

ABRIDGE

Conservation Area



*Heritage and
Environment
in Epping Forest District*

ABRIDGE CONSERVATION AREA

The village of Abridge lies on the historically significant coaching route between London and Chipping Ongar and has been an important crossing point on the River Roding for many centuries. The village name is believed to have derived from "AEffa's" Bridge, and its origins can be traced back to the 12th century. This may be connected with AElfweard who gave his name to Alderton Hall in Loughton (The Place Names of Essex XII - P.H. Reaney, 1969). The present bridge which dates from the late 18th/early 19th century is a listed building constructed of local red brick with limestone keystones.

The character and appearance of Abridge has been described as "*that most picturesque little old town, of red-brick gabled houses, with red-tiled roofs standing all huddled together in a circle, as if there were once walls around it. A strangely quiet town, which looks as if it had never ever seen the outer world, and took no interest in anything but itself*" (Essex - A.R. Hope-Moncrieff, 1909). Although the village was never "walled," the characteristic grouping of the buildings in the centre is still apparent.

At the centre of the village is Market Place, the former market area. Its triangular shape is formed by the almost continuous building lines on its west and north sides which create a good sense of spatial enclosure. The buildings which face onto Market Place have a mix of residential and commercial uses, which add to the character and vitality of the village. There are several prominent listed buildings here, the oldest of which is the "hall house" (Revival Antiques Centre - also known as The Coach House), which dates from the 14th century and is listed Grade II*. It is of exceptional interest because it is a rare survivor of a once common type of house in which the walls of the open hall were no higher than the lower storey of the crossing (most were raised when a floor or chimney was inserted in the 16th century).

The buildings in Market Place are mainly two storeys in height and set close to the back edge of the footway with little or no front gardens. This feature is generally apparent within the Conservation Area, although often not on both sides of the street in the same location. Plot frontages are relatively narrow in Market Place, widening along Ongar Road. Plot depths vary, constrained in places by the river and the historical development of the village along the Chipping Ongar to London road.

The listed buildings that now comprise the Roding Restaurant form an attractive focal point when travelling through the village in either direction. Their exposed timber framing reveals the origin of their construction in contrast to the purely decorative timber framing evident on the White Hart Public House. This building has a strong massing (three storeys) and forms a visual and physical pinch point together with the building adjacent to the Roding Restaurant. These buildings are part of a pleasant sequential development of spaces; the transition from the open

countryside into the narrowness of the bridge crossing the river and into the tightly enclosed space created by the buildings is quite sudden. This experience is visually marred by the intrusion of the modern petrol filling station, the canopy of which is a prominent and alien feature when entering the village across the bridge.

There are two other public houses in the Conservation Area, both of which are listed buildings. The Blue Boar Inn in Market Place dates from the early 19th century and is constructed of painted brick in flemish bond. A prominent feature is the Roman Doric portico over the central entrance to the Inn. The Maltster's Arms is an 18th century building which was formerly two houses. It is a timber framed and weatherboarded building with a red clay plain tile roof at the front.

Other listed buildings in the Conservation Area include River Cottage and Roding House which are situated close to each other along Ongar Road. River Cottage is an 18th century house and Roding House is a late medieval hall house. Both are set at the back edge of the pavement in contrast to the houses on either side. Consequently they are visually prominent buildings when entering the Conservation Area from the direction of Chipping Ongar. The other listed building in the Conservation Area is a "K6" telephone kiosk adjacent to the car park of the Blue Boar Inn. This familiar public landmark was designed in 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.

There are a number of buildings, and groups of buildings, which, while not being of listable quality, make an important contribution to the character of the Area. These include:- the Chapel with its strong, symmetrical elevation fronting Ongar Road; Goulds Cottages and Prince of Wales Cottages which form attractive and relatively unspoilt terraces; and Nos. 1 and 2 The Sycamores which form an attractive focal point at a slight bend in the road when approaching the village centre. The wall in front of Roding Bury and the Chapel is also important in townscape terms since it focuses the view into Market Place.

An important characteristic of the Conservation Area, which is not immediately apparent, is the historic service yards set behind many buildings, for example, to the rear of Abridge Engineering (the Volkswagen Audi Group Building), at the end of Silver Street, and the car park to the Blue Boar Inn. This characteristic has been incorporated as a design feature in some recent residential developments such as The Limes, White Hall and The Chestnuts and takes car parking out of public view.

Landscape features also play an important role in defining the setting of the village, such as the views across the White Hart Public House car park of the picturesque meadows that form the River Roding flood plain. There are also several prominent groups of trees and hedgerows, most notably at Roding House, the Chapel and the White Hart car park. The hedgerow along Ongar Road (opposite Prince of Wales Cottages and River Cottage) provides a valuable "edge" which is important in screening the rear gardens of the houses which back onto the road.

Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest in Abridge Conservation Area:

Market Place

North east end of the Roding Restaurant
(2 bay block)

Roding Restaurant

Building immediately north east of the
Roding Restaurant

Blue Boar Inn

"K6" telephone kiosk in car park of

Blue Boar Inn

Revival Antiques Centre (The Coach House)

London Road

The Maltster's Arms Public House

Abridge Road

Road Bridge over the River Roding

Ongar Road

Roding House

River Cottage

**All the above are listed Grade II
except Revival Antiques Centre (The Coach House) which is listed Grade II***

Facts About Conservation Areas

What is a Conservation Area?

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. A Conservation Area may be the historic centre of a town or village, an older unspoilt residential area, or an important country house in large landscaped grounds. Conservation Areas are designated by the District Council in recognition of their special character and to protect an important part of our heritage.

What does this mean to residents in practical terms?

Conservation Area designation aims to ensure that the special architectural or historic character of the area is properly preserved and enhanced. Buildings, paved areas, trees, hedges, walls, open spaces and other landscape and architectural features can all contribute to the character of an Area. Designation of a Conservation Area does not mean that changes cannot occur, but rather that any changes should preserve and enhance the special character of the Area.

Are there any special restrictions?

There are several special restrictions that apply to Conservation Areas. These are in addition to normal planning controls:

- * The size limit for extending your home without obtaining planning permission is 50m^3 or 10% of the house's original volume, up to a maximum of 115m^3 .
- * Consent must be obtained from the District Council for the demolition of any building within the Conservation Area. This may also include gates, walls and fences.

- * You must give the District Council six weeks' notice in writing before felling or cutting back any tree unless the tree is:

- dead, dying or dangerous;
- causing a nuisance in law;
- a cultivated fruit tree
- less than 236mm ($9\frac{1}{2}$ ") in girth around the trunk when measured 1.5m ($4'10"$) above the ground.

- * Some additional restrictions apply to the siting of satellite dishes and advertising hoardings or other advertisements.

Apart from these special restrictions, the rights and obligations of the property owner are not affected.

Are there any benefits?

Protecting the special character of the Area will be of benefit to residents, businesses and visitors alike. The designation of a Conservation Area places a duty on the District Council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing its character and appearance in carrying out its planning functions. Enhancement schemes may be prepared and implemented as resources permit. In special cases, English Heritage in partnership with the District Council may be prepared to give grant aid for the structural repair of specific buildings which add to the special character of a Conservation Area.

Where can I obtain further information?

More detailed information can be obtained by contacting: The Conservation Section, Planning Services: Tel: (01992) 564119.

This is the eighth of a series of Conservation Area leaflets to be published by Epping Forest District Council. Companion leaflets on other Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings are also available.

Epping Forest District Council, Civic Offices,
High Street, Epping, Essex. CM16 4BZ.
(01992) 564000

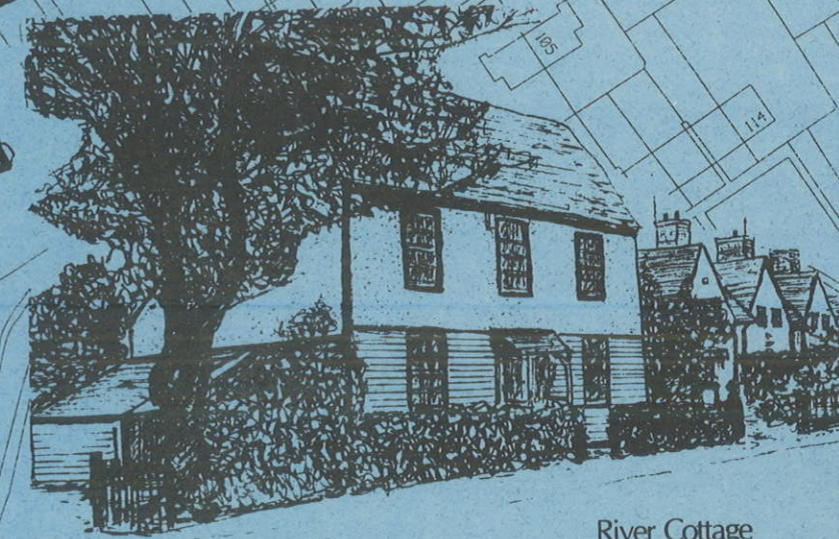
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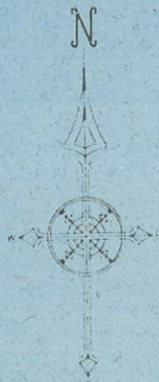
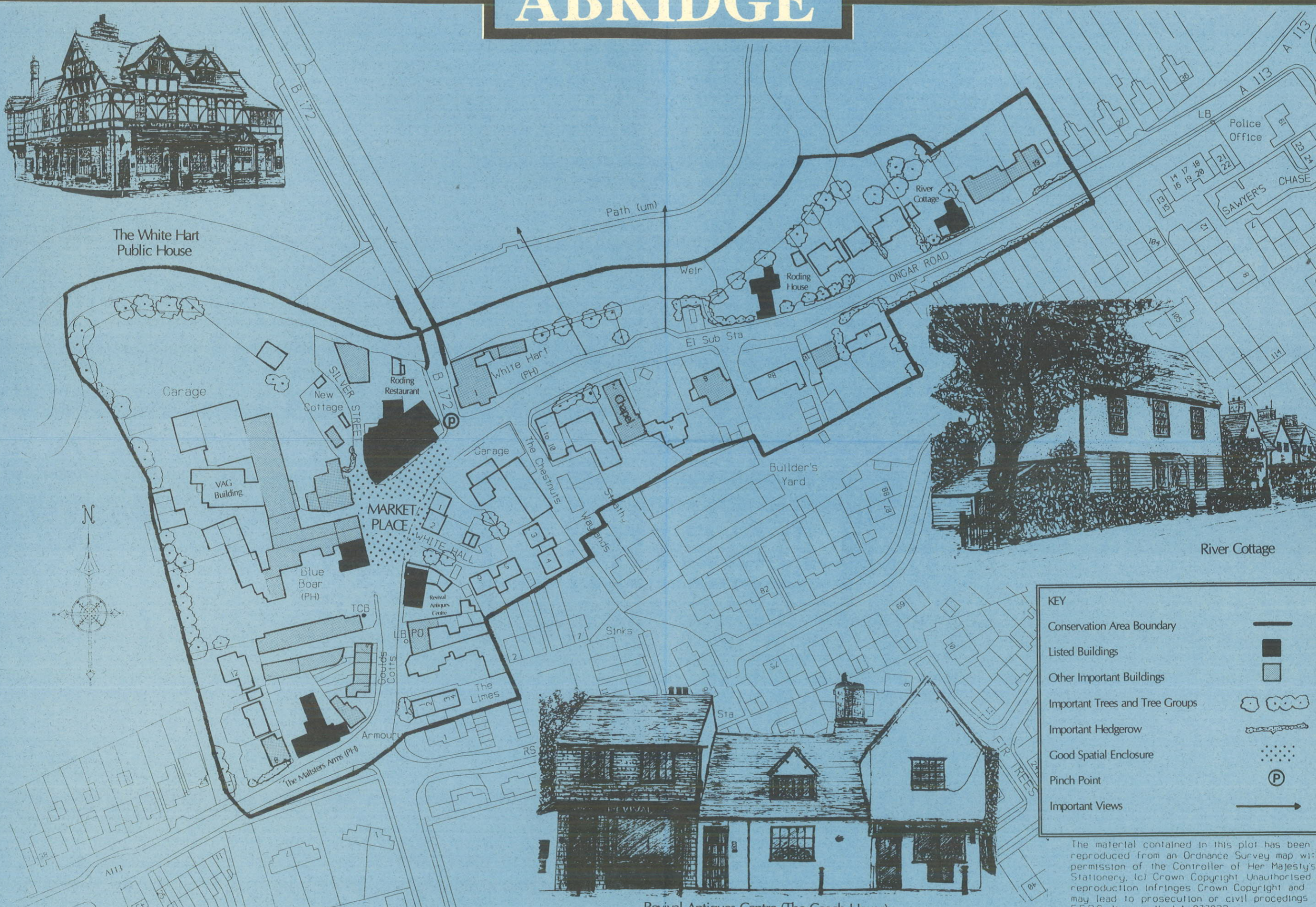
The White Hart Public House



River Cottage



Revival Antiques Centre (The Coach House)



KEY	
Conservation Area Boundary	
Listed Buildings	
Other Important Buildings	
Important Trees and Tree Groups	
Important Hedgerow	
Good Spatial Enclosure	
Pinch Point	
Important Views	

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