

were in lead sheet until slates became common.

An alternative to tile would have been cedar or oak shingles (wooden tiles). Most commonly, however, slate was imported in large quantities, especially from North Wales, and was almost universal for large or industrial buildings.

Streetscape materials

The first streets in the towns were probably little more than beaten earth and ash, but after the 17th century granite setts and sandstone paving were used for heavily trafficked areas, such as town pavements or the surfacing of yards. The Berkhamsted High Street and pavements are designed sensitively. Parking bays and bus stops are paved in small concrete pavers or cobblestones and raised to the level of the pavement. The pavement itself is slightly larger concrete pavers and are designed to drain into the centre of the pavement, not the kerb edge.



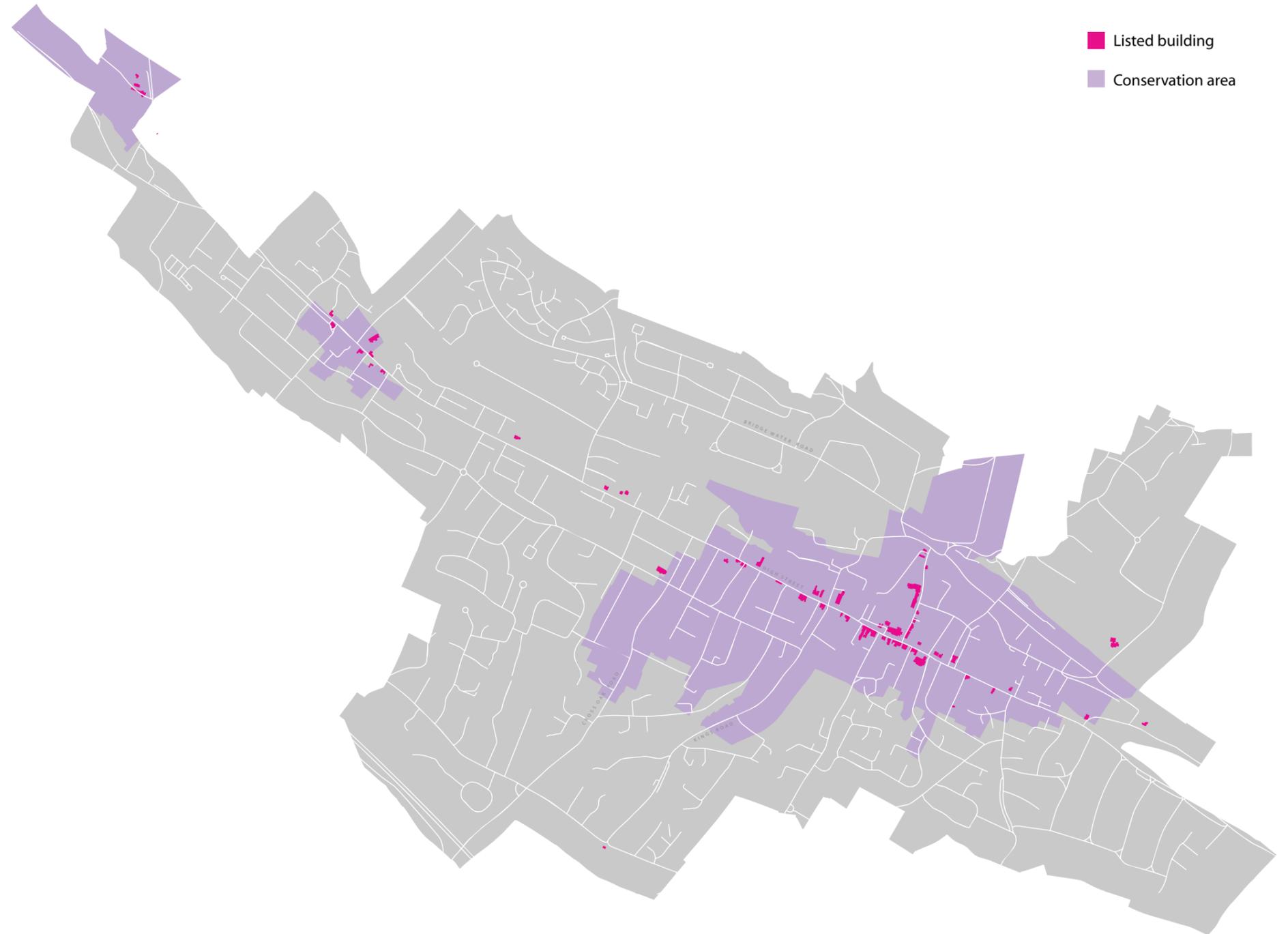
Many private entryways have mosaic tilings.



The parking bays have discrete paving at the level of the pavement, not the street bed.

MAKING PLACES LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS

Berkhamsted has three conservation areas, more than any other town in Dacorum. These areas include the town centre and adjacent Victorian residential areas (1), Northchurch Conservation Area (2) and Dudswell Conservation Area (3). There are many listed buildings within these three areas, dating from Saxon times to the 19th century.



KEY ISSUES

MP2: LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS

MP2A

Berkhamsted's town centre conservation area is extensive, including many listed buildings and surrounding residential streets.

MP2B

Streetscape elements have conflicting design motifs which do not clarify Berkhamsted's stature as an historic market town.

Berkhamsted Castle is a significant archeological heritage site and important open space just north of the train station. The earthworks that surround the castle are from the original Normal castle which probably had a timber keep on the mound. By the 12th century the keep had been replaced by a stone castle. When the castle was later demolished, the stone was used for other buildings within Berkhamsted. The original entrance to the castle most likely occurred at the point where the High Street and Chesham Road meet, setting important precedents for the location of the market and St Peter's church. St Peter's Church was built in medieval times on axis with the castle and adjacent to the triangular market place.

The walls of St Mary's church in Northchurch predates the castle, having been built during Saxon times. The listed buildings include numerous structures along the High Street dating from medieval times to the 19th century, including several residences and inns that were prominent during the coaching era. As a turnpike town along the route through the Chilterns, there were several prosperous inns and public houses along the High Street.

Additional listed buildings include the Berkhamsted School, The Court House and the Sayers Almshouses (now one-storey residences on the High Street).



The upper floor of the Court House is of 16th century timber framing and the ground floor of knapped flint and red brick were added in the late 19th century by William Butterfield.



This listed pub recalls the coaching era, when the High Street housed many pubs and inns which served the passing stagecoaches.



The Town Hall now houses a restaurant but remains in good condition.



The Sayers Almshouses, built to house poor elderly widows, were the gift of the widow of John Sayers, Charles II's chef.

The Berkhamsted town centre Conservation Area generally has both strong streetscape and significant open spaces. The notable open spaces include the church yard, the castle grounds, and the area along the Grand Union canal.

While the Conservation Area has several well-maintained and important listed buildings there are other aspects of the built environment which impact on the Conservation Area's distinctiveness.

Streetscape furniture

As seen in the images opposite, there is an inconsistent application of design to elements like bus shelters, benches, tree guards and rubbish bins. While the bus shelters recall 1980s urban improvements, the wooden bench represent a design approach which emphasises Berkhamsted's rustic character. Coherent streetscape elements would strengthen Berkhamsted's character as an historic market town.

Shopfronts

Berkhamsted has had success enforcing shopfront signage that is in character with the Conservation Area (top right image). Consultation participants noted several sites along the town centre where shopfront signs detracted from the High Street.



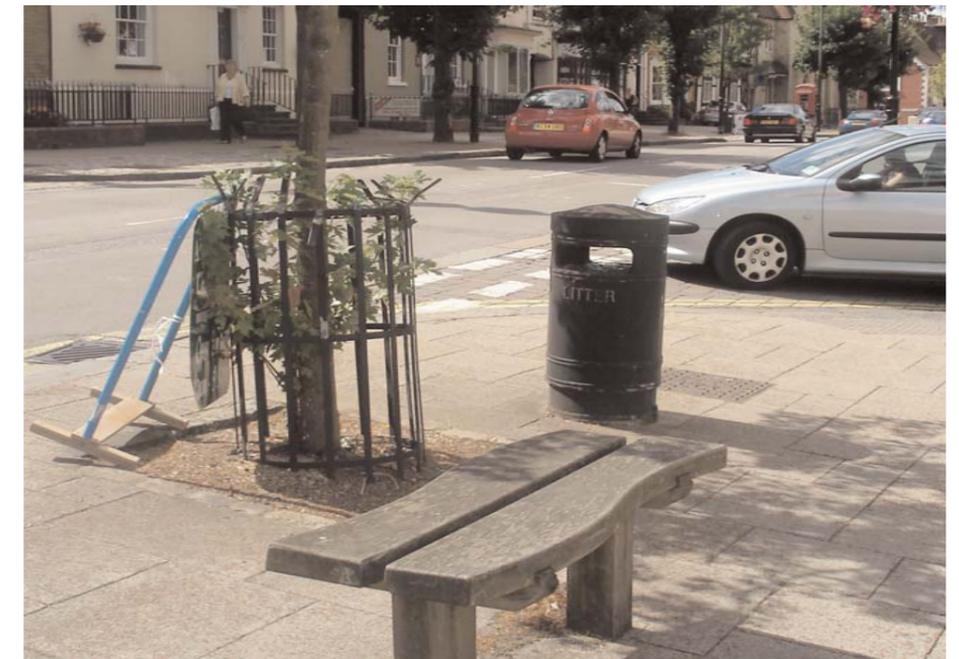
Overall, Berkhamsted's town centre has strong streetscape qualities.



Larger chains have constrained their signage to fit in with the Conservation Area.



The town bus shelters recall 1980s urban improvement schemes.



This cluster of streetscape amenities detract from Berkhamsted's stature as an historic market town.