

# Bradford Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



Client:  
Braintree District Council

Date:  
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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Summary

The Bradford Street Conservation Area is located to the north of Braintree town centre, following the line of Bradford Street as it slopes gently downhill before bridging the River Blackwater at its northern end. In contrast to the town centre, the Bradford Street area has maintained its strong linear formation and the dense occupation of buildings have allowed for little expansion, retaining a coherent, and largely unbroken, historic character.

Once a bustling high street with shops, inns and small workshops, centred around the woollen cloth trade, the area is now primarily residential. Many of the historic commercial premises have been adapted to form dwellings. The development of Bradford street stalled in the eighteenth to early nineteenth century, resulting in a character dominated by vernacular or Georgian buildings and few late twentieth century infill dwellings. The surviving built heritage of the late medieval-early post-medieval period is exceptional in Braintree, with Bradford Street being particularly noteworthy.

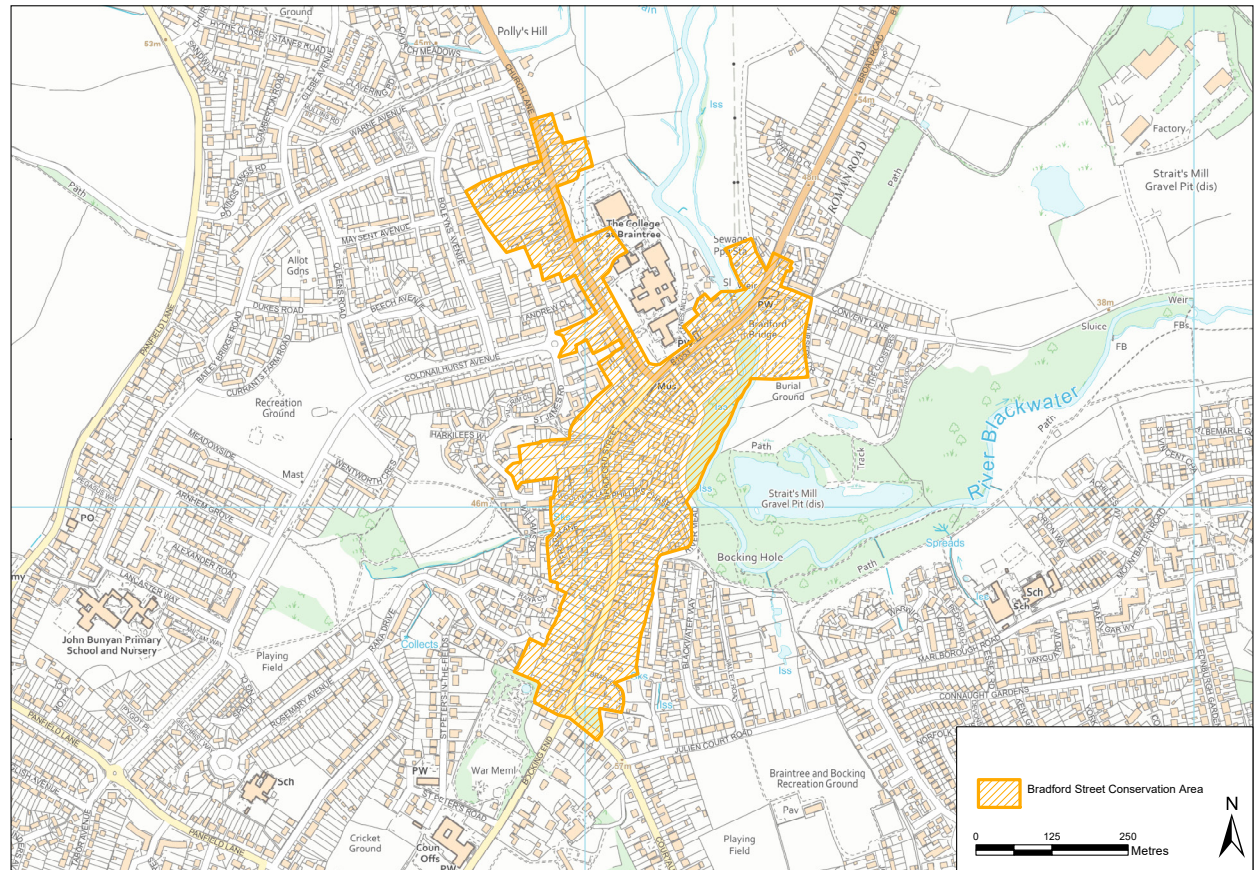


Figure 1 Map of the Bradford Street Conservation Area boundary



## 1.2 Conserving Braintree's Heritage

Braintree Conservation Area was designated on the 19th June 1969. This boundary included the town centre, extending south along London Road and north along Bradford Street, extending upwards to include the southernmost section on Broad Road.

No Conservation Area Appraisal document has been produced since the designation of the area; the boundary of the Conservation Area was reassessed in 1979 but no details of any appraisal remain. Braintree District Council appointed Place Services to complete the first appraisal document for the Conservation Area, and reassess its boundary and significance.

As part of the initial assessment of the 1969 Braintree Conservation Area boundary, it became clear that the Conservation Area had two very distinct areas which were worthy of individual Conservation Area status: the Town Centre and the northern part of the town, Bradford Street.

The proposal to divide the former Braintree Town Centre Conservation Area into two separate designated areas was agreed in principal by Braintree District Council in August 2020. The contrast in character and historic development between the town centre and the wealth of historic buildings along Bradford Street means that the Bradford Street area is of sufficient historic and architectural special interest for Conservation Area designation in its own right.

This document forms the appraisal for the new Bradford Street Conservation Area, a distinct and compact conservation area which has a linear plan form, following the line of Bradford Street.

The document is provided as baseline information for applicants to consider when designing or planning new development in Braintree.

This report provides an assessment of the historic development and character of Bradford Street and outlines its special interest. The appraisal will also consider the significance of heritage assets and the contribution that these, along with their setting, make to the character of the area. The understanding of significance will be used to assess the susceptibility of the Character Areas to change, highlighting key assets of importance.

This assessment will consider how Bradford Street Conservation Area developed, their building styles, forms, materials, scale, density, roads, footpaths, alleys, streetscapes, open spaces, views, landscape, landmarks, and topography. These qualities can be used to assess the key characteristics of each area, highlighting potential impacts future developments may have upon the significance of heritage assets and the overall character of Bradford Street. This assessment is based on information derived from documentary research and an analysis of the individual character areas.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) highlights good design as one of twelve core principals of sustainable development. Sustainable development relies on sympathetic design, achieved through an understanding of context, the immediate and larger character of the area in which new development is sited.

This assessment follows best practice guidance, including Historic England's revised Historic England Advice Note 1 for Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2019) and The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017).

### 1.3 Purpose of Appraisal

This assessment will consider how the character of the Bradford Street Conservation Area came to develop, the forms of buildings, townscape, landmarks, topography and other character defining features of this area. These qualities can be used to assess the area's key characteristics, highlighting potential impact future change and development may have upon the significance of heritage assets and the character of Bradford Street and Church Street. The Conservation Area is relatively compact and well defined, and while there are slight changes in built form from one part to another, the historic special interest, character and architectural qualities are consistent throughout. Therefore, it has not been necessary to subdivide the Conservation Area into separate character areas

The appraisal will describe and record the Bradford Street Conservation Area, defining its significance and the elements that contribute to that significance. This includes the designated and non-designated heritage assets (listed buildings and unlisted buildings) that make a positive contribution to special interest of the Conservation Area.

This assessment is based on information derived from documentary research and analysis of the individual character areas. The Appraisal document should be used as a baseline to inform future development and change with regard to the sensitivities of the Historic Environment and its unique character.

It is expected that applications for planning permission will also consult and follow the best practice guidance outlined in the bibliography. Applications that demonstrate an understanding of the character of a Conservation Area are more likely to produce good design and good outcomes.



Figure 2 Bradford Street, 1900. The old Court House is on the centre left (© The Francis Frith Collection)



## 1.4 Planning Policy Context

The legislative framework for conservation and enhancement of conservation areas and listed buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (HMSO 1990).

In particular Section 69 of this act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate areas which they consider to be of architectural and historic interest as Conservation Areas, and Section 72 requires that special attention should be paid to ensuring that the character and appearance of these areas is preserved or enhanced.

Section 71 also requires the Local Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposal for the preservation and enhancement of these areas. National planning policy in relation to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets is outlined in Part 16 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework, the NPPF (February 2021).

Bradford Street Conservation Area, which is the subject of this appraisal, is located within the area covered by Braintree District Council. Local planning policy is set out in the Braintree Development Plan. The Braintree Local Plan 2033 is located within the area covered by Braintree District Council. Local planning policy is set out in the Braintree Development Plan. The Braintree Local Plan 2033 is in two parts: **Part 1** which contains strategic policies also covering Colchester City and Tendring Councils and **Part 2** which relates to Braintree District only.

The New Local Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in October 2017 and adopted by the Council in July 2022.

### Relevant Policies within the Braintree District Local Plan are:

- SP 7 Place Shaping Principles
- LPP 52 – Layout and design of development
- LPP 53 – Conservation Areas
- LPP 54 - Demolition in Conservation Areas
- LPP 55 – Shop fronts, fascias and signs in Conservation Areas
- LPP 56 – Illuminated signs in Conservation Areas
- LPP 57 – Heritage Assets and their setting
- LPP 58 – Demolition of Listed Buildings or structures
- LPP 63 – Archaeological Evaluation Excavation and Recording
- LPP 62 – Cemeteries and churchyards
- LPP 65 – Tree protection

The latest policy position and Development Plan Documents can be found in the Planning Policy section of the Council's website: <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/planning-building-control>.

## 2. Bradford Street Conservation Area

### 2.1 Context and General Character

The Bradford Street Conservation Area is located to the north of Braintree Town Centre. Braintree Town developed around its central marketplace, while Bradford Street formed as a ribbon development along the northern route from Braintree towards Halstead. The road runs north-south with a bend at its centre, sloping downwards before it crosses the River Blackwater at its northern end.

The development of Bradford Street began as a result of the wealth generated by the medieval wool trade. The street has many surviving timber-framed dwellings built by those who profited from the trade, along with former inns, shops and small commercial and manufacturing premises. However, development stalled somewhat in the post medieval period, though many timber-framed buildings were 'gentrified' in the Georgian era, with the addition of classical facades.

Although it was a busy High Street until the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Bradford Street today is primarily residential. Many buildings that were once shops and inns are now converted to domestic use. Indications of the area's once commercial prominence is still legible, through the retention of bay windows and shop fronts, however the street is a distinct contrast from the commercial core of Braintree town centre.

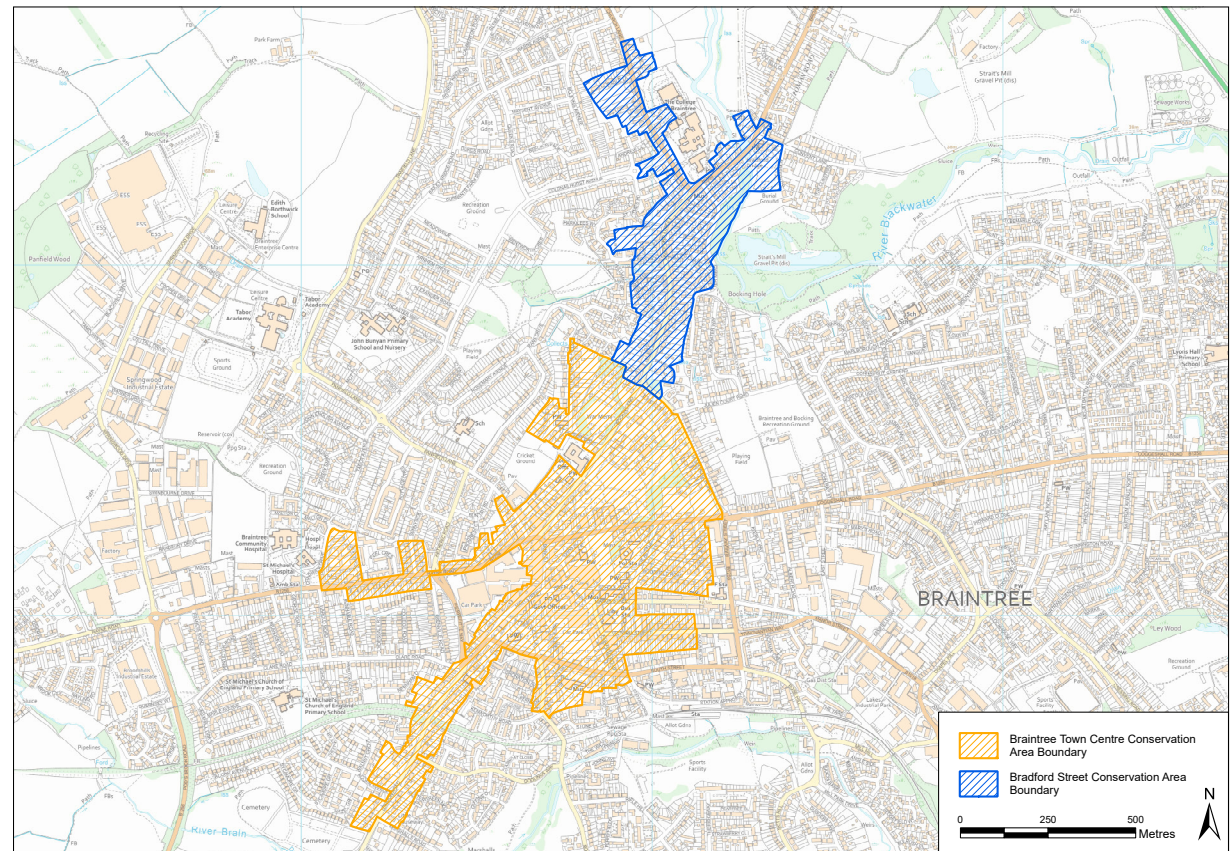


Figure 3 The Bradford Street Conservation Area (blue) shown in relationship to the Town Centre Conservation Area (orange)



## 2.2 Origin and Evolution

The following section provides an overview of the history of Bradford Street and the surrounding settlement.

### Prehistory (500000 BC – 43AD)

The Historic Environment Record indicates human occupation in the Braintree area from the Bronze and Iron Ages, with settlements at what is now the lower part of the town, near the River Brain. While there is evidence for prehistoric activity in and around Braintree, there is little prehistoric evidence yet found within the Bradford Street Conservation Area.

### Roman (43 – 410AD)

A small Roman town developed during this period which was confined within a triangular area between the main Roman roads of Stane Street (Rayne Road) and the Long Melford to Chelmsford route (London Road). Bradford Street follows part of this Roman road between Chelmsford and Long Melford. Roman funerary traditions dictated that cemeteries were located outside of settlement boundaries and a Roman Cremation vessel was found in a deep soakaway pit in the grounds of the former Kings Head Public House in Bradford Street. This suggests that Bradford Street was not occupied during the Roman period but lay outside of the settlement. The Roman town itself appears to have had two phases of development. The first century town was concentrated in the area of the modern Pierrefitte Way, with perhaps deliberate planning in the initial layout of the town. In the second and third centuries the town expanded into the Rayne Road and George Yard area, with a second phase of road building, truncating the original layout.



Figure 4 Chapman and Andre Map of Essex 1777, showing Braintree and Bradford Street, which is labelled as 'Bock-ing Street'



Figure 5 A fresco on the wall of the Council Chamber of Braintree Town Hall by Maurice Greiffenhagen, depicting King John granting Braintree a charter authorising a weekly market and an October fair. (Permission kindly given by Braintree District Museum Trust BDM 2005.34.3)

### Early Medieval (410-1066)

Evidence of Saxon occupation in Braintree has been recovered from the area to the south-west of the town, typically avoiding the reoccupation of the earlier abandoned Roman sites. St Michael's Church, situated in this part of Braintree, may have had a Saxon predecessor. In the late tenth century Braintree and Bocking formed part of the estates of the Saxon Thegn, Aetheric, who gifted his lands at Braintree and Bocking to the Bishops of London and Canterbury. The association between land at Bocking and Canterbury Cathedral lasted for many centuries.

### Medieval (1066 – 1540)

In 1199 King John granted Braintree a charter to hold a weekly market. Prior to Braintree being constituted a market-town, it was a hamlet within the hinterland of Rayne and the Parish itself was called Great Rayne. Bradford Street derives its name from the de Bradford Family, who held a manor to the east and whose name may have derived from the 'broad ford' over the River Blackwater at the north end of Bradford Street. A second manor, the Fryers, was centred on the area now occupied by the Old Court Hotel. The earliest known documented evidence of Bradford Street is found in records held at Canterbury, dating to the late fourteenth century.

Henry de Eastry, the Prior of Canterbury Cathedral, is recorded as establishing a Fulling Mill in 1303 in the location of the existing mill at the northern end of Bradford Street. The area had become one of the leading manufacturing centres of wool cloth, specialising in the production of lightweight weaves called Bays and heavier Says weaves.

Braintree was on the medieval pilgrim route between Bury St. Edmunds, Walsingham London and Canterbury. Inns for pilgrims were built in Braintree including the Hospital Chapel of St James', the site of which is believed to be near the former Six Bells on Bradford Street. As with many towns in East Anglia, great wealth was generated from the trade in selling and processing local sheep's wool. A number of Bradford Street's buildings from this period survive, though with later additions. Between Friars Lane and Woolpack Lane is a group of buildings, which include a wool hall. Number 75 Bradford Street is also thought to have a first-floor meeting room where wool was traded in the medieval period.

#### Post Medieval (1540 – 1901)

Protestant Flemish weavers arrived in the Braintree Area during the Tudor period and there remained a Flemish influence on the fortunes of Bradford Street for centuries to come. The wealthier clothiers of Braintree bought property in Bradford Street and often built tenement cottages in their back gardens. There were two periods that generated major wealth, resulting in greater investment in property: the first was in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, and the second in the eighteenth century. It is within these timeframes that many of the historic buildings in Bradford Street were built or re-fronted. However, the wool trade collapsed in Bocking at the end of the eighteenth century and thus so did the investment in property.

This collapse is evident in the number of Georgian buildings present in the street which have remained relatively untouched during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During the nineteenth century Braintree turned its manufacturing skills to processing silk, with the Courtauld and Warner families being prominent in this area of commerce, building large mills in the town centre. The low wages paid to workers during the Industrial Revolution may have prevented further investment in developing the dwellings on Bradford Street, with the result that its ancient buildings



Figure 6 Canes Mill, 1900 (© The Francis Frith Collection)



Figure 7 9 Bradford Street c.1950 taken looking north opposite the entrance to Woolpack Lane (© The Francis Frith Collection)



Figure 8 The Ordnance Survey Map surveyed between 1875 to 1876, published 1881



Figure 9 The Ordnance Survey Map, 1922

were preserved. Yet the market and retail trade of Braintree continued to grow and the introduction of the railway resulted in the establishment of engineering firms, such as Crittall Windows, Lake & Elliot and Bradbury's.

Braintree town centre developed during this new commercial era and has distinct character areas as a result. In contrast, the stalled development of Bradford Street in the eighteenth/early nineteenth century resulted in a character dominated by timber-framed vernacular or Georgian neo-classical buildings, with limited later alterations such as shop windows and a few late nineteenth and twentieth century infill dwellings. Architecturally, Bradford Street is thus more coherent than the rest of Braintree, owing to the dominance of vernacular buildings, render and painted facades and a consistent limited material palette.

In addition, the separation of Bocking and Bradford Street from the railway meant that the influence of the Victorian industrialisation of Braintree never spread to Bradford Street. Forges and large silk throwing mills were located in the centre of Braintree and Bradford Street's tightly packed building grain allowed for little expansion, meaning that the area has retained its strong linear formation.

#### Modern (1901 – present)

In the first half of the twentieth century Bradford Street became increasingly overlooked and forgotten, in terms of change and development. By the 1930s a number of the street's dilapidated buildings were considered to be hazardous and subsequently demolished, despite being included in the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments Survey of 1913.

The destruction of buildings on Bradford Street was narrowly avoided towards the end of the Second World war, when two American bombers collided over Braintree.



Figure 10 The Convent, 1900 (© The Francis Frith)



Figure 11 The view north, midway along Bradford Street c 1902 (©The Francis Frith Collection)



Figure 12 Braintree College in 1955 (© The Francis Frith Collection)



Figure 13 The wreckage of the B17 bomber, number 44-8198, near Bradford Street, 1945

The B-17 'Flying Fortresses' were on a sightseeing trip to Germany two days after VE Day when they collided on 10 May 1945, due to turbulence. The less severely damaged plane limped back to its base, while the tail of the other bomber had been severed from the main fuselage during the collision. The two parts of the plane crashed to the ground and the crew of 11 were all killed. The tail, with the rear gunner inside landed in a field at the end of Woolpack Lane, while the fuselage fell near to the Franciscan convent, at the north end of Bradford Street. By chance the buildings of Bradford Street were undamaged. A memorial to those killed was unveiled at Rivermead in 2015.

It was not until the mid to later decades of the twentieth century that the value of Bradford Street's historic buildings and unique character was understood and appreciated. Change came after the Second World War when Braintree College was built as an independent college to the north-west of Bradford Street in the late 1950s, on land belonging to Boleyn's Farm. The college merged with the Colchester Institute in 2010 and reduced in scale; the eastern portion of the college site is currently under redevelopment.

Although it was a busy High Street up until the nineteenth/early twentieth century, the buildings on Bradford Street have been largely converted to residential use. Adapted houses that were once shops and inns are now valued as exceptional historic dwellings. Hints of the area's historic commercial prominence remain, through the retention of bay windows and shop fronts, however the street's character is distinctly different to the commercial core of Braintree town centre. In the late twentieth century areas behind the buildings fronting Bradford Street were developed for new housing. Some of these cul-de-sacs and housing estates have been designed to have minimal impact upon Bradford Street's appearance. The River Mead area between Bradford Street and the River Blackwater was developed with housing in the late 1990s with the development receiving awards



for ensuring the design and feel was in keeping with the historic Bradford Street.

### 2.3 Revisions to the Boundary

The existing Conservation Area boundary around Bradford Street encompassed the buildings fronting the main thoroughfare, their rear garden areas and the alleys that run from the main street. Although it was a busy commercial High Street up until the early twentieth century, Bradford Street today is primarily residential. Clear visible evidence of the area's historic commercial nature remains, although this typologically contrasts with the commercial core of Braintree Town Centre.

As part of this review, the boundary for the former Braintree Town Centre and Bradford Street Conservation Area has been revised and the former Conservation Area divided into two separately designated areas. This reflects changing methodologies of good practice and provides a clearer strategy which acknowledges the uniqueness of Bradford Street's built environment. In terms of conservation area management, the separate designation for Bradford Street will encourage new development that complements the established grain, density, settlement pattern and character, unique to Bradford Street and Church Lane while making a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area.

#### Boundary Revision Area A

This area is the largest extension and is situated to the north-west of the Conservation Area, along Church Lane. The inclusion takes in the buildings of the historic farmstead of Boleyn's farm, on the north-eastern side of Church Lane. In addition, the eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings on the western side of Church Lane are worthy of inclusion. The extension incorporates seven designated heritage assets within the

Conservation Area in the form of five Grade II Listed buildings and two Grade II\* Listed buildings. A pair of semi-detached dwellings on Church Street, numbers 13 and 15, which feature decorative timber bargeboards, strong gables to the street front and decorative render are also now included within the conservation area.

Due to the less dense and compact development of Church Lane, there has been some infill development in the twentieth century. The front garden areas of a group of late twentieth century dwellings on Church Street (numbers 17 to 25) are also included in the revised boundary, to the north of the junction of Church Lane and Coldnailhurst Avenue. Nos 17-25 were built in the later 1960s, No 17 dates from 1966. The buildings themselves are of limited architectural interest, but their green hedged property boundaries enhance the character of the Conservation Area. In addition, the grass verges and mature trees at the junction of Church Lane and Coldnailhurst Avenue provide open green space which enhances the Conservation Area's character and these too are included within the boundary.

The majority of the Colchester Institute site is not considered of sufficient interest to warrant inclusion. However, the brick-built boundary wall of the college site pre-dates its foundation and is likely to be nineteenth to early twentieth century in date. The recently approved application for the redevelopment of the Colchester Institute site includes the demolition of the wall and the widening of the footpath (19/01743/FUL). The wall is to be rebuilt, matching the existing wall and set back from its former position. The green space containing mature trees immediately behind and adjacent to the wall will also be retained as a public space. If appropriately built, the new wall should continue to make a positive contribution to the character of the area and form a link between this part of Bradford Street and the historic buildings on Church Lane and its inclusion within the Conservation Area boundary is recommended. The public space and mature trees behind the wall also make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area as part of its setting.

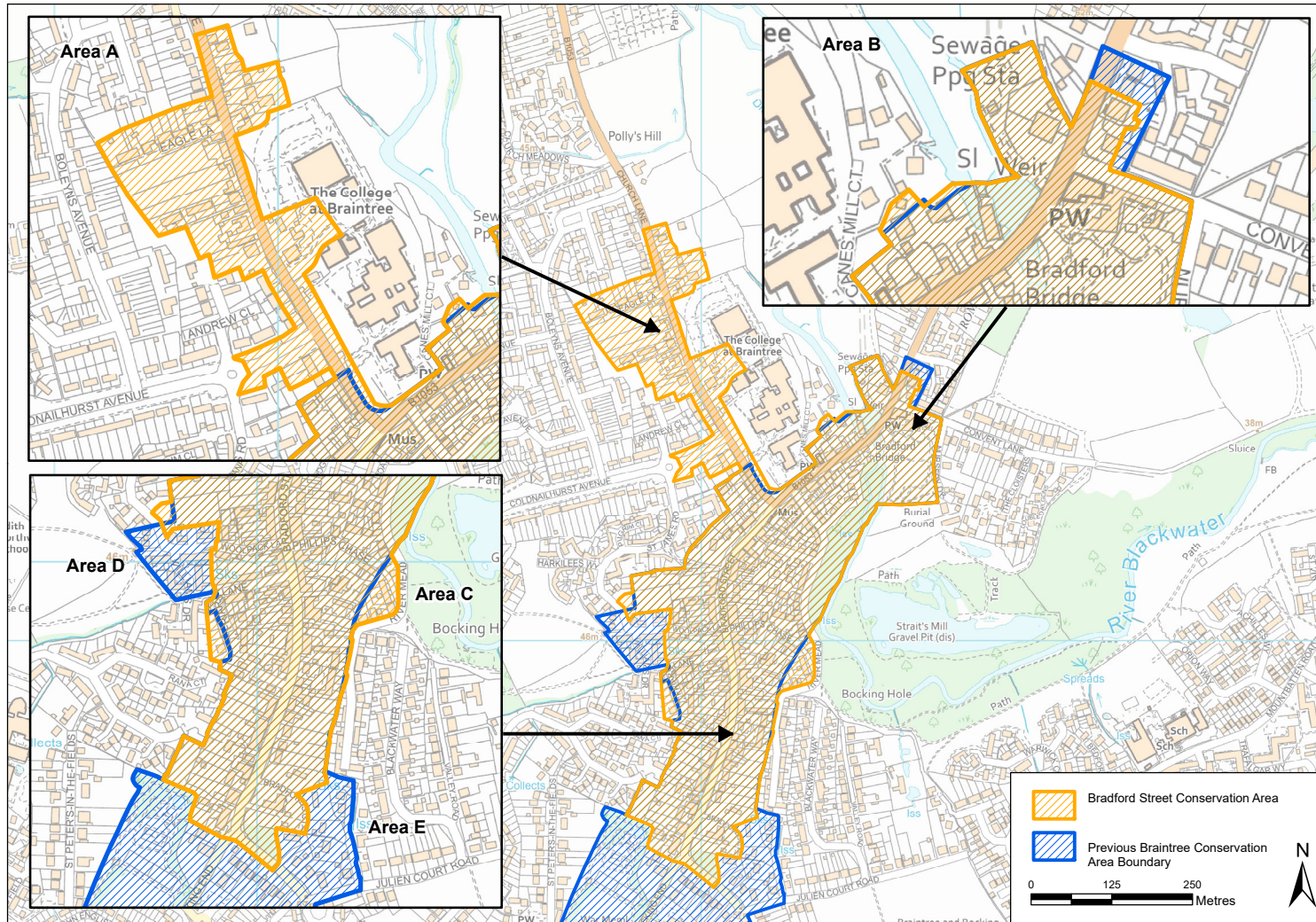


Figure 14 Map showing the changes to the Conservation Area boundary



### Boundary Revision Area B

This area is at the northern end of the Conservation Area where there has been some modern housing developed in recent years. Two newly built houses have been excluded from the Conservation Area, whilst retaining the two nineteenth-century, mock Tudor dwellings at the corner of Broad Road and Convent Lane. The two newly built houses have high quality detailing though they lack historic interest. By their positioning outside of the boundary, they would have a contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area. In addition, the boundary has been revised around the small cul-de-sac development at the northern end of Bradford Street, to the west of the Grade II\* Listed Bradford Mill. The previous boundary cut through newly built dwellings, so the repositioned boundary respects the existing boundary plots.

### Boundary Revision Area C

A small extension to the boundary has been made to include part of the River Mead development. The area was developed with housing in the late 1990s and received design awards for its response to the historic character of Bradford Street. The small area added to the Conservation Area is linked to Bradford Street by Philips Close, which corresponds to a former field or property boundary visible on late nineteenth-century mapping. There are visual corridors within this area, where the rear aspect of buildings and roofs of historic properties fronting Bradford street can be perceived and the sympathetic building forms and materials of the new development can be appreciated

### Boundary Revision Area D



Figure 15 The brick wall, foliage and mature trees at the boundary of the former Braintree Campus of the Colchester Institute. The wall is to be rebuilt as part of application 19/01743/FUL, and the new wall is recommended for inclusion within the Conservation Area boundary



Figure 16 Two rendered, new build dwellings recommended for exclusion in Area B (left hand side of image)



Figure 17, The Folly, St James' Road, now within the boundary.



Figure 18 56 Church Lane, one of the designated heritage assets within Area A now within the Conservation Area

This area is on the western edge of the Conservation Area, where modern development occurred during the late twentieth century. A small open green space on St James Road has been included within the boundary, along with the brick Folly, on the rear wall of the walled garden and the curtilage of the Grade II Listed house at 87 Bradford Street. The brick folly is of historic interest and is curtilage listed, while the green space around the building provides an enhancement to the Conservation Area. To the south of this green space, the area of modern housing centred on Williams Drive has been excluded as it lacks special architectural interest.

An adjustment to the boundary has also occurred at Gresham Place, at the western end of Friars Lane on its southern side, where the boundary currently runs through the centre of a terraced group of dwellings. The adjustment is proposed to respect the existing boundary plots and include the dwellings. They are of recent construction, but they reflect and respond to the character of the Conservation area in terms of design and materials

### Boundary Revision Area E

The division between the Braintree Town Centre Conservation Area and Bradford Street Conservation Area is located at the junction of Bradford Street, Bocking End and Courtauld Road. A group of late twentieth century dwellings, built within the former grounds of the Grade II Listed Little Bradfords, have been excluded from both Conservation Areas. Located on the corner of Bradford Street and Courtauld Road, the new dwellings are within the setting of the Listed building but they lack the special historic interest necessary for Conservation Area designation.



## **2.4 Designated Heritage Assets**

There are sixty-two listed buildings within the Conservation Area boundary. Of these, forty-nine are Grade II listed and thirteen are Grade II\* listed, there are no Grade I Listed buildings and no Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The high density of listed buildings within the Bradford Street Conservation Area is testament to the level of survival of historically significant buildings. All of the listed buildings and structures can be considered as key buildings within the Conservation Area which contribute to Bradford Street's overall significance and character. The designated heritage assets are listed within appendix 5.1 Listed Buildings.

## **2.5 Non-Designated Heritage Assets**

Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of heritage value and significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.

Non-designated heritage assets can be identified during the planning process and through conservation area appraisals and reviews. The local authority may also compile a local list of buildings of heritage value. Braintree has a local list of roughly seventy heritage assets across the District, adopted by the planning committee in 2016 and 2017. Future work to assess the suitability of buildings for local listing would inevitably result in a more extensive list. Only one building in Bradford Street, Queens Meadow, has been included on the current local list.

Several unlisted buildings have been identified during this appraisal as making a beneficial contribution to the Conservation Area's character and can be considered to be non-designated heritage assets. This list is not exhaustive and other non-

designated heritage assets can be identified in future assessments and during the processing of planning applications. Key non-designated heritage assets or unlisted buildings within the Bradford Street Conservation Area are described in section 3.5.

Key non-designated heritage assets or unlisted buildings within the Bradford Street Conservation Area are described in section 3.5.

## **2.6 Heritage at Risk**

At present there are no listed buildings that are severely neglected or at serious risk of decay due to dereliction. None of Bradford Street's Listed buildings are currently included on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register.

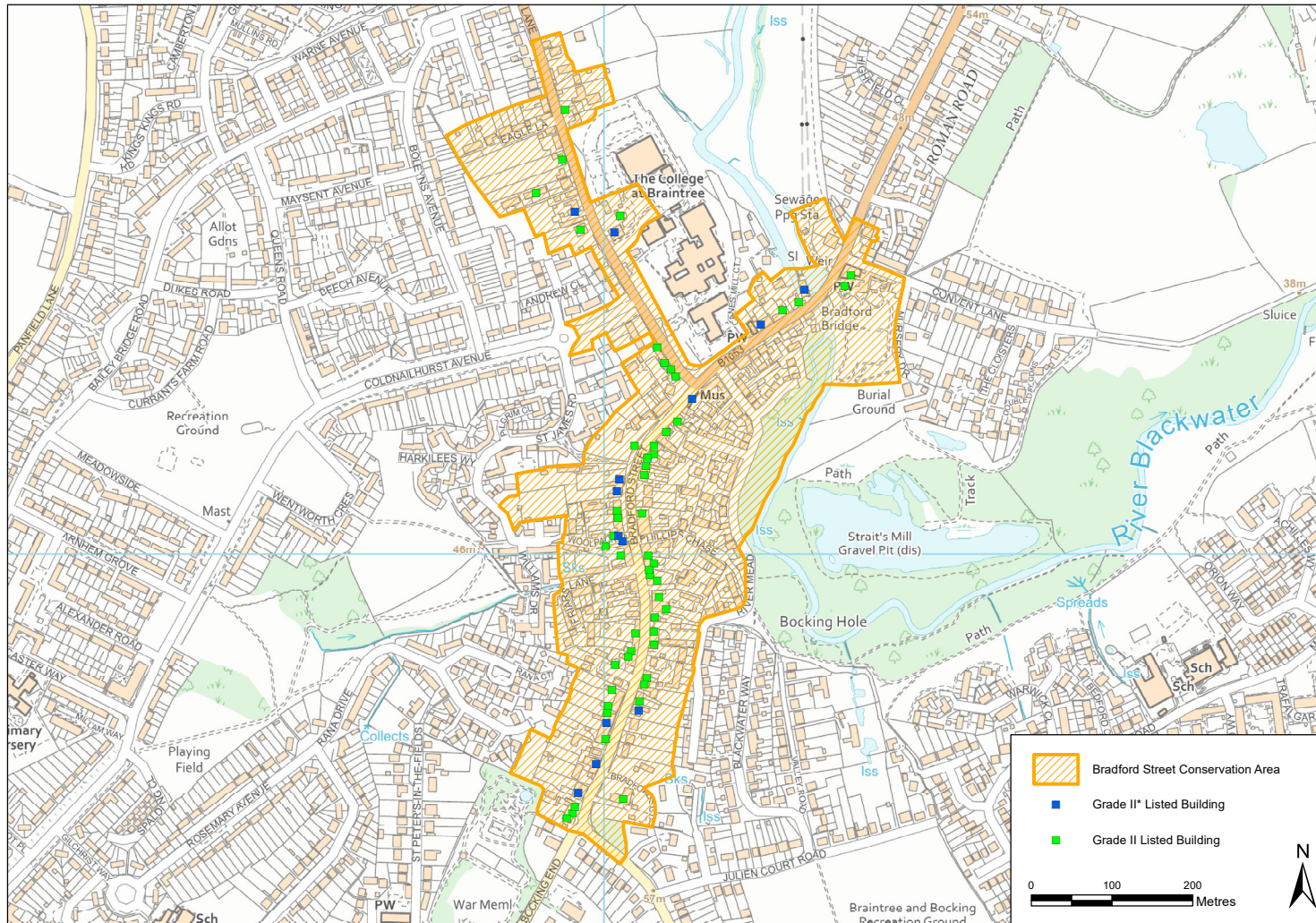


Figure 19 Map showing the listed buildings within Bradford Street Conservation Area

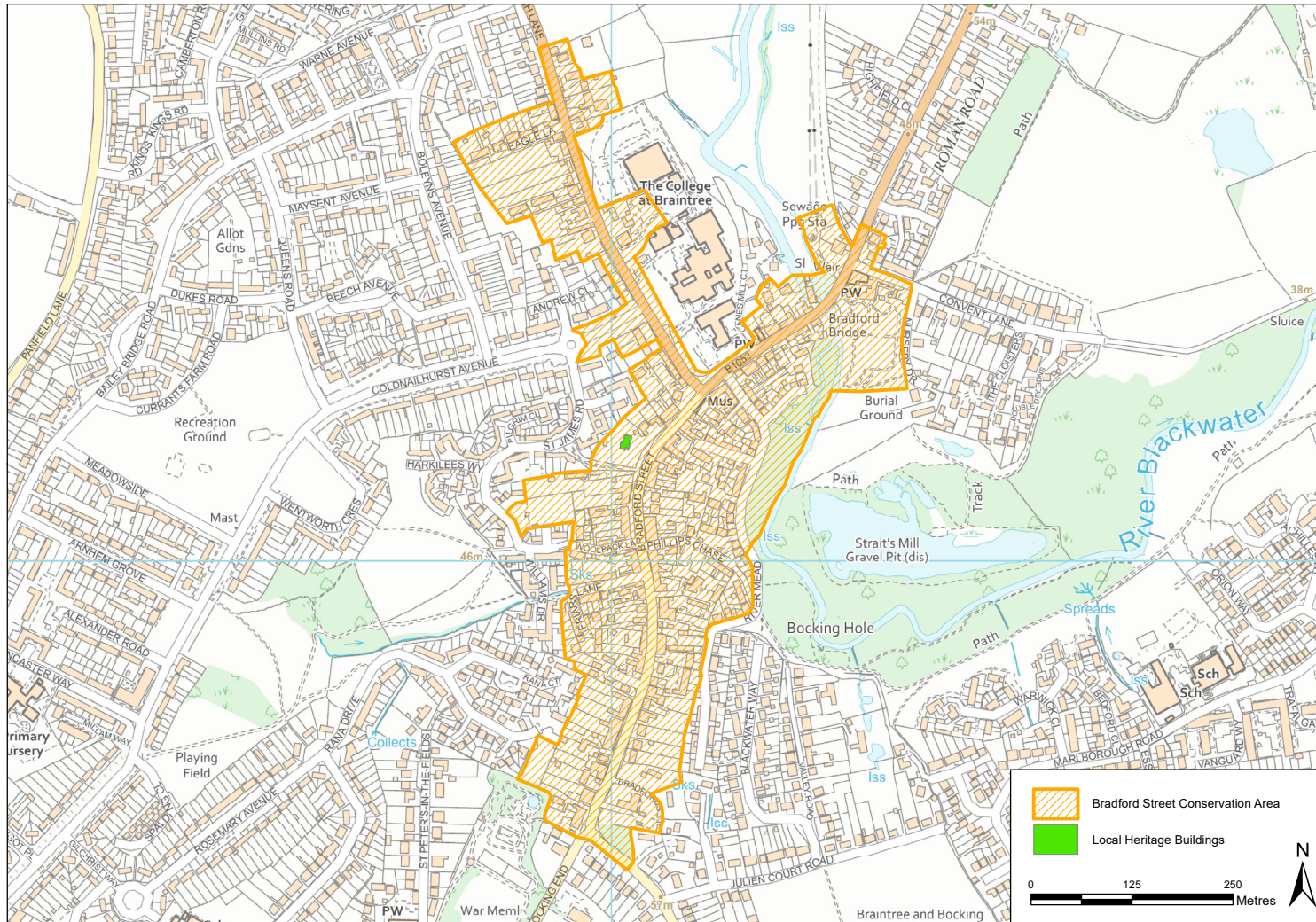


Figure 20 Map showing the location of Local Heritage Buildings within Bradford Street Conservation Area



## **2.7. Archaeological Potential**

Prehistoric settlement and activity would have favoured the low lying, fertile river valleys and floodplains within the Conservation Area for access to food and resources. Palaeolithic flint tools have been recovered from the River Blackwater which crosses the Conservation Area at the northern extent and flows along part of the eastern boundary to the rear of Bradford Street. The potential for prehistoric remains within the lower lying areas of the Conservation Area are high, especially within the river valley and less disturbed areas along Rivermead.

Limited excavations have taken place within the Conservation Area. No evidence of the Roman road has been found along the line of Bradford Street, however a potential roadside ditch was identified closer to the river which may suggest the Roman road had once followed a more direct path from the town. There is potential for further cremations to be preserved along the route of the road.

Whilst medieval and post-medieval settlement evidence is more likely to be sited along the street frontage, the backyard areas will contain evidence for ancillary activity, such as wells, cesspits, yards and middens, as well as small scale industrial activity. The soil-type is conducive to the survival of bone and ceramics, and there is the potential for significant paleoenvironmental deposits associated with the River Blackwater. Waterlogged deposits can also be anticipated within deeper features such as wells and cesspits.

## 3. Assessment of Significance

### 3.1 Summary

#### Bradford Street

While Braintree Town developed around its central marketplace, Bradford Street evolved as ribbon development along the northern route from Braintree. The area has retained its strong linear form and a coherent historic character, within a dense concentration of buildings. There is a concentration of sixty-two Listed buildings within the Conservation Area

The commercial activity that stimulated the growth of Bradford Street in the medieval era was centred around the woollen cloth trade. At least one wool hall, where the commodity was traded, survives within the group of buildings between Friars Lane and Woolpack Lane. Many of Bradford Street's listed buildings originated as a result of the wool trade, housing wealthy merchants. Within the alleyways to the rear of these houses there is a surviving utilitarian and functional character; workshops and warehouses were positioned to the rear of the houses they served.

Generally, buildings on Bradford Street have wide frontages and extend considerably to the rear, forming generous, but narrow burgage plots. Simple double pitched and gabled roofs are common, often running parallel to the street, though seventeenth and eighteenth century gambrel roofs can also be found, with gables facing the street.

A significant phase of development occurred in the Georgian period when a number of earlier timber framed buildings were re-fronted or new dwellings built. There was some nineteenth century development in the form of brick-built cottages and workshops along the alleyways. Over time the development of the area continued to spread north to Convent Hill and north-west to Church Lane, though in these areas there is less density to the buildings. Convent Hill crosses the River Blackwater at



Figure 21 The view south from the entrance to Phillips Chase



Figure 22 The view south from 92 Bradford Street



Figure 23 The view north from the entrance to Woolpack Lane

the site of the eighteenth-century Bradford Mill. At the end of Convent Hill, and close to the northern boundary of the Conservation Area, is the convent of the Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. The convent building was opened in 1898 to the designs of John Francis Bentley and it has a large garden adjacent to the River Blackwater.

Development along Church Lane began in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, with an outlying farmstead and cottages. By the nineteenth century further dwellings and terraced houses, some in long plots had begun to develop. There was a similar pattern to that seen on Bradford Street, with narrow alleys running west from Church Lane behind the houses, though the eastern side remained in agricultural use.

The significance of the Bradford Street Conservation Area is drawn from its coherent historic character and its aesthetic value, with a street pattern and buildings that are centuries old. This historic character has remained unchanged despite successive periods of economic growth and decline. The early buildings, the alteration of buildings, their change in use and the construction of new dwellings provides tangible evidence for the social, cultural, economic and architectural development of the area, which can be easily appreciated and understood.

### 3.2 Character Analysis

#### Bradford Street

Bradford Street was once a busy commercial centre, separate from the town centre and its market. The Street had large dwellings, shops and inns, while small workshops were located behind buildings fronting the main street, accessible via alleyways running off Bradford Street. These rear areas continued to provide space for small



Figure 24 The view north on Bradford Street



Figure 25 A lamp on the Bridge over the River Blackwater



Figure 26 48 Bradford Street



Figure 27 An eighteenth-century door, 37 Bradford Street





Figure 28 Phillips Chase



Figure 29 Former nineteenth century printing works behind 85 Bradford Street



Figure 30 Woolpack Lane



Figure 31 Friars Lane

scale industrial manufacturing into the early twentieth century, in contrast to the more imposing buildings fronting the street. While they have been adapted to residential use, many utilitarian buildings in these areas retain an industrial or modest character. Some alleys such as Phillips Chase to the east and Woolpack Lane to the west have become routes into Bradford Street from areas of modern housing development but they still retain their historic character.

Bradford Street provides evidence for the development of architectural styles and building traditions, with numerous timber framed buildings, Georgian and nineteenth century dwellings and occasionally some twentieth century infill development. Of the earliest building examples, exposed close-timber studding is evident, along with a fine example of a medieval window on the south elevation of the Grade II\* Listed building at number 75 Bradford Street. Jettied first-floors, original decorative pargeted plasterwork and carved timbers can also be found.

During the eighteenth century, brick facades were sometimes added to earlier timber-framed buildings, to give them a fashionable refurbishment. Examples can of this trend be found on Bradford Street, such as the Grade II\* Listed Maysent House at 89 Bradford Street. Originally constructed in the sixteenth century, the building became a substantial coaching inn, called The Queen's Head. Later the building was refaced in the eighteenth century, with plastered brickwork and a parapet, dentilled cornice and quoining were added. There are numerous Georgian pedimented architraves, with columns, pilasters, over-door lights and architraves for doors fronting the street, and a fine example of a shell canopy.

The former commercial buildings of Bradford Street have been adapted in recent decades and the area is now primarily residential, yet the former character has been retained. The change occurred prior to the introduction of modern shopfronts with large panels of glazing and generally, only historic shop fronts, with high-quality

joinery and bay windows, are to be found. Occasionally historic shop windows were inserted into much older buildings in a less than sympathetic way, such as the example at 98 Bradford Street.

### Church Lane and the northern end of Bradford Street (Convent Hill)

Church Lane branches off to the north-west from the northern end of Bradford Street. Although the earliest historic buildings within Church Lane are of similar date to those of Bradford Street, the road's character differs slightly, in that it lacks the same close-packed form of linear development. While Bradford Street formed the historic route to the north, Church Lane provided a north-western route to the outlying historic settlement of Bocking and it takes its name from Bocking's ancient St Mary's Church.

The northern part of Bradford Street is also known as Convent Hill. The road continues north from Bradford Street and crosses the River Blackwater, after which the road name changes to Broad Road. The river has been the site of a mill since 1303, when Henry de Eastry, the Prior of Canterbury Cathedral established a fulling mill at the site. Convent Hill has a less dense form of linear development than Bradford Street, though it shares the historic association with the wool trade and the processing of wool. The existing mill was built in the eighteenth century as a flour mill and the area close to the river retains this historic industrial character. There are late nineteenth century brick built terraced houses on Convent Hill along with modern, rendered, dwellings in a traditional style with plain tiled roofs, which contribute to the area's character.

Historically, Church Lane and Convent Hill lacked the condensed commercial and high-status residential development found in Bradford Street. As a thoroughfare on the periphery of Braintree, Church Lane's commercial activity was initially focussed on agricultural production. The farmstead at Boleyn's Farm was established in 1625



Figure 32 Church Lane



Figure 33 Church Lane



Figure 34 Boleyn's



Figure 35 The eighteenth-century Bradford Mill



Figure 36 Convent Hill, looking north



Figure 40 Close studding 114-118 Bradford Street



Figure 39 The jettied Dragon House, 41 Bradford Street



Figure 42 The Old Court House 31 Bradford Street



Figure 41 Decorative carving 114-118 Bradford Street

when Joseph Saville bought Boleyn's field and began to build the now Grade II\* Listed timber-framed and plastered house. The farmstead was on the eastern side of Church Lane, with agricultural fields to the south and north. Outlying cottages were built along both Church Lane and Convent Hill in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and these can be seen in the Chapman and Andre map of 1777 [Figure 4].

Further development occurred on both routes during the nineteenth century with short terraces of dwellings or modest semi-detached houses. Along Church Lane

two narrower lanes were established running west, Eagle Lane and Faggot Yard, giving access to areas behind the properties fronting the thoroughfare. This is a similar form of development to that seen in Bradford Street, though on Church Lane it is more recent. Historically, the eastern side of Church Lane was in agricultural use and part of the Boleyn's Farm. Its nineteenth century boundary wall survived the sale of the land and the development of the Braintree College in the 1950s. Although it is in need of repair, the brick wall, and the mature trees behind it, make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

### 3.3 Land Usage

Bradford Street slopes to the northeast and divides at a junction to form Church Lane and Convent Hill. This section of the Conservation Area is predominantly residential with few commercial premises. However, the historic commercial function can be easily appreciated in the form and typology of the existing buildings. The building grain is tighter along Bradford Street, becoming slightly more dispersed in Church Lane and Convent Hill. The houses on Bradford Street are generally more generously proportioned.

### 3.4 Public Realm

Buildings in the Conservation Area generally follow the line of the road, with most properties fronting directly onto the pavement and few having land between their front doors and the street. Bradford Street and its pavement vary in width; there are often areas where granite setts have been used in the pavement surface, enhancing the street's character. There is a wide area to the north of Woolpack Lane and Phillips Chase and here in particular the granite setts to the pavements are extensive. The public realm is largely confined to pavements and street signs and parking is generally on the road and pavements. There is little in the way of large public spaces within the historic streets, although the area where Bradford Street divides into Church Lane and Convent Hill provides a modest public space. This is a busy junction with a roundabout, small piazza, bench and flowerbeds in front of the former Six Bells public house (now residential) at 129-135 Bradford Street. The alleys running off Bradford Street are generally pedestrianised. There is also a footpath that runs west from Bradford Street to St James' Road, an area of late twentieth century development. The footpath has grass verges and a visually interesting undulating brick wall, known as a 'crinkle-crankle' wall Figure 46].



Figure 43 Faggot Yard



Figure 44 Eagle Lane



Figure 45 The small public piazza area in front of the former Six Bells at the junction of Bradford Street and Church Lane



Figure 46 The footpath from Bradford Street to St James Street, looking east, with the crinkle-crankle wall on the left



Figure 47 The junction of Bradford Street, Church Lane and Convent Hill



Figure 48 A lamp on the bridge



Figure 49 The River Blackwater



Figure 50 The Gospel Hall, undergoing conversion in 2020

### 3.5 Landscaping and Open Spaces

In the condensed historic development pattern within the Conservation Area there is little in the way of landscaped open spaces, nevertheless there are some spaces of importance. The network of footpaths and alleyways within the Conservation Area are frequently used pedestrian routes, which provide access to the main thoroughfares. The junction of Bradford Street, Church Lane and Convent Hill provides an important open space within the Conservation Area, where the built form opens out. In addition, the banks of the River Blackwater and the weir can be appreciated from the bridge adjacent to Bradford Mill. The Convent here also has an extensive private garden, through which the river flows.

### 3.6 Contribution by Key Un-Listed Buildings

The following buildings within the Conservation Area are identified here as being of heritage value, and some entries are illustrated with photographs. This is not a comprehensive list of non-designated heritage assets and other buildings identified during the planning process, may be considered as non-designated heritage assets in the future.

The former **Gospel Hall** [Figure 50] has recently been converted to residential use having received planning permission in May 2019. It is an early twentieth century building, built for the Assemblies of the Plymouth Brethren. As typical for this twentieth century Christian movement the building is fairly plain and understated. The building retains a high proportion of its original features and is of aesthetic and local communal value, making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

**37A Bradford Street** [Figure 51] is a late nineteenth century, single-storey, mock-Tudor dwelling, with a plain-tiled roof, plastered exterior and exposed timber studwork.

The original leaded windows are particularly fine. It is of aesthetic value and makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area

**Number 22, the Red House** [Figure 53] is a two-storey residential building with a walled front garden facing the street and probably early twentieth century in date. The dwelling has high-quality timber windows and doors and a highly ornate porch. The building, along with the trees and hedges of the front garden, make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

**Number 57 Bradford Street** is a three-storey dwelling, constructed in Gault brick with timber sash windows that feature flat lintels of rubbed brick and is probably early nineteenth century in date. There is a smaller two storey extension on its northern side, which is a later addition, probably dating to the later nineteenth century that has decorative brickwork (now painted over) including mock crenellations above the ground floor level. The building is of architectural, aesthetic and historic interest and makes a beneficial contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

**Number 61 Bradford Street** is a two-storey building and former shop with a rendered exterior, scored to resemble ashlar blocks. There are two fine bay windows to the front, formerly shop windows, and three sixteen pane sash windows at first floor level. The building is of architectural and aesthetic interest and contributes positively to the Conservation Area's character.

**Numbers 58-66 Bradford Street** form a short terrace of two-storey dwellings, with a nameplate on the façade displaying the name May Cottages and the date 1895. They are built in brick with a plain clay tiled roof, many original timber sash windows survive at first floor. Number 58 on the corner of Bradford Street and Philips Close served as a shop and retains a timber shopfront. The dwellings have modest front gardens and all but number 58 have a tiled canopy or porch that runs continuously



Figure 51 37A Bradford Street



Figure 53 22 Bradford Street, the Red House



Figure 52 May Cottages, dating from 1895



Figure 54 Numbers 9-15 Woolpack Lane



Figure 55 Queens Meadow, Bradford Street



Figure 56 The former Six Bells Public House

along the façade. The terrace is of aesthetic value and makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

**Numbers 4, 8 and 10 Woolpack Lane** form a terrace of two-storey, brick-built nineteenth century cottages with a band of decorative ceramic tiles and timber sash windows.

**Numbers 9-15 Woolpack Lane** [Figure 54] are a terrace of nineteenth century, brick-built cottages with original timber sash windows and slate roofs. Together with Numbers 4, 8 and 10, this group provide notable character to the Woolpack Lane entrance to the Conservation Area and the main thoroughfare of Bradford Street.

The large house at **Queens Meadow** is an early twentieth century dwelling, set back within a large plot, behind an earlier brick wall, which fronts the street. The building is included on Braintree's current local list. It has architectural details of interest, such as leaded windows with decorative surrounds and a rounded brick arch over the door.

The former **Six Bells Public House** [Figure 56] is an early twentieth century building in a prominent location, on the site of an earlier inn. The building has been converted to residential use and retains a distinctive architectural character, despite the addition of modern uPVC windows.

The former **Spread Eagle Pubic House** [Figure 57], and the adjacent buildings at



Figure 57 The former Spread Eagle Public House



Figure 58 Number 4, Broad Road



Figure 59 Boleyn's Cottage



Figure 60 Agricultural buildings of the former Boleyn's farmstead

numbers 67-73 Church Lane, are of some antiquity and are included on the Ordnance Survey mapping surveyed in 1875 to 1876. They are rendered with clay tiles and many of the buildings appear to have retained their timber sash windows, although not the former Spread Eagle.

**Boleyn's Cottage** at 58 Church Lane is a distinctive building of some antiquity and formed part of the farmstead complex of Boleyn's farm, bearing a close resemblance to the Grade II Boleyn's Farm at 48 Church Lane (see Figure 28). The building is rendered and has a plain tiled, gambrel roof with the gable facing the road. Like Boleyn's Farm, it may be eighteenth century in date. The cottage is to the north of a pair of weatherboarded agricultural buildings and together with the cottage the group probably once formed the farmyard of Boleyn's Farm. Although the arrangement of the yard has been much altered by the addition of modern dwellings, the cottage and weatherboarded buildings provide clear evidence of the past agriculture nature of the area and make a beneficial contribution to the Conservation Area and the understanding of its development. This is also one of the few sites in the conservation area which is of agricultural derivation in terms of use.

**Numbers 1 and 4 Broad Road and Number 1 Convent Lane** are situated the northern end of the Conservation Area. They form a group of striking buildings at the Conservation Area's entrance and are late nineteenth century in date, built in a mock-Tudor style. They are brick-built, with two of the three having timber studwork and plaster infill to the first floor. They have Tudor-styled chimneys, decorative barge boards, diamond leaded windows and occasionally a Gothic arch to a window.



### 3.7 Traditional/Local Building Materials

Common traditional construction and finishing materials within the Conservation Area include smooth render, hardwood timber framing and red brick in Flemish bond. Brick-built boundary walls are also common with flint occasionally used. Handmade, plain clay tiles with a double camber are frequently used on roofs, with slate used on single storey or ancillary buildings. Render is painted a variety of colours including white, cream or off-white, light blue and pink. More subdued and earthy colours are also found such as rust orange, ochre, terracotta and sage green.

Timber, feather-edged weatherboarding can be found in the alleys and areas behind the main thoroughfares, where historically more industrial activities took place. This is often painted black, with occasional white or light grey examples. In the area of the Bradford Mill (also known as Cane's Mill) adjacent to the Blackwater River, white weatherboarding predominates.

### 3.8 Local Details

The Conservation Area has many character defining architectural details, examples of which are on the following pages. Historic decorative timberwork can be found on bargeboards, door-surrounds, timber wall plates and rails.

There are many fine examples of historic windows within the Conservation Area and there are numerous eighteenth and nineteenth century sash windows with original glass panes. More rare horizontal sliding sash windows can also be found. Bay windows of former shopfronts are also common on Bradford Street. Nineteenth century embellishments include decorative tiles and brickwork. There are also fine examples of eighteenth and nineteenth century iron railings.



Figure 61 A nineteenth century shopfront at 15 Bradford Street



Figure 62 Exposed framing at 35 and 37 Church Lane, dating to the early sixteenth century



Figure 63 Bay window shopfronts added to a refaced sixteenth to seventeenth century building, 54-56 Bradford Street.



Figure 64 An eighteenth-century bay shop window on posts with a canopy in seventeenth century building at 92 Bradford Street

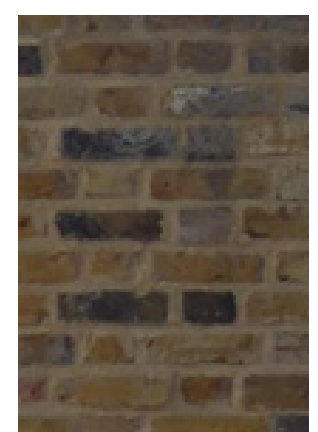
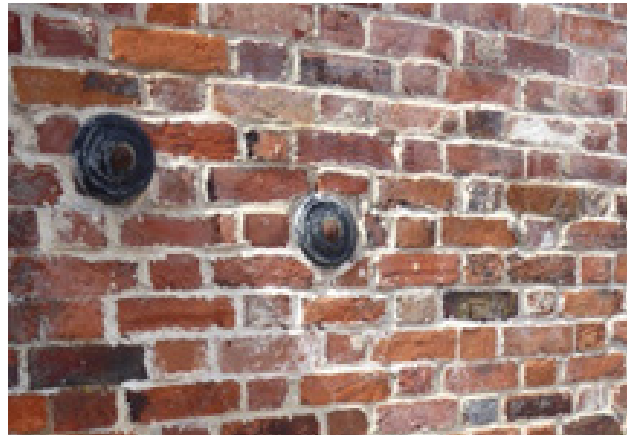
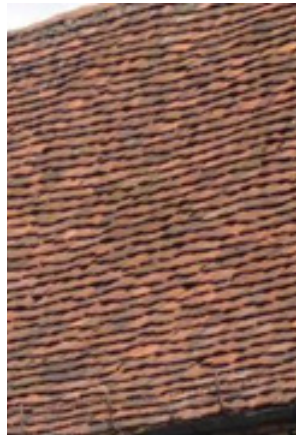


Figure 65 Top row, left to right: Pedimented doorcase with fanlight and columns; Plain Clay Tiles; Flemish brickwork in red brick; Pebble dash with sash windows; Weatherboarding painted black at first floor level. Bottom row, left to right: shell surround on a door; Classical doorcase; Example of pink and ochre render; Flintwork; Gault brick in a Flemish bond

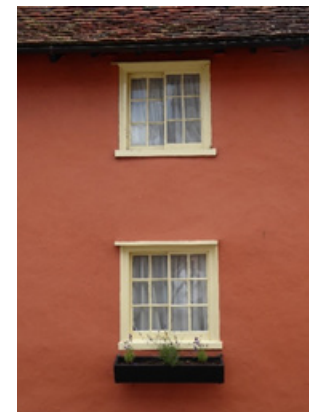
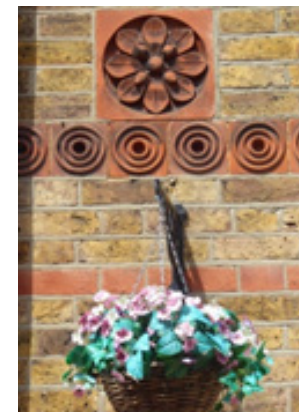


Figure 66 Top row, left to right: Nineteenth century bay window; Medieval window; Decorative bargeboards; Example of slate and clay roof tiles. Bottom row, left to right: Decorative bargeboard; Intricately carved external timber framing; Iron railings; Inset decorative clay tiles; Horizontal sliding sash windows.

### 3.9 Views

This appraisal includes a selection of key views, there may be other views of significance. Any proposals for development within the Conservation Area, or its environs, should consider the views below and any others which may be relevant or highlighted as part of a tailored assessment of that proposal.

Due to its dense, linear development the thoroughfare of Bradford Street affords key views in both directions along its length. The views up and down Bradford Street are significant and moving along the road in either direction provides kinetic views where the historic architectural character and historic significance of the Conservation Area can be experienced and appreciated. To illustrate this, seven key viewpoints are described below, although there are equally important viewpoints elsewhere on the street. A map showing the location of these viewpoints is included on the following page as [Figure 70].

**Viewpoint 1.** The view north from the southern entry point to the Conservation Area, at the junctions of Bocking End, Courtauld Road and Bradford Street is noteworthy. The road slopes gently downwards to the north and the character of the Conservation Area and its historic buildings can be easily appreciated

**Viewpoint 2.** Looking north and south from a central point on Bradford Street, it is possible to view the thoroughfare, lined with historic buildings. The significance and character of the Conservation Area can be appreciated.

**Viewpoint 3.** Similarly, looking north from a central point on Bradford Street the unique historic character of the Conservation Area can be appreciated. The curved route of the street is also evident as Bradford Street slopes gently down to the north, towards the River Blackwater.



Figure 67 Viewpoint 1, looking north from the southern end of Bradford Street



Figure 68 Viewpoint 2, looking south along Bradford Street

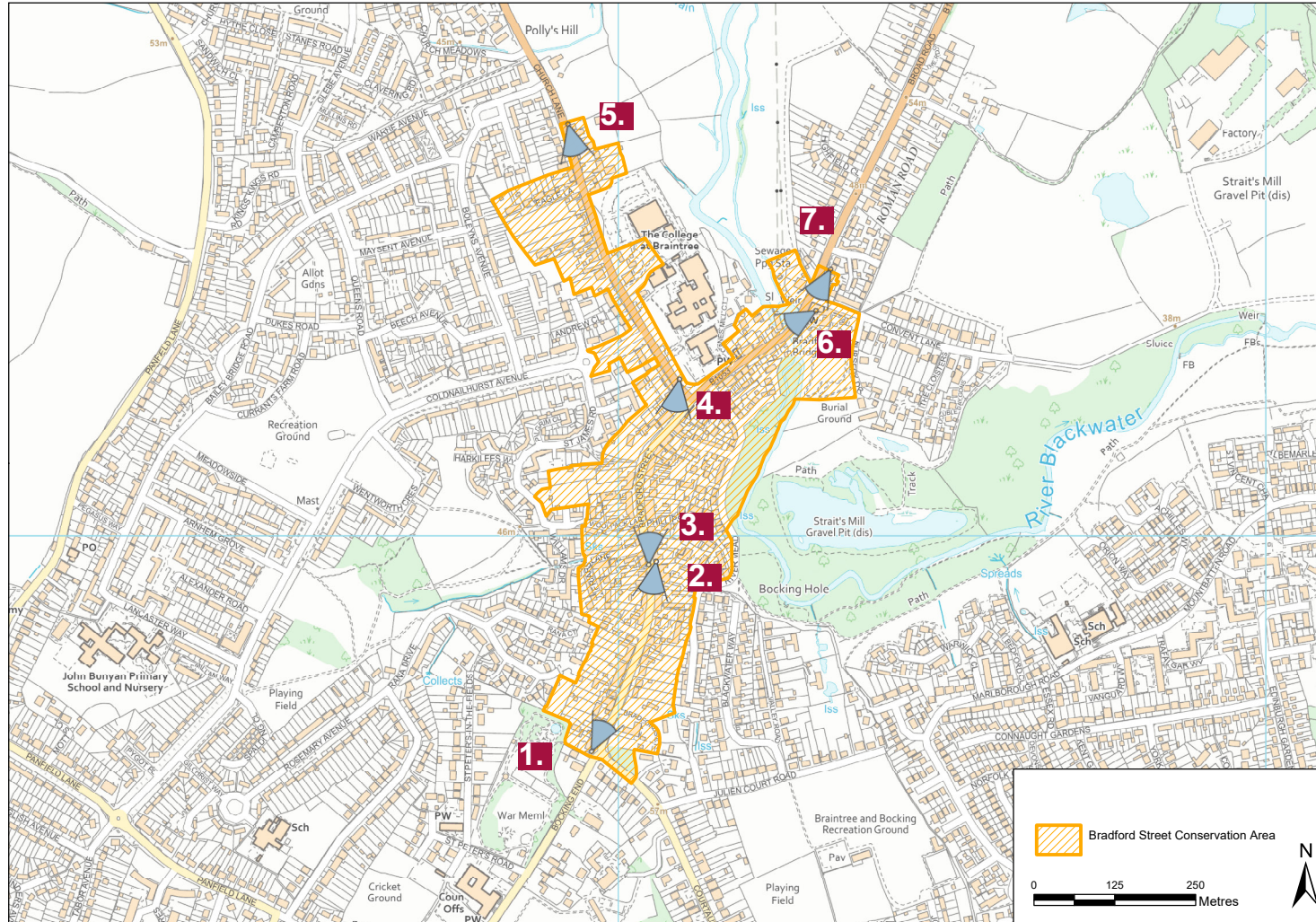


Figure 70 Map showing the location of viewpoints 1 to 7

**Viewpoint 4.** The junction of Bradford Street, Convent Hill and Church Lane is an important and well used intersection. There is the sense of more open, wider space here, compared to the more densely packed buildings of Bradford Street. The view south-west towards Bradford Street is enhanced by the timber-framed Grade II\* Listed building at number 114-118 Bradford Street. There is also the small public piazza in front of the former Six Bells public house, which allows wider views in this area.

**Viewpoint 5.** The north-western approach along Church Lane provides views into the Conservation Area. The historic character of the area can be easily perceived. The straightness of Church Lane at this point also allows long distance views into the Conservation Area.

**Viewpoint 6.** The River Blackwater at the northern end of the Conservation Area constitutes a natural break in the built environment and provides a sense of space. The bridge over the river characterises this northern entry point into the Conservation Area and also allows an important view of the Grade II\* Listed Bradford Mill.

**Viewpoint 7.** The Conservation Area's distinct character can be appreciated at northern approach. The view into the area at the junction with Broad Road and Convent Lane. The Grade II Listed Convent, the bridge and the mature trees on the banks of the River Blackwater can be seen in views looking south into the Conservation Area.



Figure 72 Viewpoint 2, looking north



Figure 74 The view west, looking over the bridge toward the mill



Figure 76 Viewpoint 7, looking south toward the Conservation Area



Figure 77 Viewpoint 4, looking south west toward Bradford Street at the junction with Church Lane



Figure 78 Viewpoint 5, looking south west along Church Lane

### 3.10 Setting of the Conservation Area

Historically, the setting of Bradford Street, Convent Hill and Church Lane was agrarian in nature, with open fields under cultivation to the north and west. This historic setting with a more open agrarian character partially survives to the north, along Broad Road and Church Lane, although modern residential development has occurred. New development in the twentieth century has also altered the open and rural character of the setting to the west of the Conservation Area, to residential.

To the east, Bradford Street and its backlands were bounded by the River Blackwater in the River Meads area. Modern development here has altered the setting's character, though the design and layout were carefully considered to be more in keeping with the character of Bradford Street. Beyond the new development, the river still forms an important element in the setting of the Conservation Area.

Historically, to the south of Bradford Street there was a short gap in development, before the edge of the market town of Braintree. This area was initially infilled by development, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, generally with civic and community structures and landscapes rather than residential development. These included Braintree and Bocking Public Gardens, Howard Hall (Masonic Lodge), the Bocking War Memorial and the H.M.S Kite Memorial. The tradition of municipal development in this area continued in the 1980s with the construction of Causeway House which accommodate Braintree District Council.



Figure 79 The view north, looking out of the Conservation Area



Figure 80 The Rivermead development, east of the Conservation Area



Figure 81 The War Memorial in the Public Gardens, north of the Conservation Area





## 4. Management Proposals

There are a wide range of issues facing the Bradford Street Conservation Area, many of which share common themes. This section seeks to recommend management proposals which address these issues in both the short and long term.

### 4.1 Positive Management: Short term

The first set of proposals relate to positive management and focus on good practice and improved ways of working with the local planning authority. These are generally low cost and can be implemented within a short timeframe, typically within one or two years.

#### Enforcement

Where the necessary permission has not been sought for alterations, such as advertising signage and building alterations which are not contained within the General Permitted Development Order, the Local Planning Authority's powers of enforcement should be considered. This could assist in reinstating any lost character or architectural features which has resulted in a negative cumulative effect on the Conservation Area, as well as avoiding a precedence being set for similar, uncharacteristic works.

#### General Maintenance: Public Realm and Highways

Through agreement between Local Authority teams and other landowners on standard good practice within the Conservation Area, relevant long-term goals can be set to promote good design within the public realm, such as avoiding excessive road markings or signage and agreeing a standard street furniture. This would help to ensure consistency over time as elements are introduced or replaced. The result

would have a long-term positive impact on the Bradford Street Conservation Area and ensure the preservation of characteristic features.

#### Planning Applications, Heritage Statements, Heritage Impact Assessments and Archaeological Assessments

In accordance with the NPPF (Para.194), applicants must describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by their proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

All applications within the Conservation Area and immediate setting require an appropriately detailed Heritage Statement. Any application without a Heritage Statement should not be validated.

Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably. In order to assess the suitability of a proposed scheme within the Conservation Area or its immediate setting, a full planning application is necessary, so as to be compliant with Paragraph 206. Outline applications lack the necessary detail of design and therefore the appearance and suitability of the development and the impact on the heritage assets cannot be fully understood.

The key views analysed within this document are in no way exhaustive. The impact of any addition, alteration or removal of buildings, structures, tree's or highways on



key views should be considered to aid decision making. This includes development outside the Conservation Area. Where appropriate, views must be considered within Design and Access or Heritage Statements. This should be in accordance with Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2019). Applications which fail to have assessed any impact upon views and setting should not be validated.

Applicants for new development or alterations to buildings within the Conservation Area may wish to reference the guidance document published by Essex County Council which is available to download at: [http://www.placeservices.co.uk/media/108286/ds17\\_5751\\_place-services\\_historical-buildings-guidance\\_01.pdf](http://www.placeservices.co.uk/media/108286/ds17_5751_place-services_historical-buildings-guidance_01.pdf)

### **Local Heritage List**

A Local List formally identifies buildings and structures of local architectural and/or historic interest, and these are considered to be 'non-designated heritage assets' under the provisions of the NPPF. Local Lists can be beneficial in ensuring the upkeep and maintenance of historic buildings that contribute to the character of the settlements. The exercise of creating a Local List would also facilitate a greater understanding of the area and could be utilised as a public engagement strategy to improve awareness and understanding.

### **Neutral Elements**

The dilution of positive buildings amongst those which are neutral leads to an underwhelming and indistinctive overall character.

Braintree Council should not allow for the quality of design to be 'averaged down' by the neutral and negative elements of the built environment. Where possible, officers

must seek schemes which enhance the built environment and look to conserve and reinstate historic features. It is also considered that poor-quality or unsympathetic schemes should not be allowed, both within the Conservation Area and its setting.

### **New Development**

There are some opportunities within the Conservation Area, and its setting, for development which makes a positive contribution to character. To be successful, any future development needs to be mindful of the local character of the Conservation Area, while at the same time addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability.

#### **Successful new development will:**

- Respect important views;
- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings;
- Use materials and building methods which as high in quality of those used in existing buildings; and
- Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of their setting.

#### **Braintree District Council should guide development in a positive manner by:**

- Engaging with developers at an early stage through the Pre-Application Process to ensure modern development is high quality in design, detail and materials.
- Considering the referral of medium-large scale development schemes to a Design Review (or similar) so that new buildings, additions and alterations can



be designed in sympathy with the established character of the area. The choice of materials and the detailed design of building features are important in making sure it's appropriate to the Conservation Area.

- Seeking opportunities for developers to make a positive contribution to the wider historic environment through Section 106 Agreements.

### Public resources

The preservation and enhancement of private properties can be improved through the publishing of resources aimed to inform property owners and members of the public. An introductory summary of the Conservation Area Appraisal in the form of a leaflet or factsheet(s) is a simple way to communicate the significance of the area and ensure members of the public are aware of the implications of owning a property within a conservation area.

In addition, a maintenance guide would assist property owners in caring for their property in an appropriate manner. A single Good Practice Design Guide on standard alterations such as signage, shopfronts, windows, doors, rainwater goods, boundaries and roof extensions, will ensure inappropriate development does not continue to be the accepted norm. A Design Guide should:

- Provide guidance on appropriate design and materials for windows and doors and encouraging the retention or reinstatement of historic glazing patterns and door designs and the use of appropriate materials.
- Provide guidance on the traditional form of boundary treatments and encourage their reinstatement where they have been removed or compromised.

- Provide guidance on traditional roofing materials and encouraging the reinstatement of good quality slate and handmade clay tiles with the removal of unsympathetic modern materials such as interlocking concrete tiles.
- Provide and update guidance relating to signage. This should address appropriate size and design, the extent and amount and associated lighting. All further planning applications and advert consent applications should be required to comply, where possible, with this standard, designed to help to restore the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Poor maintenance leads to the deterioration of the fabric of the built environment and results in a loss of architectural details. Improved awareness of simple maintenance and repair would be conducive with the preservation of the character and built heritage of Bradford Street Conservation Area. At present there is a single interpretation board, within the Conservation Area, aimed at improving understanding and awareness. This should continue to be maintained and updated where appropriate to ensure awareness and establish the identity of Bradford Street as a historic settlement.

The Friends of Bradford Street can provide advice, particularly on issues such as traffic, Neighbourhood Watch and raising the profile of Bradford Street. They can be contacted through their website via the link below:

<https://www.bradfordstreet.co.uk/>

### Shop Frontages

There is potential to raise awareness of the importance of the surviving historic shopfronts and traditional signage and the contribution they make to the special interest of the Conservation Area. Many historic shopfronts have been retained and



the activity in the area changed from commercial to residential. The production of information leaflets or web pages could be considered, which would provide guidance for homeowners on upkeep and maintenance of historic frontages. Article 4 Directions could also be used to prevent loss of historic shop frontages.

### **Tall Buildings**

The former Braintree College building was constructed in the setting of the Conservation Area, at a time when the impact of tall buildings on the character of historic townscapes was little appreciated. As a result, the building has a harmful and dominant presence which is highly noticeable from certain viewpoints. However, the building is due for demolition, which will enhance the Conservation Area's setting. Yet the potential for the future construction of buildings and structures of an inappropriate height within the setting of the Conservation Area still remains. Any such scheme should be considered in terms of the NPPF, the level of harm to heritage assets and the balance of public benefit.

### **Tree Management**

In line with the Town and Country Planning Act, all trees in Conservation Areas are afforded the same protection as a Tree Preservation Order. Trees which have a trunk diameter of more than 75mm, at a height of 1.5m from the ground, may not be felled or lopped unless six weeks written notice has been given to the Council. Six weeks' notice has to be given to the council under S211 of the Act.

It is also considered that any prominent trees, street trees, and trees with amenity value on private land throughout the Conservation Area should be monitored and maintained appropriately. This will ensure the symmetry along tree lined streets and visual rhythm, as well as maintain the green character of the area. Any tree that

makes a positive contribution to the area should be retained, maintained and, if felled (only if dead, dying or dangerous) replaced with an appropriate new tree.

### **Twentieth Century Premises**

There are some twentieth century developments which make a neutral or negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area. There is scope to enhance these sites and buildings through a considered design approach which can guide future improvements. Should opportunities for redevelopment arise in the future, high quality design should be pursued and encouraged through design guidance.



## 4.2 Positive Management: Longer Term

The second set of proposals are also focussed around positive management but either take longer to implement or are better suited to a longer time frame.

### Car Parking

Car parking along Bradford Street generally occurs within controlled bays at the side of the road, although some parking also occurs on areas of wider pavement. The future management of car parking within the Conservation Area could begin with a car parking survey, to establish the varying needs for car parking among residents. Once the level of necessary car parking has been established, a landscape strategy should be created by Braintree District Council in conjunction with local stakeholders.

### Character Appraisal and Management Plan

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan should be reviewed periodically to monitor change and inform management proposals.

### Conservation Area Boundary

The Conservation Area boundary has been revised within this appraisal in accordance with the NPPF (2019) and Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2018). The proposed changes to the boundary are given in detail in section 2.1. The boundary should continue to be assessed as part of future reviews of the Management Plan to ensure it is robust and adequately protects the significance of the area.

### Interpretation: Improved Understanding and Awareness

At present there is an interpretation board, giving a historical description of Bradford Street, towards its southern end. This improves understanding and awareness and effectively establishes the identity of Bradford Street as a historic settlement.

### Opportunity Sites

There are some opportunity sites across the Conservation Area and particularly within its setting, such as the site of the former Braintree College. If sensitively redeveloped, this site may provide the opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

### Public Realm

There is an opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through investment to improve the wider public realm. This can be achieved through continuing to improve and rationalise existing street furniture and retaining and curating elements of historic interest. The Conservation Area has bollards, a Listed phone box, pavements with granite setts, a postal pillar box and a second wall mounted post box which enhance the area's character.

A public area that requires some improvement is located outside the former Six Bells Public House, at the junction of Bradford Street and Church Lane.

The small piazza with its bench and flower beds is neglected with weeds appearing through the ground. The site is of some importance visually and is in a significant location at the junction of the main roads through the Conservation Area. Some of the most distinctive buildings can be appreciated from this location, while there are also mature trees over the road at the boundary of the former Braintree College site. The effective management of this area and perhaps some modest changes could



Figure 82 The small public piazza in front of the former Six Bells Public House



Figure 86 A wall mounted letter box, with initials GR for King George VI



Figure 85 A Grade II listed phone box, Bradford Street



Figure 84 Example of granite setts within the pavement



Figure 83 Bollards in Woolpack Lane



allow it to be more effectively used. At present, the space is somewhat neglected and underused. A new scheme that also incorporates some of the open space on the opposite side of the junction, adjacent to the former college boundary could have a beneficial effect on the character of the Conservation Area.

#### **Article 4 Directions**

An Article 4 Direction withdraws certain normal permitted development rights, which ordinarily allow for works of a limited scale to be carried out without requiring approval. They are an important tool that can be used to ensure small and incremental changes within a conservation area do not have an overall detrimental impact on its character. At present there is no Article 4 Direction in place within the Bradford Street Conservation Area and the implementation of this measure should be considered, subject to further analysis. An Article 4 Direction would help to ensure that aspects which contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area are not removed or diluted through the exercising of permitted development rights.

### **4.3 Funding Opportunities**

#### **National Heritage Lottery Fund**

The National Heritage Lottery Fund is the single largest dedicated funder of heritage in the UK and therefore is the most obvious potential source of funding. Funding is often targeted at schemes which preserve, enhance and better reveal the special interest of the area whilst also improving public awareness and understanding. Grant opportunities and requirements change overtime, for up-to-date information on NHLF schemes Braintree District Council should consult their appointed Heritage Specialist.

#### **Section 106 Agreements**

Planning obligations, also known as Section 106 agreements, can be used by the local authority to ensure any future development has a positive impact upon the Bradford Street Conservation Area. These agreements could be used to fund public realm or site-specific improvements.



## 5. Appendices

### 5.1 Bibliography

#### Publications

- Historic England, 2029. Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management
- Braintree District Museum 2008. A History and Description of Braintree Town Hall <http://www.braintreemuseum.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Town-Hall-Booklet.pdf>

#### Webpages

- B52 Air crash over Braintree <https://aviation-safety.net/wikibase/98307>
- British Geological Survey <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/>
- Historic England Listed Buildings <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>
- Lost Pubs [https://www.closedpubs.co.uk/essex/braintree\\_sixbells.html](https://www.closedpubs.co.uk/essex/braintree_sixbells.html)

#### Archives

- Essex Record Office
- Francis Frith Collection
- Braintree Museum



## 5.2 List of all Designated Heritage Assets within the Conservation Area

LIST ENTRY NO.	NAME	GRADE
1169791	3, BRADFORD STREET	II
1122542	5, BRADFORD STREET	II
1338245	7 AND 9, BRADFORD STREET	II
1170171	11, BRADFORD STREET	II*
1338248	LITTLE BRADFORDS	II
1122543	BRADFORD HOUSE	II*
1122544	NUMBER 19 (INCLUDING OUTBUILDING AT THE REAR)	II
1170198	GEORGIAN HOUSE	II*
1122545	BEEHCROFT	II
1122553	4, BRADFORD STREET	II*
1366144	6 AND 8, BRADFORD STREET	II
1122546	OLD COURT HOTEL, BRADFORD STREET	II
1338267	10-14, BRADFORD STREET	II
1122511	16-20, BRADFORD STREET (FORMERLY THE KINGS ARMS)	II
1122539	BAWN COTTAGE	II

LIST ENTRY NO.	NAME	GRADE
1170235	THE BAWN	II
1122547	GRESHAM HOUSE	II
1338268	24, BRADFORD STREET	II
1122548	DRAGON HOUSE 41 BRADFORD	II
1122512	ANGEL INN	II
1338269	38, BRADFORD STREET	II
1122513	40 AND 42, BRADFORD STREET	II
1122514	STANFORD HOUSE	II
1338270	46, BRADFORD STREET (FORMERLY THE CARDINALS CAP PUBLIC HOUSE)	II
1122515	48, BRADFORD STREET	II
1338271	50, BRADFORD STREET	II
1122516	KING'S HEAD INN	II
1122517	54 AND 56, 56A, BRADFORD STREET	II
1170273	63-73, BRADFORD STREET	II
1122549	75, BRADFORD STREET	II*
1305292	1, WOOLPACK LANE	II

LIST ENTRY NO.	NAME	GRADE
1338246	77-81, BRADFORD STREET	II*
1122487	2, WOOLPACK LANE	II
1170297	83, BRADFORD STREET	II
1338272	68, 68B, BRADFORD STREET	II
1122550	85 and 85a, Bradford Street	II
1170324	WENTWORTH HOUSE	II*
1122551	89 BRADFORD STREET, MAYSENT HOUSE (FORMERLY THE QUEENS HEAD)	II*
1122518	84-90, BRADFORD STREET	II
1306044	92, 92A, 92B, 92C, BRADFORD STREET	II
1391390	94, BRADFORD STREET	II
1338273	98 AND 100, BRADFORD STREET	II
1338278	K6 TELEPHONE KIOSK	II
1306012	102 AND 104, BRADFORD STREET	II
1122519	106, BRADFORD STREET	II
1338274	108, BRADFORD STREET	II
1305938	114-118, BRADFORD STREET	II*

LIST ENTRY NO.	NAME	GRADE
1338247	DIAL HOUSE INN (NOW RESIDENTIAL), CONVENT HILL	II*
1170350	OUTBUILDINGS TO BRADFORD MILL	II
1122552	BRADFORD MILL HOUSE	II
1170364	BRADFORD MILL	II*
1122520	FRANCISCAN CONVENT	II
1305924	1 AND 3, CHURCH LANE	II
1122523	5, CHURCH LANE	II
1122524	BISHOP CAUDEN'S HALL, CHURCH LANE	II
1305901	9, CHURCH LANE	II
1170835	BOLEYS, CHURCH LANE	II*
1122525	THE COTTAGE, CHURCH LANE	II
1170825	35-39, CHURCH LANE	II*
1140086	NUMBER 7 COB COTTAGE AND NUMBER 8, FAGGOT YARD	II
1391261	47, CHURCH LANE	II
1122528	56, CHURCH LANE (THIS IS INCORRECTLY NUMBERED ON H.E.'S MAPPING ENTRY IS IN FACT NUMBER 48 CHURCH LANE)	II

### 5.3 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

LEGISLATION/POLICY/ GUIDANCE	DOCUMENT	SECTION/POLICY
Primary Legislation	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	66: General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions. 72: General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions.
National Planning Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (2019) DCLG	Section 16; Annex 2
National Guidance	National Planning Practice Guidance (2014) DCLG	ID: 18a
National Guidance	English Heritage (2019) Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance	
Local Supplementary Planning Document	Braintree District Council Local Plan; Policy LPP42 Built and Historic Environment	

## 5.4 Glossary (NPPF)

Term	Description
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.
<b>Conservation (for heritage policy)</b>	The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.
<b>Designated heritage asset</b>	A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.
<b>Heritage asset</b>	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
<b>Historic environment</b>	All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.
<b>Historic environment record</b>	Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.
<b>Setting of a heritage asset</b>	The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
<b>Significance (for heritage policy)</b>	The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.



## 5.5 Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a conservation area?

Conservation areas are designated by the Local Planning Authority as areas of special architectural and historic interest. There are many different types of conservation area, which vary in size and character, and range from historic town centres to country houses set in historic parks. Conservation area designation introduces additional planning controls and considerations, which exist to protect an area's special character and appearance and the features that make it unique and distinctive. Although designation introduces controls over the way that owners can develop their properties, it is generally considered that these controls are beneficial as they sustain and/or enhance the value of properties within conservation areas.

The National Planning Policy Framework regards conservation areas as 'designated heritage assets'.

The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act specifies the general duty of Local Authorities, in the exercise of planning functions (Section 72). The 1990 Act states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

### How are conservation areas designated and managed?

The designation process includes detailed analysis of the proposed conservation area and adoption by the local planning authority. A review process should be periodically undertaken and the Conservation Area assessed to safeguard that it retains special architectural or historic interest. Threats can be identified, and the boundary reviewed, to ensure it is still relevant and appropriate.

This Conservation Area is supported by an appraisal and management plan. The appraisal describes the importance of an area in terms of its character, architecture, history, development form and landscaping. The management plan, included within the appraisal, sets out various positive proposals to improve, enhance and protect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

### What are the Council's duties regarding development in conservation areas?

The Local Authority must follow the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). These set out in clear terms how development proposals within Conservation Areas should be considered on the basis

of whether they preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area. Applications which fail to preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area are likely to be refused as a result. An authorities Local Plan also typically includes a specific policy on Conservation Areas.

### How can I find out if I live in a conservation area?

Boundary maps of conservation areas can be found on your Local Planning Authority website. Some authorities have an online interactive map search allowing you to search for a property. You can also contact your local planning authority directly to find out if you reside within a conservation area. Braintree District Council has an interactive Conservation Areas map which can be found by following the link below:

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/planning-building-control/conservation-areas>.

### Do I need permission to alter a property in a conservation area?

Many conservation areas have an Article 4 Direction which covers the painting, rendering or cladding of external walls. Alterations or extensions to buildings in conservation areas will generally need planning permission. Your Local Authority will provide advice as



to how to proceed.

### **Do I need to make an application for routine maintenance work?**

If routine works of maintenance are to be carried out using authentic materials and traditional craft techniques, on a like-for-like basis, you are not likely to need to apply for permission. The use of a contractor with the necessary skills and experience of working on historic buildings is essential. Inappropriate maintenance works and the use of the wrong materials will cause damage to the fabric of a historic building. It is recommended you contact the local planning authority for clarification before commencing any works.

### **Will I need to apply for permission for a new or replacement garage, fence, boundary wall or garden structure?**

Any demolition, development or construction in conservation areas will generally need planning permission. A replacement boundary, garage, cartlodge or greenhouse will need to be designed with the special historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Area in mind. Your Local Authority will provide advice as to how to proceed with an application.

### **Can I demolish a building in a conservation area?**

Demolition or substantial demolition of a building within a conservation area will usually require permission from the local planning authority.

### **What is an Article 4 Direction?**

Under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, certain minor works, such as domestic alterations, can normally be carried out without planning permission. However, some conservation areas are covered by an Article 4 Direction, which brings certain types of development back under the control of a local planning authority. This allows potentially harmful proposals to be considered on a case by case basis through planning applications. Article 4 Directions are used to control works that could threaten the character of an area and a planning application may be required for development that would otherwise have been permitted. Historic England provides information on Article 4 Directions on their website.

### **Can I remove a tree within a conservation area?**

If you are thinking of cutting down a tree or doing any pruning work, the local planning authority must be notified 6 weeks before any work begins. This enables

the authority to assess the contribution the tree makes to the character of the conservation area and, if necessary, create a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to protect it. Consent will be required for any works to trees that are protected. Further information on TPOs can be found on Historic England's website.

### **How do I find out more about a conservation area?**

Historic England's website has information on conservation areas and their designation. Further information on the value of conservation areas and what it means to live in a conservation area can also be accessed via their website.

Historic England has also published an advice note called Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management which sets out advice on the appraisal of conservation areas and managing change in conservation areas.

In addition, local planning authorities have information on the conservation areas within their boundaries available on their websites. They will have information pertaining to when the conservation area was designated, how far it extends and the reason for its designation.

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