

MASHAM

Conservation Area Character Appraisal



Working for you

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Conservation Area Appraisals aim to define and analyse the special interest which constitutes the character and appearance of a place. It is these qualities which warrant the designation of a Conservation Area. This Appraisal has been adopted by Harrogate Borough Council and forms an evidence base for the Local Development Framework (LDF). It is, therefore, a material consideration when determining applications for development, defending appeals or proposing works for the preservation or enhancement of the area. It can also form the basis for a subsequent Management Strategy, which will contain issues, proposals and policies for the conservation and enhancement of the area.
- 1.2 The Appraisal will provide information and guidance to those wishing to carry out works in the Conservation Area that do not necessarily require planning approval. It will therefore be a useful source of information for property owners, agents, applicants and members of the public who live or work in the town of Masham.
- 1.3 The main function of the Conservation Area Appraisal is to enable Harrogate Borough Council and the community to relate planning proposals to the Conservation Area. The Appraisal will help us understand the impact that development proposals would have on the Conservation Area and whether a proposal would be acceptable or appropriate.
- 1.4 The assessment of the area's special architectural or historic interest is based on a careful and objective analysis of the area. The statement of character and appearance in this Appraisal is based on the method of analysis recommended by English Heritage in their "*Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*".
- 1.5 Various qualities are looked at including: historical development, building materials, and relationships between built and open spaces. Although this Appraisal aims to be comprehensive the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.
- 1.6 Masham Conservation Area was designated on 15 October 1975 and, following a review of Harrogate District's Conservation Areas, the boundary was amended in 1995. Following approval of this Appraisal on 10 December 2008 the boundary was amended again. This Appraisal aims to describe Masham as it is today and identify the special character and distinctiveness of its setting, buildings and open spaces. Having identified those special qualities, the Appraisal will examine whether opportunities exist to protect and enhance its character.
- 1.7 By identifying what makes Masham special or distinctive, it is suggested that any future change, whether to individual buildings, building groups or the town as a whole, will be based upon this understanding of the past and present character of the town. In this way, we can manage future change to ensure that it makes a positive contribution towards preserving or enhancing its special character.

Objectives

The principal objectives of the Appraisal are:

- to define and record the special character and interest of Masham;
- to raise public awareness of the aims and objectives of the Conservation Area designation and stimulate their involvement in the protection of its character;
- to identify what is worthy of preservation to aid understanding;
- to assess the action that may be necessary to safeguard this special interest;
- to identify opportunities for enhancement.

2. Planning policy context

2.1 Local authorities have a duty to designate *'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'* as conservation areas under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The same Act also requires local planning authorities periodically to review conservation areas.

2.2 Government guidance on all development affecting conservation areas is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15). PPG 15 advises local authorities to define the elements that make the special character or appearance of conservation areas in order to provide a sound basis on which to develop local planning policies, preservation or enhancement strategies and to make development control decisions.

2.3 In determining planning applications for development within conservation areas and applications for Conservation Area Consent, the Council will give considerable weight to the content of conservation area character appraisals. The consideration of proposals in the context of the description contained in these appraisals will be an important factor in deciding whether a proposal has an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and therefore, whether it is contrary to saved Local Plan Policy HD3, which is the key policy for the control of development in conservation areas.

The scope of Policy HD3 also covers development proposals outside conservation areas, which would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.

2.4 Involving the community and raising public awareness is an integral part of the Appraisal process and needs to be approached in a pro-active and innovative way. Community involvement helps to bring valuable public understanding and 'ownership' to proposals for the area. Appendix B details how the local community has been involved and summarises the contribution it has made to this Appraisal.

3. Historic development & archaeology

- 3.1 The name Masham may derive from the Domesday Book reference to *“the ham of Maessa’s people”*, ham referring to a small settlement. The Book refers to the taxing of *“twelve carucates there by eight ploughs. Gospatric had one manor there. Ernegis has now one plough and ten villeins and three borders with five ploughs - there is a church”*.
- 3.2 Prior to the Norman Conquest in the late eleventh century, lands around Masham were settled by a succession of people, each group being succeeded by others and a turbulent history is indicated. The Romans had a presence there, but the first permanent settlers were the Saxons who built a church paid for by the Lord of the Manor. The base of an old Saxon Cross stands outside the present Church door. Around 900AD, Norsemen invaded the region, burning and laying waste to the Church and causing great suffering in Masham. They also introduced sheep farming, something for which the town is well known today.
- 3.3 Feudal lands were granted to Earl Alan, followed by Nigel de Albin whose son, Roger de Mowbray, fought at the head of men from Masham against the Scots at Northallerton in 1138. Later, Roger de Mowbray granted Masham Church to the Church of St Peter in York, so establishing a prebend. As a consequence of this the Peculier Court of Masham was established (Peculier is Norman French, meaning particular rather than odd). In the twelfth century the growth of the monasteries gave rise to the founding of granges in

Mashamshire where the breeding of sheep was carried out. The plague was to kill many people in and after 1340. At that time, houses were timber-crucked and thatched, with families and animals sharing the shelter provided. In 1393 Stephen de Scrope was granted a Wednesday Market held on the present site.

- 3.4 Masham became the crossroads for several pack-horse tracks, leading to its development as a busy trading place. Later, some of these were turnpiked (e.g. the Masham to Thirsk road in 1755). In that year the present stone bridge over the Ure was built, replacing a succession of earlier wooden structures. In 1753 the Grammar and Free Schools were established.
- 3.5 In the nineteenth century the King’s Head Hotel became the most important secular building in Masham as the main posting house in the town. William Danby was a great benefactor to Masham, on one occasion funding the repair of the Church steeple after a gale. Another famous name, Theakston, emerged in the mid-nineteenth century. Mr Theakston had a brewhouse behind the Black Bull in Silver Street and in 1870 built the new brewery and maltings in Red Lane. The railway arrived at Masham in 1875.
- 3.6 Masham today is the local centre for a large rural and agricultural hinterland. The population of the Parish is modest at around 1,260, though there has been an increase of about 20% since 1981. Four

major local industries provide significant employment opportunities: Danby Foods, l’Anson Brother (Animal Feeds) and the Theakston’s and Black Sheep Breweries, the two breweries also serving to attract tourists to the town. The Wednesday and Saturday Markets continue to attract locals and visitors, as do the annual Sheep Fair and Steam Engine Rally. However, Masham has not been unduly commercialised and there is a strong feeling that it still belongs very much to the Dale and to the “locals”. It is probably much quieter today than a century ago when records suggest that as many as 70,000 sheep were sold every year in the Market Place.



Map 1: The Historical Development of Masham



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4. Location & setting

The town

- 4.1 The town of Masham is the most northerly settlement of any size in the Harrogate District. It stands above the River Ure ten miles north west of Ripon.
- 4.2 The historic core of Masham lies on level ground with an undulating landscape to the West which gradually merges into the Pennines. To the east the land is more gently contoured, eventually falling away into the Vale of York.
- 4.3 The layout of the historic part of Masham focuses on the Market Place and the few streets leading into this central space: Park Street Silver Street, Chapman Lane and Millgate. To the north and east is an open area of grassland beside the River Ure. Lying well below the level of the town, this open space makes up about 50% of the Conservation Area.
- 4.4 The approach to Masham along the A6108 affords the most panoramic views although much of the town is obscured by banks of trees. The dominant feature on all approaches, however, is the spire of St Mary's Church.

- 4.5 The River Ure rises in the hills above Hawes in Wensleydale and passes through Masham and Ripon to join the River Ouse near Boroughbridge.



View along River Ure from Masham Bridge

- 4.6 The landscape setting around Masham bridge represents an important feature of the environs of the town. The extensive flood plain to either side of the river Ure form an important aesthetic backdrop to the town as well as providing an important recreational facility for the residents and visitors.

- 4.7 The approach into Masham from Grewelthorpe and Hackfall Woods across Nutwith Common contrasts starkly with that of the eastern approach. The land gently undulates descending from high wooded ground above Nutwith Common, past evidence of prehistoric activity in the form of cairns and enclosures to low-lying meadowland to the River Ure and Swinney Beck. Once again Masham is masked on the plateau behind banks of trees. The dominant man-made feature is the spire of St Mary's Church.



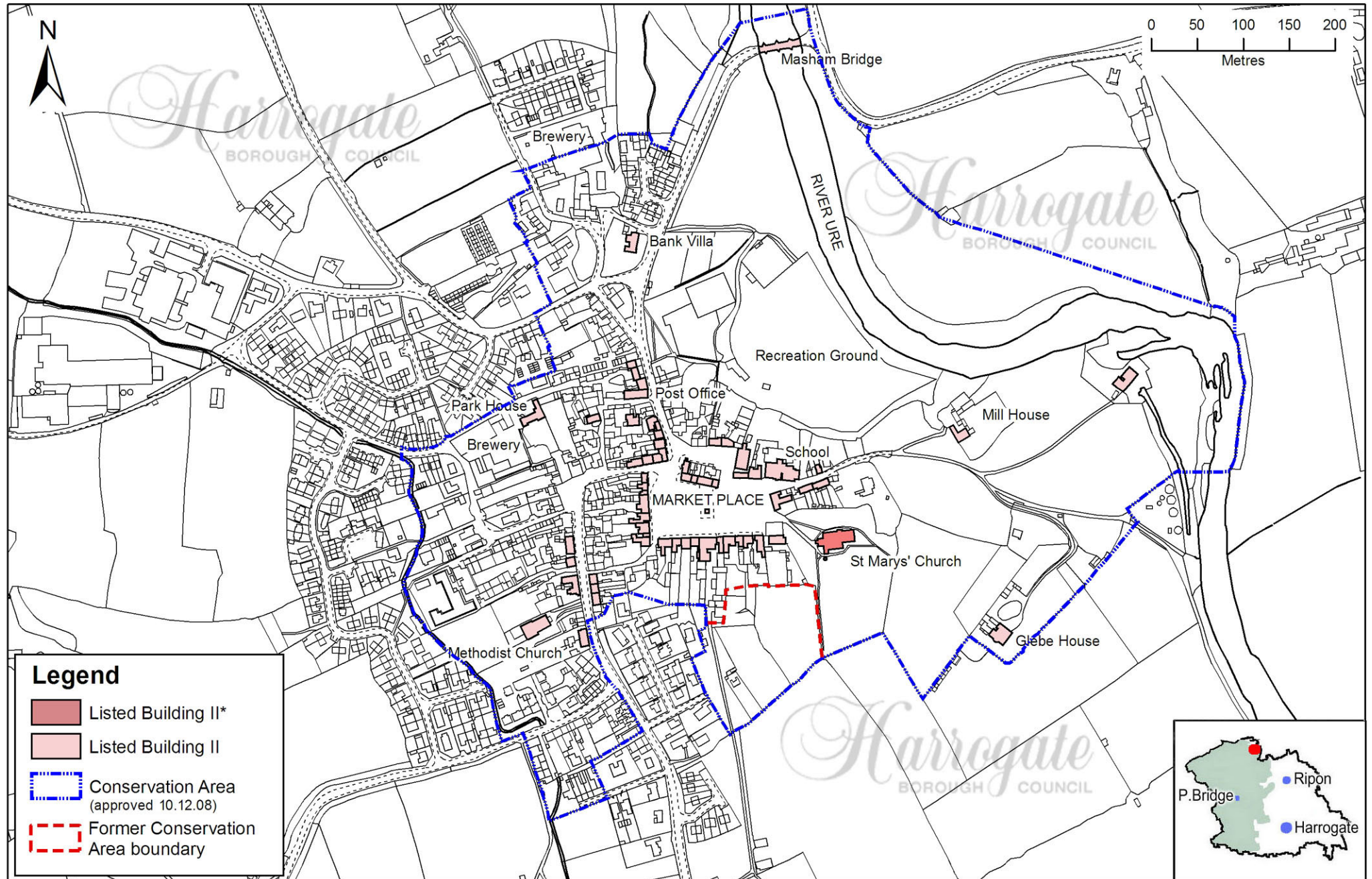
View North into Masham from Nutwith Common- the spire of St Marys commands many views from the approaches into the town.

- 4.8 The first and dominant man-made feature on entering Masham from Nutwith Common is l'Anson's animal feeds. Due to the nature of the business the majority of the building on the site are large scale steel framed industrial buildings. As a result of recent developments, efforts have been made to lessen the impact of these building with the use of earth banks and tree planting.
- 4.9 The A6108 from Leyburn is the least spectacular entrance into the town past open fields with dry stone and hedge boundaries. Interesting features outside the town are the Marfield gravel pits and the Marfield Nature Reserve (former gravel pits), and the now redundant auction site.



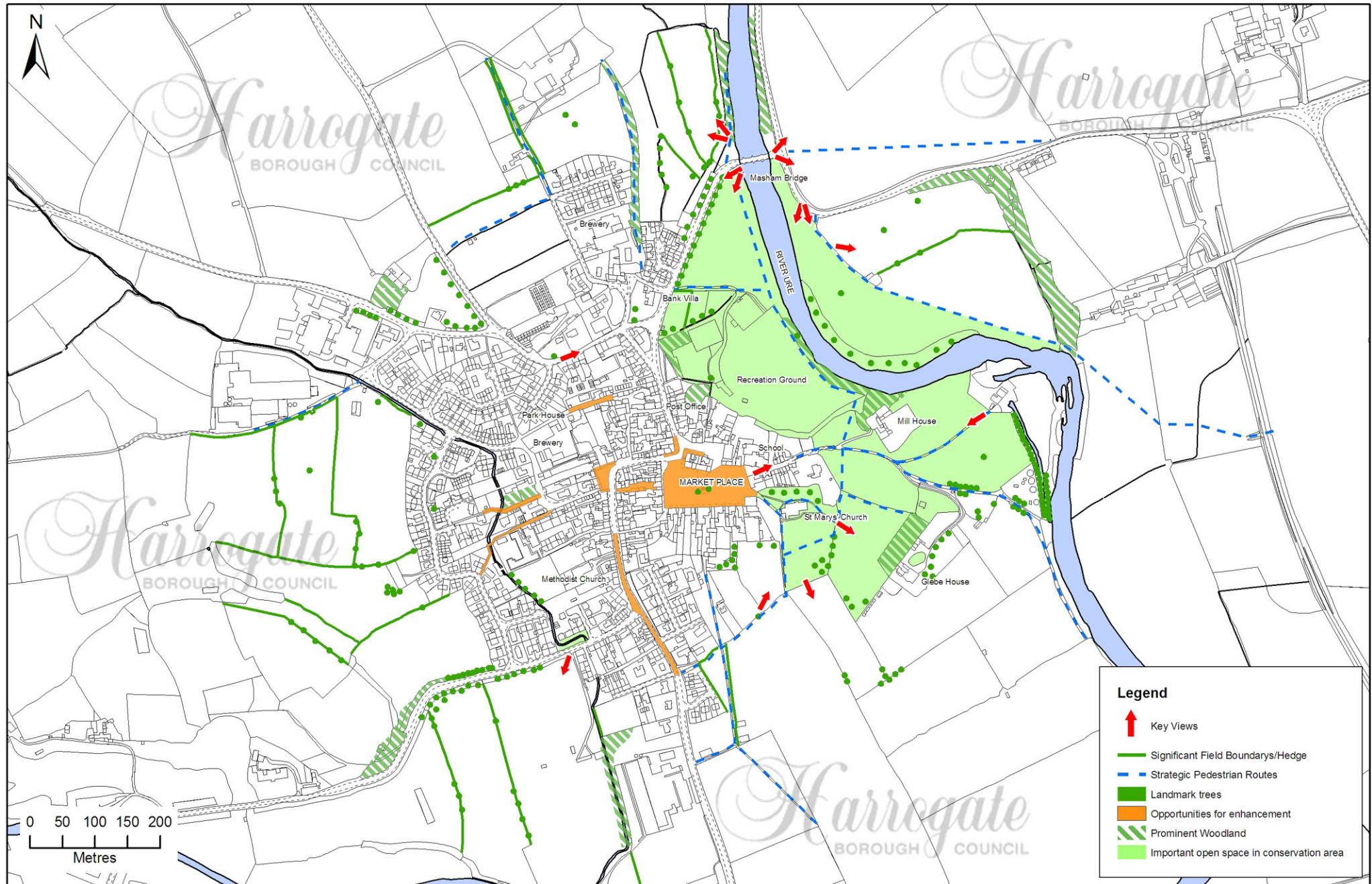
The Masham allotments (Bellfield Gardens) borders onto the Conservation Area boundary. A well-maintained site which provides an important recreational facility for the town, the importance of which was highlighted in the consultation workshop.

Map 2: The Conservation Area



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Map 3: Landscape analysis



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