

ALTON


Character Assessment

I	OVERVIEW	2
2	CHARACTER AREA DESCRIPTIONS	7
2.1	ALT01 Historic core	7
2.2	ALT02 Holybourne and Anstey	11
02a.	Anstey	11
02b.	London Road environs	12
02c.	Holybourne historic core.....	12
02d.	Cuckoo’s Corner	13
2.3	ALT03 Industrial Estate and Business Parks	17
2.4	ALT04 Residential suburbs	20
04a.	Mount Pleasant	20
04b.	Victoria Road environs	21
04c.	The Butts environs	21
04d.	Newtown.....	22
04e.	Northern suburbs.....	22
04f.	Kings Road environs.....	23
04g.	Wilson	23
04h.	The Ridgeway environs	24
04i	Highridge and Princess Drive environs.....	24
04j.	Princess Louise Square environs	25

ALTON

Character Assessment

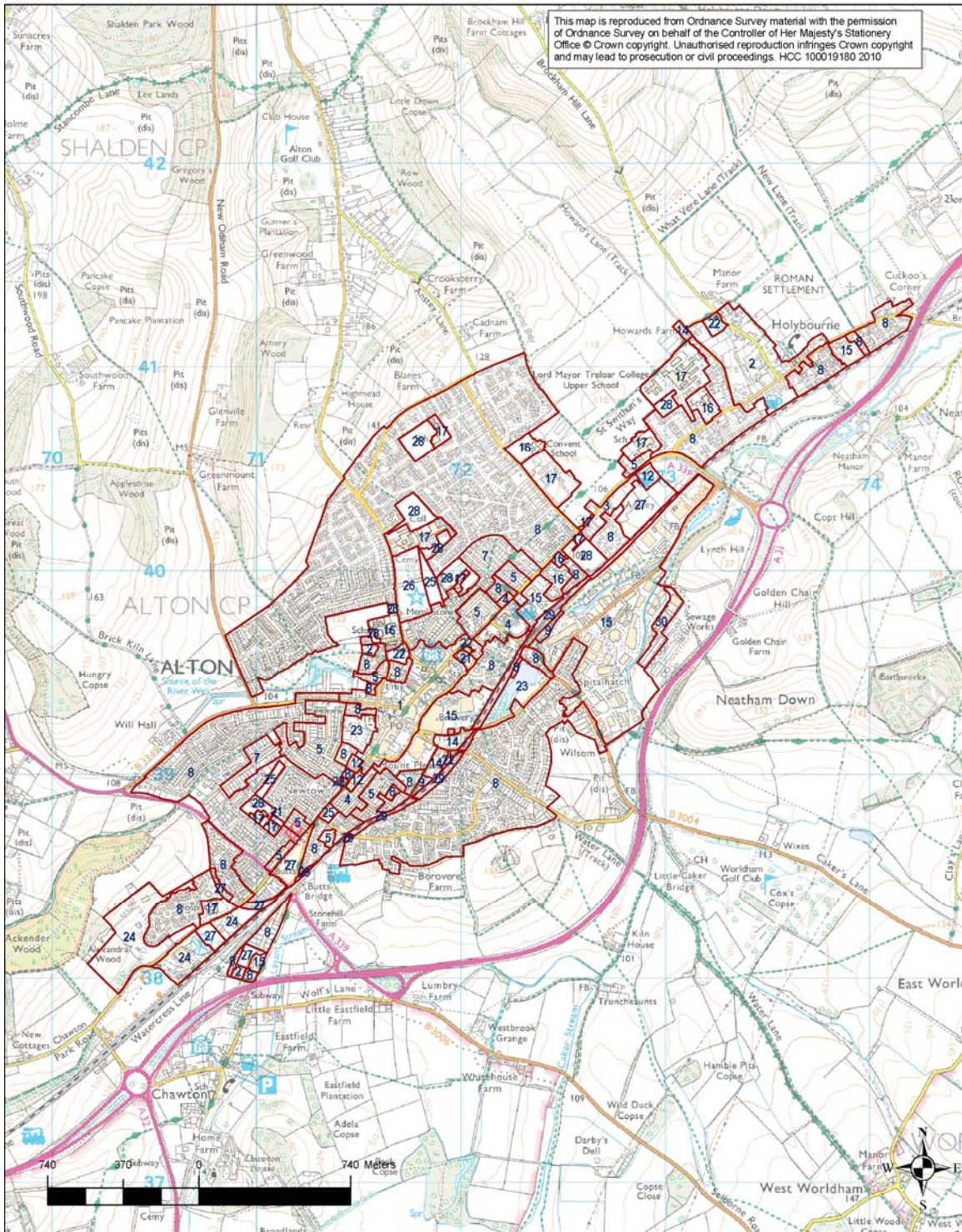
I OVERVIEW

- I.1 Alton lies near the eastern edge of the central wooded chalk downland plateau and its junction with the geologically complex greensand landscapes of East Hampshire. The River Wey rises on the western edge of the suburban area on the chalk, and flows east towards Farnham. The historic core of the town lies in the river valley, with the church and the market place standing either side of the river on higher ground. The stream is partly culverted through the town, appearing on the eastern edge of the historic core from where it flows to the north-east, its valley defined most sharply on its south-eastern side. To the north-west, the rise of the valley side is less steep.
- 
- I.2 The valley has been the defining influence in the growth of Alton, resulting in a long, narrow settlement which has grown along the valley to encompass former rural settlements at Anstey and Holybourne, all sitting along the main Winchester to London road which was an important route in the Saxon and medieval periods. When the railway came, it too followed the course of the valley.
- I.3 Most of the boundary of the town faces open countryside. Small sections of the south-eastern boundary are bounded by the A31 bypass, most of which is hidden from view from the town due to the topography.
- I.4 Alton was part of a large royal estate although the Domesday Book uses the name Neatham for this estate. Neatham is a hamlet to the north-east of Alton. The entry recorded one of the few markets in Hampshire, and the presence of a church. It is thought that it is probable that the market was actually held in Alton despite its association with Neatham. As is often the case with royal estates, Alton did not have a borough charter but sent representatives to parliament and was granted a nine day fair by Edward II. The economy of the town was probably based on wool and cloth-making, leather-working and passing trade. The road brought pilgrims travelling to and from Canterbury, royal retinues journeying between London and Winchester, and merchants and visitors heading for St Giles' Fair in Winchester, one of the greatest fairs in Europe.
- I.5 By the eighteenth century, brewing had developed into a major element of the town's economy, supporting a local hop-growing industry. Both breweries were bought by large, national brewing companies and both were closed in the late-twentieth century.

- I.6 The town saw some moderate growth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with new streets being laid out to the south-west of the historic core, developing along Westbrook Road, the laying out of Queen's Road and the expansion of the suburb of Newtown. Several new streets were also developed off Anstey Road. In the period between the wars, the most substantial area of development was adjacent to, and north-east of, the cemetery, where streets such as Landsdowne Road and Chauntsingers Road were laid out. The later-twentieth century saw considerable growth in the size of the town, particularly to the north-west where residential estates were built on the side of the valley and adjacent to the railway line where a large industrial area was built. A residential development also crossed the railway line to the south of the town centre.
- I.7 Alton is one of Hampshire's highest towns, sitting at just over 100m. To the west, the chalk rises steeply and there is a mainly arable landscape with some pasture with a dense concentration of ancient semi-natural and coppiced woodlands on the clay caps. To the east lies the South Downs National Park, easily accessible from Alton by the extensive footpath network which still connects this market town to its rural hinterland. Chawton, a small village just to the south of Alton, provides one of the main cultural associations of the town, being the home of Jane Austen, whilst the Allen Gallery in the centre of the town displays a range of landscape paintings by local painter William Herbert Allen.
- I.8 There is an Alton Town Design Statement carried out by Alton Town Partnership, which has a character assessment associated with it which has been adopted by East Hampshire District Council.

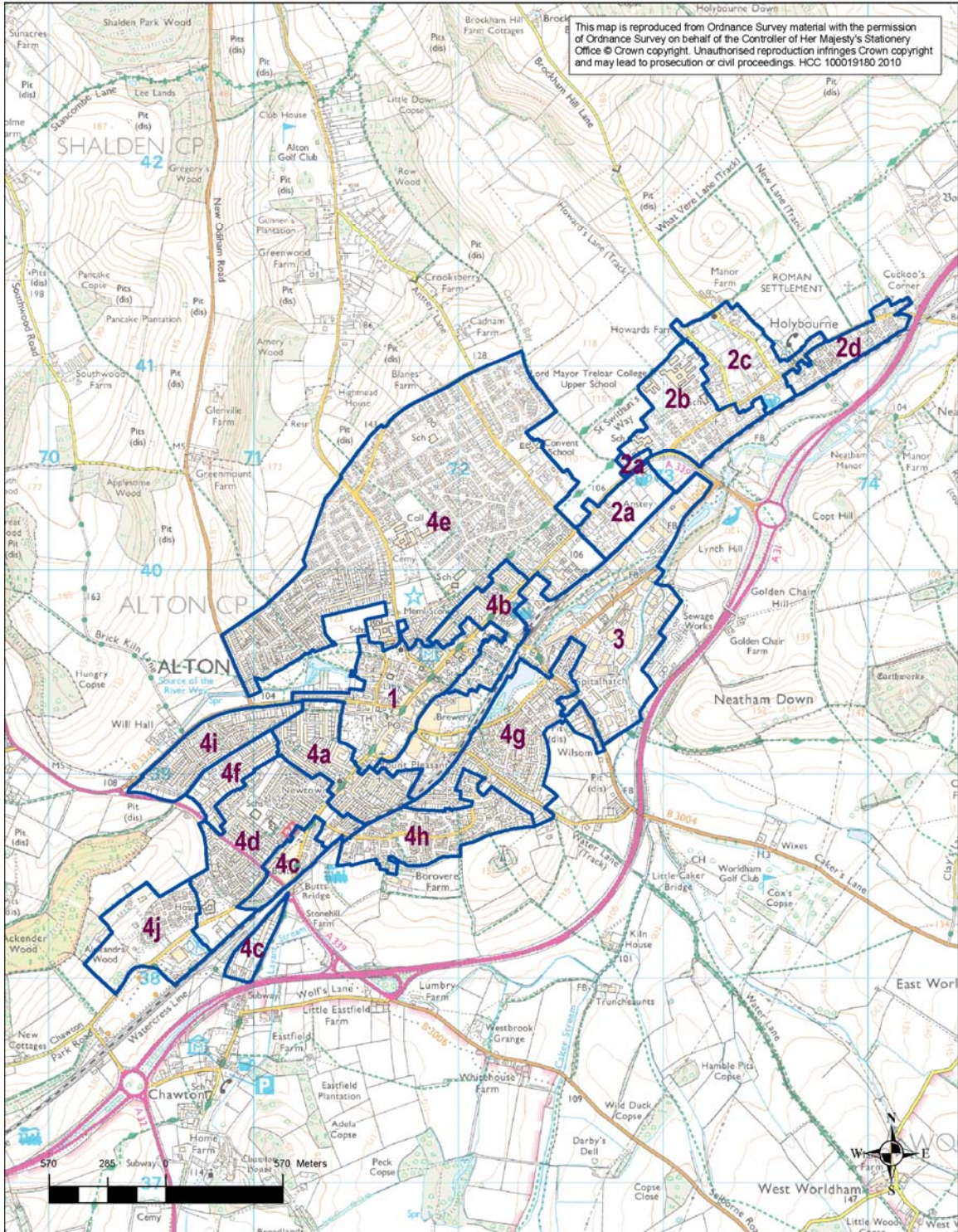
Hampshire Towns Character Assessment – Townscape Types

TCT	Description
01	Medieval Planned Urban Settlement
02	Rural Settlement
03	Post Medieval Development 1600–1819
04	Residential 1820–1869
05	Residential 1870–1914 (Terraces, Semi-detached, Small Detached Houses)
06	Residential 1870–1914 (Villas)
07	Residential 1915–1945
08	Residential Post 1945–Present (Houses and Bungalows)
09	Residential Post 1945–Present (Flats, 4 storey and above)
10	Commercial 1870–1945
11	Large Retail 1950–Present
12	Office/Commercial 1945–Present
13	Business Park 1945–Present
14	Traditional/Older Industrial
15	Industrial 1945–Present
16	Hospital/Education – Older Core
17	Hospital/Education – Modern
18	Defence Pre 1830
19	Defence 1830–1914
20	Defence 1915–Present
21	Civic
22	Religious/Churchyard/Precinct
23	Open Space (Public Park)
24	Open Space (Sports/Recreation)
25	Open Space (Allotments)
26	Open Space (Cemetery)
27	Open Space (Green Corridor)
28	Open Space (School Playing Field)
29	Transport Corridor
30	Civil Infrastructure – e.g. Sewage Works
31	Car Park
32	Mobile Home Park



ALTON TOWNSCAPE TYPES





**ALTON
CHARACTER AREAS**



2 CHARACTER AREA DESCRIPTIONS

2.1 ALT01 Historic core

2.1.1 Character Summary

Alton's historic core comprises a medieval market town crossing the valley of the River Wey and sitting along its narrow valley. The relatively wide High Street which becomes Normandy Street at its eastern end is almost continuously enclosed with buildings set out to the back of the pavement on regular plots running back from the street frontage. This is also seen in part to Market Street (which becomes Lenten Street) striking off north-west from High Street. There is a mix of commercial uses; shops, cafés, restaurants and public houses to the lively centre, and an attractive variation to building types and periods, with the eighteenth century perhaps most in evidence (although many of the buildings have older timber frames behind later brick and stucco rendered facades). This has produced a very strongly defined historic townscape. There are a lot of statutory listed buildings within this character area reflecting the quality of the built form, and much of the character area lies within the Alton Conservation Area.

2.1.2 Key Characteristics

- A nucleated settlement of medieval origins of special historic and architectural importance, set along a valley floor
- The area is undulating with roads and spaces to the west set up from the valley floor and distinct changes in level west and running north (upwards) along High Street into Normandy Street
- Regular plots that are narrow to the street and long, running back perpendicular to the street (some have been truncated or amalgamated into parking to the rear), typical of a medieval planned settlement
- Buildings are generally set to the back of pavement
- Red/orange brick, timber-framing (some rendered and some exposed), painted render and stucco (mostly white and cream but also other colours), use of vitrified headers (Flemish bond). Much refronting, in brick and render, of earlier timber-framed buildings, handmade clay tiles and some natural slate
- Buildings are between two and three storeys, with a lot of two-and-a-half-storey examples with rooms in the roofspace (lit by dormer windows)
- Mixed use; independent retailers and high street chains, cafés, restaurants, public houses, public buildings and church
- Very few trees to the town centre but mature trees to rear gardens to High Street and in the churchyard, no street trees
- Good quality public realm with granite setts and lined gutters, some stone and slate kerbs, narrow pavement in places, good treatment of distinctive alleyways
- Good access and connectivity throughout

2.1.3 *Boundaries and setting*

The historic core is enclosed by development on all sides. To the north lie residential suburbs comprising the northern suburbs (ALT04e). To the east, the boundary meets the Victoria Road environs (ALT04b) and the industrial estates and business parks of character area ALT03 are to the south-east, lining the southern side of the river valley. To the south-west and west is the Victorian and Edwardian expansion of the town in the form of Mount Pleasant residential suburb (ALT04a).

The setting of this character area is a mix of enclosed, fine-grain layout suburbs to the north, west and south-west, interspersed with open parkland to the north-west and the larger scale, commercial setting of the industrial estates and business parks to the south-east. The central core area, however, feels very contained and inward-looking and is not seen in any distant opening views or vistas because of the topography of the valley.

2.1.4 *Designations*

There are over 140 statutory listed buildings within the character area. The highest densities are to be found on two roads; High Street and Market Street. The listed buildings include a variety of building types including the Grade II* Westbrooke House (High Street), the Grade II Town Hall (Market Square) and the Grade I Church of St Lawrence (Church Street). The character area is almost entirely within the Alton Conservation Area. However, the conservation area extends beyond the character area to include a largely landscape setting to the historic core to the north-west of the town centre, comprising floodplain and the upper valley of the River Wey.

2.1.5 *Townscape types present*

TCT01, 02, 05, 08, 21, 22 and 23.

2.1.6 *Topography*

The character area follows the north–south line of High Street which runs in part along the river valley but with a townscape-defining change in level as High Street rises out of the valley to become Normandy Street to the northern end. To the west it follows Market Street which steadily rises out of the valley. In between and to the west is the higher ground of the church and churchyard (Vicarage Hill) set up from High Street. The river passes between the church and market.

2.1.7 *Layout and Pattern*

The character area comprises the historic core of Alton and its church and setting. This is an historic planned market town, set around the High Street/Market Street junction, with regular plots principally defining the streets leading from this junction. Regular (probably medieval) planned plots are seen to stretch as far as Normandy Street to the north and along into Lenten Street to the west. The use of the river, as a source of power and for production (in the breweries), defines the early and later patterns of development in the town.

Buildings are generally set to the back of pavement. There is a positive sense of enclosure from built form throughout the character area. At the junction of Amery Street and Market Street there is an attractive and intimate square, well-defined by buildings and with active frontages throughout. The rear areas to High Street and Market Street and other lanes and alleyways in the historic core are of special interest and contribute to the sense of a well-preserved historic street plan (despite some destruction of plots by amalgamation to form parking areas, or separate development which does not relate to the fine historic urban grain of the town centre).

2.1.8 *Buildings and materials*

There is much variation to the building types to the historic core of Alton; commercial premises, shops, public houses, hotels, and the Town Hall. Early houses and commercial premises (some with exposed timber-framing to side elevations) have been refronted with later brick or painted render/stucco facades and some houses are retro-fitted with nineteenth-century shopfronts. The eighteenth century is perhaps best represented stylistically, with the sash window and strong cornice lines and parapets to roofs defining many of the traditional buildings to High Street. There is much variation to height, with most buildings either two or three storey. A number also have two storeys and further accommodation in the roofspace, often lit by dormer windows which form a feature of the skyline of High Street. This variation, combined with the consistent building line, has produced a very distinctive and strongly defined historic townscape. There are also a number of high-quality new additions to the streetscape, such as the public library and flats to Vicarage Hill.

Roofs, where seen, are mostly handmade red/orange clay tiles to steep pitches. There is also some natural slate to shallower-pitched roofs, usually seen on nineteenth-century buildings. Natural slate is also seen as slate hanging to side walls.

2.1.9 *Predominant land use*

There is a mix of uses throughout the character area, with a number of independent retailers, high street chains, cafés, restaurants, public houses, some offices above shops, and public buildings such as the Town Hall and the Church of St Laurence. There are also residential buildings beyond High Street and Market Street, particularly around the church. There are also some residential units above shops but generally these upper floors are offices or used for storage for the commercial units.

2.1.10 *Public realm*

There is a high-quality public realm to the historic core of Alton with a good use of traditional materials for paving, kerbing and demarking of gulleys, gutters and cross-overs to parking as well as parking spaces. There is a notable absence of street trees. Alleyways have been paved in traditional materials to give them identity and a sense of place. These alleyways link parking areas to High Street and Market Street and are an important part of the legibility of the town.

2.1.11 *Open space*

There is almost no public open space to the historic core other than the urban square at the junction of Amery Street and Market Street. High Street is a good example of a shared space, and its wide section helps create stopping and meeting places along its length. There are two public parks to the south and west of the historic core. Alton Public Gardens is a formal landscaped urban park, whereas Amerey Hill Open Space is a more informal green space, through which runs the River Wey. Other than these, more informal open spaces include the car park to the rear of High Street, accessed from Vicarage Hill and one of the few places the River Wey can be seen (to its northern edge). Further to this there is the churchyard to the Church of St Laurence; an attractive tree-lined setting to the Grade I listed church with welcome greenery to this very urban area.

Some houses to Lenten Street and Normandy Street (to the north side) have large private open gardens, often with mature trees; these complement the skyline in extended views along the streets and, where possible, between development.

St Swithun's Way long-distance footpath (Winchester-Farnham) also runs through the character area, and there are good public footpath links to the wider countryside from the town centre.

2.1.12 *Biodiversity*

The built-up nature of the historic core limits vegetation and wildlife habitats. However, to the west of the character area, the two main open spaces, with their amenity and semi-natural habitats, and private gardens interlink to form a larger urban habitat patch. There are a lot of large mature gardens with mature trees to the rear of particularly Normandy Street (north side), Lenten Street and Amery Street (north-west side), and tree groups to the churchyard.

2.1.13 *Access and connectivity*

There is good access to the character area by road given the location on a prominent, well trafficked route. Connectivity is also good, with pedestrians being able to access High Street and Market Street via a series of lanes and alleys from parking areas, and to access adjacent character areas relatively easily via a series of footpaths and lanes.

2.2 ALT02 Holybourne and Anstey

2.2.1 Character Summary

This character area comprises two historic settlements, Anstey and Holybourne, both within designated conservation areas. Between and beyond these settlements is a mix of twentieth-century infill between London Road and the railway, and schools including the Lord Mayor Treloar School and the Grade II* listed Andrews Endowed Church of England Aided Primary School. The conservation areas include a diverse mix of historic building types and traditional materials which strongly define parts of London Road. The sense of being on the edge of the settlement dominates throughout and access to the open countryside to the north and south is an important characteristic of the character area, despite the presence of the A31 and the railway to the south.

2.2.2 Key characteristics

Sub-areas of ALT02

02a. Anstey

- A tight urban grain of older houses to London Road, and some twentieth-century infill
- Spine road runs east–west along the valley, land gently falling to the east to the River Wey and railway track
- A combination of small and large irregular plots with some sense of planning along London Road
- Some consistency to the building line along London Road with a number of dwellings (and larger buildings) to back of pavement, strongly defining townscape in places
- A mix of brick (some in distinctive ‘rat-trap bond’), painted stucco, and clay tile and natural slate roofs, some with decorative barge boards
- Buildings range from modest terraced cottage types to larger Georgian houses, all at two storey
- Residential throughout – single-family dwelling houses
- Good coverage of mature trees throughout, mostly to private gardens. Built form is often framed or partially obscured by mature trees giving a semi-rural character in places
- Car-dominated public realm with busy roads and high levels of traffic through tight urban spaces, narrow pavements
- Good access and connectivity, including an alternative footpath to the main road to north of the road

02b. *London Road environs*

- Late-twentieth-century (mix of 1970s and 1980s) series of small urban extensions at medium grain, open character
- The landform is gently falling east to the River Wey
- Medium-sized, with some large, semi-detached but mostly detached houses, set in regular plots mostly to loop roads or cul-de-sacs
- Often irregular building line following roadside of cranked roads and cul-de-sacs
- Red and buff brick, some render and some tile hanging and weatherboarding, clay tiles and grey concrete interlocking tiles
- Two-storey houses throughout
- Predominantly residential; single-family dwelling houses. The area also includes two schools
- Good retention of tree cover both within and to the edges of development, to historic boundaries and open spaces; a backdrop of trees to development almost throughout
- Wide roads, predominantly open-fronted gardens, limited traffic and unobtrusive lighting, some shared surfaces to cul-de-sacs, street trees and grass verges
- Good access and connectivity, especially to open green space and surrounding open countryside. Connectivity favours the pedestrian

02c. *Holybourne historic core*

- A semi-rural village character survives to the historic core of Holybourne with a survival of a lot of historic buildings of special interest of coarse very open grain
- Land gently rises to the north and falls to the central (north–south) stream from the village pond
- Small, medium-sized and large irregular plots with only limited sub-division
- Inconsistent building line to the lanes running north, consistent back of pavement development to London Road, boundary walls strongly define plots in the absence of buildings
- Red brick, flint (knapped and cobbled), some ashlar malmstone, painted render and stucco, natural slate and handmade clay tiles and some survival of thatch (long straw in places) to roofs. Brick and flint combinations to distinctive boundary walls
- Mostly two- with some two-and-a-half-storey houses (using dormers in roofspaces), houses are generally at a modest cottage scale
- Almost entirely residential with single-family dwellings. There is also a church and a public house
- Good tree cover mostly in the private gardens of large houses or the churchyard but providing high public amenity value, often lining lanes and providing positive enclosure
- Good quality public realm; quiet roads lined with brick/flint boundary walls, or mature hedges and trees (or both). No street lights
- Good access and connectivity, particularly for the pedestrian, with footpath networks giving direct access to the open countryside

02d. *Cuckoo's Corner*

- Late-twentieth-century housing at a medium open grain
- The topography is gently falling east to the River Wey
- Semi-detached and detached houses set in groups or around small cul-de-sacs
- Inconsistent building lines due to the overly complicated road and plot layouts
- Red brick, modern clay tile and other modern interlocking tiles
- Two-storey houses
- Entirely residential; single-family dwelling houses
- Good survival of mature trees throughout, strong tree belts to the boundary with the railway and the A31
- Shared pedestrian spaces, roads with grass verges and off-street parking
- Good access and connectivity, particularly for the pedestrian

2.2.3 *Boundaries and setting*

The Holybourne and Anstey character area is located at the eastern end of the town. It is divided into four sub-areas comprising Anstey (sub-area ALT02a), London Road environs (sub-area ALT02b), Holybourne historic core (sub-area ALT02c) and Cuckoo's Corner (sub-area ALT02d). The character area bounds open countryside to the north, the railway line, fields and the A31 to the south-east, the industrial estates and business parks to the south-west (ALT03) and the town's northern suburbs to the west (ALT04, sub-area ALT04e).

The character area enjoys a countryside setting to the north, disrupted by the railway line and A31 to the south-east. To the west, the area looks on to sports pitches, contrasting with the setting to the south, which comprises large industrial sites. Holybourne and Anstey historic cores are essentially inward-facing to the roadside and, due to topography and tree cover, they are largely unaffected by the potential impact of land uses surrounding the character area (such as the A31, the railway line and industrial areas). Open fields to the east of Anstey core and west of Eggars School effectively split this character area from the urban extensions of Alton.

2.2.4 *Designations*

The character area encompasses two designated conservation areas; the Anstey Conservation Area (sub-area ALT02a) and the Holybourne Conservation Area covering Holybourne's historic core (sub-area ALT02c). The majority of more than fifty statutory listed buildings are located in the conservation areas, with two outside them in the London Road environs (sub-area ALT02b). Notable buildings include the Grade II Tudor Cottage, London Road (thatched and timber-framed) and the Grade II* listed Andrews Endowed Church of England Primary School, London Road. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) within the character area but there are two scheduled areas, either side of sub-area ALT02d, which relate to Roman occupation at Neatham.

2.2.5 *Townscape types present*

TCT02, 03, 05, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22 and 28.

2.2.6 *Topography*

The landform of the area is gently falling from west to east towards the valley of the River Wey and the railway line which runs adjacent to the river. The Church of the Holy Rood of Holybourne sits slightly elevated to the north of the character area, and a stream fed by the village pond adjacent to the church runs in a shallow valley centrally through Holybourne.

2.2.7 *Layout and Pattern*

There are three distinct patterns of development within the character area. Firstly, the ribbon-like development of predominantly historic houses (many of them statutory listed) at a medium and sometimes fine grain along London Road in both Anstey (ALT02a) and Holybourne (ALT02c). These buildings are set immediately onto or just back from the back edge of pavement and in places strongly define the carriageway and create interesting and memorable townscape.

Secondly, to Holybourne village (ALT02c) north of London Road, there is a dramatic change in grain with medium-sized to large houses set in large to very large plots around a loop of tightly defined rural lanes converging on the attractive group of church, churchyard and village pond and associated trees and boundary walls. The detached houses are set in large landscaped gardens, informally laid out in their plots with no consistent building line or relationship to the roadside; this is one of the key characteristics of this part of the Holybourne Conservation Area. There has been some sub-division of plots to the west side of Howard's Lane.

Thirdly, between Anstey and Holybourne historic settlements (ALT02b) and to the east of Holybourne up the A31 (ALT02d), there is a series of late-twentieth-century urban extensions. These are generally cul-de-sac or loop road groups. Houses are semi-detached or detached at a medium grain. The building lines follow the line of the roadside which is often cranked or curved, producing a slight staggering to the group.

2.2.8 *Buildings and materials*

To sub-areas ALT02a (Anstey) and ALT02c (Holybourne), houses are generally older, dating from the seventeenth-, eighteenth- and nineteenth century. They are modest in scale, rarely above two storeys, with some at two and a half storeys with use of the steeply-pitched roof spaces for accommodation lit by small dormers. In plan, these houses are narrow, and side gables (and occasionally, as in Anstey, gables to the roadside) form prominent features in extended views along London Road.

To sub-areas ALT02b and ALT02d, houses are less reflective of the local vernacular and are large two-storey semi-detached or detached buildings of limited architectural merit but nonetheless cohesive as modern groups.

Traditional materials include, at the higher status, ashlar blocks of malmstone, painted render or stucco, and more vernacular materials such as cobbles and knapped and unknapped flintwork. Roofs are plain handmade clay tiles to hips or plain gables and some natural slate roofs with decorative bargeboards. Thatch survives in small numbers and examples of both long straw and combed wheat reed can be seen (particularly to ALT02c).

Flint and brick boundary walls are a particular feature of the Holybourne character area (ALT02c) and enclose much of the public highway away from London Road.

Modern houses are a combination of red and buff brickwork, some tile hanging and the use of render for variation. Roofs are generally simple and low pitched with concrete roof tiles.

2.2.9 *Predominant land use*

Land use is predominantly residential and almost entirely single-family dwelling houses. Part of the character area (ALT02b) is notable for its schools which include both historic and modern complexes. In addition, there is a public house and the Church of the Holy Rood, with its distinctive and prominent broach spire, to the north end of Holybourne village.

2.2.10 *Public realm*

The public realm is generally of a high quality with limited on-street parking and well-defined roads and pavements, although the latter are narrow in places. Some of the older areas have excessive overhead wires which have detracted from the overall attractive appearance of the streetscene. Streets and lanes are well defined by historic boundary walls to Holybourne village environs and this, combined with trees and hedges to private gardens, makes for very attractive positively enclosed public routes through the character area.

The modern urban extensions (ALT02b and ALT02d) have grass verges and small break-out areas of green space, and some street trees which add to the quality of these environments. There are also shared surfaces and some variation to surface materials. There is very limited on-street parking, with most cars accommodated on private property (front driveways and garages).

2.2.11 *Open space*

There are two significant open spaces to the north and south of London Road. These retain a gap between the urban extensions of Alton and the historic settlement and urban extensions of Holybourne. Anstey Park lies to the north of London Road, partly within ALT04e, and comprises sports grounds and amenity recreation grounds. Eggars School Playing Fields are adjacent to the park within the urban gap. There is a public footpath (St Swithun's Way) running across the park and linking to other footpaths running north-south. To the south of London Road, there is a series of open fields (with some historic field boundaries intact in places) between the road and the rail track. Holybourne sports field, just north of the boundary of ALT02d, provides a further recreation ground and is also part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument, protecting the site of a Romano-British settlement.

The schools to ALT02c are set in open grounds with grassed areas, often tree lined, between buildings and the boundaries. Parking areas have been contained and set to the west and south of the school site.

The Holybourne sub-area (ALT02c) is strongly defined by its open space to private gardens and is distinctive for its lack of development on such large plots. This gives the opportunity for the mature gardens to houses to dominate the streetscene and longer views of the built form. Development in this sub-area is very much secondary to its attractive mature landscaped settings.

2.2.12 *Biodiversity*

The open-grain settlement pattern and semi-rural location mean that public open spaces and private gardens within the character area are often directly linked to open countryside. These spaces are often hedge- and/or tree lined adding to the range of wildlife habitats within the character area. The Wey Valley, adjacent to the south of the character area, is a particularly important area for biodiversity, although not formally recognised as such through designations. There is a strongly defined green corridor to the railway forming the southern boundary of the character area with the open fields and river beyond.

2.2.13 *Access and connectivity*

There is very good access and connectivity throughout the character area despite the potential barrier to connectivity presented by the railway line to the southern edge. There are established footpath networks which provide the pedestrian with alternative routes to and from the town and directly into the countryside to the north.

2.3 ALT03 Industrial Estate and Business Parks

2.3.1 Character Summary

This is a large, fragmented industrial area and retail park to the south-eastern edge of the town, following the line of the valley and the railway. There are small-, medium- and large-footprint buildings set on a series of small skewed grids. Buildings are functional, generally offering large blank facades to roads. Mix of low-key manufacturing and storage facilities and retail and foodstore. Buildings set in large expanses of hardstanding, much of it used for parking of cars, vans or lorries.

2.3.2 Key characteristics

- Post-war industrial estate and retail park
- Land gently rising from the valley south-east up to the A31 town bypass
- Mostly small- and medium-, with some large-footprint buildings, often inward-looking, set directly off the main through road or on a grid of single point access and egress feeder roads
- Buildings predominantly set to consistent building lines relating to access roads, some variation due to these roads being offset and buildings being located between the confluence of two meandering waterways (the River Wey and Caker Stream)
- Units are steel-framed and clad in profile metal with this material unit also forming the roof covering. Some brick plinths, some structural glazing to retail units
- Buildings equivalent to two-storey domestic buildings (height to eaves)
- Low-key manufacturing and storage with ancillary office uses, some services and food retail (including a large food store) and a brewery complex
- Large semi-open and open areas for parking and the storage of vehicles. Trees, occasionally in reasonably large groups, particularly to boundaries and between units and hedges to parking areas fronting roadsides
- Predominantly dead frontages to access roads and through roads throughout, with adequate provision for pedestrian movement
- Unusually good access and connectivity for an semi-industrial area

2.3.3 Boundaries and setting

This character area is focused in two connected areas; the land between the A31 and the railway line, and an area between the historic core and railway line. To the north are the residential suburbs (ALT04) and Holybourne and Anstey character area (ALT02), to the west lies the historic core (ALT01), to the south are further residential suburbs (ALT04a and ALT04g) and to the east lie fields and the A31.

Views of the large industrial buildings on Drayman's Way impact upon the setting of the Alton Conservation Area in the historic core. The tree-lined railway line screens views to and from the character area to either side. Open fields in the Anstey sub-area (ALT02a) act as a buffer between the industrial buildings and the Anstey Conservation Area.

2.3.4 *Designations*

The character area contains the following statutory listed buildings: the Grade II Anstey General Hospital stores block; Culverton House, Lower Turk Street; and Number 1 and Anstey Mill, both on Mill Lane. The area is not within in a designated conservation area although the south-western section of the character area abuts the Alton Conservation Area boundary and as such this part of the character area could be considered to form part of the setting of the conservation area.

2.3.5 *Townscape types present* TCT08, 14, 15, 29 and 30.

2.3.6 *Topography*

The area is mostly located on the valley floor of the River Wey, with sections of the estate set on rising land to the south-east which eventually leads up to the A31 town bypass.

2.3.7 *Layout and Pattern*

Roads are generally laid out on an informal skewed grid heavily influenced by the presence of the two waterways (Caker Stream and the River Wey) and the railway line and Mill Lane (the B3004). Within the area known as Spitalhatch there is less coherence, and buildings are more influenced by the level changes here loosely following contour lines. Buildings sit in medium-sized to large plots but their setting is often defined by parking of either cars or larger vehicles (often articulated lorries and their containers).

This industrial area is unusual as it has inherited many of the historic routeways (lanes and roads), relatively recent man-made features (railway), and natural features (river courses) running across the site, giving the area a more organic and evolved character rather than the usual plan of an industrial estate imposed on the landscape.

2.3.8 *Buildings and materials*

The built form within this character area is on a medium to large scale. The massing of the units is broken up in places by the use of low-pitch roofs expressed at the gables. Single span, steel-framed buildings comprise terraced units, although this subtlety is often lost and the buildings are perceived as large and repetitive.

There is architectural integrity to some of the units, with some structural glazing used in the retail units and with some attention paid to the sense of arrival and entrance, but most are utilitarian and highly functional with limited variation in materials and often dead frontages to the main routeways through the estate. Sheds are the equivalent of two storeys in height relative to domestic buildings to eaves lines, with the exception of the brewery site buildings which are considerably taller.

Materials vary but most units are clad in profile metal with this material also forming the roof covering, otherwise cement sheeting is seen to roofs. Brick plinths of modern stock bricks of various colours and finishes are seen.

2.3.9 *Predominant land use*

There are low-key manufacturing, services and storage with ancillary office uses, large food retail stores and a brewery complex

2.3.10 *Public realm*

The public realm is adequate for the uses in the character area. Vehicles dominate but there is good provision for the pedestrian, with footpaths along the river as an alternative to the roadside. Grass verges or grassed and tree-lined areas are seen adjacent to pavements. Most buildings are set in areas of parking. These are landscaped to varying degrees.

2.3.11 *Open space*

There is no public open space within the character area other than a small allotment site off Turk Street. There are large areas of hardstanding providing forecourts and parking courts; these are intermittently occupied by cars and/or container lorries or detached containers.

There is a good degree of tree and hedge coverage to the boundaries of this character area and most units have some soft landscaping, including street trees, which helps soften the impact of these functional buildings. Some buildings have a small area of grass to their immediate setting. The riverside is somewhat lost within the character area but there is a public footpath, adjacent to the river, running through the character area and the Hangers Way long-distance footpath also runs through the area.

2.3.12 *Biodiversity*

The built nature of the character area limits vegetation and wildlife habitats, although there is some provision for landscaped green space and street trees are seen lining parts of the main routes through the industrial estates. There are strongly defined tree- and hedge-lined green corridors to all of the character area's boundaries but particularly to the south, along the riverbank and around the lakes to the west and along the railway line to the north. There are also some landscaped boundaries between units.

2.3.13 *Access and connectivity*

There is good access and connectivity throughout the character area, with separate units largely accessed from a through route (Mill Lane, the B3004) rather than via the single access and egress model so often adopted for industrial areas. There are a number of public footpaths to the edges and through the character area (next to the river), allowing good permeability and connectivity for the pedestrian. The car user is also well-connected with a number of routes passing through the character area linking to other parts of the town and to the wider road network.

2.4 ALT04 Residential suburbs

2.4.1 Character Summary

The urban extensions to the town spread along and up the slopes of the valley of the River Wey, with level changes playing an important role in defining the distinct character of particular urban areas and their wider impact in extended views across the valley. The town expanded in a strongly linear fashion with relatively small Victorian and Edwardian suburbs (ALT04a and ALT04b), but with ALT04a almost connecting with established historic development around a green known as The Butts (ALT04c). The town was further enlarged immediately post-war (ALT04d and ALT04f) and still further with massive expansion in the 1970s. Ten sub-areas, largely distinguishing between the periods of development, different grain and layout pattern, have been defined within this large character area.

2.4.2 Key characteristics

Sub-areas of ALT04

04a. Mount Pleasant

- Victorian and Edwardian terraced and semi-detached housing extension to town centre
- A grid pattern of Victorian and Edwardian streets
- Predominantly flat topography throughout
- Terraces, short rows and semi-detached and detached houses on narrow plots of a consistent traditional domestic scale
- Houses share a consistent building line throughout streets and are set slightly back from pavement, with small front gardens usually with boundary walls and/or hedges demarking each property
- Red brick with a high survival of natural slate, some modern interlocking concrete tiles for roofs. Some have been painted and/or rendered. Detailing comprises contrasting brick for window details and some decorative barge boards
- A consistent traditional two-storey domestic scale almost throughout
- Almost entirely residential, with a church (with prominent spire) to the edge of the sub-area
- Almost no public open or green space but some good trees to rear gardens
- Relatively narrow roads with on-street parking. Wirescape is an issue in places
- Good access and connectivity due to the road layout

04b. *Victoria Road environs*

- A strongly defined grid of Victorian and Edwardian streets of modest terraced houses
- Gently rising landform from east to west
- Terraces of houses on narrow plots of a consistent traditional domestic scale
- Houses share a consistent building line throughout streets and are set to back of pavement or slightly back from pavement, with very small front gardens with low boundary walls
- Rendered and painted (various colours but mostly pastels) with modern replacement concrete interlocking tiles (replacing natural slate almost throughout)
- A consistent traditional two-storey domestic scale
- Almost entirely residential but with two small schools
- Almost no public open or green space, some open areas around school buildings, very limited tree cover throughout
- Relatively narrow roads with on-street parking and very high degree of wirescape
- Good access and connectivity due to the network of roads and footpaths running through the sub-area

04c. *The Butts environs*

- An older surviving area to the outskirts of Alton town, centred on an historic open space
- The area is flat and low lying
- Plots are large and regular with generally large houses set within them
- Building lines are consistent, houses generally set back off the road but open and semi-open boundaries particularly facing the green on the north side
- Painted render, some clay tile and natural slate roofs but mostly replacement with concrete interlocking tiles
- A traditional modest scale; two-storey houses throughout
- Entirely residential except for the public house to the west wide of the green
- Good tree cover to the northern and western edges of the green, partially obscuring houses in places
- Generally high-quality public realm, complemented by the open green space and quiet nature of the access road to the houses (on the north side), grass verges in places
- Good access and connectivity, particularly for the pedestrian

04d. *Newtown*

- Planned estate of the immediate-post-war period reflecting much of the spirit of the Garden City movement
- Steadily rising landform from east to west
- Good-sized plots, those to corners can be very generous, side accesses and some front drives (often created from garden areas)
- Buildings lines are consistent to streets and areas of open space. Houses are set back, with small gardens (often laid over to parking)
- Red brick and some render, clay tile roofs and large prominent brick (some rendered) chimneys
- Two-storey throughout with no use of roofspace for additional accommodation (due to limited headroom and pitch of roof)
- Residential throughout; single-family private dwelling houses and some purpose-built flats
- Good provision of public (incidental green spaces) and private (allotments) open spaces, trees limited to rear gardens only, grass verges throughout
- On-street parking throughout, sometimes narrow roads and cul-de-sacs, excessive wirescape in places
- Reasonable access and connectivity though much of the road network is in a closed loop

04e. *Northern suburbs*

- Housing development, mostly of the 1970s, at a medium to fine grain
- Topography is steadily rising from east to west, sometimes steeply. This is reflected in the townscape with long views to the town and to the open countryside
- Small to medium-sized plots laid out mostly in short terraces or semi-detached houses to a loosely defined grid, broken housing block layouts with numerous cul-de-sacs and enclosed green spaces
- Building lines are consistent in small groups, mostly open front gardens (some have been laid over to parking)
- Red and buff brick and painted render, tile and slate hanging, clay tile and concrete interlocking tiles, some mono-pitch roofs and some vertical boarding to porches providing distinctive detailing in places
- Two-storey, low-pitched roofs (some mono-pitched) with ridges varying; some parallel to road and others gable on to the road, providing some variation
- Residential throughout; private dwelling houses
- Areas of open space between groups of houses and some wide verges, a good number of trees to rear gardens (usually grouped and following historic field boundaries) and to the roadside and lining some open spaces
- Wide roads and open boundaries give the impression of space, and grass verges enhance this sense of openness. On-street parking throughout despite much parking to front gardens
- Good access and connectivity throughout, particularly for the pedestrian, including access to the open countryside

04f. *Kings Road environs*

- Medium- to coarse-grain linear layout mix of inter-war and post-war housing to attractive hedge- and tree-lined road
- The area is elevated on a spur above the River Wey valley but is perceived as flat
- Large regular plots, often tree lined and sharing historic boundaries, containing large, detached houses
- Building lines are consistent, with buildings set back off the roadside, often semi-observed by mature landscaped boundaries
- Varied use of brick (red, orange and buff bricks), clay tile and concrete interlocking tiles, some weatherboarding
- Chalet-style houses (dormers to upper storeys), some bungalows and some large two-storey houses
- Residential throughout
- Mature trees and hedges to boundaries (particularly to the front of houses at roadside)
- High-quality public realm; almost no on-street parking, inconspicuous lighting and mature boundaries to pavements
- Good access and connectivity

04g. *Wilsom*

- Post-war houses laid out to a low to medium open grain
- Land is undulating but generally falls progressively from north to south
- Good-sized regular plots to streets and roads
- Mostly consistent building line to meandering roads with houses set back in large gardens, with hedge boundaries to most
- Mostly buff brick and concrete tile, some more variation to the south side of Windmill Hill
- Two-storey houses throughout; mostly ridge parallel to the road
- Residential throughout with generally medium-sized and some large private dwelling houses
- Some good mature tree groups to rear gardens, mostly ornamental trees to front gardens, good group of specimen trees to the lower section of Crowley Drive (appears to be part of an earlier planned landscape)
- Generally uncluttered and well-maintained; grass verges, very limited on-street parking, minimal street lighting and good street trees
- Good access and connectivity, particularly for the pedestrian

04h. *The Ridgeway environs*

- Housing development mostly of the 1970s and early 1980s at a medium to fine grain with an irregular layout
- Topography is steadily falling from east to west
- Small to medium-sized plots laid out mostly in short terraces or semi-detached houses to a series of cul-de-sacs accessed off a main feeder road
- Building lines are consistent and staggered throughout due to the meandering nature of the cul-de-sacs, mostly small open front gardens
- Red and buff brick, hanging tile, clay tile and concrete interlocking tiles
- Two-storey, low-pitched roofs
- Residential throughout; private dwelling houses
- Small areas of open space between groups of houses, very limited numbers of mature trees to rear gardens, mostly ornamental trees to front and rear gardens
- Wide roads and mostly open boundaries give the impression of space to cul-de-sacs, grass verges but no street trees, on-street parking throughout, dead frontage to feeder road
- Good access but poor connectivity despite a series of footpaths linking the area to the town centre and open countryside

04i *Highridge and Princess Drive environs*

- 1970s to 1980s development of predominantly detached houses at a low to medium grain set on series of cul-de-sacs from a single feeder road
- The landform is steeply sloping down from south to north into the valley of the source of the River Wey, opening views to the northern suburbs (ALT04e) and to open countryside
- Medium-sized to large plots with detached houses set around cul-de-sacs
- Buildings set back from the roadside in their own front gardens; open front boundaries, staggered building lines to cranked feeder roads and cul-de-sacs throughout
- Red/orange brick, some tile hanging and weatherboarding, and concrete interlocking tiles to roofs
- Mostly two-storey houses
- Residential throughout; private dwelling houses
- Very few older mature trees, mostly ornamental trees to gardens
- Wide roads, limited on-street parking, no street trees, very little traffic movement to cul-de-sacs, grass verges
- Poor access and connectivity, severely constrained by the road layout and limited access to adjoining open countryside

04j. *Princess Louise Square environs*

- Early twenty-first-century fine-grain housing
- Steadily rising landform from east to west
- Mainly terraced or semi-detached housing, mostly linked, forming an informal series of perimeter blocks culminating in Princess Louise Square to the centre
- Mostly consistent building line following road layout with houses set slightly back from the pavement
- Red brick, painted render, painted joinery, and modern clay tile and slate and other modern profiled tiles
- Two-, two-and-a-half- (with dormers) and three-storey houses
- Entirely residential; single-family dwelling houses and flats
- Maturing landscaping
- Good shared pedestrian spaces, with varied street surfaces
- Good access and connectivity

2.4.3 *Boundaries and setting*

The character area surrounds the north, west and south sides of the historic core. It is divided into ten sub-areas. The largest of these is the Northern suburbs (ALT04e) which marks the northern extent of the town, facing open countryside. To the south, Newtown (ALT04d) and The Butts environs (ALT04c) are contained by the railway line and the A31. The northern extent of the Highridge and Princess Drive Environs (ALT04i) follows Basingstoke Road (the boundary of the urban extent of Alton).

This large and diverse character area has a complex setting which varies in each sub-area. By the nature of the outer suburbs many have extended views to, or face onto, open countryside. Others, near the historic core (Sub-areas ALT04a, ALT04b), are more influenced by the tight urban grain of the historic town. Sub-areas ALT04f, ALT04a and ALT04c all contain sections of conservation areas. As a result, changes to their visual appearance could have an impact on the setting of these conservation areas.

2.4.4 *Designations*

There are more than ten statutory listed buildings (all Grade II) scattered across the residential suburbs. These include: Amery Hill School, Anstey Road; Stillions, Windmill Hill; Butts House, Butts Road; and Whitedown Cottages, Lenten Street. There are two designated conservation areas within the character area. Sub-areas ALT04a and ALT04f both contain a section of the Alton Conservation Area. Sub-area ALT04c contains the entire conservation area designation for an area known as The Butts and includes an area which could be considered to form the setting of that conservation area designation. The eastern boundary of sub-area ALT04e shares a small section with the boundary of the Anstey Conservation Area to the east. Views from and to this conservation area are sensitive, as is the open space adjacent to the conservation area boundary to the north and south.

2.4.5 *Townscape types present*

TCT04, 05, 07, 08, 16, 17, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28.

2.4.6 *Topography*

The valley location of historic Alton has had a significant impact on almost all of the residential urban extensions to the historic core, with landform playing an important part of the character of the sub-areas. A number of urban extensions built on the sides of valleys are prominent in extended views from other parts of the town. This is particularly the case for much of ALT04e which is clearly seen from the south side of the valley formed by the River Wey (particularly from Queen's Road, Princess Drive and Highridge). Views from ALT04e are also significant and take in much of the tree-lined slopes of Windmill Hill to the south of the town (ALT04g and ALT04h), and open countryside to the west.

Elsewhere, particularly in the early extensions to the town (ALT04a, ALT04b and ALT04c) which, to an extent, run along the valley floor or on elevated land just up from the valley, there are less significant changes in level.

2.4.7 *Layout and Pattern*

There is some variation in layout and pattern across the character area although large areas share common characteristics (e.g. 1970s to early 1980s medium- to fine-grain estates with incidental open grassy spaces in sub-area ALT04e). Most variation is due to the period of development and estate design preferences rather than to topographical or site constraints. The main layout principles are summarised as follows:

Late Victorian and Edwardian houses to ALT04a and ALT04b; the layout is of mostly modest terraced or semi-detached houses on long narrow plots running back from the street set in a series of parallel and perpendicular roads, creating strongly defined townscape with most houses to the back of pavement or slightly set back with low boundary walls continuing the frontage.

ALT04c is notable for its historic origins, medium to coarse, open grain and uncluttered appearance. Houses to the centre of the character area are set around an open triangular green accessed by a feeder road to the edge of the green. Elsewhere in this sub-area, houses are large and set in large regular width plots. There is significant tree cover to these large areas of garden and this distinguishes the area and sets it apart from its finer-grain neighbours to the north and east (ALT04d).

The immediate-post-war estate of Newtown (ALT04d) has a particularly strong character due to the formal building layouts and compositions around open spaces and route intersections. Many of these principles of layout are derived from the 'Garden City' model associated with Garden Suburbs. The streets, for the most part, are laid out in formal grids and are very distinctive, principally as a result of green spaces set into the street plan, complemented by grass verges, uniformity to building lines throughout, and a consistency and quality to materials and form. Houses are set in short terraces and have prominent chimney stacks which create a rhythm to the street frontages. There is a general feel of openness to the character of this estate. Despite this, houses are set to a medium grain with relatively generous plots throughout, many with side access (or alleys), and larger corner plots with houses angled to the road or street, often with public green space in front. There is good public amenity space within estates, including small urban parks, greens and allotments. Houses are set back from the road in their own front gardens but have

varied and sometimes angled or offset building lines. Boundary treatments vary but boundaries are generally open, or low timber fences, or hedges. In some cases, gardens have been laid over to parking, either informally or formally, through the use of hardstandings.

There is one sub-area of markedly lower and more open grain, on a linear layout, which singles it out for individual description; this is Kings Road (ALT04f). This area comprises large detached houses, chalet bungalows and bungalows dating from inter-war and post-war periods. Houses are set on generous plots, often with space all around the building, relatively narrow to the roadside but long with good-sized front and back gardens, with off-street parking and often mature boundary treatments such as hedges and trees. Building lines are consistent throughout, to a rectilinear road pattern. This area is particularly sensitive to change because of this very distinctive pattern of plots and houses.

The 1970s and early 1980s housing layouts within the character area share common characteristics. Sub-area ALT04e forms a substantial part of the character area and is built on a medium- to high-grain layout, sometimes in short terraces of houses with separate parking courts with garages, but mostly as semi-detached and detached houses with medium-sized to large areas of open green space between groups of houses and around which houses are set. The house groups are set out with some formality, always fronting the roadside or open green spaces. There is some variation to the ridge line, with some parallel to the road and others gable-on. This brings variation and interest to the townscape. The houses are sometimes set around a close or a green but there is good permeability with pedestrian routes linking cul-de-sacs with open green space, and wide grass verged footpaths throughout.

ALT04g and ALT04i are at medium- to coarse-grain development set on sweeping feeder roads and long cul-de-sacs. They are distinctive for their use of the topography; set on steeply sloping landform, with road layouts which follow the contours and sometimes provide extended views out of houses to open countryside or other parts of the town. These areas are uncluttered and, in the case of ALT04g, have inherited trees and landscaping from earlier periods and used these to great effect in the spacious layout of the estates.

The late-twentieth-century developments within the character area (most notably sub-area ALT04h) are at a medium grain of semi-detached and often detached houses set in groups around small cul-de-sacs, often with shared surfaces. Trees have survived from historic field boundaries and are seen to form the backdrop to some houses. This period of residential development is characterised by a single entry road, providing access to the feeder roads and cul-de-sacs. A distinct part of this pattern is that most, if not all, housing faces onto secondary roads or cul-de-sacs. This often results in the main roads into the estates having dead frontage (rear fences/hedges/high boundary walls) for part and sometimes most of their length. This is seen for most of the length of The Ridgeway to ALT04h. A notable exception and move away from this layout form is seen to the recently completed Princess Louise Square and environs (ALT04j) which employs more traditional building motifs and forms, and sets houses out in large irregular and interrupted perimeter blocks with parking courts set behind buildings. Houses facing onto the street provide active

frontages throughout. Many of these physical and spatial concepts and architectural styles and detailing could be said to have derived from the 'Poundbury' model.

2.4.8 *Buildings and materials*

There is a consistency to this large character area in terms of the height of buildings. Through all periods of development, there are rarely any houses above two storeys and relatively little use of roofspaces to accommodate additional living areas. Bungalows are relatively rare and mostly seen mixed with houses (most notably to sub-areas ALT04f, ALT04g and ALT04i). Stylistically there is wide variation across the character area. However, almost all development would be generally considered as traditional, predominantly brick or render, with some areas almost exclusively one or the other (e.g. ALT04b is entirely painted render walls) with pitched roofs and front and back gardens. There is no true style which dominates although much of the character area is given over to 1970s and early 1980s housing. Of note is the variation to roof profile which can change within estates from a hipped roof to a series of houses with gable to the roadside and some examples of a mono-pitched plan. This helps add variation and interest to the townscape. The Newtown area (ALT04d) could be considered to be in a 'Garden City' style and share some of the common characteristics of this style, namely a cottage scale, with small windows, some projecting gabled bays or small porches or door hoods, prominent chimneys and roofs. This type of inter-war and early-post-war housing is well constructed and has provided good, flexible accommodation, and still maintains its integrity and 'cottage' style.

Brick is the predominant walling material to most sub-areas, with the exception of ALT04b where painted render is almost ubiquitous. In terms of brickwork, there are many different colours, textures and finishes, from red (predominant), orange and buff bricks in straight colour and multi-bricks to the deeper browns of the inter-war and immediate-post-war examples. Brick has been painted in places. The 1970s developments to ALT04e, and to a lesser extent ALT04h, are characterised in part by tile hanging and some slate hanging; tiles are seen in different colours but mostly green and grey to the 1970s housing and orange/brown to the 1980s housing. There is also the distinct use of vertical timber boarding to porches to some houses within the ALT04e sub-area. This adds interest and variation to the housing stock.

Roofs are a mix of clay tile (either traditional plain tiles but mostly machine-cut) or concrete interlocking tiles. There is some survival of natural slate in places, particularly to ALT04a. Low-pitched roofs of bungalows (small numbers) and houses, particularly of the 1970s, use a number of different plain clay and cement interlocking tiles of various designs and colours; browns, greens and greys.

2.4.9 *Predominant land use*

The area is almost entirely single-family dwelling houses. There is some very limited flat development but this is isolated and grouped (usually between one and three low-rise blocks). This is seen to the north-eastern corner of sub-area ALT04e. There are a few well-used small, district parades of shops and single 'corner' shops within estates and on the main roads through sub-areas. Churches, chapels, community facilities, schools and colleges are key land uses and dispersed within the character areas. The latter are found mostly within sub-area ALT04e, to the north of the town, and are generally associated with playing fields and large open recreation areas.

2.4.10 *Public realm*

The quality of the public realm is generally good. There are some distinct characteristics of sub-areas ALT04d and ALT04e, such as large open areas of green space and open boundaries to front gardens, giving a strong sense of openness to the townscape.

There are a good number of principal roads (usually but not entirely post 1970s) with grass verges and additional break-out areas of green space. This, when combined with open boundaries as seen in sub-area ALT04e, gives a real impression of an open grain, uncluttered townscape and spatial quality. There is, however, a general absence of significant street trees. The exception to this is parts of ALT04g; notably Crowley Drive. To other areas, street trees are either not established or completely absent. Sub-area ALT04f, Kings Road, is notable for its well-established natural boundaries of hedge and mature trees. This is also seen to a lesser extent to parts of ALT04g, most notably the semi-rural Mount Pleasant Road and New Barn Lane; the latter as an unmade road has a real semi-rural feel despite its urban location.

There is generally on-street parking throughout the character area and this can be restrictive in places, particularly in the older suburbs (ALT04a and ALT04b) where narrow carriageways are also a characteristic of the public realm. Many areas have grass verges and these often add to the spatial qualities and open character of sub-areas, particularly areas of ALT04d and ALT04e.

To some parts of the character area, ALT04a and ALT04b in particular, wirescape is a significant issue and in some cases it dominates and defines the skyline and extended views along streets and roads.

2.4.11 *Open space*

There are various parks, recreation grounds and sports fields connected to medium-sized to large school complexes within the character area. Most of the school facilities are to the north of the town (in ALT04e). Other notable open spaces include Alton town cemetery, which contains the grave of 'sweet Fanny Adams' whose brutal murder in 1867 made sensational national headlines at the time. Kings Pond in ALT04g is an informal open space with lakeside walks, and parts of Amery Hill open space lie within ALT04e, with amenity and semi-natural habitats which bring a 'countryside wedge' into the town centre. The Butts is a formal open green space and is well-defined by traditional built form including the Grade II listed public house to the west side. The area's quality is recognised as a designated conservation area.

There are also a number of open green amenity spaces found in the 1970s urban extensions (particularly ALT04e). They generally contain some trees.

Gardens are generally medium-sized to large (some very large) with, on average, relatively limited mature tree cover, giving houses good private open spaces throughout.

2.4.12 *Biodiversity*

The generous provision of private garden space, together with open spaces and a predominantly medium-grain layout, provides green corridors throughout the character area, often linked directly to the open countryside. The river corridor is important for biodiversity, and forms a further green corridor through ALT 04e and ALT04g. There is also a small Site of Importance for Nature Conservation in ALT04j, recorded as the Lord Mayor Treloar Hospital SINC. Major traffic routes to the edges, and the railway running through sub-areas to the south-west of the town, also act as green wildlife corridors and connect multiple green spaces together.

2.4.13 *Access and connectivity*

There is generally good access and connectivity in all but a few of the sub-areas within the character area, with connectivity heavily favouring the pedestrian. This is particularly in relation to access to the open countryside to the north and south of the town, and the river corridor via public footpaths. Late-twentieth-century development (sub-area ALT04h and to a lesser extent ALT04i) offer the least access and connectivity, with cul-de-sac development with no links to the open countryside, adjacent estates or adjacent roads.