



Disclaimer to accompany the Southam Conservation Area Study

This February 1994 Alan Smith and Partners report is the result of an independent survey and analysis of the buildings and landscape form of Southam.

It identifies the architectural, historical and environmental qualities of the settlement and gives recommendations for the continuing preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area. It was undertaken for and behalf of Stratford-on-Avon District Council. The report was used to inform boundary alterations to the conservation area that were approved by the District Council's Planning Committee on 14 September 1994.

The Committee also resolved that the contents of the report should form the basis of a fully published document, available for purchase from the District Council. Whilst the formal publication was never produced for purchase the contents of the draft report has been accepted as material consideration to inform planning decisions and appeals.

S O U T H A M

**CONSERVATION
AREA
STUDY**

for

**STRATFORD-ON-AVON
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

February 1994

Alan Smith & Partners

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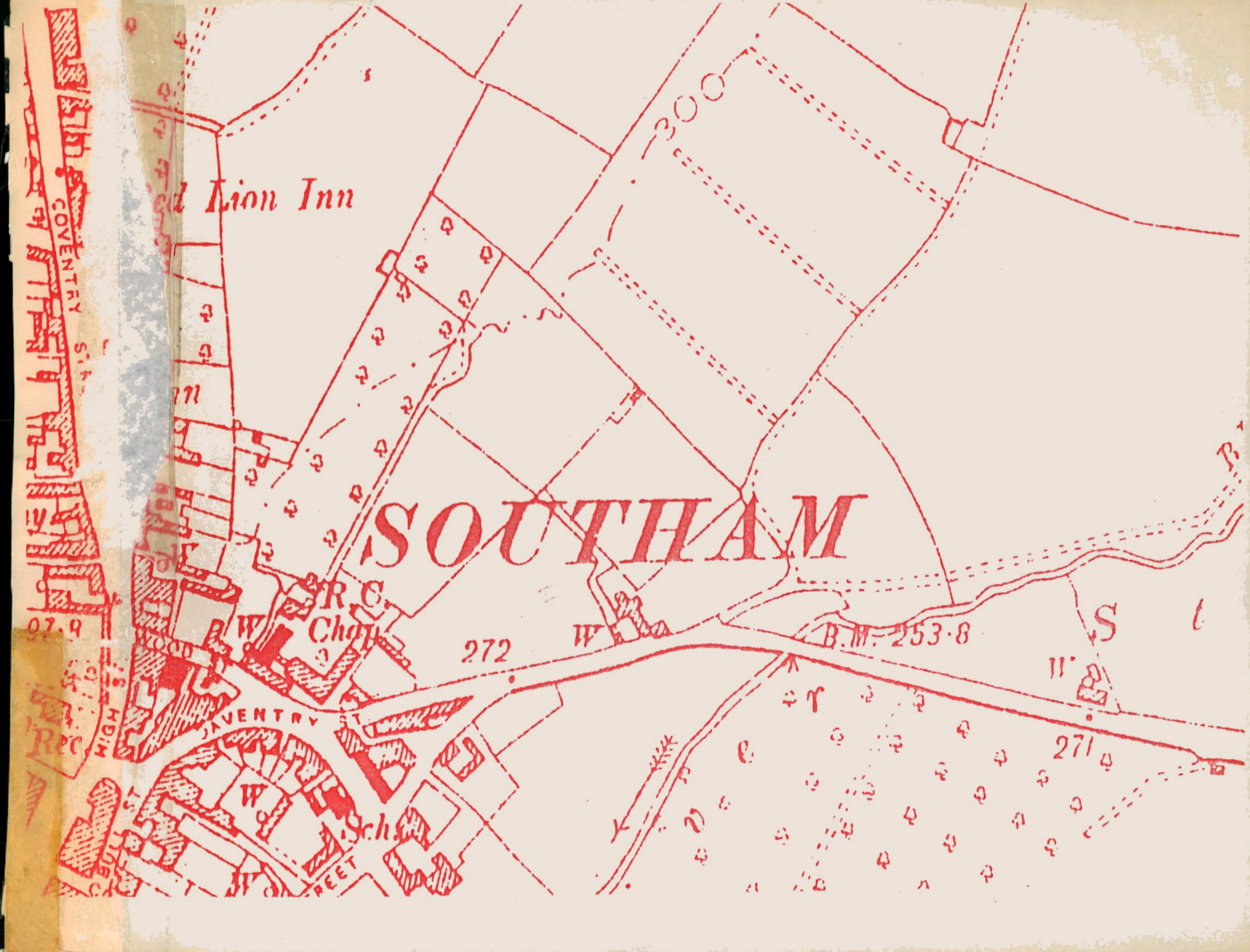
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PREFACE

This report is the result of an independent survey and analysis of the buildings and landscape form of the village of Southam, Warwickshire. It identifies the architectural, historical and environmental qualities of the settlement and gives recommendations for the review, protection and enhancement of the Conservation Area.

This study was undertaken for and on behalf of

Stratford-on-Avon District Council by

Alan Smith & Partners
Salisbury House
1236 Evesham Road
Astwood Bank, Redditch
Worcestershire
Telephone 0527 893967
Facsimile 0527 892568

Photographs were taken on 27th January and 21st February 1994, and are referenced by page number followed by either 't' to indicate top or 'b' to indicate bottom if appropriate, e.g. [40 t]

For further information contact:

Chief Planning Officer,
Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Elizabeth House, Church Street
Stratford on Avon,
Warwickshire, CV37 6HX
Telephone (0789) 260331

<< Church of St James



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<< Church of St James and Lych Gate, Park Lane



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 75), as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991

1.2 Designation

In the first instance it is necessary to analyse the character of the area to be designated and to indicate the boundaries on a map. 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.

<< High Street, Southam



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 buildings 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.

^^ School Street, from Wood Street
 << The Old School House



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 and potentially new conservation areas. This report is the result of that exercise.

The report has been approved by the District Council on xxxxxxxx as its formal view on the conservation area. It is divided into seven sections dealing with historical background; an analysis of the landscape, buildings and setting of the conservation area; development control and enhancement and the policies applied in conservation areas.

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

<< Market Hill





1 An Introduction to Southam

Southam is a market town lying on the ancient Welsh Road used by cattle drovers on their way to London. Today the town sits at the junction of the A425, A423 and A426, the roads from Royal Leamington Spa and Warwick, to the west, Coventry to the north, Rugby to the north-east, Daventry to the east, and Banbury to the south.

The town straddles the shallow valley of the River Stowe a tributary of the River Itchen half a mile to the west.

The Grand Union Canal runs east - west about two miles north of Southam, and the railway also by-passed the town by about the same distance.

The town's Conservation Area contains about 160 buildings, of which roughly 40 are listed and a further 100 significant. Although Southam has suffered in parts from insensitive development there is much of interest remaining.



^^ Church of St James from Abbey Lane

<< River Stowe, west of Wattons Lane

