



# **A Review of Stevenage Conservation Areas**



**November 2005**

## Introduction

This review of Stevenage Conservation Areas was commissioned by Stevenage Borough Council in April 2005.

The study was undertaken by BEAMS Ltd, the trading company of the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust between April and July 2005.



Front cover photos from left to right:  
Old Town Conservation Area, Shephall Green Conservation Area, Symonds Green Conservation Area and New Town Square Conservation Area

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## **1.0 The Commission**

1.1 This review of Stevenage Conservation Areas was commissioned by Stevenage Borough Council in April 2005. Its aims were,

- to review all five existing conservation areas in the borough
- to assess any need for alterations to current boundaries
- to assess previously unconsidered areas that could benefit from a new conservation area designation, including areas part of Stevenage's development as a New Town - such as the residential neighbourhoods or industrial areas
- to provide recommendations on how the conservation areas can best be managed
- to assess the effectiveness of Local Plan Policy within conservation areas (as set out in the Stevenage District Plan Second Review)

## **2.0 Context**

- 2.1 The review ‘...will act as the council’s research basis for developing sound policies in its emerging Local Development Framework and as the key resource for the determination of future development decisions in conservation areas...’.
- 2.2 The earliest of the five conservation areas was designated in 1969 and the most recent in 1988. No significant monitoring or review work had been undertaken since each site was designated.
- 2.3 The Council has recently adopted a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to guide development within the town centre ring road and along Lytton Way. This is to set the agenda for comprehensive town centre redevelopment.
- 2.4 As part of the BEAMS review and based upon the requirements made by Stevenage Borough Council, public consultation was conducted through press releases, access to the Council’s website and targeted invitation to local interest groups (Appendices 1, 2 & 3).

### **District Plan Review / Local Development Framework**

- 2.5 Stevenage District Plan Second Review (1991 - 2011) ‘...sets out the policies and proposals for controlling and allocating development and for protecting and enhancing the environment...’. The Second Review Plan was a complete review of the Stevenage District Plan 1990 Review (adopted 1994). Although adopted in 2004, it had been in use earlier as a material consideration in planning decisions.  
([www.stevenage.gov.uk/council/dev-planning/developing/dist-plan/index.htm](http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/council/dev-planning/developing/dist-plan/index.htm))
- 2.6 The legislative context changed with the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. This requires the production of a Local Development Framework (replacing District/Local Plans) and the Second Review 1991-2011 is a “saved plan” for a period of three years under this legislation.

### **Expansion “West of Stevenage”**

- 2.7 A strategic allocation of housing land west of the A1(M) outside the administrative boundary of the planned new town.
- 2.8 Hertfordshire County Council’s Structure Plan (1991 – 2011) set out the county wide planning policies that the local authorities must conform to. It states that 65,000 extra dwellings which was to be provided by 2011 and includes construction of 3,600 dwellings west of the A1(M) at Stevenage within the boundary of the Borough ([www.stevenage.co.uk/regen/stev\\_west.htm](http://www.stevenage.co.uk/regen/stev_west.htm)).

### **Methodology**

- 2.9 This review of Stevenage conservation areas utilized the guidance set by English Heritage Conservation Area Practice (English Heritage 1997) and also Conservation Area Appraisals (English Heritage 1995), which describes how to define character within a conservation area.



- 2.10 In order to assess the importance of historic areas in the borough, a review of the development of Stevenage was conducted. This incorporated map evidence, local history books, journal and newspaper articles, archaeological data and old photographs. A general historical review of the borough and more intensive assessments of each conservation area are both included in the report as supporting evidence.
- 2.11 The character assessment of each conservation area comprised a site visit and filling in a pro forma of checklist items derived from Conservation Area Appraisals (English Heritage 1997) and where appropriate a photographic record made. Predominant building styles, quality, materials, date/period, street furniture, trees, surfaces, landmarks/vistas and important spaces were recorded. The assessment also reviewed negative factors which may detract from the character of the conservation area. (For the designation of potential new conservation areas see explanation in paragraphs 5.2 – 5.5).
- 2.12 Public consultation included organisations recommended in PPG15 and those supplied by Stevenage Borough Council (Appendix 1, 2 & 3).

### 3.0 The Historic Development of Stevenage

#### Archaeological background

- 3.1 Stevenage and its surrounding landscape have been occupied since the prehistoric period (10,000BC – 100BC). Stone axes found buried in the Old Town, Fishers Green and Shephall suggest use of the open landscape by ‘hunter gatherers’ during the early period. However, the first signs of settlement date to the Bronze Age and Iron Age and have been identified from a number of pottery finds, burial sites and domestic pits. Occupation of the Borough increased into the Late Iron Age and Roman period (100BC to 450AD). Towards the end of the Roman period, the landscape probably comprised a series of small farmsteads with burial mounds and cemeteries. The most prominent monuments in Stevenage, Six Hills barrows, are thought to date to the Roman period and lie alongside London Road at the Six Hills Way roundabout. London Road linked the Hertfordshire Roman towns of Verulamium and Baldock, and later was used to form part of the medieval Great North Road between London and Edinburgh. The barrows are one of three scheduled monuments in the Borough (SM 27904; Fig. 1).

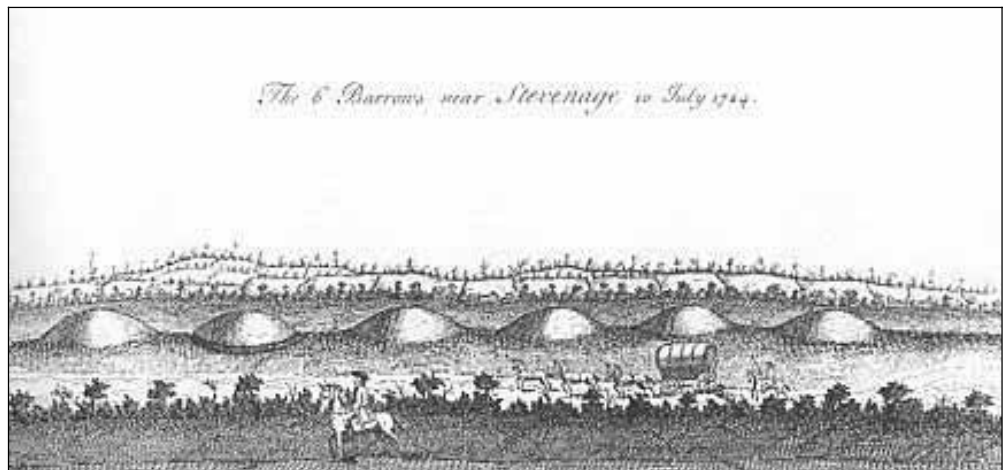


Figure 1. Engraving of the Six Hills in 1724 (Ashby 2002)

- 3.2 Evidence of Saxon occupation has been identified from both excavation and historical documentation. Settlements have been found in Broadwater and possibly also around St Nicholas Church north of the Old Town, which is thought to have originally been a timber building. Most are likely to have existed as a series of scattered small manors throughout the Borough such as Chells and Shephalbury. The first historical record of the manor of Stevenage is found in the Domesday Book dating to 1086. Known as ‘Sticenaeece’ or ‘Stithenaeece’, the estate had been given to the newly founded Abbey of Westminster by King Edward in 1062, to whom the manor previously belonged.

#### The Medieval Period

- 3.3 During the medieval period, the manor of Stevenage appeared to be very wealthy, especially in land, and was granted a market in 1281. The Great North Road ran through the Borough, west of St Nicholas Church, and bringing trade and economic prosperity to Stevenage. A new settlement grew to the south of St Nicholas along the sides of the road, burgage plots were laid, and shops and

inns constructed – some even being re-built during the medieval period. Elsewhere in the Borough, smaller manors such as Box, Chells, Woolenwick, Half Hyde, Homeleys (Whormley Wood moat – HER 11515; Thompson 2002) and Brome were owned a series of Barons – Peter de Valognes, Bishop Odo of Bayeux, Robert Gernon, Geoffrey de Bech and Willian de Ow. The manor of Shephall, however, was owned by the Abbot of St Albans where a small hamlet developed around the village green. Other small rural settlements that had also grown up around ‘Greens’ and ‘Ends’ continued to establish more permanent roots such as Letchmore Green, Fishers Green and Symonds Green. Many isolated farms were built and evidence of some ridge and furrow still survives in the north of the Borough. Early parish churches such as St. Mary’s, Shephall and St Nicholas, Old Town were constructed/replaced by stone and flint buildings in the medieval period. These buildings may have formed part of an earlier settlement comprising a manor and village.

### 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Century

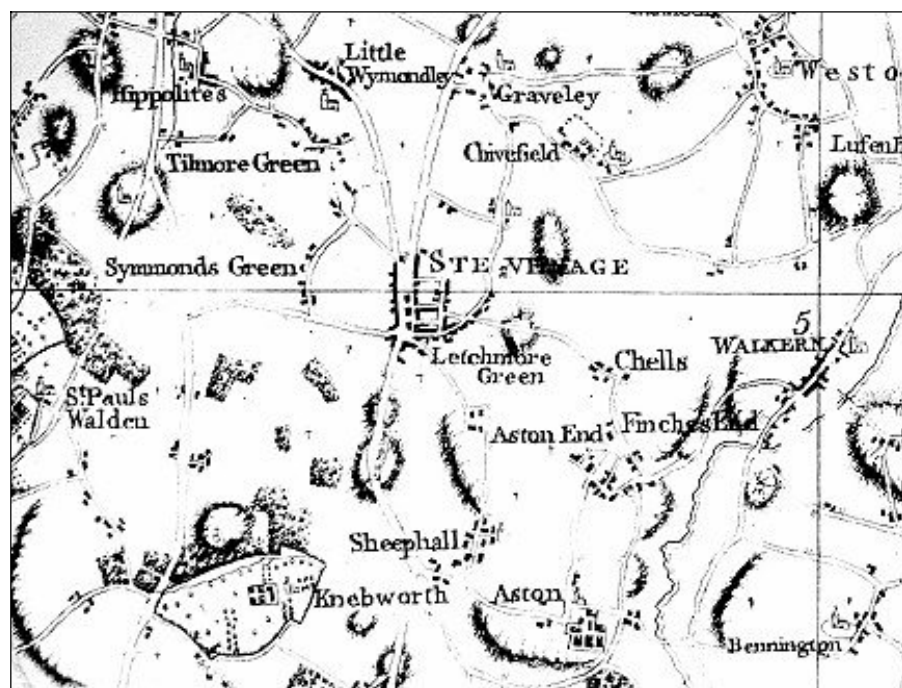


Figure 2. 1766 Map of Stevenage Borough (Dury and Andrews)

- 3.4 After the dissolution of the monasteries, land in Stevenage belonging to Westminster Abbey was given to the Bishop of London. The church leased the land until the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the Lyttons of Knebworth purchased the manor and much of the land in the Borough. The manor of Shephall was granted to the Nodes family in 1564 and was later acquired by the Unwin Heathcoates. Settlement remained focused on a growing number of small hamlets – Symonds Green, Letchmore Green, Broomin Green, Fishers Green, Norton Green, Shephall and Chells. Although Bragbury End was recorded as *Brakeburne* and *Brageberewe* in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the manor house probably dates to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Shown as a small village arranged around a triangular green in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the house stood at its north end and was then owned by Lady Baxter. Settlement grew along the Great North Road in the Old Town and it remained an important stop for the coaching trade to and from London which had increased during the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2). It was also

well known for its cattle market and being a stopping-off point for cattle herders to and from London due to its semi-rural location and the presence of ponds. Many of the old buildings in the Borough date to this period and include cottages, farms, inns, shops, small town houses, rectories and small country houses. Evidence of early Stevenage industry, two windmills and several brick kilns, is only known from historic records as the buildings have since disappeared. However the name of one of these industries is still represented, Corey's Mill, north west of the Old Town.

### **19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century**



Figure 3. 1884 Map of Stevenage Borough ([www.old-maps.com](http://www.old-maps.com))

- 3.5 During the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Stevenage began to change; while some trade was lost, new industry arrived and the population grew. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century most communities still thrived. Shephall, probably the most established village in the Borough, continued to grow in size while other settlements such as Broadwater, Pin Green, Bedwell Plash, Woodfield (including the area of St Nicholas), and Norton Green also began to further develop (Figs. 3 & 4). In the old town chapels and churches were constructed and utilities, police and a fire service were provided. More schools were also built, such as the National School (old St Nicholas School and School Master's house, North Road) which opened in 1834 (Fig. 5).



Figure 4. Cottages at Norton Green c1940 (Madgin 2001)



Figure 5. Old St Nicholas School Master's House (Ashby 2004)



Figure 6. The ESA Factory and the Old Railway Station (Ashby 2004)



Figure 7. Orchard Road c. 1900 (Ashby 2004)



Figure 8. The Railway Inn, Julian's Road c.1900 (Ashby 2004)



Figure 9. High Street and the Green 1899 (Madgin 2001)

- 3.6 However, the coaching trade along the Great North Road began to subside and inns closed on the High Street following the opening of the railway in 1850. The first railway station in Stevenage stood on the site of Julian's, a former farm located to west of the old town between Hitchin Road and Fisher's Green (Fig.

6). It was reached by Julian's Road, but was demolished in 1973. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Railway Street was constructed east of the line. Later re-named Orchard Road, it included several houses, two inns, a brewery and a Town Hall - since demolished (Figs. 7 & 8).

- 3.7 Despite closure of some businesses on the High Street, shops and offices thrived and the first Stevenage Post Office opened at no. 63 (Fig. 9). Other industries such as maltings, breweries, brick kilns, lime kilns, saw mills and other cottages industries remained well established within the town. Although primarily an agricultural economy with some large farms, the first Stevenage factory, Educational Supply Association (ESA), opened in 1883. It stood on Fisher's Green Road behind the site of the railway station (Figs. 6 & 10). The factory provided the main employment for people living in Stevenage until the later New Town industrial development of the 1950s. As a result new homes were built by ESA for their workers in the 1880's/90s which stood close to Fishers Green Road and was known as Stevenage 'new town' (Fig. 11). These residential roads were given seaside names such as Lymington, Southsea and Bournemouth.



Figure 10. Factory employees leaving work. Taken from Julian's Road in 1957 with ESA in the background (Ashby 2004)



Figure 11. New Town Post Office, in the 'new town' area of Fisher's Green early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Ashby 2004)



Figure 12. Albert Street, early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Ashby 2004)



Figure 13. Basil's Road, 1906 (Madgin 2001)

- 3.8 In 1861 Church of the Holy Trinity was built at the south end of the High Street in the old town by Arthur Blomfield (Fig. 54). Further development of the surrounding land to the east of the High Street occurred at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Houses were constructed along Trinity Road, since demolished, Albert Street, Basil's Road, Grove Road and Stanmore Road (Figs. 12 & 13). Houses on Basil's Road were built by ESA for their workers, and soon after more schools and a chapel were constructed in the town as the population grew.

- 3.9 In 1865 Charles Dickens and Edward Bulmer Lytton opened a Guild of Literature and Art on London Road to house impoverished writers and artists, but this was demolished in 1960.
- 3.10 During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century several larger houses were built in the Borough; 'Ingleside' and 'Whitney Wood' along Hitchin Road and Shephalbury Mansion south of Shephall Green. 'Ingleside' was owned by the Rose family (cordial/juice manufacturers) but has since been replaced by Ingleside Drive. 'Whitney Wood' stands near Coreys Mill and was constructed in the 1870s by Dr Andrew Whyte Barclay, Physician of the King's Household. Barclay supported many Stevenage charities including the National School, and was dedicated in the naming of Barclay School, Walkern Road which opened in 1949. Shephalbury Mansion stands within Shephalbury Park. Designed by T. Roger Smith and built in 1864, it is a neo-gothic house and replaced an older property (Fig. 14 & paragraph 4.133).

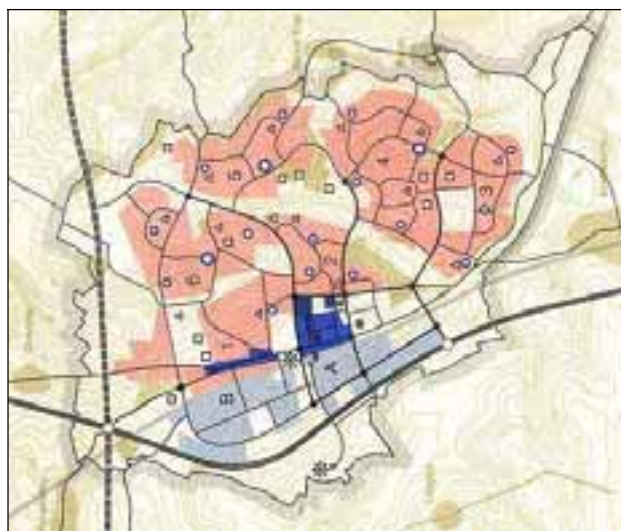


Figure 14. Shephalbury Mansion c1900 (Ashby 2004)

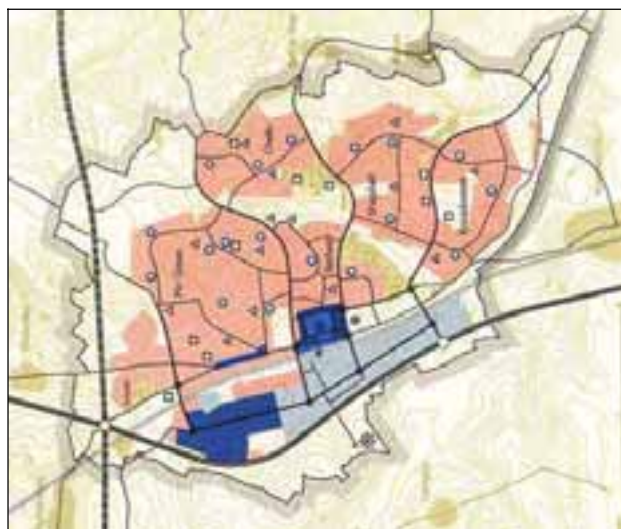
### **The New Town**

- 3.11 Before the end of World War II, the Government had begun developing a housing scheme for the Greater London area. Sir Patrick Abercrombie's plan for Greater London in 1944 suggested the creation of new 'satellite' towns, which would be designed to take London's overflowing population – one of those suggested was Stevenage. Lewis Silkin, Minister of Town and Country Planning, appointed a New Town Committee in 1945 to formulate plans for the construction and development of self-contained and balanced communities for work and living. In 1946 Stevenage Borough, which had a population of 6,237, was designated as the site of the first New Town, and the Stevenage Development Corporation created.
- 3.12 Such an experiment in building a new large modern town in the heart of the Hertfordshire countryside created much debate, and while it did have support there was also much opposition to the proposals. Public meetings were held, one in particular was attended by Lewis Silkin at the Town Hall in May 1946. Newspaper cartoons satired the creation of new towns. The railway station had its sign temporarily changed from Stevenage to Silkingrad by a local farmer, Jack Franklin of Gravely Hall Farm who opposed the plans.

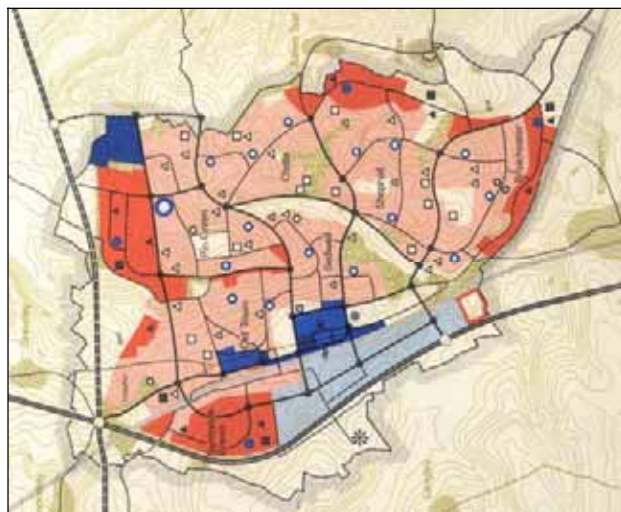




1949



1955



1966

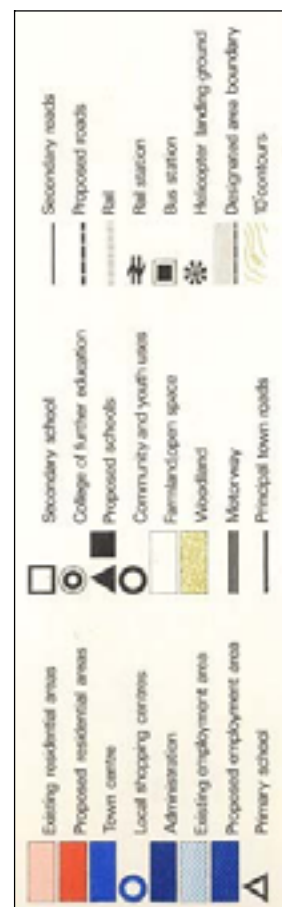


Figure 15. Stevenage New Town Master Plans 1949, 1955 and 1966 (Vincent 1967)



- 3.13 Stevenage Development Corporation appointed a Chief Architect and Planner, Gordon Stephenson, who instigated the first Master Plan of the New Town in 1949. The plan was to cater for 60,000 people located within six neighbourhoods based upon existing hamlets and clustered around a new town centre (Fig. 15). Each planned neighbourhood (Bedwell, Broadwater, Shephall, Chells and Pin Green) would have its own shops, pubs, churches, clinics, primary schools and community centres. The town centre was to be pedestrianised, and factories and business area were located on the west side away from the housing but near good road and rail links. 60,000 acres of land were chosen for the building of the new town. The area contained 20 farms and affected 80 others, but by 1952 Stevenage Development Corporation had bought 2,000 acres from landowners – some by compulsory purchase orders.
- 3.14 Plans to build a pedestrianised town centre covering 120 acres with a shopping area was first proposed in 1946 by Stephenson. By 1949 ideas comprised 300 shops for large and small traders, and also market stalls, while the main shopping streets were to be on a north-south axis. These ideas were put forward as part of the 1949 Master Plan. However, the Minister of Town and Country Planning considered the size of the town centre too large so the Corporation agreed to reduce the shopping area by five acres. The decision to pedestrianise the shopping area of the town centre was enhanced following a visit to Lijnbaan, Rotterdam in 1954. Reay and Vincent found that shopkeepers had confidence in their town centre, while the landscape treatment in the centre was also noted (paragraph 4.221; Fig. 74). In 1954 the corporation received approval in principle from the Ministry, and by 1955 Vincent had begun a new plan for the town centre (Fig. 72; paragraph 4.225).
- 3.15 Although the first Master Plan guided the development of Stevenage New Town for the next five years, it was revised in 1955 by Leonard Vincent (the new Chief Architect and Planner). The population was recorded at 17,500 in 1955 and it was clear that the size and density of the town would out grow the land allocation provision of the 1949 Master Plan. The 1955 Master Plan included changes in the size and density of both residential and employment areas (Fig. 15). It included building on land which had originally been intended to be left as a green belt within the designated new town boundary. This had the greatest effect on Pin Green as its planned population of 10,000 was re-planned in 1960 to 22,000. In the 1950s changes to the road system were also underway and the introduction of a large hospital to the north of the borough was considered. Over the next three years the population of Stevenage doubled reaching 30,000 which led to the production of a new draft Master Plan in 1961. In 1966 the Master Plan was unveiled. It included further expanding residential areas, employment areas and re-developing the Old Town to incorporate a new population figure of up to 91,000 (Fig. 15). Changes to the road system included the introduction of dual carriageways, and an increase to the town centre parking provisions, educational facilities and other services were required to cope with the population. Additional adjustments were made to the Master Plan in 1972 and again in 1978 when the population was recorded as 73,000.
- 3.16 Stevenage Development Corporation was dissolved in 1980 on completion of its work, but between 1951 and 1980 Stevenage Development Corporation built over 20,000 homes under the control of Chief architects and Planners, Gordon Stephenson, Leonard Vincent, Clifford Holliday, Donald Reay, Leslie Aked and finally Brian Alford.



The first New Town houses built in 1951, Sish Lane (Ashby 2004)



The first house completed in 1951, 4 Broadview, Bedwell (Stevenage Museum. Undated)



Bedwell neighbourhood housing visited by the Queen Mother in 1956 (Appleton 1993)



Chauncy House, formerly Stony Hall completed in 1952 (Balchin 1980)



Marymead, Broadwater completed in 1954 (Appleton 1993)



Marymead shops, Broadwater in 1957 (Stevenage Borough Council & Stevenage Museum. undated)



A 1950's kitchen with all 'mod-cons' (Collings 1987)



A typical sitting room – dining room in Half Hyde 1957 (Collings 1987)

Figure 16. Examples of housing in Stevenage New Town neighbourhoods

### Housing (Figs. 16 & 17)

- 3.17 The first New Town houses were completed in 1951 were near the Old Town - Broadview, off Sish Lane. No 4. Broadview was the first house to be completed by the Corporation. The Chauncy House flats (Stony Hall), completed in 1952, were designed by Yorke, Rosenberg & Mardall as a seven-storey block of flats with a planted area, a number of four-storey flats and two-storey terracing. Work began on the New Town neighbourhoods thereafter; Bedwell in 1952-3 (Whormley Wood, Bedwell East and North, and Monks Wood), Broadwater in 1953 (Roebuck, Shephalbury, Marymead and Longmeadow), Shephall in 1953-1955 (Leaves Spring, Half Hyde and Brandley Hill), Chells in 1958 (Peascott Spring), and Pin Green in 1962. Other areas of later residential development after the Development Corporation had been dissolved include areas within Pin Green, Poplars, Symonds Green, Chells Manor and St Nicholas.



Figure 17. Aerial photograph taken during the construction of Bedwell in 1953 (Hills, 1953)

### Recreational areas

- 3.18 Recreational areas and open spaces were seen as intrinsic to the New Town plan. Gardens, allotments, adventure playgrounds, parks, sports fields, woodland and landscaping were all planned. Fairlands Valley Park is the largest recreational space in Stevenage set within a natural valley of 150 acres. Although Stevenage Development Corporation had initially intended that the land would remain farmland, it was compulsorily purchased in 1951. The 1966 Master Plan designated the land as the town's principle area of recreation. A dam was built to create lakes for sailing, fishing, boating and paddling, and trees were planted to encourage wildlife and water birds, and paths were laid throughout the park, play equipment, a café and bar, and a bandstand were also constructed.

### The industrial area

- 3.19 A large separate industrial area, designated in the 1949 Master Plan to the west of the town along Gunnels Wood Road, was opened in 1952. New factories and office buildings were either constructed by the companies themselves or by the Stevenage Development Corporation.
- 3.20 During the 1950's some of the large companies that came to Stevenage were Hawker Siddeley Dynamic Ltd, International Computers Ltd (ICL), Kodak Ltd, British Aircraft Corporation, Bowater Packaging Ltd and Mentmore Manufacturing Company Ltd (Figs. 18 & 19). Other companies moved to new larger premises Gunnels Wood from the Old Town; Pye Ether Ltd and Marconi

Instruments Ltd (Fig. 18). The British Aircraft Corporation / British Aerospace was one of Stevenage's largest employers during the 20th century. It included several subsidiary companies such as English Electric Aviation and de Havilland and employed 6,500 in 1990 (Fig. 20). The construction of Jessops Warehouses also on Gunnels Wood Road indicates that Stevenage was ideally placed with easy access to a major road for distribution (Fig. 21). It is also the only listed building on Gunnels Wood Road. Although some of the original factories and offices located along Gunnels Wood Road survive, several have recently been cleared to make way for new units.

- 3.21 Behind Gunnels Wood Road to the west is Caxton Way where a number of small industrial units were built by the Corporation in the early 1950s. They are unlike the larger neighbouring buildings of the industrial area in their plan and design, and have an access road at the rear, Potters Lane. They are multi-functional spaces which are adaptable and as such the buildings have survived.

1952	The Bay Tree Press - first factory to open in the New Town
1953	De Havilland Propellers Ltd, Marconi Instruments Ltd, Pye Ether Ltd
1954	Kodak, British Visqueen, International Computers and Tabulators (ICL),
1955	English Electric Aviation Ltd, Mentmore Manufacturing Co Ltd
1959	The Warren Spring Laboratory 1959
1962	Bowater Factory

Figure 18. Industries which settled on Gunnels Wood Road between 1952 and 1962 (Mullan 1980)

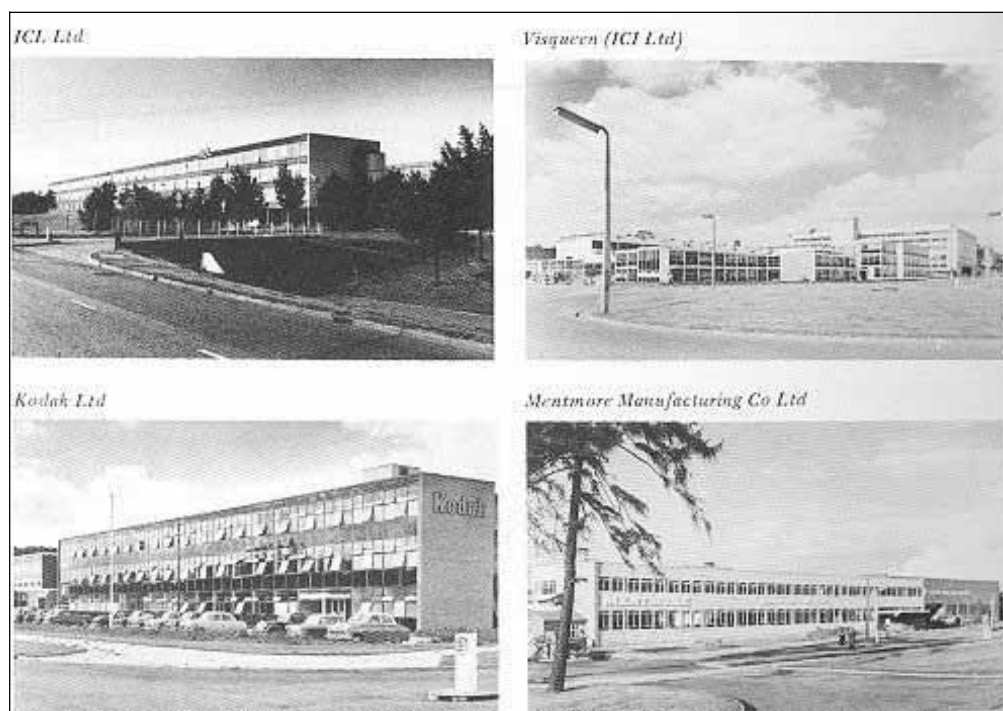


Figure 19. Early industrial buildings on Gunnels Wood Road (Balchin 1980)



Figure 20. Hawker Siddeley Dynamic Ltd on Gunnels Wood Road (Balchin 1980)



Figure 21. Jessops Warehouses, Gunnels Wood Road are listed buildings (Stevenage Museum 1975)

- 3.22 Pin Green Industrial Area located to the north east of the Borough, had been designated a site for employment as part of the 1966 Master Plan. Following the 1972 update of the plan, the site began to be developed.

### **Public Art in the New Town**

- 3.23 Public art dating from the 1950s up to the present forms an important part of the character of Stevenage New Town, especially its town centre. The concept of using art in public spaces began in 1940 when the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts was set up to promote fine arts in Britain and maintain British culture. Re-named the British Arts Council after World War II, they commissioned artwork which was to be displayed at the Festival of Britain in 1951. The Festival was an attempt to promote recovery and better quality of design in the rebuilding of British towns and cities after the war.
- 3.24 Following this artwork and sculpture, or public art as it became known, began to form an important part of the design of buildings and spaces in post war Britain. When in 1949 Henry Moore's bronze sculpture 'Family' was acquired by Hertfordshire County Council, it was decided that it should be used within the grounds of Barclay School, north of the old town. It is now a grade II listed structure (Fig. 22). During the 1950s and 1960s further works of art were commissioned by the County Council for use in schools such as 'Adventure' by Mary Spencer Watson, 1951, Fairlands Junior School.



Figure 22. Henry Moore's Sculpture, 'Family', at Barclay School

Location	Date	Form	Artist/Sculptor
Barclay School	1945	Family Group	Henry Moore
*Fairlands Junior School	1951	Adventure	Mary Spencer Watson
*Town Square	1958 ?	Ceramic mural. Symbolises the Co-operative Movement	G. Bajio CWS Architects Department
Town Square	1958	Joy Ride	Franta Belsky
Town Square	1958 ?	Clock Tower (composite)	??
Elm Green Shopping Centre, Chells	1962	Fish	Mark Harvey
The Towers	1963	Seated Figures	David Noble
Bronte/Austin Paths	1963	The Three Geese	David Noble
Chertsey Rise	c. 1963	Monster	Mark Harvey
Bandle Hill Park (moved in 1969)	No date	Donkey	Mark Harvey
Bus Station	1964	Wall Sculpture	Peter Lyon
The Glebe, Chells Way	1964	Polar Bear	Mark Harvey
Webb Rise/Archer Rd/Lonsdale Rd	1965	Dancing Figures	Dick Fowler
Symonds Green	1965	King Pin	??
Bowes Lyon Centre	1965	Abstract	??
Bandle Hill Park	1969	Abstract	Mark Harvey
*The Forum	1972	Abstract (moved from original position in 2000)	Jose de Alberdi
St.George's Way 2 underpasses	1973	Scenes from Contemporary Life & Abstract	William Mitchell
Town Square	1974	Lord Silkin	Franta Belsky
Manulife	1975	Mother & Child	Kuwak
Symonds Green	c. 1975	Sand Pit	Simon Harvey
Symonds Green	c. 1975	Clock	Simon Jones
Leisure Centre	1976	Logo	Donald Smith
Town Gardens	1981	Women & Doves	David Norris
Gunnels Wood Way	No date	Robot Family Clock	Simon Jones?
St.Nicholas School	No date	School Gateway	
Stevenage Museum	1991	Urban Elephant	Andrew Burton
St.Nicholas Church	1997	Only Connect	Angela Godfrey
St Georges Way Church Sensory Garden	c. 1998	Mosaic Fish pavement	Giles J. School project
Longmeadow School	1998?	Footballer	Dennis Heath
Queensway West	1999	Sun Dial	David Harber
Peartree Park	1999	Totem Pole	Dennis Heath
Millennium Garden	??	Planet Map	Astrium sponsored
Millennium Garden	2000	Bird in Hand, 2000. 2 hands releasing dove + 4 benches	Dennis Heath
Towers Pond, Six Hills Way National Cycle	c. 2000	Millennium milepost	Jon Mills
*The Forum	2000	Millennium metal sculpture 2 Mosaics	David Harber Peter Dunn, Janette Ireland, Anji Archer, Helen Durrant
*Pride in our town	2002		
Fairlands Valley Park	No date	Seating for the millennium + totem poles	Dennis Heath
Museum Sensory Garden & inside	No date	Seats	Dennis Heath
Alleyne's School	No date	Various ? Springtime, Harvest, Hector & Andromanche	Harry Bates ARA

Figure 23. A list of artwork and sculpture in Stevenage

(SCULPTURE SPOTTING for the HVAF/PMSA Sculpture Trail at [www.hvaf.org.uk/sculspot.htm](http://www.hvaf.org.uk/sculspot.htm).  
Last updated 7 April 2004. \*Amendments, where known, by BEAMS Ltd)





**Figure 24. Examples of public art in Stevenage**

Left to right: Clock Tower; Bajio's wall ceramic in the Town Square; Abstract on wall of Bowes Lyon House; Abstract on wall on Queensway West; 'Pride in our town' mosaic on pavement in Queensway West; William Mitchell relief sculpture in Park Place pedestrian walk; Alberdi's abstract sculpture in The Forum; Peter Lyon's wall sculpture in Town Square; Belsky's 'Joyride' in the Town Square

- 3.25 By the mid 1950s more artists had begun to be commissioned by architects to produce works for display in public spaces (Fig. 23 & 24). The design and display of abstract art and sculpture in Stevenage New Town began at its initial stages of planning. Some of the earlier works designed by local, national and international artists were probably commissioned directly by Stevenage Development Corporation and Stevenage Urban District Council for use in the town centre and its neighbourhoods. In 1957 the Development Corporation commissioned Franta Belksy to design the first piece of Stevenage New Town Public Art. The Corporation had been inspired by the use of symbolic sculpture in the rebuilding of bombed Rotterdam, and as the sculpture was to stand in the Town Square it would symbolise the creation of the New Town. 'Joyride' by Belsky is a grade II listed bronze statue of a mother playfully carrying her child (Figs. 23 & 25). Franta was educated in Prague and at the Imperial College of Art, London. Other statues by him include Winston Churchill, Cecil Rhodes and The Queen Mother, and later he designed a plaque for the Clock Tower in Stevenage Town Square to commemorate Lord Silkin.
- 3.26 In addition, private companies also commissioned artists. The architects department of The Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited commissioned G. Bajio, a Hungarian artist who worked in the CWS offices, to produce a piece of public art for their building on the corner of the Town Square. Bajio designed a 27ft by 20ft ceramic mural depicting symbolic figures of the four corner stones of a balanced economy; industry, commerce, transport and agriculture and is composed of vitrified ceramic tiles with coloured enamel glazes. The spinning wheel and its products represent textiles and consumer goods, the steelworker represents heavy industry, a teaching figure represents science and technology, and agriculture forms the background to the family (Fig. 25).
- 3.27 New town neighbourhood sculptures were mainly designed by David Noble and Mark Harvey, and date to the early 1960s. They appear to have been 'play sculptures' where the public, especially children, could interact with them (Figs. 23, 25 & 26).



Figure 25. David Noble, 'Three Geese' (Hertfordshire Countryside, 1975)





Figure 26. Mark Harvey, 'Polar Bear'  
(Hertfordshire Countryside, 1975)

- 3.28 Although public artwork was designed for use within new town neighbourhoods and schools, it is most abundant in the town centre. As well as the aforementioned Belsky's 'Joyride' and Bajio's wall ceramic in the Town Square, there are also a number of other pieces of public art elsewhere in the town centre dating to the 1960s and 1970s such as the abstract on the wall of Bowes Lyon House, the abstract set in a wall along Queensway West, William Mitchell's relief sculpture in Park Place pedestrian walk; Alberdi's abstract fibre glass and resin sculpture in The Forum; Peter Lyon's wall metal sculpture in the Town Square (Fig. 24). While some pieces have remained in their original position, others have been removed, or have been replaced by new sculpture or artwork such as Alberdi's abstract sculpture whose original position had been in the centre of The Forum (Fig. 27).



Figure 27. Alberdi's abstract sculpture in its original position in The Forum (Balchin 1980), since moved and replaced by 'Millennium' by David Harber

- 3.29 During the 1980's after the Stevenage Development Corporation had been disbanded, little public art was commissioned. The only recorded piece was by David Norris in 1981 for the town centre gardens, 'Women and Doves' (Fig.

28). Since the 1990s new pieces of public art have been commissioned that have also added to the character of the town centre such as the floor mosaics along Queensway West, 'Pride in Our Town', by Peter Dunn, Janette Ireland, Anji Archer and Helen Durrant, and the metal sculpture, 'Millennium', by David Harber in The Forum (Fig. 24). Since 1998 Dennis Heath has designed several pieces of public art for schools and parks outside the town centre (Figs. 29 & 30).



Figure 28. David Norris's 'Women and Doves' in the town centre gardens



Figure 29. Dennis Heath's 'Bird in Hand', Millennium Garden, King George V playing fields

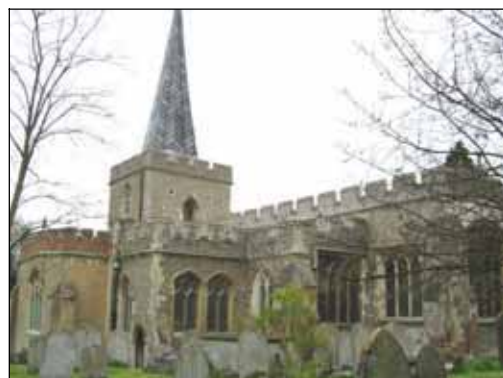


Figure 30. One of Dennis Heath's four bench seats, 2000, Millennium Garden, King George V



## 4.0 Review of Existing Conservation Areas

### St Nicholas / Rectory Lane Conservation Area



**Figure 31. Photographs of St Nicholas / Rectory Lane Conservation Area**

From left to right: Church Corner; St Nicholas Church; the water meadow; Rectory Lane; Rooks Nest Farm; Forster Country; 'Woodfield' and The Granby Public House

### **Designation**

- 4.1 The Conservation Area of St Nicholas / Rectory Lane was designated on July 7<sup>th</sup> 1982. The boundary was amended in 1984.

### **General description** (Figs. 31 & 32)

- 4.2 The Conservation Area is based on St Nicholas Church and the Bury, Rooks Nest Farm, and Rectory Lane.
- 4.3 The core is around the St Nicholas Church where the church forms a group with The Bury, the 15<sup>th</sup> century Old Bury (with associated farm buildings and pair of cottages to the East), and the 18<sup>th</sup> century Moonhill and Dominic Cottage.
- 4.4 Weston Road from St Nicholas Church to Rooks Nest retains a rural character despite the recent St Albans Drive housing development to the east.
- 4.5 Hedges and trees are also important to Rectory Lane which has along its length a variety of houses including the listed Priory, 'Woodfield' - the former Rectory, and Medbury.

### **Setting and Focal Points**

- 4.6 To the west, the setting is formed by open farmland over which there are extensive views from the conservation area. This land frames long distance views towards key buildings or building groups such as the church and The Old Bury and Rooks Nest Farm. These views are important from both inside and outside of the conservation area.
- 4.7 From the south, the conservation area boundary consists of the Martins Way dual carriageway. The approach is over Martins Way on foot from The Avenue, the tree lined route from the Old Town or on the Weston Road bridge also crossing Martins Way.
- 4.8 The eastern boundary of the conservation area is effectively Weston Road past the new cemetery. On the eastern side of this are recent housing estates.
- 4.9 To the north, the Islington Way carriageway marks the beginning of the hedged lane that leads into the conservation area.
- 4.10 Of the utmost importance for this conservation area is the nature of Rectory Lane. From The Granby Public House, it carries round to the focal point of the church entrance area introducing and helping define the conservation area as it does so. Hedges and trees dominate its appearance. Street lamp columns are small and much of the roadside does not have kerbs. This informal appearance and semi-rural character is the key to the character of Rectory Lane and the conservation area.
- 4.11 The whole area around the front of the entrance to the churchyard, Church Corner, forms the primary focal point of the conservation area. This includes the triangle of the tracks/roads here, the church lych gate and boundary wall, the cottages and the meadow opposite them (which is seen first as this area is approached from the south). There is a "sunken" section of Weston Road on south side of church yard.

### **Important Spaces**

- 4.12 These are all historically well established spaces: The churchyard with its boundary wall, the meadow west of The Old Bury, the long field leading to meadows that is cut by the main road, and the water meadow to the south with a stream flowing through.

### **Architectural & Historic Qualities of the buildings**

- 4.13 From the Public House along Rectory Lane, there is a thorough mix of age and appearance of buildings but the common theme is an individual single or two storey house set well back from the road. They are individual, not simply in the sense of being “detached” buildings, but also in their design or appearance.
- 4.14 The recent development, Chestnut Walk, illustrates the harm this type of development which requires a minor road off Rectory Lane, does to the character and appearance of Rectory Lane. This insensitive junction punched through the lane’s frontage with regulation visibility splays, kerbing and loss of hedgerow.
- 4.15 A contrast is the “new town era” Rectory Croft group with its low key, narrow, gravel surfaced, access which retains hedge and tree at the road frontage.
- 4.16 The historic nucleus around St Nicholas Church and The Old Bury forms a characterful group within a farmed landscape setting. Their architectural & historic qualities are heavily bound up with their setting. The two modern houses northwest of the Bury are of unremarkable quality.

### **Trees**

- 4.17 There are a significant number of mature trees which are part of the character of the whole conservation area. These are,
- the churchyard and the associated area around Church Corner
  - along most of Rectory Lane, incorporating both sides of the road up to its north end where it becomes Weston Road (a single lane and then a path)
  - within the water meadow
- 4.18 A further significant group of trees lie just on the edge of the conservation area and form the north end of The Avenue by Church Corner that leads into the Old Town. Both The Avenue and Weston Lane are indicated as ancient lanes with associated hedgerows in the Stevenage District Plan under policy EN15.
- 4.19 There is also an ‘Avenue of Remembrance’ of Red Oak trees that were planted along the path from St Nicholas Church to the new cemetery in 1988, in memory of servicemen. These were replaced by Whitebeams in 1995.

### **Listed Buildings**

- 4.20 Statutorily listed Buildings are listed below, but are not described here so as to avoid duplication of the list descriptions.
- The Priory, 1 and 2 Rectory Lane. Grade II. 4/1. Listed in 1976
  - The Old Bury. Grade II\*. 4/2. Listed 1948
  - Church of St Nicholas. Grade I. 4/3. Listed 1948
  - Priory Cottage. Grade II. 4/142. Listed 1976
  - Moonhill. Grade II. 4/144. Listed 1976
  - Rooks Nest Farm. Grade II. 4/155. Listed 1976

- Howards End. Grade I. 4/156. Listed 1976
- Dominic Cottage. Grade II. 4/157. Listed 1976
- L-shaped outbuilding west of Rooks Nest Farmhouse. Grade II. Listed 1997.

### **Key Locally Important Buildings**

4.21 Buildings of importance to the conservation area ("Local List" buildings) are indicated on the conservation area map forming part of this report. Unlisted buildings of particular importance to the St Nicholas / Rectory Lane conservation area are:

- The Granby Public House, North Road.  
Two storey red brick building. Pebbledash rendered front, open porch with ridge tiles. Flemish bond with blue headers to side elevation. Tiled gabled roof to main, single storey extension with hipped tiled roof to north side. Timber lattice windows to front. Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century with later additions.
- 'Rivelin', Rectory Lane.  
Single storey cartshed. Red brick with small buttresses to exterior wall. Weather-boarded end. Tiled gabled roof. Probably late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- 'Woodfield', 4 Rectory Lane.  
Two storey brick house, cream painted. Slate roof to front. Tiled roof to rear gables. Single storey bays with crenellations to south elevation. Some timber, some UPVC windows. Former rectory, probably 17<sup>th</sup> century with a 19<sup>th</sup> century front range added. Attached cottage to rear.
- 'Priory Meadow', Rectory Lane.  
Single storey yellow brick property with flat roof. Located close to the road, it has an attached garage located near to the front door with few windows. A 1960s architect designed bungalow.
- 'The Driftway', Rectory Lane.  
Single storey yellow brick property with a concrete flat roof. A long narrow bungalow, it is located back from the road next to the path onto the water meadow. Some timber, some metal windows. Its garage is attached and stands at the front of the entry. 1960s architect designed.
- 'Medbury', Rectory Lane.  
Two storey yellow brick house with canopies and round tower, possibly housing interior staircase. Part flat roof, part half-gabled. Hung slate detail. Believed to have been designed by Leonard Vincent for himself (Chief architect to the Stevenage Development Corporation during the early phases of the New Town).
- The Rectory Croft, Rectory Lane.  
A small group of two storey yellow brick houses with gabled slate roofs. Large glass windows. Attached garages. End chimney stacks to gables of No.4. An unusual 1960s development in the style of Stevenage Development Corporation.

- Houses at The Close, Rectory Lane.  
A small group of single and two storey yellow brick houses with tiled roofs, some hipped, some gabled. Large glass windows. Garages attached or inbuilt to the design. An unusual 1960s/70s development.
- The Bury, Church Corner, Rectory Lane.  
Two storey red brick Victorian house with a bay. Slate roof, probably gothic in style with a turret. Dates to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unable to see clearly.

4.22 Some of the buildings listed above have appeared in the Urban Characterisation Study and in the Stevenage Extensive Urban Survey Report (Thompson forthcoming; Thompson 2002). Other buildings have been added during this review. This list is not intended to be exhaustive record of buildings located in the conservation area, but it defines those which may warrant inclusion on a “local list”.

### **Scheduled monuments and archaeological potential**

4.23 There are no scheduled monuments in the conservation area.

4.24 Evidence of Medieval ridge and furrow, and a remnant of a hedgerow along the original line of The Avenue have been recorded. There is also archaeological potential for remains of an earlier church, manor, Deserted Medieval Village, and a pre-18<sup>th</sup> century rectory in the Conservation Area.

### **Impact of New Development**

4.25 Large recent agricultural building in front of Rooks Nest Farm with wide entrance and concrete apron disrupting the hedge line.

4.26 Close boarded fence at Nicholas Place where hedge reinforcement would have been more appropriate.

4.27 Intrusive triple garage on corner of Rectory Lane with Chestnut Walk.

4.28 Unsympathetic replacement windows on Moonhill Cottage.

4.29 Residential conversion of the barns at Rooks Nest Farm has changed the character of this group of buildings.

### **Problem Areas**

4.30 The Chestnut Walk development on Rectory Lane illustrates a suburban layout which is not in character with the conservation area. It is understood that a similar development was approved in 2004 next to it.

### **Suggested boundary changes (Fig. 33)**

4.31 The open fields to the north west are an integral part of the landscape in which buildings in the conservation area sit (see also paragraphs 4.3 – 4.8). They are just as important components of the settlement as the meadows either side of Rectory Lane. The rights of way across the fields are as significant a feature as the footpath though the street. The settlement should be seen “in the round”. It is recommended that the conservation area boundary should therefore take in the fields towards the lines of pylons using a long established hedge line / woodland edge as the boundary.

4.32 The boundary shown on the accompanying plan is based on the vistas from within the conservation area from Weston Road and Rectory Lane. Also, seen

from the rights of way looking back into the conservation area. It is not considered appropriate to include any wider tracts of countryside than this within the revised boundary because these would not have the same visual and physical relationship with Weston Road and Rectory Lane.

- 4.33 The conservation area boundary was extended around what is now the recent St Albans Drive housing area before the latter was built. Similarly, the Chancellor Road area was included.
- 4.34 Both these were Development Plan housing allocations and were included in the conservation as later boundary revisions as a result of a Local Plan Inspectors recommendation in response to objections to the Local Plan about the possible adverse impact on the conservation area/wider area of the development of these housing sites. However, the change was made before these sites were built.
- 4.35 It is clear now from their built form, that the St Albans Drive and Chancellor Road areas do not share character or appearance with the remainder of the conservation area. Consequently, It is recommended that the boundary be revised to once again, not include these areas.

### **Summary**

- 4.36 The conservation area still retains a visually rural character and the challenge is to retain this over coming decades. In particular, this will depend on the control of new development along Rectory Lane – avoiding large scale replacement dwellings or further ‘close’ / ‘cul de sac’ developments. It will also depend on how the lane is affected by highways schemes. Its “rural”, informal nature should be recognised and further road signage and road markings should not be imposed.

### **Design / management imperatives**

- 4.37 A set of guidelines should be developed with the Highways Authority for the treatment of Rectory Lane including markings, signage, lighting and access/sight lines.
- 4.38 Culs de sac or ‘close’ layouts (such as at Chestnut Walk) should not be permitted in the conservation area.
- 4.39 Details such as those mentioned under Impact of New Development (4.25) need to be carefully examined when Planning Applications are being considered. As with those specific examples, they can harm the conservation area.
- 4.40 No new development should be permitted to disrupt the visual or spatial relationships between the group of buildings which make up the historically important core of the conservation area at the church and The Old Bury. This should also preclude building on the meadows between this group and Chancellors Road, nor opposite Dominic Cottage between Rectory Lane and Martins Way. Long distance views towards this group should be taken into account.





Figure 32. St Nicholas / Rectory Lane Conservation Area

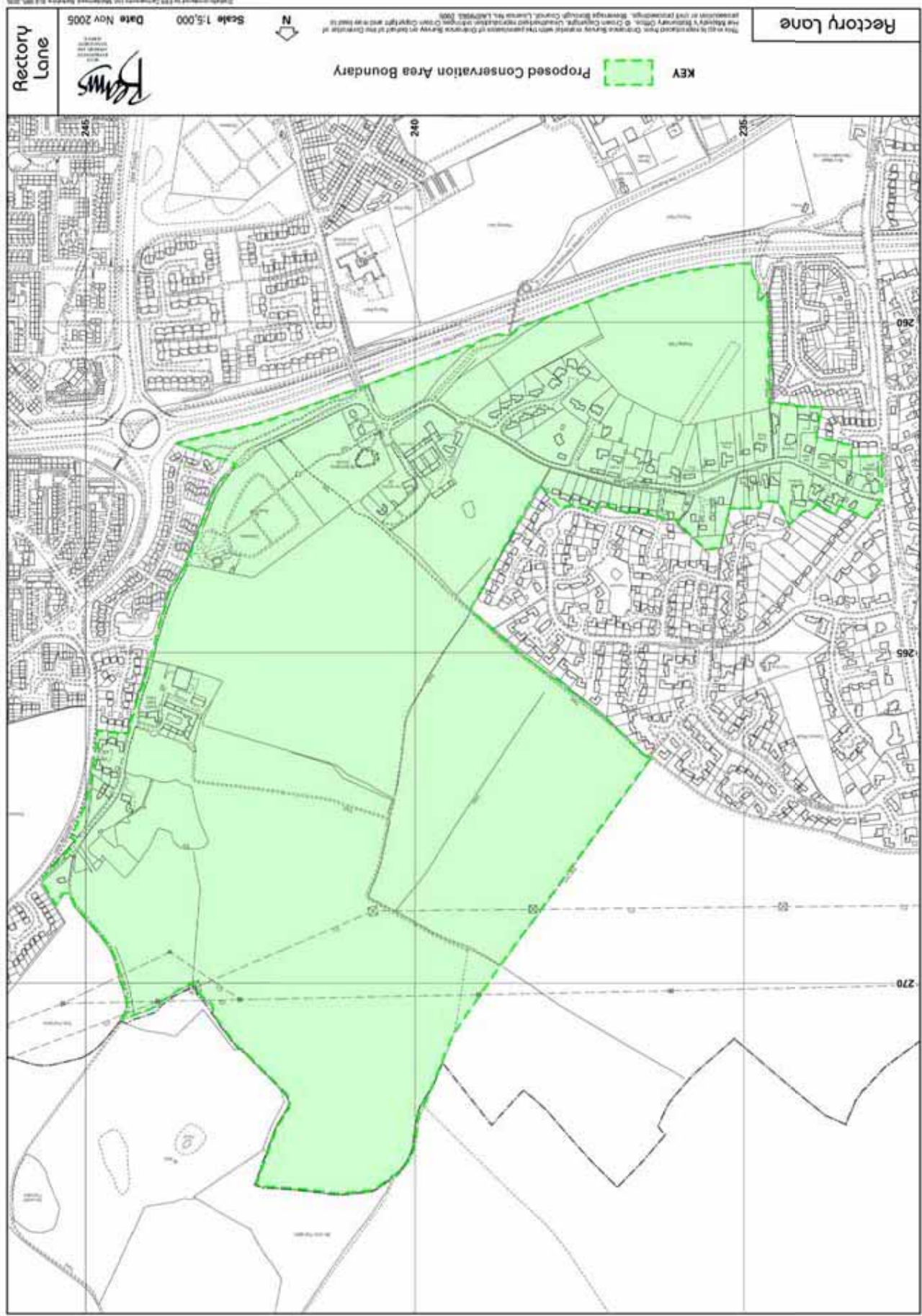


Figure 33. Proposed boundary changes to St Nicholas / Rectory Lane Conservation Area



## History

- 4.41 The parish of St Nicholas incorporates Rectory Lane that leads east away from the North Road and also Weston Road to the north. Early settlement of Stevenage, known as *Sticenaeece* or *Stithenaece* during the Saxon period, is thought to have stood in the area around the parish church. The church itself was probably constructed from wood before it was replaced in flint during the 12<sup>th</sup> century - the church tower is earlier than its nave and aisles and dates to c.1125.
- 4.42 Settlement of the parish is centred on The Old Bury, the manor house next to the church, and dates at least the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The rural setting and sparse number of buildings suggests a long history of agricultural subsistence which developed away from the growing town to the south along the High Street. The largest farm belonged to Rooks Nest, now known as Howards, which was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Howard family built Rooks Nest Farm in the 18<sup>th</sup> century comprising several large barns and farmhouse.



Figure 34. St Nicholas and Rectory Lane in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Dury and Andrews 1766)

- 4.43 By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Dominic and Moonhill Cottages had been built along the road close to the church and The Old Bury (Figs. 34 & 35). Woodfield, located towards the west end of Rectory Lane, although much altered, probably dates to the late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> century and is likely to have been the original Parsonage.



Figure 35. Dominic and Moonhill Cottages, Church Corner c.1910 (Ashby 2004)



Figure 36. The Priory, 1899 (Madgin 2001)

- 4.44 A new rectory was constructed in 1780 east of Woodfield, since re-named The Priory (Fig. 36). During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Reverend William Jowitt lived at the property with his family, however in 1919 his successor sold the house. Jowitt's

son, William Allen Jowitt, became Lord Chancellor in 1945 and later Earl Jowitt and Viscount Stevenage. He also assisted in drafting the 1946 New Towns Act. Then in 1946 the Priory was purchased by the Stevenage Development Corporation who housed senior staff there.



Figure 37. 1884 Ordnance Survey ([www.oldmaps.com](http://www.oldmaps.com))

- 4.45 To the west of the Priory was a small lane that led down to a meadow with a stream running south west across it (Fig. 37). Either side of the stream stood a row of trees and beyond, to the south, a further row running east to west – possibly indicating an earlier boundary. To the south of this field was another old lane, The Avenue. It ran from St Nicholas Church down to the Old Town along the edge of Bury Mead and met with the toll gate of the Old North Road. For most of its length either side of the lane stood an avenue of horse chestnut trees which had been partly planted in 1756 with additional sections planted in 1857, 1887 and 1936. However The Avenue was almost completely re-planted in 1989 following the 1987 storms. The Granby Public House situated on the corner of Rectory Lane and North Road was constructed by the Stevenage and Biggleswade Turnpike Trust to collect tolls from travellers. To the south of The Granby is a milestone. It dates to the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century, is made of stone and has '32 miles' from London carved into it.
- 4.46 By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century little had changed along Rectory Lane except for the construction of The New Bury next to The Old Bury (Fig. 37). The area remained relatively unchanged during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until development on both sides of the lane and along Weston Road (Fig. 38).
- 4.47 Rectory Lane has a historical link with E.M. Forster, author of 'Howard's End'. He spent some of his childhood living at Rooks Nest, now known as Howards, between 1883 and 1893 which is located towards the northern end of the lane (Fig. 39). The house was also inhabited by Elizabeth Poston, a composer, between 1913 and 1987. The area, coined as 'Forster Country', lays within and also to the north and northwest of the Conservation Area boundary. There is a monument within the Churchyard and an information sign dedicated to Forster



## Old Town High Street Conservation Area



**Figure 42. Photographs of The Old Town Conservation Area**

From left to right: Bowling Green and the war memorial; The Grange; Old Maltings and Kiln at Alleyene's School; High Street; Middle Row; High Street; Church Lane and Church Lane/Walkern Road





**Figure 43. Photographs of The Old Town Conservation Area**  
 From left to right: Methodist Church; Holy Trinity Church; Letchmore Road; High Street (formerly Ditchmore Lane); Church Lane; Bury Mead; drinking fountain on Bowling Green; The Avenue

### **Designation**

- 4.48 The Conservation Area of the Old Town was designated 24<sup>th</sup> March 1969. The boundary was amended in Sept 1979.

### **Reasons for designation**

- 4.49 To conserve its character and appearance as an historic High street.

### **General description** (Figs. 42, 43, 44 & 45)

- 4.50 The core of the conservation area is the long north-south high street, along the alignment of the Great North Road. It is contained by the highway system with Martins Way/North Road to the top, Lytton Way to the west and Fairlands Way to the south. For the detailed boundaries, the western side runs along what is both currently and historically, the back line of plots fronting the High Street and now carries Primett Road. On the eastern side, Church Lane provides most of the length of the boundary beyond which is housing of a mixture of periods. The High Street is a busy and evidently viable centre. It is wide enough to incorporate parking space on much of its length.

### **Setting and Focal Points**

- 4.51 The "Bowling Green" towards the north end, is a focal point and key space in the conservation area. Both this and the trees on it are visually important when viewed from the south.
- 4.52 Holy Trinity Church is a focal point at the Letchmore Road / Sish Lane end.
- 4.53 Both ends of Middle Row seen from along the High Street and the spaces they create.
- 4.54 Pedestrian bridge over Fairlands Way (viewed from the conservation area).
- 4.55 Trees along High Street.

### **Impact of New Development**

- 4.56 About the time of designation of the conservation area, the O.S. base map showed numerous vehicle garage premises - for instance, at the Sish Lane/London Road junction. 124 -126 High Street was a car show room. These buildings and uses have now been replaced by residential development. The same is true rear of 15/17 High Street on the east side. Demolition and replacement of a number of buildings has occurred since designation of the conservation area. Included are the terrace of cottages to the right of 1-3 The Bowling Green, 23-25 Middle Row, and buildings either side of 136 High Street.
- 4.57 UPVC windows do not have the appearance of traditional windows and affect the character and appearance of the conservation area but there are a number of buildings (eg on Church Lane but also on at least two listed buildings on the High Street) where they have been installed. It is proposed that an Article 4 Direction be considered to address this.
- 4.58 Control of advertising appears to have been generally successful (except at 48-52a High Street).

### **Important Spaces**

- 4.59 The Bowling Green as above. Bury Mead links the conservation area with open space to the north-east. Hedges and trees also make this link. In various locations there are walls, gate piers (end of The Avenue) or items such as old



lampposts (eg near 11, Church Lane), or memorials (eg the water trough and drinking fountain on the Bowling Green) that add interest to the area.

#### **Architectural & Historic Qualities of the buildings**

4.60 Buildings along the High Street and Bowling Green are oriented to face the roads. Roof ridges generally run parallel with the High Street. The High Street plots contain buildings behind the frontage which traditionally, tend to be placed along the length of the plot rather than across it. Roofs are of simple pitched, gabled form.

4.61 The majority of buildings are of two storeys (some also with dormer windows to attic space) though some earlier buildings are 1 ½ storeys. A very small number of buildings are of three storeys.

4.62 The predominant materials are red brick and plain tiles with slate on some buildings.

#### **Uses of Buildings**

4.63 Some broad themes of uses or businesses on the High Street have changed over time according to its function. ie coaching inns were once important, motor car businesses had their day and so on. Currently, there appears to be a trend of conversions to restaurants, pubs and food takeaways.

4.64 Public consultation during this review has suggested that retail shops are being squeezed out of the conservation area.

4.65 There remain a number of inns, public houses or hotels, sometimes with yards, which are historically important features of the High Street.

4.66 Rear stores/workshops are a characteristic of premises fronting the High Street and these should therefore be retained. Occasionally these are not in good condition such as the tiled roof/timber framed building at the rear of 30 High Street. The availability of these rear buildings can be important as to the flexibility of use of the frontage buildings.

4.67 Schools are a notable land use in the area to the north-east of the High Street and in the case of Thomas Alleyne's School, are historically notable.

4.68 These use part of the green space either side of The Avenue. In terms of the setting of the conservation area, they preserve areas of historically open land space around it.

#### **Trees**

4.69 There are a number of mature trees which are part of the character of the conservation area. These are,

- along the east side of the Great North Road
- within Bury Mead recreational ground
- on the Bowling Green
- along both sides of the High Street
- within the churchyard
- along Ditchmore Lane
- the boundary of King George VI recreational ground
- on the corner of Walkern Road and Church Lane

- along the west side of Church Lane

4.70 A further significant group of trees lie within the conservation area to the north and form the south end of The Avenue by Alleyne's School that leads up to Rectory Lane. The Avenue is indicated as an ancient lane with associated hedgerows in the Stevenage District Plan under policy EN15.

### **Listed Buildings**

4.71 Statutorily listed Buildings are listed below, but are not described here so as to avoid duplication of the list descriptions.

- 1 Bowling Green. Grade II. 2/49. Listed 1976
- 2 Bowling Green. Grade II. 2/75. Listed 1976
- 3 Bowling Green. Grade II. 2/50. Listed 1948
- 8 Bowling Green. Grade II. 2/72. Listed 1976
- War Memorial Bowling Green. Grade II. 2/51. Listed 1948
- 2, 4 and 6 Baker Street. Grade II. 1/19. Listed 1948
- 7 Baker Street. Grade II. 1/20. Listed 1948
- 1 and 3 Church Lane. Grade II. 1/11. Listed 1976
- 11 Church Lane. Grade II. 1/81. Listed 1976
- 19 Church Lane. Grade II. 1/82. Listed 1976
- 8, 10, 12 and 14 The Almshouses, Church Lane. Grade II. 1/13. Listed 1948
- 38 Church Lane. Grade II. 1/83. Listed 1976
- 2 – 12 Walkern Road. Grade II. 1/12. Listed 1976.
- Alleyne's School (The Old Grammar School) High Street. Grade II. 2/4. Listed 1948
- 1 High Street. Grade II. 2/5. Listed 1948
- Old Malthouse and Kiln at Alleyne's School High Street. Grade II. 2/6. Listed 1948
- 3 High Street. Grade II. 2/7. Listed 1948
- 5 (The Grange) High Street. Grade II\*. 1/8. Listed 1948
- 7 High Street. Grade II. 1/87. Listed 1976
- 9 and 11 High Street. Grade II. 1/88. Listed 1976
- 15 (The Yorkshire Grey Inn) High Street. Grade II. 1/9. Listed 1948
- 17 High Street. Grade II. 1/51. Listed 1973
- 19 (The Two Diamonds Public House) High Street. Grade II. 1/10. Listed 1976
- 25 (Cromwell Hotel) High Street. Grade II. 1/14. Listed 1976
- 27 High Street. Grade II. 1/89. Listed 1976
- 31 High Street. Grade II. 1/16. Listed 1948
- 33 High Street. Grade II. 1/90. Listed 1976
- 35 and 35A High Street. Grade II. 1/91. Listed 1976
- 37 High Street. Grade II. 1/17. Listed 1948
- 47 High Street. Grade II. 1/92. Listed 1976
- 49 and 51 High Street. Grade II. 1/18. Listed 1976
- 53, 55, 57 and 59 High Street. Grade II. 1/93. Listed 1976
- 61 and 63 High Street. Grade II. 1/94. Listed 1976
- 67 and 69 High Street. Grade II. 1/95. Listed 1976
- 79 High Street. Grade II. 1/96. Listed 1976
- 123 and 125 High Street. Grade II. 3/21. Listed 1948
- 127 and 129 High Street. Grade II. 3/103. Listed 1948
- 131 High Street. Grade II\*. 3/22. Listed 1948

- Church of The Holy Trinity High Street. Grade B. 3/104. Listed 1976
- 133 (The Coach and Horses Inn) High Street. Grade II. 3/24. Listed 1976
- The Old Cottage High Street. Grade II. 2/105. Listed 1948
- 6 High Street. Grade II. 1/47. Listed 1948
- 10 High Street. Grade II. 1/106. Listed 1976
- 12 High Street. Grade II. 1/107. Listed 1976
- 14 and 16 High Street. Grade II. 1/108. Listed 1976
- 18 High Street. Grade II. 1/109. Listed 1976
- 20 High Street. Grade II. 1/110. Listed 1976
- Trigg's Barn High Street. Grade II. 733/0/10016. Listed 1999?
- 26 High Street. Grade II. 1/113. Listed 1980
- 28 and 28A High Street. Grade II. 1/114. Listed 1980
- 30 High Street. Grade II. 1/115. Listed 1980
- 40 and 42 High Street. Grade II. 1/46. Listed 1976
- 60 (The White Lion Inn) High Street. Grade II. 1/45. Listed 1948
- 62 High Street. Grade II. 1/44. Listed 1976
- 64 High Street. Grade II. 1/43. Listed 1948
- 66 High Street. Grade II. 1/42. Listed 1948
- 68 High Street. Grade II. 1/41. Listed 1948
- 70 and 72 High Street. Grade II. 1/39. Listed 1948
- 72A High Street. Grade II. 1/40. Listed 1976
- 80 (The Red Lion Inn) High Street. Grade II. 1/38. Listed 1948
- 82 High Street. Grade II. 1/37. Listed 1948
- 84 and 84A High Street. Grade II. 1/36. Listed 1948
- 86, 86A and 88 High Street. Grade II. 1/35. Listed 1948
- 92 and 92A High Street. Grade II. 1/33. Listed 1976
- 94, 96 and 98 High Street. Grade II\*. 1/32. Listed 1948
- 104 High Street. Grade II. 1/119. Listed 1976
- 106 High Street. Grade II. 1/31. Listed 1948
- 108 High Street. Grade II. 1/120. Listed 1976
- 110 and 112 High Street. Grade II. 3/30. Listed 1976
- 114 High Street. Grade II. 3/121. Listed 1976
- 132 (Marquis of Lorne Public House) High Street. Grade II. 3/122. Listed 1976
- 136 High Street. Grade II. 3/123. Listed 1976
- 154 High Street (4 London Road). Grade II\*. 3/68. Listed 1975
- 156 - 8 High Street (6 and 8 London Road). Grade II. 3/69. Listed 1975
- 160 High Street (10b Moss Villa London Road). Grade II. 3/127. Listed 1976
- 1 and 3 Middle Row. Grade II. 1/128. Listed 1976
- 5 Middle Row. Grade II. 1/129. Listed 1948
- 7 and 9 Middle Row. Grade II. 1/130. Listed 1948
- 9A Middle Row. Grade II. 1/131. Listed 1976
- 11 Middle Row. Grade II. 1/13A. Listed 1948
- 13 Middle Row. Grade II. 1/133. Listed 1976
- 15 and 17 Middle Row. Grade II. 1/134. Listed 1976
- 23 and 25 (Watton Cottage) Middle Row. Grade II. 1/135. Listed 1976
- 2 Middle Row. Grade II. 1/136. Listed 1976
- 4 Middle Row. Grade II. 1/137. Listed 1976
- 2 Letchmore Road. Grade II\*. 3/23. Listed 1948
- 2 James Way. Grade II. 1/141. Listed 1976

### Key Locally Important Buildings

4.72 Buildings of importance to the conservation area ("Local List" buildings) are indicated on the conservation area map forming part of this report. Unlisted buildings of particular importance to the Old Town conservation area are:

- Alleyne's School, Bowling Green (Victorian extension to front)  
Single storey red brick building with side buttresses. Flemish bond. Tiled roof with open timber bell tower (gothic style) and bell. Mullion and transom timber windows to north elevation. Large pointed arched timber window to west elevation. Single storey building attached to west elevation with decorated parapet and smaller windows. Boundary wall abuts. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 4 Bowling Green  
Two storey brick symmetrical house. Tiled gabled roof. Two storey bays to front each with sloping roof into a gablet and central door with fanlight. Decorative barge boards and finials to each gablet. Mainly timber sash windows. Brick dentil decoration to ground floor above windows. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- War Memorial / trough on the Bowling Green  
Stone trough with inscription from the 'Sermon on the Mount' *Blessed are the merciful for they will obtain mercy* (Matthew 5:7). Erected by the Stevenage Band of Mercy. Dated 1908.
- Drinking fountain on the Bowling Green  
Probable marble drinking fountain. Not in use. May date to the late Victorian/early Edwardian period.
- 2 High Street (shop)  
Single storey red brick building with room in attic. Tiled half-hipped roof facing road. Shop front and doorway with sash window above and ornings to both. Currently named 'Flourist on the Green'. May date to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Possible out building to the neighbouring 'Old Cottage', a timber framed listed building.
- 8 High Street  
Two storey red brick building. Slate gabled roof. Stone lintels to UPVC windows. Carriage way to south with doors. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 22 High Street  
Two storey red brick building. Mainly Flemish bond with blue headers. Blue brick quoins and around windows. Tiled hipped roof behind a parapet. Timber windows with Tudor-style drip moulding to first floor. 6 panelled door with square fanlight. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 24 High Street, Springfield House (Community Centre)  
Two storey red brick building. Mainly Flemish bond. Yellow stock brick around windows. Tiled hipped roof, kneelers to central gable. Pointed arch opening to gable with drip moulding. Closed brick front porch with tile kneelers, Tudor-style arched opening with drip moulding. Timber windows with Tudor-style drip moulding to first floor and fish scale tiled hoods to projecting ground floor windows. Octagonal shafts to chimneys. 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed cottage survives as kitchens, but mainly 19<sup>th</sup> century.

- 34 and 36 High Street (shops)  
Two storey building divided into two properties. Shop fronts to both. Low pitch gabled slate roof. Decorative timber framing to first floor with crissal windows. Side sloping roof with diamond leaded window. 18<sup>th</sup> century, later facade.
- 38 High Street (Library)  
Two storey red brick building, now library. Shop front to ground floor with door. Brick and stone bay to first floor with columns and dentilled cornice. Tiled gable roof facing the road. Timber sash windows to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Building to the rear of 40 High Street (offices)  
Two storey red brick building. Slate gable roof. Timber sash windows to first floor. Possible 19<sup>th</sup> century workshop.
- Building to the rear of 42 High Street (offices)  
Two storey brick building with render to first floor. Painted cream and peach with doors to ground floor and large window/door above. Slate gable roof with brick decoration at gable eaves. West elevation with timber windows, small modern coloured glass window to east side. Security bars to all openings. Possible former chapel/meeting house.
- 44 High Street (takeaway)  
Single storey building with attics and two dormers. Probably timber framed with tiled gable roof. Front bay with timber windows and door. Timber casement to dormers. Possibly 17<sup>th</sup> century, later facade.
- 46 High Street (takeaway)  
Two storey red brick building. Shop front to ground floor with door. Cantled bay to first floor with gable and decorative timber framing. Tiled gable roof. Timber casements to first floor. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 54 High Street (shop)  
Two storey red brick building. Projecting ground floor shop front with dentilled cornice and a door. Tiled gable roof. Four timber sashes to first floor. Probably dates to the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 56 High Street (shop)  
Two storey red brick building. Shop front with door. Tiled gable roof. Dentilled brick cornice to eaves. Two windows with a pair of timber sashes to first floor. Probably dates to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 58 High Street (shop)  
Two storey red brick building. Shop front with door. Tiled gable roof. Dentilled brick cornice to eaves. Two timber sash windows to first floor. Some timber windows, some UPVC windows to side elevation. Probably dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Buildings to rear 62 High Street (The White Lion Inn)  
A one and a half storey and a single storey building, both with several large openings with timber doors, some since brick blocked. Tiled hipped roof. Two loading hatches in roof, one with gablet. Former stables and carriage store.

- 74 High Street (shops and offices)  
Three storey red brick building. Hipped slate roof. Shop front to ground floor with two doors. Seven UPVC windows to first floor and repeated to third floor. Timber surrounds with scroll bracket supporting a plain cornice to all first floor windows. Timber surrounds to third floor windows. Brackets to cornice at eaves. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 76 and 78 High Street (restaurant and offices)  
Two storey red brick building with four attic dormers. Tiled gable roof. Timber shop front to ground floor. Two doors, south door with timber Greek style doorcase, plain fanlight labelled with 'Lines House'. North doorway is on the corner of the building. Four single pane sash windows to first floor. Four timber casement dormers. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 90 High Street (bank)  
Two storey brick building, plastered front. Tiled gable roof. Timber shop front to ground floor with cornice and doorway. Four single pane sash windows to first floor. Two UPVC windows to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century, possibly earlier.
- 116 High Street (restaurant)  
Two storey brick building. Tiled gable roof. Timber shop front to ground floor with doorway. A bay, a single and a pair of sash windows to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 118 High Street (shop)  
Two storey brick building. Tiled gable roof. Projecting timber shop front to ground floor with cornice and doorway. Two brick headed casement windows to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 120 High Street (shop)  
Two storey brick building. Tiled gable roof. Timber shop front to ground floor with doorway. One brick headed casement window to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 122 High Street (Dew Drop Inn - Restaurant)  
Single storey brick building. Part timber part cast iron shop front with pilasters (Corinthian style heads) and dentilled cornice. Recessed front door with mosaic tile floor to doorway. Possibly 18<sup>th</sup> century, later facade.
- 166 – 172 High Street  
Two storey brick building. Slate gable roof with some decorative barge boards. Three doorways to the front with stone lintels and a large brick headed carriage opening with timber doors at the north end. Four windows to ground floor, five windows to first floor. Some timber sashes, some UPVC. All with stone lintels. Decorative canted timber bay first floor window to north side with arch headed multi-paned window below. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 13 High Street, The Post Office and Clubhouse  
Two storey brick building, plastered to first floor with brick to edges exposed as quoins. Slate gable roof. Stone block sill. Timber shop front with cornice. A pair and two single timber sash windows to first floor. Semi-circular decoration above first floor window in gable. Some UPVC windows to side elevation. Boundary wall in tact with posts. Late 19<sup>th</sup> / early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- 39 and 39A High Street (shop)  
Two storey brick building, partly pebble dashed, with large tile hung dormer. Tiled gable roof. Modern shop front to ground floor, entered from the side in single storey 20<sup>th</sup> century rear extension. Tile hung wall to north side gable. Two windows to first floor, each divided into three sashes. Casement window to dormer. Late 19<sup>th</sup> / early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 41 and 41A High Street (shop)  
Two storey brick building, partly pebble dashed, with large tile hung dormer. Tiled gable roof. Timber shop front to ground floor with door. Single storey 20<sup>th</sup> century rear extension. Two windows to first floor, each divided into three sashes. Casement window to dormer. Possibly 19<sup>th</sup> century core, later alteration to insert dormers and rear extension.
- 65 High Street (shop and offices)  
Three storey brick building. Tiled gable roof, with decorative barge boards. Shop front to ground floor with door. Two sash windows to first floor and second floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 71 and 71A High street (café and shop)  
Two storey brick building. Some decorative timber framing to ground floor. Tiled hipped roof, brick dentils to eaves. Timber shop front to ground floor with door, other windows to front and side elevation on Albert Street. Four crittel windows to front, eight to side elevation. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 81 - 83 High Street (shops)  
Two storey brick building. Slate gabled roof. Timber shop front to ground floor with two doors and cornice. Three sash windows to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 85 - 87 High Street (shops)  
Two storey red brick building. Tiled gabled roof with central gable facing the street. Timber shop front to ground floor with two doors. One orning. Three windows to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 89 - 91 High Street (shop)  
Two storey brick building. Slate/asbestos tile gabled roof. Timber shop front to ground floor with central and side doors. Five sash windows to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 93 High Street (shop)  
Two storey brick building. Slate gabled roof. Timber shop front to ground floor with central and side doors. Five UPVC windows to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Buildings to rear of 93 High Street  
Two storey brick building. Slate gabled roof. Large modern door, two casement windows and single door facing onto Church Street. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 95 High Street (shop)  
Two storey brick building. Slate gabled roof. Shop front to ground floor with a door. A sash window to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 97 High Street (shop)  
Two storey brick building. Slate gabled roof. Shop front to ground floor with a door. Three sash windows to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.



- 99 High Street, The White Hart Public House  
Two storey brick building. Pebble dashed first floor. All front painted yellow. Tiled gabled roof. Four windows to the ground floor, two sash, two casement. Pilastered doorcase with scrolls supporting gabled head. Four sash windows to first floor, one is a canted bay. 18<sup>th</sup> century, rebuilt 1829 after a fire.
- Buildings and wall to rear 99 High Street  
Single storey yellow brick building. Slate gabled roof. Hatch facing onto Church Street. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 101 and 101A High Street (shop)  
Two storey brick building. Slate gabled roof. Two shop fronts to ground floor with two pilasters and two doors. Three sash windows to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 103 High Street (shop)  
Two storey brick building. Slate gabled roof. Shop front to ground floor with a door. One UPVC window to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 105 High Street (shop)  
Two storey brick building. Slate gabled roof. Large windows to front on ground floor with a door. Timber doorcase with hood and panelled sides. Three sash windows to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 107 – 109 High Street (takeaway and shop)  
Two storey brick building. Slate gabled roof. Projecting bay shop fronts to ground floor with a door. Door to south end with orning. Carriage way with iron gates. Five sash windows to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 111 High Street (shop)  
Two storey brick building. Slate gabled roof. Projecting shop front to ground floor with a door. Two sash windows to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 113 High Street (takeaway)  
Two storey brick building. Tiled gabled roof. Projecting shop front to ground floor with a door. Two UPVC windows to first floor. 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century, altered façade.
- Buildings to rear 115 and 117 High Street  
Two buildings. One single storey red brick building with slate roof and some openings into courtyard. Brick boundary wall attached. One two storey red brick building with slate gabled roof. Several openings into courtyard; carriage way, three windows and a first floor loading hatch. Loading hatch to gabled end facing Church Street. Brick boundary wall also attached. 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mouldens Brewery.
- 1 and 1A Albert Street  
Two storey red brick angled building. Tiled gabled roof, hipped at corner. Decorative timber framing with yellow brick infill to ground floor, some in herringbone pattern. Two crittal windows to first floor.

- 1 and 2 Ditchmore Lane  
Semi-detached brick villa style two storey house. Slate hipped roof. Two ground floor bays with dentilled cornices. Two front doors. Four first floor windows, two with rounded heads. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3 and 4 Ditchmore Lane  
Semi-detached red brick gothic style two storey house. Tiled gable roof with fish scales, two gables facing the road. Slate hipped roof. Two ground floor bays with UPVC windows, dentilled cornices and sloping roofs. Two front doors set in gothic style rendered porch with decorative parapet. Six first floor UPVC windows. Brick decoration above windows in gables. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 5 Ditchmore Lane  
Detached brick symmetrical villa style two storey house. Slate hipped roof. Two ground floor bays with sash windows and sloping roofs. Central front door with plain fanlight. Three first floor sash windows. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 6 Ditchmore Lane (veterinary centre)  
Detached brick symmetrical villa style two storey house with dormers. Slate hipped roof. Two ground floor sash windows, three first floor sash windows. Central front rendered porch door with cornice and plain fanlight. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Stevenage Methodist Church, High Street  
Single storey red brick building with some white render and yellow brick dressings. Slate gabled roof. Semi-circular tower to west front corner Corinthian style pilasters. Large rounded headed windows. Decorative windows to west above double doorway. Date stone of 1876. Large 1970's extension to rear, not included.
- Stevenage Knitting Company Clothing Factory, Sish Lane  
Single storey brick building, plastered with buttresses. Slate gabled roof. Some timber boarded to end. Mixture of timber and UPVC windows. Two doors. 19<sup>th</sup> century. Attached at west side is a single storey mid 20<sup>th</sup> century brick structure with a gambrel style roof with a flat top in corrugated iron/asbestos, with a series of windows in the roof. Door and window to west wall.
- 8 Sish Lane (shown as 1 and 2 on the map)  
Two storey brick house, divided into two properties. Tiled gable roof to main house and extension, and also to attached garage. Four first floor windows, three ground floor windows. Some casements, some sash, some possibly decorative iron framed. Two porches with doorways. Large chimney to rear. 18<sup>th</sup> century, possibly earlier.
- 12 Sish Lane  
Two storey brick house, plastered and painted. Slate gable roof. 19<sup>th</sup> century, possibly earlier. Unable to see clearly.
- 2 North Road (Bury Mead)  
Two storey red brick building with three-tier bell tower (top tier is octagonal and pierced with rounded headed arches). Slate gabled roof. Gothic style arched doorway at base of tower and lead cover to roof with finial. UPVC windows throughout. Part 19<sup>th</sup> century with large 20<sup>th</sup> century extension to rear. Former Old School Masters House for the Stevenage National School

- 11 Walkern Road (shop)  
Two storey red brick building. Slate gabled roof. Three gables facing the road. Shop front bay window and door with two additional ground floor windows. Three UPVC windows to first floor. 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 15, 17 and 19 Walkern Road  
Two storey red brick building. Rendered with decorative timber work to the first floor. Projecting central bay with gable and two gablets to properties either side. Slate gabled roof with three small box dormers. Three ground floor bay windows and three casements. Mixture of timber and UPVC windows. Three porches, two open sided. 1894 date stone, and EVM initials. (Edward Vincent Methold).
- 14 Walkern Road (dental practice)  
Two storey brick building. Slate gable roof with ridge tiles and finials. Painted brickwork. Some decorative timber work to the jettied first floor and also side gable. Canted bay window to side elevation. Selection of timber casements. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- The Twitchell, Church Lane  
Two storey red brick building, part rendered, with two gabled dormers. Flint walling and weather boarding to west wall. Slate gable roof. Mixed timber casements and UPVC windows. Two large doorways with timber doors to end of property. Late 18<sup>th</sup> / early 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- The Corner House, Church Lane/Stanmore Road  
Two storey red brick building. Slate gable roof. Four windows with timber sashes facing Church Street, one ground floor bay with slate sloping roof. Door facing Stanmore Road with three other timber windows, two sash. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2 Church Lane  
Two storey red brick building. Slate gable roof. UPVC window, door and carriage way with gates to the ground floor. Two UPVC windows to first floor. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 4 Church Lane  
Two storey red brick building. Tiled gable roof. UPVC windows throughout, two to ground floor, one bay with sloping tiled roof, and two to first floor. Door recessed. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 6 Church Lane  
Two storey red brick building. Tiled gable roof. UPVC windows throughout. Two storey bay with hung tiles with two windows. Ground floor bay with hood, single window above. Door with gabled porch. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 13 and 15 Church Lane  
Semi-detached two storey red brick building. Slate hipped roof with ridge tiles and finials. Rendered first floor with decorative timber work. Two projecting bay windows to ground floor with slate canopy across and over door doorways. All UPVC windows. Dated 1895.

- 16 Church Lane  
Engine house. Built 1835 following the 1829 fire in the town. Abuts almshouses. Single storey red brick building. Hipped tile roof. Two double doors to front.
- 17 Church Lane  
Two storey red brick building with tower of three floors to front. Tiled gable roof with ridge tiles and finials. Conical tiled roof to tower. Rendered first floor with decorative timber work. One timber window to ground and first floor, and ground floor door next to tower. Dated 1895 with initials EVM (Edward Vincent Methold).
- 27 Church Lane (buildings and wall to rear 69 High Street)  
Two storey red brick building. Slate gabled roof. Ground floor door (partly infilled with brick from a larger carriage way) and two windows, first floor loading hatch. 19<sup>th</sup> century.

- 4.73 Some of the buildings listed above have appeared on a list of locally important buildings produced by Hertfordshire County Council, in the Urban Characterisation Study and in the Stevenage Extensive Urban Survey Report (Hertfordshire County Council 1973; Thompson forthcoming; Thompson 2002). Other buildings have been added during this review. This list is not intended to be exhaustive record of buildings located in the conservation area, but it defines those which may warrant inclusion on a “local list”.

#### **Scheduled monuments and archaeological potential**

- 4.74 There is one scheduled monument in the conservation area; the Old Malthouse and Kiln at Thomas Alleyene’s School, High Street (HER no. SM 53). It is also a grade II listed building.
- 4.75 While limited archaeological investigation has taken place, the High Street has been an important north-south route from at least the medieval period until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, and possibly even as far back as the Roman period. Therefore there is moderate potential for finding medieval and possibly Roman remains along the High Street. Expected remains could include property boundaries, uses of the market place, uses of rear plots, early previously undocumented inns and other building types, stream beds and pond features.

#### **Problem Areas**

- 4.76 The most significant issue that affects the character of the Bowling Green and that end of the conservation area in general is the road layout and traffic fed into the top of the High Street off North Road / Lytton Way. This effectively turns the Bowling Green and adjacent area of the High Street into a roundabout with much traffic coming in but going straight out again on James Way. This is not traffic that wants to use businesses on the High Street, it is simply through traffic routed into the top (one-way) section of the High Street. It includes heavy goods vehicles and is fast moving. The consequences are high noise levels, difficulty for pedestrians, and sterilisation of use the Green. The Bowling Green is reduced to an area of “visual amenity” – pleasant to look at but not pleasant to spend time in. The contrast with other parts of the conservation area is marked.
- 4.77 11 Church Lane is a Grade II listed building that is in an “at risk” condition.

### **Suggested boundary changes**

- 4.78 As part of the review, boundary extension to incorporate areas to the east of Church Lane was considered. These comprise houses of 19<sup>th</sup> century or later construction. There was no indication that conservation area controls were necessary or appropriate. The great majority houses had already undergone changes to fenestration, doors, roof coverings or other alterations. It was also concluded that these streets did not share the characteristics of the existing conservation area.
- 4.79 The inclusion of the tree-lined path known as The Avenue was mooted during the review on the basis of its being a historic route between the Old Town and St Nicholas. The ends of this route are already included within the respective conservation areas. It is doubtful that including the whole of the route within a long thin boundary would have any practical purpose in terms of the primary conservation controls which are over demolition of buildings or works to trees. The trees lining The Avenue are/can be protected by a Tree Preservation Order. At the time of the review, The Avenue is covered by a policy in the Stevenage District Plan EN15 (Ancient Lanes & Associated Hedgerows) which seeks to protect these from development.
- 4.80 Other boundaries are in effect, fixed by the road system. The forthcoming County Council's Urban Characterisation Study observed that the Old Town conservation area and the study's zone 1 (the medieval market town) were generally coterminous (except at the south end). No boundary changes are suggested therefore.

### **Summary**

- 4.81 The High Street has largely retained its general appearance since its designation as a conservation area. It still provides a range of services beyond those of a purely local centre. Recently, a number of shops have closed and have been converted into "super-pubs" or restaurants. The Local Plan does however contain policy on "Primary Shopping Frontages" within which no further loss of shops will be permitted.
- 4.82 Since designation there has been a significant amount of the change of use of buildings and redevelopment of "Works" or similar yards behind the High Street frontage and replacement with residential generally, development. Where changes of use are acceptable in principle, existing buildings in these plots should be retained. If re-use as dwellings is not possible, they should be given ancillary uses.
- 4.83 Demolitions (some are referred to under "Impact of new Development" above) need to be thoroughly considered according to the criteria set out in PPG 15 (or replacement) and bearing in mind the statement there at paragraph 4.27 that "The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area".
- 4.84 Historic inns are a feature of the High Street and those remaining should be retained in such use.

### **Design / management imperatives**

- 4.85 Continue to ensure shopfront grills on units in Middle Row are of the current demountable type.

- 4.86 Resolve the road layout / traffic problem caused by North Road / Lytton Way feeding through James Way.
- 4.87 An Article 4 Direction should be introduced to ensure appropriate windows when replacements are contemplated.
- 4.88 Behind High Street frontages, rear stores / workshops to be retained not demolished.
- 4.89 Yards running between and behind some buildings to be retained open.
- 4.90 Roofs to be of simple pitched, gabled form and characteristic building orientation and scale to be maintained.
- 4.91 Open spaces to be retained as such.



Figure 44. Old Town (North) Conservation Area





Figure 45. Old Town (South) Conservation Area

### History

- 4.92 The manor of Stevenage, recorded as 'Sticenaece' or 'Stithenaece', was given to the Abbey of Westminster by the Crown in 1062. The development of the Old Town, which comprises Bowling Green, Middle Row and the High Street, known as Fore Street until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, was initiated by the Abbot when he granted a market in 1281. First, temporary structures would have been erected around Middle Row and the Bowling Green. These were replaced by more permanent buildings set within burgage plots laid along the side of the road. A Market Cross formerly stood in Middle Row, near the Old Castle Inn, now the Nat West Bank. Thomas Alleyne, Rector of Stevenage in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, founded three grammar schools, one of which survives near Bowling Green at Bury Mead.



Figure 46. 1766 Map of Stevenage Old Town (Dury and Andrews)



Figure 47. The Grange early 20th century (Ashby 2002)

- 4.93 The road was an important factor in the development of the Old Town. The Great North Road brought prosperity from trade and from the general traffic to and from London. By the 17th century the new owners of the manor, the

Lyttons of Knebworth, did not discourage the growing development of the town. Market traders, stage coaches, mail coaches and post-chaises stopped and rested in the town. Subsequently, a series of coaching inns and public houses were built; The Swan Inn, The Coach and Horses, The White Lion, The Red Lion, The White Hart, The Yorkshire Grey/White Horse, The Baker's Arms, The Old Castle Inn and The Falcon - which is thought to be the oldest licensed building in the town. The Swan Inn on Bowling Green was the largest coaching station in the town and in 1667 was said to have 'the best host I know' according to Samuel Pepys. A maltings was also built to supply the local inns in the town.

- 4.94 During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries a system of road tolls were introduced. In 1663 the Great North Road was the first turnpike road to be designated, and in 1720 the Stevenage-Biggleswade Trust took over the organisation of repairs and toll collection. Outside The Coach and Horses a tollgate was built, and members of the Trust held meetings at The Yorkshire Grey. The Old Castle Inn is famous locally for its publican, Mr Henry Trigg, who on his death in 1724 was laid to rest in his coffin within the rafters of a barn to the rear.



Figure 48. Middle Row and the High Street, c1900 (Madgin 2001)

- 4.95 By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Old Town had become established and was well known for its cattle market, probably held near to Middle Row (Figs. 46 & 47). At the south end there were ponds and fields where cattle could rest while being driven to London, bringing more trade to the inns. The town's lock-up and parish workhouse, now 2 Letchmore Road, were constructed there in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1765 the parish vestry opened a 'pest house' just outside the town for the isolation of small pox patients. Buildings lined the High Street on both sides up to Bowling Green and also the market area along Middle Row (Fig. 48). Further development occurred along Back Lane / Church Lane, and Letchmore Road toward Letchmore Green. The oldest buildings stand near Bowling Green and on the west side of the High Street (Figs. 48 & 49).
- 4.96 Few older buildings remain on the east side of the High Street due to a number of fires in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Avenue, a row of Limes and Horse Chestnut trees located north of the Grammar School along a footpath leading north east towards St Nicholas Church, was first planted in 1756 / 57. Although much replaced in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was originally constructed by the Rector, Nicholas Cholwell.



Figure 49. North end of Bowling Green, c1900 (Ashby 2004)

- 4.97 By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Old Town prosperity of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century was affected by the construction of the railway in 1850 west of the town (Fig. 50). Stagecoaches no longer passed through the centre of the old town which led to the closure of some inns and public houses. However shops and offices thrived, and the first Stevenage Post Office opened in the High Street at no. 63. Industries such as maltings, breweries, brick kilns, lime kilns and saw mills were well established within the town. In addition, the opening of the ESA factory in 1883 to the west bought new employment to Stevenage and prosperity back into the town. Although the parish church of St Nicholas stood north of the town, the Church of the Holy Trinity was constructed in 1861 at the south end of the High Street. It was built by Arthur Blomfield, nephew of Canon Blomfield (Stevenage Rector and son of the Bishop of London) on the site of a former pond (Fig. 51).



Figure 50. 1884 Ordnance Survey Map of Stevenage (www.old-maps.com)



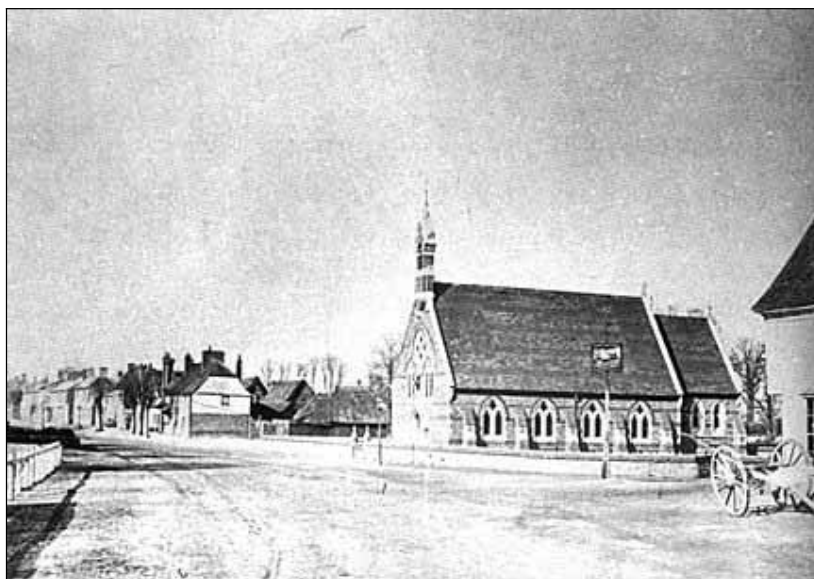


Figure 51. Holy Trinity Church at the south end of the High Street c1900 (Ashby 2002)

- 4.98 Along Church Lane at its north end a group of cottages were built by Edward Vincent Methold, a Stevenage builder and local historian (Fig. 52). They bear his initials, 'EVM', and the date 1895. South of these, a fire engine house and almshouses were constructed. The almshouses, originally built by Reverend Stephen Hellard in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, were re-built after the fire of 1807. Church Lane continued to provide access to fields, meadows and small holdings east of the High Street, also known as Dead Lane / Dead Land, and animal pounds. The workhouse on the corner of Letchmore Road closed in 1835 and was later rented by Stevenage Gas and Coke Company as offices and accommodation.



Figure 52. Church Lane in 1914 (Ashby 2004)

- 4.99 Along the High Street in the town, the Cromwell Hotel obtained a license and opened in the early 1930s (Fig. 53). Although probably built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and altered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it comprises two houses. Expansion at the edges of the town slowed down in the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century until the advent of the 1946 New Towns Act. Stevenage was designated as the first New Town,

which included demolition of some buildings to the east of the Old Town and the construction of a neighbourhood. The first building of new town development was Stony Hall, Sish Lane a seven-storey block of flats designed by Yorke, Rosenberg & Mardall in 1952 with a planted area and a number of four-storey flats. The year before they had also designed Barclay School located at the north end of the High Street to the east near the allotments.



Figure 53. Cromwell Hotel 1955  
(Ashby 2002)

- 4.100 The Great North Road was designated the A1 and by the early 1960s the bypass, A1(M), was constructed removing all through traffic in the town (Fig. 54). In the 1966 Master Plan much demolition to the east and west of the High Street was proposed to allow more residential and industrial areas to be built, and included the realignment of Church Lane.

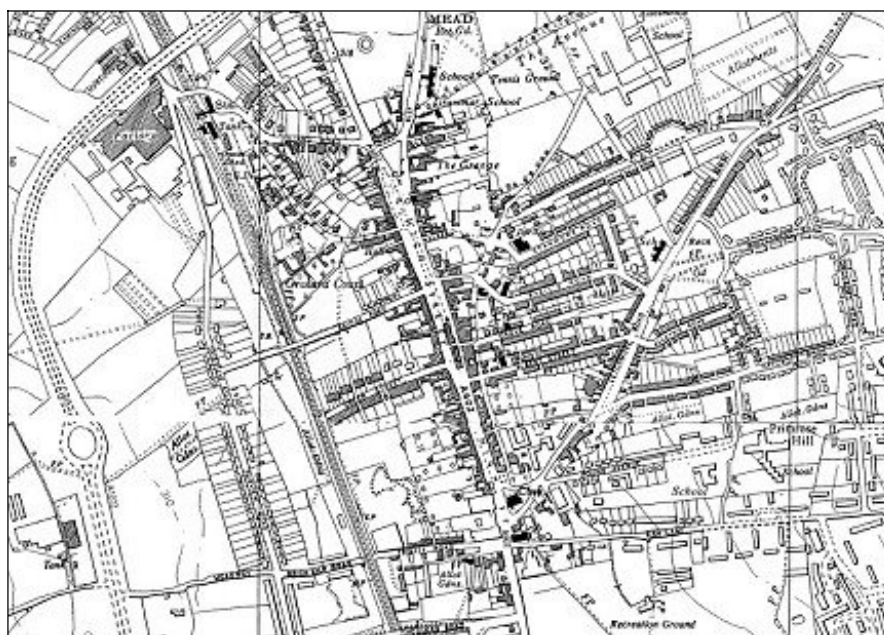


Figure 54. 1960 Ordnance Survey Map of the Old Town

## Shephall Green Conservation Area



**Figure 55. Photographs of Shephall Green Conservation Area**

From left to right: The Green and its well; St Mary's Church; Fullers Mead & Mead Cottages; terraces on Shephall Green; the Red Lion Public House; Old School House; The Green and houses on the Green



### **Designation**

- 4.101 The Conservation Area of Shephall Green was designated in 1973. Shephall Green; a study for the conservation of an old village within a new town' published by Stevenage Urban District Council circa 1973, proposed the conservation area designation.

### **Reasons for designation**

- 4.102 To preserve '...the nucleus of the old village which still survives as such within the new town...' ensuring that its character survives the pressures for change and to help the assimilation of new development and redevelopment into the landscape of the village.

### **General description (Figs. 55 & 56)**

- 4.103 Shephall Green is within a residential area south-east of the town centre and consists of a number of detached and semi-detached houses of varying heights and frontages, grouped around a narrow triangular green. The Church of St Mary and its graveyard lie at the north-east of the green. Trees in the graveyard and on the perimeters of the Green (paragraph 4.135; Fig. 59) are a significant feature of the conservation area.

### **Setting and Focal Points**

- 4.104 Within the setting of the New Town neighbourhood of Shephall lies the village after which it was named.
- 4.105 It is approached directly from the surrounding housing areas to the north off Hydean Way via either the broader western branch of Shephall Green or the narrower eastern lane.
- 4.106 From the south, the approach is directly under Broadhall Way from the south.
- 4.107 The two northern approaches are along bends which gradually reveal the Green as the focal feature. From the narrow end to the south, the Green gradually widens out.
- 4.108 The Green is framed by the buildings, hedges and trees around its edges. Particularly important backdrops are the churchyard, church and the group of 19<sup>th</sup> century and earlier buildings along the north arc of Shephall Green at the wider, north end of the Green.

### **Important Spaces**

- 4.109 The key spaces are the Green itself and the churchyard – the core of the conservation area around which buildings are clustered. These spaces contain trees that are hugely visually important and some are also of historic significance such as the old Yew tree within the churchyard between the Church and the Green.
- 4.110 Spaces within Shephall Green are characteristically delineated primarily by hedges and in the case of the churchyard by the low flint wall. Surfacing is of coarse grass. The footways are tarmaced and kerbs are recent "conservation" stone lengths.

### **Architectural & Historic Qualities of the buildings.**

- 4.111 The ages of the buildings here are thoroughly mixed (except that those along road at the northern end of the Green are older buildings). They range from the church to detached houses of the 1960s / 70s and some recent school

buildings. The older buildings being the ones that lend the area its special architectural and historic interest.

- 4.112 On the south east side of the green are mid 20<sup>th</sup> century houses and on the north west side later 20<sup>th</sup> century houses. Aside from their intrinsic interest, the older buildings amongst or close to these are important for “tying-in” the 20<sup>th</sup> century housing to the overall character. What the variously aged houses have in common includes that they are of modest size, of two storeys, and are facing the Green (The Old Rectory is the exception but this of course had a special relationship with the church). Indeed, the way the houses are arranged around the Green is an important determinant of the conservation area’s character.
- 4.113 Roof ridges generally run parallel with the Green but gables are common. Brickwork is generally of brown tones and roof coverings are mostly small tiles and on some Victorian buildings, slate.
- 4.114 Unsurprisingly, the school buildings do not relate particularly to prevailing patterns here. It is however, notable in terms of land use, that school buildings have been part of the make up of the village since certainly the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (only the former school house now survives).

#### **Trees**

- 4.115 There are a significant number of mature trees which are part of the character of the conservation area. These are,
- along the north, east and west perimeters of the Green
  - at the south end of the green just before Shephall Green Lane meets the dual carriageway of Broadhall Way
  - along the south side of the path at the north east corner of the conservation area behind 88 – 98 (even) Hydean Way
  - within the churchyard
- 4.116 The Norway Maple trees located at the north end of the green were planted in memory of Cllr Fred Millard. The large mature Oak at south end of the Green was planted by Miss Evelyn Heathcote as part of the celebrations to mark the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935.

#### **Listed Buildings**

- 4.117 Statutorily listed Buildings are listed below, but are not described here so as to avoid duplication of the list descriptions.
- Church of Saint Mary. Grade II\*. 733/5/58. Listed in 1999
  - The Old Rectory. Grade II. 5/150. Listed 1976
  - Shephalbury Farmhouse. Grade II. 5/60. Listed 1948
  - 23 Shephall Green. Grade II. 5/10000. Listed 1993

#### **Key Locally Important Buildings**

- 4.118 Buildings of importance to the conservation area (“Local List” buildings) are indicated on the conservation area map forming part of this report. Unlisted buildings of particular importance to the Shephall Green conservation area are:
- Fullers Mead and Mead Cottage, 4 and 5 Shephall Green  
Single story dwelling sub-divided into two units. Probably late 16<sup>th</sup> / early 17<sup>th</sup> century single storey cottage with rear addition. Timber framed. Tiled

roof with two dormers. External cement render. Modern timber diamond lattice windows with shutters to ground floor front.

- 5 Shephall Green  
2 storey red brick house with tiled roof. Flemish bond, some blue headers. Probably early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, replaced earlier building. Modern timber diamond lattice windows.
- 7 and 8 Shephall Green  
Pair of two storey yellow stock brick cottages with slate roof. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Two enclosed front porches. Timber sashes (no.7). UPVC double glazed windows (no.9).
- 9 Shephall Green  
Single storey cottage. Probably late 16<sup>th</sup> / early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Timber framed. External cement render. Enclosed front porch. Tiled roof with two dormers. UPVC windows.
- 10 and 11 Shephall Green  
Pair of two storey semi-detached houses in yellow stock brick with slate roof. Probably late 18<sup>th</sup> century with rear extensions. Timber sashes, 2-over-2 (no.10), 6-over-6 (no.11). Modern front porch to no.10. Weather-boarded single storey adjoined outhouse with corrugated roof to no.11.
- 12 and 13 Shephall Green  
Pair of two storey semi-detached houses in red brick, render to first floor. Tiled roof. Probably early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some timber windows, some UPVC windows.
- The Red Lion Public House, 14 Shephall Green  
Oldest part to the front, south elevation. Single storey red brick building with dormer 6-over-6 sash window in attic. Half hipped slate roof. Flemish bond with some blue headers. Probably dates to the late 17<sup>th</sup> / early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Later two and single storey extensions to rear with several different types of timber windows, and gabled tiled or slate roofs.
- 15 and 16 Shephall Green  
Pair of single storey semi-detached cottages with dormers and small roof light in attic. Red brick with tiled roof. Modern timber and UPVC windows to no.15, UPVC windows to no.16. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 46 Shephall Green  
Two storey red brick house. Stretcher bond to ground floor. Flemish bond with some tile hung walls to first floor. Tiled roof, part gabled, part hipped and half hipped. Timber open porch. Timber windows. Mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century former school house.
- Barn north of Shephalbury Farmhouse  
Timer framed and weather boarded barn on brick sill. Corrugated iron gabled roof. Two large air conditioning units attached to gabled end. Formerly part of Shephalbury Farm, now within grounds of Greenside School, possibly used as a classroom. May originally date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, contemporary with listed farmhouse. Heavily renovated and converted.

- 4.119 Some of the buildings listed above have appeared on a list of locally important buildings produced by Hertfordshire County Council, in the Urban Characterisation Study and in the Stevenage Extensive Urban Survey Report (Hertfordshire County Council 1973; Stevenage Urban District Council 1973; Thompson forthcoming; Thompson 2002). Other buildings have been added during this review. This list is not intended to be exhaustive record of buildings located in the conservation area, but it defines those which may warrant inclusion on a “local list”.

#### **Scheduled monuments and archaeological potential**

- 4.120 There are no scheduled monuments in the conservation area.
- 4.121 There have been no recorded archaeological finds. However there is potential for medieval and post medieval archaeology to be found near to the church.

#### **Impact of New Development**

- 4.122 New development since designation has consisted mainly of a small amount of in-fill (No.3, and either side of No.23), plus the frontage at Greenside school on the western side of the Green. These have had limited impact.
- 4.123 A careful approach needs to be taken concerning minor extensions (such as those to the front of the houses in the bottom right of Fig. 58) as these can affect the appearance of groups of buildings.

#### **Problem Areas**

- 4.124 The main issues appear to be vandalism (of the church’s lych gate for example) and parking pressure on the Green reportedly including parking on the Green at night and driving over the Green.
- 4.125 The visual amenity of the area at the north end of the Green is harmed by a proliferation of highways signage and waste bins - some free-standing, some on lamp-posts and some on sign-posts.

#### **Suggested boundary changes (Fig. 57)**

- 4.126 The boundary should protect the context of the Green and the buildings around it. So far, this has been protected by the existence of school playing fields as the adjoining land-use but there is no guarantee that this will be so indefinitely. The encroachment of further built development up to the houses around the green would threaten its “definition” as a separate entity from the surrounding housing areas thus radically altering its character. This would also be likely to add to pressure on the Green as an open space.
- 4.127 The playing fields are historically the agricultural fields that most closely bounded the village (as can be seen from the 1898 O.S. Map in Fig. 58) and their outer field boundaries have been preserved in the existing boundaries of the surrounding modern housing. These therefore, represent a justifiable boundary for the conservation area.

#### **Summary**

- 4.128 The conservation area as a discrete entity, has survived due to the “isolation” provided by the extensive school playgrounds, but will continue to be under pressure and require continued recognition of the need to preserve it.

**Design / management imperatives**

- 4.129 Deal with car parking on the Green and driving across it.
- 4.130 Removal/rationalisation of waste bins and highways signs.
- 4.131 The statutory “listing” of Nos.4 & 5 Shephall Green should be considered.



Figure 56. Shephall Green Conservation Area





Figure 57. Proposed boundary changes to Shephall Green Conservation Area

## History

- 4.132 The parish of Shephall was recorded as *Escepehale* situated in the Hundred of Broadwater in the Domesday Book of 1086. The estate land in and around the village comprised arable land, meadow and woodland, and was divided between the Abbot of St Albans Abbey and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Abbot Paul of St Albans soon regained all the parish land and its manor which it leased for the next 450 years.
- 4.133 The village developed around the Church of St Mary, which dates to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and probably worked on the land as tenants. In 1381 the people of Shephall fought against the Poll Tax of King Richard II by joining the Peasants revolt, led by Wat Tyler. They temporarily secured a number of rights, common pasture and right of way, from the Abbot. St Albans Abbey was dissolved in 1539 by King Henry VIII, and the manor given to George Nodes. The manor remained in the Nodes family until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century when it was sold to Michael Heathcote of London. Shephalbury Manor, located a short distance to the south of the green, was demolished and replaced by a new mansion house, a red brick neo-Gothic building by T Roger Smith, in 1864 by its owner Unwin Unwin-Heathcote (Fig. 14).
- 4.134 Since the 17<sup>th</sup> century a small number of farms were built, Broom Barns, Home Farm (Shephalbury Farmhouse on the Green), and the largest - Half Hyde. The population of Shephall is said to have remained stable over the centuries with many of its residents earning a living from a rural existence. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the population was steady at about 100, but by 1841 it had grown quickly to 265.

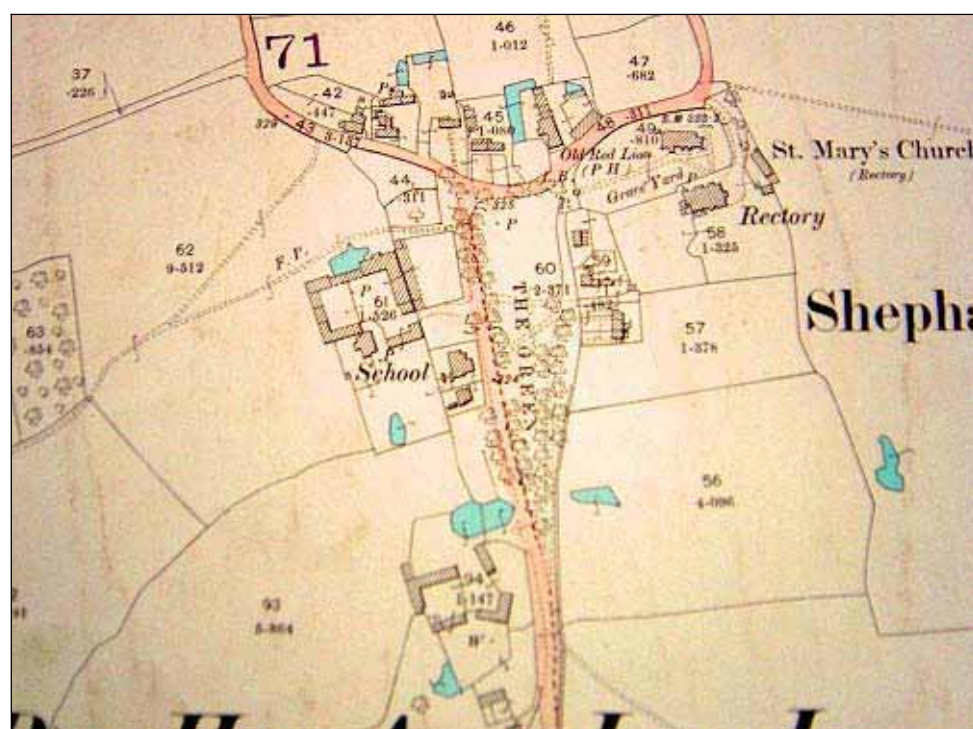


Figure 58. 1898 Ordnance Survey

- 4.135 The village was the largest settlement outside the Old Town and, as well as the church, comprised a small number of residential houses dating between the 17<sup>th</sup> and late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Red Lion Public House, the Rectory, farms and a school (Figs. 58, 59, 60 & 61). There were also a significant number of ponds

and trees located around the triangular-shaped village green with two main routes to the north of the village and one to the south.



Figure 59. The Green, Shephall c1900 (Ashby 2004)



Figure 60. Shephall School, now demolished, and School House, built 1865, still stands (Ashby 2002)



Figure 61. Fullers Mead Cottage, Mead Cottage and a brick and flint house since demolished (Ashby 2004)

- 4.136 In 1947 land around Shephall Green was compulsory purchased under the New Towns Act by Stevenage Development Corporation, and a new neighbourhood constructed in the early 1950s.



## Symonds Green Conservation Area



**Figure 62. Photographs of Symonds Green Conservation Area**

From left to right: The Common; Crooked Billet Public House; Willow Cottage; Oakfield Farmhouse; Thatched Cottage; Symonds Lodge, Symonds Green Lane

### **Designation**

- 4.137 The Conservation Area of Symonds Green was designated on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1977.

### **Reasons for designation**

- 4.138 Protection of buildings and their historic context as a remnant of a small agricultural hamlet typical within the new town designation area typical of that part of Hertfordshire to the west and north of Stevenage.

### **General description** (Figs. 62 & 63)

- 4.139 The conservation area is centred on the village green ie the common, the pond and the public house. These provide a sudden, surprising vista of rural appearance amongst an area of denser housing. It is approached via the narrow Symonds Green Lane which runs roughly north-south.

### **Setting and Focal Points**

- 4.140 Symonds Green lies on the western side of Stevenage so that the A1 forms one of its modern boundaries. Its eastern approach is via the Eastbury Avenue area of housing.

- 4.141 From the south, the Green is approached from a narrow lane which widens a little into a road where the houses start. West of this lies a field (now a sportsfield with a childrens play area (Meadway Park) with its bank & hedge to the west.

- 4.142 The southern end of Symonds Green Lane starts with houses on each side. At 'Thatched Cottage' and 'Longmeadows' the vista to the Green opens out. Other than the expanse of the Green, the most arresting focal point is The Crooked Billet Public House. Its visual appearance is therefore of major importance to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 4.143 The Green itself is framed predominantly by the hedges and trees around its edges. Buildings are few at this end and so not as strong a feature in the vistas towards the top of the conservation area as the natural landscape. At the northwest corner, a gentle curving hedged lane leads to and from the green and is terminated at the bridge that carries the Clovelly Way carriageway over it.

### **Important Spaces**

- 4.144 The basis of the conservation area is the Green itself, the eastern part of which has a rougher sward than that on the other side of the roadway. As mentioned above, hedges and trees dominate its edges and only at 'Greenside' and 'Willow Cottage' do buildings encroach. The ponds are key natural features and the wooded area around them is also a prominent feature when viewed from across the green.

- 4.145 A further evident feature is the channels of streams. Whilst the stream approaching the ponds from the east seemed to be functional, other streams appeared choked and poorly managed. The area of grass and recent tree planting west of the ponds is screened and has an enclosed character thus different from the main open space of the green. There is a small bramble and scrub dominated area reached via the footpath past 'Thatched Cottage' on what was once a route into the Green.

### **Architectural & Historic Qualities of the buildings**

- 4.146 The few buildings around the Green itself are not recent ie 'Thatched Cottage', The Crooked Billet Public House, 'Willow Cottage' and 'Greenside' next to it (though these all have been considerably altered and extended).
- 4.147 Along Symonds Green Lane on the southern approaches to the Green, the houses are 20<sup>th</sup> century ('Nursery Cottages' – the two pairs of cottages on the east side are possibly late 19<sup>th</sup> century). They are of modest size and appearance (though 'Longmeadows' is uncharacteristically larger), two storeys, but of various designs. In terms of orientation 'Thatched Cottage' is atypical in being oriented end-on to the road (the footpath it faces once having been part of Shepherds Lane, a significant route into the village).
- 4.148 The Newlyn Close, Southwold Close and 'Dunwick Farm' developments dominate this part of the conservation area and fail to relate well in layout or character to it.
- 4.149 The layout and design of the Blakeney Road (Humanist Housing Association) housing to the northeast, does not relate to the character of the conservation area. However, this development of buildings appears to predate the designation of the conservation area in 1977.

### **Trees**

- 4.150 There are a significant number of mature trees which are part of the character of the conservation area. These are,
- around the north and west boundary of the Green
  - ground to the east of the Green, including a small planted coppice
  - trees around the two ponds on the Green
  - either side of Symonds Green Lane at the south end, including the footpath
  - either side of Symonds Green Lane at the north end, including the footpath

### **Listed Buildings**

- 4.151 Statutorily listed Buildings are listed below, but are not described here so as to avoid duplication of the list descriptions.
- 'Willow Cottage'. Grade II. 2/147. Listed 1976
  - 'Thatched Cottage'. Grade II. 3/148. Listed 1976
  - Oakfield Barn. Grade II. 733/6/10013. Listed 1999

### **Key Locally Important Buildings**

- 4.152 Buildings of importance to the conservation area ("Local List" buildings) are indicated on the conservation area map forming part of this report. Unlisted buildings of particular importance to the Symonds Green conservation area are:
- Crooked Billet Public House, Symonds Green Lane  
Partly two storey red brick building with tiled hipped roof and ridge decoration and finials. Flemish bond. Front gable tile hung. Gabled dormer and box dormer. Timber windows. Closed porch. Weather boarded single storey extension. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



- 'Symonds Lodge', Symonds Green Lane  
Partly two storey red brick building with tiled gabled roof. Flemish bond. Front gable decorative timber work. Gabled dormer also with decorative timber work. UPVC diamond lattice windows. Closed porch. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Oakfield Farmhouse, Symonds Green Lane  
Two storey red brick farmhouse. Flemish bond, some blue headers. Tiled hipped roof. Front two storey bays with tiled hipped roofs. Central door with open porch. Timber 2-over-2 sash windows.

- 4.153 Some of the buildings listed above have appeared on a list of locally important buildings produced on a map by Hertfordshire County Council, in the Urban Characterisation Study and in the Stevenage Extensive Urban Survey Report (Hertfordshire County Council 1979; Thompson forthcoming; Thompson 2002). Other buildings have been added during this review. This list is not intended to be exhaustive record of buildings located in the conservation area, but it defines those which may warrant inclusion on a "local list".

#### **Scheduled monuments and archaeological potential**

- 4.154 There are no scheduled monuments in the conservation area.
- 4.155 There have been some recorded finds outside the conservation area, including a possible Deserted Medieval Village (Wollenwick) in the fields to the west and south. The potential for archaeological remains is likely to centre around at the former site of Oakfield Farm and in the fields to the west.

#### **Impact of New Development**

- 4.156 At the time of designation of the conservation area, Oakfield / Fairview Farm was a significant group of buildings in the settlement (Fig. 65). Since then, it has been the focus of recent housing development. Whilst the farmhouse is still a visible presence from the Lane, the 'Dunwick Farm' and Southwold Close developments together with Newlyn Close now dominate this part of the conservation area. Ponds have disappeared from this area and the remaining barn, which is a listed building, is in an "at risk" condition and clearly has been so for some time.
- 4.157 These represent a major adverse change in the conservation area since its designation.

#### **Problem Areas**

- 4.158 Grass on Green opposite 'Greenside' is being worn away by vehicle parking.
- 4.159 Municipal signage on the Green is intrusive.
- 4.160 Oakfield Barn, a Grade II listed building is in an "at risk" condition.

#### **Suggested boundary changes (Fig. 64)**

- 4.161 The hedge / tree lined, southern end of Symonds Green Lane should be protected as an ancient approach to the Green. It is suggested the Stevenage District Plan Local Plan Policy EN15 be applied to this route.

#### **Summary**

- 4.162 Overall, the conservation area retains a semi-rural character in terms of the Green, hedges, trees and water. However, further built development on or

affecting the remaining open space would be likely to seriously erode the basis for a conservation area here.

**Design / management imperatives**

- 4.163 Avoid further building on or affecting the remaining open space in the conservation area.
- 4.164 Management of the Green including cutting / grazing and control of car parking. It is understood that there is an arrangement for the cutting of part of the common on a twice per year basis to protect its ecological value.
- 4.165 Hedgeside ditches should be maintained to prevent their gradual loss. Hedges alongside should be managed and reinforced (eg either side of Symonds Green Lane from 'Greenside' north to Clovelly Way; east side of Symonds Green Lane adjacent to Southfield Close / Newlyn Close; either side of lane adjacent to Meadway Park and 'Cartref'.
- 4.166 Protection of trees forming the backdrop to the Green.
- 4.167 Avoid placing road and other signage on the Green between 'Thatched Cottage' and 'Greenside'.
- 4.168 Careful assessment of development or advertising at The Crooked Billet Public House which is visually prominent, to ensure that these do not adversely affect the conservation area.
- 4.169 Hedges and trees dominate the edges of the Green north of 'Thatched Cottage' and 'Longmeadows'. Further buildings should not be allowed to encroach on the green space.



Figure 63. Symonds Green Conservation Area





Figure 63. Symonds Green Conservation Area

## History

- 4.170 Symonds Green was recorded as *Wluueneuiche* in the Domesday Book of 1086, a hamlet where Robert Gernon held a small manor. Its name changed slightly through the centuries, recorded as *Wolnewyk* in 1381, and later *Wolwyck Green*. During the Middle Ages, Symonds Green became part of the Manor of Wymondley and by the 15<sup>th</sup> century was known as Hickman's Green, after a local landowner. In 1581, Edward Symonde bought the land south of the Green and it became known as *Symes Green*, which is probably the source of its name today.



Figure 65.1884 Ordnance Survey

- 4.171 Meadowland surrounded the village to the south and east and was suitable for grazing animals. There was also probably a spring north of the village that ran into the centre via small streams and emptied into a series of ponds on the common. Further ponds are also found to the south of the village. During the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century a few residential houses were scattered along the west side of the road which ran north from Old Stevenage up to Titmore Green through the common.
- 4.172 By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, at least two farms had been constructed, one just outside the main settlement to the north and the other to the south, Fairview Farm – later renamed Oakfield Farm (Fig. 65). Its barn is probably the oldest structure remaining in Symonds Green, dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century. It could be related to an older property that stood on the site such as a manor or farmhouse which pre-dated the current farmhouse.
- 4.173 There are two 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings located at each end of the common to the west, Willow Cottage and Thatched Cottage (Figs. 66 & 67). The only building to stand upon the common is the Crooked Billet Public House. There has been a public house or beer shop on the green since at least 1841 when the census recorded that the shop was kept by Elizabeth Moules whose family farmed much of the land in the area. However the current building probably dates to c.1920.

- 4.174 In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, Henry Fox, a Baptist preacher, farmed 10 acres at Symonds Green and lived in a cottage that once stood behind the Crooked Billet. His identical twin boys, Albert and Ebenezer, were well known poachers, often providing each with an alibi if caught (Fig. 68). They assisted Sir Edward Henry who was able to show that fingerprints were unique to each individual, earning the twins a place in history. They were the inspiration for the naming of the public house on Rockingham Way as part of the new town neighbourhood in Bedwell (Fig. 69).



Figure 66. Willow Cottage and pond c1938  
(Hertfordshire County Council)



Figure 67. The Thatched Cottage c1938  
(Hertfordshire County Council)



Figure 68. Albert and Ebenezer Fox  
(Ashby 2004)

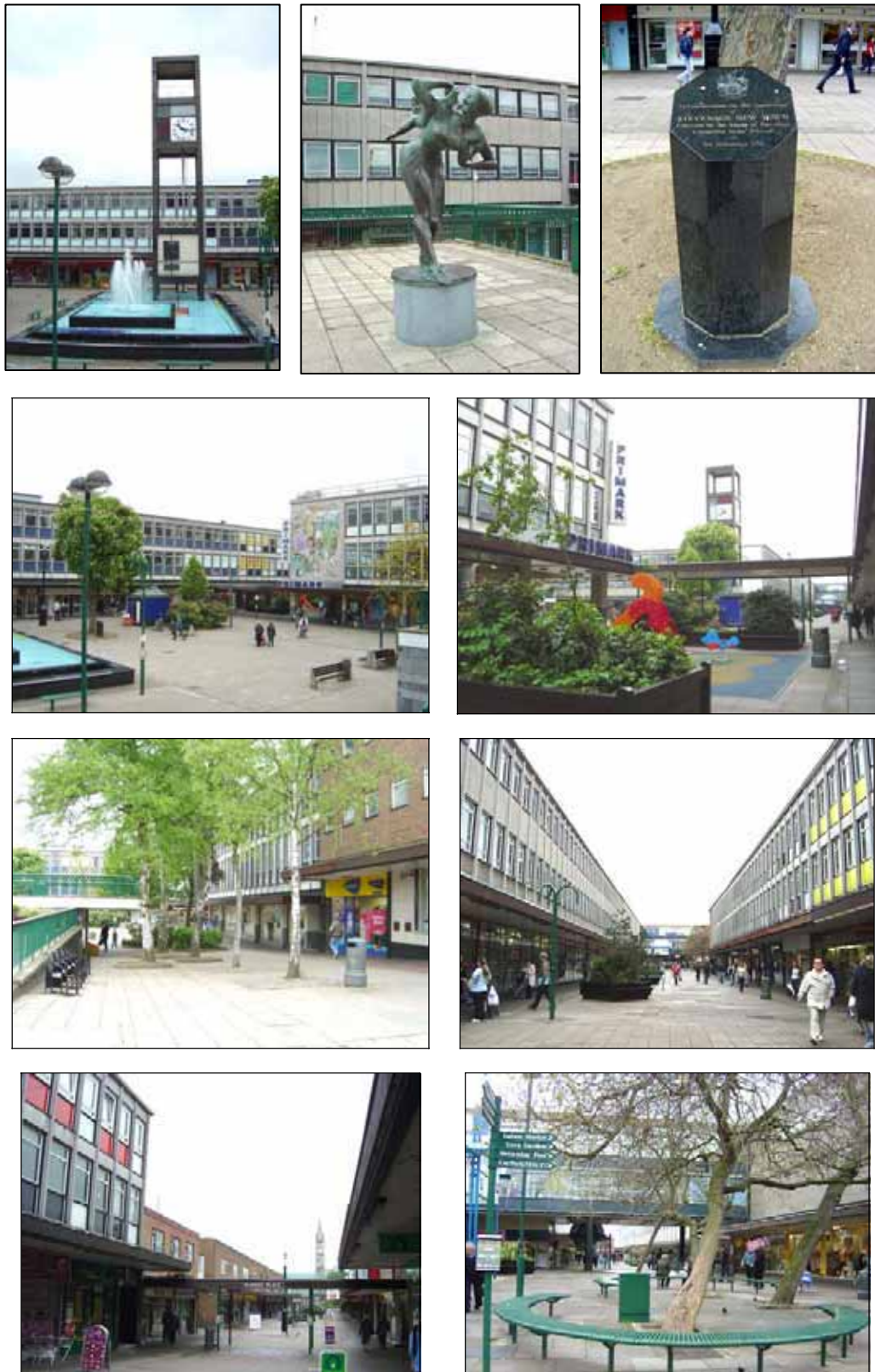


Figure 69. The Twin Foxes Public House,  
Bedwell opened in 1953 (Appleton 1993)

- 4.175 In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and up to the 1970s Symonds Green retained its rural identity. Stevenage Nurseries operated opposite Fairview/Oakfield Farm on Symonds Green Lane during this period, and the area was initially reserved by the Stevenage Development Corporation for use as nursery gardens. However in the 1966 Master Plan the nursery was to be demolished to make way for housing and by 1974 the first houses had been completed.



## Town Square Conservation Area



**Figure 70. Photographs of the Town Square Conservation Area**

From left to right: Clock Tower; 'Joyride'; monument to Stevenage New Town; Town Square; Queensway South; Market Place; Queensway Chambers

### **Designation**

- 4.176 The Conservation Area of the Town Square was designated in 1988.

### **Reasons for designation**

- 4.177 The town centre was the first designed as a pedestrianised, traffic free town centre in the country. The Town Square was at the centre of the development. It was considered to be of particular historic interest for features including “the buildings themselves, the build features of the Square, and smaller features such as the street furniture”.

### **General description** (Figs. 70 & 75)

- 4.178 The existing Conservation Area boundary takes in a part of the new town centre – namely, the Town Square and the buildings on three sides of it including that length of Queensway between Market Place and Park Place and the nearest ends of these walkways to it.

### **Setting**

- 4.179 The “setting” for the conservation area is in fact contiguous with what is currently within the conservation area ie it is the continuing arms of Queensway, Park Place and Market Place. The Church of St George and ‘The Tower’, a high-rise block, are at the end of vistas along these axes. The fourth side of the Town Square and thus, also part of the setting comprises the bus station, Danestrete and the buildings there.

### **Important Spaces and Focal Points**

- 4.180 The Town Square is *the* planned focal space in the town centre. The clock tower in its pool provides a centre-piece (which is taller than the roofs of the surrounding buildings) with its commemorative panels and the raised platform on which ‘Joyride’ stands helps enclose the square.
- 4.181 Other significant features in the Square are the large mosaic on the former Co-op (‘Primark’) building, a spectacular example of the various pieces of art in the new town centre, and the trees which reportedly, formed an integral feature of the pre-Town Square landscape and were left in their informal positions.
- 4.182 Street furniture was intended to encourage use of the square as an informal meeting place. This remains the effect although it is thought that the original street furniture does not remain.
- 4.183 At the time of this review, pavement surfacing was to be renewed in Queensway with original 1950s paving slabs being replaced by small dark brick block paving.

### **Architectural & Historic Qualities of the buildings**

- 4.184 The buildings are of three storeys, flat roofed, clad with glass or pre-cast panels, metal windowed, and with flat topped, above ground floor canopies on plain metal poles with timber fascia.
- 4.185 The 1988 designation report noted that: “There is a strong co-ordinating element in the buildings which has been achieved through the use of simple vertical and horizontal lines. These elements have been emphasized with the use of simply designed windows together with the addition of coloured panels. The height of the buildings throughout the Town Centre also serve to emphasize the uniformity of the design as they are all kept to three storeys –

this only varies in the pedestrian malls further from the Town Square where the height decreases to two storeys.”

- 4.186 Today, most of the original fenestration remains. The coloured external panelling of some premises (eg on Queensway) has been painted over. The complex of buildings around the square remains intact but their appearance suffers from lack of maintenance (Fig. 71).



Box window along Market Place



Queensway in the Town Square



Queensway at its southern end



Queensway South

Figure 71. Original windows within the Town Centre.

- 4.187 Original shop fronts (eg Market Place – stainless steel frame and marble type stallriser and pavement edge strip) have contemporary detail and materials.

### **Trees**

- 4.188 There are a small number of mature trees which are part of the character of the conservation area. These are,

- within the town square
- along the bus station perimeter

- 4.189 In addition, two cherry trees were planted several years ago on Danestrete outside the Mecca Bingo Hall with a seat to commemorate the first Chairman of Stevenage Development Corporation, Dr. Monica Felton. This may relate to the two trees that remain outside the hall which have large octagonal wooden planters with seats. A tree was also planted in the Town Square in November 1995 by Mayor for National Tree Week.

### **Commemorative monument/signage**

- 4.190 The Mayor, Cllr Brian Dunnell, unveiled a commemorative marble monument to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the New Town in November 1996. It stands in the Town Square opposite 'Boots' by a tree.
- 4.191 Town twinning. Metal sign painted black and gold indicating the distance between Stevenage and two of the four towns that have been twinned with Stevenage (Ingelheim in Germany and Autun in France). Stands along Danestrete between the bus station and the Mecca Bingo Hall.

### **Listed Buildings**

- 4.192 Statutorily listed buildings are listed below, but are not described here so as to avoid duplication of the list descriptions.
- Clock Tower and surrounding raised pool, Town Square, Stevenage. Grade II. 733/3/10009. Listed 1999.
  - 'Joyride', Town Square, Stevenage. Grade II. 3/10006. Listed 1999.

### **Key Locally Important Buildings**

- 4.193 There is currently no list of locally important buildings. However it is recommended that all three storey shop buildings and public works of art located within the current conservation area be included on a "local list". These have been indicated on the conservation area map forming part of this report. Outside the current conservation area boundary other similarly constructed buildings dating to the same period need to be assessed for their contribution to the overall character of the Town Centre. Within the current conservation area boundary buildings that should be included on a "local list":
- 2, 4, 6 & 8 Town Square
  - 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27 & 29 Town Square
  - 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 64 Queensway
  - 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73 & 75 Queensway
  - 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 Park Place
  - 1, 3, 5, 7, 7a, 9 & 9a Market Place
  - 2 & 4 Market Place
  - Public art – Peter Lyon's wall sculpture on 21 Town Square (McDonalds)
  - Public art – Bajio's wall ceramic on 8 Town Square (Primark)
  - Public art – Abstract wall sculpture on 58 – 60 Queensway (Warren James and Klick)
  - Public art – 'Pride in our town' mosaic on the pavement opposite 58 – 60 Queensway

### **Scheduled monuments and archaeological potential**

- 4.194 There are no scheduled monuments in the conservation area. There are no recorded archaeological finds from within the current boundary as it is unlikely that any investigation was conducted during the construction of the town centre during the 1950s and 1960s. Its location close to the Old North Road may have provided some evidence, however any potential evidence has probably been disturbed or removed.

### **Impact of New Development**

- 4.195 In terms of new buildings, there has been no new development within the boundary of the existing Town Square conservation area. Its setting has however, been affected by the building of 'The Plaza' at the southwest corner (next to the bus Station) where the old Post Office previously stood. Apart from its height (which is consistent with the Town Square buildings), the *curving* Plaza attempts to impose a different form on the *square* and so far, fails.

### **Problem Areas**

- 4.196 There is no particular problem *area* within the Town Square Conservation Area. Immediately next to the Town Square however, the bus station does not contribute well to its setting. It is a difficult approach for pedestrians and therefore, a poor link between the town centre and railway / leisure centre. It is also a poor visual link with obstructed views past / through.
- 4.197 One of the more obvious physical detractors, the uncoordinated, piecemeal replacement of paving slabs, resulting an ugly mix and match, is being addressed as noted above.

### **Suggested boundary changes (Fig. 76)**

- 4.198 The existing conservation area includes a fragment of the New Town centre only. Of the range of facilities planned by the Stevenage Development Corporation, only shops and a public space are included within it.
- 4.199 The Development Corporation created a town centre that provided a full range of facilities. Vincent's models and plans of the 1950s and 60s illustrate this. Fig. 72 lists what was to be included.
- 4.200 At the time of this BEAMS review in 2005, many of the Development Corporation's early buildings and spaces in the town centre survive and there is the opportunity to delineate a conservation area that more fully represents Stevenage New Town centre. This is probably the last opportunity to retain the core of what makes Stevenage, the first post-war new town, unique.
- 4.201 It is plain that the 1950s / 60s town centre needs "freshening-up". In addition, there will be new development. Nevertheless, there is choice as to which sites are redeveloped - a growing, regenerating town centre can develop whilst still holding on to a cohesive new town quarter providing a historically and architecturally distinctive identity.
- 4.202 This review has used the planned town centre as the potential conservation area boundary. Similarly, the County Council's forthcoming Urban Characterisation Study's analysis of the new town centre shows a zone boundary (Zone 2) that takes in the whole area within the ring road plus the Town Gardens (also the College and Asda Superstore area).
- 4.203 The statutory definition of a conservation area includes "an area of special architectural or historic interest" (Planning Act 1990: Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas). As the first post-war New Town, the town centre of Stevenage, was the subject of considerable deliberation over its nature and layout. To begin with, it was drawn up as a pedestrian scheme (approved in 1951) but this concept was later dropped by the Development Corporation. Then, alternative road-based and pedestrian options were produced by Vincent, the new Chief Architect. Finally, a return was made to a pedestrian scheme in the mid 1950s along the layout that exists today.



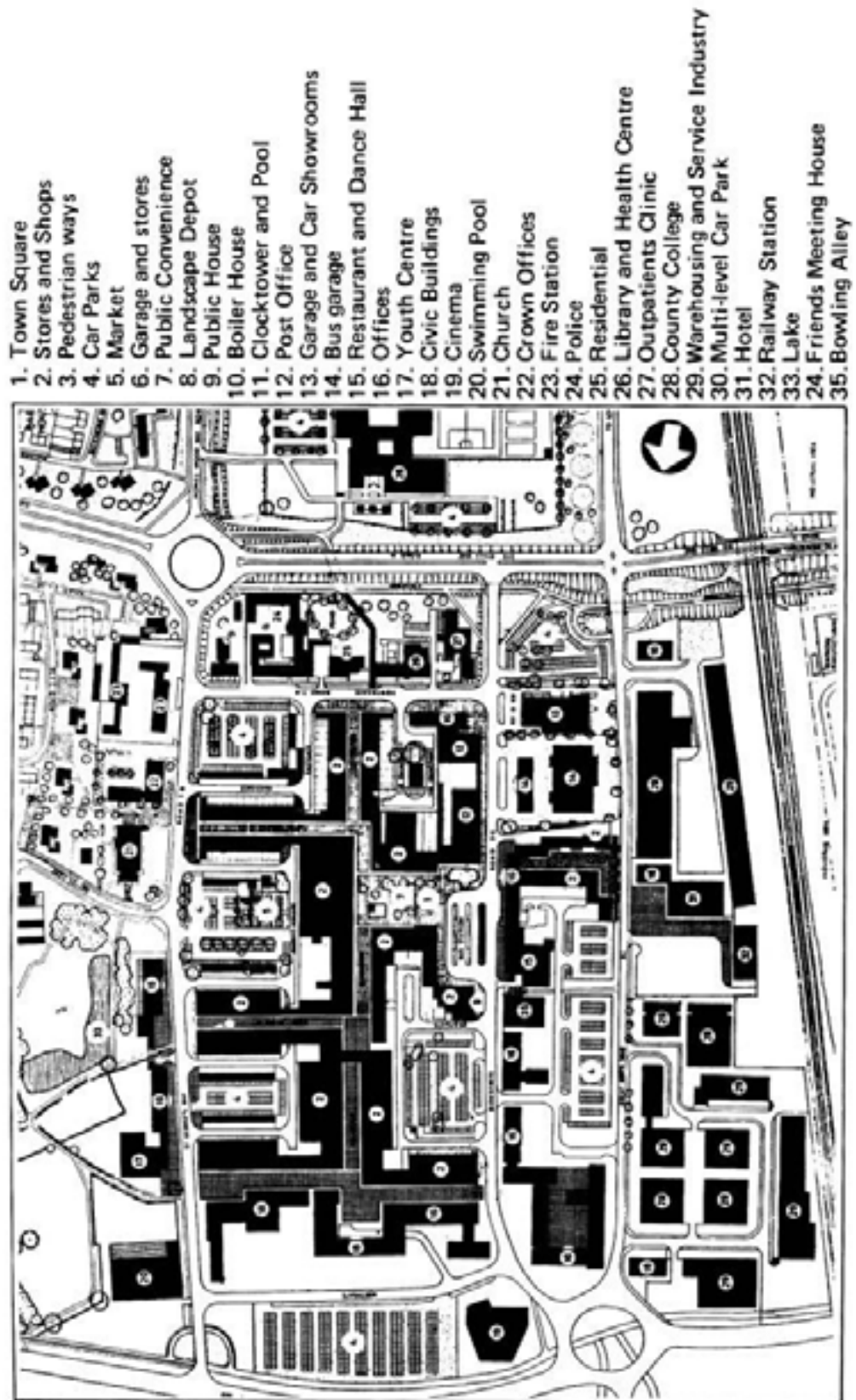


Figure 72. Vincent's 1955 model plan of Stevenage town centre, presented in 'Town Planning Review' in July 1960 (Balchin 1980)



- 4.204 The difficult gestation of its layout and concept is part of the significance of the whole town centre as an historical entity important to the evolution of British towns and Town Planning. Notwithstanding the redevelopment of some buildings, the overall layout within the ring-road remains.
- 4.205 A further aim is that the conservation area should as fully as possible represent the planned New Town centre concept by including the uses / types of buildings that the Development Corporation planned into the new town centre as these are important both to the original concept and often, the current town centre.
- 4.206 The conservation area boundary would therefore be extended to encompass the totality of the town centre within the ring-road plus the town gardens and buildings immediately across St Georges Way.
- 4.207 The ends of the shopping precincts (Market Place and Park Place) are included as they are contiguous elements of Queensway, part of existing street vistas and of the earlier Development Corporation phases of the town centre.
- 4.208 The town centre gardens, Bowes-Lyon Centre, St George's Church, 'The Tower', Southgate House, the pond, were all ingredients of the master plans. The Queensway / Southgate / Six Hills Way / Asda axis is a particularly important one and with the grouping of the library, former Health Centre, 'The Tower', and Queensway flats represents a key part of the new town centre. It demonstrates on the ground, as well as on a paper plan, the realisation of the new town concepts with bus drop-off, and pedestrian access segregated from vehicle and cycle route, and flowing from the town centre edge past town centre located facilities and housing, to the retail centre.
- 4.209 There are of course, as within most conservation areas, elements which depart from the characteristics of the original particularly, the Northgate, the Westgate Centre and alterations in the Danestrete area, where post 1950s / 60s development, infill and alteration has substantially changed the area.
- 4.210 New development is likely to occur on sites including the existing surface car parks and relating this successfully to architectural qualities and street layout of the new town era buildings will be a challenge. The demolition of some buildings within an enlarged conservation area may be proposed and in such cases it would be necessary to consider their contribution and the merits of any proposed replacement.
- Summary**
- 4.211 The existing boundary was based on phase 1 of the new town centre but does not actually cover that phase as reference to the aerial photograph of the town centre in 1959 shows (Fig. 81 & section 4.225).
- 4.212 The conservation area boundary proposed here will allow for redevelopment to be integrated with the character of the town centre.
- Design / management imperatives**
- 4.213 In terms of appearance, many buildings in the town centre could be said to be in need of a facelift. Better advertising control is necessary and some new buildings do not contribute to Stevenage's distinctive identity. Replacement windows that are not sympathetic to the architecture of the early buildings have started to appear.

- 4.214 The overriding need is to realise that Stevenage has a unique asset in the shape of the new town centre. The challenge is to take this forward and improve its visual appearance through management and planning policy.
- 4.215 The older buildings in the shopping precincts suffer from certain issues that affect their appearance. In particular, back of window advertising, lack of maintenance of cladding panels on the buildings and out of character replacement windows. These are more difficult to manage outside of the ownership of one body such as the Development Corporation, but could in part, be controlled or influenced by the Borough Council.
- 4.216 Windows currently tend to be replaced in UPVC and have a materially different appearance from the originals thus affecting not only the particular premises but also, more importantly, the building it is part of and the wider street/precinct. Street frontages designed to be of unified appearance are beginning to sport a variety of windows that do not suit the architecture and harm the visual quality of the town centre. The Borough Council Planning function can control the installation of replacement windows in these buildings. Metal windows can be refurbished, secondary glazed, or where necessary, new metal windows purchased – they are still available (including double glazing).
- 4.217 Back of window advertising may be outside of the direct control of the Council but guidance could be produced and agreements sought (Fig. 73).



Figure 73. Back of windows adverts in the Town Square

- 4.218 Similarly, a guidance (perhaps a town centre businesses charter) document could encourage upkeep of cladding panels to a coordinated scheme. If replacement of panels is proposed, this should be considered in its affect on the visual appearance of the wider surroundings and would be subject to Planning control. It would be possible to produce guidance incorporating acceptable window and cladding panel types and suppliers.
- 4.219 Advertisements and signage need to be seen in the context of the surroundings. For instance, the mural on the former Co-op (now 'Primark') building, is encroached upon by insensitive placing of the store's brand signage, thus harming the appearance of the Town Square.
- 4.220 Shopfronts. The few remaining early examples need to be protected as part of the Planning regime.
- 4.221 The early design and plan of Stevenage town centre shares similar characteristics with the Lijnbaan shopping centre in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Designed by the architectural team of Van den Broek & Bakema between 1949 and 1953, Lijnbaan was at the cutting edge of post war town urban planning in Holland and was visited by some members of the Stevenage Development Corporation in 1954, including Vincent. Recognised as the first pedestrian shopping centre in Europe, the Lijnbaan comprised a central paved walkway with planted areas and flower beds, either side of which were a series of low-rise canopied shops of two storeys and a basement (Fig. 74). The construction of the Beurstraverse Mall in Rotterdam during 1996 prompted action to update the Lijnbaan. Despite the fragmented ownership of the shops, the facades and awnings have been modernised and neglected flowerbeds removed thereby improving the area. The centre has stood the test of time and remains easily recognisable today (Fig. 74). Although some new details have been added, its earlier character has been enhanced and yet still survives.



Figure 74. Lijnbaan, Rotterdam. The first pedestrianised shopping centre in Europe.  
Top: the central walkway in 1953. Bottom: two storey shops in 1953 (left) and in 1999 (right).  
([community.middlebury.edu/~slides/HA220/views/aoc317view.html](http://community.middlebury.edu/~slides/HA220/views/aoc317view.html);  
[www.rootsinholland.com/emigr/lijnbaan.htm](http://www.rootsinholland.com/emigr/lijnbaan.htm))



Figure 75. Town Square Conservation Area



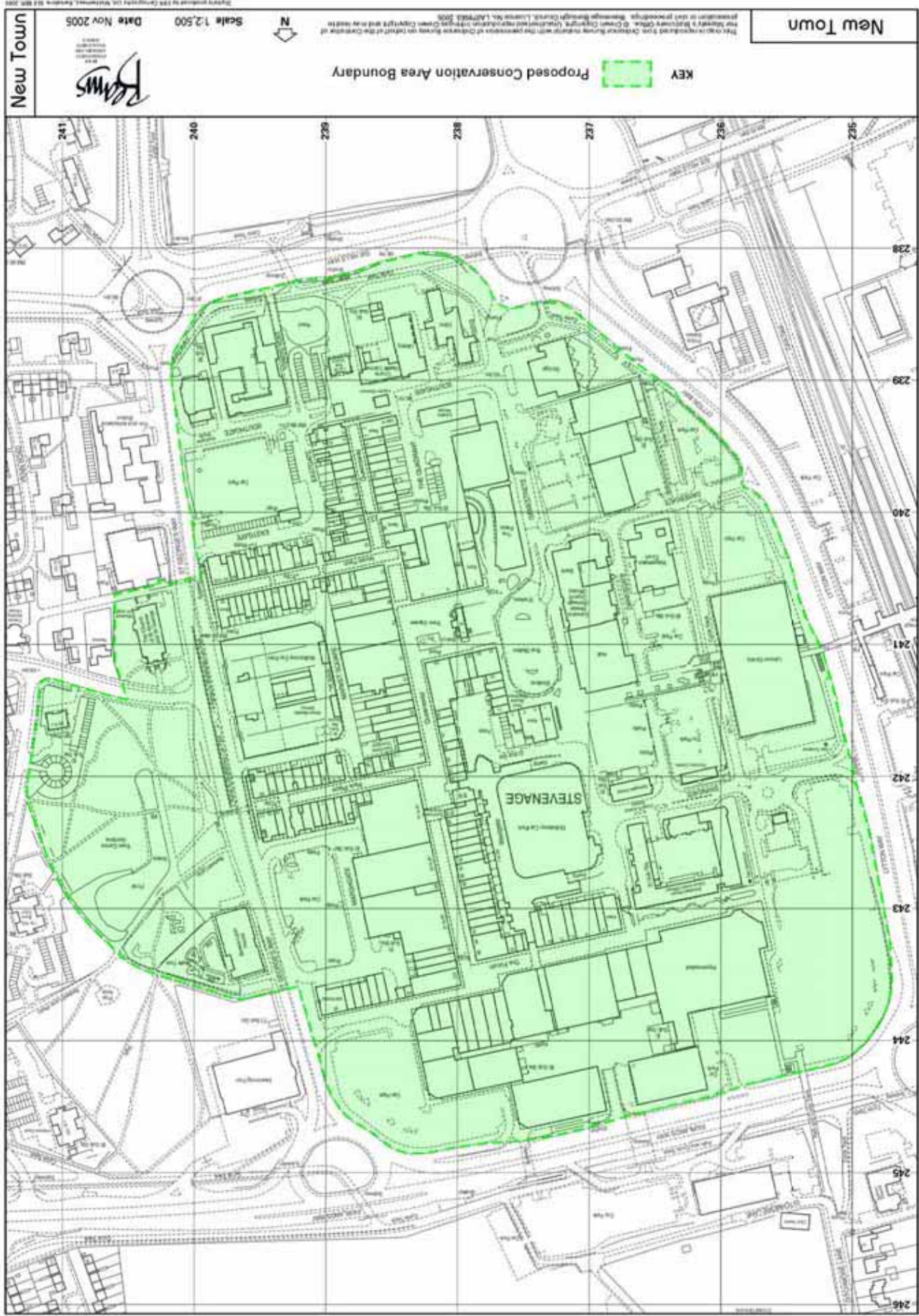


Figure 76. Proposed boundary changes to Town Square Conservation Area

## History

- 4.222 In 1946 Stevenage Borough was designated as the site of the first New Town. Prior to the building of the Town Square, the area was named South End and used as arable land (Fig. 77). By 1952 Stevenage Development Corporation had bought 2,000 acres in the Borough from landowners, some via compulsory purchase order.



Figure 77. 1884 Ordnance Survey Map ([www.oldmaps.co.uk](http://www.oldmaps.co.uk))



Figure 78. Model of a pedestrian centre for Stevenage in 1954 (Balchin 1980)

- 4.223 The draft Master Plan was designed in 1946 by the Stevenage Development Corporation's Chief Architect and Planner, Gordon Stephenson. The town centre was to be pedestrianised, however plans for its design were not fully developed. When the Master Plan was finally put forward in 1949 under, Clifford Holliday, Chief Architect and Planner, plans of the town centre plan had still not been fully formulated.
- 4.224 In 1954 the first town centre plan emerged under Donald Reay, Chief Architect and Planner (Fig. 78). However in 1955 the plan was revised by Leonard Vincent, the new Corporation Chief Architect and Planner to the Stevenage Development Corporation. As well as being the Chief Architect and Planner



between 1954 and 1962, Vincent set up his own architectural firm with Raymond Gorbing. Vincent and Gorbing were appointed to lead team to design the new town centre and also many of the buildings located within Stevenage. Further adjustments to the town centre plan were made in the Stevenage Master Plans of 1966, 1972 and 1978.



Figure 79. Construction of the town centre in 1957 and the Town Square in 1958 (Stevenage Museum, undated; Appleton 1993)



Figure 80. 'Joyride' in 1958 at its unveiling and in 1978 (Appleton 1993; private collection)

- 4.225 In 1955 Leonard Vincent's long term design for the town centre included shops, offices, civic buildings, pedestrian walkways, residential units, restaurants, a church, a library, a dance hall, cinema, a college, bowling alley, fire station and a swimming pool - many of which had been built by the mid 1960s (Figs. 72 & 83). However the first phase of construction of the town centre began in 1956. It comprised the construction of the Square, Queensway, part of Park Place, Market Place and the Bus Station. Most of the buildings were to be constructed from a concrete frame and were to be three-storey high. Upper floors without residential accommodation were let as offices. The sculpture 'Joyride' by F. Belsky was commissioned by the Stevenage Development Corporation in 1958 and stands on the raised platform behind the clock tower (Fig. 80).



Figure 81. Aerial photograph of the Town Square in 1959 (Ashby 2004)



Figure 82. The Queen opens the town centre in 1959  
(Stevenage Borough Council & Stevenage Museum undated)

- 4.226 The construction of Danestrete, parallel to London Road, required demolition of a number of Victorian / Edwardian houses. One of these was 'Daneshill House' had been given its name from the Six Hills barrows located nearby that were thought to be tombs of Danish warriors. Its name was retained for the

seventeen storey office block constructed in 1961 for Stevenage Development Corporation (SBC 1980).

- 4.227 Although some shops had already started trading in 1958, the town centre was formally opened by The Queen in May 1959. A plaque on the base of the clock tower commemorates the occasion (Figs. 81 & 82). At the end of 1958, 55 shops were trading, and by the end of 1959, all 108 were open). Towards the end of the 1950s, the town centre church, St George's, was constructed (Fig. 84). Designed by Seely & Paget, it is now a grade II listed building.
- 4.228 The development of the town centre continued through the 1960s and 1970s with the second and third phase of construction (Figs. 86 - 90).

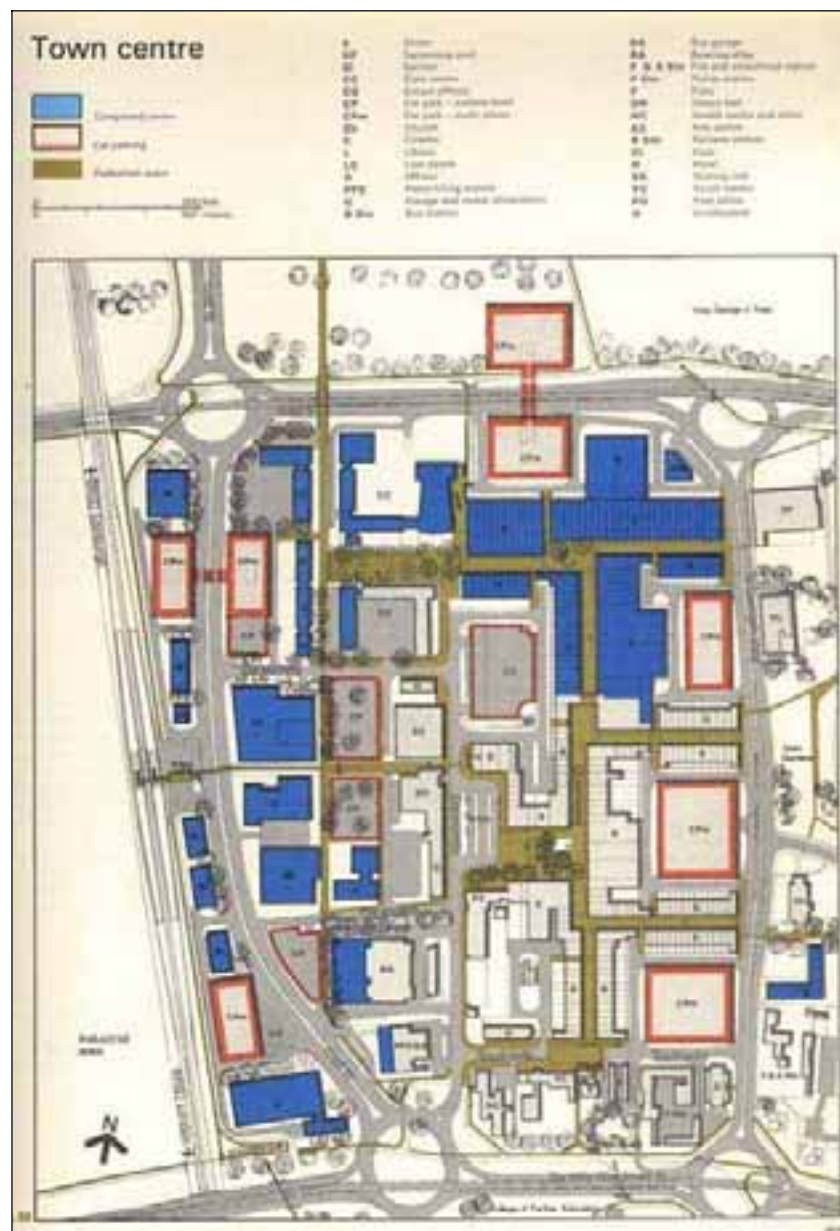


Figure 83. 1966 Master Plan of the town centre (Vincent 1967)

- 4.229 The second phase from 1960 - 1969 comprised an extended shopping area with an extra 42 retail outlets including Littlewoods and Sainburys. The main

shopping street, Queensway was completed up to and beyond Park Place with the same construction as phase one, a concrete frame three storeys high. Offices were placed above the shops along Park Place. Other buildings constructed in and around the town centre during the second phase are listed below (Figs. 88 & 89).



Figure 84. St George's Church in 1960 (Madgin 2001)



Figure 85. Town Square, 1962 (Hertfordshire County Council)



Figure 86. 1963 aerial photo of the town centre (Aerofilms no. A222377, HALS collection)



Figure 87. Aerial photograph of the town centre in 1969 (Hertfordshire County Council)

- 4.230 The development of the town centre and surrounding areas continued through the 1960s with the opening of several important buildings; the Old Police Headquarters, the College of Further Education, the Dance Hall & Bowling Alley, the Town Centre Gardens, the Central Library, the Health Centre, the Outpatients Hospital, the Swimming Baths, Bowes Lyon Youth Centre, Brickdale House and Long Ship Public House.

1960	Old Police Headquarters
1961	College of Further Education, Dance Hall & Bowling Alley, Town Centre Gardens, Central Library, Health Centre, Outpatients Hospital
1962	Swimming Baths
1965	Bowes Lyon Youth Centre
1966	Brickdale House, Long Ship Public House

Figure 88. A list of buildings constructed in the second phase of development, 1960 – 1969

- 4.231 The third phase of development took place during the 1970s up until the Stevenage Development Corporation was dissolved in 1980. During this phase there was a mix of new construction including the area around The Forum, and extensions to the existing buildings such as Littlewoods, Boots and Woolworths (Figs. 89 & 90). By 1976 the new Stevenage Railway Station, Lytton Way, the indoor market, the Arts and Leisure Centre and the Gordon Craig Theatre had all opened.

1973	The Grampian Hotel at The Forum, the new Railway Station, Cinema to the east, Manulife House, St George's Way multi-storey car park, Tesco (Westgate area)
1974	Six storey extension to Land Registry, Police Station, memorial plaque on the Clock Tower to Lewis Silkin by Franta Belsky
1975	Magistrates court, Arts & Sports Centre, Gordon Craig Theatre, an abstract sculpture by Jose de Alberdi at The Forum

Figure 89. A list of buildings constructed in the third phase of development, 1969 – 1980

- 4.232 After the Corporation was dissolved, Stevenage Borough Council took over the administration of planning the Westgate development in the 1980s. More recently the town centre has seen the opening of The Plaza at its junction with Danestrete where the Old Post Office previously stood, the construction of new shops at The Forum and a new hotel along Danestrete, opposite the former bus station.



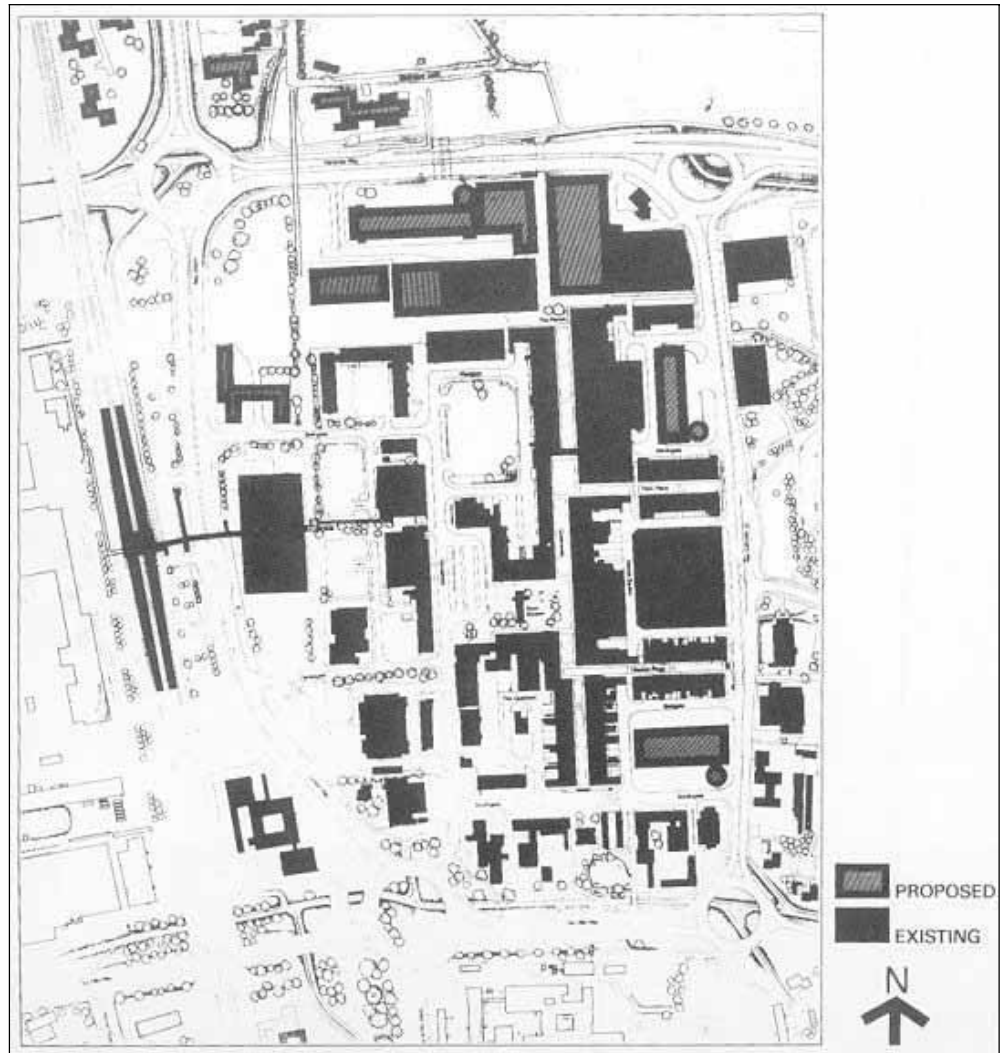


Figure 90. 1978 town centre plan (Balchin 1980)

## 5.0 Potential Areas for designation

- 5.1 As part of the review, other areas within Stevenage Borough were considered for possible designation as conservation areas.

### Approach

- 5.2 The following areas were initially considered as potential sites for designation based upon analysis of the historic growth of the town, including the construction of the New Town in the 1950s and 1960s.

#### Pre -19<sup>th</sup> century settlement

- Todds Green
- Bragbury End
- Coreys Mill

#### Late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century housing

- Fishers Green
- Green Street
- Stanmore Road/Basils Road/Grove Road
- Orchard Road/Julians Road/Essex Road/ Hitchin Road

#### Mid 20<sup>th</sup> century New Town neighbourhoods

- Neighbourhood 1; Old Town (Sish Lane)
- Neighbourhood 2; Bedwell (Monks Wood, Whormley Wood, Bedwell, Broom Barns)
- Neighbourhood 3; Broadwater (Roebuck and Shephallbury, Marymead and Longmeadow)
- Neighbourhood 4; Shephall (Leaves Spring, Half Hyde, Loves Wood, Brandley Hill)
- Neighbourhood 5; Chells (Pescotts Spring)
- Whitney Drive

#### Mid 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial buildings

- Industrial centre of Gunnels Wood Road

- 5.3 The assessment also utilised the County Council's Urban Characterisation Study of Stevenage (Thompson, forthcoming). This study identified "character" zones across the borough and assessed types and periods of urban development.
- 5.4 The above listed areas were visited and a brief assessment made using appropriate criteria as to the character of the built environment. If the character could be clearly identified the area was put forward as a proposed site for designation. Where the character could not be clearly identified, the majority of buildings had been altered or demolished, and if later development had eroded the earlier character, the area was not proposed.
- 5.5 Four areas are proposed as sites for designation as new conservation areas. These are; Orchard Road (late 19<sup>th</sup> century area of mixed building types), Norton Green (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century residential area), Caxton Way (small mid 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial units) and Broadwater (mid 20<sup>th</sup> century New Town neighbourhood).

## Orchard Road



Figure 91. Photographs of the proposed conservation area of Orchard Road

### **Reason for proposed designation**

- 5.6 Orchard Road is proposed as a site for designation as a new conservation area because of its local history and retained character (Fig. 86). The boundary includes part of Julian's Road up to the modern railway bridge, all of Orchard Road and a section of Essex Road (Fig. 87).
- 5.7 The area comprises late 19<sup>th</sup> century and some early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings including housing, a public house, shops, a maltings and a series of workshops associated with the development of the first railway station and the ESA factory. A boundary wall from an earlier property, Orchard Court, survives. Although demolished in the 1960s, the house was built by John Bailey-Denton in the 19<sup>th</sup> century who resided there. He was also responsible for building some of the houses along Orchard Road. Edward Gordon Craig (1872 - 1966), actor, scene designer and producer was born at No. 23. The Gordon Craig Theatre built in Stevenage new town centre is named after him. Today the area benefits from its relatively unaltered buildings, early land boundaries, hedgerows, established trees and character lamp posts.



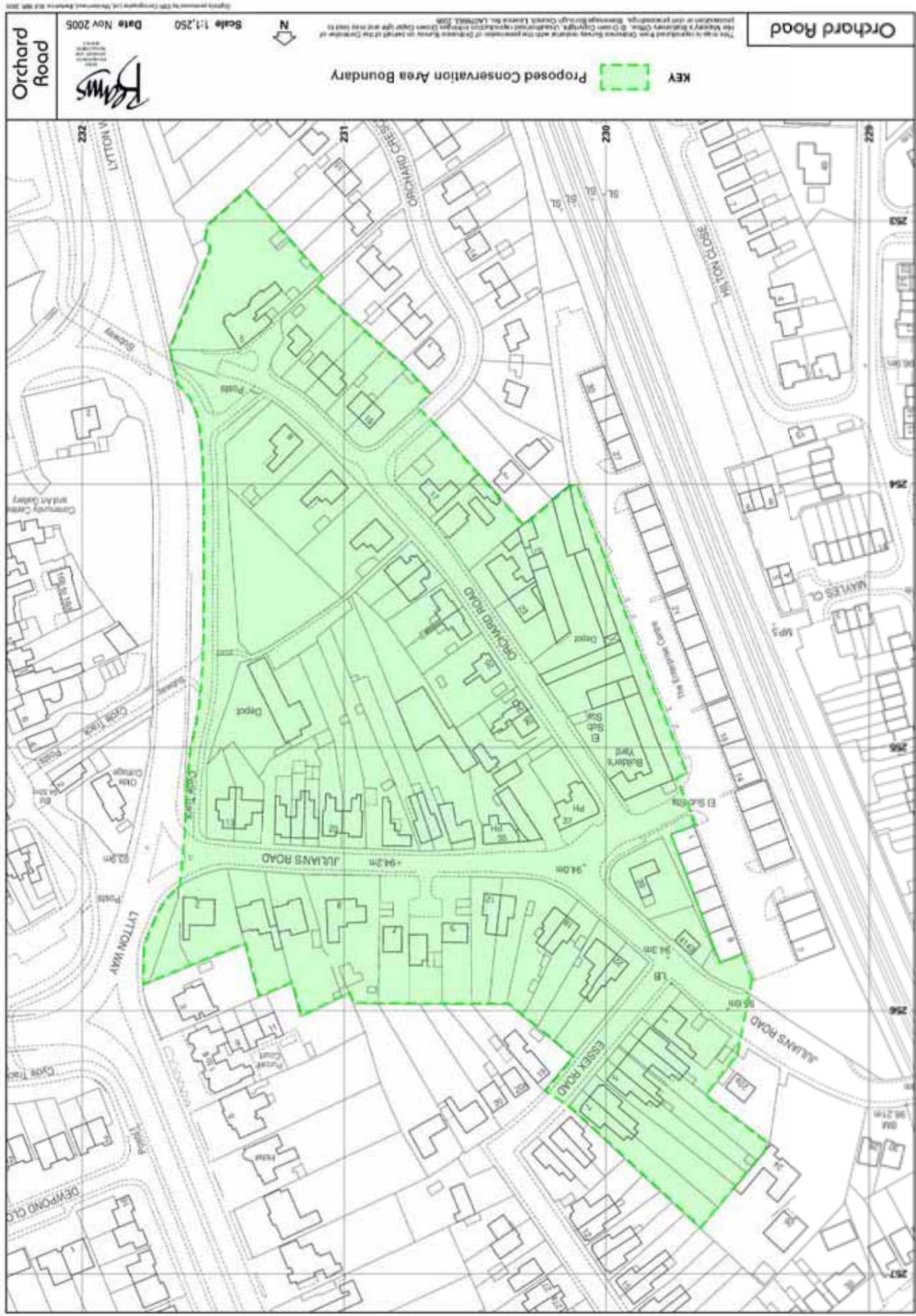


Figure 92. Potential Conservation Area boundary for Orchard Road

## Norton Green



Figure 93. Photographs of the proposed conservation area of Norton Green

### **Reason for proposed designation**

- 5.8 Norton Green is proposed as a site for designation as a new conservation area because of its local history and retained rural character (Fig. 88). The boundary includes part of Chadwell Road up to the natural edge of a field boundary to the north, south and west, and to the A1 to the east.
- 5.9 The area comprises the core of a small rural community, including the 18<sup>th</sup> century farm and the 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace cottages, the village green and a cottage located to the north, ponds, a public house, coppice woodland and fields, and some modern small scale housing (Fig. 89). The oldest building is Norton Green Farmhouse which is grade II listed. It is built of brick, retains most of its timber framed farm buildings, and was once part of the Knebworth Estate.
- 5.10 Today the area benefits from its relatively unaltered buildings, early land / field boundaries, coppiced woodland, hedgerows and established trees.





## Caxton Way



Figure 95. Photographs of the proposed conservation area of Caxton Way

### **Reason for proposed designation**

- 5.11 Caxton Way is located in the Gunnels Wood Road industrial area and is proposed as a site for designation as a new conservation area because of its local and national history, and its retained character (Fig. 90). The boundary includes a small section of Caxton Road along its west side to include the small 1950s industrial units up to the west boundary of Potters Lane (Fig. 91). The north and south boundary are met by other properties that are not included in the area.
- 5.12 It formed part of the planned industrial area of the new town and its architecture is notable as the Stevenage Development Corporation style. Designed by D.P. Reay and L.G. Vincent, two of the buildings were occupied in 1954 by Electro Methods Ltd and the Fleming Radio Factory. They were built using precast concrete frames and had concrete slab roofing. Large crittal windows were located along the front of each building where the main office areas were located. These were the drawing office, the general office, the sales office and the secretary's office. To the rear were the amenities and beyond that the 'operational area' or 'production area'.
- 5.13 The old paving and compressed concrete lampposts survive, and there are established trees and grass verges. Today the area benefits from its relatively unaltered buildings and setting. It has survived as it provides small industrial units which can be used by many different types of small businesses, but its character is under threat from development of the Gunnels Wood industrial area.





### **Broadwater (Marymead)**

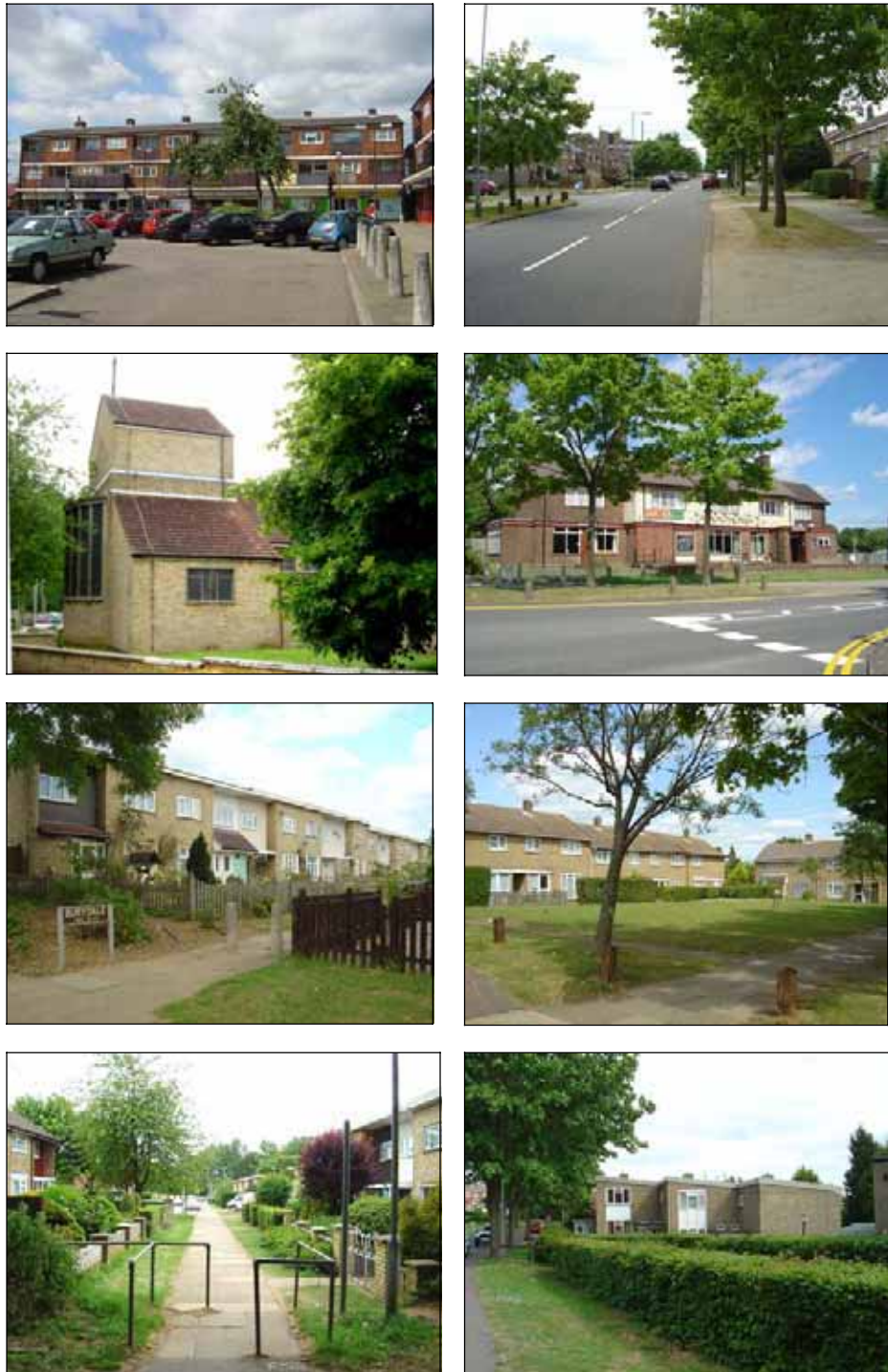


Figure 97. Photographs of the proposed conservation area of Broadwater

### **Reason for proposed designation**

A section of the Broadwater new town neighbourhood is proposed as a site for designation as a new conservation area because of its local and national history, its interesting and diverse architecture, and its retained character (Fig. 97). The area is bounded by houses to the south of Spring Drive, the lane forming the southern limit of Shephalbury Park is the north boundary, the

east boundary stops along the far side of Burydale School, and the west boundary cuts through part of Nodes Drive (Fig. 98).

- 5.14 The area was the third new town neighbourhood which began to be constructed in 1952 / 3.
- 5.15 It comprises early Stevenage Development Corporation architecture in the form of housing, garaging, a public house, a community centre, a children's home, senior housing, a shopping precinct and a church (Figs. 97 & 98). It also includes private housing developments which have a varied and explorative architectural style and plan. Although mostly three bedroom housing, there are also two storey maisonettes and a block of flats which retains its original crittal windows.
- 5.16 Today the area benefits from its relatively unaltered 1950s and 1960s buildings that are in a good to fair condition, modern land boundaries, hedgerows, paving, green spaces, established trees and a retained area of old woodland. It was chosen as the best surviving example of a new town neighbourhood which comprised all the amenities that were intended for the modern urban development of the 1950s.
- 5.17 The Borough Council will need to consider the implications for Planning Development Control of designation of this area including how closely it would seek to maintain the appearance of the terraces of houses. This might affect for instance, the approach to the addition of porches, replacement windows and other alterations or development.





Figure 98. Potential Conservation Area boundary for Broadwater

## **6.0 Development Plan Policies Review**

- 6.1 This part of the review examines the effectiveness of existing policies in meeting conservation area needs.

### **Analysis of appeals performance**

- 6.2 This is very limited due to the small number of appeal decisions available from the Local Plan Second Review at this stage.
- 6.3 Appeal Ref: APP/K1935/H/03/1137103 Policies considered in appeal decision: EN3 (Advertisements in Conservation Areas). Appeal outcome: Part dismissed / part allowed.
- 6.4 Appeal Ref: APP/K1935/A/02/1085489 Policies considered in appeal decision: EN1 EN2. EN5 TW7 Appeal outcome : Dismissed.
- 6.5 Appeal Ref: APP/K1935/A/01/1074129 Policies considered in appeal decision: EN1 EN2. EN5 TW7. Appeal outcome : Dismissed.

### **Comparison with Policy Guidance**

- 6.6 The content of Local Plan policies has been tested very recently by the Public Local Inquiry into the Plan. It is therefore too early to reconsider policy wording so soon after the Plans adoption. It is understood that between the 1990 District Plan Review adopted in 1994 and the District Plan Second Review 1991-2011 there were some numbering and wording changes to conservation area and listed building policies such as EN1 (Development in Conservation Areas), and EN2 (Demolition in Conservation Areas), but that the objectives of the policies remained very similar.
- 6.7 In BEAMS opinion, there are further small changes in wording that would help the effectiveness of these policies.
- 6.8 A particular omission from the current Local Plan however, is a policy enabling the designation of buildings of local importance. The Local Plan inspector for the inquiry into the Local Plan did not consider the policy put forward at the time to be worthwhile. However, experience elsewhere shows that a “locally important” or “locally listed” designation can be treated as a material consideration and have weight in Planning decisions.
- 6.9 A review may be necessary when the replacement for Planning Policy Guidance 15 is published or changes following the Governments Heritage Protection Review occur.

### **Policy Proposals**

- 6.10 Analysis of appeals performance even if there were sufficient data, would only be an indication of how closely followed existing policies were in just one category of applications ie those determined by inspectors outside the Council. Acknowledging the small number of appeals available to consider in this case, and the nature of some of the developments built in the conservation areas, a

more important assessment of how closely policy has been applied is in development control practice itself.

- 6.11 As commented in the relevant section of the review, there are housing developments in St Nicholas / Rectory Lane and Symonds Green conservation areas that are not sympathetic to their character and have had significant adverse impacts (and perhaps in the Old Town though we have not researched the details of the particular cases). That such developments were granted permission is likely to have been due not to the absence of a policy to protect the character or appearance of conservation areas, but to lack of analysis against which to apply that policy i.e. if the character of the conservation area is not set out (in a Conservation Area Appraisal), the achievement of “in character” development is likely to be hit and miss.

**Proposal 1**

- 6.12 This leads to the requirement for Conservation Area Appraisals to be carried out and for regular reviews – perhaps carried out to tie in with reviews of the main Local Development Documents – of Development Control practice and the impact of new development.

**Proposal 2**

- 6.13 As a particular policy proposal of the current review, it is recommended that Development Control practice should recognise that housing layouts in the form of a close or cul de sac are not in character with those conservation areas in Stevenage which are based on historic settlements. This should be considered for inclusion as part of a conservation area policy in the next Local Development plan or in guidance.
- 6.14 The use of demountable shop window grilles in Middle Row at the Old Town is an exemplary approach to shop front security in a historic context and continues to be consistently applied.

**Proposal 3**

- 6.15 There is Local Plan policy in respect of Listed Buildings that can protect their character from replacement plastic windows. We have noted that there are buildings in which plastic windows have been installed however, and enforcement to achieve their removal does not appear to have taken place. It is recommended that enforcement is pursued in such cases as control in other cases may be weakened.

**Proposal 4**

- 6.16 Of similar concern is the lack of protection of unlisted buildings within the conservation areas from the changed appearance that plastic windows entail. This is a particular issue in the Old Town due to its more homogenous character with continuous facades of buildings where unsympathetic fenestration would impact on the wider appearance. Consequently, it is recommended that the replacement of windows in unlisted buildings in the Old Town and the proposed Orchard Road conservation areas, be controlled via Article 4 Directions under the Planning (General Permitted Development) Order.

**Proposal 5**

- 6.17 That a policy be included in the Development Plan to support a list of locally important buildings and a list including the buildings identified here be compiled.

## 7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 Conservation of the character and appearance of the centre of Stevenage is of more than local importance - it has national importance. Stevenage's recent heritage as being the first planned New Town and pedestrian shopping centre in the country does not seem to be valued within the borough. As part of designating a town centre conservation area, an exercise to raise the consciousness of Stevenage as an important New Town could usefully take place.
- 7.2 The Council is encouraged to see Conservation Areas more holistically as high quality environments - not just as planning tools. Other aspects include: maintenance and enhancement of natural features such as hedgerows, open spaces, streams and ponds; highways signage and materials (eg kerbing); parking control (not necessarily with wardens – this could be via physical measures). As far as the New Town centre is concerned, a wider range of issues arises such as appearance and trading conditions, for which a visually improved but recognisably “*Stevenage new town*” identity would be a distinctive “brand” and would help retain the character of the town. This includes the care and maintenance of public works of art which have been designed for particular buildings or spaces.
- 7.3 A management regime is essential for them which rather than waiting until major and costly refurbishment is necessary (eg resurfacing Queensway), ensures that regular, less costly maintenance occurs (and is based on a design guide or “standing” specification).
- 7.4 Boundary changes are proposed for the existing conservation areas except the Old Town High Street. The general conclusion is that existing boundaries for Rectory Lane and Shephall Green are too tight and exclude visual or historic landscape context. The current conservation area boundary for the New Town centre is inadequate to conserve the character of the core of the new town.
- 7.5 No existing conservation area is considered to have lost its architectural or historic character to such an extent that it should be de-designated.

### **New Designations**

- 7.6 Four new designations are proposed which incidentally, relate to different periods of history and different types of built form:
- Orchard Road is proposed as an area of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century expansion of Stevenage
  - Norton Green is the nucleus of what was a small rural settlement on the edge of the modern town
  - Caxton Way comprises an unusual and intact group of small scale industrial buildings by Vincent & Gorbing for the Development Corporation
  - Marymead, Broadwater is selected as an area of a new town neighbourhood encompassing a wide selection of housing designs together with a representative range of associated community facilities

- 7.7 Certain policy recommendations are made above to improve the effectiveness of the Councils efforts to preserve the character or appearance of conservation areas. In particular, Development Control needs to be well integrated with policy objectives to ensure that new development does not harm conservation areas.
- 7.8 The recommendations here are likely to require that an appropriate level of increased resources be directed to conservation and the specific issues raised in this review.



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- [www.xs4all.nl/~couvreur/engl/rdam/architec.htm](http://www.xs4all.nl/~couvreur/engl/rdam/architec.htm) (Dutch architect Broek)
- [www.xs4all.nl/~couvreur/engl/rdam/wand3.htm](http://www.xs4all.nl/~couvreur/engl/rdam/wand3.htm) (A walk through the centre of Rotterdam)
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## 9.0 Acknowledgements

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This report was written by Sallianne Wilcox and Christian Brady, and has been compiled by Sallianne Wilcox. The project was managed by Russ Craig, and additional assistance was provided by Anne Haworth, Sarah Turner and Anna Cudnowska.

## APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX 1. Public consultation and responses**

Public consultation comprised,

- Writing letters to known local public interest groups (Stevenage Conservation Liaison Committee, Stevenage Society for Local History, Chamber of Commerce, Stevenage Museum and the Friends of the Forster Country).
- Press releases to two local newspapers (The Comet and The Herald)
- Article on the Stevenage Borough Council website and in their quarterly magazine
- A presentation to members at two local committee meetings; Stevenage Conservation Liaison Committee and the Old Town Area Committee
- Meeting the public while conducting visits to Conservation Areas

Responses were received from email (5), letters (5) and telephone calls (4). Some were from individuals while others were from local groups. They comprised general comments and also comments in regard to specific issues within each conservation area. A summary of these are provided below.

### **General comments**

- Conservation areas should be clearly defined
- Clear criteria and guidance on what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable practice which is easily available.
- Sign post conservation areas

### **Conservation Areas**

#### **Old Town**

- Traffic problems around War memorial on Bowling Green
- Rapidly being eroded by bland corporate influence; High Street losing its identity
- Concern over number of fast food restaurants, hairdressers and estate agents. Would like pubs to retain their original names
- Church Lane - opposite No 17, lamp post falling into disrepair.
- 11 Church Lane - listed building at risk
- Pavements block paved and tarmaced and badly patched
- Concern over increase in traffic if new homes are built to the west of Stevenage. Traffic already a problem
- Business signs to measure no more than 0.3 meters in height
- Pedestrianisation be considered
- Traffic re-routed away from Bowling Green & War Memorial

#### **St Nicholas / Rectory Lane**

- Opposition to any reduction in current boundary

- Concern over local authorities lack of consideration of the needs of a Conservation Area in respect of traffic calming and planning permission
- Concern over local authorities general maintenance of the area.
- Why is Cuckoo Wood no longer considered as a natural habitat of local importance?
- Demolition of individual buildings in the Conservation Area and replacement with a number of luxury homes that are not in keeping with local style.

#### **Shephall Green**

- Planning Department have allowed alterations which are out of keeping
- Cars park on the green overnight
- Cars driving over the green
- General area not well maintained and subject to litter and vandalism
- School children congregate – Headteachers of schools have been informed
- Lamp post by PH not Windsor design, does not match in.

#### **Symonds Green**

- No comments

#### **Town Square**

- No comments

#### **New areas for designation/inclusion**

- Rooks Nest & Howards End, “Forster Country” – extension of
- Whitney Drive including Whitney Wood
- The full length of The Avenue

Below is a list of people who contacted BEAMS following the consultation letter or interest generated from the press release.

Margaret Ashby and John Hepworth from the *Friends of the Forster Country*  
 Mrs Buicchi  
 Don Courtman  
 Angela Draper  
 Jason Hill  
 Susan Howes  
 Anji Kerr  
 Aris Mariner  
 Tim Rumball, Albert Binns, Chris Jackson and Margaret Selby from the *Rectory Lane Residents Association*  
 Kath Shorten  
 Doris Thurlow  
 Kay Walsh



## **APPENDIX 2. Stevenage Conservation Liaison Committee**

Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> June 7.30pm, Stevenage Museum. The meeting was attended by five committee members, including Clare Hill of Stevenage Museum, and was chaired by Margaret Ashby. A presentation was given by C. Brady and S. Wilcox, BEAMS. During the meeting a number of points were raised from members;

### **Old Town**

- The area at the end of the High Street at Trinity Church and the Old London Road beyond is 'dull and dreary'.
- The vista of the Old London Road has been spoilt with the introduction of the road and underpass which detracts from the character of the rest of High Street conservation area.
- The Avenue at the north end of the Old Town High Street across fields to Rectory Lane.
- This row of trees is of historic importance and must be protected. It should be included into the conservation area with its fields.
- Increased number of restaurants and a decrease in the number of small shops is of great concern for the High Street.

### **Rectory Lane**

- Protection of Forster Country must be included through the expansion of the conservation area boundary up to North Road.

### **APPENDIX 3. Old Stevenage Area Committee**

Meeting held 20<sup>th</sup> June 2005. Attended by R. Craig and S. Wilcox. Presentation given by S. Wilcox. Comments raised that impact on the conservation area appraisal are;

#### **Old Town**

- Current condition of 11 Church Lane. Members expressed their long held concerns as to its condition for many years
- Stream of traffic around Bowling Green. County Highways Department plans to divert traffic have been considered for at least 15 years and need to be put back on the agenda for implementation
- Re-route non High Street bound vehicles
- Lighting of the High Street has been on the Committee's agenda and is currently being improved
- Litter. State of pavements outside restaurant and food outlets
- Road surfaces are patchy and uneven following works
- Important ancient history of the Old Town and The Avenue up to St Nicholas
- High Street regeneration scheme to improve shopping, but no more cafes/bars
- Pavements/pathways. Slabs being used are metric and not imperial sizes
- Parking. Lack of spaces leading to over-parking and too few traffic wardens
- Street cleaning
- Preservation of old buildings is paramount. Condition of The Almshouses on Church Lane, and no. 11 is poor
- Street furniture. Too many signs (traffic and otherwise), too many boards outside shops.
- Security cameras. There are many along the High Street, but are they in the right place and are they monitored?
- Old Town planting and floral displays. Commercial business must be encouraged to participate
- Support must be given to improve of the character of the Old Town

#### **Symonds Green**

- Poor maintenance of the common

#### **General concerns / comments**

- Potential over crowding and loss of character of historic areas from proposed expansion of Stevenage
- Interest shown in a plan for education of children regarding Old Town conservation area
- Any improvement schemes require increased financing
- An advisory committee must be formed to monitor/act in the interest of conservation until a full-time conservation officer is to be installed in four years time