Rickmansworth Conservation Area
Character Appraisal and Management Plan



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Project Details

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Contents

1. Introduction **4**
1.1. The Conservation Area Appraisal 4
1.2. Summary of Special Interest 4
1.3. Location and Topography 5
1.4. The Conservation Area Boundary 7
2. Planning Policy Context **8**
2.1. Planning Policy and Guidance 8
2.2. Designation of the Conservation Area 9
2.3. Article 4 Direction 9
3. Heritage Assets **10**
3.1. Designated Heritage Assets 10
3.2. Non-Designated Heritage Assets 12
3.3. Archaeological Potential 14
4. Historical Development **16**
4.1. Introduction 16
4.2. Timeline 17
5. Assessment of Significance **25**
5.1. Architectural and Historic Interest 25
5.2. Building Significance 26
5.3. Views 28
5.4. Character Areas 35
5.5. The Setting of Rickmansworth Conservation Area 61
6. Opportunities for Enhancement **64**
6.1. Overview 64
6.2. Opportunities 64
7. Management Proposals **68**
7.1. Overview 68
7.2. Development Management Tools 69
7.3. Maintenance and Condition 71
7.4. Managing Future Change 72
7.5. Public Realm and Highways 76
Cultural Heritage 77
8. Appendices **79**
8.1. Bibliography 79
8.2. Legislation, Policy and Guidance 80
8.3. List of All Designated Heritage Assets within the Conservation Area 82
8.4. List of All Locally Important Buildings within the Conservation Area 84
8.5. Frequently Asked Questions 86
8.6. Glossary 89

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Conservation Area Appraisal

1.1.1. Rickmansworth is located within the Three Rivers District. It was first designated as a conservation area in 1974.

1.1.2. This appraisal considers how Rickmansworth developed, its building styles, forms, materials, scale, density, roads, footpaths, streetscapes, open spaces, views, landscape, landmarks, and topography. These qualities form the key characteristics of the area and help us to understand the potential impact future developments may have upon the significance of the heritage assets and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

1.1.3. This appraisal should be used as a baseline to inform future change, development, and design with regard to the sensitivities of the conservation area and its unique character. Planning applications that demonstrate an understanding of the character of a conservation area are more likely to produce appropriate design and positive outcomes for agents and their clients.

1.1.4. The content of this appraisal aims to highlight significant features which contribute to the special interest of the conservation area. The omission of, or lack of reference to, a particular building or feature does not imply it is insignificant. The true significance of any feature or building may only be fully identified when it undergoes the rigorous assessment required by an individual planning application.

1.2. Summary of Special Interest

1.2.1. The conservation area holds historic and architectural significance due to its evolution from a medieval village into a thriving town, shaped by historic industry and transport. Rickmansworth's medieval origins remain visible through its street patterns, historic buildings, and waterways, preserving its distinct character.

1.2.2. The area features a range of historic buildings from the fifteenth to twentieth century, with its medieval core centred around the church. Key landmarks, including the Grade II listed Church, Basing House, Joan of Arc School, and the locally important building the railway station, contribute to its architectural significance. Many earlier timber-framed buildings are concealed beneath brick facades, such as the fifteenth century Old Vicarage on Church Street, adding to the architectural variety. Common materials used in the construction of Victorian terraced railway workers' housing include yellow stock brick, slates, and render, further defining the distinctive residential character of the conservation area.

1.2.3. Whist predominantly urban in character, water is a prominent feature throughout the conservation area, with elements such as the canal, rivers, town ditches, and water meadows contributing to its unique character and setting.

1.2.4. The mid-nineteenth century arrival of the railway dramatically influenced the development of Rickmansworth, leading to a decline in canal-based commerce and the expansion of residential areas.

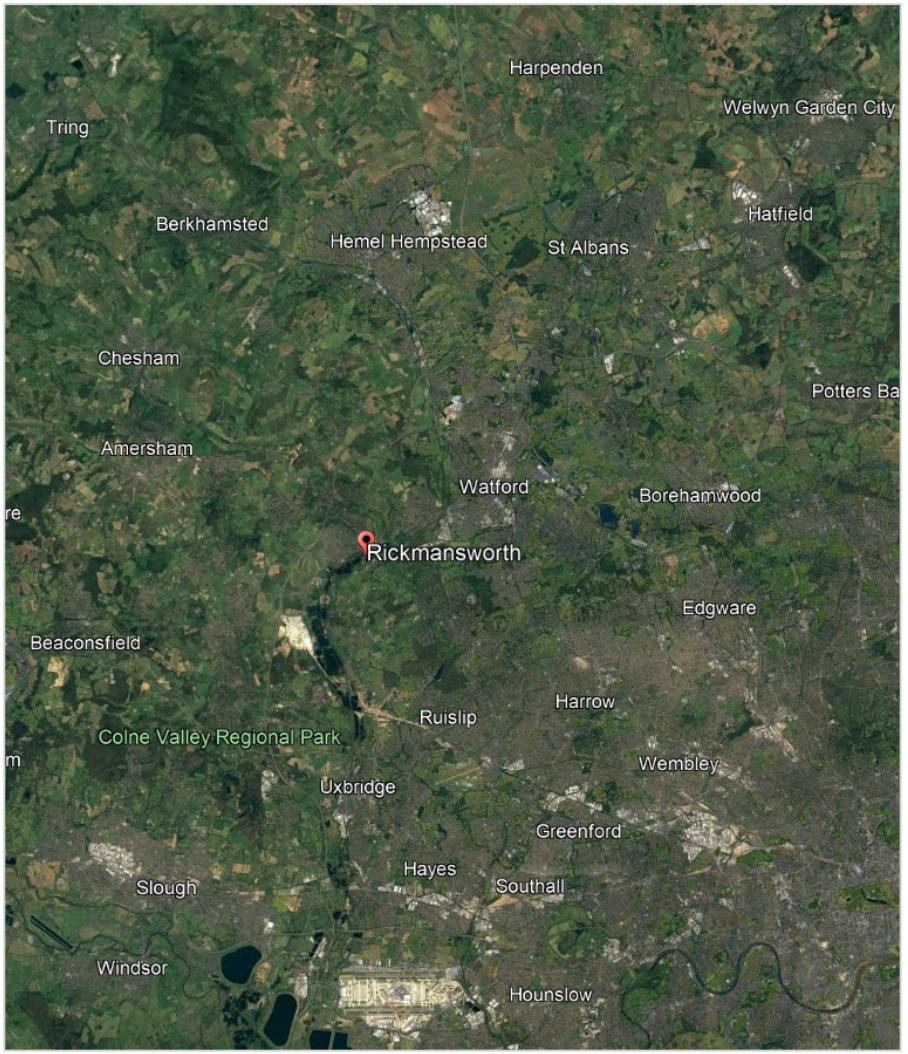
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1.3. Location and Topography

1.3.1. Rickmansworth town is located approximately 17 miles north-west of London, at the centre of a network of transport routes. It sits at the confluence of the River Chess and the River Colne, with the Grand Union Canal to the south and Metropolitan Line and Chiltern Railway line above. The M25 passes to the west of the town.

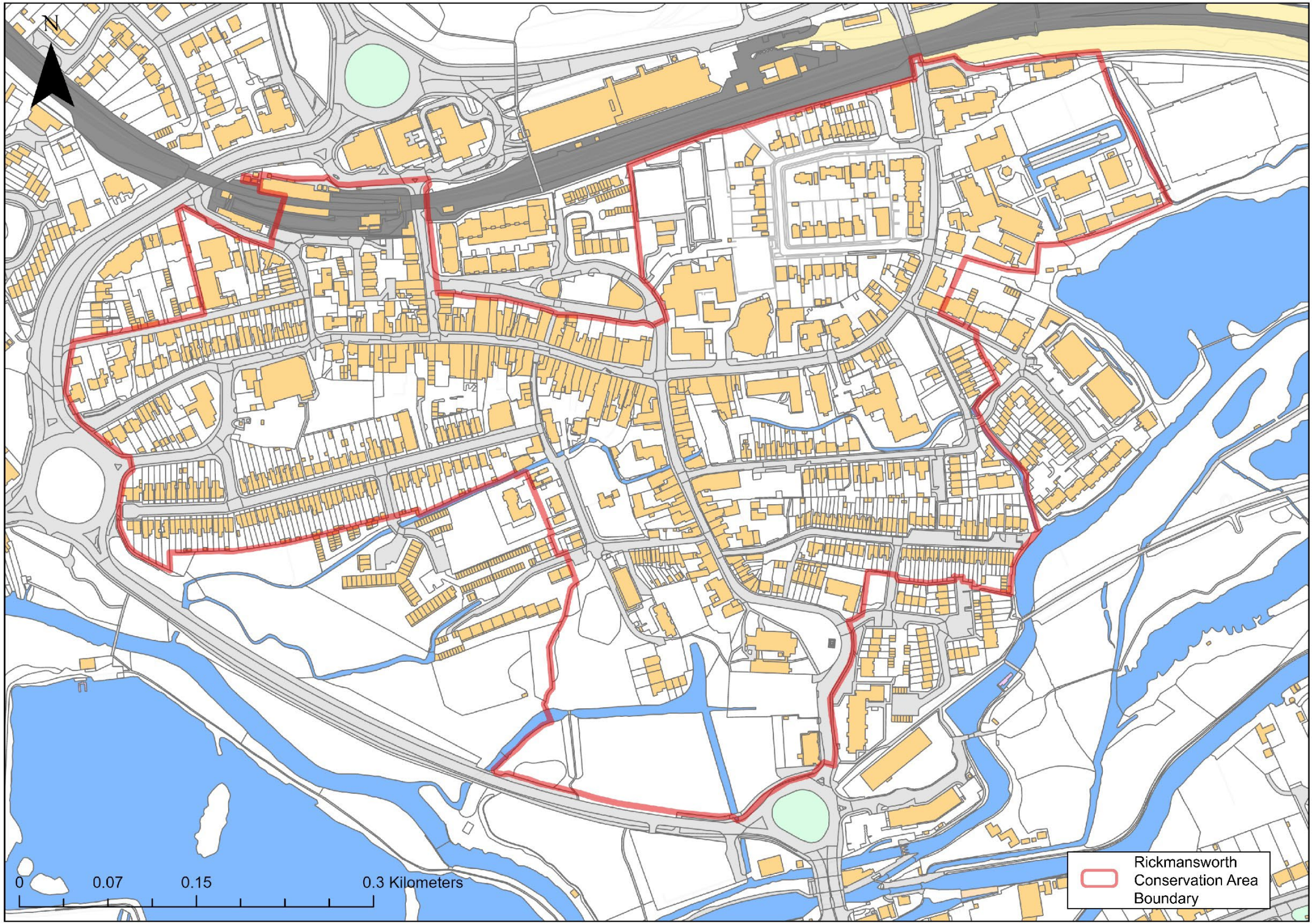
1.3.2. The area has a varied and gently undulating topography, due to the river valleys. The area slopes down towards the River Colne.

1.3.3. The underlying geology of the area is predominantly a mixture of chalk bedrock from the Cretaceous period, overlaid in places by glacial deposits, alluvium, and river gravels, particularly near riverbanks. This geological makeup as influenced both land use and local industry, historically supporting rich agriculture, milling, and gravel extraction.



Location of Rickmansworth within wider context (Google Earth)

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N
0
0.07
0.15
0.3 Kilometers
Rickmansworth
Conservation Area
Boundary

1.4. The Conservation Area Boundary

Justification

1.4.1. The Rickmansworth Conservation Area boundary has been drawn to include the areas considered to be of special historic and architectural interest, comprising:

- The High Street
- Church Street
- Residential streets such as Ebury Road and Talbot Road

1.4.2. These areas contain the highest concentration of historic buildings and spaces, which contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area. These areas are discussed further within Section 5.4.

1.4.3. An important aspect of the appraisal process is considering where a conservation area boundary should be drawn (or re-drawn as part of the subsequent reviews).[1] Proposed changes are outlined below.

Proposed Additions

1.4.4. Three locally important buildings at the station, which highlight the important role these buildings and structures played in the development of Rickmansworth and Metro-land urban expansion. The station and its associated buildings are of historic and architectural interest and merit inclusion within the conservation area. Until 1961, Rickmansworth Station was the changeover point from steam to electric locomotives for Metropolitan Line trains from Aylesbury to London and now forms a key landmark of the area.

1.4.5. The Telephone Exchange, situated on Rectory Lane behind the Royal Mail Rickmansworth Delivery Office. It has the code LWRIC and serves 10,884 residential and 600 non-residential premises in Rickmansworth and surrounding areas. Telephone exchanges have recently been the subject of greater consideration by the C20 Society, and architect's drawings of the building dating to 1937 are held at the BT Archives (and available to view online).[2] This building is of historic and architectural interest and so is considered worthy of inclusion within the boundary.

[1] Historic England Advice Note: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2019)

[2] Architect's Drawing of Rickmansworth Hertfordshire Sorting Office, Garage and Telephone Exchange, Finding Number TCE 361/ARC 877, BT Archives

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2. Planning Policy Context

2.1. Planning Policy and Guidance

2.1.1. Conservation areas are designated by the Local Planning Authorities as areas of special architectural and historic interest. The designation process includes detailed analysis of the proposed conservation area and adoption by the Local Planning Authority.

National Policy

2.1.2. The national legislative framework for the conservation and enhancement of conservation areas and listed buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2.1.3. Section 69 of this act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate areas which they consider to be of architectural and historic interest as conservation areas, and Section 72 requires that special attention should be paid to ensuring that the character and appearance of these areas is preserved or enhanced. Section 71 also requires the Local Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.

2.1.4. National Planning Policy in relation to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets is outlined in Chapter 20 of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework, or NPPF (2026). The NPPF highlights good design as one of twelve core principals of sustainable development. Sustainable development relies on sympathetic design, achieved through an understanding of context, along with an appreciation of the immediate and larger character of the area in which new development is sited.

Local Policy

2.1.5. Local Planning Policy is set out within Three Rivers District Council's Development Plan, consisting of Core Strategy (2011) Development Management Policies (2013) and Site Allocations (2014). An emerging Local Plan has recently been published but has not yet been adopted.

2.1.6. The Plan recognises that '*Three Rivers has a rich historic environment including many historic buildings, archaeological sites, historic structures, historic landscapes, spaces and conservation areas. It will be important to conserve heritage assets and their settings through appropriate control of development but also to enhance the historic environment where opportunities arise*.'

2.1.7. The Plan addresses heritage assets through Strategic Objective 10, which seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Policy PSP1 supports sustainable development of Rickmansworth while protecting its historic character. Core Policy CP12 promotes high-quality design that respects local heritage, ensuring new development contributes positively to the town's built environment. Additionally, Policy DM3 specifically addresses the historic built environment, identifying heritage assets such as listed buildings, locally listed buildings, conservation areas, ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, and sites of archaeological interest. This policy underscores the importance of preserving these assets, recognising their contribution to the district's unique character and history.

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2.1.8. Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan (2023-2028) covers the Rickmansworth Conservation Area and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

2.2. Designation of the Conservation Area

2.2.1. Rickmansworth was designated as a conservation area in 1974 and extended in 1980 to include the Victorian development of the town. It is likely that The Cloisters was included via the boundary review in 1993. [*Add further details on any boundary changes following Consultation*].

2.3. Article 4 Direction

2.3.1. An Article 4 Direction refers to a specific planning tool used by local authorities to restrict certain types of development that would otherwise be permitted under "permitted development rights." These rights allow property owners to carry out certain changes to their properties without needing to apply for full planning permission.

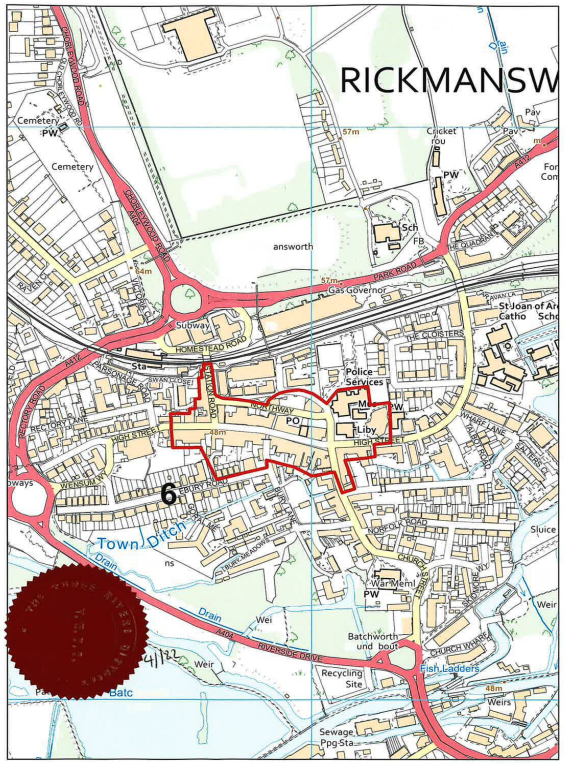
2.3.2. The Article 4 Direction removes some or all of these rights, meaning property owners must seek full planning permission before proceeding with specific types of development. There is an Article 4 Direction to preserve town centre uses relating to Rickmansworth Town Centre, which came into force on 23rd September 2023.

2.3.3. In part of the conservation area, Rickmansworth Town Centre, an Article 4 Direction applies to:

- Changes of use (e.g. from commercial to residential)

2.3.4. The effect of the Directions means that a change of use from a town centre use to residential and an office use to residential in the location shown on the map opposite would require planning permission and would be assessed by the Council against Local Plan policies.

2.3.5. These restrictions are designed to protect the vitality of the town centre. To find out more, seek further guidance from Three Rivers District Council, who have detailed information on the exact areas and types of development affected by the Article 4 Direction in the town centre.



Map showing extent of Article 4 Direction coverage

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3. Heritage Assets

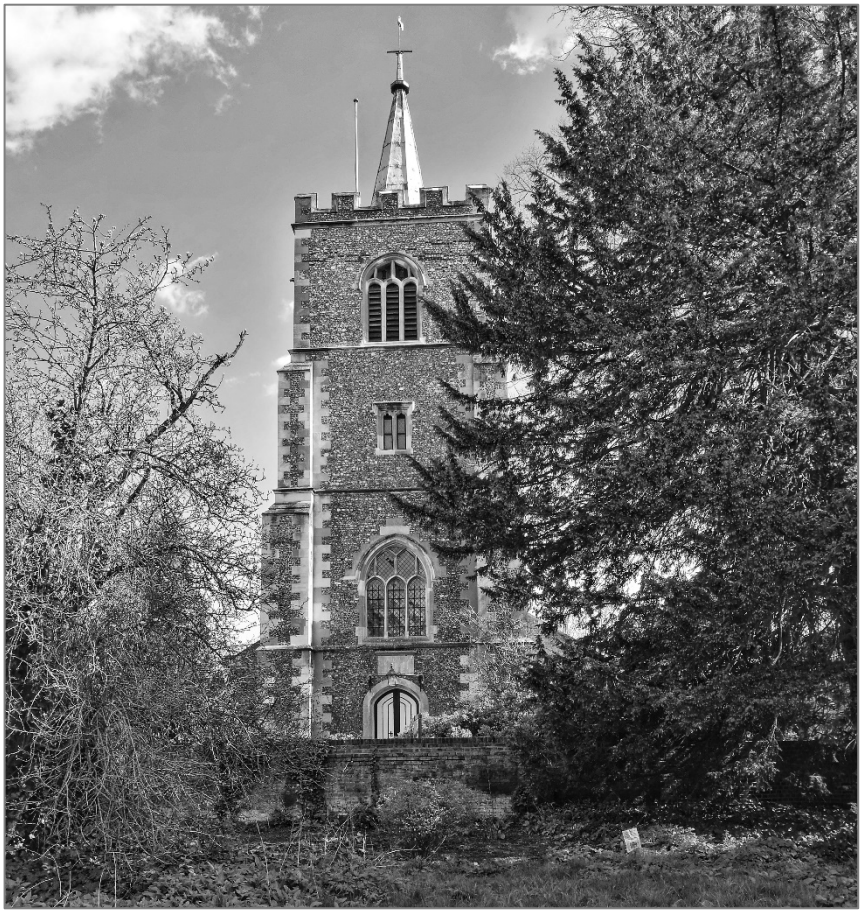
3.1. Designated Heritage Assets

3.1.1. The conservation area itself is a designated heritage asset. There are 25 further designated heritage assets within the Rickmansworth Conservation Area boundary, all Grade II listed, including the magnificent St Mary's Church designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield, a range of residential properties, public houses, tombs, monuments, a war memorial, and a K6 telephone kiosk.

3.1.2. These buildings and structures have been listed due to their special historic and architectural interest under Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and conservation areas) Act 1990. Further information about the listing process can be found on the Historic England website at https://historicengland.org.uk/.

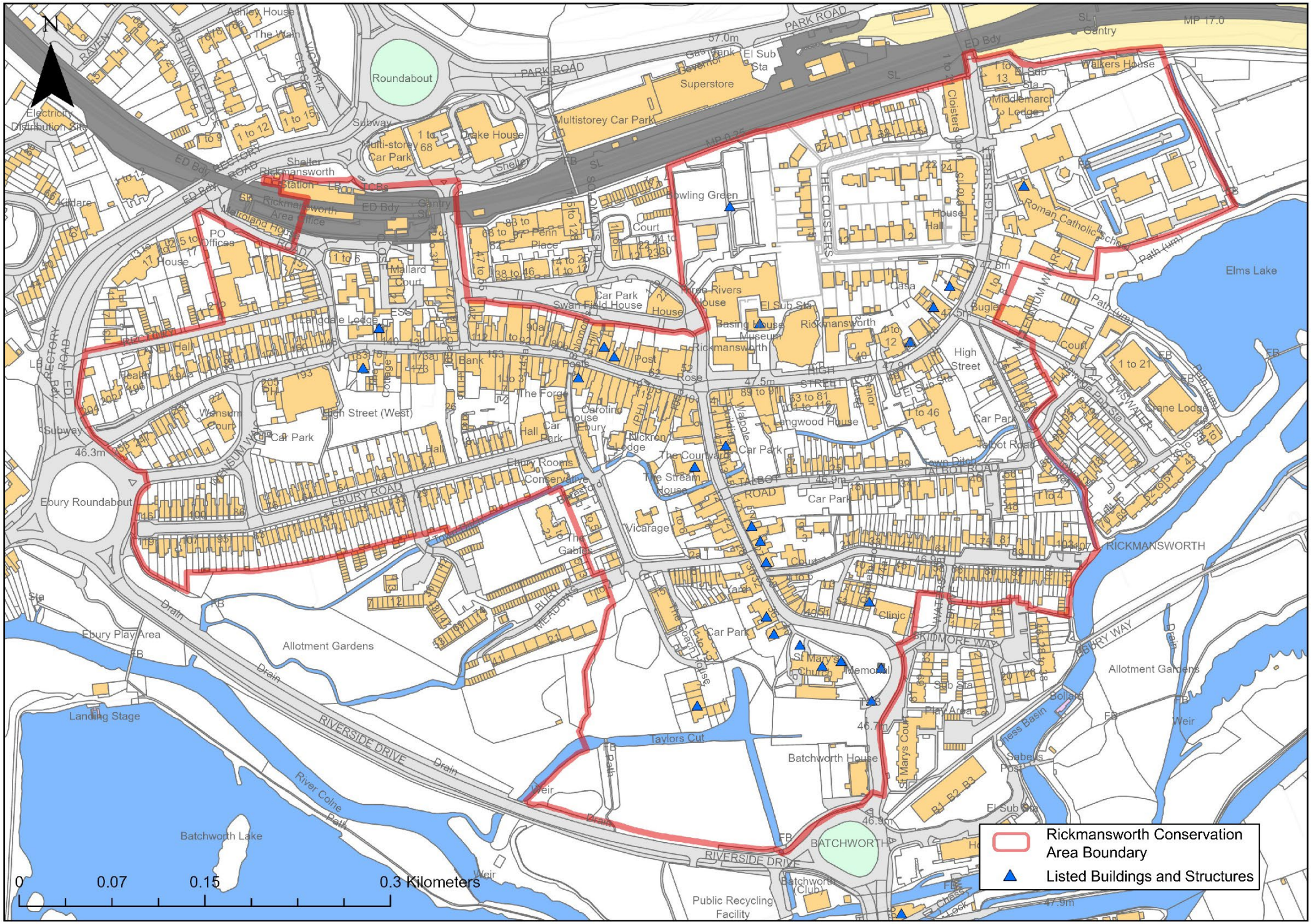
3.1.3. Listed buildings are protected by government legislation and there are policies in place to ensure that any alterations to a listed building will not adversely affect its special architectural interest. It is still possible to alter, extend or demolish a listed building, but this will require listed building consent and sometimes planning permission.

3.1.4. A full list of all the designated heritage assets within the conservation area is included in Section 8.3 and they are shown on the map overleaf. Prominent listed buildings are also highlighted in the description within 5.2, where they make a special contribution to the historic character of each area.



The Grade II Listed St Mary's Church (image kindly supplied by Ian Wood)

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N
Rickmansworth Conservation Area Boundary
Listed Buildings and Structures
0
0.07
0.15
0.3 Kilometers
PARK ROAD
HIGH STREET
RIVERSIDE DRIVE
EBURY ROAD
TALBOT ROAD
Roundabout
Multistorey Car Park
Superstore
Rickmansworth Station
Ebury Roundabout
Ebury Play Area
Allotment Gardens
Landing Stage
Batchworth Lake
Elms Lake
Taylors Cut
River Colne
Drain
Weir
Public Recycling Facility
Batchworth (Club)
Batchworth House
St Mary's Church
Memorial
Bowling Green
Basing House Museum
Three Rivers House
Roman Catholic School
Walkers House
Middlemarch Lodge
Crane Lodge
Langwood House
Talbot Road Car Park
Car Park
Clinic
Vicarage
The Gables
The Courtyard
The Stream House
Ebury Rooms Conservative Club
Caroline House
Nickron Lodge
The Forge
Wensum Court
Mallard Court
Penn Place
Swan Field House
Landdale Lodge
Kildare
PO Offices
Rickmansworth Area Office
Shelter
Subway
Gantry
Electricity Distribution Site
Ashley House
The Wain
Drake House
Multi-storey Car Park
Gas Governor
El Sub Sta
Cloisters
House
Court
Casa
Bugle
Rose
Post Offices
Bank
Hall
Health Centre
Town Ditch
Path (um)
Footbridge
Sluice
Lock
Bollard
Play Area
Sabeus Post
Chess Basin
Sta
Gantry
MP 17.0
MP 0.25
57.0m
47.5m
47.9m
46.3m
46.7m
46.9m
47.9m

3.2. Non-Designated Heritage Assets

3.2.1. All buildings, features, and planned landscapes within a conservation area make a contribution to its significance. These can be measured on a sliding scale of positive, to neutral, to negative contributors.

3.2.2. Heritage assets are defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 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'.*

3.2.3. Not all heritage assets are designated, and although a building may not be included on the list, this does not mean it is of no heritage value. Buildings and other smaller features of the built environment such as fountains, railings, signs, and landscaping can make a positive contribution to the appreciation of an area's historic interest and its general appearance.

3.2.4. Local listing is an important tool for local planning authorities to identify non-listed buildings and other heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the locality. A number of buildings and structures have been identified on Rickmansworth's *List of Locally Important Buildings* as they are considered to be good examples of their type or architectural style, demonstrating local design features, are relatively complete in their survival and illustrate the history of the settlement.

3.2.5. A full list of non-designated heritage assets within the conservation area is included within Section 8.4 and they are shown on the map on page 15.

3.2.6. As part of the appraisal of the conservation area, this document has identified heritage assets, which make a positive contribution to the conservation area and should be considered for inclusion in the list of locally important buildings in the future. They should be considered as non-designated heritage assets.

3.2.7. The following buildings are considered to have sufficient architectural interest for further assessment for their inclusion in the list of locally important buildings, as based on the Council's criteria:[3]

[3] List of Locally Important Buildings Criteria, accessed: https://cdn.threerivers.gov.uk/files/2023/01/d6b69000-9e59-11ed-8d80-6dc425ce7e94-criteria-locally-important-buildings (1).pdf

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Table of identified locally important buildings

Building	*Criteria*
The Western Pub, 205 High Street	*Architectural style, function, and historic interest*
Baptist Church, High Street	*Architectural style, function, and historic interest*
Telephone Exchange	*Architectural style, function, and landmark quality*
40 High Street, Gable House	*Architectural style and historic interest*
163 High Street	*Architectural style, streetscape quality*
28 Church Street	*Architectural style, historic interest, streetscape quality*
Former Barclays Bank 6 Church Street	*Architectural style, function, streetscape quality*



The Western Pub, locally important building

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3.3. Archaeological Potential

3.3.1. Within the conservation area there is the potential for preserved archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric to post-medieval period. Most of the archaeological remains within the conservation area are likely to comprise medieval and post-medieval features, structures and finds related to the historic core of Rickmansworth.

3.3.2. Evidence of worked flint has been found throughout the conservation area, with a larger collection at Taylors Cut, which indicates occupation in this area since prehistory. Its location, adjacent to the River Colne, would have made it a prime location for early settlers. This may have continued into the Roman period indicated with finds of pottery sherds, although no features from this period have so far been identified.

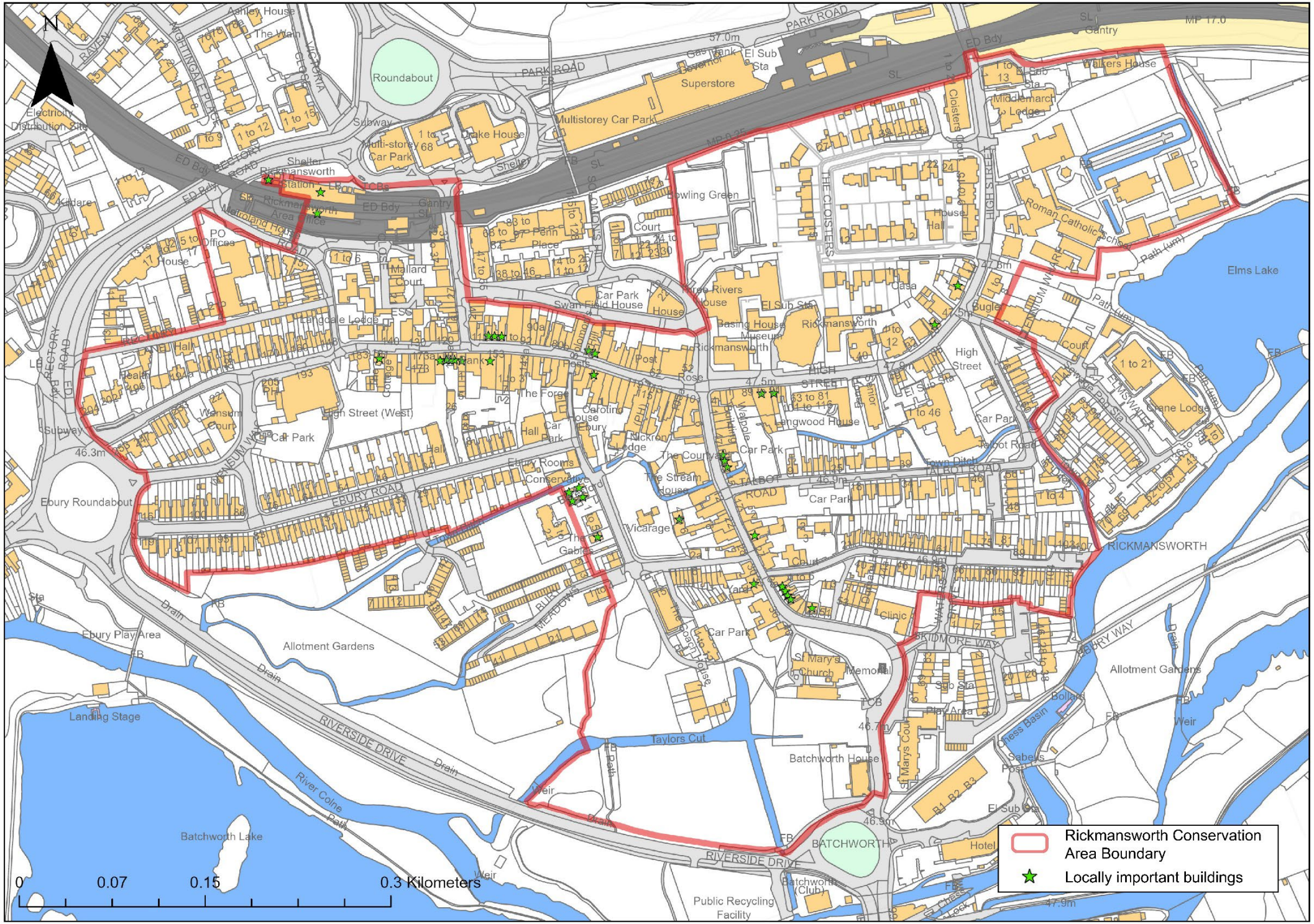
3.3.3. The conservation area comprises the historic medieval and post-medieval town of Rickmansworth. The medieval town ditch runs to the south of the High Street bisecting the conservation area; deposits created from the flooding of this feature may contain preserved paleoenvironmental remains. Although archaeological investigation within the town centre has been limited, during excavations to the southeast of the High Street an earlier alignment of the town ditch was identified with pottery dating to the twelfth-fifteenth century.[4] The areas to the south of the conservation area encompassing open land or back garden plots, especially nearer the River Colne, have the potential to preserve archaeological features of prehistoric or Roman date.

3.3.4. Archaeological monitoring undertaken along Station Road identified the cellars of earlier buildings along the street frontage indicating that, within the historic town, archaeological potential largely comprises evidence of former buildings and preserved below ground remains of the historic town including cellars and latrines.

3.3.5. The conservation area's geology comprises a complex mix of alluvium clay, silt, sand and gravel. Artefacts such as ceramics, bone, building materials and metal would be expected to survive well in chalky and clayey soils. The River Colne flows close to the southern edge of the conservation area boundary; its valley contains a high potential for surviving paleoenvironmental deposits as well as that of the town ditch. Within clayey soils waterlogged deposits can survive and should be anticipated in deeper features such as wells and cesspits. These can provide information on the wider landscape as well as evidence for food and cereal production.

[4] Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record 10901

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N
Rickmansworth Conservation Area Boundary
Locally important buildings
0
0.07
0.15
0.3 Kilometers
Roundabout
Superstore
Multistorey Car Park
Drake House
Rickmansworth Station
Rickmansworth Police Station
Mallard Court
Swan Field House
Three Rivers House
Basing House
Rickmansworth Museum
Penn Place
Bowling Green
Langdale Lodge
Wensum Court
Ebury Roundabout
Ebury Play Area
Allotment Gardens
Landing Stage
Batchworth Lake
Taylors Cut
River Colne
Batchworth House
St Mary's Church
Memorial
Public Recycling Facility
Elms Lake
Crane Lodge
Roman Catholic School
Walkers House
Middlemarch Lodge
Cloisters
Casa
Bugle
Rose
Vicarage
The Gables
Carolina House
Nickron Lodge
Longwood House
Talbot Road
Town Ditch
Clinic
Hotel
Batchworth (Club)
PARK ROAD
RIVERSIDE DRIVE
EBURY ROAD
HIGH STREET
THE CLOSTERS
RECTORY ROAD
CHURCH STREET
TALBOT ROAD
ELMSWAY
EBURY WAY
RICKMANSWORTH

4. Historical Development

4.1. Introduction

4.1.1. The following section provides an overview of the history of Rickmansworth Conservation Area and the surrounding area.



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Rickmansworth, Church Street 1897 (Copyright The Francis Frith Collection)

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4.2. Timeline

Prehistory (500000 BCE – 43 AD)

4.2.1. The rich valleys of Rickmansworth have attracted settlers for centuries. The earliest settlers left fragments of worked flint and bone as evidence of their existence.

Roman (43 – 410 AD)

4.2.2. The Romans settled in the River Valleys around this area, with evidence of villas at Latimer and Sarratt in the Chess Valley and Moor Park and Sandy Lodge in the Colne Valley.

Early Medieval (411 – 1065 AD)

4.2.3. It is from Saxon times that Rickmansworth gets its name. In the year 793 King Offa, King of Mercia, granted the Abbey of St Alban Forest land to the southwest of the abbey. There has been a settlement at Rickmansworth since at least 796 when King Ecgfrith, co-King of Mercia and the son of King Offa, granted the lands here to the Benedictine Abbey at St Albans. This was known as the 'Pynesfield Charter', which gave five farmsteads to the Abbey. The manors of 'Rickmersworth', the Moor, and Crokesley were part of the Abbey endowment.



King Offa donates land in the Rickmansworth area to the Abbot of St Albans, 793AD (Three Rivers Museum)

Medieval (1066 – 1540 AD)

4.2.4. The village of 'Rickmersworth' is recorded in the Domesday book of 1086. It was during this period that the settlement rose to the status of Market Town. During the reign of King Henry III, Rickmansworth became a town by Royal Charter and was permitted to hold a market every Wednesday, which later moved to Saturdays.

4.2.5. There is a record of the church in the early thirteenth century, and the historic core of the town included buildings such as the Bury Manor House, dating back to 1325,[5] and the Old Vicarage, a former cross wing house part of which dates back to c.1460. The Feathers, 36 Church Street, is another notable early building, occupying a timber framed fifteenth century hall house and inn.

4.2.6. The late medieval town ditch is another key feature from this period. It was originally a field drainage system that ran from the River Chess to the River Colne and was later used as a sanitary channel. The town ditch had a precursor that ran northwards of this.

[5] The old hearth-stone was found with the mason's mark and the date 1325.

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Post-Medieval (1541 – 1901 AD)

4.2.7. Although the Bury has a rich history, the present building is a Tudor structure with interior work of later date. It is the most ancient of the big houses of 'Rickmersworth', and was used by Ridley, Bishop of London.

4.2.8. The proximity of the two rivers provided an important power supply for the cloth and print industries which grew up around the town and surrounding area. Watercress was also cultivated here to supply London markets, providing another important industry for the town.

4.2.9. A notable dissenter associated with Rickmansworth was William Penn, the Quaker (1644 – 1718). For the first 5 years of his married life with Miss Springett of King John's Farm in Chorleywood he resided in Basing House. Basing House stands on the site of a much older monastic building. Penn oversaw the founding of the American Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a refuge for religious minorities of Europe.[6]

4.2.10. The Coach and Horses is a traditional pub that dates back to at least 1722. It was originally part of the Salter's Brewery, when in 1741 Samuel Salter purchased the site. This evolved into a prominent local brewery which eventually outgrew the pub site and was rebuilt on the other side of the road, now St Joan of Arc School. The brewery supplied beer to pubs in the area for over 170 years, until it was closed in 1926.

4.2.11. The early nineteenth century saw the construction of the Grand Union Canal located to the south of the conservation area, and with it an increase in industry. The Grand Union Canal is a 137-mile-long canal that runs through England, connecting London and Birmingham. It was formed between 1894 and 1929 by merging several independent waterways.

4.2.12. In October 1862 a railway line connecting Rickmansworth to Watford was opened by Lord Ebury, with interchange sidings being provided adjacent to the canal. However, the railway was not a success and closed four years later.

4.2.13. The Metropolitan line, the first underground railway in the world, arrived in Rickmansworth in 1887, providing a line into London and resulting in commuters. The line was electrified in 1925, although steam trains were still used to travel north from Rickmansworth until 1961.[7]

[6] Tolles, F. B.. "William Penn." Encyclopedia Britannica, January 3, 2025. https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Penn-English-Quaker-leader-and-colonist.

[7] Railway Archive, All Change at Rickmansworth, 2025. www.railwayarchive.org.uk

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Rickmansworth, Basing House c.1950 Photo ref: R33005
(Copyright The Francis Frith Collection)

Basing House

The present Basing House was built in 1740. It is possible, however, that part of the house in which William Penn lived is incorporated in the present building. Set back slightly at each end is a late-nineteenth century single bay extension in slightly darker brick. The building is Grade II listed and was the headquarters of the Three Rivers District Council until 1991, before being used by the Three Rivers Museum Trust.

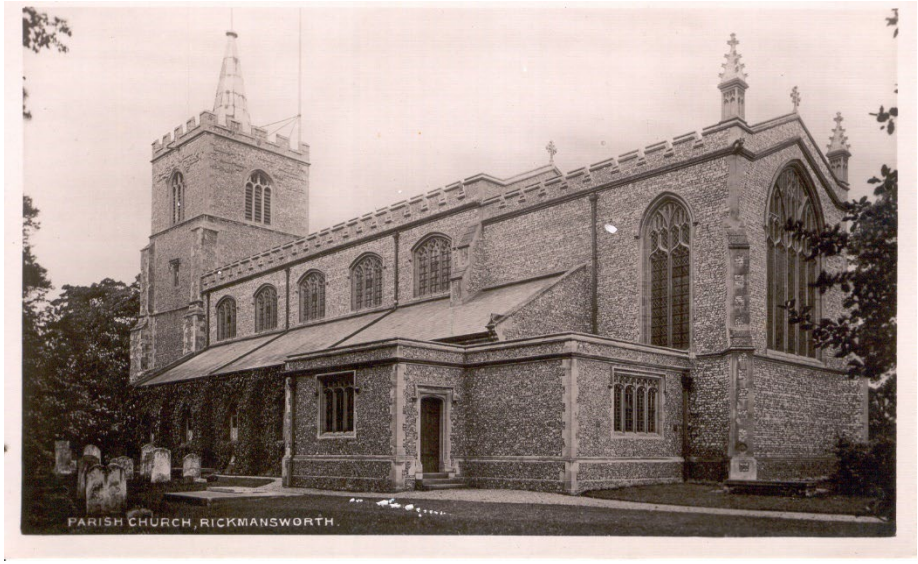


Rickmansworth, The Bury c.1965 Photo ref: R33073
(Copyright The Francis Frith Collection)

The Bury

The Bury in Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire was a manor house that was the seat of the Manor of Rickmansworth until 1741. It was built in the early seventeenth-century in brick and timber. The Manor has a rich history, including connections to the Crown, the Fotherley family, and the Taylor family. In the first half of the eighteenth century the house was much altered, and the west side was re-fronted; during the nineteenth century it was considerably repaired. It is Grade II listed, and currently subdivided into residential units.

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Parish Church of Rickmansworth c1900-1905 (Hertford Museum)

St Mary's Church

St Mary's Church has a rich history dating back to the thirteenth century; however, the current building we see today was built in the nineteenth century after the previous church was pulled down. The Grade II listed church is the outcome of two major rebuilds in the 1800s, as it was rebuilt in 1826 and rebuilt again by Sir Arthur Blomfield in 1890. The west tower is the exception and has survived from the seventeenth century.

Modern (1902-Present)

4.2.14. In the early 1900s, Rickmansworth was a growing town. The St Joan of Arc Catholic School was founded in 1904 by the Filles de Jesus (Daughters of Jesus). The main house of the school was previously The Elms, once the residence of renowned Victorian novelist George Eliot (pen name of Mary Ann Evans).

4.2.15. By the late 1920s, Rickmansworth had been expanded by Metro-land development, providing housing for commuters.

4.2.16. In 1930, the Rickmansworth Urban District Council bought Basing House, which had been the home of William Penn, and converted it into its offices and meeting place.

4.2.17. The A404 road was originally opened in 1961, and Riverside Drive was built in the late 1960s. This severed the town from its open landscape to the south and led to the relocation of the war memorial (to the churchyard) and the Lion and Eagle sculpture, now set in the Rose Garden opposite the entrance to Three Rivers House (which was built in 1991).

4.2.18. The Public Library was built in 1968, and Watersmeet in 1972, to the south of Basing House.

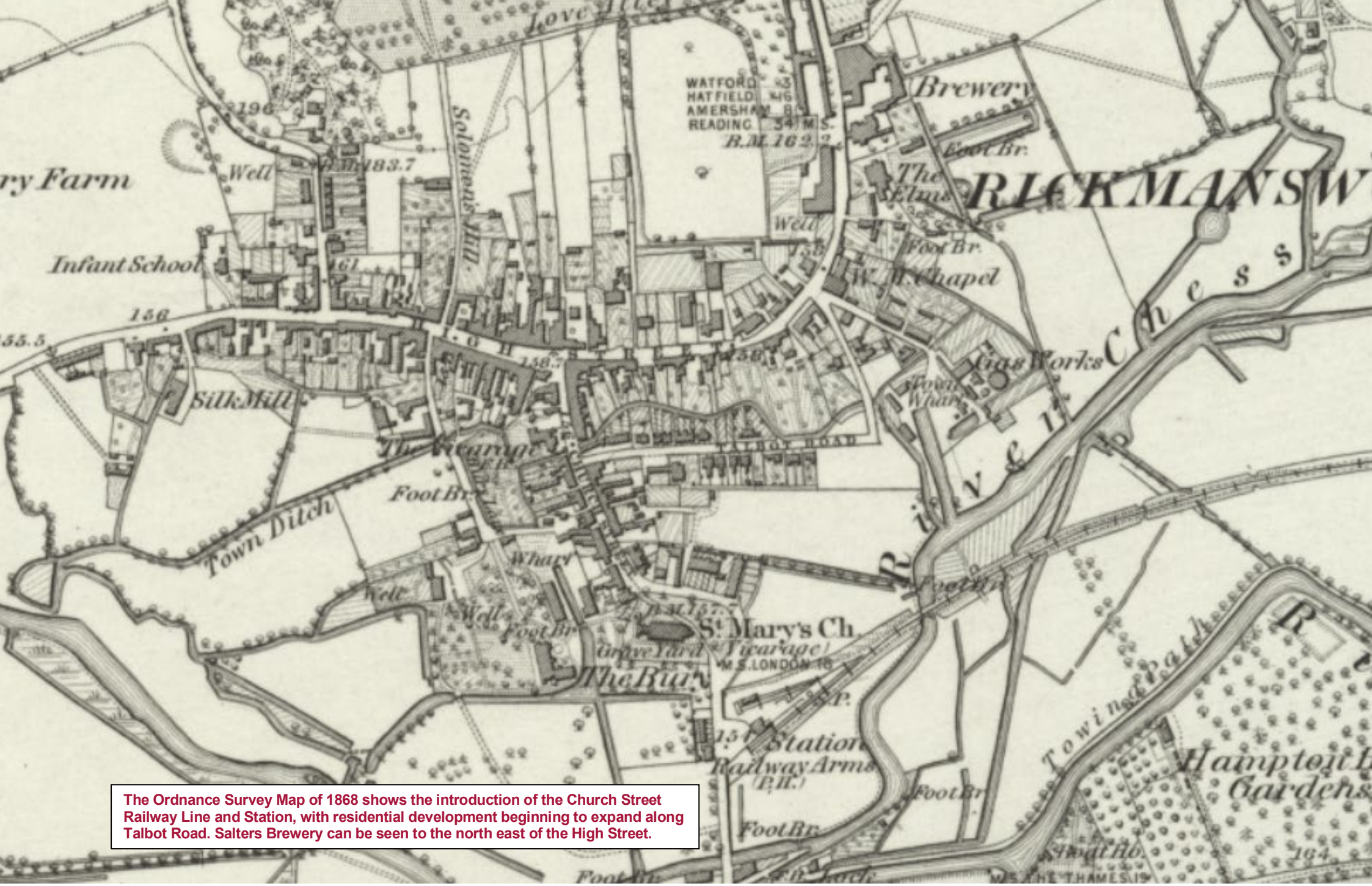
4.2.19. By the 2001 census, Rickmansworth had a population of 14,571. The town now has a variety of manufacturing and service industries. Due to its location, it also acts as a commuter base for people working in London.

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The Tithe Map of 1838 shows dense development within the historic core of Rickmansworth, surrounded by fields and the canal network.

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The Ordnance Survey Map of 1868 shows the introduction of the Church Street Railway Line and Station, with residential development beginning to expand along Talbot Road. Salters Brewery can be seen to the north east of the High Street.

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By the time of the 1899 Ordnance Survey Map, the railway line and station had relocated to the north of Rickmansworth Town. Residential development has continued to expand along Talbot Road, Norfolk Road and Rectory Road.

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**Rickmansworth, Water Splash c.1965 Photo ref: R33049, which was culverted following the harsh winter in 1963.
The distinctive frontage of the Grade II Listed Almshouses can be seen on the right (Copyright The Francis Frith Collection)**

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5. Assessment of Significance

5.1. Architectural and Historic Interest

5.1.1. Conservation areas are designated due to their special architectural or historic interest. Many conservation areas have both architectural and historic interest although the level of each varies. These values can be summarised as:

5.1.2. **Architectural interest**: An interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures.

5.1.3. **Historic interest**: An interest in past lives and events.[8]

5.1.4. Further information regarding how historic and architectural interest is assessed can be found in ***Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 12***, published by Historic England (2019).

5.1.5. The historic and architectural special interest of Rickmansworth Conservation Area is derived from its development from a medieval village, based on the natural resources and access to navigable waterways, and its evolution through the post-medieval period due to changes in industry and transport. Significant traces of the medieval settlement of Rickmansworth and its setting are still legible. Historic buildings, the cuts and canals, and the railway distinguish the conservation area from its surrounding areas. Despite large scale twentieth and twenty-first-century developments in the surrounding area, the historic core is legible through the street pattern and surviving buildings and character. As a result, Rickmansworth's inherent form and pattern of development has not been diluted. The extent of the early settlement is still clearly defined by the surviving historic buildings, streets, lanes, alleys and spaces, which provide evidence of the area's historic character and a gradual evolution over the centuries with the addition of canal and railway networks.

5.1.6. Despite continued development, Rickmansworth has a range of attractive historic buildings ranging in date from the fifteenth to the twentieth century. The medieval core of the village, centred on the Church of St Mary, and the Victorian expansion towards the north, east and west provide the form of the conservation area.

5.1.7. The historic core of the town was and remains the commercial buildings on Church Street, the High Street, and the tightly knit residential buildings along Ebury Road, Norfolk Road and Talbot Road. The principal historic buildings within the conservation area include the Grade II listed Church, Grade II listed Basing House, Grade II listed Joan of Arc School, and the locally important building the station, which are significant to the special architectural interest of the area. These are all landmark

[8] Paragraph 006, ref: 18a-006-20190723, 'Historic Environment', *National Planning Policy Guidance,* 2019.

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buildings and have a positive effect on the character and appearance of the area.

5.1.8. The arrival of the railway in the mid-nineteenth century had a considerable impact on Rickmansworth. The canal-based wharf and commercial activities gradually reduced while more houses were built to the south of the village, which shaped the development of the town.

5.1.9. Overall, the character and appearance of Rickmansworth are derived from its historic buildings, streets, and spaces, providing a strong sense of place.

5.2. Building Significance

5.2.1. Where visible from areas of public realm, the buildings within the Rickmansworth Conservation Area have been assessed for the contribution they make to the area's significance, whether positive, neutral or negative.

5.2.2. The map on page 26 should be read in conjunction with the key notes opposite. These outline the broad descriptions of positive, neutral and negative attributed to buildings within the conservation area. It should be noted that just because a building is positive it does not mean it cannot be enhanced. Some positive buildings may have intrusive aspects (such as inappropriate windows) and are addressed in the Management Plan. The buildings identified as 'Positive with opportunity for enhancement' tend to have more bespoke or fundamental issues that are not generally observed or widespread across the area.

Positive: These are buildings that have been identified as positive contributors to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Whilst identified as positive there are likely to be enhancements which can be made to better reveal the architectural interest of the building and improve its contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. These general enhancements are noted in the Management Plan in Section 7. One example would be the replacement of windows where the buildings have uPVC and reinstating sympathetic traditional shopfronts. The upgrade of these items would be beneficial as a general rule.

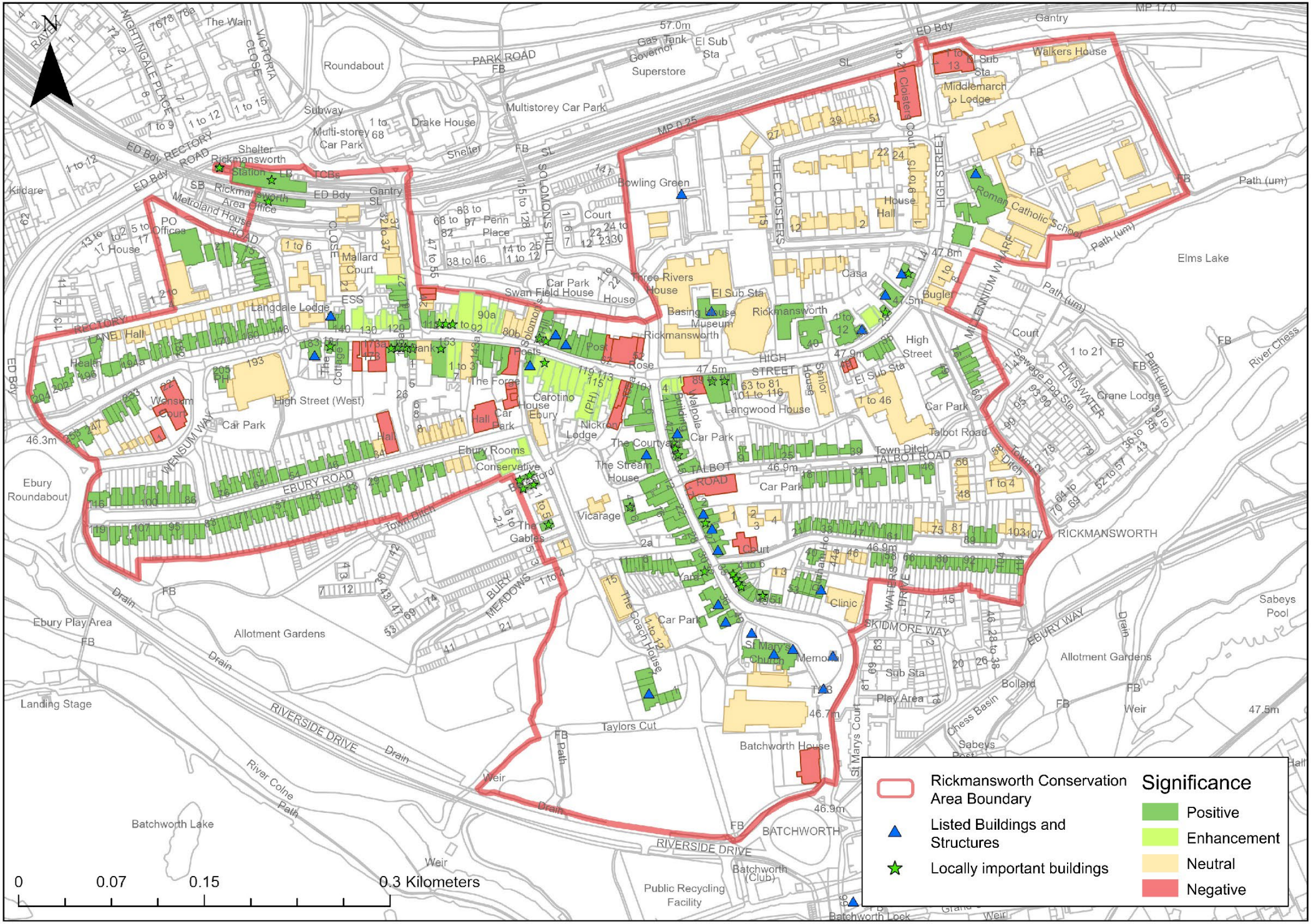
Positive with opportunity for enhancement: These are buildings which have been highlighted as they are positive contributors, however, they have been compromised due to intrusive alterations or additions. These buildings can be enhanced through the removal, replacement or redesign of intrusive or unsympathetic alterations.

Neutral: These buildings make no beneficial or adverse contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Negative: These buildings make an adverse or intrusive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Other: It was not possible to view these buildings from the public realm or ascertain their contribution to the conservation area.

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Rickmansworth Conservation Area Boundary
Listed Buildings and Structures
Locally important buildings
Significance
Positive
Enhancement
Neutral
Negative
0
0.07
0.15
0.3 Kilometers
RECTORY LANE
HIGH STREET
TALBOT ROAD
EBURY ROAD
RIVERSIDE DRIVE
PARK ROAD
SOLOMONS HILL
THE CLOISTERS
MILLENNIUM WHARF
WENSUM WAY
SKIDMORE WAY
EBURY WAY
BURY MEADOWS
Three Rivers House
Basing House Museum
Rickmansworth
Langwood House
Carotino House
Ebury
The Courtyard
The Stream House
Vicarage
Batchworth House
St Mary's Church
Memorial
Clinic
Walkers House
Middlemarch Lodge
Roman Catholic School
Elms Lake
Crane Lodge
Bowling Green
Allotment Gardens
Ebury Play Area
Landing Stage
Batchworth Lake
Public Recycling Facility
Batchworth (Club)
Batchworth Lock
Sabeys Pool
Chess Basin
Taylors Cut
Drain
River Colne Path
River Chess
Path (um)
Weir
FB
Sub Sta
Car Park
Play Area
Bollard
Gantry
Roundabout
Subway
Multistorey Car Park
Multi-storey Car Park
Superstore
Rickmansworth Station
Rickmansworth Area Office
Metroland House
PO Offices
Mallard Court
Swan Field House
Penn Place
Drake House
Shelter
Langdale Lodge
Wensum Court
High Street (West)
The Forge
Ebury Rooms
Conservative Club
The Gables
The Coach House
Nickron Lodge
Senior House
Talbot Road
Town Ditch
Sewage Pmp Sta
ELMSWATER
RICKMANSWORTH
BATCHWORTH
Kildare
Casa
Bugler
Court
House
Hall
Health
Post Office
Rose
Walpole
Clinic
Yard
Gas Governor
Tank
El Sub Sta
MP 0.25
MP 17.0
57.0m
46.3m
46.9m
47.5m
47.8m
46.7m

5.3. Views

5.3.1. The views included in this assessment are a selection of key views; this list is not exhaustive and there may be other views of significance. Any proposals for development within the conservation area, or its environs, should consider the views identified within this section and any others which may be relevant or highlighted as part of a bespoke assessment of that proposal.

5.3.2. Views are discussed in the table overleaf.

5.3.3. The criteria used when identifying views is included below:

- **Landmark View**: these are considered to be "key views" or "vistas" that are of a high visual quality and/or historic significance and significantly contribute to the ability to appreciate the area's character, appearance and historic and/or architectural interest. They may include prominent landmarks, unfolding views, and important sightlines both within the conservation area and its setting.

- **Important Townscape View**: these views provide important sightlines along streets and spaces within the conservation area. They make a positive contribution to the way the character and appearance of the conservation area is experienced.

- **Local View**: these may be attractive views within the conservation area, and may include historic facades, street patterns, and/or highlight pedestrian experiences of the area.

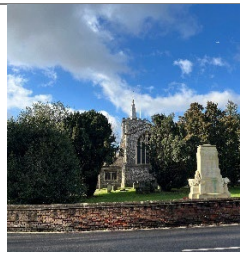




Top: Landmark View south along Church Street

Bottom: Important Townscape View of St Mary's Church facing west towards the church

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View Number	View Description	View Type	Reason for Selection	Thumbnail
1	View South along Church Street	Landmark View	The view south along Church Street is a dramatic enclosed view and represents the Landmark View within the conservation area. It should be considered a very important view in considering any proposed changes to the buildings and spaces featuring in the view. It takes in the church tower, Priory, Feathers Pub and other historic buildings, with trees forming a backdrop. In this view the historic development of the area can be well appreciated due to the multi-phase historic building stock. The view permits an understanding of the area's special architectural and historic interest.	
2	St. Mary's Church Facing west towards the church	Important Townscape Views	In this view the special interest of the church can be appreciated. The view takes in a number of heritage assets, including the listed war memorial, with curved retaining wall, and well-landscaped churchyard with glimpses of St Mary's Church behind.	

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3	Ebury Road Kinetic views facing west	Important Townscape Views	This view allows for appreciation of the residential character of Ebury Road. Facing west at junction of 'Goral Mead', the curve in the road allows views of the well-proportioned streetscape and roofscape of the primarily red brick and rendered houses. Most chimneys have been retained, there are no front dormers visible and only limited use of front rooflights. Continuing west to junction with Ebury Approach, there are more elaborate gable fronted white rendered houses on the southern side, with the view terminated by mature trees (which are more visible in summer views). The kinetic views along Ebury Road permit an appreciation of the area's historic residential expansion and its architectural interest.	
4	Ebury Road junction with Ebury Approach facing east	Important Townscape Views	Similar to the view above, this viewpoint allows a more linear view terminated by larger modern buildings at the junction with Bury Lane in which the area's historic residential development and architectural interest can be appreciated.	
5	High Street Kinetic Views facing west	Important Townscape Views	The historic and architectural interest of the conservation area and commercial character of the High Street can be appreciated in this view. This view includes an imposing red brick gable fronted building in the foreground on the southern side of the High Street (Nos. 153 to 163), contrasting with the more varied and angular Gothic	

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			Revival buildings on the northern side at No. 106 through to 142. Residential development and mature street trees are visible in the background. Outside M&S and 'The Western' Pub, this view provides an interesting transition between commercial and residential uses in which the historic development and uses of the conservation area can be understood. This viewpoint has a wider vantage point at the junction with Wensum Way on the northern side which takes in houses with attractive painted gable features, although Wensum Court detracts from the view.	
6	High Street Kinetic Views facing east	Important Townscape Views	The historic and architectural interest of the conservation area and varied commercial character of the High Street can be appreciated in this view. Facing east by Boots this view takes in attractive shopfronts at Boots and WH Smith and a varied townscape terminated by Odeon Parade at the junction with Church Street and Northway. Moving further east to the junction, this is a very open vantage point due to the junction itself and the set back of buildings from the road. The view is well contained by Odeon Parade at the junction, which is three storeys in height and has a distinct curvilinear, twentieth century design. However, this view lacks coherence due to the lower buildings set back from the road on the northern side of the junction including Rickmansworth Library.	

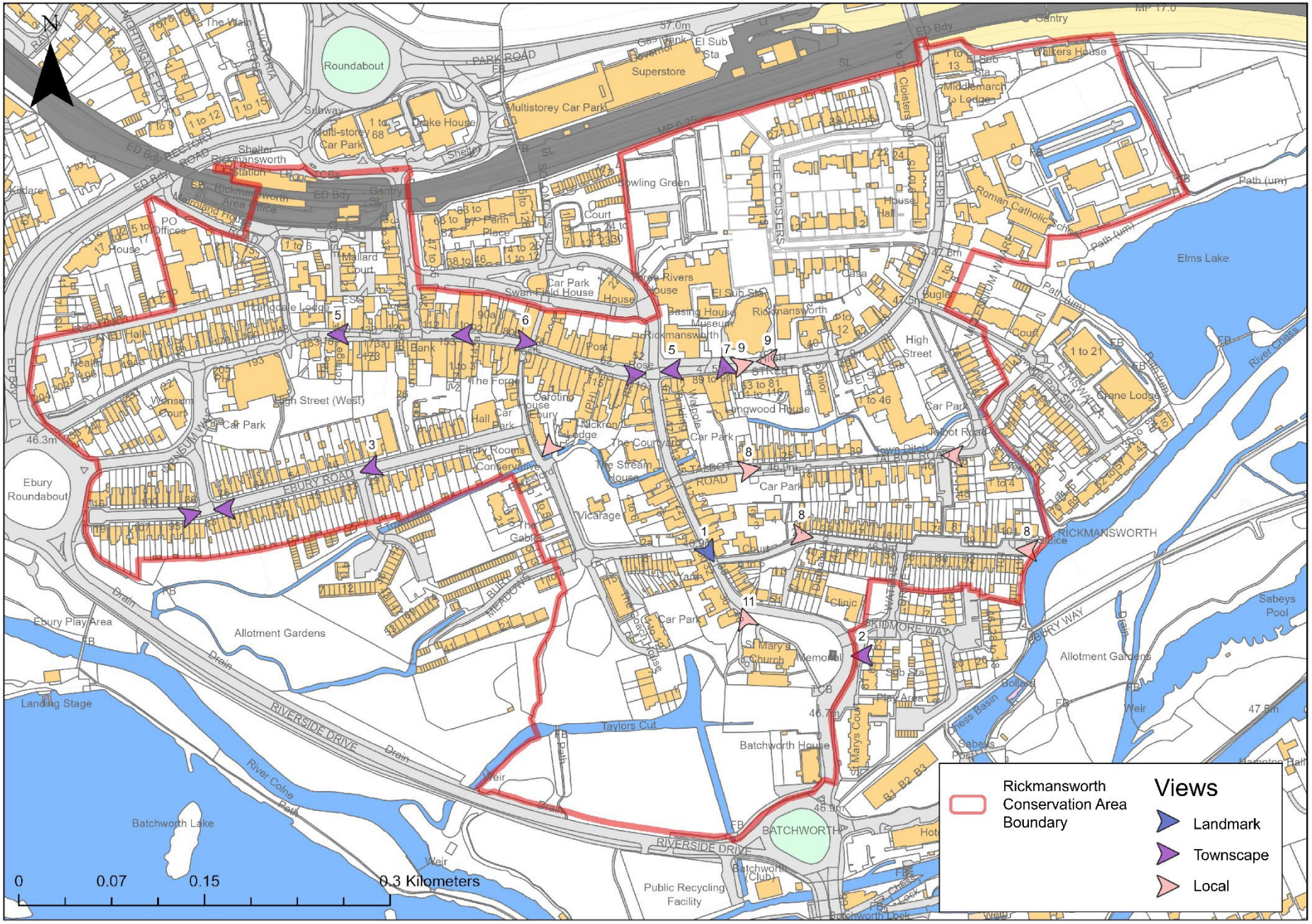
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7	View towards Basing House	Important Townscape Views	This view provides an appreciation of the grade II listed Basing House and its forecourt. It is a contained view, terminating with the historic Basing House. This view could be improved by alterations to the public realm in the foreground, to enhance appreciation of this historic building.	
8	Talbot Road and Norfolk Road	Local Views	These viewpoints provide longer views along these roads in both directions. They showcase the character and rhythm of residential, terraced development, highlighting the character and appearance of the conservation area.	
9	Views East and West from outside Watersmeet Theatre	Local Views	These viewpoints take in the character and appearance of the High Street, including a number of heritage assets. The Baptist Church and No. 40 Gable House in the foreground to the left of the view have distinct architectural detailing which contributes to the architectural interest of the area and are set amongst mature trees, positively contributing to the area's character.	
10	Bury lane facing west	Local Views	This view provides the opportunity to take in a number of features that positively contribute to the conservation area, including the Town Ditch, railings and the locally important Beresford Almshouses.	

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11	Church Street Facing North	Local Views	The view north along Church Street is attractive due to the historic building stock lining the street and the curve of the road. It also takes in the historic core of the settlement contributing to the ability to appreciate the area's special architectural and historic interest. This view is more linear and lacks the landmark quality of the view facing south.	

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N
Rickmansworth Conservation Area Boundary
Views
Landmark
Townscape
Local
0
0.07
0.15
0.3 Kilometers
Roundabout
Superstore
Multistorey Car Park
Drake House
Multi-storey Car Park
Shelter
Rickmansworth Station
Rickmansworth Area Office
PO Offices
Mallard Court
Bowling Green
Three Rivers House
Basing House
Rickmansworth Museum
Swan Field House
Car Park
Bank
The Forge
Caroline House
Ebury
Nickron Lodge
The Courtyard
The Stream House
Vicarage
The Gables
Ebury Rooms
Conservatory
Hall
Car Park
High Street (West)
Wensum Court
Langwood House
Town Ditch
Talbot Road
Crane Lodge
Elms Lake
Roman Catholic Church
Walkers House
Middlemarch Lodge
Cloisters House
THE CLOISTERS
HIGH STREET
Ebury Roundabout
EBURY ROAD
TALBOT ROAD
RICKMANSWORTH
Ebury Play Area
Allotment Gardens
Landing Stage
RIVERSIDE DRIVE
Taylors Cut
Batchworth House
Batchworth Lake
River Colne
Weir
Public Recycling Facility
BATCHWORTH
Batchworth (Club)
Batchworth Lock
St Mary's Church
Memorial
Clinic
Sabeys Pool
Sabeys Basin
Bollard
Harefield Hall
Path (um)
River Chess
ELMSWATER
BRIDMORE WAY
Drain
Path
Yard
Court
Car Park
Play Area
Sub Sta
Gantry
Gas Governor
Gas Tank
El Sub Sta
Subway
Shelter
Toilets
Post
Pond
Weir
Lock
Path
Drain
Allotment Gardens
Sabeys Pool
Elms Lake
Batchworth Lake
Batchworth Lock
Public Recycling Facility
Landing Stage
Ebury Play Area
Ebury Roundabout
Roundabout
Superstore
Multistorey Car Park
Drake House
Multi-storey Car Park
Shelter
Rickmansworth Station
Rickmansworth Area Office
PO Offices
Mallard Court
Bowling Green
Three Rivers House
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Hall
Car Park
High Street (West)
Wensum Court
Langwood House
Town Ditch
Talbot Road
Crane Lodge
Elms Lake
Roman Catholic Church
Walkers House
Middlemarch Lodge
Cloisters House
THE CLOISTERS
HIGH STREET

5.4. Character Areas

5.4.1. As part of this appraisal, Rickmansworth Conservation Area has been divided into four Character Areas:

1. Character Area One: Church Street and the Bury
2. Character Area Two: Town Centre
3. Character Area Three: High Street East
4. Character Area Four: Residential Areas - East and West

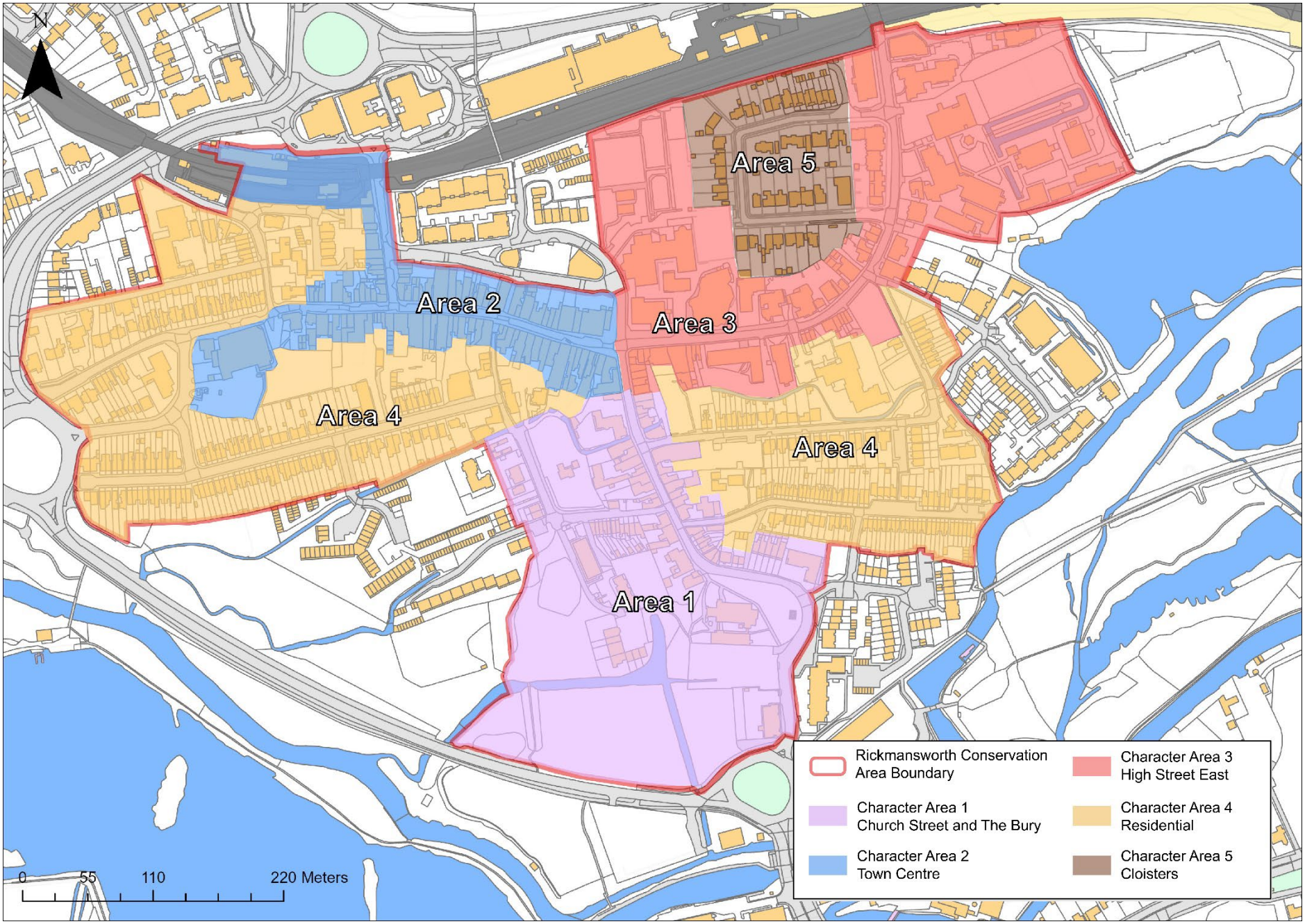
5.4.2. The areas have been determined by building typology, historical development, land use and appearance. Many of the defining characteristics of each character area are present and repeated in other parts of the conservation area, which emphasises the coherent character and significance of the conservation area. The following descriptions are not exhaustive, aiming instead to provide accessible accounts of each character area, which will allow for an informed understanding of the conservation area's special interest and defining features.

5.4.3. Prevailing architectural styles, building materials, spatial planning, landscaping, and boundary materials are detailed in the description of each character area to highlight their special architectural and historic value. Photographs are included to aid the descriptions, providing examples where appropriate to inform the understanding of this document.



A view east along the High Street, showing the boundary between the residential character area (left) and commercial high street character area (right)

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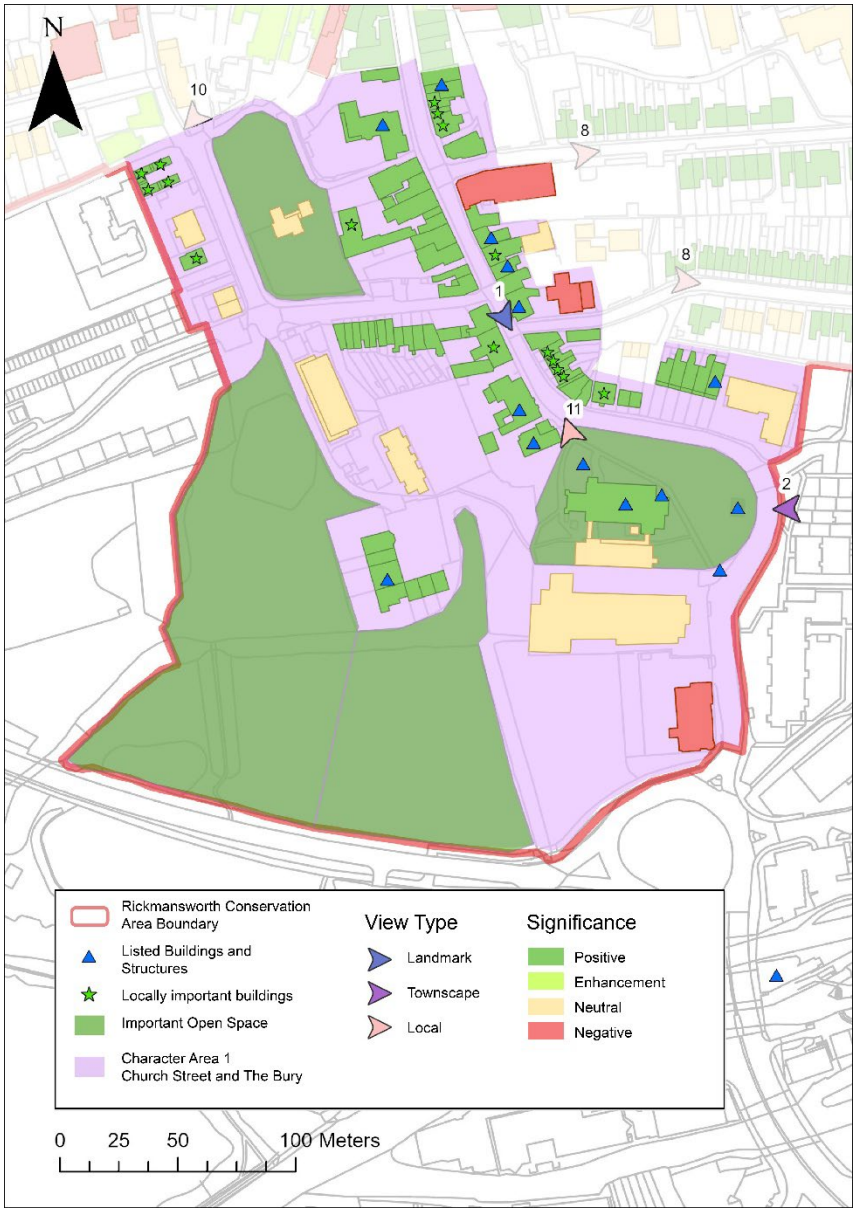
Map showing the four character areas identified within the conservation area

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Character Area One: Church Street and the Bury

Summary

5.4.4. This is the most historic Character Area, located in the southern part of the historic settlement. It has the highest concentration of nationally listed buildings, with several along Church Street including the Parish Church of St Mary's, the most important landmark building within Rickmansworth. It also includes the Grade II listed The Bury, which has a secluded and semi-rural character, and Bury Lane, which contains several historic buildings and is marked by extensive and attractive green landscaping, particularly around the perimeter of the Vicarage.



Map showing key features within Character Area One

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Description

5.4.5. The churchyard of St Mary's Church forms the entrance point of the historic buildings within the conservation area from the south, with a K6 red telephone kiosk beyond the church boundary wall. The churchyard is contained by a curved brick perimeter wall and contains extensive green landscaping and a war memorial visible from Church Street. The church, War Memorial and kiosk are all Grade II listed. The church itself was remodelled during the nineteenth century, but the west tower dates from the seventeenth century and is distinguished by its use of flint and short 'Hertfordshire spike' spire, both characteristic of Hertfordshire churches and attributed to a lack of local building stone.

5.4.6. The southern section of Church Street that curves around the churchyard on the eastern side consists primarily of nineteenth century terraces in residential use, including the Grade II listed Nos. 53-61.

5.4.7. The Priory (grade II listed) has historic associations with the Church and has an exposed timber frame, although there are clear later additions including a modern tiled roof.

5.4.8. Church Street is primarily made up of historic buildings, many originally houses now in commercial use, with fifteenth or sixteenth century origins often with concealed timber frames. Typical building materials are various historic bricks or render finishes with roofs in red tiles or dark slates. There are also several historic shopfronts still in use.

5.4.9. The view south along Church Street, taking in the church tower, Priory and Feathers Pub and other historic buildings, with trees forming a backdrop, is a dramatic enclosed view and represents the landmark view within the conservation area.

5.4.10. At the northern end of Church Street, near the junction with High Street and Northway, the older core clearly gives way to Victorian and later development.

5.4.11. To the west off Church Street, the area around The Bury and Bury Lane has a distinct character. It contains some attractive terraced houses, many of which have retained historic windows (although a number have inappropriate replacements) and there is lush greenery on the northern side. The Grade II listed Bury is a large house with sixteenth century origins. It has now been subdivided and shows signs of incremental change. Its grounds have been diminished by recent larger developments on Bury Lane, but a historic boundary wall with an unusual brick pattern has been retained on Bury Lane.

5.4.12. The mature trees within the gardens of The Bury and the Vicarage to its north combined with a lack of traffic, help to create a tranquil atmosphere which contrasts strongly with the busier Church Street and High Street. The west of Bury Lane running north-south contains some modern buildings interspersed with historic buildings of interest. This includes the locally important building 'The Gables' and the late-Victorian Beresford Almshouses, which has a distinct U-shaped plan and windows in octagon-shaped frames with colour insets. The Town Ditch and jubilee railings, both of which are historic features, sit at the junction with Ebury Road

5.4.13. The Conservative Club building and Ebury Rooms, immediately north of the town ditch are of later nineteenth/early twentieth century origin, although they have been diminished by unsympathetic modern windows. At the junction with Ebury Road the character gives way to more modern and higher density development on Bury Lane, Ebury Road and Gilliat Row.

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Layout and Land Usage

- Church Street is primarily commercial, while Bury Lane is residential.
- St Mary's Church introduces ecclesiastical use.
- There is a large area of recreational green space to the south.

Landscaping and Open Spaces/Public Realm

- St Mary's Churchyard and open space adjacent to the Bury, both of which are accessible via Public Rights of Way.
- Plentiful landscaping within the grounds of the Vicarage on Bury Lane.
- The Town Ditch also runs across Bury Lane.
- Taylor's Cut, including the woodland and pathways cutting through.



Path leading to the Bury

Landmark and Key Buildings

- Designated: St Mary's Church (Grade II), The Priory (Grade II), The Bury (Grade II)
- Non-designated: Beresford Almshouses on Bury Lane

Building Materials

- Roofs: mixture of traditional clay and modern concrete tiles and natural slate.
- Walls: generally red and stock brick or render, some timber framing along Church Street. St Mary's Church is finished in flint.
- Windows and Doors: predominantly timber (sash with some casement) to upper floors on Church Street, with some traditional shopfronts. Leaded lights can be found on the Priory. Many historic timber windows on Bury Lane have been replaced with modern uPVC, which are also found on newer buildings. Distinctive octagonal framing can be seen on the Beresford Almshouses.
- Doors are generally of a simple timber design.

Boundary Treatments

- Low boundary walls to houses, few formal boundary treatments to commercial buildings. Boundary wall to The Bury has distinct brick pattern.



'Clinker' wall outside the Bury

Views

- Landmark View: South along Church Street (View 1)
- Important Townscape View: Facing west towards St. Mary's Church (View 2)
- Local Views: Church Street facing north (View 11), and Bury Lane facing west (View 10)

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Summary of Strengths and Sensitivities

Strengths

- The most historic part of the settlement, containing a high proportion of nationally listed buildings, many of which have fifteenth and sixteenth century origins.
- St Mary's Church is the most important landmark building, the vista south along Church towards the Church is the conservation area's Landmark View.
- Use of attractive traditional materials, with many timber windows retained.
- A high proportion of accessible, landscaped open space in St Mary's Churchyard and The Bury and a tranquil atmosphere on Bury Lane with plentiful street trees.

Sensitivities

- Narrow footpaths along sections of Church Street and heavy traffic generally make it more difficult to appreciate the historic environment.
- Some less attractive modern infill development and unsympathetic uPVC replacement windows to older buildings on Bury Lane.
- Some street furniture requiring replacement.
- Town Ditch on Bury Lane has poor quality public realm including railings.
- Negative gateway building into the Conservation Area.













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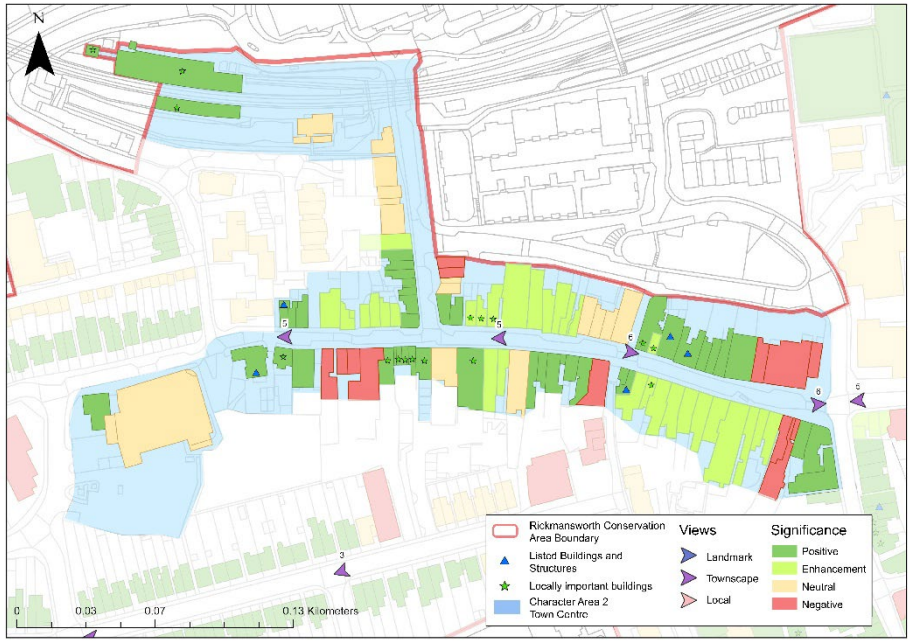
Character Area Two: Town Centre

Summary

5.4.14. This character area comprises the High Street, Station Road and Rickmansworth Station. The High Street is primarily of nineteenth century origin, with a few earlier buildings. It is a well-used retail centre, containing some historic buildings and good quality shopfronts. However, the High Street also contains several poorer quality modern buildings, and the quality of shopfronts is mixed, with the many poorer quality ones detracting from the historic character of the area. This character area has the highest potential for improvement.

5.4.15. Station Road contains several attractive historic buildings adjacent to the High Street followed by less distinguished modern development further north towards the railway bridge.

5.4.16. The station itself contains three locally listed important structures, including the main station building, which is of a typical Metroland style and points to the town's growth during the railway era.



Map showing key features within Character Area 2

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CCTV
RANGE





Description

High Street

5.4.17. The High Street is well used, with high occupancy levels and has a good variety of independent and national retailers. It has a dynamic atmosphere, and a sense of movement. Restrictions on traffic during weekends have been brought in to encourage pedestrian flow. However, it is relatively narrow with limited space for pedestrians which creates a sense of crowding. There is no focal point per se within the High Street itself and little space for public realm improvements, although the streetlamps and standing signs have a black colour theme and are of relatively good quality.

5.4.18. There are only four pre-nineteenth century buildings, all of which have sixteenth and seventeenth century origins with later alterations. These comprise four of the five nationally listed buildings on the central High Street (all Grade II listed). These include No. 133 High Street which has exposed timber framing along its flank wall, No. 72, 72A and 72B towards the eastern end of the High Street, and No. 142 and 144 and the nearby Fox and Hounds Pub at the far western end.

5.4.19. The High Street is primarily nineteenth century in character and the gentle curve in the road provides an enclosed view of building frontages, with attractive architectural details including pitched roofs, prominent chimneys, front dormers and oriel windows. Building materials are primarily red brick, stone dressings and render. There are some Gothic Revival buildings, typical of a high street of this era, which are of architectural interest.

5.4.20. Some modern infill developments have an excessively horizontal emphasis and a flat imposing appearance, detracting from the rhythm of the streetscape. These include No. 173 on the southern side, and No. 58-60 (Iceland) at the junction with Church Street/Northway. The former NatWest at No. 159 High Street, while clearly a modern infill, has a more vertical emphasis and so has a neutral impact on local character.

5.4.21. The locally important buildings are located at No. 104-106 & 108-110 High Street is an attractive and particularly prominent building due to its Gothic Revival timber exterior and prominent chimneys, although it appears to require some maintenance at upper floor levels and has poor quality shopfronts.

5.4.22. Boots at No. 76-78, (locally important building) is also built in a Gothic Revival style and is also notable for an attractive shopfront and signage. Other good shopfront examples include WH Smith at No. 74 (Grade II listed), which has a traditional shopfront and painted metal awning equipment and Specsavers at No. 127, which has a good shopfront signage and a distinctive curved upper floor bay window. Sewells Gardner at No. 165 is a recent example of a good quality shopfront.

5.4.23. However, there are many other shopfronts on the High Street which are excessively large, and of inappropriate design and colour which are not in keeping with local character and actively detract from the conservation area, which will be addressed in the Management Plan in Section 7.

5.4.24. Towards the western end of the commercial High Street there is a gentle transition to residential development, despite the presence of the bulky and modern M&S building.

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Rear of the High Street North and South (including Northway)

5.4.25. These areas immediately to the rear of the High Street to the north and south have a practical service and ancillary function and this character should be retained on the more prominent service area on Northway. There has been residential development behind the High Street to the south adjacent to Ebury Road/Gilliat Row.

Station Road and Rickmansworth Station

5.4.26. The gradient is generally flat, but slopes upward at Station Road heading north towards the station. The corner buildings are well proportioned, with those on the western side featuring attractive gable front buildings, with arched windows and terracotta decoration. Further north, at the junction with Northway, the character changes markedly with modern flatted development leading to the railway bridge and pedestrian underpass. Station Road then terminates at the modern and bulky Swan House which is outside the conservation area.

5.4.27. The railway has divided Rickmansworth from its wider setting including the former Rickmansworth Park House to the north. However, the railway has also contributed to its importance and growth during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The station building therefore has historic significance, along with architectural interest due to its characteristic Metropolitan Line style. It is a locally important building along with two other structures at the station. The bridge with pedestrian arches is also a notable positive feature, and a gateway into the conservation area. Passing trains can be seen along the bridge from the conservation area, adding to its railway character.

Layout and Land Usage

- Primarily nineteenth century retail parades, heights from 2 to 4 storeys, with residential upper floors.
- The Character Area also includes the railway station and associated infrastructure.

Landscaping and Open Spaces/ Public Realm

- Some small planters, but otherwise no green landscaping with limited scope for this due to the narrow width of the street.

Landmark and Key Buildings

- Designated: WH Smith Building at No.74 High Street (Grade II)
- Non-designated: 106 High Street, The Western pub at 205 High Street, Railway Station, Telephone Exchange Building at Rectory Lane

Building Materials

- Roofs: primarily plain clay tiles, with some natural slates.
- Walls: varied, mainly red brick and render, with some timber framed buildings.
- Windows and Doors: primarily modern shopfronts with some more traditional in appearance. Mainly modern uPVC windows at upper floors with some sash and casement timber windows.

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Boundary Treatments

- Generally, boundary treatments to the front are absent due to the town centre location, although there are some rear boundary walls, generally in brick.

Views

- Important Townscape Views: Kinetic views along the High Street facing east and west (Views 5 and 6)

Summary of Strengths and Sensitivities

Strengths

- Well used retail centre, with good occupancy levels.
- Contains a good collection of nineteenth century buildings with architectural detailing and coherent building line.

Sensitivities

- Modern shopfronts and signage on High Street.
- Some unsympathetic infill buildings along the High Street.
- Lack of public realm or focal point.









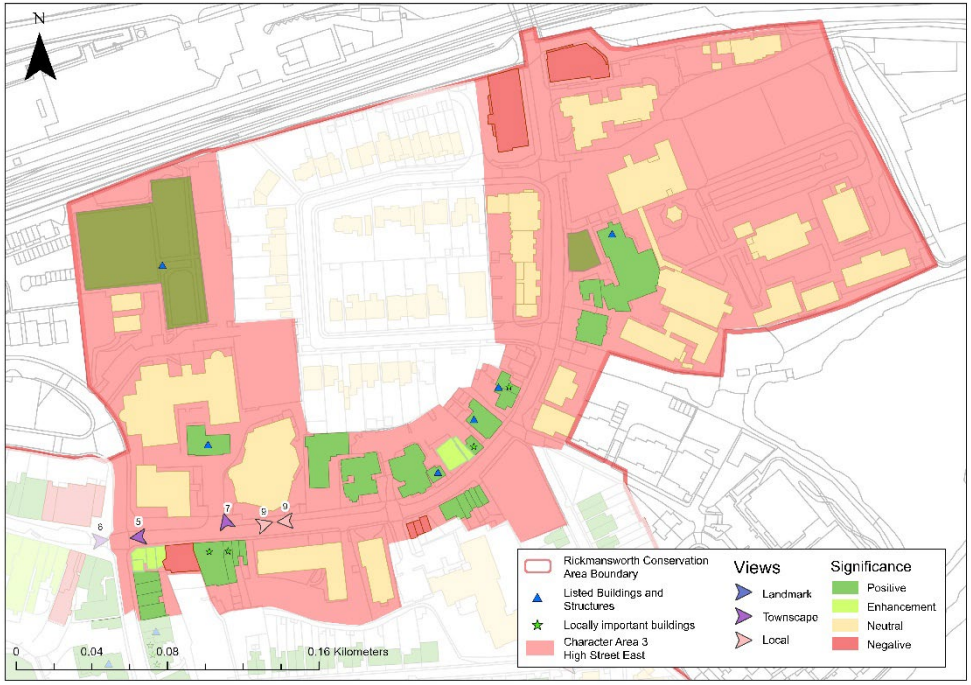
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Character Area Three: High Street East

Summary

5.4.28. This is a varied character area, with a mixture of twentieth and twenty first century buildings on the western side nearer the town centre, and eastern side near the railway. It contains an interesting cluster of historic buildings as the High Street curves north, including three nationally listed and two locally important buildings. The conservation area includes the Grade II listed Joan of Arc School and its complex. It terminates in the north at the railway.

5.4.29. The pattern of development in this character area is fragmented, with many larger modern buildings interspersed with historic buildings, which contrasts with the more uniform styles and clear patterns of development in the other character areas. There is an area of modern development to the north of the character area.



Map showing key features within Character Area Three

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Description

5.4.30. Arriving from the south or west, this Character Area commences at the junction of High Street with Church Street and Northway. There is a relatively strong horizontal emphasis in the building design, due to the extent of modern development heading east from the junction. The former Odeon Parade has a distinct curved, 1930's design although the replacement of metal upper floor windows in recent years has unfortunately detracted from its appearance. The name relates to the now demolished Odeon cinema, replaced by an office building at No. 93-95 High Street.

5.4.31. There are two finer grained stretches of historic buildings on the southern side at Nos. 83-91 and Nos. 35 to 43 respectively. Although none are nationally or on the list of locally important buildings, they are generally well proportioned and reflect the historic pattern of development, are finished in traditional materials and make a positive contribution to the area's significance.

5.4.32. Aside from this, the southern side of High Street East is characterised by more bulky modern buildings including Langdon House and Hutchings Lodge. This modern development is interrupted by Talbot Road Car park, which detracts from the area's character and appearance.

5.4.33. The northern side of High Street East contains several civic buildings including the Library and Watersmeet Theatre which have a very clear post-war civic design and building materials. The library and theatre are set well back from the road, which is at odds with the prevailing pattern of development but does reflect their importance as public buildings.

5.4.34. The Grade II listed Basing House sits behind these two buildings. It has a Georgian character although with clear later alterations and now operates as Rickmansworth Museum. The space between the three buildings comprises parking, access areas and some lower quality public realm. Along with the frontage to the library and theatre, this area has the potential for public realm improvements. The Council offices at Three Rivers House directly adjoins Basing House to the rear/north. Behind this there is a Community Garden & Orchard and Rickmansworth Bowls Club, creating a pleasant green enclave.

5.4.35. The Baptist Church and Gable House at No. 40 High Street are both of historic and architectural interest and prominent in views when heading east. Gable House was originally a school, built in the nineteenth century and is finished in brick with ornate chimneys and gables.

5.4.36. As the High Street curves north, the northern side has a historic cluster of buildings: three nationally Grade II listed, (The Hour House at No. 32, The Coach and Horses Pub and 20 High Street) and two locally important buildings (No. 18 and 24-26 High Street respectively). The Coach and Horses and 20 High Street are prominently sited on the corner and No. 20 is notable due to its exposed timber framing and historic brickwork.

5.4.37. The neutral and larger scale built character on the southern side continues until reaching the Joan of Arc School. The Grade II listed school building was originally a house and has a distinctive Georgian character. It is set amongst other historic red-brick buildings and attractive green landscaping. Neutral, modern buildings are set behind the historic school.

5.4.38. There is modern development beyond this until the visual termination point of the railway bridge to the north. The two gateway buildings which mark the entrance of the conservation

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area introduce modern mass, materials, and scale, and make a negative contribution to the area. The bridge beyond is of sufficient historic and architectural interest to be considered for local listing and forms an important feature in the setting of the conservation area.

Layout and Land Usage

- This character area has a varied layout with more modern lower density stand-alone buildings and some higher density historic elements. The usage includes a mixture of civic and educational uses, retail and some residential.

Landscaping and Open Spaces/ Public Realm

- There are some areas of public realm with planters etc. and landscaping to the Library and Theatre.
- There are a high number of mature street trees which enhance the area's character.
- The car park at the junction of Talbot Road makes a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

Landmark and Key Buildings

- Designated: Basing House (Grade II), Joan of Arc School (Grade II)
- Non-designated: Odeon Parade, Baptist Church, Gable House

Building Materials

- Roofs: a mixture of traditional clay and modern concrete tiled and natural slate roofs, and modern flat roofs.
- Walls: a variety of bricks in terms of age and colour, predominantly red brick with some stock brick, and limited use of render.
- Windows and Doors: many of the older buildings retain timber windows (predominantly sash), with some uPVC replacements.

Boundary Treatments

- Properties are generally open to the front with a small number of low brick walls or hedges.

Views

- Important Townscape View: View towards Basing House (View 7)
- Local Views: Views East and West from outside Watersmeet Theatre (View 9)

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Summary of Strengths and Sensitivities

Strengths

- An open feel to the area with wider pavements particularly on the northern side, and mature street trees.
- Strong landmark building at Odeon Parade, although its architectural interest has been compromised by replacement windows.
- Some interesting and varied historic buildings scattered through the character area including Basing House and Joan of Arc School which contribute to both the area's historic and architectural interest.

Sensitivities

- Townscape has been fragmented by the introduction of Northway and modern buildings north of this junction.
- A high number of larger modern buildings which are not in keeping with the traditional, finer grained townscape found elsewhere in the conservation area. These are found particularly at the gateway into the Conservation Area.
- Prominent surface car park at Talbot Road/High Street junction which creates a gap in the streetscene.
- Potential for public realm improvements, particularly at the junction with Church Street / Northway, near Basing House and at Talbot Road/High Street Car Park.











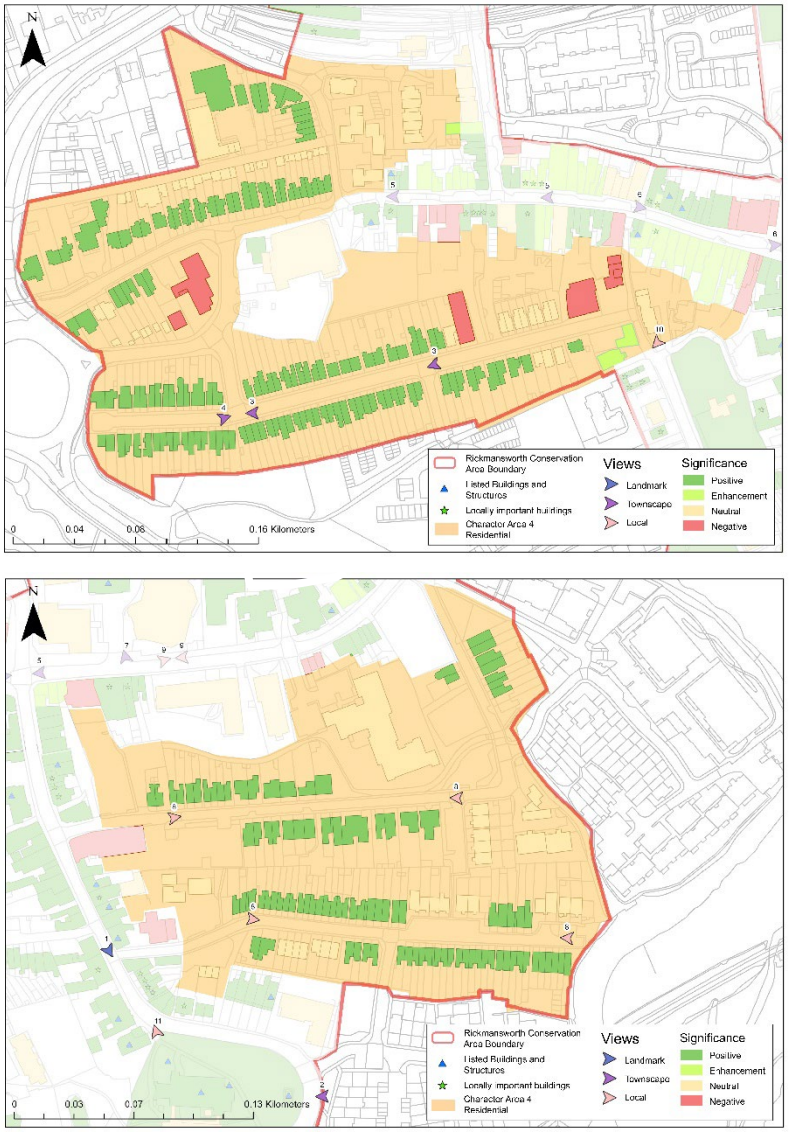
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Character Area Four: East and West Residential Areas

Summary

5.4.39. This Character Area encompasses two primarily residential sub-areas, which were developed during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While they contain no nationally listed buildings, the houses are relatively uniform and coherent in their built form, with attractive architectural features. There is a sense of intimacy, due to the compact form, lack of through traffic and relatively narrow streets, terminated by attractive green landscaping at the edge of the settlement.

5.4.40. The streetscene is diminished to some degree by surface level car parks and modern infill development. Many houses have historic timber sliding sash windows, although these have started to be replaced with uPVC windows, which detracts from the character and is addressed within the Management Plan.



Maps showing key features within Character Area Four (east and west)

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Description

East

5.4.41. The entrance to Talbot Road from Church Street in the west is marked by car parks on both sides and the bulky Talbot House, which detract from the character of the area. The low wall and planting mitigate the impact of the car park on the southern side to some extent.

5.4.42. The main east-west stretch of Talbot Road is characterised by terraced houses, generally finished in red brick or stock brick with red brick banding, with some use of white render. Decorative features including white lintels to doors and windows, gauged arches and/or keystone features, bay windows and shutters, and open porches. Doors are generally simple, often with a clear-glass fanlight above. The roofscapes are uniform, even on infill development. There are visible chimneys on the older houses and roofs are generally finished in natural slate with some use of clay or modern concrete tiles. Boundary treatments are generally low walls, hedges or absent altogether. The terraced houses contribute positively to the historic and architectural interest of the area.

5.4.43. The Town Ditch is an attractive and historic green feature at the eastern end of Talbot Road, although the railings appear rusty and poorly maintained. The larger apartment building at Hutchings Lodge detracts from the area's character but provides attractive green landscaping which enhances the streetscape. A further mews development at the eastern corner, although clearly a modern infill, is appropriate in terms of scale and materials. The two car parks at the corner detract from the built character.

5.4.44. A modern enclosed porch is noted at No. 25, which detracts from the uniformity of the building line. A small modern infill at Nos. 26-30 mirrors the scale of the adjacent houses but has modern detailing and is slightly out of keeping with the streetscene.

5.4.45. Norfolk Road is immediately parallel to Talbot Road, and its eastern access from Church Street is also marked by open car parks. Its built form is similar to that of Norfolk Road, although there is more frequent use of decorative features including bay windows, decorative door and window lintels, terracotta horizontal banding and terracotta roof ridges. The use of stock brick with red brick quoins and window surrounds is noted on the row from No. 45 -53. Some of the other houses are plainer in detailing but all still contribute positively to the historic and architectural interest of the area.

5.4.46. Modern infill houses are noted at No. 44a to 44c on the southern side and at No. 69 to 83 on the northern side, which also has a set-back building line and on-street parking. This detracts from the historic pattern of development due to the design and siting.

5.4.47. Many of the houses on Talbot Road and Norfolk Road still contain traditional timber windows and the loss of these has detracted from the prevailing well-preserved historic character. The roofscapes on both streets are uniform, generally gable ended and finished in natural slate, with visible chimneys.

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West

5.4.48. In High Street West, the residential area commences at the junction with Parsonage Road on the northern side. The houses on this side are elevated slightly above street level and set back from the road, with low boundary walls and smaller front gardens. There is a relatively uniform and attractive built scale and roofscape, with dark slate roofs and prominent chimneys. There is an attractive group of six semi-detached houses at No. 182 to 192, finished in stock brick with decorative white painted barge boards and roof finials to the front gables and porches.

5.4.49. On the southern side the large M&S building marks the end of the retail street. It is set back from the road and has well-maintained planters outside. This is followed by 'The Western' Pub formerly a house, which acts as a landmark to the start/end of the commercial area of town. The residential area commences with Wensum Court, a large flat-roofed modern block of flats, which detracts from the character due to its scale and design.

5.4.50. There are some simple brick terraced houses on the southern side of the High Street which make a positive contribution to the area. Moving west the houses are generally larger, detached or semi-detached and set back from the street, with some Victorian houses on the northern side, with one now converted to a care home. The High Street terminates with a pedestrian underpass with modern railings and a high brick wall bordered by mature trees.

5.4.51. Parsonage Road, which runs north from the junction by M&S is marked by extensive modern development on the eastern side, although the western side has a good group of red brick Victorian houses with decorative pointing in lighter brick. Nos. 15 and 17 have distinctive ground floor round windows, although the character of these houses has been slightly diminished by large front rooflights.

5.4.52. Rectory Lane acts as a back street to houses on High Street West, containing garages and outbuildings, including a workshop with a distinct glazed roof. The Telephone Exchange behind the Royal Mail Delivery Office is an imposing twentieth century brick building with prominent horizontal metal windows.

5.4.53. Along with High Street West, Ebury Road is the other main residential street in the west of the town. The eastern end at the junction with Bury Lane (including 'Gilliat Row') contains a small grouping of modern houses, a Scout Hut, a British Legion Building and open car parks on both sides. This section of the street detracts from the character of the conservation area due to its utilitarian built form. The main section of Ebury Road heading west is of historic and architectural interest characterised by shorter rows of houses, some with better quality brick with decorative detailing at the front, with stock brick visible to sides. Other houses are rendered at the upper floors with lower floors finished in stock brick. Many houses feature projecting bays at ground floor, projecting porches with painted wooded eaves brackets and use of decorative white lintels above windows.

5.4.54. The houses are slightly set back from the road with low walls and brick piers, some with low railings and metal gates. Some have pathways in black and white or red and white patterned tiles, although the majority are plain concrete. The curve in the road heading west creates an interesting vista, which terminates with a low boundary wall and green landscaping, which in long views screens the busy Ebury Roundabout beyond.

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Layout and Land Usage

- Medium-high density residential streets running east-west on the edge of the historic settlement.

Landscaping and Open Spaces/ Public Realm

- The Town Ditch, an important historic feature, runs along Talbot Road in the east.



View along Talbot Rd of the Town Ditch

- Plentiful street trees at the edge of the historic settlement.
- There are no public open spaces, except for two benches beside the car park on Talbot Road. Private open spaces are limited to small gardens.

Landmark and Key Buildings

- There are no landmark or key buildings in this character area primarily due to the uniform nature of the houses.

Building Materials

- Roofs: traditional natural slate, with some clay plain tiles, with some modern concrete replacements.



Stock brick and render with timber sash windows and panelled timber doors

- Walls: generally red and stock brick with some render and a smaller number of pebble-dashed houses.
- Windows and Doors: windows are generally two or four light sliding sashes, with a small number of casements on later houses. Timber windows are still common, with some replacements in uPVC. Simple wooden doors are generally used, some with a clear-glazed fanlight above.

Boundary Treatments

- Generally low brick walls or hedges, some with no boundary treatment. Houses generally have a small front garden.

Views

- Important Townscape View: Ebury Road, Kinetic views heading east and west (Views 4 and 3).
- Local Views: Longer views along Talbot Road and Norfolk Road in both directions (View 8).

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Summary of Strengths and Sensitivities

Strengths

- Uniform largely nineteenth century townscape with some degree of variation through architectural detailing and modern changes.
- Use of attractive traditional materials and details including timber windows.
- Tranquil atmosphere with views terminated with plentiful street trees.

Sensitivities

- Uniformity of the historic townscape has been eroded in places by some poorly sited/designed infill development and car parks.
- Gradual loss of timber windows to inappropriate uPVC replacements.
- The eastern end of Ebury Road at the junction with Bury Lane has a small grouping of modern houses, a Scout Hut, a British Legion Building and open car parks, which detract from the historic character of the area.













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Character Area Five: The Cloisters

Summary

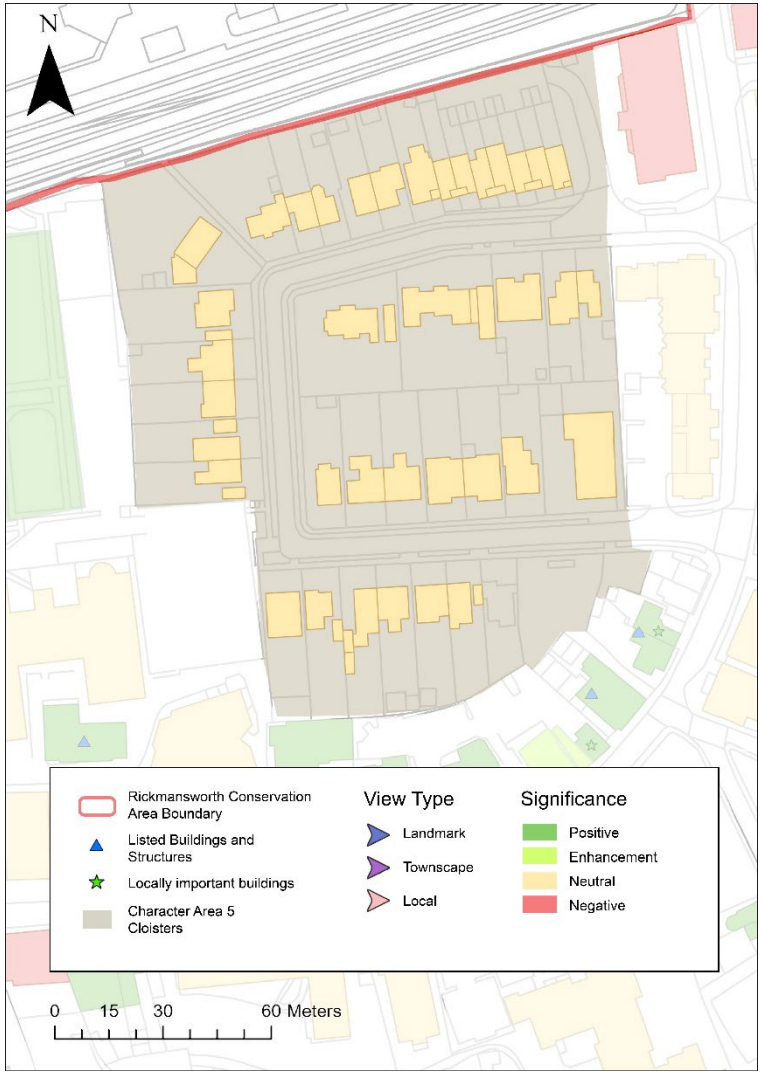
5.4.55. This Character Area includes buildings of mixed date and architectural styles, ranging from mock Tudor and 1920s/30s styles, with some later infill.

5.4.56. The residential character of this area is derived from the green streetscape, with wide grass verges, mature street trees, and generous front garden plots. The historic architectural character has been compromised due to small cumulative changes over time; for example, the majority of historic windows and doors have been lost to modern plastic replacements. Overall, these buildings make a neutral contribution to the area, but together make a pleasant group of twentieth-century development.

5.4.57. As with other residential streets within the Conservation Area, there is a sense of intimacy and enclosure, due to the lack of through traffic and greenery.

Description

5.4.58. The entrance to The Cloisters from the south is marked by the start of the residential development, and the red brick Cloisters Hall. The initial stretch of housing consists of inter-war semi-detached homes. They have pebble-dashed walls and white render, red brick detailing, traditional hung tiles, and characteristic bay windows. Some front gardens have been paved to provide parking spaces, which detracts from the character. However, the overall impression still remains distinctly green, thanks to the wide grass verges, mature street trees, and the terminating view of trees at the end of the street, providing screening from the Council car park.



Maps showing key features within Character Area Five

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5.4.59. These wide verges and street trees lead the eye along the street. The houses are set back, and the curve in the road heading around to the north creates an interesting vista, with buildings revealing themselves as you progress along the street.



Mature tree outside No. 18

5.4.60. Continuing to the north, the street is characterised by further semi-detached properties, generally pebble-dashed, with red brick detailing and hanging tiles in the Arts and Crafts style.

5.4.61. Heading east back towards the High Street is a stretch of wite rendered and mock-Tudor properties. While many have lost their traditional features, as with the remainder of the area, they are distinctive as a group. Their front boundaries have been removed to provide parking.

Layout and Land Usage

- Medium-high density residential streets laid out in a crescent route off the High Street.

Landscaping and Open Spaces/ Public Realm

- Plentiful street trees line the wide grass verges.
- Private open spaces are limited to moderately sized front gardens. Some have been paved over to make space for parking, which detracts from the verdant character.

Landmark and Key Buildings

- There are no landmark or key buildings in this character area primarily due to the uniform nature of the houses.

Building Materials

- Roofs: traditional natural slate, with some clay plain tiles, with the majority being modern concrete replacements.
- Walls: render and a smaller number of brick and pebble-dashed houses. Some mock timber and hanging tiles throughout the area.
- Windows and Doors: windows and doors are generally modern replacements.

Boundary Treatments

- Generally low brick walls or hedges, some with no boundary treatment. Some examples of taller, close board fencing, which detract from the streetscape. Houses generally have a front garden, although some have been paved over.



Mock Tudor housing with paved front gardens

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Summary of Strengths and Sensitivities

Strengths

- Wide grass verges, street trees, and garden plots create a verdant residential character, which feels enclosed from the adjacent High Street.

- Uniformity of semi-detached, mid-twentieth century properties.

Sensitivities

- Loss of traditional features and materials, such as timber windows to inappropriate uPVC replacements, roof tile replacements, and front door/garage door replacements.

- Loss of front boundary treatments and gardens to accommodate parking. Introduction of modern boundary treatments, such as high close board fencing, also detracts from the historic character.

- Small-scale development, such as additional porches and garage conversions, altering the historic character and resulting in the incremental loss of traditional materials.



View north along The Cloisters

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5.5. The Setting of Rickmansworth Conservation Area

Guidance

5.5.1. The NPPF describes the setting of a heritage asset as: *The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.*

5.5.2. Historic England Good Practice Advice Note on the Setting of Heritage Assets (2017) indicates that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which the asset is experienced; *"Where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way) then the proposed development can be said to affect the setting of that asset".*

5.5.3. Historic England's advice note on setting includes a: *"(non-exhaustive) check-list of potential attributes of a setting that may help to elucidate its contribution to significance'. As the advice note states, 'only a limited selection of the attributes listed will be of a particular relevance to an asset."* This checklist has been used to inform this assessment.

Contribution of setting

5.5.4. The setting of the Rickmansworth Conservation Area contributes to an understanding and appreciation of the town's historic character and appearance. The conservation area's relationship with its surrounding landscape, infrastructure, and development contributes to its unique special historic and architectural interest.

Canal and Water Network

5.5.5. Rickmansworth's canals and waterways are central to its historical development. The Grand Union Canal, located to the south of the conservation area, facilitated historic trade and commerce. The network of rivers and canals also contribute to the aesthetic value of the town, with scenic views that enhance the historic landscape. Protecting these waterways, and the legibility of their connection to the town, enhances our understanding of the historic development of the conservation area.



The Grand Union Canal, Batchworth Lock

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Railway

5.5.6. The presence of the railway significantly influenced Rickmansworth's evolution, particularly in terms of its relationship to London and surrounding areas. The railway, as a gateway to the town, serves not only as a functional transport hub but also as an integral part of the town's historic development. It is a way that many visitors first experience the conservation area.



The station and railway beyond

Road Network Surrounding the Historic Core

5.5.7. The road network encircling Rickmansworth's historic core contributes to its setting. Although roads like the A404 and other surrounding routes make a negative contribution by severing the historic core of the town with its surrounding landscape and creating noise pollution, they do also help to preserve the integrity of the town centre by diverting traffic around the town and creating a sense of containment to the historic core. The careful management of these roads helps to maintain the distinct character of the historic core.

Historic Manors and Parks

5.5.8. Rickmansworth's historic manors and parks are vital components of its setting. Notably, The Bury, a grand manor house, once held land across the area and was farmed for the Abbots of St Albans. This creates a historic connection between the Manor and its former demise.

5.5.9. To the north of the conservation area is Rickmansworth Park, and the south is Moor Park (now a golf course); these green spaces also form an important part of the town's historic setting. They not only add to the aesthetic appeal of Rickmansworth but also remind us of its past as a rural and semi-rural community.

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Development Beyond the Historic Core

5.5.10. While the historic centre of Rickmansworth remains largely protected, development beyond this area has had an impact on the town's broader setting. Modern development around the conservation area has changed the town's character, but it also highlights the importance of careful planning to ensure that new buildings are sympathetic to, rather than overpower, the historic character of the conservation area.



View of new development in the setting of the conservation area, visible from within the area beyond the roofline of the Almshouse

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6. Opportunities for Enhancement

6.1. Overview

6.1.1. This section addresses the key issues which threaten the special historic and architectural interest of Rickmansworth Conservation Area and identifies the opportunities for improvement.

6.1.2. The list is in no way exhaustive, and neither are the opportunities identified unique to Rickmansworth with many being shared with other conservation areas. These opportunities have been identified due to the impact they have on the special historic and architectural interest of the conservation area, and the scope to make positive changes to enhance the conservation area.[9]

6.2. Opportunities

Access and gateways

- Rickmansworth train station is located only 200m north of the town centre. However, the pedestrian route from the railway station to the town centre is poorly signposted and moves through an underpass with low levels of visibility. There is the opportunity to enhance this gateway pedestrian experience of the conservation area through waymarking, lighting, public art etc.
- Access to the town centre from High Street and Church Street leads you to the town library and the potential 'civic square'. This location bookends the High Street retail uses and is considered to be a key public realm space in the town and could be better waymarked.

Public Realm

Key Spaces

- There is an area of public realm space at the frontage of the library, Watersmeet Theatre and the access road to Basing House. There are some existing public realm elements here, including grass and mature trees, a wooden planter and signboard. However, due to the width of the pavement this area presents opportunities for enhancement of public realm. This could be in the form of improved hard and soft landscaping, information, public art etc.

Street Furniture

- Street furniture is inconsistent throughout the area, and in varying materials and condition.
- In Church Street, some street furniture is in a noticeably poorer condition, such as a disused, rusting lamppost at the junction with Norfolk Road.

Surfacing

- Inconsistent surfacing is used across the conservation area, in varying condition.

[9] Many of these opportunities are also addressed within the Rickmansworth Town Centre Concept Plan 2023, which addresses specific improvements to the High Street.

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- Along the High Street is the greatest variation of surfacing, with paving setts demarcating pedestrian crossings and loading/parking bays. The main pavement is pre-cast concrete flagstones.

- There is scope to upgrade surfacing to respond to the historic core. Use of consistent design and colour would develop a unified sense of place.

Pedestrian experience

- Options to improve the pedestrian experience could be considered on the narrow pavements of Church Street and by creating enhancing pedestrian experience of the High Street.

- The underpass near the station provides a space for improvement, creating a sense of local pride and identity, through a mural for example.

Town Ditch railing

- The Town Ditch is an attractive green feature at the eastern end of Talbot Road, although the railings appear rusty and poorly maintained.

- Railings to the Town Ditch on Bury Lane are an incongruous mixture of styles. Repair of the older railings and more suitable replacement for the existing modern railings for this could be an enhancement.

Shopfronts

- Shopfronts are an important design consideration and sensitivity for historic town centres. There is a mixture in the quality of shopfronts in Rickmansworth, with many shopfronts being not well designed. This is an area for potential improvement.

Positive examples of shopfronts

- Boots, WH Smith, Sewell & Gardner, and Specsavers have well-maintained historic or sympathetic modern shopfronts.

Road signage

- The mixture of signage within the conservation area creates a cluttered appearance, particularly on the High Street.
- In the town centre signage should be limited due to space constraints, although good elements should be retained, such as existing metal signposts.

Car Parking



High Street and Talbot Road Car Park

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- There are several smaller surface car parks in residential areas which detract from the local character and streetscene.
- The car park at the junction of Talbot Road and High Street (East) is prominently sited with minimal landscaping, which undermines the urban grain, although this has been slightly mitigated in some instances through use of good boundary treatments (Talbot Road west).
- Where car parks are set within dense urban form, any proposed redevelopment should reflect local scale and character. This is particularly important in the residential areas. If car parks are retained, potential for improved landscaping should be explored.

Quality of New Design

- Infill development has taken place with varying degrees of success.
- There is more scope for creativity or landmark buildings in areas with a fragmented pattern of development such as High Street East, but even here building heights are generally limited to four storeys and prevailing building heights should be taken into account in decision making.

Town Centre Frontages

- There could be opportunity for modifications to modern buildings particularly to the rear on the southern side of the High Street.
- Three storeys should be the limit on the High Street, except for in exceptional circumstances, landmark corner plots etc.

Town Centre/Rear of High Street Back-land Development

- The back-land locations have a practical function as service areas to the High Street, and as access points to upper floor accommodation. However, they do have the potential to impact the character of the High Street.
- There has been extensive development to back-land sites to the south of the High Street including adjacent to Ebury Road/Gilliat Row. This is generally relatively screened from sensitive views. However, future backland development should be appropriate to the character and appearance of the town centre.
- The rear of the High Street properties along Northway are much more open and visible, so development should be of an ancillary character here to avoid harmful impacts on important buildings.

Maintenance

- Many of the buildings and spaces across the conservation area have been impacted by a gradual decline in their condition due to lack of ongoing maintenance.

- There are examples of maintenance issues across the area which are common to historic buildings, such as the deterioration of paintwork, timber rot, and loss of historic features.

- Upper residential sections of the retail buildings were often found to be in a poorer condition, such as peeling paint on doors and windows, moss and vegetation damage to rainwater goods, an overall weathered appearance and some damage to brick work.

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- Due to the layout of streets and scale of buildings along the High Street, there are many views of the rears of properties. The rears of properties have often experienced incremental changes and are in poorer condition than the main facades. These areas would benefit from general and ongoing maintenance.

Inappropriate Alterations

Windows

- Many of the houses in the residential areas still contain traditional timber windows. However, these have started to be replaced with uPVC windows which has detracted from the prevailing well-preserved traditional character.

Porches

- Modern porches can have a negative impact on a streetscape, as they introduce modern building materials and form, and break the rhythm of uniform terraced housing. An example of a modern enclosed porch is noted at No. 25 Talbot Road. The addition of enclosed porches is not in keeping with the original character of these houses and further front additions will result in a gradual erosion of the regular building line, harming the area's character and appearance. Any further porches should be resisted in the Character Area Four: East and West Residential Areas.

Pathways

- In Ebury Road several of the houses have patterned tile pathways either in red and white or black and white square tiles. In most cases these have been replaced with less attractive modern materials.

- Returning historic pathways to their original Victorian/Edwardian materials would enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Neutral/Negative Contributors

- There have been pockets of inappropriate modern development within the conservation area. Where it does exist, it typically comprises of blocks of flats, which introduce uncharacteristic massing and materials into the area. Examples of incongruous buildings are shown on the map of Building Significance in Section 5.2.
- Neutral or negatively contributing spaces present a key opportunity for enhancement including softening their visual impact by landscaping and screening (planting) or through their future redevelopment into more appropriately designed buildings.

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7. Management Proposals

7.1. Overview

7.1.1. The Management Plan sets out the conservation aims and objectives for the Rickmansworth Conservation Area and a framework for guiding change. The Plan first sets out overarching principles which will guide the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

7.1.2. Section 7 provides management recommendations for all users to ensure the conservation area is preserved and, where possible, enhanced. It will also provide a basis for Three Rivers District Council when considering any changes and future development within the conservation area and its setting.

PRINCIPLES

To preserve and enhance the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area

To ensure the protect ion of Listed and Locally Important Buildings within the conservation area

To promote sympathetic and sustainable change, while ensuring that new development responds to the special character of the conservation area

Seek to enhance and protect historic shop fronts and promote high-quality new signage and shopfronts within the High Street character areas

To preserve key views of the Parish Church

To prevent the gradual loss of historic fabric and architectural detailing within residential character areas

To promote awareness of the conservation area

To enhance the way the conservation area is experienced

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7.2. Development Management Tools

7.2.1. This section covers the range of tools that help Local Authorities to manage development within conservation areas effectively. These tools will support sustainable growth and manage change while also maintaining the special interest of the Rickmansworth Conservation Area.

Character Appraisal and Management Plan

7.2.2. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will become a material consideration when assessing planning applications, listed building consents, and appeals for proposed works, with Three Rivers District Council using it as an evidence base for concluding whether the proposals are sympathetic to the conservation area.

7.2.3. The conservation area boundary has been revised within this appraisal in accordance with legislation, the NPPF (2026) and *Historic England Advice Note 1: conservation area Appraisal, Designation and Management* (2018).

7.2.4. The boundary should continue to be assessed as part of future reviews of the Management Plan to ensure it is robust and adequately protects the significance of the area. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan should be reviewed every ten years to monitor change and inform management proposals.

7.2.5. Batchworth Community Council's Neighbourhood Plan is supported by the Batchworth Neighbourhood Design Code and The Rickmansworth Town Centre Concept Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan is part of the Local Plan and a material planning consideration.

Heritage Statements, Heritage Impact Assessments, and Archaeological Assessments

7.2.6. All applications within the conservation area and its setting require an appropriately detailed and sufficient Heritage Statement. Any application without a Heritage Statement should not be validated.

7.2.7. This is in accordance with Section 20 of the NPPF, which states that applicants must describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

7.2.8. The key views analysed within this document are in no way exhaustive. The impact of any addition, alteration or removal of buildings, structures, trees or highways on key views should be considered to aid decision making. This includes development outside the conservation area. Where appropriate, views must be considered within Design and Access Statements or Heritage Statements. This should be in accordance with Historic England's *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3* (2017). Applications which fail to have assessed any impact upon views and the significance of relevant heritage assets should not be validated.

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Locally Important Buildings

7.2.9. There are a number of key positive, unlisted buildings throughout the conservation area which are of architectural and historic interest, and many are valuable assets to the local community. Three Rivers District Council currently maintains a thorough list of Locally Important Buildings, which can be found on the Council's website.

7.2.10. Locally Important Buildings within the conservation area are also included within Section 3.2 Non-Designated Heritage Assets.

7.2.11. This document has identified further buildings and features with potential for inclusion on the list, outlined in Section 3.2. These could be considered within future local list reviews and assessments. The identified buildings should be considered as non-designated heritage assets.

Article 4 Directions

7.2.12. An Article 4 Direction has been in place covering Rickmansworth town centre since September 2023. A map of the area covered by the Direction is included within Section 2.3.

7.2.13. The Article 4 Direction covers conversion from town centre and office uses to residential. This is to prevent the loss of town centre uses. Details on these additional controls can be found on the Council's website.

7.2.14. In granting or refusing planning permission consideration is given to the proposed works to ensure they preserve, or where possible enhance, the special interest of the conservation area.

7.2.15. An additional Article 4 Direction could be considered to restrict further alterations within residential areas under permitted development, including extensions or alterations to elevations fronting a road (including side elevations on corner properties), creation of hard surfaces, and removal and replacement of front boundary walls, and the installation of satellite dishes on the front of houses.

7.2.16. This would help to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area by restricting unsympathetic incremental changes which result in the loss of historic features within the streetscape or architectural details.

Enforcement

7.2.17. Where the necessary permission has not been sought for alterations, such as alterations which are not contained within the General Permitted Development Order or are restricted by the Article 4 Direction, the Local Planning Authority's powers of enforcement can be considered. This will assist in reinstating any lost character and appearance or architectural features that may have had a negative cumulative effect on the conservation area, as well as avoiding a precedent being set for similar, uncharacteristic, and unsympathetic works.

7.2.18. Where appropriate, it is recommended that enforcement action is taken against infringements of the existing Article 4 Direction to ensure it remains effective in managing change.

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7.3. Maintenance and Condition

7.3.1. Many of the buildings and spaces across the conservation area have been impacted by a gradual decline in their condition which would be mitigated with ongoing maintenance. Historic England defines maintenance within *Conservation Principles*[10] as "*routine work necessary to keep the fabric of a place in good order*". The importance of preventative maintenance cannot be over-emphasised, as ongoing maintenance can not only limit, or even prevent, the need for repairs later, it will avoid the loss of original fabric and is cost-effective.[11]

7.3.2. There are examples of maintenance issues across the area, which are common to historic buildings and conservation areas, such as the deterioration of paintwork, timber rot, and loss of historic features.

7.3.3. Basic maintenance and repair should be undertaken considerately and should match the appearance and materials used in the original. Recommended basic maintenance includes:

- Regular clearing of debris in gutters and rainwater pipes;
- Pruning of vegetation and trees, particularly those close to buildings;
- Re-fixing loose roof tiles or slates; and
- Regular repainting of external timber with appropriate paint.

7.3.4. Further advice for homeowners is provided by Historic England and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings via their websites.

Terraced housing

7.3.5. Terraced housing makes a key contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Throughout the area, small incremental changes have impacted the historic character of these terraced rows, through the loss of windows, doors, boundary treatments, loft conversions, façade rendering or painting, and satellite dishes. There is an opportunity to provide better awareness of the importance of historic terraces to local property owners and demonstrate the impact that inappropriate changes can have to a building and the wider conservation area. Historic England, for example, provides guidance on ***Changes to Historic Terraced Housing***, which addresses the key issues relating to changes to buildings of historic significance, and provides a useful resource for property owners to consider.[12]

7.3.6. In many cases, rows of terraced houses have been impacted by the varying approaches to elements that contribute to the character of the streetscape, such as historic doors and windows, additional porches, extensions and rooflights, and loss of original pathways and boundary treatments. An Article 4 Direction in those residential streets to restrict alterations that may

[10] https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/constructive-conservation/conservation-principles/

[11] Preventative Maintenance (https://www.spab.org.uk/advice/preventative-maintenance)

[12] https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/improvement/terraced-housing/

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impact their architectural interest could be considered. Original features should be preserved or reinstated wherever possible.

Chimneys

7.3.7. Chimneys are an extremely important feature of the conservation area, particularly on terraced buildings within Character Area Four: East and West Residential Areas. They are an attractive element of the historic roofscape and contribute to a sense of place here. They should be maintained in line with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Building's guidance on their website, ensuring that repairs are like-for-like. Permission could be required for the demolition or alteration of an existing chimney or for the erection of a new one

Historic windows, doors, and porches

7.3.8. A key concern across the majority of the conservation area is the alterations to windows, doors and porches. The replacement of timber windows with inappropriate uPVC or other modern windows can impact the historic character of a building, and the contribution they make to the appearance of the conservation area.

7.3.9. Historic England's *Traditional Windows Their Care, Repair and Upgrading* (2017) advises that "*the loss of traditional windows from our older buildings poses one of the major threats to our heritage. Traditional windows and their glazing make an important contribution to the significance of historic areas. They are an integral part of the design of older buildings and can be important artefacts in their own right... The distinctive appearance of historic hand-made glass is not easily imitated in modern glazing."* The loss of historic joinery such as sash and casement windows and panelled doors results in a degree of harm to the significance of an historic building, and the loss of crown or other early glass can also cause harm to the significance of buildings. Historic England's 2017 advice recommends that "*surviving historic fenestration is an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved and repaired whenever possible*".

7.3.10. Further loss of timber windows should be resisted and where replacements are necessary, these should be timber windows of a similar style to the existing. Slimline double glazing or vacuum glazing may be acceptable and improve thermal performance. uPVC replacements should be resisted due to their thicker and clearly modern profile and finish, which detracts from historic character and architectural interest.

7.3.11. Where draughts are causing an issue, the repair and refurbishment of windows and doors can improve thermal performance. Please see Section 7.4 for more information on Energy efficiency.

7.4. Managing Future Change

This section addresses the management of future change within the conservation area. It seeks to ensure that new development, including shopfronts, is designed sensitively, respecting the existing historic character, scale and materials while allowing for high-quality, sustainable growth and enhancements which will preserve or enhance the conservation area's special interest.

New Development

7.4.1. There are some sites in the conservation area which, if sensitively redeveloped, could enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. Opportunities for new development would primarily result from the redevelopment of

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sites which do not currently contribute to the area's special interest. These sites have been identified in Section 5.2 of this document.

7.4.2. To be successful, any future development needs to be mindful of the local character and appearance of the conservation area, while addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability.

7.4.3. Successful new development will:

- Relate to the geography and history of the place;
- Positively respond to the historic pattern of existing development and routes through and around it (including public footpaths);
- Respect important views;
- Respond to the scale of neighbouring buildings;
- Use local, traditional, and high-quality materials; and
- Use high quality building methods that respond to existing buildings in the area.

7.4.4. Three Rivers District Council will guide development in a positive manner by:

- Engaging with developers at an early stage through the pre-application process to ensure modern development is high quality in design, detail, and materials, that responds to the existing built environment.
- Ensuring large scale development schemes are designed to be sympathetic with the established character of the area. The choice of materials and the detailed design of building features are important in making sure it is appropriate to a conservation area.
- Seeking opportunities for developers to make a positive contribution to the wider historic environment through Section 106 Agreements where appropriate.

Energy efficiency

7.4.5. In 2019 Three Rivers District Council declared a climate emergency which committed the Council to tackling climate change. It is important to understand and address the challenges that the historic environment faces in a period of climate-uncertainty. Historic England are undertaking research into the role that cultural heritage and historic buildings can play in climate change mitigation and adaptation, and have produced a suite of guidance documents which support in decision making:

- Historic England, *Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency* (2024)
- Historic England, *Energy Efficiency and Traditional Homes* (2020)
- Historic England, *Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: How to improve energy efficiency* (2018)

7.4.6. These guidance documents should be used and promoted within the conservation area to ensure that the balance between sustainability benefits and harm to significance is carefully considered, using a holistic 'whole building' approach

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when tackling these issues. Historic England have further information on the benefits of this approach on their website.

7.4.7. A common ‘quick fix’ within traditional buildings can be addressing draughts. The repair and refurbishment of windows can improve the thermal performance of historic windows in the first instance, along with the use of shutters and heavy curtains. Alternatively, modern technology allows for well-designed secondary glazing; special timber casements that can be constructed and fixed to the interior of the frame using sections and mouldings to match the primary glazing. These less intrusive methods are advisable within the conservation area; however, it is recommended that advice is sought from the Three Rivers District Council before any changes to windows, doors, or porches are made to ensure the optimum solution is reached.

Renewable Energy Technologies

7.4.8. Whilst sustainability and energy efficiency are legitimate issues, for historic buildings a balance must be achieved between generating their own energy and avoiding damage both to the significance of the building and its fabric, and the visual impact of a renewable installation on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

7.4.9. Air source heat pumps are likely to be acceptable where they are located at the rear of the property, or discreetly sited in larger front gardens, behind screens, planting, or boundary walls, and designed to minimise visual and acoustic impact on the surrounding area.

7.4.10. Solar panels may be considered acceptable where they are located on rear or non-prominent elevations and/or located on non-prominent outbuildings. The installation of solar panels or solar slates may require planning permission.

7.4.11. New EV charging equipment should be integrated into street furniture, i.e. lampposts and bollards, where possible. Freestanding EV charging units or those attached to buildings and structures should be inconspicuous and of simple design, with low-key colours.

Tall Buildings

7.4.12. The approach to tall buildings in the conservation area aligns with Historic England Advice Note 4 Tall Buildings.

7.4.13. Tall buildings are defined by the nature of existing character and appearance. In accordance with the local character of Rickmansworth, building heights should take the context of the conservation area into account. Some sites can accommodate tall buildings, which may have a positive impact as part of a wider regeneration scheme, for example. There will also be sites that are inherently unsuitable for tall buildings due to the harm they would cause to the significance of heritage assets.

7.4.14. It is important to have a good understanding of the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected by a proposal for tall buildings, as well as the character of the place, at the earliest possible stage. This includes the conservation area, as well as designated and non-designated heritage assets within it and its setting. This understanding will help to ensure that the height of new developments respect the established townscape.

7.4.15. Proposals must carefully consider their impact on key views, heritage assets, and the wider setting of the conservation area, as outlined in Historic England’s guidance. Any development

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should demonstrate a clear understanding of scale, proportion, and townscape sensitivity, ensuring that new buildings integrate harmoniously without overwhelming the area's historic fabric.

Shop Frontages

7.4.16. The conservation area contains a number of historic shop frontages which make a positive contribution to the area, predominantly located within the High Street. While many have retained their historic character, some are in need of maintenance and repair and have undergone unsympathetic alterations.

7.4.17. Features of interest might include the original shop window and joinery, the traditional shop surround with fascia, pilasters and cornice, or other features such as tiles or signage. These features should be retained and repaired where possible, and should not be removed, covered, or altered. Repair and reinstatement of damaged or missing features will be encouraged. The general principles of shop design are to carefully consider:

- Windows
- Traditional details (pilasters, brackets, fascias etc.)
- Stall risers
- Materials
- Security (grilles, shutters etc.)
- Awnings, canopies and blinds
- Signs and advertising

7.4.18. Planning permission is usually required for changes to shopfronts. Proposals relating to historic shopfronts will be required to be of a high quality, retaining any surviving traditional features and contributing to an overall improvement in terms of character and appearance.

7.4.19. The Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan is supported by the Rickmansworth Town Centre Concept Plan (2023). Within Section 4.5 of the Concept Plan is shopfront guidance which should be followed.

7.4.20. In addition, there are a number of backland or service areas/yards within the conservation area. These are generally more functional in nature and are of some historic interest in illustrating the ancillary uses of these areas. Some of the buildings are of lower architectural interest. However, development in these locations will still be considered in relation to overall impacts on the character of the conservation area.

Views and setting

7.4.21. Some buildings and spaces fall outside the conservation area as they do not directly contribute to its historic or architectural interest, however, they form an important part of the wider area and contribute to its setting (refer to Section 5.5 for further detail).

7.4.22. Redevelopment or alteration to these buildings and spaces outside the conservation area's boundary must carefully consider any potential impacts on the conservation area's significance, including the uniformity of groups of buildings within the setting of the conservation area. Developments should be sensitively designed to better reveal the significance of the conservation area where possible.

7.4.23. The key views analysed in Section 5.3 of this document are in no way exhaustive. The impact of any addition, alteration or removal of buildings, structures, trees, or highways on key views

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should be considered to aid decision making. Where appropriate, views should be considered within Design and Access or Heritage Statements, which may be required for an application to be validated. This should be in accordance with Historic England's *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2017).

7.5. Public Realm and Highways

7.5.1. The management of the public realm spaces, highways, and access within the conservation area aims to preserve its historic character while ensuring safe and efficient movement for pedestrians and vehicles. This includes maintaining appropriate street surfaces, signage, and street furniture, managing traffic flow to reduce impact, and improving accessibility for all users in a way that is sensitive to this historic environment. Where appropriate, planning and highways authorities will work together to help conserve the existing character of the conservation area.

7.5.2. The proliferation of car parking and busy traffic routes through the conservation area are key issues and any opportunities to reduce these should be taken. It is understood that parking directly in the town centre is appreciated by many locals and businesses. Therefore, a balance should be struck by retaining some parking in the High Street while reducing or better screening some of the most intrusive areas of parking and providing better pedestrian links to parking close to the town centre.

Access and Integration

7.5.3. The conservation area has two fairly busy roads running through the centre. This results in fluctuating traffic levels throughout the historic core with some issues of parking. The conservation area is easily accessed by public transport, foot and vehicle. Improvement to the management of traffic and enhancement of pedestrian ways could enhance the area, including slowing down traffic and upgrades to the cycle network and footpaths.

7.5.4. Developing and linking public footpaths within the town centre to those outside of town, such as Rickmansworth Park, would help encourage visitors into the centre of town, boosting local business and promoting the heritage of the town.

Advertisements

7.5.5. Advertising lettering and signs used in excess of the name of the business and the service or goods supplied should be limited within the conservation area. In the majority of cases, it should be discouraged. Where it is incorporated into a shopfront, it must be designed with particular regard to the form and elevations of the building. If window-area is not necessary for display of goods or lighting it should not be obscured with posters and or laminated prints which creates a 'dead frontage'.

7.5.6. Advertisements are subject to a separate consent process under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. Restricting deemed consent for advertisements or creating Area of Special Advertisement Control could be considered as this would allow more greater control over advertisements within the conservation area and ensure new and replacement signage on retail and

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commercial buildings is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area.

Car Parking

7.5.7. There are a number of surface car parks within the conservation area. These currently make a negative contribution to the character and appearance of the area. They are, however, useful in alleviating on-street parking. The impact of car parks should be minimised as far as possible, through the use of sympathetic materials (for signage, benches, bollards etc) and by screening using planting.

Street Furniture

7.5.8. Collaboration between the Highways Department and Local Planning Authority should ensure the maintenance and replacement programme for street furniture (including lampposts) and hard surfacing reflects the character and local distinctiveness of the conservation area and promotes consistency.

Tree Management

7.5.9. Trees play a vital role to the character and appearance of the conservation area. In line with the Town and Country Planning Act, all trees in conservation areas are afforded protection. Trees which have a trunk diameter of more than 75mm, at a height of 1.5m from the ground, may not be felled or lopped unless six weeks written notice has been given to the Council.

7.5.10. Further information on trees and Tree Protection Orders is available from the Council's website.

7.5.11. It is also considered that any prominent trees, street trees, and trees with amenity value on private land throughout the conservation area should be monitored and maintained appropriately. This will ensure the symmetry along tree lined streets and visual rhythm, as well as maintain the green character of the area. Any tree that makes a positive contribution to the area should be retained, maintained and, if felled (only if dead, dying or dangerous) replaced with an appropriate new tree.



Damaged lamppost on Church Street

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Cultural Heritage

This section addresses the cultural heritage of the conservation area, which is an integral part of its identity. The management plan seeks to preserve and enhance Rickmansworth's heritage by supporting community engagement.

Public Resources

7.5.12. The cultural historic significance of Rickmansworth makes a key contribution to the conservation area. Currently, there is a museum and the Rickmansworth Historical Society, which are both located within the area and are considered to be stakeholders of the conservation area. These groups should continue to be supported as they work to promote the history and importance of Rickmansworth.

Heritage Interpretation

7.5.13. Other than the museum, there is currently no interpretation (information boards, signage, interactive QR codes etc.) within the conservation area aimed at improving understanding and awareness. This would be an effective way to improve awareness and re-establish the identity of Rickmansworth as a historic settlement.

7.5.14. Interpretation could be established in the key spaces and gateways identified in section 6.2 (the forecourt of Basing House, and the station and underpass).



Forecourt of Basing House, potential location for heritage interpretation boards

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8. Appendices

8.1. Bibliography

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8.2. Legislation, Policy and Guidance

LEGISLATION/POLICY/GUIDANCE	DOCUMENT	SECTION/POLICY
Primary Legislation	Planning (Listed Buildings and conservation areas) Act 1990	66: General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions. 72: General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions.
National Planning Policy	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. *National Planning Policy Framework*. London: UK Government, 2026.	Section 20
National Guidance	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. *National Planning Practice Guidance.* London: UK Government, 2014.	ID: 18a
National Guidance	Historic England, *Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management Historic England Advice Note 1.* Second Edition. Swindon: Historic England, 2019.	

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National Guidance	Historic England, *The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3.* Second Edition. Swindon: Historic England, 2017.	
National Guidance	Historic England, *High Streets for All* (2018) Advice for Highway and Public Realm Works in Historic Places	
National Guidance	Historic England (2020) *Conserving Georgian and Victorian Terraced Housing*	
National Guidance	Historic England (2017) *Traditional Windows Their Care, Repair and Upgrading*	
National Guidance	Historic England (2024) *Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency*	
National Guidance	Historic England (2018) *Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: How to improve energy efficiency*	
National Guidance	Historic England (2020) *Energy Efficiency and Traditional Homes*	
Local Supplementary Planning Document	Three Rivers District Council Core Strategy (2011)	PSP1, CP1, CP7, CP12, DM3
Local Supplementary Planning Document	Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan (2023-2038)	

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8.3. List of All Designated Heritage Assets within the Conservation Area

List Entry Number	Address	NGR	Grade	Date of Designation
1100848	St Joan of Arcs Convent High School	TQ 06293 94608	II	26/07/1951
1100849	The Fox and Hounds Public House	TQ 05759 94461	II	03/10/1985
1100850	Basing House	TQ 06079 94497	II	26/07/1951
1100873	7 And 9, Church Street	TQ 06052 94398	II	03/10/1985
1100874	25 And 27, Church Street	TQ 06080 94321	II	23/01/1975
1100876	Church Of St Mary	TQ 06130 94220	II	26/07/1951
1101568	K6 Telephone Kiosk Outside St Mary's Church	TQ 06170 94192	II	23/11/1987
1173409	The Bury	TQ 06029 94188	II	26/07/1951
1173487	The Chequers Restaurant	TQ 06073 94333	II	03/10/1985
1173498	The Old Vicarage	TQ 06027 94381	II	27/07/1972
1173533	Pair Of Chest Tombs with Fluted Corner Piers About 10 Metres North Of Church Of St Mary	TQ 06112 94237	II	03/10/1985
1173611	133, 133a and 133b, High Street	TQ 05933 94453	II	03/10/1985
1173616	20, High Street	TQ 06233 94527	II	03/10/1985

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1296110	142 And 144, High Street	TQ 05772 94493	II	03/10/1985
1296134	The Hour House	TQ 06201 94482	II	03/10/1985
1296164	War Memorial About 40 Metres East of Church of St Mary	TQ 06178 94219	II	03/10/1985
1296187	29-33 Church Street	TQ06085 94304	II	23/01/1975
1296195	The Priory	TQ 06091 94246	II	03/10/1985
1348226	The Coach and Horses Public House	TQ 06220 94510	II	03/10/1985
1348227	72, 72a and 72b, High Street	TQ 05962 94470	II	03/10/1975
1348239	53-61, Church Street	TQ 06168 94272	II	01/03/1982
1348240	The Feathers Public House	TQ 06085 94260	II	14/08/1974
1348241	Wilson Monument Immediately North of Chancel Of Church Of St Mary	TQ 06145 94224	II	03/10/1985
1348251	War Memorial Statue	TQ 06055 94592	II	03/10/1985
1390746	74, High Street	TQ 05954 94478	II	24/05/2004

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8.4. List of All Locally Important Buildings within the Conservation Area

Name	Address	Building Type
Beresford Almshouses	Bury Lane	Almshouse
Gables Cottages	Bury Lane	House
11 Church Street	Church Street	House
11a Church Street	Church Street	House
13 Church Street	Church Street	House
23 Church Street	Church Street	House
32 Church Street	Church Street	House
37 Church Street	Church Street	House
39 Church Street	Church Street	House
41 Church Street	Church Street	House
43 Church Street	Church Street	House
49 Church Street	Church Street	House
The Old Forge (r/o 14-16 Church Street)	Church Street	House
18 High Street	High Street	House
24/26 High Street	High Street	House

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76/78 High Street (Boots)	High Street	Shop
87 High Street	High Street	Shop
89/91 High Street	High Street	Shop
104 High Street	High Street	Shop
106 High Street	High Street	Shop
108/110 High Street	High Street	Shop
129 High Street	High Street	Shop
153 High Street	High Street	Cafe
163 High Street (Victoria Pharmacy)	High Street	Shop
165 High Street	High Street	Shop
165a High Street	High Street	Shop
167 High Street	High Street	Shop
169 High Street	High Street	Shop
181 High Street	High Street	Shop

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8.5. Frequently Asked Questions

What is a conservation area?
Conservation areas are designated by the Local Planning Authority as areas of special architectural and historic interest. There are many different types of conservation areas, which vary in size and character, and range from historic town centres to country houses set in historic parks. Conservation area designation introduces additional planning controls and considerations, which exist to protect an area's special character and appearance and the features that make it unique and distinctive. Although designation introduces controls over the way that owners can develop their properties, it is generally considered that these controls are beneficial as they preserve and/or enhance the value of properties within conservation areas.

The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act specifies the general duty of Local Authorities, in the exercise of planning functions (Section 72). The 1990 Act states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

The National Planning Policy Framework regards conservations areas as '*designated heritage assets*'.

How are conservation areas designated and managed?
The designation process includes detailed analysis of the proposed conservation area and adoption by the Local Planning Authority. As set out by Section 69(2) of the 1990 Act, a review process should be periodically undertaken, and the conservation area assessed to safeguard that it retains special architectural or historic interest. Threats can be identified, and the boundary reviewed, to ensure it is still relevant and appropriate.

This conservation area is supported by an appraisal and management plan. The appraisal describes the importance of an area in terms of its character, architecture, history, development form and landscaping. The management plan, included within the appraisal, sets out various positive proposals to improve, enhance and protect the character and appearance of the conservation area.

How can I find out if I live in a Conservation Area?
Boundary maps of conservation areas can be found on your Local Planning Authority website. You can also contact your Local Planning Authority directly to find out if you reside within a conservation area. Three Rivers District Council maintains a webpage with further information of all the conservation areas within the district. For further information, please visit the Council's website.

What are the Council's duties regarding development in conservation areas?
The Local Authority must follow the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). These set out in clear terms how development proposals within conservation areas should be considered on the basis of whether they conserve the area's significance. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 must also be followed with special attention paid to proposals preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the area. Applications which fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area are likely to be refused as a result. The Local Authority's Local Plan also typically includes a specific policy on conservation areas.

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What is an Article 4 Direction?
Under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, certain minor works, such as domestic alterations, can normally be carried out without planning permission. However, some conservation areas are covered by an Article 4 Direction, which brings certain types of development back under the control of a Local Planning Authority. This allows potentially harmful proposals to be considered on a case-by-case basis through planning applications. Article 4 Directions are used to control works that could threaten the character or appearance of an area, and a planning application may be required for development that would otherwise have been permitted development. Historic England provides information on Article 4 Directions on their website.

An Article 4 Direction was applied to Rickmansworth Town Centre in 2023, and proposals have been made within the Management Plan within this document for its review and possible extension.

Do I need permission to alter a property in a conservation area?
Alterations or extensions to buildings in the conservation area will generally need planning permission. Your Local Authority will provide advice as to how to proceed.

Part of the conservation area also has an Article 4 Direction, which relates to alterations such as alterations and enlargements, alterations to roofs and chimneys, additions of porches, outbuildings, hard surfacing, the maintenance, enhancement or demolition of boundary treatments, satellite dishes, and the painting, rendering or cladding of external walls.

Do I need to make an application for routine maintenance work?
If routine maintenance works are to be carried out using authentic materials and traditional craft techniques, on a like-for-like basis, it is unlikely that you will need to apply for permission. However, it is strongly recommended that you contact the Local Planning Authority for clarification before commencing any works. The use of a contractor with the necessary skills and experience of working on historic buildings is essential. Inappropriate maintenance works and the use of the wrong materials will cause damage to the fabric of a historic building.

Will I need to apply for permission for a new or replacement garage, fence, boundary wall or garden structure?
Any demolition, development or construction in conservation areas will generally need planning permission. A replacement boundary, garage, or greenhouse will need to be designed with the special historic and architectural interest of the conservation area in mind. The Article 4 Direction covering part of Rickmansworth Town Centre has removed Permitted Development Rights for the alteration, replacement or construction of boundary treatments and outbuildings which front a public thoroughfare (defined as a highway, waterway, or open space) so planning permission will be required. The Three Rivers planning department will provide advice as to how to proceed with an application.

Can I demolish a building in a conservation area?
Demolition or substantial removal of part of a building within a conservation area will usually require permission from the Local Planning Authority. It is important to speak to them before beginning any demolition works, to clarify if permission is required.

Can I remove a tree within a conservation area?
If you are thinking of cutting down a tree or doing any pruning work, the Local Planning Authority must be notified 6 weeks before any work begins. This enables the authority to assess the contribution the tree makes to the character of the conservation area and, if necessary, create a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to protect it. Consent will be required for any works to trees that are protected. Further information on TPOs can be found on Historic England's website. You can apply to carry out works to a tree in a conservation area here.

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How do I find out more about a Conservation Area?
Historic England's website has information on conservation areas and their designation. Further information on the importance of conservation areas, and what it means to live in one, can also be accessed via their website.

Historic England has also published an advice note called *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* which sets out advice on the appraisal of conservation areas and managing change in conservation areas, and has been used in the preparation of the following appraisal.

In addition, Local Planning Authorities have information on the conservation areas within their boundaries available on their websites. They will have information pertaining to when the conservation area was designated, how far it extends and the reason for its designation.

What is "setting"?
The "setting" of a conservation area refers to the surrounding environment in which the area is experienced, including the landscape, streetscape, and views that contribute to its overall character and historic significance. It essentially encompasses the wider context that helps define the special qualities of the conservation area itself; it does not just relate to buildings, but also the spaces around them.

Historic England's The Setting of Heritage Assets Planning Note 3 produces further guidance.

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8.6. Glossary

Term	Description
Archaeological interest	There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.
Conservation (for heritage policy)	The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.
Designated heritage asset	A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or conservation area designated under the relevant legislation.
Heritage asset	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 listing).
Historic environment	All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.
Historic environment record	Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.
Local List	Local listing is a concept that is designed to ensure that the historic and architectural interest of buildings that are of local importance but do not meet the criteria for being nationally listed is taken account of during the planning process. Local lists can be used to identify significant local heritage assets to support the development of Local Plans.

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Non-Designated heritage asset	Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets. Only a minority of buildings have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets.
Setting of a heritage asset	The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
Significance (for heritage policy)	The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

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