



# Gawsworth Conservation Area Appraisal

January 2023



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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Location and General Description**

The Gawsworth Conservation Area lies approximately 2.5km south-west of Macclesfield. It sits around 500m to the east of the A536 Congleton Road and is approached from the north and west by Church Lane. The local planning authority is Cheshire East Council.

Gawsworth is situated on the eastern edge of the Cheshire Plain, with eastwards views to the Pennine Hills. The conservation area encompasses the historic core of Gawsworth, focused on a group of three principal buildings located on the south side of Church Lane: Gawsworth Old Hall, Gawsworth New Hall, and the Church of St James. Gawsworth Old Hall and St James' Church dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the New Hall from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Old Rectory, on the north side of Church Lane, completes this grouping of significant structures.

The buildings within the conservation area sit separately from other parts of Gawsworth, such as the modern housing north of Maggoty Lane/Wardle Crescent, and are surrounded by agricultural land.

### **1.2 Status of Conservation Area**

The Conservation Area was designated in 1969, making it one of the earliest conservation areas in the country to be designated following the Civic Amenities Act 1967. Figure 1 shows the current boundaries of the Conservation Area. The most recent previous Conservation Area Appraisal for Gawsworth is the appraisal undertaken by the Conservation Studio in 2007. This Appraisal made several recommendations for boundary changes that were accepted by the local planning authority but never formalised.

### **1.3 Purpose of Appraisal**

In 2022 Gawsworth Parish Council commissioned a revised Conservation Area Appraisal to update and replace the 2007 appraisal, given that this is now 15 years old.

This new appraisal has been based on a new site assessment, desktop research and engagement with stakeholders, including Cheshire East Council.

## Key

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## 2. Planning Policy Review

This section outlines the national and local planning policies on heritage that protect and conserve heritage assets and local character. Policies also establish the need for local planning authorities to have regularly updated Conservation Area Assessments and Historic England have provided guidance on how these should be undertaken. This Conservation Area Appraisal for Gawsworth has been prepared in accordance with these policy requirements and guidance. Consequently, it will help Cheshire East to meet relevant policy requirements, and inform the determination of planning applications.

### 2.1 Relevant Legislation

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 advises that *“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority ... shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”*

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities to pay, *“special attention in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area” in the determination of planning applications.”*

### 2.2 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, last published in 2019). Chapter 16 addresses conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It emphasises that heritage assets are *“an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations”* [para 184]. Heritage assets can include World Heritage Sites, listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments or un-designated heritage assets.

Paragraph 189 explains that in determining applications, local planning authorities [LPAs] should *“require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset’s importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.”*

Paragraph 190 goes on to say that *“Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”*

Paragraph 92 dictates that when determining applications LPAs should *“take account of:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”*

More detailed guidance is provided on how to consider potential impacts. In general *“great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”* [para 193] and *“Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.”* [para 194]. Significant harm to, or loss of, grade II listed buildings should be exceptional; and, in the case of grade II\* and I listed buildings: wholly exceptional.

Paragraph 195 explains that *“Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.”*

Where the development proposal leads to less than substantial harm to the significance of the asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use [para 196].

*“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset”* [para 197].

It is recognised that not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to significance and that there could be opportunities for development within them that makes a positive contribution. Similarly, there could be opportunities within the setting of heritage assets that enhance or better reveal their significance. paras 200-201].

## 2.3 Local Planning Policy

Cheshire East Council has a significant body of planning policy that promotes conservation of local character in conservation areas. This existing policy framework is briefly summarised below. For further details, please see the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-30 [Cheshire East Council, adopted 2017].

**Table 1.1: Local Policy Requirements**

Source	Relevant Extract
Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, p.45	<p><b>Strategic Priority 3:</b> <i>Protecting and enhancing environmental quality</i></p> <p><i>This will be delivered by:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Respecting the character and distinctiveness of places, buildings and landscapes through the careful design and siting of development.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Maintaining and enhancing the character and separate identities of the borough's towns and villages.</i></li> <li>5. <i>Conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment ensuring appropriate protection is given to designated and non-designated assets, including their wider settings.</i></li> </ol>
Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, p.82	<p><b>Policy SD 1: Sustainable Development in Cheshire East</b></p> <p><i>In order to achieve sustainable development in Cheshire East, the following considerations to development will apply. Development should wherever possible:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. <i>Provide a locally distinct, high quality, sustainable, well designed and durable environment;</i></li> <li>14. <i>Contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built, historic and cultural environment;</i></li> </ol>
Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, p.83	<p><b>Policy SD 2: Sustainable Development Principles</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>All development will be expected to:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. <i>Contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Height, scale, form and grouping;</i></li> <li>b. <i>Choice of materials;</i></li> <li>c. <i>External design features;</i></li> <li>d. <i>Massing of development - the balance between built form and green/public spaces;</i></li> <li>e. <i>Green infrastructure; and</i></li> <li>f. <i>Relationship to neighbouring properties, street scene and the wider neighbourhood;</i></li> </ol> </li> <li>iii. <i>Respect and, where possible, enhance the landscape character of the area. Particular attention will be paid toward significant landmarks and landscape features;</i></li> <li>iv. <i>Respect, and where possible enhance, the significance of heritage assets, including their wider settings;</i></li> </ol> </li> </ol>
Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, p.125	<p><b>Policy SE 1: Design</b> -<i>Development proposals should make a positive contribution to their surroundings in terms of the following:</i></p>



	<p><i>1. Sense of place</i></p> <p><i>i. Ensuring design solutions achieve a sense of place by protecting and enhancing the quality, distinctiveness and character of settlements;</i></p> <p><i>ii. Ensuring sensitivity of design in proximity to designated and local heritage assets and their settings;</i></p> <p><i>iv. Ensuring that proposals are underpinned by character and design assessment commensurate with the scale and complexity of the development;</i></p> <p><i>v. Encouraging innovative and creative design solutions that are appropriate to the local context; and</i></p>
Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, p.132	<p><b>Policy SE 4: The Landscape</b></p> <p><i>1. The high quality of the built and natural environment is recognised as a significant characteristic of the borough. All development should conserve the landscape character and quality and should where possible, enhance and effectively manage the historic, natural and man-made landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness of both rural and urban landscapes.</i></p> <p><i>2. Development will be expected to:</i></p> <p><i>iii. Preserve and promote local distinctiveness and diversity;</i></p>
Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, p147	<p><b>Policy SE 7 The Historic Environment</b></p> <p><i>1. The character, quality and diversity of the historic environment will be conserved and enhanced. All new development should seek to avoid harm to heritage assets and make a positive contribution to the character of Cheshire East's historic and built environment, including the setting of assets and where appropriate, the wider historic environment.</i></p> <p><i>2. Proposals for development shall be assessed and the historic built environment actively managed in order to contribute to the significance of heritage assets and local distinctiveness. Where a development proposal is likely to affect a designated heritage asset (including its setting) the significance of the heritage asset, including any contribution made by its setting, must be described and reported as part of the application.</i></p> <p><i>3 b. Non-Designated Assets:</i></p> <p><i>i. Requiring that the impact of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be properly considered, as these are often equally valued by local communities. There should be a balanced consideration, weighing the direct and indirect impacts upon the asset and its setting, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss. The presumption should be that heritage assets should be retained and re-used wherever practicable and proposals that cannot demonstrate that the harm will be outweighed by the benefits of the development shall not be supported. Where loss or harm is outweighed by the benefits of development, appropriate mitigation and compensation measures will be required to ensure that there is no net loss of heritage value.</i></p>
SADPD Policy HER 1	Heritage assets



	<p><i>1. All proposals affecting heritage assets and their settings must be accompanied by proportionate information that assesses and describes their impact on the asset's significance. This must demonstrate a thorough understanding of the heritage asset and its setting, including (but not limited to) its historic form, fabric, character, archaeology and any other aspects that contribute to its significance. This should have regard to and reference, where relevant:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. the Cheshire Historic Environment Record;</i></li> <li><i>ii. relevant conservation area appraisals;</i></li> <li><i>iii. the Cheshire Historic Landscape Assessment;</i></li> <li><i>iv. the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey;</i></li> <li><i>v. national sources; and</i></li> <li><i>vi. original survey and field evaluation.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>2. Where works of structural alteration to a heritage asset are proposed, the application must be accompanied by an adequate structural engineer's report and method statement of the impact of the works and how it will be carried out.</i></p>
SADPD policy HER 2	<p><i>Heritage at risk</i></p> <p><i>1. New development should identify specific opportunities where heritage assets have been identified as being at risk, and make provision to secure their future through repair and/or re-use.</i></p> <p><i>2. Applications for the positive reuse of heritage assets will be supported.</i></p> <p><i>3. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of and/or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of that asset will not be taken into consideration when making a decision on a development proposal.</i></p> <p><i>4. Where a development site contains a listed building(s) identified as being at risk, proposals should be phased and secured by legal agreement to ensure its/their repair and re-use as early as possible in the development process. Prior to new development being substantially complete or fully occupied, works required to secure the listed building should be carried out in full</i></p>
SADPD policy HER 3	<p><i>Conservation areas</i></p> <p><i>1. Development within or affecting the setting of a conservation area must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.</i></p>

	<p><i>Proposals should take account of the established townscape and landscape character of the area and its wider setting, including (but not limited to):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. local topography, landscape setting and natural features;</i></li> <li><i>ii. existing townscape, local landmarks, views and skylines;</i></li> <li><i>iii. the quality and nature of material, both traditional and modern;</i></li> <li><i>iv. the established layout and spatial character of building plots, the existing alignments and widths of historic routes and street hierarchy (where physically and historically evident);</i></li> <li><i>v. the contribution that open areas make to the special character and appearance of the conservation area;</i></li> <li><i>vi. the scale, height, bulk and massing;</i></li> <li><i>vii. architectural historical and archaeological features and their settings;</i></li> <li><i>viii. the need to retain historic boundary and surface treatments;</i></li> <li><i>ix. the local dominant building materials;</i></li> <li><i>x. the building typology that best reflects the special character and appearance of the area, features and detailing;</i></li> <li><i>xi. minimising and mitigating the loss of trees, hedgerows and other landscape features;</i></li> <li><i>and</i></li> <li><i>xii. any positive improvements in the quality of the historic environment as a result of the development.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>2. Proposals for the demolition of a building or group of buildings that positively contribute to the character or appearance of a conservation area will not be supported unless the harm or loss is outweighed by the public benefits of an approved replacement scheme.</i></p>
SADPD Policy HER4	<p><i>Listed buildings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. When considering development proposals or works affecting a listed building, including alterations, extensions and changes of use, in line with its statutory duty, the council will have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.</i></li> <li><i>2. Proposals involving loss of or substantial harm to the significance of a listed building or structure will normally be refused, unless it can be demonstrated that this is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, which outweigh the harm, or the other circumstances in paragraph 201 of the NPPF (2021) apply. The council considers the demolition of listed</i></li> </ul>

	<p><i>buildings or structures to amount to substantial harm.</i></p> <p><i>3. Where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a listed building, the harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable alternative use. The council will normally support proposals for the change of use or conversion of a listed building where the use secured is consistent with the preservation of its heritage significance.</i></p>
SADPD policy HER 5	<p><i>Policy HER 5</i></p> <p><i>Registered parks and gardens</i></p> <p><i>1. Development proposals affecting a Registered Historic Park and Garden will be expected to preserve the heritage asset, its setting and any features of special interest that contribute to its significance, including, but not limited to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. the integrity of the landscape, its design and layout;</i></li> <li><i>ii. any key views; and</i></li> <li><i>iii. walled gardens or other enclosed gardens and spaces.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>2. Where development proposals would result in substantial or less than substantial harm to the significance of a Registered Historic Park and Garden, the harm should be weighed against any public benefits of the scheme, applying the approach and considerations set out in national policy</i></p>
SADPD policy HER7	<p><i>Non-designated heritage assets</i></p> <p><i>When considering the direct or indirect effects of a development proposal on a non-designated heritage asset (including locally listed buildings), a balanced judgement will be required, having regard to the significance of the heritage asset and the scale of any loss or harm.</i></p>
SADPD policy HER 8	<p><i>Archaeology</i></p> <p><i>1. Development proposals affecting a scheduled monument or an archaeological site of national significance, which is demonstrably of equivalent significance to a scheduled monument, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets in national policy and LPS Policy SE 7 The historic environment. Proposals should preserve those elements that contribute to its significance.</i></p> <p><i>2. Proposals affecting areas of archaeological interest (including areas of archaeological potential and sites of less than national importance) will be considered against Policy HER</i></p>



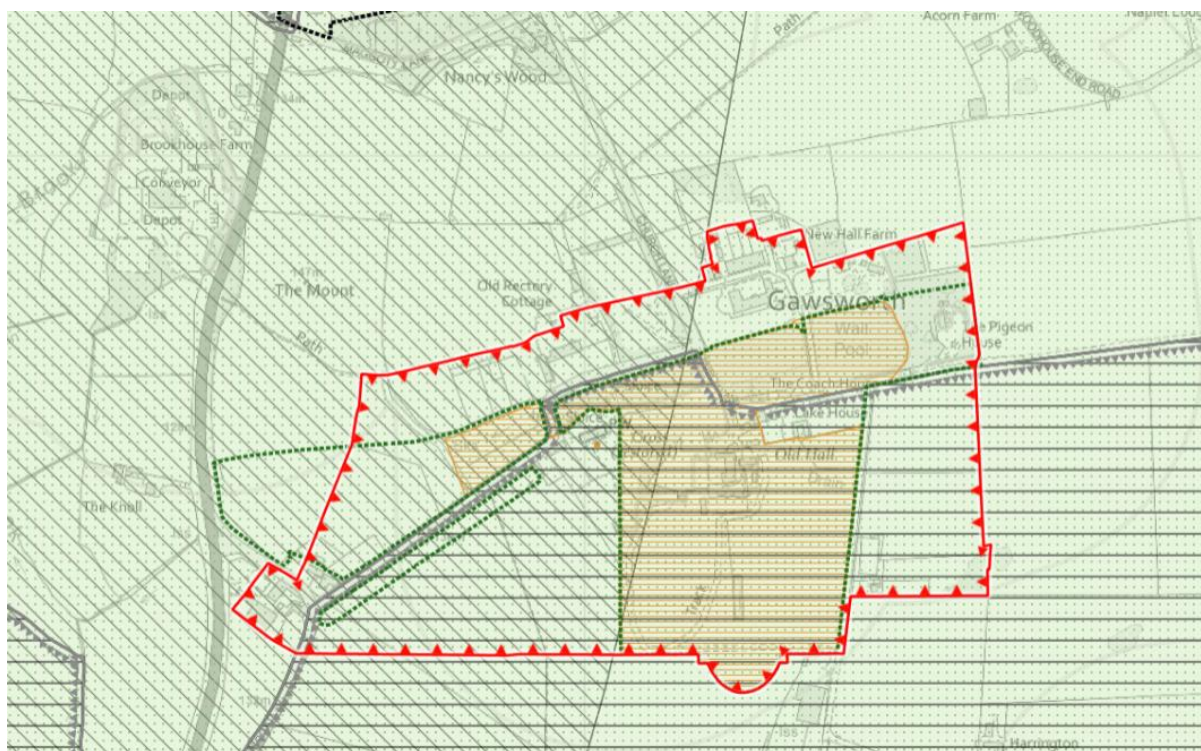
	<p>7 'Non-designated heritage assets'. Proposals will be expected to conserve those elements that contribute to the asset's significance in line with the importance of the remains. Where proposals affecting such sites are acceptable in principle, the preservation of the remains in situ is the preferred solution to mitigate damage. When in situ preservation is not possible, the developer will be required to make adequate provision for excavation and recording before or during development. Subsequent analysis, publication and dissemination of the findings will be required to be submitted to the council and deposited with the Historic Environment Record.</p> <p>3. Applications must be accompanied by an appropriate archaeological assessment, which includes information on the significance of the heritage asset, including the extent, character and condition of the archaeological resource. The significance of the archaeological remains should be assessed, as should the likely impact of the development on the archaeological remains. Where the existing information is not sufficient to allow such an assessment to be made, a field evaluation prior to determination of the planning application may be required.</p>
SADPD policy HER 9	<p>Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site</p> <p>1. Development proposals within the Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site, its buffer zone or its setting will be supported where they preserve those elements of significance that contribute to Jodrell Bank's Outstanding Universal Value, including its authenticity and integrity.</p> <p>2. Development proposals within the Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site, its Buffer Zone or its setting that would lead to substantial harm to its significance should be wholly exceptional and will only be permitted in the circumstances set out in national planning policy. Proposals leading to less substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In all cases, the assessment of harm should take into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the World Heritage Site as a whole.</p> <p>3. Development proposals affecting the Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site must be accompanied</p>

	<p>by a heritage statement. Consistent with LPS Policy SE 14 'Jodrell Bank', this should address:</p> <p>i. the effect of any development proposal falling within the Observatory's Buffer Zone on the operational efficiency of the telescopes through radio interference; and</p> <p>ii. the effect of any development proposal on all other historic attributes of the Observatory, including its setting.</p>
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## 2.4 Specific Local Policy for Gawsworth

The extract below from the Local Plan Draft Adopted Policies Map (Revised Publication Draft SADPD 2019) shows which local policies apply to Gawsworth Conservation Area and its surroundings.

**Local Planning Policies** [Adopted Policies Map, Cheshire East, 2022]



In addition to the heritage designations (discussed later in this document), the Conservation Area is subject to the following local planning policies:

- Policy PG3, PG 11 Green Belt (Local Plan Strategy)
- Policy SE 14 Jodrell Bank Consultation Zone (Local Plan Strategy) – affecting the western half of the Conservation Area
- Policy PG 6 Open Countryside (Local Plan Strategy)
- Policy ENV1 Ecological network restoration area (Site Allocations DPD)

To the north, the area of modern development east of Congleton Road is identified as an *infill village* (Gawsworth) within the open countryside under Policy PG10, meaning that infill development could occur here but only within the existing built-up boundaries of the village.

There are no existing or proposed allocations in the area for new development. By virtue of being within both open countryside and Green Belt, the Conservation Area and its surroundings are very well protected from any significant development. This is relevant in considering the likely extent and type of future changes that the Conservation Area Appraisal should respond to.



## **2.5 Article 4 Directions**

Article 4 Directions can be imposed by Local Planning Authorities to restrict the scope of the permitted development rights within defined areas. The imposition of an Article 4 Direction requires an application to be submitted for development proposals which would otherwise be subject to permitted development rights.

There are no Article 4 directions which impact upon the Conservation Area.

## **2.6 Gawsworth Neighbourhood Plan**

Gawsworth Parish Council prepared a Neighbourhood Plan for Gawsworth which was approved at referendum in May 2021 and now forms part of the Development Plan. *Policy G6* is concerned with the setting of Gawsworth Conservation Area. It states that:

*“New development should respond positively to opportunities to assimilate with the wider landscape by incorporating layout and design that maintains and/or reinforces views of St. James Church; the Gawsworth Halls; the Conservation Area; and the wider countryside”*

*Policy E3 Heritage Assets and Conservation Areas* is also relevant. It explains that proposals which conserve and enhance the significance of Gawsworth’s heritage assets and their setting will be supported and requires that:

*“Any proposal for a new building or external modification to any existing building within the Conservation Areas shall be designed to ensure a truly contextual and appropriate change that will enhance the character of the Conservation Areas. Such proposals must take account of any potential detriment to the existing appearance and unique identity of the adjacent area, and demonstrate consideration of the most up to date Conservation Area Appraisals.”*

This therefore provides a direct policy link with this document.

The Neighbourhood Plan has also identified a series of ‘*Locally Valued Assets*’, four of which are within the Conservation Area. This has been useful for identifying Non-Designated Heritage Assets (see Section 4).

## **2.7 National Heritage Guidance**

The Historic England advice note “*Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management*” (revised February 2019) provides extensive guidance on how to identify, appraise, and manage proposals within conservation areas. This Appraisal has been undertaken in full accordance with this guidance.

Historic England have also produced a series of good practice advice notes, including GPA2 Managing Significance in Decision-taking (2015) and The Setting of Heritage Assets (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2017). These provide further advice on assessing impacts, conserving assets and decision-making in the planning process.

## 2.8 Local Design Guidance

Cheshire East Council have prepared a design guide (Cheshire East Design Guide SPD, adopted 2017). Five settlement character areas have been identified, and Gawsworth (the whole parish and not just the conservation area) falls within '*Silk, Cotton and Market Towns*'. In this area brick and render are identified as the traditional materials for external walls with localised areas of stone. Timber is used selectively for decoration. Slate is the predominate material for roofing.



### 3. Historical Development

#### 3.1 Historical Development of Gawsworth

Gawsworth is one of the eight ancient parishes of the Macclesfield Hundred. This includes the country houses of Gawsworth Old Hall and Gawsworth New Hall; and St James Church and Gawsworth Old Rectory. The authors of the Cheshire volume of the Buildings of England series summarised the visual appeal of this collection of buildings:

*“There is nothing in Cheshire to compare with the loveliness of Gawsworth: three great houses and a distinguished church set around a descending string of pools, all within an enigmatic large-scale formal landscape.”* [Pevsner et al, 1971]

The Domesday Book survey of Cheshire (1086) shows a settlement named ‘Gouesurde’ in the location of Gawsworth, which was held by the Earl of Chester. A deer park was recorded here, indicating the early wealth of the manor at this time. By the late 16<sup>th</sup> century the outer park surrounding Gawsworth Hall was thought to be around 600 acres, and remained of this size until much of it was enclosed in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Whilst the park represented the private grounds of the owners of the Hall, their landholding estate was much larger and extended to Pownall Hall (in Wilmslow), Norcliffe Hall (to the north of Manchester Airport today) and southwards well into Staffordshire.

Speed’s map of Cheshire of 1610 depicts a settlement at *Gowseworth*. Burdett’s Map of Cheshire 1777 shows Gawsworth located to the east of the main Congleton-Macclesfield Road, accessed by what is now Church Lane. A cluster of buildings are shown, as too is a church, and two ponds.



Burdett’s Map, 1777 (left); Tithe Map, 1849 (right)

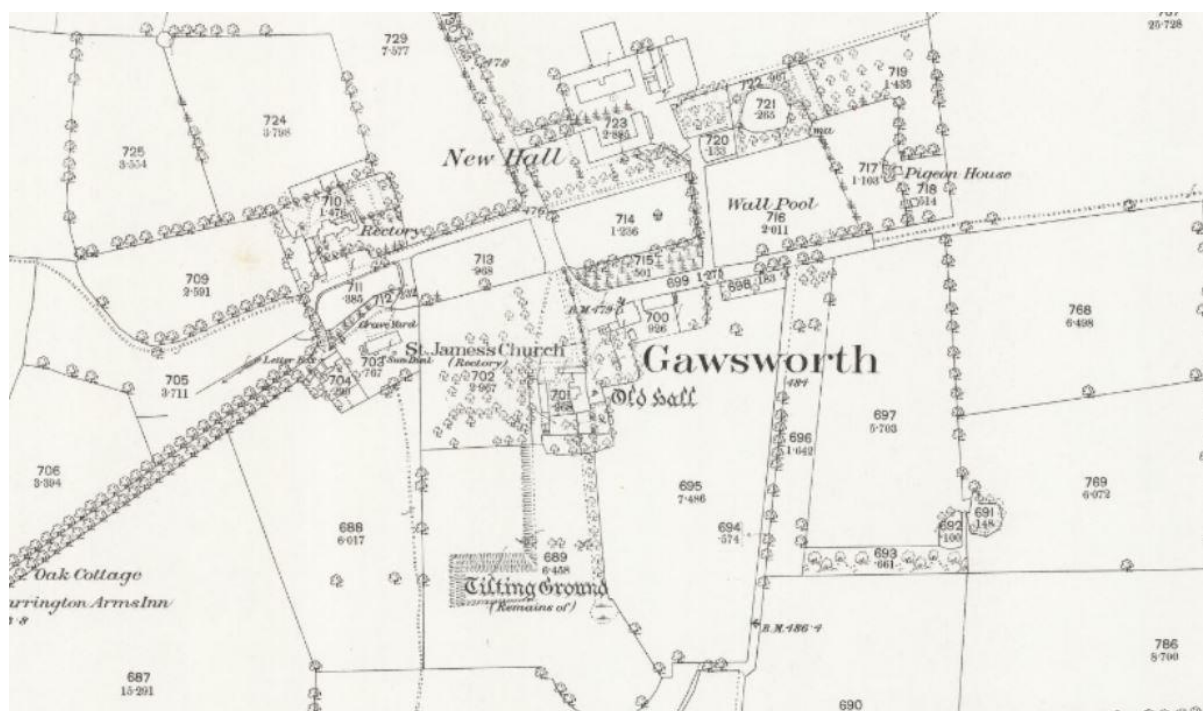
The 1849 Tithe Map shows Gawsworth comprising tithes with various occupiers but all owned by the Earl of Harrington. It also shows a well-developed road network, with the Congleton Road linking to both ends of the perpendicular Church Lane. The historic settlement comprising Gawsworth Old Hall, Gawsworth New Hall, the Church of St James and Rectory and The Old Rectory are shown on the map. Details of the grounds of Gawsworth Old Hall are shown; the walled garden is outlined and contains a linear water feature, a curtailed version of which exists today. The building now comprising the Harrington Arms Public House and attached farm buildings is also shown.

By the date of the First Edition Ordnance Survey (O.S.) Map of 1872 little of the historic settlement had altered, but greater detail is given on buildings and landscape features. The Harrington Arms Inn is named, and opposite, Oak Cottage had been erected. The remains of the Elizabethan pleasure



grounds are incorrectly named as 'Tilting Ground (Remains of)' to the south of Gawsworth Hall. The four ponds are depicted as too are the trees lining Church Lane. These 19<sup>th</sup> century historic maps show just how little has changes in the conservation area, with very little development occurring subsequently and the area appearing very similar to its current form.

The 1849 Tithe Map also shows a collection of buildings to the north of the current conservation area; this is a separate part of Gawsworth village known as Warren. Warren had expanded little by the time of the OS map of 1910. By 1976 we can see that modern development had extended southwards in the area between Warren and the the conservation area, though these areas still remained physically separate from the conservation area. The new school, shops and surrounding residential development reinforced a second centre for Gawsworth and this area has since been referred to as Gawsworth village.



1872 OS Map

Twenty acres of the civil parish of Gawsworth were transferred to Macclesfield civil parish in 1936. Gawsworth remains an independent parish with its own Parish Council. It was part of the Borough of Macclesfield from 1974 to 2009 but is now within the Cheshire East local unitary authority boundary.

### 3.2 Gawsworth Old Hall

The earliest reference to a house in 'Gowesworth' was in 1365 when a license was granted for the administration of a chapel. The manor had passed by marriage to Thomas Fitton in 1316, in whose family it remained until 1611. The Hall was extended in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when the standing of the Fitton family rose as Mary Fitton became Maid of Honour to Queen Elizabeth I. The Fitton family died out during the Civil War and following a long dispute, after the Restoration in 1660 Charles II confirmed Sir Charles Gerard's title to the estate and made him Earl of Macclesfield. At the death of the 1st Earl (in 1690) the estate was left to two co heiresses – one married to Lord Mohun and the other to the Duke of Hamilton. Endless disputes followed which finally culminated in the famous duel

of 1712 where both combatants died. The estate then devolved on Lady Mohun and her daughter married William Stanhope of Elvaston, who purchased the estate in 1727, finally settling the dispute.

The present hall was originally a moated medieval house, with the moat surrounding the existing raised platform on which the house stands. It was substantially remodelled during the Elizabethan period, when the south and west ranges were added to create a quadrangular plan. The disputes of the 17<sup>th</sup> century led to the demolition of the west wing and half the south wing in the early 1700s. The west range and half of the south range were demolished circa 1700, creating a U-plan house. After this very little was done until the major refurbishments of 1918. These were undertaken by a Captain Shimwell to whom the Hall was re-let for a peppercorn rent until 1934, representing poor recompense for his £11,000 contribution to the reparations.

Further alterations and additions occurred during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The open side of the U-plan house faces west towards the Church of St James, which was built by the Fittons on the site of the Norman chapel.

In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the ownership of the Gawsworth Estate came under dispute, resulting in a duel in Hyde Park in 1712 between Lord Mohun and the Duke of Hamilton, the husbands of the Fitton co-heiresses, over the rightful ownership of the Gawsworth Estate, when both combatants were killed. The ownership of the Manor of Gawsworth remained in dispute for a number of years until William Stanhope of Elvaston married Anne Griffith, a co-heiress to the Fitton wealth, in 1718 and then purchased the estate in 1727. William Stanhope was created the Earl of Harrington in 1742 and his family held the Manor of Gawsworth until the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



*Gawsworth Old Hall and Gardens today*

Gawsworth Old Hall is now a private residence. The house and grounds are also maintained as a visitor attraction and are used to host various events including outdoor theatre performances.

### **3.3 Gawsworth Garden and Park**

The Old Hall was set within significant Elizabethan gardens and parkland. The history of the formal gardens is not fully known and has been the subject of speculation and analysis by historians ('Gawsworth Hall Garden' by RC Turner provides an excellent summary). The 'Great Garden' is likely to have been created towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although the first written record referencing

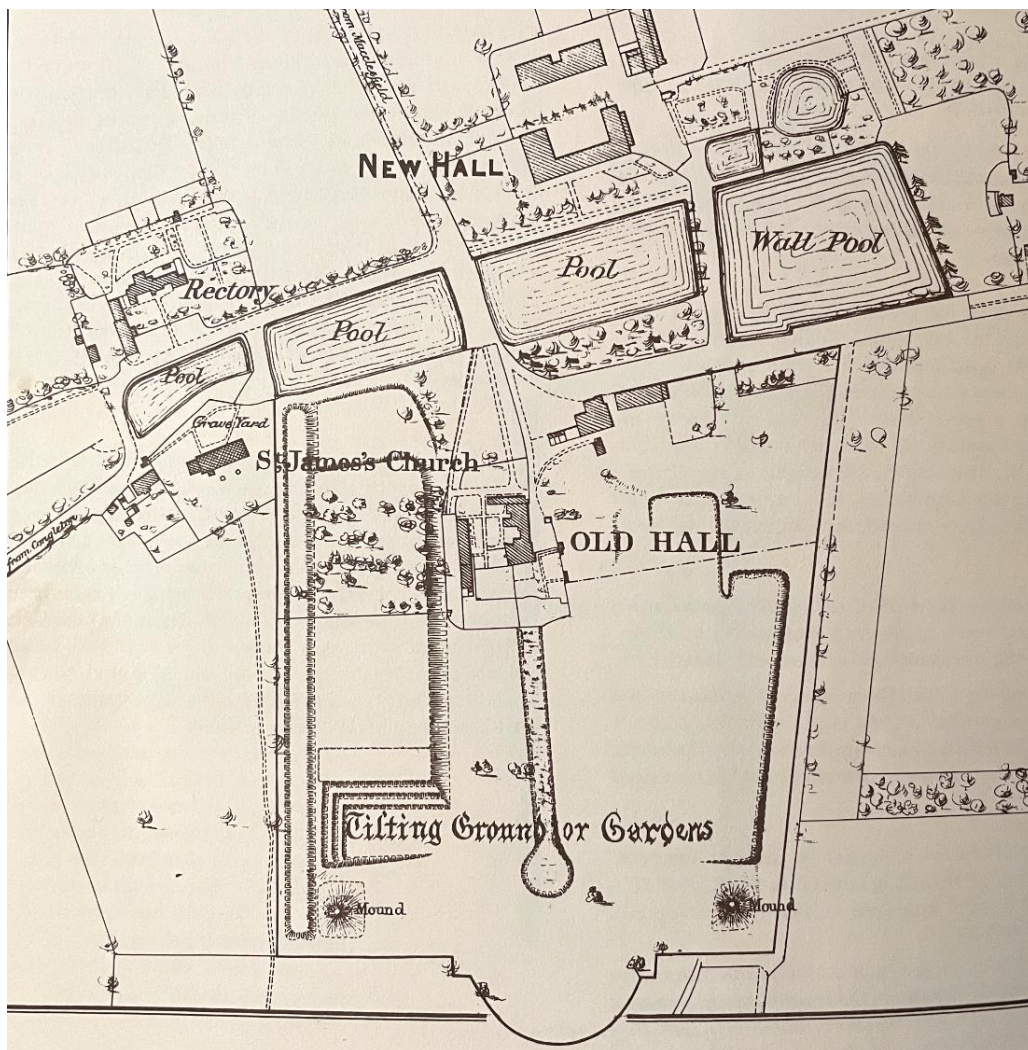


the it is not found until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the earliest plan dates from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**The Great Garden** - Gawsworth Old Hall was set within large landscaped pleasure grounds, bounded by a high brick wall to the south, and bordered by a series of fish ponds to the north.

Many of the features of the garden at Gawsworth Hall were developed by garden designers during the Elizabethan period, such as water gardens, an ornamental canal, a raised walkway and two prospect mounds.

The enclosed garden to the south of Gawsworth Old Hall is almost completely hidden from public view, and it is the high brick boundary walls that have the greatest impact on the character of the conservation area. However, there is a clear view into the garden from a gateway in the south-western corner.



*Plan of the Gardens (JP Earwaker, 1880s)*

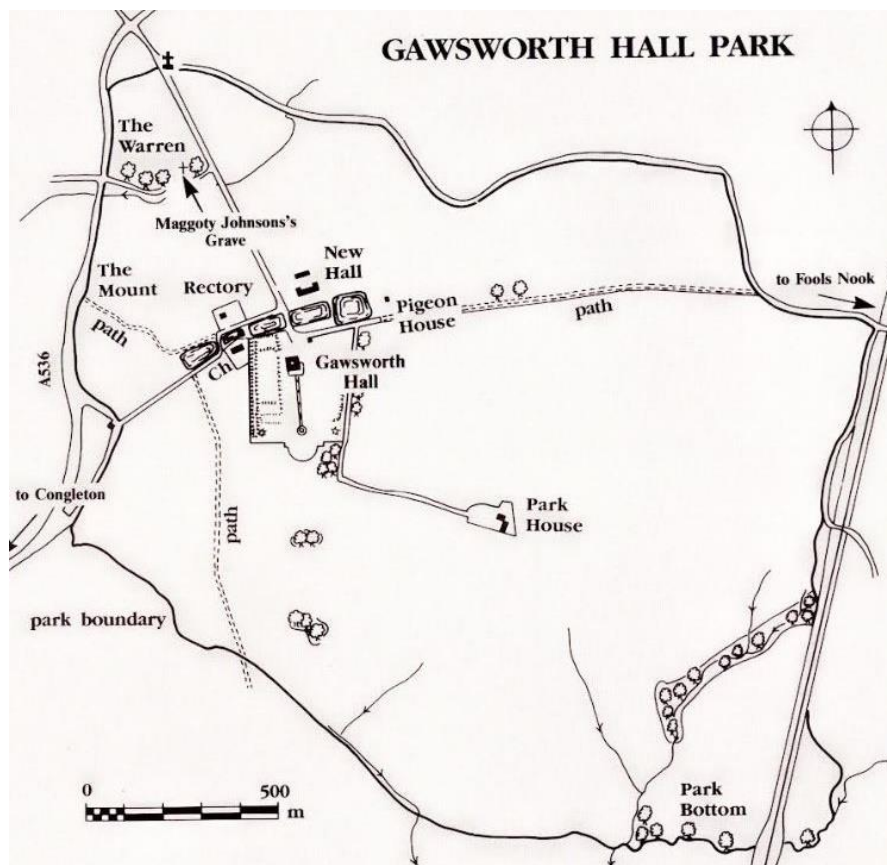
By the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Garden and the Old Hall was falling into decline. In the early 1800s it is likely that many of the brick walls were dismantled. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Old Hall was occupied by two farming families and much of the walled garden was a paddock. Ironically, this has assisted the preservation of the Elizabethan garden as at this time nearly every other country house in Cheshire had been re-landscaped by Victorian designers such as Capability



Brown, replacing the formal gardens with a more natural setting. It is the survival of these earlier features that makes Gawsworth's garden particularly significant.

**The wider parkland-** These gardens were surrounded by expansive parkland, which was not enclosed until the early 18th century. The great garden was set within a larger park, originally extending to nearly 600 acres (extending well outside the conservation area boundaries). Some of the boundaries and features of this park can be traced today. This would have formed a large enclave for the Fitton family, who were at their social and economic height during the reign of Elizabeth I. RC Turner speculated that to create this enclave the original village of Gawsworth must have been cleared away and the villagers re-housed outside the park.

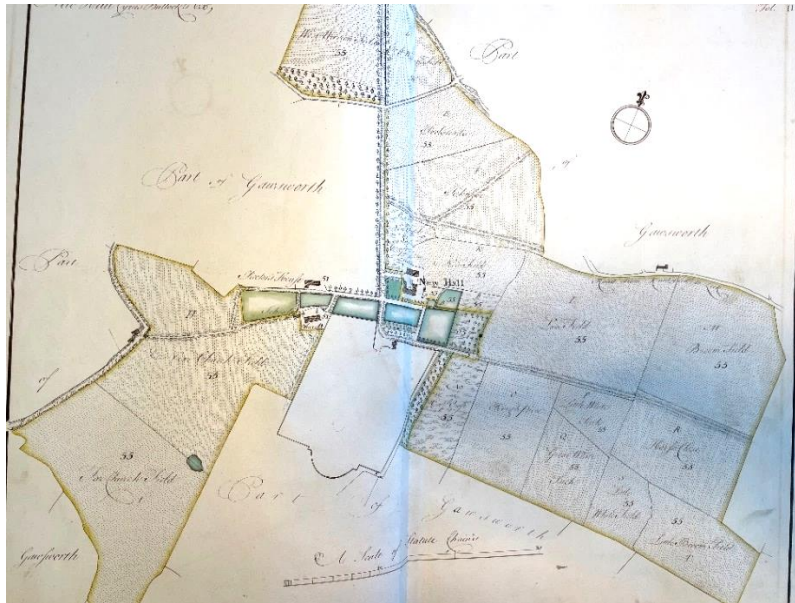
To the west the park extended up to the Macclesfield to Congleton road, to the north to Woodhouse Lane, to the east to a line close to that followed by the modern railway line, and to the south partly followed Cow Brook. The southern boundary, still followed by field edges, lies c 750m south of Parkhouse, which stands roughly in the centre of the former park. In the later 16th century there was a warren in the northernmost part of the park, while 400m north-west of the Old Hall is a hill called The Mount, from which extensive views can be gained both across the park and out into the surrounding countryside. A few ancient lime trees survive on the footpath leading east from the north-east corner of the garden enclosure, remnants of an avenue.



*Estimated extent of wider parkland (from Gawsworth Hall Gardens, RC Turner, 1990)*

By 1725 the estate had been purchased by the Earl of Harrington and the deeds described it as containing 200 Cheshire acres (around 500 standard acres). When the New Hall was constricted in 1702 parts of the Old Hall were demolished as they had become too costly to repair. When Lord Harrington acquired the estate his main residence was in Derbyshire. He enclosed the park into a

number of fields and divided the land into a number of tenant farmers. This is evident from a series of surviving estate plans held at the Old Hall.



*Gawsworth Estate title plans, 1759-60 (photographed from the original courtesy of the Richards family)*

### 3.4 Gawsworth New Hall

Gawsworth New Hall was designed and first built by Lord Mohun in 1708 but was abandoned after he was killed in his duel with the Duke of Hamilton in 1712. Later additions and alterations were made to the designs of Sir Hubert Worthington in 1914. Late 19th-century residents of the house included William Taylor Birchenough, a Macclesfield silk manufacturer and his descendent, William Taylor Birchenough, a pioneering aviator and test pilot.



*Gawsworth New Hall, date unknown (estimated 1910s) [Cheshire Image Bank, Cheshire East Council]*

The house is built in red brick with a stone slate roof. It has two storeys and attic with an E-shaped plan. The garden front has 16 bays. It was Grade II\* listed in 1967. In the 1960s the hall was handed over to Cheshire County Council to become a home for elderly women who were either physically, or mentally disabled. In the 1980s it also admitted elderly male residents. There was a large staff of carers, chefs, domestics and gardeners who looked after the residents and the grounds. Many local people who lived in Gawsworth village worked at the hall. In the mid 1980s the Hall was closed and put up for sale. Subsequently the Hall, and adjacent New Hall Barn, were been acquired by property developers and converted to apartments in the 1990s.

### 3.5 St James' Church

St James' Church dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, making this the oldest building in the conservation area. The oldest part of the church is the nave, which dates from circa 1430, with the tower and chancel likely dating from the 1470s. The church is Perpendicular in style and is constructed of yellow and red ashlar sandstone. The tower has angular buttresses with niches which used to contain statues. It also has gargoyles, eight pinnacles, the coats of arms of Cheshire families and Tudor badges.

The chancel screen is dated 1894. In the 19th century most of the old stained glass was removed, although fragments remain in the chancel windows. In the chancel are four tombs of members of the Fitton (Fytton) family. The oldest is an altar tomb to Francis Fytton dated 1608. The tombs are decorated with various monuments and effigies. Most notable is the tomb of Sir Edward Fitton, 1st baronet, and his wife Anne, who died in 1619 and 1644 respectively. In front of the tomb are the keeling figures of their three sons and seven daughters.

There is a ring of eight bells. Six of these were cast at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, one by Charles and George Mears in 1856, the other five by Mears and Stainbank in 1890. The two-manual organ was built by Nicholson and Lord of Walsall in 1895, obscuring the southwest window. In 1917 it was enlarged by Hayter and Son of Letchworth, obscuring the west window. In 1961 the organ was rebuilt.

Today the Church remains an active Anglican parish church in the diocese of Chester. The church was included in Clifton-Taylor's 'best of' English parish churches and was described by in the Buildings of England series [Pevsener et al, 1977] as being "pretty, but odd". It was Grade I listed in 1967.



Left: St James Church, 1910 [Cheshire Image Bank, Cheshire East Council]; Right: inside the church today

**Gawsworth Old Rectory**, which sits opposite the church, was built as a rectory for St James' Church, probably in around 1470. The north wing was added in 1872. The house is timber framed. It was Grade I listed in 1967 and was described in the Listing as being "*one of the best preserved medium-sized houses of the period in Cheshire, particularly valuable for the survival of the open hall*". It is now a private house. The Old Rectory, St Peters Church and Gawsworth Old Hall all of exceptional significance at Grade 1, create an important set piece within the Conservation Area.



### 3.6 Samuel 'Maggoty' Johnson

Samuel Johnson (1691–1773) was an English dancing-master, dramatist and violinist, known especially for his 1729 stage work *Hurlothrumbo*. He was a friend of the poet John Byrom who contributed the epilogue to *Hurlothrumbo*. Johnson was born in Cheshire and moved to London for much of his life but during his last 30 years, retired to Gawsworth, where he was known under the nicknames Maggoty or Fiddler Johnson. Johnson died at Gawsworth New Hall on 5 May 1773. His grave remains in the woods (now known as Maggoty Woods) and is Grade II listed.



*Johnson's grave today*

### 3.7 Archaeology

There are a number of recorded archaeological sites, buildings and finds which lie within the Gawsworth Conservation Area, with finds including prehistoric flints and axe heads.

The cross in the churchyard of the Church of St James stands 3 metres east of the south porch of the church. This monument comprises a base and an octagonal shaft set on three steps of dressed stone, and with carvings of grotesque beasts on each shoulder of the base. It is a good survival of a fine piece of late medieval carving. The cross itself dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and is grade II listed.

Gawsworth Hall gardens include the extensive earthwork remains of a 16th century garden, surrounded by a wall, together with a series of five ornamental pools created around Gawsworth Hall. The Scheduled Monument also includes the remains of structures beneath the present Gawsworth Hall.



## 4 Heritage Assets

### 4.1 Designated Heritage Assets

There are twelve statutory listed buildings and features within the conservation area. Several of the listed features are outbuildings or features otherwise associated with the three principal listed buildings. These are listed below; the numbers below are used to locate each on Figure 2.

- 1 Barn at New Hall Farm** – Grade II\* (1707-12, now apartments)
- 2 Gawsworth New Hall** – Grade II\* (1707-12 with 19<sup>th</sup> century additions)
- 3 The Old Rectory** – Grade I (late 16<sup>th</sup> century with 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century additions).
- 4 Harrington Arms PH** – Grade II (late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> century with C19<sup>th</sup> additions)
- 5 Pair of gate piers** – Grade II (c.1700)
- 6 Church of St James** – Grade I (15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century)
- 7 Cross base in Churchyard of St James** – Grade II (15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century)
- 8 Gawsworth Old Hall** – Grade I (15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> century with 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> century additions)
- 9 Gate piers** approx 20 yards north-east of Gawsworth Old Hall – Grade II (c.1700)
- 10 The Gatehouse** – Grade II (mid-late 17<sup>th</sup> century)
- 11 Watch Tower** – Grade II (a.k.a. Pigeon House, early 18<sup>th</sup> century with later additions, originally pigeon loft now house)
- 12 Garden walls of Gawsworth Old Hall** – Grade II (16<sup>th</sup> century with later alterations)

### 4.2 Area-based Listings

The historic grounds of Gawsworth Old Hall are listed. This is represented by two different listings of differing extents (as shown on Figure 2).

Scheduled Monuments generally have greater historical significance than Grade II listed buildings although they are generally less intact. Monuments are protected because of their historic importance, which may not be reflected in their current condition. For example, they can include historic ruins and archaeological sites.

Registered Parks and Gardens are included on a Register and can be considered equivalent to listed buildings. The emphasis of the Register is on gardens, grounds and other planned open spaces. The majority of sites registered are, or started life as, the grounds of private houses or public parks. The emphasis of the Register is on 'designed' landscapes, rather than on planting or botanical importance.

The Gawsworth designations comprise:

- **Registered Garden (Grade II\*)** – the historic formal gardens of Gawsworth Old Hall comprising the gardens to the rear of the Old Hall and the fish ponds. The area is c. 9 ha (c. 22 acres) and extends beyond the Scheduled Monument area to include land around the Pigeon House to

the east and extending to Congleton Road in the west. It is not clear whether this latter area was ever part of the formal pleasure gardens ('great garden'). The survival of such early garden features is uncommon; the survival of the earthworks at Gawsworth is fundamental to the significance of the gardens.

- **Scheduled Monument** – a narrower designation than the above which includes Gawsworth Old Hall and the majority of the pleasure gardens including the walled garden and fish ponds. The Scheduled Monument also includes the remains of structures beneath the present Gawsworth Old Hall.

The early garden at Gawsworth includes many features which were developed during the Elizabethan period. The inclusion of both water gardens and an ornamental canal, together with planted areas and a wilderness, and a raised walkway with two prospect mounds, make this a rare and important earthwork site. The garden scheme continued to be developed for a further 50 years before becoming part of a relict garden within the enclosing walls. The maintenance and survival of the original walls adds greatly to the importance of the remains.



*Clockwise from top left: St James' Church, Harrington Arms, Old Rectory, Gawsworth New Hall,*

### 4.3 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

The Conservation Area also has several buildings and features which although not of sufficient national interest to warrant listing, are important in exhibiting the special character of the conservation area and should be regarded as ‘non-designated heritage asset’s (as described for purposes of planning policy as explained in Section 2). Cheshire East does have a Local List of buildings (Local List SPD, adopted 2010) which identifies buildings of local importance in historic character. No buildings or features within Gawsworth Conservation Area were included in this Local List. However, notwithstanding this, the buildings below are still considered to be non-designated heritage assets in respect of the Conservation Area.

This list has also been based on the ‘key unlisted buildings’ from the 2007 Appraisal. These buildings have been reviewed and all been determined to still be of merit. The list has also taken account of the ‘Locally Valued Heritage Assets’ which were identified within the Gawsworth Neighbourhood Plan. The Non-Designated assets are listed below, and are also identified on Figure 2.

- **Little Manor, Church Lane** – Tudor tithe barn with modern additions, formerly associated with the Rectory, has group value alongside the Old Rectory and the frontage wall
- **The New Rectory, Church Lane** – built by Lord Mohun in 1707 as village school (and served as such until 1832), white rendered., has a group value alongside the Church and Church Hall. Also a Locally Valued Heritage Asset.
- **Toad Hall, Church Lane** – fine late Georgian villa, has group value alongside Gawsworth New Hall and Barn. Also a Locally Valued Heritage Asset.
- **Mews Cottages, Church Lane** – terrace of 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century cottages (originally stables to the Old Hall, later converted to cottages) has group value (comprising Coach House, Lake House, Pine Lodge, and The Spinney). Also a Locally Valued Heritage Asset.
- **Gawsworth Court, Church Lane** – although only built in 1971 it was done so in a replica historic style using plans from a Palladian house in Richmond Park. It complements historic surrounding buildings and contributes to the wider character, and so has group value
- **Oak Cottage, Congleton Road** – late Victorian farmhouse, white rendered, prominently located at the western gateway to the conservation area from Congleton Road
- **Lych Gate to St James’ Church, Church Lane** - The wooden lych gate it has also been separately identified as a Locally Valued Heritage Asset. It is significant also in that it is sited on the far side of a bridge between the ponds to the Church, effectively defining the church grounds as including the ponds (with the original Rectory also on the northern side).

One ‘key unlisted building’ from the 2007 appraisal has not been included:

- **Former stables of Harrington Arms, Congleton Road** – these were identified as a key unlisted building in 2007 but they are now considered to be in a deteriorated condition and have been much altered, not always sensitively (e.g. roof replacements). For these reasons this not considered to be currently a separate non-designated heritage asset. However, the buildings do retain a group value with the listed Harrington Arms and would in any case be protected by the listing of that building as being curtilage buildings.





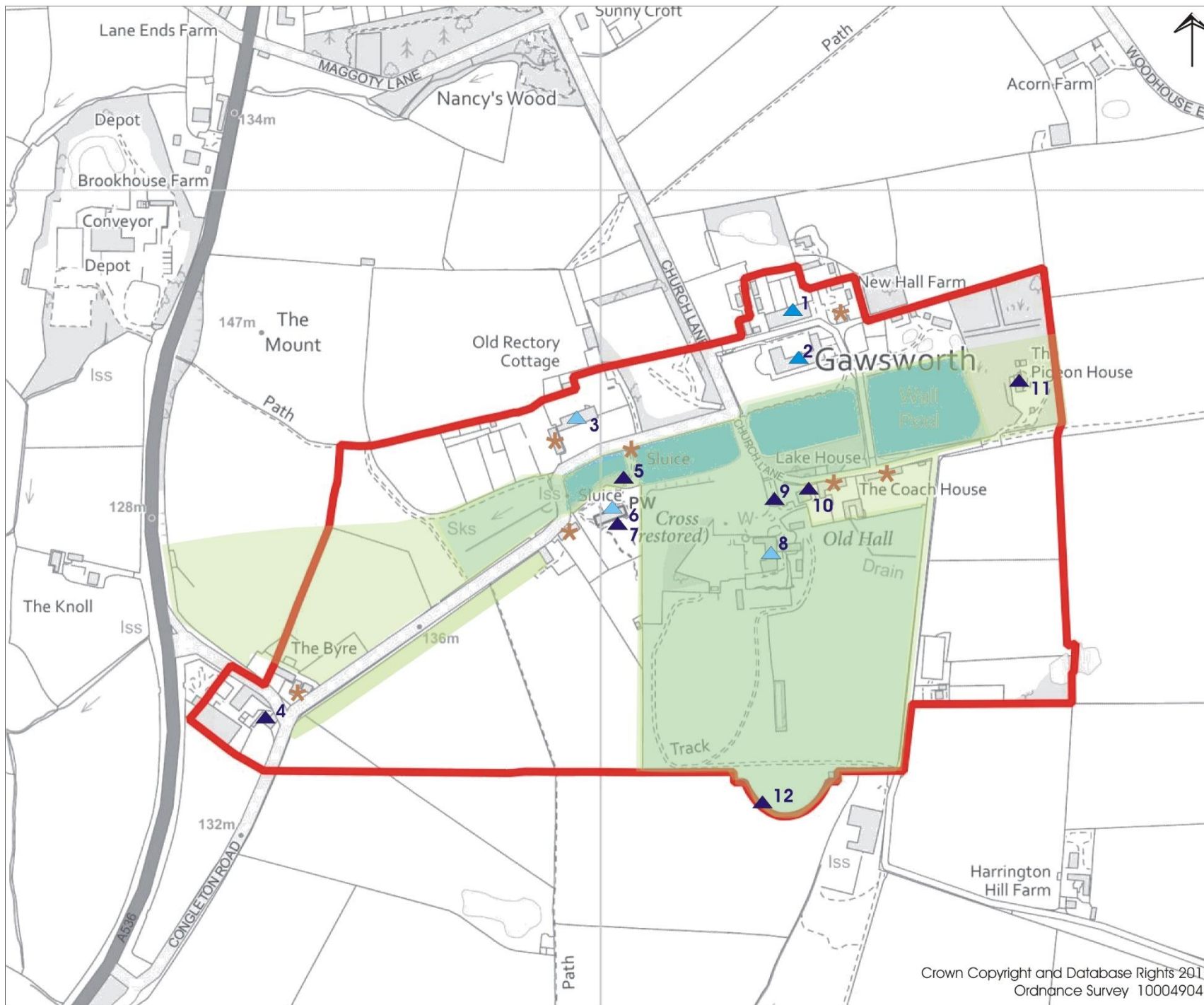
*Clockwise from top left: Oak Cottage; Toad Hall; Mews Cottages; New Rectory*



**Figure 2:  
Heritage Assets**

**Key**

- ▲ Listed - Grade I
- ▲ Listed - Grade II\*
- ▲ Listed - Grade II
- Scheduled Monument
- Registered Garden (II\*)
- ✱ Non-designated heritage assets



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2022

Scale: 1:2500

## 5. Site Assessment

This section provides an assessment of the physical townscape and landscape of Gawsworth today. It is based on site inspection and analysis. It should be read alongside Figure 3, which illustrates this spatial analysis.

### 5.1 Landscape Setting and Spatial Form

Gawsworth sits within the Cheshire plain with views to the Macclesfield hills in the east. Whilst the conservation area itself is generally level, the surrounding farmland is often gently rolling hills. Within the walled gardens there remains engineered landscape features. There are many trees and hedgerows in the conservation area, often used as structural landscape features. The chief landscape feature of the conservation area are the four ornamental fish ponds, arranged in a linear fashion west to east.

The conservation area effectively exists physically as its own small distinct collection of buildings, separated from surrounding development by intervening open fields. There are two routes into the area (by road), both with the name of Church Lane: that extending from Congleton Road in the west; and from Warren to the north. These stretches of lane have a distinctly rural feel, with mounded grassy banks, set with hedges, and dramatically enclosed by avenues of soaring trees. The character of this tree-lined lane alters on a seasonal basis; the lack of foliage during the winter months permitting glimpses through the trees out to the surrounding gently undulating fields.



*Approaches via Church Lane - left: from south-west; right: from north*



Each of these roads are lined by long and continuous avenues of trees in either side which frame the relatively narrow roads. This creates two approaches to the conservation area which are an important and distinctive feature serving to separate create an approach to a distinct destination and heightening a sense of arrival. Historic plans suggest that this was an historic feature as least as far back as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (map by JP Earwaker, 1880s) whilst the northern avenue appears to exist in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (estate plan by G. Grey, c. 1770s). It most likely existed when the first Elizabethan gardens were laid out. The northern approach is likely to have been historically more important as it aligned with the main entrance to the hall, but today the western approach has a more complete boulevard of trees.

The linear stretches of Church Lane are linked by a Z-bend stretch of road, where the avenues of trees clear and scenic vistas open up of the four fishponds and views across these reflective pools to Gawsworth New Hall, Gawsworth Old Hall and the Church of St James. The tended formal lawns of Gawsworth Old Hall and Gawsworth New Hall, the former containing a number of attractive specimen trees, lend a much more domestic character to this part of the conservation area, in direct contrast to the surrounding agricultural land.

Once within the conservation area the four ponds form the central organising feature. Gawsworth Old Hall and the Church of St James sit on the southern side, and the Rectory and New Hall site lie to the north. The Old Hall is set back within its grounds, though is visible from Church Road across the ponds, whilst the other key buildings face closer onto them with more open aspects. When standing by the ponds it is visible to look across them and see these other key buildings, creating the feel of being within the tranquil heart of the area. In this sense the ponds, and associated formal landscape, serves to unify the distinct land uses and private land and give the impression of being within a small planned settlement.



*Views across the fish ponds*

## **5.2 Gateways**

Whilst the two tree-lined roads create two well defined approaches into the conservation area, these corridors also serve to articulate 'gateways' at the landscape open up as one enters leaves the tree-lined boulevards. From the western approach, the gateway is most evident at the junction of Congleton Road (on its historic alignment rather than the A536) and Church Lane. This point is marked by the listed Harrington Arms and, opposite it Oak Cottage, both important buildings in the conservation area. There is also a traditional, early 20<sup>th</sup> century fingerpost located here. This

effectively marks the western gateway to the conservation area, with the tree lined avenue of Church Lane giving the impression of a defined route into its heart. Historically this gateway would have formed the entrance to the private parkland of Gawsworth Old Hall, and that feel is still evident.

From the northern approach from Warren via Church Lane the entry point to the conservation area is less well-defined than from the west. The suburban environment here more gradually gives way to a tree-lined approach, though this can be said to begin from Maggoty Wood but becomes more continuous south of Nancy's Wood and Maggoty Lane, where a fingerpost is also located. There are other notable buildings on this approach (such as Warren Cottage, the Old school and Village Hall) but these are more spread out and surrounded by modern development and do not form as dramatic a gateway as from the west, where the Harrington Arms and Oak Cottage sit surrounded by open fields and mark the entrance. The trees lining the road here are less continuous, less similar and less formally maintained than from the west. The northern avenue still retains some limes, presumably from the ancient main approach route, but most of the significant avenue trees are pines. These extend into Nancy's Wood making it an integral part of the avenue. There are gaps due to failure to replant after trees fall or are felled and some trees, mostly towards the hall end are enveloped in ivy. A valid conservation aspiration would be to augment and formalise these tree avenues to better reflect the historic importance of the northern approach.

Consequently, this approach is less dramatic and more gradual than that from the west and the sense of arrival in the conservation area is only truly evident when one arrives passes the entrance to Gawsworth New Hall on the left and then, more dramatically, when views open up of the fish ponds.

### **5.3 Open space and public realm**

Gawsworth Conservation Area comprises two principal types of green space: agricultural land and landscaped spaces associated with individual buildings. Linking these spaces are four ponds, creating an east-west landscape spine through the area; the ponds contribute to the cohesion of the individual elements comprising the conservation area and contribute greatly to the scenic quality of the settlement, permitting views across, and reflections within, the ponds.

Open fields surround the entire conservation area, and there is also gently undulating pastureland within the western half. A single field lies within the boundary to the east of the walled garden of Gawsworth Old Hall.

Hard-landscaped formal courtyards and forecourts are a feature of the conservation area, ranging from the farmyard to the rear of the Harrington Arms Public House, to the grander, more open spaces between Gawsworth New Hall, the New Hall Barn and Toad Hall.





*Left: lane in south-east of conservation area; right: New Hall courtyard*

Narrow lanes and approach driveways run off Church Lane, and have a distinctive enclosed character, being bounded by dense groups of trees and shrubs, such as the entrance lane to Gawsworth Old Hall, and the driveway to the Pigeon House. The lane running around the north and eastern perimeter of Gawsworth Old Hall has a hard boundary on one side created by the small-scale residential buildings e.g. Gawsworth Court, and the high brick boundary wall. To the east of Gawsworth Court the lane emerges out into open countryside, with far-reaching views across to the Pennines.

Significant trees or tree groups, are marked on Figure 3. Throughout the conservation area avenues, groups and individual trees blur the distinction between rural lanes, farmland and private gardens.

**St James' Churchyard** - The churchyard of the Church of St James has a unique character within the conservation area. It is public open space and is therefore one of the most permeable spaces. The churchyard is raised on a high mound, permitting views out and over the ponds to the north, and outlying countryside to the south. The intimate nature of the space is enhanced by the brick boundary wall of Gawsworth Old Hall on the eastern boundary and a line of mature trees on the western boundary. Mature yew and oak trees also add to the sense of enclosure. To the north of the church the monuments and gravestones have been laid horizontally, creating a patchwork of engraved stone slabs, while the more recent burial sites and a memorial wall lie to the south of the church.

The churchyard contains many interesting monuments and well-tended graves. Benches provide a place for restful contemplation. Views over the ponds from the front of the churchyard serve to enhance the setting and emphasise its tranquil nature. Two formal avenues of trees line the linear stretches of Church Lane; an avenue of lime trees on the western stretch and a mixed avenue with many pine trees on the northern section.

The lych gate is on the northern side of the ponds, meaning that the churchyard is approached by passing on what is effectively a bridge between the ponds from this direction. When the old rectory was in its original use this would have meant that this wider church precinct also included the westernmost ponds. Today the church-related uses are seamlessly integrated into the wider 'heart' environment of the four ponds.



*Fish ponds (Wall Pond on left)*

**The Fish Ponds** - The four ponds at the centre of the conservation area represent its most visible, distinctive and iconic public space. The linear arrangement of the ponds, and the way that surrounding buildings respond to them in their positioning, suggest a planned and coherent design of this space. This is probably only partially true, as the ponds may well pre-date several of the surrounding buildings. They are certainly visible on G. Grey's estate map of the 1770s but are likely to be much older and probably date from the foundation of the Elizabethan gardens to the Old Hall. They were created as fish ponds and would have been stocked for fishing but they would also have provided an ornamental role, enhancing the setting of the Old Hall. There are four ponds arranged east-west, each of a rectangular form. The easternmost pond is known as a Wall Pool, the others are unnamed.

The Wall Pool is now very different in nature than the other ponds, being larger and more informal in appearance, being less closely bounded by buildings (which include modern houses to the north). It is separated from the rest of this area by vegetation and largely only visible when one arrives at it. It is actively used by anglers and therefore has the feel of a public amenity resource rather than as a formal semi-private setting to historic building. It therefore has less significance to the conservation area than the other buildings but nonetheless remains important due to its history. There was once a fifth pond to the west, the form of which is still evident as lower ground with a drainage channel.

The square shape of the ponds corresponds with the linear roads that surround them, and both emphasise the deliberate and planned form of this area. Church Lane changes direction to tightly follow the western most two ponds before turning abruptly north. The southern arm of Church Lane follows a similar form, crossing between the ponds and following the southern edge of the two eastern ponds. The roads that cross between the ponds have the feel of bridges given their narrowness and the short distance between the ponds. These are important in offering east-west views across the ponds. The Pigeon House was sited to terminate this view eastwards, although it is of insufficient stature to do so convincingly.

This area is also characterised by the low wooden fences that edge these roads and bridges and the trees and vegetation behind them. These provide a rural feel to the area and serve to create a secluded environment that is separate from the surrounding fields, leaving the ponds only visible from within this environment. The trees and vegetation are often extensive and can sometimes inhibit views over the ponds.



**The Walled Garden** - The enclosed garden to the south of Gawsworth Old Hall is almost completely hidden from public view, and it is the high brick boundary walls that have the greatest impact on the character of the conservation area. However, there is a clear view into the garden from a gateway in the south-western corner, across the grass-covered earthworks.



*Within the Walled Gardens*

The gardens of Gawsworth Old Hall are statutorily registered Grade II\* on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens as: *“earthworks and other remains of an extensive formal garden of c. 1600 associated with a manor house. The remnants of the formal Elizabethan landscape are defined by a straight chain of five fishponds, 550m long and dropping from east to west (the westernmost pond has been dry since at least circa 1770), to the north and elsewhere by tall brick walls.”*

There are in fact several distinct elements to the gardens visible today. The area located immediately adjacent to the west of the Hall are formal, highly manicured private gardens. Historically there was a western wing to the Hall and this would have been the central courtyard. To the west of this is a wooded area that, although within the walls, provides a more natural setting as an interface to the adjacent St James' churchyard.

The walled garden at Gawsworth Old Hall are grass-covered earthworks, creating the appearance of a rough field, on the site of what was historically Elizabethan pleasure grounds, whose remnants are partially visible in the landscape form (for example the raised pathway on the western boundary and the bowl-shaped excavated). In the south-western corner of the garden is a raised plateau, considered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to be a Tilting Ground, (as annotated in OS maps), however it is now thought to be a viewing terrace for the Elizabethan landscape garden. Another key retained feature is the brick wall that surrounds the garden, Elizabethan in origin though much repaired since. A key remaining feature of the wall is the semi-circular salient that marks the southernmost boundary. This would have originally bounded the formal pleasure part of the parkland and it offers commanding views of the surrounding fields, which would originally have been the wider parkland of the estate.

**Gawsworth New Hall and surroundings** - Gawsworth New Hall has formal lawns on the west and south sides, running down to one of the fish ponds, while the manicured lawns to the north of Gawsworth Old Hall, bordered by another of the ponds are interspersed with specimen trees and shrubs. The hard landscaped courtyard at the centre of the New Hall is a very well maintained semi-private space for residents that provides a strong functional and visual link to its history. The hard landscape extends to the private roads between the New Hall and the converted Barn and Toad Hall,

serving to unify these buildings and create a distinct character area. The garden to the east of New Hall from a more secluded and private space for reflection, enhanced by providing an attractive view of the eastern elevation of the New Hall.

#### **5.4 Key views, vistas and landmarks**

There are a series of mid-range and long range views in the conservation area that are significant to its distinctive character. This includes views to landmarks, long range views to the open countryside and framed vistas.



*View to St James' Church across fish pond*

The use of structural tree planting to create avenues, as described earlier, creates vistas, or framed views. These are important in creating a distinct visual impression, even when there is no landmark to terminate the vista.





*View from Churchyard down Church Lane*

**Landmarks** can be described as being highly prominent, visible and familiar buildings, located at key orientation points and often used for directions to navigate a place. In Gawsworth the landmark buildings can be considered to be the Harrington Arms, St James' Church, Old Rectory and New Hall. Gawsworth Old Hall is also a landmark in terms of its history and function (which includes being a visitor attraction and events venue) although its position out of view from Church Lane means that it is less important for views and navigation around the publicly-accessible part of the area.

Views to landmarks are an important feature of the conservation area, and one that often derives from deliberate design as it developed historically. St James' Church tower is a notable landmark feature that is visible from many parts of the conservation area. The Church of St James sits on a raised promontory, which affords key views, to and from, from the churchyard down into and across the conservation area, most notably immediately north to The Old Rectory and north-eastwards to Gawsworth New Hall.

The Old Rectory is a prominent building lying across the westernmost existing pond from the church. Views of both, from either side of the ponds, are a distinctive feature of the area, providing an enhanced setting to these buildings and adding visual interest and appeal to the backdrop of views over the ponds.

A similar situation exists with Gawsworth New Hall, which was sited to benefit from having the ponds in its foreground setting. The view from the bridge across the pond to the New Hall is a classic view within the area, and this use of a water body is common to the setting of other country houses of this period. The Pigeon House was sited to terminate the vista looking west across all of the ponds but is now rather too well hidden by trees to be prominent in this view, however the views across the ponds, in both directions, is an important feature of the conservation area.



*View to New Hall across fish pond*

### **5.5 Townscape: built form and character**

The buildings within the Gawsworth Conservation Area are disposed in an irregular formation across the site, accessed from Church Lane, the sole named road running through the conservation area. There are some important direct relationships between groups of buildings, as a result of function and desired locational-proximity, such as between a principal building and its servicing ancillary structures, e.g. Gawsworth New Hall and Barn at New Hall Farm; and the Church and New Rectory.

The buildings within the conservation area are principally large residential houses, directly associated with the historic settlement of Gawsworth: the two country houses of Gawsworth Old Hall and Gawsworth New Hall. Former ancillary structures on the estates have since been converted to residential use, such as the Watch Tower (the Pigeon House). The Church of St James is set in a churchyard and forms a distinctive grouping with The Old Rectory and The Rectory.

Gawsworth is a rural settlement, and agricultural buildings are contained within the settlement, a Barn at New Hall Farm (converted) and to the rear of the Harrington Arms Public House. At the Harrington Arms Public House the farm buildings are arranged in an L-plan around a courtyard.

### **5.6 Materials, vernacular and architectural features**

Gawsworth Conservation Area contains buildings from three principal phases of development: 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries; 17<sup>th</sup> century; and early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the buildings are listed. There are also some 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings, which are less significant to the historic significance.

The Church of St James dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and was built in the Perpendicular manner. The nave predates the tower and chancel; yellow sandstone was used to construct the former and red sandstone the latter. Gawsworth Old Hall dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries with 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century additions and alterations. It is principally a timber-framed house, with white-washed wattle-and-daub and brick infill, with alterations in red brick laid in English garden wall bond. The two- and three-storey building originally formed a quadrangular plan, now reduced by approximately half to form a three-sided courtyard. Decorative features include decorated bargeboards, quatrefoil panels in the framing, and oriel windows.

The Old Brick is the most prolifically utilised building material in Gawsworth; the bricks are red in colour and made from clays locally available throughout much of Cheshire. Brick became popular for the construction of domestic buildings in Cheshire around the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, having formerly been used as infilling for timber-framed structures. Representations of brick construction from this period are visible in the Harrington Arms Public House and Gawsworth New Hall and associated structures; the former is constructed in English Garden Wall Bond, the latter is in Flemish Bond. The walled garden of Gawsworth Old Hall is contained within 16<sup>th</sup> century brick walls, set in English Bond and random bond, with ashlar coping.

The early domestic buildings, i.e. Gawsworth Old Hall and The Old Rectory, are timber-framed, constructed from oak which grew in profusion in this area. They are post-and-panel construction, with lath and lime plaster infill, and later infill of brick noggin. The distinctive blackened timbers and white-painted plaster or brick, was a traditional practise in Cheshire, although the practise was substantially increased through the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, such as the 20<sup>th</sup> century simulated timber-framing on parts of Gawsworth Old Hall.

A number of the buildings in Gawsworth have stone slate roofs e.g. Gawsworth Old Hall, and the Harrington Arms Public House. These large roofing slabs are of carboniferous sandstones notably from the Coal Measures quarries above Kerridge, near Macclesfield. The early 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings in the settlement have slate roofs e.g. Gawsworth New Hall. The Church of St James has a lead roof to the tower, nave and chancel.

The Church of St James is constructed of yellow sandstone, the nave and chancel, and red sandstone, the tower. The nave and chancel predate the tower. There is a pair of imposing early- to mid-18<sup>th</sup> century ashlar gate piers within the churchyard.

## **5.7 Public realm and historical features**

The public realm throughout the Conservation Area is predominantly modern, with roads of tarmac. Pavements are typically on only one side of the lane, and are of tarmac with stone kerbs. The overall effect is softened by the uncultivated grass banks on either side of the thoroughfare and wooden boundary treatments. The overall feeling of rural lanes is preserved.

There are no street lights in the conservation area, which enhances the rural character of the settlement. The churchyard has discreet lamps, in heritage style mounted on timber standards to mark the pathway through to the church.



There are several historic and distinctive features within the area that add character and are important to significance. A remnant of a historic surface is visible in the cobbled forecourt to the Harrington Arms Public House.

At the junction of Congleton Road and Church Lane stands a distinctive early 20th century cast iron finger-post, painted black and white.

Along the western branch of Church Lane a cast iron sign reads: *"Peak District & Northern Counties Footpath Preservation Society. No. 149. 1964. Public Footpath to North Road"*.

The Harrington Arms Public House has 'HARRINGTON ARMS, Robinson's' in lettering applied to the brickwork on the north-eastern gable and the southwestern elevation.

Other features include distinctive steps, doors and archways, especially at the entrance to St James' churchyard from Church Lane next to the new Rectory, and various doorways, arches and features within the Old Hall gardens.









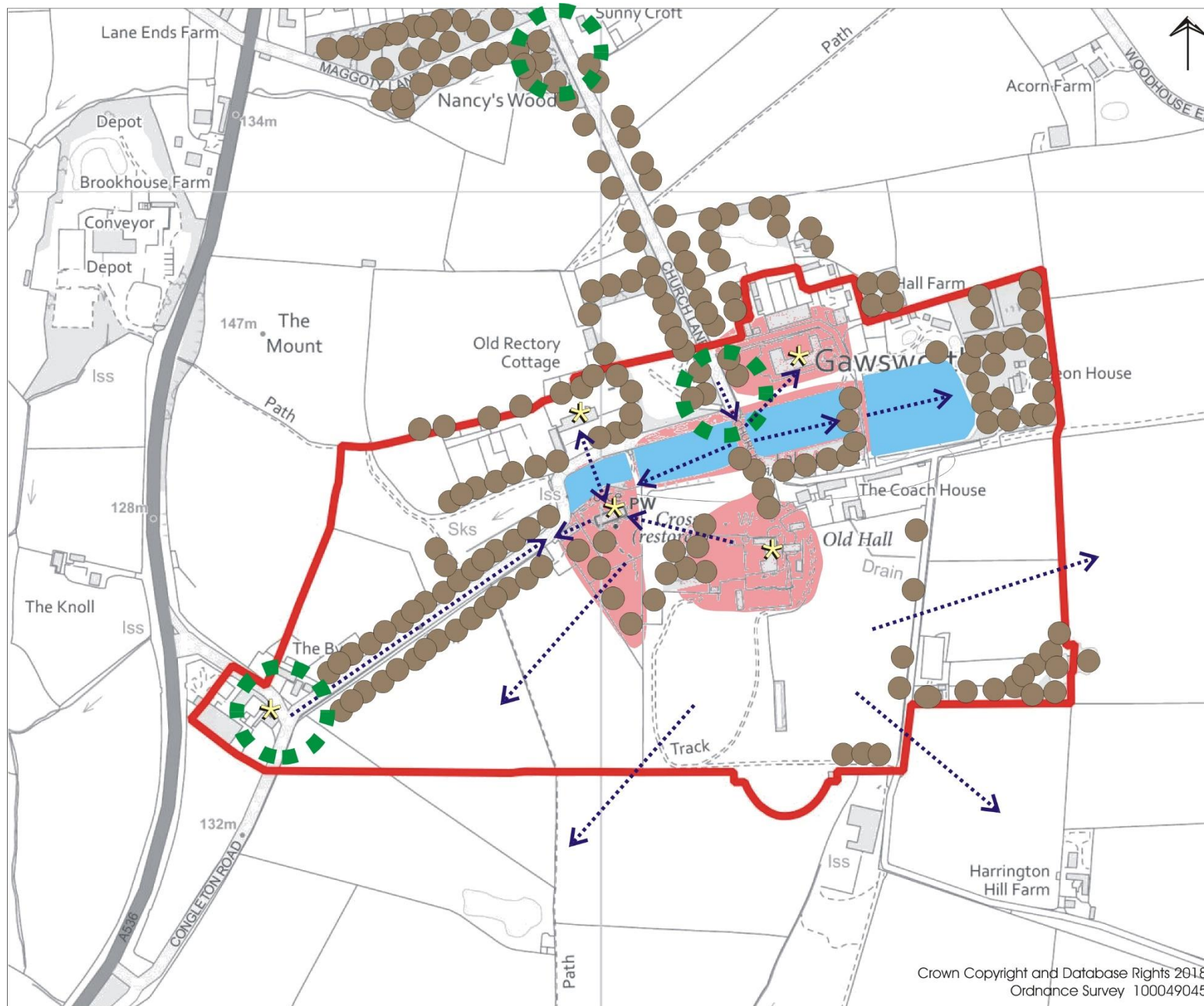
*Left: door within Walled Garden wall; right: Peel statue*

The statue of Sir Robert Peel on Church Lane opposite the Coach House, is a noticeable feature within the area. However, it has no historic association with Gawsworth and therefore does not contribute to the significance of the conservation area. Peel was a statesman of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century who founded England's first police force and became Prime Minister. He was a supporter of public parks and played a large role in the foundation of Peel Park in Salford, which was named after him. The statue was moved here from Peel Park in Manchester by a local collector, and would have much more significance if returned to Peel Park.

Figure 3:  
Spatial Analysis

Key

-  Significant tree group (diagrammatic)
-  Key View / Vista
-  Landmark building
-  Gateway
-  Positive Space
-  Fish ponds



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Scale: 1:2500

Gawsworth Parish Council  
2022



## 5.8 Character Areas

The conservation area, based on the preceding analysis can be described as having four distinct character areas. These are summarised below and shown on Figure 4.

**1. Western Approach** – the westernmost part of the area mostly comprises open farmland. Its most significant features for the conservation area are the Harrington Arms public house and the tree-lined avenue approach to the area via Church Lane. In this way it forms a gateway and approach to the heart of the heart of the area, as it would have done historically, with the public house lying at the edge of the private parkland and the tree-lined avenue representing the beginning of a formal planned landscape.

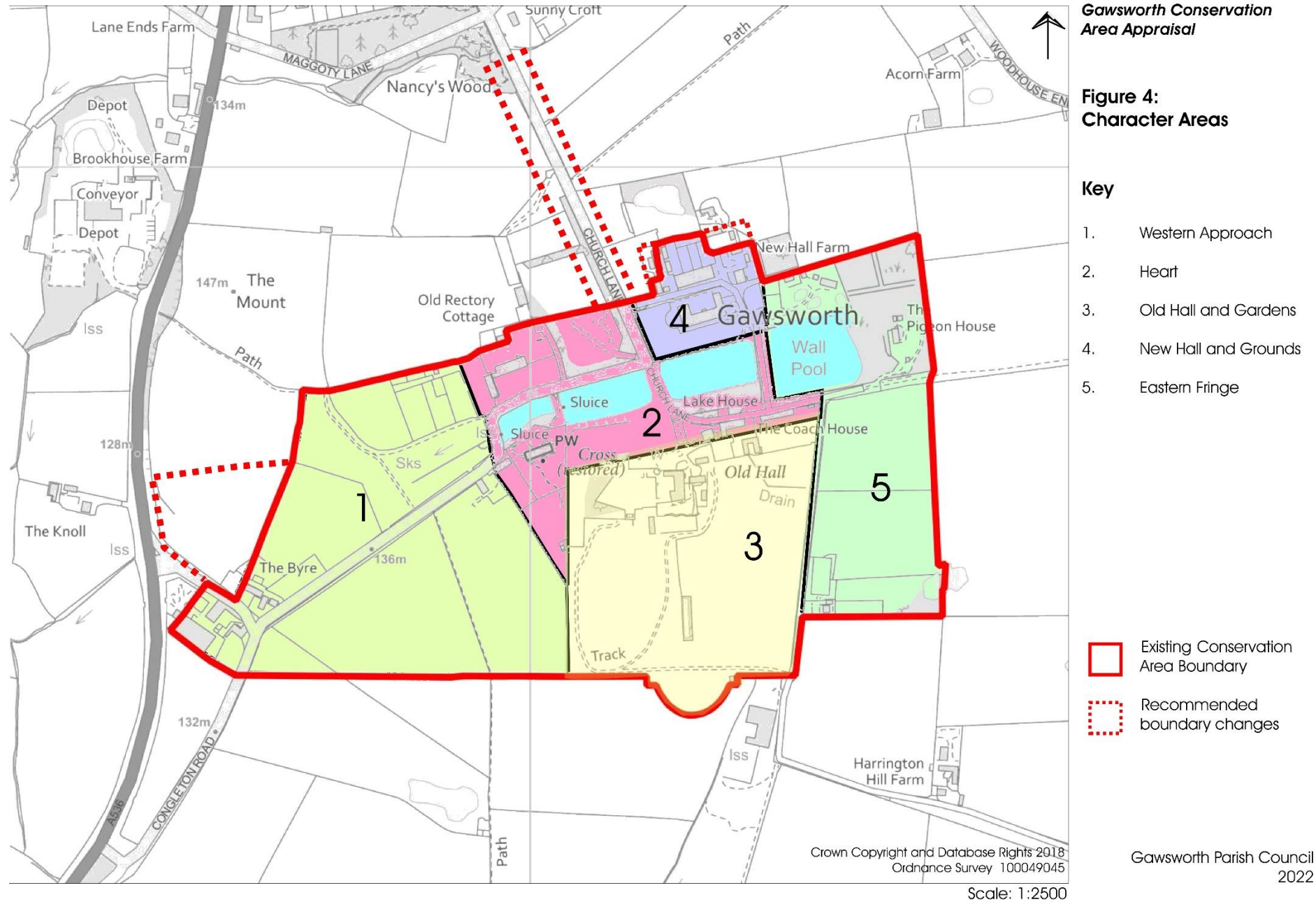
**2. Heart** – the close tree-planting at the approaches mean that heart of the conservation area is a distinct environment that opens up on arrival. Its most notable feature is the four fish ponds. These provide a setting to the varied historic buildings, including St James' Church, the Old Rectory and the New Hall. Gawsworth is a varied area with historic buildings of different ages and separate semi-private formal landscapes but the setting of the ponds serves to unify these into a coherent identity. The area also includes the historic St James' church, the key landmark within the area, together with its churchyard and old and new rectory.

**3. Old Hall and Gardens** – the Old Hall is set back behind a tree-lined frontage and so lies somewhat removed from Area 2, although there are views to the Hall and grounds across the ponds from Church Lane. The Old Hall is the historic focus of the conservation area, with the whole area lying within its historic parkland grounds, which also extended to a much wider area. Today it is the extent of this character area that retains a direct functional linkage with the Hall and the character of this area is one of formal planned gardens and grounds. In this sense it is representative of the wider parkland that existed historically. The Hall remains in private residential use, though also open periodically for visitors. This semi-private area also includes the walled gardens which have important and rare survivals of Elizabethan pleasure gardens. The area also includes some farm buildings.

**4. New Hall and Grounds** – the New Hall is a fine example of an early 18<sup>th</sup> century manor house. It is very different in its setting to the Old Hall: open to view from the public realm and enhancing the setting of the ponds in area 3. It also forms a distinct semi-private environment comprising the New Hall and its associated outbuildings (e.g. the Barn and Toad Hall) together with the gardens and hard landscaped areas that lie between them, reached via a private road leading from Church Lane. These buildings have been sensitively and successfully converted to apartments.

**5. Eastern Fringe** – the eastern area represents an interface between the formal landscapes described above and the surrounding farmland. The significance becomes diluted here but this area plays an important role in preserving the setting of the core areas. The field to the east of the Old Hall gardens is important in allowing access to view the significant boundary wall, the view through the gate to the 'tilting field' and across open countryside. The landscape opens up here, with the area containing the less formal Wall Pond (used by anglers), an open field and a small number of modern houses. It does also contain Pigeon House which is an important historic building and the Wall Pond is an important historic feature.





## 6. Summary of Special Interest

The significance of the conservation area can be summarised by the following description.

***Gawsworth conservation area provides an excellent example of a distinct small rural settlement with various complimentary uses, which survives as a distinct settlement in the surrounding Cheshire farmland. It includes several key historical features:***

- ***Gawsworth Old Hall - an excellent example of a surviving Elizabethan manor house. This is accompanied by a walled garden which includes rare and important survivals of associated Elizabethan pleasure gardens. The association with the Old Hall and its historical 'reat gardens and wider parkland also remains important.***
- ***Gawsworth New Hall – a fine example of an early 18<sup>th</sup> century manor house in very good condition. Its significance is enhanced by a continuing spatial and functional relationship with associated buildings and spaces, and its setting when viewed across the fish ponds.***
- ***St James' Church – a good example of a medieval church and part of an important grouping with its church yard, new Rectory and old Rectory.***
- ***A semi-formal planned landscape that includes four ornamental fish ponds and their relationship with surrounding buildings which gives rise to important views and enhanced settings. The landscape also significantly includes the continuation of tree-lined avenue approaches to the historic core on Church Lane, especially from the south-west.***

***Other important historic buildings include the Harrington Arms, a good example of a 17<sup>th</sup> century inn. The area is also notable for its use of local materials and vernacular features. It retains an important link with the landscape character of rural east Cheshire.***





## Views from St James' Church Tower

*Looking East*



*Looking North*



*Looking South*





## **7. Assessment of Condition and Management Plan**

### **7.1 Uses and Activities**

The conservation area has been well preserved and its significance remains strongly evident today. All of the key listed buildings appear to have continuing viable uses. Often these are the original use for which the building were constructed (for example St James' Church or the Harrington Arms). Other uses have been adapted but continue to have a use that is appropriate to conservation, for example the Old Rectory and Gawsworth Hall remain in single residential use, although without their original ownership associations. Gawsworth New Hall has been adapted to modern apartments but this has been done sensitively and has allowed the restoration of the building. Other outbuildings and agricultural buildings have been converted to residential use without losing their special character (most notably the New Hall Barn).

It is important that heritage buildings continue to provide for modern needs as this is the best way of securing their continued maintenance and future. Very few of the buildings in the conservation area are vacant (the Old Rectory was unoccupied at the time of writing) and all are in good condition and so this has generally been successfully achieved to date. Finding new complimentary supporting functions can also provide new income streams to help support the ongoing maintenance of heritage buildings and spaces. This has been notably achieved at Gawsworth Old Hall where the Old Hall is open periodically to visitors and a range of events are held annually within the gardens. In addition to supporting the maintenance of the heritage assets this has also enabled their heritage value to be enjoyed by the public. One of the fields is used periodically for event parking but this is managed to be without detriment to the conservation area. This is a very good example of conservation management that enables the significance of the assets to be better revealed and enjoyed by the public. In summary, the conservation area has successfully adapted to modern needs whilst also successfully preserving its heritage significance.

The other important use, both in and around the conservation area is agriculture. This is a land-use that may have potential to be sometimes be in conflict with heritage conservation. The needs of working farms are important considerations to local agricultural businesses and the wider local economy. It is important that this is recognised and that these needs are successfully balanced with heritage conservation.

### **7.2 Capacity to accommodate change**

The area has significant planning constraints that mean that development potential is very limited (as explained in Section 2 this includes Green Belt and Open Countryside). There are no development allocations in or around the conservation area and any development is very likely to be limited to conversions/replacements of existing buildings (subject to listed building control) or agricultural development. This situation is not expected to change into the long term, as Cheshire East has identified a five year housing supply in their relatively recently adopted Local Plan, and the location at Gawsworth is not a sustainable one for housing due to its relative distance from significant shops, services and regular public transport routes.

If any buildings within the conservation area have proposals for refurbishment/extension (if listed) or redevelopment (if not listed) then it is important that these maintain the significance of the heritage

asset (if relevant) and the significance of the conservation area. Local or historic architectural features should be preserved and any new additions must preserve the significance of the building and conservation area. It is also important to recognise that sensitive conversions and refurbishments can be vital in ensuring that a building remains in productive use and therefore securing its future maintenance and viability.

Agricultural uses have permitted development rights and exceptions to Green Belt policy restrictions that could allow development of barns and other agricultural buildings within or, more likely, around the conservation area. In these cases it will be important that the local planning authority works with applicants to make sure that the design of new building respects the setting of the conservation area, including views out from the area. For example, this could consideration of appropriate include roof materials and the colour of external elevation.

### **7.3 Maintenance Issues and Recommendations**

The conservation area is generally very well managed and maintained. The land is generally all within the demise of one of several key landowners with clear definition and responsibilities: St James' Church; the management company of the Gawsworth New Hall; the Richards family (Gawsworth Old Hall); Cheshire East Council (highways and public land); with other land in the ownership of smaller private landowners. It is important that there is effective co-ordination between these landowners in order to provide consistent and comprehensive management. The Parish Council has been effectively fulfilling this role to date and are well positioned to continue doing so.

There are a number of particular areas for maintenance recommendation:

#### **Building maintenance and repair**

- Most buildings in the area are well maintained and in good condition. No heritage assets are considered to be at risk. One building that is in need of repair is the former stables and outbuildings at the rear of the Harrington Arms. Building owners of heritage assets should maintain their properties to an adequate standard. In the case of listed buildings this is a legal requirement.

#### **Tree and vegetation management**

- There are many trees in the conservation area. They contribute to the rural feel of the area but many are in need of better pruning and the abundance of trees and vegetation can obscure important views. The trees and bushes on both arms Church Lane would benefit from being better maintained, and in places reinforced in order to create a more formal tree-lined avenue approach to the village. Felled trees should be replaced with limes. Consideration should be given on the western avenue to replacing the beeches with limes over time.
- The vegetation and trees in front of the Pigeon House should be cut back to open up views to the building across the ponds.
- Trees and vegetation behind the frontage wall of the Old Rectory is in need of cutting back and better control, as is the vegetation on the banks of the ponds and on either side of Church Lane as it passes around the ponds.

- The dried-up westernmost pond would benefit from having a more permanent and considered landscape design. At present there is an unsightly Klargest septic tank located here that detracts from the visual appearance of this area.

#### **Boundary treatments**

- Significant historic walls include the walls around the Old Hall garden and the wall on Church Lane to the frontage of the Old Rectory. In some places these walls are in need of re-pointing. Where repairs are carried out it is important to use traditional and appropriate mortars and ashlar capping.
- The wooden fences and gates at either side of Church Lane adjacent to the ponds, and the other bridges between the ponds, are in many places in need of better maintenance, or in some cases, replacement. Any replacement must use appropriate and similar materials.
- Trees and hedges behind these fences are also in need of cutting back and tidying-up. The public realm in this area should have a more formal appearance in order to relate better to the planned layout of the ponds and bridges.

#### **Maintenance and quality of carriageway and pavement surfaces**

- The road and pavement surfaces are sometimes in poor condition and in need of repair.
- The kerb and hedge and fence boundary to the Church Pool is often in a poor state of repair. There are potentially hazardous gaps and trip hazards in the area used extensively for parking for the church and conservation area visitors

### **7.4 Article 4 Directions**

No Article 4 Directions currently exist and none are recommended for the conservation area.

### **7.5 Boundary changes**

As part of the appraisal process, the existing conservation area boundary was reviewed. It was found that the boundary generally followed a justifiable line. There are, however, several changes to the boundary that would better protect of the significance of the conservation area.

The recommendation of the previous 2007 Appraisal were also reviewed in this regard. The boundary changes recommended at this time are considered to remain relevant and the current appraisal concurs with these recommendations. As part of this process the conservation officer at Cheshire East Council was consulted and it is understood that there was support in principle for the previous recommended changes and that there were no particular heritage reasons why the previously recommended boundary changes were not implemented.

#### **Recommended changes:**

**1. Northern approach** - An alteration of the boundary is recommended to include the length of Church Lane running north from Gawsworth New Hall to the brook. The tree and hedgerow from the Brook to the crossroads with Maggoty Lane are not included, however the informal yet dense planting provides an important element of setting. Church Lane, with its dramatic linear road and tall overarching



avenue of trees forms an important approach route to the conservation area. It was the historic approach to Gawsworth Hall from the north. It is of a parallel importance to the western stretch of Church Lane, already included within the conservation area's boundary. Including this area would preserve the existing tree planting and also support better maintenance and protect future tree planting here.

**2. Western field** - It is recommended that part of a field to the north of Oak Cottage is included within the conservation area; this amendment would make the boundary of the Gawsworth Conservation Area correspond with the boundary of the Grade II\* Registered Garden. It would also better protect the avenue approach of Church Lane to the south of this, and retain the boundary of the previous Gawsworth Old Hall park in this area, and provide a reminder of this wider parkland more generally.

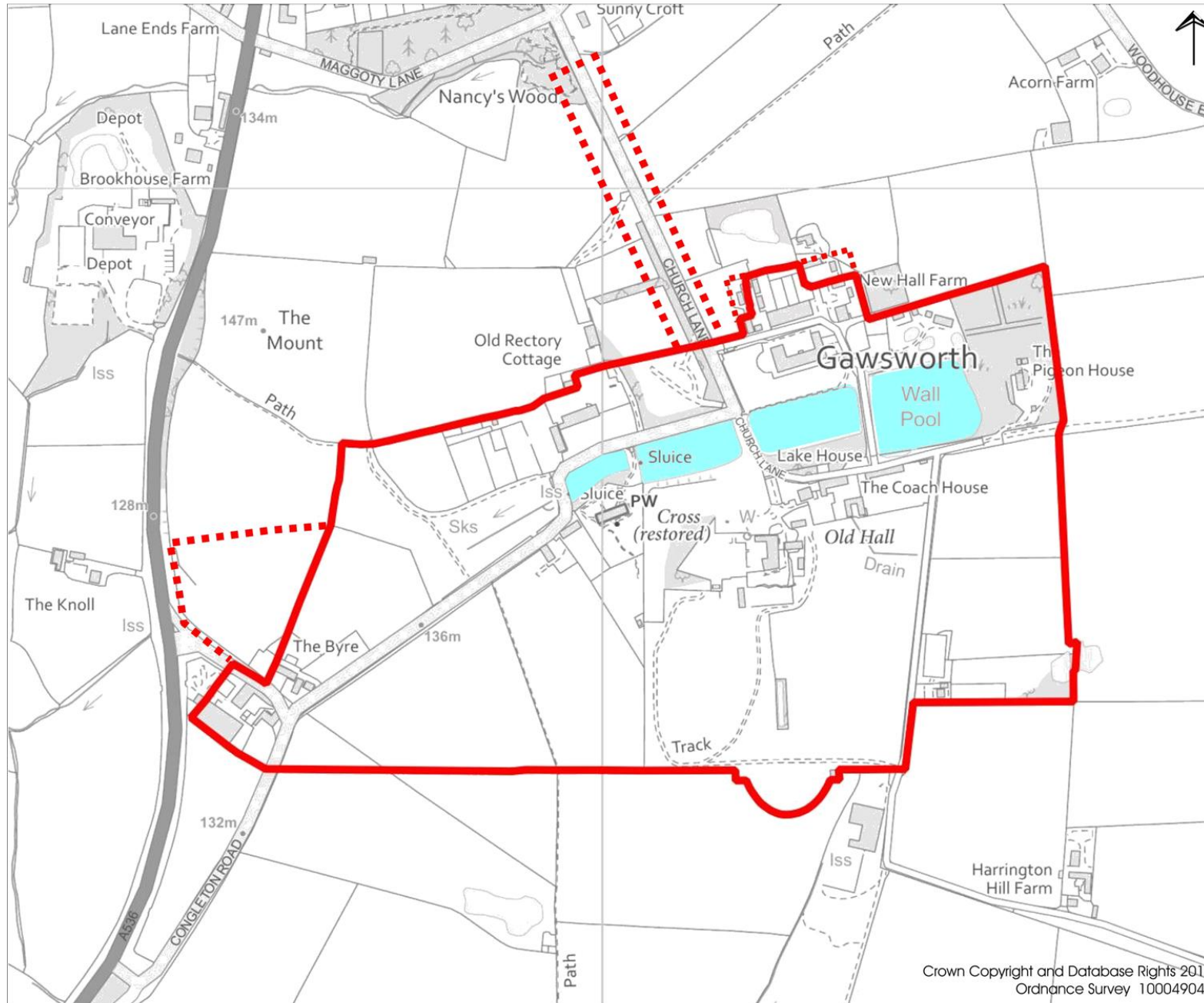
**3. Land either side of New Hall Barn** - two further small extensions to the boundary are recommended to take in two small parcels of land lying to the north-east and north-west of New Hall Barn. This would amend the boundary line to follow the rear plot line of domestic curtilages, as distinct from the surrounding agricultural land. This land was probably not historically associated with the New Hall (as revealed from historic OS mapping), however the low rise residential and agricultural buildings here (which have no significance in heritage terms) have the potential to be demolished and form the site of new development under planning policy for the Green Belt. As this land is very close to the New Hall, New Hall Barn and Toad Hall it has significant potential to affect the setting of these heritage assets. Including the land within the conservation area would therefore better enable control of any potential redevelopment and would also create a more legible and defensible northern boundary to the conservation area.

#### **Other discounted changes**

The following changes to the boundary were also considered but subsequently dismissed as recommendations:

**1. Maggoty Wood** – Maggoty Johnson is an important local historical figure with associations with Gawsworth, and the woods themselves also have local community value. However, it is felt that the presence of his grave here does not sufficiently associate this area physically with the conservation area, for which it is rather too distant (despite the proposed northern extension, which is specifically included as an approach to the conservation area). Furthermore, the grave is Grade II listed and therefore already benefits from sufficient protection, and the Woods are well maintained by the National Trust and protected as a public open space by planning policy.

**2. Further extension of fields within old parkland** – Gawsworth Old Park once extended to a much larger area, encompassing around 600 acres. However, this is felt to be too large an area to consider for inclusion (in significant part). Most of this land has no surviving physical connection to the conservation and there would be a real danger of diluting the value of the current conservation area. Providing a clear and defensible boundary must be a paramount consideration. This land is now predominantly in agricultural use and the needs of working farmers must also be considered. Indeed, it was enclosed for agricultural use as far back as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, meaning that the parkland role is now well-severed and the independent agricultural use is also a historic feature. The extension of the western field (recommendation 2 above) will serve to provide an example of this wider parkland without diluting the significance of the existing designation.



Gawsworth Conservation Area Appraisal

Figure 5:  
Recommended  
Boundary Changes

Key

- Existing Conservation Area Boundary
- Recommended boundary changes

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## **Historic Maps**

Speed's map of Cheshire, 1610

Estate plan by G. Grey, c. 1770s)

Gawsworth Estate Plans, 1759-60, courtesy of the Richards family

Burdett's map of Cheshire, 1777

Tithe map, 1849

Map by JP Earwaker, 1880s

Ordnance survey mapping, historic mapping provided by Cheshire East Council (OS, 1870, 1873, 1882, 1897, 1910, and 1976)