

# FORMER GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY COTTAGES CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

## REPORT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Former Great Northern Railway Cottages Conservation Area (620-736 even Lincoln Road) was designated in 2003 to protect its special character. Conservation Areas are defined as "...areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" (Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act, 1990). Conservation Area Designation demonstrates a commitment to positive action for the safeguarding and enhancement of its special character and appearance.

A Conservation Area increases the local authority's controls over development, demolition of buildings, and alterations to properties to maintain the character and appearance of the area.

The Local Planning Authority is required by legislation to review its Conservation Areas and 'draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas'. A character appraisal is a way of identifying the key features that define the special character of the area and bringing forward proposals for its enhancement. It is important that all those who have an interest in the Conservation Area are aware of those elements that must be preserved or enhanced and have the opportunity to comment as the Conservation Area Appraisal is prepared.

Each of Peterborough's 29 Conservation Areas will be reviewed and the appraisals will be adopted as City Council approved guidance.

The report can be viewed or downloaded at [www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk) Copies are available on request from Planning Services, Stuart House East Wing, St Johns Road, Peterborough. A summary on public consultation is available.

This appraisal area covers the existing Great Northern Railway Cottages Conservation Area and adjoining areas where these have influence on the Conservation Area. The appraisal is in accordance with the advice contained in 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals', English Heritage 2006.

**The Former Great Northern Railway Cottages Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was adopted on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2007 as City Council approved guidance and is a material consideration when making planning decisions and considering other changes affecting the area to ensure that its special character and appearance is not harmed.**

## 2.0 BOUNDARY AND SETTING

The Conservation Area is a small area containing two linear terraces of former railway workers cottages built by the Great Northern Railway Company from 1852 with a northern terrace of 25 cottages and a southern terrace of 34 cottages. The boundary of the Conservation Area is shown on Plan 1.

To the west are industrial premises and employment uses. On the opposite side of Lincoln Road is terraced housing of later Victorian age and generally similar materials to the railway cottages, shops and commercial premises. To the immediate south is the Triangle Public House (formerly the Locomotive Public House). The setting is very urban with street trees and small front gardens.

### **3.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century brought rapid expansion to Peterborough in the shape of the railways, the first arriving in 1845 from Northampton by the London and Birmingham Railway Company. This was followed by the Midland, the Great Eastern and the Great Northern Railway in 1850. The arrival of four railways in five years had a major impact on the city which until then was a relatively small market town with a population of some 8,000.

Peterborough was to become a main centre of traffic from the Midlands to the Fens and coastal ports and from London to the North. With the railways came great economic growth through employment, trade and town expansion to accommodate railway workers and an influx of new residents drawn to employment opportunities. By 1900 the population had risen to over 30,000.

The provision of housing for employees was a beneficial investment by railway companies. Deducting rent from workers pay and the possibility of eviction helped maintain order and continued service. Also, the quality of housing was normally higher than other working class housing built at the same time. Better sanitation improved an employee's health and in turn their attendance and reliability. The main railway companies in Peterborough built housing for their workers: London and North Western Railway at Woodston, Great Eastern Railway at Fletton, the Midland Railway at Spittle and the Great Northern Railway at New England.

The Great Northern Railway Company established a major locomotive works, engine and repair works at New England in 1853. New England was then set in open country some 2 miles north of the city centre. This relative isolation meant that the company had some difficulty obtaining and retaining experienced railway workmen. Early in 1854 the decision was taken to provide housing as a means of recruiting and retaining staff. Within a few years some 226 dwellings were built consisting of four parallel terraces on three streets to the east of Lincoln Road.

Senior employees lived in the larger dwellings at the end of the terraces. The northern terrace to Lincoln Road was occupied by drivers and craftsmen who were regarded as high status employees. The cottages were well-built with advanced facilities for the time including piped water supply and gas from the company's own gas works, and were superior to other working class homes in the city. A total of 6,000 employees worked at the New England works in 1866.

These plain yellow stock brick terraces were known locally as 'the barracks' most likely due to the uniformity of their design and regimented layout and arrangement. A school was built in 1856 and enlarged in 1864 to include a reading room, as well as a Mechanics Institute, and a night school for railway apprentices. The settlement soon became a small railway company town served by shops, three public houses, church and chapel.

The 1890 Ordnance Survey map below (Figure 1) reveals the extent of the settlement. To the west is part of the 80 miles of company rail yards surrounding the various engine sheds, stores and workshops. The gas holders and works are also shown.

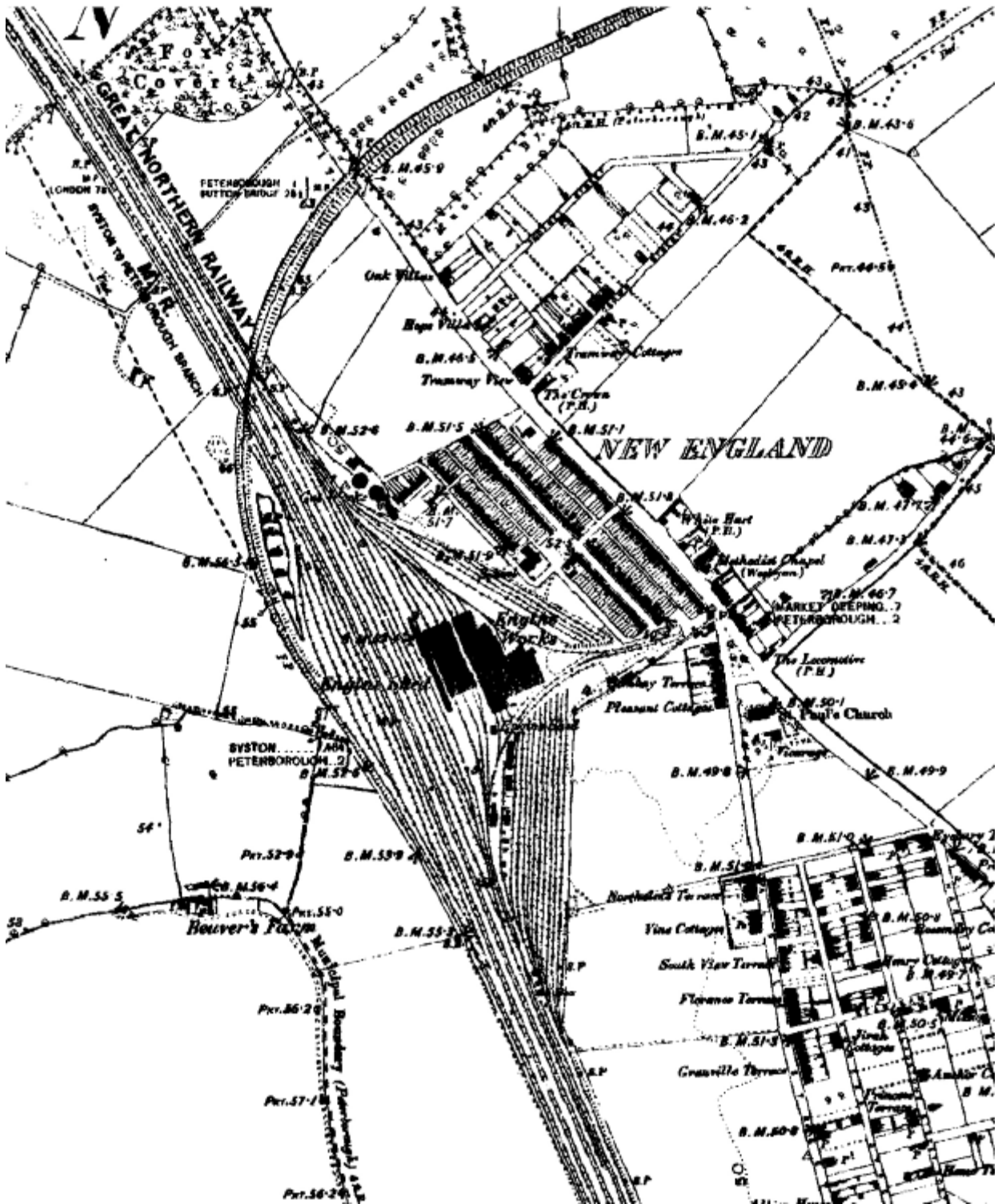
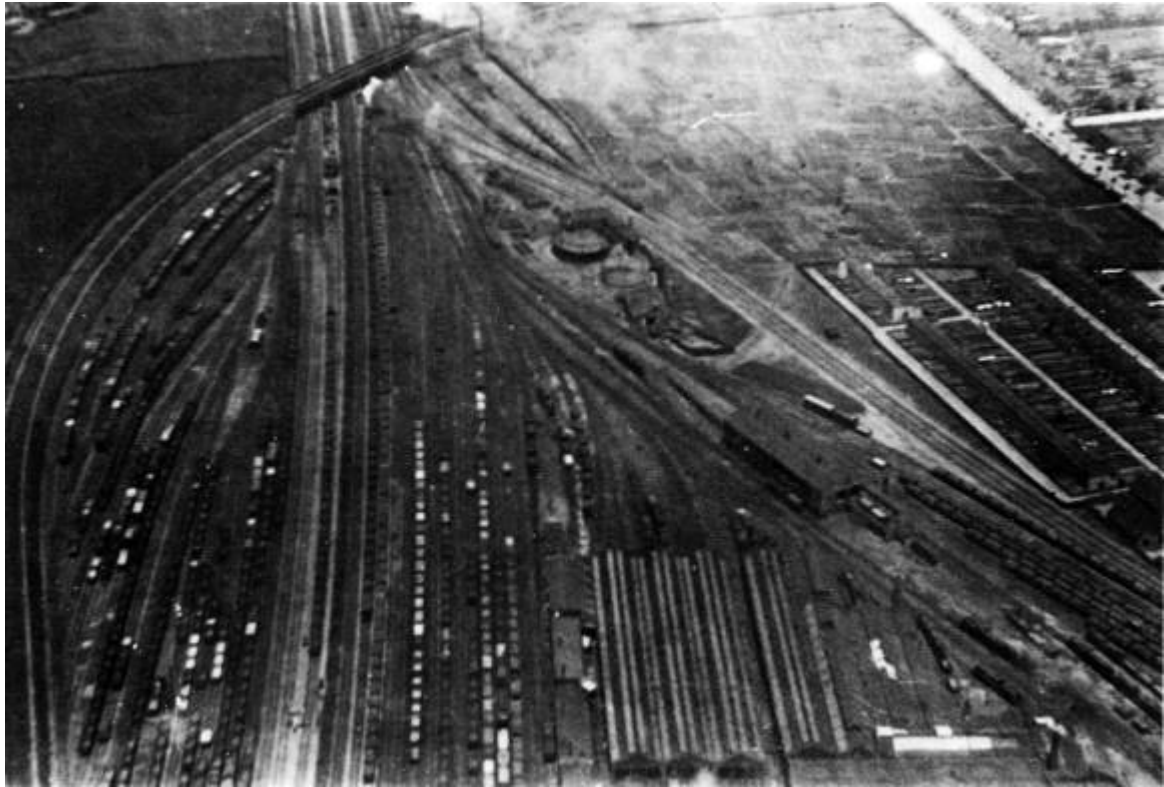


Figure 1 1890 Ordnance Survey map

The New England sidings had largely become redundant by the late 60's and the terraces to the rear of the two remaining terraces fronting Lincoln Road were demolished in the 1970's to accommodate the A16 Parkway (Bourges Boulevard). Some 49 cottages are owned by Cross Key Housing. The remaining 10 cottages are believed to be in owner occupation.



Aerial view of the New England railway works complex showing part of the GNR cottages (1920). (Courtesy Rev. R. Paten)



Rear view of the GNR cottages, 1965 (courtesy Rail Centres: Peterborough, P. Waszak)

#### 4.0 TOWNSCAPE APPRAISAL

The main feature of the conservation area are the two linear terraces of 59 mainly identical cottages constructed of local yellow stock brick by the Great Northern Railway in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The end cottages to the southern terrace are larger than the rest of the terrace having a higher ridge, a gable to the front and a side entrance door. All the other cottages are arranged as handed pairs and have broadly the same design and plan. At ground floor front are an entrance door and a side single sash window. At first floor are two sash windows. The first floor windows to the southern terrace cottages are shorter than below. The original Welsh slate roofs have been replaced by red concrete interlocking tiles. Short chimney stacks are paired and sit on the dividing wall between the cottages. All chimney stacks remain intact and virtually all cottages have their four clay chimney pots, a sign of a fireplace to all first floor bedrooms.



Typical cottage: Southern terrace



Northern terrace

No properties retain their original front doors or windows. These were replaced to a co-ordinated style during the mid 1990's and the traditional sash windows have been replicated. The window and door heads have simple flat segmental brick arches comprising two bricks per segment. Windows have white painted stone cills.

The southern gables of both terraces, nos. 620 and 688, have been rendered. Across the front face of the cottages run two projecting courses of brick forming a string course. The eaves similarly have two projecting flat rows forming the dentil course. The chimney stacks all have a decorative dentil course.

All cottages have a small front garden some 3m deep, the majority of which are planted. Front boundaries and the common returns are all formed by simple palisade timber picket fencing.

At the rear of the three larger cottages, nos. 620, 686 and 688, their original two storey rear wings remain. All other cottages retain their original single storey rear wings, though the chimney stacks have been removed. These extensions provide a unifying rhythm to the rear of the cottages.

The cottages of the northern terrace were built with a higher ridge than their southern neighbours. The most noticeable difference is that the first floor sash windows have six lights over six lights compared to the three lights over six lights to the sash windows of the southern terrace, indicating higher room heights. Another difference in detail is that the head of the flat arch to the front door of the cottages of the southern terrace is two brick courses lower than in the northern terraced cottages, a further indication of room height differences and the higher status of the cottages of the northern terrace.



Part of southern terrace



Part of northern terrace

Each property retains the original rear garden depth of some 20m. Modern timber fencing now forms rear garden boundaries. The rear garden boundary abuts up to an asphalt single width road, which marks the position of the former path between the rear gardens of similar terrace cottages further west. The view is stopped by single storey industrial buildings beyond the Conservation Area.

To the east the setting of the front of the cottages comprises a broad asphalt surfaced footway to Lincoln Road which has some pavement trees, telegraph poles and street lighting. Car parking occurs on parts of the footway. This area contributes little to the setting of the Conservation Area.

The collection of advertisement signs to the side fence of no. 688 between the terraces detracts from the overall character, as do the overhead telephone wires to the front of the cottages.



Overhead wires



Advertisement signs



Footway to Lincoln Road

## **5.0 ESSENTIAL CHARACTER**

The cottages are the most extensive and complete purpose built railway worker housing remaining in Peterborough. They formed part of a larger self-contained settlement and as such they are an important part of the social and architectural history of the City's railway heritage.

The essential character of the area is provided by the strong homogenous character of the buildings. Designed as an entity and by a single architect the terraces have a very high visual coherence, achieved by the use of a limited palette of materials, and the repetition of simple key architectural detail to windows, doors and chimney stacks.

The simple picket style fencing to the front gardens is an important strong unifying feature to the setting of the cottages.

The buildings are all still in their original residential use.

Some 49 cottages are in single ownership enabling the replacement of features to be co-ordinated and original architectural details replicated.

## **6.0 MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **6.1 Works within the curtilage and building repairs**

The control of minor alterations to the cottages is controlled under an existing Article 4 Direction. The continuation of the Article 4 Direction will ensure that essential features are not lost by incremental change.

Some three quarters of the cottages are owned by Cross Key Homes. The City Council will work closely with Cross Keys Homes to agree the replacement and renewal of features to the original designs and materials to ensure the retention of the character of the cottages. The remaining cottages largely retain their original external appearance.

The retention, proper repair and detailing of front boundary and return fences is important to the character of the buildings.

### **6.2 Public realm improvements**

The broad footway to Lincoln Road, adjoining the conservation area, has an asphalt surface and in places is used for car parking. A scheme to provide lay-by type parking to part of the footway and re-surfacing in bonded gravel would enhance the setting of the cottages. Parking provision in rear curtilages could be developed with Cross Keys Homes.

Replacing trees which have been removed from the footway would be appropriate for the setting of the cottages.

### **6.3 Signage control**

A co-ordinated scheme for the signage of businesses located at the rear of the cottages and the removal of the haphazard individual signs would be appropriate.

### **6.4 Other improvements**

Under-grounding the overhead telephone wires to the cottages would be a significant improvement.

## 7.0 CONTACTS AND REFERENCES

### Contacts

For advice on the conservation area and listed buildings: [www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk) or write / telephone: Peterborough City Council, Planning Delivery, Stuart House East Wing, St Johns Street, Peterborough, PE1 5DD; Tel: (01733) 747474; or e-mail:

[jim.daley@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:jim.daley@peterborough.gov.uk) or [jonathan.biggadike@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.biggadike@peterborough.gov.uk)

For advice on planning permission: [www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk); or write to address above Tel: (01733) 453410; or e-mail: [planningcontrol@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:planningcontrol@peterborough.gov.uk)

For advice on trees, works to trees and Tree Preservation Orders: [www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk) or write Natural Environment Section, Planning Delivery, Stuart House East Wing, St Johns Street, Peterborough, PE1 5DD; Tel: (01733) 747474; or e-mail: [john.wilcockson@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:john.wilcockson@peterborough.gov.uk)

### References

- Mackreth, D. *Peterborough*, Alan Sutton Publishing, 1984  
Webb, L. *Some Peterborough Buildings*, The Peterborough Society 1986  
Waszak, P. *Rail Centres: Peterborough*, Ian Allen Ltd 1984  
Dane, R. *Railways of Peterborough*, Peterborough Papers No. 2 1978  
Wrottesley, J. *The Great Northern Railway, Vols. I & III*, Batsford 1979

### Appendix A: Statutory Planning Policies

The Former Great Northern Railway Cottages Conservation Area is covered by the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement) 2005 and the following is a summary of the key policies which apply:

H12b	Residential design and amenity
H20	Proposals for the sub-division of single dwelling houses
H25	Loss of residential accommodation
DA1	Townscape and urban design
DA2	The effect of development on an area
DA3	Building materials in character with local tradition
DA9	Design of extensions and alterations
CBE3	Development affecting conservation areas
CBE4	Controls over demolition of buildings in conservation areas
CBE10	Control of alterations to buildings protected by article 4 directions

### Appendix B: Effect of Conservation Area Status

The cottages are covered by an Article 4 Direction made under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1997. This removes permitted development rights to carry out certain alterations to the outside elevations.

This means that planning permission is required for the following work:

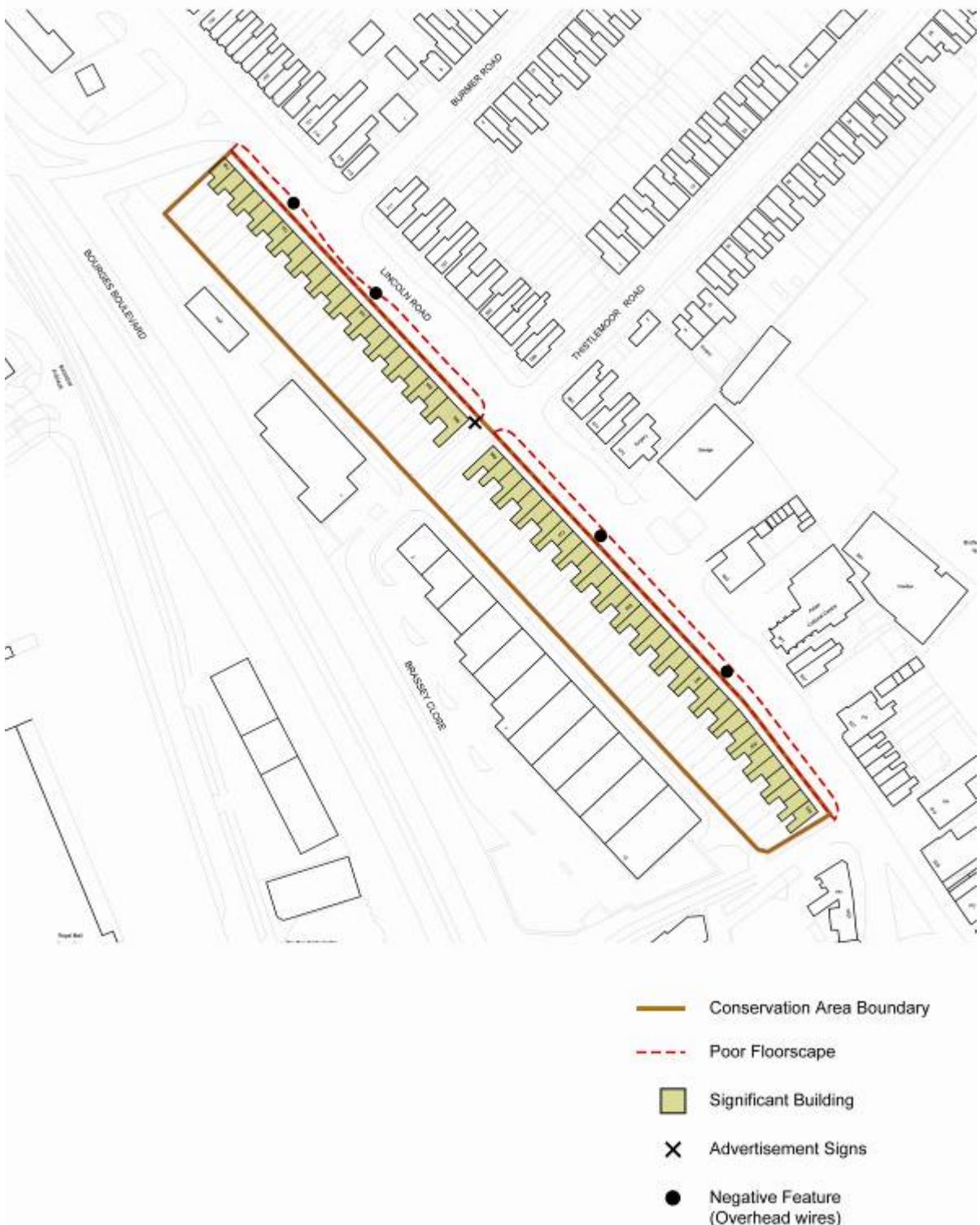
- the erection of porches and canopies
- alteration or replacement of windows and doors.
- cladding or painting the external elevations
- alterations to the roof including changing roof covering and inserting dormers and rooflights

- the alteration or removal of chimney stacks
- erection of satellite dishes
- the demolition or alteration of the front boundary fence.

No planning fee is paid in these circumstances. Special attention must be paid to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area when determining planning applications. **You are advised to contact the council concerning any proposed works to determine whether or not planning permission is required.**

Conservation area designation has the following effect:

- Special attention must be paid to the character and appearance of the conservation area when determining planning applications. Planning applications are advertised for public comment and any views expressed are taken into account. Applicants are encouraged to discuss proposals with planning officers prior to submitting a planning application.
- Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of unlisted buildings. It is advisable to contact the council to confirm whether your proposal will require consent. In certain circumstances consent is also required for the demolition of any wall exceeding 1m in height (abutting a highway or public open space) or 2m in height elsewhere.
- Trees within conservation areas are covered by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). It is an offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot or wilfully damage or destroy a tree having a diameter exceeding 75mm at a point 1.5m above ground level. The local planning authority must be given 6 weeks notice of works to trees within a conservation area. Failure to give notice renders the person liable to the same penalties as for contravention of a Tree Preservation Order.



Plan 1: Former Great Northern Railway Cottages Conservation Area