

# ABBOTS BROMLEY CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL



Final Version March 2009

Abbots Bromley Aerial Photograph



**Aerial View of Abbots Bromley**

# CONTENTS

- 1 INTRODUCTION
  - 1.1 Background
  - 1.2 Legislative context
  - 1.3 Methodology
- 2 ABBOTS BROMLEY: ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT
  - 2.1 Location and geology
  - 2.2 Building materials
- 3 EVOLUTION OF ABBOTS BROMLEY
  - 3.1 Historic development
  - 3.2 Archaeological evidence from the Conservation Area and its environs
- 4 TOWNSCAPE AND LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS
  - 4.1 Setting
  - 4.2 The influence of Abbots Bromley's historic urban form on the Conservation Area
  - 4.3 Sub-areas within the Conservation Area
  - 4.4 Local building patterns
  - 4.5 Summary of distinctive features
- 5 THE RELEVANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA
  - 5.1 Coherence and appropriateness of the Conservation Area and its boundaries
- 6 EVALUATION OF THE CONSERVATION AREA
  - 6.1 Introduction
  - 6.2 Character
  - 6.3 Listed buildings
  - 6.4 Other positive elements
  - 6.5 Particularly negative contributions
  - 6.6 Vulnerability and threats
  - 6.7 Opportunities for enhancement and development
  - 6.8 Essential development principles to protect character
- 7 SYNTHESIS FOR THE CONSERVATION AREA
  - 7.1 Wider vulnerability and threats
  - 7.2 Change in the Conservation Area since designation
- 8 RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT AND ACTION
  - 8.1 The Conservation Area and its boundaries
  - 8.2 Restrictions on permitted development rights
  - 8.3 Statutory and local listing
  - 8.4 Management strategy recommendations

9 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

10 REFERENCES AND SOURCES

APPENDIX 1 Summaries Of Archaeological Reports And Listed Buildings  
Staffordshire County Council: Historic Environment Record

APPENDIX 2 Recommendations for Statutory Listing

APPENDIX 3 Tree Preservation Orders & Protected Landscape

APPENDIX 4 Demolitions and Conservation Area Consents

APPENDIX 5 Local Plan Policies Supporting Sensitive Design And The  
Conservation Of Character

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Abbots Bromley Conservation Area was designated by Staffordshire County Council in November 1969 and was further reviewed in September 1997, resulting in the Abbots Bromley Conservation Area Statement produced by East Staffordshire Borough Council (ESBC) [Map 1]. The Statement, which was adopted as supplementary planning guidance by ESBC, set out the key significance factors for the village and suggested proposals for amendments to the existing Conservation Area boundary.
- 1.1.2 The civil parish of Abbots Bromley is essentially comprised of the core village of Abbots Bromley, the surrounding hamlets of Heatley, Bromley Hurst, Bromley Wood and Radmore Wood, and many scattered farmsteads. The village of Abbots Bromley lies in the centre of Staffordshire, north east of Birmingham and midway between Stafford and Burton upon Trent, and is a thriving commuter-belt village with largely residential development supported by some retail business and light industry. The B5014/B5234 Uttoxeter to Burton upon Trent road runs through the village (north west-south east) and has influenced the development of the village, illustrated by its linear, ribbon-like form.
- 1.1.3 Blithfield Reservoir, opened in 1953, lies close to the south west of the village. The dominant urban features of the village are the two large blocks of buildings belonging to the Abbots Bromley School for Girls straddling the High Street towards the eastern end of the village.

## 1.2 Legislative context

- 1.2.1 The establishment of Conservation Areas was first made possible by the Civic Amenities Act 1967. Thus, the designation of the Abbots Bromley Conservation Area in 1969 was an early one in national terms. Conservation Areas are defined within today's current legislation as being '*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: Section 69(1)(a)].
- 1.2.2 It is important that areas designated in this way are genuinely of architectural or historic interest, rather than merely being attractive areas in which to live and/or work. Whilst this can be a fine distinction to make, the validity and integrity of the concept stands or falls upon it. The production of a written appraisal of each Conservation Area is consequently of some considerable importance, since this provides a record of the area's fundamental special interest and the core base of buildings of architectural or historical value that exist within it.
- 1.2.3 Designation potentially gives the local planning authority greater control over extensions and demolition, the display of advertisements, and works to trees. Special consideration has to be given to proposals for development or redevelopment within a Conservation Area to ensure that its character and appearance are preserved or enhanced. In most cases, Conservation Areas are living and working communities, with both residential and commercial uses.
- 1.2.4 The purpose of designation is not to stifle or prevent change and evolution, but to control it in such a way as to maintain and enhance character and local distinctiveness. In making decisions on future development within a Conservation Area, a council must '*pay attention to*

*the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area* [Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990].

- 1.2.5 This should ensure that harmful change is not allowed, although some changes, normally not requiring planning permission (known as permitted development rights) can continue to erode the special interest of the Conservation Area. These rights can be controlled by the serving of an Article 4 Direction, which enables a council to require a planning application for minor alterations, such as replacement windows and doors.
- 1.2.6 Section 71 of the same 1990 Act obliges councils '*to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area, which are Conservation Areas*', and, in part, this re-appraisal fulfils this statutory duty (but see also below).
- 1.2.7 Despite their importance, there is no statutory requirement placed on local planning authorities specifically to prepare Conservation Area appraisals. However, under the 1990 Act, such authorities are required '*from time to time*' to undertake a review of their Conservation Areas. This is to ensure that their designation and boundaries remain relevant, logical and defensible.
- 1.2.8 As the number of designated areas steadily increases at a national level, the criteria and justification for designation are coming under greater scrutiny and challenge. It is therefore important for local authorities to have confidence in the continued relevance of their Conservation Areas, particularly those that have been in existence for a number of years.
- 1.2.9 English Heritage has advised councils to carry out appraisals of Conservation Areas within their district to identify the key features of the area and how they combine to give the place its particular character. By establishing what makes a place special and distinct, the local planning authority can more effectively ensure that change through development, or through other changes resulting from its own actions or those of other statutory authorities, do not undermine this character and wherever possible can enhance it.
- 1.2.10 As well as identifying the positive features of a place, an appraisal can also highlight areas where there is scope for improvement. This could be in terms of new development or redevelopment, or more small-scale improvements to, for example, the appearance of street furniture or signage. The results of appraisals can be used to help prioritise available resources for environmental enhancement.
- 1.2.11 The Abbots Bromley Conservation Area was last appraised formally in 1997 when recommendations for slight extensions to the 1969 boundary were proposed and adopted. The current re-appraisal has been prepared following fieldwork undertaken in November 2005. In addition to acting as a review of the Conservation Area eight years after its first review, this re-appraisal has particular importance, given the consultation that is currently in progress regarding Village Design Statement for the village, which has potential implications for the landscape within the Conservation Area.
- 1.2.12 This Conservation Area review has been commissioned to address the current Best Value Performance Indicator BV219. It will be considered for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document for Abbots Bromley, helping to guide the formulation of policies for the preservation and enhancement of the Area and assisting in the determination of relevant planning applications.

## **1.3 Methodology**

- 1.3.1 The approach adopted for the appraisal process followed that contained within English Heritage's recently updated guidance note 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' (August 2005). Regard has also been taken to the English Historic Towns Forum Report No 38 'Conservation Area Management – A Practical Guide' and English Heritage's 'Guidance on the management of Conservation Areas' (August 2005).
- 1.3.2 Site work for the appraisal of the Abbots Bromley Conservation Area was undertaken on 10th and 16th November 2005.
- 1.3.3 The appraisal was conducted through means of a detailed site-based evaluation, supported by research of appropriate secondary sources, including historic maps, trade directories and web sites.
- 1.3.4 The archaeological potential of the Conservation Area has been examined in several ways. National and county archaeological archives have been consulted as part of a desk-based appraisal. The Stafford Record Office and Lichfield Record Office was visited during November 2005, with particular attention being paid to photographs, maps, archaeological archives and published sources held there. Subsequently, information was gathered from the Staffordshire county Historic Environment Record (HER) during November 2005.
- 1.3.5 The second element of the archaeological assessment was an important exercise in its own right, consisting of a rapid visual inspection and assessment of the Conservation Area and its surrounding landscape. The work allowed for a qualitative re-assessment of the current Conservation Area and its boundaries. Finally, internet searches were carried out, using standard search engines such as Google, but also by way of bespoke archaeological internet sites such as the Archaeology Data Service, Access to Archives and the British and Irish Archaeological Bibliography.

## **2 ABBOTS BROMLEY: ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT**

### **2.1 Location and Geology**

- 2.1.1 Abbots Bromley (Grid reference SK080245) sits amid a landscape of rolling hills punctuated by clumps of woodland and scattered with farmhouses and lanes connecting with the nearby Staffordshire villages of Admaston, Newborough and Kingstone [1]. The village takes a linear form, closely hugging the main through road (B5014 Bagot Street/High Street) with small areas of development aligned along the lanes, which branch from either side of the street into the village hinterland.
- 2.1.2 The village of Abbots Bromley lies at an elevated position between 80 and 150 metres above sea level on a slight ridge, which provides views to the north and south from different points within the village. At the west and east ends, the landscape dips away slightly, further supporting the notion of the village lying along a ridge [2].
- 2.1.3 Geologically, Abbots Bromley sits above an interesting landscape of Triassic period keuper marl, a deep red clay with lenses of sandstone, overlain by glacial deposits of sand, gravels and additional clay. The landscape of Abbots Bromley is crossed by small streams [3], the largest being the river Blithe, which runs through the western side of the parish feeding the Blithfield Reservoir. In conjunction with the streams, a number of ponds have formed, some naturally and some in response to past excavations for clay (or marl), sand and gravel.
- 2.1.4 The topography of Abbots Bromley is scattered with woodland including the large area of Bagot's Forest and the smaller Marchington Woods to the north of the village.

### **2.2 Building Materials**

- 2.2.1 Clay is the most dominant and most visible natural material used in the built fabric of Abbots Bromley. Local clay, the excavations for which can still be observed around the village, was obtained from the keuper marl beds with their rich supply of clay and other minerals. Virtually the entire village is made from brick of a deep orange-red-brown hue, which in combination with the blues and weathered red clay tiles used on the majority of the roofs within the village, creates a very mellow and visually pleasing quality and firmly establishes the character of the village as a whole [4].
- 2.2.2 Other materials evident in the village that demonstrate evidence of an origin further a field are dark grey slate, used as occasional roof covering and stone (probably obtained from the sandstone layers within the keuper marl beds), found as plinths and sills on a few of the houses in the village and most notably used in St Nicholas's Church on the south side of the village.
- 2.2.3 Timber framing has been used in the village for a small number of its buildings although more may survive behind brick-clad frontages and outer skins. Close studded timber framing, typical of the Midlands tradition of timber frame construction survives in some of the buildings fronting the High Street and provide a reminder of the formerly forested nature of the landscape around the village [5].

## 3 EVOLUTION OF ABBOTS BROMLEY

### 3.1 Historical Development

- 3.1.1 The derivation of Bromley is garnered from the coupling of two Old English words: *brom* (meaning broom) and *leah* (a meadow, or uncultivated field). The initial settlement at Bromley (noted by the Domesday Book in 1086 as *Brumlege*) appears to have been founded by the deforestation of a plot of land in this once densely wooded area; the specific site perhaps chosen on account of the brook running through the valley. The first surviving written mention of this early settlement dates from 942, when King Edmund's Charter granted lands including *Bromleige* to Wulfsige the Black. A further charter issued by King Aethelred some 50 years later (in 996) gifted the lands to Wulfric Spot and detailed aspects of the estate, including three points recognisable as the current parish boundaries: Pur Brook, the River Blithe and Tad Brook. Wulfric subsequently bequeathed his lands and possessions to the Benedictines for the founding of religious premises. Consequently, an Abbey was created upon his lands at Burton upon Trent and from 1004 until the advent of the Dissolution in 1545, the evolutionary trajectory of the newly christened *Bromley Abbatis* ran in tandem with that of its Abbey.
- 3.1.2 As an ecclesiastical subject, Bromley was not held under the jurisdiction of any Lord of the Manor (despite the substantial influence exerted upon the village by the Bagot family of Bagot Park, later Blithfield), instead villagers were the villeins of the Abbey. However, the relationship between the Abbey and its estate was not entirely one-way and the increasing prominence of the religious institution during the 13<sup>th</sup> Century proved a catalyst for Bromley's economic development when a royal charter declared the village a free borough. A market was established in Abbots Bromley in 1222, and confirmed by King Henry III on May 12<sup>th</sup> 1227. The establishment of this market anticipated 600 years of agricultural trade, paid testament to today by the enduring tradition of Wakes Monday or Horn Dance Day. The market was held under the Butter Cross, which stands on the village green [6]. Whilst an exact date of construction for this structure has not been verified, popular opinion places it around the 14<sup>th</sup> Century; a deed of 1339 cites the intended erection of a structure on the site.
- 3.1.3 Following the grant of the market charter, Abbots Bromley appears to have become a source of considerable prosperity for the Abbey, and the village accordingly merited greater attention. The same Abbot Nicholas responsible for the legitimisation of market trading in the village subsequently continued to enhance the value of the township through instigating a programme of deforestation, "*reclaiming waste land, and making portions of the common into private pasture and arable fields, thus making an enclosure*" (Rice 1931, p.13). The 16<sup>th</sup> Century marked the cessation of the Abbey's control in Abbots Bromley, marking an abrupt transfer from ecclesiastical to private dominance. In 1545 the estate of Burton Abbey was secularised and passed into the private ownership of Sir William Paget, Clerk of the Signet and Privy Councillor. However, Paget's prosperity rapidly adopted a downward trajectory and he was deprived of his titles and saw all his lands and income confiscated to the Crown. Restored to honour, as a staunch Catholic, by Mary Queen of Scots, Paget's lands were re-bestowed and he became the first Lord of the Manor of the newly named Pagets Bromley. After his death his second son, Sir Thomas Paget, who followed his father's flirtations with theological controversy, became implicated in the plots surrounding Mary, Queen of Scots who was briefly housed in the village en route to her eventual place of execution at Fotheringay Castle in Northamptonshire. Following various sentences of imprisonment across Yorkshire and Derbyshire, Paget's complicity in the Thockmorton Plot resulted in his emigration. He was

convicted of treason in 1583 and thereafter died in Brussels, whereupon the Crown confiscated all his English estates, Abbots Bromley included.

- 3.1.4 The convoluted history of the Paget's relationship with the village did not conclude with Sir Thomas' demise, however, as the conversion of his son, William, to the Protestant tradition led to the restoration of all lands and incomes to the family [7]. Following this period of change, the Paget fortunes continued their ascent and, following to the battle of Waterloo, Henry William Paget was awarded the title of Marquis of Anglesey, an entitlement still retained by the family today. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, the Paget family began to dispose of their estates and the village reverted to its former title of "Abbots Bromley". The dispersal of estates was gradual, however, and the family retained ties with the village until 1932 when the Butter Cross, the Village Green and the Pinfold were given by the Marquis to the Parish Council, marking the end of their landed interest.

### Economic Development

- 3.1.5 **Agriculture:** Although an area predominantly dependent upon agricultural production, the farming trade in Abbots Bromley remained an essentially subsistence venture until the founding of the Abbey. By the time of the Dissolution in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> Century, much of the early system of individual plots had been revolutionised; with the village villeins instead farming land for Abbey benefit. By 1545, forest and scrubland boundaries had retreated, and the area cultivated for crops and grazing had greatly increased, as had the proportion of common land available to the villagers. The corresponding rise in population pays testament to improved living conditions and, coupled with the establishment of the market in 1227, is indicative of a village en route to prosperity. Burgeoning private ownership apparently proved an enhanced catalyst for the village's market trade, increasing the surplus intended for sale and decreasing the produce siphoned off by the Abbey. Certainly, the market seems to have proved the mechanism for economic and social expansion in Abbots Bromley, and local tradition testifies that *"on Market days you could walk on the people's heads, and the cattle stretched from the bottom of Bagot Street to the Lichfield Road"*.
- 3.1.6 Whilst the village itself was not directly implicated in the laying of railways, its omission from the network proved a significant contributory factor in its subsequent isolation. The construction of the North Staffordshire Line at Uttoxeter and the Trent Valley Line at Rugeley marked the two towns as potential centres of mobility, providing access to wider areas and new opportunities, both commercial and private [8]. The relative inaccessibility of Abbots Bromley resulted in a recession in its market economy and *"what had been a thriving market borough soon reverted to its original state, a small and rather sleepy little isolated village"*. In 1851, Whites directory noted the village as being *"a decayed market town, consisting of one long street of irregularly built houses"*, further supported by the statement in Pigot's Directory of 1834 which suggested that the *"market, which was formerly held on Tuesday, has fallen into disuse"*. The economic drain upon the village saw a reduction in employment, and whilst agriculture still afforded the more affluent farmers viable revenue, it could not sustain an additional workforce. Indeed, although much of the former common land had long been enclosed, *"there were still some open fields [and] practically every resident above the status of labourer, and some of the labourers also, had crofts of their own or flats in what remained of the open field"*.
- 3.1.7 This diversification of the economy in the village has continued with many farm settlements diversifying, as owners seek to supplement their incomes by cultivating secondary business through equine activities, tea-room facilities and bed and breakfast accommodation. In

addition to this, the last 50 years has witnessed the sale of many redundant outbuildings, and their subsequent transformation into executive housing [9].

- 3.1.8 **Milling:** It is postulated that the village's first mill was built sometime in the twelfth century, from when extant deeds record its existence and state its function as being in aid of the kitchen of the abbey. Across the five centuries of Abbey governance the mill provided a regular income for monastic funds. Unable to compete with modernisation, the mill closed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the building remains in surprising good condition despite a century's vacancy.
- 3.1.9 **Iron Industry:** Iron ore is commonly found in North Staffordshire and this provided an opportunity for small-scale iron manufacture in Abbots Bromley. The topography of the locality proved ideal for the purification of the metal; a process demanding three constituent parts of iron ore, heat and oxygen. In addition to the ample provision of necessary mineral deposits, the heavily forested vicinity of Abbots Bromley- principally Bagots Wood and Needwood Forest- also facilitated the acquisition of timber to be charcoaled and burnt as fuel. The blasts of air needed for oxidisation were then provided by the installation of a primitive pump on the site of a foundry (now Forge Farm), which was driven by a paddlewheel turned by Mires Brook. In the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, concern about the depletion of the area's woodland resources initiated the passing of a prohibition forbidding the use of charcoal for the smelting of iron. The decree coincided with the exhaustion of the region's easily accessible iron ore and from this point the smelting industry at Abbots Bromley ceased to be an exclusively local affair.
- 3.1.10 **Brick manufacture:** The village contained two main brickyards, the largest of which was located on Port Lane. Operating production from the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century to the 1880s, the Port Lane brickyard provided the construction material for a large proportion of the houses lining Bagot Street and High Street, as well as for prominent buildings such as the mill and St Anne's Chapel. Whilst the production at Port Lane was fairly prolific, the history of the village's second brickyard is somewhat more enigmatic, and suggested principally by the 1900 Ordnance Survey one-inch map of the area which depicts a brick kiln halfway down the narrow road sometimes called Cow Lane which leads from the top of the hill on Lichfield Road.
- 3.1.11 **Brewing:** Whilst not on a scale to rival that of nearby Burton upon Trent, Abbots Bromley boasted a sizeable brewing industry until the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century when the Licensing Acts of 1872 and 1874 imposed severe restrictions upon the sale of alcoholic goods. Prior to this date, the village's brewing trade comprised beer produced both by public houses and by independent vendors and householders and the 1834 Pigot trade directory notes that the village's "*principal trade at present is in mal*".
- 3.1.12 **Tanning and shoemaking:** Halfway down the south side of Bagot Street stands a tall, narrow-fronted house dating from the early 1770s and originally utilised as a malthouse. By 1800 the property had become a tannery, serving the 13 cordwainers (boot and shoe makers) then operating in Abbots Bromley. This suggests a burgeoning industry and, although the Pigot directory of 1834 postulates that "*the making of shoes for the manufacturers at Stafford, which formerly furnished employment to many of the inhabitants, has for some years declined*", the listings still quote some seven boot and shoe makers as remaining in business. In fact, by 1851 this number had risen to nine and trade directories continue to list boot and shoe maker in the village until the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century (the 1912 Kelly's directory features two footwear manufacturers). The tannery at Abbots Bromley closed in the early 1880s.

- 3.1.13 **Glassmaking:** Although little tangible evidence of a glassmaking industry remains, the existence of Glass Lane and the survival of certain extant documentation from the Quarter Sessions Rolls of 1590 and 1610, and the Tithe Book of 1799 listing glaziers in the village, suggest that Abbots Bromley was home to a glass industry of some variety. Certain, however, is the existence of glass furnaces in Bagots Wood in the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century, established by Richard Bagot. Referenced in the Bagot MSS at Blithfield, these furnaces ceased production when a parliamentary Act prohibited the use of charcoal for fuel.
- 3.1.14 **Other businesses:** The variety and proliferation of industrial and commercial properties in late 18th century Abbots Bromley seems quite remarkable for a settlements of its size, testifying to the village's earlier prosperity. In addition to the more substantial industries noted above, the Tithe Book of 1799 lists 23 other types of shops and businesses [10].

#### Religious Provision

- 3.1.15 Domesday Book suggests that there has been a place of worship in Abbots Bromley for upwards of a thousand years. The church of St Nicholas was built around 1300 and later altered in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries [11]. The present church contains several examples of surviving medieval material including both the western end of the north wall, and the twelve hexagonal pillars which stand inside the church.
- 3.1.16 Abbots Bromley held various other places of worship during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, which included a Roman Catholic chapel: Church of the Sacred Heart; a Primitive Methodist Church, a Wesleyan Methodist Church, and the United Reform Church (originally the Congregational Church).

#### Education

- 3.1.17 **Clarke's Free Grammar School:** The village was bequeathed its first school by Richard Clarke in the early seventeenth century. The original school building comprised a substantial black and white structure dated 1699, which still stands at the top of Schoolhouse Lane. Clarke's Free Grammar remained largely unchallenged in its educational provision until the establishment of the Church of England run National Schools in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, of which one was erected in Abbots Bromley in 1830 and now comprises the present Richard Clarke School. In 1870 the National School became a Girl's and Infants School, and the Free Grammar closed in 1893 becoming the master's house for the new Boys School which was constructed directly in front of the former academy. A second parliamentary Act passed in 1933 signified further evolution for the village's schools, as All-age Elementary (Board) schools were changed into primary or secondary schools. Accordingly, the Boys School at the top of Schoolhouse Lane was closed, and the old National School then for girls and infants became the Abbots Bromley Primary School (now the Richard Clarke Primary School), with children transferred to a secondary school in Uttoxeter after the age of eleven [12].
- 3.1.18 **School of St Mary and St Anne:** Whilst the establishment of the National Schools provided schooling for the children of poorer parents, it was perceived that little educational provision existed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century for off-spring of middle class families. This disparity was levelled somewhat by the work of Canon Woodard who conceived a mission to provide a solid education priced affordably for the children of small tradesmen and farmers. Whilst this schooling was initially intended for boys, Woodard later developed a second system for girls, based on the teachings and practices of the Church of England. In 1872 the first of two Woodard schools for girls opened in Abbots Bromley when the "Big House" and its grounds in

the High Street were purchased for the establishment of St Anne's. In 1882, St Mary's was founded at Bromley House in Uttoxeter Road to cater for the slightly less affluent gentlemen's daughters. So successful was St Mary's that the original building could not accommodate the demand of pupils and in 1893 the school was transferred to a plot of land opposite St Anne's, a move which led to the schools' eventual amalgamation in 1921 to become the School of St Mary and St Anne (currently the Abbot's Bromley School for Girls [13]).

### Charitable provision

- 3.1.19 **Abbots Bromley Hospital:** The Abbots Bromley Almshouses (formerly the Abbots Bromley Hospital) stands at the end of Bagot Street, near the Market Place [14]. An L-shaped brick building in the Queen Anne style, it consists of six single-person dwellings and a larger residence for a warden and their family. The Bagot family arms are displayed over two of the heavy oak doors, bearing their dedication by the Lambert Bagot in 1705. Although the practice of living in the houses continued in until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the administration of the estate changed from the early 1800s when the parliamentary establishment of the Charity Commissioners initiated the creation of a board of trustees, appointed from local residents. By 1920 women were admitted as tenants for the first time although it was only in 1968 that the Charity Commissioners gave official permission for widows, spinsters and married couples to become resident.
- 3.1.20 **The Poorhouse:** The Poorhouse originally comprised two small cottages near the top of Schoolhouse Lane, however, its early location proved of insufficient size and the Churchwardens (responsible for the administration of the enterprise) consequently secured the lease of Castle House (now Coleridge House) next door to the Coach and Horses Inn. This premises was used for the residence until 1841, by which time the passing of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act had relieved the wardens of their responsibilities through the creation of the Uttoxeter Board of Guardians who, in 1841, were responsible for the building of the Uttoxeter Workhouse.

## **3.2 Archaeological Evidence from the Conservation Area and its environs**

- 3.2.1 Despite the antiquity and fluctuations in the development of Abbots Bromley, relatively little archaeological evidence has been recovered for its material development. No formal excavations have been undertaken in the village aside from an archaeological watching brief carried out when the church yard was extended in 1998 and a small watching brief on a building development in 2003 at Latham House, north of the High Street.
- 3.2.2 The earliest physical record of Abbots Bromley's survival is an earthwork representing a possible medieval house platform (HER03963) located on the outskirts of the village between Ashbrook Lane and Radmore Lane. An assortment of medieval finds (e.g. coins, a spindle whorl and a key) have been located through metal detector activity in and around the village (HER03959) and the earliest fabric of the church of St Nicholas (HER08684) is considered to date from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century with 15<sup>th</sup> Century and later additions.
- 3.2.3 According to historical records, the manor of Abbots Bromley (HER02331) was founded c.1004 when it was granted to Burton Abbey and was recorded in the Domesday Book (c.1086) as holding a plough, a priest and some woodland. By the 13<sup>th</sup> Century the village held a weekly market around the Butter Cross and an annual three day fair.

- 3.2.4 In the postmedieval period, Abbots Bromley grew both in size and diversity, but little of this is reflected in the archaeological record. The watching brief on the vicarage garden for the church yard extension only produced the remnant of a garden wall and some sherds of 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Century pottery (HER05487). Building notes on the Historic Environment Record include the former manor house at Hall Hill (thought to be sited over an earlier medieval house; HER01575), the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Broughton Cottage (HER03222), which is partly timber framed and the Non-Conformist Chapel in Hall Hill Lane, which has since been converted into a residence (HER03223).
- 3.2.5 Around the village of Abbots Bromley lie various earthworks and remnants of historic field boundaries, which provide interesting evidence of earlier farming and settlement activity. The rectangular earthwork surviving in the field on the corner between Goose Lane and Yeatsall Road may represent a medieval house platform or more likely an enclosure for livestock [15]. The many lanes around the village are set within deeply banked hedges, a landscape feature more typical of the Southwest than Staffordshire, and paths, such as that leading south west from the Church of St Nicholas (called Narrow Lane), are reminiscent of early holloways and other informal trackways now reduced to pedestrian use only.
- 3.2.6 In conclusion, the modern day Abbots Bromley probably conceals much of its medieval past, due mainly to the fact that most of the housing in the village (excluding obviously later development) has its origins in the post-medieval period and were placed over earlier medieval dwellings which had reached their lifespan. This suggested continuity of settlement use will only be positively confirmed by future excavation and investigation should buildings ever be demolished along the Bagot Street/High Street frontage. The rear of the buildings, which appear to have been largely used for light industrial and craft businesses throughout the village's development, may contain more evidence of their use than has been recorded to date, but such remains are likely to be more ephemeral and disturbed from past redevelopment activity.

## **4 TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Setting**

- 4.1.1 Abbots Bromley lies along the southern face of a low ridge aligned on a north west-south east axis. From the top of the higher ground on the north side of the village, there is a clear view across the valley below to the more level landscape of Rugeley and Cannock Chase beyond. To the north, small pockets of woodland are scattered across the landscape, the most significant in terms of size being Bagot's Park and Marchington Woods.
- 4.1.2 The undulating landscape in which the village of Abbots Bromley lies, rises slightly on the south side of the village to form another low ridge and the village nestles in between the two. The main thoroughfare of Bagot's Street/High Street takes the natural route through this 'mini' valley mirroring the axis of the ridgeline. The route linked (and still links) the towns of Uttoxeter, Burton upon Trent and Lichfield and Abbots Bromley held a central position in this topographic triangle [16].
- 4.1.3 The approach to the village is primarily from either the north west (B5013 – Bagot Street), the south (B5014 – Lichfield Road) or the east (B5234 – Ashbrook Lane). Further approaches to and from the village include, from the north, Harley Lane and School House Lane; from the east, Radmore Lane and from the south, Hall Hill Lane and Goose Lane. Several mainly modern cul de sac roads lead off from Bagot Street (Mires Brook Lane and Paget Rise) with the older, historic Church Lane leading off to the south to the Church of St Nicholas.
- 4.1.4 The village itself is laid out primarily along either side of the main thoroughfare, a pattern that is likely to have been formed in much earlier times, but with smaller numbers of dwellings lining the road. This linear development along a main transport route is a common type of urban feature that can be traced in many other villages and towns across Staffordshire and the country at large. In Abbots Bromley's case, this earlier plan form has survived relatively intact with just limited additional development along the lanes branching off of the main thoroughfare and containing, modern infill developments, such as Paget's Rise. Following on from the linear plan of the village are the narrow, linear plots running back from the street frontages which are reminiscent of medieval burgage plots [17].
- 4.1.5 Although the route of High Street and Bagot Street presents an urban appearance of largely natural and painted brickwork, Abbots Bromley's buildings are set within a fairly green environment with gardens and landscaped yards to the rear of the houses. There are some small gardens and strips to the front, enclosed by railings. The centre of the village is focussed on the attractive and historically significant Butter Cross (marking the site of the medieval butter market), which is located adjacent to the village green and war memorial [18]. There are pockets of mature trees along the Bagot Street/High Street route with general greening of the village from gardens and hedgerows in the lanes. These combine to provide Abbots Bromley with a pleasantly rural village ambience.

### **4.2 The influence of Abbots Bromley's historic urban form on the Conservation Area**

- 4.2.1 The formation and development of Abbots Bromley's urban form has already been largely discussed, but its strong influence on the village's current streetscape and urban form cannot

be over-emphasised. Even a brief glance at the Ordnance Survey plan of the village in 1890 demonstrates just how little its form has changed (the four modern satellite residential developments aside).

- 4.2.2 From looking at the available historic plans of Abbots Bromley, its clear that the early form of the village was centred on the Butter Cross at the present Bagot Street/High Street intersection with the latter running north west and south east respectively. The Butter Cross was, and remains, the core of the village with its medieval origins (the church, Goat's Head and some late medieval cottages are grouped here) and was accompanied by an open square or green (as now), depicted clearly on the 1846 Tithe map for Abbots Bromley [19].
- 4.2.3 The main east-west route through the village (following natural topography of the little valley) was intersected historically by two smaller routes, the lane leading to Colwich to the south west and the lane leading to Burton upon Trent to the east (currently known as Ashbrook Lane). Both of these routes are depicted on Cary's map of 1787 and this road plan has survived to the present day. Cary's 18<sup>th</sup> Century map also shows houses dotted along either side of the road between these two lanes. As the village developed, it expanded out from its central core to the north west and south east, and gradually more tracks leading to hinterland of the village were created and formalised into lanes (e.g. Harley, Schoolhouse, Radmore, Goose and Hall Hill Lanes are all depicted on the 1846 Tithe Map [20]).
- 4.2.4 The modern plan of Abbots Bromley very much reflects its earlier, historic form, supported by the continuity of use of key buildings such as the Almshouses (Abbots Bromley Hospital), Church House, the Goat's Head, Hall Hill and Bank House. These buildings have also acted as positive constraints on large-scale new development in the village, restricting them largely to areas of land behind the street frontages, which were formerly open fields.

### **4.3 Sub-areas within the Conservation Area**

- 4.3.1 It is common in both larger and more complex Conservation Areas to sub-divide them into smaller, sub-areas whose individual character can be readily identified. The Abbots Bromley Conservation Area is considered to be both of small enough size and of one homogenous character not to warrant such a sub-division and therefore can be discussed as a whole rather than in parts. It could be argued that the green areas surrounding the village core and encompassed within the Conservation Area are of sufficiently different character to warrant separate discussion, however in the current review, they are considered to be completely integral with the village, both today and historically.

### **4.4 Local Building Patterns**

- 4.4.1 Local distinctiveness is a much used but useful way in which to describe those attributes and character features that make a place unique and memorable in people's consciousness. One element which is often key when identifying or describing the local distinctiveness of a place is the material used in its construction. If a village or town has been founded over many centuries, then usually the dominant building material is whatever is locally available, such as clay for brick, earth for cob, stone, slate and timber. How these materials are used and in what combination are also part of the local building pattern and add further to the character of a location.

- 4.4.2 Abbots Bromley is distinctive for the mellow, aged appearance of its houses primarily created by the deep orange-red-brown brick and mixed blue and old red clay tiles that many of its buildings are constructed from [21]. The variation in the types of older brick used in the village is relatively limited, many demonstrating a rough texture typical of handmade bricks with visible voids and inclusions representing the addition of organic material and other additives to the clay during making. Many of the houses are constructed in Flemish Bond and Flemish Stretcher Bond with different variations used in the side elevations. The houses constructed within the 20<sup>th</sup> Century development areas, although outside of the Conservation Area, also use brick, but a much deeper red colour and in Stretcher Bond.
- 4.4.3 The size of the bricks varies from relatively small, slim bricks in the earliest houses to sizes slightly larger than those in standard use today. With regard to colour, the deep orange tone that dominates the village is broken occasionally by deep purple/brown over-fired bricks (often used in the classical header position) and a richer red brick [22].
- 4.4.4 Variation in the brick fabric of the village can be attributed to natural variation in the local clays used in their manufacture, which were sourced from the immediate environs of the village. Indeed the 1890 Ordnance Survey map identifies two brick kilns and a brick field on the south side of the village (adjacent to Goose Lane and the Lichfield Road) and various depressions on the north side, which were probably former clay pits.
- 4.4.5 Brick decorative detailing is found throughout the Conservation Area and beyond in the form of eaves dentillation and corncicing and occasional gable dentillation [23]. Brick is also used extensively on the chimney stacks of the houses (as to be expected) and occasionally is formed into plain panels and bands, the latter contributing a practical function by protecting the vulnerable stack/roof joint [24]. Chimney stacks are also constructed in an attractive paired arrangement with chamfered corners and joined heads. Other, noticeable use of brick is found in the many surviving boundary walls which run along a number of the lanes leading off from the main street. In places these have been replaced with modern walls, but some, for example along Church Lane, still retain their distinctively old, weathered boundary walls [25]. These are capped in some locations with hogsback brick copings, others with semi-rounded copings.
- 4.4.6 Clay is also used for the dominant roofing material in the Conservation Area in the form of plain tiles [26]. Very occasionally more decorative tiles are used such as fishscale-shaped tiles and coloured tiles but these are not commonly found. The majority of the roofs are crowned with distinctive, ridged overlapping ridge tiles that contribute strongly to the local building style. Within the roofs, chimneys are commonly placed at the gable ends or axially along the ridge and occasionally have gable end, projecting full height stacks. Other roofing materials found in the Conservation Area include blue-grey slates, but these are used sparingly.
- 4.4.7 Other building materials used within the Conservation Area include timber, used in the few outwardly timber-framed buildings (Church House and the Goat's Head), but also likely to be used in many of the buildings later clad in brick in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. In the two surviving examples, the timber has been used very attractively both structurally and decoratively [27], Church House demonstrating a very good use of quality joinery and carved decoration on its Bagot Street frontage. Elsewhere timber is seen projecting from roof gables in the form of purlins and used in door and window cases.

- 4.4.8 Attractive historic (and quality replacement glass) is found many of the older buildings within the Conservation area and contributes a particular value, if subtle to its overall character quality. Very little stone is used in the buildings and where it occurs, only in small amounts (e.g. as plinths and steps). Lead is found on many of the Georgian and later door cases and window casings as leaded hoods and canopies, for weather protection of the timber structure beneath.
- 4.4.9 Finally, ironwork is noticeable by its presence and quality, being used mainly for frontage railings in many decorative forms [28]. Many villages and towns elsewhere have lost their front railings over time (e.g. often sacrificed during times of war or as valuable material), but Abbots Bromley has an attractive and distinctive range of railing designs scattered amongst the houses along the main streets.
- 4.4.10 Many of the buildings within the village are houses, some with shops or full height bay windows on the ground floor and the majority two storeys in height. Plans vary but detached and semi-detached cottages intermingle with short rows of terraced cottages, lining the street frontage and side lanes. There are a number of handsome, detached villas and Georgian houses along Bagot Street, which hark back to a time when the village of Abbots Bromley was more a prosperous town and minor gentry and wealthy yeoman could afford grander, more distinguished residences [29].
- 4.4.11 A distinctive feature that contributes to the local building pattern of the Conservation Area is the presence of brick outbuildings to the rear of the buildings fronting the street and at ninety degrees to it. Quite a number of these small buildings have survived, most dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, and are currently used as garages, stores or workshops [30]. Originally they would have had craft and industrial uses as well as store and possibly agricultural purposes (a number retain their gable-end openings for doves and other birds).
- 4.4.12 It is important to note that there are hints of some non-local traditions appearing in the building record in the village with a slight European/polite influence evident in a few of houses along the east end of the High Street; this appears in the form of projecting, coped gable ends with raised corbels, brick dentillation and again hints of a former grandeur now lost.
- 4.4.13 Dormers are scattered in clusters, but are not a common feature of the village. Where they exist, they are steeply pitched and usually intersect the eaves.

## **4.5 Summary of Distinctive Features**

- 4.5.1 The general features that provide Abbots Bromley with its locally distinctive character can be summarised as follows:
- i. The use of locally manufactured brick and tile, which have provided the primary building materials for the village since the medieval period, and which give Abbots Bromley its distinctive warm colours and texture [31].
  - ii. The comfortable, local scale of building in the village in combination with its simple street pattern and historic open core.
  - iii. The historic and enduring plan of the village with its distinctive edges and markers (e.g. the church, Goose Lane and the Girls School).

- iv. The rural setting of the village in an undulating landscape of fields and woodlands, with distant and attractive views across the village from the northern ridge to the south.
- v. The wide, open centre of the village with its distinctive planting and railings fronting the historic High Street/Bagot Street properties.

## 5 THE RELEVANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

### 5.1 Coherence and Appropriateness of the Conservation Area and its Boundaries

- 5.1.1 The extent of the Abbots Bromley Conservation Area originally designated in 1969 encompassed the entire historic core of the village (centred along Bagot Street, Market Place and High Street). The 1997 review extended the Conservation Area slightly further to the north, south and east following '*identifiable features such as hedges and property boundaries*', and included substantial areas of hinterland (comprising open meadow, gardens and playing fields).
- 5.1.2 The current review of the Conservation Area has examined both the contents of the Conservation area and its boundaries and reached the conclusion that they are as identifiable, relevant and appropriate as when they were designated in 1997. There would appear to have been few, if any, substantial changes within the designated area (as would be hoped) since 1997 with the exception of minor changes permitted within the scope of designation. Indeed the 1997 Review recommended the gradual removal of previously intrusive features such as overhead wires and other features which may detract from the character of the area. What is evident from walking within the Conservation Area is the lack of overly intrusive road signage, street furniture and other clutter usually found in villages and towns elsewhere in Britain. Abbots Bromley, through careful management and enforcement of its development rights and removal of unauthorised features, has succeeded in avoiding the often unsightly street clutter and commercial pressures, which are known to mar other Conservation Areas of similar quality.
- 5.1.3 The key historic built elements of the village are included within the Conservation Area (for example, St Nicholas' Church, the Almshouses, Church House, The Goats' Head, the Buttercross, and the majority of the listed street frontages). More modest, but still important vernacular properties are also included such as the short rows of cottages along the High Street, Hall Hill Lane, Church Lane and the Bagot Street end of Goose Lane [32]. Key areas of planting and 'greening' are also include, some by default as forming part of a residential scheme and some deliberately enclosed to provide a 'breathing space' for the harder landscaping of the built environment [33]. Of almost similar importance to those properties included within the Conservation Area are those which are excluded, such as the four clusters of late 20<sup>th</sup> Century residential development at Mires Brook Lane, Paget Rise, Swan Lane and Needwood Grange. Excluding development which makes no contribution or a negative one to the character of an area is as important as including those that make a positive contribution and the Abbots Bromley Conservation Area, on reflection achieves this balance.
- 5.1.4 The creation of 'buffer zones' within the Conservation Area has allowed a degree of protection against intrusive development for the village giving it room 'to breathe' and maintaining the rural 'green' zone which is so important to the essential character of the village [34]. In particular, the western end of the Conservation Area includes a strip of open, rough grassland bordered by a planted tree screen of mainly mature fir which forms a natural boundary to the end of the village and contributes to its pleasantly enclosed and friendly ambience. Also of note are the open grassland areas to the south of St Nicholas' Church and Abbots Bromley Girls School, and the hinterland areas to the rear (north side) of the High Street. These open areas help to emphasise the sense of cohesiveness engendered by the density of the

buildings packed along the street whilst providing important views in (and out of) the village centre.

- 5.1.5 The appropriateness of the boundaries of the Conservation Area have already been touched upon in terms of what they include and exclude; however, a brief comment of their route is required. As noted in the 1997 Review, the boundaries largely follow pre-existing field and property boundaries although in some instances (e.g. the southern boundary between Hall Hill Lane and Goose Lane) it deviates slightly to cross land in order to exclude/include specific features. The route of the boundary line on the whole makes sense in light of the comments made in the previous paragraphs, excluding the vast majority of modern buildings and development and hugging the property boundaries of the village to include nearly all of the historically significant buildings, whether listed or not.
- 5.1.6 A final comment is required on the effectiveness of planning controls to date, on new and replacement windows in Abbots Bromley. On the whole there has been a good level of survival of historic timber windows in the village on its historic buildings. Windows, more than most other elements on the façade of a building, have the greatest visual impact and inappropriate replacement or poor detailing can detract from the character and appearance of a Conservation Area significantly [35]. To ensure continued and greater protection of this quality, it is recommended that an Article 4 (2) direction be considered for adoption. This would restrict permitted development rights, particularly on the frontages of properties, and would exclude the inappropriate materials such as uPVC. Other benefits would include requiring planning permission for painting the façade of buildings, for example. Such measures will help to preserve an important aspect of the individual and collective character of buildings within the Conservation Area.

## 6 EVALUATION OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

### 6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The Abbots Bromley Conservation Area has a very homogenous character, which unlike Conservation Areas elsewhere, cannot be sensibly sub-divided into individual character sub-zones for detailed analysis. Therefore the whole of the Conservation Area has been treated as one entity and discussed as such.

### 6.2 Character

6.2.1 Abbots Bromley Conservation Area is characterised by a number of features, some of which have been discussed previously, and which include the linear, softly-curving plan of its roads, the vernacular construction of its older buildings and the attractive frontages lining the main through road of Bagot Street/High Street. The combination of the tightly clustered houses lining the road frontage with their locally manufactured building fabric of brick and clay tile (hence their homogeneity) and the predominantly two-story scale of the houses, lends the village its distinctive and attractive vernacular character. In particular the warm surroundings generated by the deep orange-red-brown colouring of the brick and tile throughout the Conservation Area lends the village a welcoming and agreeable appearance.

6.2.2 The plan of the village, although not necessarily immediately obvious to the eye, demonstrates an historical continuity of use stretching back to the medieval period. This is supported by the numerous long, linear land plots (and drives), which lead off from primarily the building plots on the north side of the main street [36]. The late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Ordnance Survey plan clearly illustrates these narrow, linear plots before the four modern developments were constructed, and the plots appear to represent classic medieval burgage plots. This type of historic land division reflects the medieval pattern of land holding in the village with buildings (residential and commercial/industrial) fronting the main through streets and their associated gardens (used for industrial, allotment and pleasure purposes) leading off behind [37]. The narrowness of the plots reflects the high value of street frontages, which limited the amount of land used for the buildings themselves. The survival of numerous small brick out-houses and sheds, sited gable-end on to the street frontage behind the main houses further supports this proposal and also add to the distinctive character of the village Conservation Area.

6.2.3 Interspersed with the buildings is important and valuable green planting, which includes neat garden frontages and mature trees including some conifers and yews. Market Place has an open grassed area with a single American red oak tree in its centre and the whole area has a pleasant mix of large fir, cedar and other tree species. In combination with the climbing plants (e.g. Virginia creeper and wisteria) that proliferate on the houses in this area, the centre of Market Place takes on a leafy and informal ambience for part of the year [38]. Other areas of important planting include St Nicholas's church yard which contains amongst other species, yew, fir, holly, silver birch and oak and provides an important green buffer to the south-central portion of the village.

6.2.4 Intermingled with the green character of the Conservation Area are the small backlanes, many of which have historically and ecologically important hedges lining their route. Good examples of these features include Narrow Lane, a footpath leading from the church yard south west to Goose Lane, Hall Hill Lane, Harley Lane and Schoolhouse Lane [39].

- 6.2.5 Small but significant details such as original 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century iron railings to the front of many of the houses along Bagot Street/High Street, original door canopies and window treatments and the naming of houses rather than just their street number all contribute strongly to the overall character of Abbots Bromley adding to the village's local distinctiveness.
- 6.2.6 Significant historic features that contribute to the character of the village range from the medieval timber and clay tile Butter Cross in Market Place, the tall tower of St Nicholas' Church, which can be seen for some distance from the southern approaches to the village, to the timber-framed Goats Head and Church House, which are more visible reminders of Abbots Bromley's medieval and Tudor past [40].
- 6.2.7 Other elements that contribute to Abbots Bromley's character include less visible ones such as the customs and traditions that have been associated with the village for hundreds of years. The famous annual horn dance, whose horns are stored in St Nicholas's Church, is as much part of the character of the village as its physical fabric and in September each year the village comes alive with an influx of visitors and local people alike. In a different direction, remnants of the village's more commercial past can still be observed, for example in the fading brewery company sign painted onto the front of Blacks Head House (No. 22 Bagot Street [41]) and the blocked up cart entrances built into the cottages at the west end of the Conservation Area in Bagot Street (e.g. Laurel Cottage in Bagot Street).
- 6.2.8 The rural element is a major component of the village's character both in terms of its setting and history. Despite the growth of small industry and commercial activity in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries, Abbots Bromley has always remained a resolutely agricultural-based village, influencing both its economic growth and social structure. Indeed it is only in the last few decades that the village has taken on its more residential character, commuting becoming the mainstay for the village's inhabitants. The juxtaposition of the boundaries of the Conservation Area to open fields and pasture is evident and in places (for example, to the south of the church/Market Place and to the south of the High Street, the division between the built environment and rural environment is very narrow.

### **6.3 Listed Buildings**

- 6.3.1 There are 50 entries on the Staffordshire County Council Historic Environment Record for Listed Buildings within the Abbots Bromley Conservation Area although quite a number of these entries include two or more individual buildings [Map 2]. The majority of the entries are listed as Grade II (47) and three are II\* (the Butter Cross, Church of St Nicholas and Church House). There are none of Grade I status. The Butter Cross is also a Scheduled Monument (designation no. 21602).
- 6.3.2 As would be expected, virtually all of the listed buildings lying within Abbots Bromley are included within the Conservation Area boundary and within this, the majority are clustered along both sides of the main through-street (Bagot Street/Market Place/High Street). These embody both the historic core of the village and its social development as quite a number of the listed buildings represented are the larger and grander former residences of wealthy landowners and merchants who lived in the village during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. For example, Churchfields House, Croft's House (both mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century) and Georgian House and Norman Villa (late 18<sup>th</sup> - early 19<sup>th</sup> Century) all offer good examples of this type of development [42].

- 6.3.3 Other, less grandiose houses also represent elements of Abbots Bromley's social structure. The many smaller, 'middle' class houses such as Batkin House and Rose Cottage on the north side of the Uttoxeter Road, St Helens on the south side of Bagot Street, Rose Cottage and The Cross on the south side of Market Place are survivor's of the village's more prosperous era in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> Century when good quality houses of pleasant proportions could be afforded by the more well-to-do villagers [43].
- 6.3.4 At the lower end of the social and economic scale, the numerous short rows of terraced cottages and small shop premises that are scattered along the main thoroughfare, provide evidence of the humbler dwellings of the earlier villagers. Wheelwright House (currently Wilson's family butcher) and No.s 5-8 High Street are good examples of workers cottages [44]. Wheelwright House also provides a good example of a timber frame constructed house which has received a brick frontage during its lifetime (probably in the 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> Century). It is suspected that there are numerous instances of this throughout the village and indeed, No.s 5-8 High Street also have internal timber framing. This gentrification of humbler dwellings in Abbots Bromley reflects a national trend that gathered pace in the late 16<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries in England.

## 6.4 Other Positive Elements

- 6.4.1 The setting of the village has already been largely addressed but it is crucial to emphasise the importance of this element when evaluating the Conservation Area. The slightly elevated position of the village, lying along the south side of the east-west ridgeline, means that long-reaching and quality views of the surrounding countryside can be seen from numerous positions around the village. In turn, the softly undulating landscape surrounding the village provides a sense of enclosure and cohesiveness to the urban fabric of the village.
- 6.4.2 Intertwined with the setting of the village are the key vistas and views that are created by the differing approaches to the village. These are a highly positive element of the Conservation Area and as such, are unique to Abbots Bromley. The most important vistas/views are considered as follows [45].

### Short vistas (looking into/out of the village):

- From Uttoxeter Road up Harley Lane,
- North end of Goose Lane into Uttoxeter Road (vista closed by The Beeches)
- North and south along Church Lane (northern vista closed by Churchfields House)
- North end of Hall Hill Lane (vista closed southwards by rise in slope to Manor Farm House and northwards by Saxon Cottage)
- Looking west along the south side of Market Place toward the Church of St Nicholas.

Most of the short vistas are closed either by curves in the roadway, the bend cutting off the longer vista or by intersecting with other roads.

### Long vistas (looking into/out of the village):

- From the church yard south-westwards (beautiful views of the sloping fields)

- From the north side of the village from midway up Schoolhouse Lane looking south towards Rugeley (stunning view across the roofscape of the village towards the countryside beyond). An equally significant view is obtained in the opposite direction (north) looking towards Marchington Woods.
- East and westwards from the edge of the village from the Uttoxeter Road and Lichfield Road (the latter gives stunning view of countryside to the south east of Abbots Bromley from Bank House onwards [46])
- The view into the Conservation Area along the Lichfield Road creates a very attractive view and captures the leafy character of the village very well (Coach and Horses Pub framed by mature trees)
- Ashbrook Lane provides a similar glimpse of the countryside beyond the east of the village
- The important view westwards along High Street from its midpoint, with the Church of St Nicholas closing the vista and trees on either side [47]

6.4.3 There are probably many more views that could be commented upon but these key vistas make the most positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

## 6.5 Particular Negative Contributions

- 6.5.1 The very positive nature of the Abbots Bromley Conservation Area has been commented upon above, but within the overall positive scheme of things there are several smaller issues which undoubtedly contribute negatively to the Conservation Area.
- 6.5.2 Walking along the main road through the centre of the village and the Conservation Area, a steady stream of vehicular traffic is noticeable, which consists frequently, amongst other things, of heavier vehicles such as large lorries, tractors and bulk transport lorries [48]. Previous attempts to slow the speed of traffic through the Conservation Area are evident in the traffic calming measures (chicanes) sited at each end of the village. Despite these efforts the speed and noise of the traffic are an intrusion into the generally calm atmosphere of the village. An additional effect of such a traffic flow is the impact on sensitive building fabric caused by vibration from the close proximity of large moving vehicles which is known to have detrimental results.
- 6.5.3 The modern housing developments discussed previously could be considered to have a slightly negative impact upon the Conservation Area despite their being outside of its boundaries; however, their scale and materials and slight attention to local detail, has resulted in their integration into the existing, historic fabric of the village. The area of older housing along Lintake Drive [49] has a rather mediocre appearance when compared to other development in the village and detracts from the higher quality housing along the Uttoxeter Road.
- 6.5.4 Unsympathetic street lighting has recently been installed by Staffordshire County Council; the tall light columns bisect the space around Market Square and Butter Cross destroying its character.

## **6.6 Vulnerability and Threats**

- 6.6.1 The Abbots Bromley Conservation Area has achieved a fine balance between conserving and enhancing the existing stock of mainly historic older buildings with the necessary residential housing needs of a popular commuter village. Any changes in this balance, such as those resulting from further new residential or commercial development, are likely to tip the scales out of favour with the qualities of the Conservation Area. Certainly any large-scale development on either side of the village, would threaten the important open views which are so part of the character of the village and would begin to encroach upon the important and historically open green spaces which lay behind the street frontages. At present, the Conservation Area maintains these open spaces, but any change to its boundaries or relaxing of development rights would place them in jeopardy from development.
- 6.6.2 One example of this vulnerability is the large field to the south of the western campus of the Girls School that runs along behind the council houses, parallel with the Lichfield Road. If the council houses were to be demolished or sold for redevelopment then this would provide a potential opportunity for a developer to extend the scope of any redevelopment in this location to the field behind (obviously subject to planning permissions, ownership, etc). This field falls outside of the Conservation Area boundary at present, which would leave the village vulnerable to further, larger-scale development, if it were proposed.
- 6.6.3 The impacts of the current traffic flows through the village have been noted, but if these were to increase considerably further then the sensitive fabric of many of the older buildings which lie close to the main road could be subject to vibration stresses and long-term damage. However, the absence of street clutter and in particular the proliferation of traffic calming measures and warning signs seen in other historic villages (there is only one speed hump in the village adjacent to the Girls Schools), is desirable to maintain so any future traffic calming or control schemes would need to be very carefully considered so as not to impact upon the existing fine balance.
- 6.6.4 Finally, proposals have been put forward for the development of a windfarm to the north west of the village (in the direction of Bagot's Park). This would comprise approximately five 115 metre high wind turbines and is likely to be visible from properties on the upper north side of the village who have views of the countryside to the north. It would, however, seem unlikely to pose any major threat to the setting of the Conservation Area.

## **6.7 Opportunities for Enhancement and Development**

- 6.7.1 The 1997 Review of the Abbots Bromley Conservation Area set out a number of proposals and recommendations for enhancement that encapsulated alterations to the boundaries to include green buffer zones at the ends of the village, grant assistance towards sympathetic repair to traditional the buildings, additional landscaping to screen unsightly features and the gradual removal of detracting features within the Conservation Area.
- 6.7.2 In the current Conservation Area Appraisal it is considered that these measures should continue to be encouraged, as on present evidence they are working well.
- 6.7.3 A Village Design Statement has been produced for Abbots Bromley by the village itself and this document makes a very valuable contribution to the future of Abbots Bromley and its Conservation Area. The statement endorses many of the concepts and proposals put forward

by the 1997 Conservation Area review document and looks to encourage both villagers and potential developers to be sympathetic to the village's character in any future planning changes they might make.

## **6.8 Essential Development Principles to Protect Character**

6.8.1 No new development principles are proposed in this appraisal of the Abbots Bromley Conservation Area, simply continued support and encouragement for the existing Conservation Area designation and its continued rigorous enforcement. Further encouragement and advice could be provided to developers proposing to build within the village to ensure that new designs are sympathetic not only with the vernacular materials already in use, but also to the scale, massing and heights of new buildings. The incorporation of small but important local detail should also be strongly encouraged as it is little details such as these which help protect and enhance the character of an area as distinctive as Abbots Bromley.

# 7 SYNTHESIS FOR THE CONSERVATION AREA

## 7.1 Wider Vulnerability and Threats

- 7.1.1 Specific threats to the Conservation Area have been dealt with in the preceding sections. It remains to draw together the key elements discussed above and to address a number of issues relating to the wider vulnerability of the Conservation Area as a whole. This will then set the context against which recommendations arising from the review can be discussed.
- 7.1.2 New residential development and the creeping changes produced by gradual replacement of historic features with new, often unsympathetic, materials as they wear out are probably the greatest threats to the character of the Conservation Area. The commuter-led demands on the village for additional housing and road access to the nearby urban and commercial centres of Uttoxeter, Burton upon Trent and Rugeley, have already had an impact upon the Conservation Area through the construction of new residential development and increased traffic flows through the village. In the future, pressures will only increase threatening the historic character of the village by the gradual infilling of significant areas of open space and blocking historic views, and altering the historic plan-form of the village from a fairly narrow, linear one to a larger sub-urban mass.
- 7.1.3 The Conservation Area is most vulnerable to these threats if the currently well-enforced Conservation Area planning designation is relaxed to allow a greater level of new development within the Conservation Area. Similarly the active efforts of the Borough Council to encourage and enforce property owners to maintain their buildings and clear the village of unnecessary street clutter have been successful so far and any relaxation in these efforts are likely to prove detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area.
- 7.1.4 From a wider perspective it is difficult to see how Abbots Bromley will be affected by any future changes in the surrounding countryside, which is currently based on a mixed-farming arrangement. The numerous small farm holdings scattered about the countryside around the village are maintaining the agricultural setting of the village despite the predominantly non-agricultural economy of the village itself. Abbots Bromley is currently a desirable place to live and it is perhaps the demands associated with this popularity that will create the greatest pressure on the Conservation Area.

## 7.2 Changes in the Conservation Area Since Designation

- 7.2.1 Understanding how and why designation has affected the Conservation Area is important. This helps to pull together the lessons of this appraisal and enables consideration of changes that need to be made in strategic planning, where this is appropriate. The 1997 Review of the Abbots Bromley Conservation Area identified a number of issues that required addressing and which have already been discussed:

- *'the need to protect the setting and linear character of the village'*,
- proposals for *'the sympathetic repair of traditional buildings'*,
- additional support for the removal or screening of unsightly features *'which detract from the character of the Conservation Area'*.

- 7.2.2 These proposals imply that by 1997 there were pressures building up on the Conservation Area, that needed to be addressed.
- 7.2.3 Very little new development has taken place within the village as a whole since 1997 with the exception of the completion of the Paget Rise development (Longlands Place) and minor alterations to the Girls School grounds on the west side of Radmore Lane [50]. From the site visits and walkovers undertaken as part of the current appraisal, the positive effects of the measures proposed in 1997 were observable and traffic aside, imply the successful implementation of the Conservation Area planning policies.

## **8 RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT AND ACTION**

### **8.1 The Conservation Area and its Boundaries**

- 8.1.1 This review of the Abbots Bromley Conservation Area has looked closely at the whole area and duly assessed its character and content. The boundaries, which were revised in 1997, take in the historic core of the village, the main areas of historic burgage plots on either side of the main road, portions of all the historic side lanes leading off the main road and significant areas of open fields and grasslands.
- 8.1.2 After appraising the Conservation Area in detail, it has been concluded that no further alterations to the existing Conservation Area boundaries are required at this time. However, consideration should be given to the long-term planning strategy for Abbots Bromley in terms of future development scheme proposals and their desirability for the village. The current East Staffordshire Local Plan addresses this issue to some degree, as does the Abbots Bromley Village Design Statement, but further consideration is desirable in terms of specific areas around the village which have the potential to be targeted by new development. The field to the rear of the council houses in Lichfield Road has already been identified as one such potential target.

### **8.2 Restrictions on Permitted Development Rights**

- 8.2.1 East Staffordshire Borough Council is concerned about those changes to properties (including material changes of appearance) that will not only affect the individual property, but will also affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Policies BE6-9 and BE12 and BE13 in the current Local Plan deals with this issue. Neutral and negative elements in the Conservation Area character appraisal are highlighted, as are opportunities for enhancement. Proposals that are considered likely to have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area will be rejected.
- 8.2.2 The Council will consider the implementation of Article 4 directions (under the Town & Country Planning General Development Order (1995) or as updated) and will refer to Part 2 subsection C regarding 'material changes of appearance'. Where relevant, the Council will also consider controls under regulation 6 of the Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations (1992 or as updated).

### **8.3 Statutory and Local Listing**

- 8.3.1 It is customary in undertaking a Conservation Area Appraisal to make recommendations for the addition of buildings or structures to either the statutory or locally compiled list of buildings of '*special architectural or historic interest*' as defined under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. All of the existing listed buildings within the Conservation Area were assessed during the field work phase of the Appraisal along with most of the non-listed buildings. It was concluded that within the Conservation Area, the existing designations (whether individual listings or inclusion within the Conservation Area) were appropriate to the buildings and structures of Abbots Bromley and no changes are therefore proposed.

8.3.2 One recommendation is proposed: the inclusion of The Cottage, located on the north side of the Uttoxeter Road just beyond the western edge of the village, on the local list of buildings of special architectural and/or historic interest. This has been recommended due to its interesting plan form and design and potential to be of quite early date.

## **8.4 Management Strategy Recommendations**

8.4.1 In essence suitable management strategies have already been discussed within the main section of the document as part of the evaluation process, but are now outlined here for simplicity.

- Rigorous implementation of the existing Conservation Area designation in terms of its planning controls and adoption of policies which limit or restrict damaging impact of certain Permitted Development rights.
- Careful consideration to be given to future development proposals (of all scales) to prevent ill-considered and intrusive construction both within and outside the Conservation Area.
- Automatic reference to the Design Principles laid out in the 1997 Conservation Area Document produced by East Staffordshire Borough Council, when any development within or adjacent to the Conservation Area is proposed.

## **9 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 9.1.1 The summary is issued as a separate document and is available from the Borough Council. It is entitled Abbots Bromley Conservation Area Character Statement (1st edition 2006).

## 10 REFERENCES AND SOURCES

### Of immediate interest:

Hibbert, F.A., 1910. *The Dissolution of the Monasteries*. London: Isaac Pitman and Sons.

Kirk, K. E., 1952. *The Story of the Woodard Schools*. Abingdon: Abbey Press.

Laddell, A.R., 1965. *Abbots Bromley*. Shrewsbury: Wilding and Son Ltd.

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Rice, M.A, 1931. *Abbots Bromley*. Shrewsbury: Wilding and Son Ltd.

Shipman, E.R., 2000. *A History of Abbots Bromley*. Private Circulation.

English Heritage, 1997. *Conservation Area Appraisals*. London: English Heritage Publications.

English Historic Towns Forum, 1998. *Report No 38 : Conservation Area Management*. London: English Heritage (ISBN : 1 898261 43 1)

*Kelly's Directory of Staffordshire*, (1851 to 1940)

*White's Directory of Staffordshire* (1835 and 1851)

Pevsner, N., 2000. *Staffordshire (The Buildings of England)*. London: Penguin Books.

### Websites:

[www.staffordshire.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk)

[www.search.staffspastrack.org.uk](http://www.search.staffspastrack.org.uk)

### Previous appraisals:

Staffordshire County Council (1969) '*Abbots Bromley Conservation Area*', and  
Borough of East Staffordshire (1997) '*Abbots Bromley Conservation Area Document*'.

### General and for more research, archaeological and design use:

## CONTACTS & SOURCES OF INFORMATION

For information regarding policies, development and regeneration within the East Staffordshire Borough, contact [East Staffordshire Borough Council](#) and go through to: Policy Team & Local Plans, Development Control – Planning Section, and/or Building Control section, and Regeneration section, respectively.

**East Staffordshire Borough Council - general enquiries 01283 508000**

**The East Staffordshire Borough Council website is**  
**[www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk](http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk)**

(this has a directory of contacts and much other information)

The postal address for Planning, Conservation and Listed Buildings information and advice is:

Development Control – Planning Control, East Staffordshire Borough Council, The Town Hall, Burton Upon Trent, Staffs DE14 2EB

ENGLISH HERITAGE the official advisory body on Monuments, Historic Area and Listed Buildings is based at 23 Savile Row, London, W1X 1AB

Customer Services telephone 0207 973 3434

The West Midlands office is at 112 Colmore Row, BIRMINGHAM, B3 3AG  
Fax 0121 625 6821 telephone 0121 625 6820

The DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE MEDIA AND SPORT (DCMS) which issues guidance and legislation jointly with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in regard to issues affecting the Historic Environment, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings is at 2-4 Cockspur Street, London, SW1Y 5DH

### **Other useful information and addresses can be obtained from:**

Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation [www.ihbc.org.uk](http://www.ihbc.org.uk)

The Building Conservation Directory [www.buildingconservation.com](http://www.buildingconservation.com)

The various local Civic Societies, Civic Trusts, The Staffordshire Historical and Archaeological Society and the small group of 'Village Design Statement' working groups are mines of information and are very willing to assist, with specific researches on the historic environment, planning issues etc. There are historic and archaeological societies and in addition the East Staffordshire Heritage Trust Company is committed to working on projects reviving buildings in the Borough.

Enquiries can also usefully be made of: Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, The Georgian Group, The Victorian Society, The Twentieth Century Society, CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, and Royal Town Planning Institute. These can be found via directory enquiries or by using a 'search engine'.

### **Further reading, references and sources of information**

Borough of East Staffordshire (1993) *'Countryside Design Summary'* Burton upon Trent. ESBC

Borough of East Staffordshire (2008) *'Design Guide'*

British Standard BS 7913: 1998 *'Guide to The Principles of the Conservation of Historic Buildings'*. London. BSI

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- Cunnington, P. (Henry, Alison. Ed.) (2002) *'Caring For Old Houses'*. Yeovil. Marston House. (Note: this is an excellent book giving details of materials of construction, principles of repair, conservation and restoration, and containing an extensive bibliography and sources of information for funding, grant assistance and other help)
- Department of Culture Media and Sport (previously joint author as Department of National Heritage with Department of the Environment) (1994) *'Planning Policy Guidance Note No 15: Planning & The Historic Environment'*. London, HMSO
- English Heritage (1995) *'Conservation Area Practice: English Heritage Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas'*. London. English Heritage
- English Heritage (1997) *'Conservation Area Appraisals: Defining the Special Architectural or Historic Interest of Conservation Areas'*. London. English Heritage
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- English Heritage / Macdonald.S ed. (1996) *'Modern Matters: Principles & Practice in Conserving Recent Architecture'*. Shaftesbury. Donhead
- Harris, R. (1978) *'Discovering Timber Framed Buildings'*. Shire Publications
- Johnson, A. (1980) *'How to Restore and Improve Your Victorian House'* Tavistock. David & Charles
- Lander, H. (1989) *'The House Restorers Guide'* Tavistock. David & Charles
- Larkham, P.J (1993) *'Conservation in Action: Evaluating Policy and Practice in the United Kingdom'* in Town Planning Review, Vol 64, No 4, pp 351-357
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- Pevsner, N. (1974) *'The Buildings of England Number 46: Staffordshire'*. Harmondsworth. Penguin Books Ltd
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Summerson, J. (1980) 'The Classical Language of Architecture'. London. Thames & Hudson

Warren, J, Worthington, J, and Taylor, S. (1998) 'Context: New Buildings in Historic Settings'. London, Architectural Press

Watkin, D. (1990) 'English Architecture'. London. Thames & Hudson

Worskett, R. (1969) 'The Character of Towns: An Approach to Conservation'. London. Architectural Press

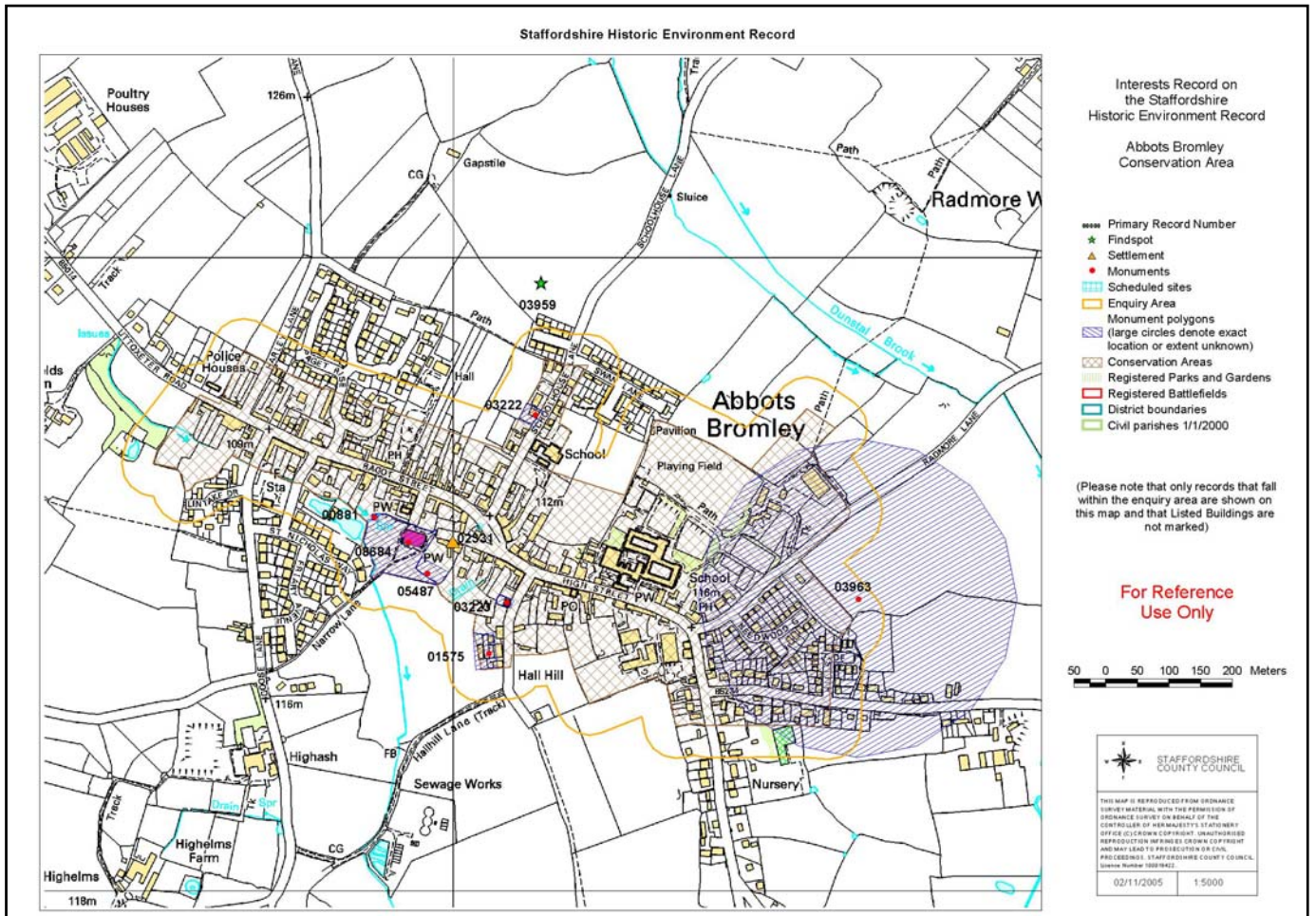
# APPENDIX 1

## Summaries Of Archaeological Reports And Listed Buildings Staffordshire County Council: Historic Environment Record

Summary Report 2/11/2005

HER No	Grid ref	Name	Description
00881	SK07872458	Church Well	The site of a natural spring used as a source of water, which is recorded on the first edition Ordnance Survey map as a 'Church Well'. The natural spring flowed into a dug-out channel, and had a trough to catch water. It had been in use in living memory, although it was in-filled sometime before 1956, as it was deemed to be unsafe.
01575	SK08052437	Manor House	A former manor house or hall, which is thought to be built on the site of an earlier, medieval house.
02331	SK07902476	Abbots Bromley (Settlement)	The manor of Abbots Bromley was granted c.1004 by Wulfric to Burton Abbey, and listed in the Domesday Book under the Abbey's holdings. In 1222 Abbots Bromley was granted a charter by Abbot Richard de Lisle, who gave the burgesses the same liberties as those in Lichfield. No archaeological remains relating to the medieval or post-medieval settlement of Abbots Bromley were revealed during a watching brief to the north of High Street at Latham House. However it is suggested that archaeological remains may survive elsewhere along High Street due to its central location within the village.
03222	SK08122474	Broughton Cottage, Schoolhouse Lane	A domestic dwelling of brick construction (in Flemish Bond), with a partly timber-framed interior. The house is of 17th century and later date.
03223	SK08082445	Congregational Chapel, Hall Hill Lane	A 19th century former congregational chapel and associated cemetery. The chapel is now in use as a house.
03959	SK08132496	Finds	A number of finds including coins of Edward I and Henry II, spindle whorls, fragments of bronze cooking vessels, a 14th century key, 15th century sword chape, a 16th century thimble and 2 pieces of lead.
03963	SK08632446	House Platform, Ashbrook Lane	A low earthwork platform to the north of Ashbrook Lane, identified as a possible house platform of unknown date.
05487	SK07962450	Garden Wall and Finds, Near St Nicholas' Churchyard	An archaeological evaluation revealed no burials or evidence of settlement activity in an area to the east of the cemetery. Finds of mainly 17th to 19th century date were recovered during the excavations, along with fragments of medieval and post-medieval roof tile.
08684	SK07912453	Church of St Nicholas	A listed parish church dated to circa 1300, with 14th and 15th century additions, but

HER No	Grid ref	Name	Description
			with possible earlier origins. The tower of the church was rebuilt in circa 1700. The church is surrounded by a churchyard, which may have once extended to the east (although recent excavations here revealed no burials in this area).



Staffordshire Historic Environment Record for Abbots Bromley Conservation Area 02.11.05

## APPENDIX 2 - Recommendations for Statutory Listing

- APP 2.1 The Local List will be reviewed along with those buildings specifically identified in the text with a view to making recommendations to the Department of Culture Media & Sport via English Heritage, to list the relevant structures.
- APP 2.2 This appraisal has found that no recommendations are required for buildings to be added to the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.
- APP 2.3 This appraisal recommends that the following buildings are included on the local list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest:

The Cottage, Uttoxeter Road

## **APPENDIX 3 - TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS & PROTECTED LANDSCAPE**

- App 3.1 Generally, under part 8 of the Town & Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 anyone intending to carry out, in a Conservation Area, works to a tree (such as lopping, topping, or felling) is required to give the Authority 6 weeks notice in writing – a section 211 Notice.
- App 3.2 Local Plan policies NE13 and NE14 outline measures to conserve existing trees and hedges, and to require detailed landscaping proposals prior to allowing development. These policies will be especially important to Conservation Areas.

# APPENDIX 4 - DEMOLITIONS & CONSERVATION AREA CONSENTS

- APP 4.1.1 The rule here is “if in doubt, ASK !”
- App 4.1.2 This is because the interpretation of the laws governing demolition in a Conservation Area have been the subject of several cases, and required the clarification of circular DETR / DCMS 2000 / 01, amongst other notices.
- App 4.1.3 In simple terms Conservation Area consent is required for the demolition of most unlisted buildings within a Conservation Area. Listed Buildings’ demolitions or partial demolitions – including structural features, internal demolitions and demolitions of listed curtilage structures are dealt with separately, by Listed Building applications.
- APP 4.1.4 Conservation Area consent is not usually required for the demolition of non listed buildings of less than 115 cubic metres volume, walls of less than 2 metres in height (or 1 metre when it abuts a highway), or agricultural buildings erected after 1st Janua
- APP 4.1.5 When considering such applications the Local Authority must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Account needs to be taken of the contribution made by a building to the architectural and historic importance of the area and of the wider effects of the demolition on the building’s surroundings and the area as a whole. The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to an area.
- APP 4.1.6 If demolition is acceptable in principle, the Local Authority still requires to consider what is proposed for the site following demolition. If there are no acceptable redevelopment plans, then consent will not normally be given. It is worth remembering that work which has an effect on the appearance of a building particularly in a Conservation Area (e.g. the removal of chimneys) may need planning permission. And, where development rights have been restricted (‘Article 4 directions’ for example) or withdrawn then changes to the appearance of the building will usually require Planning Permission

# APPENDIX 5 - LOCAL PLAN POLICIES SUPPORTING SENSITIVE DESIGN AND THE CONSERVATION OF CHARACTER

APP 5.1 A core strategy in the Local Plan, CSP3 deals with the principles of appropriate (urban) design. These principles apply just as readily to new design in villages, in general, and in Conservation Areas in particular.

'In considering the design of development proposals the Borough Council's aim is to ensure that new development makes the maximum contribution to improving or preserving the built environment of the Borough. Such an approach will ensure the conservation of areas which are already valued and the enhancement of areas currently less valued. In considering development proposals the Council will have regard to how the development relates to the following urban design objectives which are drawn from "By Design – Urban design in the planning system : towards better practice"

1. character- a place with its own identity;
2. continuity and enclosure – a place where public and private spaces are defined clearly;
3. quality and the public realm – a place with attractive and successful outdoor areas;
4. ease of movement – a place that is easy to get to and move through;
5. legibility – a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand;
6. adaptability – a place that can change easily
7. diversity – a place with variety and choice '

App 5.2 Built Environment policies indicate the applicability of these principles, and state:

'Although these are urban design objectives they, and the following policy are applicable to towns and villages alike. They are also applicable to both large and small developments as significant small developments can have a great impact on their surrounding area. It is recognised that situations will vary and certain objectives or policy elements will be more important in some cases than others. The production of *Village Design Statements* and the County Council's *Residential Design Guide* ..and *Planning for Landscape Change* document will provide a degree of guidance as to how the objectives and policy will be applied. The Council will provide further Supplementary Guidance to illustrate how the design of development should reflect the characteristics of particular areas. Where a site will have a significant impact on an area, either due to its large size or its prime location in a sensitive area, the Council may request a detailed design statement to be prepared by the developer indicating how the objectives set out above and the following policy have been taken into account in the design of a proposal. Where planning permission is granted for the demolition of unlisted buildings of intrinsic archaeological or historic

importance, the Council encourages the carrying out of *archaeological buildings recording* prior to demolition’.

**BE1** The borough council will approve applications for development which respond positively to the context of the area surrounding the site of the application and in themselves exhibit a high quality of design which corresponds to or enhances surrounding development. such considerations will apply equally to new development and development which involves the re-use of existing buildings. in considering whether design of development proposals is satisfactory, the borough council will have regard to following factors

- (a) The layout of the development in terms of its circulation routes and arrangement of buildings and how they relate to such factors in the surrounding area.
- (b) How elements of any open spaces, both hard and soft, in the proposed development relate to each other, the proposed buildings, the characteristics of the site and the surrounding landscape’s character and appearance.
- (c) The density and mix of the development in relation to its context and the uses to which the development will be put.
- (d) The massing of the development in terms of the shape, volume and arrangement of the building or buildings in relation to the context of the development.
- (e) How the height of the proposed development relates to the height of surrounding development and any vistas, views or skylines.
- (f) What materials will be used within the development and how they interrelate with each other, their immediate context and any traditional materials used in the area.
- (g) The detailing and construction techniques to be used in the development and how they interrelate with each other, and relate to the immediate and overall context.
- (h) Adverse impacts on the immediate and general environment in terms of emissions and other impacts and any use of techniques or mechanisms to reduce those impacts.
- (i) The extent to which the design of the development takes into account the safety of users and reduces the potential for crime to occur in accord with s. 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

9. The special character of the settlements in the Borough has evolved over centuries and the Council considers that, to safeguard and enhance this character, it is vital to ensure that the pace of change is controlled and that new development should make a positive contribution to its surroundings. This Plan includes policies for the protection of the historic features of the area and for the design of new buildings. The Council will therefore give a high priority to the objective of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas in considering all proposals for development, in accordance with guidance set out in PPG15.
10. One of the requirements of PPG15 is that the basis for the assessment of the character and qualities of existing or proposed areas should be set out in the Plan. The resulting assessments then form the basis for the consideration of any development proposed in a Conservation Area. As indicated by English Heritage the Council will only designate areas of real 'specialness' in the local context. The following criteria will be used as the basis of the assessment of this 'specialness':-
- a) Origins and development of the area;
  - b) Prevailing and former uses in the area and their influences on it;
  - c) Any archaeological significance;
  - d) Historic and architectural qualities of the buildings;
  - e) Character and relationship of spaces;
  - f) Prevalent and traditional building materials;
  - g) Local details and special features;
  - h) Contribution of any natural or cultivated elements;
  - i) Setting of the area and its relationship to the landscape;
  - j) Any neutral areas or negative factors.

These criteria will also be applied when considering extensions to existing conservation areas.

**BE6 Development will not be permitted in a Conservation Area, unless it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Conservation Area;**

- ♦ **If an application for outline permission is made within a Conservation area, the Local Planning Authority will require details of siting, design and external appearance of all buildings, under the provisions of Article 3(2) of the General Development (Procedure) Order.**
- ♦ **Consent to demolish an unlisted building in a conservation area will not be granted unless it can be shown that it is wholly beyond repair, incapable of reasonable beneficial use, of inappropriate structure or design, or where its removal or replacement would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of an area.**

- ♦ **Where Conservation Area Consent is granted for the demolition of structures of historic interest, the Council will seek to ensure that provision is made for an appropriate level of archaeological buildings recording to take place prior to demolition.**
- ♦ **New development should respect the character of the existing architecture in scale, grouping and materials.**
- ♦ **Proposals for development adjacent to Conservation Areas should be designed to be in harmony with the character or appearance of the area.**
- ♦ **When considering development proposals the Council will take care to ensure that views into and out of the conservation area remain unspoilt.**
- ♦ **Permission will not be granted for development on sites identified in conservation area Designation and Enhancement documents which contribute to the appearance or character of the Area, even if that site is also within a development boundary.**

**BE7 The Council will be prepared to consider making exceptions to other policies in this Plan where this would enhance the character of a conservation area.**

App 5.4 Listed buildings (many of which are sited in Conservation Areas) are covered in the Local Plan, as follows:

### **LISTED BUILDINGS**

These buildings represent the best of the Borough's heritage, being of special architectural or historic value, and as a finite resource, once lost cannot be replaced. In accordance with the aims of PPG15, the Council will seek to retain and protect all listed buildings. This reflects the importance of protecting listed buildings from unnecessary demolition, unsuitable and insensitive alteration, and will be the prime consideration for the Council in determining an application for Listed Building Consent.

**BE8 The character of listed buildings will be protected by the following means:**

**The Council recognises its statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their setting;**

**Applications for alterations or extensions to listed buildings will only be granted when they relate sensitively to the original building;**

Where the demolition of a listed building is to be permitted, the Council may require by condition or seek agreement that:-

- demolition shall not take place unless detailed plans have been approved for replacement buildings;
- the building is retained until such time as redevelopment takes place;
- important external and internal features of the building are salvaged and stored or reused;
- there is an opportunity for the appearance, plan layout and particular features of the building to be measured and recorded prior to demolition; and
- provision is made for archaeological investigation by appropriately qualified persons and excavation of the site where appropriate.

**Where Listed Building Consent is granted for the demolition or alteration resulting in the loss of historic fabric, the Council will ensure that provision is made for an appropriate level of archaeological building recording to take place prior to, or during, the commencement of works.**

App 5.5 As set out in PPG15 the best way to retain listed buildings is to keep them in use. New uses will often mean modifications to the building. A balance therefore has to be struck between the need to preserve listed buildings and the requirements of other policies in the Local Plan. This means that the need for flexibility in the application of other policies in the Local Plan to ensure new uses has to be recognised.

**BE9 The Council will be prepared to consider making exceptions to other policies in this Plan if this would secure the retention of a building of architectural or historic interest or enable an historic building or group of buildings to be given a new lease of life. Where new development is to provide income for the upkeep of historic buildings, a planning obligation agreement will be sought to secure that objective.**

App 5.6 Archaeological sites and scheduled monuments are generally covered by the Local Plan policies BE 10 and BE11:

## **ARCHAEOLOGY**

There are many features of historic and archaeological interest in the area. Those scheduled as Ancient Monuments have statutory protection but the Council recognises

the importance of protecting not only known sites but also new ones as they are discovered. If it is necessary to permit development that could affect a site where there is clear evidence of archaeological interest, the Council will ensure that there is an opportunity for archaeological excavation and recording before development occurs.

**BE10 Sites of significant archaeological interest will wherever possible be protected from new development. Development proposals affecting sites of potential interest should be accompanied by a report on the archaeological implication of the development, based on desk based assessments and, if necessary, field evaluation and by an indication of the means and resources to be made available to protect and/or record the archaeological interest of the site. Where the Borough Council have decided that physical preservation of the archaeological remains is not justified approval may be conditional upon appropriate means and facilities being made available by the developer for architectural investigation or a condition may be attached to any permission granted requiring such investigation before development commences.**

**BE11 There will be a presumption in favour of the physical preservation of scheduled Ancient Monuments and unscheduled archaeological remains of national importance, and development which would disturb or adversely affect any such monument or remains or its setting will not be permitted.**

App 5.7 Protection of open areas within settlements is covered in the Local Plan by policy NE6:

## **PROTECTION OF OPEN AREAS WITHIN SETTLEMENTS**

10. Areas of open land within settlements can contribute to the character of a settlement. Where such sites are developed the character of a settlement or area may be harmed. Where such harm would occur it is important that such sites are protected from development. Village Design Statements, promoted by the Countryside Agency, can play a positive role in identifying and recording what is special about a village. The Council has already formally adopted several Village Design Statements as SPG. Conservation Character Assessments may also identify relevant features in this context.

NE6 The development of open areas of land within town and village development boundaries will be allowed, subject to other policies in this plan, unless the land contributes positively to the character of the surrounding area and provides visual amenity for the community.

In settlements without development boundaries, the development of open space will not be permitted where the land contributes positively to the character of the surrounding area and provides visual amenity for the community.

App 5.8 Restrictions on 'Permitted Development' (ref : section 8.2) are covered in the Local Plan by policy BE12:

## **THE STREET SCENE**

15. To preserve areas of particularly high aesthetic quality such as Conservation Areas the Council wishes to minimise visually and aesthetically damaging street 'clutter' such as unsightly litter bins, freestanding advertisements, signs, public utilities equipment, power supplies and communication technology. The Council will aim to remove unsightly street furniture and where necessary replace it with more appropriate structures. Furthermore, the use and appearance of shop security shutters will need to be controlled. The Council may also wish to exert greater control over development which does not usually require planning permission. The Borough Council will therefore impose Article 4(2) Directions on dwellings in Conservation Areas where it considers there is a real threat to the character and appearance of the area and in exceptional circumstances will consider seeking the approval of the Secretary of State for Article 4(1) Directions in Conservation Areas or other areas of special quality where there is considered to be a real and specific threat due to the exercise of permitted development rights

**BE12 The Council will apply Directions in Conservation Areas to remove the permitted development rights for buildings in exceptional circumstances where development could have a real and specific detrimental effect on the special architectural or historic character of the area and in exceptional circumstances will apply to the Secretary of State for consent to apply Directions to other areas of special quality where there is a real and specific threat.**

App 5.9 The control of advertisements is a significant issue in Conservation Areas. The Local Plan highlights general considerations:

16. Advertisements and signs are important to the proper functioning of shopping and commercial areas, but the Council considers that the display of advertisements needs to be carefully controlled to ensure that they do not have a damaging impact on the environment.
17. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 gives powers to the Council to restrict the display of advertisements in the interests of amenity and public safety. Some categories have deemed consent by virtue of the Regulations, but most advertisements require a specific consent for which application is made to the Council. The Council also has powers to remove advertisements by the issue of a 'Discontinuance Notice'.

18. In carrying out its duty to control advertisements, the Borough Council will seek to ensure that advertisements are not unduly prominent in the street scene. Any advertisement which is likely to detract from the visual amenity of its surroundings will be refused consent. Particular care will be taken when considering the display of advertisements on listed buildings, in conservation areas and in the countryside. This will ensure that the special character of these buildings and areas is protected.

**BE13 In determining applications for consent to display advertisements, the Borough Council will consider the effect of the proposals on local amenities and public safety. The Council will not grant consent for the display of an advertisement unless it is satisfied that it:**

**is well located in relation to the building or site on which it is to be displayed;**  
**is of a suitable size, colour and design;**  
**is of a design and materials that are acceptable in the locality;**  
**does not stand out as an inappropriate or unduly prominent feature;**  
**does not contribute to visual clutter in the street scene;**  
**does not intrude upon the amenities of immediate neighbours;**  
**does not adversely affect the safety of users of any form of transport and pedestrians.**  
**is illuminated in manner appropriate to the locality and its position on the building or site**

19. The Council will expect most illuminated advertisements to be confined to commercial areas and to be at fascia level. The aim is to ensure commercial premises have no more than one fascia and one projecting sign, as then the display is unlikely to be prominent, and will not detract from amenity or public safety to an unacceptable degree, or create advertisement clutter. On petrol filling stations, particularly in rural areas, the Council will seek to minimise the total number and area of advertisements displayed to reduce clutter. Further guidance on the implementation of Policy BE 13 will be provided in Supplementary Planning Guidance.

App 5.10 The design of shop fronts is also given some consideration in the adopted Design Guide and Local Plan. Policy BE14 will have an impact on many Conservation Areas:

20. Shop fronts have a considerable influence on the appearance of buildings and the street scene. They are necessary to advertise and inform and can add vitality and interest to an area. They can also detract from buildings if due regard is not had to the age or architectural character of the building or area

**BE14 The Council will not grant permission for new, replacement or altered shop fronts unless they are designed to be sympathetic to the remainder of the building and to the character of the surrounding area.**