

DARBY GREEN

DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA PROPOSAL STATEMENT

**Hart District Council
September 2001**

Preface

HART DISTRICT COUNCIL has agreed to adopt a comprehensive strategy for the conservation of its towns and villages which will seek to harness the various powers, organisations and resources available to positively promote conservation for the benefit of the District.

To meet the above aims, the Council has prepared this appraisal and proposals document in respect of the Darby Green Conservation Area. This draft document has been approved by the Council, under delegated powers, for Public Consultation.

Note:

This draft document is to be considered at the meeting of the

Yateley Town Council
on Monday 19th November
at The Tythings, Reading Road, Yateley
at 7.30 pm

Members of the public are welcome to attend.
Representations concerning the contents of the document
should be made in writing addressed to
Henry Caswell c/o Policy Section, Hart District Council,
Civic Offices, Harlington Way, Fleet GU51 4AE
by no later than Friday 7th December 2001

(PARAGRAPH TO BE AMENDED AS THE APPROVAL PROCESS PROCEEDS)

The draft proposal statement was considered at a public meeting held on 19th November 2001. The comments received from and following the meeting and other consultations were taken into account in finalising the contents. The final document was approved on XXXX by the Council's Cabinet and endorsed by the full Council on XXXX.)

In January 1998 changes, which affect planning control over dwellings in many of our conservation areas, were introduced by Directions, made under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development) Order 1995. These require that many traditional details, which give a lot of the character to these historic areas, are not removed or altered without prior reference to the District Council as the local planning authority. Details of the article 4 directions are given in section 10 and a separate leaflet is also available.



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Advice

Advice on development and what needs planning permission within a conservation area is available from the Development Control Section of the Council

Advice on works to trees within conservation areas is available from the Council's Tree Officer in the Development Control Section

1. Introduction

The Local Planning Authority has a duty under section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas within their area. Special consideration is to be paid by the planning authority in carrying out its planning functions, to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Darby Green was designated as a conservation area in March 1988 and the area covered is shown on the appraisal maps included at the end of the document.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, published in 1994, refers to the need for local planning authorities to prepare detailed assessments of conservation areas, which will then be taken into account in determining planning appeals. It is proposed that this Conservation Area Proposal Statement will now provide supplementary planning guidance to serve as a reference point when considering planning applications. The statement is based on an appraisal to establish the character of the conservation area to assist owners, occupiers, officers, members of the Council and others in understanding just what is special about the area in architectural and historic terms. It also seeks to identify elements, which may be considered to be in need of improvement to better reflect the special nature of the area as a whole.

The details included in the document should not be taken as completely comprehensive and the omission of reference to any particular building, architectural detail, streetscene or view does not necessarily imply that it is of no interest or value to the conservation areas.

2. Location

Darby Green is situated in the north-east corner of the Hart District Council area, which is itself in the north-east corner of Hampshire, on the borders of both Surrey and Berkshire. Darby Green is quite a small area within the Parish of Yateley. For the purposes of development control and local planning policy, it is included within the major defined settlement area of Yateley and Hawley. The Darby Green Conservation Area, however, does have a distinctly different feel from its surrounding areas. Its character arises from its farmhouses, cottages and larger houses which are set amidst woodland and farmland on the edge of the common land areas of Darby Green and Yateley Common.

The Hamlet is situated on the junction of Darby Green Lane with the main road through Yateley from Reading to Camberley. Darby Green Lane leads westwards before turning north-west as towards the River Blackwater and the Berkshire border. The open area of the green is about one mile from Yateley town centre, three miles from Camberley and 14 miles from Reading. Although, like Yateley, it has become essentially a residential commuter area, it too has no railway station and relies on those at Camberley or Fleet for main line train services to London. The M3 motorway is accessible just beyond Camberley and the M4 motorway just south of Reading.

The Darby Green Conservation Area includes a large triangular area of common land on the north-east side of the Reading Road, much of which has become self sown woodland. Within the triangle is an open sports field and pavilion, an open roadside triangle of mown grassland north of Darby Green Lane and a group of four timber framed cottages and farmhouses. Three of these are listed as buildings of architectural or historic interest. On the south side of the Reading Road the conservation area includes a wedge of woodland within which are a number of houses and cottages of varying dates. The woodland itself is also common land with access to the dwellings over gravelled tracks through the trees. Some of these properties have fields attached to them standing between the open farmland to the west and heathland of Yateley Common to the south and east.

3. History and Development

Settlements tend to come into being because their particular location has some advantages over other places in the area. Yateley as a whole, and Darby Green within it, are located on the relatively fertile gentle slope of the Blackwater Valley, between the river itself and the barren lowland heath of Yateley Common. Its establishment depended on the system of subsistence agriculture that has long since ceased to operate in England.

The River Blackwater, whose waters ultimately flow into the Thames, is a small river within a wide valley formed during the last ice age. The Reading to Camberley road through the area runs along the valley and is located on the southern edge of the flood plain. Much of the land closer to the river tended to be regularly flooded in the winter until quite recently. The fertility of the valley soil was poor but its sandy nature made for easy ploughing and this accounts for the Yateley area being inhabited from very early times. There is no evidence of Roman settlement in the area but Yateley was certainly resettled by the Saxon period and was a place of sufficient importance to have its church constructed

in stone with the north wall of the Saxon church still existing in the present building.

In the Middle Ages Yateley was one of the largest settlements in north-east Hampshire, including the sparsely populated area of Darby Green, and was within the Manor and Hundred of Crondall. The Manor records indicate that the settlement pattern of the area, with its distinction between cultivated land and the uncultivated heathland common, became established at this time. People held lands from the Lord of the Manor along with the right to put a number of animals on the common and to take wood, peat, sand and gravel from it. The Lord of the Manor also encouraged the peasant farmers to enclose areas of common and to cultivate them, thereby increasing the rental value. The process of gradual enclosure was called "assarting" and by comparing records from 1287 and 1351 with the customary of 1567 the expansion of the land in cultivation can be worked out.

A bank and ditch had to be constructed to surround each enclosure and the temptation to enclose the largest possible area within a length of bank and ditch led to the curved nature of many field and lane boundaries. The conservation area of Darby Green is said to be a good example of the field boundary patterns established in the Middle Ages with a number of the ancient field boundaries still visible today. The fields varied in size according to their usage with larger fields closest to the river, where they flooded each winter, used for grazing and the smaller fields used for arable and as overnight enclosures for animals which were not allowed to be kept on the common at night. As the enclosures increased so the common areas reduced until they reached the size they are today, like those areas remaining at Darby Green. Landholders often eked out their existence on about 4 acres of land supplementing their income from the use of their common rights and by a trade such as shoe making or smithing.

The 1844 Tithe map shows that Yateley was then a collection of small hamlets like Darby Green with a few larger farmsteads scattered across the village. The Greens were the remaining areas of common grazing land giving access to larger areas of heathland common beyond. Around the Greens, as at Darby Green, were a collection of houses with each having one or two small fields for keeping animals overnight. The holdings of land at Darby Green were relatively small with bigger farms more scattered. The smallholdings around Darby Green depended on their close relationship to the common land for their viability.

There is a romantic tale of a Parson Darby who was supposedly an Eversley curate, who carried out robberies in his spare time, and who was hanged at Darby Green in 1841. It is suggested that this is where the hamlet got its name but the tale is just that, it seems, as it lacks historical evidence.

4. Character Description

The conservation area can be divided into three rather different elements. The major sections are the mainly open area of common land to the north of Darby Green Lane, with its cottages and farmhouses along its northern and eastern edges, and the more wooded area of Yateley Common to the south of Reading Road, with its greater variety of dwellings scattered within it. Between these areas lies the wooded area to the north of Reading Road including the playing field and pavilion.

4.1 The northern green area and its adjoining houses.

The open grassed areas of common land to the north side of Darby Green Lane are the focal point as you enter Darby Green from the Reading Road. From here you enjoy picturesque views of the listed buildings which face onto the open grass area. Unfortunately the modern footbridge over the Reading Road can dominate the view as you come along the main road but it does also provide a birdseye view of the area for its users. The bridge is clearly not an attractive feature of the area but an essential safety feature for the many school children who must cross over to the schools of Frogmore Campus and it is softened to an extent by tall oak trees on the common to the north where it is actually within the conservation area.

As you approach the open common areas from Yateley along the Reading Road you have passed a significant stretch of farmland on the north and you are very much aware that the urban area of Yateley has ended also on the south side. Darby Green conservation area is within the countryside that separates the urban areas to the west and east. The range of low agricultural buildings on the north are traditional in scale although their materials are relatively modern. They may also be considered untidy but they are typical of a small farm and fit in with the rural setting. Clarks Farm house is clearly visible through its gateway and is set quite close to the old road behind its attractive solid holly hedge and low whitened brick wall. The house is a delightfully detailed grade II listed small farmhouse dating from the 17th century with later extensions. Its bright orange clay tiled roof is gabled on the east end above the exposed timber framed brickwork with a gablet above the hip on the plain brick west end. The front has Flemish bond red/orange local brickwork with panels of blue headers. The windows are six sets of three narrow casements with Tudor style heads with carabered brick arches on the ground floor. There is a brick dentil course at eaves level and a band course of three bricks across the entire front. The multiple chimney is set on the ridge. The entrance door is plain with no porch or doorcase. There are signs that the entrance has been altered over the years and it likely to have had at least a flat lead porch to relate to its Georgian front. Above the door is a bricked up window the width of two casements. The gutters have unfortunately been replaced in plastic.

A large Acacia tree stands in front of the house and then a line of young cypressus trees help to hide the very large modern steel framed building behind that is used for processing mushroom compost. The wide grass verge area between the old and the new Reading Road has young Birch and Lime trees that add to the screening from the traffic. The old road is closed off near the farm entrance and retains its narrow rural nature without kerbs or any separate footway.

East of Clarks Farm Yew Tree Cottage is set close to the old road and separated from the farm by large Ash and Chestnut trees. The low scale cottage has a series of short span clay tiled pitched roofs

giving an attractive roofscape set behind its magnificent old Yew tree. A group of mature Oaks stand on the common in front and help greatly to screen the cottage from the modern footbridge. Yew Tree Cottage has early oak framing showing on the front with some whitened rendered areas between as well as a variety of patterns to its brick infill panels. Small flush fitting casement windows are mainly leaded with some diamond and some square panes. These are generally set within the oak framing except for one group of five casements. Two traditional small gabled dormers have been added over the years with one tile hung and the other timber clad. The roof tiles to Yew tree Cottage are more mottled with aging and moss than those of Clarks Farm.

The boundary along the front of Yew Tree Cottage is a medium height brick wall with two five bar gates and a smaller matching personnel one in the centre. The range of low outbuildings at the side and rear are mainly of whitened rendered elevations except the front wall abutting the highway which is brick. A two metre high brick boundary wall separates the dwelling from its west side garden which then has a rendered and whitened high wall onto the old road.

Eastwards from Yew Tree Cottage the lane becomes much more closed in by mature trees on both sides including many Hollies on the north side plus mature Oaks, Ash trees and Acacias. The common on the south side is the site of the old St Barnabas Church which was demolished recently following a severe fire. The position of the little tin chapel is now only marked by the big old weeping Willow trees that stood at each end of its plot and by the young Birch trees planted following its removal. The many mature trees in this section and the closed in nature of the lane are important features in the rural character of the area and as a back drop to the open area adjoining to the east.

Behind the open area of Darby Green to the north stands the listed farm house Pond Farm enjoying a commanding outlook across the green. The house dates from the 16th century with the original oak framing exposed at the rear at east gable. It is a long low two storey building with a higher 1930s wing on the west end. Its north front is all brick with the original section of local orange red colour contrasting against the rather darker red of its later wing. Its clay tiled roof is of traditional short spans. The front of the house features groups of small casement windows with shallow ones to the first floor. There is a large double chimney on the centre ridge of the roof. Pond Farm stands behind its recently rebuilt solid Flemish bond, redbrick boundary wall with a clay tiled capping above an angled dentil course. Tall timber gates mark the entrance to its gravelled driveway. Outside the wall is a line of old pollarded willows beyond its boundary ditch and adjoining the common. A large new garage/storage building has been erected recently on its northwest front boundary. Well matched to the house for the colour of its bricks and roof tiles it does, however, appear rather large in scale and roof span given its prominent frontage location. The size of the building demonstrates that it is not easy to accommodate the needs of modern garages within traditional conservation areas close to low scale cottages.

A modern house has been added on the east side of Pond Farm. It is well screened behind a large old Horse Chestnut tree and tall Willows. Its gravel drive, post and rail fencing and five bar entrance gate are appropriate to its position on the eastern edge of the conservation area. The use of a timber frame and clay roof tiles are in sympathy with its location. It does still stand out somewhat against its more traditional older neighbours in the conservation area due to its deeper roof span and more modern details generally.

Across the open green the position of the old roadway has been altered recently as part of a proposed development of the small field to the west of Pond Farm. Due to modern highway requirements the new section of road is wider than the old and its high modern concrete kerbs stand out against the soft grass edges of the old part. It has been proposed that this new road section be surfaced with gravel in due course which would help to soften its appearance.

Off the eastern edge of the common land on the opposite side of the lane is the detached low scale timber framed Pond Cottage. This the third of the listed buildings close to the green and is recorded as 17th century with later extensions and cladding. It is of two storeys and part one storey with attic. Its attractive features include a large local orange/red brickwork chimney breast at the west end, exposed timber framing to the upper part of the gables and in the rear wall with brick nogging infill.

Important aspects of this section of the conservation area to its overall character are the rural and traditional form of the area; the relationship of the old properties to the common and the old road; the traditional materials and details; the low scale and short spans of the buildings and the old established landscape setting. The spacious settings of the old cottages and farmhouses around the common reflect the early form of the settlement.

4.2 The woodland area south of the Reading Road

On the south side of the Reading Road the long tongue of more mature woodland, within the conservation area, is part of Yateley Common. This directly adjoins the open heathland areas of the common that extend all the way across to the A30. Narrow graveled tracks into the common provide access to around a dozen houses of varying sizes and ages. The southernmost track skirts along the south eastern edge of the woodland and it is nearly 200 metres before the first dwelling is reached. Heathfield Lodge (formerly Byfield Cottage) is a single storey traditional white painted cottage with a clay tiled roof and is largely hidden behind a solid holly hedge. The modern conservatory is out of character but is only just visible above the hedge. High Trees is a distinctly modern bungalow at the rear of the above cottage completely hidden from the access track. Its five bar field gate entrance and low timber garage blend in to its countryside location.

A group of large mature oak trees and several tall pines mark the entrance driveway to two larger houses. Heatheroff is now a nursing home created by extending and converting the 19th century red brick house. The property still retains its Edwardian style windows in Flemish bond brickwork and also its bright orange tile hanging to much of the original first floor.

Darby Green House is a grander Lutyens style house also in red brick but with small pane leaded light timber window frames. The house has a series of small span clay tiled roofs that are mainly hipped with some gables. Other features are the tiled arched lintels over the windows and big solid brick chimneys. The building is screened by its tall holly hedge boundary and its entrance has high brick wing walls and wrought iron gates. The house was occupied by John Duke Coleridge who was known to be an architect and a pupil of the much respected Lutyens. The strong architectural detailing gives a special quality to the house.

Cuckoo Cottage is a small modern cottage of brick under a tiled roof and hardly visible at all from the track. There are some ugly corrugated iron outbuildings hiding the orchard area of Heathfield, which is

a little pebble dashed bungalow with an interlocking clay tile roof and extended by a large two storey addition in matching materials. Many of the windows are modern with some plastic ones which detract from the traditional character of the area generally. Interesting little tiling details and the chimney decoration indicate this building probably had some connection with Darby Green House and its architect. The double garage extension on the north of the house forms the unattractive driveway entrance elevation with metal panel overhead doors facing towards the track. Its south east elevation, however, has some nice original double hung sash windows and its entrance door sits inside a tile arched porch with a central keystone type feature. There are many small ornamental trees in the garden which add to its probable connection with large house.

Along the track there is then an area of open meadow with self sown silver birch trees. Tall young oaks sit close to the track with holly woodland to the east. There is a fenced paddock before you reach the entrance to Forty Winks. This 20th century two storey house has a plain tiled roof with tile hanging to the first floor. A large, once pollarded hornbeam tree stands by the five bar entrance gate. There is a cabin in the garden and at the rear are outbuildings and a yard area. Beyond is a small orchard. The buildings add nothing to the character of the conservation area. Any future alterations or development need to address the unsympathetic nature of this little group to the more traditional character of the area as a whole.

Then you come to another pebble dashed bungalow with the same interlocking clay tiles of the 1930s. The house has leaded light metal windows plus there is a corrugated iron roofed and timber clad outbuilding with again a five bar entrance gate within a holly hedge. Open paddock areas at the rear of the small dwellings are contained by holly hedging against the heathland beyond. A little stream forms the boundary of the conservation area and separates it from the grassland to the west. The main track now leads off southwards beyond the conservation area into the heart of the common and out eventually onto the A30 road.

The footpath tracks through this part of the common form delightful walks amid bluebells, squirrels, birds and rabbits. This area is very rural indeed and even with the larger houses it is normally just the traditional tiled roofs and chimneys that are the features glimpsed through the trees.

Two further tracks lead off Reading Road into the woodland connected by footpaths to the first track described above. One track leads to Bayfield House which is a wide, simple modern red brick house under a concrete tiled roof. Its stark white reflective plastic windows, white gutters and downpipes stand out more than other properties due also to the low nature of its boundary hedging between the old tall oak trees.

North of this house is the tiny Victorian Bayfield Cottage of Flemish bond red brick walls under a slated roof. The cottage has modern timber windows within nice old brick arches and the original part glazed front door is set back in the traditional manner within a half brick reveal. A small thatched cottage can be seen at the end of the garden to the west. To the north of Bayfield Cottage and served by the third track off the Reading road is a small two storey detached house in pale coloured modern bricks which stands out as rather characterless. It has an attractive open grassed area in front of it to the east and its old timber clad garage with its galvanised iron roof seems more appropriate here.

Around behind to the west is a delightful black and white timber framed 16th century thatched cottage.

known as Old Cottage and well worthy of listed building status. It sits back within its plot and is almost hidden behind an old yew tree and holly hedge boundary. Its modern timber garage and sectional concrete workshop are fortunately only glimpsed from the track. The last building off this track is another modern house, of mainly one storey, that is almost hidden away on the western edge of the conservation corner. On the northern side of this end of the track is the long rear garden of The Bungalow which fronts directly onto the Reading Road.

The Bungalow is the first of a small group of six detached properties facing north-east onto the Reading Road. The substantial timber clad building has a sheet metal roof and is shielded from the road behind a high wooden fence. Also right on the road edge is its large two storey timber workshop/garage. The dark staining of both the timber buildings allows them to not stand out too greatly; plus their considerable age and roadside screening of holly and ivy cladding help them to blend into the rural scene.

There are then four post war bungalows set back off a single access driveway so they too are screened from the road with large mature ivy clad oak trees and holly bushes in front of them. Of quite traditional form they have been modernised by their replacement windows of various styles. One has also had its roof raised to include dormer windows but even this one is only glimpsed from the road. The last house on this side of the road is a delightful early 19th century detached cottage of pale colour-washed brick elevations under a fully hipped slate roof. The cottage also features original double hung sash windows and a large square central chimney. It adjoins open fields beyond the conservation area boundary to the west and on this side are low outbuildings operating as a cattery.

The importance of this major section to the character of the conservation area lies in the very traditional way the area has been settled on the edge of the lowland heath within the ancient field patterns, and in the character of the best of the older buildings within it. The old field boundaries need to be retained as traditional hedges and ditches. Although modern dwellings and extensions have been built the area is still not dominated by them. It is important that opportunities are taken when they occur to integrate the recent development more into the traditional form of settlement to ensure the character of the area is retained and where possible enhanced in future years. As is emphasised in section 6 it is also very important that the traditional materials and detailing is retained and restored where possible to maintain and enrich the character of the area as a whole.

4.3 The wooded area north of the Reading Road

The bulk of the land area of the Darby Green conservation area is wooded common land and part of the large expanse Yateley Common. To the south of Darby Green Road and north west of Reading Road is an area which used to be much more open and is now mainly self sown woodland. The majority of the trees are low growing young birch, hazel, holly and willow with some oak and a few larger pine trees on the southern edge. The area can get very wet, especially in the winter, and is shown as marshy land on ordnance survey maps. There are large oak trees along the Reading Road plus some sycamore and some gorse bushes also around the edge northern edge. The woodland has a small stream of dark clear water, which meanders through it from south to north ending in an attractive pond on the southern side of Darby Green Road. From here the stream is culverted under the road and continues northwards, across the common land opposite, towards the River Blackwater.

An area within the north east section of the woodland has been cleared and leveled as a local playing field with a modern pavilion. The light coloured brickwork and the low-pitched roof of faded slates seems to fit in well with the rural setting. The car park is graveled rather than tarmac and this too seems appropriate. The playing field is unfenced and provided with just the minimum of lighting, close to the pavilion, to retain the rural feel. A footpath skirts around the east side of the playing field and the ordnance sheet indicates another path running across the middle of the field. At the southern end of this section large oaks in a narrow belt of woodland form the buffer between the Reading Road and the modern housing behind it.

The importance of this area to the character of the conservation area is in its rural nature with wooded common land being the dominant element within which the playing field and the pavilion have been developed in a way that respects that character. It is important that the rural countryside nature is retained for the benefit of all its present and future users.

5. Important Landscape Elements

5.1 Trees and Hedgerows

The trees and hedgerows of the whole of the conservation area are an key feature in maintaining the very rural character. The area is dominated by its rural landscape which is made up of its open grass commons its woodland of very traditional species and its predominance of hedgerows for boundaries. Many of its hedgerows are of holly and this should be encouraged within any new plantings.

Within conservation areas written notification must be given to the Council of any proposals to lop, top or fall any trees and these works can only go ahead if either express consent is given or no objection is raised by the Council within 6 weeks.

5.2 Open Spaces

The open spaces of the Darby Green area are essential to its character with the grassed area in the centre reflecting the name of the hamlet and providing delightful views all round from it. The playing field has a very rural feel to it due to way it blends into its woodland setting. Open areas are also the dominant outlook from all parts of the area whether it is over farmland or across the heathland of Yateley Common.

5.3 Views

Some of the primary views important to the conservation area are those out from the green and those to the surrounding woodland and countryside. Views of individual traditional properties are also important whether they are clear wide views such as that of Pond Farm or the glimpses of properties like Darby Green House and Old Cottage or just the old roofs and chimneys of others. It is essential that as development occurs in the area the rural nature of the area is not altered by dominating new buildings.

6. Local Building Style

A key feature of the conservation area is the traditional form and detailing of the majority of the buildings within it. The three listed buildings are obviously major features but other buildings also display architectural and historic elements from the 16th to 20th centuries. Craftsmen made quality components and features are seen throughout the conservation area. Details and scale of buildings do differ in different parts of the conservation area and it is important that any future development reflects the urban design of the particular part within which it is situated.

External Walls

The dominant wall material is brick made locally in a red/orange colour typical of much of Hampshire. The exposed oak timbers of the early timber framed houses are generally now filled between with brick nogging but there are also buildings retaining their whitened rendered panels such as Yew Tree Cottage and Old Cottage. Clay tile hanging is seen on Heathcroft within Yateley Common reflecting its Edwardian style but it is not a common feature. There are also instances of colour washed brickwork and of pebble dashed render but again these are not that common.

Brick Bonding

The brick bonding often reflects the ages of the older brick built properties. The Flemish bond brickwork that is a feature of Clarks Farm, however, relates to the period when its original timber framed front exterior was replaced. This property also has some delightful blue header panels on the front elevation plus a wide horizontal brick band course. Flemish bond occurs again on later cottages such as the tiny Bayfield Cottage and also on the boundary wall to Pond Farm. The brick nogging infill panels to timber framed houses are generally in simple stretcher bond but Yew Tree Cottage has a variety of angled or square patterned panels. Dentil courses of brickwork at eaves level can be seen on Clarks Farm and again is a feature of the wall to Pond Farm. The use of clay tiles in flat courses as a decorative detail within brickwork is a particular feature of the Lutyens style Darby Green House and also occurs in simpler nearby Heathfield bungalow.

Windows

The old farm houses and cottages generally have simple casement windows which occupy relatively small proportions of the wall areas such as those seen at Pond Farm. The casements to Clarks Farm feature Tudor style window heads but these are replacements and may not reflect their original form. Where dormer windows do occur they are generally small scale with narrow cheeks such as those at Yew Tree Cottage. There are a few properties only with double hung sash windows including the cottage to 3Cs cattery on the Reading Road and Heathcroft features very large Edwardian casements with small panes to the upper sections only. The flush fitting nature of the traditional timber casement windows of the older properties are an important element of the character of the conservation area. Modern timber windows do not match these details and modern plastic windows are very inappropriate replacements for any traditional ones.

Roof Details

Around the green the cottages and farm houses feature small span clay tiled roofs with the orange clay colour particularly prominent on Clarks Farm. Within the wooded area off Reading Road the larger houses also have clay tiles but the spans are often greater reflecting the larger properties of the 19th century. There is a small amount of slate roofing present and just the one thatched property Old Cottage.

Chimneys

Chimneys are an essential character feature of most of the traditional properties in the conservation area and need to be retained. Main ones tend to be sited on the ridge or end wall of older properties. Heatheroft is exceptional with wide narrow chimneys springing from the side eaves and those of Darby Green House have unusual details at the top.

Boundaries and Screening

The nature of the boundaries within the whole of the conservation area is very consistent and reflects its rural nature. Hedges are the predominant boundary and holly is a very common element. The retention of these hedges is essential to the preservation of the character of the area and new development should continue this. Entrance gates are mostly five bar timber agricultural type gates and these too should be retained and further encouraged. There are brick walls to some properties including the prominent one across the front of Pond Farm but these do dominate the area and erection of further walls could detract very easily result in a change to a more urban feel. There are very few visible boarded fences and these also need to be resisted as a replacement for hedges. Post and rail fences with indigenous hedges behind do occur and blend in well. The use of fast growing fir trees as screening is not a common feature and also needs to be resisted.

The presence throughout the conservation area of many mature Oaks and other indigenous species provides a lot of general screening such that on passing through the area much of the built development is completely unseen or just glimpses are seen of roofs and chimneys within woodland.

7. Opportunities for enhancement

Reference has been made in the text and particularly in sections 4 and 6 to instances where inappropriate types of development or loss of details has occurred which detract from the character of the conservation area. It is often the loss of small details that may seem insignificant in themselves but which, when added together, really do result in the failure to preserve the character of the conservation area.

Many of the details referred to in the text are now covered by an Article 4 Direction referred to in section XXX below. It is a reflection of the Local Planning Authority's concern over the loss of historic details in conservation areas generally that resulted in the making of the order in 1998.

8. Implementation and Review

The Council will seek to influence the implementation of the statement through the operation of its development control policy.

Under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Hart has an obligation as the Local Planning Authority to keep its conservation areas under review. Any such reviews would need to be carried in conjunction with the Parish Council and include consultation with local residents and other interested parties.

9. Policies and Proposals

The policy framework for development proposals within these and other conservation areas within Hart is provided by the Hart District Local Plan. Relevant Local Plan proposals are those relating to conservation areas, listed buildings, nature conservation, trees and woodland as well as those dealing with general design criteria.

10. Article 4 Directions

In January 1998 a direction was made under article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 removing permitted development rights in respect of the following forms of frontage development in the Darby Green and other conservation areas in the district:-

- a) The erection, alteration or removal of a chimney on a dwelling house, or on a building within the curtilage of a dwelling house. (*Curtilage is the contained area around the dwelling*);
- b) The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house. (*This includes minor alterations like the replacement of windows or doors and the removal, alteration or replacement of design features like brickwork detailing, curved barge boards, traditional cast iron gutters, etc.*);
- c) The alteration of a dwelling house roof.
- d) The erection, construction or demolition of a porch outside an external door of a dwelling house.
- e) The erection, alteration or demolition of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure within the curtilage of dwelling house. (*This covers all built boundary treatments including those of under 1 metre in height*);
- f) The painting of a dwelling house or a building or enclosure within the curtilage of a dwelling house. (*This only applies to either painting parts of the building in a colour scheme that would detract from the character of the area or to the painting of parts of the building not previously painted - the normal repainting/maintenance of previously painted areas is not affected*).

Planning permission is now required for all such works to non-listed dwellings. All chimneys are covered along with all other development as above which would front a highway or open space within the conservation area.

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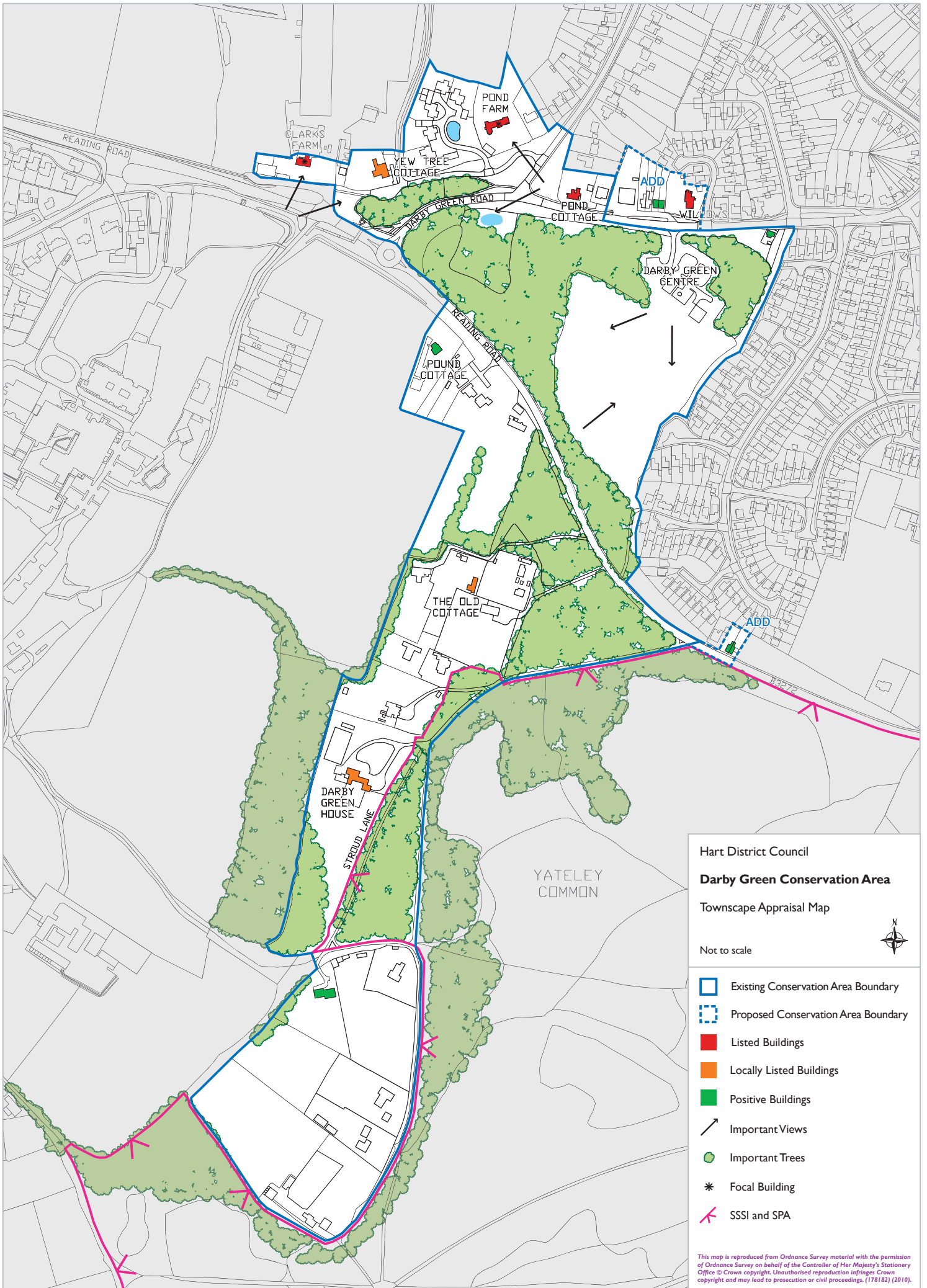
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English Heritage – Conservation Area Character Appraisals

With thanks to the Yateley Society for contributions on the history of the area and buildings.



Hart District Council
Darby Green Conservation Area
 Townscape Appraisal Map

Not to scale 

-  Existing Conservation Area Boundary
-  Proposed Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Buildings
-  Locally Listed Buildings
-  Positive Buildings
-  Important Views
-  Important Trees
-  Focal Building
-  SSSI and SPA

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