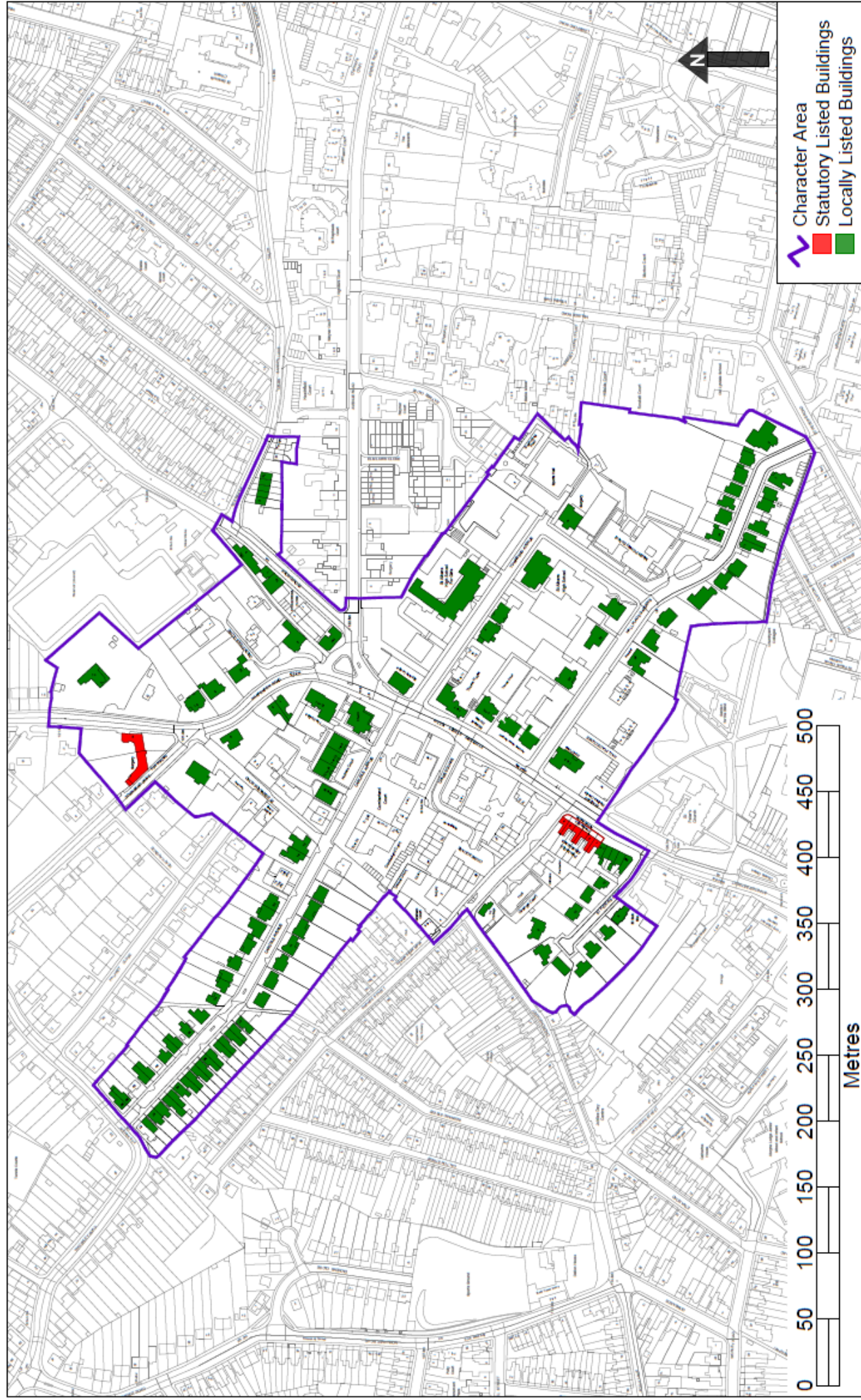




***Character Area 7e***  
***Northern St Peter's Street***







 Character Area  
 Statutory Listed Buildings  
 Locally Listed Buildings

# AREA 7E: NORTHERN ST. PETER'S STREET

© Crown copyright and database rights 2011 Ordnance Survey 100018953

## Area 7e: Northern St Peter's Street

*Carlisle Avenue, Chime Square, Grange Street (part), Hall Place Close, Hall Place Gardens, Harpenden Road (part), St Bernard's Road, St Peter's Close, St Peter's Street (part), Sandpit Lane (part), Stonecross, Townsend Avenue.*

### Scheduled Monuments

None.

### Listed Buildings

*Harpenden Road*  
9 (Grade II).

*St Peter's Street*  
Pemberton Almshouses (Grade II), Forecourt Wall & Gateway at Pemberton Almshouses (Grade II).



*Pemberton Almshouses (grade II listed).*



*The Jolly Sailor P.H. (locally listed).*

### Locally Listed Buildings

*Carlisle Avenue*

Odds: 7-23 (incl.), 27-57 (incl.), 59.

Evens: 12 & 14 (Wilton Court), 20-34 (incl.), 36, 38, 40-44 (incl.), 48 and 50, 56 and 58, 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist Church, Holmes Court 1-24 (consec.).

*Grange Street (part)*

Odds: "Ivy Cottage", 1-51 (incl.), 53-61 (incl.).

Evens: 8-12 (incl.), 14-42 (incl.), 44-88 (incl.).

*Hall Place Gardens*

Odds: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11, 13-17 (incl.), 19, 21 and 23.

Evens: 2, 4, 8 (incl.), 12 and 14, 20 (Ringwood, part of St Albans High School), 22 and 24.

*Harpenden Road (part)*

Odds: 1 and 3, 5.

Evens: 2-10 (incl.), 14.

*St Bernard's Road*

Heath Lodge.

*St Peter's Street (part)*

Odds: 109-117 (incl.), 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist Church. (see also Carlisle Avenue), The Hollies (1-12).

Evens: "Hall Place", "Parkbury", "York Lodge", "School" (to north of York Lodge, now Michael House), "Thorne House" 1-5 (incl.), "Cricketers" P.H.

*Sandpit Lane (part)*

Evens: 2-6, 10.

*Stonecross*

1, 1a, Jolly Sailor P.H.

*Townsend Avenue*

Odds: 1 St Albans High School Front.

Evens: Thorne House (1-7), 2, 4 and 6 (School buildings) excluding modern return extension.



## Area 7e: Northern St Peter's Street

### Character Summary

The special character of the area is diverse reflecting both the changing historical development and the diverse range of building types and styles. However, there is some uniformity of materials, and trees and landscaped areas also make a significant contribution. The area developed around the northern entrance to the old town where three main routes, Harpenden Road, Sandridge Road and Sandpit Lane (via Stonecross) meet. The survival of three substantial properties set in large grounds, The Grange, Hall Place and Townsend, and the distance from both the town centre and the station meant the area remained largely undeveloped until c.1900, when large detached dwellings began appearing along the existing roads and in the newly laid out roads. Several of the side roads are home to sizeable detached and semi-detached dwellings designed for the growing Edwardian "well to do" but there are also a number of large civic, educational and religious buildings in the area, particularly

located on or close to St Peter's Street. A mix of styles, uses and green coverage might amount to an area rather mixed in character, but this is not the case. Similarities in layout and scale between the side roads also give the area a definite unity, if a little divided by St. Peter's Street running through the middle of the area.

Wide and busy with traffic, the central spine comprising Harpenden Road and St. Peter's Street is definitely the dominant area. It is lined with a variety of buildings that are a mix of residential and commercial. To the northern end, a few large detached houses set away from the road have been converted into commercial use. Hedges and mature trees line the pavement at this end, minimising the impact of the road on the houses. The busy road junction is located at the northern end but slightly softened by the planted island. Side roads are more residential in character.



*Busy St Peter's Street runs through the centre of this character area and has historically been a main route out of the City to the north.*



*The streets that branch off from St Peter's Street to the east and west are more quiet and residential in nature.*

## Area 7e: Northern St Peter's Street

### History

Most of this character area was located within the medieval town boundary at the north end of the settlement. Here St Peter's Street forked to become the main routes to Luton and Sandridge/Wheathampstead (probably a former Roman road). A further fork, which led to the east (Sandpit Lane) marked the northern extremity of the medieval borough. The place was marked by a cross (one of six around the boundary) and the location still survives as Stonecross. The high road to Luton continued along the edge of Barnetwode (later renamed Barnett Heath) and now known as Bernard's Heath.

This character area lies just to the north of St Peter's Church and churchyard which are described in Character Area 3. St Peter's Street narrows quite substantially at this point and historically development here was restricted by the medieval church and churchyard on the east side. This part of the medieval town was known as Bowgate and early maps indicate a similar pattern of long narrow burgage plots running back from the west side of the road. Most of this side was redeveloped in the 1930s, with a three storey parade of shops, and more recently, although the C17 almshouses survive.

Leading off Bowgate was St Peter's Lane (now Grange Street) which gave access to St Peter's Grange, one of the Abbey's outlying farms. No buildings survive from this time but records indicate that earlier buildings were replaced in c.1400 by a substantial grange with numerous buildings including a great barn. This is likely to have been similar to that surviving at Kingsbury (Character Area 4c) which dates from the same period. Records also show that the site was moated and further enclosed by a clay bank and ditch. One edge of the enclosure formed the borough boundary, and is believed to lie close to Bernard Street. Some of the grange buildings may have survived to the early C19 and are shown on a watercolour of that period. Subsequently development took place in the mid to late C19 with terraced cottages.

The 1880 OS map shows a large house then known as The Grange on the St Peter's Street frontage set in a substantial garden on the corner of St Peter's Lane. This was replaced in 1936 by a new bus garage to serve the town. It was a significant Art Deco modern building by Wallace Gilbert and Partners (to guidelines by Holden), but it was demolished in the 1990s and replaced by flats known as Chime Square. They are designed in a neo-vernacular style to reflect the Edwardian buildings adjacent. The entrance piers to the former bus garage were retained in the development as were several prominent trees on the site including a horse chestnut and acacia.



*An undated watercolour depicting an "Ancient Abbey Grange, St Albans, Herts, near St Peter's Church." Probably an image of St Peter's Grange. Image courtesy of St Albans Museums.*



*Chime Square is in a neo-vernacular style to reflect the Edwardian buildings adjacent.*



## Area 7e: Northern St Peter's Street

### History contd.

The northern end of the area is sometimes referred to as Snatchup End, or Snatchups Row, or even Snatchhops. It is the thoroughfare on the west side of the spur of land which is the northern tip of the ancient Borough of St Albans. The road would have been one of the natural routes for those leaving town to the north in the medieval period, although it probably dates from the Roman period. The return on the east side of the six plots on this spur, widened in the C19 to accommodate vehicular traffic, gradually became the High Road to Sandridge. The name Stonecross later came to refer to that stretch of the road alongside these plots, many early deeds having referred to the plots as 'atte' or 'nere' the Stone Cross. Most of Snatchup plots were until recently occupied by a row of tenanted cottages in the occupation of artisans who moved relatively often. In 1841 the census shows Snatchup Alley as home to 23 families, including a chimney sweep, two journeyman carpenters, two bricklayers and two brickmaker's labourers. Clay pits and brickworks were located on Bernard's Heath just outside the medieval town boundary.

In 1854 Thomas Haden Oakes, an ironmaster from Derbyshire acquired a site to provide a water supply to the town through cast iron pipes. He drove deep boreholes at this, the highest point in the town to extract water from the chalk aquifer. As the town developed, demand for the water grew and the business established by Oakes was incorporated as the St Albans Water Company. The Company gradually took over more land for cast-iron storage tanks and towers and for the engines and pumps and a house built for a resident engineer. The building which was the motor house and the engineer's house still survive as nos.1a and 1 Stonecross, but the storage tanks have now been replaced by a covered reservoir adjacent to a new waterworks to the north.

The northern view is terminated by a prominent 1930s building formerly The Cricketer's Inn and now a restaurant. There has been a public house on this site since the late C19, the name reflected the cricket ground which was beyond

the site on Bernard's Heath.

The Jolly Sailor P.H. in Stonecross has been a public house since the 1820s, when it was acquired by Francis Searancke's Kingsbury Brewery. The attractive front was probably altered in the later C19. Until the 1960s two cottages remained to the north of the pub, but they are now demolished and the pub is now the last building on the way out of the old borough. Snatchup Alley is nowadays a convenient shortcut for pedestrians on their way to and from the city centre. It still marks a boundary – that between Marshalswick South and Clarence wards of the mod-



*Snatchup Alley looking north.*



*The former Cricketers P.H. was named for the cricket ground on Bernard's Heath to the north.*

<sup>1</sup> See Kate Morris: Snatchup Alley or Stonecross (2006)

## Area 7e: Northern St Peter's Street

### History contd.

Opposite Grange Street and to the north of the churchyard was the site of Hall Place, a substantial late medieval house. From records and surviving photographs, the house dated from the mid C15. Regrettably, Hall Place was demolished in 1907. The adjoining property to the north, Townsend, was demolished at the same time and the extensive area of cleared land was sold for housing. In 1907 Henry Steer, a local developer, submitted a plan for a new road layout described as Hall Place Estate. This comprised Townsend Place (now Townsend Avenue) and Hall Place Gardens. The plan was typically marked out with a building line and 97 long, narrow plots not including the site of Hall Place itself. The plan was not completely adhered to, however, and, apart from the east end of Hall Place Gardens, the area was laid out with more substantial detached Edwardian villas on larger plots. These were mostly designed by local architect Percival Blow. The scale of houses and spacious layout reflects the adjoining earlier development of St Peter's Park. However, the architectural style is more vernacular in an Arts and Crafts style either in brick or with rendered walls above brick plinths and half timbering. Each house is differently designed adding interest to the area.

The most significant departure from the plan is that most of the north side of Townsend Avenue was acquired by the proposers for a new girls' school. The trustees acquired a substantial part of the still undeveloped site and in 1907 submitted plans for a school building designed in an Edwardian Baroque style by Amian Champneys, the son of the distinguished Victorian architect Basil Champneys. The school has expanded in the post-war period with new development on the former playing fields to the east of the original building. A number of the former Edwardian houses in Townsend Avenue and Hall Place Gardens are also now in use as part of, or associated with, the girls' school.

Carlisle Avenue is a long residential road extending westwards just south of the Stonecross junction with St. Peter's Street. Originally a short

road from St Peter's Street called Cumberland Road, it was extended and developed about 1898 and built up with a few houses shortly after. The first houses are fairly typical of their c.1900 date with gabled ends, pebbledashed first floor façades above brickwork and mock Tudor framing. A similar style was adopted for the second phase of development in the 1920s. At the St Peter's Street end, the earliest houses on Cumberland Road, c.1870, were two pairs of quite large semi-detached premises which had larger plots. These were replaced by blocks of flats in the 1980s. The houses at the west end of Carlisle Avenue are c1900, semi-detached, and slightly smaller in scale. This end has survived the pressure for redevelopment, retaining original plots and scale. The continuity is still there and the road and the buildings retain much of their original character in spite of the on street parking and construction of traffic-calming chicanes.

St. Bernard's Road, which was originally part of Cumberland Road, extends north directly off Carlisle Avenue. It was gradually built up with detached houses in a piecemeal fashion. The road is private as there was never permission to cut a private road, rather permission to build several individual houses (some are now used for local businesses like dentist's and vet's surgeries). The piecemeal development of this road has meant that, although the architectural continuity is lacking, the road has maintained a quieter atmosphere with its unmade gravel surface, mature planting and little through traffic.



*The earliest houses on Carlisle Avenue are at the western end and have pebbledashed first floors.*



## Area 7e: Northern St Peter's Street

### History contd.

Some limited early development took place outside the old town boundary. On the south side of Sandpit Lane is an important small group of modest cottages, possibly dating from the mid eighteenth century but altered. No. 9 Harpenden Road dates from the early C19 but is now set down below road level which has slightly diminished its impact. Both these surviving early buildings, located outside the town boundary, have now been subsumed in later suburban development. However, the short stretch of Harpenden Road in the conservation area still retains the few large late Victorian and Edwardian houses built here. Some are of significant streetscape value, especially no. 5 which is prominently sited on the bend. There are also significant trees of landscape value here with some houses set back from the road. There is a striking contrast between the well treed and almost rural feel here and the southern end of this character area, especially due to the sharp bend in the road which screens views of the city centre until the last minute.

Finally, the predominantly early C20 character of the area is punctuated by several post-war buildings of variable quality. A few infill or replacement flat blocks and houses are located throughout the area, some of which could, with benefit, be replaced or enhanced. Of more architectural merit is Holmes Court, a block of flats in Carlisle Avenue, and the similar The Hollies in St Peter's Street. The prominently sited 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist Church on the corner of Carlisle Avenue and St Peter's Street, designed by Hertfordshire based Architects Melvin Lansley and Mark, is a locally listed and well landscaped modern landmark building.

Although St. Peter's and environs is quite a varied area architecturally, its significant development after c1900 means that it actually represents a broad range of purely C20 building. The large houses and grand schools of the beginning of the century make an interesting comparison to the flats, primary school and houses of around eighty years later. The two stages of development (c.1920 & post-war) represent well how the

wants and needs of our society changed in terms of architectural style and function. Several of the later side roads are similar in width and built character, although nowadays fairly busy with traffic, both parked and moving. Trees lining most of the streets help contribute further towards a continuous character.



*No. 9 Harpenden Road (grade II listed) is below road level so it has a diminished impact on the streetscene.*



*The 7th Day Adventist Church is a modern landmark.*



*Holmes Court is a modern flat development of more architectural merit than other infill modern housing.*



## Area 7e: Northern St Peter's Street

### Buildings

Building styles, types and sizes within the area are diverse, reflecting an age range of nearly 400 years. However, most buildings in this area are post-1900 and, with a few exceptions, materials are generally traditional with local red brick, clay tiles, render and applied half-timbering predominating.

There are two listed buildings within this character area. On the corner with Grange Street, Pemberton's Almshouses is a row of six single storey dwellings dated 1627. It has a high pitched tiled roof with three pairs of tall, diagonal chimney shafts. Built in red brick unusually with alternate courses of stretchers and Flemish bond, it has three pairs of plain, round-headed doorways and six small, two-light, leaded windows in cemented openings with narrow, brick labels above. To the front there is a forecourt wall and a tall, brick gateway with a pointed head, small brick plinths at the sides and centre. Above the round-arched door opening is a stone panel with the inscription: "These 6 Almshouses were erected and endowed with Five pounds Per Annum each. Out of the Manor of Shelton in Bedfordshire by Roger Pemberton of St. Albans Esquire, who was buried in the Church of St. Peter November 20th 1627."

No. 9 Harpenden Road from the early C19 is two-storey and has a converted and extended range of outbuildings to the rear. It has its main entrance front below road level, a low pitched, hipped, slate roof and walls of red brick with a distinctive diaper pattern of blue headers. It has sash windows, some in flush, box frames and original, external shutters and its door has a plain fanlight and a cornice hood with large, curved brackets. It still occupies an important corner location.

North of the churchyard, part of the east side of St Peter's Street frontage is situated behind a fine early wall of brickwork, flint and clunch and with a good wrought iron gate. The wall itself sits atop a high level, blue brick footway to the street, guarded by some planting and a railing. The wall originally belonged to the former Hall

Place, demolished in 1907 to make way for the new Edwardian layout. The large Edwardian detached houses are set in substantial plots, mostly set well back behind hedges, which are an integral part of the "Garden City" style aimed for at the outset. They are mainly neo-vernacular in design with large, hipped, tiled roofs with dormers, half timbered gable ends, pebble dashed and half timbered facades, with some red brickwork, generally at lower levels. There is a predominance of horizontally proportioned window openings, including bays, and there are some elaborate doors and porches. Several of the larger houses are now either in multiple occupation or in use as doctors' or dentists' surgeries or associated with the girls' school. Several substantial trees remain which can be seen through gaps and are reminders of the former large plots from when they were private houses. There is a fair amount of car parking and on-street parking associated with the doctors' surgery and the school. It is important that the area does not become over-developed with infill and that, in particular, the mature trees are retained. These buildings form a good group.



*Thorne House typifies the neo-vernacular style of the area.*



## Area 7e: Northern St Peter's Street

### Buildings contd.

In Stonecross, The Jolly Sailor P.H. is a small C19 building but with an attractive late Victorian frontage with a commanding presence in the road. It has pronounced quoins and a triangular pediment above the door and has been extended to the east in recent years in a modern style, which shares a similar roofline and is set further from the road edge than the main building. Opposite the public house are the backs of the gardens to houses on Avenue Road behind a small tarmaced car park.



*The Jolly Sailor P.H. (locally listed) has a late Victorian frontage.*

On the east of St. Peter's Street is Townsend Avenue, cut into the grounds of the Hall Place in 1907. There are a variety of buildings and uses on this short road, following the convention of the area. The focal point of the north side is the large red brick High School for Girls with attractive white painted timber windows and a green copper bell tower in the centre of the roof. The Edwardian Baroque style of the original building is quite distinguished and is perhaps the best example of this style in St Albans. As well as a modern extension of this building to the east, the road also has various other modern buildings associated with the school. A number of detached turn-of-the-century houses in a variety of styles line the south side. These, too, reflect the past parkland character of the area with trees visible through the gaps between the buildings. Also situated in Townsend Avenue is Maple Primary School, one of a number of new post-war schools built by the County Council, built on the former tennis club. Although modern, it is well landscaped and not over dominant in the streetscene. The adjoining road, Hall Place Gardens, is very residential in character, resembling the south side of Townsend Avenue and Carlisle Avenue. The houses of c.1908 are mainly detached on large plots with gabled ends, pebbledash façades etc. Where the road curves, the building line is staggered, opening up views of the flanks of buildings. The east end of the road is denser in character with houses closer to the road with substantial trees in the gardens. These two roads provide a visual link between this area and the neighbouring 1880s suburbs.



*The frontage building of St Albans High School with its green copper bell tower is probably the best example of Edwardian Baroque in St Albans*



*The houses on Hall Place Gardens are mostly detached with pebbledashed facades.*



## Area 7e: Northern St Peter's Street

### Buildings contd.

To the west of St Peter's Street, the earliest part of Carlisle Avenue is the west end as it was developed at the turn of the century and largely consists of pairs of Edwardian semi-detached houses. The remaining part of Carlisle Avenue was developed in the late 1920s. There is a great homogeneity in architectural style in this part of Carlisle Avenue, as a single developer/builder was responsible for the development of this group of houses. The houses are substantial, two-storey, detached and semi-detached family houses, pebbledash (some with red brick), with plain red clay tiled roofs. The form is generally hip to hip roofs with a projecting front gable or gables - some projecting over two-storey bays. Houses are generally set back from the front boundary, within good-sized plots. The gentle slope and curve in the road creates a pleasing streetscene of stepped buildings which it is important to preserve.

Also leading west from the north end of St. Peter's Street, opposite the church, is St. Peter's Close, a short cul-de-sac of individually designed detached houses laid out in 1933 and built up by 1940. These mostly display "Stockbroker-Tudor" detailing similar to those found in Harpenden and some were developed by the same firm Jarvis. In a similar fashion to Pondwicks Close and Marlborough Gate, it is an unusual suburban cul-de-sac to be found located close into the more urban town centre but more architecturally interesting in style.

Chime Square which replaced the bus garage dates from the 1990s and was designed in a neo-vernacular style to reflect the Edwardian buildings adjacent. The entrance piers to the former bus garage were retained in the development as were several prominent trees on the site including a horse chestnut and acacia.



*The houses in the eastern section of Carlisle Avenue were built in the 1920s by a single developer.*



*St Peter's Close is a short cul-de-sac that was laid out in 1933 and built up by 1940.*



*The houses in St Peter's Close are detached and individually designed.*



## Area 7e: Northern St Peter's Street

### Public Realm

The key-note character of this area is dictated by St Peter's Street, the main historic road to the north of the city, and to the largely late C19 and early C20 roads which spread out on either side. Therefore, the road and footpath network comprises a key aspect of the area. Traditional blue brick pavements have been retained on the raised pavement to the east side of St Peter's Street but most of the side streets are paved in non-traditional materials including tarmac and paving slabs. In contrast to the busy main roads, there are still some surviving alleyways and pedestrian routes in this character area such as Snatchup, Gombards alleyway (see also Area 7L), and the footpath to the rear of St Peter's churchyard and Hall Place Gardens (see also Area 7g). These are a linking feature and a key public realm asset of this character area together with the trees and shrubs which are present along the pavement edges and in residential front gardens.



*Most of the road and footpath network is surfaced with tarmac.*



*Trees at the pavement edge are a public realm asset.*



*There are a number of alleyways in the area including Snatchups Alley and Gombards Alley.*



*Trees and shrubs in residential front gardens also contribute to the character of the area.*

## Area 7e: Northern St Peter's Street

### Positive & Negative Characteristics and Scope for Change

#### Positive

- ✓ Views of the city centre and particularly of St Peter's Church from the north end of St Peter's Street.
- ✓ Historic Assets - listed and significant locally listed buildings provide a strong sense of history with the statutorily listed almshouses and areas of Edwardian housing.
- ✓ Outstanding locally listed modern buildings: The Hollies and 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist Church.
- ✓ Well landscaped frontages to houses, public and commercial buildings, historic walls and sympathetic railings.
- ✓ Mature trees and garden hedgerows particularly along Harpenden Road.
- ✓ Footpaths form a good link for pedestrians and a pleasant and peaceful route away from road traffic.
- ✓ Some historic street furniture and paving survives.



*Locally listed buildings help create a sense of history along with the listed buildings in the area.*



*View of St Peter's Church and the city centre from the north end of St Peter's Street.*

#### Neutral

- Most recent flats and post-war modern buildings are generally appropriate in design but not of special interest.

#### Negative

- ✗ St Peter's Street is busy with through traffic throughout the day.
- ✗ Side roads are heavily parked and busy with traffic.
- ✗ Some bus and car congestion is related to St. Albans High School for Girls.

#### Scope for Change

- The City Vision provided an opportunity to look at ways to enhance the character and put forward possible improvements for the area given its status as a key entrance point for the City.
- Some modern buildings in the area would benefit from redevelopment or enhancement. However, large buildings are not easily assimilated into the scale and grain of the historic area.
- Some private car parks and verges would benefit from enhancement through planting and resurfacing.
- Footpaths and pavements need to be maintained and enhanced (this could be as part of the green ring within the City Vision).



