



# Worcestershire Villages Historic Environment Resource Assessment

## Stage Two Pilot Study Report





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Jack Hanson

With contributions from  
Adam Mindykowski, Emma Hancox and Emily Hathaway

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Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

Worcestershire County Council

The Hive

Sawmill Walk

The Butts

Worcester

WR1 3PD

[archaeology@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@worcestershire.gov.uk)





# Worcestershire Villages Historic Environment Resource Assessment Stage Two Pilot Study

## Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
1 INTRODUCTION .....	3
1.1 Business Case .....	3
1.2 Key Objectives .....	5
2 METHODOLOGY .....	6
2.1 Methodological Research and Development .....	6
2.2 Resources .....	6
2.3 Village Characterisation .....	8
2.3.1 Village Selection.....	9
2.3.2 Desk Based Assessment .....	10
2.3.3 Parish and Landscape Assessment.....	11
2.3.4 Baseline Village Characterisation .....	12
2.3.5 Streetscape, Landscape and Structural Survey .....	14
2.3.6 Historic Environment and Character Appraisal.....	18
2.3.7 Character Statements .....	22
2.3.8 WVHERA Website .....	23
2.4 Community Engagement and Consultation .....	23
2.4.1 Promotion and Publicity .....	23
2.4.2 Village Stakeholders, Authorities and Societies .....	24
2.4.3 Community Consultation .....	24
2.4.4 Mobile Methodologies .....	25
3 PROJECT OUTPUTS.....	30
3.1 WVHERA Characterisation and Engagement Methodology.....	30
3.2 Village Character Statements and Evidence Base .....	30
3.3 Historic Environment Record Enhancement.....	31
3.4 Policy, Planning and Conservation .....	33
3.4.1 Neighbourhood Planning.....	33
3.4.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) .....	35
3.4.3 District Local Development Frameworks .....	36

3.4.4	Green Infrastructure Planning .....	36
3.4.5	Conservation Area Appraisal .....	36
3.4.6	National Heritage Protection Plan (NHPP) .....	36
3.5	Partnerships .....	37
4	DISCUSSION.....	38
4.1	Project Capacities and Resources.....	38
4.1.1	Complexities of Village Historic Character .....	38
4.1.2	Project Efficiency .....	40
4.2	Community Engagement and Neighbourhood Planning .....	41
4.2.1	WVHERA Products .....	41
4.2.2	Community Capacity .....	43
4.2.3	Neighbourhood Planning.....	44
4.3	Priorities and Opportunities.....	50
4.3.1	Village Historic Environment Characterisation and Resource Assessment .....	50
4.3.2	Historic Townscape Characterisation .....	50
4.3.3	Neighbourhood Planning Historic Environment Toolkit .....	51
4.3.4	Strategic Liaison.....	51
5	CONCLUSIONS.....	53
5.1	Primary Outputs .....	53
5.2	Priorities and Future Objectives.....	54
6	ARCHIVE .....	55
7	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	55
8	PERSONNEL.....	55
9	PRINCIPAL SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	56
10	APPENDIX .....	57

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Worcestershire Villages Historic Environment Resource Assessment Pilot Project (Stage Two), funded by English Heritage and undertaken by the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (WAAS), has developed townscape characterisation and community engagement methodologies aimed at providing a suite of historic environment products and robust evidence-bases to support local heritage initiatives, Neighbourhood Planning, and to inform appropriate development-management within the settlements of Worcestershire.

The WVHERA pilot project has aimed and succeeded in generating a methodological framework with which to effectively assess and characterise the historic environments, and greatly enhance the historic environment records, of settlements both within and beyond the Worcestershire authority. The project has developed programmes of community engagement to promote historic environmentalism, to local stakeholders, and ensure community perspectives of local historic and archaeological distinctiveness and character can be adequately and appropriately represented within planning and conservation policy or strategy. The project has aspired to generate products which are of a form and content well-suited to support and inform Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups, parish councils and village societies within local initiatives, and which facilitate and inform future liaison, discussion and partnerships between the various dimensions of local authority, statutory agency, and community-advocacy. These objectives have been achieved through case studies of the villages of Alvechurch and Kempsey, of the Bromsgrove and Malvern Hills districts of Worcestershire respectively.

The WVHERA pilot project has provided vital perspectives on the current position of historic environment and historic environmentalism within Neighbourhood Planning, informing the priorities and objectives of the project development of the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service for the immediate future. Further opportunities for utilisation of the WVHERA products, to enhance local records and awareness of the historic environment, have been identified through incorporation within on-going projects including the *'Worcestershire Historic Environment Action Plan'* pilot study, alongside collaboration with district authorities and statutory agencies respective of Conservation Area appraisals, Green Infrastructural planning and District Strategic Frameworks. Finally, valuable insights have been gained towards the fiscal viability of the WVHERA methodology, allowing more appropriate resourcing of future initiatives which employ its diverse and cross-disciplinary techniques.

The report outlines the business case and objectives of the project (Section 1, pages 3-5) followed by a detailed outline of the WVHERA methodologies of characterisation, resource assessment and the programme of community engagement and consultation (Section 2, pages 6-29). The products and outputs of the project are then discussed, with review of their potential application and benefits relative to a broad range of community and local-authority initiatives (Section 3, page 30-36). Finally a detailed, critical discussion of the significance and cost-effectiveness of the project-outputs and their potential applications towards both strategic and local planning is included alongside the priorities and objectives of future Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service characterisation projects and

initiatives in support of Neighbourhood Planning (Section 4 and 5, page 37-51). Example character statements and Character Area Survey forms can be located within the Appendix (page 57).



# INTRODUCTION

This report discusses the second stage of the Worcestershire Villages Historic Environment Resource Assessment (WVHERA) Pilot Project, undertaken by the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (WAAS) and funded by English Heritage. The second stage pilot has developed townscape characterisation and community engagement methodologies aimed at providing a suite of historic environment products to support Neighbourhood Planning and local heritage initiatives within the settlements of Worcestershire. Historic and archaeological characterisation has developed within both landscape and townscape contexts over the preceding decades, with extensive strategic support from English Heritage for projects predominantly led by respective local authorities. With a large proportion of the county-scale Historic Landscape Characterisation now complete, increasing attention is being diverted towards the applications of characterisation within specific localities such as towns, cities, and now villages with the view to inform appropriate historic environmental policy and management.

The report contains a detailed outline of the expanded and enhanced methodology, developing the WVHERA stage one pilot project through critical appraisal and amalgamation of existing townscape characterisation methodologies, and the development of a programme of community engagement and consultation through the assessment of a suite of both traditional and newly developed techniques. The extensive outputs of the project are outlined with review of their potential application within a broad range of local and local-authority agendas. Finally a critical discussion of the significance and cost-effectiveness of the project-outputs and their potential applications towards both strategic and local planning is included, consequently informing a statement of the priorities and objectives of future Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service characterisation.

## 1.1 Business Case

Worcestershire has a diverse assemblage of settlements ranging from the substantial urban and sub-urban areas of Worcester and Redditch to a handful of small market towns. Over two hundred distinctive villages and small hamlets are dispersed throughout the largely rural county, with many more scattered small settlements that are each composed of a handful of buildings.

The six district councils of Worcestershire, some working in partnership, have developed strategic development plans in order to define the planning framework within which government housing targets are to be met. There is a discernible risk that future development in small settlements, which occurs without a robust evidence base, might lead to development plans that contradict and therefore weaken the locally distinctive and spatial-character of small settlements. There is recognition that small settlements in Worcestershire (defined as villages, hamlets and loosely agglomerated groups of dwellings) are generally under-represented within the Historic Environment Records both in terms of understanding the character and significance of their historic development and the setting of historic assets contained within the settlement and its hinterland. Furthermore, while existing characterisation studies (*Historic Environment Assessments*, *Historic Landscape Characterisation* and *Historic Farmsteads*) and site-based records (Historic Environment Records, *Historic Buildings of*

*Worcestershire*) have improved the evidence base; it is clear that individual settlements require a more focused and integrated assessment in order to produce clear statements of recommendations based on a comprehensive and reliable record of historic environment to which planners and stakeholders can refer when validating planning applications.

The Worcestershire Villages Historic Environment Resource Assessment (WVHERA) aims to address this lack of integrated spatial assessment of the historic environments of the villages and hamlets of Worcestershire, in order to provide conservation guidance for individual localities, alongside supporting wider initiatives including strategic and Neighbourhood Planning. The project aims to identify small settlements which are likely to be affected by the impact of new development, potentially leading to settlement expansion and infill, and carry out a characterisation-based assessment with local community input and character-statement documentation and historic environment evidence bases for each settlement. The instigation of the Neighbourhood Planning system offer distinct opportunities for community engagement with historic environment through the local authority. However, increasing limitations in the capacities of local authorities negates the intensive engagement and consultation required to adequately support Neighbourhood Plans to ensure historic environment and character are adequately and appropriately represented. Methodologies derived from historic townscape characterisation may therefore provide a vehicle through which to provide the necessary support and instruction to local communities.

The WVHERA stage one pilot study has demonstrated the potential for a rural settlement-based assessment to address a wide range of assets and landscapes in relation to one another and the wider setting: capturing the historic character, potential, impact and sensitivity in such a way that can inform both guidance for planners and nest within the hierarchy of existing and on-going characterisation studies. The stage two pilot aims to expand upon, and consolidate the methodology applied within the stage one pilot, developing and encouraging a programme of community engagement within the assessment and dissemination processes. The objective are: to develop and apply methodologies to identify what communities consider of special 'historic' quality within their settlement; to integrate this into historic environment assessment frameworks and guidance; and to promote awareness of the fundamental principles and values of historic characterisation and historic environmentalism. The core outputs will be: a finalised, cost-effective methodology for assessing village-and-townscape character; a suite of techniques to be utilised within community engagement and consultation aimed at maximising local understanding, value and capacity in relation to their historic environments; a GIS evidence base, supported by character statements and guidance for two settlements aimed at informing spatial planning decisions; an enhanced Historic Environment Record for the respective settlements; the development of new community, local-authority and academic partnerships; and a concise set of priorities and objectives to inform the development of future WAAS projects pertaining to historic characterisation and Neighbourhood Planning.

## 1.2 Key Objectives

- Review, expand and finalise the WVHERA historic environment characterisation and resource assessment methodologies for subsequent application within Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service projects.
- Develop programmes of community engagement and consultation, reviewing both traditional and recently developed methods, to produce a suite of techniques aimed at enhancing and complementing the characterisation methodologies and products.
- Identify two priority settlements for assessment and produce robust historic environment evidence-bases comprised of character statements, assessments of local sensitivities and an enhanced Historic Environment Record for use by local communities, parish councils, local authorities, statutory agencies, developers and spatial planners.
- Engage with local stakeholders including Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups and community societies to promote historic environmentalism within community agendas and local initiatives, build capacity in historic environment assessment and inform the content and structure of the WVHERA products.
- Utilise the WVHERA products to collectively liaise with local communities, strategic partners, community and professional stakeholders and the local authorities to inform future interfaces and strategies for the more effective and beneficial management of local historic environments and landscapes.
- Identify priorities and objectives to inform the development of Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology projects which utilise the WVHERA methodologies and/or engage with Neighbourhood Planning.

# METHODOLOGY

2

## 2.1 Methodological Research and Development

The WVHERA Stage Two Pilot Project has expanded upon its predecessor to both enhance the village-characterisation process and develop an effective means of community-engagement through which to maximise the potential impact, practicality and value of the products and outputs for the various local and strategic stakeholders.

The characterisation methodology of the WVHERA Stage One Pilot was reviewed and critically assessed relative to the objectives of the Stage Two study. This occurred alongside further review of previous characterisation projects and relevant guidance. This included English Heritage's Historic Environment Local Management (HELM) '*Understanding Place*' series to provide the frameworks within which the desk-based and field-survey methodologies were established and existing methods of landscape and urban assessment, such as Conservation Area Appraisals, Extensive Urban Surveys and Historic Area Assessments. Extensive influence was drawn from previous historic townscape characterisation projects through examination of their methodologies and liaison with the respective project officers. A comprehensive record of such projects can be found within the aforementioned English Heritage '*Understanding Place...*' guidance, with the '*Lincoln Townscape Assessment*' and its project staff having a particularly strong influence and input respectively.

A key aim of the Stage Two WVHERA Pilot Study was the creation of a robust methodology for programmes of community engagement and consultation during and following the townscape characterisation process. Appropriate means of local engagement and consultation have been developed respective of three critical objectives: to draw on what it is that a community considers to be historically characteristic within their settlement; to promote the concepts, capabilities and potential of 'historic environment' and historic landscape characterisation as a means of identifying and advocating local distinctiveness within spatial planning and community initiatives; and to inform the structure of project outputs and products to best suit local stakeholder needs. While reference to existing historic area and character assessment-methods has again informed the development of the community engagement methodologies, considerable experimentation has occurred with 'in situ' or 'mobile' methodologies through newly formed partnerships with academic urban-morphologists of the University of Birmingham's School of Geography. This has facilitated the generation of approaches employing a suite of established, augmented and newly developed consultation techniques ready to be appropriately utilised within future programmes of historic landscape and townscape characterisation.

## 2.2 Resources

### Historic Environment Record

Extensive use has been made of the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER is the county's primary source for archaeological and historic environment information, comprising approximately thirty thousand records relating to all aspects of Worcestershire's historic environment,

incorporating archaeological monuments, historic buildings, landscape-features alongside records pertaining to all known archaeological events and the associated grey literature. The resources and guidance produced by previous Worcestershire County Council and WAAS projects were utilised including *Historic Environment Assessments*, *Historic Environment Character Zones*, *Historic Farmsteads Characterisation*, *Historic Landscape Characterisation*, and the *Historic Buildings of Worcestershire* projects. Additional information was obtained from reports, appraisals and datasets in relation to Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas, all of which are held, if not curated, by the Historic Environment Record.

#### Archival and HER Library Resources

The collective records of the Worcestershire HER and Archive contain thousands of literary sources on the historic environment of the county, in both digital and physical form. This incorporates thousands of grey literature reports, oblique and vertical historic aerial photographs and extensive historic mapping of broad periods and forms: ranging from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, to tithe and enclosure mapping and the later-20<sup>th</sup> century Ordnance Survey Pathfinder and Explorer series'. A wide variety of additional documentation, cartographic resources and visual materials were also available relating to particular localities, structures or features within the selected case-study settlements.

#### Cartographic and Remote Sensing Resources

Alongside the aforementioned historic maps held within the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record and Archive an extensive collection of digitised historic and modern Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping is held as GIS layers, proving integral to the characterisation process. The mapping incorporates the 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> editions (circa 1884 to 1960) at 1:2500 and 1:10560 scales, and is complimented by extracts of the early-19<sup>th</sup> century one-inch-to-the-mile surveyor's drawings and digitised, georeferenced copies of elements of the WAAS collection.

The Ordnance Survey mapping was supplemented by vertical aerial photographs collected by GetMapping for Worcestershire County Council in 1999 and 2005, alongside the freely available vertical and oblique aerial imagery provided by the Google and Bing Maps services. Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data was sourced from the Environment Agency to provide a detailed topographical model of the landscape and processed by WAAS into various hillshade, slope and aspect derivatives.

While not traditionally viewed as a 'remote sensing' resource, Google's 'Streetview' service proved invaluable for desk-based assessment of the settlements and character areas. While the tool should not be seen as a replacement for in-field assessment due to a range of inherent limitations, it has revolutionised the urban-assessment process, providing perhaps the most comprehensive record of urban form in existence, and vastly increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the assessment process.

#### External GIS Datasets

Alongside the HER and GIS mapping layers curated by Worcestershire County Council, a broad collection of externally created and curated datasets were sourced to expand the understanding of

settlement and landscape character and morphology. This incorporated layers which represented and informed: natural-environmental designations including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, woodland (both modern and ancient) and orchards, geological form and stratigraphy, erosion risk and soil-type, the Worcestershire Habitat Inventory, information from the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, common land, green infrastructure, Public Rights of Way and many other miscellaneous datasets representing features from street-signage and lighting to street hierarchies.

#### Local Knowledge, Documentation and Guidance

Obtaining and utilising local knowledge and expertise was vital to the project. This incorporated a wide variety of literary sources, historic photographs, mapping and oral testimonies. Both individuals and local groups provided substantial information on various aspects of their respective settlements alongside invaluable perspectives and opinions on the relative facets of their historic environments. As well as enhancing existing records on known archaeological and historic assets this information proved valuable for the assessment of the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century components of each settlement: a period within which minimal archaeological or historic environmental assessment of historic significance and local distinctiveness has occurred.

#### Reference Materials

The extensive array of historic character attributes necessitated the collation of a vast array of reference material pertaining to the numerous features, details, forms and themes outlined in the 'character attributes' insert (page 16). These were sourced from a range of literature and online resources relating to both the historic environmental and archaeological disciplines, alongside architectural, infrastructural, ecological, natural environmental and urban-morphological guidance, from a variety of sources and organisations.

### 2.3 **Village Characterisation**

The WVHERA methodologies adhered to definitions of 'character' utilised by historic landscape and townscape characterisation: that character is comprised of the collective influence of a wide array of assets and attributes which inform how people perceive and experience a particular place. The composition of local character can be recorded through desk-based, field-survey and community-consultation techniques to identify the extent, form and provenance of the historic and inherited characteristics of an area. The relative influence and significance of particular attributes or assets can therefore be assessed respective of the 'whole'.

It was essential that the characterisation process was undertaken holistically: without preliminary attribution of significance relative to particular characteristics such as period of origin, 'heritage' features, or national designation. This ensured that the relative nuances of the *local* distinctiveness of each character area, and subsequently each settlement, could be assessed in respect of their own, unique composition. Further, a key tenant of the characterisation methodology was the avoidance of value judgements; for instance, statements on the appropriateness of the urban design of recent developments or the potential locations of future expansion. Instead, the products are designed to readily facilitate such judgements of significance or appropriateness respective of a particular agenda by the local community and various stakeholders. The WVHERA products therefore aim to inform and encourage discussion of historic character and significance through a robust, comprehensive, and objective evidence base. Finally, the characterisation process aimed to incorporate cross-disciplinary

attributes, including those pertaining to the ecological and natural environments to encourage consideration of the influences and synergies of the historic environmental disciplines within such agendas.

Two villages were identified as case studies within which to develop and undertake a programme of historic characterisation and community engagement in order to generate character areas supported by a robust evidence base. The historic character and environment of the character areas were appraised, with bespoke character statements for each area produced, supported by a greatly enhanced Historic Environment Record for the respective settlements.

### 2.3.1 Village Selection

The villages of Alvechurch and Kempsey were selected to form the case studies through which to develop the characterisation and community engagement methodologies. A range of criteria were derived from the objectives and anticipated outputs of the project, supplemented by advice through liaison with stakeholder organisations and individuals. The various criteria were also intended to ensure settlements incorporating a diversity of form, function, period and designated significance were selected in order to facilitate the development and critical assessment of the methodology and products in a broad range of contexts.

- The villages should meet the 'Category 1' criteria outlined in the '*South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy*'.
- The presence of a range of distinctive potential character areas should be immediately apparent.
- The settlements should have at least a moderate Historic Environment Record representation, with clear potential for enhancement.
- The settlement must have experienced 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion which has at least moderately affected its character and setting.
- The settlement should have a moderate to high potential for further development within the settlement or its immediate environ.
- The settlement should contain active community groups who have undertaken local initiatives, including parish plans or design statements, and are undertaking or initiating a Neighbourhood Plan.
- At least one Conservation Area should be located within the settlement.
- The selected settlements should not be situated within the same district and should preferably represent the north and south of the county.
- The selected settlements should display a modicum of variation relative to the aforementioned criteria to ensure appropriate comparisons and critical analysis can be achieved.

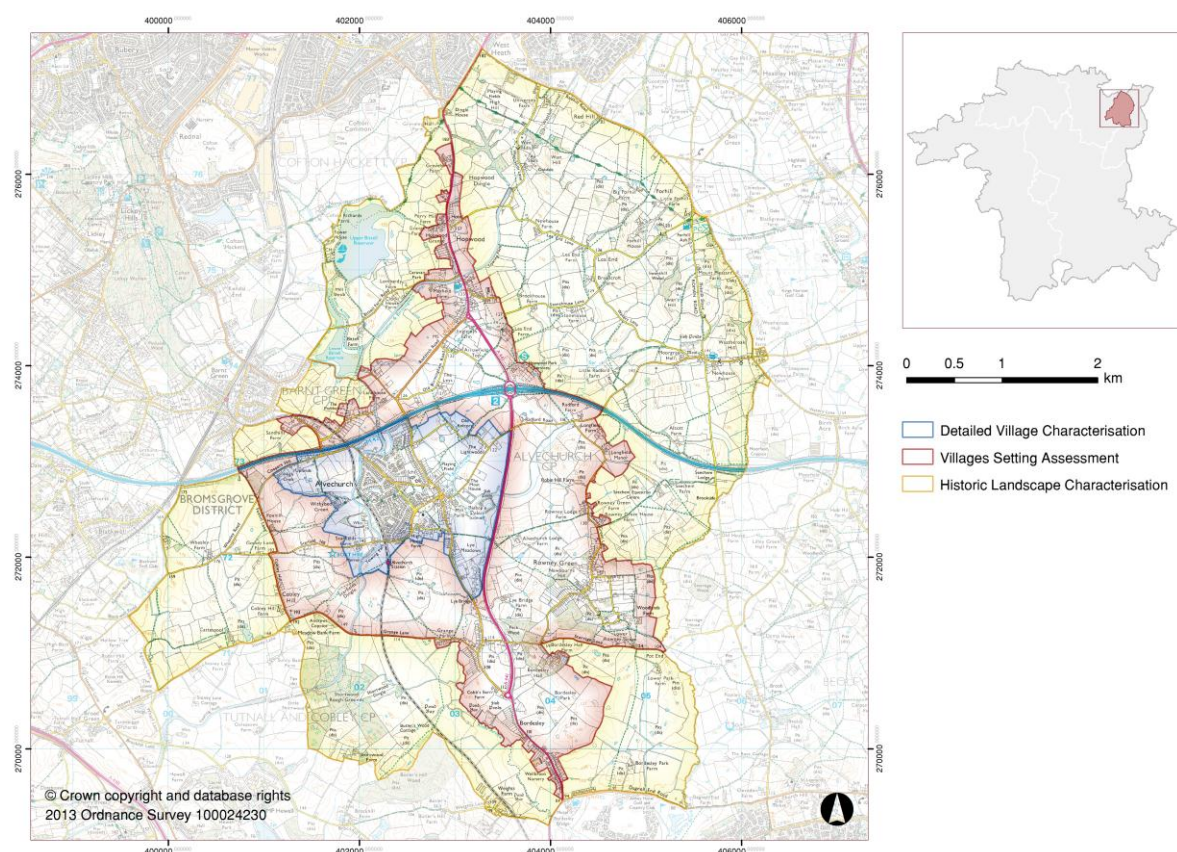


Figure 1: Alvechurch Study Areas

### 2.3.2 Desk Based Assessment

Prior to the initiation of village characterisation and field survey a rapid desk-based assessment of the respective parishes was undertaken in order to assess, enhance and collate the information and resources outlined in section 2.2. The assessment contextualised the settlements within their contemporary and historic environments and therefore facilitated the allocation of appropriate study areas of the villages and their environs. In addition, the initial desk-based assessment informed the priorities and objectives of the WAAS internal-project interfaces including *Historic Buildings of Worcestershire* and *Historic Landscape Characterisation*.

The broad range of geospatial data was amalgamated into the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record GIS system, operating within ESRI's 'ArcMap' version 10.1, allowing unified assessment of resources of highly varying origin, chronology and provenance. The digital collection was further enhanced by the digitisation and geo-referencing of a number of HER and archival resources. The extensive collection of grey literature, historic mapping, historic aerial photography, historic photographs and public records, held by the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, were examined and relevant information and material collated into a dedicated project archive.

Assessment of the settlement's origins and redevelopment occurred through map regression/progression using the extensive digital collection of Ordnance Survey mapping, supplemented by the physical copies of earlier mapping from the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service. The map regression was complimented by the additional, aforementioned resources of the Historic Environment Record and associated projects, alongside modern aerial and



remote sensing data, to generate a comprehensive appreciation of the origins, expansion and redevelopment of the parishes and their landscapes.

A desk-based survey of the landscapes of the parish was undertaken in order to contextualise the settlements within their broader historic environments. This incorporated consideration of factors including: known landscape character; geology and soils; topography current or historic land-use; rural connectivity; countryside and open-spaces; communications; and viewsheds. The survey also provided opportunity to greatly enhance the Historic Environment Record from the newly acquired digitised historic cartographic and modern remote sensing datasets and identify areas for further improvement during the field survey and characterisation processes, with particular focus on the numerous unrecorded historic buildings.

Initial reconnaissance of the character areas proved invaluable and was often undertaken in accompaniment of community members of local expertise to help inform the initial impressions and designation of the survey areas.

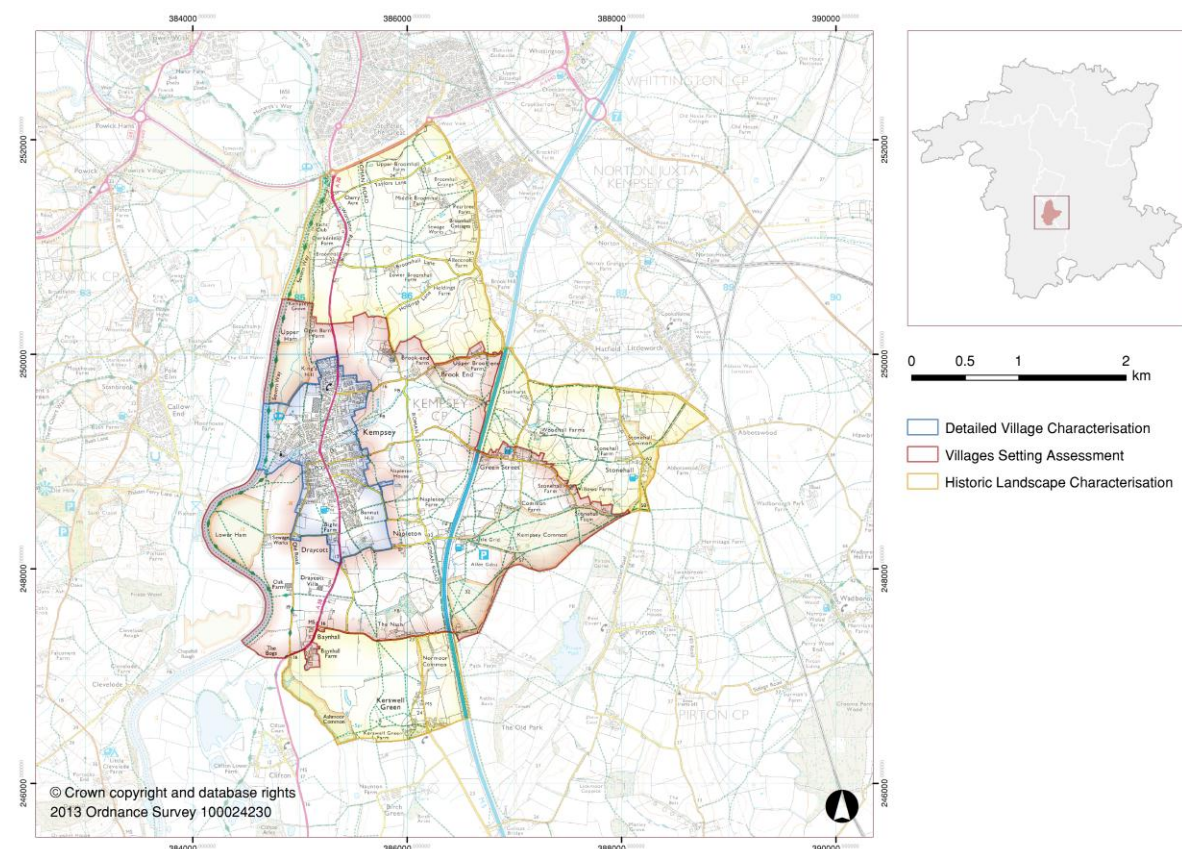


Figure 2: Kempsey Study Areas

### 2.3.3 Parish and Landscape Assessment

The initial desk-based assessments of the parishes of Alvechurch and Kempsey informed the designation of the survey areas, with three concentric levels of characterisation deemed suitable to the projects objectives and intended products. These were:

- Village Characterisation:

Bespoke, intensive urban and sub-urban characterisation of the villages and their immediate environ.

□ Village Setting Assessment:

Examination of the relationships, influences and character of the villages' immediate environments and landscapes, alongside that of the hamlets and farmsteads, interspersed throughout the parishes, through the enhancement of the *Historic Landscape Characterisation* datasets and records.

□ Landscape Characterisation:

Broad assessment of the regional historic environments and wider historic and archaeological landscape setting of the villages, utilising the *Historic Landscape Characterisation* data, revisited and revised *Historic Environment Character Zones* and *Landscape Character Assessment* datasets and reports.

The detailed characterisation of the chosen villages was carried out in three stages: the initial, baseline desk-based characterisation of the area; the detailed revision and refinement of character areas through intensive streetscape, landscape and structural survey; and the production of bespoke character statements and historic-environment resource assessments for Alvechurch and Kempsey.

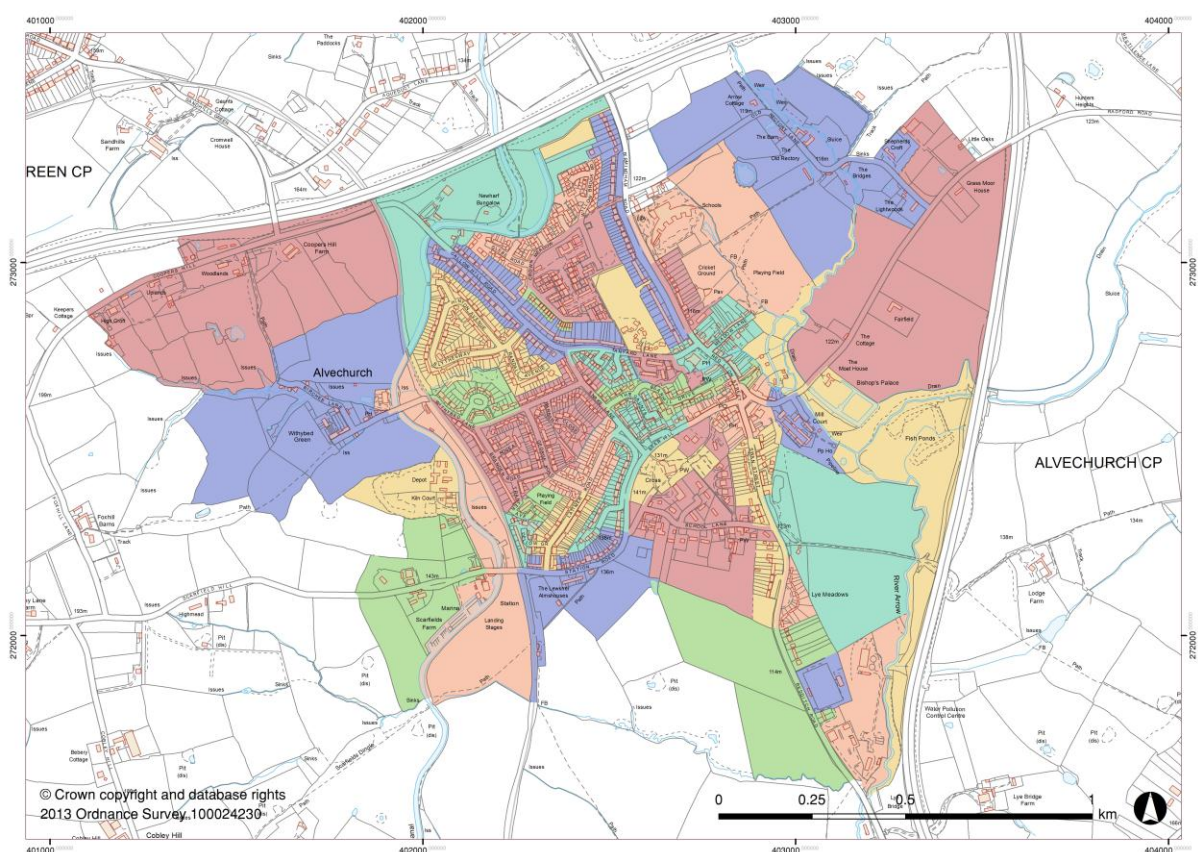


Figure 3: Alvechurch Character Areas

### 2.3.4 Baseline Village Characterisation

The first stage of the assessment involved a desk-based, baseline characterisation informed by the extensive resources outlined in section 2.2. The base-line characterisation was formed around a range of primary character-forming components: broad urban, rural and landscape-morphological

themes which were deemed likely to heavily influence an area’s historic or contemporary form, character and setting. The selected attributes were designed to provide an efficient and effective outline of likely, or potential areas of distinctive character within each settlement, building the framework upon which to generate the more detailed and refined character areas through the subsequent field surveys and consultations where a more comprehensive and detailed record of the streetscapes, landscapes and built-form of the areas could be obtained. The initial character-forming criteria were:

- Period of origin
- Historic development and redevelopment
- Land use
- Street pattern and hierarchy
- Urban form (e.g. scale, density, block pattern, set-back)
- Architectural form (e.g. design, period, diversity)
- Structural plot forms and extent
- Historic environment and archaeology
- Historic landscape character
- Water-bodies and watercourses
- Rural connectivity
- Ecological and natural environment
- Green and/or Open spaces
- Communications
- Topography
- Geology

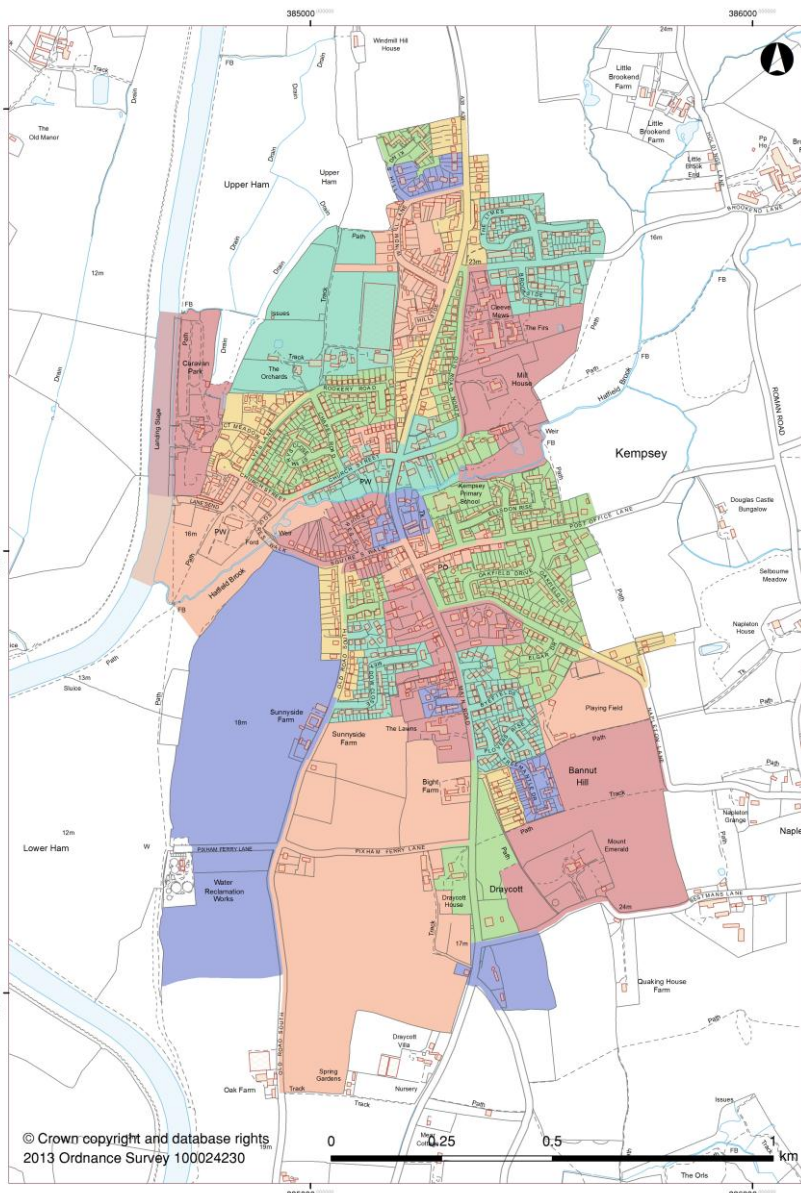


Figure 4: Kempsey Character Areas

The initial character areas were predominantly mapped relative to the Ordnance Survey Mastermap dataset to provide tangible boundaries which could be most practically utilised by the targeted user-base, including local residents and strategic planners. Where this was not deemed appropriate, boundaries were defined from historic mapping or features, including a topographic ridge-line or the furthest extent of a distinctive viewshed. Each character area was provided with a unique reference number and used to generate mapping and survey forms to be utilised during the characterisation fieldwork.

### 2.3.5 Streetscape, Landscape and Structural Survey

Subsequent to the baseline characterisation, intensive field-survey was undertaken to enhance and refine the demarcation and records of the village's character areas. The survey endeavoured to fulfil four objectives: to provide a detailed record of the character 'attributes', produce a comprehensive photographic record of the streetscapes, features and built form of the character areas, further enhance the Historic Environment Record and refine the initial character areas for community consultation.

#### Character Area Survey Record

Each character area was recorded using a bespoke survey form designed from the amalgamation of various landscape, structural and archaeological field-records and context sheets (see Appendix). The form facilitated the production of a highly detailed record of the various character-forming components of a particular area, covering an extensive array of streetscape, land-use, land-form, built form and architectural attributes alongside provision for free-text descriptions, sketch-mapping and capacity for recording newly identified archaeological and historic environment features for subsequent addition to the HER. These records were used to inform the production of the character statements and further refinement of the character areas' extent and form. The recorded components and attributes are outlined in the 'Character Attributes' insert (page 16).

A critical component of the survey form was the inclusion of the 'Primary Character-Forming Components' and 'Distinctive or Significant Historic/Inherited Characteristics' fields. These fields are designed to encourage critical consideration of the plethora of information recorded within the form, clearly defining the principal contemporary and/or historic or archaeological attributes and features which define the character of a particular area. These were accompanied by a map of the character areas with free-text fields to enable in-situ refinement of boundaries and appropriate capacity for bespoke descriptions of setting, form and character.



CHARACTER AREA SURVEY RECORD v.2.1		Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology		
Character Area:	Code:	Grid Reference:	Date:	Surveyor:
<b>Streetscape</b>				
Period of development				
Predominant architectural component				
Diversity of architectural component				
Historic condition (discernibility)				
Green and / or Open spaces				
Predominant boundaries				
Permeability				
Vacancy/Dereliction				
Active/Passive frontages				
Gap sites				
Demarcation of area				
Street pattern				
Street hierarchy				
Architectural hierarchy				
Footway width	Road width			
Footway material	Road material			
Kerb type	Road furniture			
Street furniture				
Ornamental structures				
Planting schemes				
Views				
Focal points				
Relationships to surrounding areas				
Notes:				
				
Pressures for change		Notes:		
Discernibility of trends				
Rural connectivity				
				

Figure 5: Character Area Survey Record

The recording of such an extensive array of character-forming components and attributes had several distinct advantages. Alongside the documentation of the most readily discernible attributes which influence local character, the form provided a checklist through which more subtle features, themes or components of an area’s character can be identified and documented - While adjacent character areas may be conspicuously distinctive, their differences may in fact be resultant of understated nuances in their aesthetic, form or function. Furthermore, the examination of character areas in such detail may highlight the distinctiveness of the *absence* of particular features or attributes in marked contrast to adjoining areas or the broader settlement and landscapes. While this process is time-consuming, it is critical that the resultant evidence base contains sufficient detail to accurately portray *local* distinctiveness through which to appropriately inform *local* planning and initiatives.

## Character Attributes

The character 'attributes' of the field-survey records were derived and amalgamated from numerous urban characterisation studies of areas including Rugeley, Oxford, Dudley and Lincoln, with the latter of particular influence. Attributes were also obtained from examination of existing methods of landscape and urban assessment including Conservation Area Appraisals, Extensive Urban Surveys and Historic Area Assessments. The Historic Landscape Characterisation project methodologies of various counties were consulted, alongside comparable projects from non-historic-environmental disciplines, including Natural England's 'Landscape Character Assessments' and various academic endeavours undertaken by socio-historical geographers and urban morphologists. The building recording forms of Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service were modified and amalgamated for use within the character assessments and consideration was made to the core reference-literature to maximise its potential benefit to character-attribute identification and recording. Finally, the collated information and insights derived from the methods, theories and principals of the aforementioned resources were tailored to function most effectively within the context of Worcestershire's landscapes and settlements, and relative to the WVHERA objectives and projected outputs.

### Landscape, Townscape and Streetscape:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Predominant period of development           | <input type="checkbox"/> Road width and material                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary land-use                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Road and street furniture and signage               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary land-use                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Ornamental structures                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discernibility of historic land-use         | <input type="checkbox"/> Planting schemes                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic condition Green and/or open spaces | <input type="checkbox"/> Views/heds and inter-visibility                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boundaries                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Focal points  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Permeability                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural connectivity                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vacancy/Dereliction                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Discernibility of themes                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active/Passive frontages                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Discernibility of pressures for change              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gap sites                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-visual characteristics (smell, noise)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demarcation of area                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Influence of lighting                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distinctiveness from environ                | <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal variation                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Street pattern                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Points of transition                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Street hierarchy                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of enclosure                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Predominant architectural component         | <input type="checkbox"/> Barriers to movement                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity of architectural component        | <input type="checkbox"/> Elevations (slope, aspect and relief)               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural hierarchy                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Geology   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Footway width and material                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Water bodies and waterways                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kerbing                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural environment, trees, vegetation, and ecology |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Discernible earthworks and archaeological features  |

### Built Form:

- Prominent structural type
- Period(s) of development
- Average structural scale
- Building line
- Structural density
- Roof line
- Group coherence or variation
- Building setback
- Horizontal/vertical emphasis
- Extensions or projections
- Public / private boundaries
- Private / private boundaries
- Plot form and extent
- Building position (within plot)
- Plot access
- Landmark buildings
- Public buildings
- Historic condition
- Changes in functionality and legibility

### Building Recording:

- Type and function
- Period of origin
- Structural form
- Scale
- Aspect
- Walling material
- Method of construction
- Roof shape
- Roof pitch
- Roofing material
- Window forms and materials
- Window framing and decoration
- Doorway forms and materials
- Doorway framing and decoration
- Decoration and unique features
- Roof projections
- Roof details
- Chimneys

## Photographic Survey

An extensive photographic record of the character areas was collected during survey and field-assessment, ensuring a comprehensive illustrative evidence base was generated covering the wide range of assets, features, views, and character-forming components and attributes. Particular use was made of panoramic photographic techniques to produce 'streetscapes': views down roads, lanes and streets; views into and out of areas; and imagery which attempted to encapsulate the broad range of locally distinctive character attributes and components which collectively formed and influenced the respective localities. This extensive collection of over 1300 photographs for each

settlement proved invaluable to inform further characterisation, to generate the character statements, as illustration during community consultation and as a valuable project-output to support local community in the use of the products and within any future historic environment initiatives.



Figure 6: Streetscape photography, Old Road North, Kempsey

The methodologies generated by the *Historic Buildings of Worcestershire* (HBW) project were utilised to produce a rapid photographic and written record of each settlement's historic structures. The HBW shape files, indicating the presence of extant structures visible on 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey Mapping, were enhanced to incorporate later 19th century, early 20th century and later locally distinctive structures. This facilitated rapid recording of the historic structural form during the streetscape recording and photographic survey, which was subsequently utilised within the project and integrated into the Historic Environment Record; thus, resulting in an extensive enlargement in local coverage (see section 3.3).

### Village Setting Assessment

The characterisation fieldwork also incorporated a broader landscape assessment to address questions including settlement setting, viewsheds, and urban/rural connectivity. Alongside further enhancement of the Historic Environment Record, this provided vital opportunities to garner a detailed understanding of the villages' relative influences on and from their environs' distinctive historic landscape character, features and form. Again, an extensive photographic record including numerous wide-angle panoramas accompanied the survey forms and mapping to enhance the resultant village-character evidence base.



Figure 7: Panoramic viewshed of Alvechurch village landscape setting from Newbourne Hill, Rowney Green

### 2.3.6 Historic Environment and Character Appraisal

While detailed consideration of the nuances of each character area is to be encouraged, it was recognised that there is a need to ensure that rapid evaluation of the character areas is achievable to facilitate efficient use of the Kempsey and Alvechurch products. A scoring system was therefore implemented to reflect: the relative quantities and densities of the local historic environment resource; the influence of various character-forming attributes and themes towards the inherited character of the areas; and the relative sensitivity of each area as a component of the villages' historic character and setting. The criteria are based on both quantitative and qualitative components and are designed to inform and guide future assessments of significance, value and influence undertaken by the targeted stakeholders and community groups. The assessment criteria were as follows:

#### Historic Environment Resource Assessment

##### *Historic Buildings*

The relative presence or absence of historic structures within the character area. This is a representation of the density or proportion of historic buildings within an area relative to its size, it does not differentiate between designated or non-designated buildings, and considers structures which pre-date the large-scale inter-war and post-war housing developments of the early to mid-20th century.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 0 | There is an absence of historic buildings within the character area.  |
| 1 | There are a small number of historic structures within the character area interspersed between a predominantly modern built-form. |
| 2 | There are numerous historic structures within the character area, forming a significant proportion of the area's built-form.      |
| 3 | The structural component of the character area is entirely, or almost entirely, composed of historic buildings.                   |

##### *Above and Below Ground Archaeology*

An evidence based assessment drawing on sources including the Historic Environment Record, historical documentation, grey-literature, historic mapping and aerial photographs to assess the presence of, and potential for, archaeological monuments and subsurface deposits within a character area.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 0 | The area is of unknown archaeological potential with no known monuments currently located within the character area.  |
| 1 | No known archaeological monuments are currently located within the character area. The area is thought to be of moderate archaeological potential.                                |
| 2 | There are known archaeological monuments within the character area. The area is thought to be of moderate to high archaeological potential.                                       |
| 3 | Numerous and/or significant above or below ground archaeological monuments are located within the character area which is thought to be of considerable archaeological potential. |

##### *Historic and Archaeological Landscapes*



The presence of features pertaining to distinctive historic landscapes and land-use. This includes a broad range of 'designed' environments, including: ornamental, parkland, and recreational spaces; distinctive agricultural fields and enclosure systems; militarised landscapes; unenclosed lands; and woodlands.

- 0 There are no features pertaining to an existing or former historic landscape.
- 1 A small number of subtle features pertaining to a historic landscape or land-use are discernible.
- 2 Numerous historic and/or archaeological features clearly allude to a historic land-use; however, contemporary landscape character is primarily formed from proceeding activity and redevelopment.
- 3 A historic landscape or land-use and its component archaeological features are clearly discernible and remain the primary character forming components of the area.

### Inherited Character

#### *Streetscape*

An assessment of an array of historic features which collectively form a distinctive inherited urban character, or historic 'streetscape'. This includes an examination of architectural themes, materials and hierarchies in conjunction with consideration of the presence of historic street furnishing (e.g. ornamental structures, road and shop signage); infrastructure (e.g. street lighting, paving); boundaries (e.g. railings, walling, bollards); and urban design (e.g. planting schemes, green spaces).

- 0 No inherited historic streetscape features are evident.
- 1 A small number of historic streetscape features are evident, referencing a largely eroded historic character. Redevelopments and/or modifications of the area have diminished their collective influence on local distinctiveness.
- 2 Numerous historic streetscape features have been retained which continue to contribute to local character, while not forming primary character-forming components.
- 3 The character area has retained a historic streetscape, with a numerous and diverse array of historic features continuing to contribute significantly to a local inherited character and distinctiveness.



Figure 8: Distinctive historic built form and streetscape, School Lane, Alvechurch

### *Built Form*

The built environment will regularly represent the primary character forming component of an area, with the many and varying structural types, forms, materials and functionalities collectively influencing local distinctiveness and 'place-shaping'. When scoring the inherited character of an area's built form consideration is given to: local buildings' period of construction and the discernibility of period-defining features; architectural form; architectural details and aesthetic; the survival and on-going utilisation of original and locally distinctive construction materials; the historic and contemporary functionality of buildings; and the setting of structures within their associated urban blocks, plots and building lines. No distinction of significance is made between the structural period of origin, instead their respective influences to an area's character with, for instance, 1930s ribbon development seen as an equally distinctive 'historic' built form as 19<sup>th</sup> century workers' cottages.

- 0 Built form does not contribute to the inherited character of the area. Buildings and urban morphology do not reflect local or historic architectural themes.
- 1 Modern development has had a significant impact on the local historic built form, leaving only a small number of fragmented inherited structural characteristic features discernible.
- 2 While numerous historic buildings and structural features are evident within the area, providing a strong sense of inherited character, insensitive modern redevelopment and/or alterations to the built form has eroded the historical cohesion of the area.
- 3 Local architecture and urban morphology contributes considerably to a local historic character. Numerous buildings with distinctive period features and local materials remain a predominant character forming component of the area. Alternatively,

modern development and redevelopment has been successfully integrated with the extant historic urban environment through the use of locally appropriate designs and materials.

### *Landscape Setting*

This category examines the historic setting of a character area relative to its immediate environment, adjacent areas and the wider historic landscape. Consideration is given to the presence and survival of significant views; historic land-use and the discernibility of associated features; the relationship (distinctiveness or coherence) to adjacent character areas and the wider settlement; and the significance of the natural environment and geomorphology towards an areas prevailing character.

- 0 The landscape has undergone dramatic modern transformation, removing all components of the historic landscape character and making earlier land-usage, visual and spatial relationships indistinguishable.
- 1 The land-use and landscape setting of the area has undergone considerable transformation; however, a small number of features pertaining to the preceding setting of the character area remain evident.
- 2 While a modicum of landscape transformation has occurred, inherited characteristics from previous land-usage and the broader landscape setting continue to contribute to local distinctiveness.
- 3 The character area represents a largely unaltered and coherent historic landscape, retaining a significant proportion of its original features, relationships and setting which collectively produce a distinctive inherited character.

### Sensitivity

The assessment of sensitivity is designed to reflect the influences of a particular character area with its distinctive historic environmental features and attributes towards the broader urban-form, setting and character of the settlement. While the 'Inherited Character' scoring provides a quantitative representation of the influence of streetscape, built form and landscape-setting towards a particular locality, the sensitivity scoring assesses the area's contribution towards the wider urban and rural environments of the village.

Sensitivity is not defined by the cumulative score of the 'Inherited Character' features; instead it is designed to examine their influence relative to the settlement as a whole. For instance, an area of pastoral landscape lying immediately adjacent to a settlement may maintain a strong influence and therefore sensitivity through its viewsheds and inter-visibilitys despite an absence of a distinctive historic-structural component or streetscape-features. Conversely, a highly enclosed streetscape lined with structures and features of a particular period-form and aesthetic may be deemed as sensitive, due to its demarcation of a distinctive route or gateway through or into a settlement respectively, despite a relative detachment from the broader urban or rural environments.

Critically, sensitivity scoring *is not* a definitive representation of appropriateness or potential for future development, modification or change in relation to Historic Environment. Rather, it seeks to provide guidance as to where historic and inherited characteristics are of particular influence to the historic

form and setting of the wider settlement; and therefore the relative need for their appropriate consideration during the planning and urban-design processes and associated local initiatives.

Furthermore while the presence of historic and archaeological features, buildings and landscapes are likely to increase the relative sensitivities of a particular character area, a high accumulated score from the 'Historic Environment Resource Assessment' will not necessitate a high sensitivity - avoiding the relegation of areas of considerable local distinctiveness below those of broader regional or national significance.

### 2.3.7 Character Statements

The culmination of the desk-based assessments and fieldwork of the characterisation process was the production of bespoke character statements for each character area, which together formed the 'Historic Environment Characterisation and Resource Assessment' for Kempsey and Alvechurch. Example character statements can be examined in the Appendix.

**Town Mill**  
Alv\_022

The Town Mill character area is defined by the site of a number of watermill-complexes which have consecutively occupied the locality since the medieval period. The contemporary landscape is formed of the 18th to 19th century mill and factory adjacent Radford Road situated at the fore of a 20th century housing development constructed on the site of the 19th century mill-complex and subsequent 20th century farm-buildings. The design and urban form of the 21st century redevelopment is highly coherent with the industrial character of the mill and associated historic buildings, thus, creating a coherent streetscape of high historic environment value and integrity.

**Urban Morphology and Landscape Context**  
The Town Mill is set-back 25m from Radford Road, with an asphalt-covered parking area constructed in place of a demolished mill pond at the line. A remnant inherited character of the plain's frontage has been retained in the form of the low boundary walling of red-brick with blue-brick coping alongside street lighting in a faux gas-lamp design and components of former mill-machinery recontextualised in an ornamental function.

The modern development is orientated relative to the historic 18th and 19th century mill complex, re-incorporating the historic structures into reconstructed and expanded courtyards of coherent character and form. This industrial character is further enhanced by the absence of modern kerbing and pavement, the installation of 'conservation' themed street-furniture and the utilisation of both stretcher and herringbone aligned brickwork block-paving. Additional reference is made to the industrial provenance of the site through the allocation of pertinent housing-names, alongside the construction of a broad and linear arrangement of blue-engineering bricks within the block-paving to demarcate the course of the mill's tail-race identified during a 2005 programme of archaeological works.

The area is demarcated from its immediate environment by the large landmark buildings of The Mill at the western frontage, compounded by the narrow private lane which grants access to the housing at the rear. While there is a strong sense of enclosure formed by the courtyard street-pattern alongside the linear and largely unbroken building lines, the historic connectivity with village-core and the now archaeological utilisation of the River Arise watercourses remain evident within the open, green areas immediately adjacent to the modern housing estate. While a modicum of landscaping has removed earthworks to the south, the earthwork banks of the river which define

the northern extent of the character area, those of the Bishop's Palace most further south, and the managed watercourses of the river and adjacent sluices, drains and channels continue to form discernible components of the area's landscape setting.

**Built Form**  
The structural components of the character area are formed of a partially extant 18th to 19th century mill complex, expanded through 21st century housing development. Mill Farm House sits immediately adjacent to a large factory building, north of an area of 21st century housing development which incorporates a number of additional historic structures into its urban morphology and aesthetic. While an adjacent cottage, Mill Bank was demolished in favour of a sports and social club in the mid-20th century, the 'Gothic Cottages' which lie across the Radford Road remain extant. Despite the extensive 21st century housing to the rear, the character area has retained an exceptional level of its historic structural character through appropriate and sensitive restoration, maintenance and redevelopment.

The 18th to 19th century Town Mill is formed of two structural phases, with a rectangular-plan three-and-a-half-storey side-gabled mill and factory building immediately east of the three-storey Mill Farm House.

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

English Heritage

English Heritage

Historic Environment Resource:	B: 2	A: 3	L: 2
Inherited Character:	S: 3	B: 3	L: 2
Sensitivity:	High		

Figure 9: Historic Environment Character Statement

The statements were produced from the information derived from the field survey records, providing a comprehensive written overview of the urban morphology, landscape contexts and built forms of the character areas. These were supplemented by mapping of the character area and sufficient photographs to adequately represent the various distinctive streetscapes, features and structures of the respective localities. Each character area was given a relevant title to accompany their unique reference codes to provide accessible references for both public and strategic users. A 'Statement of Inherited Character' forms the critical component of the statements, summarising the key inherited characteristics, attributes, sensitivities and relationships of the areas. This was accompanied by the respective 'Historic Environment Resource' and 'Inherited Character' scoring, the assigned category

22

of sensitivity and a list of key historic-character forming components in order to provide efficient, effective and concise historic environmental guidance.

The statements were produced during the characterisation process, often immediately prior to the field survey record, generating a more comprehensive and contextual record of local character. The draft character statements were distributed to local community members and groups on completion for discussion and feedback, and incorporated into the community and stakeholder consultation process.

### 2.3.8 WVHERA Website

The GIS team within the Systems and Customer Access of Worcestershire County Council are integrating the WVHERA datasets into a bespoke online browser-based map, displaying the various character areas, their titles and reference numbers and links to the respective character statements. The online delivery of the products will facilitate greater access to the evidence base, allowing rapid reference by both the local authorities, communities and stakeholders. The website will be provided without charge from the GIS team and should therefore be seen as an aspiration, not an expectation of future WVHERA projects.

## 2.4 Community Engagement and Consultation



Figure 10: Community outreach, Kempsey

The development of a programme of community engagement and consultation to enhance and promote the WVHERA characterisation methodologies and products respective of community views and aspirations is a key objective of the pilot study. This has been achieved through the application and critical assessment of an array of techniques, based around four key principals:

- Promote the fundamental principles and benefits of 'historic environmentalism' to local communities and stakeholders.
- Consult on both the contents and form of the characterisation 'products' to ensure they are fit-for-purpose in their substance *and* functionality.
- Explore and pursue 'in situ' consultation and engagement techniques to reform, expand and enhance upon preceding methodologies.
- Develop productive working relationships with community groups and local residents to inform and support future historic environment initiatives.

### 2.4.1 Promotion and Publicity

Promotion and publicity of the project occurred through advertisement in the local press, in magazines and newsletters, and on parish and village noticeboards. The project was promoted online

through various websites and using social media. Further publicity was achieved through attendance of various community events for the further advertisement of the project, and to encourage wider engagement with the consultation process.

#### 2.4.2 Village Stakeholders, Authorities and Societies

Early and direct contact with the respective parish councils, local groups, and village societies was critical to establishing connections with community leaders whose assistance in organising subsequent consultation events proved invaluable. Dedicated outreach with the key community stakeholders was integral to the engagement process, resulting in the establishment of highly valuable working-relationships that could be utilised within the project and with potential for further development within subsequent Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service initiatives. Attendance of community meetings, including those of local societies and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups, was critical in order to gain the necessary perspectives on their respective objectives and capacities; ensuring the subsequent design, form and content of the project-outputs complimented the aspirations of the communities.

#### 2.4.3 Community Consultation

The unanticipated abundance of distinctive localities within the Kempsey and Alvechurch villages (see section 4.4) resulted in a large density of character areas relative to their small populations. This proved prohibitive to organising consultation events for individual areas or neighbourhoods within the time constraints and financial capacities of the pilot study. This did not however prove to be a

significant hindrance, forcing a more refined and targeted approach relative to the project's objectives.



Figure 11: WVHERA promotion at 'The Hive', Worcester

During the programme of outreach and publicity local residents and stakeholders were asked to register their interest for consultation on particular character areas, landscapes or localities. This provided direct points of contact for those who best understood and appreciated the nuances of particular

areas and therefore facilitated highly productive discussions which continued throughout the project. This allowed for a more flexible and adaptable means of garnering local values and perspectives on a range of issues, allowing individuals to consider and contemplate the products 'in situ' to provide more contextual feedback and over a broader period of time. This approach also avoided the potential pitfalls of a singular, dedicated event where community feedback is subject to time constraints and may be led by particular agendas.

In lieu of dedicated neighbourhood consultation events, resources were committed to promoting and explaining the broader principals of historic townscape characterisation and the Historic Environment Record to the local community. The resources of the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service at 'The Hive' therefore proved invaluable to enlightening local communities to the broad applications and benefits of assessing and engaging with their historic environments. This was deemed to be essential in light of the recognised deficiency of both the representation and consideration of 'historic environmentalism' within local planning, despite considerable potential and capacity to do so (see section 4.2). A day was committed to each settlement which incorporated a tour of the records office and archaeological field section followed by an afternoon of presentations and discussion aimed at highlighting the resources of the Historic Environment Record and Advisory Service. This preceded the promotion of the use of the WVHERA resource assessments and characterisation products during neighbourhood planning and local initiatives. The character statements and WVHERA products were presented amongst a broader collection of historic photographs, grey literature, aerial photography, historic mapping, archival materials and computer-terminals running the county Historic Environment Record and GIS in order to both highlight the extent and complexity of the service's resources and emphasise their potential benefits to local planning and research using WVHERA as the case example. The combination of formal consultation and broader historic environment advocacy therefore formed a key principal of the community outreach and engagement processes: ensuring the products of the WVHERA project are not only suitably influenced by local perspectives and opinions, but also sufficiently understood and valued as a means through which to promote them.



Figure 12: WVHERA Consultation event at 'The Hive', Worcester

#### 2.4.4 Mobile Methodologies

While numerous methods and techniques of community consultation and engagement have been developed for archaeological and historic environmental projects, there is a common risk of failure to comprehensively assess local views and perspectives through limitations inherent in their contexts and form. Restricting consultation to singular events in overly-formalised environments may often result in feedback dominated by particular, broad-scale agendas and with variable levels of

involvement from those participating. Further, in respect of area-based characterisation at local scales the importance of context is critical. Discussions occurring 'in situ' provide a heightened level of critical assessment respective of the locality, derived from active experiences rather than a process solely dependent on recollection. The WVHERA project has therefore aimed to assess newly developed 'mobile methodologies', utilising advancements in hand-held, GPS-enabled technologies such as smartphones, in conjunction with web-based means of data-dissemination. Social-geographical research is leading the development of these mobile techniques (see Ricketts Hein et al. 2008), with newly established partnerships within such academic bodies developed during the WVHERA pilot study.

Several field-based techniques of historic environmental survey and assessment have been appropriated and amalgamated for the project. These range from the recording of individual structural or monumental assets, to more area-based approaches such as those of English Heritage's '*Placecheck*'. The objective has not therefore been to supersede established mechanisms of consultation and engagement, but rather attempt to enhance their potential impact and pertinence to historic townscape characterisation through the amalgamation and collective application of formal, 'in situ' and mobile methodologies.

#### Fieldwork

While multiple individuals from both settlements aided in the field-recording process, it was rapidly established that the complexity of the villages' urban morphology negated the projects capacity to implement and supervise extensive community-led fieldwork. Furthermore, it was found that providing sufficient training and instruction in the recognition and categorisation of the vast array of character-attributes required to effectively complete the field-survey records could not be achieved within the limited resources of a pilot study. It was therefore decided that greater resources should be committed to promoting the project's products, instructing the community on their potential applications, and undertaking subsequent 'in situ' consultation, with the field-recording of 'character' remaining a predominantly professional undertaking. Alternative means of local character assessment were consequently investigated, with the 'MapLocal' approach outlined in the subsequent section proving particularly applicable.

A more efficient and accessible means of community-fieldwork was derived from the *Historic Buildings of Worcestershire* project. Both community members and Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service placement students were accompanied by project staff to collect an extensive photographic record of the extant historic structures of the settlements, vastly enhancing the Historic Environment Record and local evidence base for the respective parishes. This can readily be achieved as a purely local-community endeavour, with the methods of outreach and training well-developed within the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, and provides an achievable and efficient means of boosting community involvement with the characterisation process.





Figure 13: Historic building survey. Church Street, Kempsey

### MapLocal

'MapLocal' (<https://maplocal.org.uk>) is a participatory-GIS tool designed and developed as part of an Arts and Humanities Research Council research project led by Dr Phil Jones of the University of Birmingham School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences. The tool combines a freely available smartphone 'app' linked to a bespoke browser-based mapping system to facilitate the

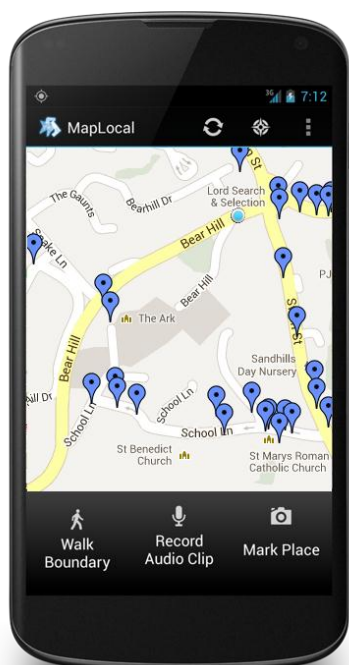


Figure 14: MapLocal App

recording of opinions and collection of photographic material pertaining to a particular agenda, within a designated study area. The application combines the GPS tracking, photographic and audio-recording capabilities of smartphones to allow for the collation of information collected by local participants, which is subsequently universally accessible within the online platform. The application can therefore be used by local communities to gather both qualitative and quantitative information on their local assets and areas, in a highly accessible format to be readily utilised to inform local initiatives such as neighbourhood planning.

The 'MapLocal' approach has a range of distinct advantages, with the potential to favourably augment traditional consultation methodologies. The tool fits within the expanding field of 'mobile methodologies' (see Ricketts Hein et al. 2008) which utilise mobile and geospatial technologies to facilitate more extensive 'in situ' consultation and engagement of community members in a wide range of socio-geographical and environmental contexts. These

approaches allow for community consultation and engagement to occur within a context appropriate to the research or strategic agendas being addressed, avoiding generalisation and encouraging consideration of a range of issues in levels of detail befitting the needs of the project. The technique

also overcomes the potential dominance of particular issues and perspectives during consultation events or meetings. The tool therefore aims to broaden the demographic of consultees, allowing individuals who are unlikely to attend local community meetings and events, or conversely those who do but may not feel their views are comprehensively recorded, to be proportionally represented within the consultation process.

Through the WVHERA project, a new partnership was developed with the University of Birmingham, who provided three smartphone devices in order to pilot the 'MapLocal' technique for historic environment initiatives. The smartphones were distributed to willing participants of both the Kempsey and Alvechurch study areas where they were utilised to collect photographic and audio data pertaining to local historic character and distinctiveness. The data was subsequently utilised to inform the respective character statements and further enhance the photographic record of each area. While the method proved highly successful in its application, the extent of its use was somewhat limited to 'pilot' status by: a lack of available project-time to dedicate to local advertisement and training; a scarcity of smartphone capabilities within the communities engaged with the WVHERA process; and the absence of financial capacity to incentivise involvement as has occurred in previous 'MapLocal' studies. The establishment of the new working partnership and examination of the technique within an historic environment context has, however, highlighted its substantial potential for future utilisation. The devices are therefore expected to be employed within the forthcoming *Worcestershire Historic Environment Action Plan* pilot study and the possibility for a future bespoke pilot study is being explored.

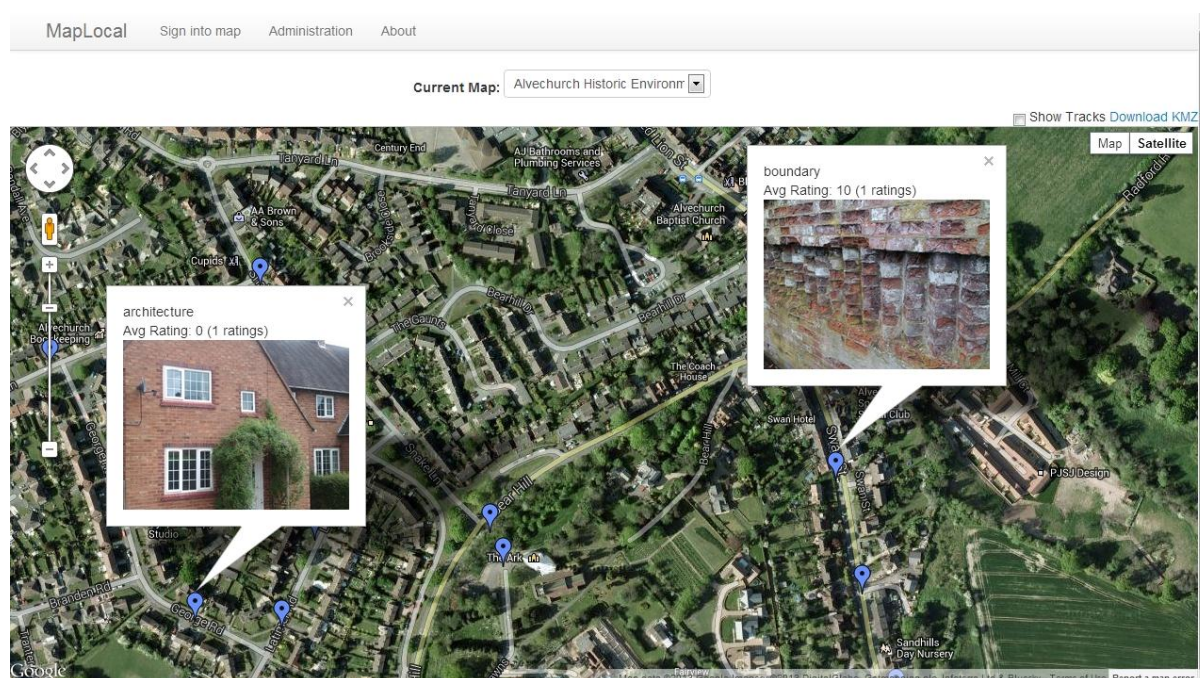


Figure 15: MapLocal web-mapping

### 'Walkabouts'

With a significant tenant of the WVHERA pilot project geared towards assessing the validity of 'in situ' community consultation and engagement methodologies, a variety of potential theories and techniques were explored through review of relevant historic environment and heritage initiatives such

as English Heritage's 'Placecheck' and further liaison with the University of Birmingham geographers and urban morphologists.

'Walkabouts' with community members and groups were therefore undertaken, each with specific objectives defined relative to the locality and/or participants. These included the historic built form, specific archaeological monuments, and broader historic environmental and landscape issues. A general informality was essential, with priority given to generating productive discussions regarding the processes of historic environment planning and management and how the local authority could best support the needs of the strategic aspirations of the local community. The 'walkabouts' were essential towards understanding the values, perspectives, and sensitivities of the local communities relative to their settlements, and further developed invaluable working relationships which could be drawn upon throughout the WVERA and future, related projects.



Figure 16: Community 'Walkabout', Kempsey

Several of the 'Walkabouts' for the WVERA Stage Two Pilot Study were delayed beyond the expiration of the project schedule in order to integrate local assessment and consultation with the *Worcestershire Historic Environment Action Plan: Pilot Study*, within which the parishes of Alvechurch and Kempsey form two of the chosen case studies. The post-project 'walkabouts' will therefore utilise the completed WVERA character statements to inform discussion of the historic environment agendas, objectives and priorities to be incorporated into the parish Historic Environment Action Plan, further illustrating the potential value of the WVERA evidence-base towards community advocacy and engagement.

# PROJECT OUTPUTS

3

## 3.1 **WVHERA Characterisation and Engagement Methodology**

The WVHERA stage two pilot study has generated a robust methodology which is primed to be utilised to characterise a broad array of urban and sub-urban environments. Through extensive examination of contemporary methodologies within both the historic environmental and geographical disciplines, the methodology should be well suited to be effectively and efficiently deployed within the villages and towns across Worcestershire and beyond. The methodology has been developed to be applicable within a variety of contexts, from the assessment of the influence of ancient archaeological monuments to the significance of later-20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century housing development on a particular locality. The methodology is designed to produce products and outputs which can be utilised flexibly to advocate local historic environments, inform a far-reaching and cross-disciplinary array of local agendas and as a framework within which to enhance the capacity for local research to promote community values and engagement. The WVHERA methodology will be applicable within settlements of size ranging from small hamlets to large towns and cities, with the fiscal and temporal requirements of each project relative to the complexity and capacities of each locality (see section 4.1).

A key objective of the WVHERA project was to develop a programme of community engagement which both efficiently acquired local perspectives on local distinctiveness and character, alongside highlighting the complexities, value and potential of their respective historic environments in both strategic and research contexts. Through examination of the consultation methodologies of comparable projects, discussion with local community members and liaison with both local authority and academic parties a range of potential methods have been utilised and critically examined to inform the collation of a suite of appropriate techniques. The project has highlighted the values of 'mobile methodologies' and 'in situ' engagement in accompaniment to traditional means of local consultation and has provided valuable insights into the relative capacities of community involvement in the characterisation and fieldwork processes. Critically, it was recognised that the programme of community engagement must be appropriate to the scope and complexity of the project and settlement in question; thus, future projects will draw appropriately from this collection of promotional, consultation and mobile techniques.

## 3.2 **Village Character Statements and Evidence Base**

The WVHERA pilot study has generated characterisation 'products' for Alvechurch and Kempsey, consisting of forty-two and thirty-three character areas respectively, each with associated character statements, historic environment resource scoring, sensitive assessments and appropriate mapping. These are accompanied by guidance and case studies on the potential applications of the products within local strategic planning and heritage initiatives, and further advice on the broader advantages of historic environmentalism, for a wide variety of community agendas. Further guidance on the use of the county Historic Environment Record and Archive were included, alongside possibilities for the additional enhancement of the local resource through professional, community and voluntary projects.

The character statements are to be delivered in both documentary and online formats through the bespoke web-GIS mapping, allowing rapid and interactive access to the project's products and data.

The intensive photographic and archaeological surveys of the settlements and their environs produced approximately 1500 images for both Alvechurch and Kempsey, encompassing the broad array of themes considered during the characterisation process. This photographic resource of the villages' historic environments was provided to the local community with a view to be used as they see fit, with exception of commercial endeavours. While the photographic record was a by-product of the character-surveys, the resource has proven to be of particular value to the respective communities, greatly enhancing the inherently text-heavy character statements and enhancing their potential application in the promotion of local distinctiveness and significance.

### 3.3 Historic Environment Record Enhancement

The WVHERA desk based assessments, field survey and community engagement extensively enhanced the Historic Environment Record of the villages and parishes of Kempsey and Alvechurch.

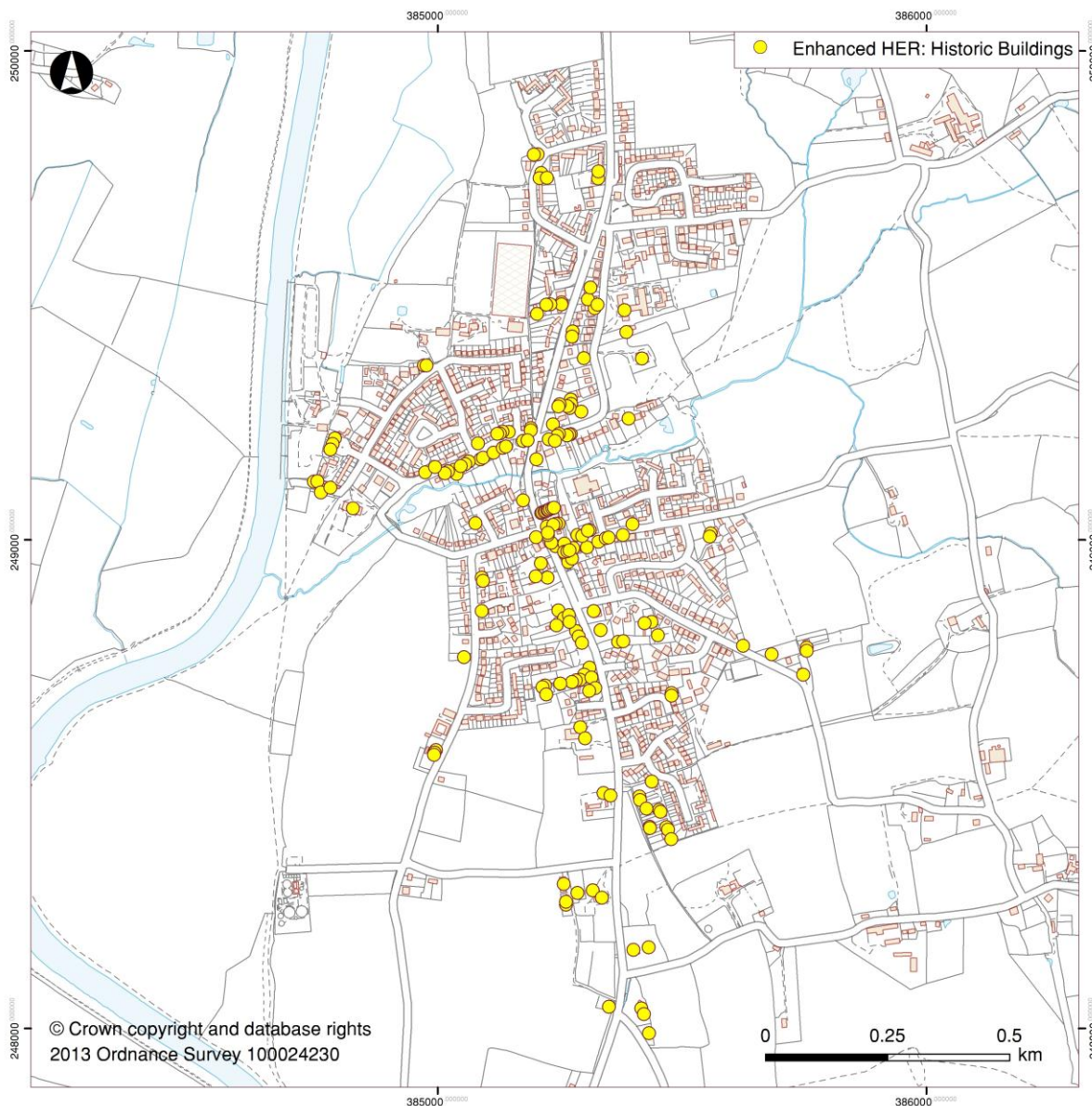


Figure 17: Historic building survey

Alongside revision and modification to existing records, an extensive collection of historic and archaeological buildings, monuments and landscapes were identified, dramatically increasing the relative density of HER representation for each settlement far beyond comparable parishes. Alongside providing a vastly improved local record for community researches and stakeholders, this will facilitate a significantly improved capacity for effective historic environment management and assessment within future local, district and county planning.

The application of the *Historic Buildings of Worcestershire* methodology within the character-assessment framework has resulted in the dramatic enhancement of the Historic Environment Records data and resources pertaining to the built form of the two settlements. 213 and 195 historic structures were photographed and recorded within Alvechurch and Kempsey respectively, representing an increase of 169 and 172 HER building records from the pre-project dataset. Critically, this has

facilitated a vast increase in the record of non-designated historic structural assets within the parishes, contrasting markedly from the high proportions of Worcestershire's villages which remain predominantly represented by listed buildings alone within the HER. Of the structures already



recorded by the HER prior to the WVHERA studies, a large majority have been enhanced through a more contemporary photographic and descriptive record. The initial desk based assessment, field-reconnaissance and characterisation studies facilitated the collective application of numerous cartographic resources and remote sensing datasets, including recently acquired high resolution aerial orthophotographs and Environment Agency LiDAR data. Numerous archaeological monuments were therefore identified, pertaining to the historic land-usage of the villages' environs, and the records of previously identified monuments greatly refined and enhanced. Rapid field-evaluation of many of these sites could also occur during the subsequent surveys of landscape and townscape character. The photographic survey has also enhanced the products of the *Historic Farmstead Characterisation* project for those within the survey areas; and modification to the *Historic Landscape Characterisation* records has occurred, to more accurately reflect the broader landscape character areas of the village and their immediate environments.

The engagement of local communities further enriched the local Historic Environment Record through both anecdotal discussions, and various formal or informal 'walkabouts' undertaken between local authority representatives and members of the community. Alongside drawing on the vast local knowledge-base, this allowed for more detailed discussion on the *local* significance of these assets and the community's aspirations for their future management and utilisation. Extensive promotion of the Historic Environment Record during the community engagement and consultation programmes has also ensured that a greater appreciation of the extensive resources of the service has been generated within the local communities, alongside its considerable potential to support and enhance local initiatives and research. Elements of the local archival resources utilised within the project have therefore been integrated with the HER, and additional information derived from future community research and surveys is more likely to be deposited into the HER collections for broader dissemination.



Figure 19: Alvechurch Deer Park boundary, Peck Wood

### 3.4 Policy, Planning and Conservation

#### 3.4.1 Neighbourhood Planning

The key strategic output of the WVHERA pilot project was to develop a methodology which delivered historic characterisation products fit to be utilised by local community groups and stakeholders. The assessment of the relative capacities of groups, such as the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups and associated local societies, has therefore provided a much deeper perspective on their relative aspirations and requirements, vastly improving the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service's ability to provide appropriate and effective support. The promotion of the Historic Environment Record through the programme of community engagement has facilitated a deeper local appreciation of the form and potential of historic environmental and archaeological resources; with the bespoke character statements providing a flexible and dynamic framework within which the potential

impact of, or potential for, development can be assessed relative to local character, distinctiveness, heritage assets and setting.

The community engagement and consultation programmes worked to facilitate a greater local understanding of the complexities and values of their respective settlements' historic environments and its capacity for the promotion of a wide array of cross-disciplinary local agendas ranging from development, economy, infrastructure and community. Providing such guidance and direction was deemed critical towards maximising the contribution of the WVHERA products towards local planning, ensuring the character statements and enhanced historic environment resources could be most effectively utilised to support village or parish advocacy. The importance of this engagement was further emphasised by the under-representation and consequent lack of awareness of the potential value and applications of historic environmentalism and characterisation within the parish authorities and local stakeholder groups (see section 4.2). Local community groups and stakeholders proved extremely receptive to the various discussions, with particularly productive engagement occurring with those of more natural-environmental vocations who could readily recognise the parity and synergies of the historic/archaeological and ecological disciplines. Feedback from the steering groups, local historians and local historical societies was also favourable, with their introduction to the concepts and potential benefits of landscape archaeology and characterisation enabling an enhanced capacity for community promotion of local values and heritage assets. The working-relationships developed between Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service and local communities are therefore facilitating further engagement to promote, plan and manage the historic environments of the parishes. The *Historic Environment Action Plan Pilot Project* intends to develop these relationships further, integrating greater representation from the district Conservation Officers in order to develop strategies derived from a unified county, district and parish endeavour, set within the frameworks of the village character areas.

The WVHERA project has succeeded in promoting the consideration of historic environment, and application of historic environmentalism, beyond assessment of buildings, monuments and landscapes recorded by national designation or the Historic Environment Record. Analysis of completed and published 'frontrunner' neighbourhood plans alongside the results of recent surveys by LOCUS consulting (see Partington, 2013) has revealed a tendency to exclusively advocate the preservation of assets and areas deemed of national significance, negating those of potentially comparable local importance which may not correspond to designation criteria. The project has promoted the importance of non-designated and unrecorded features of distinctiveness and significance specific to the *local* settlements, highlighting the necessity for consideration and promotion of features beyond listed buildings and the conservation areas. The detailed record of distinctive features and localities within the character statements was reinforced through the historic buildings survey, clearly highlighting the divergence between lists of national significance and accurate representations of local assets. The influence of 20<sup>th</sup> century features as historical assets to local character and distinctiveness was also demonstrated, with early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century former-social housing proving to be of particular distinctiveness and importance to communities and their villages. The Archive and Archaeology Service is therefore optimistic that historic buildings and landscapes of local significance, but unrepresented within national listings will be more effectively represented within the respective Neighbourhood Plans through increased local awareness and further local-authority support.



The potential of historic landscape or townscape characterisation to identify features of local significance within areas deemed of low historic-urban value was also displayed. Numerous character areas which would likely be precipitously dismissed as of low historic environment potential through rapid desk based assessment were found to contain inherited features and nuances of distinctive historical or archaeological interest to local communities, pertaining to a former land-usage or a now historic local character. Characterisation allowed for the formal recording of such features and localities of anecdotal community value, alongside highlighting unrecognised historic or archaeological features to local residence; thus, engendering a greater sense of interest, value and engagement towards their respective neighbourhoods, potentially encouraging greater involvement in local advocacy and planning.

A commonly stated hindrance to Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups arises with comprehensive community opposition to future development, diminishing opportunities for the necessary constructive discussions on its prospective design, location and extent. With further development of the settlements a high probability, it is hoped that the WVHERA products and evidence base may facilitate a new perspective: that development may be of *benefit* to a locality through the application of appropriate design and urban form which sensitively respects local character and distinctiveness. Conversely, the potential for the degradation or fragmentation of small settlements through insensitive urban expansion or modification can be readily displayed to developers through the WVHERA evidence base to promote a more locally-contextual approach.

#### 3.4.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework states: *The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development* (paragraph 6). Paragraphs 126-141 contain policies for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Achieving sustainable development requires that economic, social and environmental improvement should be sought jointly and simultaneously (paragraph 8). Pursuing sustainable development also involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment (paragraph 9). The WVHERA project and method provides an evidence base and mechanism to promote sustainable development that responds to settlement character and supports the Neighbourhood Planning process. The 12 core planning principles of NPPF (paragraph 17) include requirements that development should:

- *Be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area*
- *Always seek to secure high quality design*
- *Take account of the different roles and character of different areas*
- *Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside*
- *Encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings*
- *Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance*

Section 3 of NPPF, *Supporting a prosperous rural economy*, states that: *Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive*

*approach to sustainable new development*, and that local and neighbourhood plans should support sustainable growth *through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings*. (Paragraph 28).

Good design is recognised as a *key aspect of sustainable development* and *indivisible from good planning* (paragraph 56). Developments should be designed within the context of their setting to *establish a strong sense of place* and should also *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials*. (paragraph 58).

#### 3.4.3 District Local Development Frameworks

These are policies that have undergone a long evolution, particularly given the strategic reform that has led to the deletion of Regional Spatial Strategy followed by the introduction of NPPF. The districts have responded with revised local development frameworks and nested policies. Outputs from WVHERA will not directly contribute towards the evidence base of current district frameworks because it is currently not a strategic evidence base. However, it will nonetheless, inform the processes driven by local policies in relation to the validation of planning applications and site masterplanning; and will therefore help to promote sustainable development in Alvechurch and Kempsey.

#### 3.4.4 Green Infrastructure Planning

The Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy is due to be published in October 2013 and has been produced by Worcestershire County Council in partnership with District Councils, statutory agencies and third sector organisations. The Framework supports and promotes the conservation and enhancement of multifunctional assets that contribute strongly towards the definition of place and the delivery of sustainable development. The holistic method of assessment employed in WVHERA has included assets that contribute towards Green Infrastructure objectives and the wider environmental setting of Alvechurch and Kempsey. It therefore provides a detailed evidence base that should inform Green Infrastructure concept plans and site masterplanning.

#### 3.4.5 Conservation Area Appraisal

The detailed assessment of character generated by WVHERA offers a significant evidence base that should be considered in relation to future Conservation Area Appraisals where there is an opportunity to revise the boundary of a Conservation Area. It is also valuable in the context of the setting of Conservation Areas where inappropriate development can have significant negative impacts on the Conservation Area and direct impact to unlisted historic buildings and their setting. The project, therefore, presents an opportunity to assess the whole historic environment of a settlement beyond its historic core and areas of designation, thus providing a greater scope for understanding the impact of change.

#### 3.4.6 National Heritage Protection Plan (NHPP)

English Heritage has set out its strategic aims in the Plan, which includes priorities for supporting assessments of change and protection of heritage assets. The Project has attempted to link with the following initiatives set out in the Action Plan (May 2011): Measure 2, Threat: Assessment and Response (specifically 2A1, Development Pressure); Measure 4, Understanding: Assessment of Character and Significance (specifically 4F Rural Settlement and Land Use); Measure 5: Responses,

Protecting Significance (specifically 5B2, Underpinning Local Planning Processes and 5C1, Enhancing The Capabilities Of Historic Environment Records) and Measure 6: Responses, Managing Change in the Historic Environment (specifically 6A: Managing change in the historic environment).

### 3.5 **Partnerships**

The characterisation methodologies have allowed new partnerships to be established with urban morphologists of the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Birmingham. As outlined in section 2.4.4 liaison with Dr Phil Jones and Colin Lorne has facilitated involvement with their 'MapLocal' research, the insights and expertise from which will be employed within future Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service projects targeting historic area assessments, characterisation and Neighbourhood Planning. Members of the University's Urban Morphological Research Group also provided valuable critical guidance and feedback. Expanding the service's working relationships towards urban morphologists is deemed to be essential towards promoting historic environmentalism within agendas of contemporary planning, urban design and 'place making', and it is hoped that the WVHERA pilot project has facilitated future collaboration between these groups and the local authority.

# DISCUSSION

## 4.1 Project Capacities and Resources

The required time and resources to undertake such characterisation studies, in conjunction with community engagement programmes, stakeholder liaisons, village-HER enhancement and development of the WVHERA stage one methodology have far surpassed that which was first anticipated by the project. The complexities of the larger villages of Worcestershire, represented by Alvechurch and Kempsey within the stage two pilot project, has exceeded predictions displaying far greater coherence with the county's towns than the numerous smaller villages and hamlets they were intended to represent. Further, the required intensity of desk-based and field survey to adequately represent the diversity and distinctiveness of local historic character exceeded that anticipated, with **a minimum of 1.5 working days per character area deemed suitable for the collective desk-based assessment, field survey and production of character-statements.** Vital insights have therefore been gained towards the appropriate resourcing and costing of future projects which utilise the WVHERA characterisation and community-engagement methodology:

### 4.1.1 Complexities of Village Historic Character

**The key insight derived from the WVHERA pilot is the importance of not viewing the density and complexity of historic urban character as directly proportionate to settlement size and form.** The initial costing and scheduling of the WVHERA pilot project was undertaken on the assumption that the characterisation of villages would require a proportionally reduced professional contribution relative to the size of the city-and-townscape characterisation projects which heavily influenced the project's methodology. This was not the case, with seventy-five character areas identified across the Kempsey and Alvechurch survey areas representing a near two-fold increase in the anticipated output; thus, doubling the required resources for assessment, recording and characterisation. It has been found that the extensive 20<sup>th</sup> century development of many of Worcestershire's larger villages has produced settlements which, while retaining highly distinctive local characteristics, represent microcosms of modern towns through the density, form and impact of housing developments and the influence and expansion of local infrastructure:

**The significant complexity and diversity of historic character within Alvechurch and Kempsey has been generated through largely continuous, but piecemeal, housing development through the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century.** The settlements' status as 'village' has attracted regular but small-scale piecemeal urban expansion along the historic routeways, with subsequent urban infill of the field-parcels and landscapes between these developments. In contrast, the 'town' is more likely to attract much larger schemes encompassing a far greater number and density of dwellings and encompassing a much greater proportion of the respective settlement's environ. The relative development of the 'town' or 'village' therefore respectively produces large and coherent areas of distinctive character, or numerous character areas pertaining to the numerous bespoke phases of settlement expansion. The contrast is also marked between larger villages and the more frequent hamlets and small settlements of the Worcestershire landscape. The construction of housing within the smaller settlements' often

remains as individual localities, with insufficient lateral expansion to instigate further urban infill. The impact of a small-settlement's development on the number of distinctive character areas within the village or hamlet (and the associated fiscal and temporal requirements of a dedicated characterisation project) is therefore reduced, as singular areas are created in contrast to the extensive formation and fragmentation of a more heavily expanded settlement.

**This exponential increase in the complexity or urban-character relative to the extent and proportion of village-expansion is further compounded by the vast diversity of 20<sup>th</sup> century housing design, regularly forming highly distinctive character areas defined by particular phases of a settlement's development.** While pre-20<sup>th</sup> century architectural styles are often readily classified to broad periods (e.g. Victorian; Edwardian), modern housing is regularly categorised by decade(s) of origin. The rapid developments in both construction and communications technologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century resulted in greater fluctuations in structural materials and influences, resulting in an enhanced diversity in urban design as subsequent national and continental themes informed urban form. Settlements that have witnessed continuous 20<sup>th</sup> century development are therefore highly likely to contain numerous areas of distinctive urban character, each with unique attributes, features and characteristics inherited from their respective decade or architectural-theme. This diversity therefore generates a much greater depth of complexity of urban character within heavily expanded localities, increasing the number of discernible character areas exponentially, and consequently the professional resources required to adequately survey, record and analyse their inherited and historic characters. This was found within both Alvechurch and Kempsey, where numerous, highly distinctive areas of 20<sup>th</sup> century urban historic character were identified which could not justifiably be amalgamated; greatly inflating the number of character areas beyond initial predictions. In contrast, subsequent examination of smaller villages reveals a far greater coherence of structural form, with minimal fragmentation through highly sporadic, localised, small-scale developments resulting in a far lower density of character areas relative to the settlements' extents. Conversely, consideration of Worcestershire's towns, to examine the capacity of the WVHERA methodology for townscape characterisation, identified clear parallels with the Alvechurch and Kempsey studies, with the comparable continuity of housing development throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries resulting in the creation of numerous character areas of highly distinctive modern urban forms and streetscapes.

**The Kempsey and Alvechurch case studies have therefore provided a more representative assessment of the relative resources required of characterisation projects focussed on the larger villages and towns of Worcestershire, rather than the 'villages and hamlets' that had been anticipated.** With hindsight, the project would therefore have been better suited selecting study areas from the 'category 1', 'category 2' and 'category 3' criteria of the *'South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy'* to provide a comparative assessment based on urban form, rather than the less-productive regional comparisons drawn from comparable northern and southern-Worcestershire 'category 1' villages. Additional investigation may therefore be required to accurately quantify the costs and efficiencies of the methodology within the smaller settlements and hamlets of the county. It is, however, expected that such settlements will prove far more cost-effective and financially accessible to local communities, with vastly decreased densities and quantities of distinctive historic character areas (predicted 5-10, in contrast to the circa 35 of Alvechurch and Kempsey) facilitating much more rapid 'WVHERA' assessments. **It is therefore essential the projected financing and resourcing of future projects is undertaken respective of the settlements in question, not broader assumptions based on**

concepts of the 'hamlet', 'village', or 'town', with selection and rapid assessment of the candidate villages preceding any funding-application to ensure project efficiency and cost-effectiveness is not compromised.

#### 4.1.2 Project Efficiency

Extensive consideration was given to the complexity of the survey methodology, assessing the required form and function of the 'products' relative to the capacities of the pilot study and potential future projects. As evident in section 2.3 the townscape characterisation methodology is complex and particularly 'fine-grained' in its levels of detail, resulting in a labour-intensive means of field-assessment and recording. While removing the attribute-led approach may dramatically reduce the necessary professional resource, it will produce generic and broad appraisals of historic land-use and urban-form, negating the subtle nuances of *local* distinctiveness which the products seek to identify and promote. It was therefore determined that **the integrity and functionality of the products for the advocacy of village character would be undermined by over-generalisation, with their capacity for utilisation within local planning and to support local agendas dependant on the detailed descriptions and records of the character statements.** Attempts to define a 'middle ground' between broad landscape-characterisation and townscape-characterisation are not therefore advised, with the distinct advantages of each often dependant on their exclusive application. Further, a historic characterisation methodology which produces character statements, drawn from a robust evidence base, which comprehensively represent the distinctiveness and nuances of a particular settlement's historic environment, requires this intensive, attribute-led survey in order to adequately support local planning and heritage initiatives. The feasibility of the WVHERA methodologies application to the plethora of small settlements, villages and hamlets of Worcestershire must therefore be considered in this context (discussed further in section 4.3).

The extent of the character areas was also considered, with the potential amalgamation of character areas to reduce the necessary field-survey and character statements discounted, again as contradictory to the objectives to promote *local* distinctiveness and complexity. Further, the well-recognised deficiencies of 'hard-line' boundaries between character areas was addressed with the application of 'fuzzy' boundaries and areas of transition applied at the early stages of the project. The marked decrease in efficiency, accessibility and over-complication of the subsequent characterisation products was however seen to be of detriment to the project methodology and outputs, with the more static but recognisable and strategically-applicable boundaries adopted.

The required intensity of desk-and-field based characterisation, in conjunction with the community engagement programmes, has minimised the project's capacity to assess the survival and character of below-ground archaeological deposits beyond the scoring provided within the resource assessments. **The relatively poor evidence base pertaining to archaeological deposits within the villages and small settlements of the county is a recognised deficiency of the resource; it is therefore highly problematic to provide comprehensive appraisals of sub-surface archaeological material and its relative influence on the local environments of many such localities without considerable conjecture.** While our records and understanding of surface archaeological features and historic buildings can be readily enhanced through the WVHERA process, comparable assessment of sub-surface deposits cannot occur without archaeological evaluation: an undertaking likely beyond the capacities and resources of townscape characterisation. Further, the principals of historic townscape

characterisation do not immediately adhere to the consideration of intangible sub-surface features. Local distinctiveness and setting are defined by discernible features or attributes however subtle, nuanced or subconsciously-perceived. Archaeological features which *are not* manifested through above-ground monuments, directly influencing urban morphology, or purposely referenced within subsequent design are therefore unlikely to sufficiently contribute to local distinctiveness to justify intensive investigation within a townscape characterisation survey. Review and revision of the curatorial response of the local authority towards archaeological deposits within villages is intended within the proposed *'The Assessment, Management and Recording of Heritage Assets in Worcestershire – A Strategic Model'* project; thus, providing a more robust, consistent and beneficial means of identifying and recording local sub-surface assets.

## 4.2 Community Engagement and Neighbourhood Planning

### 4.2.1 WVHERA Products

Consideration of the relative complexities and detail of the characterisation methodology must also be considered relative to the prospective use of the products for local planning and heritage initiatives. **The resultant character statements must find an appropriate balance between public accessibility and integrity as tools to inform and guide strategic planning:** a product which is too detailed, strategic or academic may not be readily accessible to non-professional members of the communities they are intended to support; however, an overly simplified product is unlikely to adequately inform strategic planning and local agendas, diluting the potential impact and functionality through over-generalisation. **The enhancement of townscape-characterisation guidance for local communities, and the promotion of the broader concepts of historic environmentalism to local stakeholders is therefore critical towards maximising the potential consideration and contribution of historic environment and inherited character towards village planning.**

The project's objectives to combine a holistic appraisal of local historic character devoid of professional value-judgements on 'good' or 'bad' design and development, instead aiming to inform and support such decisions by local communities, became problematic when considered in conjunction with the assessment of relative sensitivities within the settlements. Allocating sensitivities of historic and inherited characteristics while not compromising the tenants of avoiding, for instance, favourable or unfavourable localities of development, was not readily achievable. A highly uniform 21<sup>st</sup> century housing estate with a distinctive continuity of architectural aesthetic is of *high* sensitivity to modification which does not reflect this distinctive urban character; however, the area may have a markedly low correlation to the historic and inherited characteristics of its respective settlement and is therefore of *low* sensitivity within this broader context and the WVHERA framework. By determining sensitivity in relation to the historic character and development of the broader settlement, a value judgement is inherently being made through the promotion of particular facets of the village's urban morphology.

## Case Study 1: Western Alvechurch 'At Risk' Landscape



The western Alvechurch landscape was identified as an area of particular historic landscape distinctiveness deemed 'at risk' due to its low representation within historic environment listings and records; and consequent potential for degradation through inappropriate consideration of the historic landscape within local and regional planning. The character areas are situated within a coherent remnant historic landscape incorporating the historic settlements and farmsteads of Scarfields, Withybed Green and Cooper's Hill, interspersed with well-preserved enclosures adjacent to the industrial waterways, marina and brickworks of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal and the 19th century railway.



The landscape is divided by piecemeal enclosures of exceptional condition with a plethora of historic hedgerows and mature hedgerow-trees. Minimal subdivision or amalgamation of the enclosures has occurred in marked contrast to the broader regional landscape, with the enclosures interspersed by highly discernible earthworks and ponds pertaining to former marl pits. Historic footpaths and bridleways continue to generate a high sense of permeability throughout the landscape, and the raising topography grants highly characteristic views of the parish mirroring the slopes of Rowney Green and the northern and eastern parish. Semi-ancient natural woodlands and modern plantations are interspersed between the field parcels, with dense tree-lines defining many of the topographic ridgelines.

The settlements are comprised of 18<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> century cottages, many of which represent the former dwellings of the agricultural and industrial workers of the farms, brickworks and canal. Several historic public houses form landmark structures within their respective settlements, with Cooper's Hill defined by large, statement Victorian through early 20<sup>th</sup> century dwellings along a highly enclosed historic route alongside further 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century cottages. A number of well-preserved and maintained historic farmsteads intersperse the rural landscape, further enhancing the historic landscape character and setting of the area.

The linear infrastructure of the Worcester to Birmingham canal and the 'Cross-City' (historically 'Gloucester Loop Line') railway demarcate the furthest extents of the 20<sup>th</sup> century westward expansion of Alvechurch village. The brick canal bridges and plate-girder railway bridges therefore form highly distinctive gateways between the historic western parish landscape and the modern settlement. The canal has retained much of its historic character and condition through a continued commercial functionality facilitated by the expanded Alvechurch Marina, which services a now largely recreational narrow-boat industry. This, in conjunction with the continued industrial utilisation of the site of the historic Alvechurch brickworks has ensured a distinctive historic character persists through preserved canal-side features, architecture and activity.



The landscape and its component character areas are therefore seen to be of distinctive historic landscape character and of high sensitivity to degradation or fragmentation through development, redevelopment and modifications which do not appropriately reflect the area's historic environment.

In spite of this clear historic environment value, sensitivity and capacity the landscape's representation within national and county listings was particularly low prior to the WVHERA project: incorporating a single listed building, one historic building record and a small number of records pertaining to archaeological ridge and furrow. While a Conservation Area incorporates the canal, this pertains to the full extent of the Worcester to Birmingham infrastructure and is not intended to promote the character and distinctiveness of this specific locality. Though numerous structures and archaeological monuments have subsequently been identified and recorded within the HER, these cannot adequately represent the *collective* influence of a diverse array of historic and archaeological features to a coherent landscape character and setting of distinctiveness and significance. The WVHERA character statements and characterisation methodologies provide a vehicle through which to channel and promote the significance of this landscape within local planning, development and conservation. The local significance of the landscape as the product of an amalgamation of numerous distinctive features of lesser individual, but higher collective value, can be readily promoted to ensure future discussion of potential development, or modification, can be undertaken more sensitively and appropriately to the area's historic environments. Further, the character statements will be deployed within the impending *Historic Environment Action Plan and Conservation Area Appraisals* within the parish; thus, providing further layers of guidance to inform the future management of this distinctive environment.



#### 4.2.2 Community Capacity

The aforementioned complexities inherent in townscape characterisation (see section 2.1) make community-led survey problematic through the lack of unified and accessible guidance and reference materials to support a locally-led initiative. The large quantity of potential distinctive character-forming attributes, which themselves incorporate a vast array of unique features and details, require specific and accurate definition through recognisable terminologies if they are to be adequately represented within the subsequent products; thus, reflecting the respective locality's distinctive qualities. The WVHERA project field-surveys required the accumulation of a large and diverse collection of cross-disciplinary reference materials pertaining to themes such as: the more overtly historic-environmental such as historic buildings and archaeological monuments; the extensive array of architectural designs, features and form; guidance on both historic and modern street-furnishing and features; and information on the identification and definition of natural-environmental features. The professionally-led surveys of the WVHERA project allowed the expansion of expertise through extensive and freely accessible reference materials, based on existing commercial and academic experience of landscape archaeology and historic landscape characterisation. This is highly unlikely to be obtainable by local communities without extensive professional training and guidance, negating the potential for reduced

costs through a community-led characterisation methodology. Cost-effective and efficient historic townscape characterisation may however be achievable with a reference 'toolkit' for use by local communities, incorporating guidance on the identification and description of the various structural, streetscape and landscape features through appropriate terminologies and illustrative references, perhaps in a context akin to Brunskill's still widely utilised '*Vernacular Architecture*'. Iterations of such a 'toolkit' do exist (see '*Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit*'), providing valuable guidance on potential survey methodologies and highlighting the various character-forming attributes that require consideration; however, these rarely provide comprehensive and detailed reference materials to ensure adequate descriptions of the vast nuances of each attribute. These products therefore rely heavily on an 'assumed knowledge', requiring the user to have either an extensive cross-disciplinary expertise, or substantial access and awareness of the required reference materials. For instance, the expectation of a community member to hold sufficient knowledge on architectural details, such as brick-bonding, dentilation or roofing-form, while obtaining a capacity to adequately outline urban and landscape morphologies is unreasonable relative to the commonly limited resources of a local initiative. While this depth of information may be argued to over-saturate the process with excessive detail, the integrity and functionality of the products for local planning and design-guidance depends on accurate and appropriate descriptions and terminologies which can be recognised and practically utilised within such contexts. To generalise would be to undermine the principals of defining *local* distinctiveness resulting in more generic statements of broad urban form which do not reflect street, village or landscape character. Certainly, a number of communities may contain the required expertise within their respective demographic; however, this cannot be guaranteed within each of the plethora of parishes and settlements looking to undertake Neighbourhood Plans. **A concise and accessible 'toolkit' of townscape characterisation which provides descriptive and graphic reference materials pertaining to the array of potential character-forming components may therefore be critical to the feasibility of extensive, future community involvement in village-or-townscape characterisation.**

The relative capacities of local community stakeholders to expand on the evidence base must be considered: Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups and local societies are often burdened with considerable workloads pertaining to a vast array of local agendas, relying heavily on volunteers. The removal of overt professional value judgements from the products may necessitate substantial additional work to be undertaken by the respective communities to make full value of the resources which, as has been shown with Alvechurch and Kempsey, may be extensive. This may be compounded by a lack of local expertise in the management of historic environments and the advantages of historic characterisation for local planning, reducing the potential impact and application of the character statements and evidence base. The promotion of the 'value' of historic environmentalism towards local planning and adequate guidance on the establishment of locally-specific valuations of historic character, by respective communities, is therefore critical within any future WVHERA projects to ensure the potential benefits of the products are not missed.

#### 4.2.3 Neighbourhood Planning

While the WVHERA methodology and products have proven highly effective at engaging local stakeholders with historic townscape and landscape characterisation, the project has identified broader priorities which require attention. The intensive field survey and programme of community engagement has successfully highlighted the availability of historic environment resources and their potential contribution to local planning beyond the conservation of designated assets and areas.

However, this has been achieved through intensive local authority involvement and such opportunities are deemed likely to be overlooked by steering groups without revision of local authority historic environmental policies of engagement. **While there is a clear aspiration within the respective communities to ascribe value to local historic character and archaeological assets, a lack of awareness of available historic environmental resources hinders their capacity to do so. Further, despite their unparalleled knowledge of the local urban-form, landscapes and histories a shortage of expertise in their potential application towards promoting local character and distinctiveness, alongside supporting broader agendas including countryside and environmental management, negates their consideration and subsequent inclusion within the Neighbourhood Plan.** Examination of the published Neighbourhood Plans of the 'Frontrunner' localities demonstrates the potential risks of such under-representation of historic environment, with local advocacy of their respective heritage assets and historic character often limited to conservation of assets deemed of national and not local significance, accompanying broadly defined statements on local character.

### Case Study 2: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Housing

Twentieth century housing developments form integral components of the urban morphologies of modern settlements and encompass a vast collection of architectural forms and design. In contrast to 21<sup>st</sup> century development, where structural design has become more homogenous, specific phases of village expansion are likely to reflect a highly distinctive form and aesthetic. Further, the streets, structures and features of these developments are likely to directly resonate with local residents who have occupied or even constructed the properties at some point in their lifetime. While these areas should therefore be seen as significant elements of a settlement's historic and inherited character, they do not qualify for representation with national listings and are rarely identified within Historic Environment Records; they are therefore often overlooked when considering local historic environment and setting. The character statements of the project provide a means through which to advocate the importance of these areas to and by the local community, with a comprehensive evidence base outlining their distinctive architecture and features. A number of example character areas are summarised below:

The 1950s houses north of **Callow Hill Road, Alvechurch** are semi-detached red-brick dwellings with a highly distinctive hipped roofline and a prominent cat-slide roof between cross-gabled forward-projections. The structures are set back and above the street behind large grass verges with minimal front boundaries. The structural-position and form contributes to a highly distinctive streetscape forming an avenue along the north-western approach to the village-core. The structures were constructed as part of a 'homebuild' programme instigated, undertaken and completed by local residents, a number of which continue to occupy the properties. With a singular 'historic' building located within the character area and no discernible archaeological monuments the perceived historic environment value of this street would likely be deemed 'low' without characterisation and assessment within the WVHERA methodology, enabling the provenance and significance of the area to village history and environment to be appropriately reflected.





The mid-20<sup>th</sup> century housing of the northern and eastern extents of **Latimer Road and George Road, Alvechurch** are properties constructed of cross-hipped and cross-gabled forward projections extending from two-storey, semi-detached structures with highly distinctive roof lines and aperture-dressing. The properties are largely situated behind their original box-hedgerows and lawns. The structural form and aesthetic is particularly distinctive of this phase of Alvechurch's early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century piecemeal westward expansion which preceded the more extensive urban infill of the latter decades of the century. The WVHERA project has promoted the significance of these constructive phases and their associated

urban designs and morphologies towards local character to the local communities, generating further discussions on their contribution to the settlement's history and a subsequent desire for adequate representation within local planning.

Awareness of historic environmental information and data within the Kempsey and Alvechurch communities was enhanced considerably through the WVHERA programme of community engagement. While this was a definitively positive output of the project, it clearly highlights the need for more extensive outreach towards local stakeholder groups to ensure the full resources and capacities of county Historic Environment Records and Archives are identified and understood. Although the local communities were generally aware of the presence of the H.E.R, the scope of documentary, bibliographic, cartographic, remote sensing and photographic resources pertaining to the respective parishes was not widely appreciated. Further, the accessibility of the resource and freely available consultation and advisory capacities of the services were broadly welcomed as of great potential benefit to the local plans. The WVHERA methodologies achieved the required outreach with the Alvechurch and Kempsey communities to promote the HER and Archive; however, **a more cost-effective means of engaging and educating local stakeholders is essential to ensure adequate awareness and utilisation of the resources of HERs is achieved within the expanding quantities of Neighbourhood Plans, being undertaken within Worcestershire.**

The potential application of historic environment resources towards a broad array of multi-disciplinary local agendas is also often overlooked. There is a need to enhance awareness of the potential contribution of historic environment to inform issues beyond conservation of designated assets, including: the promotion of local character and distinctiveness; the appropriate structural form and location of housing development; the management of the countryside and rural-access; and local biodiversity and ecology through green infrastructural planning. Such agendas regularly form the crux of the Neighbourhood Plan and could benefit considerably from consideration respective of local historic environment and character. **The future priorities of HERs engaging with Neighbourhood Planning *must* therefore involve incentivising 'historic environmentalism' through awareness and promotion of the discipline and the potential of its resources and principals towards cross-disciplinary urban, rural and landscape management strategies.** A failure to do so, will again likely result in Neighbourhood Plans which promote heritage and historic environment relative to solely national, not local definitions of significance and distinctiveness.

### Case Study 3: Local Value

The intensive streetscape and landscape-character recording developed for the WVERA project proved capable at identifying features and distinctiveness within areas initially deemed as of low historic environment value. While these features or attributes may be considered as of low significance at a national, regional or even parish scale their presence may considerably influence and/or enhance the character of a particular locality. Through identifying such subtleties and nuances, and highlighting both their existence and provenance to local communities it is hoped an increased interest, value and engagement can be generated towards their respective neighbourhoods.

**King's Hill, Kempsey** is largely comprised of a 1970s housing estate in a quadrant-block street pattern at the northern-most extent of the 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion of the village. While the 20<sup>th</sup> century development of King's Hill has removed a large proportion of the feature pertaining to the post-medieval rural landscape north of Kempsey, the exemplary panoramic viewshed of the historic west-Worcestershire landscape and its associated historic and archaeological buildings, monuments and landscapes has preserved a strong sense of connectivity to the historic environment.



**The Buckleys, Alvechurch** is a large area of terraced housing located within the 20<sup>th</sup> century westward expansion of Alvechurch and situated within a quadrant-block street pattern. While the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century development has radically altered the local environment, there remain tangible remnants of a historic agricultural landscape in the form of unaltered open-spaces, mature trees, earthworks of a former clay pit and the extent of the housing development which is roughly aligned to the post-medieval field boundaries. These features represent a rare manifestation of 19<sup>th</sup> century farming regime which characterised the landscape between the historic village of Alvechurch and the transportation infrastructure to its west.



It is unquestionable that local residents are often unparalleled in their knowledge and expertise of local histories and settlement-development. Representatives of the local historical societies are common within Steering Groups, reflected within Alvechurch and Kempsey, and have provided invaluable insights and guidance to the WVERA project. However, their respective contribution to

the conservation or promotion of historic environment and local distinctiveness is limited by the aforementioned shortage of awareness of historic landscape or townscape characterisation and heritage management. This contrasts markedly with professional-level representation from comparable disciplines such as architecture, urban-morphology, ecology or communications. The WVHERA project has displayed how direct engagement with such groups and individuals, through town-and-landscape characterisation, can readily provide the required instruction on how to maximise historic environment representation within Neighbourhood Planning. However, the process is not sufficiently cost-effective to be applicable across the numerous Neighbourhood Plans of the county. The steering and stakeholder groups of Alvechurch and Kempsey have been found to be formed of individuals who are both receptive to the provision of historic environment information and are fully capable of critically assessing local significance and distinctiveness relative to it. **Developing means through which local authorities may more effectively and efficiently provide appropriate guidance and advice to local historians and historical societies on the potential of historic environmentalism within Neighbourhood Planning must therefore be seen as a priority.**

#### Case Study 4: Beneficial Development

Alongside identifying historic distinctiveness within settlements, the WVHERA methodology can be utilised to assess the relative impacts of historic development on local character and setting. Developments which promoted local historic character and are deemed to be of favourable design or functional benefit to a settlement can therefore be advocated utilising the respective character statements. Conversely, the evidence base can be utilised to underline policies aimed at discouraging development deemed insensitive or inappropriate by the community, informing constructive negotiations between local and strategic stakeholders. The promotion of future development to be of benefit to the local community and settlement is a core tenant of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups, who's responsibilities surround guiding and informing future development strategies relative to local agendas and perceived significance; and not wholesale prevention as is commonly mistaken. The character statements for Alvechurch and Kempsey may be used by the respective steering groups to outline the capacity for development to maintain or enhance the villages through consideration of historic character and distinctiveness. Further, the longer-term benefits of appropriate housing development can be highlighted; thus, facilitating a more productive conversation between the steering groups and their consultees:



**Mill Court, Alvechurch** is defined by the site of a series of watermills which have consequently occupied the locality since the medieval period. The contemporary landscape is formed of a 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century mill and factory situated at the fore of a 21<sup>st</sup> century housing development constructed on the site of the former mill-complex and subsequent 20<sup>th</sup> century prefabricated farm-buildings. While 20<sup>th</sup> century demolition of the mill pond, an associated cottage and many of the ancillary 19<sup>th</sup> century structures and features has partially eroded the historic built form, the primary structures of the mill complex remain extant and well maintained with minimal inappropriate modern alteration despite several changes in functionality. Crucially, the 21<sup>st</sup> century redevelopment at the rear of the historic mill complex has been undertaken in an exceptionally sensitive manner. Despite the

loss of a large majority of the mill's ancillary structures in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the newly built housing has successfully maintained the historic coherence and aesthetic of the area through due reverence to the architectural design and urban form of the extant 19<sup>th</sup> century assets. The appropriation of distinctive architectural details and forms alongside the inheritance of street orientation, placenames and reference to sub-surface archaeological monuments has generated a highly distinctive streetscape of considerable historic integrity, which not only maintains but considerably enhances the historic character and value of the locality. Mill Court therefore represents a prime example of how a relatively high density of housing development can benefit local character and distinctiveness through appropriate reverence to both the settlements designated and undesignated historic assets and streetscapes.

Further north, the 1930s developments of **Birmingham Road, Alvechurch** consists of a linear residential streetscape set-back from the main road behind a distinctive tree-lined, hedgerow, and fenced boundary alludes to the historic extent of the post-medieval piecemeal enclosure. The housing is of an architectural and urban form, which is highly distinctive of the inter-war ribbon developments which dominated the rural and sub-rural settlements of the region, with two-storey dwellings with cross-hipped and cross-gabled forward-projections interspersed with cat-slide roofs and dormer windows. The properties contain distinctive architectural details including brick-



segmental arches above the door frames, string-courses of both matching and contrasting colouration at the window lintels and sills and side-hung garage doors. Highlighting the broad, modern appreciation for such structures and their architectural form and aesthetic within modern communities, in stark comparison to the ferment national opposition which opposed ribbon development at the time of their construction, proved highly effective at outlining the potential long-term benefits of settlement development to the local community. It is therefore hoped that the respective character statements can be utilised by Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups to encourage a comparable long-term perspective and facilitate productive discussions on urban form and design.

A valid concern raised by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups surrounded the extent of the characterisation study areas. While focussing on the settlements of Alvechurch and Kempsey and their immediate environs was readily seen as beneficial by the groups, the parish-wide scale of their respective Neighbourhood Plans resulted in the understandable request for the project's expansion to adhere with their administrative boundaries. The examination of the satellite settlements and smaller villages and hamlets of the parishes was seen to be beneficial; however, the aforementioned resources required for the Alvechurch and Kempsey characterisation prohibited equally detailed assessment of the smaller settlements. This is intended to be addressed within the forthcoming *Historic Environment Action Plans* for Alvechurch and Kempsey parishes. Further, it was felt the *Historic Landscape Characterisation*, *Historic Environment Assessments* and *Historic Farmstead Characterisation* projects provided sufficient historic environment and landscape-character information to support parish-wide assessment, and that the promotion of these products to local communities would provide the required guidance and information. However, **settlement-based assessments derived from urban-characterisation methodologies may not be readily suited to informing Neighbourhood Planning within the predominantly rural parishes of Worcestershire**, providing limited information within parishes which unlike Alvechurch and Kempsey do not contain a large village. Again, the selection of two 'category 1' villages was in error, with further assessment of the potential influence of the WVHERA methodologies towards smaller villages and hamlets still required.

Additional insights derived from discussions with the Steering Groups surrounded the potential for the over-saturation of community consultations, with the WVHERA based events, workshops and fieldwork potentially diverting attention from the key agendas of the local Neighbourhood Plan. While a characterisation methodology must not therefore supersede or hinder the local programmes, it is

not feasible to extract sufficient information and perspectives through rapid or minimal engagement. **Targeted consultation to allow those most knowledgeable of particular character areas relative to their residence or expertise has therefore proved effective at generating the required critical feedback, while avoiding an unnecessary burden or distraction on the local community and plan respectively.**

#### 4.3 **Priorities and Opportunities**

##### 4.3.1 **Village Historic Environment Characterisation and Resource Assessment**

The WVHERA methodology of characterisation and community engagement is primed to be utilised across additional villages, parishes and settlements of Worcestershire. The method has been developed to be sufficiently robust and flexible to be applicable across a wide-range of urban and rural contexts and in relation to settlements of any size or form. Priority will be given to promoting the application of the process within the parishes undertaking, or planning to undertake Neighbourhood Plans, with ten Plans incorporating fourteen parishes currently in progress (as of September, 2013). There is need for assessment of the methodology's applications within smaller villages and hamlets, with the 'category 2' villages deemed most 'at risk' from insensitive development. The cost-effectiveness of characterisation within such smaller settlements is likely to be far greater than that found within Alvechurch and Kempsey, with the inherent complexities of the larger and significantly expanded settlements necessitating greater investment than anticipated. Resources for assessment of smaller villages will be sought from national or regional budgets and the capacities for funding through the local Neighbourhood Planning resources will be explored during the development of the 'Historic Environment Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit'.

A viable alternative to professionally-led survey would be the encouragement and instruction of local stakeholders to undertake the desk-based and field-assessments as a community, voluntary effort. There is certainly capacity within village-communities to undertake projects of such scale and complexity with the *'Alvechurch Design Statement'* a prime example of a local initiative supplementing planning policies. However, as outlined in section 4.2.2 coherent and comprehensive reference materials pertaining to the character attributes and components must first be produced to facilitate such initiatives.

##### 4.3.2 **Historic Townscape Characterisation**

While the WVHERA methodology has been developed in the context of villages and small settlements, the unexpected coherence of complexity of character and urban-form between the large villages of Alvechurch and Kempsey and that expected of the towns of the county highlights opportunities for the application of townscape characterisation within the larger settlements. The towns of Worcestershire combine those of valued historic and archaeological resources, alongside those of distinctive historic character but poor coverage within the Historic Environment Record and national designations. There are therefore opportunities for application of the WVHERA methodology within these towns, enhancing the potential conservation of both recognised and under-appreciated historic and archaeological assets and character, alongside encouraging community engagement and promotion of their locally distinctive heritage assets and historic environments through Neighbourhood Planning and local advocacy. Discussion with district authorities to identify possible priorities and opportunities will be undertaken to assess the potential for such initiatives utilising the new capacities



of the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service within the distinctive townscapes of the county.

#### 4.3.3 Neighbourhood Planning Historic Environment Toolkit

It is clear that the application of the WVHERA methodology across a significant proportion of the county's current and future Neighbourhood Plans is unlikely to be financially viable. There is therefore a pressing need to develop bespoke packages of historic environment information and guidance, tailored to the respective parish or parishes to ensure historic environment and character is not under- or misrepresented through the concerns raised in section 4.2. The provision of a collection of relevant information and resources including: a historic environment record search, historical cartographic materials, historical terrestrial and aerial photography, information on the availability of locally-focused grey literature and the availability of data and insights pertaining to projects such as the '*Historic Landscape Characterisation*' or '*Historic Environment Assessments*' for Worcestershire should accompany guidance and advice on the application of historic environment resources and historic environmentalism within Neighbourhood Planning. Further instruction on the enhancement of advocacy of the historic environment of the locality should also be included alongside outlined methodologies for the improvement of local records through techniques developed within projects such as *Historic Buildings of Worcestershire* and the WVHERA process. If possible, capacity for the local authority to apply elements of the WVHERA community engagement programme to inform, educate and engage local communities on and with historic environmentalism should also be explored, with the 'walkabout' and workshop-based events of particular promise. The generation of such historic environment toolkits and events are deemed to be among the critical priorities identified by the pilot study, forming a cost-effective means of ensuring historic environment is adequately represented within the Neighbourhood Plans of the county. Synergies have been identified between the findings of this project and those of the *LOCUS Consulting* Neighbourhood Planning questionnaire, undertaken as part of the National Heritage Protection Plan funded project '*Expanding the Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base – Museums, Records Offices, Archives and HERs*'. It is hoped opportunities for collaboration between the Archive and Archaeology Service and the subsequent stages of this project can be developed, building upon the professional and methodological foundations of the WVHERA pilot study.

#### 4.3.4 Strategic Liaison

The products of the Alvechurch and Kempsey historic characterisation and historic environment resource assessment will be utilised in liaison between the county, district, parish and statutory authorities to assess and develop their potential applications. District Conservation Officers will be consulted to develop interfaces between the project outputs and Conservation Area Appraisals, with the impending '*Historic Environment Action Plan*' pilot project set to examine the relative priorities within the designated areas of Alvechurch and Kempsey through the character statements and enhanced historic environment evidence base. The WVHERA products will also be examined and tested as appropriate and applicable within District Core Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and the Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Frameworks. The impact of the WVHERA products towards planning and conservation strategies cannot be immediately assessed; however, effective dissemination and promotion of the products will ensure future examination of their utilisation and influence can occur. The products also aim to encourage greater liaison and collaboration between

the parish, district and county-wide layers of local authority, aiming to generate and enhance productive working relationships to the benefit of local historic environments and community planning.

# CONCLUSIONS

5

The WVHERA stage two pilot project has developed a methodological framework of historic townscape characterisation and community engagement, to be utilised within the settlements of Worcestershire, to promote historic environmentalism within local agendas, initiatives and planning. The methodology is capable of providing robust evidence bases pertaining to the inherited character of settlements of varying scales and contexts, augmented by programmes of community engagement targeting local stakeholders, to ensure community perspectives of local historic and archaeological distinctiveness of character can be appropriately represented within planning and conservation policy or strategy. The products have been designed to support Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups, parish councils and village societies, and to promote engagement and productive discussion between the local authorities and community-advocates. The WVHERA methodologies of characterisation and community engagement are therefore primed for utilisation within further villages, parishes and towns of Worcestershire.

Assessment of the relative impacts of the WVHERA products will be undertaken within the case-study villages of Alvechurch and Kempsey during the creation of their respective Neighbourhood Plans, and enhanced by continued support from the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service through projects including the forthcoming *'Worcestershire Historic Environment Action Plan'* pilot study. The pilot project has provided vital insights into the current position of historic environmentalism within Neighbourhood Planning, both identifying opportunities for utilisation of the WVHERA products to enhance local records and awareness of the historic environment, alongside priorities for further enhancement of the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Services contribution to, and engagement with Neighbourhood Planning in the immediate future. These include the development of bespoke historic environmental packages or toolkits to promote and support Neighbourhood Plans, alongside the instigation of greater collaboration between local authorities, statutory agencies, and the local communities in respect of the historic environment.

## 5.1 Primary Outputs

- A robust methodology of townscape characterisation primed to be utilised for the assessment of a broad array of urban and sub-urban historic environments.
- A programme of community engagement to promote and consult upon historic environment and historic environmentalism within local planning and community advocacy.
- Historic environment characterisation and resource assessments for Alvechurch and Kempsey, accompanied by an extensive historic environmental evidence base through substantial HER enhancement. Highly productive working-relationships with the respective community stakeholders, groups and societies.
- Vital insights towards the application of historic characterisation and historic environmentalism within Neighbourhood Planning.
- Newly developed community, local-authority and academic partnerships.

## 5.2 **Priorities and Future Objectives**

- Promote and deliver the WVHERA methodology of historic characterisation and resource assessment across additional villages, prioritising those undertaking or planning to instigate a Neighbourhood Plan and/or of 'category 2' status.
- Explore the potential for historic townscape characterisation within the towns of Worcestershire utilising the WVHERA methodologies.
- Develop a 'Neighbourhood Planning Historic Environment Toolkit' through partnership with statutory agencies and NHPP projects.
- Liaise with county and district authorities, statutory agencies and local communities to assess and develop the potential application and impact of the WVHERA products within initiatives including Neighbourhood Planning, Conservation Area Appraisals, District Core Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and Sub-Regional Green Infrastructural Frameworks.

## 6 ARCHIVE

The project archive consists of:

- Digitised project documentation including reports, mapping, survey forms and correspondence
- GIS based mapping of historic character within Alvechurch and Kempsey
- Character statements and guidance for the Alvechurch and Kempsey settlements
- Photographic archive for Alvechurch and Kempsey
- Library of character-attribute reference materials and local documentation

The project archive will be placed at

Worcestershire Historic Environment Record  
Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service  
The Hive  
Sawmill Walk  
The Butts  
Worcester  
WR1 3PB

## 7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## 8 PERSONNEL

The methodological development, characterisation, and report preparation was led by Jack Hanson (Historic Landscape Officer, WAAS). The project has been managed by Adam Mindykowski (Historic Environment Countryside Advisor, WAAS). Specialist support was provided by Shona Robson-Glyde (Historic Building Archaeologist, WAAS) regarding the recording of historic buildings, with Emma Hancox (Historic Advisory Policy and Advisory Manager, WAAS), Adam Mindykowski and Mike Glyde (Historic Environment Planning Officer, WAAS) advising on strategic planning processes and frameworks. Valuable support was provided by Rob Hedge (Community Archaeologist, WAAS) during the community consultation programme. Emma Hancox and Rob Hedge assisted in the *Historic Buildings of Worcestershire* surveys alongside three placement students: Vicky Collins, Ben Shears and Emily Parker. Paul Hudson (Learning & Outreach Manager, WAAS) and Sue Vale (Outreach Assistant, WAAS) supported the community engagement and consultation events at The Hive.

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## APPENDIX

10

The appendix contains:

- A selection of character statements from the Alvechurch and Kempsey historic environment characterisation and resource assessments
- The Character Area Survey Record form, version 2.2 (August 2013)

# Red Lion Street & Meadow Lane

## Alv\_032

The character area is largely formed of the 18th and 19th century linear expansion of the post-medieval village along Birmingham Road. The area incorporates the wayside cottages constructed within the post-medieval tenement plots, intermittent cottages pertaining to the medieval village-fringe, and small areas of 20th century infill and redevelopment. The area is of considerable inherited character, retaining a plethora of structures from Alvechurch's post-medieval through late-19th century development. The wayside 18th through 19th century cottages form a highly distinctive historic streetscape, furnishing the roadside with a range of both vernacular architectural details. The area is also considered to be of significant potential for below ground archaeological deposits. The character area is distinctive from 'Alvechurch Village' (representing The Square, Bear Hill, and the northern extent of Swan Street (Alv\_035)) through the prevalence of wayside cottages with a distinctive 18th-19th century industrial-vernacular, over the more polite commercial properties and service industries which dominate The Square.

### Urban Morphology and Landscape Context

The area's cottages are constructed at the forefront of long, narrow, burgage plots aligned to the roadside with minimal or no structural set-back. The prominence and continuity of the largely terraced building-line therefore forms a relatively enclosed streetscape with distinctive site lines along the 15th through -19th century frontages of Red Lion Street from and towards the village core. The area's boundaries are largely minimalist, with very low, brick or stone walling accompanied by sporadic planting schemes and box-hedgerows defining the small front-plot spaces of structures with a slight set-back. The walls are predominantly Flemish-or-English bonded, occasionally with engineering-brick or stone coping. There are however a number of more prominent boundaries at the road-junctions including the tall, engineering-brick capped wall at the west of Meadow Lane; and the low stone wall defining the corner of Red Lion Street and Tanyard Lane, where the form and dimensions of the masonry suggests potential reuse from the remains of a more historic structure such as from the site of Bordesley Hall to the southeast.

The sense of enclosure has however been partially diminished with the early-20th century demolition of the historic Red Lion public house and adjacent cottages. While these post-medieval structures were also situated at the roadside, the significant set-back of the contemporary structure has fragment the linearity of the western streetscape; and thus the connectivity of a number of the historic village-fringe cottages from a coherent post-medieval core. The redevelopment of the Red Lion has also generated a number of roadside grass-verges and open-spaces including the front and rear car parks.

While there is little formal ornamentation and few planting schemes, the

streetscape is highly furnished due to the density of decorative architectural features within the primary elevations (outlined in the proceeding section). The late-18th through 19th century vernacular is particularly prominent, and significant to an historic character of considerable integrity and condition. While the prevalence of residential over commercial properties minimises commercial or shop-signage, a number of small, local businesses are evident with frontages and signage which largely retain a historic vernacular. While the road is relatively broad, the pavements are narrow. Both are resurfaced with asphalt, and defined by pre-cast concrete kerbing. Highway furnishing, signage and lighting are largely of late-20th and 21st century design, in contrast to the 'conservation'-style features of the village core (Alv\_035).

While the low structural set-back reduces the influence of trees and planting schemes within the streetscape, there remains a moderate density of vegetation. Prominent hedgerows and mature trees are evident along the historic burgage plot boundaries, particularly tangible adjacent the brook and to the rear of the Meadow Lane cottages. The brook, connecting the canal in the west to the River Arrow in the east, flows through the character area and is evident within a recessed channel adjacent to the church and garage, passing under Red Lion Street. While the subtlety of these environmental features reduces the sense of rural connectivity, the Public





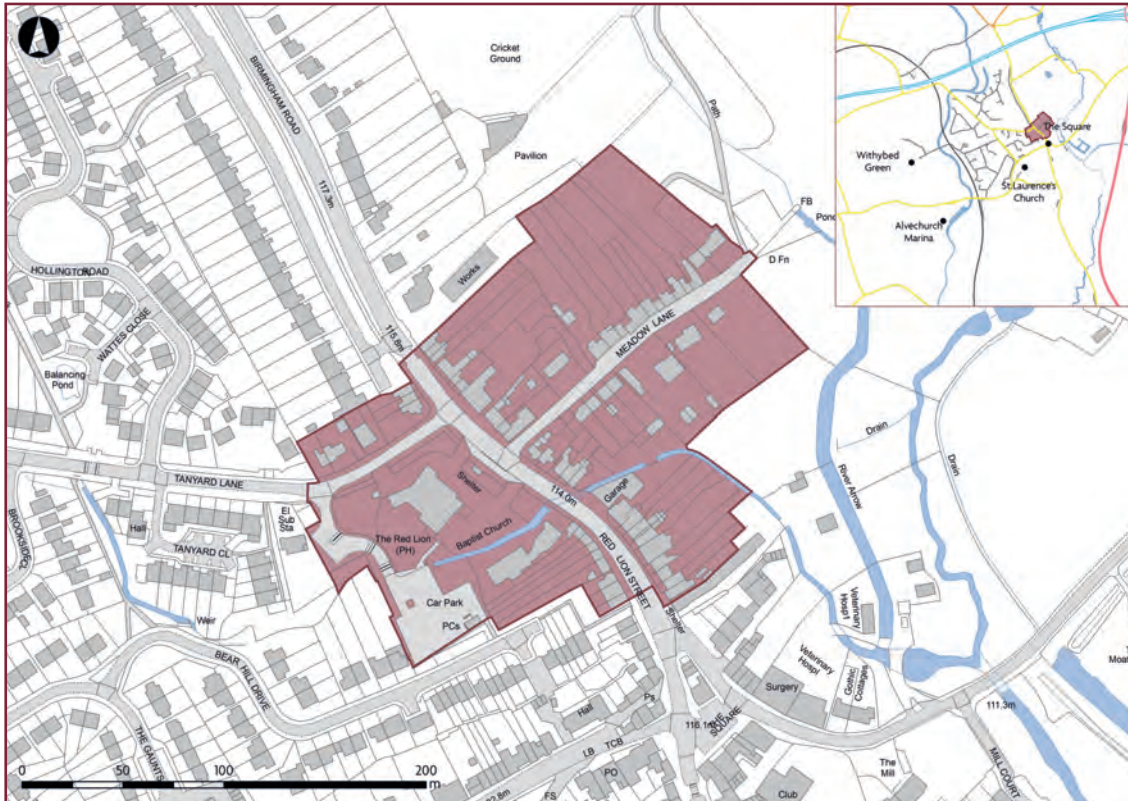
Right of Way at the north-western extent of Meadow Lane (leading to the tree lined avenue and playing fields which occupy the historic post-medieval piecemeal enclosures (Alv\_006; Alv\_008) provides immediate access to a rural landscape.

The character area is considered to be of significant potential for below ground archaeological deposits, with the 18th and 19th century wayside cottages occupying medieval and post-medieval tenement plots. This, in conjunction with the lack of substantial modern redevelopment, suggests that the presence of sub-surface archaeological features pertaining to activity at the medieval and post-medieval village-fringe is highly probable. Although minimal invasive archaeological investigation has occurred within the character area, stratified deposits of 12th through 17th century provenance with datable artefactual and environmental assemblages have been identified. There is some potential for waterlogged deposits within the area; however none have as yet been identified. The 18th and 19th century development of Red Lion Street and Meadow Lane may have implications on the preservation of sub-surface features within the character area, truncating deposits contemporary to those adjacent the Bishop's Palace (Alv\_010), the latter preserved due to an agricultural land-use.

### Built Form

The structural form of the Red Lion Street and Meadow Lane character area is predominantly formed of the linear, wayside arrangement of 18th and 19th century cottages. The structures represent the northern post-medieval expansion of the village along Birmingham Road from the medieval nucleated core. While the density of 18th through 19th century development has created a coherent built form, there is a notable diversity of period-features, creating a streetscape dense in Victorian vernacular-architectural character.

The high density, predominantly two-storey cottages are constructed with extensive terracing and minimal gap-sites. The low structural set-back in conjunction with the terracing generates a highly linear and prominent building line; while the multiple phases of urban development forms an inconsistent roof line through variations of structural scale both vertically and laterally. Roofs are almost entirely gabled, with brick square-and-rectangular stack chimneys set both at the gable and within the roof spaces. The roofs vary in pitch, with a number of properties featuring prominent cross-gables from the primary and rear elevations. Cottages are constructed of English-or-Flemish bonded





red/orange brickwork, with engineering and/or sand-coloured brick-décor introduced within the mid-19th century structures. Ashlar stone lintels, sills, and constructive materials are also evident within a number of properties. While there is a characteristic consistency in the broader urban-form of the terraced 18th through 19th century housing, subtle differentiations can be identified between the structures towards the historic village-fringe, from those adjacent the historic core. An increasing density of 'polite' architectural detail is evident within the frontages of the more central properties, with those towards the fringe more prevalent in 18th through 19th century vernacular-architectural features. The streetscape's well-preserved collection of later-18th and 19th century features includes: brickwork string-courses, dentilation, diapering, quoins, segmental arches, and ventilation features; casement or sash windows and varying doorways with moulded ashlar pediments, lintels, and sills; and roofs, canopies, and dormers with distinctive bargeboards, finials, tiling, and ridge-tiles. While few of the aforementioned features are used to such prevalence to be determined as individually distinctive of the area; the density of these varied and well-preserved late-18th through 19th century architectural details generates an urban form of significant inherited character.

The terraced workers cottages at the fringe of the village-core, north of Meadow Lane and Tanyard Lane along Red Lion Street (e.g. nos. 31-35; 44-54), demarcate the transition from the modern village's 20th century ribbon-developments along Birmingham Road to the post-medieval core. The 18th through 19th century cottages are two-storeys, featuring shallow to moderately pitched gabled roofs, constructed of predominantly stretcher-bonded brickwork of red/orange colouration, with double-coursed segmental arches above windows and doorways, and ashlar-stone sills.

The single-storey 18th century cottages, constructed along the northern side of Meadow Lane (nos. 5-23) and at the corner of the lane with Red Lion Street (nos. 34-38), are highly distinctive with numerous characteristic period features preserved in notable condition. The terraced cottages are constructed of red, English-or-Flemish-garden wall bonded brick. Moderate to steeply-pitched gabled roofs are clad with red-colouration tiling, with square or rectangular stack chimneys emerging both through and avoiding the ridge, alongside a number which project from the gables of the end-

terrace cottages. Side-hung mullioned windows are set below double-course segmental arches, with front-gabled wood-framed and tile-clad canopies over doorways. Dentilation or cavetto-brick cornices are evident below the eaves. The most distinctive features are the gabled dormers, constructed partly below the eaves with bargeboards to the dormer-gable. Two such dormers are evident within each terraced cottages, generating a highly characteristic building and roof line. Despite the cottages' architectural consistency, their multi-phased construction has resulted in a number of bespoke features including the half-timbered gable of numbers 5 – 7 Meadow Lane. The historic character of the 18th century cottages has been referenced within elements of the piecemeal 20th century urban infill, particularly within the mid-20th century detached cottage of no. 3 Meadow Lane with its scale, front-gabled dormers, and gabled roof.

Along the southern extents of Red Lion Street, towards the village core, the wayside-cottage architecture is increasingly polite, while retaining the fundamentally 18th/19th century vernacular-character outlined above. This accompanies a partial increase in both structural scale and the prominence of individual frontages over the collective. Large, vertical-sliding sash windows are more prevalent, with the brickwork segmental arches of the more northern cottages giving way to decorative pediments, sculpted ashlar-stone lintels, and painted two-centred brickwork arches (e.g.: nos. 11-15; no. 20; and nos. 14-18 respectively). A number of the 19th century cottages, including Lilac Cottage and Jessamine Cottage, commonly feature blue and/or sand-coloured brickwork string-courses, diapering, and cill-brick framing for windows, doorways and ventilation slits. The larger properties may feature narrow, steeply-pitched cross-gables within the primary elevation framed by bargeboards with applied moulding and finials. Numerous, distinctively tall chimneys are constructed within the roof-spaces, either avoiding the ridge or extending from the gable.

The post-medieval architecture of Red Lion Street and Meadow Lane is interspersed by limited 20th century development, with a modicum of urban infill through wayside cottages, houses and bungalows along Meadow Lane, and the more prominent and extensive redevelopment of the Red Lion public house adjacent the Red Lion Street/Tanyard Lane junction. These structures are primarily characteristic of their respective periods of origin, with minimal continuity of the 18th/19th century vernacular.

Three landmark buildings exemplify the late-medieval through 20th century architecture which collectively forms the historic village core: the modified and extended 15th century timber-framed house east of the southern extent of Red Lion Street; the 19th century Alvechurch Baptist Church; and the 20th century, redeveloped Red Lion public house. Despite these landmark structures there is however a minimal architectural hierarchy within the streetscape, with the collective influence of the 15th through early-20th century built-form the prominent characteristic feature of the area.

Numbers 2 through 8 Red Lion Street form a highly distinctive multi-phased structure, within elements pertaining



from the 15th through 19th century. Numbers 6 and 8 are a 15th century timber-framed property with tile roof and narrow, vertical panels with brick infill evident within the primary elevation. This contrasts to the larger, brick-nogged panels to the rear of the structure. 16th through 19th century modifications are evident, with two distinctive cross-gabled 19th century two-storey extensions book-ending the medieval building. The mid-19th century extension at the southern extent features dentilation below the eaves and along the gable-verge, while the later-19th century extension to the north displays the aforementioned sand-coloured brickwork string-courses, diapering, and cill-brick framing akin to Lilac and Jessamine Cottages.

The Baptist Church's brickwork is highly distinctive, with its construction of English-bonded dark-red coloured brick, interspersed with numerous double-coursed engineering-brick string courses. The windows and doorways are set below saw-toothed two-centred arches and stone drip-moulds, interconnected by a lintel-course of moulded stone atop brick dentilation. The stone, mullioned lancet window of the primary elevation features three apertures with iron-latticed frames. A circular aperture framed with pointed, segmental brick is set near the peak of the primary elevation's gable. The cross-gabled roof is steeply-pitched, clad in alternating courses of plain and 'club' tiles, with punched double-toothed ridge tiles and sculpted ecclesiastical stone finials.

The modern Red Lion public house is an expansive 1930s, cross-gabled, two-storey structure with distinctively tall, steeply-pitched roof. The rendered and painted elevations feature a high density of one-side hung casement windows with wrought-iron frames and small panes. The roofs are clad in darkly coloured plain tiling, with large rectangular stack chimneys emerging through the ridge, both at the gables and the cross-gable interfaces. Dentilation is evident below the eaves and at the gable-vertices. A mid-20th century bus shelter with gabled, tiled roofs survives adjacent to the Red Lion car park at the roadside.

#### Statement of Inherited Character

The character area is of considerable inherited character, retaining a plethora of structures and features from Alvechurch's post-medieval through late-19th century northward expansion. While Red Lion Street's status as the northern avenue of approach to the village core has been superseded by the inter-war ribbon developments along Birmingham Road (Alv\_001; Alv\_033), the high density, minimal set-back and linearity of the of 18th through 19th century cottages continues to form a highly distinctive historic streetscape. The 18th and 19th century architecture furnishes the street with a range of predominantly industrial-vernacular period features including: brickwork string-courses, dentilation, diapering, quoins, segmental arches, or ventilation features; casement or sash windows, alongside varying doorways with moulded ashlar pediments, lintels, and sills; and roofs, canopies, and dormers with distinctive bargeboards, finials, tiling, and ridge-tiles. The cottages are interspersed with a number of structures which both pre-and-post-date the dominant 18th through 19th century built-form, and themselves display a range of well-preserved and distinctive period features. The modified and extended 15th century timber-framed house at the southern extent of Red Lion Street forms a landmark historic structure at the fringe of the medieval core, while the Alvechurch Baptist Church and redeveloped Red Lion are notable 19th and early-20th century buildings respectively. A number of prominent historic boundaries demarcate the road junctions of Meadow Lane, Red Lion Street and Tanyard Lane with the latter, constructed of large masonry, possibly constructed of reclaimed stone from Bordesley Hall. The character area is considered to be of significant potential for below ground archaeological deposits, with the 18th and 19th century wayside cottages occupying medieval and post-medieval tenement plots. This, in conjunction with the lack of substantial modern redevelopment within the area, suggests the presence of sub-surface archaeological features pertaining to activity at the medieval and post-medieval village-fringe is highly probable.

#### Primary Characteristic Components

- Prominent 18th and 19th century built form with wayside, terraced cottages
- Enclosed, historic northern approach to the post-medieval village core with a linear, high-density and terraced urban morphology
- Density of 18th through 19th century vernacular and polite architectural features
- Landmark 15th, 19th and early-20th century buildings
- Distinctiveness from the 'Alvechurch Village' (Alv\_035) urban morphology through prevalence of residential cottages over commercial frontages

#### Historic & Inherited Characteristics

- Well-preserved assortment of 18th through 19th century cottages with a broadly coherent structural form
- Density and variety of both vernacular and polite 18th through 19th century architectural features within the frontages forming a highly furnished streetscape
- Landmark structures including a modified 15th century timber-framed house, 19th century Baptist Church, and 1930s public house
- Extant post-medieval tenement plots, preserved within the 18th through 20th century plot boundaries
- Historic boundary-walls, predominantly brick-built of 19th century origin, with some of potentially reclaimed masonry
- High potential for below ground medieval and post-medieval archaeological deposits associated with the historic village fringe and core

Historic Environment Resource:	B : 3	A : 3	L : 2
Inherited Character	S : 3	B : 3	L : 2
Sensitivity	High		



# Latimer Road

## Alv\_015

The Latimer Road character area is defined by late-1930s and highly distinctive 1950s housing development constructed within the historic parliamentary enclosures west of the village-core. The housing was developed south of Snake Lane in order to conjoin it, New Station Road, and the newly constructed George Road into a permeable urban area of post-war expansion. While there is a strong architectural coherence within the area generated through common details and aesthetics, two distinct forms of mid-20th century semi-detached properties are evident, sat opposite one-another to the east and south, and west and north, of George Road and Latimer Road respectively.

### Urban Morphology and Landscape Context

The housing is largely situated at the mid-front of rectangular plots. The housing has a linear building line set far back from the roadside due to the wide pavements and grass verges, at the fore of front-lawns and driveways, forming a distinctively broad streetscape. Box hedgerows are highly characteristic features of the area and continue to demarcate the majority of the plots, despite the replacement of several with picket-fencing and low-walling. There is minimal street furnishing, with asphalt paved roads and pavements, and pre-cast concrete kerbing. The grass verges, box-hedgerows, front-lawns and a number of mature trees contribute to moderate open and green sense of place.

The linear street pattern facilitates sight lines along the 1930s terraces of south Latimer Road (née New Station Road; Alv\_030), generating a low sense of enclosure further compounded by the broad streetscape. The character area is however distinctive of its environ due to its unique architectural form within the village. The housing at the corner of George Road and Snake Lane form landmark, gateway structures with their prominent elevations demarcating the points of transition between Snake Lane, Latimer Road, and George Road.



### Built Form

There is a moderate to high coherence of the built form within the character area, with several distinctive attributes common across the mid-20th century housing. Three housing-forms are evident, with prominent features and designs contributing to an area of particular architectural distinctiveness, highly characteristic of a phase of mid-20th century public housing and urban design.

Ten 1950s semi-detached, two-storey properties form twenty dwellings aligned to the west and north of Latimer and George Road respectively. These are constructed in a highly distinctive architectural form and aesthetic. The structures are characterised by their unique roof-lines and furnished with numerous brickwork details. The roofs are hipped with highly distinctive cross-gabled extensions emerging from the primary elevation which feature cat-slide roofs projecting inwards across the façade. The roofs are notably steep, with darkly coloured plain tiling and square stack chimneys emerging from within the structure passing through the ridge, alongside a number of taller chimneys projecting through the hipped roofs. The housing is built of red/orange coloured, stretcher-bonded brickwork. Rectangular, mullioned windows are framed by canted brick sills and header- brick lintels. The gables are decorated with cornice returns and ventilation slits. Numerous bespoke front-or-side-gabled canopies extend above doorways and windows.

Two distinctive structures are situated at the junctions of Latimer Road with Snake Lane and George Road. These structures are aesthetically contemporary with those of Withybed Close to the northwest (Alv\_003). The houses are constructed of stretcher-bonded brickwork with prominent forward and rear projections respectively emanating from the centre, and outer-corners of each semi-detached dwelling. The roofs are hipped, steeply pitched with plain ridge tiles. The forward projections are two-storeyed with cross-hipped roofs. The rear-projections of the southern



property are single-storeyed with flat-roofs, while the northern structure has cat-slide roofs emanating from the hipped roof. The windows are rectangular, mullioned, UPVC and set flush-with the façade again above and below lintels and sills of header and canted brickwork respectively. Rectangular-stack chimneys emerge through the ridge from within the structure.

The late-1930s housing east of Latimer Road and south of George Road is comprised of moderate-density, semi-detached dwellings of low architectural diversity. The properties are gabled, constructed of lightly coloured stretcher-bonded brickwork, with shallow-pitched roofs of darkly coloured pantiles. Rectangular, mullioned windows of UPVC material are again situated below lintels of header-bricks with canted brick sills, mirroring those within the aforementioned housing. A cornice is formed by bargeboards at the primary elevation, and as with the adjacent housing brick cornice returns are evident at the gables and small ventilation slits are set within the gable-elevations. Three, small square-stack chimneys emerge from within each structure, with a shared, central chimney passing through the ridge, and a dedicated flue for each semi-detached dwelling narrowly avoiding the ridge. Numerous properties have side-gabled canopies above ground floor doorways and windows.

**Statement of Inherited Character**

While no tangible traces of the pre-20th century landscape remain, the Latimer Road area has a strong sense of historic character generated through its urban and architectural form. The structures of the northern and eastern extents of Latimer and George Roads are characteristic of a highly distinctive phase of mid-20th century housing design. There has been minimal erosion of this urban form through insensitive modifications; therefore, the streetscape has retained much of its historic integrity. The modern Latimer Road is therefore comprised of two streetscapes of distinctive character formed by early-to-mid-20th century public housing, with the 1930s terraces (Alv\_030) south of late-1930s and 1950s semi-detached properties.

**Primary Characteristic Components**

- Broad streetscape with wide roadside spaces extending the structural set-back
- Highly distinctive mid-20th century architectural form and aesthetic
- Box-hedgerow boundaries
- Long, linear sight lines southwards along the 1930s terraces of south Latimer Road

**Historic & Inherited Characteristics**

- Historic early-to-mid 20th century public-housing architecture
- Correlation with 1930s terraces of south Latimer Road

Historic Environment Resource:	B : 0	A : 0	L : 0
Inherited Character	S : 2	B : 3	L : 1
Sensitivity	Moderate/High		



# Town Mill

## Alv\_022

The Town Mill character area is defined by the site of a number of watermill-complexes which have consecutively occupied the locality since the medieval period. The contemporary landscape is formed of the 18th to 19th century mill and factory adjacent Radford Road situated at the fore of a 21st century housing development constructed on the site of the 19th century mill-complex and subsequent 20th century farm-buildings. The design and urban form of the 21st century redevelopment is highly coherent with the industrial character of the mill and associated historic buildings; thus, creating a coherent streetscape of high historic environment value and integrity.

### Urban Morphology and Landscape Context

The Town Mill is set-back 25m from Radford Road, with an asphalt-covered parking area constructed in place of a demolished mill pond at the fore. A remnant inherited character of the plot's frontage has been retained in the form of the low, boundary walling of red-brick with blue-brick coping alongside street lighting, in a faux gas-lamp design, and components of former mill-machinery recontextualised in an ornamental function.

The modern development is orientated relative to the historic 18th and 19th century mill complex, reincorporating the historic structures into reconstructed and expanded courtyards of coherent character and form. This industrial character is further enhanced by the absence of modern kerbing and pavement, the installation of 'conservation' themed street-furniture and the utilisation of both stretcher and herringbone aligned brickwork block-paving. Additional reference is made to the industrial provenance of the site through the allocation of pertinent housing-names, alongside the construction of a broad and linear arrangement of blue-engineering bricks, within the block-paving, to demarcate the course of the mill's tail-race, identified during a 2005 programme of archaeological works.

The area is demarcated from its immediate environment by the large landmark buildings of The Mill at the western frontage, compounded by the narrow private lane which grants access to the housing at the rear. While a strong sense of enclosure is generated by the courtyard street-pattern and linear and largely unbroken building lines, the historic connectivity with village-core and the now archaeological utilisation of the River Arrow has been both preserved and enhanced by the sensitive modern redevelopment.

Earthworks pertaining to the medieval through post-medieval modification and exploitation of the River Arrow watercourses remain evident within the open, green areas immediately adjacent to the modern housing estate. While a modicum of landscaping has removed earthworks to the south the earthwork banks of the river, which define

the northern extent of the character area, those of the Bishop's Palace moat further north and the managed watercourses of the river and adjacent sluices, drains and channels continue to form discernible components of the area's landscape setting.

### Built Form

The structural components of the character area are formed of a partially extant 18th to 19th century mill complex, expanded through 21st century housing development. Mill Farm House sits immediately adjacent to a large factory building, north of an area of 21st century housing development which incorporates a number of additional historic structures into its urban morphology and aesthetic. While an adjacent cottage, 'Mill Bank', was demolished in favour of a sports and social club in the mid-20th century, the 'Gothic Cottages' which lie across the Radford Road remain extant. Despite the extensive 21st century housing to the rear, the character area has retained an exceptional level of its historic structural character through appropriate and sensitive restoration, maintenance and redevelopment.

The 18th to 19th century Town Mill is formed of two structural phases, with a rectangular-plan three-and-a-half-storey side-gabled mill and factory building immediately east of the three-storey Mill Farm House.



The farmhouse has a double forward-gable, of Flemish-bonded brickwork construction. The farm house has a plain tile roof of moderately steep pitch with plain bargeboards, wooden finials and ventilation-slits decorating the gables. Rectangular-stack chimneys project from the western wall. Windows are rectangular, mullioned or bay (ground floor only), adjacent a doorway situated under a large front-gabled canopy. The western mill and factory structure is of greater scale than the farmhouse, creating a stepped roof line. The building is of English-bonded brickwork construction with a moderately sloped slate roof with no decorative features or projections. The three storeys are demarcated by rows of iron-barred windows of 'extended leg eyebrow' form, framed by double-ringed segmental archways of header bricks and blue-brick sills. Cast-iron wall ties are evident on the building façade, and have been incorporated into the structural aesthetic. Historic photographs indicated both the farmhouse and mill-structure were once rendered, however this has been removed in favour of bare-brickwork frontages. At the opposite side of Radford Road, Gothic Cottages mirror Mill Farm House in their front, double-cross-gabled form with bargeboards and ventilation slits at the gable and a moderately sloped plain-tile roof. The brickwork bonding is also Flemish, with mullioned replacement-UVPC windows below double-ring segmental archways of header orientated brickwork. An ornate brick chimney projects from within the property passing through the ridge.

The structures of the modern development are situated within an arrangement which mimics a historic courtyard of 19th century industrial structures, largely demolished in favour of prefabricated farm buildings in the mid-20th century. The courtyard therefore generates a highly enclosed streetscape of terraced cottages with a consistent linear building-line of northeast and northwest aspects, perpendicular to the mill and factory buildings. The building density is moderately high, with the minimal gap-sites generating a low sense of permeability. The structures are situated at the fore of very small rectangular plots with no setback from the courtyards. The cottages are constructed in a manner heavily influenced by the remnant historic structures of the site, deriving a significant degree of their architectural form and details from these assets. The 19th and 21st century architecture therefore largely blends seamlessly into a coherent and highly distinctive streetscape of considerable historic character. The cottages are terraced, of two-storeys and of brick construction in English or Flemish 'Garden Wall' bond, for the modern or historic structures respectively, with header-brickwork at every fourth course. Windows are rectangular with a vertical emphasis, mullioned and of UVPC material, situated under segmental archways of header-orientated brickwork. Roofs are moderately pitched of both tile and slate tiling (modern and historic structures respectively) with stepped projecting-brickwork flashing at the gable which sits atop brickwork, dentilated kneelers and dentilation below the eaves. Doorways are not recessed within the frontage, situated below segmental brickwork archways of header bricks and are of wooden construction. Subtle variations are evident between the three lateral alignments of cottages. The south-western alignment is formed of three individual structural-units with two contemporary

structures mirroring the design of the historic third, including distinctive semi-circular windows, a cross-gabled projection and 'dogtooth' dentilation. The north-eastern alignment has sandstone window sills, traditional dentilation, front or side-gabled doorway canopies, and square-stacked chimneys passing through the ridge. The central alignment contains numerous former storage units, which have been converted to garages and expanded with structures of highly passive frontages with small window apertures and further 'dogtooth' dentilation.

#### Statement of Inherited Character

While 20th century demolition of the mill pond, Mill Bank Cottage and many of the ancillary 19th century structures and features has partially eroded the historic built form, the primary structures of the mill complex remain extant and well-maintained with minimal inappropriate modern alteration despite several changes in functionality. The 21st century redevelopment at the rear of the historic mill complex has been undertaken in an exceptionally sensitive manner. Despite the loss of a large majority of the mill's ancillary structures in the mid-20th century, the newly-built housing has successfully maintained the historic coherence and aesthetic of the area through due reverence to the architectural design and urban-form of the extant 19th century assets. The appropriation of distinctive architectural details and forms alongside the inheritance of street-orientation, placenames and archaeological monuments has generated a highly distinctive streetscape of considerable historic integrity, which not only maintains but considerably enhances the historic character and value of the locality.

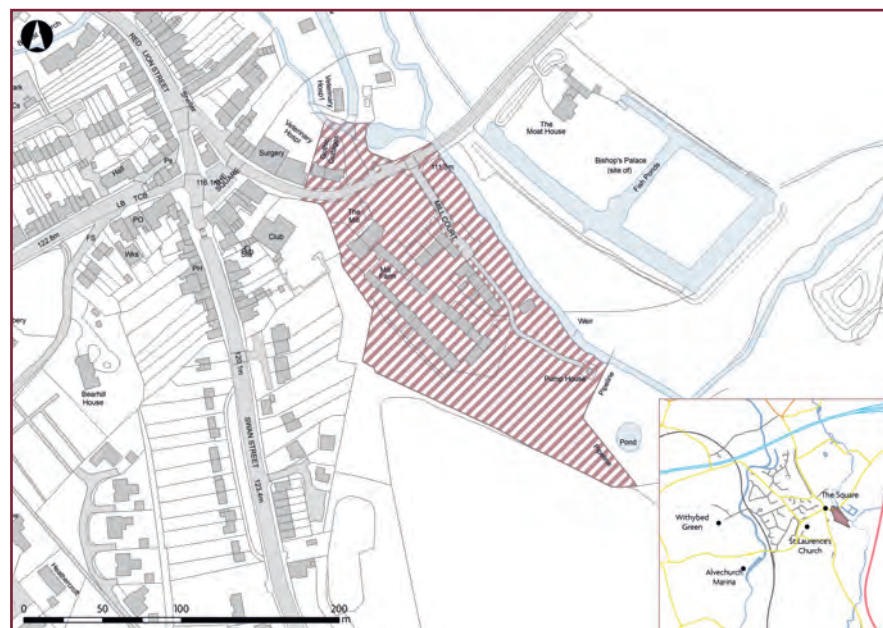
#### Primary Characteristic Components

- Largely extant industrial mill complex
- Courtyard street=pattern of terraced cottages
- Inherited architectural style
- Street furniture and placenames of historic provenance

#### Historic & Inherited Characteristics

- Extant, well-maintained 18th and 19th century factory, mill and cottages
- Extensive appropriation of historic architectural style in 21st century housing development
- Sensitive continuation of historic urban form, placenames and street furnishing
- Reference to sub-surface archaeological deposits in street furnishing and proximity to medieval earthworks

Historic Environment Resource:	B : 2	A : 3	L : 2
Inherited Character	S : 3	B : 3	L : 2
Sensitivity	High		



# Kempsey Village South

## Kem\_031

The Kempsey Village South character area is located centrally within the modern village of Kempsey, approximately 100m south of the Hatfield Brook. The area contains the southern extent of the post-medieval village core, aligned along Main Road (A38) and the adjoining Post Office Lane.

### Urban Morphology and Landscape Context

While the character area is not physically demarcated it is clearly delineated within the immediate settlement, forming a distinct point of transition between the southern village approach of large high-status housing and the post-medieval village core of 18th and 19th century dwellings and services. Several landmark buildings including The Talbot public house, the former Post Office and the half-timbered Linton Cottages define this transition and form the focal point for the character area. While this 'village core' character has been retained, the area has become somewhat detached from further areas of surviving 18th to 19th century historic-village character to the north (Kem\_002; Kem\_010; Kem\_025). 20th century development along Main Road and within the eastern extent of the historic grounds of Kempsey House has resulted in the formation of an area of distinct character (Kem\_029); thus fragmenting the post-medieval components of Kempsey village, forming two distinct modern village cores which has subsequently been reflected within the designation of two (formerly three) distinct Conservation Areas.

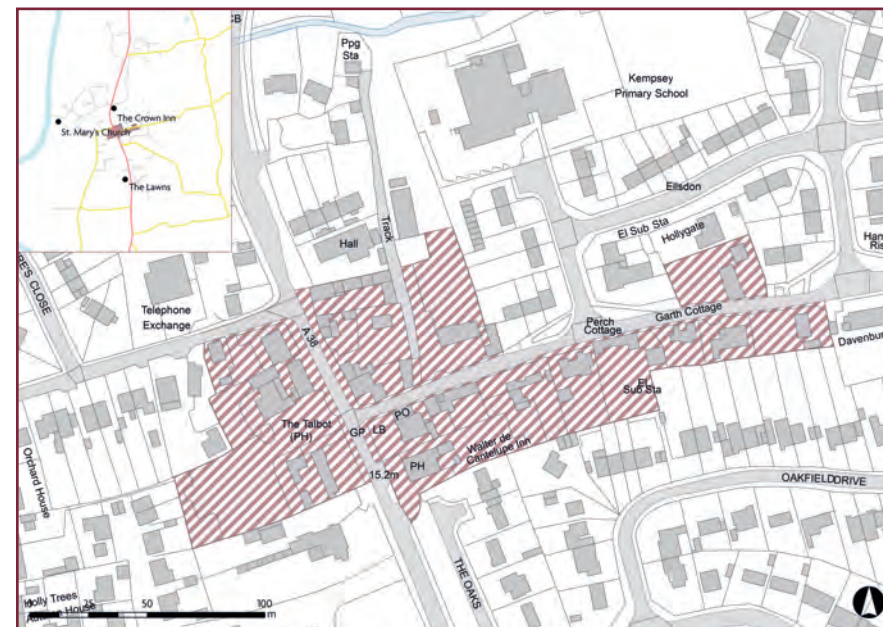
The character area is part of the historic nucleated village of Kempsey, containing both the major road (A38/Main Road) which forms the proverbial spine of the village and the ancillary Post Office Lane, along which numerous 19th century structures remain extant. Distinctive historic street-furnishing continues to significantly contribute to streetscape character. The cast-iron street signage contributes to the well-preserved 19th century built-form of the character area, with additional references to historic activity and building functions evident through street names and decorative details upon railings, doorways, chimneys and the preserved painted-hardware store signage of 38 Main Road. While the 20th century replacement of road, paving and kerb materials with asphalt and pre-cast concrete, 20th century road signage, and structural modifications have somewhat eroded the inherited character of the area, a strong historic component remains discernible to compliment the well preserved 18th and 19th century architecture.

While the character area contains numerous substantial boundaries, there is a relatively low sense of enclosure and strong permeability to the area. A moderate to high sense of vitality is generated by the major road and public house. No distinctive planting schemes are evident, with the natural environment influencing local character minimally beyond vegetation within private gardens.

### Built Form

The area's built form is predominantly composed of structures and features pertaining to the southern extent of the 18th and 19th century nucleated village. While there is a modicum of structural variety, with two-storey semi-detached 19th century cottages situated alongside a number of larger contemporary high-status housing and earlier half-timber cottages, there exists an architectural coherence derived from broadly consistent structural materials, forms and features. There is a moderate structural density with a linear building-line formed by the minimal set-back and prominent frontages of the structures.

Boundaries form a distinctive component of the character area's built form. The red-brick walls, with engineering-brick-coping, evident throughout the area are highly characteristic of Kempsey's post-





medieval village core and are evident demarcating a large majority of historic plots.

The 19th century detached and semi-detached, two-storey structures are of red-brick construction with some rendering, and form the predominant structural form within the character area. These are largely side-gabled, with a normal-to-steep roof pitch of plain tile material and dentil cornice detail. Chimneys are generally projecting at the gable-end and are of rectangular-stack construction. Windows are of vertical-or-horizontal-sliding sash construction of wooden or UPVC material and segmental arches of tapered bricks project above the ground floor frames. Doorways are partially recessed, rectangular with a segmental arch of tapered brick and contain a variation wooden or replacement-UPVC doors. The structures are not set-back, with the frontages immediately adjacent to the public footway. There are few distinct projections or extensions to the structures with the exception of a number of small doorway canopies and bay-windows.

The 18th century Linton Cottages (42 & 44 Main Road) and 3 Post Office Lane form distinctive landmark structures within the character area. These half-timbered, thatched, one-and-a-half storey dwelling are side-



gabled with square, mullioned, leaded windows. Segmental arches of tapered bricks are evident above the window frames and the arched doorway of Linton Cottages and single panelled-rectangular-stack chimneys are evident projecting from the gable-ends of both dwellings. The cottages appear in excellent condition, with some modification in the form of a single-storey flat-roofed extension extending to the rear of Linton Cottages and 19th and 20th century extension of 3 Post Office Lane.

While the historic integrity of the character area's built form has been well maintained, the legibility of modern alterations is high. The removal and replacement of distinctive features including sash-windows, traditional walling and street furniture with non-locally distinctive modern equivalents has partially eroded the historic village character. Numerous discernible modifications have, however, adhered to local historic characteristics respecting traditional materials, designs and structural forms; therefore counteracting a degree of the aforementioned detrimental redevelopment.

#### Statement of Inherited Character

The area is of notable historic and archaeological significance with a well-preserved 18th to 19th century nucleated village character manifested through the area's built-form and streetscapes. The character area has a high concentration of undesignated historic buildings and is seen to be of moderate to high archaeological potential. The character area contains an abundance of distinctive historic architectural details and street-furnishings which are characteristic of Kempsey village, forming a distinctive historic streetscape; and should therefore form a valuable point of reference to ensure future development is appropriate and sensitive to local character. There has been a degree of erosion to inherited character and fragmentation of the village core from 20th century modifications and development. The area remains at high risk from further redevelopment or alterations which do not comply with locally-distinctive structural themes.

#### Primary Characteristic Components

- Historic nucleated village core inherited character
- 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings
- Substantial red-brick walling with engineering brick coping
- Fragmentation from northern Kempsey historic village core
- Landmark buildings forming the gateway from the southern approach to the village

#### Historic & Inherited Characteristics

- 18th and 19th century building stock
- Street furniture and decor alluding to historic village-centre activity
- Historic Boundaries



Historic Environment Resource:	B : 3	A : 2	L : 2
Inherited Character	S : 3	B : 3	L : 2
Sensitivity	High		



# King's Hill South

## Kem\_018

The King's Hill South character area is comprised of a 1920s social housing development in a distinctive curvilinear arrangement. The housing estate was constructed within the southern extent of an area of piecemeal enclosure, approximately 0.7km north of the historic core along Worcester Road, and has retained a degree of rural connectivity through its viewsheds and access to historic routeways. The area is demarcated by the more historic Windmill Lane to the south, Worcester Road in the east, the later-20th century housing estate atop King's Hill immediately north and the extant field parcels adjacent the Upper Ham to the west.

### Urban Morphology and Landscape Context

The character area is situated within a broad area of early-to-mid 20th century nucleated-cluster settlement, representing the northward expansion of the village along Worcester Road. The character area is moderately distinctive from its environ, with its architectural style and urban form predating that of the later housing developments of the 'King's Hill North' (Kem\_012), 'Windmill Lane' (Kem\_011), 'Worcester Road' (Kem\_012), and 'The Limes' (Kem\_001) character areas. The structures are aligned in a curvilinear pattern, with the central five buildings aligned in a crescent, abutted by two properties along both King's Hill and Old Road North

The historic route of Windmill Lane has been retained, alongside the historic footpath (evident on historic mapping long prior to the 20th century development) which provides access to the field parcels north of the modern village boundary. Roads are 4-6m in width and of asphalt construction, with no pavements along Windmill Lane where grass verges are evident in their stead.

The character area has retained a strong rural connectivity afforded by extensive panoramic views from the elevated King's Hill, looking west over the Upper Ham, the rural landscapes beyond, and towards the Malvern Hills. This is compounded by the aforementioned retention of the historic footpath, allowing immediate access to the modern village's rural fringe.

### Built Form

The housing estate is comprised of nine uniform 1920s two-storey semi-detached dwellings. The plots are predominantly bounded by hedgerows with sporadic picket and lap-panel fencing. The plots are irregular in form, averaging around 600m<sup>2</sup> in area. Buildings are set-back irregularly due to the curvilinear building-line relative to the linearity of Windmill Lane; however, the structures are consistently situated at the centre of their respective plots. The roof line is consistent. There is a low building density, enhanced by the large spacing between each structure forming distinctive visual gap-sites and facilitating movement



between Windmill Lane and the King's Hill estate immediately to the north (Kem\_012).

The structures are of red-brick, stretcher-bond construction with hipped low-pitched roofs of plain tiles. The roof has simple ridge-tiles, and projects to the rear at either end of the property over the first storey window. An additional ground floor, one-storey projection is evident emerging at the centre-rear of the properties alongside a number of varied later extensions. Rectangular-stack chimneys with projecting string-courses emerge predominantly through the ridge at the centre of the structure. Windows are rectangular, mullioned and of replacement-UVPC material. They are situated under a relieving arch of tapered header bricks. A triple-brick course of differentially coloured brickwork runs along the base of the structures.

### Statement of Inherited Character

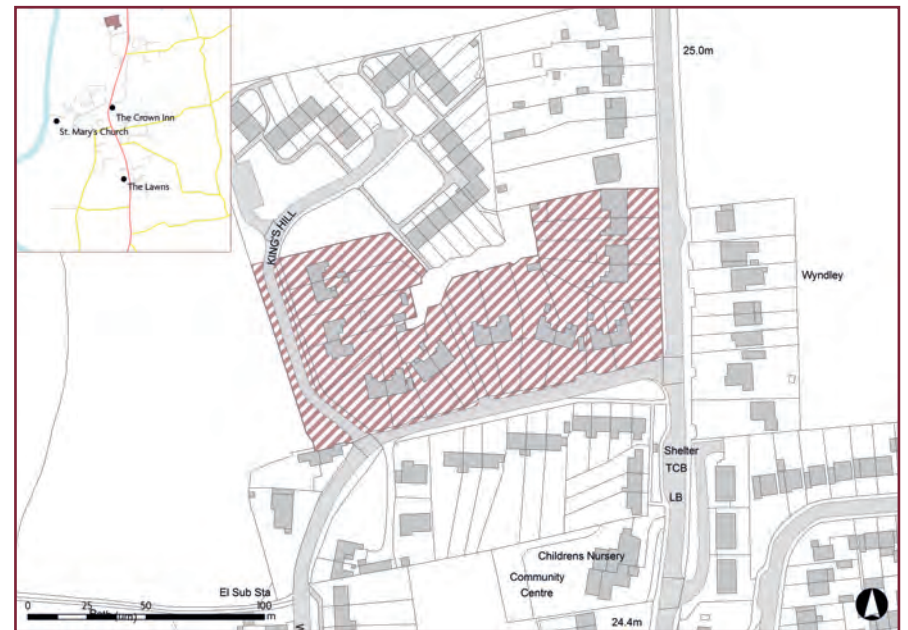
The urban and architectural form is highly distinctive of early 20th century social housing. Despite the loss of rural-historic features of the north Kempsey agricultural landscape the character area has retained a rural connectivity through its viewsheds and adherence to the historic routeways of Windmill Lane and the historic right of way.

### Primary Characteristic Components

- 1920s social-housing urban and architectural form
- Panoramic viewsheds of western Worcestershire
- Hedgerow boundaries

### Historic & Inherited Characteristics

- 1920s social-housing urban and architectural form
- Rural connectivity afforded by westward viewsheds and extant historic routeways



Historic Environment Resource:	B : 0	A : 1	L : 1
Inherited Character	S : 1	B : 3	L : 1
Sensitivity	Moderate		

# Old Road North (East)

## Kem\_021

The character area is aligned along Old Road North, situated between this historic approach to the village and the Main Road bypass which superseded it in the mid-19th century. The character area is defined by its distinctive enclosed streetscape of predominantly mid-20th century two-storey, detached housing interspersed by a small number of historic cottages situated adjacent to the 19th century manors of Cleeve Court, The Firs and Mill House (Kem\_002). Prior to the construction of Main Road the area was composed of the piecemeal enclosures and orchards which characterised the landscape immediately north of the historic village core along Church Street.

### Urban Morphology and Landscape Context

The character area has a distinctive streetscape formed by the 19th and 20th century developments (Kem\_002; Kem\_021) along Old Road North, the now historic approach to the medieval through post-medieval village core. The curvilinear alignment of the wayside properties with the road in conjunction with the prominent hedgerow and woodland boundaries of Cleeve Court, Mill House and Manor House create a highly enclosed and partially sunken avenue, further enhanced by the linear viewsheds and the rising topography to the east and west.

The diversion of traffic along Main Road in the mid-19th century has dramatically altered the area's land-use and character. The former village-approach has been relegated to a local street creating a sense of tranquillity contrasting markedly with the now heavily utilised Main Road. The redevelopment of the road-infrastructure altered the 'spine' of the village, realigning the historically east-to-west emphasis of Church Street and the southern-dog-leg of Old Road North, to the north-to-south alignment of Main Road which facilitates a rapid transition through the village and subsequently marginalises much of the post-medieval village-core. The character areas of St. Anne's Church (Kem\_010), Church Street (Kem\_025), and Old Road North (Kem\_002; Kem\_021) have, however, inherited a distinctive historic streetscape with a relative consistency of built form and urban morphology throughout their 18th through 21st century development. Thus, despite their marginalisation a distinctive historic-village character remains readily discernible when stepping away from the modern commuter-route.

A moderate rural connectivity is maintained by the Public Rights of Way and immediacy of Brookend Road, granting rapid access to the historic enclosures and lanes of the western parish. This is further enhanced by the extensive modern and historic hedgerows and private-garden plantation. Both the road and adjacent pavements are narrow and of asphalt and pre-cast concrete paving alongside a number of narrow, roadside grass verges. There is minimal road furnishing beyond 20th century signage and lighting. The front-of-plot boundaries are varied, with continued diversity in the planting schemes and vegetation within

the private front-plot spaces.

### Built Form

While there is considerable diversity in the aesthetic and design of the mid-20th century housing aligned with Old Road North, there is a distinctive consistency of their form and morphology. The properties are detached, broadly spaced, two-storey (with exception of a number of bungalows) structures which sit at the middle of their respective plots, forming large front-spaces of driveways and gardens. The building line is curvilinear, following the road-alignment despite the considerable set-back and is constructed with a moderate urban density.

The structural design of the properties varies considerably, with a number of phases of construction clearly discernible. The structures at the southern dog-leg of Old Road North, aligned east to west, are gabled-ended with an alternating east/west and north/south aspect. The houses are of stretcher-bonded brick construction with moderately-steep sloped roofs with pantiles, bargeboards and square-stacked chimneys. A number of the properties have wooden cladding at the gable end and all properties sit back from the road behind grass verges and extensive private driveways with minimal boundary features. Further north a row of cross-hipped bungalows, again with pantiles, bargeboards and square-stack chimneys are situated behind grass-verges and private front gardens, partially elevated from the road behind a low, stone boundary-wall. At the mid-point of the road, a mid-to-late 20th century development of detached, predominantly hipped-roofed housing is situated adjacent to, and set-back from, the road down a





private drive. These properties are of red-brick stretcher-bonded construction with distinctive engineering blue-brick string courses, relieving segmental arches and sills, alongside large mullioned windows and cross-hipped and cross-gabled projections. A number of 19th century, gable-ended cottages intersperse these properties with tall rectangular faux-sash, mullioned UVPC windows and plain-tiles within the roof and doorways canopies. 'The Cottage' is a distinctive example of these, with a stepped gable end and rendering with decorative, painted-framing indicative of a now demolished rear-projection.

As with the area's housing style there is a distinctive variation in the plot boundaries of the area, with low stone-walling, prominent brick-walling with blue-brick coping, lap-panel fencing, and hedgerows of varying proportion evident in association to the various structural phases. This contrasts markedly with the large, visually restrictive hedgerow and woodland boundaries of the 19th century plots immediately to the west, facilitating distinctive 'open' frontages in contrast to the visual and physical enclosure of the 19th century properties.

While the 19th century properties are of distinctive character from the mid-20th century properties, and the prominent hedgerow boundaries restrict visibility to within these plots, they continue to strongly influence the area's character as landmark buildings elevated from the partially sunken road on an eastwardly-rising slope.

#### Statement of Inherited Character

While the character area's built form has considerable variation in design and aesthetic, there is a coherent theme of detached one-to-two-storey, gable-ended properties with large set-backs and frontage-spaces which are aligned to the curvilinear street-pattern and raised above road-level due to a rising roadside topography. This structural density and urban morphology has therefore maintained a streetscape of a highly enclosed, partially sunken historic routeway which was formed with the truncation of the eastward enclosures and orchards with the mid-19th century development of Main Road. Although the large properties east of Old Road North are of distinctive character from the modern housing, they continue to have a strong visual and physical

impact on the character of the area, forming landmark historic structures and further compounding the sense of enclosure through their extensive hedgerow and woodland front-plot boundaries. In spite of its predominantly 20th century provenance, the character area has therefore maintained a moderate coherence with the 19th century streetscapes of the historic Kempsey village-core which now forms distinctive wayside lanes and streets of considerable inherited character, marginalised by the diversion and increased utilisation of Main Road as a major communications artery.

#### Primary Characteristic Components

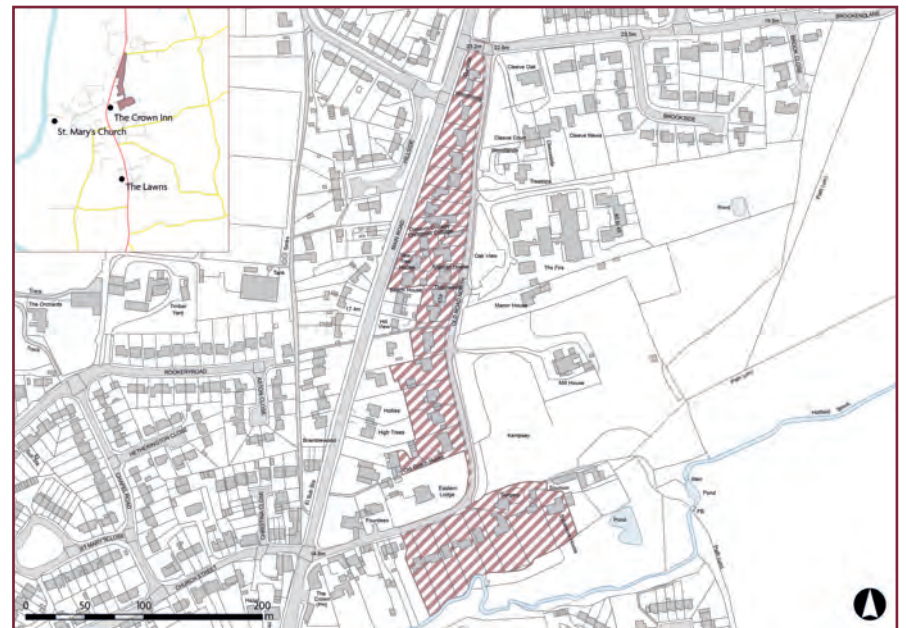
- Variable architectural aesthetic within consistent built form (density, aspect, structural form, set-back, scale)
- Highly enclosed historic streetscape formed by prominent boundaries and topography
- Adjacent landmark structures of Cleeve Court, The Firs and Manor House

#### Historic & Inherited Characteristics

- Adherence to historic road alignment and morphology
- Historic partially sunken routeway with prominent hedgerow and woodland boundaries
- Visual and physical influence of 19th century landmark structures of Cleeve Court, The Firs and Manor House



Historic Environment Resource:	B : 2	A : 2	L : 2
Inherited Character	S : 3	B : 2	L : 2
Sensitivity	Moderate		



Character Area:	Code:	Grid Reference:	Date:	Surveyor:
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<b>Streetscape</b>			
Period of development			
Predominant architectural component			
Diversity of architectural component			
Historic condition (discernibility)			
Green and / or Open spaces			
Predominant boundaries			
Permeability			
Distinctiveness from environ			
Active/Passive frontages			
Gap sites			
Demarcation of area			
Street pattern			
Street hierarchy			
Architectural hierarchy			
Footway width		Road width	
Footway material		Road material	
Kerb type		Road furniture	
Street furniture			
Ornamental structures			
Planting schemes			
Views			
Focal points			
'Gateway' structures or features			
<b>Notes:</b>			

Built Form			
Prominent structural type		Building setback	
Period(s) of origin/development		Public/private boundary	
		Private/private	
Average structural height		Building position	
Building line		Plot form and extent	
Building density		Plot access (front & rear)	
Roof Line			
Roof Pitch		Notes:	
Historic condition			
Group coherence / variation			
Landmark buildings			
Public buildings			
Change in function - Legibility?			

Land Use	
Primary Broad Type	
Primary Sub-Type	
Secondary Type(s)	
Historic type	
Historic type tangibility	
Circulation and barriers	
Landscape setting	
Points of transition	
Sense of enclosure	
Notes:	

Land Form	
Elevation (slope/aspect/relief)	
Discernible geology	
Water bodies	
Waterways	
Natural Environment & Ecology	
Vegetation / flora	
Earthworks	
Notes:	

Other			
Vitality / Tranquillity		Non-visual characteristics	
Rural connectivity		Influence of light	
		Seasonal variation	
Distinctiveness from environs			
Pressures for change		Notes:	
Discernibility of trends			





## Primary Character-forming Components

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## Distinctive/Significant Historic/Inherited Characteristics

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## Notes

