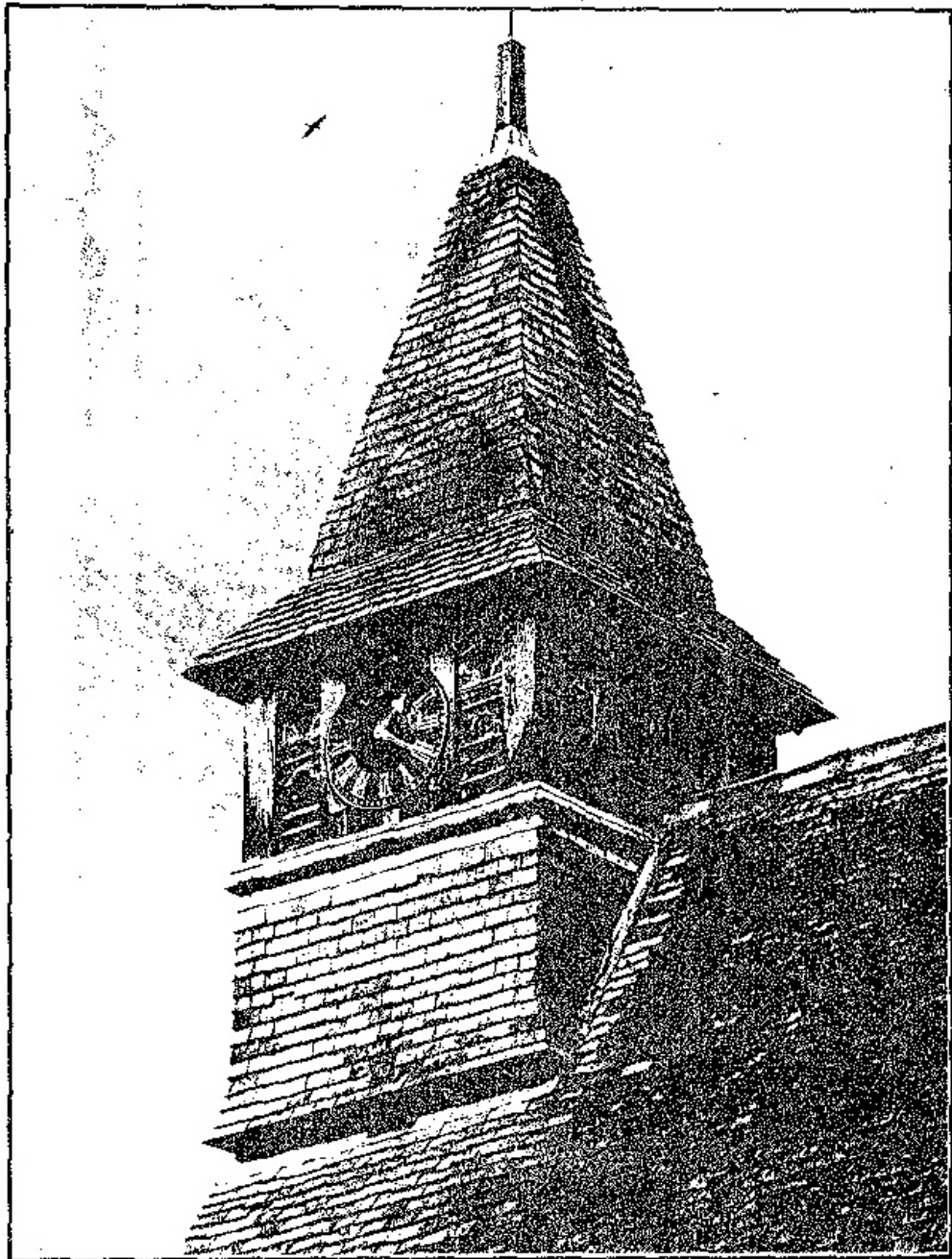


BRAISHFIELD

Conservation Policy



Test Valley Borough Council

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Conservation Policy

This Policy was adopted by the Borough Council on 9th September 1981, the date of the designation of the Braishfield conservation area.

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BRAISHFIELD CONSERVATION POLICY

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Introduction

Test Valley Borough Council is currently undertaking a programme of conservation area designation throughout its area and this report sets out a policy for Braishfield. The report describes the village and its history, defines the boundary of the conservation area and suggests a framework for action to enhance its special qualities.

Conservation policies are complementary to, rather than substitutes for, other planning measures. They do not attempt to be comprehensive and although the objectives and proposals they contain will have a clear bearing on such issues as the location and design of new development, they are not village plans, and are not concerned with building programmes.

The towns and villages of our landscape have evolved over centuries and contain many beautiful and historic areas that are unique in character due to a highly diverse collection of buildings, trees and spaces. For more than thirty years buildings of special architectural or historic interest have been awarded special protection against demolition or alteration; the Braishfield area contains a number of 'listed' buildings that are covered by these provisions. The controls do, however, relate solely to the buildings themselves, whereas it is often the surroundings that are an essential part of their character.

Although the rapid change of recent years has brought its benefits, in many instances the architectural heritage has been placed under considerable pressure. The Historic Buildings legislation proved to be an inadequate way of protecting the individuality of settlements and as a result the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 makes it a duty for all local planning authorities to identify those parts of their area that are of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as 'conservation areas', where special efforts may be given to their preservation and enhancement. At the present time (1981) there are more than 5,000 conservation areas in England and Wales; of these 175 are in Hampshire and 12 in Test Valley.

Village Location

Braishfield is a small rural settlement in Hampshire, four miles north of Romsey and three miles east of the River Test.

In 1980 the population of the Parish of Braishfield was approximately 590.

Braishfield History

The founding of the civil Parish of Braishfield goes back only to the nineteenth century, but there has long been human habitation in the area. Excavations at Broom Hill to the east of the present village have revealed a mesolithic settlement (7,000 - 5,000 B.C.), that includes the discovery of the remains of a house estimated to date from c. 5,000 B.C. that is perhaps Britain's earliest known dwelling.

Much later the Romans settled in the area, and another recent excavation has revealed a late 3rd or early 4th century bath house. This building was part of a Roman villa complex and it is known that there were at least six substantial buildings that were in occupation long before the construction of the bath house. Stone was brought from Purbeck in Dorset for use as floor and roofing flags.

After the departure of the Romans little is recorded of Braishfield until 1043 when, as part of the manor of Michelmersh, the lands were donated by Queen Emma to the Prior and Chapter of St. Swithun's Winchester (the Cathedral clergy). Much of this holding was later to be released by the church to secular landowners, including Corpus Christi and New College, Oxford. The latter body owned land in the Braishfield area up to the time of the Second World War.

In the Middle Ages Braishfield, which appears in medieval documents variously as 'Brayfield', 'Brayesfeld' and 'Braisfelde', consisted of a number of large but isolated farmsteads. Of these, several survive today including Pitt Farm, Elm Grove, Sharpes Farm, Fairbournes and Paynes Hay Farm. Until 1794 when the fields were enclosed there were two commons in the Braishfield area; the 138 acre Braishfield Common (covering most of the southern part of the present village, from the war memorial), and Casbrook Common (occupying a wedge-shaped area to the west of the Lower Street junction).

By 1855 Braishfield had become large enough to justify the establishment of its own administrative area. An Anglican church was built (the Congregational chapel had already been built some years earlier), thus establishing a new ecclesiastical parish, and a civil parish was formed shortly afterwards. The church was designed by William Butterfield, the architect of Keble College, Oxford, and Winchester Hospital, as well as many churches. One curious feature of the churchyard is a tomb chest, dated 1820; some thirty-five years before the building of the church. An inscription on the chest records that it was moved from Michelmersh after the consecration of the new building.



The twentieth century has seen a gradual expansion of the village mainly in the form of residential development adjacent to existing farms and cottages. With the exception of the 'new' boundary between Braishfield and Michelmersh, the boundaries of the old manor have not altered materially since the eighteenth century - and quite possibly for eight hundred years or more before that.

Braishfield Today

Many towns and villages have developed from a single point; a water supply, a defensive mound, a bridge, or perhaps the junction of two roads; spreading outwards, either radially or along the line of a road or river. Braishfield is an exception to this pattern in that it existed for many years as a scatter of farms set at some distance from one another that have gradually coalesced with subsequent additions to form the village we see today. The result of this development is a settlement with a rather fragmented appearance, but one with clusters of buildings with a strong collective character. There is no single dominant building style, although most structures have employed the traditional local materials of hand-made brick and tile, thatch, flint and hardwoods.

In the centre of the old village is All Saints' Church; its low, squat spire is clearly visible through the screen of woodland and forms a significant local landmark. At a closer distance the big, plain tile roof, sweeping down from the nave ridge over the north aisle, is the most pronounced feature of the church when seen from the churchyard. The brick walls are laid in English bond with blue diaper work in the upper reaches, a characteristic of many Victorian churches and of Butterfield's work in particular. Beside the church is a paddock, surrounded by trees. This green area offsets the buildings around it and forms a key ingredient to the open character of the village.

Church Lane runs around the east and north of the village centre. Several large, mainly recent, houses face across the lane towards the paddock and the church; they include The Close, a substantial Victorian house in a thickly wooded setting. At the western end of the lane is Orchard Cottage, one of the remaining thatched dwellings in the area and one that has now been restored.

Further north the main road leads out of the village. An interesting collection of buildings is found at Pond Cottages - four dwellings arranged in an 'L' shape, facing south and east. The southern pair are brick, with plain tile roofs; the eastward facing pair, set back from the road, share a timber frame and a long thatched roof.

Beyond Pond Cottages is Braishfield House. Although the present building is recent, being the replacement of a building destroyed by fire earlier this century, the farm has a long history. The older brick outbuildings are of merit and are tightly grouped, abutting the road.

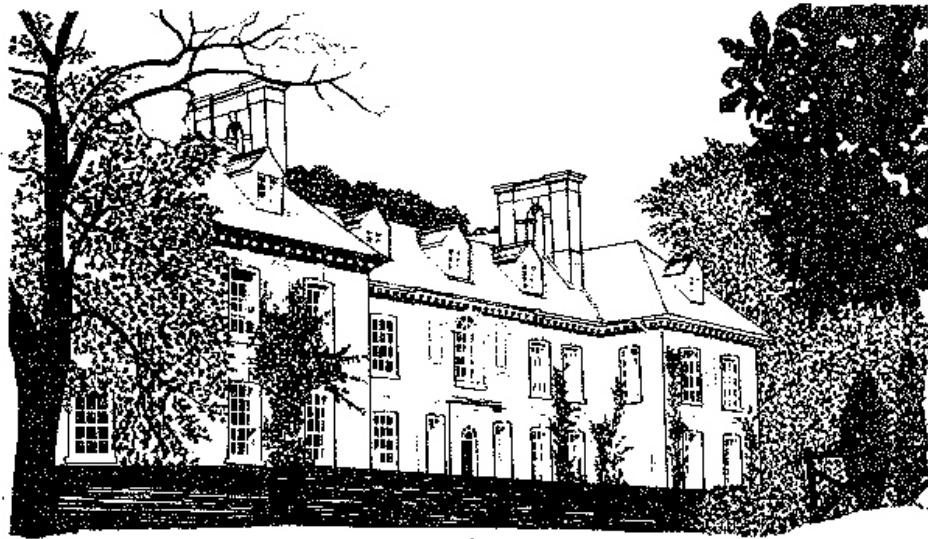


In the southern part of the village centre is another important farm complex; Elm Grove Farm. The farmhouse itself is a solidly constructed brick building with a plain tile roof; its somewhat austere facade is successfully relieved by a graceful timber verandah and canopy. The out-buildings with their red brick walls and hipped slate roofs are noteworthy. Elm Grove is surrounded by wide tracts of open countryside that are of great importance to the setting of the village.

On the opposite side of the road to Elm Farm is Yew Tree Cottage, a thatched and limewashed cottage in a secluded position behind a tall hedgerow. The junction of the main road through the village and Church Lane is marked by a simple memorial cross, erected after the first World War. From this point a good view may be obtained of the open fields and woodland beyond Elm Grove, rising southwards up Common Hill.

Newport Lane is a key part of the old village. At its eastern end is a cluster of brick cottages, tightly grouped and facing a thick hedge on the other side of the lane; further westwards, the road winds past a scatter of old and new buildings to reach the Newport Inn. A pleasant slate roofed brick building, the present Inn is thought to date from the early part of the nineteenth century but may be a replacement of an earlier building.

Outside the old core of the village are a number of interesting farms and old buildings; Sharpes Farm, Paynes Hay Farm and Fairbournes Farm are of particular historic interest and all retain one or more old outbuildings. Mention must also be made of Braishfield Lodge, a distinguished eighteenth century stucco building with large mullioned bow windows, and Braishfield Manor, a fine five-bay Georgian house that was greatly extended by the addition of its two flanking wings. Both old and new work is notable for the fine gauged brickwork and accuracy of classical detail.



The Conservation Area Boundary

The approach to designating a conservation area has been to identify the special environmental qualities of the settlement, and to recognise those parts with such qualities by including them within a specific boundary. The intention is not necessarily to include every historic building or to exclude individual buildings of an inappropriate or unsightly design; rather, it is to establish the broad character of the area. Equally it has not been considered necessary to incorporate all the surrounding landscape into the conservation area (although key areas of open space are included), as there are other complementary planning policies which protect the countryside against inappropriate development.

The designated area includes the old centre of the village and extends from Braishfield House in the north to the Wheatsheaf public house in the south.



Development Control Policy

The conservation area policies are intended to complement existing planning policies by providing additional guidelines for development within the conservation area. Policies to protect those areas adjacent to conservation areas, including the countryside, are set out in the Mid-Hampshire Structure Plan (Hampshire County Council : approved 1980) and the Coast and Country Conservation Policy.

Proposals for any development adjacent to a conservation area will need special consideration to ensure that they do not detract from the character or setting of the conservation area.

A : NEW BUILDING WORK

(i) Works requiring Planning Permission

The overriding aim is to ensure that new development accords with the architectural and visual qualities of the area. Open areas of special visual importance are identified on the plan and development of these areas will not normally be permitted. In areas where new development is appropriate, particular importance will be attached to the scale of new structures and their relationship with neighbouring buildings and the landscape. The significance of colours, building materials, fenestration, roof pitch and vertical emphasis should be given careful consideration; for this reason detailed plans containing such information will normally be required with each planning application. This requirement may also apply to development adjoining or close to a conservation area if the proposal is likely to make an impact on its character.

(ii) Listed Buildings

More than eight hundred buildings in Test Valley have been included by the Secretary of State for the Environment on a schedule of buildings of "special architectural or historic interest". Several buildings around the Braishfield area have been 'listed'. Buildings are graded according to their merit; most are 'Grade II', but a few particularly important buildings are graded 'I' or 'II*'. The consent of the Borough Council is required for any work likely to affect the character of a listed building; this would include such work as external redecoration, the replacement of doors or windows, or the removal of chimneys, internal walls or architectural features.

THE AUTHORITY EXERCISES A PRESUMPTION AGAINST ALL WORKS TO LISTED BUILDINGS THAT ARE LIKELY TO PREJUDICE THEIR SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC QUALITIES.

(iii) Works not Requiring Planning Permission : Unlisted Buildings

The majority of buildings in the Braishfield area are not listed and therefore do not require consent for alterations or minor additions; nevertheless, advice on such works to 'buildings of local interest' will gladly be given. These buildings are shown

on the map. Where particular features are to be restored or traditional materials employed in work that will make a beneficial contribution to the conservation area, grant aid may be available.

If it is intended to carry out work on a building in a conservation area (or a listed building anywhere) owners are advised to contact the Borough Council Planning Department to see whether consent is required and whether the intended work is eligible for a grant.

CONSENT IS REQUIRED FOR THE DEMOLITION OF ANY BUILDING IN A CONSERVATION AREA, WHETHER LISTED OR NOT

The only exceptions are certain small or temporary structures - further details are available from the Borough Council Planning Department.

B. : TREES AND LANDSCAPE

The plan identifies open areas that form a vital part of the character of the villages. Because of their importance it is highly unlikely that the Borough Council will permit development in these areas, since it wishes to see them retained and well maintained.

Encouragement will be given to owners to fell and replace dead trees and to plant additional trees and hedges; where they make a significant visual contribution, grant aid may be available.

ANYONE INTENDING TO TOP, LOP, UPROOT OR FELL A TREE IN A CONSERVATION AREA MUST GIVE THE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING DEPARTMENT SIX WEEKS NOTICE OF THEIR INTENTION.

Further details about trees in conservation areas are given in the Appendix.

C : ARCHAEOLOGY

Prior to any demolition or rehabilitation work affecting listed buildings, or other buildings and sites within the conservation areas, the Borough Council may notify the appropriate archaeological experts to enable survey and records and possibly excavation to be carried out if appropriate. A planning condition to this effect will be attached in appropriate circumstances.

A Framework for Enhancement

With the introduction of the Civic Amenities Act in 1967, it was made clear that the designation of a conservation area should only be a prelude to action for enhancing an area's character and appearance. The following paragraphs indicate the range of suitable work and include the suggestions of Test Valley Borough Council for minor improvements in the Braishfield area, but it is stressed that these are intended solely to act as a basis for discussion, in the hope of stimulating further ideas and determining priorities.

PROJECTS NEED NOT BE LIMITED TO THE CONSERVATION AREA.

The Planning Department can advise on the availability and sources of grant aid for repairs to historic buildings, and for enhancement projects.

In preparing projects for enhancement it is important to recognise that the quality of the areas stem from their informality; contrast, surprise and variety are the key elements that need to be protected or developed.

1. TREES AND HEDGES

The character of Braishfield owes much to the woodlands which shelter and enclose the buildings in the old village. The Map identifies those trees of particular visual significance and every effort should be made to secure their retention or, in the case of dying or diseased trees, replacement. There may be areas in Braishfield where there is scope for further planting.

2. OPEN SPACES AND FOOTPATHS

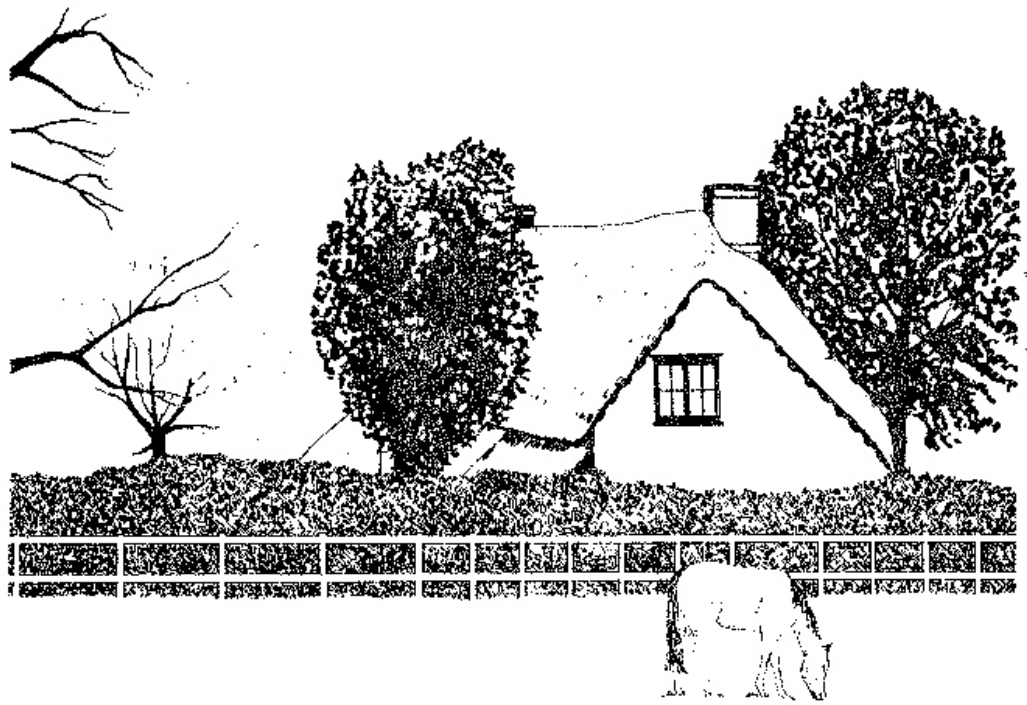
This study has highlighted the relationship between the village and the surrounding fields and open areas. Reference has been made to the high landscape quality of the surrounding countryside and it is important to maintain the separate identity of the settlement. Within the village there are also important open areas, notably the paddock area by the All Saints' Church. It is essential to the character of the village that these areas remain free of development.

The village pond is an important part of the character of Braishfield and it may be possible to carry out works to maintain the water level and enhance its setting.

Footpaths around the parish maintain the links between its different parts; these should remain in use wherever possible. There may be an opportunity for improvements to stiles, signs and fences.

3. BUILDINGS AND WALLS

The rich variety of construction and materials has been described in detail. The overall standard of maintenance is very high, but where repairs are required it is important that the correct materials and techniques are used. Advice to the owners of old buildings is available from the Planning Department, Test Valley Borough Council, Duttons Road, Romsey (telephone Romsey 515117). The Department is also able to advise on the availability and sources of grant aid for repairs to historic buildings.



Implementation

The success of any enhancement work will depend primarily upon the initiatives of landowners and the Parish Council, but the co-ordination of volunteer labour will also be necessary. The part to be played by the different agencies is outlined below.

TEST VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Borough Council is the body responsible for the designation of the conservation area; also for the granting of planning permissions, for the granting of consent for alterations to listed buildings and for the demolition of other buildings; for the control of tree felling (other than Forestry Commission schemes). With regard to enhancement proposals officers of the Borough Council may be able to co-ordinate enhancement schemes working with the agent carrying out the work (Parish Council, landowner or amenity group) and the specialist advisers (Hampshire County Council, Test Valley Archaeological Committee, Countryside Commission). The Council can also provide information about grants, including those from its own environmental enhancement fund, for which an explanatory leaflet is available.

BRAISHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Braishfield Parish Council could be responsible for preparing and carrying out an enhancement programme when this is finalised. It may be that the role of the Council might be to consider proposals for improvements and to work out the programming details. The Council could recruit a volunteer work-force and liaise with landowners about schemes.

INDIVIDUALS

Landowners will be responsible for deciding whether a scheme takes place. Without their consent there is no question of the work progressing but it is hoped that they will adopt a positive approach to any suggestions put forward. All local people, whether interested parties or not, are asked to come forward with suitable schemes.



Appendix :

Trees in Conservation Areas

The Town and Country Planning Act 1971 (Section 61A) requires anyone who proposes to 'top, lop, uproot or wilfully damage or destroy' a tree in a conservation area to give six weeks notice to their district council (in this area, Test Valley Borough Council). This requirement is intended to give the council a final opportunity to serve a tree preservation order (TPO), where appropriate, before work is carried out. TPOs may be served where it appears to the council that it is 'expedient in the interests of amenity'. Permission must be sought from the council before any work is commenced. Work may not be commenced within the six week period without consent.

If the work to a tree in a conservation area is begun without the six weeks notice the person carrying out the work becomes liable for penalties similar to those for contraventions of a tree preservation order and a similar duty to replant. If the authorised work is not completed within two years of giving notice of consent, further notice must be given. The particulars of a notice are recorded by the council in a register open to public inspection. 'Notice' forms are available from the Planning Department, Test Valley Borough Council, Duttons Road, Romsey.

The six weeks rule does not apply to trees that are dying, dead or dangerous, or where works are necessary for the prevention or abatement of a nuisance. Except in an emergency however, a minimum of five days should be given to the authority to decide whether to dispense with a requirement to replant with a tree of appropriate size or species.

There are certain categories of trees that are exempt from all tree preservation or conservation area controls; these are summarised below.

MAIN EXEMPTIONS

- * Trees of less than 75 mm. in diameter, 1.5 m above ground level (or 100 mm. where the act is carried out to improve the growth of other trees);
- * Trees cultivated for fruit production, growing or standing in an orchard or garden;
- * Trees cut down in accordance with a forestry dedication covenant or Forestry Commission plan;
- * Trees cut down by a statutory undertaker (such as the Post Office or river authority).
- * Trees which need to be felled to enable development to be carried out following the granting of planning permission.

Braishfield CONSERVATION AREA

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— Conservation Area Boundary
 ■ Buildings of Local Interest
 ▨ Important Open Areas
 * Important Woodland

Scale 1" = 2500