



**Proposal for the Designation of
Darkes Lane (west) Conservation Area,
Potters Bar
2010**



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1 Introduction

Under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, local planning authorities ‘...shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and shall designate those areas as conservation areas’. A conservation area affords statutory protection through the control of any planning proposals that may negatively affect its character or appearance; this may include the demolition of a building, re-development within the conservation area boundary, or development of a site that lies adjacent to the conservation area. It also provides a basis for the enhancement of the area.

Hertsmere Borough Council’s Local Plan was adopted in 2003 and currently includes sixteen conservation areas. These are located in the villages of Aldenham, Elstree, Letchmore Heath, Ridge, Roundbush, Shenley, South Mimms, and Patchetts Green and Delrow. There are also further conservation areas within Bushey, Bushey Heath, Radlett and Potters Bar. Hertsmere Borough Council has a long term commitment to protecting and enhancing its conservation areas whose character or appearance is worthy of designation.

Under section 6.1 of the Local Plan which the Council has ‘a duty to review from time to time whether any or further parts of its area should be designated...’. A conservation area *might consist of a terrace of houses, or a square, a village or even a whole town centre. Listed buildings sometimes form the core of a conservation area, but it is the overall character of a conservation area that is particularly important. It is not only the individual buildings which are protected but also the spaces around them.*

The Council is proposing to designate a number of avenues which are located to the west of Darkes Lane, Potters Bar. This area has special architectural and historic interest and began to be developed in the early twentieth century under the *Potters Bar Estates Company*; later greater development of the area was proposed (*Potters Bar Garden Estate*). After designation, any development proposals within the conservation area boundary would need to complement the special character of the north end of Darkes Lane and The Avenue / Heath Drive / Manor Way / Mountway area. A scheme of enhancement could also be implemented by the Council, as part of its long term commitment to historic areas with Hertsmere (see section 4).

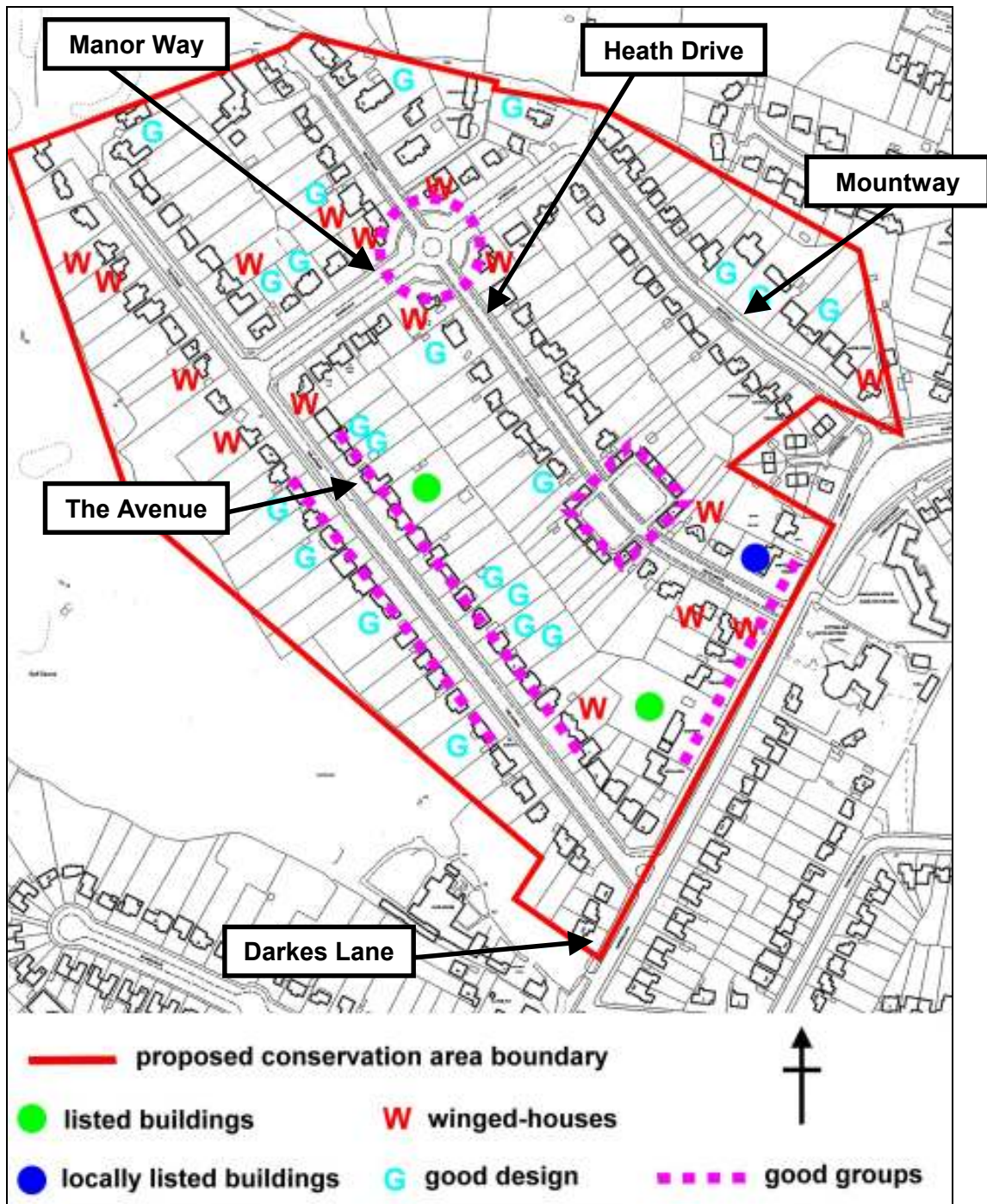
2 Criteria

There are no national criteria for the designation of conservation areas. Guidance for the assessment of ‘specialness’ (local distinctiveness and community value) has been taken from *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5)*, *PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*, and from English Heritage’s *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas* (2006). The weight that a conservation area holds (and its strength tested through planning controls) means that there must be *sufficient special interest and quality to warrant designation*. The character or appearance of an area is assessed by looking at the following.

- the quality of individual buildings
- the historic layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares
- the use of characteristic materials
- the appropriate scaling and detailing of contemporary buildings
- the quality of advertisements, shop fronts, street furniture and hard and soft surfaces
- vistas along streets and between buildings
- trees and other green features / spaces
- the extent to which traffic intrudes and limits pedestrian use of spaces

3 Proposal to designate a new conservation area in Potters Bar: Darkes Lane (west)

The proposed *Darkes Lane (west) Conservation Area* in Potters Bar shall incorporate Darkes Lane, The Avenue, Heath Drive, Manor Way and Mountway as indicated on the accompanying map below. The map also shows the locations of original well-designed detached buildings, good groups of houses and a common design type, 'winged-houses', along with statutory listed buildings and those that appear on the Hertsmere Local List. 'Winged-houses' are found throughout the estate particularly on corner plots and at the island by Heath Drive and Manor Way; in some cases these houses have been added to over time while others retain more of their original character. Cedar Close is not included within the proposed conservation area boundary due to the design and layout of the 1960s houses.

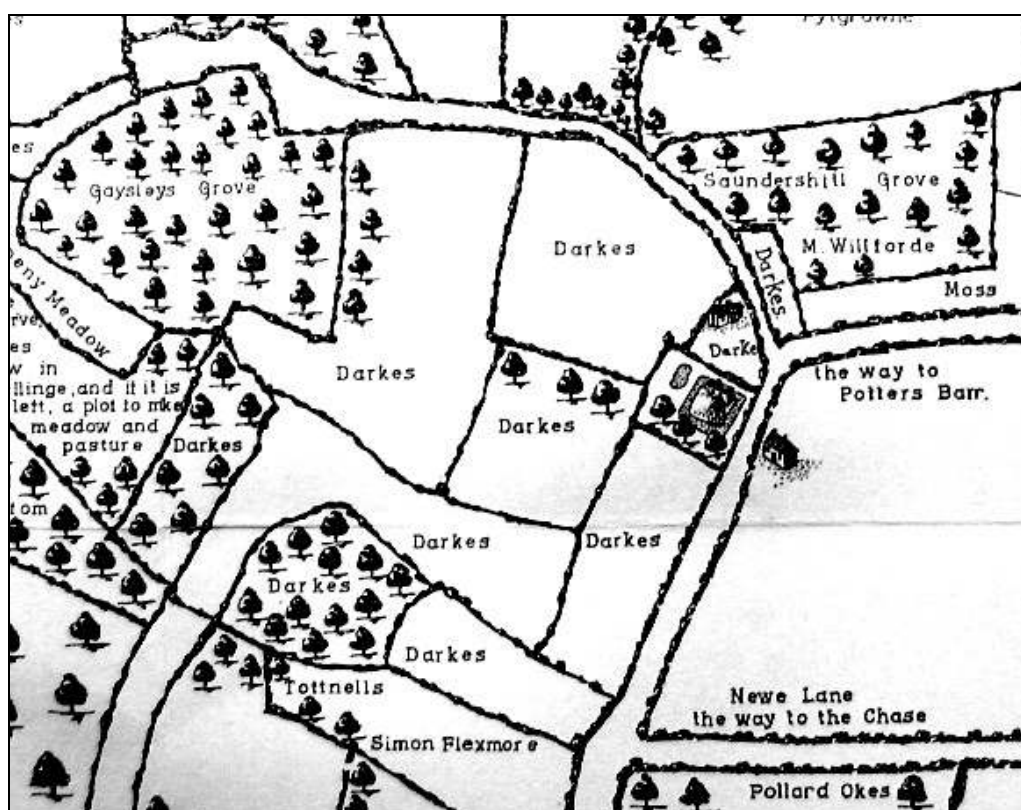


Ordnance Survey map supplied by Hertsmere Borough Council, annotated by the author

Darkes Lane (west), Potters Bar: special architectural and historic interest

Darkes Lane lies to the northwest of Potters Bar and was named after Darkes Lodge (formerly Darkes Farm), which stood at its north end close to the bend in the road that then becomes Church Lane and leads onto Little Heath.

During the medieval period the area to the northwest of Potters Bar was a rural landscape and held two manor houses, Darkes and Wyllyotts. Scattered tenements lay to the north of Wyllyotts, several along tracks that led into Enfield Chase, a Royal hunting ground. The moated site of Darkes and its manor house stood at the north end of Darkes Lane on the west side, and are thought to have been connected to John Derk, a collier. Although a manor house was recorded on a map dating to 1594 (see below), the site is thought to date back to the 1300s; the medieval manor house was pulled down in 1830 and replaced by a new property, Darkes Farm (later known as Darkes Lodge), which was demolished in c1956 to make way for a small group of new houses. The second medieval manor, Wyllyotts, stood at the south end of Darkes Lane on the west side by Mutton Lane crossroads. Two buildings survive at Wyllyotts; a house dating to c1800 and a late sixteenth century attached barn. These grade II listed buildings are now home to Potters Bar Museum.



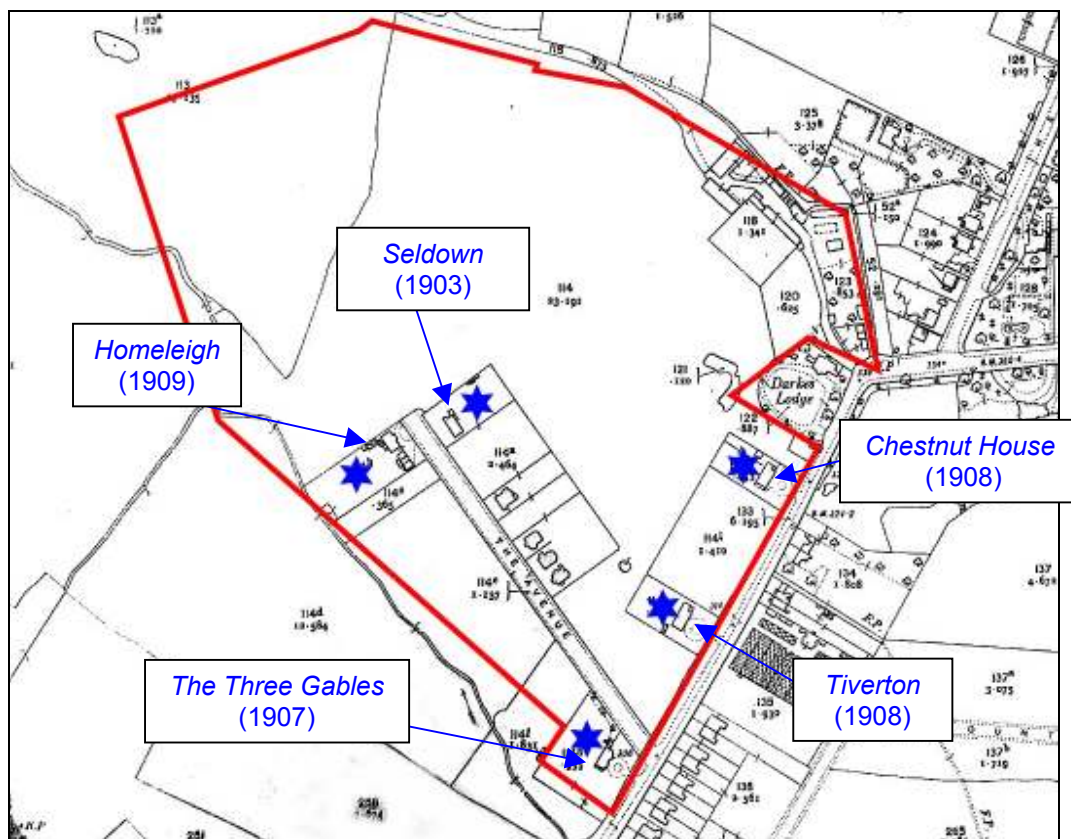
Map of northwest Potters Bar in 1594 showing Darkes (Darkes Lodge) along with the surrounding land owned by the manor house (Rutherford Davis 1966).

Throughout the later centuries the area northwest of Potters Bar remained rural with its open fields and were probably farmed by the occupants of both Darkes and Wyllyotts. After the opening of the railway station in 1850 for the Great Northern Railway, which lay at the south end of Darkes Lane (then known as Baker Street), development along the east side of the road slowly began to take place.

By the late 1870s, maps show that there were six detached properties along Baker Street, which included Darkes Lodge with its small lodge house (on the west side) and Elm House, Oak Royd and Osborne Park Gardens (on the east side); Osborne Park Gardens are thought to have belonged to Osborne Hall, Osborne Vicarage or Osborne Grange that stood on Osborne Road in Little Heath. Another large house, Mount Grace, lay along Church Lane to the east of Darkes Lodge. However, none of these detached houses survive today as all have since been demolished and replaced by modern housing and a school.

The development of the area stepped up a pace in the early twentieth century when further houses were constructed along Baker Street (Darkes Lane). This included five semi-detached properties on the east side of the road close to the junction with Billy Lows Lane south of Osborne Park Gardens (recorded as a nursery in 1898), and a new private road, The Avenue, was laid on the west side of the road on land that belonged to Darkes Farm (Darkes Lodge).

South Mimms Rural District Council granted permission for the provision of The Avenue in September 1903 for the *Potters Bar Estates Company* (Potters Bar Estates Ltd), which was being developed to provide detached houses of an “economical description” within easy access of London; the application for this new road was made by *Messrs Banister Fletcher and Sons, Architects*. A month later the Council granted permission for the construction of a new residential property, ‘Seldown’, on The Avenue. ‘Seldown’ was the first of five houses that would be built on the new estate, two on The Avenue and three along Darkes Lane (Baker Street / Station Road). Plans for all five houses were all submitted by the same architects, *Messrs Banister Fletcher and Sons* and were all designed by Sir Banister ‘Flight’ Fletcher (1866 - 1953); Fletcher who was not only an architect, but also an architectural historian, author and barrister, and from 1929 to 1931 was the President of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). ‘Seldown’ was soon followed by ‘The Three Gables’ (1907), ‘Tiverton’ (1908) and ‘Chestnut House’ (1908) on Darkes Lane, and ‘Homeleigh’ (1909) on The Avenue. It is likely that all were constructed by 1910 as photographs and plans of these houses appear in Fletcher’s own book, *The English Home* (see below for images and map for locations). Published in 1910, the book was written with his brother Herbert Phillips Fletcher, also an architect; their address is given as 29 New Bridge Street, Ludgate Circus, London. Although Banister’s buildings included banks, churches, flats, houses and commercial properties, the book concentrates on the design and construction of houses, providing ‘...the details necessary to promote health and comfort in a modern house...’ (forward by the Duke of Argyll in Fletcher & Fletcher 1910). Examples of such houses included a few by Banister himself and also architects of the Arts and Crafts movement such as E.L. Lutyens, M.H. Baillie-Scott and C.F.A. Voysey, whose influences can be seen in some of Banister’s own designs.



The 1914 25" Ordnance Survey map depicting The Avenue and Darkes Lane (HALS). Annotated to show the five houses designed by Sir Banister Fletcher and the proposed conservation area boundary



Photograph of *Seldown*, The Avenue (front)



Photograph of *Seldown*, The Avenue (rear)



Photograph of *Three Gables*, Darkes Lane (front)



Sketch of *Tiverton*, Darkes Lane (front)



Sketch of *Chestnut House*, Darkes Lane (front)



Photograph of *Homeleigh*, The Avenue (front)

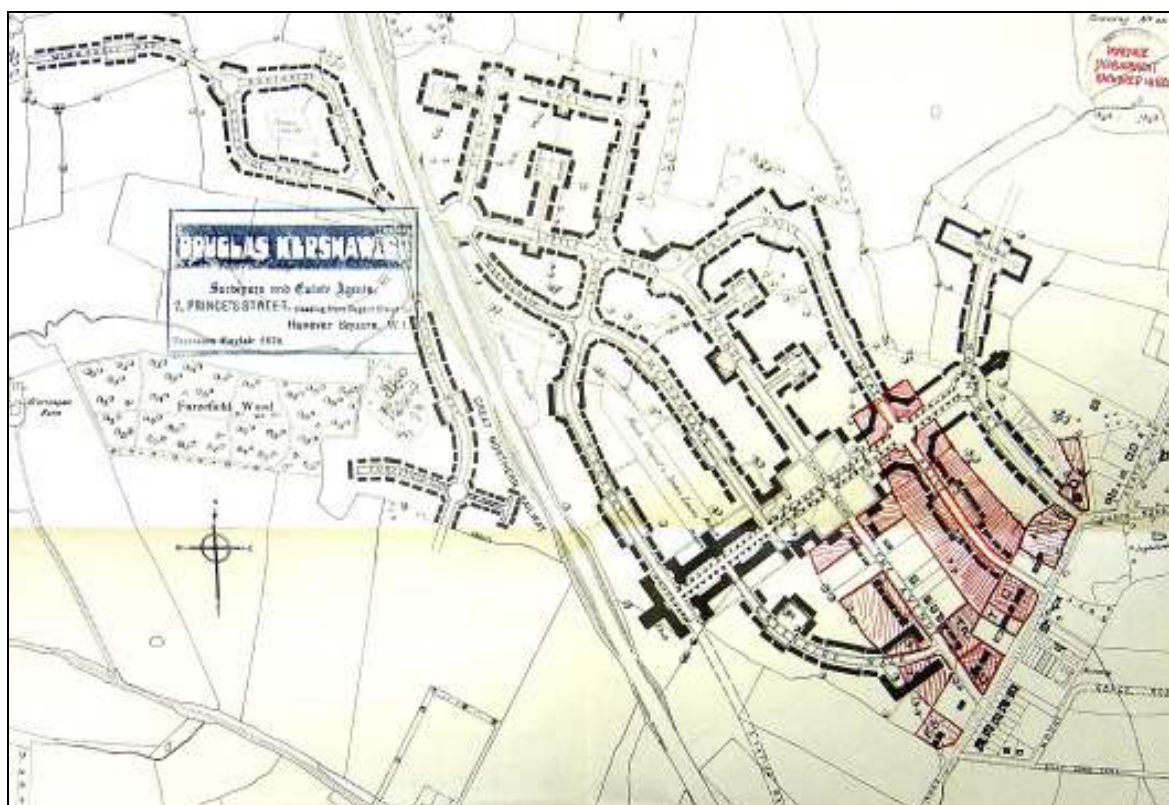
All the above images are reproduced from the book *The English Home* (Fletcher and Fletcher 1910)

'Seldown' was built by Mr Newton and in 1906 was occupied by Mr Francis John Philps, one of the Directors of the *Potters Bar Estates Company*. When 'The Three Gables' was built on the corner plot by Mr Grover in 1907, Philps moved into the new house that had been erected especially for him. 'Tiverton', 'Chestnut House' and 'Homeleigh' were all built by E. Lawrence and Son; 'Homeleigh' was occupied by a Mr Alfred F. De Waelin in 1927 (President of the original Potters Bar Bowls club from 1919 and President of Potters Bar Cricket Club 1925-29). The surviving records of war damage in Potters Bar are said to show that a high explosive bomb demolished 'Homeleigh' and damaged Nos. 18, 21, 23 ('Seldown') and 24 The Avenue on 26th February 1941. It appears that 'Homeleigh' was re-built and has a similar style to the original design. By 1914 a further four houses had been built along on the east side of The Avenue, nos. 7, 9, 11 and 15; these may have been added soon after those designed by Sir Banister Fletcher (see map above). According to a survey conducted in 1980, less than three

percent of buildings standing in Potters Bar date back to pre-1914, which adds to the special architectural / historic interest of this residential area along Darkes Lane and the role it plays in the history of Potters Bar.

On 11th January 1918 the *Potters Bar Estates Company* (Potters Bar Estates Ltd) was voluntarily wound up at the offices of the company's solicitors *Westbury, Preston and Stavridi*, 40 Old Broad Street, London; this was reported in the London Gazette dated 1st February 1918 by the Chairman Charles B. Freeman (online source). It is thought that Mr William James King of 5 Great St. James Street, Bedford Row, London and also 'Woodstock' North End Road, Hendon bought a large proportion of the undeveloped land owned by the Potters Bar Estates Ltd after its liquidation.

After World War I ended, the first stage of significant development on the west side of Darkes Lane began to take form. In c1920 a plan for an enlargement of the existing estate was drawn up for the *Potters Bar Garden Estate Company* (see below). It shows a planned neighbourhood with much new housing laid out along several new roads that extended to the north, east and west of The Avenue, and continued beyond the railway line to the west. Heath Drive, Manor Way and Mountway are all named along with other roads such as Greenside Walk, Ridgeway, Meadowbank, Little Heath Avenue and Stonegate. Across the middle of the estate lay the main tree-lined strip, Broadway, and at the centre stood a large open area, Central Square. Tennis lawns, bowls and croquet lawns, a school, a picture theatre, a club and children's play areas were also planned. At the east end of Broadway by the Mountway roundabout stood a church; a short road, Bolton's Close, led northeast from this roundabout. It is clear from the plan that the Potters Bar Garden Estate was to share some similarities with two other Garden Cities in Hertfordshire; Letchworth Garden City (founded in 1903) and Welwyn Garden City (founded in 1920). Existing properties on The Avenue and those on the west side of Darkes Lane were to be incorporated into the proposed Potters Bar Garden Estate.

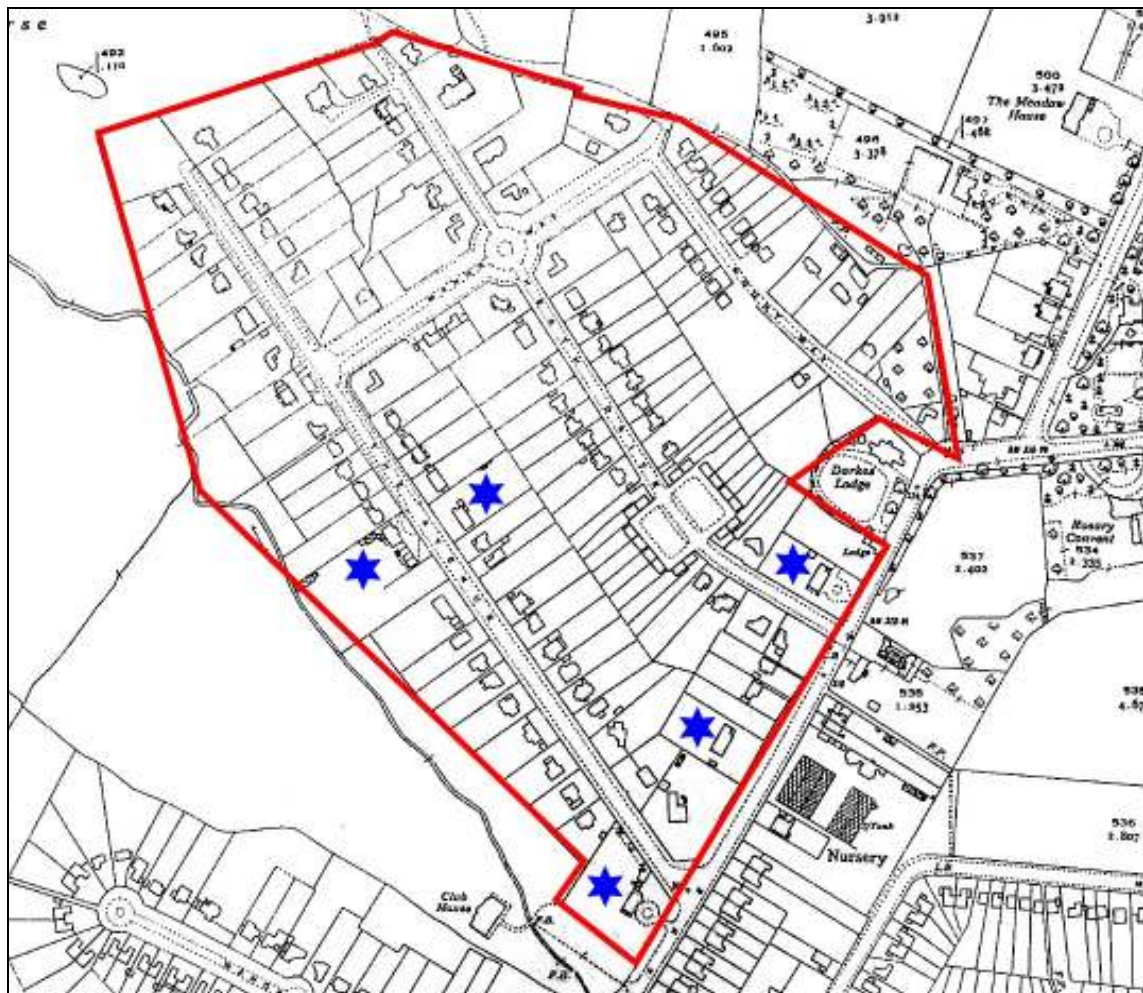


Plan for the Potters Bar Garden Estate, c1920 (HALS Pamphlets). The area for 'immediate development' is shaded red. Drawn by Thompson, Herrell & Jones, Architects, 170 The Strand, London.

In April 1920 South Mimms Rural District Council approved an application for twenty-nine houses on Heath Drive; this was the beginning of Potters Bar Garden Estate Company's development of the area led through their surveyors and agents, Douglas Kershaw & Co of 2 Prince's Street London. It is said that the two U-shaped groups of houses on Heath Drive (nos.

5 – 22) were built by Prisoners of War after the First World War and that the front porches were added during construction when it was realised that the existing front doors could not fully open due to the position of the staircases.

Throughout the 1920s plans for individual houses continued to be approved by the Council for The Avenue as well as for Heath Drive and Manor Way. By 1928 there were thirty-six houses on The Avenue, forty-six houses on Heath Drive and five houses on Manor Way. Many of the house plans for The Avenue and Manor Way were submitted by Mr William James King who, a few years later, also built houses on Billy Lows Lane along with the cinema and shops on Darkes Lane, which were constructed due to the growing population in the area. In 1923 William James King applied to the Electricity Commission to provide electricity for properties within this area of Potters Bar including the houses on Station Road (Darkes Lane), The Avenue, Heath Drive, Manor Way ‘...from The Avenue to the road proposed to be called Bolton’s Close...’ (stated in the London Gazette, 25th December 1923; online source). This shows the extent of development by that time. It did not include the extensive Garden Estate or Mountway; construction of houses along Mountway occurred later during 1920s and early 1930s. According to property deeds, the 1930s houses at the north end of Mountway were constructed by Messrs Taylor and Pointing (William Alfred Taylor and James Pointing, builders from North Finchley). These houses can be seen on the 1935 Ordnance Survey map below.



The 1935 25" Ordnance Survey map depicting the newly built housing on the west side of Darkes Lane since 1914; the planned development of The Avenue, Heath Drive, Manor Way and Mount Way (HALS). Annotated to show the five houses designed by Sir Banister Fletcher and the proposed conservation area boundary

The extent of the 1920s and 1930s development along the west side of Darkes Lane can also be seen on the 1935 Ordnance Survey map. Today, all but four of the original houses associated with the pre-war (1900 – 1935) development of land to the west side of Darkes Lane survive. In addition, two pillar post boxes dating from the Potters Bar Garden Estate Company's

development of the area also remain, one on Darkes Lane by St Kilda on the corner of Heath Drive (King George V monograph: 1910 – 1936) and one by no. 32 The Avenue (King George VI monograph: 1936 – 1952). It is clear from the 1935 map that the full extent of the intended Garden Estate did not go ahead, but it is not known exactly why. On part of the land set aside for development lies Potters Bar Golf Club; it was established in 1923 and may be part of the reason why the Garden Estate did not fully develop. William James King owned the land on which the Golf Club stood and at the end of the 1920s tried to (unsuccessfully) sell the Golf Club to South Mimms Rural District Council.

Images dating to the 1920s show the area to the west of Darkes Lane, *Potters Bar Garden Estate*, as it began to develop from 1920 onwards. Spacious building plots bound by hedges set back from the street front, and the trees and grass verges along the avenues and roads, were distinctive features of the area. The street layout as seen by 1935 is still apparent today; it has not been extended and follows the design of part of the original layout as shown from the plan dating to c1920. Of particular note are the houses around the island on Heath Drive where it meets Manor Way, and the group of houses around the communal green towards the south end of Heath Drive. The design of houses at the west end of Manor Way, where it meets The Avenue, also show signs that an island was once planned; this appears to be a change from the Central Square that was shown on the c1920 plan.



Darkes Lodge (Darkes Farm), Darkes Lane as shown in a 1935 sale catalogue (HALS Pamphlets). It was demolished in c1956 and replaced with Cedar Close



(a)



(b)

(a) Baker Street (Darkes Lane), c1925 (courtesy of Potters Bar History Online). A view of the houses newly built on the west side of the road: 'Tiverton' (centre), and 'Trencom' and 'Clavering' (right).

(b) The same view of Darkes Lane today. Due to tree growth, only 'Tiverton' and 'Trencom' are visible. 'Tiverton' is one of the five houses designed by Sir Banister Fletcher and is a grade II listed building. Although the lamp post is prominent, urban street lighting has been kept to a minimum on Darkes Lane. The style of street lighting is more low key on the roads within Potters Bar Garden Estate to the west.



The Avenue taken from Darkes Lane of the houses newly built (courtesy of Potters Bar History Online). Thought to date to c1930, it shows the beginnings of the *Potters Bar Garden Estate* with its tree lined road, grass verges, hedges, pavements and detached houses. The house on the right corner, 'Ranworth', has architectural qualities of the Garden City type.



The same view of The Avenue today. The house on the left corner was 'The Three Gables' by Sir Bannister Fletcher (demolished in 1969 and replaced by 5 new houses). The house on the right corner ('Ranworth', later 'Hyde House'), as seen in the photo above, was demolished in c1985 and replaced by new houses. Road markings, bollards, street lighting and signage at the entrance to The Avenue are not in-keeping with the character of the Potters Bar Garden Estate to the west; within the estate street furniture is kept to a minimum.



Heath Drive taken by the island at the junction with Manor Way soon after the new houses were built (HALS Photographic Collection: 78B4a). Thought to date to c1930 and, like the photograph above, it shows the beginnings of the *Potters Bar Garden Estate* with its tree lined road, grass verges, hedges, pavements and detached houses.



The same view of Heath Drive today. The photograph shows an example one of the four 'winged-houses' (no. 39 Heath Drive) that lie on each corner plot around the island. All survive and form a good group.

From the 1950s onwards, a degree of in-fill housing was added to vacant plots within the planned neighbourhood west of Darkes Lane. A hand full of later houses were added when larger plots were sub-divided. A small number of modern houses now stand where one or two original buildings once stood, such as either side of the entrance to The Avenue. In the 1960s Cedar Close with its small group of new houses was built on the site of the Darkes Lodge that was demolished c1956.

Darkes Lane

Darkes Lane is lined along its west side by a group of detached houses that extend from Cedar Close south to the car park of Potters Bar Golf Club. South of the entrance to Heath Drive where the pavement widens is a grass verge that extends down to the Golf Club. Along Darkes Lane are eleven houses, six of these date from between 1908 and the mid 1920s: 'Tiverton' (a grade II listed building), 'Trencrom', 'Clavering', 'St Kilda' and no. 2 Darkes Lane (two of several winged-house types found on the estate), and 'Chestnut Tree House' (a locally listed building). Although individual in their style, they are well-designed buildings that form a good group and are part of the early layout of the Potters Bar Garden Estate. They have retained much of their original character by way of their characteristic materials, property layout and historic boundaries. All stand back from the boundary and are fronted by gardens, tall hedges and trees.

Some more modern buildings have been built along Darkes Lane. Two new houses were added in the 1960s, 'Baytrees/Cedarwood' (next door to 'Chestnut Tree House') and 'Newlands' (located by 'Tiverton'). Eight new houses were constructed at the entrance to The Avenue following the demolition of two original detached houses; the five houses to the south replace 'The Three Gables' and were built in the 1970s, while the three houses to the north replace 'Ranworth' (later 'Hyde House') and were built in c1985. The brick boundary walls to these modern houses are not characteristic of the area but are generally softened by bushes and trees. Although not all the houses are perhaps as aesthetically pleasing as the older properties, they have been included within the boundary as they lie within the former Potters Bar Garden Estate and are prominent corner plots at the entrance to The Avenue. The view or vista of Darkes Lane along its length is good from both directions and it also provides good views west along The Avenue, Heath Drive and Mountway.



Left – right: 1920s houses on Darkes Lane; 'Trencrom', 'Clavering' and 'St Kilda' (winged-house)



'Tiverton', Darkes Lane. 1908. Listed building (photograph taken from the English Heritage website: www.imagesofengland.org.uk)



'Chestnut Tree House', Darkes Lane. 1908. Locally listed building

The Avenue

The Avenue is lined on each side by detached houses on single plots that are set back from the edge of the road. It is bounded by Potters Bar Golf Club to the south and west, and is joined by Manor Way to the east. Permission for the construction of the road was given in 1903. Along the pavements on each side is a narrow grass verge upon which stands a row of large evenly spaced trees. The trees along The Avenue probably date to between 1905 and 1925; the trees north of the junction with Manor Way are more intermittent and a few at the entrance to Darkes Lane may be older.

Beyond the modern houses at the entrance on Darkes Lane, the majority of the fifty six properties on The Avenue are part of the early layout of the Potters Bar Garden Estate and includes a Banister Fletcher designed property, 'Seldown', the first house to be built on the road after permission was granted in 1903 that is also a grade II listed building. The majority of houses on The Avenue are individual in style and many are well-designed buildings, especially those between Darkes Lane and the Manor Way junction ('Seldown', 'Homeleigh', nos. 8, 18, 26, 11, 13, 15, and 27 & 29, and beyond Manor Way no. 51), and as such form a good group (nos. 3 – 29 odd and 8 – 26 even). They have retained much of their original character by way of their characteristic materials, property layout and historic boundaries. All houses stand back from the boundary and are commonly fronted by low brick walls with front gardens and driveways. Some properties on The Avenue have hard standing parking areas, but most are softened by bushes, trees or raised planting / flowerbeds. Changes have been made to the layout of four original single plots along The Avenue; two houses have been demolished, their plots each sub-divided and four new houses built (nos. 20a & 20b and 40 & 42), and two have retained the original house (nos. 1a and 36), but the plot has been divided and a new house built adjacent to the original property (nos. 1 and 36a).

Seven of the sixteen winged-house types found on the estate lie along The Avenue (nos. 3, 32, 33, 36, 39, 44 and 46). Some survive well with only minor changes, while others have been more heavily extended.



View north along The Avenue



'Seldown' (no. 23) by Sir Banister Fletcher. Listed building. The first house to be erected on the Potters Bar Garden Estate c1903



'Homeleigh' (no. 22) originally designed by Sir Banister Fletcher c1909. Demolished by a bomb in 1941 & re-built in the 1950s



8 The Avenue; one of the original 1920s houses



11 The Avenue, built c1910 (1903 - 1914)



26 The Avenue; one of the original 1920s houses



27 & 29 The Avenue; one of the original 1920s houses



3 The Avenue, a winged-house type; one of the original 1920s houses



33 The Avenue, a winged-house type; one of the original 1920s houses

Heath Drive

Heath Drive is the spine of the Potters Bar Garden Estate. It is crossed by Manor Way at its north end where lies a small island. Most of Heath Drive is lined on both sides by detached houses on single plots that are set back from the edge of the road. Towards its south end are two U-shaped groups of similarly designed properties that are divided in the centre by Heath Drive. Each are laid around three sides of a private garden laid to grass with additional planting along the boundary next to the pavement. Along the length of Heath Drive the pavement is lined with a narrow grass verge upon which stand intermittently planted trees. These trees probably date to the 1920s and are part of the original planned development.

The majority of the fifty two properties on Heath Drive are part of the original layout of the Potters Bar Garden Estate and have retained their character, property layout and historic boundaries. All houses stand back from the boundary and are commonly fronted by hedges or brick walls with front gardens and driveways. Some properties on Heath Drive have hard standing parking areas, but most are softened by hedges, bushes or trees. Except for the separate group around the two private gardens laid to grass, the majority of detached houses on Heath Drive are individual in style. Some are particularly well-designed buildings (nos. 24, 36, 44 and 45) while others, particularly the four corner properties at the Heath Drive island by Manor Way, form good groups (nos. 38, 39, 40 & 41). These houses are also four of the six winged-house types found along Heath Drive (nos. 2, 3 and 38 – 42). Some survive well with only minor changes, while others have been more heavily extended. The planted island and surrounding corner landscaping at the Heath Drive / Manor Way junction provides a pleasant green space. The two U-shaped groups of houses built each built around a private garden are also a good key group (nos. 5 – 21 odd & 8 – 22 even). Constructed as eight semi-detached, two storey houses with two pairs adjoining on the longest side of each group, they all share similar features such as rendered walls, hipped concrete tile roofs, rendered chimney stacks, red tile window sills and central exposed brick porches. Originally built with multi-paned iron framed windows, these have mostly been replaced. Later single storey additions have been built at the rear. The two private gardens are each owned by the four houses that directly face them. Although each property owns a strip of this land, the gardens are treated as a single green space; this green space forms a pleasant feature either side of the road. Around each lies a gravelled driveway. The view of the houses to the west side has been blocked by the planting of a tall hedge and fir tree while the view to the house on the east side is more open.

Although no houses have been demolished on Heath Drive, changes have been made to three original single plots: the garden of no. 45 was sub-divided and new properties built either side of the original building (nos. 45a and 43a), and the plot of no. 54 was also divided and a new house built next door to the original property (no. 56). In addition, a portion of the rear garden of 'Chestnut Tree House', Darkes Lane was separated and a new house built (no. 1).



View south along Heath Drive from the island by Manor Way



24 Heath Drive; an original 1920s house



36 Heath Drive; an original 1920s house



44 Heath Drive; an original 1930s house



45 Heath Drive; an original 1920s house



38 Heath Drive, a winged-house type at the island; one of the original 1920s houses



39 Heath Drive, a winged-house type at the island; one of the original 1920s houses



40 Heath Drive, a winged-house type at the island; one of the original 1920s houses



41 Heath Drive, a winged-house type at the island; one of the original 1920s houses (since altered)



(1)



(2)



(3)

*Original 1920s two groups of houses around the private gardens on Heath Drive:
(1) & (2) east side: nos. 5 – 21 (odd); (3) west side: nos. 8 – 22 (even)*

Manor Way

Manor Way joins with The Avenue, Heath Drive and Mountway towards the north end of the Potters Bar Garden Estate. It is divided into two parts, Manor Way east and Manor Way west, by the Heath Drive island. Both roads are lined on each side by detached houses on single plots that are set back from the edge of the road. Manor Way west has deep grass verges planted with a row of trees. These trees probably date to the 1920s/1930s and are part of the original planned development. Unlike Manor Way west, Manor Way east is a private road and has no public pavement; its grass verges appear to be privately owned and form part of their front gardens. At the east end of Manor Way east, outside no. 12, stands a very old tree that could have been part of the medieval landscape of Darkes Lodge (Darkes Farm). Seven of the thirteen properties on Manor way are part of the original layout of the Potters Bar Garden Estate and all have retained their character, property layout and historic boundaries. Of the remaining six houses, two were later plot in-fills (nos. 6 and 8) while four were built on large garden plots that were sub-divided; 'The Ark' (at 39 Heath Drive), no. 6 (at 40 Heath Drive), and 'Aanand Nivas' & 'The Orchard House' (at 33 The Avenue). The houses on Manor Way west are fronted by a mixture of hedges, low brick walls or planted beds with gardens and driveways. Some properties have hard standing parking areas, but most are softened by planting. Those on Manor Way east commonly have some degree of planting or hedging between the grass verge and the house. Most properties also have double entry connecting driveways that makes its overall character different to that of Manor Way west. Three houses on Manor Way are particularly well-designed with an individual style and have retained their character; nos. 2, 4 and 12.



Manor Way east looking east from the Heath Drive island



Manor Way west looking east from The Avenue



Two of the original houses on Manor Way (west): no. 2 (1920s) and no. 4 (1930s)



12 Manor Way (east); an original 1920s house and the old tree surviving from Darkes' medieval landscape

Mountway

Mountway forms the eastern arm of the Potters Bar Garden Estate and although only just over half of the properties along road had been developed by 1935, it is proposed that all be incorporated into the conservation area boundary as Mountway was part of the planned neighbourhood; it also shares some characteristics with the three other roads. At its south end lies Cedar Close (not included).

Mountway is lined on each side by a total of twenty nine detached houses on single plots. They are set back from the edge of the road that has a grass verge along its southern half which extends from Darkes Lane up to 'The Old Barn'. Nineteen houses are part of the original layout (built by 1935) and all have retained some of their character, property layout and historic boundaries (nos. 1, 2, 5, 7, 12 – 22 even, and 11 – 25 odd). Three original houses are particularly well-designed and lie on the east side of the road and have retained much of their original character: no. 1, no. 5 ('Tudor') and no. 7 ('The Old Barn'). Nos. 5 and 7 are set further back from the roadside towards the rear of their plots and have large mature front gardens. The remaining houses were built on vacant plots from the 1960s onwards. Most of the houses on Mountway are fronted by either hedges, brick walls, fences or are open to grass. Some properties have hard standing parking areas, but most are softened by planting except for, in particular, nos. 20 and 22 that have paved over their front gardens and are open to the road.



Mountway looking east from Darkes Lane (2 Darkes Lane, a 1920s winged-house type, is on the right)



Mountway looking west from Manor Way; houses either side of the road at the north end of Mountway were built between 1930 and 1935



1 Mountway: an original 1920s house



*'Tudor', 5 Mountway: an original 1920s house
(source: Sale particulars by Strutt & Parker Estate Agents)*



'The Old Barn', 7 Mountway: an original 1920s house

4 Enhancement

While the historic character of the proposed Darkes Lane (west) Conservation Area has survived and there is sufficient special interest and quality to warrant preservation through designation, it is also recognised that its general appearance would benefit from certain improvements / enhancements in relation to its architectural interest and overall visual appeal. Some of these improvements / enhancements could be undertaken by the Council while others, relating to home owners, could be encouraged through the production of Planning Design Guidances.

Improving road / pavement surfaces:

- Roads and pavements within the proposed conservation area generally suffer from cable tracks, mismatched surface in-fill, cracking from tree roots or surface camber and poor maintenance. This could be improved through a scheme of enhancement. The limited number of road markings within the estate should be maintained as any subsequent introduction of new markings would significantly affect the character of the area.

Street furniture:

- Street signage clutters the pavements at the junction of Darkes Lane and The Avenue by the mini roundabout and could be reduced. The bollards are also an unattractive feature.
- The bench and waste bin on the corner of The Avenue could be improved or removed.
- Appropriately designed street signs to replace the existing signage may also be considered as the existing signs are modern and lack character.
- The design of the existing urban street lighting at the junction of Darkes Lane and The Avenue and those along Darkes Lane could be revamped through the use of more appropriate / character lamp posts. Those along the streets within the estate, while more low key, could also be improved.

Retention of grass verges / trees:

- Existing grass verges and trees are key features. They should be retained and, where possible, could be re-installed to soften the appearance of hard standing off-street parking areas and pavements. Along sufficiently wide pavements, such as along Mountway, grass verges could be installed.
- Where possible, tree planting could be considered, such as along Manor Way east (a private road) and Mountway, as this would be in-keeping with garden city / garden estate character that is found on other roads within the proposed boundary. Where tree planting is more intermittent, additional trees could also be added along the roadside such as at the northern ends of The Avenue and Heath Drive (beyond their junctions with Manor Way).
- The tree at the east end of Manor Way outside no. 12 is particularly old and was part of the earlier medieval landscape (Darkes Lodge/Farm). It is worthy of preservation.

Retention of boundary walls and front gardens:

- Although some properties within the estate have already lost their front gardens to off-street parking, surviving boundary walls or hedges should be encouraged to be retained and, where they have been lost, could be re-installed. The use of large electric metal gates together with hard surface off-street parking should be discouraged as they would detract from the character of the area. The scope for an Article 4 Direction could be considered in some locations if it was considered to be desirable to introduce greater control over alterations to property frontages.

Green space:

- The private gardens in front of the two U-shaped groups of houses on Heath Drive should be retained. The tall hedge and fir tree on the west side could be reduced in height or be removed and replaced with lower level planting / bushes that would be more in-keeping with that seen on the east side.
- The area around the Heath Drive island could be improved with more beds for planting.

Retaining architectural features:

- Where possible, any architectural features that were part of the original design of the houses on Potters Bar Garden Estate should be retained as these form the character of individual building and the estate as a whole. A general encouragement to maintain these features should be exercised.
- While most the original windows to properties within the proposed conservation area boundary have been replaced with modern types, some have survived. A general encouragement to maintain the existing windows or, if required, replacement with an appropriate style of window could be put into practice.
- The design of the two U-shaped groups of houses on Heath Drive should be retained where possible, as any alterations (particularly to the front elevations and roof form) would affect the character of the group. The style and size of the front porches are important features and should be encourage to be retained. A design guidance for this group of properties could be considered.

Avoiding the sub-division of plots or the grouping together of plots:

- As discussed above, there have been a limited number of changes to the layout of properties standing within the proposed conservation area boundary. Where this has already occurred it has resulted in the demolition of a small number of original buildings (such as on the corner plots of The Avenue and Darkes Lane) for new development or from the sub-division of garden plots (primarily on The Avenue and Heath Drive). Once designated, the erosion of the street layout in this manner should be avoided.

Sites for improvement:

- Currently there are no obvious sites that might be suggested for improvement within the proposed conservation area boundary. However, should any plans be submitted in the future for the plot previously occupied by Darkes Lodge / Darkes Farm at the entrance to Mountway (now Cedar Close), an appropriate design more in-keeping with the layout of Potters Bar Garden Estate should be considered.



1960s houses on Cedar Close at the junction of Darkes Lane and Mountway. It replaced Darkes Lodge/Farm after its demolition in c1956. Some older trees that stood within the garden of the house appear to have been retained.

5 Acknowledgements

Museums and other organisations

Potters Bar Museum

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