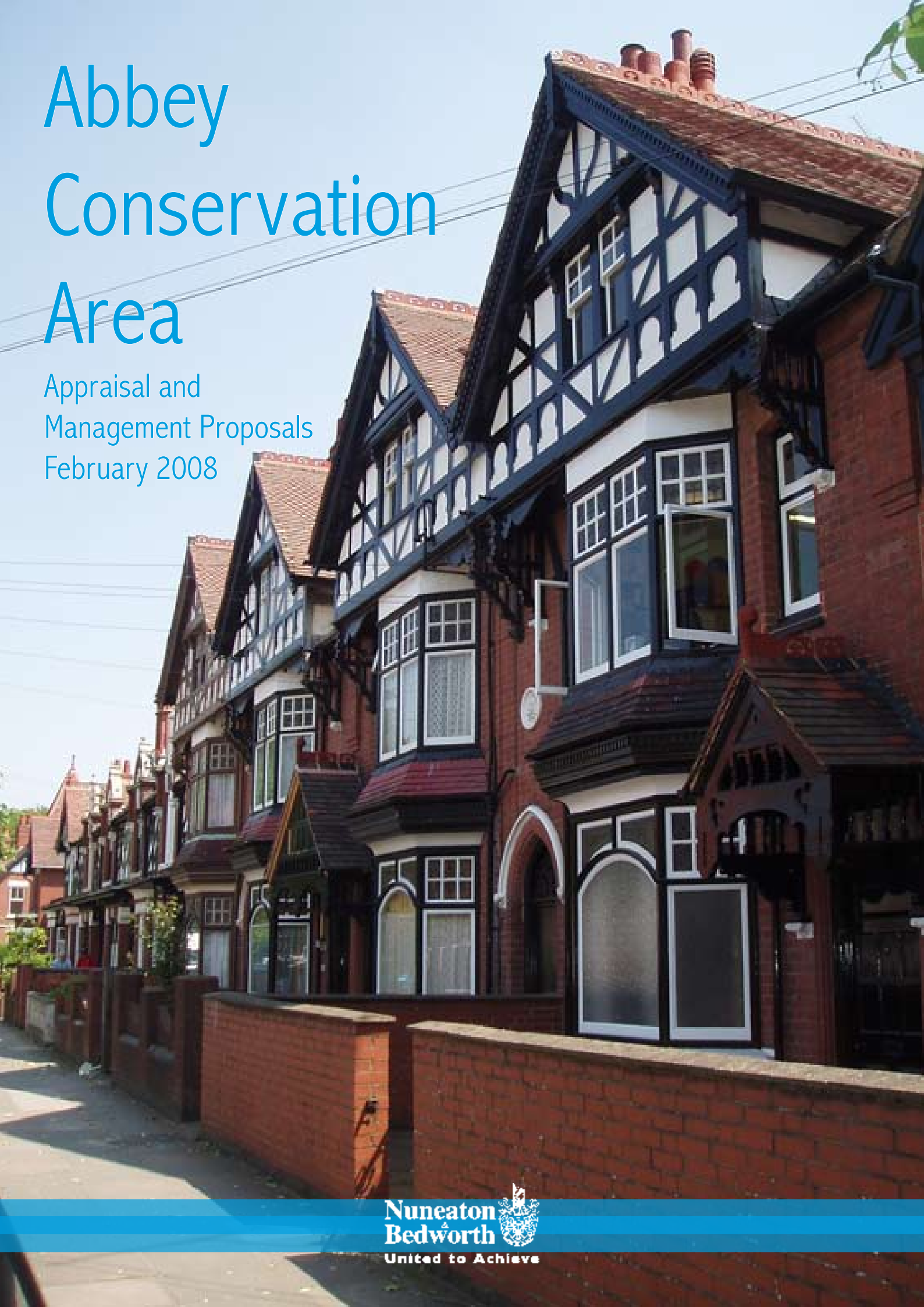


Abbey Conservation Area

Appraisal and
Management Proposals
February 2008



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PART I

I.0 INTRODUCTION

I.1 This document is an appraisal of the special architectural and historic interest of the Abbey Conservation Area, originally designated in 1993 and extended in 2007. It was issued in its current form in February 2008 following public consultation on a draft version issued in July 2007. It is intended that this will be adopted in final form by Cabinet in Autumn 2008, following that outcome of public consultation on the new interim Article 4 (2) Directions (see Appendices I & 2).

I.2 The original area comprises the St Mary's Abbey precinct, the former Nuneaton Cottage Hospital, selected housing along both sides of Manor Court Road, and the recreation ground 1. The extended area includes a wider residential area around Manor Court Road, including Earls Road and Manor Park Road. Together they constitute Nuneaton's first middle-class suburb of the late 19th and early 20th centuries 1a.

Original Abbey Conservation Area Designated 1996



The new 2007 Abbey Conservation Area boundary



2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 2.2 A conservation area is defined as “*an area of special architectural and historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”
- 2.3 Government and, its advisor English Heritage, have stressed the need for conservation areas to be managed positively and effectively. In order to do this, decisions that affect their character or appearance need to be made on the basis of a good understanding of their special architectural and historic interest, and their significance or value as identified by both professionals and the community. That is the purpose of this document - to set out the special architectural and historic interest of the area in and around the current Abbey Conservation Area

3.0 DEFINITION OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC INTEREST

- 3.1 The extended conservation area including Earls Road and Manor Park Road, is considered to be of special architectural and historic interest because:
 - It is an attractive, compact, suburban area of tree lined streets and significant private and public open spaces containing many good and relatively well preserved local examples of middle class housing, most of which were designed by local architects over a relatively short period from the late 19th century up to the outbreak of the First World War. While there are some discordant elements, there is a relatively high degree of unity in scale, form and materials to the housing of the area. This combined with the private and public green spaces make it an area of above average amenity value in the local context and one considered worthy of conservation area status.
 - It contains at its core within the central ‘green wedge’ to either side of Manor Court Road, the standing and below ground remains of a medieval Benedictine priory and its associated precincts. These represent some of the best-

preserved nunnery remains in an urban context in the country and are of considerable historical significance to Nuneaton. Built amidst them and actually incorporating powerful fragments of the priory church ruins in its structure, is the Church of St Mary a grade 2 listed building by the Arts and Crafts architect Clapton Rolfe.

- It was the first middle class suburb to be created in Nuneaton and home to several notable local figures. Foremost among them was the industrialist and philanthropist Reginald Stanley who established the area and was a key figure in the development of late 19th century Nuneaton. The influence of Stanley, either directly or indirectly, permeates the area in its layout, its more significant buildings, its building materials and details, its green spaces, and in its many mature trees.

4.0 ASSESSING SPECIAL INTEREST

4.1 LOCATION AND SETTING

4.1.1 Location and context

The Abbey Conservation Area subject of this study is located just half a mile to the north west of Nuneaton town centre in the town’s Abbey Ward. It is bisected by Manor Court Road, a busy traffic route linking two B- roads radiating from the town centre – the B4114 to Hartshill and Atherstone in the northwest, and the B4112 to Stockingford, Ansley and Coleshill to the west **2**.

Off this main traffic through-route on its north side are the much quieter tree-lined residential streets of Earls Road and Manor Park Road, together with Manor Park Avenue that leads to the former Cottage Hospital complex. The latter lends an institutional air to the surrounding area and creates a demand for local private rented accommodation. Tenancy in the area is mixed with a majority of owner occupied detached houses and semi detached houses inter-mixed with properties in multi-occupation.

The area is physically distinct from late 19th century housing development adjacent to the north and east, being mostly of lower density, more loose and informally laid out than the rigid straight lines of terraces that characterize the majority of Nuneaton’s Victorian housing stock.

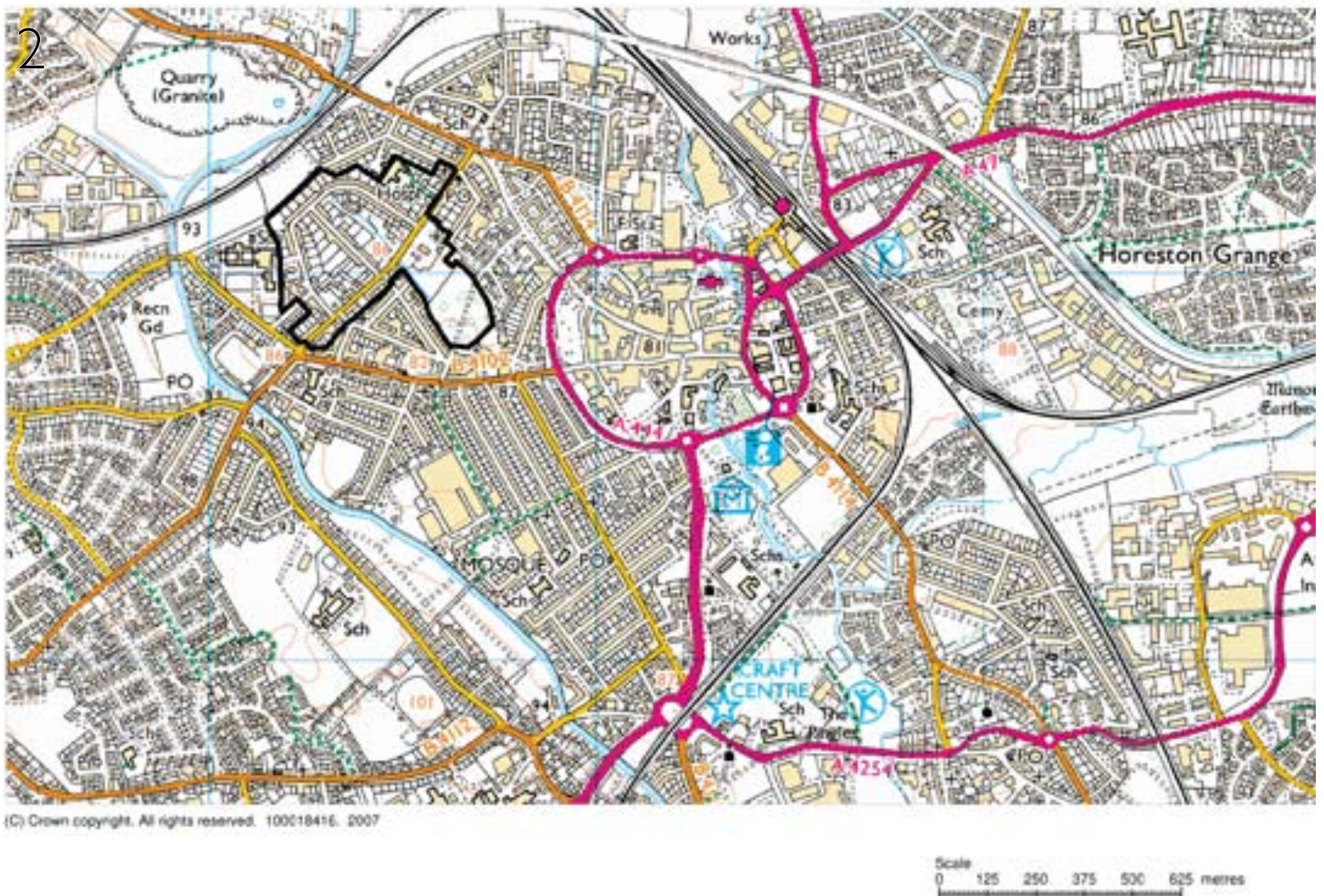
4.1.2 General character and plan form

The area's character is one of modest, mellow, suburban gentility with the majority of its late 19th and early 20th century housing in sound physical condition and retaining much of its original appearance. Houses are mostly set in shallow paved front forecourts enclosed by brick boundary walls, with longer mature gardens to the rear that can occasionally be glimpsed from the street through gaps between buildings. It displays some influences of the garden-suburb movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This romantically inspired movement attempted to bring something of the countryside to the town, as is evidenced by its tree lined streets, the curving alignment of Earls Road, the preservation and incorporation of green, well treed spaces, and in the architecture of its many individually designed houses by architects working at a time when garden suburb ideas were new and fashionable.

4.1.3 Landscape Setting

The Abbey Conservation Area lies on largely flat terrain on the northwestern edge of the town centre. It is surrounded to the north, east, and south by quite densely packed urban, predominantly terraced housing, and to the northwest by narrow band of open space bordering a railway line (the former Midland Railway Company line to Birmingham) and Coventry Canal. As a consequence there are no significant views into the conservation area from outside its existing boundaries, and the perceived change in character from urban to suburban is quite sudden and unheralded when approaching from the southwest and northeast along Manor Court Road.

Abbey Conservation Area - Location Plan



4.2 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

4.2.1 Historic interest of the area

The Abbey area has been at the centre of Nuneaton's physical development at two major periods in its history; - firstly when the medieval 'new' town was planted in the twelfth century by the newly founded priory, and secondly at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, when the town expanded rapidly and extensively beyond its medieval limits.

4.2.2 Medieval and Post Medieval Periods

St Mary's Abbey and precinct was a Benedictine nunnery/priory admitting both nuns and monks, and led by a prioress. It was one of only four in England belonging to the French mother abbey of Fontevrault, and the best preserved. It was founded under Robert de Beaumont, Earl of Leicester who, in c. 1155, awarded the nuns almost the entire Manor of Eaton centered then on the pre-urban Saxon settlement whose name means farmstead or village by water. It is from this foundation that the town became known as Nuneaton (Nun's Eaton).

The priory was the intellectual centre and economic driving force behind the development of the medieval 'new town' in the later 12th century. It laid out the market square and planned a regular sequence of burgage plots along Abbey Street (the 'high street') thereby recognizing the achievement of borough status. As the priory's largest endowment in Britain, Nuneaton's economic exploitation and success was closely tied to that of the mother church.

At the dissolution of the monasteries in 1540, King Henry VIII granted the manor and priory to Sir Marmaduke Constable of London, who converted the priory buildings to his manor house. His tomb lies in St Nicholas Church.

The manor subsequently became part of the estates of the Aston and Paget families, and the manor house itself was abandoned by the 18th century if not earlier.¹



St. Mary's Abbey ruins

In 1765 Henry Paget, Earl of Uxbridge, sold his Nuneaton holdings and the title of Lord of the Manor to James Edward and Henry Tomkinson in whose family the priory and surrounding land remained until the later 19th century.

4.2.3 Victorian Development

For the best part of two hundred years the priory and its precinct had stood as isolated ruins in open fields until the latter part of the 19th century. Then, with a fast growing town population, there came pressure for new housing and an additional place of worship for the Church of England.

The impetus for the latter came from a local land owner Mr. Thomas Botrill (commemorated in the nearby street name) who died in 1869 leaving a bequest of £400 towards the building of a new church and £2500 for its endowments provided it was built within ten years. The presence of the former priory made its location among the priory ruins an attractive and obvious location.

The foundation stone was laid on 26 April 1876, and consecrated on 8 October 1877 by the Bishop of Worcester. Its designer was an Arts and Crafts architect of national standing – Clapton Rolfe of Reading & Birmingham. Rolfe also designed the adjacent vicarage which was built by 1886. Its first resident was the Rev. Charles de Havilland, father to the famous aircraft designer and manufacturer, Geoffrey, who lived here as a boy, and grandfather to the actress Olivia de Havilland.

¹ From Eaton to Nuneaton p 21 & 22

4.2.4 **The Development of Manor Court Road : Historical Context**

The subsequent growth of housing along and around Manor Court Road, which followed the construction of the road itself between 1890-2, (see 4.2.6 below) formed part of the major expansion of the town at the turn of the century. Two main factors were behind this growth, both of which had close associations with the Manor Court/ Abbey Green area.

The first was the establishment of good national and local rail links and, in particular, a direct rail connection to Birmingham with the opening of a station for the Midland Railway in Midland Road (the former Abbey Street Station) in 1864. This provided quick and direct access to large markets in the Second City for coal, brick and stone - markets that Nuneaton, with its mineral wealth and developing extractive and brick making industries, was eminently suited to supply.



St. Mary's Abbey Church 1876-7 by Clapton Rolfe

The other major factor was the emergence of an active and innovative middle class at this time who not only supplied the technical and entrepreneurial skills needed to develop the local economy, but who also had the ability and the resources to shape and manage the town through participation in local government and other public services. Several of them came to reside in the Manor Court area. Foremost among them was the colourful Cornish-born Reginald Stanley (1838 -1914), North American adventurer, gold prospector, co-founder of the State Capital of Montana USA, entrepreneur, inventor, colliery owner, local Liberal politician and philanthropist,



St. Mary's Vicarage c. 1886 by Clapton Rolfe

4.2.5 **Proposals for Manor Court Road**

The presence of the Abbey Street Station in Midland Road must have been a major incentive to Reginald Stanley who, along with major landowner Mr. James Charles Tomkinson MP, was the chief proponent of the new road. It would provide a shortened direct route between the station and Stanley's brick-and-tile works some two miles to the west at Stockingford, thereby avoiding the congestion of the town centre via the Arbury Road and Abbey Street, and reducing his transport costs significantly.

Tomkinson, inheritor of the Manor of Nuneaton and resident in London, had been a business partner of Stanley in several previous ventures, and stood to benefit financially from a new road over his land. It would open up a large area of open fields containing the ancient priory and the newly built church and vicarage for potentially lucrative housing development, being conveniently situated close to the town centre and its two railway stations.

4.2.6 **A Controversial Proposal**

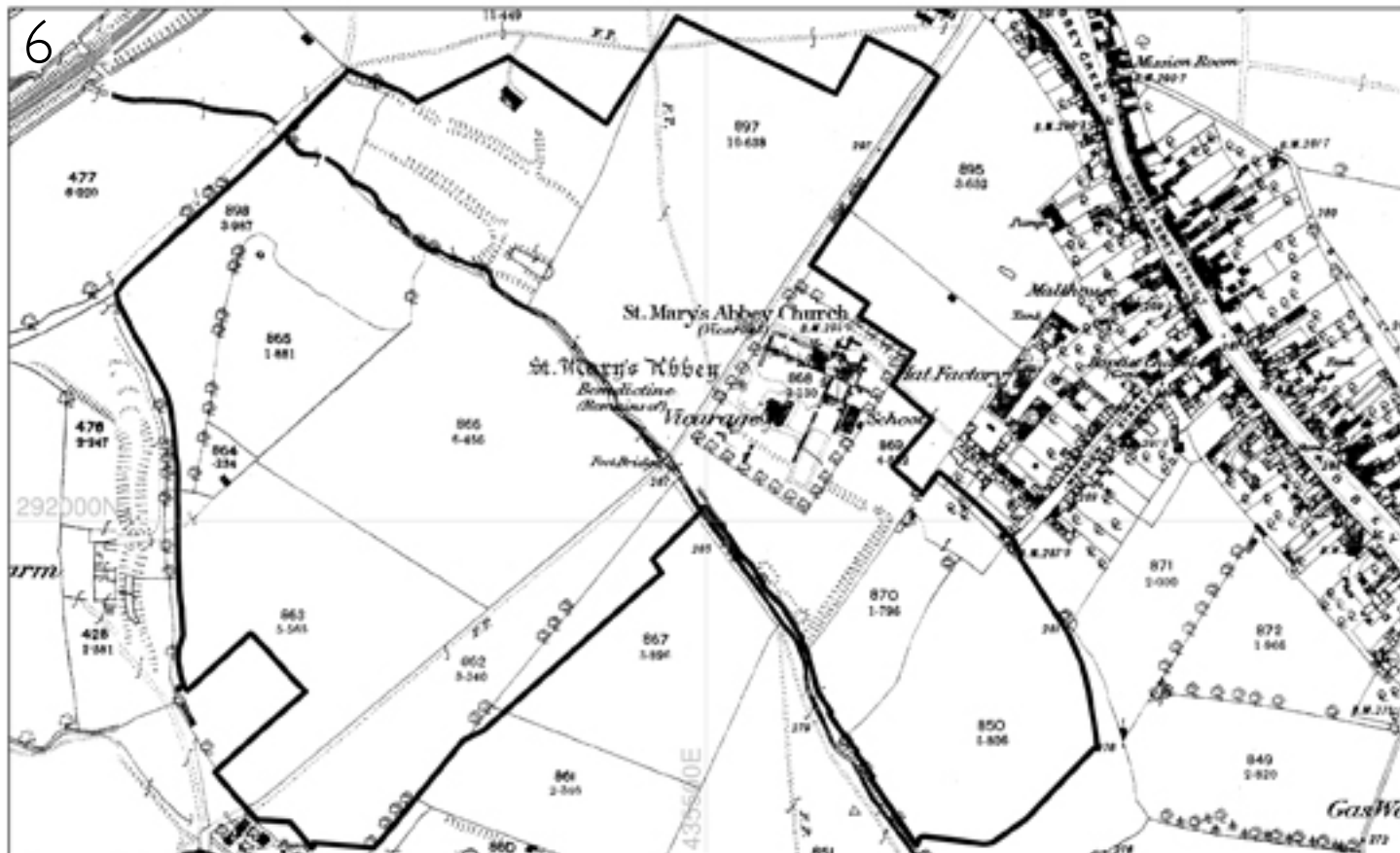
Getting approval for the construction of Manor Court Road from the Local Authority of the day was a surprisingly protracted and controversial affair leading to some heated public exchanges between Stanley and George Ward the then Chairman of the Local Board of Health, exchanges that were to continue well after the road had been finished.

There were two principal reasons. One was that Tomkinson would only provide the land for the road if the Board met half the construction

The Abbey Area in 1886 before the road was built



6

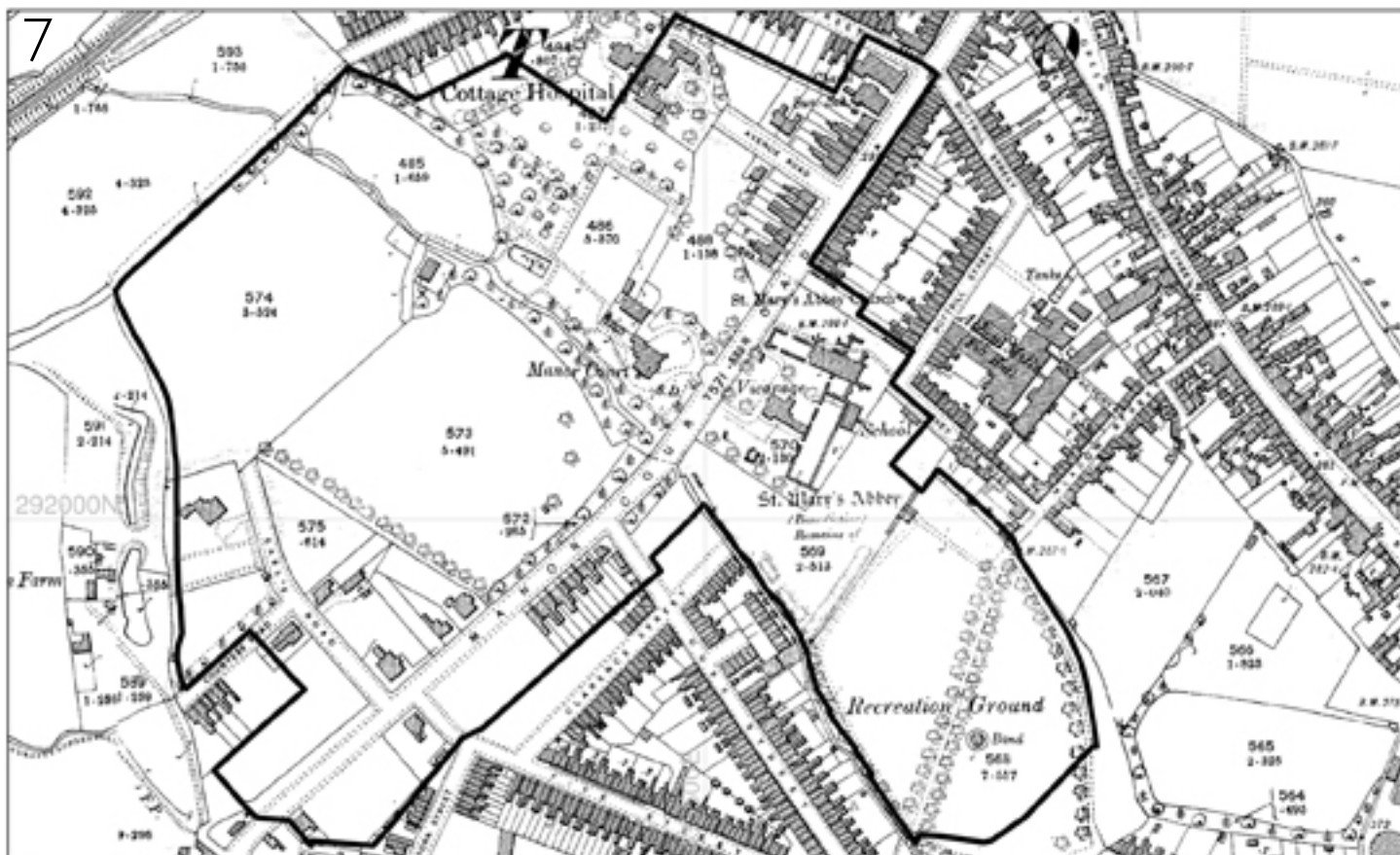


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The Abbey Area in 1902



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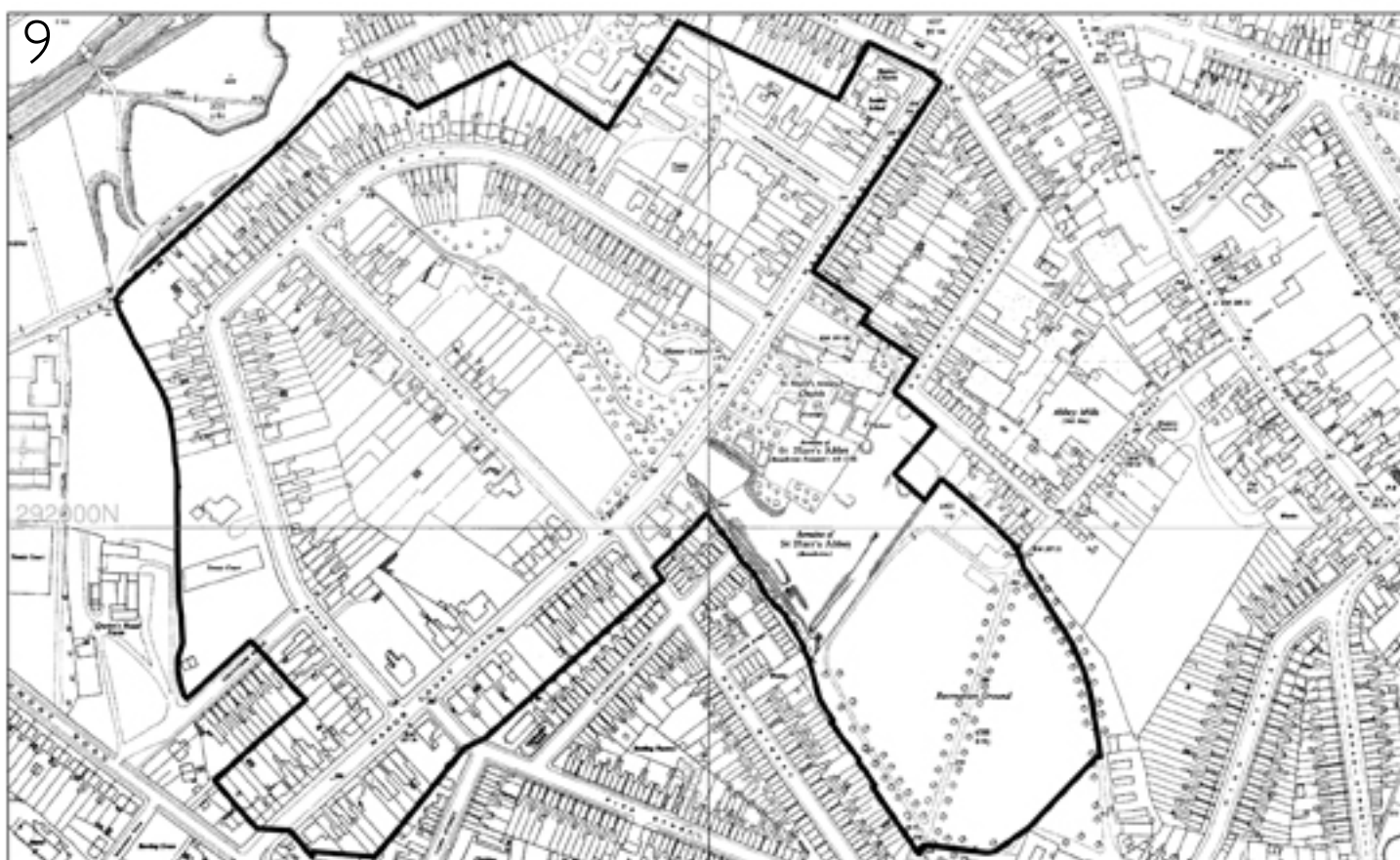
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costs, and, at the same time, closed off Vernons Lane (a narrow lane running parallel and to the north of the proposed road). The other reason was that Ward appeared suspicious of Stanley's involvement and motives from the outset and remained implacably opposed to him and his proposals through all stages of the road project.

In 1884 when Stanley first put Tomkinson's offer to the Local Health Board (on which he also sat) he urged the Board to accept on the grounds that the shortened route would greatly benefit the general public, save wear and tear on the existing Arbury Road, and that the income derived from the rates on the new properties would soon recoup the public money spent on road construction.²

Ward as Chairman pointed out that there could be considerable financial gain to Tomkinson and therefore all costs of road construction should be borne by him as the landowner. In answer to Stanley, he felt that only private carriages and carts would benefit from the shortened route to the Railway Station and not the average working man who would have to pay for it along with other ratepayers. The proposal was defeated but the Board did move to offer to close Vernon's Lane to cart traffic but not foot traffic provided the Tomkinson met the full cost of the road. He promptly declined.

Two years later Stanley put the proposal forward again, this time submitting a local petition in favour of building the new road with some 900 signatures which, he stressed, included 'a considerable number of working classes'. The earlier condition requiring the stopping-up of Vernons Lane was also dropped. The Board voted narrowly in favour (though Ward abstained), but without sufficient majority for it to be carried.³ The Local Government Board eventually authorized the road but in two stages. The first half was constructed as a cul-de-sac, 50 yards wide and some 400 yards long off Abbey Green probably terminating at the recently constructed St Mary's Church and Vicarage. It was completed by 1891. The remaining 450 yards down to the Cock and Bear Inn on Queens Road was sanctioned as an extension in the same year and completed in 1892 at a cost of £13,000 to be paid for from the public purse.⁴

Eight years had passed from when the proposal had first been placed before the Local Board of Health to its completion in 1892. Stanley had prevailed but criticism of his support for the road did not disappear for several years afterward. Two years later in 1894 he was moved to answer critics (foremost of whom was George Ward) by writing a letter to the Nuneaton Chronicle saying his reasons for building the road on which the petition had been based had been vindicated by events. He also stated, somewhat defensively perhaps, that he was now the owner of most of the land to either side of the new road but that this had not been his intention at the time of organizing the petition, the land having been acquired 'a year or two later' (i.e. c.1888).⁵

4.2.7 **The Creation of a Middle Class Housing Area**

With the road constructed, housing development proceeded at a steady rate. To the east side at its north end down to the Abbey church, housing took the same form as recent development on land owned by Tomkinson along Abbey Street; i.e. fairly high-density terraces for lesser tradesmen, and the lower middle classes including white collar railway workers. It was the same on the west side down to the substantial Gothic Baptist church of 1898 on the corner of Willington Street, but from there houses were more substantial and predominantly semi-detached.

Southward from the new Anglican church, along the middle and southern sections of Manor Court Road on Stanley acquired land, the development pattern was markedly different from the Tomkinson owned areas. It was of a markedly lower density, with houses of grander architectural pretensions gradually rising to either side of the wide tree lined street. It appears that Stanley, astute to the shifting socio-economic patterns and markets of the time, may well have spotted an opportunity to establish the southerly half of Manor Court as a pleasant leafy residential area for the Nuneaton's newly emerging middle class.

It certainly began as such with the building of large detached houses occupied by local professional and business people. Also with new

2 (Report of the Local Board of Health Nuneaton Chronicle July 4th 1884, & Aug. 27th 1886)

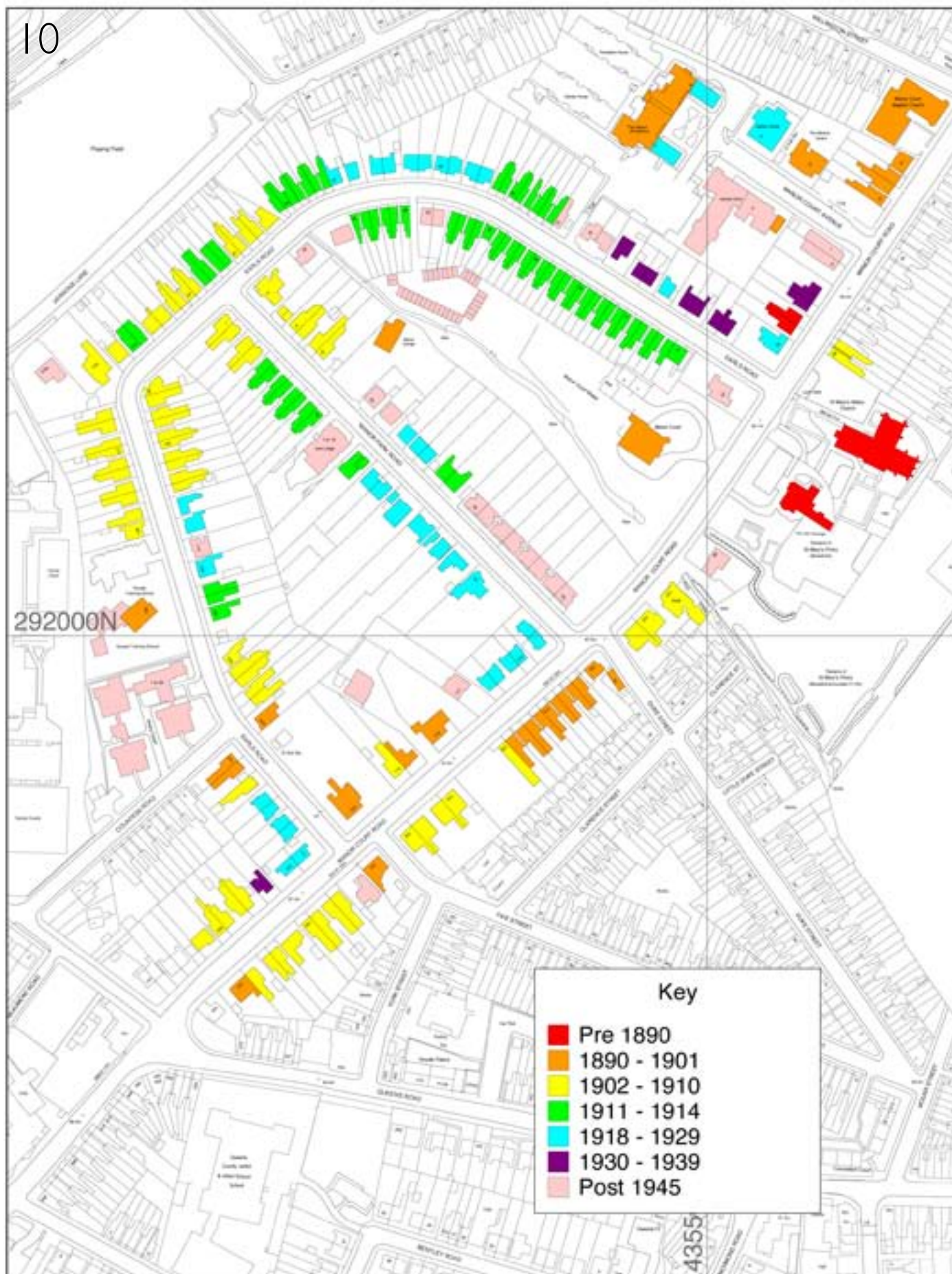
3 (Report of the Local Board of Health Nuneaton Chronicle Aug. 27th 1886)

4 (Annual Report of the Borough Engineer 1891-94 – Surveyors Annual Report for 1892 p.26).

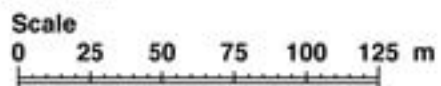
5 (Nuneaton Chronicle 2nd March 1894)



10



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housing came the Cottage Hospital built on land donated by Stanley and Tomkinson, and accessed by a road off Manor Court Road that had been generously paid for by Stanley and laid out in 1892.

Stanley had also decided by this time to live opposite the Priory ruins and Abbey church, and presumably would have wanted to ensure, as far as he could, that the area around Manor Court was agreeably developed with professionals and leading local business men of the time living as suitable neighbours. And so it almost came to be for at the turn of the century the 1901 Census records that among the areas residents at the time were:- Dr E Nason physician and son of the founder of the Cottage Hospital; Charles A Phillips Hat Factory proprietor recently moved from Atherstone into 139 Earls Road; James Bates brickworks manager residing at Baden House 140 Manor Court Road; Frederick Swallow, mining engineer living in Gayton House (115 Manor Court Road); and Francis Broadbent, doctor of medicine, Herbert Greatrex, accountant, George Helps gas engineer, and Walter Whiteman solicitor all residing at Landsdowne Terrace .

4.2.8 **The Cottage Hospital**

Virtually from the beginning of the area's development as for housing, it has been influenced by, and intimately linked with, the development of one of Nuneaton's most important public institutions - the Cottage Hospital.

This was established in 1893 through private and voluntary public donations on land gifted by both Stanley and Tomkinson. It was designed by Stanley's architect FJ Yates and followed immediately on from the laying out of Hospital Road, now Manor Court Avenue in 1892, again at the expense of Reginald Stanley who planted it



The Cottage Hospital

with trees.

The driving force behind the hospital was Dr Richard Nason and his son Edward. The latter was among the first, if not the first resident, to live in Stanley's new housing development at Mardale, 123 Manor Court Road in the same year that the hospital was completed. This house was eventually bought by the hospital just after the Second World War as a home for the hospital night nurse. The owner of Nuncroft, 139 Earls Road, Charles Phillips, was, along with Tomkinson, Stanley and the Nason's, a founding member of the Cottage Hospital Committee. His house subsequently became a private maternity hospital immediately after the last World War when it became the property of NHS until early 2008.

4.2.9 **The Pool Bank Street Recreation Ground**

In order to preserve something of the green setting of the priory ruins amidst the ever encroaching tide of housing and to create a public space for the benefit of local people living in the surrounding terraced streets, Charles Tomkinson leased in perpetuity to the people of Nuneaton, a sizable area of land to the south east of the church for a recreation ground. It was laid out in 1892 and Reginald Stanley donated 72 trees

4.2.10 **Stanley's Decline and the Development of Earls Road and Manor Park Road**

Not long after having lost his wife in 1898 after 32 years of marriage, Stanley's business interests took a heavy downward turn when the Boer War (1899-1902) badly disrupted trade with South Africa. By 1908 a sizeable part of the grounds to Manor Court had been sold off to a housing development consortium - The Manor Park Land Syndicate (see below), and by the following year he had moved out of his old house and into one of the villas in Landsdowne Terrace.

The strain of adversity in his business activities at a late stage in his life evidently took its toll on Stanley's health. He suffered a stroke not long after moving into Landsdowne Terrace and it is said that local people spread hay and sand on the road to reduce the noise of passing traffic while he convalesced there as a mark of their concern and respect for him⁶. In 1910 he left Nuneaton for the coast at Bexhill-on Sea where he died

four years later at the age of 76.

Stanley's land sales in the late Edwardian period resulted in the subsequent development, between 1909 and 1914, of Earls Road and Manor Park Road, the details of which are described below. It marked a distinct shift downward in the type of housing market provided for, and thereby a fall in status relative to the late 19th century Manor Court Road developments associated with Stanley. Nevertheless this relatively intense and rapid phase of suburban expansion immediately prior to the outbreak of the First World War resulted in an attractive residential enclave being produced. With its curving irregular semi circle of Earls Road bisected by the straight Manor Park Road, these tree lined streets and their varied house designs by local architects in local materials, evoke something of the early 20th century garden-suburb and mark it out from the more rigid streets and the rather dull and repetitive terraced housing of the late 19th and 20th centuries found elsewhere in Nuneaton.

4.2.11 The Inter-war Period

The First World War brought a sudden halt to building which lasted the four years of the conflict. For the next few years after that development was meager and piece-meal with developers relying in most cases on government building subsidies to make construction financially worthwhile.

Vacant plots were gradually filled over the interwar period though a number of housing plots at the south end of Manor Park Road remained undeveloped until the 1950s. Meanwhile the period witnessed the steady expansion of the Hospital with additions to wards, new medical facilities, a mortuary, and a nurses home (now Jepson House) all to the designs of the local architect HN Jepson. During the Second World War the area suffered from air raids with several houses lost to enemy action in 1941 around the junction of Manor Park Avenue and Manor Court Road. These were subsequently redeveloped shortly after the war's end.

4.2.12 The Later 20th Century

Post war development has not been extensive within the area there being little scope for building other than isolated infill development after the completion of Manor Park Road at the end of the 1950's / early 1960s.

In 1951 the retired gas engineer George Helps, who had lived at Stanley's former residence Manor Court since 1915, died and bequeathed the house to a charity for use as a nursing home. This opened in 1954. In 1960 the coach house and stable block to Manor Court were converted into flats, and lock up garages were built to provide income for the home. The nursing home continues at Manor Court today.

The Cottage hospital continues despite NHS plans to close and demolish it for redevelopment in 1993. The proposals met with strong local opposition and led directly for calls to designate a conservation area to protect the hospital buildings.

This was subsequently declared by the Council in 1993 and its boundaries are shown in illustration **1**

4.2.13 The Sequence and Pattern of Housing Development

Development took place piecemeal and was carried out by numerous small-scale builders either for themselves acting as developers, or for others. The latter ranged from men of means and major landholders (like Stanley and Tomkinson), to minor 'amateur' developers including professionals such as architects and doctors, and others with capital to invest including business people and traders. All were building homes, either for themselves to live in, or speculatively, to sell on.



Mardale, 123 Manor Court Road 1893 by F J Yates.
Home of Dr Nason

The scale of a builder's individual developments within the study area was small - typically two to four houses were built as a 'development unit', occasionally six to eight. They were designed mostly as pairs of houses either individually as semi-detached units, or as parts of short rows of terraces. Detached houses are also present though they are not numerous, most of them being built during either the 1890s or the 1920s

The building process was relatively straightforward. A major landowner, or landowners, would seek approval from the Local Board of Health for a road, or roads, to be laid on their land. Sometimes, as in the case of Manor Court Road, construction might be met in total or in part from the public purse, but more often it was paid for by the landowner/s themselves. A plan for the road would be drawn up by the developer's agent, (an architect/surveyor in the case of Earls Road and Manor Park Road), and submitted to the Board for approval. This would set out not only the line of the road itself but also the arrangement of house plots along its

length, showing their width and depth, and also the proposed building line as a set distance from the back edge of the footpaths to which the front elevations of the houses needed to conform.

After the road was approved, land to either side would be split up into smaller development parcels and sold by the larger landholders to smaller developers and prospective homeowners.

15



Pair of Villas in Hospital Road by F J Yates for Reginald Stanley

13



The former Cottage Hospital 1893 by F J Yates

16



Manor Court 1896 by F J Yates for Reginald Stanley

14



Gayton House 1893 for F Swallow by F J Yates

17



17. Landsdowne Terrace 1896 by F J Yates for Reginald Stanley

18



18. Coachman's House 106 Manor Court Road

These parcels were not, however, all released on to the market at the same time. On the evidence of the development pattern and building dates in the Manor Court area, it is clear that some development parcels were held back by their owners and released in phases over several years. In one case a sizable development parcel at the junction of Manor Park Road and Manor Court Road remained undeveloped until well after the Second World War.



Nunscroft 139 Earls Road for hat manufacturer C A Phillips



Lyndhurst and Milton Villas, 157-9 Earls Road. Built 1897 for Ernest Voules a tile manufacturer's clerk



'Denehurst' 117 Manor Court Road

The details of how and why certain plots came up for sale while others remained undeveloped for several years are now lost but it obviously related both to reasons of supply - the needs and wishes of the principal land holders, and demand - the popularity of certain plots with prospective small scale developers/ owners at a particular time.

Once a smaller developer/potential homeowner had acquired his or her plot or plots, each would independently seek building regulations approval for the building or buildings to be placed on them. The approval controlled building floor heights, distance of the front elevation from the highway edge, the position of the front of the building in relation to its neighbours, the materials to be used, the minimum area of open space to the rear of the house and other sanitation and ventilation matters. In the vast majority of cases within the proposed conservation area, architects made the application for Building Regulations approval and produced house plans for this purpose. Most of these still survive and their drawings show room layouts, and sometimes, front elevations.

Where landowners had insufficient means to meet the necessary road and building infrastructure costs, a syndicate might be formed for this purpose, assembling the land, building the road, parceling up plots and then selling them on to individuals and smaller developers. Within the proposed conservation area the Manor Park Land Syndicate was set up for this reason, acquiring land from Reginald Stanley to develop it by laying out Manor Park Road and the western half of Earls Road in 1908.



Baden House 140 Manor Court Road. Built 1900 and designed by Leicester architect T Gordon for James Bates a brickworks manager

23



102-4 Manor Court Road c.1905. By local architect RH Smith for local developer A W Rose

24



144-146 Manor Court Road c.1906. By local architect A Moreton.

25



148-150 c.1906 by A Moreton

Road construction for development within the area started with the laying out of the northern half of Manor Court Road by 1891, followed shortly afterwards by the remaining length down to Queens Road in 1892. Then came Hospital Road (now Manor Park Avenue) laid out in 1892/3 at the expense of Reginald Stanley for the hospital. A short length of Earls Road up to Nunscroft (139 Earls Road) was also probably laid out at, or shortly after, this time, and in 1897 Stanley received further approval for Countess Road off the Earls Road cul-de-sac.

Housing development within the proposed conservation area began with building on a small number of select and widely dispersed plots along these roads from 1893 onwards. It comprised of a series of detached villas and a substantial terrace most of which were designed by Stanley's architect F J Yates of Birmingham, together with the Cottage Hospital in Hospital Road - also by Yates. Though numerically small this is visually a significant group.

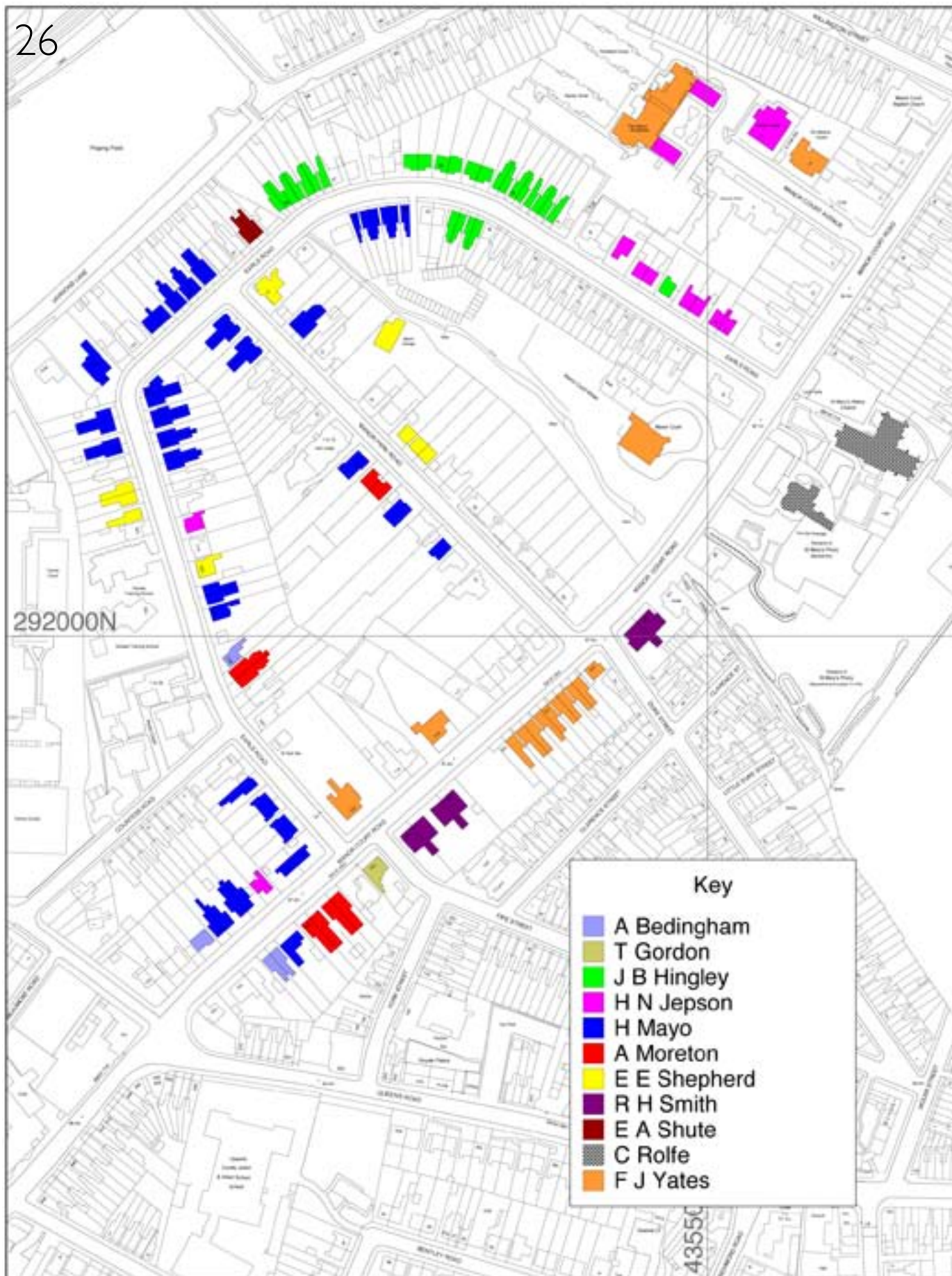
The first buildings, were a villa for Dr E Nason named Mardale (123 Manor Court Road) ¹² and the Cottage Hospital ¹³ both built in 1893. These were followed by Gayton House (115 Manor Court Road) ¹⁴ for the mining engineer Frederick Swallow, Gardeners Cottage for Stanleys gardener Mr J Randle, together with a pair of villas in Hospital Road (now the Medical Centre) in 1894, ¹⁵ and Manor Court for Stanley himself in 1894/5. ¹⁶ In 1896 came Lansdowne Terrace - a row of a nine houses, ¹⁷ and at about the same time the Coachman's House (106 Manor Court Road). ¹⁸

Yates designed all of the foregoing ⁷ presumably under the patronage or influence of Stanley. Other substantial houses of the 1890s and early 1900s in this first phase, not designed by Yates but similar in style and character (though in most cases less accomplished), include Nunscroft (139) Earls Road for the hatting factory owner Charles A Phillips (of Hall and Phillips felt hat manufacturers), ¹⁹ Lyndhurst and Milton Villas (157 - 159), ²⁰ Earls Road in 1897 for Ernest Voules, a tile manufacturers clerk, Denehurst (117) Manor Court Road) of c.1896, ²¹ and Baden House (140) Manor Court Road of 1900 designed by a Leicester architect T.J. Gordon for James Bates a brickworks manager. ²²

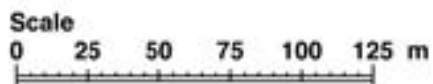
7 (with the possible exception of 106 which on stylistic grounds looks like a Yates building but there is no building control record to confirm this)



26



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27
5-7 Manor Park Road 1909. Designed by Nuneaton architects H Mayo & Son for developer George Cooper



31
94-96 Earls Road c.1909 by H Mayo & Son



28
6-8 Manor Park Road 1909. Designed by H Mayo & Son



32
98-100 Earls Road c.1909 by H Mayo & Son



29
87-89 Earls Road c.1911 by H Mayo & Son



30
90-92 Earls Road c.1909 by H Mayo & Son for G Cooper

This development of the mid-late 1890s represented a first phase of building heavily influenced either directly or indirectly by Stanley and his architect Yates. It established for Nuneaton a small area of leafy late Victorian suburbia containing substantial middle class houses well separated from each other along the middle and southern sections of Manor Court Road from the Abbey Church and the Priory precinct southwards.

After the first Stanley/Yates phase of development there was a small hiatus, with little building in the first five years of the new century along the Stanley owned sections of Manor Court Road. Then around 1905 there came a relatively intense spate of construction (presumably following a release of land for sale by Stanley) with a series of substantial detached and semi-detached villas along the south east side of Manor Court Road that continued the middle-class character of the first phase, but in a noticeably less accomplished and flamboyant manner than Yates's buildings. They were built by minor local developers principally A W Rose, using local architects, among them - H. Mayo, A Beddingham, A. Moreton, and RH Smith. [23-25](#)

The next noticeable phase of building came with the construction of Manor Park Road and the first extension of Earls Road from Nunscroft to Bar Pool Brook in 1908/9. This happened about the time that Stanley moved from Manor Court into 10 Landsdowne Terrace. The roads were built for the Manor Park Land Syndicate on land previously held by Stanley to create a sizeable area of building land to the west of, and close up to, the line of Bar Pool Brook.

The approved plan for the roads, drawn up by the architect and surveyor Henry Mayo, shows the building lines for houses as 12 feet from the back edge of footpath along Manor Park Road and 10 feet along Earls Road, with plots widths of 23 and 18 feet respectively. Plots to the south of Manor Park Road however, and adjacent to a short stretch of Manor Court Road were substantially larger ranging from 45 to 80 feet. It may be significant that these larger, more prestigious and therefore more expensive, plots remained undeveloped for several years, in some cases for decades.

Initial building activity along the new roads was concentrated along the east side of the western arm of Earls Road and to both sides of the northern section of the same, and the northern end of Manor Park Road beginning in 1909. The pre-eminent building type was the suburban semi-detached house, noticeably more modest in scale than earlier houses built along Manor Court Road and the earliest section of Earls Road. ²⁷⁻³²

It went with the dominant development pattern in this third phase of development, which was one of numerous small development units comprising mainly of only two plots for a single pair of semidetached houses. All were built within a short period - in the years 1909/11. Only in one or two cases was the development unit of this time slightly larger and then only comprising of two or three pairs of semis.

It would appear from this short and intense phase of activity that the Syndicate's release of land was limited and that the generally smaller plots released were very marketable generating much competition between potential buyers.

The most successful buyer was the local builder George Cooper who acquired and built some 24 houses on several plots. He teamed up with the architect Henry Mayo, the designer of the road and housing layout. Mayo was easily the most popular house designer with the many

small-scale developer clients at this time. Other local architects engaged here included Ernest. E. Shepherd and Arthur Moreton.

The second and final extension to Earls Road, from Barpool Brook back down to Manor Court Road, was carried out in 1911. It completed an irregular crescent shape bisected by the contrasting dead straight line of Manor Park Road. The nature of building along this final eastern section was different from the previous ones. There is a noticeable increase in building density as rows or terraces of modest housing appear alongside closely spaced semis in relatively small plots, signifying that the housing market aimed at here was once again lower than previously. ³³⁻³⁴ This reinforces the suggestion that smaller, less expensive, plots were the more popular and easier to sell in Nuneaton at this time.

Judging by the rate of building, targeting a lower level of the housing market was successful, and as a result, a good 60% of the street building frontage of the post-1911 section had been developed within only two years of the road's construction. Contemporary building also filled some of the gaps in building frontages left at the northern end of Manor Park Road and the adjacent earlier northern section of Earls Road. Again the builder George Cooper was the most prolific developer. He constructed the entire run of houses from Nos. 2 to 50 Earls Road between late 1911 and late 1913. It is not known who his architect was, if indeed he used one at all by this time. The most prolific known architect in this phase was another local- JB Hingley- whose designs were generally not of the standard of Mayo, Shepperd and Moreton.

This period of rapid house building was brought to an abrupt halt with the outbreak of the First World War. New building did not start again in the area until 1920 and when it did, it was clearly a struggle for builders and developers to provide anything the market could support without public subsidy. The Government with its mandate to provide 'homes fit for heroes' made grants available, subject to certain build-quality standards, through the early-mid 20s. These enabled a small number of houses to be constructed in the first years of the new decade though several subsidies were subsequently repaid presumably for breaching conditions of offer.

33



14-32 Earls Road. Terraces c. 1911 make an appearance alongside closely spaced pairs of semi's in the northeastern half of Earls Road.

34



10-12 Earl Street, South West Side. Smaller semi detached houses stand close together in the north eastern arm of Earl Street

Building was again concentrated in discrete parcels of land, probably relating to land releases by owners. It was located along to the middle and southern sections of Manor Park Road down to Manor Court Road on the west side, on Manor Court Road to the west of the south westerly arm of Earls Road, and to the gap left between the pre-war building at the north east angle of Earls Road.

The 20s pattern of development marked a significant departure from previous ways. Firstly the undeveloped formerly large prestigious

35



36



35&36. 125 Manor Court Road & 17 Earls Road. c. 1925. Architect H Mayo tries hard to maintain an imposing frontage to Manor Court Road despite the shallowness of the housing plot.

37



103-109 Manor Court Road c. 1924. The quality of design fronting Manor Court Road falls significantly with the building of these Government subsidized post-war houses for local developers Hale & West.

plots fronting Manor Court Road were reduced drastically in size through subdivision, while, conversely, the plot sizes along the lesser streets were increased, particularly to the west side of Manor Park Road. Here there is a small concentration of detached houses in very generously sized gardens for the area.



30-32 Manor Park Road c. 1920 by architect Ernest Shepherd for George Cooper



35 Manor Park Road 1925 by Henry Mayo & Son



39 Manor Park Road 1924 by Henry Mayo & Son



43 Manor Park Road



31-33 Manor Park Road 1922 by Arthur Moreton

This seems to be a clear indication that Manor Court Road itself was declining in its attractiveness as a location for better quality housing. The latter was presumably moving to quieter plots along Manor Park Road facing the then undeveloped grounds of Manor Court and away from what was a busy and noisy vehicle thoroughfare.

The considerable reduction in plot size along Manor Court Road certainly posed design problems for any architect attempting to maintain an imposing front façade of suitable scale for that street, as can be seen from Henry Mayo's valiant attempt with 125 Manor Court Road/ 17 Earls Road for local builders Hale and West.^{35 36} On the other plots adjacent to Manor Park Road (103-109 Manor Court Road) by the same builder/developers, no such effort was made, to the marked detriment of the character and quality of the street scene.³⁷

All of these buildings were the subject of a government building subsidy. Despite this the design, scale and materials of 103-109 Manor Court Road contrast adversely with the Yates designed houses of the late 19th century standing nearby. No architect's name is given on the building regulations approval suggesting an off-the-peg design.

Other more individual designs include 28-32 Manor Park Road built in c.1920 by George Cooper using Ernest Shepherd as his architect,³⁸ nos. 29-43 Manor Park Road - three of which were again designed by Mayo (29, 35 & 39),³⁹⁻⁴¹ and a pair of semi's of c.1922 (31-33 Manor Park Road) by Arthur Moreton.⁴² In Earls Road lesser quality housing (by pre- first world war standards) of c. 1920 and designed by JB Hingley, filled the gap between his earlier houses on the north side of the road.⁴³

The apparent decline in standards in the way that buildings were designed to form an integral part of a larger street scene composition in part of Earls Road from the 1920s (and the failure of Local Authority powers to control this through building regulations), is well illustrated by the incongruous grafting on of one half of a semi detached pair of houses of the later 1920s (57 Earls Road), to an earlier terrace of completely different design built just before the First World War (59-71 Earls Road).⁴⁴

The oddness is compounded by the fact that another half of a semi-detached pair with the same half missing, stands next door at 55 Earls Road.⁴⁵

The final interwar phase of building took place during the 1930s on land immediately to the west of Hingley's houses on the north side of Earls Road and backing on to the hospital site. Here semi detached houses (11-15 Earls Road) of typical 1930s suburban form, were built to the designs of HN Jepson,⁴⁶⁻⁴⁸ with the exception of No.9 which was again by Hingley of c. 1929.⁴⁹

By the outbreak of the Second World War most of the developable land along Earls Road/Manor Park Road had been built on, with the exception of one sizeable development parcel to the southern half of Manor Park Road backing on to Barpool Brook and the grounds of Manor Court. This was not developed until the late 1950s /early 1960s when a line of semi-detached houses all of the same off-the-peg design⁵⁰ was constructed in longish plots to a typical speculative builders specification of the time in lesser quality materials. Subsequently there has been infill development on narrow isolated single plots or parts of plots. At best this has been of uninspired design adding nothing to the area, and at worst it has been alien and harmful to neighbouring buildings and the surrounding area.

4.2.14 **Archaeology and the Scheduled Ancient Monument**

The archaeological interest of the area resides in the medieval remains of the Benedictine priory³ and its associated precinct areas to either side of Manor Court Road and along Barpool Brook. The area of medieval development was significantly more extensive than the currently scheduled

ruins and precinct areas. It is believed that they extend under present housing to Earls Road although its boundaries are as yet unknown⁸. The known area, which is scheduled as an ancient monument, lies to the southeast and northwest of Manor Court Road. That to the northwest covers the present day gardens to Manor Court and forms a small part of a once extensive outer priory precinct. Documentary sources record the presence of several houses, barns, a tile maker's workshop, and the Abbey mill in this outer precinct.

The priory church lies in the area to the south east of Manor Court Road and occupies the highest part of the site. The church would have formed one side of a range of buildings enclosing an inner court. Further buildings were placed outside the main rectangular complex and the whole was enclosed by a bank boundary.

Little remains of the 12th century church except for four massive piers that mark the crossing of the central tower which are now incorporated within the Victorian church by Clapton Rolfe. Part of an eastern range of buildings belonging to the Chapter House survives as above ground remains, but for the rest of the complex only foundations survive. To the south east of the main complex in what is now Abbey Meadow lie the buried remains of the abbey's infirmary.

The preservation of the ground plan indicates that this was a high status complex supporting a sizeable religious community in the medieval period with as many as 93 nuns in 1234.

4.3 **SPATIAL ANALYSIS**

4.3.1 **The character and interrelationship of spaces within the area**

Open spaces are a key feature of the conservation area making an important contribution to the suburban character of Manor Court Road, Earls Road, and Manor Park Road, setting it apart from the more hard urban housing found in neighbouring streets to the north and east.

The most important space is the green wedge running through the middle of the area on an axis at right angles to that of Manor Court Road on a line following Bar Pool Brook. It comprises

43



43-53 Earls Road c. 1920 by architect JB Hingley

46



1-3 Earls Road 1936 by architect HN Jepson

44



57-59 Earls Road - Incongruous adjacent plot development

47



5-7 Earls Road 1930 by HN Jepson

45



55 Earls Road built as the half of a pair that was never completed

48



11-13 Earls Road 1937 by HN Jepson

49



9 Earls Road 1929 by JB Hingley



38-52 Manor Park Road c. 1960

a sequence of three linked spaces:- Firstly the rear gardens to Manor Court; secondly the land containing the standing and below-ground remains of the priory, St Mary's church, and the grounds to the former vicarage on the southeast side of Manor Court Road, and thirdly the recreation ground to the south east of the Church and vicarage. This sequence of green spaces was planted with trees at the instigation of Reginald Stanley and his groups of mature specimens are much in evidence making a vitally important contribution to the softening and greening of the suburban landscape. This contribution is particularly noticeable along the central section of Manor Court Road opposite the Abbey Hotel.

The municipal recreation ground to the southeast also has an important spatial landscape role in providing a green setting to the Abbey ruins and Church in pedestrian approaches to them from the town centre and the southeast. It acts to convey, with only a little imagination on the part of the viewer, something of the rural character of the area before it was developed for housing particularly when looking northwards from within the ground. ⁵³

Nearly as important as this green wedge is the cumulative visual contribution made to the garden suburb character of Earls Road/Manor Court Road by the many private rear gardens. The very long rear gardens that support large mature trees (not commonly found in 20th century housing areas in the town) to the southwest side of Manor Park play an important role in complementing and reinforcing the low density character at the heart of the area.



51. 106 Manor Court Road and Lansdowne Terrace



52. Earls Road



53. Open space south of St Mary's Church

Street enclosure is agreeably handled by the consistency of building lines that set back houses behind shallow front gardens or forecourt areas, themselves enclosed by varying boundary treatments, but most commonly brick walls

4.3.2 Key views and vistas

Owing to the flat general topography (which dips slightly towards the south) there are no distant views into the conservation area from outside its present and proposed boundaries. Within the conservation area there are no outstanding landscape or townscape views but there are a number of views and vistas of notable buildings and building groups along streets and from public spaces.

Included among them are:-

- the long vistas down the straight line of Manor Park Road towards the Coachman's House (106 Manor Court Road) that terminates the view and effectively marks the corner of Manor Court Road and Duke Street.
- Contrasting with the long straight alignment of Manor Park Road is the curving of Earls Road that gradually reveals to view the succession of houses that line both sides.
- Oblique views along Manor Court Road to landmark buildings including Lansdowne Terrace, Manor Court, St Marys Abbey, and the former Vicarage.
- The long vista along Manor Court Avenue terminated by the symmetrical composition of the Cottage Hospital with main axis centered on the line of the middle of the road.
- The middle distance views over green treed space of the recreation ground to the Priory Ruins and Vicarage

4.4 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

4.4.1 Character Areas and Zones

Eight areas of different but related character have been identified in the study area. These are shown at Fig. 54. Their main character and significance is summarized below together with any key buildings they contain. There is some overlap between the areas, and the boundaries are blurred in certain areas particularly in the middle section of Manor Court Road where a 'zone of transition' is indicated between various adjacent character areas.

4.4.2 Character area I: - Manor Court Road and Earls Road (part)

Principal features

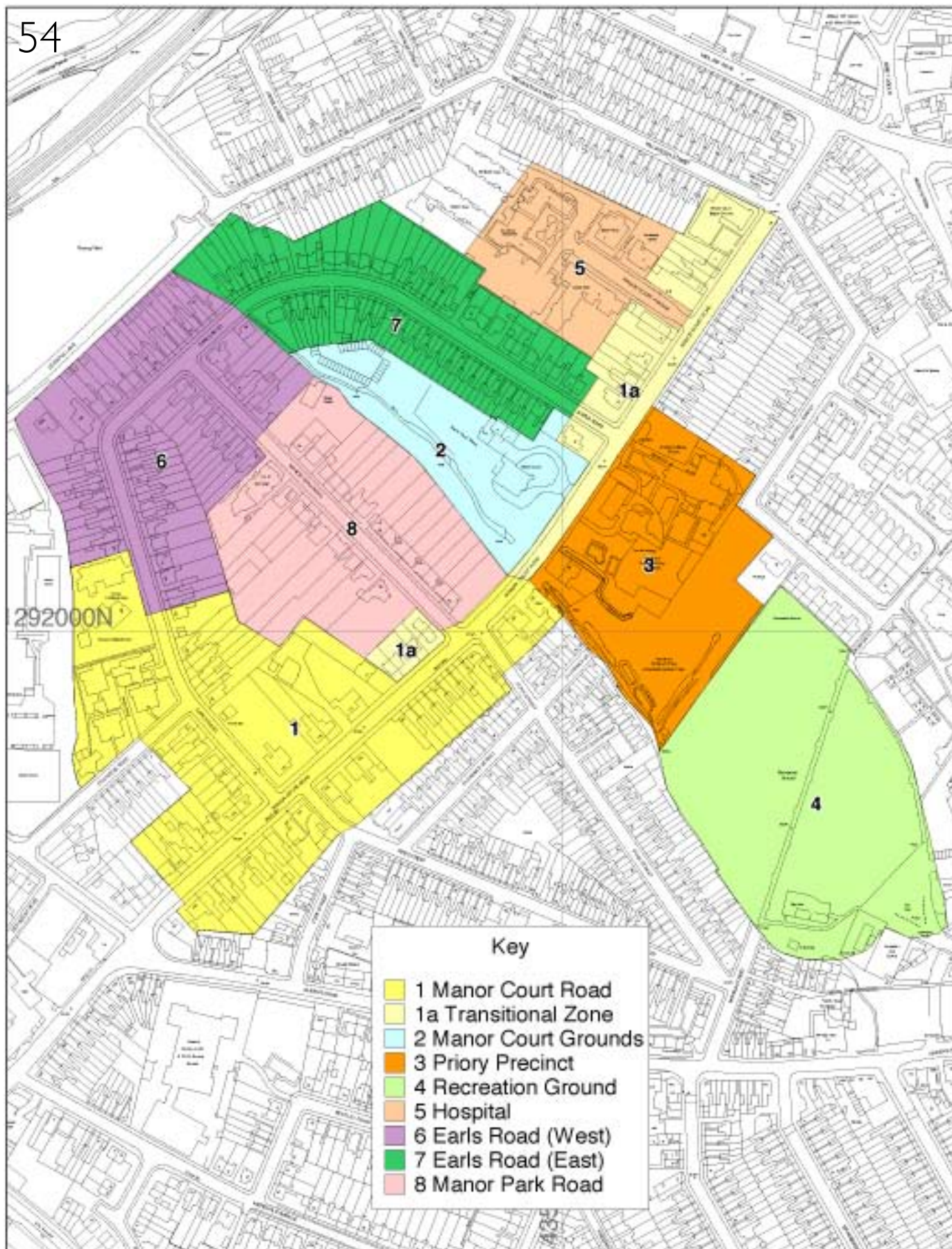
- Houses designed by FJ Yates
- Substantial detached and semi detached, two and three-storey, late Victorian and Edwardian villas
- Mature street trees
- Wide street with generous pavements
- Lansdowne Terrace a significant landmark building
- Mix of residential, service and institutional uses
- Leafy character particularly in the middle section flanked by the grounds of Manor Court and the Abbey Precinct
- Larger gardens visible in glimpse views between buildings from the street

This sub area largely coincides with areas along Manor Court Road owned originally by Stanley and developed either directly by him or under his influence through disposal to other smaller developers. It extends to include part of Earls Road (see Fig. 54) The predominant period of building is late 19th century Victorian and Edwardian, with some inter-war and post-war infill. The characteristic building types of this area are substantial middle class detached and semi-detached houses, and a row of villas. Today it is an area of mixed use and though primarily residential in character, it accommodates a nursing home, hotel, and various other service sector uses such as dentists and accountants. Several of the larger houses have been converted to flats.

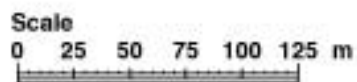
Stanley's architect FJ Yates was an important influence in this, the first late 19th century phase of development in the conservation area. He designed a small number of buildings in various styles but the most common was a free and eclectic Domestic Revival style, which incorporated forms, details, and materials found in English vernacular and continental buildings. These included dominant steeply pitched tile roofs (in most cases as high as the elevations beneath them), red brick walls with applied 'black and white' timber framing, particularly to gables, and tall chimneys. These elements were often arranged in carefully contrived compositions, producing varied picturesque silhouettes and roofscapes. The most spectacular example is



54



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Landsdowne Terrace of 1896 grouped with the Coachmans House. The style can be seen as part of a rural romanticism fashionable in the late 19th century. Its models were the picturesque vernacular revival houses in developments such as Bedford Park, London, Bourneville, Birmingham, and Port Sunlight near Liverpool. The style fits in well with the ambience of the Manor Park Road in the vicinity of priory ruins with its newly planted tree lined pavements, and extensive areas of leafy open spaces. It also complimented the prominent new vicarage of 1886 by Rolfe that had also responded to the semi rural and ancient context around the priory ruins.

Most other housing in this character area is of the late 19th century and Edwardian period and shows some of the same late Victorian stylistic influences as Yates buildings, but they were designed by less accomplished local architects who lacked his bold compositional skills and eye for striking detail. Instead they tend to be less ornate and employ simple rectangular box-like forms under hipped or gabled roofs, on to which were grafted two-storey bays often topped off with black and white gables or tiled hipped roofs or a mixture of the two. More substantial examples are to be found on Manor Court Road including nos. 102-104, 148-150 and in Earls Road such as nos. 139, 136-138 and 161-165. Walls are predominantly of red machine made brick mostly dressed with standard 'catalogue' detailing to windows and eaves - characteristically bow headed lintels and terracotta eaves detailing. Most of these together with the red clay roof tiles on these buildings were manufactured locally and many probably in Stanley's brick and tile works.

The modern blocks of apartment housing immediately to the south of 139 Earls Road are of no intrinsic architectural or historic interest and have been included solely on the grounds of rationalizing the conservation area boundary.

Key Buildings

- Landsdowne Terrace Designed by Yates for Reginald Stanley
- Gayton House 115 Manor Court Road Designed by Yates for Henry Swallow, Mining Engineer
- Bayden House 140 Manor Court Road Designed by T.J. Gordon for James Bates brickworks manager .
- The Coachmans House 106 Manor Court Road.

- Manor Court. House built for Reginald Stanley to a design by Yates in 1894-5. A three storey building with corner turret and conical roof. Many of the building materials were produced in Stanley's local brick and tile works.
- Mardale. 123 Manor Court Road Designed by Yates for Dr Edward Nason
- 139 Earls Road built for Charles Phillips hat manufacturer

4.4.3 **Zone of Transition 1 a: - Manor Court Road**

The light yellow area along part of Manor Court Road in Fig. 54 represents a zone of transitional character between the flanking open space character areas 2 & 3 and the hospital complex sub area 5. The zone has no strongly identifiable character of its own but derives its mixed character from the adjacent areas it connects.

Principal features

- The large gothic style Baptist church with memorial stone laid by Stanley in 1898 and opened by him in 1899.

4.4.4 **Character Area 2: Grounds to Manor Court**

Principal features

- The below ground remains of the medieval priory
- Manor Court (see above)
- Mature trees and brook course
- Open and green, leafy character of this area
This is one of three key green spaces running in a belt through the conservation area and it houses the large former residence of Reginald Stanley – Manor Court. This is now used as a nursing home. The grounds, which originally extended to six acres, contain many mature trees most of which were planted by Stanley, a keen amateur arboriculturalist. These include Hornbeam, Lime, Corsican Pine, Sycamore, Black Poplar, and Yew. They contribute considerably to the leafy character of the central section of Manor Court Road and the amenity of the Conservation Area generally. Running through the middle of the grounds is the stream known as Barpool Brook which provided the necessary water supply to

the priory and powered its mill situated by the Barpool itself on the western boundary of the priory precinct outside the current study area to the northwest. In addition to its aesthetic and nature value this character area has historic value for its associations with Stanley and for its below ground remains of the medieval priory precinct-part of the scheduled ancient monument.

4.4.5 **Character Area 3: St Mary's Priory Precinct, Church and former Vicarage**

Principal features

- The standing and below ground remains of the medieval priory set in open space adjacent to the listed church of St Mary
- The listed Church and former vicarage including the mature trees and gardens of the latter
- Open and green, leafy character of this area

This character area comprises the standing and below ground remains of the principal parts of the medieval priory. As such it has considerable historic value. It also has high aesthetic value for the openness of the spaces around the ruins and the listed Victorian Church and former vicarage, and for the quality of the buildings themselves—both Grade 2 listed buildings

Key Buildings

- St Mary's Church and Priory Ruins. Built in 1876 to the design of Clapton Rolfe with chancel added in 1906 and a north transept in 1930 both by Harold Brakspear. It is listed grade 2.
- Former St Mary's Vicarage. In 1886 Charles de Havilland wrote 'you will observe a vicarage has been built. It is of medieval style with a view to being in unison with the surrounding ruins and the Abbey Church'. It is also listed grade 2.

4.4.6 **Character Area 4: Pool Bank Street Recreation Ground**

Principal features

- Mature trees flanking paths donated and planted by Stanley in 1892
- Views towards the priory ruins.

This municipal recreation ground, surrounded by urban terrace housing and tower blocks, is included in the conservation area for its historic associations with Stanley and Tomkinson, and for its amenity value in providing an open green setting to the priory ruins, and in the mature trees it contains.

4.4.7 **Character Area 5: The Hospital**

Principal features

- Wide tree lined street approach laid out and paid for by Reginald Stanley
- Original hospital symmetrically designed and centered on the main axis of the street and terminating street vistas from the south.
- Buildings designed by FJ Yates
- Buildings designed by H N Jepson
- Institutional character of a large hospital complex

This character area has some of the highest quality buildings in the conservation area designed by two significant architects FJ Yates of Birmingham, and HN Jepson of Nuneaton the latter designing in the 1920s and 30s. The area has considerable historic value as Nuneaton's first hospital paid for by voluntary private contributions and its close associations with its principal patrons – the prominent local figures Stanley, Tomkinson, Dr Richard Nason and his son Edward, and Charles Philips

Key Buildings

- The former Cottage Hospital designed by FJ Yates. The original building of 1893 comprised a central administration block in a free classical renaissance style and two flanking eight bed wards. The latter were extended in 1920 to house twenty beds each. Later further wards were added funded through private subscription until nationalization
- Jepson House. Built as a nursing home in 1926 to the design of HN Jepson
- The Medical Centre. Originally a pair of villas designed by Yates
- The Gardeners Cottage. Another building by Yates.

4.4.8 **Character Area 6: Earls Road West and Manor Park Road North**

Principal features

- Attractive quiet suburban residential area
- Predominantly Edwardian semi detached houses of consistent form, scale and materials, most with projecting two-storey bays often under 'black and white' gables
- Mature street trees
- Curving road alignment

This is an area of predominantly late Edwardian semi-detached housing displaying a high degree of consistency in its form, scale, materials, and building lines. In its layout and use of street trees it has a pleasant suburban character of above average aesthetic/amenity value in the local context. It has no key buildings as such as most are typical and representative forming part of a cohesive group or groups, rather than standing out individually.

The predominant style adopted is one which derives from the vernacular revival style of the late 19th century but adapted to the more modest scale of middle class semi detached houses of the late Edwardian and immediately pre first war periods. The houses, nearly all designed by local architects, represent the forerunners of that archetypal inter-war suburban design - the semi-detached house designed as a reflected pair with characteristic two-storey canted or semi-circular bay windows (the leitmotif of the conservation area) under gables and for dormers often in 'black and white' timbering, and arched porches to the front doors.

4.4.9 **Character Area 7: Manor Park Road Central and South**

Principal features

- Attractive quiet suburban residential street
- Substantial detached and semi detached inter-war houses of varied designs by local architects
- Houses have large rear garden plots
- Mature street trees
- Long straight vistas

An area of interwar and post war housing development characterised by above average sized rear garden plots that make a significant

contribution to the suburban character of the existing conservation area and to the current study are as a whole. Again there are no key buildings but there are several detached and semi detached houses of the early interwar period that make a significant contribution to the above average amenity value of this sub area.

The group of late 1950s semi detached houses to the south of the road have little inherent architectural or historic value but they do not offend and their gardens again make a significant contribution.

4.4.10 **Character Area 8: Earls Road East**

Principal characteristics

- Quiet residential street
- Short terraces or rows together with closely spaced semidetached houses mostly built immediately before the outbreak of the first world war
- Two-storey front bays under gables are a signature feature
- Interwar infill housing by local architects including 1930s houses by Jepson and 1920s houses by Hingley
- Curving road alignment
- Mature street trees

An area of predominantly pre first world war and interwar housing of higher density and lesser architectural quality than other character areas but above average in the current local context and closely related to the character of areas 6 & 7. Unlike other character areas, semi-detached houses are accompanied by longer straight rows of housing that are characteristic of the more rigid grid iron pattern of development found more generally in late 19th century Nuneaton. Again the two-storey front bay under gables is the signature feature, which collectively create a pleasing rhythm through repetition along the street frontages.

The plan type of these pre 1914 houses is of narrow fronted units most often designed as pairs of semi-detached houses (though sometimes extending into rows of up to eight) that are deep front to back with long rear service ranges. Typically these accommodated two reception rooms (the parlour or sitting room and the dining

room) and a hallway in the main body of the house with kitchen, pantry, scullery and coalhouse accommodated in the long rear range. On the first floor were two bedrooms with a third and the bathroom and wc again housed in the rear service range.

4.5 **BUILDINGS WHICH CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA.**

These are shown on Fig. 55. Generally they are buildings that:

- are designed by local architects and/or
- are representative of the majority of buildings in the area and
- display a reasonably high degree of intactness and/or
- form part of a significant group

4.6 **MATERIALS & DETAILS**

Materials have particular significance in the conservation area in that most are Nuneaton made products, with probably the majority of these originating from Reginald Stanley's brick and tile works in Stockingford and the Haunchwood Works. They include roof tiles, stone window dressings and terracotta ornamentation.

Catalogue elements such as decorative terracotta sunflower plaques (a typical Arts & Crafts motif of the late 19th century) can be seen on buildings designed by different architects at different dates for example on 123 Manor Court Road by Yates of 1893 and the Abbey Hotel (originally a house) of 1905 (architect unknown but possibly RH Smith)

Iron drainage gulley-covers in the footpaths are by Stanley's Nuneaton Manufacturing Co.

Render, either employed with brick or used exclusively on principal elevations, became increasingly more common from the end of the Edwardian period to the end of the 1930s.

It is notable how many roofs within the proposed conservation area retain their original red plain clay roof tiles, ridge and bonnet tiles, and finials - a testament to the quality of these Nuneaton made products

4.7 **BUILDING CONDITION**

The greater part of the external building fabric of housing in the study area is substantially intact and properties generally retain a high degree of historic integrity. The loss of historic detailing has largely been confined to windows and doors where plastic and modern stained joinery have detracted from the buildings in which they have been installed. Generally the better quality buildings have fared the best in terms of retaining important features and escaping adverse alterations. In a few cases alterations have been undertaken that have almost completely destroyed the original appearance and character of houses.

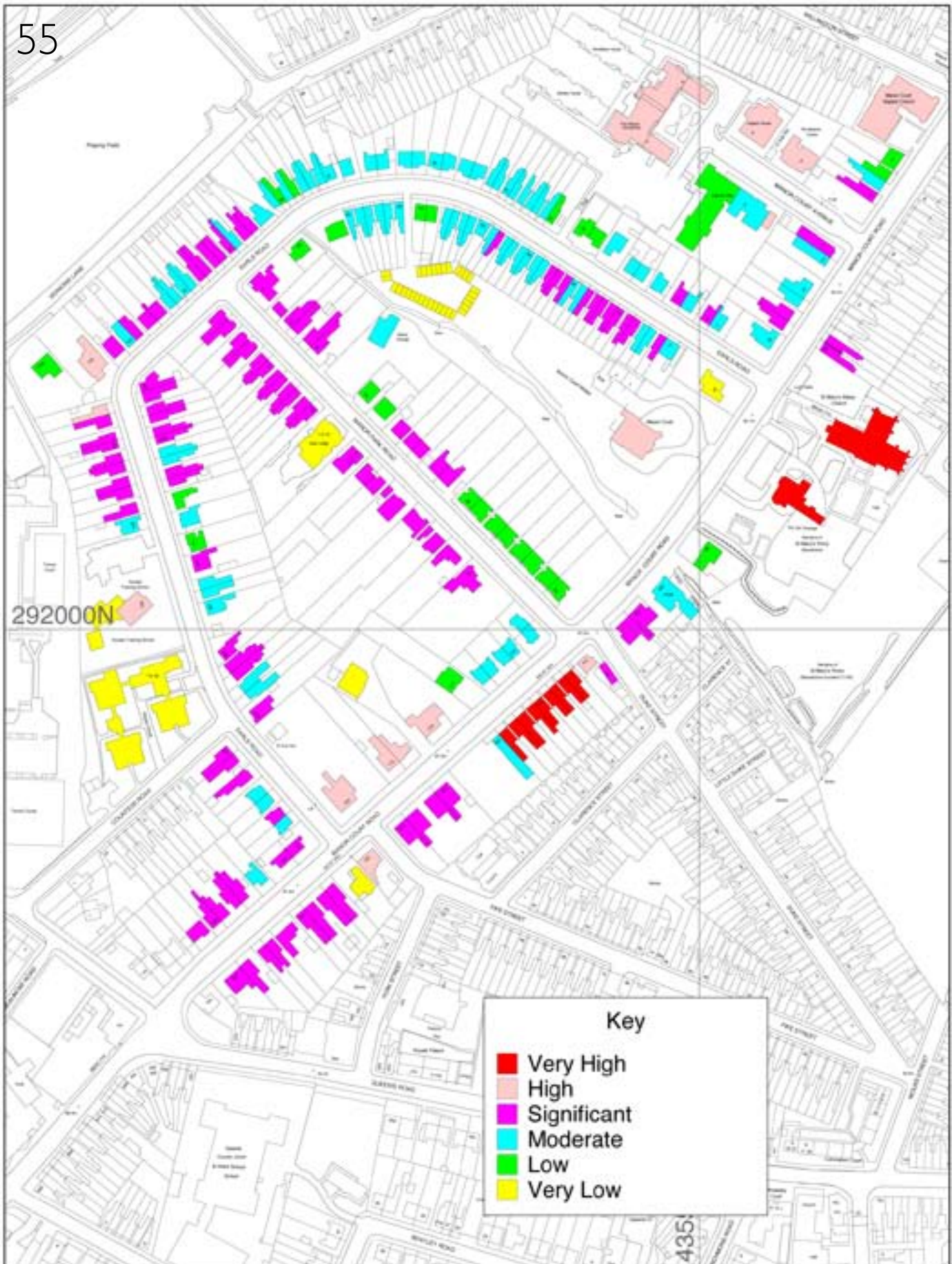
4.8 **THE EXTENT OF INTRUSION OR DAMAGE (NEGATIVE FACTORS)**

The following elements detract from the special character of the area:

- Later 20th century development which does not relate in scale, form or materials to the typical Edwardian and inter-war character of houses in the study area (they are indicated in yellow in illustration 55)
- Loss of historic windows and doors. These have been lost on a major scale with many replaced in UPVC throughout the area.
- Loss of historic detailing/ materials. Smaller houses of lesser quality in original design and materials have fared worse with applied render and unsympathetically designed alterations compromising significantly the appearance and historic value. This applies also to front boundary walls where occasionally inappropriate materials such as concrete blocks have been used instead of the original brick
- Loss of front gardens and boundary walls to hard-standing for cars
- Unsympathetic and eclectic front boundary wall treatments
- Vehicle traffic along Manor Court Road
- Adverse effects of multiple occupation - adding to extra pressure for on-and-off-street car parking and unkempt front gardens
- Car Parking



55



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PART 2

5.0 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

5.1 Heritage Value of the Area

5.1.1 The heritage value of the existing conservation area is detailed above. For the purposes of the future management of this heritage value the following physical attributes are identified as being particularly important to consider for the preservation of the sense of place of the Abbey area:-

Architecture:

- The coherence of housing through unity of scale, form, building lines, plot sizes, colour and texture of materials, similarity of date, and nearly all houses designed by a small number of local architects.
- The integrity and relative intactness of buildings and building groups, including institutional buildings as well as housing.
- The immediate physical setting of these buildings visible from public areas (particularly front forecourt areas and boundary treatments)

Archaeology:

- The above and below-ground remains of the medieval priory, priory precincts and their setting.

Open Spaces:

- Large private gardens to houses in Manor Park Road
- Grounds to the St Mary's Abbey and old Vicarage
- Grounds to Manor Court
- The Recreation Ground

Natural features:

- Street trees
- Trees in public spaces
- Garden trees.
- Boundary Hedges

The Streets:

- Any surviving early fabric and details especially evidence of associations with Reginald Stanley eg iron drainage gulleys and man-hole covers, street lights etc

5.2. Problems posing a threat to heritage value

5.2.1 Problems threatening the integrity and intactness of house designs and their immediate setting (largely because of permitted development rights) include:-

- The widespread use of inappropriate materials particularly plastics for windows and doors. These are one of the most damaging and pervasive of alterations that are made to houses⁹ and are permitted in conservation areas unless Article 4 Directions are in place (see section 5.4).
- Poor design of replacement of windows and doors of any material usually to provide primary double glazing
- Staining rather than painting of external replacement joinery
- Loss of front gardens to concrete car parking areas and their associated boundary walls
- Unsympathetic means of enclosure to forecourts/front gardens such as fancy openwork grey concrete blocks resulting in loss of visual unity to the street scene.
- Removal of period details such as cornices to bay windows, decorative brickwork, brick arches, canopies and substitution with poor quality replacements
- Extensions in the form of large porches or infilling between bay windows and entrances with long canopies
- Rendering or painting brick elevations

9 'House' refers to a single family dwelling house, not flats or houses in multiple occupation.

- 5.2.2 Problems not related to permitted development include
- Inappropriate form and scale of new buildings.
- 5.2.3 Other potential threats (not yet a problem but likely be in the future)
- Recovering roofs in wrong materials. Original natural red plain clay tiles locally made are a key feature of the houses in the area. Unless controlled by Article 4 (2) Directions they can be replaced by cheaper coloured concrete substitutes creating a haphazard patchwork effect on the present uniform roofscape of the area
 - Removal of chimneys
 - Infill development - though there are not many opportunities. Some potential for rear development in long back gardens along Manor Park Road which should be resisted.

5.3 Planning & Development Control Policies

- 5.3.1 Existing conservation policy in the local plan is generic and non-site specific, requiring that the special character or appearance of conservation areas be preserved or enhanced.
- 5.3.2 Specific development control policies could be formulated for the area to preserve and enhance its character by basing them on the building controls that established that character in the first place eg. Strict adherence to established building lines, limited palette of materials, height limits and restrictions on building materials. These would need to be linked to the LDF via policies and guidance in the local development document to carry any weight in planning decisions.
- 5.3.3 Work on the production of the Local Development Framework is currently in progress. It is intended that both the appraisal and management proposals contained in this document will inform the core strategy and later SPD policies for the LDF. Public consultation on these proposals will be in accordance with the statement of community involvement (SCI).

5.4 Article 4:2 Directions

- 5.4.1 Under Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 a large number of minor works that constitute development are excluded from the need for planning permission and are referred to as permitted development. In those conservation areas where there is a high concentration of private houses the cumulative effect of many individual small-scale works carried out as permitted development can be quite devastating to the overall integrity and cohesiveness of the area – which is often the principal reason for designation in the first place. Articles 4(1) and 4(2) of the General Permitted Development Order enable local planning authorities to make directions removing certain of these permitted development rights. Article 4 (2) directions apply only to parts of houses and their associated buildings and structures that front onto highways, waterways or public open spaces, and can be imposed by the Council without reference to the Secretary of State.
- 5.4.2 Unfortunately where a significant proportion of buildings have lost original features such as windows and doors, attempting to control further loss can prove to be difficult. However while additional controls may be unwelcome with some owners, houses are often bought in conservation areas because of their character, and residents know to expect extra controls. Indeed they are welcomed by many as a protection against neighbours lowering property prices through poor quality alterations. Consequently the introduction of Article 4(2) Direction controls is considered both practicable and desirable for the protection of the character of the conservation area.
- 5.4.3 The two new interim Article 4(2) Directions A & B currently in operation are set out at Appendix 1. Appendix 2 contains a plan showing the properties affected by the two Directions together with lists of these buildings. Confirmation of the Directions (authorised by the Council on 12 December 2007) will be dependent on the responses received from public consultation. If the Directions are not confirmed within a six-month period from the date of issue they will lapse.

5.5 **Street management and improving the public realm**

- 5.5.1 Responsibility for highways, footpaths, and street trees within the area lies with Warwickshire County Council. Subject to resources, an audit will be undertaken by the Borough Council in consultation with the County Council to look at the opportunities and potential for improvements to pavements, street furniture and road signs within the conservation area. The Borough Council will subsequently seek to ensure that any enhancement proposals carried out by the County Council will be informed by the audit. This would be supplemented by historical research to determine the traditional types of materials used for paving, and the need to retain existing historical surfaces where they survive. Any future works would aim to enhance local distinctiveness and also be in line with the English Heritage manual *Streets for All: West Midlands*.

5.6 **Guidance to the public**

- 5.6.1 Guidance notes relating to both policy and design matters will be prepared for all residents affected by the imposition of any new Article 4 Directions.

5.7 **Arrangements for monitoring future change**

- 5.7.1 A dated comprehensive photographic record is being made of the conservation area as part of the process of introducing new Article 4 Directions. This can then be used as a baseline for monitoring future change and to assist in any future enforcement action.

5.8 **Strategy for the management and protection of important trees, greenery and green spaces**

- 5.8.1 Trees are of considerable importance to the quality and character of the Manor Court area. Many of them were planted at the end of the 19th century under the direction of Reginald Stanley and are approaching the end of their life. They will need to be replaced in due course.
- 5.8.2 The Council will, subject to resources, undertake an audit of the nature conservation assets of the conservation area to include the identification of all mature trees and formulate management proposals for their care and protection including the setting of priorities for replacement and identifying funding to meet the costs involved.

6.0 APPENDICES

Appendix I: Article 4(2) Directions introduced in 2008

Article 4 (2) Direction A (includes controls over alterations to windows and doors on selected properties)

Whereas the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, being the appropriate local planning authority within the meaning of article 4 (2) of the order, are satisfied that it is expedient that development of the descriptions set out in the Schedule below should not be carried out on buildings coloured red on the attached plan unless permission is granted on an application made under Part III of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Now therefore the Council is pursuant of Article 4(2) of the Order direct that the permission granted by article 3 of the Order shall not apply to development on the said land of the descriptions set out in the Schedule below.

This Direction shall remain in force until the xxth day of (month), 2008 being six months from the date of this direction) and will then expire unless it has been confirmed by the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council before that date.

The direction made by the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council pursuant to Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order 1995 (as amended) applying to 21, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 98, 100, 102 to 104, 106, 108, 110, 112, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 122, 123 and 124 to 126 Manor Court Road and 1 Manor Court Avenue, Nuneaton and dated 11th September 1996 is hereby cancelled from the date on which this direction is confirmed.

Schedule

Description of development the subject of this direction:

1. Development within Part I of Schedule 2 to the Order, consisting of the erection, alteration or removal of a chimney on a dwelling house or on a building within the curtilage of a dwelling house.
2. Development within Class A of Part I of Schedule 2 to the Order consisting of the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house, where any part of the enlargement, improvement or alteration would front a highway or open space.
3. Development within Class C of Part I of Schedule 2 to the Order, consisting of the alteration to a roof slope of a dwelling house which fronts a highway or open space.
4. Development within Class E of Part I of Schedule 2 of the Order, consisting of the provision within the curtilage of a dwelling house of any building or enclosure, swimming or other pool required for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house as such, or the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of such a building or enclosure where the building or enclosure, swimming or other pool to be provided would front a highway or open space, or where the part of the building or enclosure maintained, improved or altered would front a highway or open space.
5. Development within Class H of Part I of Schedule 2 to the Order, consisting of the installation, alteration or replacement of a satellite antenna on a dwelling house or within the curtilage of a dwelling house where the part of the building or other structure on which the satellite antenna is to be installed, altered or replaced fronts a highway or open space.
6. Development within Class A of Part 2 of Schedule 2 or Class B of Part 31 of Schedule 2 to this Order, where the development consists of the erection, construction, maintenance, improvement, demolition or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure and would be within the curtilage of a dwelling house and would front a highway or open space.
7. Development within Class C of Part 2 of Schedule 2 of the Order, consisting of the painting of the exterior of any part, which fronts a highway or open space, of –
 - (i) a dwelling house; or
 - (ii) any building or enclosure within the curtilage of a dwelling house.

Article 4 (2) Direction B
(excludes controls over alterations to windows and doors on selected properties)

Whereas the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, being the appropriate local planning authority within the meaning of article 4 (2) of the Order, are satisfied that it is expedient that development of the descriptions set out in the Schedule below should not be carried out on buildings coloured blue on the attached plan unless permission is granted on an application made under Part III of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Now therefore the Council in pursuance of Article 4(2) of the Order direct that the permission granted by article 3 of the Order shall not apply to development on the said land of the descriptions set out in the Schedule below.

This Direction shall remain in force until the xxth day of (month) 2008 being six months from the date of this direction) and will then expire unless it has been confirmed by the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council before that date.

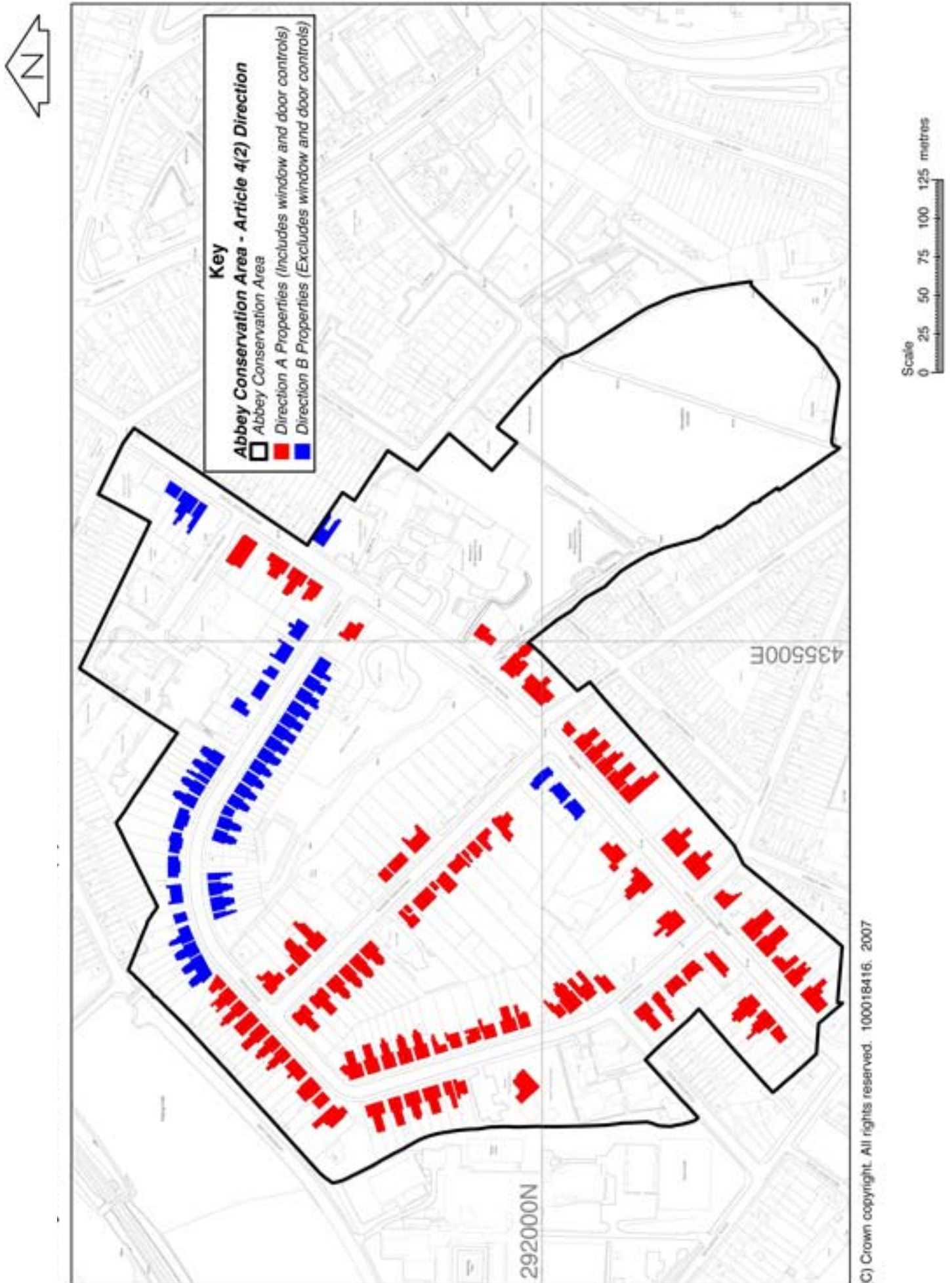
The direction made by the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council pursuant to Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order 1995 (as amended) applying to 21, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 98, 100, 102 to 104, 106, 108, 110, 112, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 122, 123 and 124 to 126 Manor Court Road and 1 Manor Court Avenue, Nuneaton and dated 11th September 1996 is hereby cancelled from the date on which this direction is confirmed.

Schedule

Description of development the subject of this direction:

1. Development within Part I of Schedule 2 to the Order, consisting of the erection, alteration or removal of a chimney on a dwelling house or on a building within the curtilage of a dwelling house.
2. Development within Class A of Part I of Schedule 2 to the Order consisting of the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house, where any part of the enlargement, improvement or alteration would front a highway or open space.
3. Development within Class C of Part I of Schedule 2 to the Order, consisting of the alteration to a roof slope of a dwelling house which fronts a highway or open space.
4. Development within Class E of Part I of Schedule 2 of the Order, consisting of the provision within the curtilage of a dwelling house of any building or enclosure, swimming or other pool required for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house as such, or the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of such a building or enclosure where the building or enclosure, swimming or other pool to be provided would front a highway or open space, or where the part of the building or enclosure maintained, improved or altered would front a highway or open space.
5. Development within Class H of Part I of Schedule 2 to the Order, consisting of the installation, alteration or replacement of a satellite antenna on a dwelling house or within the curtilage of a dwelling house where the part of the building or other structure on which the satellite antenna is to be installed, altered or replaced fronts a highway or open space.
6. Development within Class A of Part 2 of Schedule 2 or Class B of Part 31 of Schedule 2 to this Order, where the development consists of the erection, construction, maintenance, improvement, demolition or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure and would be within the curtilage of a dwelling house and would front a highway or open space.
7. Development within Class C of Part 2 of Schedule 2 of the Order, consisting of the painting of the exterior of any part, which fronts a highway or open space, of –
 - (i) a dwelling house; or
 - (ii) any building or enclosure within the curtilage of a dwelling house.
8. Development at Paragraph 2 shall not include the alteration or replacement of windows and doors provided openings are not altered in size, shape or form.

Appendix 2: Plan and lists of properties affected by Article 4(2) Directions A & B



Schedule of properties subject to withdrawal of permitted development rights including changes to windows and doors (shown in red on map on page 37)

Earls Road Even No.s

90, 92, 94, 96, 98, 100, 102, 104, 106, 108, 110, 112, 114, 124, 126, 128, 130, 134, 136, 138, 140, 142, and 144.

Earls Road Odd No.s

73, 75, 77, 79, 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, 91, 101, 103, 105, 107, 109, 111, 113, 114, 115, 117, 119, 121, 123, 125, 127, 129, 139, 157, 159, 161, 163, 165, 167, 169 and 171.

Manor Park Road Even No.s

2, 6, 8, 10, 12, 28, 30, 32, 34, and 36.

Manor Park Road Odd No.s

1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43.

Manor Court Road Even No.s

98, 100, 102-104, 106, 108, 110, 112, 114, 116, 118, 120, 122, 124-126, 132, 134, 136, 138, 140, 144, 146, 148, 150, 152, 154, 156, 158 and 160.

Manor Court Road Odd No.s

21, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 115, 117, 119, 123, 125, 129, 131, 133, 135 and 137.

Manor Court Avenue

1

Schedule of properties subject to withdrawal of permitted development rights excluding changes to windows and doors within existing openings (shown in blue on map on page 37)

Earls Road Odd No.s

1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69 and 71.

Earls Road Even No.s

2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 68, 70, 72, 74, 76 and 78.

Manor Park Road Odd No.s

No. 45.

Manor Court Road Even No.s

80 and 82

Manor Court Road Odd No.s

11, 13, 15, 17, 101, 103, 105, 107 and 109.