

# **Barrington Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan**



**January 2022**

# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Statement of Community Involvement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. History and development</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1 Location and setting	5
3.2 Historic development	5
<b>4. Character</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1 Summary description	7
4.2 Key characteristics	8
4.3 Architectural characteristics	9
4.4 Spatial characteristics	10
4.5 Key views and landmarks	11
4.6 Landscape and open spaces	14
4.7 Archaeology	14
<b>5. Management, enhancement, and new development</b>	<b>16</b>
5.1 General advice to protect and enhance the character of the conservation area	16
5.2 New development	16
5.3 Trees	17
5.4 Enhancement	18
<b>6. Heritage assets and positive structures</b>	<b>21</b>
6.1 Designated heritage assets	21
6.2 Possible Non-designated Heritage Assets	21
6.3 Positive buildings and structures	22
<b>7. Proposed boundary changes</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>8. References</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>9. Credits and copyright information</b>	<b>25</b>

# 1. Introduction

Conservation Areas are defined as ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’

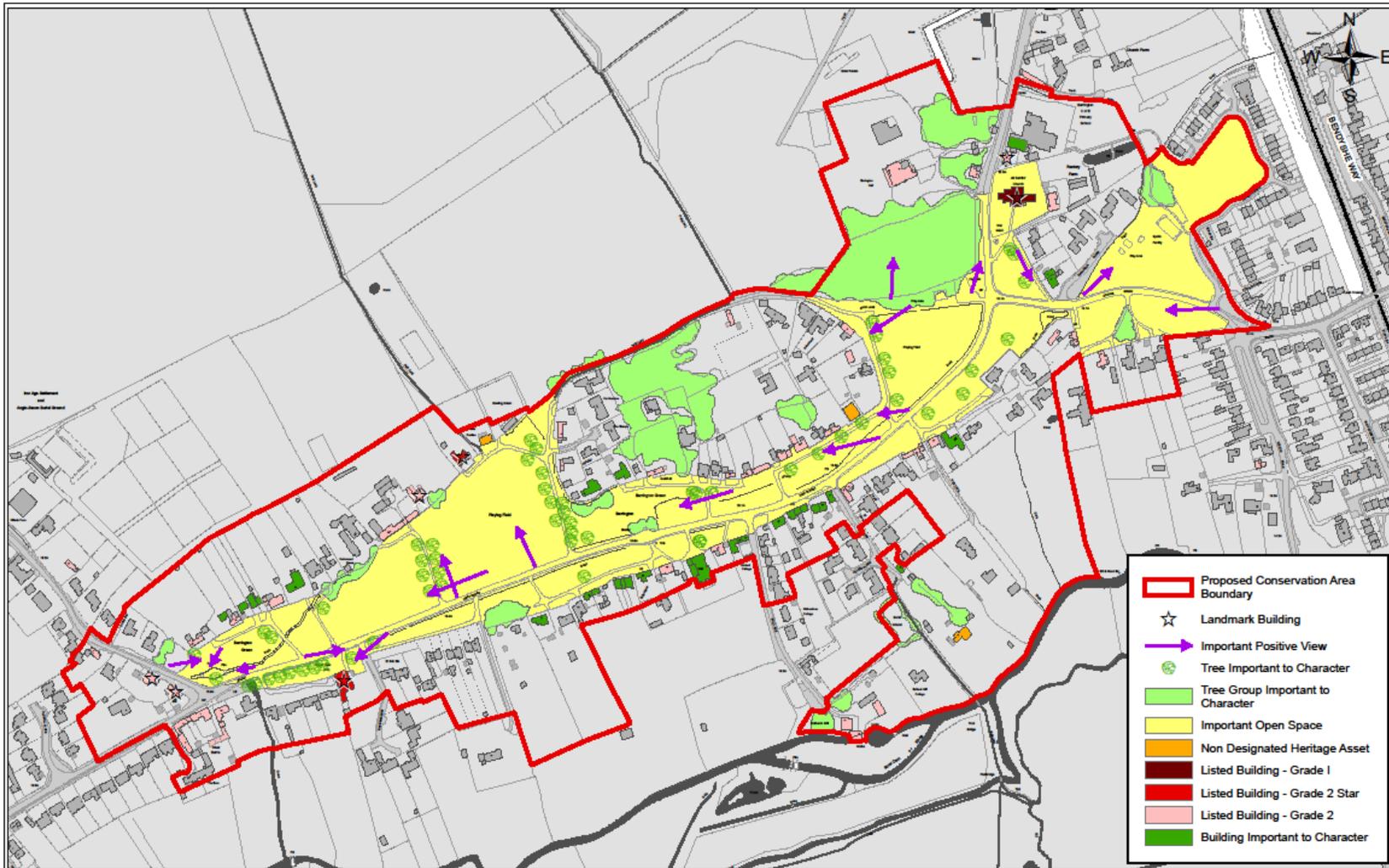
This document sets out the special architectural and historic interest of the Barrington Conservation Area and aims to fulfil the District Council’s duty to ‘draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement’ of its conservation areas as required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

This document covers all the aspects set out by Historic England on conservation area appraisals and management plans, including an analysis of the special character of the conservation area and recommended actions for the management of the area in order to preserve and enhance its character.

## 2. Statement of Community Involvement

Following survey work, a draft conservation area appraisal for Barrington was published on the Joint Planning Service website on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Notification of this was sent by email to the parish council and the elected members representing Barrington on SCDC. Separate notification was sent by post to all the addresses in land recommended for addition to the conservation area. All these parties were invited to respond to the draft through an online survey.

The survey elicited two responses. The responses are summarised in the report below. After careful consideration, it was decided that it was not necessary to make any changes have to the appraisal in the light of responses.



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### Barrington Conservation Area

Date: 24 June 2021  
 Produced by: PPSE Team  
 Greater Cambridge Shared Planning  
 Scale: 1:3,500 @ A3

## **3. History and development**

### **3.1 Location and setting**

- 3.1.1 Barrington is a spring-line village on the north bank of the River Rhee. It lies partly on alluvial and river gravels, partly on the gault, and partly on clay overlying the chalk, which rises to the White Hill ridge to the north of the village. It is within the Chalkland Landscape Character Area as identified in the District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- 3.1.2 Barrington exhibits very clearly the linear character typical of the chalkland villages. Central greens are often a feature of such villages; the large oval green around which Barrington grew remains a very distinctive element of the character of the village. From it, a number of lanes run down to the river, which is lined by small tracts of grassland and areas of trees, in which willows are particularly numerous.
- 3.1.3 The surrounding landscape, both in the valley bottom beyond the river to the south, and on the rising land to the north, is agricultural, primarily large arable fields, but this is not apparent from within the village, and especially not within the conservation area, where houses and trees cut off almost all outward views.

### **3.2 Historic development**

- 3.2.1 Barrington was the site of a large Iron Age settlement. Evidence of a Roman villa, and extensive Anglo-Saxon remains have also been found.
- 3.2.2 Before the Norman conquest, the land in Barrington was spread between five main owners, including the Abbey of Chatteris. The Abbey retained its holding when William I redistributed other Barrington land to his followers and family. Domesday Book listed the village as having 54 households. There were three mills: East Mill, Bulbeck Mill and West Mill.
- 3.2.3 By 1278 population stood at 102 families. Building started on the main part of the present Church in the 13th Century, using clunch quarried locally. A century later the remainder, including the tower and clerestory, was added. In 1326 the church was passed to Michaelhouse College in Cambridge.
- 3.2.4 The green was originally lens-shaped, much wider in the centre than it is now. Around 1650 a large inclosure took place in the oval area served by Back Lane, and cottages started to be built on its southern edge. The buildings on the original north edge of the green in this area have now disappeared. In 1676 the adult population was recorded as 181 and by 1742 the population was 312.

- 3.2.5 Enclosure took place in 1796. Unusually, the cottagers of this village did keep their rights to an area of common land - the Green. By 1820 there was considerable poverty here as a result of agricultural depression. A National School was opened in 1839. The original building remains part of Barrington Primary School. In the 1851 census, 533 people were recorded including 7 farmers and 99 agricultural labourers. Shepreth Station was opened in 1851, and fruit grown in the village was taken there to be transported to London.
- 3.2.6 In 1863 mining began for coprolites - phosphate nodules used for fertiliser. This work was profitable but dangerous, and paid much above agricultural work, attracting workers from elsewhere. At the peak of the digging, the population rose to 727. Brickmaking and cement manufacture were established in the nineteenth century. There were already four brick-makers by 1841, and the Prime family opened the Shepreth Road brickworks by 1876, which grew in size, producing bricks, glazed tiles and cement before its closure around 1909. A new cement works opened on Haslingfield Road in 1918, which was eventually linked to the London-Cambridge railway line, taken over by Rugby Portland Cement in 1926, and substantially expanded in the early 1960s. Cement production continued until 2008, the chimney of the Cemex works being a landmark until its demolition in December 2018. The site is now being restored to former levels.
- 3.2.7 In the 1940's, the population was mainly farm workers and employees of the cement works. Electricity began to be available in the village in 1937; a clean piped water supply was completed in 1955 and drainage and sewerage installed between 1969 and 1972. In 1961 the population was 531; from this time new houses and bungalows appeared, mainly at the east end of the village, which began increasingly to be inhabited by people working in Cambridge. The population is now about 900 adults and it will rise substantially following the approval of residential development on the former cement works site.

Below: Barrington: Ordnance Survey Six-inch Series 1886  
 Reproduced with the permission of the [National Library of Scotland](https://www.nls.uk/)



# 4. Character

## 4.1 Summary description

- 4.1.1 The conservation area in Barrington is centred on the village's distinctive elongated green. It includes the medieval parish church and a large number of other listed buildings, most of which flank the north and south sides of the green.
- 4.1.2 The Green is defined and enclosed by the marginal lines of houses. Their low profile, and the coherence lent by the abundance of thatched roofs and the predominance of white render give the conservation area a very strongly rural character. While there are a significant number of twentieth-century buildings in the conservation area, they mostly adhere to the prevailing character of older buildings, especially in scale, materials, and roof profile. The visual unity of the conservation area is consequently strong, and this emphasises the long history of this part of the village.

Below: White rendered buildings with a very low profile predominate on the north (left) and south (right) sides of the Green along High Street. There are many roofs of longstraw thatch.



## 4.2 Key characteristics

- Large and very elongated **oval green** stretching along the main street, with ponds, ditches, and narrow 'permitted roads' across it. The Green is flanked mostly by a **single line of well-spaced detached houses** to north and south.
- More than 30 listed buildings, many of them **thatched cottages**. Several date from the late 17th century or earlier
- Preponderance of buildings finished in **render, usually painted white** or a very pale colour
- Generally **low profile** of buildings, with very low eaves, and many first-floor rooms served by dormer windows
- Medieval church which is a **landmark** at the east end of the village
- Extensive use of **hedging** for property boundaries; picket fences are quite common, but there are very few front boundary walls. Many houses with **open frontages**
- Many **mature large-scale trees**, both on the green, and between and behind the flanking lines of houses, and around the Hall

Left below: the centre of the Green – buildings are mainly rendered or painted brickwork in pale colours

Right below: low eaves and many dormers



## 4.3 Architectural characteristics

Characteristics	Typical of Barrington
Scale and form	<p>Generally two storeys, but many houses have the upper storey in the roof space, with dormers</p> <p>Some substantial houses, many cottages and more modest houses</p> <p>More than 30 timber-framed houses</p> <p>Most buildings are detached; several instances of two former cottages combined as one. Limited examples of semi-detached form, mostly from C20. A few terraces.</p> <p>Some former farmhouses around the green, with outbuildings adjacent</p>
Walls	<p>Mostly render, usually painted white, but some other pale colours</p> <p>Limited number of brick-faced buildings are more commonly red than buff</p> <p>Brick and clunch plinths</p>
Roofs	<p>Widely of longstraw thatch, generally with block cut ridges</p> <p>Some slate roofs, more clay tiles</p>
Windows	<p>Very varied, including sash and casement windows with both large and small panes. Many buildings have replacement windows from the last few decades, including modern emulations of leaded lights, and some uPVC.</p> <p>Older timber windows do remain in many buildings, including a significant number of side-sliding sashes.</p>
Boundary treatments	<p>Hedges are the predominant form of property boundary</p> <p>Many picket fences</p> <p>Many houses have open frontages, not demarcated by physical boundaries</p>
Small-scale features	<p>A number of very small-scale features contribute to village character. They include the water-pump outside No.18 High Street, the water trough on Challis Green, the former telephone kiosk, the war memorial, post boxes, the village sign, distinctive lampposts, and timber benches</p>



Above: open frontages on the High Street and West Green

## 4.4 Spatial characteristics

- 4.4.1 The huge open space created by the sequence of greens, and the lines of generally low-profile buildings which surround it, are the defining characteristic of Barrington. It means that almost all the buildings in the conservation area can be seen from a distant perspective, set in a context which has wide grassy spaces in front of the buildings and large-scale trees around and behind them. Generally there are only limited glimpses of buildings beyond the perimeter lines around the green, and the spaces between buildings reveal glimpses of, or hint at, open land beyond, so the sense of a small-scale and strongly rural settlement is retained. Many houses around the Green have substantial gardens, and the Green is also fringed by trees in many places, sometimes in front of the buildings, but more often behind them.
- 4.4.2 The visual impact of the Green is heightened by the fact that the perspective across its component parts opens out very suddenly on the roads into the village, which are all enclosed in the conventional way by trees, hedges and buildings. This revealing of the view of the Green is most dramatic at the western end, on Shepreth Road and especially Orwell Road, but is also experienced at the eastern end of the village, coming from Haslingfield or Foxton. The four routes meet on the Green, channelling all through traffic across it, and further heightening its importance to the character of the village.

- 4.4.3 The unique character of the Green also arises from distinctive features including the carefully designed 'permitted roads', the ponds and drainage ditches, and the restrained street lighting.
- 4.4.4 The Back Lane area, which was the original northern edge of the Green, has a strongly rural character, in which curtilages are reached by a lane densely enclosed by vegetation, and houses are often heavily screened. The character of this area has been eroded by recent development, but remains very firmly rural.
- 4.4.5 The lanes leading from the Green to the river were once an important part of the network of routes enabling the village to function. Modern development along Mill Lane has wholly changed its appearance, but some elements of the original character of these routes can still be discerned in Boot Lane and Slid Lane.

## **4.5 Key views and landmarks**

- 4.5.1 Because the Green is the central feature of the conservation area, the key views are along and across the green. The space itself is dominant, and few buildings stand out individually as landmarks. Only the church, and the Royal Oak, whose exposed timber frame marks it out, are true landmarks, seen from a distance, but the two listed buildings at the turn of Orwell Road (Nos. 1 and 3) must be considered landmarks, because of their very prominent position in long views across West Green, and the way they are framed by a dark background of trees. Some other buildings are very prominent features when seen from the opposite side of the green and can be seen to some extent as landmarks. These include West Green Farmhouse and Newlyn. Away from the Green the original school building stands out because of its very distinctive character. Key views and landmark buildings are identified on the conservation area map, and some are shown below.

Below: Barrington Conservation Area: landmark buildings



Original National School



Newlyn



The Royal Oak



West Green Farmhouse



The parish church



1 and 3 Orwell Road

Below: Barrington Conservation Area: key views



View west from Challis Green



View of 2 High Street from the play area



View through the woodland to Barrington Hall



View north across West Green



View across West Green to Orwell Road



View east across the Green from Orwell Road

## 4.6 Landscape and open spaces

- 4.6.1 Open green areas are a key characteristic of this conservation area, and they form the spine around which the conservation area coheres. West Green is the largest remaining section of the historic green, and it is a very prominent visual feature. It is linked by the narrower green on the north side of the High Street and the wide verges to north and south in this section, to Challis Green and eventually the modern extension of Hessleron Green. The importance of all the component parts of the Green, including the narrower central section, as a visual feature is intensified by the absence of physical plot boundaries to the front of many houses, which effectively enlarges the green space. The ponds at either end of the Green are a very significant visual feature, as well as playing a vital part in the village drainage system.
- 4.6.2 Trees and hedges are very significant to the character of the conservation area. They emphasise the greenness of the whole conservation area, especially when they are in leaf. They also have a softening quality; alongside the numerous thatched roofs, they serve to limit the appearance of straight lines and sharp edges in the conservation area. They are also important for their role in providing definition to the Green.
- 4.6.3 Where physical boundaries to the front of plots exist, they are largely formed by hedges or low picket fences, most of which have a weathered quality. Hedges frequently form the boundaries between plots too. In both cases, hedges are generally low and do not entirely screen the space behind them from the public realm.
- 4.6.4 Groups or areas of trees are especially important to the character of the conservation area:
- Along both sides of West Green and along the 'permitted roads' which cut across it
  - In the Back Lane area
  - Around Barrington Hall
- 4.6.5 The churchyard forms an extension to the green at its eastern end and creates an open setting for the church building itself, giving the south elevation considerable prominence as an observer approaches from the west. The churchyard wall is itself a prominent feature, which should be considered a non-designated heritage asset.

## 4.7 Archaeology

- 4.7.1 Barrington has been the subject of considerable archaeological investigation. A large Anglo-Saxon graveyard was discovered during coprolite working in the 1870s, although the site was largely obliterated and many of the finds lost.

Twentieth century archaeological work has found evidence from many periods in the vicinity of the village, including the Iron and Bronze Ages. A Bronze Age defensive enclosure and ring ditch is amongst the most significant. Evidence of Roman settlement has been found, and further Anglo-Saxon material including more graves. Evidence has also been found of Civil War engagements near the river at Archer Bridge.

## **5. Management, enhancement, and new development**

### **5.1 General advice to protect and enhance the character of the conservation area**

- 5.1.1 Guidance to promote enhancement of the conservation area is provided in the Council's District Design Guide SPD and in the Development in Conservation Areas SPD. These two documents were adopted by the Council to support previously adopted Development Plan Documents that have now been superseded by the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018. The two documents are still material considerations when making planning decisions, with the weight in decision making to be determined on a case by case basis having regard to consistency with national planning guidance and the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018. Bearing in mind this proviso, new development should have due regard to the two SPD documents, which are available on the Council's website.
- 5.1.2 Sustaining the character of the conservation area into the future will depend on proper management of the existing heritage assets, on care in the design of new development, including alterations and additions to existing buildings, and on taking opportunities for enhancement.

### **5.2 New development**

- 5.2.1 Proposals for new development in the conservation area are likely to be for domestic extensions, for the subdivision of existing large plots, for the conversion of barns or other non-residential buildings to dwellings, or for the replacement of existing houses by new ones. Any such new development should:
- be set well back from the street,
  - adhere to the scale of existing development, which is generally only two modest storeys,
  - respond positively to the massing, materials and fenestration of the adjacent buildings,
  - relate harmoniously to the positioning of nearby buildings, particularly their set-back from the street and their place in the lines of houses along the green
  - retain existing trees where they contribute to the definition and framing of the open green space,

- avoid aggressive, sharp-edged boundary treatments such as masonry or ranch-style fencing, especially on street frontages (picket should be considered the most appropriate fencing)
- avoid eroding, filling or blocking the visually important gaps between houses lining the green
- avoid unsympathetic addition of micro-generation technologies such as solar panels

5.2.2 Proposals to subdivide plots, including those which propose an additional house or houses to the rear of existing buildings, are particularly problematic in this conservation area. The two widely-spaced single lines of houses on each side of the green are a key characteristic of the conservation area, and any development which fills these gaps, or results in additional buildings being visible through the gaps or above the roofline of the existing houses would seriously erode the quality of the conservation area. Opportunities to subdivide plots without causing such harm are likely to be limited in the conservation area.

5.2.3 Detailed design and materials selection in new development should take the opportunity to enhance the character of the area. The low-profile massing of existing buildings is a clear template for new development, and the proportions, positioning, orientation, roof shapes and fenestration patterns of the present buildings also provide pointers which will help to avoid harm.

5.2.4 Neither the predominance of white or pale render in the conservation area, nor the fact that red brick is more common than buff, need be a rigid constraint for new development, but these elements of the area's character should be considered. Similarly, the prevalence of open front boundaries, low hedges and picket fences should be carefully considered before other boundary treatments are proposed.

5.2.5 Restrained material palettes for new buildings and the use of high-quality materials and high-level craft in their application will also help to enhance the character of the conservation area.

## 5.3 Trees

5.3.1 Long-term management of trees is essential to the character of the conservation area. Such management needs to both ensure the continued welfare of the existing trees and plan for enhancement and replenishment. The replacement of existing large trees by smaller species should be resisted. Large trees in gardens on both sides of West Green, in the Back Lane area, and to the south of Challis Green, are very important in framing the green spaces of the conservation area, and this fact should be an important consideration in handling tree applications.



Left: Trees on the north side of West Green

Right: Typical 'permitted road' across the Green.

## 5.4 Enhancement

5.4.1 Past good practice means that Barrington conservation area is relatively free from features which detract from its character. Such as do exist, and opportunities for enhancement in the conservation area, are listed below.

<b>Opportunities for enhancement</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Management proposal</b>
Green spaces	The greens are crucial to the character of the conservation area. Their appearance is not an accident of nature, but a result of centuries of management.	Continued careful management of the greens, including vegetation, drainage and use, is essential.
Hardstanding	Hardstanding for residential properties does not impinge significantly on the character of the conservation area. The space provided by the lightly-engineered 'permitted roads' and the substantial set-back of many houses from the highway help to avoid this. However, retention of the green quality of the edges of the greens is very important to the character of the conservation area.	Any proposals to create additional areas of hard paving in the conservation area should be discouraged, particularly in front of the lines of buildings, or where visually intrusive. Where applicable, planning control should be used to avoid such development.

<b>Opportunities for enhancement</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Management proposal</b>
Highway engineering	The carriageway on West Green and High Street is conventionally engineered, but in a restrained manner. The absence of a footway on the north side helps to preserve the rural character of the green. The many 'permitted roads' which serve groups of houses off these streets have been carefully designed to retain a more informal and rural character, without standard blacktop or kerbstones, and of limited width. This restrained engineering is very important to the character of the green spaces.	Work with all stakeholders to ensure the retention of this engineering approach. Avoid any urbanization of the public highway or the routes which feed it.  Construction traffic for development around the Green may pose a risk to the integrity and quality of the 'permitted roads', and the Green itself, especially in winter; planning conditions may need to address this issue.
Boundary treatments	Boundary treatments on the street frontage are important in the conservation area. Many properties have no boundary demarcation at the front, allowing the green to extend visually right up to the house. Low hedges and low unpainted picket fences are the main form of front and side boundary, eliminating sharp lines.	Resist planning applications for inappropriate front walls or fences where consent is required. Where permission is not required, discourage such new boundary markers by informal communication.
Trees	Large trees are of importance to the character of the conservation area; they help to define the green. The trees are located in both public and private spaces.	Ensure conservation area controls over tree works are used to protect existing trees, and encourage succession planting.

<b>Opportunities for enhancement</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Management proposal</b>
Windows	The quality of the conservation area has already been eroded by modern replacement windows, particularly where buildings are close to the street, but many traditional windows remain.	Promote guidance on traditional windows, outlining their positive contribution to the character of a conservation area. When planning permission is required, the loss of traditional windows should be resisted, and the use of suitable modern windows supported where appropriate. Replacement of poorly-designed modern windows with more appropriate versions should be encouraged. <a href="#">Historic England advice</a> is extensive,
Extensions and alterations	Many buildings in the conservation area have been extended. Further proposals of this sort can be expected.	Alterations to buildings in the conservation area, whether those buildings are identified as making a positive contribution or not, should respond carefully both to the original character of the existing building and that of the conservation area as a whole. Alterations which eliminate or ameliorate recent poor design, or restore elements of original character to buildings should be encouraged.
Signage, street furniture and lighting	Efforts have been made in the past to minimise clutter in the conservation area, and these have been very successful. Adapted speed limit signs, muted directional signage and the muted character and careful positioning of street lighting standards along the green all help to conserve its special quality.	Good practice in this area should be continued. This will mostly be through liaison with the highway authority and utility providers, and informal advice, but planning and advertisement control should be used to avoid clutter where they apply.

## 6. Heritage assets and positive structures

### 6.1 Designated heritage assets

- 6.1.1 There are 39 listed buildings within the Barrington conservation area boundary: All Saints Church is Grade I, the Royal Oak public house and Newlyn (14 West Green) are Grade II\*.
- 6.1.2 Each listed building or structure is identified on the Conservation Area map, and full details of their listing can be found at [Historic England](#)

### 6.2 Possible Non-designated Heritage Assets

- 6.2.1 Five structures in the conservation area have also been identified which, although not nationally listed or designated, are of local importance.
- 6.2.2 The wall of the churchyard merits this status because of its age, its distinctive materials and its visual importance at the east end of the Green, including its role as a part of a group with the listed church and the listed war memorial.
- 6.2.3 The old Congregational chapel, now a private residence, at 10 High Street, is of historic interest. Built in 1856, it is also an architecturally distinctive element of the street scene on the north side of the High Street, even though it has been much altered from its original form.
- 6.2.4 The old water pump outside 18 High Street is of historic interest because of its design and makes a significant contribution to the rural quality of the Green at this point.
- 6.2.5 The cricket pavilion makes a significant contribution to the street scene, both as a part of the northern line of buildings on the Green, and as part of a group with the cricket pitch and village sign. It has also been important in the social history of the village.
- 6.2.6 The cottage at 9 Boot Lane is of historic interest as the former residence of the eminent nutritionist, Elsie Widdowson.
- 6.2.2 These properties have been identified on the conservation area maps for information purposes and to ensure that they are given due regard in any related planning applications. It is also recommended that they be formally assessed as non-designated heritage assets by the council; and considered for inclusion on any subsequent Local Heritage List.



Left: the former Congregational chapel    Right: the churchyard wall

## 6.3 Positive buildings and structures

- 6.3.1 In addition to the above, there are also 29 buildings or structures which are not nationally designated and are unlikely to meet the criteria for consideration as a non-designated heritage asset, but nonetheless do contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation areas.
- 6.3.2 These buildings or structures make a valuable contribution and should be viewed as key elements of the overall character and significance of the relevant conservation area. Alterations to, or the loss of, these assets can have a lasting impact on the special character of the area in which they lie. These structures have been identified as positive buildings on the conservation area maps.

## 7. Proposed boundary changes

The five proposed boundary changes are listed below and illustrated on the Proposed Conservation Area Boundary Changes map on page 23.

- Inclusion of Heslerton Green in the conservation area

The reason for this inclusion is that the green, because of its position and seamless boundary with Challis Green, is visually an integral part of the wider Green which is the primary feature of the conservation area. It forms part of the setting for buildings to the south-west.

- Inclusion of the remaining parts of the curtilages of Nos. 1,5,7 and 13-23 West Green in the conservation area.

The reason for this inclusion is that the tree cover and very limited degree of development in these plots has direct and indirect impacts on the character of West Green. It is logical to include the complete curtilages in the conservation area

- Inclusion of the whole of the village hall building in the conservation area.

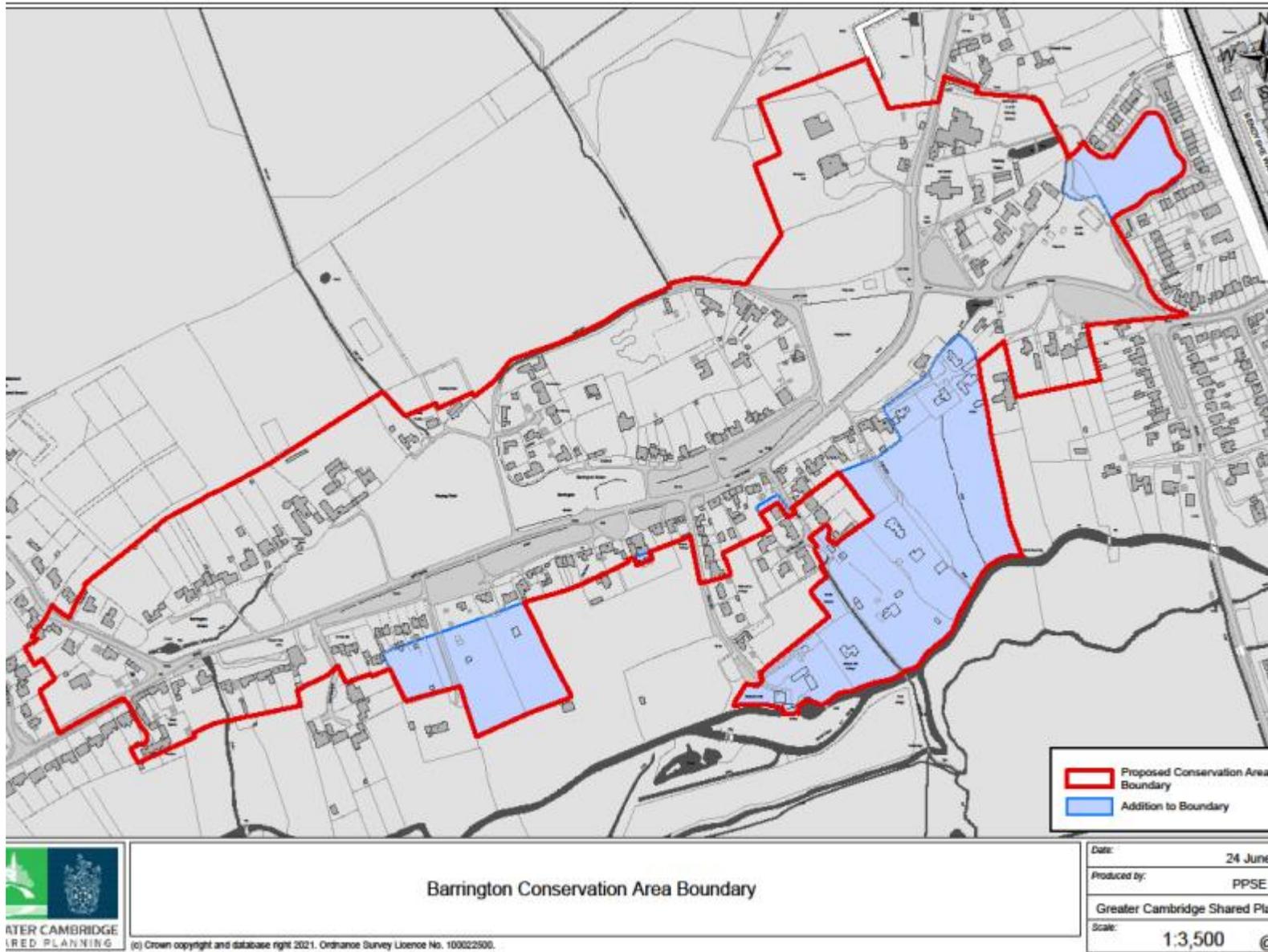
The reason for this inclusion is that although the rear part of the Hall is not visually important to the character of the Green, it is illogical and administratively difficult for the boundary to run through the centre of the building.

- Inclusion of land to the north and east of No.4 Boot Lane in the conservation area.

The reason for this inclusion is that its appearance, particularly that of the verge and small outbuilding, retain some of the earlier character of Boot Lane indicating its role in the historic street pattern as one of the lanes linking the Green to the river.

- Inclusion in the conservation area of a wider area around Boot Lane and Slid Lane, incorporating land south of 1-7 High Street and 23-27 High Street, the cottage at 9 Boot Lane, the old burial ground, and the Bulbeck Mill area.

The reason for this inclusion is the historic interest of the old burial ground and the cottage formerly occupied by Elsie Widdowson, the role of Slid Lane and Boot Lane as routes from the Green to the river in the historic street pattern, and the significance of the Bulbeck Mill buildings which are listed.



## 8. References

South Cambridgeshire District Council    South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018  
South Cambridgeshire District Council    District Design Guide SPD 2010  
South Cambridgeshire District Council    Development Affecting Conservation Areas  
SPD 2009

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