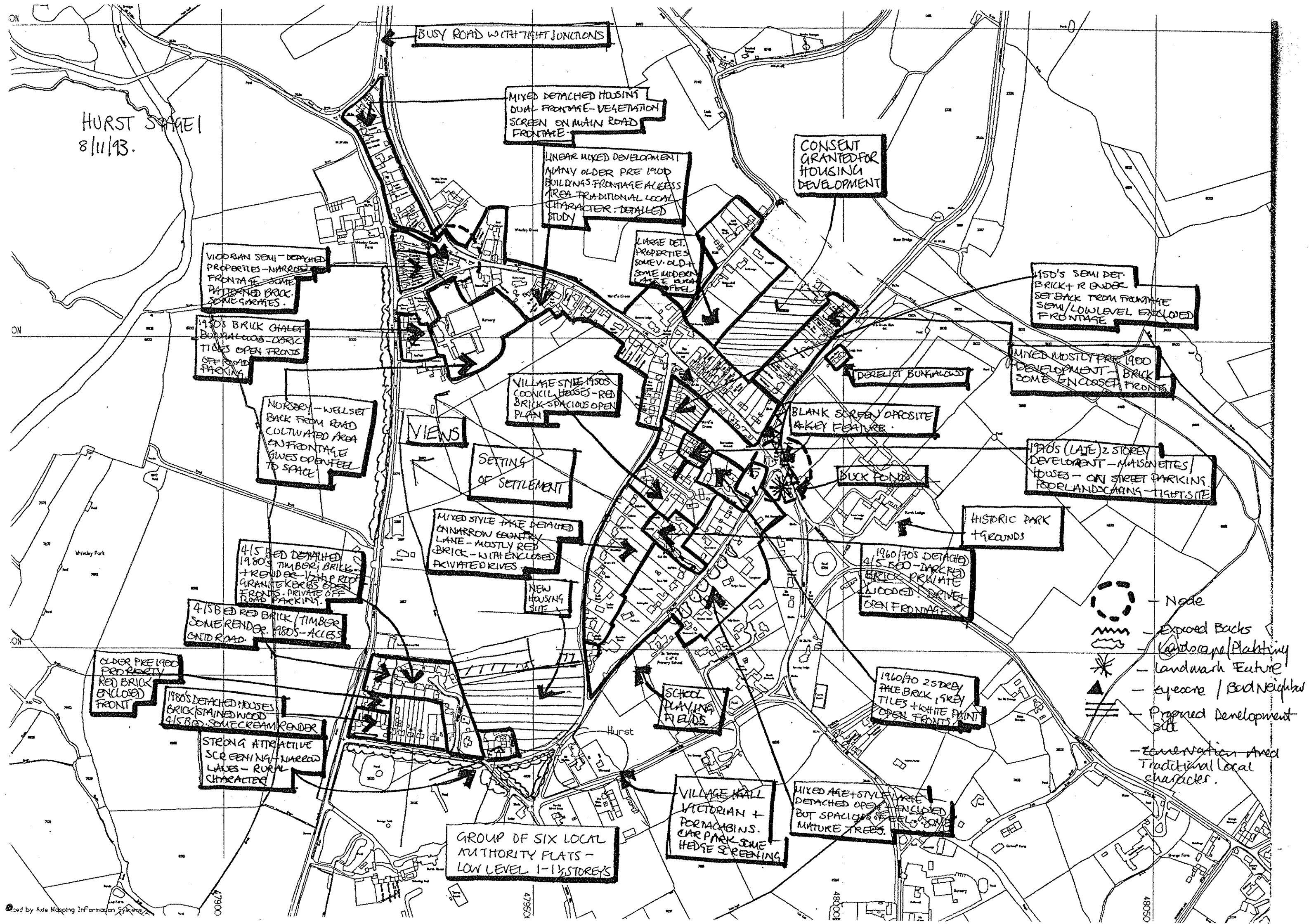


Hurst



Settlement Development

The main village of Hurst was developed away from the historic core of the settlement which now forms the Conservation Area. This is believed to have occurred because following the Black Death in 1348, the surviving villagers built new dwellings away from the church and graveyard to avoid contamination. This unusual situation has survived in this form to the present day, in which the church, built on a wooded hill, is located at some distance from the population centre of the village.

Development of the village centre is linear in fashion concentrating on the north-south route, here we find the distinct Townsend Pond, the village cricket ground and the main village facilities. The village contains some fine 16th Century timber framed buildings; the pressure for development coming later than centres like Wokingham meant a number of these have survived. In addition the village is an attractive residential area in a countryside location, making dwellings of any kind highly desirable.

The concentration of Listed Buildings around the church makes up the Conservation Area, clearly distinct from the remainder of the village.

Legibility

Being a dispersed village with distinct character areas it is difficult to ascertain the true village centre, but to the traveller the concentration of activity along the main A321 and the importance of this route itself, reinforces the legibility. Certainly in modern times the village shops are more the centre of the village than the church. Townsend Pond is an important focus to the centre of the village. It is a shame that the cricket ground is enclosed as this would increase the focus of the village at this point with a traditional open green.

The surprise of the church with its own collection of buildings around it adds to the delight of Hurst. It is also visible from some distance above the trees. Much of the village is served by wooded rural lanes which lend a distinct rural feel to the character.

Special Character

The vast majority of the village could be said to display 'special character', as an attractive village. It has kept a good relationship to the surrounding countryside and suffered only minor infill and modern development. The linear part of the village is linked by a series of ponds and ditches, which adds another dimension to the built environment. The backdrop to the village, especially the approach from the south, is well wooded.

The special features include:

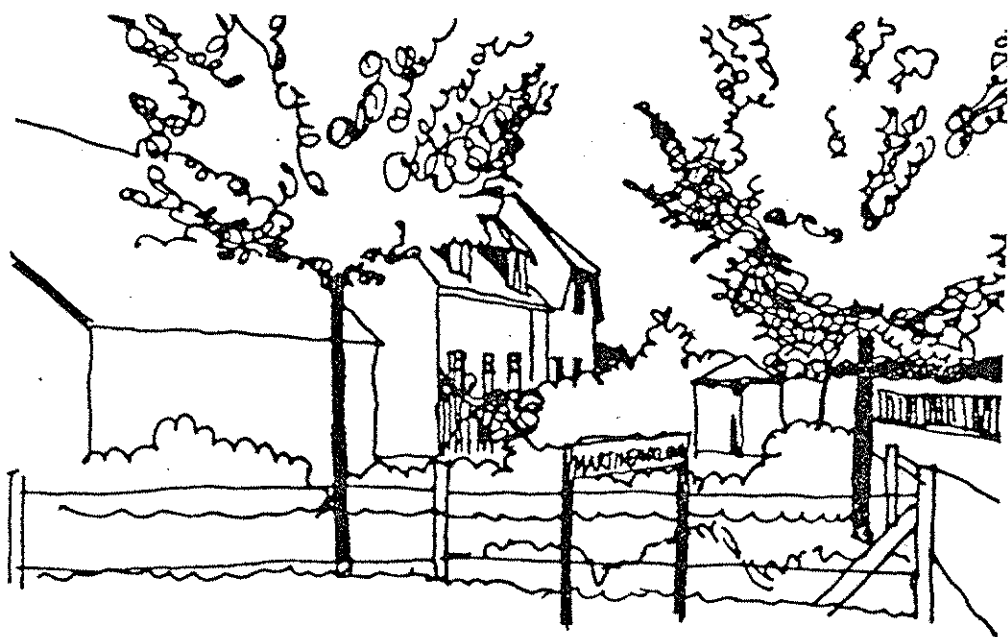
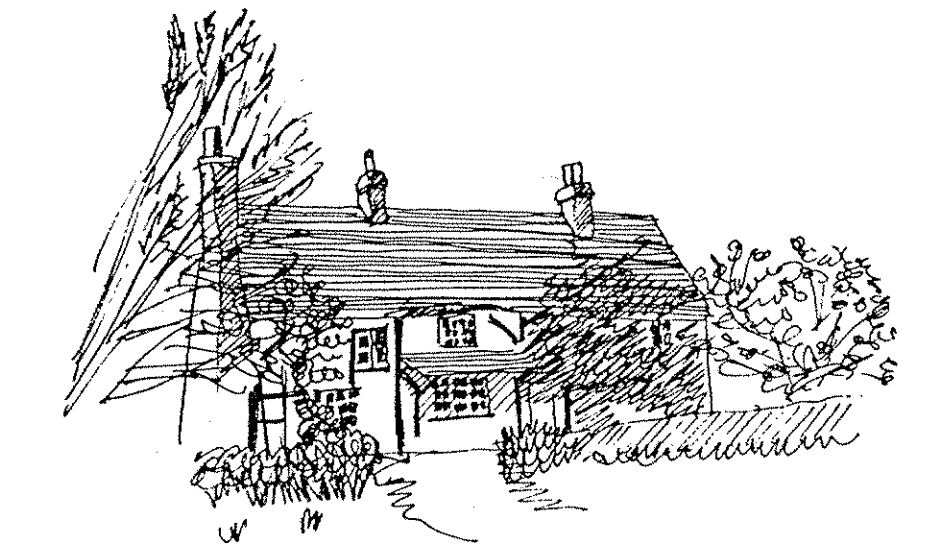
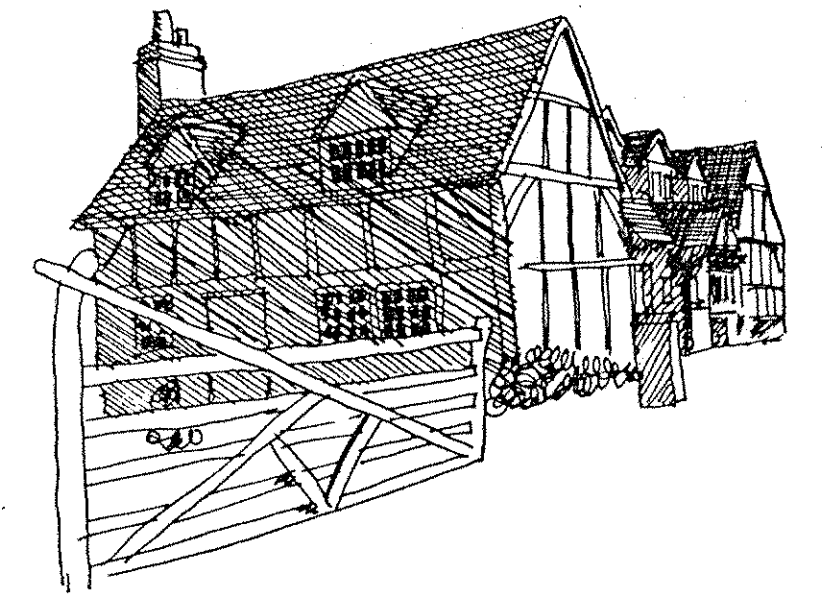
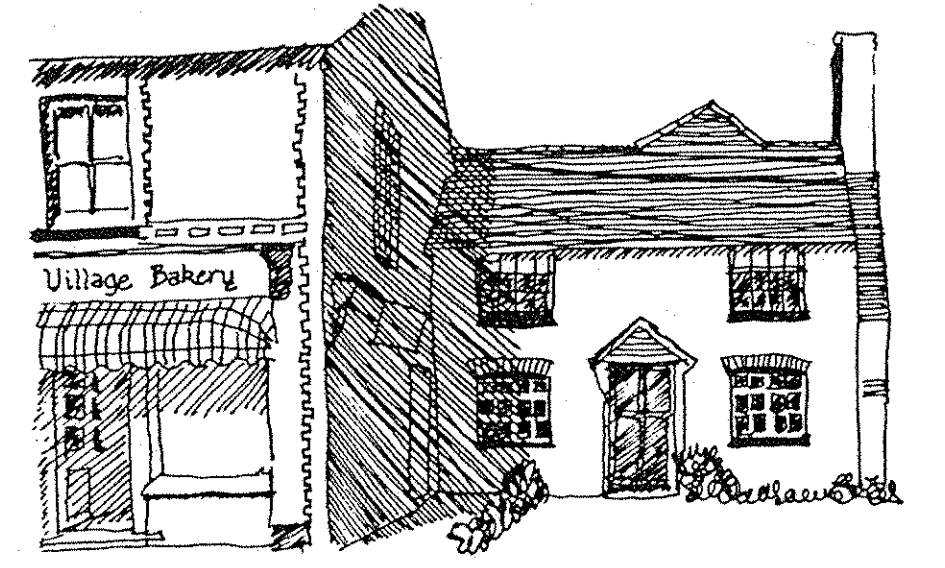
- ❖ Good range of attractive historic buildings.
- ❖ Feature village pond.
- ❖ Distinct Conservation Area.
- ❖ Wooded and rural setting.
- ❖ Limited unsympathetic modern development.

Negative Features

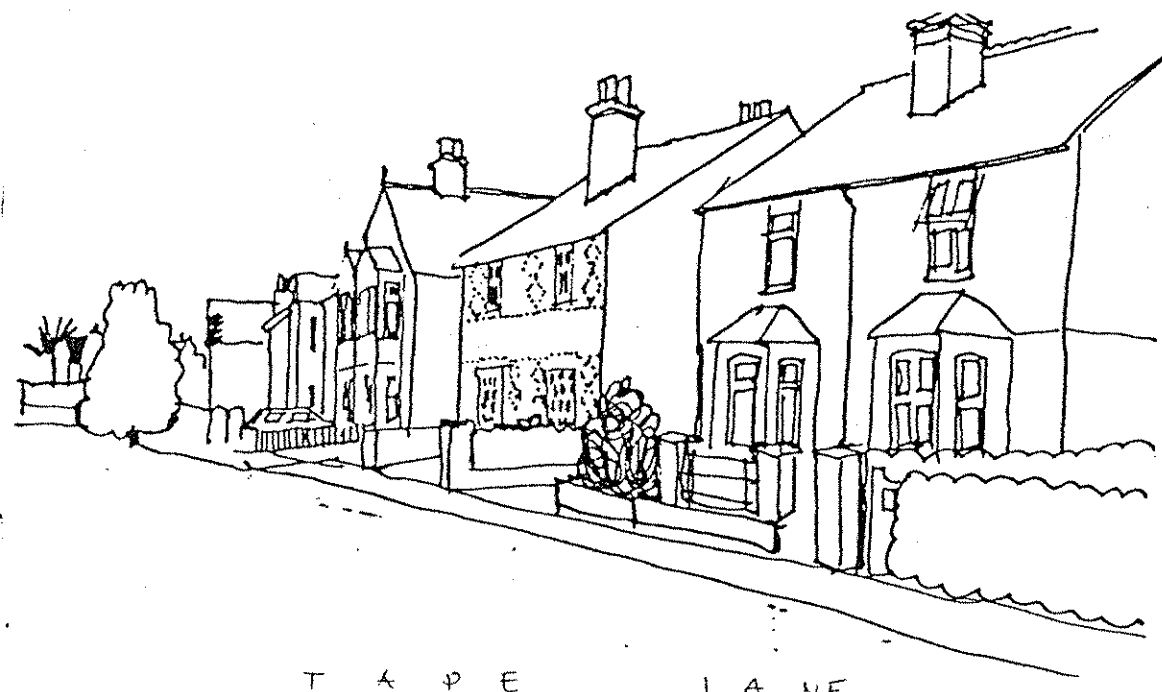
The main problem is the speed and flow of traffic along the A321. However, some natural 'traffic calming' occurs with the parking of vehicles to use facilities; this obstructs the road making only a single carriageway. This is desirable as it acts as a pinch-point - this could be formalised by official traffic calming but benefit could be made by slowing traffic earlier by use of gateways.

The village has a number of areas that might detract from the village character:

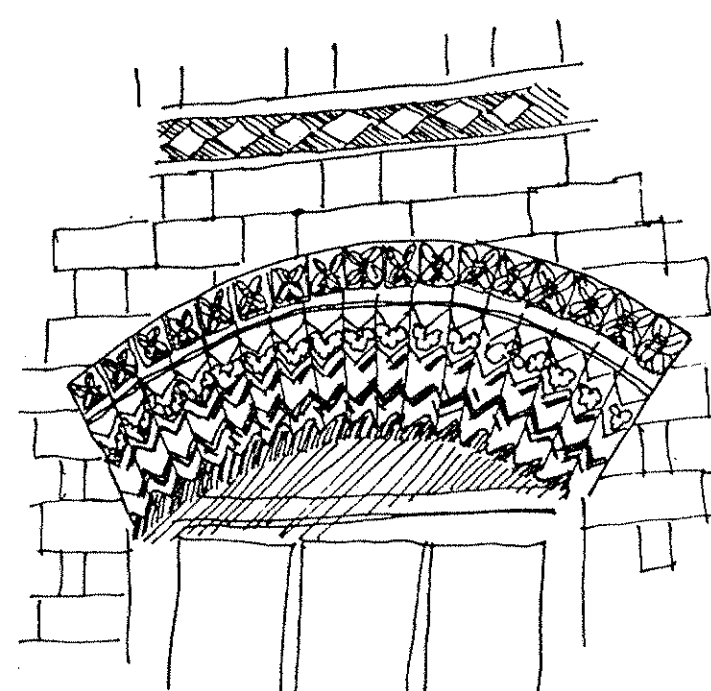
- ❖ Grassed area near Townsend Pond.
- ❖ Play area and fencing.
- ❖ Hurst cricket ground - very enclosed.
- ❖ Woodlands neglected.
- ❖ Road signage clutter.



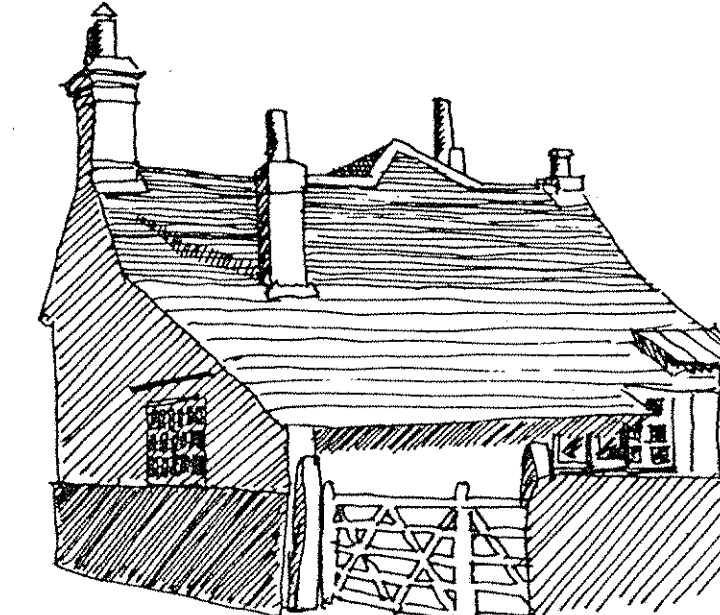
M A R T I N E A U L A N E



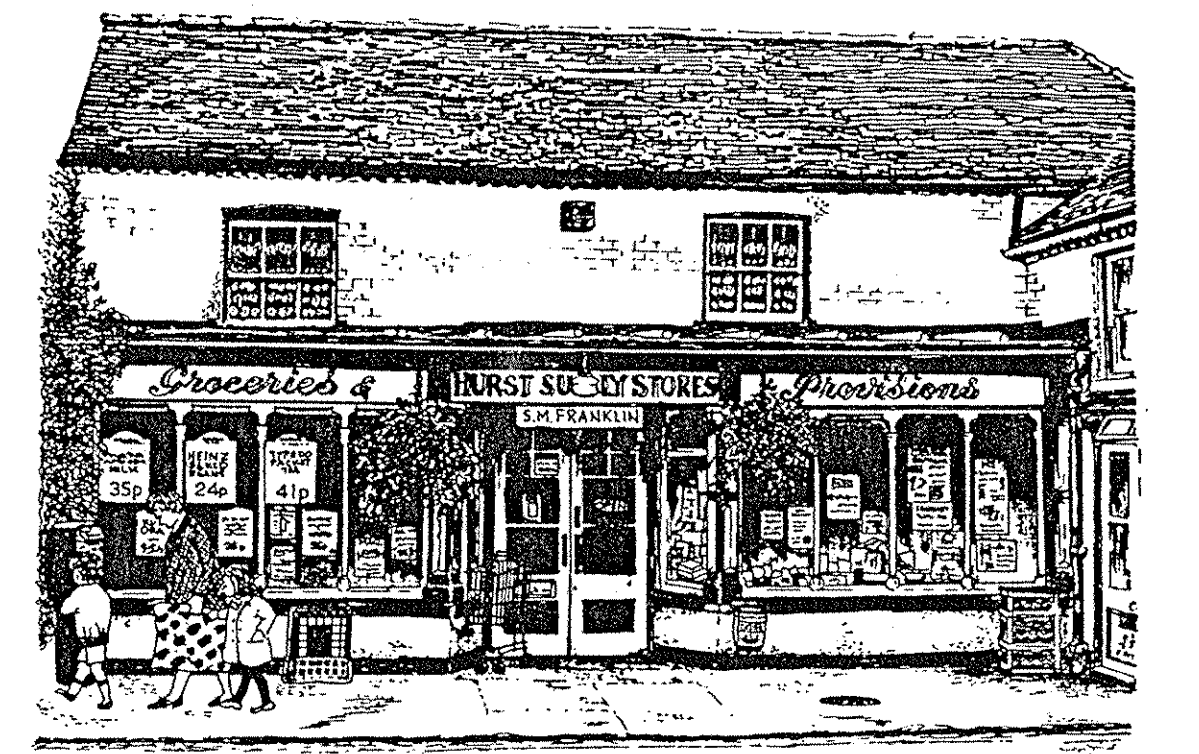
T A P E I A N E



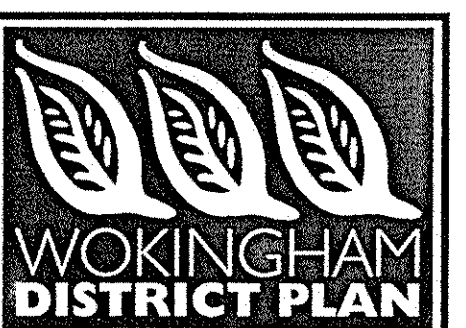
ARCH DETAIL



REAR OF HURST STORES



Built Environment Survey



April 1994