, indeed the 1874-.94 Ordnance Survey Map shows a characteristically larger number of outbuildings in the rear and the juxtaposition on the adjoining plot of large maltings.
- 7.13 “The Bell and Feathers”. This was at 52 Bell Street (LB.GII) on the corner with “The Square” and would thus have been well situated in the market place. An inn gallery (for access to rooms) was inserted in the 17th century and this is indicative of its likely use at this time.
- 7.14 London Road is typical of many main road settlements, although in this case it is really a bypass to the main town and therefore never developed as a high street and has only a smattering of shops. These are in any case mostly around the entrance to Bell Street which has always been the important trading street of the town. South of this junction is residential and contains some good 18th century and 19th century houses. North of the junction, whilst still mainly residential, the buildings are generally 19th century or later and not so grand. Most recently, the east side of the road has seen the introduction of a supermarket and a garage both of which are intrusive and negative in visual effect. For many years this was the main trunk road from London to Norwich and traffic would have been heavy and intrusive throughout the 20th century. Despite the opening of the M11 to the east of the town and the de-trunking of the former A11, it remains a very busy road and this has a negative effect on the environment.
- 7.15 In Bell Street the current frontage use is predominantly retail with also a bank and building societies but with some wholly residential and some small offices and businesses, whereas Knight Street is more residential, although there are some shops near to the Bell Street end, a bank and two pubs. It is quieter than Bell Street. The rear yards still retain some older outbuildings which are reminders of the former uses and in one case a small cobblers still survives. Others, behind nos. 13/15, 19 and 29-31 Bell Street and 22, 30 and 40 Knight Street are now small courtyard housing precincts, not of great quality but reasonably deferential in scale and materials and providing residential accommodation in the town centre that improves the night time environment.

Character Area 1: photos



*The White Lion
28 London Road*



*The Old Bell
38 Bell Street*



*King William IV
7 Vantorts Road*



*The George IV
Station Road*



11 Bell Street



*Sayesbury Manor
Bell Street*

- 7.16 To the rear of 1-7 Bell Street is a small shopping precinct of largely modern construction but incorporating at least one old Victorian building which flanks onto London Road and this serves the useful purpose of connecting the supermarket on London Road and its car park to the Bell Street shops. Some of these areas are softened by trees within adjoining gardens such as behind 9, 11 and 35 and the Market House, Bell Street and 4, 8, 12, 26, 30, 32 and 40 Knight Street. The rear yards behind the south of Bell Street have been combined into three linked municipal car parks which also give access to the Surgery behind no.4 and district council offices in Sayesbury Manor (LB.GII), which is set well back against the footpath and cricket pitch. The western car park is well landscaped with grass and major trees which were once part of the large garden to no.4. These not only enhance the setting of the listed building but also Bell Street itself and they combine well with the trees in the private garden to “Eversley” to the east and the avenue of trees to the footpath to the south.
- 7.17 The central space is a car park straight off Bell Street, between no.8 and no.10 but this is not landscaped, apart from a street tree at the egress, which is therefore important. The third car park to the east is also unrelieved but does benefit from the trees along the footpath to the south and within the garden to the inn to the east. “Sayesbury Manor” is an 18th century over-restored white stucco building within its own courtyard, enclosed by a rather mean brick wall and close-boarded fence. It presents its rear elevation and outbuildings to the car park and the overall effect is not harmonious. The car park surfaces are of unbroken tarmac throughout except for the forecourt to Sayesbury Manor, which is of concrete blocks and only marginally better. Except for the landscaped west end, the area overall has a negative effect on the character of the conservation area and should be enhanced. However, it serves a very positive purpose in helping the viability of the shops and combining the health and municipal functions.
- 7.18 Knight Street becomes increasingly more residential in character progressively towards the north. Again there is variety in widths and heights of buildings and spaces in between, which are generally tighter on the west side, (photo), the east being broken up in the centre by the Victorian School building and “The Forebury” turning off to the east. The school is set back and whilst of high quality, is a marked contrast to the majority of the architecture in the street, the rear 20th century extension to the building is however not a good example and has a negative effect on the character of the conservation area. The northern end of the street appears to be all of the 19th century or later and probably resulted from the division of earlier larger plots. No. 19 on the south side appears to have been built in splendid isolation on what until that time was open farmland stretching down to the river. It remains a landmark building here being a very wide frontage white stucco Regency house listed grade II*. The road forks at its junction with Station Road and the “George IV” Inn sits on the island thus created. It is difficult to know how this developed, possibly one of the forks was once a carriage entrance to the Inn which later became a through route when the town developed further towards the river.
- 7.19 “The Square” is the truncated remainder of the former market place and it is believed that the buildings to the east are actually a product of the market being progressively developed with permanent buildings from the 15th century onwards. This process would have stopped sometime before the closure of the market by the end of the 18th century. It remains now as an intimate space, hardly more than a widening in the road but charming nonetheless and still an important crossing of the main streets. It is enclosed on the south and north by shops and to the north by a firm of accountants all within white stucco buildings with classical frontages. There is, a butchers shop in the southwest corner with glimpses of barn like buildings beyond reminiscent of the agricultural past. The trees and openness of “Fair Green” are glimpsed beyond the southeast corner.

Character Area 1: photos



Victorian School, Knight Street



North end of Knight Street



1 The Square



The Old Manse, Fair Green



1, 2 & 3 Vantorts Road (Mann Memorial Almshouses)



1 & 2 Fair Green

- 7.20 Church Street forms part of what was formerly the market and now accommodates the transition between the bustling town and the quiet churchyard to which it leads. In retail use at the western, end it becomes more residential in character beyond the junction with Vantorts Road. Unsurprisingly, some of the buildings have ecclesiastical roots e.g. nos.1 - 3. The white weatherboarded building 1 Vantorts Road was formerly the workhouse. Vantorts Road is more rural and progressively so as it leads south towards Sheering Mill Lane through Fair Green. Residential in character although with one public house, formerly an inn, the large houses are well spaced out on the east side with views through to the trees in the churchyard beyond. The west side is lined with a good wall and tree screen to 1 & 2 Fair Green, although the southern half forms the eastern side of Fair Green itself.
- 7.21 Fair Green is wholly residential. It is the historic location of the chartered fair, landscape dominated and semi-rural in character, having the appearance and quietude of a village green. Every building contributes because they are only six and widely spaced.
- 7.22 Sheering Mill Lane is also rural in character but is included in this character area for convenience, because it is linked with the churchyard and Fair Green. The small part of it which is within the conservation area is evocative of what once must have been a narrow country lane, winding down to the river and Sheering Mill but which has now become partly suburban beyond the conservation area.
- 7.23 The churchyard is the last essential component of the medieval town, lying just beyond the main cross roads and former market place and between them and the supposed site of the former manor. It is a major landscaped space and something of a hub for pedestrian routes joining the town centre with suburban areas to the east. It is of course the setting for the most important building, the Church of St. Mary's the Great, listed Grade I. It is described more fully under the "Open Spaces" heading above.

Architectural and historic qualities of the buildings

- 7.24 Despite this being a medieval planned town, there is now little uniformity of plot widths, heights or architectural styles. This is because plots would have been amalgamated or truncated and buildings progressively altered, extended or replaced over the centuries. There are still a significant number of timber framed buildings from the 15th and 16th century onwards throughout the area but they have been progressively modernised to account for changes in architectural taste. Indeed many 18th century buildings are timber framed which is an unusual characteristic of the town. Even 19 Knight Street, an early 19th century, stucco, Regency House is timber framed. Because of this wish to modernise yet still retain the timber frame, most buildings are plastered or rendered and very few have an exposed timber frame (the cross wing of 36 Knight Street seems to be the only example where rendering has been removed recently to expose a previously covered timber frame). However, the prevalent building type is of white rendered buildings with steeply pitched red tile roofs.
- 7.25 Some of the rendering is pargetted in the local vernacular tradition, in panels with various different infill patterns impressed or scratched in such as at 1 -3 Church Street. However, 18th century and later pargetting tends to be in classical form, intended to simulate the forms found on 18th century stone buildings such as dentilled eaves, cornices and pilasters such as at 4 Bell Street.
- 7.26 There are relatively few brick buildings and some of these are 18th century encasements or merely frontages to timber framed buildings. This would have been the ultimate expression of wealth and status in the late 17th century and 18th century. They are carried out in typical Hertfordshire fiery red brick and tend to be of particularly high standard e.g. 40 Knight

Street and 11 Bell Street. However during the later 19th century brick was used for relatively lower status buildings, which tended to be of cream or yellow stocks that were popular in the Victorian era and cheaply transportable from outside the district by train e.g. 2a & 2b Knight Street and some of the 19th century or later houses in the central part of London Road.

- 7.27 Likewise, there are very few surviving early window frames even on the older properties, especially on the frontages, where 18th century/19th century sash windows would have replaced them as part of the modernising process and which remain the prevalent type. (There are early leaded light windows in 37 Bell Street and at “The Market House”).
- 7.28 Shopfronts where they occur, are typically of painted timber, small in scale, with modest fascias and signage, except in London Road, where there are some poor aluminium shopfronts and over-sized or garish signs. Some are 19th century or earlier, and a few are of very high quality, with sophisticated classical detailing.
- 7.29 The flanks and rear of the older buildings tend to display surviving earlier finishes and materials, such as vernacular pargetting, painted or blackened weatherboarding and mullioned windows, displaying their earlier origins. The few remaining old outbuildings in the rear yards are important vernacular reminders of the historic use of the burgage plots, as are the remaining vertically boarded gates on the frontages which give access to them, even where these are modern replacements. There are a significant number of 18th /19th century water pumps surviving in the town centre which are good enough to be listed individually or within the description of listed premises. Mains water did not reach the town until 1948 and this may be the reason for their survival.
- 7.30 Despite the agricultural history of the town, there are now no thatched roofs in the town centre. While this maybe because of the danger of fire in the packed streets, it is as likely that the desire for expression of wealth and status led to their replacement with the local fiery red peg tiles on the steep pitched roofs of the town.
- 7.31 The individual buildings in all the streets of the town centre core tend to make a strong contribution to the character and many are listed whereas this is less so in the case of London Road, where the later infilling between the surviving 18th century. Buildings is often of less quality and in some cases poor.

London Road

- 7.32 The southern section contains the better buildings, which are also well spaced and benefit from landscaping both between the buildings and from the good mature tree screen which graces most of the eastern frontage of the road up until the Bell Street junction. Nos. 29 - 43 form a good picturesque group of historic buildings.
- 7.33 Nos. 29 -33 (LB.GII) although set back, are prominent because they mark the entrance to the conservation area and being on the corner with Maylins Drive, the flank is seen for some distance. The front range is 18th century, timber framed and of white stucco with mostly original sash windows and louvered shutters, which add to the rather “out of town” feel to the group. No. 33a (LB.GII), is also prominent because the earlier rear range was extended right up to the road in the 19th century and encased in buff brick. It was then increased in height and has unusual 1st floor tall French windows above the arched ground floor openings that once gave access to a forge but are now fenestrated.

Character Area 1: photos



1 – 3 Church Street



4 Bell Street



The Market House, 42 Knight Street



29-33a London Road



37 London Road



43 London Road (The Clock House)

- 7.34 No. 35, Sayesbury Cottage, (LB.GII) also has a country cottage feel, embodied in the hipped red tiled roof, bay windows and dormers and emphasised because it is set back behind a picket fence and small garden. It is 18th century, timber framed, cream stucco. There is a good street tree between no.35 and no.37. No. 37 (LB.GII) an 18th century timber framed house with a double frontage of white painted brickwork completes this picturesque group. The little outbuilding in white painted weatherboarding in the East Hertfordshire vernacular tradition adds to the effect. No. 39 is a prominent building which takes up the corner with Hoestock Road. It is of high quality cream gault brickwork with red brick banding and quoins and moulded terra-cotta bracketed eaves. The roof is of slate with a splayed hip at the corner. An unlisted building of good quality which enhances the character of the conservation area and makes a positive contribution. No. 43 (LB.GII) takes up the other corner with Hoestock Road and its importance is emphasised by the good group of trees and good buff stock brick wall, which form part of the garden to the north and separate it from the more commercial part of London Road beyond. The house is 18th century timber framed and stucco and has prominent canted bay windows. The gable end is weatherboarded as are the stables to the rear, which are also of interest.
- 7.35 A tree screen continues beyond the garden to no.39 and partially conceals the modern houses behind. On the opposite side of the road, the trees finally give way after the grounds of "Eversley", a large late-Victorian house of red brick and decorative tile hanging, in Neo-Vernacular style. A good quality building that contributes positively.
- 7.36 The town centre is then announced by the prominent Georgian frontage of the White Lion Inn, which is described in greater detail above. Although the positive merits of the building have also been discussed, its car park lets it down badly, spoils the setting from the south and is a negative influence on the character of the conservation area. Towards the northeast corner of the car park is "The Assembly Room" (LB.GII) an interesting late Georgian survival. A simple white stucco building, tall but well set back and so subservient to the Inn. Fortunately the trees beyond the car park to the rear, soften the effect somewhat.
- 7.37 Opposite the Bell Street junction, 47 -51 is a group of unlisted buildings. No. 47, whilst run down, is a simple inoffensive white rendered building but the others, which are all in restaurant use have been altered/rebuilt and are disfigured with garish signage, which is particularly unfortunate, given their important location opposite the junction and closing the vista down Bell Street. They are at best neutral in contribution. No. 53 (LB.GII) is a simple but tall three storey house in dark pink stucco with a small 20th century shopfront in green glazed brick. No. 55 (LB.GII) is a lower, two-storey building in white stucco with sash windows and louvered shutters, housing a delicatessen and a hairdresser with modern but reasonably scaled shopfronts in painted timber.
- 7.38 The group to the north of the Bell Street junction is generally poor. On the west side there are two large three-storey blocks of flats occupying the former plots 57-67. 20th and 21st century in date, these are out of scale and the brickwork, window design and architectural details are out of character with the town. They are considered to be of negative contribution. The supermarket development opposite clearly serves a useful purpose, especially as it incorporates some small retail units, at the corner with Bell Street which are at least of neutral contribution and potentially positive with better shopfronts. However the main block has a very plain and utilitarian brick frontage and poor quality shopfronts which make a negative contribution, although the street trees provide some screening, which should improve as they mature. Whilst the frontage building of the supermarket itself is restrained, the wide gap created affords unattractive views into the car park and the flank of the retail units.

- 7.39 The little listed building, Groves House (LB.GII) is now rather isolated between two car park accesses. However, its double gable end remains prominent in views from the north because it is set forward of the modern buildings. The street tree against the south gable end helps the setting to a degree. It is of white stucco with steep pitched red tiled roofs and with 3-light mullioned casement windows as a reminder of its 17th century origins. The garage forecourt is the final piece of this rather poor part of the road and is of extremely negative effect.
- 7.40 On the opposite side of the road is a residential group of more character that represents the development that took place to the west of London Road in the 19th century. There are two detached houses set back from the road, 69 and 71, one of red brick and one of yellow stocks, both with slate roofs, in very original condition and of positive contribution, although the frontages have been opened up for parking. These are followed by a terrace of smaller artisan cottages, 73-81, mostly of brick and weatherboarding with red tiled roofs, although no. 81 was combined to form the "The Gate" public house in 1843. Although the cottages are less original, this whole group is considered to make a positive contribution, although the car park to the side of The Gate, with views to the poor telephone exchange to the rear makes a negative contribution. No. 87 is a prominent building because it occupies the corner of an access road to the telephone exchange and because of the gap created by the car park to The Gate. It is a large double fronted 19th century house, in red brick with terra cotta details around the bay windows. It makes a positive contribution along with the frontage garden and trees in the side garden.
- 7.41 Opposite, beyond a pair of maisonettes, which are screened by landscaping in generous front gardens are nos. 62 -68, a group of 17th century origin but with 18th / 19th century frontages in white painted weatherboarding, an East Hertfordshire rural vernacular tradition (all LB.GII). These form part of a good group with nos. 89 -95, small late 18th century houses of varying materials, plaster, brick, tiles and slates but united by 18th century/early 19th century sash windows and listed (LB.GII). Nos. 97 and 99 although unlisted, are 19th century white stucco buildings of good quality, which also contribute to the character of the area. On the negative side, several of these frontages have been opened up for car parking to their detriment. Likewise, nos. 70-74 are a simple group of unlisted Victorian cottages, which whilst not of such character, do compliment nos. 62 -68 and are therefore considered positive in contribution. Nos. 101 103 is a charming small cottage pair, in pink render, set back behind an attractive garden, although marred somewhat by plastic windows (LB.GII). No. 105 is a much altered 19th century building with a shop on the ground floor with a garish and overscaled shop fascia. Whilst it detracts at present, because of the shopfront, the building as such is neutral in contribution. Nos. 76-82 is a simple, mainly terraced, Victorian group which, although somewhat marred by replacement windows, still contributes positively to the character of the area.
- 7.42 Taking up the corner with West Street are two / three storey housing blocks with shops on the ground floor. The applied gables and weatherboarding do not disguise the inappropriate bulk and blandness of these buildings, which are unfortunately negative in contribution on this important corner site. The group of buildings on the opposite corner is more appropriate in scale and interest but fails to make an adequate contribution to this important junction. The northwest corner of the crossroads is no better served by no. 1 Cambridge Road, an extremely bland housing block with poor quality shopfronts beneath and of negative contribution. However, the northeast corner still retains buildings from Walnut Tree Farm, including the former farmhouse (LB.GII) of brick with a symmetrical parapetted stucco frontage. Attached to the south is a building described in the list as 19th century, but this actually appears to be now a modern yellow stock building with an aluminium shopfront. To the east, there remains an 18th century black weatherboarded barn, which also has a frontage to Station Road.

Character Area 1: photos



53 London Road



Groves House and neighbouring supermarket, London Road



62 – 68 London Road



Weatherboarded barn, Station Road, formerly part of Walnut Tree Farm, Cambridge Road



The Good Intent, Station Road

- 7.43 The complex is a reminder of the agricultural past of the town, when farms encroached right into its heart and makes a positive contribution. Altogether, this important junction, which marks the crossing of two historical routes and the northern end of the historic town is weak and crying out for improvement.
- 7.44 The conservation area continues into Station Road. Nos. 8-12 and the public house, "The Good Intent", (LB.GII) are part of a small 19th century suburb of artisans housing, possibly originally occupied by workers at the large maltings down by the river, or London workers taking advantage of cheap workers railway tickets. This is shown as "Newtown" on the 19th century Ordnance Survey Maps. There is a good case for including this whole area i.e. on the south side of Station Road right down to the Knight Street junction as an extension to the conservation area.
- 7.45 As it stands, the group which is within the current boundary is of positive contribution, especially the public house, "The Good Intent", a pleasant corner building of yellow/brown stocks, early 19th century but incorporating an 18th century rear wing. Very original and clearly a vibrant community asset (LB.GII). The downside is the car park, which cuts a big gap in the enclosure of the street and is of unrelieved tarmac, although it does afford views of trees in the gardens beyond.

Bell Street

- 7.46 This street can be split into groups because of the intervening gaps. The corner with London Road is dominated by the impressive "White Lion Hotel" (see above) but from the junction on the north side of the street no.7 makes an impact because 1-5 are relatively low and plain although they afford access through to a small shopping precinct behind and to the supermarket and make a positive contribution. No. 7 (LB.GII) is a good quality stucco 17th century listed building with 18th century windows and has two good quality linked shopfronts.
- 7.47 The group of nos. 2, 4, 9 and 11 is particularly fine and the best in the street. No.2 (the side elevation of the White Lion Hotel) and no.4 are both faced in white stucco, no.4 is particularly fine because of the classical detailing embodied in its pargetting. It is well separated from the next group by the fine wall and trees of its former garden. No.9 is prominent because it is end on to the street and has an atypical hipped/gabled roof, although the end elevation is very restrained, in four pargetted panels and with only one Georgian window, asymmetrically placed, in contrast to the return façade, which is carefully ordered and visible from the street across the large garden. No.11 (LB.GII*) is well set back from the street behind its garden but is prominent because of the width of its plot and because it is of fine quality, early 18th century red brickwork with rusticated quoins and key stones in gauged work. Nos. 9 and 11 are enhanced by their front boundary treatments, including wide vertically boarded carriage gates, characteristic of the street and their landscaped gardens, which combine well with the landscaped grounds of no.4 opposite.
- 7.48 The next group is dominated by two buildings, nos.13 & 15 because of its height, the only three-storey building in the street and no.6 a modern building, because of its excessive depth, which is unfortunately undisguised because the whole of its flank is exposed by the car park access. Together with no.8 it forms what can more accurately be described as a block. No. 6 gives the impression of a very large building, although it is only two storeys in height and is regarded as neutral/negative. Its neighbour no. 8 is not listed but is probably early 19th century judging by the window frames. Also in white stucco it is unremarkable but whilst the modern shopfronts are not good, it makes a positive contribution and could be considered for local listing.
- 7.49 Nos. 13 & 15 (LB.GII) is a listed Georgian building, prominent because of its height, the

set back of no.11 and also because it is of brickwork although it is very plain and boxy, the roofs being hidden behind parapets to all elevations. It could be said to represent a typical Georgian building of the type to be found all over the country but without the concessions to local distinction that is exhibited by its fellows. The fascia and pilasters of the shopfronts are good but the infill is not. Modern to no. 13, currently a restaurant and of brickwork to no. 15, currently occupied by an insurance consultant.

- 7.50 No.17 (LB.GII) has a plain stucco “Georgian” frontage to a 17th century house now a shop on the left hand side with a good 19th century shopfront. There is a yard to the rear which is as yet undeveloped and still contains an old black weatherboarded outbuilding in use as a cobblers, evocative of a time when many of the rear yards would be occupied by small workshops. No. 19 is set back deeply from the street and is a mid20th century mock-Tudor house, out of character but with a certain charm of the unexpected. To the rear of this is a small courtyard bungalow development. The whole plot is considered neutral in contribution.
- 7.51 The car park egress beyond no. 8 intrudes between this and the next group. 18-32. Mostly fairly low eaved plain white stucco buildings, although listed (LB.GII), they are relatively simple and plain, unified by the stucco and the Georgian windows and with good shopfronts, some historic and some modern reproductions. No. 24 has a former carriageway behind full height boarded doors, historically characteristic of the street. However, the group is dominated by no.26, currently offices, which has an unusually high first floor and high eaves.
- 7.52 Likewise on the other side of the street, of the group, 21 -29, the most prominent is no. 29 (LB.GII) because of its height. Nos. 21/23 (LB.GII) are a pair of 17th century to 18th century cottages with a 19th century brick front (colour washed) and a modern shopfront which is small and in proportion. Nos. 25 & 27 are unusual, having retained an earlier frontage with mullioned and leaded windows and therefore atypical in that the Georgian treatment has not been applied. No. 29 has a modern shopfront but simple and well proportioned.
- 7.53 There is a gap between this group and Nos. 31&33 (LB.GII) giving access to 20th century housing of deferential scale and neutral in character. The building itself has a wide plain Georgian frontage and two 19th century shopfronts but the right hand one is marred by a plastic “dutch” blind that is out of character. There is a carriageway between no. 33 and the next group and this now serves a small residential block, “Granary Court”. This is of white render and brickwork and in an “L” shape around a car parking area, which also serves the frontage building. The residential buildings are at best neutral in contribution and the car park is negative, however there are views beyond of good trees in the rear of Knight Street that soften the view. No. 35-37 is a plain red brick late-Victorian building with a high pitched tiled roof which, although not listed, contributes positively to the character. It is occupied by a bank but the frontage of this, in white render with stained timber display windows, is out of character and negative in contribution.
- 7.54 A prominent feature next to the bank is a tall and narrow black weatherboarded structure with a prominent sack hoist cantilevered out over the street, said to be a rebuild in facsimile of an earlier building but nevertheless it does contribute positively. Beyond a pair of modern buildings set back from the pavement and of neutral contribution at best is the “Market House” (LB.GII*). This building forms the corner with “Knight Street and is further described under that heading. The Bell Street range is very long part rendered and part dark weatherboarding, formerly part used as a maltings and part as a fine central town house. It is a unique building and a reminder of the town’s past. The west gable is prominent because of the set back of the adjoining buildings and has a prominent chimney stack with coupled diagonal shafts. There are two wide mullioned windows, although these are described as 19th century in the DOE list.

Character Area 1: photos



*White Lion Hotel from Bell Street
& 7 Bell Street*



The Chantry, 9 Bell Street



13 & 15 Bell Street



19 Bell Street



24 Bell Street



*The Market House Hotel, 42 Knight Street
from Bell Street*

7.55 Opposite the bank, No. 36 (LB.GII) forms a prominent group with the "Old Bell". It is gable end on to the street and jettied and pargetted in early vernacular style, although with an 18th century sash window to first floor. The mock bow fronted shopfront is out of character. The "Old Bell" (LB.GII) is a 16th century inn, further described earlier. It is very prominent in

the street scene. The frontage is pargetted in vernacular style but the windows are later, including 19th century canted bays to the ground floor and recent 20th century replacement windows to the first floor, which until that time had remained mullioned. It still has a carriageway to the rear, which is now a substantial garden with trees which contribute to the character and can be seen from the street.

- 7.56 Nos. 40-44 (LB.GII) is a simple low stucco building with panelled pargetting and a coved eaves cornice. The ground floor is split into three shopfronts with mock bow windows.
- 7.57 No.46 (LB.GII) is a plain plastered jettied 16th century building which has been extended to the west with a 20th century building with a reasonably scaled frontage range but with a recessed shopfront and garish fascia, which are out of character. The rear extension is a utilitarian flat roofed structure that is visible from the street.
- 7.58 No. 52 (LB.GII) is a good corner building and together with no.4 The Square formed an Inn called "The Bell and Feathers". It is white rendered and pargetted and has good 19th century shopfronts that return round the corner. The west flank is black weatherboarded but this is largely covered up by a later extension.

Knight Street

- 7.59 The street is entered from the important hub of "The Square" and it's junction with Bell Street with two very strong corner buildings. On the west, the deeply jettied "Market Hall" (LB.GII*) most recently a public house but currently vacant. It is a surviving former maltings, although the Knight Street range is more representative of an early high status medieval house with deep jetties to both elevations and mullioned and leaded windows evocative of the 16th century origins of the building but probably later reproductions. On the opposite corner is the impressive no. 35-37 (LB.GII) which forms a strong corner with Church Street. A medieval timber framed building but with fine Georgian facades in pargetted stucco with an impressive modillioned eaves cornice, Georgian windows and good quality 19th century shopfronts with strongly expressed pilasters and consoles taken round the corner into Church Street. No. 33 (LB.GII) is a well mannered, 19th century neighbour to it, which successfully picks up the same proportions although much plainer and with a low pitched slate roof and with white painted weather boarding at the north end.
- 7.60 No.40 (LB.GII*) is a landmark building. A fine example of a medieval timber framed house fronted by an exceptionally high quality early Georgian brick facade in very original condition. The setting of the house and of no. 38 has been somewhat compromised by the formation of 20th century courtyard housing within its former garden and in particular the vehicular access to it, although the mature street tree helps to soften the view through and is an important tree within the general street scene too. No. 38 (LB.GII) is prominent because of the exposed timber frame on the cross wing, although this atypical and gives the whole building a "split personality", the rest of the building retaining its 18th century cloak.
- 7.61 No.28 (LB.GII) now a bank, is prominent again because of the high quality and sophisticated 18th century brick frontage, which compares with the contemporary frontages at no. 40, 11 Bell Street and the White Lion Hotel in London Road and is indicative of the highest status buildings in the town in the early 18th century. The high parapet returns on the flank and hides the old tile roof.

- 7.62 Opposite is the Fawbert and Barnard Infants School. This building is important not least because of its function, which continues to give life and activity, not only to Knight Street but also to the grounds to the rear and the otherwise peaceful churchyard. It is also prominent by contrast as an unashamedly Victorian building in yellow stock brickwork with red details under low pitched slate roofs and because it forms the corner with "The Forebury". It is set well back behind a forecourt, which is rather spoilt by untidy later buildings but enhanced by a good street tree. The school is not listed but contributes positively to the character of the conservation area.
- 7.63 The junction is also marked by "The Queens Head" (LB.GII) also prominent because of its function and because it closes the vista at the end of "The Forebury". This building may have been built as a public house in the early 19th century. It conforms to the prevalent white stucco and sash windows of the town, although with a low pitched slate roof, typical of its period. The other corner with "The Forebury" is weak with two mid-20th century houses, 21 & 23 set back. Whilst the frontage trees make a valuable contribution, along with the good tree outside no.18, opposite, nos. 21 & 23 are considered neutral/negative. The corner is also graced by a good telephone box and pillar box. No.19 is a fine, white stucco Regency house with three storeys. A wide but innocuous extension to the south, however due to the set back, in summer at least this is screened by some very good street trees in the frontage.
- 7.64 Nos. 6,8,10 and 12 are Edwardian neo vernacular houses and whilst they introduce a more suburban form and some alien features such as half-timbering and tile hanging, some rendering is still present and they are of good quality and considered to enhance the character, making a positive contribution. These buildings are relatively widely spaced and afford views of garden trees beyond and this is an important feature. However, one has been extended to the side and this has had the effect of closing the gap and has also led to the paving of the front garden to enable car parking, both of which are detrimental to the overall group.
- 7.65 No.4 is another fine listed building (LB.GII) with a good white stucco Regency front range, separated from no.6 by a fine tree within the garden to the latter. Its importance is emphasised by the curve in the road at this point and because of the projecting wing at the northern end where the road bifurcates. It is enhanced by the fine trees within its garden to the north, which impact on the street scene. However, although less imposing as a building, "The George IV" Inn (LB.GII) is more important as a landmark because it occupies the island that is formed by the fork in the road and consequently closes the vista looking north down Knight Street. However, from the important view point across the station road junction from the north, it presents a weak and untidy image behind a small car park, fronted by ranch style fencing, only partly screened by hedging.
- 7.66 The west corner of this important junction is also not well served by 2a/2b Knight Street, which, although an attractive enough Victorian semi-detached pair in buff stock brick to the frontage, present a blank flank wall to the corner. A rather better corner building is the bakery which occupies the corner of the eastern fork of Knight Street. Although a simple Victorian building of red and buff brickwork, with a decent if not outstanding shopfront, it gives a welcome liveliness to this corner, which is some distance from the main shopping area and makes a positive contribution.
- 7.67 No.17 Station Road is prominent as it forms the northwest corner, opposite Knight Street with Station Road. No.15 is a medieval timber framed house (LB.GII) in white stucco under a steep pitched red tile roof. It retains early casement windows with leaded lights and a vernacular open eaves detail and has not received the 18th century makeover.

Character Area 1: photos



33 – 37 Knight Street



38 – 40 Knight Street



*28 – 32 Knight Street and the Queens Head
(no. 28)*



19 Knight Street



8 – 12 Knight Street



4 Knight Street

The Forebury

- 7.68 This street connects Knight Street to the mid-20th century developments to the east, is on the line of an old footpath, which is shown on the earlier Ordnance Survey Maps, leading through farmland down to the river. The buildings are not outstanding and the rear extension to the infants' school is not a good example of post war school building, the link with the frontage building being particularly poor. However, the memorial hall and particularly the library can be regarded as neutral or even positive, unexciting but decent restrained buildings of their period.
- 7.69 The open space on the south side of Forebury is valuable and attractive, affording views of the church spire and incorporating the tree lined footpath that connects to the west end of the churchyard and Church Street, although it is a shame that the density of the hedge precludes views from the path into the churchyard.

The Square

- 7.70 The Square makes up for its lack of size by the quality of its buildings, their happy juxtaposition and its important location at the historic hub of the town. No.2, is the plainest building but prominently situated, closing off the south side of the space but allowing a partial view beyond into the green space of Fair Green and a glimpse of the old barn and other black weatherboarded buildings in the little courtyard leading off from the southwest corner of the square. Of 16th century origins but having an 18th century front range according to the list description (LB.GII), it has the simplicity of an early 19th century building, with simple sash windows in plain stucco. There is a painted timber shopfront to a butchers shop, continuously used as such since 1838.
- 7.71 The other two buildings on the east and west sides of the square are similar in external appearance, having 18th century frontages in white stucco, sash windows and red tiled roofs but whereas no.1 (LB.GII) is of the 18th century and rather more detailed, including a modillioned eaves, no. 3 & 4 (LB.GII) is an old 16th century former Inn (together with 52 Bell Street) with an 18th century facade, and has pargetted panels. Both have good quality 19th century shopfronts, (partial on no.1), no. 3 & 4 with a central doorway with pedimented classical porch, which faces across the square to pilastered and pedimented central doorway in no.1.

Church Street

- 7.72 Church Street has a quiet atmosphere, leading down to the peaceful, sylvan churchyard, through a pleasant pair of oak gates. It contains a collection of different and unusual building types, developed partly over the former market place.
- 7.73 Nos.1-3 (LB.GII) is described in the DOE list as "a special purpose building", although there is evidence also that at one time it served as an Inn. In white stucco, with panelled vernacular pargetting and still with mullion and transomed casement windows and attractive arch headed shopfront windows. No.5 stands out because it is of red brick with stone dressings and of unusual design, being the former fire station. The most prominent feature is the stone archway, with projecting voussoirs to the former main doors, now a fully glazed shopfront beneath the ornate carved stone date plaque. This is a simple but strong building which expresses its original function and the pride of its creators. Despite its contrast with the prevalent architecture, it has a positive effect on the character of the conservation area. No.7 is a simple late-Victorian, white rendered building immediately adjacent to the churchyard, with impressively tall chimney stacks but well mannered and of positive contribution.

Character Area 1: photos



1 The Square



2 The Square



1 – 3 Church Street



2 – 8 Church Street



Church House & 1 Vantorts Road



Fair Green House, 17 Vantorts Road

Vantorts Road

- 7.74 This forms a quiet junction with Church Street and becomes progressively more rural towards the south and into Fair Green.
- 7.75 No.1 (LB.GII) is prominent because it forms the corner with Church Street by means of an elegant curved corner to the brickwork frontage to Vantorts Road. However, the main frontage is in Church Street, almost within the churchyard and of white painted weatherboarding in East Hertfordshire vernacular tradition. The building was formerly known as the church house and was at one time the work house.
- 7.76 Other prominent buildings are “The King William IV” inn and No. 17, “Fair Green House” (both LB.GII). The former is also of white painted weatherboarding. There are views between it and no.1 into the trees of the churchyard and the church spire, with the rear of the little “Tudor Gothic” almshouses, 1-3 Vantorts Road (LB.GII) of knapped flint with stone dressings.
- 7.77 No. 17 owes its prominence not only to its location overlooking Fair Green but also to its impressively wide frontage. Again this is an 18th century white stucco facade to a much earlier timber framed building. The central portion has a raised parapet and the roof has been truncated by a lead flat, presumably to hide the old steep tiled roof, which was unfashionable in the 18th century and diluted the impression of modernity and status. Nos. 19 & 21 form the corner with Sheering Mill lane and with no. 17 are visually part of the group of buildings around Fair Green. No. 21 is more “cottage like” than most other buildings in the town and appropriately marks the entrance to Sheering Mill Lane.

Fair Green

- 7.78 Fair Green is also distinctly rural. It is the location of the historic chartered fair but now has a distinctly village green character. It is landscape dominated with good trees and widely spaced buildings, giving views to further trees within the generous gardens. All the buildings are good quality and have presence because of the setting. Only “Fair Green Place” is not listed. It is however relatively small, of red brown brick and reticent and can be regarded as neutral.
- 7.79 Nos.1 & 2 is otherwise the odd one out because it has a 19th century brick frontage and slate roof facing the green but here too the grey stock bricks are recessive and the grounds are well endowed with good trees which screen the building. To the rear, the three storey weather-boarded part is impressive and individual but once again screened by trees.

Sheering Mill Lane

- 7.80 This lane is very narrow and again markedly rural. No. 123 is prominent due to its position on a right angled double bend and can be seen from across the playground which forms part of the churchyard. Although of 17th century or earlier origins it presents a tall symmetrical white rendered double fronted 18th century range to the north frontage in the lane and has two impressive double storey height canted bay windows. The black weather boarded outbuildings attached to the southeast, back directly onto the lane and enclose it. The house can also be partially seen from the lane further to the east upon entry into the conservation area and also above the high garden wall at the end of “Rushfields” to the south.
- 7.81 The distinctive double half-hipped gable ends of 136 Sheering Mill Lane are also prominent on the same bend, when seen from the lane to the west. From the lane to the south, the later 18th century range has an unusual 19th century projecting Gothic porch and gothic style window.

The Churchyard

- 7.82 This is the principal green space within the town, containing a wealth of fine trees and acting as a hub to the footpath network. It of course contains the Church but also other good buildings in the southwest corner, which compliment it rather in the nature of a cathedral close. These include nos. 1 and 7 Church Street, discussed above but also “The Old Vicarage”, the “Mann Memorial Almshouses,” and the rear of an old black weatherboarded barn at the rear of 17 Vantorts Road (all LB.GII). The almshouses were built in 1901 and are an elaborate group of three, with the two ends projecting forward as gable ends. Of knapped flint with stone dressings, in Tudor gothic style, they complement the church. The Old Vicarage is also prominent in views across the churchyard. Built in 1857, it has tall moulded chimney stacks, steep tiled roofs and diaper patterned brickwork.
- 7.83 The Church (LB.GI) is the finest and oldest building in the town and whilst its fabric dates as far back as the 13th century, it is known that a church existed here back to the conquest and beyond. Also, it has been added to and extended in intervening centuries and it is blessed with an unusual wealth of fine monuments which are testament to the wealth and prosperity of the town throughout this time. The Church is now largely of exposed flint with stone dressings but it is interesting to speculate whether it was once plastered in imitation of stonework and thus more similar in appearance to the majority of buildings within the town. The tower is fairly squat but the typical Hertfordshire Spike steeple can be seen from various viewpoints within and around the town.

Character Area 1: photos



123 Sheering Mill Lane



136 Sheering Mill Lane



The Old Vicarage, Sheering Mill Lane



1, 2 & 3 Vantorts Road (Mann Memorial Almshouses)

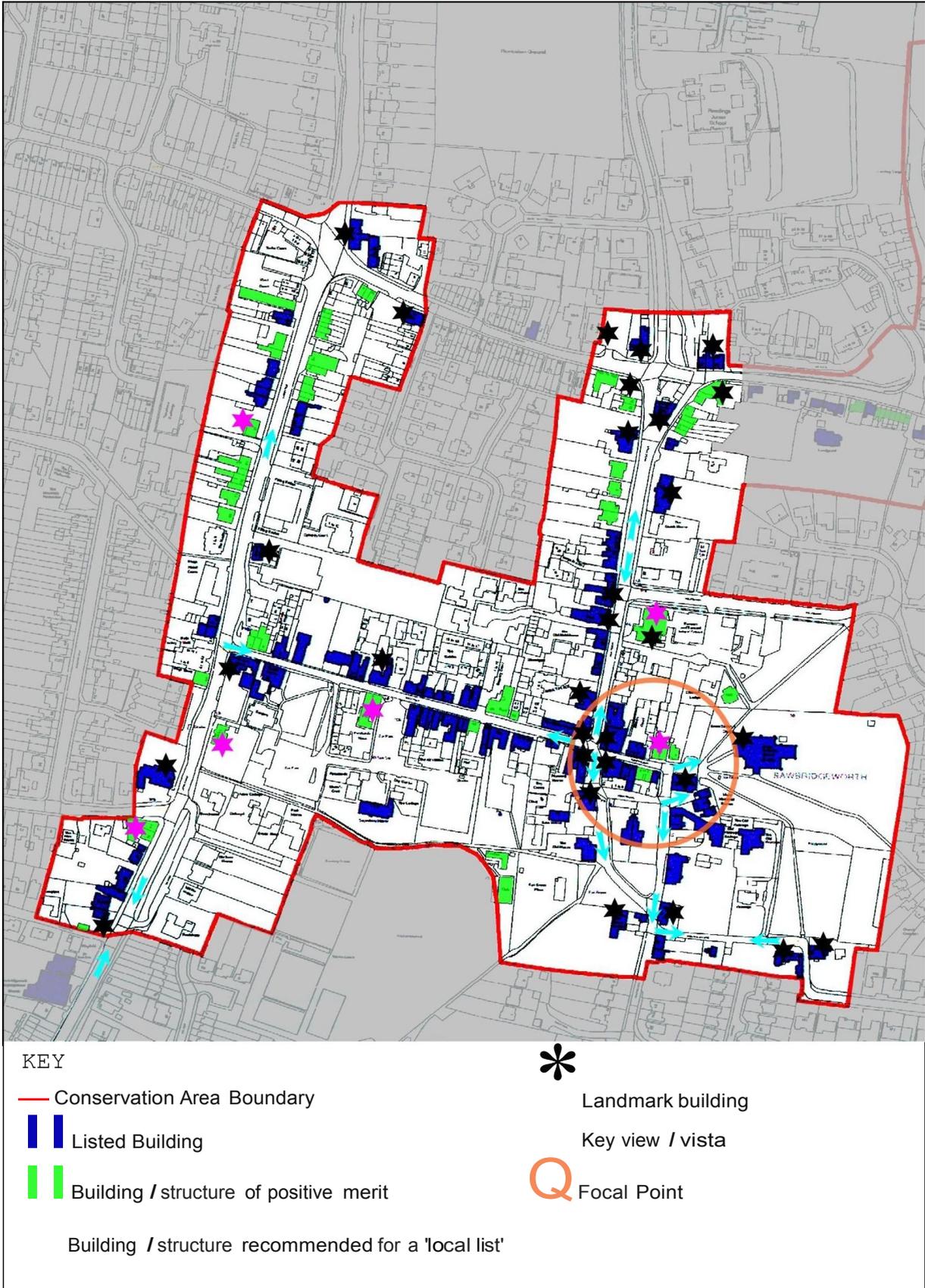


Figure 17. Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area. Character Area 1: The Medieval Core. Appraisal map

CHARACTER AREA 2: Station Road and River Valley

- 7.84 This area encompasses Station Road, Mill Lane, the River Stort and its banks, including the former maltings buildings both sides of the railway line and the station.

Former uses, prevailing activity and their effect on plan form and building types

- 7.85 Station Road, formerly Barker's Lane and Mill Hill was historically part of an east-west cross country route. Its river crossing and junction with London Road played an important role in the genesis and thriving of the town. Locally, it was important as the connection between the town and the mill and it is believed that the surviving mill site is that mentioned in the Domesday Book.
- 7.86 The river is known to have been navigable until the end of the 16th century and although it later became impassable, after its canalisation in 1769 it became the most important trade artery to London and beyond until the coming of the railway in 1845. The area immediately to the south of the river crossing then quickly became the centre of industry, (principally malting) and increasingly large maltings buildings were erected, initially on the hill, leading down station road towards the river, then on the east river bank, served by its own short spur and finally, just beyond the railway line immediately to the south of the station.
- 7.87 Despite its increasing importance, this part of Station Road, to the east of the junction with Knight Street, remains semi-rural in character as it gently curves down the hill, because it is narrow, landscape dominated on the north side of the road and because the buildings on the south side are relatively widely spaced, with trees in between in some cases and on rising ground beyond to the rear.
- 7.88 Further down towards the river, views across open water meadows to the north open out and to the southeast and there are glimpses of the massive old maltings buildings across the reed beds and river. These larger maltings developed in two separate areas. Initially, immediately beyond the river crossing and later in the 19th century, to the east side of the railway line. The western group is of five buildings in a linear configuration, following the curve of the canal spur. The setting is rough and ready but not inappropriate to their robust industrial form. Hard standings are a mixture of tarmac and cinders and the canal and spur are lined with gaily coloured narrow boats and paraphernalia which enliven the scene. The eastern group is very much higher, reflecting their later date and are in a "V" formation. They have been converted to residential use and whilst the conversions are more controlled, the setting to the south is poor, being dominated by a huge car park.
- 7.89 The railway line runs between the two maltings groups, The East & West Maltings, which originally had sidings serving them directly. The station buildings, the footbridge and the level crossing are of poor quality and are of negative contribution to the character of this part of the conservation area.

Character Area 2: photos



View south towards the West Maltings from the road bridge on Station Road



View northeast along Mill Lane to the former 18th century mill site



70 & 72 Station Road



The West Maltings from within the site, Station Road



The East Maltings; Waterside Place and Maltings (Priors Court)



Sawbridgeworth Railway Station, Station Road

Architecturally and historically significant buildings which contribute positively, and negative factors within the character area

7.90 This area contains older timber framed buildings of the 17th century and 18th century which are generally more vernacular than similar aged buildings in Character Area 1, with a greater number of examples of thatch, weatherboarding and earlier mullioned windows; together with later generally brick built maltings or buildings associated with this industry. The area around the mill contains further brick maltings in addition to the white weatherboarded structures often associated with this process.

Station Road

7.91 The junction of Station Road with Knight Street has already been discussed in respect of Character Area 1. The road becomes narrow and curves as it proceeds down the hill to the river from this point and the prospect, framed by nos. 27-31 and the bakery, is landscape dominated, buildings on the north side being screened by a good hedgerow and trees.

7.92 There is a picturesque group of four small cottages, 64-72 on the south side, stepping down the hill (all LB.GII). Two of them have completely weatherboarded frontages whilst the pair, 70&72, are part weatherboarded and Cob Cottage (no.64) has weatherboarding to its gable end. Only one, no.66 has sash windows and there are other vernacular features such as catslide roofed extensions. They are well spaced, with views to trees between and beyond, which add to the rural feel. The trees are in the large curtilage of "Landguard" (LB.GII) an 18th century building remodelled as a Regency "cottage ornee" probably by Thomas Rivers who lived here in the first half of the 19th century. The DOE list describes a wonderful building with extravagant decorative features (site not visited for this assessment). The trees on this site and those which adjoin in "The Forebury" and Knight Street make a strong contribution to the character of the conservation area.

7.93 No. 76 is interesting as a structure originally associated with the mill (LB.GII), 18th century, of white painted brickwork with a dentilled eaves course and sash windows, it still retains a wide three centred archway and an unusual bay window built, according to the list description, to afford views both to the river wharf and the mill. It forms a stop end to a long terrace of early 19th century cottages in yellow stock brick, slate roofs and with all their sash windows retained. A good simple group, reasonably original and probably built to house workers in the maltings. They make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. Most have a picket fence to the frontage, which seems appropriate to the semi-rural location.

7.94 The junction with Mill Lane is strongly announced by a 20th century residential block of red brick with buff brick details and slate roofs, designed to evoke a maltings complete with a weatherboarded "oast" feature. There were maltings buildings shown on the 19th century Ordnance Survey Maps which were near to this location and part of one of them, converted to residential use still remains to the east. The building is successful as a corner feature and appropriate to the site and although "pastiche", it contributes positively to the character of the conservation area. On the other side of the junction with Mill Lane/Leat Close, the large group of trees also make a strong positive contribution. On the opposite side of the road the end of the terrace, 78-90 and the little thatched cottage, no. 92 (LB.GII), close the vista from Leat Close. The cottage has a decorative plastered frontage, thatched porch and eyebrow dormers which, together with the picket fence and cottage garden, emphasise the semi-rural setting. Between the cottage and the terrace to the west there is a narrow driveway to "Landguard" and a footpath which leads up to the centre of the town. This is rising ground and the trees beyond seem to tower over the small cottages and, along with the tree in the frontage, they also make a strong contribution to the scene.

Character Area 2: photos



66 Station Road



68 Station Road



Mill Store, Mill Lane from Station Road



92 Station Road



Mill House, Mill Lane

Mill Lane

- 7.95 Beyond the corner building, Mill Lane winds steeply down to the small picturesque group of buildings which mark the former mill site. This is centred on The Grain Store, sited right by the river on the island created by the millstream. A classic white weatherboarded mill building with a projecting lucam and more unusually a bell tower, 18th century (LB.GII). To the west on the other side of the millrace is the "Mill House," also an 18th century white weatherboarded building (LB.GII) but, unusually for Sawbridgeworth, with a mansard roof. To the south of these historic buildings are two late 20th century buildings of weatherboarding on brick bases built in a pastiche of the originals. Although a polite response to the historic group, it could be argued that in this case they do rather diminish their setting.
- 7.96 Behind the corner building, and gable end on to Station Road, is a former maltings building, described in the DOE list as a mill store but on the 19th century Ordnance Survey Maps as a maltings. This is a long black weatherboarded building on a high brick base with a red tiled roof, which is prominent from the east. The main historic mill group is attractively set, particularly from the river towpath. Running along the south west side of the mill stream is a long terrace of cottages, converted from a former maltings. Not very well detailed and, much of the maltings character has been lost. However, because of its historical associations, it is considered as making a positive contribution.

Station Road

- 7.97 From the Station Road/Mill Lane junction, south of the thatched cottage is a group of three unlisted houses. Of these, no. 94 is a late Victorian or Edwardian house, of red brick with a steep pitched roof and three prominent gabled dormers, which contributes positively to the character, whereas the other two are neutral. The other side of the road is landscape dominated and the unlisted buildings are considered neutral in contribution, although nos. 35&37 are listed GII and contribute historically as former mill workers cottages.
- 7.98 On the south side, two listed houses follow the previous group. Of these, no. 96/98 (LB.GII), is most prominent because it is sited well forward. A vernacular cottage with a wide range of materials. The roof is part thatched/part tiled, the walls part rendered, part white and part black weatherboard and the windows predominantly sash on the ground floor with casements above. No. 100, "Orchard Cottage" (LB.GII), is less prominent, being well set back and overshadowed by the massive maltings building to the east. This is of more polite, classical appearance, of plain pink stucco with 18th century sash windows, under a steep pitched red tile roof. There are good trees around and behind this building which partially screen the west gable end of the adjoining maltings.
- 7.99 The former Orchard Works maltings is a massive mid-late 19th century building of 12 bays in yellow gault brickwork and under a slate roof, with a dramatically high lucam towards the west end. Now converted to residential use (River Court), it remains an important landmark at the entrance to the town and very prominent when seen from the river towpath to the north and beyond in the water meadows through a gap in the trees (LB.GII). Beyond is a small group of mid-20th century suburban detached and semi detached houses, set back from the road behind a good hedge.
- 7.100 Bridgefoot House, occupies the corner of Station Road and "The Forebury" with two fine late 17th century frontages to the north and the east which are testament to very high status and wealth of the farm in that period. Interestingly it retains its mullioned and transomed windows which were not modernised in the 18th century. On an important corner just beyond the river crossing on the eastern approach to the town.

Character Area 2: photos



96 Station Road



Orchard Cottage, 98 Station Road



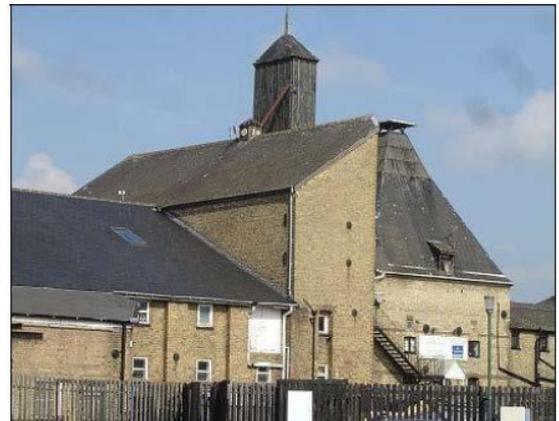
*Orchard Works, Station Road
(now 1 – 36 River Court)*



Mid-20th century suburban detached and semi detached houses, Station Road



Bridgefoot House, Station Road



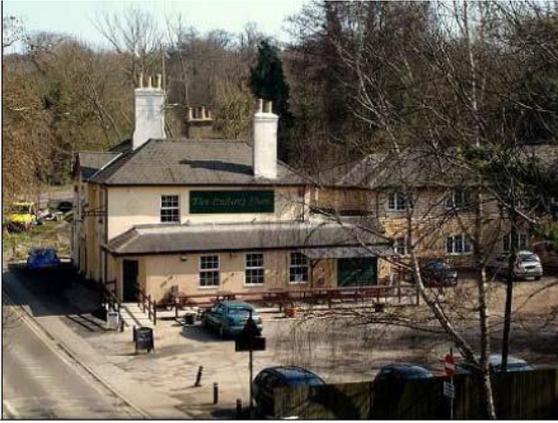
The West Maltings, Station Road

- 7.101 Looking across the river from Bridgefoot House one sees the massive former maltings complex (LB.GII); The West Maltings. This is a long linear group. The north block curves organically with the bend in the canal arm that serves it and is of yellow stock brick with slate roofs and has a gabled loft hoist cantilevered on brackets at the north end of the east elevation. A three storey block adjoins on the southeast elevation and this has an oast and a tower that creates an interesting roofscape.
- 7.102 The south block is rather taller and has a massive cross wing at the north end, a smaller one at the south end, two oasts and gabled projections. It has a more dramatic roofscape than the north block and is more architecturally resolved. The buildings have been converted for use by a myriad of small businesses in a fairly uncontrolled manner and there are many different window types, a plethora of rooflights and different signs in many different designs and colours, However, the buildings are alive and vibrant and strong enough to contain these. It is interesting to compare them with the rather more controlled but comparatively sterile residential conversions of the other group of maltings on the other side of the railway line.
- 7.103 To the east is the railway crossing, bridge and station, none of which have anything to commend them, the station buildings being of negative contribution. From the crossing, the eastern maltings group is seen looming high above a good group of trees by the railway line.
- 7.104 The Railway Hotel is an attractive Victorian public house with a symmetrical frontage of cream stucco with pargetting, sash windows and tall chimney stacks which makes a positive contribution at the eastern gateway to the settlement.

Station Road / Lower Sheering Road (former maltings group)

- 7.105 Over the railway lies The East Maltings group; it is approached by car along Sheering Lower Road and also by foot from Station Road. The southern block is the first approached (Waterside Place) from Lower Sheering Road. It looms high over the three small houses in front of its east elevation. Of these, no. 181/183 and no.187 were probably formerly associated with the maltings. The former is very simple, of machine made red brick and tiled roof, whereas no. 187 is more decorative, of neo-vernacular design, with tile hanging and three gable dormers, although it has lost its original windows. Both buildings make a positive contribution, whilst the two later infill buildings between are neutral.
- 7.106 Waterside Place is of mainly six storeys, rising in part to seven, the south block would have been the tallest building for miles around when built in the late 19th century and indeed remains so. Of red brick with blue brick bands at sill levels, segmental arched heads to the windows. The roof at the west end is octagonal, with a domed cupola. The north block, Priors Court, is of yellow stock brickwork under slate roofs with two gabled dormers, lower at four storeys and at the north end has a six-storey cross wing. Gainsborough House is three to four storeys in rendered brick and stands next to Waterside Place.
- 7.107 The buildings have been converted into residential use. This has resulted in two rows of triangular dormers on the roof of the south block and a very high lift shaft in consequence. The replacement windows are simple three light casements, although there are some applied metal balconies. The buildings are so strong, however, that they can accept these changes despite the poor setting, especially to the south; which comprises a wide expanse of tarmac for car parking. Thankfully this is well screened from the road and to the south and so long distance views are not affected There are good middle distance views of each group from the opposite sides of the railway line and long distance views from the river valley to the north, the Hatfield Heath Road and Hallingbury Road.

Character Area 2: photos



The Railway Hotel, Station Road



The East Maltings: Waterside Place, Station Road



The East Maltings: Waterside Place (left) and Priors Court (right), Station Road



The East Maltings including Gainsborough House at the southern end

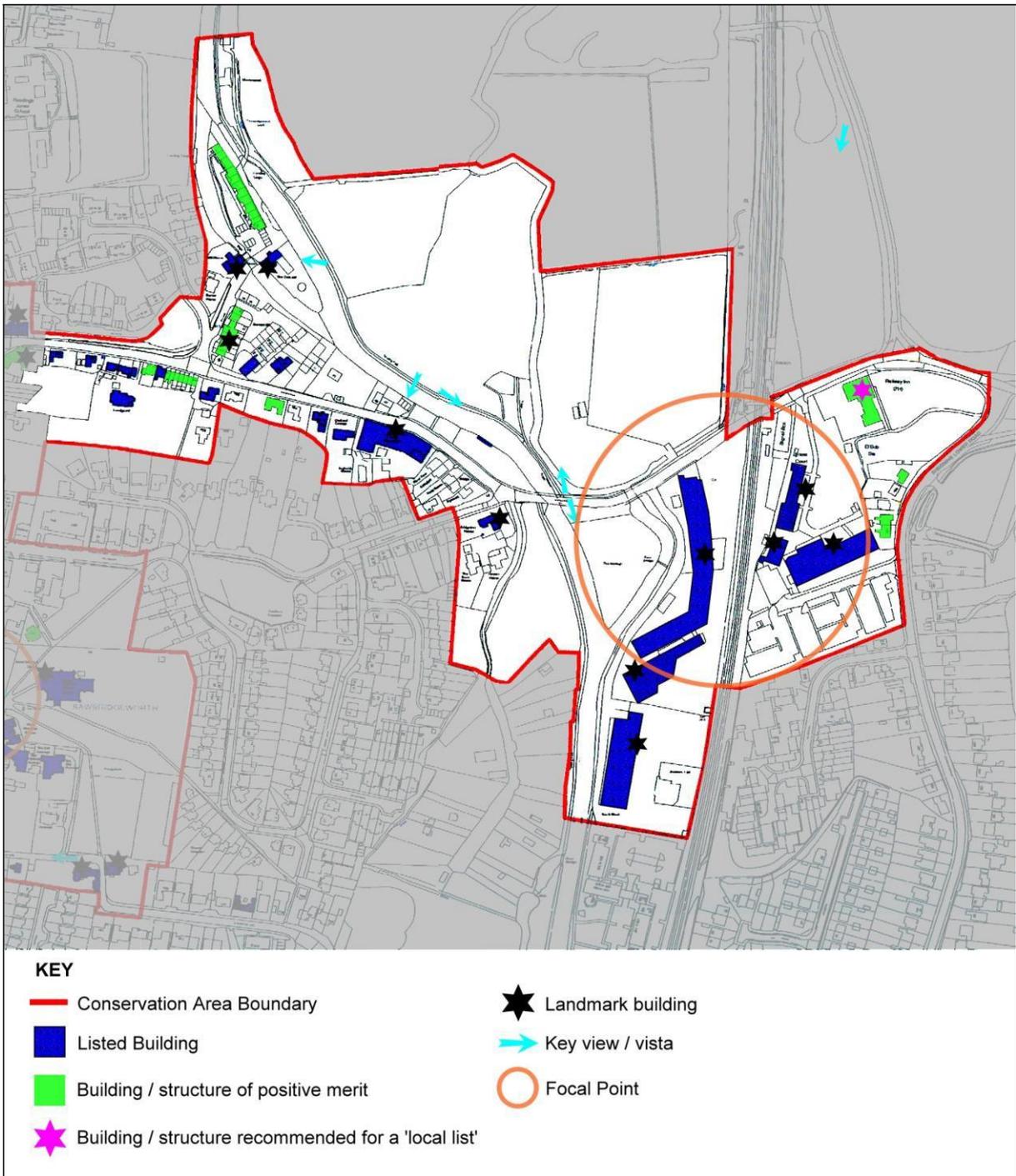


Figure 18. Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area. Character Area 2: Station Road and River Valley. Appraisal map

Buildings recommended for addition to the Local List

7.108 Buildings which contribute to the character have been picked up also in the section on architectural quality and should be retained. Some of these could form part of any future local list. They are marked on the Appraisal Maps above (Figures 17 & 18) and are as follows:

Character Area 1:

- 39-41 London Road
- "Eversley", London Road
- 87 London Road
- 8 Bell Street
- 5 Church Street (the old fire station)
- The Fawbert and Bernard Infant School, Knight Street



39 – 41 London Road



Eversley, London Road



8 London Road



8 Bell Street



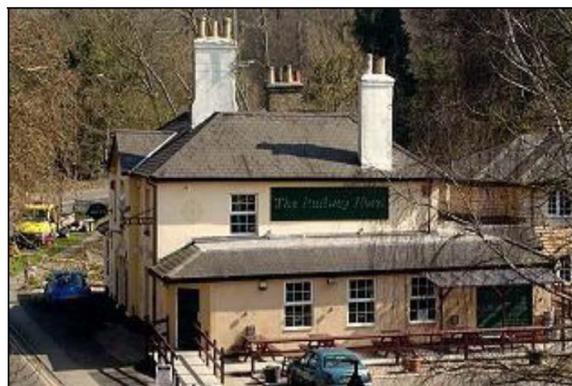
5 Church Street
(the old fire station)



The Infants School, Knight
Street

Character Area 2:

- The Railway Hotel, Station Road



General condition including neutral/negative areas

- 7.109 Neutral and negative areas have also been described in the section on architectural quality. Generally the condition of buildings is good across the town. The west group of maltings is variable in condition, because of the myriad of different users. There is concern that parts are not being used and it would be advisable to commission an inventory to establish the facts.
- 7.110 There are some empty shops in the town centre but again a proper survey and assessment of use patterns over a time period, say the last decade, would be essential before drawing any conclusions. This could be part of the public consultation process.

Extensions to the Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area

- 7.111 The “Newtown Area” on Station Road (1). An example of a Victorian suburb addition to a Hertfordshire Town. This is shown shaded pink on Figure 19.
- 7.112 The Cricket pitches and pavilions which demonstrate the development of recreational sports in the 19th century (2) and in this case moved right into the heart of the town in the early 20th century, which is unusual. As an open space it separates the medieval town from its later suburbs. This is shown shaded yellow on Figure 19.
- 7.113 Following Members consideration it now includes the Springhall Road suburb to the south (3) and this is shown dotted in Figure 19.

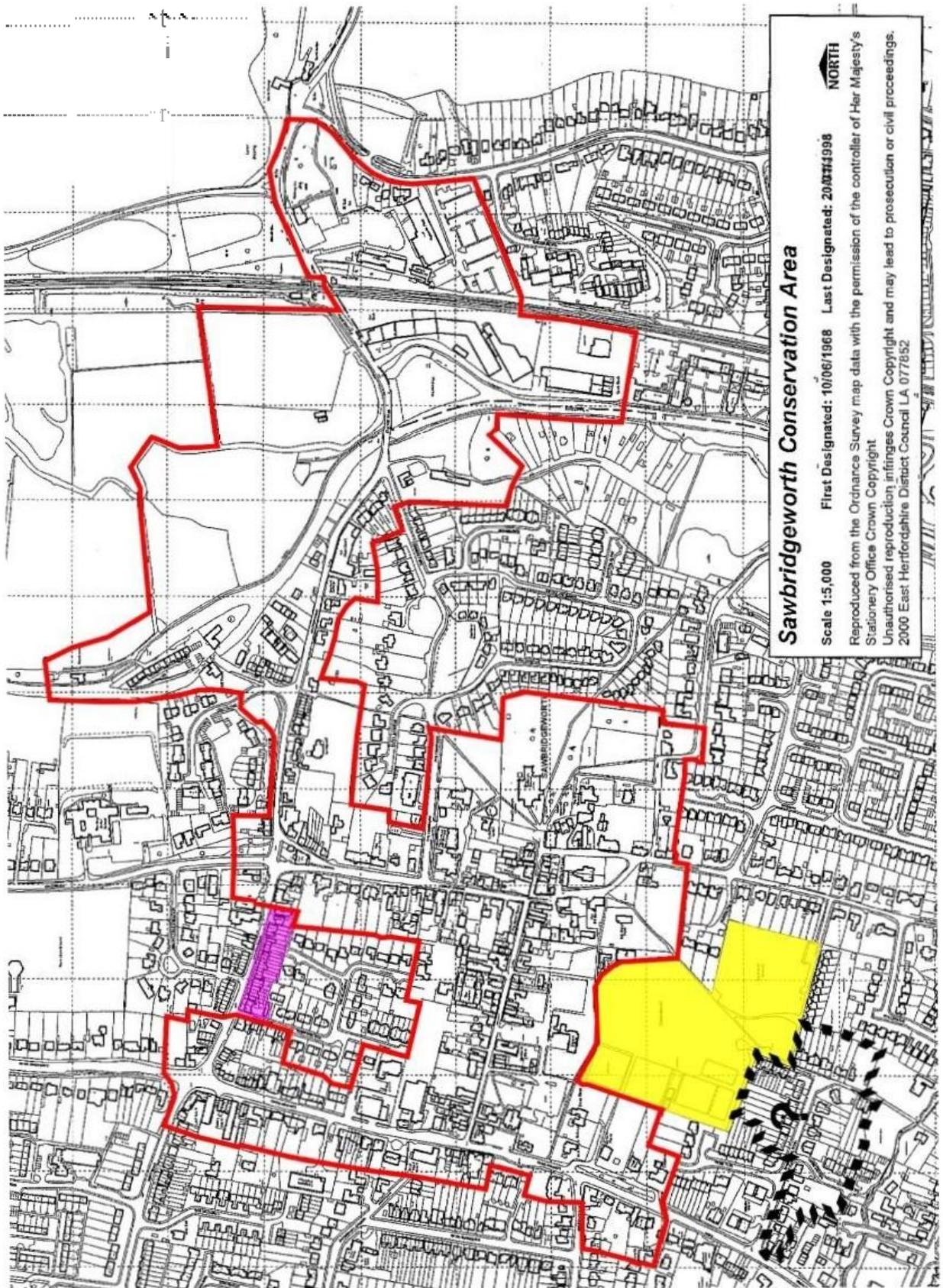


Figure 19. Proposed extensions to Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area: Station Road (1), cricket pitch (2), and Springhall Road (3)

8.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 8.1 There is a strong emphasis on community participation and engagement in the production of both the production of a conservation area appraisal and the associated management plan. A public exhibition was held in May 2014 in order for the local community to have a look at the documents and maps as well as having the opportunity to ask Officers any questions. This was followed by a six week consultation period with the comments received being considered for inclusion within the appraisal document.

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- Page, W (ed.). 1912. *A History of the County of Hertford: volume III.*

Maps

1766. Dury & Andrews Map of Hertfordshire. Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, Hertford.
1839. Tithe Map of Sawbridgeworth. Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, Hertford.
- 1874-94 Ordnance Survey Map of Sawbridgeworth. Supplied by East Herts Council.
- 1897-98 Ordnance Survey Map of Sawbridgeworth. Supplied by East Herts Council.
- 1920-24 Ordnance Survey Map of Sawbridgeworth. Supplied by East Herts Council.
- 1938-51 Ordnance Survey Map of Sawbridgeworth. Supplied by East Herts Council.
- 1962-92 Ordnance Survey Map of Sawbridgeworth. Supplied by East Herts Council.

Images

- Beams Collection (Sawbridgeworth): Beams Ltd, Hertford.
Buckler sketch of Bell Street in 1834; The Market House. Photographed in 1935; 1970 aerial photograph of Sawbridgeworth; 1948 aerial photograph showing the countryside around Sawbridgeworth

- HALS Photographic Collection (Sawbridgeworth) Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, Hertford:
Congregational Chapel, Station Road; Fair Green; Great St. Mary's Church; Postcard of Sawbridgeworth Mill c1907; Sawbridgeworth Railway Station, Station Road; Station Road c1890 looking west; The Maltings at Sheering Mill, Station Road.

Policy Documents

- East Herts Council Local Plan 2007 (Second Review)* English Heritage. 2005. *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals.* English Heritage. 2006. *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas. Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS 5)* and
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Historic Environment Records relevant to Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area

Appendix 2. Listed Buildings within Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area

Appendix 3. Relevant Local Plan Policies

APPENDIX 1 Historic Environment Records relevant to Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area

All HER records relating to Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area as provided by the Historic Environment Unit, Hertfordshire County Council (March 2011).

HER Number Site name

17	Sawbridgeworth Town
1104	Church of St Mary the Great, Sawbridgeworth
3628	Station Road Maltings, Lower Sheering (Essex HER)
5133	Road Bridge, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth
5391	Mill Maltings, Mill Lane, Sawbridgeworth
5807	Sawbridgeworth Mill, Mill Lane, Sawbridgeworth
6274	Malting, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth
6275	Malting, rear of 30-32 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth
6276	Orchard Maltings, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth
6277	Malting & Mill Store, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth
7163	Site of Malting, rear of 8 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth
7269	Sawbridgeworth Lock, River Stort Navigation
9409	Pump Behind The Old Bell PH, 38 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth
9410	Pump, West of 1 Fair Green, Sawbridgeworth
9411	Pump, West of 40 London Road, Sawbridgeworth
9413	Site of Wesleyan Chapel, London Road, Sawbridgeworth
9414	Parish Workhouse, 1 Vantorts Road, Sawbridgeworth
9415	Site of Almshouses, Sawbridgeworth Churchyard
9416	89 London Road, Sawbridgeworth
9417	Site of Maltings, West of 18 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth
9418	Site of Maltings, East of 29 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth
9419	Former Maltings, Rear of 35 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth
9420	The Market House, 42 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth
9422	Site of Maltings, 11-13 Station Road, Sawbridgeworth
9423	Site of Maltings, 7-9 Church Street, Sawbridgeworth
9533	Site of Market Place, The Square, Sawbridgeworth
9534	'Special Purpose' Building, 1-3 Church Street, Sawbridgeworth
9535	Crane Base, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth
9536	Manse, Fair Green, Sawbridgeworth
9537	Hall House, 21-23 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth
9538	2 Church Street, Sawbridgeworth
9653	Fair Green House, Vantorts Road, Sawbridgeworth
9654	46 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth 2 The Square, Sawbridgeworth
9656	3 & 4 The Square/50-52 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth
9658	Fair Green Lodge, Sawbridgeworth
9659	Assembly Room, adjacent to 28 London Road, Sawbridgeworth
9660	White Lion Hotel, 28 London Road, Sawbridgeworth
9661	The Old Bell, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth
9882	Ditch, possible site of Sayesbury Manor, The Forebury, Sawbridgeworth
11433	Bridgefoot House and Outbuildings, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth
11916	Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth
12254	4 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth
12258	Site of Parsonages, Sawbridgeworth

12259 The Old Vicarage, Sheering Mill Lane, Sawbridgeworth
12542 Fair Green, Sawbridgeworth
12815 Site of Post-Medieval Stables, 22-26 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth
13144 Medieval Post Hole, behind 21-23 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth
13145 Post-Medieval wall behind 19 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth
13660 King William IV PH, 7 Vantorts Road, Sawbridgeworth
15044 Former Maltings at Sawbridgeworth Road, Lower Sheering (Essex HER)
15231 Post-Medieval Field Boundary, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth
15232 Landguard, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth
15625 Barclay's Bank, 28 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth
17188 3 Station Road, Sawbridgeworth
17189 35-37 Station Road, Sawbridgeworth
17190 The Good Intent, 16 Station Road, Sawbridgeworth
17191 Walnut Tree Farm, 2 Cambridge Road, Sawbridgeworth

SEE REVISED APPENDIX 2

Listed Buildings within Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area

Listed Building Address Grade Parish Church of Great St Mary's, Church Street I 19 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth II* 40 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth II* The Market House, 42 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth II* The Red House, 11 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II* The Old Vicarage, Sheering Mill Lane, Sawbridgeworth II Former National School, 129 Sheering Mill Lane, Sawbridgeworth II Trevarthen, 136 Sheering Mill Lane, Sawbridgeworth II Green Man House, 123 Sheering Mill Lane, Sawbridgeworth II Charles Riches Shop, and Private House, 1 The Square, Sawbridgeworth II Barn 12yds SW of 2 The Square, Sawbridgeworth II 15 and 17 Station Road, Sawbridgeworth II CraneBaseandQuayWall,StortNavigation,20ydsNorthofStationRoad,West II

of Stort Bridge. Cob Cottage, 64 Station Road, Sawbridgeworth II 68 Station Road, Sawbridgeworth II Landguard on Hillside to South of Station Road, Drive adjacent to No. 90 Station II

Road, Sawbridgeworth 96 and 98 Station Road, Sawbridgeworth II Bridgefoot House, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth II Mann Memorial Almshouses, 1, 2, and 3 Vantorts Road, Sawbridgeworth II Barn at No. 17 Vantorts Road, Sawbridgeworth II Vantorts Cottage, 21 Vantorts Road, Sawbridgeworth II Barclay's Bank, 28 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth II 30 and 32 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth II 36 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth II 38 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth II White Lion Hotel, London Road, Sawbridgeworth II Assembly Rooms, 28 London Road, Sawbridgeworth II DisusedWaterPump, adjacenttoSWcornerof30LondonRoad, II

Sawbridgeworth Groves House, London Road, Sawbridgeworth II Sayesbury Cottage, 35 London Road, Sawbridgeworth II Hill Cottage, 37 London Road, Sawbridgeworth II Vine Cottage, 101 and 103 London Road, Sawbridgeworth II Grain Store, Sawbridgeworth Mill, Mill Lane, Sawbridgeworth II 40, 42, and 44 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II 46 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II 2 Cambridge Road, Sawbridgeworth II 2 Church Street, Sawbridgeworth II DisusedWaterPumpatrearof1FairGreen,Sawbridgeworth II Fair Green Lodge, Fair Green, Sawbridgeworth II Linden House, 4 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth II K6 Telephone Kiosk at Junction of Knight Street and The Forebury, II Sawbridgeworth 13 and 15 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II 27 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II The Elms Health Centre, 4 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II Sayesbury Manor Council Offices, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II 24 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II 36 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth, II 17 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II 31 and 33 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II Stable Block, 4 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II 28 and 30 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II The Old Bell Public House, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II 35 and 37 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth II 22 and 24 Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth II The Clock House, 43 London Road, Sawbridgeworth II Starlings, 89 London Road, Sawbridgeworth II 95 London Road, Sawbridgeworth II Mill House, Sawbridgeworth Mill, Sawbridgeworth II 2 The Square, Sawbridgeworth II 27, 29 and 31 Station Road, Sawbridgeworth II Good Intent Public House, 16 Station Road, Sawbridgeworth II 70 and 72 Station Road, Sawbridgeworth II 92 Station Road, Sawbridgeworth II OrchardWorks,StationRoad,Sawbridgeworth II Water Pump, Bridgefoot House, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth II King William IV Public House, 7 Vantorts Road, Sawbridgeworth II Corner House, 19 Vantorts Road, Fair Green, Sawbridgeworth II Spring Cottage, 23 Vantorts Road, Sawbridgeworth II 66 Station Road, Sawbridgeworth, II TheWhiteCottage,29LondonRoad,Sawbridgeworth II Carpenters, 33A London Road, Sawbridgeworth II 68 London Road, Sawbridgeworth II 3 Fair Green, Sawbridgeworth II 20 and 22 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II 25 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II The Pharmacy, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II Summer House, 9 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II The Chantry, 9 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II 21 and 23 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II 29 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II 18 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II 26 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II Water Pump, 38 Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth II 91 and 93 London Road, Sawbridgeworth II Mill Store, Mill Lane, Sawbridgeworth II

APPENDIX 3

Relevant Local Plan Policies

Chapter 7. Shopping & Town Centres

STC4 Shopping Frontages – Smaller Centres

(I) Within the existing main commercial frontages of Sawbridgeworth, Buntingford, and Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets, as defined on the Proposals Map, and listed in Appendix (III) to this Local Plan, a range of uses will be encouraged within Use Classes A1 (Shops), A2 (Financial and Professional Services), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes), A4 (Drinking Establishments), A5 (Hot Food Takeaway), D1 (Non-Residential Institutions) and D2 (Assembly and Leisure).

(II) Within these centres a sustainable level of shopping facilities will be maintained and proposals for development or change of use from Shop (A1) to Non-Shop (non-A1) uses will not be permitted, where this would result in an excessive concentration of Non-Shop uses.

Chapter 8. Environment and Design

ENV1 Design and Environmental Quality

(I) All development proposals, including extensions to existing buildings, will be expected to be of a high standard of design and layout and to reflect local distinctiveness. To those ends, development proposals will be expected to:

- (a) demonstrate compatibility with the structure and layout of the surrounding area, as well as effective connection with existing routes and spaces;
- (b) complement the existing pattern of street blocks, plots and buildings (the grain of development);
- (c) relate well to the massing (volume and shape) and height of adjacent buildings and to the surrounding townscape;
- (d) respect the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring buildings and those of future occupants and ensure that their environments are not harmed by noise and disturbance or by inadequate daylight, sunlight or privacy or by overshadowing;
- (e) incorporate sustainable initiatives in design, layout and construction methods including energy and water conservation and solar energy as an integral part of the design of the development;
- (f) consider the impact of any loss of open land on the character and appearance of the locality, and on the nature conservation interest or recreational needs of the area;
- (g) minimise loss or damage of any important landscape features;
- (h) provide landscape, recreation or amenity features, and where appropriate habitat creation, in accordance with the Hertfordshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

(II) Development proposals, other than those relating to an existing dwelling house, must be accompanied by a written statement of design and access principles. The statement should include illustrative material explaining the approach to design and an assessment of the impact of the proposal on the visual quality and character of the locality.

ENV3 Planning Out Crime – New Development

(I) New residential or commercial development proposals will be expected to incorporate crime prevention measures through their design, layout, and landscaping.

(II) Developments should be designed to reduce the opportunity for crime by encouraging the surveillance of streets, footpaths, and communal areas, and the creation of areas of defensible space. Such measures should not significantly compromise the provision of high quality landscape schemes nor be prejudicial to the existing character of the area and public amenity.

(III) Police or other specialist security advice on the acceptability of designs in crime prevention terms will, where appropriate, be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

ENV4 Access for Disabled People

New development, or proposals for changes of use, or relevant alterations to existing buildings, to which the public in general expects to have access, especially shops, sports, recreation and community facilities, will only be permitted if they are designed to meet the needs of people with impaired mobility, including having regard to accessible parking spaces (where appropriate), convenient movement along pathways, and an unhindered approach to buildings.

ENV5 Extensions to Dwellings

Within the six main settlements listed in Policy SD2 and Category 1 and 2 Villages identified in Policies OSV1 and OSV2, planning permission will be granted for extensions to existing dwellings, provided that the character, appearance, and amenities of the dwelling and any adjoining dwellings would not be significantly affected to their detriment. Outside the main settlements and Category 1 and 2 Villages, an extension to a dwelling or the erection of outbuildings will additionally be expected to be of a scale and size that would either by itself, or cumulatively with other extensions, not disproportionately alter the size of the original dwelling nor intrude into the openness or rural qualities of the surrounding area. All policy proposals will be considered against the criteria set out in Policy ENV6.

ENV6 Extensions to Dwellings – Criteria

Proposals for extensions to dwellings will be considered in accordance with Policy ENV5 and against the following criteria:

- (a) proposed extensions should be to a design and choice of materials of construction, either matching or complementary to those of the original building and its setting;
- (b) side extensions at first floor level or above should ensure appropriate space is left between the flank wall of the extension and the common curtilage with a neighbouring property (as a general rule a space of 1 metre will be the minimum acceptable), to safeguard the character and appearance of the street scene, existing trees and hedgerows, and prevent a visually damaging “terracing” effect;
- (c) two storey extensions to semi-detached and terraced properties will not be permitted where they would significantly detract from the amenities of any neighbouring property by shadowing, loss of privacy, or similar;
- (d) flat roofed extensions, except those on the ground floor, will be refused as visually undesirable other than in those exceptional circumstances where the character of the original dwelling allows a flat-roofed design to be appropriately incorporated;
- (e) roof dormers may be acceptable if appropriate to the design and character of the original dwelling and its surroundings. Dormers should generally be of limited extent and modest proportions, so as not to dominate the existing roof form.

ENV8 Residential Annexes

(I) Residential annexes will be permitted where:

- (a) the accommodation forms an extension to the main dwelling and is capable of being used as an integral part of the dwelling; and
- (b) sufficient space to park vehicles for both parts of the dwelling, in accordance with adopted standards, is available and appropriately located in design terms within the curtilage; and
- (c) for development within the six main towns and Category 1 and 2 Villages, the proposal complies with Policies ENV5 and ENV6; or
- (d) for development outside the settlements and villages listed in (c) above, the proposal complies with Policy ENV6.

(II) Where permission is required for conversion of an existing outbuilding to a residential annexe, permission may be granted where:

- (a) the outbuilding is of a design and structure in keeping with the existing dwelling and locality;
- (b) the size of the outbuilding is compatible with the requirements of the annexe;
- (c) the outbuilding is appropriately located in relation to the main
- (d) dwelling;
- (e) sufficient space to park vehicles for both parts of the dwelling in accordance with adopted standards, is available, and appropriately located in design terms, within the curtilage.

(III) Where planning permission is granted for a residential annexe, planning conditions may be imposed or a legal agreement sought to ensure that the occupation of the annexe remains tied to the main dwelling.

ENV9 Withdrawal of Domestic Permitted Development Rights

(I) The District Council may, as appropriate, impose conditions preventing the later conversion of domestic garages into additional habitable rooms, unless adequate compensatory parking provision is made within the site, that does not detract from the amenity of surrounding environment.

(II) The District Council may impose conditions on planning permissions in appropriate cases, withdrawing specific classes of ‘permitted development’, which would otherwise exist under a Development Order, thereby requiring an application for planning permission for any such proposed development.

ENV11 Protection of Existing Hedgerows and Trees

(I) In its consideration of all development proposals, including new road or road improvement or maintenance works, the District Council will endeavour to ensure maximum retention of existing hedgerows and trees and their reinforcement by new planting of native broad-leaved species.

(II) Where hedge and tree removal is unavoidable, replacement planting of broad-leaved species along an appropriate and natural line of the new, or realigned, highway will be expected.

ENV12 Special Area of Conservation/Special Protection Area/Ramsar Site

(I) Proposals for development or land use which may affect a designated or candidate Special Area of Conservation, a classified or potential Special Protection Area or a Ramsar Site will be subject to the most rigorous examination. Development or land use change not directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of the site for nature conservation, and which is likely to have significant effects on the site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects), and where it cannot be ascertained that the proposals would not adversely affect the integrity of the site, will not be permitted unless the District Council is satisfied that:

(a) there is no alternative solution; and

(b) there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the development or land use change.

(II) Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, development or land use change will not be permitted unless the District Council is satisfied that it is necessary for reasons of human health or public safety or for beneficial consequences of primary importance for nature conservation.

ENV13 Development and SSSI's

(I) Proposals for development in, or likely to affect, Sites of Special Scientific Interest will be subject to special scrutiny. Where such development may have an adverse effect, directly or indirectly, on the SSSI it will not be permitted unless the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the nature conservation value of the site itself and the national policy to safeguard the national network of such sites.

(II) Where the site concerned is a National Nature Reserve (NNR), or a site identified under the Nature Conservation Review (NCR) or Geological Conservation Review (GCR), particular regard will be paid to the individual site's national importance.

(III) Where development is permitted the District Council will impose conditions or use planning obligations (or as subsequently revised), to ensure the protection and enhancement of the site's nature conservation interest.

ENV16 Protected Species

(I) Development and other land use changes which may have an adverse effect on badgers and other species protected by Schedules 1, 5, and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, and the Nature Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 will only be permitted where harm to the species can be avoided.

(II) Where in exceptional cases permission is granted contrary to the above, the District Council will impose conditions and planning obligations (or as subsequently revised) which seek to:

(a) facilitate the survival of existing populations of species as well as encouraging the provision of new habitats;

(b) reduce disturbance to a minimum;

(c) provide adequate alternative habitats to sustain at least the current levels of populations.

ENV17 Wildlife Habitats The District Council will:

(a) support the work of the Hertfordshire Environmental Forum in achieving the actions and targets contained within the Hertfordshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan;

(b) work with landowners and other agencies to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wildlife, particularly those of a linear or continuous structure, and those which function as 'stepping stones' enabling individuals, species, and ecosystems to 'migrate, spread, and mix';

(c) seek to realise opportunities for habitat creation as part of appropriate development schemes in land reclamation schemes, public open spaces, and on other land held by the local authority;

(d) actively pursue the designation of Local Nature Reserves;

(e) seek, in the river valleys, to ensure that river and transport network improvements and other public utility maintenance schemes are appropriately designed and effected. Support will be given to schemes encouraging the restoration of traditional agricultural land use patterns;

(f) promote nature conservation in urban areas by encouraging appropriate management of recreational, amenity, and disused land, and where possible providing nature trails and other interpretative and environmental education facilities;

(g) seek improvements to nature conservation wherever possible as development is granted and if necessary enter into relevant legal agreements.

ENV18 Water Environment

(I) Development or change of use of land will be required to preserve and enhance the water environment in one or more of the following ways:

- (a) improvements in surface water quality and the ecological value of watercourses and their margins;
- (b) deculverting and naturalisation of the river channel;
- (c) promotion of nature conservation centred on water habitats;
- (d) river corridor landscape enhancements; and
- (e) sustainable improvements in public access and leisure use of water features.

(II) With regard to watercourses, development of the following types will only be acceptable if there is no harm caused to the water environment: culverting, diversion, artificial reinforcement of beds/banks using 'hard' materials, buildings and hard surfaces in close proximity (within 10 metres).

(III) Such developments in close proximity to watercourses will also normally be expected to retain or (re) establish open river corridors on one or both sides of river channels, with appropriate retention/planting of indigenous species.

ENV19 Development in Areas Liable to Flood

(I) Proposals for development, including raising of land, in the flood plains and washlands will not be permitted if they would:

- (a) materially impede the flow of flood water;
- (b) increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;
- (c) reduce the capacity of floodplains/washlands; or
- (d) increase the risk to people or property from flooding.

(II) Applicants will be required to submit a Flood Risk Assessment in conjunction with their planning application where the Council deems this necessary.

ENV20 Groundwater Protection

Development which may cause the contamination of, or otherwise prejudice, groundwater will not be permitted. Development proposals in areas of known groundwater importance will be required to submit a detailed assessment of the impact the development proposals will have on groundwater resource, including measures to mitigate any potential threat to the groundwater.

ENV21 Surface Water Drainage

(I) Where appropriate and relevant, all development proposals will be expected to take into consideration Best Management Practices to surface water drainage, as advocated by the Environment Agency. Where applicable, planning obligations (or as subsequently revised) may be sought to ensure the ongoing maintenance of such practices, including off-site provision.

(II) Proposals that do not take sufficient account of such techniques and/or are detrimental to the effectiveness of existing schemes based on such techniques, will be refused.

ENV23 Light Pollution and Floodlighting

(I) In order to minimise light pollution, planning applications for external lighting schemes, including floodlighting, will only be approved where it can be demonstrated that:

- (a) the scheme proposed is the minimum needed for security and/or operational purposes;
- (b) it minimises the potential pollution from glare or light spillage;
- (c) it minimises impact on residential amenity;
- (d) it minimises impact on the character or openness of the Green Belt or the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt or on dark rural landscapes;
- (e) it would not adversely affect ecological interest;
- (f) there would be no dazzling or distraction of motorists or cyclists using nearby roads, or other adjoining users or uses.

(II) In considering proposals for lighting schemes, the District Council will give consideration to the aesthetic affect of the light produced and any supporting structures, and any hours of use which may be enabled by the lighting scheme.

ENV24 Noise Generating Development

- (I) The District Council will expect noise generating development to be designed and operated in such a way that minimises the impact of noise nuisance on the environment.
- (II) In considering proposals, the following will be taken into account:
- (a) the proximity of existing or proposed noise sensitive developments;
 - (b) the proximity of nature conservation sites;
 - (c) the cumulative impact of noisy development;
 - (d) the time and nature of the noise;
 - (e) the nature of the surrounding area.

ENV25 Noise Sensitive Development

- Noise sensitive development (including homes schools and hospitals) should not be exposed to noise nuisance from existing noise generating sources, or programmed developments such as new roads. In considering proposals for noise sensitive developments the District Council will take into consideration:
- (a) the noise exposure categories set out in PPG24;
 - (b) the proximity of existing or programmed noise generation developments;
 - (c) the degree to which the layout and design of the proposals provides protection against noise.

ENV26 Hazardous Substances

- (I) Permission for development involving the storage, use, or transfer of hazardous substances, as defined in the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990, will only be granted if it would cause no extra risk to the public or to the natural environment, and would not prejudice the use or development of other land.
- (II) Development in the vicinity of a site known to be used for the storage, use, or transfer of hazardous substances will not be granted permission if there would be an unacceptable risk to the life or health of its users.
- (III) The Precautionary Principle will be applied as set out in paragraphs 2.5.1 to 2.5.3.

Chapter 9. Conservation Areas

BH5 Extensions and Alterations to Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas

Proposals to extend or alter an unlisted building in a Conservation Area which require planning permission will be permitted where they are sympathetic in terms of scale, height, proportion, form, materials and siting in relation to the building itself, adjacent buildings and the general character and appearance of the area.

BH6 New Developments in Conservation Areas

New developments in or adjacent to a Conservation Area will be permitted where: they are sympathetic in terms of scale, height, proportion, form, materials, and siting in relation to the general character and appearance of the area or are otherwise of such quality as to be highly likely to enhance the character and appearance of the area;

- (a) those open spaces, trees, and other landscape features materially contributing to the character or appearance of the area are not affected to the significant detriment of that area;
- (b) historically significant development features such as the street pattern, boundary walls, and street furniture are wherever possible retained; and
- (c) important views within, into, and out of the Conservation Area or its setting are respected.

BH7 Street Furniture and Traffic Calming in Conservation Areas

The District Council will endeavour to ensure that within the requirements of current highway legislation and without prejudice to the safety of the users of the highway:

- (a) street furniture is kept to an appropriate level, carefully sited and designed;
 - (b) traffic calming schemes are carefully designed with close regard to the surrounding environment.
- Signage and road markings should be kept to a minimum and materials of construction be of an appropriate type, quality, and colour.

BH8 Statutory Undertakers Works in Conservation Areas

In co-operation with statutory undertakers the District Council will make special efforts to ensure that careful attention is paid to the external design, siting, detailing, and (where appropriate) screening of service provision control structures and the placing or burying of cables.

BH14 Shopfronts in Conservation Areas

(I) Proposals for new shopfronts or alterations to existing ones will be permitted where the proposed design is sympathetic to the scale, proportions, character, and materials of the structure, adjoining buildings, and the street scene in general.

(II) Shopfronts of architectural or historic interest shall be retained and repaired as necessary.

(III) Proposals for new or replacement fascia will be permitted where: the design and depth would not be detrimental to the proportions or scale of the existing building or shopfront;

- (a) the design would not link two or more buildings with separate architectural identities; and
- (b) on a single building serving two or more shop units, would be of single depth or design.

BH15 Advertisements in Conservation Areas

In its consideration of applications within Conservation Areas for express consent made under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations, the District Council will only accept advertisements where they:

- (a) are either painted or individually lettered in a suitable material of an appropriate size and design in relation to the building or fascia upon which they are to be displayed;
- (b) shall preferably be non-illuminated. Where illumination is proposed as necessary it should be discreet in size and of a minimum level;
- (c) are a form that shall be of a traditional fascia or hanging type;
- (d) other than in the most exceptional circumstances, be of an appropriate size necessary to convey their message.

Additional policies:

BH 17 refers to enabling development with respect to listed buildings.

BH1, BH2 and BH3 are relevant to sites of archaeological interest.

Chapter 14. Sawbridgeworth

SA1-4 concern allocation of land for two housing developments both of which are outside the conservation area but could impact on its setting.

SA1 Housing Allocations -Sawbridgeworth

In accordance with Policy HSG2 (II) the following sites, as identified on the Proposals Map, are allocated for residential development:

- (I) In Phase 1: Remaining Deposit Version Housing Allocations (included in Table 3.2(h) in Chapter 3: Housing)

SA2 Cambridge Road/Crofters Site

Location	Ref No	Brownfield/ Greenfield	Site Specific Policy	Estimated Number of Dwellings		
				Open Market	Affordable	Total
Land at Cambridge Road/Crofters	223.1	Greenfield	SA2	78	52	130
Land East of Millfields and Lawrence Avenue	173 & 305	Greenfield	SA3	24	16	40
TOTAL				102	68	

(I) The Cambridge Road/Crofters site is identified on the Proposals Map for residential purposes, together with leisure, recreation and community facilities.

(II) The development of the site shall make provision for up to 40% affordable housing, in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4.

(III) Development of the site should not proceed until appropriate replacement sports pitch provision has been made in accordance with Policy SA4. Such provision shall be at least equivalent to that lost in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility.

SA3 Land East of Millfields and Lawrence Avenue

(I) Land east of Millfields and Lawrence Avenue, as defined on the Proposals Map is identified for residential purposes in accordance with Policy HSG2(II) and SA1. The layout of new development should include open space along the River Stort frontage to ensure that the river landscape and its biodiversity interests are protected.

(II) The development of the site shall make provision for up to 40% affordable housing, in accordance with Policies HSG3 and HSG4.

SA4 Sports Pitch Provision

A site of 14 hectares has been allocated to the north of Leventhorpe School as shown on the Proposals Map for sports pitch provision.

