



HIGH WYCH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

2013



Memorial stone to Rev H. F. Johnson in the parish church, largely built at his expense.

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This Appraisal has been produced by Officers of East Hertfordshire District Council to assess the current condition of the High Wych 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 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, recognises these facts and commits the Council to review its Conservation Areas and their boundaries. The production of this document is very much 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 practical management proposals that would improve the character of the Conservation Area and which are capable of being implemented as and when resources permit.

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

1.8. This Conservation Appraisal will:

- **Identify the special character of High Wych Conservation Area.**
- **Identify elements that should be retained or enhanced;**
- **Identify detracting elements;**
- **Review the existing boundaries;**
- **Put forward practical enhancement proposals;**

1.9. The document will be prepared in partnership with the Parish Council and the local community through the consultation process.

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

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

PART A - LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

2. Legal and Policy framework.

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

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

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

2.4. From October 2013 planning permission is now required for the demolition of a building in a Conservation Area but is subject to certain exceptions. For example, it does not apply to Listed Buildings which are protected by their own legislation but is relevant to other non listed buildings in the Conservation Area above a threshold size set out in legislation¹. Looking for and assessing such buildings is therefore a priority of this Appraisal.

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

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

2.7. However, even within Conservation Areas there are 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 such as distinctive porches, windows or walls or railings to some non-listed properties can be subject to a more detailed assessment and if appropriate made subject to protection by a legal process known as an 'Article 4 Direction' which withdraws 'Permitted Development Rights'.

¹ The demolition of a building not exceeding 50 cubic metres is not development and can be demolished without planning permission. Demolition of other buildings below 115 cubic metres are regarded as 'Permitted Development' granted by the General Permitted Development Order, subject to conditions that may require the Council's 'prior approval' regarding methods of proposed demolition and restoration.

The use of such Directions needs to be made in justified circumstances where a clear assessment of each Conservation Area has been made. In conducting this Appraisal, consideration will be given as to whether or not such additional controls are necessary.

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

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

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

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

- There should be a positive strategy in the Local Plan for the conservation of the historic environment and up-to-date evidence used to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make.
- Conservation Areas. Such areas must justify such a status virtue of being of '*special architectural or historic interest*'.
- Heritage assets. A Heritage asset is defined as '*a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listings)*'.

- Considerable weight should be given to conserving such heritage assets and the more important they are the greater the weight. For example the effect of an application affecting a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account and a balanced judgment reached. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II Listed Building should be exceptional whilst harm to heritage assets of higher status, e.g. a grade I or II* Listed Building should be wholly exceptional.
- Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance or better reveal their significance and proposals that preserve such elements should be approved.
- The use of Article 4 Directions to remove national permitted development rights should be limited to situations *‘where this is necessary to protect local amenity or the well being of the area...’*
- Green Areas. Such areas of particular importance can properly be identified for special protection as Local Green Spaces in selected situations.

2.12. East Hertfordshire’s environmental initiatives and Local Plan Policies. East Hertfordshire is committed to protecting Conservation Areas and implementing policies which preserve and enhance them; to support their preservation through the publication of design and technical advice and to be pro-active by offering grants and administering an Historic Buildings Grant Service. With regard to the latter grants are awarded on a first come first served basis in relation to works which result in the maintenance of listed buildings and other unlisted buildings of architectural or historic interest. The maximum grant will not normally exceed £1,000.

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

2.14. The Council also has a ‘Buildings at Risk Register’, originally produced in 2006 and updated in 2012/13. In relation to High Wych there are no such buildings identified as being ‘At Risk’ in the Conservation Area although some exist elsewhere in the parish. Grant assistance not exceeding £10,000 may be available for necessary works that lead to such buildings’ long term security.

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

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

2.17. High Wych Conservation Area was first designated in 1990.

Part B - APPRAISAL

3. Origins and Historical Development

3.1. The historic records held by the County Archaeologist within or close to the existing Conservation Area, record a number of interesting facts. For example a Windmill once stood in the grounds of a house called 'Windmill' facing High Wych Road. This is recorded as having been demolished in the mid 19th century leaving no visible remains (local sources advise the Windmill was removed to another location).

3.2. There are no records of Prehistoric, Roman or Anglo Saxon settlement in the Conservation Area but that does not preclude its possible existence. Elsewhere in the parish Roman coins have been found.

3.3 Medieval and earlier. The Manor of Groves which lies beyond the Conservation Area belonged to the Reading Abbey from the 12th century until the Dissolution. (This site is a Locally Important Historic Park and Garden as set out in the Councils Supplementary Planning Document of 2007).

3.4. The village is described by County Archaeological records as being a post medieval hamlet formerly in Sawbridgeworth parish that became a separate administrative entity in the mid 19th century acquiring a church school and vicarage largely funded by the Rev H. F. Johnson.

3.5. The memorial to Rev H.F. Johnson and his wife in the parish church (see front cover) advises he was Vicar between 1862 and 1880 and died in 1908 aged 73 when he was Bishop of Colchester. The memorial reads *'By their care and chiefly at their cost this church was built. To their faithful service this Parish owes the beginning of its spiritual life and growth. By their generous charity both here and elsewhere the hearts of many were cheered and blessed... They were lovely and pleasant in their lives....'*

3.6. Plan 1 shows the existing Conservation Area plotted on mapping dating from 1874. This map shows a small hamlet with recently built church, school for Boys and Girls and a Vicarage recently built by Rev H.F.Johnson; the Half Moon PH and a Smithy to the west of the central

green. The community was small and heavily treed. Bakers Farm and a scattered group on High Wych Lane was separated from the tightly knit central green area as was the group consisting of the Church, School and Vicarage. The former windmill and or mill house previously referred to may be the building complex shown on the map furthestmost east with OS reference number 754.

3.7. By 1920 very little has changed with only a small amount of infilling. The smithy is still identified at this time.



Picture 1. Old Thatched Cottages with Half Moon PH in distance – date unknown.
Reproduced courtesy of Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies.

3.8. By 1963 very significant changes and development had taken place leaving the layout and built form much as it is today.

3.9. A picture of settlements can often be glimpsed by referring to Kelly's Directories. However the 1874 Kelly's provides little information as the settlement at this time was a part of Sawbridgeworth parish. However the following commercial entries were included at this time: blacksmith, beer retailer and baker, miller, the Half Moon PH and the Hand and Crown PH.

3.10. The publication, Place Names of Hertfordshire, Cambridge University Press 1970 advises several names, including Wyches (1540) and Highwick (1676).

3.11. Plan 1 shows the existing Conservation Area boundary approximately imposed on mapping dating from the late 19th century.

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

4.1. Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

4.2. Areas of Archaeological Significance.

4.3. Listed buildings. Individually listed buildings have been identified, plotted and a selected few are briefly described, such abbreviated descriptions being based on the Dept. of Culture Media and Sport's list, occasionally with additional comments by the fieldworker. Full descriptions can be obtained on line at English Heritage's website or Heritage Gateway website (www.heritagegateway.org.uk) Listed Buildings are protected from unauthorised demolition, alteration or extension. Structures, including railings and walls, within the curtilage of listed buildings, if they are pre-1948, are subject to the same controls as listed buildings.

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

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

4.5. Trees and Hedgerows. The basic criteria for identifying important trees and hedgerows are:-

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

4.6. Open spaces or gaps of quality that contribute to the visual importance of the Conservation Area where development would be inappropriate 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. Other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution are noted and shown diagrammatically. In relation to walls and railings those above prescribed heights (1m fronting a highway including a footpath or bridleway, water course or open space or 2m elsewhere) are protected and require permission for their demolition).

4.8. Reference has previously been made to the potential of introducing Article 4 Directions in justified circumstances 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, those selected need to be below the prescribed heights (walls fronting a highway including a footpath or bridleway, water course or open space 1m or 2m elsewhere require permission for their demolition), be prominent in the street scene and make a positive architectural or historic contribution to its visual appearance.**
- **In relation to other features, these may include good quality architectural detailing to non-listed buildings, constructed of wood, metal or other materials.**
- **It may also be appropriate to introduce Article 4 Directions to retain quality buildings below the prescribed threshold where permission for demolition in Conservation Areas is not required.**

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

4.10. Important views are identified.

4.11. Conservation Area boundaries. In suggesting any revisions to the Conservation Area boundaries, 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. The extent of the Conservation Area can include open land that has historical associations with the built form. This may particularly be the case if such open land is environmentally important and visually forms part of the Conservation Area's setting and is distinct from open farmland.

5. GENERAL CHARACTER AND SETTING OF HIGH WYCH

5.1. In terms of its wider setting, the Landscape Character Assessment produced in 2007 as a Supplementary Planning Document, describes the High Wych slopes as being *'an area of transition, showing increasing urban influence in the southern part ... Around High Wych there are wide stretches of open farmland with old houses nestling in small coppices. The flint church is surrounded by the school, ancient houses and thatched cottages..'* The document continues *'High Wych Road is a commuter –run,,. therefore not tranquil'* and also refers to the detrimental effect of *'creeping urbanisation'*. In this respect the 20th century developments north of High Wych Road and east of High Wych Lane have changed the historic settlement pattern.

5.2. The Conservation Area, the subject of this Appraisal, currently extends the built up length of High Wych Road that includes the historic core together with 20th century properties at its eastern extremity beyond Blacksmiths Way. It also extends in a northerly direction along High Wych Lane to include several groups of Listed Buildings, open spaces and woodland. Much of the latter open space and woodland is of historic importance, as can be seen on Plan 1.

5.3. Records show there are 18 Listed Buildings within the existing Conservation Area. Of this total, 7 date from the 17th century or earlier (39%); 3 from the 18th century (17%); 7 from the 19th century (39%) and 1 from the 20th century.

5.4. One building, namely the church is listed grade II*; all others are grade II.

5.5. This Appraisal also identifies other buildings of high quality that are not listed but that should be retained. These date from the 19th century and are an important element in the high environmental quality of the

Conservation Area and make a contribution to its built form and historical evolution. Selected numbers of these buildings have good quality windows, chimneys and other architectural features worthy of additional protection.

5.6. There are also open spaces of quality.

5.7. Trees and small areas of woodland enhance many areas adding character and diversity to many local street scenes. Some of these are important in their historic and visual qualities and it is most important they are retained.

5.8. This Appraisal proposes amendments to the Conservation Area boundaries that are described elsewhere below.

6. DETAILED CHARACTER ANALYSIS.

6.1 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. There are none in the Conservation Area although it is worth noting two exist elsewhere in the parish namely: RAF Sawbridgeworth WWII airfield defences and a moated site at Mathams Wood.

6.2. Archaeological Sites. There are no designated Areas of Archaeological Significance in the Conservation Area.

6.3. Individually Listed Buildings. A selection of these is described below and has been chosen to illustrate their variety. The descriptions provided are sometimes much abbreviated and based on English Heritages official entries.

6.4. K6 Telephone Kiosk on the central green - Grade II. Type K6. Designed 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. Made by various contractors. Cast iron. Unperforated crowns to top panels and margin glazing to windows and doors. The listing occurred in 1993 and the description and national grid reference provided shows its location as being on the central green. However it no longer exists in this location nor, as observed by the fieldworker, was it located elsewhere in the village. There is a modern kiosk on the east side of High Wych Lane to the north of Dovedale. This issue needs further investigation which may result in EHDC and English Heritage records being amended.

6.5. Stable Block at Bakers Farm, Grade II - Stable block. 1891 for Mr E. B. Barnard of Grove, a racehorse owner. Brick rough rendered with red tile roofs and rendered crow-stepped gables rising above roofs, and having ball finials on the bottom steps. L-shaped stable block in Arts and Craft style, apparently Scottish in derivation. Carved wooden hatchment on centre block 'AD 1891. EBB'. Elevation to lane uninterrupted except for row of regularly spaced ventilators with an iron

cross below each. Crow-stepped gable over loading door to central hay loft, with projecting hoisting-beam and recessed plank door.



Picture 2. Stable Block at Bakers Farm, described as being in the Arts and Crafts style, Scottish derivation.

6.6. The Thatched Cottage, High Wych Lane- Grade II. 17th century or earlier. Irregular stepped thatched house facing south, gable to road.



Picture 3. The Thatched Cottage dating from the 17th century or earlier. Thatch is an important traditional roofing material used in the village that is important to retain.

6.7. Iron Gates to park of The Manor of Groves – Grade II. Iron gates. 19th century. Probably for E. B. Barnard. Tall double gates with scrolled overthrow, all in wrought iron to traditional design. Important element in group around the junction with Bakers Lane.

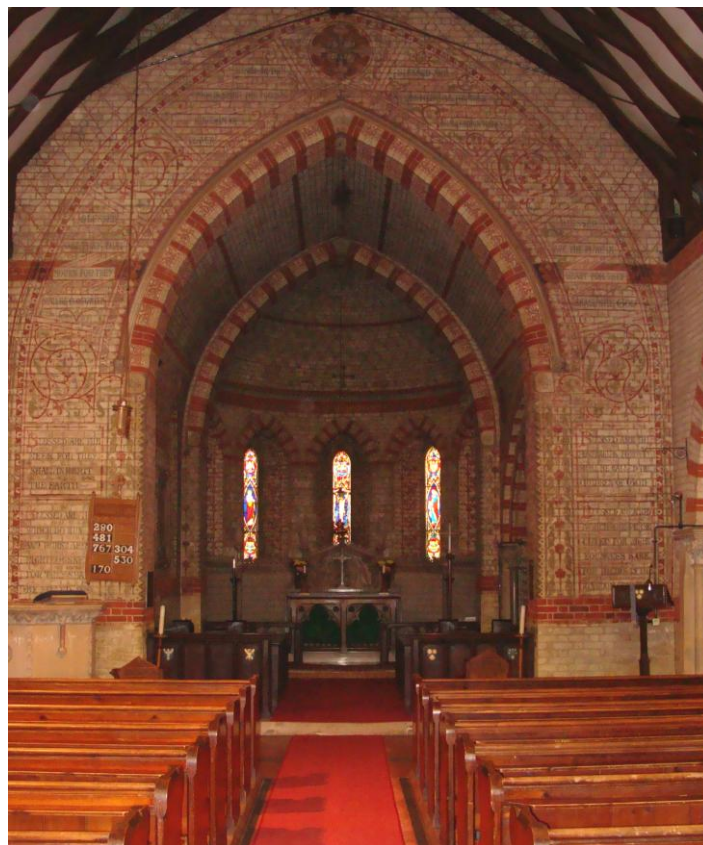
6.8. Wychcroft Cottages – Grade II. 17th century or earlier. Long one and a half storey, thatched roof. Timber frame weather boarded over brick base. Single large central stack rising behind the ridge. Shallow weather boarded lean-to rear addition.



Picture 4. Wychcroft Cottages, 17th century or earlier. **There is concern regarding the condition of the thatched roof that should be monitored. Potentially a candidate to be considered for grant assistance or in the longer term, included on the Council's Buildings at Risk Register, if improvements are not made. The thatched roof has since been repaired and is no longer of concern.**

6.9. Parish Church of St James the Great – Grade II*. 1860-61 by George Edward Pritchett (1824-1912) for and chiefly at the cost of Rev H. F. Johnson. A striking village church in Pritchett's personal interpretation of the Early English style. A vast red tile roof (currently being repaired) tops low buttressed walls of uncoursed knapped flints with red brick bands and stone lancet windows and dressings. Interior of church virtually unaltered. The arcade with red and white voussiors is carried on single slender stone columns with the exaggeratedly large square foliate capitals prominent in the wall paintings in the nave of St Albans Abbey. Contemporary stained glass windows in chancel and apse and slightly later in nave, aisle and vestry. Square stone font on 4 marble pillars, with figure carving on each face. A striking church of original design of which contemporary critics said it shows considerable skill on the part of the architect and which Pevsner regarded "*as original in its handling of Gothic forms as anything in the Art Nouveau of forty years*

later". The church is of the greatest architectural interest, unaltered and retaining its original scheme of painted decoration.



Pictures 5 and 6. The grade II* parish church that Pevsner describes "*as original in its handling of Gothic forms as anything in the Art Nouveau of forty years later*".

6.10. Wall and Gates alongside road at Parish Church of St James and School House – Grade II. 1860-61 presumably by G E Pritchett (1824-1912), architect for church, school and school house. Long flint wall with frequent red brick piers, red brick base course and chamfered coping. Uncoursed, knapped flint. Limestone block set in head of each pier has short cast iron finial in form of a cusped spearhead with raised flower on each face. These support a continuous square wrought iron rail twisted between supports. Idiosyncratic use of varied materials consistent with school, house and church. An interesting design by Pritchett, unusual and different from original proposal shown in perspective.





Pictures 7 and 8. Gate and fine 19th century boundary wall to churchyard.

6.11. School House –Grade II. Schoolmaster's house. 1860-61 by G E Pritchett (1824-1912). Built adjacent to school opened 13 April 1861, two storey knapped flint Gothic style with steep red tiled gabled roof with bellcast at eaves. Paired limestone lancet windows with rectangular recessed sash windows with shouldered heads and herring-bone red brick tympana. Large stock brick central chimney with dentilled and corbelled upper stage with stone corners and 4 square terra-cotta pots. Heavy plank door with decorative iron hinges and shouldered head to frame. Interior sparsely fitted with battened plank doors, chamfered architraves and simple wooden fire surrounds. A little altered purpose-built schoolmaster's house of considerable social and architectural interest.



Picture 9. Fine 19th century schoolmaster's house by G E Pritchett.

6.12. High Wych Grange – Grade II Vicarage, now a house. Built as Vicarage for Rev H. F. Johnson in newly-created parish. In scholarly Gothic style facing W. Designed to give the effect of a tall medieval hall-house with 2 storey gabled cross-wings at each end. Unusually for Hertfordshire, built of stone. Limestone dressings with coursed, squared, rubble walling. Very steep tiled gabled roof, with large timber framed 'louvres', tiled and barge boarded rising above centre of hall range. Picturesque irregular chimneys. Servants' parts in white brick with flat pointed arches, overlooking east service yard. Interior of house has high ceilings, and plaster cornices characterised by wide plain chamfers flanked by smaller mouldings on wall and ceiling. A staircase rises in the west 'hall range' lit by the tall window. A striking 19th century stone house designed by Pritchett giving the impression of a large medieval hall-house, for a wealthy vicar. An essential element in the group of new parish buildings erected by Pritchett for Rev Johnson 1860-62.



Picture 10. 19th century former Vicarage for Rev H F Johnson. Designed by G E Pritchett.

6.13. Important buildings within the curtilages of Listed Building.

Building to south west of School House, is annotated The Bungalow on mapping. Single storey weather boarded structure with hipped roof, heavily mossed. Two chimneys. The building probably of mid 20th century date, is not in use and boarded up. Should be retained and used productively, subject to proper assessment, including internal inspection.



Picture 11. Building to south west of School House worthy of being returned to an appropriate productive use, subject to proper assessment and inspection.

6.14. Other non listed buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution. Gable Cottages, a prominent 19th century block prominent in the local street scene. Constructed of yellow brick with decorative red brick detailing above windows and doors. Complex tiled roof with 3 no. prominent chimneys with pots. Possibly 3 no. original doors. Also single storey brick and tiled roofed outbuilding to rear contemporary with age of cottages. Modern windows to main block detract but impact reduced virtue of using common design. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 12. Gable Cottages, an important group of 19th century properties that is important in the local street scene which should be retained.

6.15. The Rising Sun, 2 storeys 19th century or earlier. Although modified with later additions and modern windows the general mass of the original building is not badly compromised and its general appearance and mass remains an important element in the street scene. Old tiled roof with 2 no. chimneys with pots which should be retained through normal planning process.



Picture 13. The Rising Sun PH. Although compromised to some degree by later extensions its general mass and chimney features are important in the street scene that should be retained.

6.16. St James Cottage, single storey of flint construction with tiled roof and chimneys and pots. Probably 19th century. Stone lintels and cills but modern windows detract. Although set back from the road its mass and form contributes to the quality of the Conservation Area. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for the chimneys may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 14. St James Cottage whose mass and form and distinctive chimneys add to the quality of the streetscape.

6.17. Complex of 3 no. buildings to south of access to High Wych Grange; namely Yew Lodge and Grange Lodge. Advised by resident they were believed to have once been a carriage house and stabling associated with High Wych Grange in the 19th century. Later mapping from the 1920's indicates this association perhaps no longer existed at this time. Of flint and brick construction, central chimney stack with pots, 2 no. original porches and some good quality window detailing. Prominent in the street scene. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for the chimneys and selected features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.





Pictures 15-18. Yew Lodge and Grange Lodge, prominent in the street scene with selected details worthy of additional protection.

6.18. The Curatage. A fine 19th century house of flint and brick construction with pyramidal tiled roof with 2 no. chimneys with pots. Whilst the property has been later extended to the east, the original structure still largely retains its distinctive form. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for the chimneys may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 19. The Curatage, a 19th century property which, despite later additions, largely retains its distinctive original form.

6.19. Other distinctive features that make an important architectural or historic contribution. Walls so identified are protected from demolition without prior consent virtue of exceeding specified height or being within the curtilage of a Listed Building unless otherwise noted.

6.20. The boundary wall to the church is a separately Listed Building and important environmental feature whose qualities have been previously noted.

6.21. War Memorial. This is located close to the boundary wall of the churchyard and its simple elegant design commemorates those who gave their lives in both world wars.



Picture 20. The simple elegance of the War Memorial adds to the quality of the traditional graveyard.

6.22. Selected gravestones within graveyard. Most important are those from the late 19th early 20th centuries.



Picture 21. Selected gravestones in the churchyard add significantly to quality this traditional open space where additional seating might provide a useful service to visitors.

6.23. Important Open Spaces. The small village Green is identified as Registered Common Land. It is a central focal point of the village with mature tree and shelter. The K6 telephone kiosk that was previously located here would have added traditional character to this small space.

6.24. The extensive graveyard is a well kept traditional space of considerable quality and environmental importance setting off the grade II* listed church. Formally planted with traditional churchyard trees, it also contains a range of good quality 19th/20th century gravestones and the War Memorial previously referred to. It is the fieldworker's view that seating could usefully be provided so that this fine traditional environment could be better appreciated and contemplated.

6.25. Pasture land adjacent and to the north of High Wych Grange. This open land is particularly important to the setting of High Wych Grange whose boundaries and extent remain essentially the same as shown on the late 19th century mapping.

6.26. Playing field and associated playground. A pleasant well maintained community open space with maturing trees planted to the front of High Wych Lane. The latter boundary is defined by a concrete post and wire fence that detracts to a degree. The effect of this could be reduced by planting a native species hedge.



Picture 22. The community playing field on High Wych Road would benefit from planting a frontage hedge to disguise the post and wire fencing.

6.27. Particularly important trees and hedgerows. Those trees that are most important are shown very diagrammatically on the accompanying plans. Trees are important particularly when they are of historic interest and visually important. As previously observed parts of the village are a commuter run and affected by the effects of '*creeping urbanisation*'. Trees play an important role in countering this effect and several groups are particularly worthy of mention.

6.28. Spinney opposite Bakers Farm. This is a dense treed area of mature woodland of historic interest appearing on late 19th century mapping and is of high visual importance.



Picture 23. Spinney opposite Baker's Farm, of historic interest and high visual importance.

6.29. Spinney west side of High Wych Lane. An area of woodland the frontage of which is of historical interest with considerable visual qualities complementing groups of Listed Buildings opposite.



Picture 24 .Spinney on west side of High Wych Lane of historic interest and visual importance.

6.30. Important views. A selection as shown on accompanying plans.

6.31. Elements out of character with the Conservation Area. Site and unused building to south west of School House. This site is very untidy and detracts from this part of the Conservation Area. Discussions should take place with owners to seek improvements and secure an appropriate long term future.



Picture 25. Untidy site to south west of School House in need of short term improvements and productive long term future.

6.32. Small industrial estate adjacent to Universal House and west of the central green. This small industrial estate detracts in visual terms but is clearly beneficial in providing employment opportunities.



Pictures 26 and 27. Universal House employment site. Short term improvements might include boundary fence enhancements.

6.33. Scout and Guide HQ hut, Bakers Farm Lane. This flat roofed wooden building has no architectural merit and appears to be in decline. It may suffer from limited funding. Modest improvements such as removing small areas of invasive vegetation and selective cleaning (e.g.sign) would be beneficial. What is the long term future of this structure/site?



Picture 28. The local Scout and Guide HQ. What is the future of this building and site?

6.34. Roadside sign, High Wych Lane. A minor issue easily resolved involving the re-erection of a roadside sign, presumably damaged by traffic contact. **Issue now resolved.**



Picture 29. Re-erection of this street sign would a make worthwhile albeit minor visual improvement. **Issue now resolved**

6.35. Opportunities to secure improvements. Discuss potential of securing long term future of disused building and untidy site to south west of School House with owner. Consider providing seating in the churchyard. Consider planting hedge of native species to front of playing field on High Wych Lane to disguise concrete post and wire fencing. Consider minor improvements to Scout and Guide HQ. Request HCC to re-erect damaged road sign, High Wych Lane.

6.36. Suggested boundary changes. It is proposed to remove several areas from the Conservation Area that are in peripheral locations and which are considered to be of insufficient special architectural or historic interest. Councils have a responsibility to ensure such areas justify Conservation Area status and are not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

6.37. Bakers Farm Cottage and consequential amendment to spinney opposite. This modern mid 20th detached property is located on the western edge of the Conservation Area and is considered to be of insufficient architectural merit or historic interest. It is therefore proposed to be excluded from the Conservation Area. Also a minor boundary adjustment rear of Bakers Farm. A revised boundary continuing to include the adjacent Listed Buildings complex at Bakers Farm is considered more appropriate.

6.38. Wychways and Culland House. These modern mid/late 20th century detached properties are located on the northern edge of the Conservation Area and are considered to be of insufficient architectural merit or historic interest to warrant continued inclusion. They are therefore proposed to be excluded from the Conservation Area. A revised boundary continuing to include the adjacent group of three Listed Buildings to the south is considered more appropriate.

6.39. Properties east of Blacksmiths Way and The Curatage, on the north and south sides of High Wych Road respectively. These modern mid 20th century properties are located on the eastern edge of the Conservation Area and are considered to be of insufficient architectural merit or historic interest to warrant continued inclusion. A windmill once existed (in the grounds of the modern property 'Windmill') but it is recorded there are no visible remains of this structure so any historical associations are very limited indeed. The area is therefore proposed to be excluded from the Conservation Area. A revised boundary that includes the Curatage and Blacksmiths Way is considered more appropriate.



Picture 30. Modern properties on the north side of High Wych Road that are proposed to be excluded from the Conservation Area.

6.40. Other actions. Explore the circumstances surrounding the K6 telephone kiosk, a Listed Building which records show once existed on the central green. Amend records as may be necessary.

PART C - MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS.

7. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS.

7.1. *Revised Conservation Area Boundaries.* The revised boundaries include the following amendments.

- (a) Exclude Bakers Farm Cottage located on the western edge of the Conservation Area and consequential amendment to spinney opposite.**
- (b) Exclude Wychways and Culland House located on the northern edge of the Conservation Area.**
- (c) Exclude properties east of Blacksmiths Way and The Curatage, on the north and south sides of High Wych Road respectively.**

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

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

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

***7.7. Planning Control – Other Unlisted Buildings that make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution.* Within the existing Conservation Areas this Appraisal has identified six unlisted buildings/ groups of buildings that are considered to have sufficient qualities to be described thus. These are Gable Cottages, The Rising Sun, St James Cottage, Yew Lodge complex, Grange Lodge, the original structure of The Curatage. Any proposal involving the demolition of these buildings is unlikely to be approved.**

***7.8. Planning Control – Other Unlisted distinctive features that make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution.* This Appraisal has identified a wall that makes a particular contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. This is protected virtue of Listed Building legislation.**

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

date. This would be associated with further detailed consideration and possible refinement.

7.10. Planning Control – Important open land, open spaces and gaps.

This Appraisal has identified the following particularly important open spaces: the central village green, St Jame’s graveyard, pasture land adjacent to and north of High Wych Grange and playing field west side of High Wych Lane. These open spaces will be protected.

7.11. Planning Control – Particularly important trees and hedgerows.

Only the most significant trees are shown diagrammatically. Two areas of woodland are particularly important, namely the spinney opposite Baker’s Farm and the spinney to the west of High Wych Lane. It has not been possible to plot trees on inaccessible land. Subject to certain exceptions all trees in a Conservation Area are afforded protection and a person wanting to carry out works has to notify the Council. Trees that have not been identified may still be considered suitable for protection by Tree Preservation Orders. Owners are advised to make regular inspections to check the health of trees in the interests of amenity and Health and Safety.

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

7.13. Enhancement Proposals. The Appraisal has identified a number of elements that detract which are summarised in the Table below together with a proposed course of action; other actions are also identified. Within the staff and financial resources available, Council Officers will be pro-active and provide assistance. It must be recognized that such improvements will generally be achieved only by the owner’s co-operation.

Detracting element	Location	Proposed Action.
Untidy site and building in the curtilage of a Listed Building	To south west of School House	Contact owner and seek short term improvements/ establish long term future
Boundary fencing	Industrial estate adjacent to Universal House	Contact owners and seek short term improvements/ establish long term future
Boundary fencing	To front of playing field High Wych Lane	Discuss possibilities, including planting hedge of native species, with Parish Council
Scout and Guide HQ	Bakers Farm Lane	Discuss potential of minor improvements such as removal of vegetation and cleaning of sign. Long term future?
Damaged road sign	High Wych Lane	Request HCC to resolve

Tarpaulin on thatched roof	Wychcroft Cottages	Seek to establish nature/ extent of any repair work that may be necessary and offer advice/assistance to owner as appropriate.
Other Actions		
Explore the circumstances surrounding the K6 telephone kiosk, a Listed Building no longer present which records show once existed on the central green. Amend records as may be necessary.		
Explore the possibility of providing seating within the churchyard.		

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 Re-pointing 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.**