

Markyate Conservation Area



Draft Character Appraisal



Acknowledgements

The production of this document has been a collaborative partnership between Dacorum Borough Council's Conservation team, and BEAMS Ltd.

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Photographs:

Front Cover (Main picture) - *The curve of the High Street, looking north, at the southern end of the Conservation Area*
Images left to right – *Methodist Church, Albert St; Door case to Cavendish House, High Street; sign for Walter Spary Wheelwright, no. 72 High Street; Sebright House, High Street*

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Part 1 Markyate Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

1 Introduction



Markyate lies in the valley of the River Ver, located in the northwest of Hertfordshire and close to the Bedfordshire border. The Conservation Area is linear and is focussed along a historic stretch of the High Street which follows the line of the Roman road, Watling Street. This linked London with Chester, and this route later became part of a busy coaching road which brought wealth to Markyate. The former coaching

inns and other historic buildings fronting the pavement either side of much of the High Street define the character of the village. Markyate Conservation Area is unusual in that it has no village green, church, or other focal point.

Conservation Area designation

Markyate Conservation Area was first designated on 6th October 1969; the boundary has not been amended since its designation.

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is “*an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”. Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas. Section 72 also specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Policies set out in Chapter 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) are most relevant and should be read in conjunction with the associated Planning Practice Guide (July 2019) which provides practical guidance on how the policies laid down within the Framework should be interpreted and implemented.

The Framework notes that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. The Framework also places certain responsibilities upon Local Planning Authorities in that they should have a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. The Framework (para. 191) states: *When considering the designation of conservation areas, 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.*

NPPF, paragraph 206 states: *Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas ... and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.*

New development and change will always therefore take place in conservation areas, and the main purpose of designation is to ensure that any proposals will not have an adverse effect upon the overall character and appearance of an area.

This Appraisal highlights the special qualities and features that underpin the character of Markyate and justify its designation. This Appraisal is supported by Dacorum Borough Council's Core Strategy and Local Plan.¹ The Dacorum Core Strategy was adopted 2013 and should be read alongside the saved policies from the Local Plan 2004 for a complete picture of current planning policy.

Historic Environment policy CS27 notes that all development will favour the conservation of heritage assets and that the integrity, setting and distinctiveness of designated and undesignated heritage assets will be protected, conserved and if appropriate enhanced. In specifically referring to conservation areas, it notes that development will positively conserve and enhance the appearance and character of conservation areas. Negative features and problems identified in conservation area appraisals will be ameliorated or removed.

Dacorum Borough's Local Plan was adopted on the sixteenth April 2004, and certain policies relate specifically to conservation areas and remain saved and current. In particular:

Policy 120.1: Designation as a conservation area provides the opportunity to preserve or enhance an area of architectural or historic interest by controlling building demolition and the design, scale and proportions of extensions and new development, as well as the type and colour of the materials used.

¹ The New Single Local Plan (to 2036) is in preparation at the time of publication.

Policy 121.1: There is a need to control inappropriate types of permitted development which would be detrimental to a conservation area.²

The Council has also produced relevant guidance, including Development in Conservation Areas or affecting Listed Buildings.³

The purpose of this appraisal is therefore, in accordance with the methodology recommended by Historic England,⁴ to define and record the special architectural and historic interest of the Markyate Conservation Area. A detailed review of

the existing boundaries of the Conservation Area has also been undertaken to determine if areas should be included or removed from the designation.

This appraisal is intended to be comprehensive in its scope and content. However, omission of any specific building, structure, site, landscape feature, space, feature or aspect located in or adjacent to the Markyate Conservation Area should not be taken to imply that it does not hold significance and positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset.⁵

² See also Policies 118 and 119.

³ See Environmental Guidelines SPG Section 7: Development in Conservation Areas or affecting listed Buildings. Further advice is contained on the Council's website www.dacorum.gov.uk.

⁴ Historic England Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management Historic England Advice Note 1 (2016), Chapter 3.

⁵ Conservation areas are defined as Designated Heritage Assets within the Framework

2 Location and Setting

Location

Markyate is a large village situated in the north-east of Dacorum Borough and lies approximately 7 miles directly north of Hemel Hempstead, 4 miles south-west of Luton and 4 ½ miles south-east of Dunstable. The small village of Flamstead is located a short distance to the southeast. A bypass for Markyate was constructed to the east of the village in 1956 - 1957 and junction 9 of the M1 motorway is a short distance away. The location of Markyate has made it a popular commuter village and a large part of the village is outside the Conservation Area. The 2011 Census recorded a population of 3135. Luton and Dunstable (both in Bedfordshire) exert much influence on the social and economic life of Markyate. The village is close to the source of the River Ver, the watercourse runs to the east of the High Street and is mainly underground.

Boundaries

Arising out of this appraisal process, it has been agreed that the Conservation Area boundary be amended, with some areas included within the Conservation Area and other areas removed (See map 6).

The early twentieth century terrace along the north side of Wesley Road is included, it is relatively unaltered and a good example of part of the Edwardian development in Markyate. At the south end of the Conservation Area George Street / King Street and part of the High Street are included, this area represents a good example of the nineteenth century development of Markyate and use of local traditional materials. The boundary has been extended to the north to include Markyate War Memorial.

Areas of late twentieth development which do not make a positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the Conservation Area have been removed from the Conservation Area boundary and the boundary rationalised in places.



View of Cell Park from the churchyard of St John the Baptist church

Topography & Landscape Setting

Markyate lies at the convergence of two well-defined valleys at the head of the River Ver, on the dip slope of the chalk. To the northwest there are two dry valleys which lead towards the scarp slope of the chalk at Whipsnade and Dunstable Downs.

The River Ver passes through the parkland setting of The Cell and comes down past the east side of the High Street and parallel to it. The watercourse was bridged over by the by-pass (A5183) when it was constructed in 1955-57 and it does not form part of the setting of the conservation area.

Markyate's buildings stand on land that rises gently as the High Street is followed to the north. Streets leading off to the west, such as Pickford Road, slope gently up from the High Street and to the east the land gently falls away into the Ver valley. The topography consists of gentle slopes and results in picturesque views although it is not spectacularly steep in any part.

The surrounding countryside area is predominately mixed arable use with scattered pockets of pasture, some common land and woodland, and parkland. The countryside around

Markyate is designated as Green Belt, Rural Area and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Markyate Cell Park is recognised as a Registered Park and Garden (grade II listed).

Geology

In common with the areas north of Hemel Hempstead, Markyate stands on Cretaceous deposits of Middle and Upper Chalk. The superficial deposits on this chalk base consist of Chalk with Flints and Pebble Gravels. Flint is frequently used as rubble core and surface cladding in traditional buildings locally. Bricks were also made locally; there was a strong tradition of local brickmaking in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

Archaeology

Due to a settlement pattern that is based on Watling Street, the area in and around the centre of Markyate has much archaeological potential. However, for the Early Prehistoric (before 600 BC) and Iron Age (600 BC to AD 43) periods there is little positive evidence. Five palaeolithic flints were found on Markyate Street (HHER 1308) but their precise location was not recorded.



Construction of the Markyate bypass in 1955 showing the chalk revealed by removal of topsoil, aerial view looking south (BEAMS photographic archive)

Markyate is 6.5 km south-east of the Roman small town of Dvrocobrivis (modern Dunstable) and 12 km northwest of Verulamium (modern Saint Albans). Both were important settlements during the Roman period and the present Markyate High Street follows the line of a major Roman road, Watling Street which ran from St Albans towards Dunstable and then on to Wroxeter and

Chester (Viatores route 1E) (HHER 9525). Roman settlement in the surrounding landscape is thought to have been characterised by dispersed farmsteads. There was a Roman cemetery north of Markyate (HHER 1465).

Saxon (c.450-1066)

A single find represents Saxon presence in Markyate; an 8th century Hiberno-Saxon gilt-bronze belt mount was discovered in the garden

of the Old Vicarage (HHER 1306). Cropmarks reveal a substantial earthwork that once surrounded a spur of high ground known as Humbershoe, southwest of the village. The name Humbershoe is recorded in 1251 as Humbrittesho, thought to derive from 'Hunbheort's spur of land', suggesting that the earthwork is of Saxon date (HER 17817). A list of Historic Environment Records relevant to the Conservation Area is given in Appendix 2.

3 The Historical Development of Markyate

The Medieval Period

There is no mention of Markyate in the Domesday survey (1086) which would suggest there was no significant amount of settlement in this area at that time.

In the early 12th century, Roger, a monk from nearby St Albans Abbey, became a hermit in the woods near Watling Street. He attracted followers, including a woman who became known as Christina of Markyate. She was a devout noblewoman, recluse and religious visionary whose cult had much influence on the ecclesiastical history of the area. The Benedictine Markyate Priory was established by Christina with the support of Abbot Geoffrey de Gorham of St Albans in 1145, in a wood belonging to the Dean and Chapter of St Pauls, London. Excavation in pastureland at Cell Park, the estate associated with the medieval priory, revealed a deposit of medieval and post-medieval ceramic building material (HER 11868).

The Place Names of Hertfordshire (Gover etc.) indicates the first use of 'Markyate' to identify the settlement occurred in the 12th century when references to the Priory began; the name Markyate being derived from 'Mark' meaning boundary and 'yate' meaning gate thus 'boundary gate', early spellings of the name include Mercygate (1247) and Markeyghate (1390). The settlement at Markyate was at the junction of the parishes of Caddington, Studham (Bedfordshire) and Flamstead (Hertfordshire) hence why it did not have its own parish church during the medieval period. There are no records of medieval activity within the conservation area although it is likely some development had occurred along the High Street in association with the existing road, Watling Street (HER2050).



An extract from the 12th century manuscript (The St Albans Psalter)

Christina of Markyate in a miniature of the twelfth century with Christ and the monks

Post Medieval (1500-1900)

After the dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII (in 1536) the Benedictine priory was granted to Humphrey Bourchier in 1539 and demolished. A house (Markyate Cell) was built on or very near the site.

The position of Markyate upon the route of the historic Watling Street route which connected the major settlements of Saint Albans to the south and Dunstable to the north and beyond to Chester would continue to govern the life and economic wealth of the village which expanded significantly during the post-medieval period.

The inns, and several the other properties that line the High Street frequently have older, timber frame, fabric behind their eighteenth or nineteenth century frontages. The Sun Inn (now in residential use) is a sixteenth century former open hall house with a north cross-wing, possibly the oldest building in the Conservation Area and first recorded as a public house in 1605. 64 High Street contains fragments of

sixteenth century wall paintings, suggesting the construction of high-status buildings along Watling Street and considerable local wealth during this period.

In 1657 Thomas Coppin bought the manor of Markyate Cell (now Cell Park) and did much to improve the lives of the residents of Markyate, building new farms and buildings in the village. Coppins School was established in a building on the High Street in 1666, The Old Vicarage was part of the school, but this was demolished in the 1960's.

The main road through Markyate was often in a bad state and not well maintained; this became more of an issue with the establishment of the stagecoach service – in 1657 the stagecoach from London to Coventry and Chester stopped in Markyate. Eventually, in 1723, the road through Markyate became part of the Dunstable-St Albans-London Turnpike Trust established by Act of Parliament in 1722. Money raised from the tolls was used for upkeep of the road, the number of stagecoaches, mail coaches and other vehicles using the roads increased. The



Map 2 Extract from the Dury and Andrews map of Hertfordshire (1766), showing 'Marget Street' and 'Marget Cell' (HALS)

road was improved in the early nineteenth century by Thomas Telford as it formed part of The Holyhead Road for mail coaches.

To support this coaching trade there were many public houses and coaching inns along the High Street including the Red Lion, The Sun, The White Horse, The Cross Keys, Swan Inn, The Five Horseshoes, The Green Man, The Plough and the Sebright Arms. There were other smaller beer houses too and many of the inns and public houses brewed their own beer. The notorious highwayman Dick Turpin apparently stayed at The Sun Inn.

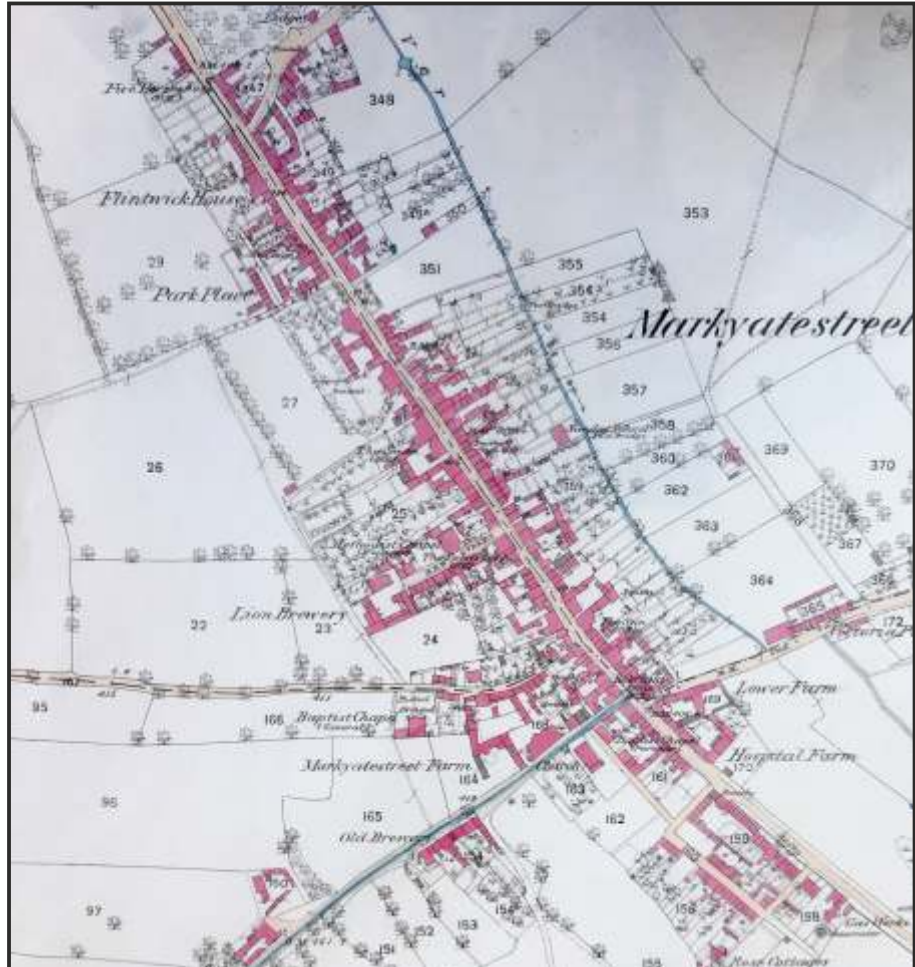


The Lion Brewery was situated at the end of Albert Street; it included a house (8 Albert Street), malt house, malt kiln, boiler house, brewery, stables and office. In the late nineteenth century the brewery also produced bottled mineral water.

Apart from the numerous inns and public houses, other trades flourished to support the stagecoaches such as blacksmiths and wheelwrights, of which the Walker and Spary families are best known. A sign on 72 High Street remains for Walter E Spary Wheelwrights. Several women and girls worked in the bonnet making and straw plaiting industry; Luton, only 4 miles away was the centre for straw hat manufacture. There

were several small hat manufacturers in Albert Street, in workshops and outbuildings at the back of houses. Other inhabitants of the village worked on local farms and estates including Markyate Cell and Beechwood Park, there was also employment in the local brick fields. There were several shops including a butcher, bakers, greengrocers, and hardware stores. Other businesses included a funeral parlour (Nelsey's), builders' yard, photographers, and a watch maker.

Pickfords the well-known carriers had a service operating between Manchester and London in the 1750's, it passed through many towns including Markyate.



Map 3 Extract from the 1880 Ordnance Survey map showing 'Markyate street' with the River Ver running to the east of the High Street & parallel with it (HALS).

In 1780 Thomas Pickford came to live in Markyate (at Jordan's Farm, later Home Farm), on Pickford Road which is named after the Pickford family.

The development of the railway network in the 1840's brought about a sharp decline in



Markyate High Street, looking north with the Swan Inn on the left side

coaching traffic through Markyate, although local carriers remained. The proposed plans to link Markyate to the railway (in Luton and Dunstable) never came to anything which led to a certain degree of economic stagnation, this perhaps has had the effect of preserving the built character of Markyate.

Historically Markyate was partly in Hertfordshire (Flamstead parish) and partly in Bedfordshire (within Studham / Humberhoe and Caddington parishes). Finally, in 1897, the civil parish of Humberhoe was abolished and combined with part of Houghton Regis (Bedfordshire parish), the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire portions of Caddington and the Hertfordshire part of Flamstead, to create the new civil parish of Markyate which lay wholly within Hertfordshire.

In the early to mid-nineteenth century dwellings were built along 'New Street' (now Albert Street) and in the mid to late nineteenth century residential development started to occur at the south end of the historic High Street and along Cleveland Road / William Street.

Religion in Markyate

Markyate is unusual in that it did not have its own parish church during the medieval period, this is due to it having been part of other parishes.

Markyate's residents would have had to travel to church in either Flamstead, Caddington or Studham, so construction of the chapel-of-ease by the Coppin family in the south-west corner of the Markyate Cell estate in 1734 would have been welcomed.



Markyate High Street, looking south. Troops on manoeuvres travelling through the village in c. 1912. The cycle shop of the left side (with Lyons Tea sign) was demolished to create the entrance to Roman Way.

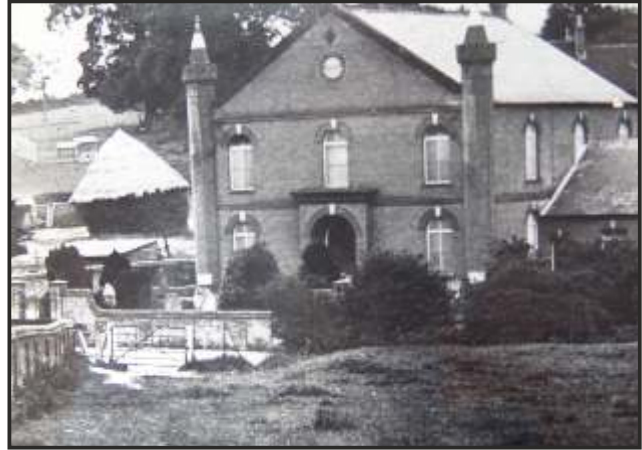
Markyate eventually became an ecclesiastical parish in 1877 and the former chapel of ease of St John the Baptist within Cell Park became the parish church. A new Chancel was added in 1892, this date is commemorated in a foundation stone in the exterior east wall of the church. The Sunday School for the newly formed parish was constructed in the village itself, on Pickford Road, and comprised a 'tin tabernacle', which was in use until the 1990s as a parish hall (HER 30496) when it was demolished for new housing. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, nonconformists (Protestant Christians who were not part of the Church of England) began to settle in the Markyate area, including Quakers, Baptists, and Wesleyan Methodists.



Drawing by Buckler (c. 1830) of St John the Baptist with Markyate Cell in the background (Markyate Local History Society, 2002)

Non-conformist worship was strong and well established, three non-conformist chapels remain within the Markyate Conservation Area, two of which are still in use as places of worship.

The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel on Albert Street was built in 1859, it replaced an earlier nineteenth century chapel which was sited near the river Ver, and which continued to be used as a Sunday School until 1879. A new Sunday School building was constructed adjacent to the Methodist chapel in 1880 (it remains but is now in residential use). The Methodist church was extended to front and rear, with a new entrance from Wesley Road being built in 1967.



The Baptist Chapel, Buckwood Road – note the haystack in the background (Markyate Local History Society, 2002)

The Baptist chapel on Buckwood Road was built in circa 1873 replacing an eighteenth-century purpose-built meeting house, it has its own burial ground. The Baptist chapel was built by George Palmer of Liverpool Road, Luton for £640. The Sunday school hall was extended in 1897.



Particular Baptist Chapel, corner of Pickford and Cleveland Roads (Markyate Local History Society, 2002)

A Particular Baptist Chapel was constructed on the corner of Pickford and Cleveland Road in the mid nineteenth century, a modest single storey brick building with a slate roof (which later became a factory and is now a dwelling). It was built by Benjamin Goodyear who broke away from the Baptist Church following a rift.

There was also a Primitive Methodist Chapel in Buckwood Road (outside the Conservation Area), now demolished.

Twentieth Century

Markyate High Street underwent little physical change within the early part of the twentieth century. A few of the public houses went out of business and were converted to residential use. Other businesses changed and adapted; Prudens Bakery was established in the village in 1928.



The Methodist Chapel and adjacent Sunday School building, Albert Street (Markyate Local History Society, 2002)

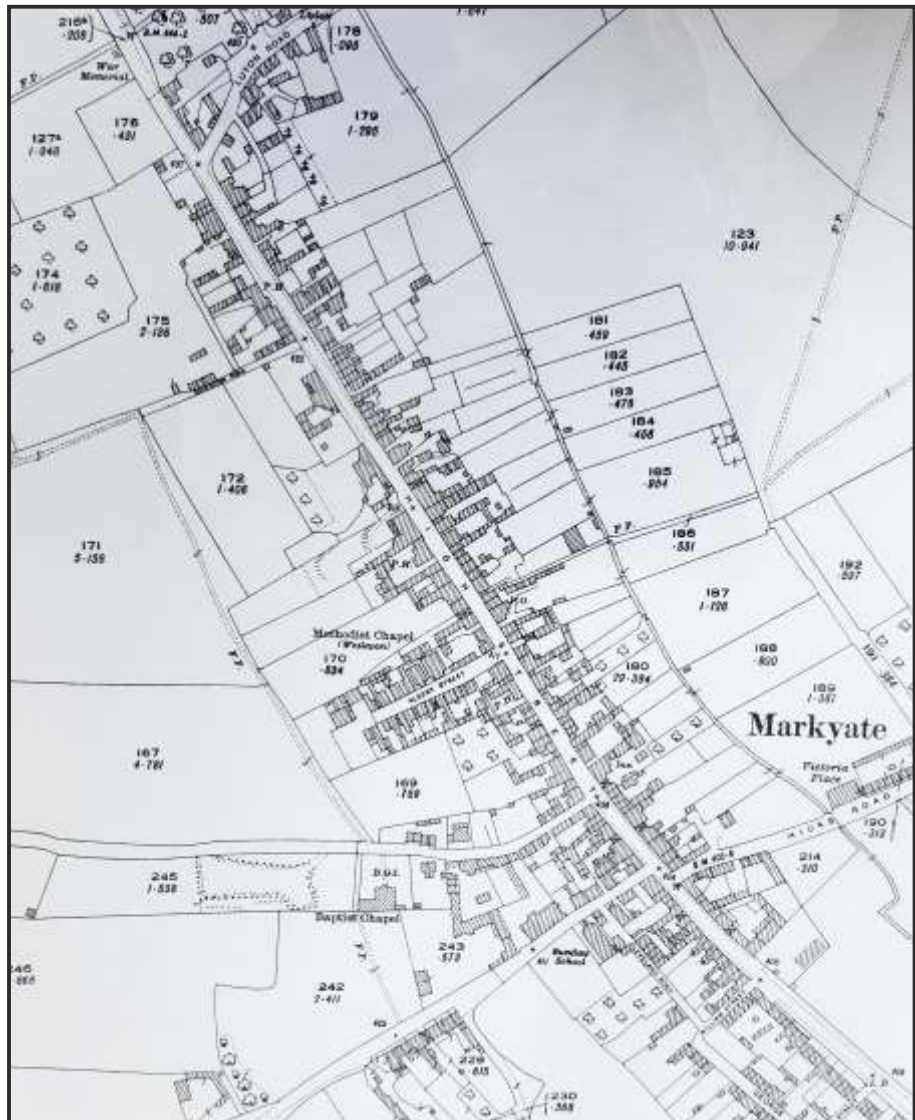
After the First World War, in 1921, a Portland Stone memorial comprising a cross on a pillar and plinth base was erected at the north end of the High Street to commemorate the fallen of the First World War. The west side of the monument includes the names of the fallen from the Second World War and conflicts in Greece (1948) and Northern Ireland (1974). The War Memorial currently lies just outside the Conservation Area boundary.



The unveiling of Markyate War Memorial, 1921. Its once rural setting has changed since its erection.

Wesley Road was created in 1924 and entailed demolition of a property fronting the High Street, residential development to the west side of the High Street continued throughout the twentieth century.

The early twentieth century invention of the motor car and petrol- and diesel-powered buses, vans and lorries was to have a massive impact upon Markyate and by 1950 the need for a bypass was no longer in doubt, there were frequent protests about the amount of traffic travelling through the village. The bypass was constructed to the east of the High Street to take traffic away from the centre; it made a huge difference at the time, but Markyate is once again busy with local traffic.



Map 4

Maryate in 1920 (HALS, Ordnance Survey map)

There are several examples of mid twentieth century development



Markyate Cell in the early twentieth century

on vacant or redeveloped plots along the High Street, particularly towards its northern end. In the latter part of the twentieth century the rear parts of historic burgage plots which previously extended down to the River Ver (now close to the route of the bypass) were developed for housing on Roman Way and Fullerton Close with new accesses created from the High Street. Other forms of backland development have occurred within yards and gardens to the rear of High Street properties.

Markyate Cell

Markyate Cell (now known as Cell Park) is a country house standing in parkland that reaches as far as the north end of Markyate village, its presence has prevented the development of Markyate in this direction. The house dates from

the sixteenth century but has been modified many times since that date and was largely rebuilt in 1908 after a fire.

Markyate Cell was built on the site of a former Benedictine Priory which had connections with Christina of Markyate (who lived about 1095 to 1155), a devout noblewoman, recluse and religious visionary who developed a following.

During the mid-seventeenth century Markyate Cell was connected with another famous female, the notorious highwaywoman Lady Katherine Ferrers who lived there. The 1945 film 'The Wicked Lady' starring Margaret Lockwood and James Mason was based upon her life and exploits. From 1916 to 1918 Sir Thomas Beecham, the eminent orchestral conductor, resided at Markyate Cell.

4 Surviving Historical Features within the Conservation Area

Summary of Historical Features

- The linear High Street following the line of the ancient Watling Street with properties either side fronting the pavement
- Former coaching inns and public houses
- Non-conformist places of worship
- Inn sign brackets / inn signs
- Street lanterns attached to the front of buildings
- Historic signage
- Good examples of traditional building materials, good quality eighteenth and nineteenth century brickwork, timber frame visible on side / rear elevations or within carriage arches, flint
- Former industrial buildings / brewery buildings
- Back yards and outbuildings associated with buildings fronting the High Street and some burgage plots
- Victorian shopfronts



Retained wrought iron bracket and The Sun Inn sign

Street pattern and building plots

The line of the High Street (ancient Watling Street) forms a central spine through the Conservation Area, which is linear and relatively narrow, rising

gently towards its northern end. For the most part historic buildings form a continuous frontage, punctuated by streets entering the main road on both sides and narrower accesses to rear yards, either through carriage arches or gaps between buildings. The south end of the High Street is not completely straight, but curves gently – contributing to the character of the village.

On the east side of the High Street there are only two routes that exit from the High Street; Hicks Road leads out into the countryside via Harps Hill and at the north end the High Street follows the original route of Church End to join up with the A5183 by-pass. Church End can still be reached via a pedestrian underpass. The distinctive long narrow burgage plots to the rear of properties on the east side of the High Street with footbridges over the River Ver have been cut short by the by-pass and modern residential developments of Fullerton Close and Roman Way.

Markyate village developed further on its western side and to the south. Pickford Road is an old route leading west, past the Beechwood Park estate and on to Great Gaddesden. It was previously known as Cheverells Lane but renamed Pickford Road in 1860 in recognition of the Pickford family who farmed Markyate Street



The curve of the High Street, looking north, at the southern end of the Conservation Area

Farm in the nineteenth century and went on to establish the well-known firm of carriers.

Buckwood Road leads northwest towards Whipsnade. By 1880 'New Street' had been constructed and by 1924 it was renamed Albert Street. Cavendish Road was shown on the 1880 Ordnance Survey map as a track leading west, known as Cock Lane – it was not until 1920 that it became known by its current name and development began to occur at its eastern end. Cleveland Road and William Street were laid out by 1880 and development started in a piecemeal

fashion in this area. Wesley Road was not created until post 1924 and entailed demolition of a property fronting the High Street.

Development is generally dense along the High Street with houses adjoining along much of its length. Towards the northern end there are larger historic houses occupying individual plots and newer development has occurred, either on previously empty or redeveloped / infill plots. Some of this newer development is detached and set back from the street with front gardens.

5 The Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

Analysis

Markyate village lies within the Ver valley, and the Conservation Area follows the historic High Street with properties adjoining along both sides of the road – a former Roman road and later part of a busy coaching route. It does not easily divide into separate character areas although the tight knit historic development in the southern part of the Conservation Area becomes more fragmented towards the north end which comprises larger dwellings (both old and new) and mid to late twentieth development and redevelopment.

Markyate is described as a village although the tight grain of development seen between Hicks Road and Roman Way, with burgage plots running to the rear and properties fronting the narrow pavements gives Markyate the character of a busy town and High Street.

The southern end of the conservation area starts at the junction of William Street and High Street and includes a terrace of nineteenth century development on its west side. Part of a late twentieth century development is included within the boundary on the east side whose design and massing is at odds with the more traditional built form locally. North of this is a small building used as a shop and a café on the corner (occupying a former car showroom), it is possible the gable roofed building is a remnant of the farm that once occupied this site.

To the north of the junction with Pickford Road and Hicks Road the historic character of Markyate becomes firmly established with rendered timber frame properties and eighteenth and nineteenth century brick facades (often re-

fronting older timber frame properties) fronting the pavement. An exception to this is the group of three 1970's properties (111, 113 and 115), these are set back from the road with small front gardens, whilst at odds with the established pattern of development they are low key in design and scale.

Between the junctions of Pickford Road and Buckwood Road (west side) there is the more imposing 3-storey Sebright House (no. 76), formerly the Sebright Arms Inn until 1967. No. 74 comprises the former tack room to the Sebright Arms with accommodation over the carriageway to the yard behind. A shopfront on the ground floor has been infilled. Markyate Fire Station (built 1940) is set back from the High Street with a necessary area of hardstanding to the front and its side elevation addressing Buckwood Road, its brick tower could be considered a minor landmark in the village.

A short stretch of Buckwood Road, which leads to Whipsnade, is within the conservation area – it comprises nineteenth and late twentieth dwellings, its primary feature of interest is the Markyate Baptist Church set back from the road with historic brick wall to front and sides and an area of grassed lawn. The terrace of houses to the west are a late twentieth century infill.



High Street, east side with the 3-storey Sebright House in centre

North of Buckwood Road 2-storey historic properties form a strong frontage to the High Street on both sides, with carriage arches and narrow openings providing glimpses through to the rear of plots.

The north side of Albert Street is dominated by the pedimented gable of the Methodist Church whilst the south side incorporates a group of good quality nineteenth century development with a more consistent slate roof line and pitch which contrasts with the more varied roofscape of the High Street. Albert Street is truncated by the gates to the former Golden Lion brewery of which the early nineteenth century brewer's house remains occupying a good-sized plot at the end of the street.

North of Albert Street development continues, fronting both sides of the High Street. At the junction of Wesley Road and High Street are a K6 telephone box and red pillar box, traditional village features. Within the shopfront of Markyate Spice, no. 73 High Street, an early pattern of letter box can be seen to the left of the door.

The wide road junctions to Roman Way and Fullerton Close do weaken the character of the village towards its northern end due to the visibility of modern development but historic development continues to front the east side of the High Street. To the west side, the late twentieth century development at 32 High Street, to the north of Village Place does not reflect the historic character of the Markyate. The visual impact of the mid twentieth century dwelling to the south of The Grange is limited by its being set back behind the historic boundary wall. On the opposite side of the High Street eighteenth and nineteenth century properties prevail, including the nineteenth century terrace 'New Cottages', more gaps are visible between pairs / groups of properties.



Markyate Methodist Church, Albert Street

To the north of 20 High Street the historic character of the conservation area is disrupted by more modern developments on both sides of the road (created on vacant or redeveloped historic building plots), but this is partly re-established by the strong façade of The Grange and The Maltings opposite. There is a break in the High Street as it turns to the east to rejoin the A5183 (Markyate bypass) however the High Street does continue to the north, following its historic route with the former White Hart public house on the corner. The conservation area ends on the east side of the High Street to the north of



White Hart Inn at north end of the High Street

Cell Dene, a nineteenth century detached property – once associated with Markyate Cell.

Development to the north of The Grange comprising mid to late twentieth century detached dwellings is excluded from the conservation area, but this side of the High Street does include the War Memorial, fronting the road, it remains a feature of clear historic, social and architectural merit at the northern end of the High Street.

Throughout the conservation area there are views of the rear elevations and roofscapes of High Street properties from the roads leading east and west off the High Street, so these elevations can be sensitive to change, particularly at upper floor and roof level.

Summary of townscape features

Markyate has late medieval origins and its focus remains along the historic High Street (former Roman road and later a busy coaching route).

Key features are:

- Linear High Street, lined with mostly two storey properties fronting the pavement
- Good quality Georgian and Victorian architecture (often re-fronting older buildings)
- Gabled roofs running parallel to the High Street with chimneys punctuating the roofscape
- Gently sloping roads to east and west sides of the High Street

Current activities and uses

Today Markyate is a commuter village with a busy High Street. There are a few shops including a convenience store, bakers (Prudens, established 1928), hardware store, beauty parlour, hairdressers, chemist and restaurants / take-aways. The Baptist and Methodist Churches both lie within the conservation area and the parish church of St John the Baptist lies adjacent to it. There are two public houses within the

Conservation Area (The Swan and The Local). However, many buildings formerly in use as public houses, workshops, stores and shops have been converted to residential use. The remaining public houses and shops give vitality to the High Street and their retention should be encouraged.

Markyate retains a strong village identity; the wider village has a primary school, a Village Hall, a Cricket and Football Club and there are brownies, beavers, and scouts' groups. Other activities include fitness club, Local History Society, and a choir. The Hertfordshire Way passes through Markyate Conservation Area.

Whilst the bypass provides essential relief, the centre of Markyate is still busy with vehicles travelling along the High Street and using the local roads. Parking occurs on both sides of the main routes and blockages area common when delivery vehicles park.

Focal points, views, and vistas

Markyate Conservation Area is unusual in that it has no church or village green / nucleus so there is no clearly identifiable focal point. Taller buildings such as 76 High Street (Sebright House) and the rusticated stucco fronted 64 High Street stand out within the brick frontages which



View up Pickford Road

prevail along the High Street. The imposing portico to Cavendish House catches the eye.

There are attractive views along the High Street and views both up and down Pickford Hill. At the north end of the Conservation Area there are views from the High Street towards the grade II listed Cell Park Lodge and the park itself. Views down Roman Way and Fullerton Close have trees in the distance, on the other side of the valley, but the newer residential development does tend to dominate these views.



Trees and grass to the front of Markyate Baptist Church, Buckwood Road

From the public footpaths near Beechwood Park (to the west) and Caddington Hall (to the east), the village of Markyate can be seen within the valley. The historic roofscape and use of traditional roofing materials is legible.

Open spaces, landscape and trees

Markyate Conservation Area has little in the way of open spaces, landscape or trees within its boundary. The exceptions to this include trees and grass to the front of Markyate Baptist church on Buckwood Road and planting to the front of the Methodist church on Wesley Road. The willow tree at the south end of the Conservation Area is a welcome feature.

Public realm: Floorscape, street lighting and street furniture

There is a limited amount of public realm within Markyate Conservation Area due to the way properties front immediately on to the pavement and there are no significant areas of public / open space such as a village green. The grade II listed red telephone box (K6, designed by George Gilbert Scott) and red pillar box outside The Local (corner of High Street and Wesley Road) both contribute to the street scene and opportunities to enhance this area should be explored.



K6 telephone box and pillar box on the High Street



62 High Street, historic cobble surfacing within carriage arch containing timber frame and old red brick infill

Many streetlamps are attached to the front of buildings due to the lack of space for freestanding streetlamps along the High Street, those that do exist are of a traditional style. Several examples of the older metal blue and white enamelled street signs remain affixed to buildings.

The street and pavement are tarmac but there are some remnants of historic cobble surfacing visible within yards / yard entrances – these are valuable survivors and contribute to the character of the area.



Coronation Clock (1911) attached to the frontage of 48 High Street



Old blue and white enamelled street sign

6 The Buildings of the Conservation Area

Architectural styles and detailing

The Conservation Area contains a fascinating collection of buildings, with a variety of age and architectural style. There are larger scale properties on the west side of the High Street, particularly towards its northern end. Properties on the east side are generally more modest in scale and architectural detailing. Most are now in residential use despite many having been used as inns and public houses in the past. Additional dwellings have been created through the subdivision of existing buildings, such as The Grange and former Home Farm, Pickford Road. Several former shops and some outbuildings have been converted to dwellings.

Although Markyate is close to the Cell Park estate, and it is known the Coppin family did make some improvements within the village there is no obvious 'estate influence' to be seen.

The earliest known buildings along the High Street include no 101 (former Sun Inn, a sixteenth century open hall house with cross wing), 58 – 62 High Street (late sixteenth century) and 64 High Street, also late sixteenth century and containing wall paintings of this date internally. These have been re-fronted, adapting to the changing fashions and concealing the timber-frame origins of the property – the buildings along the High Street would have looked very different in the seventeenth century. However timber frame can still be seen within several carriage arches and to the rear elevations of some properties including number 101 (former Sun Inn). The gable end of 117 also features some timber frame which shows the building was formerly jettied to the front. The Old Maltings, 11 High Street, contains an early timber

cruck frame, possibly reused. The statutory list descriptions describe many other properties as dating to the seventeenth century, or earlier but all have been re-fronted providing the Georgian and Victorian character which prevails.



Timber frame visible in carriage arch to 59 High Street



Timber frame to gable end, 117 High Street

The Conservation Area is particularly characterised by a wide range of good quality



Village Place, red brick laid in Flemish bond with dark brick headers



Elliptical carriage arch to Cavendish House

eighteenth and nineteenth century brickwork. Many properties are built of, or refaced, with local brick, usually laid in Flemish bond and the use of dark headers to create a decorative chequered effect is common. Good examples include Village Place, numbers 65 and 72 High Street and 117 High Street which features chequer brick with a red brick diamond at first floor with letters either side. The red brickwork with coloured mortar to Cavendish House is particularly fine and includes a superb example of an elliptical gauged red brick arch over the carriageway.

Number 9, 11 and 13 Albert Street are grade II listed, they date to c. 1840 and are exceptionally well detailed examples of Victorian brick properties with lighter red brick dressings. Nos. 83 and 85 High Street have a cheerful mix of Luton Grey brick with red and cream brick

banding and decorative terracotta window heads. Number 47 is built of a Luton Grey brick and some examples of buff brick are also seen.

Flint is used in the side elevation of no. 52 High Street and the outbuilding to the rear. The only building of flint construction is the nineteenth century wing to The Grange. Part of the boundary wall to Markyate Baptist Church on Buckwood Road is of flint construction but the rest is brick.



Quill House, red brick with decorative brick banding



Flintwork to side wall of 52 High Street and outbuilding to rear

Several properties along the High Street are rendered and painted cream or white but it is the distinctive banded stucco façade of 64 High Street which really stands out within the street scene.

Weatherboard is used upon some single storey outbuildings to the rear of High Street properties but is otherwise not a feature seen along the High Street.

Tile hanging is visible on the rear gable of 76 High Street, seen from Pickford Road.



64 High Street with its eye-catching stucco facade

Roofs are generally gabled with the roofs running parallel with the High Street – there is a pleasing variation in roof pitches and eaves / ridge heights to the older buildings along the High Street whereas the nineteenth century terrace north of the William Street junction with the High Street and the terrace on Albert Street has a typically consistent roofline. Older roofs tend to be clad with plain clay tile but examples of slate to old roofs are seen and to nineteenth century properties (such as 75 and 77 High Street with its hipped roof). Chimney stacks and pots are an important feature within the street scene.



Markyate High Street roof scape, east side looking south

There are many examples of traditional windows including timber sashes, casement, and Yorkshire (sliding) casements. 62 High Street has Yorkshire sliding casements at first floor and timber sashes to the ground floor. The Grange has an impressive nineteen 6-over-6 timber sashes to the front elevation.



62 High Street, horizontal 'Yorkshire' sliding casement



Sash windows to The Grange

Due to the narrow nature of the High Street and pavements either side doorcases tend to be very modest in scale / design or confined to hood moulds. The exception to this is the portico to Cavendish House, designed to impress and located at the northern end of the High Street which is slightly wider than the southern end and contains larger detached historic properties.



Door case to 117 High Street

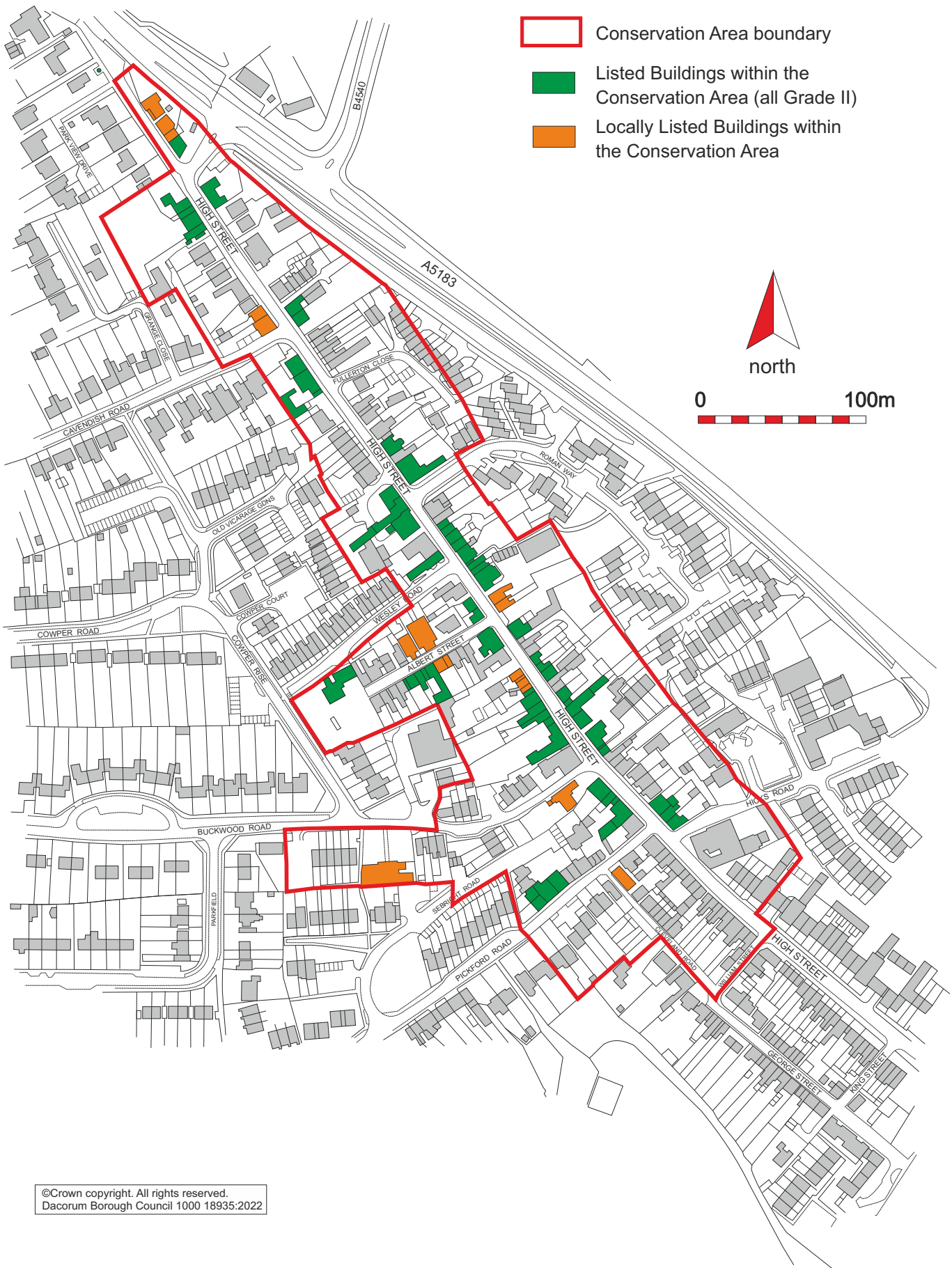


Door case to Sebright House with pediment and fanlight



Portico to Cavendish House

Map 5 Listed Buildings : Markyate



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7 Negative Features and Issues

Traffic and parking

Parking is limited along the High Street and, despite the bypass, the busy route is often filled with local traffic and some overly large delivery vehicles which struggle with negotiating the narrow High Street and its side roads. This was raised as a significant issue during the public consultation process.



111, 113 and 115 High Street, Markyate

Negative Buildings Within the Conservation Area

There are few buildings of really negative impact within the Conservation Area although some of the mid twentieth century infill and latter twentieth century redevelopment along the High Street does not reflect the established pattern of development that exists.

Examples include numbers 15, 17 and 19 (E J Smith DIY). The late twentieth century terrace at 32 High Street is modest in scale but poorly detailed with uncharacteristic front gardens and the classical Georgian style door cases (5 in all) are overly elaborate. Nos. 111, 113 and 115 comprise a short terrace of circa 1970's infill, set back from the High Street with large enclosed front porches, they contrast with the pattern of development within the southern part of the High Street where historic properties front the pavement.



Mid to late twentieth century development within Markyate, 15, 17 and 19 High Street

Shopfronts and advertising

Some signage is not of sufficient design quality and box fascia signs have been applied to the front of buildings despite them not having a shopfront (Markyate Fish Bar and Markyate Grill). The shopfront windows to Markyate Stores are filled with large scale advertising posters which detract from the street scene.



Fascia signs to Markyate Grill and the property before signage was added



Large posters in the window of Markyate Stores



Signage to Markyate Fish Bar

Inappropriate Alterations and Extensions

Traditional materials and details are being eroded the use of inappropriate materials (plastic windows, doors, fascias and rainwater goods, concrete roof tiles and poor-quality repointing) but examples are limited. There are satellite dishes facing the street, both on listed and unlisted buildings – an example of this are the dishes attached to the front of various properties along the north side of Pickford Road. Substantial front dormers have unfortunately been added to the roof slope of 41 and 43 High Street, otherwise dormers are confined to rear roof slopes.

Due to the narrow nature of the High Street, street lamps are fixed to the fronts of buildings and there are numerous cable runs along building frontages, giving some an untidy appearance.






Satellite dishes to front elevations of properties along Pickford Road

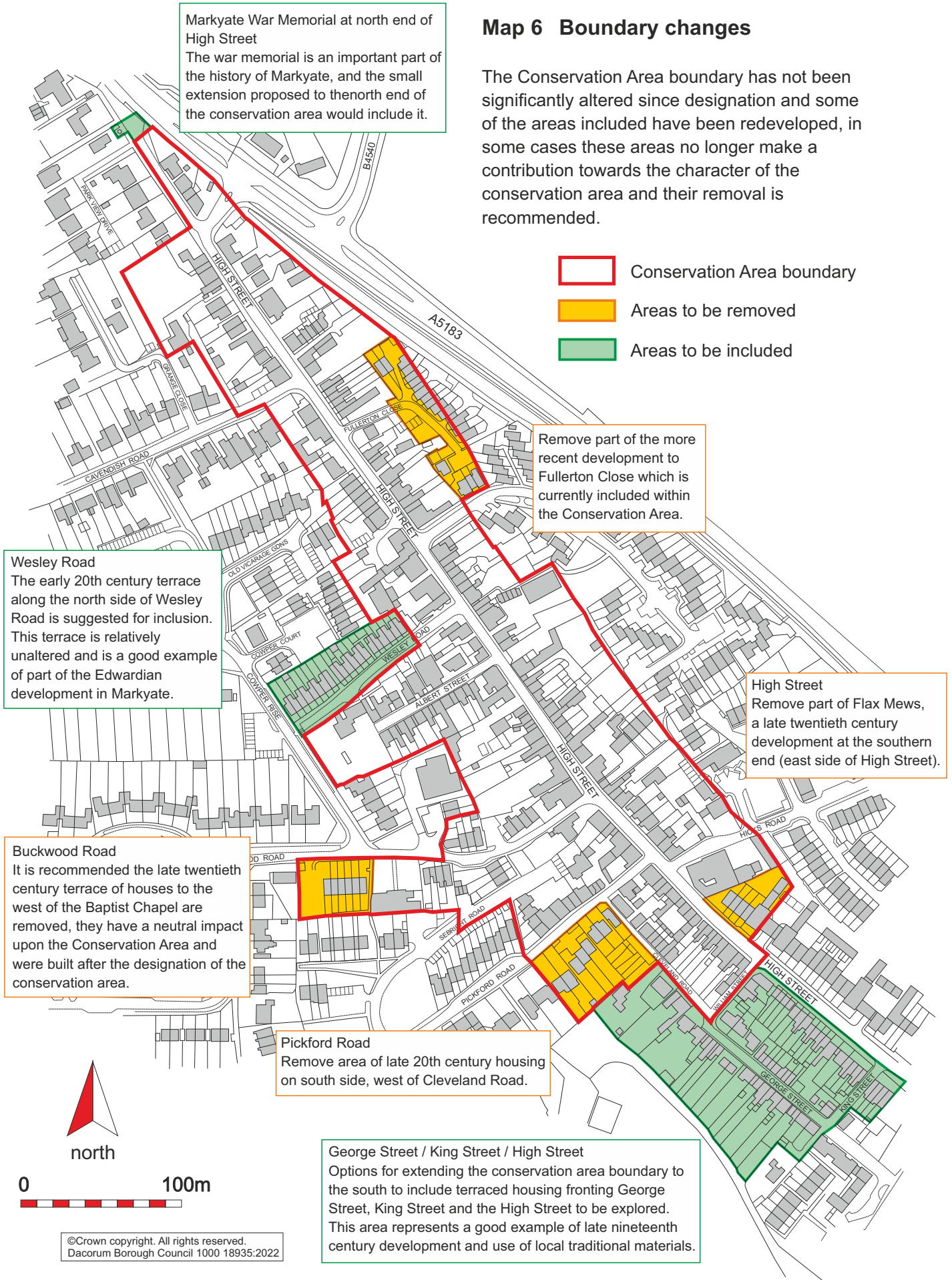


Replacement window on right side at first floor level is at odds with the original sash windows to the front elevation of 73 and 75 High Street

Map 6 Boundary changes

The Conservation Area boundary has not been significantly altered since designation and some of the areas included have been redeveloped, in some cases these areas no longer make a contribution towards the character of the conservation area and their removal is recommended.

-  Conservation Area boundary
-  Areas to be removed
-  Areas to be included



Further reading

Markyate Local History Society 2002 *The Book of Markyate*. Halsgrove

Cutler, R. 1990 *Markyate in Camera*. Quotes Ltd.

Appendix 1:

Statutory listed buildings within Markyate Conservation Area

HIGH STREET (east side)

The White Hart, 5 High Street
The Old Maltings, 11 High Street
Shaw's Cottage, 25 and 27 High Street
Old Forge Cottage, 45 High Street
49 High Street
59, 61, 63 and 65 High Street
67, 69, 71 and 73 High Street
81 High Street
87, 87a and 89 High Street
93 High Street
97 and 99 High Street
The Sun Inn (former), 101 High Street
117, 119 The Old Red Lion House, and 121

PICKFORD ROAD

8, 8A, 8C, 8B, 10 AND 10A, Pickford Road

HIGH STREET (west side)

4, 8 (The Grange), and 8a (Cleagrove)
Cavendish House
Stable and coach house in rear yard of no. 30
34 (Village Place) and adjoining entrance screen
to north
The Swan Inn
40 High Street
K6 Telephone Kiosk
44, 44a and 46 High Street
48, 48a, 48b and 48c High Street
58, 60 and 62 High Street
64 High Street
72 High Street
74 High Street
Sebright House and Sebright Cottage at rear

ALBERT STREET

9 and 11 Albert Street
13 Albert Street
The Old Brewer's Yard, 8 Albert Street

Appendix 2:

Historic Environment Record: Herts County Council

HHER Number	Description
2050	Village of Markyate
12090	The Sun Inn, 101 High Street
12103	The White Hart, 5 High Street
12102	The Swan, 36 High Street
12100	117 – 121 High Street
7024	Lion Brewery, Albert Street
17368	Site of post medieval cottages, High Street
30956	67 – 73 High Street
9525	Roman road, Watling Street
12099	Sebright House (The Sebright Arms), 76 High Street
12098	The Old Maltings, 11 High Street
12092	Site of The Five Horseshoes, 1 High Street
30496	Site of the 'Iron Room', Pickford Road
12097	Red Lion public house, 20 High Street
16649	Home Farm, 8 – 10 Pickford Rd, Markyate
17549	38 High Street
12091	4 High Street and The Grange (The Cross Keys), 8 High Street
12093	42 High Street
10087	Post medieval pits behind 75 High Street
12087	Markyate Baptist Chapel, Buckwood Road
12101	64 High Street
30918	58 – 62 High Street
12089	Particular Baptist Chapel, Pickford / Cleveland Road junction
12086	Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Albert Street
12096	65 High Street (The Plough)
12094	50 High Street (The Green Man)
12105	Site of the Healey Mineral Water Business, 84 High Street
12104	Site of the White Horse, 22 High Street
16647	Site of Lower Farm, London Road
16648	Site of Hospital Farm, London Road

Appendix 3 :

Locally Listed Buildings.

These buildings are recognised for their local architectural or historic significance and contribution they make to the quality of the local environment. Encouraging the use of local lists will strengthen the role of local heritage assets as

a material consideration in the planning process although permitted development rights remain.



*Markyate Methodist Church, Wesley Road
(this view from Albert Street).*



*Former Sunday School building for the adjacent
Markyate Methodist Church, Albert Street.*



Baptist Church, Buckwood Road



*Former Primitive Methodist chapel, corner of Cleveland
Road and Pickford Road*



Cell Dene, 1 High Street



3 and 5 High Street



24 High Street



26 High Street



52, 54 and 56 High Street



Markyate Fire Station



75 (Prudens Bakery) and 77 High Street



5 Albert Street

