

Grantchester

CONSERVATION AREA



SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE CONSERVATION.

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INTRODUCTION.

This document is the one of a series produced by the District Council which look individually at South Cambridgeshire's Conservation Areas

The purpose of this appraisal is twofold:

- To act as a guide for development control in the Conservation Area.
- To identify the features which contribute to the special character of Grantchester and those features which could be enhanced.

This document was approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance by South Cambridgeshire District Council on 20th May 1999.

THE REASONS FOR THE CONSERVATION AREA.

The designation of a Conservation Area is recognition of the architectural quality and historic interest of the area.

The reasons for the designation of a Conservation Area include the quality of the buildings, the spaces in between them, the landscape, trees, and street furniture. All of these factors can affect, and combine to form, the character of the area.

The following section is an analysis of these features showing why Grantchester warrants its Conservation Area status. It will also identify areas where these features have been eroded, lost or replaced.

The conservation area was designated in 1975 and includes the High Street, Mill Way, The Broadway and part of Coton Road.

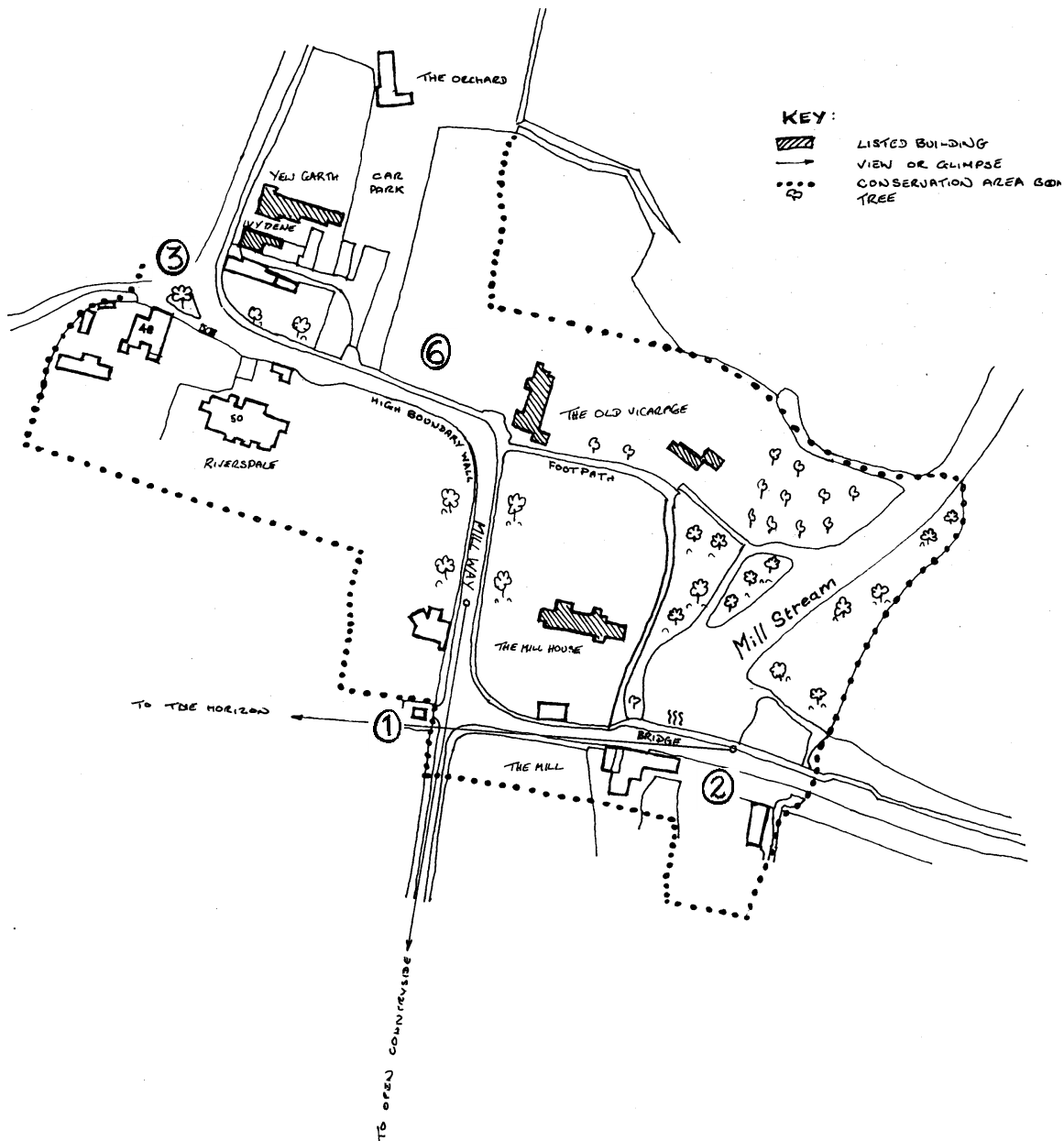
Village Development.

Grantchester grew up where two adjacent and parallel tracks running east from Barton, Comberton and Toft crossed the Cam at fords. The northern road to Coton, now the wide road which was once used as a village green, led down to one ford. This route is still appreciable as low banks and ditches. Only a small portion of the southern track is still used, that to the west of the Old Vicarage; however its east/west continuations are still footpaths. The church lay between the two tracks, on an older religious site, and the subsequent expansion of the village saw the development of a north/south route running past the church, dog-legging around field boundaries to link the two older tracks.

More recently the village has been used as a recreational area for students and other members of the university, most notably by members of the Bloomsbury group, of whom

Rupert Brooke, once a resident of the Old Rectory, was a member. This is reflected in the sophistication of the more recent buildings in the village, such as Riversdale and Balls Grove, two arts and crafts mansions, as academics and members of the middle classes moved to Grantchester.

Mill Way.



Mill Lane is situated at the southern end of the Conservation Area, and differs from the rest in that it has a looser grain, something which results in an enclosed character to the lane as continuous garden walls and high hedges, often with trees behind, give a feeling of intimacy which could in some areas be best likened to a tunnel-like sense of enclosure, particularly between Riversdale and The Mill House. Three sharp bends, sometimes resulting in visual

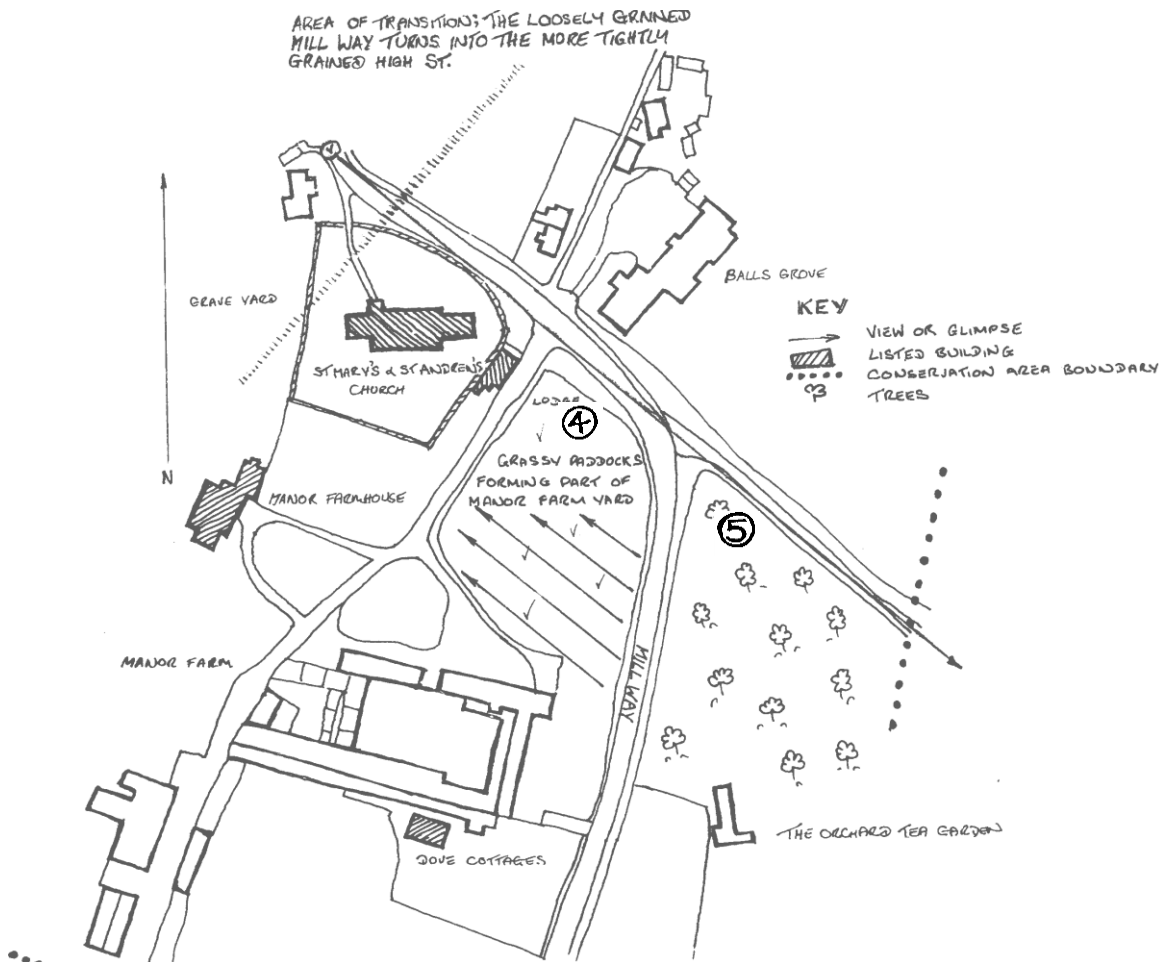
stops, sometimes giving views across open countryside further reinforce the quality of enclosure. At either end the lane opens out to form a transition; to the south (1) the final bend gives views of open countryside, both to the west and the south, and also a wider vista on the bridge of the mill stream and meadows bordering the river Cam. The bridge over the mill race (2) is a notional entrance to the village, with a quite obvious transition from open countryside to village settlement, a boundary which would appear to be as old as this site's use as a mill.



The Lodge, Mill Way

The tree (3) opposite no. 48 is very important, forming a visual stop when viewed either from NE or SE. The patch of grass upon which it sits forms something visually akin to a small green.

Nos. 41-45 form a very cohesive group of rendered properties all with multi-pane vertical sliding sash windows. These properties are of different dates and building materials, but have in common their scale and detailing.



To the north (4) Mill Way opens out to the west to give valuable views across the yard and paddocks of Manor Farm to the church beyond, before following a gentle bend past the orchard, turning into the High Street at the church. The agricultural character of this land within the heart of the village, juxtaposed as it is with the orchard, an area of land turned over to leisure, gives a clear illustration of the differing ways in which the university and university students have used the village as a resource over a long period of time. If this character is to be retained, possible future uses of the farm buildings must retain their agricultural character and that of the land which forms their open setting.

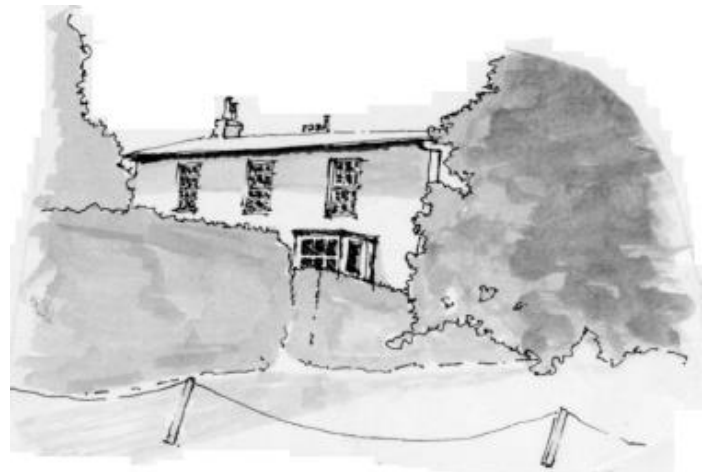
Gravel drives predominate, retaining the informal feel of the street scene however, in some places new granite setts give a more suburban feel.

The Orchard Tea Garden (5) has very important historical associations with the Cambridge intelligentsia of the early part of the 20th century. In many ways the tea garden still symbolizes the relationship between the university and the village, and retains much of the very English pastoral idyll which attracted its original customers. In a village where special historic as well as architectural interest defines the conservation area, its importance cannot be stressed too strongly. The high mixed hedge which forms its boundary with Mill Lane is important in imparting an atmosphere of relative privacy to the Orchard and enclosure to the road.

The Old Vicarage forms an important visual stop when approached from either direction. Its large gardens form an crucial part of its setting and are also an important open space within this part of the conservation area (6).

Buildings of Special Note.

Garden Building at the Old Vicarage, Mill Way. Garden building, originally a theatre, photographic studio and a sham ruin. c1855. Clay bat, and yellow brick with pantiled roof. Built by Samuel Widnall who lived at the Old Vicarage, for theatrical productions and as a photographic studio. He was the author of several books including a local history. Listed Grade II



No.48 Mill Way

No. 61 (The Old Vicarage) Mill Way. House of c1684 with mid C20 restorations. Brick ground floor, timber framed first floor, partly replaced by brick, and original brick end walls. Tiled roofs with original end stacks of red brick. This is the Old Vicarage referred to by Rupert Brooke in his poetry. He moved there in 1910.. Listed Grade II.

No.79 (Mill House) Mill Way. A house, originally a house and cottage. The House is early C18 and cottage probably contemporary, with C19 and later alterations. Timber framed, plaster rendered and tiled, with a half hipped roof. Listed grade II.

No.43 (Ivy Dene) Mill Way. House of c1840. Clay bat roughcast rendered on brick plinth. Pyramidal roof of slate with central grey brick stack. Square plan. Two storeys. Listed grade II

No.41 (Yew Garth) Mill Way. House of three building periods; late C17,C18 and c1830. Timber framed and red brick, plaster rendered to C17 house and yellow brick to C18 extension. Clay bat, rendered, to c1830 front. Roofs of modern tiles and slate. Listed grade II.

Parish Church of St Mary and St Andrew. C12 origins. Clunch rubble stone, fieldstone, rendered, with dressed clunch ashlar to the chancel. Limestone dressings. Tiled roofs. The west tower has an embattled parapet of three stages with splayed plinth and contemporary three stage angle buttressing. Listed grade I.

Nos. 4 and 6 Mill Way. Manor house, c1452 with additions and alterations of C17 and later. Timber framed, rendered and alterations and additions of red brick, painted. Tiled roofs with internal and side stacks. The site is moated. The manor was acquired by Kings College Cambridge from Executors of Henry Somer, former Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1452 as a home farm and has remained College property. Listed grade II.

Nos. 36 and 38 (Dove Cottages) Mill Way. Dovecote, now a house of the C18. Timber framed, rendered on high brick plinth and tiled, hipped roof with gablets. Listed grade II. War memorial, the churchyard.. c1920. Limestone The inscriptions include one to Rupert Brooke. Listed grade II.

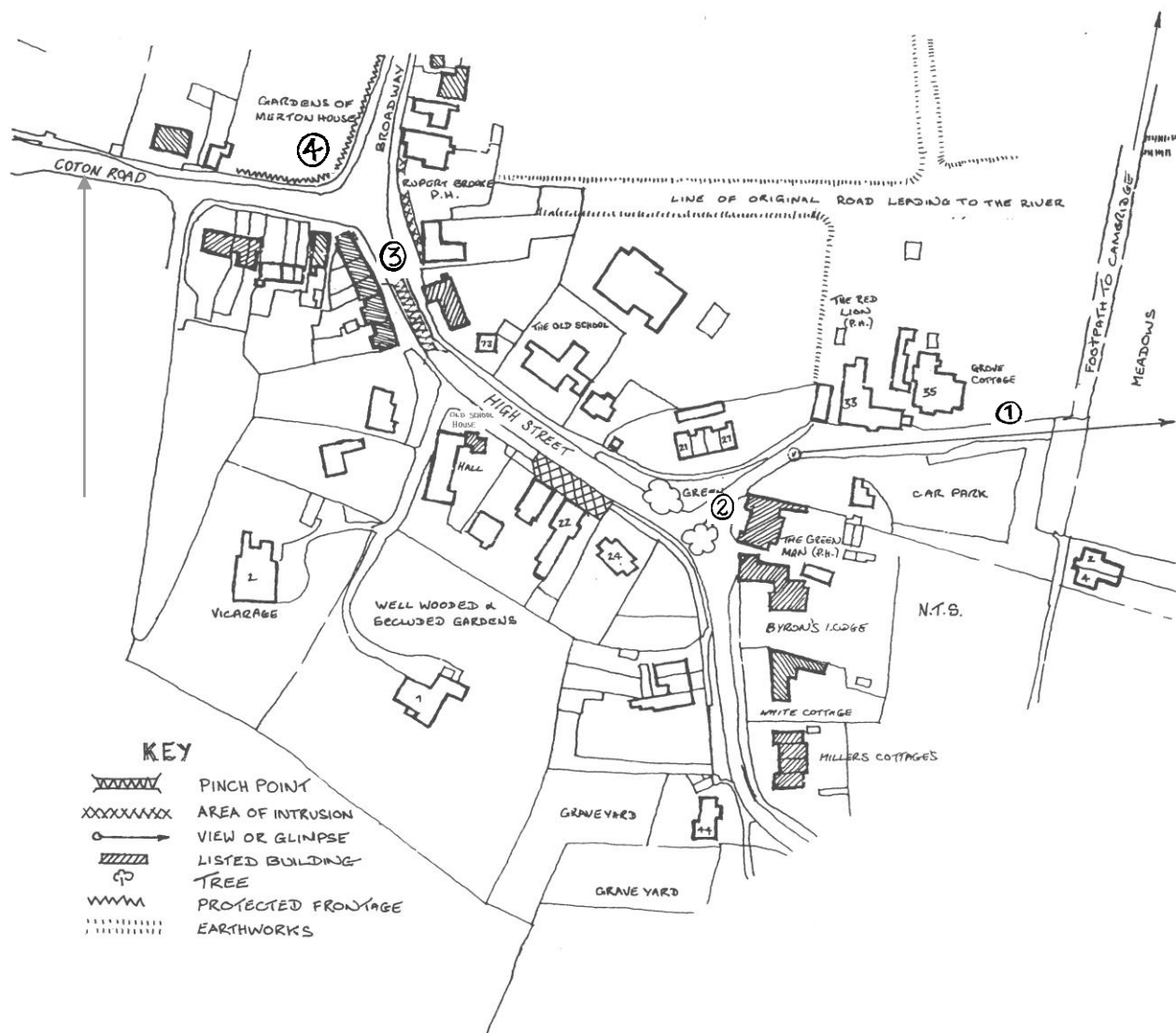
Churchyard Wall. Late C17. Large red and burnt bricks, generally English bond, with repairs. Listed grade II.

The High Street.

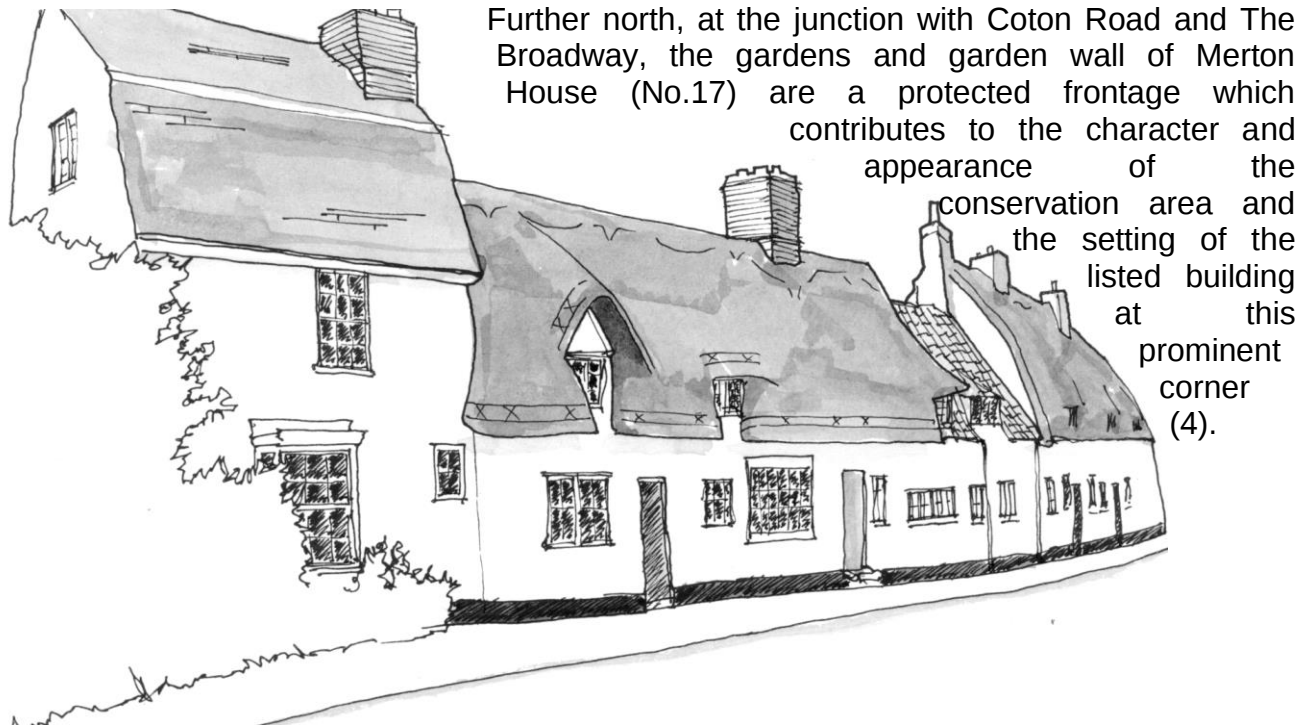
The High Street forms the historic core of the village and runs from the church to the junction with the Coton Road, also encompassing a section of road which branches off past the Red Lion public house to the riverside meadows, which can be glimpsed through another “tunnel” of mature trees (1). The village green (2) forms the focus of the street at this point, and is an important departure from the largely linear character of the conservation area, opening out into a large triangular space, the green formed by a small patch of ground in the centre and a wide verge to the north. The two trees are very important features in the street scene, in an area which can be seen as the pivotal point of the village.



The Green Man Public House.



The Green Man public house, Byron's Lodge, The White Cottage and Millers Cottages form a group of buildings which by their stylistic differences but common scale make something of a picturesque ensemble. Further north, nos. 2-10 combine with nos. 1 and 9-13 Coton Road to create an almost continuous row of thatched or once thatched cottages, forming an important group. The High Street narrows into a pinch point here (3). The appearance of this street is for the most part more open than Mill Way, with smaller houses with front gardens or houses sited directly on the back edge of the footpath rather than houses surrounded by large enclosed grounds.



Further north, at the junction with Coton Road and The Broadway, the gardens and garden wall of Merton House (No.17) are a protected frontage which contributes to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the listed building at this prominent corner (4).

Nos. 2-10 (Wrights Row, below) High Street. A row of cottages of several building periods; late C17, early and later C18 and early C19. Mostly timber framed on brick plinth, plaster rendered, but possibly some clay bat, particularly in the early C19 parts. Roofs are thatched, long straw and reed, plain tiles and buff and red pantiles. Listed Grade II.

No. 7 (Kings Cottage), High Street. Mid C17, and C18 additions. Timber framed, plaster rendered and tiled with original red brick ridge stack with diagonally set shafts. Original plan probably of lobby entry type but present entry now in mid C20 porch to left hand end. Single bay addition, C18. Framed, plastered with tiled, mansard roof, and probably almost contemporary is a small wing for a shop towards the road. Listed Grade II.

Byron's Lodge, High Street. Cottage, of C17 or C18 origin, much extended in the first half C20. Timber framed rendered and applied timber framing with reed thatch roof and rebuilt stack. In early C20 the loft over the stables was converted to a studio for WG de Glenn, RA, The society portraitist. Unlisted.

No 67 High Street (The White Cottage). Early C18. Timber framed, plaster rendered and long straw thatch roof with grey brick C19 ridge stack and end stack. Listed Grade II.

No. 69-75 (Millers Cottages) High Street. Originally a row of four cottages, Mid C19. Grey brick and low pitch slate roofs with deep over hangs and bracketing to gable ends of cross wings. Three grey brick ridge stacks. Half H-plan with one cottage to each cross wing and two to centre range. Listed Grade II.

No. 59 High Street. The Green Man Public House (above). C17 origin, and C19. Timber framed, rendered, and brick, painted. Tiled roofs, shaped barge boarding to ends and C19 grey brick ridge stack. In the C19 the cross wings were extended to the road and cased in brick and a verandah built along the front. Listed Grade II.

Nos. 9-13 Coton Road (Grant Cottages). Row of three cottages, now two. Late C18 or early C19, renovated, restored and extended mid C20. Long straw thatch, half hipped roof. Horizontal sliding sashes. Three doorways with boarded doors. Listed Grade II.

Village Hall, High Street. Once the national school, now the village hall, dating from c1830. Timber framed now cased in asbestos, and hipped, reed thatch roof with stump of original stack in rear wall. Listed Grade II.

The Broadway.

The Broadway runs north from the junction of the Coton Road and the High Street into the Grantchester Road from Cambridge. This road is unusual in that it is largely only developed on its western side; the properties overlook the riverside meadows and form an historic and familiar view for those walking along the river between Grantchester and Cambridge.

At no.87 a bend in the road (1) marks the end of the village and the beginning of the open countryside. There are views from most of the Broadway out to the open countryside at this point, and number 87 also forms the first view when entering the village via this route. This boundary of the village is certainly as emphatic as that at Mill Way, and further development along this road should be resisted in order to preserve this aspect of its character.

The close grain of development from no.39 to no.81 is a strong motif in the street scene which is reinforced by the largely original windows and doors which contribute strongly to the rhythm of these valuable but unlisted C19 buildings.



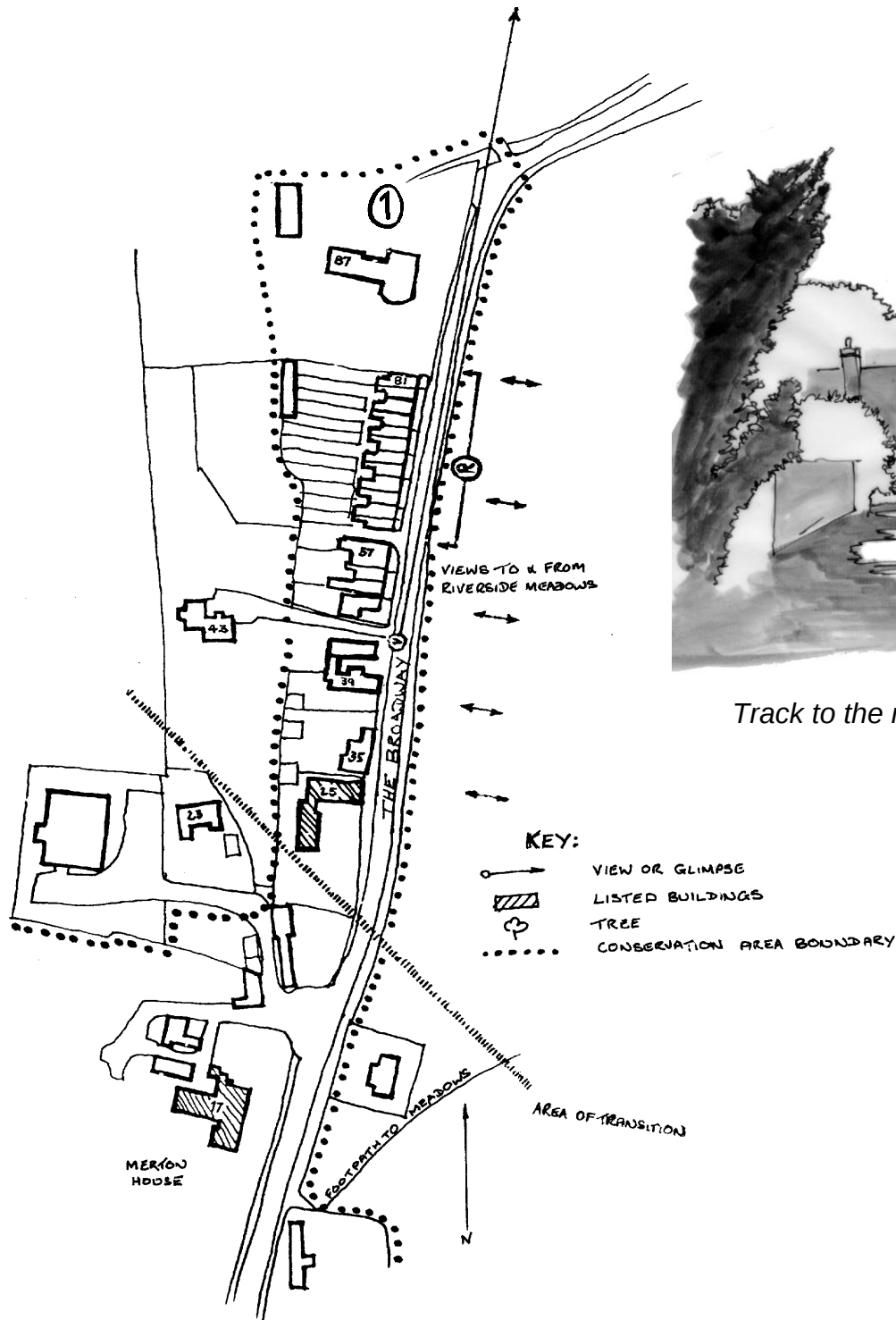
*Right:
The terraced
housing*

*Left: The strong
rhythm of terraces*



Between nos. 19 and 21 Broadway there is a track which runs into some trees to the rear, between the garden wall of Merton House and some barns. This rural, unmade track provides depth and an element of curiosity to the street scene.

Due to the cheek-by-jowl style of development along this road, there are a large number of strong groupings of buildings, sometimes made more interesting by the mix of building types, as in the photograph below of no. 39 and the art gallery.



Track to the north of Merton House.

No. 25 (Merton Barn) Broadway. Barn, now house, C18 and mid C20. Timber framed, Weatherboarded and long straw thatched. Five bays and originally aisled on north side. End to road. Barn door in south wall now glazed. Originally associated with 35 Broadway (Audley Cottage). Listed Grade II.

No. 10 Broadway (The Almshouses). Four almshouses, now single dwelling. C18 and C20. Mainly brick, painted, and tiled roof with repaired internal and end stacks. The origin of the almshouses is uncertain but they were established on a more certain basis in 1883. Listed Grade II.

No. 35 (Audley Cottage), Broadway. House, C17 origins, but much remodelled in mid C19. Timber framed, plaster rendered and brick with steeply pitched mainly tiled roofs and internal C19 stacks. Listed Grade II.

No. 17 (Merton House). Late C18. Grey brick and tiled. The house is symmetrical being of three bays and is two storeys high with attic dormer windows. The garden wall is mainly grey brick but includes some carstone. Listed grade II.

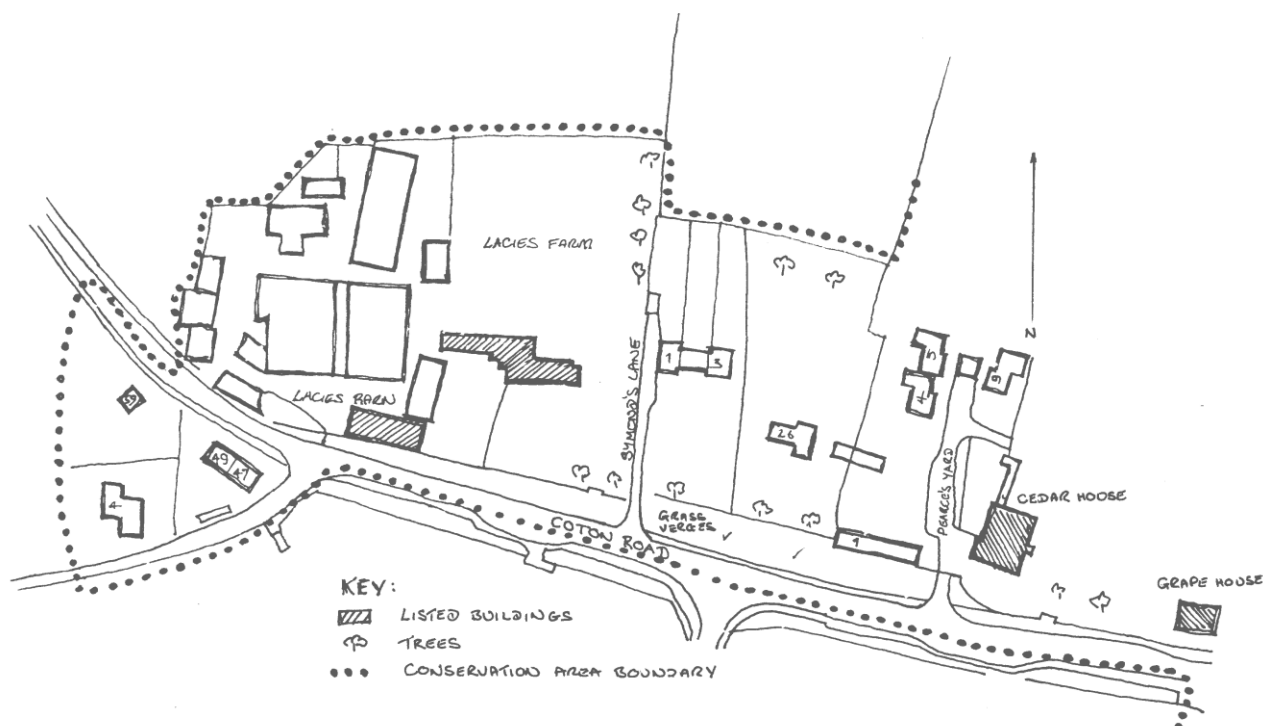
No. 8 Broadway (Cobblers). Cottage. Late C18 or early C19. Brick, painted and long straw thatch roof. Listed Grade II.



The art gallery and no. 39 Broadway.

Coton Road.

Coton Road was until recently undeveloped as a residential part of the village apart from its eastern end near its junction with the High Street and the Broadway. Along the northern side, farmsteads are the oldest buildings. Cedar House and Lacies Farm, while on the southern side of the street post war council houses represent a significant expansion of the village on what would have been a green field site.



Two of the chief characteristics of the road are the wide grass verges between the back edge of the pavement and the high hedges which form the front boundaries of many of the properties. These impart respectively a feeling of spaciousness and informality to the street and a feeling of privacy to the large gardens. Near the junction with the High Street there are a concentration of listed buildings; however, nos. 1-13 form a strong group which include nos. 3-7, all unlisted.

An aspect of Coton Road which could be considerably enhanced is the view of the T-junction with the High Street. At present the dominant feature is the car park of the Rupert Brooke Public House. The erection of a suitably detailed brick wall and gates would improve the situation considerably.

At the western end of the conservation area the group of buildings which make up Lacies Farm, including the barn and farmhouse make a strong group which is the last functioning remnant of the original agricultural character of the village. In between Cedar House and Lacies Farm a number of houses and



Grape House

cottages have sprung up in the 20th century which are placed in large plots which are abundantly planted. Further infilling or backfilling of these plots should be resisted in order to preserve the sense of spaciousness which is still apparent between Pearce's Yard and Lacies Farm.

No. 1 (Crossways) Coton Road. Cottage, Late C17 with C19 shop addition. Timber framed and plaster rendered with reed thatch roof, half hipped and original red brick ridge stack. A bread oven projects from the rear wall. The C19 lean-to addition to the road end was originally a butcher's shop. Listed Grade II.

No. 18 (Cedar House) Coton Road. House, probably late C17, with major alterations and additions of c1870. Mainly C19 grey gault brick but with some timber framing, now cased, in the range to the road. Tiled roofs and side and internal grey brick stacks.. The house was remodelled in 1870 by Mr Banyard. Listed Grade II.

No. 10 Grape House, Coton Road. Villa 1836, dated on stack. Grey brick and low pitch, hipped slate roof with symmetrically placed end stacks. Double pile. Two storeys. Symmetrical range of three recessed hung sashes of twelve panes each. Central panelled door with rectangular fanlight. Unlisted.

Barn at Lacies Farm, Coton Road. Barn, C18. Timber framed, weatherboarded. Single aisled and of four bays. Braced tie beams and queen strut roof trusses. Listed Grade II.

No.34 (Lacies Farmhouse) Coton Road. c1720 and c1840. Red brick, English bond to front and rear walls. Half hipped, tiled roof with wood eaves cornice and C19 grey brick end stacks. Listed Grade II.

Summary.

Materials.

- Walls - Rendered Timber Frame, gault and soft red brick and rendered clay bat.
- Roofs - Longstraw thatch, slate and clay pan and peg-tiles.

Details.

- Windows - Horizontal and vertical sliding sash windows, some casements.
- Doors - Four and six panel, and planked.
- Eaves - Sprocketed eaves or exposed rafter feet, with guttering mounted on angle brackets, or in the case of slate roofs on the larger villa-type houses, deep soffitted eaves with shallow fascia boards.

Scale.

In general the scale of houses in Grantchester relates to the size of their curtilage. In general the larger houses are situated on Mill Way, while houses on the High Street and Broadway are much smaller, often semi detached or one of a row.

The scale of vernacular architecture of South Cambridgeshire has historically been dictated by the dimensions of timber available for roof trusses and other timber framing. This has tended to keep the spans of individual elements in each building down to around five meters, something which has given these buildings distinctive proportions, especially when combined with the steep roof pitches associated with thatch and peg tiles. Generally the height of these houses is under eight meters.

Important Open Spaces.

- The fields between the village and the river.
- The Paddocks and farmyard of Manor Farm.
- The churchyard
- The Green.
- The Orchard Tea Garden.
- The gardens of the larger houses.
- The Paddocks along Mill Lane adjacent to the Mill.
- The grounds of the Old Vicarage.

Setting.

A critical part of Grantchester's character lies in its close proximity to, but distinct separation from the city of Cambridge. Numerous views both into the conservation area from outside the village, and views out to the open countryside are very important, and it can thus be seen that the fields surrounding Grantchester (the setting of the conservation area) perform a fundamental role in defining its character. The greenbelt performs a key role in keeping this setting open. Any future proposals relating to development on this land will be resisted if they are perceived to have an adverse affect on the setting of Grantchester Conservation Area.