

BOTLEY CONSERVATION AREA.

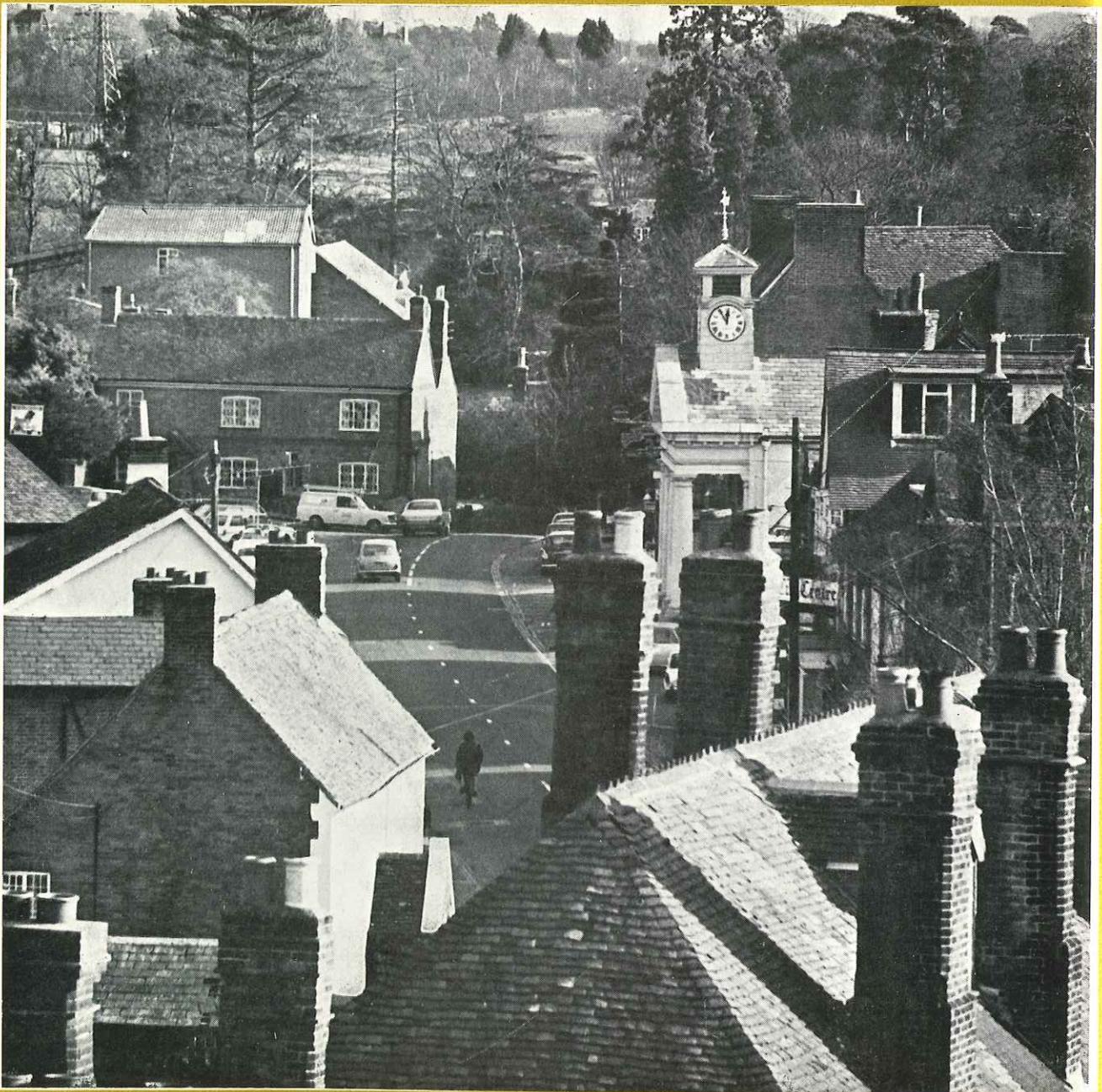


Photo: E. N. Lane.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN

The settlements of Botley grew up around their original asset—the lowest crossing point of the River Hamble. A small Saxon settlement was established around the church at the bottom of Church Lane and Brook Lane; this is probably the one mentioned in the Domesday Survey in 1086 as being held by Ralph de Mortemer, one of William 1st's tenants-in-chief.

The village probably moved from the site around the church to a point further up the river as a result of the establishment of a market and annual fair, for which John de Botley was given a charter by Henry III in 1267. It may have been at this time also that a new crossing point of the river was established at what is now the bridge. The old crossing by the church had perhaps become too wide and dangerous for heavy carts and wagons and John de Botley probably saw the commercial advantages of placing his market at the junction of the roads from Fareham, Bishops Waltham, Southampton and Winchester. The present day triangular market may well have been laid out on land which John had recently bought. Tolls may have been taken at points where the western end of the Market Square narrows and where the present bridge crosses the River Hamble, and so the small medieval town gradually expanded along Winchester Street, High Street and Church Lane, with its growth in prosperity.

The first bridge at Botley was opened in 1797 and made travellers and waggons independent of the tide which would have caused delays in crossing of up to six hours. So began the decline in Botley's importance as a staging post; of the fourteen inns which the village once boasted, only The Bugle, Dolphin and Brewery remain; the weekly market and annual fair were patronised less and less. Apart from the flour mills which have been in existence for a thousand years, Botley never developed industries such as the brick and clay workings of Fareham and Bishops Waltham.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, with improvements in roads, the building of a bridge across the river, the coming of railways and the final cessation of the market and fair, the importance of the town waned, so it became a small pleasant village. In fact William Cobbett—a resident in Botley from 1804-1810—described Botley as "the most delightful village in the world". It has come to serve mainly as a centre for the surrounding scattered settlements, for the smallholdings and farms of the neighbourhood. The town growth gathered momentum in the inter war years. Since the 1950's both Council and private houses have been built on three sides of the village, and a large new housing estate is being built between Winchester Road and Holmesland Lane.

Increasing population and heavier commercial vehicles are now the cause of Botley's worst traffic, which is a constant danger to people using The Square. These narrow roads are not suited to heavy lorries and there are many danger points, particularly at the junction of High Street and Winchester Street. Problems also result from the various uses within The Square; access points have poor visibility and parking facilities are inadequate. To the visual intrusion of traffic can be added the clutter of advertising signs, the insensitive street furniture and such eyesores as the repair garage (Botley Garages) and Sciviers Tank Depot, all within The Square.

The Buildings of Botley

When Botley's centre moved to the market triangle, the old church became isolated; only its old chancel remains. A new church, to give the parishioners a shorter walk, was begun in 1836. A famous late Victorian architect, Sir Thomas Jackson, added the north aisle and other features.

The only other "grand" building in Botley is the Market Hall, built in 1848 in the classical style; the use of this style is interesting, as it was out of favour with most architects by that date, and it hints at the conservative tastes of the countryside.

Although the market was established in the 13th century, none of Botley's houses are as old as that. The earliest are Elizabethan or early Stuart, reflecting the prosperity that the small town must have enjoyed in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

A great rarity is the timber-framed house in Winchester Street, because it has one most unusual feature, a date carved into one of the brackets that support the upper floor. It is difficult to read the last digit, but it is probably 1610. Other brackets have initials, IH and AH, presumably those of the man and wife who built the house. So far, research has not revealed who they were but they were rich enough to have a spacious property, built with well cut timbers and decorative details such as the brackets. The jettying of the upper floor so that it "oversails" the pavement was a favourite status symbol until the end of the 17th century.

Another jettied building in Botley is Cobbets Restaurant in the market-place and although it does not have a date, it is obviously very similar to the one in Winchester Street. (The East end is a later edition). It is a little more showy in its details: the timber braces on the upper floor have a sinuous curve, and there is more elaborate detail in the carving on the brackets. The roses and other designs on these are interesting because they are in the Renaissance style, and show how the new architectural ideas that could be seen in "grand" buildings of the period worked their way down the social scale. At first, however, they were used as decorative details: the basic design of the timber-framing of houses had altered little during the last hundred years.

One thing that had changed, however, was the inside of houses. In the Middle Ages, everyone had a "hall" in their house, which was the main living-room and had in its centre a fire burning in an open hearth. There was no upper floor over the hall, and the smoke went straight up to the roof timbers, to filter out through the thatch or a small opening. By the end of the 16th century, open fires were considered old-fashioned and everyone wanted a proper fireplace: Cobbets was a good example of the rather elaborate chimneys that were often built to show the world that the owner had up-to-date ideas.

The chimneys at Cobbets are of brick. The use of this material was becoming widespread, and it was not long before timber-framing was unnecessary. At Cobbets, as when brick was used to fill the gaps in the walls between the timbers: in the 18th century cottages, such as the ones at the end of the market where the roads cross, it is far more structural. These bricks came from nearby, possibly from Fareham. One of the attractions of brick buildings is that the walls were made of different shades of colour which prevents the dullness which uniform surfaces such as concrete and stucco are likely to produce. Brick-laying is a skilled craft, and the decorative effects that can be achieved are well displayed in Botley House, where bricks are used in the detailed work above the doors, windows, etc. This is a Georgian house, its design based on the work of architects who had been trained in the Classical style, building houses that emphasised symmetry and formality to declare to the outside world the importance of their owners. It is very much the architecture of a prosperous, self-confident and stable society, and the well-to-do Botley citizen who paid for Botley House in the 18th century was announcing his own view of his role in Botley's society, just as the really wealthy land-owners declared their status through their large and elegant country seats.

Other signs of Botley's prosperity are the inns: the Dolphin and the Bugle both thrived on the coach trade of the pre-railway years. The "Catherine Wheel" at the corner of Church Lane was also an inn. On the outside it does not look very old but inside there are timber posts and beams which show that it is at least an 18th century building. Other brick buildings worthy of note are the cottages on the corner of High Street and Winchester Street that face up the market square. They are not particularly grand or important, but they are pleasant small-scale 18th century houses. Their windows are probably early 19th century, in the "Gothic" style, a fantasy in vogue in contemporary literature as well as in architecture. It is buildings like these, unpretentious but with interesting details, that are worth looking for and appreciating in any town or village. Botley is fortunate to have preserved so much of its past. Historical information has been kindly supplied by Messrs. M. F. Hughes and D. A. Hinton of the Hampshire Archeological Committee.

The Conservation Area

There are two parts to the conservation area, a small southern area which is the site of Old Botley, lying just to the north of the Roman road, and the main area. This includes the Square, the original street pattern, which preserves the medieval and post-medieval market place at the eastern, wider end of the High Street, the River Hamble both north and south of the bridge, including the buildings which front on to it, and the buildings described above.

The Square is most important in architectural terms and as the centre of community life. With its combination of triangular shape, subtly angled entrances, offset church tower and buildings of varying size and styles it represents an attractive piece of townscape. Most prominent among the buildings are the Market Hall of 1848 with its portico and clock tower, the Dolphin and Bugle Public Houses and Botley House, though there are other buildings which are important not so much because of their architectural merit as their position in the Square. Forge Cottage for example is a small pleasant building which forms a visual stop to the west of the Square on the inside of the bend, effectively defining the limit of the old part of the village. The eastern end of the Square is visually closed by a two-storey 18th century house which, although rather small for its visual rôle, is reinforced by a belt of mature trees. If either of the buildings were to be demolished the character of the Square would be effectively destroyed.

POLICY

The Local Planning Authorities feel that the character and appearance of this village should be preserved and enhanced and has therefore designated the area illustrated on the accompanying map, as a Conservation Area under The Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

1. The attention of owners, occupiers and potential developers of buildings listed as being of special architectural or historic interest is drawn to the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 which introduced a new code of procedure designed to protect such buildings when either alteration, demolition or extensions are proposed. Demolition of all buildings in the Conservation Area requires planning permission.
2. In order to preserve and enhance the character of The Square, uses within the Conservation Area which generate unreasonable noise or other nuisance or would result in visual intrusion or considerable traffic generation will not normally be permitted and any existing uses of this nature will not usually be allowed to expand.
3. The scale and relationship of buildings in the village is very important and may be destroyed if street widening occurs, if the building line is not maintained or if certain trees and walls are removed. Where it is necessary to replace a building, the position, scale and massing of the original should, in most cases, be reproduced. It is therefore proposed to retain the existing frontage, although in the interests of road safety, some minor road improvements may be necessary.
4. Permission in outline form will not normally be given for building development in the Conservation Area. Detailed plans including elevations showing the new buildings in their setting, and particulars of colours, materials, existing trees and proposed landscape treatment will usually be required. Particular care will be exercised to ensure that inappropriate materials or colours are not used and that advertisement signs, if found necessary, are carefully designed for their purpose and position. Informal consultations will, however, be encouraged with the Local Planning Authority to assist applicants at the stage when outline permission would normally be sought.
5. **Trees**
As a result of the Town and Country Amenities Act 1974, any proposals to cut down, lop, or uproot trees within the Conservation Area must be notified to the local authority to enable it to consider making a Tree Preservation Order on the trees in question.

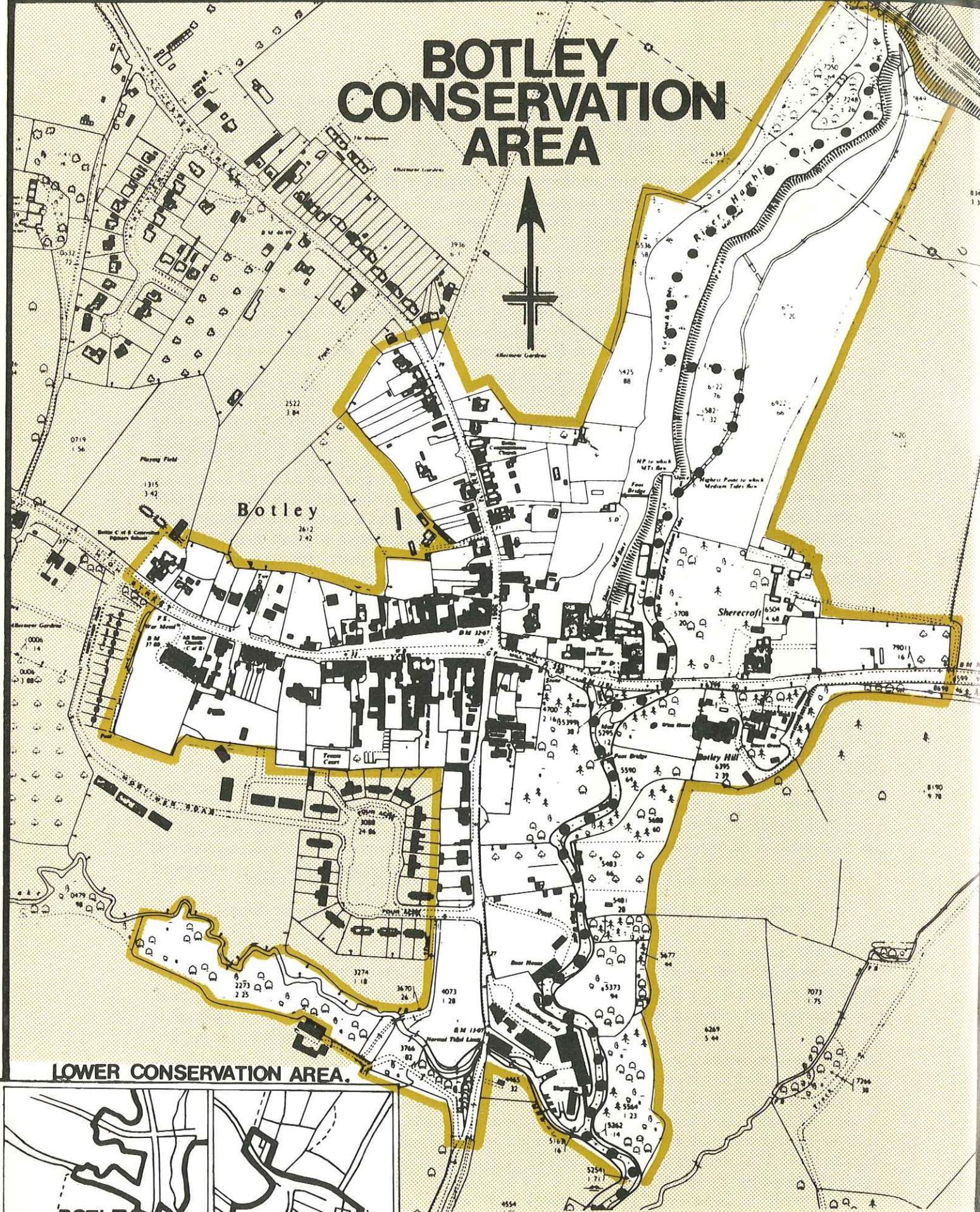
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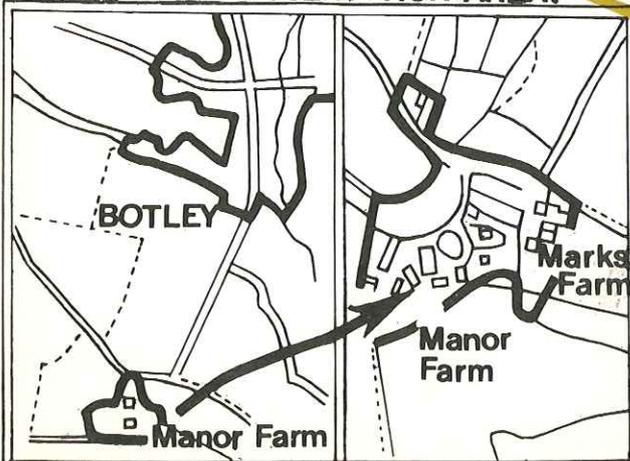
J. B. Thompson, A.A.Dip., R.I.B.A., M.R.T.P.I., Dip.C.D.(Edin.), Director of Planning,
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Based on the Ordnance Survey.

BOTLEY CONSERVATION AREA



LOWER CONSERVATION AREA.



Scale 0 100 200 300 400 500 Feet

EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL AND WINCHESTER CITY BOUNDARY. ● ● ●
CONSERVATION AREAS. —