



Kettering
TOWN COUNCIL

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Planning for Good

KETTERING CENTRAL
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER STUDY

DECEMBER 2025

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. WHAT IS AN AREA OF SPECIAL CHARACTER?	3
3. PROPOSED AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER	4
4. THE LEICESTER STREET – BAYES STREET AREA OF SPECIAL CHARACTER	6
5. THE WILLAIM STREET AREA OF SPECIAL CHARACTER	9
6. THE ROCKINGHAM PARK AREA OF SPECIAL CHARACTER	12
7. THE STAMFORD ROAD AREA OF SPECIAL CHARACTER	15
8. THE ST. PETER’S ROAD – YORK STREET AREA OF SPECIAL CHARACTER	18
APPENDIX A; THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD	23

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared by ONH Planning for Good for Kettering Town Council to support the proposed identification of five 'Areas of Special Character' (AoSC) in the Town Council's Kettering Central Neighbourhood Plan (KCNP).

1.2 From the outset the community was keen for the Neighbourhood Plan to contain policies that recognised and bolstered the distinct histories and identities within parts of what is a large plan area. The area has one designated Conservation Area focused on the adjoining town centre and containing most of the town's listed buildings.

1.3 ONH has reviewed the Northants Historic Environment Record and other heritage sources, and undertaken field survey work, to identify those parts of the town outside its historic core that are surviving examples of its late 19 Century evolution. It has used the helpful guidance published by Historic England in 2021 on local heritage listing (its Advice Note No.7 second edition).

1.4 In identifying the various AoSC, the boundaries in some cases have been drawn beyond where the character has been identified. The reason behind this is that while a particular plot may not share the distinctive features of its surrounding AoSC, if that plot were to come forward for redevelopment, it would be appropriate for the design of the scheme to reflect and enhance the character of the relevant AoSC, if within the identified boundary.

1.5 ONH gratefully acknowledges the use of images from the excellent pictorial history of the town in Tony Smith's 'Kettering Revisited' of 1993. Permission to use these images in this report is being sought.

2. What is an Area of Special Character?

2.1 It is best to think of an Area of Special Character as an area of architectural and historic interest that is of local significance but not to the extent that justifies being designated as a statutory Conservation Area (though some may be candidates for potential future designation).

2.2 The planning system defines them as 'non-designated heritage assets' (see §209 of the National Planning Policy Framework), which means that planning applications need to show that they have acknowledged, understood and responded to their local heritage significance. They therefore stand above the norm in terms of the character and appearance of the local area.

2.3 The guidance advises that defining an area should be based on some criteria:

- Their age, which may explain common building types and materials where they are still evident
- Their architectural interest, which may derive from surviving building features that represented a particular popular style or type of construction or craft
- Their historic interest, which may provide a reminder of how the local area has evolved over many decades and centuries as a 'collective memory' of the local community
- Their mix of uses of land and buildings, whether all of one type of use or a variety that helps the area stand out from the surrounding uses
- The presence of landmarks, as uses, buildings, structures or spaces that stand out in the streetscene even if they themselves have little architectural or historic interest

2.4 To have proper weight in the planning system, Areas of Special Character must be identified and justified as part of the production of a plan like this Neighbourhood Plan. This allows for the local community, land and property owners and other bodies to have their say on the proposals before they are considered for approval.

2.5 Once finalised, the AoSCs will be identified in a policy of the KCNP and they will be shown on its Policies Map. After the Neighbourhood Plan is made, North Northamptonshire Council, as the local planning authority, will require all planning applications in the AoSCs to show how they have taken into account their local heritage significance as described in this report.

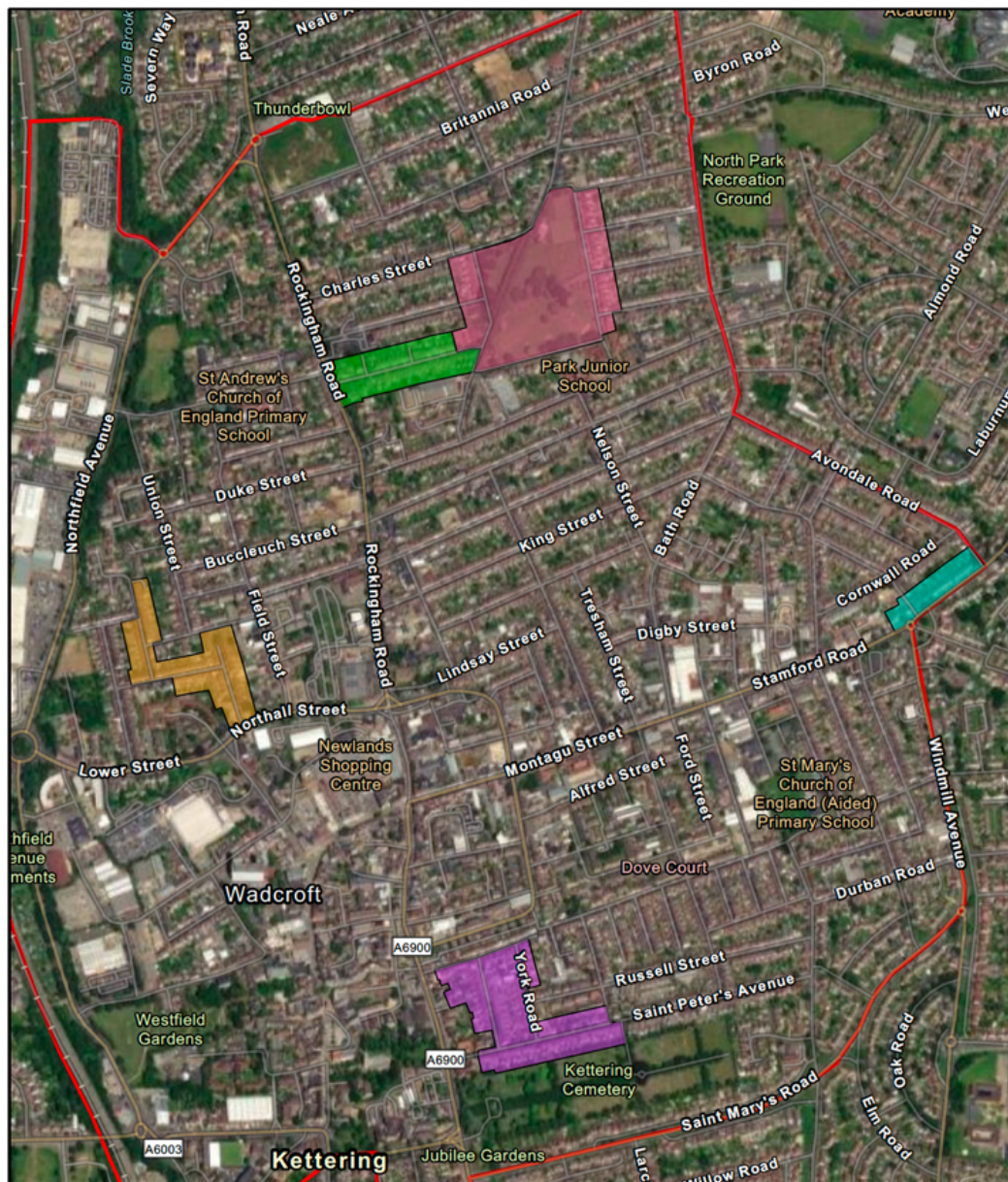
3. Proposed Areas of Special Character

3.1 A review has been undertaken of the neighbourhood area and from a number of possibilities, five AoSCs have been proposed (see Plan A below):

1. Leicester Street/Bayes Street
2. William Street
3. Rockingham Road Park
4. Stamford Road
5. St. Peter's Avenue – York Road

3.2 All cover residential areas of the town just beyond its centre that were developed in the last years of the 19 C and first years of the 20C during a rapid period of the town's growth. Three – Stamford Road, St. Peter's Avenue and Rockingham Road Park – exemplify how the wealth generated by its industrial success led to the building of larger, more decorated homes for the new middle class. The Oxford Street and William Street areas comprise a mix of homes for working class and middle-class households.

3.3 Although there are many other parts of the town built around this same time, these five areas stand out as especially valuable examples of this period, with more of their character evident and surviving than in others. There are very few listed buildings in the areas, but there are a number of other buildings, many prominent in the streetscene, that are of local architectural, historic or townscape interest.



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- Leicester Street - Bayes Street
- William Street
- Rockingham Park
- Stamford Road
- St Peters Avenue - York Road

Plan A: Proposed Areas of Special Character

4. The Leicester Street – Bayes Street Area of Special Character

4.1 This area lies on the northern edge of the town centre and continued the town's growth north-eastwards to Slade Brook and the railway line begun twenty years or so years earlier off Field Street. The area occupies higher ground with the land sloping gently from east to west towards the brook and north to south to the town centre.

4.2 Its three roads – Leicester Street, Bayes Street and Oxford Street in between – are residential in use and character with only an industrial unit and petrol station on Bayes Street in different use. There has been very little development in the last few decades; the flatted scheme on the corner of Bayes Street and Northall Street is the only modern development.



Plan B: Leicester Street - Bayes Street in 1899 (Source: National Library of Scotland)

4.3 The roads are perfectly straight and are enclosed by terraces of buildings on both sides to form a narrow street profile. The plots are very regular in width and depth – every building fronts the street either at the back of pavement or with a small (< 2m) front patio or garden behind a low brick wall.

4.4 The buildings are two storey in Oxford Street and Leicester Street and mostly two-and-a-half and three storey in Bayes Street. Almost every building in the area has a full dormer in the roof – some have Dutch gables but most have simple pitched roofs with the occasional decorated bargeboards. Single or double storey canted bay windows are common in the larger properties in Bayes Street.



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Plan C: The Proposed Leicester Street - Bayes Street Area of Special Character

4.5 Most distinctive is the survival of significant architectural detailing in the brickwork to almost every building in the area. Red brick string courses to the pale yellow brick facades are very common and also decorated door and window lintels and jambs. Notable too are the terracotta bricks around the mostly depressed (sometimes segmental) arches along much of Oxford Street and part of Bayes Street. Throughout there are brick bracketed eaves below clay tile roofs.

4.6 Beyond the area there is a long view southwards along Bayes Street to the church spire at St. Peter & St. Pauls. There is also a long view west along Oxford Street to the western side of the town beyond the railway. Otherwise, the area has an enclosed and intimate, quiet character that is enhanced by the delight of its Victorian architectural features.

PHOTO GALLERY



1 Two storey canted bays



2 Distinctive corner building



3 Flattened door archway



4 Decorative window surrounds



5 Decorative brickwork



6 Legacy shop use



7 Taller buildings on corner plots

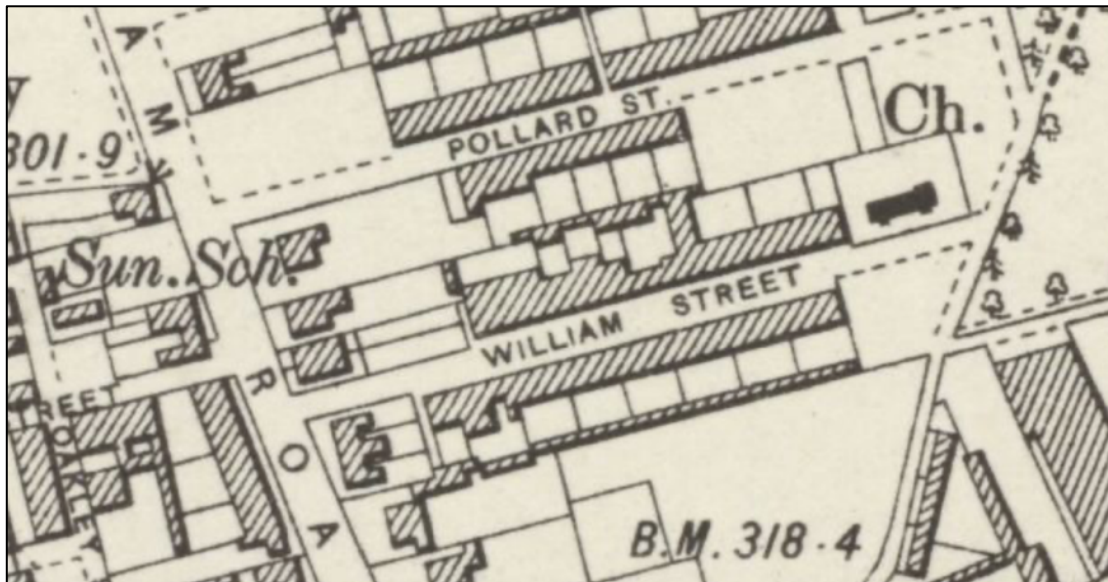


8 Strong street rhythm

5. The William Street Area of Special Character

5.1 This single street joins Rockingham Road to its west with Rockingham Road Park to its east a half mile north of the town centre. It is now residential in character and was part of the early 20C expansion of the town that included the laying out of the original recreation ground (see later).

5.2 The land is flat and the road perfectly straight, allowing long views along its full length. The view west is terminated by three storey 125-145 London Road which bolsters the immediate suburban character. The view east to the Park is punctuated by 37-41 former factory building, a tall, three storey orange/red brick building of six bays with large windows under segmented arches and deep eaves (see the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record description in the Appendix).



Plan D: William Street in 1899 (Source: National Library of Scotland)

5.3 There are long terraces on both sides of low two storey buildings with common plot widths and depths. Although low, the street is relatively narrow creating an intimate character, as there are short front gardens behind low brick walls or iron railings.

5.4 The buildings are almost all of the dominant orange/red brick of the local area with low pitch clay tile roofs with no dormers. All have canted bay windows, mostly single storey apart from the group Nos. 62-70 that have two storey polygonal bays.

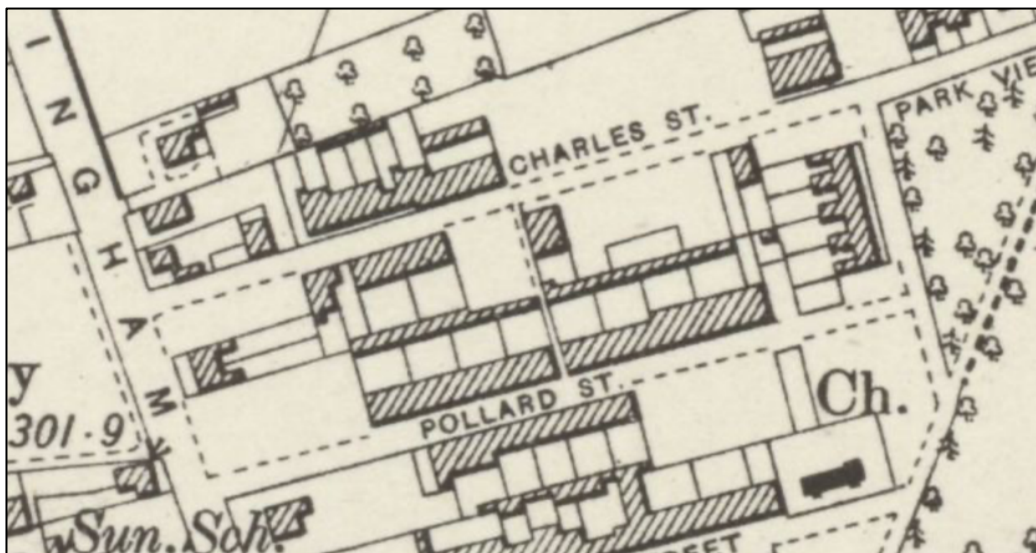
5.5 There are prominent buildings on the corners with London Road – No.96 is of a Gothic style and a darker brick, two and a half storey building with an elaborate mix of slate roof pitches. No. 98 is a tall three storey building with two storey bay windows. At the eastern end are two more distinct buildings that form part of the adjoining Rockingham Road Park AoSC.



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Plan E: The Proposed William Street Area of Special Character

5.6 In assessing this area, consideration was given to including an additional area covering Pollard Street and Charles Street to the north of William Street (see Plan F below). Both streets include some of the older and wider terraces with canted bays that are common to William Street (e.g. 'Waverley Cottages' and 'Montrose' of Nos. 57 – 63 Pollard Street).



Plan F: Pollard Street and Charles Street in 1899 (Source: National Library of Scotland)

5.7 However, neither street has the same uniformity of character as William Street as both have longer stretches of later, simpler terraces and many more modern buildings. In addition, the buildings in both streets have generally seen more alterations to their windows, doors, bays, facing materials and boundary treatments than William Street. For those reasons it is considered that the Area of Special Character should not extend to these other streets.

PHOTO GALLERY



9 Two storey polygonal bays



10 Decorative boundary



11 Single storey canted bay



12 Prominent corner plot



13 Long views along street



14 View of park



15 Former factory



16 View onto Rockingham Road

6. The Rockingham Park Area of Special Character

6.1 The Park is the basis for this AoSC, which extends to cover some of the surrounding buildings. It was originally laid out as a Recreation Ground c. 1896, next to the former reservoir and water works. At the time, it lay beyond the northern edge of the town but was part of the development of the suburban streets that began to expand the town east to Bath Road and north up Hallwood Road. It was the first formally laid out recreation ground to serve the town.

6.2 The path through the Park follows line of Park View and Hallwood Road along the route of a much older footpath running north-east from St Andrews Church towards Corby. There are many mature trees around its edges and along the central footpath. It is formal in its park character with a central bandstand that can be seen from all its edges.



Plan F: Rockingham Park in 1899 (Source: National Library of Scotland)

6.3 On its western edge, Park View was laid out with Park and is a wonderful terrace of two-and-a-half storey, suburban houses. They have prominent gabled dormers above two storey canted bay windows and have retained their decorative architectural details – the moulded name plates are delightful. The terrace has longer front gardens than much of the town's older urban areas which are defined by low brick walls. No. 15 ('Haslemere') on the southern corner plot is especially prominent as it is larger in plan form and slightly taller than the others, with two tall trees in its garden complementing those opposite in the Park. More generally, the mature street trees combine with Park trees to create arcadian character along all of Park View.



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Fig. A: The Bandstand in the Park (Source: Kettering Town Council)

6.4 All Saints Church also occupies a prominent corner plot of the Park and William Street. Built in 1916 to replace the original iron church of 1898, it has a distinct tall, octagonal brick tower and tall pointed arches, with large expanse of orange/red brick walls (see HER description in the Appendix). Other prominent buildings are the unusual Nos. 72-74 William Street on the corner plot opposite the church – it has a corbelled circular, flat topped ('bartizan') tower above an angled ground floor brick arch faces the street in views south along Park View.

6.5 Although of less intrinsic architectural value than their counterparts on Park View, the buildings along Park Road also complement the Park setting with some notable groups that match those on Park View, e.g. 48-54 (notably the timber balcony) and 22-32 (notably the wide two storey bow window and roundel window instead of the normal gabled dormer).



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Plan G: The Proposed Rockingham Park Area of Special Character

PHOTO GALLERY



17. Prominent corner building



18. Fornal parkland



19. Playful decoration



20. Arcadian Park View



21. Two storey bays plus dormers



22. Prominent church



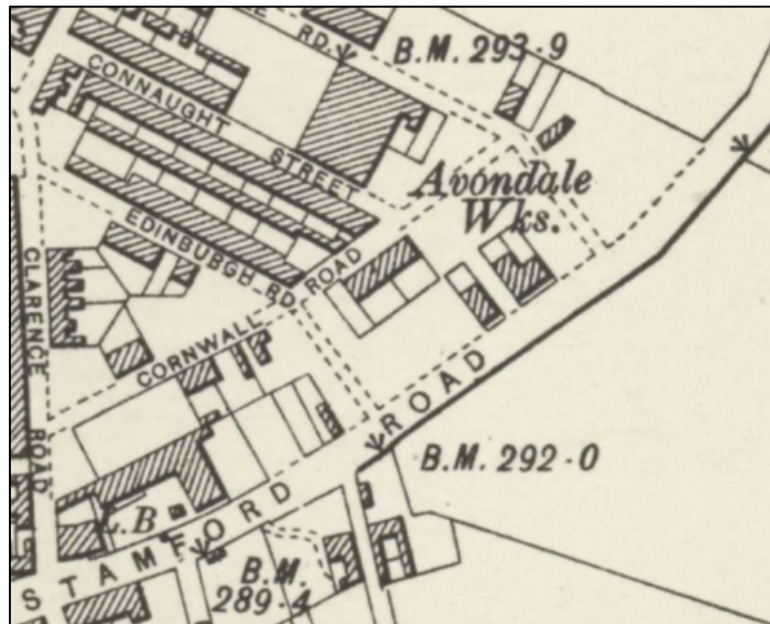
23. Unusual bow/bay mix



24. Higher order building

7. The Stamford Road Area of Special Character

7.1 Stamford Road is one the main roads into the town from the east. It is therefore busy with traffic but this short length has a more intimate character derived from the combination of its buildings and street streets.



Plan H: Stamford Road in 1899 (Source: National Library of Scotland)

7.2 It comprises a long terrace of early 20C two and a half storey buildings with single storey canted bays (apart from Nos. 161-167 which have two storey bays). All have full pitched roof dormers and moulded window and door jambs. There are short front gardens behind low brick walls. The local orange/red brick dominates the appearance of the AoSC.



Fig. B: Stamford Road 1921 (Source: Kettering Revisited, T. Smith)

7.3 In addition, there is the impressive former Atlas Leather Co building at its western end. It is the most prominent in the streetscene as a tall three storey, four bay factory in orange/red brick with large windows, deep eaves and a moulded name plate on upper floor frontage and date plate in distinct pediment (see Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record description in the Appendix).



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Plan J: The Proposed Stamford Road Area of Special Character

PHOTO GALLERY



25. Prominent former factory



26. Two storey canted bays



27. Decorated door and windows



28. Gabled dormer windows



29. Mature street trees



30. Pedimented door frames



31. Decorated recessed porches



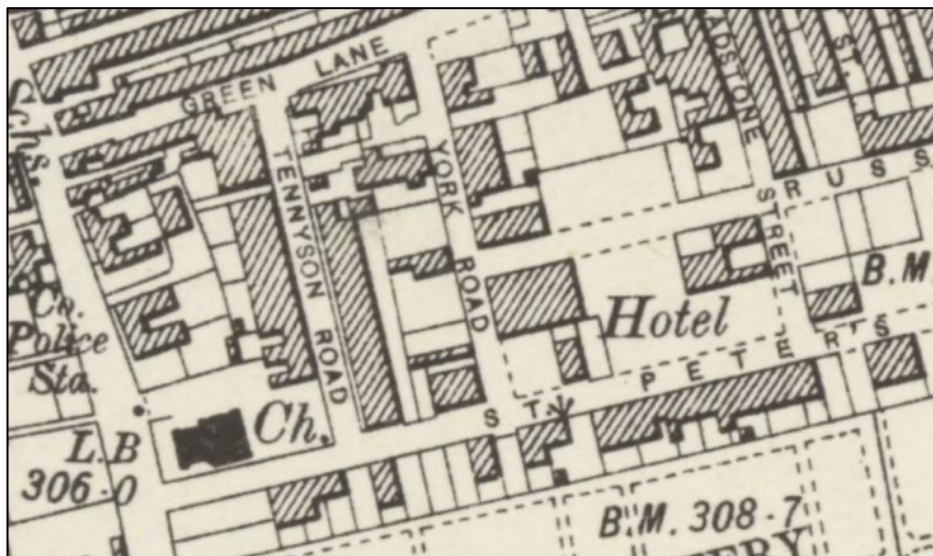
32. Single storey canted bay

8. The St. Peter's Avenue – York Road Area of Special Character

8.1 This residential area was part of the town's growth in the late 19C but unlike the Leicester Street Area its houses were a little higher status, larger and more elaborate. It lies on the eastern edge of the town centre and off the main London Road north of the town's cemetery.

8.2 The part of the area fronting on to London Road, including the United Reford Church and No. 31, lies within the Kettering Conservation Area designated in 1982. A Character Appraisal of the Conservation Area was published in 2007. Although those buildings and the views to and from London Road play an important part in defining the essence of this Area of Special Character, to avoid confusion between this Study and the Appraisal, that area has been excluded from the Area of Special Character boundary (see Plan L below). However, references are made to the buildings for completeness.

8.3 It is focused on St. Peter's Avenue but extends north up Tennyson Road and York Road where they meet with Green Lane. The streets are perfectly straight and at right angles, affording long views along them.



Plan K: St. Peter's Avenue to York Road in 1899 (Source: National Library of Scotland)

8.4 It comprises detached houses with some semi-detached and small terraces of two-and-a-half and three storeys in wider plots. Most of its buildings have canted bay windows, some of two storeys. Every building has a pitched roof dormer (not flat roofed) as part of larger pitched slate roofs. Orange/red brick dominates the appearance of the area.



Fig. C: St. Peter's Avenue 1926 (Source: Kettering Revisited, T. Smith)

8.5 Although the street width is wider than other streets of this age, the profile is narrower given the short front gardens (with low brick walls) and the buildings are taller and the many street trees to St. Peter's Avenue at least combine to create an intimate character. There is considerable use of fine decorative brick and plaster work, with many string courses and lintels/jambs mouldings. Especially playful (as noted in the Northamptonshire 'Pevsner' guide) are the main stone or clay name and date plates on the upper elevations, including references to the famous explorer H.M. Stanley and to famous literary figures, including Tennyson.



Fig. D: Staples Factory, Green Lane (Source: T. Smith)

8.6 The area derives part of its character from a number of prominent historic buildings, notably the listed United Reform Church on the corner with London Road and the separate Institute building on the Avenue and the house at No.25 London Road. The Institute provides a wonderful complement to the church in its slightly subservient scale, materials palette and architectural detailing. The two storey Jacobean style bow window on the left of the three bay elevation to the Avenue and cream stone name plate above the main entrance are a delight. The modern building to its right (replacing the former Sunday School) is a reasonable successful addition in scale and form if not in its richness of detail. The Tudorbethan No.25 London Road was a later, mid 20C addition to the Church setting. Its scale and form also complement the Church and its distinctive appearance in views along London Road is eye-catching.



Fig. E: Congregational Church, London Road and St. Peters Avenue 1915
(Source: Kettering Revisited, T. Smith)

8.7 In addition, the listed Dalkeith Works (or ‘Staples Factory’) is a tall, brick and stone, Italianate style industrial building prominent in views along Green Lane from the east. It was one of earliest shoe factories in the town and therefore a remainder of this important part of its history – the residential conversion has retained its heritage significance.

8.8 Along the Avenue, Mafeking House is especially prominent as a landmark with its battlemented parapet on the angled ground floor corner. The corner buildings at Nos. 26, 42 and 44 Green Lane are also of more architectural and townscape interest with their original character surviving well. The Masonic Hall on York Road is distinct in its non-residential use and has a prominent pediment and name plate above main entrance. No. 31 London Road is double fronted with polygonal bays and offers additional heritage interest as a group with the Church at the western entrance to the AoSC.



Fig. F: Congregational Church, London Road 1905 (Source: Kettering Revisited, T. Smith)

8.9 Also of townscape interest are the views of Nos. 14/16 and 40/42 St Peter's Avenue, which terminate the long southern views along Tennyson Road and York Road. There is also a long view of the iron stone Corn Market Hall in London Road which terminates the western view along the Avenue, and a glimpse view from York Road of the listed Newmans factory, another remainder of the industrial past. The brownfields sites at No. 33 St. Peter's Avenue and No. 16 Tennyson Road offer a potential opportunity for redevelopment or infill schemes to enhance the character and appearance of the AoSC in these locations.



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Plan L: The Proposed St. Peter's Avenue to York Road Area of Special Character



Fig. G: Images of Moulded Name Plates

PHOTO GALLERY



33. Three storey canted bay



34. Arcadian street scene



35. Congregational Sunday School & Institute



36. Italianate Dalkeith Works



37. Higher order, larger houses



38. The prominent but subtle Masonic Hall



39. Distinctive battlemented parapet



40. Rare gabled dormers



41. Prominent corner building

APPENDIX A: NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

Name: Thomas Foster and Son, William Street
HER Number: 7198/31

The Garfield Shoe Works was built circa 1890, probably for the firm of Thomas Foster and Sons. It stands on the north side of William Street and by 1899 and perhaps originally, possessed an L plan. Only the street range survives, but some indications of its former extent can be gauged from a view published in 1916. The street range consists of three-storeys and six bays. The south front has pier and panel walling with stone capitals to the piers and large segmental-headed windows.

The factory appears to be a relatively small example of three storey factory type. Clicking, leather storage and closing would probably have taken place on the first and second floors. The admin and the management offices would probably have been located on the first floor though there is no evidence of their existence. Conversation with the architect indicated that at least in the last years the factory was owned by Griggs and may not have been involved in the complete shoe manufacturing process, only part of it. No detail on exactly what part was available. The factory also had a large dust extraction unit (maybe for extracting dust or glue fumes) and a compressed air system which may be a remnant from the earlier days of the factory. There was a single storey finishing room at the back of the factory, but this has now been demolished.



Name: Atlas Leather Co, 115 Stamford Road
HER Number: 7198/44/1

This leather factory was built circa 1915 on Stamford Road for the Atlas Leather Company. The three storeyed range fronting Stamford Road consists of four bays in orange coloured brick with a slate covered roof. A later two-storeyed range at the rear has steel framed windows and a corrugated asbestos roof.

Office accommodation to the frontage with very basic architectural embellishment, but very plain. The rest comprises north lit sheds now in use by a number of business including 'County Footwear UK Ltd Quality Shoe Manufacturers' Building established 1892.

The Atlas leather Co was formed in 1915 and specialised in russett kip butts, dull sides, box sides, box shoulders, box bellies and calf. Between 1929 and 1937 it was taken over by Clipstone and Whitwell, who manufactured shoelaces. Three-storeyed frontage with four bays, the central two carried up to a gable. Constructed from orange brick with limestone ashlar dressings and some blue brick. The ground-floor openings have keyed segmental arches with the exception of the entrance in the second bay from the west. This has a lintel inscribed with the word 'office'. To the west there is a yard entrance and to the east two large windows. The two upper floors are articulated by brick piers at each end and framing the two central bays, rising to square stone kneelers. On the first floor, and on the second floor in the two central bays, the windows have chamfered lintels and original timber mullion-and-transom frames. Between the first and second-floor windows of the central bays an ashlar signboard has the legend 'Atlas Leather Co'.



Name: Industrial building, Bayes Street
HER Number: 7198/0/79

Small two storey industrial building to rear of house on Bayes Road. Possibly belonged to Salt and Co Brewers - if they were a small concern.



Name: All Saints Church
HER Number: 7198/263

Building erected of iron in 1899, became an ecclesiastical parish in February 1916. The building on the site now is a red brick structure presumably of early 20th century date. Large building, but with few architectural features.



Name: Sunday School, St. Peter's Avenue
HER Number: 7198/282/2

New Sunday Schools for the Congregational Church on London Road and an institute were erected in St Peter's Avenue in 1909. The buildings are very large, red brick structures which no longer appear to be in use. The Sunday School, Institute and Caretaker's House were opened on 28th April 1910 and paid for in the same year.



Name: Park Road Infant School
HER Number: 7198/0/122

Erected in 1899. The building is of red brick, but much is smaller and simpler in design than the main school. Still in use.



Name: Masonic Hall, York Road
HER Number: 7198/359

Building shown on map as Drill Hall but has sign on frontage "Masonic Hall 1901". Still in use for this function. Has a later extension to the side.

