

WYCHAVON

conservation area appraisal

Beckford



Beckford

The Beckford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan were adopted by Wychavon District Council as a document for planning purposes. Minute 87 of the Executive Board meeting of 10 April 2019 refers.

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PART 1. BECKFORD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of a Conservation Area Appraisal

1.1

Conservation Areas were introduced in 1967 by the Civic Amenities Act as a response to the perception of the increasing erosion of historic areas through inappropriate new development.

1.2

Under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the statutory definition of 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 include historic town or village centres, historic parks and gardens, or sites of industrial and transport interest, such as canals.

1.3

Conservation Areas create a framework within which the local authority safeguards the character of a whole area by recognising the contribution that individual buildings make to the historic townscape, together with spaces between and around buildings, street patterns, trees, views and other elements such as ground surfaces and boundary treatments.

1.4

The Beckford Conservation Area was designated in March 1972, and the boundary was reviewed in 2018 during the preparation of this appraisal. This appraisal identifies the special interest and character of the Beckford Conservation Area, and provides guidance on how the preservation or enhancement of its character or appearance can be achieved. The revised conservation area boundary is shown in the appraisal.

Planning Policy Framework

1.5

This appraisal should be read in conjunction with the [South Worcestershire Development Plan \(2016\)](#), and national planning policy as set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework \(2018\)](#).

The SWDP contains local Historic Environment Policies that set out a positive and sustainable strategy for protecting and managing the historic environment.

- The relevant policies are SWDP6 (Historic Environment) and SWDP24 (Management of the Historic Environment).

This appraisal supplements SWDP6 and 24 and is intended to help form an understanding of the significance of Beckford Conservation Area.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out national planning policy regarding the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, which plays an important role in the delivery of sustainable development.

- NPPF paragraphs 184-202 set out the Government's planning policy on *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*, and more specifically policy relating to conservation areas.

1.6

Broadly, these policies seek to ensure that the character and significance of a Conservation Area is preserved.

Guidelines for development specify:

- New development should respect its context in design, including scale, form, proportion and detailing
- The use of materials in accordance with those traditionally used in that particular part of the Conservation Area
- New development to be located within sites in a similar way to the general pattern of building in that part of the Conservation Area
- Boundary walls, railings and hedges should be incorporated in the development in a

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similar way to those already in existence in that part of the Conservation Area, using similar materials and detailing, or species

- Signs to respect the character of the buildings and quality of the historic environment in their siting, size, materials and design

Permission may be refused for:

- The demolition of any building or structure if its loss would harm the character and/or appearance of the area
- The extension or alteration of building where the change would damage the area's character and/or appearance
- Development which would be harmful to the setting, character or appearance of the area
- Development which would adversely affect, or result in the loss of, historic plots, layouts & street pattern, important views, open spaces, tree cover or boundary features within the Conservation Area
- Signage which would be harmful to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area

1.7

Wychavon's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2010) is relevant in the assessment of development proposals within Conservation Areas.

2 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

2.1

Beckford is a small, quiet rural village with a long history of settlement stretching back to the 8th century. The village's historic plan form, plot layouts and buildings are still very much evident. Each phase of development has left a wealth of historic buildings, which combined with the surviving plan form demonstrate much evidence of the settlements early origins and development.

2.2

The importance of agriculture in Beckford's history is reinforced by the constant connection between the settlement and surrounding countryside. Views over fields around the conservation area are particularly important to its character, and the natural environment permeates the village in the form of open space, gardens, verges, trees and hedges and stone walls. This connection is reinforced through the survival of a range of agricultural buildings within the village

2.3

An important part of Beckford's character is derived from the way in which the historic core is experienced. Access to the centre of the Conservation Area, around the Church and Beckford Hall, is limited to either private driveways or public footpaths. Somewhat restricted access to much of the historic core creates a feeling of isolation, as much of the conservation area can only be experienced on foot. Walking around, only glimpses are allowed of many properties and their associated gardens, narrow footpaths focus largely on both the Church and Beckford Hall at the core.

2.4

The conservation area is focussed on the historic core of Beckford Hall and the church. The special interest of Beckford that justifies its designation as a conservation area includes:

- **Its long history, still evident in the layout of the village, its buildings and in visible archaeological remains**
 - **The survival of a clear demonstration of historic social hierarchy within the village,**

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evident in the size, design and siting of buildings

- The positive contribution of larger properties and their setting
- The quality and variety of historic buildings, as well as local architectural detailing
- The significant contribution of the natural environment in trees, hedges, gardens, parkland, and fields
- The strong relationship between the village and its surrounding rural landscape
- The prevalence of stone boundary walls which make a strong contribution to the character and appearance of the area
- The unique way in which the settlement is experienced at its historic core, via a series of public footpaths and private driveways that create a sense of isolation

The conservation area boundary is drawn to reflect this special interest.

3 ASSESSING SPECIAL INTEREST

Location

3.1

Beckford sits on the southern foothills of Bredon Hill, at the junction of the lower slopes of the hill where it meets the edge of the Vale of Evesham. Beckford is situated approximately 6 miles east of the market town of Tewkesbury and is also in the shadow of Dumbleton Hill to the east. It is one of a number of historic settlements sited on the flanks of Bredon Hill.

Landscape Setting

3.2

Bredon Hill dominates the immediate landscape to the north of the village with its tree lined hedges, orchards and small copses. On the hillsides to the east and south of the village there are some larger areas of woodland. Many of the trees within the Beckford Hall estate have been felled but immediately north of the village, evidence of park land remains. Large fields to the north of the village towards Bredon Hill are punctuated by native hedges, footpaths and tracks from where the village is visible below.



View across the landscape surrounding Beckford from Pigeon Lane on Bredon Hill

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Dumbleton Hill in the distance from Bredon Hill



3.3 Beckford's immediate agricultural setting is well preserved. The plentiful views out of the village over fields provide visual reminders of the link between farming and the development of the settlement.

3.4 There are many old quarries and sandpits in the area, some of which are still evident to the north of the village within Beckford Nature Reserve. Beckford Gravel Pit is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is of national importance for its Geology.



SSSI In Beckford Nature Reserve

3.5 The Beckford Nature Reserve abuts the northern boundary of the conservation area and is owned and managed by Beckford Nature Reserve Ltd. The reserve makes a strong contribution to the immediate setting of the conservation area, with public footpaths linking it to the historic core of the village.



Beckford Nature Reserve

3.6 The village lies to the north of Carrant Brook. Development in the north east of the village has overlaid historic parkland, and development on the southern boundary has replaced former fields and orchards. The preservation of Beckford's remaining agricultural and rural setting is essential to the character of the village.



Uninterrupted view of Dumbleton Hill, south of the village showing the countryside which typically surrounds the village.

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The view looking south from Court Farm Lane. As can be seen there are no buildings.



Carrant Brook showing how residential curtilages interface with the surrounding countryside.

Historic Development of Beckford

3.7

The existence of Neolithic and Roman settlement around the present day village of Beckford is evidence of a long history of settlement in the area. The availability of a supply of fresh water from springs emerging from Bredon Hill and the proximity of fertile land were likely reasons for early settlement.

3.8

The presence of a church at Beckford by the late 8th century, on the site of the present church, suggests that there was already an established settlement in the area of the present day village by the Saxon period. The Manor was held by the Bishop of Worcester and it is likely that Beckford was established as a farming community by Worcester Abbey and worked by tenants of the monastic estate to contribute to support of the abbey.

3.9

The Domesday Book of 1086 records Beckford tenanted by 32 villeins (feudal tenants) and 21 bordars (unfree labouring peasants) with 31 plough teams, indicating a large and well established farming settlement by the beginning of the Norman period of some 150 to 200 inhabitants. It is likely that early settlement of the present village was first established along Main Street and around the church, and probably comprised a village of small farms. By this time Beckford is known to have been at the heart of a large arable estate.

3.10

In 1128 a priory was founded at Beckford, on the site of the present Beckford Hall. The church is the earliest surviving building in the village today, dating from around 1130. The church and the priory would have been at the heart of the early medieval village. Although there are no other surviving buildings from such an early date the layout of the present day village, with its wide linear main street lined with roughly rectangular plots, and the church, manor house and a triangular green at its heart, suggests elements of a planned medieval settlement overlaying the earlier Saxon settlement, probably laid out around

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the same time as the construction of the church and priory.

3.11

The land would have been cultivated in strips with large open areas of arable crops, probably with communal grazing and hay meadows next to the brook. There is still evidence of this medieval farming system in the landscape around the village in the very distinctive patterns of "ridge and furrow" that have survived to the present day. There has been extensive pasture for sheep on Bredon Hill and in the 13th century it was said that the manor could maintain 500 sheep. It is likely that these rich arable lands and sheep pastures made Beckford a desirable and profitable place of settlement.

3.12

Records of tailors, smiths, weavers, a butcher, carpenter, and a cobbler from the 14th to 17th centuries suggest a well established village in the medieval and post-medieval periods. The green and High Street were lined with timber framed and thatched buildings.



12th Century Church of St John the Baptist in the heart of the village.

3.12

The majority of early buildings in the village today are substantial stone and timber framed houses dating from the 16th and 17th centuries. These are scattered along Main Street and in the vicinity of the church, suggesting that the layout of the village was well established by this time. Roads, paths and lanes branching to the north, south, east and west would have given access to the surrounding fields,

meadows and hill grazing. Many of these routes are still present today.

3.14

The presence of a number of early substantial houses suggests prosperity in Beckford in the 16th and 17th centuries. Much of the manor is thought to have been enclosed for sheep farming by the 16th century and it is possible that much of its wealth came from the large profits that were to be made in wool.

3.15

Enclosure of the remainder of the parish in 1774 resulted in the building of outlying farms, replacing the strip farming system with its meadows and commons, and creating the fields which are familiar today.

3.16

In 1794 the road passing through Beckford (Main Street) was turnpiked, linking Beckford with a good road to the market town of Evesham. The railway arrived in 1866. In a short space of time the village was well connected with transport links to towns and further afield to markets at Birmingham and London. During the 18th and 19th centuries brick houses replaced earlier timber framed buildings along Main Street. This phase of building is clearly recognisable in the brick houses and cottages built in villa style that was fashionable at the time. These buildings reflect the wider availability of materials and exposure to different architectural styles brought about by the improvement of the transport network.



The paved area outside School Cottages shows how this area of the village has altered from being formerly the market place.

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Fields around the village, showing how the former strip farming system has been replaced



The view looking south towards the village showing the open fields with no buildings.



Main Street connecting Beckford with the market town of Evesham.

3.17

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of circa 1886 suggests a thriving community by this date with several properties arranged along both sides of Main Street including, houses, cottages, a school, post office and smithy. Beckford's built form was largely consolidated during the 19th century, and became something resembling that which would be recognisable today.



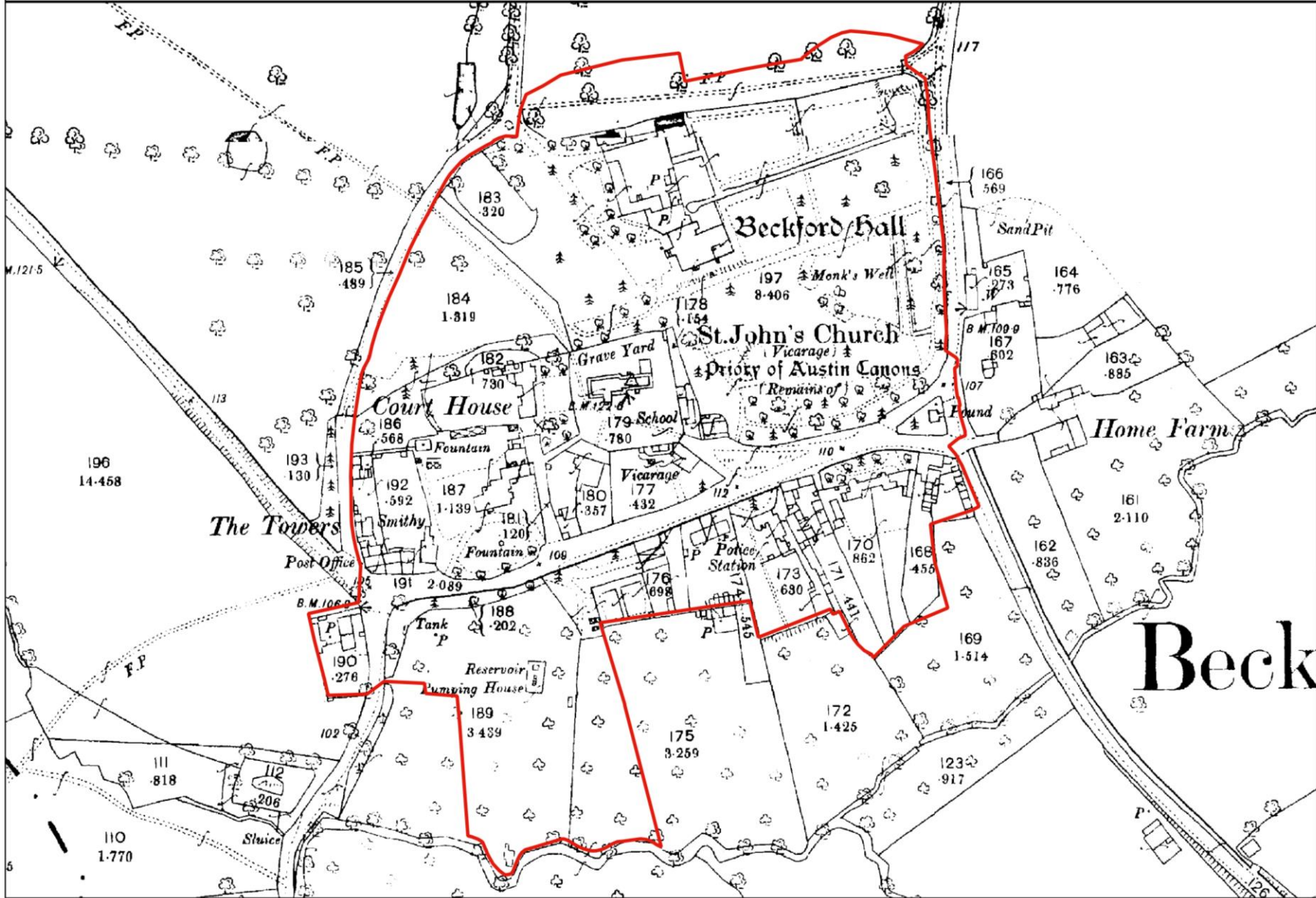
16th Century Tile Barn, Main Street

3.18

The 20th century saw an abundance of new development on the fringes of the conservation area and immediately outside the boundary. Alterations to existing buildings within the conservation area also took place with The Smithy, school and post office converted to residential use. Gaps between buildings have been infilled with a mixture of new houses and bungalows, particularly at the west and eastern ends of Main Street and in the grounds of Beckford Hall. Further 20th Century residential development has taken place to the north of Court House along Court Farm Lane. A small amount of new development has taken place during the 21st century, primarily outside the conservation area to the east along Station Road.

3.19

Despite these more recent changes Beckford retains much of its open space, a farm, many of its historic buildings, and most of the surrounding land remains in agricultural use. The settlements early origin as a small rural farming community is still readily apparent in its layout, setting and surviving buildings.



Legend

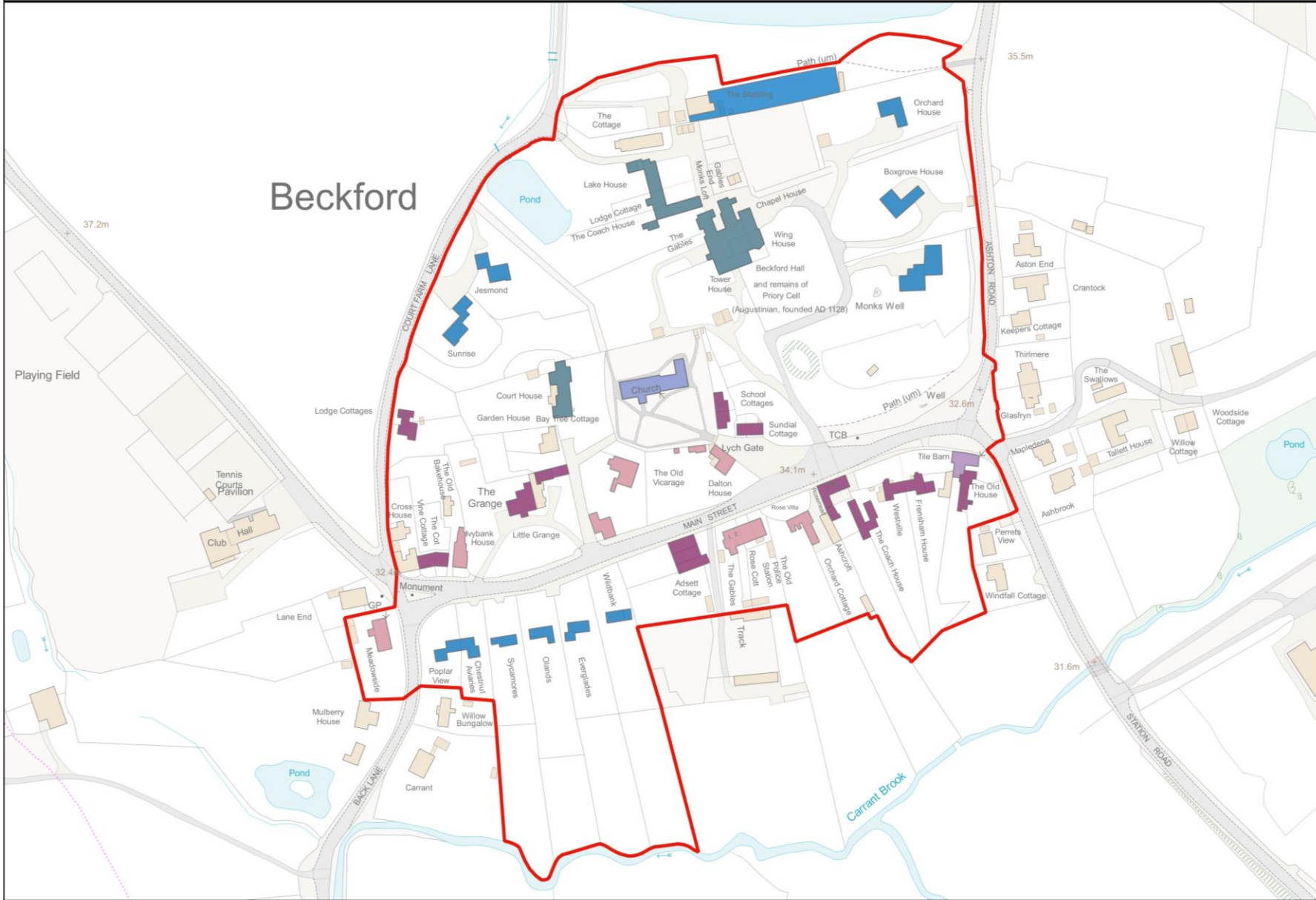
Red line symbol: Conservation Area Boundary

Date: 25/03/2019
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Settlement Development of Beckford



- Legend**
- Conservation Area Boundary
 - 20th Century Buildings
 - 19th Century Buildings
 - 18th Century Buildings
 - 17th Century Buildings
 - 16th Century Buildings
 - 12th Century Buildings



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Archaeology

3.20

Numerous sites of archaeological interest around the village provide evidence for Neolithic, Iron Age and Roman settlement in the vicinity. A clustering of these sites is located in the area of Court Farm to the north of the village and Home Farm in the south east. Sites are apparent as cropmarks of cursus enclosures, trackways and ring ditches.

3.21

While much of the physical evidence for the medieval farming system at Beckford has disappeared, an area of possible medieval or post-medieval ridge and furrow is still visible as earthworks in fields between Beckford and Little Beckford and also in fields towards the shrunken medieval and post medieval village of Grafton to the north east of Beckford. Though the village would have once been surrounded by ridge and furrow, much of this has been lost to agricultural activity and modern development.

3.22

In the wider area around Beckford towards Conderton, two Anglo-Saxon cemeteries have been discovered. Both sites are thought to date to the 6th century, the inhabitants found at the site known as Beckford B are believed to have been part of a poor Saxon community due to the poor quality and scarcity of grave goods.

Plan Form

3.22

The village is laid out along a principal east-west axis formed by Main Street. Footpaths and lanes branch off the Main Street to the surrounding fields to the north, south and east. This framework of roads, lanes, and footpaths is likely to be medieval in origin and is likely little changed. It serves to create a unique character to the historic core of the conservation area, by allowing much of it to only be experienced from private property or via public footpaths.

3.23

Individual houses, cottages and farm buildings are loosely scattered along Main Street and Court Farm Lane in a linear pattern, roughly following their line, with no uniformity in spacing between buildings or in their relationship to the road. Many of the older buildings are set back from the road surrounded by large gardens, although a number of 18th and 19th

century properties front the road but are set behind small front gardens, often with railings.

3.24

The modern buildings are frequently set back behind front gardens. Most have generous plots with gardens extending to the sides and rear, so that there is no hard delineation of a consistent building line. To the south of Main Street plots frequently back onto the surrounding fields leading down to Carrant Brook. To the North of the central portion of Main Street there are larger plots centred around the Church of St John the Baptist and Beckford Hall incorporating a great deal of open space.

3.24

Whilst more recent development has taken place to the west of Main Street, to the rear of Court House, and in the grounds of Beckford Hall, the historic plan form of Beckford is still evident as a series of large properties set in generous plots with scattered farms surrounding the village.

Spaces

3.25

Throughout the village, gardens and surrounding fields are a green backdrop to the built environment and are a significant element of its character. Notable examples include the fields along the south side of the village which can be seen in views between buildings from Main Street across to Dumbleton Hill. Views of Bredon Hill can be seen from Court Farm Lane and from the open space around the church and gardens at The Old School, School Cottages, Dalton House, Court House and Beckford Hall. Grass verges are a particular feature along Main Street.

3.26

Central to the Conservation Area is the churchyard which is a large open space of the former market surrounded by prominent large buildings. The open space and the existence of mature trees, make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. To the front of the lych-gate (formerly known as the market place) is now used for parking.

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The lych-gate, through which the open space of the small square can just be seen.

3.27

Less apparent, but just as important, are private gardens. While the full extent of these gardens are not entirely visible to the public, the lack of interruption by buildings and presence of planting contributes to an impression of openness appreciated from glimpses over boundaries, between buildings and from roads and footpaths to the rear. Gardens behind buildings also play an important role in the visual relationship between street frontage and the natural environment of the open countryside behind. This visual relationship provides the setting for many of the buildings and is a significant element of the rural character of the village.



A view into the village, showing how the residential properties border the adjoining countryside.

Key Views & Vistas

3.28

Tracks to the north of the village provide long distance views across the fields to the conservation area, and show the village in its rural setting against the backdrop of Dumbleton and Alderton Hill. From other directions heavy tree planting around the village hide it in the landscape.



Mature trees surround the village with the hills in the south beyond.

3.29

There are frequent prominent views from outside the conservation area and within the village toward the church and Beckford Hall. Both the Church and Hall are visible in the wider landscape from the lanes and tracks approaching the village.



The wider landscape setting of Beckford taken from Bredon Hill showing the mature trees, wide open landscape and the setting of the Parish Church and Beckford Hall.

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3.30

Views to open farmland from Station Road, Back Lane and Court Farm Lane are part of the cumulative appreciation of the way in which the village remains linked to its countryside setting and they make a significant contribution to its rural character.



3.31

Short and medium distance views along the gently curving Main Street naturally focus on prominent buildings such as the Church of St John the Baptist, The Grange and Beckford Hall. Other focal points include the mid 18th Century gate piers, gates and adjoining walls of Beckford Hall, the ornate entrance gate to The Grange, Rose Villa, Dalton House, the Old School and School Cottages.



Looking into the conservation area from the junction where Court Farm Lane meets Main Street, a panoramic view is allowed of this corner of the village.



The low boundary walls and large front gardens of Poplar View and Chestnut Aviaries allow a broad and dynamic view of the western end of the conservation area. It enables the focus to remain on the important listed buildings as you enter the village from Back Lane, and creates a sense of space that has a positive impact on the character and appearance of the conservation areas.

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Looking west along Main Street, where the contribution of the natural environment and boundary walls is predominant



Looking east along Main Street the natural environment is again very prominent and means that long range views tend not to focus on particular buildings

3.32

Many views within the conservation area naturally highlight the presence of Beckford's older buildings, since these are invariably sited prominently at the roadside and are dominant in street vistas. Equally as prominent in the streetscape of Beckford Conservation Area is the natural environment, particularly trees.

4 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

General

4.1

The character of the Beckford Conservation Area is that of a quiet and leafy rural village, set within an historic framework of roads, lanes, cottages and houses, with larger properties are set in generous plots. This rural character is reinforced by the frequent presence of open space surrounding and permeating the village and frequent views to the surrounding countryside, together with the presence throughout of hedges, boundary walls with gated entrances, gardens, trees and grass verges.

4.2

Farming has historically played an important role in the development of the settlement and the continued presence of farm buildings, cottages and farmhouses within and around the village contributes to its rural character.

4.3

The retention of this rural landscape setting, spaces, views, historic form and buildings, boundary features, trees and grass verges within the village is essential to the preservation of its character.

4.4

Notably, modern intrusion in the form of obtrusive street lighting, road markings, roadside kerbing and signage is largely absent from the conservation area, and the sense of a quiet rural village is enhanced by Beckford's distance from principal roads and lack of through traffic.

Character Areas

North Side of Main Street

4.5

Main Street runs on a W/E axis through the village. This area to the north is the core of the conservation area characterised by an historic framework of 12th, 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th century buildings, many of which are set in spacious plots. The earliest buildings are the priory c.1128 now Beckford Hall and the church of St John the Baptist c.1130. A real sense of the core is enhanced by the

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presence of gardens walls and the churchyard wall. While 20th century residential development is located within the large gardens around Beckford Hall, much open space and many trees remain. Although the large and significant properties along this side of main street are frequently only glimpsed between trees and shrubs it is the curtilage stone boundary walls which are most visible and are so characteristic of Beckford Conservation Area.

South Side of Main Street

4.6

The south side of Main Street has no extant early buildings excepting for The Old House C16th and Rose Villa C18th at the east end. Most of the dwellings are situated in fairly evenly spaced plots facing the highway with fore gardens of various sizes. Later 20th century properties have large front gardens and earlier properties have small to the front gardens these are situated at the east end of Main Street. The majority are bounded by walls and fences.

Buildings

4.7

Several of the buildings in the Beckford conservation area are listed for their special architectural or historic interest. Some of these are of early origin. There are other historic buildings which, although not listed, are still of local interest and exist much as originally designed. The more recent houses are representative in design of their respective periods of construction. The result is a succession of buildings of architectural variety.

4.8

The most prevalent building types in Beckford are large houses set in sizable plots reflecting Beckford's historic origins. Older buildings of all types are constructed in the form and style typical of the local Worcestershire tradition of their respective periods and, although often extended and updated, many remain fundamentally as originally designed. Most of these historic buildings, whatever their period, share common design characteristics of:

- limited spans/plan depths dictated by historic building construction methods
- a simple main rectangular plan form, occasionally with one or more rear wings
- fenestration is carefully arranged on principal elevations

The result is a commonality of form in older buildings throughout much of the conservation area despite the variety of periods and architectural styles.



A terrace on the South side of Main Street showing how closely positioned many of the plots which front the highway are.

4.9

Cottages

Cottages from the 18th and early 19th centuries are detached, semi-detached or terraced and simple in form with rectangular plans and limited spans dictated by historic building construction methods. These buildings are modest in scale, size and design with pitched roofs and chimneys.

4.10

Late 19th Century cottages

These tend to be equally simple in plan form and modest in size and scale. These are detached or semi-detached and are a modest two storeys with shallower pitched roofs. Fenestration reflects the Classical influence of the period with balanced arrangements of centre placed door and carefully arrangement of modest sized casement windows. Doors are part-glazed under a modest hood or small porch. Dormers are absent. Ridge mounted chimneys are centre placed or a matching pair of end stacks.

4.14

Houses

Houses in Beckford date through the centuries from the 16th century to modern, each reflecting in size and architectural style their purpose and period of construction. This results in a rich variety of houses in the village.

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4.15

Early houses

These largely date from the 16th and 17th centuries and are commonly detached buildings which are of a substantial size; reflecting their role in the history of the village, for example the Court House. These properties are detached, rectangular in plan, some with later additions forming an "L"-plan. They are mainly large in size and hold a prominent position within the street scene. Roofs are steeply pitched with large prominent chimneys, often externally mounted stacks against the gable or side walls or chimneys piercing the roof slope.

Fenestration is a mix of irregularly placed small casement windows and more careful arrangements of casement windows and centred doors on some principal elevations. Doors are solid boarded or panelled, often under a modest hood.

4.16

The Old House on Main Street is thought to date to the 16th century; though it has been altered, it survives in its prominent position as one of the oldest buildings in the village. Part coursed limestone rubble and ashlar in addition to timber-framing with rendered infill panels; it showcases a range of locally available materials and architectural styles.



The Old House



A 16th century house showing size and architectural style of this period.

4.17

One of the most significant houses within the conservation area is Beckford Hall, originally the site of a 12th century priory which dissolved in 1414 and was subsequently rebuilt as a house during the 17th century. The Hall is constructed of coursed dressed limestone and limestone ashlar with ashlar dressings. Before being subdivided the house had undergone a number of alterations, largely during the 19th century.

The property is now subdivided into several dwellings and much of the associated land has been sold off and built on. The hall is somewhat concealed from the majority of the village, with glimpses allowed from various angles but rarely a full view.



Beckford Hall as seen entering the driveway from Main Street

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Beckford Hall viewed from the Monks graveyard within the grounds

4.18

Court House is 17th century in date, with some 19th century additions and alterations. Supposedly named because in the 19th century it held the manorial courts where sheep stealers were tried and subsequently hung in nearby Dalton House (Gloucestershire Federation of Women's Institute, 2002). It survives as an H-shaped house, largely rebuilt, but the original plan probably comprised a timber-framed hall and cross-wing on the north.



Court House

4.19

Later houses

A large proportion of the surviving buildings in the Beckford Conservation Area date from the 18th and 19th centuries. Frequently they are detached or semi-detached, rectangular in plan, size and scale is varied with some larger properties around the church. Most of the buildings consist of two storeys, occasionally with a rear wing. Some have prominent gables onto the road, and many of the more modest properties

are situated closer to the road. The roofs are a mix of steep and shallower pitches. Chimneys are largely ridge mounted and centre or matching pairs at gable end. Fenestration is usually carefully placed with symmetry in elevation of matching casement or sash windows and a centre placed door. Doors are usually panelled timber. Fascia boards exist on 19th century houses.



The relatively modest scale and design of 18th & 19th century cottages



The Old Vicarage as seen from the graveyard to the rear

Beckford



The west elevation of The Old Vicarage, the mixed use of materials becomes more prominent here



19th century Lodge Cottages make use of traditional materials but in a design characteristic of its period of construction



19th century semi detached properties, steep roof pitches with two matching chimneys in roof elevation at either end

4.20

Modern Houses

Considerable development in the later 20th century has taken place in three areas of the conservation area, i) in the grounds of Beckford Hall, ii) Court Farm Lane and iii) south west corner along Main Street. These modern buildings vary in size, form and design, with no predominant style but all set in sizeable plots. They differ from the older buildings often having features including porches, conservatories, large windows with a horizontal emphasis, insignificant or no chimneys and integral and attached garages.



Many of the 20th century properties are set within large landscaped plots, and are quite far back from the road

Beckford

4.21

Farm Buildings

Farm buildings are mainly converted to residential use within the conservation area, though some do survive as outbuildings. However, the presence of these buildings still contributes to the history of the area, and they serve as a reminder of Beckford's connection with agriculture and farming.



Outbuildings survive at The Old Vicarage, their appearance suggest past agricultural use



Adsett Cottage is adjoined to a set of barns, and although the complex has been partially converted at the rear it is clear that they are of an agricultural nature

4.22

Other Building Types

The Church has architectural features from its several periods of development from the 12th century to the 19th century, indicative of a long period of settlement at Beckford. The nave and lower stage of the tower are Norman. The building has a central tower; the lower stage was formerly part of the 12th century chancel. A three stage tower with a spire was added in the 14th century which was replaced in 1622 by the

belfry. Within the surrounds of the church is a lych-gate erected in 1925.



4.23

Listed Buildings

Listed building legislation exists to protect those buildings that are considered to be of architectural or historic interest. Other buildings and structures attached to, or pre-dating 1st July 1948 and forming part of the curtilage of, these listed

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buildings are also listed by association. This includes boundaries; railings, walls, gates and gate piers. Several buildings in the Beckford Conservation Area are listed, therefore, any changes affecting them will also be considered in terms of the effect on the conservation area.

4.24

The Council's Heritage Team should be contacted for advice on whether a building or structure is curtilage listed before any works are carried out to potentially designated buildings or structures.

4.25

Unlisted Buildings

There are many other buildings that although they are not listed, are important locally and possess qualities of age, materials and style.

4.26

That many of these properties retain much of their original character and appearance is to the credit of those owners who have carefully preserved them. There is, however, no guarantee as to their future and these properties are vulnerable to future change. The Management Plan at Part 2 includes a proposal for consideration of Article 4(2) Directions to provide long-term protection against unsympathetic alterations. The effect of the Direction would be that certain alterations which formerly did not require planning permission would need permission in future, but only where the change affects those parts of a property fronting a highway or public open space.

Materials

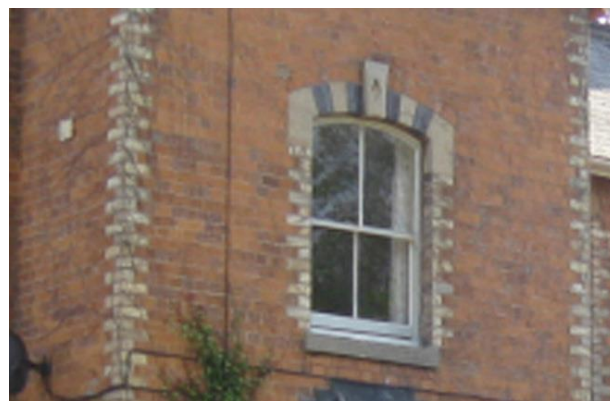
4.27

Historically, the use of building materials in Beckford reflects what was available locally at the time, with materials only being transported long distances for expensive high status buildings. Beckford is situated on the border of the Cotswolds and so the earlier buildings are a mix of Cotswold Stone, local lias stone and timber frame, typical of this location.

4.28

Walls

The buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries are mostly local brick in a rich orange/red colour, often patterned with yellow and blue headers and stretchers. Occasionally buildings feature roughcast panels or have a later facing of smooth render.



19th century properties patterned with yellow and blue headers and stretchers.

4.29

The 16th, 17th and 18th century buildings are mostly built in limestone ashlar including the 19th century milepost. Some of the buildings have timber framing with rendered infill. Elsewhere brick is used.

4.30

Modern buildings are mainly faced with brick of various colours, while some are rendered and painted, mostly in whites and creams.

4.31

Roofs

There exists a mixture of roofing material, some plain tile, machine made tiles and slate roofs. The Church of St John the Baptist is an example of a stone tiled roofs laid in diminishing courses. There are also examples of slate roofs at The Old Rectory and Rose Villa. The presence of hipped roofs with brick end stacks, steep roof pitches, deep eaves and verges and exposed rafter feet on many of the older buildings is indicative of earlier thatched coverings, suggesting that thatch was the predominant pre 17th century roofing material at Beckford. It is important to the special interest and character of the conservation area that these details are retained.

Beckford

4.32

From the 19th and early 20th centuries roof coverings are mainly plain red/brown machine-made clay tiles.

4.33

The roofs of modern houses are covered with machine made tiles in clay and concrete, consistent with their dates of construction.



Brick built 18^t century Rose Villa

4.34

Windows

Most windows in stone buildings are simple single glazed plain or leaded lights glazed direct into stone mullions and surrounds, with opening lights of wrought iron. Casement windows are wrought iron and painted timber, with plain glazing and occasional leaded lights. Sash windows are painted timber. The materials used in windows are characteristic of their respective periods of buildings. The retention of these traditional materials is important to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



Dalton House with its casement windows. The ground floor windows show cambered brick heads.

4.35

Some of the historic windows in Beckford have been replaced by modern ones. There are examples where uPVC has replaced original materials. Side hung casements and sliding sashes have been replaced by top hung hinged opening lights. The modern replacement of traditional windows is harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area as uPVC replacements rarely match the detail and finish of traditional windows.

4.36

Doors

Generally doors within the conservation area are painted, stained or oiled timber. Some have glazed openings and many are set beneath ornate porches or canopies. As with windows, the modern replacement of traditional doors is harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

4.37

There are examples around the village of cast iron gutters and down pipes. Also, Examples of 19th century cast iron work detailing on roofs and wrought iron decoration around porches.

Ground Surfaces

4.38

Roads and pavements are tarmac. Most footpaths are associated with a grassed verge on one side or the other, sometimes both sides. At either end of Main Street the grass verge continues to the road giving a softer appearance which adds to the rural character of the conservation area.



Main Street with the grasses verges softening the appearance between the stone wall of Beckford Hall and the highway.

Beckford

4.39

The majority of private driveways in Beckford are Cotswold gravel. Some are tarmac, setts, pavements or flags. The softer gravel finish is more in keeping with the character of the conservation area.

4.40

Local Details

Within Beckford's built environment there are local building details which contribute to the character and special interest of the conservation area. These include:

- coursed and dressed limestone rubble with ashlar dressings.
- patterned brickwork in yellow headers and blue bricks in 19th century buildings
- Flemish bond in brickwork
- eaves detailing, including cornices, dogtooth courses and dentil bands evident in 19th century construction of cottages, houses and farm buildings;
- decorative ridge tiles, shaped clay roof tiles and colour banding of clay roof tiles on some 19th century roofs;
- ornate pierced bargeboards on 19th century houses and cottages;
- the red telephone box in Main Street, in front of Beckford Hall;
- the entrance gates and piers to Beckford Grange and Beckford Hall
- the milepost in Main Street;
- the lych-gate;

4.41

Boundaries

Boundaries make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation areas and Beckford is no exception. Several of the boundaries are historic in their position and/or materials. A range of materials is utilised for front

boundaries, some of which are low enough to permit views into gardens and sometimes beyond. When afforded, this visibility over front boundaries should be preserved as it is a characteristic feature of the conservation area.



Entrance to Beckford Hall with its sweeping driveway into the mature landscaped grounds.



The low stone boundary wall with its railings permitting views into the garden area.

4.42

Older cottages and houses often have no formal boundary to the road frontage, a modest grassed or planted verge or open garden. Some have a very low dry stone wall.

4.43

Stone walls are one of the features of Beckford conservation area. The taller walls bound the higher status buildings. The lower stone walls allow glimpses of the properties behind an endearing feature of the area. Beckford benefits from the absence of wooden fences and brick walls along the residential curtilages of its properties.

Beckford



The tall stone wall of Beckford Hall which contributes to the character of the conservation area.



One of the many prominent entrances within the street scene.



The footpath leading from the church towards The Grange



The imposing entrance to The Grange

4.44

Hedging and substantial tree planting along plot boundaries and open space contribute significantly to the rural character, particularly in views within the conservation.

4.45

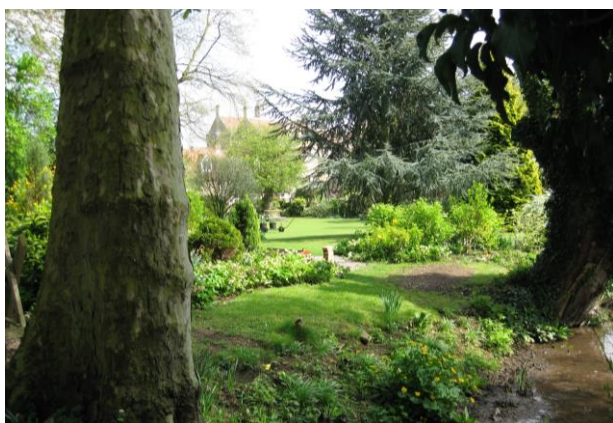
There are a number of interesting boundary points in the village, for example the lych-gate at the Church of St John the Baptist. One of the main features of this conservation area are the prominent entrances to many of its larger buildings along Main Street, for example the stone wall fronting Beckford Grange with its dominant arched entrance gates, the stone wall surrounding Beckford Hall punctuated by its gate piers surmounted by fluted urns and cast iron gates, the entrance gates to The Old Vicarage and the low brick wall with railings in front of the semi circular driveway of Rose Villa.

4.46

Natural Environment

The natural environment is essential to the rural character of Beckford and is a crucial feature of the views into and out of the conservation area. The first impression of the village is one of spaciousness with its large properties set in sizeable plots complimented by sympathetic boundaries and landscaping. Open spaces in the form of parkland, fields and gardens, and an abundance of trees, contribute to the green character of the village.

Beckford



Views across neighbouring residential properties give glimpses of Beckford Hall

4.47

The rural setting of Beckford is attributed to the fields surrounding the village. The large open space surrounding the church provides views to neighbouring properties of Beckford Hall, Beckford Grange, Dalton House and Court House. The parkland formerly associated with Beckford Hall to the north east of the village makes a significant contribution to the rural setting of the village.

4.48

The grass verges and open front gardens all contribute to the character and appearance of the area. Private gardens have a role in the character and appearance of the conservation area. The private gardens of Court House and The Old Vicarage allow good views of the church. Views across neighbouring properties through mature tree and shrub planting give glimpses of Beckford Hall. The Hall itself is said to have a 18th/19th century box trees which may be considerably older.

4.49

Less apparent, but just as important, are private gardens behind the street frontages. While the full extent of these gardens may not be entirely publicly visible, the lack of interruption by buildings and presence of planting contributes to an impression of openness appreciated from glimpses over boundaries and between buildings, particularly from the footpaths leading to and from the churchyard. The green spaces are an important feature in the setting of historical buildings.

4.50

Trees and hedges are essential elements of Beckford's character and appearance, featuring in views within, into and out of the conservation area and creating a green and leafy atmosphere. There are a number of established trees and tree groups particularly in and around the grounds of Beckford Hall and along the Carrant Brook. Distinctive groups of trees that are set against the skyline create a striking backdrop to parts of the village that is an essential element of its character.

4.51

The trees of particular note are the mature trees within the churchyard. The trees within the grounds of Beckford Hall and the mature trees within the front gardens of the properties at the west end of Main Street.

4.52

All trees over a certain size are protected in the conservation area. Written notification must be given to the Council before carrying out any works to these trees. Some trees are individually protected by Tree Preservation Orders and consent is needed from us before any works to them are carried out.

Our Landscape Team can advise on which trees are protected, the type of works which would need to be notified or need consent, the procedures and the likelihood of getting consent for the works. The contribution of trees to the character and appearance of the conservation area will be a factor in the consideration of a notification or application.

Enhancement Opportunities

4.53

There are features that compromise or detract from the character and appearance of the Beckford Conservation Area. These include:

- **Surfaces** - The use of tarmac and concrete pavements detract from the overall appearance of the conservation area. Particularly the former market area immediately in front of the lich-gate at the entrance to the church yard.

Beckford

- **New Buildings** - Most new builds show design characteristics which are different to the established characteristics of the area. The design of these buildings will not be considered as a precedent for future development proposals.
- **Loss of Gardens to Development** - One of the characteristics of Beckford is its number of large properties set in sizeable plots. The Council will consider any future proposals for infill development carefully to ensure this particular character of the conservation area is not lost.
- **Architectural Details** - The retention of historic and appropriate detailing such as doors, windows, iron detailing to roofs, porches and boundaries are important to the character and appearance of the conservation area and therefore every opportunity should be made to ensure they are not lost.
- **Loss of gardens and boundaries to car parking.** Gardens are vulnerable to replacement with hard surfacing for car parking with associated loss of boundary wall and hedges.
- **Loss of architectural features.** Such as doors, windows and other local building details. The retention of historic and appropriate details is important to the character and appearance of the conservation area, but these remain vulnerable to change as windows and doors are replaced, materials are changed and buildings are altered.

We would welcome the opportunity of discussing the scope of improving these features.

Neutral Areas

4.54

There are some parts of the conservation area which, in their present form, neither enhance nor detract from its character or appearance. Many of the new houses are set in good sized plots with gardens, stone boundary walls, boundary hedges and planting which softens their appearance and helps to integrate them into the historic environment.

We will be careful to guard against these properties becoming too dominant through future additions or alterations.

Threats

4.55

Beckford has been affected by 20th century development and is sensitive to change. In particular:

- **Development.** Development on the fringes of the conservation area has the potential to detrimentally impact the special interest and character of the Beckford Conservation Area.

5 ISSUES

5.1

The appraisal has highlighted the following issues in the Beckford Conservation Area:

- Design quality of new buildings and conversions
- Erosion of the historic plan form and loss of open spaces to infill development
- Loss of architectural features on historic buildings
- incremental alterations to buildings
- the potential impact of the loss of mature trees

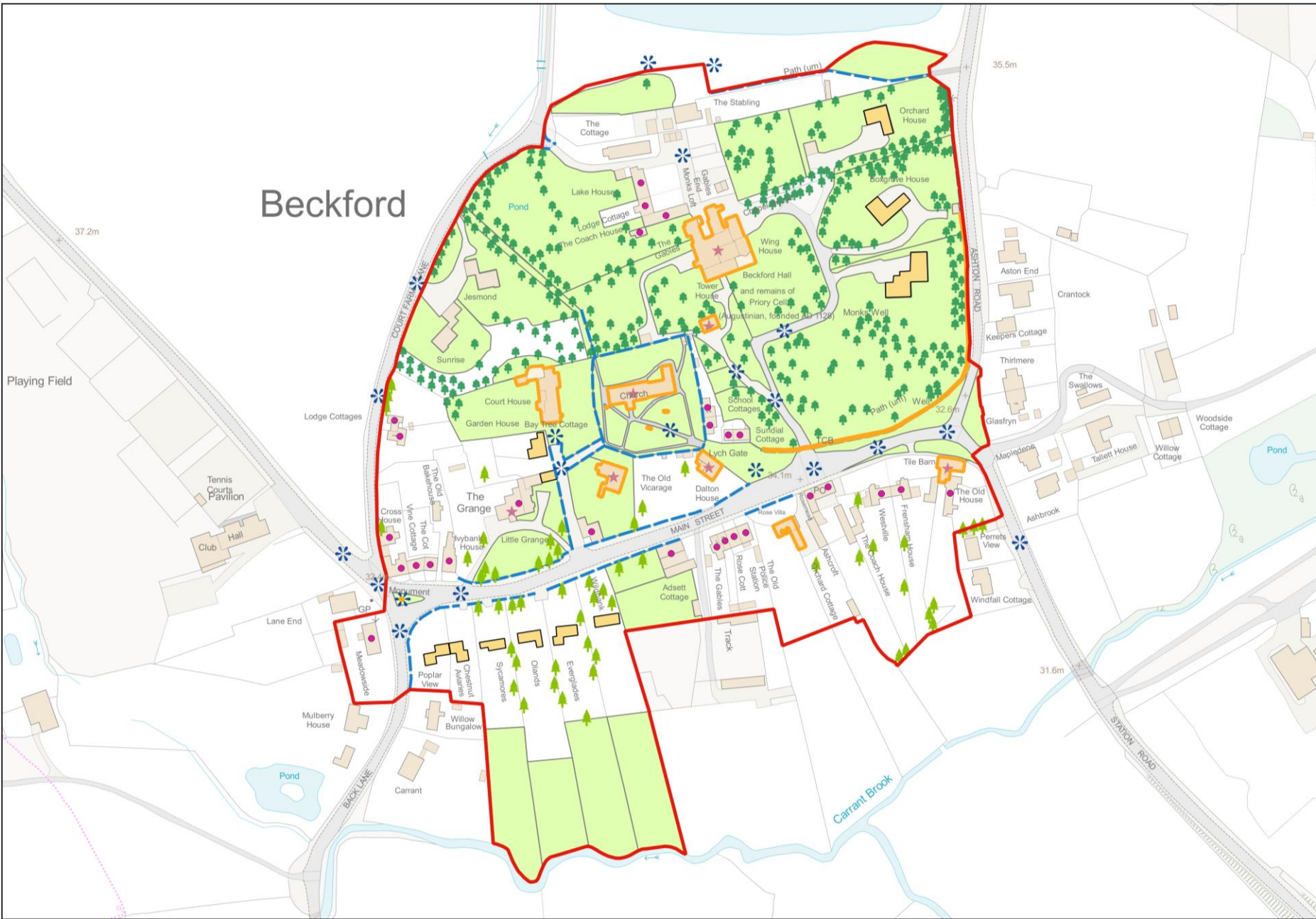
5.2

The Management Plan will consider how these might be addressed to ensure the continuing preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

NOTE

Although it is intended that this appraisal should highlight significant features of the conservation area which are important to its character or appearance, omission of a particular feature should not be taken as an indication that it is without merit and unimportant in conservation and planning terms.

Beckford



- Legend**
- Revised Boundary
 - Listed Buildings
 - Heritage Assets of Local Interest
 - Trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order
 - ▲ Significant Trees
 - ★ Focal Features
 - ✱ Significant Viewpoint
 - Important Boundary Feature
 - Neutral Features
 - Important Green Space



Date: 17/04/2019
 Produced by: Wychavon Heritage Team

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PART 2. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

1. What is this Management Plan for?

1.1

This management plan is a mid- to long-term strategy for preserving and enhancing the Beckford conservation area, addressing the issues arising from the appraisal.

1.2

This plan is prepared in accordance with our duty under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of our conservation areas.

2. Management Proposals

1. Design quality of new buildings and conversions

Some new buildings and conversions exhibit design characteristics that are quite different to the established characteristics of the area and which fail to preserve or enhance the conservation area. Others are let down by poor attention to detail and materials.

Action

We will:

- seek improvements to buildings where opportunities arise through development proposals; and
- assess new proposals against our Local Plan Policies on Design, Conversion of Buildings, Preserving and Enhancing the Conservation Area, Preserving the Setting of Listed Buildings

2. Erosion of the village's historic plan form and loss of open spaces to infill development.

New development at the rear of historic plots has eroded in part the historic plan form of the conservation area and intrudes on the visual and historic relationship between built heritage and open space. In other parts gardens and spaces have been lost to infill development.

Action

We will:

- assess new proposals against our Local Plan Policies on Development Control, Preserving the Setting of Listed Buildings and on Preserving and Enhancing the Conservation Area and against the Beckford Conservation Area appraisal

3. Loss of architectural features on historic buildings and incremental alterations.

Several buildings in the conservation area have been adversely affected by the use of inappropriate modern materials or details such as the replacement of original timber sash windows with double glazed uPVC or stained hardwood windows, and the loss of original timber front doors.

Action

We will:

- consider the need for Article 4(2) Directions to those properties listed at Appendix 1, to bring such works under planning control, to ensure that the special qualities of unlisted buildings of local significance are protected; and
- address unauthorised alterations to buildings through enforcement action where appropriate, in accordance with our Enforcement Policy
- seek improvements to buildings where opportunities arise through development proposals; and
- assess new proposals against our Local Plan Policies on Development Control, Preserving the Setting of Listed Buildings and on Preserving and Enhancing the Conservation Area and against the Beckford Conservation Area appraisal

Beckford

4. Trees

Many of the trees that are important to the character and special interest of Beckford have reached or are reaching maturity and are vulnerable to potential loss through the natural ageing process. The maintenance and replacement of these trees is essential to preserving the character of the conservation area.

Action

We will:

- encourage the maintenance and re-planting of trees

Beckford

6. Article 4(2) Directions

What is an Article 4(2) Direction?

6.1

An Article 4(2) Direction is an Order that the District Council can make to provide long-term protection against unsympathetic alterations to unlisted dwelling houses in conservation areas by restricting certain "permitted development" rights. This means that alterations that formerly did not require planning permission would need permission in the future. This would only apply to elevations or parts of a property which front public roads, rights of way or public open spaces. It would not normally affect the rear of a property or the rear garden, and does not affect interior alterations.

Why consider them for Beckford?

6.2

The conservation area at Beckford has been designated in recognition of its special architectural and historic interest and a desire to preserve its character and appearance.

Although many alterations to all types of buildings can be controlled in a conservation area by planning permission, changes can still take place to unlisted dwellings and their sites that can damage the character and appearance of the conservation area, but which are "permitted development", i.e. they do not ordinarily require planning permission.

6.3

There are many buildings in the Beckford Conservation Area which, although not listed, have qualities of age, style and materials which are locally distinct and which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. That many of these properties retain much of their original character and appearance is to the credit of those owners who have carefully preserved them. There is, however, no guarantee as to their future and these properties are vulnerable to future change.

6.4

Furthermore, the character of Beckford is enhanced by the boundaries of existing properties particularly along Main Street. The ornate gates, stone walls and landscaping to many of the

properties afford a positive contribution to the street scene and enrich the character and appearance of the conservation area.

6.5

The "permitted development" being considered for additional control by the Direction is: comprised of Class A of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 which would normally be permitted under Article 3 of that Order. This includes:

- a) the formation of any new, or material alteration to any existing window, door, or other openings of a dwellinghouse where these front a public road, right of way or open space;
- b) the removal or replacement of existing windows and doors of a dwellinghouse where these front a public road, right of way or open space

Beckford

APPENDIX 01 Statement of Community Involvement

Introduction

1.1

This statement is a summary of community involvement and public consultation undertaken by Wychavon District Council in respect of the Beckford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals and proposed changes to the Beckford Conservation Area boundary.

Background

1.2

A report to the Council's Planning Committee on explains the reasons for preparing a character appraisal and management plan for the Beckford Conservation Area. Specifically, the character appraisal and plan is drafted in accordance with the requirements on Wychavon District Council imposed by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to:

- keep its conservation areas under review;
- prepare policies and proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of its conservation areas; and
- pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area in exercising its planning functions.

1.3

The preparation and publication of conservation area character appraisals and management proposals is a key step in the Council fulfilling these duties.

Community Involvement

1.4

Community involvement has taken the form of:

- briefing sessions with the Beckford Parish Council and District Council Member for Beckford
- a public meeting at The Beckford Inn on the evening of 6th February 2019

- a letter to residents affected by the review of the Beckford Conservation Area on 15/01/19

Consultation

1.5

The consultation period began on 4th February 2019 and ended on 15th March 2019

Consultation was by:

- A public meeting held at The Beckford Inn on the evening of 6th February 2019
- Publication of the draft appraisal, management proposals & proposed conservation area boundary changes on the Wychavon District Council website, accompanied by an electronic feedback form
- Placing of the same documents for public inspection during the consultation period at:
 - Wychavon District Council, Civic Centre, Pershore
 - Beckford Post Office
- Notification to Worcestershire Archaeological Unit, Historic England, Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire County Highways.

Consultees

1.6

The following were consulted on the draft appraisal and management plan:

- Beckford Parish Council
- District Council member for Beckford
- Beckford residents
- Worcestershire County Archaeological Service
- Worcestershire County Council
- Historic England
- Worcestershire County Highways

Publicity

1.7

Notice of the public meeting and consultation was given by way of:

- Posters placed in Beckford Post Office, Beckford Parish Noticeboard
- Letters to residents affected by the conservation area review
- A public meeting

Beckford

- Information on Wychavon District Council website
- Documents placed at the Civic Centre, Evesham Library, Council's website
- Information forwarded to consultees

APPENDIX 02

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Worcestershire County Records Office

Further Information

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Wychavon District Council at
www.wychavon.gov.uk

Historic England at:
<https://historicengland.org.uk>