

Old Bedhampton Conservation Area Appraisal, January 2019.

Bedhampton Heritage Alliance Representation March 2019.

This submission is made on behalf of the The Bedhampton Heritage Alliance formed to protect the Heritage of Old Bedhampton. It consists of Bidbury Mead Friends, The Bedhampton Charitable Trust, The Manor Trust, The Bedhampton Historical Collection and Save Old Bedhampton. It also represents the 1,785 residents and visitors who petitioned Havant Borough Council on 13TH February 2018. The Alliance held a public meeting on 27th February 2019 at which several unanimous votes backed the Alliance to make a number of representations to HBC regarding The Old Bedhampton Conservation Review Appraisal. Some were in favour of the Borough's proposals based on the evidence available. The meeting, also unanimously mandated the Alliance to propose an extension of the Conservation Area to include the carriageway, verges and hedges of Lower Road, Old Manor Farm, Farm and Workers Cottages as well as Narrow Marsh Lane and its railway bridge.

Conservation Area and Heritage Assets.

This contribution shall seek to demonstrate how the whole area (Map 1) provides a cohesive place with historic evidence that surrounds the core of the village and why the Appraisal should make a change to its recommendations for boundary extensions to HBC Cabinet and Full Council.

The Conservation Area was last reviewed 25 years ago, 1994. Best practice guidance suggests a review cycle of every 5 – 10 years. The current review for consultation makes 9 recommendations which are broadly supported (paragraphs 7.8 to 7.29) but perversely and perhaps deliberately excludes one suggestion made by an Independent Heritage Consultant with superficial reasons that do not survive scrutiny. The Appraisal document also makes some presentation errors and factual inaccuracies which will be listed elsewhere (email to Jessica Hill 24/03/19, part 1 & 2) .

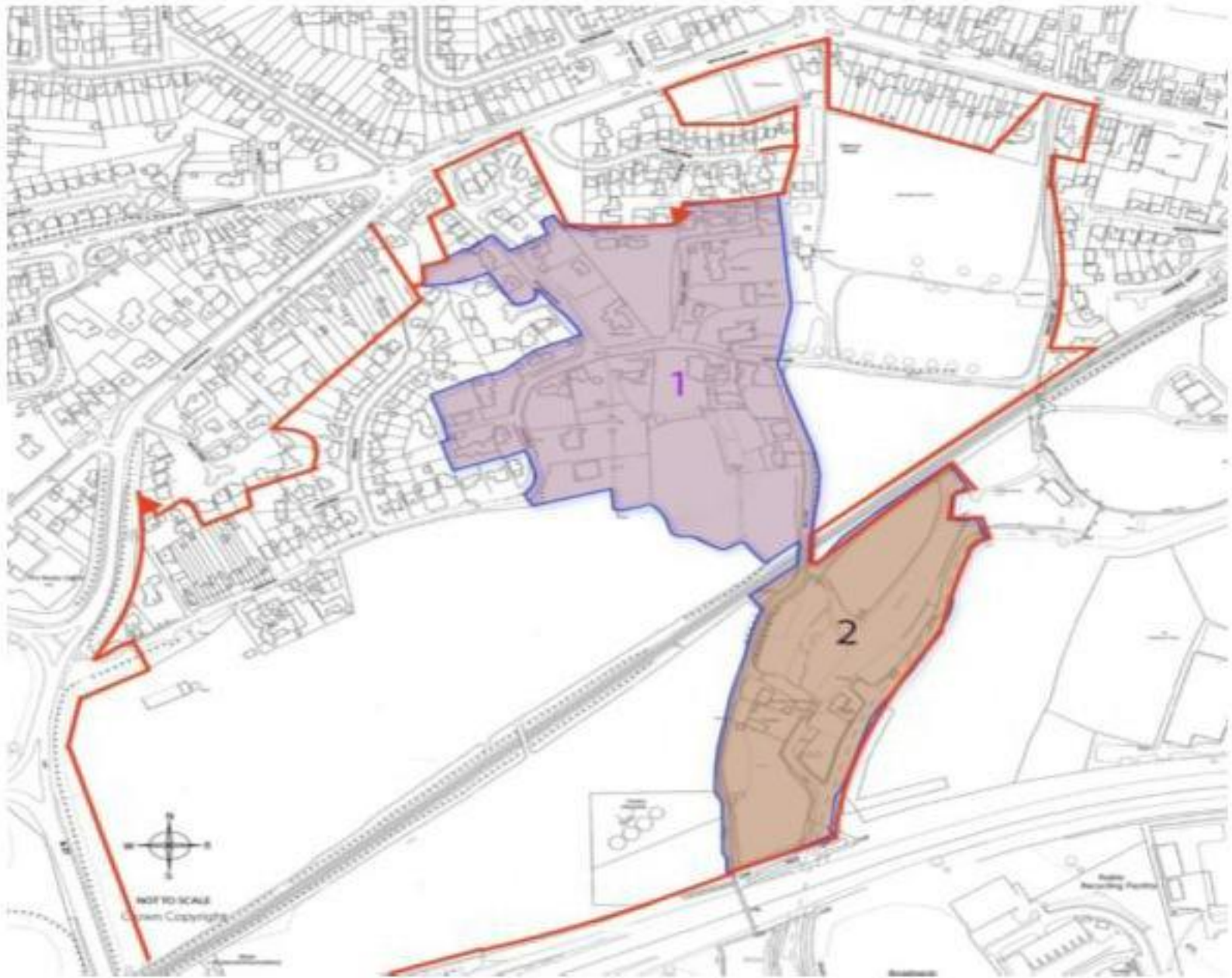
The knowledge and understanding of the current Conservation Area, the History, the Heritage and its settings are relatively well documented although there appears to be a palpable lack of understanding of the uniqueness of Old Bedhampton amongst decision makers. The Old Bedhampton Conservation Area Appraisal, January 2019 is in the main playing catch up, given the 25 years that have elapsed since the last review. There is no detailed assessment of future threats and consequently no documentation of a strategic plan for ongoing maintenance and development of Old Bedhampton. Paragraphs 7.6 and 7.7 acknowledges the Independent Heritage Consultant's suggestion of a further extension

to include Lower Road west of the Triple Bend. This has been rejected on the grounds that the farmland should not be included as it is of no architectural or historic interest and lacks physical content. However quoting from paragraph 2.8 of the Appraisal document: “.. the historic landscape and field patterns remains remarkably intact, including the network of routes, tracks and paths, some of which have their origins recorded as far back as the 1770s. Narrow Marsh Lane and its Victorian railway bridge, Old Manor Farm (a positive building of local interest) and Lower Road Cottages have the same historical post railway importance as does the Old Bedhampton School and Mission Hall Area. In addition, the surrounding land is considered to be of “Archaeological Importance” (paragraph 2.15).

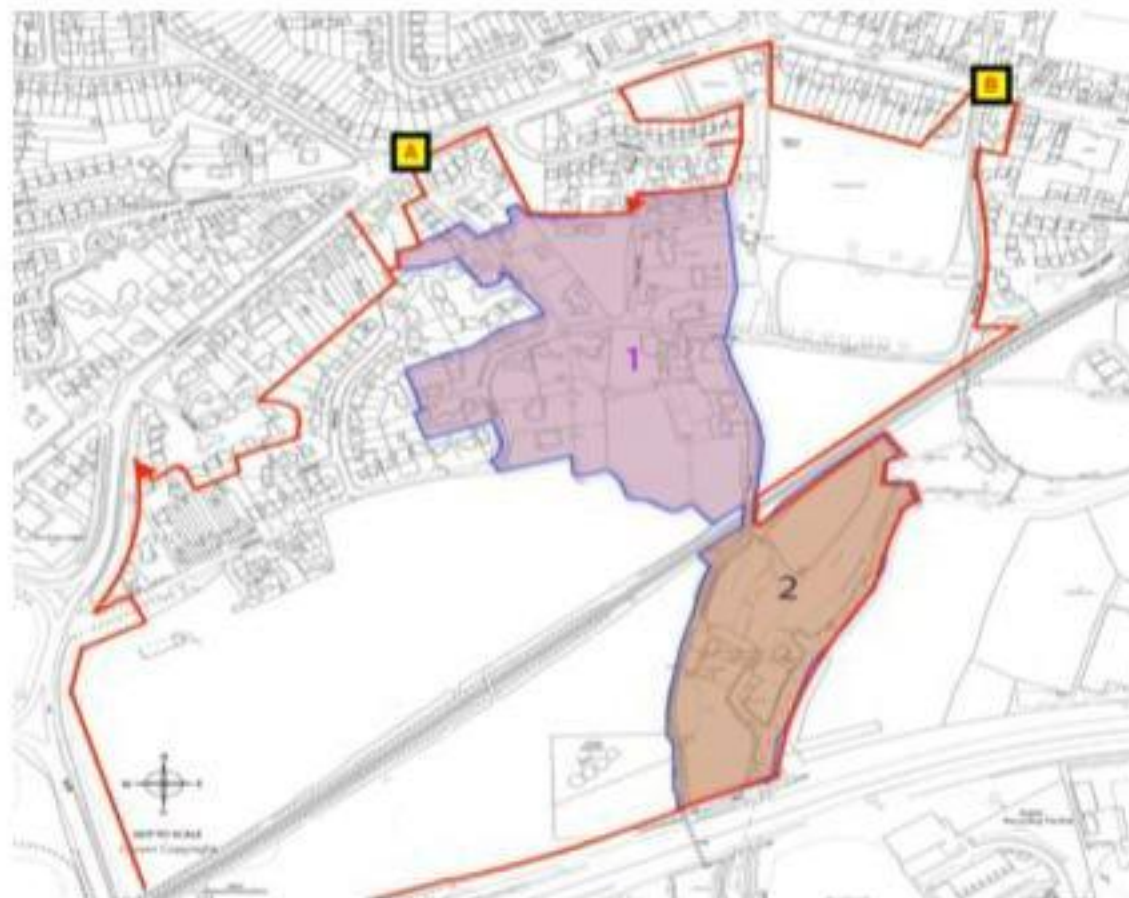
Up to this date, any appraisal of Old Bedhampton has naturally focused on the core centre around the Church of St. Thomas and Mill Lane. The area bounded in red on Map 1 demonstrates a single discrete area (“Greater” Old Bedhampton) which measures approximately 1km from west to east (west Lower Road to north Kingscroft Lane) and 0.75km from north to south (the Hulbert Road portal to the southern end of Mill Lane). This area is only accessed by 2 vehicle access points (Map 2). This is in comparison to 8 pedestrian/cyclist access points (Map 3). The discrepancy between walkers/cyclists and motor vehicles explains and emphasises the social character of the area as a tranquil and safe pedestrian/cycling asset. This asset serves not just local residents but also residents from the west, north and east of Old Bedhampton who come to enjoy the History and Heritage assets at its core. The area is also an important transit point for walkers and cyclists to access The Broad Marsh shore line of Langstone Harbour safely by using the pedestrian bridge across the A27. Once at Broad Marsh there is then the choice of using the coastal path to Langstone (Wayfarers Walk) and beyond or the coastal path to Farlington (Shipwrights Way Walk) and beyond.



Broad Marsh looking south across Langstone Harbour across to Portsmouth.



“Greater” Old Bedhampton Area (Map 1).



Motor vehicle access points. (Map 2).
The area is served by only Brookside Road and Kingscroft Lane.

Brookside Road (A) is the main access. It is in substantial parts a shared space (without pavements) and runs through the Conservation Area to the heart of Old Bedhampton. It currently serves 126 households, St. Thomas Church, The Tennis Courts and Bowling Club, Cricket and Football on the Mead as well as Family recreation at the adventure area and an authorised light industrial Unit at the western end of Lower Road.

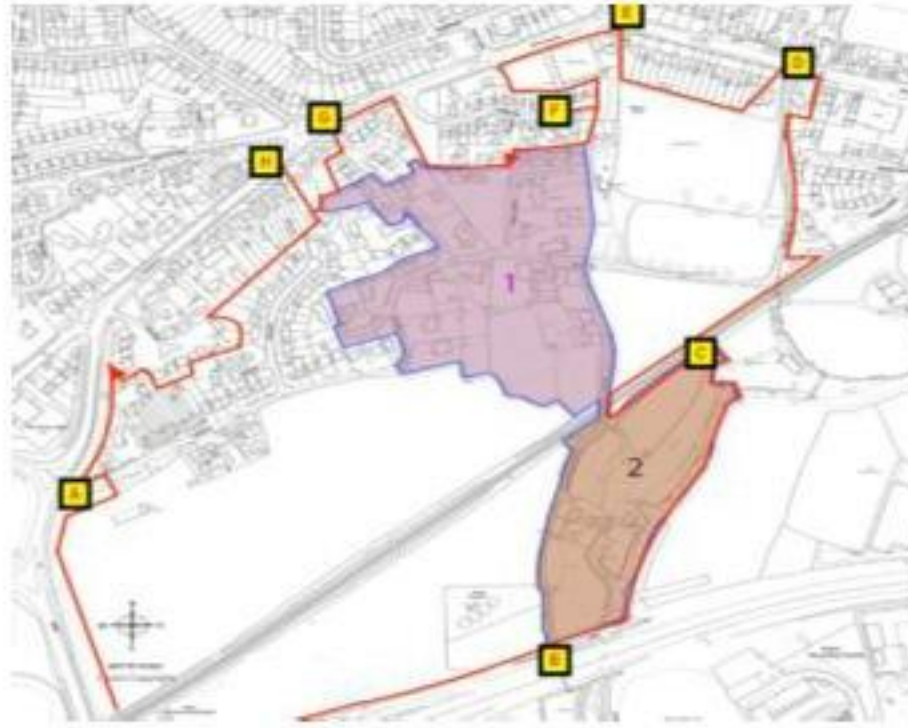


Brookside Road.

The second road portal is Kingscroft Lane (B) which is a single track sunken lane with no pavements or verges which leads into Bidbury Lane and then Lower Road, all of a similar character. Travelling against the contour created a deeper cut (in Kingscroft) than along the contour (in Bidbury Lane and Lower Road) thus resulting in less cut and spreading occurring.



Kingscroft Lane.



8 Pedestrian/cyclist Access Portals (Map 3).

All 8 of these pedestrian/cycle portals convey a distinct feeling of arriving at or leaving the area of “Greater” Old Bedhampton. On the one side there is the frenetic activity and congestion of traffic on either the Rusty Cutter Roundabout, Bedhampton Hill Road or Bedhampton Road (B2177), whilst on the other side and within yards there is the immediate transformation to an area of tranquillity and beauty with the feeling of safety.

This balance between pedestrian and vehicular penetration of this area gives the experience of the whole area the same character. One that has been recognised as having an air of tranquillity that is attractive to visitors and contributes to a feeling of wellbeing.

A. The western end of Lower Road



Leaving

Arriving

B. The south end of Mill Lane



Leaving



Arriving

C. Mill Lane, east



Leaving



Arriving

D. Kingscroft Lane, north



Leaving



Arriving

E. Hulbert Road



Leaving



Arriving

F. Nursery Road



Leaving

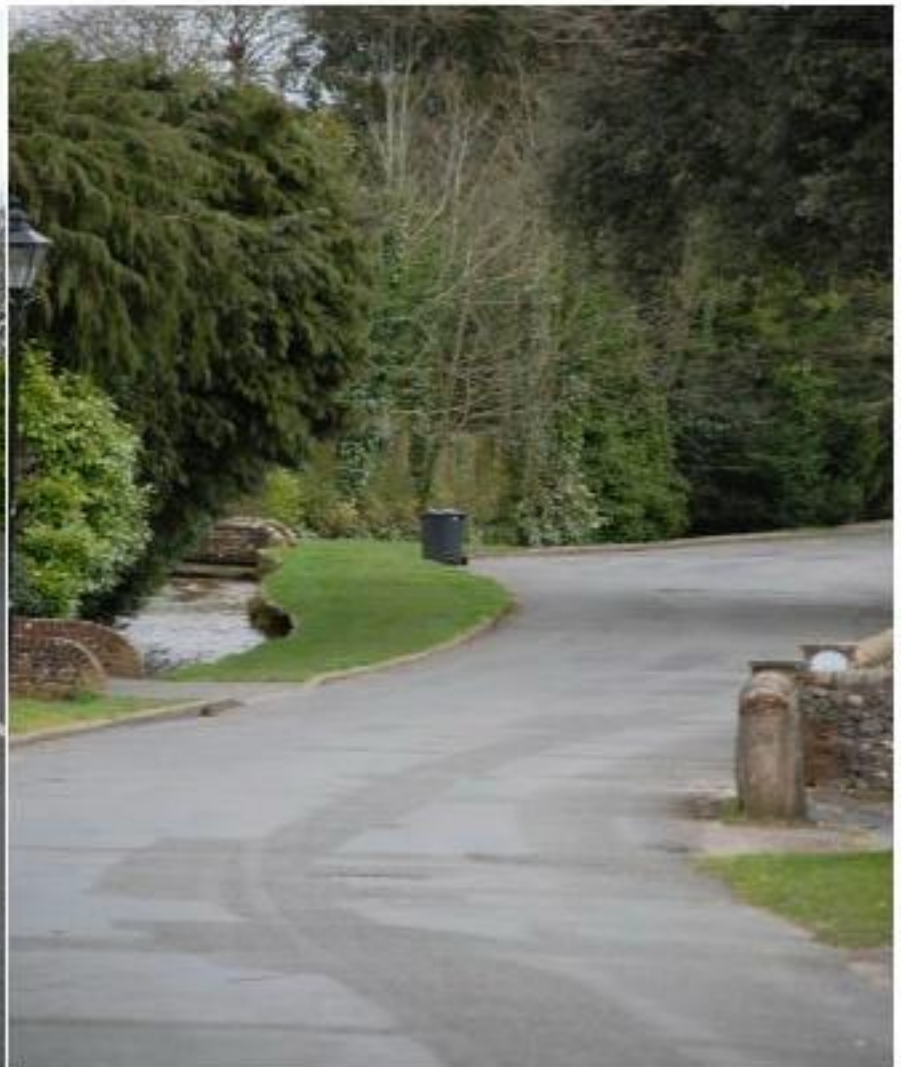


Arriving

G. Brookside Road



Leaving



Arriving

H. Lodge Road Cut



Leaving



Arriving

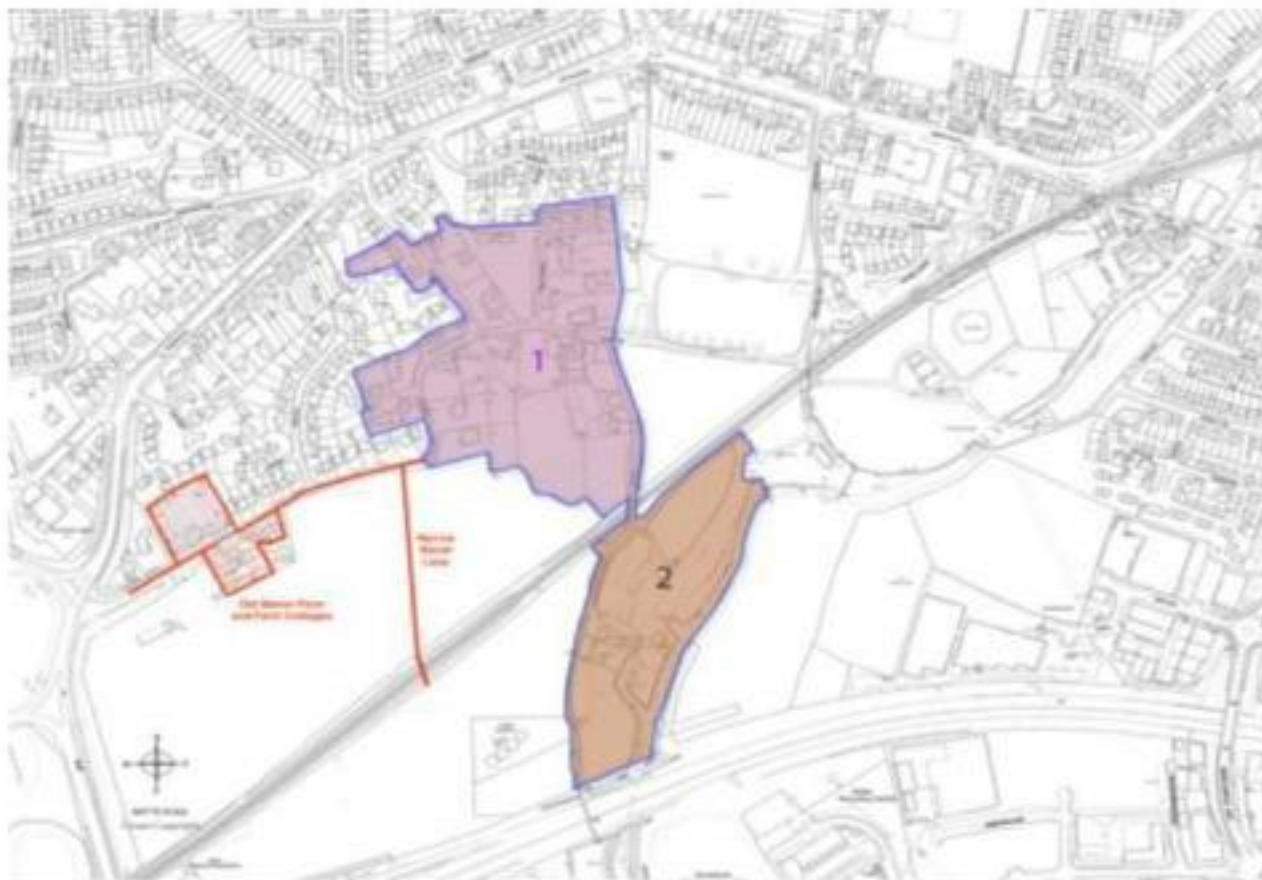
Walkers and cyclists appreciate and enjoy the ease of access to these beautiful areas. The sense of wellbeing is enhanced by the tranquillity, ambiance of significant heritage and relative safety resulting from a lack of vehicular interference. Through cyclists preferring to use Lower Road and Kingscroft Lane as opposed the nearby trunk road network when passing from west to east and visa versa. This privileged facility is a definite positive factor promoting health and wellbeing for all residents living within “Greater” Old Bedhampton and its surrounding wards.



Families and sportsmen/women enjoying the facility of Bidbury Mead appreciate the beauty, tranquillity and feeling of safety as compared to those areas surrounding Old Bedhampton to the north, east and west.



Kingscroft Lane, Bidbury Lane and Lower Road are the only remaining elements of the Havant to Portsmouth turnpike. The 3 elements of sunken lanes are a continuum of which the former 2 are deemed worthy of conservation. It appears arbitrary and illogical to ignore Lower Road and its converted farm buildings and workers cottages which are also of equal value and historic duration as Bedhampton School and Mission Hall Area.



Extension of Conservation Area to Lower Road, Old Manor Farm, “Workers” Cottages and Narrow Marsh Lane, Map 4.



Part of Old Manor Farm, circa 1900, now converted to residential properties. A Positive Building of Local Interest.

Quoting from the Appraisal document: "There are a limited number of designated listed buildings within the conservation area. Some non-designated buildings have been identified as positive buildings due to their heritage value as they make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, local distinctiveness and sense of place....." (paragraph 7.12). "However, and even if on the local list, this provides no additional control, but it is an objective of the NPPF to conserve such buildings as they carry material weight when determining the outcome of a planning application" (paragraph 7.13).

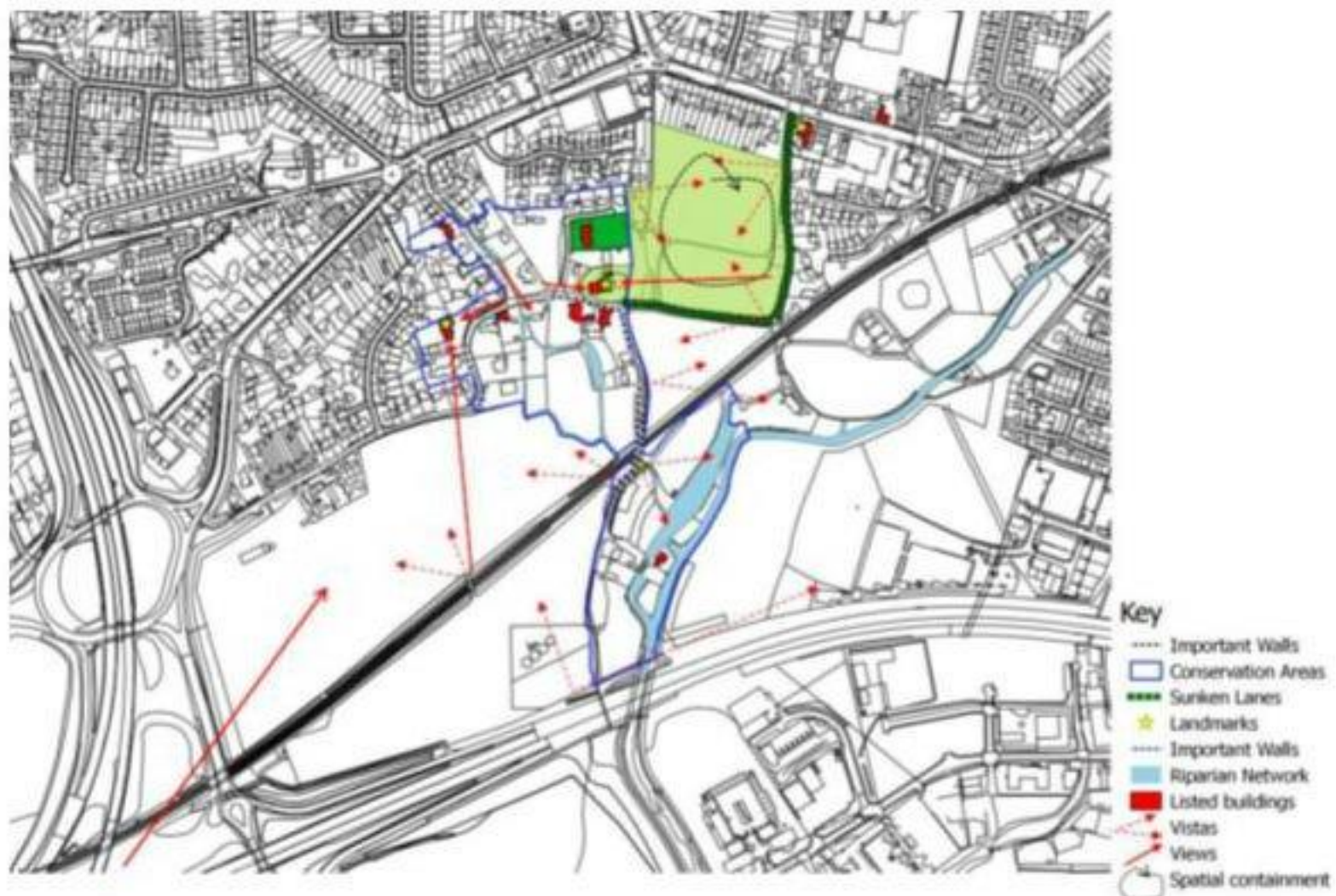


Lower Road "Workers" Cottages

Quoting from the Appraisal document: "The route of Narrow Marsh Lane which is known to have existed in circa. 1770 and on historic map dating from 1797 (Figure 6), which leaves Lower Road and leads to a bridge over the railway line to the land beyond. Recorded as a route in the late 18th century, it is now a track. The link to the harbour was severed by the construction of the A27 by pass (paragraph 2.9). The historical association with Belmont to the north is indicative of the historical importance and significance of this route for access to Broad Marsh and the harbour for the owner, to serve the adjacent lands and in the wider context for the settlement." (paragraph 3.22). "There is evidence of the public use of Narrow Marsh Lane up to 1957 from the records of historian John Pile, dated 9.10.1994. 'early routes remaining in use in 1957.'" (paragraph 3.36). In fact, there is recorded evidence of recreational use by local residents at least till circa 2005 at which time access was denied. An ongoing historic search has yet to demonstrate a formal closure order.



**The north end of Narrow Marsh Lane leading to the early Victorian railway bridge.
The southern end of Narrow Marsh Lane at Landing Place in Langstone harbour as seen
on the historic map above.**



There are no views identified from Lower Road on the above Townscape plan. There are several views available, such as Lower Road to the Mill Lane bridge.

The 40 year old shelter belt of 40' high Leylandii type conifers is described as “intrusive” (para 2.9) and are not deserving of their TPO designation as they obliterate views to and from Lower Road to the Conservation Area at Mill Lane and completely obscure the open rural setting to the south and west of the Conservation Area.



Mill Lane Bridge from Lower Road.

Not shown, are views to be had from the large numbers of trains passing daily that provide an image not only of the setting of Old Bedhampton but also that of Havant itself and its historic relationship with the valuable coastal lands on the shore of Langstone Harbour.

It is hoped that the area of “Greater” Old Bedhampton as outlined on Map 1 has been shown to be one discrete entity with all parts being interdependent to form what is a unique enjoyable historical and architectural environment and is in part an Area of Archaeological Importance (paragraph 2.15). Whilst some physical parts are deserving of designation as a Conservation Area, others are equally important for providing a semi-rural quality to the setting of the whole area. It may be argued that this is a unique microcosm in Havant Borough which demonstrates the history of the area over the past 250 years whilst remaining vibrant in tranquil unassuming way.

To avoid taking a long term strategic view to protect and enhance the whole area (“Greater” Old Bedhampton) leaves the western approach (western Lower Road) vulnerable to piecemeal permitted development (e.g. brick walling Lower Road verge banks) which will erode its extensive character and in turn undermine The Conservation Area and its tranquillity that currently makes it such a valuable attraction for recreation and therefore health and wellbeing. Conservation Area status accompanied with an Article 4 Direction should be agreed with local residents to prevent further erosion of the evidence and setting.

1.19 Paragraph 185 of the NPPF requires that, “Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:
b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

The HBC Old Bedhampton Conservation Appraisal January 2019 has made a reasonable attempt at catch up from 1994 but now needs to be more imaginative and put in place safeguards for the whole of “Greater” Old Bedhampton. Protection and enhancement will not be achieved with quarter century reviews. The strategic plan should be considered to be a living and evolving project as more and more evidence continues to come to light. It is clearly understood that Havant Borough Council heritage resources are severely constrained, but The Bedhampton Heritage Alliance is willing to assist as it has already demonstrated with numerous positive actions to date.

Recommendations:

1. Enact the 9 recommendations made in the Appraisal document.
2. Extend the Conservation Area to include Lower Road, (carriage way, hedges, verges and banks), Old Manor Farm, “Workers” Cottages and Narrow Marsh Lane with Railway Bridge.

3. Extend a path from the south side of Narrow Marsh Lane bridge to Mill Lane along the south side of the railway in order to make a circular walk for even the most physically challenged.
4. Work closely with Bedhampton Heritage Alliance to protect and enhance "Greater Old Bedhampton and Broad Marsh water front for future generations.
5. Consider establishing a visitor's centre to exhibit educational material of the local history, geology, environment and ecology with some refreshment.
6. Support the Alliance in developing its fledgling "Time Travellers Self Guided Walk".
7. Discuss with land owners and the local community innovative ways of using the farmland (community farm?) that protects and enhances the conservation Area and its settings as well as the local environment and ecology, if the land is no longer to be used for farming.

References:

1. NPPF 7/18.
2. The Old Bedhampton Conservation Area Review Appraisal, HBC January 2019.