



*Basingstoke
and Deane*

Conservation Area Appraisal Silchester



...making a difference

Introduction

The Silchester Conservation Area was first designated in 1992 by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council in recognition of the special architectural and historic interest of the village.

Having designated the Conservation Area, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that those elements that form its particular character or appearance should be preserved or enhanced, especially when considering planning applications.

It is therefore necessary to define and analyse those qualities or elements that contribute to, or detract from, the special interest of the area and to assess how they combine to justify its designation as a Conservation Area. Such factors can include:

- its historic development;
- the contribution of individual or groups of buildings to the streetscene and the spaces that surround them; and
- the relationship of the built environment with the landscape.

They can also include the less tangible senses and experiences such as noise or smells, which can play a key part in forming the distinctive character of an area.

The Appraisal takes the form of written text and an Appraisal plan. In both respects every effort has been made to include or analyse those elements key to the special character of the area. Where buildings, structures or features have not been specifically highlighted it does not necessarily follow that they are of no visual or historic value to the Conservation Area. The document is intended to be an overall framework and guide within which decisions can be made on a site-specific basis.

This Appraisal of the Silchester Conservation Area follows its review in 2003 by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and explains what its designation means for those who live and work in the area.

This document was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane on 17 July 2003 and complements the policies of the Borough Local Plan (review).

It has been subject to consultation with Councillors, the Parish Council and local amenity groups. A full list of consultees, copies of their responses, and details of the Council's consideration of the issues raised during the consultation period are available for inspection, by appointment, at the Civic Offices, during normal office hours.



*Dial Cottage and Silchester Cottage,
Little London Road*



*Old Meadows, Briar Cottage,
and The Old Malt House (The Pound)*

Location and Population

The village of Silchester lies on the northern boundary of Hampshire, approximately eight miles from Basingstoke. Silchester is best known for the nationally important remains of the large walled Roman town of Calleva Atrebatum. The main part of the Conservation Area is drawn tightly around the central area of the village. It also includes a separate settlement located half a mile to the east of Silchester, known as 'The Pound'.

The population of the Silchester Conservation Area in 1998 was approximately 91 (projection based on the Hampshire County Council Planning Department Small Area Population Forecasts 1995).



Romans Hotel

Historic Development

Settlement Origins

The name of Silchester implies the proximity of a Roman town, and to the east of the present village is the site of the Iron Age 'Oppidum' of Calleva Atrebatum. The Belgic tribe of the Atrebates, fleeing from Caesar in Gaul c.50BC, settled on a high gravel plateau, calling it 'Calleva Atrebatum' - the town in the woods of the Atrebates. The woods provided fuel, crops were grown, and cattle grazed in the fields.



Old Meadows at The Pound

After the Roman invasion of 43AD, the Romans adopted the site as an administrative centre, and developed a 'Civitas' town there. Calleva was a prosperous town, administering local justice and collecting taxes from a large area. The Roman integration and influence here was peaceful. The town is the focus of several roads, which still dominate the landscape in places. They are often long and straight in their course. The Roman remains occupy a lozenge-shaped site at the northern edge of the parish, and five or six Roman roads radiate from this site. The present parish church occupies a site at the eastern edge of the walled area, one mile from Silchester village.

Calleva's glory faded as trade routes shifted. The Roman army withdrew its support and Saxons invaded from the north. Little is known until a Domesday Book entry in 1086, which records two manors for Silchester, as it had then become known. One of these became the parish of Mortimer West End. The other, with a population of fifty to sixty, was located around the Manor House and The Pound, and became the parish of Silchester. Today, these two parishes probably reflect the extent of the Roman 'territorium' centred upon Calleva.

During the middle ages, Silchester was a small settlement. It was visited by King John in May 1215, when he stayed with Ralph Bluet, Lord of the Manor at the time. In September 1601, Queen Elizabeth I passed through the settlement on her way to Basing House to the south.



Pound House at the junction of Church Lane and Bramley Road



The Village Hall

The Duke of Wellington, residing in the adjacent village of Stratfield Saye, bought the Manor of Silchester in 1828. The majority of the villagers lived in cottages or rough shacks on, or around, the common, paying rent to The Duke. The present Duke of Wellington sold the Manor of Silchester in 1972 to John Cook, who gave Silchester Common to the parish.

Settlement Development

The essential settlement pattern of Silchester is a reflection of the ad hoc development of the village between the early 14th and 19th centuries. This was possibly as a result of the absence of a resident Lord of the Manor, from 1316 to 1828. The population expansion, following the Black Death, probably caused the settlement to shift from the church and The Pound to the heathland in the west of the parish. Although of poor soil, the heathland could be cleared and a dwelling built for free, if done quickly. This ended in 1828, when the first Duke of Wellington bought Silchester from his brother-in-law, the Earl of Longford. The only lasting evidence of the early manorial influence is the 12th century church, and the moated site on the east side of the area.

There were no important families in the Silchester area until the 19th century and, therefore, very few high status houses before then. Silchester Hall and Silchester House were then built and replaced earlier farms. Rector Coles gave the Old Rectory its present Georgian exterior. Unlike other villages under the control of The Duke of Wellington, Silchester did not have any of his estate houses. The Duke paid for the school to be built in 1844 and Rector Coles organised the construction of the Crown Inn (now the Calleva Arms public house) in 1865.

Farming was the main occupation, evidenced by the numerous farm names still in existence. These tenanted farms continued under absentee owners, and included land around Byes Lane, owned by The Queen's College, Oxford. It is likely that the clearance and use of the heathland after the 15th century would have created new cottage industries. These would have been centred on the adjoining woodlands and products of the heathland. Before 1945, the village had a range of shops and small businesses but all these have now disappeared, and it is now almost exclusively residential.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, families such as the Newnham Davis', the Thorolds and the Bramley-Firths moved into the new large houses, such as Silchester Hall. They provided work for the local population and perhaps were responsible for the building of cottages in the village. In 1926, Norman Evill, a London architect and possible student of Edwin Lutyens, was commissioned to design the Village Hall along with Heathecote House, New Timbers (now the Roman Hotel) and The Grange.

An Appraisal of the Conservation Area

An Overview

The Appraisal plan identifies those buildings, views, and key features considered essential to the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area. In addition to the listed buildings, it also includes unlisted buildings of particular individual or group value, which are indicated on the plan as notable. This is not to undermine the value of other unmarked buildings or structures that reflect the historic development of the village without detracting from its special qualities.

Individual hedgerows have not been included on the Appraisal plan. However, their contribution to the character of the Conservation Area should not be underestimated and their significance is implicit in the Appraisal.

The main village is essentially residential and intimate in character, with an informal arrangement of buildings around narrow lanes and the common. The lanes link together small pockets of spaces often defined by key buildings. The Pound is also residential but of stronger rural appearance than the main village.

Built Form

There are 11 buildings in the Silchester Conservation Area included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, as being of local or regional importance (Grade II).

The village centre is dominated by Silchester Common but has a number of thatched buildings that create its distinctive character. There is an informal mix of building layouts, styles and materials in the village centre.

The Pound is a much smaller settlement, along a winding road in the open countryside, but it also has a group of important historic buildings that set it apart from neighbouring settlements. The buildings follow a more linear pattern in irregular but spacious plots. However, a degree of cohesion is created by a combination of boundary fences, trees and hedges that link the buildings.

The listed buildings are dispersed throughout the village and represent a variety of building types, mainly dating from the 17th to 19th centuries. Often located at prominent positions in the area, they make a significant contribution to the special qualities of the Conservation Area. Some of these older buildings have been altered over successive periods to accommodate changes in their use or contemporary architectural fashions. The re-fronting in brick of timber-framed buildings, and the insertion of carefully arranged sash windows to produce polite elevations, was particularly common in the 18th century. Other buildings have retained more completely their vernacular form and materials.



New Timber Lodge



Barns adjoining Old Meadows (The Pound)



*Silchester House and outbuildings
with clocktower*



The Old Stores



Woodrow



Former Forge Cottages

There are several unlisted buildings in the village centre that contribute positively to the special character of the Conservation Area. They date mainly from the 19th and early 20th centuries, and are scattered among the listed buildings, representing an expansion of the village.

Although some have intrinsic architectural or historic merit, most are highlighted for their group value in reinforcing the character of the Conservation Area.

Key Individual Buildings

The Village Centre

Culhams Farmhouse (Grade II) is a large house of status built in 1847. It is almost hidden by late 20th century houses built on former adjacent farmland. Its dominant chimney stacks and steep slate roof can be glimpsed from Little London Road. Just to the south can be glimpsed a long brick built barn with slate roof that lies between the modern Brookfields and Prospect House. This offers a reminder of the predominantly rural character of the area.

Silchester House, which replaced an earlier farm, is located at the eastern end of Holly Lane, set back from the road in extensive grounds. This large and intricate listed building dates from about 1840. It is of Tudor Gothic style, reflecting the wealth of this area in the latter part of the 19th century. The mass of the building is broken by its strong gables and the juxtaposition of interesting roof slopes punctuated by sets of highly ornate chimney pots. The outbuildings adjoining the house are also of merit. The clocktower to the building adjoining the western end of the house is a prominent feature and can be viewed along Holly Lane as it curves around the house.

Opposite the common, Vine Cottage is an early 19th century, two-storey brick building with a prominent catslide at the rear. On the other side of the common, The Old Stores on the corner of Whistler's Lane, dates from the 18th century. Its vernacular and polite symmetrical front elevation and hipped tile roof are prominent from across the common and help define the space between it and the public house opposite.

There are also a number of non-listed buildings that have individual architectural merit. Romans Hotel, is a large, distinctly imposing, 'Arts and Crafts' building. It was designed by Norman Evill, a London architect, and constructed in the early part of the 20th century. It occupies a large semi-public space off Little London Road.

Woodrow is of an unusual form, as the original 19th century building has been extended to the south. This brick-fronted and clay tiled building is set within a mature tree belt. The Village Hall has a dominant form, with its tall and steep pitched roof slopes and tile hung gable-end facing the

common. The former Forge Cottages off Pamber Road form an important terrace of brick construction and predominantly slate roofs, screening views of more modern development behind. In this way, the terrace retains the character of vernacular buildings around the edge of the common

The Pound

Pound House stands slightly apart at the western end of the hamlet. It is set in an extensive garden, stretching down to Silchester Brook to the south. It has a symmetrical and polite elevation, and appears to have been intended to be set apart from the main group of buildings.

Pound Cottage is a long rendered brick building, framed by two later cross wings extending forward of the original building line. The more recent adjoining garage building is of complimentary scale, and has a small but prominent clocktower that can be seen along Church Lane. Briar Cottage is a one and a half-storey cottage, built of brick with thatched roof and eyebrow dormers. The thatched garage building to the rear hides the cottage from view, but contributes to the rural character of the area. The stable block in the grounds of The Old Coach House helps define a small, intimate space behind.



Dial Cottage



Dial Cottage and Silchester Cottage

Significant Groups of Buildings

The Village Centre

Dial Cottage, Holly Tree Cottage and Holly House form an important group of Grade II listed buildings and are an essential part of the appearance of the Conservation Area. These vernacular cottages are constructed of brick, with some exposed timber-frames and thatched or red clay tile roofs. Important to this group is Silchester Cottage, an attractive small house of symmetrical features, constructed of brick, now painted, with a slate roof and wooden sash windows. The house can only be seen from the road junction as it is set slightly back. The two smaller brick and slate roof outbuildings (in particular the larger of the two alongside Little London Road) contribute to the mix of building forms and materials. These combine to create a strong sense of place around the small triangle of grass formed by the intersection of Little London Road and Holly Lane. The taller brick outbuilding at the front of Stacey Place on Little London Road (immediately behind Dial Cottage) also contributes to the character of this important space at the heart of the Conservation Area.

Forming part of this group is New Timber Lodge, a small thatched building on Little London Road. The Lodge punctuates the view from the south up the hill and provides the first glimpse of the historic, rural character of the village. Together with the Calleva Arms public house, it terminates the long view from Silchester Common to the north.



1-6 Whistler's Lane



Pound Cottage

The Calleva public house and buildings along Pamber Road form an important group that is prominent across the common. The main brick front elevation and hipped slate roof of the public house are dominant in the village scene. Immediately behind is Fiveways, a small brick double-fronted cottage, and closely juxtaposed to the north-west is Vine Cottage. These buildings are all important in helping define the relationship between the common and the settlement edge.

Along the southern side of Whistler's Lane there are several late 19th and early 20th century semi-detached houses and cottages. These are all constructed of red brick with clay tile roofs and set behind low brick front walls. The combination of these buildings and the unmade lane creates a special intimate space. This is terminated at its northern end by the brick rear of The Old Stores. It is bordered to the south by a two-storey loft building with dark weather-boarding on its upper floor, and the dense tree belt on Bramley Road behind.

The Pound

Old Meadows, the barn on Bramley Road and, opposite, The Old Malt House, form a cohesive group of listed buildings. These are the main focus of this small settlement around its main road junction. Old Meadows dates from the 18th century, with a later 19th century extension to its western end. The main elevation reflects the architectural fashion for ordered or polite elevations, transposed into a rural setting. Its doorcase is of particular note. The building occupies an important position on the bend of Bramley Road and terminates the view along the lane opposite. Its chimney can also be viewed across the open fields, at the entrance to the Conservation Area further along Bramley Road.

Behind Old Meadows, along Bramley Road, lies a group of barns. The main one has a long brick and timber elevation, and is also listed. This prominent building makes a significant contribution to defining the essential rural appearance of this part of the Conservation Area.

The Old Malt House dates from the 17th century and is also a building of status, reflecting the wealth of the area at this time. Its tiled roof and exposed timber-framing are visible above the tall brick boundary wall, enclosing the property on all sides.

The Character and Importance of Public and Private Spaces

The Village Centre

In the village centre, heathland, and its associated scrub and gorse dominate the smaller uncultivated spaces, within the settlement. These are a reminder of the once extensive heathland to be found in the north of Hampshire.

The expansive common is the most dominant, and memorable, feature of the Conservation Area. The character of the buildings on its perimeter is strengthened by the long views afforded across the open common. The common and heathland area around Silchester is much valued as a recreational resource for pastimes such as walking and horse riding. Silchester Common is owned in its entirety by the Parish Council, which has recently reintroduced grazing, to protect this important habitat. It is also a protected Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The small triangular green, at the junction of Little London Road and Holly Lane is intimate by contrast, but remains a focal point within the village. It is defined by the close-knit pattern of the adjoining buildings and has important views out to Silchester House, back to the common and down the hill to the south. At the foot of the slope is the Flex Ditch, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The ditch is now well covered by mature vegetation, but is visible from the pond alongside the main road. It adjoins the line of a former Roman Road ('Portway') that crosses the main road at this point. The pond and ditch create an intimate space at the southern entrance to the Conservation Area which is revealed beyond the bend in the road and up the hill. The tall chimney-stacks on Culham's Farm are the first visible sign of the area.

Hedges contribute extensively to the south and east of the settlement, especially where they form high barriers along the verges of the roadsides. They bring cohesion to the village linking the informally arranged buildings together, and add interest by providing glimpses of the buildings behind. Larger and more mature trees are found in the gardens and along property boundaries in the Conservation Area.

The character of the tree cover is mainly broad-leaved with the occasional conifer, such as black pine, Scots pine and yew. Among the broad-leaved trees oaks predominate, with some mature lime, horse chestnut and ash also represented. Sycamore is now beginning to encroach into the Conservation Area. There are several mature trees, of note, including a maturing walnut to the rear of the Calleva Arms public house. There is a fine copper beech and also a cedar of Lebanon, in the grounds of Silchester House. A pair of notable hedgerow hollies can be seen along Bramley Road.



View across Silchester Common to the Calleva Arms public house



Flex Ditch Pond

The Pound

Dense belts of mature trees punctuate the stepped layout of buildings along Bramley Road. They offer only quick glimpses of the buildings and views of the countryside beyond. However, there are extensive views across open fields, notably at the entrances to the Conservation Area to the east and west.

The lane joining Church Lane with Bramley Lane is a particularly special semi-private space. Although a public road, the well-kept grass verges and stone markers, together with the large trees (especially the tall yew hedges), create a very private space. The area enclosed by this lane, Church Lane and Bramley Road is another important space, that may have been an animal pound. This private space is an orchard or garden to The Old Malt House, but there are views across and through the space at some points. There are also large, well-established planted grounds to Pound Cottage and Brook Farm.

These cultivated areas all boast well-spaced, large and mature trees, enhancing the rural quality and character of this area. However, in contrast to the village centre, the tree cover is more extensive and makes a greater contribution to defining the character of the area. The broad-leaved element predominates, with a wide variety of species represented. These include many young trees planted in some of the large gardens. Species noted include tulip tree, birch, Norway maple cultivars, horse chestnut, ash, lime, beech, poplar, white willow, oak and cherry. The coniferous element there are several notable yews together with examples of western red cedar, Lawson cypress, young cedar and black and Scots pine. Also of note is a young hornbeam in the grounds of Brook Farm, and a tall, stately lime in the garden of Old Meadows. Of particular note, is an ancient pollarded oak on the highway verge opposite Briar Cottage. A good example of a spreading hedgerow oak can be found on the field boundary along Bramley Road, opposite Brook Farm.



View into The Pound from Bramley Road



View across private gardens of Old Meadows, The Pound



View towards The Old Malt House from Pound Cottage

Building Materials

The variety of traditional building materials reflect the general ad hoc vernacular development of Silchester and The Pound. They range from the earlier use of timber-frames and thatch through to the use of polite brickwork in the 18th century. In the 19th century, rendering was used to imitate stone (for example at Silchester House). The survival of thatch, in particular, reinforces the special rural character of the Conservation Area.

Given the domestic scale and simple provincial architecture of the buildings in the Conservation Area, historic joinery (such as sash windows, doors and door hoods) are often the features that define the appearance of properties. This is also the case for more grand or ordered elevations where the arrangement of sash windows are key to the architectural design. Although some buildings have been modernised, the use and overall effect of inappropriate replacement windows and doors is limited.



Vine Cottage from Pamber Road



Brook Farm at The Pound

The Setting of the Conservation Area

The landscape around Silchester is very special. It contains the largest single remnant of the once extensive north Hampshire heathland, much of which has been lost since the Second World War. To the north and east of Silchester is an extensive Area of Special Landscape Quality (ASLQ). This covers Silchester Common and the heathland throughout the Parishes of Pamber and Tadley. Pamber Forest is a local Nature Reserve, and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) covers Lord's Wood and most of Silchester Common.

The setting of the Conservation Area is predominantly woodland and suburban to the north and west. There are a number of large buildings set in extensive grounds within this setting, for example Silchester Hall, The Old House, Dicker's Farm and The Rectory. All of these could be considered to play an important part in defining the character of the Conservation Area itself.

To the south and east is an area of more open countryside. This is an area of heavy clay, gravel, sand, some woodland cover, plus small and medium sized fields. Scattered villages and farming settlements, joined by a dense network of winding lanes, characterise an area found on slightly more open higher ground. The Pound is considerably more exposed than the village centre, in terms of the long views across the open countryside that surrounds it. Its winding road also contrasts with the long, straight lanes on its approach. However, the belts of trees, forming many of the boundaries to the area result in infrequent glimpses of buildings in the area from outside The Pound.



View of Woodrow across Silchester Common

Areas of Archaeological Significance

Every settlement contains within it archaeological evidence of its origins and development, of the economy and industry of the community, and of the lives and lifestyles of past inhabitants.

It is in the Areas of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP) that such archaeological remains will be encountered.

Where a development is proposed, the impact that it might have on these remains is a material consideration within the planning process. This may occasionally result in the need for archaeological recording in the case of some developments.

The majority of the present day settlement of Silchester is considered an Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP). The buildings in the settlement were initially built on raised land, within Silchester Common. However they have then encroached further to the west in at least two visible stages. The dates of these periods of development are not clear, although a post-medieval date is often given to such settlement plans. However, in some areas of the country, common edge settlement is thought to have been underway in the 12th century.

Today, the oldest buildings on the pieces of raised drier land within the common are either 17th, late 18th, or early 19th century. Encroachments on the common land had certainly taken place by 1653, and are shown on a map of this date. The Flex Ditch is at the point where the present road and the ditch cross. This is important, as archaeological evidence may survive in this area to prove the relationship between these two features.

At the north end of the common, and also to the west of the main area of settlement, are two more 'islands' of settlement considered as an Area of Archaeological Potential (AAP). These areas of development were in existence by the 17th century and may be late medieval in date.

Conservation Area Planning Controls

The following controls apply within the Conservation Area in addition to normal planning controls:

- Conservation Area Consent is normally required for the demolition of buildings or structures over a certain size within a Conservation Area.
- The Council must be given six weeks notice of any intention to undertake works to, cut down or uproot any trees over a certain size in the Conservation Area.
- Planning applications which, in the opinion of the Borough Council, would affect the special character of the Conservation Area must be advertised and the opportunity given for public comment. This may include proposals outside the Conservation Area which nevertheless affect its setting.

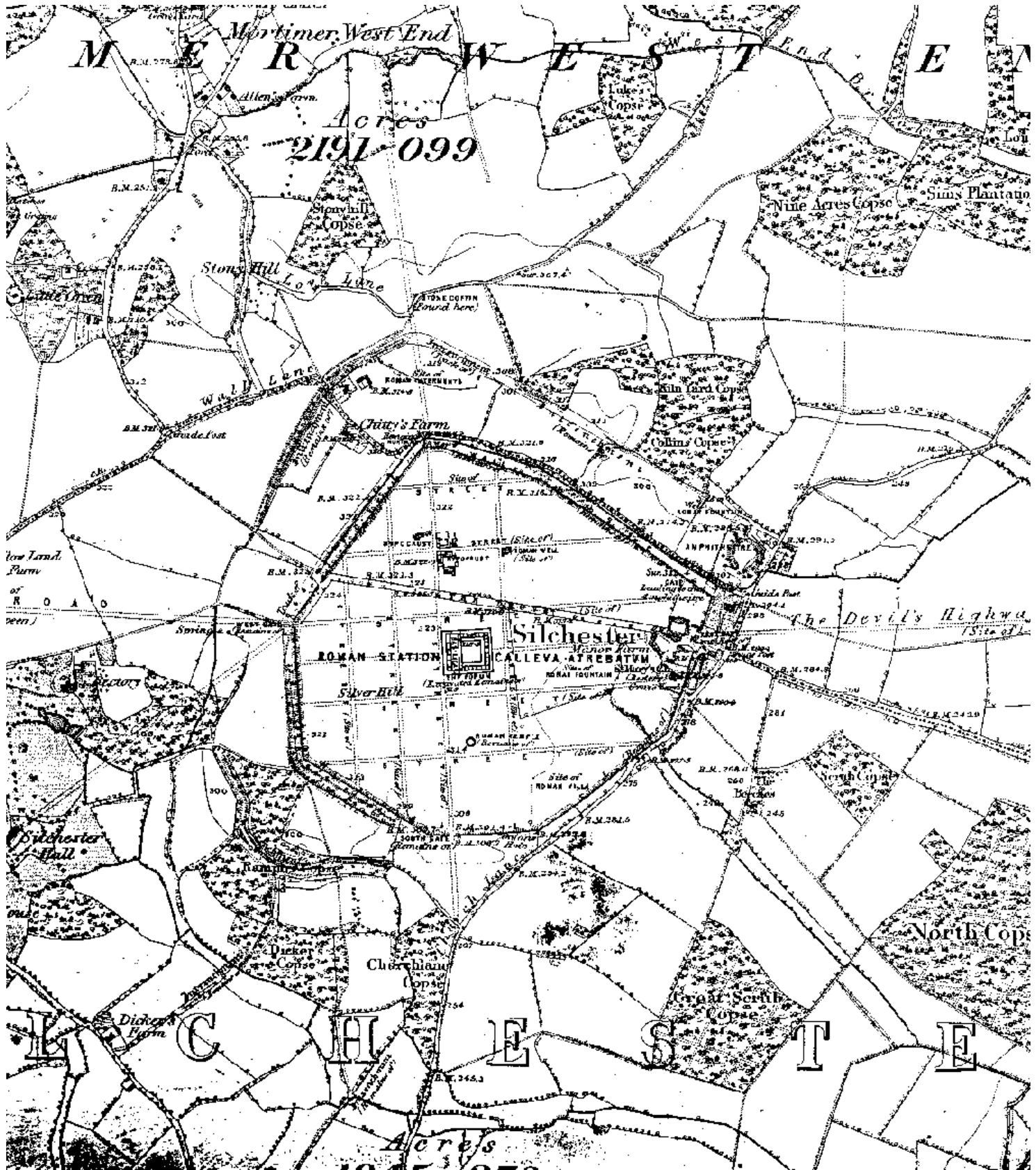


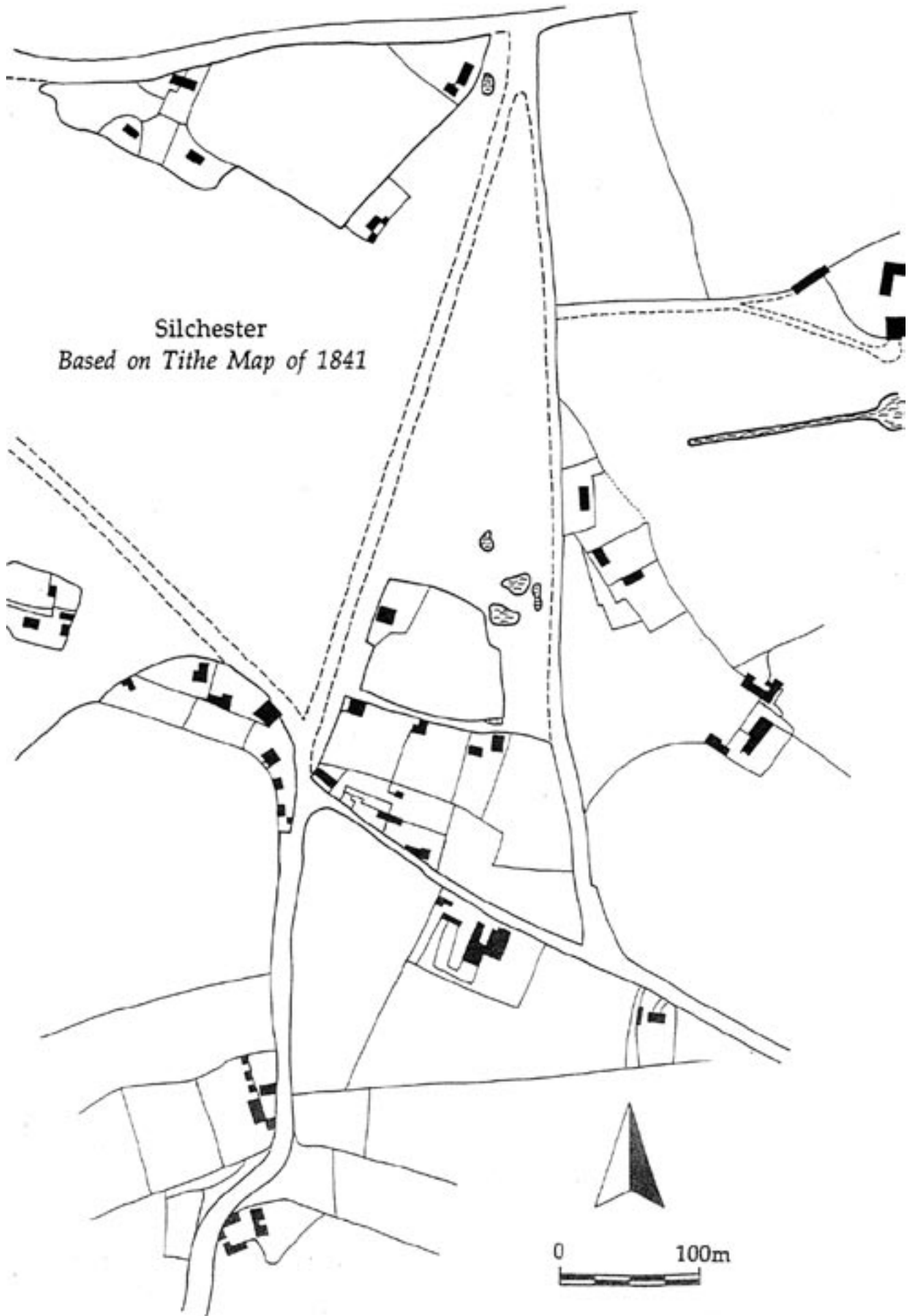
6 Whistler's Lane

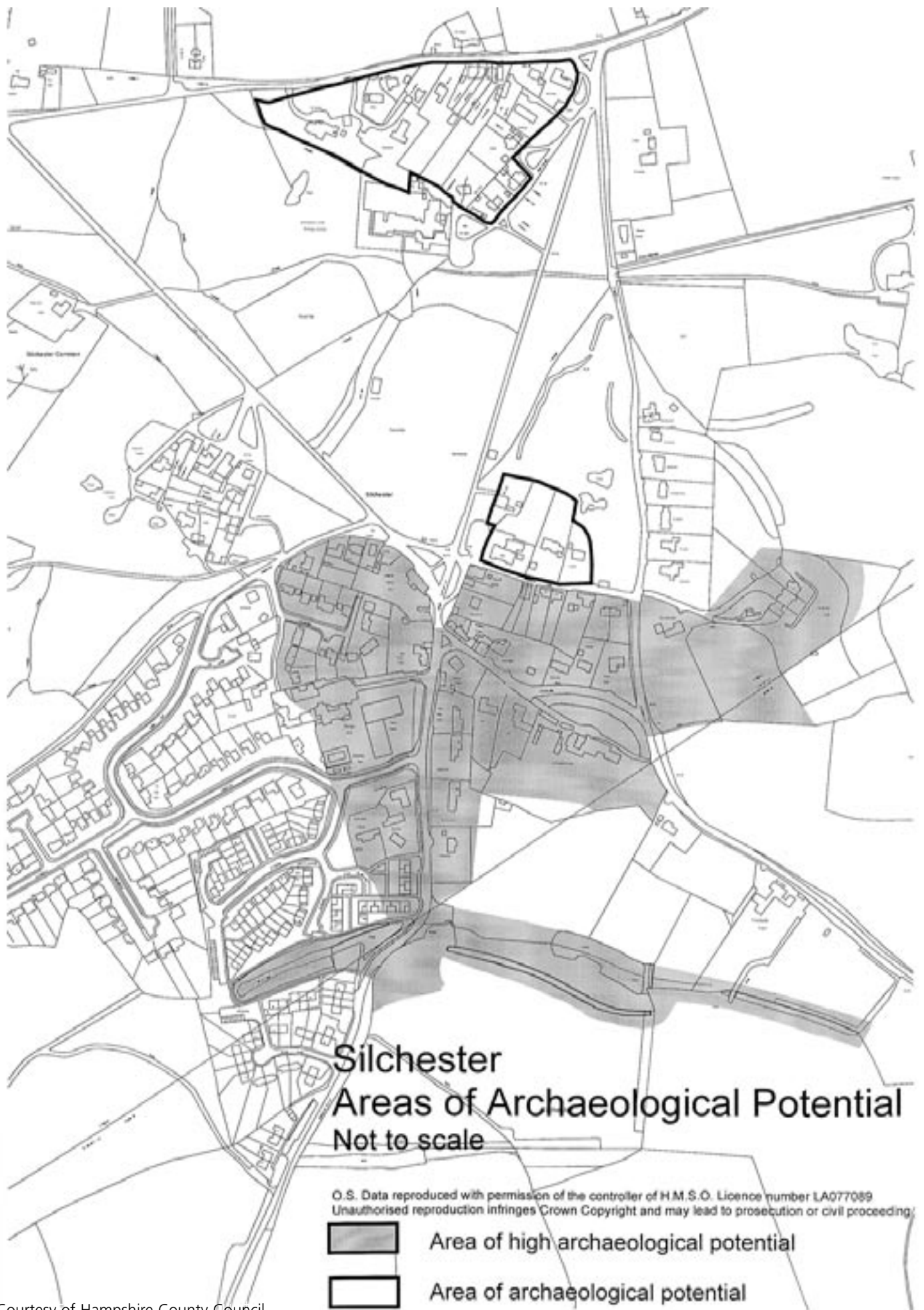
Statutory policies relating to Conservation Areas and listed buildings are set out in the adopted Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan. These policies reflect the statutory duty on the Local Planning Authority to have regard to the preservation of historic buildings or their setting, and to the enhancement of areas designated as being of special interest. These policies seek to ensure that particular attention will be paid to the scale, height, form, materials and detailing of proposals including boundary treatments and other features of note. In order to consider the implications of development and given the detail required, the Borough Council will normally require proposals within the Conservation Area to be submitted in the form of a full, and not outline, application. The Borough Council's Conservation Officers are available for advice and information on all matters relating to development proposals in the Conservation Area.

Grants

The Borough Council provides grants for various types of work. These include Historic Buildings Grants, Environment and Regeneration Grants, and Village and Community Hall Grants. Leaflets are available explaining the purpose and criteria for each grant and an approach to the Council is recommended for further information on any grant.







Courtesy of Hampshire County Council

Conservation Area Appraisal

Silchester

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