



## ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'C'

# HUNSDON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

## DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

2013



Website: [www.eastherts.gov.uk](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk)  
E-mail: [caappraisal@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:caappraisal@eastherts.gov.uk)  
Phone: 01992 531590

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

# **HUNSDON DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN.**

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# **HUNSDON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

## **DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION**

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**This Appraisal has been produced by Officers of East Hertfordshire District Council to assess the current condition of the Hunsdon Conservation Area, to identify where improvements can be made and to advise of any boundary changes that are appropriate. The document is in draft form and will be subject to public consultation and agreement by District Council Members.**

### **1. Introduction.**

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

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

**1.3. The District is situated in an economically buoyant region where an attractive environment, employment opportunities and excellent transport links, road rail and air, make it a popular destination to live and work. In addition to London a short commuting distance away, the District is influenced by other factors beyond its administrative area, such as Stansted Airport and the towns of Harlow and Stevenage. With such dynamics it is inevitable that the historic environment will be subject to pressures which emphasize the need to protect it.**

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

**1.5. Conservation Areas are environments which are considered worthy of protection as a result of a combination of factors such as the quality of**

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

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

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

1.8. This Conservation Appraisal will:

- Identify the special character of Hunsdon;
- Identify elements that should be retained or enhanced;
- Identify detracting elements;
- Review the existing boundary;
- Put forward practical enhancement proposals;

1.9. The document has been prepared in partnership with the local community and the Council would like to record its thanks to the Parish Council and to the members of the local community who provided useful information to officers when the survey was being undertaken.

1.10. Acknowledgement and thanks are also recorded to Hertfordshire County Council whose Historic Environment Unit has been particularly helpful.

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

## **PART A - LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **2. Legal and Policy framework.**

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

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

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

**2.4. One of the most important additional planning controls that apply to Conservation Areas is set out at section 74 of the Act which states that ‘*a building in a conservation area shall not be demolished without the consent of the appropriate authority*’. This requirement is known as ‘Conservation Area Consent’ (CAC)\* and is subject to certain exceptions. For example it does not apply to Listed Buildings which are protected by their own legislation but is relevant to other non listed buildings in the Conservation Area above a threshold size. Looking for and identifying such buildings is therefore a priority of this appraisal. Another exception relates to certain ecclesiastical buildings which are not subject to local authority listed building and conservation area administration provided an equivalent approved system of control is operated by the church authority. This is known as the ‘ecclesiastical exemption’. Importantly in such circumstances, church authorities still need to obtain any necessary planning permissions from the Council.**

**2.5. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 (as amended), defines the range of minor developments for which planning permission is not required (permitted development, or PD) and this range is more restricted in Conservation Areas. For example the Order currently requires that the addition of dormer windows to roof slopes, various types of cladding, satellite dishes fronting a highway and a reduced size of extensions, all require planning permission in a Conservation Area whereas they would not require permission beyond.**

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\* Since October 2013 the need to obtain CAC has been replaced by a requirement to obtain planning permission

**2.6. However, even within Conservation Areas there are many other minor developments that do not require planning permission. So as to provide further protection the law allows Councils' to introduce additional controls if appropriate. Examples of such controls can include some developments fronting a highway or open space, such as an external porch, the painting of a house or the demolition of some gates, fences or walls. The removal of important architectural features that are important to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area or individual buildings within it such as distinctive porches, windows or walls or railings to non-listed properties can be subject to a more detailed assessment and if appropriate made subject to protection by a legal process known as an 'Article 4 Direction' which withdraws 'Permitted Development Rights'. The use of such Directions can only be made in justified circumstances and a clear assessment of each Conservation Area considerably assists in this respect. In conducting this Appraisal, consideration will be given as to whether or not such additional controls are necessary.**

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

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

**2.9. National Planning Policy Framework. Published in March 2012, this document replaces previous advice, including PPS 5, Planning for the Historic Environment. The principle emphasis of the new framework is to promote sustainable development. Economic, social and environmental roles should not be considered in isolation because they are mutually dependent and positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment should be sought, including replacing poor design with better design. Whilst architectural styles should not be imposed it is considered proper to reinforce local distinctiveness.**

**2.10. In relation to the historic environment the new National Planning Policy Framework advises as follows:**

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

**2.11. East Hertfordshire’s environmental initiatives and Local Plan Policies.** East Hertfordshire is committed to protecting Conservation Areas and implementing policies which preserve and enhance them; to support their preservation through the publication of design and technical advice and to be pro-active by offering grants and administering an

**Historic Buildings Grant Service.** With regard to the latter grants are awarded on a first come first served basis in relation to listed buildings and other unlisted buildings of architectural or historic interest. The maximum grant will not normally exceed £1,000.

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

**2.13.** The Council also has a 'Buildings at Risk Register', originally produced in 2006 and updated in 2012/13. In relation to Hunsdon Parish there are a number of buildings entered on the Register as being 'At Risk' including the Walker Monument at St Dunstan's Church. However no such buildings have been identified within the Conservation Area. Grant assistance not exceeding £10,000 may be available for works that lead to such structures long term security.

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

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

**2.16.** Hunsdon Conservation Area was designated in 1968.

## **Part B - APPRAISAL**

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

**3.1.** No references to Iron Age, Roman or Saxon occupation have been found.

**3.2.** Hunsdon appears in Domesday Book as Honesdone but this is the name of a manorial estate and not necessarily that of the core village.

**3.3.** Although not located within the Conservation Area and removed from the village, Hunsdon House and the Parish Church of St Dunstan, both



listed Grade I, exemplify the historic importance of the area during the 14-16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Pevsner describes the church as being ‘*a fine late medieval parish church with the oldest timber north porch in the county, an elaborate Jacobean screen to S chapel, the best example in the county, 2 early 17<sup>th</sup> century monuments of the highest sculptural quality of their time.*’ Pevsner describes Hunsdon House as ‘*a house of great historic interest*’ and it is well documented as being a Royal residence with extensive parks for hunting and closely associated with Tudor monarchs including Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. The Parish church of St Dunstan and Hunsdon House are therefore of outstanding historical interest.



Picture 1 - Parish Church of St. Dunstan, a fine Grade I Listed Building, whose monuments are representative of the rich historical associations of the area.

3.4. From an analysis of the details accompanying the Listed Building descriptions within the Conservation Area it can be shown that 7% date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, 37% from the 17<sup>th</sup> century , 30% from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and 26% from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

3.5. The map dating from 1874 shows a small compact Victorian village whose core is essentially the same area as the existing Conservation Area. This map identifies a School (Boys and Girls), currently the existing Village Hall, the Pump in its existing location, a Post Office south of the existing garage, a Gravel Pit

(now Play Area, west of no.1 High Street) and extensive Allotment Gardens, south of Drury Lane where 20<sup>th</sup> century residential properties have subsequently been built. Perhaps most interestingly this map shows a small free standing 'Lock Up' at the junction of High Street and Acorn Street with an OS bench mark on its northern wall.



Picture 2 - The Village Pump and High Street in the late 1940's (photograph courtesy of Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies).

3.6. The map dating from 1897 shows that the Gravel Pit referred to above had been extended in a westerly direction and the Post Office had moved to a location opposite the Fox and Hounds PH.

3.7. The map dating from 1920 shows a further extension to the Gravel Pit, the original Allotment Gardens together with further Allotment Gardens to the rear of nos. 1-11 High Street, a Smithy located on the north western end of Drury Street and a Parish Hall on the site of the existing Garage. Most regrettably the Lock Up had been demolished by this time. Otherwise the village core remained largely unchanged.





Picture 3 – High Street looking west, probably early/mid 20<sup>th</sup> century ((photograph courtesy of Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies).

**3.8. This situation remained essentially unaltered until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century following which residential areas such as Paddock Close and Holland's Croft to the north, development to the south of Drury Lane and Wicklands Road and Rectory Close and Tanners Way enveloped the historic core with typical mid 20<sup>th</sup> century development.**

**3.9. During the Second World War a major airfield was built adjacent to the village with construction starting in October 1940. It was opened in 1941 as a Fighter Station with two intersecting runways, a squadron HQ, fighter pens, hangars and defence structures including many pillboxes. In addition to the RAF, the RAAF and RNZAF operated from this site flying Hurricane, Mosquito and Mustang aircraft. 'Operation Jericho', the famous raid on Amiens prison to release French Resistance prisoners was carried out from Hunsdon Airfield. A local source also notes that the R.C.A.F were based here also and they operated the Douglas Havoc Bombers. The same source also mentions the existence of a parachute packing shed, of which only a few remain in the UK.**

**3.10. Due to the exceptional rarity of some structures (an air raid shelter, sleeping shelters and ammunition stores) and the general good level of preservation, a number of structures and groups were scheduled in 2002. The Scheduled description reads as follows: *In addition to the pillboxes the associated structures at Hunsdon are rare survivals: the air raid shelter, sleeping shelters and the ammunition stores. In particular the two sleeping shelters in Tuck's Spring are very rare nationally with only six***

*known examples. Taken individually therefore several of the Hunsdon airfield defence structures can be seen as of national significance; however, it is the survival of the entire group with a distribution around the whole of the airfield perimeter road which provides such a graphic illustration of the nature of airfield defence during World War II.*

3.11. Kelly's Post Office Directory of 1874 for Hertfordshire describes Hunsdon as having a National School and Charities amounting to £38 per year being distributed in money. Reference is made to Hunsdon House and occasional historic royal visits. Chief crops were stated to have been wheat, barley and beans. There was a population of 518 in 1871. Trades listed include blacksmith, 2 no. grocer and drapers, coach maker, draper, miller, builder, 2 no. beer retailers, 2 no. shoemakers, saddler, painter and plumber. The only Public House entered at this time is the Fox and Hounds which is consistent with what is annotated on the map dating from 1874. Hunsdon, like most rural villages in this period was an independent self sufficient community.

3.12. The Place Names of Hertfordshire published by Cambridge University Press refers to the following ancient names: Honesdone, Hodesdone (1086), Honesdon (1235), Hunnesdon (1255), Hunesduna (1317) and the present name Hunsdon from 1368. Possibly derived from ancient words translated as 'Hun's Hill'.

3.13. Plan 1 shows the existing Conservation Area superimposed on a map, which dates from 1874.

#### **4. General Designations and criteria used to identify Important Features.**

4.1. There are no designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the Conservation Area as currently drawn. As identified above, WWII defences at Hunsdon Airfield were scheduled in 2002 and one be such defence, a pillbox at the end of Drury Lane is proposed to included within the extended Conservation Area.

4.2. Areas of Archaeological Significance. Nearly the entirety of Hunsdon's Conservation Area is so designated, the principle exceptions being no. 91 High Street and strips of land to the north of Drury lane and the eastern end of Tanners Way. Not all archeological sites are of equal importance and the Council will decide a course of action that may vary from recording any remains prior to development or protecting it from development, when determining planning applications.

4.3. Listed buildings. Individually listed buildings have been identified, plotted and some very briefly described. Full descriptions can be obtained

on line at English Heritage's web site or Heritage Gateway. Such Listed Buildings are protected from unauthorised demolition, alteration or extension. Structures, including railings and walls, within the curtilages of listed buildings, if they pre date 1948, are subject to the same controls as listed buildings.

**4.4. Non-listed buildings of quality and worthy of protection from demolition.** There is one non-listed building that makes an important architectural or historic contribution to the Conservation Area and this has been separately identified. The basic questions asked in identifying such buildings/structures are:

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

**4.5. Trees and Hedgerows.** There are several trees and a hedgerow that particularly contribute to the quality of the Conservation Area. The basic criteria for identifying such important trees and hedgerows are:-

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

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

**4.7. Any other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution are noted. Of importance in this respect is the centrally located 19<sup>th</sup> century cast iron pump and railings.**

**4.8. Reference has previously been made to the potential of introducing Article 4 Directions in justified circumstances and the criteria for their selection in relation to features associated with selected non listed properties is as follows:**

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

**4.9. Features that detract from the character of the area or which are in poor repair have been identified.**

**4.10. Important views are identified and are described below.**

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

## **5. General Character and Setting of Hunsdon.**

**5.1. In terms of its wider setting, the Council has produced a Landscape Character Assessment (2007) as a Supplementary Planning Document. It describes Hunsdon village as being situated on the Hunsdon Plateau bounded to the south by estate/ parkland associated with the River Stort, to the east by farmland and to the north by the River Ash valley. The area is described as being very rural in nature with few settlements, quite remote with significant woodland groups in north east. One distinctive feature identified is Hunsdon airfield, described as being bleak and lacking in features.**

**5.2. Whilst the general character of the whole Parish has changed significantly elsewhere with the influx of 20<sup>th</sup> century development, Hunsdon's Conservation Area has largely retained its historic identity, particularly by its tightly knit groupings of Listed Buildings on the High Street.**

**5.3. Throughout the Conservation Area trees in groups or as individual specimens add to its quality.**

**5.4. There are 80 Listed Buildings in the Parish as a whole, 5 of which are Grade II\* and 2, St Dunstan's Church and Hunsdon House, being Grade I.**

**5.5. Of these, 27 are concentrated in Hunsdon's designated Conservation Area. Here buildings from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries are represented. As previously noted 7% date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, 37% from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, 30% from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and 26% from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.**

**5.6. As set out below this Appraisal identifies any other buildings and structures of quality that are not individually listed.**

**5.7. In summary most of the designated Conservation Area is visually rich in quality buildings. The lack of parking provision associated with dwellings results in a large area of parked vehicles in the Conservation Area. The impact of this is considered to detract from the quality of the area. The few quality buildings on Drury Lane are dominated by modern development whilst features beyond its existing eastern boundary are of quality and warrant serious consideration for being included within the Conservation Area.**

**5.8. The existing Conservation Area is clearly defined and has a visually separate identity from the modern developments that surround it and is composed of two main identity areas:- Area A - Drury Lane and Area B - the remainder of the Conservation Area, principally High Street.**

## **6. Detailed Character Analysis.**

### **6.1 Area A – Drury Lane.**

**6.2. General Overview.** Drury Lane is a narrow road in which 20<sup>th</sup> century housing of limited architectural or historic importance dominates. The front boundaries of these 20th century dwellings are characterised by a mixture of uncoordinated treatments and use of different materials that detract in places from the quality of the lane as a whole. The lane provides direct access to the open countryside whose large scale, flat and open qualities are characteristic of its former use as a WWII airfield. The visual quality of the lane improves as the well defined and clear break with the open countryside is approached, where a small meadow, trees and a pond of some antiquity provide a verdant environment. The lane continues into the arable open countryside by a well used public footpath.

**6.3. Scheduled Ancient Monument.** In the garden of Hunsdon Lodge Farm, a short distance from the eastern edge of the existing Conservation Area and obscured by dense scrub and trees, is a scheduled WWII pillbox. The scheduling entry describes it as being *‘an unusual, hexagonal pillbox built of brick walls with a concrete roof ... max. diameter 4.7 m, with comparatively thin brick walls, full-height doorway, and non-flaring gun apertures (without gun mountings). It is suggested that its primary function may have been a communications post’*. As previously noted this part of the lane links up with a well used public footpath whose users would benefit by seeing this interesting structure if the owner would consider removing some of the scrub and opening up the view of the pillbox.

**6.4. Archaeological sites.** Most of Drury Lane is designated as being an Area of Archaeological Importance which extends as a curiously shaped ‘arrow head’ in a south easterly direction to include the site of a former pillbox some distance away to the east of no. 26 Wicklands Road.

**6.5. Individually Listed Buildings.** Within Drury Lane there are 4 Listed Buildings namely, nos. 2- 4, dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century; nos. 24-26, dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century; Orchards, no. 9, dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier and no. 21, probably dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Nos. 2-4 situated at the western extremity are visually linked with the High Street. Nos. 9, 21 and 24- 26 form an interesting group towards the eastern end of the lane. Nos. 24-26 are probably the most interesting and picturesque which the Listed Building text identifies as having once been the former village Bakehouse. All are listed grade II.



**6.6. Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution.** None have been identified.

**6.7. Other distinctive features that make an important architectural or historic contribution.** None have been identified.

**6.8. Important open land, open spaces and gaps.** As previously considered, the small open meadow and pond to the east of no. 21 Drury Lane is a pleasant verdant environment. It makes a significant contribution to the general spatial and visual importance of the lane and it is considered appropriate to extend the Conservation Area to include it. The pond may have wildlife interest but this is unknown without survey. A countywide Reptile and Amphibian Group may be willing to provide the necessary expertise to determine this.



Picture 4 – Attractive pond and treed area at eastern extremity of Drury Lane, proposed to be included within the Conservation Area.

**6.9. Particularly important trees and hedgerows.** There are several particularly important trees within Drury Lane as diagrammatically identified on the plans. The greatest concentration is located at the eastern extremity, proposed for inclusion within the Conservation Area.



**6.10. *Important views.*** Views from within looking eastwards and from the footpath in the countryside beyond looking towards the Conservation Area are important.

**6.11. *Elements out of character with the Conservation Area.*** A support post to a highway sign at the western end needs repainting. A power supply pole and associated equipment located adjacent to the well used footpath at the eastern end detracts. Also fencing in the central section of the north side of Drury Lane would benefit from repair.



Picture 5 – Detracting utility pole adjacent to Public Footpath at eastern extremity of Drury Lane.

**6.12. *Opportunities to secure improvements.*** Discuss with owners of Hundston Lodge Farm concerning potential of opening view of scheduled WWII pillbox. Discuss the potential for improvements to both the highway sign and power supply equipment with Hertfordshire CC and Power Company, respectively. Discuss with owner the potential for executing selected repairs to fencing.

**6.13. *Suggested boundary changes.*** It is considered appropriate to retain Drury Lane within the Conservation Area and extend it to include the WWII pillbox, pond, small meadow and treed area at its eastern extremity.

**6.14. Area B - principally High Street.**

**6.15. *General Overview.*** The general overview of the High Street and the remainder of the village is one of a compact historic core surrounded by modern development within which car parking has a considerable visual impact. This occurs because the built form in the centre of the village consists of several long terraces with limited off street car parking facilities. The dense urban townscape which is distinctive in this part of the High Street differs from the more open nature of the village in the west, mostly characterised by 19<sup>th</sup> century 'estate' cottages.

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

**6.17. *Archaeological sites.*** Data from Hertfordshire County Council indicates that a Victorian Tombstone from 1851 was found to the rear of no. 39 High Street and infers the latter may have originated from a burial ground reputedly associated with a Friends Meeting House at 15 High Street to the west. (The latter building is not shown as such on the early maps from this period. If the tombstone still exists and the writing is legible, its possible association with a Friends Meeting House would be easy to establish. By way of example a Quaker tombstone commemorating a death, say on 25<sup>th</sup> February would likely be inscribed ...'on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the second month'). Other archaeological records from the same source are generally associated with Listed Building descriptions, some of which are mentioned below.

**6.18. *Individually Listed Buildings.*** Within this area there are 23 individually Listed Buildings or groups of buildings. All are grade II except Pump House and Tanners, which are both grade II\*.

**6.19.** These latter two, date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century or earlier and are probably former Hall Houses and are of considerable historic and

architectural interest. The Pump House is a central focus point and the largest in the Conservation Area and is recorded as having been The Feathers (PH?) in 1637, a Smithy in 1671 and later a Coachmaker and Builder. Tanners on the other hand is the centerpiece of a picturesque group in its part of the High Street and was formerly a farmhouse.

6.20. Eight of the remaining buildings in this area date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century; 6 from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and 7 from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

6.21. Interestingly representative of the 17<sup>th</sup> century are nos. 28-32 High Street that were built for widows in 1697 by the Hunsdon Charity and altered after 1842. Their weather boarded façade and tiled roofs are prominent in the streetscape. The groupings appearance could be improved by co-ordinating the design of front doors, some of which are out of keeping with their listed status. Nos. 73-77 also dates from the same period and are similarly white weather boarded. This architectural element is prominent to this part of the village and is an essential feature that must be retained. Painting individual properties different colours would be entirely inappropriate.



Picture 6 - White weatherboarding is an important architectural feature of some Listed Buildings in Hunsdon.





Picture 7 – A terrace not local to Hunsdon: the purpose of this photo is to illustrate the importance of design detail. The successful character of historic terraces in part depends on simple repetitive detailing, including doors. Expression of ownership can be provided by painting doors different colours.

6.22. The Village Hall as previously noted was a School and dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Timber framed and tiled roof, it is symmetrically flanked by nos. 41 and 49 that the Listed Building text describes thus: *'this estate village town planning scheme (to achieve formal symmetry around the then school) was carried out (in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century) when the Calvert family owned Hunsdon House'*.



**Picture 8 – The Village Hall, High Street.**

**6.23. The western end of the northern side of High Street contains a picturesque grouping of 19<sup>th</sup> century Gothic estate houses, distinctive and important in the street scene. Within this grouping is no.15, possibly a former Friends Meeting House. This charming Lilliputian building probably dates from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century and was given its existing appearance during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.**

**6.24. Elsewhere, the village pump and railings by Turner of Dorset Street, Fleet Street, London, is a fine 19<sup>th</sup> century of a Victorian public pump in the Gothic style. It is a focal point to which the eye is drawn but unfortunately its qualities are frequently obscured by parked vehicles. The feature is considered of sufficient quality to warrant exploring the possibility of introducing a traffic management scheme to overcome this. Such a scheme might consist of a raised platform edged with granite kerbs. There may be other solutions worthy of discussing with the Highway Authority and the Parish Council.**



**Picture 9 – The Village Pump and Railings, a central focal point of the village, frequently obscured by parked vehicles. It is proposed to explore the potential of introducing a Traffic Management Scheme. Compare this photograph with historic picture no. 2 .**

**6.25. *Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution.*** Only one such building has been identified namely No. 91 High Street, a tall distinctive early 20<sup>th</sup> century house, painted brickwork, slate roof and 2 no. tall chimneys with pots. The central door is recessed and there are 2 no. bay windows to ground floor with vertical sliding sash windows. Selected architectural detailing are candidates for protection by possible Article 4 Direction subject to further consideration and notification.





**Picture10 – No. 91 High Street, identified as an unlisted building that makes an important architectural or historic contribution to the street scene with selected features that are worthy of protection**

**6.26. *Other distinctive features that make an important architectural or historic contribution.*** The village pump and railings has already been identified as a key Listed Building of quality above. Nearby there is an early street lamp repaired and rejoined at the top of its support that may date from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**6.27.** The other feature of quality is the stone war memorial at the junction of High Street and Acorn Street. This consists of a tall stone cross, set on a stone base and commemorates those who gave their lives in both the Great War and WWII.





Picture 11 – The War Memorial and adjacent public car parking area. This important focal point in the village could perhaps be improved and subject to Parish Council agreement, it is suggested that an enhancement scheme be prepared for consideration.

**6.28. *Important open land, open spaces and gaps.*** The War Memorial referred to above is located on a triangle of land to the south of a small public car parking area and bounded to the east by the Crown PH. The whole area is an important focal point within which there are several signs, decorative, directional and informational; a Horsechestnut tree showing some signs of dieback and a modern telephone kiosk that appears underused and untidy with graffiti. The grass treatment around the War Memorial and the tarmac surface of the car park are simple and effective.

**6.29.** However the whole space and the contribution it makes to this focal point in the Conservation Area could be improved by introducing clearer boundary definition. One means of securing this objective would be continuing the native hedge to shield the picket boundary fence of the Crown PH (in need of repair), consider removal of Horsechestnut tree (should dieback accelerate) and the telephone Kiosk (?), and subject to practical issues, such as the possible presence of underground services and maintaining highway visibility at the junction, introduce selective specimen tree planting. This will be discussed with the Parish Council in the first instance.

**6.30. *Particularly important trees and hedgerows.*** There are several trees on the south side of the High Street that contribute to the quality of the Conservation Area. One of these is the Horsechestnut within the public parking area, which as noted above, may be reaching the end of its life. The hedge to the north of the well used footpath from Tanners Way to the High Street is visually important and clearly defines the open countryside to its north whilst enclosing the linear stretch extensively used by walkers.

**6.31. *Important views.*** Views along the High Street in both directions are important. The one looking north east across the village pump and railings towards the Pump House is the most important and one that could be improved to a significant degree by the implementation of an improvement scheme as referred to above.

**6.32. *Elements out of character with the Conservation Area.*** The principle detracting element is the visual impact as a result of parked vehicles. It is recognised that real improvements could only be achieved by providing additional parking in close proximity to the problem and the likelihood of achieving this is remote. However as mentioned above, a scheme aimed at removing the few parked vehicles in the immediate vicinity of the village pump is worthy of further consideration. There are a number of utility poles that also detract. Those outside nos.59/61, no. 41A and no. 23 are particularly intrusive and adversely affect the historic environment.



Picture 12 – One of several utility poles that detract from the high visual and historic qualities of the Conservation Area.

**6.33. *Opportunities to secure improvements.*** In conjunction with the Parish Council and Highway Authority consider enhancement schemes at (a) the Village Pump and railings and (b) the Memorial and car parking area, junction of Acorn Street / High Street. Contact should be made with the utility company to seek their views if there is a realistic opportunity to remove the intruding equipment referred to above, possibly on a phased long term basis.

**6.34. *Suggested boundary changes.*** Relatively minor changes are proposed to better reflect existing boundaries north of St Dunstan's Road. Modern properties, nos. 50 - 56 Tanners Way, together with the frontages to nos. 36 – 38 High Street, are proposed to be excluded. These latter sites



are not areas of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance should be conserved.



Picture 13 - 20<sup>th</sup> century properties at Tanners Way proposed to be removed from the Conservation Area.

**6.35. Overall summary.** Hunsdon Conservation Area is generally of high quality with key buildings of architectural and historic interest being concentrated in the High Street where the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries are well represented. Because of its layout and architectural form, on-street car parking is a problem with no real opportunities to properly resolve the issue. It is recommended that Drury Lane remain within the Conservation Area where an extension is also proposed. Elsewhere relatively minor boundary changes are suggested. Enhancement schemes are suggested for further consideration to improve the environment in the centre of the village by re instating the Victorian Pump and railings as an important central feature which would involve measures to prevent several vehicles from parking in its immediate vicinity. Subject to views of the Parish Council it is also proposed to improve the area around the public car parking and War Memorial at the junction of Acorn Street and High Street.

## **PART C – MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

## **7. Management Proposals.**

**7.1. *Revised Conservation Area Boundary.*** The revised boundary is shown on Plan 3 and includes the following amendments.

- (a)** Extend the Conservation Area to include meadow land, pond and scheduled WWII pillbox at the eastern extremity of Drury Lane.
- (b)** Exclude nos. 50 – 56 Tanners Lane.
- (c)** Exclude frontages to nos. 36 – 38 High Street.
- (d)** Minor boundary changes north of St. Dunstan's Road.

**7.2. *General Planning Control and Good Practice within the Conservation Area.*** All planning policies are contained in the East Herts Local Plan Second Review adopted in April 2007. It is against this document and the National Planning Policy Framework that the District Council will process applications.

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

Telephone no. 01279 655261

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

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

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

**7.5. *Planning Control - Potential need to Undertake an Archeological Evaluation.*** Within the sites designated as being an Area of Archaeological Significance the content of policies BH1, BH2 and BH3 are particularly relevant.

**7.6.** With regard to Scheduled Ancient Monuments (in this case the pillbox at the eastern end of Drury Lane), English Heritage's Guide for Owners and Occupiers states that should a person wish to carry out any works that will affect a scheduled monument '*whether above or below ground,*

*you must apply to the Secretary of State for prior written permission.'* Where this is applicable, applicants are strongly recommended to contact the regional English Heritage office for early discussions. The local contact details are English Heritage 24 Brooklands Avenue Cambridge CB2 2BU. Telephone 01223 582700. E-mail: eastofengland@english-heritage.org.uk

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

**7.8. Listed Buildings** are the most significant factor in contributing to the quality of Hunsdon's built environment. It is essential that their architectural detailing is not eroded and their other qualities and settings not compromised. Of particular importance are several white weather boarded facades to Listed Buildings that are prominent in the High Street. As previously referred to this architectural element is an essential feature that must be retained. Painting individual properties different colours would be entirely inappropriate.

**7.9. Planning Control – Other Unlisted Buildings that make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution.** Within the revised Conservation Area there is only one such unlisted building that has been identified, namely no. 91 High Street. Any proposal involving its demolition would unlikely to be approved.

**7.10. Proposed Article 4 Direction –** Distinctive features that are integral to the unlisted building identified in the above paragraph which make an important architectural or historic contribution include selected chimneys and windows. Appropriate additional protection can be provided by removing Permitted Development Rights via an Article 4 Direction. The associated legislation is complex. Should the Council consider such a course of action appropriate there would be a process of notifying the affected owner separately at a later date. This would be associated with further detailed consideration and possible refinement.

**7.11. Planning Control – Important open land, open spaces and gaps.** This Appraisal has identified the following important spaces: the area around the War Memorial at Acorn Street and the small meadow and pond at the eastern extremity of Drury Lane. These represent open spaces and other landscape features within the revised boundary to the Conservation Area that materially contribute to its character or appearance and will be protected.

**7.12. Planning Control – Particularly important trees and hedgerows.** Only the most significant trees are shown diagrammatically. Subject to certain

exceptions all trees in a Conservation Area are afforded protection and a person wanting to carry out works has to notify the Council. Trees that have not been identified may still be considered suitable for protection by Tree Preservation Orders. Owners are advised to make regular inspections to check the health of trees in the interests of amenity and Health and Safety. As previously advised some hedgerows may be protected by the Hedgerow Regulations.

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

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

<b>Detracting element</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Proposed Action.</b>
<b>Car parking immediately adjacent to listed Victorian Pump and railings.</b>	<b>High Street, junction with Drury Lane.</b>	<b>Discuss options at local level and seek to negotiate an improved solution with the Parish Council and the County Council whereby Pump and Railings are reinstated as a key central focal point.</b> The council will seek to find a solution in partnership with the Highway Department with Hertfordshire County Council.
<b>Elements within War Memorial and public car parking area.</b>	<b>Junction High Street /Acorn Street.</b>	<b>Seek to negotiate improved solution with the Parish Council and County Council. With PC agreement, consider comprehensive landscape improvements.</b> The Horsechestnut tree's deterioration will have to be monitored.
<b>Power distribution pole and equipment.</b>	<b>Eastern end of Drury Lane.</b>	<b>Discuss potential for improvements with power company.</b>
<b>Highway sign.</b>	<b>Entrance to Drury Lane.</b>	<b>Treat/repaint rusty pole.</b>
<b>Wooden fencing</b>	<b>Central section</b>	<b>Discuss potential for</b>

	<b>Drury Lane</b>	<b>improvements with owner.</b>
<b>3 no. utility poles.</b>	<b>High Street, near nos. 23,41A and 59/61.</b>	<b>Discuss potential for improvements with power company.</b>
<b>Other actions</b>		
<b>Request owner of secluded WWII pillbox to enhance view for benefit of passing walkers on nearby public footpath.</b>		
<b>Check need for continued presence of Telephone Kiosk, junction High Street/Acorn Street. The Officers will make contact with the utility company.</b>		

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

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