

***OBJECTION
ON GROUNDS OF
LOSS OF AMENITY***

*PREPARED FOR
SAVE COFFERIDGE CLOSE
BY
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Introduction

1. The following statement is an objection to planning application 11/00143/FUL on grounds of loss of amenity arising from the removal of 51 mature trees including a remnant orchard, green space and landscaping in the centre of Stony Stratford, leading to substantial diminution of historic value, sense of place and pleasantness. Stony Stratford promotes itself as a historic market town and visitors come to the town for this reason. The proposal to redevelop Cofferridge Close removes a historic town centre landscape that is integral to the character and identity of Stony Stratford.
2. Cofferridge Close lies within the historic core of Stony Stratford and its Conservation Area and is therefore part of a ‘designated heritage asset’ as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF)¹. The applicant’s heritage assessments submitted as part of this planning proposal give a brief history of Stony Stratford and Cofferridge Close but the primary focus is concerned with the potential for archaeological remains and the impact of the redevelopment on the surrounding listed buildings. There is no assessment of the history of the place or any investigation into significance attaching to the landscape, orchard habitat and trees that currently remain within the Close.
3. The Planning Statement from the applicant maintains that ‘the concealed location of the site means that it provides a limited contribution to the conservation area’². On the contrary, the following objection provides evidence to show that Cofferridge Close the place, its orchard, trees and green space are very much a part of the history of the town from medieval times to the present and its redevelopment as a wholly commercial site would obliterate the remaining physical evidence that references its past history and uses. Cofferridge Close is a significant place in the ‘historic environment’ of Stony Stratford, holds considerable amenity value for the community and contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The NPPF defines ‘historic environment’ as:

‘All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time including all surviving physical remains of past human activity whether visible, buried or submerged and landscaped and planted or managed flora.’³
4. Planning application 11/00143/FUL is contrary to the environmental and social roles required of sustainable development as outlined in the NPPF under the heading ‘Achieving sustainable development’⁴:
 - ‘an environmental role — ... contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity ...’
 - ‘a social role — ... supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities ... by creating a high quality built environment with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.’

¹ NPPF Annex 2: Glossary, page 51.

² Planning Statement, page.21.

³ NPPF Annex 2: Glossary, page 52

⁴ NPPF, paragraph 7.

Cofferidge Close — history of the ‘place’

‘Sense of place’ — those characteristics that make a place special or unique.

Mid to Late Middle Ages

5. Cofferidge Close is first written about in 1484 and has therefore existed as a place in Stony Stratford for at least 528 years. Historical records show that since 1484 it has been variously known as Cofurrers Close, Cofferers Close, Cofferey’s Close and The Cofferidge⁵. Cofferidge Close therefore stands alongside Market Square, Horsefair Green, the burgage plots, the property boundaries and other features of the medieval townscape of Stony Stratford still visible today.
6. In the late medieval town Cofferidge Close comprised ‘... six acres of land between the Market Square and Horsefair Green ...’⁶. For a town enclosure of this era Cofferidge Close was large, suggesting a place of some importance. The origin of the place name Cofferidge gives clues to the early significance of the place since the likely etymology is:

‘... that the Close belonged to the Cofferer. The Cofferer was an appointment within the royal Treasury in medieval times. The Oxford English Dictionary has the earliest record from the 14th century: c.1330 “... Sir Ralph the Cofferer was Treasurer at the time.” — DR PAUL CAVILL, LECTURER IN EARLY ENGLISH, UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM⁷
7. Dr Cavill also suggests that the position of Cofferidge Close near Watling Street might suggest a tax-collecting purpose. In central government in the Middle Ages, the Exchequer controlled collection of revenue and the Wardrobe controlled expenditure. The Cofferer was one of two deputies to the Keeper of the Wardrobe and these three officials accompanied the King whenever he travelled away from London. The royal appointment of Cofferer came into prominence under Henry II (1154-1189) and ‘it was under Edward III (1327 – 1377) that the Cofferer acquired all his importance.’⁸
8. Dr Cavill’s view on the likely etymology of Cofferidge is supported by the fact that Stony Stratford was frequently visited by the kings and queens of England from the reign of King John in the 13th century to that of Henry VIII in the 16th century. These royal visits came about because of the town’s strategic position on Watling Street, its proximity to the royal hunting forests of Whaddon, Salcey and Whittlewood and its ability to accommodate the royal entourage in its many inns. ‘So ... from early times the king is to be found at Stony Stratford transacting affairs of state and making it for the time being the seat of his government’⁹. It is worth noting that the place name Cofferidge Close is unique in the UK.

15th and 16th centuries

9. The historical record shows that from the 15th century to the present, Cofferidge Close has been linked to the prominent citizens and families of the town. The first mention in 1484 links Cofurrers Close and lands of Thomas Rokkes with ‘Thomas Mauntell of Furtho (Northants) Esq. and Margaret his wife’¹⁰. Thomas Rokkes (also spelled Rokys) was one of a new class of merchant family who settled in Stony Stratford in the 15th century ‘... buying

⁵ Cofferidge Close is sometimes mistakenly called Cow Fair or Cow Friars. However this was the original name of Silver Street where the medieval cow fair was held.

⁶ F.E. Hyde and S.F. Markham, *History of Stony Stratford*, McCorquodale and Co. Ltd (1948).

⁷ E-mail in Annex A.

⁸ T.F. Tout, *Administrative History of Medieval England*, Manchester Univ Press (1948), Vol. 1 page 23.

⁹ Hyde and Markham, *op. cit.*, page 28.

¹⁰ Bodleian Library, Radcliffe MSS Dep. Deed 282 — see Annex A.

land in large parcels in the neighbourhood'¹¹ with the profits from their trade and industry. In 1476 Thomas Rokys together with John Edy, Richard Lawe and John Haile were granted licence by King Edward IV to establish a religious guild, the Fraternity of St Mary and St Thomas the Martyr¹². The guild had the right to acquire land and property, and in 1482 '... permission was given by the king to acquire in mortmain a most interesting list of possessions'. Endowments to the guild not only came from the people of Stony Stratford 'for George Longville of Wolverton and Thomas Furthoe of Cosgrove gave rents and lands'¹³. It is quite possible there is a link between the reference to Cofferridge Close in the 1484 document and a grant to the guild from the Furtho Manor.

10. From 1484 until 1619 Cofferrers Close belonged to the Furtho Manor¹⁴. The Furtho Manor account book 1604–1619 records in 1605 under 'Redditus firmariorum' (income from rents) from houses and lands in 'Stratford, Wolverton and Calverton' that John Penn was renting Cofferrers Close at that time¹⁵. From the mid-16th century the Penns were a numerous and prominent family in Stony Stratford who owned the tanyard in Horn Lane and built the mill house. There is another mention of Cofferridge Close in the Furtho Manor account book for 1605¹⁶, three shillings being due for 'Much thro Meadflower ... Cofferridge Close' (likely payment for reaping /haymaking as the day-labourer rate in 1600 was one shilling).

17th and 18th centuries

11. By the reign of Elizabeth 1 (1558-1603) Cofferridge Close was gradually being built around and 'by the latter part of the 18th century had a fairly continuous ring of houses around it including a Baptist chapel dating from 1657, the Crown and White Hart Inns dating from about 1650 and a Potash house'¹⁷. During this period the size of the Close reduced from its original 6 acres to the 3.4 acres it is today and was split up into paddocks and gardens attached to the properties surrounding it. Evidence of this change is contained in the 1646 Will of John Eves the elder, a maltster of Stony Stratford. As likely owner of much if not all of Cofferridge Close at this time, he bequeaths five tenements 'with soe much of the Cofferridge ground as is now sett foorth and appointed by me'. This suggests he was apportioning land in the Close to the houses that he owned around it. At the age of twenty, his son, also John Eves, inherits as well as a house 'all my Cofferridge Close except for such as is allready sett foorth and appointed by me to the five severall Tenements at the Cofferridge Close'¹⁸.
12. With the introduction of the poor rate levy in 1597 there is further evidence about past owners of Cofferridge Close contained in the Overseers' account of assessments to be paid by the principal property owners of the town for distribution as poor relief. In the earliest account book for the west side of the town dated 1669, Wm Bevin is required to pay a relatively high levy of six shillings as owner of Cofferridge Close¹⁹.
13. An early reference to Cofferridge Close is found in the deeds of the Baptist Church when in 1657 William Hartley the elder (b.1610), Anabaptist, draper and leading citizen of Stony Stratford, sold a small strip facing Horsefair Green to the trustees for the purpose of erecting a small meeting house. In 1707 William Hartley's son, also William Hartley, bought the whole of Cofferridge Close from Wm Bevin. The Hartley family were major property owners in both Stony Stratford and Old Stratford. In 1714 Cofferridge Close was gifted to Eleanor Knight, the wife of William Hartley's son (again named William Hartley), as part of a

¹¹ Hyde and Markham, *op. cit.*, page 25.

¹² Sir F. Markham, *History of Milton Keynes and District*, Vol 1, White Crescent Press, Luton (1973), page 133.

¹³ Hyde and Markham, *op. cit.*, page 22.

¹⁴ Furtho Manor account in Annex A.

¹⁵ See Annex A.

¹⁶ See Annex A.

¹⁷ Francis E. Hyde, 'The Growth of a Town – II', in *Town Planning Review*, 20:2 (Oct 1949), page 197.

¹⁸ National Archives, PROB 11/201 f 116 — see Annex A.

¹⁹ Hyde and Markham, *op. cit.*, page 72.

marriage settlement that also included a house ‘with a mauling and garden and the house adjoining to the west’²⁰ and six other houses along the High Street.

14. Even though strips of Cofferridge Close were gradually allocated to surrounding properties, evidence suggests that over the centuries ownership of the majority of the land within the Close has remained in the hands of one or two individuals at any one time. The Land Tax Assessments for Stony Stratford 1781 show that Cofferridge Close was split between two owners, Mr Hilyer (probably Thomas Hillyer living at or near 25 High Street) owning and occupying ‘house and cofrey’ and paying £2 tax, and Mrs Elizabeth Gleed (wealthy widow of maltster Thomas Willeat) paying sixteen shillings for ‘close’ which she occupies ‘hursel’. By 1790, in relation to Mr Hillyer’s portion of the Close now described as ‘Cofferridge’ and still owned by him, the Land Tax Assessment is fifteen shillings. The part of the Close owned by Mrs Gleed is identified as ‘Cofrey’ in 1782, as ‘Cofridge’ in 1783 and from 1788 onwards as ‘Cofferridge’.

19th and 20th centuries

15. By 1841 the owners of Mrs Gleed’s portion of the Close were probably the executors of George Brooks (who owned 7, 8 and 9 Horsefair Green up to his death in 1819), who were paying £1 8s 6d a year in land tax for ‘Cofferridge’. In 1843 ownership of this land (likely to be land and orchard extending behind 8 Horsefair Green) passed to Thomas Knighton, who bought the Horsefair Green properties from George Brooks’ Estate²¹. William Boyes, a prosperous draper and silk merchant living on Market Square, purchased 8 Horsefair Green in 1893 and Cofferridge Close in 1894. William Boyes died in May 1896 and a portion of his estate was auctioned in Stony Stratford on 4/8/1896. Lots 14 and 15 in the auction brochure were 8 Horsefair Green known as St James and Cofferridge Close²².
16. The title deeds of 8 Horsefair Green record that in 1907 William Henry Sansom ‘collector of rates and taxes’ sold the property ‘... and also all that piece or parcel of pasture land commonly called or known by the name of Cofferridge Close ...’ to Walter William Meadows. A plan dated 1907 from the deeds of 8 Horsefair Green shows the extent of the portion of Cofferridge Close attached to the property (see Annex A). The house and the orchard/pasture portion of Cofferridge Close remained in the ownership of the Meadows family until 1964 when Dorothy Meadows sold the Close to Wolverton Urban District Council and her brother sold the house. From at least the 1950s the Haseldine family owned the portion of Cofferridge Close on the High Street side until compulsory purchase by Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC) in the 1970s.
17. By the 1970s Cofferridge Close had become a partially derelict site behind the High Street but still retained some green space and orchard trees on the Silver Street side. The current mixed-use development conceived by MKDC and completed in 1976 represents the very recent history of Cofferridge Close. The scheme retained a portion of the green space within the Close (sufficient to give the feel of a small park) and many original orchard trees, incorporating them into the landscaping that was such an important element of the overall design. The MKDC Cofferridge Close development achieved a clever balance between old and new urban fabric and was praised for the ‘visual amenity of the environment surrounding the buildings’²³. Cofferridge Close is now a key element of the ‘new heritage’ of Milton Keynes.

²⁰ Hyde and Markham, *op. cit.*, page 81.

²¹ Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Aylesbury.

²² see e-mail from Archivist, Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies – Annex A.

²³ Terry Farrell, ‘Cofferridge Close Stony Stratford’ in *Architectural Journal*, 01/11/1978.

21st century

18. In 1997 Cofferridge Close passed to the Parks Trust who sold in 2002 to Earl (Stony Stratford) Limited. In 2005 global property investment company CB Richard Ellis bought Cofferridge Close on behalf of their client National Australia Group CIF Trustee Limited and Yorkshire and Clydesdale Bank Pension Trustee Limited, who propose the current redevelopment.
19. Cofferridge Close is a townscape with historical significance that contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Local Planning Authority considers Cofferridge Close to be a (non-designated) heritage asset as defined in the NPPF Annex 2: Glossary (see e-mail from MKC Conservation and Archaeology Manager in Annex A).

Planning application 11/00143/FUL undermines local identity and sense of place by appraising Cofferridge Close as a commercial site and is therefore contrary to:

- **The Ministerial Foreword to the NPPF** — ‘Our historic environment-buildings, landscapes, towns and villages can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives rather than withers.’¹
- **NPPF paragraph 137** — ‘Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance and better reveal their significance.’¹
- **MK Core Strategy Policy CS20 (Heritage Protection)** — ‘New developments should protect and enhance the character, diversity and cultural significance of the Borough’s historic assets Development proposals must consider the character, appearance and setting of buildings, structures, areas, parks and gardens and landscapes that are of historic, architectural, cultural or archaeological interest.’

Cofferidge Close – the orchard

Traditional orchards are ‘..... an important component of England’s cultural heritage.’ — NATURAL ENGLAND

‘Most surviving traditional orchard sites are therefore old features and represent a profound resource for our cultural heritage.’ — HERTFORDSHIRE ORCHARD INITIATIVE

‘Traditional orchards are a long-established and widely distributed habitat and make a significant contribution to biodiversity, landscape character and local distinctiveness across the UK.’ — UK BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN — PRIORITY HABITAT DESCRIPTIONS — TRADITIONAL ORCHARDS²⁴

History of the orchard

20. It is quite likely that an orchard has been a feature of Cofferidge Close for a very long time because town closes with small fields and orchards were a feature of the medieval townscape. The first mention of an orchard in the Close occurs in 1707 when William Hartley the elder bought ‘a house called the Potash House, the waste land called the Horsefair on the south and Hartley’s cherry orchard heretofore called the Cofferidge to the north’²⁵.
21. Some of the fruit trees in Cofferidge Close today are the remnants of an orchard which occupied part of the Close for at least 70 years before the 1976 MKDC scheme. Stony Stratford residents often refer to ‘the orchard’ when talking about Cofferidge Close, so this earlier orchard is still very much in living memory. Dorothy Meadows in her booklet *Early Years in Stony Stratford 1913-1929* (pages 5–6) describes the orchard as she remembers it from her childhood and also identifies some of the original trees and apple varieties remaining in the Close today. An orchard in Cofferidge Close is evident on the 1925 OS map of Stony and an aerial photo of the town from 1931 clearly shows an extensive orchard at that time. By 1972 an aerial photo shows a much reduced orchard but the fruit trees which were preserved in the 1976 MKDC scheme are clearly visible in the foreground (see aerial photos in Annex B).
22. When the MKDC plan for Cofferidge Close was conceived, the existing orchard was regarded as the most pleasant aspect of the Close²⁶ and was preserved and incorporated into the final landscaping with the addition of a few new fruit trees on the green space, around the perimeter and within the new areas of planting. Currently there are fourteen fruit trees on the central green space, twelve apple and two pear. Both pear and some of the apple trees are the remnants of the much earlier orchard that also included fruit trees around the perimeter wall. Seven original perimeter trees still remain: four apple on the green space by the private garages, two apple in front of the Methodist chapel and one pear tree by the tattoo parlour (see plan drawing for the MKDC scheme which identifies existing trees to be retained and new to be added, in Annex B).
23. In her booklet, Dorothy Meadows writes ‘Dad bought Cofferidge Close from a man who had served as a government administrator in India. It was he who planted the fruit trees in the orchard’²⁷. William Walter Meadows bought Cofferidge Close in 1907, therefore it is likely that some of the remaining old orchard trees are more than 105 years old. Pear trees are particularly long-lived (up to 300 years) so the two on the green are almost certainly very old specimens.

²⁴ jncc.defra.gov.uk.

²⁵ Francis E. Hyde, *op. cit.*, page 198.

²⁶ Wayland Tunley, architect of the Cofferidge Close scheme, talking at The City Discovery Centre, 16/05/12.

²⁷ Dorothy Meadows, *Early Years in Stony Stratford 1913-1929*, Moreton Press (1996), page 13.

Orchard assessment

24. There are thousands of fruit varieties that are associated with traditional orchards, many of them locally distinctive. Old trees are a relic of a former landscape and, as such, a valuable part of our cultural heritage. Marcus Roberts, chair and co-founder of the Mid Shires Orchard Group, is of the opinion that the Cofferridge Close orchard is of real interest because:
- As a mixed orchard it tends to indicate some antiquity and it is quite likely that this urban close has been an orchard for a considerable time.
 - The survival of the orchard in an intra-urban space is unusual.
 - Mixed orchards of pear and apple are quite rare in this region.
 - The survival of such a close and its planting and relationship to the modern townscape make it of significant heritage interest.
 - The medieval and post medieval trend in planting was for mixed pear and apple orchards, so it can be argued this is a rare survivor of a tradition of fruit planting that was characteristic of the area and this increases its heritage value.
- (see emails from Marcus Roberts in Annex B).
25. The Cofferridge Close orchard has high amenity value because the trees are both visible and accessible to people in the town. In the proposed redevelopment, 13 of the 14 orchard trees on the green would be cut down, leaving just one pear tree standing with a few other non-orchard trees on a residual strip of the green. As a result, a key feature of the Conservation Area with heritage and cultural value for the local community and visitors to the town would be erased to make way for car parking. The orchard is a special landscape intrinsic to the character and identity of Stony Stratford and forms part of the historic setting of the many listed buildings surrounding Cofferridge Close. The destruction of this orchard would therefore undermine local character and sense of place and adversely affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Orchard biodiversity

26. Traditional orchards make a crucial contribution to biodiversity. They are defined by Natural England as:
- ‘... groups of 5 or more fruit and nut trees planted on vigorous rootstocks at low densities in permanent grassland and managed in a low intensity way.’
27. Traditional orchards have declined nationally by 75% since 1950. They are being ‘lost to intensification, neglect or grubbed up to make way for development’²⁸. They are particularly vulnerable due to lack of regulatory protection. Due to their decline and the specialist ecological habitat they hold within the landscape and particularly in the trees themselves, traditional orchards have since 2007 been a priority habitat under the UK government’s Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). Traditional orchards support over 400 specialist wood decay species including the Noble Chafer Beetle which is a priority species. They are also important habitats for amphibians, mammals and birds which range across the landscape. In order to provide continuity of habitat many orchards need new trees planted within them. Marcus Roberts (Mid Shires Orchard Group) has identified three and possibly four plantings of apple trees in the Cofferridge Close orchard and is of the opinion that ‘the trees are also in a viable and healthy condition and the spread of ages and types are excellent for ecology and diversity.’ Commenting on the cavities and dead wood in the oldest fruit trees in the Close he says ‘several of the cavities have fresh evidence of wood boring insects and frass which might be associated with the Noble Chafer Beetle or other national priority species’ (see emails from Marcus Roberts in Annex B).
28. The People’s Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) acting under the auspices of Natural England (the government’s advisor on the natural environment and lead agency for the new

²⁸ Natural England website.

England Biodiversity Strategy) has for the past five years been locating and mapping English traditional orchards in order to preserve this unique and special habitat. **The Cofferridge Close orchard is now recorded on the national inventory of priority habitats maintained by Natural England (see letter from Steven Oram, Orchard Project Coordinator, PTES – Annex B).**

Impact of the proposed redevelopment on the orchard

29. Not only does the planning application to redevelop Cofferridge Close fail to identify this important habitat, it fails to investigate the ecology of the Close in any respect. The proposed development does not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area because it removes a traditional orchard habitat which is significant historically, culturally and in relation to its biodiversity. When MKC Development Control responded to this planning application the Senior Landscape Architect commented in relation to the apple trees:

‘... their loss may impact on the historical connection to the previous orchard. Please consult the Council’s Building and Conservation Officer on this issue.’

30. There is no evidence that the applicant has done so. Milton Keynes Council should as a matter of urgency confirm the traditional orchard status of the fruit trees in Cofferridge Close under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. They should also investigate the biodiversity of the orchard including the condition of the orchard trees bearing in mind that decay within the standing tree is crucial to traditional orchard ecology and not a reason to fell.

In relation to the Cofferridge Close orchard, planning application 11/00143/FUL is contrary to the following national and local planning policies:

- **NPPF paragraph 17 – Core planning principles** – ‘conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.’
- **NPPF paragraph 126 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment** – ‘Local planning authorities ... should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.’
- **NPPF paragraph 126 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment** – In developing conservation strategies local planning authorities should take into account ‘opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.’
- **MK Core Strategy CS20 – The Historic and Natural Environment** – ‘New Developments should protect and enhance the character, diversity and cultural significance of the Borough’s historic assets Development proposals must consider the character, appearance, and setting of buildings, structures, areas, parks and gardens and landscapes that are of historical, architectural, cultural or archaeological interest.’
- **MK Core Strategy CS20 – The Historic and Natural Environment** – ‘In order to maximise biodiversity we will protect and enhance the hierarchy of national, regional and local sites within the Borough as well as BAP Priority Habitats and species.’

Cofferidge Close – green space

Open Space: All open space of public value, including not just land but also areas of water which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity. — NPPF ANNEX 2 GLOSSARY.

Incidental open space: typically in residential areas and of immediate community or neighbourhood interest. — MILTON KEYNES OPEN SPACE STRATEGY 2007 2.02 – MK RANGE OF OPEN SPACES

Amenity open space: smaller open areas, including woods, copses and ponds, where recreational use is incidental to their primary function as an attractive feature in otherwise built up areas or as wildlife habitats — MK LOCAL PLAN – LEISURE AND RECREATION 13.14

‘Only the larger sites protected by this policy are shown on the Proposals Map. **Other sites such as playing fields and incidental open space are given equal protection by this policy.**’ — MK LOCAL PLAN – LEISURE AND RECREATION 13.14

History of the green space

31. Cofferidge Close is part of a sequence of historic town centre spaces from Horsefair Green to Market Square linked by a well-used pedestrian route that takes people past the green area in the Close. With the feel of a small park, Cofferidge Close is pleasant to walk through because of the trees and green space within it; this green heart of the MKDC scheme was intended as public space. The orchard green and the seat overlooking the space are used for rest and recreation as people go about their business in the town and by local residents who live in or close to the centre of town. In the evenings and at weekends, after the busy Saturday shopping period, the Close is a quiet place.
32. The Cofferidge Close town houses (7–23 Silver Street) were designed as an integral part of the 1976 scheme. The first-floor living rooms have full-width glazed rear walls and balconies designed to give a flexible inside-outside plan with views over the open green space and trees. In their decision to list the town houses, English Heritage stated:
 ‘... the open aspect of the close is an important component of the setting of 7–23 Silver Street given the integrated nature of the design of the whole ...’²⁹.
33. There is no evidence in the history of Cofferidge Close to indicate that the green area that remains today has ever been built on. An early Ordnance Survey map 1822–37 appears to show that some building had taken place but the later map dated 1881 shows the Close to be predominantly open space. The applicant’s Heritage Assessment suggests inaccuracies in the map of 1822–37 and errors tend to be confirmed by the earlier 1814 Ordnance Survey map which shows the majority of the Close to be undeveloped (see maps — Annex C). On balance of probability, it is likely that the green space in Cofferidge Close today is the last remaining green remnant of the original medieval enclosure first mentioned in the Radcliffe document of 1484. Like the orchard, the green space is integral to the historic and cultural identity of the town and an important element of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the surrounding listed buildings.

Impact of the proposed redevelopment on the green space

34. The application to redevelop Cofferidge Close proposes to build car parking over the green area, leaving a residual strip close to the new store. At present the total area of the central green space is 1,630 sq m. If this development went, ahead, 75% of this green area

²⁹ English Heritage — Advice Report — Case no. 468471 — 24/05/2012.

would be built over and only 434 sq m. would remain. The redevelopment proposal also removes the landscaped areas still remaining from the original continuous green bund along the pathway from Silver Street to the High Street. Horsefair Green and Cofferridge Close are the only green areas in the very heart of Stony Stratford and to lose one of these open spaces would diminish the quality of the town centre and represent a significant loss of amenity for Close residents, the local community and visitors alike.

35. A supermarket of the size proposed, open seven days a week, would generate continual traffic movement in Cofferridge Close, transforming it into a characterless place with none of the qualities it currently possesses. Loss of this green space would also destroy those remaining significant visible elements of the Close that recall its past history and were preserved and enhanced in the 1970s MKDC mixed-use scheme. In 1995 the occupants of the town houses in Cofferridge Close successfully opposed a planning application³⁰ to remove a substantial part of the green to make way for additional car parking (see letter dated 11/10/95 — Annex C). Previous planning decisions are a valid objection to a current planning consideration.

Removing the majority of the green space in Cofferridge Close neither preserves nor enhances the character and appearance of the town's Conservation Area and to build over it would be contrary to the following national and local policy:

- **NPPF paragraph 74 — Promoting healthy communities** — Existing open spaces, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
 - an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
 - the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a **suitable location**; or
 - the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.
- **NPPF paragraph 69 — Promoting healthy communities** — Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve places which promote safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes and **high quality public space which encourages the active and continual use of public areas**.
- **MK Local Plan — Leisure and Recreation — Policy L2** — Planning permission will be refused for proposals involving the loss of open space used for leisure and recreation unless alternative provision of at least equivalent size, quality, suitability and **convenience** is made.

³⁰ Application nos. MK/401/95 and MK/402/95.

Cofferidge Close – trees

‘All trees in conservation areas that have a diameter of more than 7.5 cm measured 1.5 m above ground level are afforded similar protection to those covered by Tree Preservation Orders.’ — MKC ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT

‘Over half of the trees to be removed to accommodate the redevelopment are categorised as grade B This represents a significant loss of amenity and general good quality urban tree cover as well as a release of locked-up carbon.’ — MKC LANDSCAPE SERVICES MANAGER

Loss of trees and effect on trees are material planning considerations.

History of the trees

36. The collective impact of the trees in Cofferidge Close makes a substantial contribution to town centre amenity and to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The trees stand within public space, are accessible to anyone living in or visiting the town, highly visible on the path linking Horsefair Green to Market Square and valued by the local community as a key element in the attractiveness and pleasantness of the centre of Stony Stratford.
37. At present there are 82 mature trees in the Close and 21 species are represented. Some, like the orchard trees (22), have historic and cultural value. Some, like the yew trees (5), can live for centuries. The Indian Bean Trees (2) and the Sycamore (4) are particularly resilient and adaptable. The False Acacia (1) and London Plane (1) can absorb a lot of pollutants and the Holly trees (3) provide good winter habitat for birds. Of the 38 trees just mentioned, only 10 are retained in the redevelopment proposal.
38. Some trees in the Close today predate the MKDC development (the 19 old orchard trees; the Corsican Pine, yew and 2 holly trees on the central green space and the 5 in front of the Baptist Chapel). The rest were added as part of the landscaping of the 1976 scheme, including a walnut and additional apple and pear to reference the historical orchard use of the Close. A number of the non-orchard trees on the central green space are mentioned in Dorothy Meadows booklet as being in Cofferidge Close when her father bought the land. She identifies these trees as ‘... some tall trees including conifers’³¹. William Walter Meadows bought Cofferidge Close in 1907, therefore these trees are more than 105 years old.
39. About 25 trees have been removed in the 37 years since the MKDC development was completed, including a number of fruit trees and a significant number that were lost in 1995 when the landscaped bund along the path from Silver Street to the High Street was severely reduced to provide additional parking. Since there are no trees along Stony Stratford High Street, the trees in Cofferidge Close together with those on Horsefair Green have added significance as urban visual amenity.

Impact of the proposed redevelopment on the trees

40. Of the 82 trees in Cofferidge Close, 77 are under the control of the present owner. The applicant states that 44 trees will be cut down in the redevelopment but the real number is 51. The discrepancy in the number of trees lost arises because the applicant groups the 7 orchard trees on the green space and counts them as 1 tree (group TG4 in the Tree Survey submitted by the applicant) and in the same way the 3 espaliered pears on the office wall (TG3) are counted as 1 tree (see tree plan taken from the Tree Survey for the planning

³¹ Dorothy Meadows, *op. cit.*, page 7.

application — Annex D). In the proposed redevelopment 66% of the trees in Cofferridge Close controlled by the applicant will be removed to fulfil the car parking requirement for a supermarket of the size planned, to allow for the manoeuvring of large delivery vehicles and to accommodate the new building. Of the 26 retained trees, 2 old apple trees by the residential garages are earmarked for removal because of decay, a feature which is fundamental to the biodiversity value of fruit trees. The rationale for removing 7 trees growing against the perimeter wall by the pedestrian exit to Market Square and 8 along the line of the existing residential garages can only be because space for the development is so limited. The loss of such a large number of established mature trees in a Conservation Area severely diminishes town centre amenity and should be wholly unacceptable.

41. The applicant states in a letter concerning amended plans that 44 new trees will be planted as part of the redevelopment (see letter dated 03/06/2011 — Annex D). However the Amended Proposed Landscape Layout submitted by the developer shows only 34 new trees (see amended landscape layout — Annex D). The planting of new trees in car parking areas, whatever the number, does not compensate the local community for the loss of existing urban tree cover. MKC Landscape Services Manager — Trees comments in his response to the application:

‘The new trees will take a decade or two to make up for the majority of the volume loss of tree cover ...’

42. Removing trees that reference past uses in Cofferridge Close and trees carefully chosen in the 1976 MKDC landscaping scheme now at full maturity does not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Stony Stratford Conservation Area.

43. On the redeveloped site the 7 retained trees (some over 100 years old) on the remaining green space stand approximately 18 metres from the outer wall of the supermarket. Although protection measures are required these trees must be vulnerable to damage from above ground demolition and construction works. Below ground tree roots are particularly at risk from excavation for foundations and services, compaction of soil through heavy vehicle movements and by contamination from toxic building materials.

44. The new trees to be added in the proposed redevelopment are incidental to the primary function of the space, which is to provide car parking and to facilitate vehicle movement; this is in stark contrast to the current situation where some trees recall past uses of the Close and others were added as part of a carefully landscaped public space around a mixed-use scheme.

Removing a large number of trees that contribute to the quality of the urban environment equates to substantial loss of amenity and replacing with something which does not possess the qualities of the present is contrary to:

- **NPPF paragraph 17 — Core Principles** — ‘... planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a **good standard of amenity** for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.’
- **NPPF paragraph 17 — Core Principles** — ‘... planning should contribute to **conserving and enhancing the natural environment** and reducing pollution.’
- **NPPF paragraph 156** — ‘The planning system should **contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes**, geological conservation interests and soils.’
- **NPPF paragraph 73** — ‘Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the **health and well-being of communities.**’
- **MKC Local Plan — Vision and Aims** — ‘3. Create new habitats to improve biodiversity and **increase tree cover for carbon fixing.**’
- **MKC Local Plan — Vision and Aims** — ‘9 Protect and enhance important archaeological and geological sites, **listed buildings and conservation areas.**’

Conclusion

45. The amenity value of Cofferridge Close arises from its history, accessibility, green and landscaped areas, orchard and trees. The concealed location of the Close, cited by the applicant as the reason for its limited contribution to the Conservation Area, is a key historic feature recalling its origin as a medieval town enclosure. The Close is public space in the town centre criss-crossed by well-used historic pathways and retains a strong sense of place despite detrimental alterations that have detracted from the quality of the original MKDC scheme. Since 1976 there has been gradual erosion of the amenity value of the original landscape design, including removal of trees, planters, public sculpture, planted pergolas, tiered crocus planting on the green and bespoke seating (including the circular seat around the walled sycamore tree). However the important central green space remains intact and the saplings planted at the time are now well established trees that, together with the trees predating the 1976 development, make a significant contribution to visual amenity in the town centre. Many of the objections to the redevelopment proposal submitted by local people related to the loss of green space and trees. In considering the Cofferridge Close landscape the aim should be to restore it to the quality of the original not to destroy the remaining elements as this application proposes.
46. Planning application 11/00143/FUL proposes to remove almost all visible evidence of the past uses of Cofferridge Close leaving only meaningless remnants and the boundary wall to reference its history. The Close becomes dominated by car parking and is transformed from a pleasant green public space to one where people are unlikely to feel inclined to linger. The proposed redevelopment would effectively signal the demise of Cofferridge Close as a historic place in the town because it would come to be defined by the supermarket brand that occupies the site.

This proposal represents substantial loss of town centre amenity and does nothing to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Stony Stratford's Conservation Area and is contrary to:

- **NPPF paragraph 17 – Core principles** – ‘conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.’
- **NPPF paragraph 61 – Requiring good design** – ‘... planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.’
- **NPPF paragraph 69 – Promoting healthy communities** – Planning policies and decisions should promote ‘safe and accessible developments containing clear and legible pedestrian routes and high quality public space which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.’
- **NPPF paragraph 7 – The environmental role required of sustainable development** – ‘contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment
- **NPPF paragraph 132 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment** - ‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset [Conservation Areas are designated heritage assets], great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. **As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.**’

Sources

F.E. Hyde and S.F. Markham, *History of Stony Stratford*, McCorquodale and Co. Ltd (1948).

Place Name Society – name-studies@nottingham.ac.uk

‘Stony Stratford and Wolverton — Extracts from Records 12th–16th Centuries’, compiled by Sir Frank Markham from the Radcliffe MSS in the Bodleian Library and other records. Typescript supplied by the Bucks County Library 1970 — Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Aylesbury.

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Land Tax Assessments for Stony Stratford West — Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Aylesbury.

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Joint Nature Conservation Committee — Advisor to the Government on Nature Conservation — jncc.defra.gov.uk

Dorothy M. Meadows, *Early Years in Stony Stratford 1913 – 1929*, Moreton Press (1996)

Natural England — Advisor to the Government on the Natural Environment — www.naturalengland.org.uk

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English Heritage, ‘Advice Report — Cofferidge Close, High Street, Stony Stratford’ (Case No. 468471).

Annex A

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E-mail from Dr Paul Cavill, Lecturer in Early English

From: **Name-Studies** <name-studies@nottingham.ac.uk>
 Date: Wed, Mar 14, 2012 at 12:40 PM
 Subject: RE: Meaning of Cofferridge
 To: angela cook <angela.maxfield1@gmail.com>

Thanks for this. I think the likeliest etymology here is that the Close belonged to the Cofferer, the name of a royal treasury appointment in the middle ages. The Oxford English Dictionary has the earliest record from the 14th century: ‘c1330 R. Mannyng Chron. (1810) 319 Sir Rauf þe Coffers þat tyme was Tresorerer’ (Sir Ralph the Cofferer was Treasurer at that time). It looks as if the name became a surname, as the quotation might seem to suggest. But the position of the place near Watling Street might also suggest that it had an actual tax-collecting purpose; the size of it, assuming the name covered the whole 6 acres, is much larger than a normal ‘close’. Certainly, I think there is reason to believe that it was of some importance, as you argue.

I hope this helps.

Good wishes,

Paul Cavill

Dr Paul Cavill
 Lecturer in Early English
 School of English
 University of Nottingham
 Nottingham NG7 2RD
 Tel. 0115 8467549
 Fax. 0115 9515924

Abstract of Radcliffe MSS Dep. Deed 282

2nd Oct. 1484. Stony Stratford MS.RADCLIFF DEP. DEED 282

Grant.

Thomas Mauntell of Furtho (Northants) Esq., and Margaret his wife and John Hail of Stonystratford grant to William Duraunt of Stonystratford £10 RENT FROM LANDS in Stonystratford and Couesgrove (Northants). Rent accruing from tenement and gardens of Henry Tub of Stony Stratford - 28/-
From Coffurrers Close and lands of Thomas Rokkes (S.S) - 26/8d
 from tenements & lands of Thomas Tovuesyend (S.S) - 26/8d
 45½ acres of John Alwey, Wolverton..... - 28/8d
 12 acres & 1 rod of John Oxe..... - 8/-
 tenements & lands of Thomas Aras of Couesgrove (Northants) 43/-
 " " " " William Hanow " " " 20/-
 " " " " Henry Aras " " " 7/-
 lands and meadows William Nicoll, jun. 12/-
 Distrain is allowed, and the grantors are held in bond of £40
 No Witnesses.

Dated 2 Oct. 2 Ric III

NB. Seal missing.

Transcript of entries in the Furtho Manor account bookRedditus firmariorum.
Stratford, Wolverton and Calverton.

De William Read for the message called Bozarde cum terr
 De Turney and Riguell for his house
 De Henry and William Punter for their house
 De vid Michael
 De Matheo Emmerton for his house
 De Thomas
 De Thomas Hartley pro firma message sui
 De Thomas Marriott "
 Thomas Greene "
 Thomas Whidnell "
 John Penn "

John Penn pro Cofferers Close

Humfrido Peacock pro firma message sui
 Arthur Phillips
 vid Newton
 Thomas B
 C
 Smith
 Thomas Lord
 Robert Swaine
 Thomas Coley
 Robert Miller
 John Newman
 Robert Painter
 vid
 Williamson
 Thomas Smyroff
 Antonio Ashbie
 Thomas Glover
 Willmo Ritte
 Thomas S
 Wilmo Franklin
 John Millburne pro messuagio de novo recuperat
 Thomas Kingston " " "
 John Franklen

Cofferers Close belonged to the Furtho from 1484 to 1619FURTHO ACCOUNT BOOK 1604 - 19

List of works done (or due) by carters, reapers, haymakers.

List of Rents:Passenham.

De John Bannactre		50/- or £6.
De Elenora Clarke		0
Stockinge	my mothers joint fund	
De Parrott	house at O/S	4.8
De Robert	Passenham field	20d.

Stratford, Wolverton and Calverton.

De quondem domo in Stratford Bozards being my mother jointure		0
De Thomas Turney to my mothers		£10.10s 0d
De Richards Lord to my mother 27/6 to me		£4. 2s.5d
Ranalph Young	" 4	4d

1605

Much thro Meadflower Cofferide Close 3/-

**Transcript of extracts from will (11/8/1646) of John Eves, maltster of Stony Stratford, proved (9/7/1647) before the Prerogative Court of Canterbury
(The National Archives, PROB 11/201 f° 116)**

In the name of God Amen The Eleventh day of August in the two and twentieth yeare of the Raigne of o[u]r Souvraigne Lord Charles the kings ma[jes]tie that now is Annoq. Domini One thousand sixe hundred forty sixe I John Eves the elder of Stony Stratford in the County of Bucks maulster beinge in good health and perfect remembrance thanks be given to Allmightie God do make and declare this my last will & Testament.

Item I give and bequeath unto Hanna Eves my kinswoman the two tenem[en]ts at the **Cofferidge Close** and one in the Occupation of the widdow Abbut and the other next adjoining to it in the occupation of Thomas ffrier with soe much of the **Cofferidge ground** as is now sett foorth and appointed by me, and to the heires of her body lawfully begotten for ever.

Item I give and bequeath unto Sarah Godfrey my kinswoman the wife of John Godfree the younger one tenement at the **Cofferidge Close** and now in the occupation of the widow Campion and the tenement next adjoining to it now in the occupation of Thomas Earle and one other tenement next adjoining now in the occupation of Thomas Lovell with soe much of the **Cofferidge ground** as is now sett foorth & appointed by me to all the three tenements, and to the heires of her body lawfully begotten for ever.

Item I give and bequeath unto John Eves my kinsman the house with the Appurtenances wherein I now dwell when he shall attain and come to the age of Twentie years and to the heires of his body lawfully begotten for ever And for want of such issue then to the heires of Hanna Eves his sister lawfully begotten for ever, And my mind and will is that Anne Eves his mother shall have the use of my said house untill the said John come to the said age of Twentie yeares keepinge the same in sufficient repair and herselfe a widdowe And further I give and bequeath unto him the said John Eves more all my **Cofferidge Close** except for such as is allready sett foorth and appointed out by me to the five severall Tenements at the **Cofferidge Close** and of the same And to the heires of his body lawfully begotten for ever, And for want of such issue my will and mind is that the said Cofferidge Close shall come and returne unto Nicholas Elford my kinsman and to the heires of his body lawfully begotten for ever, Allwayes provided that the yearly Rent of the said **Cofferidge Close** be equally divided between my Executors untill the said John Eves shall attain to the age of Twentie yeares and afterwards to the only use of the said John Eves

In witness whereof I the said John Eves have hereunto sett my hand & Seale the day and yeare first abovewritten John Eves. Sealed subscribed published and declared as my last will and Testament In the presence of us Henry Hall Robert Boddell.

E-mail from Archivist, Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies

14/2/2012

Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies
County Hall · Walton Street · Aylesbury · Buckinghamshire · HP20 1UU

I have checked our indexes and have been able to find one reference to Cofferidge or Coffereys Close in Stony Stratford. This is auction sale particulars dated 1896 for properties in Stony Stratford, comprising Chestnut Close, Cofferidge Close, The Chestnuts (house), St James (house), 3 houses on Market Square, 4 shops on Church Street, High Street and Market Square, 9 cottages on The Green, Horn Lane and Silver Street, close on Horn Lane, and furniture (itemised), with some papers including plan, photograph and poster dated 1894 (D-WIG/2/7/1896/18).

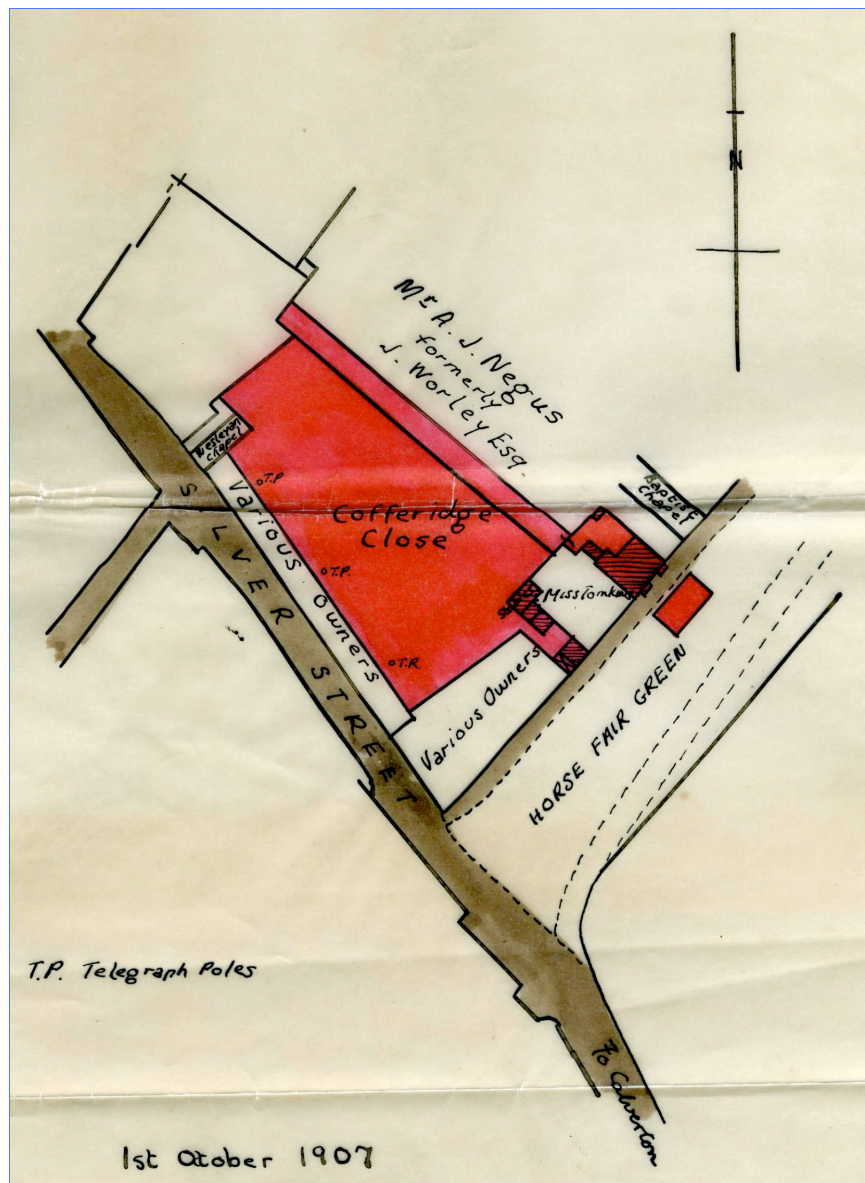
This Office holds Ordnance Survey maps for various dates, from the first edition (c1880) to the current edition. There is a survey done under the Finance Act of 1910, showing who owned and occupied property at that date. However the only earlier maps of the parish cover small portions showing properties belonging to specific individuals, and none are earlier than the late nineteenth century. There are no surviving inclosure or tithe maps.

Sally Mason
Archivist
Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies

Abstract of title deeds of 8 Horsefair Green

1/10/1907 William Henry Sansom, collector of rates and taxes, conveyed to Walter William Meadows, draper, for £1000 “all that messuage, tenement or dwelling house with the yard, garden and outbuildings thereunto adjoining and belonging situated on the West Side of Stony Stratford and fronting on the north west side of the Horse Fair Green in the adjoining parish of Calverton, together with the kitchen garden in the rear of the said messuage or tenement, and together also with the piece of garden ground standing on the Horse Fair Green aforesaid and containing ten poles or thereabouts and beginning immediately in front of the said messuage and separated therefrom by the Public Roadway and occupied therewith as a flower garden; and also all that piece or parcel of pasture land commonly called or known by the name of ‘Cofferidge Close’ with the stables, lofts, outhouses and other buildings erected thereon situated on the West Side of Stony Stratford and adjoining the messuage or tenement thereinbefore described” (see plan) “to hold the same with the appurtenances (except and reserving out of the assurance thereby made the small strip of ground (part of the Cofferidge Close) acquired by Miss Emma Tomkins from the said W.H. Sansom and thrown into the garden belonging to the adjoining hereditaments of the said Emma Tomkins and which strip of ground the said W.H. Sansom was under the obligation to convey to the said Emma Tomkins whenever required so to do)”

Drawing dated 01/10/1907 from title deeds of 8 Horsefair Green



E-mail correspondence with MK Conservation and Archaeology Manager

From: Angela Cook
Date: Mon, Nov 21, 2011
Subject: Re: Query arising from the Lloyds Court draft.
To: Peart, Simon
Cc: Fenwick, Nick; Kirk, Debbie and others

1. You say in your response [to my earlier query] that as there is as yet no formal local listing procedure for non designated heritage assets they are currently being :-
'...identified as and when they arise through the decision making or plan making process i.e. on an ad hoc basis.'

Would I be correct in concluding from this that both Lloyds Court and the Coffee Hall Church have been accorded heritage asset status (as defined in PPS5) through this ad hoc process? This leads me to ask whether Cofferridge Close is being identified in this category through decision making around the current planning application?

2. Both yourself and Nick Fenwick have confirmed the local significance of Cofferridge Close so does this mean that this significance now becomes a material planning consideration? I ask this because the Conservation Officer's response (dated 08/03/11) to the planning application although giving a brief account of the merits of the original scheme did not afford it any current significance rather focussing on the detrimental alterations that have occurred.

3. Is Debbie Kirk fully aware that Cofferridge Close is considered to be '...of local significance and considered a heritage asset by the LPA'.

4. Who asked MKC to write the development brief for Lloyds Court?

From: Peart, Simon
Date: Thu, Nov 24, 2011
Subject: RE: Query arising from the Lloyds Court draft.
To: angela cook
Cc: Fenwick, Nick; Kirk, Debbie and others

1. Lloyds Court and the Coffee Hall Church both came to light through informal discussions. Cofferridge Close was during the planning process.

2. Cofferridge Close sits within the conservation area which is a 'designated heritage asset', however, the Local Planning Authority consider it to be a (non-designated) 'heritage asset' in any case. Both are material to the consideration of planning applications.

3. Yes she is.

4. I'll refer this one to Neil Sainsbury who is Head of Urban Design and Landscape Architecture, it is his team that has worked on it.

Simon Peart, Conservation & Archaeology Manager

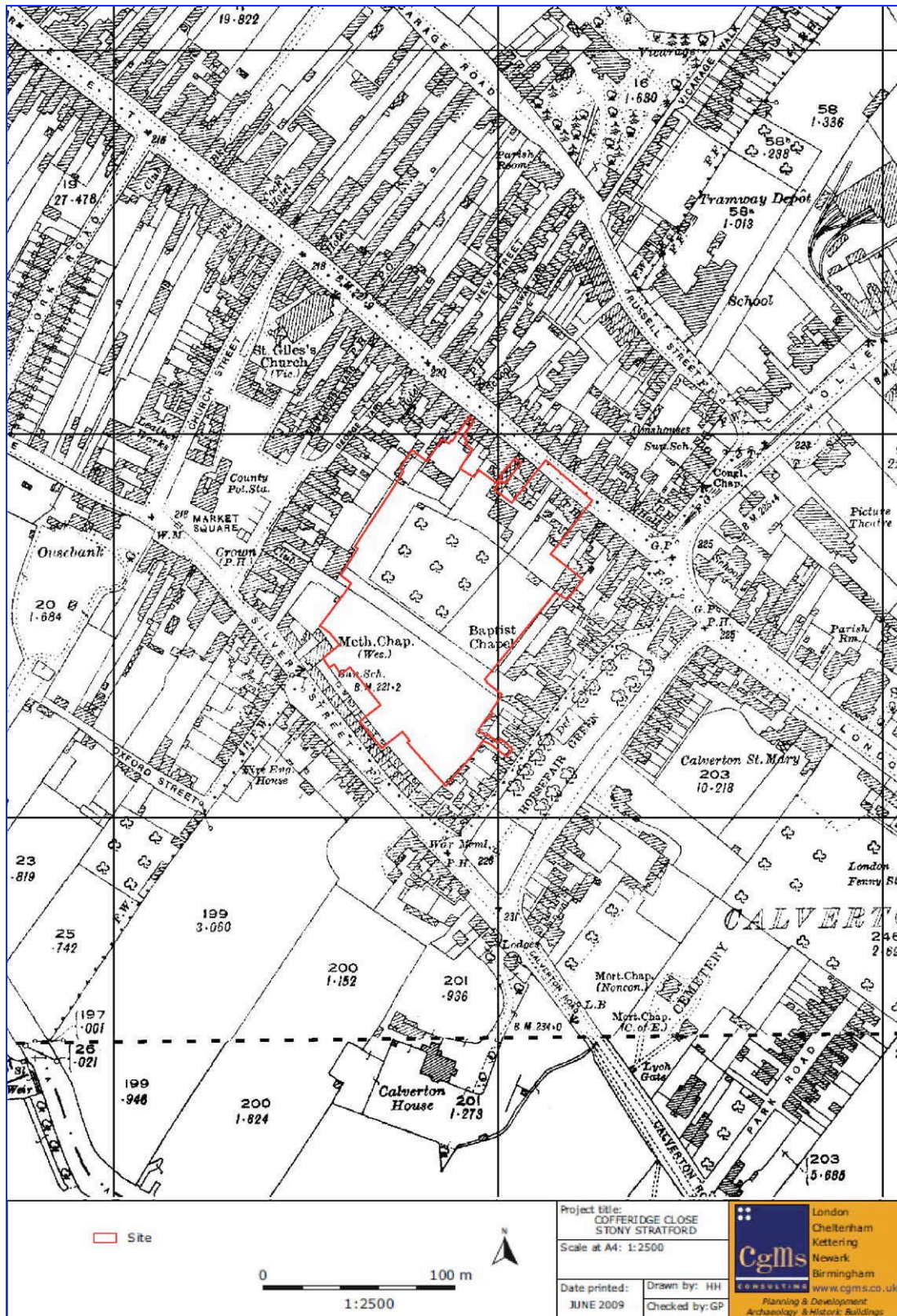
Milton Keynes Council | Conservation & Archaeology | Planning, Economy & Development | Civic Offices | 1 Saxon Gate East | Milton Keynes MK9 3EJ

Discover Milton Keynes HER: www.heritagegateway.org.uk

Annex B

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1925 Ordnance Survey map of Stony Stratford



Aerial photos 1931 and 1972

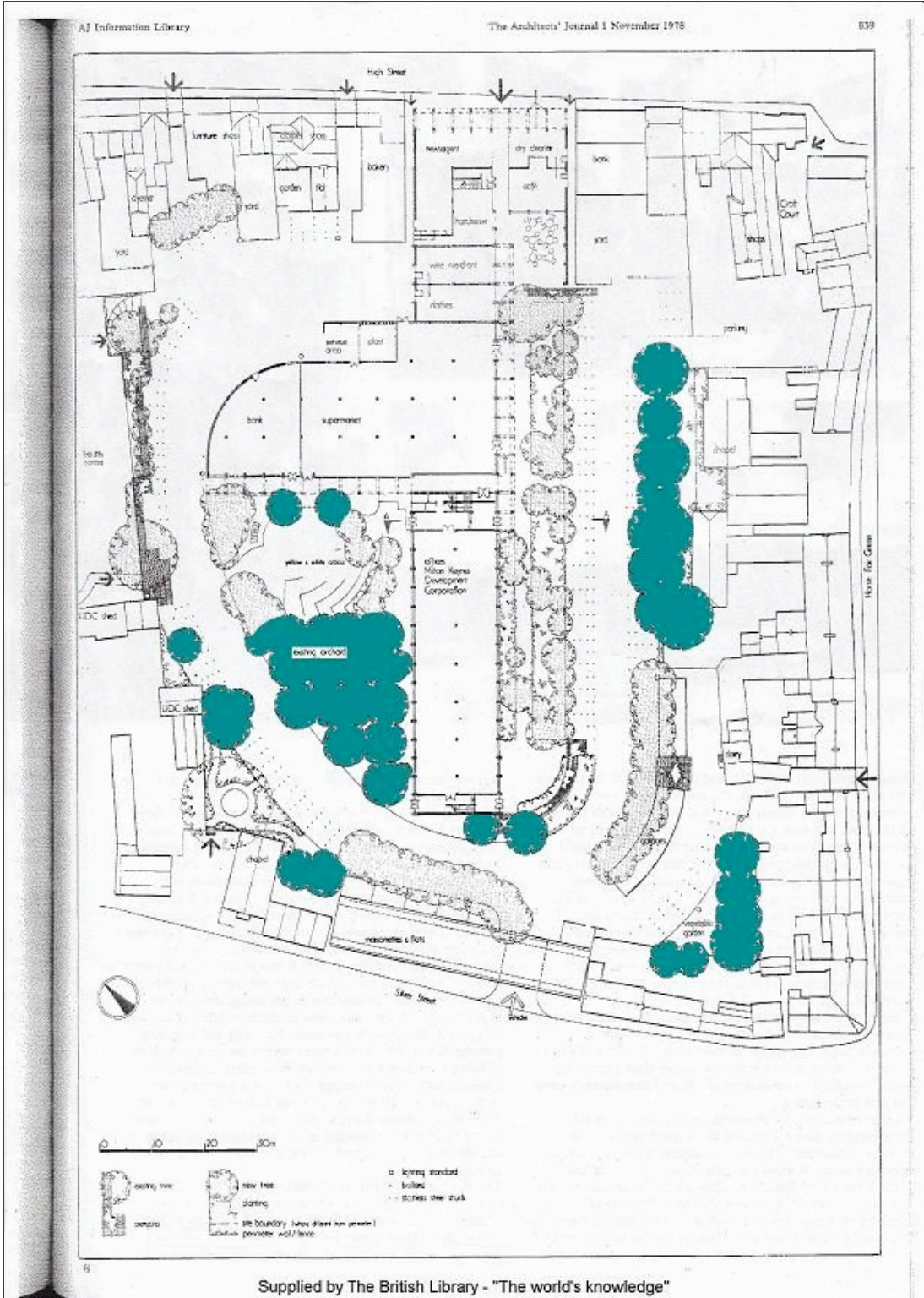
1931



1972



MKDC plan of trees to be retained (coloured green) and new to be planted



Extracts from e-mail correspondence with Marcus Roberts, Mid-Shires Orchard Group

From: **Marcus Roberts** 10/2/2012
 I saw the site last year, with Iain Reed the Town Clerk and stated that the site was of real interest because:

- 1) It was a remains of an intra-urban medieval or late medieval old enclosure
- 2) The survival of the orchard in an intra-urban space was unusual
- 3) As a mixed orchard, it tended to indicate some antiquity and it was quite likely that this urban close had been an orchard for a considerable time
- 4) Mixed orchards of pear and apple are quite rare in the region
- 5) the survival of such a close, its planting and relationship to the modern townscape made it of significant heritage interest and amenity value.
- 6) To lose it would be to negatively impact on an important part of the towns character and individuality.

From: **Marcus Roberts** 12/2/2012
 The estimates on the longevity of trees [of 20-40 years, in the tree assessment accompanying the planning application] seem very low, even for mature trees. Also, pear trees have a particularly long life as *Pyrus Communis*, so this estimate is particularly wide of the mark by up to two centuries!!

From: **Angela Cook** 21/5/2012
 My investigations suggest the apple and pear trees on the green are at least 105 years old. A local history booklet written by someone (now deceased) whose father bought Cofferridge Close in 1907 says the fruit trees were planted around the perimeter and on the green by the previous owner. An aerial photo from 1931 also clearly shows the linear layout of a much more extensive orchard in the Close.
 Could the apple trees actually be that old? The tree survey carried out by Forbes Laird for the planning applicant describes the group of 7 apple trees on the green as 'young' trees so there is a huge discrepancy here between my estimate and theirs.
 I cannot find anything on the internet to help me with this although I have found it is possible for apple trees to live this long. Incidentally the ones here still bear a lot of fruit. In the landscaping for the 1970s MKDC scheme I know that all the fruit trees on the green were there prior to this development and no new were added on this space.

From: **Marcus Roberts** 21/5/2012
 In terms of tree age, pear trees are particularly long lived. The oldest pear tree in southern England is in my friend's garden in Maidenhead (Mr Kupferman) and has been determined to be 330 years old.
 In terms of apple trees, typical apple trees will last between 50 – 80 years, but, some can last for as long as 250 years and I know many example of between 100 – 200 years old. Planners tend to consistently underestimate the ages of trees, as it suits their case to give the pessimistic typical age.
 While one would normally expect old trees to have a large trunk, this can be misleading as some apple trees may have been planted on to small rootstocks and I have come across some very old apple trees with very small trunks. For example at the late John Geldgood's garden, there are some tiny apple trees whose age has been established as 120 – 130 years, so size can be misleading. Also, some soil conditions can stunt the development of trees, if the top-soil is shallow, or the very young tree suffered excessive grass or weed competition.
 It would be worth looking to see if there are any other old photographs that might be of assistance. If you can send me a scan of the aerial photograph I can map it onto the satellite image of today to see if the current trees sit on the exact rows and spacings, which would be indicative.
 It is possible that some of these current apple trees are replants, but some of them are also mature trees that I would have expected to be at least 50 – 70 years old, and there is a particularly old one at the back wall of the orchard, but you do need to make sure that the developers of the site did not plant at least some of the trees, as my recollections of the

orchard are that there are at least three plantings in the site and there is a group of younger looking apple trees in amongst the rest. One way of deciding this would be to survey and measure the rows and spacings, as one planting will typically be consistent in spacings. However, in terms of age it is the pear trees which are going to be the oldest in the orchard and the most unusual feature.

I would also add that I have recently carried out some GIS work on patterns of historic fruit tree planting in the area and it is clear that the medieval and post medieval trend in planting was the planting of mixed apple and pear orchards , so it can be argued that this is now a rare survivor of a tradition of fruit planting that was characteristic of the area, which increases its heritage value.

I am also attaching to this email information on the TEMPO system of evaluating trees for TPOs, which you might find of great value in making your case.

From: Angela Cook

22/5/2012

I have found out that when MKDC landscaped the current Cofferridge Close scheme they did indeed add in a few apple trees to the pre-existing orchard on the green space and around the perimeter. Some original trees definitely remain and as you say will most likely include the two pear. This fits in with the advice you have given in your reply.

The fact that MKDC sensitively respected the former uses of the Close by adding fruit trees amongst the older ones is an important aspect of the loss of amenity issue.

From: Marcus Roberts

22/5/2012

Many thanks for the additional update which confirms at least three planting periods for the orchard, though I suspect that the old apple tree on the other side of the close may actually have been planted before the other apple trees, so four plantings of apple trees may be represented. I think it is the pear trees that are well worth pushing, but in juxtaposition with the apple trees. Also, remember that the orchard has high amenity value, as the trees are highly visible and accessible and already provide a valued lunch and picnic site for people in town. People would lose a valuable recreational space. The trees are also in a viable and healthy condition and the spread of ages and types are excellent for ecology and diversity.

From: Marcus Roberts

12/6/2012

I did take another look at the orchard and one thing that is clear is that some of the oldest trees have plenty of cavities and dead wood, which make for key habitats for invertebrates such as nationally protected species such as the noble chafer beetle. Several of the cavities had fresh evidence of wood boring insects and frass, which might be associated with the Noble Chafer, or other national priority species. The presence of the extensive tree hollowing also tells us that the oldest apple trees are certainly in excess of 80-90 years old as well. However, the trees seem healthy over all, so it cannot be claimed that they are in ill health and will have to be culled anyway - virtually all of the trees have many years of life left in them. The fact that there are a wide variety of ages of trees also makes their conservation value much higher, as they provide for a variety of habitats and the life of the orchard will be extended into the future.

From: Marcus Roberts

12/6/2012

The apple and pear trees and other tree planting show a mixed habitat of tree types, forms and ages, with a generally open canopy that is not providing excessive shading of the ground and trees, which are regarded as optimum for the ecological value of an orchard. The presence of a short sward is also regarded as encouraging a desirable series of lichens and other wild-life. The presence of several varieties of apples and pears is also optimal, as the micro variations in the quality of the bark, as well as larger variations in terms of the attitude and disposition of the branches and leaf types also contribute to a varied habitat conducive to many types of insect and wild life. The mature trees provide good cover and habitat for birds.

Letter from Steven Oram, Orchard Project Coordinator, PTES

people's trust for endangered species |

Ms A. Cook
7, Silver Street
Stony Stratford
Milton Keynes
MK11 1JS

15 Cloisters House 8 Battersea Park Road London SW8 4BG
020 7498 4533 enquiries@ptes.org www.ptes.org

22nd May 2012

Dear Ms Cook,

Development on site of Traditional Orchard habitat at Cofferridge Close, Stony Stratford

The People's Trust for Endangered Species would like to offer its backing to your campaign to halt the proposed destruction of an historically, culturally and biologically important traditional orchard.

This orchard is recorded on the national Inventory of priority habitats maintained by Natural England. Traditional Orchards are recognised as a critical to the aims of reducing and reversing the alarming loss of biodiversity that dominates conservation effort. Milton Keynes Council's Core Strategy states that Priority Habitats should be preserved. Failure to do so would directly contradict this provision, along with those set out by Government through the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) and the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP).

Traditional orchards are still being lost across the country mostly due to economic pressures. If one exists in a public place, where commercial considerations are not an issue, it is a prime site for preservation, ostensibly for biodiversity reasons, but also for the health-promoting virtues of public green-space, and the historical significance of such remnants of our past to our cultural identity. This orchard is a particularly rare occurrence in Milton Keynes, and the only publicly visible one in Stony Stratford (according to the inventory).

The biodiversity of old orchards includes birds, bats, invertebrates, fungi, and mosses among other things. They are particularly important for invertebrates that live in wood and the removal of an orchard could potentially cause the local extinction of invertebrate species, some of which may be nationally rare. Development of an old orchard will also lead to the loss of potentially rare fruit varieties.

In light of this, we urge that Milton Keynes Council carefully consider and assess the biological, cultural and heritage value of the site before any development is approved, ensuring that adequate species surveys and fruit variety identification is undertaken during the planning process and that biodiversity interest is conserved and enhanced in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework. If an overriding public interest argument is imposed and the development proceeds, the Council should ensure that a suitable replacement site, of significantly larger size due to a huge loss to biodiversity from this site, is made available and sufficient provision made for its long-term management.

Yours sincerely

Steven Oram
Orchard Project Coordinator

Registered charity no. 27206



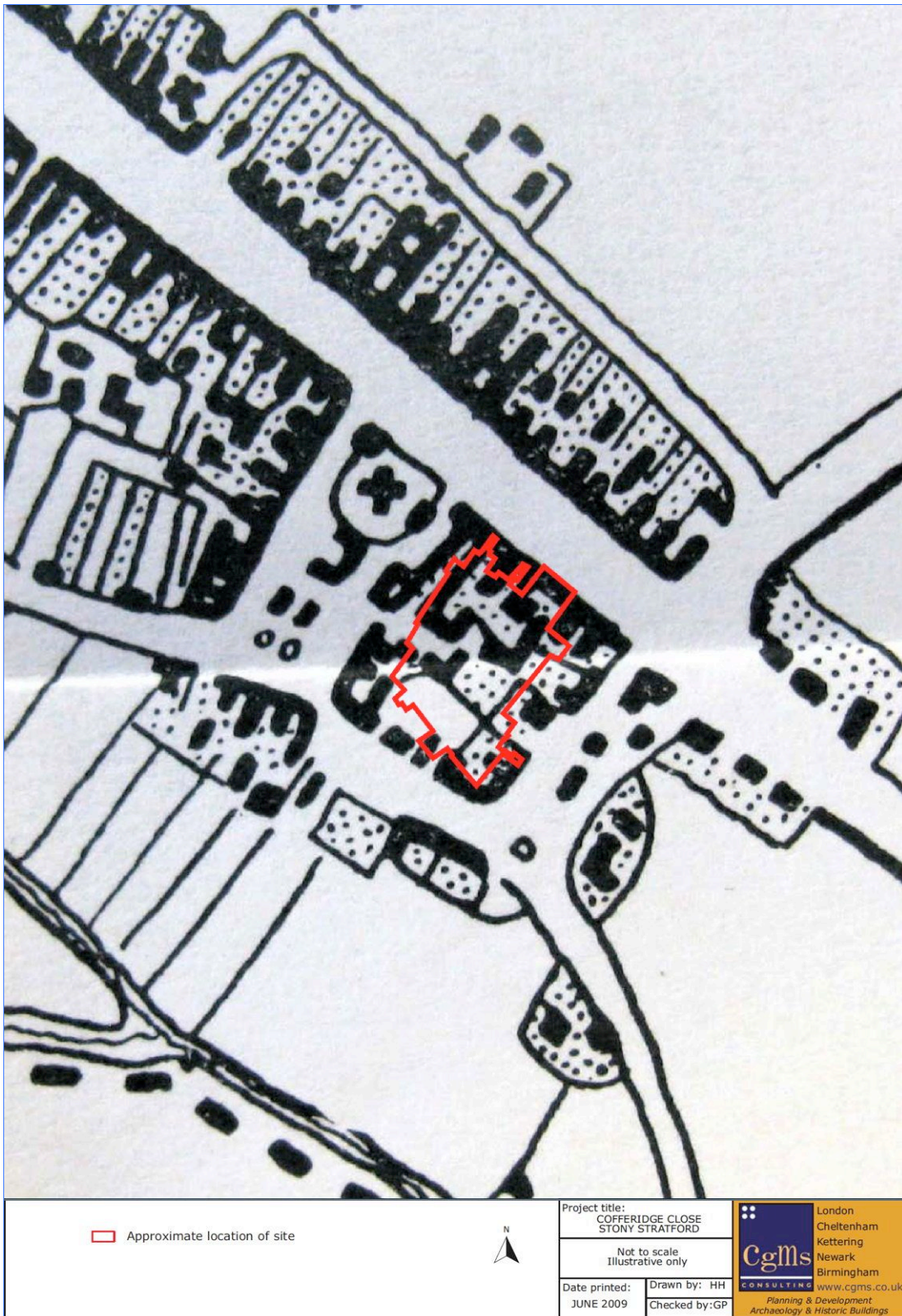
registered charity no. 274206 |

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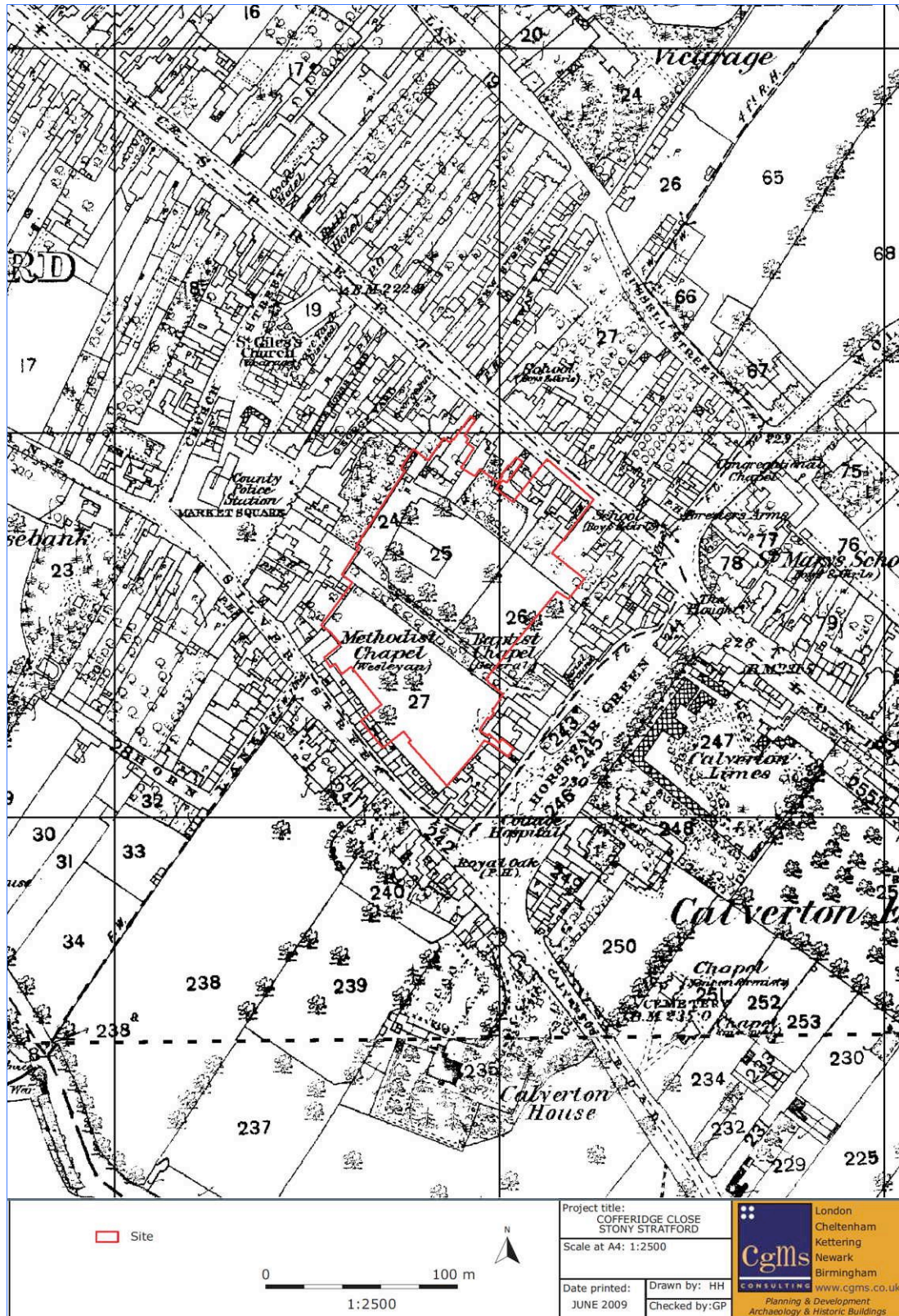
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Drawing based on Ordnance Survey map 1822–1832



Ordinance Survey Map 1881



Ordnance Survey Map 1814



Letter from Borough of Milton Keynes dated 11/10/95



Chief Executive Officer M.J.Murray LLB
 Environment Director A.J.Thomas BSc CEng MICE MIHT
 Chief Planning Officer M.Edwards B.Arch MCD RIBA RTPI



Borough of Milton Keynes

P O Box No 112
 Civic Offices 1 Saxon Gate East
 Milton Keynes MK9 3HQ
 Telephone Milton Keynes (0908) 691691
 Building Control direct line answerphone MK 682319
 (outside office hours)
 Development Control Enquiries direct line MK 682358

The Occupier
 7 Silver Street
 Stony Stratford
 Milton Keynes
 MK11 1JS

My Ref. DJA/SC/MK/401/95 &
 MK/402/95

Your Ref.

When calling please ask for
 Mr D J Anders
 Ext: 2335

11/10/95

Dear Sir/Madam,

APPLICATION NOS: MK/401/95 & MK/402/95
 PLANNING PERMISSION AND CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT FOR
 PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO COFFERIDGE CLOSE, STONY STRATFORD

You may recall that I wrote to you in May to advise you of the above applications and to enable you to make comments if you had wished to do so. As part of the proposals it had been proposed to construct additional car parking on the grassed area to the rear of the offices which also contains a large number of trees.

However, when the Council's Planning Committee considered the applications following a visit to the site it decided that the additional parking was not acceptable on the area of open space and it asked the applicant to consider locating the proposed car parking on the other side of the offices on the area presently occupied by the landscaped mound.

I have now received a revised drawing from the applicant's agent and I enclose a copy for your information. If you wish to make any comments on the revised car parking proposals I would be grateful if you could let me have them in writing by the 25th October 1995.

Yours faithfully,

D. J. Anders

(Assistant Director
 (Development Control))

MK40195SS/PLANSRC/PLANTEXT

Enc.

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Annex D

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Tree Retention and Removal Plan



Extract from letter from Barton Willmore concerning amended plan

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

06 JUN 2011

RECEIVED

75th BARTON WILLMORE
planning · design · 1936 – 2011

Beansheaf Farmhouse
 Bourne Close
 Calcot
 Reading
 RG31 7BW

t 0118 943 0000
 f 0118 943 0001

A. Mills, Esq.,
 Major Projects Office,
 Planning Services,
 Milton Keynes Council,
 Civic Offices,
 1 Saxon Gate East,
 MILTON KEYNES. MK9 3ZL

17073/A3/KM/SD/dw

3rd June, 2011

BY EMAIL & POST: amills@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Dear Alan,

COFFERIDGE CLOSE, STONY STRATFORD, MILTON KEYNES
PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE 11/00143/FUL

[EXTRACT]

Landscaping

Whilst it is acknowledged within the original application documentation that 51 of the existing trees are to be removed, following discussions with the Council's landscape and tree officers 4 of the existing trees are to be reinstated and retained (tree nos. 37, 38, 56 and 57).

Furthermore having reviewed all of the representation letters submitted to the Council and in view of the comments made by members of the public, the amended plans retain the existing garages and landscaped area to the rear of the properties on Horsefair Green and Silver Street, along with the 4 existing trees in this area.

These changes now result in 43 trees being removed from the site, with 44 new, semi mature, trees being planted across the site as replacements. As such there is now a net gain of trees within the site, with the species carefully chosen to ensure their sustainability in their proposed location.

Minor changes to the landscaping proposals have also been made, which are a direct result of the comments made by the Council's Landscape Officer and have no bearing on the site layout.

[EXTRACT]

Yours sincerely,



KIM MORRIS
 Director

cc. A. Mills - CB Richard Ellis Investors
 C. Brindley - Stony Stratford Town Council

