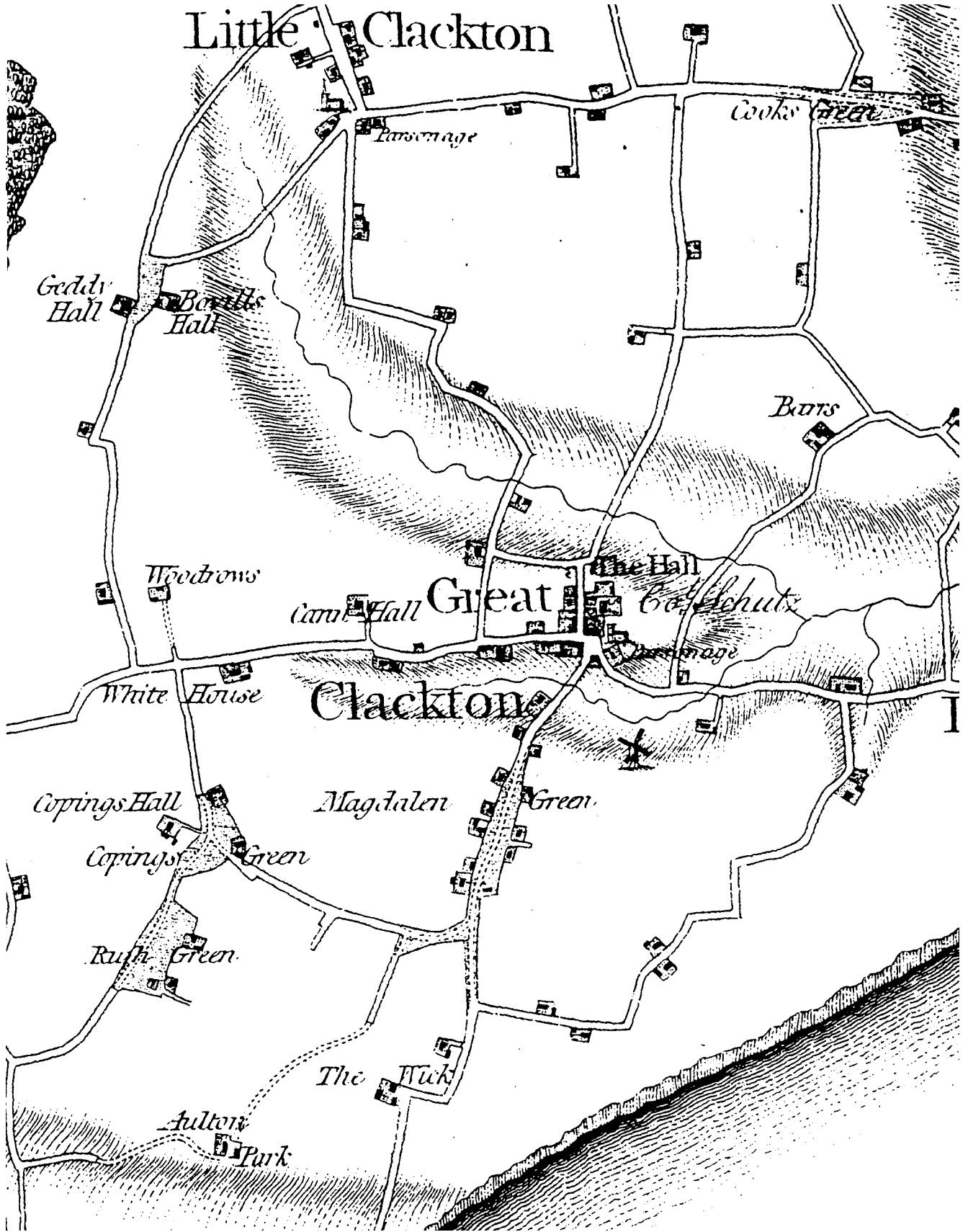




# Great Clacton Conservation Area



## **DISCLAIMER**

### **CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISALS**

**This Conservation Area Character Appraisal adopted by the Council in March 2006 and appearing on this WebPage is derived from an earlier document produced for the Council by consultants Smith Stuart Reynolds in 2001. Subsequently, the Council published these documents for consultation purposes in late 2005. These were then partially updated and amended to reflect the comments received from town and parish councils and other interested parties. No comprehensive revision and updating of the 2001 documents took place.**

**The Council recognises that over time changes have taken place to various buildings referred to in the Appraisals so that certain comments / statements made in relation to those buildings are now, no longer applicable. For up to date information relating to planning applications, permissions or other developments on individual buildings referred to in the Appraisals you are advised to use the Council's planning public access search engine at [www.tendringdc.gov.uk/TendringDC/Environment/Planning+and+Buildings/](http://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/TendringDC/Environment/Planning+and+Buildings/) or contact Regeneration, Planning and Community Services on 01255 686161.**

### Great Clacton Conservation Area

This Conservation Area Character Appraisal has been produced by the District Council but is based on earlier work by consultants Smith Stuart Reynolds in 2001. These earlier documents contain the views of the consultant and did not necessarily reflect the Council's Officer's views. Although these documents have existed for some time they had no formal, planning status.

The Council subsequently agreed in 2005 to prepare Conservation Area Character Appraisals for each of its Conservation Areas and as a forerunner to updating the above consultant's documents a consultation exercise took place in late 2005/early 2006. This involved town and parish councils and certain local amenity bodies. The results of the consultation exercise were reported to the Council's Planning Portfolio Holder when the document was formally considered for adoption as Council planning policy. As a result of this consultation the Appraisal documents have been amended and updated in the light of the comments received from consultees and as a result of certain changes which have taken place since 2001. Much of the descriptive material used in the original SSR documents has been retained.

Proposals originally put forward by the Consultant involving suggested changes to Conservation Area boundaries, enhancement works or proposed Article 4 Directions have been retained in these latest documents. However, it is recognised that town or parish councils do not support some of these suggestions and this is referred to in the appropriate document. Their inclusion in the documents as suggestions only does not indicate that the District Council supports such proposals at this time. They will be subject to further consideration by the Council in due course. Indeed all such proposals for boundary changes, and any new Article 4 Directions will be required to go through quite separate, statutory processes which will also be carried out with further public consultation.

This document has been formally adopted by the Council as part of its planning policies for this conservation area under the provisions of Section 71 of the Planning [Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas] Act 1990. It will therefore be an important material consideration in relation to the assessment and determination of planning and related applications in the Conservation Area.

#### **SUMMARY**

**Great Clacton Conservation Area represents the centre of the old village, now surrounded with housing development from the expansion of Clacton, but retaining its function as a focus for the surrounding community. It derives its character from this service, most notably represented by the fine church and three old inns. Other historic buildings provide a focal point south west of the church.**

## Great Clacton Conservation Area

### LOCATION

Great Clacton is located in suburban development approximately 2 km (1.25 miles) to the north of Clacton-on-Sea, to the east of the A133 which forms the main route into the town. It lies on an important junction in the secondary road network, particularly the inland road running east-west through the Clacton conurbation and connecting Holland-on-Sea with St Osyth and Colchester.

### DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The scale and importance of the Norman parish church gives some indication of the relative importance of Great Clacton, which was the most significant settlement in the area until the emergence of Clacton-on-Sea in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Chapman and André's Essex map of 1777 shows the village concentrated around the south east corner of a small square of roads where the north-south route from Little Clacton crossed the east-west route between Little Holland and St Osyth. As is so often the case, the roads do not meet in a regular arrangement, and prominent on this map is the important space south west of the church created as the roads from the south (Old Road) and from the east (Valley Road) converge. The Ship Inn can be identified, and the southern end of North Road and the south side of St Johns Road are the most consistently developed locations.

Little had altered by the time of the first 6" edition of the Ordnance Survey in 1874, apart from incidental items pointing to changes in agricultural operations such as the steam corn mill that had been erected on Old Road opposite the entrance to the windmill (now Windmill Park and just outside the Area). In the last century the growth of Great Clacton has the levels of vehicle-borne traffic have all but overwhelmed the setting of this village, but its character survives as a commercial centre and an important focal point for its surroundings.

### CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARIES

The Area is centred on the junctions of St Johns Road with North Road, Old Road and Valley Road. It includes the Queens Head and the southern end of North Road, St Johns Road westwards from Three Chimneys, the northern end of Old Road and Valley Road as far as the Methodist Chapel. The boundary takes in the horticultural site north of Valley Road and the churchyard, as well as the Grade II listed Great Clacton Hall and its garden abutting the supermarket car park north of the church.

### REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN POLICY CONTEXT

The Area is positioned well within the urban area of Great Clacton and is well within the Development Boundary. Main Shopping Area designation is allocated to the northwest corner of the area to encompass the North Road and St. Johns Road retailing fronts. The north east corner houses the listed building of St. John the Baptist Church, and the churchyard is designated as a Protected Open Space.

## AREA APPRAISAL

### *Church of St John the Baptist*

The most impressive building in Great Clacton is the Church of St John Baptist, a significant Norman church with heavily-buttressed elevations in septaria with thin brick quoins. The weather boarding of the belfry stage of the tower adds to the prominence of this building as an important local landmark, with its short pyramidal spire. South of the church is a well maintained churchyard with many fine ornamental trees. Features of particular importance are the avenue of limes leading to the south porch, the strong enclosure on the south side, and a prominent and unusual tomb which makes an effective pinch point with a lamp post at a slight curve in the churchyard path leading eastwards.

The churchyard path leading to the west tower is however in variable condition, and the paved space in front of the tower is a bland area of tarmac. The church hall is a system building of insufficient visual appeal in this setting. The relationship between the church and the extensive car park to the north is also problematic; there is a rough untreated area immediately north of the church itself, but there is a new black painted cast iron gate and fence.

A pleasant walkway with good boundaries and mature planting leads westwards to North Street. The only part of the Area north of this path is Great Clacton Hall now used as a residential home for the elderly. This is of two storeys, with a double pile roof over elevations of smooth buff render. Mature trees to the south and west of the curtilage contrast with a rather open frontage to the car park where the upkeep of shingle areas and the position of waste disposal are unresolved problems.

### *North Road*

The path emerges on North Road next to a prominent street tree. To the north, development is mostly post-war and of varied character, although the surgery on the west side is of late Victorian date with robust details. Nos 8-14, a terrace of four early 20<sup>th</sup> century houses with fake half-timbered elevations and altered windows stands behind a sequence of rather open fronted gardens with concrete or tarmac vehicle parking. They stand opposite nos 3-11, a terrace of five two-storey Victorian houses, originally of yellow brick but now rendered under a slate roof. They are otherwise little altered apart from the projecting ground floor windows of nos 9 and 11. The two properties at the southern end are double-fronted, one of which contains a disused shop with an old shop front. This adjoins the Old Plough, a two storey building with fake half-timbering under a slate roof. The slight set-back from the road frontage helps it to make a picturesque composition with its neighbours, and has been used to provide a projecting porch and bay window and some outside seating. It dates back at least to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and was formerly the brewery to the adjacent Queens Head Hotel, one of the most significant properties in the Area after the church. Both of these public houses are Listed Grade II.

### *St Johns Road*

The Queens Head, its car park and garden fill the north west corner between North Road and St Johns Road. It is an impressive building, with two vernacular ranges under roofs of old clay tiles given additional prominence by a splendid full-height circular bow window on the corner. A formal elevation to North Road with tall diamond-leaded lights contrast with a more homely elevation in the two-and-half storey façade to St Johns Road. The west elevation to the car park is also varied, with a two storey flat roofed extension relatively prominent in views from this angle. The car park of plain reddish tarmac has an inconsistent frontage of white steel bollards, and gives views to the backs of properties on North Road as well as a semi-derelict weatherboarded and pantiled barn. The pub garden and games area to the rear is outside the Area.

On the south side of St Johns Road, the western edge of the Area is formed by Three Chimneys, another fine vernacular building with elevations of white-painted brickwork and a clay tiled roof. This house has large chimney stacks at either end, and a timber-framed rear extension. Its grounds are filled with mature trees, and there are two fine specimens in the front garden.

The south side of St Johns Road is formed by a group of commercial properties of various dates and styles. The post office and adjacent house, for example, are two storey Victorian properties in red brick with white brick details under a slate roof. The take-away restaurant next door is later but picks up many of the same characteristics. It has a reticent modern fascia, and both these properties are prominent in views from the west. Next door is a tea room and builders' office, an earlier two storey structure with a rendered front elevation containing sash windows above modern extended shop fronts. There are views either side of this property to some rather scruffy rear areas.

To the west again is Saddlers Cottage (Listed Grade II), a tiny weatherboarded cottage with a roof of concrete tiles. The façade contains sash windows and an old shop front behind a dwarf wall of brick with septaria panels. Its setting is very much compromised by the adjacent pedestrian crossing with its lights and control box. A small concrete parking space to the side is poorly detailed.

A 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century house takes St Johns Road to the corner with Old Road and Valley Road. This is of two storeys with rendered elevations under a clay tiled roof unfortunately shorn of chimney stacks. The façade contains altered windows, particularly the shop windows with their small paned pattern. A small open forecourt is paved with concrete slabs. The return is much more attractive; the original chimneys, door details and sash windows have been retained behind an appropriately detailed forecourt with trees.

The north east corner between North Street and St Johns Road is taken up with a plain though consistent post-war development of shops in facades variously of brick and weatherboarding. A considerable set back on the North Road frontage allows room for commercial display, contrasting with the narrow pavements on St Johns Road. The rear service yard is well maintained though dull. An old brick wall has survived between the entrance to the rear yard and the houses to the north. The access also gives a glimpse of the church tower.

To the west, and in a very prominent position within the Area as a whole, are elegant properties dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They have elevations in plain white render under a hipped slate roof with plain wide eaves. While the western property has the remains of a Victorian shop front, the central and eastern have oddly-proportioned porticos. The whole terrace makes an important group with the old facades across the road and the fine horse-chestnut at the entrance to the churchyard.

In other respects, the churchyard entrance could be in better condition; gate piers and concrete bollards are marooned and damaged, surfaces are generally poor, and a panelled fence to the vicarage on the south side does not help to produce a sense of enclosure.

The southern side of this important space is formed by the Ship Inn, a fine timber-framed property of two-and-half storeys dating from at least the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Its attractive central gable has a carved bressummer beam, and the wings to the side would originally have been jettied. It stands behind a plain half-moon area with concrete bollards, and has a bland car park to the rear.

### ***Old Road***

Old Road proceeds southwards past a sympathetically redeveloped housing site (formerly a clothing factory) with an important row of trees in the dip to the south. On the road frontage are a pair of single storey shops and a small brick cottage which was boarded up at the time of survey. The mature trees to the west are matched by a large self-seeded area behind a timber boarded fence to the east. This is followed on the east by a group of modern council houses in a formal arrangement around a small front green, and then by a pretty pair of two storey cottages under a hipped slate roof. The final house within the Area is a rambling property, the original cottage being gable end to the road with a large rear extension. A screen of mature sycamores forms the back drop to these properties, and an effective edge to the Area.

On the other side of the road, a single storey sectional building with a bland shingled forecourt operating as auction rooms gives way to No. 383, a listed timber-framed cottage of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century behind an early 19<sup>th</sup> century façade under a slate roof. The low brick wall to the road frontage is a significant feature, as is the mature planting of the front garden and the attractive single storey outbuilding to the south with its louvered cupola.

### ***Valley Road***

Valley Road runs to the south east from the centre of the Area, and has almost a suburban character between well-maintained properties with good front boundaries. On the south side, and east of the Ship Inn, is Eaglehurst, a Victorian property with spindly half-timbering over a brick base. A second gable is in brick and leads to a substantial front boundary wall in panelled brick. Beyond this, another self-seeded area screens an informal and attractive wooded path to Windmill Park which gives access to a modern hall set in a simply detailed curtilage.

Opposite, and at the south eastern edge of the Area, is Great Clacton Methodist Church, a neatly-maintained and rendered building with simple gothic details and a prominent gable with projecting porch. In contrast, its parking area is rather bland and the surrounding detail is poorly maintained. To the west, a pair of cottages are set back from the road behind open vehicle forecourts. They stand next to Forge Cottage, listed as dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and immaculately maintained with a well-detailed drive and a well-maintained garden frontage. The garden contains fine trees to the north and west.

Above and behind Forge Cottage is the drive to the Fruit Farm. This is a substantial rectangular area given over to horticulture, with two modern houses and a range of outbuildings. It is well-enclosed to all sides apart from the Area boundary to the east. Back on the road frontage is the curtilage of St Johns Vicarage a thinly-detailed post-war house with plain lawns and some evergreens to the road frontage.

## **APPRAISAL PLAN**

The above analysis has been used to generate Maps 1 and 2, indicating the essential structure of the Conservation Area and its relative quality. Included in Map 2 are features regarded as either negative or neutral compared to the character and appearance of the Area, as follows.

### *Negative factors*

The auction room on Old Road is identified as a negative factor because it is an unattractive building which makes no attempt to contribute to the character of the street.

### *Neutral factors*

Identified under this category are further buildings or locations which are unobjectionable in general terms but which fail to add up to convincing townscape in this sensitive location. They are:

- The vicarage
- 8-14 North Road
- The community centre and the small area of school grounds on the south side of Valley Road.

## **SUGGESTED ENHANCEMENTS: BUILDINGS**

The church hall is an insufficiently substantial building in its important setting, and it would be a considerable enhancement if it were replaced, and a proper relationship with the church tower created.

The Plough Public House has been badly damaged by fire but it is expected that it will be repaired and reopened in the near future.

## **SUGGESTED ENHANCEMENTS: CURTILAGES**

Given the excellent condition of the Queens Head and its grounds, the car park frontage to St Johns Road is something of a disappointment and might be made more robust and consistent.

The grounds to the rear of The Ship Inn are prominent in the character of Old Road and are unfortunately unkempt.

Improvements to the car parking associated with the Methodist chapel and to the east of Saddlers Cottage have been referred to in the text.

## **SUGGESTED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS**

The entrance to the churchyard from the south west is a critical element in the character of the Area, given the fine horse-chestnut and the proximity of listed buildings. The car park surface, posts and bollards, noticeboards, surrounding boundaries and the area

under the tree need reconsideration in a comprehensive manner.

The forecourt to the Ship Inn is plain, and the concrete bollards unsympathetic to the character of this listed building. Improvements might soften the pervasive impact of the traffic circulation arrangements in this important location.

## **BOUNDARY REVIEW**

The Area boundaries generally reflect the incidence of properties of visual value and historic interest, or the potential for redevelopment, to which must be added the cleared factory site at the north end of Old Road. The attractiveness of the older properties at the southern edge of the Area on Old Road are considered in this instance sufficient justification for the consequential inclusion of the auction room and the flats opposite, which do not contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Area.

Only at the south eastern corner of the Area is the boundary questionable, where it runs across the grounds of the Community Centre. If this boundary is reconsidered as a result, it has to be said that neither the hall nor the path contribute much to the character of the Area as the old centre of a village, and it is recommended that the Area is redefined along the eastern boundary of Eaglehurst.

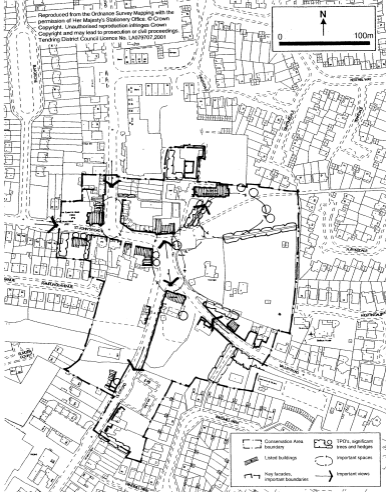
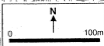
The effect of this adjustment is shown on Map 3.

## **Further Information**

For further information about the Conservation Area Reviews please contact Tendring District Council's Heritage and Conservation Manager on 01255 686170.



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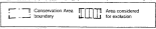
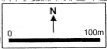
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Tending District Council  
**GREAT CLACTON  
CONSERVATION AREA  
MAP 1  
STRUCTURE**



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Tendring District Council  
**GREAT CLACTON  
CONSERVATION AREA**  
**MAP 3**  
**BOUNDARY REVIEW**



1. The Parish Church of St. John the Baptist, as seen from the adjacent car park. This is a substantial and important building, the setting of which is very attractive to the south but more compromised to the north.



2. A fine horse-chestnut tree defines the entrance to the churchyard from the south-west. Unfortunately, many other features of this prominent location do not make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Area as a whole.



3. The pedestrian walk-ways leading from North Road to the car park have been very attractively laid-out, with good surfaces, well-considered boundaries on the whole, and a wealth of mature planting.



4. These properties on North Road make very little contribution to the Area, which recognises the commercial centre of this old village. The matter has not been helped by the loss of the front garden boundaries as a result of vehicle parking.



5. The exacting demands of vehicle borne traffic have turned the public spaces in the centre of the old village into traffic corridors. This has resulted in a narrow footpath in front of the modern shops on the right, and the installation of traffic control equipment out of scale with the tiny cottage in the centre.



6. The impressive Queens Head has many delightful features, and its car park is generally well laid-out and maintained. The actual frontage to St. John's Road, however, is insufficiently well-defined in this context.



7. This attractive group of cottages forms the entrance to the Area from the south. Their strong relationship to the road and their background of mature planting are both positive features in the street scene.



8. In contrast, the Auction Rooms opposite fail to make any positive contribution to the character of the Area. The plainness of the building and the openness of the forecourt make it a negative factor.



9. This view of the north end of Old Road shows the importance of the surviving Listed Buildings in creating distinctive townscape. The cleared factory site is a prominent feature. The Site has been sympathetically redeveloped for housing.



10. Well-maintained properties and street frontages contribute to the distinctive character of Valley Road as it enters the Area. The spreading roof of the Ship Inn is a particularly delightful feature.



11. Once again, the demands of vehicular traffic have compromised the setting of the Ship Inn and its neighbouring Listed Buildings. The forecourt to the Ship is particularly plain and could do with visual improvement.



12. The Methodist Church on Valley Road has a projecting gable and porch, and is a prominent feature at the entrance to the Area. In contrast, its parking area requires considerable attention in terms of materials and maintenance.