



# Lemsford Character Assessment

**Client:** Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

**Date:** May 2023



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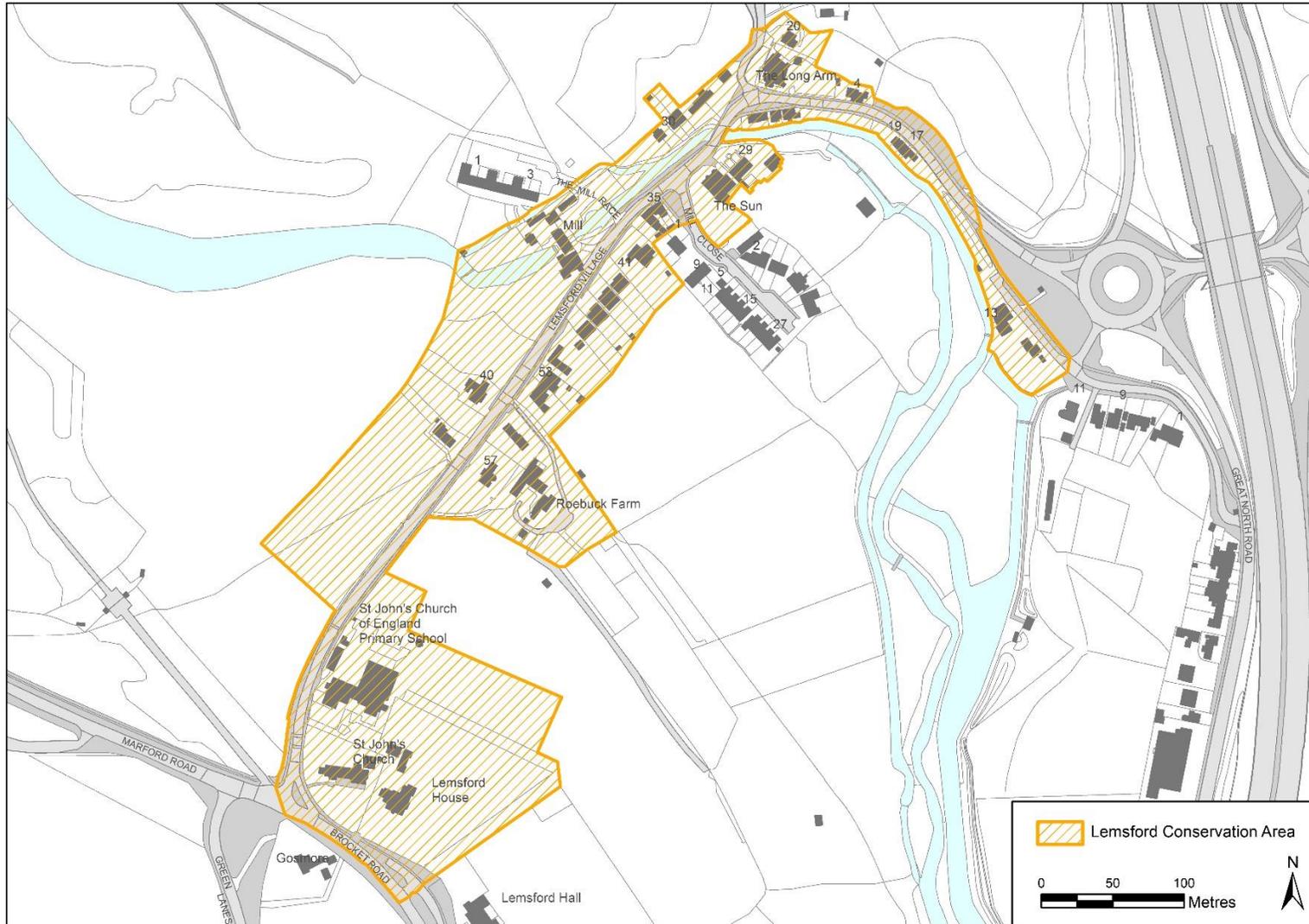


Figure 1 Lemsford Conservation Area

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Scope of the Report

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has appointed Place Services to assess the suitability of the Lemsford area for conservation area designation. The assessment has been focused on Lemsford Village. Surrounding streets were also visited. The streets identified for assessment have been selected following a site visit to identify areas of special interest.

The following report provides an outline of the historic development of the Lemsford area and an assessment of its character by exploring different qualities that contribute to this, including building styles, materials, streetscape, and open green spaces. A discussion on the suitability of conservation area designation, under the provisions set out in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, is included in this assessment. A boundary for the conservation area has been identified following site assessment, analysis and consultation.

Documentary research has been carried out utilising several primary and secondary sources including local history books, maps, original plans, and historic photographs within the Hertfordshire Archives. A site visit was also carried out on 17<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

The report does not assess the ecological significance of the area.

### What is a conservation area?

Conservation areas are designated by the Local Planning Authority as areas of special architectural and historic interest. There are many different types of conservation area, which vary in size and character, and range from historic town centres to country houses set in historic parks. Conservation area designation introduces additional planning controls and considerations, which exist to protect an area's special character and appearance, and the features that make it unique and distinctive. Although designation introduces controls over the way that owners can develop their properties, including the removal of some permitted development rights, it is generally considered that these controls are beneficial as they sustain and/or enhance the value of properties within conservation areas.

The National Planning Policy Framework regards conservations areas as 'designated heritage assets'.

The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act specifies the general duty of Local Authorities, in the exercise of planning functions (Section 72). The 1990 Act states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

## 1.2. Planning Policy and Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights good design as one of twelve core principals of sustainable development. Sustainable development relies on sympathetic design, achieved through an understanding of context, the immediate and larger character of the area in which new development is sited.

This assessment follows best practice guidance, including Historic England's revised Historic England Advice Note 1 for *Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management* (2019) and *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2017).

The legislative framework for conservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (HMSO 1990). In particular section 69 of this act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate areas which they consider to be of architectural and historic interest as Conservation Areas, and section 72 requires that special attention should be paid to ensuring that the character and appearance of these areas is preserved or enhanced. Section 71 also requires the Local Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposal for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.

National planning policy in relation to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets is outlined in chapter 16 of the NPPF. Paragraph 191 states that *'When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic*

*interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.'* Paragraph 206 states that Local Planning Authorities should *'...should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance.'*

## 1.3. Consultation

The public consultation ran for six weeks during which time the draft was available to view on the Council website.

Responses received were from a range of residents, stakeholders, and statutory consultees. All public responses were considered and, where appropriate, the document was amended before adoption, and the designation boundary changed.

Common responses were requests for the boundary to encompass a greater area (refer to Section 2.1); questions over the assessment of non-designated heritage assets (refer to Section 2.4); and energy saving measures (this should be addressed in a full Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan). Other responses included comments on matters relating to improvements to highways and ecology, such as the river and wildlife. Where appropriate these comments are addressed in Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 and a more detailed assessment will be provided in a full Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, although more detailed ecology considerations will fall outside the scope of the conservation area designation.

## 2. The Lemsford Area

### 2.1 Extent of the Area

The study area for this assessment includes the following roads: Lemsford Village, Mill Close, and a small area of Brocket Road located next to Church of St John the Evangelist. Other roads on the edge of this area, including parts of the Great North Road, located closest to Lemsford Village were also assessed. However, they were not considered to be worthy of further investigation, either due to loss of original features or buildings, a lesser degree of cohesion in their design, or the distance from the main focus of the assessment area. For example, the Great North Road is a very busy road and most historic buildings have been demolished and replaced with late twentieth century buildings; the historic buildings that do survive have undergone significant alteration. However, certain buildings and assets do contribute to the special interest of the area as a part of its setting, for example The Waggoners and Red Lion public houses, which are two surviving nineteenth-century coaching inns which are experienced on the northern approach into Lemsford along the Great North Road.

Lemsford Springs was considered for inclusion within the conservation area but it was not considered to possess the degree of special historic or architectural interest required for designation. It is an area of ecological value and is already protected as a wildlife site. However, as part of the area's setting it does still contribute to the special interest of the area. The surrounding agricultural fields also contribute as part of the conservation area's setting.



Figure 2 Lemsford Village

## 2.2 Origin and Evolution

Lemsford is a village with a long and rich history. Situated on the River Lea, historically Lemsford was part of the Parish of Hatfield with the land held by the Abbot (and later Bishop) of Ely. The village takes its name



Figure 3 Lemsford 1905

from the 'ford' over the 'Lea'. The mill, the key building in the area, has been grinding corn since at least the twelfth century.<sup>1</sup>

The river Lea enters the village from the west of the mill and was crossed by a ford up until 1775 when the first bridge was built. The oldest part of the village is clustered around the old ford.<sup>2</sup>

From the seventeenth century until 1833 the Great North Road passed through the village on its way from London to York. This was a 'golden age' for Lemsford; the village bustled with several coaching inns and all the trades needed to service the traffic. However, the condition of the section from Lemsford bridge to Ayot became near impassable in wet weather, so much so that a new road, the 'New Cut', from Stanborough to Ayot was made in 1833 and Lemsford was bypassed.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The History of Lemsford paper by W.C. Horn

<sup>2</sup> Lemsford Village: From Valley Road Corner to Brocket Corner; Lemsford Local History Group; Pub 7; 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Before the mid-nineteenth century, the villagers of Lemsford were mainly occupied as agricultural labourers working on the Brocket, Panshanger or Salisbury estates, or in trades servicing the needs of travellers and their horses. With the arrival of the railway many found the pay and working conditions in London more attractive and left the land. Following this exodus, and the construction of the 'New Cut', the number of buildings in the village was reduced, particularly at the north-east end.<sup>4</sup>

There's an old mill by the stream,  
Nellie Dean,

Where we used to sit and dream,  
Nellie Dean,

And the waters, as they flow

Seem to murmur, sweet and low,

"You're my heart's desire, I love  
you, Nellie Dean". (Nellie Dean, written by Henry

W Armstrong purportedly about Lemsford Mill)

Lemsford was the northernmost part of the Parish of Bishops Hatfield until 1859 when the Church of St. John the Evangelist was consecrated and the Parish of Lemsford created.<sup>5</sup>

## The Mill

Lemsford is likely to be one of four mills on the River Lea within the Parish of Hatfield mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Book.<sup>6</sup> However, it

is not categorically recorded until the twelfth century when Simon Fitz Adam is named as the owner.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 4 Lemsford Mill 1940

A corn mill with an overshot waterwheel, the mill appears to be key in the development of Lemsford. While it was an estate village the location of Lemsford appears to be as a direct result of the mill being situated close to the ford. This is unusual in the fact that the village is likely to

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk/Article>

<sup>6</sup> <https://opendomesday.org/place/TL2308/hatfield/>

<sup>7</sup> Cotton Manuscript Claudius C XI

have developed around the mill and the ford rather than a church or castle/large house. The influence of the mill on the village is evidenced by the use of the name Lemsford Mill to reference the village from the seventeenth century.

By the eighteenth century the miller was a tenant of the Brocket Hall Estate. It appears that the mill was highly profitable during this period, suggested by the fact that in 1788 the miller was paying rents of £50.<sup>8</sup>

The old wooden mill collapsed in the mid-eighteenth century, said to be due to an over energetic young miller working too hard.<sup>9</sup>

*"...and lastly the old mill, which could not stand the strain that was being put on it by its young and energetic occupier and collapsed into the river, with the result one man had his leg and another his arm broken. The present mill was soon erected and did a big business for forty years, until the steel roller mills put the stone ones out of action."<sup>10</sup>*

The present mill was rebuilt in 1863. A stone plaque showing a lion holding a star and beneath the words 'Rebuilt in 1863' is set in the wall behind the Mill.<sup>11</sup>

In 1911 the mill ceased grinding corn and the wheel was adapted to supply electricity to the Mill House (one of the earliest houses in the area to have electricity; listed Grade II: List UID 1101027), making it an

early example of waterpower in the UK. Later in the twentieth century the wheel was removed, and only in 2004 was a new metal wheel with wooden panels installed.<sup>12</sup>

There are several Grade II listed buildings associated with the mill that have survived. These include The Mill House, three outbuildings and Mill Cottage.

### Brocket Hall and Park

To the north of Lemsford Village is Brocket Hall and Park, a Registered Park and Garden (List Entry UID: 1000540). Early evidence suggests there was a house on the Brocket Hall as early as 1239 called 'Watershyppes'.<sup>13</sup> In the fifteenth century the heiress of the manor married Sir Thomas Brocket, whose son Edward had the house replaced with a new house in 1440, known as Brocket Hall<sup>14</sup>.

Lord Melbourne and Lord Palmerston, two of Queen Victoria's Prime Ministers, were nineteenth century owners of the estate. (lemsfordhistory.co.uk)

By the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries most of the land the village occupied was owned by Brocket Hall estate, which later became

<sup>8</sup> Panshanger Archives

<sup>9</sup> Lemsford Village: From Valley Road Corner to Brocket Corner; Lemsford Local History Group; Pub 7; 2011.

<sup>10</sup> 'The History of Lemsford paper by W.C. Horn

<sup>11</sup> Lemsford Village: From Valley Road Corner to Brocket Corner; Lemsford Local History Group; Pub 7; 2011.

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk/Article\\_Mill.html](http://www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk/Article_Mill.html)

<sup>13</sup> Feet of F. Herts. 19 Hen. III, no. 218.

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk/Article\\_Brocket\\_Hall.html](http://www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk/Article_Brocket_Hall.html)

part of the Cowper estate (sometimes referred to as Panshanger Estate).<sup>15</sup>

Before the mid-nineteenth century many of the villagers of Lemsford were occupied as agricultural labourers working on the Brocket estate (later Cowper estate).<sup>16</sup> Many cottages in the area were built of a distinctive yellowish brick for workers on the Cowper Estate and bear a crest with a C above a coronet and the date 1891, including 'Cowper' Cottages within Lemsford.<sup>17</sup>

The Church of St. John the Evangelist was built in the 1850s in memory of George Augustus, the 6th Earl Cowper, by his widow and children.<sup>18</sup>

While Brocket Hall and Park are not within the village there is a strong historic association between them, with several of the houses within the village having been built for estate workers, including the nineteenth century Roebuck farmhouse.

## Lemsford Bridge

Situated on the River Lea, until the late eighteenth century the river was crossed at Lemsford by a ford. In 1777 a brick bridge was built but was washed away when the river flooded in 1795.<sup>19</sup>

*'The river Lea also overflowed in Brocket Hall Park, drove down the pales into the mill orchard, carried away a part of a Haygate post, undermined stack and the yard gate and forced up the foundation wall, took away corner of the mill room, and damaged the wheat sacks standing in the room: blew up the arch at the park-- gate, washed away the gravel from under the groundsell, and left it quite clear, and forced down the Park wall several yards in length; carried away the miller's yard, gate and hay to the bridge, stopped the arch, and blew up the Bridge, so that nothing could pass over it.'*<sup>20</sup>

The bridge was rebuilt in 1795 and still survives (Grade II listed; List Entry UID: 1296198).

The bridge

A story from the late nineteenth century goes that a group of Lemsford 'old boys' threw a police officer over the Lemsford Bridge and into the river. Earlier they had stated that they wouldn't stand for those 'fellers that man Peel had started'. When one of these new police officers stuck their head inside the public house he was quickly grabbed and 'half carried' down to the river. (Hertford Mercury and Reformer, Friday 13<sup>th</sup> Jan 1939)

supposedly became known as 'Battle' bridge during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries due to the fights that broke out on it, caused by the strong ale served in the public houses on either side of the bridge.

<sup>15</sup> Tithe Apportionment 1839.

<sup>16</sup> Lemsford Village: From Valley Road Corner to Brocket Corner; Lemsford Local History Group; Pub 7; 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk/Articles.html>

<sup>20</sup> Parish Register 1795

## The Great North Road

The early-mid 1800s were a Golden Age in Lemsford's history. This was not because of the arrival of the railway, but because of the many stagecoaches that passed through the town, due to its position along Great North Road.<sup>21</sup> Prior to the construction of the railways, stagecoach was the principal way to travel. In any one day, Lemsford would have upwards of 100 coaches passing through it. This led to a



View from the "Long Arm and Short Arm" at Lemsford by Ronald Riggs.

**Figure 5 View from Long Arm and Short Arm Public House early 20<sup>th</sup> century**

boom in the village. Inns and public houses became common as places where travellers could stop for a break and refreshment. They also became popular with the many blacksmiths, farriers, wheelwrights, carpenters, carriers, cordwainers and bakers that worked in the area, as a direct consequence of the Great North Road. In fact, many of the buildings associated with the stagecoach era still survive, including The Sun Inn (Grade II: List UID 1173523), No.37 Lemsford Village (former washhouse); Grade II: List UID 1101029), and Bridge House (used by the stagecoach consortium to house the local manager and accommodate passing gentry; Grade II: List UID 1348157). Many others have been demolished including the Roebuck Inn, a large and busy coaching inn which included a farmhouse (Roebuck Farm survives though the farmhouse and barns are later additions), cottages, stabling for 24 horses, a yard, outhouses, and a smithy.<sup>22</sup>

However, the boom did not last long. By the latter half of the nineteenth century trade had begun to decline, due to the construction of a new road (the 'New Cut') and the arrival of rail travel. Trade declined so much that by 1880 the Roebuck Inn had been demolished.<sup>23</sup>

## Lemsford Springs and the Watercress beds

Before becoming a wildlife site, Lemsford Springs was under cultivation as a watercress bed. From 1859 to 1948 the beds were cared for and

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk/Articles.html>

<sup>22</sup> Lemsford Village: From Valley Road Corner to Brocket Corner; Lemsford Local History Group; Pub 7; 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

cultivated by the Tims family, who owned what are now known as the 'Cress Cottages' (Nos. 13-15 Lemsford Village).<sup>24</sup>

Watercress was much prized in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a valuable green vegetable for the late winter months, before the importation of out of season and exotic vegetables from warmer climes reduced its popularity. The lagoons in what is now Lemsford Springs Nature Reserve provided the ideal conditions for its growth. They never froze in winter, and they were filled with exceptionally clean water from several underground chalk fed springs.<sup>25</sup>

The first mention of commercial watercress growing in Lemsford is an 1854 newspaper article in which George Tims is recorded as renting watercress beds in Lemsford.<sup>26</sup> The Tims family first rented and then owned the watercress business sending the cut watercress to market in London.<sup>27</sup>

#### Watercress Wars: Fowl Play

In 1854 George Tims took a Mr Kemp to court, asking for compensation for damage done to the watercress beds by Mr Kemp's ducks and fowls. According to court records, Mr Kemp was not initially aware of the damage caused and as soon as he realised, he shut up his ducks. He stated if Mr Tims had '*come in a proper manner to him, he would have made him compensation, instead of which he came and abused him*'. The judge decided that Mr Tims was entitled to 10 shillings of compensation. (Lemsfordhistory.co.uk)

## Church of St John the Evangelist

The church (Grade II listed: List UID 1348158) was constructed in 1858-1859 as a memorial to George Augustus, the sixth Earl Cowper. It is an Early English Gothic style church and was designed by David Brandon.

The church has a long association with the St Johns School, located nearby at the south-east end of the village, built in 1872 by the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl Cowper.



Figure 6 A Group cycle from Digswell Hill to Lemsford. Tatler 1904

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.lemsfordhistory.co.uk/Articles.html>

<sup>25</sup> Lemsford Village: From Valley Road Corner to Brocket Corner; Lemsford Local History Group; Pub 7; 2011.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.hertfordshire-genealogy.co.uk/data/oldnews/hm-1854-11-04-watercress-lemsford.htm>

<sup>27</sup> Lemsford Village: From Valley Road Corner to Brocket Corner; Lemsford Local History Group; Pub 7; 2011.

## 2.3 Designated Heritage Assets

There are 12 designated heritage assets within the Lemsford area, including Lemsford Mill, The Sun Inn, The Church of St John the Evangelist, and The Bridge over the River Lea. All are Grade II listed. A full list of all the designated assets within the Conservation Area is included in Appendix 1.

These buildings, structures and features have been listed due to their special historic and architectural interest as defined by Historic England. Further information about the listing process can be found on the Historic England website: [www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/)

### Listed Buildings

The rarer and older a building is, the more likely it is to be listed. As a general principle, all buildings that pre-date 1700 and are in a relatively intact condition will be listed, as will all buildings that date between 1750 and 1850. There is a strict criterion for buildings built after 1945; buildings less than thirty years old are unlikely to be listed unless they have been deemed as exceptional examples of their type.

Listed buildings are considered under three grades in England. Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest and make up approximately 2.5% of all listings; Grade II\* are of more than special interest; Grade II are of special interest and most common, making up 91.7% of all listings.<sup>28</sup>

Listed buildings are protected by government legislation and there are policies in place to ensure that any alterations to a listed building will not affect its special interest. It is possible to alter, extend or demolish a listed building but this requires listed building consent and sometimes planning permission.

The Lemsford area contains a high number of listed buildings which emphasises its special interest. Many building types are designated, including mill buildings, historic inns, cottages, and church, providing a rich and layered representation of English architectural history. The variety is important, highlighting how the village has developed and altered over time and acknowledging the multiple phases of Lemsford's development.

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<sup>28</sup> Historic England, Listed Buildings <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/listed-buildings/>



**Figure 7 Grade II Listed Lemsford Mill**

There are no scheduled monuments or Registered Parks and Gardens within the Lemsford area, though the Brocket Hall Registered Park and Garden's boundary is to the north of the village.

## 2.4 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Every building, space and feature within an area makes a contribution to its character and special interest, be it positive, neutral or negative.

Heritage assets are defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as ‘A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.’<sup>29</sup>

Not all heritage assets are listed, and just because a building is not included on the list does not mean it is of no heritage value. Buildings and other smaller features of the built environment such as fountains, railings, signs, and landscaping can make a positive contribution to the appreciation of an area’s historic interest and its general appearance.

Local listing is an important tool for local planning authorities to identify non-listed buildings and heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the locality. At present there is no local list for Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council. This document has identified heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the area and could be considered for local listing in the future.

The criteria used to assess the non-designated assets has been informed by the criteria and methodology set out in Historic England’s guidance.<sup>30</sup> This approach ensures that the output is consistent with similar surveys at both a local and national level.

A Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan would include more detail and provide for known archaeological remains within the conservation area and identify the potential for archaeological finds.



Figure 8 26 and 28 Lemsford Village

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<sup>29</sup> NPPF, p67

<sup>30</sup> Historic England Advice Note 7 (2nd edition): Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage (2021)

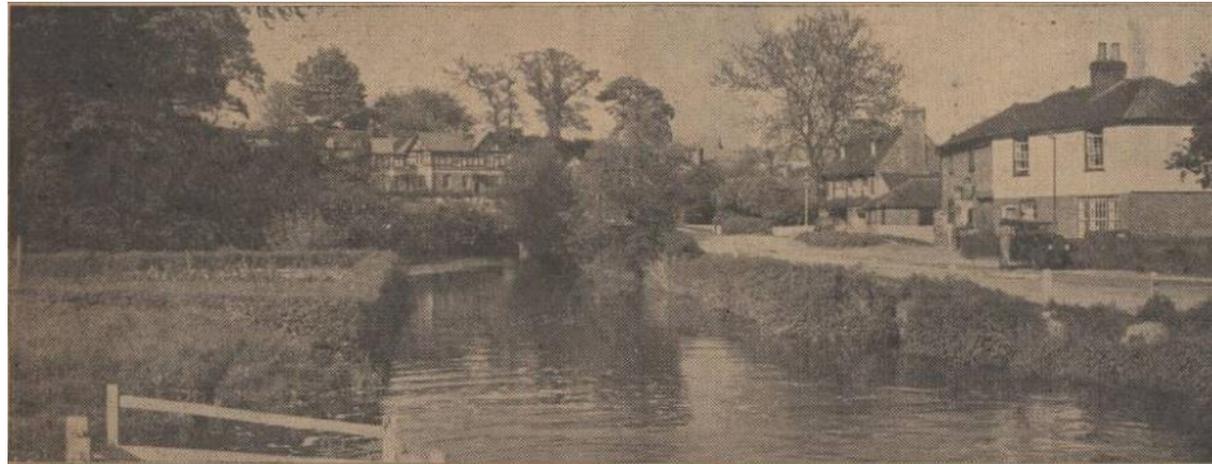
Buildings and features within the Conservation Area which could be considered as non-designated heritage assets due to their local historic and/or architectural interest include:

- Nos 13-15 Lemsford Village (Cress Cottages) – The scale and use of materials, including red brick, are intrinsic to the area’s rural nineteenth century building stock. The cottages contribute to local character and distinctiveness. Their original form and scale remain identifiable even with later extensions. Close historic association with Lemsford Springs and watercress cultivation.
- Nos 2 and 4 Lemsford Village – Former cottages for farmworkers at Hanside Farm, which have group value with Nos 21 and 23. The scale and use of materials, including red brick, are intrinsic to the area’s rural nineteenth century building stock. The cottages contribute to local character and distinctiveness. Though altered their original scale and form remain recognisable.
- Nos 17 and 19 Lemsford Village – Close association with Lemsford Springs, as fresh water was collected from the properties before mains water. The use of stock brick identifies its earlier construction date than many of the later red brick properties.
- Nos 21 and 23 Lemsford Village - Former cottages for farmworkers at Hanside Farm, which have group value with Nos 2 and 4. The scale and use of materials, including red brick, are intrinsic to the area’s rural nineteenth century building stock. The cottages contribute to local character and distinctiveness. Though altered their original scale and form remain recognisable.
- No 25 Lemsford Village – Dates from the 1600s but all that remains of the original single storey cottage is the chimney stack. Heavily altered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century its scale and use of materials, including red brick, are intrinsic to the area’s rural nineteenth century buildings.
- No 27 Lemsford Village – Its former use as a village shop is of historic interest.
- Nos 26-32 Lemsford Village - Victorian cottages built by the Brocket Estate for their workers. They are of group value.



**Figure 9 Cress Cottages**

- Long Arm and Short Arm Public House – 1929 replacement for original beer house, smithy and bakery. An attractive, purpose-built beer house. The decorative details present a strong Arts and Crafts character, indicative of local and national style. Its name has a long history and was well known due to its uniqueness (it was commented on in the Daily Mirror 20 August 1918).
- Nos 40 and 42 Lemsford Village - The 'Cowper' cottages were built of a distinctive yellowish brick for workers on the Cowper Estate and bear a crest with a C above a coronet (for Earl Cowper) and the date 1891. Of group value alongside other Cowper Estate buildings.
- Roebuck Farmhouse – Built by the Cowper Estate in 1880. Of group value alongside other Cowper Estate buildings.
- St John's School – Built in 1872 by the 7th Earl Cowper. Of group value alongside other Cowper Estate buildings.
- Lemsford House - Was the vicarage for the Church of St. John the Evangelist.



**Figure 10 Lemsford Village with the Long Arm and Short Arm Public House in the centre 1945**

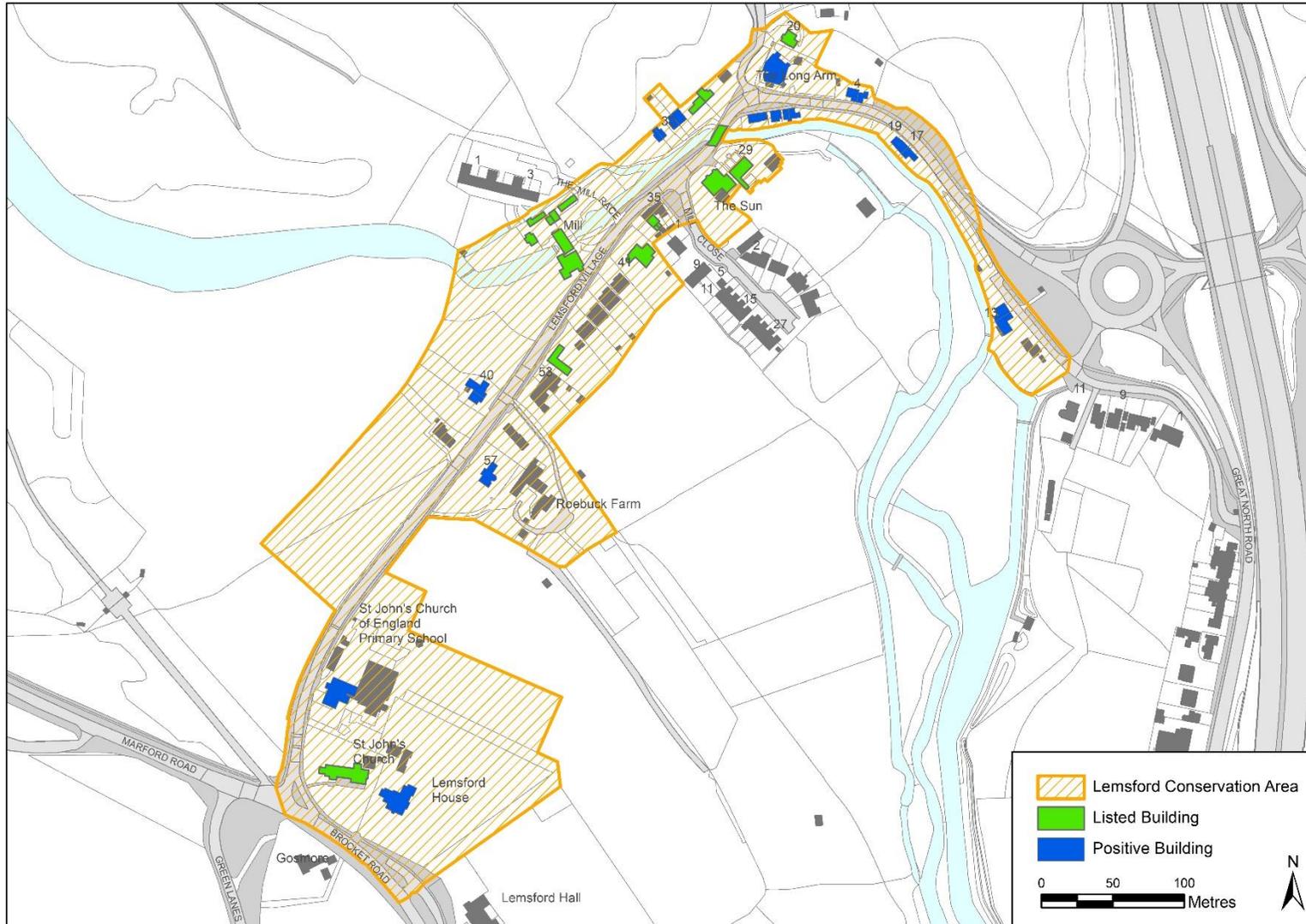


Figure 11 Lemsford Conservation Area

## 3 Character Assessment

### 3.1 Settlement Pattern and Building Uses

Lemsford has a distinct character, owing to its location close to the River Lea and Lemsford Springs, its development as an estate village initially focused around the mill, and the later influence of its position close to the Great North Road. A rural settlement positioned within a valley, its high banks and tree plantations on its north side mean that the central part of the village has a woodland village feel and verdant appearance.

Most properties line the road - named Lemsford Village - and the river Lea which runs alongside the road. The road crosses the river at the Grade II listed bridge. For the most part, the settlement has linear development characteristics, although some nucleated development traits are apparent around the mill and ford. The historic street plan remains largely intact.

The Lemsford Village road forms the spine of the village. Running along the road, or in close proximity to it, are several key buildings including public buildings such as The Sun Inn (Grade II listed; circa 1730-1740), and The Long Arm Short Arm Public House (current building dating from 1928 which replaced an eighteenth century building); industrial buildings such as the mill (Grade II) and associated mill buildings; and other residential buildings many of which were either associated with agricultural work (Nos.13-15 'Cress Cottages; Nos 2-10 'Bankside Cottages') or formerly in commercial use such as No.35 (former smithy; see OS Map Hertfordshire XXVIII.14 Revised: 1897, Published: 1898) and No.27 the former village shop and bakery. There are distinct

building groups within the village, including the mill group, church group, Roebuck Farm group and the buildings with strong associations with the Great North Road and stagecoaches.

### 3.2 Building Styles and Materials

There are a variety of building types within Lemsford. Many are residential, vernacular style houses and cottages, most are detached though some of the older buildings are semi-detached. All are two storeys, with most being constructed of red brick, though some nineteenth century houses are constructed of gault brick.

The majority of houses have pitched roofs with the older buildings tending to have clay tiled roofs (though some have been replaced with slate tiles or concrete tiles), while many of the nineteenth century buildings having slate tiled roofs.

The eighteenth century and earlier houses commonly have casement windows, while the nineteenth century properties have sash windows. However, many of the original windows have been replaced with UPVC. Pitched dormer windows are also very common, as well as box dormers on the more modern houses.

Plot sizes throughout the settlement vary; properties on the south side of Lemsford Village road, in the centre of the village, front onto the road and have large rear gardens, while houses on the north side, bordering the Brocket Hall Park and Garden, have large front gardens and small

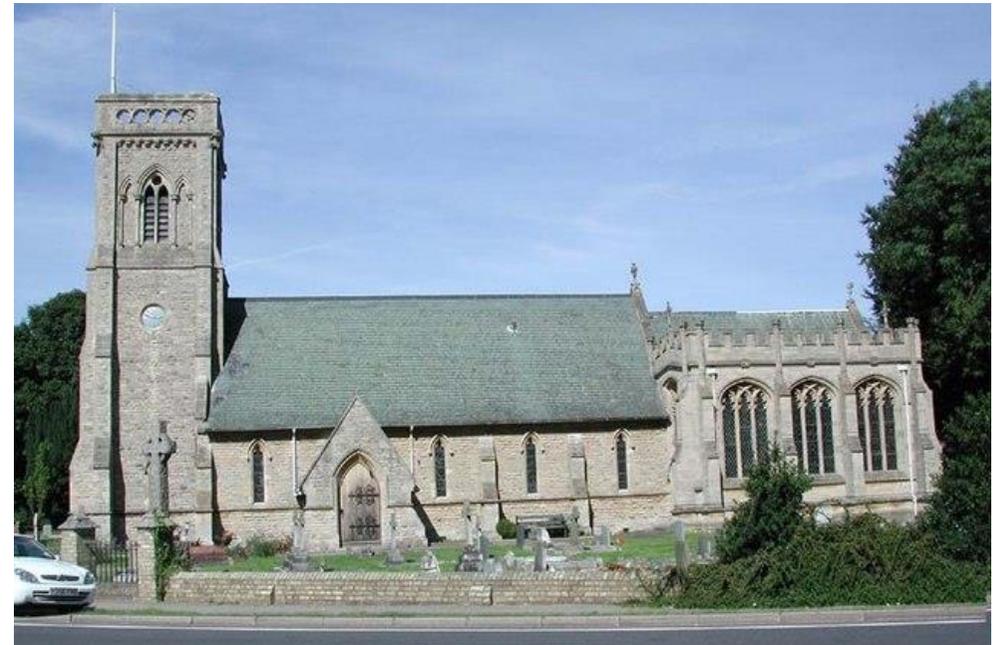
rear gardens. Moving away from the centre of the village houses tend to have large plots with both front and rear gardens.

Two residential properties stand out from the rest, primarily due to their high status: the eighteenth-Century Bridge House (Grade II) and nineteenth century Mill House, both of which have a grander appearance with symmetrical facades.

Many of the now residential buildings in the area were formerly used for commercial purposes such as smithies. No.35 is a good example of this, appearing more as a utilitarian building, with a weatherboarded first floor.

Several farm and agricultural buildings appear to have survived, predominantly associated with Roebuck farmyard. The farmhouse itself is of interest as a gault brick nineteenth century replacement constructed by the Cowper Estate, whilst the barns and ancillary buildings that form a courtyard – though highly altered – also date to the late nineteenth century, with timbers frames on brick plinths and weatherboarding.

In terms of larger buildings, five are notable. The mill is the largest and most significant. The only building over two storeys, the four-storey corn mill is constructed of pale gault brick at the ground and first floor with the upper storeys clad in weatherboarding. Its appearance clearly marks it out as an industrial building. There are two public houses within the area, The Sun Inn and The Long Arm and Short Arm. Both are two storeys with footprints larger than regular houses, and predominantly constructed of red brick. However, their different periods of construction are clear with the Sun Inn's (Grade II) old tile roof and gable end stacks



**Figure 12 Church of St John the Evangelist**

making it stand out in views from the bridge. Finally, there is the Church of St John the Evangelist (Grade II) and associated school, which stand slightly apart from the main village.

### 3.3 Streetscape

The area remains recognisable from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which can be seen when comparing historic pictures and photographs. There is a clear distinction between the residential and commercial areas of the village and the more industrial mill complex, both of which contribute to the streetscape.

Both the variations and consistencies of the residential and commercial buildings add to the interest of the streetscape. The slight differences in form and design in the buildings, apparent when viewing the streetscape, allow one to understand the long history and development of Lemsford. Common traits bring a consistency to the appearance of the area, particularly those of the surviving historic buildings, such as their two-storey height and use of materials such as red brick. These traits make a positive contribution to the streetscape. The gaps between buildings, which can be quite large, also contribute to the streetscape as they allow the trees and vegetation behind and in between to give the streetscape a green aspect.

The mill and its associated buildings stand out in the streetscape, in large part due to the overall size of the mill, which is a landmark within the village. This juxtaposition with the smaller residential and commercial buildings positively contributes to the streetscape, as it is quite a rare sight in a village so small and allows one to understand the different influences and needs on design of buildings in the village.

Trees line the road at the west end of the village as the land rises towards the Church of St John the Evangelist. In the central part, trees

form the backdrop, though some large trees obscure views of the mill (from historic photographs it is apparent that this was not always the case). At the east end of the area there are several trees on the street, and on a small green in front of the houses which separates the area from the Great North Road and the roundabout.

The trees and hedges to front boundaries, combined with trees within the Registered Park and Garden to the north, result in a strong green aspect to the streetscape. The variety in the building elevations and building placement result in the area having an organised but slightly irregular appearance. The different building types adds additional visual interest.

There is very little street furniture aside from benches on a small green area beside No.35 Lemsford Village, which are not of a high quality.

The streetscape in some parts can become somewhat dominated by vehicles, particularly during school drop off, which is an unfortunate necessity, particularly given the important contribution the trees and hedges otherwise make to the area.

### 3.4 Landscaping and Open Spaces

Trees and hedges make a strong contribution to the Lemsford area, particularly those located on boundaries and within gardens, as they give a green appearance to the rural village.

The large green areas surrounding the village, including Lemsford Springs, Brocket Hall Registered Park and Garden and the agricultural

fields, contribute as part of the village's setting. They help in the appreciation of the significance of the village and its historic rural character, acting as a green backdrop and contributing to the historic context to the area. They also demonstrate the strong historic associations between the village and its setting.

### 3.5 Negative Elements

The noise from the Great North Road, and to a lesser extent Brocket Road, is the most strikingly apparent negative element of the area. It disrupts the tranquility of the village particularly at its east end, where the noise from vehicles is especially loud and constant. While it lessens in the central part of the village it is still noticeable and detracts from the appreciation of the heritage assets in the area. Further medium to large scale development in the area could add to the vehicle noise, as well as the overall activity in the village, further eroding what is left of the tranquility of the village.

The loss of original windows and doors and their replacement with UPVC, as well as the use of concrete roof tiles, has negatively affected the character and appearance of the area. Fenestration and the roof scape make an important contribution to the appearance of the area and these alterations have had a detrimental impact. The use of inappropriate materials is noticeable throughout the village, as well as other relatively minor alterations which result in unattractive features. If they were to continue, the cumulative impact of such alterations may result in the village having a disjointed appearance, resulting in a

lessening in the overall character of the area. However, the fact that the replacement windows appear to largely reflect the original fenestration slightly mitigates against the loss of the originals.

On-street parking is a detracting element in parts of the village, although this tends to only be at certain times of the day, generally around school pick up and drop off times. The volume of cars parked on the road results in views of the heritage assets being disrupted and obstructed, particularly in the south and west parts of the village.

Some mid-late twentieth century development has crept into the area, most noticeably on Mill Close where a new road and several houses along with garages were constructed in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lemsford Village formed along a single road (Lemsford Village) and Mill Close was the first residential road to be built off the central road, introducing a planned element to the historical linear development<sup>31</sup>. This, alongside the designs of the buildings along Mill Close, that have little in common with the appearance of the area, has eroded both the character and appearance of the area.

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<sup>31</sup> As discussed on page 21 around the mill and ford traits of a nucleated settlement are found.

New residential development in and around the village, particularly medium to large scale development, could increase the erosion of the character and appearance of Lemsford. Such development may not only result in increased noise and activity in the village but could also further alter the historic arrangement and streetscape of Lemsford, and therefore cause harm to its special interest.



**Figure 13 Mill Close**

## 4 Findings

### 4.1 Special Interest

An area must be of special architectural or historic interest to warrant designation as a conservation area. The Lemsford area identified is considered to be of considerable historic and architectural interest due to the following reasons:

- Lemsford has been the site of a corn mill since at least the twelfth century and probably before this.
- Lemsford Mill, associated buildings and landscape are a rare survival of an almost complete, nineteenth century milling environment. The mill and several other buildings within the group are Grade II listed buildings.
- Lemsford is characterised by its historic link to agricultural and industrial activity and the Great North Road. These associations had a considerable impact on the built form within the village which is still identifiable today.
- Lemsford's history as an estate village.
- At the centre of the village is a harmonious group of traditional buildings which reflect the character of Lemsford, including examples of traditional, modest houses and early public houses.
- Several identifiable historic groups of buildings including the mill group, the church group, and Roebuck Farm group.
- Change over time has been minimal meaning that Lemsford is still recognisable to how it was in its heyday of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- Survival of traditional buildings and street plan that allows one to understand the designs and craftsmanship of the past.

Aspects of the area's setting also contribute to the special interest of the area including historic associations with Brocket Hall (Cowper Estate), Lemsford Springs, the agricultural land around the village and the two-surviving nineteenth-century coaching inns The Waggoners and The Red Lion which are experienced on the northern approach into Lemsford along the Great North Road.

### 4.2 Suitability for Conservation Area Designation

The area is considered to be of special architectural and historic interest as an estate village that developed around the ford and medieval mill, and further developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because of its close proximity to the Great North Road. The village's street plan,

built form, and streetscape survive largely intact from the nineteenth century. The area has a distinct character and appearance, and this is considered to be worthy of preservation. It contributes to an understanding of the development of the local area as well as the history of development close to medieval mills. In addition, it contributes to the understanding of surrounding villages located to busy roads in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The suggested boundary has been chosen to ensure that important aspects of special interest within the area are included, whilst also ensuring that the boundary is clear and easy to identify. Surrounding land such as agricultural fields and Lemsford Springs have not been included but are considered to be an important part of the setting of Lemsford, as is Brocket Hall Registered Park and Garden.

The south-east end of Lemsford Village and the part of the Great North Road closest to the village have not been included within the boundary because of the significant change that has occurred in these areas, and the impact that the loud noise of the road has on the character of these spaces, resulting in them being of minimal heritage significance (though some of the buildings that line the Great North Road do contribute to the area as part of its setting). Mill Close has not been included due to it being a 1960s development that does not contribute to the special interest of the area. Gosmore (96 Brocket Road) was also considered for inclusion within the boundary, as it was the site of a former inn, but this was decided against as the existing building is a later replacement for the inn, and its inclusion would lead to an awkward boundary.

It is recommended that a full character appraisal and management plan is written for the Lemsford area, in accordance with Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to ensure that the special interest of the area is fully understood and protected.

## 5 Appendices

### 5.1 Appendix 1: Listed Buildings

<i>Listed Building</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>List UID</i>	<i>List Description</i>
Lemsford Village (No.20 Lemsford Village)	II	1101026	Cottage. C17 timber framed. Brick infill, rendered. Plain tile roof with gable ends. 1 storey and attics. 2 modern gabled dormers. Modern casements and glazed door. External brick chimney stack at each end, one with a circular oven at the base, the other is partly exposed in a small modern single storey extension. Later outshut at rear with catslide roof.
22 and 24 Lemsford Village	II	1173491	Cottage range. C18 casing to C17 timber framed cottage. Red brick with burnt brick headers; modern, red-tile, gable-end roof. Single storey and attics. 4 leaded casements and 4 similar gabled dormers. Left hand door is C18 flush panels with 2 glazed panes. Large chimney stack with joined square shafts. 1 stack on SW gable end.
Bridge Over River Lea or Lee	II	1296198	Bridge. Earlier C18. Red brick with stone coping. 2 arches. Stone coping on buttresses of cutwaters. 3 plain pilasters on side walls.
Bridge House (29 Lemsford Village)	II	1348157	House. Late C18. Red brick, double pile house. Plain tile roof with front gable-end chimney stacks and parapets. 2 storeys. 4 recessed glazing bar sash windows. Modern parapet. Door on left of centre has 6 flush panels, semicircular fan with crossed glazing bars and flush panel surround with pilasters, fluted consoles and flat hood. Later outshut on NW.
The Sun Inn	II	1173523	Public House. Circa 1730-40. Chequered red brick. Old tile roof with 2 hipped casement dormers and gable end stacks. 2 storeys and attics. 3 C19/20 sash windows, those of ground floor in

			canted bay windows either side of central doors, the whole with a tile hung canopy. C18 moulded wood eaves cornice. C18/19 lean-to on SW with modern extension.
No. 37 including Outhouse	II	1101029	House C17 or earlier, to rear of No. 35. Single storey with 2 gabled dormers. Red brick. Steep pitched old tile roof with large chimney stack on SE enclosed by modern single storey extension. Segmental leaded ground floor windows. Outhouse with weatherboarding and pantile roof adjoins extension on SE.
Mill Cottage (34 Lemsford Village)	II	1348156	Cottage range. Early-mid C19 casing, probably to earlier core. Single storey. Plastered walls, slate hipped roof. Red brick chimney stack on right centre. 3 modern casement bow windows, formerly Yorkshire casements. Included for association and group value with The Mill.
Three Outbuildings to the North, North-West of Lemsford Mill	II	1101028	Cart sheds and storehouse. Probably c1863, when mill was rebuilt. All tarred weatherboarded. 1 plain tile roof. 1 pyramid slate roof. 1 hipped slate roof with pan-tile roof outbuilding attached. 3-light glazing bar casement to plain-tile-roof shed. These outbuildings are included for their intimate visual and functional association with the Mill.
Lemsford Mill	II	1173499	Large water corn mill, converted to flats. Rebuilt 1863 according to date stone in south wall. 4 storeys and attic. Ground and 1st floor of pale gault brick, the upper storeys clad with weatherboarding. Slate roof half hipped at N end with bracketed weatherboarded housed hoist above centre of east front. 5-bay elevations. Small segmental arched windows in brickwork, timber lintels to those in weatherboarding. Superimposed former loading doors in line with the hoist. The mill wheel which was overshot, is no longer in situ. Internally the structural system of cast iron columns with concave echinus to the capitals is still intact; queen post trusses carry roof.
Mill House (38 Lemsford Village)	II	1101027	Mill owners house. C1838-39. Backs on to the south end of the Mill. Extended to sides and rear c1850-60 in sympathetic manner. Yellow stock brick, 2-storey, 3-bay original entrance front facing the road with hipped slate roof. Central dormer. Tripartite outer windows with single sash over doorway, shallow revealed glazing bar sashes. Slightly cambered gauged brick arches. 6-

			reeded-panel door. Lobe pattern fan. C1850-60 shallow gabled wing breaks forward to left hand, with similar tripartite windows. Glazing bar sashes to side. Tripartite windows to rear as well. Important group value with mill complex.
The Old Cottage (49 Lemsford Village)	II	1296165	House. Late C17. Timber framed. Modern roughcast on plaster and red brick. 1 storey and attics. Clasped purlin old tile roof has two gabled dormers and a red brick chimney stack on SW end. 2 sloping buttresses and 2 casements to front. Cross wing on SW with tile hung gablet above ridge.
Church of St John the Evangelist	II	1348158	Church. 1858-9 by David Brandon in Early English Gothic style. Rough-cut ashlar stone with smooth stone dressings. Westmoreland slate roofs. SE chapel added in 1930 for the Nall-Cain family by F E Howard in Perpendicular style. Nave has trefoil-headed single lancets with hood moulds, stepped buttresses and continuous moulded sill course. Parapeted gabled S porch. Two stage W tower has clasp buttresses, 2-light plate-tracery belfry opening and quatrefoil parapet. Large 5-light E window with intersecting geometric style tracery. SE chapel has 3 4-centred arch windows with cusped tracery and moulded, stepped buttresses. Moulded plinth and crenellated parapet. W door with crocketed ogeed arch is surmounted by an elaborate 2-light window. Interior has naturalistic leaf capitals. Stained glass to E window by Clayton and Bell 1874. Altar frontal in carved wood dated 1605. Rich lierne vaulting to chapel. Canopied tomb in luscious perpendicular style to Florence Nall-Cain (d. 1927). Altar reredos carved in wood and alabaster.