



Epping Forest District Council
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Staples Road Conservation Area

*Character Appraisal and
Management Plan*

DRAFT

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1. Introduction

1.1 Definition and purpose of conservation areas

A conservation area is an 'area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). A conservation area may be the historic centre of a town or village, an older unspoilt residential area, or an important country house in large landscaped grounds.

The designation of a conservation area introduces special controls, including the requirement of consent from the Council to demolish any building or part of a building or to carry out works on unprotected trees. These restrictions aim to ensure that the special architectural and historic interest of an area is retained for the benefit of local residents, businesses, visitors and future generations.

1.2 Purpose, scope and nature of character appraisals

Following conservation area designation, local authorities also have a statutory duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas, and to consult the local community about these proposals. A conservation area character appraisal is intended to fulfil this obligation. Its main aims are to;

- define the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area;
- review the current conservation area boundaries, so that they reflect what is considered to be of special interest;
- increase public awareness of the aims of conservation area designation and

encourage community involvement in the protection of the character of the area;

- identify measures that need to be taken to preserve the character of the conservation area and put forward proposals for its enhancement.

It is hoped that this document will provide a management framework to control and guide change in Staples Road Conservation Area and that it will form a basis for other planning decisions that affect the area.

It is, however, not intended to be comprehensive in its content and failure to mention any particular building, feature or space does not imply that these are of no interest.

1.3 Extent of Staples Road Conservation Area

The Staples Road conservation area encompasses most of Staples Road and was first designated in 1995. The conservation area is shown in Map 1 (Appendix 4)

1.4 Methodology

This document was compiled between autumn 2008 and winter 2009. In putting together the appraisal, the conservation area was surveyed and photographed in detail, a range of historic maps were consulted and documentary research was carried out. This draft version of the appraisal is being put out to public consultation between January and February 2010 to allow the comments and suggestions of local residents and businesses to be incorporated into the final version.

2. Planning Policy Context

2.1 National Policy and Guidance

Conservation areas were first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. National guidelines concerning government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment are set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note Number 15 – “Planning and the Historic Environment” (Sep. 1994).

2.2 Local Plan Policies

The Council's current policies relating to conservation areas are set out in the Epping

Forest District Local Plan. This plan was originally adopted in 1998 and has recently been partially reviewed. Alterations were adopted in July 2006, with the addition of policy HC13A concerning the creation of a list of buildings of local architectural or historic importance and matters relating to them.

The Council has begun work on the local development framework that will replace the existing local plan. At this stage, it is uncertain how conservation area character appraisals will fit into the new system, but it is expected that they will become advisory policy documents that will support the main development plan. (Further information can be found on the Planning Services section of the Council's website)

3. Summary of Special Interest

3.1 Definition of special architectural and historic interest

The special interest of this area derives mainly from the unaltered streetscape and the interesting architectural features of the buildings. The street is predominantly from the Victorian period; built by notable architects including J. Cubitt, G. Beckett, E. Lawrence and G. Hatton. Many features built were new for the period. The area has also been the subject of visits and residence from notable people. The main elements contributing to the special architectural and historic interest of Staples Road Conservation Area are set out below:

Elements of special architectural and historic interest

- Unaltered streetscape.
- Contribution from noted architects.
- Colour, texture and general appearance of traditional building materials used.
- Architectural features were added which were new for their time (on the schools in particular).
- Interesting historic events associated with the area eg. There are still traces of the use of the area in World War II.
- Interesting uses for the buildings ie. No.3 Melbourn Cottage was used as a retreat house for poor children in the summer.
- Interesting historic people associated with the area eg. Robert Hunter; 19th century lexicographer, naturalist & missionary and George Pearson; film producer.

3.2 Definition of the character of Staples Road Conservation Area

The character of any conservation area derives from the interaction of a number of different factors including the street layout, the variety of buildings, the trees and green spaces and land use. The main elements contributing to the character of Staples Road Conservation Area are set out below:

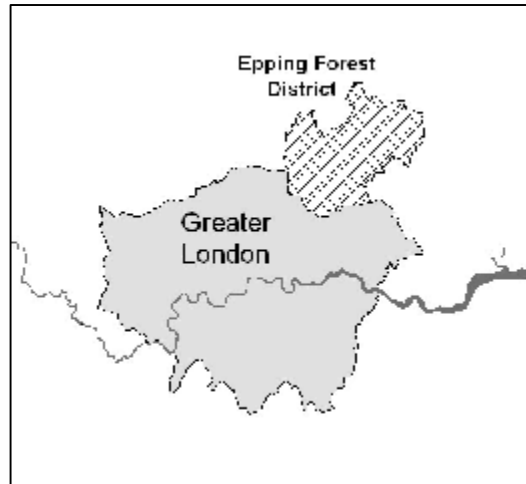
Factors contributing to the character of the conservation area

- The distinct forest edge environment with houses directly facing the forest across the lane.
- Calm and quiet location (excluding school drop off and collection times).
- Unaltered streetscape.
- Colour, texture and general appearance of traditional building materials used in the constructions.

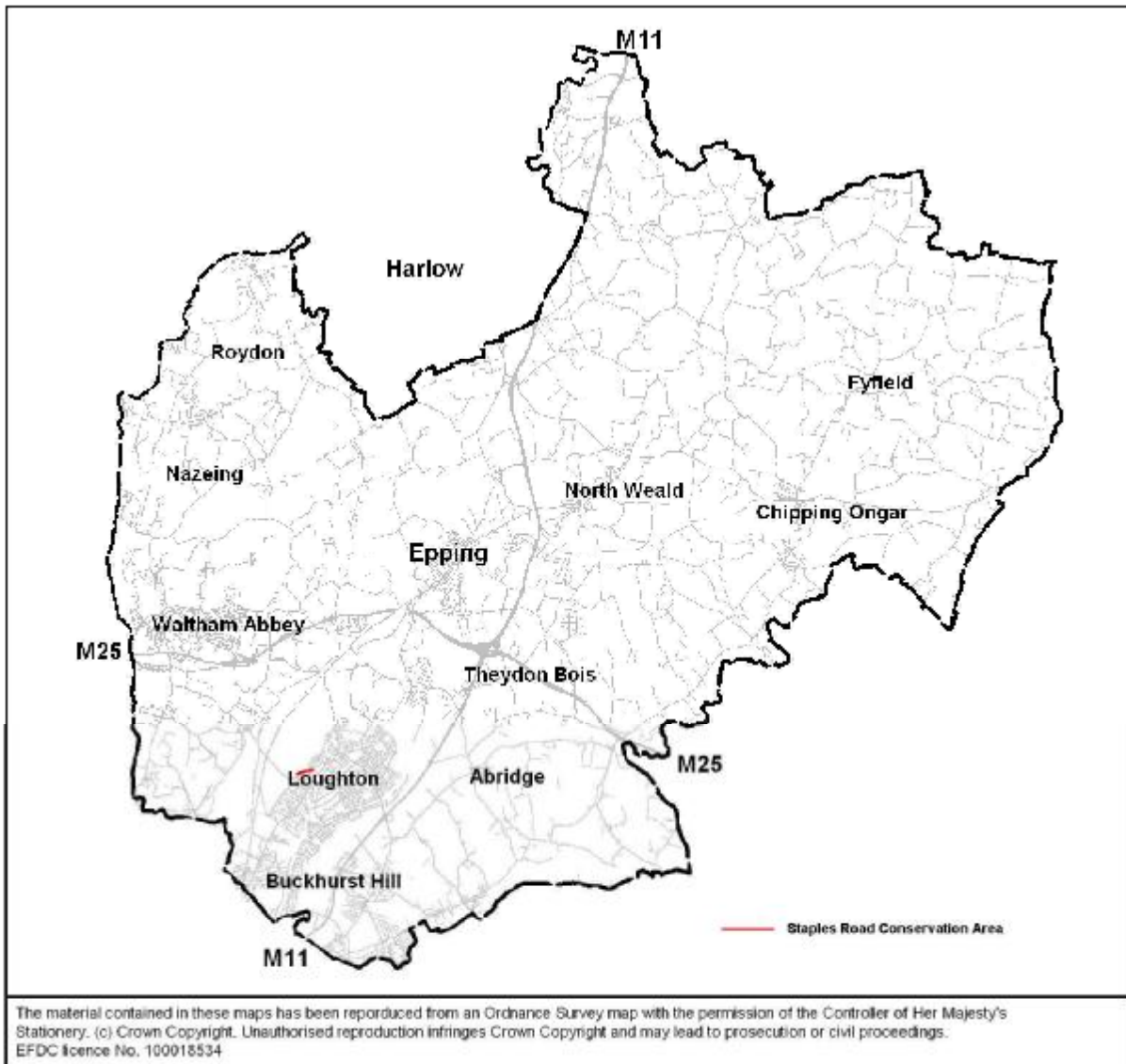
4. Location and Population

Staples Road Conservation Area encompasses the south west section of Staples Road and is situated on the western fringe of Loughton, towards the south of the Epping Forest District, (about 500 yards from Loughton Town centre). It is approximately 4 miles south east of Waltham Abbey, 5 miles south west of Epping and 12 miles north east of the centre of London. The town is also situated just south of the M25 and west of the M11

The conservation area is part of St Mary’s Ward, however, the forest opposite is in St John’s ward. It contains the two schools, 27 houses, and a population of about 60. It is situated less than a mile to the west of York Hill Conservation Area.



Location of Epping Forest District



Location of Staples Road Conservation Area within Epping Forest

5. Topography and Setting

The conservation area lies on the southern slope up to Staples Hill ridge; approximately 45 meters above sea level. At this point on the hill the gravel which covers the top of the ridge meets the clay which covers the bottom. The plots on which the houses are built were the last uncultivated pieces of land to be developed in the area, no doubt due to the high proportion of gravel in the soil. This is also why the boundary of the forest from the medieval period to 1864 finished at what is currently the bottom of Staples Road gardens. The street makes a quiet and peaceful boundary between the Forest and the Town.



The view over Roding Valley from Staples Road



Aerial view showing Staples Road Conservation Area within its setting

6. Historical Development and Archaeology

6.1 Origins and development

The whole conservation area was part of the Forest until December 1864. On the 23rd of that month, the Lord of the Manor; Maitland, enclosed and gave away in quarter acre sections what are now the house plots of the present Staples Road. However, two conditions were imposed; that the plots remain enclosed, and that the recipients give up any claim they might have on the customs and practices of the manor. It is supposed that Maitland had realised his plan to enclose the forest depended on those who had common rights not exercising them.

Some Staples Road residents accepted Maitland's requests without argument, providing the plots we now see today, however, others chose not to accept and it was by doing this that the manorial customs were maintained and later led to the saving of the forest. This was through the custom of lopping trees and the sharing of cattle. In turn, as is pointed out in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* article on Willingale, this was highly influential in the national conservation movement.



Staples Road in 1877 showing the first lopping

Staples Hill was also the traditional place, on 11 November each year, for the ceremony of the first lopping.

Housing development took place slowly, partly due to the legality of the Staples Road enclosures being questioned after the case of *Willingale v Maitland*. Owners did not think it worthwhile to commit to expensive building and therefore, the first houses did not appear until the mid/ late 1870's. These were small cottages

(nos. 23-25, then nos. 17-19). A small cottage, with a shop later attached, was added at the site of nos. 19-21. The first large house was no. 69 (Kent House) which was built around 1878 (later demolished c1960); its site being added to the school. Around the same time Melbourne Cottage (a cottage orne) appeared and these were the only houses marked on the first edition of the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map. The legality of the plots was finally decided by the Epping Forest Arbitration of 1880 that regularised the position. It was decided that the illegal Staples Road enclosures should remain, however, owners would have to pay £50 an acre for acquiring title to the land. After that, there was every incentive to build because of the location immediately adjacent to the Forest and the preservation.



Stapes Road c1900

In the 1880s, several important, landmark larger houses were built, including Glendower and Forest Villa (nos 5-7, in 1882) and Marian and Georgiana villas (nos 35-37, in 1887). Oak Villa was another larger house of this period, but was divided in 1907 into two dwellings, now nos 55-57). Sawpit Cottage, built on the rear of the plot, was the original house on this site and was built of weatherboard, however, it became derelict, and was demolished in the 1970s.

In 1888, the newly appointed Loughton School Board purchased vacant plots at the north end of the street and commissioned James Cubitt to design the boys' school. In 1891 he added the Infant School, which had been on a hut on Harding's clearing opposite, and these two very distinctive buildings now form the Junior School. The 1888 and 1891 buildings are mirror images of each other. Cubitt was an architect of national

and international repute, known mainly for chapels.

By the Edwardian period, another phase of building began to take place, which included the four very distinctive villas (nos. 39-45), the Girls' School (designed for the County Council by Herbert Tooley), and the two infill cottages (nos. 9 and 11 built on what had been a tea garden called the Rustic Retreat). Also built around this period was a detached cottage; built on the backland (named Hardings or Carters Cottage, now no.63) and Hope Cottage (no. 65).

Around 1928, the vacant plot between no 45 and 57, which had been a piggery, was infilled by a pair of semi-detached houses and one detached house, their design being typical of the era.



An early view of Staples Road School

In the 1940s, a HORSAs (Huts for Raising of the School-leaving Age) canteen block was erected between the Girls' and Boys' schools. To compensate for loss of play space, the County Council bought and demolished no.69, whose site is still marked where the frontage changes to chain link fencing and its steps can still be discerned. The canteen survived until 2006, when a purpose built hall replaced it. This was of sympathetic design (the architect was Jeff Collinson) which respected the design of the Victorian schools.

Changes in the 1970s and 80s were relatively few, mostly because many of the houses were either in the hands of private landlords who spent little, or longstanding owner occupiers, and therefore, Staples Road, compared to other local streets, was not altered by PVC and aluminium windows and doors, stone cladding etc.

In 1989, one new house, no 33, was built on a side plot, but here the architect copied the Victorian design of nos. 35-37. In the 1990s, No.5 was given an extension in weatherboard which was built in a manner sympathetic to the character of the building.



View of the Original School c1890

Following the establishment of the conservation area in 1995, there have been relatively few changes.

6.2 Archaeology

There has been no recorded archaeological exploration in the conservation area which was forest land until the latter part of the 19th century.

6.3 Notable people

Several notable people have been associated with Staples Road.

At no. 3 lived first John Dean, reeve of Loughton; and intermittently during its spell as a retreat, Sir John Kirk. It received royal and other distinguished visitors on an annual basis and more than two million child visitors.

Robert Hunter, lexicographer, naturalist, and missionary, had no 7 built to his own design and lived there between 1882 and 1897. In this house he completed his great dictionary, the biggest before the *Oxford*.

Joseph Hawkins Hayward, the first clerk of Loughton Parish and Urban District Councils (UDC) lived at no. 7 between 1897 and 1931.

The house was the first registered address of the Loughton UDC.



The Glasscock family owned nos 9-17 and 27-31. They were notable for two things in Loughton; one, being noted rose growers and nurserymen and secondly, William Glasscock was awarded the Royal Humane Society's medal for saving a child from drowning c1890.

The Willingale family, who were key in the preservation of Epping Forest, owned and ran nos. 19-21, while George Pearson, the school headmaster from 1907-1912, went on to become a distinguished film producer.

7. Character Analysis

7.1 General character and layout

The conservation area is linear, being based solely along Staples Road, at the north west edge of Loughton.

The character of the conservation area derives from the setting of the buildings, the tranquil atmosphere, the unaltered streetscape and the massing of the buildings in a boomerang shape along a quarter-mile length.

7.2 Key views



View along Staples Road

The variety and quality of views are an important part of the conservation area. The primary views are from both ends of the street, with the forest counterbalancing the frontages opposite. Some of the houses are set out individually, and between them, views are offered of Loughton beyond, especially from the school playground and down Staples Hill Path. Other houses are in rows, offering an urban landscape that contrasts strongly with the forest.

Views of the backs of the houses and the gardens are obtained from Staples Hill Path and views of the forest are obtained from all along the road.

At the north east end of the conservation area, York Hill Conservation Area can be seen.

Its position on the ridge makes the Conservation area a prominent feature from several distant viewpoints, including the seat on Nursery Road

Stubbles, Traps Hill, and Chigwell Rise.



View over the school playground

7.3 Character analysis

The length of the conservation area possesses the same character throughout, which is analysed more closely as follows.



Staples Road School

The north end is dominated by the schools, their fine roofscapes, turrets, and chimneys. Tooley, architect of the Infant school, described the degree to which the building's effect could be gauged by its roofline.

The grassed area next to the school abuts the school playground. It contains trees and shrubs which line the roadside, with glimpses of Loughton beyond.

The centre of Staples Road is characterised by the trees of the Forest coming much closer to

the roadside, creating almost a tunnel effect between trees and houses, the streetscape was much improved by reproduction lamp standards erected in 2007. The view down the path then opens up almost as a descent into the unknown between gnarled fruit trees, substantial self-seeded forest trees, and neglected garden ground.

The west end of Staples Road is closed by a five-barred gate and little green. The cottages towards the centre of the road lead on to the four bigger houses; nos. 21, 7, 5 and 3, towards the end of the road, with gaps and passages into the gardens beyond and at the end of the road, an open vista south-west along the course of Shaftesbury. At the end of the road the hammerhead gives rise to views west into and over the dam and Staples Road pond. This end of the road has reproduction lamp standards erected in 2005, which have greatly improved its ambience.

7.4 Buildings of architectural and historic interest

There are several buildings in the conservation area of architectural and historic interest. Their historic origins can be assessed via ordnance survey maps and photographic records post 1908. A complete photographic survey from 1988 is also accessible. This was completed in connection with the school centenary. There are no statutory listed buildings but there are three locally listed and other buildings of townscape merit which are described below and are marked in Appendix 4 (Map 3).

Locally listed buildings

Locally listed buildings

- **Staples Road County Primary School**
- **3 Staples Road**
- **7 Staples Road**

The Local List, which is maintained by the District Council, includes buildings which are considered to be of local architectural or historic importance. No specific consent is needed for alterations to locally listed buildings over and above the normal planning controls, but they do receive special consideration within the normal planning process

and their inclusion on the Local List normally provides a presumption against the redevelopment of the site.

Staples Road County Primary School

These schools were Loughton's main schools from 1888 onwards. Education in the 19th century was provided by the nonconformists in Smarts Lane and by the Church of England in Staples Road (on the site of Ashley Grove). These were amalgamated in 1887, when, under the direction of a School Board, James Cubitt was commissioned to create the new buildings. The first building erected by the Board was the Boys' School, which is the centre building (of the present block). In 1891, the Infant school was built, replacing a wooden building opposite. This is the southern block, which was extended to the south, again to Cubitt's designs of 1904. The legend "Loughton Council Schools" is clearly visible; representative of the county having taken over from the School Board in 1902.

The girls' school was commissioned by the Essex County Council on 12 June 1911, architect, Herbert Tooley. This is the northern block.



Wartime graffiti

The school complex on the edge of the forest, retains its 19th century appearance completely. It was built on a sloping site, with undercrofts to all three buildings. These were originally open, but are now largely infilled to provide extra classroom space. All the blocks are on the hall-classroom principle where the hall can be converted to classrooms by means of partitions. The centre block retains the frames for the dividers and in the south block the hall was divided c 1950. In the centre block, the hall faces north and the

classrooms south; vice-versa in the south block. The architect thus made the schools mirror images of each other.

They are of brick, in Arts and Crafts style, with mouldings and excellent detailing in the same material. Each of Cubitt's buildings is "E" shaped, in mirror formation, and has a frontage of bold gables to the street, and an intricate roofline of red brown tile, with a bell turret. The buildings are divided from the road by brick piers and dwarf walls, surmounted by the original Victorian railings, with matching gates. The doors and windows of the building are still in their original arrangement, mostly sashes with divided panes of 19th century glass, and doors; the centre block entrance is especially interesting, with gas lamp brackets.

"One of his [Cubitt's] best and most consciously arts and crafts groups, a decidedly Brydonian essay in a mix of local red bricks and picked stocks, with hard pressed Birmingham bricks and rounded blue Staffordshire ones, and Reading tiles"

[Binfield, The Contexting of a Chapel Architect, 2000]

The 1911 Girls' School cost £4,041, and complements Cubitt's earlier work. In his speech at the opening day, Tooley described it as owing its massing entirely to the roofline. The walls were of stone bricks relieved by red; the interior featured a teak staircase and dados of glazed brick and terrazzo on the stairs. The school incorporated a separate house for the caretaker.

Forest Villa No.7

Forest Villa was built (as Forest Retreat) by George Beckett in 1882 to the specifications of Dr Robert Hunter who was a Scottish missionary and lexicographer. Hunter compiled most of his 14 volume Encyclopaedic Dictionary (1879-1987) and his Bible Dictionary (1893) in the house. The former being the biggest before the Oxford English Dictionary was released. Hunter used the house not only as his residence, but as a place of refuge for sick children from the Victoria Docks. He died in the house on 25th February 1897. There is now a blue plaque is visible on the house.



Forest Villas, 7 Staples Road, Locally Listed

The appearance of the house is severe; being a Scottish-style detached house, twin double bayed, the bays splayed, with brick piers and stone dressings. The house is built of Woodford red brick, tuck-pointed, under a steep slate roof. Arranged on the half landing principle to take advantage of the hillside site, the rear rooms are about 5ft lower than those at the front. There is a prominent central belvedere, where Hunter conducted astronomical investigations. The house has tall chimney stacks and original doors, shutters, and windows throughout. The front door has never been pierced for a letterbox, and the mechanical bell pull, still in operation, and all other door furniture are original. The rear elevation is plain, all redbrick, with burglar bars to the original ground-floor sash windows. The original clinker-built timber lean-to laundry room was added in 1970 and is hardly visible from street. There is an ugly but concealed 1950s garage. The interior contains most of the original fittings. The garden covers a quarter of an acre, replanned in 1930s by Reginald Lloyd. There is an Edwardian greenhouse and a lattice fence to front. The street aspect is identical to that at the date of building.

Melbourn Cottage/ Shaftesbury Retreat House No.3

Retreats in the Epping Forest area were moderate catering establishments, where large groups of visitors to the forest could be given meals. As such, they were an important part of the social history of leisure in late 19th century London. There were at one time 11 such places, of which

only three have survived, and those only in part. The Shaftesbury Retreat was an unusual one. It started out as the Melbourn Retreat, run by John Dean, in the garden of Melbourn Cottage, 1879, and by 1888 was a fully fledged catering establishment, offering services to visitors. However, in 1894, it was bought by the Ragged School Union for their exclusive use in bringing poor children out from London for a day in the country. Between then and 1939, when it was requisitioned, over 2 million children had been received. The retreat was notable for its Royal patronage after about 1907; in most years, the king or one of the princes came to open it for the season. The feeding barns, extended in 1906 latterly a glassworks, were demolished c1969 and the backland developed, but the Retreat House remains as a private house.



No.3 Melbourn Cottage, Locally Listed

An annexe built in 1895, to the east (No 2 Shaftesbury) also remains, but in very much altered condition. The architect of the original two storey cottage orne is unknown, but alterations and extensions of 1895 were by "Mr Warman", who gave his services for free. In 2008, alterations were made to the design of White and Milesen, including matching dormers on the north east side and changes to the entrance and window openings. The distinctive spiky ridge tiles, many of which had been lost, were matched and replaced.

Decorative bargeboards adorn the main and subsidiary gables along with an Essex pantile roof, decorative ridge tiles and chimney stacks. Verandas exist with some later infilling. Rooms interconnected. Original iron railings remain along with casement windows. An interpretation board exists by the keeper's cottage garden opposite.

Key Buildings of Townscape Merit

Besides the statutory and locally listed buildings,

there are other 'key buildings of townscape merit' which contribute a great deal to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The most important of these have been identified as follows.

Key Buildings of Townscape Merit

- **The Four Sisters nos. 39-45**
- **Marian and Georgiana Villas Nos. 35-37**
- **Willingale Cottage, no. 21**
- **Forest Lodge (formerly Glendower), No. 5**
- **New Hall, Schools**

The first buildings of merit are the houses known as the "four sisters"; nos. 39-45 Staples Road. Each house bares part of the name of the builder's two daughters named Edith Ellen Lawrence and Clara Louisa Lawrence. The houses are square double fronted villas built in 1905 by the architect Mr J Hoghin. They are red brick with stone mullions/dressings. The gables are decorated with bargeboards and deep eaves and the original name of each villa is held on a plaque central to each bay. This group helped to define the character of the Staples Road Conservation Area with their strong lines and links to the start of the 20th century.



The Four Sisters, 35-45 Staples Road, building of key townscape merit

Marian and Georgiana Villas nos. 35-37 are a pair of large semi detached villas from 1887. The architect remains unknown. They are of yellow stock brick with red brick dressings, slate roofs and brick dormers. They have shallow eaves with dentil-cornice, vertically sliding sashes, splayed 2-storey bays and rear square

bays also.



Marian & Georgiana Villas, nos. 35-37, building of townscape merit



Willingale Cottage, No. 21, building of townscape merit

Willingale Cottage No. 21 is a 3-bay replica Victorian villa of 2003-4 (architects: Andrew Smith Associates) replacing the shop and cottage owned by the Willingale family. Reclaimed yellow stocks, unglazed 4 panel door to echo nos 5-7, sliding sashes. Slate roof. Suitably plain and an enhancement to the streetscape.

Forest Lodge No.5 (once Glendower) was constructed by George Beckett (as was no.7), for himself 1882. It is similar to no.7, but a bit larger and of course without belvedere. It has splayed bays with wooden cornerposts, a gable to each bay, terracotta panels, and roof tiled, but somewhat altered with concrete tiles to original pattern. A weatherboarded extension was added in 1995.



Forest Lodge, No. 5, building of townscape merit

7.5 Traditional building materials

The Staples Road Conservation Area has a considerably varied selection of properties in age styles and size which together with the street scenes make a uniquely picturesque area. It was not developed until after the era of timber framing and weatherboarding, therefore brick was the main building component along with slate or tile roofs. A summary of the traditional building materials used in Staples Road is given below;

<u>Traditional Building Materials</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walls: brick • Roofs: tile or slate • Windows & doors: timber • Boundaries: timber, hedges, trees

Walls

Most of the buildings are of standard 9 or 14 inch brickwork laid in traditional bonds, some still with lime mortar. No 7 is tuck-pointed. Dressings are of brick or stone. No 5 has terracotta panels. Only the 1920s houses and nos.3 and 63 (both in part) were rendered. The bricks used are yellow locally made or London stocks, and for the two redbrick houses, soft Woodford reds. Red bricks used as string courses and as decorative features are of different origins. Prof Binfield described the brickwork of the Cubitt schools, particularly well as quoted in section 7.4.

Roofs



Belvedere on the Roof of No.7; Forest Villa

In the conservation area they are traditionally made of tile or slate. The roofs of the two schools are of exceptional extent and quality. Both mediums give an elegant, well-proportioned roof. No.3 retains its original Essex pantiles, with an intricate ridge tile design, while no.7 retains a complex original roof of grey slate. The two 1928 villas have original red pressed clay tiles. No.5 appears to have concrete tiles, but these would seem to be a copy of those originally fitted, as early photographs confirm. There are a number of original dormers, and one or two later ones. The belvedere on no.7, a prominent feature of the road, is of timber construction, from the waist down clad in zinc. Its windows are casements some decades old. The originals, it is thought, were horizontally sliding sashes.



Cupola at the Staples Road Infant School

The cupola of the infant school and gothic timber bell-turret of the former boys' school are noteworthy. Roofs are varied by different styles

of chimney, those on the Junior School and no.3 being specially noteworthy.

Doors and windows

Timber is the traditional and most used material. A feature of the conservation area is the number of original sliding sash windows preserved in the street. Most are vertically divided sash windows, divided once. Examples of this can be seen at Edith, Clara, Louisa and Ellen Villas. Others however, have wooden casements such as no.3 and 63 which were renewed based on the original pattern. Modern equivalents also exist such as replica UPVC sashes.

Fewer original doors have survived, especially in the cottages, but those that do are an exemplary selection. For example, nos. 5 and 7 have their original unglazed 4 panelled doors with stop chamfering, with lights in adjoining panels of etched glass; no 7 retains its original door knocker, central knob, and wire-operated bell. Meanwhile, nos 35-45 all have their original doors, glazed upper panels, most with good coloured glass. Most others doors are later replacements, and only a few are unsympathetic; none of which are of plastic.

Boundary treatments

Traditional boundaries were made up of picket fences and hedges.



Many picket fences survive, including those consisting of straight parallel boards and also the "Loughton lattice" design.

Boundaries between houses are important, and many of these are hedges. The original plot holders mostly chose to separate their ground with hedges, probably by simply laying existing woodland plants in a row; and where they survive, these are now nearly 150 years old and a haven to wildlife.



A more unusual type of boundary originally adorned the Four Sisters. This consisted of Clinker walls, made from gasworks residue. However, these have been demolished since their construction. Cast iron railings, another unusual feature of Staples Road, adorn no. 3, the Shaftesbury Retreat House, but these include later gates.

The rear boundaries of the Staples Road plots was a ditch, which originally extended to the Brook, but drainage to the Drive main sewer was arranged around 1908, and thereafter the ditch south west of the path became disused while the upper part still runs. The rear gardens of nos. 25-29 were truncated to provide development plots; these are now overgrown, but a valuable terrain for wild flowers such as primroses and bluebells.

Street furniture



The most prominent items of street furniture in the conservation area are the reproduction Victorian lamp posts which have been fitted outside the houses.

Just outside the conservation area at the western end of the road, the road closure is made of wooden jockey rails and a five-bar gate; appropriate for its setting. There are some areas such as signage and road markings which are, however, in need of enhancement.

7.6 Contribution made by trees, hedges and green spaces



Notable tree on forest land opposite the urban side of Staples Road

Trees are a very important feature of this Conservation Area due to the proximity of the forest. These include some notable oaks, pines, a magnolia and a rhododendron. For more information on preserved trees in the area, please contact the trees team at Epping Forest District Council.

Hedges are also a feature of the area; used as boundaries to properties. Some contain at least 12 tree/shrub species and other hedging plants have become full-grown trees since their original plantation. These hedges thus have the biodiversity of hedgerows several centuries old, to which later species (e.g. forsythia) have been added.

7.7 Activity and movement

Staples Road is predominantly residential but also includes a school complex. Since the road was closed to through traffic in 1992, the area has remained tranquil, being accessed only by residents, however, on the north east end of the street, traffic is busy at school drop off and pick

up times.

At weekends and off peak times, the road (which is included in the “Walk Round Loughton”) is used by horse-riders, cyclists, and walkers, both locals and visitors. As there are three pubs at one end of the road and two at the other, there is sometimes traffic of revellers passing through.

8. Opportunities for Enhancement

8.1 General threats to the character of the conservation area

Common threats to conservation areas include the replacement of windows and doors with unsympathetic uPVC or aluminium equivalents and the destruction of traditional frontages to houses.

However, these have been protected against since 1996, with the introduction of an article 4(2) direction which withdraws certain permitted development rights from residents. Please see Section 11; General Guidance for further information on this.

There could also be the perceived threat of development on forest land opposite the urban side of the street, however, this is protected under the ownership of the City of London. New development is therefore against the principles of the conservation of this land.

8.2 Areas for enhancement

Areas for enhancement specific to the Staples Road Conservation Area will evolve from the public consultation meeting. This section will be added to and details of opportunities for enhancement given, following the consultation response.

9. Conservation Area Boundary

9.1 Current conservation area boundary

One of the purposes of a character appraisal is to review the boundaries of the conservation area. The current boundary, which was originally drawn up in 1995, encompasses most of Staples Road, from no.3 at the south west end of the road to the end of school complex. It does not include any part of the forest but stretches back to the rear plots of the houses.

A map of the current area can be found in Appendix 4, Map 1.

9.2 Areas that could be included

There may be a wish to extend the conservation area. Any further areas proposed for inclusion in the conservation area will be considered and decided on following the public consultation.

10. Community Involvement

10.1 Involving local people

Community involvement is an integral part of the appraisal process. The Council aims to take into account the local residents' views in defining the special interest of the conservation area and formulating strategies for its improvement and management. The comments and suggestions of a number of local residents and amenity groups will be taken into account in the publication of the final version of this document. Loughton Town Council and local organisations such as the Hills Amenity Society and the Loughton Historical Society will be consulted on the draft appraisal and a public meeting will be held in the area to discuss its content. A copy of the draft will be posted on the Council's website between September 2010 and October 2010

and hard copies of the draft will be available on request. In order to inform local residents of the public consultation period, flyers and posters will be distributed in the conservation area.

10.2 Timetable

May 2008 – September 2010	Draft appraisal prepared
September 2010	Public Consultation
November 2010	Finalising Report
January 2011	Publication

11. General Guidance

It is the intention of Epping Forest District Council to make use of its powers to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of its conservation areas. The following is general guidance aimed at controlling and guiding change within Staples Road Conservation Area in order to ensure that it is properly maintained as a heritage asset. The Council's local plan policies (adopted 1998) regarding conservation areas are set out in Appendix 1.

11.1 Views and setting

It is important that the significant views both within and out of the conservation area are preserved and, where possible, enhanced. Any development in or around the conservation area should respect the nature of these views and contribute positively to them.

11.2 Architectural details

As set out in the Council's local plan policy regarding the demolition of buildings in conservation areas (policy HC9), there will be a strong presumption towards the retention of all historic buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. There will also be a presumption in favour of the retention of original historic features such as traditional doors, windows and railings as these features contribute a great deal of interest and value to the townscape. When historic features need replacing, a like-for-like approach should be taken wherever possible. The reinstatement of traditional features should always be based on a sound understanding of the original structure and, where possible, historical evidence.

11.3 Traditional building materials

The use of traditional materials will be encouraged in the construction of new buildings or extensions to existing buildings in the conservation area. Modern materials such as concrete, uPVC and aluminium will be discouraged as these will generally be out of character with the conservation area and can erode its quality and historic interest.

11.4 Trees and open spaces

Trees, hedges and open green spaces are an integral part of the character of the conservation area and the Council will endeavour to retain

them where possible. The Council has stated in the local plan that it will not give consent to any work to trees that could be detrimental to the character, appearance or setting of the conservation area (policy HC6).

11.5 Public realm

It is important that the quality of the conservation area is maintained to a high standard and improved where possible. In general, signs and other street furniture should be designed to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area. They should also be kept to a minimum to preserve the character of the area. It is the Council's policy to ensure that public utility companies and the Highway Authority consider the character of conservation areas when carrying out works within them (policy HC8).

11.6 New development

It is recognised that conservation areas must evolve to meet changing demands and that new additions can make a positive contribution to the character of a conservation area if of a high quality, and sympathetic to their surroundings. Any new development should be in keeping with the character and appearance of that particular part of the conservation area in terms of scale, density, massing, height, layout, building line, landscape and access. New development should also be composed of traditional facing materials (policy HC7).

11.7 Activity and uses

The conservation area is a small urban settlement on the edge of the Forest, whose environment is protected by the absence of through traffic.

11.8 Renewable energy & technology

In recent years, there has been a growing tendency to install satellite dishes and communications towers prominently on the top of buildings. Interest in the use of renewable energy systems such as wind turbines and solar panels on individual residential properties will also have to be monitored. In order to preserve the character of the conservation area, permission will only be granted for such fixtures where they are installed in undamaging and visually unobtrusive positions. It should be noted

that such fixtures will rarely be acceptable on statutorily listed buildings (policy CP10, local plan alterations, 2006).

11.9 Alterations under Article 4(2)

As of 1996, certain changes made to properties within the Staples Road Conservation Area require planning permission where usually this wouldn't be required. This was brought in to effect in order to conserve the character of the area and protect it from potential threats. Owners must therefore apply for permission in the case of any of the following alterations which would front the public highway;

(a) The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling-house (*this includes the replacement of windows and doors, extensions and rendering as some examples*);

(b) the alteration of a dwelling-house roof (*this includes stales and tiles, dormer windows and rooflights as examples*);

(c) the erection or construction of a porch;

(d) the provision within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse of any building or enclosure,

swimming or other pool, or the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of such a building or enclosure;

(e) the provision of a hard surface in the front garden of a house;

(f) the installation, alteration or replacement of a satellite antenna on a dwellinghouse or within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse;

(g) the erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure;

(h) the painting of the exterior of any building or enclosure within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse;

(i) any building operation consisting of the demolition of the whole or any part of any gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse.

Please note that these are summarised guidance and before any works are carried out in the conservation area, residents are advised to contact the Conservation Officer at Epping Forest District Council.

12. Management Plan

It is important that the character of the conservation area is preserved and, where possible, enhanced in order to maintain its special interest. The following section outlines the Council's objectives for the preservation and enhancement of Staples Road Conservation Area over the next five years.

Following the public consultation any proposals put forward will be considered and an action plan for the preservation and enhancement of the Staples Road Conservation Area will be drawn up.

12.1 Conservation Area Management Plan

CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

General management objectives to preserve and enhance the conservation area

1. Ensure that any new development is to a high standard and is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the conservation area in terms of scale, massing, style and materials.
2. Discourage the use of unsympathetic modern materials such as uPVC, untreated aluminium and concrete roof tiles.
3. Ensure that the clean and tidy environment expected in a conservation area is maintained.

Short term objectives for enhancement

4. Discuss with local community groups how we can inform new residents and businesses that their properties are in a conservation area and the responsibility that this entails.
5. Carry out an audit of street furniture with particular reference to repair or replacing where necessary.
6. Assess the current conservation area boundary and see if any alterations need to be made.

Medium term objectives for enhancement

7. Evaluate the visual impact and necessity of signage in the conservation area with a view to removing any unnecessary signs and replacing those necessary ones with more sympathetic alternatives.

13. Bibliography

- Information taken, with permission from
The Buildings of Loughton 2003, Loughton and District Historical Society, 2003, Author: Chris Pond
- Images courtesy of;
 - (i) The Waller Collection
 - (ii) Loughton Historical Society

14. Acknowledgements

We are indebted to the many local people who, from personal interest or as representatives of local organisations, have taken the time and trouble to contribute to the development of this Character Appraisal and Management Plan. This has involved attending meetings, carrying out an inordinate amount of legwork in order to compile the townscape survey and to take photographs. This groundwork contributed to the formulation of the original draft. Without this invaluable support we would be unable to produce this document at this time. Particular thanks are due to:-

Alan Enguell, Anne Pratt, Chris Pond, Diane Rhodes, Esther Law, Ian Locks, Jeremy Penn,

Lisa Godsalve, Mark Hines, Matthew Geyman, Richard Caterer, Stephen Pewsey, and Wendy Fisher

Photographs Courtesy of:

The Percy Thompson Collection, Loughton Historical Society, Chris Pond, Diane Rhodes, Ian Locks and Matthew Geyman – Copyright remains with the holders.

Apostrophes:

After much debate it was decided to omit apostrophes from all street and public house names as there is no consistency of use.

Appendix 1. Relevant National Guidance and Local Plan Policies

National Guidance

There are several special restrictions that apply to conservation areas. These are in addition to normal planning controls. For further information please contact the Development Control Office.

Consent must be obtained from the District Council for the demolition of any building within the conservation area – this may also include gates, walls and fences.

You must give the District Council six weeks notice in writing before felling or cutting back any tree unless the tree is:

- dead, dying or dangerous;
- causing a nuisance in law;
- a cultivated fruit tree;
- less than 7.5cm in diameter when measured 1.5m (4' 10") above the ground.

Some additional restrictions apply to the siting of advertising hoardings or other advertisements, satellite dishes and chimneys.

Epping Forest District Local Plan Policies (Adopted January 1998)

POLICY HC6

Within or adjacent to a conservation area, the Council will not grant planning permission for any development, or give listed building consent or consent for works to trees, which could be detrimental to the character, appearance or setting of the conservation area.

POLICY HC7

Within conservation areas, all development and materials will be required to be of a particularly high standard to reflect the quality of the environment. Development should:

- (i) be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the conservation area in terms of scale, density, massing, height, layout, building line, landscape and access;
- (ii) have traditional pitched roofs and create a roofscape with sufficient features to provide an appropriate degree of visual interest in keeping with the character of the conservation area;

(iii) be composed of facing materials chosen from the traditional range used in the district;

(iv) have facades which:

(a) provide an appropriate balance between horizontal and vertical elements, and proportions of wall to window area;

(b) incorporate a substantial degree of visual intricacy, compatible with that of the facades of historic buildings; and

(v) where applicable, be of a scale compatible with any adjacent historic buildings.

POLICY HC8

The Council will seek to ensure that all public utility companies and the highway authority have regard to the need to preserve the character of conservation areas when considering works within them.

POLICY HC9

The Council will only grant consent for the demolition of a building in a conservation area where the building does not make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of that area, or where the redevelopment proposal preserves or enhances that character or appearance. Any consent may be subject to:

- (i) planning permission having already been granted for the redevelopment of the site; and
- (ii) a legal agreement that the building is not demolished before a contract for the redevelopment of the site has been made.

POLICY HC10

The Council will not give consent for works to the interior or exterior of a listed building which could detract from its historic interest or architectural character and appearance.

POLICY HC11

The Council will not give consent for the demolition of a listed building unless it can be shown, to the satisfaction of the Council, that there are very exceptional circumstances as to why the building cannot be retained and returned to an appropriate use.

POLICY HC12

The Council will not grant planning permission for development which could adversely affect the setting of a listed building.

POLICY HC13

The adaptation or conversion of a listed building to a new use may be permitted where:

- i) This can be shown to be the only way to retain the special architectural or historic interest of the building;
- ii) Any proposed alterations respect and conserve the internal and external characteristics of the building and do not diminish its special architectural or historic interest; and
- iii) The immediate and wider landscape settings of the building are respected.

Substantial reconstructions or extensions, and sub-divisions into more than one unit will not be permitted. Conditions may be imposed to control land use or development rights associated with the converted building.

POLICY HC13A (adopted in 2006)

The Council will prepare a list of buildings of local architectural or historic importance (the 'local list'). Maintenance of these buildings will be encouraged and they will receive special consideration in the exercise of the development control process.

POLICY CP10 (ADOPTED IN 2006)

Proposals for renewable energy schemes will be permitted provided there is no significantly adverse effect upon:

- (i) existing land uses from loss of visual amenity, noise, pollution or odour;
- (ii) the local highway network including the convenience and safety of road users;
- (iii) telecommunications networks, radar installations and flight paths for aircraft;
- (iv) sites of importance for nature conservation (ie. Statutory and locally designated sites), conservation areas, schedules ancient monuments and other nationally important remains and their settings, listed buildings and their settings, or landscape character.

In granting permission for the scheme the Council may require, by use of Section 106 Obligations and/ or planning conditions, that (a) appropriate mitigation measures are provided to ensure compliance with criteria (i) to (iv) above, and other relevant policies in the Plan and, (b) that the application site is fully returned to a condition appropriate for its previous use when or if the scheme is decommissioned or becomes redundant.

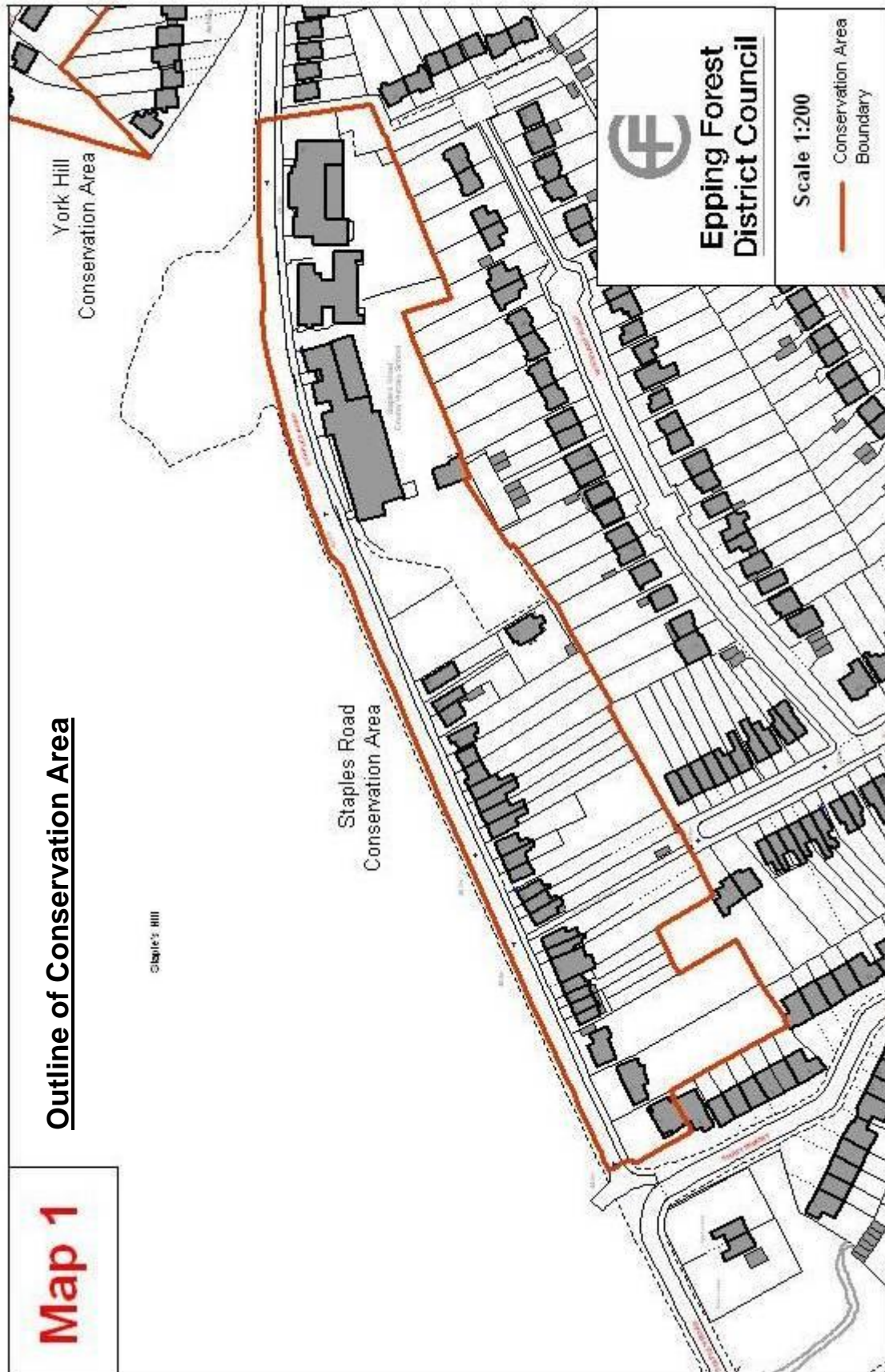
Appendix 2. Townscape Survey

No.	Name/ Number of Building (all on Staples Road)	Building Merit				Key features of the building				Elements which detract from the conservation area character				
		Locally listed	Building of townscape merit	Blue Plaques	Impact on conservation area*	Age	Type**	Walls***	Boundary****	Upvc /aluminium windows	Upvc/ aluminium doors	Concrete roof tiles (or similar)	Elements in need of repair or maintenance	Satellite dish on façade
1	3, Melbourne Cottage	Y			P	C19	D	RB	RH					
2	5, Glendower/ Forest Lodge		Y		P	C19	D	RB/WB	CLH/H			•		
3	7, Forest Retreat/ Forest Villa	Y		Y	P	C19	D	RB	CL/CLH					
4	9 (no.4)				O	C19	TC	SB/RB	CP/PL			•		
5	11 (no.3)				O	C19	TC	SB/RB	CP/PL	•		•		
6	15 (no. 2)		Y		P	C19	TC	SB/RB	PP/PL			•		
7	17 (no.1)		Y		P	C19	TC	SB/RB	PP/PL			•		
8	21, Willingale Cottage		Y		P	C21	LD	YB/RB	PL/W					
9	23				O	C19	TC	PB	PP			•		
10	25				O	C19	TC	R/RB	PP			•		
11	27 (1 Holly Cottages)				O	C19	TC	SB/RB	CP					
12	29 (2 Holly Cottages)				O	C19	TC	SB/RB	CP					
13	31 (3 Holly Cottages)				O	C19	TC	SB/RB	CP					
14	33				O	C20	SDV	SB/RB	W					
15	35, Marian Villa		Y		P	C19	SDV	SB/RB	W/H					
16	37, Georgiana Villa		Y		P	C19	SDV	SB/RB	W/H					
17	39, Louisa Villa		Y		P	C20	TV	RB/STD	CIW/H					
18	41, Clara Villa		Y		P	C20	TV	RB/STD	CIW/H					
19	43, Ellen Villa		Y		P	C20	TV	RB/STD	CIW					
20	45, Edith Villa		Y		P	C20	TV	RB/STD	CIW					
21	47				O	C20	SD	R/RB	NONE					
22	49				O	C20	SD	R/RB	NONE					
23	51				O	C20	D	R/RB	W				•	
24	57, Oak Villa				O	C19	SD	SB/RB	CP	•				
25	59, Oak Villa				O	C19	SD	SB/RB	CP	•				
26	63, Hardings Cottage				O	C20	DC	SB/RB	NONE					
27	65, Hope Cottage				O	C19	DC	SB/RB	R	•		•		
28	Junior School ex Infants	Y		Y	P	C19	Sch	YB/RB	R&W					
29	Junior School ex Boys'	Y			P	C19	Sch	YB/RB	R&W					
30	Infant school ex Girls'	Y			P	C20	Sch	YB/RB	R&W					
31	Hall				O	C21	Sch	YB/RB/BB						
Key	<p>* P = Positive, N = Negative, O = Neutral</p> <p>** D = Detached, SD = Semi detached, T = Terraced, C = Cottage, V = Villa, Sch = School</p> <p>*** RB = Red brick, WB = Weatherboarding, SB = Stock Brick, STD = Stone, PB = Painted Brick, R = Render, YB = Yellow Brick, LD = Link Detached, BB = Blue Brick</p> <p>**** R = Railings, H = Hedge, CL = Creosoted Lattice Fence, CP = Creosoted Picket Fence, PP = Painted Picket Fence, CI = Clinker, W = Wall, P = Picket Fence</p>													

Appendix 3. Glossary of Terms

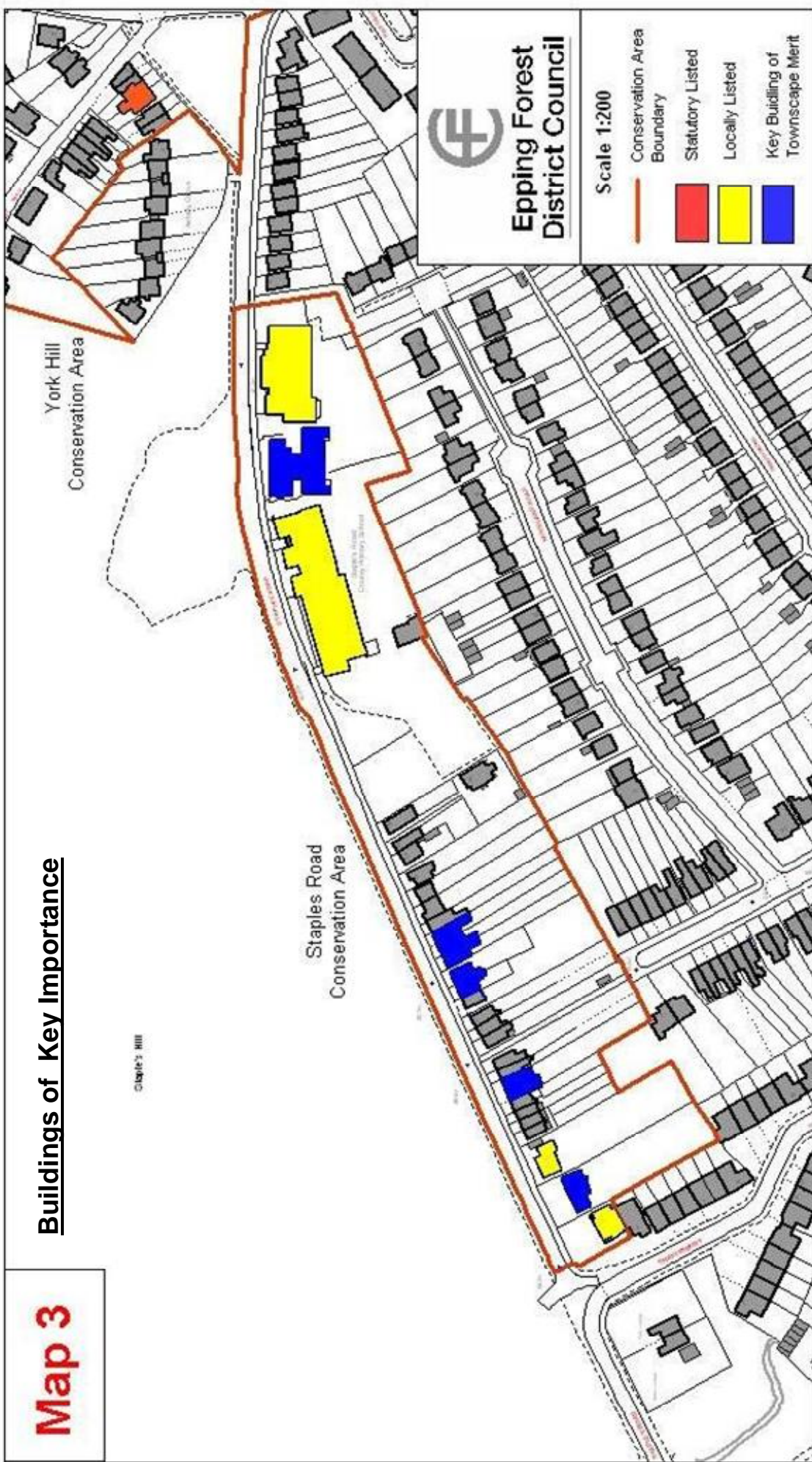
Bargeboard	A timber piece fitted to the outer edge of a gable, sometimes carved for decorative effect.
Belvedere	A roofed structure, especially a small pavilion or tower on top of a building, situated so as to command a wide view
Casement	Side hinged window.
Cinquefoil	An ornamental foliation in panels or tracery so called because it is arranged around five intervals, known as foils or cusps, that describe the outlines of five leaves or petals.
Console	An ornamental bracket with a compound curved outline.
Cupola	A vaulted roof/ceiling, a small dome set on a circular or polygonal base or resting on pillars, a domelike structure surmounting a roof or dome.
Feather-edged	Boards fixed with their thin edge upwards, then overlapped by the next board, thick edge down, with any rebate helping to keep out rain and wind
Flemish Bond	Brickwork with alternating headers (short ends) and stretchers (long sides) showing.
Gable	The vertical part of the end wall of a building contained within the roof slope, usually triangular but can be any 'roof shape'.
Orne	A rustic building of picturesque design
Pantile	Curved, interlocking roof tile of S-shaped section usually made of clay or concrete.
Pargetting	The use of external lime plaster in a decorative manner with incised or moulded surfaces, especially timber-framed houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
Pilasters	A shallow pier or rectangular column projecting slightly from a wall.
Quatrefoil	In the shape of a four leaf clover or circular with four foils enclosed.
Rendering	The covering of outside walls with a uniform surface or skin for protection from the weather. Cement rendering: a cheaper substitute for stucco (fine lime plaster), usually with a grainy texture.
Sash window	A window that slides vertically or horizontally on a system of cords and balanced weights.
Stock brick	A traditional clay brick commonly used in house construction; often called London stocks because of the frequency of use locally. May be yellow or red in colour.
Undercrofts	An underground room or vault

Appendix 4: Maps



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