

# Ailsworth



## Built Environment Audit 2002/2004

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# Acknowledgements

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This is a Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT) audit methodology, for which PECT retains the intellectual property rights. It was developed by Richard Donoyou MRICS, MRTPI, assisted by Veronica Thorne (Peterborough Civic Society), and Richard Brown (PECT).

The Audit survey work was completed by the villagers. Richard Donoyou compiled the final report and produced the Townscape maps.

The contribution of Lin Last (PECT), in typing, producing charts, formatting and checking text and data cannot be overestimated.

Finally, the immense contributions of David Henderson as leader of the Castor and Ailsworth Design Group/Project Co-ordinator, Carole Humphries, Joan Pickett, William Burke, David Shaw and Stephanie Bradshaw, who were instrumental in galvanising local enthusiasm and participation, ensured high quality research at all stages of the project.

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# 1.0 Summary

The Audit methodology has been successful in prompting a different way of thinking about the built environment. The surveys have involved a cross section of community interests and age groups, stimulating wider investigation of the buildings, walls and trees, which combine to create Ailsworth's unique townscape.

The data captured has given new insights into the built environment and led to debate based on knowledge rather than conjecture.

The Audit has informed the drafting of the Castor and Ailsworth Village Design Statement and gives a basis of understanding between Peterborough City Council, as the local planning authority and Ailsworth Parish Council and local people.

In replacing intuition with method, the Audit's findings have challenged many long held preconceptions of Ailsworth as, predominantly, a conservation village.

Of the two hundred and seven primary buildings in Ailsworth, most, one hundred and sixty four or 79%, were built during the last fifty years. Ailsworth is thought of as a stone village and all surviving buildings originating before 1900 are built in local oolitic limestone. However, almost all twentieth century buildings are constructed in modern brick with concrete tiles.

The combination of the pre-twentieth century buildings, stone walls and forest trees planted in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and historic street pattern form the basis of Ailsworth's attractive townscape. In contrast, twentieth century development has made almost no positive contribution to the village's character and appearance. It appears that no new substantial stone walls have been built since 1900, nor is it certain that modern plantings will effectively replace the large forest trees planted two to three hundred years ago and now reaching maturity.

There is some evidence that recent planning policies, reinforced by building conservation grants have been successful in conserving the basic historic fabric of the village. However, the evidence shows that new building makes little concession to traditional building forms, siting or materials and does not reinforce, enhance or continue the high quality built environment, which evolved up to 1900.

If new buildings are to contribute positively to Ailsworth's built environment legacy, fundamental changes are needed to the repetitive and uniform estate-type development, which prevailed throughout the twentieth century.

This is the challenge for the twenty first century.

## 2.0 Project Objectives

### 2.1 Village Design Statement

The community of Ailsworth wishes to play an active role to protect and conserve its unique village environment. The Countryside Agency's Village Design Statement (VDS) initiative provides a mechanism through which local people can research and prepare plans and proposals for their communities.

Following a VDS workshop organised by the Countryside Agency at the village hall, Ailsworth Parish Council resolved to prepare a 'Joint' Village Design Statement for Ailsworth and the neighbouring village of Castor. This document has, therefore, been prepared in parallel with a Castor Built Environment Audit, led by Castor Parish Council.

### 2.2 Objective Research

There was a view that planning issues often became contentious because some decisions appeared to be based on matters of opinion rather than established facts. To minimise subjectivity and provide a clear basis for future policy, it was considered that the VDS should, wherever possible, be based upon hard information and data. Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT) was requested to consider developing a research methodology, which would provide the hard built environment database and at the same time allow a wide spectrum of community interests to be actively involved.

The idea of an Audit was then developed with the prime objective being to produce a statistical picture of the village, which would be of intrinsic value as a historical document and at the same time, provide a sound database for other policies and projects.

Over a ten-year period, PECT has developed particular expertise in local environmental research and auditing, with projects such as the Peterborough Natural Environment Audit and Peterborough Energy Audit receiving national recognition. The experience gained in these projects was applied to the built environment and a comprehensive audit methodology devised.

A Local Heritage Initiative grant was awarded to Ailsworth Parish Council to enable the field testing of the new built environment methodology. Peterborough City Council confirmed that the results of the research could be used as the foundation for the Castor and Ailsworth VDS.

### 2.3 A Community Project

Active participation of a wide range of groups and organisations, of varying ages and interests was considered essential. To achieve this, the large and complex task of researching and preparing a comprehensive built audit was broken down into a series of smaller, simpler tasks. Relatively straightforward field survey techniques assisted data capture and standard Excel spreadsheets were used for data recording and subsequently added to the Access database for further analysis.

Almost all communities include some people who have gained ICT skills to manage and manipulate spreadsheet data through their work and education. The computer based system also allowed several people to work and input into one or more survey tasks and for the data and results to be shared through floppy disks, CDs and email.

The survey method does not require assistance from built environment professionals such as town planners, architects or urban designers.

### 2.4 Measurability and Repeatability

The survey method established a measurable 2002-4 built environment baseline, and allows a subsequent re-survey as a whole or in selected parts so that changes over time can be identified and accurately measured.

### 2.5 Wider Applicability

Through the testing and refining of the concept of built environment auditing in the village of Ailsworth (along with parallel projects in the villages of Castor and Thorney), it was hoped that a robust and tested methodology would emerge. This could then be made available for use by other communities to help them understand and plan for the future of their towns and villages.

## 3.0 Working Method

Research methods were devised and field trials conducted to establish four databases:

- **The Buildings Database**
- **Other Features Database**
- **The Townscape Database**
- **Other Factors and Influences Databases.**

### 3.1 The Buildings Database

The total number of buildings was counted to establish a population of buildings. The units of this population were based upon Peterborough City Council's properties reference system. Thus, collections of related buildings on the same plot (for example, a house and garage or shop and detached rear store etc.), were taken as one unit. Similarly, buildings that had been separate in the past but are now amalgamated, for example, two or three cottages converted into one large house, were also taken as a single unit.

This approach was necessary to establish a consistent and workable on-site survey method and a reasonably manageable database. Having established total numbers, the characteristics of the buildings population were recorded by on-site surveys and added to the database. Typical population characteristics included size, type and age, as well as more complex factors unique to the built environment.

The full Buildings Database comprised:

#### 3.1.1 Size

Building floor plan areas (footprints) were recorded under the following categories:

- very small - <50m<sup>2</sup> footprint area
- small - 51-80m<sup>2</sup> footprint area (one or two bedrooms)
- medium - 81-110m<sup>2</sup> footprint area (three bedrooms)
- large - 111-150m<sup>2</sup> footprint area (four bedrooms)
- very large - >150m<sup>2</sup> footprint area (> four bedrooms)

After a number of field trials, categories based on domestic properties were selected, firstly, because the surveyors from the local community found it relatively easy to relate property size to bedrooms in comparison with other methods tested. Secondly, since the vast majority of properties are in residential use or are domestic in scale, there is logic in the size to bedroom relationship.

#### 3.1.2 Storey Heights

Initially, it was thought that establishing the height of buildings could readily be related to the number of storeys. Bungalows, obviously, have one storey, but in a typical row of bungalows, some will have had loft conversions with dormer windows inserted, making them one and a half storeys, even though the roof ridge is of an identical height to an adjoining unconverted property. Equally, a two storey modern house has considerably lower eaves and ridge than a two storey Georgian house with high ceilings and steeply pitched traditional roof.

These differences were resolved by recorders strictly adhering to the number of storeys of accommodation. So, a house or barn with a ground and first floor would be two storey, whilst a house with attic (ground floor, first floor and second floor within roof space) would be recorded as two and a half storey.

A Buildings Key, with sketches of building types and corresponding storey heights was produced to assist community surveyors.

The categories recorded were:

- 1 - bungalow or single storey shed
- 1.5 - dormer bungalow or cottage with attic dormers within roof space
- 2 - buildings with a ground and first floor but floor to ceiling heights may vary
- 2.5 - buildings of two storeys plus dormer windowed attics within roof space
- 3 - three storeys
- >3 - more than three storeys.

#### 3.1.3 Property Types

- detached
- semi-detached
- terrace
- flat or maisonette
- other

#### 3.1.4 Ages

- 1600 – 1700 and earlier
- 1700 – 1800 (eighteenth century)
- 1800 – 1900 (nineteenth century)
- 1900 – 1925 (twentieth century)
- 1925 – 1950 (twentieth century)
- 1950 – 1975 (twentieth century)
- 1975 – 2000 (twentieth century)
- >2000 (twenty first century)

Where old buildings had been converted, the original date of the building was recorded, provided its origins were clear from its overall appearance. Thus, for example, a barn dating from 1659 but sensitively converted to a house in 2002 would be recorded as seventeenth century.

Where buildings have been extended or altered over several centuries, the general outward appearance of the buildings was the period recorded.

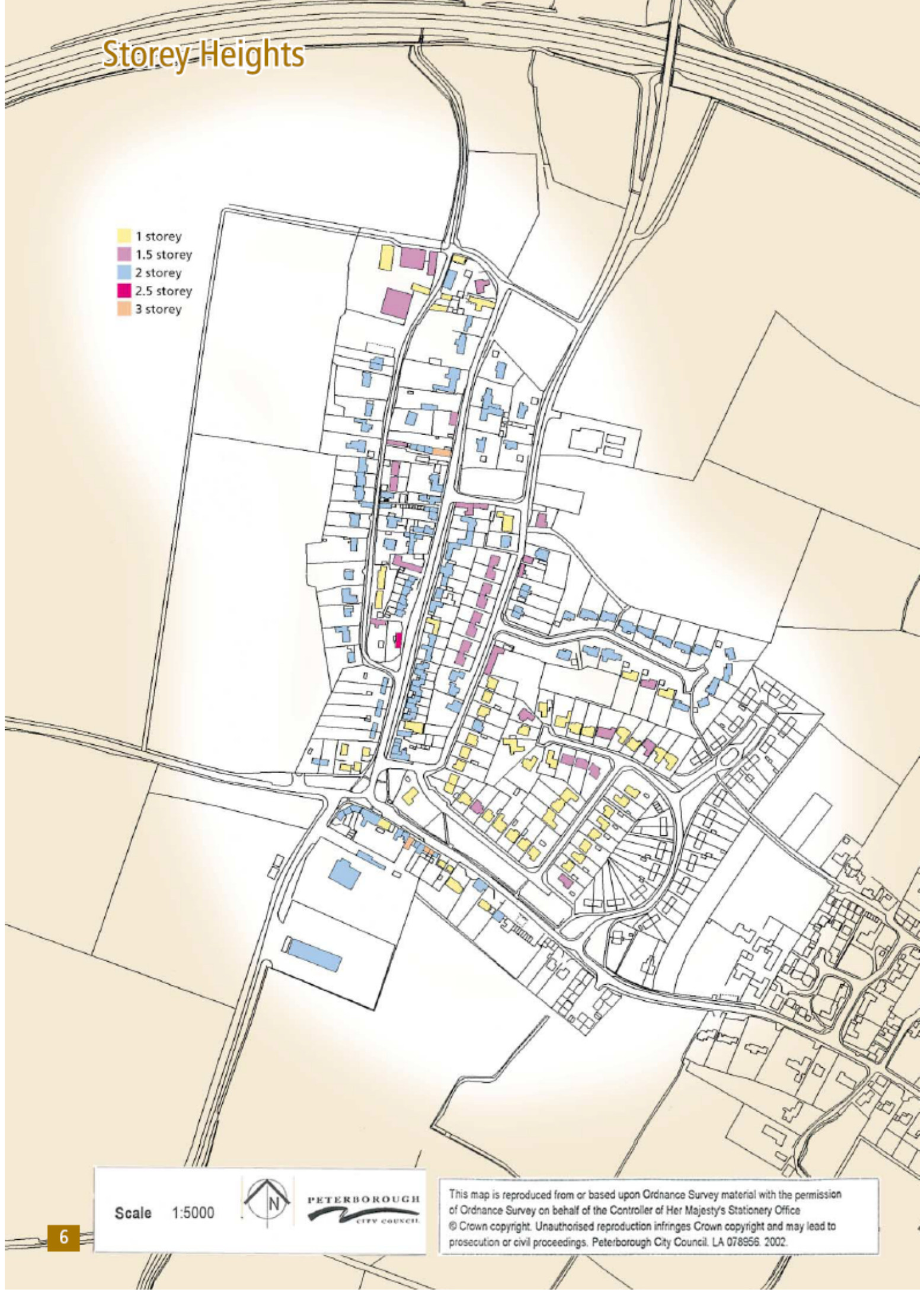
#### 3.1.5 Wall Materials

- old bricks
- modern bricks
- render
- stone
- artificial stone
- other

The objective of this survey was to identify old (pre-

# Storey Heights

- 1 storey
- 1.5 storey
- 2 storey
- 2.5 storey
- 3 storey



Scale 1:5000

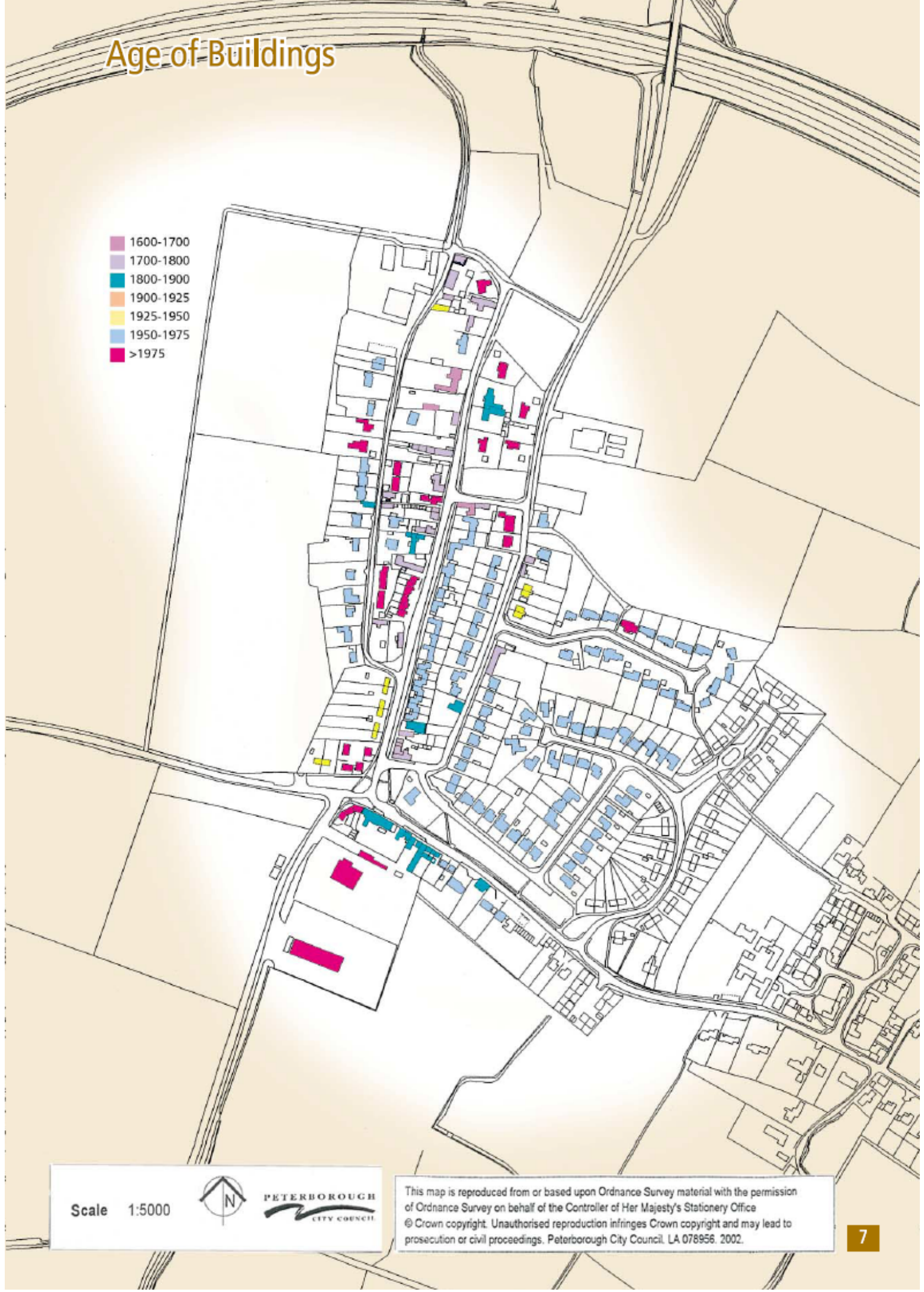


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# Age of Buildings

- 1600-1700
- 1700-1800
- 1800-1900
- 1900-1925
- 1925-1950
- 1950-1975
- >1975



Scale 1:5000

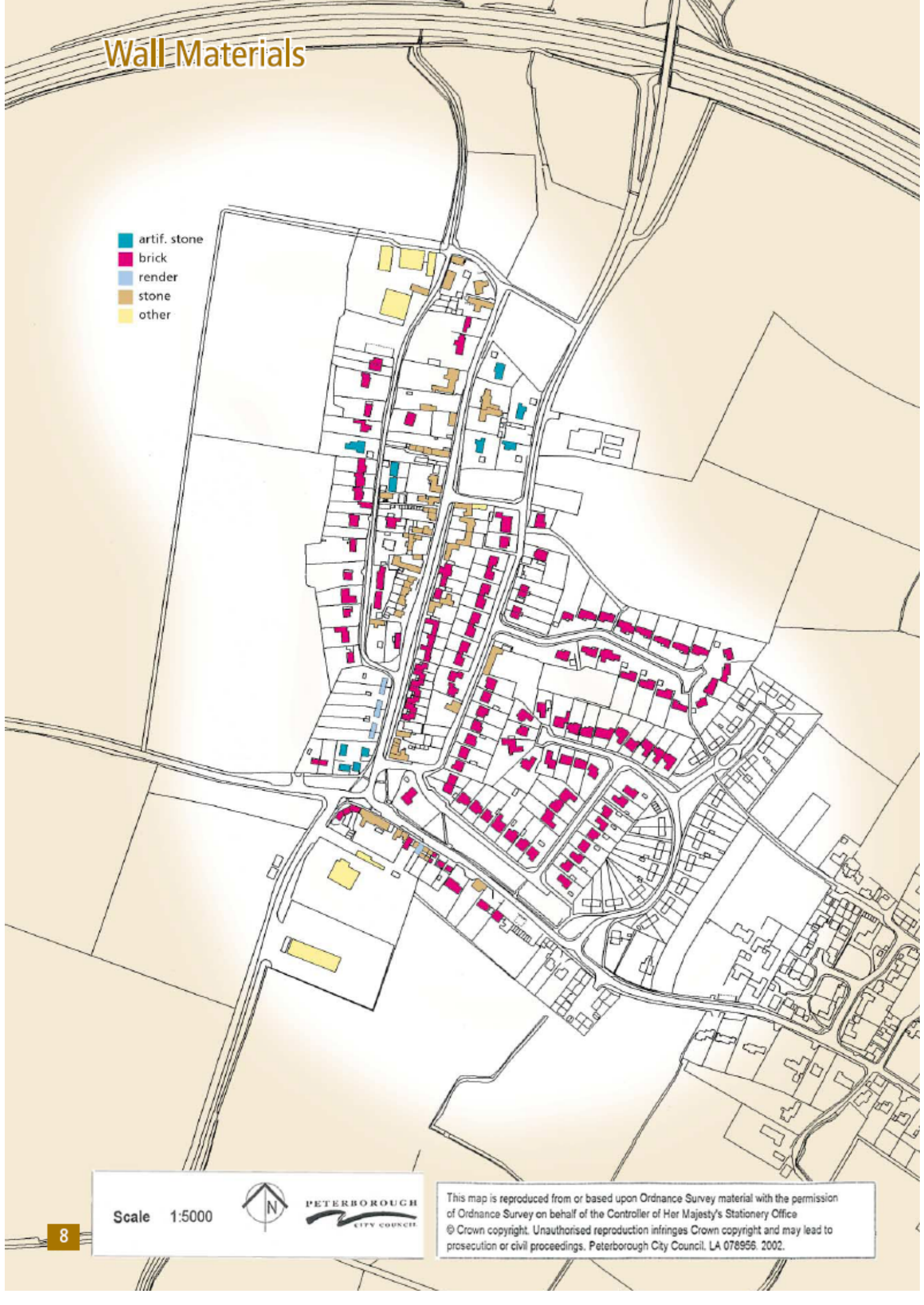


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# Wall Materials

- artif. stone
- brick
- render
- stone
- other



Scale 1:5000



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twentieth century) and new (1900 onwards) building materials. The field trials demonstrated that with guidance and some practice, the community surveyors could readily identify the differences between old, locally made stock bricks and mass produced wire cut or sandfaced bricks. However, distinguishing between modern hand-made type bricks and the old bricks they were chosen to match, presented great difficulties.

Similar problems were encountered with the latest artificial stones, which convincingly replicate natural stone. Distinguishing between modern and traditional rendering was also difficult at times.

A colour photographic materials key proved of some help.

### 3.1.6 Roof Materials

Collyweston slate  
 Welsh slate  
 old pantiles  
 thatch  
 Welsh slate replica  
 red pantile replica  
 other modern tiles

Modern replications of Collyweston and Welsh slates and concrete and clay pantiles, presented similar difficulties to walling materials in defining “old” and “modern” materials.

### 3.1.7 Uses

A3 public houses, cafés, car salesrooms, petrol stations, launderettes  
 C2 residential schools, colleges, hospitals, nursing homes  
 C3 residential  
 D1 church, church hall, health centres, day nurseries  
 D2 cultural, sports and leisure facilities  
 police station/house  
 agriculture

The use recording and analysis was based on the Town and Country Planning Uses Classes Order.

## 3.2 Other Features Database

### 3.2.1 Walls (Freestanding)

The character and appearance of Ailsworth is strongly influenced by walls, built of local coursed stone. Some of the walls are known to have early origins and are therefore of historic and townscape importance.

Walls were recorded on a property by property basis. However, it was quickly found that many walls span several property boundaries, therefore subsequent analysis on a property by property basis may be misleading.

The key point of the research was to establish the significance of walls as part of the street scene. The analysis of walls and townscape thus represents the most important area of research.

Research areas were:

### 3.2.2 Walls

height (<1m, 1m-2m, >2m)

materials (stone, brick, other)

### 3.2.3 Fences

A key to fence types was prepared. Only fences in the public view were included in the survey, thus side and rear garden fences were excluded unless they separated private spaces from a public road, footpath etc.

Fences height (<1m, 1m-2m)

type (close boarded, palisade, larch lap, picket, hit & miss)

### 3.2.4 Hedges

Hedges were surveyed using the same assumptions as for fences. A photo key sheet illustrated the following categories:

height (<1m, 1m-2m, >2m)

type (native, ornamental, leylandii)

### 3.2.5 Trees

Only trees affecting the street scene were included in the survey; these may include trees in front gardens or side gardens adjacent to roads, pavements and footpaths. A species identification chart including common native species (in leaf) was prepared and surveys undertaken on the following:

Trees height (<3m, 3m-8m, >8m)

type (non-native, native)

Heights could be gauged as follows:

<3m - about half way up the wall of a modern two storey house (first floor level)

3m-8m - between the first floor and roof ridge of a modern two storey house

>8m - the ridgelines of modern houses.

Modern two storey houses were taken as a height barometer because at least one is likely to be visible in all village streets.

## 3.3 The Townscape Assessment

The Buildings and Other Features Databases are *quantitative* assessments of Ailsworth's built environment. The purpose of the Townscape Assessment is to provide a *qualitative* assessment. The principles of auditing demand a process, which is comprehensive, repeatable, measurable and objective. The project, as funded under the Local Heritage Initiative, requires community participation and local ownership.

To ensure comprehensiveness, the survey considered townscape as spaces, enclosing elements and details as follows.

# Roof Materials

- Collyweston slate
- old pantiles
- other modern tiles
- replica pantiles
- thatch
- Welsh slate
- other

Scale 1:5000

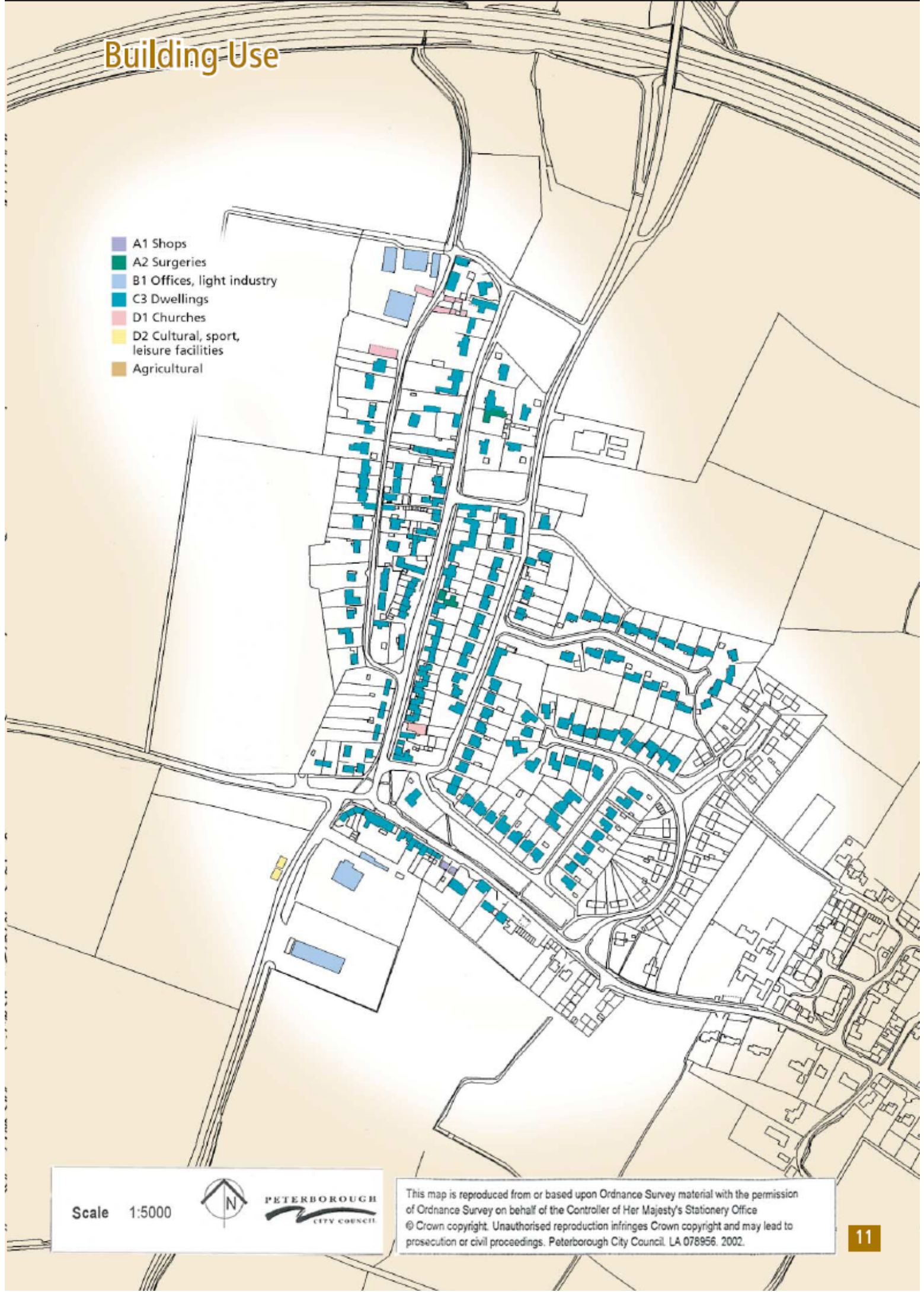


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# Building Use

- A1 Shops
- A2 Surgeries
- B1 Offices, light industry
- C3 Dwellings
- D1 Churches
- D2 Cultural, sport, leisure facilities
- Agricultural



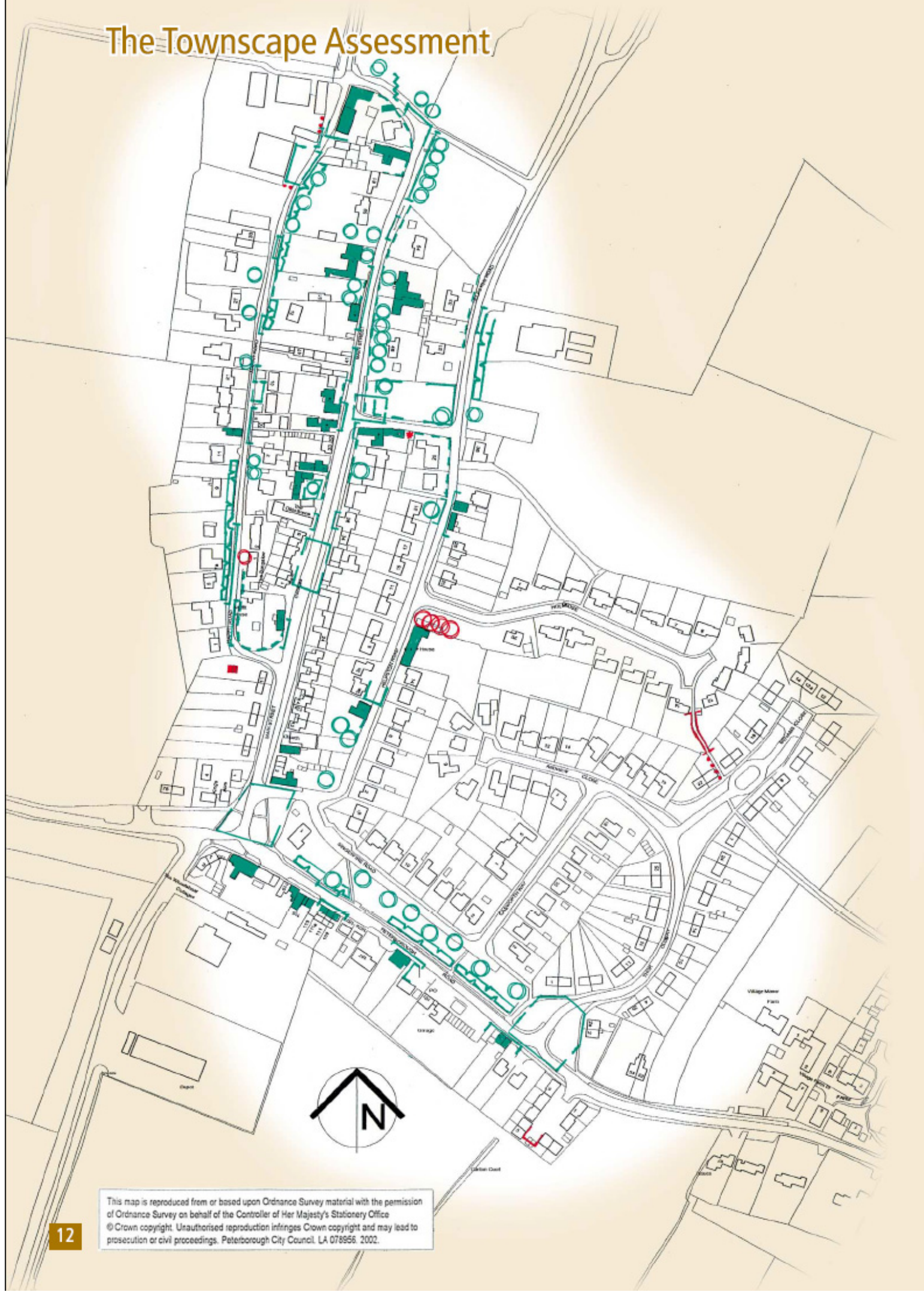
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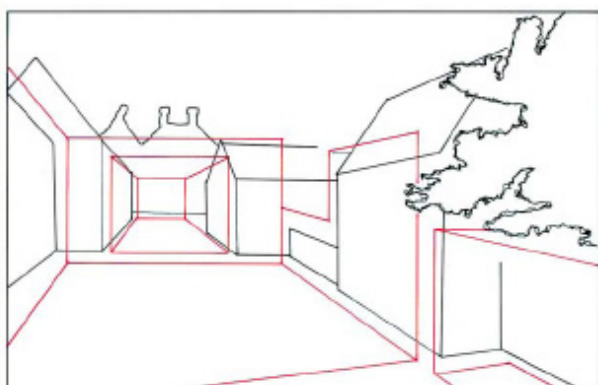
# The Townscape Assessment



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### 3.3.1 Spaces

These are three-dimensional areas enclosed by the ground, buildings, trees, fences, etc. It is the size and arrangement of these spaces which make up the character of the area.



Each of the main components of townscape was further broken down as follows:

#### Spaces

- Defined by
- Vertical enclosure - for example overhanging trees
  - Static enclosure - walls, trees, buildings etc making strongly square shaped spaces
  - Dynamic enclosure - walls, trees, buildings etc. making a strongly defined linear streetscape
  - Changes in level - steps, retaining walls or even steep hills which strongly demarcate one definable space in a street scene from another
  - Views and Vistas - Prominent features such as a major tree or church tower, or an alignment of buildings, walls, trees etc, which strongly draw the eye from one space to another.

The amount of enclosure is factually defined in the Buildings and Other Features assessments through storey height and tree, wall and hedge height surveys.

### 3.3.2 Enclosing Elements

These are the sides of the enclosed space,

e.g. buildings, trees, walls, hedges etc.

Enclosing Elements were summarised as:



- Buildings - of any size, type or age, make a very positive contribution to the street scene or which clearly detract from it.
- Walls - stone, brick, block or other masonry walls.
- Fences/Railings -
- Trees -
- Other -

### 3.3.3 Details

These are the finer parts of the scene, e.g. architectural make-up, local building styles, materials etc., which may brighten and enliven an area, giving it an individual identity, or an unsightly advertisement or road sign, which may spoil a street scene.



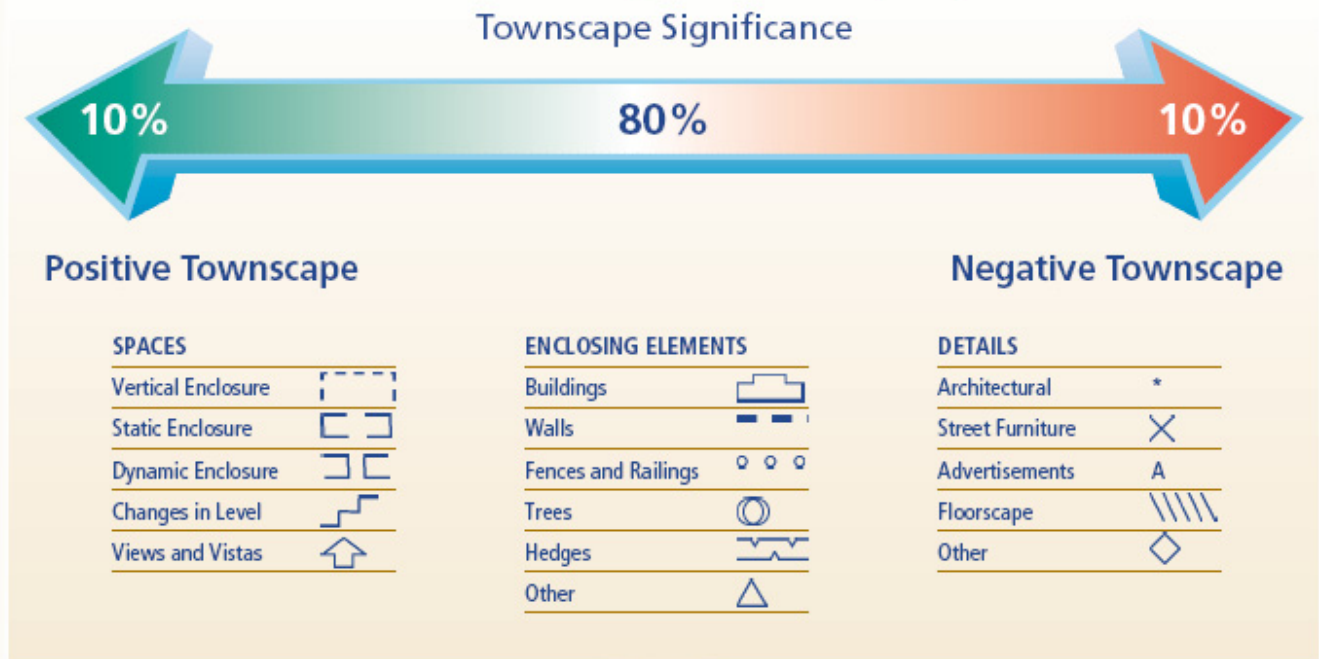
- Architectural - striking features of buildings such as decorative chimneys, or moulded door case, or alterations or features, which are obviously out of place in the street scene.
- Street furniture - street lights, bollards, benches etc.
- Advertisements - shop fronts, illuminated and non-illuminated projecting signs etc.
- Floorscape - tarmac, paving, cobbles or specially designed surfaces around trees or steps etc.
- Other -

A more detailed explanation of all these components can be found in the Peterborough Built Environment Survey Pack, available from Peterborough Environment City Trust.

To ensure comprehensiveness, surveyors stopped in every street at approximately fifty metre intervals. At each stop they looked in front, behind and to both sides and systematically recorded the spaces, enclosing elements and details in turn, using the symbols supplied in the Pack.

To ensure objectivity, the only features that were recorded were those that *very obviously, positively* contributed to the street scene or *clearly detracted* from the street scene. Surveyors undertook the survey in pairs or threes. At each stopping point, the surveyors were required to ask themselves the question: "Would nine out of ten people conclude that this building, tree, wall, advert etc., positively contributes to Ailworth's built environment, or clearly detracts from it?" If all surveyors reached agreement, a symbol, (red for

## Base Data Sheet – Key to Townscape Symbols



negative features, green for positive), was drawn on an Ordnance Survey base. If surveyors were unsure, or could not reach agreement, NO NOTATION was made.

To ensure accuracy, two or three groups were asked to independently survey the same streets and subsequently compare their results. A rate of 80% consistency between the groups was considered acceptable. Ideally, the final database for spaces, enclosing elements and details would be on average taken from the results of two or three survey groups.

### 3.4 Other Factors and Influences

It is acknowledged that institutional factors may have considerable effects on the built environment. Some, such as general planning policies relating to design, siting or materials were found to be very difficult to quantify and measure.

Establishing hard information in other areas proved possible but required considerable research. The datasets that were assembled are given below.

#### 3.4.1 Listed Building Grants

Two grant schemes have operated in Ailsworth over the last fifteen years. These are the Collyweston Slating Scheme, jointly run by English Heritage and Peterborough City Council and the Listed Building Grant Scheme, financed solely by Peterborough City Council.

Comparison of the condition of buildings with data on availability and distribution of grants may help gauge the effectiveness of grants for the repair of historic buildings in maintaining the overall character and appearance of Ailsworth.

Information on grants is a matter of public record.

However, it was considered that making public the amount of grant made available to specific properties (and hence owners) did not advance the analysis and could undermine community support for the overall project. Therefore, all information is presented in a general format, which does not identify grants to properties.

#### 3.4.2 Building Status

The level of protection and deeper consideration of alterations and extensions afforded by listed building status, whether Grade I, II\* or II and through Article 4 Directions, was examined in conjunction with the Townscape and Buildings databases.

#### 3.4.3 Planning Applications/Listed Building Consents

Analysis of the number, type, date and decision of planning applications and listed building consents would give some indication of the development pressures on the village. A deeper understanding of these processes would assist in formulating policies, through, for example, Village Design Statements to better respond to development pressures.

Analysis of the number, types and decisions on applications for planning and listed building consents, submitted since 1971 was undertaken. However, the number of applications was far greater than anticipated. The types of application, for new buildings, alterations, extensions, demolition etc., were also more complex than originally thought.

Therefore, the analysis was confined to the number of applications approved and refused in ten-year periods. This was a major data collection task but, even with the basic analysis undertaken, the results were significant.

# Listed Status

- Grade I
- Grade II\*
- Grade II
- Grade II (Group Value)
- Non-listed

Scale 1:5000



PETERBOROUGH  
CITY COUNCIL

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## 4.0 Summary of Findings

The table below presents a summary of the characteristics of Ailsworth's buildings.

### Total Number of Buildings Surveyed In Ailsworth: 207

#### NUMBER OF BUILDINGS:

|                    |                         |     |                     |     |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|
| By Age:            | 1600-1700 & before      | 12  | 1925-1950           | 13  |
|                    | 1700-1800               | 20  | 1950-1975           | 121 |
|                    | 1800-1900               | 11  | >1975               | 29  |
|                    | 1900-1925               | 1   |                     |     |
| By Size:           | small                   | 52  | large               | 61  |
|                    | medium                  | 91  | very large          | 3   |
| By Type:           | detached                | 130 | semi-detached       | 42  |
|                    | terrace                 | 35  |                     |     |
| By Storey Height:  | 1                       | 57  | 2.5                 | 1   |
|                    | 1.5                     | 4   | 3                   | 3   |
|                    | 2                       | 142 |                     |     |
| By Condition:      | good                    | 203 | fair                | 4   |
|                    |                         |     |                     |     |
| By Wall Materials: | artificial stone        | 11  | stone               | 50  |
|                    | brick                   | 136 | other               | 2   |
|                    | render                  | 8   |                     |     |
| By Roof Materials: | Collyweston slate       | 13  | thatch              | 11  |
|                    | old pantiles            | 5   | Welsh slate replica | 1   |
|                    | other modern tiles      | 143 | Welsh slate         | 21  |
|                    | red pantile replica     | 8   | other               | 5   |
| By Use:            | A1                      | 3   | D1                  | 2   |
|                    | A2                      | 1   | D2                  | 1   |
|                    | B1                      | 2   | other               | 1   |
|                    | C3                      | 197 |                     |     |
| By Listed Status:  | Grade II                | 4   | Non-listed          | 184 |
|                    | Grade III (Group Value) | 19  |                     |     |

## 4.1 Buildings

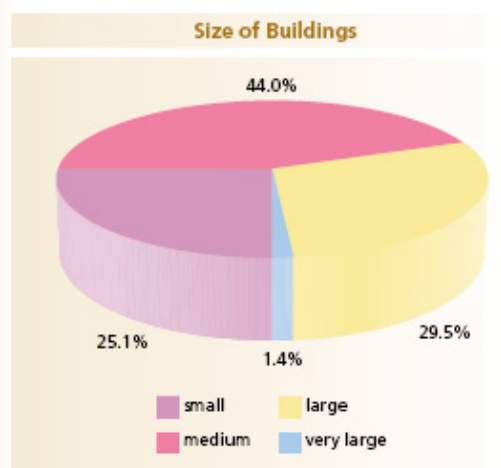
### 4.1.1 The Building Population

The total number of buildings, that is buildings individually identified on Peterborough City Council's property register, numbers two hundred and seven. This figure includes buildings which, whilst under one ownership, for example in a farmyard group, can clearly be taken as individual buildings in their own right.

Structures such as garages, sheds etc., which are clearly associated with a main building, are not included in this total. It can readily be argued that these secondary structures can have a profound effect on the character and appearance of villages. For this reason, the townscape survey includes all buildings and structures. However, it was found that the level of complexity posed through analysis of the two hundred and seven primary structures posed a considerable challenge. The additional work required through the inclusion of several hundred secondary buildings was not considered to add greatly to the overall levels of understanding of the village or audit process. They are, therefore, not included in this analysis.

### 4.1.2 Building Size

Total Number of Buildings - 207



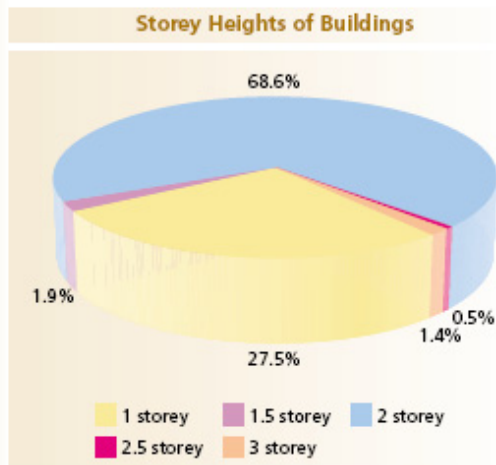
Most buildings (44%), are medium sized, and most of these are on Helpston Road and the Singerfire Road/Casworth Way/Andrew Close estate.

A quarter of the building stock is small, and clustered to the south of the village on Peterborough Road and Helpston Road.

Almost a third, (29.5%) of buildings, have been classified as large. The impact of very large and very small buildings is minimal.

### 4.1.3 Storey Heights

Total Number of Buildings - 207



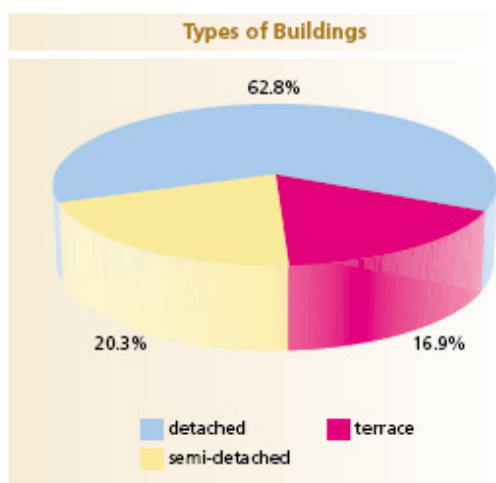
Ailsworth is dominated by two storey buildings. Of the total population of buildings in the village, 69% are two storeys high.

There are fifty seven single storey buildings in the village, equating to 27% of the total number. Most of these are twentieth century bungalows on Helpston Road and the Singerfire Road/Casworth Way/Andrew Close estate.

The historic streets of Peterborough Road, Main Street and Maffit Road have the greatest variation in building heights, with the predominant two storey buildings interspersed by single storey, one and a half storey and three storey buildings. The one and a half storey properties in the Singerfire Road/ Casworth Way/Andrew Close estate are bungalows incorporating dormer loft conversions.

### 4.1.4 Property Types

Total Number of Buildings - 207



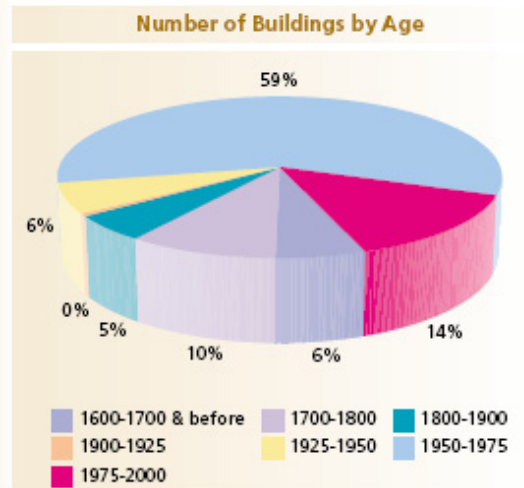
Detached buildings account for 63% of all properties in the village.

Thirty five or 17% are terraced properties, including end of terraces. Semi-detached properties account for forty two properties or 20% of the village building population.

The historic streets of Peterborough Road and Main Street have the greatest mix of building types; the Singerfire Road/ Casworth Way/Andrew Close estate and the western side of Maffit Road are almost entirely composed of detached properties.

### 4.1.5 Ages of Buildings

Total Number of Buildings - 207

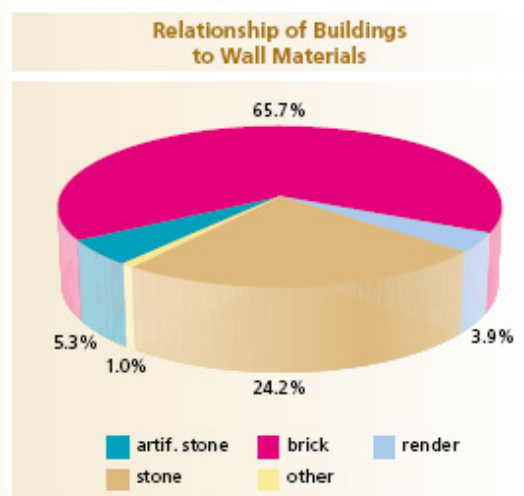


More than three quarters of Ailsworth properties (79%), were built during the twentieth century and 74% of these were built between 1950 and 1975. The Singerfire Road/Casworth Way/Andrew Close estate, much of Helpston Road and the majority of infill developments on the west side of Maffit Road were constructed during this period.

Main Street clearly represents the village's historic core, with buildings from the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The older buildings on Peterborough Road all date from the nineteenth century.

### 4.1.6 Wall Materials

Total Number of Buildings - 207

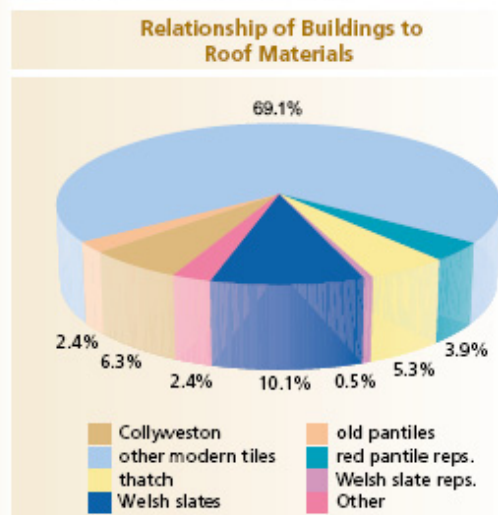


The majority of buildings (66%), are constructed of modern bricks. The next largest category are stone buildings representing 24% of all buildings, with artificial stone making up 5% of the total building stock.

Unsurprisingly, the modern estates and infill housing are almost entirely constructed in modern brick; the Distribution of Wall Materials map very clearly defines the historic core of Ailsworth as the cluster of stone buildings around the north half of Main Street.

#### 4.1.7 Roof Materials

Total Number of Buildings – 207



The pie chart shows that modern tiles are the most common roofing material in Ailsworth, accounting for 69% of all properties.

Welsh slate comprises 10% of all roofs, which are notably clustered around Peterborough Road and associated with the nineteenth century buildings.

The pre-nineteenth century roofing materials of thatch and Collyweston slate, 5% and 6% of all roofs respectively, are noticeably grouped on the north half of Main Street. These groupings of traditional materials are reinforced by eight red pantile replica roofs.

#### 4.1.8 Use of Buildings

The vast majority of buildings (95%), are in residential use. On the north and south extremes of the village off Maffit Road and Station Road, are light industrial/office uses and two shops survive on Peterborough Road. Other uses include doctors' and dentists' surgeries, the chapel and the Hutz community facilities.

#### 4.1.9 Condition of Buildings

98% of buildings in Ailsworth have been found to be in good condition with 2% judged to be in fair condition. There are no buildings on English Heritage's list of historic buildings under threat through disuse and dereliction.

### 4.2 Other Features

#### 4.2.1 Overall Findings

The two hundred and seven buildings include ninety one property boundaries defined by stone walls, fourteen by fences and twenty three by hedge boundaries. Some properties have one boundary of stone, whilst a hedge forms another: others have boundaries made up of a wall or fence with a hedge behind. The basic statistics are set out in the table below.

Interrogation of this data has been restricted to fairly straightforward analysis.

Nonetheless, some telling conclusions can be drawn. A greater depth of analysis on the geographic distribution and visual importance of trees, hedges, walls and fences is contained in the Townscape sections.

#### WALL ANALYSIS: Total nos. of properties in Ailsworth with wall boundaries 91

|                |       |           |
|----------------|-------|-----------|
| Wall Heights   | <1m   | 51        |
|                | 1m-2m | 39        |
|                | >2m   | 1         |
| <b>Totals</b>  |       | <b>91</b> |
| Wall Materials | stone | 42        |
|                | brick | 48        |
|                | other | 1         |
| <b>Totals</b>  |       | <b>91</b> |

#### FENCE ANALYSIS: Total nos. of properties in Ailsworth with fence boundaries 14

|               |                        |           |
|---------------|------------------------|-----------|
| Fence Heights | <1m                    | 2         |
|               | 1m-2m                  | 12        |
|               | >2m                    | 0         |
| <b>Totals</b> |                        | <b>14</b> |
| Fence Types   | vertical close boarded | 1         |
|               | palisade               | 6         |
|               | larch lap              | 3         |
|               | other                  | 4         |
| <b>Totals</b> |                        | <b>14</b> |

#### HEDGE ANALYSIS: Total nos. of properties in Ailsworth with hedge boundaries 23

|               |                 |           |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Hedge Heights | <1m             | 1         |
|               | 1m-2m           | 17        |
|               | >2m             | 5         |
| <b>Totals</b> |                 | <b>23</b> |
| Hedge Types   | leylandii       | 4         |
|               | formal garden   | 5         |
|               | informal garden | 10        |
|               | formal native   | 4         |
| <b>Totals</b> |                 | <b>23</b> |

#### TREE ANALYSIS

| Heights      | Types      |     |            |
|--------------|------------|-----|------------|
| native       | non-native |     | subtotals  |
| <3m          | 18         | 40  | 58         |
| 3m-8m        | 118        | 79  | 197        |
| >8m          | 36         | 21  | 57         |
| sub totals   | 172        | 140 |            |
| <b>Total</b> |            |     | <b>312</b> |

## 4.2.2 Walls

A total of ninety one properties have boundary walls, 43% in local coursed limestone and 53% in brick. The distribution of old stone walls is confined to the historic village but the Singerfire Road/Casworth Way/Andrew Close estate twentieth century housing is characterised by dwarf brick frontage walls. Many walls are quite short, punctuated by house access drives. Other properties have long boundary walls, which have a stronger visual impact.

In particular, the walls fronting 48 to 54 Main Street and the Manor Farmyard development make a very strong contribution to the street scene.

## 4.2.3 Fences

Fences demarcate fourteen property boundaries and most are the palisade type.

## 4.2.4 Hedges

There are twenty three hedged property boundaries, with most being 1m-2m high garden hedges. However, this analysis does not reveal the visual significance of the large hedge to the north of Peterborough Road, which bounds open space and therefore does not have any property boundaries, or the hedges enclosing the narrow Maffit Road.

## 4.2.5 Trees

A total of three hundred and twelve trees were recorded from public viewpoints within the Ailsworth village envelope. Others may exist in rear gardens, which are not visible from streets or footpaths.

There are notable trees within public open spaces, such as between Peterborough and Singerfire Roads and on the village green. Most of these are ornamental species planted in the twentieth century and now reaching maturity. More than half (55%) of the trees recorded are of native species; most of these (68%) are 3m-8m in height and 20% are mature specimens over 8m in height.

















About 45% of all trees are non-native and over half of these (56%) are 3m-8m in height; 15% of non-native trees are over 8m high. These include the poplars and pollarded limes at the north end of Main Street and isolated trees throughout the village.

## 4.3 Townscape

### 4.3.1 General Evaluation

The table below demonstrates that the townscape of Ailsworth is overwhelmingly positive. However, the map shows that the distribution of positive elements is uneven. Combinations of spatial enclosure by strongly positive buildings, wall and trees are almost entirely confined to the north part of Main Street and Peterborough Road. The positive character of Maffit Road is mainly due to the narrow road carriageway, enclosed by building gable ends and hedges. The twentieth century streets of Singerfire Road/Casworth Way/Andrew Close are very different in character to the historic village streets.

## ANALYSIS OF TOWNSCAPE EVALUATIONS

| Townscape elements        | Key                                                                                   | Positive Contributions | Negative Contributions |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>SPACES</b>             |                                                                                       |                        |                        |
| Vertical Enclosure        |    | -                      | -                      |
| Static Enclosure          |    | 10                     | 1                      |
| Dynamic Enclosure         |    | 22                     | 2                      |
| Changes in Level          |    | 1                      | -                      |
| Views and Vistas          |    | -                      | -                      |
| Sub Total                 |                                                                                       | 33                     | 3                      |
| <b>ENCLOSING ELEMENTS</b> |                                                                                       |                        |                        |
| Buildings                 |    | 25                     | 1                      |
| Walls                     |    | 10                     | -                      |
| Fences and Railings       |    | -                      | 3                      |
| Trees                     |    | 42                     | 5                      |
| Hedges                    |    | 7                      | -                      |
| Other                     |    | -                      | -                      |
| Sub Total                 |                                                                                       | 84                     | 8                      |
| <b>DETAILS</b>            |                                                                                       |                        |                        |
| Architectural             |    | 1                      | 1                      |
| Street Furniture          |   | -                      | -                      |
| Advertisements            |  | -                      | -                      |
| Floorscape                |  | -                      | -                      |
| Other                     |  | -                      | -                      |
| Sub Total                 |                                                                                       | 1                      | 1                      |
| <b>TOTALS</b>             |                                                                                       | <b>118</b>             | <b>12</b>              |

### 4.3.2 Spaces

The spaces notations indicate a townscape of varied spatial enclosure. The narrowness of Maffit Road, combined with low gable ends and linear hedges, interspersed with trees, all situated close to the carriageway edge give a strongly linear character.

The combination of houses and high stone walls close on the back edge of the pavement give a dynamic form to the north part of Main Street. The gable ends to the pavement and trees behind walls, reinforce the linear form but also provide punctuation. The buildings at 90° to the carriageway relieve the dynamic space with more static forms, most notably at the Helpston Road/Main Street paddock and cut, known locally as Cross Street.

The two greens, at the southern end of Main Street/Helpston Road and Thorolds Way, are human-scale static (square) spaces defined by combinations of buildings, hedges, trees and carriageway layout.

Well defined spatial enclosure is entirely absent from twentieth century developments, with the exception of the cut between Holme Close and Benams Close, Castor. Here the narrowness and blind nature of the alley give a negative sense of claustrophobia.

### 4.3.3 Enclosing Elements

Only 12% of buildings make a positive contribution to Ailsworth's townscape. The ten walls that were recorded as positive are all stone and include the 2m high and 140m long wall on the east side of Main Street and the wall around the Manor Farmyard development.

The hedges to Maffit Road and Peterborough Road, both over 2m high and 100m and 150m in length respectively, are prominent in shaping the townscape in this part of the village.

Forty two (or 13%) of the total village stock of three hundred and twelve trees make a positive townscape contribution. Invariably, these are larger specimens including the pollarded limes and poplars to Main Street and mature ornamental trees beside Singerfire Road. A number of trees have been heavily lopped, which in four instances has resulted in extreme disfigurement.

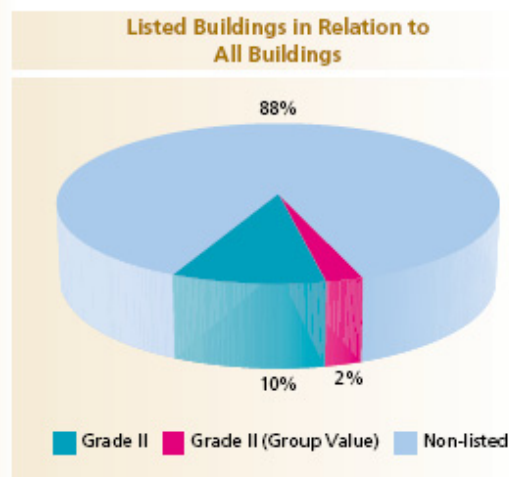
### 4.3.4 Details

Whilst the need for business security is understood, the razor wire tops to the fences at the north end of Maffit Road present a brutally intimidating feature in a village street scene.

## 4.4 Other Factors and Influences

### 4.4.1 Building Status

Total Number of Buildings - 207



There are twenty three listed buildings in Ailsworth, 11% of the total building stock.

These are all Grade II and occur in two noticeable clusters along Peterborough Road and in the north part of Main Street; hence nineteen of the twenty three buildings are noted as having Group Value.

### 4.4.2 Listed Building Grants

Over a twelve-year period (1990-2002), fourteen grants were made, totalling £9,637 with an average grant of £688.35. Almost two thirds of grants were given during the period 1995-2000 and it is understood that Peterborough City Council has now curtailed all grant schemes. Since only twelve of the twenty three listed buildings and two of a possible ninety one stone walls have received financial assistance over the last decade, it seems that there will be future demand for grants to help maintain Ailsworth's historic walls and buildings.

### 4.4.3 Planning Applications/Listing Building Consents

#### PLANNING APPLICATIONS / LISTED BUILDING CONSENTS DETERMINED

| Dates         | Planning  |          | Listed Building |            |
|---------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|------------|
|               | Approvals | Refusals | Consents        | Refusals   |
| 1971 – 1980   | 22        | 1        | 2               | –          |
| 1981 – 1990   | 47        | 1        | 13              | –          |
| 1991 – 2000   | 25        | 2        | 8               | –          |
| >2001         | –         | –        | –               | –          |
| <b>TOTALS</b> | <b>94</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>23</b>       | <b>–</b>   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  |           |          |                 | <b>121</b> |

The vast majority of planning applications and applications for listed building consent are approved. Only four out of one hundred and twenty one applications have been refused over the thirty-year period from 1971 to 2001.

Coincidentally, the number of applications to alter or extend listed buildings since 1971 was exactly the same as the number of listed buildings - twenty three. Changes every thirty years on average, to buildings that have existed for two to three hundred years, exert a degree of pressure on the historic buildings stock. During the same period, there was one planning application for approximately every other non-listed building.

#### ANALYSIS OF GRANTS FOR REPAIR OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND WALLS

| Types of Work                          | Dates          |             |                |             |               |            | Totals    |             |
|----------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
|                                        | 1985-1990      |             | 1990-1995      |             | 1995-2000     |            | Nos.      | £           |
|                                        | Nos. of Grants | Total £     | Nos. of Grants | Total £     | Nos. of Total | Total      |           |             |
| Re-thatching                           | 1              | 1000        | 1              | 625         | –             | –          | 2         | 1625        |
| Roof repairs/re-slatting               | 1              | 215         | 3              | 2917        | 1             | 879        | 5         | 4011        |
| General repairs                        | 2              | 1119        | 3              | 2172        | –             | –          | 5         | 3291        |
| Boundary walls                         | –              | –           | 2              | 710         | –             | –          | 2         | 710         |
| <b>TOTAL GRANTS – £ by year groups</b> | <b>4</b>       | <b>2334</b> | <b>9</b>       | <b>6424</b> | <b>1</b>      | <b>879</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>9637</b> |

## 5.0 The Audit

### 5.1. Buildings

#### 5.1.1 General Explanation

This section of the report looks at key relationships that exist between components of the built environment. The Audit examines links between the surveys and thereby builds up a picture of the village as it actually is. This is made possible by logging all data on Access database, the co-ordinates of which can then be interrogated.

For each relationship examined, the information is presented as a graph and also, where appropriate, on a map. This allows the survey information to be represented in the most effective manner possible, and by using maps, gives on-the-ground meaning to what is otherwise abstract information.

The thirty six key dual relationships are considered. These form the basis of the Audit process report. To avoid duplication and replication, a selective approach to the analysis has been adopted. For example, the relationship between Age and Condition would be the same whether it is written as "Age - Condition" or "Condition - Age". Whichever way it is written, the underlying information is not going to change. As a result, when all the replication has been removed, the survey is left with thirty six dual relationships.

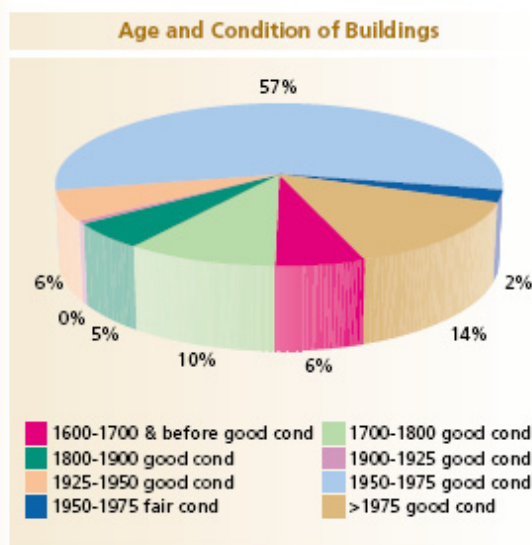
These are demonstrated in the table below.

The relationships that are struck out are those that are replicated elsewhere in the table. For example, where "height-age" is struck through, it is because the relationship has already been examined in the query "age-height". Changing the order of the words has no influence on the result of the query. Many of the queries, although important to carry out, reveal no

significant relationships between the categories. Where this occurs, it is stated that the query gave no significant insight into the survey.

#### Analysis by Age and Condition

Total Number of Buildings - 207

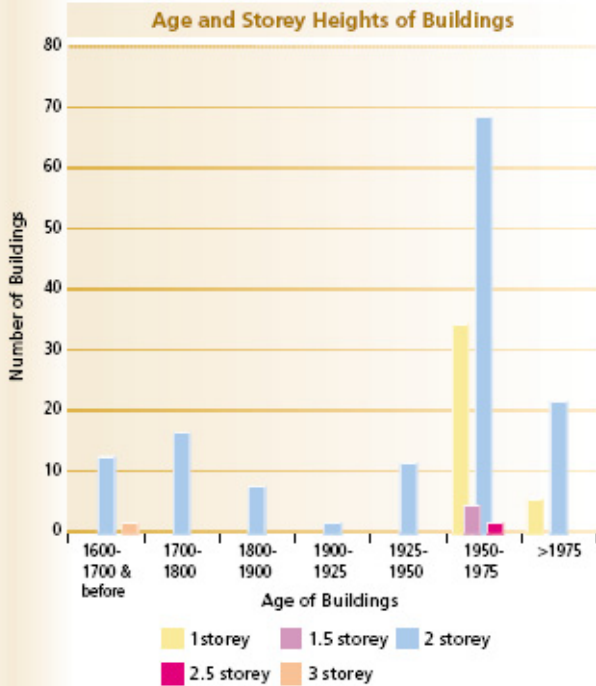


Ailsworth does not have many properties that are in a less than good condition. The few that are not in good condition (only four properties from the whole built population of the village), are classed as being in a fair condition.

It is not known if the good condition of the built fabric is due to the general affluence of the Greater Peterborough area, the availability of grants for re-thatching, Collyweston slating and stone wall repairs or other factors.

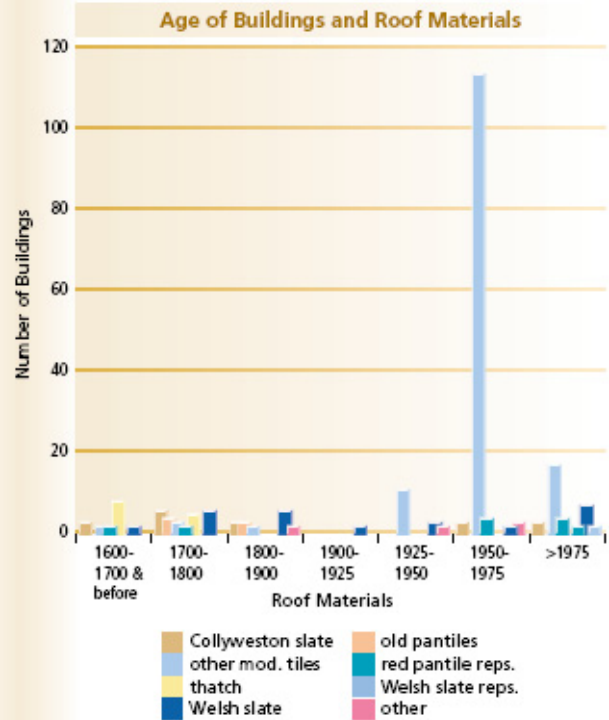
| Age                      | Height                | Size                     | Type                       | Materials (Walls)       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Age - Condition          | <del>Height—Age</del> | <del>Size—Age</del>      | <del>Type—Age</del>        | <del>Walls—Age</del>    |
| Age - Height             | Height - Condition    | Size - Condition         | Type - Condition           | Walls - Condition       |
| Age - Roofs              | Height - Roofs        | <del>Size—Height</del>   | <del>Type—Height</del>     | <del>Walls—Height</del> |
| Age - Size               | Height - Size         | Size - Roofs             | Type - Roofs               | Walls - Roofs           |
| Age - Status             | Height - Status       | Size - Status            | <del>Type—Size</del>       | <del>Walls—Size</del>   |
| Age - Type               | Height - Type         | Size - Type              | Type - Status              | Walls - Status          |
| Age - Use                | Height - Use          | Size - Use               | Type - Use                 | <del>Walls—Type</del>   |
| Age - Walls              | Height - Walls        | Size - Walls             | Type - Walls               | Walls - Use             |
| <b>Materials (Roofs)</b> | <b>Use</b>            | <b>Status</b>            | <b>Condition</b>           |                         |
| <del>Roofs—Age</del>     | <del>Use—Age</del>    | <del>Status—Age</del>    | <del>Condition—Age</del>   |                         |
| Roofs - Condition        | Use - Condition       | Status - Condition       | Condition - Height         |                         |
| <del>Roofs—Height</del>  | <del>Use—Height</del> | <del>Status—Height</del> | <del>Condition—Roofs</del> |                         |
| <del>Roofs—Size</del>    | <del>Use—Roofs</del>  | <del>Status—Roofs</del>  | <del>Condition—Size</del>  |                         |
| Roofs - Status           | <del>Use—Size</del>   | Status - Size            | Condition - Status         |                         |
| <del>Roofs—Type</del>    | Use - Status          | Status - Type            | Condition - Type           |                         |
| Roofs - Use              | <del>Use—Type</del>   | Status - Use             | Condition - Use            |                         |
| <del>Roofs—Walls</del>   | <del>Use—Walls</del>  | <del>Status—Walls</del>  | <del>Condition—Walls</del> |                         |

## Analysis by Age and Storey Heights



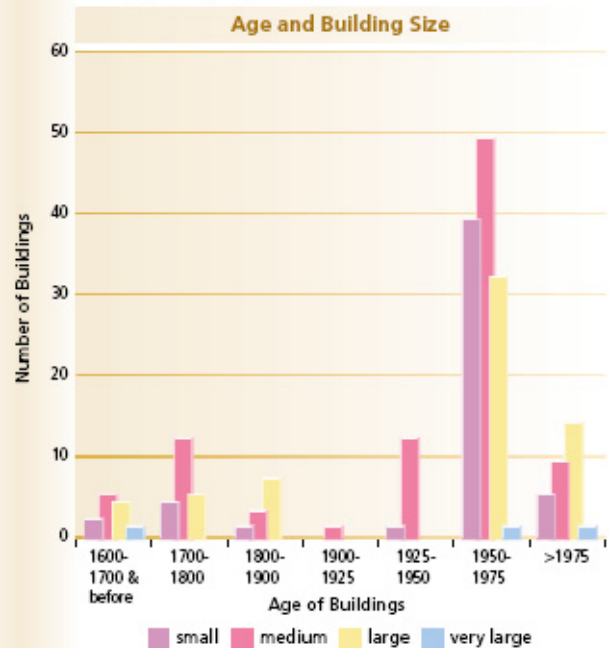
Most properties in Ailsworth are two storeys high and were built between 1950 and 1975. There is only one historic building in the village that has less than two storeys - a one and a half storey building that dates from 1600-1700. Up until 1950, bar this one exception, all the surviving property has two storeys. This begins to change in the 1950s, when single storey buildings appear in the village for the first time. Between 1950 and 1975, thirty four single storey properties were built, namely the bungalows in Singerfire Road/Casworth Way/Andrew Close/Main Street. The growth of single storey properties declined between 1975 and 2000, when only five were built. Recent years have seen infill development by houses between one and a half and two and a half storeys in height.

## Analysis by Age and Roof Materials



The palette of natural roofing materials in the pre-twentieth century period is very striking and the overwhelming preponderance of modern concrete tiles after 1925 even more so. It is interesting and encouraging to see the return of traditional materials since 1975, probably as a result of greater emphasis on conservation and design following the introduction of the Department of the Environment Circular 23/77, *Planning and the Historic Environment*.

## Analysis by Age and Size

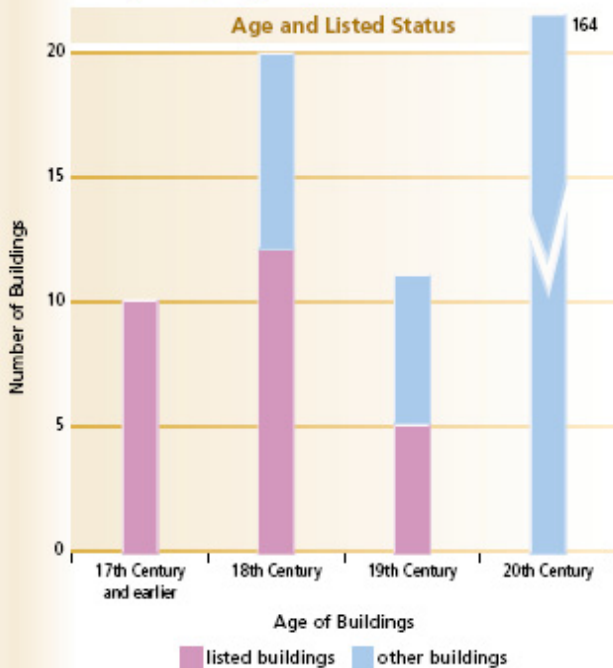


For the purpose of this graph, size is taken as the building footprint. The distribution of buildings clearly

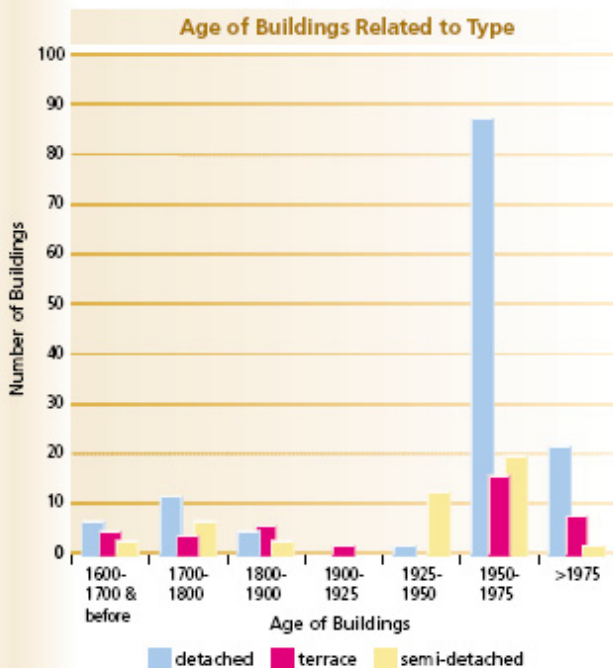
shows the post 1950 building boom. Between 1950 and 2000, one hundred and fifty properties (of all sizes) were built in Ailsworth – the busiest period of construction by far.

The chart shows that medium sized buildings are the largest category in the first half of the twentieth century, but in the last fifty years more large houses have been built. A mix of large, small and medium sized properties survive from all periods before 1900.

### Analysis by Age and Status



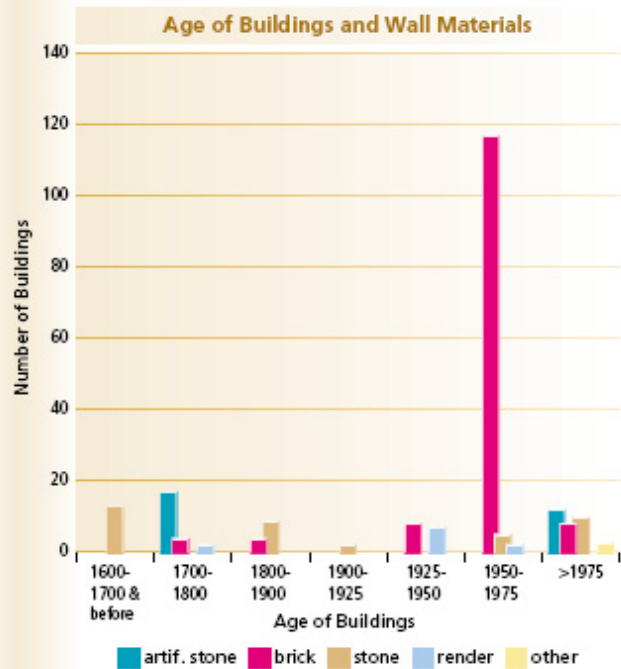
All buildings originating from the seventeenth century (1600-1700) are listed. Alterations to eighteenth century buildings have resulted in 40% not being justified to be of listable quality. Five of the 11 nineteenth century buildings have been listed for their group value; these are within the linked terraces on Peterborough Road. No twentieth century buildings are listed.



### Analysis by Age and Type

Until 1925, there was a mix of detached, semi-detached, end terrace and terraced properties. The 1925-1950 period saw the erection of twelve semi-detached properties, but the major expansion during the 1950-1975 period was primarily through the building of seventy seven new detached houses representing 37% of all buildings in the village.

The dominance of detached properties continues in the post 1975 period, when a further eighteen houses were constructed. Post 1950, detached houses represent 46% of all buildings in Ailsworth.

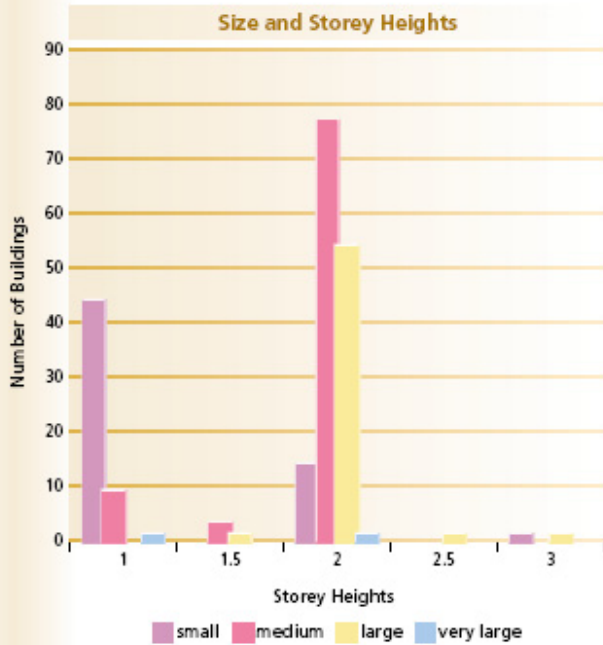


### Analysis by Age and Wall Materials

Until the twentieth century, stone was the predominant wall material in Ailsworth.

Between 1950 and 1975, modern brick was used on the majority of buildings. Since 1975, there has been a greater mix of materials, with artificial stone and new stone buildings featuring, particularly beside older stone buildings.

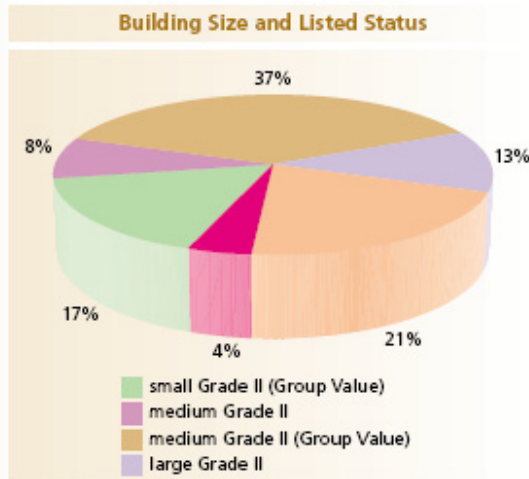
### Analysis by Building Size and Storey Heights



The analysis above confirms that medium sized two storey is by far the most dominant building form with small single storey buildings (bungalows on Casworth Way, Andrew Close, Singerfire Road and Helpston Road) the next largest group.

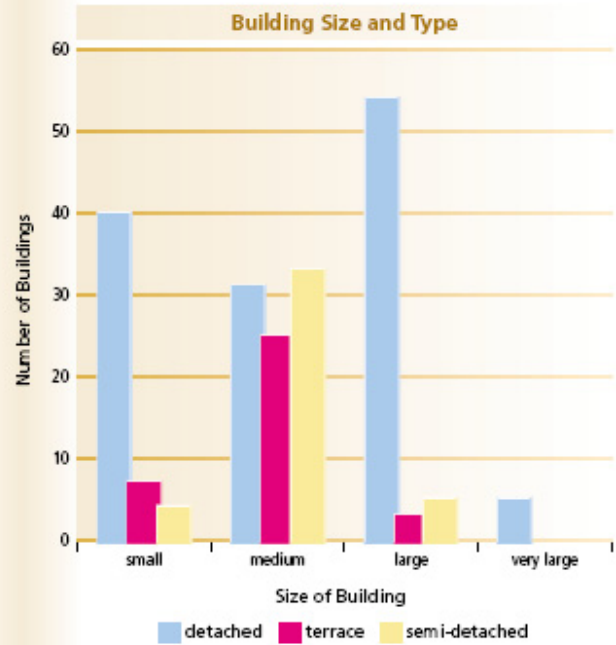
### Analysis by Size and Status

Total Number of Buildings - 23



Nine (of twenty three) listed buildings have been recorded as medium sized, two are in the very large category and eight are recorded as large.

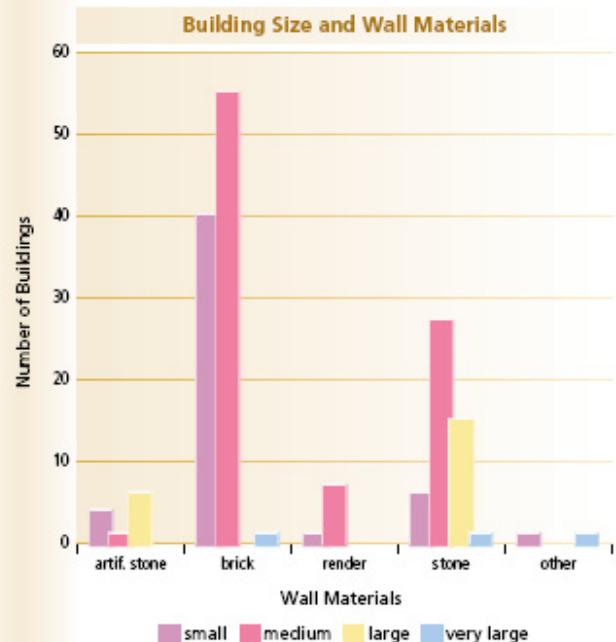
### Analysis by Size and Type



Most detached properties in Ailsworth are large, but there are a surprising number of very small and small, detached houses. Medium sized and small houses make up the majority of semi-detached and terraced properties.

Overall, Ailsworth has a far greater mixture of property sizes than neighbouring Castor, which is dominated by large detached buildings.

### Analysis by Size and Wall Materials



Forty one buildings (across all size divisions) are of stone. Of this total, by far the most stone buildings (twenty five) are medium sized. Large stone buildings are also well represented by nine buildings. Six stone buildings are small, twenty five are medium sized, nine are large and one is very large.

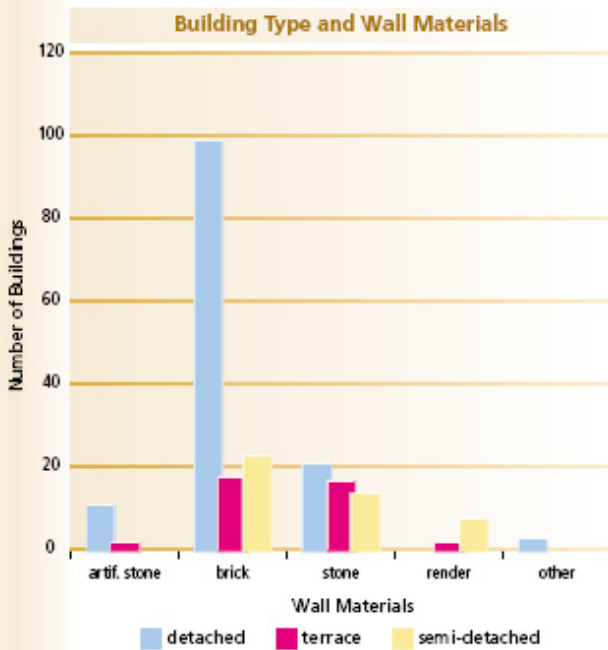
However, over half of all buildings are in modern brick and of these, twenty four are very small. There are eleven small properties, thirty four medium sized properties and thirty eight large brick properties.

Artificial stone has been used on only eleven properties (four very small properties, one medium sized property and six large properties). Old brick accounts for just one small property and three medium sized properties, while render is found on one small and six medium sized properties.

### Analysis by Building Type and Status

Of the twenty three listed buildings in Ailsworth, ten are detached, seven are in terraces and four are semi-detached.

### Analysis by Type and Wall Materials



There are very few properties in Ailsworth that are not made either of modern bricks or stone. Of the few that are made of other materials, there are ten detached properties and one end terrace property made of artificial stone.

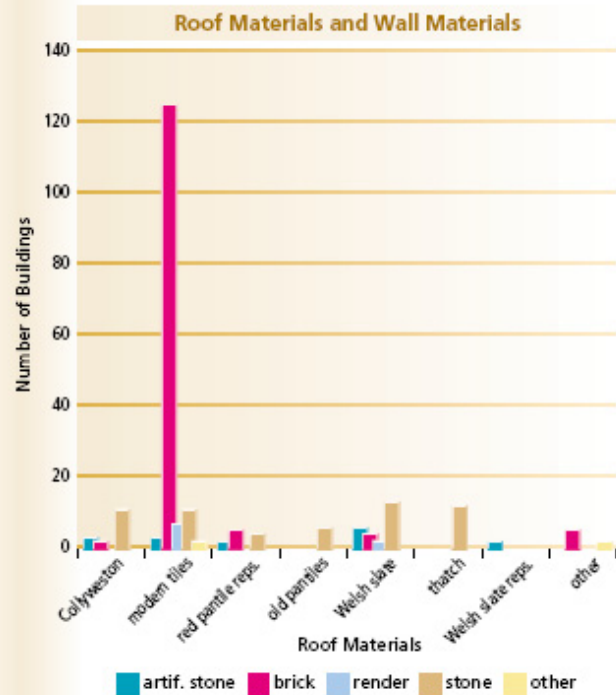
There are two detached properties built of old bricks, one end terrace and one mid terrace property made of this material.

Similarly, rendered properties are scarce in the village, with six semi-detached and one mid terrace property being rendered.

Stone buildings account for fifteen detached, seven end terrace, nine mid terrace and ten semi-detached properties.

However, it is modern brick that features most within the village built environment. Throughout the village, seventy eight detached, six end terrace, seven mid terrace and twelve semi-detached houses can be found. It can, therefore, be concluded that the majority of properties in the village are detached and built of modern brick.

### Analysis by Roof Materials and Wall Materials

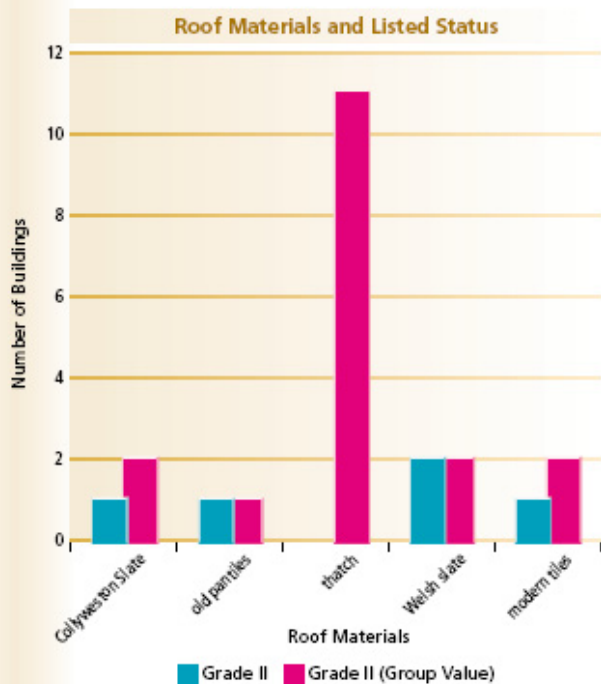


The overwhelming majority of properties in Ailsworth are built of modern brick and roofed with modern tiles. This combination of materials accounts for one hundred and twenty four properties in the village.

Stone properties with Collyweston slate roofs account for ten properties, while a further twelve stone properties have Welsh slate roofs. There are eleven stone properties with thatched roofs. Stone buildings with modern tiled roofs account for ten properties.

As can be seen from the graph, none of the other combinations of wall materials and roofing materials make a significant numerical impact on the village.

## Analysis by Roof Materials and Building Status



Thatch is the dominant historic roofing material in Ailsworth, present on eleven of twenty three buildings. Geographically, these are clustered in and around north Main Street and lend a small-scale vernacular character to this part of the village.

The Welsh slate buildings are mainly in a linked terrace along Peterborough Road, developed during the early part of the nineteenth century, presumably in response to increasing road traffic and trade.

Two of the three listed buildings with modern roof tiles were modernised before 1977, when more stringent controls on listed buildings and conservation areas were introduced.

All but two listed buildings have stone walls, one has rendered stone and the other is in brick.

Therefore, most listed buildings in the main village are thatched with stone walls, and a secondary group on Peterborough Road are built of stone with Welsh slate roofs.

## 5.1.2 Other Buildings Findings

### Other Possible Correlations

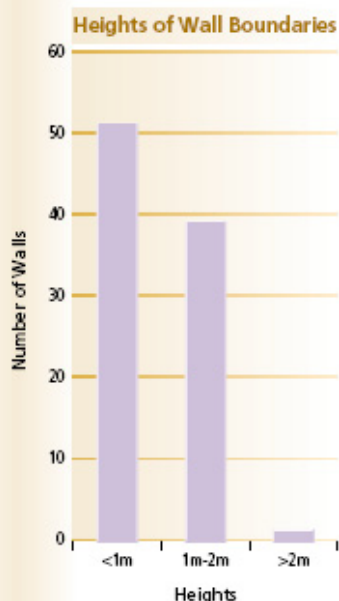
The remaining possible correlations listed below were examined and no significant relationship was found, as detailed in the table below.

| SPREADSHEET DATASETS                                                                                                                         | FINDINGS                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Age and Building Use                                                                                                                         | No significant relationships found. |
| Storey Heights and Condition<br>Roofing Materials<br>Property Size<br>Building Status<br>Property Type<br>Use<br>Wall Materials<br>Condition | No significant relationships found. |
| Property Size and Condition<br>Roofing Materials<br>Use                                                                                      | No significant relationships found. |
| Property Type and Roofing<br>Materials<br>Use                                                                                                | No significant relationships found. |
| Wall Materials and Condition<br>Use                                                                                                          | No significant relationships found. |
| Roof Materials and Condition<br>Use                                                                                                          | No significant relationships found. |
| Use and Condition<br>Building Status                                                                                                         | No significant relationships found. |
| Building Status and Condition                                                                                                                | No significant relationships found. |

## 5.2 Other Features

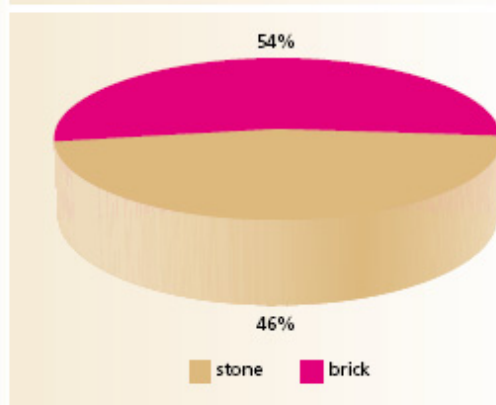
### 5.2.1 Walls

Almost half of all properties, ninety one in all, have a boundary to a public highway marked by a wall and 46% of all walls are made of stone and 52% are brick.



The actual number of stone walls which relate to properties is difficult to accurately assess, because some walls span several property boundaries but are relatively short, whilst others are very long, have a big visual impact and only relate to one property. In contrast, the brick walls in Singerfire Road/Casworth Way/Andrew Close are contemporary and related to the individual properties and their paths and drives.

### Boundary Wall Materials



The contribution of walls to the townscape of Ailsworth is significant and is further analysed and discussed under Section 5.3 Townscape.

### 5.2.2 Fences

Only 6% of properties have a public boundary marked by a fence and most of these (70%) are between 1m and 2m in height.

There is no dominant fence type; the "other" category may warrant further examination to better identify the group's characteristics.

As with walls, this analysis does not account for the length and visual impacts of each fence and it may be that one or two long fences, of almost 2m in height, have a disproportionate influence on the character of the village in relation to the rest of the fence groups.

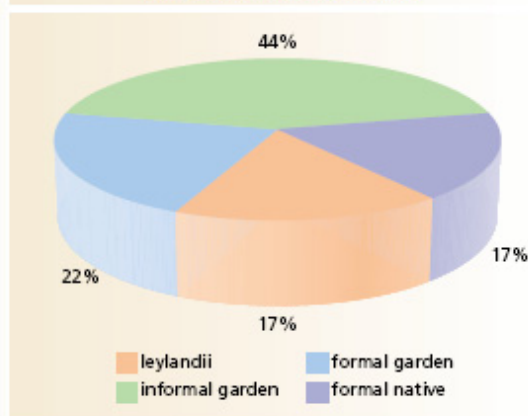
The visual impact of fences is further assessed in Section 5.3 Townscape.

### 5.2.3 Hedges

Over a tenth, 11% of all properties, have a public boundary marked by a hedge. Of the twenty three hedge boundaries, nearly three quarters are hedges between 1m and 2m in height.

However, the large 2m high hedge along Peterborough Road does not relate to a property boundary and is, therefore, excluded from this analysis. Similarly, the figures do not convey the visual impact of hedges in Maffit Road.

### Types of Hedge Boundaries



### 5.2.4 Trees

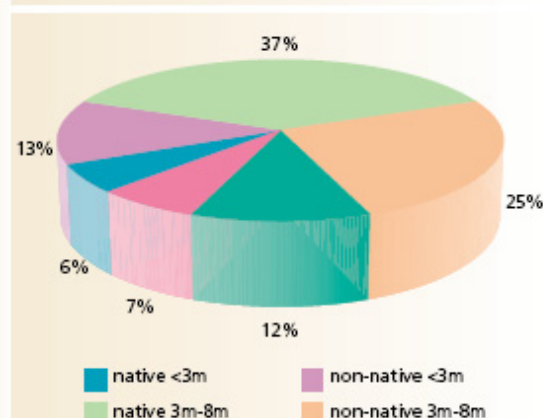
A total of three hundred and twelve trees are visible from public roads and footpaths. Over half 55%, are regarded as native species including oak, ash, hawthorn, poplar, birch, beech and horse chestnut.

Correspondingly, 45% are non-native. The non-natives include the ornamental species, such as cherry, ornamental crab apple and almond, planted in the first half of the twentieth century and now reaching maturity.

Trees of 3m-8m in height, of both native and non-native species, make up well over a half (63%) of all trees recorded. Of these, 60% are native species and 40% are non-native. Only 19% of trees are less than 3m high. These may either be small decorative species or young saplings, which may grow bigger.

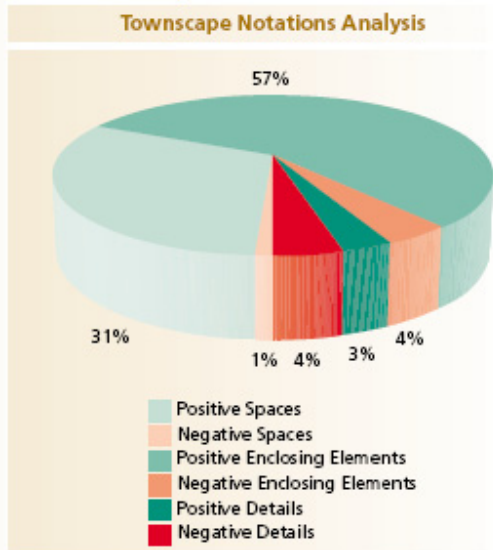
The intuitive conclusion is that a stock of young trees, which will grow to over 8m in height and eventually replace existing large trees, have not been planted.

### Tree Types Related to Height



## 5.3 Townscape

### 5.3.1 General Analysis



The townscape of Ailsworth is overwhelmingly positive. A total of one hundred and eighteen positive and only twelve negative townscape contributions were recorded, with a breakdown as follows:

The table right provides a detailed record of the relative contributions of each element of townscape. It gives an indication of the relationship between dynamic and static spaces, with further spatial definition provided by vertical enclosures and changes in level.

## Analysis of Spaces

### Relationship of Spaces and Enclosing Elements

Section 4.3 gives a general analysis of the forms of spaces within the village streets.

The table below sets out all the elements of townscape, which have been identified as positively enclosing space.

| Townscape Elements<br>(which enclose space) | Type of Space Enclosed |           |           |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|
|                                             | Static                 | Dynamic   | Vertical  |
| Buildings                                   | 12                     | 16        | –         |
| Walls                                       | 1                      | 7         | –         |
| Individual Trees                            | 5                      | 9         | –         |
| Hedges                                      | 2                      | 5         | –         |
| <b>Sub Totals</b>                           | <b>20</b>              | <b>37</b> | <b>–</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                |                        |           | <b>57</b> |

A particular feature of enclosure in Ailsworth is the old buildings set at 90° to the road. The succession of gable ends close to the footpath edge provide assertive features that frame perspective views along straight streets. The combination of two gables opposite each other, such as The Olde Barns and 38 Main Street, produce particularly notable pinch points. Where these occur, there is a tendency to view the spaces between them as static and square, such as those framed by 37A, 39 and 44 Main Street and The Olde Barns, 17, 19 and 23 Main Street.

The strongly static spaces at the southern end of Main Street/Helpston Road do not appear to be formally enclosed by any particular elements but are, nevertheless, well-defined spatially. In part, this is due to the juxtaposition of the hedges and trees between Singerfire Road and Peterborough Road. The hedges on Maffit Road and north end of Helpston Road, in combination with the stone wall opposite and carriageway dog-leg, both strongly define linear space as do the combinations of walls, earth banks and mature trees at the north end of Main Street.

## Spatial Enclosure, Storey Heights and Road Widths

The most characteristic townscape of Ailsworth arises from the combination of one, one and a half and two storey cottage gables and narrow roads. The narrowness of the roads allows relatively low buildings, set on the back edge of the footpath, to provide strong spatial definition, especially in combination with high walls and mature trees of more than 8m in height.

### Analysis of Enclosing Elements

| TOWNSCAPE AND BUILDING PERIODS |                                               |            |                                     |                                                                    |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Building Periods               | Number of Buildings contributing to Townscape |            | Total Number of Buildings in Period | Percentage of Buildings giving Positive & (negative contributions) |
|                                | Positively                                    | Negatively |                                     |                                                                    |
| <1600                          | –                                             | –          | –                                   | –                                                                  |
| 1600-1700                      | 7                                             | –          | 10                                  | 70%                                                                |
| 1700-1800                      | 13                                            | –          | 20                                  | 65%                                                                |
| 1800-1900                      | 8                                             | –          | 11                                  | 75%                                                                |
| 1900-2004                      | 1                                             | 1          | 164                                 | 0.6% (0.6%)                                                        |

In all periods before the twentieth century, most buildings have been judged to make a positive contribution to the built environment. In the twentieth century, the vast majority of buildings (99%+), make no particular impact on townscape either positive or negative.

Clearly, neither the major estates nor very substantial amounts of twentieth century infilling have had a positive effect on the visual quality of Ailsworth.

## Townscape and Walls

Twelve local coursed limestone walls have been recorded as having a positive impact on the townscape. These vary from short walls a few metres in length and linking buildings, to the very substantial walls at the northern end of Main Street and Helpston Road. The long walls have been punctured to allow new access drives for modern infill housing.

The combination of walls and buildings, trees or hedges provides the most positive townscape impacts.

## Townscape and Fences

One fence was considered to detract from the village's appearance. It is in poor condition, with concrete stub posts exposed to public view and as it confines a narrow alley could not visually be overlooked.

## Townscape and Building Status

The relationship between listed buildings and positive townscape is very similar to that of Townscape and Building Periods.

## Townscape and Property Types

There is no discernible relationship between property types and townscape; the blandness of twentieth century semi-detached and detached forms of development may be a combination of architectural style, siting and building types. The siting of gable ends on the back edge of the footpath, with other linked buildings set back 5-10m, is a strong component in Ailsworth's townscape.

## Townscape and Building Use

The age of properties appears to be a stronger influence on their visual appearance than their use. Properties, which clearly had a different historic use (public house, barns, agricultural sheds etc.), have tended to be converted for residential purposes in the last twenty five years.

## Townscape and Trees

Trees provide almost 25% of recorded elements, which enclose space and are all examples of vertical enclosure.

The difficulties of recording individual trees within tree belts or situated on private property encountered in Castor, were not experienced in Ailsworth. However, trees (and hedges) in public space, which cannot be attributed to a particular property, were found to be more influential on townscape than in Castor.

# 6.0 Conclusions

## 6.1 The Methodology

The basic objective of the Ailsworth Built Environment Audit was to devise a methodology which allowed local people to compile accurate quantitative and qualitative assessments of their local built environment, which can then be used as an agreed and authoritative basis for a Castor and Ailsworth Village Design Statement.

As this report illustrates, the task of assembling a comprehensive and authoritative built environment benchmark has been accomplished. However, it is also of importance to note the main problems and difficulties, which are inevitable with the involvement of many people in a complex project.

### 6.1.1 Community Involvement

The two villages of Castor and Ailsworth are very close together. While they retain their individual character and Parish Councils, they are as one for community purposes.

Ailsworth prepared a proposal for an Audit at the same time as Castor and both villages obtained Local Heritage Initiative funding for their respective Audits. A Built Audit Group, drawn from both villages led the project and co-ordinated community involvement.

Organisations and individuals involved in the preparation of this Audit, a total of twenty five people, included:

Castor Parish Council, Ailsworth Parish Council, the Tennis Club, the Women's Institute and St Kyneburgha's Church, Castor and Ailsworth Society of Arts (CASA), who jointly produced the illustrations for the Boards. Castor, Ailsworth and District Gardeners' Society was also involved, and Vincent and Rosalind Brierley provided a photocopying service.

Given the wide variety of age groups and backgrounds, it was felt advisable to carry out sample accuracy checks on the information collected. Once all the supporting information was available, surveys were found to be generally consistent and accurate. However, the co-ordination of data and drawing the information together into a consistent format was very time consuming.

### 6.1.2 The Surveys

Whilst the concept of each individual survey seemed straightforward, it quickly became clear that supporting information was needed to enable community surveyors to make accurate records. Subject areas which caused problems included dating buildings, distinguishing between old (pre-twentieth century) and modern building materials and identifying native and non-native trees and hedgerows.

These difficulties were partly resolved by compiling illustrated colour guides using published tree identification charts and building material photographs provided by Peterborough City Council's Planning Department.

Building dates were sourced by reference to the Statutory List, the Royal Commission of Historic Monuments Record of Peterborough, Pevsner and professional guidance.

As data collection progressed, it became clear that consistency and selectivity were required if the information gathered was to be manageable and usable. Therefore, the principal buildings on each site only, were recorded. In most instances, this was the main dwelling house, with garages, sheds, greenhouses etc. omitted.

It also became clear that not all information related to a single property, for example, stone walls or hedges were found to span several property boundaries. In these cases the existence of a wall or hedge was recorded for each property.

Finally, many imposing trees are sited on road verges and public open space and verges, so could not be included in the property reference database system.

The townscape assessment methodology was designed to provide a basis for consistently recording the qualitative aspects of the built environment's visual impact. In practice, the data collected by two groups of community surveyors was compared to a survey independently conducted by PECT's professional support staff. When the databases were compared, there was an 80% consistency between the three, with the major differences relating to the perception in the views/vistas category. It can, therefore, be concluded that the townscape assessment forms a consistent benchmarking database and, provided subsequent assessments strictly adhere to the methodology, changes over time in built environment quality can be accurately measured and monitored.

### 6.1.3 Data Capture

When the surveys were underway, large amounts of data in a variety of paper formats were quickly assembled. It soon became clear that the volume of information gathered and the need for consistency and accuracy in transferring paper records to the Access database could not reasonably be undertaken on a volunteer basis. Furthermore, due to widely varying computing abilities, electronic sharing of this task was not practical. Therefore, data capture from hand-written survey records to computerised format was undertaken by a PECT member of staff.

## 6.2 Key Findings

Ailsworth is regarded as a historic conservation village. However, in numerical terms it is very different. Most buildings (80% of the total of two hundred and seven), date from the twentieth century and 72% of all buildings have been built in the last fifty years. The majority of buildings are detached and built of modern bricks and tiles. The largest single property group is made up of twentieth century, two storey, detached houses with modern brick walls and concrete roof tiles.

Most twentieth century buildings have repetitive plan forms, are set back from the highway and are uniformly spaced along estate roads and cul-de-sacs. In contrast, buildings dating from before 1900 have a wide variety of footprint shapes and sizes. A significant number of pre-twentieth century buildings are sited with a façade or gable directly onto or very close to the pavement edge, with other buildings set back between them, thus forming small “squares”. Stone walls, built on the footway edge, link older buildings both physically and visually. Buildings from all periods appear in sound structural condition.

Nearly 43% of all properties have walls, but over half of these are modern dwarf brick walls; just over 11% have hedge boundaries. The majority of walls are less than 1m high, but this figure disguises the visual and historic impact of the larger, longer local stone walls. Ailsworth does not have the legacy of large mature forest trees that are so prominent in Castor’s townscape, the poplars and limes to Main Street being the most significant groups visually, with individual trees elsewhere. It is thought that both native and ornamental plantings, which are now so influential, are reaching maturity. A carefully planned, comprehensive programme of forest tree planting to help define space would greatly benefit future townscape.

Visually, twentieth century development makes almost no contribution to the character and appearance of Ailsworth. In contrast, in the old street areas, the stone buildings, stone walls, hedges and trees combine to give a characteristic historic built form. Together, they form sequences of varied human-scale spaces, which give a particular sense of place. The townscape map graphically illustrates a visual quality graduation as follows:

- historic street pattern and historic walls, buildings and mature trees - **key positive townscape**
- historic street pattern but with substantial modern infill development with historic stone walls, mature trees and hedges - **mainly positive townscape**
- historic streets, “improved” some by highway engineering operations and dominated by repetitive modern built forms - **townscape with positive features**
- modern (twentieth century) highway engineered streets and repetitive estate-type built forms - **no sense of spatial organisation or visual character.**

## 6.2.1 Planning Policies

Planning policies, reinforced by grant schemes appear to have been successful in conserving the historic environment that existed in 1974, when conservation became a key part of town and country planning legislation. However, the great majority of twentieth century buildings within the village envelope and the conservation area, are built in modern brick and concrete tiles. These have substantially changed the character of Ailsworth. In Castor, twentieth century infill development is minimal in the historic streets. In contrast, in Ailsworth the historic streets of Main Street, Maffit Road and Helpston Road are dominated by modern infill, and the townscape appraisal clearly shows the effect that these developments have had on visual quality. Post 1975, stronger conservation policies may have resulted in greater use of stone and artificial stone, but modern brick has remained the primary building material, as seen in housing on Maffit Road.

The pressures for change, as demonstrated by the numbers of planning applications, increase year on year. The number of applications for listed building consents, demonstrate a powerful trend to make changes over increasingly short time periods, to buildings which have remained largely unaltered for two to three hundred years or more. Careful management of the listed building stock is clearly required to avoid loss of the historic fabric through alterations and modernisation.

In the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement) 2002, many of the remaining open spaces and frontages, including walls, have been given protection from further development. The agricultural land surrounding the village has been designated an area of “best landscape”.

A site of 1.42 ha on the current light industrial site south of Peterborough Road has been allocated for further residential development. This is outside and unrelated to the historic settlement pattern and fabric.

## 6.2.2 Green Spaces

The key green spaces within the village built envelope are:

- i the paddocks between Main Street and Helpston Road
- ii the fields and field frontages to the east of Helpston Road (south of the Vogul Training Centre)
- iii the two Greens between Peterborough Road and Main Street/Helpston Road and Singerfire Road.

Whilst all these make significant contributions to character and appearance, there is scope to improve their spatial definition by, for example, new tree and hedge planting.

## 6.3 Recommendations

Recommendations are considered within the following priorities:

Conservation

Enhancement

Improvements

The Future Built Environment.

### 6.3.1 Conservation

Retaining the fabric, which underpins the character and appearance of Ailsworth's built environment is the fundamental first priority. It may be considered within the framework of the townscape survey as follows.

### 6.3.2 Spaces

This Audit identifies the key spaces which form the character of Ailsworth. These spaces need to be retained and reinforced. Gradual erosion by, for example, allowing part demolition of walls to accommodate a new dwelling, driveway or highway "improvements", which straighten roads and introduce standardised pavements and concrete kerbs, should be strongly resisted.

The townscape survey graphically demonstrates that the historic street patterns and open spaces create combinations of well-defined and interesting static and dynamic spaces. The contrast between these and the dull, uniform and lifeless modern estate roads could not be more marked. There is scope to introduce new hedges and trees to improve the spatial organisation around the open spaces.

### 6.3.3 Enclosing Elements

Buildings are the key enclosing elements but walls, mature trees and hedges are also important. To conserve the townscape, the pre-twentieth century buildings, which are the foundation stones of the built environment must be retained without exception, maintained using the original natural building materials, and unsympathetic extensions and alterations resisted.

Similarly, the village's stone walls need to be retained, kept in good repair and further breaches to create new access drives etc. strongly opposed. No new stone walls appear to have been built in the twentieth century. There are situations where new walls would enhance spatial enclosure or improve the townscape.

A number of key trees are at or approaching maturity. It would make sense to plan and act now to firstly, replace trees which are now at maturity and secondly, to consider areas of less positive townscape where space

exists to accommodate ambitious forest tree planting schemes. The paddock, between Main Street and Helpston Road, and The Green, between Singefire Road and Peterborough Road, may present such opportunities.

The long hedge of native species along Peterborough Road has recently been reinforced and lengthened, and will make an even stronger visual contribution to the southern part of the village. In contrast, the hedges along Maffit Road are under many individual ownerships, but visually, appear as a continuous green corridor. Maintenance and reinforcement is, therefore, dependent on the co-operation of several owners. The visual impact of the hedge opposite 31 and 33 Helpston Road arises because it has not been maintained and is now evolving into a line of semi-mature trees. Regular cutting to a height of 3m would benefit the hedge and townscape.

### 6.3.4 Details

The application of town planning powers combined with financial incentives, have been influential in retaining buildings and walls and so maintaining the fabric of the built environment. The availability of grants for the repair of walls and buildings from Peterborough City Council was curtailed in 2000. This Audit presents compelling evidence to conclude that the grants system was influential in maintaining built fabric on a long term basis. There is, therefore, a strong argument for the re-introduction of grants for historic building and stone wall repairs.

### 6.3.5 Enhancements

Townscape enhancement is the process of maintaining and adding to features that are already positive. The analysis of planning applications shows that almost every opportunity within the village envelope for infill development has either been exploited or planning consent given. Further intensification of development would result in a loss of environmental quality.

However, trees are less permanent than buildings and there is evidence to conclude that trees, which are most influential in environmental terms, may have the shortest potential lifespan. There is, therefore, a case for making plans now to begin planting a new generation of large trees. These should be in positions which will have a real townscape impact in enhancing spaces, particularly the green open spaces.

It is likely that the costs of drawing up and implementing such a farsighted tree planting programme would attract grant and sponsorship assistance from lottery and other sources.

| Area/feature                       | Proposed improvement                                                                                                                        | Ownership/ responsibility  | Approximate order of costs and possible funding sources |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Main Street (north end)            | plant native hedge (holly/beechn/hawthorn) at top of bank/verge to reinforce and eventually replace existing poplar trees                   | land owner/Parish Council  | £750 max                                                |
| Main Street/ Helpston Road paddock | plant/reinforce native hedge with interspersed native forest trees to the Cross Street frontage                                             | land owner/ Parish Council | £500 max                                                |
| Helpston Road (east)               | i tree/hedge planting to enhance footpath and provide shelter for users                                                                     | land owner/Parish Council  | £500 max                                                |
|                                    | ii part coppice hedge opposite 31 and 33 in preparation for further coppicing and "laying" in 2-3 years                                     |                            | £250                                                    |
| Main Street/ Helpston Road (south) | draw up plans to reinforce static (square form) spatial organisation through tree and hedge planting and implement over, say, 3-year period | Parish Council             | £1,000                                                  |

### 6.3.6 Improvements

The townscape assessment identified a number of areas and features where relatively simple and inexpensive improvements would have a significant visual effect. Many could be partly achieved through community effort and exploiting opportunities through initiatives such as National Tree Week.

### 6.3.7 The Future Built Environment

Ailsworth is designated as a Limited Rural Growth Settlement in the *Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement) 2002*, and a site of 1.42 ha has been allocated for housing off Station Road. Development can be expected to introduce an additional fifteen houses plus garages etc. into the village, adding a further 7.5% to the building stock. It is important that the new development does not result in proposals for highway "improvements", resulting in modern alignments, kerbs and materials being superimposed to undermine the remaining character of the Wheatsheaf junction.

Regarding the form of the housing itself, a key decision needs to be made to determine if the development will continue the huge divergence between twentieth century and historic Ailsworth. Will it reject past forms of modern development in favour of buildings and layouts, which are more akin to that which evolved to form the village up until the nineteenth century?

If the latter is the case, new development will need to:

i Vary the width and alignment of road carriageways incorporating sharp turns and avoiding regular and standardised T-junctions, kerb radii etc.

ii Create sequences of human-scale dynamic and static spaces by

- siting combinations of building façades, gables and freestanding stone walls at the back edge of pavements, with a few set further back

- reinforcing the spatial organisation by exploiting or introducing changes in level by, for example, raising banks and creating vertical enclosure by planting large forest trees close to the pavement edge

- incorporating alleys and cuts, strongly enclosed by walls, hedges and trees and opening out into larger spaces at either end, physically linking the new development with the existing village

- incorporating green space as an *integral part* of spatial organisation.

iii Include some buildings of varying sizes and heights in addition to the three to four bedroom, two storey norm. Buildings should include subtle variations in plan forms, verge and ridge heights etc., and

- be constructed in local coursed stone or a good quality, coursed stone replica with Collyweston replica, clay pantile, Welsh slate roofs or even new thatched roofs

- be visually and physically linked with hedge planting and stone walls

- incorporate some instances of architectural detailing, which create a positive psychological response, a sense of place and association with the historic Ailsworth.

For information about the report or general methodology please contact:

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