

Avenue Road area Character Study

1 Context

This area represents a multi-period high-quality suburban expansion away from the urban heart of the town. It is physically separated from the town by the canal, developed in the very late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century.

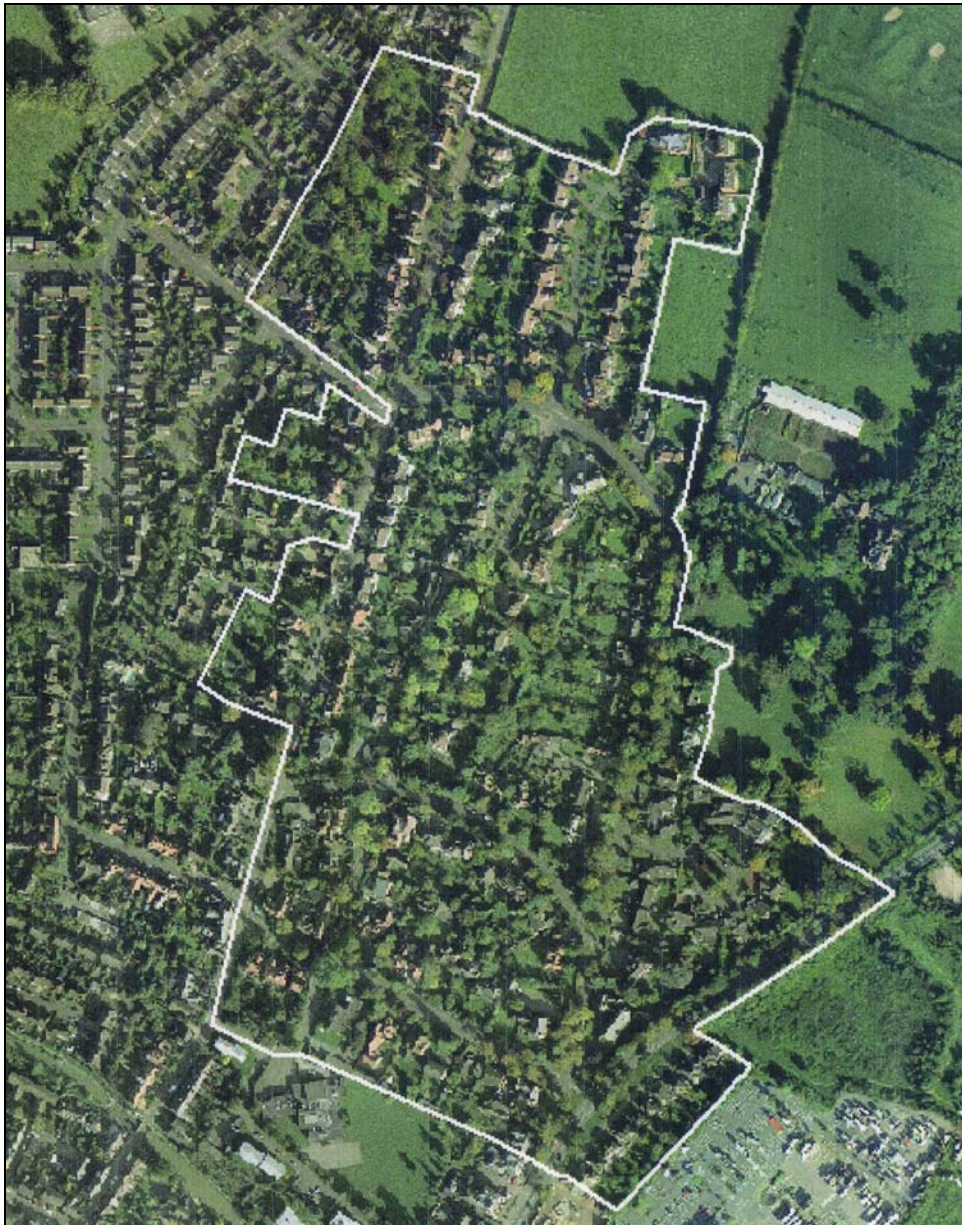
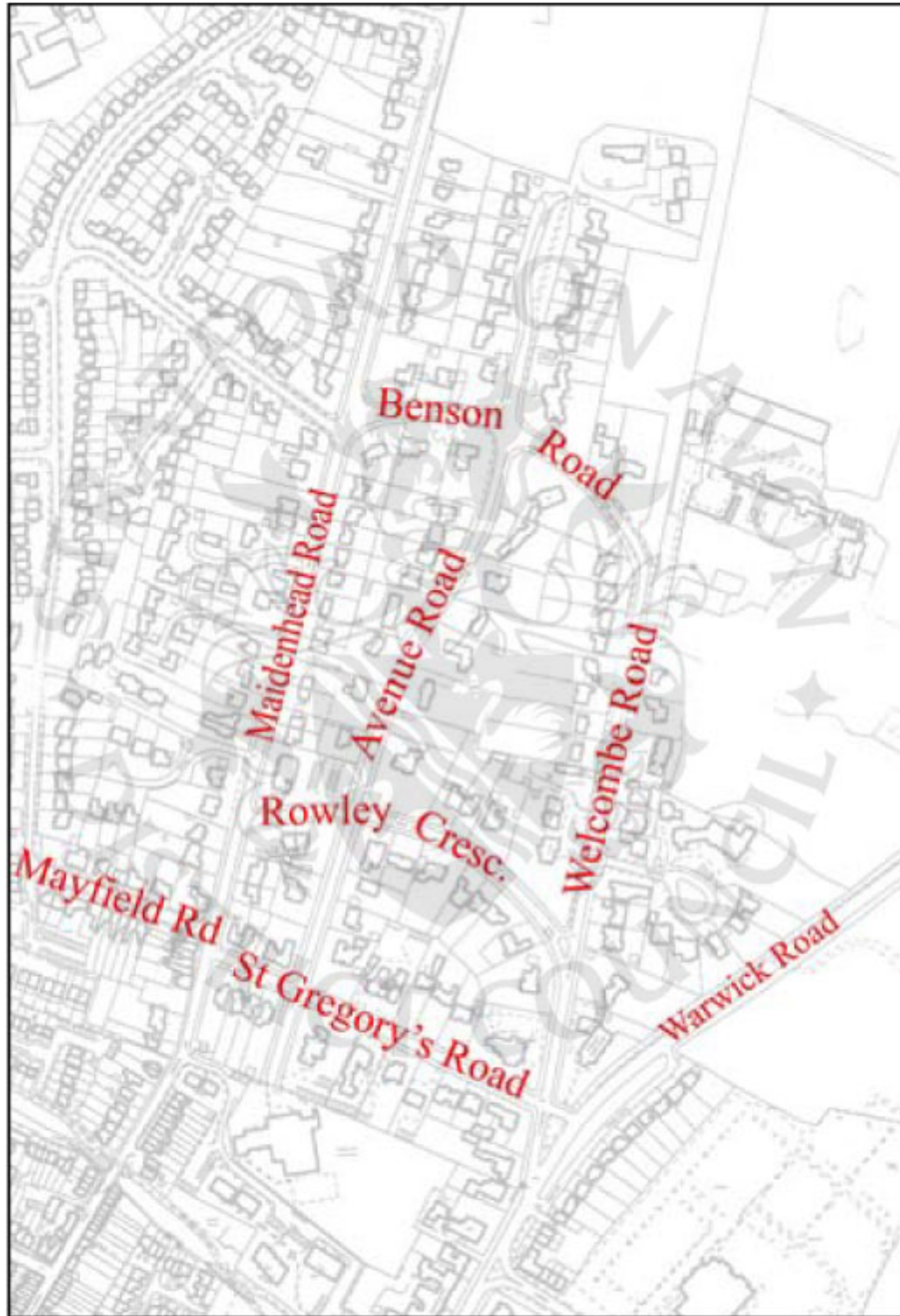


Plate 1: Aerial view of study area
Image from Stratford upon Avon District Council



Map 1: Principal streets

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2 Site and setting: introduction

2.1 Location within settlement; routes etc

This area lies north-north-east of the town centre but, apart from the Warwick Road which impinges on the south-eastern extremity of the area, there are no through routes. There are two NNE-SSW parallel roads, joined by two curved crescents and one straight road, in almost a ladder pattern.

Welcombe Road appears to have its origins in an approach lane to Welcombe, now a hotel/golf course. A Gothick-styled house is known here in the 1830s but the present house was built in 1867.¹

It is likely that Maidenhead Road follows the alignment of an earlier farm track.

2.2 Landscape

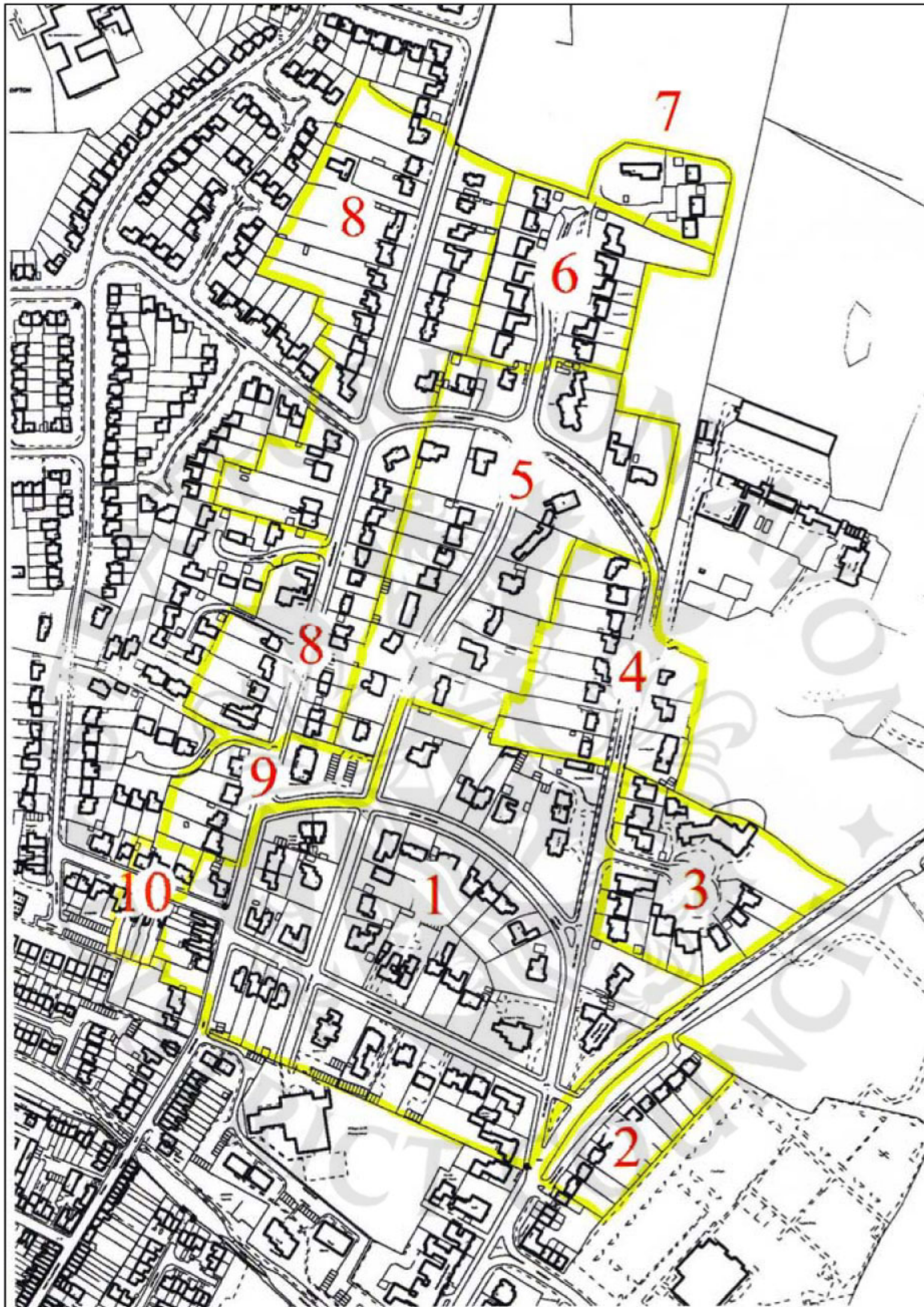
The land rises gently from the town centre towards the Welcombe and Clopton Hills Local Nature Reserve to the NNE. St. Gregory's Road is at about 45m, and the field immediately north of the area is at 65m. The obelisk on the ridge behind the Welcombe Hotel is at 102m.

The south-eastern part of the area lies on river terrace gravels. The north-eastern part of the area lies on Keuper marl. The boundary between the two runs from the junction of St Gregory's Road and Maidenhead Road ENE to Welcombe Road.²

¹ Pevsner, N. and Wedgwood, A. (1966) *Warwickshire* (Buildings of England series) Penguin, Harmondsworth, p. 234.

² Geological Survey sheet 200, 1974.

2.3 General character and plan form summary



Map 2: General character

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A range of plan areas can be identified on the basis of architectural and plan form.

- Area 1: the earlier phase of late-Victorian/Edwardian villa development, albeit with some later infill.
- Area 2: a row of inter-war detached houses fronting Warwick Road.
- Area 3: an area of middle post-war bungalows in the grounds of a surviving large Victorian house.
- Area 4: an area of smaller inter- and post-war housing along Welcombe Road.
- Area 5: a group primarily of larger inter-war houses along Avenue Road.
- Area 6: a development of high-quality detached houses of the late 1980s.

- Area 7: a mixed group consisting of a Modern-style flat-roofed brick house with three large recent detached houses in its grounds.
- Area 8: a group predominantly of lower-status inter-war houses along Maidenhead Road, but including a small number of earlier Victorian houses and some recent infill.
- Area 9: a small group of post-war houses and a block of flats (with garages) on Maidenhead Road: included primarily to allow consideration of both sides of the road.
- Area 10: not part of the original study area, this small area contains a pair of well-maintained late-Victorian/early-Edwardian terraces facing each other. These smaller dwellings complement the much larger properties of the same date in Area 1.

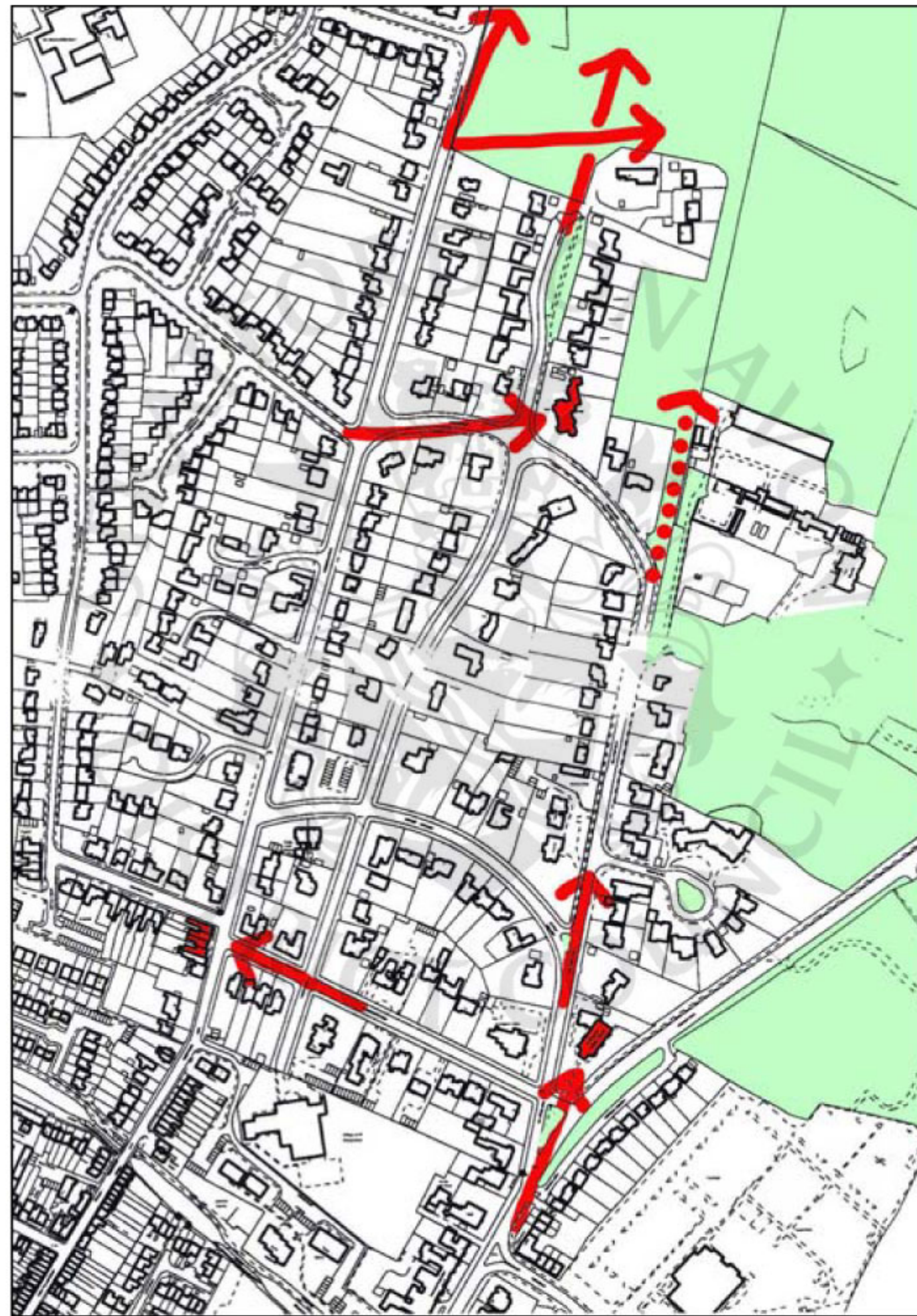
2.4 Landmarks/views

The character of much of the area – particularly its southernmost portion – is of large villa-type houses, each of which in its grounds is virtually a landmark. Some are more noticeably so as they terminate some of the shorter vistas within the area. St Gregory's RC church is a more noticeable landmark from the Warwick Road (but will be partially concealed by vegetation from spring to autumn).

Towards the northern ends of Welcombe Road and Maidenhead Road there are views out of the built-up area towards the trees and open space of the Welcombe and Clopton Hills Local Nature Reserve – including the hilltop obelisk (of 1876) and the polygonal Clopton Tower (which Pevsner³ could not date).

The topography – despite the slope down towards the town centre - and dense built form preclude clear views of the town centre which, in any case, does not possess tall landscape structures to focus upon.

³ Pevsner and Wedgwood (1966), p. 234.



Map 3: Open space and views

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3 Historical development: overview

3.1 Brief summary of the settlement

"In the late-19th century the then Town Council laid out a substantial area of roadworks, including Welcombe Road, St Gregory's Road, Rowley Crescent, Avenue Road and Maidenhead Road. It was intended that these would be sold off as individual building plots for the well-to-do merchants. It is believed that at this time the street planting was established, but only a few of the building plots were sold and developed".⁴ In fact the maps suggest that this interpretation is not quite complete and that elements of the roads, although plainly intended, were not laid out at that time. There is some evidence to suggest that Maidenhead Road was in existence earlier, at least as a trackway, and that parts of an earlier building survive to the west of the road.

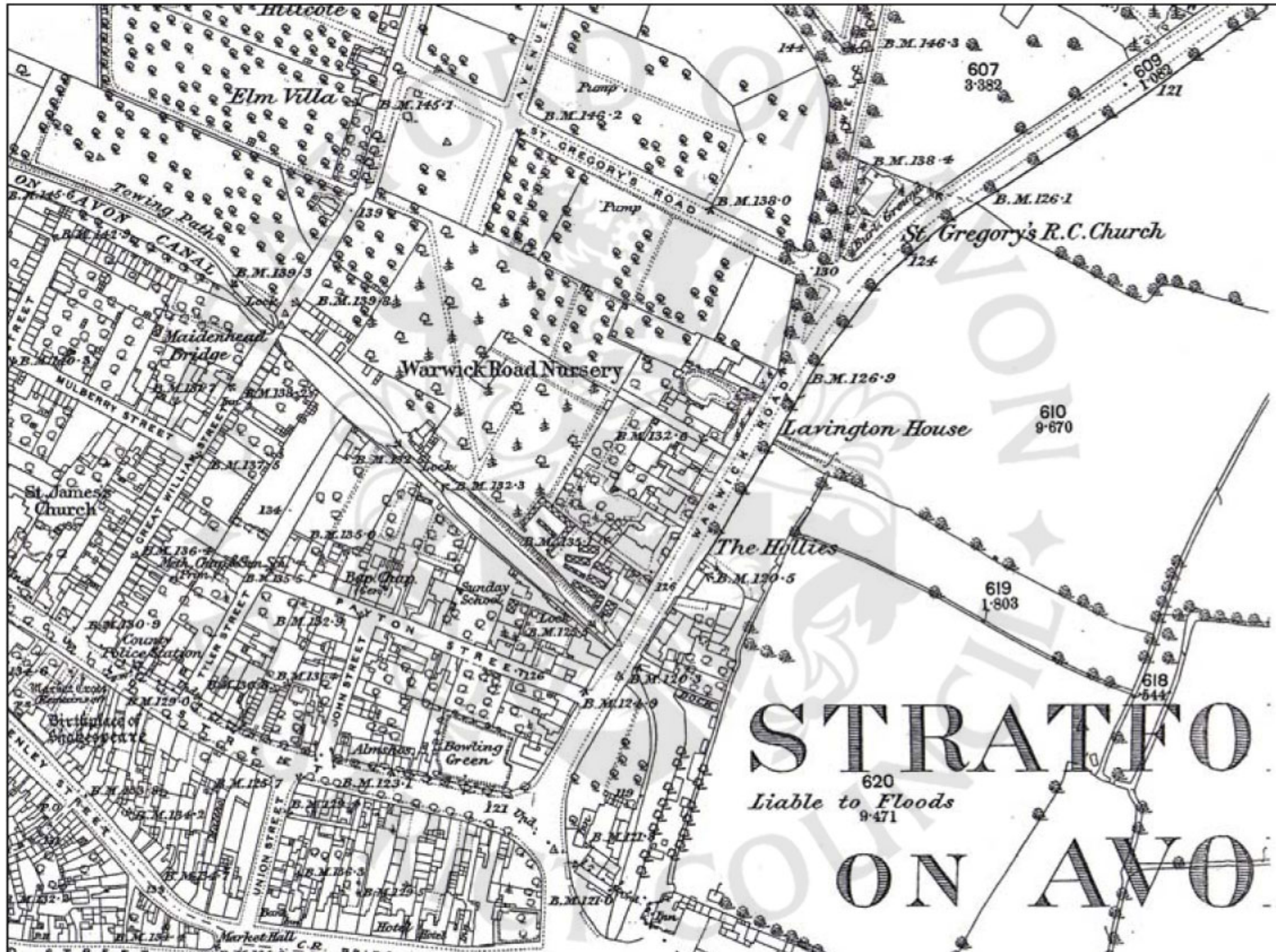
The first suburban expansion was of substantial high-quality Regency villas along the Warwick Road (just outside this area). The second phase was of late-Victorian and Edwardian properties, many of which are large detached villas,

⁴ Stratford-on-Avon Conservation Area document, July 1992, p. 80.

We have not seen documentation of the Town Council's involvement; it would be unusual at this time for municipal estates of this nature to be developed, and a closer parallel lies with the development of urban fringe estates of large landowners.

some having substantial coach-houses. Development was indeed slow in the late-Edwardian period and was interrupted by the First World War. The third phase is of the inter-war period, where there are two areas distinguished by the size and status of dwellings. Stratford was growing very rapidly at this time, especially in the late-1920s following completion of the Birmingham rail link; this building period was twice interrupted, by the Depression and the Second World War. Lastly there is some recent infill and extension, particularly to the north of the area.

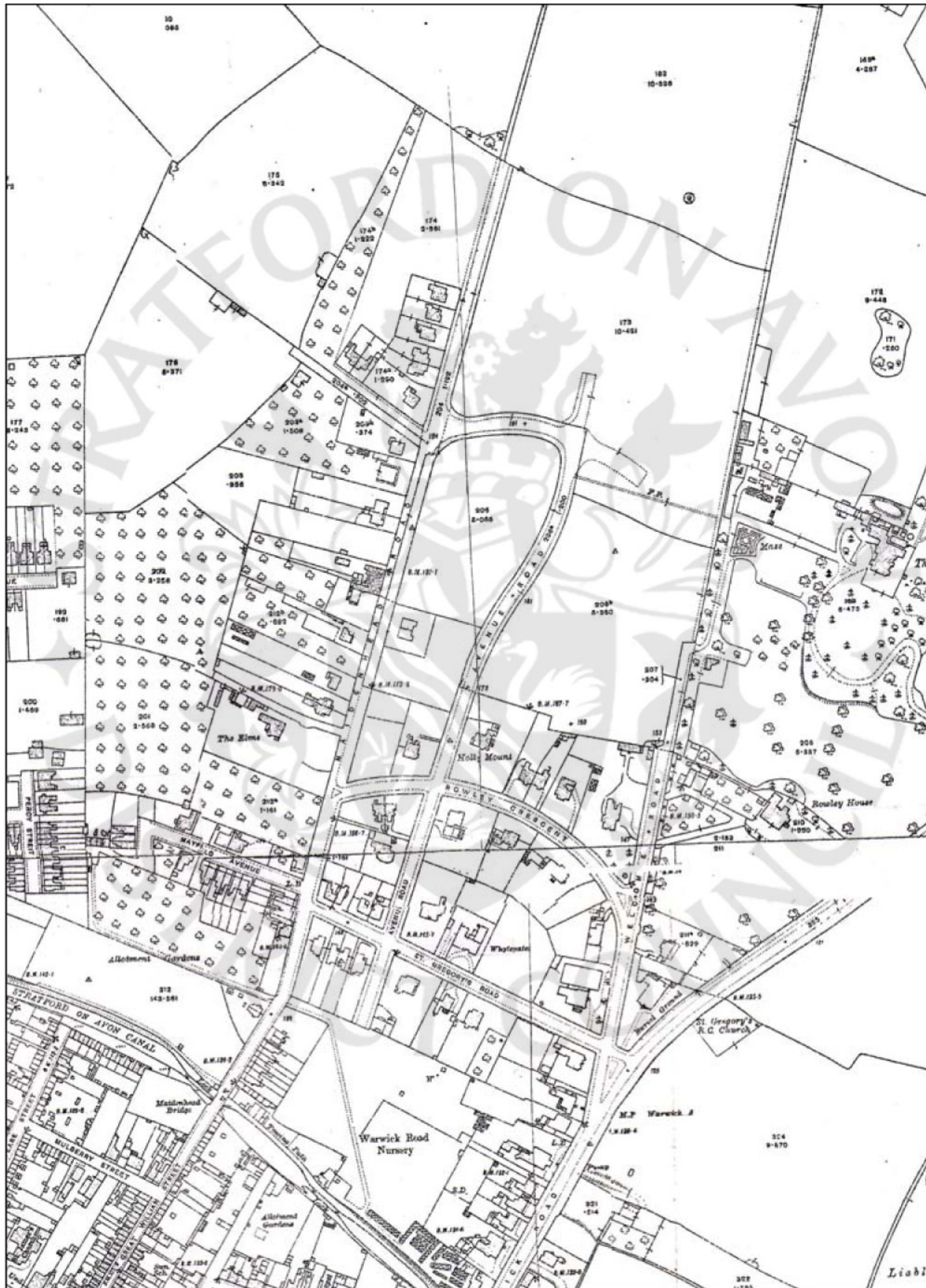
3.2 Details of the study area, using historical maps



Map 4: Ordnance Survey 1889

The 1889 map shows that the basic structure has already been laid out, with the framework of Maidenhead Road, Avenue Road and Welcombe Road linked by St Gregory's Road and the curve of Rowley Crescent just visible at the edge of the sheet. The property boundary running north-west to south-east clearly terminates this new layout, shown by the abrupt ending of Avenue Road at the Warwick Road Nursery, and the bend where Maidenhead Road joins the existing Great William Street.

Not shown on this sheet is Maidenhead Road, and local residents suggest that records exist implying that No. 68 contains an early agricultural building possibly of the early 1700s.

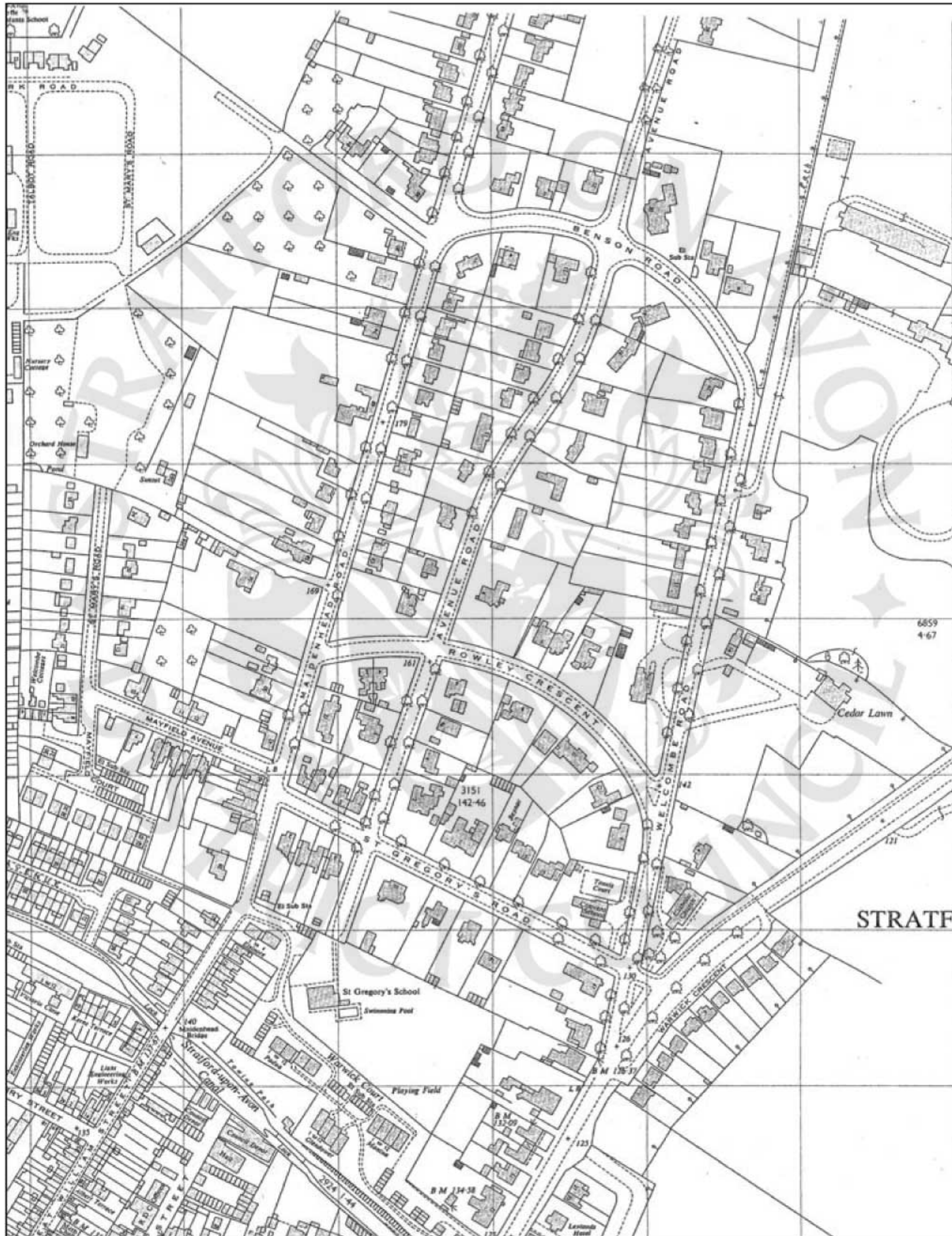


Map 5: Ordnance Survey 1914

The 1914 OS 25" sheet shows the ongoing development of the road network, with Benson Road still under construction and Avenue Road just being laid out for a few metres to its north. The land south of Benson Road is not yet subdivided into building plots, except for one semi-detached pair east of Maidenhead Road shown as being under construction. West of Maidenhead Road much land is marked as orchard, but a surprising number of houses are marked. Number 78 has a deep plot also extending behind 80, also shown as orchard.

A photograph exists dated "c. 1890" of the construction of one of the Rowley Crescent houses by the local builder J. Harris & Son.⁵

⁵ Douglas, A. (1993) *Memories of Stratford-upon-Avon* Brewin, Studley, p. 45.



Map 6: Ordnance Survey 1965

The 1965 OS 25" sheet⁶ shows the layout and build-up of the majority of plots, with the exception of some north of Benson Road. To the east, Cedar Lawn (formerly Rowley House) still stands in its own extensive plot. The plot pattern west of Maidenhead Road is erratic, suggesting several stages of building. Behind 44-54 is a plot marked as orchard.

⁶ For copyright reasons this map cannot be reproduced in a public document unless OS royalties are paid.



Map 7: Ordnance Survey 1966

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By the 1:2500 sheet of 1966, the estate in front of Cedar Lawn is being built up.



Map 8: Contemporary GIS

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The contemporary map (from the District Council's GIS) shows the development north of Benson's Road and, in particular, the extent of 1970s and 1980s developments to the west of Maidenhead Road, including culs-de-sac developments on plot tails.

4 Spatial analysis

4.1 General character of streets

This is an area of broadly ladder form, with two parallel streets running nearly north-south (and a third sinuous street), with three streets at right angles, two of crescent form. This grouping of streets leads off the major Warwick Road. There are two culs-de-sac leading from the main road network.

With the exception of Warwick Road, all of the streets are minor residential streets bearing no substantial weight of traffic, and being of appropriate dimensions and form.

4.2 Character and inter-relationship of spaces

Spaces are shown in green on the earlier map including views and vistas. It is clear that there is very little "space" within the area itself, although sizeable areas of public and private space adjoin the area, particularly towards the north and the Country Park.

Within the area itself there are some tiny and poor-quality roadside spaces, especially fronting the houses of Area 2; the roundabout in Area 3 and the hawthorne row in Area 6. These are all self-contained spaces; the first two would benefit from some maintenance and enhancement.

Within the area the most important spaces are private spaces: the larger gardens with their mature planting

4.3 Movement patterns/uses

The A439 Warwick Road passes through the southern extremity of this area. This is a major traffic highway, the key link to the M40 and Warwick. The County Council's traffic counts in September 2004 record a 24-hour weekly average of 14,299 vehicles, an annual morning peak of 1,218 vehicles per hour and annual evening peak of 1,219 vehicles per hour. This is significantly higher than any other Stratford approach road other than the A3400 Birmingham Road.

Observation suggests that, although not a major through route, numerous vehicles percolate through this area during the daytime; some leave the Warwick Road and enter this area at excessive speed. Some – but not all – of this traffic is to access the school located outside the southern boundary of the area. The town end of the area is quite heavily used for on-street parking.

The long-distance public footpath signposted 'Monarch's Way' leads along the length of Maidenhead Road from the canal towards Clopton Tower and the Local Nature Reserve. A parallel public footpath leads from the end of Welcombe Road through fields towards the Welcombe Hotel and the Local Nature Reserve access land. It is clear that both are well used for dog walking.

5 Built character analysis

Two areas are examined here as this informs later decisions on designations. The older part of the area, to the south, is already designated.

5.1 Plot patterns (including dimensional analysis)

Many plots in this area are irregular owing to the sinuous nature of Avenue Road. Plots east of Maidenhead Road are more regular in width and depth, suggesting their layout at one period. Plots west of Maidenhead Road are much more irregular at present, reflecting considerable truncation and subdivision from their original state as shown by the historic maps.

Avenue Road, east side⁷

	Plot length (m)*	Plot width (m)**	Plot area (m ²)
Average	59.99	31.47	1936.58
Maximum	71.56	35.67	2905.5
Minimum	47.82	19.56	1290.97

* measured along the southern plot boundary.

** measured along the street frontage.

Maidenhead Road, east side (sample)⁸

	Plot length (m)*	Plot width (m)**	Plot area (m ²)
Average	36.67	15.48	596.53
Maximum	45.07	18.11	840.72
Minimum	31.66	11.55	390.59

* measured along the southern plot boundary.

** measured along the street frontage.

5.2 Building patterns

Building patterns, placement on the plot etc are typical of the periods in which the houses were constructed. The majority are set well back on their plots, with noticeable gaps between buildings.

Avenue Road, east side

	Building setback (m)*	Building footprint (m ²)**	% of plot built over
Average	13.32	221.57	11.75
Maximum	21.55	262.99	15.95
Minimum	9.62	130.14	9.05

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

** includes all mapped extensions, outbuildings etc.

⁷ The plots measured here represent the high-quality inter-war development later recommended for conservation area status.

⁸ The plots measured here form the more regular part of the larger recommended conservation area extension. The plots west of Maidenhead Road have undergone considerable truncation and other alteration.

Maidenhead Road, east side (sample)

	Building setback (m)*	Building footprint (m ²)**	% of plot built over
Average	9.49	123.76	21.69
Maximum	10.69	166.23	28.67
Minimum	8.68	93.07	16.64

* 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

The buildings in this area are extremely mixed in both date and quality. There is, to the south, an area of large and ornate late-Victorian and early-Edwardian properties, both detached and semi-detached, of two or three stories. Some retain substantial original outbuildings (although some of these have been altered for residential use). Some have been subdivided for multiple occupation, demonstrated by garage blocks to the rear of the main house. Most of these properties are in good condition. Most of these properties lie within the existing conservation area (see below). However there is also a surprising number of pre-1914 buildings along the west side of Maidenhead Road, but generally not of the same size, status or quality. They include No. 68, unusual in that its outbuildings stand at the extreme front edge of the plot. Residents suggest that it has an early core.

To the east of Avenue Road is an area of substantial inter-war houses, in a range of styles. Again these are of high quality and good condition; although some have been extended these extensions are not significantly detracting from the original character or appearance. Some are imposing buildings of significant townscape importance.



Plates 2 and 3: Avenue Road – imposing; Maidenhead Road - varied

The bulk of Maidenhead Road is lined to the east with lower-status inter-war houses, both detached and semi-detached; with small numbers of earlier and post-war buildings. The range of inter-war styles here is surprising. In fact especially to the north-west of Maidenhead Road it is clear that the normal boundary between architectural periods, the First World War, is not a good indicator. Only the 1914 map evidence prevents some buildings being categorised as inter-war. East of Warwick Road but within this study area is a

row of inter-war houses, similar to those on the east side of Shipston Road. All of these houses are typical of their period; none are outstanding.

At the extreme northern end of Avenue Road is no. 30, of brick International Modern style, built in 1934. This is well-screened and difficult of access.

The west side of Avenue Road, and Welcombe Road, are predominantly post-war houses of varying styles, none of particular merit. Likewise the group of post-war bungalows (c. 1966-70) in the grounds of Cedar Lawn forms a coherent layout, but the individual buildings have little intrinsic architectural merit.

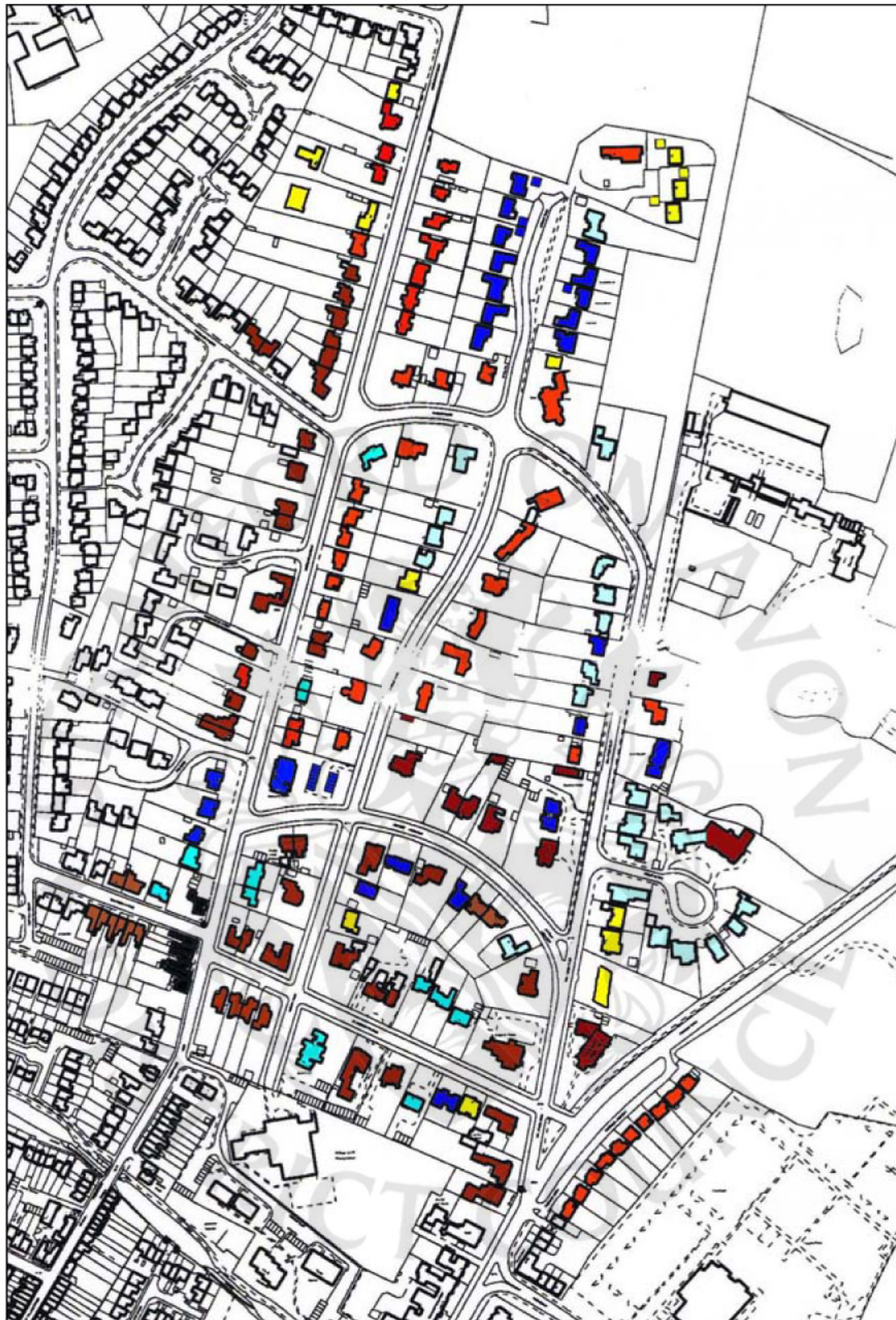
North of Avenue Road is a development of high quality and particular character, dated 1987. Typical of speculative development of this period and market niche, these are well-maintained.

The map suggests a considerable amount of post-war infilling; some of the more recent has been of large apartment buildings designed to imitate the bulk, at least, of the Victorian/Edwardian villas; a few others are of smaller scale and fit well with their surroundings; some are much smaller and are thus incongruous.



Plate 4: Maidenhead Road, dated 2004

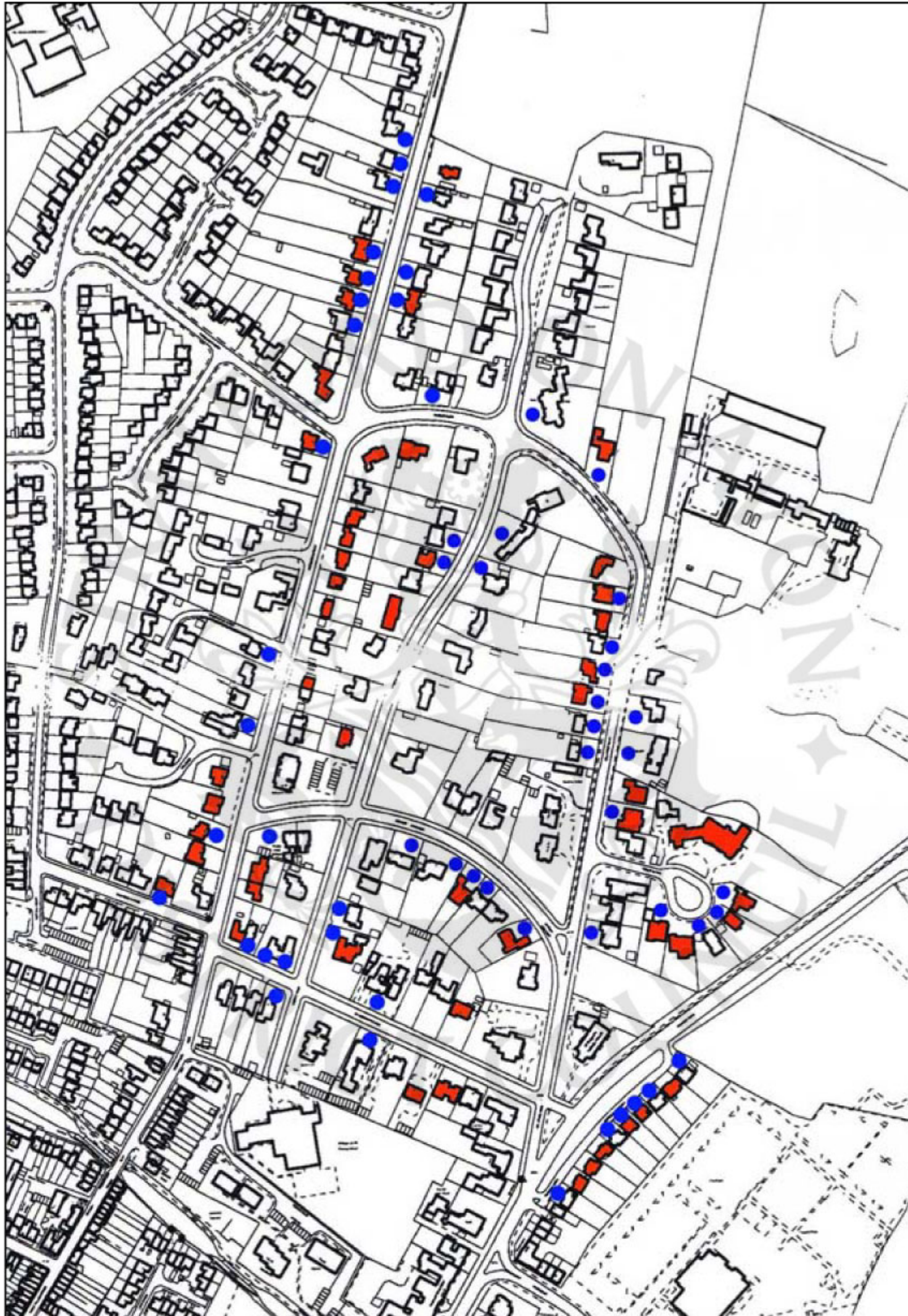
Overall, therefore, there is some intrinsic architectural merit in the area as a whole, principally of the late-Victorian/early-Edwardian, and inter-war, periods. Much of this – although not all – has already been recognised via the existing conservation area designation. There is certainly scope for reassessment of some of the inter-war properties.



Map 9: Building periods

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



Map 10: Front garden conversions and replacement windows

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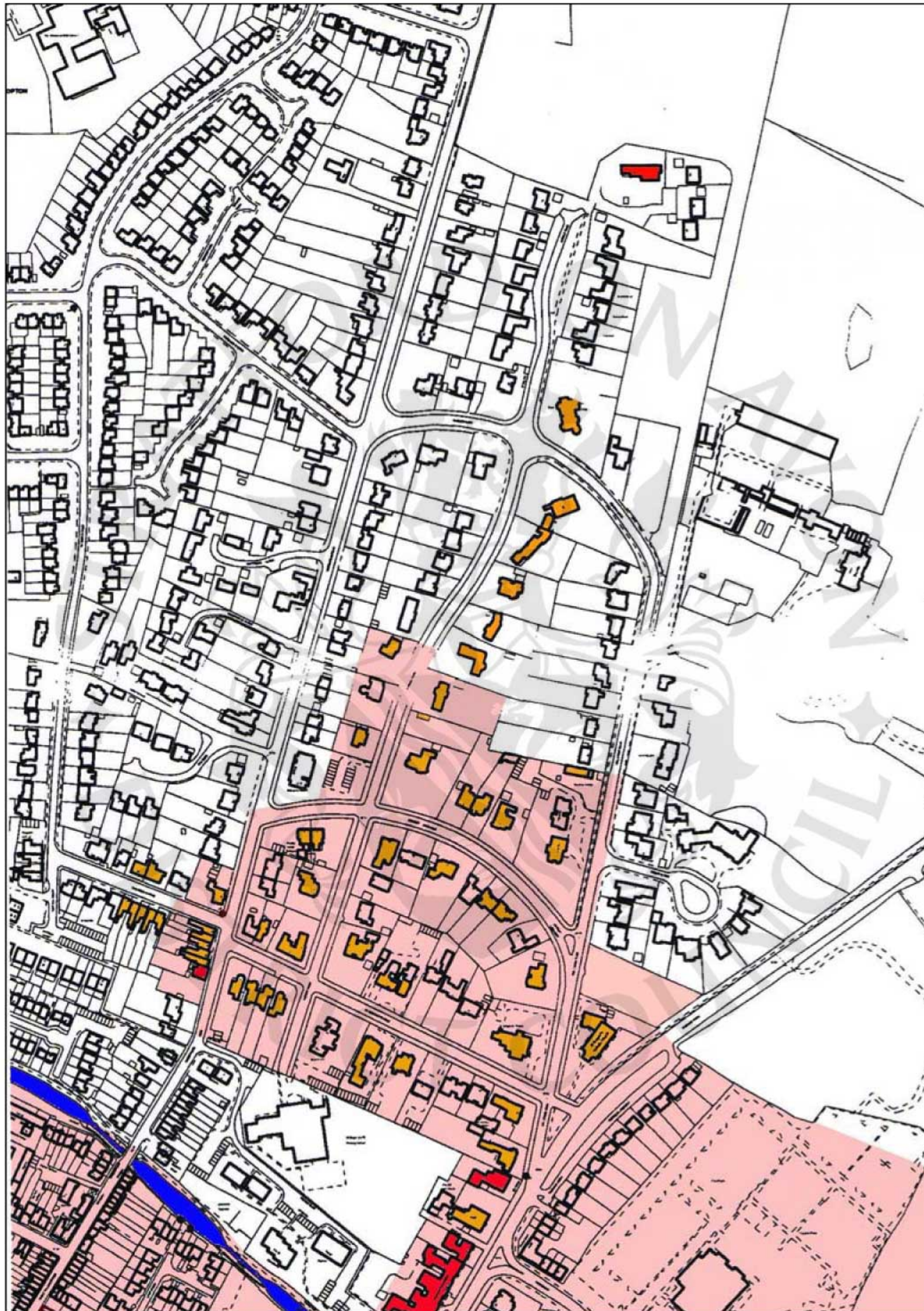
On Map 10, red shows the replacement of original windows (usually steel-framed) with uPVC, and blue dots indicate the conversion of front gardens for car parking⁹. It is noteworthy that many of the pre-1914 buildings west of Maidenhead Road, and the larger inter-war buildings east of Avenue Road, retain much of their original windows, and few gardens are converted for parking.

5.4 Predominant local/traditional building materials (textures, colours etc)

The predominant building material is red brick. Inter-war buildings are sometimes rendered or pebble-dashed, especially on the first floor; this is usually painted, most usually white. Some pre-1914 and inter-war buildings use half-timbering, some with substantial (probably structural) timbers.

⁹ From visual estimate, over 50% of the road frontage.

5.5 Audit of heritage assets



Map 11: Existing conservation area and Listed buildings

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A part of the southern section of this area is already contained within the town centre conservation area as extended in 1992 (shaded pink).

The two Listed buildings within the area boundary are shaded red. There are other Listed buildings on Warwick Road south of the study area; these are Regency villas, being the early suburban expansion away from the town.

Regency Cottage, 20 Maidenhead Road, is Listed at Grade II. It is of c. 1812-14 with c. 1820 additions including the canted full-height bay windows (named Elm Villa, with an extensive orchard plot, on the 1889 map).

No. 30 Avenue Road, at the extreme end of the area, was Listed at Grade II in 1997. It was built in 1934 by H.W. Simister of Birmingham for B.C. Joseph. It is a two-storey brick house in International Modern style, with low-pitched roof hidden by parapets. The Listing schedule describes it as "a well designed, high quality and little altered house of the period".

Little of archaeological significance is recorded within the bounds of this study area, although there are suggestions of medieval settlement "at Welcombe" just to the north, including the earthworks of a possible medieval castle.¹⁰

5.6 Contribution of key unlisted buildings

A number of larger unlisted buildings make a substantial contribution to the character and appearance of the area owing to their size and position, especially those on street corners. These are shaded orange on the Map 11 (refer also to Map 3, of views and vistas). Some of the larger Victorian/Edwardian houses within the conservation area have significant survivals of coach-houses and similar service buildings. Their survival, albeit that some are substantially converted for residential use, is significant. Some of the villas have been converted for multiple occupation, including garage blocks in the rear gardens; others have had extensions including conservatories added.



Plates 5 and 6: Surviving villa and Catholic church

The Catholic church of St Gregory on the Warwick Road corner is visually significant from the Stratford direction; more in terms of the bulk and scale of a public building than for any particular intrinsic architectural or historic merit. Pevsner¹¹ notes that this is by E.W. Pugin, dated 1866, except for the west front and porch; he suggests that the interior is poor.

No. 68 Maidenhead Road is interesting in that its outbuildings stand at the extreme front edge of the plot: it thus interrupts the later building line. It would be worthy of further investigation both in physical and documentary respects to seek verification of residents' suggestions of an early date.

¹⁰ Warwickshire County Council, Sites and Monuments Record.

¹¹ Pevsner and Wedgwood (1966), p. 414.

5.7 Public realm audit

The pavements are generally surfaced with tarmac of rather variable quality, some of which has had a surface treatment that does not address underlying problems of disturbance from street tree roots. Moss is plentiful on many of the pavement surfaces which, in wet weather, may cause a slipping hazard.



Plates 7 and 8: Poor pavement maintenance and Welcombe Road lamp standard

Kerbs are of stone in the south-eastern part of the area, and of standard concrete in the remainder.

Street furniture is standardised and modern, with a proliferation of recent parking control signs. However some lamp standards on Welcombe Road are distinctively different, being glass globes on standard smaller posts. The number and positioning of street signs etc on the Warwick Road leading into Stratford are intrusive. At the top of Avenue Road, immediately before the late-1980s development, an early twentieth-century sewer vent pipe remains to demonstrate the early infrastructure layout.

Area 3 has a particular character and identity, which are damaged by intrusive on-street parking and delivery vehicle damage to the central green island.

Many of the gardens, especially of the pre-war properties, are bounded by low walls. Some of these are failing and falling, apparently having insufficient foundations.

In the northern part of the area, where there are public footpaths out towards the Local Nature Reserve, there are many deposits of dog faeces.

6 Other contributing factors

6.1 Land uses

The area is residential, with some hotels/guest houses occupying some of the larger and older properties in the south-west part of the area (closest to the town

centre), and some conversions to, and new purpose-built blocks for, flats/apartments which inevitably intensify the domestic uses, associated traffic movements etc.

Traffic noise on the Warwick Road can be intrusive particularly at peak periods. Other noise comes from the school to the south of the area, at the usual periods of breaks, lunchtime, and arrival and departure time.

6.2 Vegetation and natural environment

The older part of the area has some very substantial mature trees both in private gardens and as street trees. Some of these are very mature. A small number have evidently been felled and not always replaced. Welcombe, Warwick and St Gregory's Roads are lined with Lime, and Avenue Road with Indian bean trees.



Plates 9 and 10: Rowley Crescent - enclosure formed by mature garden trees and hedges; Warwick Road - grass, bulbs and trees.

The later, inter-war, areas have a number of significantly smaller street trees of various ornamental species, typical of public planting of the period. Area 6, developed in the 1980s, retains an earlier row of hawthornes which perhaps lined the original access to 30 Avenue Road, which may have run along a field boundary.

Some of the street spaces are worthy of mention. The green island in Area 3 could provide a good focus for the development, but its edges are damaged by vehicles and it is usually obscured by on-street parking. The unusually-proportioned grass verge with the hawthorne row of Area 6 adds very considerably to the individual character of this development. Warwick Crescent (Area 2) is a private unsurfaced road fronted by an uneven grassed area (with spring bulbs) and mature trees.

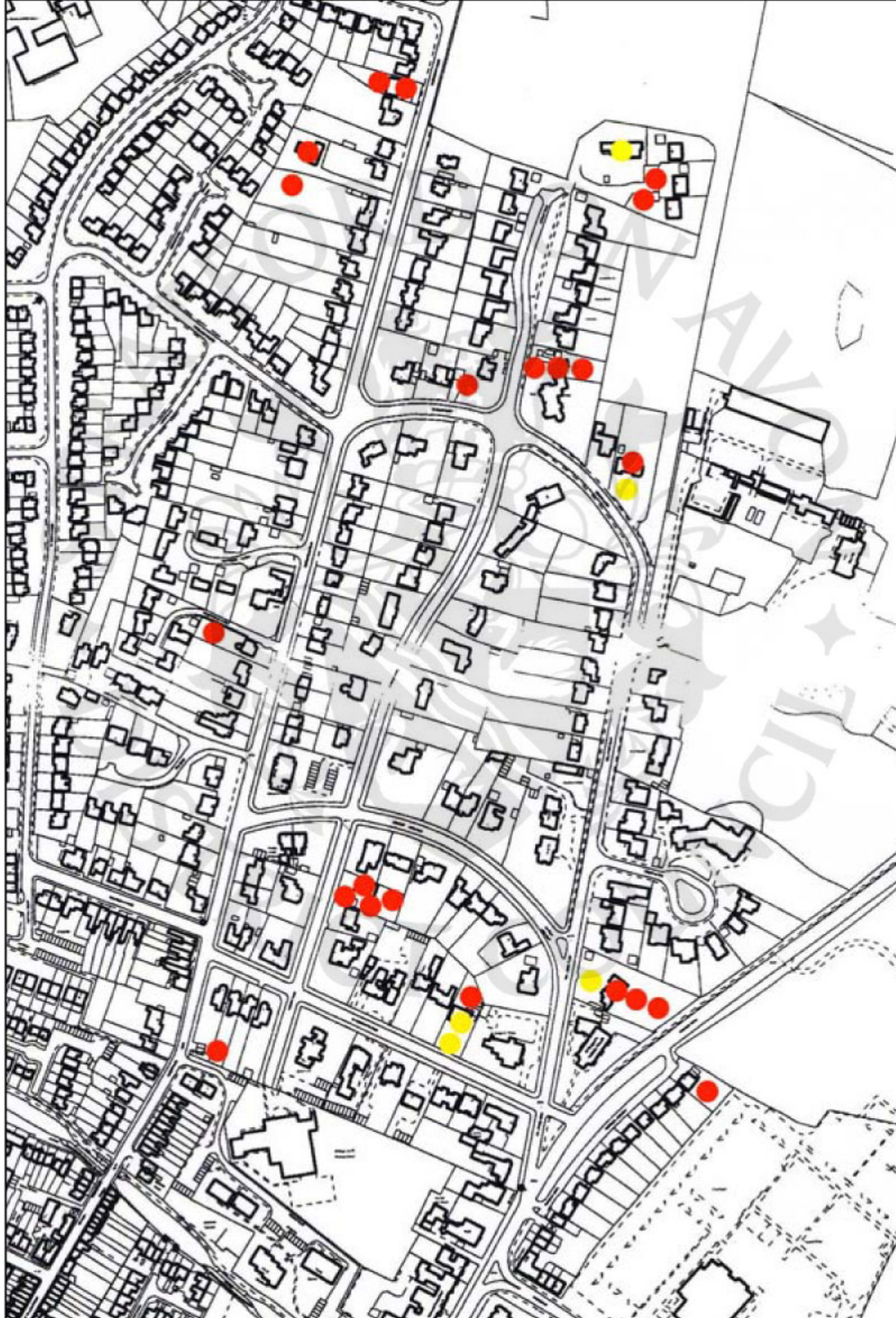
The rear of the recent apartment block north of St Gregory's church is listed by the Warwickshire Museum as a site of ecological importance or interest (reference 79/25).

7 Appraisal

7.1 Development pressure analysis

Analysis of development control records for 1990-2004 (Appendix) shows a substantial number of applications, the majority of which are for new dwellings, some involving the demolition of original buildings. There are several 'chains' of successive applications for several properties. The majority of applications for

new dwellings are refused. Throughout the period there is a high rate of withdrawn applications, suggesting that negotiations with the planning authority are raising awareness of important issues (although some applications are re-submitted in revised form). It is interesting to note, however, that there has only been one refusal and nine permissions (excluding tree felling) between 2002 and 2004.



Map 12: Development pressure

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The map shows major planning applications in red, and those that explicitly require the demolition of an existing property in yellow. Half of the demolitions have been resisted. The clustering of applications, ie affecting relatively few properties, is evident.

7.2 Key positive features/areas

There are three strong positive features of this area. One is the strong characteristics of built form, including many substantial residential buildings of some quality surviving on their original plots, in several cases with original outbuildings also surviving. A high proportion of the pre-1914 buildings especially west of Maidenhead Road, and the larger inter-war properties on Avenue Road,

retain original windows and gardens. Where the buildings are not intrinsically of high quality, they nevertheless form a relatively low-density area typical of its various periods, and generally in good state of repair.

The second feature is the distinctive ladder street pattern leading off the Warwick Road. This, as the maps demonstrate, is indicative of a steady, gradual development process moving outwards from the town centre and canal area stretching throughout about a century. The curving crescents show a deliberately designed street layout albeit that the frontages were built up in different morphological periods.

The third feature, of probably greatest visual significance from spring to autumn, is the presence of so many substantial mature trees, in the gardens of a number of the larger houses and, more particularly, in Welcombe and Avenue Roads.

7.3 Neutral areas

There are areas of individually undistinguished houses (Areas 3, 4 and 9) that could be characterised as being of neutral impact; although the very existence of these properties does define and enclose the public realm.

Area 3 does, however, have a strong unity owing to its development within the grounds of a large Victorian property and its structure around a grassed and planted central island. However the pavements are heavily mossed and the central island damaged by vehicles.

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

Aspects of the public realm are not of high quality and could be improved (signage, paved surfaces). A small number of individual buildings are not of high quality or are of inappropriate scale for their location and could, with benefit, be suitably redeveloped. The main visual intrusion at the time of survey was the small group of three large recent houses at the far northern part of the area (in Area 7) which are clearly visible from the public footpath continuing the alignment of Welcombe Road. Their height, and the blank south-facing gable walls, are intrusive.

7.5 Character zones

In this area, the character zones are identical to the plan zones (see earlier map). However they can be characterised as follows:

- Area 1: the earlier phase dominated by late-Victorian/Edwardian villa development. This is a mature area of significant character created by its substantial properties in well-established grounds, including numerous sizeable mature trees.
- Area 2: a row of inter-war detached houses fronting Warwick Road. These are typical of their period, not of high status, and set back behind an amorphous open space.
- Area 3: post-war bungalows in the grounds of a surviving large Victorian house. The house has been much altered and extended; many of the bungalows have been altered. There is a clear identity to this area although it is not of high quality; the intrusive on-street parking and vehicle damage to the central island does detract from what character there is.
- Area 4: an area of smaller inter- and post-war housing along Welcombe Road. This is an area of substantial character, although this is

- created almost wholly by the mature street trees rather than by the buildings.
- Area 5: a group primarily of larger inter-war houses along Avenue Road. The character of this area benefits from street trees, albeit smaller than in Welcombe Road; some are recently planted. The east side of the road has significantly larger and higher-quality properties, and three of the corner plots at the northern end of Avenue Road have larger inter-war houses surviving (although one has been extended and converted for apartments).
- Area 6: a development of high-quality detached houses of the late 1980s. This is an area of considerable quality and distinctive character, part of which is formed by an older alignment of small hawthornes.
- Area 7: a mixed group consisting of a Modern-style flat-roofed brick house with three large recent detached houses in its grounds. This area has no unity, and (see earlier) the new houses are of such a scale that they detract from views elsewhere in the area.
- Area 8: a group predominantly of lower-status inter-war houses along Maidenhead Road, but including a small number of earlier Victorian houses and some recent infill. Despite these earlier and later properties, the street as a whole has a substantially complete mature inter-war character.
- Area 9: a small group of post-war houses and a block of flats (with garages) on Maidenhead Road: included primarily to allow consideration of both sides of the road. These properties are important in terms of enclosing the public realm, the space of the street; their intrinsic character is low.
- Area 10: Two well-maintained terraces on Mayfield Road; virtually identical detailing but that to the north is actually a pair of semi-detached houses. This suggests a planned, unified urban and architectural composition.



Plates 11 and 12: Mayfield Road

7.6 Areas under existing or potential threat

The scattering of major development proposals (Map 12) suggests that properties across the study area may be subject to threat.

Several properties have been converted for multiple occupation at various times, one very recently. One substantial building has been constructed as apartments (just north of the church). Although the scale overall does not detract from surrounding late-Victorian/early-Edwardian neighbours, the architectural detailing is inevitably simplified in comparison. Conversion of properties elsewhere in the study area requires substantial extensions, which likewise tend to be of smaller scale and simple detail. These conversions do not enhance the area.

There has been some, although relatively little, subdivision of larger plots for infill development. The infills are, virtually without exception, incongruous by their small scale or their architectural style.

8 Discussion of special characteristics

The south part of the area is already designated within the town centre conservation area. This was described as “those streets of the late-19th century extension to the town which were developed in a reasonably consistent manner and still retain much of their original character. This represents the only area in Stratford-upon-Avon of Victorian villa development and it is an important element of the town’s history”.¹²

The inter- and post-war area to the north was very deliberately excluded from the area at that time, for two reasons: “the houses are of later construction and of usually smaller and tighter planning ... Additionally, apart from along Welcombe Road, the street planting has tended to be of a more ornamental nature, losing the robustness characteristic of the southern area ...”. Therefore, “whilst historically the whole street pattern is of some significance, where the building fabric was not developed at the same time and the planting not in accordance with the original proposals, this does not appear to give sufficient grounds for their inclusion in the Conservation Area”.¹³

Street trees can be managed by the local authority, and Tree Preservation Orders served as appropriate.

In the years since the last conservation area review, there has nationally been a trend towards re-valuing inter-war and early post-war buildings and layouts. In this area, the street pattern represents a unified original concept for the development; there are some high-quality larger inter-war houses, and some lower-status inter-war and post-war houses that nevertheless match the low-density layout and complete the built form.

We feel it significant that the original design concept was sufficiently robust to withstand the hiatuses in building caused by two world wars and the inter-war depression, resulting in sub-areas developed within the original plan layout that are characteristic of their period and characterful.

9 Recommendation on designation

We therefore recommend that the conservation area boundary be extended to recognise:

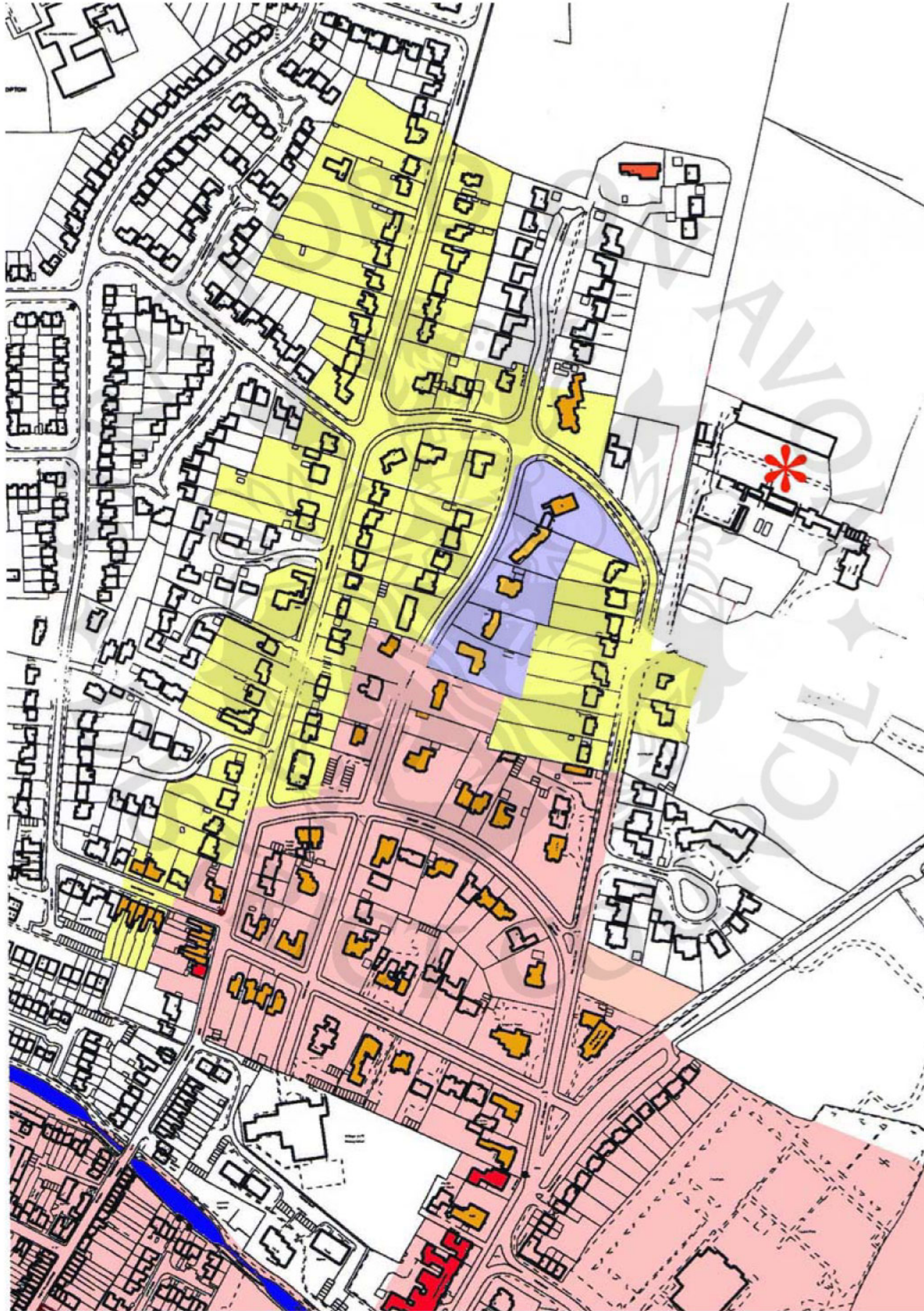
(a) the group of high-quality inter-war houses on the east side of Avenue Road. This area is shown shaded pale blue on Map 13;

(b) as we feel that the character of the original street layout and the mature street trees is substantial, and the overall character of some of the lower-status inter-war houses especially along Maidenhead Road is strong despite outliers of other periods and detail changes including window replacements, we further suggest that the area encompass Welcombe and Maidenhead Roads and the terraces of Mayfield Road. This area is shown shaded pale yellow on Map 13.

¹² Stratford-on-Avon Conservation Area document, July 1992, p. 79.

¹³ Stratford-on-Avon Conservation Area document, July 1992, p. 80

Although there are areas of undistinguished buildings within the overall proposed boundary, this is not a legal hindrance to the designation of a conservation area; moreover there are such areas within the existing area boundary (Area 2 within this study area, for example).



Map 13: Recommended conservation area designation

In considering this boundary we note that the substantial house in its own grounds, marked with a red asterisk, has not been considered for inclusion.

10 Existing policy

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

11 Policy and management suggestions

The character of the overall area would be damaged by insensitive extensions and building replacements. New development must pay appropriate heed to the scale and detailing of the sub-area, reflecting the richness of materials and detailing without necessarily resorting to pastiche. The bulk, plot coverage, location on plot, and roof pitches are also characteristic features. Several buildings could, however, be replaced with advantage to the area's overall character and appearance.

The conversion of larger single-family houses to multiple occupation needs sensitive treatment, with changes to the external built fabric (eg window insertions) kept to a minimum. In such circumstances the treatment of the garden area is perhaps more significant, with the requirement for additional car parking usually leading to replacement of garden space.

Any conversion to professional or commercial offices that would have an adverse impact on the character of the conservation area should be resisted. Regard should be had to impacts on the built fabric and open space, as well as additional traffic movements. Encouragement is given to a degree of working from home, which does not involve additional traffic nor substantial building extensions.

The characteristics of buildings and spaces are as significant in the zones of smaller houses, Maidenhead and Welcombe Roads. Side extensions extending to the plot boundary, especially at upper levels, should be strongly discouraged as this leads to an unplanned terrace form, detracting significantly from the original detached or semi-detached design concept.

Encouragement could be given to several aspects of private property maintenance that impinge upon the public realm, and upon area character and appearance. These include appropriate replacement of failing front walls, and management – and consideration of succession planting – of mature garden trees. Removal of these front garden walls, which add to the enclosure of the public realm and are characteristic of much of the pre-war parts of the area, should be resisted (especially in Rowley Crescent where, owing to the lack of street trees, they are of greater significance).

The local authority should consider appropriate footpath treatments that would resolve the problem of tree root disturbance and the growth of surface moss. Similarly, a higher priority should be given in the northern part of the area to "poop-scoop" signs and facilities, to discourage dog fouling.

The remaining sewer vent pipe at the top of Avenue Road requires maintenance: it is rusty and its crest is damaged.

Some small verges and open spaces require attention and improvement.

The street trees require monitoring and maintenance and, as appropriate, succession planting.

The extent of on-street car parking will require monitoring, following the implementation of new parking restrictions.

APPENDIX: Selected development control information 1990-2004

Date	Address	Type	Decision
1990	4 Benson Rd	1 dwelling in garden	refused
1990	11 Warwick Crescent	dwelling	refused
1991	58 Maidenhead Rd	bungalow	withdrawn
1991	66 Maidenhead Rd	3 bungalows (reserved matters)	approved
1992	R/o 58-60 Maidenhead Rd	2 bungalows (outline)	permitted
1993	R/o 58-60 Maidenhead Rd	details for plot 2	permitted
1993	25 Avenue Rd	bungalow in place of existing garage	withdrawn
1993	R/o 104-6 Maidenhead Rd	4 bungalows	refused
1994	land adjoining 4 Benson Rd	dwelling	refused
1994	R/o 104-6 Maidenhead Rd	2 bungalows (outline)	
1994	adjoining 10 Maidenhead Rd	dwelling (outline)	permitted
1995	R/o 58-60 Maidenhead Rd	2 bungalows (outline, renewal)	permitted
1995	adjoining 10 Maidenhead Rd	dwelling (reserved matters)	approved
1996	60 Maidenhead Rd	demolition; 4 dwellings	withdrawn
1996	R/o 58-60 Maidenhead Rd	2 bungalows (reserved matters)	approved
1996	4 Cedar Close	alterations & extensions	permitted
1996	77 Maidenhead Rd	extension	permitted
1996	adjoining 6 Avenue Rd	dwelling	withdrawn
1996	17 Welcombe Rd	extension	permitted
1997	R/o 60 Maidenhead Rd	demolish; 2 dwellings (outline)	
1997	30 Avenue Rd	demolish; construct 5 dwellings	withdrawn
1997	30 Avenue Rd	3 dwellings	permitted
1997	R/o 106 Maidenhead Rd	bungalow (reserved matters)	approved
1999	R/o 106 Maidenhead Rd	bungalow	permitted
1999	R/o 60 Maidenhead Rd	demolish; 4 houses	withdrawn
1999	R/o 60 Maidenhead Rd	demolish; 4 houses	permitted
1999	adjoining 81 Maidenhead Rd	dwelling	refused
1999	20 Avenue Rd	1 dwelling & replacement garage	refused
1999	adjoining 6 Avenue Rd	dwelling	withdrawn
1999	6 Avenue Rd	demolish garage & flat above	permitted
2000	adjoining 6 Avenue Rd	dwelling	withdrawn
2000	adjoining 6 Avenue Rd	dwelling	refused
2000	adjoining 20 Avenue Rd	dwelling	permitted
2001	106 Maidenhead Rd	demolish; 1 bungalow, 3 terraced town houses	withdrawn
2001	106 Maidenhead Rd	demolish outbuildings; new	refused

		bungalow	
2001	20 Avenue Rd	change use hotel to 1 dwelling	permitted
2001	20 Avenue Rd	partial demolition; conversion & extension for 14 flats	withdrawn
2001	4 Benson Rd	garage with room above	permitted
2001	4 Welcombe Rd	demolish; construct 8 dwelling block	withdrawn
2001	4 Welcombe Rd	demolish; construct 8 dwelling block	refused
2001	4 Welcombe Rd	demolish; construct 5 dwelling block	refused
2002	106 Maidenhead Rd	demolish; 1 bungalow, 3 terraced town houses	refused
2002	20 Avenue Rd	partial demolition; conversion & extension for 9 flats	no decision
2002	20 Avenue Rd	partial demolition; conversion & extension for 9 flats	permitted
2002	20 Avenue Rd	dwelling	permitted
2002	20 Avenue Rd	dwelling	permitted
2002	45 Maidenhead Rd	alterations & extensions	permitted
2002	adjoining 6 Avenue Rd	dwelling	permitted
2003	9 Benson Rd	demolish; construct 7 dwelling block	permitted
2003	15 St Gregory's Rd	demolish original & replace	permitted
2003	3 Avenue Rd	tree felling	permitted
2004	15 St Gregory's Rd	demolition of existing house	permitted
2004	15 St Gregory's Rd	demolition of existing outbuildings	permitted
2004	6A Rowley Crescent	tree felling	permitted