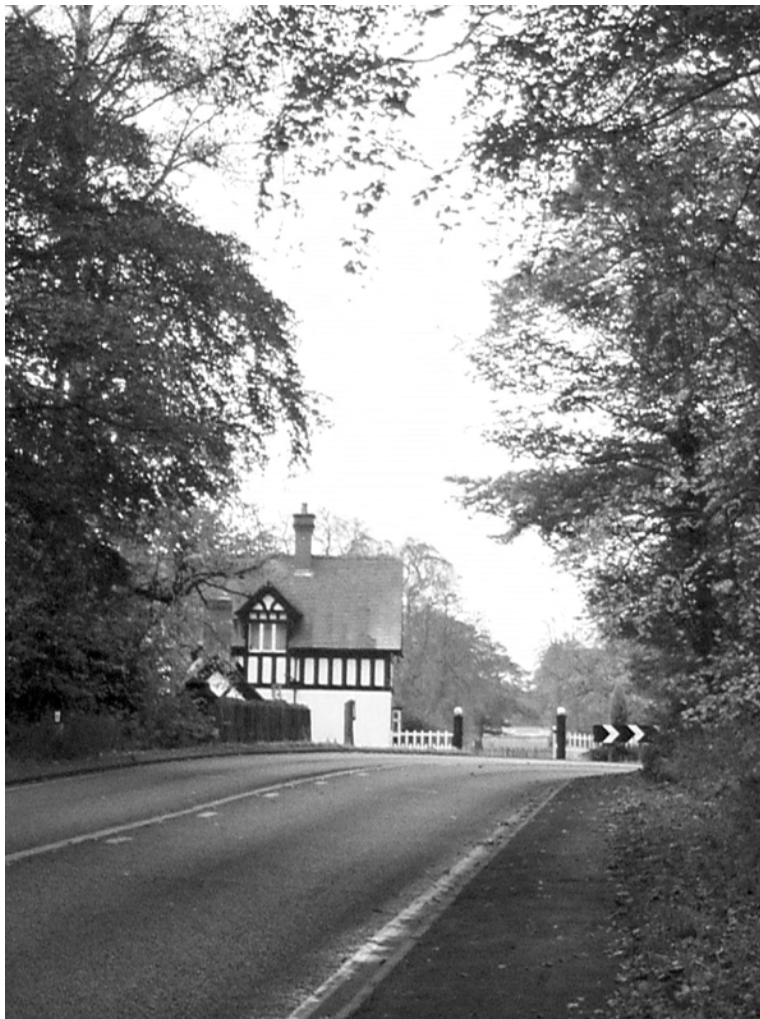


Vale Royal Borough Council

# BOSTOCK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, and are now an accepted part of Town and Country Planning legislation and practice. Local Authorities are required to identify “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. They are also under a duty to review existing designations from time to time.

It has been recognised that if the special interest, character and appearance of a conservation area is to be retained, it must be managed. The first task in this process is to define and analyse the special characteristics that justify the designation of the conservation area. This is achieved by carrying out a Conservation Area Appraisal.

The character of an area depends upon its historic background, the architectural quality and interest of its buildings, their materials and detailing, the way they relate to each other, the line of the highway, the quality of the landscape, trees and open spaces and a variety of unique features.

A Conservation Area Appraisal provides a description of those elements that contribute to and define the character of the conservation area. It also provides the basis for development plan policies and development control decisions, both within and adjacent to the Conservation Area boundary. Subsequently the appraisal will provide the background for proposals to preserve or enhance the area. It may also identify development opportunities. Therefore the Government has stated that appraisals are considered to be essential for all existing and proposed conservation areas.

Vale Royal Borough Council understands the importance of involving the local community in the appraisal process. It has recognised that these studies are only valid if those people who are most closely affected by the designation of the conservation area accept the content of the appraisal. As a result, a public consultation exercise has been undertaken, the considered responses from which have been incorporated into this final version of the appraisal.

The Borough Council's methodology for conducting Conservation Area Appraisals has been accepted as an example of Good Practice In Conservation by the Royal Town Planning Institute. However the Council has resolved to continue to revise and improve its methodology for conducting conservation area appraisals whilst striving to maintain a degree of consistency between the various completed studies.

The principal effects of this designation are as follows:

1. The Council is under a duty to prepare proposals to ensure the preservation or enhancement of the area
2. In carrying out its functions under the Planning Acts, and in particular determining applications for planning permission and listed building consent, the Council and the Secretary of State are required to take into account the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area
3. Permitted development rights are more restricted within the designated area
4. Consent must be obtained from the Council for the demolition of any building in the area (subject to certain exceptions)
5. Special publicity must be given to planning applications for development in the area
6. Six weeks' notice must be given to the local planning authority before any works are carried out to trees within the designated area. It becomes an offence, subject to certain exceptions, to cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or destroy any tree in the area without the prior written consent of the local planning authority

# HISTORY

## 1. Historic Evolution of the Settlement

### 1.1 *Origins and development of the settlement*

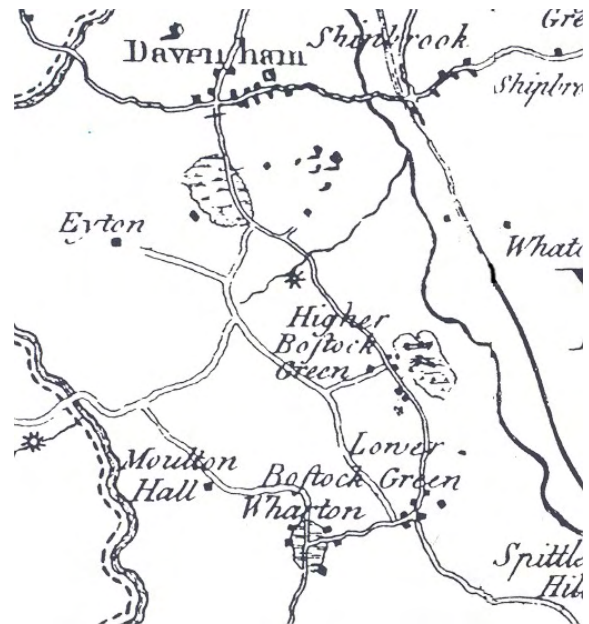
The settlement of Bostock is mentioned in the Domesday Book as Botestoch a Saxon family that later took the name of Bostock. The name is thought to have derived from Bota's Stoc - the farm belonging to Bota.

The development of Bostock Green village has been closely associated with that of Bostock Hall. This large brick country house was constructed in 1775 for Manchester businessman William Tomkinson. The original Bostock Hall, a timber framed and moated building on a site to the south of the area, was demolished in 1803.

In 1792 the Hall was purchased by the France family (who later became France-Hayhurst and who lived there until 1950). The Hall was considerably altered circa 1850 to 1875. At the same time the entire late C18<sup>th</sup> village of Bostock Green was virtually rebuilt in the 'Estate style' that is seen today. It was regarded as a model Estate, complete with farm, polo stud and dairy herd. Community facilities, including a Social Club, tennis court and bowling green complete with a spired pavilion, were added in the early 1900's.

In the 1950's the Hall complex became a residential school but it reverted to private ownership in the late C20<sup>th</sup>. Along with much of the adjacent farm complex it was eventually acquired in 1998 by developer P. J. Livesey. The majority of the buildings were repaired and converted. The poor quality dormitory blocks were removed and replaced by residential units of a more sympathetic design and new houses were constructed in the walled garden. This created a total of 68 privately owned dwellings and apartments, within a managed residential Estate landscape.

The village of Bostock Green and many of the Estate houses, farms and land still belong to the France-Hayhurst family and are managed by an agent.



**Burdett's map of 1777**

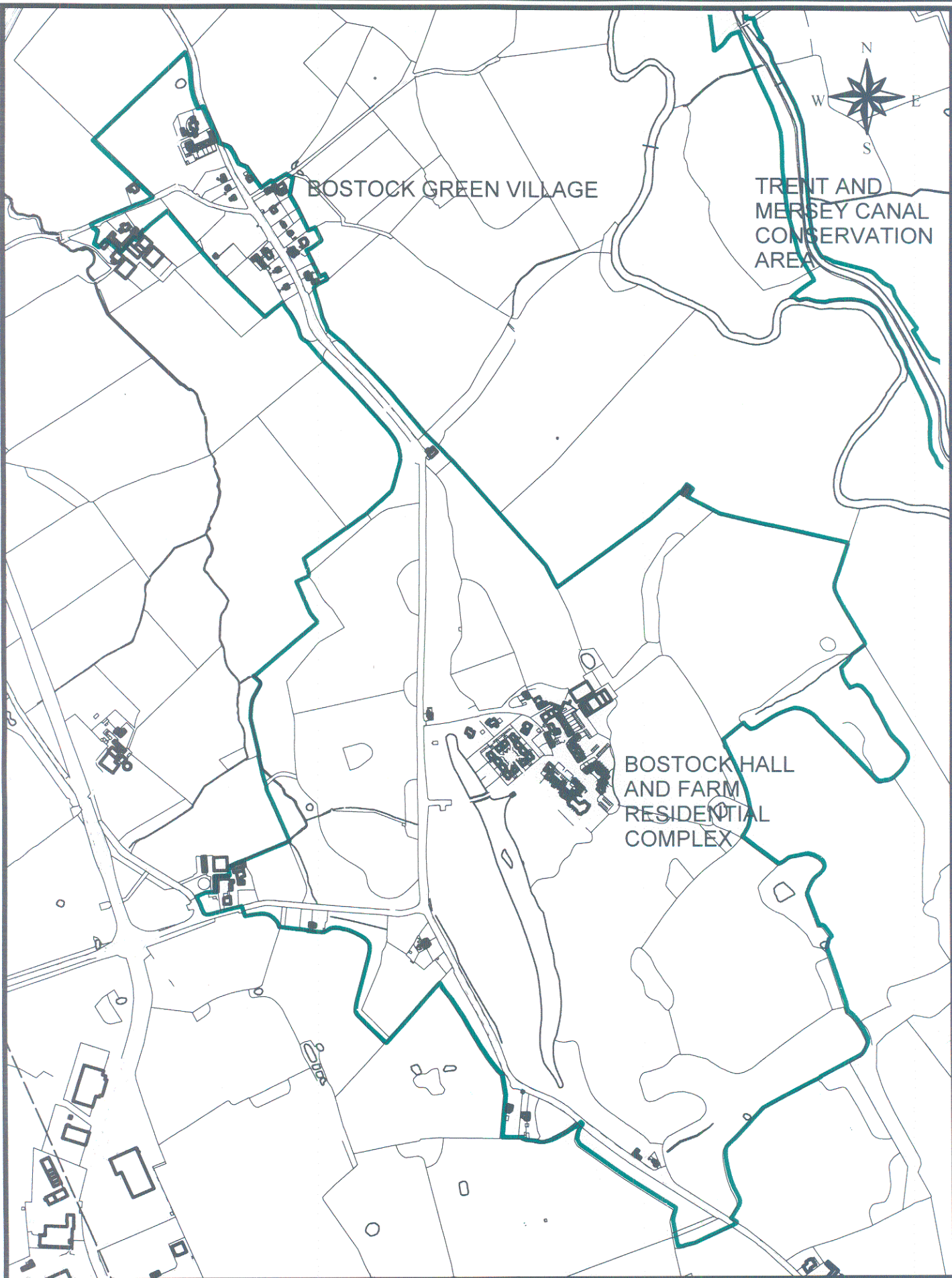
### 1.2 *Topographical elements that have influenced the settlement form*

The landscape is essentially flat and open, typical of the Cheshire plain, and providing few constraints on the development of the community. However there are the valley sides of watercourses to the West, North and East of the Estate.

### 1.3 *Influences of current or previous land uses on the area*

The origins of the Hall and its Estate were agricultural, and this influence remains strong. The wealth and status of the family afforded the extensive designed landscaping that is still a dominant feature. The mid C20<sup>th</sup> development of the Hall as a residential school with dormitory blocks facilitated the site's change of use and the subsequent residential development. The balance of the Estate is still a managed agricultural holding. The long established Estate joiner's workshop close to Bostock Hall Farm is now used by a private joinery contractor, which is an appropriate rural enterprise activity.





## 2. Archaeological significance and potential of the area

As the earliest recorded settlement dates from the C11<sup>th</sup> (Domesday Book), it is likely that there would have been considerable archaeological evidence dating back to this period. However, the Cheshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record has no record of any significant finds. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the area.

## TOWNSCAPE

### 3. Form and structure of the settlement

#### 3.1 *Boundary of the Conservation Area*

Clockwise from the North, the Conservation Area boundary follows the field hedgerow to the North of Bostock Grange Farm, crosses the C653 (formerly A533) and runs South along the highway hedge. It then follows the Eastern boundary of all the properties on the Eastern side of Bostock Green village.



**Northern Boundary of the Conservation Area**

Continuing South along the wire fence to the East of the strip of woodland to North Lodge, it then follows the Eastern edge of the North Drive to the Hall for some 300 metres. Turning North-East along a wire fence, it reaches the derelict 'Ox House', which it encloses, then runs East-South-East. Meeting another field boundary, it runs South, then bends slightly to the South-East. Where a drain emerges from

Hill Wood, the boundary runs to the West, and then skirts the entire Southern part of Hill Wood before following a field boundary West, to meet a ha-ha, which contains the remains of a metal Estate style fence.



**Ha-ha and fences on eastern boundary**

Turning South, the boundary follows the Estate hawthorn hedges and fences, passing the East side of Oak Clump and skirting South-East around Oak Wood until it meets the main A533, which it crosses.

The boundary then follows the line of the hedge which skirts the woodland belt to the South-West of the A533, and briefly meets the road. It then follows the Southern edge of the vehicle track to the rear of No 16 Bostock Road, and passes along the boundaries of the rear gardens to Nos 16 to 10. Running North along that to No 10, it meets the rear of the woodland strip to the South-West of Bostock Road and to Nos 8 and 6, where it runs due West to the South of Wood End Cottage. It follows the field boundary to Bostock Road which it crosses, and then encloses the original structures of the Home Farm complex of buildings.

It follows a drain Easterly, then the Western boundary of Pennels Wood, first North, then North-West until it reaches the woodland opposite North Lodge. There it runs in a Northerly direction along the wire fence to the West of the woodland belt bordering the C653, back to the village of Bostock Green.

The boundary follows the Western edge of the village, including the open field to the



rear of Nos 22 to 12, Bostock Green, and along the rear hedge boundary of the Bowling Green and Playing Fields. Close to Brick Kiln Lane it follows a field boundary running South-West, before enclosing only the South-East and South-West facades of the older brick structures of Brook House Farm. It then runs North to Brick Kiln Lane, East along the North side of the Lane and then follow the hedgerow boundary of the field to the West of Bostock Grange Farm and Mews, running North-West and then North-East to meet the C653.

### 3.2 *Views within, into and out of the area*

South of Bostock Green, the C653 road has a strong visual impact. Bordered by tall mature trees, linear vistas are created along the various straight lengths. The North Lodge presents a classic terminal view just before the C653 turns due South.



**South along the heavily wooded C653**

At the North Lodge, the avenue of trees along the former driveway is still obvious, but modern industrial farm buildings, the roof lights of which can be seen glinting in sunlight, unfortunately terminate the view.

Moving South along the C653, open views exist across parkland, between the copses that skirt the road to the West. They are restricted by Pennels Wood, a dense band of mixed woodland in the middle distance.

South of the 'T' junction between the C653 and the right-angled A533 (formerly A5018) the road is heavily wooded on both sides

and lateral views are restricted. Looking westwards, the scale of the new industrial buildings on the Winsford Industrial Estate is such that they are occasionally visible beyond the trees, however their light colour blends with the skyline and they are not very intrusive, when viewed at speed.

To the East of the C653, the tree belt is punctured by an entrance adjacent to Middle Lodge and the new vehicular access to Bostock Hall. From this new gateway there is a fine view of the distant Hall beyond the perimeter tree belt.



**View of distant Hall from the new entrance**

As the service road crosses the causeway, there are good and extensive views to each side of the lake. Following the road to eventually arrive at the parking area in front (to the South) of the Hall, there is a panoramic view of the landscaped parkland, including copses (clumps) and mature trees, meadows, occasionally with stock grazing and water.

At the Southerly end of the Conservation Area it is possible to see beyond the gates of South Lodge and to observe the tree lined approach to the Hall. This would also have once afforded a distant view of the Hall and is of some historic importance.

Approaching the Conservation Area from the North, the village of Bostock Green is seen after a series of bends in the C653. On the left, the cottages to the East of the village appear as a series of dark cubes.

On the right, the tall hedge fronting Bostock Grange Farm and the gable of its former barn act as a gateway feature, focusing the view South toward the village.

The woodland tends to be more dense on the East of the C653 but at intervals between Bostock Green and North Lodge there are gaps giving uninterrupted views over meadows and trees to the skyline and villages beyond.

To the North-East of Bostock Hall, the land falls away, with views over the valley of the River Dane and adjacent Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area. There are more distant views of the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope and the Pennines beyond, with Cloud End and Mow Cop on the horizon. However these views are from private farmland and not accessible by the public.



**View East Jodrell Bank and the Pennines**

### 3.3 *The importance of spaces within the Conservation Area*



**The Village Green**

Within Bostock Green village there are the accessible spaces of the playing fields and

Bowling Green complete with a distant spired Pavilion, all purposely designed to create a traditional village green image.

Within the grounds of the Hall, the lake creates an important special space with reflections and movement from the water surfaces and its wildlife. There is tranquillity - the noises are of waterfowl and wind in the trees - well screened and insulated from the adjacent sounds of traffic and humanity.



**View of the lake**

The extensive lawns between the Hall and the lake, whilst broken by areas of tree and shrub planting, play an important part in establishing the setting of the Hall's main west elevation and Service wing.



**Lawn in front of the Hall west elevation**

During the residential development, many of the important spaces within the Hall and



former farm complex service areas, such as the farm and stable yards, were redesigned and modified. Open courtyards created by the new residential property supplement them. The space that formed the Walled Garden has been so substantially reduced that it has effectively been lost.

The surrounding parkland has a special sense of place beyond being just simple farmland. It is part of a former planned landscape and remains carefully managed, maintained and cultivated to create a unified and visual harmony of woodland, trees, meadows, hedges, fences and water.

The main tree lined highway corridors are also important spaces, linking the other key elements of the Conservation Area.

### *3.4 Enclosure within the settlement*

Property boundaries are strongly defined in a variety of materials. Thorn hedging, in a range of conditions, and occasionally reinforced or gapped up by timber post and rail, predominates, especially to the traditional Estate properties.



**Thorn hedge reinforced by timber fencing**

Iron post and bar railing, painted black, is a locally distinct, though not common, form of fencing. More frequently found are split timber pales of alternating height fixed with round pegs. Common to road frontage boundaries and surrounding the oak tree planted to define the centre of the old County of Cheshire, this style of fencing is uncommon, but not unique to the area.

Low key hedges and post and rail or wire fences are found in the pastoral landscape. There are also some red brick walls, of varying height and forms of coping, usually close to farm properties. Along the Village Green frontage, a worn-out post and chain fence, backed by a poor thorn hedge, has been reinforced by old tree trunks.



**Tree baulks behind the worn-out post and chain perimeter to the Village Green**

Tree trunks are also found protecting the tree lined verges of the C653, preventing unauthorised parking and Estate access. Many of the tree baulks are badly rotten.

These forms of enclosure are appropriate to the rural context of the Conservation Area. Estate management has maintained the continuity of traditional detail. Where this control has been relaxed, obvious modern elements are being introduced, elaborate, ornate, twisted and gilded metal gates and railings being an example. These are in contrast to the traditional spear topped metal railings found above low red brick walls in the vicinity of Middle Lodge.



**Modern ornate fencing and gates**



To the south of Middle Lodge is the recently constructed entrance to the Bostock Hall residential Estate. This is an untidy collection of assorted forms of enclosure. Low timber knee rails protect the visibility splay behind which timber post and rail fencing leads to new red brick piers with ornate modern security gates.



**New entrance to Bostock Hall**

Within the Bostock Hall and farm complex residential development, there are few property boundaries. Essentially the totality of the original single ownership is maintained by the format of an open plan Estate. Where boundary features exist they are very low key, as small, although often evergreen, hedges.

The exceptions are:

The grade II listed walls to the Walled Garden, where the partially rendered original red brick walls rise to over 4 metres high;



**Rendered Walled Garden walls**

the assortment of bold boundaries to Platts Hall, as a result of which the property

stands relatively isolated within the overall complex:



**Platts Hall adjacent to the walled garden**

the new sections of red brick wall, screening the newly created residential garaging and parking area to the rear of the former service wing of the Hall; and

the new tall red brick wall between the converted farm barns and the residual farm buildings.

There are significant historic gateways to each end of the former South Drive. Both of these structures feature ornate scrollwork and are listed. They include screen fencing adjacent to the gates and piers. Operational gate mechanisms are still housed within The South Lodge.

To the South of the area, a low stone wall at the back of the grass verge, on either side of the South Lodge, defines the Estate boundary. In parts, a deep drainage ditch lies behind the wall.



**Stone wall by South Lodge**

On the western side of the A533, south of its right-angled junction (C653 and former A5018), a more continuous length of ditch, topped by a weak hedge, closely follows the edge of the road footpath.

Much less attractive is the extensive length of galvanised chain link fencing to the road frontage boundary of the Bostock Hall complex. Originally installed in the 1950's, sections of this are in poor condition.

Throughout the Conservation Area there is evidence of regular vehicle impact damage to all types of the roadside boundaries.

### 3.5 *Urban Form*

The Conservation Area has a strong linear form. Its main elements are strung along the former A533 (now C653 and A533) as it runs from North to South.

Bostock Grange Farm lies in the North of the Conservation Area, well screened behind an overgrown hedge, although its range of roof chimneys is visible. The property is believed to be of considerable age and together with its range of barns immediately to its South, is shown on the 1839 Tithe Map. In the late C20<sup>th</sup> the barns were adapted and converted into a number of residential units, now known as Bostock Grange Mews. They are fairly well screened and being accessed from Brick Kiln Lane, are only marginally more visually prominent from the C653 highway than they were prior to conversion.

Almost hidden along Brick Kiln Lane lies Brook House Farm, which has a mixed range of traditional and modern farm buildings to its South-West. Another Tithe Map property, it is part of the Bostock Estate and is still in agricultural use.

Close-by, the village of Bostock Green is a collection of widely spaced properties, individually aligned within their separate plots. A number of cottages are known to have existed in 1801 and the majority of the

village is shown on the 1839 Tithe Map. The Smithy, which is known to have been built prior to 1798, can also be identified. Some of the cottages (Nos 16 – 22 Bostock Green) were specially built for the poor. The cottages were all modified to create the appearance of a planned model village, in the second half of the C19<sup>th</sup>. At the beginning of the C20<sup>th</sup>, the former Laundry was created by adding a water tower to a building that had been constructed at the South end of the village in the late C19<sup>th</sup>.



**Properties at Bostock Green**

The new development within the Bostock Hall and Farm complex consists of the regeneration of many of the existing buildings to create a high-density settlement. There are also new courtyard developments, relating closely to the original arrangement of buildings and blending new with the old.



**Some of the new courtyard style development**

The three isolated gatehouses are by their function situated close to the road. North Lodge is at a bend, where it is given



prominence and visibility. Middle Lodge is almost inconspicuous, sited on a straight section of road behind metal railings above a low brick wall. South Lodge faces down Bostock Road. Set behind grander, more ornamental gates and railings, it has outbuildings aligned with the A533.

There are three further isolated pairs of cottages (Nos 6/8, 10/12 and 14/16 Bostock Road) together with Wood End Cottage. In the model village style and set well back from the A533 amongst trees, they integrate well into their setting.



**Nos 6 & 8 Bostock Road**

Home Farm has all the characteristics of a typical farm. It lies in the western part of the Conservation Area, on the A533 Bostock Road (formerly A5018). The farmhouse has a classical trabeated portico in the middle of its symmetrical elevation, fronting the road. It has none of the romantic 'Arts and Crafts'



**Home Farm**

characteristics of the model Bostock Estate properties it appears to pre-date. Its simple out-buildings and barns include some that are typical of the traditional 'Cheshire style' and whilst it may be a part of the managed Estate, its characteristics are those of an independent enterprise.

### 3.6 *Road Pattern*

Bostock has an essentially linear 'T' shaped road pattern. The A533 runs South to North. One third of the way North, it turns West (formerly the A5018). From this junction, the road running North (formerly the A533) is now the C653. All other roads are essentially service culs-de-sac.



**The A533 approaching the A533/C653 junction**

Roads are a dominant feature of the Conservation Area and importantly the only public means of access through the area, since public footpaths do not exist across the adjacent landscape.

The C653/A533 essentially consists of five straight sections of highway running through the Conservation Area. Entering Bostock Green from the North, and running generally South-Easterly, the C653 is joined acutely from the West by Brick Kiln Lane. Just South of the village it deviates slightly to the East and then bends due South at North Lodge. From there on, until its intersection with the A533 from the West, the road is very straight for some distance. After this intersection, the A533 follows a South-Easterly alignment in two relatively straight sections, linked by a complex bend close to Nos 10 to 16 Bostock Road.

There were three existing routes from Lodges into the Hall complex. Those from the North and South, across parkland, have been replaced by a new road, crossing the northerly end of the lake. The access from the Middle Lodge that was essentially a service access, still serves the remaining Bostock Hall farm complex.



**Middle Lodge**

## **BUILDINGS**

### *4.1 Age Profile*

The Hall, dating from 1775 (but probably based on an earlier structure) is the oldest known property in the area. There was further development of the Hall and its complex in the C19<sup>th</sup>. Although many of the Estate buildings, especially those in Bostock Green village, are known to be of an earlier foundation, major remodelling and refurbishment circa 1870's produced the present Estate style. In the early C20<sup>th</sup>, this was supplemented by the development of social facilities in Bostock Green village.

The Hall and farm buildings were further developed and remodelled post 1998. The new buildings that were added were the first in the area for over a century.

### *4.2 Dominant Architectural Styles and Types*

Although originating from the house designed by Samuel Wyatt in 1775, the Hall was extensively remodelled twice in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The vast brick extensions are a

free mixture of Queen Anne and Gothic complete with ornate gables, turrets and spires, including a water tower.



**Hall and adjoining west wing**

Associated with the Hall, and of similar dates, is a series of grand stables and the complex of formal Estate farm buildings, in a combination of classical and gothic detailing of a high standard. There are further complexes of agricultural buildings with rather plainer detailing located throughout the Conservation Area.

Mid C20<sup>th</sup> flat roofed school dormitory units were swept away to facilitate the late C20<sup>th</sup> open courtyard development. This is in a neo-classical style, appropriate to the character of the Hall. The new Walled Garden development reflects the themes and details of the local Estate vernacular.



**Development inside the Walled Garden**

Elsewhere the smaller scale domestic 1870's architecture of the Estate cottages has a Victorian romantic character with timbered black and white gables or



dormers, slate roofs, distinctive red Cheshire brickwork with arched brick soldier courses and terracotta sills. Windows and frames are of painted timber with either casement or sash opening lights, all with a degree of uniformity. There are some interesting porches.



**Estate style cottage**

The larger Estate properties tend to have more decorative timber framing mainly at first floor with ornate bargeboards.

The Social Club (formerly a Reading Room) has a more substantial scale, and displays decorative diaper patterned brickwork to its gables and special red brick mullions in the style of John Douglas. It is not typical of the Bostock Estate style.



**The Village Social Club**

The Old Laundry building, created by adapting and extending an earlier structure in 1905, and now the Village Hall, shows

the Edwardian influences of the period in the detailing of the water tower.



**The former Old Laundry now the Village Hall**

There is a low-key undertone of the late C19<sup>th</sup> 'Arts and Crafts' movement in some of the rustic detailing throughout the Estate properties. The exceptions are in Bostock Grange and Home farms, where the farm-houses have distinctive Georgian origins.

#### *4.3 Building Materials, Texture and Colour*

Roofs are mainly blue Welsh slate with red or grey terracotta ridge and hip tiles. Red plain tiles can be found on some buildings, mainly from the early C20<sup>th</sup>. The spires and turrets are usually covered in oak shingles.

Red pressed Flemish Bond brickwork with ashlar facings has been used for the more important Hall building. In some cases the brickwork is ornately patterned and there are examples of terracotta dressings and stuccoed plaster strap work, all fashionable during the 1870's.



**The listed Cottage and Stable Building, now the Estate Manager's Cottage (North-East elevation)**

The lesser domestic buildings have textured red multi wire cut facings typically known as the Cheshire brick, which were made locally in a yard along Brick Kiln Lane. Decorated brickwork was introduced to the tall chimneys, which are capped with ornate yellow clay pots.



**No 18 showing the typical uniform features**

The central section of the converted barns at Bostock Grange Farm appears to have been rebuilt, or heavily re-pointed. There is an unfortunate visual effect from the use of light coloured bricks and modern mortar.

Bostock Grange Farm is unusual in that the brickwork has been over rendered. It also has Georgian vertical sash windows, which are not a feature of Bostock Green village. Here, the windows are mainly of white painted timber either sash or casement type with some set in small panes. Dormer window features have black and white gables. On the ground floor frontage of the Social Club, an added projecting bay window has coloured leaded light windows of a simple 'Arts and Crafts' style. The village has not been affected by the spate of standardised builders joinery or UPVC windows and doors.

Rainwater disposal goods are in many instances still of cast iron. Careful management has resisted modern intrusions that would damage the architectural qualities of the settlement.

#### **4.4 Key buildings – listed and unlisted**

Bostock Hall is a grade II\* listed building dating from 1775. The Architect is thought to be Samuel Wyatt. The garden elevation is the best-preserved section of that period with a distinctive recessed round arch to the central bay passing through three floors with a Venetian window at first floor. The later extensions of 1850 and 1870 are by an architect yet to be identified.



**Bostock Hall, listed grade II\***

Within the Hall complex there are two former stable blocks (one possibly a former



**The former listed and restored stables**



**The listed farm building with spire**



slaughterhouse and cottage), a former engine house and a farm building, all listed at grade II and believed to date from 1755, with additions of 1850. These have been converted into houses and apartments.

The walls to the former kitchen garden are also listed grade II and now enclose a development of detached houses. After extensive reconstruction, the timber-framed 'Platts Hall' was relocated to the site from Lostock, Northwich, where it was listed at grade II. However it has limited visual impact at its new site.

The grade II listed Boat-house is a building of great charm. Circa 1870, it is two storeys, including a round-headed boat arch to the lake. A gabled and tiled roof with decorated shingle clad spire sits above corner pilasters of stone and fine brickwork together with highly decorative detailing.



**The grade II listed Boathouse**

Both the North and South Lodges are grade II listed, and are significant visual elements along the C653 and A533, respectively. The South Lodge also includes the railings and gate piers. Those from the North Lodge were relocated to Verdin Park in Northwich, and are listed in that location.

Within the village, the Smithy is a grade II listed building, although both the former Old Laundry (now Village Hall) and the Social Club, neither which are listed, are of equal visual significance.



**The listed Old Smithy located in the village**

Apart from the spired pavilion on the Village Green the remaining buildings within the Conservation Area may be regarded of secondary quality. However, collectively they display a uniformity of design with a restrained use of materials that is essential to the character of this uniquely attractive Estate village.

Although not visually important, there are three buildings to the North-East of the Hall that were probably key to the development of the Estate. They are an 'Ox House', (shown on the 1839 Tithe Map), a complete subterranean red brick Victorian 'Ice House' and an underground pumping station.



**Former Ox House to North-East of Hall**

The gable end of the converted barns to Bostock Grange Farm acts as a form of

punctuation to the North end of the village. Bostock Grange Farm lies slightly to the North of the barns, but is well hidden behind an overgrown hedge.

#### 4.5 *Interesting and unusual details*

There are numerous special details on the main elevations of the Hall and throughout the complex of adjacent buildings. The Hall has both Venetian and Diocletian windows; a three storey round stone arch; terracotta panels; stone niches for statues of Buddha; and a parapet with vase shaped balusters. The service wing has stucco strap-work in relief with masks of the Sun and Wind. The numerous gables are topped by spirelets.

The former stable block of 1775 also features a Diocletian window and circular clockface within a large stone arch to each key elevation. It has spires, louvered at their bases and a weather vane.

The outbuildings and walls to Farm Cottage at Bostock Hall Farm have interesting terracotta medallions embodied in walls below scalloped gable parapets in stone.



**Detail on outbuilding at Farm Cottage at Bostock Hall Farm**

Spires are an unusual yet frequently used feature throughout the Estate. They are also found on the Village Green Pavilion,

the Boathouse by the lake (also with weather vane) and various stable and farm buildings. The former Engine-house has a cupola rather than a spire.



**No 60 & 62 within Bostock Hall development**

Within Hill Wood, due East of Bostock Hall, there is a complete, subterranean, red brick Victorian 'Ice House'. Its domed roof indicates that it was built to a very high standard of craftsmanship.

The unity of the Estate cottage character is significant, despite variations in detailing. There are finial topped decorative timber framed gables with ornate fascias and some interestingly detailed brick chimneys, notably on Nos 17 and 19 Bostock Green, which also features a dated and initialled cast iron front to its rainwater hopper-head.



**Nos 17 & 19 with decorative timber-framing, rain-water hopper-head and brick chimneys**

Roundels feature on many of the traditional farm buildings throughout the area, glazed on those converted to residential use.



On the roadside, adjacent to Coachman's Cottage (No 12 Bostock Road) is a timber framed well-housing dated 1874 containing the remains of a cast iron village pump.



**Well house located at the road side of the A533**

A similar, larger building dated 1872, adjacent to the playing fields in the north of the Conservation Area, was formerly the Bostock Green village pump house and now acts as a bus shelter.

The Bostock Village Green Pavilion is entirely timber-framed, with an interesting gable to its roofed veranda.



**The pavilion in the Village Green**  
**"This pavilion and recreation ground was presented by Col. France Hayhurst. D.L.J.P.C.A to the Bostock Parish Council May 11<sup>th</sup> 1912"**

The traditional Cheshire black and white colour scheme is usually used. It also features on the decorative open timber

framed porches found on some of the Estate cottages and the Smithy.



**Porch at the Smithy**

The hip roof of the former Old Laundry includes timber steam ventilation louvers.

Bostock Grange Farm has an unusual two storey central porch and very shallow roof pitch. Home Farm has a Doric porch.

Distinctive Estate fencing of alternating height cleft and dowelled timber pales occur regularly along roadsides and throughout the Conservation Area.



**Cleft timber fencing along the roadsides**

Oak bollards originally linked with chains are located on the roadside of the Village Green. They are an important item of street

furniture and if restored could replace the felled tree trunks that are currently used to prevent unlawful vehicular entry to this site and elsewhere on the Estate.

Many field gates are constructed to an Estate style with well-crafted timbering and distinctive ironwork although a number have been replaced with a more standard type of gate. Most unusual is the rather grand field gate access, formed by a pair of brick gate piers, flanked by traditional spear topped metal railings, to the open fields opposite Middle Lodge.

Most Estate dwelling gates consist of a simple but uniform vertical round-topped white painted palings, a detail also found used for fencing in some places. House names and numbers are of consistent style.



**Uniform gate found throughout the village**

The gate to Bostock Grange Farm, facing directly onto to C653, appears to have been redundant for some time. Constructed of a diagonal open weave of thin laths it has an attractive rustic character.



**Bostock Grange Farm gate**

A timber delivery box is built into a brick wall close to Bostock Hall Farm.

Within the grounds, of Bostock Hall, stone lions sit close to the lake and a weighing device acts as a piece of sculpture in the converted farm complex.



**Weighing device in the garden of 59 The Barns**

In the Bostock Green area there are numerous plaques associated with tree planting by the community.

## **5. Street Scene**

### *5.1 Street Furniture, wirescape, water pumps/troughs*

Traffic and road signs are standard and utilitarian. However, a milestone of 1850, cast iron with circular post with o-gee shaped domed top attached to a curved plate can be seen outside No 8, at the south end of the Conservation Area on the A533. A similar milepost in the north of the Conservation Area, also previously listed, was unfortunately destroyed in 1994 and de-listed. A plastic design has replaced it.

There are some streetlights on the C653 in Bostock Green and on the A533 (formerly A5018). All are fairly inconspicuous during the day; the luminaires of the slender columns are lost amongst the tree canopy.

The two former Well or Pump Houses are very significant items of street furniture. The former, to the south of the area, is deteriorating whilst that by the Village Green, is now a bus shelter. To the rear is a



broken bench and close by a utilitarian litterbin and broken circular tree bench.



**Village bus shelter in front of the village green**

A 'GR' pillar box set into a brick pier with a weathered stone capping and attached wrought iron rail is located at Bostock Green. It replaces a 'VR' box lost to vehicular impact. A poor replica has been sited at the entrance to Bostock Hall.



**Village post box**

Trees tend to conceal the many electricity and telephone wires. However there is an excessive amount of conspicuous wirescape in the north of the Conservation Area. Chimney mounted satellite dishes are also an issue in this locality.

There is a most intrusive double pole pylon located in a gap on the west side of the C653 just south of Bostock Green village. It could have been sited more sensitively.



**Intrusive Pylon on west side of A533**

Where overhead lines pass through the extensive woodland perimeter of Bostock Hall, their maintenance has caused problems. Extensive tree pruning and felling has occurred to protect the route of the lines at the expense of visual amenity.

The timber-framed Well House outside No 12 Bostock Road on the A533 encloses the remains of a cast iron village pump.

## **5.2 Shop fronts, advertisements**

There are a limited number of traditionally painted signs on timber backing but no modern shop fronts or illuminated adverts to detract from the character of the village.

The sign on the village Blacksmiths is well crafted, displaying the quality of the craftsmanship available.

Signs within the Hall complex are standardised using discreet lettering on a timber background.

### 5.3 *Landmarks and Focal Points with historic connection or visual interest*

There are few focal points or landmarks within the Conservation Area. The village was too small to support a Church, traditionally a focal point. However, the Pavilion with its spire, provides a limited focal point on the Village Green.



**The Pavilion at the Village Green**

The North and South Lodges act as minor focal points and their placing on bends gives them prominence.

The sheer bulk of Bostock Hall makes it a distant focal point from the new access gates, as it would originally have been from the North and South Drives.

### 5.4 *Floorscape – materials, colour and texture*



**One of the many cobbled paths**

Many of the cottages and houses retain their attractive cobbled garden paths, whilst others are of round gravel.

The public roads and footpaths are of tarmacadam with concrete kerbs. The roads within the Hall have been given a bound yellow gravel stone finish.

## **LANDSCAPE**

### **6. Landscape setting**

Set within the Cheshire Plain, relatively flat arable and pastureland surrounds the Conservation Area. The area is rural in character, essentially agricultural with woodland copses. To the east, the River Dane valley is broad and shallow.

### **7. Green spaces, trees, hedges**

The playing fields/Village Green at Bostock Green have been developed as a community space and used for a variety of purposes. Adjacent to this and separately fenced is the Bowling Green, given to the village at the beginning of the C20<sup>th</sup>, a recently restored and greatly used facility. Tennis courts were also provided but are no longer used.

The various Estate cottages all maintain areas of private open space, often as cottage gardens. Private green spaces exist associated with the residential developments around the Hall for the use of residents. The lawns between the Hall and the lake are well managed and contain floodlights focused on the Hall.

Trees are an important aspect of the character of the Conservation Area. The Bostock Hall Estate has a designed landscape, which has essentially survived through management.

Mature trees, as single specimens or in belts of mixed woodland, are a dominant feature of the landscaped parkland surrounding the Hall. Avenues of trees,



planted to line the North and South access drives to the Hall can still be identified.

Copses or clumps, created for breeding game, occur frequently, carefully sited as part of the controlled landscape composition. They consist mainly of oaks under-planted with rhododendron and other species to provide cover for wildlife. In many cases they are sunk below the normal ground levels and when occurring by roadsides there is an elevated view down through the branches to the evergreen carpet of undergrowth below.

Where trees occur in pastureland it is interesting to note that the base of the leaf growth has been evenly and neatly trimmed to a straight line by grazing animals creating a distinctive feature.

Many of the trees within the Conservation Area are the subjects of tree preservation orders. However some require surgery and would benefit from the establishment of a woodland management programme.

Some replacement tree planting has taken place, notably to the East of the (now) C653, North of Middle Lodge. There is also tradition of commemorative tree planting at Bostock Green.



**The commemorative oak tree in the village**

An oak tree marking the centre of the traditional County of Cheshire is fenced in the Estate style of cleft oak pales.



**Plaques at the commemorative oak tree**

**Left: "This tree stands in the centre of the County of Cheshire 1887"**

**Right: "This oak tree was planted by Rev Cannon Col and Cap F.Hayhurst in the jubilee year of H.M. Queen Victoria 1887"**

Thorn hedges along road frontages make a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The trimmed hedge field pattern of the surrounding landscape has changed little since the earliest recorded 1839 tithe map.

## **8. Water features**

The parkland lake is the main water feature and is appreciated for its visual qualities and its significant contribution to wildlife habitat. The newly constructed causeway access adds to the drama of the approach to the Hall.



**The causeway and lake to the south**

In the lawned approach between the Hall and the lake there is an ornate water

feature. A statue incorporating a fountain stands at the centre of a geometrically shaped formal pond.



**Water feature in Hall grounds**

There are numerous ponds and drainage ditches throughout the Estate. In the South of the Conservation Area, ditches can also be found to each side of the A533. A duck pond lies in Oak Clump, South-East of Bostock Hall and to the North of this there is an underground former pumping station. Also in this area is a series of wells. These features are all important historic elements of the Estate.



**Former pump house to the North-East of the Hall**

## **OTHER FACTORS**

### **9. Negative Factors**

Traffic flow along the C653 has decreased since the construction of the Davenham bypass, however it remains as a busy road with fast moving traffic. In addition there is noise disturbance and the road probably presents the least attractive feature of the Conservation Area. The road is relatively wide whilst the footpath is narrow and not segregated from the carriageway. Traffic speed is not controlled and walking along the footpath is an uncomfortable and hazardous experience. Highway boundary features are often damaged by the impact from speeding or out of control vehicles.

There are no signs indicating the access points to the Hall and Farm complex, and because of the speed of the traffic this does not contribute to highway safety. There are also visual considerations. Two sets of 'chevron' signs indicating the bend at the North Lodge, although necessary in highway safety terms, are very visually intrusive.



**North Lodge with 'chevrons'**

Because of the lack of public footpaths in the area, the beauty of the landscape and buildings cannot be fully appreciated.

The Hall has always been the base for a relatively isolated community, traditionally of an inter-dependant and self-sufficient nature. However, the current high-density residential development is essentially a



commuter settlement, dependent upon private transport, as evidenced by the amount of car parking and garaging provision within the development. There are no shops or amenities nearby for the convenience and servicing of this community and this has impact upon the local road system.



**Extensive garaging for commuters cars**

There is also the detritus associated with traffic, litter and dumping which spoils the countryside hedgerows and copses.

It is the level of detail that gives the Conservation Area its special attraction. A high standard of maintenance is therefore important. However a number of elements are in disrepair. The deteriorating condition of the former Well House gives cause for concern. The seat to the rear of the bus shelter and the memorial seat around the tree on the Village Green are both badly damaged. Nearby there is also a simple, but not very robust litterbin, often found to be overflowing, with rubbish lying around.



**Damaged seat and overflowing litterbin**



**Memorial bench at the Green badly broken and in need of repair**

The boundaries of the Village Green are also a catalogue of various forms of damaged fencing. Metal bar railings are bent, broken and rusting, and reinforced by inappropriate fencing of barbed wire on timber posts. Large decaying logs and a weak thorn hedge backs the neglected post and chain fencing to the frontage.



**Poor fencing at the Village Green**

The use of tree trunks to prevent access to the fields and open spaces looks untidy, detracting from the character of the area and requiring an alternative solution.

Field gates and fences throughout the Estate also show signs of disrepair, probably due to pressure on the resources generated by the Estate. To the North of Brick Kiln Lane the fields are neglected and no longer in agricultural management, to the detriment of the Conservation Area.

Throughout the Conservation Area, traditional farm buildings are being supplemented by modern structures of an



industrial character. This is only an issue when the traditional buildings become underused and are not maintained.

Apart from that caused by traffic, there is also some noise disturbance from blasting in the salt mines below the area and from factories on the Winsford Industrial Estate in the South of the Conservation Area.

## **10. Neutral areas**

### *10.1 Areas which neither enhance nor detract from the character or appearance of the area*

There are no obvious areas of this type.

### *10.2 Areas and opportunities for development and/or enhancement*

The spaces between buildings and the quality of the parkland setting are of such great importance that there should be no further development in any part of the Conservation Area. Opportunities for even minor forms of development, such as extensions, should be restricted. The majority of the original Estate properties are still under Estate management, although some have been sold to private ownership. Article 4 Directions exist on Nos 2/4 and 10/12 Bostock Road. These bring extra local planning authority control to certain forms of development, in an endeavour to retain the special and uniform detailed character of some of those original Estate cottages that have been released from the Estate management control.



**Nos 10/12 Coachmans Cottage**

A separate management company established by the developer also controls any future development proposals affecting property within the grounds of the Hall and farm complex.

There are various traditional elements within the Estate and Conservation Area generally that require improved levels of maintenance and repair. A number of examples are found at the Village Green. These are noted in Section 9 above.



**Broken neglected railings at the Village Green**

The South Lodge gates and entrance area could be improved by a sensitive restoration. The access apron is somewhat overgrown and unused but has the potential to be restored.



**The South Lodge and listed gates and piers**

Additional tree planting along the South-Western edge of the A533 would help to screen the visual and aural impact of the nearby Winsford Industrial Estate. Similarly the impact of some incongruous modern farm buildings both within and adjacent to



the Conservation Area could be reduced by better colour schemes and screen planting.



**Farm sheds in need of improved screening**

Ideally, public access will eventually be afforded by footpath through the Estate and across to the adjacent valley of the River Dane and the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area.

## **11. Ambience/uniqueness**

### *11.1 Sounds and smells*

Traffic noise and the occasional disruptive sounds from the underground salt blasting and Winsford Industrial Estate are notable. More attractive are the sounds of bird life and waterfowl, with over 60 different bird species identified in the area. There is also the frequent noise of wind in the trees and sounds associated with farming activities.



**Pastoral landscape**

Away from the main road, one is aware of the particular pleasures of the countryside, including the smells of grass and hay,

woodland vegetation and blossom, manure and earth.

### *11.2 Vitality and vibrance of the area*

Apart from the speeding through traffic, the Conservation Area has a relatively quiet and unhurried rural air. This is despite the scale of the late C20<sup>th</sup> residential development at Bostock Hall, which has a relatively minimal visual impact because of its secluded location. Throughout the Conservation Area there is no real sense of vitality and human contact is infrequent.

### *11.3 Historical associations with unusual crafts, famous people and events*

Bostock Green Village and the Hall and Farm Estate remains as a testament to the forethought, planning and consistent management of the France-Hayhurst family. There can be few model villages of this relatively small size that were provided with the same range of social facilities.

Bostock Green has traditionally been considered as the centre of Cheshire, as indicated by the oak tree, planted in 1887, the Jubilee Year of Queen Victoria. This replaced another oak tree of significant age that had been planted nearby at an earlier date.

There is also evidence of the tradition of commemorative tree planting shown in the various plaques found on the Village Green.



**Tree Plaque at the Village Green  
"Family History Society of Cheshire"**





**Tree Planting Plaque at the Village Green  
"Cheshire Federation of Womens Institutes"**

#### *11.4 Other characteristics which make the area unique*

The Estate village has its own ambience. This is created by the consistent yet varied detail design of each cottage and their settings within cottage gardens, with lawns



**Typical Estate style cottages and gardens**

and borders containing scented flowers and shrubs bordered by neatly clipped hedges.

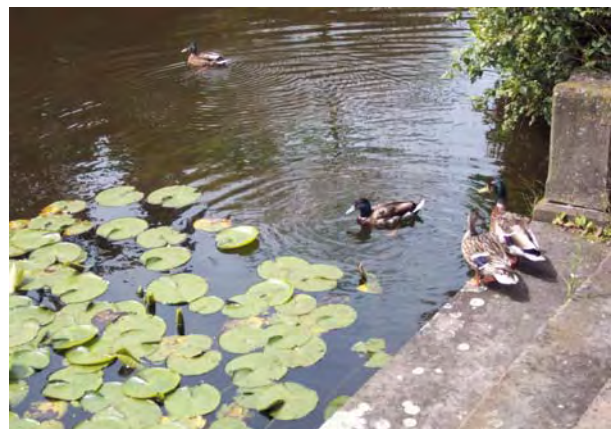
The Hall manages to retain its feeling of historic associations in spite of the recent development. The expanse of lawns leading to the lake, dominated by the dignity and splendour of the Hall, seems unspoilt and unaffected by the number of people who now live there and are able to share the experience of living in such attractive surroundings.



**View of the Hall from the lake**



**Feature statues in front of the lake**



**Wildfowl at the Hall lake**



The lake and island are uniquely attractive aspects of the Estate. Although obviously part of the designed landscape, their naturalised appearance and attraction to wildlife helps to integrate the managed landscape with the natural environment.

Bostock Green village was a planned model Estate village, associated with a unique country house. Despite changes and development, the essential architectural and historic characteristics of the Estate have survived.

### Additional Photographs

#### IMAGES OF BOSTOCK HALL



**View of main Hall**



**View of Hall and development from the Walled Garden**



**The listed Cottage and Stable Building, now the Estate Manager's Cottage (North-West elevation)**

#### ACCESS AND LAKE



**The causeway**



**Causeway from lake**



**Poor replica of village post box at Hall entrance**



## IMAGES OF BOSTOCK GREEN



East side



East side



East side



Barns in North-East



West side



Bostock Grange Mews – former barns

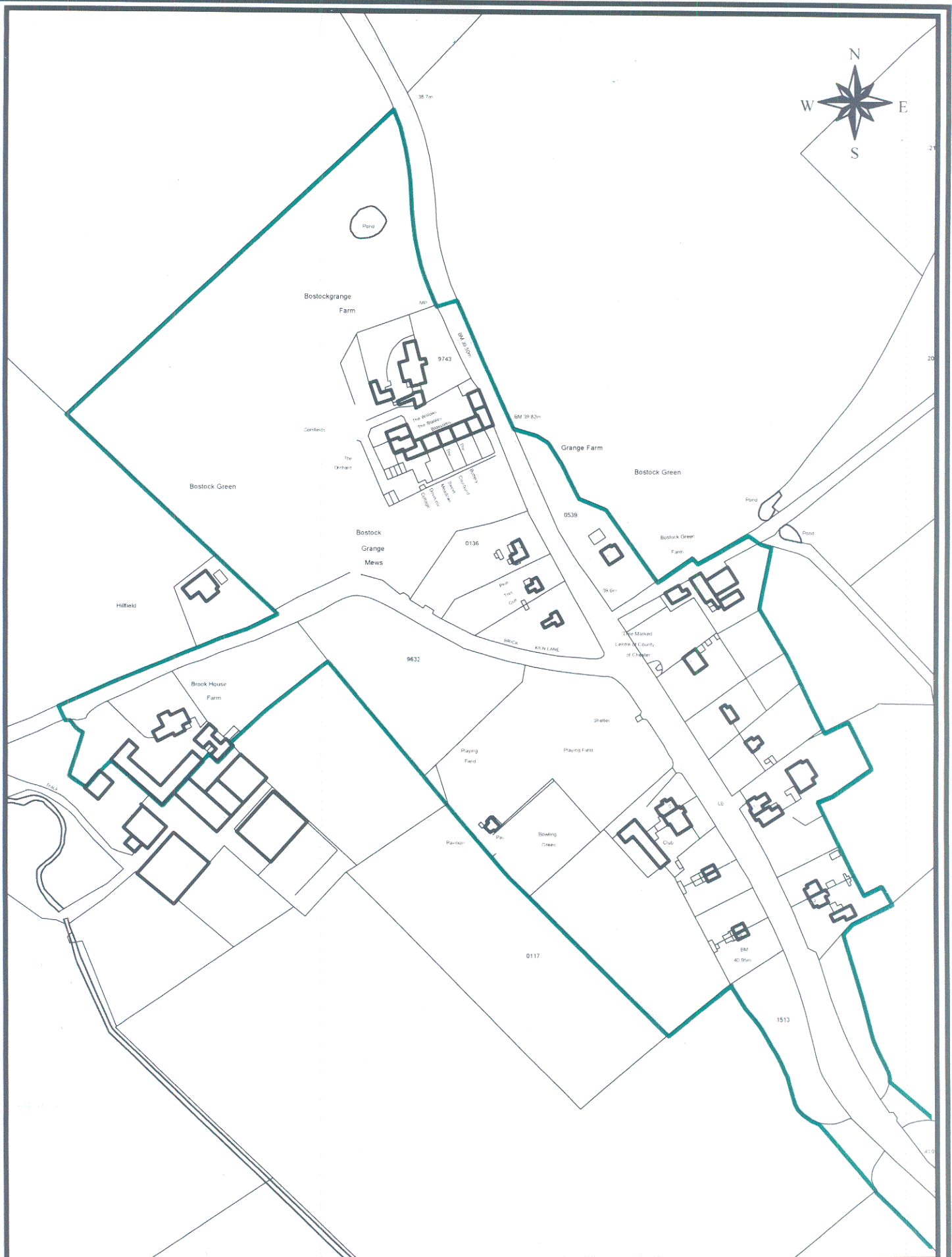


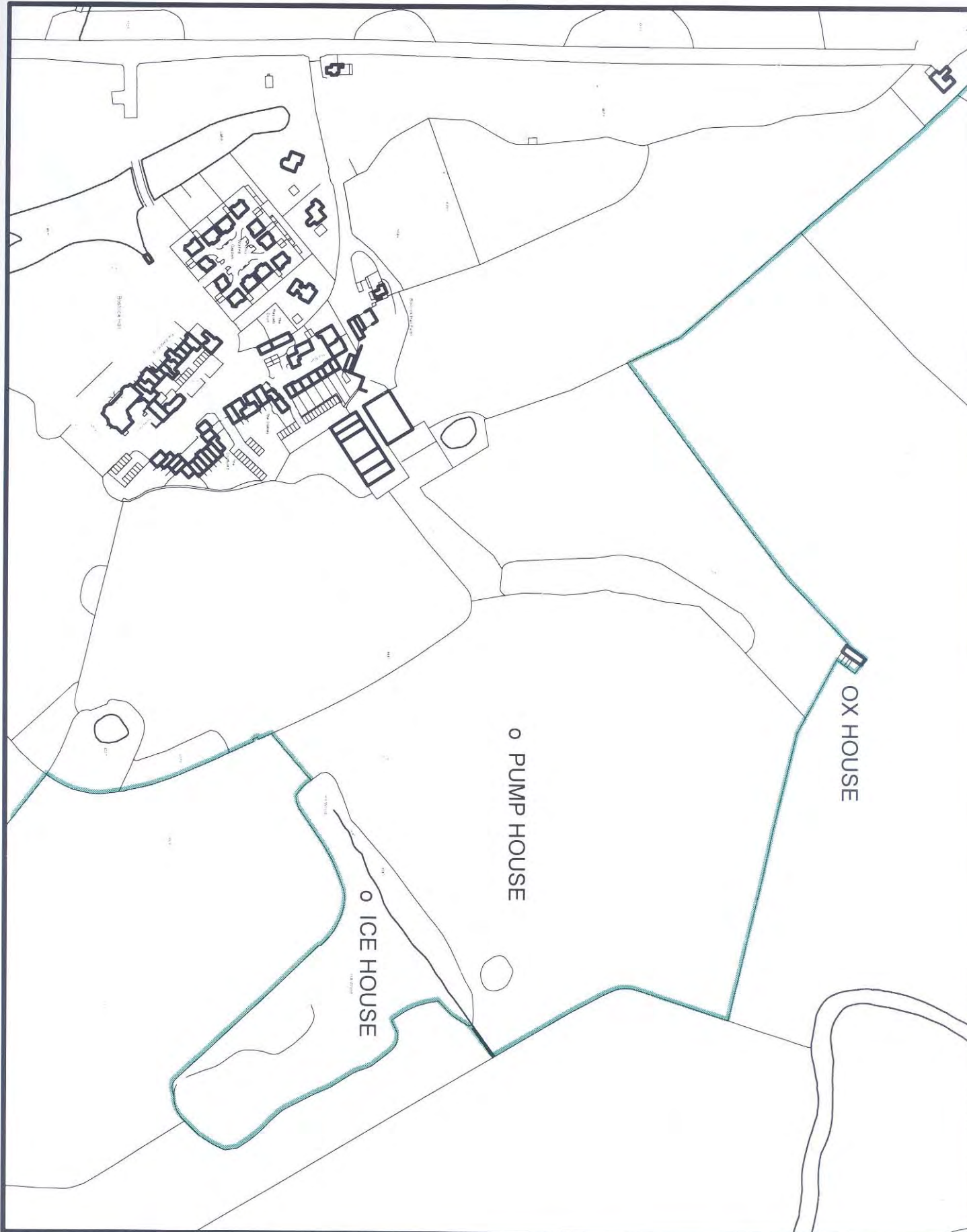
Restriction notices on Village Green Playing Fields tree



Memorial bench at the Village Green







VALE ROYAL BOROUGH COUNCIL  
WYVERN HOUSE, THE DRUMMER,  
WINSFORD, CHESHIRE, CW7 7AH

CONSERVATION AND DESIGN  
TELEPHONE 01696 867721  
LICENCE NUMBER LA 079 863

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*Whilst an appraisal aims to identify the essential elements that give an area its character, it can only be a 'snapshot' in time. Elements and details of an area may be important even if they are not specifically referred to in the document.*

*This document should be read in conjunction with "Conservation Area Appraisals", produced by Vale Royal Borough Council in July 1997.*

**Bostock Green Conservation Area was designated by Vale Royal District Council on 8 April 1976. It was reviewed in 2002/3, the boundary was extended and the Conservation Area renamed.**

**This appraisal relates to the revised and renamed Bostock Conservation Area that was designated by Vale Royal Borough Council on 24 April 2003 when the appraisal was adopted.**

Based on an initial survey by Robin Wolley

Acknowledging the local knowledge contributions of Cllr and Mrs R Cotterill

Bostock Conservation Area Appraisal  
(one of a series to be produced)

VRBC Cons 12/X

March 2003

David M Hayes  
Conservation and Design Manager  
Environmental Policy  
Environment and Sustainability Directorate  
Vale Royal Borough Council  
Wyvern House, The Drummer,  
Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 1AH