



## ASTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

ADOPTED MARCH 2018



St. Mary's church a fine building dating from the 12th century. Amusing date error in repairs to Victorian stained glass detailing. Clearly Mr Oddie was not 136 years old when he died and one of the date references (probably 1992) is wrong.

**East Herts. District Council, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8EQ**

## CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Pages
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1.1- 1.12</b>	<b>1- 3</b>
<b>2. Legal and Policy framework.</b>	<b>2.1- 2.17</b>	<b>3- 7</b>
<b>3. Origins and historic development.</b>	<b>3.1- 3.13</b>	<b>7- 9</b>
<b>4. Environmental Designations and criteria used to identify other important environmental features.</b>	<b>4.1- 4.14</b>	<b>9- 12</b>
<b>5. Character Analysis.</b>	<b>5.1- 5.59</b>	<b>12- 37</b>
<b>6. Overall summary.</b>	<b>6.1-6.9</b>	<b>37-38</b>
<b>7. Management Proposals.</b>	<b>7.1-7.15</b>	<b>38-41</b>
<b>EHDC Contact details.</b>	<b>7. 3</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Schedule of Enhancement proposals</b>	<b>7.15</b>	<b>41</b>

**Plan 1 - Map from 1874-1894 with adopted conservation area superimposed.**

**Plan 2 – Adopted Management Plan.**

# **ASTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**ADOPTED MARCH 2018**

This document is the adopted Aston Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan which replaces the draft document that was subject to a public consultation exercise during September/October 2017. There was a public meeting on 7 September 2017 followed by a consultation period until 19 October 2017. Members considered the responses to this consultation at their Executive Committee and Council meetings on 6 February 2018 and 1 March 2018 respectively. The document was adopted on 1 March 2018. The document now appears with any necessary boundary revisions and textual changes required as a result of consultation feedback and adoption.

The content of Appraisals written from 2016 which include this paragraph may differ from predecessor documents. Selected revisions have been incorporated to reflect changes to legislation, the emerging District Plan, nomenclature, consolidation and other improvements resulting from experience gained to date. This process is ongoing.

It has not been possible to access some rear boundaries and in such cases interpretation of selected information provided has been taken as best from satellite information.

## **1. INTRODUCTION.**

**1.1.** The historic environment cannot be replaced and is a resource that is both fragile and finite. Particularly in an age when society and its needs change with rapidity, the various historic and architectural elements of conservation areas can be perceived to interact in a complex manner and create a ‘unique sense of place’ that is appreciated by those lucky enough to reside in such special places and the many interested persons who appreciate and visit them.

**1.2.** East Hertfordshire District has a particularly rich and vibrant built heritage, featuring 42 conservation areas and approximately 4,000 fine listed buildings displaying a variety of styles representative of the best of architectural and historic designs from many centuries. Generally and very importantly the clear distinction between built form and open countryside has been maintained.

**1.3.** The District is situated in an economically buoyant region where an attractive environment, employment opportunities and excellent transport links, road rail and air, make it a popular destination to live and work. In addition to London a short commuting distance away, the District is influenced by other factors beyond its administrative area,

such as Stansted Airport and the towns of Harlow, Stevenage, Royston and Cambridge. With such dynamics it is inevitable that the historic environment will be subject to pressures which emphasize the need to protect it.

**1.4. The East Hertfordshire Local Plan Second Review, adopted in April 2007, recognises these facts and commits the Council to review its conservation areas and their boundaries. The production of this document is part of this process.**

**1.5. Conservation areas are environments which are considered worthy of protection as a result of a combination of factors such as the quality of design and setting of the buildings or their historic significance. In addition to the individual qualities of the buildings themselves, there are other factors such as the relationships of the buildings with each other, the quality of the spaces between them and the vistas and views that unite or disrupt them. The relationship with adjoining areas and landscape, the quality of trees, boundary treatments, advertisements, road signage, street furniture and hard surfaces, are also important features which can add to or detract from the conservation area.**

**1.6. This Appraisal recognises the importance of these factors and considers them carefully. This document will be regarded as a ‘material consideration’ when determining planning applications. Where appropriate the documents put forward simple practical management proposals to improve the character of the conservation area and which are capable of being implemented as and when resources permit.**

**1.7. The recommendations concerning non-listed buildings and structures are normally formed by the field worker’s observations made from the public realm and seldom involve internal inspection or discussions with owners. Thus such recommendations contained in this Appraisal might be subject to reconsideration through the planning application process, where that is necessary, and which would involve the submission of additional information. Similar considerations apply to estimating dates of buildings and also to their legal status in relation to householder permitted development rights (i.e. either being considered as single dwellings or alternatively as flats). Similarly with respect to assessing whether or not a building is curtilage listed.**

**1.8. This Conservation Appraisal:**

- Identifies the special character of the conservation area;
- Identifies elements that should be retained or enhanced;
- Identifies detracting elements;
- Reviews the existing boundaries;

- Puts forward practical enhancement proposals;

**1.9. The document has been prepared in partnership with the local Parish Council and the local community through the consultation process.**

**1.10. The Parish Council have produced a Village Plan in 2005, a very polished and professionally produced document covering a wide range of subjects including environmental issues. In this respect the Village Plan attaches importance to the protection of open spaces, an issue with which this appraisal agrees and explores in greater detail. Additionally the Village Plan attaches importance to the protection of trees and suggests selected Tree Preservation Orders be made. In discussion concerning the conservation area the Village Plan proposes various extensions which are considered elsewhere in this Appraisal.**

**1.11. Acknowledgement and thanks are recorded to Hertfordshire County Council whose Natural Historic and Built Environment Team has been particularly helpful.**

**1.12. This document is written in three parts: Part A - Legal and Policy Framework; Part B - Appraisal; Part C - Management Proposals.**

## **PART A - LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **2. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK.**

**2.1. The legal background for designating a conservation area is set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This states that the Council shall from time to time designate Conservation Areas, which are defined as being ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance’. The same section of the Act also requires that Councils undertake periodic reviews.**

**2.2. Section 71 of the Act requires Councils to ‘formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement’ of conservation areas and hold a public meeting to consider them.**

**2.3. Within conservation areas there are additional planning controls and if these are to be supported it is important that the designated areas accord with the statutory definition and are not devalued by including land or buildings that lack special interest.**

**2.4. Planning permission is required for the demolition of a building in a conservation area but is subject to certain exceptions. For example, it does not apply to Listed Buildings which are protected by their own legislation but is relevant to other non listed buildings in the conservation area above a threshold size set out in legislation\*. Looking for and assessing such buildings is therefore a priority of this Appraisal.**

\* The demolition of a building not exceeding 50 cubic metres is not development and can be demolished without planning permission. Demolition of other buildings below 115 cubic metres are regarded as 'Permitted Development' granted by the General Permitted Development Order, subject to conditions that may require the Council's 'prior approval' regarding methods of proposed demolition and restoration.

**2.5. Certain ecclesiastical buildings (which are for the time being used for ecclesiastical purposes) are not subject to local authority administration provided an equivalent approved system of control is operated by the church authority. This is known as the 'ecclesiastical exemption'. Importantly in such circumstances, church authorities still need to obtain any other necessary planning permissions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.**

**2.6. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England), Order 2015 (amended) defines the range of minor developments for which planning permission is not required and this range is more restricted in conservation areas. For example, the Order currently requires that the addition of dormer windows to roof slopes, various types of cladding, satellite dishes fronting a highway and a reduced size of extensions, all require planning permission in a conservation area.**

**2.7. However, even within conservation areas there are other minor developments associated with many non-listed buildings that do not require planning permission. So as to provide further protection the law allows Councils to introduce additional controls if appropriate. Examples of such controls can commonly include some developments fronting a highway or open space, such as an external porch or the demolition of some gates, fences or walls or their alteration. The removal of existing important architectural features that are important to the character or appearance of a conservation area such as chimneys, traditional detailing or materials, distinctive porches, windows and doors or walls or railings can be subject to a more detailed assessment and if appropriate made subject to protection by a legal process known as an 'Article 4 Direction' which withdraws 'Permitted Development Rights'. The use of such Directions needs to be made in justified circumstances where a clear assessment of each conservation area has**

been made. In conducting this Appraisal, consideration has been given as to whether or not such additional controls are appropriate.

**2.8. Works to Trees.** Another additional planning control relates to trees located within conservation areas. Setting aside various exceptions principally relating to size, any proposal to fell or carry out works to trees has to be ‘notified’ to the Council. The Council may then decide whether to make the tree/s subject to a Tree Preservation Order. This Appraisal diagrammatically identifies only the most significant trees or groups of trees that make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area, particularly when viewed from the public realm. Other trees not specifically identified may still be suitable for statutory protection. Several trees in the conservation area are protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

**2.9. Some hedges may be protected by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.** This legislation is extremely complicated and only applies in certain situations that are determined by the location and extent of the hedge, its age and or its historical importance, the wildlife it supports and its number of woody species. The Regulations do not apply to domestic garden hedges.

**2.10. National Planning Policy Framework.** The principle emphasis of the framework is to promote sustainable development. Economic, social and environmental roles should not be considered in isolation because they are mutually dependent and positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment should be sought, including replacing poor design with better design. Whilst architectural styles should not be imposed it is considered proper to reinforce local distinctiveness.

**2.11. Of particular relevance to this document, 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 (sic) 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.

**2.12. East Hertfordshire’s environmental initiatives and Local Plan Policies.** East Hertfordshire is committed to protecting conservation areas and implementing policies which preserve and enhance them; to support their preservation through the publication of design and technical advice and to be pro-active by offering grants and administering an Historic Buildings Grant Service. With regard to the latter grants are awarded on a first come first served basis in relation to works which result in the maintenance of listed buildings and other unlisted buildings of architectural or historic interest. The maximum grant will not normally exceed £2,000.

**2.13.** In respect of the above the Council has produced a number of leaflets and guidance notes that are available on line and on request. These guidance notes on the preservation and repair of historic materials and buildings' provide useful information relevant to the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. They will be updated as resources permit.

**2.14.** The Council also has a ‘Heritage at Risk Register’ originally produced in 2006, updated in 2012/13 and again updated in 2016/17. This document is available on the Council's website. Grant assistance not exceeding £10,000 may be available for necessary works that lead to such buildings’ long term security. There are no such buildings in the conservation area or within Aston Parish.

**2.15. 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 Council's website or a copy can be obtained from the Council (contact details are set out in section 7).

**2.16.** 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.

**2.17.** Aston conservation area was designated in 1979.

### **3. ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

**3.1** There are 8 Historic Environmental records held by Hertfordshire County Council within the conservation area, mainly referencing listed buildings (see below) and about another 10 in close proximity.

**3.2** Prehistoric - beyond the conservation area to the north and elsewhere at a find spot unknown, Neolithic and/or Palaeolithic hand axe/s and flints have been found.

**3.3.** Roman settlement. Possible occupation may have occurred as evidenced by the finds of a Roman coin of Diocletian (beyond the conservation area to the north) and also a Roman Dodecahedron (12 sided object) that may have been some form of measuring gauge. Diocletian was Emperor 284-305.

**3.4.** Anglo Saxon - unknown.

**3.5.** The Domesday Book was a census commissioned by William I in 1086. In relation to Aston it notes that *The Bishop (of Bayeux) himself holds Aston. It is assessed at 10 hides, and there are 4 ploughs, and there can be a fifth. There is a priest and 11 villans with 5 bordars have 5 ploughs, and there can be another 5. There are 6 cottars and 4 slaves, meadow for 2 ploughs, pasture for the livestock (and) woodland for 200 pigs. In all it is worth £18, when received £14. TRE £20. 3 of Archbishop Stigand's men held this manor and could sell.*

**3.6.** Interpretation: A 'Hide' was a standard unit of land measurement interpreted to be about 120 acres. A 'villan' was a peasant legally tied to land he worked on and of higher economic status than a 'bordar'. A

cottar generally occupied a cottage with land in return for services/labour. TRE is an abbreviation meaning 'In King Edward's time'.

**3.7. Medieval settlement.** The manorial estate of 'Estone' appears in the Domesday Book but whether there was already a village at this time is unknown. The presence of a priest as set out in the Domesday Book indicates some status. In the medieval period (say 12th- 15th century) the only representative building that remains is the church whose origin is 12th century, added to in the 14th and 15th centuries.

**3.8. The 19th century.** A picture of the settlement as it can be recognised in part today is set out in Kelly's Directory of 1874 which refers as follows: Aston is a parish and village...The church of St Mary the Virgin has undergone considerable repairs...Aston Bury, formerly a Monastery, but now a farmhouse is in this parish. The soil is gravel and flint; subsoil various. The chief crops are wheat, barley and turnips...and the population in 1871 was 662.

**3.9. Commercial activities** in addition to farmers listed in Kelly's at this time were a blacksmith, shoemakers (2), beer retailers (3), wheelwright, miller and baker and shopkeepers (2). Two public Houses listed, namely the Rose and Crown and Boot.



Picture 1. The Beehive. Reproduced courtesy Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS).  
Not featured in the 1874 Kelly's but believed to have been a Beer Retailer and Grocer in the  
1880's.

**3.10. Mapping from 1874 -1894 (Plan 1)** identifies the community was heavily wooded in parts. It identifies the location of St Mary's Church, The Rectory and Aston Park. Allotments were in existence at this time being the present day location of housing called Garden Field. Beyond this was a school for Boys and Girls (now housing). The Rose and Crown and Boot PH's and a Post Office are also identified. A gravel pit is shown to the east of the church. A large house, Aston House existed in a site opposite the church.

**3.11. Mapping from the 1920's shows small additional areas of development and notes the presence of a Parish Room attached to the Victorian school building. Later developments have occurred from the mid 20th century onwards. The Boot PH had changed its name to the Pig and Whistle. Aston House still existed at this time but was demolished later in the 20th century and is now the site of modern housing at Yeoman's Drive. During World War II Aston House was occupied by the Special Operations Executive. The sole survivor of Aston House is the listed Coach House which is illustrated elsewhere in this document.**

**3.12. The publication, Place Names of Hertfordshire, Cambridge University Press 1970 advises several names, a selection of which is included thus: Eastune 11th century, Eston(e) 1086, Aston(e) 1296. Possible derivation of name East Farm, Tun.**

**3.13. Plan 1 shows the adopted conservation area boundary plotted on historic map dating from 1874-1894.**

#### **4. ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGNATIONS AND CRITERIA USED TO IDENTIFY OTHER IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES**

**4.1. Scheduled Ancient Monuments. A National designation.**

**4.2. Areas of Archaeological Significance. Designated locally by EHDC on advice from HCC. The areas identified by this Appraisal are areas as shown on the Council's most up to date mapping system and may sometimes differ from that shown on the adopted Local Plan. The identification and refinement of such areas is an ongoing process.**

**4.3. Listed buildings. A National designation. Individually listed buildings have been identified, plotted and a selection is briefly described, such abbreviated descriptions being based on the national list, occasionally with additional comments *in italics* by the fieldworker. Full descriptions can be obtained on line at Historic England's website [List.HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://List.HistoricEngland.org.uk) Listed buildings are protected from unauthorised demolition, alteration or extension. Structures, including railings and walls, within the curtilage of listed buildings, if they are pre-1948, are subject to the same controls as listed buildings.**

**4.4. The issue of deciding whether or not a building is 'curtilage listed' can sometimes be problematic and there is no exact legal definition of a building's curtilage. The main tests relate to the physical layout of the land surrounding the main building/s at the date of listing, the physical layout and functional relationship of structures to each other; ownership, past and present and use or function, past and present. Structures need to be ancillary or subordinate to the main Listed**

**Building and form part of the land and not be historically independent. Protection is granted to such objects or structures within the curtilage of a Listed Building if they were built prior to July 1, 1948. In determining the extent of a Listed Building and its curtilage, a key assessment will be to examine the situation at the time of listing.**

**4.5. Non listed buildings of quality and worthy of protection. Non-listed buildings and structures that make an important architectural or historic contribution are identified by this Appraisal. The basic questions asked in assessing such buildings/structures are:**

- (a) Is the non listed building/structure of sufficient architectural or historic interest whose general external form and appearance remains largely unaltered?
- (b) Does the building contain a sufficient level of external original features and materials?
- (c) Has the building retained its original scale without large inappropriate modern extensions that destroy the visual appearance particularly in respect of the front elevation?
- (d) Is the building visually important in the street scene?
- (e) Determining which properties to include or which to exclude is occasionally a matter of difficult judgement.

**4.6. Important trees and hedgerows are identified by this Appraisal. Their positions are shown very diagrammatically. Access to some rear areas has not been possible. The basic criteria for identifying important trees and hedgerows are:-**

- (a) They are in good condition.
- (b) They are visible at least in part from public view points.
- (c) They make a significant contribution to the street scene or other publicly accessible areas.

**4.7. Open spaces or gaps of quality that contribute to the visual importance of the conservation area where development would be inappropriate are identified by this Appraisal. The basic question asked in identifying such areas is does the open space or gap form an important landscape feature contributing to the general spatial quality and visual importance of the conservation area? Private open spaces forming an important setting for an historic asset and unkempt spaces**

that have the potential to be enhanced are candidates for selection subject to complying with the principle question.

**4.8. Other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution are identified by this Appraisal. In relation to walls and railings those at and above prescribed heights in a conservation area 1m abutting a highway (including a public footpath or bridleway, waterway or open space) or 2m elsewhere, are protected and require permission for their demolition.**

**4.9. Reference has previously been made to the potential of introducing Article 4 Directions in justified circumstances. The Appraisals undertaken to date have identified elsewhere in the District that many historic architectural features of quality remain unaltered on some non listed buildings but, on the other hand, the exercise of Permitted Development rights has eroded other parts of some conservation areas. Should Members decide to proceed with such an initiative in Aston, such important historic detailing including features as identified below could justifiably be retained and inappropriate alterations to them controlled. (Update: Members agreed the general principle of introducing and testing the impact of an Article 4 Direction in 2016 elsewhere in the District).**

- Chimneys, in good condition, contemporary with the age of the property, prominent in the street scene and generally complete with chimney pots.
- Selected windows, on front or side elevations, fronting and visible from the street/s, generally contemporary with the age of the property or of a sympathetic historic design and where the majority of windows of respective elevations retain their original characteristics and have not been replaced by disruptive modern glazing units.
- Other features might include good quality architectural materials and detailing constructed of wood, metal or other materials.
- Walls or railings which make a positive architectural or historic contribution to the visual appearance of the conservation area.
- It may also be appropriate to introduce Article 4 Directions to retain quality buildings below the prescribed Permitted Development threshold.

**4.10. Features that are out of character with the conservation area and detract or are in poor repair are identified.**

**4.11. Important views are identified.**

**4.12. Conservation area boundaries.** In relation to any revisions to the conservation area boundaries, principal consideration has been given as to whether or not the land or buildings in question form part of an area of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance should be conserved. The conservation area can include open land that has historical associations with the built form. This may particularly be the case if such open land is environmentally important and visually forms part of the conservation area's setting and is distinct from open farmland.

**4.13. Wildlife sites.** Those shown are identified on the emerging District Plan (which may differ from those on the Adopted Plan due to updates).

**4.14. Historic Park and Gardens.** These are identified as Registered Historic Parks and Gardens at a national level by Historic England. Others that are Locally Important have been identified by East Herts District Council.

## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

**5.1. General Landscape setting.** The Council's Landscape Character Assessment produced in 2007 (which is Supplementary Planning Guidance) identifies the distinct landscapes of the District in terms of their wider settings. The conservation area is located within Area 39 being part of the Middle Beane Valley. The character of Aston is not detailed but the area generally is noted as having remote characteristics despite its proximity to Stevenage.

**5.2. General overview.** Positive attributes. The church is a prominent focal point at Broadwater Lane. Open spaces and trees throughout make a most important environmental contribution to the conservation area which contains a number of listed buildings of quality and other non listed buildings worthy of retention including some in an extension to the conservation area.

**5.3. Negative attributes.** Parts of the conservation area contain mid 29th century housing of limited architectural or historic interest. Other areas adjoining the conservation area can be similarly described. Although a separate issue and one that is not the focus of this appraisal, one is aware of the detrimental effect of traffic on the narrow roads and lanes both within and approaching the community. Where appropriate the conservation area boundary has been redrawn in some locations to both include an additional area and exclude other areas.

**5.4. Individually Listed Buildings.** There are 16 listed buildings/groups within the existing conservation area. Of this total, seven date from the 17th century, three from the 18th century and two from the 16th century. The church dates from the 12th century. The 19th and 20th centuries are also represented, the latter period by a War Memorial and a memorial lych gate to the church.

**5.5.** The above buildings are grade 2 except the church and Nos. 43/45 Benington Road, both of which are grade II\*.

**5.6. Individually Listed Buildings.** A selection of Listed Buildings with abbreviated descriptions based on the National list is provided below. Any comments by the fieldworker are in *italics*.

**5.7. No 34 Benington Road. (Post Office) - Grade II. House.** Later 18th century. Timber frame on plastered brick sill, roughcast with slate roof and red brick central chimney. An asymmetrical house with shop door and window.

**5.8. Rose and Crown PH Benington Road - Grade II.** Formerly a public house, *local information advises it may reopen as such.* 16th century east end, 17th century the remainder, renovated by brewers circa 1950. Timber frame on low stucco plinth. A 2-storeys, 3-cell, central chimney plan house. Exposed timbers inside with heavy roughly dressed joists in east part with deeply chamfered beam and expanded ends to side timbers.

**5.9. No 20 (Beehive Cottage) - Benington Road - Grade II. House.** Later 17th century. Timber frame on black stucco plinth, plastered with scratched decoration, steep old red tile roof to main house, thatched roof to lower west extension. '1609' painted over 2-light casement window.



Picture 2. Beehive Cottage picturesque thatched roof dating from the 17th century.

**5.10. Nos. 43-45 Benington Road- Grade II\*. Mid to late 16 century.**  
Timber frame on painted brick sill, plastered with a steep old red tile roof. A 2-storeys and attics, 2-cell, central chimney, originally lobby entrance plan house facing west. First floor north chamber has a painted scheme of the early 17th century, agreeable with dated examples elsewhere in Hertfordshire of 1605, 4 painted walls with elaborate Jacobean strapwork panelling, with stiles, rails, arabesques and diamonds, colours of yellow, dark red, pale red and black outline. An upper frieze with partly decipherable sententious or pious texts, perhaps from a common source book with those at Pirton Grange, Hertfordshire. Included at Grade II\* as a perhaps complete decorative scheme in an otherwise modern house.

**5.11. War Memorial in St Mary's churchyard - Grade II.** Memorial cross. Circa 1919. Limestone. A tall standing cross on a square plinth and an hexagonal base of 3 high steps. Tapered cross shaft with moulded panelled faces and necking and 4-lobed capital with chamfered cross above. Wheel-head with expanded ends to arms. Moulded base has raised lettering. Names inscribed around 2 upper steps.



Picture 3. An unusually designed Memorial Cross.

**5.12. Lych Gate at St Mary's Church - Grade II. 1921 in memory of Rev G V Oddie (1850-1919). Oak timber frame on high plinth of knapped flint with stone dressings. Red tiled roof. A small gateway at roadside, gabled to front. Roof carried on central framed truss with 4- centred arched braces, spandrels carved with rose and portcullis. Cusped openings flank central tablet with raised lettering and embattled cresting. A pair of low gates with trefoil piercing.**



Picture 4. Lych gate commemorating Rev G V Oddie (1850-1919).

**5.13. Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin - Grade II\*. Nave and chancel circa 1230, West tower late 14th or early 15th century, low pitched timber roofs and new windows late 15th century, restoration and north aisle 1850. Flint rubble with rough plastered finish and corbelled brick crenellated parapet to tower with stone dressings and tiled buttress offsets. Knapped flint uncoursed facing to rest of church with stone dressings and flushwork chequer of stone and flint on porch. A picturesque irregular church with 2-bay low chancel, taller 3-bay nave with 3-bay arcade and north aisle, square 2-stage tower with large diagonal buttresses. Chancel has 2-bay arched- braced oak roof. Carved and panelled oak choirstalls circa 1886 from St Mary's Lambeth installed 1973. 19th century east window. Oak screen circa 1520 with side panels and central opening. Good figure brass in central aisle before chancel arch, 1592 to John Kent and wife.**



**Picture5. 16th century brass to John Kent and wife.**



Picture 6. Fine west tower to parish church dating from 14th/15th century. A key feature in the conservation area.

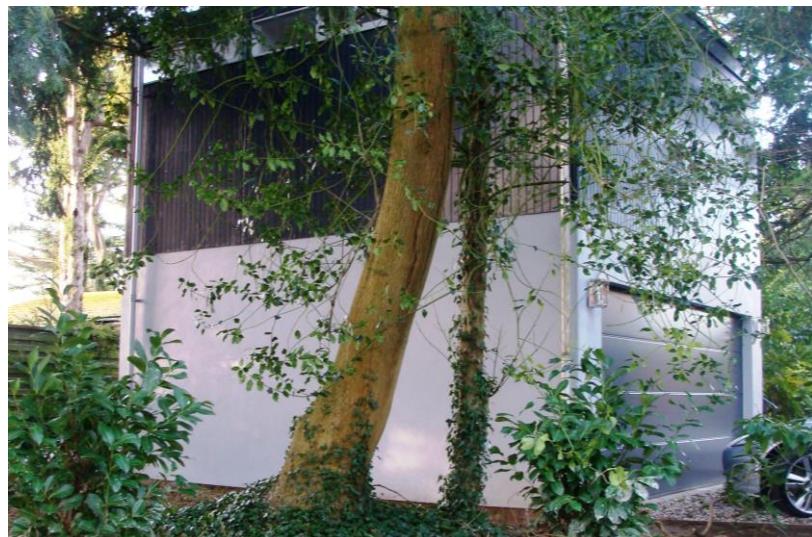
**5.14. The Coach House, Yeomans Drive Grade II. Late 17th or early 18th century. Flemish band brickwork with red stretchers, grey headers, red cutter brick band quoins, window arches. Large moulded brick cornice. Hipped tiled roof behind parapet. Central wooden clock turret astride roof ridge carrying octagonal arcaded cupola and wrought iron weather vane. This fine property is the sole survivor of Aston House, the latter complex believed to have been demolished in the 1960's. Are there any local sources of photographs of Aston House and knowledge of the reasons for its demolition?**

**5.15. Scheduled Ancient Monuments. There are none in the Conservation Area or indeed elsewhere in the parish.**

**5.16. Areas of Archaeological Significance. Much of the conservation area is so designated and is shown on accompanying mapping.**

**5.17. *Important buildings within the curtilages of Listed Building.*** The issue of deciding whether or not a building is 'curtilage listed' can sometimes be problematic and there is no exact legal definition of a building's curtilage (see previous).

**5.18.** Although not legally 'curtilage listed' as this building post-dates 1948, this represents an interesting contemporary solution for a garage to south of the Coach House. It is appreciated this inclusion may be controversial because of views expressed to the fieldworker regarding a recently approved contemporary solution elsewhere in the village. However there is a place for contemporary solutions even in an historic environment. With the passage of time they may well be considered as being representative of the time in which they were built much as we appreciate the various design solutions of the past.



Picture7. Interesting contemporary solution that may have both support and criticism.

**5.19. *Other non listed buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution.*** This Appraisal identifies other buildings of high quality that are not listed but that should be retained. These generally date from the late 19th/early/mid 20th century and are an important element in the environmental quality of the conservation area and make a very positive contribution to its built form and historical evolution. Any important architectural features they possess and worthy of retention are identified.

**5.20. Aston Dene.** Large house now in multi ownership; probably of 19th century date and altered and extended. Identified as The Rectory on mapping from 1874 although changed to Aston Dene on mapping from 1897-1898. Now two residential units. Main body of house of yellow brick

**construction with slate roofs and tall chimney stacks with pots. Good quality detailing including front door detailing, rubbed brick lintels and many good quality windows. In expansive grounds rising up to the church. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**



**Picture 8. Croquet at Aston Rectory during the 19th century. Image reproduced courtesy of Mr Michael Whyte-Venables RIBA.**



**Picture 9. Aston Dene a large 19th century property, in multi ownership, set in extensive grounds and formerly a Rectory.**

**5.21. The Lodge, formerly associated with Aston Dene. Dates from early 20th century. Single storey of red brick with steeply sloping tiled roof and prominent chimney. Simple bargeboard detailing. Modern windows but of common design which lessens impact. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**



**Picture10.** The Lodge a pleasantly detailed lodge building which dates from the early 20th century.

**5.22. Farm Cottage.** Of late 19th century date. Two storey of red brick construction with vertically hung decorative tiles; canopy to front. Tiled roof with central chimney. Window detailing later. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



**Picture 11.** Farm Cottage - a late 19th century house typical of its period and appropriately located in the conservation area.

**5.23. Aston Cottage corner of Aston End Road/ Benington Road.** Of 19th century date and shows as such on mapping from 1874. A tall prominent red brick building with tiled roof, some being decoratively scalloped. Chimneys, one prominent to Aston End elevation. Entrance porch to Aston End Road and bay windows to both floors at Benington Road elevation. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



**Picture 12.** Aston Cottage, dating from the 19th century is located corner of Aston End Road and Benington Road, prominent and distinctive in the street scene.

**5.24. Outbuilding to Aston Cottage accessed from Aston End Road.** Date contemporary with that of main house. Now garaging. Weather boarded with decorative tiled roof detailing. Whilst the design of the garage doors detract to a degree the buildings are worthy of retention. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

**5.25. Gregor House and Braids.** Large semi detached house of red brick construction with steeply pitched pyramidal roof with tall prominent chimneys. Circular recessed entrance detailing. Window detailing various. Identified as a Rectory on mapping from 1897. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

In extended conservation area.

**5.26. Garden Cottage.** Probably dates from first half of 20th century. Simple two storey rendered cottage with steeply sloping tiled roof and 2 no. chimneys. Altered but together with adjacent Farm Cottage it makes a worthwhile visual contribution to the street scene. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



**Picture 13.** Garden Cottage- a simple elevation which together with adjacent Farm Cottage, makes a worthwhile visual contribution to the street scene.

**5.27. Nos. 47-57 Aston End Road.** Dating from the mid 20th century these rendered properties with steeply sloping tiled hipped roofs and chimneys are prominent in the street scene. Despite some alterations and satellite dishes their general mass and co-ordination of colour and use of traditional materials adds to the quality of the street scene. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



**Picture 14.** The co-ordinated mass of Nos. 47- 57 Aston End Road, particularly their roofscape is visually pleasing and as time passes will make an increasing historic contribution to the village.

**5.28. Nos. 34 -36 Aston End Road.** Dating from the early 20th century this large building dominates the street scene in this location with its steeply sloping tiled roof and prominent central chimney with pots. Some decorative wooden detailing to first floor. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 15. Nos. 34-36 Aston End Road a prominent pair of early 20th century houses which add to the variety of the street scene.

**5.29. St Crispins and No. 1 School Lane (The White Cottage).** Of late 19th/early 20th century date; a small corner group of two of red brick construction with blue brick pattern. Slate roof with central chimney. St Crispins has central entrance with decorative porch; window to right distinctive and may have been shop window. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 16. St. Crispins corner of Aston End Road and School Lane. The window to the right is interpreted by the fieldworker as once having been that of a shop. Is there any local knowledge?

**5.30. Other distinctive features that make an important architectural or historic contribution.** Walls and railings so identified are protected to varying degrees virtue of exceeding specified height relevant to the conservation area legislation or by being within the curtilage of a Listed Building unless otherwise noted.

**5.31. Wall south side of Broadwater Lane, opposite and west of the church.** Prominent red brick walls with decorative capping detailing and entrance piers approx 2m in height. Adds to and defines village approach in this location. Historically part of Aston House.



**Picture 17.** Prominent brick wall that once was the boundary to Aston House. An important architectural and historic feature on this approach.

**5.32. Walls to north of Yeomans Drive enclosing properties Nos. 14 and 16 Yeomans Drive. Up to 3m in height and of red brick construction. Of good quality and makes a significant contribution from selected publicly accessed locations. Gates with original/early wooden detailing. Area shows on mapping from 1874 to be enclosed and formally planted with typical footpaths associated with a Victorian Kitchen Garden. Some removal of vegetation and repairs would be beneficial.**





**Pictures 18-19. Walls and original/early access. Most likely to have enclosed a Victorian Kitchen Garden from the mid/late 19th century.**

**5.33. Wall to frontage of churchyard. A low brick and flint wall with rounded brick capping detailing and pier supports.**



**Picture 20. Prominent brick wall to churchyard frontage.**

**5.34. Wide range of interesting gravestones in churchyard. Local information advises the earliest dates from the 16th century.**



Picture 21. There are many good quality gravestones of architectural, historical and some of ecological interest. These grey lichens in the field workers opinion are most interesting. The British Lichen Society offers advice on the subject.

**5.35. Important Open Spaces. The spaces identified below are most important and should be preserved.**

**5.36. Open land used as a cricket pitch and in active communal use is bounded by Stringers Lane, Aston Lane and Benington Road. This open space has retained its essential configuration and layout since the early 20th century. Prior to that it was larger and included land which is now built as Park Farm House. The open space is bounded by trees hedging and fencing and there is a small cricket pavilion at Aston Lane. Looking across to Stringers Lane the area is enclosed by unremarkable properties of a mid 20th century date which nevertheless frame and enclose the view. The site is a quintessentially English village open space which must be retained as such. It is also suggested simple improvements could be made including tidying the area around the cricket pavilion and providing additional hedging of native species to replace existing fencing in due course.**



**Picture 22. Cricket Pitch in centre of village a quintessentially English village open space that must be protected. It is framed on its south east by housing on Stringers Lane, which although unremarkable, nevertheless retains much of its original form and use of materials.**



**Picture 23. Boundary fencing of the Cricket Ground at Stringers Lane and elsewhere would benefit by being replaced by hedging of native species (of similar height to that of fencing so as to preserve views across).**

**5.37. Open land between the churchyard and Aston Dene. There is a strong visual and historical link between the church and Aston Dene. The latter gently sloping land can be viewed from the churchyard and there is an historic association in that Aston Dene was one the Rectory. On the east is an avenue of trees that may at one time to have provided**

**a walkway to the church. Maintaining the open nature of the site is important. Several ancient trees provide additional interest.**





**Pictures 24-26. The importance of the open space between Aston Dene and the church.**  
Maintaining its open nature is essential. Top picture shows a very fine Holm Oak tree to right of Aston Dene. Lower picture shows walkway leading to church from Aston Dene. Is there any local knowledge regarding this?

**5.38. The Churchyard.** The churchyard is a space of high environmental quality with a range of interesting tombstones (one advisedly dating from the 1600's) and native trees of species associated with churchyard planting.



**Picture 27. St. Mary's churchyard is most attractive with interesting tombstones trees and flora.**

**5.39 Strategic Countryside Gap in the Green Belt.** During the consultation of this appraisal the Parish Council expressed particular concern regarding an area of open land within EHDC administration to the west of Gregor House, The Braids and the tennis courts. This is part of the countryside which separates Aston from Stevenage. The land forms part of the Green Belt where development is very restricted unless exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise.

**5.40.** The openness of this wider landscape to the west of Aston plays an important role in preventing Stevenage and Aston coalescing and merging together. It is essential to maintain the separate integrity of Aston village and preventing the narrowing of this gap is important in achieving this objective.

**5.41. Particularly important trees and hedgerows.** Those trees that are most important are shown very diagrammatically on the accompanying mapping. Trees are important at many locations in the conservation area. This is particularly the case in relation to the open space between Aston Dene and the church and within properties off Yeomans Drive (formerly the site of Aston House). In both these locations there are selected magnificent specimens.



Picture 28. Fine mature Yew tree Yeomans Drive on site of the landscaped gardens of former Aston House. Mapping from 1874-1894 shows such mixed coniferous and deciduous planting in this location.

**5.42. Water features.** Whitney Pond in the extended conservation area is surrounded by trees with an island that is a nesting area, the fieldworker was informed.

**5.43. Important views.** A selection as shown on accompanying mapping.

**5.44. Wildlife sites.** There are none in the conservation area. However during consultation the presence of Great Crested Newts in ponds at a field known as 'Little Orchard' behind and to the west of Farm Cottage and Gardeners Cottage in Aston End Road was referred to. This has been reported to the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust for further investigation.

**5.45. Historic Parks and Gardens.** There are none in the conservation area although elsewhere in the parish at Aston Bury there is one such site identified on the Council's Historic parks & Gardens document as being locally important.

**5.46. Elements out of character with the Conservation Area.** Open and enclosed area to rear of cricket pitch. Items associated with maintenance of the cricket pitch could with advantage and little effort be improved.



Picture 29. Area adjacent to and rear of cricket pavilion would benefit from minor improvements. Outdoor storage of items little used or used on a season basis could perhaps be stored out of sight.

**5.47. Storage area to front of Pig and Whistle PH.** This consists of an accumulation of metal and wooden fencing which detracts.



Picture 30. Area to front of Pig and Whistle PH would benefit from general improvement.

**5.48. Area of single storey garaging north end of Stringers Lane. What is the future of this site? Currently used as lock up garaging/ storage area. In need of repainting.**



Picture 31. Garaging area north end of Stringers Lane would benefit from general improvements including co-ordinated paint of garage doors.

**5.49. Storage area to south side of Frank Cooper and Son, Landscapers, Stringers Lane. This storage area detracts. Additional native hedging and management of existing frontage hedge would assist.**



**Picture 32. Management and gapping up of frontage hedge to encourage more adequate screening would be beneficial.**

**5.50. Boundary fencing adjacent to footpath north east end of Stringers Lane. Broken fencing detracts. Replacement would result in significant improvement.**



**Picture 33. Broken fencing adjacent to footpath detracts. For information the metal guards prevent access by quad bikes.**

**5.51. Opportunities to secure improvements. Remove vegetation and initiate selected repairs in relation to wall enclosing Nos. 14-16 Yeomans Drive. Consider providing additional hedging of native species at selected locations around central open space and cricket ground (to similar height of fencing so as to preserve views over). Selected improvements in vicinity of and rear of cricket pavilion. Improve area to front of Pig and Whistle PH. Improve garage court area north end of Stringers Lane. Improve frontage hedge screening to Frank Cooper and Son site, Stringers Lane. Improve/replace broken wooden fencing adjacent to footpath north east end of Stringers Lane.**

**5.52. Boundary changes.** The conservation area boundary at Aston has been modified to make a number of alterations including an extension and several exclusions. The reader is referred to accompanying mapping.

**5.53. The conservation area boundary has been amended to:**

(a) Include properties at Aston End Road and north side of School Lane being Garden Cottage through to No. 57 and Nos. 32 - 36 Aston End Road. Also north side of School Lane No. 1 through to Pond House and extending east to include Whitney Pond. The latter is a small attractive water feature managed in part by the Parish Council. Within this area are several properties of various ages with sufficient architectural qualities and of historic interest, previously detailed elsewhere in this appraisal. Additionally on School Lane there are two listed properties dating from the 16th and 17th centuries respectively. Thus this area has a wide range of historic buildings and features worthy of retention. Whilst it is true there are some more recent 20th century properties with lesser qualities, the boundary could not have been sensibly drawn to exclude the latter whose impact in any event is generally limited by frontage tree and hedge cover.

(b) Exclude Nos. 3 - 5 Astonbury Farm Cottages. These properties in a peripheral location dating from the mid 20th century are a terrace of three dwellings considered to be of limited historic or architectural interest. Various alterations affecting their original simple and uncomplicated front elevation have been made including an extensive area of solar panels.



Picture 34. Nos. 3-5 Astonbury Farm Cottages. The original simple lines of these 20th century properties in a peripheral location have been visually compromised by extensions and a large area of solar panels.

**(c) Exclude treed area south of Gregor House and south of Broadwater Lane. The reason for this exclusion is because the land lies within Stevenage Borough Council.**

**(d) Exclude Nos. 6-8 Aston End Road. These properties are of insufficient historic or architectural quality to be included in the conservation area and being located on a peripheral location their exclusion is easily achieved.**



**Picture 35. Nos 6-8 Aston End Road. Mid 20th century dwellings with shallow roofs and flat garaging whose peripheral location and lack of architectural/ historic interest warrant their exclusion from the conservation area.**

**(e) Minor adjustment (exclusion) to revise boundary opposite The Lodge at Dene Lane to better reflect existing features on the ground.**

**5.54. General explanation of boundary amendments and retention of selected areas within the conservation area.**

**5.55. Retention of modern properties Yeomans Drive Area. More recent residential development from the last half of the 20th century is of limited quality although a few buildings display some aspects of architectural interest and modernity. The area is historically important being the site of former Aston House. In parts it is visually important, containing The Coach House, a listed building, some fine mature trees and walls that are interpreted as once having enclosed a kitchen garden of 19th century date. The latter trees and walls are afforded some protection virtue of being in the conservation area. On balance retention of conservation area status is considered appropriate.**

**5.56. Area at Aston End Lane and School Lane.** Parts have been included in the conservation area. The eastern extension to Millhouse is removed and distant from the main body of the conservation area.

**5.57. St Mary's Close.** Whilst this area dates from the late 20th century it is cohesive in terms of design and layout. In any event it could not be sensibly excluded particularly bearing in mind its physical relationship with the area at Aston End Road proposed for inclusion.

**5.58. Land proposed for inclusion in 2005 Parish Plan.** Land to south west of conservation area being Long Ridge housing area and open pasture land extending to Gresley Way. These areas are distant from the main body of the conservation area. The housing area is relatively modern. Within the pasture land there are some good quality trees which the District Council might consider making subject to Tree Preservation Orders should they become under threat.

**5.59** This appraisal considers the openness of the gap of countryside to the west of Aston to be an essential element to retain as open countryside so as to preserve the separate integrity of Aston (see 5.39 and 5.40 above). However the inclusion of this land within the conservation area as requested by the PC is not considered appropriate as it forms part of the wider landscape. (This latter consideration follows advice from Historic England at para 12 of their Advice Note 1, Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management 2016).

## **6. OVERALL SUMMARY.**

**6.1. Aston Conservation area as amended essentially consists of a principal grouping of listed buildings around Benington Road and New Park Lane in the east, the church and nearby open spaces in the west, another grouping around Aston End Road and School Lane in the north and a large open cricket ground in the centre of the village, quintessentially English in character. The retention of these open spaces and their open nature is considered to be most important. The retention of Aston's separate integrity and preventing its merging with Stevenage, particularly by development narrowing the countryside gap between the two communities, is essential.**

**6.2. Within the conservation area there are groupings of mid/late 20th century developments whose locations dictate they cannot be sensibly excluded.**

**6.3. Throughout the conservation area mature trees are visually most important and in some locations compensate for built form that could have been more sensitively designed.**

**6.4.** A number of non listed buildings of quality that should be retained have been identified but others it is noted have been damaged by the exercise of Permitted Development Rights by, for example, the insertion of inappropriate modern windows and by the erection of porches.

**6.5.** Many of the above non listed buildings to be retained have early and original architectural detailing and features worthy of protection and preservation and additional controls can be introduced to protect such features.

**6.6.** Such controls are known as Article 4 Directions which could be applied selectively and sparingly and could, *inter alia*, protect windows, chimneys and other selected architectural detailing and materials following notification of owners and further consideration. The Council has recently agreed to implement an Article 4 Direction elsewhere in the District on a test basis.

**6.7.** There are also other features of importance that should be retained, including walls that add to the quality and diversity of the conservation area.

**6.8.** In relation to the requirement to enhance some improvements have been identified which are set out in summary tabular form in the Management section below. The suggested improvements will principally be implemented by the goodwill and with the co-operation of individual owners. However the Council may be able to offer advice and guidance and, subject to staff resources, will be prepared to do so, as and when appropriate.

**6.9.** The positive elements outweigh the negative and subject to the boundary amendments, it is considered Aston is worthy of its status as a conservation area.

## **PART C - MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS.**

### **7. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS.**

**7.1. *Revised Conservation Area Boundary.*** The adopted boundary is shown on the accompanying Management Plan to which the reader is referred and includes the following amendment/s.

(a) Include properties at Aston End Road and north side of School Lane being Garden Cottage through to No. 57 and Nos. 32 - 36 Aston End Road. Also north side of School Lane No. 1 through to Pond House and extending east to include Whitney Pond.

- (b) Exclude Nos. 3 - 5 Astonbury Farm Cottages.
- (c) Exclude treed area south of Gregor House and south of Broadwater Lane (land lies within Stevenage Borough Council administrative area).
- (d) Exclude Nos. 6-8 Aston End Road.
- (e) Minor adjustment (exclusion) opposite The Lodge at Dene Lane to better reflect existing features on the ground.

**7.2. General Planning Control and Good Practice within the Conservation Area.** All 'saved' planning policies are contained in the East Herts Local Plan Second Review adopted in April 2007. It is currently against this document and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPP) that the District Council will process applications. The NPP is supplemented by Planning Practice Guidance. One such guidance note of particular relevance is 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'. In due course the 2007 Local Plan will be replaced by the District Plan whose policies will then be relevant.

**7.3. Applicants considering submitting any application should carefully consider the relevant policies and if necessary contact Officers to seek pre-application advice.**

Telephone 01279 655261 (For development proposals ask for Development Management. For general conservation advice ask for a Conservation Officer).

E-mail: [planning@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:planning@eastherts.gov.uk)

Website: [www.eastherts.gov.uk](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk)

Or write to Development Management, East Herts. District Council, Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8EQ

**7.4. Applicants may also wish to refer to one of the several Guidance Notes previously referred to which will be updated as resources permit.**

**7.5. Planning Control - Potential need to undertake an Archaeological Evaluation.** Within Areas of Archaeological Significance (as shown on either the adopted Local Plan or emerging District Plan), the contents of policies BH1, BH2 and BH3 are particularly relevant.

**7.6. Listed Building Control and Good Practice.** Those buildings that are individually listed are identified. Other pre-1948 buildings, structures or walls within the curtilage of a Listed Building are similarly protected in law.

**7.7. Listed Buildings** are a significant asset in contributing to the quality of the Conservation Area. It is essential that their architectural detailing is not eroded nor their other qualities and settings compromised.

**7.8. Planning Control – Other Unlisted Buildings that make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution.** This Appraisal has identified a number of unlisted buildings/ groups of buildings that are considered to have sufficient qualities to be described thus. Any proposal involving the demolition of these buildings is unlikely to be approved. Other buildings are similarly identified in the extended conservation area.

**7.9.** These buildings are: Aston Dene (multi ownership), The Lodge, Farm Cottage, Aston Cottage, outbuilding Aston Cottage, Gregor House and Braids.

Within extended conservation area.

**Garden Cottage, Nos. 47-57 Aston End Road, Nos. 34-36 Aston End Road, St. Crispins/ No. 1 School Lane.**

**7.10.** There are other distinctive features that are integral to some of the important unlisted buildings identified above that make an important architectural or historic contribution, including selected chimneys, windows and other architectural detailing where protection could be provided by removing Permitted Development Rights via an Article 4 Direction. The associated legislation is complex. Should the Council consider such a course of action appropriate there would be a process of notification separately at a later date. This would be associated with further detailed consideration and possible refinement.

**7.11. Planning Control – Other distinctive features that make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution.** This Appraisal has identified some walls and other features that make a particular contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. These will be protected from demolition within the parameters of legislation.

**7.12. Planning Control – Important open land, open spaces and gaps.** This Appraisal has identified the following particularly important open spaces: Cricket field, open land between churchyard and Aston Dene and the churchyard. These spaces will be protected. The open countryside within the Green Belt including the open gap between Aston and Stevenage will be protected.

**7.13. Planning Control – Particularly important trees and hedgerows.** Only the most significant trees are shown very diagrammatically. It has not been possible to plot trees on inaccessible land. Subject to certain exceptions all trees in a conservation area are afforded protection and a

person wanting to carry out works has to notify the Council. Trees that have not been identified may still be considered suitable for protection by Tree Preservation Orders. Owners are advised to make regular inspections to check the health of trees in the interests of amenity and Health and Safety.

**7.14. Planning Control - Important views.** A selection of general views is diagrammatically shown. Policy BH6 is particularly relevant.

**7.15. Enhancement Proposals.** The Appraisal has identified several elements that detract which are summarised in the Table below together with a proposed course of action; other actions are also identified. Within the staff and financial resources available, Council Officers will be pro-active and provide assistance. It must be recognized that such improvements will generally be achieved only by the owner's co-operation.

Detracting element	Location	Proposed Action.
Storage areas enclosed and open.	Around and to rear of cricket pavilion.	Consider opportunities for improvement.
Open storage area.	To front of Pig and Whistle PH.	Discuss potential for improvement with owner.
Garage court area.	North end of Stringers Lane.	Discuss potential for improvement, including implementation of a co-ordinated colour paint of garage doors, with owner.
Industrial storage area.	Frank Cooper and Son site, Stringers Lane.	Seek owner's cooperation in securing improvements of existing frontage hedge.
Fencing to footpath	North east side Stringers Lane.	Seek to replace broken and damaged panels.
<b>Other actions.</b>		
Liaise with owners seeking co-operation in undertaking any repairs and removal of selected vegetation.		
Consider additional boundary hedging of native species in selected locations on boundary to Cricket Ground (suggested retain similar height to that of fencing to preserve views over).		

