

Report title



Knutsford

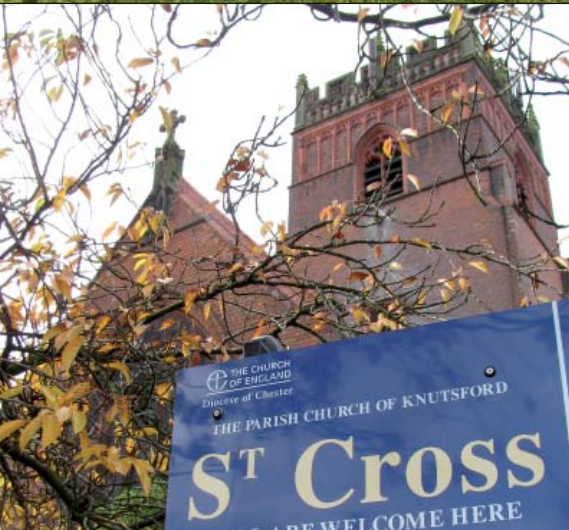
Neighbourhood Plan

Character Assessment

2018

in support of the Knutsford
Neighbourhood Plan







Contents

Introduction	4
Historical Timeline	6
Choosing the Character Areas	8
Character Areas:	
1 - Sanctuary Moor and Southern Settlement	10
2 - South West Residential	15
3 - North West Knutsford and Mereheath Park	20
4 - The Heath	25
5 - Town Centre and The Moor	30
6 - Cross Town	36
7 - Mobberley Road West Residential Estates	41
8 - Manor Park	45
9 - South East Chelford Road Residential Estates	49
10 - Shaw Heath and Longridge	53
11 - North East Trading Estate Area	57
12 - Tatton Park	60
13 - Booths Park	63
Monitoring and Review	67

Introduction

The Knutsford Character Assessment forms part of the Knutsford Design Framework; a suite of documents prepared in support of the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan. The Character Assessment has been prepared in order to establish a baseline for analysis of the townscape character of the Town. This document provides a detailed analysis of the character of the Town and guidance on the key features of that character which should therefore be taken into account when new development of any type comes forward. This document should be read in conjunction with the Knutsford Design Guide.

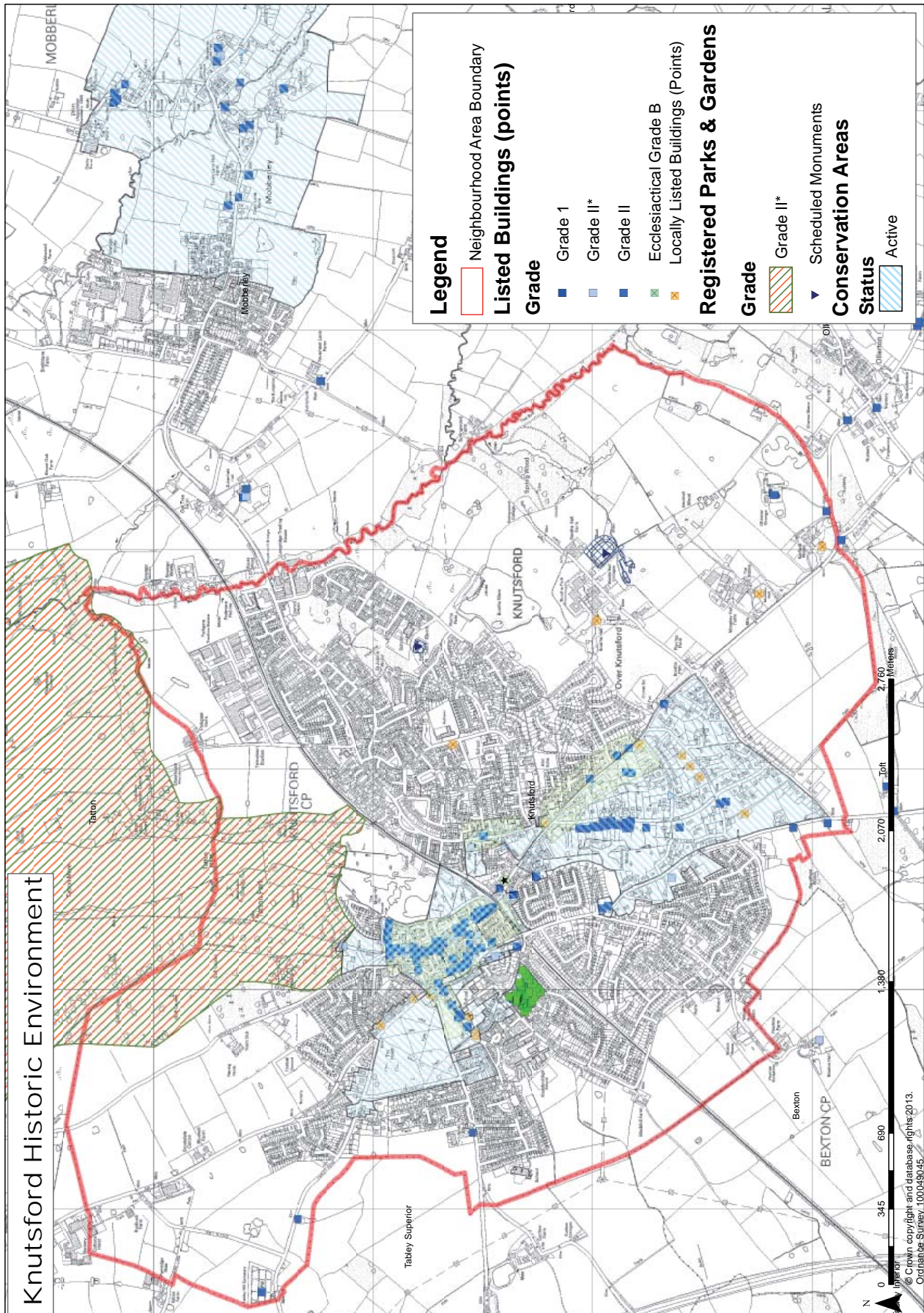
The Knutsford Character Assessment has identified 13 Character Areas. These are predominantly urban in character but, include areas of parkland, common land and open space at the settlement edge. Each Character Area is assessed under the following topics:

1. Topography
2. Land Use
3. Layout
4. Landscaping
5. Open Spaces
6. Landmarks
7. Streetscape
8. Views and Vistas
9. Heritage and Archaeology

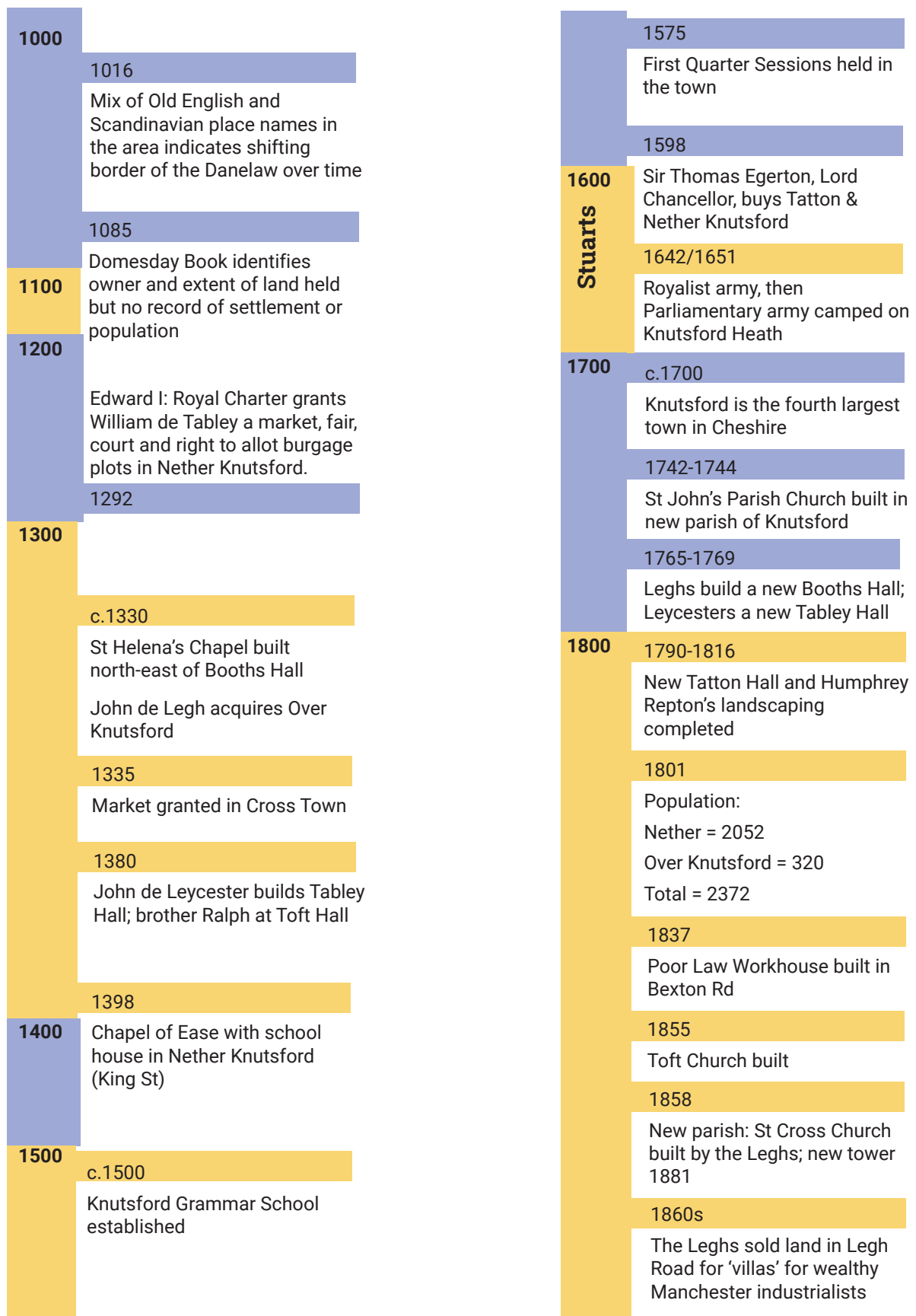
These nine topics create an accessible summary .Each Character Area is accompanied by photographs identifying key features set out within the section's text. Also included is a map of each Area showing its extent and a detailed spatial townscape analysis. Each section concludes with a summary of the key elements of the character which should be taken into account when proposing new development or works within each area. This summary box identifies key materials, colours and architectural and natural features which help create and distinguish the identity of each area.

A brief history of Knutsford is provided within the introductory chapters including a timeline which puts the construction of some of the Town's key buildings into historical context.





Knutsford Historical Timeline





1862	Manchester-Altrincham railway extended to Knutsford
1871	Town Hall designed by Waterhouse (now 'Lost and Found')
1895	Knutsford designated an Urban District Council (UDC) Richard Harding Watt built The Old Croft and eight more villas in Legh Road
1900	
1901	Population of Knutsford 5172
1902	Watt built Ruskin Rooms and Laundry in Drury Lane
1907	Watt's King's Coffee House and Gaskell Memorial Tower built
1911	Conservative Club built (now OKA)
1914-1918	180 Knutsford men gave their lives in the First World War
1922	War Memorial Hospital completed; Heathfield Square started by Knutsford UDC
1922 - 1932	Development and infill along Manchester Rd; Northwich Rd; Bexton Rd; east end of Garden Rd; George St; Mobberley Rd.
1930 - 1932	Shaw Heath; Market Place housing built by Knutsford UDC

1935	Marcliffe Cinema opened (now Curzon)
1936-7	King Edward Road constructed (named after Edward VIII)
1939 -1945	63 Knutsford men and one woman killed in Second World War
1948 -1965	Thorneyholme estate; Five Oaks Estate: 286 houses on Mobberley Rd (by KUDC)
1950 - 1975	Owner-occupied housing: Grove Park, Meadow Drive, Woodvale Road; Queensway, Glebelands, Manor Park, Carrwood, Ashworth Park, Boothfields, the Downs, Mereheath, Sunley estates
1959 - 1974	M6 construction; excavated earth from the M6 raised level of The Moor
1975	Longridge (Manchester overspill) housing estate completed
1981	New St Vincent's Church, George Street
2000	
2001	Population 12,656; New Knutsford Library built on Toft Rd opened 2002
2007	Regent Street development
2010	Sessions House closed as a court (now Court House Hotel)

Choosing the Character Areas

The Character Areas set out within this assessment have been devised as part of a multi stage process through partnership between Town Planning students at the University of Manchester, the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan Heritage Working Group and Urban Imprint, the project consultants.

The students conducted a town walkover in order to categorise the areas of the town into character areas. Prior to this site work they conducted a desktop study using mapping to identify patterns and differences within the built form (looking at densities, land use, grid patterns). The team split into sub groups and used a standardised proforma to catalogue the character of each part of the town according to set variables. For example topography, landforms, blue and green infrastructure, accessibility, transport infrastructure, street hierarchy and road networks, urban grain and townscape. This approach sought to ensure consistency in analysing the town and ultimately enabled comparison between the character areas identified.























The Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan Heritage Working Group consists of a number of local residents involved in local heritage and conservation groups, many with a professional background in the sector. The group have been maintaining a photographic record of the town over the past decade and this proved to be an excellent resource for this project. Using this resource in combination with their knowledge of the town and conducting additional walkovers the heritage group refined the character area boundaries based on detailed knowledge of the streets and spaces of the town in order to arrive at the 13 character areas set out on the Character Areas Map.

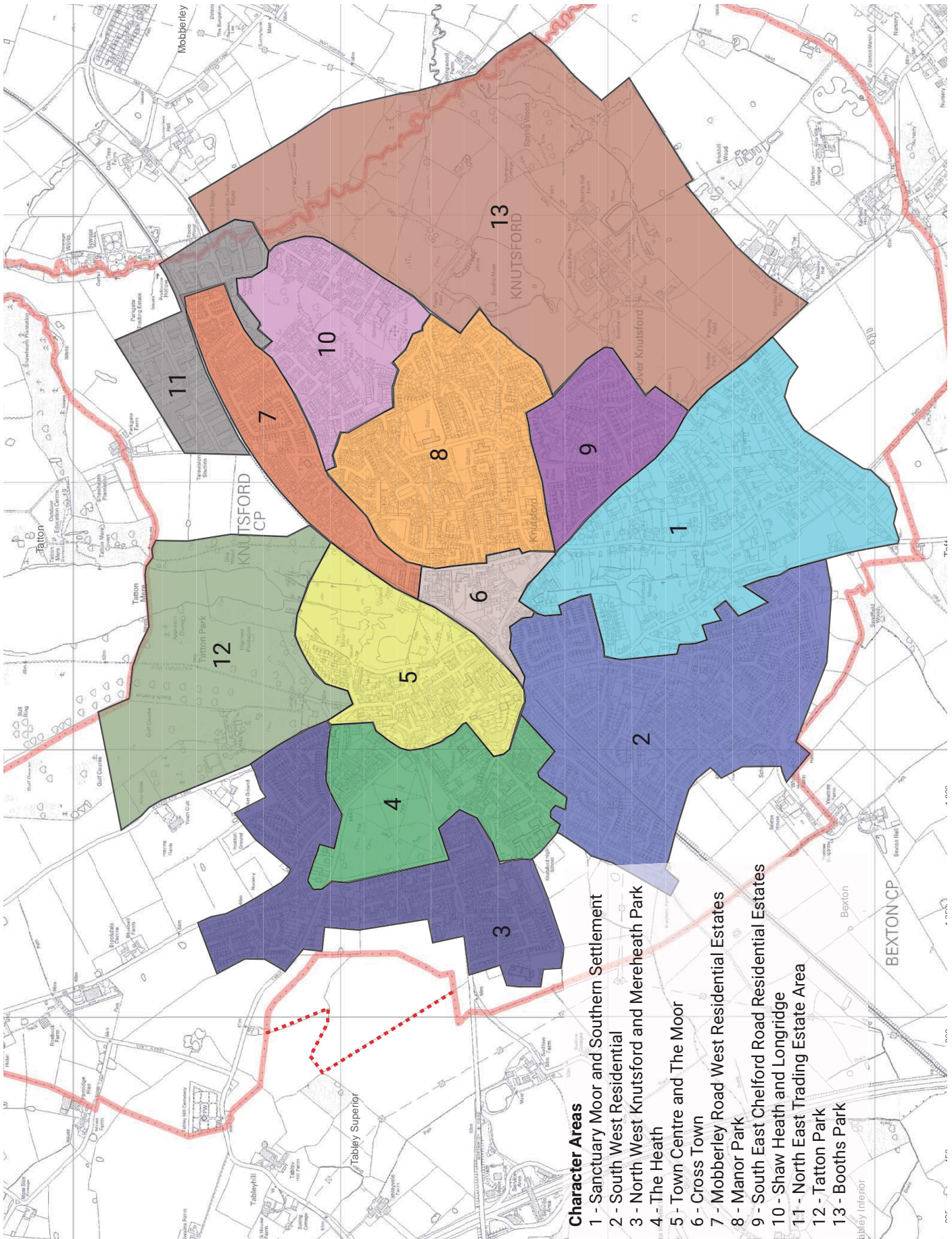
The Heritage Group in partnership with Urban Imprint then prepared a townscape analysis of each character area based on the work of urban designer Kevin Lynch. This is presented in each map which accompanies the assessment of each character area.

In addition to this work, a basic palette has been provided at the end of each section to summarise the overarching use of materials and to draw out any other key features such as architectural detailing and boundary treatments.

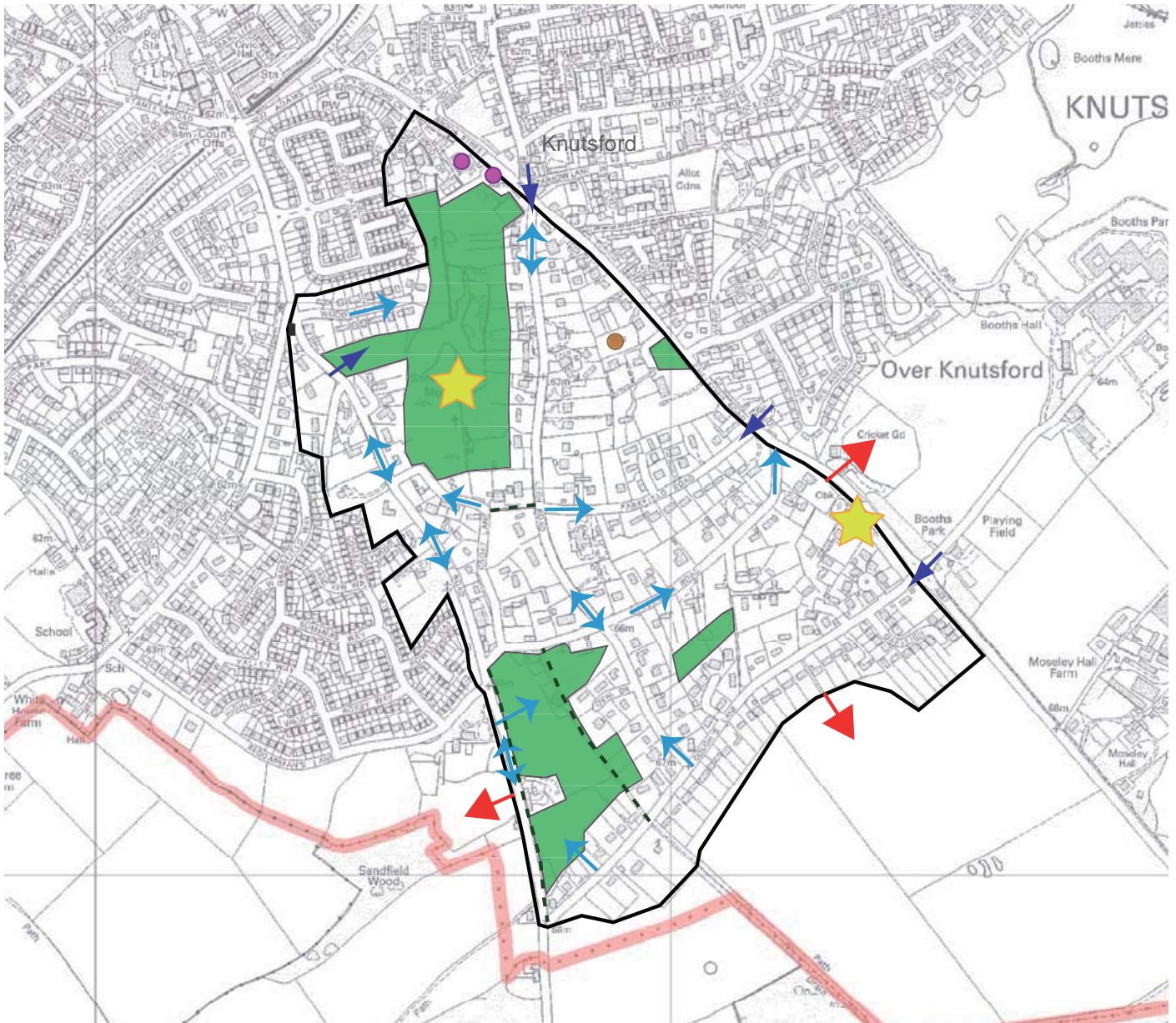
Character Area Analysis

KEY

-  Community use
-  Educational use
-  Civic use
-  Commercial use
-  Sheltered living
-  Healthcare use
-  Leisure and sport use
-  Industrial use
-  Parking
-  Character Area boundary
-  Footpath
-  View into the settlement
-  View from the settlement
-  View within the settlement
-  Vista
-  Open space
-  Conservation Area
-  Leisure and sport use
-  Commercial use
-  Industrial use
-  Landmark
-  Bridge/tunnel



1 - Sanctuary Moor and Southern Settlement





1 - Sanctuary Moor and Southern Settlement

The majority of the settlement within Character Area 1 is designated as the Legh Road Conservation Area. It is situated to the south of the town centre with the A50, Toft Road, on its western edge: instead of the A537, Chelford Road on its eastern edge: instead of, Gough's Lane as its southern edge and Woodvale Road and Lilybrook to the north. It has an overall sylvan character, with large tree-filled gardens and tree-lined avenues to the south in the Legh Road/ Leicester Road residential area, and with the tree-filled wilderness that is the bowl of Sanctuary Moor in the north. The sylvan character makes it both an attractive residential area and a green corridor for wildlife to move to and from the open countryside.

Topography:

The land is flat except in the region of Sanctuary Moor which is a deep peaty depression within the 50m contour in between Toft Road and Legh Road. The land to the rear of the properties on the western edge of Legh Road and on the eastern edge of Toft Road slopes steeply down to Sanctuary Moor as does Woodvale Road and Croft Lane. The topography of Sanctuary Moor is such that water naturally drains from a higher level at the southern end

(Croft Lane) to the northern end (Lilybrook) and then into the Moor pool via the River Lily in the town centre. Sanctuary Moor is a designated SBI Grade A.

Land Use:

The area is almost exclusively residential. Commercial use comprises one block of offices (on Brook Street), a pub with restaurant (on Chelford Road) and a petrol station with small retail outlet (on Toft Road). A small car maintenance workshop unit is situated on Toft Road at Paradise Green. Leisure and sport use comprises a hall with meeting and snooker rooms on Brook Street and a bowling green and club house on Chelford Road.

Layout:

Generally the layout of the settlement is irregular. Most of the roads have gentle curves and the prestigious, usually detached houses sit well back from the road within generous plots that vary in size and shape. There is a high degree of separation between buildings, particularly in locations where the historic plot ratios have been upheld. Thus the settlement is of low density (the lowest within the town) with an openness and spaciousness that contributes significantly to the character of the conservation area and its sense of place. Although most

of the roads through the area are wide there are lanes (such as Croft Lane) and footpaths which are sinuous, narrow and rural in character. A number of cul-de-sacs exist throughout the area, two in Gough's Lane with gated access. These have been built on land that has been subdivided into much smaller plots in sharp contrast to earlier developments. A small number of terraced or semi-detached historic estate cottages are located on small regular plots, in many instances, fronting the road.

Landscaping:

Sanctuary Moor is part of the natural landscape as are the agricultural land known as Dairy Farm Field at the southern end of the CA alongside Toft Road. Both are inaccessible to the public. In the case of Dairy Farm Field as it is enclosed by post and rail fencing and is cultivated by a local farmer. In the case of Sanctuary Moor the majority of it is surrounded on virtually all sides by residential gardens. On Legh Road near its junction with Chelford Road, spaces between the Watt buildings such as Lake House 'frame' a distant view of Sanctuary Moor. The area is inaccessible due to its dense vegetation and boggy ground, which enables wildlife to flourish undisturbed. It is a designated Local Wildlife Site. There are some areas of openwater and ornamental ponds that were created by Watt on the

boundaries of the gardens of the houses of Legh Road. The River Lily's source is this body of water and the natural drainage that comes from the surrounding roads, gardens/land and historic drainage channels. The river Lily flows towards Brook Street where it enters a culvert under the road.

In general, there is a high degree of private planting both on the boundaries and within the grounds of the houses within the area. A most important feature of this private landscaping are the mature trees that and screen and give 'tantalising' glimpses of the historic buildings from the road. Publicly inaccessible areas of woodland between Gough's Lane and Leycester Road (S-085 Astley Close Wood); in the gardens of Woodgarth on Leycester Road. In the southern portion of Sanctuary Moor, lie between Croft Lane and Woodvale Road there is a dense area of wet woodland (S-066 Sanctuary Moor woodland).

Public realm landscape consists of grass verges and in some cases these are maintained by residents. In the absence of pavements in some roads, such as Goughs Lane, the grass verges are used by pedestrians

Open spaces:

The recreational open space of S-077 the Cross Town Bowling Green and the public open space of S-030 Higher Town Green are both accessible from Chelford Road.

Landmarks:

On Chelford Road opposite to Booths Park stands the distinct monument 'The Obelisk' which is Grade II listed. At its apex is an urn with flower or flame which is thought to be from the church of St Helena.

Sanctuary Moor is the most distinctive natural landmark in the landscape.

Altogether there are twenty one listed buildings within this area all significant in their own right because of their age or architectural features. However, the group of buildings which are the most prominent are the Legh Road villas commissioned by Richard Harding Watt. They combine Italian and Moorish architecture in a style which is totally unique. They vary in size and form and with their follies and landscaped gardens they form a cohesive group.

Their informal boundaries were designed to take full advantage of the natural landscape of Sanctuary Moor and is meandering stream, the River Lily (refer to views and vistas).

Streetscape:

The roads throughout the area are tarmacadam as are many of the pavement surfaces, other than Legh Road where there are flags. At entrances and on driveways residents have employed a variety of surface treatments ranging from old setts to modern concrete setts and pavements. These contrast sharply both in colour and texture with the public realm tarmacadam and heritage brick and stone boundary walls.

Street lighting, signage and other utility equipment is of a standard unitary authority modern design. There is no street seating, bollards or litter bins within the area. However, increasing numbers of both plastic and wooden verge protector posts are being installed throughout the area.

Walls in front of the older buildings consist of sandstone blocks and brick with lime mortar. A number of significant stone gate piers are located in Legh Road, Parkfield Road, Chelford Road and Leycester Road. Another historic feature of the area are the stretches of riven oak fencing particularly in Legh Road. As walls are low and the fencing is open, the plantings of hedges, shrubs and trees behind the walls are a strong feature and are in sympathy with the area's openness, sylvan character and sense of place. Metal railings and gates although not as sympathetic to the area do retain the openness and views.



However this is not the case with the high brick walls, wooden panelled fencing and solid wooden and metal gates with security features that are being installed in conjunction with modern development. When these expanses of blank surfaces occur along footpaths graffiti is in evidence.

Views and vistas:

Views out of the area over the open countryside occur at intervals along Gough's Lane towards Toft; Chelford Road towards Booths Hall and Toft Road towards Bexton.

Despite the winding nature of Legh Road views in either direction at particular points along its length highlight the key features of natural landscaping and iconic buildings. Similar pleasant views exist along the main roads such as Toft Road particularly in the locations of the estate cottages. There are open views across Dairy Farm field from Gough's Lane, Toft Road and the footpath between Leycester Road and Gough's Lane. Watt intended the rear of his buildings, 'The Terraces' on Legh Road to be viewed across Sanctuary Moor. Such a view remains today from Toft Road, across the open space field S-084 at the rear of the houses of Woodvale Road.

Heritage and archaeology:

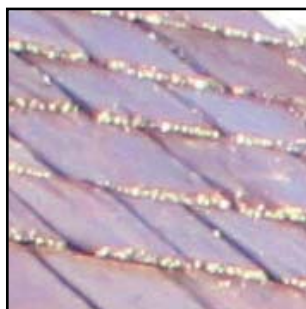
No archaeological finds are logged for this area and the nearest area of archaeological investigation has been the site of the old manor house of Norbury Booths the residence of the Legh family.

The historical development of this settlement is closely linked with the two principle landowners, the Leycester family of Toft Hall and the Legh family of Booths Hall. As is clearly shown on the Tithe Maps the land's primary use was for pasture and horticulture. Sanctuary Moor was accessible and used for grazing with only a central portion that was unusable as bog. The site of the earliest of the listed buildings is that of the manorial court of Norbury Booths. This building incorporates a 17th Century Hall. Throughout the area there are late 18th Century and early 19th century buildings that 'chart' the development of the settlement as estate lands were sold. The twenty one listed buildings, locally listed buildings and buildings of townscape merit are described in detail in the Legh Road Conservation Appraisal of 2005 and Historic England's documents.



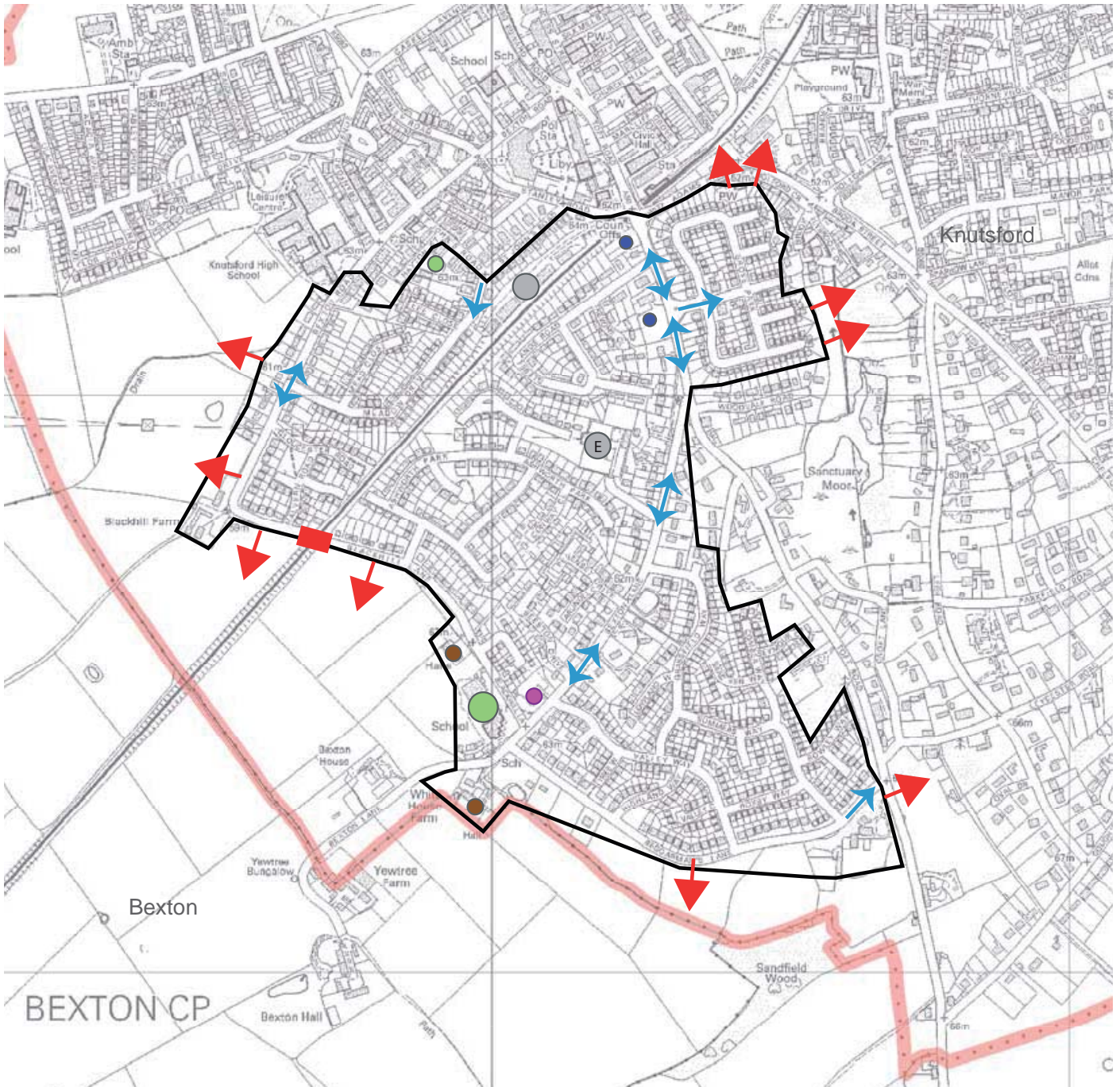


Materials and Colour Palette





2 - South West Residential



2 - South West

Residential

The Character Assessment Area 2 is located to the south west of the Town Centre. The Manchester-Chester railway line crosses the settlement in a cutting running a south west to north east.

Beggarmans Lane and Blackhill Lane form the southern perimeter and Bexton Road its western edge. The northern perimeter of the settlement follows the southern side of sections of St John's Avenue, St John's Road, Stanley Road and the northern edge of the Grove Park Estate. Its eastern perimeter follows the eastern boundaries of the Grove Park Estate and the Sunley estate.

Topography:

The land is flat either side of the railway cutting in Ashworth Park, and Glebelands Road and Malvern Close, Meadow Drive and St John's Road. In the Sunley Estate (bounded by Bexton Road and Beggarmans Lane) the area is generally flat with undulations.

The Grove Park Estate is on flat ground in the area closest to Toft Road.

The cul de sacs on the eastern perimeter of the estate are steep slopes that end at Sanctuary Moor or to the rear of houses on Brook Street. The land on the northern perimeter is at quite a significant height above the level of Adams Hill.

Land use:

The settlement is predominantly residential encompassing three 20th Century housing estates, Grove Park which was completed in the 1950s; Ashworth Park and Sunley which were completed in the 1970s. Other housing of this period is in evidence on roads such as Glebelands Road, Meadow Drive and Gloucester Road.

Large Victorian villas and smaller terraced properties are situated along Toft Road, Bexton Lane, Hayton Street, St John's Road and St Peter's Avenue. In all of these situations these older properties are on the sections of roads that are closest to the town centre, a clear indicator the outward expansion of the town over the centuries.

On a 4-5 acre site on Blackhill Lane there is a two form entry Primary School with a nursery and preschool accommodated in a separate building. Adjacent to the school there are two buildings within separate enclosures, one is the Air Cadets HQ, the other the local Scout Group HQ. The Scout HQ is available to other community groups for meetings and leisure activities. Located nearby, at the end of Bexton Road, is the Masonic Hall which is also hired out for private and community functions. A doctor's surgery and a dental practice are situated within two of the large Victorian villas on Toft Road.

A large office block is located at the junction of Bexton Lane with Blackhill Lane. The other sizeable area of commercial land use is the Stanley Trading Estate situated in the cutting to the rear of the properties on St John's Road. This consists of small units one of which is a privately run children's play centre. An electricity grid sub-station is located on an area of land between the houses at the northern end of Ashworth Park and the northern end of Bexton Lane.

Layout:

Both Ashworth Park, Glebelands and Grove Park have a single entry- exit point. The layout of Grove Park is the most regular of the estates with a circulatory road and five cul de sacs on its eastern perimeter. The houses sit at a regular distance from the road within equal sized plots, they were originally uniform in design, however, due to modernisation and expansion there is now less conformity. Ashworth Park's road system is a network of curved and straight roads each ending in a cul de sac. There is no through road. There is more variety in size of plot and design of house in respect of layout and use of materials. The properties on these three settlements are primarily detached houses with no apartment blocks or bungalows. Ashworth Park is an open plan development.



The Sunley estate is also an open plan development of detached properties with Summers Way, Valley Way and Grassfield Way interconnecting to provide through routes between Beggarman's Lane and Bexton Lane. The roads generally wind through the estate with side roads ending as cul de sacs. The pattern of development is irregular with variations in size of plot and housing style which includes a number of groups of bungalows. The building line is consistent and follows the curvature of the road with the houses set back at a regular distance.

There are three other significant groups of bungalows within the area, these are in Mead Close, Lee Close and St John's Road on the side adjacent to the railway line. The pattern of development is of higher density in these locations with properties in a regular layout and set back from the road with enough frontage able to accommodate the length of a car. The layout of the detached properties along Meadow Drive is of similar density and format. Semi-detached and mews-type properties are located off Bexton Lane in the cul de sacs of Beeston Drive, Pevensey Drive and Beeston Drive.

Two of the main roads within this settlement Bexton Lane and Bexton Road are straight roads with larger properties of both the 19th Century and the 20th Century set back from the roadside within more substantial plots.

Footpaths from Grassfield Way and the northern end of Ashworth Park give access for pedestrians to Bexton Lane.

Open Spaces:

A number of neighbourhood greens have been incorporated in the estates, namely S-024, S-025 and S-026 within Ashworth Park, S-028 in Malvern Road and S-029 in Beggarman's Lane. All are highly valued grassed areas with a variety of trees in the majority of cases. They are extensively used for recreation by residents. The largest open green space within the settlement is the school field (S-069) of Bexton Primary School, however this is not available to residents for recreational use nor is the private bowling green S-086 located at the Masonic Hall.

The Manchester to Chester railway line serves as an open space in that it is a valuable wildlife corridor from the farmland through the settlement and on into the town centre.

Landscaping:

There are wide grass verges backed by hedges and trees bordering the farmland along Beggarman's Lane and Blackhill Lane. Verges and lines of specimen trees (with distinctive springtime blossom) are a significant feature of the Grove Park estate as is the landscaping

of the S-093 at the entrance exit point off Toft Road. The verges of Bexton Lane end at the Paradise Green Neighbourhood Green S-036 which separates the houses from the busy Bexton Lane/Toft road junction. The entrance to the Stanley Trading Estate is well landscaped with grass verges and trees. Similarly within the estate the steep slope behind the housing is a well-managed green landscape of grass and trees. This offsets the hard landscaping of the parking areas around the commercial units and connects the town with the wildlife corridor of the railway line.

A feature of Bexton Road is the mature Oak trees that have been incorporated into the gardens on the perimeter of the estate. The pond (S-087) in the gardens of a property on Bexton Lane is the only expanse of natural open water within the area. There is a large amount of private landscaping of lawns, shrubs and flower beds within gardens and in the open plan estates this creates a high degree of green openness. Natural landscape in the form of agricultural land is a significant feature on the southern perimeter of the area.

There are no large expanses of hard landscaping other than the car parking areas within the Stanley Road Trading Estate and the parking areas and hard surface playgrounds of the Primary school.

Streetscape:

The surfaces of roads and pavements are predominantly tarmac with street lighting and signage of a standard municipal design with metal, wooden or concrete stanchions. In some areas LED lighting has been installed. Litter bins and seating, where provided on neighbourhood greens and outside the primary school, are of a standard municipal design. The exception is a privately funded wooden memorial seat on the island at the entrance to Grove Park.

In the areas of housing that are not open plan, the boundary treatment is both hard and soft, often with a combination of low brick walls backed by evergreen or native species hedges. In the areas fronting busy roads, such as Toft Road, there is higher wooden panelled fencing to screen off what are the rear gardens of properties.

A number of electricity pylons are visible in the street scene of Ashworth Park and Glebelands closest to the electricity grid substation and a line of pylons visible are in Meadow Drive, Gloucester Road and Bexton Road.

Views and Vistas:

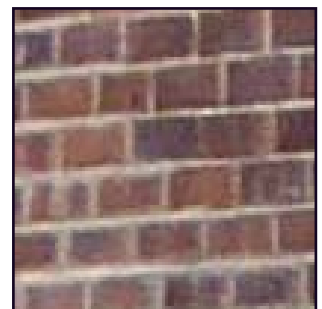
There are a number important views out of the area, southwards from Blackhill Lane and Beggermans Lane across hedges to farmland and patches of historic woodland such as Sandfield Wood. At the junction of Beggarman's Lane with Toft Road there is a view across the open fields of Dairy Farm Field. Within Grove Park, the gardens of the houses at the ends of the most northern cul de sacs overlook the Grade 1 listed Unitarian Chapel. The houses at the ends of the southern cul de sacs have views out across Sanctuary Moor to the rear of the Grade II listed buildings of Legh Road.

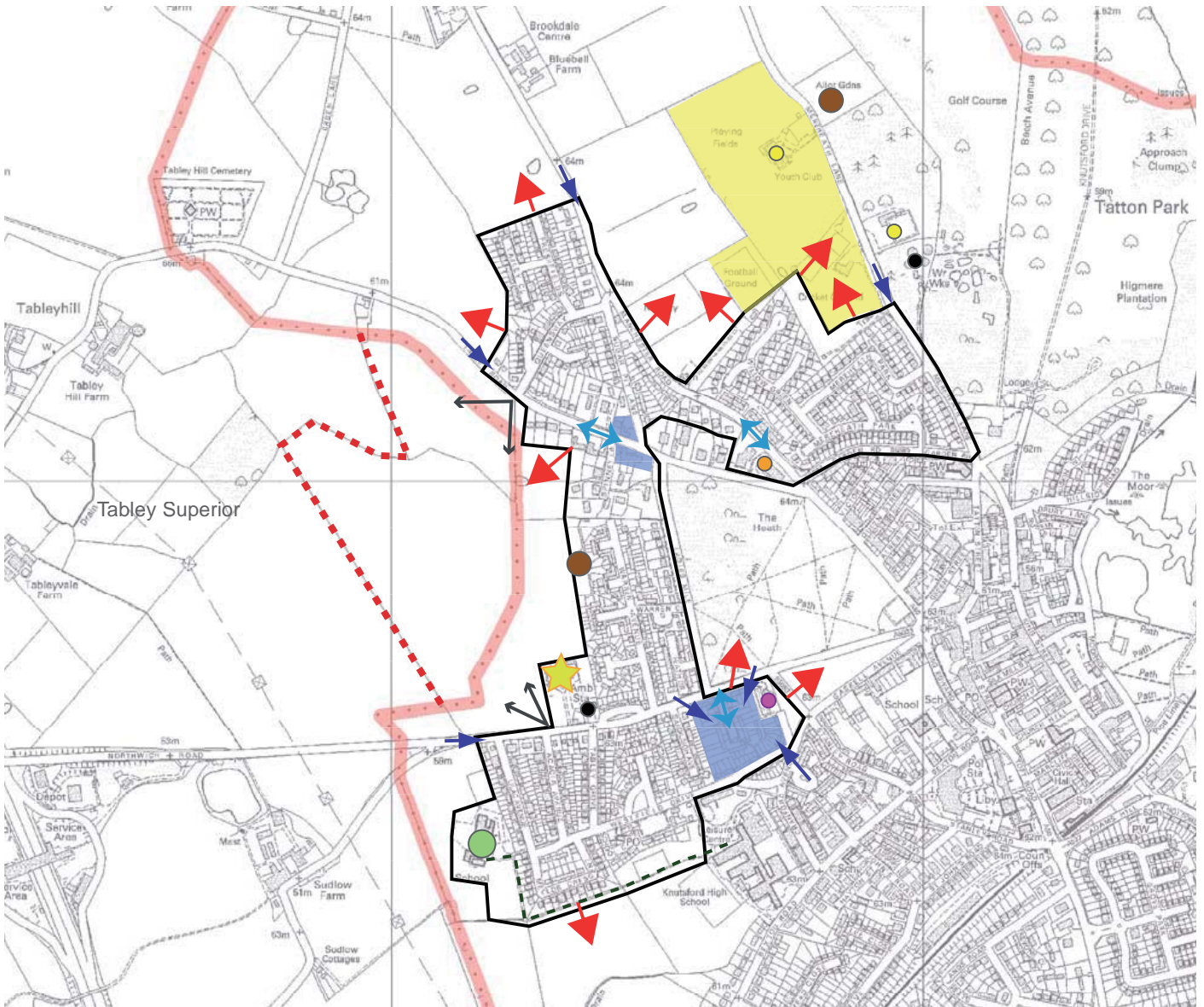
Heritage and Archaeology:

The principal roads of Beggarman's Lane, Toft Road, Blackhill Lane, Bexton Lane, Stanley Road and Bexton Road are recorded on the tithe maps of 1846-56. Beggarman's Lane and Blackhill Lane provided access across tenanted agricultural land to farms and large houses such as Bexton Hall. The 1908 map of the town shows how, as the town expanded, houses were built out from the town centre along these roads and along the western edge of Toft Road. Grove House, a large house set in its own grounds with its lodge on Toft Road at the junction with Adam's Hill, is shown on both the tithe maps and early 20th Century maps. A The house was demolished in the 1930s and the housing estate was completed after WWII. Ashworth Park and Sunley estate were completed in the late 1970s, infilling the area between the town centre and the perimeter roads of Beggarman's Lane and Blackhill Lane. This pattern of expansion is similar to that outlined in the development plans of the 1946 document 'Knutsford Adventure in Planning'.



Materials and Colour Palette







3 - North West Knutsford and Mereheath Park

Character Assessment Area 3 encompasses the settlement north of Westfield Drive, including the Mereheath Park estate located on the eastern side of the principal road, Manchester Road (A50). Its western and northern boundaries are adjacent to the strategic sites LPS36A, LPS36B and LPS 36C and the safeguarded land LPS39 and LPS40 designated in the Cheshire East Local Plan. The eastern boundaries are Mereheath Lane, Ladies Mile and the northern section of Stanley Road. The area includes the Conservation Area of Heathfield Square; a very small portion of the Town Centre Conservation Area that is situated at the northern end of Ladies Mile. A second principal road, Northwich Road (A5033) forms the western Gateway to Knutsford and Manchester Road its Northern Gateway. Tabley Road and Mereheath Lane are more rural roads but they are used extensively by traffic and therefore act as Gateways for the town.

Topography:

The land across the whole of the settlement is flat.

Land Use:

The settlement is residential with predominantly 20th Century housing some of which was built by the Knutsford Urban District Council in the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. The remainder was built privately primarily as estates in the 1970's. Two large blocks of retirement apartments are situated adjacent to The Heath and Manchester Road and a smaller unit of sheltered accommodation at the junction of Stanley Road with Northwich Road.

Community land use consists of the land to the west of Lilac Avenue where there are school buildings and playing fields that are part of the Academy situated on Westfield Drive and the allotments to the west of Warren Avenue.

To the north of the housing of Mereheath Park and Willow Green there is a wide range of sport facilities consisting of football pitches, indoor and field archery ranges, a cricket pitch with practice nets, squash courts and seven all weather, floodlit tennis courts. Two of the three clubhouses are available for hire by community groups some of which provide other sport related activities such as gymnastics.

The only land occupied by public services is a small area on Northwich Road where an ambulance station is situated. Adjacent to the ambulance

station is Memorial House, originally built in 1922 by public subscription as the Knutsford War Memorial Cottage Hospital. Since 1995 the building has been in commercial use as the divisional headquarters of a national charity.

Layout:

The street layout between Westfield Drive and Tabley Road is straight and regular. Curves are more a feature of Tabley Road, Manchester Road and Mereheath Lane and the estate roads of Mereheath Park. Sugar Pit Lane and Queensway link Manchester Road to Tabley Road which in turn provides a link to Northwich Road via Ladies Mile. The cul-de-sacs of Tabley Close and Freshfields are accessed through Queensway. Two entry-exit points serve the Mereheath Park estate, one on Garden Road, the other on Mereheath Lane. The three cul-de-sacs that form Willow Green can be accessed via either of these points.

The layout and housing density of Mereheath Park is regular, the smaller plots are occupied by a few bungalows. Similarly the housing layout on Queensway is regular in size and layout, as is Tabley Close and Freshfields where density is higher. Along Sugar Pit Lane, Tabley Road and Manchester Road plots and houses vary in size, layout and design as development has taken place 'piece-meal' over a longer

period of time. The pre 20th Century and early 20th Century properties are generally situated on larger plots which are subject to pressure for redevelopment. The lowest housing density area of the whole settlement is Spinney Lane a cul-de-sac off Tabley Road where the houses are situated on a variety of substantial plots. Heath Drive is a 20th Century courtyard development of mews properties on the Victorian Kilrie Hospital-School site with a pedestrian access off Manchester Road and vehicle access from Ladies Mile.

The layout of the settlement in and around Westfield Drive is regular with the highest density in Westfield Drive itself where the semi-detached properties, built originally as social housing, are situated. The privately built housing of Acacia Avenue, Lilac Avenue and Tabley Grove is predominantly semi-detached properties which occupy wider and deeper plots. Detached houses are found in greater proportion on the larger plots facing Manchester Road. Mellor Crescent and School Close incorporate a mix of bungalows, semis and detached properties. Sandileigh Avenue a cu-de-sac off Northwich Road is a very high density street of semi-detached and terraced properties. In all of these areas there are consistent building lines and uniformity in materials specific to the particular style of property and street design.

Access to Heathfield Square is by a single entrance-exit

road off Northwich Road. It is a Conservation Area as it is a significant post WW1 development of housing built as part of the then government's 'Homes For Heroes' social project. The layout follows the principles the 'Garden City' movement. (For specific information on design and management issues refer to the Heathfield Square Conservation Area Appraisal).

Warren Avenue is a straight road with two access point one off Northwich Road the other off Ladies Mile. The four cul-de-sacs and the uniform blocks of semi-detached properties follow a regular building line. At the end of each of the three northern-most cul-de-sacs a block of terraced properties overlook the allotments. The properties at the end of the southern-most cul-de-sac overlook the site of Memorial House and Warren Avenue terminates adjacent to the perimeter of the properties on Spinney Lane.

Open Spaces:

An extensive open space on the perimeter of the settlement, to the rear of Lilac Drive, is the playing fields (S-068) of the Lower School of the Academy. A footpath runs alongside the playing fields behind Mellor Close and School Close to connect this site to the Academy's main buildings on Bexton Road.

Two open spaces that can be classified as Neighbourhood Greens. One is S-038 on Westfield Drive, the other is S-014 in Queensway. Both are popular children's play areas and in the case of S-038 it is a visually attractive green space in a dense housing area. S-014 is used for community gatherings and is planted with a variety of trees and flower beds.

There are no Neighbourhood Greens within the Mereheath Park estate only two small roundabouts of grass with trees. On Garden Road, S-090, is a wide grassy verge with plantings of chestnut trees that effectively links the green environment of The Heath with the wooded area at the entrance to Tatton Park and Wallwood. It is used regularly for parking by local residents and visitors to the town, particularly during special events.

The open spaces closest to Warren Avenue within the boundary of the Character Area are the allotments S-062 and the lawns and the stands of protected pine and lime trees within the grounds of Memorial House.

Landscaping:

Public realm landscaping in the form of wide grass verges and mature trees is most evident at the eastern end Northwich Road, Ladies Mile, Tabley Road, Queensway and Manchester Road. Tabley Road is the most sylvan Road in the settlement



and demonstrates the key elements of a green gateway into Knutsford. Mereheath Lane, and Northwich Road are similar gateways where the integration of the rural environment into the urban is a key feature of the town. The mature trees on these roads are an important component and in some instances, such as the copper beach at the junction of Heathfield Square with Manchester road are landmarks in the streetscene.

In Mereheath Park, the open front gardens of grass, shrubs, small mature trees and flower beds are an attractive feature of the estate. In other areas of the settlement even where front gardens are shallow there is a high degree of private planting consisting of shrubs, small trees and flower beds. The least green area is Sandleigh Avenue where the frontage of the terrace properties has been hard surfaced to provide parking. Similarly, in Heath Drive green landscaping is at a minimum.

Streetscape:

Mereheath Park is an open plan estate so there is very little hard boundary treatment. Where there are fences they are required to screen the rear gardens of corner properties. Although boundaries are supposed to remain open some picket fencing has been installed recently in the vicinity of the entrance-exit point off Garden Road. The verges and roundabout in this location are also used for parking.

Throughout the rest of the settlement there is a mix of hard and soft boundary treatment with brick walls, open and closed timber fences and native and evergreen hedgerows. Lamp posts, street signage and furniture is of a standard municipal design. The settlement contains the only traffic calming measure within the town, which is where road bollards and road humps are used along the length of Westfield Drive. Roads and pavement surfaces are tarmac.

Views and vistas:

A significant feature of the Character Area is that it is encompassed on all sides (other than Garden Road) by open spaces such as the Heath, playing fields and agricultural land. The views that peripheral properties have across these spaces are important, as are the wider vistas across agricultural land on the principal roads, Northwich Road and Tabley Road. There are landscape features on the horizon such as Tabley Hill and copses of landmark trees. These are a key component of the visual rural landscape identified as LFW3 (Lower Farms and Woods, The Arley Character Area).

Views within the settlement are associated with either landscape features such as The Heath or buildings of historical merit such as Heathfield Square and Egerton Terraces. Views along the roads at the 'entry' gateways on the principal roads are a key component of the town's 'sense of place' as a market town integrated into the countryside.

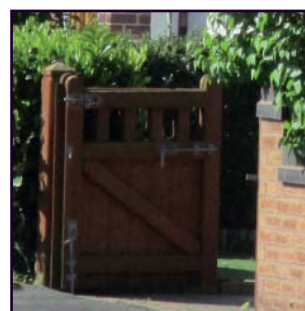
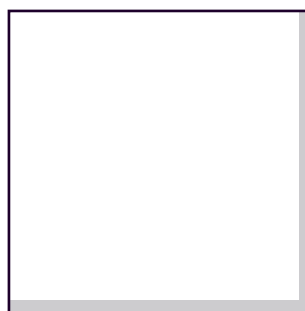
Heritage and Archaeology:

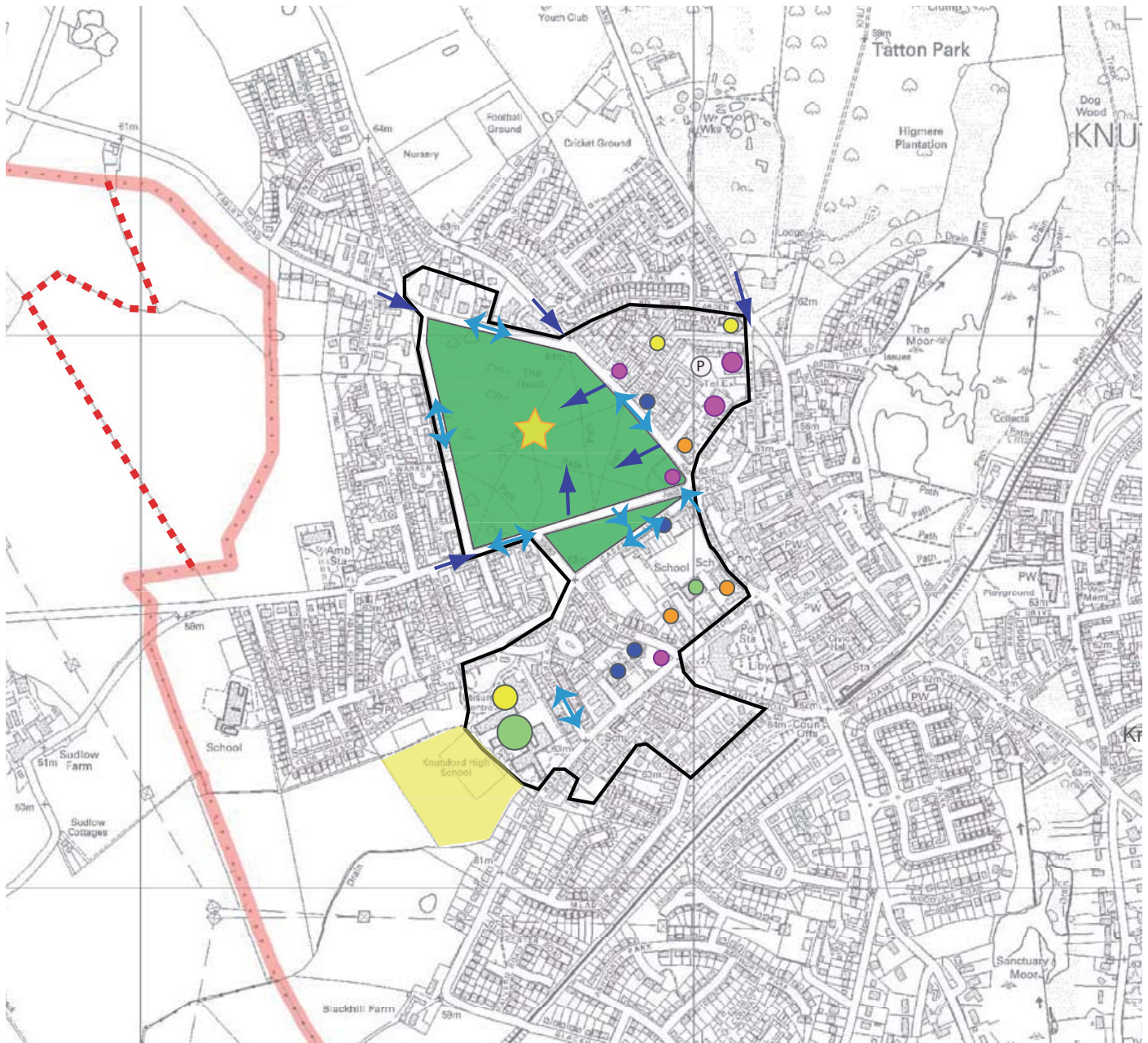
The land within this Character Area was originally either owned by the Leycester Warren family of Tabley or the Egertons of Tatton. Tithe maps reveal the apportionments and ownership of individual plots in the first half of the 19th Century. The buildings still visible today are the properties at the junction of Ladies Mile with Tabley Road and Sugar Pit Lane and the early 19th Century Grade II listed Toll House on Northwich Road. Mereheath Lane and the eastern edge of Mereheath Park are adjacent to boundary of the registered park and gardens of Tatton Park. The current youth club-sports facilities are on land donated to a charitable trust by Lord Egerton of Tatton.

On the map of 1908, Kilrie and the line of trees along The Heath are in situ and further building of houses has taken place along Sugar Pit Lane and Garden Road. The land to the north of Garden Road is identified as being used as allotments and a nursery. There is a sport facility in the form of a cricket pitch off Mereheath Lane. A football ground is located at the end of Sugar Pit Lane where Queensway is now situated.



Materials and Colour Palette





4 - The Heath

Character Area (CA) 4 encompasses the western portion of central Knutsford and includes The Heath and Little Heath. There are two main roads running through it, Manchester Road (A50) in a north-south direction and Northwich Road (A5033) in an east-west direction. These roads meet at the apex of The Heath with the Little Heath at Canute Place. From here the perimeter runs along King Edward Road to its junction with Bexton Road. To the East of Manchester Road and to the west of King Edward Road the CA contains a substantial number of older properties including mid-18th Century houses and Victorian villas and terraces. Therefore it encompasses a portion of the Town Centre Conservation Area and the whole of the St John's Conservation Area

Topography:

The area, including the large open spaces that are The Heath and the Little Heath, is predominately flat, with a general downward slope toward the west end of The Heath.

Land Use:

A third of this CA comprises the 35 acres of The Heath and Little Heath which is of great amenity and recreational value to the

town, used for walking and for major community events such as The Royal May Day.

A high proportion of the area is residential and this includes specific accommodation in the form of two purpose built retirement home complexes; a house offering assisted living flats and small number of commercial serviced apartments.

As this is a central area of the town there are a number of purpose-built buildings and converted older properties of community use for education, medical and leisure provision. The purpose built properties include an 11-18 age-range school which incorporates a joint use Leisure-Sports Centre with swimming pool, courts and gym; a one form entry primary school and pre-school; a church; two dental surgeries. The converted properties include a 3-11 co-educational independent school; doctors' medical centre; a community hospital with has purpose built extensions; a theatre.

Commercial use consists of a large purpose-built office block in Tatton Street and smaller units on Windsor Way; funeral services and a hotel (with restaurant) on Manchester Road. Two retail outlets of national companies are sited in the area, one in the 19th Century building at the corner of The Heath and the second in the commercial block on Tatton Street.

Layout:

There is a variety of street layouts. The roads bordering The Heath and Little Heath are straight as are the majority of the streets to the east of Manchester Road. Garden Road is curved and Queen Street has a right-angled bend half way along its length. In the southern portion of the CA the road layout is more irregular with winding curves, right angled bends and in one instance it is circulatory.

Throughout the area the pattern of the settlement is determined by the type, size and age of the property. Thus Victorian terraced properties front the road for example Albert Street, Victoria Street, Queen Street and Stanley Road whereas the town houses (1860s onwards) of Manchester Road, Garden Road, Cranford Avenue and St John's Avenue have small front gardens as do the estate worker type cottages for example of Bexton Road and Queen Street. The plots of these properties regular in size with a consistent building line. The larger Georgian and Victorian semi-detached houses and detached villas for example in St John's Road and Tabley Road are on more substantial plots with encompassing gardens giving a greater degree of openness. Regardless of the type of property, the streetscape in each of these roads is one of symmetry and uniformity from which is derived a sense of place.



Of particular note is Gaskell Avenue where there is less uniformity and consistency in the building line. Here a sense of place is imparted by the age, size and style of several of Knutsford's important mid-18th and 19th Century historic buildings (refer to Listed Buildings).

Open Spaces:

The most significant open public spaces are S-001 The Heath (designation LGS via Local Plan) and S-002 the Little Heath. The playing fields and recreational grounds within the area are S-067 Knutsford Academy School Field, S-070 Egerton Primary School Field that is visible from King Edward Road and S-076 the Manchester Road Bowling Green.

Landscaping:

The Heath (and including the adjacent Little Heath) is Common Land (designated 1951) an open area of semi-improved grassland bounded by a mature single line of lime trees. The western edge of The Heath is a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and it contains woodland, two areas of rare lowland heath and a dip in which is a natural sand pit. This land, by its nature, lies lower than its surroundings and is part of a wildlife-nature reserve area. Both Heaths are of great significance to the character of the town. Each

contributes to the 'gateways' of Manchester Road, Northwich Road and Tabley Road also to the sense of place of Ladies Mile and Gaskell Avenue. There are no substantial verges in this area but there are small areas of green such as the triangular piece of land directly opposite the Little Heath and a corner plot at the entrance to the Leisure Centre.

The perimeter trees of The Heath are a significant feature in Manchester Road, Northwich Road and Tabley Road. The lime trees of the Little Heath and The Heath in effect create an Avenue at the east end of Northwich Road. At the western edge of The Heath there is a copse of woodland trees. Mature trees are a prominent feature of the public realm along Cranford Avenue, the western side of Ladies Mile, King Edward Road and at the entrance to St John's Avenue from Stanley Road. In off-road public places they are used to provide screening in car parks on Tatton Street and Westfield Drive at the Leisure Centre. Trees within the gardens of larger properties providing canopy cover that is in sharp contrast to the roads where terraced properties edge the pavement. S-081, Ash Court garden has a number of TPOs – yew, oak holly, firs and walnut

There are extensive areas of hard standing within car parks both public, private commercial and residential. The largest of the public car parks is in Tatton Street, others are at the community hospital (Bexton Road) and Leisure Centre (Westfield Drive).

Landmarks:

The distinctive landmark of this Character Area is The Heath. The Heath also accentuates the prominent setting of a number of distinct buildings, particularly the ex-Conservative Club and houses of Gaskell Avenue that have an association with notable residents of the past (refer to Heritage section). There are two monuments on The Heath a drinking fountain and a horse trough.

Streetscape:

Wherever front gardens and patios are of sufficient size, there is some soft boundary treatment with hedging and green landscaping of shrubs and herbaceous planting both in the soil and in containers.

Hard surface boundary treatment consists of brick walls, when low with (sand) stone toppers or railings; picket fencing and iron railings. There are number of Victorian gate pillars of streetscape significance in Manchester Road, St Johns Road, Tabley Road and Cranford Avenue. The railing around The Heath and Little Heath is of 20th Century low concrete pillars with circular metal rails.

Road surfaces, car park surfaces and pavements are predominantly of tarmac, with cobbles occasionally in evidence in driveways and minor streets such as Windsor Way. The surface of

private parking at Cranford Square is decorative concrete blocks and these are also to be found in front of residential houses where hard standing has replaced gardens to accommodate off road parking. Where this has involved the removal of hedges and historic boundaries it has been to the detriment of the street scene and sense of place.

Views and vistas:

There are a number of important views into the settlement, in particular, on entering the town via Tabley Road, Manchester Road and Northwich Road. There are significant views along the road and across The Heath framed by the trees. The view-point from the roundabout on King Edwards Road down Gaskell Avenue is an important view which will characterise the town in the minds of those who drive through it. Similarly the views within Cranford Avenue which retains a strong sense of place.

Heritage and archaeology:

The Heath has always had a significant role in the life of the town. From the 1200s freeholders had rights to graze livestock there and to remove turf, clay and sand for building. It was used as a camping ground by soldiers during the English Civil War and by American soldiers in WWII. Horse racing took place over its

ground for over 200 years until the late 1800s. Gaskell Avenue, Ladies Mile, Tabley Road and Westfield Drive aligned with the 'route' of the track. The ex-Conservative Club is on the site of the Race Stadium. Until the 1950s The Heath was co-managed by the freeholders and the Egertons of Tatton Park.

The listed buildings list and Conservation Area Appraisals provide extensive historic detail for a large proportion of this CA however, here it is important to note some of the properties that have links to notable residents of the past and thereby contribute significantly to the distinctiveness of the town. These properties are no 17 Gaskell Avenue, Heathwaite House, the childhood home of Elizabeth Gaskell and no 19 Gaskell Avenue, Heath House, reputed to be the home of the highwayman Edward Higgins.





Materials and Colour Palette



5 - Town Centre and Moor





5 - Town Centre and Moor

The Character Area 5 encompasses the 'core' of Knutsford, the majority of which is designated as the Knutsford Town Centre Conservation Area. The CA's western perimeter runs along the south eastern edge of Bexton Road, King Edward Road, Green Street and Tatton Street. In the south its border is the railway line and Stanley Road. In the east its border is the eastern edge of The Moor and the railway line embankment.

Topography:

The area to the west of Princess Street and Toft Road is flat. To the east of Toft Road, Princess Street and Tatton Street the land drops steeply down towards King Street. To the east of King Street this the steep slope continues until it reaches the River Lily and Moorside. The Moor is flat until the land rises again along its eastern perimeter. One consequence of steep slope within the town centre is that when there is severe rainfall and the drains are overloaded, water runs off Princess Street down the ginnels onto King Street and then down the side streets to the Moor. It is not unknown for such severe run off to cause flooding in such properties as the Heritage Centre.

Land Use:

As with many other town centres, there is a mix of commercial, civic, community and residential buildings. Within the main shopping areas of Princess Street, King Street, Minshall Street, Regent Street and Canute Place, more shops, cafes and bars use the ground floor of buildings whilst the upper floors are either flats or office suites. A number of houses are situated in the narrow streets which run between King Street and Princess Street but most are concentrated on the eastern edge of the area in the residential roads and squares of Norbury's Yard, Egerton Square, Drury Lane and the Hillside Road estate. Along Moorside and within Ruskin Court and Old Market Place, there are blocks of purpose built flats and retirement accommodation.

In the southern portion of the area, facing Toft Road are the town's main civic buildings, the Town Council Offices, Library and Police Station, close to the two transport hubs: the railway station and the bus station. There are a number of community buildings with meeting rooms such as the Methodist church on Princess Street and the Parish Church of St John. Residential buildings consist of flats above the Library and houses in Marcliff Grove. Commercial buildings include a cinema, a large office block located beside the railway station, a petrol station, a restaurant/hotel

(originally the Sessions House) and a large supermarket located behind the Library.

In the eastern section is the area of reclaimed wetland known as the The Moor which is an important recreational space for the town with a children's playground and grassed area used for events. The Moor pool drains to the north into Tatton Mere.

Layout:

The layout of the central area is basically a regular one with parallel principal streets running north-south with a small number of yards and long thin alleys or ginnels running west-east connecting King Street and Princess Street. This layout is a result of the earlier pattern of medieval development and the narrow and steep alley lie along the lines of the 13th Century burgage plots.

The buildings on the very densely built up streets of King Street and Princess Street front the roadway and are set at the back of narrow pavements. There are gaps between buildings where the narrow alleys emerge but some detached buildings butt –up directly against their neighbour. The varied architecture of the large number of listed buildings, the differences in height and use of assorted materials (predominantly brick) gives these streets their unique sense

of place. The regularity and uniformity of the terraced shops on either side of the roadway in Minshull Street provides a contrast that is equally striking. A similar degree of uniformity and tight urban form exists in the retail and 'above shop' residential buildings of Regent Street, a modern, pedestrianised shopping precinct development.

The layout of the residential areas alongside Moorside and in the Hillside Road estate is less dense and less regular. Modern developments such as Norbury's Yard and Ruskin Court have blocks of buildings around internal courtyards or open spaces.

Open spaces:

The largest and most significant open space is The Moor(S-006). Its 5.5 acres with play area, picnic area, shelter and seating are used for public recreation and town events. It has been a Green Flag Park since 2009. There are a number of footpaths in different directions across the Moor enabling good connections between Cross Town and the Town Centre. The main footpath from Middle Walk is adjacent to the Moor Pool and beyond the Tatton Mere reedbeds. The Moor has to cope with the run off of water from higher land. Maintenance of the sluice and reed beds is essential to keep the water flowing freely onwards onto Tatton Mere. A footpath

across the higher ground beside the embankment leads to Dog Wood. At the northern end of King Street at its junction with Tatton Street is Wallwood (S-005) and the tree lined pedestrian footpath and vehicle access road to Tatton Park

In the southern portion of this character area are a number of open spaces that form the landscaping around civic and commercial buildings. In the case of the Council Offices (S-021); library (S-022); Booths (S-023); Sessions House (S-035) these consist of grassed areas with mature trees, hedges, shrubbery and some flower beds. The grounds of St John's Parish Church are significant open spaces (S-043). The grassed area with its a tree lined pathway down a steep slope to King Street is enclosed by walls these are lined by the gravestones that have been moved from within the area. At the front of the church a number of gravestones remain in situ amongst the mature trees, others have been used to form pathways.

Landscaping:

There is a high degree of hard landscaping in the form of public and private car parks, with very little green landscaping within them. This is apparent when viewing King Street car park from the Moor. Similarly the wall and car park to the rear of the buildings of Princess Street

contrast with the trees and green open space on the opposite side of King Edward Road. There are no green verges within the town centre and permanent green landscaping is sparse. Some shops and offices overcome this by using container plantings. Green landscaping is more prominent in the residential areas as most of the houses have small gardens, or courtyards with grassed areas, flower beds and shrubs. The verges and gardens of the retirement flats and houses along Moorside enhance the appearance of the stream known as the River Lily which flows in a watercourse before entering the pool and reed beds at the end of Drury Lane. The only open expanse of water within the Town Centre is the Moor Pool.

Streetscape:

Throughout the town the primary road surfaces are tarmac with the exception which is on the steep section of Church Hill where original setts are in situ. Pavement surfaces vary throughout the area. Some of the older alleyways (Cotton Shop Yard) and yards are surfaced in granite setts or crushed stone dressing. Modern concrete flagstones and pavements have been used in regent street, Princess Street and King Street. Tarmac is also a common feature. In King Street below St John's Parish church there are examples of an older form



of paving, York stone which is also a feature together with sandstone setts in Red Cow Yard. Throughout the rest of the area tarmac and pavements are a common feature.

In Toft Road, King Edward Road, Canute Place, Moorside, the Moor, Regent Street and residential areas street lighting is modern with either metal or concrete columns. Heritage style lamp posts are located in King Street car park, on Church Hill and by the railway bridge. In King Street, Princess Street and Minshall Street the lights are wall mounted in most instances these are heritage style rather than modern fixtures. In King Street, a small number of genuine heritage lights remain which are gas lamps converted to electricity. Similarly different styles of street and shop signage and street furniture exists throughout the Character Area. The majority of street signage is modern with some heritage style signage posts. Recently when street furniture has been replaced the Town Council has adopted a consistent heritage design.

Public seating is mainly concentrated in the open spaces within the town. Some cafes have taken to putting out their own tables and chairs on the pavement.

Hard surface boundary treatments within the Town Centre consist of metal railings and brick walls. Hedgerows and soft boundary treatment is mostly found in the residential areas within the town.

Landmarks:

On Toft Road are St Johns Parish Church, the Sessions House and the old Market Hall(now Lost and Found); In King Street are the Gaskell memorial and the entrance to Tatton Park. In Drury Lane are sited the Ruskin Rooms and the Laundry.

Views: Knutsford 's sense of place has much to do with views across its open spaces and it's skyline with the iconic Richard Harding Watt Towers. Equally there are important views along its streets in particular:

- Along the winding historic streets of King Street and Princess Street
- From Moorside over the Moor and Moor Pool
- Down Church Hill
- From the northern end of King street to the entrance gateway of Tatton Park
- Down Drury Lane
- Though the gaps between buildings on King Street down to the Moor

Heritage and Archaeology:

The development of the Town Centre (Nether Knutsford) from when it was laid out by William de Tabley in 1292 is outlined in the background papers Timeline

and Historical Development of Knutsford that accompany this Neighbourhood Plan. Within this character area there is the largest concentration of listed buildings (refer to the map xxx and the list of 'Listed Buildings of Knutsford'). Most of them date to the 18th or early 19th Centuries and were built as houses with the occasional commercial or civic property. King Street contains sixteen examples of 16th or 17th century buildings, all of them timber-framed but altered over time through restoration. The listings range from significant grade II* listed buildings, such as the King Street and the Gaskell Memorial Tower, to those that are either locally listed or those identified as Buildings of Townscape Merit such as Nos 1-7 King Street. There are significant shop fronts dating to the 19th and 20th centuries in the principal shopping area of Princess Street, King Street and Minshall Street, the most notable are within listed buildings such as Nos 34 and 36 King Street circa 1840.

The iconic buildings in King Street are those the local philanthropist Richard Harding Watt who directed a variety of architects in the design and construction of his buildings, the most important of which is the Gaskell Memorial Tower and former King's Coffee House (built originally as the Council Offices and coffee house) completed in 1908. (For architectural descriptions refer to Pesvner's The Buildings of

England Cheshire. Revision 2011
by Clare Hartwell and Matthew
Hyde)

The boundaries of the Area
of Archaeological Potential
(AAP) of the historic core of
Nether Knutsford are provided
in the Cheshire Historic Towns
Survey 2003. Excavations work
carried out at the Angel Public
House on King Street revealed
well preserved archaeological
deposits of the medieval period.
There is potential that other
such material survives within
Knutsford.

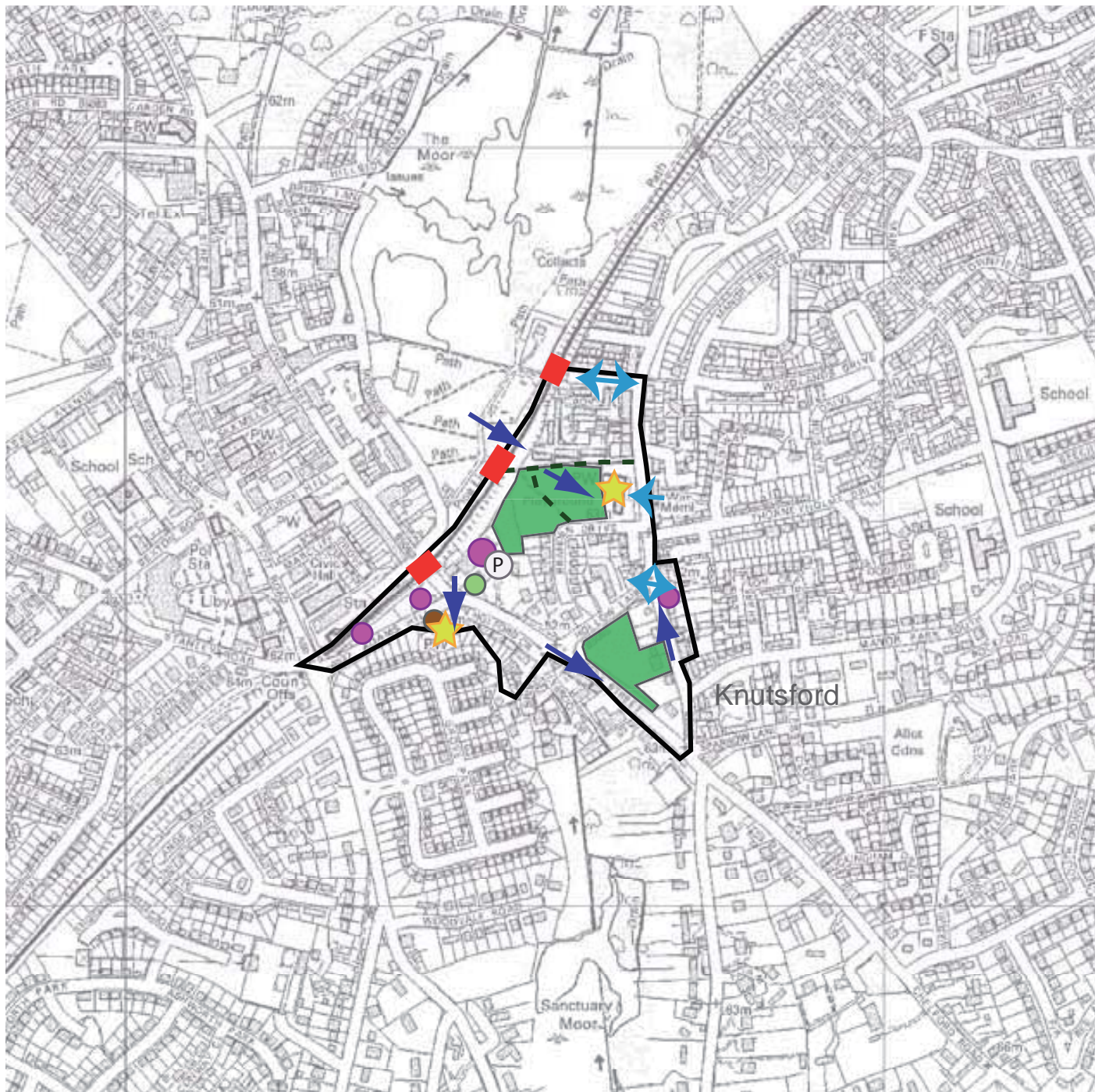




Materials and Colour Palette



6 - Cross Town





6 - Cross Town

The perimeter of this Character Area is defined by the railway, Adam's Hill, Brook Street (A537) and Mobberley Road (B5085). Within it is the whole of the area designated as the Cross Town Conservation Area and a southern portion of the Knutsford Town Centre Conservation Area.

Topography:

The majority of the land within this Character Area (CA) is elevated above the Moor. St Cross Church is built on the hill above the Moor, Brook Street on the western side of Mobberley Road. From the church the ground slopes sleeply down the hill along Hollow Lane, then flattens out along Brook Street before rising steeply up Adams Hill to the junction with the A50. In the opposite direction along the Chelford Road the ground rises up a hill until it meets the junction with Legh Road. Eastern edge of the one way road that runs from Manor Park South to Thorneyholme Drive the houses are elevated above the road. The linear pattern of the development on this elevated section of ground is a key component of the Cross Town Conservation Area as it marks the origins of the settlement of Norbury Booths (refer to Historical Development and the Time Line) that existed in the 13th Century. The 20th

Century developments of Branden Drive and Ella Grove are built on the slopes around the church but they are still at a higher elevation than Brook Street and the Moor. The land to the southern edge of Brook Street and Adam's Hill is the elevated land at the edge of the Grove Park estate.

Land Use:

Within the CA is some of the oldest housing in Knutsford as well as 20th Century developments of private and social housing. There are two major religious centres, St Cross Church on Mobberley Road and the Unitarian Chapel on Brook Street. Both have burial grounds and community meeting rooms. The retail area on Brook Street comprises a large 20th Century supermarket. The Public buildings consist of Knutsford's Victorian station on Adam's Hill and the Carnegie Library now used as a children's nursery on Brook Street. A Community Hall on Branden Drive is used as a Yoga Centre and a public house that also provides meals is situated amidst the oldest elevated section of housing

Layout:

The western perimeter of the CA is the railway line running north-south. The A537 Knutsford – Macclesfield Road which runs along the CA southern perimeter connects with the key route to the north eastern area of the town and Mobberley. Generally the major roads are straight with service roads to the housing on Ella Grove and Branden Drive curved and terminating as cul de sacs. The small parade of housing fronting Brook Street is served by a service road parallel with the main road.

The building line of the older elevated housing is either at the pavements inner edge or set back to provide an extremely small forecourt/garden areas. The plot sizes of these buildings also varies in relation to the spaces in between and the size of plot to the rear. Overall the housing is high density. This contrasts with the low density of the housing on the western side of the road where the plots are large and the detached houses are surrounded by gardens giving a high degree of openness.

The 20th century development of Ella Grove is a high density development of terraced houses with 3 to 5 units in a block. A 20th Century block of flats (accessible from Hollow Lane) is situated behind the 20th Century housing of Branden Drive where there are semi-detached and detached properties on regular sized plots.

In Branden Drive closer to its junction with Mobberley Road along Richmond Hill there are Victorian cottages, 20th century and interwar year properties.

The houses on Brook Street are on regular sized plots with a straight building line that runs parallel with the road. Their rear gardens are curtailed by the elevated land on which sits the Grove Park Estate.

Open Spaces:

A 'green' fronts the houses on Richmond Hill (S-046) and a triangular 'green' at the top of Hollow Lane (S-044). A larger area behind St Cross Church, called The Barncroft (S-007) serves as a recreational ground and playing field and in the past has been a wildflower meadow. Two burial ground's are within the settlement, one at the Brook Street Chapel (S-096) and the other at St Cross (S-002)

There is very little public realm landscaping in the form of grass verges other than in the front of the housing on Brook Street and that in Ella Grove. The amount of private planting in front gardens varies according to the depth of the plot: so very little in front of the Victorian houses fronting Mobberley Road but more grass, hedgerows and herbaceous planting in the 20th Century developments of Branden Drive. The area of open ground behind St Cross Church. Hollow Lane

has mature trees and planting on the sloping land on both sides. A particular dominant feature is the dense planting on the triangle of land at the junction of Brook Street with Chelford Road. Another mature copse of trees is situated on the 'triangle' of open space at the top of Hollow Lane before its junction with Thorneyholme Drive. Individual mature trees are to be found on the boundaries of the land behind St Cross and in the grounds of the Unitarian Chapel.

Despite the tree cover on the southern slopes of Adam's Hill, the hard landscaping of roads, and pavements is the dominant feature. There is very little landscaping around the nursery and only a small amount of planting at the rear of the car park of the supermarket to give a screen for the housing on Branden Drive. None exists along the edge of the pavement to assist in reducing air pollution along this very busy section of road.

Pavement and road surfacing throughout the area is tarmac with one exception - which is in front of the oldest elevated houses. Here there are sections of pavement which are of old cobbles. In some places it is evident that the cobbles are covered by the tarmacked pavement surface. Lighting and signage throughout the area is of the modern municipal type not heritage. Some seating is sited on the open greens areas. Most are of hard wood.

The boundaries of the oldest houses are brick walls, in some case with railings on top, picket fencing, and stone walls. Iron railings are a common feature particularly around the open spaces, church grounds and burial grounds. Other railing treatment consists of concrete posts with rails and open wooden railing.

Landmarks:

There are two distinct buildings in this CA both are religious buildings and both are listed. St Cross Church (1880-81 by Paley and Austin) is both prominent within the immediate landscape and from the Moor and Moorside because of its massive crossing tower and elevated position. The Brook Street Unitarian Chapel is modest in size and not as prominent in the landscape. However it is significant building because of its early architectural form of 1689.

A distinctive feature of the CA is the raised pavement, two metres high at its tallest point, in front of the cottages on the eastern side of Mobberley Road

Views and vistas:

The slopes within the area and the height of the land above the town create a number of



prominent views and vistas. Within the area the special views are of St Cross Church from the elevated older housing area; from Mobberley Road when travelling in either direction; looking up at the church from the open space. The best view of the Unitarian Chapel is from where Adams Hill meets the end of King Street. The best view to the outside from within the Character Area is from the rear of St Cross across Brook Street. From outside the Character Area St Cross Church is just visible through the trees from the pathway across the Moor; from the path along Moorside; and from the traffic lights at the top of Adams Hill.

Heritage and Archaeology:

The Cross Town Conservation Area is considered to be the oldest settlement within the wider town of Knutsford (refer to Historical Development and the Timeline). Some of the cottages on the elevated section to the east side of Mobberley Road incorporate timber framing which is visible on the gable of one cottage externally.

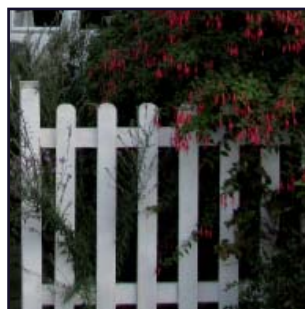
There are two listed buildings in the CA, one, the Unitarian Chapel is Knutsford's only Grade I listed building. St Cross is listed Grade II*. Several buildings of Townscape merit are identified in the Cross Town Conservation Area Appraisal.

At the western end of St Cross Church there is the remains of a red sandstone cross with late medieval decorations. The socket stone which was found under the surface of the old churchyard in 1846 is now situated in the porch of the church. (HER No. 1240/0/1) This may have been the original market cross that gave Cross Town its name.



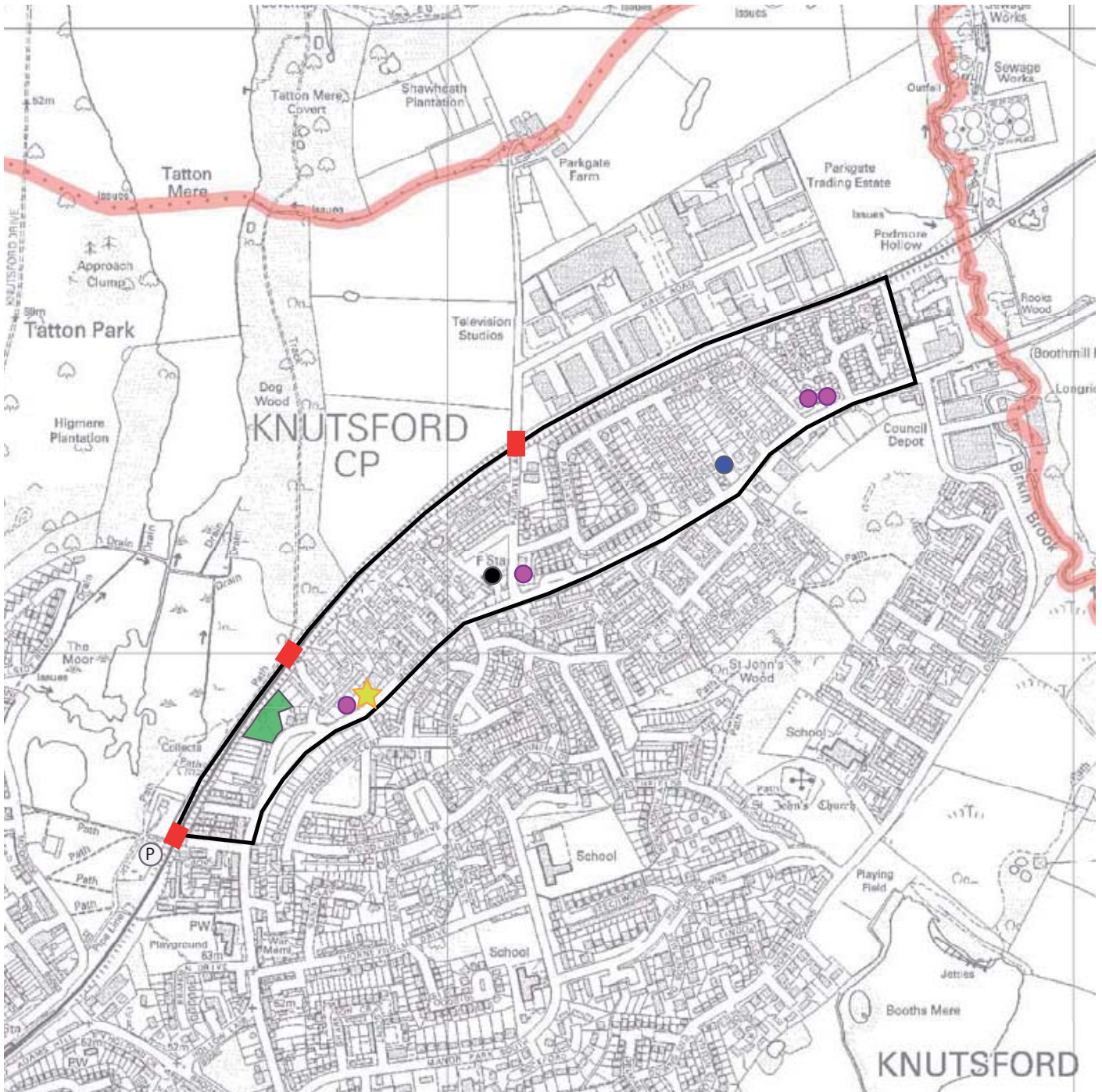


Materials and Colour Palette





7 - Mobberley Road West Residential Estates



7 - Mobberley Road West Residential Estates

Mobberley Road acts as the southern perimeter of Character Area 7 (CA) and the railway line acts as its northern perimeter. The western end abuts the Cross Town Conservation Area. The area contains one of the major footpaths for pedestrians that enables them to reach the Town Centre through an underpass under the railway line. The Mobberley Road is a major route that gives access to the Parkgate and Longridge Trading Estates (CA 11) and carries traffic wishing to access Knutsford and the M6 from the east. The area is characterised by estates of residential houses with small private gardens.

Topography:

Mobberley Road is level and flat along its length from the south- south- western corner until it reaches the steep slope in the north- north- east corner near to the junction .here the road road crosses a bridge with Montmorency Road.

At the south-west end (at Middle Walk) the land slopes steeply down towards the Moor where there is a footpath under the railway line. This steep slope continues behind the settlement up to Moordale Road. The slope is less steep at Mallard Close

where there is a footpath over the railway line leading into Dog Wood. At Parkgate Lane the road passes on a bridge over the railway line.

Land Use:

The area is residential with a very small amount of retail. The retail comprises a small parade of four shops on Parkgate Lane and one shop on Mobberley Road which together provide groceries, a Chinese takeaway, a post office, a chemist and a shoe repairer.

Public and community services within the CA are all situated on Mobberley Road. These comprise the Fire Station, Annandale Medical Centre, Holly House Veterinary Surgery and a Dental Surgery.

Layout:

In the area from Middle Walk to Moordale Road the houses front the Mobberley Road and the building line is close to the road. Their plots are regular, with small gardens to the front and yards to the rear. These houses together with those that front Middle Walk and Moordale Road are the older, Victorian properties of this CA. The pattern of the development is regular, arranged in rows on two straight roads.

The properties beyond Moordale Road are on larger plots and set back from the road on a service

road. This area and the housing of the 'bird' estate (Mallard Close, Teal Avenue, Merlin Avenue, Grebe Close, Heron Close) is less dense with greater space between buildings. The estate is served by two access roads with a number of side roads ending in cul de sacs.

The housing along Braidwood Avenue reverts to smaller plots and denser development as does the 2017 housing on Parkgate Lane and the housing which consists of mostly bungalows on the estate known as Parkgate. At the beginning of Lodge Road plot sizes are similar to those of Braidwood Avenue At its end there are larger houses on larger plots with a private pond. There is a consistent building line with the buildings set back from the road but there are differences in the sizes of back gardens due to the curvature and circulatory nature of the road.

The housing of the Oaks estate (Springwood Avenue, Merriman Avenue, Oakfield Avenue and Leigh Avenue) is less dense and the most regular in size of plot and building line. The five straight roads of the estate are accessible from Mobberley Road. Although pedestrians can access Springwood Avenue from Parkgate, bollards prevent any through movement by vehicles along this internal road parallel with the railway line.

The pattern of development of the housing off Montmorency road is irregular, the building line is not



straight as blocks of housing are of a staggered arrangement and there is a mix of plot sizes.

Landscaping:

Mobberley Road has long stretches of continuous hedgerow between pavement and housing. There is some public realm landscaping and continuous road corner edge grass verges of over 2 metres width on Mobberley Road; around the fire station; alongside the parade of shops on Parkgate Lane; either side of the junctions of Mobberley Road with Montmorency Avenue and Merriman Avenue.

The majority of front gardens in the whole of this CA are either very small or no deeper than the length of a single vehicle. This results in a dominance of hard landscaping of pavements and driveways particularly when the front garden has been lost for car parking purposes. There are dominant mature trees along the Mobberley Road (except in front of the Victorian housing) and mature trees in the public realm landscaped areas. A limited number of mature trees grow within the estates and a small amount of tree planting exists within gardens. The railway line is well screened by tree and shrub planting from the back gardens alongside the railway line and this also means that the Parkgate Industrial Estate is relatively well hidden.

Open Spaces:

The green open spaces within the estates include: S-011 an informal recreational area; S-012 The Mobberley Road Crescent walled garden; S-061 a large space with mature trees; S-045 Land around the Fire Station; S-097 pond at the end of Lodge Road.

Landmarks:

The distinctive landmark in this CA is the water tower on the Mobberley Road which is now the site of a national builder's merchant.

It was built at this high point above the town by the Knutsford Light and Water Company (formed in 1872).

Streetscape:

The pavement and road surface throughout the area is tarmac. The street lighting is of the standard municipal type. There are very few hedgerows in the Victorian area of Middle Walk and Moordale Road. Here Victorian brick walls and picket fences are the dominant boundary treatment. Gardens and hedgerow planting are common in all other areas of the CA particularly in the Oaks Estate but also lap wooden fencing, metal railings and low brick walls are used.

Views and vistas:

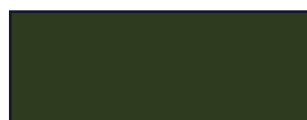
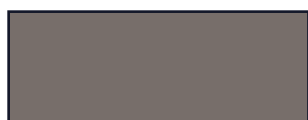
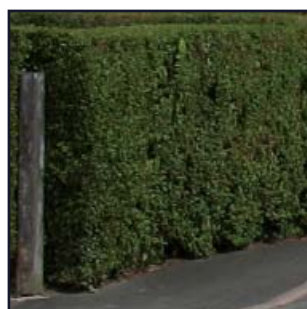
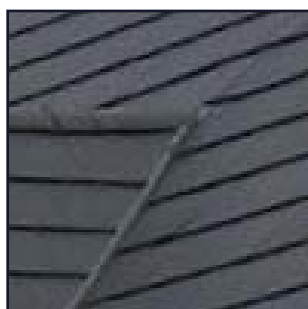
The area has a significant view from bridge at end of Mallard Close over Dog Wood and towards Tatton Park.

Heritage and Archaeology:

The slopes on which this settlements was built are clearly shown on the tithe maps to be largely in the ownership of Peter Legh of Norbury Booths. The builders of the railway used the topography of the land to their advantage in building the line in 1862. The censuses reveal that the occupants of the oldest houses in this area were largely unskilled workers.

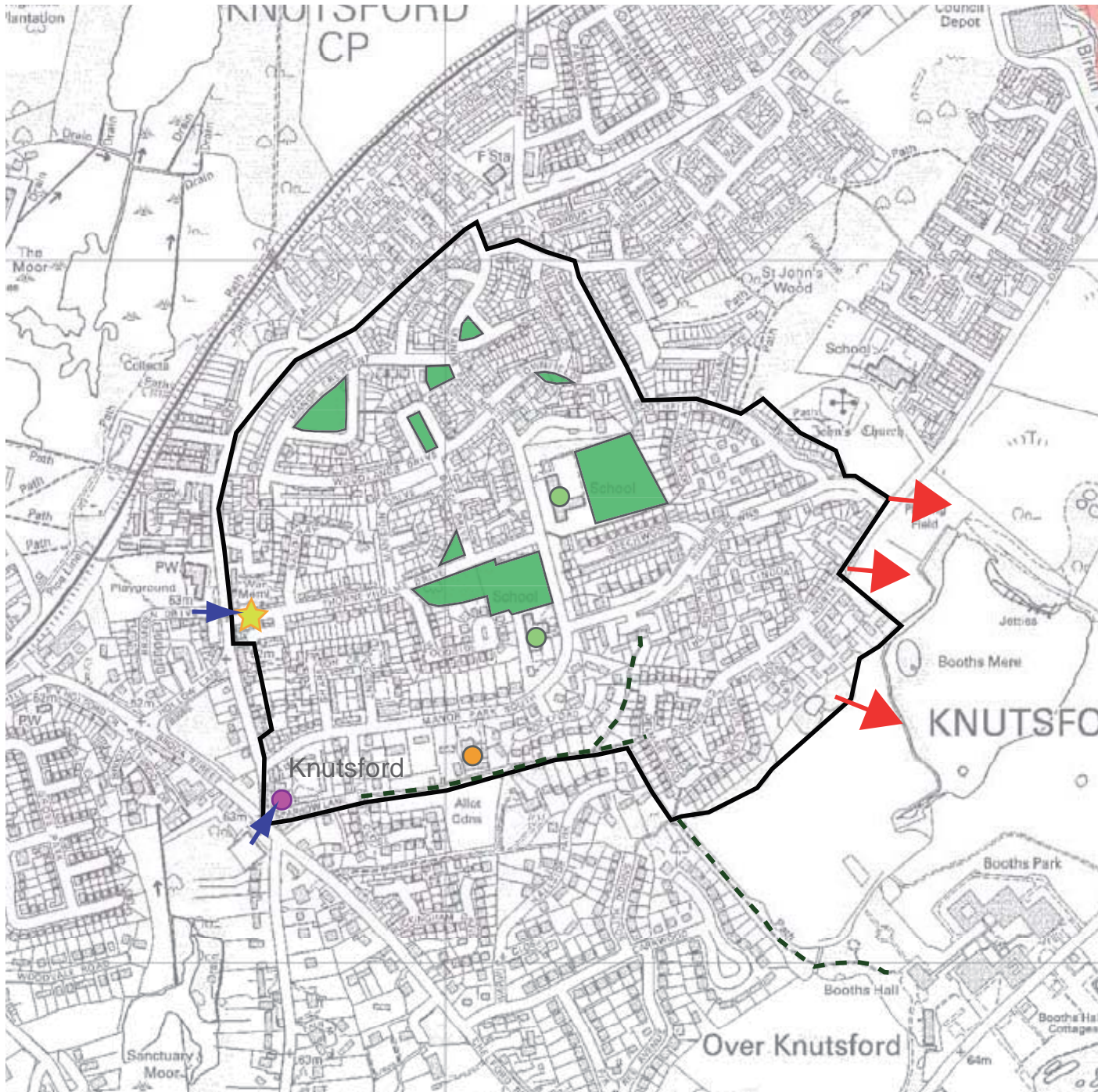


Materials and Colour Palette





8 - Manor Park



8 - Manor Park

Character Assessment Area 8 is a residential settlement situated to the east of Knutsford's Town Centre, on the eastern side of the Mobberley Road. Its southern perimeter is Sparrow Lane; the footpath to Booths Park and the rear boundaries of the properties that are adjacent to the grounds of Booths Park. To the north-north east of the area is the Longridge estate.

Topography:

The area is predominantly flat with the exception of an incline on Thorneyholme Drive and occasional undulations along footpaths or where there are remnants of woodland.

Land use:

The whole of the area is residential, characterised by larger and smaller private housing with a number of bungalows in certain roads and smaller areas of social housing comprising houses and flats. Commercial use is limited to a small parade of shops on Woodlands Drive within the estate and the old post office on the corner of Sparrow Lane which houses two trading units with flats above. The other non-residential buildings within the area are two primary schools;

a community building used by the local scout group and available for hire by other community groups; Sharston House, a private residential nursing home in an adapted Victorian residence situated on Manor Park South

Layout:

The principal road through the area, the Mobberley Road runs north-south. Five main access roads which connect the Mobberley Road with all of the residential roads throughout the CA. These are Manor Park South, Thorneyholme Drive, Manor Crescent, Manor Park North and Longridge. The road layout is irregular. The five main access roads wind through the area and interconnect with one another either directly or via side roads. Minor roads that exist throughout the CA end either as cul de sacs or as crescents.

This area has one of the highest number of footpaths which provide residents with access to the schools or to Mobberley Road and the Town Centre via Sparrow Lane or Woodlands Drive. The footpaths can also provide connections to the schools for residents from out of the character area (as in the case of the footpath connecting Delmar Road to South Downs and Carwood).

The density and layout of the housing varies throughout the area, with the larger detached

houses and bungalows built to a regular building line and occupying reasonably generous plots with front, rear and side gardens as is the case in Manor Park South and other roads in this vicinity. Semi-detached and terraced properties again follow a regular building line, but they are built on narrower plots with front and rear gardens (evident in Manor Park North and on its periphery).

Open Spaces:

There are a number of significant open spaces within the CA including the playing fields of the two primary schools (S-071, S-072); informal play and recreation areas (S-010, S-017); and rectangular and triangular 'greens' (S-016, S-008, S-009, S-019, S-020, S-047, S-118, S-119, S-120). All help to reduce the density of the housing and soften the hardness of the estate landscape.

Landscaping:

There are two areas of natural woodland which are the remnants of the grounds of two Victorian mansions, Woodlands and Thorneyholme. One area is in between Woodside and Thorneyholme Drive (S-018) and the other Mansion Drive (S-048). The latter has an avenue of mature trees that were originally



along the wall of the original mansion. A high degree of planting within private gardens enhances the green environment. This is complemented by a mix of mature trees and hedges with wide grass verges affording privacy and visual space.

Streetscape:

There is a high proportion of soft boundary treatment in the form of low and high, well-maintained hedges throughout the area. Where there are low brick walls and wooden fencing are often with hedges planted behind. Walls and hedges are generally higher along the sides of footpaths.

Pavements and road surfaces are tarmac. Street lighting, seating, bus shelters, bollards, litter bins and street signage are all the same throughout the area and are generally metal and of a standard municipal type

Landmarks:

The Cross Town War I Memorial is located at the junction of Thorneyholme Drive with Mobberley Road.

Views and vistas:

There is a significant view of Booths Mere across the open

recreational space at the end of Higher Downs at its junction with Boothfields. At this vantage point there is also the view out of the area towards St Helena's and St John's Wood.

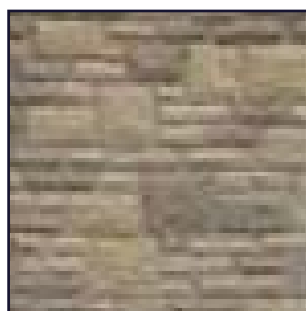
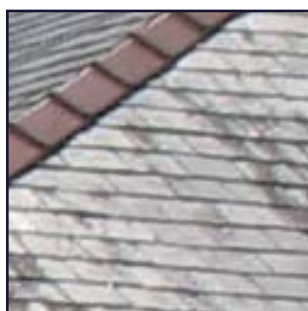
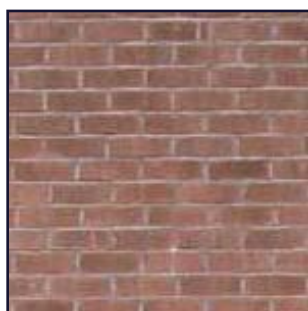
Heritage and archaeology:

The tithe maps of 1836-51 show that the principal landowner was Peter Legh of Norbury Booths Hall and apart from a strip of houses on the eastern edge of Mobberley Road, ie within Cross Town, the land was mostly used for pasture. By circa 1875 a road had been constructed across the area and the line of this road is that of today's Manor Park South and Manor Park North. A large house, Woodlands was on the site now occupied by St Vincent's School. Its access road became Thorneyholme Drive. The lodge of Thorneyholme are the only evidence today of the Victorian villas that were built in this area in the 19th Century. Some of the early cottages still exist along Mobberley Road. Others have been demolished to make way for new development for example Church Mews which is situated on the site of Cross Town Boy's and Girl's school.



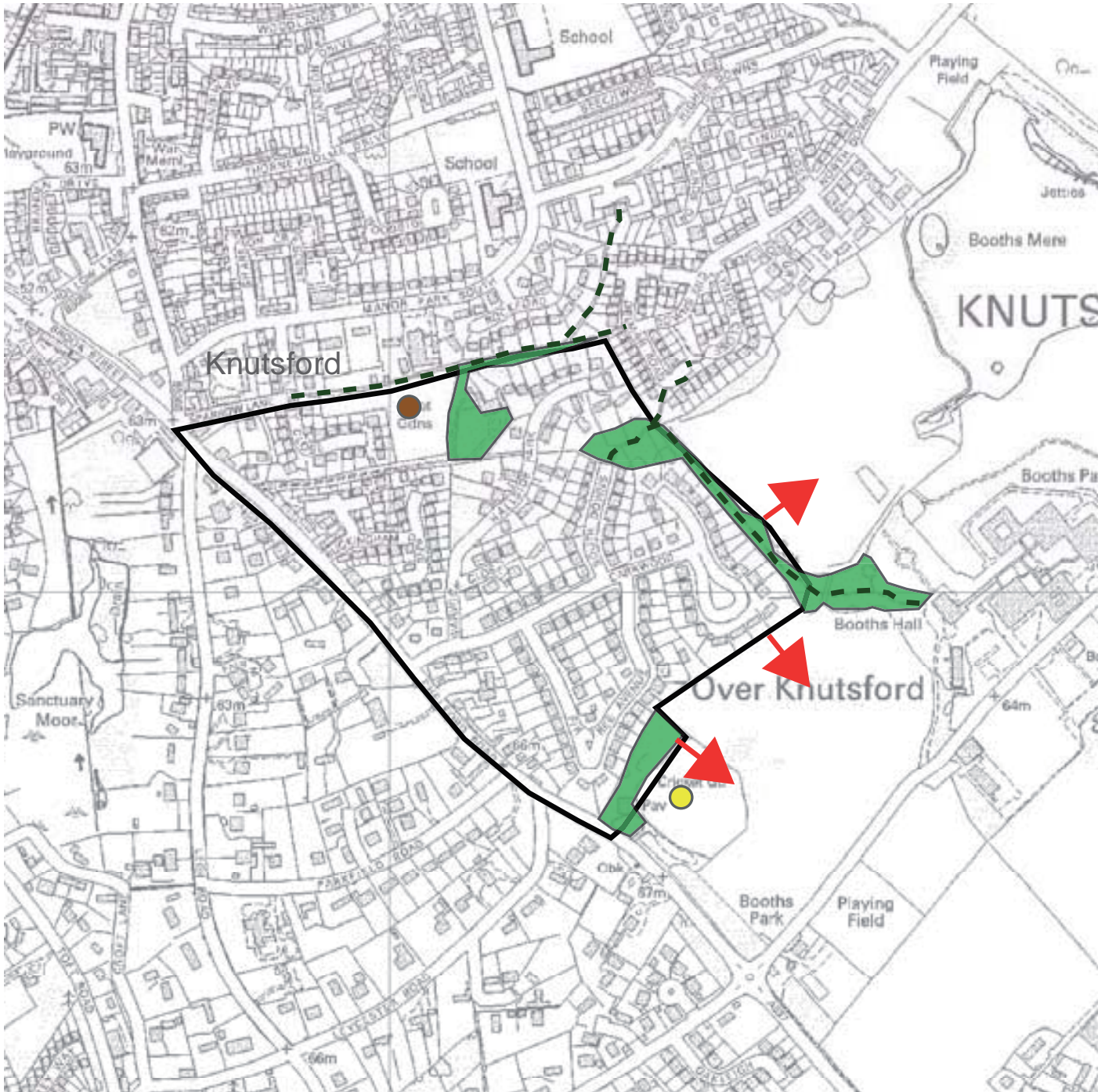


Materials and Colour Palette





9 - South East Chelford Road Residential Estates



9 - South East Chelford Road Residential Estates

This Character Area is situated to the south east of Knutsford Town Centre and it is accessed via the A537 Knutsford- Chelford- Macclesfield Road that runs along its western edge. It is adjacent to the Legh Road Conservation Area on the other side of the Chelford Road and the Cross Town Conservation Area on the other side of Sparrow Lane. It is a residential area with an open and sylvan appearance. Although the majority of its housing is 20th Century the settlement that along Chelford Road is one of the oldest areas of the town. It is associated with the manor of Knutsford Booths which was in the ownership of the Legh family of Booths Hall (refer to History of the Settlement and Timeline).

Topography :

Generally flat.

Land Use:

The area is entirely residential with a community facility in the form of Sparrow Lane Allotments.

Layout :

The main access roads off the A537 Knutsford-Chelford Road

into the settlements in this CA are straight. However the internal roads within the estate are circulatory or end in cul de sacs. Similarly Aylesbury Close that runs from Manor Park South and bisects Sparrow Lane (the Northern boundary of this Character Area) and Hallside Park are curved roads ending in cul de sacs.

In general the layout across the whole of the Character Area is irregular. There is a uniformity in building line within the estates in that the houses are set back from the road. Plots have a good degree of openness due to generous side gardens. Generally the houses on Carrwood, South Downs, Warwick Close and Hallside Park are on larger than average plots. The size of the back gardens in Carrwood and Fir Tree Avenue varies according to their boundaries with Booths Park on the Eastern Edge. Hallside Park plots are also irregular and vary in size according to their position within what were the grounds of the earlier house and nursery. The building plots are less generous on Buckingham Drive. The 'Italianate' style of this development was planned to complement the nearby Legh Road Conservation Area and the historic setting of the listed cottages and houses of Over Knutsford which are to be found along Chelford Road, the western edge of this Character Area.

The housing along the Chelford Road consists of the oldest buildings of this Character Area.

In general, the buildings are close to the road as either their front boundaries form are the pavement or they have very small gardens.

Sparrow Lane and the footpath to Booths Park are Public Rights of Way

Open Spaces:

The Downs End/Delmar Road Green is an attractive piece of grassland between sets of housing with a footpath cutting through. The Sparrow Lane Allotments are one of three allotment sites within the town and this is the largest with 41 plots. It is owned by Knutsford Town Council and managed by the Knutsford Allotment Society.

Landscaping:

Although this area has a lot of private planting with grass, hedgerows and trees there is little public realm landscaping. This is most noticeable along Chelford Road and Buckingham Drive where no grass verges exist and the hard landscaping of pavements and road surfaces dominate. However, the planting of trees and shrubs on the traffic islands in Fir Tree Avenue and Carrwood and the corner green at the bend in the road contribute to the open feel of this part of the settlement.



Sparrow Lane is a green landscape of hedgerows and trees that screen any buildings or gardens along its length.

A clearly defined broad line of trees and woodland follows the line of the old carriageway to Booths Hall from the entrance to Hallside House off the Chelford Road. It ends within the larger clump of woodland at the northern end of South Downs and on the perimeter of the boundary with Booths Park.

Streetscape:

Within the estates of Carrwood and Buckingham Drive the front gardens are laid to lawn with only a few patches of boundary hedging. Along Chelford Road there is a mix of soft and hard boundary treatment including hedgerows (thorn, privet, box), brick walls (old, new, rendered) pillared gateways, picket fencing, split oak fencing, iron railings and gates and stone walling.

Throughout the CA the road and pavement surfacing is tarmac and the lighting of a municipal type. Similarly, street furniture and street signage is modern except for one distance sign that is located on the Chelford Road, against the stone wall that is the boundary to a house in Fir Tree Avenue, between the 'Old Dame School' cottage and Booths Park.

Views and Vistas:

There are significant views from their rear gardens for the property owners of Carrwood and Fir Tree Avenue across the parkland landscape and cricket pitch of Booths Park. Similarly the properties at the ends of Ash Grove and Fox Grove have views of Booths Park and it's mere. Within the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan a portion of the land, nearest the Mere has been for Green belt release as a safeguarded site suitable for 150 dwellings.

Heritage and Archaeology:

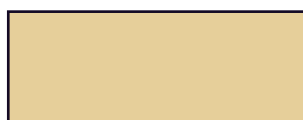
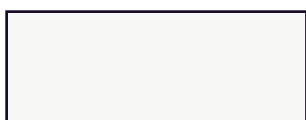
Two listed buildings and a listed pump (outside a row of cottages) are situated on Chelford Road. As stated in the introduction to this Character Area the settlement that arose along Chelford Road is associated with the early settlement of Cross Town and with the manor of Knutsford Booths (Over Knutsford) which was in the ownership of the Legh family of Booths Hall (refer to 'Historical Development' and the 'Timeline').

The streetscape, particularly the rows of cottages which are of Townscape Merit, is a historic one and although 20th Century houses have been built on the land behind the cottages, they are largely hidden from view. Grange

Cottage 'The Old Dame School' is one Knutsford's oldest buildings with records of occupancy dated 1641.

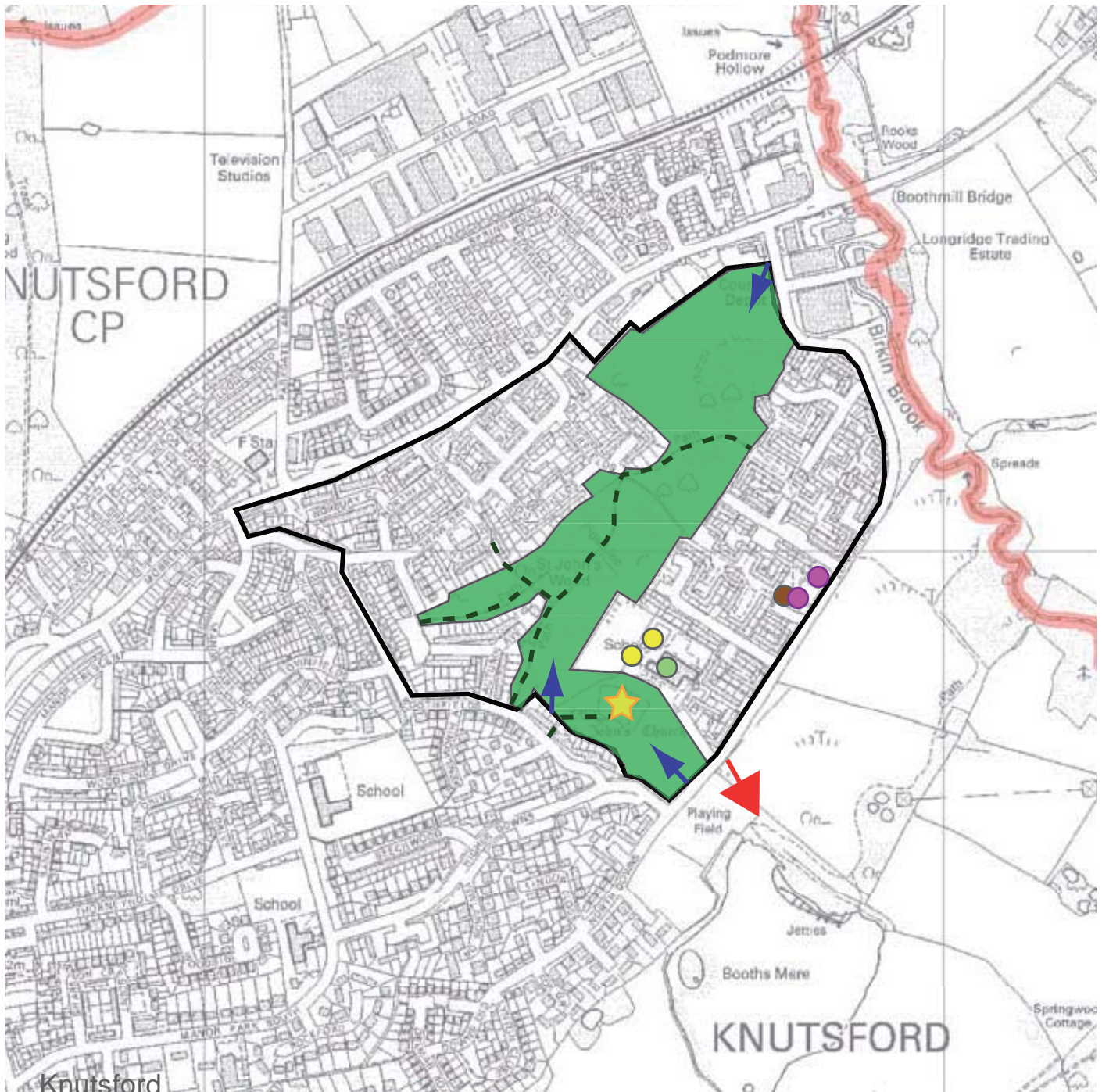


Materials and Colour Palette





10 - Shaw Heath and Longridge



10 - Shaw Heath and Longridge

Character Area 10 is situated to the north east of the Town Centre. It is a residential area of high density housing. Its northern perimeter is the Mobberley Road from which there are the two main access roads, Shaw Drive and Longridge. Longridge forms the settlements eastern and southern boundary with Boothfields on the western edge.

Topography:

The roads within the area are predominantly flat. However, in the centre of the character area there is a deep depression in the land creating a valley in between the two main housing concentrations of Longridge and Shaw Heath.

Land use:

Two thirds of the area is high density residential, with the only commercial use being a small parade of shops and a public house on Longridge. In the parade, one shop unit has been converted into a small community 'hub' with café. A building which was built as a primary school at the southern end of Longridge is now used a specialist educational unit with a wide catchment area. On the northern side of the area

on the Mobberley Road there is a second community building, the Shaw Heath Social Club.

The remaining third of the land consists of formal play spaces and recreational areas that form an almost continuous accessible green space that threads its way through the centre of the settlement from the junction of Longridge with the Mobberley Road, along the 'valley' to the junction of Longridge with Higher Downs.

Layout:

The Longridge road and housing layout is a very regular one with straight roads with the blocks of houses and flats built to the same building line and on equal-sized plots thereby creating a uniform pattern. The front gardens to the housing blocks are generally deep and wide enough to accommodate a single car, back gardens are of a similar size. Some houses have single garages and there are blocks of garages or parking areas for the residents of flats and terraces.

The road layout of the Shaw Heath housing is also irregular with houses on regular and equal sized plots within individual streets. Shaw Drive is the main road through the centre of the settlement and roads off Shaw Drive are either straight and end in cul de sacs or semi-circular to form crescents.

A number of footpaths run through the 'valley' and connect the two residential areas of Shaw Heath and Longridge. These connect with footpaths within each residential area enabling pedestrians to cross the settlement instead of walking around via the perimeter roads.

Open Spaces:

There are a number of different sized public greens (S-050, S-051), gardens (S-052), amenity green open spaces (S-114, S-115, S-117) and playgrounds/areas (S-015, S-031) in the Shaw Heath residential area. In the Longridge residential area there is a large formal playground (S-003) near to the Mobberley Road junction, the St John's school field(S-073) and the grounds around the Ancient Scheduled Monument of St Helena's (S-013). St John's Wood (S-004) runs along the valley that is in between the two residential areas.

Landscaping:

A significant area of natural landscape that lies along a NNW-SSE line in a depression that bisects the settlements of Shaw Heath and Longridge. This area of St John's Wood (S-004) is a priority habitat of deciduous wet woodland containing black poplars. Alongside the eastern perimeter of Longridge there is



countryside in the form scrub and copses of trees. This area gives a rural aspect to the road and it is used by residents for recreational activities.

Throughout the area there are verges, in some instances deep verges, that provide substantial green landscaping in front of houses and flats. Gardens are generally small with plantings of shrubs and hedges but few trees. Some front gardens have been paved over to provide off-road parking. Hard landscaping is a dominant feature within the confines of the built environment and in communal areas such as residents' parking spaces.

Streetscape:

Tarmac is used extensively for roads and pavements throughout the settlement. Street lights are tall metal columns with LED's. Signage consists of wooden posts with metal signs. Street furniture is standard. There is a mix of hard and soft boundary treatments with some hedges retained around private gardens and used around recreational areas particularly in the Shaw Heath settlement area. Feather edge wooden fencing is a common hard boundary treatment in Longridge and is a dominant feature of a modern development in St John's Vale. Around open spaces low wooden post and rail is used. There is also some use of metal railings around play areas and around

residential gardens sometimes in conjunction with low brick walls.

Landmarks:

The scheduled monument of St Helena. Refer to heritage section below and Heritage timeline).

Views and vista.

The most significant views are those across the landscaped open space areas in particular from the end of Longridge and Boothfields across to open space to the mound that is the scheduled monument of St Helena. There is also a significant vista from the end of Longridge and from the open space of St Helena towards Booths Park and the watery edge in the distance of Booths Mere. When turning into Longridge from Mobberley Road the view across the play and recreational space is an attractive one and contrasts sharply with the hard landscaping and boundary treatment of the Trading Estate on the opposite side of the road.

Heritage and archaeology:

Archaeological investigations took place in 1998 and 2000 of the Scheduled Monument 1014378 (HER Number 1240/1) recorded on the historic record as

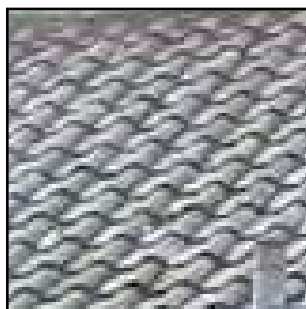
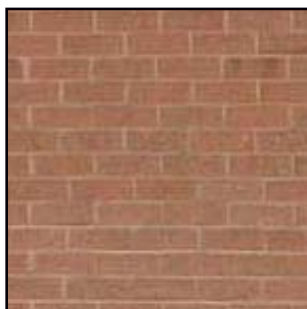
the site of the parochial chapel of St John, and known locally as the site of St Helena to whom the church was dedicated after its construction in early 14th Century. The Cheshire Historic Town's Survey Archaeology 2003 of Cheshire County Council records that three grave slabs dating from the period 1170 to 1250 were revealed in 2000. These were removed from site for safe keeping and the tombstones of the 17th to the mid 18th Century were laid out to follow the outline of the Church that fell into disrepair by 1741. The churchyard is 50m in diameter with a banked enclosure and ditch. There a pedestrian access from the NW from Boothfields via a tarmac path. In 1998 the archaeological advisors carried out a Preliminary Survey of the site (unpublished report SCH 4348) and recommended that:

- The site be opened up by removal of the overgrown shrubbery to make it more visible and less subject to vandalism (signs of which were in evidence)
- Discontinuation of the use of heavy grass mowing machinery which was damaging kerbstones
- Reinstate the one primary 'official' entrance to the site by installing a railing around the site and outside the scheduled area .

These recommendations were never adopted and currently Knutsford Town Council is considering taking over management of the site from Cheshire East Council.

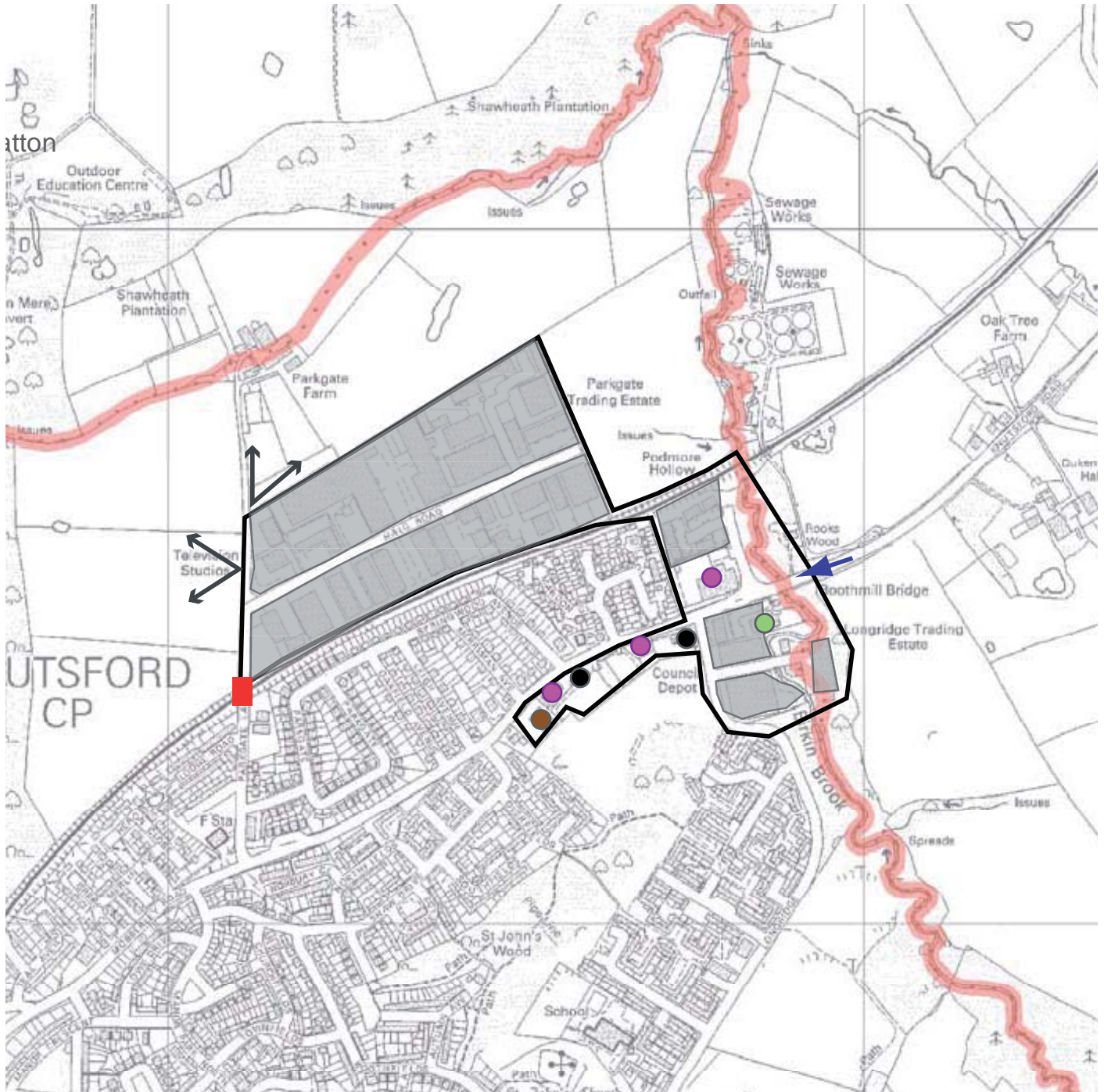


Materials and Colour Palette





11 - North East Trading Estate Area



11 - North East Trading Estate Area

This character area is situated to the north east of the Town Centre. The Mobberley Road that connects the area to the town centre crosses Birkin Brook at Boothmill Bridge on the parish boundary and acts as the North East gateway to Knutsford. It is predominantly an industrial area with wide avenues and views across agricultural land. The Birkin Brook forms the boundary at the end of character area and it is separated from CA 7 by the railway wildlife corridor.

Topography:

Overall the area is flat except for the land on the eastern boundary which slopes down to Birkin Brook. The railway runs on an embankment which is above the level of the road at the end of Rookwood Way.

Land use:

The settlement consists entirely of commercial, light industrial and a small number of retail and wholesale units. The land within the Parkgate Industrial Estate, Longridge Trading Estate and alongside Rookwood Way is occupied by purpose-built commercial units, office blocks and light industrial workshops.

The buildings range in size from large two-storey blocks to small, one storey units and cater for a range of uses: offices; light manufacturing; prestigious car maker's showroom; warehousing and logistics; building supplies and specialist retailers. In the southern section of this CA alongside the Mobberley Road the largest units are those of the service station with a small associated retail outlet; Cheshire East Local Council depot and recycling centre and the children's nursery.

Layout:

Within the Parkgate Industrial Estate Haig Road, the entry-exit road, and its side roads are straight and of a generous width to accommodate HGVs. Haig Road is accessed from Parkgate Lane which is too narrow at the bridge over the railway to accommodate the width of an HGV and car side by side. Parkgate Lane is a no through road which terminates at Parkgate Farm.

The Longridge Trading Estate is accessed from Longridge through a single entry-exit point with security gates. In general there is a good degree of openness and space between buildings on the Parkgate Industrial Estate and open fields to the west. The buildings of the Longridge Trading Estate are close together within a secure fenced and gated complex.

Landscaping:

There is a large amount of hard standing from each of the service roads to provide car parking for workers and clients. There is a good amount of green landscaping, with wide grass verges; tree lined pavements either side of Haig Road and well-tended hedges and lawns around office buildings particularly at the end closest to Parkgate Lane. The Longridge Trading Estate lacks green landscaping, apart from the copse of trees at the end of the site closest to Birkin Brook. Limited provision of parking space on the Longridge Trading Estate results in cars being parked on verges on Longridge.

Open Spaces:

S-053 is the field on the corner of Parkgate and Haig Road. Parkgate sits within the natural landscape encompassed by agricultural land. The land to the west of the Parkgate estate is used for horses that to the north is identified in CEC's Adopted Local Plan as Strategic Site LPS37 to accommodate the building of 200 dwellings. Lapwing nesting sites are located on this agricultural land behind the Royal Mail Sorting Office. Key Green Corridors for wildlife exist along Birkin Brook; woodland at the eastern end of area and the agricultural land to west and north of character area.



Streetscape:

Roads and pavements are tarmac surfaces with all lighting and street furniture of the standard municipal type. The railway is screened by trees and shrubs from view from within and outside the estate.

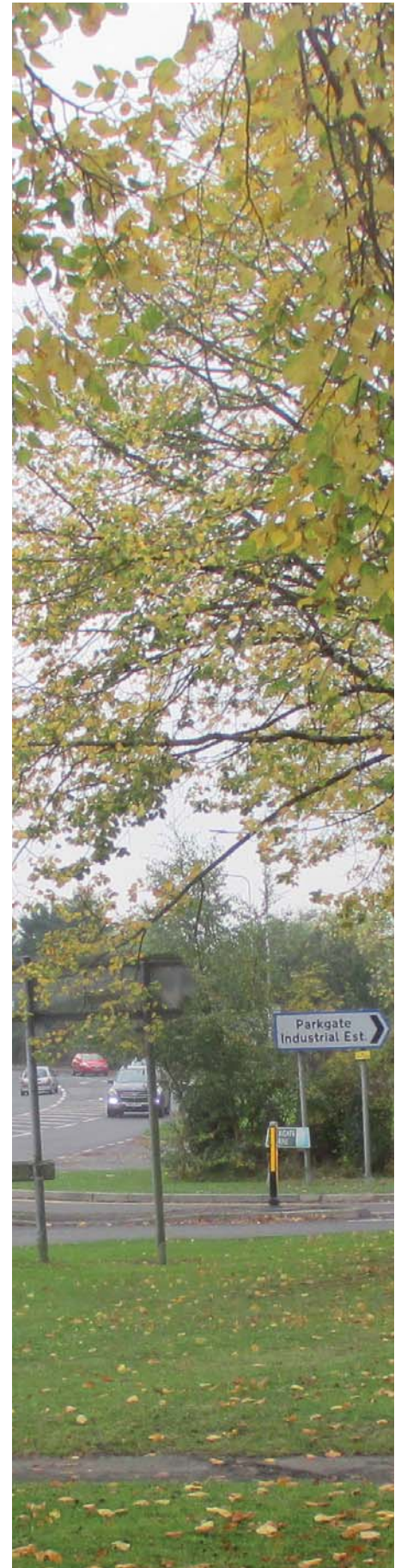
Landmarks, views, vistas:

The views out of the area from the south are across a landscaped grass public space with play equipment; to the east copses of trees and scrub around Birkin Brook; to the west and north agricultural land and areas of woodland that are within the Tatton Hall Estate (Dog Wood, Tatton Mere Covert and Shawheath Plantation). No significant views exist either within or out of the settlement nor any landmarks.

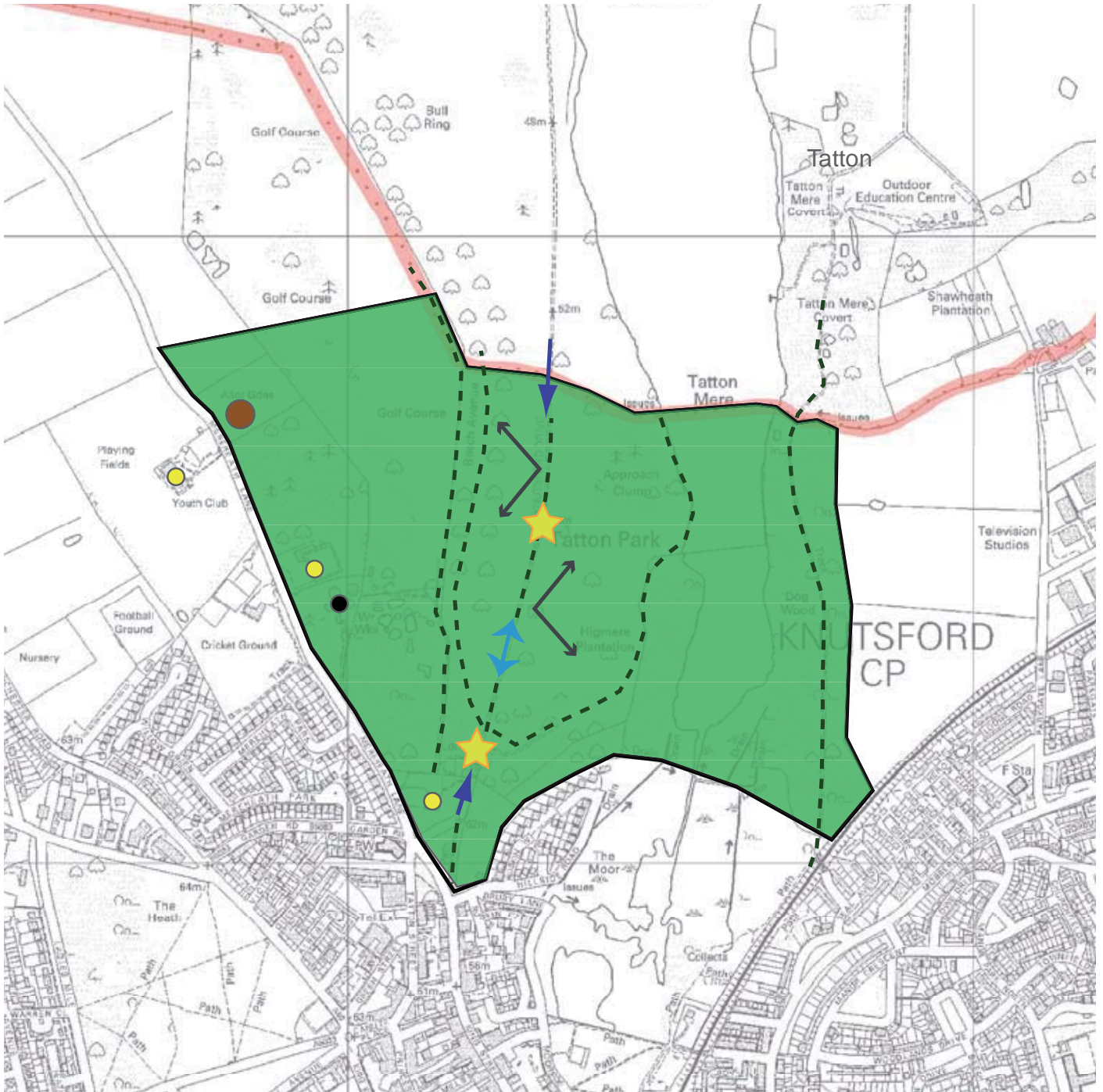
The area is directly under the flight path of flights to and from Manchester Airport.

Heritage and Archaeology:

The Cheshire Tithe maps of 1836-51 show that the majority of the land in this CA was under the ownership of Peter Legh of Booths Hall. The area of the Longridge Trading estate was the site of the mill pools and Booths Mill.



12 - Tatton Park





12 - Tatton Park

This Character Area (CA) is situated to the north of Knutsford Town Centre and encompasses the southern portion of the historic estate of Tatton Park that lies within the parish boundary of Knutsford. Tatton Park Grade II* Registered Park and Garden is a fine example of an historic estate, including 18th century designed landscape and gardens, an extensive landscape park and Tatton Hall. The entry-exit point to the road that goes through the site is at the Grade II* Knutsford Lodge Gateway at the end of King Street. The western boundary of the park is a significant feature in Mereheath Lane, which together with the A556 Manchester Road forms the two Northern Gateways into Knutsford. This western edge of the park is acknowledged in the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan to be an important buffer zone between the Registered Park and Garden, the SSSI and Ramsar site of Tatton Mere, and the proposed 250 dwellings on Strategic Site LPS36C.

Topography:

This Character Area is designated within Cheshire Landscape Assessment as Landscape Character Type (LCT) 9 Estate Woodland and Trees (EWM 4 Tatton and Rostherne). The defining characteristics of this landscape character type (LCT)

are a concentration of historic estates with areas of parkland, formal gardens, high density of mature woodland and mosses and meres. The land is generally flat pastureland with broad undulations and occasional steeper slopes arising through agriculture or landscaping activity.

Land Use:

Most of this southern area of the Tatton Estate is open parkland, a very popular tourist destination and a tranquil landscape of high visual merit and a significant place for recreational purposes such as walking, cycling, family picnics-outings and horse riding. The area to the east of Tatton Mere is wooded and can be accessed from the end of Mallard Close by a footpath through Dog Wood. Midway on this eastern side of Tatton Mere is a sailing centre with storage for boats in the wooded area. A golf course and club house are located near the western boundary beyond Beech Walk. There is also a bowling green and club house, a sewage treatment plant and an extensive area of allotments all of which can be accessed from Mereheath Lane. The lodge at the Park entrance is a residential property. The Park is open daily with a fee for entry by car but there is a small car parking area to the right of the entrance gates. The deer park dates from 1290 AD and there areas of prime

agricultural land beyond the eastern edge of this CA and areas of ancient woodland.

Landscaping:

The 18th Century Parkland landscape is the work of one of the most distinguished designers in English Landscape history Humphrey Repton. Other famous designers Joseph Paxton, Lewis Wyatt and John Webb were involved in the landscaping of gardens and buildings some of which are in view from within this CA. The most significant feature in the landscape to the east is the expanse of open water, Tatton Mere (an SSSI with valuable aquatic fauna). To the south of this CA Tatton Mere is fed by water flowing from the Knutsford Moor Nature Reserve, a large area of fen and reed swamp and a valuable bird habitat. Most of the Park is permanent pasture with many champion trees. One of the earliest landscape features is Beech Avenue which runs up the western side the earliest plantings of which were present in 1740. In the last few years some of these mature beech trees have been lost. The perimeters to the Character Area are largely wooded which gives the Park its feeling of seclusion and lack of impact from surrounding roads. The only intrusion into the quiet landscape are the planes from Manchester Airport over this southern section of the estate. Tatton Park is an excellent

example of an historic estate, that has a strong sense of place and whose landscape character has had an influence beyond its gates and boundaries.

Landmarks, views and vistas:

The most significant built landmark in this southern area of Tatton Park are the Grade II* Knutsford Lodge Gateway (refer to Knutsford Listed buildings). The most significant natural landmark is Tatton Mere within its parkland setting. Because of the wooded perimeter there are no significant views into the area. However wide open views are a feature of the park across its vast acreage measuring circa 5km from north to south and over 3km from east to west. From the northern end of the road at the parish boundary the views are towards Melchett Mere and Tatton Hall.

Heritage and archaeology:

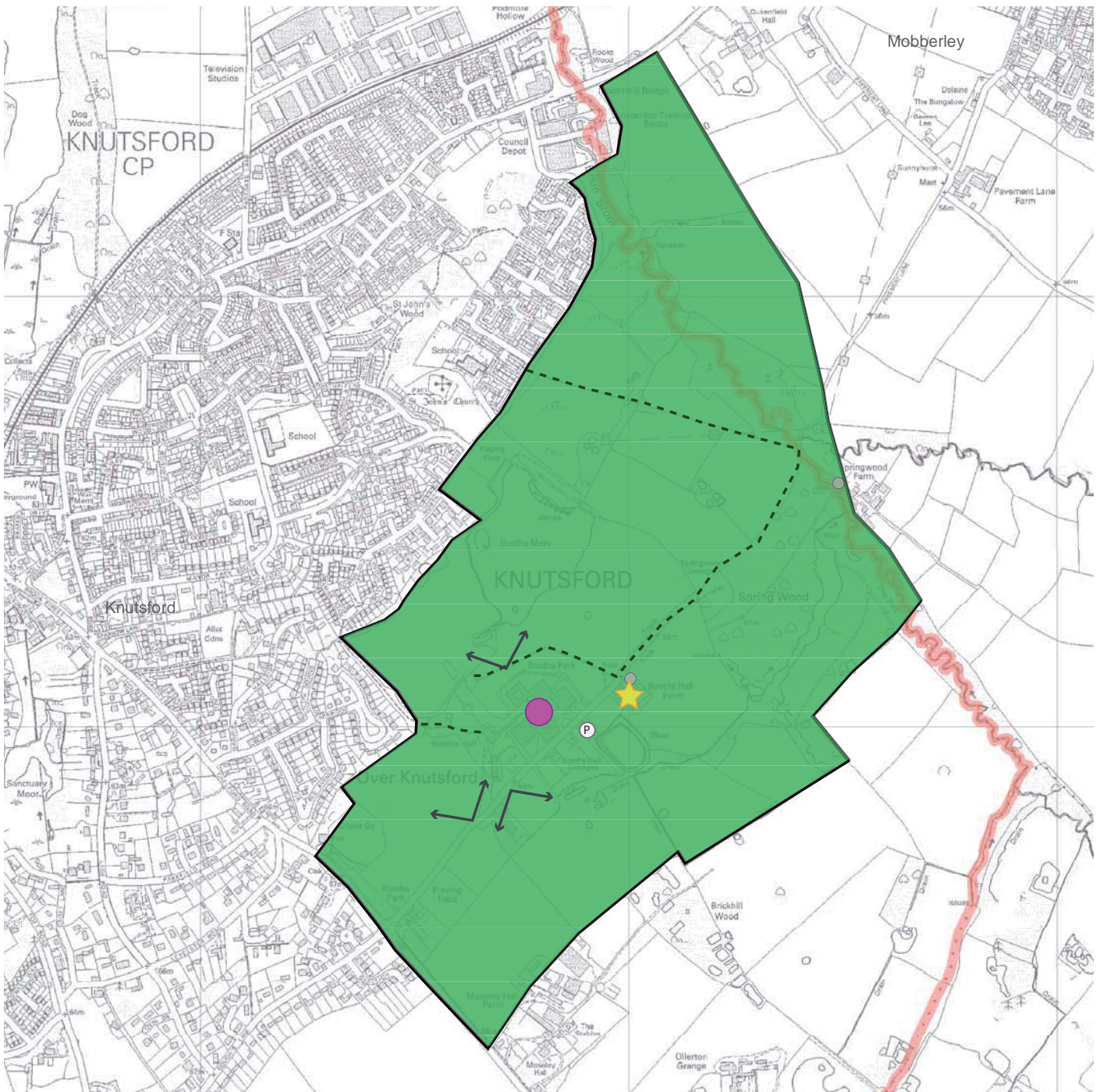
Tatton Park is one of the finest examples of an historic estate in the country. The portion of the estate that is within the parish of Knutsford is a small fraction of the total area of 2000 acres.

Its appearance today is due very much to the ideas of the landscape architect Humphrey Repton (1752-1818). There is archaeological evidence of a settlement during the Stone Age (refer to timeline) and there have been a number of archaeological investigations on site (HER Records 1285 and 1298). Tatton Mere is a glacial mere, developing in the natural depression in the land left as the ice sheet retreated some 15000 years ago. Humphrey Repton took full advantage of this natural feature to create an impressive feature within the landscaping of the park. Outside the estate field boundaries are hedges of hawthorn and mature trees and expanses of pine and broad leaf woodland which have been used to screen the estate.





13 - Booths Park



13 - Booths Park

This Character Area is situated to the south-south east of Knutsford Town Centre on the A537 Knutsford- Chelford- Macclesfield Road. The access road to Booths Park, marked by the lodge house, is at the roundabout at the junction of the A537 with Goughs Lane. At this point the A537 forms the rural south east Gateway to Knutsford. The Character Area encompasses the house and land of one of the main historic estates of Knutsford and which is now a key business community of around 3000 people.

Topography:

This Character Area is predominantly an area of flat parkland. The area that makes up the parkland of the historic estate was designated within Cheshire Landscape Assessment (2008) as of Landscape Character Type (LCT) 9 Estate Woodland and Trees (EWM 5 Tabley, Toft and Booths). The land in the northern section at the edge of the Longridge estate has more undulations particularly along the edge of the road.

Land Use:

A multi-occupancy business site. Its commercial office buildings, associated 'hard standing' car parks and the original Georgian Booths Hall occupy an area in the Southern part of the Character Area. The remaining open expanse of grassland, circa 250 acres is used by Booths Hall Farm, an award winning dairy farm with a herd Ayrshire cows. The farm and associated buildings are situated behind the office buildings. Some small areas to the south of the commercial buildings are used for community recreational activities: behind the Carrwood estate there is a cricket pavilion and pitch and to the East of the entrance driveway a football pitch. Designated and non- designated footpaths are used extensively by walkers and residents.

Layout:

A single entrance-exit road connects Booths Hall and all other buildings to the A537 Knutsford-Macclesfield Road. The road has a pavement running on one side only which interconnects with paths around the commercial buildings site and is linked to the main car parking areas. The farm and its outbuildings are situated where the road terminates at the rear of the office buildings. A stile connects with the rural footpath that runs northwards to a junction

with Pavement Lane in Mobberley Parish and the junction with the path connecting Longridge to Pavement Lane.

Open Spaces:

The majority of the site is open parkland (S-057 Booths Park) with a small amount of fencing to cordon off fields for grazing and silage for Booths Hall farm. A large area of open water ,Booths Mere, is managed by Altrincham & District Angling Club. The surface of Booths Mere is level with the surrounding parkland. Booths Mere is characteristic of the landscape character as identified in Cheshire's Landscape Appraisal of this area.

To the east of the Hall ,within an extensive copse of trees at the corner of the car park is the site of the original timbered, moated, quadrangular manor house, fishponds and interconnecting channels. The water in this system connects by a stream to the pool within Springwood (S-057 Springwood) which connects to Birkin Brook. Birkin Brook is hidden by trees (S-100 Woodland along Birkin Brook) as it winds along a natural contour in the land in a northerly direction to its junction with the B5085 Knutsford- Mobberley Road. The other trees within the site consist of a copse of trees lining the A537, Chelford Road; individual mature trees scattered throughout the parkland; trees around the perimeter of Booths



Mere and the ancient monument; south of the car parks.

The northern area of the site, opposite Longridge, is more enclosed with scrubland with many interconnecting footpaths across the intervening open spaces between copses of trees.

The key green corridors for wildlife movement are: the open countryside; Springwood to Birkin Brook through to Tatton Park; Booths Mere to the Scheduled Monument of St Helenas and St John's Wood in to adjacent Woodland Valley LCA.

The parkland has three designated wildlife sites: Booths Mere and associated woodland; Birkin Brook and associated woodland; Springwood, ancient woodland with an abundance of species

There are three recreational grounds within the area: S-037 Toft Cricket Club pitch (with associated clubhouse and car park) on the western edge; S-058 Playing Field at Booths Hall; S-103 Exercise Space at Booth Park.

Landscaping:

The car parks are large open areas of hard standing, with only perimeter screening. Mature trees are a significant feature throughout the open parkland and in the gardens around the Hall.

The grounds around the Hall and the buildings are formally landscaped, with lawns, stone

terraces, stone ornaments and sculptured, clipped shrubs and trees reflecting the historical nature of the site. Paths connecting the commercial buildings are generally well screened by soft landscaping. The result is that none of the office blocks other than the historic Booths Hall can be seen from the entrance road or the A537.

Streetscape:

Road and pavement surface are tarmacked with modern electric lighting. Pavements are flagged in the formal garden areas and tarmacked in other areas. Areas of seating in the vicinity of the buildings. There is a low level lighting and a traffic control barrier that controls entry to the area around Booths Hall.

The most distinctive and iconic feature of the Character Area is the historic house, Booths Hall, built in 1742 with landscaped gardens and deer park.

Views and vistas:

From outside the site, the landscaping accentuates the Hall's visibility from the A537. From the end of Longridge the water of Booths Mere is just visible.

From within the site are: views from the main drive are across the parkland towards the west, (to the

rear of the Fir Tree Avenue and Carrwood) and to the east across pastureland towards Moseley Hall and Ollerton Grange. The paths at the rear of the office buildings provide wide views across the parkland of the open water of Booths Mere; Springwood; the copses of shrub and trees along the edges of Birkin Brook and fields in Mobberley parish. Within the adopted Cheshire Local Plan an area of land to the rear of Ash Grove and Fox Grove has been progressed as a safeguarded site for 150 dwellings.

Heritage and Archaeology:

Two Scheduled Monuments and one locally listed building are within the Character Area. Both of the Scheduled Monuments are hidden by scrub and trees and inaccessible. They are Scheduled Monument HER 1242/1 (the moated site and fishponds and channels of the original 14th century house) and the ice house HER 2268. An archaeological dig was conducted on the site of the original hall in 1973 and the finds are described in the HER records. The locally-listed building is Booth Hall.



Monitoring and Review

This Character Assessment has been prepared alongside the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan. The assessment acts as a tool for developers, residents and decision makers in categorising the town into character areas and defining the elements which make each area distinctive and unique within the context of the town. A Knutsford Design Guide has been produced in tandem with this document and the character assessment provides the evidence to support the guidance.

Whilst this assessment has been produced to support the neighbourhood plan and design guide it is a resource in it's own right and should be used by many for a variety of purposes within and outside of the planning system.

Due to it's important role in documenting, recording and assessing the character of the town as a whole it is recommended that this character assessment be monitored, reviewed and updated in whole or in part every five years or if the character of an area changes as a result of new development. Ideally the assessment will be used to ensure that new development considers and complements the existing character as identified within this document.

