

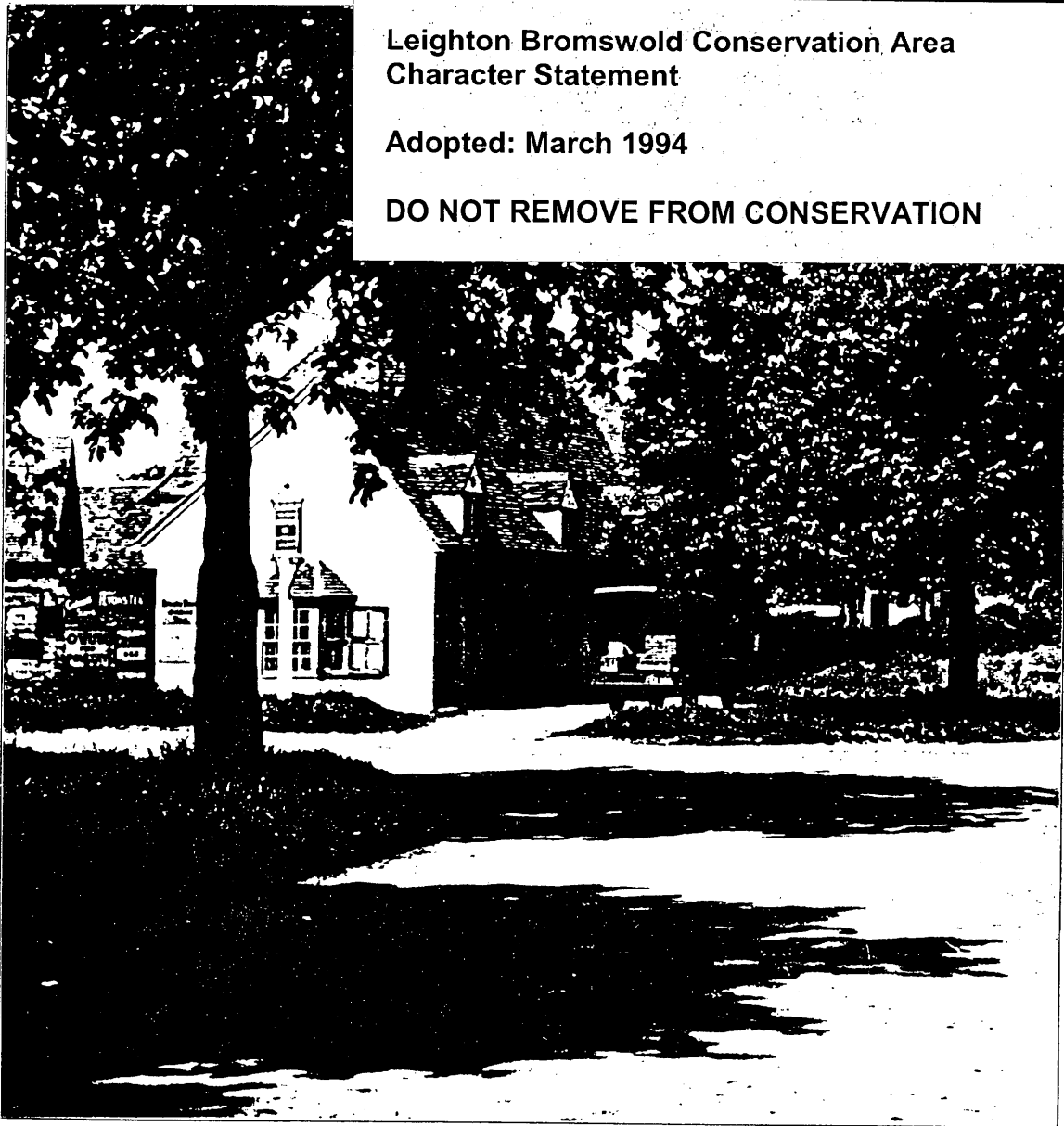


Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area

Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area
Character Statement

Adopted: March 1994

DO NOT REMOVE FROM CONSERVATION



Character Statement

LEIGHTON BROMSWOLD CONSERVATION AREA

CHARACTER STATEMENT

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Approved by
Planning Committee
March, 1994

FOREWORD

Sixty-two Conservation Areas have now been designated in Huntingdonshire. However, the act of designation is not an end in itself, but the start of a process to preserve and enhance the character of each Conservation Area. Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are Conservation Areas. Furthermore, the Government in its Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, on Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas, seeks the review of existing Conservation Areas and their boundaries against consistent local standards for designation.

Whilst it is the ultimate intention of this Authority to undertake boundary reviews and formulate policies for preservation and enhancement, this represents a very large workload which would require several years to achieve. Therefore, the most pressing priority is the publication of Conservation Area Character Statements which justify existing designations. The Statements are intended to provide guidance for formulating policies for preservation and enhancement and to assist in determining planning applications within Conservation Areas. They will also prove useful in individual cases which go to appeal, by providing additional documentation for Inspectors to assess the merits of the Local Authority's evidence.

The format of each Character Statement will consist of an introduction of the legislative background, followed by an assessment of the local setting, history, character and landscape setting (if relevant) of the Conservation Area in question.

A comprehensive list of the 62 Conservation Areas with plans of each area showing Listed Buildings and Ancient Monuments is contained in the booklet 'Conservation Areas in Huntingdonshire' published in October 1991 by the District Council. This document also gives summary information on the special nature of the control of development within Conservation Areas and this is reproduced for information in Appendix 1 to this Character Statement.

The District Council's Local Plan for Huntingdonshire (with proposed modifications incorporated) gives the general planning policies which the Council are pursuing to preserve and enhance Conservation Areas (four policies in all). These are contained in Appendix 2.

The District Council is currently producing advice and guidance notes on "Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings" and on "Residential Design". These documents will provide further information and advice to the householder, developer and others to maintain existing buildings and when building anew in Conservation Areas and elsewhere.

CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER STATEMENT

LEIGHTON BROMSWOLD CONSERVATION AREA NO. 12

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Conservation Areas are designated by the Local Planning Authority based upon the criterion that they are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.' Considerable scope and discretion can, therefore, be applied in such a designation. The process of designation is contained within Section 69 of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act. Prior to this Act, Conservation Areas were designated under the 1967 Civic Amenities Act. Section 72 of the 1990 Act requires the Local Planning Authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas in exercising its planning functions.
- 1.2 Apart from giving special consideration to applications for new development, the legislation affecting Conservation Areas also provides for control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and the felling and lopping of trees. Furthermore, in respect of those Conservation Areas designated prior to November 1985, additional limitations have been placed on permitted development rights. Grant aid may also be available within Conservation Areas, either through Town Schemes or Section 10 of the Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act, 1972.
- 1.3 The Conservation Area for Leighton Bromswold was designated by the District Council on 14th October 1974. The purpose of this Conservation Area Character Statement is to:-
 - i) Justify the Conservation Area designation.
 - ii) Justify the overall shape and area of the Conservation Area but not specific boundaries.
 - iii) Provide detailed information on history, architecture and landscape and their interrelationships to guide developers and development control officers when considering proposals within Conservation Areas to ensure the essential character of the area is preserved and/or enhanced.
- 1.4 Further guidance in this respect has been produced recently in a Draft Planning Policy Guidance Note (No. 15 - Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas) issued jointly by the Department of the Environment and the Department of National Heritage.
- 1.5 The document emphasises that it is important that conservation areas are seen to justify their status because "a local authority's justification for designation, as reflected in its identification of an area's special interest, and its character and appearance, are factors which the Secretary of

State will take into account in considering appeals against refusals of conservation area consent for demolition."

- 1.6 This Conservation Area statement describes the essential characteristics of Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area in justifying its status, thereby providing a basis upon which the Local Authority can assess development proposals and enable judgements on decisions to be made.

2. LOCAL SETTING

- 2.1 Leighton Bromswold lies astride a prominent ridge to the north of the valley of Ellington Brook, 8 miles to the west of Huntingdon. It is a relatively small village of approximately 200 inhabitants. It possesses a linear layout with dwellings on both sides of The Avenue, which runs along the ridge on a broadly east-west axis with St. Mary's Parish Church at the eastern end.

3. HISTORY

- 3.1 The present size of the village belies its earlier importance. At the time of the Domesday Book, Huntingdonshire was divided into four hundreds, and the court for the Leightonstone Hundred met at Leighton Bromswold. The square stone now located by the lych gate of the Parish Church was its judgement seat.
- 3.2 In medieval times, Leighton Bromswold was a relatively large village, for in 1327 it had 80 households paying tax, when by no means every household in an English village was wealthy enough to fall within the taxable range. Leighton was one of 14 settlements in Huntingdonshire to be given a charter for the holding of a market between 1180 and 1318, and it was granted an annual fair in 1211.
- 3.3 Leighton Bromswold may have emerged as the coalescence of two original hamlets. In the Domesday Book of 1086 Leighton appears as a single large manor, whilst reference is made to Bromswold in 1168. Following the grant of the estate to the Bishops of Lincoln, between 1072 and 1076, the two hamlets were drawn together and a single village created, probably before 1250, when the Church, an integral part of the planned settlement, experienced a massive building campaign.
- 3.4 Castle House and the extensive earth works to the east were the result of plans by Sir Gervase Clifton to build a new house to the design of John Thorpe. The Clifton family, who at one stage owned the Manor House, were one of the 60 gentry families of Huntingdonshire. It is very doubtful, however, if work ever started on the main house, although its plans are still retained in the Soane Museum. The surrounding parklands were, however, established and the meadows around the site of Sir Gervase Clifton's Manor House still bear names indicating the former existence of a park here, such as the Vicarage Park (now glebe), the Great Park and Upper and Nether Park.

- 3.5 Also at the beginning of the 17th Century, the Church was in a ruinous condition, and apparently about 1606 a rebuilding was commenced. In 1626 the prebend of Leighton Bromswold was accepted by George Herbert, the metaphysical poet, who was a close friend of the Ferrars family of Lt. Gidding, after it had been refused by Nicholas Ferrar.
- 3.6 Whilst the Parish Church, a Grade I Listed Building, and Castle House (Grade II*) are the main architectural landmarks of the village, several other domestic properties date from the 17th Century whose design, setting and composition in the street scene have helped to create the present character of Leighton Bromswold.

4. CHARACTER

- 4.1 It is the juxtaposition of the domestic buildings with the mature trees and grass verges along the main village street, appropriately named The Avenue, which provides the essential attractiveness to Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area.
- 4.2 Although the majority of Listed Buildings in the parish are clustered around the junction of The Avenue with Sheep Street and Church Lane, in close proximity to the church, nevertheless, the whole village still retains an attractive quality worthy of inclusion within the Conservation Area. This is not due to the architectural quality of the individual buildings, but to the continuation of the street scene along the whole length of The Avenue in the direction of Old Weston. Along the western part of the street, the only Listed Building is the Green Man Public House, but the mixture of 19th Century Victorian cottages and residential conversions such as the former school, chapel and forge do not disturb the village character. Modern 20th Century housing, whilst of only modest quality, has similarly not disturbed the uniformity and continuation of the street scene.
- 4.3 The most important building in the village is the Parish Church, clearly visible on the ridge overlooking the southern and northern approaches to Leighton. Whilst original 13th Century parts remain, its main architectural features date from the 1626 restoration by George Herbert. The west tower built in 1634 by the Duke of Lennox, is constructed in Ketton, Weldon and Barnack limestone. The church forms part of an overall grouping with Castle House and Manor Farm. Castle House was constructed in red brick coursed in English bond with stone dressings as a rectangular block of three storeys with central carriageway. The archway has since been blocked and alterations were undertaken in 1904 using materials from the demolished Stow Longa Manor House.
- 4.4 The eastern end of the village is distinguished by the loose nature of development, with a close affinity between open countryside and dwellings set in spacious grounds.
- 4.5 The vernacular domestic architecture of Leighton Bromswold gains expression from those properties along The Avenue and Sheep Street. Those around the junction of these roads have mostly been included as listed buildings because of their group value, and date from the 17th Century. Individually they

are generally two storey rendered cottages with pantile or peg tile roofs, whose setting is enhanced by the mature collection of deciduous and evergreen trees on the small areas of village green containing the war memorial and the hundred stone.

- 4.6 Both approaches to the village, along Sheep Street from the north and Staunch Hill from the south, are noted by the roads having a sense of enclosure between banks of mature oak and ash trees. On reaching the ridge, strong terminal features are provided by the buildings standing at the road junctions, with the position of Town End Farm being particularly important in this respect.
- 4.7 Town End Farm also characterises the style of architecture associated with the traditional properties in The Avenue, dating from Victorian times and constructed with local stock bricks. A variety of roofing materials on such properties is noticeable, including Welsh slates, peg tiles and modern concrete tiles. Both sides of The Avenue possess wide grass verges containing mature trees, mostly being specimen horse chestnuts. Only on few occasions is the domestic architecture interrupted by contemporary outbuildings. The most notable collection is the Green Man Public House and the adjoining range of barns, whilst the workshop adjoining No.1 The Avenue has been considered worthy of listing in its own right, being a timber-framed, black weather-boarded barn of two storeys with a pantile roof.

APPENDIX 1

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS

One of the most effective ways of preserving and enhancing Conservation Areas is through the control of development. Listed buildings cannot be demolished or altered or extended without obtaining consent from the Local Planning Authority or the Secretary of State for the Environment. Similarly the right to carry out certain developments, within the curtilage of a dwelling which is listed, without having to obtain planning permission are reduced. When determining planning applications for development which affects listed buildings or Ancient Monuments, the Planning Authority must give consideration to the effects of the proposed development on their character. Since many Conservation Areas are centred on areas where there is likely to be significant archaeological interest, consent may be withheld or conditions imposed to enable investigation and recording to take place.

The designation of a Conservation Area gives further powers of control to the Local Planning Authority. In these areas the right to carry out certain developments without the need to obtain planning permission are reduced. In particular:

- i) the amount of extension to a dwelling is limited to less than 50 cubic metres or 10% of the original dwellinghouse.
- ii) no cladding of any part of the exterior by stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles is permitted to a dwellinghouse.
- iii) no alterations may take place to the roof of a dwelling which would result in its enlargement.
- iv) no alterations or extensions can take place within the curtilage of a dwelling to buildings over 10 cubic metres in volume.
- v) Satellite dishes are not allowed on a chimney, nor on any wall or roof slope fronting onto a highway.

Generally, planning controls in Conservation Areas are directed to controlling demolition. In this respect, Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of buildings and structures over certain sizes. Furthermore, anyone who wishes to lop, top or fell a tree within a Conservation Area must give the Planning Authority six weeks notice of their intention. This gives the Planning Authority the opportunity to make a Tree Preservation Order.

LOCAL PLAN POLICIES ON CONSERVATION AREAS

En5 DEVELOPMENT WITHIN OR DIRECTLY AFFECTING CONSERVATION AREAS WILL BE REQUIRED TO PRESERVE OR ENHANCE THEIR CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE.

Conservation is not preservation, and whilst the District Council is concerned to see the retention of the most important features and characteristics of designated areas, it is at the same time attempting to assimilate good modern architecture in historic locations.

The relevant statutory provisions are to be found in the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. Subject to minor exceptions, no building in a Conservation Area may be demolished without the written consent of the Council, and trees within a Conservation Area (again with minor exceptions) are also given additional protection. Six weeks notice of any lopping, topping or felling of such trees must be given to the Council, in order that a Tree Preservation Order may be made if necessary. In Conservation Areas, there are reduced permitted development rights and proposals for development that are likely to affect the character or appearance of the area, may be of public concern and must therefore be advertised.

The District Council will continue to protect and enhance the character of the designated Conservation Areas. Particular attention will be paid to alterations to existing buildings and the design of new developments within the Conservation Area.

En6 IN CONSERVATION AREAS, THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE HIGH STANDARDS OF DESIGN WITH CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BEING GIVEN TO THE SCALE AND FORM OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA AND TO THE USE OF SYMPATHETIC MATERIALS OF APPROPRIATE COLOUR AND TEXTURE.







It is important to lay down basic design criteria when new development in a Conservation Area is being proposed. This criteria will ensure that new dwellings will follow the general pattern of the existing built form, materials and styles. The District Council will use the provisions of Article 7, of the General Development Order, 1988, to require details to support outline planning applications in Conservation Areas.

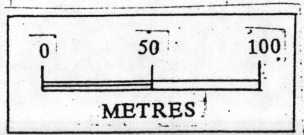
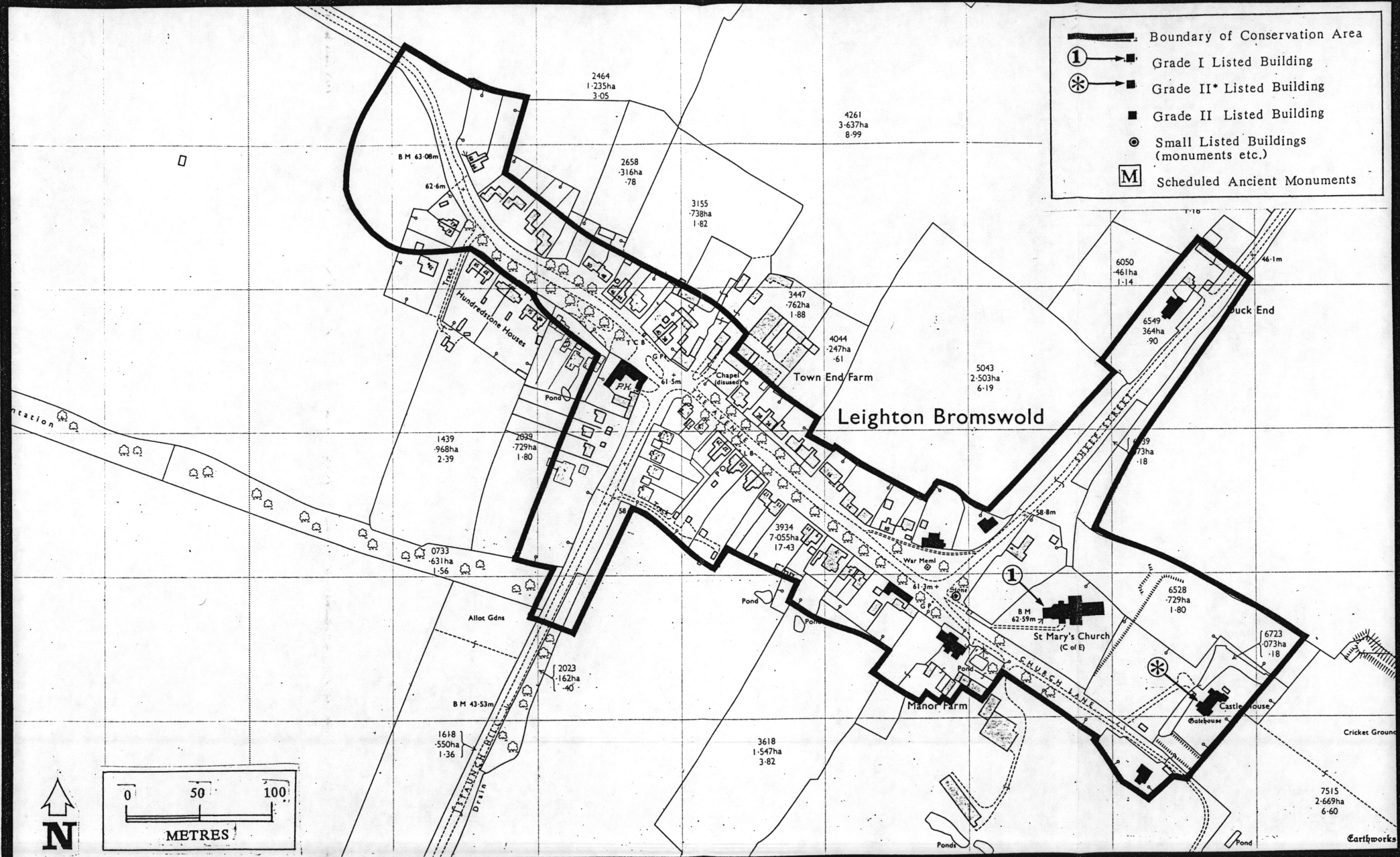
En7 WHERE DEMOLITION IS TO BE FOLLOWED BY REDEVELOPMENT, CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT MAY BE WITHHELD UNTIL ACCEPTABLE PLANS FOR THE NEW DEVELOPMENT HAVE BEEN APPROVED. IF APPROVED, THE TIMING OF THE DEMOLITION WILL BE STRICTLY CONTROLLED.

Proposals for redevelopment sometimes take a considerable time to implement. The demolition and clearance of sites before a new scheme has been approved or implemented could lead to the situation where an unsightly area in a Conservation Area is created and left for some time. The opportunity for a sympathetic replacement scheme may be lost if the designer does not appreciate the scale and form of the original building(s) now lost.

En8 DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED IF IT WOULD IMPAIR IMPORTANT OPEN SPACES, TREES, STREET SCENES AND VIEWS INTO AND OUT OF THE CONSERVATION AREAS.

Conservation Areas are made up of buildings, trees and open spaces (both public and private) which together form a cohesive area. It is recognised in the chapter on housing that within the environmental limits not all areas of land should be built on. There are important open spaces, gaps and frontages that should be preserved in their own right.

-  Boundary of Conservation Area
-  Grade I Listed Building
-  Grade II* Listed Building
-  Grade II Listed Building
-  Small Listed Buildings (monuments etc.)
-  Scheduled Ancient Monuments



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LEIGHTON BROMSWOLD

CONSERVATION AREA No.12

Designated by
 Huntingdonshire District Council
 on 14th October 1974