



CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL FOR HARVINGTON

Revised December 2014



HARVINGTON CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

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1 Introduction

Harvington Conservation Area (the Area) was designated by Wyre Forest District Council in 1991. It is situated about three miles south east of Kidderminster in the County of Worcestershire.

The Conservation Area encompasses a small agricultural hamlet focused upon the medieval Harvington Hall, together with its setting.

This document aims to set out the special architectural and historic characteristics of the Conservation Area. The character appraisal will be of interest (and use) to those involved with development and use of the area, and that adjoining it.

The Adopted Wyre Forest Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and the Adopted Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan include policies linked to the Historic Environment. For Harvington Conservation Area Policy, SAL.UP6 of the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan, which is called 'Safeguarding the Historic Environment', is particularly relevant. This Policy ensures that future development within, or adjacent to the Conservation Area, will need to protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the Area.

2 Legislative and Policy Framework

The first Conservation Areas were designated under the Civic Amenities Act (1967). This Act was superseded by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 69 of this later Act imposes a duty on Local Planning Authorities to identify areas that are of special architectural or historic interest, where it is desirable to preserve and enhance the character and appearance, and to designate them as Conservation Areas.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has replaced previous Government guidance which was detailed in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment. The NPPF does, however, maintain the importance placed on conserving and enhancing the Historic Environment as well as providing specific advice for Conservation Areas, most notably in Paragraphs 127, 137 and 138.

The General Permitted Development Order 1995 (GPDO) classes a Conservation Area as being “Article 1(5) land”. Whilst planning permission is not required for many types of works outside such areas, control is given to Local Authorities for works being undertaken within Conservation Areas, including, but not exclusively, the enlargement of a dwelling-house, the rendering of such properties, and the installation of antennae and satellite dishes.

The Adopted Wyre Forest Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and the Adopted Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan contain various policies describing the aims and objectives of the Local Authority in relation to the wider historic environment, and in particular to the preservation and enhancement of the conservation areas within the District. These policies are contained within Appendix 1 of this Appraisal.

It should be noted here that it is not only buildings that are protected when a Conservation Area is designated – trees are also given some protection.

3 Analysis of Character

3.1 Setting and topography

Harvington is situated approximately three miles east of Kidderminster, in the parish of Chaddesley Corbett. The Conservation Area covers an area of 4.6 hectares and is set amidst agricultural land, approached by a narrow winding lane running off the main road from Kidderminster to Bromsgrove.

Harvington Hall stands on a triangular-shaped island with an attendant malt-house and chapel. It is surrounded by a roughly square moat traversed by two stone bridges. The site is a Scheduled Monument and the Hall is Grade I listed. Harvington Hall is open to the public and is renowned as having one of the finest surviving series of priest's hiding places in England.



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Aerial view of the Conservation Area

3.2 Historic evolution

The name Harvington is Anglo-Saxon, and is recorded in the 1086 Domesday Book under the manor of Chaddesley Corbett. Archaeological evidence

suggests that the square moat and its platform, upon which the current Hall stands, were in existence by the 13th century.

One of the earliest structures on the site is believed to have been timber framed, standing on a sandstone foundation and roofed with stone tiles. Some timber framing is still present within the current Hall and this is believed to date to the 14th century.

Documents from 1270 onwards record the manor in the ownership of the de Herwyntons until 1344, when it passed to Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. It remained as part of the Warwick estate for almost 200 years until it was bought by John Packington in 1529. It is believed that it was under the ownership of Packington's son and grandson that substantial alterations were carried out in the 16th century. During these alterations the plan form of Harvington Hall was totally altered, giving an asymmetrical house, entered through a bridge over the moat which led into a courtyard, with the main house on the left. Parts of the medieval building were incorporated into the new building with the timber framing encased in brick. It is likely that the Malt House was constructed during this period. The Packington family owned and resided at Harvington Hall until 1696 when it passed to the Throckmorton family.

During the early 18th century the west and north sides of the courtyard were demolished. An estate map of 1745-1746 by Thomas Thorp provides an insight into the layout of the Area during the mid-18th century. It shows, for example, a Bowling Green, situated in part of what is now the Hall's front lawn. It also shows the Great Garden enclosed by its Elizabethan brick wall. Two small buildings, now demolished, occupied the edge of the island between the Malthouse and the Chapel. The Chapel had been converted from the upper floor of a range of farm buildings in 1743.

In 1825 the Chapel was replaced by a new church, built opposite the Hall, with a Priest's House built adjacent to it in 1838. The former chapel was subsequently used as a school until 1913. During the 19th century the Hall became neglected and gradually stripped of much of its furniture, fixtures and fittings. In 1923 Mrs Ellen Ryan Ferris purchased the site and gave it to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham which later consolidated into the Birmingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustees under whose ownership it remains.

Since 1930 programmes of restoration and preservation have been carried out and the Hall has been opened to the public. After restoration in the 1980's the Chapel, in the Hall grounds, has again been used for worship.

3.3 Land-uses

Residential: There are a small number of dwellings based around Harvington Hall Farm on the eastern side of the Area.

Religious: Harvington is considered to be strongly linked with the Catholic history of the Midlands. The priest holes at Harvington Hall are some of the finest remaining examples in the country. There are also several places of worship at Harvington. The Hall housed its own chapel until the 18th century when a separate, but discreet chapel was built on the moated island, and in 1825 St. Mary's Catholic Parish Church was built opposite the Hall.



Left, the 18th century chapel, right, 19th century St Mary's Church

Tourism: Harvington Hall is open to the public which adds to the profile of the Area. It attracts over 20,000 visitors a year, making it a valuable attraction to the local area and to the wider Wyre Forest District. St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church also provides a place of interest to visit. The picturesque hamlet and the peaceful nature of the surrounding areas encourages visitors.

The majority of the land within the Parish is used for agriculture, horticulture and farming.

3.4 Colours

Colours within the Area are provided by both the built and natural environment. Harvington Hall is a prominent feature and its warm and mellow red brick and red tile roof is a major contributor to colour within the Area. This is enhanced by the presence of other red brick buildings within the vicinity. The presence of red sandstone on several of the buildings in the Area also contributes to the Area's colour.



Colour within the Area is provided by both the built & the natural environment

The grasses and trees within the Area and the views out across the agricultural landscape also provide colour to the Area which changes dependent on the seasons.

3.5 Climate

The surrounding countryside creates the setting for the Area and is heavily influenced by the climate, which changes scenery, colours and views with the seasons.

3.6 Green Spaces

a) Trees

Trees are an important component of the character and appearance of the Area. Aerial views of the Area show the high density of trees surrounding the Hall, which has the effect of hiding the Hall from view from outside the Area. Trees and hedgerows are also used to provide some privacy for Harvington Hall Farm and associated buildings.

The stump of an elm tree on the border of Harvington Hall car park is all that remains of what was once an avenue of elms that marked one of the approaches to the Hall.

There is one Tree Preservation Order in the Area which covers three pine trees outside the church. Trees within the Area and not covered by a Tree Preservation order are still afforded some protection through the Conservation Area designation.



Examples of how trees in the Area provide both interest and colour and also serve as a screen hiding buildings from view

b) Parks and Gardens

The moat surrounding Harvington Hall is a highly important landscape feature within the Area. The moat has been present since the 13th century and was originally the second of a chain of five pools, three of which still hold water. The national importance of the moat and

fishponds is recognised through its entry on the Schedule of Monuments (the only legal protection specifically for archaeological sites).

The Estate Map of 1745-6 shows a large walled garden which is believed to have been constructed during the late sixteenth to early seventeenth century. By the 1884 First Edition Ordnance Survey map the enclosure is shown to be laid out as an orchard. The walls of the garden survive. The section of the garden that belongs to the Priest House has been retained as a garden, but the other half has now been given over for use as an overspill car park.

There is a sizeable area of open space to the fore of the Hall beyond the moat. Although a relatively recent development, it was landscaped in 1949, this lawned section is an important component of the Hall's setting and the Area's character.

The herb garden in the south-east angle of the moat has recently been restored and replanted.



Top left to right, the moat, the lawned section in front of Harvington Hall,
Bottom left to right, the Walled Garden, the herb garden

3.7 Historic pattern and movement

Harvington Hall and its estate has been the principal focus of activity within the Area since the 13th century and therefore provided the main influence on pattern and movement within the Area. Surrounding buildings would have served the needs of the Hall, typically as agricultural buildings or cottages for estate workers. From the 16th century the religion of the household would also

have had an influence on movement within the Area, from sheltering priests to providing a chapel to enable worship in the Catholic faith. Harvington's association with Catholic history continues, represented by the annual Pilgrimage to Harvington for a mass in honour of the English Martyrs. This pilgrimage continues a tradition that dates back to the late 19th century. St Mary's Catholic Church at Harvington is also the Catholic parish church.

Although the Hall fell out of use, its restoration and opening to the public have meant that the Hall is once more a focus for movement within the Area.

3.8 Illumination and night-time appearance

There is no street lighting in the Area, which helps it retain a rural and uncluttered feel.

3.9 Views

The views into and out of the Area provide important links between the hamlet and its surroundings:

a) Into the Area

Views into the Area are fairly limited as the Hall and surrounding buildings are shielded from the approach road to the north by trees, while from the approach road to the south views are partially shielded by the Walled Garden.



Glimpses into the Area can be gained from the footpath that skirts the outside of the moat and the Monarch's Way footpath which provides a glimpse to the range of farm buildings that lie on the eastern side of the Area.

b) Out of the Area

The views out of the Area reinforce the sense of the rural location of the hamlet. Views across agricultural land can be gained from many parts of the Area including from the south bridge of the Hall. The south east part of the Area affords views across to Chaddesley Corbett, identifiable by the spire of St. Cassian's church.



View out of the Area towards Chaddesley Corbett

c) Views within the Area

Views within the Area are limited. Glimpses of the Hall can be gained when approaching from the lane from the north west, but it is not until the final corner is reached that the Hall and church can be clearly seen.



Views within the Area are often limited

The buildings that lie to the east of the Area are partially screened from view by hedgerows and trees.

3.10 Style of buildings

The predominant type of building within the Area is agricultural, from Harvington Hall Farmhouse and its associated buildings to the Malthouse. These buildings are vernacular in style. The pattern of studs on the timber framing of the Malthouse and the diagonal brick noggin have been described as vernacular features typical of the region.

An example of polite architecture can be found in the Area in the form of the Priest's House with its classically proportioned design.

The style of Harvington Hall itself ranges from medieval to Elizabethan with 18th and 19th century additions.



Left, the Malthouse, right The Priest's House

3.11 Size and morphology of buildings

As with most historic settlements, the size of a building is largely dictated by their historic use.

The largest building within the Area and the most visually dominant is Harvington Hall. Its plan form has undergone several alterations during its history with both extension and some demolition having taken place, dependent upon fashion and the needs of the household.

3.12 Materials and construction

a) Walls and construction methods

The principal building material within the Area is red brick, often warm red or warm orange in colour with a range of bonded constructions. It has been suggested that the bricks used at the Hall were fired in two fields adjacent to the north east of the Hall. When brick is used as a material it is often in conjunction with sandstone.

Sandstone is a material often found within the Area, the quarries for which can still be seen. Buildings that have used sandstone include St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church which is faced with sandstone ashlar and surrounded by a sandstone wall. Sandstone is also used for plinths and dressings.



Examples of construction methods within the Area

There are also examples of timber framing within the Area, some such as the Malthouse have been left exposed, while other timber framed buildings such as Harvington Hall Farm have been clad in brick. The barn about 20 metres north of Harvington Hall Farmhouse has had its oak timber framed exterior surfaced in elm boarding. However within the Area the facing material is typically left untreated which emphasises the natural colours of the sandstone and brick.

b) Windows

There are a variety of windows types within the Area which range from stone mullioned windows, to side hung casements, to sash windows and to Y tracery found at the church. Window dressings also vary and include plastered wedge lintels and segmental heads.

Windows are predominantly constructed in timber or metal. The Area is enhanced through the lack of use of UPVC, which due to the material and finish is not considered appropriate for historic properties.

The variation in the type, construction and finishing details of the windows assists in creating the Area's character.



A selection of windows from within the Area

c) Doors

The Area contains a variety of doors and surrounds that range from simple boarded doors to half-glazed and fully glazed doors.



A selection of doors from within the Area

Some of the doors date back to the 17th and 18th centuries and include interesting detail such as the leaf-head strap hinges found at the Malthouse.

Door surrounds include flat canopies, tiled gable canopies and wooden architrave.

The traditional doors found within the Area compliment the historic character of the hamlet.

d) Roofs

Most of the roofs in the Area are gabled, the pitch of which is generally steep varying between 40 and 45 degrees. A noticeable exception is the Priest's House which has a hipped roof.

Roofing materials in the Area are predominantly tile and range from hand-made red clay tile to machine tile. Again the Priest's House provides the exception with its slate roof.

The roofing materials provide a textual richness to the Area, with the irregularity and undulating unevenness of the hand made clay tiles adding to the historic character of the Area.



Examples of the roofing materials found within the Area

e) Rainwater goods

Rainwater goods are traditionally cast iron, predominantly in half-round profile for guttering. Of particular interest are the lead rainwater goods at Harvington Hall, particularly those on the north side of the Hall with its dated hopper head and decorated downspouts. A more modern version of which can be found on the south side.

f) Boundary walls, copings and railings

There are several prominent boundary walls within the Area including:

The Churchyard Wall: This is grade II listed and is an early 19th century sandstone ashlar. There are two gateways on the north side, each with square gate piers with pyramidal caps.

The Garden wall: This, to the south of the Priest's House, is also listed, is about 2 metres high and encloses the west, east and south sides of the garden west of the Priest's House. It is brick with brick and stone coping. The walls are believed to date from the late 16th or early 17th century and enclosed the "Great Garden" shown on the 1745-6 Estate Map.

The hedgerows: These, which line the narrow lanes that lead into the Area, enhance the sense of enclosure and visually narrow the carriageway which has the potential to reduce the speed of traffic entering the Area. The high verges have restricted kerbside parking which helps to retain the rural character of the Area.



Top left, the churchyard wall, top right the Garden Wall,
Bottom, hedgerows on approach to the Area

3.13 Survival of architectural features

The Area has retained many original architectural features. These include:

- Traditional roofs and roof coverings

- The lead downpipe and hopper at Harvington Hall
- Traditional windows and doors, both in traditional materials and designs
- The moat
- The Garden Wall



Lead downpipe and hopper at Harvington Hall

3.14 Landmarks, focal points and special features

a) Landmarks

Landmarks are buildings, structures or other features that are important because their size, design or position make them particularly noticeable. Landmarks in the Area include the following:

- Harvington Hall – the Hall is the principal landmark within the Area by virtue of its size, design and position.



Harvington Hall is the principal landmark of the Area

- The Priest's House – this is a landmark by virtue of its height and design, with its imposing elevation when viewed from the south.

b) Focal Points

Focal points are buildings, structures or areas that are important because of their position in view-lines, or because they are the centre of well-frequented public activity. Focal points include the following:

- Harvington Hall – the Hall is open to the public and is therefore a centre of public activity although the extent can vary dependent on the time of the year
- St. Mary's Roman Catholic church – the church is the Catholic parish church and has provided a place for worship since 1825. In doing so it continues a tradition of Catholic worship at Harvington.
- The Wain House – this is a focal point because its position punctuates the end of a view-line.
- The Garden Wall – the height of the Wall means that it is noticeable from various points within the Area and when approaching from the south east it is a noticeable feature of the landscape. It also serves an important function of screening the overspill car park.
- The moat and associated pools – these serve as a focal point within the landscape of the Hall, this focal point is further enhanced by the presence of waterfowl.
- The 18th century chapel – the chapel is one of the first buildings that can be seen when approaching from the north west. Its reflection in the stillness of the moat further enhances its status as a focal point.



Focal points in the Area include the moat and the Wain House



Focal points also include the 18th century chapel

c) Special Features

One of the key characteristics of the Area is the high quality and historic interest of the structures within it. There are 12 Statutory List Entries within the Area. Harvington Hall is Grade I listed which denotes the Hall as being of “exceptional interest”. It is one of only 6 Grade I listed buildings in the District. The Hall and moat have also been scheduled as an Ancient Monument. Scheduling is only applied to archaeological sites of national interest.

The two quarries in the Area are also special features due to their association with the redevelopment of the Hall in the 16th century. One of the quarries was even subsequently used as the dog kennels for the Hall.



One of the quarries within the Area

3.15 Ground Surfaces

There are several types of ground surface within the Area. These include:

- Grass: From the lawned area in front of, and to the rear of, Harvington Hall to the grass-lined roadside edges and the overspill car park, grass forms a substantial part of the ground cover within the Area.
- Water: The presence of the moat and fishponds means that water is a significant ground surface that has been associated with the Area for centuries.
- Gravel: Used in the centre of the Area to denote the parking area. The informal use of its layout, appearance and the material minimises the potential impact that the parking area could have.
- Standard tarmacadam: used on the approach roads into the hamlet.

3.16 Hard landscaping/Street furniture

Hard landscaping and street furniture have been kept to a minimum within the Area. Highway signs are present on the approach to the hamlet and are related to speed restrictions.

Other signs in the Area that relate to either the Hall or the church are painted a dark red which provides some continuity within the Area. The signs are well maintained, limited in number and removable, all of which helps to negate the potential negative impact that they could have on the Area.

Benches are restricted to the back of the Hall forming an attractive picnic area.

3.17 Tranquil areas and active areas

The rural setting of the hamlet and the small number of buildings within the Area ensures that the Area enjoys relative tranquillity despite being a popular visitor attraction. The car park within the centre of the Area provides an active area, serving both the needs of the Hall and the church. Particularly tranquil areas include the moat, especially where the moat broadens out into a small lake with waterfowl and coarse fishing.

Harvington Hall Lane, the narrow lane which passes through the Area is used by commute traffic on weekdays during the early part of the day and again around 5pm to 5.30pm. This disturbs the tranquillity of the Area and is potentially dangerous for pedestrians.



Examples of tranquil and active areas

3.18 Noise

On the whole the Area is quiet and peaceful with noise reflecting its rural location. The Area is situated far enough away from the main road to keep the noise of vehicular traffic to a minimum although this level of noise increases during commuter times and when the Hall is open. Other noise includes human conversation which is especially focused in social areas such as the Hall and the church.

3.19 Paths

There are two paths that run at the edge of the Area: one runs from the Walled Garden and skirts the moat, providing views of Harvington Hall, the moat and views towards Harvington. The second is part of the “Monarch’s Way” footpath which follows the escape route of Charles II after his defeat at the battle of Worcester during the Civil War. This section of the path provides views across to the range of buildings associated with Harvington Hall Farm.

3.20 Alien features

The Area, on the whole, has maintained its “traditional character”. Perhaps the most noticeable alien features within the Area are the highway signs present when approaching from the south east. The road is flanked by two 30mph signs in addition to a road marking. At this location where the road is narrow and the signs can be clearly seen, it may be more appropriate to only have one sign.



The traffic signs are an alien feature within the Area

4 Concluding Statement

Harvington Conservation Area is rich in archaeological, historic and architectural interest. This is reflected in the designation of part of the Area as a Scheduled Monument and in the high number of Statutory Listed Structures within the Area. The site has been carefully managed and maintained ensuring that many historic details have been retained.

The rural setting, in addition to the number of trees and hedges found within the Area, further adds to the special character and appearance of the Area.

Adopted Wyre Forest Local Plan Policies

Policy SAL.UP6

Safeguarding the Historic Environment

1. Heritage Assets

Any development proposal affecting the District's heritage assets, including their setting, should demonstrate how these assets will be protected, conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced. The District's heritage assets include:

- Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments.
- Building and Structures on the Local Heritage List.
- Landscape features including ancient woodlands and veteran trees, field patterns, watercourses, and hedgerows of visual, historic or nature conservation value.
- Archaeological remains and non-designated historic structures recorded on the County Historic Environment Record.
- Historic parks and gardens.

Developments that relate to a Heritage Asset should be accompanied by a Heritage Statement. Where proposals are likely to affect the significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, the Heritage Statement should demonstrate an understanding of such significance and in sufficient detail to assess any potential impacts. This should be informed by currently available evidence.

When considering a development proposal which may affect a Heritage Asset, or when preparing a Heritage Statement, applicants should have regard to the following points:

- To ensure that proposals would not have a detrimental impact on the significance of a Heritage Asset or its setting and to identify how proposals make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the area.
- Any harm or loss of significance will require clear and convincing justification.
- The re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where this is consistent with the conservation of the specific heritage asset.
- Proposals which secure the long-term future of a heritage asset at risk will specifically be encouraged.
- That repairs, alterations, extensions and conversions of heritage assets take into account the materials, styles and techniques to be used and the period in which the asset was built.
- The installations of fixtures and fittings should not have a detrimental impact on a heritage asset, should be inconspicuously sited and proportioned and be designed sympathetically.
- In considering new development that may affect a heritage asset, proposals will need to identify how the scale, height and massing of new development in relation to the particular feature, and the materials and design utilised, does not detrimentally affect the asset or its setting.

Development proposals that would have an adverse impact on a heritage asset and/or its setting, or which will result in a reduction or loss of significance, will not be permitted, unless it is clearly demonstrated the following criteria are met:

- a. There are no reasonable alternative means of meeting the need for development appropriate to the level of significance of the Heritage Asset.
- b. The reasons for the development outweigh the individual significance of the Heritage Asset, its importance as part of a group and to the local scene, and the need to safeguard the wider stock of such Heritage Assets.
- c. In the case of demolitions, that the substantial public benefits of the development outweigh the loss of the building or structure; or the nature of the asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; or the loss of the heritage asset is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use. Redevelopment proposals should provide design which mitigates appropriately against the loss of the heritage asset in proportion to its significance at a national or local level.

Where material change to a heritage asset has been agreed, recording and interpretation should be undertaken to document and understand the asset's archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance. The scope of the recording should be proportionate to the asset's significance and the impact of the development on the asset. The information and understanding gained should be made publicly available, as a minimum, through the relevant Historic Environment Record.

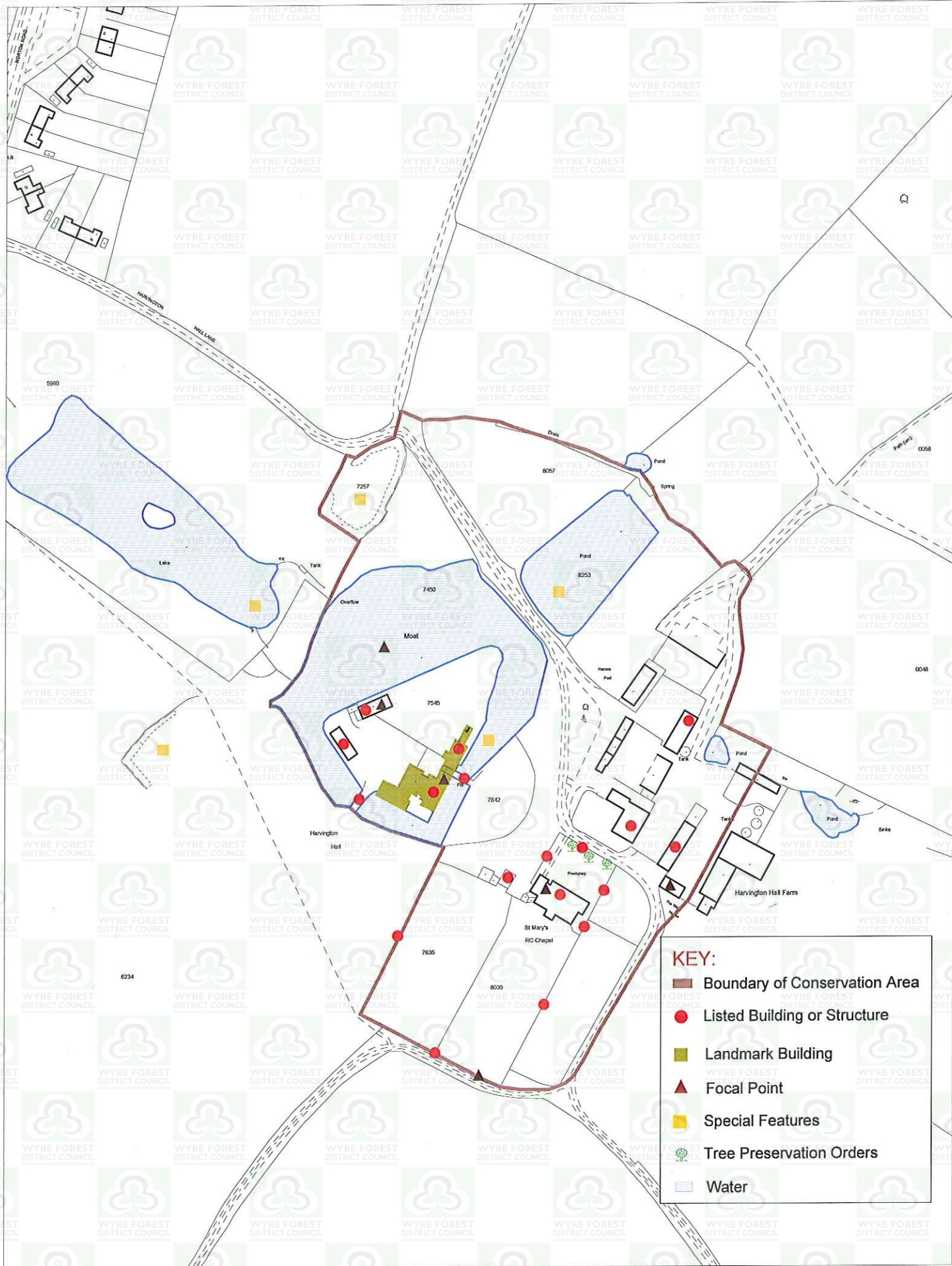
2. Conservation Areas

When development is proposed in, or adjacent to, a Conservation Area, proposals should accord with the existing (or draft) Conservation Area Character Appraisal and seek to enhance or better reveal the significance of the area. Development should not adversely affect views into, within, or out of the Conservation Area.

Proposals for the demolition of a building or structure in a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it has been clearly demonstrated that:

- i. It has no significance in itself or by association, and no value to the significance of the Conservation Area.
- ii. Its demolition or replacement would benefit the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- iii. Proposals include detailed and appropriate proposals for redevelopment, together with clear evidence redevelopment will proceed.

Proposals that affect shop fronts within a Conservation Area should have regard to the Council's Shop Front Design Guidance.



KEY:

- Boundary of Conservation Area
- Listed Building or Structure
- Landmark Building
- ▲ Focal Point
- Special Features
- 🌳 Tree Preservation Orders
- Water

