Alcester Road Character Study

1 Context

The Alcester Road is a significant entrance route to the town from the west. Immediately east of this area is the railway station; on the south side of the road Stratford-upon-Avon High School. This is, therefore, a heavily-used road.

However, this area is significantly within the built-up area of Stratford. It is not therefore of particular significance as an “approach road” in terms of character, appearance, and introducing travellers to the town itself.

The main period of development north of the road is inter-war, with speculative and local authority housing being represented in several phases. Interestingly this development occurred at about the same time that the rail link to Birmingham was developed and the Shakespeare-based tourist industry was increasing. Post-war development includes small speculative estates and several further local authority estates.

The original boundary of this area dissected several areas of character, which have been considered in their entirety here; and also excluded the south side of the Alcester Road, which is considered in general terms for policy development with respect to perception and management of the street as a unit.

Plate 1: Aerial view of study area
Image from Stratford upon Avon District Council
2 Site and setting: introduction

The Alcester Road is a significant entrance route to the town from the west; an historical route to the Roman settlement, now small market town, of Alcester. Hence this is an important early routeway. This is a busy road, but the study area is now deeply embedded within the built-up area of the town.

Other minor residential roads have been developed parallel to, and north of, the main road. A new estate is currently being developed to the south.

The study area is bounded to the east by the main road leading to the industrial district; to the north by a substantial post-war housing estate; and to the west by the narrow green corridor of the Shotttery Brook.

The geology of this small area is interesting. The extreme east and west of the area is on Keuper Marl, then a narrow folded rhaetic band crosses the road just west of Brookside Road and again just west of Masons Road, crossing Masons Road approximately at the junction with Baker Avenue. This folded band encloses an area – the bulk of the area studied – of Jurassic lower Lias, mainly clay.¹

2.1 Landscape

In broad terms this is a flat area. To the west there is a slight dip with the Shotttery Brook; further west the land rises again, largely occupied by post-war housing developments. East of the area the main road visibly rises, but this is man-made: the embankment to the railway bridge.

2.2 General character and plan form summary

This is a mixed residential area dominated by the original built development, of inter-war largely speculative housing, not of high status, on reasonably deep plots, to the north of the Alcester Road. South of this road was – until relatively recently – an area of principally agricultural land; a belt between this area of residential development and Shotttery. The eastern part has recently been developed.

Several distinct sub-areas can be identified on the basis of their plan and architectural characteristics:

**Map 2: General character**

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**Area 1:** an area of late-1970s "New Town" style modernist housing tightly focused on a cul-de-sac. Well-maintained as a unit although windows appear to have been replaced.

**Area 2:** a small part of a much larger development of the 1960s to the north of this area. This is an area with its own distinguishing characteristics, and is not considered further in this study.

**Area 3:** a small area of speculative 1960s/70s housing around two culs-de-sac (3a, 3b); many of the houses have been altered in piecemeal fashion.

**Area 4:** an area of short terrace housing of the early inter-war period. (Area extended beyond the local authority’s suggested boundary to include both sides of the road.)

**Area 5:** an area of local authority maisonette development of the late inter-war or early post-war period; all re-roofed and re-windowed. (Area extended beyond the local authority’s suggested boundary to include both sides of the road but to exclude recent developments at the eastern end of Lodge Road.)

**Area 6:** area of local authority terraced bungalows for the elderly, built around an open grassed square. (Area extended beyond the local authority’s suggested boundary to include both sides of the road.)

**Area 7:** area of four vernacular-styled semi-detached pairs forming the opening to the road. (Area extended beyond the local authority’s suggested boundary to include both sides of the road.)²

**Area 8:** Frontage to the north side of Alcester Road; inter-war housing. This area has a readily-identifiable sub-unit of uniform semi-detached pairs with half-timbered upper floors (Area 8A), itself interrupted by a pair of formerly commercial properties fronting the entrance to a road access.

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² This building type is also used elsewhere in small infill sites in Stratford.
2.3 Landmarks/views

There are no significant landmarks – built or natural – within this area, although the Fire Station tower is visible immediately to the east. Views are largely confined to the east and west, along the main Alcester Road. To the east these are truncated by the railway bridge embankment; there are no distant views into the town itself. To the west of this area there is a significant view south towards Shottery and south-west over the Shottery Brook valley to the trees and houses on the next hill. These views across the open agricultural land still remaining to the south-west of the Alcester Road are a significant characteristic of the western part of this area and of its approach along Alcester Road from the west. Within the area, the dense built form prevents significant vistas.

3 Historical development: overview

This is an area of suburban residential development of the inter-war period, much apparently developed at about the time that the railway connection to Birmingham was built. Much of the local authority-built housing was built in the post-war period, when Masons Road was being identified as an industrial/employment area.

3.1 Details of the study area, using historical maps

![Map 3: Ordnance Survey 1889](image)

The 1889 OS 25” sheet shows a complete absence of development in this area except for Mason’s Lodge to the north.
The 1975 OS 25" sheet shows the area fully developed with the exception of Area 1 to the west. Interestingly the alignment of Clarence Road appears to follow the track north from Alcester Road to Mason's Lodge, seen on the 1889 map. This early alignment thus determines the plot patterns of Area 8A.

The contemporary map shows the development of Area 1; the addition of dwellings on the west side of Brookside Road; and the redevelopment of the ambulance station at the corner of Lodge Road and Masons Road for housing.
4 Spatial analysis

This is a small and essentially linear area focused on the main Alcester Road and the parallel minor roads Lodge Road and Baker Avenue, the former being of cul-de-sac form. Alcester Road is a standard main road with pavements on both sides but no verges. It has recent highway improvements including cycle lanes and new pedestrian crossings. The remaining streets are narrower minor streets with narrow pavements, and significant on-street parking; however Baker Avenue is also a bus route.

4.1 Character and inter-relationship of spaces

![Map 6: Open spaces](image)

There are only two open spaces in this area.

The most significant is that in Area 6, surrounded on three sides by the bungalows for the elderly. This composition is carefully composed, although it is informal (no formal planting, paths, or maintenance). It is crossed by a desire-line informal path.

The second is attached to Area 1, the “New Town-style” housing, and is simply an area of grass on the street curve, marking the transition between Area 1 and Area 2. A windowless gable wall and fence border it. It appears little used and makes little or no positive contribution to the area, although consultation responses show that it is locally valued. Facing it is a further space, a paved car park for this development. It appears to be very rarely used, and is poorly maintained (the seemingly quite new fence is already failing). Yet this fence divides this development from a very significant green linear open space, through which the Shotttery Brook flows (immediately west of this study area). There is clear potential for developing a proper access to this space, as there is a bridge and footpath to shops on the other side of the Brook, yet no formal access on this side. There is clear demand for this, as slippery and dangerous tracks down to the brook, and conversations with residents, demonstrate.

The contribution of the open agricultural land still remaining to the south-west of the Alcester Road is worthy of mention, although outside this area itself. The open nature of this “buffer” between here and Shotttery is very significant, particularly to travellers from the west; as they travel down from the slight hill towards the Shotttery Brook and then up to the level section of Alcester Road, the
open land and its agricultural hedge do recall the character of other rural approaches to Stratford. (This area to the south of Alcester Road lies within the Shottery Conservation Area).

Most of the houses are detached, and the spaces between individual detached houses (and between pairs of semi-detached) are significant in setting a rhythm of building-space-building, especially as most of the buildings are relatively close to, and clearly visible from, the highway. Glimpses are afforded of some long rear garden plots, and some significant tree clumps within them.

4.2 Movement patterns/uses

The major vehicular movement is along the main Alcester Road. The school, supermarket and railway station, all adjoining this area, are significant generators of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

The County Council’s traffic counts in September 2004 record a 24-hour weekly average of 10,158 vehicles, an annual morning peak of 1,024 vehicles per hour and annual evening peak of 971 vehicles per hour.

Masons Road, through the industrial and commercial area, has a substantial amount of HGV traffic; and some through traffic bypassing the town centre to the A3400 roundabout.

The proposed Shottery bypass is likely to affect traffic volume on the Alcester Road.

5 Built character analysis

Some key variables have been measured for particular areas. They help to show how different some areas are, and can be useful in setting acceptable limits for future development.

5.1 Plot patterns

Area 4
Lodge Road terraces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Plot length (m)*</th>
<th>Plot width (m)**</th>
<th>Plot area (m²)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>36.87</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>214.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>41.68</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>244.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>31.12</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>170.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* measured along the western plot boundary; includes the shared paths immediately behind the houses.
** measured along the street frontage

Area 5
Lodge Road maisonettes

Given the complex mapped plot patterns for these maisonettes, not all variables can be realistically measured. These ten blocks have slightly varying plot widths and lengths owing to the curve of the street; the plot lengths and areas are:
Alcester Road Character Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Plot length (m)*</th>
<th>Plot area (m²)**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>41.38</td>
<td>945.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum</strong></td>
<td>46.05</td>
<td>1013.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum</strong></td>
<td>38.78</td>
<td>873</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* measured along the centreline of each block
** “plot” here refers to the land associated with each block of 4 maisonettes.

**Area 6**
Terraced bungalows

It is difficult to give meaningful measurements for this development as there are no clearly-defined separate ownerships and plot patterns.

**Area 8**
Alcester Road frontage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Plot length (m)*</th>
<th>Plot width (m)**</th>
<th>Plot area (m²)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>53.37</td>
<td>9.24</td>
<td>491.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum</strong></td>
<td>122.69</td>
<td>19.36</td>
<td>1724.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum</strong></td>
<td>32.53</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>249.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* measured along the western plot boundary
** measured along the street frontage

5.2 Building patterns

**Area 4**
Lodge Road terraces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Building setback (m)*</th>
<th>Building footprint (m²)**</th>
<th>% of plot built over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>51.83</td>
<td>24.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum</strong></td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>61.71</td>
<td>29.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum</strong></td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>49.17</td>
<td>20.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* measured perpendicularly from the front of plot to the nearest part of the building.
** includes all mapped extensions, outbuildings etc. with the exception of communal garages.

**Area 5**
Lodge Road maisonettes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Building setback (m)*</th>
<th>Building footprint (m²)**</th>
<th>% of plot† built over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>152.48</td>
<td>16.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum</strong></td>
<td>6.58</td>
<td>152.48</td>
<td>17.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum</strong></td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>152.48</td>
<td>15.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* measured perpendicularly from the front of plot to the nearest part of the building
** includes all mapped extensions, outbuildings etc.; however digital maps do not show outbuildings known to exist here. All buildings are identical.

† “plot” here refers to the land associated with each block of 4 maisonettes.

** Area 6
Terraced bungalows

It is difficult to give meaningful measurements for this development as there are no clearly-defined separate ownerships and plot patterns. However the individual flats do not appear to have been individually extended since their original construction.

** Area 8
Alcester Road frontage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building setback (m)*</th>
<th>Building footprint (m²)**</th>
<th>% of plot built over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>9.79</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>11.75</td>
<td>253.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>7.18</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* measured perpendicularly from the front of plot to the nearest part of the building.

** includes all mapped extensions, outbuildings etc.

5.3 Architectural and/or historical qualities of buildings

This is a wholly residential area representing two periods of the twentieth century. The buildings fronting Alcester Road (Area 8) are predominantly of the inter-war period; a mixture of detached and semi-detached; two-storey and bungalow; but typical of small-scale speculative development at the lower end of the market in this period. Most are at the smaller end of the speculative or municipal range. Most are detached. They are architecturally unremarkable. There is a mixture of built form and massing, both gable and eaves to the road. The use of brick lower floors and rendered upper floors is characteristic, although Area 8A is characterised by half-timbered upper floors.³

There is an area (4) of inter-war local authority terraced housing, typical and unremarkable; of post-war local authority maisonettes (5), a very unusual dwelling type, certainly in this area, but having been re-roofed and re-windowed; of post-war local authority (?) terraced bungalows for the elderly (6), of little intrinsic architectural character but of some urban design significance with their open space; an area of local authority “New Town-style” housing (1), of some quality; and several small speculative post-war developments, of little interest and considerably altered.

There is therefore little intrinsic ‘special’ architectural merit in this area.

³ “Black-and-white” half-timbering is a significant architectural characteristic of central Stratford. However, much of this character was either created or revealed by architectural fashion and reconstruction schemes in the early-twentieth century; broadly the time when much of this area was developed (R. Bearman, various local publications).
Plate 2: Maisonettes, Area 5

Plate 3: Group of half-timbered semi-detached, Area 8A

Map 7: Building periods

- Early-mid Victorian
- Late-Victorian - Edwardian
- Inter-war
- Early post-war c. 1955-1970
- Middle post-war c. 1970-1990
- Recent, post-1990

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The great majority of these buildings have had original timber windows replaced by aluminium or uPVC (red on Map 8). There is a relatively small number of extensions; most of the recent ones being unobtrusive. However, several commercial properties (B&B and apartments) on key corner locations have been unsympathetically extended on several occasions and are now of incoherent form and out of scale with their surroundings, with particularly high plot coverage.

Car parking is an evident problem in this area. Blue dots on Map 8 indicate conversions of front gardens to vehicle parking, usually with the loss of much or all of the front garden enclosure.\(^4\) Green indicates a predominance of on-street parking.

A small number of buildings remain in good original condition.

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5.4 Predominant local/traditional building materials

Predominant materials are brick (usually an orange/red colour) especially on ground floors, and upper floors are typically rendered or pebble-dashed, often painted in a pale colour. On occasion the brick has also been painted. Roofs are usually red or brown tiles, occasionally pantiles. Some brown tiles are merely

\(^4\) From visual estimate, over 50% of the road frontage.
weathered reds. Slate is rare. Some tiles have been replaced by inappropriate concrete tiles.

5.5 Audit of heritage assets

There are no listed buildings within this area, and none appear to be potentially listable as individuals.

However some traditional street furniture (pillar boxes etc) remains.

There is no record of significant archaeological interest in this area; although the Alcester Road itself is a Roman alignment and later a turnpike.\(^5\)

5.6 Contribution of key unlisted buildings

There are no individual unlisted buildings whose individual contribution could be described as "key". However there are four groups of buildings that make significant "group value" contributions to the townscape resulting from their original design uniformity and its retention despite subsequent maintenance, alterations and personalisation of the buildings.

- Area 1, the "New Town-style" housing
- Area 6, the bungalows for the elderly, positioned around the square grassed open space
- Area 5, the maisonettes
- Area 8A, the row of semi-detached houses each side of Lodge Road, with their upper-floor half-timbering.

The unlisted and greatly extended commercial buildings discussed earlier do make a notable negative contribution especially as they stand on street corners.

5.7 Local details

The surviving traditional red letter-box on the west side of Clarence Avenue is a relic of the former use of this property as a post office. However, it is not in a prominent location.

5.8 Public realm audit

Street furniture is standardised, save that some of the telegraph poles retain turned finials. Paved surfaces consist of varying qualities of patched tarmac; kerbstones are standardised. Gutters require maintenance, having grass growing in numerous places. Standard cable service boxes exist, usually located at the back of the pavement and painted green, but nevertheless sometimes a target for graffiti. New standardised pedestrian crossings across Alcester Road are very prominent.

6 Other contributing factors

6.1 Land uses

The area is wholly residential in character; although there is a distinction between Area 6 and the remainder of the area. A few properties along Alcester Road have been converted to commercial accommodation, principally guest-houses; with the

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\(^5\) Warwickshire County Council, Sites and Monuments Record.
two former commercial properties bordering Clarence Avenue facing on to
Alcester Road having been converted to apartments.

6.2 Senses: sights, sounds, smells

The busy nature of the Alcester Road from traffic and the school, and
disturbances from the industrial users and emergency services on Masons Road
are very influential on these roads; but scarcely permeate further into the area.

6.3 Vegetation

There are no significant large trees within the area. However, some of the street
trees especially around area 6 are small-scale and are well-suited to the character
of their built surroundings.

Rear gardens in particular have some smaller mature trees; the overall
impression is of greenery visible in the spaces between houses (for example in
the maisonette area).

The tree boundary between Area 1 and the Shottery Brook corridor is locally
significant and there are opportunities for habitat enhancement along the bank.

The hedge boundary to the south side of the Alcester Road is a significant
contributor to visual character along this road. Its protection to the west, where
open agricultural land remains, is significant; elsewhere it has been substantially
eroded by recent residential development. The remaining mature trees within
this southern boundary to the area are significant.

7 Appraisal

7.1 Development pressure analysis

Planning records for this area (Appendix) show little pressure for new
development, but very much more for a variety of extensions and alterations.
There have been several applications for changes of use, including from shop to
residential, and from dwellings to guest house use. In general the greatest area
of pressure for all types of change is the Alcester Road frontage.

7.2 Key positive features/areas

Areas 1, and 5-6, are strongly contained and have individual character and
identity based on their original architectural form and layout. This remains
significant despite replacement of windows (and roof tiles in area 5) largely
because these changes have been uniform and wholesale.

Area 8A has some visual coherence with the surviving upper-floor half-timbering;
however this is being eroded through smaller-scale changes including the
conversions of front gardens and loss of enclosure; and the area is interrupted by
the two converted apartment buildings.

7.3 Neutral areas

The bulk of the Alcester Road north frontage can be characterised as neutral. The
retention of so many original buildings is a positive feature. But its significant
variety in original building form, and particularly the scale of window
replacements and front-garden conversions which detract from the area’s original
character and appearance, are negative features; hence the overall judgement is neutral.

7.4 Negative features/areas (loss, damage, intrusion)

The volume of vehicular traffic along Alcester Road, especially at peak times, detracts from the small-scale suburban nature of much of the frontage development.

Three houses and shop/houses on noticeable road junctions have been converted to commercial residential use (Bed-and-breakfast and apartments), with poorly-designed and co-ordinated extensions and a lack of car-parking. These are highlighted as large black dots on Map 9 below.

Plate 5: Example of piecemeal extensions: conversion for apartments

The erosion of the hedge boundary south of Alcester Road by recent development allows the new development to be intrusive.

7.5 Character zones

Character zones have been identified, based largely on the plan form and architectural characteristics of the area. Map 9 highlights the key areas and features discussed below.

Map 9: Character zones
7.6 Areas under existing or potential threat

The longer rear gardens of some of the Alcester Road properties to the west of this area may be vulnerable to backland infill schemes, which would probably require demolition of one or more frontage buildings to gain access.

The maisonettes, which are apparently unpopular in other districts, may be subject to wholesale redevelopment proposals.

8 Discussion of special characteristics

None of the identified areas have architectural or historical features of special interest.

Several, however, have significant unifying features of architectural form, plan form, and urban design.

9 Recommendation on designation

Designation as a conservation area is not recommended. Following the legal definition of a conservation area, and mindful of precedents elsewhere, there is insufficient here of “special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. However, it is suggested that Areas 1 (shown shaded purple on Map 9), 5 and 6 (shown shaded blue) could be considered for designation as ”Areas of townscape interest”. Area 4 (outlined with blue dots) could be added to 5 and 6 as it is derived from the same origin (local authority housing), and the character area would then encompass three types of this housing.

It is felt that area 8A, being interrupted by two massively-converted and extended buildings, does not merit this designation; however the uniformity of its main feature, a very visible aspect from both east and west views along Alcester Road, could be retained by a specific design policy.

10 Existing policy

Guidance in the Local Plan, the Town Design Statement, and the District Design Guidance, applies.

The open area between Alcester Road and Shottery, which affects the open character of this approach road (and which we said appeared vulnerable given developments E and W of it) is an Area of Restraint (Policy EF.3). It is included within the Shottery conservation area. However the 2003 Deposit Draft has added to this Policy a note that development may, nevertheless, be permitted if “exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated” ... this includes “where a proposal would have demonstrable benefits and contribute significantly to meeting Local Plan objectives” (para 4.4.3a).

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11 Policy and management suggestions

11.1 Area 1

A formal link should be made and maintained between area 1 and the Shottery Brook corridor to replace the existing informal and unsafe paths through the wooded area (shown as a green arrow on Map 9).

The management of this area is evidently cohesive and uniform; this management – and the residents – should be engaged in the process of valuing and maintaining the distinct character of this area.

11.2 Area 4

Cohesiveness of this small but originally uniform area is being lost through individually small-scale piecemeal changes. It is difficult to resist such changes particularly when the scale of change (new windows, front garden conversions) is so widespread. Some general information and advice might usefully be prepared for residents. Piecemeal redevelopment should be discouraged, although redevelopment of an entire block (of 3-4 houses) could be permitted where the replacement is of appropriate scale, form and materials.

11.3 Area 5

This is a small area which retains much of its original character despite wholesale re-roofing and window replacement. This extends to the original rear plot patterns and outbuildings. As long as this group remains in one overall management these characteristics can be retained. Piecemeal redevelopment should be discouraged.

The management of this area is evidently cohesive and uniform; this management – and the residents – should be engaged in the process of valuing and maintaining the distinct character of this area.

11.4 Area 6

This is a small area which retains much of its original character, including the open layout, despite wholesale window replacement. As long as this group remains in one overall management these characteristics can be retained. Any fences to form private gardens should be visually permeable and not higher than 1 metre. The open square deserves careful management and maintenance, and consideration could be given to formalising and paving the diagonal desire-line path (subject to the views of residents). The small street trees are valuable and should be managed. Piecemeal redevelopment should be discouraged.

The management of this area is evidently cohesive and uniform; this management – and the residents – should be engaged in the process of valuing and maintaining the distinct character of this area.

11.5 Area 7

This is a small area which retains much of its original character, including the architectural form, despite window replacement and front-garden parking. These four pairs of semis form a valuable corner to Masons Road; a foil to the commercial development to the east. Any further extensions should respect the vernacular styling of the original houses, as has been done in one case.
**11.6 Area 8** (shown pale pink on Map 9)

The frontage development along Alcester Road is of very varied character, but is of significance as forming a major approach to the town core. Further conversions of front gardens for car parking should retain as much of the existing front garden enclosures as possible. Roof conversions should have flat rooflights or appropriately-designed dormers on the front elevation. The glimpses into rear gardens are characteristic along this street, even from moving vehicles, and thus side extensions should not close such views. This is particularly the case for the areas outlined in pale green above. ‘Terracisation’ should be strongly discouraged, and where extensions are proposed they should be in scale and subservient to the original dwelling and set back from the building line.

Individual properties could be replaced with new development of appropriate scale and form, and ideally employing the dominant local materials of rendered upper floor and brick ground floor. Any such new building should respect the local characteristic of building footprint being some 20% of the plot area on average. Building setbacks should be within the range of 7.1 – 11.75m.

**11.7 Area 8A**

The key feature of this area is the unity of its upper floor half-timbering. To retain this visual unity, a significant feature from the main road (and one well reflecting the local vernacular and the well-known half-timbered buildings of the town), a specific design policy could require the retention of the upper floor timbering. More realistically, some general information and guidance might be prepared for residents to explain the wider visual and townscape value of this feature. Further west in Area 8 is an identical semi-detached pair, one of which has lost its timbering; this usefully highlights the visual contribution made by this design feature. Residents could usefully be reminded of (anecdotal) evidence from estate agents that changing such a prominent feature in a uniform row may devalue the individual property and its neighbours.

**11.8 Hedge south of Alcester Road** (shown as green dotted line on Map 9)

The opportunity should be taken, as far as possible, to secure the appropriate management of this hedge (including its associated trees) to retain or regain the visual appearance of an agricultural field boundary. Even when periodically cut, such boundaries are characteristically untidy; it should not become suburban and tidied. This would retain something of the agricultural feel of the main approach roads to the town.
### APPENDIX: Selected Development control information 1990-2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<td>11 Brookside Close</td>
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<td>2 1-bed flats</td>
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**Minor developments**

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