



Stratford-upon-Avon

Conservation Area

Stratford-on-Avon District Council

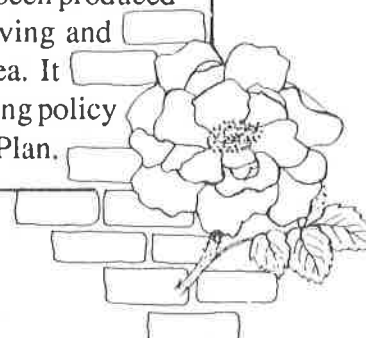


Preface

Stratford-upon-Avon Conservation Area was designated by Warwickshire County Council in 1969, in accordance with the Civic Amenities Act 1967. Control and monitoring of the Conservation Area later passed to Stratford-on-Avon District Council which, in 1991, resolved to review its designation as required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Michael Reardon and Associates in collaboration with Alison Higgins Associates were commissioned to undertake an independent survey and analysis of the buildings and landscape of the town. This report identified the historical, architectural and environmental qualities of the settlement, made recommendations for the continuing protection and enhancement of the Conservation Area and proposed boundary changes. It was adopted by the District Council on 20 July 1992, taking into account local opinion.

This booklet, based on the consultants' report, has been produced by the District Council in the interests of preserving and enhancing the character of the Conservation Area. It forms a supplement to the District Councils' planning policy as set out in the Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan.



July 1992

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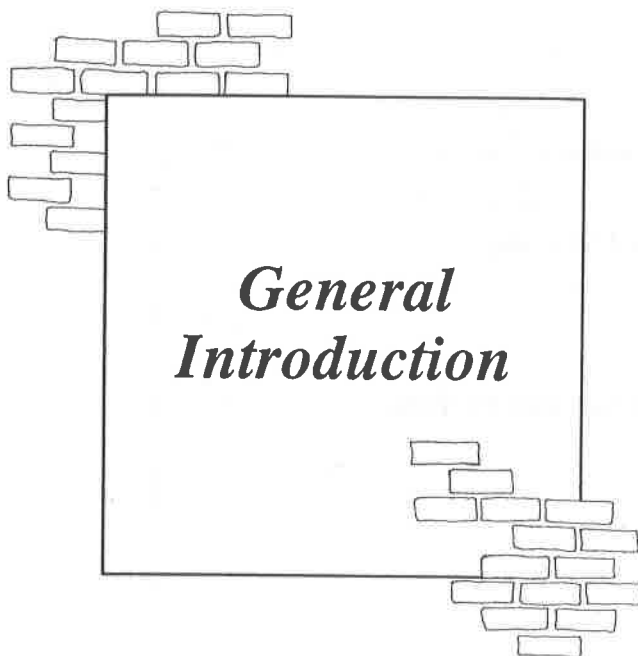
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General Introduction

1.1 Definition

The statutory definition of a conservation area is an "area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance." Conservation Areas are normally centred on listed buildings and pleasant groups of other buildings, open space, or an historic street pattern. A village green or features of archaeological interest may also contribute to the special character of an area. It is however the character of areas, rather than individual buildings, that such a designation seeks to preserve or enhance. The most recent legislation dealing with Conservation Areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 (Sections 69 to 78).

1.2 Designation

Stratford-upon-Avon Conservation Area was originally designated in 1969 under the Civic Amenities Act 1967. With the passage of time it has become appropriate to assess the character of the area to decide whether the boundary should be redefined to take account of changing circumstances.

Designation should be seen as only a preliminary stage in the conservation process as the Town and Country Planning legislation requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. In doing this the emphasis will be on control rather than prevention, to allow the area to remain alive and prosperous but at the same time to ensure that any new development accords with its special architectural and visual qualities.

1.3 Pressures

If we do not take steps to protect and preserve buildings of value, either in their own right or because of the contribution they make to a pleasant townscape or village scene, they may well be lost, and once lost, they cannot be replaced. It should, however, be remembered that our heritage is the product of many centuries of evolution and it will continue to evolve. Few buildings exist now in the form in which they were originally conceived. Conservation allows for change as well as preservation and our architectural heritage has to be able to accommodate not only changes of use but also new building nearby. This can be done provided that the new buildings are well-designed and follow fundamental architectural principles of scale and the proper arrangement of materials and spaces and show respect for their neighbours. Conservation means breathing new life into buildings, sometimes by restoration, sometimes by sensitive development, sometimes by adaptation to a new use and always, by good management. Taking decisions on matters concerning listed buildings and conservation areas involves balancing many factors.

1.4 Response

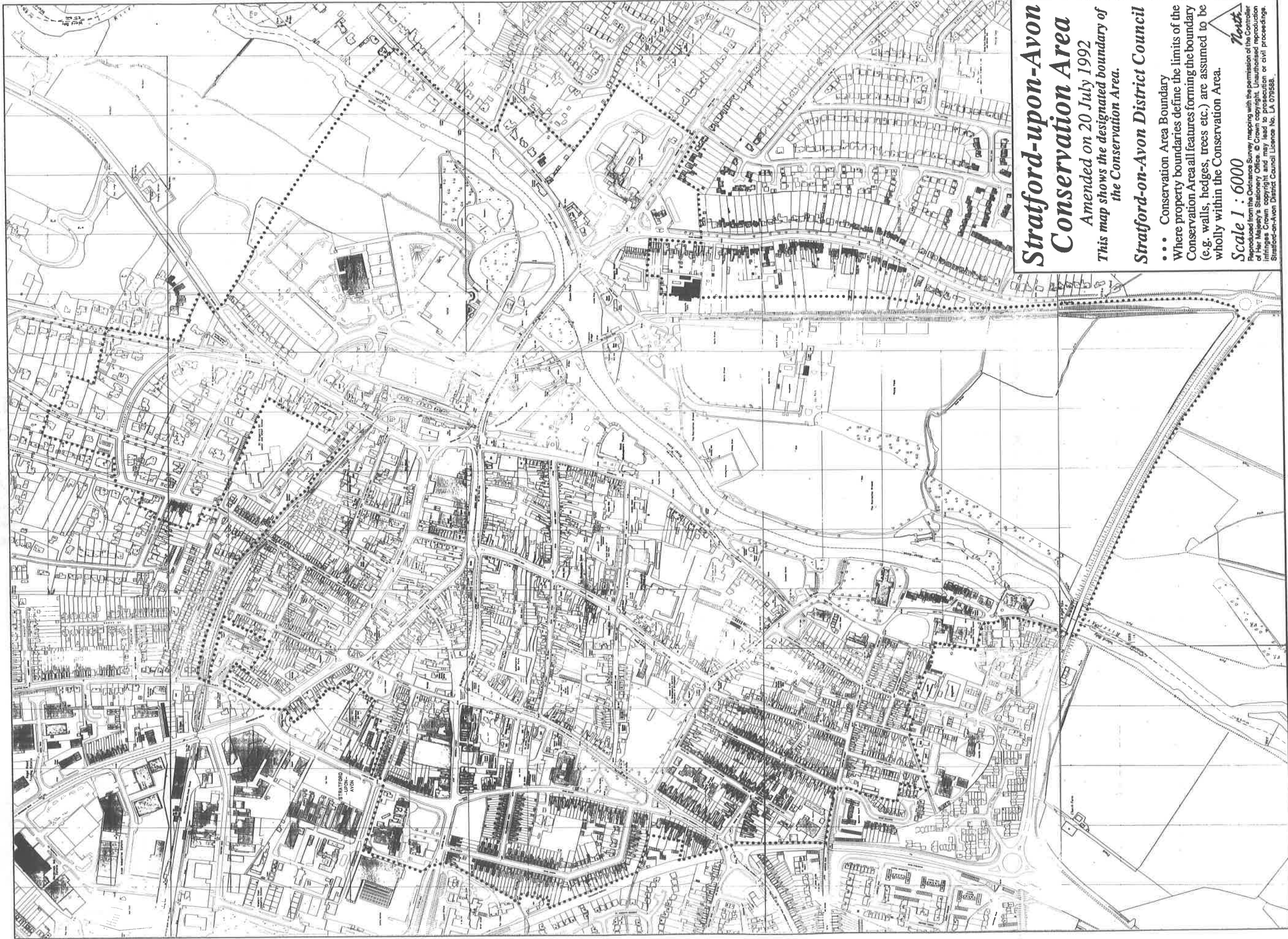
Historic buildings and conservation areas are vitally important to the environmental quality of life in this country. Buildings of architectural and historic merit should receive very special attention. Local authorities stand in the vanguard of those protecting historic buildings and areas. The Secretary of State expects them to make diligent use of all the powers available to them. Public opinion is now overwhelmingly in favour of conserving and enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene, and, it is expected that authorities should take account of this when framing their policies affecting historic buildings and conservation areas.

1.5 Further Advice

In 1990 Stratford-on-Avon District Council began a complete review of existing Conservation Areas. This report is the result of that exercise.

The report has been approved by the District Council on 20 July 1992 as its formal view on the amended Conservation Area. It is divided into 11 sections dealing with location; history and development; characteristics of the conservation area; landscape features; the future of the Conservation Area; in addition are listed building and settlement analysis appendices and the conservation area policies leaflet.

This document is not exhaustive, and further advice and information can be obtained from the Planning Department, Stratford-on-Avon District Council.



Stratford-upon-Avon Conservation Area

Amended on 20 July 1992
**This map shows the designated boundary of
the Conservation Area.**

Stratford-upon-Avon District Council

- • • Conservation Area Boundary
- Where property boundaries define the limits of the Conservation Area all features forming the boundary (e.g. walls, hedges, trees etc.) are assumed to be wholly within the Conservation Area.

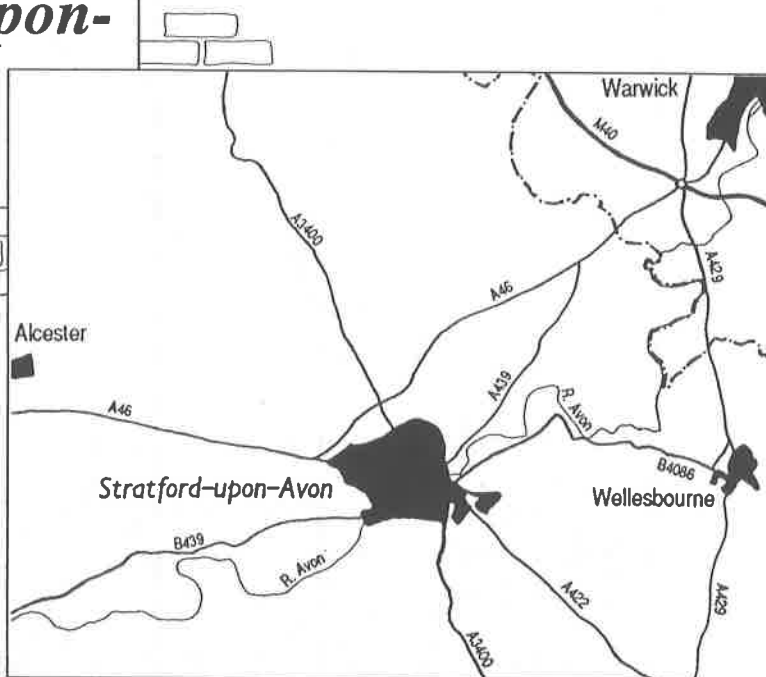
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1

An Introduction to Stratford-upon- Avon



River Avon and view to Holy Trinity Church

The town of Stratford-upon-Avon is situated on the west bank of the River Avon, centred on an ancient crossing point. The river at this point is sufficiently wide to have formed a major barrier to travel in the past. The river valley is wide and shallow and the river slow-moving and meandering. There has consequently been a build-up of fertile soils which, originally, supported significant oak forests remaining well into the Middle Ages in the Forest of Arden to the north and subsequently producing good agricultural soil.

Since the river flows along the clay beds of the Jurassic and Triassic geological periods, there are no good building stones in the immediate vicinity. Outcrops of weak lias stones cause some undulation in the valley but the nearest good stones are those of the Cotswolds some 10 miles to the south which, in historical terms, was a long distance.

The low-lying nature of the surrounding land resulted in areas of swamp alongside the river which, until the construction of the



Shakespeare's Birthplace in Henley Street



Aerial photograph showing gridiron pattern

'Causeway' in the 15th century, made access to the then wooden bridge difficult. The town itself stood some distance back from the river on slightly higher ground.

The present built-up area covers a considerably larger area than the historic town. The majority of this expansion has taken place during the last 50 years but, thanks to the special attention given to Stratford as an historic centre from as early as the 18th century, the form of the medieval town is still clearly visible.

The gridiron pattern formed by the main streets in the centre is an indication of the town's early planned layout. This street layout was then sub-divided into burgage plots of a relatively consistent width, stretching back into the island areas between the streets. The housing was originally built along the street frontage which then necessitated either alleyways or archways through to the rear parts of the plots to gain access to outbuildings and workshops. This layout has significantly influenced the later,

and present, development of the town, whilst the large 'backland' areas have presented special opportunities and difficulties.



Access through buildings to the rear of properties such as at Shrieve's House in Sheep Street is typical of the area and if well handled allows concealed development of backland areas

Around the medieval heart, the 19th Century saw the development of a number of suburbs. Although these, to some extent, are also on a gridiron pattern, they were much more tightly planned and also began to incorporate a number of large industrial and institutional developments. It was also around this time that development on the east bank of the river began to increase, but on a much more haphazard pattern.



High Street looking towards Chapel Street

Beyond this architecturally and historically interesting heart, the town has now developed along the lines of most 20th century towns, encompassing formerly detached hamlets and villages such as Shottery, Tiddington and Bishopton. The first is designated as a separate Conservation Area and is covered under a separate report.

The location of the town has clearly influenced its character in a number of ways. The presence of clays and the lack of local stone, coupled with the existence of early woodland, has dictated the choice of building materials. The well-watered, fertile ground has then produced a rich agricultural area which has influenced the economic standing of the town. The location at a river crossing for a major coaching route between London and Birmingham, thence on to Holyhead, has also had an economic influence on the town, affecting the type and character of the built environment. The most significant influence on Stratford's character however is not geographical but, of course, literary. If Shakespeare had been born in the 18th rather than the 16th century there is no doubt that the Stratford of today would have a very different appearance.



Gower Memorial

2

The Settlement - History and Development

that monastery. Although there are a few records of this period it is believed that there may have been a small hamlet clustered around the religious buildings which may have borne the name of Stratford. Around the end of the 12th century however, as a deliberate attempt to encourage the growth of a town, a 'new town' was planned slightly to the north of this early settlement. Remarkably the pattern of this is



Clopton Bridge

The Roman road joining Ryknild Street at Alcester with the Fosse Way, crossed the River Avon close to the present site of the Clopton Bridge. It was this ford that gave Stratford-upon-Avon its name. There does not appear to have been any settlement on this site however until much later. In the 7th century a large parish, later to be known as Old Stratford, encompassed many of the villages around this area but these were still isolated hamlets and none appears to have been on the present site of the centre of Stratford.

During Saxon times a monastery was established within this parish and it is generally held that the present church occupies the site of

still visible in the present plan of Stratford. Alcester Road, Greenhill Street, Wood Street and Bridge Street, follow the line of the Roman road down to the river. To the south of this, a regular pattern of streets was laid out in a grid iron as described in *Introduction to Stratford-upon-Avon*. After this date the new settlement became known as Stratford and the previous hamlet, Old Stratford. It is significant that the area of the former settlement remained outside the borough of Stratford until the late 19th century and even now is distinguished by the title of the Civil Parish.

The area of the new town was significantly larger than that required for the number of habitations and only the northern area from Bridge Street to Scholars Lane was built up even as late as the 16th century. The street frontages in this area were divided into burgage plots of narrow width, but stretching deep into the centre of the gridirons. This arrangement has had a distinct influence upon the long term character of Stratford, which has encouraged the variety along the street frontage. Additionally, the need for vehicular access to the rear parts of each burgage plot has frequently necessitated the creation of archways through the buildings along the street frontage. Many of these still remain.



Holy Trinity Church from the recreation ground

The southern part of the new town remained as open fields for very much longer and the subsequent developments along the southern end of Chapel Street and along Church Street were generally of a much larger scale, not tied to the burgage plots.

There appears to have been little economic pressure for growth of the town during the Middle Ages but extensive development would have been restricted by the presence of a swampy area known as Gild Pits (now Guild Street) to the north, the common fields to the west beyond the line of Grove Street and Arden Street, the property owned by the College, a large house which developed on the site of the monastery following the Reformation to the south and the river and adjacent marshes to the east.

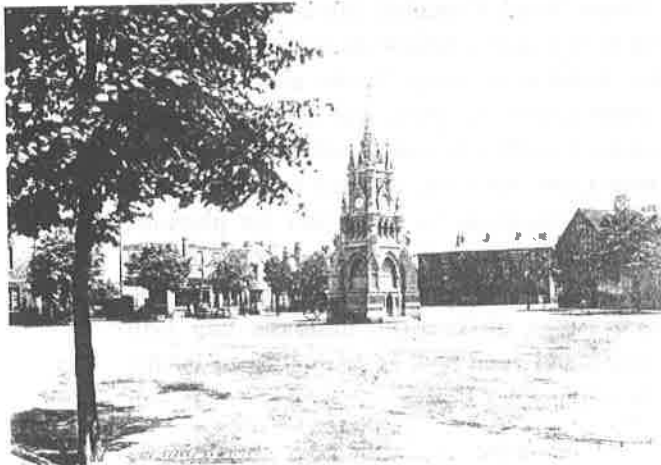
Extensive research in connection with Shakespeare's life in Stratford has produced a clear picture of the society and population of Stratford in the late 16th century. There appears to have been little growth in the town in the previous three centuries but by the Tudor period it was beginning to increase its established reputation as a successful market town, and a centre of small industry. The former activity is

still perpetuated in some of the street shapes, such as the large open space of Rother Street, or Rother Market, where the cattle market was held and the width of Bridge Street, although this was later to be divided into Fore Bridge Street and Back Bridge Street by a row of houses known as Middle Row, which were demolished in the 19th century. Sheep Street perpetuates the use of this street for a sheep market.

Only local, easily-obtained materials were normally used for constructing the houses. At this time, this was essentially timber from the



Mason's Court



Rother Street 1890



Rother Street and market in 1992

forests, wattle and daub from the swamps by the river and reeds from the river bank. The combustibility of these materials had a radical effect in the later-16th century as much of the town was devastated by a series of disastrous fires in 1594, 1595 and 1614. Although many of the existing buildings were destroyed, the general layout was retained including the narrow plots, but a subsequent order of the local corporation forbade the use of thatch and insisted on the use of roof tiles.

The late-17th century saw the introduction of brick to Stratford. Suitable clays were discovered immediately to the west and brickworks were soon developed, which continued in existence to the present century. It is brick from this area that produced the characteristic brickwork used over much of the town. This utilises two tones of brick, one rather lighter than the other which is used in the headers of a Flemish bond of brickwork, producing a distinctive chequered pattern.

Around this period trade across the country was developing rapidly. Stratford's location on a main route from London to Birmingham and also on the, by then, largely-navigable river, allowed it to develop as a significant trading point. The 17th and 18th

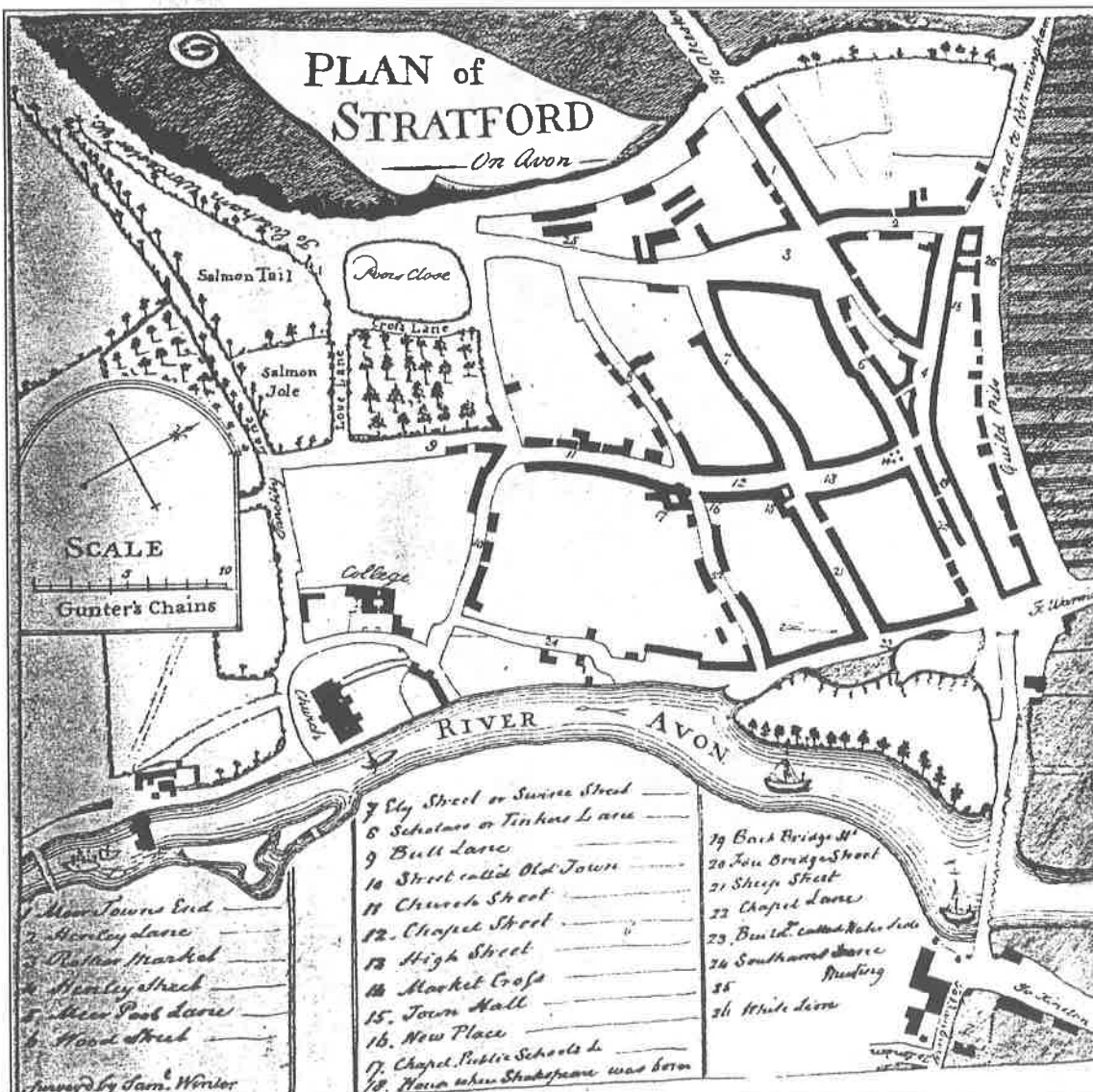


Chequered brickwork typical of 19th century buildings in Stratford area, particularly Areas B and D

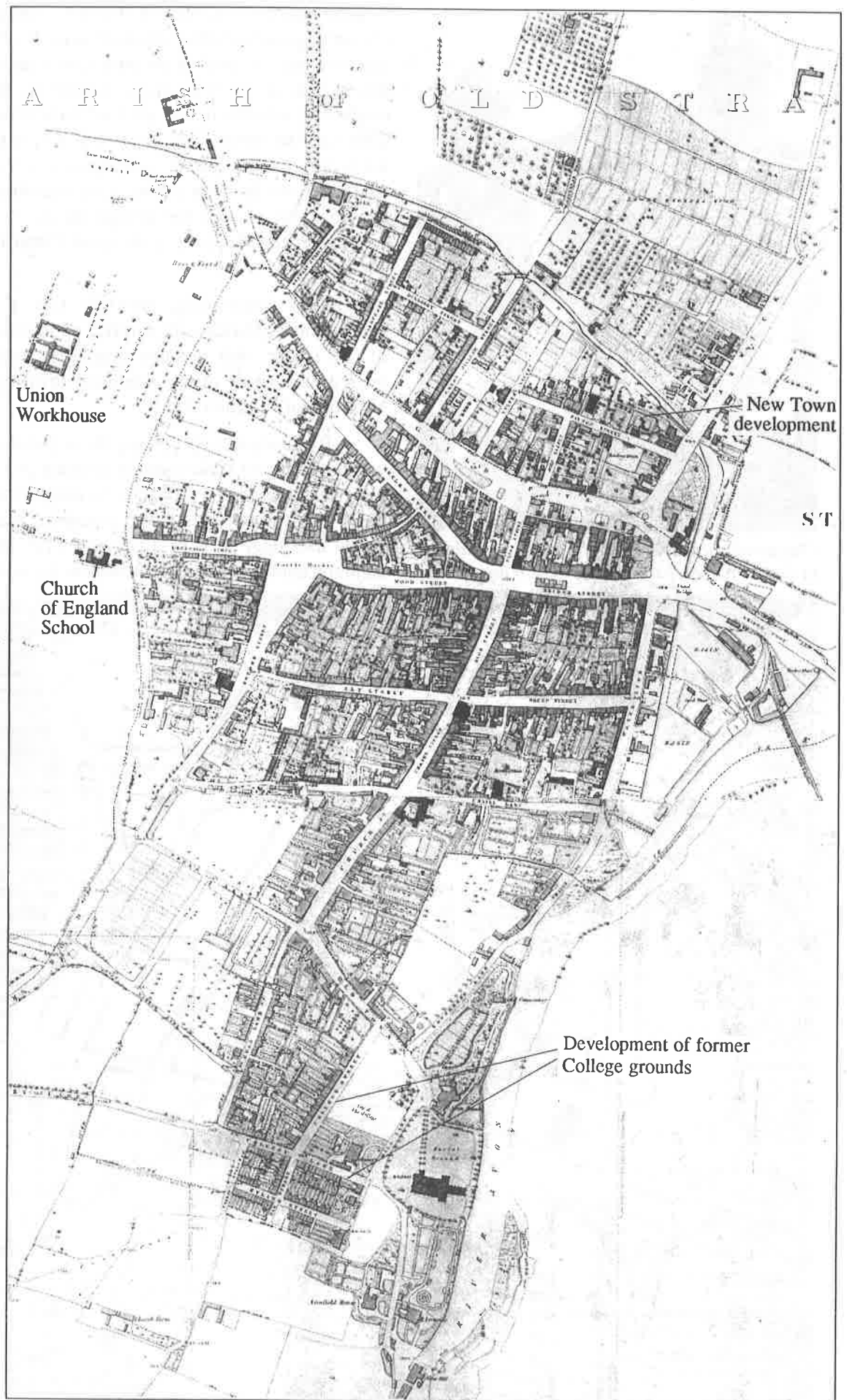
centuries saw the development of a large number of coaching inns, particularly on Bridge Street, and a number of small-scale industries mainly connected with agriculture began to be established, often in the rear areas of the burgage plots. The 18th century saw increasing prosperity for Stratford - the further development of the navigation on the river encouraging industrial development around the bridge as did the opening of the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal in 1816.

This increasing wealth and the development of brickwork is reflected in some of the larger 18th century properties built towards the south of the medieval town eg. Mason Croft, Church Street.

By the early-19th century the population was beginning to show signs of increase and a number of historic factors allowed the town to break its previous boundaries (*compare plan below and page 12*). In 1775 and 1786 the common lands to the north and west of the town



Plan of Stratford-upon-Avon in 1759. Built-up area bounded by open (common) fields to north and west



Plan of Stratford-upon-Avon in 1851. Following Inclosure Acts development has taken place to north, up to the canal, to the west, but only the Workhouse and School, and to the south following demolition of the College

centre were the subject of Enclosure Acts and in 1797 the College to the south was demolished. This did not result in an immediate expansion but, in the early-19th century, the then owner of the White Lion Inn, John Payton, purchased land to the north of Guild Street and began laying out a new town represented by John Street and Payton Street. Originally it was intended that this should be a well-to-do residential area and the initial properties were quite large, such as the present Duke's Hotel,

which was developed by an experimental building society.



Wellesbourne Grove

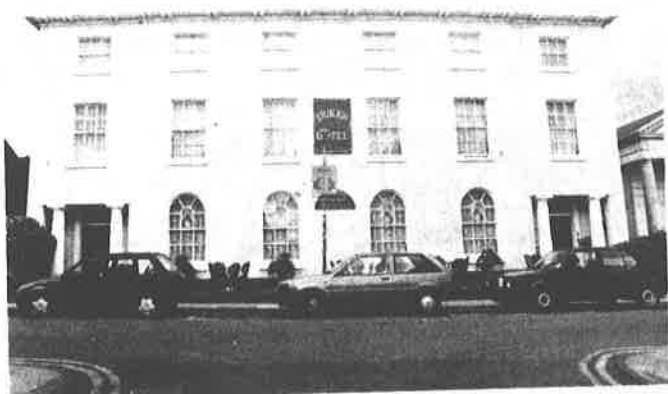
During the 19th century, the increasing sense of public concern is represented by a number of large public buildings which were built on the nearest open ground to the centre of the town, namely immediately to the west of Arden Street. These buildings included the workhouse, hospital and a Church of England school. Unfortunately, the school has recently been lost but large parts of the workhouse and hospital are still retained.



Former Church of England School, Alcester Road

A further constraint to the development of Stratford during the 19th century was the existence of the railway lines to the west and south (*see plan overleaf*). This appears to have restricted development in these directions and encouraged development firstly to the north and, eventually, over the river into Bridgetown.

From the mid-18th century, Stratford has promoted its connections with Shakespeare and encouraged the tourist trade, resulting in a certain boost to its own self-esteem. Its very tight development constrained by the railway, the river, the canal and a certain amount of industrial development to the north did not allow the development of any properties that



Duke's Hotel in Payton Street

but the demand was for smaller properties and both he, and other developers, began establishing the current range of workers' cottages but of a reasonably high standard.

To the south of the town the owner of the former College land began auctioning plots in the 1820's. The houses were again initially of a 'superior type', such as those in College Street,



18 - 20 and Old Town House, College Street

but, as the development proceeded through the 1830's and 40's, the less pretentious terraces of the remainder of this area were developed.

Much of the land to the west was in the ownership of Thomas Mason, and development here was not permitted until after his death in 1867. One of the first developments was that of Wellesbourne Grove and part of Albany Road,



Plan of Stratford-upon-Avon in 1914: development to west and south constrained by railways. Development also spread beyond the canal to the north and over the river.

were in keeping with the ideals of the rising merchant class of Stratford. The Borough Council embarked on a, not entirely successful, development to overcome this lack by laying out a new estate off the Warwick Road. The Borough owned a large tract of land to the north of the 19th century new town. Welcombe

Road, St. Gregory's Road, Avenue Road, Maidenhead Road and Rowley Crescent were laid out with the express purpose of developing large, private houses. Unfortunately only a few of the plots were sold off and developed at that time but the plan remains and subsequent development into the 20th century has



1 and 3 St. Gregory's Road, with No. 5 behind

maintained some of those characteristics that were originally intended.

Throughout the development of Stratford, the river and its valley have presented a significant barrier. The earliest bridge was a timber structure spanning purely the river channel itself, but the approaches were reportedly extremely poor due to the presence of large areas of swamp land. In the 15th century, thanks to the altruism of Sir Hugh Clopton, the wooden bridge was replaced by a stone bridge and attached causeways which, apart from relatively minor modifications, still forms the basis of the existing Clopton Bridge (*photograph page 9*).

The general flood plain of the river was not developed until the 19th century. Only a few properties could be built close to the river on the slightly rising ground around the site of the Church. By the 19th century however the area of the Bancroft had been drained and, to some extent, controlled. The construction of two canal basins on this site encouraged industrial development around this area which was further enhanced by the construction of the tramway to Morton-in-Marsh in 1826 that terminated at the wharf. Much of this industrial development has now been wiped away and only Cox's timber yard between the tramway and Clopton Bridge remains as a reminder of this.

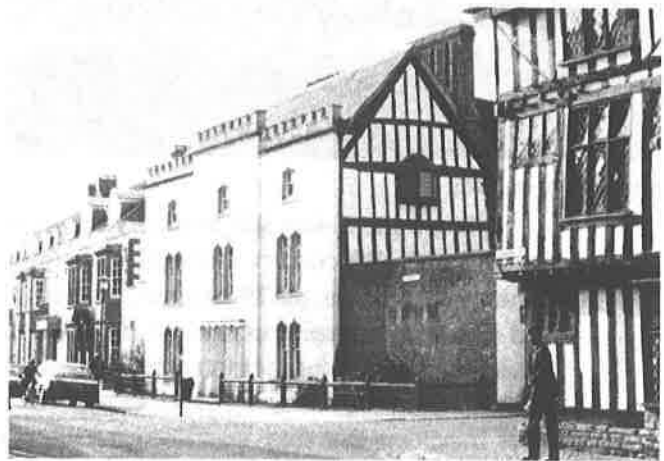


Cox's Timber Yard: centre is the Principal Timber Warehouse

Apart from the construction of the Memorial Theatre, opened in 1879, the rest of the flood plain remained undeveloped, leaving a wide green swathe through the centre of the town. Development in the latter part of the 20th century however, to the north of Clopton Bridge, has made significant inroads into this, radically changing the character of the river valley.

A significant factor in the historical change of Stratford has undoubtedly been the influence of Shakespeare and the many myths and traditions surrounding his life. Since the celebration of the Shakespeare Jubilee, organised by David Garrick in 1769, the cult of Shakespeare has affected aspects of Stratford's development. By the 19th century this enthusiasm had grown to unprecedented proportions and there existed an urge to 're-discover' the Stratford of Shakespeare's time.

Undoubtedly in the late-16th century, much of Stratford was timber framed and indeed thatched, as noted previously, and even after the fires of c1600 timber framing remained the normal method of construction. However, the introduction of brickwork and a general depreciation of the poverty of timber framing led the 18th century to conceal much of the earlier buildings with brick facades. Fortunately, there were generally insufficient funds available for buildings to be demolished and re-built



During the 18th century many early buildings were given new facades but remained as largely medieval structures. These facades were mostly removed in the 19th and 20th centuries but a few, such as 16 Church Street, remain.

wholesale, and the earlier buildings were still retained behind the new facade. Ironically New Place, the home of Shakespeare in his later life, was one of the few properties where such an extravagance could be afforded and the original property was totally removed in the early 18th century to be replaced by a grand brick and stone structure which, in turn, was totally demolished in the mid-18th century, in a fit of

pique of the then owner against the marauding tourists. The resultant gap in Chapel Street is a living reminder of the pressure of tourism!



High Street in the late 19th century still presented a largely Georgian appearance with little timber-framing in evidence. Many of these facades have since been removed to reveal, or allow the reconstruction of, timber-framing behind leaving a more mixed character with a predominance of black and white work.



High Street in 1993

Since there was still much evidence of the 16th and 17th century town still remaining behind later facades, the 19th century enthusiast had ample opportunity to remove the brick or rendered classical facades to reveal the earlier structures. Often, however, these were in such poor condition that they warranted significant re-building.

This enthusiasm significantly changed the character of Stratford, removing the dignified Georgian facades and producing the quaint timber-framed medieval town that we see today. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Birthplace itself. As elsewhere in this area, the properties along Henley Street were, no doubt, originally divided into burgage plots and, as still remains on the south side, the building line was probably continuous. By the early 19th century, the reputed Birthplace was still part of

a terrace of small cottages with vestiges of timber frame showing. In the mid-19th century however this was purchased, together with the adjacent property known to have been owned by Shakespeare's father, for preservation by the newly formed Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. The immediately adjacent properties were then demolished, leaving the Birthplace in grand isolation and a systematic re-construction was undertaken based on an 18th century etching of the two properties when much of the timber framing was still visible. The building we now see as a quite grand property isolated in a large private garden probably bears little resemblance to the property in the 16th century and is largely a figment of the 19th century imagination (present day photograph see page 6).



Shakespeare's Birthplace in the 1840s was a simple terraced house. The removal of adjoining properties and the virtual reconstruction of the building in 1858 has resulted in a rather grand building befitting its importance but probably not typical of the original structure.



Birthplace c1864

This longing for the re-creation of an historical ideal is however as valid as many of the other multi-faceted influences which have helped shape the present town.

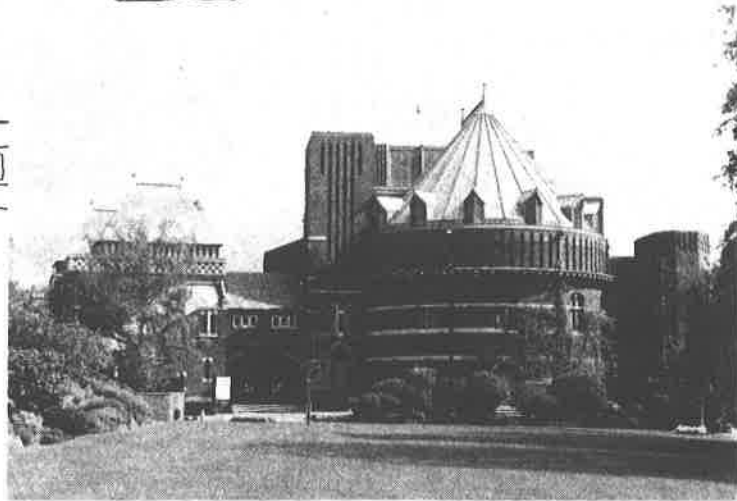
3

Characteristics of the Conservation Area

For Settlement Analysis
Maps see Appendix B

architectural or historic interest. Of these, 25 are in the top 2% of the country's Listed Buildings, being Grade I or II*.

This great concentration of historic buildings lends a great deal to the character of the town. It is outside the scope of this report to comment on the individual contribution of these buildings but they should not, in any case, be

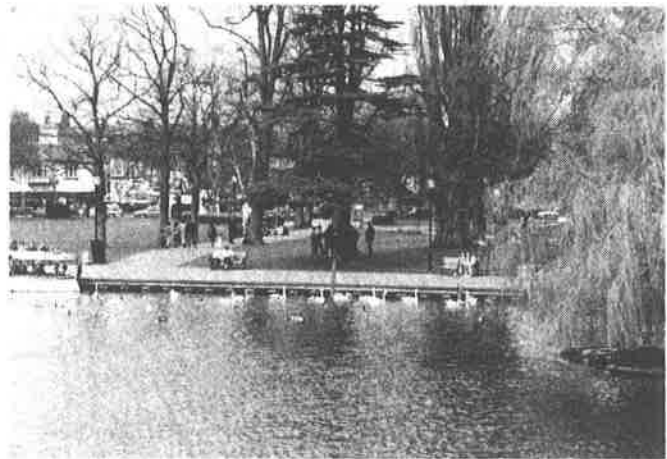


Swan Theatre

3.1 General

Stratford-upon-Avon is a remarkable example of an English market town. Despite increasing commercial pressure it still retains many features which reflect its historic development. Much of this survival is due to the importance placed on the history of the town by its role as a tourist centre. The town has consequently avoided the drastic changes experienced by many other towns of a similar size throughout the country.

The result of this protection is that Stratford boasts over 250 buildings listed as of



Waterside, Bancroft Gardens and the River Avon

seen in isolation. The character of the Conservation Area is generated by many interconnecting aspects of the town as described in the following sections. The **Conservation Area Plans** (see inside back cover) identify the location of the Listed Buildings and also those other buildings which contribute to the general character. Other buildings in the area inevitably influence the character, and inappropriate alterations to them could be detrimental. It is perhaps best to consider these other buildings as those which require improvement in order to enhance the Conservation Area.



Stratford-upon-Avon town centre

Sub-Divisions The general sub-divisions are as follows:

AREA A

The generally open area along the river.

AREA B

The early-19th century developments to the north of the medieval town up to the canal.

AREA C

The 19th century developments to the west of the medieval town up to the railway.

AREA D

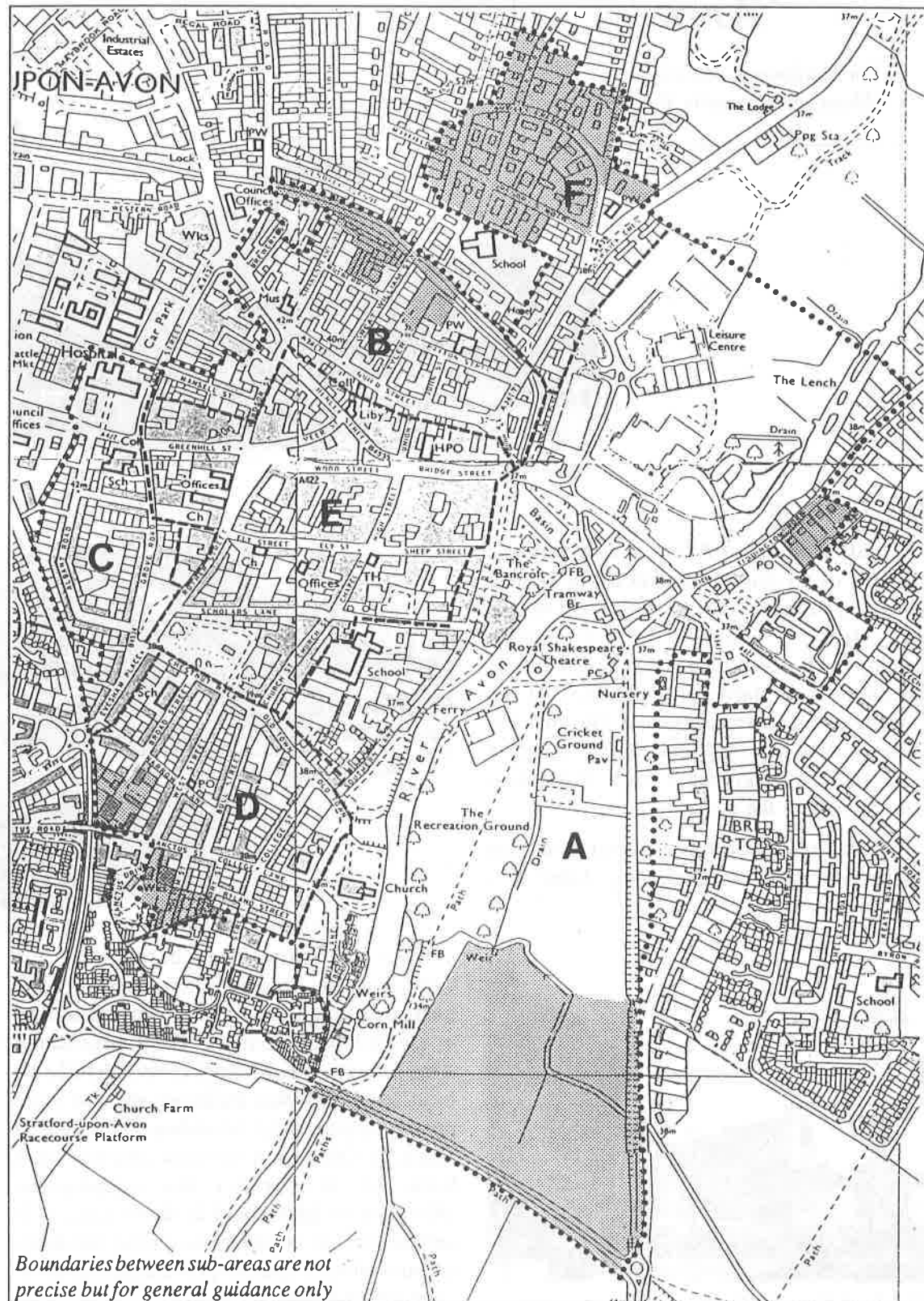
The 19th century developments to the south of the medieval centre on the site of Old Town.

AREA E

The medieval heart of the town itself.

AREA F

The late-19th century development beyond the canal to the north.



3.2 Sub-divisions

The Conservation Area encompasses not only the medieval heart of the town but also much of the 19th century suburbs and the open spaces adjacent to the river. Although these are all clearly related, both historically and, in some cases, architecturally, the different areas present differing characteristics. In order to understand the whole Conservation Area it is necessary to examine the different areas separately.

This study has identified six general sub-divisions of the Conservation Area. The distinction between the areas is not precise and there are several instances where the characteristics of one area extend beyond the general boundary of another. The following comments should not therefore be regarded as applying to a clearly defined physical area, but should be used to help identify the changing characteristics as one traverses the Conservation Area as a whole.

The Conservation Area however should not be seen in total isolation. One's appreciation of the Conservation Area is greatly influenced by one's experiences in approaching it. Consequently the appearance and characteristics of the various thoroughfares leading to the Conservation Area are of some importance. In most cases it would not be appropriate to designate these approach roads as Conservation Areas in themselves, but as preludes to the Conservation Area they perhaps require slightly more stringent control than other areas.

3.3 Approaches to the Conservation Area

There are 7 principal approach roads leading to the heart of the town. By far the most impressive is that along the Warwick Road, which descends onto the valley bottom a mile or so outside the town and proceeds through open countryside that slowly changes to almost



View into the Conservation Area from Warwick Road

parkland before entering the built-up area and Conservation Area at the same time. This transition from open farmland to an area of special architectural character emphasises Stratford-upon-Avon's status as a market town, re-inforcing the links between town and country. Further development in this area would severely affect the present tight link between countryside and Conservation area.

All the other approaches enter the built-up area at some distance from the Conservation Area and pass through somewhat undistinguished surroundings. The Tiddington, Banbury and Shipston approaches have a certain gentility as they pass through areas of well-to-do residential properties, set within generally well-maintained gardens. The Banbury and Shipston Roads have been given a somewhat greater status as a result of the tree planting along the roadside from the very edge of the town right up to the Conservation Areas, providing a gentle transition from country to Town Centre. All three approaches benefit from the focusing of attention as they suddenly reach the eastern end of the Clopton Bridge, announcing the arrival within the Conservation Area. It is unfortunate that this inevitably results in the traffic bottleneck, somewhat alleviated but not removed by the gyratory system between the Swan's Nest and Alveston Manor Hotel.

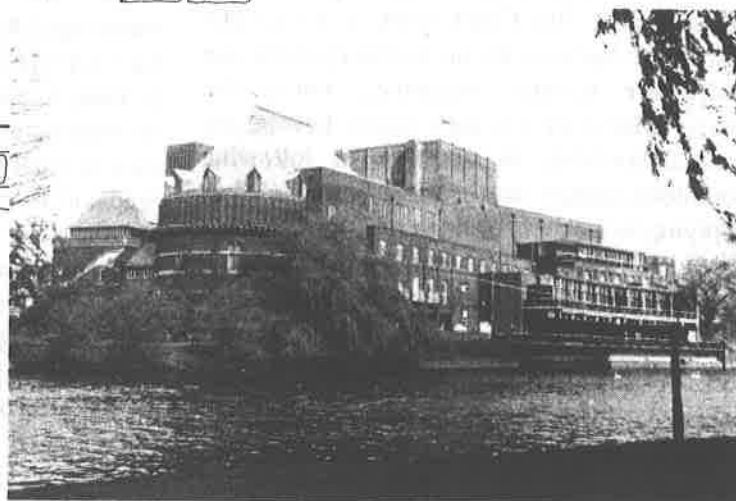
The transition from open farmland to the built-up area on the Evesham Road is again somewhat mollified by the lines of trees along the road as far as The Salmon Tail public house, but from here up to the Conservation Area, the road passes through a rather nondescript and diverse area of town. One of the most impressive aspects of this approach is, however, the view of the town as the road reaches the crest of Bordon Hill where the traveller still feels to be in open country. This impression should be retained but its control is outside that of the Conservation Area.

The Alcester Road approach has little to commend it. It passes through a mile or more of undistinguished townscape, alleviated by fields and playing fields on the south, before a fairly abrupt entry into the town centre as it passes over the railway line. The Birmingham Road approach, whilst probably the busiest, is unfortunately the worst, passing as it does through a semi-industrial atmosphere to arrive at the Conservation Area at an ill-defined crossroads and a sea of tarmac. Any efforts to improve these approaches would benefit the Conservation Area.

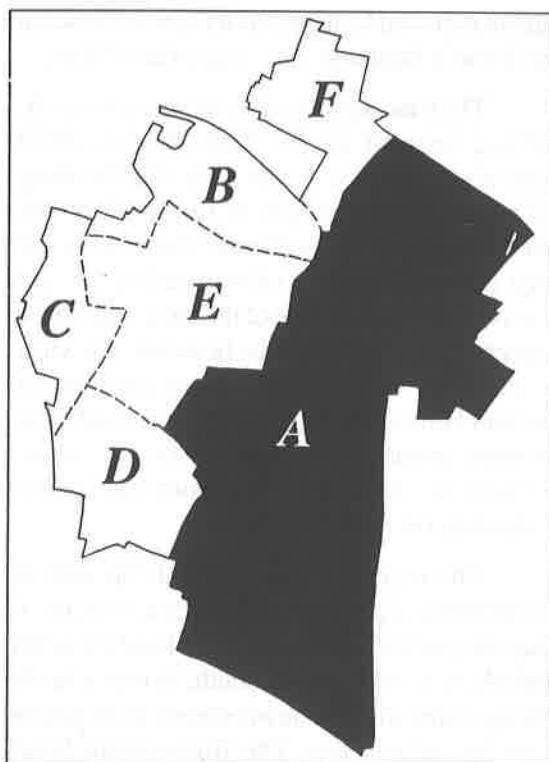
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Conservation Area A

See also Chapter 10 -
*The Future of
the Conservation Area*



Royal Shakespeare Theatres across the River Avon



4.1 General Characteristics

Area A is dominated by the River Avon. The west bank of the river, stretching from the viaduct in the south, up to Clopton Bridge, is characterised by large areas of open ground/gardens interspersed with important town

buildings such as Holy Trinity Church and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. Prior to demolition, the corn mill and the two large houses on the river bank, namely Avonside and Avonbank, reinforced this pattern of development of relatively large detached important buildings, fronting the river and surrounded by mature gardens.

The river is traversed by means of a footbridge at the southern end of the area as well as a recently re-furbished vehicular bridge. Between Holy Trinity Church and the Royal Shakespeare Theatres, a small ferry for pedestrians operates. North of the theatres Clopton Bridge crosses the river as well as the old tramway bridge.

The east bank of the river consists predominantly of recreation grounds, providing various sporting facilities. These grounds are fairly heavily planted with some mature trees and some more recently planted specimens.

The area north of Clopton Bridge, which was previously open ground, is dominated by modern development, which includes a large car park, a leisure centre and a large hotel. The area known as the Swannery maintains its relationship to the river and the Stratford-upon-



Area A characterized by dominance of the growing environment over the built environment. Well into this century this represented a swathe of green countryside through the town; development in the last twenty years at the north has virtually broken this corridor.

Avon canal, although it is dominated by the backdrop of the Moat House Hotel.

Southern Lane and Waterside describe the edge of the 'garden' boundary to the west bank of the river. The development along Southern Lane and Waterside is characterised by residential development which fronts directly onto the road, consisting of some large and some small scale terraced houses.

The area around Clopton Bridge, which includes the Stratford-upon-Avon canal basin and the Swannery area, is visually an extremely important area. This is so because the functions around this area relate in a workman-like manner to the river itself. This area was, into the present century, a busy industrial area whose industries were linked to the tramway, the canal and the river. The basin was a functioning canal basin with several wharfs and boat houses, while the saw mill, which still exists, was obviously linked very closely to the tramway. It is important to ensure that the spirit of this area is not lost, even if its use changes.

4.2 Architectural Form and Materials

4.2.1 West Bank of the River: Mill Lane, Southern Lane and Waterside

This is the only sub-area within *Area A* which has a consistent architectural character and where there are buildings of sufficient unity to discuss the architectural form and use of materials.

Mill Lane is now dominated by two new developments viz. Avonside and Lucy's Mill. Southern Lane is dominated by two new developments consisting of a housing courtyard



Avonbank Paddock

on the Avonbank Paddock site and the reconstruction of The Other Place Theatre.



Southern Waterside

Southern Lane turns into Waterside at Old Ferry House, at this point Waterside consists of relatively large-scale terraced houses which front directly onto the road with very small gardens. These gardens are often situated slightly higher than pavement level and the houses are characterised by their individuality. The Ferry House, for example, situated directly opposite the pedestrian ferry point, has very much an identity of its own, established by detailing and proportion. Despite the individuality of these buildings, which mostly date from the 18th and 19th centuries, they establish a unity amongst themselves through the dominant use of brick facades and clay plain-tile roofs. The areas of land behind Southern Lane are characterised by large open tracts of land, which are now either car parks for the local authority or grounds attached to King Edward VI Grammar School.

Waterside presents an almost uninterrupted facade of simple, relatively low and small-scale terraced houses to the street front. These are characterised by clay plain-tile roofs with simple brick chimneys and facades,



25-31 Waterside

Painted timber windows and dormers on the first floor. Many of these terraced houses are a floor and a half in height. These terraced houses are situated directly on the pavement and are only interrupted by the large Victorian building



36-39 Waterside

which relates in style to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre Art Gallery, situated directly opposite.

The remaining length of Waterside, between Sheep Street and Bridge Street, is now occupied by modern development which, although unsympathetic in detail, retains the building line at the front edge of the pavement.

Southern Lane and Waterside are characterised by pavements which are paved in blue engineering brick pavers and granite kerb edges. The pavements along these two streets are important since they perform, in a sense, as a river side promenade, giving views through



Waterside walk

the gardens over the river. These pavements are also an important pedestrian link between Holy Trinity Church and the Royal Shakespeare Theatres.

4.3 Views

The views in *Area A* are dominated by the river. Clopton Bridge provides an important pedestrian and vehicular entrance and exit view to the town. The views across the river towards the theatre and down towards the church are



Old Tramway Bridge and Theatres

pleasant ones; however, the views to the north are dominated by the large developments of the Moat House Hotel and the recently-constructed car park. Similarly, the new Mulberry Centre now forms the main focus of the entrance to the town from Bridgefoot.



View from the River Avon of the Canal basin with Waterside and The Mulberry Centre behind

Other important views are gained from the east bank of the river along the length of the footpath which lines this side of the river. It

with the Shipston Road. A large area of land was included in this part of *Area A* in order to preserve the quality of these views across open ground.



Holy Trinity Church from the east bank

should also be noted that views are obtained across the river towards Holy Trinity Church from the new Southern Relief road at its junction

As the river is much used by small boats, views from the river itself should be taken into account. The views from the river are characterised by glimpses of buildings on Southern Lane and Waterside, seen through an almost continuous screen of mature planting and trees. This is reinforced by further mature landscaping on the various small islands which occupy a section of the river near Lucy's Mill.

The other important views in the area are those which terminate the views down Bridge Street, Sheep Street and Chapel Lane. The view down Chapel Lane is terminated by the tent-like roof structure of the Swan Theatre. The view down Sheep Street, terminated by Bancroft Gardens, is somewhat disfigured by an ill-placed modern lamp-post. The view down Bridge Street is less appealing, looking directly at the Moat House Hotel.



Stratford-upon-Avon from the southern relief road

The other entrances into the area i.e. along the Shipston Road, the Banbury Road and the Tiddington Road are also important to consider with regard to views. The entrance from Shipston Road is characterised by an avenue of mature trees which line the western side of the road at a slightly higher level, situated on top of the tramway. The view from Banbury Road is dominated by an early view of a row of pleasant cottages, attached to the Swan's Nest Hotel, and is terminated by the charming 18th century pavilion which once was in the grounds of Alveston Manor Hotel. This same pavilion also forms an importance focus at the approach from the Tiddington Road.

4.4 Landscaping

4.4.1 Area A

Area A is dominated by the presence of the River Avon. The landscaping element in this area is the single most important feature. The area consists mainly of large areas of open recreation ground adjacent to the river, as well as several mature gardens. These gardens provide appropriate landscape settings for some of the most important public buildings in this

town. Due to the importance of landscaping in this area, it is described in some detail under various sub-area headings:

4.4.2 Lucy's Mill Area

Although mature willows line the edge of the bank of the river adjacent to the Mill, there are still large open gaps which make the



Stratford-upon-Avon, winter 1990

building extremely noticeable particularly since the opening of the Southern Relief road.



River Avon at Lucy's Mill

The Avonside development adjacent to Lucy's Mill contains several important trees some of which are subject of a Tree Preservation Order. These include sycamore, cedar, beech, tree of heaven, Scots pine and several old oaks. These trees are relics of a once fine garden, attached to Avonside, the family home of the Lucys, the mill-owners. The riverside elevation of these developments could be improved by additional planting.

4.4.3 The Recreation Ground

The recreation grounds are large areas of open grass. The footpaths which line the edge of the river are well planted with mature trees as well as more recently planted specimens. Trees in the area include, mature lime, thorn, poplar and horse chestnut. The new planting consists mainly of silver birch, Cotoneaster, willow, dogwood and rowan.

The additional car parking adjacent to the sports ground has been screened by new planting, consisting of plum, birch, rowan, dogwood and Cotoneaster. The sports ground itself is surrounded by mixed thorn and rose hedge, with mature willow and silver birch. Again, in a similar way, the bowling green is bounded by privet hedging and lines of conifers.

Opposite the Theatre Garden, the planting consists of alder, willow and rowan. A line of



View of the Recreation Ground from the Theatre

mature willow trees extends along the path opposite the theatre with a row of newly planted willows on the other side of the footpath. Opposite the ferry landing there are mature lime, horse chestnut and beech, with additional recent planting of birch and rowan. The area around the Water Rat contains Berberis, roses and thorns.

4.4.4 The Tramway

The Tramway acts as an important visual boundary to the area, with its consistent planting of ash, oak and elm, with some thorn and privet hedging. The planting along the tramway also functions well as an avenue to the footpath. Being elevated it is visible on the skyline as a linear feature and is seen from the approaches to the town as well as from parts of the town itself.

4.4.5 River Islands

The various islands on the river adjacent to the recreation grounds are generally very heavily planted and are important landscape features. They perform extremely well as screening devices to the views from either side of the river bank. The island between the two weirs is well established with plantings of sycamore, willow and the remains of a holm oak. Lock Island is similarly planted with ash and sycamore. The island opposite Cox's Timber



Nature Reserve

Yard is a nature reserve and has a mixed planting of willow, yew, hazel and sycamore.

4.4.6 Bancroft Gardens

The Bancroft Gardens are an important landscape element in Stratford and are much used and loved by the public.

The Gardens are characterised by a more formal, urban character which is not out of place, given its proximity to the town centre. It also provides a contrast to the more informal and wooded feeling of the Avonbank Garden

further down the river. The Garden has several avenues of mature trees as well as a sunken rose garden, and incorporates the lockside adjacent to the canal basin. The Gardens contain mature



Bancroft Gardens

trees, including lime, cedar, silver birch with a fine old horse chestnut surrounded by brick paving and a very ancient weeping ash supported on an iron frame. The entrance to the Bancroft Gardens from Waterside, at the bottom of Sheep Street, has raised beds on either side with seasonal bedding plants and a circular rock garden in the centre.

4.4.7 The Theatre Garden

The Theatre Garden contains a fine, mature London plane adjacent to the steps of the theatre leading down to the river. Box

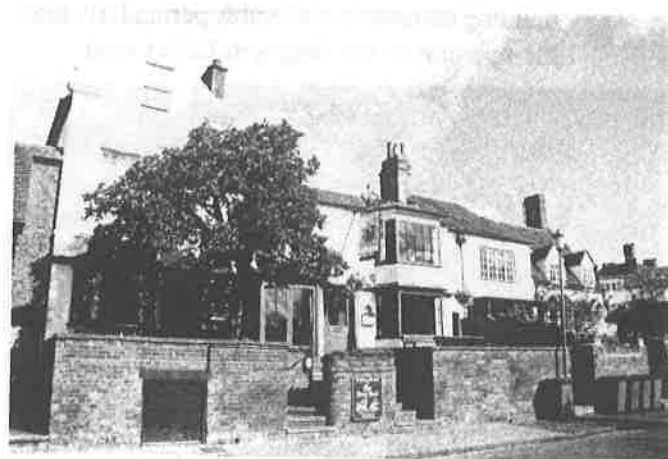


Royal Shakespeare Theatre

hedging lines the steps leading up to the veranda outside the theatre. Around the theatre there are raised brick and stone beds containing clipped Euonymus, Berberis and Cotoneaster. Clipped yew buttresses flank the southern side of the steps leading to the balcony with some silver birch and a cherry in the grassed area outside the theatre offices.

4.4.8 Waterside/Southern Lane

The houses front directly onto the street, resulting in relatively small gardens. Several of these small gardens, however, have important brick walls, e.g. the Arden Hotel, and some



The Black Swan/Dirty Duck Public House

contain mature trees, such as the ancient mulberry tree situated outside The Black Swan/Dirty Duck Public House. These small gardens are often elevated above the pavement level.

4.4.9 Avonbank Garden

(see aerial photograph page 24)

This garden was once the parkland setting for the large house called Avonbank which stood on the site between the round house and the Church. The mature trees, informal lawns and well-established screen of planting to the river provide a delightful riverside setting in contrast to the more formal Bancroft Garden.

An important element in this garden is the almost continuous line of the boundary wall along the length of Waterside and Southern Lane. This begins at the Church as a lias stone wall, becomes a brick wall along the Southern Lane garden and then again becomes a lias wall along the length of the garden which is adjacent to The Swan Theatre. This is a strong linear device which performs well in describing the edge of the riverside gardens.

The area between the church and the balustrading in the garden, contains fine mature cedar trees, a maidenhair tree, a tree of heaven, with variegated holly, yew and laurel at the edges of the gardens. New planting of trees such as rowan and lime have taken place. A weeping willow stands at the river's edge and a span of regenerating elm trees. The entrance to this garden is framed by a golden yew. This area of the gardens was once the site of Avonbank House and retains much of its mature domestic garden feeling. The old stone terrace wall is a sad reminder of the house, appearing in the garden like the remains of a Greek temple.

The trees in the main part of the garden include mature pine, larch, hornbeam, lime, yew, London plane and silver birch. A mature red oak stands in the centre of the gardens.

Groups of holly, yew and laurel are situated around the sub-station and in the shrubbery adjacent to the Brass Rubbing Centre. Yew, poplar, whitebeam, maple and shrubs extend along the edge of the garden by Southern Lane. Three mature holm oak are planted on the Southern Lane side of the Brass Rubbing Centre with an underplanting of laurel, Mahonia and holly. A fine cedar stands within the garden opposite The Other Place. Planting down to the river's edge consists of maple, willow, walnut, holly and laurel. Broad gravel paths dissect the garden. A line of flowering trees, including laburnum and cherry are planted within the garden opposite The Other Place Theatre.

Adjacent to the ferry landing, are mature sycamore, swamp cypress, horse chestnut and holly. The river bank adjacent to the garden outside The Swan Theatre is edged with mature horse chestnut, willow, silver birch, swamp cypress and dogwoods. This screen of trees and shrubs is considered to be an extremely important element within the area.

4.4.10 The Moat House Hotel

(see aerial photograph page 28)

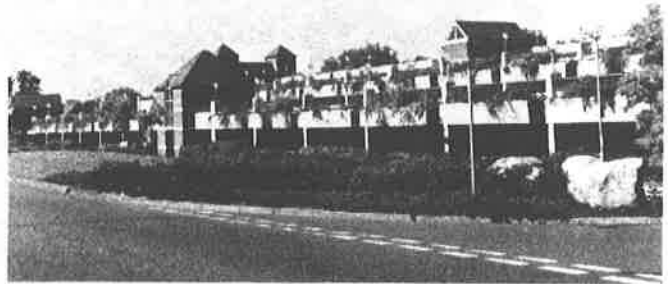
Lawns extend down to the river with some weeping willow and beds of roses set within the lawns. This area could be much more appropriately planted. A programme of dense planting could be implemented to screen the building from the important views from Clopton Bridge and Bridgefoot. Detailed planting around the hotel is poor with white plastic and concrete tubs lining the pavement adjacent to the hotel and the entrance having raised stone beds containing conifers. A rose bed has been established alongside the windows which overlook the car park. The car park at the Moat House Hotel would benefit from substantial, additional planting to screen it from the Bridgefoot view.

4.4.11 Land adjacent to The Moat House Hotel *(see aerial photograph page 28)*

The grass area alongside the approach to Clopton Bridge has a double row of whitebeams extending along the side of the road and on the western side there are seven mature limes along the bank of the Marina. These whitebeams replaced a line of poplars which had become dangerous.

4.4.12 Bridgefoot Multi-storey Car Park

This recently-completed building has been comprehensively landscaped. The beds at the entrance around the edge of the car parking area on the ground have been thickly planted



Bridgefoot Multi-storey Car Park

with beech, Eucalyptus, thorn and Cotoneaster saplings which are well maintained. Grass banks along the roadside adjacent of the entrance to the car park have beds of trees and shrubs set within them. The large boxes on both levels of the car park contain a mixture of shrub planting which is already helping to soften the outlines of the building.

4.4.13 Bancroft Place

(see aerial photograph page 28)



Bancroft Place from Stratford-upon-Avon Canal

This is a new canalside development which has been well planted with a mixed hedge of willow and snowberry around the car parking bay. Pollarded willows and thorn along the frontages overlook the road. Four mature willows have been retained along the fence which separates the new multi-storey car park and the drive to the houses. The fence has climbing plants growing over it. Ground-covering planting around the entrance to the flats consists of Cotoneaster, Lonicera and ivy and the area has been paved with brick.

4.4.14 The Leisure Centre and Car Park

(see aerial photograph page 28)

This has been reasonably well screened by a grass bank planted with ornamental trees and beds of roses. On the western side of the car



Stratford-upon-Avon, summer 1990

park area, a wooden closeboarded fence extends the length of the car park, backing on to the gardens in Warwick Crescent. Islands of trees and shrubs have been created amongst the car parking spaces, to help break up the large expanse of tarmac. Trees include rowan and cherry. A beech hedge extends along the main road leading into the car park on the western side with a low wooden railing on the east dividing off the Leisure Centre. Flowering cherry and rowan have been planted along the side of the Leisure Centre. Raised brick planting beds have been constructed outside the entrance to the Leisure Centre with inadequate planting. Planting outside the Harlequin Steakhouse has been well executed, with effective shrubs such as Euonymus and Eleagnus. Trees include rowan and silver birch. A mature thorn hedge extends around the perimeter of this restaurant and the tennis courts.

4.4.15 Alveston Manor Hotel

(see aerial photograph above)

The garden is characterised by mature trees which include a line of lime trees either side of the path leading into the hotel grounds from Tiddington Road. There are several horse chestnut trees which line the garden boundary along the Banbury Road and four additional horse chestnut along the northern side of the car park. A double row of mature hazel extends along the northern edge of the car park. This may have been a nut walk at one time. On the southern side of the garden is a fine old cedar. The drive coming off the Banbury Road is hidden in a cutting from view of the hotel. The banks on either side are planted with box, lilac, ash and lime with ground covering of ivy. This gives a very pleasing woodland effect. A fine boundary wall in brick surrounds the garden of the hotel.

4.4.16 Approaches to the Area

The approach from Tiddington Road is lined on either side by houses which are set back from the road and have well established gardens containing mature trees. The views to the river are generally obscured on the western side of the road; however, there are places where one obtains views through the screen planting.

The entrance along Banbury Road has mature sycamore and lime trees lining the road on the southern side, with wide grass verges. A privet hedge runs along the edge of the footpath leading to the garage with a mature willow outside the garage forecourt. The garage is reasonably well screened to the front with birch and conifer planting.

The entrance off the Shipston Road has two semi-mature lime planted on the verge by the entrance to the garage. Mature trees line the road on the wide grass verge further to the south. The guest house and cottage gardens along this road have mostly been paved to provide car parking space and contain very little planting. The visual line of the tramway is important along this approach.

A wide lawn area is in front of the cottages attached to the Swan's Nest Hotel, at the junction of the Shipston Road and Banbury Road. This lawn area contains two mature fruit trees which provides some landscape relief to an otherwise quite densely architectural area. The planting at the side of the Swan's Nest Hotel consists of mixed shrubs, a mature ornamental cherry and

conifers. Four mature horse chestnuts, a holm oak and a gazebo are on the traffic island, which is retained by a low brick wall and a stone coping.

4.4.17 Chapel Lane

Beyond New Place Gardens lies the Union Club Garden which has a mixed *Lonicera* and holly hedge along the top of the retaining wall with holly and ornamental cherry trees. Two junipers are on either side of the steps leading up to the entrance. The wall that surrounds the car park adjacent to the road is surmounted by clipped privet hedging.

A mature holm oak stands at the entrance to the car park of the Arden Hotel on the southern side of the lane. The school park has some shrub and tree planting around the car parking bays. A lovely old brick wall about 10ft high forms the perimeter wall to the old school buildings adjacent to the Guild Chapel.



Chapel Lane



Gazebo, Banbury Road