

Witherley

Conservation Area

Designated

Watery Witherley would be a very good description of this picturesque village which lies in the south west corner of the Borough. Improvements to the flow of the river Anker which divides the village from Warwickshire to the northwest have reduced the impact of flooding from the spectacular events of earlier years. For at least 500 years the tall spire of the present 14th century St Peter's Church has been a landmark in the countryside around. Following its destruction by lightning in 1924 it was rebuilt to a lower height but is still nearly 48 metres high. The famous Atherstone Hunt has its stables and kennels at Witherley. Constructed in 1835, it was the subject of a book by Seigfried Sassoon, "The Memoirs of a Foxhunting Man". Before the Second World War, the village was almost self sufficient and included a smithy, bakery, slaughterhouse, mill, post office and a shop. However since the 1960's, the settlement has seen major new development. Village farms have disappeared, traditional cottages have been demolished, or modernised and only pockets of the traditional character of the village remain.



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

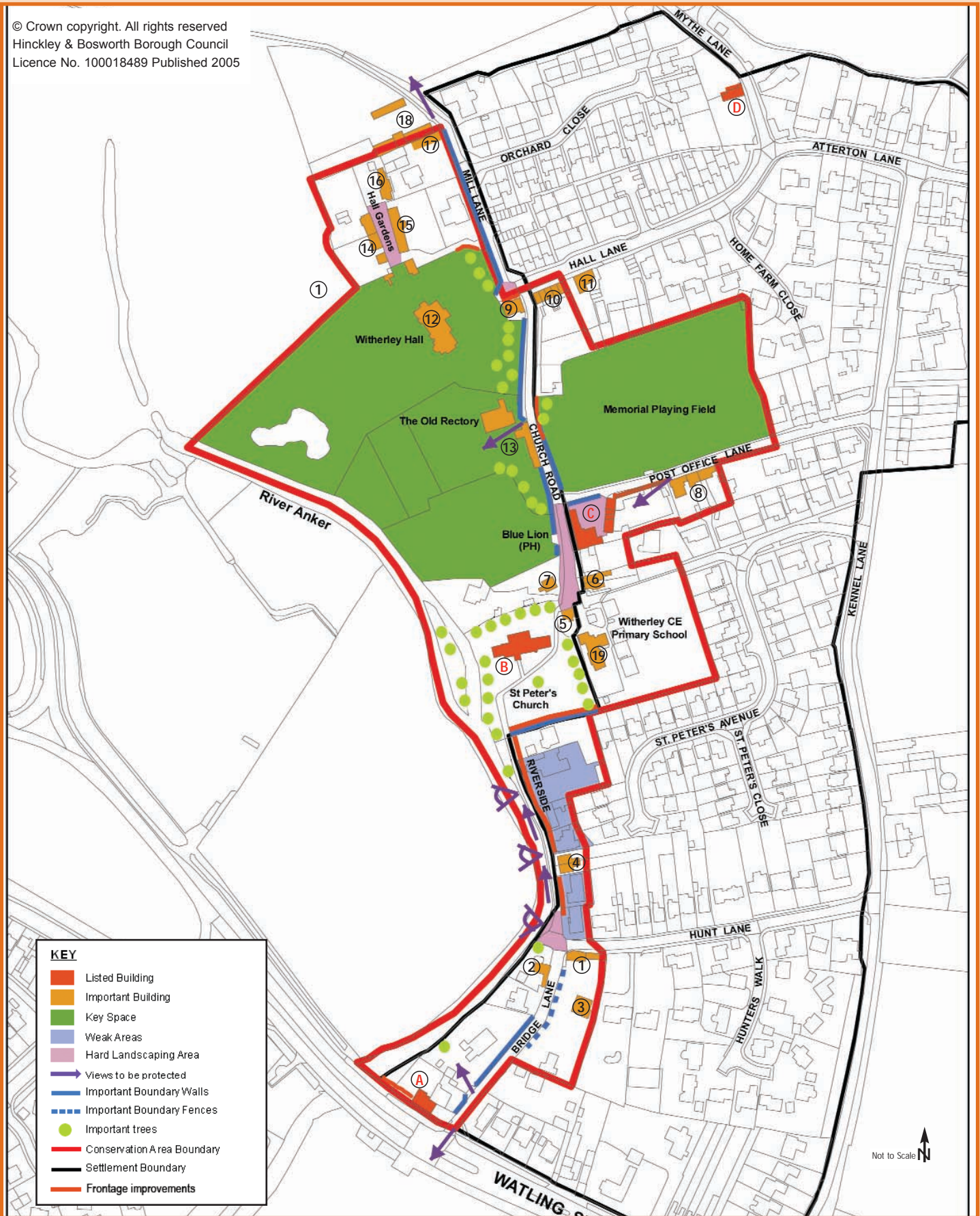
A Borough to be proud of

Corporate Performance & Strategy June 2007

Document adopted 31st July 2007



Church House Farm



Listed Buildings - (A) Bridge House (B) St Peter's Church (C) Blue Lion Public House and outbuildings (D) Mythe Lane Cottage

Unlisted Buildings of Local Historic or Architectural Importance -

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| (1) 1 Bridge Lane | (5) 1 Church Road | (9) 2 Hall Lane | (13) The Rectory | (17) Greenhouse |
| (2) 2 Bridge Lane | (6) 2 & 4 Church Road | (10) 4-12 Hall Lane | (14) The Stables | (18) Farm Buildings |
| (3) 3 Bridge Lane | (7) 5 Church Lane | (11) Home Farm | (15) The Coach House | (19) Primary School |
| (4) 3/4 Riverside | (8) 15/19 Post Office Lane | (12) Witherley Hall | (16) Nurses House | |

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING POSITIVELY TO THE CONSERVATION AREA

Archaeology

Although Witherley derives its name from the Saxon "Wigtrypes Lea" the settlement has associations with Roman Times. Located to the south of the village are the earthworks of the Roman camp Manduessedum, a scheduled ancient monument. The camp which is generally rectangular in shape sits astride Watling Street.

Setting

Witherley is located in the shallow valley of the River Anker. The surrounding countryside is comparatively flat, generally under pasture and is well provided with trees particularly around the village itself. The parish church of St Peter acts as the focal point of the village and the main part of the settlement is screened by trees. The village of Witherley has developed around the point at which Watling Street (A5) crosses the river Anker. Although this major road has been the reason for its development and has limited the settlements southern boundary, its impact on the village has been very limited. Village roads are rural in character with generally very narrow footpaths or in some cases with no footpaths.

Gateways and views

The meandering path of the River Anker defines the western limit of this village conservation area and provides strong visual qualities which has welded together its built fabric. Bridge house, a fine three storey grade II listed Georgian mansion on the edge of Watling Street marks the southern entrance into the Conservation Area. Access from the north and east is limited to the lanes from Atterton and Ratcliffe. These link up at Mythe Lane cottage, a grade II listed medieval timber framed property, to enter the Conservation Area along Hall Lane, the principle entrance to Witherley Hall.

Views into and out of the area are dominated by the tall elegant spire of St Peter's Church which can be seen from several vantage points, particularly on the settlement's northern and western sides.

Townscape and Architectural Quality of the Buildings

The publically accessible land within the Conservation Area is divided into four distinct areas.

- 1 Bridge Lane:** This is characterised by distinctive Victorian high brick walls and cast iron railings, now interwoven with hedging. These features channel views along the road and, to a large extent, have successfully reduced the impact of adjacent modern development. They are to be protected and new openings kept minimal.
- 2 Riverside and St Peter's church yard:** Within the settlement, recent development has had a major detrimental impact on the traditional character of the historic core. This is evident along this important river frontage. Large single storey properties have been constructed set well back from the road with wide windows, shallow pitched roofs, man-made materials and open frontages to take advantage of the views. Now, only a single pair of Victorian houses with blue brick boundary walls remain as a legacy of the former river frontage buildings.
- 3 Church Road:** This area is dominated by the large flat open recreation ground, the Memorial Playing Field. Together with the nearby Victorian primary school, they act as a secondary focal point for the village. Linking both is a fine area of village streetscape overlooked by several traditional village buildings including the Blue Lion public house. On the southern and western sides of the recreation ground, with few exceptions, buildings have also retained their traditional appearance and modern infill development has been avoided.
- 4 Witherley Hall:** The final area is dominated by the massively high boundary walls of Witherley Hall. It includes the Hall's iron entrance gates, its lodge, its distinctive workers cottages and other associated brick structures.

Building Style, Scale, and Detail

Within the conservation area, there is no dominant building style. Vernacular buildings reflect the agricultural origins of the village and with few exceptions are two storeys in height, with simple plan set close to or on the back edge of the road. Roofs are gabled with blue clay tiles or slate coverings, brick dentil courses, plain ridge chimneys, over-sailing eaves or sometimes, decorative bargeboards. Brick elevations are plain with an occasional ground floor bay window or modern porch. Modern rendering has been detrimental but is limited to a few properties on Post Office Lane. Frequent architectural details include vertically proportioned windows, beneath segmental arches or stone lintels and blue canted brick sills. Away from public view, Witherley Hall and the Rectory have spectacular wooded



grounds extending down to the river. The Blue Lion public house overlooks the intersection of Church Road and Post Office Lane. Dormer windows and roof lights are not a characteristic of properties in the Conservation Area.

Boundary Treatments

High walls of blue brick, often with triangular or saddle back coping, are an important historic feature of the street scene. These are closely associated with the principle historic houses in the area, channel views along the street and gives the conservation area a unique appearance. Other traditional treatments include intricate Victorian cast iron railings set over blue brick boundary walls and also hedges.

Contribution of Spaces and Natural Elements

Riverside and the church yard with their spectacular views to the west are the most important public spaces in the area and give the Conservation Area its unique image. These views, edged by mature trees, provide a striking contrast to the enclosure of the Memorial Field with its low boundary hedges and wooden railings. Key private green spaces are the grounds of the Rectory, the adjacent paddock and Witherley Hall all of which have been carefully landscaped and fall gently towards the river.

Important hard surfaced streetscapes include the Witherley Hall stable yard, and the southern end of Church Road which have retained some traditional surface finishes and are particularly sensitive to change.

FACTORS HAVING A NEGATIVE INFLUENCE ON THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

Buildings of Poor Visual Quality

Within the area there has been new development in the post war period. These buildings which have been erected have for the most part not strengthened the traditional qualities of the area. Single storey buildings, particularly, where not sited behind traditional high brick walls, by reason of their design scale and layout appear discordant with the traditional streetscape.

Enhancement

The enhancement of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area can be defined as the reinforcement of the qualities providing the special interest, which warranted designation. It may be through the sympathetic improvements to site frontages identified in the detailed analysis of the area. It may involve physical proposals or the application of

sensitive, detailed development control over extensions and alterations. Areas which warrant special attention for enhancement are marked on the Conservation Area plan.

GENERAL CONSERVATION AREA GUIDANCE, PLANNING CONTROLS AND POLICIES

To maintain the distinctive character and appearance of the Witherley Conservation Area it will be necessary to:

- Retain listed buildings and buildings of local interest.
- Ensure new development contributes positively to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area: siting, scale, design and materials used.
- Ensure house extensions satisfy the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Resist development proposals in the key areas which have been identified.
- Ensure the consistent application of positive, sensitive and detailed development control over proposals to alter Bridge House, Witherley Hall, the Rectory, their grounds and associated buildings.
- Ensure important views of the church, the river and out into the countryside are protected.

Special attention should be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the appearance of a Conservation Area. Planning applications in Conservation Areas are separately advertised. The principal effects of the designation of a Conservation Area are summarised as follows:

- Consent is required for the total (or substantial) demolition of any building (exceeding 115 cubic metres).
- Applications for outline planning permission are not normally acceptable. Full planning applications are likely to be required.
- Planning permission is required for
 - 1) the external cladding of any building with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles.
 - 2) alteration of the roof which results in its enlargement.
 - 3) a satellite dish on chimney, wall or roof fronting a highway.
- The design of all new shop fronts, advertisements and security grills should be in accordance with the Council's Shopping and Shop Fronts Supplementary Planning Document.
- Anyone proposing works to a tree in a Conservation Area must give six weeks written notice to the local planning authority.

These requirements do not cover all aspects of control in Conservation Areas and you are advised to contact the Local Planning Authority.

For further advice contact:

The Conservation Officer

Corporate Performance & Strategy • Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
Council Offices • Argents Mead • Hinckley • Leics • LE10 1BZ

Tel 01455 238141 Email planning@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

Web Site www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk



Former Stables