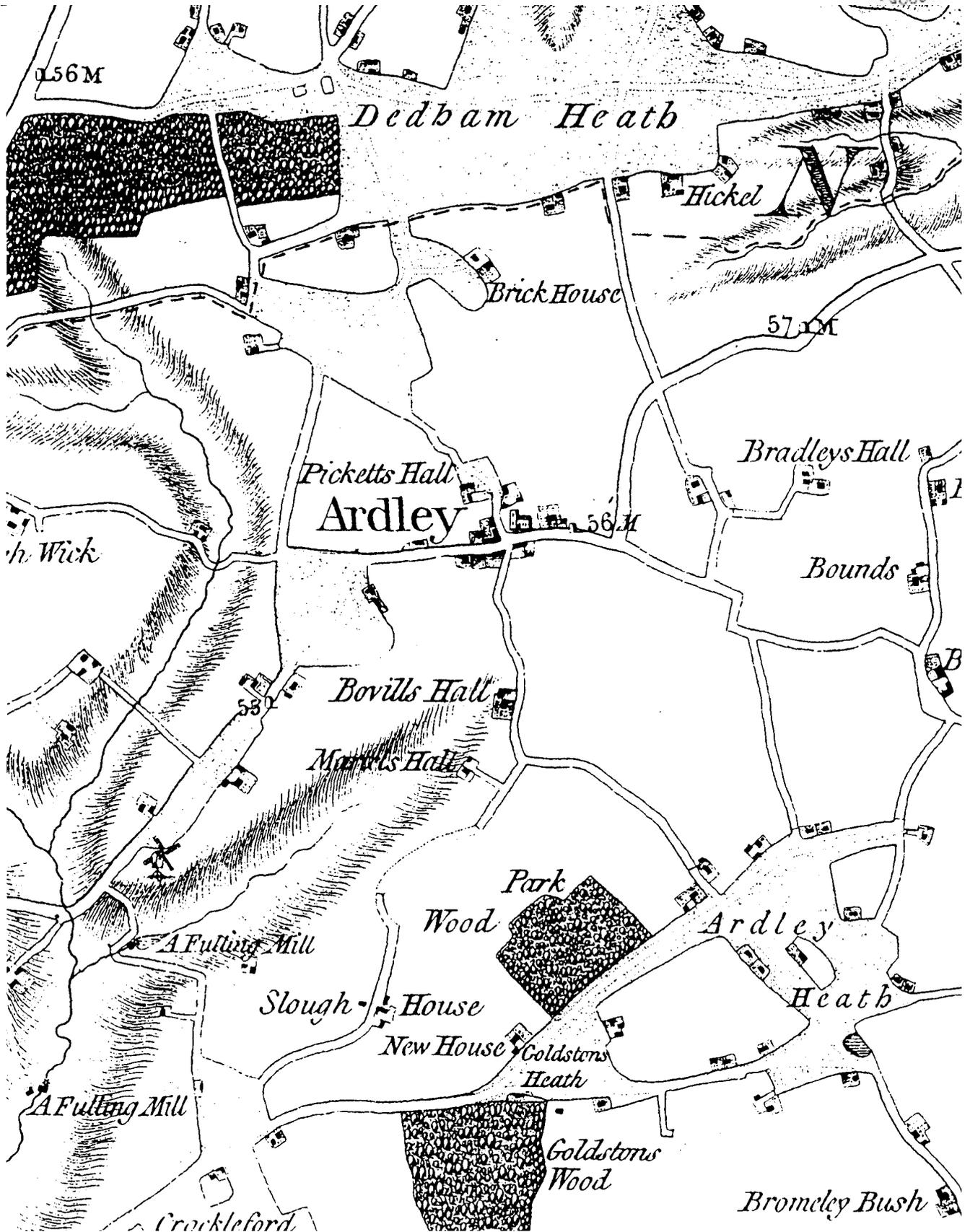




Ardleigh Conservation Area



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referred to in the Appraisals so that certain comments / statements made in relation to those buildings are now, no longer applicable.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/ or contact Regeneration, Planning and Community Services on 01255 686161.

Ardleigh 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

Ardleigh is a small medieval village at an important road junction, and retains its fine church and sequences of attractive vernacular buildings. The well-treed approaches to the north and the east are essential to the character of the village and are also included in the Area. The village expanded southwards in the 19th century, resulting in further groups of distinctive buildings, which with their settings are also recognised by Area designation.

Ardleigh Conservation Area

LOCATION

Ardleigh stands on the A137 roughly half way between Colchester and Manningtree where it is crossed by the B1029 between Dedham and Brightlingsea. It lies in relatively flat countryside, very open in character, particularly to the north and south-west of the village.

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Early maps show the village concentrated around the crossroads, with the Church in the north eastern quadrant and the core of the village on the western limb towards Colchester. This state of affairs subsisted until well into the 20th Century, despite the construction of the railway between Colchester and Harwich and the development of Ardleigh Station and the nearby railway tavern, now Tavern House, to the south of the village. There has been considerable development in the last fifty years, most notably the western extension of the village, the redevelopment of Ardleigh Court, and the infilling of land between the crossroads and the Station. The Conservation Area covers the crossroads and the southern extension on either side of Station Road.

CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARIES

The northern apex of the Area is found at the triangular grassed area opposite the former Ardleigh Hall. From here the boundary runs eastwards to take in the backs of properties on The Street and the grounds of Ardleigh Court and the cemetery on Harwich Road. South of Harwich Road the Area includes The Limes, and then turns southwards to include the developed part of the village including the grounds of New Hall.

Turning westwards along the railway line, the Area boundary crosses Station Road and proceeds northwards along the backs of properties on the west side of Station Road. It remains closely associated with Station Road and Colchester Road, turning northwards again to take in the gardens of houses on the west side of The Street and the grounds of Ardleigh Hall.

REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN POLICY CONTEXT

Ardleigh village is clearly defined by its Development Boundary. Protected Open Spaces are designated just south of the junction between Church View and the Chapel Croft cul-de-sac, also at the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin, and at the village cemetery in the eastern corner. The grounds adjoining Ardleigh Hall, which lie west of The Street at the northern tip of the village, are also shown as an Protected Open Space and it is here that the Conservation Area boundary runs adjacent to two specific sites which are Safeguarded Existing Employment Areas. The Conservation Area expands its boundary beyond the Development Boundary in the south corner of the village to incorporate New Hall and the railway line. The Local Plan also safeguards the car park, which occupies a small plot to the east of the Harwich and Station Road crossroads in the village centre.

AREA APPRAISAL

Despite the general openness of the landscape, the approaches to the older part of the village are relatively well screened. From the north, mature hedgerows and trees on either side of The Street restrict forward views of the village, while from the east, the village presents itself – as so many other villages in the district – as a mediaeval Church tower surrounded by mature planting. The crossroads is certainly very busy with traffic, although the area has an identity given to it by the dispositions of buildings and the arrangement of mature trees. Each limb

of the crossroads, and each quadrant, has a different quality. That to the west is densely developed, the slight bend in the road bringing a consistent group of buildings and a stone chapel into relative prominence. The northern arm, The Street, has an attractive group of older buildings on the east side and is linked to the Colchester Road by a pretty two storey cottage which faces the crossroads and is its most distinctive component. The eastern arm is dominated by mature trees, contrasting with attractive low brick walls associated with the churchyard and the former Ardleigh Court. Apart from a brick-built pair of double pile cottages on the southern arm, there is least townscape or conservation interest in the southern arm: a slight bend in the road terminates the view as it reaches modern developments.

The Church and Harwich Road

The Church of St. Mary the Virgin is a substantial structure with walls of puddingstone and flint with ashlar dressings. There is fine flushwork in the south porch and in the base of the tower. The strongly-textured tower has a tall parapet of flushwork in brick and flint. The churchyard wall with attractive triangular-headed brick copings is pierced by a traditional open timber lych-gate. As well as the many mature trees in the churchyard, a distinctive feature is the short axial avenue of yews leading to the south porch. These trees make an immense contribution to the character and appearance of the Area, especially those on the eastern frontage.

The northern side of the churchyard is more open, giving attractive views of Seeley Court and its outbuildings. This fascinating building is a Georgian re-working of a large vernacular structure: its most distinctive features are the fretwork verandah porch, three Venetian windows and a varied roofscape. While the two storey Victorian church hall has a formidable frontage to The Street, the side elevation is enlivened by an attractive covered staircase to first floor level.

The eastern boundary of the churchyard is defined by a fine brick wall, low in the centre but rising to battlements on either side. Beyond this is Ardleigh Court; the former house has been replaced by a development of patio bungalows set in mature and well-stocked grounds full of ornamental specimen trees. A modern brick wall defining the visibility splay on the eastern side of the access leads back to the original frontage brick wall with thin clasping buttresses.

The Area extends eastwards to include the cemetery, its frontage with cast iron gates and railings leading to a pleasant secluded space. The original, western half of the cemetery is more densely and randomly planted though the original formal lines of the design are still evident. The newer half is more open, and repeats the yew avenue of the earlier portion. There are no views of any note over open countryside from this location. Development on the south side of the eastern limb consists of Little Court, an older detached property, and The Limes, a small secluded estate of five detached houses in mature surroundings. They are all so well screened from the road and from other viewpoints that they have little wider significance in townscape.

The Street

The Street runs northwards past the churchyard. As already indicated, the corner is marked by a two storey, double pile cottage in blue painted render under a roof of old clay tiles. A mature horse-chestnut immediately to the south of this cottage helps it to fill this important corner. Facing the churchyard there is an attractive group of older buildings. The first is The Lion, its southern gable prominent in the street scene. A two storey building, it has rough rendered walls and a dentilled brick eaves. Beyond this is Tudor Cottage and its neighbour, the front façade with continuous jetty now entirely plastered and finished in shades of pink. Attached to this on its northern side is a further range of cottages, this time of one and a half storeys under an old clay tiled roof, but again finished in pink render. A paired vehicular access then leads to a two storey Victorian building, now linked to a former Hall in an office complex. The frontage building has been shorn of much of its interest and the surroundings are lacking in maintenance. To the rear is a single storey surgery.

A group of pleasant late 19th and early 20th Century houses on the west side of The Street face a tall brick terrace of surprisingly urban aspect. Apart from the Post Office and General Stores at the southern end, the terrace retains many of its original features, even down to the stained glass in the upper lights of the large windows. The small front gardens have received a variety of alterations over the years, however, although in only one case has there been an attempt to provide a vehicle run-in. To the north of this stands The Hollies, a tall late Georgian property of three storeys under a hipped slate roof with wide eaves. The last two houses in the Area on this side of The Street are modern bungalows of no intrinsic interest, set behind frontages with mature planting. An informal triangular green leads to a public footpath and a lane giving views across open countryside. The adjoining small industrial estate is insufficiently screened with chain link fencing.

On the west side of the outer end of The Street stands Ardleigh Hall. A health & fitness suite is housed in the

outbuildings to the former Hall, the single storey northern extension of which is an important element in the approach to the village from the north. The main entrance is in a half timbered block dated 1883 with a substantial clay tiled roof and cupola. The grounds are well-treed though with no real sense of order or purpose. Car parking in the northern half of the former pond site is only roughly laid out. A large detached house in what today passes for classical design has been created at the southern end of the pond site, opposite The Hollies.

Colchester Road

Colchester Road represents the old main street of the village. Leading from the crossroads on the north side, frontage development consists firstly of Boxley House, a small cottage of similar proportions to the one on the corner though with only half the depth. Beyond The Bards, a late Victorian villa of red brick, stands the Village Shop, an attractive vernacular building with a double pile roof and substantial central chimney stack. Though of timber-framed construction, the gables are faced in brick while the front elevation is rendered with Victorian sash windows. The entrance to the shop is in a bold single storey projection with slate roof which is an important element in the street scene. Beyond is a pair of undistinguished post-war houses; their fronts gardens and boundaries are unkempt and unappealing.

Development on the south side of Colchester Road is more attractive. Unusually, the majority of buildings closest to the crossroads present gables to the main road. A simply-detailed timber bus shelter leads to the newsagents, a vernacular building with a prominent gable faced in painted brick. This building is unhappily in a poor state of repair. Next to this is The Ancient House, now a restaurant and brasserie. This is a splendid half-timbered building, of which the eastern portion consists of two prominent close studded gables projecting over a modern ground floor façade of bay windows in close studding with brick infill. A third frontage gable to the west has close studding and arched braces. The next property has a neat gabled façade of pink render and small pane sashes, hiding a lower rear block with a gambrel roof of old clay tiles and catslide dormers.

Next to this is Dundas Place, the frontage of which contrasts a long low one and a half storey block with a taller two storey cross wing with prominent gable. The final gable in this group is the most substantial, and belongs to the rock-faced Methodist Church. Beyond is an attractive group of three cottages, with small-pane sash windows in a rendered façade under a roof of old clay tiles. The next property is also three cottages though these are set gable-end to the road and are much altered in external details. The road frontage is taken up with a fish and chip shop under a prominent catslide roof. Windows on the main road frontage have interesting timber heads.

The edge of the Conservation Area is reached at Cypress Cottage. This is a timber-framed one and a half storey cottage with catslide dormers in a gambrel roof of old clay tiles. The elevations have been re-cast in brick, those of the gables relatively recently in common brick. The former smithy, a large single-storey weatherboarded shed on the road frontage, is an important element in the scene. The Area includes a small part of Blacksmiths Lane, a public footpath to the side of Cypress Cottage, for reasons which are not entirely clear. The Area boundary to the rear of these Colchester Road properties appears to be run obliquely across the rear drying greens of the flats to the south. There seems to be no reason why the Area boundary should not follow the rear boundaries of the Colchester Road properties.

Station Road

Station Road leaves the crossroads between the Council car park, simply and attractively laid out behind ornamental planting, and a new house known as Lima, which nods towards the local vernacular although the pargetting panels are ruthlessly plain, and the lack of chimneys is a notable failure of modern house design. The double-piled pitched roof of the garaging is an interesting solution to a perennial problem. A row of old red brick cottages, Nos. 2 and 3, leads past an extended chalet called Forresters to a pretty double pile Victorian house, of painted brick under a clay tiled roof with decorative barge-boards. Behind is the considerable yard of DCMT Service and Douglas Curtiss Limited.

Opposite is Church View, a pleasant though not exceptional housing estate with limited references to the local vernacular. Station Road continues past varied developments mostly from the 20th Century, although the most attractive is Old Coal House, a late Victorian red brick villa with segmental heads to the ground floor openings. At this point, the brick wall frontage and mature planting of New Hall dominate the street scene. New Hall itself is an attractive two storey late Georgian house, of yellow brick and small pane sash windows under a spreading hipped slate roof. It is completely secluded from the street.

Opposite is Wheatlands, an interesting development of detached houses, arranged around two short access roads parallel with the main road. These lead to a fascinating complex surrounding the Old Phoenix Mill. In the centre

is Mill House, a pleasant two storey villa of yellow brick with small-pane sashes set in a plastered frontage. Between the modern development and Mill House is Little Maltings, a new building of red brick attempting to emulate the solid qualities of the older buildings in the vicinity. It succeeds quite well, apart from an all-too-typical coarseness of details. Both of these properties are dwarfed by Phoenix Mill, itself, a four-and-a-half storey block of yellow brick with pedimented gables and a substantial rear extension in white weatherboarding. The list description indicates that it was one of the first purpose-built steam mills in Essex. The front and side elevations are a little unkempt and could be tidied up with advantage. The rather utilitarian Village Hall makes a strong contrast with its rather open frontage giving views to the playing fields behind. This in turn leads to Tavern House, the former Railway Tavern public house and a tall three storey building with small pane sash windows in a smooth rendered façade under a hipped roof with decorative modillion brackets. The severity of the design of this building is relieved only by a semi-octagonal bay on the south elevation, almost entirely hidden by screen planting.

The edge of the Conservation Area is reached at Station House, a two storey property of red brick with attractive arched window heads and a spreading lean-to porch. The house name sign displays a Great Western locomotive which is most unfortunate in this Great Eastern location. There are now no station buildings. The Area includes the yard behind Station House, and extends for a considerable distance eastwards with a dense line of shrubs and mature trees to the north.

The only remaining part of the Area is the south eastern tip of Station Road: this is occupied by New Hall Lodge, a small single storey building with a pyramid roof, interesting eaves details and a rather unfortunate flat roofed garage. Further south again, behind a densely planted frontage, is a late Victorian villa of vernacular design, which is poorly maintained at present. On the south side of the railway line, both Notcutts Garden Centre and the appropriately-named "Nursery View" on the other side of the road are mid-Victorian properties, possibly associated with the construction and development of the railway. Between Nursery View and the railway line, the buildings, access and parking associated with Mirum Products have no historic interest and little visual appeal.

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

Colchester Road

The pair of post-war semi-detached houses opposite the Methodist Church are of no historic interest and have no positive relationship with their surroundings. Along with the drive to the Telephone Exchange they are considered as negative factors.

Neutral factors

Given the strong relationship between most of the historic properties in the Area and their road frontages, the commonest kind of neutral factor identified is where buildings provide little or no sense of enclosure. This can be seen in the northern half of the Area associated with the modern bungalows on the eastern side of The Street, in the more haphazard parts of the grounds of Ardleigh Hall and in the modern detached house recently constructed opposite The Hollies.

Church View and Chapel Croft also fall into this category: while they have created a pleasant internal environment, there is comparatively little relationship with Station Road. Mundane modern houses on either side of the entrance to Mary Warner Road similarly fail to produce interesting and consistent frontages.

The Village Hall and its car park are neutral factors because they do not respond to the character of their distinctive neighbours. Finally, the railway line at the southern edge of the Area is neutral, as with the disappearance of the station it lacks sufficient historic or architectural interest in its own right.

SUGGESTED ENHANCEMENTS: BUILDINGS

No particular enhancements are suggested.

SUGGESTED ENHANCEMENTS: CURTILAGES

The Street

The improvement of the surroundings of the office buildings north of the group containing Tudor Cottage. The southern access drive is rather unkempt, while the side and rear elevations towards the surgery are on public view.

Improved boundary treatment., including screening, is suggested for the industrial complex at the north end of the triangular green area at the entrance to the village. This would promote the enclosure of the green area and enhance the contrast with views over open countryside to the north east.

Station Road

The yard for DCMT Service and Douglas Curtis is a large area unrelieved by any form of screening. Planting or some other method of subdividing this site would be a visual improvement for the Area, particularly given the attractiveness of the house on the road frontage.

The surroundings of Phoenix Mill, including its small forecourt, are in need of some maintenance and attention.

The grounds of the Village Hall are rather bland and the frontage to Station Road lacks a sufficient boundary to help retain the continuity of the street scene.

SUGGESTED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

There are few locations for public works in Ardleigh because the dominance of developed street frontages limits the public domain. The most prominent are the grassed area in front of the church, and the public car park opposite: the former is more than adequate, while the latter is the result of considerable investment to create an attractive and useful facility.

BOUNDARY REVIEW

A number of small anomalies have been referred to in the text. Small boundary adjustments are recommended associated with Colchester Road to remove a small section of drying green as well as the post war semis and the drive west of the Village Shop. There is furthermore no apparent advantage in including a small section of railway line in the Area, and this small modification is also recommended.

More difficult issues are raised by the inclusion of modern housing estates in the Area. These are considered in turn.

- Ardleigh Court represents the redevelopment of mature grounds in a low key manner, and forms an important part of the setting of the church: it is recommended that this development should remain in the Area.
- Opposite, The Limes has an important planted frontage to Harwich Road again an important feature in the character of the Area: the houses behind are smart and attractive, though of little wider visual value.

- Church View/Chapel Croft is more problematic. Its main road frontage is more open, but apart from the houses flanking the access it makes little positive contribution. This section of Station Road is the least visually and historically important in the Area, being the later infilling between the old medieval village to the north and the early 19th century nucleus of Phoenix Mill/New Hall and the slightly later developments associated with the station. The deletion of Church View would call the adjacent part of Station Road into question and suggest the division of the Area.

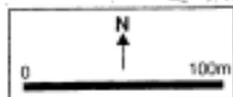
On balance it is recommended that no changes are made to the Area with regard to these housing developments.

The character and appearance of the northern end of The Street requires some justification as well. The grounds of Ardleigh Hall and the modern bungalows north of The Hollies are in strong contrast to the more continuously developed sections leading into the village centre. This is however an important approach to the village, the small green is of visual significance and potential further developments at the Hall need to be set in an appropriate policy context. Only a small alteration to the boundary is therefore proposed, to exclude a small section of curtilage adjacent to the Hall on the road frontage.

The recommendations are shown on Map 3.

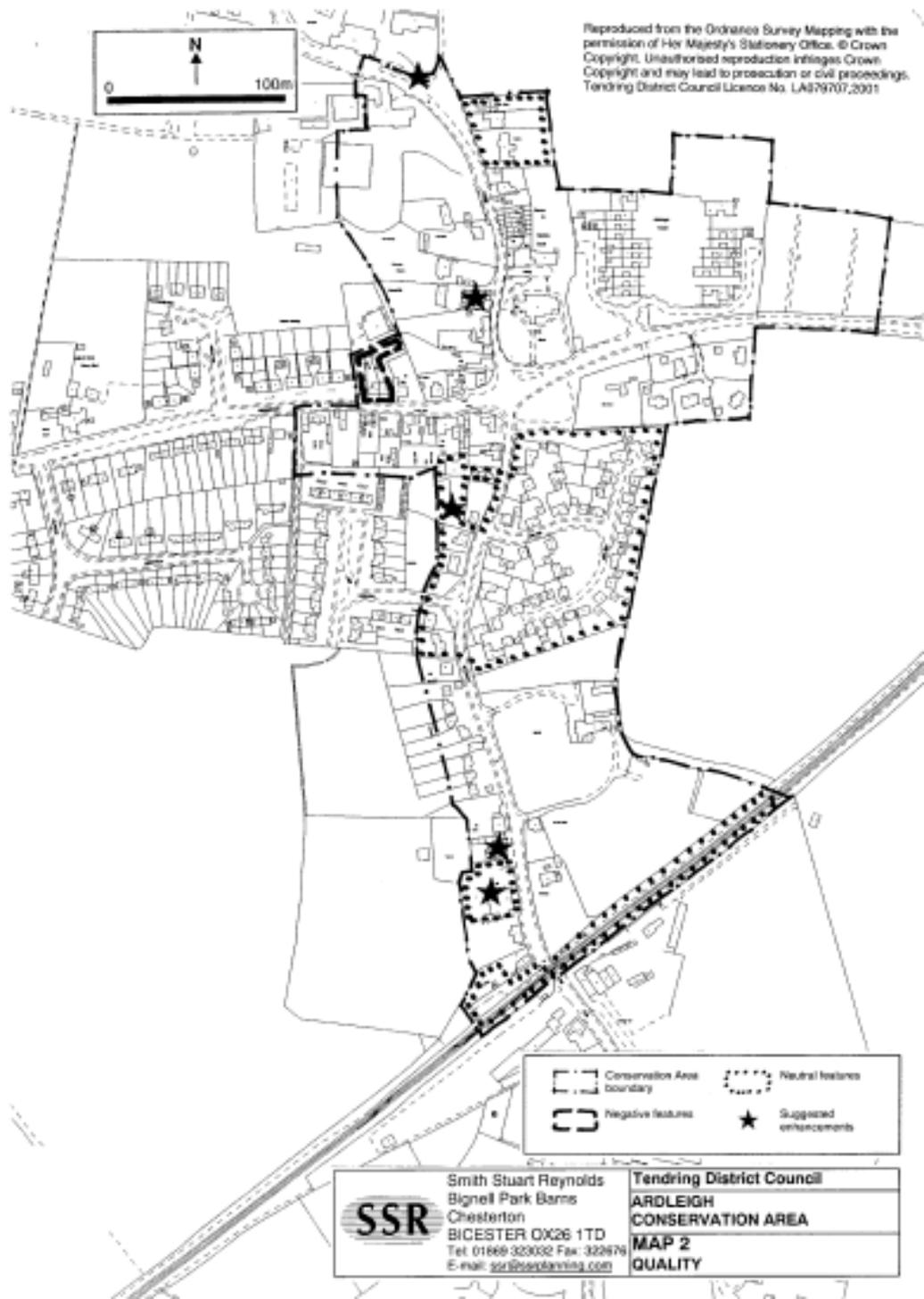
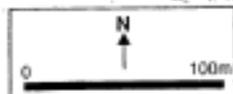
Further Information

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



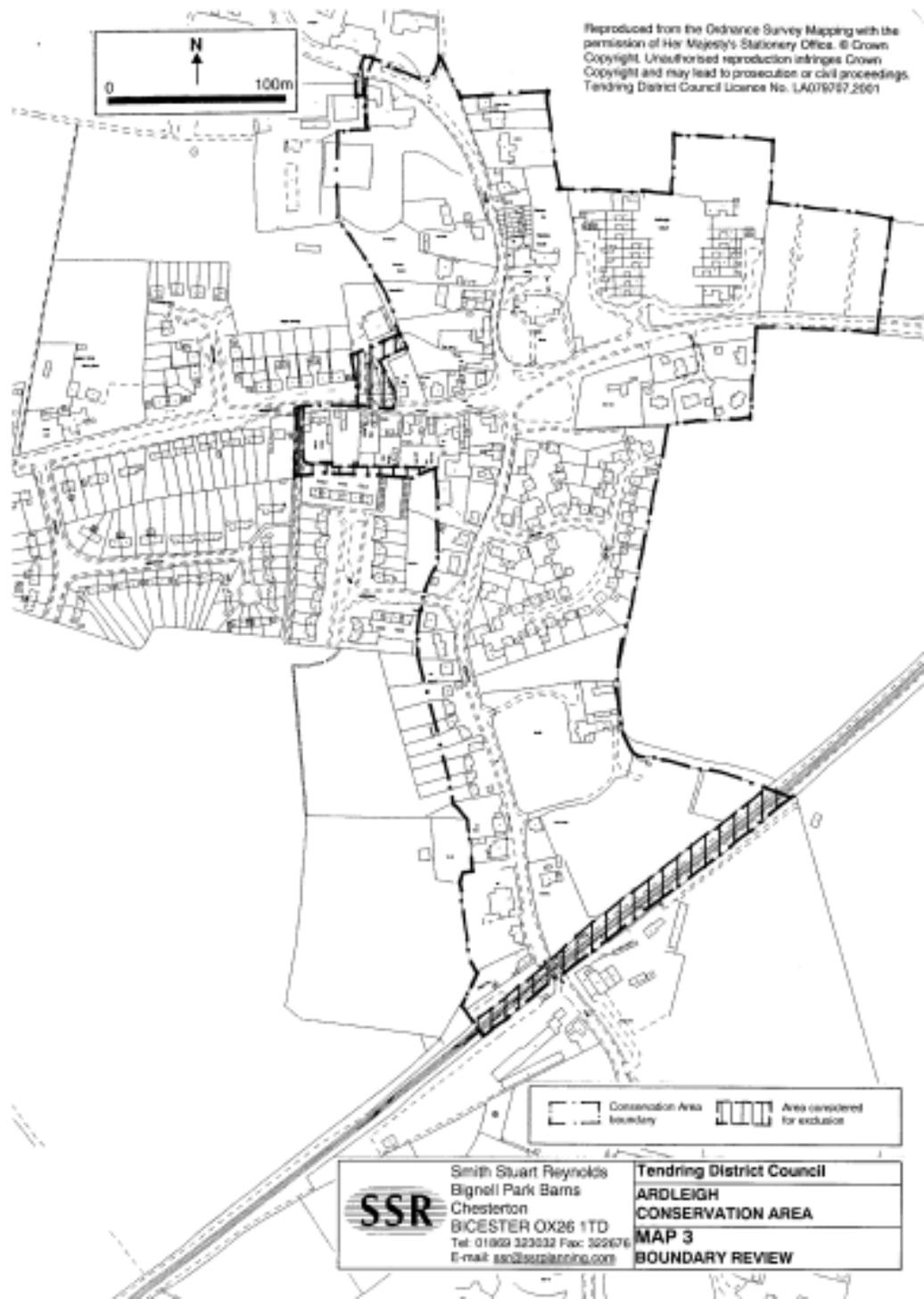
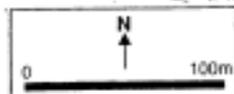
| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Conservation Area boundary | TPOs, significant trees and hedgerows |
| Listed buildings | Important spaces |
| Key facades, important boundaries | Important views |

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| | Smith Stuart Reynolds Bignell Park Bams Chesterton BICESTER OX26 1TD Tel: 01969 323032 Fax: 322676 E-mail: ssr@ssrdesigns.com | Tendring District Council ARDLEIGH CONSERVATION AREA MAP 1 STRUCTURE |
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|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Conservation Area boundary | Neutral features |
| Negative features | Suggested enhancements |

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| SSR | Smith Stuart Reynolds Bignell Park Barns Chesterton BICESTER OX26 1TD Tel: 01869 320302 Fax: 322676 E-mail: ssr@ssrplanning.com | Tendring District Council ARDLEIGH CONSERVATION AREA MAP 2 QUALITY |
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--- Conservation Area boundary ▨ Area considered for exclusion

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| | Smith Stuart Reynolds Bignell Park Barns Chesteron BICESTER OX26 1TD Tel: 01869 323032 Fax: 302676 E-mail: ssr@ssrplanning.com | Tendring District Council |
| | | ARDLEIGH CONSERVATION AREA |
| | | MAP 3 |
| | | BOUNDARY REVIEW |



1. This view of the entrance to the village from the east demonstrates the importance of mature trees and the surviving front boundary wall to Ardleigh Court.



2. The cross roads at the centre of the village, looking west. Important in this view are the groups of vernacular buildings complimented by mature planting. The care taken over the planting and the maintenance of incidental open spaces is particularly welcome. The main road itself unfortunately dominates this view.



3. Attractive vernacular properties face the churchyard across The Street. The distinctive churchyard wall can be glimpsed at the left of the photograph, along with the mature planting which adds to the significance of the churchyard in the village scene.



4. The pretty outbuilding to Seeley Court and the adjacent terrace combine in The Street to produce the most concentrated street frontage in the Area. These buildings happily retain most of their original details.



5. The approach to the Area along Colchester Road from the west. The large and simply-detailed timber shed on the right is a prominent feature, and relates well to the surrounding vernacular architecture .



6. Station Road has a more spacious character than the centre of the original village. The house on the right is virtually the only part of the Church View development which relates positively to the street.



7. Phoenix Mill, as viewed from the car park of the Village Hall. The Mill, Mill House and other nearby developments form a significant grouping in this part of Station Road. The relative openness of the Village Hall grounds is a relative disappointment.



8. Station House and Tavern House looking northwards from the railway. These buildings are another part of the historical development of Ardleigh and require sympathetic consideration.



9. These office conversions front the car park and access to the surgery on The Street. Side and rear elevations in older villages settings often require more careful consideration given the generally informal character of building and property layouts.



10. While The Village Shop is an important part of the character of the Colchester Road, beyond its distinctive projecting shop front stand a pair of uninspiring post-war houses which are recommended to be excluded from the Area.



11. This small triangular green is a significant part of the approach to the Area from the north, contains several attractive trees, and forms a link between the more closely-developed part of the village and the wider countryside beyond. Better screening of the industrial complex in the background would be an improvement.



12. Station Road at the junction with Warner Road is unassuming in townscape terms but forms a relatively short passage between the medieval centre of the village and the 19th century developments to the south. It is considered for retention in the Area along with the Church View development to avoid splitting the designation.