

Kimbolton

Conservation Area Character Statement



Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement



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Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

Contents Page

		Page No.
1.	Introduction	1
2.	The Historical Development of Kimbolton	2-3
3.	Character of Kimbolton Listed Buildings Protected Trees and Open Space Important Views and Vistas	4
MAP A	Constraints: Conservation Area Boundary Listed Buildings Buildings of Local Interest Area of Best Landscape Protected Open Space	5
4.	Architectural Detail Timber Frame Brickwork and Rendering Colours Roof Covering Windows Doors	6
5.	Street by Street Analysis	
MAP B	High Street	7
	High Street	8
MAP C	East Street and St Andrews Lane	9
	East Street and St Andrews Lane	10
MAP D	Churchyard	11
	Churchyard	12
MAP E	Thrapston Road, Carnaby and Grass Yard	13
	Thrapston Road, Carnaby and Grass Yard	14
MAP F	London Road and Castle	15
	B645 and London Road	16
	Castle and Grounds	17
6.	Opportunities for Development and Enhancement	18
7.	Summary	19
Annex 1	Archaeological Statement	20

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 **H**untingdonshire has sixty-three Conservation Areas, designated for their “special architectural or historical interest”. Designation is not an end to itself but the start of a process to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area’s character or appearance, in accordance with the statutory duty of the District Council.
- 1.2 The character of a Conservation Area is defined not only by the buildings within it, but also by the pattern of streets, open spaces and trees that separate them. In addition to normal Planning and Listed Building controls, Conservation Area designation restricts certain minor developments which would normally be permitted to property owners.
- 1.3 This Conservation Area Character Statement forms one of a series of statements that is adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan. The Local Plan contains policies relating to Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, archaeological remains, trees and open spaces. The Character Statements provide a basis for development plan policies and development control decisions within the Conservation Area.
- 1.4 **The Kimbolton Conservation Area**
- Kimbolton is situated in the west of Huntingdonshire, close to the boundary with Northamptonshire. It is set in the valley of the River Kym amongst the rolling landscape which characterises the western edge of the district. The Conservation Area was designated on 8th January 1974.



Aerial photograph showing the extent of the Kimbolton Conservation Area boundary.

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

2. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Although archaeological evidence exists of early Roman and Anglo-Saxon occupation, the first documentary evidence of a settlement at Kimbolton is provided in the Domesday Book of 1086. A population of between four hundred and five hundred was scattered around the site of the church, and a small defensive earthworks existed on a site half a mile to the southwest. This is now known as Castle Hill.



Castle Hill is known to be the site of the early castle at Kimbolton. This site is now protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.



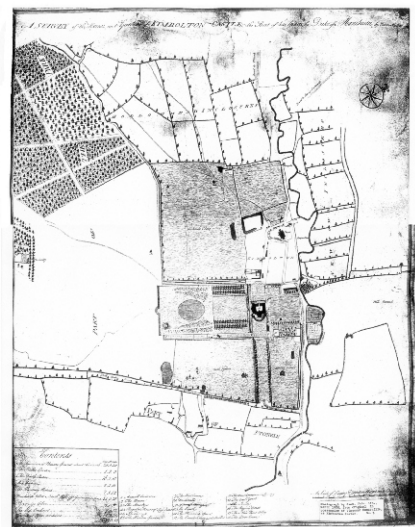
No.6 Carnaby lies on the street line of what was the original east-west road, north of the Church.

2.2 The layout of the High Street, as seen today, is that of a planned mediaeval settlement and has been dated to the early 13th century. This followed Kimbolton's recognition with a market charter in 1200. Prior to this the main east-west road ran to the north of the church. The town layout was reorganised when a new market was positioned between the church and the new castle site.

2.3 To the edge of the new market, measured frontages were divided into narrow 'burgage' plots with sizeable crofts to the rear. These plots were offered for tenure and created a permanent and encouraging environment for traders who traditionally moved around parishes selling from carts. By 1279, the town's inhabitants included traders such as a shoemaker, butcher, tanner, weaver, painter, cutler and carpenter.

2.4 In 1279 the site of the present Kimbolton Castle was occupied by a small fortification. Speculation then surrounds the Castle's development until the early 16th century. In 1521 the building's owner, the 3rd Duke of Buckingham, was beheaded. The building passed to Sir Richard Wingfield who began building a Tudor manor house, evidence of which survives today. Kimbolton Castle and Estate was sold in 1615 to the Montagu family, who became the Earls and later the Dukes of Manchester.

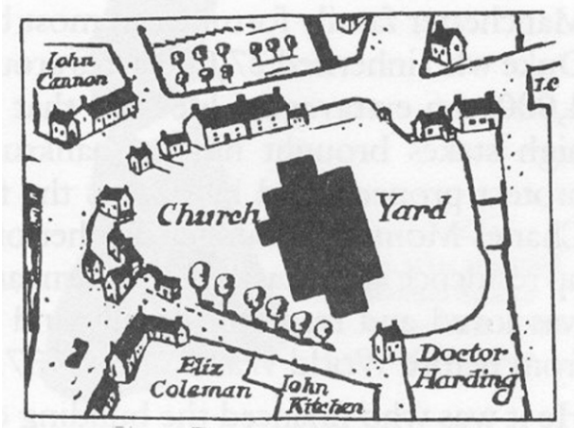
2.5 Much of Kimbolton's architectural character can be attributed to the fashions of the 18th century, with work having already begun to redesign part of the castle by 1700. Following the collapse of its south side, Sir John Vanbrugh began repair works for the 4th Earl of Manchester that included the remodelling of the castle into its present form. The gatehouse, designed by Robert Adam, was added to the composition in 1764 and completed in 1766.



Map of 1763 showing the fashioned landscape and gardens associated with Kimbolton Castle.

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

- 2.6 During the 18th century a number of large townhouses were constructed in both the High Street and its service lane, East Street. The frontages of many of Kimbolton's timber-frame buildings were remodelled during this period and this extended into the early 19th century.
- 2.7 Kimbolton's fortunes were mixed in the nineteenth century. The population increased in the early half of the century and reached a peak of nearly 1700 in 1861. In terms of development, dense in-filling occurred in the alleys, yards and service lanes as opposed to the development of greenfield sites.
- 2.8 The latter half of the century brought a decline in Kimbolton's prosperity, due to the effect on the economy of the importation of cheap wheat. By 1870 vacant buildings were being cleared, particularly around the church. The market also ceased to trade at some point in the 1890s. The prosperity of Kimbolton Castle was also not faring well, although its loss in fortune was more related to the extent of the 9th Duke of Manchester's gambling.



This 1763 map shows building at the churchyard boundary prior to demolition in the 1870's.



Photograph of the High Street from 1933. Apart from the introduction of cars into the scene and the loss of traditional blinds to the front of shops, the view down High Street has changed little.

- 2.10 Kimbolton School has had an important role within the town since its foundation as a grammar school in the 16th century. The school originally occupied buildings within the churchyard, although it moved to new premises in Tilbrook Road in the 1878. In 1950 the school purchased Kimbolton Castle from the Duke of Manchester, and continues to occupy the castle today. A number of buildings within the High Street are in the school's ownership, two of which are run as boarding houses.

- 2.9 Although the population had declined, Kimbolton maintained its role as a significant Huntingdonshire town. In World War One, Mandeville Hall became a Red Cross hospital and prisoners of war were held at the castle. In World War Two the Castle was requisitioned by the Royal Army Medical Corps. At the outbreak of war the Montagu family left Kimbolton Castle never to return.

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

3. THE CHARACTER OF KIMBOLTON CONSERVATION AREA

The boundary defining Kimbolton Conservation Area includes the whole of the original village core and part of the formal garden associated with Kimbolton Castle. It excludes the more recent development to the west of the village and the outer extent of the castle parkland.

3.1 Listed Buildings

- (i) There are 80 buildings and structures in the Conservation Area, which have been listed by the Secretary of State as being worthy of protection because of their special architectural or historic interest. Notably there are three Grade I Listed Buildings, which are nationally outstanding, as well as six Grade II* buildings. The locations of these buildings and structures are illustrated on Map A.



No. 13 Thrapston Road - Grade II Listed Building.

3.2 Protected Trees and Open Spaces

- (i) By virtue of Conservation Area legislation, all trees within the Conservation Area boundary are protected and the Local Authority must be contacted prior to works being undertaken to them.
- (ii) The landscape enclosing the town is equally as important to its character as the development of the buildings. The surrounding landscape originally formed the designed parkland associated with the castle.

3.3 Important Views and Vistas

There are a number of principal views within the Conservation Area as well as a variety of interesting vistas, which are identified within the document.

MAP A - Constraints

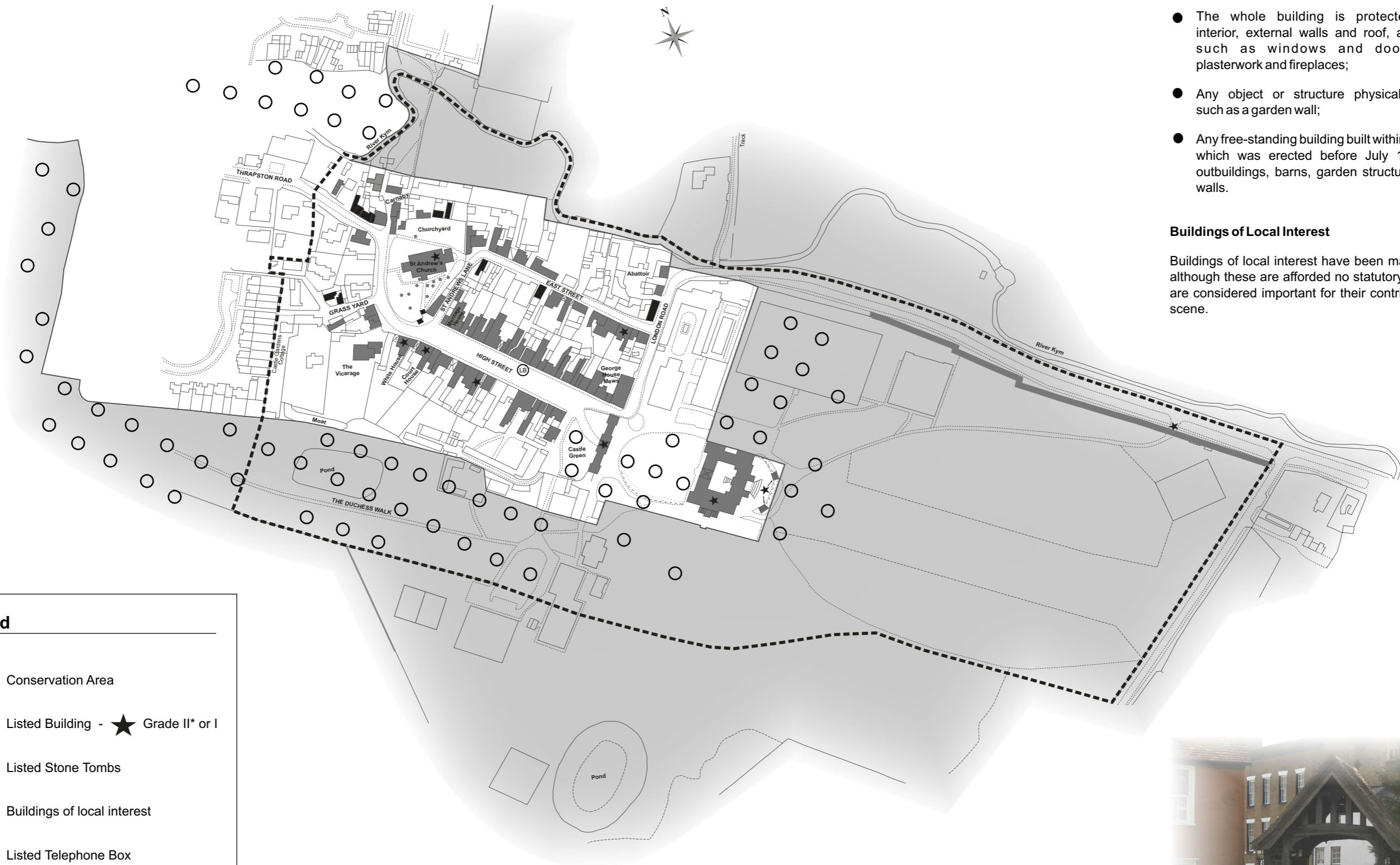
Listed Buildings

The following elements of a Listed Building are protected, whatever its grade:-

- The whole building is protected, including its interior, external walls and roof, and fixed features such as windows and doors, staircases, plasterwork and fireplaces;
- Any object or structure physically attached to it such as a garden wall;
- Any free-standing building built within the curtilage which was erected before July 1st 1948, such as outbuildings, barns, garden structures and boundary walls.

Buildings of Local Interest

Buildings of local interest have been marked on the map, although these are afforded no statutory protection. They are considered important for their contribution to the local scene.



Legend

- Conservation Area
- Listed Building - ★ Grade II* or I
- Listed Stone Tombs
- Buildings of local interest
- ⓁB Listed Telephone Box
- ☞ Area of Best Landscape
- Protected Open Space



The Lych-gate is seen as a building of local interest and makes a positive contribution to the street scene in the High Street and setting of the churchyard.

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

4. ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

4.1 Timber-Frame

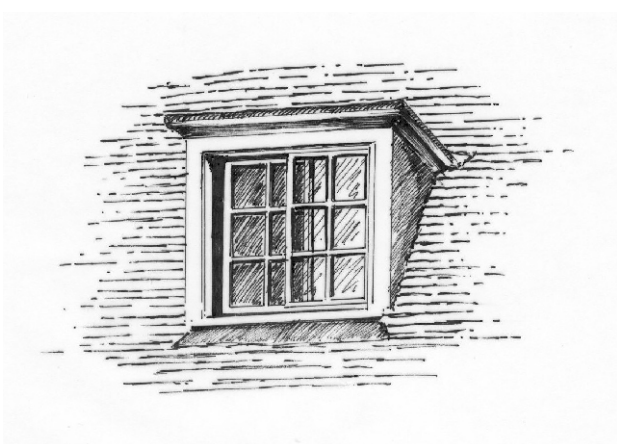
Common to many buildings, original timber framing has been hidden by classical frontages, a result of 18th and early 19th century prosperity. Timber-frame is, however, a traditional building material and 19 High Street boasts timber-frame with timbers dating back to the 1300s.

4.2 Brickwork and Rendering

- (i) Brick is a widely used material within Kimbolton, although it is commonly rendered or painted. There is a variety of colouring to exposed brickwork ranging from the red of the castle's boundary wall to the yellow/orange of local brick buildings. Gault brick can also be seen in use, most notably buff in Grass Yard.
- (ii) Rendered or painted frontages are common to many buildings within the Conservation Area, and varied colouring makes for an interesting street scene. Coloured frontages are now commonplace with finishes ranging from pink, green and yellow although white and off-white dominate.

4.3 Roof Covering

- (i) Roofing materials used to principal buildings are predominantly Welsh slate and clay peg tiles. The peg tiles are characterised by the local regional colouring of Cambridgeshire Mix. Pantile has traditionally been used to roof garage and outbuildings only.
- (ii) Dormers are an interesting addition to the roofline on many streets and these are predominantly of the flat-topped style.



4.4 Windows

Windows are a strong unifying feature within Kimbolton, with hung sash windows featuring predominantly. Earlier horizontal sashes can be seen on a handful of buildings on the High Street, and are also noted for exhibiting heavy glazing bars. Twelve to twenty pane sashes are typical of the style of window seen in Kimbolton.

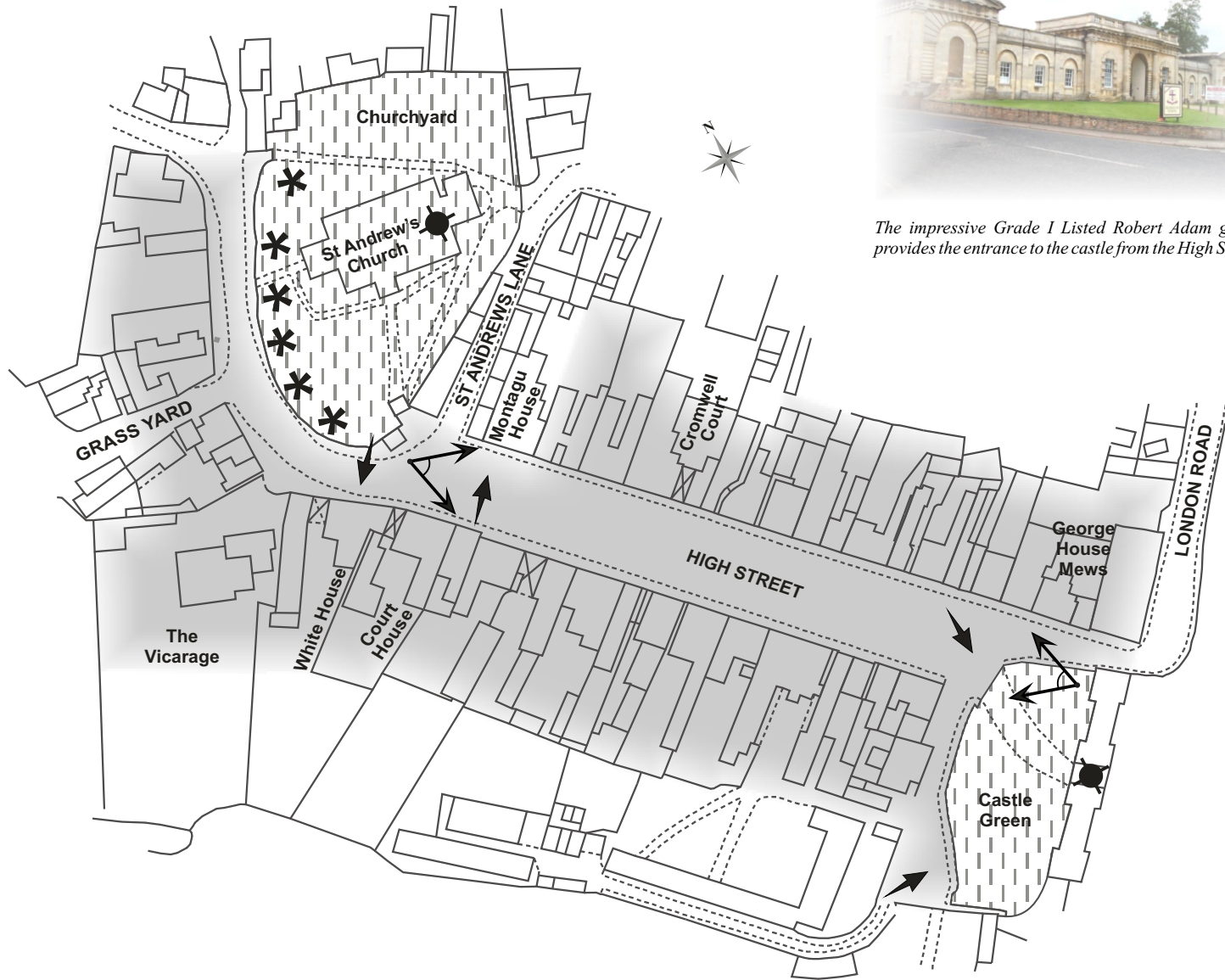
4.5 Doors

- (i) Period timber doors front most buildings although there are variations in style ranging from classical 6-panelled Georgian doors, with or without glazing, to 4-panel Victorian doors with upper glazed panels.
- (ii) Timber doorcases can be seen on many properties adding to the classical prestige of building frontages. Detailing on a number of properties also includes prestigious hoods or decorative fanlights.









No 7 East Street has a fine classical door with pediment casing and fanlight.

MAP B - High Street



The impressive Grade I Listed Robert Adam gatehouse provides the entrance to the castle from the High Street.

Legend

-  Important Wide View
-  Short Range View
-  Important Green Space
-  Important Trees and Foliage
-  Landmark Building
-  High Street

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

5 STREET BY STREET ANALYSIS

5.1 High Street

- (i) The wide High Street remains a centre of trade for Kimbolton and ground-floor uses of buildings range from shops to pubs, with upper floors predominantly in use as residential dwellings. This mixed use has been extremely important to the vitality of the town. The retail use maintains Kimbolton's commercial importance in this rural part of the district.
- (ii) There is a dominant neo-classical style to the buildings which front both sides of the High Street. Both sides of the street have a predominantly uniform building line of adjoining properties. Plot widths appear to vary as do building heights. Although buildings remain between two and three storeys, variations in height contribute to interesting roof-lines, most notably to the south side of the street.
- (iii) A coherence of architectural detail exists within the High Street. Georgian-styled sashes are a feature of upper floors with only two properties deviating from this style. The roofing material is in either plain tile or slate. Within the street all but two buildings have been rendered or painted.
- (iv) Shop frontages and ground floor fenestration vary along High Street and this adds character to the street scene, although cars parking either side of the street do obscure an appreciation of these details. With the exception of the Barclays Bank frontage, a classical style is maintained.



Along High Street there is a distinct character to the footpath: cobbles in the footing of buildings and the road with York paving set down the centre.

- (v) At the north west entrance to the High Street the tree-fringed churchyard provides a corner focal point for the turning road while buildings on the opposite side of the road start to reduce in scale and adopt a residential character. This is in contrast to the nature of the scene at the castle end.



The Gatehouse and Castle close the view of the south east end of the High Street.

- (vi) Fronting the gatehouse is Castle Green, which is a well-tended lawn area. The lawn is an important green space within a street scene that is dominated by hard surfacing. A row of houses faces the gatehouse on the other side of Castle Green. Their style is in keeping with the character of High Street.

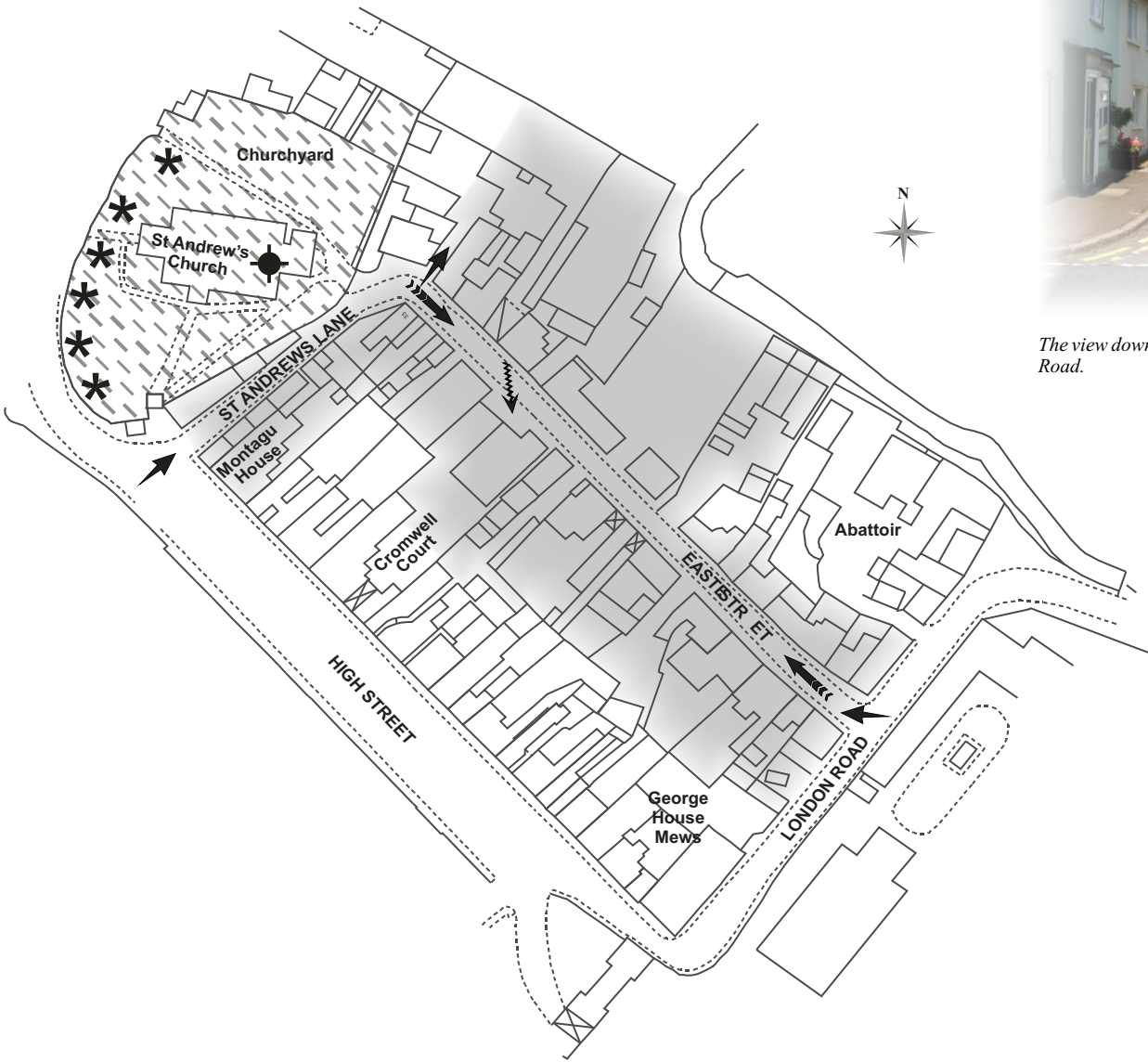


The Ludlow Post Box on High Street is an interesting feature within the street scene.








MAP C - East Street & St Andrews Lane



The view down East Street from London Road.



Legend

-  Long Range View
-  Short Range View
-  Poor View
-  Important Green Space
-  Important Trees and Foliage
-  Landmark Building
-  East Street & St Andrews Lane

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

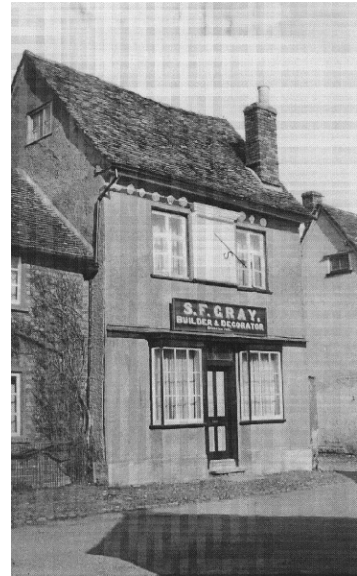
5.2 East Street and St. Andrews Lane

- (i) Historically East Street was the service lane running behind the prestigious High Street properties, and in every way this ancillary character remains. Building construction is smaller in scale although there is coherence in materials and style, in keeping with the character of High Street. The majority of properties in East Street are residential, although there is a limited amount of business use. Traffic flow is minimal and this contributes to the quieter character of the street.
- (ii) Architectural details common to East Street include the use of plain tiles to the roofs of street-fronting buildings, with only one property roofed in slate. Windows consistently use small pane glass and glazing bars although style varies between sash and some casement. Rendered buildings are also plentiful along the street.
- (iii) To the southwest side of the street the building line, although staggered, remains strong with occasional breaks allowing rear access behind the High Street. Two notable buildings on this side of the street are the double-fronted Georgian buildings close to the junction with London Road. Unfortunately the quality of the street scene is interrupted by the poorly designed BT building towards St Andrew's Lane.



The access lane off East Street leads to the last remaining passage between East Street and High Street. At one time 6 passages linked the two streets.

- (iv) Towards the north-eastern end of the street the building line is increasingly broken. No 2 East Street is set back from the street and the foliage within the garden enhances the street scene. Modern in-fill development can be seen along the street although this is set well back from the road and does not intrude along the pathway.



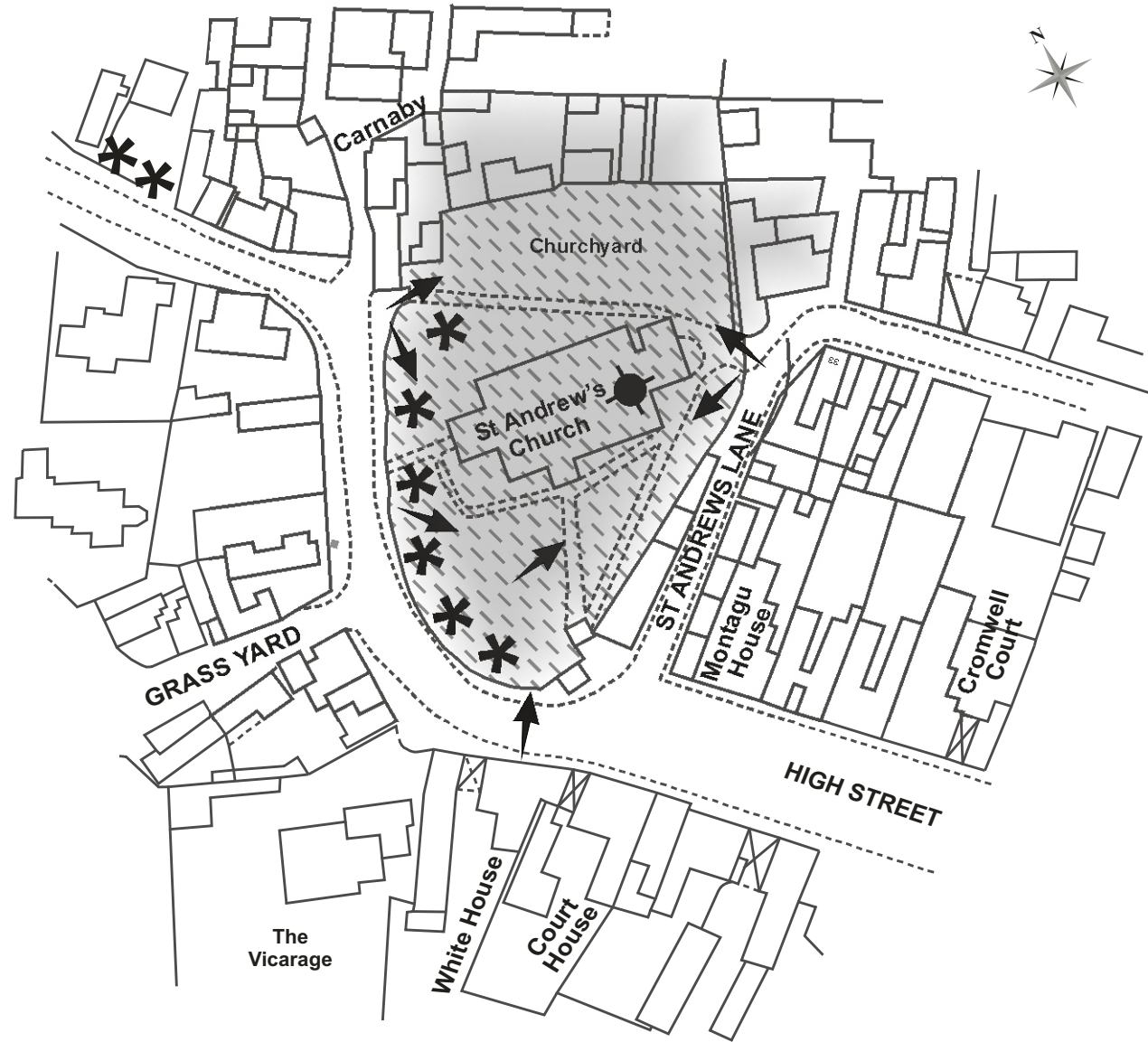
The large-scale sundial on Dial House makes for an interesting feature along the street. This photo taken in 1933 shows the building as business premises although today the property's function is residential.

- (v) St. Andrew's Lane runs from the northern end of East Street to connect with the High Street. Being narrower than East Street, the sense of enclosure and the small scale of buildings is very evident here, although a wall and railing boundary open this space up to the churchyard. The chancel of St Andrew's Church and the spire beyond dominate the narrow character of the lane.
- (vi) Both sides of the street are in residential use. The building known as Apothecary House is of particular interest as this is a survivor of the cluster of buildings which occupied the perimeter of the churchyard.





MAP D - Churchyard



Late eighteenth-century table tomb inscribed to the Campart family. Tomb sited five metres southwest of St. Andrew's Church



Legend

-  Short Range View
-  Important Green Space
-  Important Trees and Foliage
-  Landmark Building
-  Churchyard

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

5.3 Churchyard

- (i) St Andrew's Church, a Grade I Listed Building, is set back from the surrounding streets. A listed Victorian gault brick wall encloses the churchyard from High Street, while railings front St Andrew's Lane. The grassed space with cobbled pathways provides a contrast with the busy character of the neighbouring High Street. Mature trees are sited within the churchyard and 14 table tombs - 12 of which are listed - contribute an interesting feature.



Looking into the churchyard from the north end of High Street, the spire rises through the trees.

- (ii) St Andrew's Church is built in rubble stone, some cobble stone, with limestone dressings, and brick to upper parapets. The spire of the church rises above the tree-line and is prominent from most vantage points within the village. It is only within the churchyard that the 13th, 14th and 15th - century decorative elements of the church's exterior can be fully appreciated.



This beautiful entrance leading into the Montagu Vault dates from the late 19th century.








- (iii) North of the churchyard are a number of residential properties facing the church and accessed through the churchyard. They present an attractive unspoiled grouping, made all the more pleasing by the peaceful location and the lack of vehicular access.

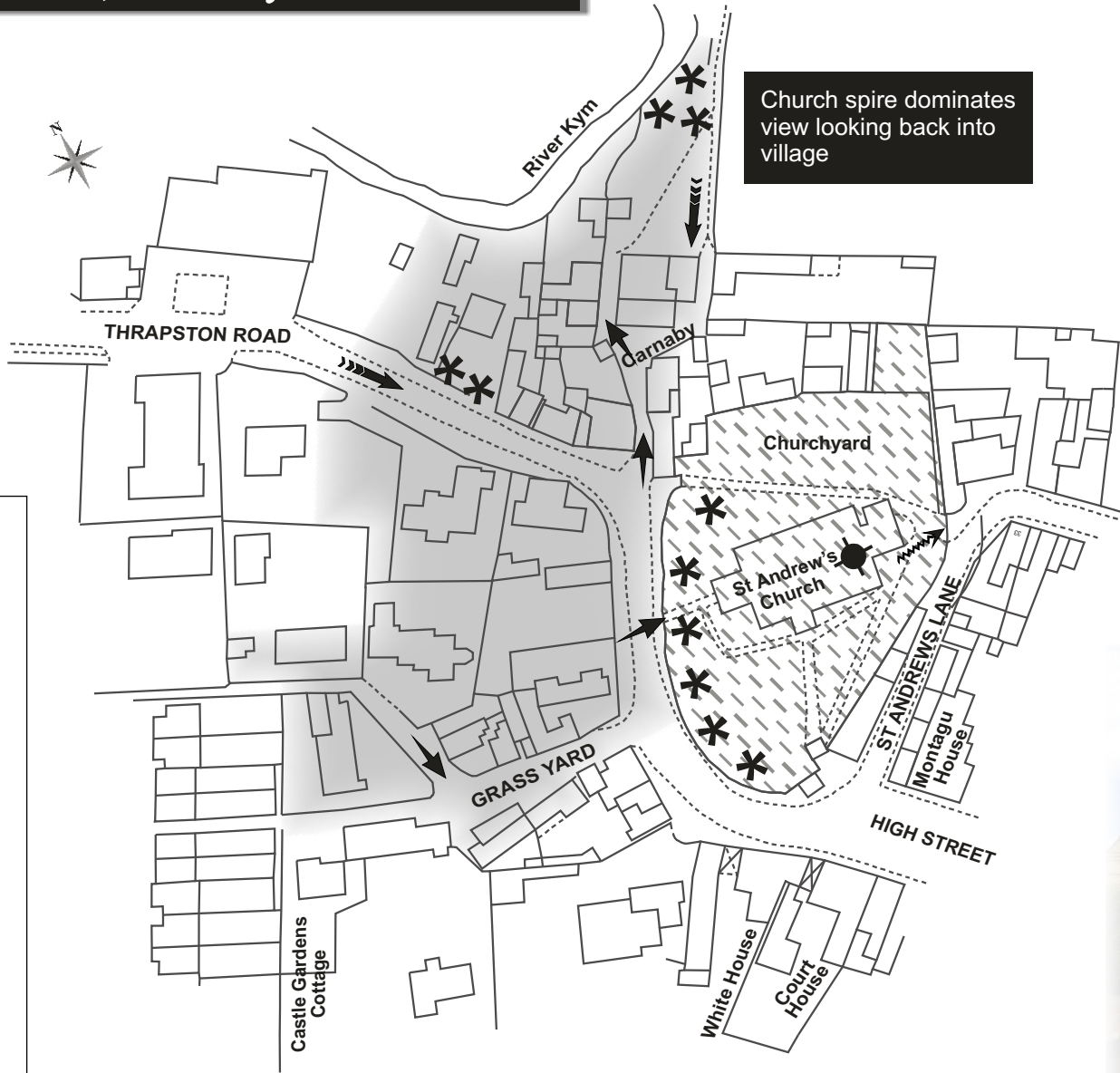


The dwellings within the churchyard have a unique setting, but maintain the unified architectural character of Kimbolton.

MAP E - Thrapston Road, Carnaby & Grass Yard

Legend

-  Long Range View
-  Short Range View
-  Poor View
-  Important Green Space
-  Important Trees and Foliage
-  Landmark Building
-  Thrapston Road, Carnaby & Grass Yard



Church spire dominates view looking back into village



The spire of St. Andrew's Church rises above the buildings in Grass Yard.

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

5.4 Thrapston Road, Carnaby and Grass Yard

5.4.1 Thrapston Road

- (i) Thrapston Road is the main road into Kimbolton from the west, and as such the Conservation Area boundary only incorporates part of the road on the approach to the church. The predominant use of buildings along the street is residential although just outside the Conservation Area are a garage, fire station and village hall.
- (ii) Towards the church the first few properties along Thrapston Road abut the street. The mock Tudor cottages, built in 1900, are of interest, as their style is unique in Kimbolton. Leading away from the church and out of the Conservation Area the buildings have been set back with gardens and street-fronting boundary walls.



The spire of the church is the key focus looking down Thrapston Road. Vegetation in gardens and the church yard contribute to this view.

5.4.2 Carnaby

- (i) Carnaby is a very attractive tightly-knit group of small dwellings, the character contrasting with the open street scene of High Street and Thrapston Road. Buildings and boundary walls abut the narrow lanes that run between the houses.
- (ii) Architectural detail starts to deviate from the uniformity of High Street buildings. External detailing such as windows and doors begins to

vary reflecting the humble nature of this back-land area, although building materials remain consistent.

- (iii) At the rear of Carnaby, open space directly behind the housing is used for parking. The path following beyond this, running adjacent to a field of rough grassland, leads towards a bridge over the River Kym. The area is characterised by the trees and foliage that dominate the riverbank.



The narrow street of Carnaby can be seen between Carnaby House on the right of the photo and No 1 Thrapston Road on the left.









5.4.3 Grass Yard

- (i) Located off the High Street this area provides a buffer between the historic High Street and new development outside the Conservation Area boundary. The scale and character of this area contrasts with the High Street. Buildings are small in scale and predominantly single storey. Where buildings are set back, low brick boundary walls front the road with the exception of No. 2 with its railings. It is the yellow colouring of gault brick which gives this area its particular character.

MAP F - London Road & Castle



Legend

-  Long Range View
-  Short Range View
-  Important Wide View
-  Poor View
-  Important Green Space
-  Important Trees and Foliage
-  Landmark Building
-  London Road & Castle



From the Bedford Road, the height of the wall drops to reveal magnificent views across the castle grounds towards the castle's east portico.

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

5.5 B645 and London Road

- (i) The B645 leads from the village of Stonely towards Kimbolton. The first indication of the forthcoming settlement is the boundary wall and gateposts of Kimbolton Castle. The red brick wall runs parallel to the main road before dropping to form a ha-ha allowing views across to the castle. The wide verge and mature trees bring a very tangible sense of formality and large scale to this approach to Kimbolton.



The Grade II listed gate on the approach to Kimbolton along B645.*

- (iv) As well as the access to East Street, there are a number of access points leading off London Road to rear backland areas. The abattoir, for example, is sited to the rear of London Road and runs adjacent to the River Kym. This collection of buildings are of no merit. Similarly there is access to a courtyard of buildings, including some housing, behind High Street/East Street, known as George House Mews.



The built up area of London Road is very much enclosed by the street-fronting buildings at either side.

- (ii) The re-alignment of the main road to its present position in the High Street, in mediaeval times, has resulted in the two right-angle bends in London Road. The first bend, leading into London Road, follows the castle boundary wall round and the road suddenly becomes enclosed on both sides by street-fronting buildings. The splendour of Kimbolton is only fully appreciated where the gatehouse provides the turning point at the second corner. It is here that you are greeted by the wide prestigious High Street that lies ahead.
- (iii) Although London Road has the same building detail as the High Street, such as the use of Georgian-style windows, the majority of buildings have exposed brickwork in place of the light-coloured renders. The lack of light coloured renders combined with the dominating buildings of the former castle mews and boundary walling leave it feeling very much enclosed.

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

5.6 The Castle and Grounds

- (i) Kimbolton Castle and its grounds are occupied by the school and separated from Kimbolton by boundary walling. While the castle still dominates the area, the character of the area has very much an educational feel. Low-level school buildings are situated around the perimeter of the grounds. Football, astro-turf and cricket pitches now make use of the former gardens and lawns around the castle.



The gardens that front the castle are now well tended lawns for cricket.

- (ii) The grounds immediately to the south of the castle are included within the Conservation Area boundary while the parkland outside provides the setting. Interestingly, there are no physical structures or natural landscape features defining the Conservation Area boundary and this lack of distinction can undermine the Conservation Area designation.



Looking towards the town from the castle's west entrance, the splendour of the gatehouse is set back across a tended lawn. The church spire is also visible on the skyline.

- (iii) From the castle, notable vistas have been maintained looking inwards and outwards from key entrance points, the most impressive view being from the east portico looking down the avenue of Wellingtonia trees. A species of tree not native to Britain, these are a dominant landscape feature and are a surviving element from the Victorian gardens. From the south steps on the south front, the views look across the tended lawn towards the open countryside, historically the parkland associated with Kimbolton Castle.
- (iv) Following the change of use from country house to school, there has been some modern development undertaken within the grounds. More recent single-storey building, to the west close to the gatehouse, has been designed to a high standard. Architectural detail, such as window style, has been borrowed from the castle and the buildings are set amongst tree-planted landscape. This is in contrast to poorer quality buildings to the north.



Modern building has been constructed at low level and the trees have been retained as important features of the setting.

- (v) The Duchess Walk leads from the modern buildings in the school grounds along land behind the High Street. The tree-covered setting and wide path make for a beautiful pleasant walk as well as a soft edge to the built environment. Only the area of Duchess Walk closest to the school is incorporated within the Conservation Area although there is no natural or physical feature which distinguishes the boundary.

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

6. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

(i) The nature of Kimbolton's Conservation Area means there is little room for new development. Many opportunities to reuse and enhance redundant sites have already been taken. The conversion of the Moravian Chapel off East Street is a good example.

(ii) A few sites can be identified where new development may provide an opportunity to enhance the Conservation Area. The abattoir site, off London Road, consists of a hard landscaped yard with sheds. The Conservation Area would benefit from the enhancement of this site. Similarly, outside the Conservation Area, on Thrapston Road the garage site could be enhanced to improve the approach to the Conservation Area.

(iii) There is a strong sense of civic pride in Kimbolton and as such the character of the Conservation Area has been maintained and conserved to the highest standard. The school's ownership of the castle has ensured that the buildings and grounds have not only maintained a continuous use but have also been well-kept. There are, however, a few areas where improvements could enhance the Conservation Area. These include;

The floorscape in Grass Yard.

The redundant old school in Grass Yard.

Car parking in the High Street.

The removal of double yellow lines in East Street.

Repairs to table tombs in the Churchyard.

(iv) The wide road within the Grass Yard is currently tarmacked. The expanse of this tarmacking does not provide a positive setting for the residential buildings located here. There is opportunity to enhance this area, particularly as it is a private road and vehicular access limited. Resurfacing could also provide a better link between the High Street and the new build outside the Conservation Area. There are currently proposals for converting the old school into a dwelling and the reuse of this site will enhance the area.



The former school house in Grass Yard has planning permission for a residential dwelling.

(v) The ability to park cars in the High Street contributes to its ease of use and is important to maintaining the vitality of Kimbolton's shops. Visually, however, the parking does interfere with the setting of the historic buildings and views of the street scene. This issue is all the more emphasised by untidy parking through the lack of defined parking bays. A review of parking in this area could produce a scheme to enhance existing parking arrangements.

(vi) While double yellow lines prevent the car dominating the road and give order to car parking, their use is visually intrusive in the street scene. It is felt the use of double-lining in East Street highlights this. An option is to retain the lines but use a lighter colour to lessen the visual impact.

(vii) The table tombs within the churchyard are both important in their own right and contribute positively to the setting of the churchyard. The repair of these tombs will ensure that their interest is preserved for the future.

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

7. SUMMARY

- (i) It has been established that Kimbolton has a strong identity and one which has maintained its scene of historic character while retaining a mix of business, residential and educational use. It is this balance which characterises Kimbolton and it is one which should be conserved now and into the future.
- (ii) The close association and visual impact of Kimbolton Castle to the town defines the sense of place. It has, however, been identified that varying pockets of character exist such as Carnaby, the churchyard and Grass Yard.
- (iii) There is a consistent architectural style among the buildings of Kimbolton, defined in both the building form and in the materials used in construction. Common features include:
- The use of brick in construction.
 - The rendering or painting of facades.
 - The uniformity in window and door detailing.
 - The inclusion of flat-roofed dormers within the roofline.
 - The consistency in roof material.
- (iv) Where development opportunities arise, the nature and style of new build should respect the consistent architectural style. It should be ensured that building materials used in construction, renovation and repair are in keeping with the existing surrounding materials and are used in an appropriate context. Pantile, for example, is common to the roofs of outbuildings but is not seen on the roofs of principal buildings.
- (v) The variations in character between the different streets and spaces within Kimbolton are an important feature. When considering development or change, consideration should be paid to the scale of the immediate street scene and the nature of the surrounding buildings.
- (vi) The open space of the castle grounds is very important to the setting of the Castle and the wider character of the town, as are the views offered into the wider landscape.
- (vii) Within the churchyard, by the river and within the Castle grounds there are a number of prominent trees. These are an important natural element contributing to Kimbolton's character.
- (viii) Protecting the special character of Kimbolton is of benefit to businesses, residents and visitors alike. For more details, information and advice please contact the Planning Services Department at Huntingdonshire District Council. Tel 01480 388424.

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement

ANNEX 1

Archaeological Statement: Kimbolton

1. This archaeological record looks towards the presence of archaeology and historic understanding of the area of Kimbolton as opposed to the town of Kimbolton specifically, although mediaeval, understanding does focus largely on the growth and development of the town. The underlying geology is clay with the exception of the valley floor where a band of gravel exists.
2. Only one site is registered as a scheduled ancient monument and this is the Motte castle in Kimbolton Park known as Castle Hill (No: 27171). This site lies outside the Conservation Area boundary.

3. The Archaeological Record

3.1 Prehistoric

There is little firm evidence of prehistoric settlement in the area although stray finds have been known dating from the Paleolithic through to the Bronze age. Whilst this shows some activity in the parish the nature is uncertain.

3.2 Roman

It is likely that the valley of the Kym formed an agricultural landscape that comprised hamlets and fields. Some important finds of imported wares at the airfield suggest the presence of a higher status site in the area. Stray finds of pottery have been found in the school grounds and the occasional coin found around Kimbolton town.

3.3 Anglo-Saxon

There is very little evidence of Anglo-Saxon settlement in Kimbolton. Although the discovery of a pottery scatter near the priory suggests the presence of a settlement on the southern-facing slopes of the valley dating from 5th to 7th centuries. It is surprising that the location of the late Saxon Kimbolton is unknown and that no

archaeological evidence from this period has been discovered. The settlement could lie within an area where little intervention has been undertaken and a good candidate would be the great park, although the presence of a mill indicates river access.

3.4 Mediaeval

The present old part of the town dates from at least the 13th century, as evidenced by the presence of house gables on the course of the High Street and it is likely that the majority of the mediaeval settlement lies in the current built-up area. This is confirmed by finds of pottery in the churchyard and by the castle.

The town was a focus for the area, and several outliers were created, possibly deriving from late Saxon origins. These include Wornditch, Stonely and Overstowe. Outside Kimbolton, extensive remains of ridge and furrow and other elements of the agricultural system of this time still exist, although they are gradually being destroyed by modern farming.

While the centre for the mediaeval period was between the castle and the church, and it is likely it was a planned mediaeval town, issues still arise as to when this was actually undertaken. It is known the High Street was in existence in the 13th century and the earliest components of the church date to 1200. There is also reference to a manor house in 1201 and a castle in 1217. The re-routing and re-coursing of the road around the castle is unusual for this period and it is not necessarily assumed that the road was diverted at this time.

For further information please contact the County Sites and Monuments Record on 01223 717312.

