

FIRWOOD FOLD CONSERVATION AREA



Environment Department

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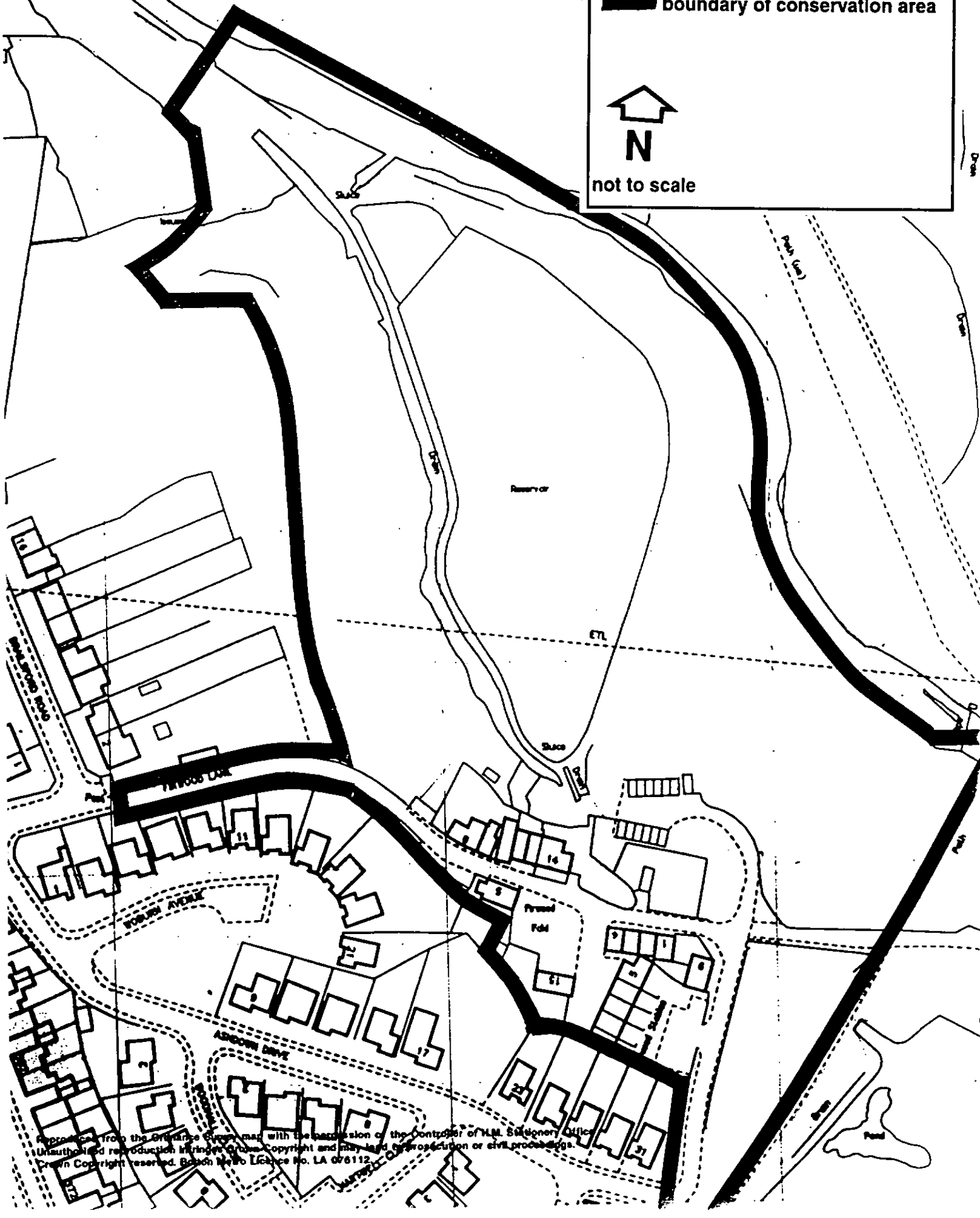
FIRWOOD FOLD CONSERVATION AREA

Key

 boundary of conservation area



not to scale



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FIRWOOD FOLD CONSERVATION AREA

Character Assessment

Introduction

Firwood Fold is situated two miles to the north east of Bolton Town Centre above the valley of the Bradshaw Brook.

It was the first Conservation Area to be declared within the Borough and consists of a hamlet of formerly agricultural dwellings and out-buildings and a reservoir surrounded by woodland.

The name "Firwood Fold" is thought to mean a large farmstead ("fold") set in by a wood ("Firwood").

History

Firwood Fold originated as a rural community. The earlier buildings date from the Sixteenth Century and were originally timber framed. They were clad at a later date in brick or stone. Number 15 Firwood Fold is reputed to be the oldest inhabited building within the Borough.

Number 10 Firwood Fold is also of great interest as it is the birth place of Samuel Crompton the inventor of the "Mule". This machine for spinning fine cotton yarn was

perfected in 1779 and was a very important development in the cotton manufacturing industry. Samuel Crompton lived in the house from his birth in 1753 until 1758.

Buildings were added to the Fold in the 17th and 18th Centuries. These additions may have been a consequence of an increase in productivity at the Crompton Estate of which Firwood Fold was the central farmstead.

The fortunes of the Crompton Estate as an agricultural undertaking waned during the 18th Century. During the 19th Century the Fold was part of Thomas Hardcastle's estate. Hardcastle was a textile manufacturer and lived at Firwood Hall (now demolished). He built a Dutch barn and a school at Firwood Fold.

The stables and a former pig house have been converted into residential use. The barn has been demolished and its site landscaped to form a green.

During the 20th Century the buildings at the Fold were largely neglected until they were purchased by Bolton County Borough Council in 1969.



Figure 1.
10 Firwood Fold




Figure 2.
5 Firwood Fold

FIRWOOD FOLD CONSERVATION AREA

Townscape

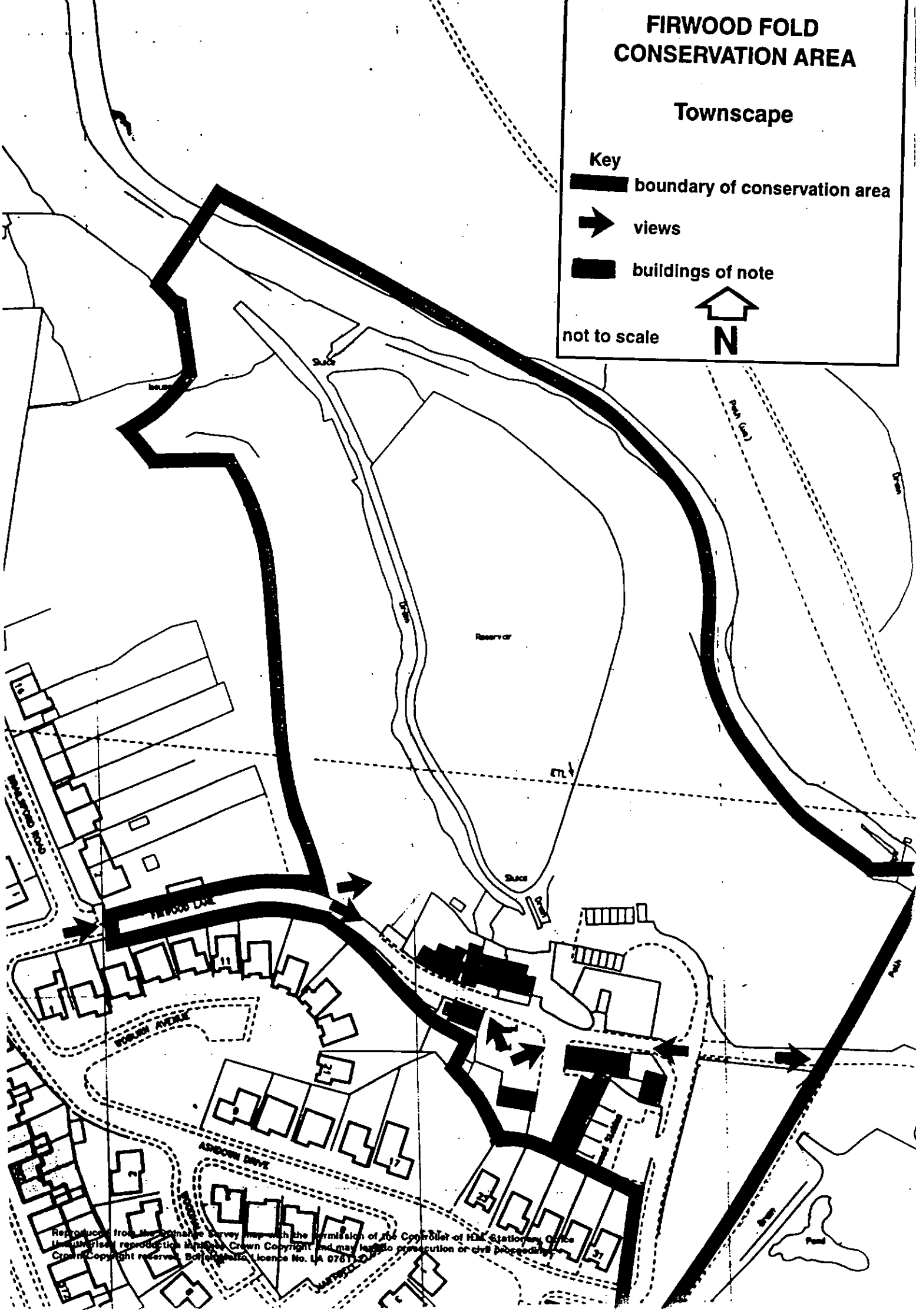
Key

 boundary of conservation area

 views

 buildings of note

not to scale



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The Fold was declared a Conservation Area at this time. In 1974 all the buildings, except the former pig house were Listed as being of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. In 1976 the refurbishment of the Fold won a Times/RICS housing award.

Townscape

Firwood Fold is situated beyond an area of 20th Century housing off Crompton Way. It forms a tightly knit group of properties with a strong rural character. This results from its small scale, the vernacular style of the buildings, the use of local materials for building construction and street surfacing, its partial enclosure by woodland and the close proximity of a small reservoir.



Figure 3.
The Fold's single thoroughfare

Enclosures

Firwood Lane forms a pedestrian access to the Conservation Area from Crompton Way. Access for vehicles is via Ashdown Drive. The western end of Firwood Lane is a footway only, though it widens to include a carriageway where the frontages are built up.

Within the area, vistas are closed by slight bends in Firwood Lane and by woodland to the north and east. The central green created by the demolition of the barn provides views of most buildings in the Fold.



Figure 4.
The Green

The Conservation Area is not clearly visible from its immediate surroundings and is therefore very secluded. Views of the Fold from Firwood Lane contrast sharply with the adjacent suburban housing and create a strong sense of surprise.

Landmarks, Views And Skyline

There is a clear view out of the area looking east down Firwood Lane towards Bury. There is a good view of the reservoir from the western end of Firwood Lane.



Figure 5.
View into the area looking east

Boundary Treatments

Many properties have boundary walls constructed of either stone blocks or large stone flags. These are important to the visual

character of the Fold and its strong sense of enclosure.

Street Layout

Those properties built as dwellings together with the former school, front onto Firwood Lane and are sited directly at the back of the footway. Number 15 is set well back beyond the green and numbers 13 and 14 have small front gardens. The former pig house and stables are sited at right angles to the Lane.

Junctions and Meeting Points

The open green, although not an original feature, now forms the focal point of the Fold. It is centrally placed within the built up area and is overlooked by the majority of buildings. The landscaping is simple and appropriate with mown grass and several trees.

Street Frontages

The pattern of building is irregular, individual properties having been constructed and modified over a long period of time. They have been constructed as single units, pairs or short terraces. Numbers 10 to 14 have been built in several phases to form a continuous terrace, with number 10 projecting slightly forward from the other houses.

Street Furniture

The section of Firwood Fold, passing through the Conservation Area is surfaced in river cobbles as are the footways, with some areas of stone flags.

There are a number of traditional fluted cast iron lighting columns with ladder bars and traditional style replacement lanterns along Firwood Lane. The columns have the makers name "Ryder Bros, Bolton" cast near to the base and were installed as part of the Conservation Area enhancement scheme in the early 1970's. There is a traditional style

bracket fixed to the wall of number 5 and a concrete lighting column at the northern end of Ashdown Drive.

There is a modern litter bin cast in concrete with a pebble aggregate on the central green and a modern street sign at the eastern end of Firwood Fold.

Architectural Character

Although the hamlet has developed over a long period of time, the buildings form a cohesive, group because of their tight arrangement, common scale, simple style and their use of a restricted range of local materials including brick, stone, slate and thatch. Most of the buildings are two storeys high and all are in residential use. With the exception of the former pig house all the properties in the Conservation Area are Listed as being of Special Architectural or Historical interest.

1 TO 4 FIRWOOD FOLD

This row of cottages at the south eastern corner of the area probably dates from the early Eighteenth Century. Number 1 is built of roughly coursed and squared rubble and the rest are built of brick with a stone plinth. The row has slate roofs, boarded front doors, fixed light windows on the ground floor and casements on the first floor, all with glazing bars.



Figure 6.
1 to 4 Firwood Fold

1-5 FIRWOOD MEWS

This Eighteenth Century stable block was converted into residential use in the late 1980's. It is constructed of brick with a stone plinth and a stone flagged roof and has bulls eye windows at first floor level. The plank doors and top hinged windows are recent replacements in earlier openings.



Figure 7.
Former stables



Figure 8.
Former stables

THE FORMER PIG HOUSE

This single storey stone rubble building with a slate roof has been converted to residential use. It has modern two light windows and a plank door.

3 AND 4 FIRWOOD FOLD

Originally built in the early Nineteenth Century as a school, this building is now a pair

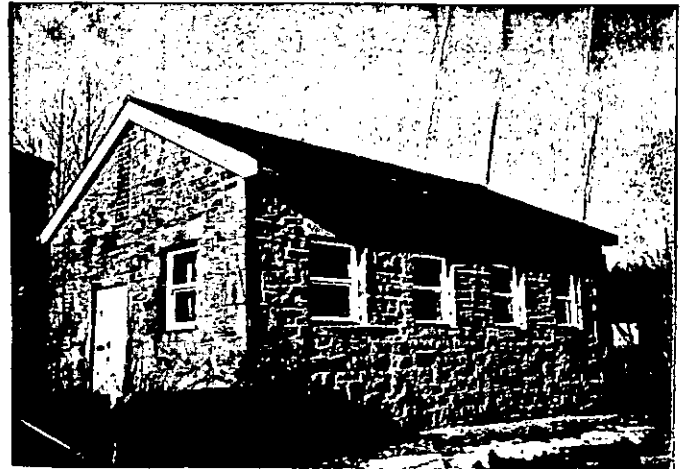


Figure 9.
Former pighouse

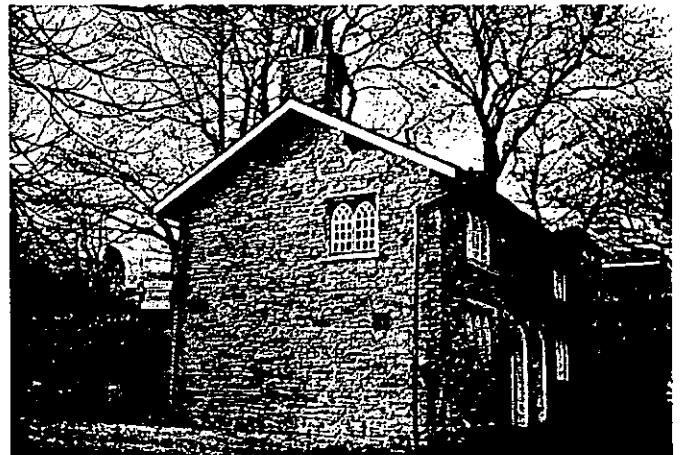


Figure 10.
5 Firwood Fold

of houses. It is constructed of coursed and squared stone with a stone flagged roof. The paired doors have steep two centred arches with hood moulds. There are three light casement windows on each floor with pointed arched traceried lights beneath drop ended hood moulds.

8 AND 9 FIRWOOD FOLD

The external structure of this pair of houses is largely Eighteenth Century but incorporates substantial elements of an earlier building. Number 9 is built of roughly coursed and squared stone and number 8 is built of brick with two exposed cruck blades on stone plinths to the front elevation. Number 9 has stone mullioned windows and number 8 has iron horizontally sliding sash windows with small

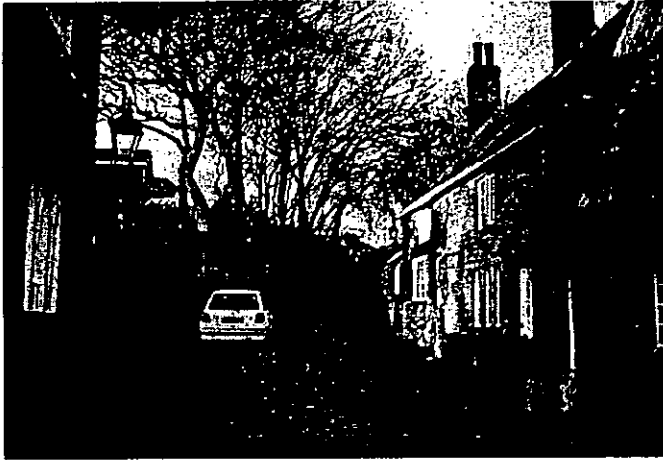


Figure 11.
8 and 9 Firwood Fold

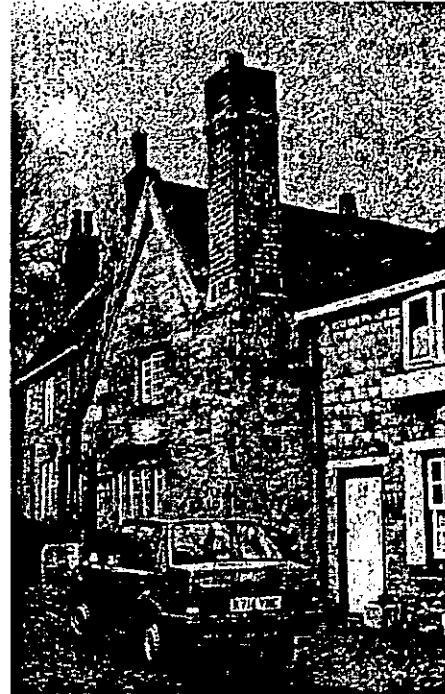
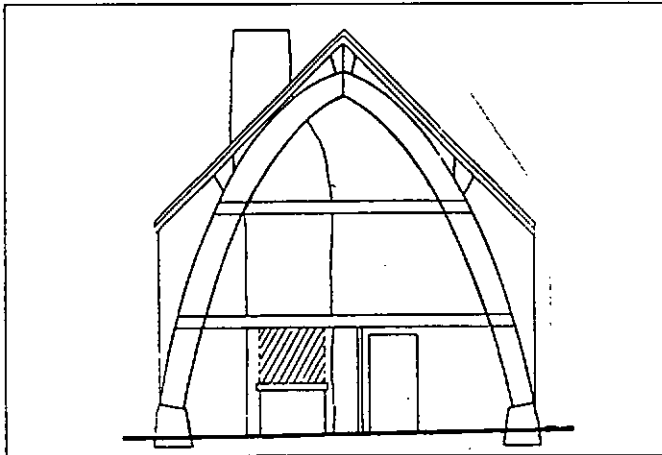


Figure 12.
10 Firwood Fold



Sketch 1
Section drawing of 8 Firwood Fold

panes to the first floor. The steeply pitched slate roof has timber clad verges.

10 FIRWOOD FOLD

This Sixteenth Century building has an integral timber frame clad in coursed and squared stone with rendered side elevations and a thatched roof. It is one and a half storeys high with a gable fronting the street. This has a stone mullioned window with a drop ended hood mould on the ground floor and a horizontally sliding sash window above. A stone plaque records that the house was the birth place of Samuel Crompton in 1753.



Figure 13.
11 to 14 Firwood Fold

11 TO 14 FIRWOOD FOLD

These three late Seventeenth, early Eighteenth Century houses were originally four dwellings. They were built in two phases, numbers 11 and 12 forming a pair. The ground floor windows to these houses have 20 pane sashes while the first floor has casement openings. Number 14 has a Nineteenth Century bay window on the left hand side and a four light mullioned window on the right hand side. There are cast iron railings on a low plinth wall bounding the front garden of No. 14.



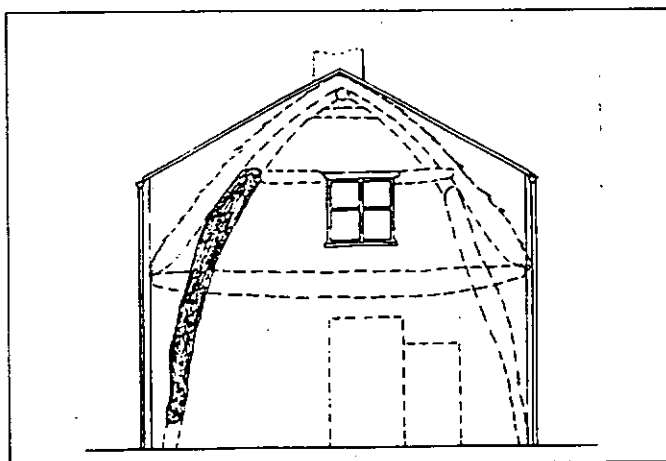
Figure 14
13 and 14 Firwood Fold



Figure 15
15 Firwood Fold

15 FIRWOOD FOLD

This house is probably Sixteenth Century in origin but was extensively remodeled in the Nineteenth Century. It is largely constructed of stone although the structure has been raised and extended in brick. The gable incorporates a cruck truss. The property has a heavy graded slate roof and modern windows. This is believed to be the oldest inhabited house in Bolton.



Sketch 2
Section drawing of 15 Firwood Fold

SECTION TWO

Policy Guidelines

Statutory Controls

Firwood Fold was designated as a Conservation Area in 1969. There are a range of planning controls to protect its character.

All the buildings in the Conservation Area except the former pig house are Grade II Listed Buildings. Numbers 10 and 15 Firwood Fold are of outstanding interest being Grade I and II* respectively.

Listed Building Consent is needed from the Council to demolish, part demolish or extend a Listed Building or to alter it outside or inside in any way which would change its character.

Conservation Area designation means that Conservation Area Consent is needed from the Council to demolish or part demolish all but the smallest buildings. Part demolition means the removal of features such as chimney stacks and bay windows. It also includes demolition of elevations of a building.

The Council must be notified in writing of any proposals to cut down, top or lop a tree in a Conservation Area.

Bolton's Unitary Development Plan contains a number of policies relating to Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. These are set out in the Appendix. General guidance on policy for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas is given in Development Control Policy Notes 19 and 20, available from the Planning Department.

Guidance leaflets on the care, maintenance and alteration of traditional buildings are also available free of charge.

The undeveloped wooded area to the north and east of the Fold is included in the Green Belt and is within an area of Special Landscape

Value. Bolton's Unitary Development Plan contains policies relating to the Green Belt and areas of Special Landscape Value which are set out in the Appendix

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

New Development

Opportunities for new development within the Conservation Area are very limited. Any new development must reflect the character of existing buildings with respect to siting, scale, proportions, materials and detailing. Applications for Outline Planning Permission will not be considered.

Street Surfacing And Furniture

Any original stone flags, cobbles and kerbs should be retained and re-laid where necessary. Stone walls should be retained and any repairs carried out using the same materials and methods of workmanship. The traditional cast iron street lights should be retained.

BUILDING ALTERATIONS

MATERIALS

Alterations should utilise traditional materials to match those used to construct the building. Reclaimed local stone or new stone to match the existing should be used in preference to reconstituted stone.

Strap or ribbon pointing should be avoided since this not only harms the appearance of the building but can damage the stone by preventing the run off of water. External walls should not be painted, rendered or clad in modern materials. External cleaning should only be carried out to remove corrosive dirt.

Cleaning should be carried out by a specialist firm under close supervision.

Decorative features including plaques, mouldings and date stones should be retained.

WINDOWS AND DOORS

Stone widow cills, mullions, lintels, door surrounds, steps and any original windows and doors should be retained.

The integrity of the majority of properties depends on the retention of an uninterrupted flat facade relieved only by the subtle modelling of the surface achieved by the recessing of doors and windows. The following are unacceptable:

- porches
- bow and bay windows (unless these are existing original features of the building);
- external shutters;
- changes in size of shape of window and door openings;
- dormer windows.

Any doorways or windows no longer in use should be retained and not blocked up.

Owners should be encouraged to use the following styles when replacing windows and doors.

- Vertical sliding sash windows with glazing bars in vertically proportioned window openings and either horizontal sliding sashes or side hinged casement windows with glazing bars in horizontally proportioned openings.
- Vertically boarded doors.

Windows and doors should be made of timber and should be painted. Staining is not a traditional finish for timber and should not be used. UPVC windows and doors are not acceptable as they are not in keeping with the character of traditional buildings.

New windows or doors should be recessed to the original depth and should not be fitted flush with the face of the wall or projecting from it.

CHIMNEYS AND ROOFS

Chimney stacks should be retained and if replacement is necessary, this should be in the same materials which have been used to construct the remainder of the building. This may be brick or stone with clay pots. Where central heating flues are installed these should be contained within the original chimney pots or traditional style replacements.

Roof repairs or replacements should be in slate, stone flags or thatch depending upon the existing roofing material. Where ridge tiles need replacing these should be in stone or blue clay. New roof lights may be acceptable but these should be flush fitting and should not be on prominent roof slopes.

RAINWATER GOODS

Replacement rainwater goods should be in timber, cast iron or moulded aluminium with a black coating.

GARDEN WALLS AND GATES

Stone garden walls including upright flags should be retained. Iron railings and garden gates should be retained.

MINOR FIXTURES

Standard external fixtures including satellite dishes, meter boxes, burglar alarms, central heating flues and security cameras should be sited in unobtrusive positions. Wherever possible they should be colour coated to match the background materials i.e. walls or roof.

WHEELIE BINS

The layout of traditional properties can create difficulties for storing bins. Wherever possible they should be stored out of site, not left out on the street or footway.

FIRWOOD FOLD CONSERVATION AREA

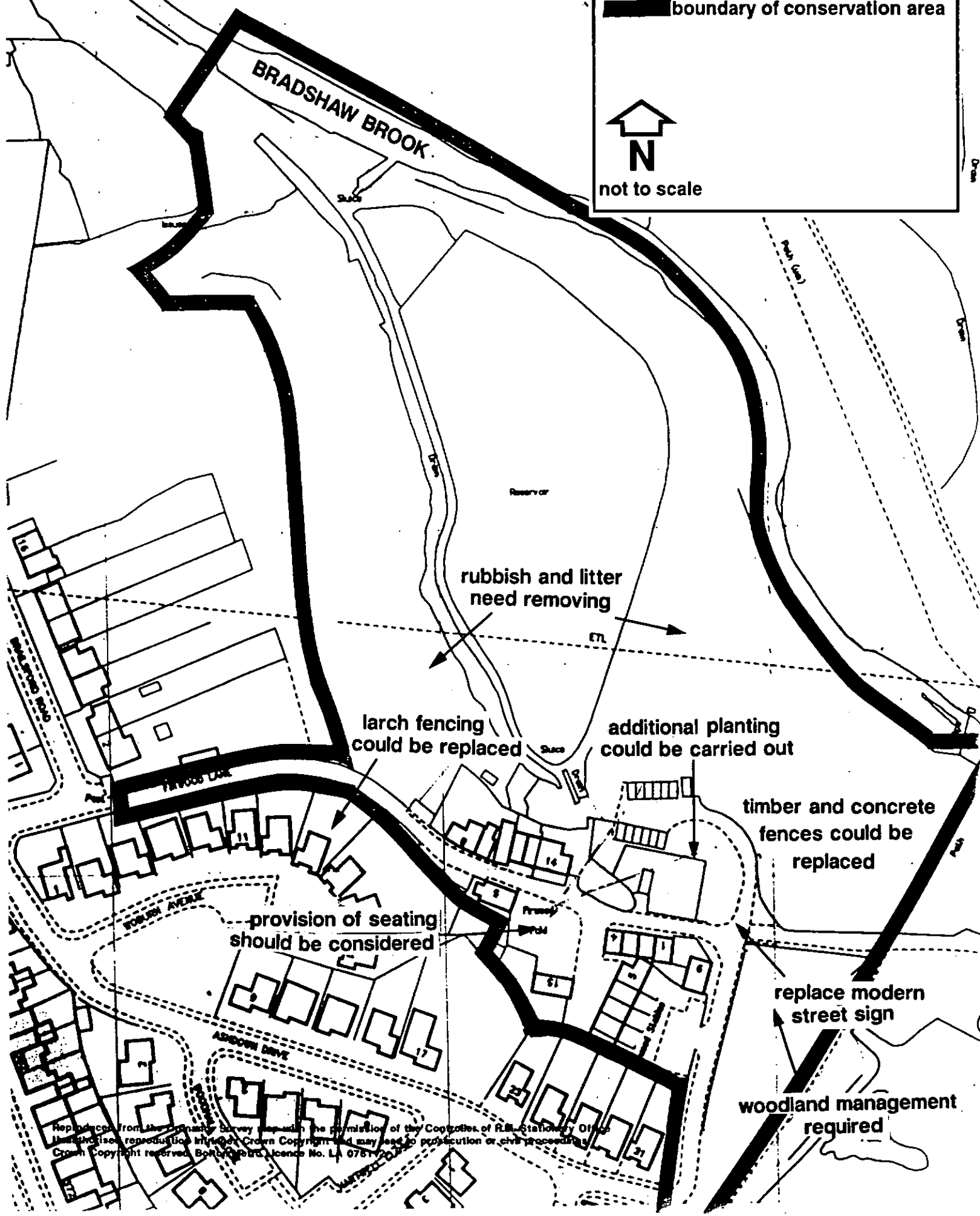
Opportunities

Key

 boundary of conservation area



not to scale



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SECTION THREE

Opportunities For Enhancement

This section highlights issues. It does not put forward detailed proposals for enhancement.

GARDEN AREA OPPOSITE 1-4

The timber and concrete fences around these gardens are unsightly and their replacement with stone walls would enhance the area.

GARAGE COURT

This is generally well hidden but would benefit from additional planting to completely screen the garages from numbers 1-4.

AREA TO THE EAST OF ASHDOWN DRIVE

This area of woodland is very overgrown and would benefit from management including the thinning of saplings.

WOODLAND TO THE NORTH OF THE AREA, ADJACENT TO THE RESERVOIR

Rubbish and litter mar this attractive natural area which is of considerable wildlife value. This rubbish should be removed.

SEATING

The provision of traditional style timber seats on the green and in the woodland area should be considered.

STREET SIGN

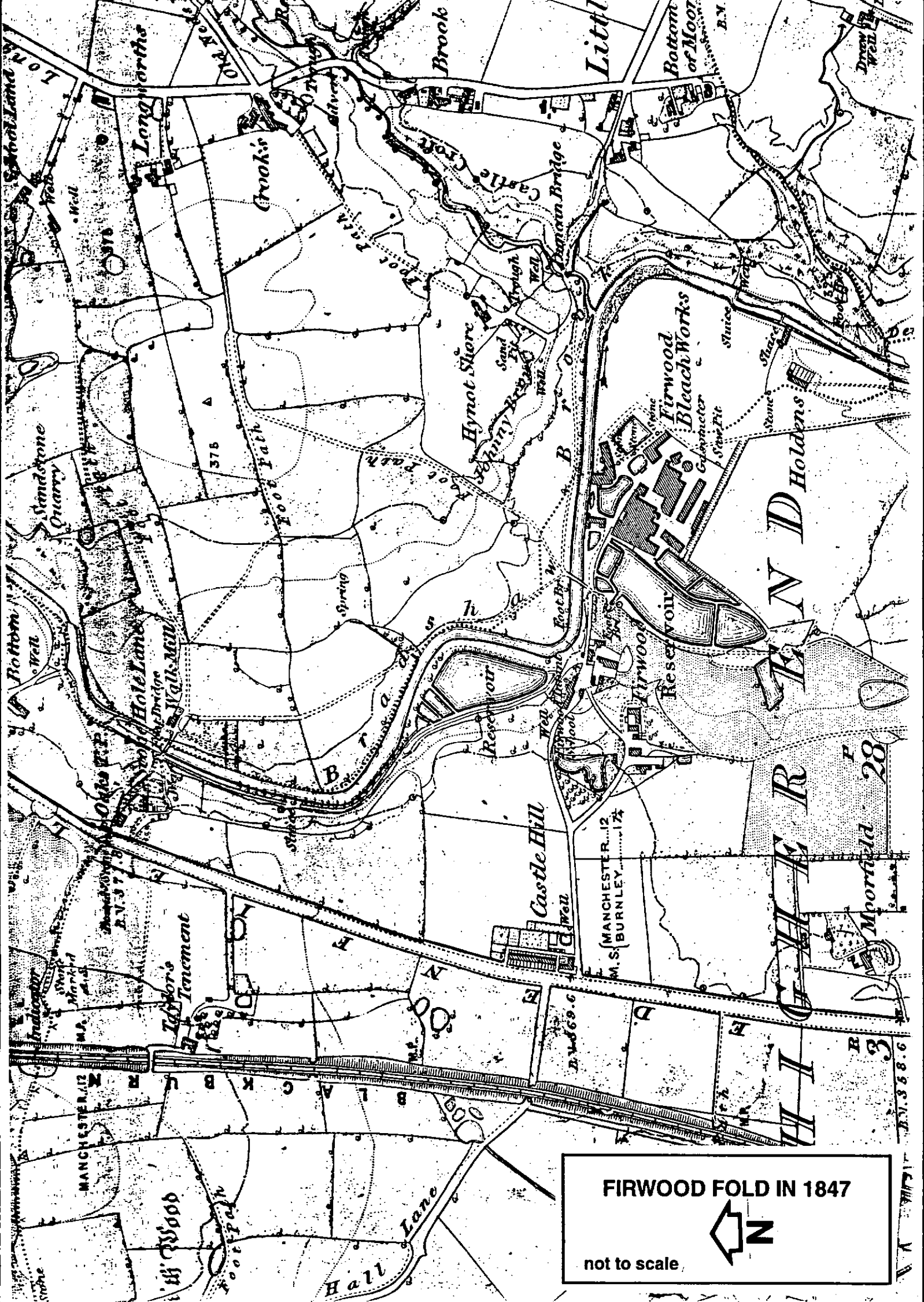
The modern Firwood Fold street sign should be replaced with a purpose made sign to complement the existing street enhancement work.

STREET LIGHTS

The cast iron lamp posts need repainting and some of the lanterns need repair.

FENCING TO FIRWOOD LANE

The larch lap fencing to the rear of the properties on Woburn Avenue bordering the southern boundary of Firwood Lane detracts from the character of the Fold. A hedge, stone wall or iron railings would be more in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area.



FIRWOOD FOLD IN 1847



not to scale

APPENDIX

Bolton's Unitary Development Plan Policies

Conservation Areas

CE2. The Council will preserve or enhance the character of Conservation Areas.

Conservation Areas represent a significant element of Bolton's architectural and historical heritage. The Council will preserve or enhance these areas through the control of development and through positive schemes of enhancement. Development which is allowed should contribute positively to the quality of the environment. The Council is empowered to designate further Conservation Areas and will consider designating them as appropriate.

CE2/1. The Council will preserve or enhance the character of Conservation Areas by:

- (a) ensuring that all new development and alterations to existing buildings preserve or enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area;
- (b) requiring the height, size, design, materials, roofscape and plot-width of new development, including alterations or extensions to existing buildings, to respect the character of the Conservation Area;
- (c) seeking to retain the materials, features, trees and open spaces which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.

This policy outlines some of the elements which the Council will take into account when considering applications in Conservation Areas.

CE2/2. The Council will not normally allow the demolition of buildings which

contribute to the character of a Conservation Area. Where demolition is acceptable the Council will ensure that new development preserves or enhances the appearance of the Conservation Area, and that building takes place as quickly as possible after demolition.

Consent from the Council is necessary for the demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas. If the building is important to the area's character, then demolition will be resisted. The Council will ensure that unsightly gaps are not left when demolition does take place by ensuring rapid redevelopment with good quality buildings.

CE2/3. The Council will not normally consider outline planning applications for development in Conservation Areas.

The Council will consider whether it has sufficient information to assess fully the environmental implications of a proposed development from an outline application.

Listed Buildings and Sites of Archaeological Interest

CE3. The Council will protect Listed Buildings and their setting, Ancient Monuments, and Sites of Archaeological Interest from harmful development and operations.

Listed Buildings, Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Interest are valuable as part of Bolton's heritage and there is a presumption for their retention and against any damage occurring to them. The Council will also try to ensure that necessary repairs are carried out to Listed Buildings whose

condition is deteriorating. In appropriate circumstances the Council will encourage the Department of the Environment to list buildings which are considered to be of sufficient architectural or historical interest. Where damage to archaeological sites is inevitable, action will be taken to try to ensure that the site is recorded fully.

CE3/1. Proposals for the alteration, extension or change of appearance of Listed Buildings should not detract from their character, appearance or setting. In considering applications for Listed Building Consent the Council will have regard to the following criteria:

(a) proposals should retain the materials, features and details of the Listed Building;

(b) the height, size, design, setting and roofscape should respect the character of the Listed Building;

(c) proposals should not detract from the setting and open space which surround a Listed Building.

This policy outlines the detailed criteria which will be taken into account in the determination of applications for Listed Building Consent. Apart from the basic design, it also highlights the importance of the setting and open space which surround Listed Buildings.

CE3/2. The Council will normally consider favourably proposals for appropriate alternative uses for Listed Buildings, provided that their character, appearance and setting are conserved.

Some Listed Buildings are no longer required for their original uses. There is a danger that some buildings can lie empty and deteriorate, increasing pressure to demolish them. The Council will try and avoid this by allowing

alternative uses as long as they do not harm the character and appearance of the building and its setting and are in conformity with other policies of this Plan.

CE3/3. The Council will protect, enhance and preserve Sites of Archaeological Interest and their setting and the importance of archaeological remains will be recognised in the consideration of planning applications.

Archaeological remains are irreplaceable and, in many cases, subject to damage and destruction during development. The Council will continue to support the maintenance and development of a comprehensive record of archaeological sites and monuments. The importance of archaeological sites and Ancient Monuments will be recognised in the consideration of planning applications. Where it is not considered essential to preserve remains, then arrangements will be entered into to record archaeological evidence.

The Green Belt

CE10. The Council will maintain a Green Belt the purposes of which will be to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas; to safeguard the surrounding countryside from further encroachment; to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; to preserve the special character of historic towns; and to assist in urban regeneration.

The Green Belt around Bolton has been successful in fulfilling its primary purposes which are set down in this policy. There is still sufficient land outside the Green Belt to accommodate anticipated development until well beyond 2001. As advised in Strategic Guidance, the previously defined Green Belt is being incorporated in its entirety into the Plan.

The five primary purposes of the Green Belt, as defined in this policy, are the same as those

defined in the Government's Planning Policy Guidance note 2.

CE11. The Council will not normally allow development within the Green Belt, unless it is clearly needed for agriculture, forestry or other uses appropriate to a rural area and does not prejudice the purposes and visual amenities of the Green Belt by reason of its scale, design and siting.

This policy gives effect to policy CE10 by stating how the Council will react to proposals for development within the Green Belt. The effect of the policy is to ensure that the Green Belt will generally be kept open, and certainly protected from inappropriate development. Policy CE11/1 lists the limited circumstances in which development could be acceptable.

CE11/1 The Council will not allow development within the Green Belt unless it falls within one or more of the following categories:

- (a) development in connection with an outdoor recreation facility, together with ancillary buildings required in connection with that facility;**
- (b) development in connection with cemeteries or institutions requiring large grounds;**
- (c) development for mineral extraction in accordance with in the policies for minerals;**
- (d) small scale business, including industrial or warehouse development in existing industrial estates;**
- (e) changes of use of existing redundant buildings which possess architectural or historical merits;**

- (f) limited infilling in settlements or ribbon developments that are within the Green Belt where it is in scale with the area and will not adversely affect its character or surroundings.**

Development in any of the above categories will be acceptable only if it does not prejudice the purposes and the visual amenities of the Green Belt by reason of its scale, design and siting.

This policy recognises that certain developments can be accommodated in the Green Belt without prejudicing the primary purposes.

In the case of (d) the industrial estates to which this part of the policy applies are shown on the proposals Map.

Further guidance on category (e) is contained in a Development Control Policy Note.

In the case of (f) limited infilling is the development of a small gap in an otherwise built frontage, capable of containing one or two houses or another development of a similar size. The settlements to which this part of the policy applies are shown on the proposals Map. A particular difficulty exists in relation to 'ribbon developments' which are strung out along some roads. Where ribbon developments are in the Green Belt, and present a significant and generally unbroken frontage, small gaps may be capable of limited infilling without prejudicing Green Belt objectives. This will usually be a question of looking at each case on its merits. The character of the site will be taken into account and generally development which would involve the felling of trees, or the spoiling of a fine view, would be prevented.

The Council will also continue to give sympathetic consideration to the particular operational requirements of statutory undertakers, and other bodies providing essential public services. Where such uses are already established on sites within the Green

Belt, this would not necessarily inhibit the continuation, improvements or reasonable extension of the use. However where a proposal is made to locate an entirely new development within the Green Belt, or a significant addition to or consolidation of an existing facility, the Council will require the various public bodies to show compelling reasons why a site outside the Green Belt was considered by them to be unacceptable; and there will be a presumption against development of this kind where no such compelling reasons appear to the Council to exist.

Some waste disposal developments are of an open and temporary nature, and would not prejudice the primary purposes of the Green Belt. The Council may give sympathetic consideration to such developments if they are in accordance with the policies for waste disposal.

There are a large number of existing sources of employment in the Green Belt. Limited development which forms part of, and is essential to the maintenance of an existing source of employment, may be acceptable in the Green Belt, provided that it would not prejudice the primary purposes of the Green Belt.

Small scale extensions that are in character and scale with the original building and appropriate to the site, may also be acceptable in some cases, provided they do not prejudice the primary purpose of the Green Belt.

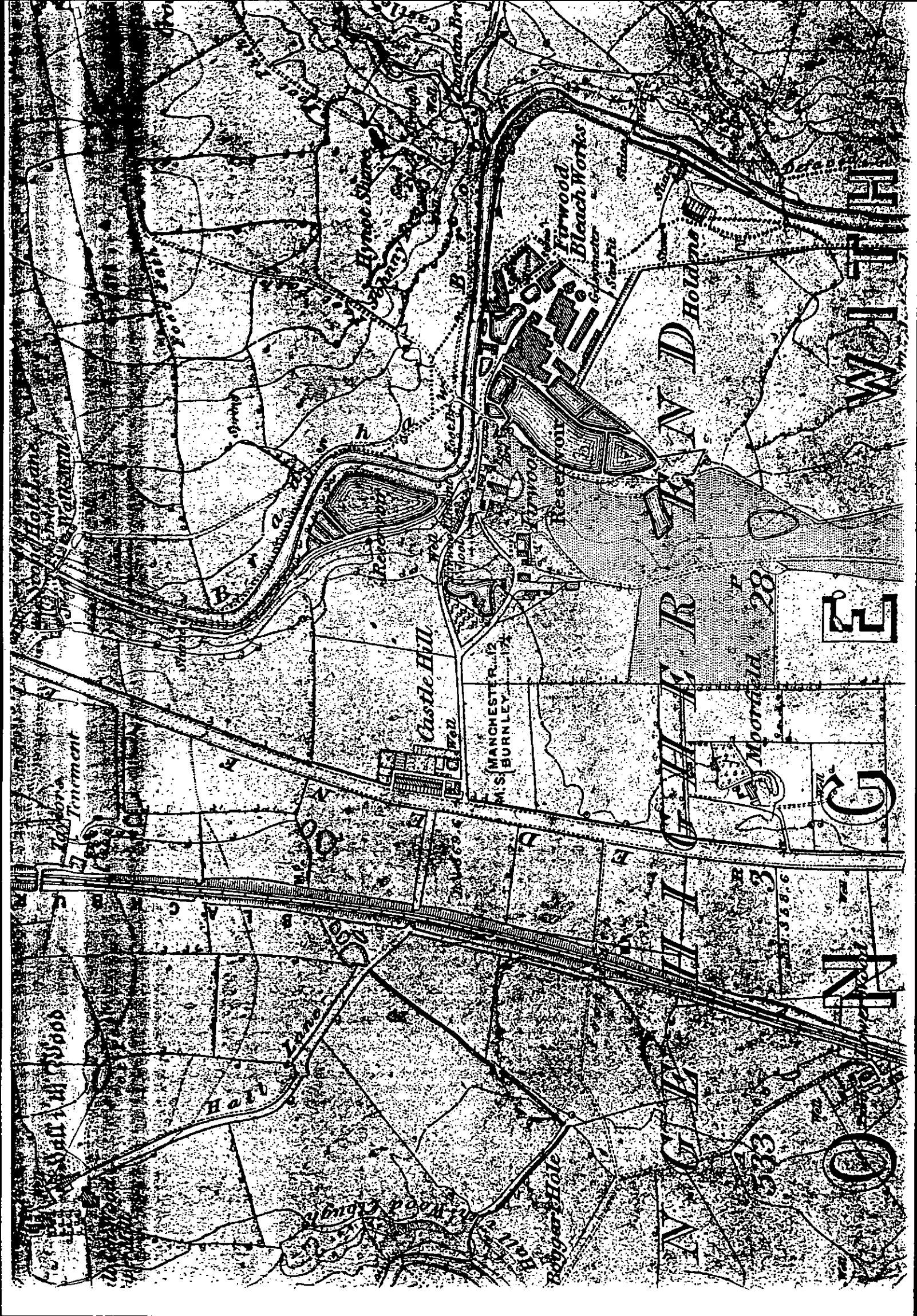
Landscape

CE13. The Council will protect and enhance the quality and diversity of landscape in the Borough

The Borough's rural landscape is important in its own right and provides the urban areas with an attractive setting which is important for the quality of life of residents and attracting economic investment into the Borough. The Council has an Environmental Strategy and a Countryside Recreation Strategy for Bolton which aim to protect and enhance the environment. The Council will continue to pursue these aims through its development control and other planning powers.

CE13/1. The Council will not allow development which would adversely affect the character of Areas of Special Landscape Value. Where development is acceptable it will be required to be sympathetic to its surroundings, and especially high standards of design, siting and landscaping will be expected


The Areas of Special Landscape Value are shown on the proposals Map. Generally these areas are prominent from a wide area, possess attractive features and lack obtrusive elements. Development may be acceptable in these areas but it will be subject to strict controls. Unduly obtrusive development will not be permitted.



FIRWOOD FOLD CONSERVATION AREA

Townscape

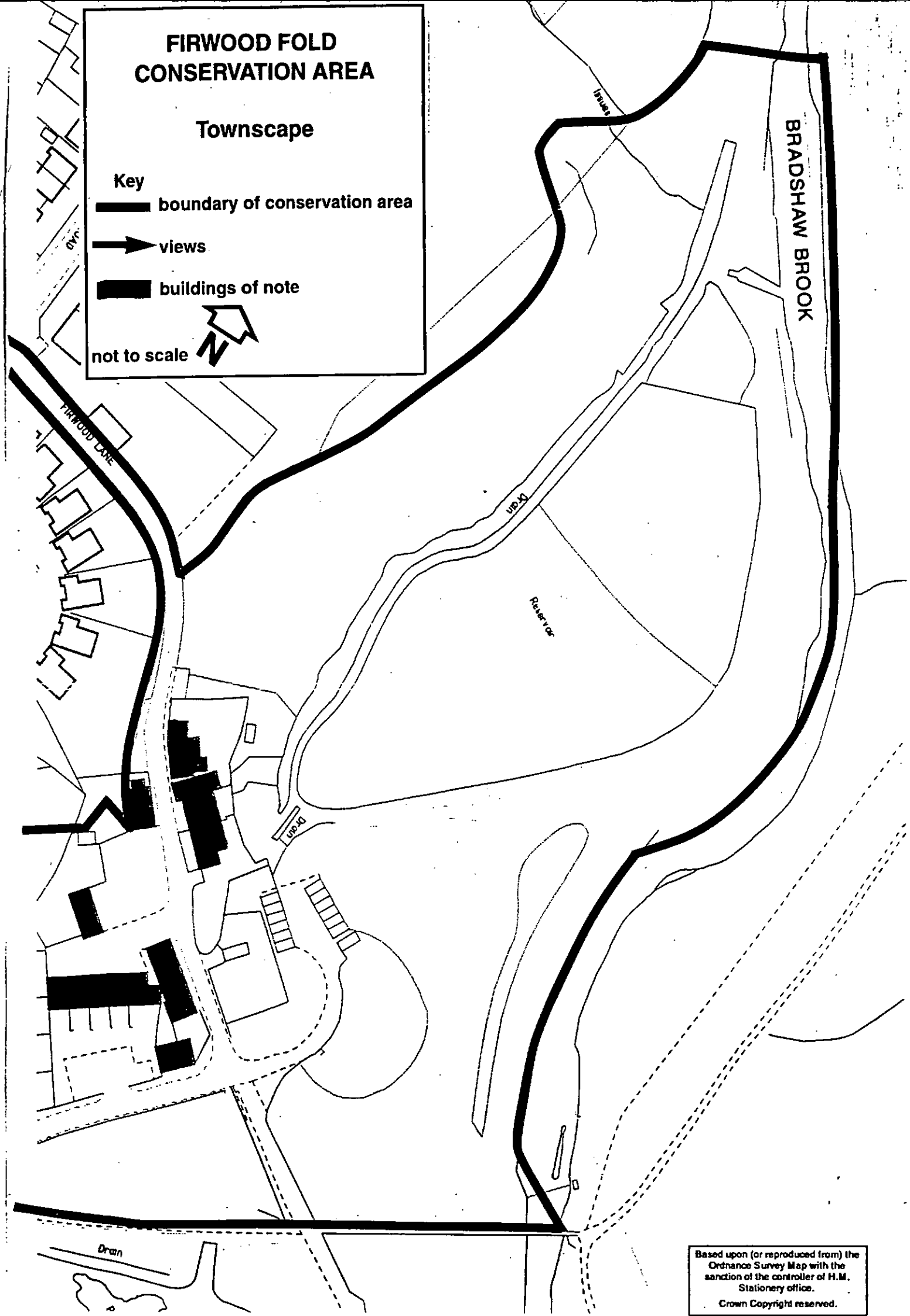
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 views

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