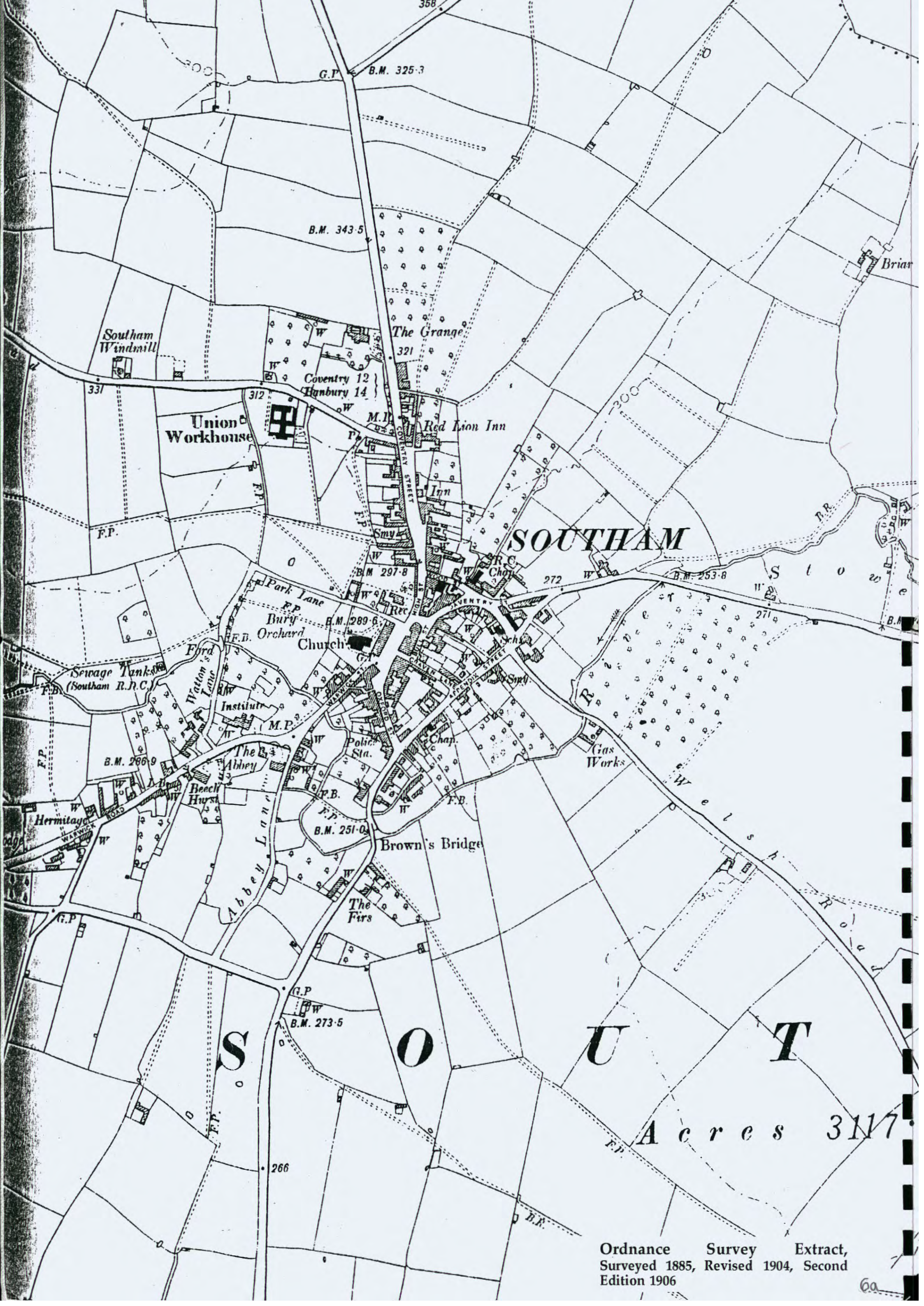
# 2 The Settlement - Historical Background and Development

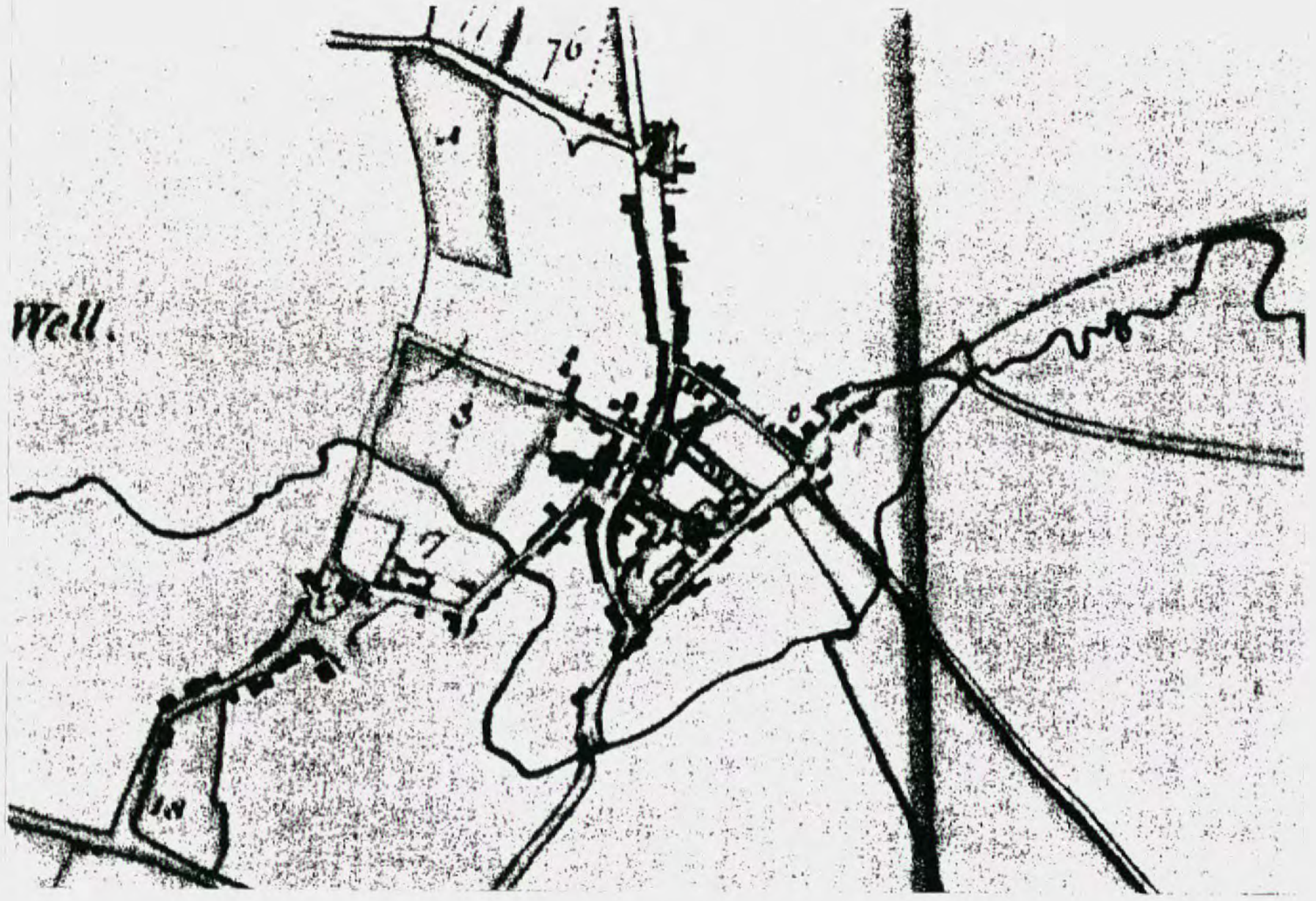
Southam has two medieval cores, in 1227 the Prior of Coventry was granted a charter by Henry III to found a market, Market Hill, to the south of the older Coventry Street which shows a market layout and a series of burgage plots.

It appears that this addition was not an immediate success and later documents record that the Prior of Coventry was still trying to promote the market venture at the end of the fourteenth century. The market, however, continued until the twentieth century, with cattle in Coventry Street, pigs by the Bull Inn and a general market on Market Hill. The continuing market accounts to some extent for the high number of inns and public houses.

The Old Mint Inn, allegedly fourteenth century, although the List Description states sixteenth century, is said by some to take its name from an occurence following the battle of Edge Hill. Charles I commanded his local noblemen to bring him their silver treasure, which he then melted down and minted into coins with which he paid his soldiers. Others state that for three hundred years, until the eighteenth century, local trade tokens were minted there to take the place of scarce copper coinage of the period.

Another tale of Charles I states that since the townsfolk neglected to ring the church bells on his arrival in 1641, the doors of the church were locked by the King's men who had to be bribed to re-open them.


B.M. 325·3
B.M. 343·5
Southam Windmill
The Grange
321
Coventry 12
Hanbury 14
331
312
Union Workhouse
Red Lion Inn
Inn
SOUTHAM
Smy
R.C. Chap
272
B.M. 253·8
Park Lane
Bury Orchard
B.M. 289·6
Church
Ford
Sewage Tanks (Southam R.D.C.)
Watton's Lane
Institute
M.P.
Police Sta.
Chap.
Gas Works
B.M. 286·9
The Abbey
Beech Hurst
Hermitage
WARWICK ROAD
F.B.
B.M. 251·0
Brown's Bridge
The Firs
G.P
B.M. 273·5
266
Briar
Stowe
Welsh Road
SOUT
Acres 3117.
Ordnance Survey Extract,
Surveyed 1885, Revised 1904, Second Edition 1906
6a




The town was known to Shakespeare being mentioned in Henry VI Part II, when Warwick the Kingmaker, awaiting his army, is told by Sir John Somerville that Clarence is not far away: "At Southam I did leave him with his forces and do expect him here in two hours hence".

An early town map dated 1775 shows much of the character of the medieval market town. Comparison with the 1885 Ordnance Survey shows fairly modest alteration and extension, although the burial ground, gas works, The Grange and Union Poor House were constructed during this period, as was Hill House and the adjacent Stoney Thorpe Hotel, originally built as the Eye and Ear Infirmary.

In the early 1830's, before the advent of the railways, Southam was a coaching stop, with the London - Warwick - Birmingham Royal Mail coaches passing through every week day after a nine hour journey from the capital. These and many other competing coaches needed fresh horses at one of the many inns.

Modern residential housing developments have now almost entirely swamped the original cores of the town. The open swathe of land following the line of the River Stowe to the west of the centre is the sole remaining significant large area of open space and is hence very important in townscape terms.

The recent by-pass to the east of the town, by diverting major through traffic, should greatly benefit the environmental quality in the conservation area, in the future.

**<< Town map extract c.1775**

# 3 The Settlement Today - Characteristics of the Conservation Area

**Introduction**

Southam is a busy market town where the character of the Conservation Area has survived in spite of commercial pressures and less than sensitive design, infill and expansion in the latter half of the twentieth century. In several places modern development has compromised the quality of the conservation area and it is proposed to exclude these areas where they lie on the periphery. However, where it is inappropriate to exclude zones because they are surrounded by significant areas, suggestions for schemes of improvement are emphasised.

It would be misleading to suggest that Southam is now a settlement of the very highest townscape quality. However, this gives even greater importance to the preservation and enhancement of that which remains.

## 3.1. Approaches to the Conservation Area

**From the North, Coventry Road**

From the north, the open, tree lined road drops gently from a shallow brow through unremarkable twentieth century suburban dwellings, **[7t]**. The substantial trees within the grounds of the Council Offices, formerly The Grange, mark the entrance to the conservation area, **[21b, 36b]**

**From the East, Daventry Road**

The new by-pass **[7b]** and its associated traffic island are now the main features of this approach. New residential developments along Daventry Street are reasonably sympathetic in scale and form. The modern school extensions are however less successfully integrated into the character of the town.

**From the South, Banbury Road**

This approach **[8t]** passes from the by-pass through unremarkable suburban residential development. The road dips gently towards the shallow valley and Brown's Bridge which marks the entrance to the conservation area.

**From the South-west, Warwick Road**

This approach, **[8b]** again largely through twentieth century residential developments, generally lacks a coherent character although there are a few interesting properties closer to the by-pass.

**From the West, Welsh Road West**

This approach is also mostly suburban in character. Tomwell Close **[92t]** has the feel of inter-war continental experimental housing, which although perhaps interesting is rather out of context.

## Key to Town Character Sub-divisions

## 3.2. Environmental and Architectural Qualities

### Introduction

This account of the environmental and architectural qualities of Southam attempts primarily to define the important characteristics which warrant Conservation Area status. More detailed individual building descriptions are provided in Appendix A.

The town falls into distinct areas. For clarity of definition, the character of the Conservation Area is discussed area by area, important adjoining features are also discussed, as follows;

**Area A - Medieval Core, High Street, Market Hill, Oxford Street, Coventry Street, Bull Street and Daventry Street**

**Area B - The River Stowe Valley**

**Area C - Craven Lane and south-west end of Pendicke Street**

**Area D - School Lane and north-east end of Pendicke Street**

**Area E - Wood Street**

**Area F - Council Offices, formerly the Grange**

**Area G - Warwick Road**

These divisions are primarily to aid description and discussion.

**Area A - Medieval Core, High Street, Market Hill, Oxford Street, Coventry Street, Bull Street and Daventry Street**

This area forms the heart of the Conservation Area, reflecting the mediaeval layout of the market town. Buildings generally sit at the edge of the footpath following the original building line. Spaces are well defined, particularly Market Hill and Coventry Street which exhibit typical market spaces.

At the southern end of the area, Oxford Street has a continuous line of buildings on its west side forming an important group **[9t]**. Ridges are usually parallel to the road, but heights vary and the street scene is therefore both coherent and lively.

The east side of the road is now an open carpark which disperses the sense of enclosure. The recent supermarket is on a very important corner plot and succeeds in creating some enclosure, but the lack of a shop frontage to Market Hill is a pity **[9b]**.

Market Hill has a clear regular plan and, although the buildings now vary in character, it exhibits a coherent market space quality. To the south-east side the buildings are bold and confident and their character remains largely intact **[49]**. On the north-west side, modern shopfronts have made their mark, although much interest remains **[10t]**. The Black Dog, encloses the southern end of Market Hill, although much altered it forms an important terminal building **[51]**.

Market Hill leads northwards to High Street, the east side continues much of the character of Market Hill, but some elegant facades are marred by modern ground floor shopfronts.

The west side of the High Street contains the library **[10b]** and police station **[11t]**, both

formal buildings set back from the line of the High Street. The fine trees grouped around the library contribute much to the quality of the environment locally.

Bull Street and Daventry Street form an attractive area, subordinate to the High Street, but of a more coherent character. Buildings line the street continuously, mostly two storey and rendered, ridges are parallel to the road [**11b**].

The main road continues northwards, and is here known as Coventry Street. The west side, despite the rather crude Co-op [**12t**] and Acorn Stores [**89b, 90**], forms a pleasant street wall. A consistent scale is maintained even by the modest recent infill. The gently curving facade recalls the market place function. The large extent of tarmac and paving, inconsequential tree planting and grass verges unfortunately do little to complement the general quality of the environment in this area.

The east side of Coventry Street exhibits much more variety. The group containing the post office is a reasonably successful combination of modern and Victorian. The Old Mint, with a variety of historical associations, is of considerable individual architectural importance, and creates a focal point for the town. The small patch of green and yew tree complete this intimate scene.

No 50 Coventry Street is an elegant contribution to the enclosure of this area, which continues with the adjoining short terrace. The coherent enclosure breaks down a little in the area just south of the Bowling Green. The urban plan form is familiar to many market towns, a terminal building forming a stop to a bottle shaped area. (Henley and Alcester have good examples. In reality the key buildings here are rather low key modern and flat roofed, and therefore lack sufficient quality to reinforce this potentially interesting space.

The Bowling Green rounds off this section of Coventry Street, its modern single storey extension to the north helps to change the scale and character towards the Fire Station and Red Lion. The Fire Station, on a prominent site, owes more to its period than its context. The Red Lion combines with this building to create a fairly enclosed area opening off Coventry Street. The tower and conifers are pleasant features, adding visual interest.

Further north, this side of Coventry Street forms a coherent street scene almost entirely of two storey residential properties. Modern infill has for the most part complemented the character here although the single three storey element is less than successful **[12b]**.

The northern edge of the significant part of the town is marked by a row of semi-detached cottages. These are of a similar style to buildings along School Street, buff brick with red brick string courses and segmental arched window heads, slate roofs, decorative dentil courses, barge boards. These constitute a local vernacular which could form a model for future developments **[12b]**.

The western boundary of this area is marked by the footpath running north-south along the rear gardens, this has some interesting gateways **[25]** and garden features.

**Area B - The River Stowe Valley and Church**

This area of varying character is linked by the shallow river valley, and can be broken down into three zones. Firstly, the open area to the west of the Church which forms the most attractive view of Southam, secondly, the area around Warwick Street and thirdly the space around Brown's Bridge.

The views along the valley, west of the church are the most significant in Southam **[13t]**. The spire rises impressively from the graveyard, the uncluttered recreation ground and curving river complete this splendid scene. The long views to the horizon from the churchyard are equally important to the character of this area **[21t]**, which could be summarised as Southam's heart and lungs.

Where Warwick Street crosses the river the townscape unfortunately breaks down, marred by twentieth century residential developments whose form, materials and proportions clash with the general quality of the conservation area as a whole. The group of houses south-west of the church are particularly disappointing, impairing the view of the church from the Warwick Road approach **[20b, 22t]**.

The river meanders southwards and turns to enclose a loop of open space, which is crossed by Brown's Bridge. This open space, although a little unkempt, forms an important swathe of land which forms a visual boundary between the heart of the town and the residential expansion of the twentieth century **[13b]**.

**Area C - Craven Lane and south-west end of Pendicke Street**

This area is dominated by the large and rather barren car park to the new supermarket, and by the rear yard of the Craven Arms. The row of modest cottages along Pendicke Street, which include the former chapel, although refenestrated, this group forms very important enclosure to this area **[14t, 32b]**.

**Area D - School Street and north-east end of Pendicke Street**

School Street is a coherent area whose character is based on the School House **[2b]**, Social Club buildings, and the semi-detached dwellings all dating from the nineteenth century. The character of these houses, which constitute a "sub-vernacular", is similar to that of the terrace on the east side of Coventry Street described above. Variations in detail and roof form as the houses curve up the rise are particularly pleasant **[2t, 14b, 31b, 74b, 75 & 76]**.

The School building continues the theme of decorative brickwork, but with dressed stonework reflecting its greater civic importance.

The triangular plot north-east of School Street has been successfully knitted back into the urban fabric by modern developments which have respected the form and townscape.

**Area E - Wood Street, North side**

Wood Street, running into Daventry Street, has a varied character. A large public car park dominates this area, its detailing and landscapaing are bleak and utilitarian adding little to the quality of the environment. A market is held here weekly although this has had little impact on the architecture **[26]**.

South-east of the car park the street line is restored by the convent buildings, the large church, set back behind the older buildings, is unexpected. Old House Retreat, dated 1876, but with earlier origins, is an important townscape building, terminating the views along Daventry Street **[15t]**.

The recent residential development, The Cloisters, curves along the road line, creating a new street wall. The form is appropriate although the materials are perhaps rather harsh **[15t]**.

St Mary's school **[94t]** is a mixture of styles adding little to the quality of the conservation area.

**Area F - Council Offices, formerly the Grange**

The early nineteenth century listed building, The Grange **[15b]**, and its fine landscape setting, make a pleasant entrance to the conservation area. The bank of mature trees fronting Coventry Street are particularly important to the townscape quality. The recent Southam Community Hall sits within the grounds as a pavilion and the integrity of the garden boundary is therefore largely maintained

**Area G - Warwick Road**

Warwick Street climbs gently from the bridge and becomes Warwick Road. The views back towards the church, now only a vestige of their former quality, are nevertheless an important feature of this area.

The significant section of Abbey Lane is short but attractive, its alignment with the church spire is a pleasant relationship. The defiantly detached No. 3 is unfortunate.

The Abbey is a fine building on a stunning plot, its elevated position dominates the south-western view from the church, the mature trees, in particular the magnificent Cedar of Lebanon, add to this scene **[16t]**.

Beyond this point Warwick Road lacks a coherent overall character, but has several significant individual buildings.

The Stoneythorpe Hotel and Hill House both listed form a notable group of historical importance. The buildings are marred by desolate landscaping and unsympathetic signs **[16b]**.

Detached bungalows on the north side and houses on the south lack coherence. The monument to the dispensary of 1889 is an interesting feature but sits a little uncomfortably in its semi-suburban setting **[57]**.

In contrast, Beech House, Beech Loft, and Whitehall House and Barn form a close knit group of buildings of considerable quality. Beech House mimics the setting of The Abbey, looking toward the church **[17t]**, and is also complemented by fine mature trees. The gated entrance to Beech Loft has an attractive elliptical brick arch **[17b]** and this sets a street line which is maintained by Whitehall House and Barn. Whitehall Barn, has a simple extension and boundary wall which rounds off the significant part of this area.

The listed Nos. 24 & 26 Warwick Road are the most significant to the north side of the road and form a group with No. 22. Beyond this point the fabric dissolves into suburbia **[58]**.

## 3.3. Architectural Form and Character

It would be very misleading to suggest that Southam had a single overriding character or form and the following is a brief summary of the most significant common characteristics.

Although of mediaeval origin, the town is now predominantly nineteenth century in character, only the plan form and a very few buildings exhibit mediaeval characteristics.

Terraced buildings dominate, although a significant number of late nineteenth century dwellings are semi-detached in form.

Buildings are generally two and three storey, and dormers are rare. Roofs are mostly simple pitches with ridges parallel to the road, although there are a significant number of hips and gables.

Eaves details vary, timber fascias, three course dentils and dog-tooths are found throughout.

Windows vary greatly with no set pattern, doors and porches are restrained and simple.

## 3.4. Predominant Building Materials

Southam has a variety of building materials and the following are found throughout

**Roofs**

Plain tiles and slates are found in more or less equal amounts, with slate predominating in late nineteenth century buildings.

Many buildings within or adjoining the conservation area have been re-roofed with concrete interlocking tiles which detract from their character **[19t]**. A single thatched house remains.

**Walls**

The original predominant stone walling is now only found in a few buildings, and a painted rendered finish is more common in buildings earlier than about 1850.

Brick now dominates throughout **[19b]**. This is generally a warm brown-red, but in two areas this is replaced by a buff brick with red brick details. Terracotta detailing is also found in these areas.

Only a few examples of timber framing are apparent, although much is likelt to be hidden by more recent rendering.

# Townscape Summary

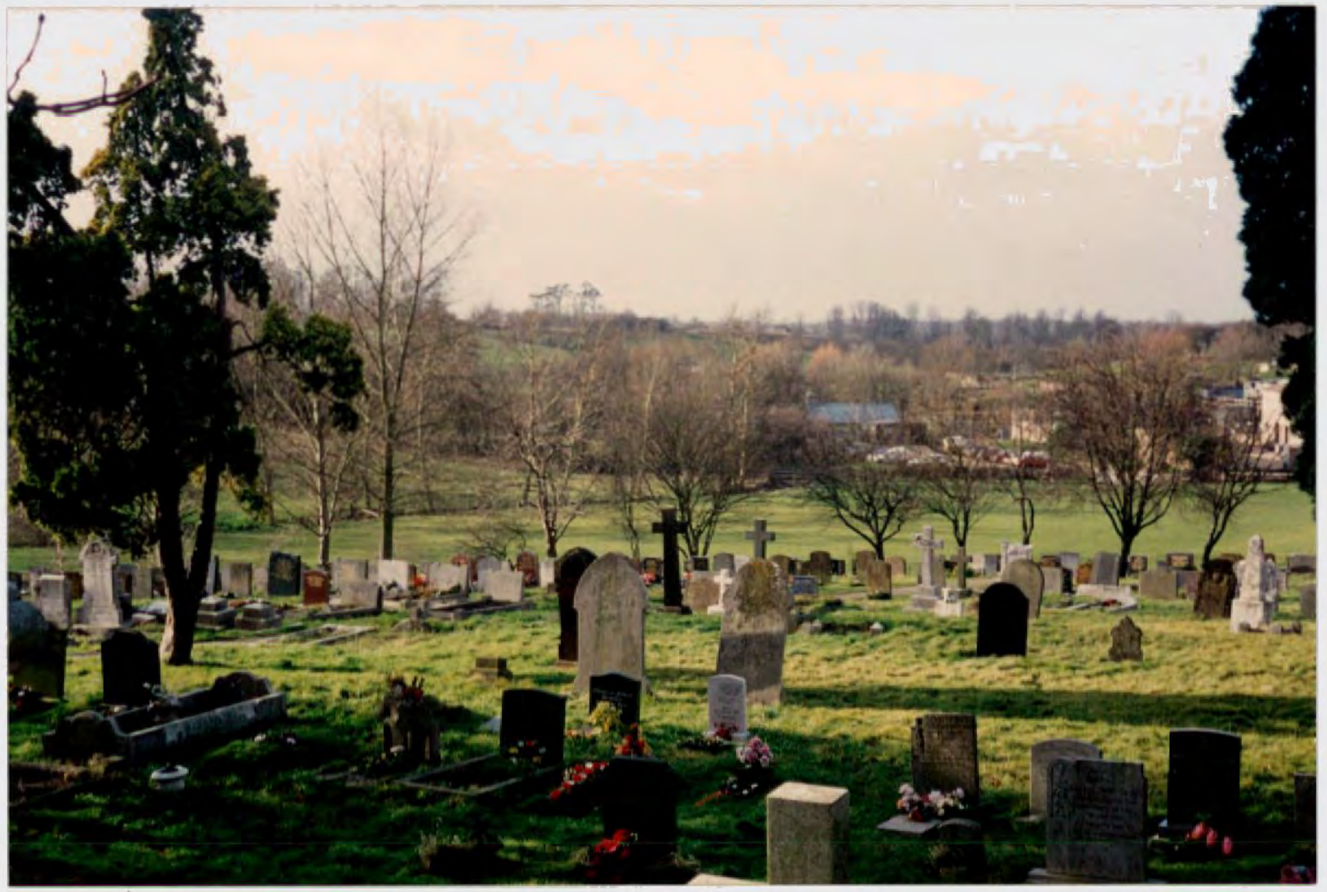
## 3.5. Summary

Southam has a varied character, reflecting its market past, and the commercial pressures of a busy town. It is an important town with considerable history and some interesting townscape qualities, and it is right that the whole should be protected by Conservation Area status.

The above townscape analysis forms the basis of our proposed alterations to the Conservation Area which are discussed in section five

^^ **Church of St James from Warwick Street**

<< **Northern end of Oxford Street**



# 4 The Settlement - Landscape Features

## 4.1. The Town in the Landscape

### Geography

Southam straddles the shallow valley of the River Stowe. The surrounding countryside is pleasant, but unremarkable. The river valley forms an important link to the landscape, particularly the open section, west of the church [21t].

Modern residential developments, the recent by-pass to the east of the town and the industrial area to the south have now almost entirely severed any connection between the historic core and the landscape **[21b]**. This further emphasises the importance of maintaining the open space to the west of the church.

**Landmarks**

For the reasons outlined above the town's landmarks now lack their former significance, the most important are,

**The spire of the church of St. James,** particularly from the west and south

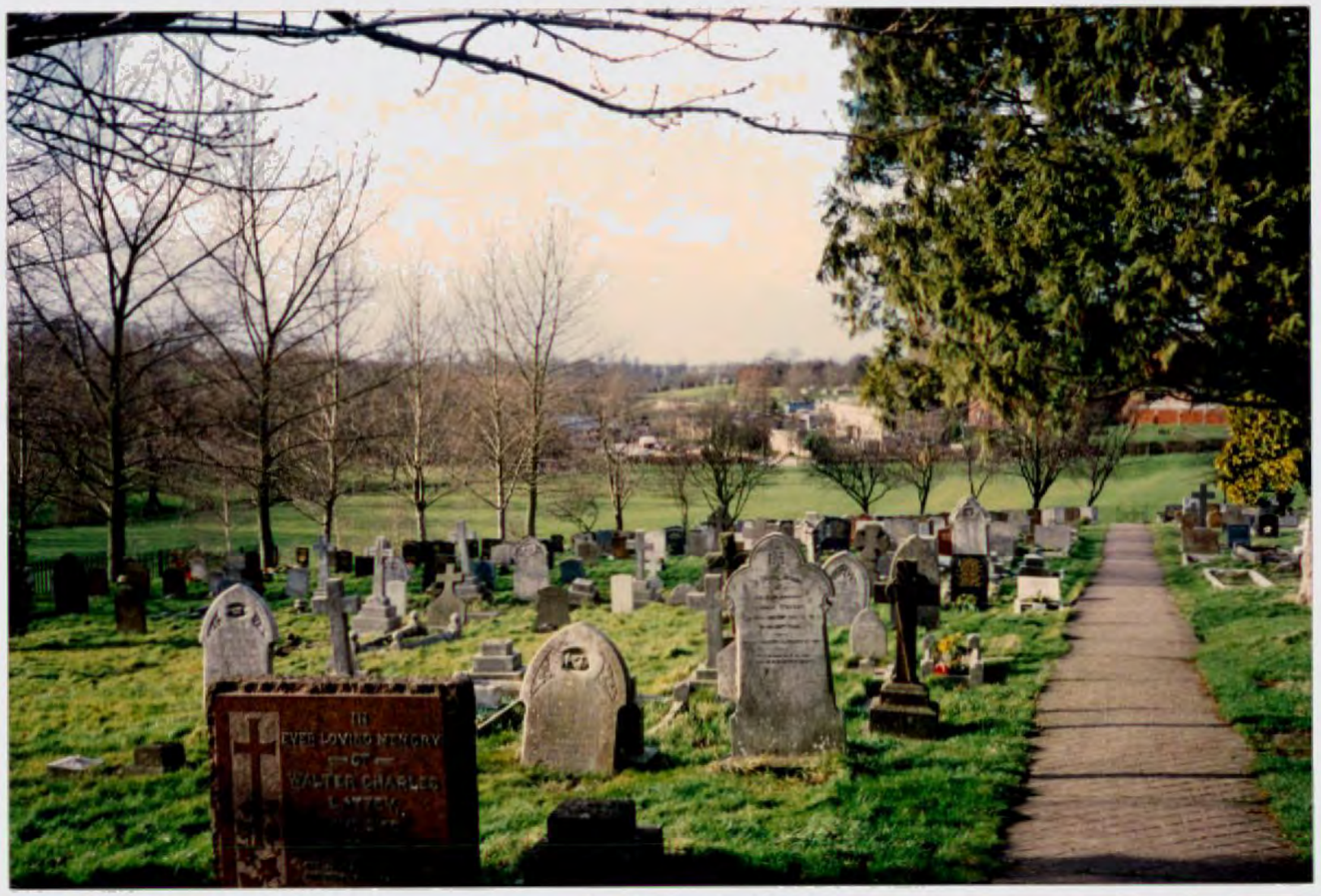
**Cedar of Lebanon outside The Abbey** from the town and churchyard, **[16t, 22t]**

**Cedar of Lebanon outside Beech Hurst** from the Warwick Road approach

**Fire Station tower,** which is important to its immediate locale, **[22b]**

**Approaches**

For the reasons discussed above the approaches have lost much of their landscape relevance to the Conservation Area, see section 3.1.



## 4.2. Landscape in the Town

### Public Open Spaces

Open spaces are generally informal and loosely defined and vary greatly in character, the most significant are as follows,

### The Churchyard, Recreation Ground and River Valley west of Warwick Street

This large and most important open space has a variety of characteristics which link together pleasantly. The churchyard north-east of the church is enclosed by the rear of Market Hill, and has an avenue of Limes commemorating Waterloo, it is small scale and intimate.

The area immediately west and south of the church is more open, long attractive views to distant countryside over the well cared for graveyard and fruit trees are some of the best in Southam [23t].

The land beyond then drops away down to the river, and is used as a recreation ground. This large area is well used and one of the town's most important amenities.

Beyond the river the character is rather more garden than public, access being limited to Watton's Lane.

### Open Area around Brown's Bridge

This area flanking the north river bank, has attractive trees on both banks. A well used footpath defines the north edge. Although a little unkempt this space, including the bridges, forms an important visual edge to the historic core and Conservation Area [23b].

**Area around Library**

Fine trees dominate this pleasant informal area surrounding the Library, the trees flanking the High Street are particularly important in creating and continuing the sense of enclosure **[24t]**.

**The Grange**

The setting of the former house retains much of its original character despite the recent extension and Community Hall. The formal circular sunken garden area south of the house is still evident. The trees flanking Coventry Street are important both to the setting of the house and to the approach to the Conservation Area **[24b]**.

## Trees

Trees are important to the character of the Conservation Area in several discrete areas relating mainly to the areas of open space discussed above.

Pockets of mature trees play a significant role along Warwick Road and the northern part of Coventry Street.

Significant trees are shown at the end of the report.

## Other Soft Landscape Features

Significant, soft, growing, landscape features are relatively few, the Yew tree at The Old Mint public house and the ivy clad wall to the Warwick Road elevation of Whitehall House are of note

## Hard Landscape Features and Artifacts

Much of the hard landscaping in the town is of a rather low quality of design and materials, and there is considerable scope to make improvements in this respect.

Features of significance include,

Lych Gate to Church of St James, **contents page**

Hanging signs to The Bull. The Crown and The Old Mint public houses **[40b]**

Fire Station Tower **[30b]**

Octagonal garden building, adjacent western footpath **[93b]**

Rear garden gate, adjacent western footpath **[25]**

Gravestones, church yard of St James **[22t]**

Kissing gate and railings to graveyard **[21t]**

Monument, Warwick Road **[33b]**

Arched entrance, gates and hard paving to Beech Loft **[17b]**

## 4.3 Recommendations for Improvement

Several areas in the town would benefit from landscape improvements, some of which are also discussed in section six,

1. **Daventry Road** Additional tree planting along Daventry Road to soften harsh fencing, reduce windswept effect and tie this area to the landscape

2. **Wood Street car park** tree screening and general landscape improvements would be of considerable value here [26]

3. **'Pennywise' car park** existing landscaping is rather low key, further structured tree planting along Oxford Street would help to create a greater sense of enclosure

4. **Brown's Bridge** this area which has public footpaths crossing it would benefit from general improvements and perhaps greater access [27]

**Proposed amendments to the Conservation Area**

# 5 - The Conservation Area

## 5.1. Introduction

Southam's existing Conservation Area is well established. In view of the above discussion it is proposed that there should be some modest alterations to the area in order to ensure that the qualities outlined can be maintained and where possible enhanced.

## 5.2. Proposed Conservation Area Boundary

It is proposed that the Conservation Area boundary should remain as existing with the following alterations

### A) Brown's Bridge

The tract of open space flanking the river and either side of Brown's Bridges forms a visual separator between the suburban development to the south and the historic central core. Although a little unkempt this area clarifies the edge of the Conservation Area. It is proposed that the existing boundary should be extended to include a larger area to east of the older bridge in order to protect further the quality of the setting, and the extent of the open space. In addition it is proposed to amend the boundary to include the river in view of its landscape importance to the completeness of this area. [27]

It is proposed therefore to extend the Conservation Area as shown.

**B) Willow Gardens, Garaging**

The Willow Gardens development and its associated garaging both fail to complement the character of the Conservation Area. Their form, proportions and scale lack the qualities found elsewhere. Nevertheless, the site is of great importance to the character of the town and to exclude it would offer no hope for improvement. It is therefore proposed to continue to include the part of the site adjacent to the river, in order to ensure that any redevelopment in this area is be given appropriate consideration.

The garaging is in a less prominent position and it is therefore proposed to exclude these and the adjoining plot **[28t]**.

It is proposed therefore to amend the Conservation Area as shown.

**C) Warwick Road**

The residential properties south-west of the important, listed, no. 26 are unremarkable, bearing no relationship to the character of the Conservation Area. There are some important trees to the front boundaries and it is therefore proposed to amend the boundary to exclude these properties but continue to include the section of the frontage containing the trees [29].

The area of backland between the Warwick Road properties and the river, and the the west of Watton's Lane has warranted careful consideration. The importance of the open area east of Watton's Lane leading to the church has been clearly established, however moving westwards this area has less and less relevance to the character of the Conservation Area. Its general landscape qualities are protected by the Area of Restraint policy. It is proposed therefore to amend the boundary here so that it corresponds more closely to the area which has an effect on the character of the Conservation Area. This also aligns more closely to the boundary of the listed buildings on Warwick Road.

It is proposed therefore to amend the Conservation Area as shown.

**D) River Stowe**

In view of the importance of the river to the character of the Conservation Area, in particular the setting of the church, it is proposed to amend the boundary here to include both banks

### E) Youth Centre and adjacent dwelling

The Youth Centre is a rather low grade building at the periphery of the Conservation Area, the adjacent dwelling is also unremarkable **[30t]**. Neither building contributes to the character of the Conservation Area, both sites are remote from the High Street and it is therefore proposed to exclude this area as shown

### F) The Red Lion and The Fire Station

The Red Lion **[28b]**, set at right angles to Coventry Street, is a pleasant nineteenth century building with an outshot which creates a semi-enclosed area. The side of the Fire Station and its attendant tower and trees helps reinforce this.

The Fire Station is a simple unpretentious building **[30b]**, although of limited townscape importance as an individual building, the site is of considerable significance for the character of the conservation area. Redevelopment here would inevitably have an impact on the conservation area. In view of these points it is proposed to include this area as shown.

## G) School Street Area

The present Conservation Area boundary passes through several existing significant buildings, and many considered to be of merit are excluded. In addition new development has occurred in and around this area. In light of this it is felt that the conservation area boundary here requires redrafting.

The existing boundary at present passes through the extended buildings of St Mary's School, **[94t]**. As a group these have no association with the character of the conservation area, the modern buildings to the east shield the older larger buildings, and it is therefore proposed that this section should be excluded from the conservation area.

The triangular plot between Daventry Road, Pendicke Street and School Street contains the listed building ref 68, No. 4, and the old School Building, ref 155, the remaining buildings in this area all contribute to the coherence of the townscape in this area. The south-east side of Pendicke Street, buildings refs 160 and 161, also reflect this nineteenth century character **[31t]**.

School Street, curving into Pendicke Street, contains a significant group of dwellings, and the social club, these exhibit a coherent character based on buff brick with red brick detailing and slate roofs as described elsewhere. This area's character relates to that of a similar group along Coventry Street **[31b]**.

In view of this area's general coherence, Victorian character and importance to the setting of the remainder of the Conservation Area it is proposed to amend the boundary to include this area as shown.

### H) Backland, rear of Pendicke Street

This small pocket of land has recently been redeveloped for residential use. The buildings are rather large for their setting, and are therefore at variance with the character of the conservation area. It is proposed to exclude this area from the conservation area **[32t]**.

### J) Pendicke Street, east side

This modest group of dwellings, including the former chapel, although much altered, contribute a great deal to the much needed sense of enclosure around the car park to the supermarket. This forms a distinct hard edge to the town core and it is therefore proposed to include it within the conservation area **[32b]**.

## Other Areas Considered

### Coventry Street, north, east side

This recently constructed row of dwellings has successfully maintained the street frontage and its form is very much in sympathy with the character of the town in this area. However it is felt that these characteristics would be easily reproduced in any redevelopment and there is, therefore, no need to include this area.

### Wood Street Car Park

This area is of limited quality, however, it occupies an important townscape position any any redevelopment should be given specific conservation area goals. It is also an area which would benefit greatly from sensitive improvements and it is hoped that its continued inclusion will help to promote these.

## 6.2.
## Recommendations for Improvement

There are a number of areas which would benefit from further consideration leading to possible schemes of improvement and enhancement.

a) **Overhead wires** - removal of wires over Warwick Road, Daventry Street, Pendicke Street, School Street and Banbury Street

b) **Street lighting -** more sensitive street lighting particularly along Warwick Road, High Street and Coventry Street **[33t]**, would improve the general character of the conservation area

c) **Warwick Road -** indigenous tree screen planting could help to improve the setting of the Monument, and reduce the impact of the modern dwellings on the conservation area **[33b]**

d) **Bowling Green -** the car park to this otherwise successful building is bleak, soft landscaping particularly to the east boundary would benefit the character of the conservation area greatly **[34t]**

e) **Coventry Street -** is now barely perceptible as a market area, the wide expanse of tarmac, and generally unsympathetic landscaping detract from the historical meaning of this area. The recent by-pass should give an opportunity to carry out considerable improvements to landscaping, car parking, street furniture, street lighting etc in order to restore some its former significance **[34b]**.

f) **Oxford Street -** indigenous tree screening/landscaping to the supermarket car park would help a little to maintain the street form

# 6 - Development Control and Enhancement

Development control and the machinery for schemes of enhancement in a Conservation Area will be as set out in the Stratford-on-Avon Local Plan (see Chapter 7. Policies) under the provisions of the Planning (Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

## 6.1. Safeguarding Environmental Quality

Southam has had much of its original character eroded by modern development and commercial and transport pressures. Nevertheless much of significance remains and, perhaps more than other better cared for towns, schemes of improvement may have a greater impact.

The recently constructed by-pass should greatly reduce through traffic. This may therefore be an appropriate time to examine traffic management in general with a view to safeguarding the quality of the environment.

### Policies

The Stratford - on - Avon District Local Plan contains Area of Restraint policies covering and protecting the important areas of landscape overlapping and adjoining the Conservation Area in the west along the river.

There are several other points listed below which may also lead to improvement schemes.

g) **Market** - the Wood Street car park is used for a weekly market, although different from the original markets, it is very much a reflection of Southam's continuing tradition. Improvements to this area, perhaps relating to the market function, could help with townscape issues as well as ensuring the continuance of the market tradition **[35t]**.

h) **Wood Street Car Park** - this car park has generally rather poor street furniture, and hard landscaping and would benefit greatly from a scheme of improvements, perhaps associated with the market function **[26]**.

i) **Riverside Walk** - a network of footpaths crosses Southam and there is considerable scope for these to be improved. The walk westwards along the river could be extremely pleasant, perhaps having the Holy Well as its final goal.

j) **Stoneythorpe Hotel** - the forecourt of the hotel is bleak, a sensitive scheme of hard and soft landscaping could benefit greatly the setting of this listed building and this approach to the town. The hotel signs are also unsympathetic and deserve enhancement.

k) **Banbury Road** - the lay-by and hard landscaping along Banbury Road are rather utilitarian. Schemes of more appropriate soft and hard landscaping could benefit this area **[35b]**.

l) **Churchyard/Market Hill** - the entrance to the churchyard at the southern end of Market Hill is potentially an attractive piece of townscape. Modern railings and brickwork clash with the remaining traditional pattern, and a modern bench completes the disappointment. Restoration of this area would be welcome **[3]**.

**m) Market Hill generally -** the west side of the south end of Market Hill is in need of enhancement.

The buildings would benefit from sensitive improvements particularly to the fenestration, doors porches and blinds.

Street lighting could be refined, and poles removed.

The raised pavement area has scope for improvement by using more traditional and vernacular materials. Steps and the like have considerable potential for creating further townscape quality **[36t]**.

**n) Northern Approach -** substantial tree planting, on the east side, at the end of Ash Grove, would help to dramatise this approach by combining with those existing on the west side to create a strong entrance to the conservation area **[36b]**.

**o) Recreation Ground -** more sympathetic bridge, railings and the like would enhance the west corner of the recreation ground.

**p) Street furniture -** is generally utilitarian and unsympathetic, particularly the railings in Oxford Street, in front of the Court and Lloyds Bank and in the High Street, a more imaginative approach could benefit the environment greatly **[1]**.

**q) Shopfronts -** in common with many market towns shopfronts, in parts, clash with the quality of the original buildings. Those which would benefit most from refinement include, Southam Bakers, Rumbletum, Market Hill west side, Acorn Stores, Lovelocks Sports **[37t]**.

# Conservation Area Review
# Summary Plan - 1:2500

Proposed Conservation Area Boundary

Existing Conservation Area Boundary where different from above

Important

Open Spaces

Views

Terminal Features

Trees/tree groups

Listed and Significant Buildings

Listed Buildings

Significant Buildings

37a

r) **Brown's Bridge Area** - modest tidying of the landscape and improvements to access to this important open area would greatly enhance this area.

s) **Willow Gardens** - additional tree screening to this building may help to reduce its impact on the conservation area [37b]

## 6.3. Conclusion

Southam is an interesting town, with varied townscape qualities. The suggested Conservation Area boundary extensions, continued appropriate care and maintenance of its buildings and landscape, schemes of improvements, together with the development control machinery should be sufficient to maintain and enhance its character and environmental quality.

Brownes Bridge
River Stowe
Bury Orchard (Recreation ground)
SOUTHAM
Sewage Works
Swimming Pool
Southam First School
Southam Middle School
Red Lion Pub
Bowling Green (Pub)
Hotel
Map to Appendix A - Listed Building references