

HEATH END CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND STUDY



OCTOBER 2002

PREFACE

The District Council has a duty under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to determine which parts of the District are of special architectural or historical interest which it is desirable to preserve and enhance and to designate such areas as Conservation Areas. Having regard to these requirements and the advice contained in the English Heritage guidance notes 'Conservation Area Practice' and 'Conservation Area Appraisals', in July 2002 the District Council produced an appraisal document proposing the designation of a conservation area at Heath End.

The document 'Heath End : An Appraisal For Conservation Area Designation' was the subject of consultation and publicity over a six week period between 1 August 2002 and 12 September 2002. Having considered the various representations and recommended amendments the District Council's Executive Board of 29 October 2002 resolved the following :-

- (1) to approve the designation of a Conservation Area at Heath End.

- (2) to adopt (subject to amendments) the consultation document 'Heath End : An Appraisal For Conservation Area Designation' as the Heath End Conservation Area Appraisal/Study as supplementary planning guidance to the policies of the North West Leicestershire Local Plan.

As supplementary planning guidance the Conservation Area Appraisal/Study document whilst not having the same status as an adopted plan policy may be taken into account as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Conservation Areas are defined as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance“ (Section 69(1)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). The Heath End Conservation Area was designated by North West Leicestershire District Council on 29 October 2002 and the boundaries are shown on Map 1.
- 1.2 This Appraisal/Study document aims to fulfil two key roles. The Appraisal outlines the historical development of Heath End and defines the special interest, character and appearance of the built and natural environment within and surrounding the existing Conservation Area boundaries. The Study identifies future opportunities for the preservation and enhancement of the Area. (The numbers **in bold** in the text refer to an associated plate/photograph).

2. LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY OF HEATH END

2.1 Heath End is a small hamlet situated some 4km to the south-east of Melbourne and some 5.5 km to the north of Ashby de la Zouch. The settlement lies on the southern side of Heath Lane, and the stream which flows alongside the lane here forms the county boundary between Leicestershire and Derbyshire.

2.2 Heath End essentially comprises the Saracens Head Public House and a group of scattered (former) farmsteads along Heath End Lane/Callan's Lane which leads southwards away from Heath Lane. Immediately to the north-east of Heath End is the entrance to one of the three main drives serving Staunton Harold Hall (Heath End Drive) , beyond which is an area known as Dimminsdale (Dimsdale). To the north of the settlement are the (former) lands of the Harpur-Crewe family's Calke Abbey estate.

2.3 Heath End is split between the Parishes of Staunton Harold* and Ashby de la Zouch. Ley Farm, Bracken Cottage (Heath End Cottage) and Heath End Farm lie within the Parish of Ashby de la Zouch and the Saracens Head Public House is within Staunton Harold Parish. The boundary between the parishes follows the line of a stream and established field boundaries as it 'zig-zags' its way southwards away from Heath Lane through the hamlet.

* Staunton Harold was earlier within the Parish of Breedon (Nichols, 1804, p685). The Staunton Harold Parish Meeting was established in 1894.

3. ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF HEATH END

- 3.1 As indicated by the origin of its name, Heath End was initially established at the edge of heathland and thus at the furthest extent of cultivated agricultural lands. The stream/field boundaries which run parallel with Heath End Lane/Callan's Lane⁽¹⁾ and which divide the parishes of Ashby de la Zouch and Staunton Harold, also formed the boundary between the estates of the Shirley family (to the eastern side) and the Hastings family (to the western side).
- 3.2 The Shirleys of Staunton Harold Hall (the Earls Ferrers from 1711) acquired the manor house and its estate by marriage in 1423. In the medieval period two parks were created within the estate; the Little Park - surrounding the manor house - and the Great Park - centred on Staunton Lodge. Heath End, at the north-western periphery of the Shirley family's estate, however, appears to have been a focus for agricultural and coal mining activities.⁽²⁾
- 3.3 The earliest records of coal extraction at Staunton Harold/Heath End date back to the fourteenth century and at Dimminsdale the Earls Ferrers had established a lime and lead works by the mid-eighteenth century (Usher, 1999). Between 1828-30 the 8th Earl Ferrers secured a direct connection from the horse drawn Ticknall Tramway to the Dimminsdale Lime and Lead Works (Holt, 1992, p9).⁽³⁾ The provision of a further short spur to Heath End enabled coal to be brought from collieries there to fire the lime kilns at Dimminsdale (Holt, 1992, p9). The establishment of these tramway links led to a period of expansion in mining activities around Heath End in the middle part of the nineteenth century (Owen, 1984, p200). Mining activities continued around the hamlet until the beginning of the 1880s when the colliery in Rough Heath Wood was abandoned (Usher, 1999).⁽⁴⁾

- 3.4 The Hastings family secured lands at Heath End with the grant in 1462 of the manor of Ashby De La Zouch to William Lord Hastings; whom between 1474 and 1483 re-built Ashby Castle. During the English Civil War the Hastings family (the Earls of Huntingdon from 1529) joined the royalist cause, although following the slighting of the Castle in November 1648 the family re-located to their other seat at Donington Park (Hillier, 2000, p58). A Hastings Estates Map of 1734 reveals that Heath End was an integral part of the scattered complex of potteries established around Ticknall in the early post-Mediaeval period (Leicestershire County Archives; Courtney, 2001, p29).⁽⁵⁾ Potteries at Ley Farm and at Bracken Cottage (Heath End Cottage) operated (at least) into the eighteenth century.⁽⁶⁾ There may also have been at least one pottery in the triangular shaped field to the north of the Saracens Head and possibly one on the site now occupied by the public house itself.⁽⁷⁾ The availability of both coal and clay locally were significant factors in the siting of the potteries; the streams flowing through Heath End also provided a water source.
- 3.5 The Hastings family (and their descendants the Rawdon-Hastings and Abney-Hastings families) apparently retained their lands around Heath End until the end of the nineteenth century (Colvin, 1985, p91). The Staunton Harold estate of the Shirley family survived as an entity until 1954 whereupon it was broken up with the sale of the Hall, its associated buildings and lands by the 12th Earl Ferrers in 1954 (Fox, 2001, p51). With the sale lands and properties at Heath End were bought by the Harpur-Crewes of Calke Abbey; although by 1958 two cottages had been demolished. The post War period also witnessed the substantial contraction in agricultural activities in the hamlet; resulting in some outbuildings becoming redundant and farmhouses becoming private residences; a process largely completed with the break up and sale of the Harpur-Crewe estate in the mid-1980s.

Notes

1. 'Callans' means a challenge and is a name typically given to an area along a parish boundary the subject to dispute (Winchester, 2000, p93).
2. A more detailed summary of the historical development of the estate is given in the adopted Staunton Harold Conservation Area Appraisal and Study (April 2001). At the estate's south-east extremity Lount also provided a focus for farming and coal mining activities; the latter continuing from the medieval period until the late twentieth century.
3. The Ticknall Tramway was opened in 1802 to link the lime quarries at Ticknall to the Ashby Canal at Willesley Basin (Holt, 1992, p7-8).
4. The tramway link to Dimminsdale closed in 1891 and the limestone quarries had gone out of use by the end of the nineteenth century (Holt, 1992, p16; Usher, 1999). In the immediate post War period open cast coal mining was proposed within the bounds of the Staunton Harold Estate although the plans were abandoned (Fox, 2001,p50-2).
5. The complex of potteries around Ticknall (of which some 28 sites have been identified to date) covered a large area, from the village itself down to the southern parish boundary, westwards across to Calke in the area now under the Staunton Harold Reservoir and also included the Melbourne Pottery (information from Mrs Janet Spavold). The pottery industry producing 'Ticknall Ware' was essentially a rural cottage industry which was active by at least the sixteenth century. The industry was in decline by the end of the eighteenth century, although two potteries remained in operation at Ticknall into the nineteenth century. The last of the Ticknall potteries closed in 1891. (information taken from 'Ticknall Pottery and the Calke Collection' by H. Usher (1989)).
6. The brick built extension to the timber framed Ley Farmhouse was built by a potter (information from Mrs Janet Spavold).
7. Information in respect of the potteries at Heath End from Mrs Janet Spavold.

4. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING POSITIVELY TOWARDS THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

Character Statement

- 4.1 The character of the Area is essentially derived from the scattered grouping of the Saracens Head Public House and the farmsteads in the hamlet along Heath End Lane/Callan's Lane. In their origin the buildings range in date from the early post medieval period through to the late Victorian period.

Building Materials and Local Details

- 4.2 Ley Farmhouse is a sixteenth century timber framed house with stone plinth; with some close studding at the rear, on the north-eastern wall (DoE, 1977). The external infill panels would originally have been of wattle and daub, although these have been replaced with panels with plastered infill and (mostly) red brickwork. Red brickwork is the predominate material to the other dwellings and agricultural buildings in the hamlet. Roofs are of Welsh slate and dark clay plain tiles. The steep pitch to the roof of Ley Farmhouse reflects the fact that its was formerly thatched.

Architectural and Historic Quality of Listed and Unlisted Buildings

- 4.3 Ley Farmhouse **(1)** is included on the list of buildings of special architectural or historical interest at Grade II*; as a building of particular national importance. The Saracens Head Public House and its outbuildings **(2)**, Bracken Cottage (Heath End Cottage) **(3)**, Heath End Farm **(4)** and its associated structures, and the outbuildings to the former farmstead/cottages opposite Heath End Farm are all considered to be buildings of some architectural or historic interest.



Plate 1 : Ley Farmhouse



Plate 2 : Saracens Head Public House and Outbuildings



Plate 3 : Bracken Cottage (Heath End Cottage)



Plate 4 : Heath End Farm

Boundary Treatments

- 4.4 Boundary treatments along the Heath Lane/Callan's Lane frontages of the farmsteads are of red brickwork, stonework and of hedgerows.

The Archaeological Significance and Potential of the Area

- 4.5 The Saracens Head Public House replaced the earlier Elm Tree Inn which stood alongside the Heath End driveway to Staunton Harold Hall until its demolition in the 1860s/70s. The outbuildings **(5)** in the paddock area on the eastern side of Callans Lane (opposite Heath End Farm) are the surviving elements of a larger group of buildings which occupied the site until the second half of the twentieth century: including a pair of cottages demolished in 1958. It is likely that below ground archaeological remains survive. It is also



Plate 5 : Outbuildings in Paddock area opposite Heath End Farm

likely that below ground remains will survive of the former kilns in the settlement used in the production of pottery in the post-medieval period.

The Contribution of Green Spaces and Natural Elements

- 4.6 The fields and paddock areas between the farmsteads which comprise the hamlet are integral to the scattered form of development that predominates. The boundaries to the field areas are of mature hawthorn with some individual mature trees.

The Relationship Between the Area and the Surrounding Landscape

- 4.7 The former historical relationship between the eastern part of Heath End and the Staunton Harold Estate remains in a physical form with the survival of footpath links; now in use as public rights of way. The principal link is the public footpath which leads south-eastwards away from Heath End and proceeds alongside the boundary of Rough Heath Wood before proceeding eastwards towards the former walled garden to Staunton Harold Hall.
- 4.8 The coal reserves extracted from the mines around Heath End were primarily used by the Earls Ferrers at Staunton Harold Hall and on the estate, although some coals were sold on to gain revenue (Owen, 1984, p141-2). Similarly, the lime produced at Dimminsdale was primarily used on the Staunton Harold estate for building works and agricultural purposes (Usher, 1999). The remains of coal pits exist in the area immediately to the south-east of Heath End and are marked by a series of hollows and disturbed ground (Burnett Associates, 1995). The route of the former tramway which linked these pits to the Dimminsdale Lime and Lead Works remains traceable as it leads north-

eastwards from the Heath End Drive across the agricultural lands. To the northern side of Heath Lane the embankment of the tramway constructed to link Dimminsdale Lime and Lead Works to the main Ticknall Tramway (although now tree covered) remains prominent as it runs along the periphery of the Calke Abbey estate. Within Rough Heath Wood the shafts to the former colliery are marked by mounds in the wood and nearby is the engine pond, used to supply water to the boilers of the winding and pumping engines (Usher, 1999).

5. FACTORS HAVING A DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

5.1 Some redundancy of former farm outbuildings has occurred as a result of the decline in agricultural use in the hamlet in the post war period. The vacancy and lack of maintenance to the buildings has been detriment to the built fabric of such structures.

5.2 The stables to the Saracens Head Public House have been in part extended in block work which by reason of its colour and texture detracts severely from the character and appearance of the established buildings at the site.

6. FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

New Development/Planning Policies

- 6.1 Any development proposals would be considered having due regard to the policies of the Local Plan (Policies E10 and E11). The relevant policies of the Local Plan as they relate to any development in a Conservation Area are outlined in the Appendix.

Permitted Development Rights

- 6.2 The designation of a Conservation Area brings with it some restrictions on permitted development rights for residential properties within an Area. Nevertheless, a number of works including extensions and alterations can be undertaken without the need to submit an application for planning permission to the District Council. As a mechanism to increase local planning authority controls in respect of such works, an Article 4(2) Direction under the provisions of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 allows authorities (without any referral to the Secretary of State) to withdraw certain categories of permitted development rights in respect of alterations and extensions to residential properties in Conservation Areas.
- 6.3 The District Council has generally resolved not to serve such Article 4(2) Directions, but rather to provide advice and education on the use of appropriate materials to properties in Conservation Areas (available from the Planning and Environment Division). This is the position the Council will take in respect of the Heath End Conservation Area.

Repairs to Historic Building Fabric

- 6.4 With regard to the repair of existing historic building fabric, the District Council operates a discretionary historic buildings grant scheme which makes available grant aid for private individuals in relation to the repair of listed buildings and unlisted buildings which are considered to contribute positively to the character of a Conservation Area. Full details of the scheme (which has a limited budget) are available from the Planning and Environment Division. A similar scheme is operated by the Historic Buildings Section in the Environmental Management Department at Leicestershire County Council.
- 6.5 Where buildings are the subject of long term vacancy or neglect, the District Council will attempt to work with owners/prospective purchasers to secure the long term future of any building. The District Council does, however, have more formal powers in the form of Urgent Works Notices and Repairs Notices to require that repairs be undertaken to listed buildings and other buildings of architectural or historic merit in Conservation Areas.

7. APPENDIX : HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT POLICIES OF THE NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

POLICY E10

Development will not be permitted within Conservation Areas, or where it would affect the setting of such areas, which would:

- (a) Be detrimental to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area in terms of:
 - (i) scale, proportions and massing;
 - (ii) layout, grouping and setting;
 - (iii) detailing and materials of construction.
- (a) Be detrimental to the setting of buildings which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- (b) Result in the loss of open spaces or important views within, into and out of the Conservation Area.
- (c) Result in the loss of particular features which contribute positively to character and appearance of the Conservation Area, including:-
 - (i) Walls and other means of enclosure;
 - (ii) Ground surfaces;
 - (iii) Natural features (such as trees and hedgerows); and
 - (iv) Features of archaeological interest.
- (a) Be detrimental to environmental quality in terms of:-
 - (i) Traffic generation;
 - (ii) Noise and other forms of environmental intrusion.

POLICY E11

Consent for the demolition of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area will not be granted unless:-

- (a) It can be demonstrated that the condition of the building makes it impracticable to repair, renovate or adapt to any reasonably beneficial use for which planning permission would be given; and
- (b) There is clear and convincing evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the existing use of the building, or to find a viable and acceptable new use or uses.

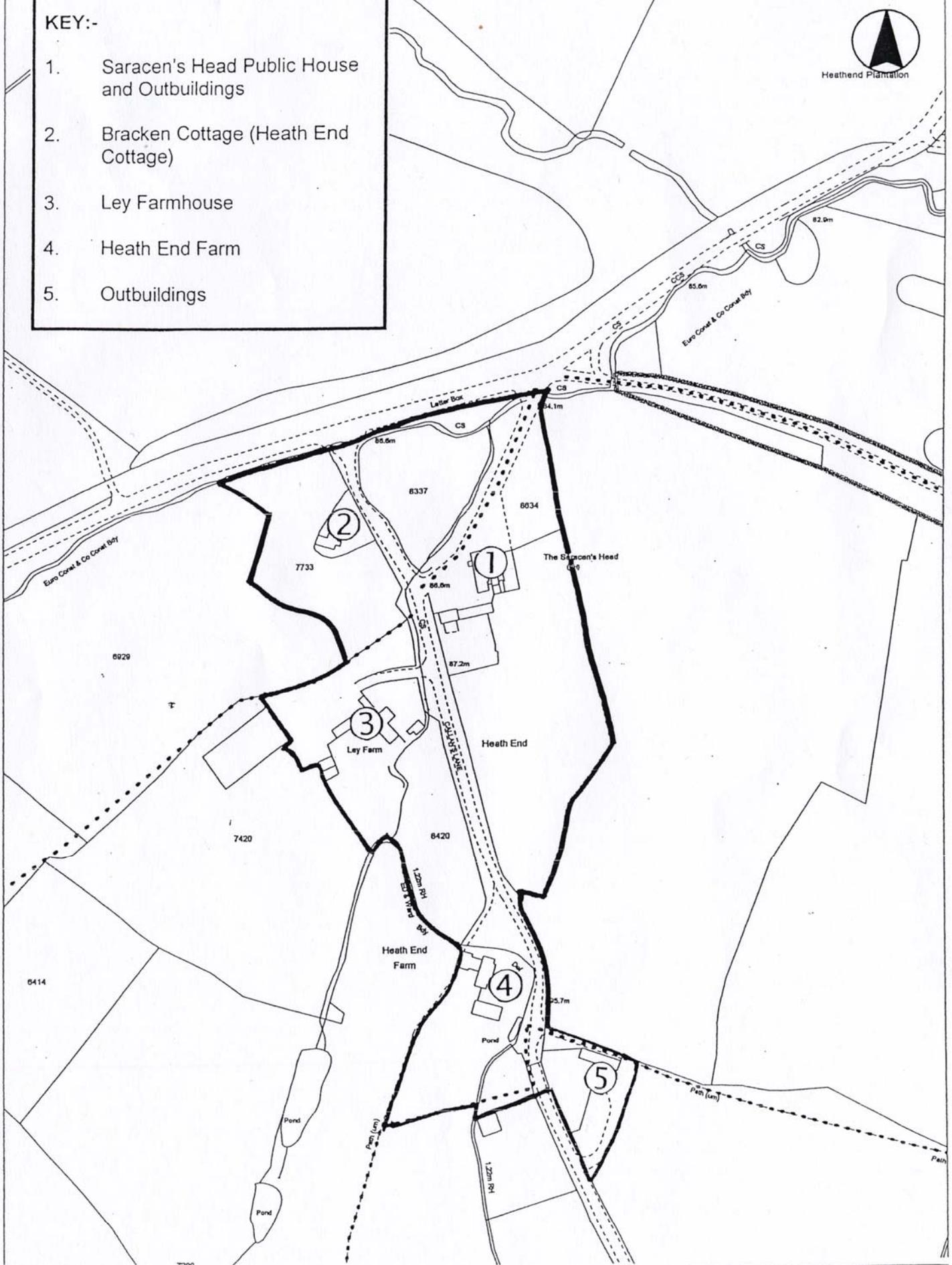
In the case of buildings which make little or no contribution to the character and appearance of their conservation area, demolition will not be permitted unless redevelopment of the site or the creation of an open space would make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area concerned.

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KEY:-

- 1. Saracen's Head Public House and Outbuildings
- 2. Bracken Cottage (Heath End Cottage)
- 3. Ley Farmhouse
- 4. Heath End Farm
- 5. Outbuildings



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