ABBOTS LANGLEY

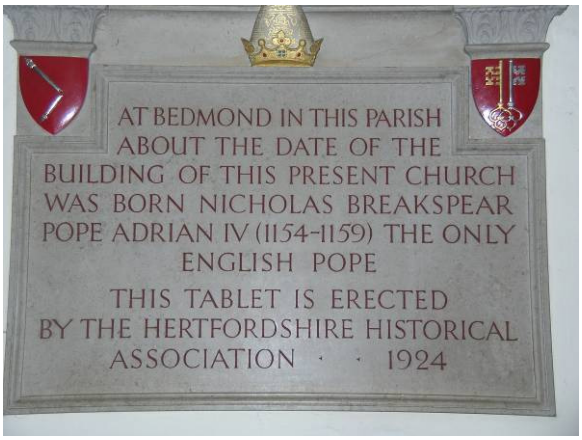
Draft Conservation Area Appraisal

July 2014











THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

ABBOTS LANGLEY CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

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1.0 Introduction, Background and Purpose

1.1 Introduction and Summary

Tightly drawn around the medieval core of the village, the Abbots Langley Conservation Area is focused on the Grade I Listed Church of St Lawrence which dates from the middle of the 12th Century. The Conservation Area encompasses the early built development around the church and manor house and the link between these two areas, which is mostly made up of later 19th Century buildings.

The special architectural and historic interest of the Abbots Langley Conservation Area is derived from the well preserved historic core that records and displays the village's growth from a small settlement to substantial village. The historic centre of Abbots Langley includes the exceptional Church of St Lawrence, 16th to 18th century brick cottages, grander Georgian buildings, Victorian/Edwardian shops and houses and 20th century development.

1.2 Background and Purpose of Appraisal

Three Rivers District Council has a duty under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate as Conservation Areas any "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". The designation of a Conservation Area brings additional protection for trees, control over demolition and development as well as a requirement for decision makers, when exercising planning powers, to pay "special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area".

The Council is additionally required by the 1990 Act to keep Conservation Areas under review and to formulate and publish, from time to time, proposals for their preservation and enhancement.

Conservation Areas are considered "Heritage Assets" by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF states that local planning authorities should "identify and assess the particular significance" of heritage assets and set out a "positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment" that takes into account, alongside other matters, the "wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits" that the historic environment can bring.

Based on the area around the Grade I Listed Church of St Lawrence, Abbots Langley Conservation Area was designated by Three Rivers District Council in October 1969. This was one of the earliest Conservation Area designations in Hertfordshire.

The aims of this appraisal are to:

(a) Set out the special architectural or historic interest of the Abbots Langley Conservation Area and to describe the special character and appearance that it is desirable to preserve or enhance;

(b) Examine the existing boundaries of the Conservation Area and consider the potential for other areas to be included and, if appropriate, where existing areas should be excluded and;

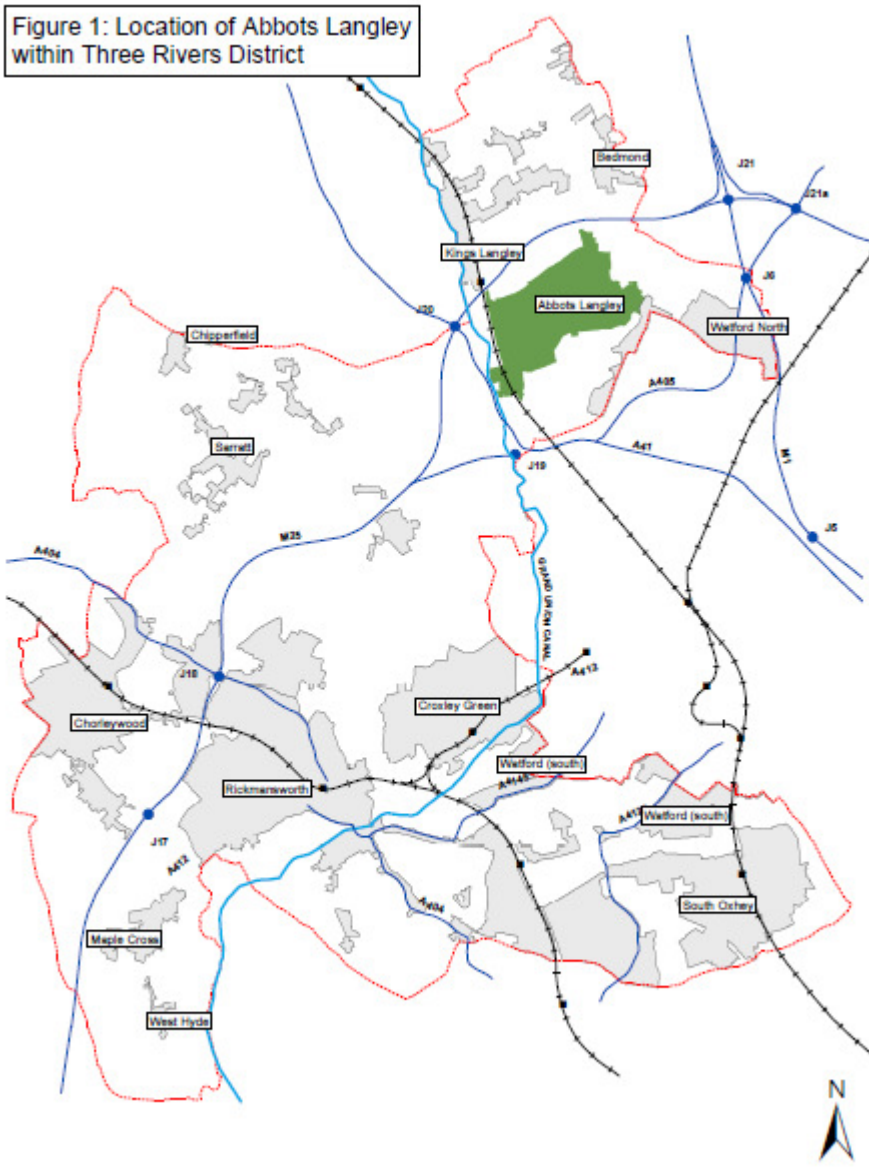
(c) Identify areas that area subject to pressure for change that would be adverse to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area as a result of work undertaken as permitted development and identify any areas where the removal of permitted development rights would safeguard the essential character and appearance of the area.

Please note: *The Conservation Area Appraisal does not represent an exhaustive record of every building, feature or space within the Conservation Area and an omission should not be taken to imply that an element is of no interest.*

2.0 Location

Abbots Langley is a large village located to the north of Watford in South West Hertfordshire. The medieval centre of the village, around St Lawrence's Church, is in the northern part of the settlement with extensive Victorian and 20th Century suburban development to the south and west. The village is bounded by the West Coast Mainline Railway and Watford Road to the west, a small area of open space between the village and Leavesden to the south and south east and countryside to the north and north east. Other settlements near Abbots Langley include the villages of Bedmond and Kings Langley to the north and Hunton Bridge to the west.

Figure 1: Location of Abbots Langley within Three Rivers District



The Abbots Langley Conservation Area extends south west along the High Street, past the Grade 1 Listed Church of St Lawrence, to Kitters Green. The boundaries of the Conservation Area are provided by Tibbs Hill Road / Bedmond Road in the north and Kitters Green in the south. The Conservation Area covers approximately 13ha. For a map of the Conservation Area please see Appendix 1.

3.0 History and Development

3.1 History

There is no known evidence of a settlement at Abbots Langley prior to the 11th Century. The village name derives from 1045 when, Ethelwine the Black and his wife Wynfelda, gave 'Langelei' (denoting a long meadow or long lea) to the Abbot and monks of the monastery of St Albans. The Monastery played an important part in the affairs of Abbots Langley for several hundred years. 'Langelei' was recorded in the Domesday survey of 1087 as having a priest, 10 villagers and 5 smallholders. The village's resources at the time included 3 hides (360 acres) and 2 watermills. The presence of a priests suggests the existence of a Saxon church, likely to have been found on the same site as the current Church of St Lawrence.



Figure 2: Church of St Lawrence the Martyr

The oldest surviving building in the village, the Parish Church of St Lawrence the Martyr was dedicated in 1154. Although extended and altered at various points since the 12th Century the Norman nave, aisles and tower all survive.

Abbots Langley gains historical significance beyond Hertfordshire as the reputed birthplace of the only Englishman to ever become Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. Nicholas Brakespear, who become Pope Adrian IV in 1154, is thought to have been born at Brakespear Farm, near Bedmond, in approximately 1100. He served as Pope until his death in 1159.

Aside from a brief but bloody disturbance during the Peasants Revolt in 1381, the supreme power of the Abbot in Abbots Langley survived until the Dissolution of the Monastery at St Albans in 1539. Following Dissolution, the Manor House was granted to Sir Richard Lee who was one of Henry VIII's military commanders. The Manor House was sold back the Crown in around 1575 and was leased, by James I, to Francis Bacon in around 1612. By 1644 the Manor House was owned by Francis Combe who left it, and his other possessions in Abbots Langley, to Sidney-Sussex College, Cambridge and Trinity College, Oxford. Documentary evidence indicates that the Manor House gradually declined in importance in the centuries following Dissolution. The site of the Manor Houses was leased separately to William Childe in 1539 this likely contributed to the decline in importance of the Manor House. The site of the Manor remained with the Childe family until 1711. The 19th Century holders of the site, who included the Fearnley-Whittingstall family, lived at Langleybury Hall outside the village. The medieval manor-house and its grounds were located south of the church, where the slight remains of a homestead moat survive in the area opposite Kitters Green. The site is now known as the Manor House Grounds.

The Grand Union Canal (opened in 1797) and the London to Birmingham Railway (opened in 1838) pass through Abbots Langley Parish to the west of the village. Kings Langley Station, known as Kings Langley and Abbots Langley Station until 1974, opened in 1839 and is within Abbots Langley Parish. The station is located to the north-west of the village. The construction of the canal and railway gave Abbots Langley access to important north-south transport links.

Abbots Langley began to grow in the years following the opening of the railway station. In 1870 the Metropolitan Asylum opened at Leavesden just outside the village centre. Around the same time a number of residential roads in the Kitters Green area were set out and housing gradually began to develop. The process of slow and steady growth continued through to the early years of the 20th Century. In the 1920's development rapidly increased and the village continued to grow throughout the rest of the century. Following the closure of the Leavesden Hospital in the 1990s the site was redeveloped for housing.

The following page explore the development of Abbots Langley in more detail with reference to historic maps.

3.2 **Development**

Abbots Langley began to substantially expand from the middle of the 19th Century, with rapid expansion beginning in the 1920s. Referring to historic maps it is possible to chart the expansion of Abbots Langley from 1839 to the present day.

- **1839 Tithe Map:** Buildings spread southwards along the High Street. Cluster of buildings opposite St Lawrence Church. Kitters Green is still a distinctively separate hamlet to the south of Abbots Langley. Gallows Hill south west of Kitters Green another separate hamlet.

- **First Edition 1846-1901 Ordnance Survey Map:** Kitters Green is considerably more developed than as shown on 1839 maps with Popes Road, Breakspeare Road, Adrian Road and Langley Road all in place with some housing completed. The gap between Kitters Green and Abbots Langley almost closed. Little additional development around St Lawrence Church / High Street area.

- **Second Edition 1888-1915 Ordnance Survey Map:** First signs of development spreading west along Abbots Road to the north west of St Lawrence Church. Infilling around Breakspeare Road including the addition of Marlin Square.

- **Third Edition 1900-1949 Ordnance Survey Map:** Housing spreading further west along Abbots Road. First signs of housing on Gallows Hill Lane to the south west of the medieval core around what is now Broomfield Rise. Additional infilling around Breakspeare Road evident.

- **Fourth Edition 1922-1969 Ordnance Survey Map:** Shows the addition of The Crescent off High Street, although little development completed. First signs of housing along Trowley Rise south of Breakspeare Road. Further houses evident along parts of Gallows Hill Lane. Hazlebury Avenue, south of Gallows Hill Lane in place, although no housing present.

- **Fifth Edition 1945 Ordnance Survey Map:** Further housing development visible to the south and south west of the medieval core. Development south of Gallows Hill Lane with a large housing estate completed around Hazlebury Avenue / Hazlewood Lane / Bloomfield Rise / Upper Highway between 1922 and 1945 (most likely completed before 1939). Further development completed along and south of Trowley Rose. Medieval core around St Lawrence Church still borders open countryside to the north. Development completed around The Crescent. First signs of housing along Kindersley Way south of Abbots Road / West of Manor House Grounds

- **Sixth & Seventh Edition 1970 – 1991 Ordnance Survey Maps:** Modern development surrounds medieval core to the north and east - school and library built to the north of St Lawrence Church severing churches boundary with countryside. Construction of the Library led to the demolition of the villages old school buildings which were Locally Listed. Housing development complete around vicarage on St Lawrence Close. Housing in place along both sides of Tibbs Hill Road. Development complete along Kindersley Way and Manor House Gardens. Sports and Social Centre added to Manor House Grounds. Development along Abbots Road now reaches the railway. M25 completed in this period. Housing replaces Leavesden Hospital to the west of Tibbs Hill Road and further housing development has been completed south of Trowley Rise. By around 1991 Abbots Langley's form and layout largely reflects that in place today.

Abbots Langley developed rapidly during the 20th Century, with the villages present form and layout largely settled by the early 1990s. Throughout the period of rapid development beginning in the 1920s the medieval core of the village remained relatively intact although there was been some encroachment of modern buildings.

4.0 Character and Appearance

4.1 Conservation Area Boundaries

The boundary of the Conservation Area (Appendix 1) is drawn tightly around the medieval core of the village and extends south west with the High Street to form a linear space. It encompasses buildings and spaces that reflect the historical development of the village centre from the early settlement around both the Church of St Lawrence and Kitters Green, near the Manor House, to the later 19th Century development of the High Street as a link between the two. Natural boundaries are provided by Tibbs Hill Road to the north and Kitters Green to the south.

4.2 Characteristic features

As in most villages, development in Abbots Langley took place sporadically as and when there was local demand. As a result there is no one architectural style that takes precedence. Aside from the Church of St Lawrence, the earliest buildings date from the 16th Century and include the timber framed Pound Cottage and Yew Cottage (discussed further in 4.6 below). Other timber framed buildings, such as The Abbot's Houses (discussed 4.5 below) are hidden behind brick skins, a popular modification common in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. A number of small scale brick cottages and larger Georgian buildings (Vicarage and Breakspear Place) were built in the 18th century. The brick cottages reflect the local vernacular. The Georgian properties benefit greatly from the gardens in which they are set despite reductions in size as a result of development in the mid-20th Century. Larger scale housing development began in Abbots Langley during the 19th Century and continued through the 20th Century, as a result a number of Victorian/Edwardian and 20th Century houses, flats and shops are found in and around the Conservation Area. The more modern buildings do not generally reflect any particular local vernacular and could be found in any of Britain's urban areas.

There are various important characteristics and architectural features which contribute to the character of the area, including:

- Mixture of materials—flint, brick, timber and clunch
- Harmonious co-existence of building styles and dates
- Late 12th Century clunch and knapped flint church, surrounded by mid-16th Century timber framed houses and 18th Century cottages
- Larger 18th Century houses (the Vicarage and Breakspear Place) and their gardens
- Low key Victorian development
- Presence of many fine brick or brick and flint walls which add to enclosure of the High Street and its environs
- Soft landscaping
- The retention of details - chimney stacks, original shop signage etc.

4.3 Character Areas

The Conservation Area Appraisal undertaken by BEAMS in 1994 identified three separate character areas each "with different but harmonious characters" (BEAMS, 1994:4). These character areas can still be clearly identified within the Conservation Area. The three areas identified are *Tibbs Hill to The Abbots House*; *The Commercial Centre* and *Kitters Green*. A map illustrating the Character Areas can be viewed in Appendix Two. A study of each area is provided on the following pages.

4.4 **Tibbs Hill to The Abbots House**

Forming the northern part of the Conservation Area, *Tibbs Hill to The Abbots Houses* includes a range of buildings of architectural interest, most notably the Grade I Listed Church of St Lawrence. A number of the other buildings are of architectural and historic interest including the 18th century Vicarage and associated stable block and a row of cottages dating from the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries.

The junction between Tibbs Hill Road and High Street forms the northern entrance to the Conservation Area. The northern boundary of the Conservation Area is located towards the northern edge of Abbots Langley, near the settlement boundary with the open countryside. The entrance to the Conservation Area from Tibbs Hill Road retains a rural atmosphere that is enhanced by greenery on both sides of the street.

Enclosing brick and brick and flint walls are also a feature of the northern part of the Conservation Area, especially along the section of High Street between the junction with Tibbs Hill Road and St Lawrence Church. Brick and brick and flint walls help to create a sense of enclosure. However they do not overly dominate the space and are generally subservient to the trees and other planting.



Figure 3: Historic curve of the High Street



Figure 4: Planting outside the Library (looking north)

Unusually, the first buildings encountered when entering the Conservation Area are modern (School, Library, Hannover Gardens and Margaret House) built in the 1970's and 1980's. Although not necessarily sensitively designed the buildings are sympathetically landscaped and the planting, especially around the Library and Hannover Garden, contributes to the street scene atmosphere of rurality at the entrance to the Conservation Area.

The High Street has retained it's historic curve meaning the medieval core of the village is hidden by the sweep of the road when entering the Conservation Area. The Grade I Listed Church of St Lawrence the Martyr comes into view on following the road round past the library. Occupying a plot that has been a major Christian burial ground for over 1000 years, St Lawrence Church is set back from the road with the graveyard to the front.

Initial construction of St Lawrence's took place between 1140 and 1150. The Church was dedicated to St Lawrence, a much venerated early Christian martyr, in 1154. The tower was added later, with construction taking place between 1190 and 1200.



Figure 5: Church of St Lawrence—Grade I Listed Building



Figure 6: Setting of St Lawrence's Church—Vicarage behind

The Norman church is likely to have replaced an earlier Saxon church on the same site. Records from the 1086 Domesday Survey record the presence of a priest in the village, which suggests there would also have been a Saxon church. Studies have suggested that the original church become the Chancel (space around the altar) of the Norman church, this was replaced when it fell into decay around 1400.



Figure 7: Norman Tower and 15th C Buttresses



Figure 8: Corpus Christi Chapel on left

A number of architectural styles are evident throughout the building reflecting the numerous alterations and additions that have taken place. The oldest parts of the present building are the twelfth century (1140-1190) Norman arches of the north and south arcades and the late 12th Century (1190-1200) tower. The tower is supported by two large buttresses which were added in the 15th century. The south east Corpus Christi Chapel was built between 1307 and 1327. In 1969 the Church suffered from a serious fire which destroyed the organ, choir and much of the roof.



Figure 9: Variety of Building Materials used



Figure 10: The Vicarage—Grade II Listed

The row of 16th, 17th and 18th Century cottages opposite the church on the eastern side of the High Street make an important contribution to the street scene. Numbers 9 and 9a are the earliest surviving cottages, dating from the early 16th Century, although they were re-fronted and extended in the 18th Century. Numbers 5, 7, 9, 9a, 11, 13, 15, 17, 17a, 19 and 25 are all Grade II Listed Buildings. The village Workhouse was located in and behind No.15. It is likely that at least some (and possibly all) of these properties would have replaced earlier cottages. No.1, located on the corner of High Street and The Crescent is a relatively sympathetically designed modern addition. With frontages directly onto the road, these vernacular cottages contrast interestingly with St Lawrence's Church opposite.



Figure 11: No 1, 3, 5 and 7, High Street.



Figure 12: No 7 and 9 High Street



Figure 13: No 7, 9, 9a and 11 High Street



Figure 14: No 19 High Street.



Figure 15: No 25 High Street.



Figure 16: View looking north from Junction with St Lawrence Close.

The Boy's Home Public House, named to commemorate soldiers returning home from WW1, and numbers 27, 29 and 31 are all Locally Listed and date from the mid 18th century and 19th century. These buildings reflect the building line and domestic scale of the Listed Buildings further up the High Street. No 25 (Figure 15), a Grade II Listed property, is set back behind a front garden, breaking the near-continuous building line.







Figure 17, 18 and 19: No. 3, No 29-31 and The Boys Home - Locally Listed opposite the Church of St Lawrence

The row of attractive Listed and Locally Listed Buildings comes to an abrupt end at the traffic island with a poor example of modern infill. The unoriginal and poorly designed building is set back from the road behind an extensive area of hardstanding and acts to break up the unity of the street scene. The poor design is highlighted by its position between the row of attractive historic buildings opposite the church and the well designed 1930s shopping parade.

4.5 **The Commercial Centre**

The commercial centre is effectively the area between Abbots Langley Police Station and St Lawrence Close, the area within which the Abbot's House, the Old Maltings and various amenities and services can be found.

The north-west side of the High Street between Henderson Memorial Hall and St Lawrence Close has an attractive row of Victorian shops which are present on Second Edition OS Maps published in the late 19th Century. Unfortunately most shops have had poor modern shop fronts installed. However the essential character of the row of shops has been retained. South of Henderson Memorial Hall on the western side of the High Street is a mid/late 20th Century infill that although not architecturally significant does reflect the size and scale of other buildings in this part of the Conservation Area.





Figure 20, 21 and 22 - Variety of building types and styles that characterise the Commerical Centre

Buildings on the eastern side of the High Street are a mix of types and ages (Figures 20, 21 and 22 above), although most date from the 20th Century. This group includes a good example of a 1930s shopping parade. The rows of shops on both sides of the road provide an important link between St. Lawrence and Kitters Green and generate the busy and bustling character that is evident in this part of the Conservation Area. This central area is the most urban of the Conservation Areas three distinctive Character Areas. The location of most of Abbots Langley's amenities and services here ensure that the Conservation Area remains the central focus of the village.

Beyond the Langley Road/Abbots Road crossroad the Commercial Centre begins to get increasingly tranquil with trees lining both sides of the road. The western side of the road south of Abbots Road is largely dominated by 20th Century infill, initially a row of shops and flats followed by Causeway House and The Grange, both flatted developments. Although not the most architecturally attractive buildings, and of a height and bulk that is generally out of keeping with the wider area, they detract from the character of the Conservation Area.



Figure 23 - 20th Century Infill




Figure 24 and 25: 71-79 High Street - Locally Listed

Opposite the 20th Century row of shops on the East side of the High Street adjacent to the Methodist Church is a row of Victorian terraced houses built in 1880 (Figure 24 and 25 above). Built of gaunt brick with redbrick detailing each house has a bay window. The terraced row has considerable group value and are the best preserved architectural representatives of their period in Abbots Langley. Unfortunately the uniformity of the group has been broken with the addition of a rooflight to one of the properties.

The Abbot's House, which stands on an important historic site near the church of St Lawrence, has a deceptively simple Queen Anne frontage which conceals a fascinating building. The story of this house is a complex architectural puzzle and unfortunately there is not sufficient detail in early records to allow its chronology to be definitively determined. However it is known that the oldest part of the current house is the southeast side, which dates from 1600. This section was built with 2 storeys and attics, and was truncated at the northeast end in the 18th Century. A large timber-framed structure of this type could have been a wing of the kind normally added to a large medieval open hall. The bulk of the surviving historic structure is late 17th Century, of mixed construction, hidden behind the neo-Georgian facade. It has also been established that the house stands on the site of an early farmstead.



Figure 26: The Abbot's House - Grade II Listed



Figure 27: View of The Abbot's House from junction with St Lawrence Close

The Old Maltings (including Kiln and Stable Block) is an early/mid 17th Century Malt House that is now a residential house and community hall. The building was restored and partly rebuilt in 1975. The Old Maltings is timber framed with partial red brick casing with sham timber framing. The brick stable block dates from the 19th Century and the Kiln dates from the 18th Century. The setting to the rear could be greatly improved with sensitive landscaping.



Figure 28: The Old Maltings - Grade II Listed



Figure 29: The Old Maltings - Grade II Listed

Both the Abbot's House and Old Maltings are Grade II Listed. Immediate views of the Old Maltings cannot be gained due to its siting behind the row of shops along the western side of the High Street. Views of the Abbot's House are also obscured by the row of shops when approaching from the south. From the north the views of the house are blocked by a brick wall and trees with only the roof and chimney visible as illustrated above. As a result the contribution both buildings make to the street scene is limited.

4.6 **Kitters Green**

Forming the southern part of the Conservation Area, Kitters Green was originally a separate hamlet around the Manor House for Abbots Langley. The two settlements became contiguous during the latter half of 19th Century.

A marked contrast to the commercial centre to the north, Kitters Green is a tranquil space enhanced by greenery. This part of the Conservation Area includes a range of attractive 16th Century and early 19th Century houses. Kitters Green contains two Listed Buildings, Yew Cottage and Pound Cottage, and a range of Locally Listed Buildings. These include the Royal Oak an 18th Century public house and a terraced row of late 18th/early 19th century cottages.



Figure 30: Yew Cottage - Grade II Listed



Figure 31: Rear of Yew Cottage

Yew Cottage (Figure 30 and 31 above) is a Grade II Listed timber-framed house dating from the late 17th Century. The cottage has retained its white-washed brick noggin and original features and proportions. Notable features include a tiled roof with a catslide roof to the rear over an original lean-to/ outshut. A later gabled building runs along the north-eastern boundary of the site, which is shared with the communal gardens of the mid twentieth century flats of Castano Court.

Pound Cottage (Figure 32 and 33 below), is a Grade II Listed detached timber framed dwelling dating from the mid 17th century. The building has twentieth century additions that include a porch and a converted garage to the side adjacent to Kitters Green. The additions are sympathetic and do not detract from the buildings character. Occupying an unusually prominent plot adjacent to the green, all four of Pound Cottages elevations are easily viewed from the public realm. As such the building's prominence in and importance to the character of this part of the Conservation Area is increased.



Figure 32: Pound Cottage - Grade II Listed



Figure 33: Pound Cottage looking North from Kitters Green

A row of Locally Listed late 18th and early 19th Century cottages (Figure 34, 35 and 36 below) are located to the north of Pound Cottage. Two of the cottages (95 and 97) are built in flint with redbrick detailing around the windows. These two are of an interesting and innovative design that is not repeated elsewhere in the Conservation Area. The third cottage (93) is constructed from red brick in contrast to its neighbours. The three cottages have considerable group value and add architectural interest to the street scene. As a group the three are set well back from the road behind parking and well planted front gardens. Hedges form the frontages with the road and help contribute to the rural atmosphere that is present in this part of the Conservation Area.







Figures 34, 35 and 36: No. 93, 95 and 97 Kitters Green - Locally Listed

The Royal Oak (Figure 37 below) is a public house occupying an 18th Century building that is of architectural interest due to its unusual design and layout. The building, which was a cottage and barn until 1827, has been extensively extended. These alterations contribute to the building's character and interest. The Royal Oak is set on the eastern side of Kitters Green along with Pound Cottage. Access is provided in the form of a track through the heart of the open green to Gallows Hill Road which until the mid-20th Century passed through a large pond. .



Figure 37: The Royal Oak Public House - Locally Listed



Figure 38: Kitters Green viewed from High Street

Modern infill is present around Kitters Green, for example Castano Court. The modern buildings however are low-key and do not affect the character or setting of the Listed Buildings or the wider Conservation Area.

As with the northern entrance into the Conservation Area off Tibbs Hill Road, the greenery and open space before and around Kitters Green provide an almost rural atmosphere to the southern entrance of the Conservation Area. The soft landscaping and planting, in particular the avenue of trees along on both sides of the main road, helps to enclose and provide a boundary for, the Conservation Area.

4.7 **Key Views into and out of the Conservation Area**

Views into and out of the Conservation Area are limited by curve of the High Street, brick walls and extensive planting around the main entrances into the Conservation Area in the north and south. Views into the Conservation Area from side roads are also limited, largely due to the nature of the road. Views out of the Conservation Area are generally into the village's extensive Victorian and Edwardian residential areas along Abbots Road, Langley Road and Adrian Road.



Figure 38: Typical view out of the Conservation Area - Adrian Road



Figure 39: Typical view out of the Conservation Area - Abbots Road

The village's most significant building, the Church of St Lawrence, is not readily visible from outside the Conservation Area due to its siting and architecture; for example the Norman tower, when compared to other church towers and spires, is diminutive and is therefore not visible from a significant distance. Views of the Church are limited from within the Conservation Area due to the curve of the road, extensive planting and the Church buildings position set back from the road.

4.8 **Archaeology**

There have been no significant archaeological finds within Abbots Langley. However the majority of the Conservation Area is within a defined Area of Archaeological Significance.

4.9 **Modern Influences in the Conservation Area**

There are a number of modern developments within the boundaries of the Conservation Area, many of which sit comfortably alongside the historic properties of the village's core and help contribute to Abbots Langley's sense of place. Modern developments include Hanover Gardens, Margaret House Residential Home, Hertfordshire County Council's Library, Causeway House, the Grange, Castano Court, No 1 High Street, St Saviours Roman Catholic Church and developments around Breakspear Place.

The Hertfordshire County Council Library, built in the 1980s, is located in the heart of the Conservation Area. Located on a prominent site near the Church of St Lawrence the library has been designed to sit comfortably adjacent to a Listed Building within a site that has well-established trees along the boundaries with the road and Church. The library building brings interest and variety to the townscape in this part of the Conservation Area while the wider library site helps to contribute to the almost rural feel of the approach to the Church from Tibbs Hill Road. The library provides a good example of how a well-designed simple modern building can sit comfortably on a prominent site. The quality of the building was recognised by a Civic Trust commendation in 1984.

The 1994 Conservation Area Appraisal identified the empty plot at No 1 to 3 High Street as an 'Area in Need of Attention'. At the corner of High Street and The Crescent, the plot occupies a prominent location adjacent to the complete row of 16th, 17th and 18th Century cottages opposite the Church of St Lawrence. The new properties, built in the mid 1990s, complete the terrace and reflect the size, scale and general appearance of the historic buildings without trying to directly replicate their appearance. The buildings are clearly identifiable as modern additions however they sit comfortably adjacent to the historic buildings and make an important contribution to the streetscene by completing the row of cottages and providing a defining corner at the junction between The Crescent and High Street.



Figure 40: Hertfordshire County Council Library



Figure 41: No. 1 to 3 High Street

St Saviours Roman Catholic Church, Hannover Gardens and other development around Breakspear Place occupy what were once the historic building's extensive grounds. The buildings, all modern in their design and appearance, vary in their quality and interest. St Saviour's, dating from the late 1950s/ early 1960s, is notable for the large and prominent sculpture on the front elevation, facing The Crescent. The sculpture brings architectural interest to what is otherwise an unremarkable part of the Conservation Area. The location and design of Hannover Gardens does infringe significantly on the setting of the Grade II Listed Breakspear Place. However the grounds around Hannover Gardens, including large Cedar trees, do contribute the streetscene and offer some sense of historic setting of the Breakspear Place.

Although not enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the majority of the modern infill and additions do not significantly harm its special historic and architectural interest. In general the buildings added to the Conservation Area in the second half of the 20th Century are low-key and subtle, matching the size, scale and bulk of the Conservation Area's existing buildings. Examples of low key modern additions to the Conservation Area include Margaret House, Castano Court just off Kitters Green and 38-42A High Street adjacent to Henderson Memorial Hall.



Figure 41: Castano Court



Figure 42: The Grange



Figure 43: St Saviours

5.0 Considerations for Development

5.1 Conservation Areas and National and Local Planning Policy

Development within the Abbots Langley Conservation Area is controlled by National and Local Planning Policy covering the Conservation Areas and the Historic Environment. The Three Rivers Core Strategy (2011) and Development Management Policies Local Development Document (2013) set out the planning policies for the District and it is recommended that anyone wishing to carry out any alterations should refer to these documents which are available on the Council's web site at:
http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/PlanningPolicy

5.2 Conservation Areas and Permitted Development

'Permitted Development' rights normally mean that some domestic alterations may be carried out without first obtaining planning permission. However, these rights are more restricted in Conservation Areas. For example, permission is required for satellite dishes, dormer windows and other alterations to a roof as well as external cladding and works to trees.

No work is automatically ruled out by Conservation Area designation. However, it does impose an additional requirement on residents to apply to the Council for planning permission for certain works. All applications for planning permission in a Conservation Area are considered from the conservation point of view and can be refused on conservation grounds alone. This also applies to development proposals in the vicinity of a Conservation Area. As with any planning application, an applicant has a right to appeal against a refusal or against any conditions attached to a permission or consent.

Where new development is proposed it is important that it is guided by sound principles of historic conservation and urban design. All forms of new development should be sympathetic to the historic context of the Conservation Area and should:

- Preserve and reinforce the distinctive pattern of historical development including road patterns, open spaces, plot sizes and boundaries and boundary treatments
- Maintain key views and vistas within, into and out of the Conservation Area
- Reinforce the distinctive architectural character of the Conservation Area through an informed understanding of distinctive building forms and types, features and materials. The superficial echoing of historic features in new buildings should be avoided
- Reinforce the scale and massing of surrounding buildings. It is essential that new development is not out of scale with existing building typical of the Conservation Area by way of its height , floor levels, size of windows and doors and overall massing
- Reinforce existing building lines and orientation of existing development

5.3 Development of Historic Buildings

There are 25 Nationally Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area (see map in Appendix Three and description of buildings in Appendix Four and Five) and any alteration to these buildings (external or internal) may require Listed Building Consent from the Council.

In addition to these buildings there are 21 Locally Listed Buildings (see map in Appendix Three and description of buildings in Appendix Six). Although many have been altered and extended, they are still of importance to the character of the area. Although not protected in the same way as Nationally Listed Buildings the Council will resist the demolition of such buildings in the Conservation Area.

Applicants proposing development are advised to discuss their proposals with Council Officers before submitting a formal application particularly where the proposed development:

- affects the character or appearance of the area
- affects the setting of Church of St Lawrence
- affects the open spaces and/or trees that are essential to the setting of the Conservation Area particularly around the entrances / exits.
- proposes alterations to brick or brick and flint walls that enclose parts of the High Street
- proposes alterations to the identified historic buildings

5.4 **Trees**

The Conservation Area has many mature and notable trees which contribute greatly to the character of the area. Many of these trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

In addition permission is also needed to lop, top or fell any of the other substantial trees (defined as having a trunk diameter of 75mm or more at 1.5m above ground level) in the Conservation Area. The Council must be informed in writing at least six weeks before any work to lop, top or fell trees is undertaken. This provides the Council with an opportunity for the making of a TPO should it be considered appropriate. If a tree is dead, dying or dangerous emergency works may be carried out. However the onus is on the landowner to prove that the work was necessary.

Landowners are advised to consult Officers at the Council before undertaking any work on Trees in Conservation Areas.

6.0 Review of Conservation Area Boundary

6.1 **Abbots Langley Conservation Area Boundary**

As part of this appraisal the existing boundaries of the Conservation Area have been examined to consider the potential for new areas to be included and/or for existing areas to be excluded. Officers have carefully considered the existing boundaries and the suggestions for changes made during the consultation period and have determined that there is no justification for amending the boundaries of the Conservation Area.

The suggestions put forward during the consultation period included;

- *removing the Commercial Centre* - Officers consider this area to be an integral part of the historic centre of Abbots Langley that should be retained as part of the Conservation Area.
- *extending to included the area of Victorian houses around Adrian Road and Langley Road* - Officers consider that it would be inappropriate to extend Conservation Area boundaries to include this area due to the extensive modern interventions that have already taken place. Any significant individual properties will be considered for Local Listing.
- *extending to include Mansion House Farm* - the Farmhouse and associated buildings are Listed and therefore protected from inappropriate development.

7.0 Management Strategy

7.1 **Abbots Langley Conservation Area Management Strategy**

The Council is required to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. In line with guidance published by English Heritage a Management Strategy for the Abbots Langley Conservation Area will be developed that is based on the character appraisal that is provided in this document. As such no detailed work will be undertaken on a Management Strategy until a full consultation has taken place on this Conservation Area Appraisal and a finalised document has been approved by the Sustainable Development, Planning and Transport Committee.