APPENDIX 1

WOODHAM WALTER

CONSERVATION AREA
CHARACTER STATEMENT

MALDON DISTRICT
COUNCIL

***Front cover illustrations**: Photograph of the Bell and Wingtons from beneath the canopy of an oak tree. The decorative border depicting oak leaves and acorns is based upon the carved decoration on the jetty bressummer of The Bell*

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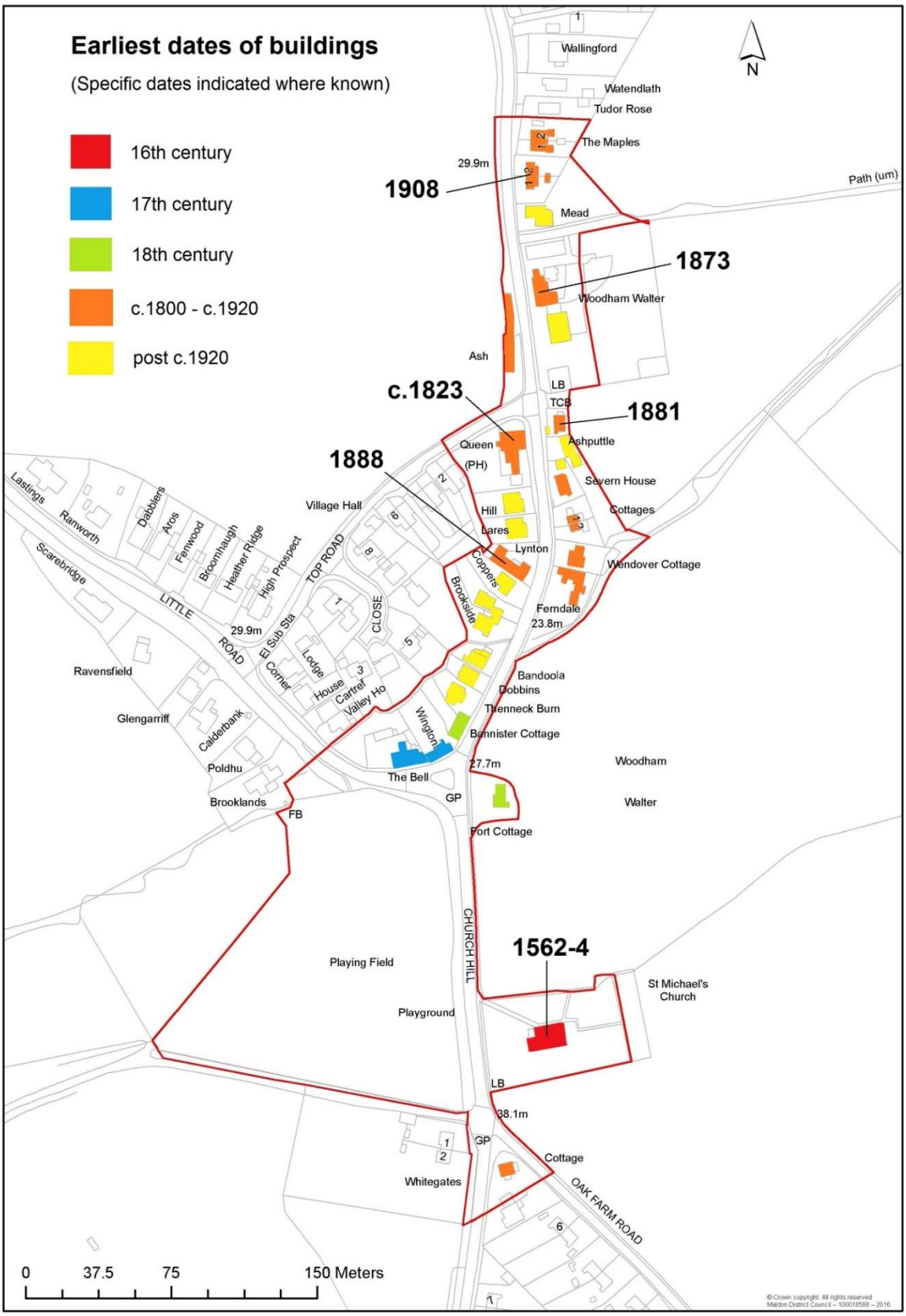


Map 1: Conservation area boundary highlighting the earliest dates of buildings

1. INTRODUCTION

Maldon District Council's Planning and Licensing Committee resolved to designate the Woodham Walter Conservation Area on the 2nd of March 2017. This is the date from which the designation came into effect. This followed an 8-week period of public consultation between the 11th of August and the 6th of October 2016, as part of which every resident within the area was written to. Those who responded to the consultation were almost unanimously in support of the area's designation as a conservation area.

Conservation areas are 'Areas of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (*Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*). They were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. Local authorities have a duty to designate conservation areas, to formulate policies for their preservation and enhancement, and to keep them under review.

Woodham Walter possesses plenty of the ingredients of an attractive and vibrant historic Essex village. It boasts an ancient and beautiful parish church, a pretty Victorian primary school, a nursery housed within a Victorian chapel, a pair of gothic brick almshouses, two historic pubs, a public meadow and a good collection of old and characterful houses, all handsomely lined along a leafy street which winds down and up land that slopes either side of a stream.

While there are several modern houses within the conservation area, these are mostly set back further from the road edge than the older buildings, and their appearance is softened by attractive front boundary treatments and planting. This character statement describes the Woodham Walter Conservation Area's unique and special character and appearance which, in the words of the legislation, it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) advises that 'when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest' (paragraph 127). With this guidance in mind, the boundary has been drawn to include the most valuable historic buildings and spaces whilst limiting the number of modern houses which possess no heritage value. The boundary of the conservation area is linear in form, taking in the parish church, Church Cottage and Bell Meadow to the south, and the Almshouses and 1&2 The Maples to the north, and including most of the street-fronting properties in between. Beyond this boundary, the houses are predominantly modern and architecturally unexceptional. Some of the adjoining agricultural fields are valuable insofar as they

form part of the wider setting in which the conservation area is viewed and appreciated but, as they do not possess any notably 'special architectural or historic interest' in their own right, they are not included within the boundary. To avoid confusion the boundary is generally drawn along property boundaries.

2. CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Woodham Walter Conservation Area encompasses the historic core of the rural village, the boundary drawn in linear form to take in the 16th century church of St Michael and Bell Meadow in the south up to the Victorian school and gothic brick almshouses in the north and including the various historic buildings in between. The historic settlement is a very good nucleated village with many of the traditional village elements: church, pubs, Victorian school, almshouses, and a recreational meadow. The surrounding, predominantly arable landscape supported a prosperous rural economy based on agriculture. In the past the village was composed mainly of the cottages of tradesmen, craftsmen and agricultural labourers. Several of the smaller semi-detached and terraced cottages were knocked into single larger houses in the 20th century. The old shops, whose former presence is sometimes highlighted by display bay windows, have now all closed. A golf course, established at The Warren early in the 20th century, and situated on the boundary of the conservation area, is now one the settlement's major businesses. Situated on the fringe of the 'wooded hills' landscape region of Essex, the land slopes quite steeply either side of the brook which runs through the village, creating a lively streetscape and some impressive long views, particularly from Bell Meadow and the Church. The village is not on a main road so the settlement remains peaceful and unspoilt. The layout of the village follows a historic road pattern centred upon The Street (historically known as 'le Brook street' because it crosses the brook). A particular highlight of the village is the junction between The Street, Church Hill and Little Baddow Road; a relatively broad open area with a triangular island of grass in the centre. One side of this space is lined by a picturesque group of old buildings and the composition is complemented by a nearby oak tree and by the Maldon Ironworks fingerpost in the middle of the junction. Despite significant 20th-century infilling and replacement dwellings, the conservation area retains a rich and varied historic built environment. Properties span the centuries, exhibiting a variety of traditional building methods and materials. Many of the houses appear to nestle into their plots behind generous front hedges. The considerable number of trees helps generate an Arcadian character.

3. MATERIALS AND DETAILING

Traditional materials and detailing make a significant contribution to the character of local area.

External wall finishes

Around half the buildings in the conservation area are **rendered**. Normally the render is applied to a timber frame. A few of the modern houses have render applied to masonry. The earliest example of render over brickwork is probably Lynton House (1888), which has exposed brickwork quoining framing the rendered panels. There are also fragments of a plaster finish on the 16th century brickwork of the parish church. Wingtons has smooth render with a gently undulating surface arising from the movement of the timber frame over the centuries. Nos1 & 2 The Maples retain their Edwardian un-painted pebbledash render.

Fig. 1 Render above weatherboarding on Wingtons

All the houses pre-dating the middle of the 19th century are **timber framed**, but the framing is generally not visible on the outside of the building. The main exception to this is The Bell, which had its render removed in the 1930s to re-expose the timber frame. The studs are closely spaced in the East Anglian tradition known as “close studding” (fig. 2). In the mid-20th century Wendover Cottage had black-painted battens applied to its rendered finish in imitation of the half-timbered appearance of The Bell. More recently, the small extension added to the south side of the parish church in 2014 has an exposed oak frame in-between which there are vertical oak planks and battens, all left unpainted and allowed to silver over time (fig.3).

Fig. 2 Exposed timber framing on The Bell

Fig. 3 Un-painted oak cladding on the recent extension to the parish church

Fig. 4 White painted weatherboarding at Lynton

A more common type of timber cladding is horizontal, featheredged **weatherboarding**, normally painted black or white. This is a distinctly vernacular material which features on many rural historic houses in the Maldon District. The most notable example in the village is probably Tadpoles Nursery (the former Congregational Chapel built in 1881). It is also found on Wingtons on the flank wall and along the bottom of the front wall. It is often found on outbuildings such as the former stables at The Bell and Lynton and on the former privies to the rear of the almshouses. Black painted weatherboarding is used to good effect on the late 20th-century extension to Ferndale.

Fig. 5 Black painted weatherboarding at Ferndale

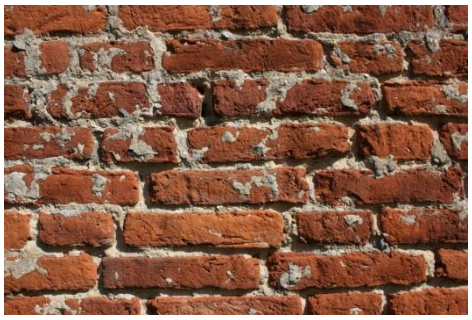


Fig. 6 Brickwork on the parish church (1562-4)

Fig. 7 Brickwork on the primary school (1873)

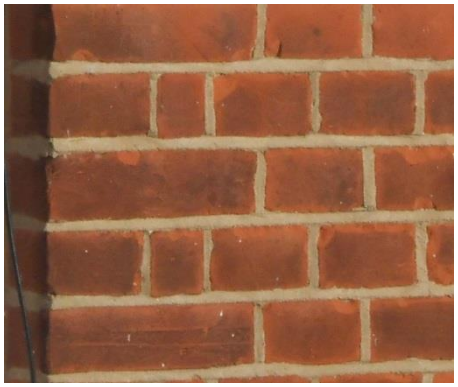


Fig. 8 Brickwork on the almshouses (1908)

Fig. 9 Brickwork on a house of the third quarter of the 20th century

The oldest **brickwork** in the conservation area is found on the parish church (fig. 6); an important example of Elizabethan brick architecture with delightful crow-stepped gables. It is not until the middle of the 19th century that whole houses are found built of brick (i.e. Lynton House, Redbrick Cottages and Ferndale). The use of red brick embellished with contrasting yellow or white brick banding occurs to good effect on the school and at Ferndale (fig. 7).

Before the early 20th century the bricks are predominantly soft reds, reflecting the fact that they were made from earth dug locally. The brown and yellow bricks used in some of mid-late 20th-century houses are quite different in appearance; lacking the texture and warmth of older brickwork. But some of the more recent brick developments have blended with the old quite successfully. The extension added to 1 Brick Cottages in the late 1980s and the new hall added to the school early this century use soft red bricks which are a good match for the neighbouring Victorian brickwork. The brickwork used for the plinth of the extension to the church is an excellent match for the thin red brickwork of the 1560s.

Before the early-20th century most brickwork was laid in Flemish bond. One exception is the parish church which has an unusual variation of Flemish stretcher bond. 20th century brickwork tends to be in stretcher bond and can appear quite monotonous in comparison with traditional bonds.

Fig. 10 Double-cambered clay plain tiles

Fig. 11 Single-lap clay pantiles

Fig. 12 Natural slate

Fig. 13 20th-century concrete tiles

Roof coverings

The oldest buildings in the village are roofed with handmade **clay plain tiles** laid steeply (47° to 50°). Ranging from deep orange to brown in colour, these old tiles have a textured and slightly irregular surface and a double-cambered profile (fig.10). Such tiled roofs are an important component of the special character of the area. The outbuildings to the rear of Lynton House and at the northern end of Ash Cottage are covered by distinctive orange clay single-lap **pantiles** (fig. 11).

Welsh **slate** was being imported to Maldon by sea from the 18th century and it became increasingly popular throughout the district in the 19th century. It is found on several of the mid-late 19th century buildings in the village, which tend to have slacker roof pitches as a consequence (typically 35° to 40°). Slate is also used to good effect on the recent extension to the school, where it reflects the roof covering on the Victorian building.

Brown **concrete tiles** are quite common in the village, notably on most of the mid-late 20th century houses. Their dull brown colour lacks the warmth of the older clay tiles. They have sadly also been used to replace the original roof coverings of some of the 19th-century buildings such as Church Cottage and the Queen Victoria pub, and detract from the traditional appearance of these properties as a consequence. The reinstatement of more traditional roof coverings on the older properties in the village, if and when the opportunity arises, would be positively encouraged.

Windows and doors

Old windows and doors can be rare and beautiful items, equivalent to antique chairs or tables in cultural and aesthetic value. Wherever possible they should be conserved rather than replaced.

There are a wide range of window types and dates throughout the village. Lead-glazed windows, and vernacular windows which were originally lead glazed, are a notably common feature of the village, although all the lead glazing itself appears to date from the 20th century. The oldest windows in the village are the early 17th-century ovolo moulded mullion windows in The Bell which were uncovered and restored in the 1930s (fig. 14). Wingtons also has one small and easily overlooked moulded mullion window of the 17th century on the first floor of its front elevation (fig. 15). To the right of this there is a vernacular flat-framed casement window dating from the 18th century. Although now plain glazed, the horizontal saddle bars reveal that it originally had lead-glazed panels. Bannister Cottage has similar casement windows which were originally lead glazed. Later examples of lead glazing are found in the almshouses where they are housed in brick gothic arched openings (fig. 16), in the extension to the south of the church and in Fort Cottage where the 20th century window frames are of unpainted oak (fig. 17).

Fig. 14 Early 17th-century mullion window

Fig. 15 Early 17th-century mullion window to left of 18th-century casement window

Fig. 16 Early 20th-century lead-glazed windows with pointed arch heads

Fig. 17 Lead-glazed windows in unpainted oak frames

Some of the painted timber windows at Tadpoles Nursery (fig. 18) have arched heads in reference to the original ecclesiastical function of the building. The bay windows at the east end of The Bell and the west end of Wingtons probably relate to the former presence of shops in these parts of the properties. Casement windows with asymmetrical fanlights replaced the sash windows in the Queen Victoria pub in the 1960's, considerably eroding this building's traditional character in the process. Vertically sliding sash windows dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries are relatively common and attractive features. More unusual is the horizontally sliding sash on the front elevation of Wingtons (fig. 19). Where plastic windows have been inserted they generally fail to replicate the traditional detailing and appearance of painted timber sash windows, demonstrated by a comparison of 1&2 The Maples (fig. 20). But the modern green-finished metal windows on the extension to the school prove that contemporary-style fenestration can appear sympathetic on new buildings in historic areas (fig. 48).

Fig. 18 Arch headed casement window

Fig. 19 Horizontally sliding 'Yorkshire' sash

Fig. 20 Original painted timber windows and plastic replacement windows

Doors are generally less prominent features than windows in the conservation area but there are good quality examples of historic and modern timber doors. Notable historic doors include the front door on Bannister Cottage, which is of a traditional four-panel design (fig. 21), and the front door of Wingtons, which is of six panels with the upper two glazed (fig. 22). Sympathetic 20th-century doors include those on the front of The Bell and the unpainted oak door on the front of Severn house (fig. 23).

Fig. 21 Four-panelled door

Fig. 22 Six-panelled door

Fig. 23 Timber door with vertical battens stained black

External decoration

External decoration is very limited but of special note is the original carved decoration on The Bell. The gable bressummer was carved with a renaissance strapwork design with pendants of a similar style hanging from each end (fig. 24). This decoration helps date the building to the early-17th century. The first-floor jetty bressummer is carved with a band of interlocking ovals and lozenges above a band of oak leaves and acorns (see front cover), the latter perhaps in reference to the wooded character of the village. There are also ornamental terracotta blocks in the top of the gable to Lynton House. These blocks, primarily in the form of floral and foliate motifs including sunflowers, were highly popular in the 1870s and 80s.

Fig. 24 Strapwork carved decoration

Fig. 25 Ornamental terracotta blocks

4. BOUNDARY TREATMENTS

Boundary treatments are an important form of townscape enclosure, and their quality has a considerable impact upon the character of the area. Woodham Walter is notable for some good traditional boundary treatments. A number of properties have mature front hedgerows which can make houses appear to nestle into their plots, and contributes to an Arcadian character. Such hedgerows complement the setting of traditional properties such as Church Cottage and 2 The Maples, but can also soften the presence of more modern buildings and the clutter of parked cars as at Bandoola and Coppers.

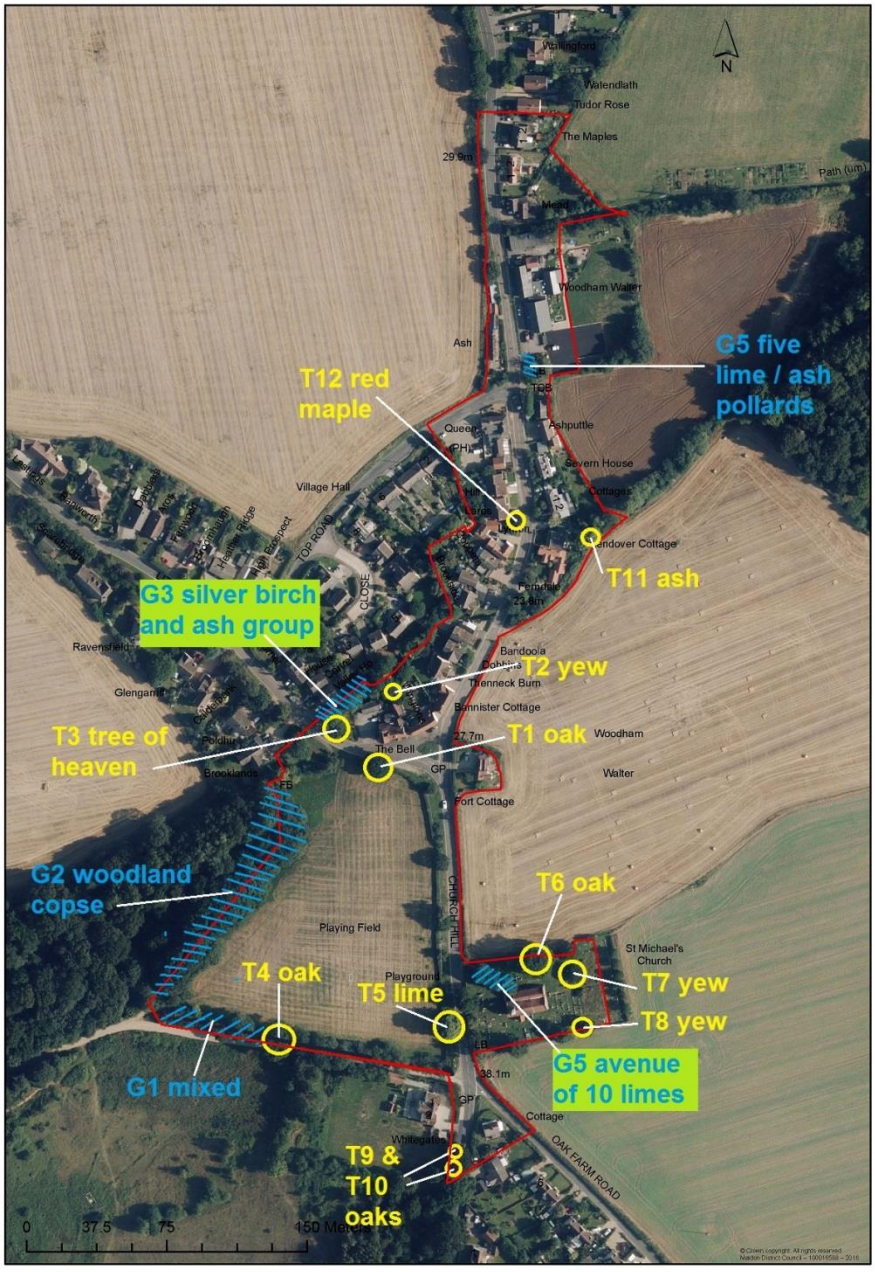
Fig. 26 Mature front boundary hedge outside Church Cottage

Low picket fences are highly characteristic of villages in this part of Essex and are found painted white outside Wendover Cottage and Brookside, and stained brown outside the school and the almshouses. Unusual metal railings with arched heads are used to good effect outside the parish church and Lynton House.

Fig. 27 Front railings outside Lynton House

5. TREES

Woodham is a Saxon name meaning settlement in the wood (Ryan, p. 10). Mature trees are a particularly valuable aspect of the village's special character. The best trees, and those which most deserve special care and retention where possible, are highlighted on the map below. Especially valuable trees, in terms of their contribution to the character of the village, include the oak tree opposite The Bell and the woodland copse which fringes the western side of Bell Meadow. Those trees not highlighted on the map may still have some amenity value by contributing to the general wooded character of the village.



Map 2: Aerial view indicating important trees

Fig. 28 The oak tree opposite The Bell has a particularly important relationship with the historic buildings nearby

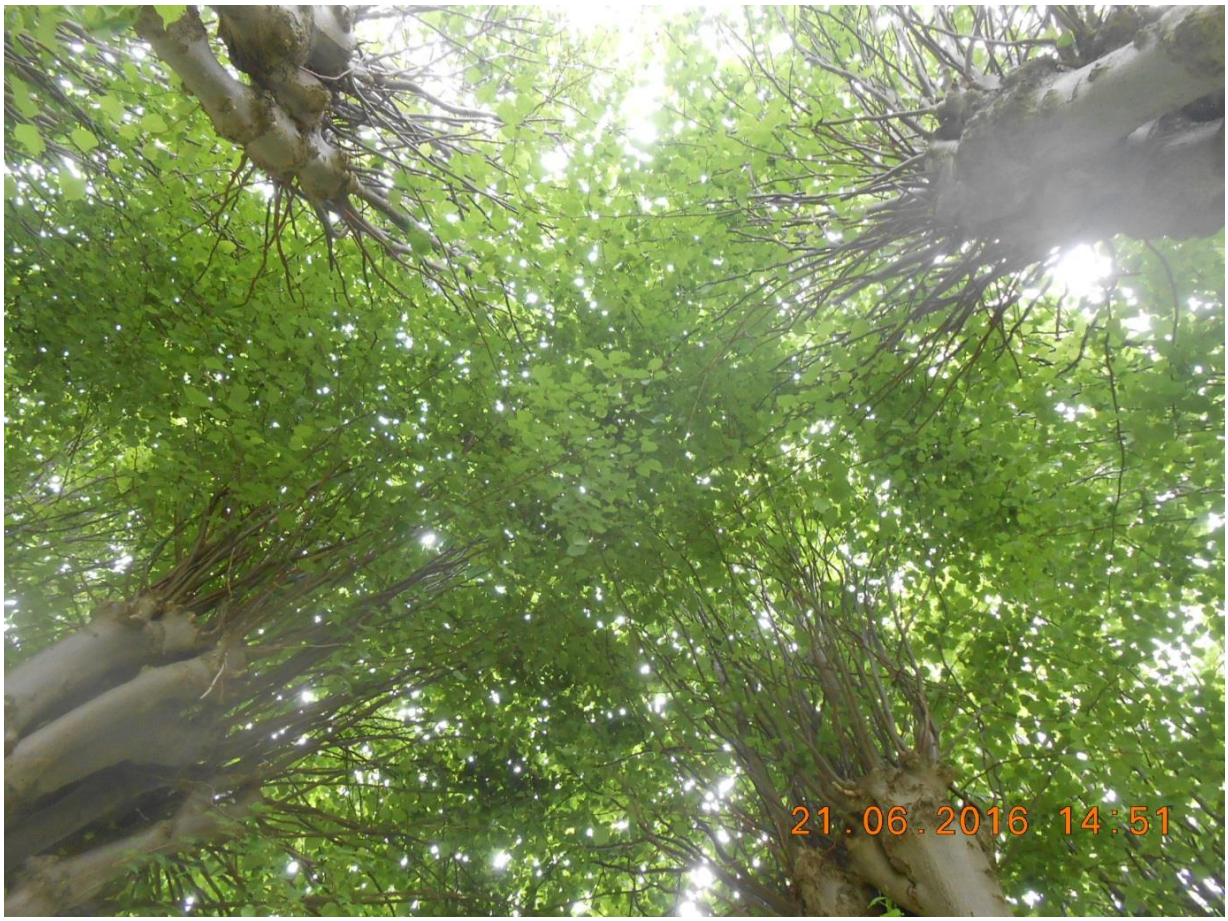


Fig. 29 Looking up into the canopies of the avenue of limes which line the church path

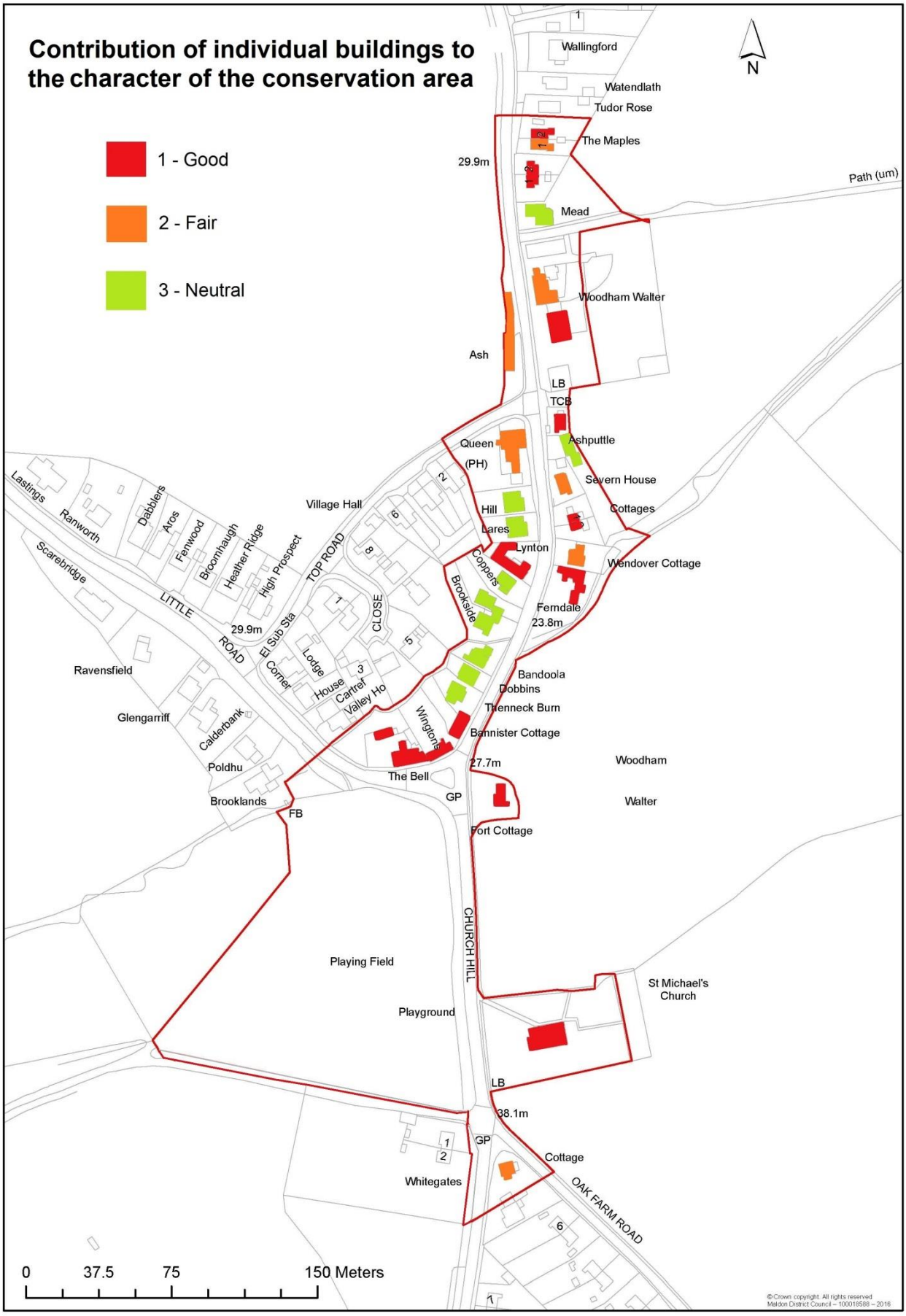
6. STREET FURNITURE

There are several examples of traditional street furniture within the conservation area which make a positive contribution to the special character of the village. As with the historic buildings, these are features which merit sympathetic maintenance and retention. Of particular note are two black and white painted cast iron **fingerposts** made by Maldon Ironworks in the first quarter of the 20th century. One is in front of Church Cottage on the junction between Church Hill and Oak Farm Road, and the other is opposite The Bell on the junction between Church Hill and Little Baddow Road (fig. 30). There are several good traditional **benches**, the best being two green painted wrought-iron benches with scroll shaped arm rests, one on Bell Meadow and another inside the bus shelter (fig. 31). A plaque inside the **bus shelter** explains that it was erected in the late 1940s by the British Legion of Woodham Walter as a war memorial. The shelter's modern brickwork is softened by the ivy growing up its front at the time of the survey. The red painted **phone box** and **post box**, situated in front of Tadpoles Nursery, are attractive and familiar features in the village scene, located at a focal point of the village in close proximity to the School, The Queen Victoria pub and the bus shelter (fig. 32).

Fig. 30 Cast-iron fingerpost opposite The Bell

Fig. 31 Wrought-iron bench on Bell Meadow

Fig. 32 Phone box, post box and war memorial bus shelter



Map 2: Contribution of individual buildings to the special character of the area

7. AREA ANALYSIS

In *Map 2* each building has been assessed and its contribution to the appearance and character of the conservation area graded. Whilst this system is subjective, it aims to provide a guide to aid the planning process. The criteria for the grading are as follows:

1. “Good” = listed and unlisted buildings which make a significant positive contribution to the conservation area. They exhibit few, if any, unsympathetic alterations and may represent important landmarks

2. “Fair” = buildings which make a positive contribution through design, age, materials, siting or detailing, but which may have incurred alterations that do not relate well to the special character of the conservation area. Enhancements may increase significance to 1.

3. “Neutral” = buildings which have a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area. These are all modern houses which possess no heritage significance.

To provide greater detail and a more thorough assessment, the following paragraphs describe the components which make up the special character of the conservation area. Individual buildings and areas are analysed, beginning with the parish church then working in a clockwise direction down to Church Cottage, up the west side of The Street and Rectory Lane and back down the east side of these streets.

Fig. 33 The parish church view from the east

The Parish Church of St Michael is the most important historic building within the boundary of the conservation area. A grade II* listed building, the church is historically notable for being the only church in Essex to be built during the reign of Elizabeth the first. It was constructed in 1562-3 and consecrated in 1564. Its medieval predecessor is thought to have been located close to the site of Woodham Walter Hall ½ a mile to the south east. The church is quite small in scale, constructed primarily of soft red bricks with crow-stepped gables and a bellcote topped by a shingle clad spire. Interestingly for the date, the windows are all still perpendicular gothic in style. Some of the windows may originally have been recycled from the medieval church, although they now appear to be Victorian replacements. A small extension, employing high quality traditional materials, was added to the south side of the church in 2014. The extension, designed by Gerald Barret and built by Robbie Wilks, is similar in form to a long lost porch which used to occupy the same position and which features in an 18th-century drawing. The architectural features and history of the church are described in greater detail elsewhere and need not be reiterated here (i.e. the list description, Pevsner and Ryan)

The **churchyard** is an attractive and important communal space. It contains some valuable trees including the avenue of limes which flank the footpath from the road, an ancient oak on the northern boundary and a couple of yew trees. The oak entrance gate and the hoop-topped iron railings along the northern edge of the church yard are good quality traditional boundary treatments. Looking north from the churchyard there are important views of the village in the distance.

Fig. 34 Church Cottage viewed from the churchyard

Situated at the southern extremity of the conservation area, **Church Cottage** was first built in the Victorian period as a pair of cottages and was converted into a single dwelling in the 20th century. The house occupies the triangle of land at the junction of Church Hill, Herbage Park Road and Oak Farm Road. The plot is raised above road level making the building appear prominently in the streetscene, despite its relatively modest scale. The building's best feature is a bold 17th-century style red-brick chimney stack comprising four grouped lozenge-section shafts and moulded caps and base. The cottage is a full 2 storeys at the front, dropping to 1 ½ storeys to the rear under a catslide roof. Certain modern alterations – such as the brown concrete rooftiles, the uPVC windows and uPVC conservatory – detract from its traditional character. But the silhouette of the building remains striking and attractive and is complemented by the mature hedge along its front boundary and the oak trees to the south-west of it.

Fig. 35 The view north from Bell Meadow

Bell Meadow is a very important communal space with an intimate relationship with the village. It is bounded by mature woodland to the west, and established hedgerows and occasional trees along its other boundaries. The meadow slopes steeply downwards to the north-west, in the direction of the brook. The hillside affords very attractive views of the nucleated part of the village. It also hosts the annual popular Bell Meadow Day in the summer.

Fig. 36 The Bell, Wingtons and Bannister Cottage

The junction between Church Hill and Little Baddow Road is a highly attractive and memorable space, enclosed by picturesque old houses to the north and the steeply sloping Bell Meadow to the south. It is a triangular space with an island of grass in the centre which hosts a black and white painted fingerpost manufactured by Maldon Ironworks; an important historic feature in its own right. On the north side of the junction, The Bell, Wingtons and Bannister Cottage (each described in more detail below) comprise one of the most winsome groups of historic buildings in the Maldon District. The oak tree immediately to the south-west of The Bell is a notably valuable element in the composition; framing views of the historic buildings and at certain times of day filtering dappled sunlight onto The Bell.

Fig. 37 The Bell

Apart from the parish church, **The Bell** is the most significant historic building in the conservation area. It is grade II listed, although such is its architectural quality that arguably it could merit upgrading to II*. Its construction, layout and decoration all indicate it was built early in the 17th century. Around 1930 the southern and western elevations were restored to their original appearance with a commendable degree of accuracy. The building's close-studded timber-framed construction was re-exposed and lead-glazed windows were reinstated. The exposed timbers have been painted black, as was fashionable early in the 20th century but was probably not the finish in the 17th century. It was (and still is) quite a showy building, with most of the finances thrown at the front elevation which has carved decoration and almost continuous glazing. Notably there is no evidence of any original windows on the other elevations.

The most elaborate part of the building is the crosswing, at the left-hand end, which has a jettied first floor and a jettied gable. As described above (see p. 13), the crosswing has lavish carved decoration. The central windows on the crosswing originally projected as an oriel and bay. Many of the smaller windows retain their original mullions. The single-storey Georgian eastern extension was occupied by a shoemaker's workshop in the 19th century (Ryan, p. 84). The continued use of the building as a pub makes a valuable contribution to the vitality and character of the village.

Fig. 38 Wingtons

It is not obvious from the outside, but **Wingtons** (listed grade II) also dates from the 17th century, albeit from a little later in that century than The Bell. On the front elevation there is a small first-floor window with a moulded mullion (second from left) which is original, and there are features inside the building which confirm the 17th-century date. However, unlike The Bell, the charm of Wingtons derives less from its original features, than from the way in which it has been adapted organically over the centuries in a vernacular fashion. There are windows on the front elevation dating from the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and no two are the same! On the ground floor there are three bay windows. In addition to vertically sliding sash windows, there is one horizontally sliding sash (also known as a Yorkshire sash), and two wonderful Georgian casement windows of a type which has rarely survived in the Maldon District.

The upper parts of the front elevation are rendered and the lower parts are clad in weatherboarding, but the junctions between these two types of cladding are at variable levels. The eastern flank is clad in weatherboarding. According to Pat Ryan: "The property was leased by Thomas and Hannah Shynn, shopkeepers who first appeared in the parish registers in 1731. All the rooms listed in James Brown's inventory of 1794 can be identified in the house as it stands today" (Ryan, p. 91).

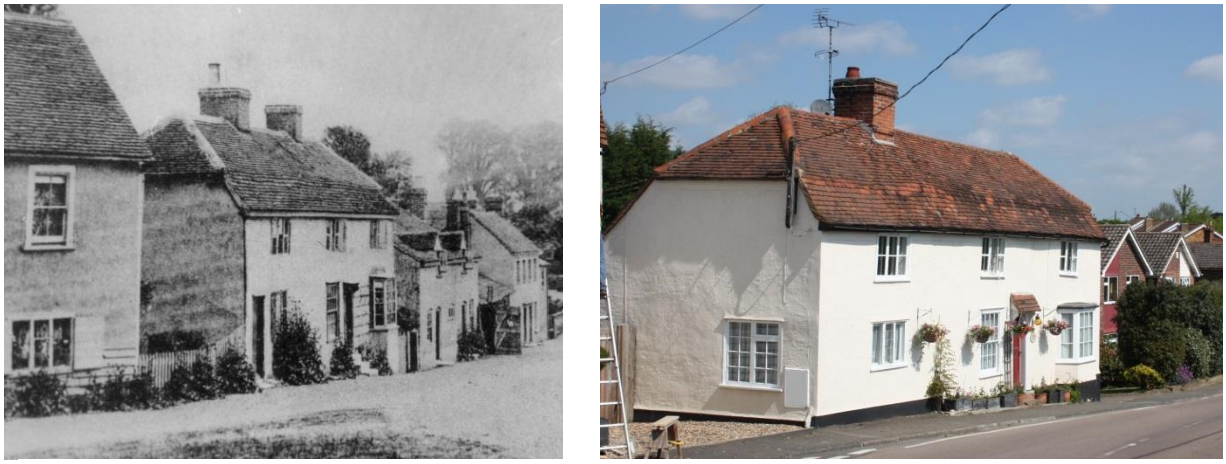


Fig. 39 Bannister Cottage in the early 20th century (left) and in 2016 (right)

To the north of Wingtons is **Bannister Cottage**, another grade II listed building. It is a classic example of local Georgian vernacular architecture, having a half-hipped gambrel roof and some formerly lead-glazed casement windows typical of the period. In the 18th century the building was in use as a pair of farmworkers' dwellings (Ryan, p. 43). In 1801 the building was purchased by the parish vestry for use as a poor house, at which time it was probably extended by a further bay to the north, and it remained in this use until 1834, after which it reverted to three cottages. Apart from infilling the front doorway that existed at the left-hand end of the front elevation and the loss of a chimney the external appearance of the building has changed very little.

Fig. 40 Modern houses on the west side of The Street between Bannister Cottage and Lynton House

Between Bannister Cottage and Lynton House there are six modern houses built from the 1960s onwards. From south to north these are **Thenneck Burn, Dobbins, Bandoola, Brookside Colt House, and Coopers**. These houses are typical of their date and make a neutral contribution to the special character of the conservation area. The houses are set back further from the Street than the older houses, and their modern appearance is softened by some well-established trees and hedges.

Loading up the bread outside Allingtons Bakery, about 1907

Fig. 41 Lynton House early in the 20th century (left) and in 2016 (right)

Lynton House is a late-Victorian brick property comprising a gabled crosswing to the left and a narrow 'hall' range to the right. The building is rendered except at the corners of the walls and around the windows, where the brickwork is exposed and arranged in the fashion of masonry quoins, creating quite a distinctive appearance. The gable to the crosswing is embellished with ornamental terracotta blocks primarily in the form of floral and foliate motifs including sunflowers. The original front door and porch, which feature in old photographs, have been removed and a doorway which once existed on the flank of the 'hall' range has been converted into a window. But the frontage is otherwise little altered.

The front fence is of an unusual, but charming, design comprising wooden post and rails surrounding iron balustrades that intersect in pointed arches (fig. 27). Attached to the rear of the house are structures which, early in the 20th century, were used as a flour store and bakery. Flanking the northern side of the driveway is an attractive former stable building clad in weatherboarding and roofed in Roman clay tiles (fig. 4).

A study of the 19th century OS maps indicates that this property was built between 1881 and 1896. Apparently there is a date of 1888 inscribed in the rear gable of the original house, now concealed within the roof of the flour-store extension.

Fig. 42 Lares and Robin Hill

To the north of Lynton are **Lares** and **Robin Hill**. These are two detached houses built at the same time in the 1970s, each incorporating an integral garage. They are constructed of yellow brick and roofed in brown concrete rooftile. On each house the right-hand end of the front elevation is stepped back and rises to taller eaves. The two houses are typical of the period and make a neutral contribution to the special character of the conservation area. They are quite prominent due to the way in which the land rises up from The Street. Lares has a pleasant Maple tree in its front garden. The planting of front hedgerows would augment the villages' Arcadian quality and soften the appearance of these modern houses.

Fig. 43 The Queen Victoria PH early in the 20th century (left) and in 2016 (right)

Occupying a prominent position on the corner of the junction between the The Street and Top Road is the **Queen Victoria PH**. The timber-framed structure of this pub represents three former houses. These were part of a terrace which originally comprised six houses – one facing The Street and five facing Top Road – and was described as 'newly built' in 1823 (Ryan, p. 89). The Queen Victoria is mentioned in the 1861 census at which time it occupied the eastern end-house of the terrace. In the 1960s, the western three houses were demolished to make space for a car park and the pub expanded into the remaining houses.

Although the historic form of the building is still apparent, some of the 20th-century alterations detract from its traditional character. The reinstatement of timber sash windows and the use of more traditional or softer boundary treatments would hugely enhance the appearance of this prominent building. The continued use of the building contributes positively to the vitality and character of the village.

Fig. 44 Ash Cottage

Occupying a narrow roadside plot on the west side of Rectory Road is **Ash Cottage**. This is a small, single-storey cottage. Roadside cottages are a common feature of the Maldon District, with most examples dating from the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Ash Cottage is quite a late example since it dates from early in the 20th century. The cottage nestles into the plot, its eaves only just peeping above a mature front hedge. The building has a long, linear form with two outbuildings attached to the northern end. The roof of the main house is covered with early concrete tiles laid in a lozenge pattern, and the outbuildings are roofed with corrugated tin and Roman clay tiles.

Properties on the east side of Rectory Road and The Street

Fig. 45 2 The Maples (left) and 1 The Maples (right)

When drawing the boundary of the conservation area, it seemed logical that the northern-most properties to be included should be **1 & 2 The Maples**. Beyond this the houses are predominantly modern and of no special interest. 1 & 2 The Maples are a handsome, symmetrical pair, the essential form of which is unaltered. A particular feature is the lean-to veranda roof which is continuous across the front elevation. The pebbledash render is probably original but the concrete roof tiles are not. Both houses retain wavy-profile bargeboards in their gables.

The front elevation of No. 2 is almost perfectly preserved, retaining the original windows and curious lattice-pattern brackets to the veranda. By contrast, the façade of No. 1 has been altered by the insertion of plastic windows and by the infilling of the veranda; alterations which have eroded that property's traditional appearance. The box hedging in front of the properties is in keeping with the village's Arcadian character. The loss of the front garden of No. 1 to concrete hardstanding has resulted in a harder appearance.

Fig. 46 1 & 2 The Almshouses

Immediately to the south of The Maples are the red brick **Almshouses**, which make a very positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. A carved stone plaque on the front reads:

ALMSHOUSES IN THE MEMORY OF

THE REV

R.H. FAULKNER. M.A.

RECTOR OF THIS PARISH 1875-1907.

ERECTED BY HIS THREE SONS

1908.

The best architectural features of these tiny houses are their gothic-style windows, which have pointed-arch openings and lead-glazed panes. The porches are later, but broadly respectful of the proportions of the original building. There is a good picket fence and pretty planting along the boundary. To the rear there is a small outbuilding, possibly former privies, clad in black weatherboarding and roofed in clay tiles.

Fig. 47 Woodham Mead

Woodham Mead is a modern house, built early in the 1980s, of loosely traditional form, which makes a neutral contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Fig. 48 Woodham Walter Primary School

A school was first built on the site of **Woodham Walter Primary School** shortly after 1829, and this was replaced by the current building in 1873 (Ryan, p. 61). The Victorian school was erected by the village builders, the Gozzetts. The original school building is a modest and fairly typical example of its type and date. But it is an important building in the context of the village. The Victorian building is built of soft red brick laid in Flemish bond with yellow / white bricks used for banding and to enliven brick arched heads. The plastic windows unfortunately dilute its Victorian character to some degree. The school features quite prominently in long views because it is sited upon the crest of the hill.

The modern extension adjacent to the road, added early this century, is a thoughtful and sensitive response to the character of the site. It employs warm, soft red bricks and slate-pitched roofs, in reference to the original school, and more contemporary-style fenestration in green-coloured frames which is quite effective.

The modern ‘portakabin’-type structure at the northern end of the site, close to the road, is not attractive, but is relatively unassuming and a common and accepted feature of schools nowadays, ever under pressure to find additional space. The picket fence and box hedge front boundary is good, and successfully softens the appearance of the car park.

Fig. 49 Tadpoles Nursery

What is now **Tadpoles Nursery** was first built as the Congregational Chapel in 1881. Services and a Sunday School were held in the chapel until after World War II. It later became the village shop (the 'Chapel Stores'), before recently becoming Tadpoles Nursery. It is a charmingly vernacular building, clad in white-painted weatherboarding, its roof covered with natural slates. Its most memorable features are the pointed-arch timber windows, which are the only external sign of the building's formerly ecclesiastical function. The building is now partially hidden behind a row of trees, which are in themselves a pleasant feature in the street scene.

Fig. 50 Ashputtle

Ashputtle was built around 10 years ago, replacing a bungalow of the same name. The bungalow – a red brick structure with lead-glazed windows – was originally built shortly after the First World War as a village reading room. The new house is of a loosely traditional form, and makes a neutral contribution to the character of the village.

Fig. 51 Severn House early in the 20th century (left) and in 2016 (right)

To the south of Ashputtle is **Severn House** which was built in the mid-19th century as a timber-framed pair of semi-detached cottages. The cottages were converted to a single dwelling in the 1960s. The basic form of the building remains unchanged but there have been a number of modernisations. The sash windows have been replaced with timber casements which have top-opening fanlights and (by traditional standards) quite chunky detailing. A roughcast render has been applied over the building, including over the brickwork of the chimney stacks. The trees in the front garden are quite attractive.

Fig. 52 2 Brick Cottages (left) and 1 Brick Cottages (right)

Redbrick Cottages are another pair of mid-19th century cottages, this time of red brick with a hipped slate roof. In the late 1980s No. 1 was extended to the side in a matching style to the original. The front elevation of the cottages, including the modern side extension to No. 1, retains fine painted-timber sash windows. At the time of the survey for this appraisal the front hedge had grown to the point that it largely conceals the front elevation from view, which is a shame since the cottages make a valuable contribution to the traditional character of the village.

Fig. 53 Wendover Cottage (left) and Ferndale (right)

Wendover Cottage is a 19th-century house which has been 'Tudorised' in a playful manner in the mid-twentieth century, through the introduction of lead-glazed windows and black-painted battens to convey the impression of exposed timber-framing. The front picket fence has even been painted black and white to reflect the half-timbered effect of the house. The 19th-century form of the house is otherwise essentially little altered, retaining slate roofs and a gable-end brick chimney stack. Although the 'Tudorised' features are inoffensive, the restoration of the building's Victorian character would represent an enhancement.

Fig. 54 Ferndale

The gabled front of **Ferndale** provides a visual stop to the housing on this side of the street. It is a late 19th-century brick house, orientated with a gable facing the road. Like the school it is predominantly of red brick but deploys some horizontal bands of yellow brick. The property was quite extensively altered in the 1990s but, due to the way in which the land slopes down from the road and the presence of a mature front hedge, the extensions are not that noticeable, and the historic building remains the most prominent element in views from the street.

Fig. 55 Fort Cottage

Somewhat isolated on the eastern side of Church Hill, and perched on elevated land overlooking the junction with Little Baddow Road is **Fort Cottage**. It is probably Georgian in date but possibly earlier. It is known to have been occupied by two families in the mid-19th century (Ryan, p. 86). A two-storey extension was built on the north side of the cottage earlier this century. Prior to that, the two-storey front range was covered by a roof that is fully hipped to the north and half hipped to the south. The cottage has been extensively altered but in a manner which respects the spirit of the original, using hipped clay tile roofs and oak-framed and lead-glazed windows. The roof of the side extension is set back so that the form of the earlier roof can still be seen and appreciated.

There is a tall hedgerow along its boundary with Church Hill but, thanks to its elevated position, the cottage appears prominently in views from several directions. The most notable views of the cottage are from the junction with Little Baddow Road – where it is framed by the canopy of an oak tree – and from Bell Meadow – where its setting within the wider, partly-wooded and rolling landscape is highly picturesque.

8. THE CONSEQUENCES OF CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION

The objective of a conservation area designation is to preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of a place. Once a conservation area has been designated it becomes the duty of the local planning authority to consider the desirability of this objective when determining any planning applications which affect it or its setting. The purpose of the designation is not to prevent all change but to ensure that new development augments rather than erodes the special qualities of a place.

Establishing a conservation area immediately places firmer planning controls over certain types of development. The main additional requirements include the following:

- 6 weeks' notice must be given to the local authority before works are carried out to any tree in the area. This does not include trees whose trunks have a diameter of less than 75mm above ground level
- Planning permission is required for the demolition of any unlisted building with a volume of more than 115 cubic metres
- Planning permission is required to demolish a gate, fence, wall or railing over 1 metre high next to a highway (including a public footpath or bridleway) or public open space; or over 2 metres high elsewhere
- Planning permission is required for alterations to the roof of a dwelling house resulting in a material alteration to its shape, notably dormer windows
- Planning permission is needed for the installation of a satellite dish on a chimney, wall or roof slope which faces onto and is visible from a public highway
- Planning permission is needed to clad any part of the exterior of a dwelling house with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles

Unless the local authority introduces further restrictions called Article 4 directions many minor, but potentially harmful, alterations can still be carried out to dwelling houses without planning permission. So, for example, without an Article 4 direction the owners of independent dwelling houses can replace front windows and doors, change roof coverings, paint over exposed brickwork and demolish chimneys. While such alterations may be of little consequence if carried out to modern houses (whose contribution is judged to be neutral), if such changes were made in an unsympathetic manner to any of the historic properties in the village, the special character of the area could be seriously undermined. In order for the conservation area designation to be meaningful an Article 4 direction is being introduced at the same time relating to the following properties:

- Church Cottage
- Lynton House
- Ash Cottage
- 1&2 The Maples
- 1&2 Almshouses
- Severn House
- 1&2 Brick Cottages
- Wendover Cottage
- Ferndale
- Fort Cottage

The effect of the Article 4 direction is that the following types of development would require planning permission:

- The alteration of front doors or windows, including the formation of new windows and doors.

  REASON: This is to discourage the loss of historic windows and doors which contribute positively to the character of the area in the instances where it is possible to repair and retain them. It is also ensure that new windows and doors respect the special character of the conservation area in terms of design, detailing and materials and to discourage the introduction of windows and doors of unsympathetic design. With respect to any elevation on the house which faces a highway, complete replacement of a window or door or formation of a new window or door opening therefore require planning permission. The need for planning permission does not extend to such alterations on elevations which do not front a highway.

- The alteration of the front roof slope, including the replacement of the existing roof coverings with a different material or the installation of a micro-generation unit.

  REASON: This aim of this measure is to ensure the continued use of roof coverings that are most in keeping with the special character of the Conservation Area, such as natural slates and clay tiles. While Maldon District Council supports efforts towards sustainability and energy efficiency, this measure will also ensure that micro-generation units are installed in a way that does not detract from the special character of the property or the conservation Area. Planning permission will be required when the front roof slope is completely re-covered with a different material or a micro-generation unit is attached to the front roof slope. Planning permission will not be required in the instances when re-roofing only involves replacing existing slates or tiles using materials which match the existing exactly.

- The painting over of unpainted brickwork.

  REASON: Traditional historic brickwork was usually not meant to be painted and when it is painted it can seriously harm the character of a building. Once a historic brick wall has been painted it is difficult and expensive to expose again. This measure would therefore seek to discourage the painting of areas of unpainted brickwork which were always meant to be exposed, where its character as such is deemed to be important.

- Alterations to or the removal of a chimney on a house or buildings associated with the house.

  REASON: Chimneys make an important contribution to the roofscape of the Conservation Area. This measure will encourage the retention of historic chimneys where they make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area

Planning applications which are required as a result of the Article 4 direction are currently free of charge.

9. CONCLUSION

Woodham Walter is a very special rural village, with a good combination of attractive buildings, open spaces and trees. The rolling landscape creates a lively streetscape and some impressive views. The numerous mature trees and hedges generate a verdant and Arcadian character. Within the boundary of the conservation area there is a special character and appearance which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. On this basis, its status as a conservation area is justified. Such status, informed by this character statement, will help ensure that the local planning authority, local residents, developers and other organisations make considered decisions about changes affecting the conservation area and preserve its special character for future generations.

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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