

Conservation Area



BENTLEY

EASTHAMPSHIRE



Partners

Introduction & Brief History

Bentley Conservation Area was designated in 1968 and extended in January 1978, and later extended in June 1993.

Bentley dates back to the Roman Period. The village has gradually evolved since this time to its present form, through its association with the following important routes -

- The ridgeway north of the village used by the Phoenicians and their reputed association with trading Cornish tin;
- The Pilgrims Way running south of the village providing links between Winchester, Farnham and Canterbury;
- and the creation of the Turnpike Trust which established the main road between Alton and Farnham, which we know today as the A31.

Bentley is recorded as being held by William the Archer, in service to the King. By 1086, Henry de Blois, the Bishop of Winchester had the manor and liberty of Bentley, as part of the Farnham Estate. He created the Archdeaconry of Surrey to which the tithes of Bentley were allotted. A number of curates were appointed upto and following the Dissolution of the Monasteries until 1648, when the church was dispossessed of its lands which were sold to George Wither. He was a well known poet and Roundhead who sold the estate to raise money, to form a troop of soldiers for Cromwell. The Bishop regained his confiscated lands with the reinstatement of the Monarchy, and held the Manor until the 1880's when it passed to the Ecclesiastical commissioners.

In more recent years Bentley was the home of the Chief Scout, General Sir Robert Baden-Powell, who came to live at Blackacre on the edge of the village in 1919, renaming it Pax Hill.

Character of the Conservation Area

The main route between Alton and Farnham, now the A31, became more important by the seventeenth century, and some of the oldest buildings on the northern side of this main road, date from that time. They form the ribbon of development defining the linear layout of Bentley, upto and beyond Hole Lane, as far as the small green adjacent to the village pond. Many of these buildings, concealing a core of timber framing, were later re-fronted, mainly in the eighteenth century and have changed little since.

The character of the Conservation Area is portrayed by the relationship between the larger isolated properties, which are set back from the road, and enclosed by old brick and/or malmstone walls and many fine mature trees, and the contrasting groups of mixed smaller scale terrace properties. These smaller buildings are also set back from the road and have long thin front gardens. Some of these define the westerly entrance or exit of Bentley, such as the former almshouses known as Holmwood Cottages.



1-5 Main Road



Holmwood Cottages, Main Road

North-east of Hole Lane, a group of unlisted and unlisted historic buildings of varying architectural styles and age continue the linear form of development upto the green. These are tightly grouped and built close upto the road edge, and include a shop, public house and former public house.

A pink granite obelisk of 1897, describing the commemoration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee defines the south-westerly corner of the green. Here, the building layout and positions change; they are stepped back from the road to form the green, an informal common area which encapsulates the village pond.

Opposite, to the south of the main road, a few infrequently placed modern buildings are situated close to the former Rectory. High ironstone walls demarcate the boundary edges of the old Rectory; they help define the end of this group of buildings, and the beginning of the open area to the south of the main road.

This open aspect of flat farmland and meadows to the south is a prominent and distinctive characteristic of the Conservation Area. It provides open views with the village from the south, and across the valley to the Old Greens, Telegraph Hill, Isington Mill and Alice Holt Forest in the distance. It also provides a visual contrast to the hard edge of the built up part of the village.

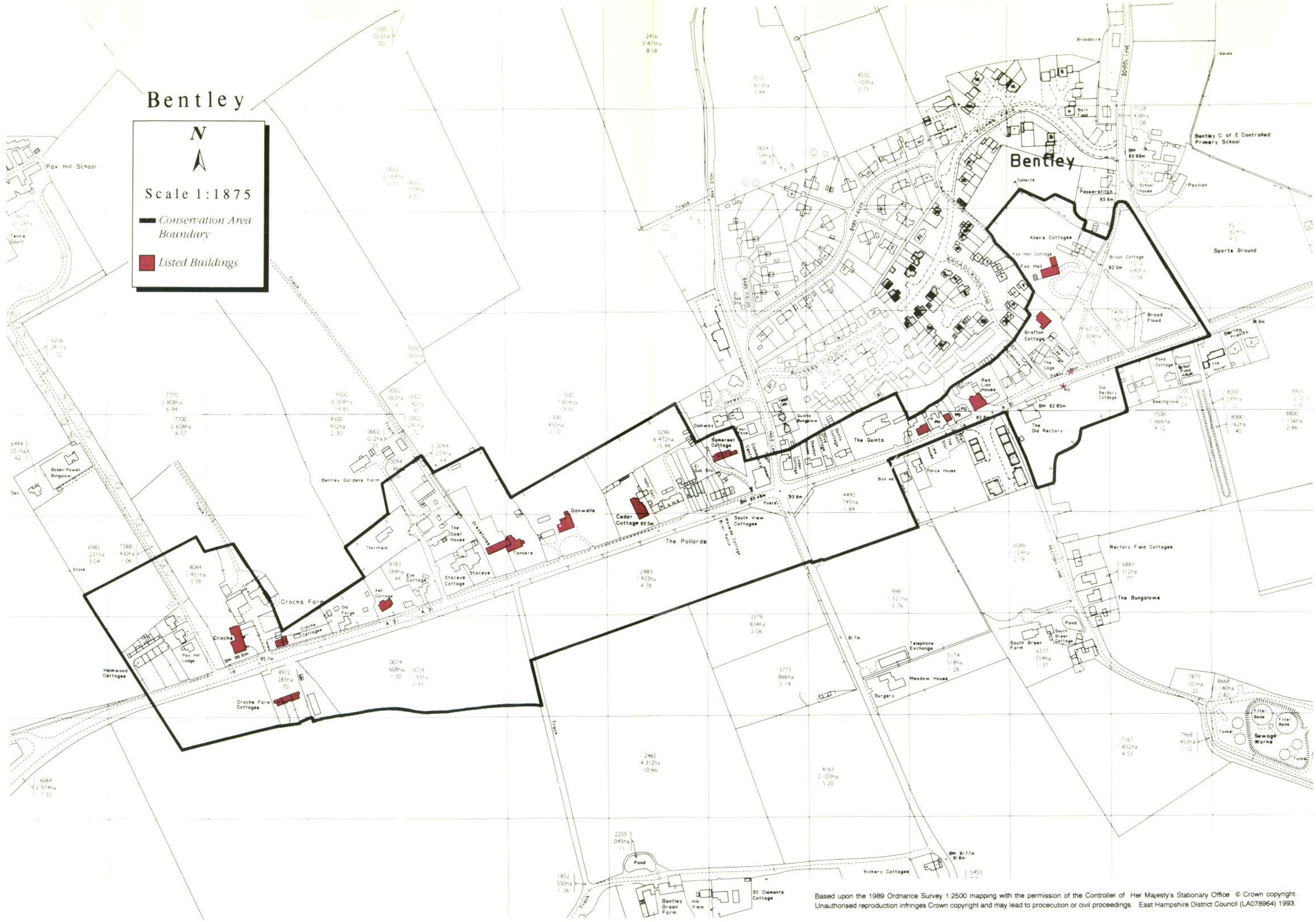
Bentley



Scale 1:1875

— Conservation Area Boundary

■ Listed Buildings



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Buildings

There is a range of building styles and type in Bentley. Details of some of the historic buildings in the Conservation Area are given below:

- **Somerset Cottages** : A late medieval cruck timber-framed hall. Cruck construction is very rare in this part of Hampshire. The exterior is brick with a tiled roof. There is a massive chimney.
- **Ganwells and the adjoining Coach House** : An earlier house but mainly late 18th century house with Regency detailing and a mid 19th century rough cast render exterior. Inside the beams supporting the upper floors are 17th century, whilst the old tie beams suggest the remains of a pre - 17th century building.



Ganwells, Main Road

- **Fox Hall and Fox Hall Cottage** : An early 18th century stuccoed house which was remodelled in the 19th century. It has a steep slate roof, a "toothed" eaves and fascia, scalloped bargeboards and gabled dormer windows.
- **Tanners** : A 17th century house with 18th and 20th century alterations. Built in red brick and tiles which hide an earlier timber framed core.



Tanners, Main Road

- **The Memorial Hall** : A red brick building built on a site presented by Thomas Eggar in memory of the men who died in the 1914 - 18 war.
- **Crocks Farm Cottages** : 17th century cottages with exposed timber framing which were altered in the early 19th century.
- **Crocks Farmhouse** : A late 18th century brick building with a Doric porch.

- **Greystones** : A late 18th century house with stone walls and a tiled roof (formerly a barn).

Other Buildings, Details and Materials

Brick is the predominant material used throughout Bentley; it was often used to conceal early seventeenth century timber frame construction. Other materials also applied in the late 18th, early 19th century include tile-hanging (usually at first floor level only), stucco and render.

Most of the roofs are undulating and tiled, with the occasional steeply pitched slate roof of the nineteenth century. The roofs are also predominantly hipped or half-hipped with stepped or high ridges, gabled or hipped dormers and plain chimneys with double stacks.

Other architectural elements contributing to the overall character of the village include a range of fenestration detailing, including lattice casements and a variety of sliding-sashes. Panelled porches with ornamental fretwork and medallioned cornices can be found throughout the village, together with pedimented doorways with fluted Doric pilasters.

Unusual features unique to Bentley include:-

- the "**Bentley Book**", located close to the junction of Hole Lane with the A31. It was designed by Lord Baden-Powell for a Daily Mail competition for village signs in 1923, and is in the form of an open book showing a map of Bentley and a resume of points of historic interest.
- the listed **white stone milestone** of 1825 located to the south of the main road, opposite the green.

New Development

The design of new buildings, extensions and alterations to existing buildings and new uses within the Conservation Area will all affect its character. The design of development will need to respect the details, overall form and materials found within the Conservation Area. Those who undertake development should do so with care.

Further advice is given in the following leaflets which are published by East Hampshire District Council as part of the Conservation Directory:-

- East Hampshire's Conservation Areas.
- Caring for East Hampshire's Conservation Areas and Historic Buildings.

Further Reading

- The Buildings of England. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight N Pevsner and D Lloyd (Penguin Books).
- The Victorian County Histories.
- Hampshire Treasures, published by Hampshire County Council.

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