

LOCALITY - HERITAGE & HISTORY

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The village of Botley dates back to Roman times and maybe before.
- 1.2 Botley was the first practical crossing point at which the River Hamble could be forded at low tide and thus was a logical location to establish a settlement. Also, it was the furthest point that barges could reach at high tide. This was why, at Botley, three important trades were established, the exportation of timber, flour milling and the manufacture and exportation of wooden barrels. Barges could come up full of grain from the port of Southampton with the rising tide and back with timber or milled flour on the falling tide.
- 1.3 Thus, it was the obvious place for the location of the Botley Flour Mills. The Botley Turnpike was also a strong factor in its location. A flour mill has been in the area for over 1,000 years. The oldest part of the current building dates from 1770 with much being rebuilt and extended in 1870. Formerly, the mill was owned by the Duke of Portland and known as The Duke of Portland Mill.
- 1.4 A Conservation Area designation covers much of the village centre in which a considerable number of Listed Buildings including The Mill are located.
- 1.5 In the early 1800s William Cobbett, a famous resident of Botley, wrote that Botley was “the most delightful village in the world”. Sadly, were he alive today, it is very doubtful if, due to the excessive traffic, pollution and overdevelopment, he would continue to hold that view!
- 1.6 In the late 13th century a grant by Charter of a weekly market and fair was granted by the Lord of the Manor, which indicated the growing importance of the village. In 1756 the Hamble was bridged, and the establishment of the Botley Turnpike accelerated the development of the village which is today still characterised by many of the listed buildings in the village centre.
- 1.7 From a village which was first recorded as having a population of circa 100 it has now grown to over 5,100. Much of its development has occurred in the late 1900s and more recently.
- 1.8 Traffic, particularly the use of heavy trucks (HGVs), has grown exponentially to the point that many of the historic and listed buildings are at risk from vibration damage and in certain areas, particularly Mill Hill, physical damage. The principal roads, particularly High Street and Winchester Street are narrow and designed for horse traffic in the 1800s and before. They are certainly totally inadequate for the type and volume of traffic which currently passes. A very poor air quality, which affects the health of many children and the elderly has been the result. This has led to an AQMA (Air Quality Management Area) designation. Although

detailed elsewhere, the provision of a bypass is vital if the character and integrity of Botley's ancient built heritage is to be maintained and preserved along with the health of the inhabitants.

- 1.9 The village is served by Botley Railway station, actually in Curdridge, with links to cities and towns on the coast and to Eastleigh and beyond. The fact of its existence was very important and acted as a reason why the important strawberry growing industry, sadly no more, was established here. It provided a fast link to Covent Garden and the important markets in London. It is now principally an important passenger service and a depot for construction aggregates, the latter being one of the main causes of the number of HGVs that pass through Botley. This will be avoided with the coming of the bypass.

2 Listed Buildings

- 2.1 Botley houses fifty Grade II and one Grade II* listed buildings (Old Church of St Bartholomew) (see Appendix 1). Within the Eastleigh Borough this represents 28% of the buildings which are listed and over 4% of the listed buildings in Hampshire. Thus, the village of Botley contributes a disproportionate amount of the Heritage Buildings to the borough and county and so, due to its heritage and history, it deserves special protection.

- 2.2 Significant amongst the important of Botley listed buildings are described in sections 2.3 to 2.6.

2.3 Botley Mill

- a The Mill buildings and their site is recognised by EBC as being of significant importance to the history and heritage of Botley. A flour mill and paper mill has existed for many centuries. The current buildings constructed circa 1760 were located because they were both adjacent to the Botley Turnpike and was at the head of the navigable River Hamble. Grain could be delivered by barge from Southampton on the rising tide and returned as milled flour on the falling tide. The mill wheels were driven by waterpower, the flow of which was controlled by sluices to increase or decrease the power of water flowing from the upper Hamble. These sluices and the buildings to house them still exist and were in commercial use until 1985. They, together with the main buildings, which are in an advance state of dilapidation, should be preserved. The lower parts are used as shops and a restaurant which enhances the specialist nature of Botley's shopping experience.

2.4 Botley Square

- a The High Street, known as The Square in the centre of the Village, and the southern end of Winchester Street, houses 30 of the imposing

listed buildings of Botley. Many of these were occupied by notable citizens. Together these buildings represent the most striking feature of Botley. Amongst these is the Market Hall, erected in 1848, and All Saints Church, built in 1836.

- b Also, located in the Square are the three public houses closest to the Village centre, two are Grade II Listed Buildings, which should be considered as community assets. The Neighbourhood Plan should encourage their continuance and resist any change of use application.
- c A further public house is located further north in the village at Boorley Green and whilst it is not nationally listed, it is locally listed and is equally important as a community asset and an important place for social intercourse and so should be protected from change of use and development.

2.5 Manor Farm (Grade II) and St Bartholomew's Church (Grade II*)

- a The location of St Bartholomew's Church and Manor Farm suggests that in medieval times the village was mainly to the south of its present location with the probability that there was an established crossing of the Hamble at a much lower point. St Bartholomew's is on the site of an earlier Saxon Church with the present structure dating from the 14th century.
- b The Manor Farm dates from the early 1500s. The Farm comprises an interesting and largely intact group of medieval farm buildings. It is owned by Hampshire County Council and is used as an attractive, popular and valuable visitor centre.

2.6 Botley Wharf

- a Located off Church Lane the wharf, now semi derelict, is still in clear visual evidence. Although now unused, this wharf, which linked Botley with the important port of Southampton, was the principal cause why three significant local trades developed. Flour from Botley Mills was sent to Southampton and locally grown timber for shipbuilding and other uses and barrels from the Botley cooperage were also exported. Also, the wharf was important as barges full of building materials, coal and day to day necessities arrived via this wharf.

2.7 Although not Historic England Listed Buildings several other Botley features are worthy of note, these being:

- a Large Black Barn on Woodhouse Lane (Locally listed building);
- b Maddoxford Farm House (Locally listed building);
- c The Pear Tree Inn, Boorley Green, built circa 1850 (Locally listed building). Also, it is an Asset of Community Value (reference ACV/2016/1, listed June 2017);
- d The Landing Craft Crews Memorial at HMS Cricket in Manor Farm;
- e The Village War Memorial - built in 1921, and;

- f The Nurseland Poppy Memorial for the fallen in World War 1, dedicated in 2018.

3 The Conservation Area

- 3.1 The central area of the village is a designated conservation area. This covers most of The High Street, Mill Hill, Church Lane and Winchester Street. Any new construction in the Conservation Area should be only small scale. Design and materials should be of a traditional nature with modern materials and 'cutting edge design strongly discouraged. Botley is considered a 'special traditional village'.
- 3.2 Any future small-scale development in the conservation area must respect this and if possible, enhance it. Botley Village centre has developed into an area depicted by its specialist, destination retail outlets. This should be supported and encouraged. This can best be achieved by enhancing the existing parking and creating additional parking to encourage visitors to the shops and restaurants of the village. Also, this is addressed in the Traffic section of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.3 A few former shops have in the past changed their use to residential. Any such future change of use applications should be discouraged. A pleasing aspect of the village centre and the conservation area is the lack of fast food outlets. Any future planning applications for such discordant uses should be refused.
- 3.4 External shop signs can also be discordant in a conservation area. In accordance with current EBC policy, shop signs should be non-illuminated and at ground floor level only. Important in a conservation area is the signage and street lighting.
- 3.5 Also, there are a number of examples, though not in the conservation area, of interesting and historic items, which on their own may not be significant, but add to the history of the village.

4 Geology

- 4.1 The geology of the area consists of a limestone aquifer over laden by the Bracklesham beds or group. which consist of loose sand and gravels containing large numbers of fossils from the Eocene period, which can be seen in the banks of the Pudbrook.
- 4.2 The whole area needs to be protected in order to alleviate deep boring and fracking and protect the Eocene fossil beds.

5 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)

5.1 There are 23 SINCs of local importance in Botley Parish and 5 SINCs in Winchester City District that extend up to the boundary of Botley (see Appendix 2).

5.2 These SINCs should all be protected from damage by development for the benefit of the local fauna and flora and for future generations.

6 Archaeology

6.1 Three river valleys in Hampshire, the Test, the Itchen and the Meon have in the past been afforded protection from excessive and destructive development, but for some inexplicable reason the Hamble River basin has not received the same safeguards. Already development within the Botley Parish threatens archaeological sites and relics. No further development should be permitted that endangers existing archaeological sites. Any development that is allowed must be accompanied by a detailed archaeological survey.

6.2 Botley and the Hamble River

a The River Hamble has been a conduit for human activities reaching back to at least the Palaeolithic era. Much investigation has been carried out in the areas alongside the lower reaches of the Hamble, with many findings as detailed below. There has been less activity in the Botley Parish area, so it is very likely that archaeological sites and artefacts are still to be found, in line with existing discoveries detailed below.

6.3 Stone Age - pre 2000 BC, including Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic

a Flint tools and other artefacts have been discovered in gravel beds in the river basin. It is likely that the wet, marshy areas of the upper river contained various food sources and deserve investigation.

6.4 Bronze Age - 2000 BC to 650 BC

a A hoard of Bronze Age axes has been found near the Hamble River. These peoples engaged in maritime trading and commerce in the English Channel and North Sea. It is entirely likely that the Hamble provided havens for shipping which are still to be discovered.

6.5 Iron Age - 650 BC to 43 AD

a The Hamble River formed the dividing line between two Iron Age tribes and defensive mounds and ditches have been found at various places in the river valley. Excavations in the 1930s led to the discovery of salt workings, brick workings and potteries.

6.6 Roman sites - 1st to 5th century AD

- a At Manor Farm - a part of the Roman Road between Chichester and Bitterne;
- b At Boorley Green - a short section of Roman road discovered by the Southern Water archaeologist;
- c Adjacent to Ford Lake at Braxells Farm - a Roman pottery;
- d Adjacent to sewage works by the river at Mark's Farm - remains of Roman buildings excavated in 1895;
- e Immediately across the river from the Roman buildings at Mark's Farm (6.6d), but in Curbridge, are remains of pottery kilns and a possible villa. It is likely that this was where the above-mentioned Roman road crossed the river.

6.7 Saxon sites - 5th to 11th century AD

- a Log boat unearthed at Fairthorne Manor in 1885.
- b Saxon or Norman font unearthed in 1740 - now in Botley Parish Church.
- c Four cremation urns found at Braxell's Farm during development in 2016.

6.8 Mediaeval sites - 11th to 16th century AD

- a Remains of mediaeval bridge between Curbridge and Botley.
- b Remains of several mills by Ford Lake, of various dates.
- c Wreck of Henry V's flagship, the Grace Dieu, in the River Hamble below Manor Farm.

6.9 18th and 19th century AD

- a Site of William Cobbett's house on the river bank by Botley Bridge.
- b Remains of the harbour and Parish Quay, off Church Lane, Botley.

6.10 World War II sites and remains - 20th century

- a During the Second World War the areas of Botley Parish and the Upper Hamble were used extensively by British, American and other Allied forces. In the run up to D-Day, on the 6th June 1944, very large numbers of troops occupied permanent and temporary camps in and around Botley. Many roads in the area were strengthened to take convoys of vehicles waiting to embark for France.
- b Evidence of this extensive military use of the whole area can still be found and particularly worth noting are the following:
- c Site of HMS Cricket in Manor Farm Country Park, where Landing Craft crews trained for D-Day. The concrete bases of the Nissen huts and other buildings cover a large area around the QE2 Activity Centre and many artefacts can still be found in the woodland;
- d Landing craft bays in Hoe Moor Creek are still just visible but the crumbling wooden sides are in urgent need of preservation;

- e The remains of the control building and concrete access road for the Starfish Decoy site at Mark's Farm. This was an area by the River Hamble, said to resemble the Itchen at Southampton, where during an air raid flares were lit to attempt to persuade enemy planes to drop their bombs there instead of on the City;
- f Site of Observer Corps building at Braxell's Farm;
- g Maddoxford Lane has a concrete base, under modern tarmac, from Winchester Road at Boorley Green through to Curdrige. This is part of the concrete road system laid to carry vehicles travelling to the ports or waiting to embark. It includes two lay-bys, one of which provided a resting place for Winston Churchill and Generals Eisenhower and Montgomery while touring the area.
- h All the sites listed in 6.29 to 6.35 warrant conservation in order to allow further investigation, as little has been done up to now.
- i In Sherecroft House, which is part of Botley Village although just in Curdrige Parish, there is a bomb proof room which was used for the later development of the Spitfire, as part of the Shadow Factory. The house was used as an invasion base by the Americans for D- Day. In the grounds are large cone shaped concrete blocks that formed part of the road block across Botley Square. In the outer wall of Sherecroft House is a look-out tower and possible machine gun post, now mainly covered by ivy and there are four others in the surrounding walls. On the same wall are numbers marking two bays for parking military vehicles just before D-Day. These have been regularly re-painted ever since by various unknown residents.

6.11 For those of older generations the Second World War seems a comparatively recent and vividly remembered part of their lives. However, for younger residents it can be fairly ancient history, despite the interest now being paid to it in the schools. Therefore, it is important that attention should be paid to preserving what is left of the heritage items dating from that period.

6.12 If future generations of Botley residents are to enjoy the rich archaeological heritage that undoubtedly exists in the area, then strenuous efforts must be made to protect present and future sites from damaging development or deliberate demolition.

7 Local history and heritage trails and the Botley Museum

7.1 The Cobbett Trail is a 5 mile gentle circular walk through historic Botley, which concentrates on buildings and places that William Cobbett knew and described. The Trail starts and ends at the Botley Market Hall. More details can be found using the links below.

<https://www.botley.com/thingstodo/walks/cobbett-trail>
<https://www.hampshire-life.co.uk/out-about/walks/hampshire-walk-through-botley-and-alongside-the-river-hamble-1-3969252>

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- 7.2 The Strawberry Trail is a part linear (Botley to Bursledon) and part circular (Bursledon to Netley and back to Bursledon) 15 mile walk through the historic strawberry growing area of southern Hampshire. More details can be found using the links below.

<https://www.botley.com/thingstodo/walks/strawberry-trail>
https://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_name=Strawberry+Trail

- 7.3 As part of the Botley Neighbourhood Plan it is hoped to develop a Heritage Trail in Botley linking the most important Listed Buildings. This Heritage Trail would complement the Cobbett and Strawberry Trails. If a suitable grant could be obtained the Trail would make use of both boards and Zapper technology. The Trail would link to the Botley Museum (see 7.4).

<https://www.zappar.com/getzappar/>

- 7.4 Either as part of this Heritage Trail or as one or more separate History Trails to commemorate the very rich local history relating to World War 2 including the D Day Landings, the Landing Craft Training Camp and the location and impact of the American and Canadian troops based in and around Botley.

- 7.5 As part of the Botley Neighbourhood Plan we wish to create a Botley Museum to promote local heritage and history. Two possible sites for this Museum would be the Botley Mills or one of the Uplands Farm Buildings (both Listed Buildings). To create this Museum would require a developer contribution and it is on the Botley Community & Infrastructure Priority List.

- 7.6 Objectives:

- a Create a local Heritage and History Trail, and;
- b Create a Botley Museum.

8 Summary

- 8.1 All of the above demonstrates the importance of the history and heritage of Botley Village and the need for any future development to take account of this very important village.
- 8.2 Appendix 1 shows the importance of the built history of Botley and the vital place it occupies within the Borough of Eastleigh.
- 8.3 Appendix 2 shows the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Botley and adjacent to Botley but in Winchester City.

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