

Hodsoll Street

Conservation Area Appraisal



SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE



December 2003

Hodsoll Street

Conservation Area Appraisal

The historic environment is a social asset of immense value and one of the keys to the continuing prosperity of Sevenoaks District. Conservation Area Appraisals are part of the process of ensuring that we make the best use of our historic environment. They are tools for the positive management of change, not a means of preventing development. Conservation is focused on the entire historic environment, not just listed buildings. Trees, open spaces, buildings, uses, roads and streets all contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the District's conservation areas.

The man-made environment of our conservation areas has used energy and materials moulded by people both past and present. The District Council will creatively manage the fabric of these areas in a sustainable way as a legacy for future generations.

It is intended that this appraisal will inform the activities of the Council, the public and other bodies where these impact on the conservation area.

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1.00 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definition and Purpose of Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas first came into being as a result of the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 and are intended to identify any valuable visual or historic characteristics in a locality that may warrant special measures in order to protect and preserve them.

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990 recognises that there are particular areas of ‘architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ and charges planning authorities with a duty to designate any such locations within their jurisdiction as Conservation Areas. This designation then empowers the local authority to pay particular attention to planning considerations and development within them and gives greater control over such matters as demolitions, landscaping and trees, and the display of advertisements.

Designation also raises the awareness of local residents and businesses to the quality of their surroundings and is intended to encourage an active interest in the care and maintenance of their properties and surrounding land, thereby fostering a sense of communal pride.

It has been recognised that designation, because of the responsibilities and obligations it places on both owners and the local authority, should only be imposed on areas that are demonstrably suitable. Where the criteria have been met, the area should then benefit from the additional control and protection that designation confers, and from official recognition of the special architectural and historic character of the locality.

The management of our national cultural and historic inheritance is of paramount importance and Conservation Areas are a vital ‘grass roots’ starting point from which to safeguard the continuing care of our environment.

1.2 Purpose of Appraisals

As their number grows, it has become even more important for local authorities to include a well-defined and considered policy for their designated Conservation Areas in their Local Plans.

Planning pressures are such that any designation is likely to be subjected to detailed scrutiny and must be readily and demonstrably defensible against adverse criticism. The criteria for designation should be kept as uniform as possible and the public should be kept fully aware of the reasons for any proposed changes in their area.

The 1990 Act charges local authorities with the responsibility of undertaking a review of their conservation areas from time to time, both to consider the possibility of revising their extent, and to identify any past changes or future pressures which may affect the original reasons for their designation.

English Heritage published an advisory leaflet on the subject in March 1997, which outlines the preferred approach to these appraisals and gives examples of the type of content that it would be useful to include.

The appraisals should define the key elements that together give the area its character, and objectively analyse how they interact to enhance their individual impact. They can then provide suggestions for future policies and improvements based on a clear understanding of the special architectural and historic qualities that highlight the area and give it its local distinctiveness.

These appraisals can also be used as a valuable means by which the impact of planning policies and the implementation of enhancement measures can be assessed.

1.3 Local Conservation Area Policies

The Sevenoaks District Local Plan (adopted March 2000) lists the following policies which relate to conservation areas:

EN21 In the designation and review of Conservation Areas the Local Planning Authority will assess all the following matters:

- 1) **The special architectural, or historic interest of the area.**
- 2) **The cohesive character and integrity of the area including spaces round buildings their settings and trees.**
- 3) **The desirability of preserving, or enhancing the character, or appearance of the area.**
- 4) **The pressures for change which may encourage piecemeal development, which would threaten the character of the area.**
- 5) **The need to promote economic prosperity, through schemes of environmental enhancement, to overcome vacancy, neglect, decay or dereliction.**

EN22 Proposals to demolish buildings, which contribute to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, will not be permitted in the absence of overriding justification. Preference will be given to conversion and/or refurbishment as opposed to outright demolition of a building. Proposals to demolish extensions to original buildings or outbuildings will be judged on their contribution to the overall character of the area.

EN23 Proposals for development or redevelopment within or affecting Conservation Areas should be of positive architectural benefit by paying special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area and of its setting. The design of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings should respect local character, whilst the treatment of external spaces including hard and soft landscaping, boundary walls, street furniture and signs should be compatible with and enhance the appearance of the area.

Buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area are identified on the character appraisal plan at the end of this document . English Heritage national guidance on conservation areas sets out the criteria used to identify these buildings.

The Sevenoaks District Local Plan also states that the Local Planning Authority will undertake detailed assessments of designated Conservation Areas and will prepare proposals for their preservation. Development proposals will be judged against their overall contribution to the enhancement of the character and appearance of the area as set out in any scheme, which may have been prepared. This assessment and the detailed analysis of the area contained in the report are intended to fulfil this commitment and provide the background for enhancement schemes.

1.4 Other Local Plan Policies

The Local Plan also identifies specific policies designed to protect the natural environment and historic buildings.

Policy EN6 places restrictions on development within the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and EN7 gives priority to the enhancement of natural beauty, landscape, open space, geographical features and wildlife over other planning considerations within the North Downs and Greensand Ridge Special Landscape Areas. Other Areas of Local Landscape Importance where development may be restricted are noted in policy EN8.

Landscape features and wildlife habitats beyond the confines of the urban areas, towns and villages are also protected by policy EN11.

Important areas of greenspace within the built confines are safeguarded under policy EN9 and EN10 protects important areas of urban fringe.

Listed building policy is defined in sections EN18 and EN19 and the reuse rather than the demolition of unlisted buildings of local interest is promoted by policy EN20.

Trees over a certain size are automatically protected within Conservation Areas, with any proposed work to them having to be notified to the local authority in writing six weeks in advance.

Transport strategy for the District is summarised by the following section.

T1 A co-ordinated transport strategy will be implemented including: -

- 1) Encouragement of the provision of appropriate public transport services and facilities.**
- 2) Use of traffic management to achieve a safer and more efficient use of existing roads.**
- 3) An integrated car parking strategy involving residents' parking, local enforcement and consideration of the need for park and ride facilities.**
- 4) New highway construction and improvements to the existing network.**
- 5) Encouragement of walking, and cycling.**

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF CONSERVATION AREA

2.1 General Description

Hodsoll Street Conservation Area covers some 2.8 ha and contains six listed buildings. It was designated in 1971 and has not been extended since then.

The area lies entirely within the Metropolitan Green Belt and a Special Landscape Area.

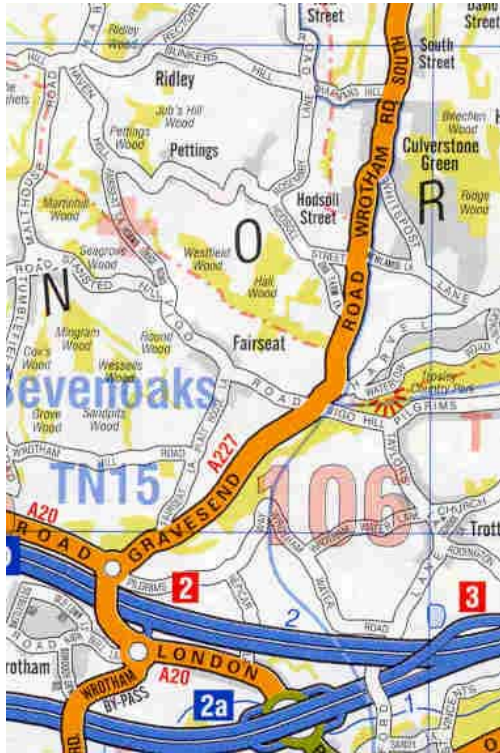
The conservation area consists of a cul-de-sac that provides access to Holywell Farmhouse, the public house and a number of private residences centred around an open green. Holywell Park to the north is surrounded by private landscaped grounds.

2.2 Location and Geographical Context

Hodsoll Street is situated in the eastern extremity of Sevenoaks District, between the hamlets of Fairseat to the south and New Street to the north.

Hodsoll Street is served by a network of minor country roads leading north to New Street and northwest to Pettings and Ridley.

Roads leading south and east connect via the A227 Borough Green to Gravesend road to the A2, M2, M20, M26 and M25 are easily accessible.



Map 1: Geographical location showing major routes.

The nearest railway station is at Meopham, to the north, and is on the main London to Dover line.

The hamlet is within easy access of Dartford, Chatham and Rochester via the A2 to the north, with easy access to the major retail park at Bluewater.

2.4 Architectural Description

The development of the village over several centuries has given rise to an interesting variety of architectural styles, and the range of buildings contained within this Conservation Area contribute to the charm and picturesque qualities of the hamlet.

The majority of original roof coverings have been retained and are either slated with clay ridge and hip tiles, or clay tiles hung on pegs or nibs.



Fig 1: The Green Man Public House

Modern roof coverings have also been introduced, either as replacements or as part of a modern addition to the historic property.

Outbuildings and modern sheds have been clad in corrugated metal sheeting or roofing felt. Extensions to the rear of properties, with limited visual impact, have been asphalted.



Fig 2: Rear Extension to The Green Man



Fig 3: Stable Block, Holywell Farm

A most unattractive and uncharacteristic change is the complete replacement of original roof coverings with concrete interlocking tiles on the listed former Post Office, Hodsoll House.



Fig 4: Hodsoll House

The angle of roof pitch varies depending on the material used, and the contrasting heights of the ridge line often lend variety and interest to the street scene.



Fig 5: Holywell Cottage

Catslide roofs, sweeping down from the ridge to the ground floor ceiling level and covering side or rear elevations, add further visual diversity.

There are a few examples of tall decorative chimneys, which are mainly associated with the principal building to Holywell Park, but the majority are more simply finished either in fairfaced brickwork or render.

The medieval chimney stack to Holywell Farmhouse is an interesting feature.



Fig 6: Chimney stack, Holywell Farmhouse

A tall chimney in the single storey part of Peach Cottage appears to be out of scale with the historic property .



Fig 7: Extension and chimney stack, Peach Cottage

Dormer windows are often inserted into the roof slopes, giving light to the attic spaces, which can then be utilised as additional accommodation. Other features include windows inserted into the gable ends within the roof construction.

A wide variety of building materials have been used, the most abundant of which is brick, either fairfaced, painted or rendered. In some instances it has been combined with stone detailing to

windows and parapets, or with other materials such as weatherboarding, vertical tile hanging

or flint.



Fig 8: Main building to Holywell Park



Fig 9: Peach and Plum Cottages

Traditionally, windows were either timber casements or vertical sliding sashes; although varying styles of modern plastic windows have been introduced in later additions to buildings.

3.0 CHARACTER APPRAISAL

3.1 Setting of the Area and Spatial Relationships

From the country road to Hodsoll Street there is nothing to suggest the quality of buildings contained within the hamlet, as much of the conservation area is hidden by established trees and hedgerows. As the lane continues northwards, a view of the weatherboarded house Greenfields and a glimpse of Holywell Cottage give a first impression of the hamlet.



Fig 10: View looking North

At the end of the lane the area opens out revealing a central open green with the buildings focussed on and enclosing the space. This open green is a critical visual element of the rural but enclosed character of the conservation area.



Fig 11: View looking west from Greenfields

Continuing in a north west direction the lane divides into the private drive of Holywell Park and the road leading to Holywell Farm.



Fig 12: View looking south from the drive of Holywell Park



Fig 13: View looking east from road leading to Holywell Farm

The buildings are ranged loosely around the green with a mix of residential and commercial uses along the western side. Holywell Park is the dominant building at the northern end of the area. Development pressures are constrained by Green Belt policies although conversion work has recently been undertaken on a timber framed barn adjacent to Greenfields.



Fig 14: The green and overhead wires from The Green Man Public House

3.2 The Impact of Individual Elements/Features/Groups of Buildings

Where boundary walls exist they are usually low, using a combination of fairfaced and painted brick, flint and stone rubble. Additional features include piers, which vary in height and are often finished with ornamental stone cappings.



Fig 15: Brick walling with white painted brick capping



Fig 16: Brick and flint wall, Holywell Farm

Other features that contribute to the character of the area include ironwork such as ornate gates; traditional lamp posts within private gardens and traditional signage for the public house.



Fig 17: Traditional lamp post and public house sign

The scale and architectural style of Holywell Park is unique within the Conservation Area and is ideally situated to capture the full impact of the surrounding countryside.



Figs 18 & 19: Views looking North West from the drive

The common use of the name “Holywell” suggests that the cottages, farmhouse and associated outbuildings were originally part of the Holywell Park Estate.

The hamlet as a whole presents an idyllic rural scene, but this does serve to emphasise modern intervention where it is detrimental to the village scene. Whilst the chimney stack on the single storey extension at Peach Cottage complies with current legislation, its local impact is unsightly.



Fig 20: Peach Cottage extension and chimney

The use of concrete roof tiles as replacements for traditional roofing finishes detracts from the aesthetic appeal of the area and imposes considerable additional loading on the historic fabric.

The close proximity of the buildings to the road and the lack of pavements, result in cables and telegraph poles intruding into the visual context of the hamlet. This is unsightly and consideration should be given to removing the overhead wires.



Figs 21: & 22 Telegraph poles which are also used for cameras and security lighting

The lurid colour of a timber boarded pavilion/hut on land adjoining the Conservation Area adjacent to Holywell Park impacts adversely on the rural scene and would be less of an eyesore if a more subdued natural colour were chosen.



Fig 23: Timber weatherboarded pavilion, adjacent to Holywell Park

4.0 FUTURE TRENDS

4.1 Current and Future Pressures on the Area

The need to find residential development sites in this popular region within easy reach of London puts any village under pressure. Whilst new development within a conservation area is not necessarily unwelcome, the impact that this can have on the traditional form and character of the village has to be carefully considered before permission is granted. Green Belt and conservation constraints will limit future change.

4.2 Potential for Enhancement and Future Policy Recommendations

Consideration should be given to including Kalamunda in the conservation area, as this property contributes to its character and appearance. It is timber framed with cedar wood shingle cladding to the walls and roof. Although fairly common within this part of Kent, its position within the hamlet warrants inclusion in the conservation area.



Fig 23 : Kalamunda and lychgate

Whilst not public open space, it may be advantageous to incorporate the strip of land to the South of Kalamunda which provides part of the setting of the conservation area, and extend the boundary to include Leaders, a Grade II listed building, and the adjacent pond.

The conservation area would be further enhanced by the resiting or removal of telegraph poles and cables. Every encouragement should be given to the replacement of any concrete interlocking tiles with a more appropriate traditional roof covering.

Acknowledgements:

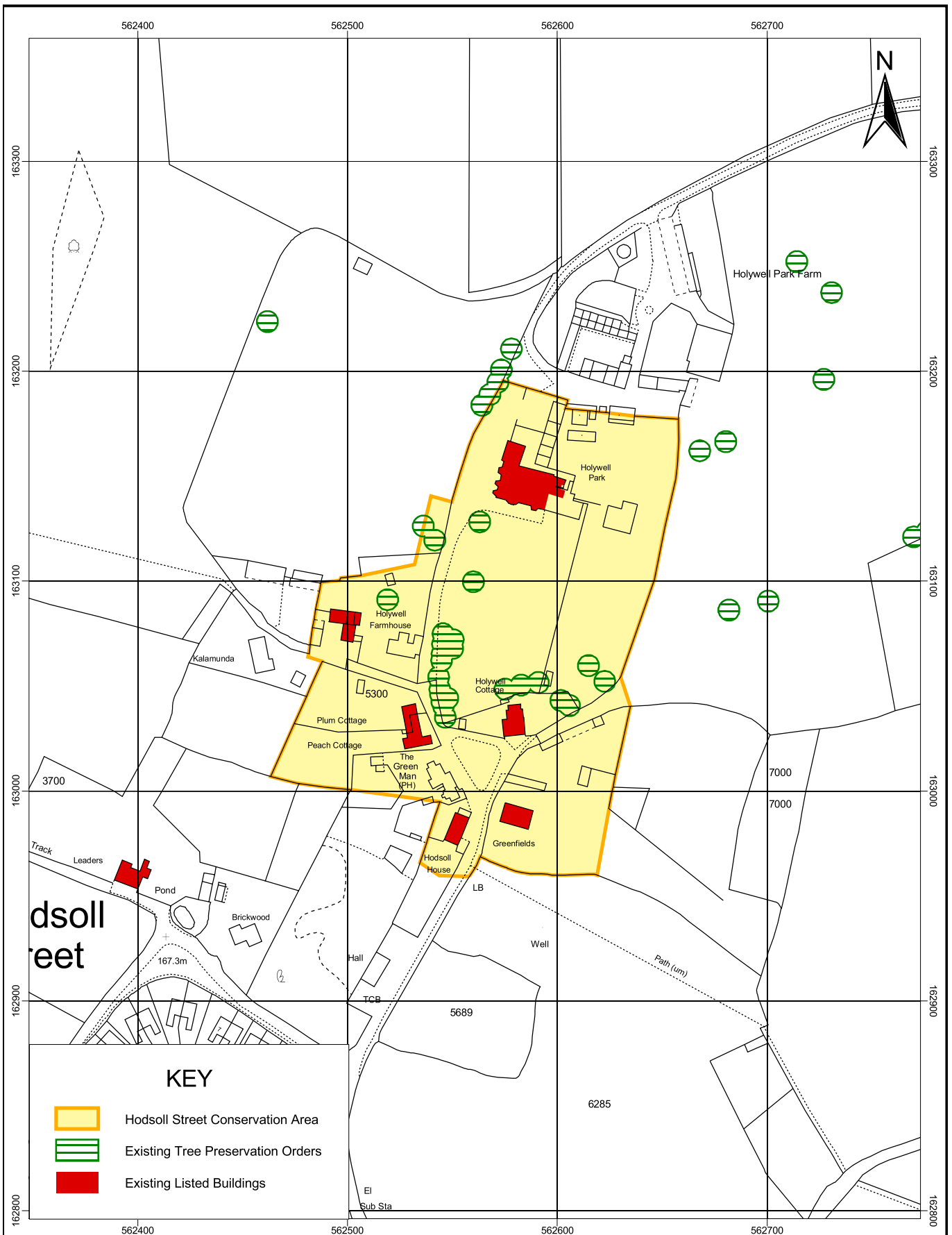
The draft appraisal was prepared by Donald Insall Associates Ltd.

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KEY

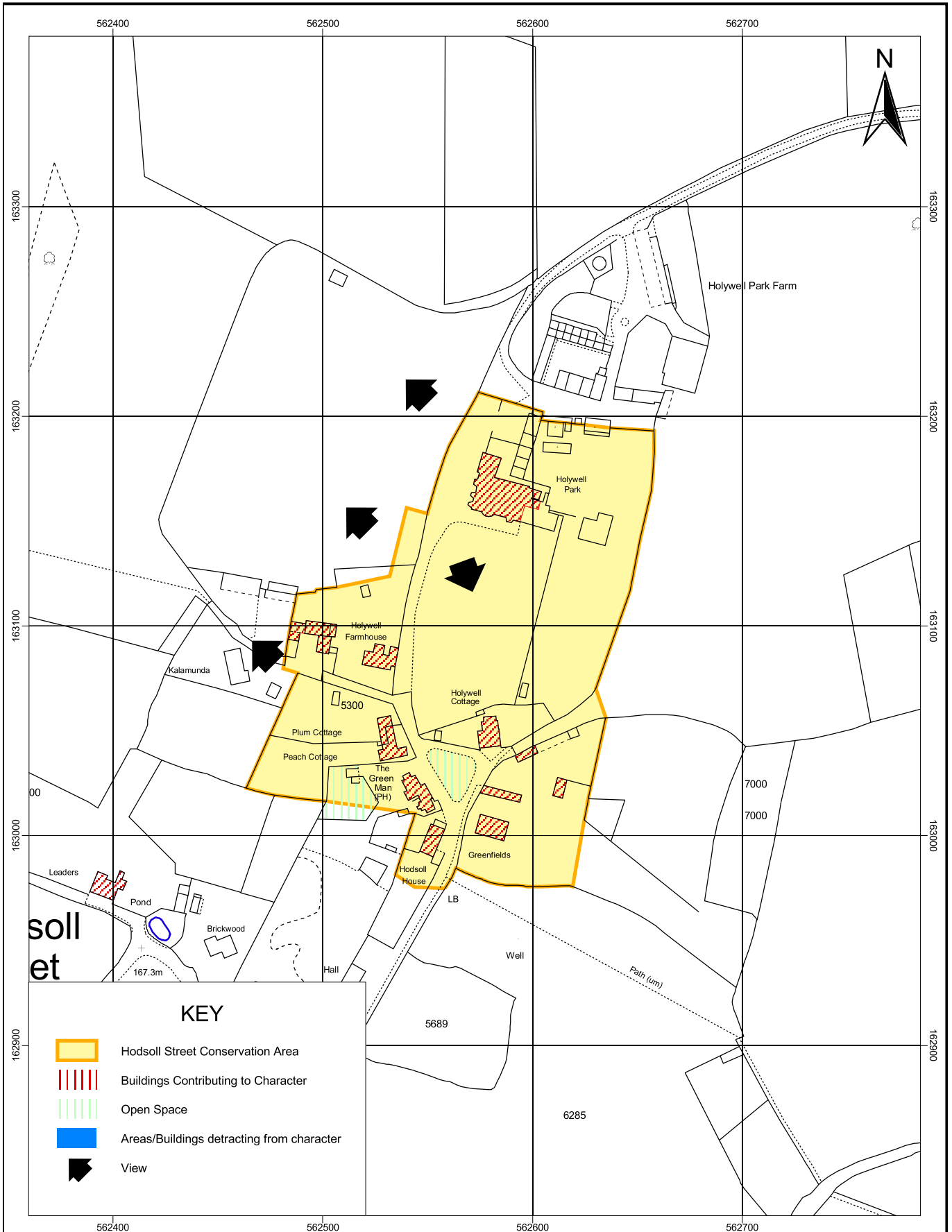
-  Hodsoil Street Conservation Area
-  Existing Tree Preservation Orders
-  Existing Listed Buildings








Hodsoil Street Conservation Area Designations

Scale	1:2500
Date	March 2003
Drawn By	SNM

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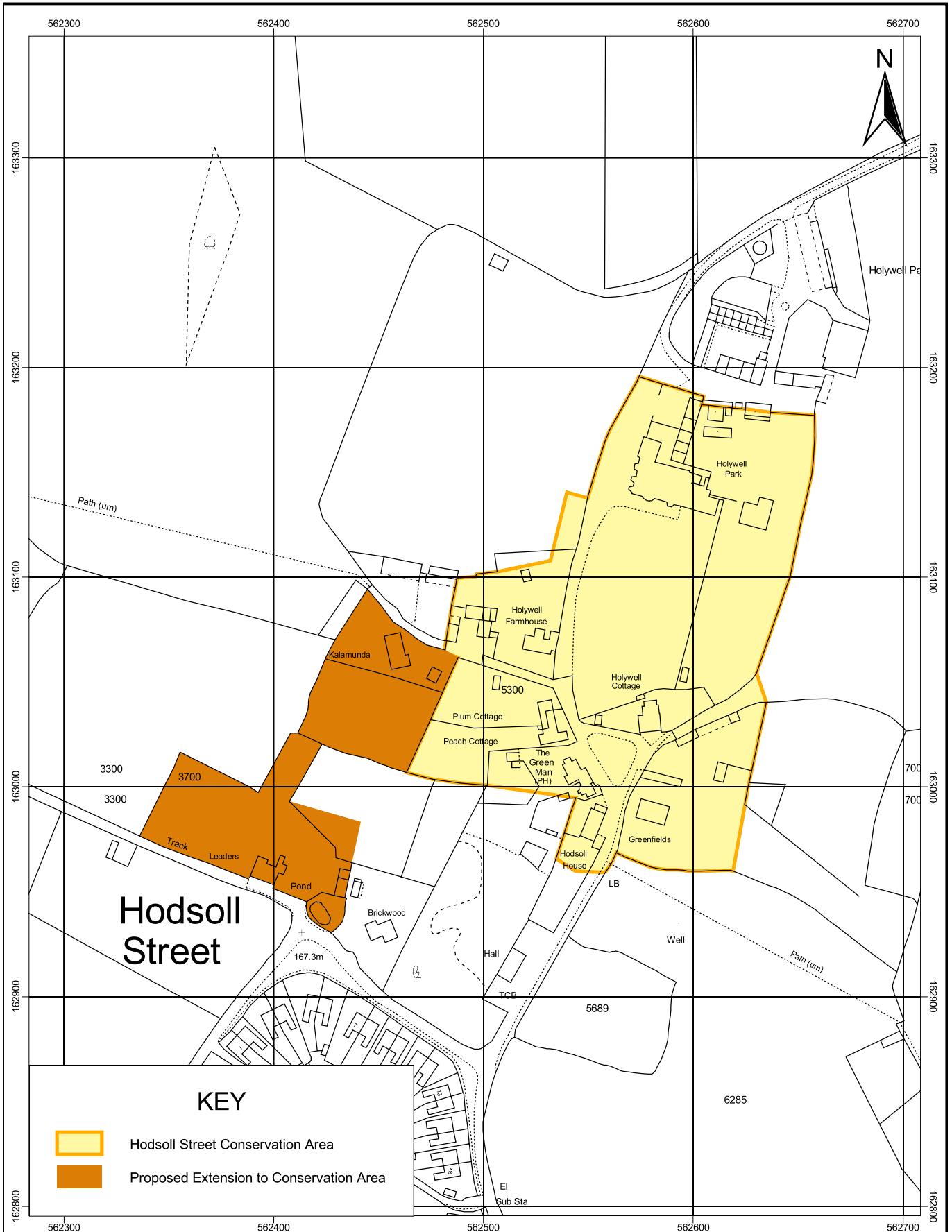
KEY

-  Hodsoll Street Conservation Area
-  Buildings Contributing to Character
-  Open Space
-  Areas/Buildings detracting from character
-  View



**Hodsoll Street
Conservation Area
Character Appraisal**

Scale	1:2500
Date	March 2003
Drawn By	CW-T
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KEY

- Hodsoil Street Conservation Area
- Proposed Extension to Conservation Area



**Hodsoil Street
Conservation Area**

**Recommendations for
Future Policy Changes**

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