

SPOFFORTH

Conservation Area Character Appraisal



Working for you

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	1
Objectives	2
2. Planning policy framework	2
3 Historic development & archaeology	3
4 Location & landscape setting	4
5. Landscape character	6
6. The form & character of buildings	8
7. Character area analysis	12
Map 1: Historic development	14
Map 2: Conservation Area boundary	15
Map 3: Analysis & concepts	16
Map 4: Landscape analysis	17
Appendix A:	
1 Management strategy	18
2 Monitoring & review	18
3 Maintaining quality	18
4 Conservation Area boundary review	18
5 The management of change	19
6 Opportunities for enhancement	19
Checklist to manage change	23
Appendix B: Public consultation	24

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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 provides information and guidance to those wishing to carry out works in the Conservation Area whether or not they require planning approval. It is, therefore, a useful source of information for property owners, agents, applicants and members of the public who live or work in Spofforth.
- 1.3 The main functions of the Conservation Area Appraisal are to ensure that any works in the Conservation Area have regard to the special qualities of the area and to devise a strategy to protect them. The Appraisal will help us to understand the impact that development proposals would have on the Conservation Area and whether they are acceptable and/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, using a method of analysis recommended by English Heritage. Various qualities are looked at including: historical development, building materials, and relationships between buildings and open spaces. Although an Appraisal aims to be comprehensive, the omission of a particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.
- 1.5 Spofforth Conservation Area was originally designated in October 1978. Following a review of Conservation Areas, the boundary was amended on the 15 April 1993. This Appraisal aims to describe Spofforth as it is today and identifies the special character and distinctiveness of its setting, buildings and open spaces.
- 1.6 Having identified those special qualities, the Appraisal will examine whether opportunities exist to protect and enhance its character. By identifying what makes Spofforth special or distinctive, it is suggested that any future change, whether to individual buildings, building groups or the village as a whole, will be based on this understanding of the past and present character of the village. In this way, we can manage future change to ensure 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 settlement's special character and interest;
- 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 framework

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 to periodically 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). This 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 accordance with 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 the contribution it has made to this Appraisal.

3 Historic development & archaeology

- 3.1 The original name for Spofforth seems to have been Spottford, probably meaning “the ford near the plot of land”. However, there are several variants of the name in Norman documents.
- 3.2 After the Norman Conquest the manor of Spofforth was acquired by the Percy family who, by the beginning of the fourteenth century, had built the castle, obtaining a licence in 1308 to crenellate. The Percys were on the losing side of the Battle of Towton in 1461 and afterwards the castle was partly destroyed. By the middle of the sixteenth century it had been rebuilt, probably in the form of a fortified house. Ruins are all that remain today. The oldest visible part of the property is the thirteenth century undercroft to the hall, which is built against a rocky outcrop and there is a fourteenth century two storey chamber to the north west corner. The southern part of the castle site was cut by the building of the railway in the mid-nineteenth century.
- 3.3 Although the church is of Norman origin, it was largely rebuilt in a Norman Revival style in 1855. In 1224, a licence was granted for a weekly market in the ‘town of Spofforth’, and the presumed medieval settlement occupied the tangle of narrow lanes and the wider castle street between the church and the castle.
- 3.4 The York and North Midland Railway from Tadcaster to Spofforth was opened on August 10, 1847 and the line was extended to Harrogate in May 1848. Spofforth station was situated on the branch line from Harrogate to Church Fenton and the line joins the main Leeds North Eastern route at Crimple Viaduct. The railway construction created a very large embankment across the valley next to the castle and substantially changed the appearance of this part of the village.
- 3.5 Up until the Second World War, the village supported a number of independent tradesmen including farmers, licensed victuallers, shopkeepers, tailors, shoemakers, joiners, millers and blacksmiths. Although agriculture is still the main vocation of the village, only a minority of workers are engaged in it today, rather the majority of the residents of working age commute to Harrogate, Wetherby, York and Leeds.
- 3.6 During the construction of Massey Fold, more than 200 graves were uncovered. Archaeologists used Carbon dating to determine that the bones were from people of Celtic Christian origin dating back to 680AD.



4 Location & landscape setting

4.1 Spofforth is a village situated 5 miles south east of Harrogate and 3 miles north west of Wetherby. It occupies a low ridge between Park Beck to the west and the River Crimple to the east, where millstone grit gives way to magnesium limestone and new red sandstone.

4.2 The main road through the village connects Harrogate to Wetherby and the Great North Road. Two minor roads, probably constructed to supply the outlying farms, join the Knaresborough to Wetherby road, one at Little Ribston and the other to the south at North Deighton. Another road runs through Follifoot and joins the Harrogate to Leeds road at Pannal.

4.3 The village is readily visible from across the valleys of the various becks (the principal views of Spofforth are across the Crimple Valley), from Follifoot and Harrogate roads, and the roads to Little Ribston and North Deighton. To the south east the crest of the ridge conceals most of the village from distant views, while to the west the railway embankment and the natural regeneration of vegetation along it largely screens the village from the surrounding countryside. A handful of dwellings that have been built on top of the embankment are unfortunately sited, contrary to the traditional settlement pattern, and are visible from a wide area to the west.



4.4 Spofforth does not have a strong focal point. It has grown up along a road, traversing the length of the ridge, as the lower ground to the east and west would have been liable to flooding beside the becks. There has been some lateral expansion beside several minor lanes, particularly those forming loops on the east side of Castle Street. The Harrogate to Wetherby road runs along part of the ridge but turns off to cross the flood plain of the Crimple on a low embankment.

4.5 The presence of numerous trees and shrubs and the comparatively unobtrusive nature of much modern development has not made Spofforth intrusive in its landscape setting.

4.6 The old corn mill is detached from the rest of the village at the northern end of Mill Lane, adjacent to the river Crimple. The mill is an important feature of the locality, indicative of former activity in the village, and the Conservation Area boundary extends to include it.

4.7 The proximity of many buildings to the street gives much of the village a very enclosed character, with glimpses between roadside buildings to the back land or countryside beyond. The width of the middle section of Castle Street, and the fact that it adjoins Castle Field across which part of the castle is visible, makes this a very important space within the village. The grass triangle where Church Hill meets Church Lane has an attractive character that owes much to the mature trees in the vicinity. Formerly, the village had a second grass triangle in the main street. Whilst the triangle is still evident on the ground, this former area of open space is now occupied by the village hall and the remainder of which is utilised as car parking. The small field to the south west of Massey Garth, distinguishes the church and its setting from the more intensively built up parts of the village.

4.8 The Conservation Area includes a number of well detailed, attractive historic buildings which together form a cohesive whole. Unfortunately the modern housing estates extend the village in an uncharacteristic way. A case in point being the development of the cul-de-sacs of Mill Close, Grange Avenue, Castle Ings and Parklands, which are not representative of the established form and layout. These housing estates, particularly Grange Avenue and Mill Close, which stand on a prominent hillside facing across the Crimple Valley are widely seen and are incongruous features in the landscape.

They make little, if any, contribution to the distinctiveness of the village. Similarly, the development off Clive Road to the north of the village comprising Columbine Terrace, Jessamine Terrace and Zennia Terrace. This group of terraces does not reflect local distinctiveness in form or layout and as such appears incongruous in the street scene. However, the uniformity and character of each row gives this part of the village a cohesive identity and the landscaping in this area is attractive, helping to assimilate the buildings into the village.

4.9 With the exception of nos. 47, 49, 51 and 53 Castle Street, a row of 4 houses formerly known as Leconfield Terrace, the majority of the traditional properties in the village are detached or semi-detached sited with their front elevation facing the main road and the roads that create a loop back onto the main street. Some groups of houses are evident in the village but these are designed and built as separate entities rather than in terraced form. Infill development in recent years has been more appropriate in design to the village.

4.10 The majority of properties in the village are set back from the road by small front gardens that are enclosed by walls and hedges. These front gardens serve to soften the predominantly stone built form and are attractive in the street scene, providing a source of colour and texture with the changing seasons.

4.11 The village is surrounded by a green envelope of open fields, which are important to its setting and rural character. The capacity of this settlement, which is surrounded by floodplain, to absorb new development is limited if the rural pastoral landscape is to be retained and not lost.

4.12 The buildings are linked by a network of sand stone walls and hedges lining the streets, which add to the sense of enclosure and form strong visual ties throughout the village. These boundary walls and hedges are fundamental to the character of the village and important in views contained within. Beech Lane, for example, is narrow and tightly enclosed by stone walls and mature trees flanking the twisting lane. The stone walls vary in type and style providing a rich variety. Fields on the valley sides and on the valley bottom tend to have hedge boundaries, which include individual hedgerow trees.

4.13 Tree and woodland cover is critical to the character of the well-wooded valley landscape of the River Crimple. Mature trees and shrubs likewise feature strongly within the village.

4.14 Although agriculture now has less importance as a primary activity, previously there were seven farms within the village, which contributed to the rural qualities of the village. Former farm groups are less easily recognised as such because the original buildings have been converted and new buildings have intruded into the original layout.



Millennium Garden

4.15 There is no obvious 'centre' to the Conservation Area because of the linear nature of the village, although the castle and its grounds do provide some focus. The Castle and Castle Garth, together with the green triangle and the playing fields form an important 'arm' of countryside reaching into the heart of the village. In addition, Millennium Garden is an attractive, landscaped area of public open space.



Millennium Garden seen from the pavement.

5. Landscape character

- 5.1 The settlement of Spofforth occupies the low ridge between Park Beck and Crimple Beck that has been farmed since medieval times. This shallow valley landform with the flat valley bottom of the River Crimple has a distinct character, which is sensitive to change from inappropriate development. Spofforth is the only settlement in this valley. The distinctiveness of the Crimple Beck corridor is a result of landform and the influence that the Beck has had on land use, which is predominantly grassland with occasional arable fields. On the upper valley sides there are occasional gritstone outcrops, particularly to the east, which is a characteristic shared with Plumpton Rocks Historic Park and Garden to the north of the village, where the outcrops are much more pronounced.

Key views

- 5.2 The valley is broad and partially enclosed and there are views across it from the east and, to a lesser extent, the west.
- 5.3 Due to the layout and topography of the village and the nature of the gently curving roads that run through it, views tend to be 'contained' within the village instead of leading down the long vanishing perspective of a straight road. From the churchyard there are views of the village, of the farmland to the east and of Wetherby to the south. Views of the surrounding countryside open up along the roads out of the village. The undulating landform is scattered with various blocks of woodland



that interrupt views across an otherwise open landscape.

Significant field boundaries

- 5.4 The village is surrounded by fields that are large to accommodate modern and intensive farming practices for cereal production plus some improved grassland for grazing. The amalgamation of smaller fields to create these large fields has led to the removal of hedgerow field boundaries and trees. The fragmented hedging is interspersed with hedgerow trees. These individual trees within hedge boundaries and scattered across the fields add depth and wooded cover to the setting of the village. The field boundaries are important to the landscape setting of the village and are a valuable resource in providing physical and visual connectivity to the countryside.

Prominent woodland & landmark trees

- 5.5 Woodland cover is sparse except for occasional trees along hedged field boundaries and where associated with Crimple Beck. Mature trees line the watercourses of Crimple and Park Becks. The presence of trees in and around the settlement gives the village an immediate semi-rural appeal.
- 5.6 The wealth of mature trees in the churchyard and within the grounds of the Old Rectory and those on the green triangle at the bottom of Church Hill, are a particular feature, visible from numerous parts of the village and integral to its character.



- 5.7 Towards the edge of Spofforth there are important groups of trees that help to blend the village into the surrounding countryside and in some cases conceal relatively unattractive development. The

trees and shrubs along the old railway embankment help to soften the distinctive outline and appearance of this substantial piece of civil engineering and serve to separate the village from the agricultural land to the west. Individual native field boundary trees and hedgerow trees such as Oak, Ash and Field Maple that punctuate the landscape and field boundaries in the surrounding area complement tree cover within the village.

- 5.8 These important groups of mature trees are fundamental to the character of the village.



Strategic pedestrian routes

- 5.9 Spofforth has a network of roads and lanes providing routes through the village as well as links and connectivity between the village and the countryside. Spofforth cycleway, known as “The Harland Way”, links Spofforth to Wetherby. Part of the National Cycle Network, it is an attractive, well-surfaced, level and traffic-free former railway line running from Spofforth to Wetherby and east to the village of Thorp Arch.

6. The form & character of buildings

- 6.1 There are 13 items in Spofforth on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest:
- Spofforth Castle (Scheduled Ancient Monument) Grade II***
 - Church of All Saints Grade II***
 - Manor House, 44 Castle St Grade II**
 - 47, 49, 51 & 53 Castle St Grade II**
 - Brookroyd Cottage, 22 Castle St Grade II**
 - Spofforth House, The Old Rectory, Church Lane Grade II**
 - Archway with gates & flanking wall and inner, freestanding, archway to the Old Rectory Grade II**
 - John Metcalfe memorial, All Saints Churchyard Grade II**
 - Massey Garth & Chantry House, Harrogate Road Grade II**
 - Milepost against north corner of Castle Farmhouse ... Grade II**
 - Castle Farmhouse, 33 High St Grade II**
 - 26 & 28 High St Grade II**
 - Packhorse Bridge Grade II**

6.2 The ruined Castle is located on a low hill to the west of the village. The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and includes the ruins of the west range of the thirteenth century manor house and the buried remains of other buildings, such as an earlier eleventh century residence. The west range is of two storeys, the oldest part being the undercroft which is early thirteenth century. Above this is the



A detail of Spofforth Castle

great hall and the private rooms of the lord and his family, built and modified in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries after licence to crenellate was granted to Henry Percy in 1309. Spofforth Castle's importance lies in the good survival of standing remains and extensive archaeological deposits, and in its connections with the Percys, one of the most important and influential noble families in medieval England.

6.3 The Church of All Saints was largely rebuilt in Norman Revival style in 1855 by J. W. Hugall for Rev James Tripp, Rector. However, the tower dates back to the fifteenth century and the interior includes some twelfth century remains. It is built of coursed, gritty, pink sandstone and has a graduated Westmorland slate roof.

6.4 Manor House, no. 44 Castle Street is late seventeenth century, and was formerly an apothecary's shop. It is constructed of coursed gritstone with long and short chamfered quoins and has a pantile roof

with eaves courses of stone slates. The roof line is punctuated by a large central chimney stack. This two storey property has a lobby-entry plan and is 4 bays wide and 2 rooms deep. The central door is set in a moulded stone architrave and has a rectangular overhead. Detailing on the



Manor House

property includes paired stone gutter brackets, ashlar coping and shaped kneelers. Each gable end has a small rectangular board door in a double-chamfered stone surround. Internally there is an early to mid-eighteenth century staircase with turned balusters and the front room has a large stone fireplace with roll mouldings.

6.5 Formerly known as Leconfield Terrace, nos. 47,49, 51 and 53 form a row of 4 houses, which date from the late seventeenth century with twentieth century alterations. The terrace is built of coursed gritstone with a pantile roof, which is punctuated with chimney stacks at each



Formerly known as Leconfield Terrace

gable end and 3 further stacks spaced along the ridge. The main entrance has a large ogee lintel with the inscription:



'I.S. 1682'.

- 6.6 Brookroyd Cottage, no. 22 Castle Street, is a mid-eighteenth century coursed gritstone property with a Westmorland slate roof and stressed quoins, ashlar copings and shaped kneelers. The cottage is a traditional two storey, double fronted property.
- 6.7 The Old Rectory, also known as Spofforth House, comprises several elements but mainly dates from the late eighteenth century, although there are some four-

teenth century remains. It is a two storey residence with seven bays, two of which form a slightly projecting bay to the left side and is constructed of coursed sandstone and ashlar with a stone slate roof. The windows are 12-pane sashes in plain surrounds and with a projecting linking band at first floor sill level. The rear wall of the left wing has a blocked window with fourteenth century plate tracery at first floor level. A high stone wall encloses the



property and its associated garden.

- 6.8 The flanking walls at the Old Rectory, referred to above, are listed in their own right. The archway with gates, the flanking walls and the inner, freestanding archway, known as the precinct wall, are of medieval date and later in parts. The outer archway, which is a shallow pointed arch, is constructed of coursed, squared sandstone with wrought iron gates. The five metre high flanking wall is of similar masonry and has flat coping, stepped down to each side of the arch. The gates have dog-bars with fleur-de-lis heads, plain rails and elaborate scrolls above. The inner, freestanding arch, which is of coursed rubble with plain chamfered voussoirs and flat copings, was found

behind plaster in an old stable during alterations in 1928.

- 6.9 The churchyard associated with the Church of All Saints is the burial ground for (and has a memorial to) John Metcalf, a renowned local figure who died in 1810. He was a road surveyor who worked extensively throughout Yorkshire between 1745 and 1792 despite his blindness (caused by smallpox at the age of 6). He was known as 'Blind Jack of Knaresborough' and lived to 93.
- 6.10 Massey Garth and Chantry House are two houses of eighteenth and nineteenth century date with thirteenth century remains. They are constructed of coursed gritstone with Westmorland slate and twentieth century pantile roofs



respectively. These two storey properties comprise three parallel ranges, the central range with thirteenth century features being part of Massey Garth, the rear ranges belonging to Chantry House, both with lower eaves. The structure of the middle range, which include blocked round-headed arches with paired attached columns, indicate the remains of the house of a Chantry Priest attached to Spofforth church. The original house (now known as Massey Garth) is thought to have been built, in part, using stone from the Church of St Mary Magdalene which existed before the current church was built.

- 6.11 Castle Farmhouse, no. 33 High Street, was formerly two houses but is now a single property. It dates back to the late eighteenth century and contains the remains of an earlier structure. Built of coursed gritstone with a pantile roof, it is two storey in height with a continuous outshut to the rear. Internal timber work suggests that this was a single-aisled timber-framed house which was encased in stone in the late eighteenth century.
- 6.12 Nos. 26 and 28 High Street are two dwellings of late eighteenth century. They are built of coursed rubble with a pantile roof and outshut to the rear. As with number 33 High Street, referred to above, timber posts visible internally suggest that this may have been a timber-framed, single-aisled building now encased in stone.
- 6.13 At the northern edge of the conservation area, the bridge immediately to the west

of the Old Corn Mill dates from the eighteenth century and would have served as a packhorse bridge to the Mill. It is constructed of millstone grit and is single span, approximately 4 metres long and a metre wide. It has a keyed arch with projecting band over and arched parapets of large blocks.

- 6.14 Additionally, there are a number of unlisted historic buildings, which make a *positive* contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and are of particular interest locally. These buildings have been identified during the public consultation and, as recommended in PPG15, are recorded on the concept map. There is a general presumption that buildings of local interest within the conservation area will be protected from demolition and the Borough Council will be especially vigilant when considering applications for alteration or extension.
- 6.15 Arguably the most substantial and most important buildings, from an architectural point of view, are the castle, the church and the Old Rectory. Although these and the other listed buildings are the structures of most architectural merit, the overall character of Spofforth is also dependent upon and inseparable from numerous other buildings. These are the vernacular cottages, farm buildings, and outbuildings. Their importance and the contribution they make stems from the fact that they were built by men familiar with both the local tradition of building and the materials used. The character of these buildings is therefore essentially local.



- 6.16 The key characteristics of the local architectural style, based on the principle elevation of the remaining unaltered buildings are:

General form

- 6.17 Buildings are orientated parallel to the main street (with the exception of the modern housing developments) and the majority are fairly small with relatively narrow (depth) buildings with gabled roofs. Cottages and houses are two storey and predominantly detached, with modest frontages, usually wide enough to accommodate one room either side of a central doorway. Single storey outbuildings or barns are common features.



Farm buildings, most of which are now converted for residential use, vary in size according to their original use have been built with attention to architectural detailing, in contrast to the vernacular cottages and other buildings that comprise the majority of the village and are the main components of its character.

Materials

- 6.18 The local walling material is pink sandstone, often of a warm colour and typically used as squared-off blocks, finished with a relatively smooth punched face. Roofing materials are sandstone flags or pantile, usually with a stone ridge. Welsh slates and other roofing materials have been used but do not normally blend



with the stone walling as well as the local roofing materials. The use of stone lintels with a very shallow curve to the lower edge is an unusual and attractive feature of the village.

- 6.19 Stone, both rubble and dressed, predominates. Some brick is used too adding variation in colour. An example is the

village hall, which was built later than most buildings in the Conservation Area.

Architectural detailing

- 6.20 Most buildings in Spofforth are not richly decorated, yet there is a distinctive style with detailing typical of vernacular architecture.

Roof detailing

- 6.21 Most domestic buildings have chimney stacks situated at the apex of the roof either at the gable or part way along the ridgeline. They are generally of stone construction (but not always, as brick is also used). The gable flues are built within the thickness of the external wall and not expressed on the gable wall.



External walls

- 6.22 Quoins (large corner stones) are a common feature though, in many cases, very simple in form. Generally, there is a low window to wall ratio. Most windows openings are of simple rectangular form with flush heavy stone lintels and projecting cills.

Windows

- 6.23 Traditional window types dominate vernacular buildings in the area, being vertically sliding sashes, horizontally sliding or Yorkshire sashes and casements. Examples of all types



of windows are to be found in Spofforth, with vertically sliding sashes being the most common. A small number of dormer windows and rooflights are evident in the village, fortunately these are on the least visible roof slopes. Proliferation of these features would be detrimental to the historic roofscape.

- 6.24 There is also evidence of traditional windows having been replaced by PVCu windows in a number of properties. These alterations erode the character and appearance of the village and consideration should be given to installing traditional windows once more as part of a sympathetic enhancement project.

7. Character area analysis

7.1 This section examines the buildings and spaces within the Conservation Area in greater detail looking at sub areas. The aim is to identify the special character of the area that provides Spofforth with its particular 'sense of place' and to summarise the details and features that are important. The sub areas can be defined according to historical development, building form and uses and location. These areas are:

- 1: The village green & the Old Rectory
- 2: Beech Lane & Canby Lane
- 3: Castle Garth & Castle Street

The village green & its environs

7.2 The triangular village green provides a local focal point in this part village. The green is well defined by the three roads and enclosed by buildings and stone walls on each side. Fortunately the edges of the green have not yet suffered erosion from vehicular movements. There are five



mature trees on the green, which add to the rural character of the village. There is also a bench, which enables residents and visitors alike to enjoy the tranquility of this area. The siting of the green is unusual, not at the heart of the village as is



commonly the case, rather it is set behind properties fronting the main village street and is therefore obscured from view. An element of surprise, the green comes into view on descending Church Hill and curving round the gentle bend of Church Lane off Castle Street. To the north, the green is enclosed by the change in topography as the land rises. The eastern corner of the green is enclosed by the Old Barn, the gable end of which abuts Church Lane. On the south east side of the green is the Anglican church of All Saints and the Old Rectory. This is typical of traditional village greens which usually have a pub, shop or church in the immediate vicinity. To the west, detached properties are enclosed by traditional stone walls. The green and its environs are fundamental to the character and form of the village and

significant to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Beech Lane & Canby Lane

7.3 Beech Lane is a gently curving, single track lane characterised by two storey sand stone cottages tightly spaced and directly abutting the road, which creates a sense of enclosure. Similarly, Canby Lane is a very narrow, single track lane, flanked on both sides by high stone walls and mature boundary trees which heighten the strong sense of enclosure. This lane widens slightly at the Church Hill end. At this point, steep grass verges are introduced, which soften the built form. Both Beech Lane and Canby Lane lead onto Church Hill, which is comparatively wider, with grass verges either side. Whilst Church Hill is flanked on both sides by stone walling, properties are set back from the road by front gardens and are quite well spaced, creating a more open character.



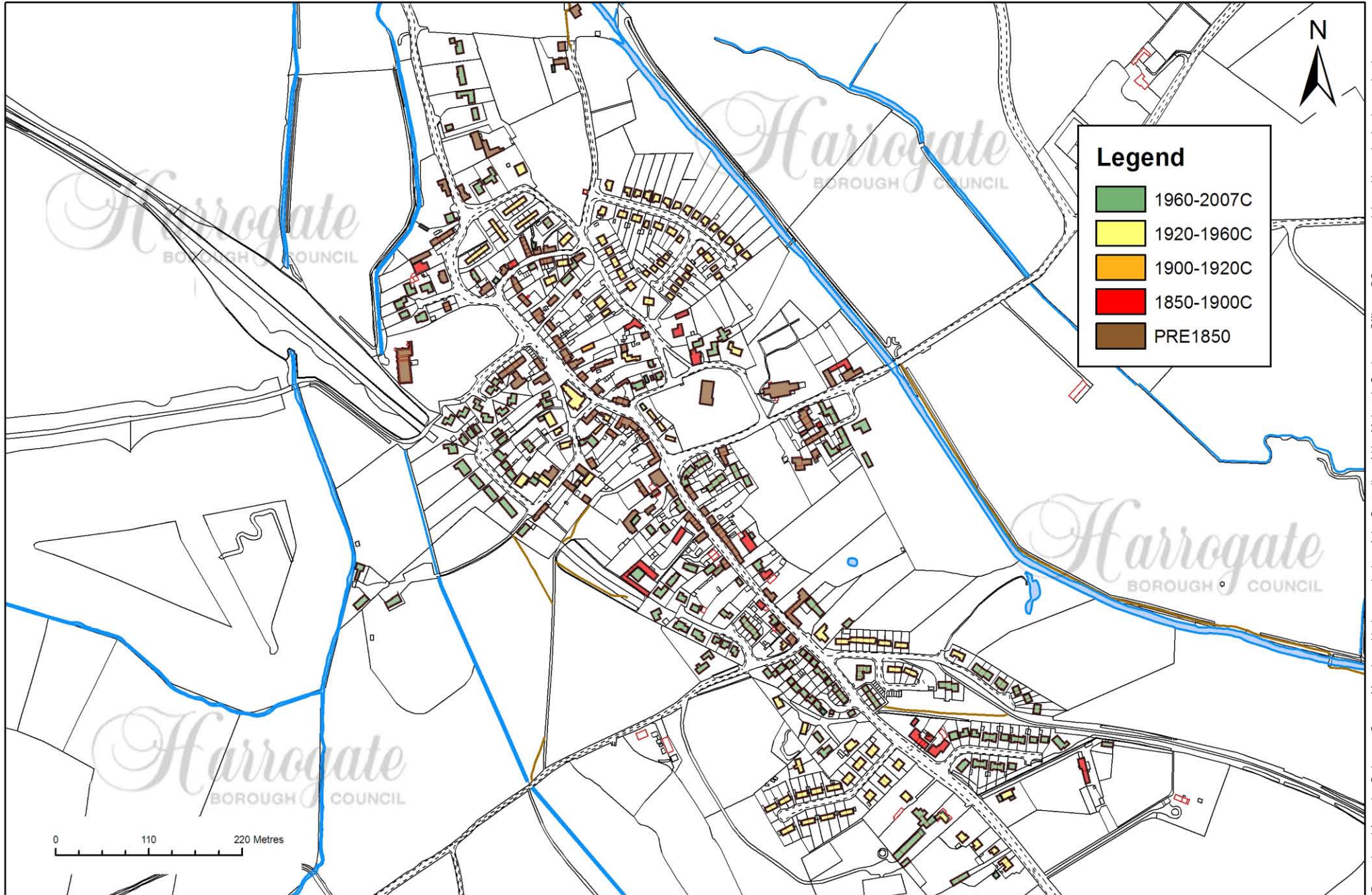
Castle Garth & Castle Street

7.4 Within the village, Castle Garth is an important open space - evidence of the village's heritage and historical associations. There is a marked difference in character between High Street and Castle Street. The former has many buildings close to the road resulting in an enclosed feeling. Castle Street begins closely confined between buildings but, as it progresses north westward, it widens out into a spacious road which is in character



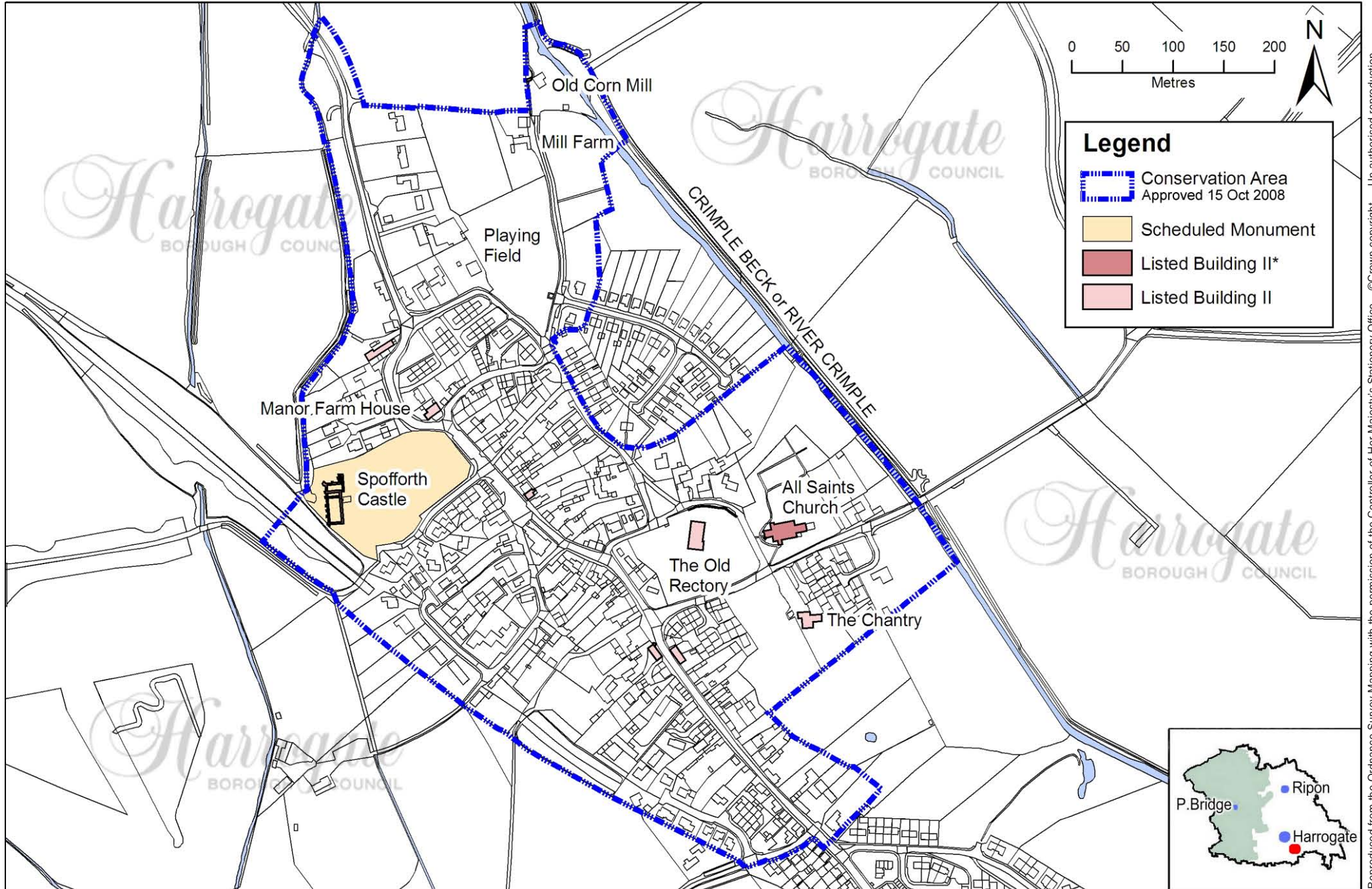
with the more open aspect of the village around Castle Garth. Castle Street is believed to have been the ancient market place. In the past, several attempts were made to build on the land in front of the castle and this was finally forestalled in 1985 when the Parish Council, village society and the people of Spofforth raised funds to purchase 'the Castle Field', or Castle Garth.

Map 1: Historical development of Spofforth



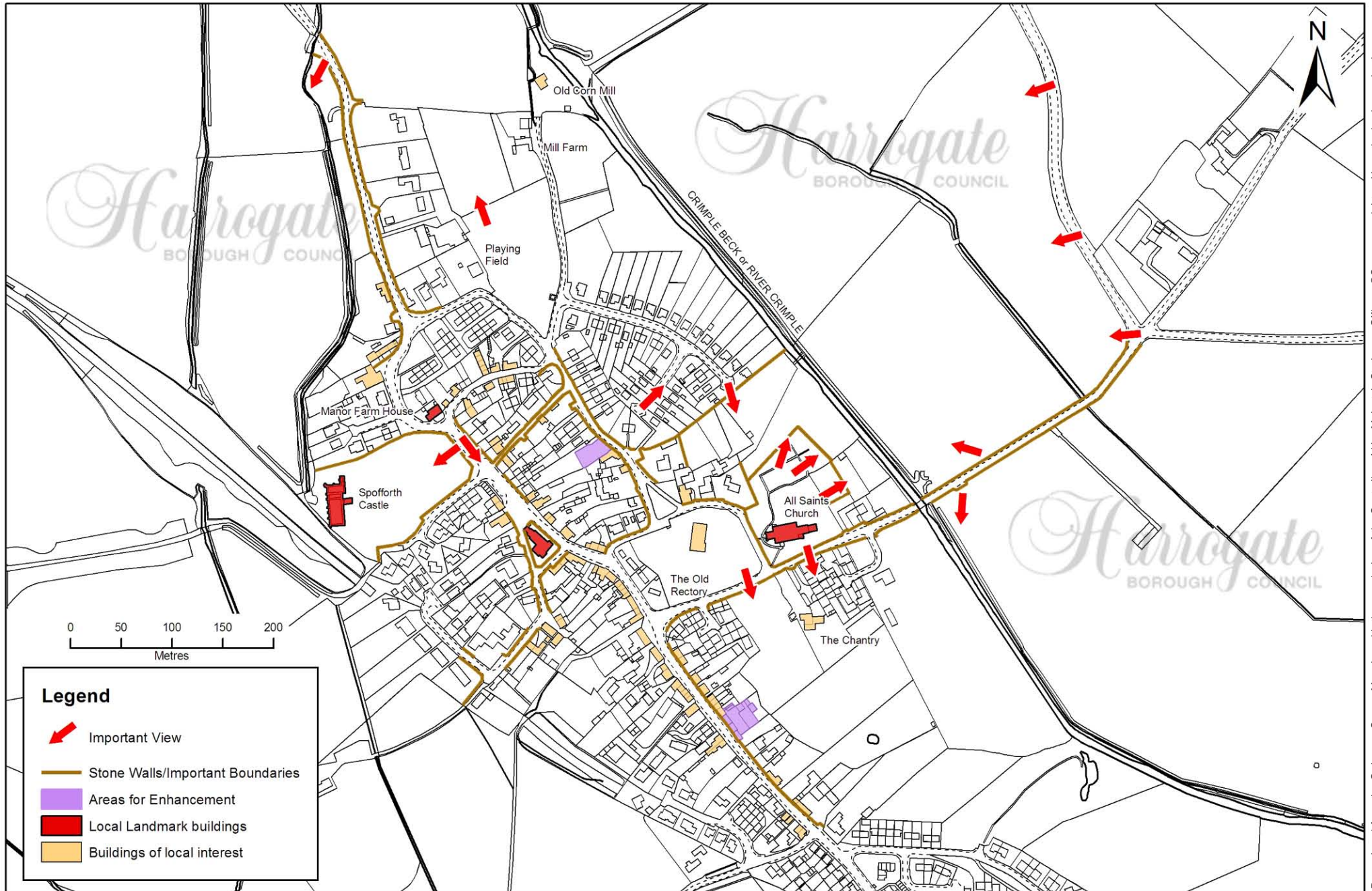
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Map 2: Spofforth Conservation Area boundary



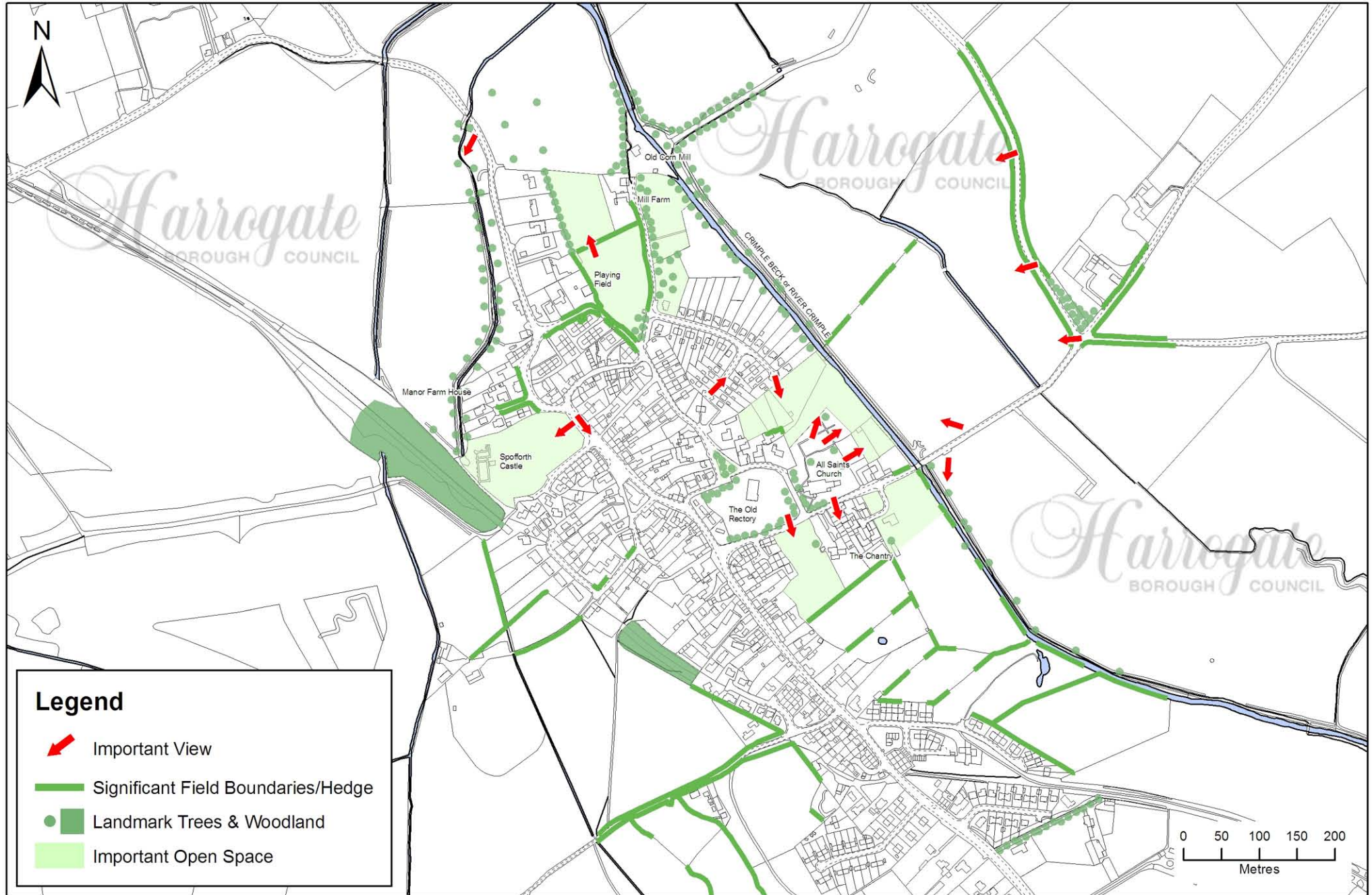
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Map 3: Analysis & concepts



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Map 4: Landscape analysis



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Appendix A

1. Management strategy

The purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy is to provide a clear and structured approach to development and alterations which impact on the Spofforth Conservation Area. The special qualities, which “it is desirable to preserve or enhance”, have been identified in the Appraisal.

Although Spofforth is an attractive village, it does not follow that all buildings and spaces within the Conservation Area necessarily contribute to that attractiveness. Ultimately the aim is to (a) explore whether there are any buildings or areas which are at odds with or spoil the character of the Conservation Area and (b) to consider how the special character or distinctiveness, as defined in earlier sections of this document, might be best preserved or enhanced.

Clearly some of the ideas or suggestions will relate to buildings or land in private ownership. It is important to note that individual owners and/or the local community will not be under any obligation to make the changes or improvements suggested. However, they may be encouraged to think about suggestions made, and once the Appraisal has been adopted, the findings and recommendations will be considered by the Borough Council in response to any applications for planning permission, listed building consent, conservation area consent or requests for grant aid.

2. Monitoring & review

The Borough Council is required to review its Conservation Areas on a regular basis; this may involve the designation of new Conservation Areas, the de-designation of areas that have lost their special character, or the extension of existing Conservation Areas. The special character of Spofforth has been re-evaluated as part of the process of preparing the character appraisal and this contributes to the overall review.

Part of the review process involves the maintenance of a comprehensive and up to date photographic record to establish a visual survey of buildings of local interest in the Conservation Area. This record was compiled with involvement of the community at the public consultation event.

3. Maintaining quality

To maintain the recognisable quality of the Spofforth Conservation Area and to ensure the highest quality of design, the Council will:

- From time to time review the character appraisal and management strategy, which will act as a basis for development control decisions and the preparation of design briefs;
- Require all applications to include appropriate written information and legible, accurate and up to date, fully annotated scale drawings;
- Keep under review a list of buildings of local interest, that positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- Where appropriate prepare supplementary planning documents including design guidance and development briefs;
- Expect the historic elements which are an essential part of the special architectural character of the Conservation Area to be preserved, repaired and reinstated where appropriate.

4. Conservation Area boundary review

As part of the process of producing the Appraisal, the existing Conservation Area boundary was reviewed. The outcome of the public consultation event identified adjoining areas as being of positive interest in ways which directly relate to the special character of the existing Conservation Area. The future inclusion of these areas has been determined on the basis of their “special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

It was suggested by residents at the workshop to include the field situated between Toad Hole Beck and Park Beck, known as the Vivor, which is believed by local residents to have been the site of former fishponds serving the Castle. However, any reference to this site in the Scheduling for the Castle and Castle Garth is absent. There is also limited cartographic evidence or indeed visible earthworks to indicate this former use of the

land. Furthermore, the existing belt of mature trees that line both sides of Toad Hall Beck provide a natural and established boundary for the Conservation Area boundary to follow. For these reasons, inclusion of this site was not supported.

A further extension suggested includes the nature reserve and pond at the far south eastern end of the village, which is accessed off East Park Road. Whilst it is acknowledged that this is an attractive area, its location is somewhat divorced from the existing Conservation Area. Similarly, the cricket ground was suggested for inclusion. This site is a valuable community facility but is set apart from the confines of the main settlement. For these reasons, inclusion of these sites was not supported.

Some residential development was also suggested for inclusion, specifically the Station Court housing development. This is an area of relatively modern housing of limited merit. Whilst the area is situated within the setting of the existing Conservation Area, the character and appearance of the development lacks any special architectural or historic interest to warrant its inclusion. Consequently, extension of the boundary to include this site was not supported.

5. The Management of change

The special character and appearance of Spofforth Conservation Area is vulnerable to erosion and significant harm through often well-intentioned, but misguided alterations and inappropriate change.

Whilst there is scope for enhancement, there are no sites in the Conservation Area that could be considered to have a wholly negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

6. Opportunities for enhancement

Spofforth is an attractive village, and most of the buildings are in good condition. There are however, a number of opportunities for the enhancement of some areas as follows:

- Reinstate windows to their former pattern and detail where use of standardised factory made joinery and PVCu windows has undermined the character of historic areas.

- Greater effort should be made to place overhead cables underground.
- Replace items of street furniture and lighting with ones of more appropriate design.
- Trees which make a particular contribution to the conservation area should be protected by Tree Preservation Orders (trees in conservation areas have a degree of protection).
- Management of existing trees and additional native tree planting to soften the impact of modern housing developments, for example the redevelopment of the former Village Farm on Harrogate Road.
- Improve the general upkeep and appearance of the Church Hill area of the village.
- Maintenance and/or repair of the redundant farm group on the east side of High Street. The condition of the farm group, which abuts the road, arguably detracts from the character of the Conservation Area and could be restored and brought into use.



It should be noted however, that buildings falling into disrepair is historically not unusual and is part of the long-term evolution of the landscape, as land management and the economy and society change. Buildings can become significant wildlife habitats and are also an important source of materials for recycling. Notwithstanding the disrepair of the buildings, the farm group makes an important contribution to the Conservation Area, indicative of former activity in the village.

- Car park/area of hard-standing associated with former public house on Church Hill.



Existing Buildings

The survey of the existing buildings within Spofforth clearly identified that a distinctive character exists, although to some extent this has been eroded by subsequent alterations, which have not always recognised that distinctiveness. Over the past 30 years, public awareness and expectation of the planning system to protect the 'familiar and cherished scene' has increased substantially. Additionally, there now exists a greater understanding of the impact which incremental change can have upon the distinctive character of historic areas. Options to safeguard and enhance the architectural character of Spofforth could include some or all of the following:

Design Guidance

Additional design guidance, which is more specific to Spofforth, could be considered for future alterations to direct change towards materials and design detailing which complements the defined local architectural character. This would be in the form of non-statutory planning guidance. If adopted, this guidance would act as a yardstick against which proposals could be assessed and could assist both existing and future residents in understanding what is desirable.

Article 4 Directions

Formal control over future alterations of buildings could be introduced through what is known as an Article 4 Direction, which removes permitted development rights. These are the rights granted by Statute to alter dwellings without the need for planning permission within strict limitations. Article 4 Directions can be designed to be specific to particular types of development, relating, for example, only to roof covering or front elevations. It cannot place an embargo on change, but rather brings certain types of development within the scope of planning control, so the impact of any proposed change can be properly assessed. Article 4 Directions,

which are drawn up by the local planning authority, namely the Borough Council, is the only means of applying equal control to all buildings within the conservation area. Without such a Direction, alterations will only be subject to control where planning permission or listed building consent is required. Equally, any non-statutory planning guidance will only be capable of being applied in those cases where applications are necessary. Article 4 Directions could be introduced throughout the conservation area or just to individual buildings whose special interest is considered to be at risk from incremental change.

Reinstatement of architectural details

Quite a number of buildings have been subject to ill advised alterations and as a result, have lost much of their architectural character, in some cases to such an extent that their original form and character is no longer recognisable. The introduction of standardised twentieth century door patterns and PVCu windows and porches has undermined the character of many historic areas. The use of non-traditional finishes such as staining for joinery is detrimental to the character and appearance of the village and controls or guidance to encourage painted timber and traditional details and materials should be introduced. Non-sympathetic alterations should be resisted.

Grant Schemes

From time to time the Borough Council operates grant schemes to help maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The reinstatement of windows to their former pattern and detail could be achieved through the use of grant aid where listed buildings are concerned and in those cases where alterations have had a severe impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area

Erosion of quality & loss of architectural detail

The character and appearance of buildings in the Conservation Area is harmed by the removal or loss of original architectural features and the use of inappropriate materials. For example the loss of original joinery, sash windows and front doors can have considerable negative impact on the appearance of an historic building and the area. Insensitive re-pointing, painting or inappropriate render will harm the long-term durability of brick and stonework.

In all cases, the Borough Council will expect original historic features and detailing to be retained, preserved and refurbished in the appropriate manner, and only replaced where it can be demonstrated that it is beyond repair.



Roof alterations & extensions

Rooflines and chimney stacks are important elements in the Conservation Area. Fundamental changes to the roofline, insensitive alterations, poor materials, intrusive dormers, or inappropriate roof windows can all harm the character of the historic roofscape and will not be acceptable.

Gardens & front boundary treatments

Front and rear gardens make an important contribution to the streetscape and character of the area. The Borough Council will resist the loss of soft landscaping and original boundary walls and railings. For example, the construction of new openings and the consequent breaking up of the continuous stone walls flanking the main streets would be detrimental to the character and appearance of conservation area.



Telecommunications equipment, satellite & cable dishes

External telecommunications apparatus including cable runs can harm the appearance of historic buildings. The Borough Council can provide guidance on the installation of telecommunication equipment including satellite dishes.

Overhead Wires are intrusive throughout the Conservation Area and undergrounding of cables would considerably enhance the character of

the village. This should be a long term aim in the interests of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Floorscape

It is unlikely that in past times street surfaces in Spofforth were formalised with setts, paving or cobbles and it is considered that modern tarmac is a natural successor to the rammed earth and stone that would have preceded it. In parts of the village concrete kerbings have been used. It is considered that these should be replaced with more traditional stone kerbings in the interests of the visual amenity of the Conservation Area.

Important trees

The existing mature trees throughout the Conservation Area, add to its charm and character. The loss, for example, of trees on the grass triangle would significantly erode the character. In accordance with the Council's Landscape Design Guide, the existing pattern of hedgerows, hedgerow trees, trees and shrubs should be preserved and repaired through managed planting and maintenance. In considering both of these areas, guidance should be geared towards tree/shrub planting and management methods that improve wildlife habitats.

Outdoor advertisements & street furniture

The design and appearance of street furniture and advertisements in the village adds to street clutter and needs improvement in order to visually enhance the character and appearance of the area.

New development

A key consideration is the impact that future development proposals (whether in the form of new buildings or through the extension of existing buildings) might have on the distinctive form and character of the conservation area.

The Conservation Area Appraisal will provide guidance on the locally distinctive building features and details which reinforce the particular 'sense of place' that characterises Spofforth. This will assist in the formulation of proposals for small scale extensions and development.

Where larger development schemes are proposed, then it is likely that a site specific design brief will be required. This will be informed by the Conservation Area Appraisal and would identify those features such as buildings, trees and boundary walls which would be retained within the redevelopment scheme.

New buildings will only be permitted where they respect, rather than compete with the historic skyline, respect landform and landscape pattern and are accompanied by a comprehensive landscape scheme that is integral to the design. New development must be of a suitable quality of design and execution and should relate to its context and respect the established values identified in the appraisal. The Council will encourage new development that complements the establish grain or settlement pattern, whilst representing the time in which it is built and the culture it accommodates. New development should respect and not detrimentally impact on the exiting spaces between buildings.

A further key consideration for new development is the appropriateness of the overall mass or volume of the building and its scale. A new building should be in harmony with, or complementary to, its neighbours. It is also important that the materials generally match or complement those that are historically dominant in the area. Within these criteria, new development should aim to achieve creative design solutions, whether contemporary or traditional in style.

Employment & commercial activity

Commercial activity can provide a focus for the community and contribute to the character of the village. The village is fortunate to have some services such as a shop, hairdresser and a pub (in earlier times the village boasted four pubs). Efforts



should be made to encourage and support businesses and to protect and enhance existing commercial activity and local services.

Neutral buildings & spaces

Neutral elements or buildings may have no special historic or architectural quality in their own right, but nonetheless provide a setting for listed buildings and unlisted building of local character or interest. This back-cloth is important and needs careful management.

Checklist to manage change

In managing change in the Conservation Area, regard should be paid to the following:

- Development should not impinge on the form and character of Spofforth.
- Buildings should be constructed of materials which match or complement local traditional materials.
- Design should reflect the distinctive local architectural style both in terms of overall form and detailed design as appropriate to the context.
- In general new buildings should follow the established building line, with frontage properties set back from the road edge by front gardens enclosed by stone walls, except along Beech Lane where buildings should abut the road edge.
- New development should not adversely impact on the historic skyline, respecting important features such as the church tower and castle.
- The repair and reuse of older buildings should be encouraged in the first instance rather than redevelopment.
- Maintain the softness of roadside verges by avoiding the introduction of kerbs where none existed historically.
- Positive management of the ageing stock of mature trees.
- Retain important gaps between buildings to ensure glimpses of trees and views are maintained.
- Minimise clutter of signage and street furniture.
- Repair and retention of stone boundary walling.

Appendix B

Public Consultation

The Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the requirements for public consultation. To meet these requirements, and to inform a review of the Conservation Area, a public consultation event was held on Tuesday 24th July 2007. This consultation took the format of a public meeting and included a walkabout and a workshop session. Prior to the event residents were notified via a leaflet. In addition, a press release appeared in the local newspaper informing residents and consultees that a review of the Conservation Area was taking place and that a workshop had been arranged. This information also appeared in the 'Latest News' section of the Council's planning website.

The format of the workshop included a short presentation on why the Conservation Area is being reviewed, the purpose of the Appraisal and management plans and a brief resumé on the changes that have happened since the original designation.

The main activity was a walkabout, which involved dividing into groups walking around part of the Conservation Area. The groups were encouraged to make notes and take photographs to identify what makes Spofforth special to them. On return to the hall, the workshop session enabled the groups to share the information gathered on the walkabout by annotating large maps of the village with text, symbols and photographs. The maps then facilitated a feedback session, mainly focusing on identifying potential areas within the Conservation Area in need of enhancement.

The outcome of the consultation event and the information gathered directly contributed to producing this Appraisal. Key issues raised at the event included:

- the preservation of Important views;
- identifying buildings of local interest;
- suggestions for changes to the extent of the Conservation Area;
- the retention of important boundary walls;
- the retention and management of trees.

Whilst every effort has been made to take into account and give due consideration to the views of the local residents (and to represent those views in this Appraisal document) it has not been possible to be comprehensive.

Local involvement is an essential aspect of the consultation process and local residents are encouraged to comment on the draft documents. When all comments have been received, any appropriate revisions will be made before the Conservation Area Appraisal is endorsed by the Council and published on the Council's website. This Appendix will be updated after the full public consultation has been completed.

