

Vale Royal Borough Council

**LITTLE BUDWORTH  
(Revised)  
CONSERVATION AREA  
APPRAISAL**

**FEBRUARY 2007**



## INTRODUCTION

Conservation Areas are many and varied. They were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, and are now an accepted part of Town and Country Planning legislation and practice. More than 9,100 have been designated in England. 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 regularly.

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.

An appraisal also provides the basis for development plan policies and development control decisions, both within and adjacent to the Conservation Area boundary. The appraisal will subsequently provide the background for a management plan; proposals to preserve or enhance the area and additional control regimes. It may also identify development opportunities. Therefore the Government has stated that up to date appraisals (not more than 5 years old) 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 was adopted in 1997 and 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 format presently used is in bullet points under standard headings and therefore some duplication of text will occur.

The principal effects of this designation are:

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 when determining applications for planning permission and conservation area 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. Extra 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.

## Background

Little Budworth Conservation Area was initially designated by Vale Royal District Council on 9 October 1975. An appraisal was adopted on 25 January 2001.

The Government now suggests that to be up to date, appraisals should be not more than 5 years old. A review was therefore conducted in 2006 followed by a public consultation exercise. A revised conservation area boundary and appraisal was adopted by Vale Royal Borough Council on 29 March 2007.

## NOTE:

*Since the appraisal was prepared in February 2007 and considered by the Council's Executive Group in March 2007, some of the matters referred to in the document have been addressed. These are the Cheshire railings p5 and p14/15 and litterbins p9.*

*However because the appraisal is a snapshot in time dated February 2007, it was inappropriate to revise the text before publication.*

## Policy Context

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute towards sustainable development. As part of this principle, national and regional policy directs new development towards defined urban areas. Part of this rational is to protect and preserve the character of the countryside and existing settlements.

The Regional Spatial Strategy proposes that the majority of development should be in a corridor between Liverpool and Manchester. Regeneration proposals should also focus on these metropolitan centres.

The Borough's Local Plan First Review Alteration, adopted June 2006, is the relevant document for the control of development.

Little Budworth is situated within the Open Countryside, where new development is normally restricted, subject to policies contained within the Borough's Adopted Local Plan. The built up part of the village lies within a Settlement Policy Boundary. Development is constrained but less so than in the Open Countryside. The types of residential development that would be allowed are limited, whereas, employment development and the change of use of existing buildings to retail uses may be allowed, subject to certain criteria. The loss of existing village shops and sole facilities providing an important local service will be strongly resisted.

Planning applications will normally required to be fully detailed, in order that the impact of the proposals can be assessed and most require to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement. The highest standards of design, signage and advertising are required to protect street scene character.

Local Plan Policy BE 23 states:  
The Borough Council will evaluate applications for development within and adjacent to the boundaries of designated conservation areas against those characteristics which are revealed in conservation area appraisals. Significant consideration will be given to ensuring that development proposals respect, maintain and compliment those aspects of the appraisal which define the local distinctiveness of the area, in particular these elements will include:

- The prevailing townscape of the area;
- Dominant building styles, materials and details;
- Important spaces and landscaping within the area;
- View into and out of the conservation area;
- Unique characteristics of the area.

Demolition proposals within conservation areas normally require consent and need to be justified. They may not be allowed until a contract for the construction of an approved, appropriately designed replacement property has been signed.

## Appraisal Summary

Situated in the Cheshire Plain close to a large remnant of the Mara and Mondrum forests, the village of Little Budworth is believed to date from C7th. It lies in close proximity to Oulton Park (former seat of the Egertons) and stands above Budworth Pool. The ancient church sits on a large outcrop of red sandstone.

Although a pre-Domesday settlement, Little Budworth remained as a small agricultural settlement until after World War II. Despite significant development in the late C20th, the village retains a close relationship with its agricultural setting. Its key historic buildings sit along its main roads, the pattern of which have remained unchanged, in settings that are generally undisturbed by the modern development.

No single architectural style or building material dominates the historic properties. Apart from the visually prominent red sandstone church, the local vernacular accommodates slate and tile roofing above Flemish bond red brickwork, with some render and remnants of timber framing. Red sandstone walling unifies the composition. There are many examples of polygonal walling, an unusual feature in Cheshire. Amongst the older developments and structures are echoes of the relationship between the village and the Egerton family.

Where modern development is found in the conservation area, it tends to be of an unsympathetic character, including single storey properties and dominant garage doors. These are often well screened by mature hedges, the occasional loss of which can have significant impact. There are many examples of poor detailing, particularly with dormer windows and inappropriate brickwork.

Properties, hedges and open spaces appear to be well maintained. There is some visual clutter and elements of the public realm are in need of attention. Developments associated with the cricket club are beginning to become obtrusive.

For its size, the village is reasonably well served with facilities. Its overall character is that of a quiet rural commuter settlement. However there is regular aural disturbance from the motor sport and track activities at Oulton Park and increasing traffic noise from the nearby A54.

There is little scope for further development within the conservation area without it having an adverse impact on its character. However the sympathetic redevelopment of some of the plots of modern dwellings could add to the local character.

## Practical Support

Within the conservation area, the potential exists to grant aid private enhancement schemes that have a public benefit. The enhancement of the public realm may also be supported.

Detailed supplementary design guidance may be provided to assist applicants when developing their proposals.

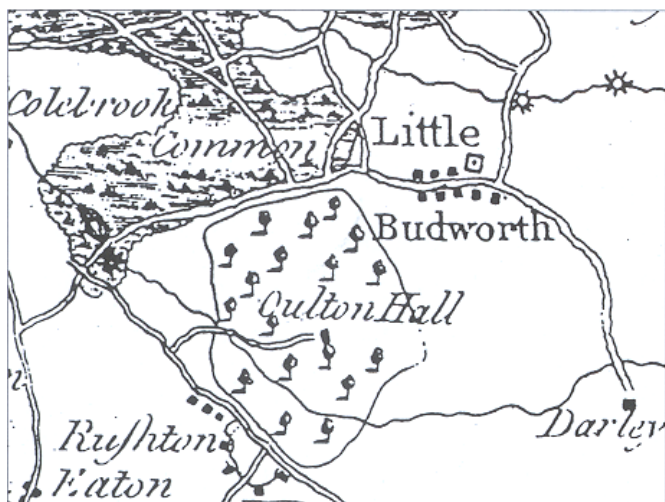
Applicants are invited to discuss any significant development proposals within the Conservation Area with the Council's Planning Control Service at an early stage. Telephone 01606 867715 after 1pm

## HISTORY

### 1. Historic evolution of the settlement

#### 1.1 Origins and development of the settlement

- Village believed to date from C7th.
  - Listed in Domesday Book as 'Bodeurde' (Budda's enclosure).
  - Church (probably fortified) recorded in 1190.
- Circa 1816, Ormerod wrote – (Little Budworth) "extends about half a mile Eastwards from the gate of Oulton Park, along a sandy lane, and consists together of farm houses and cottages interspersed with trees and gardens".
  - Remained little changed until access roads were widened between the two world wars.



Extract from Burdetts map of 1777

- History of land titles of Little Budworth (Budworth en le Frith) and Oulton is complicated.
  - Circa 1155, granted to Robert le Grosvenor, by Earl of Chester.
  - Manor of Little Budworth was held by one line of Grosvenor family, eventually passed through Mere, Troutbeck and Talbot families, onto Earls of Shrewsbury.
  - Manor of Oulton was held through female line of Grosvenors – acquired in marriage by John Egerton during reign of Edward IV (1461-1483).

- Sir Philip Egerton, knighted in 1660 during reign of Queen Elizabeth I, held land in both Little Budworth and Oulton.
- Oulton Hall, last of a number of mansions at Oulton Park – destroyed by a fire February 1926 and subsequently bombed in 1940.
  - Walled parkland survives – much altered – a Historic Park and Garden of Local Significance.
  - Large gated archway with lodges each side remains to West of village, outside Conservation Area.
- Village not tied to Oulton Hall, but Egertons of Oulton had close affinity with village and benefactors of Church at Little Budworth.
  - Family vault was sealed in 1870.
  - Egerton Estate survives in name – acquired land from auction sale of whole village by Shrewsbury Estate in 1917.

#### 1.2 Topographical elements

- Little Budworth stands on higher ground to South of Budworth Pool.
  - Although pool is dammed, this unusually large millpond may be semi-natural in origin.
  - Some claims that village has used Pool since at least 1372.



The Church from Budworth Pool

- Geologically, area is at Southern limit of glacial sand and gravels of Delamere, overlooking typical Cheshire Boulder Clays.
  - Springs and at least one well in area.

- Some sandstone outcrops occur – Church is founded on one.
- Beds of salt deposits underlie landscape.

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

- Area was once extensively wooded and formed part of Mara and Mondrum forests (now Delamere Forest).
  - Little Budworth Common (outside Conservation Area boundary) – a remnant of these forests, although much denuded during World War II.
- Village originally closely linked with agricultural activity.
  - Has reduced over years and redundant farm buildings have been converted to residential use.
    - Exceptions are:- Manor Farm Buildings, now houses a local specialist joinery business (an appropriate rural use); and Lower Farm, remains a working farm.



**Lower Farm**

- Latter part of C20th, village experienced brief phases of planned residential development.

## **2. Archaeological significance and potential of the area**

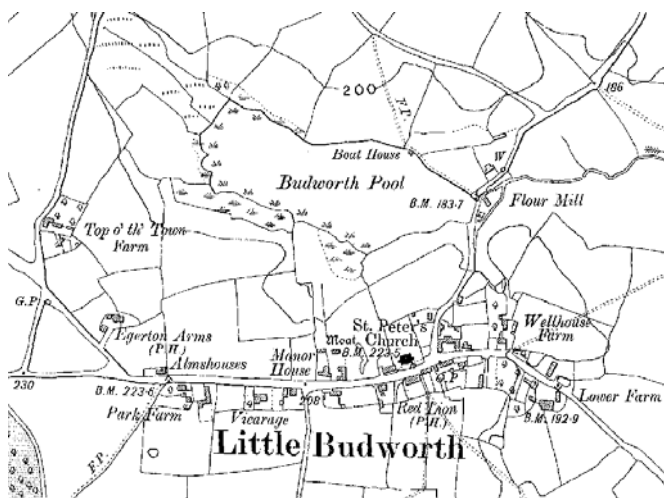
- Except for Church and Pinfold, Little Budworth has little significant archaeological resource.

- The Old Flour Mill and its spillway are surviving examples of industrial archaeology within Conservation Area.
  - Mill was one of two given by Richard le Grosvenor to Robert le Taillor in 1369.
    - Other was a fulling mill – possibly down stream.
  - Known as Walk Mill in 1850 – when a corn mill.
  - Also briefly was a slaughterhouse.
  - Once three-storey – present structure converted into a dwelling mid 1980's.



**The Old Flour Mill**

- Site of former moated Manor House lies to West of Church.
  - Both clearly shown on Ordnance Survey map of 1910.



**1910 Ordnance Survey extract**

- Sales catalogue of 1917 illustrates Manor House as black and white timber-framed farmhouse.

## TOWNSCAPE

### 3. Form and structure of the settlement

#### 3.1 Boundary of the Conservation Area

(Relating to the revise designation dated 29 March 2007.)

- Clockwise from Western end, boundary of Conservation Area begins on Park Road some 50 metres West of junction with Vicarage Lane and is initially defined by a section of Cheshire Railings set above a low polygonal stone wall, which it encloses.
- It follows and encloses the railings, then a hedge along Park Road around to the North until opposite the Northern boundary of Park Cottage and Pinfold Hey Barn (formerly Top o' th' Town Farm).
- Crossing the road the boundary is marked by a fence leading from the property across fields and all the way around the North side of Budworth Pool.
- North-east boundary includes Northern curtilage of Mill House Farm on to centre-line of un-named possible "green lane" where it turns South-east to centre-line of Mill Lane which it follows to South-west, then at Eastern boundary of The Old Flour Mill it runs South-east.
- Crossing mill stream, it then following a fence line for approximately 70 metres to another fence at which point it runs south and continues, embracing the curtilage of Waters Reach, which it follows round to the West to the centre-line of the access road, where it runs South to the Northern spur of Well Lane.
- Again following the centre-line of the road and then briefly an access track, it runs East then South to enclose the curtilage of Lower Farm before running South-east along the centre-line of an access track to the boundary of the enclosure of the farm buildings of Lower Farm which it follows to the South-west and then North up to the centre-line of Well Lane.
- Southern boundary then follows centre-line of Well Lane until Eastern curtilage of Yew Tree Cottage, which it encloses, and after crossing St. Peters Drive, continues

along back gardens of properties on Vicarage Lane, including bowling green of Red Lion to centre-line of Booth Avenue, which it follows South until opposite a hedge and fence line which it follows to the West, across fields to a public footpath.

- Boundary follows this Northerly to West of Park Farm and near to Vicarage Lane it turns West, enclosing and defined by a tall hedge above a low stone wall at rear of footpath in verge. Wall ceases and hedge reduces in height before crossing over to meet railing on Park Road.

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

- Church tower is main focal point.
  - Built on highest ground in centre of village, Church dominates views within and outside Conservation Area.
- Interesting framed view through archway in evergreen hedge to front door of Well House Farmhouse on Well Lane.
  - From West, after passing mature trees along Vicarage Lane – an attractive view of Church Cottages providing setting for Church.



Church Cottages and Church of St Peter

- Either side of Manor Farm Buildings are open views across fields towards trees surrounding Budworth Pool.
  - Land parcel to West of Church – developed as modern Village Green.
    - From higher part – interesting and almost continuous panoramic view.
- Village is hidden away down country lanes.

- Approached from North-east along Mill Lane – road is bordered by hedges and trees.
  - Church tower is repeatedly seen prominent against skyline.
  - Mature trees cover approach to Conservation Area where road bends to left with terminal view of The Old Flour Mill to left of Budworth Pool.



**The Church and The Old Flour Mill terminal view**

- Hedges above polygonal stone walls line road as it rises towards village.
- Church tower seen again – partly concealed against an open skyline, behind some cottages, with trees adjacent.
- Approaching village from North-west – glimpses of dominating cricket pavilion and out buildings of Park Cottage/Pinfold Hey Barn are seen behind hedgerows and scattered trees surrounding farm.



**Skyline – Cricket Pavilion and Pinfold Hey Barn**

- Outward view from Western end of Conservation Area is dominated by woodlands of Little Budworth Common.
  - Tree screen extends to South-west, above red brick wall surrounding Oulton Park.
- Good open views from North-western end, across fields – scattered trees lining roadside.
  - Gentle incline leads towards tree lined skyline and terminal view of Pool Head Farm on hillside.
- Some views to East and South are distinctly open over flat agricultural landscape – scattered trees along field boundaries.
- To East on clear days – can see Mow Cop (26 miles), Shutlingsloe (37 miles) and vista of Peaks.
- To North are good open vistas up to trees surrounding Budworth Pool and beyond to agricultural land, farms and dispersed dwellings.
- On a sunny day, views to North-east can be affected by reflections off silos at Sandy Bank Farm.

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

- Primary space within Conservation Area is water surface of Budworth Pool together with adjoining area of rising grassland and trees, up to properties along North side of Vicarage Lane.
  - Quiet, open, natural area contrasting with mainly linear development forming rest of Conservation Area.
  - Space emerges as open grassland to North of Vicarage Lane, either side of Manor Farm Buildings.
    - Formerly moated site of Manor House, this broken yet unified space at centre of Conservation Area provides a vital visual and physical link to open agricultural landscape around village.
    - Includes a land parcel that has been converted into a modern Village Green.
    - Current impact of development is low but certain structures have been rather prominently placed.



**View to Village Green**

- Further increases in physical structures will have an adverse impact on this important space and on views to open countryside that it allows.
- Series of important, linked spaces, with limited visual skyline enclosure – situated to West of village centre.
  - Large, slightly elevated triangular area of grass created by intersection of three roads – sheep often graze here.
  - Space relates to:-
    - Adjacent small area of grass around War Memorial;
    - Car park forming open frontage of Egerton Arms;
    - Adjacent paddock fronting Vicarage Lane.



**War Memorial**

- These spaces flow on to West and North but are defined to South along

Vicarage Lane by hedge above polygonal wall fronted by row of young trees.

- To East, they form an important open setting to key buildings of Park Farm and Dodd's House.

### *3.4 Enclosure within the settlement*

- Strong sense of enclosure of property exists within Conservation Area.
- Definition is predominantly by hedges above sandstone walls of varying heights.
  - Some of larger more prominent stone walls are of polygonal construction.
- Walls of recently created access to Park Cottage/Pinfold Hey Barn conversion are incongruous and of suburban character.
- Access to recently built Holly House is also overstated with ball finials to gate piers.
- Some wooden fences and iron railings.
  - Includes two runs of curved topped Cheshire railings adjacent to Park Road.
    - The section to the West of Park Road has been repainted incorrectly.
    - The section fronting Vicarage Lane remains rusting – in need of attention.



**Rusting Cheshire Railings – Vicarage Lane**

- Wooden fence to front of Telephone Exchange deteriorating – needs attention.
- Recent and intrusive tall chain-link fence to cricket club behind a weakly planted new hedge on a bank – needs improving.

### *3.5 Urban form*

- Village of Little Budworth is a closed settlement.

- Several distinct elements to its urban form.
  - Mill Lane – characterised by change of level.
    - Tree-lined, undulating road, with dispersed buildings on hillside to North-east.
    - Becomes more nucleated towards village centre.
    - Along Mill Lane, Church tower's relationship with landscape setting changes – appearing and disappearing due to presence of trees and undulation of road.
  - Intersection between Mill Lane, Well Lane and Vicarage Lane – staggered slightly – buildings block view, providing landmarks and creating sense of enclosure.
    - This location, adjacent to Church, has greatest concentration of historic buildings in village.
    - These buildings are aligned with their street frontages close to back of pavement.
      - Include Red Lion Inn, which has its car parking mainly concealed to rear.



**Church View (currently undergoing renovation), Old Hall Cottage and the Red Lion**

- Further along Vicarage Lane – older buildings are similarly positioned but nature of properties changes.
  - Still with linear alignment, individually large dwellings are set within large garden plots heavily planted with hedging as screening along road frontages.
    - Many are of a modern suburban character – most notably after break in

development created by open spaces adjacent to Manor Farm Buildings and wide road junction with Booth Avenue.

- Although some properties have historic character, Well Lane is mainly characterised by modern suburban residential development.
  - More recent and inappropriate properties have been excluded from Conservation Area boundary.
  - Lower Farm sits at Eastern edge of village and Conservation Area. Boundary.
- Western end of Conservation Area has open character.
  - Properties are few and dispersed in open space including Egerton Arms, which has an extensively open frontage that also serves as its car park.



**Egerton Arms and War Memorial**

- Nearby are open grounds of Oulton Park Cricket Club – but even these are becoming more developed – prominent and obtrusive practice nets.
- Curtilage developments associated with residential conversion from former Top o' th' Town Farm have changed character of area.

### 3.6 Road pattern

- Main route through village is 'T' formation.
  - Vicarage Lane, which has secondary roads at right angles to it, runs West to East.
  - Outside Church, which acts as fulcrum of village, it intersects with Mill Lane, which runs North as the main route, and Well Lane, its continuation radiating to East.

- West end of village – alignment of Park Road, Vicarage Lane and Pinfold Lane forms interesting triangular shaped block.
  - Main part – enclosed triangular field.
  - Adjacent – smaller triangular open area of grass where War Memorial stands.
- Un-named old road off Mill Lane to North of Conservation Area – possible “green lane”.
  - Appears on 1870 OS map.
- Various footpath links from edge of area out to open countryside.

## 4. Buildings

### 4.1 Age profile

- Buildings in Conservation Area show continuous development – C15th to C21st.

### 4.2 Dominant architectural styles and types

- No single architectural style dominates.
  - Eclectic mix of development based on simple rural vernacular.
  - Many original farm buildings, such as Park Mews Cottages and Park Cottage/ Pinfold Hey Barn buildings have been converted into residential properties.
  - Many buildings are suburban residential properties of recent date, little architectural or historic interest, and often with prominent garage doors.
  - Some recent residential developments have small, gabled, pitched roof dormer windows – but usually poor reflections of those on older properties.



Recent ‘cottage style’ dwellings

- Although detailing is often crude, these help integrate new development into street scene by reducing scale of property and creating interest to roof eaves line.

### 4.3 Building materials - texture and colours

- Older buildings have varied roof pitches, colours and materials – grey slate most common – plain tiles and thatch also found.
  - Interesting texture created by scallop shaped roof tile on Egerton Arms.
- Building materials – mainly red sandstone ashlar and red Flemish bond brick.
  - Some render, some whitewash, some timber framing.
  - English Garden Wall bond at Church View Cottage (dated 1880).



Rose and Church View Cottages

- Recent renovation of Red Lion – render removal revealed red sandstone ashlar wall flanked by brickwork including former archway and redundant timber frame elements.
- Older properties – varied chimneystacks – mostly simple and large section with corbelled tops – and varied pots – round and square.
  - Some unusual chimneys –
    - Brick relief panels at Church View Cottage.
    - Double–diamond upper stacks at Egerton Arms.
- Low red sandstone ashlar walls around many building plots – a unifying element throughout Conservation Area.

- Small pane timber windows complete traditional vernacular theme.
  - Some leaded lights.
    - Coloured leaded glazing to porch of Egerton Arms.
  - Diamond-patterned lattice metal frames in wooden sub-frames at Village Hall.
  - Renovated Summer 2005.
- Utilitarian storage barns with corrugated metal roofing found at Lower Farm – not very conspicuous because of relatively isolated location.
- Many inappropriate modern materials increasingly evident – large pane PVCu windows, large garage doors, modern bricks and roof-lights are most intrusive.



**Modern property lacking conservation character**

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

- Church of St. Peter – key Grade II\* listed building contributing significantly to village character.
  - Church site has been similarly used since 1190.
  - Square perpendicular tower, built between 1490 and 1526 – most original part of Church.
    - Clock face inscribed 1785.
  - Body of Church poorly rebuilt in classical style in 1800 and later "restored" in typical Victorian manner, between 1870 and 1871 by John Douglas, Cheshire's famous architect.



**Church of St Peter**

- Church is part of key group of buildings at historic core of village.
  - Immediately to South-west lie Church Cottages.
  - Opposite are three cottages conjoined into two dwellings, known as Church View and Old Hall Cottage (Grade II) together with Red Lion Inn.
- At Western end of Vicarage Lane, Dodd's House (Grade II\*) is prominently located. Built in 1737 as an almshouse.



**Dodd's House**

- Another key building group along Vicarage Lane includes Old Vicarage (Grade II), Village Hall, Old Parsonage and across road semi-detached Selkirk Cottages.
  - Of particular note and also known as Manor or Manor Farm Cottages.
    - Built by Lady Selkirk in memory of her nephews, Lord Egerton's twin sons, killed in World War I.

- Secondary key buildings include: The Old Flour Mill; Well House Farmhouse (Grade II); Manor Farm Buildings; Park Farmhouse and Egerton Arms.

#### 4.5 Interesting and unusual details

- Polygonal stone walling (not a common feature in Cheshire) found in abundance in Little Budworth.
  - Mainly along entrance roads to village, where used to provide retaining walls, usually with hedge planted above.
- Solid sandstone flight of steps up to tower end of church – rather grand for small village.
- C17th (Grade II) Pinfold – clearly visible at junction between Park Road and Pinfold Lane.
  - Built from coursed ashlar – square enclosure constructed to allow stray animals to be impounded.



**The Pinfold**

- Village war memorial – located at intersection of Pinfold Lane and Vicarage Lane.
  - Unusual Celtic pattern on cross reflects influence of Lady Selkirk, again in memory of her nephews, killed in World War I.
- Cricketer on pavilion weathervane.

## 5. Street Scene

### 5.1 Street furniture, wirescape, water pumps/troughs

- Street furniture is minimal.

- Two litter bins in need of attention (cast iron replacements due early 2007).
- Traditional style timber benches situated throughout the village.
- Close to Church - a traditional cast iron fingerpost directional guidepost in good condition.



**Traditional Finger Post near Church**

- Rusting and derelict cast iron post of similar former unit – plated N.U.D.C. 1895 – found by Pinfold – could be subject of restoration scheme.
- Late C20th bus shelter on North side of Vicarage Lane.
  - Rather clumsily detailed – modern common bricks with an alien character.
- Close to Old Post Office – a traditional red K6 telephone box – locally important building.
  - Also in this location – an unfortunate concentration of assorted street furniture and poles creates visual clutter.



**Clutter near the rebuilt Old Post Office**

- Street lighting – typical of rural Cheshire – luminaires bracketed from timber poles or on purpose made concrete or metal columns.
- Street signage also standard and utilitarian.
  - All elements suggest minimum standards of repair and maintenance.
- Wirescape is common and moderately obtrusive.
  - Very conspicuous around Mill House Farm – in more open North-east of Conservation Area.
  - Some heavy-duty wires intrude upon views around Church.
  - More obtrusive – number of poles supporting wires.



**Obtrusive pole mounted electricity equipment**

- Of particular concern – pole-mounted transformer units in West of Conservation Area.
- Within garden of Dodd's House – an attractive old cast iron water pump.

### *5.2 Shop fronts, advertisements*

- Main shop within Conservation Area is Parkers Store – general store and post office.
  - Has simple hand-painted sign above shop window and standard plastic Post Office sign to left of property.
- Signage for both public houses – relatively tasteful and discrete.
  - Some small portable signs create an untidy and cluttered effect.
    - Notably for Egerton Arms.

- Manor Farm Buildings on Vicarage Lane (converted to business use) also have hand-painted signs – obtrusive white background.



**Signage at Joinery Workshop**

### *5.3 Landmarks and focal points with historic connection or visual interest*

- Main focal point within Conservation Area is Church tower.
- To West of village – in relatively isolated location – War Memorial provides focal point of historical interest.



**Celtic Designs on War Memorial**

- Size, scale, design and location of cricket pavilion make it dominant feature of Western end of village.

## 5.4 Floorscape - materials, colour and texture

- Dominant street and footpath paving material is tar macadam.
- Natural stone kerbs along Vicarage Lane, Well Lane and Mill Lane – should be retained for traditional character.
- Grassed area surrounds War Memorial.
- Grass verges along Mill Lane and at Western end of Vicarage Lane.
- Along Park Road and Pinfold Lane – verges at unrestrained edges of highway become puddled with mud in bad weather.
- At junction between Mill Lane and Well Lane are two areas of settstone paving.
- Cobblestone paving is found outside Red Lion.



Settstone paving – Mill Lane/Well Lane

## LANDSCAPE

### 6. Landscape setting

- Little Budworth lies upon Cheshire Plain.
- Surrounding landscape is relatively flat.
  - Slight undulations in topography due to activity of stream – now dammed to create Budworth Pool.
- Village stands on land that rises slightly above surrounding contours to South of Pool.
  - Consequently, Conservation Area is seen as being in an elevated position when approached from North.
- Arable and pasture land surrounding Conservation Area forms a neutral platform upon which Conservation Area develops.



Agricultural setting

### 7. Green spaces, trees and hedges

- Conservation Area includes large amount of agricultural land between Vicarage Lane and Budworth Pool within its boundary.
- Parcel of this land has been developed as modern Village Green with play equipment and seating.



Village Green

- Physical prominence of play equipment structures in this area is detriment to visual relationship between built and natural elements within Conservation Area.
- Areas of open grassland present in West of Conservation Area, close to War Memorial and also at cricket ground – but development of practice nets is eroding openness.
  - Also a field that includes a football pitch lies outside Conservation Area boundary.

- Conservation Area boundary includes Glebe-land fields to West of Booth Avenue, behind properties fronting Vicarage Lane.
  - Contributes to setting of Conservation Area – little different from adjacent arable farmland – defined by skyline hedgerow.
- Mature trees and hedgerows line roads approaching and within Conservation Area.
  - Old road – possible green lane – off Mill Lane to North-east of Conservation Area is tree lined both sides.
- Well developed garden hedges along Well Lane and Vicarage Lane help to neutralise impact of much of modern housing, and provide a sense of unity.
  - Interesting evergreen hedge with archway over gates to Well House Farmhouse frames view to door porch.
  - Loss of mature hedge to Lodgemere exposes characterless design of property.
- By front driveway to Old Parsonage stands largest tree in the village, a lime.



**Vicarage Lane trees**

- Large churchyard tree affects some views of church tower.
- Most significant tree in area is considered to be lime tree opposite entrance to Church on Mill Lane.
- Despite important contribution that trees make to character of Conservation Area, no significant tree preservation orders exist.
- Trees and rushes also surround Budworth Pool. Photographic evidence suggests that rushes from Pool were traditionally used for thatching local cottages.

## 8. Water features

- Budworth Pool is most significant body of water within Conservation Area.



**Budworth Pool**

- Site of Biological Importance, grade B – open water, swamp and woodland.
- Significant wild life habitat.
- Pool source – stream from North-west.
- Water from Pool was used to power Old Flour Mill.
- Spillway, now altered, passes beside The Old Flour Mill, before continuing Eastwards to Chesterlane Brook.

## OTHER FACTORS

### 9. Negative Factors

- Some new development within Conservation Area has been insensitively located.



**Compromised setting of Church**

- The Croft, a late C20th development on Mill Lane, intrudes upon setting of Church and affects views of Church tower from North-east approach.
- Dwelling known as Waters Reach sits in elevated position overlooking same approach.
  - Good example of modern design of its period but of alien character given its setting within Conservation Area.



**Waters Reach on Mill Lane**

- Along Vicarage Lane and to lesser extent Well Lane – many post-war suburban dwellings, often with large, obtrusive garage doors, detract from historic character of area.
- Dominant location of garage block to frontage of converted barns – now called Park Mews Cottages – and open macadamed courtyard, detract from character of and integrity of this conversion.



**Park Mews Cottages**

- Recent developments trying to replicate vernacular often fail due to poor detailing.
  - Especially where dormer windows have been attempted – usually poor proportions.
- Much modern development within village, and particularly extensions to properties, has been carried out using inappropriate modern common bricks.
  - Local tradition of using Flemish bond has also been ignored.
    - Example is South gable elevation of Lower Farm House – a rear extension has been unsympathetically added.
    - Old Post Office has been rebuilt and extended in alien brickwork.
- Some barn conversions rely on obtrusive roof-lights – there are better conservation designs available if roof-lights are needed.
- Mediterranean style alterations to stables at Mill House Farm are not sympathetic to vernacular character of area.



**Stables at Mill Farm House**

- Scale and detail (flood lights) of equestrian related development at this location could have an adverse impact upon setting of Budworth Pool.
- Telephone Exchange is small and unobtrusive but its curtilage is neglected – unkempt grass and decaying fence.
- Although most properties are in good repair, soft red sandstone walls need to be carefully managed.
  - Hard cement mortar is damaging, as can be seen on The Pinfold, and needs to be avoided.

- Recent development of cricket club practice nets is intrusive in to open space.



**Obtrusive cricket practice nets**

- New roadside chain-link fence and bank with weak hedge does not screen but adds to clutter.
- Oulton Park Racing Circuit, attracts motor racing enthusiasts from far a field – has large impact on village.
  - Noise and traffic on race days, and occasionally on practice days, can be a nuisance.

## 10. Neutral Areas

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

- Fields behind properties to South-western end of Vicarage Lane – historic Glebe lands – contribute to setting of Conservation Area.



**Glebe lands behind Vicarage Lane**

- Bounded by a sky-line hedgerow, any physical development of this land would have an adverse impact upon setting of that part of the Conservation Area.
- Along Vicarage Lane there are modern properties that do not enhance character of Conservation Area.
  - However most are screened from view by substantial hedges minimising their visual impact.



**Vicarage Lane hedging**

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

- Few locations where development would not have a serious impact upon character.
  - Effect upon open spaces, views, hedge and tree cover and especially upon views of Church will be important factors to be considered when evaluating any proposals.
  - Settings of key buildings, particularly where adjacent to open spaces, need to be maintained.
- Potential to reduce visual streetscape and wirescape clutter; to improve quality of street furniture, street lighting structures and floorscape; and also to improve definition of space outside Church.
  - Old cast iron fingerpost by Pinfold could be refurbished.
  - Two runs of Cheshire railings to West end of village –need varying degrees of attention.
    - Such work would enhance approach from West of Conservation Area.



**Cheshire Railings**

- Important to ensure that any further development of the Village Green open space to West of Church, remains minimal.
  - Any additional structures should be kept low to reduce impact on openness of area.
  - Ideally, steps should be taken to reduce prominence of basket-ball stanchion.
- Views of modern development on rising ground to East of village could be screened from North-eastern approach by a tree planting programme.
- Similarly, tree planting could be used to screen cricket club developments at North-west end of Conservation Area.



**Substantial Cricket Pavilion**

- Improved public access around Budworth Pool, by creation of a footpath, has been an aspiration for some time.
  - It is a project that is worthy of support.

## **11. Ambience/Uniqueness**

### *11.1 Sounds and smells*

- Every hour, Church clock chimes – provides an attractive aural element.
- Occasionally, tranquillity of Budworth Pool is broken by noisy activities of bird life, but this is a natural and interesting occurrence.
- Sounds and smells of farm animals and of agricultural machinery in fields around area permeate, as a reminder of village's agricultural heritage.
- In contrast, subject to wind conditions, there are bursts of aggressive noise, together with smell of burnt fuel, from regular use of Oulton Park for motor sports events.
  - Parts of Conservation Area also suffer continuous background "hum" of distant traffic and emergency vehicle sirens.

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

- Little Budworth is typical of many country villages – has air of a commuter village.
- It is relatively quiet, with low traffic levels, except on Oulton Park race days.
- Within Conservation Area are two pubs and a cricket ground, with a football pitch nearby, a local general store cum post office, Church and a Village Hall and Village Green.



**Village Hall**

- Whilst these facilities attract support from outside village, their presence suggests that a strong social spirit prevails within village.

- There is a distinctive rural feeling about Conservation Area.
  - Farm vehicles passing through village are a reminder of primary industry upon which village was originally based.
    - However agricultural presence within Conservation Area is not strong.
  - Budworth Pool is used recreationally for fishing, but has only limited public access.
  - There are pleasant walks around area and village.

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

- Despite impact of current motor racing activity – a valid historic relationship exists between activities at Oulton Park and village, through Egerton family.
- Site of St. Peter's Church has a long history, being formerly dedicated to St. Mary and All Saints and associated with Parish of Over.
  - Altered many times, John Douglas, Cheshire's famous Victorian architect, was responsible for restoration to present state.
  - Egerton family had a long association with Church – family vault lies within churchyard.
- Common reed grows in Budworth Pool – once used to thatch local cottages.
- More recently – cricket club has achieved high status – probably accounting for scale of pavilion development.
- For any of these links to be lost would be detrimental to aspects of character of Conservation Area.

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

- Variety of natural environments within Conservation Area is fundamental to its relatively unique character, attracting different types of wildlife to area.
  - Budworth Pool is a grade B Site of Biological Interest.
    - Important open water, swamp and woodland habitat.

- Diversity of species includes marine life in Budworth Pool; waterfowl on and around Pool, including Kingfisher; and hedgerow wildlife, as well as those animals living off agricultural land.



**Swans on Budworth Pool**

### **Listed Buildings in Conservation Area**

	grade
Church of St Peter, Vicarage Lane	II* & GV
Church View and Old Hall Cottage, Vicarage Lane	II & GV
The Old Vicarage, Vicarage Lane	II
Dodds Charity Almshouses and garden wall, Vicarage Lane	II* & GV
Pinfold, Pinfold Lane	II*
Well House Farmhouse, Well Lane	II



**Well House Farmhouse**

## Locally Important Buildings in Conservation Area

The Old Flour Mill, Mill Lane  
Church View and Little Croft, Mill Lane  
Lower Farm, Well Lane  
Stable, Lower Farm, Well Lane  
Red Lion, Vicarage Lane  
Church Cottages, Vicarage Lane  
Church View Cottage, Rose Cottage and The Nook, Vicarage Lane  
Manor Farm Buildings, Vicarage Lane  
K6 telephone kiosk on Booth Avenue close to Vicarage Lane  
Manor Farm Cottages (Selkirk Cottages), Vicarage Lane  
Village Hall/Church Room, Vicarage Lane  
The Old Parsonage, Vicarage Lane  
Park Mews (former outbuildings, Park Farm, Vicarage Lane)  
Park Farmhouse, Vicarage Lane  
Egerton Arms, Pinfold Lane



**Lower Farmhouse**



**Selkirk (Manor Farm) Cottages**



**Park Farm**



**Egerton Arms**

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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.*

**Little Budworth Conservation Area was designated by Vale Royal District Council on 9 October 1975 and reviewed in 2006.**

**This appraisal relates to the revised designation that was adopted by Vale Royal Borough Council on 29 March 2007 following a consultation exercise, when it was adopted as Supplementary Planning Information for the purposes of informing relevant planning control decisions.**

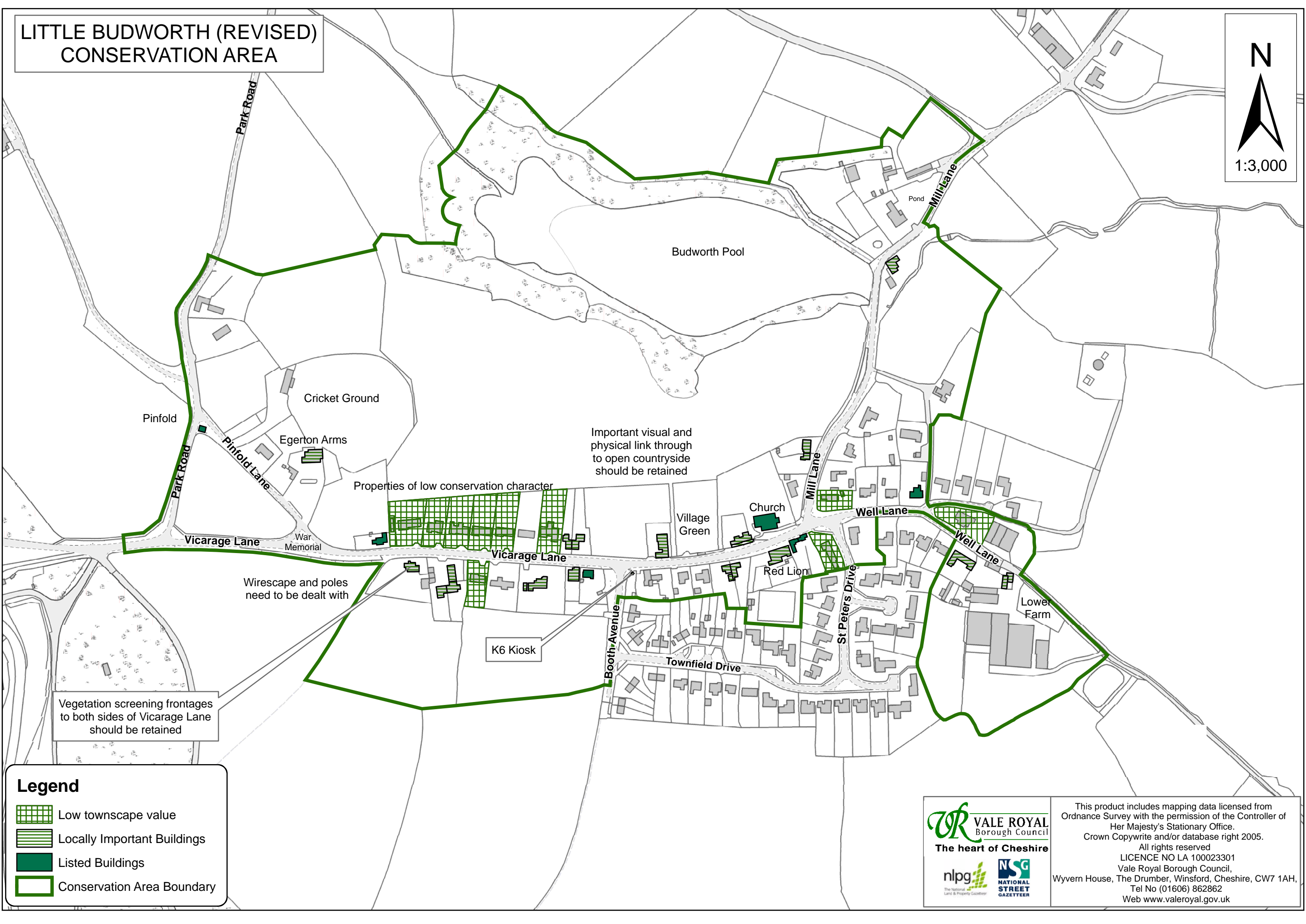
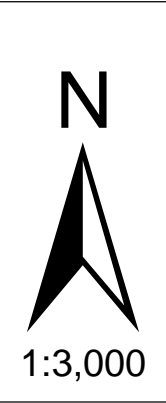
**Copies of the summary of consultation comments and the responses to them are available as a separate document**

Little Budworth (Revised)  
Conservation Area Appraisal  
(one of a series to be produced)

Revised after public consultation  
VRBC Cons 10/X February 2007

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LITTLE BUDWORTH (REVISED)  
CONSERVATION AREA



**Legend**

- Low townscape value
- Locally Important Buildings
- Listed Buildings
- Conservation Area Boundary

**VALE ROYAL**  
Borough Council  
The heart of Cheshire

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