



BUNTINGFORD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

ADOPTED JULY
2016



Retaining a rich architectural heritage whilst at the same time maintaining a buoyant economy are issues that are closely associated and a challenge particularly in relation to the High Street.

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

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Plan1. Adopted Conservation Area on historic map dating from 1874-1894.

Plan 2. Management Plan

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This document is the adopted Buntingford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan which replaces the draft document that was subject to a public consultation exercise during March/April 2016. There was a public meeting on 1 March 2016. Members considered the responses to this consultation at their Executive Committee and Council meetings on 7 June and 27 July 2016 respectively. Members resolved to adopt the document on 27 July 2016. The document now appears with any necessary boundary revisions and textual changes required as a result of consultation feedback and adoption.

The content of Appraisals written from 2015 which include this paragraph differs slightly from predecessor documents. Selected revisions have been incorporated to reflect changes to legislation, the emerging District Plan, nomenclature, consolidation and other improvements resulting from experience gained to date. This process is ongoing.

1. Introduction.

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

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

1.3. The District is situated in an economically buoyant region where an attractive environment, employment opportunities and excellent transport links, road rail and air, make it a popular destination to live and work. The Town of Buntingford is the smallest of the five main settlements in the District and the only such settlement that does not have a Railway Station. The public transport services to the surrounding large towns are infrequent and unreliable, therefore making the car the preferred method of transport for commuters and shoppers. In addition to London a short commuting distance away, the District is influenced by other factors beyond its administrative area, such as

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

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

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

1.6. This Appraisal recognises the importance of these factors and considers them carefully. This document will be regarded as a 'material consideration' when determining planning applications. If appropriate the document puts forward simple practical management proposals that would improve the character of the Conservation Area and which are capable of being implemented as and when resources permit.

1.7. The recommendations concerning non-listed buildings and structures are normally formed by the field workers observations made from the public realm and seldom involve internal inspection or discussions with owners. Thus such recommendations contained in this Appraisal might be subject to reconsideration through the planning application process, where that is necessary, and which would involve the submission of additional information. Similar considerations apply to estimating dates of buildings.

1.8. This Conservation Appraisal:

- Identifies the special character of the Conservation Area.**
- Identifies elements that should be retained or enhanced;**
- Identifies detracting elements;**
- Reviews the existing boundaries;**
- Puts forward practical enhancement proposals;**

1.9. The document has been prepared in partnership with the Town Council and the local community through the consultation process. EHDC thanks the Town Council for their considerable assistance and advice to date and for assuming responsibility for many of the proposed enhancements.

1.10. The Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan has recently been produced by the community. This document identifies the importance of the river Rib and underlines the need to maintain a sense of place and local character and to preserve and enhance valued green spaces. The Council has also commissioned 'The Phoenix Project' produced by Phil Jones Associates which the authors advise as serving 'as a supplement to the Neighbourhood Plan'. This is based on work undertaken by Ben Hamilton- Baille in 2014. The proposal 'sets out to explore ways to enhance the relationship between traffic and pedestrians and to retain and enhance the quality of our historic town'.

1.11. The above report advises that 'all who have been made aware of our proposals have been very enthusiastic'.

1.12. The Department of Transport have produced Local Transport Note 1/11 Shared Space in October 2011 advising that *Shared space is a design approach that seeks to change the way streets operate by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles, primarily through lower speeds and encouraging drivers to behave more accommodatingly towards pedestrians.*

1.13. An article dated April 2015 by Barbara Speed entitled *Shared spaces: a clever trick for safer roads or a step backwards into chaos* discusses some considerations associated with shared spaces.



Picture 1. High Street, Buntingford - date unknown probably early 20th century. An historic perspective of the concept of 'shared space'. Reproduced from the collection of the late Philip W. Plumb and The Buntingford in Old Photographs Facebook page.

1.14. In relation to the High Street the key aims set out in the Phoenix Project are as follows

- *Build on existing high quality environment through minor interventions.*
- *Remove bollards along length of High Street*
- *Patch repairs to surface treatments where required.*

1.15. This Conservation Area Appraisal does not comment on the general principles set out in the Phoenix Project as the associated proposals contained therein are principally matters of highway design and traffic/pedestrian safety. However the removal of selected street furniture and clutter as advised would be welcomed if consistent with safety.

1.16. In addition to the bullet points identified by the Phoenix Project above, this Appraisal considers that tree planting in the High Street at suitable strategic locations is worthy of further investigation subject to overcoming practical considerations such as location of underground services, stability of nearby buildings and property entrance points. There are publications which give practical advice on the subject e.g. Trees for Cities. Such planting if considered appropriate could occur in association with or independent of Phoenix Project proposals.



Picture 2. Would limited strategic tree planting in the High Street improve the environment and is it worthy of further consideration?

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

1.18. A very small part of the Conservation Area falls within Wyddial Parish. This is a small triangle of woodland to the north east of Wyddial Road and Vicarage Road.

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

PART A - LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

2. Legal and Policy framework.

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

2.2. Section 71 of the Act requires Councils to *'formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement'* of Conservation Areas and hold a public meeting to consider them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.9. Some hedges may be protected by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. This legislation is extremely complicated and only applies in certain situations that are determined by the location and extent of the hedge, its age and or its historical importance, the wildlife it supports and its number of woody species.

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

2.11. Of particular relevance to this document, the National Planning Policy Framework advises as follows:

- **There should be a positive strategy in the Local Plan for the conservation of the historic environment and up-to-date evidence**

used to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make.

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

2.12. East Hertfordshire's environmental initiatives and Local Plan Policies. East Hertfordshire is committed to protecting Conservation Areas and implementing policies which preserve and enhance them; to support their preservation through the publication of design and technical advice and to be pro-active by offering grants and administering an Historic Buildings Grant Service. With regard to the latter grants are awarded on a first come first served basis in relation to works which result in the maintenance of listed buildings and other unlisted buildings of architectural or historic interest. Details are available on the Council's webpage.

2.13. In respect of the above the Council has produced a number of leaflets and guidance notes that are available on line and on request. These guidance notes on the preservation and repair of historic materials and buildings' provide useful information relevant to the

preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. They will be updated as resources permit.

2.14. The Council also has a 'Heritage at Risk Register', originally produced in 2006 and updated in 2012/13 and more recently in 2016. This document is available on the Council's website. In relation to the town and the Conservation Area there are two such buildings identified as being 'At Risk'. These are identified later in the document. Grant assistance not exceeding £10,000 may be available for necessary works that lead to such buildings' long term security.

2.15. The East Herts. Local Plan was adopted by the Council in 2007. The 'saved' policies set out in the plan remain in force and are relevant in relation to Conservation Area and Historic Building considerations. The Local Plan and its policies can be viewed on the Councils website or a copy can be obtained from the Council (contact details are set out in section 7).

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

2.17. Buntingford Conservation Area was first designated in 1968 and its boundary reviewed in 1981 and again in 2000.

Part B - APPRAISAL

3. Origins and Historical Development

3.1. There are about 60 records within the existing Conservation Area held by the County Archaeologist. A considerable number of these relate to Listed Buildings, some descriptions of which are included later in this document.

3.2 Prehistoric. There was Iron Age settlement to the east and north west of the Conservation Area.

3.3. Roman settlement. The High Street is the route of Ermine Street, London to York. A Roman pit has been discovered to the rear of No. 59 High Street containing two rim sherds of late first/early second century date.

3.4. Buntingford is not documented until the 13th century and in 1288 was described as a hamlet with a chapel on the highway and church some distance away. The chapel referred to is assumed to have stood

on the site of present day St Peter's built by the Rev Alexander Strange in the early 1600's 'for the benefit of the Inhabitants, who are at a great distance from the church', (the latter is now in the process of an imaginative conversion to a house). In 1338 the Lord of the Manor received license to transfer her market to the highway with the grant of a fair.

3.5. Minutes from 1742 Turnpike Minute Book note a resolution to erect stones from Wadesmill to Royston in the northern road. Buntingford was an important coaching town with large numbers of inns. The 1838 Layston Tithe map shows a toll gate at the approximate position of High Street Hare Street Road.

3.6. Prior to the late 19th century Buntingford as we know it today consisted of an accumulation of land falling in the parishes of Layston, Wyddial, Throcking and Aspendon. The mapping from 1874-1894 curiously refers from time to time to 'obsolete boundary' 'retained to separate different sets of parcel numbers'. Were such 'obsolete' boundaries the alignment of former parish boundaries?

3.7. A picture of the settlement as it can be recognised today is set out in Kelly's Directory of 1874 which refers as follows: *Buntingford is a Union Town, in the parishes of Aspenden, Layston, Throcking and Wyddial. ...Buntingford is lighted by gas from works erected at the south end of the town in 1861.. Here is the terminal station of the Ware and Buntingford branch of the Great Eastern Railway; it is a single line of about 13 miles....Here is a free Grammar school, endowed in the year 1630...also a National and a British school, several almshouses...there are other charities amounting to about £70 annually, which is usually expended in coals...The Independents and Particular Baptists have each a chapel, and there is a Police station...The Union Workhouse is capable of accommodating 160 inmates.*

3.8. Kelly's Directory of 1874 lists the following commercial entries; saddler and harness makers (2), ironmonger, confectioner, linen and drapers (2), leather seller and tanner, hairdresser and beer retailer, straw bonnet maker, brewer and cooper, tailor, cooper, undertaker, thrashing machine proprietor, coach maker, tailor and draper, coal merchant, book seller, shopkeepers (3), chimney sweepers (2), butchers (3), boot and shoe makers (3), baker and coal dealer, beer retailers (6), millers (2), farmer, wheelrights (2), chemist and druggist, bakers (3), general dealer, surgeon, haberdasher, family grocers (3), tailor and drapers (2), watch and clock makers (2).

3.9. Public houses mentioned are the Railway Inn, Fox and Duck, Crown, Bell, White Hart, Adam and Eve, George and Dragon, Angel, Bull, Chequers.

3.10. From the numbers of local trades it can be seen that the considerable and varied level of self- sufficiency is a hall mark of

communities of this date and is consistent with other communities of similar size at this time.



Picture 3. Appears on 1874-1894 OS map as *Formerly Throcking Ph. (det.No.2) Gas Works*. Now north end of Downhall Ley. Reproduced from the collection of the late Philip W. Plumb and The Buntingford in Old Photographs Facebook page.



Picture 4. The railway station and branch line (1863-1965, freight). Now Fairfield Estate area. Reproduced from the collection of the late Philip W. Plumb and The Buntingford in Old Photographs Facebook page.



Picture 5. The Cattle Market Market Hill/High Street. Date of picture unknown probably early/mid 20th century. Reproduced from the collection of the late Philip W. Plumb and The Buntingford in Old Photographs Facebook page.

3.11. Mapping from 1874 -1894 (Plan1) shows The Old Vicarage (modern day Co-operative store), the site of the Throcking Gas Works, the Buntingford Union Workhouse and Tannery opposite (set up circa 1792, closing 1925). A leat or artificial waterway connected the Tannery to the River Rib. Several malshouses exist, two Smithy's are noted; Church Street was called Great Lane. A school is shown on the Causeway and another one behind the High Street (the old grammar school). There was a gravel pit to the west of Little Court and a saw pit to its south. There are a number of references to obsolete boundaries and to land formerly being in Layston Parish and Throcking Parish. The railway together with its station and cattle pen and Railway Inn were located in at the south of the town (now Fairfield area). At the north end of the town was a long linear plot with a Vicarage, now demolished and the present day location of Vicarage Road. Mapping of 1920-24 identifies a football ground, allotment gardens and a tennis garden behind the Chequers PH, north of Norfolk Road and defined by The Bowling Green (now Bowling Green Lane). There was a large gravel pit in the general area of Honey Lane.

3.12. The community commenced larger scale expansion in the 1940-50 period with the development of Archers, Bridgefoot and Sunny Hill. Mapping 1938-51 shows a curious collection of buildings (Snells Mead area) which was the site of a Royal Army Ordnance factory, various buildings and enclosure. Buildings believed to have gone by the early 1970's.

Thereafter expansion has been substantial but much of the core retains many of its early historical characteristics.

3.13. The publication, *Place Names of Hertfordshire*, Cambridge University Press 1970 by J E B Gover, Allen Mawer and F M Stenton advises several names, a selection of which are included thus: Buntiford (1226), Buntingford (1255), Bontingford (1275). The origin of the name may relate to 'Ford of the people of Bunta'.

3.14. Plan 1 shows the adopted Conservation Area boundary approximately imposed on mapping dating from 1874-1894.

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

4.1. **Scheduled Ancient Monuments.** A National designation. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

4.2. **Areas of Archaeological Significance.** Designated locally by EHDC on advice from HCC. The areas identified by this Appraisal include areas as shown on the latest emerging District Plan. The identification and refinement of such areas is an ongoing process.

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

4.4. **Non listed buildings of quality and worthy of protection.** Such other non-listed buildings and structures that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the Conservation Area are identified by this Appraisal. The basic questions asked in assessing such buildings/structures are:

- (a) Is the non listed building/structure of sufficient architectural or historic interest whose general external form and appearance remains largely unaltered?
- (b) Does the building contain a sufficient level of external original features and materials?
- (c) Has the building retained its original scale without large inappropriate modern extensions that destroy the visual appearance particularly in respect of the front elevation?

(d) Is the building visually important in the street scene?

4.5. Important trees and hedgerows are identified by this Appraisal. The basic criteria for identifying important trees and hedgerows are:-

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

4.6. Open spaces or gaps of quality that contribute to the visual importance of the Conservation Area where development would be inappropriate are identified by this Appraisal. The basic question asked in identifying such areas is does the open space or gap form an important landscape feature contributing to the general spatial quality and visual importance of the Conservation Area? Private open spaces forming an important setting for an historic asset and unkempt spaces that have the potential to be enhanced are candidates for selection subject to complying with the principle question.

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

4.8. Reference has previously been made to the potential of introducing Article 4 Directions in justified circumstances. The Appraisals undertaken to date have identified that many historic architectural features of quality remain unaltered on some non listed buildings but, on the other hand, the exercise of Permitted Development rights has eroded other parts of some Conservation Areas. Should Members decide to proceed with such an initiative, such important historic detailing including features as identified below could justifiably be retained and inappropriate alterations to them controlled.

- Chimneys, in good condition, contemporary with the age of the property, prominent in the street scene and generally complete with chimney pots.**
- Selected windows, on front or side elevations, fronting and visible from the street/s, generally contemporary with the age of the property or of a sympathetic historic design and where the majority of windows of respective elevations retain their original characteristics and have not been replaced by disruptive modern glazing units.**

- Other features might include good quality architectural materials and detailing constructed of wood, metal or other materials.
- Walls or railings which make a positive architectural or historic contribution to the visual appearance of the Conservation Area.
- It may also be appropriate to introduce Article 4 Directions to retain quality buildings below the prescribed Permitted Development threshold.

4.9. Features that are out of character with the Conservation Area and detract or are in poor repair are identified.

4.10. Important views are identified.

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

5. CHARACTER ANALYSIS.

5.1. General Landscape setting. In terms of its wider setting, the Landscape Character Assessment produced in 2007 as a Supplementary Planning Document, describes Buntingford as probably superseding a deserted settlement close to St. Bartholomew's church and developing as a typical coaching town along the original linear road pattern. The document notes the most extensive visual impact comes from adjacent residential areas.

5.2 General overview. The Conservation Area principally consists of the High Street, made up of historic buildings of various dates, many being in commercial use. Elsewhere are River Green and the River Rib and a large area of paddock and permanent grassland surrounding Little Court. The landscape surrounding Little Court is attributed to Humphrey Repton, a famous 18th century designer although its extent is not plotted on the source of this information being the Council's Historic Parks and Gardens document. The design and layout of the various 20th century developments which envelop the Conservation Area varies considerably in quality with many such housing areas being in contrast to the high architectural qualities of the older parts of the town.

5.3 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. There are none.

5.4 Areas of Archaeological Significance. The majority of the Conservation Area is so designated; principal exception being land north of Little Court. The designation shown is that identified on the emerging District Plan.

5.5 Individually Listed Buildings. There are 89 Listed Buildings within the existing Conservation Area. Of this total, 3 date from the 15th century (3%); 19 from the 16th century (21%); 21 from the 17th century (24%); 29 from the 18th century (33%); 14 from the 19th century (16%) and 3 from the 20th century (3%). All buildings are Grade II except Nos. 41-43 High Street, The Almshouses, High Street and No. 66 High Street which are grade II*; also the church of St Peter which is grade I. (In respect of No. 66 High Street where Historic England's records were ambiguous at draft document stage, HE have now confirmed this building is grade II*).

5.6. As previously indicated two Listed Buildings have been identified as being 'At Risk'. These are No. 59 High Street and the curtilage listed wall to the front of the Old Grammar School on the High Street frontage (recently removed).

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

5.8. Almshouses - Grade II*. 1684 (possibly by Robert Hooke) for Seth Ward Bishop of Exeter and Salisbury, mathematician and astronomer, friend of Wren. Plum brick in Flemish-bond, Portland stone dressings, and steep old red tile hipped roof. 2 storeys, U-shaped building around a court. 7- windows wide symmetrical front to west range and 5-windows wings. 2 windows to each floor on ends of wings which also have an offset plinth in line with the red brick courtyard retaining wall topped by a wrought iron railing on timber posts, swept up to a central gate approached by 2 steps. On tablet over door '1684/THIS HOSPITAL WAS ERECTED AND/ENDOWED BY SETH WARD D:D: LD. BP. OF/SALISBURY & CHANCELLr. OF YE MOST NOBLE: ORDER OF YE GARTER WHO WAS BORN IN YIS:/TOWN WITHINYE PARRISH OF ASPDEN & EDVCA-/TED IN YE FREE- SKOOL OF BUNTINGFORD.' Fine scrolled stone trusses support the entablature with swelled frieze and moulded surround to battened door. A classical almshouses of 1684 of outstanding interest. *The railings to front are not plotted on EHDC records but should be.*



Picture 6. Finely detailed entrance to this Grade II* group of Almshouses.

5.9. St. Peter's church - Grade I. Chapel of Ease, now a church. Circa 1615 (inscription stone with 'Domus Orationis 1615' on east gable) for Vicar Dr Alexander Strange. Restored 1899-1900 by W A Pite, renewing windows restoring west gallery and adding north porch, and vestry/heating chamber. Red brick in English-bond with steep tiled roofs. An unusual Jacobean town preaching house in Greek cross form orientated with chancel and semi-circular apse at south and entrance under clock and bell at north. Gothic Survival style. Spalled brickwork to elevation fronting High Street. Without prejudice grant assistance may be available.



Picture 7. Repairs to spalled brickwork to St Peter's church may be eligible for grant assistance. Note the Milestone is also individually listed (the new metal plaque was attached in 2006).

5.10. War Memorial - Grade II. War memorial cross. Circa 1919. Portland stone. A tall tapering octagonal pillar with moulded base raised on an inscribed square block worked to octagon at top, raised on 3 steps. All topped by a small octagonal-shafted tapered armed cross with expanded finials to arms. Capital of pillar carved in leaf scroll with acorns. Sunk flower ornament around neck of pillar and trefoil panels around bottom. Ornamental motif above inscription on each face of square base block.



Picture 8. Fine 20th century War Memorial.

5.11. Jubilee Pump House - Grade II. Pump 18/19th century: pumphouse 1897 inscription reads 'SET UP BY/F J ROBINSON ESQRE/1897 TO COMMEMORATE/THE 60th YEAR OF THE/GLORIOUS REIGN OF/QUEEN/VICTORIA'. Wooden pump pillar, oak pumphouse with shingled roof. A slender square pump pillar. Hexagonal pumphouse on angled oak posts with braces to wallplate. Pointed hexagonal shingled roof. Inscription in relief on 4 sides.



Picture 9. Jubilee Pump, High Street.

5.12. Nos. 41 - 43 High Street - Grade II*. Front range 15th century incorporating earlier north crosswing, 16th century North West wing, front altered in early 18th century. Timber frame plastered at front, roughcast or dark weather boarded rear parts. Steep old red tile roofs. A large 2- storeys U-shaped group, formerly the Angel Inn, with carriageway entrance to yard in the centre. Remains of wall paintings on ground floor of No 41 around fireplace, of 2 periods. Earlier ones of skilful execution and solid colour. Elaborate moulded fireplace lintol. Interior of No. 43 has exposed close-studding, tension braces and heavy flat joists.



Picture 10. No. 41-43 High Street, a fine grade II* listed building with typical carriageway entrance to rear.

5.13. No. 59 and 59A High Street - Grade II. Early 16th century hall house with two crosswings, hall largely rebuilt in the 19th century when middle and north part of street front cased in brick. Timber frame largely cased in grey gault brick. Steep red tile roofs. Heavy arch-braced entrance to carriageway and brackets to each end of jetty. Small shopfront with fascia to left. Three tall octagonal brick shafts to central chimney to middle, backing onto carriageway. Nos. 59 and 59a are included on the Councils Buildings at Risk Register. Works continue in relation to new development to the rear. The building at the front appears unoccupied with windows to ground floor partially boarded (for security reasons?)



Picture 11. No. 59 High Street The return of this building to occupation will be very welcome.

5.14. No. 81 High Street - Grade II. 17th century or earlier, 18th century front. Timber frame roughcast with steep old red tile roofs. A small 2-storeys L-plan house with carriageway through. Lobby-entry, central-chimney plan with stair to rear of stack. Front has moulded wooden eaves cornice, 2 windows to upper floor and one to left of central door. 2-storeys projecting bay window with sashes and canted corner-lights. Similar oriel with coved base over carriageway with small brackets to lintol. 6-panel door with step, moulded surround and dentilled open pediment on brackets. *Metal fire Insurance plaque centrally attached.*



Picture 12. No. 81 High Street and historic metal fire Insurance plaque.



Picture 13. Another example elsewhere on the High Street of a metal Sun Insurance fire plaque. Can you find it? Such plaques were added to buildings to identify them as being insured by the company's fire brigade in the 18/19th centuries before the advent of municipal fire services.

5.15. No. 100 High Street - Grade II. Late 18th century. Red brick with a steep red-tiled roof. An asymmetrical 2-storeys and cellars, double-pile, end-chimneys plan house. 4 windows long front with 2nd bay from north projected slightly containing the door and window over. Triple-sash recessed windows with small panes, plastered reveals, and segmental gauged arches. 2 steps to 6-panel door with fanlight and deep moulded arched stucco hood mould. Formerly Top o' Town House.



Picture 14. No 100 High Street - late 18th century red brick house.

5.16. The Old Croft (on north corner of Little Lane) Grade II. Late 16th or early 17th century, taller west parlour wing early 18th century. Timber frame on stuccoed plinth, plastered upper part over red brick nogging. East gable has remains of old fan pargetting. Steep thatched roofs. *One of few thatched properties in the town; thus traditional roofing is particularly important to retain.*



Picture 15. One of only two thatched properties in the Conservation Area.

5.17. Bridge foot House - Grade II. Formerly Buntingford Union Workhouse 1836, South west wing added 1872. Yellow brick with red brick at rear, and slate roofs. A large symmetrical building facing west with projecting centre of a high basement and 2 storeys, and 2 storeys wings. 2 storeys 1872 extension in matching materials. Heavy dentilled brick cornice and central pediment. Built to serve the 16 surrounding parishes and to hold 160 inmates. *Some early windows in need of repair/maintenance.*

5.18. Layston Cottage and No. 3A - Grade II. Early 16th century hall house with 2 crosswings, 17th and 18th century north range, 19th century single-storey gabled front extension and general renovation. Timber frames roughcast with diaper pargetting to jettied middle range. Steep old red tile roofs. Flint and slate gabled front wing with red brick dressings. An irregular 2 storeys and attics building.



Picture 16. Layston Cottage, River Green - A large early 16th century Hall house with later additions.

5.19. Peel House, High Street Grade II. Early 19th century. Buff brick with slated roof. A tall 2-storeys building. Irregular front with panelled soffit to eaves overhang, 3 regularly spaced upper windows, Double doors in wide doorcase up 3 steps at left hand end and adjoining 2 taller windows to police office, single width door up 6 steps in similar doorcase and taller and wider Ground floor window at right.



Picture 17. Peel House, former Police Station.

5.20. Brick wall The Causeway - Grade II. Red brick wall to rectangular garden south of Little Court. Garden wall. Early 18th century. Red brick in lime mortar. Large rectangular walled garden alongside road. Sloping plinth offset of 3 courses, and pilaster buttresses carried up to die into wall at projecting course under the brick-on-edge coping. About 3m tall, courses follow the slope.



Picture 18. Fine listed kitchen garden wall, a prominent feature on The Causeway.

5.21. Bridge to Little Court - Grade II. Bridge carrying drive over River Rib. 18th century red brick. 9 inch segmental arch ring and red brick parapets with half-round coping over tile creasing.



Picture 19. Picturesque 18th century bridge to Little Court.

5.22. The Cage - grade II. Town lockup. Early 18th century. Walltop and roof renewed in mid 19th century. A small square building near the bridge over the River Rib, about 3m x 3m. Recessed battened and framed door with decorative iron hinges hung on iron pins from heavy frame under timber lintol. Of special historic interest as a local antiquity.



Picture 20. The Cage, Wyddial Road.

5.23. Telephone Kiosk High Street - Grade II. Telephone kiosk. Type K6. Designed 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. Made by various contractors. Cast iron. Square kiosk with domed roof. Unperforated

crowns to top panels and margin glazing to windows and door. This listed structure needs vegetation removing, repainting and general refurbishment and 2 no. panes of glass replacing.

5.24. George VI letter box that forms part of the formal description of one of the listed bridges over the River Rib. Inscribed GR. Such boxes were designed in the reign of George V but the Post office continued installing them (to use them up) in the early reign of George VI, after which a new design was introduced.



Picture 21. GR letter box considered to be listed as it is part of formal listing description.

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

5.26. The main tests relate to the physical layout of the land surrounding the main building/s at the date of listing, the physical layout and functional relationship of structures to each other; ownership, past and present and use or function, past and present. Structures need to be ancillary or subordinate to the main Listed Building and form part of the land and not be historically independent. Protection is granted to such objects or structures within the curtilage of a Listed Building if they were built prior to July 1, 1948. In determining the extent of a Listed Building and its curtilage, a key assessment will be to examine the situation at the time of listing.

5.27. Benson Hall is assessed as being within the curtilage of St. Richard's RC church and dedicated to the memory of Monseigneur Robert Benson who wrote the novel 'Lord of the World' in 1907. It would seem the building was erected in the late 1920's following the Roman Catholic church. The front elevation is of flint with stone window and door detailing. Slate roof with 2 no. finials. Sides and rear of concrete block construction.



Picture 22. Benson Hall - a curious 20th century building dedicated to Catholic priest and novelist, Robert Hugh Benson whose novel Lord of the World is regarded by some as a prophetic neglected Catholic masterpiece.

5.28. Single storey barn to rear of 69 High Street (The Buntingford Kitchen). Single storey red brick building with old tiled roof. Worthy of retention despite modern alterations.



Picture 23. Barn to rear of 69 High Street most worthy of retention.

5.29. Group of single storey barns constructed of brick and flint with slate roofs within curtilage of Little Court - probably 19th century in origin.



Picture 24. Barns in curtilage of Little Court. The mapping from 1874 shows a saw pit to their front on what is now the approach road.

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

5.31. Nos. 1- 3 and no. 5 Chapel End. Two storey 19th century cottages, frontages rendered with slate roofs. Nos. 1-3 has central chimney with tall pots. Modern windows detract to a degree but the effect is minimised because all are the same. Doors painted same colour. Front elevation makes a most worthwhile contribution to the street scene. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 25. Nos. 1-3 Chapel End. Plaque reads *These properties...were bequeathed by the Buntingford Almshouse Trust by Miss A Saggors of Buntingford*. Note harmony achieved by windows of same design and doors painted same colour.

5.32. Austins Funeral Directors building. Simple early/mid 20th century single storey rendered building with tiled roof. Building of good proportions with early/ original windows. Plaque to front reads Fire Station 1931. A number of features worthy of retention are protected by existing planning control.



Picture 26. Austins Funeral Directors - a simple building of pleasing proportions.

5.33. Barclays Bank, Market Hill House, Buntingford Dental Care and flats nos.1- 4 to rear, the latter advised formerly to have been a stable block. Mixture of slate and tiled roofs. Late 19/early 20th century in appearance (Bank annotated as such on 1920-24 mapping). Some original window and wooden other detailing noted; such features worthy of retention on commercial premises being protected by existing planning control. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features on the residential property may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 27. Group of properties displaying good quality architectural detailing which positively contribute to the townscape and which should be retained.

5.34. Nisa Local Store, Baldock Road. Tall robust red brick building probably dating from the mid 20th century with hipped tiled roof and tall chimney stacks. Original windows worthy of retention to side elevation but in need of repair. Some limited rationalisation of signage would significantly improve the street scene.



Picture 28. Local Nisa store. A robust mid 20th century property, a good example of its period and worthy of retention. Shows on OS mapping as being a Post Office for which purpose it may have originally been built. Some modest rationalisation of signage would be of considerable benefit to the street scene.



Picture 29. Early windows to Nisa Local Store and PO worthy of retention and in need of refurbishment.

5.35 Buntingford Youth Centre building. Probably dates from the early 20th century. Of brick, render and pebble dash finish with recessed entrance and decorative wooden detailing to front. Sign to front reads 'Technical Institute'. Early leaded window detailing. Slate roof with cupola. Many features worthy of retention through normal development control.



Picture 30. Buntingford Youth Centre, an interesting early 20th century building.

5.36. Nos. 1-11 Norfolk Road. Early 20th century two storey terrace of yellow brick with slate roof and 3 no. chimneys with pots. Usual personalised changes to windows and doors but overall mass and uniformity of roofscape contributes positively to the quality of the Conservation Area. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for

selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 31. Nos. 1-11 Norfolk Road - an early 20th century group that despite changes to detail, continues to make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

5.37. Nos. 13-15 Norfolk Road. Two storey pair of early 20th century semi detached houses of brick pebble dash and render finish. Hipped tiled roof with diagonally set chimney stack. Some wooden decorative detailing. Despite personalised changes the overall mass contributes positively to the quality of the Conservation Area and adds historic diversity. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

5.38. Nos. 4 - 20 Norfolk Road. Two storey late 19th century of brick construction with slate roofs (roof to no.10 is tiled). Chimneys mostly with pots. Despite personalised changes, including painted brickwork and render, the overall mass contributes positively to the quality of the Conservation Area and adds historic diversity. Impact of modern windows to no.4 reduced virtue of common design. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

5.39. Nos. 105 - 113 High Street. Two storey late 19th century terrace visually and historically unified by roofscape consisting of slate roof and chimneys with pots. Elsewhere some original features but usual personalisation in relation to windows doors and surfaces. Despite such changes the overall mass contributes positively and on balance is worthy of retention. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

5.40. Nos. 88 - 94 High Street. Group of two storey 19th century rendered cottage with tiled roofs and chimneys with pots. Some original features but many window and door alterations through the exercise of Permitted

Development rights. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 32. Nos. 88 -94 High Street. Despite alterations general mass and scale and roofline adds to the architectural character and historic diversity of the High Street.

5.41. i Smashed It Repairs, no.76A High Street. Single storey of brick construction with old tiled roof and carriage entrance; adds to variety and character of the street scene.



Picture 33. I smashed it repairs. Varied roofline adds to quality of the Conservation Area.

5.42. Nos. 1 - 7 Union Terrace. Two storey 19th century terrace, principally rendered; slate roofs, chimneys with pots. Various traditional elements altered but nevertheless the general mass is pleasing and the buildings are of historic interest. Assumed to take their name from the Buntingford Union Workhouse (now Bridgefoot House) opposite. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 34. Nos. 1 - 7 Union Terrace. Despite alterations the mass of this terrace is visually pleasing and the buildings have interesting historical association.

5.43. No. 25 Wyddial Road. Two storey 19th century of flint and brick construction with slate roof and central chimney stack set diagonally. Two range brick window and central door surrounds. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 35. No. 25 Wyddial Road.

5.44. Nos. 9-21 and No. 47A (correctly numbered? being property between No. 21 and PH) Church Street. Two storey late 19/early 20th century terrace. Some original features but usual window and door alterations. Roofs to Nos. 9-15, slate; remainder tiled. All with chimneys, some with pots. Nevertheless whole mass contributes to the quality of the Conservation Area and is worthy of retention. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 36. Late 19/early 20th century terrace Church Street worthy of retention.

5.45. Nos. 5-7 River Green. Pair of 19th century cottages of red brick construction with some decorative blue brick detailing. Tiled roof with large prominent central chimney stack with pots. Some decorative wooden detailing to dormers and entrance. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 37. Pair of distinctive cottages being Nos. 5-7 River Green.

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

5.47. Wall to south of Almshouses. Of red brick construction approximately 2m in height. Some spalled brickwork in need of repair.



Picture 38. Important wall to south of Almshouses in need of repair.

5.48. Metal railings to front of Almshouses. Sturdy metal railings on dwarf brick wall; forms an important visual function and encloses garden to one of the most important listed buildings in the town.

5.49. Red brick wall to rear and north of Town Council offices. 3m + in height generally in good condition. Suggest removal of young ivy growth whilst this is still easily achieved.



Picture 39. Good quality tall brick wall to rear and north of Town Council offices. Suggest removal of ivy whilst young and easy to achieve.

5.50. George VI Pillar letter box, High Street. Iconic British design. Inscribed GviR with crown above and words Post Office below.



Picture 40. George VI pillar Letter box in High Street, standard iconic British design.

5.51. Wall - frontage to Old Grammar School High Street. Brick wall that makes a significant contribution to the Conservation Area in this location. Wall now removed in period following publication of draft appraisal. Included on the Council's Buildings at Risk Register.



Picture 41. Wall to frontage of Old Grammar School in urgent need of repair and potentially eligible for grant assistance from EHDC. Wall now removed, photo retained in document as record.

5.52. Plaque west side of bridge over River Rib, south end of High Street. Plaque reads Hertfordshire County Council 1937. The lettering needs re- inscribing.



Picture 42. Plaque on bridge over River Rib needs re-inscribing to retain information for the future.

5.53. Plaques east side of bridge over River Rib, south end of High Street. Initialed N M AND W E, both dated 1766. The lettering needs re-inscribing.



Picture 43. Historic plaques on bridge presumed to have formed part of an earlier bridge structure.

5.54. Low wall to boundary of Bridgefoot House, forms part of curtilage of listed building and thus protected. Capped with half rounded bricks for most part. Ideally modern concrete capping detail needs replacing.



Picture 44. Curtilage listed low wall to Bridgefoot House. Modern concrete capping detail needs replacing.

5.55. Wall to front of New Cottage The Causeway. A prominent flint wall fronting New Cottage forming boundary to River Rib. Of flint construction with rounded brick capping detail. The wall is a prominent feature in the immediate location and in need of repair. The western end is covered in ivy.



Picture 45. Boundary wall to New Cottage, The Causeway in need of repair and removal of vegetation.

5.56. Wall to south side of Little Lane. Of red brick construction and about 2 m in height. Some piers. Prominent feature on this well used footpath. Should be retained. Partly within, partly beyond revised conservation area.

5.57. Bridge over River Rib at junction of Wyddial Road/ Vicarage Road. Of brick construction. Interesting metal plaque affixed to wall fronting

road dated 1899 signed by the then Clerk of the County Council. Lettering difficult to decipher and would benefit from restoration.



Picture 46. Bridge carrying Wyddial Road over the River Rib with interesting plaque in need of restoration dated 1899.

5.58. Important Open Spaces. Small green spaces with trees to front and rear of St. Richard's church.

5.59. The River Rib and adjacent footpath. The River Rib runs through the community from north to south and forms a most attractive and important feature and is of local distinctiveness



Picture 47. The river supports many birds and gives pleasure to many people.



Picture 48. The River Rib and adjacent footpath is a most valuable natural and community asset.

5.60. 'Shared Space' junction of High Street/Church Street. This paved area provides access to Church Street and is flanked by buildings. The paved area has some cracked or broken surface slabs. There is also a single tree, a flower bed in container, a seat, salt container and litter bin. It occupies a prominent site in the town centre and in the author's opinion it could be improved to provide an enhanced environment in a key location. It is suggested landscaping proposals be drawn up.



Picture 49. 'Shared space' junction High Street and Church Street. In the author's opinion it could perhaps be improved to make it more vibrant.

5.61. Layston Court Gardens. An open space of considerable environmental value in the centre of the town run by the Town Council. The space is well used and well linked to the town's footpath network. It is approached by a narrow footpath from the High Street in need of improvement. It is understood the close board fencing in this location is not the responsibility of the Town Council. The Gardens themselves contain mature tree specimens, several scattered flower and shrub beds and a number of seats, litter bins and dog waste containers. Mapping from the 1920's through to the 1950's shows the location of a Sun Dial in the Gardens.

5.62. The manner in which such areas are landscaped is a matter of local preference but it is considered improvements could be made. Questions asked

- **Could the existing layout be improved to create a better sense of openness?**
- **Are the relatively scattered higher maintenance flower and shrub beds necessary or appropriate?**
- **Is there an overall cohesive landscape approach?**
- **Is the seating in the right places?**
- **Are there too many litter bins and other containers?**

5.63. It is suggested consideration be given to the preparation of a landscape assessment and management plan including proposals for improving the approach from the High Street.



Pictures 50, 51, 52. Layston Court Gardens. Top picture, mature trees form the basis of the Gardens high quality but a greater sense of openness could be achieved: litter bins detract and are all of them really necessary? Middle picture - there are a number of higher maintenance flowers beds. Would a larger single or border display be more effective? Lower picture shows access to Gardens from High Street which is unattractive - some repairs necessary but it is understood this is not the responsibility of the Town Council - solution?

5.64. Land to the east of Wyddial Road to the River Rib being a linear strip of horse paddocks and land around Little Court consisting of an enclosed historic walled garden adjacent to the Causeway and land to

the north of Little Court to Wyddial Road which is permanent grassland that can be viewed from the public domain. The site in combination provides an important open setting to the listed property Little Court and also a visually important open space which can be viewed in parts from the public domain. Throughout there are many trees that add to the high quality of the natural environment in this part of the Conservation Area. The whole represents a natural environment of high quality that should be protected. The Conservation Area boundary has been extended in an easterly direction (see below).



Picture 53. Open land viewed from Wyddial Road that makes a significant visual contribution to the Conservation Area in this location.

5.65. Any others e.g. Wildlife sites/ Historic Parks and Gardens. There is a diagrammatic circle towards the northern end of the Conservation Area called Porters Close. The East Herts. Wildlife Sites Inventory of 2013 describes this as being *Buildings and environs important for protected species.*

5.66. Historic Parks and Gardens. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document produced in 2007 'Historic Parks and Gardens' identifies Little Court as being a 'well preserved Humphrey Repton landscape surrounding and late C19 gardens'. The document does not identify the extent of Repton's landscape surroundings. The author has discussed the matter further with the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust and they advise there is only reference in Repton's accounts that he visited Little Court. Whether or not elements of landscape around Little Court can be attributed to Repton is not proven, in their view. However Hertfordshire Gardens Trust are of the opinion that land to the east beyond the fence in the picture below forms part of the parkland setting to Little Court and is worthy of protection.



Picture 54. Landscape surrounding Little Court provides a parkland setting worthy of retention. View from house up the slope in easterly direction.

5.67. **Particularly important trees and hedgerows.** Those trees that are most important are shown very diagrammatically on the accompanying plans.

5.68. **Important views.** A selection as shown on accompanying plans.

5.69. The views along the High Street are those which demonstrate the principal built historic quality of Buntingford.

5.70. The view of the River at several locations and into permanent grassland at the northern end of the Conservation Area best illustrates elements of the high quality natural environment.

5.71. **Elements out of character with the Conservation Area.** Design and condition of group of 13 lock up garages to rear of High Street and south east of car park. Notwithstanding the removal of these from the Conservation Area, improvements are essential if they are to remain in use and existence.



Picture 55. Poor quality lock up 'garaging' area that detracts. They are now removed from the Conservation Area. Can any improvements be made. What is its future?

5.72. A-boards on the High Street detract in selected locations. They vary in size and style. Discussion need to take place with interested parties including the traders, the Town Council and Hertfordshire County Council to first ascertain their consideration of the matter. The author has been advised that complaints are occasionally received but not in relation to their visual appearance.



Picture 56. A - Boards on the High Street. In visual terms these are disruptive and uncoordinated. Is there an acceptable solution? Should action be taken?

5.73. Site at northern end of town being The Tile Shop, Direct Carpets and Acorn House. This group of properties set back from the road and to the south of a grouping of listed buildings is visually unattractive. If the site could be redeveloped for an appropriate use and at an appropriate scale with buildings located to the front of the site continuing the historic alignment of the High Street, this would represent a significant gain.



Picture 57. Site principally consisting of The Tile Shop and Direct Carpets is alien to the general alignment and historic qualities of the rest of the High Street. Its redevelopment to an appropriate use and at a sympathetic scale and alignment would be beneficial.

5.74. Elements of the Jolly Sailor's PH. This building is strategically located on the corner of High Street and Hare Street Road. Elements probably date from the late 19th century but it is much altered. Advertisement banners to the Hare Street Road frontage detract (now removed) as do poor quality elements including fencing and outbuildings to the rear. If improvements could be achieved to this strategic corner location within the Conservation Area, this would represent a real benefit. Some improvements have been made following discussion between the Council and the owners.





Pictures 58, 59. Improvements to this strategic corner location would be of real benefit. The Phoenix Project appropriately suggests an enhanced seating area outside the PH. These banners have now been removed and a considerable visual improvement has resulted.

5.75. Opportunities to secure improvements. Repair spalled brick work to Market Hill elevation of St Peter's church. Similarly repair spalled brick work to wall south of Almshouses nearby. Seat in need of refurbishment /minor repair north of War memorial. Undertake repairs to listed K6 telephone call box. Remove young ivy growth on wall to rear of Town Council offices. Seek to secure modest rationalisation of signage to Nisa Local store, Baldock Road.

5.76. Footpath linking Pig's Nose and The Causeway. Removal of weeds and excess vegetation would be an advantage.



Picture 60. Removal of excess vegetation on footpath linking Pig's Nose and The Causeway would be advantageous.

5.77. Small untidy area, Church Street south side. Now advised land is owned by the Crown Estates.



Picture 61. Untidy site Church Street.

7.78. Commemorative seat in need of repair, Wyddial Road. Damaged and vandalised; in need of repair or replacement.



Picture 62. Damaged commemorative seat in need of repair or replacement.

5.79. Seating area High Street/Baldock Street. The minimum needed here is repair to one of the seats. However long term future and design of the site may be interlinked with Phoenix Project proposals which make a general recommendation to declutter and remove barriers.



Picture 63. Minimum works involve repairs to one of the pair of seats.

5.80. Boundary changes. These details are shown on accompanying plans. Councils have a responsibility to ensure such areas justify Conservation Area status and are not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

5.81. There are other individual buildings and areas elsewhere such as the 20th century housing development of Dell Spring which lack special architectural or historic importance. However in the latter situation for example, it would be difficult to sensibly redraw the boundaries to

exclude this area so its retention as 'neutral' buildings within the Conservation is accepted.

5.82. The following changes have been made:

(a) Extend the Conservation Area to the east of Little Court to include a well defined field that is important to the setting of Little Court, a listed building. The land in question contains a number of trees some of which are mature and ancient.



Picture 64. The conservation area has been extended to the east of Little Court to include the parkland type setting of the field beyond the fence in the picture.

(b) Extend Chapel End footpath including the River Rib and its treed banks south to the bridge.

(c) Exclude the following areas which are modern developments and are not considered to be areas of special architectural or historic interest.

(i) Area south of the village consisting of the Fire Station, the Co-operative store and car park to the east of Station Road and residential development on the west of Station Road being The Gables and nos. 1 - 14 Rib Way.



Pictures 65, 66, 67. The Fire Station, the Co operative store and housing opposite is now excluded from the Conservation Area on the basis that this area is not of special architectural or historic interest.

(ii) Group of 13 lock up garages to rear of High Street and south east of car park. These buildings are of very poor quality and assumed to be associated with nearby residential development beyond the Conservation Area. Notwithstanding their removal from the Conservation Area their future should be explored and should they be retained, improvements need to be carried out.



Picture 68. Garage block now removed from the Conservation Area. Notwithstanding this improvements are needed.

(iii) No.15A Norfolk Road 'Red Bricks'. A modern property on the edge of the Conservation Area of insufficient architectural quality and limited historic interest.



Picture 69. No.15A Norfolk Road, now excluded from the Conservation Area.

(iv) No. 131 High Street. A modern property on the edge of the Conservation Area of insufficient architectural quality and limited historic interest.



Picture 70. No.131 High Street, now excluded from the Conservation Area.

(v) Nos. 2- 4 Garden Road. A pair of modern properties on the edge of the Conservation Area of insufficient architectural quality and limited historic interest.



Picture 71. Nos. 2-4 Garden Road, now excluded from the Conservation Area.

(vi) Nos. 2 - 6 and Layston House, The Causeway. A group of modern properties on the edge of the Conservation Area of insufficient architectural quality and limited historic interest.



Picture 72. Nos. 2 - 6 and Layston House, The Causeway, now excluded from the Conservation Area.

(vii) Nos. 1 - 10 Bridewell Close. A larger group of modern properties on the edge of the Conservation Area of insufficient architectural quality and limited historic interest. Following representations Grovebury House remains within the conservation area.



Picture 73. Nos. 1- 10 Bridewell Close, modern properties of insufficient architectural or historic interest to be included in the Conservation Area and now excluded.

5.83. Other actions. Advise Historic England of several errors as set out in table to Management section below. Show railings to front of Almshouses on EHDC mapping records as being listed.

6. OVERALL SUMMARY

6.1. Buntingford Conservation Area is of high quality and generally considered worthy of its status as a Conservation Area. It is considered to be an area of '*special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance*'.

6.2. This Appraisal and Management Plan as now adopted extends the conservation area to include land of a parkland nature to the east of Little Court. Also extend Chapel End footpath including the River Rib and its treed banks south to the bridge.

6.3. However it also concluded that its boundaries should be modified elsewhere to exclude modern housing located in peripheral locations.

6.4. The town's greatest environmental asset is the High Street and its historic buildings, many of which are finely detailed and a number having interesting carriageway entrances. The quality of these buildings must be carefully maintained and in this respect planning and listed building control has an important role to play.

6.5. The Phoenix Project currently being considered by the Town Council makes a number of recommendations although those relating to the High Street are limited to minor interventions, removal of bollards and patch repairs to surface treatments. It is suggested this be re examined to reconsider if there are other aspects that would add vitality and visual improvements. One such consideration might be the introduction of limited tree planting if services and other practical considerations could be accommodated.

6.6. Another significant asset is the River Rib which runs north south throughout the town. This is partly accessible by public footpath which links with the important open space in the town centre, Layston Court Gardens, managed by the Town Council. The river is of visual importance and of wildlife interest to the wider community.

6.7. In the north east corner of the Conservation Area there is a large area of open land around Little Court. This is heavily treed in many locations and consists of an historic walled garden, an historic landscape setting attributed to Humphrey Repton, horse paddocks and permanent grassland. Whilst this area is privately owned a number of its fine qualities are visible from the public domain and it is highly important its openness and fine qualities are protected for the future.

6.8. A number of non listed buildings from the late 19/early 20th century have been identified for retention and protection along with other features of architectural or historic interest.

6.9. A number of opportunities have been identified where improvements could be secured. These vary from very small proposals

to more strategic considerations such as the future of larger sites and introducing greater vitality to others. Any such improvements will principally be executed through the owners' co operation but there could be instances where District Council officers may be able to assist. Experience elsewhere has shown the active involvement of the local Town or Parish Council can be critical. In this case Buntingford Town Council has advised of their involvement which is much appreciated. These enhancement proposals are set out in tabular form below.

PART C - MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS.

7. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS.

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

(a) Include field to east of Little Court.

(b) Extend Chapel End footpath including the River Rib and its treed banks south to the bridge.

(c) Exclude the following areas

(i) area consisting of the Fire Station, the Co-operative store and car park to the east of Station Road and residential development on the west of Station Road being The Gables and nos. 1 - 14 Rib Way.

(ii) Group of 13 lock up garages to rear of High Street and south east of car park.

(iii) No. 15A Norfolk Road.

(iv) No. 131 High Street.

(v) Nos. 2- 4 Garden Road.

(vi) Nos. 2 - 6 and Layston House, The Causeway.

(vii) Nos. 1 - 10 Bridewell Close.

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

Historic Environment'. In due course the 2007 Local Plan will be replaced by the District Plan whose policies will then be relevant.

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

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

E-mail: planning@eastherts.gov.uk

Website: www.eastherts.gov.uk

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

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

7.5. *Planning Control - Potential need to undertake an Archaeological Evaluation.* Within the sites designated as being an Area of Archaeological Significance as shown on the emerging District Plan, the contents of policies BH1, BH2 and BH3 are particularly relevant.

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

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

7.8. *Planning Control – Other Unlisted Buildings that make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution.* Within the existing Conservation Areas this Appraisal has identified 15 unlisted buildings/ groups of buildings that are considered to have sufficient qualities to be described thus. These are: Nos.1-3 and No. 5 Chapel End; Austin Funeral Directors building; Barclays Bank, Market Hill House, Buntingford Dental Care, High Street and Nos. 1 - 4 flats to rear; on Baldock Road - Nisa Local Store; Buntingford Youth Centre building; on Norfolk Road - Nos. 1-11; 13-15; 4-20. Elsewhere on High street Nos. 105-113; 88-94; 76A (iSmashed it Repairs). Nos. 1-7 Union Terrace; No. 25 Wyddial Road; Nos. 9-21 and adjacent 47A (?) Church Street; Nos. 5-7 River Green. Any proposal involving the demolition of these buildings is unlikely to be approved.

7.9. Planning Control – Other unlisted distinctive features that make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution. This Appraisal has identified a number of railings and walls that make a particular contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. They are protected from demolition virtue of exceeding the specified heights relevant to Conservation Area legislation or by Listed Building legislation. Any proposal involving their demolition is unlikely to be approved. Removal of other PD rights involving alteration is also an available option.

7.10. Other distinctive features that contribute to the quality of the environment are also identified. These should be protected within the parameters of existing legislation.

7. 11. There are other distinctive features that are integral to some of the important unlisted buildings identified above that make an important architectural or historic contribution, including selected chimneys, windows and other architectural detailing. In some situations protection already exists through existing planning controls but in other cases protection could only be provided by removing Permitted Development Rights via an Article 4 Direction. The associated legislation is complex. Should the Council consider such a course of action appropriate there would be a process of notifying the affected owners separately at a later date. This would be associated with further detailed consideration and possible refinement.

7.12. Improvement of features and architectural detailing. This Appraisal has noted the diminishing quality of several 19th century terraces principally damaged by the exercise of Permitted Development Rights. If there is support for the idea one initiative could be the preparation of an improvement scheme whereby Council officers in association with residents, draw up improvement proposals to be implemented on a voluntary basis over a long period. This could involve the replacement of inappropriate architectural items such as windows and doors at such time replacements were proposed.

7.13. Possible redevelopment site. Site at northern end of town consisting of The Tile Shop, Direct Carpets and Acorn House. This group of properties set back from the road and to the south of a grouping of listed buildings is visually unattractive where redevelopment by an appropriate use and at an appropriate scale and alignment would be beneficial.

7.14. Planning control - Wildlife Sites. Any development that adversely affects wildlife species occupying such sites will not normally be permitted and would need clear justification. Proposals will be considered against Policies ENV 14 and ENV 16.

7.15. Planning Control – Important Historic Parks and gardens. EHDC Supplementary Planning Document ‘Historic Parks and Gardens’ has

identified Little Court as being locally important, although its extent is not geographically defined. Proposals that significantly harm such gardens special character will not be permitted and will be considered against Policy BH16.

7. 16. Planning Control – Important open land, open spaces and gaps. This Appraisal has identified the following particularly important open spaces: Green spaces around St Richard's church; River Rib and adjacent footpath; 'shared space' junction of High Street/Church Street.; Layston Court Gardens; Land to the east of Wyddial Road and around Little Court. These open spaces will be protected.

7. 17. Planning Control – Particularly important trees and hedgerows. Only the most significant trees are shown diagrammatically. It has not been possible to plot trees on inaccessible land. Subject to certain exceptions all trees in a Conservation Area are afforded protection and a person wanting to carry out works has to notify the Council. Trees that have not been identified may still be considered suitable for protection by Tree Preservation Orders. Owners are advised to make regular inspections to check the health of trees in the interests of amenity and Health and Safety.

7. 18. Planning Control - Important views. A selection of general views are diagrammatically shown. Policy BH6 is particularly relevant.

7.19. Enhancement Proposals. The Appraisal has identified a number of elements that detract which are summarised in the Table below together with a proposed course of action; other actions are also identified. Within the staff and financial resources available, Council Officers will be pro-active and provide assistance. It must be recognized that such improvements will generally be achieved only by the owner's co-operation. Butingford Town Council have offered significant and much appreciated assistance by assuming responsibility for progressing many of the actions set out below.

Detracting element.	Location.	Proposed action.
Diminishing quality of several 19th century terraces principally damaged by the exercise of Permitted Development Rights.	Various locations, High Street, Church Street, Norfolk Road, Union Terrace.	Consider an initiative whereby Council officers in association with residents draw up proposals to improve one such terrace. Such proposals to be implemented by residents on a voluntary basis.
Brick wall in poor state of repair in key location. Wall subsequently removed.	High Street frontage to Old Grammar School. On Council's Buildings at Risk	Approach owner and seek co operation in undertaking appropriate repairs(now rebuild). Potentially eligible for

	Register.	grant assistance from EHDC.
Detracting commercial site.	North end of High Street.	Carefully consider through the planning process any redevelopment of this site by an appropriate use and at an appropriate scale and alignment.
Detracting corner location.	The Jolly Sailor's PH.	Consider in greater detail and contact owner with view of seeking co operation to make visual improvements. Some improvements recently undertaken.
Spalled brickwork.	High Street elevation St Peter's church.	Seek owner's co operation in undertaking necessary repairs. Without prejudice grant assistance may be available.
Spalled brickwork.	Wall south of Almshouses, r/o St Peter's Church, Market Hill.	Source owner and seek owner's co operation in undertaking necessary repairs. Without prejudice grant assistance may be available.
Seat.	Near War Memorial.	Seek owner's co operation in undertaking repair and refurbishment and repainting.
Telephone kiosk.	Near War memorial.	Seek owner's co operation in undertaking refurbishment.
Ivy growth on wall.	Rear of Town Council offices.	Seek owner's co operation in undertaking removal.
Signage.	Nisa Local Store, Baldock Road.	Seek owner's co operation in considering limited rationalisation to improve street scene.
Windows in need of repair.	Nisa Local Store, Baldock Road.	Seek owner's co operation in undertaking necessary repair/ refurbishment.
Group of 13 lock up garages.	To rear of High Street and south east of car park.	Despite removal from Conservation Area seek owner's co operation in undertaking necessary refurbishment.
A Boards.	High Street.	Discussions need to take place with interested parties in the first

		instance.
Weeds and excess vegetation.	Footpath between Pig's Nose and The Causeway.	Remove and maintain.
Boundary wall in need of repair.	To frontage of New Cottage, The Causeway.	Seek owner's co-operation to undertake necessary repairs.
Commemorative seat in need of repair.	Wyddial Road.	Seek owner's co-operation to undertake necessary repairs or replace.
Untidy area.	Church Street south side.	Land appears to be up for sale. In first instance seek to establish owners intentions.
Damaged seat.	High Street/Baldock Road.	Short term - repair seat. Long term consider future of whole site in association with Phoenix Project proposals.
Other Actions.		
In association with the Phoenix Project if implemented (or if not) consider the potential for tree planting at suitable strategic locations in the High Street in order to secure visual improvements.		
'Shared space', High Street/Church Street. Consider commissioning a landscape enhancement scheme for this key central space.		
Consider preparing a landscape and management plan for Layston Court Gardens and improve access from High Street.		
Stone plaque west side of bridge over River Rib, south end of High Street. Plaque reads Hertfordshire County Council 1937. Contact Herts. County Council and seek their co operation to re-inscribe it.		
Stone plaques east side of bridge over River Rib, south end of High Street. Plaques are initialled and dated 1766. Contact Herts. County Council and seek their co operation to re-inscribe them.		
Metal plaque dated 1899 on bridge carrying Wyddial Road over River Rib. Contact Herts. County Council and seek their co operation to restore it.		
Contact owner of Bridgefoot House and seek co-operation in replacing concrete capping detail with traditional rounded bricks to part of low boundary wall. Also seek cooperation in undertaking necessary repair/maintenance to selected early windows.		
Inform Historic England that Nos. 68-70 High Street and No. 78 Gilpin House are wrongly plotted on their mapping. Also advise Historic England of 2 no. listed buildings at Buntingford Road Puckeridge (No.7 and No. 27) are wrongly included in their records as being in Buntingford parish.		
Show Railings to frontage of Almshouses as being listed on EHDC mapping records.		

