



## WATTON-AT-STONE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

ADOPTED JULY 2014



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# **WATTON- AT- STONE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**ADOPTED 30 JULY 2014**

**This document is the adopted Watton-At-Stone Conservation Area Appraisal, which replaces the draft document that was subject to public consultation in November 2013, extended to April 2014 and public meetings on 13 November 2013 and 7 March 2014. Members considered the responses to this consultation at their Executive Committee and Council meetings on 3 June and 30 July 2014 respectively. Members resolved to adopt the document on 30 July 2014. The document now appears with any necessary boundary revisions and textual changes required as a result of consultation feedback and adoption.**

## **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 by the many interested persons who appreciate and visit them.**

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

**1.3. The District is situated in an economically buoyant region where an attractive environment, employment opportunities and excellent transport links, road rail and air, make it a popular destination to live and work. In addition to London a short commuting distance away, the District is influenced by other factors beyond its administrative area, such as Stansted Airport and the towns of Harlow and Stevenage. 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, recognize these facts and commit 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 will consider them carefully. This document will be regarded as a 'material consideration' when determining planning applications. The document also puts forward simple and practical management proposals that improve the character of the Conservation Area 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 their structural condition. Therefore 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 may apply to estimating dates of buildings.**

**1.8. This Conservation Appraisal:**

- **Identifies the special character of Watton-at-Stone;**
- **Identifies elements that should be retained or enhanced;**
- **Identifies detracting elements;**
- **Reviews the existing boundary;**
- **Puts forward practical enhancement proposals;**

**1.9. The document has been prepared in partnership with the local Parish Council and the local community through the consultation process and the Council would like to record its thanks to them.**

**1.10. Acknowledgement and thanks are recorded to Hertfordshire County Council whose Historic Environment Unit has been most helpful. Particular thanks are extended to Mr Alan Rattue for permission to reproduce a number of historic local collection photographs.**

**1.11. This Appraisal 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 area accords with the statutory definition and is 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 Order) 1995 (as amended), defines the range of minor developments for which planning permission is not required and this range is more restricted**

in Conservation Areas. For example, the Order currently requires that the addition of dormer windows to roof slopes, various types of cladding, satellite dishes fronting a highway and a reduced size of extensions, all require planning permission in a Conservation Area.

2.7. However, even within Conservation Areas there are many other minor developments 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 include some developments fronting a highway or open space, such as an external porch, the painting of a house or the demolition of some gates, fences or walls. The removal of important architectural features that are important to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area or individual buildings within it such as distinctive porches, windows or walls or railings to some non-listed properties 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 can only be made in justified circumstances and a clear assessment of each Conservation Area considerably assists in this respect. In conducting this Appraisal, consideration has been given as to whether or not such additional controls are necessary.

2.8. Works to Trees. Another additional planning control relates to trees located within Conservation Areas. Setting aside various exceptions principally relating to size and condition, any proposal to fell or carry out works to trees has to be 'notified' to the Council within 6 weeks of the works. Some trees within the Conservation Area are already be subject to Tree Preservation Orders. This Appraisal diagrammatically identifies only the most significant trees or groups of trees that make a particularly important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Other trees not specifically identified may still be suitable for statutory protection.

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 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. Published in March 2012, this document replaces previous advice, including PPS 5, Planning for the Historic Environment. The principle emphasis of the new 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. In relation to the historic environment the new 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 listed buildings and other unlisted buildings of architectural or historic interest. The maximum grant will not normally exceed £1,000.

2.13. In respect of the above the Council has produced a number of leaflets and guidance notes that are available on request. Further details are provided in Appendix 1.

2.14. The Council also has a 'Buildings at Risk Register', originally produced in 2006 and updated in 2012/13. In relation to Watton-at-Stone there are two milestones entered on the Register as being 'At Risk', one is located on the High Street within the Conservation Area, the subject of this Appraisal. Grant assistance not exceeding £10,000 may be available for works that lead to such structures 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 Council's website or a copy can be obtained from the Council (contact details are set out in section 7).

2.16. In accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council is in the process of preparing a planning policy document which will replace the 2007 Local Plan. This will be known as the East Herts District Plan (DP). Once adopted the DP will contain the relevant Council planning policies.

2.17. Watton at Stone is surrounded by designated Green Belt that sweeps up to the Category 1 Village Boundaries in all locations.

2.18. Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area was first designated in 1975 and most recently in 2000.

## **Part B - APPRAISAL**

### **3. Origins and historic development.**

3.1. The evidence of early settlement in the area is relatively well documented and interesting. Neolithic arrow heads and axes have previously been found in the Parish and a Neolithic flint blade was found in the church allotments.



**3.2. At nearby Aston, an Iron Age bronze mirror was found that probably was buried as part of a Late Iron Age cremation grave and from information available, this can be seen at the British Museum. The mirror dates 50BC - 50AD.**

**3.3. There is evidence of Roman occupation with finds of Samian and Castor wares and coins having been found in the present Rectory garden in 1957 and Roman pottery finds in gardens of the Rivershill housing area. A Roman road linking Welwyn and Braughing crossed the southern part of the village.**

**3.4. In 969 AD when the Manor belonged to Westminster Abbey, it was called Wattun.**

**3.5. The Listed Building description refers to the fact that the Parish Church dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century was built on an earlier foundation, so Saxon settlement is a possibility.**



Picture 1 - The Parish Church is a fine structure dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century that dominates the local landscape.

**3.6. Watton- at –Stone as seen today and as can be analysed from Listed Building descriptions, evolved from the 15<sup>th</sup> century with all subsequent centuries to the present date being represented.**

**3.7. Woodhall Park (now Heath Mount School) was an important factor in the growth of the settlement during the late 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is a grade I Listed building with features in the grounds being separately listed. It was built by T. Leverton for Sir T. Rumbold in 1777 – 1782 and further extended in 1794. Its attached garden is scheduled grade II\* and landscaped by W. Malcolm, Royal Nurseryman circa 1780. In 1801 the house and surrounding land was purchased by Samuel Smith, a banker from Nottingham. The Estate was occupied by four generations of the Smith family, until the death of Colonel Henry Abel Smith.**

**3.8. It is recognised that the Estate greatly contributed to the local community in addition to the character of the area and still continues to do so. The family finance major changes to Watton Church, they built Almshouses and schools, including being co-founders of Haileybury in 1862. The Estate continues to contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area through maintaining a property portfolio and conservation work.**

**3.9. The map dating from 1874 (Plan 1) identifies many interesting features including a Malthouse opposite the former Waggon and Horses PH, a Corn Mill at Mill Lane, Allotment Gardens where the Hockerill housing development is now located; two groups of Almshouses; a school for Boys and Girls, now the site of detached houses south west of Old School Orchard; an Infants school nearby; a Smithy on the southern part of the High Street; the milestone in its current location annotated London 26 miles.**

**The Rectory at this time was present day Crowbury and a group of four cottages existed at Watton Green. Three PH's and a Post Office are indicated and the map at this time shows the present day Allotments on a more extensive area which then included present day Glebe Court. A small gravel pit existed in Hanginghill Wood.**



**Picture 2 – Early Photograph dating from early/ mid 20<sup>th</sup> century of the Post Office, now 103 High Street. A key building of merit in the street scene whose mass and general form is little changed. Photo courtesy of Mr. Alan Rattue's local collection.**

**3.10. Later mapping from 1897 shows similar features although by this time the Methodist Chapel had been built on the site of a previous property and the Infants School was identified as the Parish Room. Additional planting of exotic species such as the Chilean Pine in the church yard and the two magnificent Sequoias to the west of the church are identified on the map from this date. A Lock up is annotated on the north side of the High Street. This building still exists and is discussed later in the Appraisal.**

**3.11. Mapping from the 1920 shows the Rectory had relocated to what is now Glebe House off Rectory Lane overlooking a defined Cricket Square in its current location. The gravel pit in Hanginghill Wood had been significantly extended.**

**3.12. Mapping from 1938 indicates several changes including construction of the Railway, its Station and nearby Cattle Pen; a Gravel Pit adjacent to the River Beane and accessed from Mill Lane and the War Memorial. Otherwise the form of the village had changed little.**

**3.13. The first scheduled passenger service at Watton commenced in 1924 but the Station was closed in 1939, re-opening again in 1982. Services currently operate to Stevenage and London.**

**3.14. Mapping from 1963 shows that many of the modern estates had enveloped much of the historic core by this time. Interestingly the building of the former Victorian school for Boys and Girls still existed and the former Malthouse opposite the Waggon and Horses PH had become a garage. A garage also existed on what is now The Beaneside housing cul de sac. The Rectory had moved for the third time by this date and by comparison is the modest single storey building of today. A 19<sup>th</sup> century building or earlier clearly shown to the south of The Chestnuts on earlier maps called 'The Haven' had regrettably been demolished by 1963.**



Picture 3 -'The Haven' to the south of 'The Chestnuts'. The former was demolished in the 1960's. Photo courtesy of Mr. Alan Rattue's local collection.

**3. 15. Kelly's Post Office Directory for 1874 describes Watton (note no reference to Watton at Stone) as being ...a parish and large village on the River Beane and on the Great North Road. The church of SS Andrew and Mary is an ancient building of flint and stone... it was repaired and restored at a cost of £7,000. There are National and Infant Schools. In the village is a large Water Mill. In the village are almshouses, erected in 1867 by Abel Smith esq. for the use of three widows and widowers... His seat, Woodhall Park is finely diversified by hill and dale... The chief crops are wheat, oats, barley and turnips. The population in 1871 was 866.**



Picture 4 - Mid 20<sup>th</sup> century photograph of the garage that previously existed opposite the former Waggon and Horses PH. Photo courtesy of Mr. Alan Rattue's local collection.

**3.16. In addition to farmers, trades listed are as follows: 3 no. shopkeepers, 3 no. builders, 2 no. bakers, 2 no. shoemakers, 2 no. beer retailers, , a miller, a harness maker, a tailor, a wheelwright, a surgeon, a draper, a butcher, a plumber and painter, a grocer and shoemaker. Three Public Houses are listed namely the Bull Inn, the George and Dragon and the Waggon and Horses. In common with other rural settlements of this time, Watton at Stone was a dynamic largely self sufficient community supporting a wide range of trades.**



Picture 5 - former retail premises, now in residential use as nos. 69-71 High Street. Photo courtesy of Mr. Alan Rattue's local collection.

**3.17. The Place names of Hertfordshire published by Cambridge University Press refers to the following ancient names; Wattun (969), Wodtone (1086), Watton Stone (1304), Watton atte Stone (1311), Wotton at Stone (1462) and Wattonstrete (1463). The name possibly derives from *wad* and *ton* meaning woad farm.**

**3.18. The Village Guide of 1988 by Alec Sandison advises that the reference to the word 'stone' that forms part of the name may be associated with a prehistoric or Roman mark stone, a lump of Puddingstone at the site of the former Waggon and Horses PH.**

**3.19. The adopted Conservation Area is shown on Plan 1, a map dating from 1874. Also superimposed on this map is the approximate alignment of the Roman road that once linked Welwyn and Braughing.**

**4. General Designations and criteria used to identify important environmental features.**

**4.1. There are no designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the Conservation Area. However within the Parish there is a scheduled Roman site 400m to the east of Backlane Wood and another Scheduled Ancient**

**Monument of medieval origins with evidence of the presence of a very high status ecclesiastical site at Well Wood and Chapel Wood.**

**4.2. Areas of Archaeological Significance.** Nearly the entirety of Watton-at-Stone's Conservation Area is so designated. The principal exception being an extensive area of land south of Crowbury (former Rectory) off Church Lane. Not all archeological sites are of equal importance and the Council will decide a course of action that may vary from recording any remains prior to development or protecting it from development, when determining planning applications.

**4.3. Listed buildings.** Individually listed buildings have been identified, plotted and some very briefly described, such abbreviated descriptions being based on the Dept. of Environment list. Full descriptions can be obtained on line at English Heritage's web site or Heritage Gateway. Such Listed Buildings are protected from unauthorised demolition, alteration or extension. Structures, including railings and walls, within the curtilages 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 from demolition.** There are considerable numbers of non listed buildings that makes an important architectural or historic contribution to the Conservation Area and these have been separately identified. The basic questions asked in identifying 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/ structure visually important in the street scene?

**4.5. Trees and Hedgerows.** There are many trees and hedgerows that particularly contribute to the quality of the Conservation Area. The basic criteria for identifying such 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 have been identified. 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. Any other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution are noted.**



**Picture 6 - Chimneys are a very important architectural feature in the local streetscapes. There is an extensive range of types and sizes throughout the village.**

**4.8. Reference has previously been made to the potential of introducing Article 4 Directions in justified circumstances and the criteria for their**

**selection in relation to retaining features associated with selected non listed properties is as follows:**

- **In relation to chimneys, these need to be in good condition, contemporary with the age of the property, prominent in the street scene and complete with chimney pots. Exceptionally particularly important chimney stacks without pots may be selected.**
- **In relation to selected windows, these need to be on front or side elevations, fronting and visible from the street/s, contemporary with the age of the property and where the majority of windows of respective elevations retain their original characteristics and have not been replaced by modern glazing units.**
- **In relation to walls or railings, those selected need to be below the prescribed heights (walls 1m fronting a highway including a footpath or bridleway, water course or open space or 2m elsewhere require prior consent for their demolition), be prominent in the street scene and make a positive architectural or historic contribution to its visual appearance.**
- **In relation to other features, these may include good quality architectural detailing to non-listed buildings, constructed of wood, metal or other materials.**
- **It may also be appropriate to introduce Article 4 Directions to retain quality buildings below the prescribed threshold where permission for demolition in Conservation Areas is not required.**

**4.9. In Watton at Stone it has been concluded that a number of Article 4 Directions may be justified subject to further consideration, possible refinement and notification.**

**4.10. Elements that are out of character with the Conservation Area or that are in poor repair have been identified and appear later in the Appraisal.**

**4.11. Important views are identified and are described elsewhere.**

**4.12. In relation to any revisions to the Conservation Area boundary, consideration has been given as to whether or not the land or buildings in question form part of an area of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance should be conserved.**

**5. General Character and Setting of Watton-at-Stone.**

**5.1. In terms of its wider setting, the Landscape Character Assessment produced in 2007 as a Supplementary Planning Document, describes the area to the south west of Watton at Stone as large scale arable farmland with extensive views, sinuous open lanes and Ancient Woodlands. The area to the north east of the village describes Woodhall Park and Watton at Stone slopes as being an upland arable landscape with strong planned parkland influence and characteristics within Woodhall. The document properly notes that any development proposals that affect the integrity and historic value of this landscape area should be resisted.**

**5.2. Despite extensive modern developments off Station Road in the north west quadrant of the village and other developments such as Lammas Road, the Beaneside and Rivershill, the designated Conservation Area has largely retained its historical identity.**

**5.3. There are two distinct areas that constitute the Conservation Area. Firstly there is the High Street running from the former Waggon and Horses PH in the north to the junction of Church Lane in the south. The centre of the High Street is characterised by a tightly knit grouping of interesting historic buildings of quality and variety.**



**Picture 7 - High Street looking north, this part of the Conservation Area is characterised by tightly knit groups of historic buildings of quality and variety.**

**5.4. Secondly there is an extensive open area, the focal point of which is the Parish Church. This area extends to the south to include Watton Green and is linked to the main village by Church Path which is a public footpath. This area consists of well maintained sports facilities, allotments, public and private open spaces, pasture land, parkland, hedges, sunken lanes, woodland, designated Wildlife Sites and a village green that is well removed from the village to the south. This area is extensively treed and includes a number of mature exotic parkland varieties especially popular with the Victorians and likely planted from about the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Apart from a few modern buildings scattered in large plots the area has retained its essential open character.**



**Picture 8 - Looking towards the dominant church tower from the War Memorial across an open space of great quality.**

**5.5. There are 50 Listed Buildings in the Parish as a whole, one of which is Grade I and 2 of which are grade II\*. The Grade I building is Woodhall Park located beyond the Conservation Area. This imposing property is now used as a school and is situated in its grade II\* parkland setting, a small area of which intrudes into the Conservation Area at the south east junction of High Street and Ware Road. A fine view of its imposing scale, setting and**

relationship with the village can be observed from Church Lane, west of the church.

5.6. Of the 50 Listed Buildings in the Parish as a whole, 26 are located in the Conservation Area. Of the latter 3 date from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, 7 from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, 7 from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, 3 from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, 5 from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and 1(a telephone kiosk), from the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

5.7. As set out below this Appraisal identifies other buildings of high quality that are not listed. These are numerous, dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and are a very important element in the environmental quality of the Conservation Area. A number of these buildings are owned by the Woodhall Estate who also own an number of listed buildings within the conservation area. These buildings are kept in good repair and the estate is sensitive to ensuring their high qualities are maintained.

5.8. In summary most of the designated Conservation Area is visually rich, being either defined by high quality buildings or open spaces. Its historical and architectural quality is well defined and not unduly adversely affected by modern mid-late 20th century developments on its boundaries. More recent housing development to the south east of the former Waggon and Horses PH is considered to be a pleasing example of modern development successfully incorporated in a key Conservation Area location.

5.9. The Conservation Area is clearly defined and is composed of two main identity areas namely: Area A – the High Street (from former Waggon and Horses PH to the War Memorial) and Area B – the remainder of the Conservation Area.

## 6. Detailed Character Analysis.

6.1. Area A- High Street from former Waggon and Horses PH to the War Memorial.

6.2. *General overview.* The long High Street lies entirely within the Conservation Area. The area from the former Waggon and Horses PH to Mill Lane in the north and part of the High Street in the south at the junction with Rivershill is affected by 20<sup>th</sup> century development of limited architectural or historic interest which has properly been excluded from the Conservation Area. The centre of the village is characterised by a tightly knit grouping of interesting historic buildings of quality and variety. Typically these historic buildings are constructed of yellow stock brick with steeply sloping red tiled or slate roofs where chimney stacks form a dominant and important element of the street scene. In addition to the concentration of Listed Buildings, there are many high quality 19<sup>th</sup> century

non listed properties whose generally unspoilt architectural qualities are worthy of recognition and protection.

**6.3. *Scheduled Ancient Monuments.*** There are none.

**6.4. *Archeological sites.*** Data from Hertfordshire County Council indicates that Roman pottery and coins dating from the 1<sup>st</sup>- 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, indicative of occupation, has been found in gardens of Riverside.

**6.5. *Individually Listed Buildings.*** Within this part of the Conservation Area the 25 Listed Buildings are grade II except Watton Place and attached wall that is listed grade II\*. Most originate from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries with the 15<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries also being represented. Many of the earlier buildings have evolved and have been altered or extended in subsequent centuries. A selection of Listed Buildings is briefly described below.

**6.6. Watton Place, grade II\*,** dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century with later alterations up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Originally it was a two bay open hall. It dominates this part of the High Street with its distinctive jetty, steeply pitched roofs and range of chimneys. Nos. 44- 46 High Street and the George and Dragon PH are described as originally having been open hall houses, dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries respectively.



Picture 9 - Watton Place, listed Grade II\*.



6.7. The village pump and housing, listed Grade II, dates from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and given by Abel Smith of Woodhall Park as a memorial for his son Lt. General. P. Smith.

6.8. There are two sets of former Almshouses, both listed grade II. The first, Nos. 98 - 110 High Street, formerly 7 Almshouses and dated 1867, is believed to have been built for Lady Susan Smith of Woodhall Park whilst the second 55A - 63 High Street, formerly 8 Almshouses, dates from 1873 and was built by Abel Smith of Woodhall Park.



Picture 10 - 19<sup>th</sup> century former Almshouses built by the Smith family. The decorative barge board detailing is found on other buildings elsewhere in the village.

**6.9. The former Lock up (now ancillary to no.87 High Street). The Listed Building description describes it thus: ‘a small rectangular chamber with a smaller room added to rear later in C19 to accommodate constable’s office at front and 2 cells. Original door to road now blocked’. This small building is unusual and part of the rich historical heritage of the village. It is suggested that the vegetation be removed and with the owners co-operation and consent, acknowledge its previous use by adding a discreet plaque.**



**Picture 11 - The small detached building on the left of the photograph was a 19th century lock up. Its interesting and unusual former use could usefully be identified by a discreet plaque. The front entrance door is now blocked up. Photo courtesy of Mr. Alan Rattue’s local collection.**

**6.10. Another Listed Structure also previously referred to and annotated on 19<sup>th</sup> century mapping is the Milestone in the southern stretch of the High Street. This is a grade II structure dating from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century and was erected by the Watton Turnpike Trust. As can be seen by careful examination of Plan 1, the annotation on this map reads *M.S. London 26*. Its poor condition is noted on the ‘Buildings at Risk Register’ with a recommendation for cleaning, general restoration and repainting.**





Picture 12 - Listed Milestone, cleaning, general restoration and repainting is recommended. It is included in the Council's Buildings at Risk Register.

**6.11. Representing the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the K6 Telephone Kiosk in the High Street designed in 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, constructed of cast iron with domed roof and crowns to top panels.**

**6.12. *Buildings not individually listed but within the curtilage of Listed Buildings worthy of note.* Single storey outbuilding within the curtilage of the former Waggon and Horses PH. The latter has now been converted to residential use and the single storey 19<sup>th</sup> century outbuilding is renovated and now used as garaging.**

**6.13. Outbuilding within curtilage of George and Dragon PH. Open front lodge with tiled roof covered in climbing Wisteria vegetation which hides some of the structure that might need repair works.**

**6.14. Weather boarded with hipped tiled roof outbuilding to rear of The White House, High Street.**

**6.15. Outbuilding off White House Close. 19<sup>th</sup> century or earlier, single storey, pantiled roof and weather boarding to northern elevation. Southern elevation supported with temporary wooden supports to prevent potential collapse and roof partly removed. Planning permission incorporating it within residential development granted. Need to establish owner's current intentions and proceed accordingly. A candidate for inclusion on Council's Buildings at Risk Register.**



**Picture 13- Outbuilding within the curtilage of a Listed Building off White House Close in urgent need of restoration.**

**6.16. *Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution.* No. 32 High Street (south side), The Grey House. A tall 19<sup>th</sup> century yellow stock brick house with hipped slate roof and 4. no.distinctive chimneys. Also of note is a single storey outbuilding to north of main house constructed of brick with slate hipped roof of similar date to main house. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**

**6.17. Nos. 33 - 39B High Street (north side). Group of distinctive 19<sup>th</sup> century 2 storey cottages with ashlar finish (render designed to simulate stone blocks) to elevations and slate roof. 2 no. distinctive and highly visible chimneys each with 6 no. individual stacks (see Picture 6). Also 4 no. distinctive and unusual porch detailing. Despite modern windows, fencing and wall to front, this group makes a significant and unusual architectural contribution to the Conservation Area. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**

**6.18. No. 41 High Street -The Firs (north side). A tall 19<sup>th</sup> century distinctive detached residence constructed of yellow stock brick with red brick quoins and window dressings. The property dominates this part of the High Street with its steeply pitched tiled roof and 2 no. chimneys of quality, one of yellow brick to front with red brick detailing. Distinctive Bay windows with tiled roofs. Also single storey outbuilding of quality constructed of brick and weatherboarding and slate roof. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**

**6.19. The Olde House, High Street (south side). 19<sup>th</sup> century 2 storeys, constructed of yellow stock brick with slate roof and 2 no. chimneys. Windows, vertical sliding sash; elevation to road painted white. Despite later wall to front and extension to rear this building makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and compliments the nearby Listed Building.**

**6.20. Nos. 48-50 High Street (south side). 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages, 2 storey in height and set back from the High Street. Constructed of yellow stock brick with red brick quoins and window detailing; chimneys, slate roof and decorative ridge tiles. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**

**6.21. No. 52 High Street (south side). Simple 19<sup>th</sup> century 2 storey red brick residence with central doorway and vertical sliding sash windows to front elevation. 2 no. later replacement chimneys to rear. Also a former washhouse extension with chimney to rear that is an interesting historical remnant that should be protected. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**

**6.22. Barn to rear of no. 52 High Street (south side). A single storey 19<sup>th</sup> century former agricultural building (advised previously as a milking parlour) now used as storage. Horizontal boarding with asbestos roof.**

**6.23. Wesley Centenary Church, High Street (south side). Single storey late 19<sup>th</sup> century church constructed in 1891 of yellow stock brick with horizontal red brick banding and window detailing. Central entrance doorway to front elevation with decorative iron hinges and typical decorative Victorian column detailing with distinctive circular window above. Inscription to front elevation reads WESLEY- CENTENARY- CHURCH. Leaded windows to side elevations, probably original, 18 in number. Some window replacements to rear elevation. This building is particularly noteworthy for its historical associations and because it is typically representative of its type and period. Because it is largely unaltered it may be considered a potential candidate to become formally listed. Protection of its important external features is secured by existing planning controls.**



**Picture 14 – Wesley Centenary Church, High Street, a fine example and representative of its type built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century: a potential candidate for formal listing.**

**6.24. 7 -14 Newman’s Court, High Street (south side). Long single storey 19<sup>th</sup> century range of former agricultural buildings constructed of yellow stock brick with slate roof. Modern extension to northern end well executed and detailed. Original building has 3 no. dormers and paneled detailing to front elevation. A quality building that adds architectural diversity to this part of the street. The design of the modern windows could have perhaps been more sympathetic.**

**6.25. Nos. 64- 66 High Street (south side). Simple group of 2 storey 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages, yellow stock brick and slate roof with 2 no. dominant chimneys. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for the chimneys may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**



**6.26. Nos. 68-76 High Street (south side). A distinctive group of 19<sup>th</sup> century yellow stock brick 2 storey terraced cottages with steeply pitched tiled roofs with 2 no. small central dormers and other gable end elevational detailing. 3 no. decorative tall chimneys with pots. Many original windows. Single storey outbuilding of brick and tiled roof construction to rear visible from adjacent footpath. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**

**6.27. Nos. 75-85 High Street (north side). A fine grouping of 19<sup>th</sup> century 2 storey dwellings constructed of red brick with steeply sloping tiled roofs that make a significant contribution to the Conservation Area in this location. In total 7 no. decorative and highly visible chimneys. Various interesting architectural detailing including bay window to front of no. 81; blocked window to no. 83 and wooden detailing to no. 85. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**



**Picture 15 - Nos. 75- 85 High Street, a fine grouping of 19<sup>th</sup> century dwellings with steeply sloping tiled roofs that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area in this location.**

**6.28. Nos. 78 - 80 High Street (south side). 19<sup>th</sup> century 2 storey property set back from road situated in large plot. Of red brick construction with slate roof and tall central chimney. Visual assessment from road draws preliminary conclusion windows to front are probably original. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**

**6.29. Nos. 84-86(?) High Street (south side). 19<sup>th</sup> century 2 storey yellow stock brick cottages with steeply pitched tiled roof with 2 no. small central dormers and 2 no. tall distinctive and prominent chimneys with many original pots. Situated behind frontage hedge and tree screen. An Article 4**

**Direction to provide protection for the chimneys may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**

**6.30. Nos. 92 - 96 High Street (south side). 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace, tall and prominent adjacent to Listed Almshouses. Constructed of yellow stock brick with slate roof and 5 no. chimneys. There is a brick by the side entrance initialed and inscribed 1857. A dominant building in the street scene with fine mullioned window detailing to ground and first floors. Single storey brick with slate outbuildings to the rear have original wooden doors and ironmongery. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**



**Picture 16 - Fine mullioned window detailing to nos. 92 - 96 High Street. Is there any local information as to the buildings original use?**

**6.31. No.103 High Street (north side). Tall 19<sup>th</sup> century of yellow stock brick construction with steeply pitched red tiled roof, dormers and 3 no. tall decorative chimney stacks. Red brick quoins and window surround detailing and decorative eaves carpentry. Some original windows of quality but others are later replacements. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**

**6.32. No.114 High Street (south side). Yellow stock brick, 2 storey 19<sup>th</sup> century with steeply sloping slate roof with double gable detailing and door with canopy to front elevation. Decorative and prominent chimneys with some original pots. Many original windows. Unusual roof configuration to rear elevation. Also brick and slate single storey outbuilding to rear contemporary with main building. An Article 4 Direction to provide**

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



Picture 17- No.114 High Street, an unlisted building that adds considerable quality to the street scene in this location.

**6.33. Nos. 127- 129 High Street (north side). Simply designed 19<sup>th</sup> century 2 storey constructed of yellow stock brick with slate roof and 2 no. prominent chimneys and pots. 4 window range to each floor; all windows identical thus providing a pleasing repetitive architectural feature. Visual assessment from road draws preliminary conclusion windows to front elevation may be original. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**

**6.34. Nos. 133 – 139 High Street (north side). 19<sup>th</sup> century group of two storey cottages with slate roof and 3 no. chimneys. Nos. 133 -137 constructed in yellow stock brick whilst no.139 is constructed of red brick with yellow brick quoins and window detailing. One window blocked up. A variety of window types some side hung other vertical sliding sash. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**

**6.35. The Chestnuts, High Street (western side). A tall Gothic 19<sup>th</sup> century property set in large secluded well treed grounds. Constructed of red brick and steeply pitched tiled roof (some tiles scalloped) and several large**

distinctive chimneys. Distinctive porch to east elevation with date plaque 1869. Principal windows with original stone lintels, cills, dressings and heavy wooden frames. A fine building typical of its type and date. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

**6.36. *Other distinctive features that make an important architectural or historic contribution.*** Red brick wall to Listed Almshouses with blue triangular brick capping detail (manufactured by Wood and Ivery Ltd, Albion Brickworks, West Bromwich) protected virtue of being within curtilage of a Listed Building.

**6.37.** Distinctive yellow stock brick wall to nos. 133-139 High Street of varying height, some with brick blue triangular capping detail. Height mainly in excess of 1m and thus afforded protection.

**6.38.** War Memorial commemorating local persons who gave their lives in the Great War. A simple but finely detailed and graceful commemorative War Memorial constructed of white stone. Cross surmounted on graceful tapering column supported by decorative triangular plinth with names and commemorative texts to three sides; the whole on a three stepped stone base. In good condition with all inscriptions and names legible. Approximately 4m in height. The Memorial is a possible candidate to be recognized formally as a Listed Building, despite having been relocated from a site nearby.



Picture 18 - First Remembrance Service 1920. The War Memorial was moved to its current location in the 1980's. Photo courtesy of Mr. Alan Rattue's local collection.

**6.39.** Simply designed and constructed yellow stock wall, 19<sup>th</sup> century, from Rivershill junction with High Street to bridge crossing the River Beane (north side) on Ware Road. In excess of 1m in height and so protected from demolition without prior consent.



**6.40. *Important open land, open spaces and gaps.*** The small area opposite the former Waggon and Horses and south of Lammas Road junction is a tiny but important grassed area with a group of maturing trees that contribute positively to this part of the Conservation Area. The River Beane is a feature that contributes to the quality of the Conservation Area in selected locations.

**6.41. *Particularly important trees and hedgerows.*** There are several groupings of trees in the High Street that add to its quality environment although for the most part the High Street is a compact urban landscape. The tree groupings of particular interest are to the frontage of the Grey House, within the curtilage of Watton Place clinic, the open area to the west of the former lock-up, within the grounds of The Chestnuts and the open land enclosed by the 19<sup>th</sup> century wall opposite The Chestnuts.

**6.42. *Important views.*** There are a number of important views particularly in the centre of the High Street looking in either direction where the eye is drawn to the rich variety of the architecture, particularly its roofscape and chimneys.

**6.43. *Elements out of character with the Conservation Area.*** Signage near village pump. Sign detracts from this important Listed Building.



Picture 19 - Disruptive highway signage near listed pump.

**6.44. Fence adjacent to no. 85 High Street. The existing fence detracts in a visually important central location.**

**6.45. Signage south side of High Street, east of Almshouses. A clutter of signs which detract.**

**6.46. Utility poles.** There are a number of utility poles in the Conservation Area that detract to varying degrees. There are however three particularly detract namely one near the Village Pump; one outside nos. 93- 95 High Street and one outside no. 133 High Street.



Picture 20 - One of several disruptive utility poles in the High Street.

**6.47. *Opportunities to secure improvements.*** Consider the potential for relocating signage near village pump and potential for rationalization of highway signs between the Almshouses and no. 114 High Street, with Hertfordshire County Highways. Also contact the utility company to explore if there are any practical solutions to reduce the impact of 3 no. utility poles in the High Street. Regarding the fence adjacent to no. 85 High Street the most efficient means of reducing its impact would be to allow ivy vegetation, evident in parts, to increase its cover.

**6.48. *Boundary changes.*** Several late 20<sup>th</sup> century large detached dwellings to rear of the High Street (off School Lane and Old School Orchard) have insufficient architectural or historic interest and as a consequence this group of properties have been removed from the Conservation Area.

**6.49. Area B- remainder of Conservation Area.**

**6.50. *General overview.*** Views into this area west of the High Street are dominated by the church, fine mature trees, open spaces, woodland and common land within which there is a small scatter of development including the former 19<sup>th</sup> century Rectory (now Crowbury) and later modern properties. Parts of Church Lane are enhanced virtue of being sunken with steep banks. The overriding characteristic of the area is its openness and rural quality. Land to the east of the High Street centred around Watton House is similarly open in character. Both areas lie within the Green Belt.

**6.51. *Scheduled Ancient Monuments.*** There are none within the Conservation Area boundary.

**6.52. *Archeological sites.*** As previously advised, a Roman road linking Welwyn and Braughing crossed the southern part of the village. Officers from Hertfordshire County Council, Historic Environment Unit, have advised this is one of the best known Roman routes in Hertfordshire, well established elsewhere by crop marks and excavations.

**6.53. Potsherds, including Samian and Castor ware, tile, box tiles, bronze and glass fragments, part of a knife handle and late Roman coins, including those of Constantine and Valentinian, together with masonry and a stoned paved area were reportedly found by the Rector whilst digging in his chicken run situated on the site of the present Rectory. These were assumed to be outbuildings of a large Roman structure. Other Roman coins were found in the 18<sup>th</sup> century nearby and referred to by letter dated 1742. Two fragments of Roman tile were found in a drain next to the church.**

**6.54. The remains of two medieval moats exist near Watton Green, one with a possible fishpond. A Trade Token believed to date from the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century was reported found to the west of the Rectory.**

**6.55. *Individually Listed Buildings.*** The Parish Church is listed grade II\* and principally dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and rebuilt on an earlier foundation. Flint with stone dressing in the Perpendicular style. Later 15<sup>th</sup> century north chapel. The Church, dedicated to St. Andrew and St. Mary, dominates the local landscape and is situated in a churchyard within which are many fine and varied tombs. There is a magnificent 19<sup>th</sup> century brass Corona Lucis, (crown suspended from the roof to hold lighted tapers) first installed in 1897, that it is hoped can one day be re-hung in its original

location. The first recorded Rector was Gilbert de Twye in 1221. The entire church was restored in 1851 by G. Clarke at the expense (£7,000) of Abel Smith, whose north chapel has a considerable number of family monuments, including one to Abel Smith who died in 1859. A monument to Philip Bottler and his wife previously occupied this chapel which was relocated elsewhere in the church.



Picture 21 - Typical Victorian Memorial Stone in the Parish church this one commemorating Abel Smith of Woodhall Park.

**6.56. Buildings within the curtilage of Listed Buildings worthy of note.**

There is a small single storey ancillary building of flint and stone dressing with red tiled roof in the churchyard at the commencement of Church Walk. It is known as the Bier House and was storage for the bier that transported coffins. It is indicated on 19<sup>th</sup> century mapping but does not feature on mapping dating from 1920. The latter is consistent with a notice advising that it was 'Rebuilt by the voluntary labor of Watton men summer 1924'. There is graffiti on one wall that needs removing.



**6.57. Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution.** Watton House Lodge, Ware Road. Single storey 19<sup>th</sup> century Lodge to Watton House. Ashlar finish applied to brickwork; steeply sloping tiled roof. Decorative barge board detailing and large chimney to rear also in ashlar finish. Original window detailing. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 22 - Watton Lodge a delightful lodge building of ashlar facing over brick and typical Victorian barge board detailing.

**6.58. Watton House, off Ware Road. Hertfordshire County Councils archeological records states ‘*Watton House is shown (on mapping dated 1839) as a large building at the south end of the High Street. Behind it were the ‘pleasure grounds’ on both sides of the river Beane. By 1880 the house had been demolished and replaced by a much larger Victorian country house 150m to the NE*’.** The present building is a large distinctive house, the former residence of Sir Nigel Gresley and situated in extensive grounds with mature landscaping of both native and exotic species, whose character is in part compromised by modern 20<sup>th</sup> century housing that surrounds the main building. Elevations are finished in ashlar style and painted cream, roof tiled with prominent chimney stacks. Many original windows remain and large distinctive Bay window to front with tiled roof; decorative bargeboard detailing similar to that at Watton House Lodge. As

**this property is in multi occupation it is controlled by existing planning controls..**

**6.59. Watton Cottage, Church Lane. A 19<sup>th</sup> century 2 storey house that is important and dominant in the local scene. Rendered finish and slate roof, dormers and chimneys. Various original windows, some with Lancet detailing, others have horizontal sliding sashes. Wooden porch detailing to east elevation. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**



**Picture 23 - Watton Cottage an unlisted property with many original features, worthy of additional protection.**

**6.60. Outbuilding to Watton Cottage. Single storey painted brickwork and slate roof. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**



**Picture 24 - Outbuilding to Watton Cottage. Selected original wooden doors and associated ironmongery are features worthy of additional protection.**

**6.61. Crowbury, Church Lane, adjacent to and west of the Church. Crowbury was formerly the Rectory. A large imposing 2 storey 19<sup>th</sup> century yellow stock brick residence with slate roof, distinctive chimneys and many original sliding sash windows. Several modern extensions have been added. The whole is set in extensive grounds with mature trees and formal garden to south east. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**



**Picture 25 - North elevation of Crowbury off Church Lane as it is today.**





Picture 26 - Crowbury in historical context, photo probably taken late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century, little has changed. It was originally the Rectory.

**6.62. Glebe House, off Rectory Lane. A large imposing early 20<sup>th</sup> century residence that was formerly the 'second' Rectory. Architects - Milne and Hall (source Pevsner). Constructed of brick, 2 storeys in height with tiled roof and tall dominant chimneys. Striking classical Pediment detail to east elevation overlooking Cricket Ground. Windows are original as are many internal features. The chimneys and selected windows are worthy of additional protection. The property is a good example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century grand domestic architecture. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.**



Picture 27 - Glebe House, The second Rectory probably built early 20<sup>th</sup> century (architects were Milne and Hall). An imposing residence of quality.

**6.63. *Other distinctive features that make an important architectural or historic contribution.*** 19<sup>th</sup> century wall from River Beane crossing (south side) to a point some 100m south east of Watton Cottage. In excess of 1m in height and so protected from demolition without prior consent, where it abuts highway. Section along track south east of Watton Cottage has collapsed. Ideally need repair/replacing but original purpose may no longer be relevant. Need to discuss issue with owner before making any practical recommendation.

**6.64. Boundary Wall to Crowbury, junction of Church Lane and Perrywood Lane.** Constructed of yellow stock brick of varying height up to about 4m protected from demolition without prior consent. Covered in ivy that may be damaging surfaces and foundations.

**6.65. *Historic Park and Garden.*** The western extremity of the nationally listed Grade II\* Woodhall Park intrudes into the Conservation Area at the Ware Road/ High Street junction and in this location consists of woodland surrounded by 19<sup>th</sup> century wall, collapsed in part. The Boteler family acquired the Manor in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and created the parkland in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Sir Thomas Rumbolt bought the estate in the 18<sup>th</sup> century building the present building in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century undertaking extensive planting at this time. The Smith family purchased the area in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century

adding the lodges and building the surrounding wall for example. Some of the original features associated with the pleasure grounds have been overlaid by playing fields and school buildings. A full and extensive description is available on line at English Heritage.

**6.66. *Designated Wildlife sites.*** There are 3 such sites, namely: Hanging Hill Wood, Watton Springs and Watton Green.

**6.67.** The western corner of Hanging Hill Wood is the western extremity of the grade II\* listed Park and Garden previously referred to and is an Ancient semi natural woodland with invasive Sycamore and conifer species. There is a good diversity of ground flora. The River Beane is a feature that contributes to the quality of the environment in this part of the Conservation Area.

**6.68.** Watton Springs to the south east of Watton Cottage supports a mosaic of habitats some being associated with seasonally wet areas. Woodland, possibly Ancient, covers part of the designated site, particularly on higher ground. The flora is moderately species rich.

**6.69.** Watton Green is an old village green with a moated site adjacent. The habitats are rough grassland and associated broadleaf woodland and hedgerows. There are records of Great Crested Newts, a protected species.

**6.70. *Important open land, open spaces and gaps.*** Expansive open space between the centre of the village and the church. This large area to the west of Church Walk consists of sports facilities including the Cricket Square, beyond which is meadow land continuing in a southerly direction until it meets the boundary of the current Rectory and Church Lane. The whole is framed by hedges and trees in the distance and represents a quintessentially English landscape setting for the church tower. Its open nature is its most important quality and additional planting that would break this up should be avoided.

**6.71. Church Walk.** Church Walk is a well used metalled public footpath of high quality, lined to both sides with well trimmed mature native hedgerows linking the church in its isolated location to the village. It forms a boundary to well used allotments to the east.

**6.72.** Open space to south west of War Memorial traversed by public footpath. Its northern and southern boundaries are defined by mature trees. To the west is the church graveyard with St Andrew and St Mary's Church beyond. Its open nature is a very important landscape feature setting off the church. Any proposals introducing planting that would fragment its open character should be avoided.

**6.73. Church graveyard. The graveyard contains a large number of historic tombstones, the earliest of which dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the latter being located adjacent to the south wall of the church. Within the graveyard are a number of mature trees including a mature Chilean Pine, planted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.**



Picture 28 - The Parish church graveyard, it contains many interesting tombstones.

**6.74. Watton Green. Watton Green is a large area of open Common Land, enclosed in part by hedges and trees. Earlier mapping as recent as 1938, indicates there used to be a group of 4 cottages nearby to the north of the road. In common with the rest of the area its important characteristic is its open nature which must be maintained. There is an information board whose written contents are fading together with a separate mounting of bylaws and a dog litter bin and rubbish bin close by.**





Picture 29 - Watton Green, together with surroundings is an open space of quality and part of a area of visual and ecological importance.

**6.75.** The organizations responsible for the maintenance of the above open spaces are commended for the care and attention being provided.

**6.76. *Particularly important trees and hedgerows.*** The area is dominated by trees and hedgerows, the most important of which are shown diagrammatically on accompanying plans. Of particular note are those framing the important views. The hedges flanking Church Walk and the 2 no. Sequoia conifers planted to the north of the church car park are most noteworthy. The latter tall imposing trees originating from the west coast of the United States were popular with the Victorians.



Picture 30 - 2 decorative Sequoia conifers to the north of the church car park are magnificent specimens likely planted in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century that are native to west coast of the United States and which were popular with the Victorians.

**6.77. *Important views.*** These are shown on accompanying plans.

**6.78. *Elements out of character with the Conservation Area.*** Land west of Ponderosa and the Moat House, off Perrywood Lane. This site consists of several low key buildings associated with horse stabling, outdoor storage including abandoned vehicles and chipped timber and 2 no. larger asbestos former agricultural sheds. The site has an untidy appearance that is particularly apparent to adjoining properties and from a public footpath.



**6.79. Watton Nursery and its car parking area. This large expansive car park and nursery buildings with their poly tunnels detract from this valley setting of the River Beane. Nevertheless the whole is partly assimilated by the scale of the landscape and nearby tree planting. Close planting of fruit and decorative species on the east bank of the River Beane could be improved by additional planting of more appropriate native species in this large scale natural setting.**

**6.80. Redundant pole at junction of Church Lane and Perrywood Lane. There is a single pole with no information plaque on small green within road at this location that serves no purpose.**

**6.81. *Opportunities to secure improvements.* In respect of land to the west of Ponderosa and the Moat House, carefully evaluate and assess the potential for improving the untidy nature of the site.**



**Picture 31 - Land west of Ponderosa and the Moat House, off Perrywood Lane, one of two areas excluded from the Conservation Area.**

**6.82. It is suggested discussions take place with the owners of the Nursery site with a view to seeking to implement a simple planting scheme of native species to improve the car parking area and reduce the impact of the more intrusive nursery buildings.**

**6.83. Signage and litter bins at Watton Green. Ideally the information sign needs replacing and if this occurs, consideration should be given to reconsidering location, general rationalization and reducing impact.**

**6.84. Redundant metal support pole, small green at junction of Church Lane and Perrywood Lane. Contact owner (Hertfordshire C.C.?) and request its removal.**

**6.85. *Boundary changes.* Land west of Ponderosa and the Moat House, off Perrywood Lane is untidy and detracts and has insufficient architectural or historic interest to warrant inclusion. As a consequence this site has been removed from the Conservation Area.**

**6.86. *Overall Summary.* Watton at Stone's Conservation Area is of a particularly high environmental quality. The urban nature of the High Street contains a significant number of high quality unlisted buildings from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The compact nature of this part of the village is in contrast with the rural nature of the landscape around the church, off Church Lane and Perrywood Lane and the area around the River Beane and Watton House to the east. In the latter locations there are also several unlisted buildings of quality worthy of retention. The overall imperative and conclusion of this Appraisal is to retain and protect many 19<sup>th</sup> century unlisted buildings and consider introducing additional controls to protect their associated architectural features of quality. Also to maintain the open nature of the rural landscapes within the designated Conservation Area. Two relatively minor boundary changes have been made.**

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

### **7. Management Proposals.**

**7.1. *Revised Conservation Area Boundary.* The revised boundaries include the following amendments. Their exact boundary alignments are shown on the accompanying plan to which the reader is referred.**

- a) Exclude several late 20<sup>th</sup> century large detached dwellings to rear of the High Street off School Lane and Old School Orchard).**
- b) Exclude land west of Ponderosa and the Moat House, off Perrywood Lane.**
- c) 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**

against this document and the National Planning Policy Framework that the District Council will process applications.

**7.3. Applicants considering submitting any application should carefully consider the relevant policies and if necessary contact Council Officers to seek pre application advice. For further details including advice on Planning Applications, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Landscaping, and other general administrative advice please contact the Planning Department for assistance.**

Telephone no. 01279 655261

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

Or write to E.H.D.C. Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8EQ

**7.4. Applicants may also wish to refer to one of the several Guidance Notes referred to in Appendix 1 below.**

**7.5. *Planning Control - Potential need to undertake an Archeological Evaluation.* Within areas designated as being a Scheduled Ancient Monument or within the Area of Archaeological Significance 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 most significant factor in contributing to the quality of Watton-at-Stone's built environment. It is essential that their architectural detailing is not eroded nor their other qualities and settings compromised. Of particular importance is the varied roofscape and prominent chimneys.**

**7.8. The Appraisal has identified the milestone on the High Street as being 'At Risk'. Other ancillary buildings in the curtilages of Listed Buildings have been identified as being in need of repair and/or potentially 'At Risk'. In this respect the owner of an outbuilding off White House Close needs to be contacted and within the limitations of existing staff and financial resources, the Council will seek satisfactory solutions that secures this structure's long term future. In relation to the mile stone on the High Street, the Council will initially seek advice from English Heritage as to how best initiate repairs and discuss further with Hertfordshire County Council.**

**7.9. Planning Control – Other Unlisted Buildings that make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution.** Within the Conservation Area there are 26 unlisted buildings/ groups of buildings that have been so identified. These are: The Grey House and outbuilding; Nos. 33-39B High Street; no.41 High Street; The Olde House; 48-50 High Street; 52 High Street; Barn rear of 52 High Street; the Wesley Centenary Chapel; Newmans Court; 64-66 High Street; 68-76 High Street and outbuilding; 75-85 High Street; 78-80 High Street; 84-86 High Street; 92-96 High Street and outbuilding; 103 High Street; 114 High Street and outbuilding; 127-129 High Street; 133-139 High Street; The Chestnuts; Watton House Lodge; Watton House; Watton Cottage; Outbuilding to Watton Cottage; Crowbury, Church Lane and Glebe House, Rectory Lane. Any proposal involving the demolition of these buildings is unlikely to be approved.

**7.10. Proposed Article 4 Directions.** There are other distinctive features that are integral to some of the unlisted buildings identified in the paragraph above that make an important architectural or historic contribution, including selected chimneys, windows and other architectural detailing. In some situations protection may exist through existing planning controls but in other cases additional protection could only be provided by removing Permitted Development Rights via an Article 4 Direction. The latter 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.

**7.11. Planning Control – Other Unlisted distinctive features that make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution.** This Appraisal has identified a number of walls that make a particular contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Most of these are protected virtue of exceeding the specified heights relevant to Conservation Area or Listed Building legislation. Any proposal involving the demolition of these walls is unlikely to be approved.

**7.12. Productive discussions** took place with English Heritage to explore the potential of formally listing selected additional buildings and structures. It is considered that such an application in relation to the War Memorial and the Wesley Centenary Church could succeed but it should be emphasised that listing is subject to a formal submission process and success cannot be guaranteed. Any person or organisation can make such an application.

**7.13 Planning control - Wildlife Sites within the Conservation Area.** The wildlife importance of these sites has been set out previously . 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.

**7.14. Planning Control – Important open land, open spaces and gaps.** This Appraisal has identified the following important spaces: a small area opposite the former Waggon and Horses PH; the expansive open space between the centre of the village and the church; Church Walk; open space to the south west of the War Memorial traversed by public footpath; the church graveyard and Watton Green. These represent open spaces and other landscape features within the Conservation Area that materially contribute to its character or appearance and will be protected.

**7.15. Planning Control – Particularly important trees and hedgerows.** Only the most significant trees are shown diagrammatically. 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. As previously advised some hedges may be protected by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

**7.16. Planning Control – Important views.** The most important views within and out of the Conservation area are diagrammatically shown. Policy BH6 is particularly relevant.

**7.17. Enhancement Proposals.** The Appraisal has identified a number of elements that detract that are summarised in the Table below together with a proposed course of action. Within the staff and financial resources available, Council Officers will be pro-active and provide assistance. It must be recognized that such improvements will frequently only be achieved with the owners co-operation.

<b>Detracting element</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Proposed Action.</b>
<b>Highway signage.</b>	<b>Near village pump.</b>	<b>Contact County Highways and explore potential of relocating sign.</b>
<b>Highway signage.</b>	<b>South side of High Street, east of Almshouses.</b>	<b>Contact County Highways and explore potential of rationalising signage.</b>
<b>Fence.</b>	<b>To north of no. 85 High Street.</b>	<b>Discuss potential of increasing vclimbing vegetation cover with owner.</b>

<b>Historic structure identified as being 'At Risk'.</b>	<b>Listed Milestone, High Street.</b>	<b>Contact English Heritage for advice then seek to agree restoration with HCC.</b>
<b>Historic building potentially 'At Risk'.</b>	<b>Off White House Close.</b>	<b>Establish owner's intention to initiate repairs and pursue action as may be necessary. A candidate for future inclusion on Council's Buildings at Risk Register unless repairs are carried out.</b>
<b>Historic outbuilding covered in vegetation where repairs may be necessary.</b>	<b>Within curtilage of listed building, the George and Dragon PH.</b>	<b>Discuss with owner before formulating any proposals.</b>
<b>Watton Nursery and car parking area.</b>	<b>Ware Road</b>	<b>Contact owner and discuss potential of implementing a landscaping scheme to improve the environmental qualities of this part of the Conservation Area.</b>
<b>3 no. utility poles in the High Street.</b>	<b>Near village pump; outside nos.93-95 and outside no.133.</b>	<b>Contact utility company to explore if there are any practical solutions of reducing their impact.</b>
<b>Collapsed wall.</b>	<b>South east of Watton Cottage.</b>	<b>Ideally needs repair/replacing. Need to discuss issue with owner before making any practical recommendation.</b>
<b>Untidy site.</b>	<b>To west of Ponderosa and The Moat House, Perrywood Lane.</b>	<b>Carefully evaluate and assess the potential for improving its untidy nature.</b>
<b>Historic building in need improvement .</b>	<b>Small ancillary building in churchyard near Church Walk (Bier House).</b>	<b>Contact church with request to remove graffiti.</b>
<b>Fading information board, associated signage and litter bins.</b>	<b>Watton Green.</b>	<b>Discuss with Parish Council possibility of replacing the information board; consider rationalization and location.</b>
<b>Redundant metal support post.</b>	<b>Junction of Church Lane and Perrywood Lane.</b>	<b>Contact owners( H.C.C?) and seek its removal.</b>



<b>Other actions.</b>
<b>Make application for the following buildings to be formally listed; Wesley Centenary Church and the War Memorial.</b>
<b>Contact owners of Watton Clinic and Crowbury suggesting removal of selected vegetation from boundary walls principally in the interests of their long term stability.</b>
<b>Contact owner of former lockup building and explore removing vegetation and providing a discreet plaque advising of its interesting former use.</b>

**Appendix 1. Guidance notes produced by East Hertfordshire District Council. The following represent useful technical information and can be obtained via the details provided above.**

- 1. Brick Repointing and Repair.**
- 2. Conservation Areas.**
- 3. Cleaning Historic Brickwork.**
- 4. Farm Buildings.**
- 5. Flint and Flint Wall Repair.**
- 6. Hard Landscaping in Historic Areas.**
- 7. Listed Buildings.**
- 8. Rainwater Goods and Lead.**
- 9. Shopfronts.**