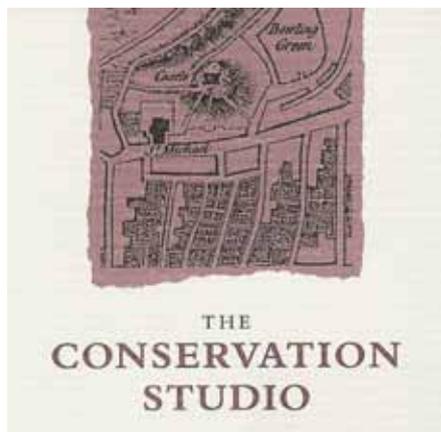




HITCHIN RAILWAY AND RANSOM'S RECREATION GROUND

CONSERVATION AREA: CHARACTER STATEMENT 26 JULY 2011

Whilst conducting a second review of Hitchin Conservation Area, areas beyond the existing conservation area boundary were considered for designation. Hitchin Railway and Ransom's Recreation Ground Conservation Area is a new designation and this statement assesses its setting, character and appearance and should be read in conjunction with the conservation area map and the up-dated Register of Buildings of Local Interest for Hitchin (also adopted on 26 July 2011).



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Townscape Appraisal Map

1 INTRODUCTION

The Hitchin Railway and Ransom’s Recreation Ground Conservation Area designation followed extensive consultation with the local community. The assistance of the Hitchin Historical Society with the provision of background information leading to the designation is gratefully acknowledged.

As recommended in English Heritage guidance dated March 2011, this Character Statement assesses the setting, character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and identifies negative features where improvements would be welcome.

Because of the size and nature of the Conservation Area, it has been divided into two Character Areas, each of which has a unique character and appearance. An assessment of each of the Character Areas is included at Chapter 7, which also identifies areas for improvements. A summary of the principal issues are in Chapter 8.

Whilst this statement is a completely separate document from the Hitchin Conservation Area Character Statement (also adopted 26 July 2011), the latter may still provide a useful reference.

2 SUMMARY

The special interest that justifies designation of the Hitchin Railway and Ransom’s Recreation Ground Conservation Area derives from a number of architectural, historic and environmental factors, as summarised below:

- The Hitchin Railway and Ransom’s Recreation Ground Conservation Area is a linear conservation area which draws together the attractive open spaces of Ransom’s Recreation Ground with its important historical connections and the historic buildings located near to, or associated with, the Hitchin Railway
- The woodland, river Hiz and the adjoining Triangle Community Garden in Ransom’s Recreation Ground are notable natural features
- The surviving allotments, marking the eastern boundary to the Recreation Ground, are of social and historic significance
- The Conservation Area contains a relatively small number of buildings, but nearly all of them are either locally listed or are of sufficient architectural and historic interest to be considered to make a ‘positive’ contribution to the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area – these buildings are arranged in three groups as follows:



The entrance to Hitchin Station

A group of buildings focused on the railway station:

- Hitchin Railway Station, dating to 1910
- The adjoining Station Terrace, a group of houses built for railway staff in c1850
- The Stationmaster's House, also built in 1910
- A further red brick house of c1910 called 'The Bungalow Station Gates'

A group of buildings facing Nightingale Road:

- The two storey warehouse built by the Great Northern Railway (GNR)
- A single-storey yellow brick Midland Railway building dating to 1857
- The Nightingale Public House (formerly known as the Leicester Railway Inn)
- A small group of well preserved 'positive' historic cottages, including Leicester Cottages, which were built in 1857

A further group of buildings, also associated with the railway, but facing Ransom's Recreation Ground:

- The Midland Cottages of c1857, built from yellow brick with slated roofs

3 ACTIVITIES, LOCATION AND SETTING

3.1 Location and setting

The Hitchin Railway and Ransom's Recreation Ground Conservation Area forms part of the historic town of Hitchin, one of the largest (population around 30,500) settlements in north Hertfordshire. Letchworth Garden City is just a few kilometres away to the north east, separated from Hitchin by a strip of open countryside. The Chiltern Hills lie to the south west and feed the River Hiz which flows northwards through Hitchin, including along the north western boundary of the Conservation Area. Whilst it is little more than a stream, and in some locations in the town it has been culverted, the river makes an important contribution to the amenity of the adjoining Recreation Ground.

The Conservation Area lies about 100 metres to the north and east of the boundary to the much larger Hitchin Conservation Area which covers the town centre and some of the residential suburbs which surround it. The two conservation areas are separated to the south by an area of mixed 19th and 20th century development in Dacre Road and Walsworth Road.

Elsewhere, the setting to the Conservation Areas is provided by the railway line to the north east, with mainly 20th century residential development beyond, and, to the north and east, by further residential development which mainly dates to the late 19th or early 20th century along King's Road, Alexandra Road and Florence Street. An Industrial Estate is accessed via the road which leads past the railway forecourt in a southerly direction.



*The Children's Playground,
Ransom's Recreation Ground*



*View over the Recreation Ground to
Midland Cottages*

3.2 Activities and uses

Uses within the Conservation Area are mixed, with the locally listed houses facing Ransom's Recreation Ground being in residential uses. The Recreation Ground is an important local facility, with allotments, a children's play ground, a community garden and a volley-ball court. A further group of houses can be seen in Nightingale Road, then beyond, the uses start to change, with the Nightingale Public House and the two railway buildings (both of which are boarded up and not in use) beyond. Turning into Station Approach, the uses all relate to the railway, with residential uses in the railway houses facing the roundabout, and Hitchin Station behind. A relatively recent Audi salesroom is located within the Conservation Area facing Nightingale Road – this is of modern design with mid grey cladding and its visual impact is neutral rather than negative.

Whilst the Recreation Ground is generally quite peaceful, the noise of trains along the embankment, and also close to the railway station itself, can be quite dominant at times.

3.3 Topography and geology

The Conservation Area sits on flattish land which dips very slightly towards the River Hiz at the northern end of the Conservation Area. The only significant topographical feature is the steep wooded bank leading up to the marshalling yards and railway lines on the eastern side of the Recreation Ground. This must have been created to allow the line to run above Walsworth Road, which passes beneath the bank close to the edge of the Conservation Area. Geologically, Hitchin lies on Chiltern Hills chalk with surface alluvial deposits and clay, and where the chalk and clay interface, springs often occur, such as the one which feeds the River Hiz.

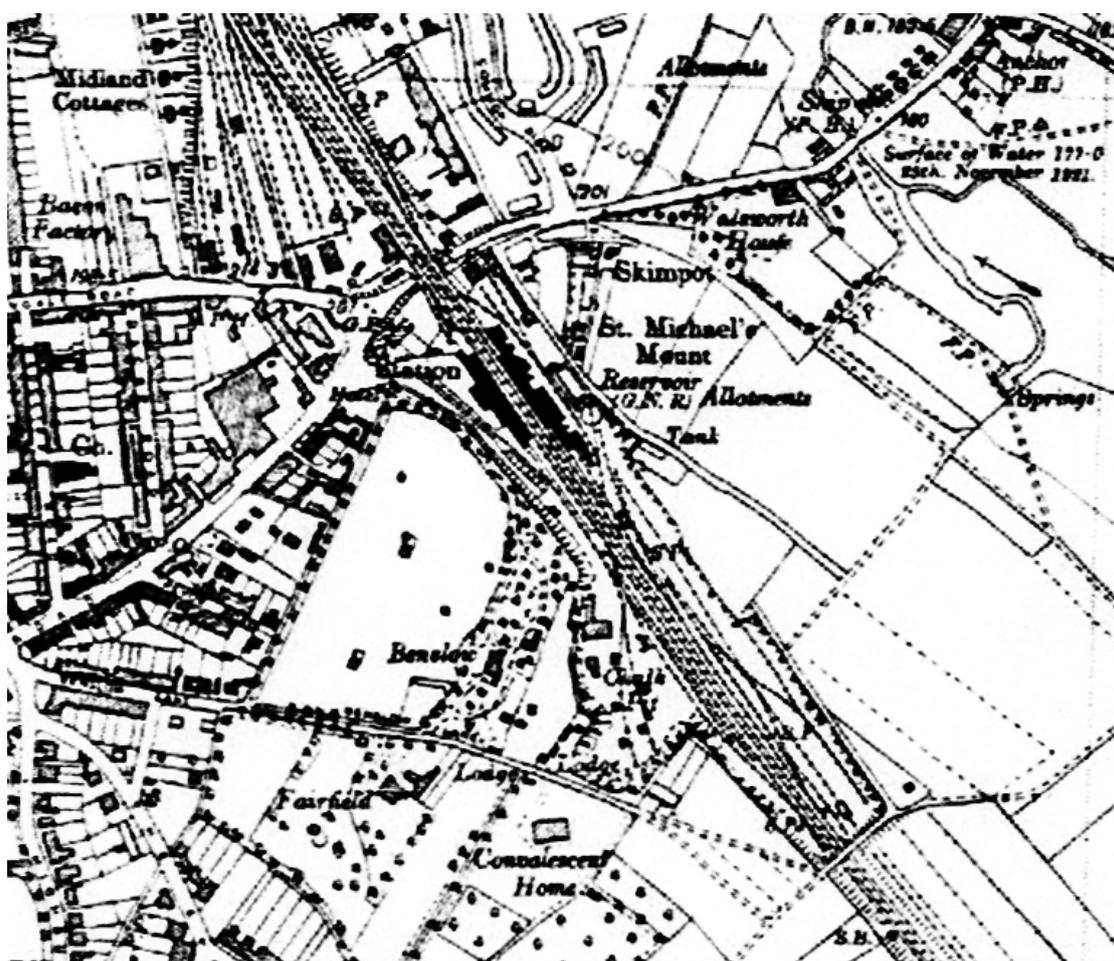


*The River Hiz flows through the
Recreation Ground*

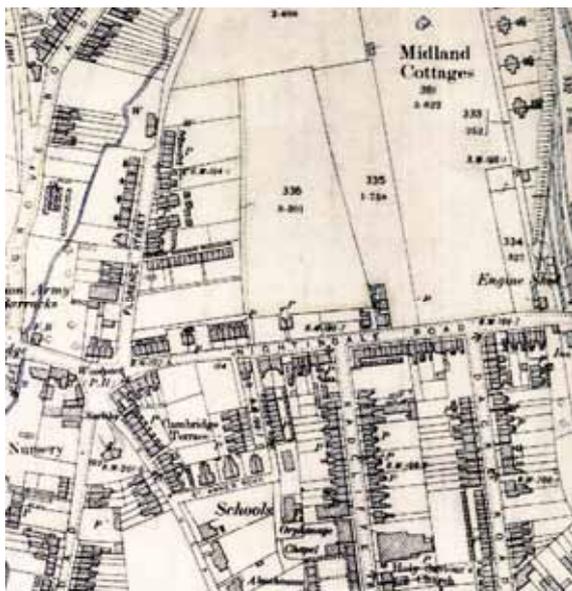
4 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

4.1 History of the Conservation Area

Early maps confirm that this area was fields, some of them retaining their medieval strips, until the coming of the railway in the mid 19th century. In 1847 work began on a London to York railway line which became the Great Northern Railway. The line passed to the east of Hitchin because Lord Dacre objected to encroachments on his park near Welwyn. Hitchin was finally connected to London in August 1850, and two more lines followed – the first to Cambridge (the Hitchin and Royston Railway 1850-51), and the second to Leicester via Bedford (the Midland Railway in 1857). Hitchin's importance was recognised by the installation of the electric telegraph in 1854, some 12 years before all stations were so equipped. From the 1850s Hitchin assumed a significant role in the transference of goods throughout north Hertfordshire and south Bedfordshire, with coal and grain being particularly important. This resulted in the development of a large goods yard with associated storage facilities, two of which remain. Reliable journey times of around 45 minutes to London attracted commuters and led to a corresponding growth in new housing in the town. The original station was largely rebuilt in 1910-11 although some features remain. At the same time a new stationmaster's house was built. Other features include Station Terrace, built in 1850 to house railway employees, Midland Cottages, built in the late 1850s, and The Bungalow, a small red brick building which was also built for railway staff. Many of these 'railway' buildings, including the station itself, are locally listed.



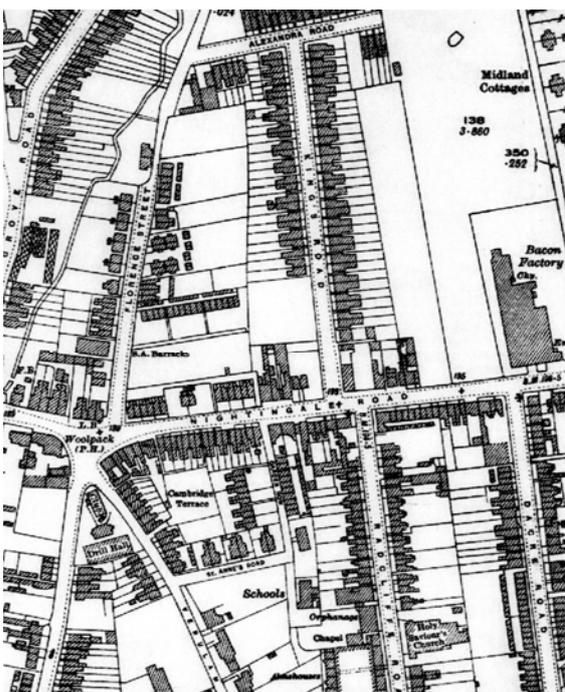
Historic Map of 1881



Historic Map of 1898



Historic Map of 1923



Historic Map of 1946

The map of 1881 confirms that Ransom's Recreation Ground was then partly open space but was mainly given over to allotments. Not much had changed by 1898, but between then and 1923 King's Road was built on the eastern side of these allotments, leaving the smaller strip of allotments between Kings Road and the Recreation Ground which remain today. Otherwise, the land continued in farming use until 1929, when local landowner and business man Francis Ransom donated it to the people of Hitchin, and the present public Recreation Ground was created with its notable entrance gates facing Nightingale Road. Francis Ransom was a descendent of William Ransom, pioneering archaeologist, founder of the famous Hitchin pharmaceutical firm, and a leading figure amongst Hitchin's many Quakers.

More recently, some of the railway buildings have been demolished although fortunately several important examples remain. Ransom's Recreation Ground remains an important local facility with its important historical connections. It has been enhanced physically by the provision of a community garden and children's playing ground close to the River Hiz. The allotments which lie between the Recreation Ground and the houses facing King's Road are still in use.

A detailed description of the development of Hitchin as a whole has been included within the Hitchin Conservation Area Character Statement.

5 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

5.1 Relationship of buildings to spaces

In the north of the Conservation Area, the defining spatial feature is the wide open green space of the Recreation Ground, with the Midland Cottages set back along an unadopted lane which provides access from Nightingale Road. These properties feature in views across the Recreation Ground and their impact is enhanced by the trees which lie in front of them. Further trees can be seen on the steep bank which rises above them to the former marshalling yards. Clearly part of a planned development, they share a common building line and although now somewhat altered, together form a group of highly distinctive properties.

The small group of unlisted but positive residential buildings which face Nightingale Road are typical of the type of late 19th century development which can be found throughout Hitchin. They sit back slightly from the pavement, although one small group (Leicester Cottages) is at right angles to the road and can only be glimpsed from it up a narrow access alleyway. Further along Nightingale Road, the two locally listed railway buildings are close to the road but historically relate to the marshalling yards behind them, now somewhat decimated and abandoned, with some new development.

Hitchin Station is set back behind Station Terrace which is located on a slightly raised bank above the busy road in front of it. This terrace, along with the adjoining Stationmaster's House, shields the station building from this road and constrains views along Station Approach towards the actual station.



Nightingale Road looking towards the junction with Walsworth Road



Station Terrace and the former Stationmaster's House, viewed across Station Approach

5.2 Trees and hard and soft landscaped open spaces

The Conservation Area is notable for the large open green space (Ransom's Recreation Ground) which forms the principal feature of the area. This is gently undulating and drops very slightly towards the River Hiz, which lies along its northern-most boundary. Although called a river, the Hiz is, at this point, little more than a stream, but it does make a very positive contribution to the special character of the area. An area of gardens (The Triangle Community Garden) is looked after by the local community and is located close to the river. This provides a focal point of activity which is allied to the adjoining and well-used Children's Playground. Otherwise, the open green space is dominated by the high wooded bank which leads up to the railway line on the eastern side of the Recreation Ground. More mature trees provide an appropriate setting to the locally listed Midland Cottages which lie at the bottom of this bank. Public allotments, glimpsed through a hedge, lie along the western boundary. A tall avenue of trees leads from the public entrance into the Recreation Ground from Nightingale Road, which is marked by the original 1929 gates.



The Triangle Community Garden



The entrance to the Recreation Ground is marked by the original 1929 gates, which are locally listed

Around the railway station the ground level has clearly been reduced to create a level surface and the building is now almost entirely surrounded by tarmac. However, along the southern boundary of the large car park, the land rises to form a steep bank but the modern houses beyond this bank are almost completely concealed by mature trees and the remains, (just outside the Conservation Area) of a small chalk pit and lime kiln.

The most important trees are marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map, but their position and crown spread is indicative only, and the omission of a particular tree does not mean that it is of no significance.

6 THE BUILDINGS

6.1 Listed buildings

There are currently no listed buildings in the Conservation Area although there are a large number of Buildings of Local Interest (see below).

6.2 Buildings of Local Interest

North Hertfordshire District Council currently maintains a *Register of Buildings of Local Interest for Hitchin* (BLI’s), more commonly referred to as ‘locally listed’ buildings, many of which lie within the adjoining Hitchin Conservation Area. This was first compiled between 1997 and 1998. Some of the buildings date to the late 19th or early 20th century and are interesting examples of local vernacular styles or materials. They may also have particular significance for their association with local people or a local historical event, or have social or political significance. The criteria for selecting BLI’s are given in the *Register*.

In conjunction with a review of the Hitchin Conservation Area and with the assistance of the Hitchin Historical Society, the District Council has reviewed the existing Register of Buildings of Local Interest (BLI’s). A total of 96 buildings are now included in the Register. A large number of these buildings lie within the Hitchin Railway and Ransom’s Recreation Ground Conservation Area, as follows:

- Gate piers and gates to Ransom’s Recreation Ground, Nightingale Road
- Bedford Cottages, Nos. 1-6, 7a and 8-12 Nightingale Road

- The two storey warehouse built by the Great Northern Railway (GNR), Nightingale Road
- The single storey Midlands Railway weighbridge building, Nightingale Road
- The Nightingale Public House, Nightingale Road
- Station Terrace, formerly called Great Northern Cottages, Station Approach
- Bytham Bank, the former Stationmaster's House, Station Approach
- Hitchin Station



Midland Cottages (Nos.1 - 6)



GNR warehouse, Nightingale Road

Detailed descriptions are included at 6.4

6.3 Positive buildings

A further number of unlisted buildings in the Conservation Area have been identified as being 'positive' buildings and these are marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map, along with the locally listed buildings. In the Hitchin Station and Ransom's Recreation Ground Conservation Area, the only 'positive' buildings form a group of residential cottages facing Nightingale Road and the end of Dacre Road.

The criteria for the selection of 'positive' buildings is that they are buildings of townscape merit which are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provide the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, 'positive' buildings contribute to the special interest of the Conservation Area, often forming notable groups which help to define the streetscape within the conservation area.

Hitchin Railway and Ransom's Recreation Ground Conservation Area is a Designated Heritage Asset with regard to PPS 5 :*Planning for the Historic Environment*. Most importantly, both BLI's and 'positive' buildings contribute to the special interest of the conservation area, and both categories of buildings are regarded as Non-designated Heritage Assets. Policies HE2, HE7, HE8 and HE9 of PPS5 are of particular relevance as are paragraphs 15 and 83 of the accompanying English Heritage Practice Guide.

6.4 Ages, styles, materials and details

All of the buildings in the Conservation Area date to after 1850, when the first railway line was built through Hitchin. This led to the provision of the first (now mainly demolished) railway station and also the addition of housing for railway workers, namely Station Terrace, built in c.1850. Formerly known as Great Northern Cottages, this row of six terraced houses is two storeys high, with a cream painted stucco finish and a shallow pitched slated roof. Some of the original six-over-six sashes remain. More buildings followed shortly afterwards when the Midland Railway line was added, most notably the addition of paired and terraced houses facing over what was to become Ransom's Recreation Ground. These properties date to c1857 and are now known as Nos. 1-6, 7a and 8-12 Midland Cottages (No. 7 is a modern addition to the terrace, with matching details), and they were originally arranged as a short terrace of six with three pairs of cottages to the south. They are two storeys high and are constructed using white brick with red brick arches to the casement windows, many of which are original. Their most notable feature is the long line of gables which face the open green space. Some original lean-to porches remain, attached to the front elevation. Most of the roofs in the terraced group have been reroofed in concrete tiles, but to the south, the paired groups largely retain their original Welsh slate roofs. In 2009 a new pair of almost matching cottages was built on the site of a modern building, and more development, of similar details but greater in scale, has also been inserted closer to the entrance from Nightingale Road.



Station Terrace



Midland Cottages (Nos.8 and 9)

Close by, on the opposite side of Nightingale Road, there are further unlisted brick cottages dating to the mid-19th century. Leicester Cottages are dated 1857, and are built from red brick with curved window and door heads picked out in white painted stucco. Two storeys high, all of the windows have been replaced with uPVC or similar. They are located behind a small group of nine properties, possibly slightly later in date, which face either Nightingale Road or Dacre Road. They are also built from red brick with canted ground floor bay windows. The two houses in Dacre Road, which feature in views along Nightingale Road, are a larger pair of slate-roofed properties with wide flat architraves around each door and window. The end house retains its original three over three sash windows.

Close to Hitchin Station, two further residential properties were added when the station was rebuilt in c1911. Bytham Bank (the former Stationmaster's House) is a well detailed red brick two storey house with a ground floor canted bay overlooking the station forecourt and its original slate roof. The windows are also original, with multi-paned upper sashes over single pane lower sashes. Opposite, 'The Bungalow' was built as the platform master's house and is a simple rectangular shape with a

pitched roof and corbelled out eaves. The house was built using the deep red brick as the station, and shares similar details. The basement of the original building once retained a small observation window where the station master would have kept his lantern and oils, and above there was a further observation window, also facing the towards the railway line. The Bungalow was later incorporated into the grounds of Benslow House by John Ransom and the building marked the beginning of a long drive which once led up to the house. The building now has a concrete tiled roof, double glazed uPVC windows and a small kitchen extension but because of its historical associations it is considered worthy of local listing.

Hitchin Station replaced the original 1850s building in 1911 and is a long, relatively low one or two storey building. The two storey main section retains groups of four windows on the first floor. The ground floor below has relatively few openings apart from the necessary doors for passengers and freight. The single storey block, which continues the line of the two storey section, has much larger windows arranged in a regular pattern, probably containing the original waiting rooms as there are chimneys. The pitched roof is covered in Welsh slate. A portion of the 1850 building still survives at the northern end of the up-side platform as revealed by the change in the brickwork and the rounded arches over the windows.



Midland Railway weighbridge building



The Nightingale Public House

Associated with the station, but built when the Midland Railway arrived in the late 1850s, the two remaining buildings in the Conservation Area are of special significance. The first is the warehouse which was built by the Great Northern Railway (GNR) in the 1890s. This substantial brown brick building is one of the few remaining reminders of Hitchin's importance as the hub of a vast railway network, and is two storeys high with shallow-arched windows. Some original cast iron windows remain, but other openings have been bricked up or boarded up. The roof is covered in what appears to be asbestos tiles. This important building is not in use and is therefore 'at risk'. Close by, the much smaller, yellow brick Midland Railway weighbridge building retains similar details and materials to Midland Cottages, and is dated 1857. It is single storey, with red brick dressings to the arched window heads and eaves dentil cornice. The shallow pitched roof is now covered in felt, but must once have been slated. It is also empty and a new use urgently required.

The Nightingale Public House dates to the late 19th century and is built from red brick with yellow brick dressings and two large gables protruding slightly into the street. Below the left hand gable is a two storey stone bay with the name 'Fordham's Ales and Stout', the style of the lettering suggesting a date of around 1910. This matches the single storey extension between the two gables.

7 CHARACTER AREAS

The Conservation Area has been divided into two Character Areas according to each area’s layout, open spaces and buildings. These Character Areas are:

Character Area 1: Hitchin Railway Station and Nightingale Road

Character Area 2: Ransom’s Recreation Ground and the Midland Cottages

7.1 Character Area 1: Hitchin Railway Station and Nightingale Road

General description

This Character Area lies closest to the existing railway line and station and is notable for its many locally listed buildings. The survival of the two railway buildings and the adjoining public house and cottages is of note as they all provide links to the industrialisation of this part of Hitchin in the mid to late 19th century. However, it has been adversely affected by modern road widening schemes and the intrusion of some modern development, most notably the now empty B and Q warehouse, which faces the entrance to the station forecourt. Lyon Court, just outside the Conservation Area boundary, is another very large modern development which dominates this part of Hitchin.



Hitchin Station



*The former stationmaster’s house,
now Bytham Bank*

The public realm

Street lighting is provided by tall steel standards. The pavements are covered in tarmacadam and the kerbstones are a mixture of concrete and granite.

The buildings

This Character Area contains a very high proportion of locally listed buildings which are described in Chapter 6. These buildings were built either to provide accommodation for railway workers, or for industrial or practical purposes associated with the railway.

Important views

- The principal view (View 1) is across the station forecourt to the station building itself, taking in the long low red brick building and the various elements of the working railway which contribute to its setting, such as the overhead cables, lighting and signs.

Key Negative features

- Over-sized modern development close to the entrance to the railway station
- The derelict and neglected site containing the former B and Q warehouse
- A number of large advertising hoardings facing the railway car park and Nightingale Road
- The use of modern materials on the residential properties, most of which are all either locally listed or considered to be 'positive' buildings
- Poor quality boundaries to the back gardens of Station Terrace, facing the station forecourt
- The very poor condition of the warehouse and former weighbridge building, both of which are locally listed
- The surrounding private land and the more modern railway buildings, some of which are in use, all appear somewhat neglected
- The Nightingale Public House is in need of restoration and repair

Issues and opportunities for enhancement

- Urgent repairs and new uses are needed for the empty locally listed buildings
- Improvements to the public realm are required
- Repaving the alleyway leading to Leicester Cottages, perhaps using Staffordshire blue paviers, would be beneficial

7.2 Character Area 2: Ransom's Recreation Ground and the Midland Cottages

General description

The Recreation Ground was created in 1929 when the land was donated to the residents of Hitchin. Now owned and managed by North Hertfordshire District Council, it is a popular open green space and includes the allotments, children's playground and a community garden. Some of the grass has been left as a wildflower meadow. The River Hiz is a further attraction, along with the many mature trees which are most notable on the railway embankment which form the backdrop to the Midland Cottages. The playground is a much-used local facility, and there is also a small volley-ball court in one corner. The Recreation Ground can be approached from four directions – from the original 1929 entrance on Nightingale Road; through a long red brick building (a pavilion which appears to be in partial use) from Alexandra Road; and from two entrances from the central part of Alexandra Road and from Grove Road.



View across Recreation Ground



An avenue of trees leads up from Nightingale Road

The public realm

The pathways through the Recreation Ground are covered in tarmac. Street lighting is by low steel standards, and litter collection is provided by simple black plastic bins or much lower metal bins of no special interest. There are some timber or metal park seats in several locations. Many of these features are in poor condition.

The buildings

The only buildings are the Midland Cottages which are described in some detail in Chapter 6.

Important views

- View 2: This view takes in the long avenue of mature trees which mark the main entrance into the Recreation Ground from Nightingale Road.
- View 3: This opens out from the enclosed space of the avenue leading up to the Recreation Ground to provide a long view over the grassed area to the Midland Cottages and the wooded railway embankment beyond.
- Views 4, 5 and 6: These take in a similar view over the wide open green space of the Recreation Ground and focuses on the gabled elevations of the Midland Cottages on the opposite side of the park, with the heavily wooded bank which rises above them.
- Views 7 and 8: These views take in the wild flower meadow, and the wooded railway embankment beyond.



Poor quality signage in the Recreation Ground



Seating and litter bins in the Recreation Ground need replacing

Key Negative features

Ransom's Recreation Ground

- The railings at the locally listed entrance to the Recreation Ground have been removed
- Poor quality street lighting and other public realm features, including public seating and litter bins

- Graffiti in several locations, including on the Ransom's Recreation Ground sign at the northern entrance to the Recreation Ground
- All of the public realm features would benefit from more regular cleansing and redecoration
- The sign for the Triangle Community garden is in need of replacement
- Rubbish in the River Hiz
- The former pavilion, a single storey red brick building close to the entrance from Alexandra Road, is in poor condition and locked up

Midland Cottages

- Concrete roof tiles on many of the properties

8 SUMMARY OF ISSUES

These 'Issues' follow the identification of Key Negative Features which are set out in Chapter 7.

8.1 *The future management of Ransom's Recreation Ground*

Ransom's Recreation Ground, which is looked after by North Hertfordshire District Council, is the principal open space within the Conservation Area and is important to the wider area of Hitchin town. Its trees, open green spaces and public facilities should be preserved for future generations, and local initiatives, such as the Triangle Community Garden, should be supported and nurtured. Various improvements to the signage and public realm features (particularly the street lighting, public seating and litter bins) are needed although due to funding issues it is recognised that this may not be achievable in the immediate future.

8.2 *The protection of views and open spaces*

The most important views within the Conservation Area are noted on the Townscape Appraisal Map, but of course each resident or visitor will have their own favourite view or vista, sometimes little more than a glimpse through a gap in some buildings. The protection or enhancement of these 'glimpses' and pleasant surprises is an important consideration when planning applications are being assessed. In the Hitchin Railway and Ransom's Recreation Ground Conservation Area, the open green space of Ransom's Recreation Ground must be preserved for future generations, and the protection of the views over this open green space towards the Midland Cottages is of paramount importance.

8.3 *The public realm*

The poor quality of the public realm in the Recreation Ground has already been noted, and further enhancements would be welcome in Nightingale Road and Station Approach. Overall, there are clearly issues with poor maintenance and the gradual deterioration of various items of street furniture, particularly public seating. As funds permit, the provision of a standard 'palette' of features (seats, litter bins, street lighting street signage etc) could be adopted by the District and County Councils to ensure that only high quality, well designed features are added.



Improvements are needed to the public seating and other features in the Recreation Ground

8.4 Buildings of Local Interest

North Hertfordshire District Council currently maintains a *Register of Buildings of Local Interest for Hitchin* (BLI's), more commonly referred to as 'locally listed' buildings, many of which lie within the adjoining Hitchin Conservation Area. More details are provided in Chapter 6 para. 6.2. The District Council has prepared a revised draft list of BLI's in Hitchin Parish with the assistance of the Hitchin Historical Society. 96 buildings or structures are now included on the Hitchin Parish Local List, eight of which lie within the Hitchin Railway and Ransom's Recreation Ground Conservation Area. In due course, further additions to this list may be made.

8.5 New development

The Conservation Area contains one site where redevelopment to an appropriate scale and design would be very welcome – the former B and Q site opposite Station Approach. The District Council could consider preparing a Planning Development Brief for this site to encourage sensitive redevelopment.

8.6 Site specific improvements

The following buildings or sites would all benefit from improvement:

- The entrance gates to Ransom's Recreation Ground in Nightingale Road – reinstate metal railings
- Provide new paving to Leicester Cottages, Nightingale Road, possibly using Staffordshire blue brick paviors
- Replace signage in the Recreation Ground
- Replace litter bins, street lighting and public seating in the Recreation Ground
- Refurbish the Nightingale Public House and restore the front elevation
- Repair the two locally listed but now empty railway buildings in Nightingale Road and find a suitable new use for them

APPENDIX 1: Townscape Appraisal Map

PLANNING GUIDANCE - APPROVED FOR DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PURPOSES

STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION AND PROCESS

4 July 2009	Exhibition launch and 1st round of Public Consultation
4 September 2009	End of 1st round of public consultation
14 May 2010	2nd round of Public Consultation
11 June 2010	End of 2nd round of Public Consultation
14 September 2010	Hitchin Committee
26 July 2011	Cabinet Meeting

In addition, there was local publicity, entry on the District Council's website and letters were sent to various stakeholders, details of which are available from the address below.



If English is not your first language, or you have difficulty reading this document, please ring our customer services team on (01462) 474000 to request it be provided to you in either Urdu, Bengali, Polish, Italian, large print, Braille or on tape.

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