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**CONSERVATION AREA  
CHARACTER APPRAISAL**

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**AMINGTON GREEN**

On behalf of

**TAMWORTH BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

CgMs Ref: SW/SH/8898

Date: March 2008

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## 1.0 Introduction and Planning Policy Context

- 1.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on every local planning authority to 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. Such areas can then be designated as conservation areas.
- 1.2 The Act also states that local planning authorities should, from time to time, review their existing conservation areas and formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas.
- 1.3 Essentially, the added planning controls that conservation area designation brings include controls over demolition, strengthened controls over minor development and the protection of trees. Within the Tamworth Local Plan (2001-2011, adopted July 2006), policies ENV22 and ENV23 concern conservation areas.
- 1.4 The appraisal defines the special interest of the Amington Green Conservation Area and includes proposals for enhancement of its character and appearance. The more clearly the special interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded, the sounder will be the basis for development plan policies, development control decisions and proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character of an area. A detailed survey of the area was carried out by staff of CgMs Ltd in September and October 2007.
- 1.5 It is intended that this guidance will be useful for residents, developers and the general public in understanding the significance of the area and will help to ensure its special interest and character can be preserved and enhanced for future generations. This document follows English Heritage's 2006 guidance on the production of conservation area appraisals and is intended to:
  - Assist in defining what is of 'special' architectural or historic importance
  - Give recommendations on features and characteristics that should be protected

- Identify possible areas for future enhancement within the designated area
- Provide guidance on the form, style and location of future change and development within the designated area.

## 2.0 Overview of the Conservation Area

- 2.1 The set of plans in Appendix 2 aims to identify the elements which contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and also illustrate recommendations for alterations to the conservation area boundary and for additional designations.
- 2.2 Plan 1 shows the existing conservation area boundary and statutorily listed buildings (buildings identified by English Heritage as being of special architectural or historic interest). Plan 2 shows buildings recommended for inclusion on the local list, significant views, important trees, important open spaces, walls, railings or hedges of note, and 'enhancement' sites.
- 2.3 The local list consists of buildings that play a part in establishing the character of the area but fall short of meeting the current criteria for listing. However, as government guidance contained in *PPG 15- Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994) makes clear, there is a presumption against the demolition of such buildings, particularly where they make a 'positive' contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 2.4 'Important' trees are also identified. These are usually highly visible from public places and/or they contribute to the setting of a listed building, the street scene or a building of local note. Important open spaces are also marked on Plan 2, as these can play a significant role in the character of an area. Character is defined not just by buildings, walls and trees, but also by the spaces between them. These contribute to the setting of buildings. Open spaces allow views around the area and they are often an important element in telling the story of the historical development of a community.

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- 2.5 Important unlisted walls and other forms of boundary enclosure, such as railings or hedges, are recognised. These are usually built of local materials and help to define spaces and frame views. Significant views into, out of and around the proposed conservation area are also identified for it should be appreciated that a conservation area's character does not necessarily end with a line drawn on a map. Often the character is closely associated with attractive views and vistas out to other areas, sometimes via gaps between buildings, along streets or across open spaces. Views within an area such as that to a church, school or other landmark building can also be particularly valuable.

## **AMINGTON GREEN CONSERVATION AREA**

### **3.0 Introduction and General Character Summary**

- 3.1 The small Amington Green Conservation Area is located in Amington on the original village green, northeast of the urban sprawl of modern Amington, and 2 miles to the east of the town of Tamworth. The conservation area was designated in July 1985 and subsequently reviewed in September 1997, when it was considered that the original boundaries were still relevant and appropriate. The focus of the designated area is the Grade II listed St. Editha's Church, the Green, and surrounding buildings.
- 3.2 The Green is accessed off Tamworth Road and is bounded by the latter and the Coventry Canal to the north, housing on Dog Lane to the east, Amington School to the southeast, housing on Levett Road to the south, and housing on Repington Road to the west/southwest.
- 3.3 The area was once common land and formed the focus of the original village of Amington. Some of its semi-rural character has remained and while it no longer retains its importance as the centre of the village, and has lost its close connection to the nearby Coventry Canal, it is a significant reminder of Amington's past history.
- 3.4 The conservation area is characterised by its 'village' atmosphere, and by open space, greenery and mature trees, a rarity in modern Amington. This distinct character is very apparent when The Green is seen against the backdrop of the surrounding modern housing developments.

#### 4.0 Summary History of the Area

*Historic Ordnance Survey mapping is included at Appendix 1*

- 4.1 Amington, formerly a distinct village, is now a suburb of Tamworth. It is an ancient settlement, recorded in the Domesday Book as 'Ermendone'. Archaeological research in 1965, following the discovery of crop marks near Amington Old Hall, led to the discovery of the remains of a deserted medieval village.
- 4.2 In 1246 Amington and Tamworth were in the King's ancient demesne until its transfer to the Earl of Warwick. Hugh son of Richard of Hatton held the manor in the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The manor passed down through the family until through marriage it passed to the de Clinton family. It was the object of a series of settlements by members of the family during the next 200 years. In 1422 one third of the manor was conveyed to the Repington family. The whole manor was finally transferred to the Repington family in 1538 and was still in their hands in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The manor estate still exists north of Amington Green and is the subject of its own conservation area.
- 4.3 There has been a place of worship on The Green for hundreds of years. Early gravestones in the churchyard date to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The present church replaced the 1836 Chapel of Ease, which had originally been built to serve as the village school. The present parish church of St. Editha, funded by Charles H. W. Repington of Amington Hall, was erected in 1864 to the designs of G.E. Street. The east window of the Chapel of Ease was saved and placed in the new church over the west doorway. Today the church stands in the middle of a small green surrounded by several houses, mostly of 18<sup>th</sup>-century date.
- 4.4 The setting of Amington Green changed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century with the construction of the Coventry Canal which runs north of The Green. The canal, which runs for 38 miles from Coventry to Fradley Junction, north of Lichfield, was fully operational in 1789 and served as a main supply route for the transportation of coal. Originally The Green was much more open with direct views from the church and nearby houses to the canal. The railway arrived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, running east-west just beyond the canal and serving Tamworth Colliery to the east.

- 4.5 The 1883 Ordnance Survey (O.S.) map shows what is probably much closer to the original layout of what was then a small village. The section of 'The Green' that now runs in front of Nos. 1 and 2 was then nothing more than a path across the village green and No. 1 appears to have been a farmhouse adjoining a large farmyard surrounded by agricultural buildings to the southwest through which Levett Road and Repington Road North were built in the 1960s.
- 4.6 By the 1920s sand was being extracted from land south of Amington House and, by 1938, from land southwest of the house. The path across the green did not become a more formal road until the period between 1924 and 1938. During this period, Bypass Road (the extension of Tamworth Road to the southwest) had also been constructed, opening up the village to access from this direction and enabling new residential development. In the 1960s the farmyard was demolished to create the two new roads and the housing development here, and the farmhouse was subdivided to create three separate dwellings, Nos. 1-3. Since the 1970s, larger front gardens have been created for these properties which now extend to the road.
- 4.7 The village pound, in front of the garden to No. 12, is shown on all the historic maps. The vacant plot at the corner with Tamworth Road contained a building, possibly a small cottage, and an outbuilding, in 1883. The outbuilding was demolished, along with the truncation of land associated with Amington House, with the construction of Bypass Road in the 1930s, but the cottage remained until the 1960s; the plot of land has been vacant ever since and now provides an important area of open space at the 'entrance' to the conservation area.
- 4.8 Despite the additions to the original street pattern of the village, its original configuration around the church and green remains more-or-less intact.
- 4.9 The village, once part of Amington and Stonydelph civil parish became part of Tamworth Rural District in 1932 and then Tamworth Borough in 1965.
- 4.10 Residential development continued in the area into recent times. In the 1990s two developers built a 1000 home estate nearby on the village known as Amington Fields and, in 2006, Antler Homes built a 17 house estate named Ashby Grange off Tamworth Road, west of The Green.

## 5.0 Appraisal

### 5.1 Amington Green

#### General Character, Spaces, Views and Uses

- 5.1.1 The character of the conservation area is that of a semi-rural village focused around St. Editha's Church and the green adjoining it, with the green open spaces and attractive mature trees all adding to the discrete nature of the area. The Green has managed to cling onto this character despite surrounding modern developments.



**The Green retains its semi-rural character**

- 5.1.2 The churchyard is accessed via modest wooden gates from The Green and Tamworth Road. It has its own rather private character, linked to The Green by views through the gateways and to the tall trees. The sense of enclosure is created by the picket fence and mature holly boundary hedge which surrounds the churchyard. Early photographs clearly show that this boundary is an important historic feature long associated with The Green. The churchyard, well maintained with mown grass and an attractive grassed pathway, contains surprisingly few gravestones, although some may have been removed.



**The attractive grassed churchyard**

5.1.3 The narrow road known as The Green winds its way around the church linking up with Tamworth Road to either side. The grass of The Green, the mature overhanging trees and the lack of pavements along the eastern section, give the road a sylvan feel, interrupted only by residents' parked cars. The view north along the road east of the church, the road marked to the west by low, unobtrusive wooden posts, is terminated by a large two-storey 1930s house on Tamworth Road. The house, one of a line of such houses on the north side of Tamworth Road, although not unattractive, is a clear visual marker of the change of character between the conservation area and later surrounding developments.



**View out of the conservation area to Tamworth Road**

- 5.1.4 The numerous trees which surround the church frame attractive views within and across the conservation area. Views from the conservation area out are generally less appealing. Views south towards the later 20<sup>th</sup>-century brick bungalows on Levett Road also take in the small and shabby traffic island with its inappropriate large tiered black plastic planting container. Views from The Green west and northwest are more inviting and take in a bank of mature trees and one of Thomas Sheasby's 1785-90 Grade II listed canal bridges (Bridge 65; outside the conservation area).
- 5.1.5 The important properties surrounding the church, including Yew Tree House and Amington House, maintain the link back to the area's historic and affluent past. Amington House is a particularly elegant building, its setting enhanced by The Green and Church, and is an important indicator of past affluence, acting as a good landmark on the western side of the conservation area, its massive southern elevation announcing the change in architectural character from the later 20<sup>th</sup>-century housing on Repington Road North.
- 5.1.6 From Amington House 'The Green' extends northeast around the church. Walking along this stretch of road one experiences a more enclosed, semi-private feel, with houses set well back behind boundary walls, hedges and trees.

#### **Architectural Quality of Buildings and Building Materials/Contribution of Key Unlisted Buildings**

- 5.1.7 The conservation area is characterised by a range of architectural styles, from the grand brick-built Amington House, to smaller vernacular-style cottages, and the historic timber-framed Yew Tree House.
- 5.1.8 The conservation area is centred on St. Editha's Church (listed at Grade II), built in 1864 by G.E. Street. The rock-faced stone and ashlar church is an attractive landmark building, with strong features including double gables, lancet windows and east-facing rose window, and is prominent both from within the conservation area and from surrounding roads. It is orientated east-west and is surrounded by the green, leafy churchyard bounded by a thick holly hedge.



**G. E. Street's St Editha's Church**

5.1.9 The Grade II listed Amington House, built in c. 1770 with a mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century rear wing is the most noticeable building surrounding the Green and dominates the open aspect southwest of the church. It is an elegant three-storey Georgian red brick building with a neat central entrance with reeded pilasters, triglyph entablature and open pediment. The building commands a position on the road facing the church and is a prominent feature for people passing through the conservation area.



**The Grade II listed Amington House**

5.1.10 Yew Tree House (also listed at Grade II), formerly known as Priest's House, is an important survivor in the area, a late 16<sup>th</sup>-/early 17<sup>th</sup>-century lobby entrance timber-

framed building with 18<sup>th</sup>-century additions. The house, with jettied gable and decorative framing, sits back from the road surrounded by a landscaped garden. The low front boundary wall is an important historic feature defining the extent of the property.



**The historic timber-framed Yew Tree House**

- 5.1.11 A gravel access road runs down the side of Yew Tree House and leads to a 'courtyard' which serves the rear of Nos. 10 and 12. These probably 18<sup>th</sup>-century cottages are set well back from the road behind long front gardens and are most clearly seen from the yard. Despite uPVC windows to No. 10 (Cross Tree Cottage), the properties are well appointed and add to the mixed architectural character of the area. Three double garages in the yard, which serve the houses, have been thoughtfully designed so as not to detract from the character of the houses. From the yard the outbuildings and high wooden fence obscure public views to No. 8's rear garden, which occupies the southeastern extreme of the conservation area.



**Nos. 10 and 12 'The Green'**



**The Garages to the rear of Nos. 10 and 12**

5.1.12 Nos. 1, 2 and 3 on The Green/Levett Road are simple semi-detached two-storey dwellings, originally a single farmhouse, probably of 18<sup>th</sup>-century date, with painted render and plain slate roofs. The front gardens are well maintained and add to the area's 'church close' character. The modern iron railings and red brick piers of No. 3 on Levett Road are somewhat suburban and accord better with the modern developments on Levett Road. Despite various alterations, the former farmhouse is a reminder of the historic rural agricultural character of the village.



**The former farmhouse, Levett Road**

- 5.1.13 The houses built between Tamworth Road and the canal in the 1930s, immediately northeast of the conservation area, and the modern bungalow at No. 358 Tamworth Road clearly have a separate character and are quite rightly excluded from the designated area. A solitary row of terraced houses, built in 1890, is located on the Tamworth Road and, although they have more historic character than the later residential developments, they are not of the same character as the conservation area and are not part of the original village green that is the principal focus of the conservation area.

#### **Negative Features**

- 5.1.14 The low timber rails marking the green and surrounding the small roundabout are in a poor state of repair and provide a rather unattractive boundary line. Stone setts survive around the edge of the green, and these should certainly be maintained, but it is likely that the timber rail, or some sort of boundary, is considered necessary to prevent parking on the edge of The Green. If this is the case, a low boundary of this sort is preferable to anything more substantial or the introduction of unwanted signage.



**Boundary edges to The Green**

- 5.1.15 The tiered black plastic planter and brash municipal planting with begonias adorning the rather feeble roundabout is completely out of character with the conservation area. This incongruous feature also affects views west to Amington House, which detracts from its setting. A small tree would be preferable to the planter.



**The unsympathetic roundabout in need of redevelopment**

- 5.1.16 The concrete street-lighting pole and attached litter bin are both examples of inappropriate and dated street furniture which damage the character and appearance of the conservation area. A tatty white-painted metal 'No ball games' sign situated in the middle of The Green is inappropriate for the area and could be replaced by a wooden sign placed near the churchyard boundary.

### **General Condition and Capacity for Change**

- 5.1.17 The conservation area is generally in good order with well appointed properties and well maintained communal areas. The holly hedge surrounding the church could be tidied up to create a more attractive boundary and there is capacity for improvements to the small seating area on the green providing it is of appropriate scale and design.
- 5.1.18 The overgrown plot west of The Green and north of Amington House may have historical associations with Amington House but has been vacant since the 1960s. Its current overgrown status is not ideal but its open condition allows a view from just outside the conservation area towards the side of Amington House and its rather ramshackle-looking collection of outbuildings, and this view adds to the green and semi-rural character of the conservation area. It is desirable that this open space is retained as it now acts as an important marker of the boundary of the conservation area.
- 5.1.19 The existing boundary walls and hedges are an important characteristic of the conservation area, and should be maintained. An Article 4(2) direction may benefit the conservation area in helping to ensure that these features and original windows and doors (where these survive) are retained.

## **6.0 Proposed Boundary Amendments, Recommendations for Listing and Article 4 Directions**

- 6.1 No changes are proposed to the conservation area boundary. The boundary, centred on the church, the green and surrounding houses, is a distinct area which incorporates the whole of what remains of the original village and which is clearly differentiated from the surrounding modern developments.
- 6.2 Buildings recommended for inclusion on the local list:
- Nos. 1-3 The Green. While these buildings have been altered, they are important historically as they represent the original farmhouse in the village.
- 6.3 Under Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, a general planning permission is granted for a range of minor developments. These 'permitted development' rights are more restricted in conservation areas for certain types of development, including the addition of dormer windows, some types of cladding, the erection of satellite dishes fronting a highway, and the reduction in size of permitted extensions.
- 6.5 Articles 4(1) and 4(2) of the Order enable local planning authorities to make certain directions withdrawing permitted development rights. Article 4(1) directions apply to any type of land or building but need to be approved by the First Secretary of State. Article 4(2) directions may be used to withdraw permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development which materially affects aspects of the external appearance of dwelling houses in conservation areas. The removal or alteration of a particular type of architectural feature important to the character and appearance of the conservation area, such as distinctive windows, gates and boundary walls, can be specified in the direction.
- 6.6 Local authorities should notify local people and take account of public views before deciding whether to confirm an Article 4(2) direction.

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- 6.6 Article 4 directions applying to features like doors, windows, porches and roof coverings work best in areas of strongly-defined (and well-preserved) architectural character.
  - 6.7 In the Amington Green Conservation Area, it may be considered appropriate that an Article 4(2) direction is served on the whole area, in order to maintain the survival of original joinery and boundary walling, where this exists.

## 7.0 Monitoring and Revision

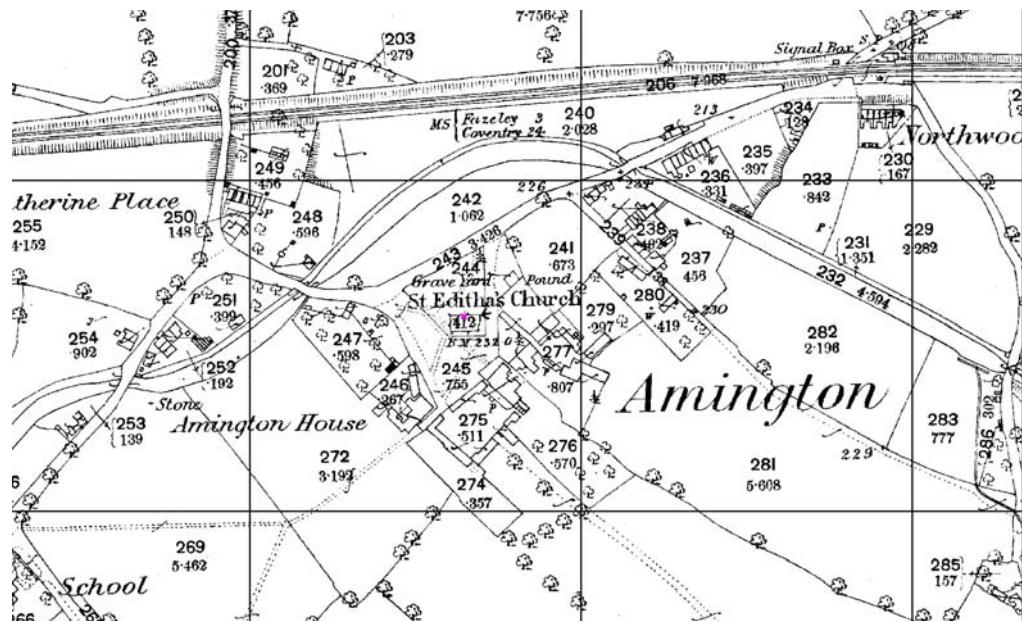
- 7.1 As recommended by English Heritage in its 2006 publication, *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas*, it is essential to monitor the conservation area and to review the published character appraisal on a regular basis.
- 7.2 Changes to the conservation area may occur through the implementation of schemes approved by the Council, such as new development or changes to the public realm, or through both permitted and unauthorised alterations. General deterioration or changes to the condition of the area's physical fabric may also occur over time.
- 7.3 A dated photographic record of the conservation area has been created during the production of this character appraisal. The main aim of this is to provide a baseline for measuring change in the appearance of the conservation area and for monitoring the physical condition of its buildings. The record can also be used as an aid to any enforcement action should unauthorised alterations be carried out. In order to take enforcement action on unlisted buildings the unauthorised alteration must be shown to have been carried out within the last four years, so for these purposes it is important to ensure that the photographic record is updated on a regular five-year cycle.
- 7.4 In the case of listed buildings too, where there is no time limit on when enforcement action can be taken (provided of course that the unauthorised works were undertaken after listing took place), regular updating of the photographic record is equally important, not just as a record of change but as possible evidence in enforcement or prosecution cases.
- 7.5 If appropriate, local community awareness of the conservation area may be maintained by engaging their assistance in the updating of the photographic record. This might be achieved through the use of volunteers from local historical or amenity societies or even groups of schoolchildren or students working on a street-by-street basis. Information could be stored on electronic 'pro formas' which show dated 'then and now' photographs to illustrate where change has occurred. These could be added to every five years with each phase of review.

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- 7.6 English Heritage (2006) recommends that a 'virtuous circle' of monitoring, review and action should be established in order to maintain a sustainable equilibrium. Ideally, a five-year cycle of review should be established. With the aid of an updated photographic record, a review of the conservation area in five years' time (2012) to establish what has changed (and why) since this character appraisal was produced will enable it to be updated.
- 7.7 Importantly, such a review will also allow an assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's current conservation area policy and a measurement of how successful the Council has been at implementing the recommendations for enhancement made in the character appraisal. The reasons for success or non-success can then be appraised and policies modified or specific actions proposed as appropriate. The rate and nature of change identified may also indicate whether it would be desirable to produce 'Design Guides' providing guidance on topics such as extensions and alterations to historic buildings, development proposals and shop front design.
- 7.8 The review may also lead to further alterations to the conservation area boundary, either to bring new areas into the conservation area or remove areas from it that no longer contribute to or reinforce its character and appearance.
- 7.9 The review may either result in a thorough overhaul and updating of the existing character appraisal and production of a new version, or could take the form of an addendum to the existing document, which focuses specifically on changes that have occurred over the last five years, what effect these changes have had on the character and appearance of the conservation area, and updated recommendations for enhancement.

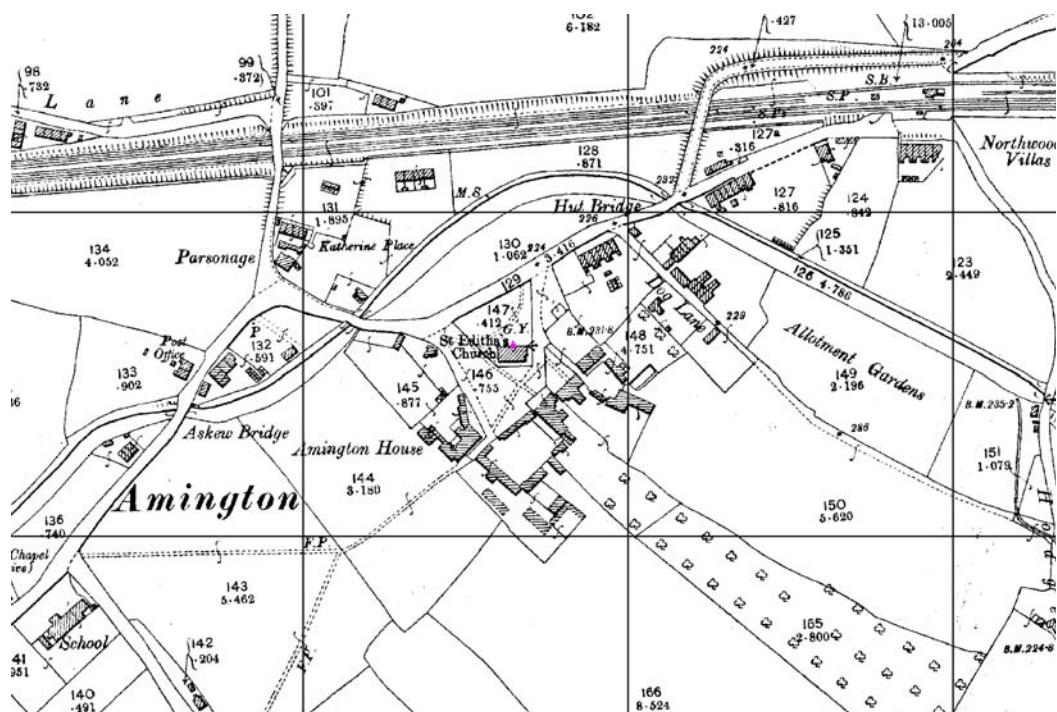
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**Appendix 1:**

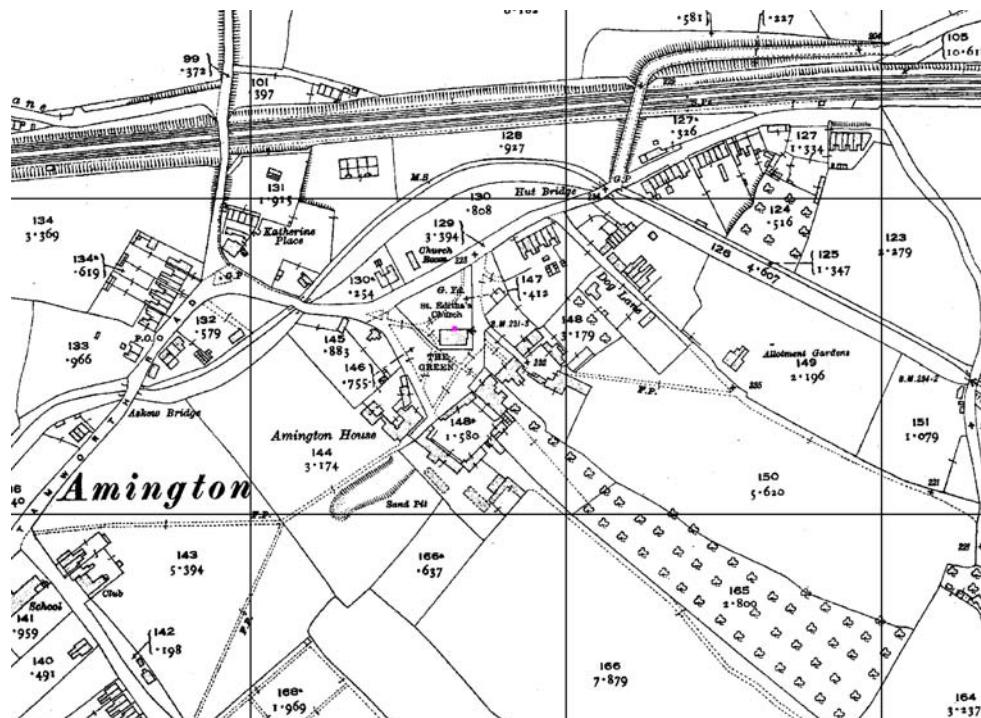
**Historic Ordnance Survey Mapping**



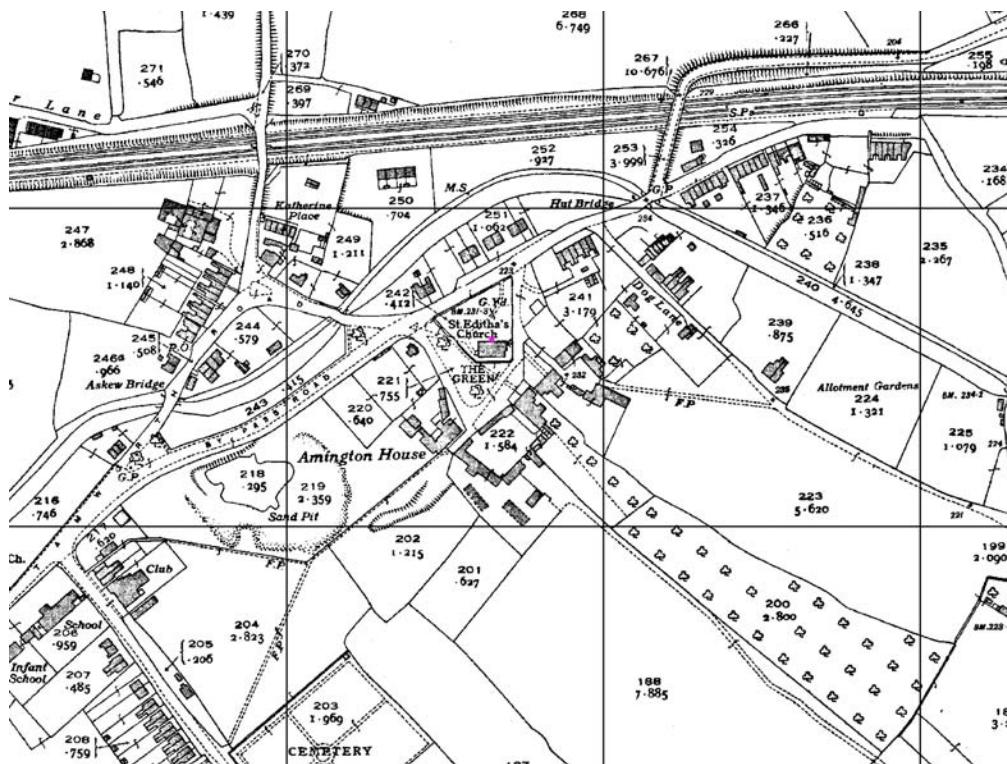
1883



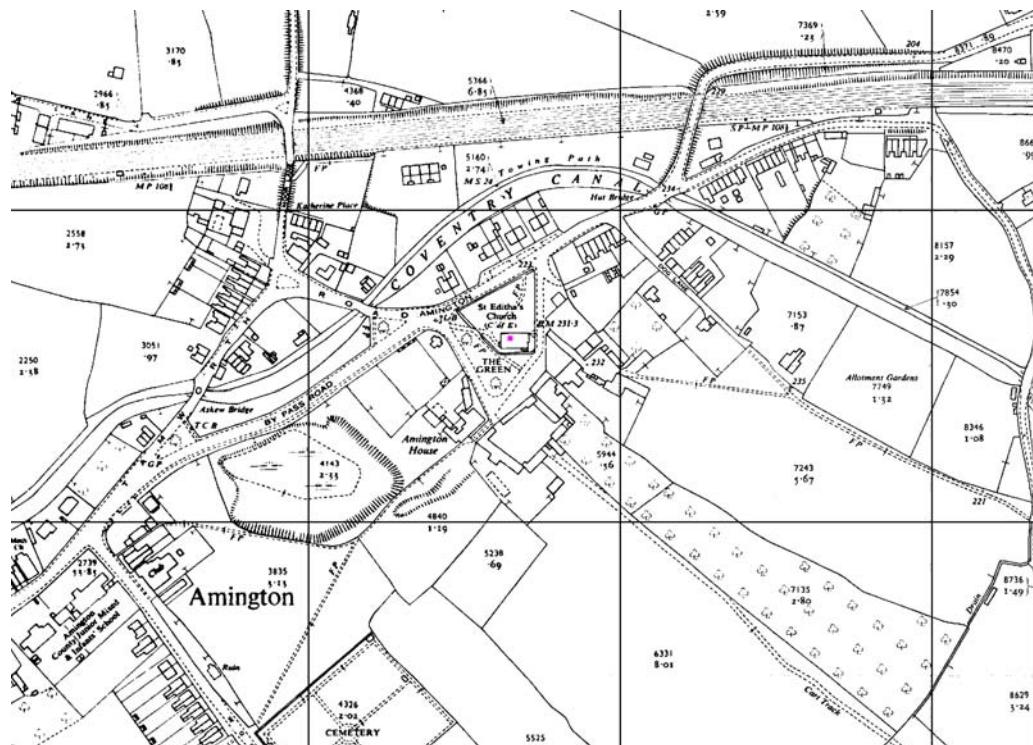
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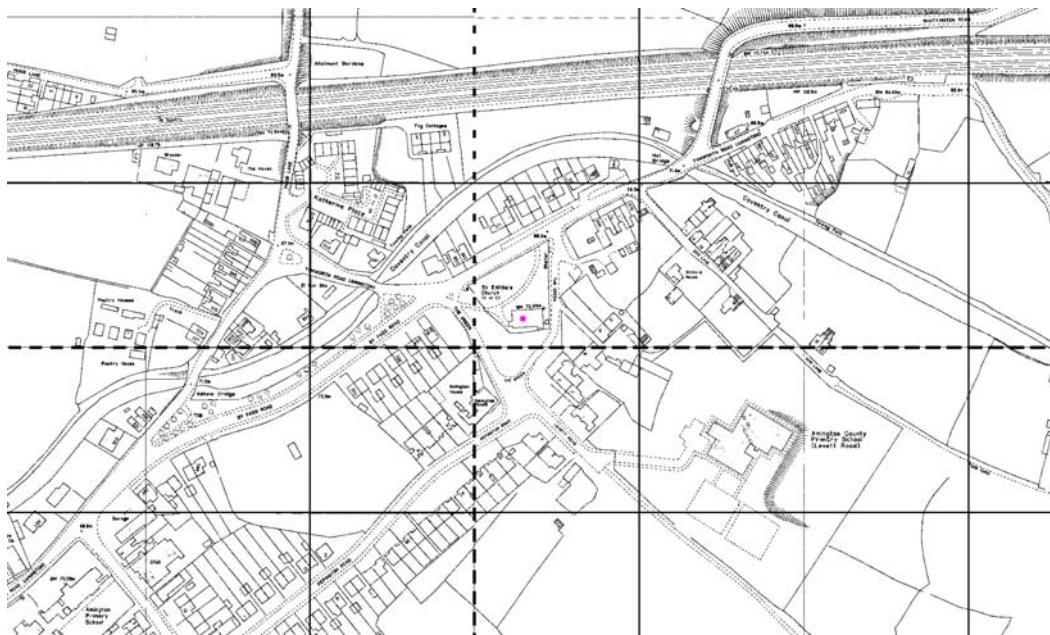
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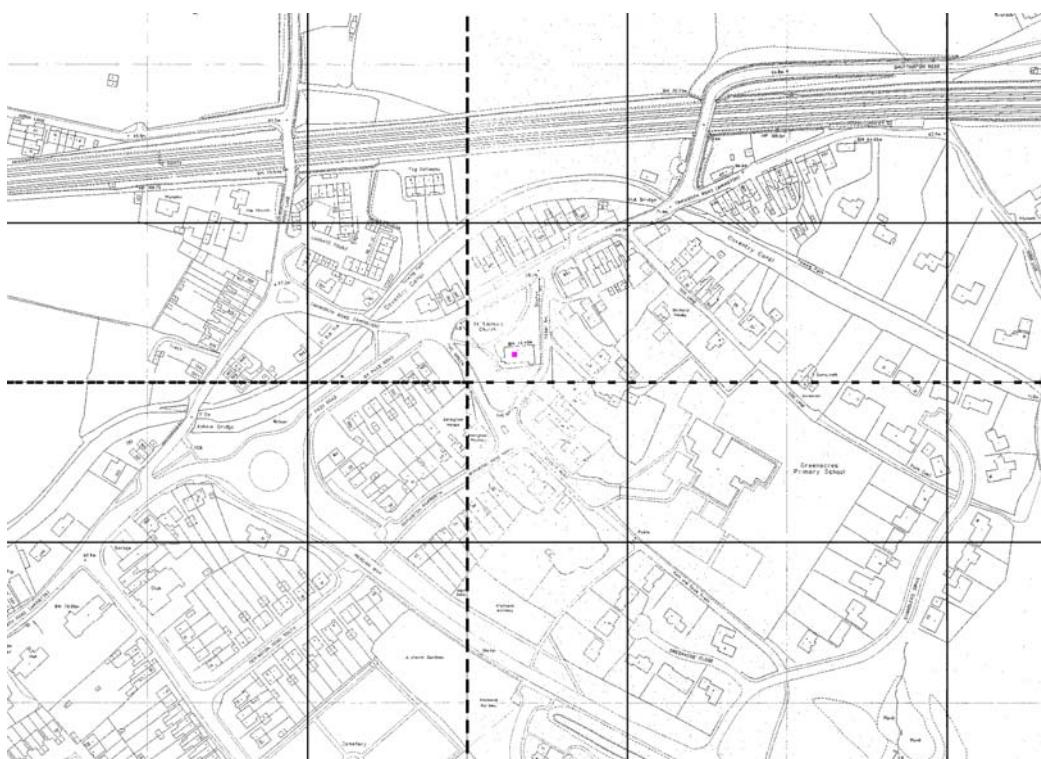
1938



1958



1974



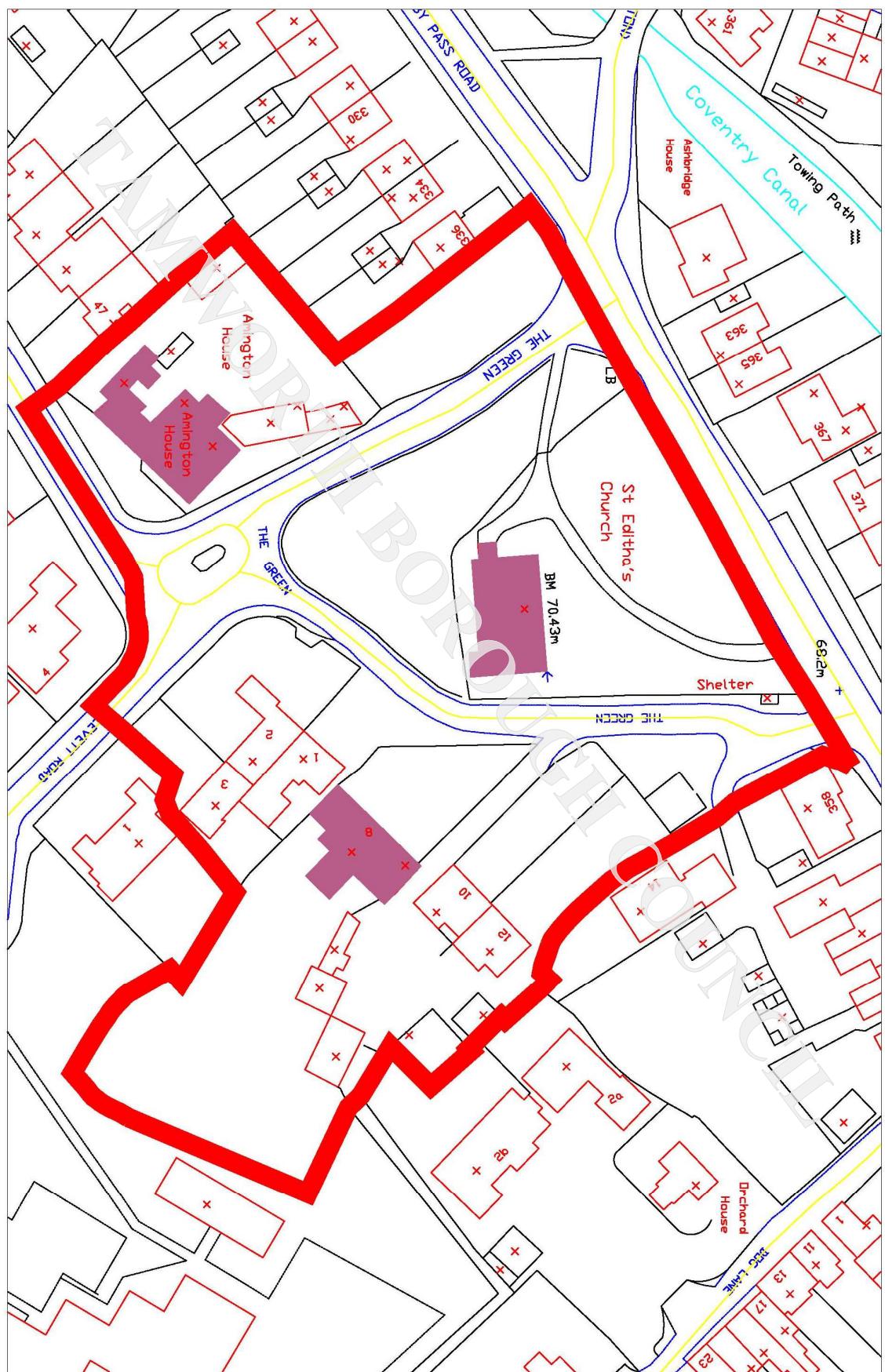
**1993**

**Appendix 2:**

Plan 1: Existing Designations

Plan 2: Proposals and Recommendations

AMINGTON GREEN CONSERVATION AREA; Existing Designations



Conservation Area Boundary

Listed Building

AMINGTON GREEN CONSERVATION AREA; Proposals and Recommendations

