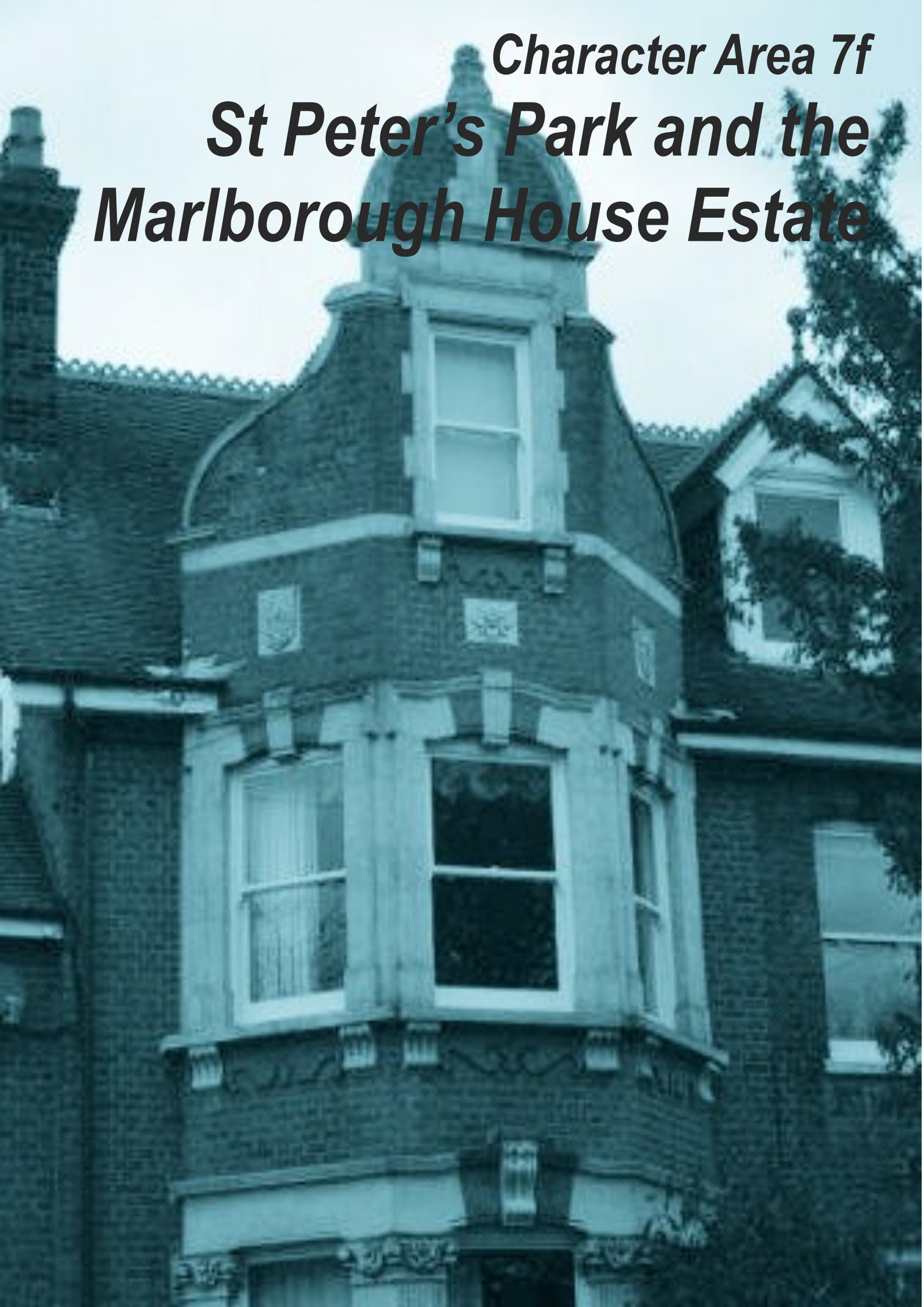
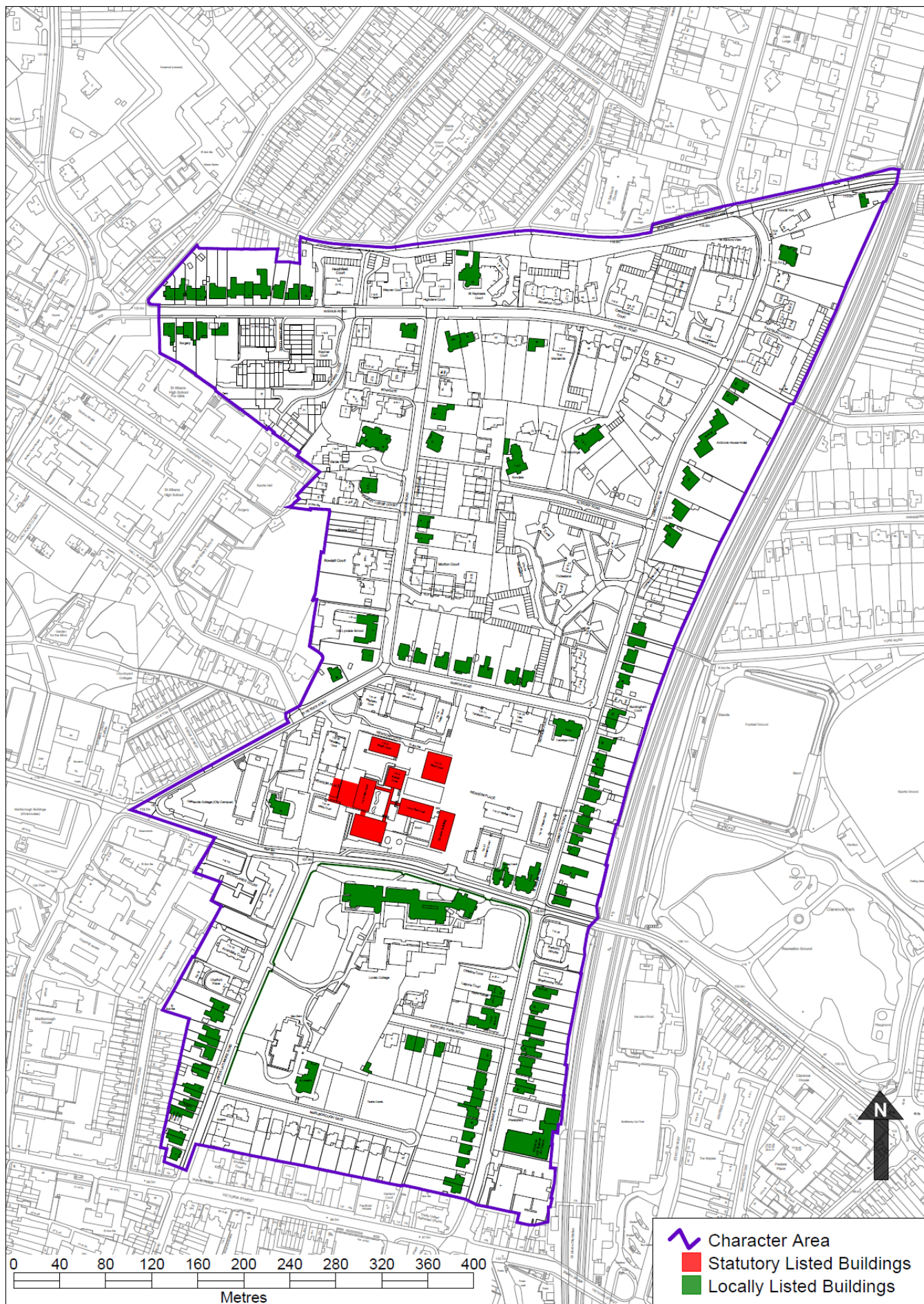


***Character Area 7f
St Peter's Park and the
Marlborough House Estate***





AREA 7F: ST. PETER'S PARK AND THE MARLBOROUGH HOUSE ESTATE

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Area 7f: St Peter's Park and the Marlborough House Estate

Althorp Road (including The Moorings and Sundale), Avenue Road (including Heathfield Court, Waver Court, Highclere Court, St Raphaels Court, Jamesson Court, Cranmore Court, Summerhill Court, The Mansards), Beaconsfield Road (part) (including Beacon House, Sherbourne Court, Yarra House, Laguna Court, Catalina Court), Bedford Park Road, Elm Lawn Close, Hatfield Road (part) (including Brooklands Court, St George's Court), Hillside Road (Murton Court, Bowgate, Stable Mews, Ramsey Lodge Court, Hillside Court, Rowlatt Court, Hillside Gate), Lemsford Road (including Eastbury Court, Thirlestane, Corringham Court), Marlborough Gate, Manor Road (including Turnbridge Court), Raymer Close (including Raymer Court), St Peter's Road (part), Sandpit Lane (part), Upper Lattimore Road (including Avondale Court, Chalfont Place).

Scheduled Monuments

None.

Listed Buildings

Hatfield Road

Blocks A, B, C, D, E, F & L, Oaklands College City Campus (Grade II).

Locally Listed Buildings

Althorp Road

'The Moorings' nos. 1-7 and 'Sundale' (Flats 1-6).

Avenue Road

Odds: 1-7, 9a, 9b, 11 (flats 1-5 and 9-15), 15-19 (incl), 29 (St Raphael's including coach house to rear), 35, 37.

Evens: 2-8 (incl), 18, 24.

Beaconsfield Road

Odds: Trinity United Reformed Church (see Area 7c), 3-35 (incl) (1-5 Laguna Court).

Evens: SS Alban and Stephen RC Church, 20-44 (incl).

Bedford Park Road

1, 3 and 4, Outbuilding in r/o number 6.

Hatfield Road

Odds: 23, 31-33, St George's Court (formerly number 35).

Evens: 98 ("Mermaid P.H.", see Area 4b), Loreto College frontage (Chapel, Hurstlea, Theresa Ball Building (original house and class room block)), boundary wall.

Hillside Road

Odds: 1, 3-5 (former Lyndale School – 1-12 Old Lyndale School, excluding flats 8, 9, 11 and 12), 19 (1-6 Ramsey Lodge Court), 21-23 (includes 21a, 23a & 23b), 29.

Evens: 4, 6, 12, 14.

Lemsford Road

Evens: 2, 4, 6, 8-26 (incl), 28 & 30, 32-40 (incl), 46-58 (incl), 64 & 66.

Manor Road

Odds: 1-9 (incl), 11, 13.

Evens: 2.

Marlborough Gate

Marlborough House (now 'St Josephs' in grounds of Loreto College).

Sandpit Lane

Evens: 16.

Upper Lattimore Road

Odds: 1-5 (incl), Friends Meeting House (part) 7, 9-15 (incl), 17 and 19, 21-25 (incl), 27 and 29.

Evens: Wall to Loreto College.



Nos. 27+29 Upper Lattimore Road (locally listed).

Area 7f: St Peter's Park and the Marlborough House Estate

Character Summary

The special character of the area is essentially of a planned late Victorian/early Edwardian middle class suburb, which was built south of the historic route of Sandpit Lane to Victoria Street on former farmland which was part of the Spencer Estate and some parkland which was associated with large houses at the northern end of St Peters Street (Character Areas 4a and 7e). With detached and semi-detached residential buildings, neo-vernacular styles, wide plots and roads, all set amongst large trees, it became in some sense a proto-garden suburb, built largely to serve the growing number of people using St Albans as a

commuting base for working in London. Though development commenced in the early 1880s, each road and the style of the houses on it, many often finely detailed, is broadly indicative of the era the road was cut. Later development includes numerous examples of infill housing, including many small developments set back from the road and the conversion of larger dwellings into flats. The redevelopment of part of the College of Higher Education dating from 1958-60, which is a fine example of its kind, affording it listed status, is the most recent example of redevelopment in this character area.



This character area is a planned late Victorian/ early Edwardian middle class suburb built for the increasing numbers of people commuting into London from St Albans. The houses are predominantly detached or semi-detached in a neo-vernacular style on sizeable plots with large trees.

Area 7f: St Peter's Park and the Marlborough House Estate

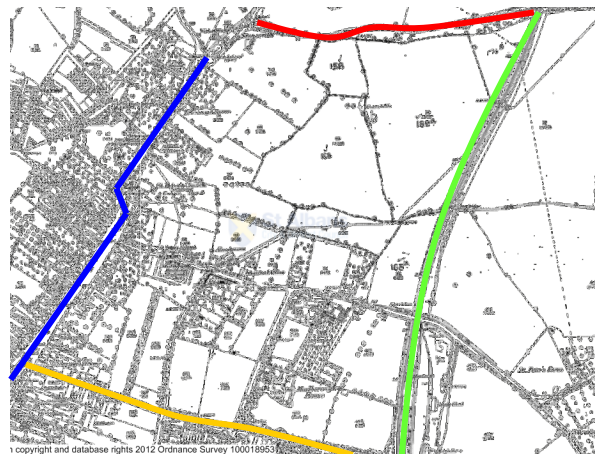
History and Buildings

Sandpit Lane forms the northern boundary of this character area and was the possible course of a Roman road which led to Ware¹. In 1884 local residents prevented the private enclosure of common land and as a result much of the road's south side remains open space to this day. A scheme was approved by St Albans City in 1915 to protect as open spaces the roadside wastes in Sandpit Lane, this was because an extension of the City boundary in 1913 had vested the wastes in the city council jurisdiction under the Commons Act of 1889, which dealt with the regulation of commons by local authorities².

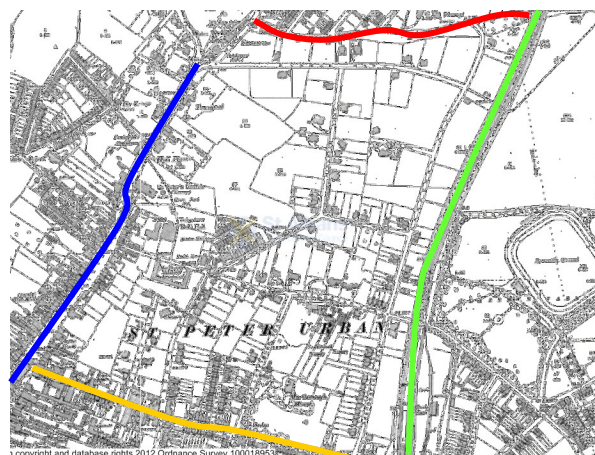
The planned layout of the area north of Hatfield Road was approved by the Council in 1880 and the building of salubrious middle class homes in the large leafy park was begun: it was described in a promotional map of the time as St Peter's Park "half an hours ride from St Pancras Station". This map showed the layout of St Peter's Road, Avenue Road, Hillside Road and Manor Road as they are today and it would seem that large houses had already been built along Hatfield Road, whereas roads such as Townsend Avenue and Hall Place Gardens (see Character Area 7e) were outside the sale area and would follow a few years later. St Peter's Park was built up over forty years and the buildings display a variety of architectural features but were consistent in being built on very large plots of land. Redevelopment has resulted in several blocks of three and four storey flats littered throughout, particularly on the roads that were originally more spaciouly planned; these give a somewhat mixed feeling to these areas, mainly due to the varying heights of the buildings. The gently curved roads were planned with both access and appearance in mind, so they are wide with pleasing vistas framed by the mature trees that help unite the area throughout. St Peter's Park extended from the back of the buildings facing St Peter's Street to the Midland Railway track laid by 1868 in a cutting, which therefore forms a very physical, as well as visual boundary to this character area.



The area has a mixed feeling because of the varying roof heights.



The St Peter's Park and Marlborough House Estate area on the 1880s OS map showing the area as largely undeveloped. It is bounded by Sandpit Lane to the north (in red), the Midland railway line to the east (in green), Victoria Street to the south (in yellow) and St Peter's Street to the west (in blue).



The St Peter's Park and Marlborough House Estate area on the 1900s OS map displaying much of the modern layout with most of the current streets already cut and many beginning to be built up on generous plots.

¹ Urban Archaeological Database Monument 628: Viatores route 214

² Postcards of St Albans

Area 7f: St Peter's Park and the Marlborough House Estate

History and Buildings contd.

Hillside Road and Avenue Road are the closest of the group to town and were built up first in circa 1880. Avenue Road runs from east to west and is typical of this character area being a long, straight and wide road, indicative of its planned history. Hillside Road comes off Avenue Road to the south, and has similar characteristics. Older houses in both roads are built in red brick with vertical proportions, often with gables and bay windows facing onto the street and they display finely detailed windows, doors and decorative elements; the houses are therefore typical of their period. The houses are mainly detached with large gardens and consequently have suffered the most subsequent development and change of use; a number of the houses are now used as nursing homes and there are also several blocks of flats. Often with different materials, they have been infilled between the existing houses, particularly towards the west end of Avenue Road. Avenue Road is rather split in character, with the east end being quieter with more modern houses and some flat developments, and the west end, closer to the city centre, being busier with traffic but retaining a greater number of original houses. The one exception is St Raphael's House in the eastern end which also retains its coach house behind, which can be seen on Sandpit Lane (Character Area 7h). This was perhaps because the western end of the street was built up first because of its proximity to the town, and by the 1920s it was more or less in its current state with the houses on the northern side being more closely built which gave less scope for later development. Landscaping is derived from trees and vegetation within front gardens. Whilst the historic houses are set relatively close to the pavement, with what was a small garden to the front, now often being sacrificed for parking, the more modern developments have more often been set back with more landscaping to the front. The new flat developments have varied positions to the street and therefore the street scene is less uniform than it would have once been; one such example is Elms Lawn Close. Hillside Road has also suffered from later development and, between the Victorian and Edwardian houses that survive, the

street is dominated by mid C20 flat developments. However, the planned nature of the street can still be gleaned through the survival of the wide boulevard and much of the landscaping.



The older houses in Hillside Road have decorative features like these barge boards.



The coach house at the rear of St Raphael's House.



There has been quite a bit of modern infill on Avenue Road because of the large plot sizes.

Area 7f: St Peter's Park and the Marlborough House Estate

History and Buildings contd.

St Peter's Road and Manor Road and some buildings along Hatfield Road date from a slightly later period of the early 1900s. Within this character area is no. 35 St Peter's Road; it is a brown brick building on a large plot with fine sash windows. Otherwise, on St Peter's Road the college site to the east and no. 1 Hillside Road can be glimpsed from within this character area. Manor Road lies parallel to Avenue Road; the northern side of the road consists of a group of smaller detached red brick houses, five date from the 1900s and the remaining three were built slightly later. They display a variety of detailing such as wooden balustrade porches, tile hanging, ridge details and bay windows. To the east of this group, a small area of grass and some trees stretches to the end of the road. It is situated in front of a brick wall which marks the boundary of Thirlestane and some of this development can be seen over the wall. The Oakland's site lies to the south of Manor Road, although the original buildings are mainly viewed from Hatfield Road. It was a fine exemplar of the world renowned Hertfordshire post war education system by the County Architect's Department who designed a modernist campus of pavilions set back from Hatfield Road amongst a mature landscape. The group is listed for its innovative design, for the way the individual buildings are distributed within trees and their spatial relationships. The Oaklands site is therefore an interesting continuation of the previous housing that was also incorporated into a tree filled landscape. New blocks of two to five storey flats are in process of development on the southern side of Manor Road, alongside this excellent 1959 campus. Fortunately the trees, when in leaf, on both sides of Manor Road provide a major contribution to its character. At the eastern end of Hatfield Road, on the corner of Lemsford Road, two pairs of historic buildings remain, constructed of red brick with yellow and black brick detailing including window arches and band courses.

South of Hatfield Road and well hidden from the road behind an impressive red brick medallion and dentil detailed high wall (which is locally listed) is Loreto College, a Catholic school for

girls which first came to the site in the 1922. There is a variety of architectural styles on the campus spanning a period of around 150 years. In the 1880s the site stretched further to the south and terminated at Victoria Street. At that time it was split, with the New Zealand nursery on the east (which left in the 1940s) and The Elms, a mid-Victorian house on the west. Within the site is St Joseph's, a house originally known as Marlborough House, which belonged to Samuel Ryder; a local philanthropist and famous golfer and founder of the Ryder Cup. It is constructed from yellow stock brick with a slate roof and dates from circa 1860. Also within the grounds, and visible from Hatfield Road, is Hurstlea. Originally a house situated east of the nursery site, this exhibits the Arts and Crafts details associated with local architect Kinnear Tarte, who altered the original C19 building. When the school took over the site they first used The Elms buildings as the convent, then in 1923 they acquired Marlborough House which became known as St Joseph's. In the 1930s the Chapel was built, which can be seen from Hatfield Road, a simple affair built in red brick with striking multi-paned windows. The block behind is a prefabricated structure in steel and concrete. Although the buildings are clearly very different, they are united and integrated into the area by their landscape setting, which includes the surrounding trees.



The redeveloped Oakland's site (some of the buildings are grade II listed) continues the tradition of housing in a well-landscaped setting.

Area 7f: St Peter's Park and the Marlborough House Estate

History and Buildings contd.

The college is set in-between Beaconsfield Road and Upper Lattimore Road. Upper Lattimore Road was cut slightly earlier than Beaconsfield Road in circa 1880 and built up by 1910, with the southern end being more developed than the northern end. Today the eastern side of the road southwards to Marlborough Gate benefits from the open aspect of the Loreto College site. At the northern end on the western side there are three modern developments dating from the 1980s which replaced earlier buildings. They are mixed in style and the most northerly one utilises yellow brick which is somewhat incongruous with the red brick dominant in the road. The southern end of the road displays more original houses; those on the western side are semi-detached and constructed of red brick (except one half of a pair which has been rendered), many display bay windows and in terms of scale they are smaller than those on Beaconsfield Road. The eastern side, south of Marlborough Gate, consists of two detached dwellings, no. 2 was built in 1936 and has a high pitched roof behind a parapet and is constructed of a brown brick, no. 4 is of white painted render in the Arts and Crafts style. Marlborough Gate, a cul de sac, runs off Upper Lattimore Road to the east and forms the southern boundary of the Loreto College site; the yellow brick building of St Joseph's is visible from this road. Marlborough Gate, because it lacks through traffic, is quite peaceful, aided by the open aspect of the college grounds to the north. The road was cut in 1923 and the houses here are influenced by the Arts and Crafts, with dark brick, white painted timber and prominent steeply pitched roofs, except nos.1 and 3, built in 1923, which are white painted render; the side elevation of no. 1 is also prominent on Upper Lattimore Road. They still broadly follow the theme of the area in being large, detached houses on bigger plots.

Beaconsfield Road dates from the late 1880s and into the early 1900s, and was built up on the western side first, where most houses were built in the 1890s. It was auctioned as twenty valuable freehold plots in 1880 as "Marlborough House Estate", being the eastern half of the Marlbor-

ough House property and beyond a line of trees which ran along an old field boundary. Plots were 38 feet wide (12m) and the building line set back 20 feet (6m). A high wall was proposed to separate the curtilage of Marlborough House from this building land. Some homes were built as individual designs but there are also groups of a similar design which appear to be speculative (Mr. Etheridge and Mr. Woodman appear to have developed several plots). At the southern end there are four tall and robust houses with large turret like bays and wide pointed arched doorways. Several others have prominent gables. The houses to the northern end and on the east side of the street are slightly smaller in scale and more mixed in materials than Upper Lattimore Road, for example displaying more mock timber framing, gault bricks and tile hanging. On the eastern side at the southern end is a large, red brick and shallow metal roofed, two storey office development (1990s), which replaced the P.O. Sorting Office. In terms of scale it still allows the SS Alban and Stephen Church to its north side to be dominant. The church has a large tower and a plain façade with round headed windows to the first floor, and is also constructed of red brick. It was opened in 1905 replacing a smaller Catholic Church in London Road, which was built in 1878.



There are four houses in Beaconsfield Road with turret-like bay windows.

Area 7f: St Peter's Park and the Marlborough House Estate

History and Buildings contd.

Bedford Park Road runs off Beaconsfield Road to the west; on the south side are some rendered 1920s houses which, like Marlborough Gate, are influenced by the Arts and Crafts style and to the north are some modern orange brick houses. A small cottage to the rear of no. 6 Bedford Park Road, which was formerly part of the nursery and was later used by Melbourne Cooper for filming, is locally listed.

Upper Lattimore Road in particular (with the exception of the college site) and Beaconsfield Road are in general less green than the rest of the area, however, both Bedford Park Road and Marlborough Gate do benefit from the landscaping of Loreto College. The area is similar to the southern end of the eastern side of Lemsford Road, with a few trees on the street front, but more trees behind which also serve to screen the railway line.

Lemsford Road continues northwards from Beaconsfield Road (running parallel to Hillside Road) and forms the eastern boundary of the character area. It was built up slightly later than most of St Peter's Park, around the turn of the C20, and many more of the buildings are finished in Tudor style, often with red brick to the ground floor, half timber and render or pebbledash, with lighter coloured brick to the first floor. The houses are individually planned and almost all are detached and vary to a great degree in this road alone. To the north the houses are large with big gardens, more typical of the origins of the area, but to the south, whilst they are detached houses, they are smaller and more closely packed. Here the gabled ends of the houses, medium pitched roofs, wooden balustrades and horizontal wooden framed windows really contribute towards the street scene. In common with the rest of the street, the group is surrounded by mature trees. The earlier houses that remain are relatively widely spaced and some are set at an angle to the road, which introduces more informality and allows landscaping in front and in between to impact on the street scene. This is also true of some of the modern developments which are set back from the road. It is clear how the

area's originally generous planning appealed to developers and therefore there have been many examples of later building, both in the rear gardens and with the infilling between the plots. An example of this is seen with Althorp Road, a cul de sac with generally heavy landscaping which runs off Lemsford Road. It was cut in the early 1900s and originally contained two houses on either side of the road both on large plots. By the 1920s two more houses on either side of the road also on large plots had been built. By the 1960s the two houses on the northern side of the road remained but three other houses had been built to the east in the grounds of one of these houses and the buildings to the south had been demolished. Today the remaining larger houses have been converted into flats. By the 1980s Althorp Road contained a set of modern houses at its western end, constructed on the rear gardens of the houses on Hillside Road. Thirlstante, on the corner of Althorp Road and Lemsford Road also demonstrates the redevelopment in the area. It is a group of flats dating from the 1960s which consists of a set of seven units, all but two are made up of three joined parts which are fanned with the aim of introducing as much light into the greatest number of units and are therefore indicative of planning for social good of this time. Though stylistically it does not blend with the area, the landscape setting of large trees and the way it is set back from the road help to soften its impact and it is nonetheless an interesting example of its era.



The houses at the south end of Lemsford Road are still mostly detached but they tend to be smaller and more closely packed than those to the north.

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Materials

The materials of the buildings are dependant on the date of the road concerned. Generally each road displays a certain consistency with original materials still evident, although later development often breaks this continuity. In the roads developed earliest, buildings in warm red/orange brick and slate and clay tile are the prevalent materials, with some brick detailing, whereas later roads display render or pebbledash and mock Tudor timber framing with tile roofs; all display timber windows. Later development sometimes utilises metal (windows and doors).



Architectural details, like this terracotta plaque, can be found on many of the buildings.



The materials and architectural styles used are varied but the street layout and treed setting provide a cohesive character.



Warm red/ orange brick is prevalent with slate or tile roofs.



Mock Tudor timber framing and render or pebbledash are commonly found on houses in later roads.

Area 7f: St Peter's Park and the Marlborough House Estate

Public Realm

The area benefits from two large open areas: the educational sites of Loreto College and Oaklands. Although these have a private function, their landscape can be appreciated from within the character area. Whilst there is no public green area, many of the streets benefit from mature trees both within gardens and on the street. There are also generous spaces between buildings, a feature of the planned layout of the area, which has mostly been retained. In terms of street furniture, there is little of note, no historic lampposts remain, there are, however, some traditional post boxes and a Victorian vent post on the corner of Lemsford Road. Paving is generally consistent, being concrete paving rather than tarmac which benefits the area because a contrast is provided to the roadway. Some blue brick paving survives.



Some historic post boxes remain.



Some blue pavements remain, although most paving is concrete.



Trees in front gardens and spaces between houses are positive.



Trees at the pavement edge contribute positively to the area.

Area 7f: St Peter's Park and the Marlborough House Estate

Positive & Negative Characteristics and Scope for Change

Positive

- ✓ The generous planning of this area means wide roads, front gardens and big plots are common.
- ✓ The listed buildings – the former College of Further Education (later Oaklands): seven listed buildings built as a modernist campus of pavilions set back from Hatfield Road amongst a mature landscape, which are a fine exemplar of the world renowned Hertfordshire post war education system by the County Architect's Department.
- ✓ The Loretto educational campus and the former Oaklands College area are spaciouly planned developments with specimen trees and therefore contribute space and landscape quality to the character area.
- ✓ The locally listed buildings which represent the development of the area and exhibit a good range of materials and well-executed detailing so representative of the craftsmanship skills of the C19 in brickwork, joinery, stone, terracotta, and tile hanging.
- ✓ The general consistency of the early housing styles in various streets which are indicative of their age.
- ✓ The amount of landscaping on these streets, mainly provided by the mature large trees, which were part of their original layout. Also the position and spacing of the plots which contribute to the public realm by creating leafy shadowy settings for the wide roads and help to unite the roads and conceal the different architectural styles amongst the roads.

Neutral

- The Scout Hut on Sandpit Lane, which, though rather functional, is reasonably hidden.

Negative

- ✗ Sub-division of plots and of buildings, and out of scale flat developments or over extension of buildings, has spoilt the otherwise general consistency of this area in terms of plot/building sizes which contributes to its character.
- ✗ Incremental changes, such as front gardens being sacrificed for parking and/or changes to materials, which often break the uniformity of architectural styles or impact on the positive features of roads.
- ✗ The car parking and through traffic in many of these roads.
- ✗ The excessive amount of on street parking diminishes the wide and open character of the roads.

Scope for Change

- Use of some of the buildings for other functions could erode the predominant residential feel of area and should be avoided. Likewise, infilling, especially with flat developments, and sub-division of larger dwellings needs to be controlled in the future so as not to undermine the positive characteristics as outlined above.
- Limiting the extent of on street parking.
- Protection of trees and landscape gaps.
- Limiting office use of residential buildings to retain the suburban and residential character of the area.