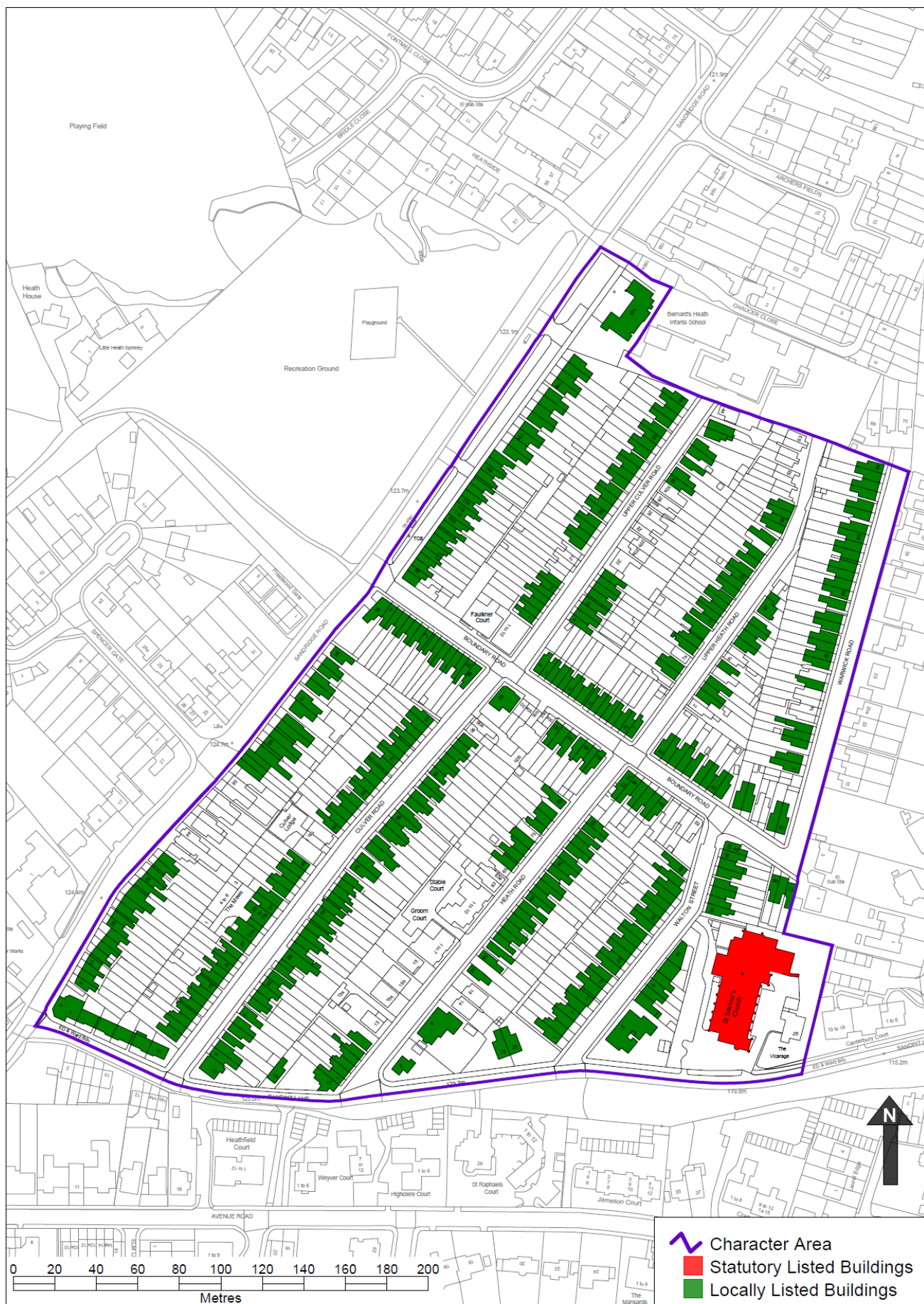


***Character Area 7h
Boundary Road Cottages***





AREA 7H: BOUNDARY ROAD COTTAGES

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Area 7h: Boundary Road Cottages

Boundary Road, Culver Road, Heath Road, Sandpit Lane, Sandridge Road, Upper Culver Road, Upper Heath Road, Walton Street, Warwick Road.

Scheduled Monuments

None.

Listed Buildings

St Saviour's Church (Grade II)

Locally Listed Buildings

Boundary Road

Odds: 1-27 (incl.), 29-49 (incl.), 55 & 57.
Evens: 2-28 (incl.), 32-36 (incl.), 38-44 (incl.), 46-54 (incl.), 64 (formerly 30 Walton Street), 64a, 66-70 (incl.).

Culver Road

Odds: 1-49 (incl.), 55-87 (incl.).
Evens: 6-88 (incl.), 92.

Heath Road

Odds: 1-11 (incl.), 67 & 69, 71 & 73, 77-83 (incl.).
Evens: 2 & 4, 24-68 (incl.), 70.

Sandpit Lane

(part – for remainder see Area 7f St Peter's Park and Area 7i Clarence Park)

Odds: 1-11 (incl.), 13, 15, 17, 19 & 21.
Evens: 2-6 (incl.), 10.

Sandridge Road

Evens: 4-38 (incl.), 60-88 (incl.), 90, shop at corner of Boundary Road, 92-152 (incl.).
Bernard's Heath Infant's School

Upper Culver Road

Odds: 1 & 3, 5-13 (incl.), 25-63 (incl.).
Evens: 2-18 (incl.), 30-38 (incl.), 40 & 42.

Upper Heath Road

Odds: 1, 5-27 (incl.), 31-39 (incl.), 41-47 (incl.).
Evens: 4-8 (incl.), 12, 18-26 (incl.).

Walton Street

Odds: 1-45 (incl.).
Evens: 2-14 (incl.), 16-28 (incl.), 30 (now 64 Boundary Road).

Warwick Road

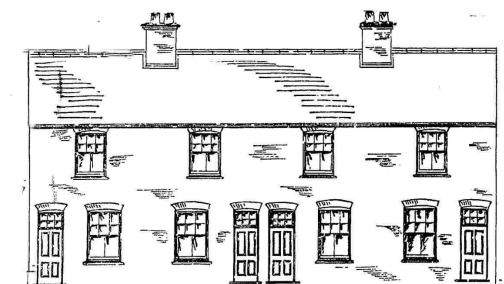
Evens: 2-10 (incl.), 20, 24-64 (incl.).



The front façade of the Grade II listed St Saviour's Church



Bernard's Heath Infants School—locally listed



Typical, locally listed, early terraced cottages in Boundary Road. Front and Rear Elevations from original plans, c1885

Area 7h: Boundary Road Cottages

Character Summary

This character area is to the north of the city centre, on the northern boundary of the St Albans Conservation Area. The St Albans conservation area was extended on 1991 to encompass this area of late 19th and early 20th century residential development.

This area is bounded to the west by Sandridge Road and to the south by Sandpit Lane, two of the main ancient northerly routes out of the City. The northern boundary encompasses the frontage building of Bernard's Heath Infants School on Sandridge Road and then runs along the side boundaries of the most northerly properties in Upper Culver Road, Upper Heath Road and Warwick Road (excluding nos. 66-70). The eastern boundary includes the properties on the western side of Warwick Road, nos. 66-70 Boundary Road and also encompasses St Saviour's Church on Sandpit Lane.

This area was once a part of Bernard's Heath, a large area of common land on and around the summit of the hill on which St Albans is built. This is the highest part of the city and the cottages of this character area were developed on the flat plateau of land on the top of the hill.

Sandridge Road and Sandpit Lane are relatively busy roads, leading from the city centre. Between these two roads, lies a quiet residential area within a constrained network of streets. This area comprises a series of

late Victorian and Edwardian red brick terraces, regularly and densely plotted. The narrow frontages, minimal setback and absence of landscaping result in an essentially urban character. It is a coherent group of brick buildings, which include many attractive artisan cottages.

This area is now predominantly residential, and most of the original non-residential sites have been redeveloped during the late C20, adding some small pockets of modern residential development into the primarily C19 framework. These small pockets of modern development are of variable quality. The designation of this area as a General Improvement Area in the 1970s has also resulted in some unsympathetic alterations and extensions to the original housing.

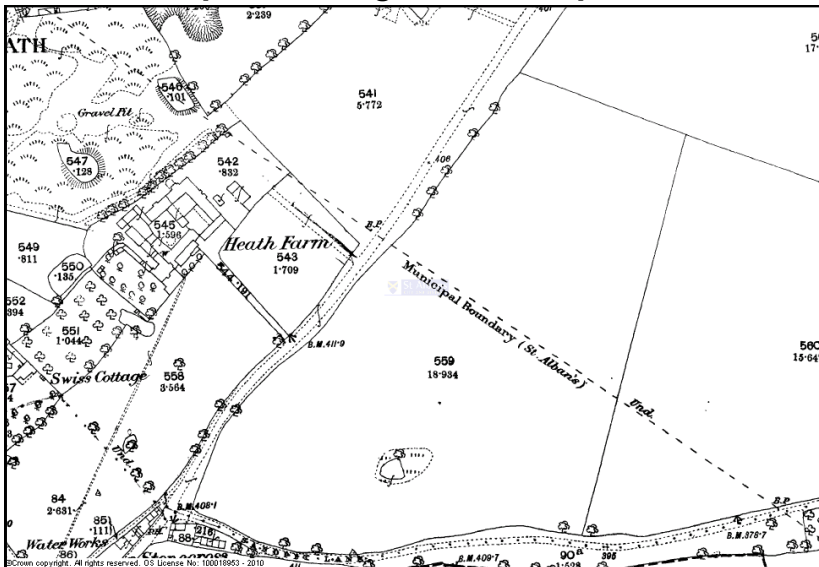
Bernard's Heath Infants' School and St Saviour's Church are the two significant non-residential buildings within the area. The school is a typical Edwardian school building: a single-storey, red brick building with symmetrically placed front gables and tall, round top windows. The school is set back from the road behind the wide grass verges and access road which fronts the properties on this side of Sandridge Road. St Saviour's Church is an imposing, Grade II listed church built between 1896 and 1902. The church is set back from the road in a wide plot, with a tarmaced parking area to the forecourt.



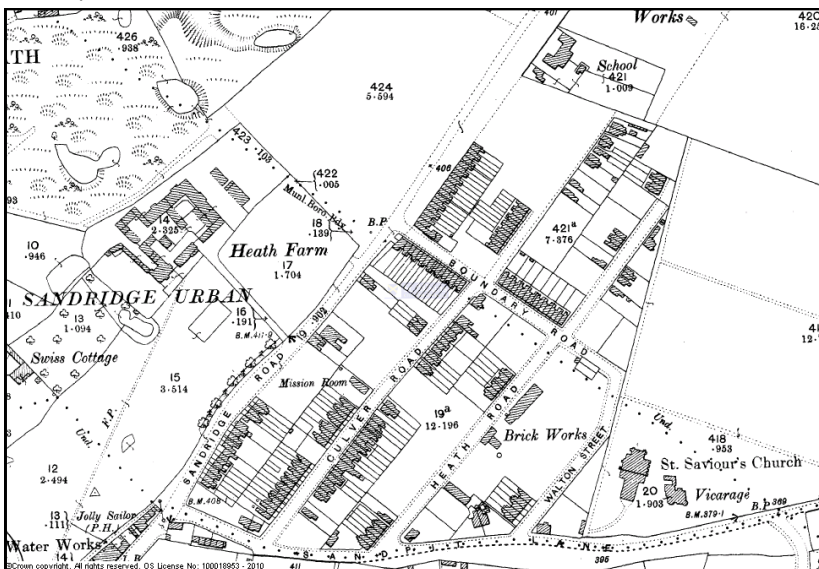
Typical terraced housing in the area.

Area 7h: Boundary Road Cottages

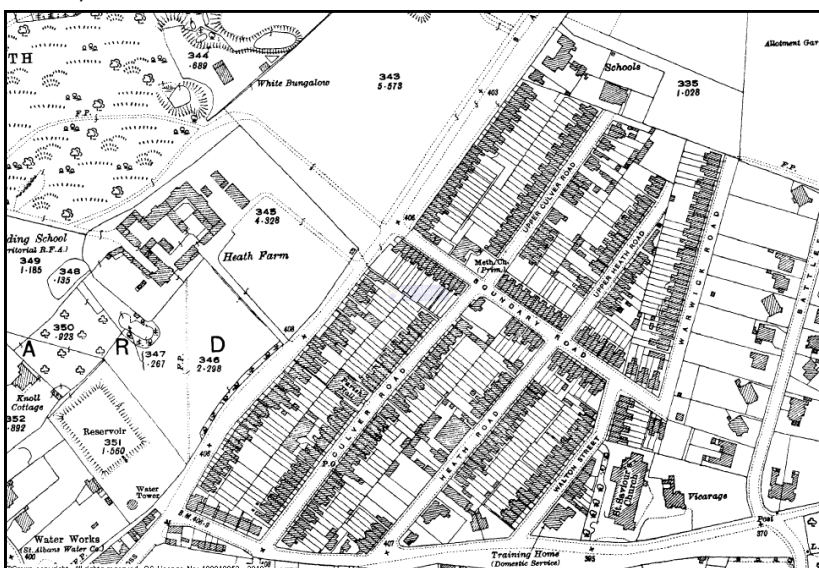
Historic Maps showing the development of the area



OS Map c 1880



OS Map c 1900



OS Map c 1920

Area 7h: Boundary Road Cottages

History

The Stone Cross (see also Area 7e) which stood at the junction of Sandridge Road and Sandpit Lane in the Middle Ages was probably a large roadside shrine, which also marked the northernmost limit of the medieval town. Sandridge Road is the historic route from St Albans to Hitchin, and it is thought that both Sandridge Road and Sandpit Lane have pre-Roman origins. Both these ancient ways were drove roads where drovers had the right to drive and rest livestock along the road without let, hindrance or tolls from the Abbey. The unusually wide verges are the remnants of the roadside wastes: grassland where cattle could be rested and grazed.



Wide verges — the roadside wastes where drovers rested their cattle.

Although all of this land was probably once part of the common land of Bernard's Heath, by the C16 the land was enclosed as part of the Manor of Sandridge which passed through the generations into the ownership of the Spencer family. By the late C19, the land was part of Heath Farm, a large farm, sited to the west of Sandridge Road outside the City boundaries, on the site of what is now The Limes. The farm was owned by Earl Spencer and tenanted.

In 1879, the St Albans City Extension came into force and the City boundary was extended. This was much against public opinion, which was in favour of St Albans remaining the small and simple town that it had been since coaching days. Fixing the new boundary at points radiating from the Town Hall at a distance of three-quarters of a mile, the southern part of this area was brought within the new municipal boundary.

In about 1880, Earl Spencer started selling off some of the land of Heath Farm for building. Roads were cut, the land plotted and sold to speculative builders. Boundary Road was cut just to the north of the line of the new city boundary, hence its name. The new houses in Boundary Road remained in Sandridge Parish, thus benefiting from village rates, lower than those of the city. The land was sold mainly to build workmen's cottages, although, amongst the houses, a scattering of small shops, workshops and stables were also built. Terraces of narrow-fronted houses were erected in blocks throughout the area. Building progressed rapidly. Although no houses had been built at the time of the 1881 census, by 1882, the first houses were already occupied. This area became known as 'Sandridge New Town'.



Originally small shops, these buildings have now been converted to residential use.

Bernard's Heath had long been a place for brick making, and clay pits and kilns had been a feature of the area since the C15. By the late C19, the frenzied pace of house building in St Albans had brought a huge demand for building materials. Some of the Spencer land was used for clay excavation, and larger, more industrialised brick works sprang up around Bernard's Heath to meet the continuous demand for bricks. Within this area, there was a brick works on the south side of Heath Road. This industrial site was surrounded by a cluster of other small building workshops and companies, who also set up on Heath Road. On Sandridge Road, on land adjacent to Bernard's Heath School, just to the north of the area, was the Heath Brick and Pottery Works, run by Jacob Reynolds, the tenant farmer of Heath Farm. The local brick works supplied many of the red bricks that were used to build the terraced cottages in this area and in the rest of St Albans.

Area 7h: Boundary Road Cottages

History contd.

As Sandridge New Town developed, it was clear that the area was going to have a much lower tone than the housing developments to the south of Sandpit Lane, such as Avenue Road. The brick works with their smoke and smells made poor neighbours to the new cottages, coupled with the fact that many of the disused brick pits were used as landfill sites to dump the town's rubbish. Fortunately, the brick works were comparatively short-lived. By 1910, the area was substantially built up and, by that time, the brick works had largely disappeared. The brick works on Heath Road were closed down in 1899 and the site was then redeveloped for housing. As the population of Sandridge New Town increased, the need to educate the area's children became a priority. In 1888, Bernard's Heath School was established in temporary premises to educate the growing numbers of children in the area. The current purpose-built school was erected in 1903.

Churches were also built in the area. A Primitive Methodist Church School and Church were built on the corner of Boundary Road and Culver Road, sadly demolished in the late C20 when the site was redeveloped as flats, Faulkner Court. An Anglo-Catholic Mission Church was established in an iron building in Culver Road. When this building became too small, plans were drawn up to build a new large church on land gifted by Earl Spencer. The foundation stone of St Saviour's was laid by Countess Spencer on 25th July 1896 and work progressed rapidly. The church was built of local bricks from the Heath Brick works, whose proprietor, Jacob Reynolds, was also the churchwarden. William Woodward designed the church to be built in two phases; building a large iron structure that served as a church during the construction of the Chancel, and then as a temporary nave once the Chancel was completed. In 1900, this temporary nave was removed and all church services took place in the Chancel, vestry and lady chapel. The permanent nave, side aisles and enlarged vestry were completed fourteen months later and were consecrated in November 1902. The Mission Church on Culver Road was

redeveloped and became St Saviour's Parish Hall (also known as The Culver Hall), until the site was redeveloped as Culver Lodge in the late C20.

The dense and regular residential plotting of the C19 left little room for infill building, but almost all of the non-residential sites have now disappeared from this area. During the late C20, buildings were converted and sites redeveloped for residential use, leaving little or no legacy of any previous uses visible in the built form. During the 1970s, this area was designated as a General Improvement Area and, in modernising these houses, some unsympathetic alterations have been made. Latterly, some reinstatement of original features has taken place, and such improvements should be encouraged in the future.



St Saviour's Church (clockwise from top) - entrance door; the nave; from Sandpit Lane.



The 'Old Tin Hut'—the original Mission church on Culver Road.

Area 7h: Boundary Road Cottages

Spatial Analysis

Sandridge Road

Only the eastern side of Sandridge Road lies within the Conservation area and within this character area. Although an ancient route, Sandridge Road was not built up until the late C19 and early C20 and is edged with typical semi-detached and terraced housing of that era. Unusually, the corner plots, that is plots on the corner of Sandpit Lane and on both corners of Boundary Road, remain as small shops. Some extensions have been added to these premises and there have been changes to the original shop fronts. However, importantly, the original small neighbourhood scale has been retained.

Between Sandpit Lane and Boundary Road the character is quite urban. This housing is densely plotted; a variety of cottages and small villas, set to a varied building line, mostly with small front gardens, with little opportunity for planting.

been eroded due to cars parking on the grass and improvements should be made to reinstate and safeguard the grass to maintain its positive contribution to character.

Directly after the junction with Boundary Road, a long terrace of narrow fronted cottages, densely plotted, with no setback from the access road, benefit greatly from the overall setback from the carriageway. Between these cottages and Bernard's Heath School, four short terraces of pretty cottages, built in 1905, are set back from the road, with front gardens that enhance their setting. In this part of Sandridge Road, given the spaciousness of the carriageway, the grass verge and the outlook to the recreation ground and mature roadside trees, the character is that of a village green rather than that of a ribbon of urban development.



Above from left: red brick terraces on Sandridge Road; corner shop at the end of Boundary Road; the road opens out beyond Boundary Road, the recreation ground is to the left of the road.

After Boundary Road, the road widens. The recreation ground on the western side of the road is a valuable open green space and the roadside planting of mature trees contributes to the pleasant outlook and softens the urban character of the area. On the eastern side, a wide grass verge and an access road separate the buildings from the main carriageway. This additional width is a relic of the original roadside wastes, and the verge makes a positive contribution to the setting of buildings on this side of the street. Some of the grass verge has

Bernard's Heath Infants School also faces out onto the recreation ground, set behind the grass verge and access road. The small Edwardian school was built as the community of Sandridge New Town developed, and retains the character of a small village school. With its pleasing, symmetrical composition, well designed fenestration and relatively simple detailing, the quality of this building is established by its use of good quality traditional materials rather than by relying on complicated form and ornate decoration.

Area 7h: Boundary Road Cottages

Spatial Analysis

Sandpit Lane

Between Sandridge Road and Culver Road, a terrace of good quality late Victorian villas addresses the street. Beyond the junction with Culver Road, Sandpit Lane is more informally and sparsely built up. A few houses do address Sandpit Lane: those on the larger corner sites at the ends of the adjoining roads. A small shop on the corner of Heath Road is another of the small-scale neighbourhood shops which has survived, although the attached builder's yard, once a common feature in this area, is now somewhat of an anachronism. For the most part, the side returns and gardens of the adjoining streets are the predominant feature, and close-boarded timber fences and some mature planting add to the informality.



Victorian villas at the start of Sandpit Lane.



Few houses address Sandpit Lane.

The green verge on the southern side of the road, which widens after the junction with Heath Road, is another relic of the drover's roadside wastes. This green area with its mature trees creates a spacious feel to the street, screens the development to the rear of Avenue Road (Area 7f), and makes a positive contribution to the character of the area.

St Saviour's Church is a large imposing church consecrated in 1902. Built in local red brick with Ancaster stone dressings, the façade has a projecting porch from which an octagonal turret surmounted by a spirelet rises. A recessed niche contains a statue of The Christ by C H Mabey above a pair of lancet windows. The enclosed porch has large gothic windows with beaded stone tracery. The church is set within in a wide plot, set well back from the road edge behind a low hedge and red brick wall. The large area to the fore has been tarmaced to use as a parking area, and this poorly landscaped setting does little to set this Victorian gothic church in an appropriate context.



Sandpit Lane and the wide grass verges.



The corner shop— junction of Sandpit Lane and Heath Road.



The setting of St Saviour's Church is poor.

Area 7h: Boundary Road Cottages

Spatial Analysis

Boundary Road, Culver Road, Upper Culver Road, Heath Road, Upper Heath Road, Walton Street and Warwick Road

The remaining streets in this area are fairly homogenous in their development. The streets are quite narrow, and the grain of development is tight. The road layout is a simple grid. Roads to the south of Boundary Road run parallel to Sandridge Road and to each other. Roads to the north are extensions of those to the south, and are cul-de-sacs, terminating at an old field boundary. The terraced housing is arranged in perimeter blocks within the grid. The narrow-fronted houses are densely packed, with little setback from the pavement edge. There are few gaps within the street frontage and the minimal front gardens do not allow much scope for planting to soften the dense urban character.



Early terraced housing.

Almost all of the houses are typical, late C19, brick-built, tunnel-back terraced houses. Amongst the terraced houses are a few semi-detached houses and, rarely, small detached houses. All of the houses are two-storey, with shallow roofs, which would originally have been slated rather than tiled. The regularity of the plots, the established building line, the similarity of scale and form, the predominant use of red brick and the contemporariness of the development gives great architectural continuity to the area.

The earliest cottages were developed from 1881 onwards and are small and plain fronted. These earliest cottages are to be found peppered throughout these streets, but most are to be found to the west of Heath Road. Many of these early cottages have been rendered and/or painted. Some have suffered some unfortunate window and roof replacement.

The later cottages, built towards the turn of the C20, have slightly wider frontages, and a greater level of detail, with simple porches and bay windows. Most of these later cottages have not been painted and display the original brickwork but, as with the earlier cottages, some have suffered unfortunate window and roof replacement.



Later, more detailed terraced housing

Area 7h: Boundary Road Cottages

Spatial Analysis

Boundary Road, Culver Road, Upper Culver Road, Heath Road, Upper Heath Road, Walton Street and Warwick Road (contd.)

Originally a mix of uses would have existed within this residential area. Shops, workplaces and religious meeting places were built amongst the houses. Street corners were often given over to these shops and commercial uses, although, in this area, a mix of uses was found throughout. A few of these uses remain; the corner shops and the shop on Culver Road are the most obvious examples, adding variety and maintaining a mix of uses which was part of the historic character of the area.

Other commercial buildings have been converted to residential use. The residential conversion of the shop on the corner of Walton Street and Boundary Road is a good example of how such shops can be converted sympathetically, retaining the original shop front, although the exposed aggregate, 1960s planters on the widened Walton Street pavement are an incongruous contrast.

More commonly, the commercial plots have been infilled with late C20 residential development, sometimes demolishing original buildings. Development at nos. 30a/b/c Boundary Road and nos. 20a/b Upper Culver Road are examples of such development. Sympathetic infill development would pay regard to the grain, scale, form and materials of the surrounding development. Larger sites have also been redeveloped. St Saviour's Parish Hall (The Culver Hall) and the Primitive Methodist church were demolished in the late C20 and replaced with flatted development: Culver Lodge and Faulkner Court. These blocks of flats have large footprints and do not fit well with the grain and scale of the surrounding development.

Other larger sites could be comprehensively redeveloped. The industrial past of Heath Road initially led to a varied pattern of development. Although the Brickworks site was redeveloped for housing in the early C20, much of the rest of the street was not plotted for housing, but was in commercial use until the late C20, when these commercial plots were redeveloped as housing and flats. As a result, there is a variety of modern development in this street. Whilst some of these developments have large footprints in comparison with the surrounding earlier development, the elevational treatments mitigate the scale, and the vertical fenestration and materials are generally appropriate.



A view from the cart entrance of Dumpleton's old yard, illustrating some remnants of the mix of uses within the area.

Area 7h: Boundary Road Cottages

Public Realm

This is predominantly an urban residential area, densely developed and with little green space. Most of the green space is within the gardens of houses but, where there are front gardens, these are small and, individually, can only make a limited contribution. For the most part, there is little greenery within these front garden areas and more planting could soften the urban character of the area.

There are no public green spaces within the dense framework of the late C19/early C20 residential development. The open space of the Sandridge Road Recreation Ground is outside this area, but contributes to the outlook from the houses in Sandridge Road, which are within this area. The setting is similar to that of a village green.

The unexpectedly wide grass verges in Sandridge Road and Sandpit Lane are the vestiges of drover's roadside wastes. These grass verges positively contribute to the green and spacious character of these streets. The roadside trees on the verges are some of the few significant mature trees within the area. In Sandpit Lane, the planting on the verge effectively screens the development at the rear of Avenue Road.

Within this area, streets are generally narrow, as are the pavements. In the roads to the south of Boundary Road, the hard urban streetscape is much improved by the use of traditional blue brick paving, although, in the remaining streets, concrete paving slabs and tarmac are used.

Sandridge Road and Sandpit Lane are the main through roads within the area. These are relatively busy roads, where traffic tends to dominate. Within the narrow residential side roads, parking is a problem. The densely plotted houses and narrow frontages exacerbate the problem. Throughout all of those streets planned in the C19 and early C20, frontages are dominated by parked cars, and this does impact negatively on the character of the area.



Front gardens of the terraces are small and generally contain little planting, thus contributing little green space.



Wide grass verges are a remnant of the roadside wastes of the drovers' roads of Sandridge Road and Sandpit Lane, and provide much needed green space in the area.



Streets south of Boundary Road have traditional blue brick paving.

Area 7h: Boundary Road Cottages

Positive & Negative Characteristics and Scope for Change

Positive

- ✓ Residential area with a strong identity and distinctiveness.
- ✓ Predominantly late C19 to early C20 development with cohesive townscape quality.
- ✓ The architectural and historic continuity of 'planned' development.
- ✓ Quiet, residential areas close to the city centre, set away from main thoroughfares.
- ✓ The early C20 community school, still in community use.
- ✓ The early C20, Grade II listed, St Saviour's Church.
- ✓ The outlook to the Recreation Ground in Sandridge Road.
- ✓ The wide grass verges and roadside trees in Sandridge Road and Sandpit Lane.
- ✓ Traditional paving.

Neutral

- Some later infill development.

Negative

- ✗ Unsympathetic alterations to the late C19 and early C20 houses.
- ✗ Late C20 developments which are out of keeping with the character of the area.
- ✗ Parking in the narrow streets, dominating the street frontage.
- ✗ Erosion of grass verges in Sandridge Road due to parked cars.
- ✗ The poor landscaped setting of St Saviour's Church.

Scope for change

- Unsympathetic changes to windows, doors and architectural details can easily erode the iteration and rhythm of the C19 frontages.
- Reinstatement of original architectural details: windows, doors, roof coverings.
- More planting and greenery to front gardens throughout the area.
- Improvements to parking arrangements, particularly in respect of the grass verges.
- Improvements to the setting of St Saviour's Church.

