



Braintree District Council

Pebmarsh Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan September 2012



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Table of Contents.

Introduction – 1

Part 1 – Appraisal of the Conservation Area – 3

- Origins and Historical Development – 4
- Character Analysis – 7

Part 2 – Management Proposals – 24

- Enhancement Proposals for Pebmarsh Conservation Area – 29

Part 3 – Legal Framework – 30

Maps

Figure 1 – Historic Map with current Conservation Area.

Figure 2 – Character Analysis.

Figure 3 – Management Plan.

Introduction

- 1.1 The historic environment cannot be replaced and is a resource that is both fragile and finite.**
- 1.2 Braintree District has a rich and vibrant built heritage, featuring many fine listed buildings displaying a variety of styles representative of the architectural and historic styles of many centuries. In addition, there are many other buildings of quality that are not listed but are worthy of recognition. In addition to the District's market towns there are a variety of villages displaying a rich character of architectural form in rural settings where generally the clear distinction between built form and open countryside has been maintained. The District also has an important industrial heritage where a number of famous companies first established their presence in the area during the 19th Century. These companies and their products together with associated housing built for their workforce has left an indelible and distinctive architectural mark.**
- 1.3 Braintree District is situated within an economically buoyant region where an attractive environment, employment opportunities and good transport links make it a popular destination to live and work. It is inevitable, therefore, that the built environment will change and grow in response to the economy and population growth, as a result of inward-migration. It is therefore important to continue appraising the qualities of the District's conservation areas and to develop practical ways of protecting and enhancing them.**
- 1.4 Pebmarsh Conservation Area was originally designated in 1989, its current extent is shown on Figure 1. Conservation areas are built environments which are considered worthy of protection as a result of a combination of factors such as the quality of design and setting of the buildings or their historic significance. In addition to the individual qualities of the buildings themselves, there are other factors such as the relationships of the buildings with each other, the quality of the spaces between them and the vistas and views that unite or disrupt them. The relationship of the conservation area with adjoining areas, as well as the quality of trees, boundary treatments, advertisements, road signage, street furniture and hard surfaces are also important features which can add or detract from the conservation area.**
- 1.5 This appraisal recognises the importance of these factors and will consider them carefully. The resulting document will be regarded by Braintree District Council as a 'material consideration' when exercising its statutory development control function. The document will also put forward simple and**

practical management proposals capable of being implemented at local level as and when resources permit.

1.6 The Conservation Appraisal will:

- **Identify the special character of the area;**
- **Identify elements that should be retained or enhanced;**
- **Identify detracting elements;**
- **Review the existing boundary;**
- **Put forward practical enhancement proposals;**
- **Strengthen development and design control.**

1.7 This appraisal has been prepared in partnership with the local community and will be subject to public consultation. Pebmarsh is considered by the Parish Council to be a good example of an indigenous population mixing well together with new residents, who together exhibit a diversity of skills, ranging from thatchers to accountants. There are also a number of active voluntary groups organising annual and other spontaneous events.

1.8 The Council would like to record its thanks to the Parish Council and to the members of the local community who provided useful information to officers when the survey was being undertaken. Particular thanks are due to Mr Harry Anderson who provided historic photographs of the former silk mill and its workforce and to Mr John Harding-Payne for providing other historic photographs used in this document.

1.9 This document is written in three parts: Part 1 - Appraisal; Part 2 - Management Proposals, Part 3 Legal and Policy Framework.

PART 1

APPRAISAL OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

The legal and policy framework for designating, managing and appraising conservation areas is set out in Part 3 of this document.

General Character and Setting of Pebmarsh

2.1 Pebmarsh consists of three main parts:-

Cross End to the east of the main village consisting principally of modern development interspersed with occasional historic buildings; the main village centred around the church with its designated conservation area, and Oak Road to the west which is a principally a string of relatively modern ribbon development. The current appraisal of the conservation area concurs with the view previously taken that neither Cross End nor Oak Road merit consideration for conservation area status.

2.2 Pebmarsh, along with many rural communities, has lost many of its original supporting services, including the recent closure of the King's Head Public House.

2.3 In terms of its wider setting, Pebmarsh lies within the Colne river valley area of the Landscape Character Assessment produced and adopted in 2006 as part of the Council's base information. The village is bordered on three sides by the Wickham farmland plateau.

2.4 The Landscape Character Assessment referred to above generally concluded that the Colne river valley area has a relatively high sensitivity to change and this is considered to be particularly relevant to the countryside surrounding the village. Briefly the conservation area centred around the church is a small village in a large open rural landscape. The approaches are generally characterised by well kept hedgerows beyond which is a mosaic of agricultural crops and colours with a high incidence of trees and hedgerows within the agricultural framework. Looking across from Cross End the agricultural landscape is pastoral and of a smaller scale field pattern.

2.5 The most noticeable building is the church tower which dominates the scene from most approach roads and from within the settlement. This is particularly the case when viewed from the following locations: Rafe Hall and village green, Oak Road;

selected view points from Water Lane and Pearson Close, and from Mill Lane at its junction with The Street.

- 2.6 In terms of the general character and plan form of the main village, Pebmarsh has been the recipient of several 20th century developments some of which date from the mid 20th century, which are not particularly sympathetic to existing historic assets. There are 19 listed buildings in the Parish of which 9 are located in the conservation area.
- 2.7 The churchyard represents a particularly fine setting for the church and its open nature with groupings of tombstones and several mature trees has been properly recognised on the Pebmarsh inset of the Local Plan as an important open area.
- 2.8 Throughout the conservation area trees in abundance add to its quality, a few of which have previously been made subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).
- 2.9 The approach from Rafe Hall down to the village is noteworthy for the small village green and War memorial and the narrow approach to the village with its agricultural hedge and bank on its southern boundary.
- 2.10 Approaching Pebmarsh, the visitor's first impression is likely to be one of a typical small English village, set in an expansive rural hinterland.

Origins and Historical Development

- 2.11 As far as can be ascertained, no prehistoric deposits within the Conservation Area have been identified.
- 2.12 There is evidence of some Roman settlement in the area. For example Scheduled Monument Record (SMR) 9341 refers to there being a few fragments of Roman brick in the fabric of the church and another reference relates to a large '*cylindrical Roman padlock bound with bronze*' having been found in the grounds of Evelyn House (now 'Elvir'). SMR 9342 says in relation to the church that the '*pre 14th century nave was a tall narrow structure, possibly Saxon*'.
- 2.13 Evidence of Medieval occupation is more apparent. Pebenhers (1086); Pubemers (1141); Popeners (1239); Pebmarshe (1295) and Pebermerche (1390) are a selection of the many different spellings identified in 'The place names of Essex' by Reaney. Parts of the church tower date from the 14th century. The church was added to at later periods and evolved into the Grade I structure we see today, which dominates the landscape from within and beyond the

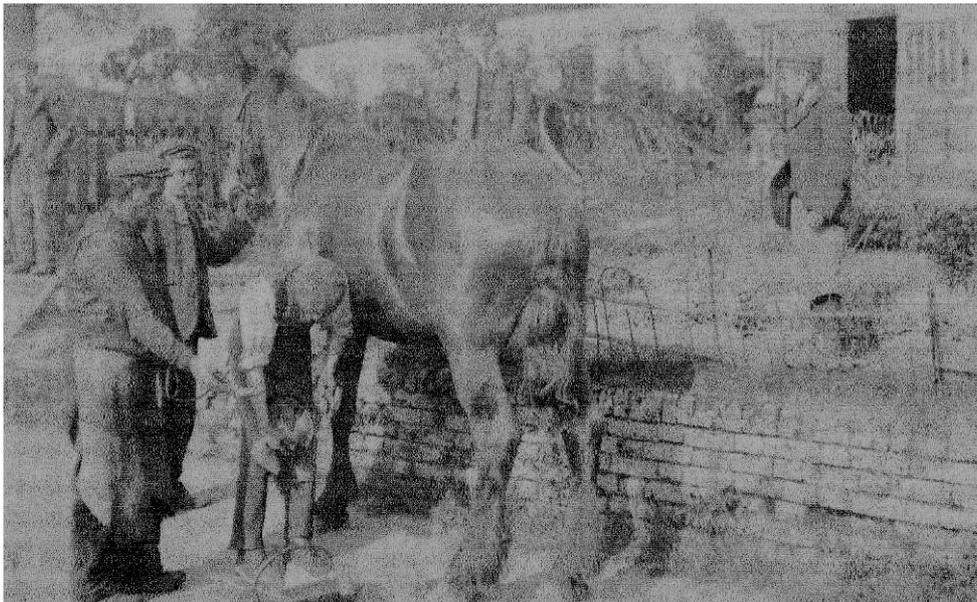
settlement. There is a military brass in the church of Sir William Fitz-Ralph who fought in expeditions against the Scots and who died circa 1323. Nikolaus Pevsner in his series 'Buildings of England' volume relating to Essex, refers to it as being '*one of the most important brasses in the county*'. Sir William's family were important in Essex and Suffolk during the 13th and 14th centuries. The manor that was anciently held by them is referred to in White's directory of Essex 1848 which states they '*were long seated at the hall which stood in Castle Meadow*'. Morant's History of Essex, 1763-1768 states '*The mansion house (probably the site of the present day listed building The Manor House, circa 1500 and extended in later periods) stands near a brook in Pebmarsh Street. At one end of it there is an ancient chapel and not far from it was a castle of which the remains are scarce visible. However the meadow wherein it stood is to this day called Castle Meadow*'.

- 2.14 Pebmarsh continued to develop in the 15th and 16th Centuries with buildings like the King's Head PH dating from these times. The 16th Century saw relatively significant development because nearly 40% of all listed buildings in the Parish date from this period. The Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (Volume III, North east Essex, published in 1922) contains several references to moated sites in the parish from this approximate time. One such moat is located at Rafe Hall then described as being Homestead Moat at the rectory.
- 2.15 The 17th Century is also well represented as it has about 20% of the parish's listed buildings.
- 2.16 Whites Directory of Essex 1848 describes Pebmarsh thus: '*a village near the source of a rivulet ...has a large silk factory and its parish contains 614 souls*'... The factory belonged to the Courtauld family who moved to England from America in 1794 and established their first factory at Pebmarsh at about that time (Pevsner says about 1798). The site of the factory was down Mill Lane and within the curtilage of present day Mill House. The silk mill building is shown on the 1898 Ordnance Survey Map and described thereon as already being disused at that date. Pevsner refers to it being pulled down about 1900. The remains of the sluice and associated embankments are still visible. The Courtauld Mills later became an established household name, the company building large factories elsewhere nearby, including one at Halstead. Sadly they were all closed by the 20th century. The converted mill at Halstead is larger but similar in architectural style to the original one at Pebmarsh.



Picture 1. The Courtauld Silk Factory – late 19th century

2.17 Additionally the 1898 Ordnance Survey Map identifies a corn-mill, a malt house and a smithy, all on Factory Lane (present day Mill Lane), together with the school (present day Old School) and the Rectory (present day Rafe Hall). The post office directory of 1874 lists, along with numerous farmers, a range of other trades and occupations. These include a miller, a baker, a shopkeeper, a pork butcher, a blacksmith, a wheelwright, a grocer and postmaster, silk throwsters, a saddler, another shopkeeper and two beer retailers together with the parish clerk, the school mistress and the rector. Clearly the village at this time was very self sufficient.



Picture 2. Smithy, Mill Lane

- 2.18** Several noteworthy persons are buried in the graveyard including Harry Cameron, 'The Great Carmo', a showman magician (1881-1944) whose gravestone was erected by The Circus Friends Association of Great Britain, and R.H. Amherst Stoops (1881-1955) who was successively governor of Jerusalem, Cyprus and Northern Rhodesia. The victim of a murder that gained notoriety at the time is buried here as reported by the Halstead Colne Valley Gazette of 1896.
- 2.19** It is interesting to note that the present day population (479) is less than it was in 1848 (614). This decline of 20% is significant, probably reflecting a combination of the general 19th century shift away from the countryside together with the relative isolation of the village and its poor road communications. Against this background of decline it is perhaps more important, even today, for the community to use all endeavours to prosper and develop its existing community resources, including its heritage assets and its historic identity.
- 2.20** Figure 1 illustrates the present Conservation Area boundary imposed on the 1898 Ordnance Survey base.

Character Analysis

- 2.21** Although the Conservation Area of Pebmarsh is small there are two distinct areas. Area 1 - The Street and Area 2 - Mill Lane.
- 2.22** There are no designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the village.
- 2.23** Archaeological sites. There are two sites, namely Rafe Hall, a moated site, and Mill House, the site of the former silk mill.
- 2.24** Individually listed buildings have been identified, plotted and briefly described using English Heritage's on-line source. As set out previously these are protected from unauthorised demolition, alteration or extension. Structures, including railings and walls, within the curtilages of listed buildings, if they are pre-1948, are subject to the same controls as listed buildings. There are a small number of such walls and railings in Pebmarsh and these are identified.



Picture 3. Detail of wall fronting the churchyard showing traditional materials and syle

- 2.25** There are also other non-listed buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the conservation area and these are separately identified. The basic questions asked in identifying such buildings are:
- (a)** Does the general external appearance of a non-listed building, which makes an important architectural or historic contribution to the conservation area, remain largely unaltered?
 - (b)** Does it contain a sufficient level of external original features and materials?
 - (c)** Has it retained its original scale without inappropriate modern extensions that destroy the visual appearance particularly in respect of the front elevation?
 - (d)** Is the building visually important in the street scene?
- 2.26** Buildings within the Conservation Area which are neutral in character and neither enhance or detract from the street scene, are uncoloured on the map in Figure 2 of the Appraisal. Some are from the late 20th century reflecting principles set out in the 'Essex Design Guide'.
- 2.27** The basic criteria for identifying important trees and hedgerows are:-
- (a)** they must be in good condition;
 - (b)** they are visible at least in part from public view points

- (c) they make a significant contribution to the street scene or other publicly accessible areas.

2.28 Open spaces that contribute to the visual importance of the conservation area where development would be inappropriate and which accord with the aims of Local Plan policy RLP4 have been identified. The basic questions asked in identifying such spaces are:

- (a) Is the space an important landscape feature contributing to the general spatial quality of the conservation area? or
- (b) Is the open space an important setting for an historic asset?

Unkempt spaces that have the potential to be enhanced are also candidates for selection.

2.29 Other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution are noted and shown diagrammatically. Such features include the war memorial, seating and early street lamps.

2.30 Features that detract or are in poor repair have been identified.

2.31 Important views are identified. The dominance of the church has previously been noted and view points are shown.

2.32 In revising the conservation area and recommending which areas are suitable for inclusion or exclusion, consideration has been given to whether or not the land or buildings in question form part of an area of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance should be conserved. In Pebmarsh several significant areas are proposed to be excluded as they do not meet the aforementioned criteria.

Area 1 – The Street

2.33 The Street is a narrow busy road with some footpaths on the north side. It provides access for commuters travelling to and from surrounding towns and villages. It is also extensively used by residents going to and from the village hall and local school. Whilst its narrowness is part of its charm, this latter factor, combined with density and speed of domestic and commercial traffic movements can detract from the quiet rural nature of the area, particularly at peak times. The change of levels, as The Street descends to the Peb Brook and then rises towards Oak Road, adds to the quality of the environment. Development between the church and Rafe Hall is characterised on its southern

boundary by a hedgerow of native species on a bank, whose rural qualities make a significant contribution to the conservation area. West of the church development is denser and of greater visual and historic importance containing buildings of varied styles, materials and with an interesting roofscape including a tall modern thatched building that is referred to below. The most striking and positive feature of this area is the manner in which the mass and height of the church dominates the local scene.



Picture 4. The Street – note the visual importance of Rectory Cottage and the elevated rural hedge on bank

North Side

2.34 Listed buildings:

- (a) Rectory Cottage near the Village Green is an important early 19th century building in the street scene with thatched roof and simple iron railings to the front. The building is also important as it acts as an important visual introduction to the village in this location.
- (b) The Parish Church of St John the Baptist dates from the 14th century. Its architectural merits and the manner in which it dominates, both in long distant views and from within the conservation area, have already been noted. The front boundary to the church is a 9th century brick capped flint wall that is an important visual feature in the centre of the conservation area. A similar wall of lesser height and visual impact forms the eastern boundary of the original

burial ground. Gravestones in the churchyard are of some architectural and considerable historic importance.

- (c) Fronting The Street to the west of the church is The Manor House and Old Post Office dating from about 1500, extended in 16th -18th centuries, timber framed, with red clay tiled roof. The former Post office building used to be a shop with 2 no. splayed bays.
- (d) Further to the west is the 20th century telephone kiosk, type K6, designed in 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott with domed roof and crowns to top panels.
- (e) Nearby is The King's Head PH dating from the late 15th century, timber framed and plastered and roof of clay tiles.
- (f) Further west is a property called Fieldfares that is of late 15th or early 16th century heavily modified in the 20th century with 20th century extensions. Fieldfares has a low 19th century flint wall with stone capped to front and side. All these buildings are Grade II with the exception of the church which is Grade I. In addition to their detailed characteristics, their varied materials and juxtaposition with neighbouring buildings are important.



Picture 5. The old Post Office, probably late 19th century

2.35 Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution:

- (a) Street Farm Cottage is a 19th century narrow span flint construction with slate roof and 2 no. chimney stacks. Despite an extension to the rear which is not visible from the road, this property with its prominent flint construction makes an important contribution to the street scene.
- (b) Keepers Cottage is a tall and steeply pitched, partly thatched property that dominates the local scene and makes a positive contribution to the area. The building was

erected as recently as 1999 and the end product is interesting as the attention to detail is well considered and executed. It represents one possible design solution for house design in conservation areas.



Picture 6. Keeper's Cottage - this distinctive property was built in 1999

- 2.36 Trees and hedgerows: Two mature trees fronting The Street within the churchyard, one a Yew and the other a Horse chestnut, together with the hedge of native species forming the front boundary to the village hall make a particularly valuable contribution in this location. Other mature trees in the churchyard define rear boundaries and are also visually important.**
- 2.37 Other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution:**
- (a) 2 no. street lamps. One original lantern exists on wooden support outside church yard entrance. The second is immediately to the east of the brook and is an early street lamp about 3-4 m tall with tapering fluted column and original lantern and fittings in need of restoration. Local information advises the latter street lamp was moved from its original location close by.**
 - (b) Nearby are 5 no. 19th-20th century cylindrical metal supports capped by decorative finials with horizontal metal bars providing safety railing to the brook (originally a similar feature existed on the other side of the road).**



Picture 7. The street lamp in front of the church

2.38 Open spaces:

The importance of the churchyard is recognised by its designation under Policy RLP 4 in the adopted Local Plan. As set out earlier the churchyard and its open nature with groupings of quality tombstones and several mature trees is a most important open area of visual and historic interest in the public realm. The open area west of the village hall and fronting The Street is potentially an important environmental asset in need of improvement.



Picture 8. The churchyard, its enclosing flint wall and dominant horse chestnut tree

2.39 Important views:

The views along The Street in both directions between the War Memorial and the church are important for reasons previously expressed.

2.40 Detracting elements:

- (a) Planting to the front of school. This is of a decorative nature including shrubs roses and domestic plants more normally associated with a domestic garden. Replacement with native species reflecting those found in the countryside hedge opposite would provide a better landscape solution. Additionally a wooden storage shed with felt roof and associated items detracts from the rural quality of the street scene in this location.**
- (b) Village hall site. The area between the car park and landscaped area is untidy in places having been eroded by car parking, an issue that could be resolved by additional planting. On a point of detail, existing notice boards to village hall could be refurbished or replaced.**
- (c) Graveyard extension. Where access is gained from the ancient graveyard, the ragged end of the 19th century wall detracts and is in need of repair.**
- (d) Robust utilitarian re-enforced concrete posts and metal rails fronting church. These are in need of repair/**

refurbishment. Two litter bins attached to these railings detract.

- (e) Street lamp near brook. This is in need of repainting and general refurbishment. Suggested action to rectify these detracting elements is set out in the management proposals.

2.41 Throughout the conservation area overhead cables are a disruptive element. Their impact varies from location to location. In some situations, they are partially obscured by vegetation, but elsewhere they are more visible. Realistically they are likely to remain for the foreseeable future, however should the opportunity arise for selective under-grounding, this should be pursued.

2.42 Proposed Boundary Revisions:

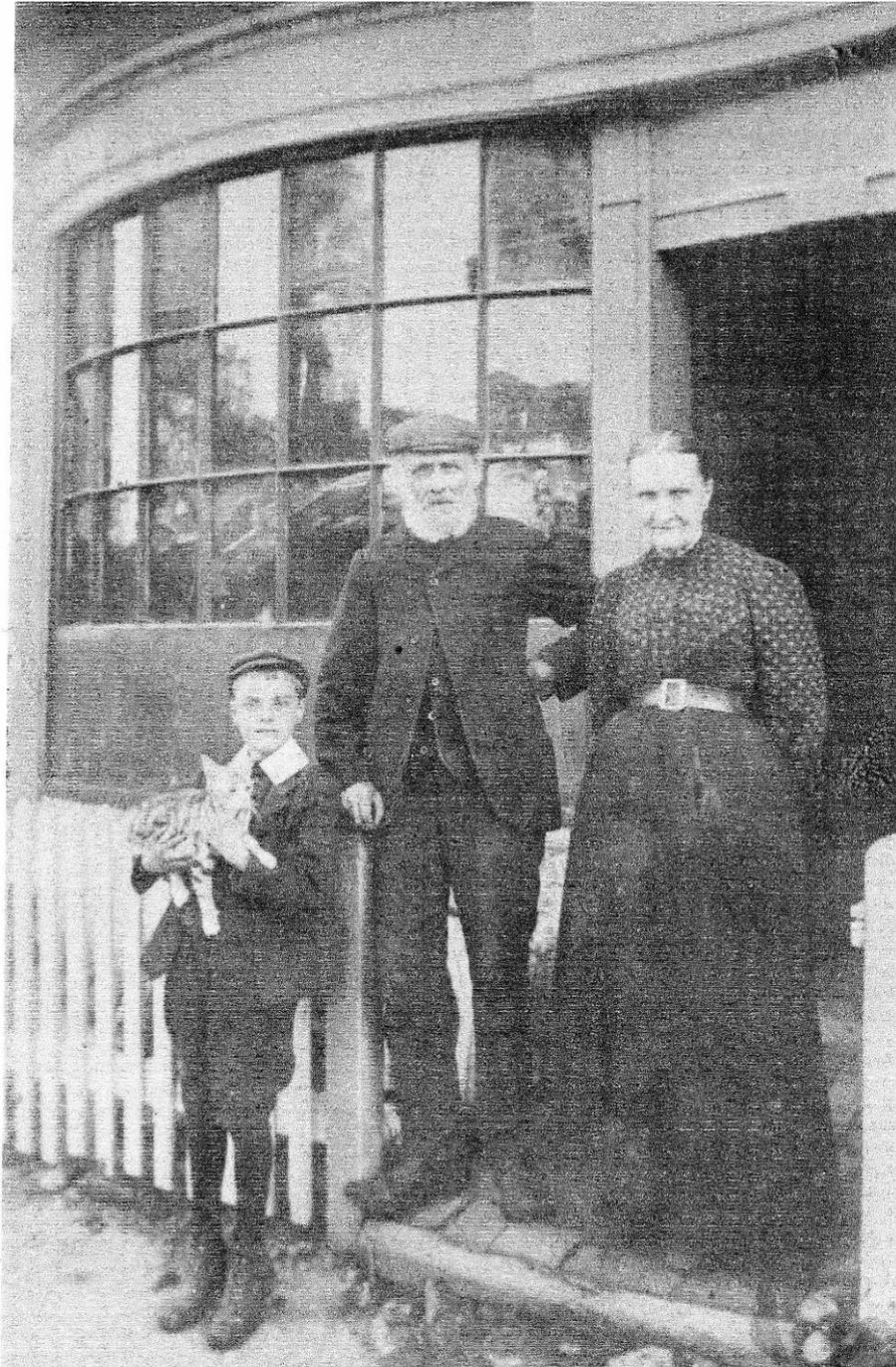
- (a) Greathouse Farm Cottages. These mid 20th century bungalows to the east of Rectory Cottage do not positively contribute to the street scene and have no special architectural or historic interest.
- (b) Land rear of Fieldfares. This is part of the garden of Barn Farm, has no special interest and is unrelated to boundaries on the ground.

These areas are therefore proposed to be excluded from the conservation Area.

South Side

2.43 Listed buildings:

- (a) 'Great Lengths' originates from the 16th century is timber framed and plastered with thatched roof.
- (b) Further west and defining the historic approach of this part of the village is Old Saddlers and Ivy Cottage, being a pair of 18th century timber framed and plastered thatched roof cottages. One has an 18th century saddler's shop front consisting of a bow window. Both are Grade II and with their thatched roof, provide the only building of historic or visual importance in an otherwise ordinary street scene.



Picture 9. Old saddlers shop, probably late 19th century

2.44 Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution:

Rafe Hall, immediately to the east of the village green is a large, striking 19th century building principally of brick with slate roof built in a style which can perhaps be best described as 'Italianate'. Its prominent central tower, deep overhanging eaves with decorative supports and imposing range of chimneys make this former rectory a most interesting building. Together with

extensive tree cover and being a moated site, the whole makes a valuable contribution to the visual and historic qualities of Pebmarsh. The site and building is currently being refurbished.



Picture 10. The Rectory (now Rafe Hall), probably late 19th century

2.45 Trees and hedgerows:

The tree cover in relation to Rafe Hall is noted above. Coniferous trees fronting the south side of The Street, opposite the church are mature and striking. A single mature red horse chestnut tree on the village green is distinctive. An important natural feature is the agricultural hedge that borders The Street, running from the easternmost extremity of the conservation area to Hillside. This countryside hedge is set on a bank of about 1m in height and provides this approach to the village with a distinctive rural quality. Its loss would be very much regretted.

2.46 Other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution:

- (a) The stone war memorial on the village green commemorates those from Pebmarsh that died in the Great War and is set on a double octagonal base and has the initials JHS carved on the cross. It is generally in good condition.**
- (b) Nearby on the green is a wooden seat in need of repair and re bedding. It is dated 1910 GR 1935, commemorating the Silver Jubilee of George V.**

2.47 Open spaces:

The village green is a small area of grass on which are situated a utilitarian sign post together with the tree and other features referred to above. It is quintessentially English and its quality lies in its simplicity. Some sides and corners of the grass sward are being eroded by traffic. The grounds to Rafe Hall are an important landscape feature and together with the tree cover, contributes to the overall spatial quality of the conservation area and to the setting of this important building.

2.48 Important views. Comments as for north side of The Street.

2.49 Detracting elements:

- (a) At the village green. Some sides and corners of the grass sward are eroded by traffic. The Silver Jubilee seat with missing horizontal bar and crooked setting needs repair.
- (b) The shelter to the west of Water Lane. This is in need of repair and restoration. Suggested action to rectify these detracting elements is set out in the management proposals.



Picture 11. The shelter in need of repair, west of Water Lane

2.50 Proposed Boundary Revisions:

- (a) Open field opposite village hall and school, western end of village. The hedge and bank defining the edge to The Street is a feature that contributes significantly to the village

approach in this location and is clearly visible in an early photograph and thus of some historic interest. It is therefore proposed to include the hedge and bank but exclude the field beyond. This field is outside of the village development boundary therefore policy CS5 of the Core Strategy apply, effectively protecting the field from development, except that which may be required to support agriculture or some other use which must take place in the countryside.

- (b) Land at western edge of the settlement. The listed building (Ivy and The Saddlers) is the obvious visual focal point of architectural and historic interest in this location. Land to the west currently within the conservation area is a poor quality environment of no architectural or historic merit, consisting of a caravan residence and a building plot. The boundary should however be extended to include all the curtilages of the buildings in this location.

Area 2- Mill Lane

2.51 Mill Lane is a very narrow road with particularly tightly knit development near its junction with The Street and contains a number of other non listed buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the conservation area in this location. Its quality is marred in part by parked cars straddling the pavement and unfortunately there would seem to be no means of resolving this problem. The mid 20th century bungalows to the west of Mill Lane beyond the conservation area do not add to the quality of this area. Beyond the bungalows, Mill Lane to the south is a private road giving access to Mill House, site of the original Courtauld silk mill and is of local historic importance. There are two areas of open space that contribute to the architectural or historic characteristics of the area. The most striking and positive feature is the manner in which the mass of the church dominates the northern end of Mill Lane.



Picture 12. Corner of Mill Lane, probably taken late 19th century

2.52 Listed buildings:

There is one listed building, Weaver's Cottage, originally built about 1500, being timber framed and plastered with thatched roof and 20th century extensions. The dwelling is important in the street scene on its elevated position.

2.53 Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution:

Commencing at the northern end of Mill Lane:

- (a) 'Sabrick' is 19th century or possibly earlier. Originally it was subdivided into 2/3 cottages and formed part of a visually important complex of buildings on this corner site, now demolished. Render with tiled roof to exterior, replacement 20th century metal windows of quality that add to its general architectural interest.**
- (b) 'Nether House' is 2 storey late 18th early 19th century rendered with tiled roof, central doorway with original windows.**
- (c) The neighbouring property 'Crabtree Cottage' is a delightful small scale 19th century constructed of brick with slate roof, original windows and central chimney. The extension to the rear does not detract from the architectural and historic contribution that this building makes to the street scene.**
- (d) Neighbouring nos. 1 and 2 Mill Lane are a pair of two storey 19th century dwellings of brick and slate roof with some original features including windows to front. The overall**

charm of this grouping is its mixed variety of scale, architectural styles and use of materials.

- (e) Further south set back in extensive grounds is 'Heritage House' a former Rectory built in 1939. Of brick construction with tiled roof, the property has a 4 window range with large central window and entrance. The building is particularly well proportioned, typical in style of an affluence residence of the mid 20th century and with all original features and fittings including pleasantly designed and proportioned rainwater goods. A low key extension to the side seeks to mimic the original design and its lesser scale is subservient to the original structure.
- (f) At the bottom of the lane is situated 'Mill House' which dates from the 19th century or earlier with an early 20th century extension to the east built when the disused silk mill was demolished. 2 storey, rendered and with tiled roof and chimney stacks, this building is worthy of inclusion despite several later extensions. The simple brick and tiled ancillary building to the east dates from the same period and is of good quality construction with original doors and iron work fittings. Pevsner describes Mill House thus; *'a pretty timber-framed and plastered house. It once belonged to the silk mill which was the beginning of Messrs Courtaulds. The silk mill was started here about 1798 and pulled down about 1900'*.



Picture 13. Nos. 1 and 2 Mill Lane with Crabtree Cottage beyond



Picture 14. Heritage House

2.54 Trees and hedgerows:

Some prominent conifers are located at the north western end of Mill Lane. Other prominent mature specimens exist within Heritage House and also within the garden to Mill House.

2.55 Other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution - none exist in Mill Lane.

2.56 Open spaces:

The curtilage to Heritage House sets the building off. Its extensive area and decorative trees forming the approach, other trees to the northern boundary and centrally located cedar tree planted on the axis central to the house is a fine setting for the building and contributes to the overall quality of the conservation area. Similar comments are relevant to the landscape setting of Mill House, particularly to the north, within which are located several worthy specimen trees. This latter landscape is also important from an historical perspective as remains of the sluice and retaining embankment associated with the original silk mill, are still visible.



Picture 15. The extensive grounds of Heritage House

2.57 Important views:

The church seen from the north end of Mill Lane is a focal point, dominating and closing the view in this location.

2.58 Detracting elements:

The road surface is potholed in places whose repair would improve matters.

2.59 Proposed boundary changes:

- (a) The extensive area of open land within the curtilage and principally to the east of Mill House is not important as a landscape feature, neither is it important from a historical perspective.**

2.60 Figure 2 shows these features.

PART 2

MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

Revised Conservation Area Boundary

- 3.1** The proposed revised boundary is shown on Figure 3. The majority of revisions relate to areas being removed from the conservation area however revisions (e) and (f) refer to inclusions:
- (a)** Greathouse Farm Cottages north of village green;
 - (b)** Land to rear of 'Fieldfares';
 - (c)** Open arable field south of The Street, opposite school and village hall (whilst still retaining roadside hedge and bank within the conservation area);
 - (d)** Area to the east of Mill House.
 - (e)** Minor correction to the boundary at Rafe Hall.
 - (f)** Extension to include whole of curtilage from land west of Ivy Cottage to Mayflower Cottage.

Planning Control and Good Practice within the Conservation Area

- 3.2** The appraisal has described the national legislative and planning policy framework set out in Part 3 and it is against this background that the Council's planning officers and their specialist advisors will process planning applications, currently considered against policies set out in the Braintree District Local Plan Review adopted in July 2005 and the Core Strategy adopted in September 2011. These documents are available on line at www.braintree.gov.uk. Several key policies are set out in Part 3. Policy RLP95 Preservation and Enhancement of Conservation Areas, is the most relevant. Policy RLP90 Layout and Design of Development which is a generic policy covering development in all areas is also pertinent, policy CS9 – Built and Historic Environment.
- 3.3** Good practice for applicants considering submitting planning applications is to carefully consider the content of the relevant policies and if necessary to seek additional advice from the Council's officers who will be pleased to assist. Larger schemes that require a pre-application meeting with a planning officer are subject to a fee. Please contact the Planning Department for further advice:

Telephone on 01376 552525;
Email planning@braintree.gov.uk

Or write to:

Braintree District Council
Causeway House
Bocking End
Brantree
Essex
CM7 9HB

Planning Control and Good Practice Listed Buildings

- 3.4** The nine individually listed buildings are shown on Figure 2 and 3.
- 3.5** Policies RLP99 - Demolition of Listed Buildings and Policy RLP100 - Alterations and Extensions and Changes of Use to Listed Buildings, set out in Part 3 are the most relevant.
- 3.6** The listed buildings in Pebmarsh, whilst few in number, make a significant contribution to the street scene with their predominant appearance of coloured render and thatch or tiled roofs. Good practice for applicants will be to carefully consider the content of the above policies. Perhaps the most important considerations relate to the scale of extensions and use of materials. The former generally needs to be subservient and properly articulated with the original structure whilst the materials should always be of the highest quality. Replacement of thatch with alternative materials is entirely inappropriate as is the use of plastic replacement windows. A pre-submission discussion with one of the Council's officers is advised. Essex County Council Historic Buildings and Conservation Area Advisers statutory consultees on applications affecting listed buildings. They are also able to provide pre-application advice. They can be contacted via the Planning Department.

Other Buildings that make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution

- 3.7** Unlisted buildings in conservation areas above a size of 115 square metres cannot be demolished without consent. Policy RLP99 Demolition in Conservation Areas is set out Part 3.

- 3.8 This appraisal identifies 10 other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution and these are identified on Figure 2 and 3. Any application involving their demolition is likely to be refused.**
- 3.9 The degree to which these buildings has been altered varies. The most common detrimental alteration relates to windows and in some cases original windows have been replaced by inappropriate modern ones. Powers to restrict permitted development should however be used sparingly and this principle has been followed. Restricting the proposed control for new windows only on the front elevation of 8 of the above properties namely Rafe Hall, Sabrick, Nether House, Crabtree Cottage, Nos 1 and 2 Mill Lane, Heritage House, Mill House and Street Farm Cottage is an option if continued alterations become a problem in the area resulting in a significant detriment to the character of the Conservation Area. This can take place separately from this appraisal and would require residents to be notified.**

Important Open Spaces and Trees

- 3.10 The churchyard is identified on Inset 45 of the Local Plan as being subject to this policy. Policy RLP4 Prevention of Town Cramming will apply to areas of open space which make a positive contribution to the character of an area within a defined settlement, whether a conservation area or not. Full details are set out in Part 3.**
- 3.11 In addition to the historic churchyard, the appraisal has identified 5 other open spaces of quality, namely the village green and land at the village hall, both in the public realm, and the gardens in whole or part at Rafe Hall, Heritage House and Mill House. None of these lie within the village envelope so development is unlikely. These spaces together with the diagrammatic locations of trees that make a particularly important contribution to the conservation area are illustrated on Figure 2 as well as 3.**
- 3.12 Good practice guidance suggests owners making regular inspections as necessary to check the health of trees in the interests of amenity and health and safety. Works requiring consent to carry out works to trees in the conservation area either in the front or rear garden of a property requires consent. As previously noted, subject to exceptions, any proposal to fell or carry out works to trees in a conservation area has to be notified via the appropriate procedure, which gives the Council the opportunity to make the tree/s subject to a Tree preservation Order. The Council's Landscape Section is able to offer advice**

and can be contacted via the above-mentioned details. They are also able to give general advice.

Protecting Important Views

- 3.13 Policy RLP95 refers to preserving '*views into and within the constituent parts of designated areas*.' The principal views, all relating to the dominance of the church are shown on Figure 2. In considering planning applications, officers will take this consideration into account.

Other Distinctive Features that make an Important Visual or Historic Contribution

- 3.14 These are indicated on Figure 2. Several are already protected by virtue of being within the curtilage of listed buildings, namely railings at Rectory Cottage and boundary to front and side of Fieldfares. Boundary walls to the church are particularly fine. Others are the War memorial, the wooden seat on the village green, 2 no. street lamps and decorative supports to safety railings at the Peb Brook. None of the latter group are protected in law but most are in public ownership and no threats to them would seem to exist. Practical measures to enhance some of them are set out below in the table 'Enhancements Proposals for the Pebmarsh Conservation Area'.

Potential Need to Undertake an Archaeological Evaluation

- 3.15 There are 2 archaeological sites, namely Rafe Hall, a moated site, and Mill House, site of the former Silk Mill, the historical importance of which has previously been described.
- 3.16 Policy RLP104 Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance reproduced in Part 3 sets out the criteria for development affecting such sites.
- 3.17 Good practice for applicants will be to obtain advice from the Council and its specialist advisors via the contact details set out above.
- 3.18 In the time available it has not been possible to advance knowledge of the castle or its whereabouts referred to in Morant's

History of Essex. However it is hoped that the ‘re-discovery’ of its existence might rekindle interest in the matter locally and lead to additional information becoming available.

Speed Management Plan

- 3.19 The appraisal has noted the concerns voiced by residents with whom officers briefly discussed the issue. It is suggested that further feedback be obtained from the Parish Council and residents and if necessary the technicalities be raised with Essex County Council with a view of considering the matter further.**

Enhancement Proposals for Pebmarsh Conservation Area

3.20 The appraisal identified a number of detracting elements which the table below summarises and proposes a course of action. Council officers can provide the parish with assistance where appropriate.

Detracting element	Location	Proposed action.
Traffic damaged edges and corners of grass sward	Village green	Provide granite edging, liaise with PC and ECC and seek external funding
Broken historic seat	Village green	PC repair and re-set
Inappropriate decorative planting	To front of school	Officers liaise with school and ECC and if agreement reached, draw up and cost revised landscaping scheme and seek external financial assistance to implement it
Grass sward boundary with car park, eroded by traffic	Village hall	Discuss with PC and jointly draw up landscaping scheme for this area and seek external financial assistance from BDC
Notice board.	Village hall	PC consider repair/repaint/replacement
Damaged historic wall	Entrance to graveyard extension	Church authorities to provide retaining pier to prevent possible collapse
Rusting metal railings and litter bins	To front of church	Rub down and treat as necessary. Suggest removal of litter bins for limited period to observe outcome
Street lamp in need of repair	East of Peb Brook	Repaint /repair as necessary
Safety Railings	Peb brook north side	Repaint/repair as necessary
Shelter	West of Water lane	Repair and treat wooden structure with preservative
Potholes in road	Mill Lane	Establish ownership/ responsibility and undertake necessary repairs

PART 3

This section sets out the legal and policy framework relating to development in conservation areas.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Development

- 4.1 The legal background for designating a conservation area is set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The Act). This states that the local planning authority (The Council) shall from time to time designate conservation areas, which are defined as being ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance’. Pebmarsh Conservation Area was designated by resolution of Planning Committee on the 9th November 1989.
- 4.2 Section 71 of the Act requires Councils to *‘formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement’* of conservation areas and hold a public meeting to consider them.
- 4.3 Within conservation areas there are additional planning controls and if these are to be supported it is important that the designated conservation areas accord with the statutory definition as set out above and are not devalued by including areas that lack special interest.
- 4.4 One of the most important additional planning controls that applies to conservation areas is set out at section 74 of the Act which states that *‘a building in a conservation area shall not be demolished without the consent of the appropriate authority’*. This requirement is known as ‘conservation area consent’ and is subject to certain exceptions. For example it does not apply to listed buildings (see above) but may be relevant to other non listed buildings in the conservation area if it is considered that these are of sufficient merit to warrant identification and protection. Looking for and identifying such buildings will therefore be a priority of this appraisal.
- 4.5 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 (as amended), defines the range of minor developments for which planning permission is not required and

this range is more restricted in conservation areas. For example the Order currently requires that the addition of dormer windows to roof slopes, various types of cladding and satellite dishes fronting as highway, all require planning permission in a conservation area whereas they would not require permission beyond.

- 4.6 However, even within conservation areas there are many other minor developments that do not require planning permission. So as to provide further protection the law allows Councils to introduce additional controls if appropriate. Examples of such controls can include some developments fronting a highway or open space, such as an external porch, the painting of a house or the demolition of some gates, fences or walls. The removal of important architectural features that are important to the character or appearance of a conservation area or individual buildings within it such as distinctive porches, windows or walls or railings to non-listed properties could be specified by a legal process known as an 'Article 4 Direction'. The use of such directions can only be made in justified circumstances where a clear assessment of each conservation area has been made. In conducting each appraisal the Council will consider whether or not such additional controls are necessary. If it is so considered then a separate consultation exercise with the owners of such properties will be necessary.**

Works to Trees

- 4.7 Another planning control relates to trees located within conservation areas. Setting aside various exceptions principally relating to size and condition, any proposal to fell or carry out works to trees in a conservation area has to be 'notified' to the Council within 6 weeks of the works. The Council may then decide make the tree/s subject to a Tree Preservation Order. This appraisal will only diagrammatically identify the most significant trees or groups of trees that make a particularly important contribution to the character of the conservation area. However trees that are not so identified may still be considered suitable candidates for tree preservation orders in the process referred to above.**

PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Policy

- 4.8** The recently adopted National Planning Policy Framework makes reference to the designation of conservation areas and that local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

Core Strategy Policy

- 4.9** Since the first draft of this appraisal Braintree District Council has adopted its Core Strategy. The relevant policies which related to conservation are policy CS5 – The Countryside, policy CS8 – Natural Environment and Bio-diversity and policy CS9 – Built and Historic Environment.
- 4.10** The Council will be producing a Development Management Development Plan Document which will replace policies in the Adopted Local Plan Review 2005 in due course.

Core Strategy and Local Plan Policy

- 4.11** The Braintree District Local Plan Review (BDLPR), adopted in July 2005 includes the following policies which seek to protect the character of the rural areas and historic environment.
- 4.12** Policy RLP4 - Prevention of Town Cramming

Within Village Envelopes and Town Development Boundaries development of open areas, which are important visually, which contribute to the character of the settlement, or which are used for recreational, social, or community purposes or which are of importance to nature conservation will not be permitted.

- 4.13** Policy RLP 90 Layout and Design of Development

The Council seeks a high standard of layout and design in all developments, large and small, in the District. Planning permission will only be granted where the following criteria are met:

- (i) The scale, density, height and massing of buildings should reflect or enhance local distinctiveness;
- (ii) Buildings, open areas, circulation spaces, and other townscape and landscape areas shall be of a high standard of design and materials;
- (iii) There shall be no undue or unacceptable impact on the amenity of any nearby residential properties;
- (iv) Designs shall recognise and reflect local distinctiveness, and be sensitive to the need to conserve local features of architectural, historic and landscape importance, particularly within Conservation Areas and in proximity to parks and gardens of historic interest, ancient monuments and sites of archaeological importance;
- (v) The layout, height, mass and overall elevational design of buildings and developments shall be in harmony with the character and appearance of the surrounding area; including their form, scale and impact on the skyline in the locality;
- (vi) Both the overall planning and detailed design shall incorporate measures to ensure the maximum practical environmental sustainability throughout the construction, occupation and demolition of the development, in relation to energy conservation, water efficiency, waste separation and the use of materials with low overall energy requirements. Supplementary planning guidance will be prepared on these aspects;
- (vii) Use of the most sustainable modes of transport is promoted in the design and layout of new development, and the resultant traffic generation and its management shall seek to avoid significant increases in traffic movement, particularly in residential areas;
- (viii) Designs and layouts shall promote a safe and secure environment, crime reduction and prevention and shall encourage the related objective of enhancing personal safety; with the maximum amount of natural surveillance of roads, paths and all other open areas and all open spaces incorporated into schemes;
- (ix) Landscape design shall promote and enhance local biodiversity;
- (x) The design and level of any lighting proposals will need to be in context with the local area.

4.14 RLP95, Preservation and Enhancement of Conservation Areas states:

The Council will preserve, and encourage the enhancement of, the character and appearance of designated Conservation Areas and their settings, including the buildings, open spaces and areas, landscape and historic features and views into and within the

constituent parts of designated areas. Built or other development, within or adjacent to a conservation area and affecting its setting, will only be permitted provided that:

- (a) The proposal does not detract from the character, appearance and essential features of the conservation area;**
- (b) Any new development is situated in harmony with the existing street scene and building line, and is sympathetic in size, scale and proportions with its surroundings;**
- (c) Architectural details on buildings of value are retained;**
- (d) building materials are authentic and complimentary to the building's character.**

4.15 Policy RLP96 Demolition in Conservation Areas

Consent for the partial or total demolition of a listed building will only be granted in the most exceptional circumstances, where:

- (i) the demolition of the building is demonstrably unavoidable for structural safety reasons; and/or**
- (ii) all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses, find viable new uses, or secure preservation through a form of charitable or community ownership, and that these efforts have failed; and**
- (iii) redevelopment will produce substantial benefits for the community, which would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition;**
- (iv) demolition works are made conditional upon planning permission being granted, and a contract agreed, for redevelopment; and**
- (v) at least one month is permitted to record the listed building before demolition.**

4.16 Policy RLP100 Alterations and Extensions and Changes of Use to Listed Buildings, and their settings

Development involving internal or external alterations, extensions and partial demolitions to a listed building or structure(including any structures defined as having equivalent status due to being situated within its curtilage), and changes of use will only be permitted if the proposed works or uses:

- (i) do not harm the setting, character, structural stability and fabric of the building (or structure); and**
- (ii) do not result in the loss of, or significant damage to the building or structure's historic and architectural elements of special importance, and include the use of appropriate materials and finishes. The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate**

control over the development, design and use of adjoining land.

4.17 Policy RLP 104 Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance

Where development would adversely affect the physical preservation of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other nationally important archaeological remains, and their settings, whether scheduled or not, there will be a presumption in favor of their preservation in situ.

Other areas of archaeological significance (i.e. those which, although important locally, are not of national significance) will be preserved. When development affecting such sites is acceptable in principle, mitigation of damage will be sought through the preservation of the remains in situ as a preferred solution. When in situ preservation is not justified, the developer will be required to make adequate provision for excavation and recording before or during development.

4.18 The Local Plan also refers to the potential of the Council withdrawing permitted development rights where developments are cumulatively detracting from the special character or appearance of a conservation area (Article 4 Direction set out above).

4.19 The Local Plan contains more detailed policies relating to conservation areas and many additional ones relating to other heritage assets. Attention is also drawn to other policies relating to development in Town Development Boundaries and Village Envelopes (RLP3) and policy RLP136 protecting recreation sites.

4.20 In summary it is considered that the policies of the adopted Braintree District Plan and Core Strategy are robust and in accord with national legislation and current government advice. The process and format of this conservation area appraisal and the key elements it intends to look at set out above also take account of the same factors and of advice set out in English Heritage's advisory document 'Guidance on Conservation area appraisals'.

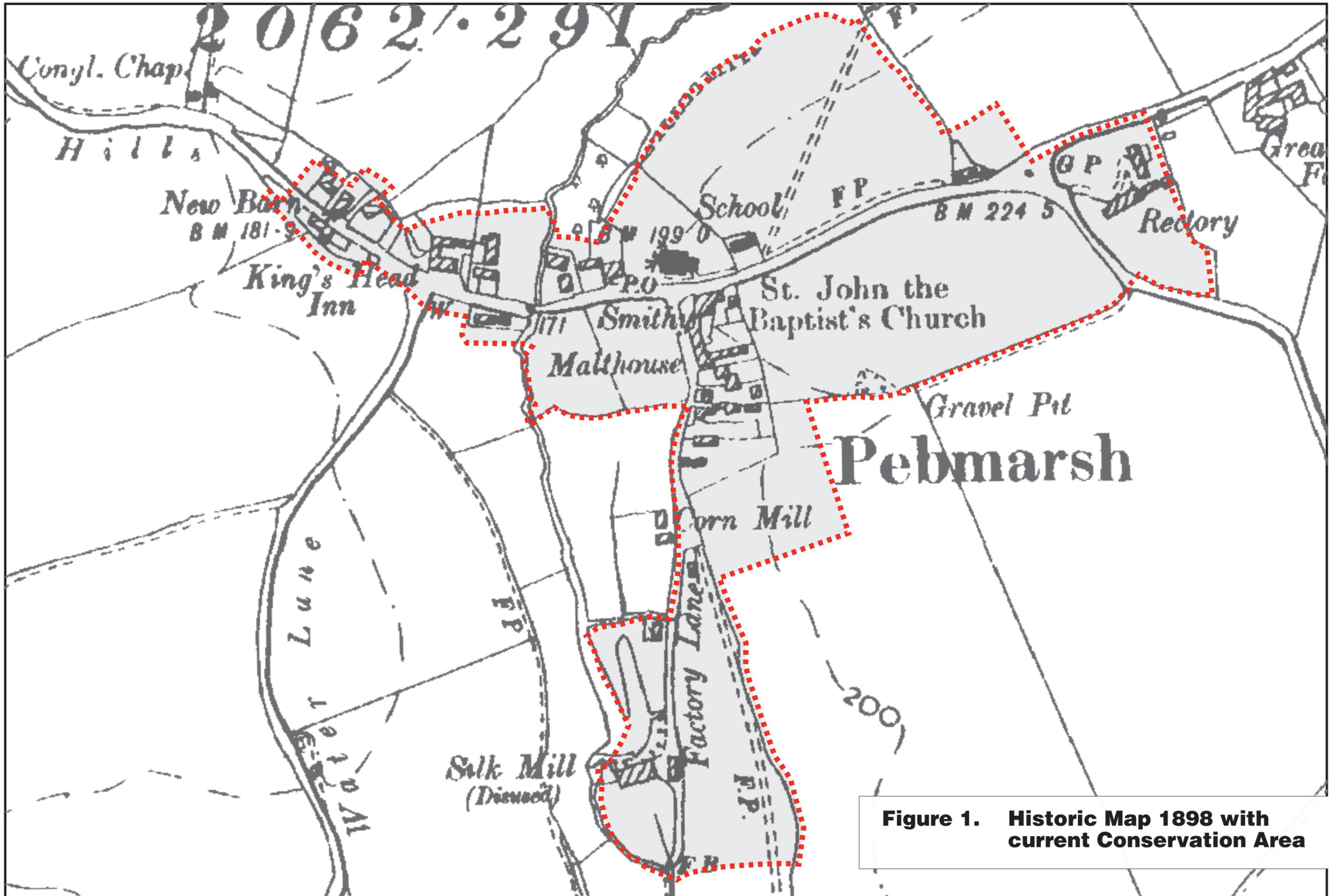


Figure 1. Historic Map 1898 with current Conservation Area

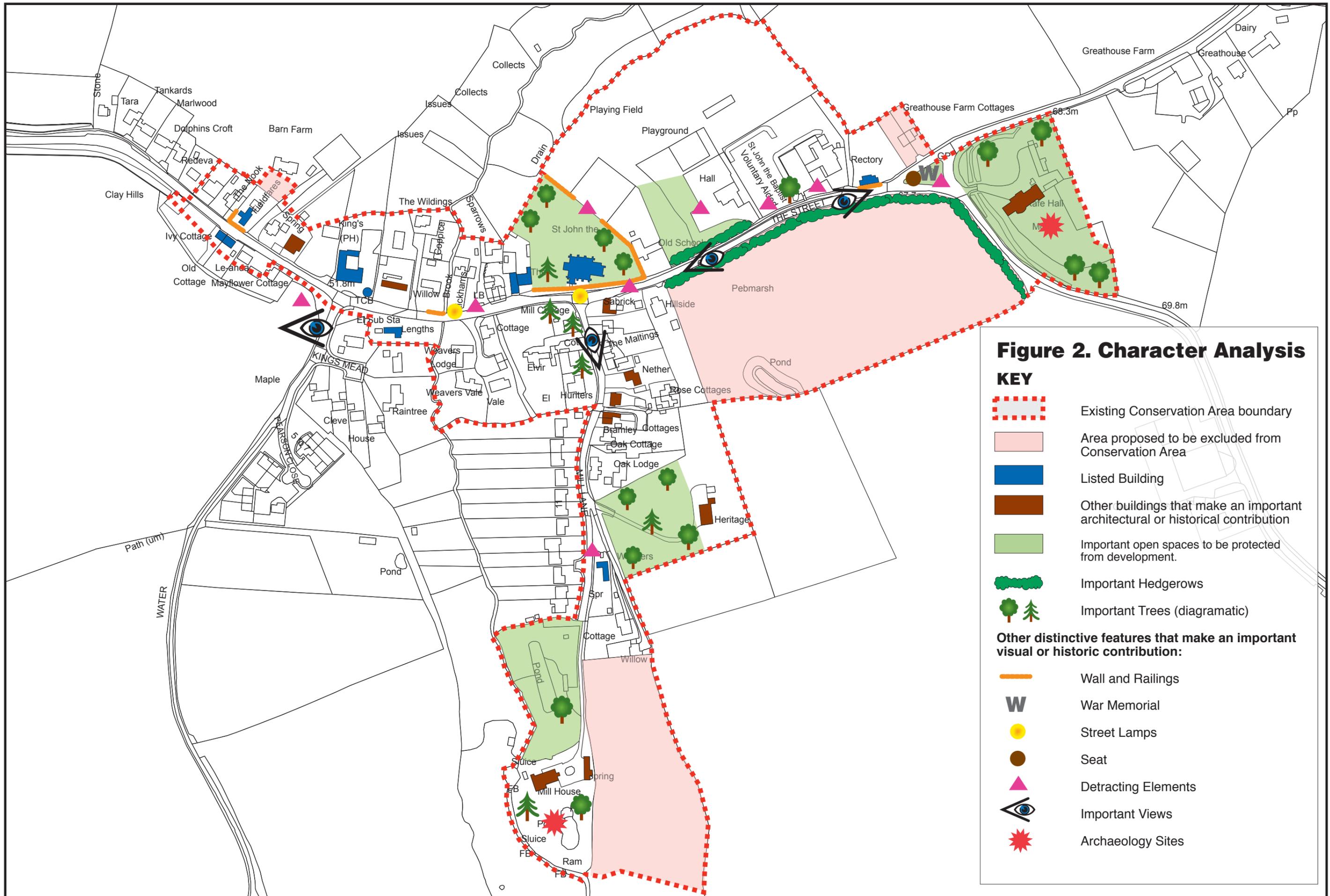


Figure 2. Character Analysis

KEY	
	Existing Conservation Area boundary
	Area proposed to be excluded from Conservation Area
	Listed Building
	Other buildings that make an important architectural or historical contribution
	Important open spaces to be protected from development.
	Important Hedgerows
	Important Trees (diagramatic)
Other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution:	
	Wall and Railings
	War Memorial
	Street Lamps
	Seat
	Detracting Elements
	Important Views
	Archaeology Sites

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