



**Kidlington Conservation Areas  
Draft Appraisal  
May 2009**

**Planning, Housing and Economy**

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# 1. Introduction

*'The major part of the town consists of some of the ugliest ribbon development in the county, with 1930s semi-detached houses of the most dismal kind for two or three miles along the Oxford-Banbury road. The old village is east of this.'*  
Nikolaus Pevsner 1974

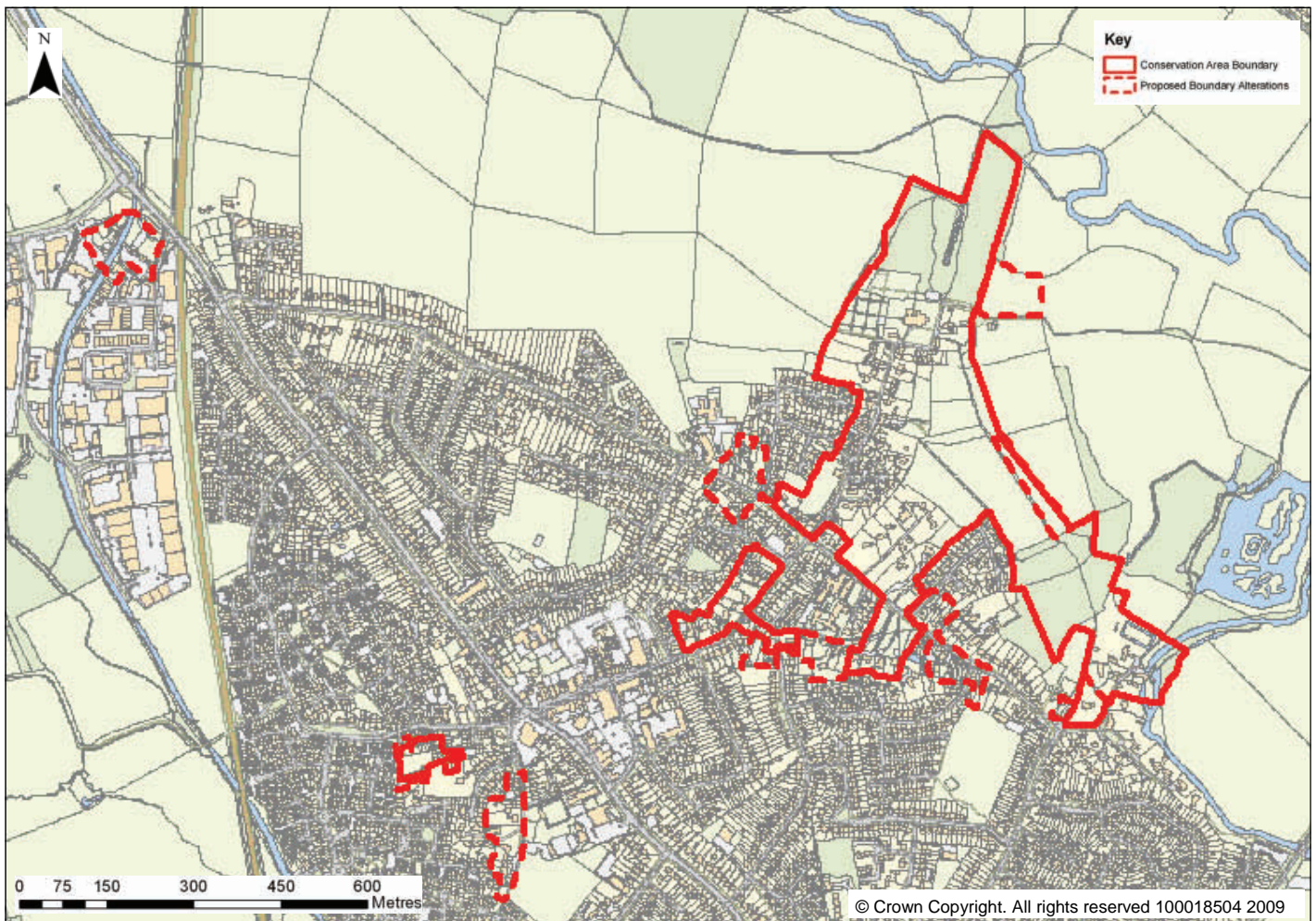


Fig. 1: Conservation Area Boundaries including proposed amendments and new designations

Kidlington makes a proud claim to be Britain's largest village and contains three existing Conservation Areas: Church Street, High Street and The Rookery. Originally a distinctly rural community, the village was extended to the west and south during the 20th century, and boasts a fine example of a 1930s Garden City to the south.

In acknowledgement of its special qualities, which need to be preserved and enhanced, this document is the first full appraisal of all three Conservation Areas following their designations in 1974 (Church Street) and 1991 (High Street and the Rookery) and their subsequent reviews in 1996, and proposes two additional designations of conservation areas at Crown Road and Langford Lane Wharf.

# 2. Planning Policy Context

## 2.1 Conservation Area Designation

2.1.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides legislation for the protection of the nation's heritage of buildings and places of architectural and historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

2.1.2 Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. However, it is the 1990 Act (Section 69) which places a duty upon local planning authorities of identifying areas of special architectural or historic interest through an appraisal process and to designate them as Conservation Areas.

Since 1967 some 8,000 conservation areas have been designated in England, including 56 in the Cherwell District.

2.1.3 Local planning authorities have a duty under the Act to consider boundary revisions to their Conservation Areas 'from time to time'.

2.1.4 This document is based on a standard recording format derived from advice contained in documents published by English Heritage (2005). The appraisal process enables the special character and appearance of Kidlington can continue to be identified; thereby ensuring that any future development preserves or enhances that identified special character.

2.1.5 This is a draft document which is subject to consultation and may be amended as a result. The final document will be put to the Council's Executive for approval and any new designation will have immediate effect. The approved document will be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the Conservation Areas and their settings.





Figure 2: Topographical map

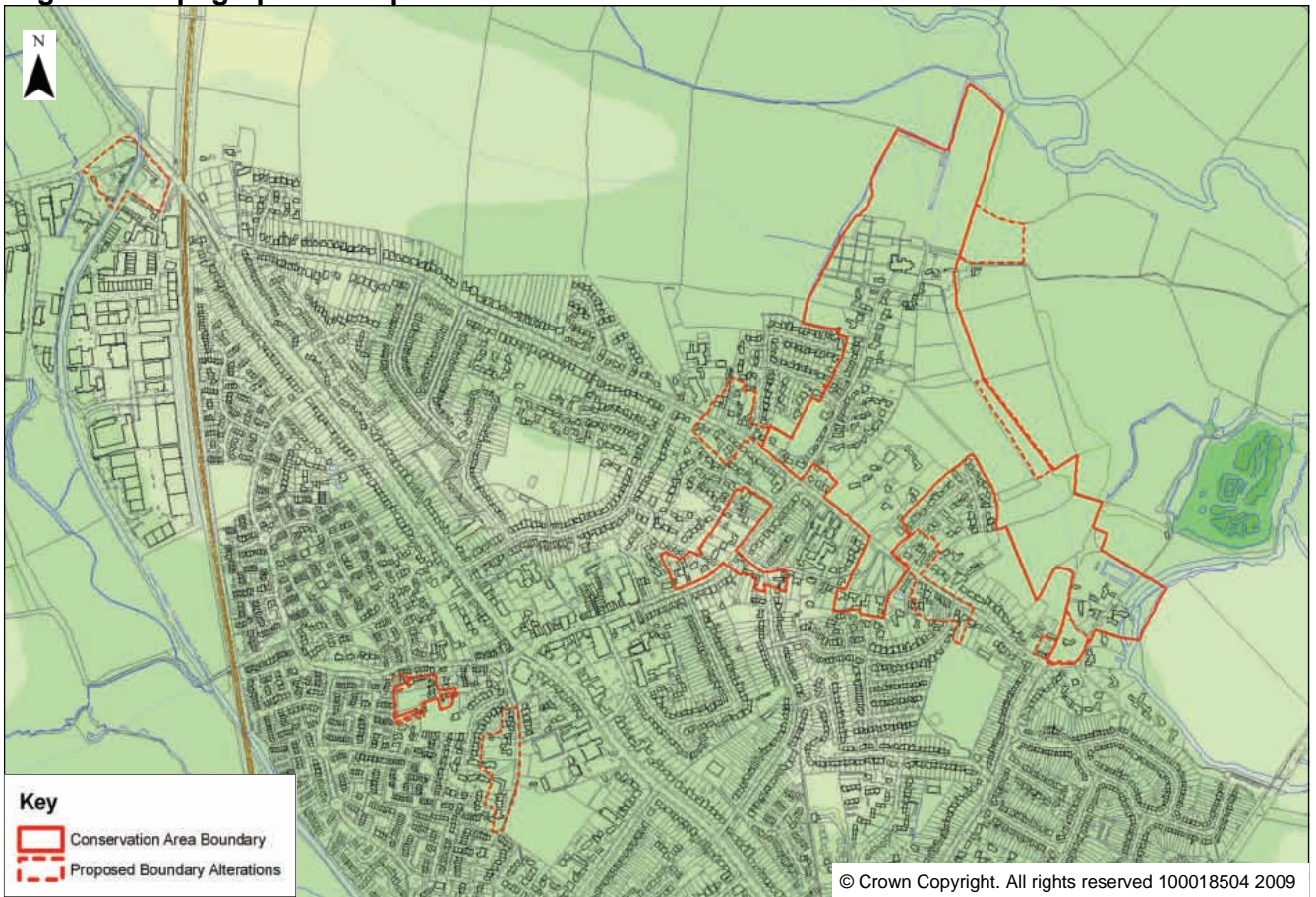
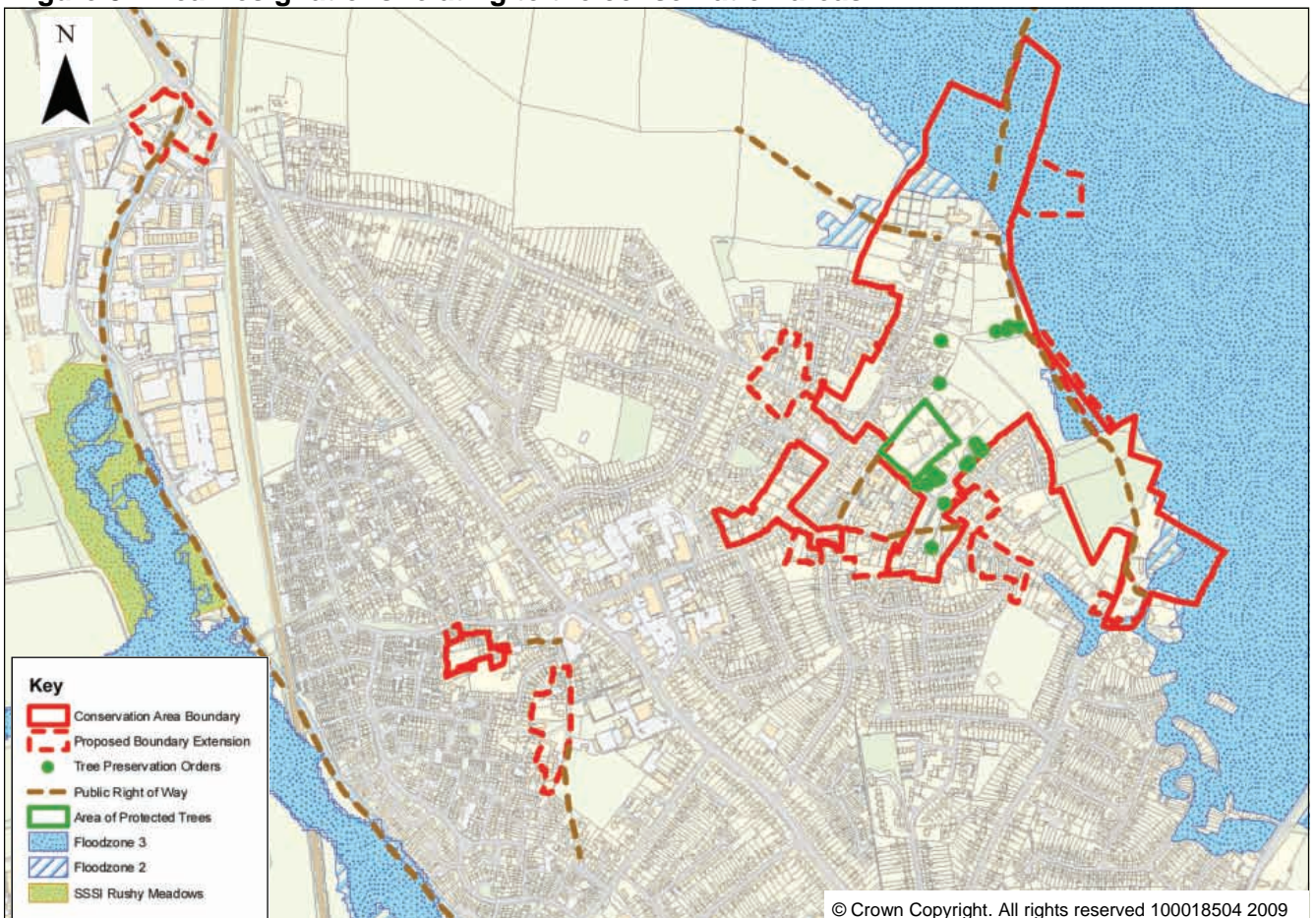


Figure 3: Area Designations relating to the conservation areas





# 3. Location and Topography

Kidlington parish lies between Oxford and Woodstock, and its dominant feature is the village of Kidlington, which grew up alongside a two mile stretch of road, now known as the A4260.

The land is relatively flat, lending itself well to the industrial developments of the Oxford Canal and Great Western Railway during the 18th/19th centuries. The village is surrounded by drained agricultural fields and smaller villages and has good connections to Oxford and Banbury, as well as being close to the A34.

The Kidlington meadows extend eastwards from the conservation area towards the River Cherwell and are recognised by OCC as an ecologically important area. The whole of this part of Kidlington is within the consultation area for the Rushy Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest to the west of the Oxford Canal. The meadows are generally very open with limited tree cover, and are an important breeding site and habitat for the endangered British water vole.

With the exception of the west end of the High Street and the limited development along Oxford Road at the junction of these two roads, the conservation area boundaries describe the extent of the village settlement towards the end of the 19th century.

There are three existing Conservation Areas centred on the historic parts of the village: Church Street which stretches south from the church; High Street, focussing on the northern historic area of the street; The Rookery, a small pocket of late 19th century housing to the west of Oxford Road.

A fourth Conservation Area is proposed at Crown Road to the west of Oxford Road, incorporating an area of 18th/19th century housing; the site of a former Manor which became an outlying farm and associated buildings.

A fifth Conservation Area is proposed at Langford Lane Wharf to the north of the main settlement, incorporating 18th century cottages and the Wise Alderman public house.



Fig 4: 2004 Aerial view of the village including the current and proposed Conservation Area boundaries

# 4. History of Kidlington

## 4.1 Origins

4.1.1 The village of Kidlington developed as a number of small, scattered settlements, of which the earliest and most important was around the church and medieval manor house.

4.1.2 The name Kidlington is of Anglo Saxon origin and means 'Cydel's settlement'. The archaeology within the parish is centred around the main village (see 4.4).

4.1.3 The most prominent feature prior to Inclosure in 1818 was the large green, which covered most of the township south of the Bicester Road. From the early 16th century Kidlington was consequently known as 'Kidlington on the Green'. A second small green was located at the junction of Church Street, Mill Street, High Street and The Moors.



Fig 5: Kidlington on the Green prior to Inclosure in 1818 © KDHS

## 4.2 Development & Population

4.2.1 The 1086 Domesday entry for Kidlington (known there as 'Chedelintone') mentions a mill and lists 40 unfree tenants and two servi (servants). The village was held by Robert d'Oilly along with Bicester, Water Eaton and Bletchington. Robert had taken over the Saxon manor with its church and mill, and had been instructed to build a castle in the city of

Oxford. The area of Gosford was once part of Kidlington, and was separated in 1142 when it was granted to the Hospitallers.

4.2.2 By 1301 the village population had risen to 22 free and 55 unfree tenants on the Manor. The village continued to grow despite being checked by the black death in 1349; an epidemic in 1593 and a fire in 1638. By 1622 some 96 houses were recorded and development had spread to Moor End.

4.2.3 The manor in Kidlington was passed in 1532 to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, by King Henry VIII, his brother-in-law, and later to Leonard Chamberlain and John Blundell in 1546 following Brandon's death. The likely site of this manor is west or south-west of the church on the site of Thornbury House. The medieval house was demolished and rebuilt in the 18th century.

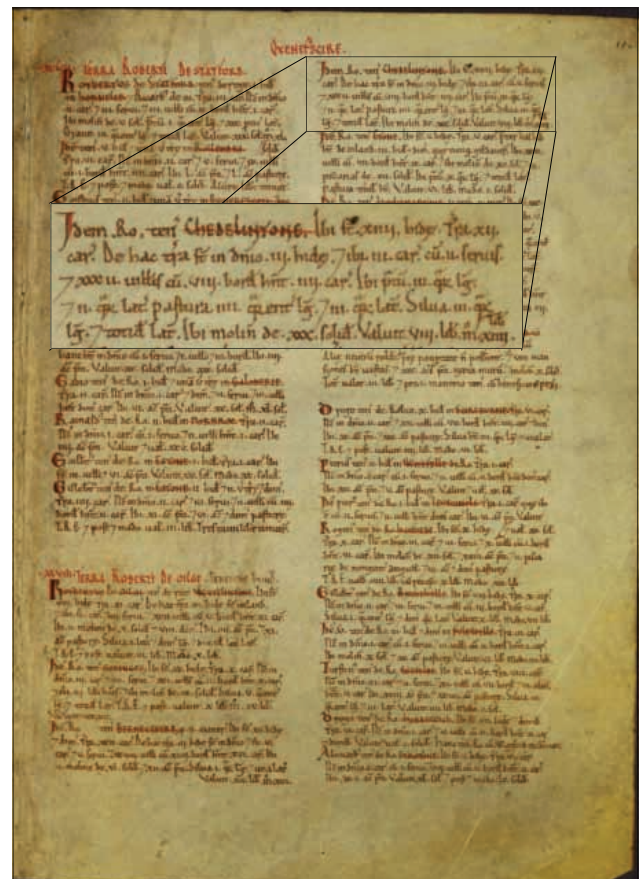


Fig. 6: Extract from Domesday showing the entry for Kidlington and its mill



4.2.4 Kidlington played an important part for both sides during the English Civil War; Royalist troops were stationed at Campsfield to the west of the village. Gosford Bridge, east of the mill, had a strategic role in the siege of Oxford in 1644, during which it was successfully defended by the Royalists. The local gentry mainly fought for the King.

4.2.5 In the 17th century Kidlington, in addition to the 3 manors (Bury, Bailey and Hampden), a number of substantial farmhouses were constructed, for example Hill Farm (87 High Street). Several properties in School Road date from this period including nos. 6-14, which in 1837 were sold as 'Five Cottages and the Old Poor House'. Number 14 was the Poor House, which had previously been a school.

4.2.6 From the latter part of the 18th century the village of Kidlington became something of a dormitory for Oxford, chosen by citizens who wanted a house within easy reach of the city. As a consequence several large houses were built fronting the two greens.

4.2.7 Famous residents of Kidlington include the architect of Blenheim Palace, Sir John Vanbrugh, who lived in Hampden Manor during the building phase of the palace, and designed and built his own water closet with personal fireplace in the front garden, which still stands today. More recent inhabitants include Thomas Beecham, the pill manufacturer; the philosopher Bertrand Russell; the federalist Lionel Curtis and the entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson.



*Sir John Vanbrugh 1664-1726*

### 4.3 Trade & Industry

4.3.1 The village relied on agriculture for its main source of employment and prior to Inclosure in 1818 shared a single set of open fields in Thrupp, making the two villages almost indiscernible from each other. The agriculture of the parish was arable, with several compact farms surrounding the main village. Some were dedicated to pastoral activities, including cattle and sheep, although the main crops grown were flax, wheat and barley.

4.3.2 This pastoral agriculture was mainly due to the large expanse of common ground south of the High Street. Prior to Inclosure, this was grazing land. In 1818, the land was offered to the Duke of Marlborough, making the Duke and Exeter College the largest landowners in the village. The College having previously acquired land and several properties from Sir William Petre in 1566 after he bought it from Queen Elizabeth I the previous year. The former common land was divided into fields and let to local farmers. The present residential buildings on the land did not appear until the late 1920s, when development spread along the Oxford Road.

4.3.3 The 19th century expansion of the village coincided with an improvement in transport links, begun by the building of the Oxford Canal, which opened in 1790. The canal provided employment for boat builders, coal merchants and bargees, and used the newly created basin wharf at Thrupp. During WWII the canal played an important part in servicing the air base, later to become Oxford Airport. The GWR from Oxford to Banbury opened in 1850 and was connected to the London/Birmingham railway in 1851. The station, constructed in 1855, was closed in 1964. Intended to serve the town of Woodstock rather than the small village of Kidlington, the yards were placed on the west of the line. The 18th century warehouse at Langford Lane was later converted into 19th century thatched cottages.





Fig. 7: Kidlington and the surrounding landscape before the railway (pre-1830s) - approximate conservation area boundaries

4.3.4 The economy of Kidlington changed during the 19th century from one based solely on agricultural and local trades, to one dominated by non-agricultural work. This is mirrored in the architecture of the village, which saw several 19th century brick terraces erected, and development which concentrated on the High Street, Lyne Road and Banbury Road areas (all outside the conservation areas).

4.3.5 Traditional crafts (which included a Flemish weaver in 1437) gave way to commerce facilitated by the arrival of the canal and the railway. For the non-professional class the largest employment opportunity after farming was domestic service, although it is likely that many of the servants worked in Oxford city.

Non-agricultural occupations increased during the 19th century as professionals and prosperous tradesmen settled in the village for convenient daily travel to Oxford. This included physicians, teachers and the deputy lieutenant of Oxfordshire.

4.3.6 Building programmes of the 20th century, consumed much of the available land. 1930s Kidlington saw an increase in poultry farming, and a popular fruit farm was situated in the north-west.

4.3.7 There was little local industry until after WWII, despite the increase in population and shops. In the 1930s and 50s, building was on the increase, and car dealerships and garages appeared. The Oxfordshire Farmers' Bacon Factory occupied a site opposite the station for 30 years, finally closing c.1960.



*Kidlington Airfield in 1941 during the war efforts © Oxford Airport*

4.3.8 The airport was initially opened as a landing ground in 1939 and requisitioned by the RAF in 1939/40. After the war a flying school was established and civil aviation began again in 1946. In the mid 1970s the airport employed nearly 500 ground staff and trained over 400 pilots for international airlines.

4.3.9 An industrial zone first mooted in 1938 was finally constructed in the 1950s. Various engineering and commercial factories were established, although several failed thrive. The area has since been re-established as a centre for car dealerships, the Oxford Motor Park.

4.3.10 The Oxford Zoological gardens was sited in Kidlington on the land surrounding Gosford Hill farmhouse, where the present Thames Valley Police station stands. Opened in 1931, the zoo housed a large collection of animals including polar bear cubs, a lion and an eleven-year-old elephant. After only a few years occupation, the zoo closed in 1937/8, and the buildings were taken over by the East Ham Grammar School.

4.3.11 The history of educational provision within Kidlington is unclear until the late 16th century, when a parishioner provided for his son to be educated at the local school for three years. It is known that a schoolhouse was built on the green in 1634, however this was converted into a townhouse by 1710, followed by a workhouse in 1754. During this time, educational charities were providing for schoolmasters, suggesting that although the school building may not have been kept, the tradition of education was still thriving. Smaller schools teaching a total of 116 children were recorded in 1815, and private boarding schools were becoming popular.

A National day and Sunday school was built in 1827/8 on Exeter College land in the centre of the village. Truancy was a constant battle for the teachers, and it was reported in 1868 that 25% of the pupils were habitually absent.

After a rebuild in 1871, the school became a county school in 1940, and continued in use until 1952 when the children were transferred to the new Kidlington Junior County school on the Bicester Road, now known as the Edward Feild school. The old school building was reused as a social centre, and burnt down in 1977.



## 4.4 Archaeology

4.4.1 While there is an abundance of written history about the parish and village following the Norman Invasion of the 11th century, direct evidence of former occupations is scarce. Within the Parish the indications of early occupation including a prehistoric ridgeway (running alongside the present A4260), tracks and flints, Roman coins, pottery and the sites of two Roman villas with crop marks and a well. The evidence however is scare; the result of limited investigatory activity in the area.

The Roman villa site close to the church, with its associated fields was formerly a scheduled ancient monument; this classification has been removed due to erosion of the site and reappraisal, which suggests that it may have been merely a farm connected to the nearby villa at Campsfield.

4.4.2 There are two other unscheduled monuments in the parish; a dovecote and possible monastic complex sited adjacent to the church. A further archaeological site (of medieval fishponds and a possible moated cottage) was built upon in the 1990s just east of Parker's Farm, situated east of the Begbroke Science Park.



*The undulations of the former scheduled monument can be seen in the fields east of the church*

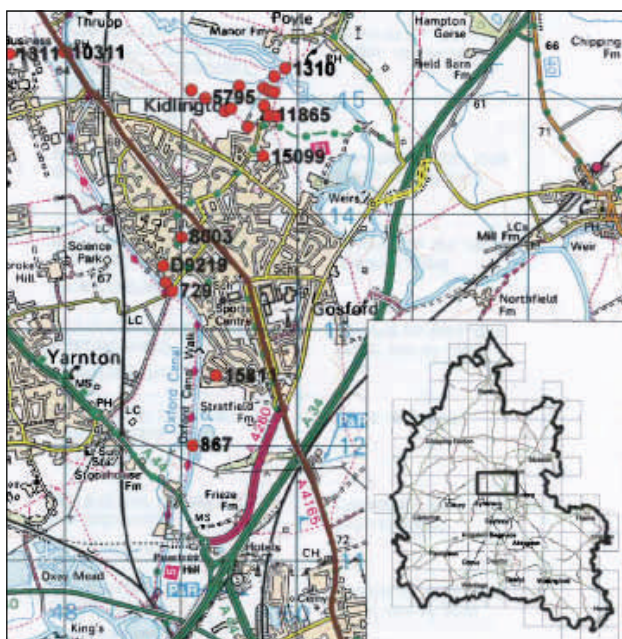


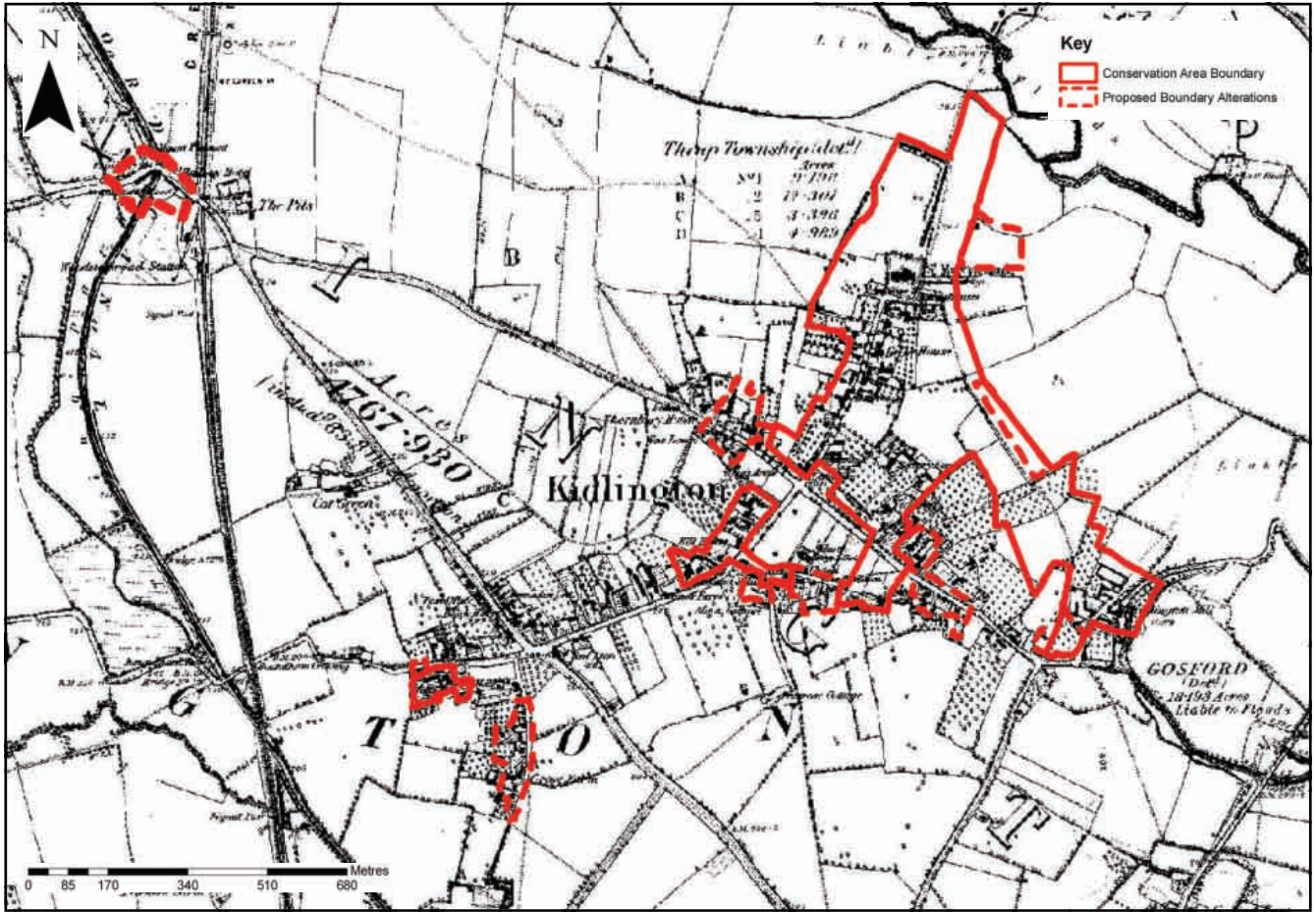
Fig. 8: Map showing archaeological finds within the Kidlington area © Oxfordshire County Council

4.4.3 There have been numerous small finds found during watching briefs and by residents. These include Roman coins and early flint arrowheads, and a Roman urn found in a well near the church in 1840. Two Saxon spearheads found in the village are now on display in the Ashmolean Museum.

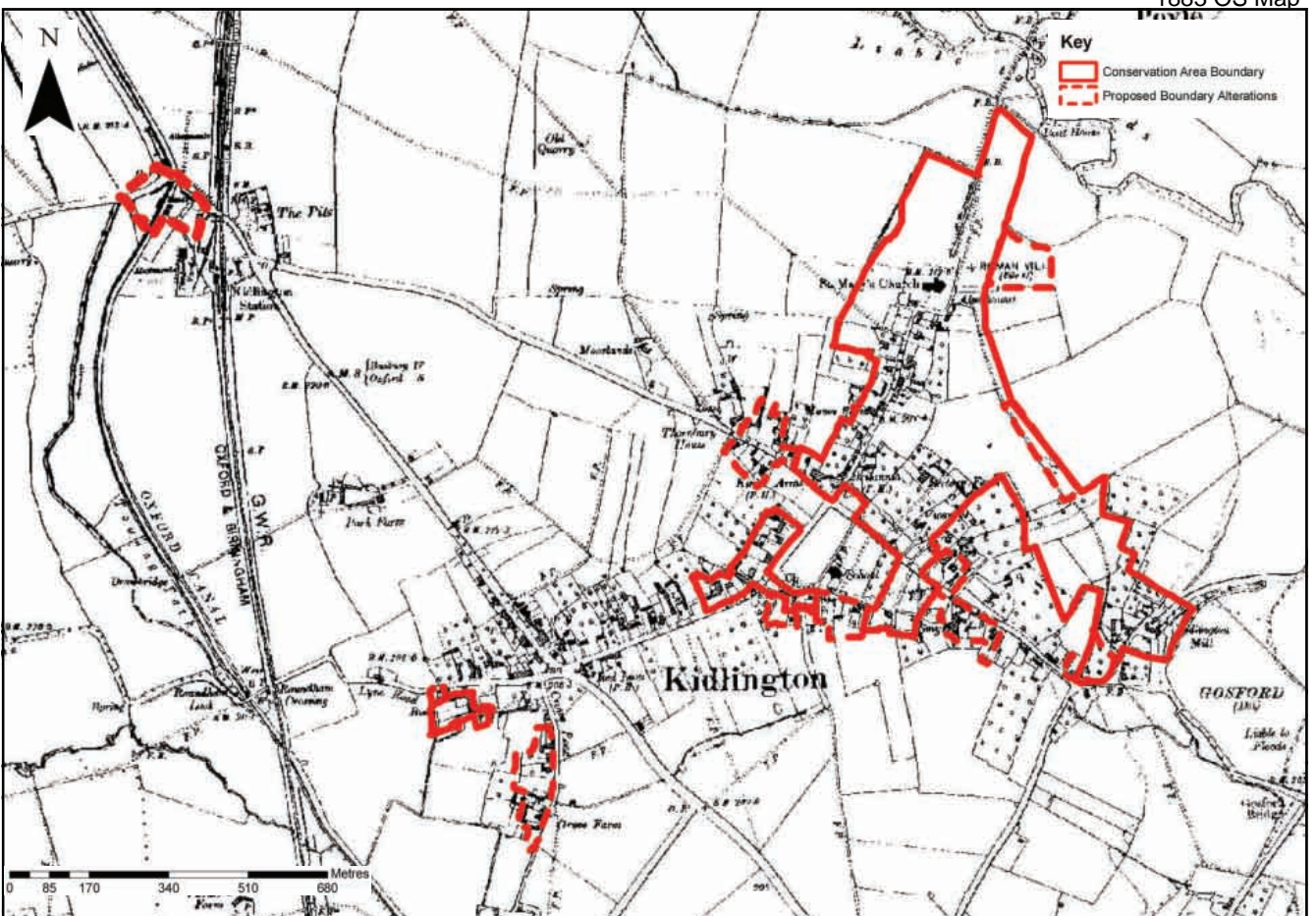
As can be seen from the map, the majority of finds is concentrated around the church. This indicates the importance and prominence of the site over the past 3000+ years.



Fig. 9: Village development in Kidlington from 1883

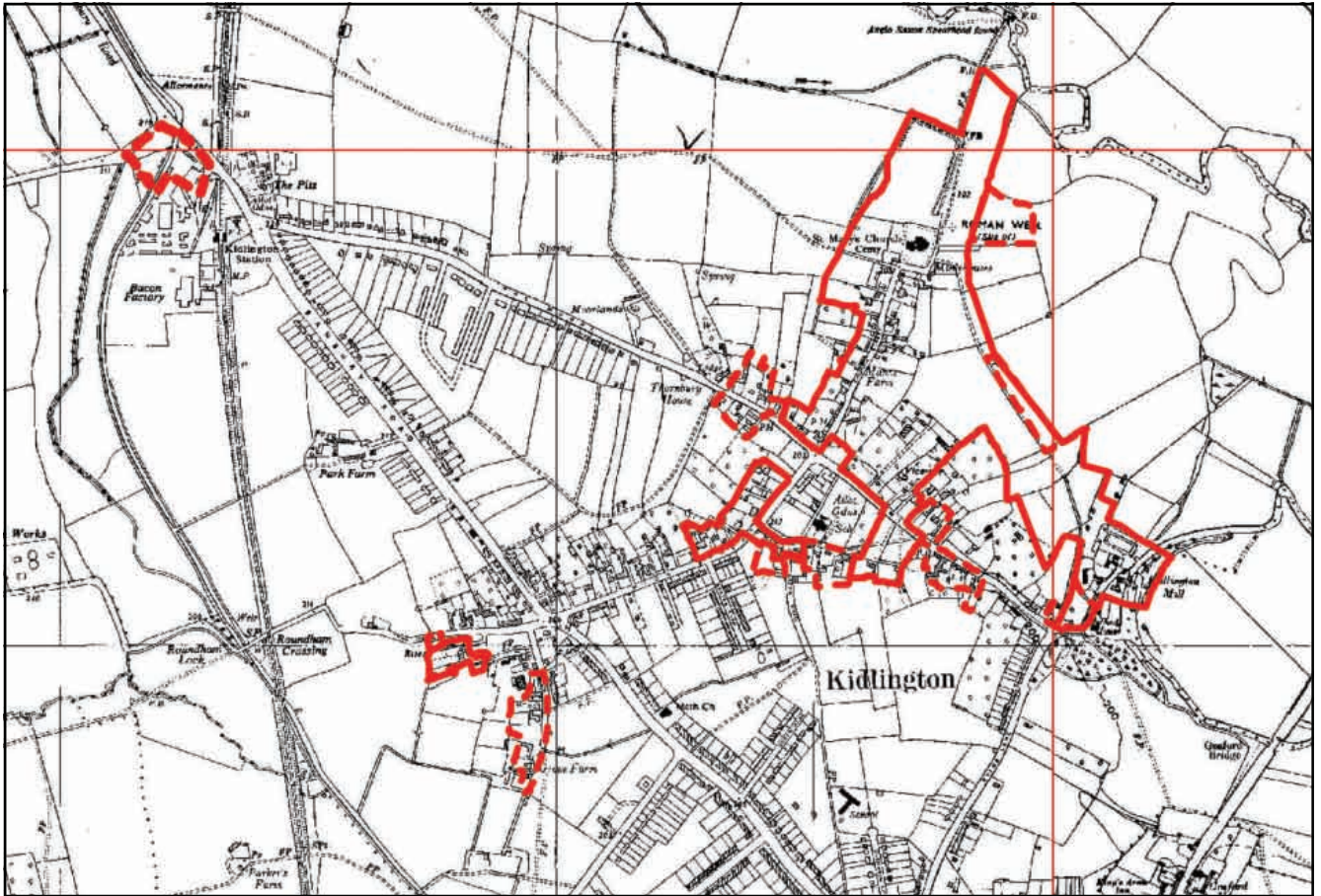


1883 OS Map

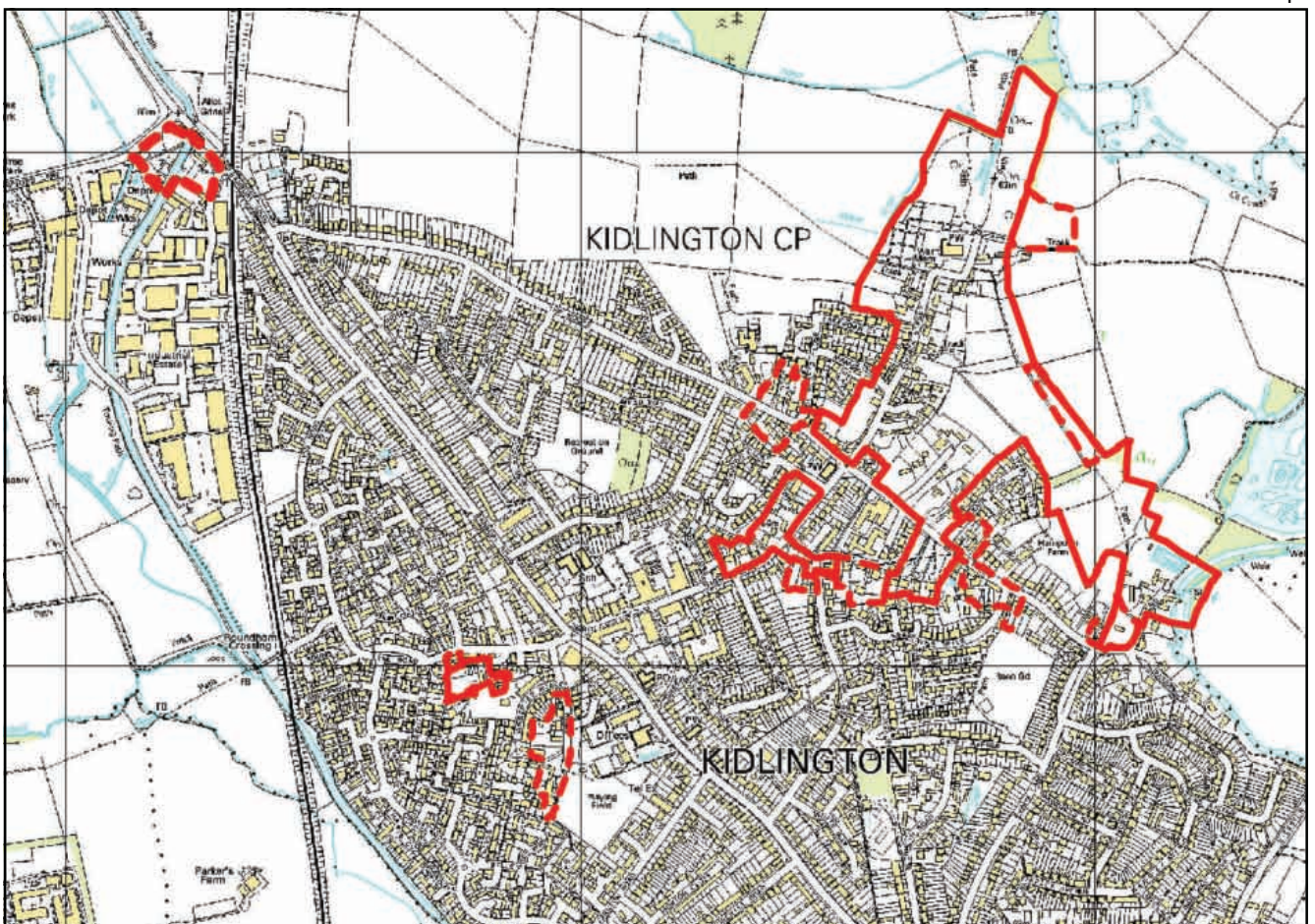


1914 OS Map





1955 OS Map



2008 OS Map



# 5. Church Street Conservation Area



*Aerial photograph of Church Street Conservation Area 2004*

5.1 Church Street Conservation Area lies on the eastern fringe of Kidlington, the oldest part of the village. It is centred on Church Street, and includes parts of Mill Street, Mill End and the meadow land to the east of Mill Street between the Church of St Mary and Mill End.

Unusually the parish church is not located in the centre of the settlement but on its northern extremity, being the most northerly structure overlooking the water meadows of the River Cherwell.

The Conservation Area comprises two main focii: the parish church with the village street leading to it, and the Mill and associated buildings. These are separated by the intervening water meadows and pre-20th century development.

## 5.2 Listed Buildings within Church Street Conservation Area

There are several listed buildings within this conservation area. The majority are Grade II; their locations are given in figure 10.





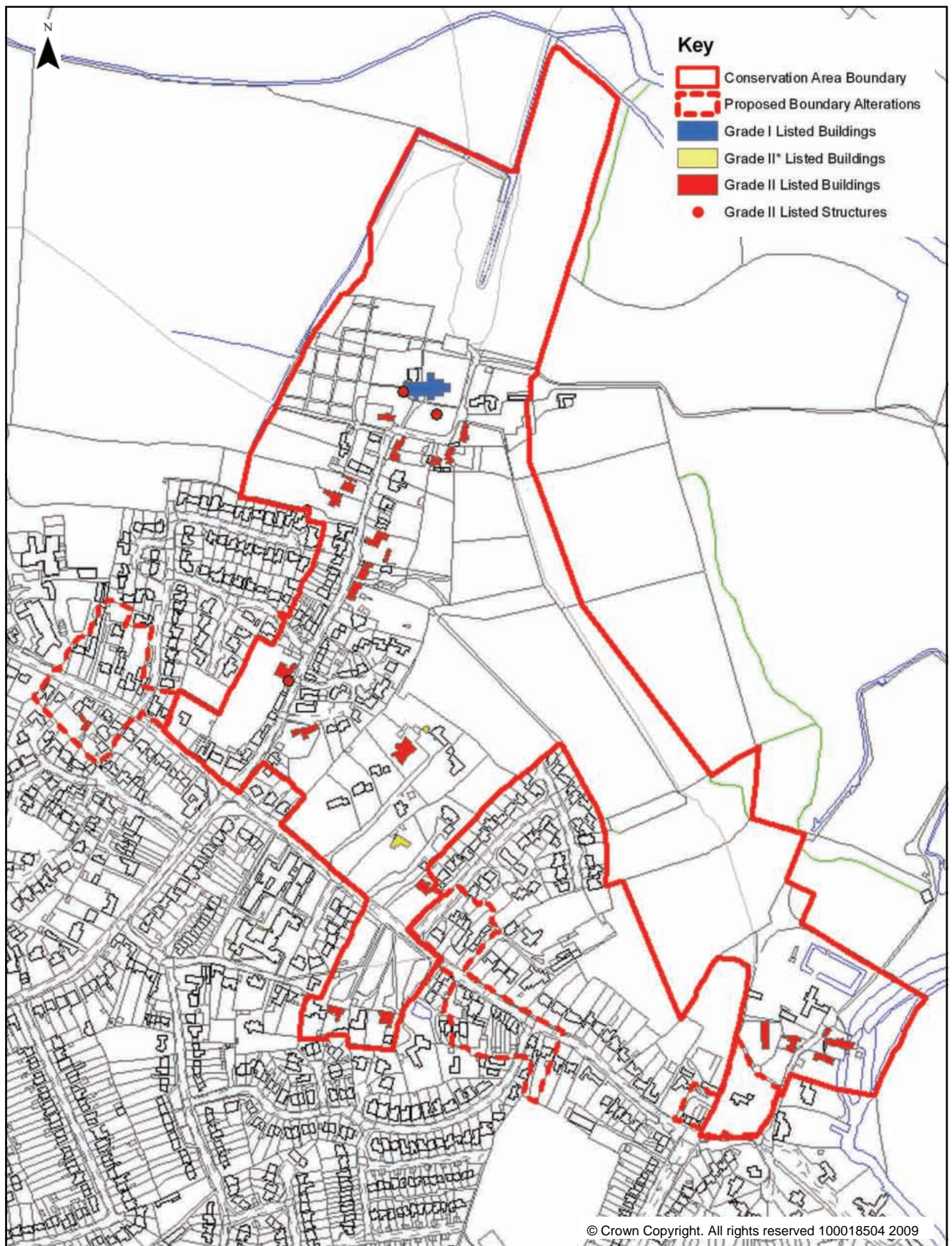
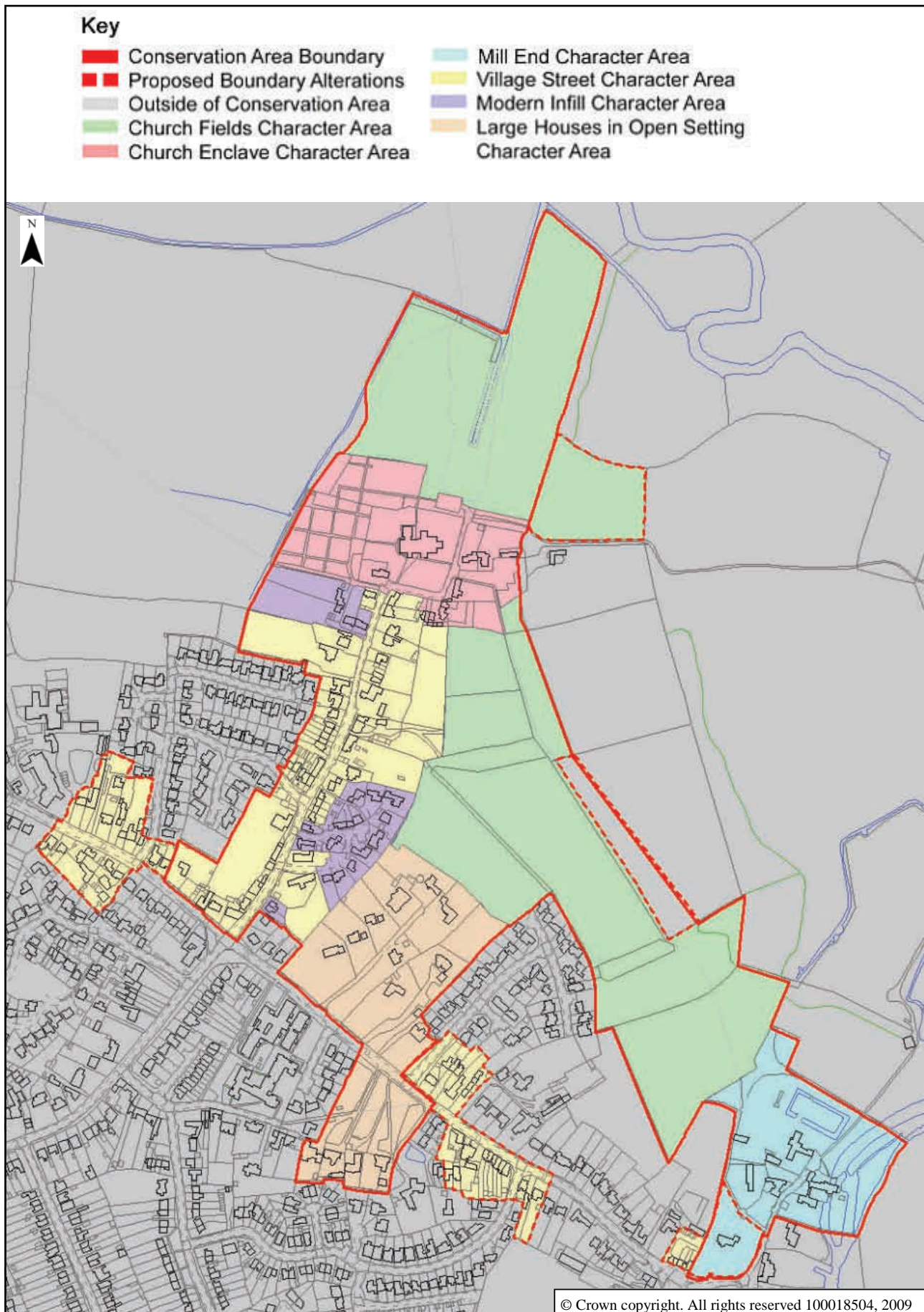


Fig. 10: Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area  
For descriptions, see Appendix 2



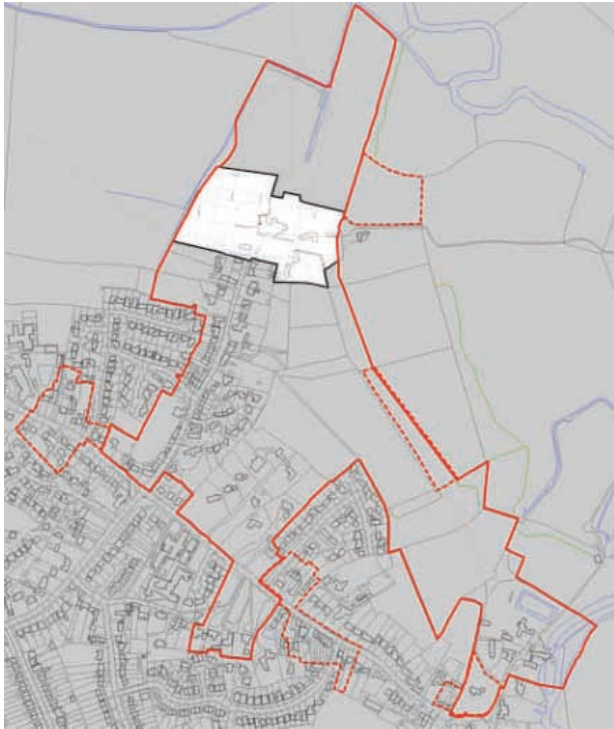
Fig. 11: Character Areas within the Conservation Area



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## 5.7 Church Enclave Character Area



The 13th century Grade I Listed Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin is the focal point of this character area, located on the northern extremity of Kidlington, prominent in views from across the flood meadows of the River Cherwell. It is a real jewel and well hidden from most of the settlement.

### 5.7.1 Land Use

Ecclesiastical use dominates this area. The church occupies a central position within the enclosed church yard, with an extensive cemetery to the west, recently extending north into the open flood plain. 17th century almshouses, small cottages and a modern dwelling face the church yard on its south and east side. Unusually, associated ecclesiastical buildings such as the Old Vicarage and Old Rectory are located some distance from the Parish Church; nor is there a village hall or school room built close to the place of worship.

### 5.7.2 Street Pattern

Routes converge from all directions at the Parish Church, from the water meadows, east from The Mill and also from the villages along the aptly named Church Street, which terminates at the church. The road wraps tightly around the church yard wall, finally terminating in a car park between the church

and the water meadow that serves both churchgoers and walkers. The slender spire of St Mary's Church is a magnificent focal point from all directions. Even though Church Street has a slightly meandering building line, the spire is always visible, attractively framed by the Church Street frontages.



*The west elevation of the church*

### 5.7.3 Building age, type and style

The Church of St Mary the Virgin dates from around 1220 in cruciform form with central tower and no aisles, extended in the Perpendicular style. Its spire dates from about 1450 and is a distinct landmark within and without the village. Morton's Almshouses date from 1671, with a high quality extension added in 1953-4, replicating the local stone vernacular style.



*Morton's Almshouses*

Number 82-88 Church Street facing the south east corner of the church yard are two groups of semi-detached thatched vernacular cottages of the late 17th—early/mid 18th century, as is the property known as the Priests House. This property is much altered,



having originally been three cottages, two of which were demolished in the mid 20th century, and has recently been extended to abut the church yard once more.

There is also a semi-detached property of late 20th century construction immediately east of the church built on the former rope worker's site.

### 5.7.4 Scale and massing

The church, placed centrally within the original church yard, is a very significant feature, particularly its spire which rises to 51.8 metres. By contrast the handful of dwellings around the church yard consist of two sets of diminutive semi-detached vernacular cottages tucked into the south east corner, the low gabled almshouses with the adjacent 104 and 106 Church Street of recent construction modelled in similar scale and set at 90 degrees to the church yard, which minimises their impact. The Priests House, 65 Church Street, placed at the head of the Church Street vista close to the entrance of the church yard, is a remodelled and extended two storey building, formerly three cottages.



*The Priest's House, 65 Church Street*

### 5.7.5 Construction and materials

The Church of St Mary is constructed in limestone ashlar with fine detailing (moulding and fine window tracery) and the roof is stone slates. All other buildings are of limestone rubble with the traditional combed wheat reed or stone slate roofing. The almshouses have stone mullioned windows with iron-studded plank doors, the cottages simple casements under timber lintels and plank doors with canopied porches. The few subsidiary buildings in brick and tile add to the informal rural atmosphere.

### 5.7.6 Means of enclosure

The limestone churchyard wall and other low boundary walls have a unifying influence, containing the road around the church yard. The vernacular cottages are set some distance back from the road behind cottage gardens which rely on vegetation for enclosure.



*Limestone boundary wall at the church*

### 5.7.7 Trees, hedges and open spaces

The historic churchyard dominates this area, devoid of gravestones and roughly tended with wild flowers, its simplicity sets off the magnificent church. The church yard extension is, by contrast, busy with decorated grave stones and adorned with flowers. Two yew trees frame the gateway to the church yard, but otherwise there are surprisingly few trees in the church yard itself. To the west, north and east lie the vast open meadows of the River Cherwell.



*Yew trees at church entrance*



### 5.7.8 Features of special interest

- The recently restored spire is a landmark, particularly from across the Cherwell valley. Swifts nest in the tower during the summer. The flora in the church yard contributes to the rural character.
- The almshouses have date stones to commemorate their construction and refurbishment (1671 and 1953 respectively).
- The war memorial is located in a prominent position close to the church yard gateway at the head of Church Street



*The War Memorial*



*Almshouses date stone  
1671*

### 5.7.9 Carriageways and footways

Church Street wraps around the churchyard and its lack of footways or kerbs very much contributes to the informal rural character. The road terminates at the car park, which is tarmacadum surfaced, and unsurfaced public rights of way fan out across the meadows, some part of the well-used Kidlington Circular Walk.



*View northwest from the churchyard across open fields*

### 5.7.10 Threats

The car park to the north of the church caters for most of the needs of church goers but may need extension to avoid damage to Church Street from parking.

The vernacular cottages are small scale for contemporary requirements, but extensions would need to be very carefully handled to avoid dominating the original fabric.



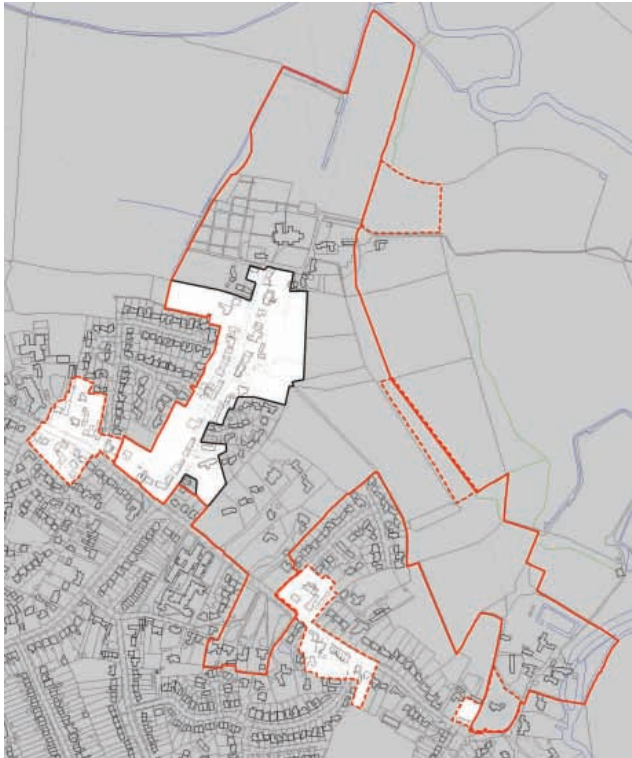
*82-84 Church Street*

### 5.7.11 Key Views

- There are spectacular views across the water meadows towards the church spire, which can be seen against the flat horizon amongst and between layers of trees and hedgerows from all directions for many miles around and conversely, expansive vistas out of the church yard west, north and east over the flat landscape.
- The approach along Church Street enjoys views of the spire framed by building frontages for its entire length.



### 5.8 Village Street Character Area



Successive OS Maps show that up until the latter part of the 20th century, the settlement pattern remained constant and housing density within the character area low, with many areas under orchard cultivation. Change occurred with the pressure for housing development, and the streets saw wholesale in-fill from the 1970s onwards.



*Manor Farm, 17 Church Street*

The roads now known as The Moors, Mill Street and Church Street were the arterial transport routes of their day, connecting the settlement of Kidlington north to the medieval field systems towards Thrupp, east to the mill and latterly north-west to the Langford Lane Wharf and coal depot. The importance of these roads has declined with the advent of the car, bringing the route of the old Roman Road (A4260) to prominence. This has left the northern historic fringes of Kidlington as something of a leafy backwater.

#### 5.8.1 Land Use

This area is almost entirely residential today; historically this was not the case and as recently as World War II there was a thriving network of businesses along both Mill Street and Church Street. The Kings Arms and The Six Bells public houses and a small row of shops at the east end of Mill Street are the sole survivors of this.

Farms were also important to the area. One of the original manor houses, Bury House, was located on Church Street, although its exact position is unclear. Manor Farm functioned as a working farm until 1968 and was large by 19th century standard: cows were driven down from the paddock beside the church to the yard off Church Street, hence the former name, Cow Lane.

#### 5.8.2 Street Pattern

The historic footpaths and transport links have given rise to the carriageways of today. The Moors (formerly Bury Moor Road) together with Mill Street ran across the north-eastern edge of the former Town or Village Green (see figure 5). The junction of these two roads was formerly known as Bateman's Corner, a popular recreation ground. Sadly, modern development swept the green away leaving just a small section on the south-side of Mill Street. The properties along School Road now define where the south edge of the green once was.

The main roads form a cross road at the junction of The Moors, Mill Street, High Street and Church Street. A number of subsidiary modern estate roads emanate from these historic routes, as well as a number of historic 'courtyards': nos. 29-33 The Moors and nos. 53-59 Church Street. The remnants of former farmyards can also be identified by the presence of both converted and derelict farm barns and outbuildings.



### 5.8.3 Building age, type and style

Buildings from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries are all to be found and can be readily identified from their architectural detailing.

The Moors and Mill Street have a mixture of housing types. The 18th and 19th century stone-built housing stock is represented by both polite and vernacular properties, the latter sometimes built as a short row or appended to the gable of an adjacent building. The 20th century in-fill buildings are mostly of yellow brick; however more recently constructed stone terraced housing is vernacular in style.



72 Church Street - a polite dwelling

On Church Street both polite and vernacular architecture is in evidence. At the south end of the lane more humble properties predominate, whereas larger houses occupy the northern part. In the Inclosure award of 1818, the larger properties on Church Street are classed as 'a house and homestead' i.e. farm with farm buildings. These mostly remain although most have lost their associated farmland.

Generally, both polite and vernacular architecture is represented in equal measure. This variation in building type and settlement pattern underpins the character and appearance of the character area. However, it is clear from both photographs and OS maps that wide-scale clearance of cottages and barns has been undertaken in the past, to the detriment of the integral historic character of the village street area.

### 5.8.4 Scale and massing

The majority of the properties on the Moors are set back from the carriageway, with the exception of The King's Arms public house. The properties therefore form a relatively coherent building line. The buildings, with the exception of the tightly knit yards where vernacular cottages appear jumbled together, are sited in generous plots. The impression of space that this layout creates is fundamental to the character of the area. Throughout the character area the buildings are mostly two storeys, the notable exceptions being the grander houses and some cottages with attic storeys.



Polite and vernacular: a direct comparison nos. 5 and 7 Church Street

The difference in scale between polite and vernacular architecture can be illustrated by comparing nos. 5 and 7 Church Street: although the two structures have the same eaves height, number 7 is an older vernacular property with 3 storeys, whereas the later polite number 5 has just two storeys. Inside, the ceiling heights reflect this later trend for more space and light.



20-22 The Moors: vernacular vs. polite



Church Street is similar to Mill Street in that there is a great variety of historic building types, although here the buildings appear segregated by social class. The humbler dwellings and former businesses located in the south of the street, the grander properties in isolated walled plots to the northern end of the lane. This is not an absolute rule, as terraces of dwellings are found in the northern section of the lane, not built to the roadside but set back within their own plots. Interestingly a number of the grander properties appear to have been deliberately constructed facing south (e.g. Manor Farm and Grove House) so that in the case of Grove House the road has to navigate its way around the side of the building.



*Grove House, no. 60 Church Street*

### 5.8.6 Means of enclosure

The Moors and Mill Street form a continuous leafy residential road. The buildings are generally set back, resulting in front boundary walls and hedges which define the edge of the public space. The front garden boundary walls are a pleasant mix of low stone walls, garden trees and other shrubby vegetation. What therefore greets the eye is a strong, visually pleasing boundary of vegetation. To the east end of Mill Street this changes with rows of vernacular stone cottages interspersed with detached houses defining the edge of the public space. In Church Street this variation is emphasised, with the strong building line defined by the buildings at the south end, but defined more by front walls and hedges at the north end towards the church.

### 5.8.7 Trees, hedges and open spaces

Due to the frontages of many properties being on or very close to the carriageway, there are few areas of greenery within the character area. The larger front gardens in The Moors and Mill Street allow for garden foliage to contribute more significantly to the 'leafy suburb' appearance of the streetscape. There are also a number of tall architectural trees which significantly contribute to the appearance of the streetscene.

### 5.8.8 Features of special interest

Nos. 74 and 76 Church Street have interesting carved wooden panels showing Renaissance influence in their porches, depicting a tree and head respectively. This is accompanied by a date stone (JAD 1776) at no. 76.



*Porch and plaque at no. 76*

Manor Farmhouse, no.17, has a particularly prominent Grade II stone archway entrance in classical style with segmental pediment.

Nos. 33A and 35 The Moors are unusual in that they were originally designed as tower houses. Although extended significantly in passing years, the square cores of these structures are still visible.

The shops at the southern end of Mill Street are a pleasing find in a residential area. The village was once dotted with small shops like these and it is good to find such a tradition still alive in Kidlington.



### 5.8.9 Carriageways and footways

The public highways and adjacent pavements are conventionally surfaced. This gives the area a very manicured and urban appearance, especially on The Moors and Mill Street where the building line is well set back from the road. Historic paving can be seen outside nos. 52-60 Church Street and there are granite setts in the entrance to Spindlers, which serves to mark the edge of the carriageway.



*The main differences in these photographs are due to the advent of the car and modern technology: note the loss of the thatch on number 11 Church Street and the open fields to the east*



*1A Franklin Close—a barn under threat*



*Cables continue to mar views of historic buildings*

### 5.8.10 Threats

- There were several derelict barns and outbuildings left behind in the recent development sweep. In particular the barn on the corner of Franklin's Close holds a significant position, and efforts should be made to rescue this building as a sign of the village's agricultural past. Only a barn or barn-like building would be appropriate for this site. Further north on Church Street, another small area behind no. 54 is ideal for rescue rather than clearance.
- Inappropriate in-fill, in terms of design, density and location, remain a constant threat to the appearance of the area. This includes the last vestiges of the Town Green which should be protected as open space.
- The location of satellite dishes and rooflights on the front elevations of buildings continues to have a degrading impact on the overall appearance of the area and the building to which they are attached.
- On street parking on Church Street remains a threat to the appearance of the area.

### 5.8.11 Key Views

- The key view is that of the spire of the Church of St Mary framed by the traditional houses along Church Street.
- Views along Mill Street and The Moors are visually pleasing, giving an impression of traditional vernacular architecture and trees. The bends in the road limit long-distance views, encouraging further exploration of the village.
- Sadly, all views are marred by the ubiquitous over-head cables that seem to be a feature of the settlement.



*View down The Moors with Thornbury House in the distance © J. Kennedy*



*Trees soften the strong lines along Mill Street*



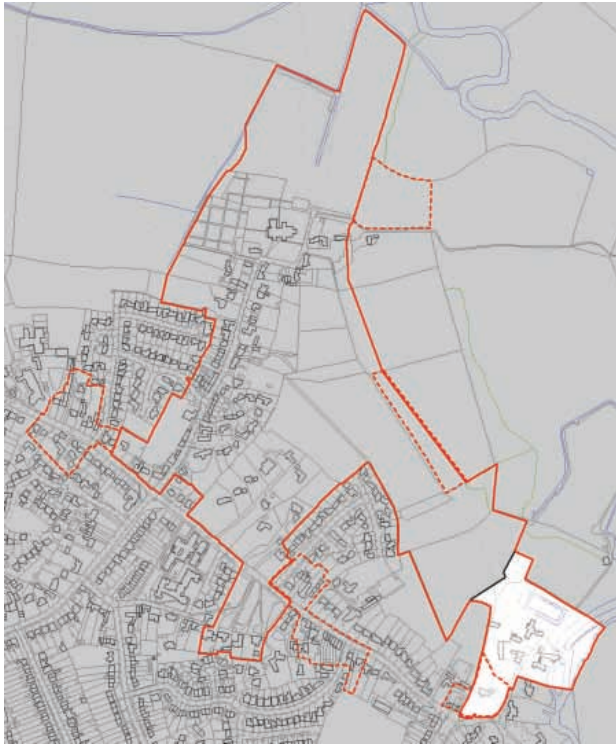
*Marlborough Terrace: a hidden gem*



*Mill Street has been drastically altered since the 1930s to accommodate modern traffic © O. Gurney*



### 5.9 Mill End Character Area



This area covers the properties surrounding the former mill and the associated ponds and river. The site has contained a mill since the 11th century and, although the property is now a dwelling, this continuation of use is an indication of how important the industry was to the developing village.

#### 5.9.1 Land use

The area is now entirely residential with pockets of scrub land, pasture, ponds and river. The mill is no longer in active operation although the sluice gates are still used to regulate the flow of the River Cherwell through the area.

#### 5.9.2 Building age, type and style

The five buildings within the area have a homogenous character, constructed between the 17th and 19th centuries, with later additions and alterations. The buildings are all two or two and a half storey, and are mainly set back from the carriageway, reducing their immediate impact. The exception is Mill House, which sits almost directly on the carriageway and provides a stunning entrance to the area, encouraging the eye to follow as it bends around the corner. The structures are functional and mainly vernacular, although there are a few grand touches, such as the projecting gables at Mill House.

#### 5.9.3 Construction and materials

The universal use of limestone is a uniting factor in the area. The use of stone slate for roofing is the most prolific, although the Miller's House is notable for its surviving thatch. Wooden cladding can be seen at Mill End House on the eastern end and dormer; sitting comfortably with the dark wood of the windows. The area is free of modern plastic windows and recent alterations have generally been in sympathy with the properties.



*The Miller's House c.1910: a wall now divides the garden from the front and has a later extension © J. Kennedy*



*Mill House with its boundary wall and projecting gable*



### 5.9.4 Carriageways and footways

Mill End has preserved its rural character in part due to the lack of modern carriageway features. The exception is a speed bump, installed at the entrance to the area to act as a flood barrier. The open turning circle and passing places are often used as parking by residents. Although this is having the effect of eroding the grass verges, the lane continues to retain its countryside charm without the intrusion of modern kerbs and signs.

A public footpath (FP265/7) runs northwest to the west of Mill House. This historic route is mentioned in *Valor Ecclesiasticus* in 1534/5. The narrow pathway leads across the flood plain fields to St Mary's Church, emerging beside the almshouses, and is defined on its eastern side behind Mill House by a limestone wall.



*The enclosed carriageway with rural verges emphasises the isolated location whilst retaining character*

### 5.9.5 Means of enclosure, trees and green spaces

The boundary wall of Gowan Lea on Mill Street leads the eye into Mill End, creating a strong curving entrance to the area. Although the house is mid/late 20th century, the wall is an important feature within the character area, and the trees within the garden are a pleasant backdrop for the striking wall.

Mill End is dotted with trees and green verges, and the field of Mill House is a pleasing entrance to the more enclosed area around the mill. Each house has extensive gardens with several mature trees and hedges. The most striking is a large conifer hedge at Mill End House which allows privacy for the house beyond and a lush green backdrop for the houses.

High limestone walls provide a sense of enclosure which is countered by the open flood plains to the north. Combined with strong metal gates at the entrance to the Mill and Mill End House, this could be a forbidding and dominating factor on the area; however, the open lane to the south and the rear field garden of Mill House counteract this and balance the sense of enclosure.

The vegetation softens rather than overwhelms the limestone walls and helps the area to retain its rural charm.



*The boundary wall at Gowan Lea is a striking landmark at both Mill End and on Mill Street*



*Mill End from the air - the public domain is tightly enclosed by limestone walls, whereas the aerial photo reveals very spacious plots beyond*



**5.9.6 Features of special interest**

- The wheels are still in place at the mill and the sluice gates regulate the water flow, a practice which has continued for nearly 1000 years. The mill was used to generate electricity for The Miller's House during the early 20th century and a swathe of cables was previously hung between the buildings.
- There is a high proportion of statutory listings within the area which indicates their importance, both historically and architecturally, to the development of the village.
- The isolated location of the properties has preserved this rural enclave and prevented the influx of modern materials and adaptations. It is a charming encapsulation.



*High water at the Mill*

**5.9.10 Threats**

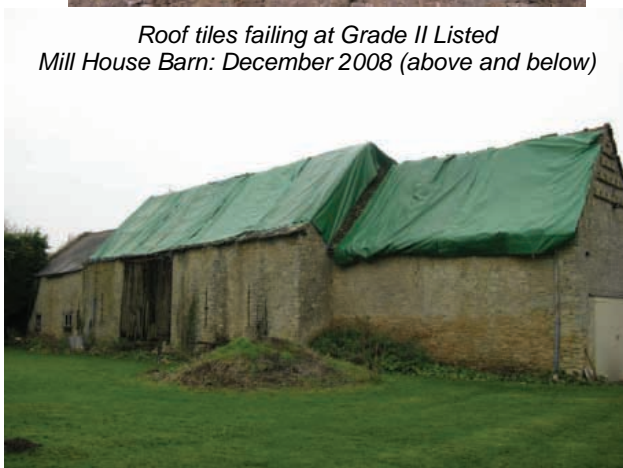
- Flooding is a serious threat to properties in Mill End. The floods of July 2007 breached the ground floors of the properties. Regular clearing of the river Cherwell can sometimes cause problems for the Mill as large pieces of debris are swept down river.
- The Grade II barn at Mill House is currently at risk. Action must be taken swiftly to prevent this building from falling irrevocably into disrepair.



*The large private gardens are sometimes covered by flood water*



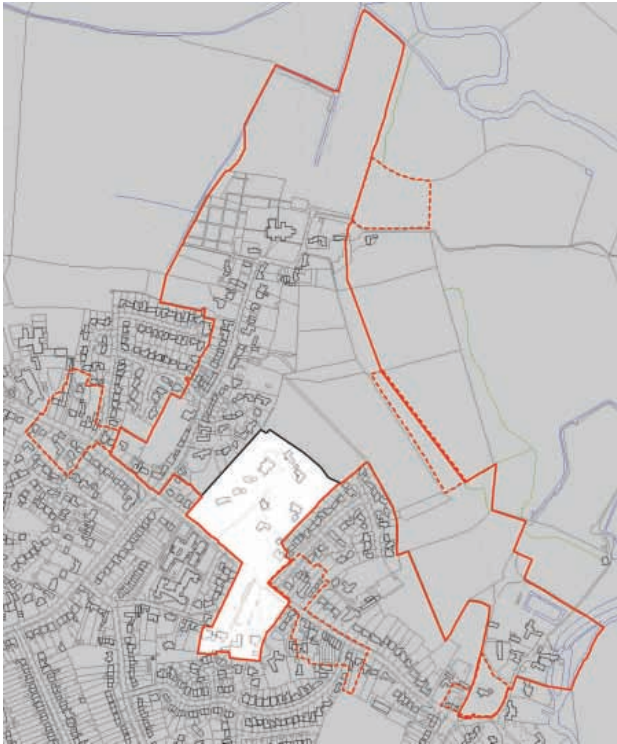
*Roof tiles failing at Grade II Listed Mill House Barn: December 2008 (above and below)*



*The historic route leading to the church*



## 5.10 Large Houses in Open Setting



Large residential properties in unusually spacious grounds with heavy tree cover. The area contains the last remnants of the former village green, which now survives as private gardens.

### 5.10.1 Land use and street pattern

Divided by Mill Street, this area comprises the remnants of the former green to the south and infilling of spacious heavily treed grounds to the north.

The former Rectory Farm complex on the northern side of Mill Street is accessed via a private drive, as is 40-52 Mill Street on the southern side.



*Buildings are hidden from the main carriageway*

### 5.10.2 Building age, type and style

The historic properties include the Old Rectory which is 16th century in origin, and former farmhouses from the late 17th to mid 18th centuries. The style is mainly 'Georgian', with grand frontages, while the Old Rectory and Old Vicarage reflect their earlier origins.

Interspersed with these historic dwellings are modern additions, including the conversions of the Rectory Stables, as well as some late 20th century dwellings. The newer properties are styled 'of their time'; detached with large garages and plenty of open space around them.



*52 Mill Street: viewed from across the road with an extensive front garden*

### 5.10.3 Scale and massing

The scale of the properties is significantly different to the vernacular cottages of Church Street, being much larger detached dwellings. They are predominantly two storey with few attic conversions. The exception is Rectory Stables, which is a one and a half storey conversion, having a minimal impact on its surroundings. The properties are set back from the carriageway, resulting in less of an immediate impact on the streetscene, and protecting the dwellings from the main road.

The principal buildings of the Old Vicarage and Old Rectory are hidden from view due to their positioning and the vegetation. The Old Vicarage would have had a prominent position on the edge of the former green, while the Old Rectory would have been visible as part of the farm complex across its southern pastures. Now the Old Rectory is entirely hidden, and the Old Vicarage can only be seen through tantalising glimpses from the main road.



**5.10.4 Construction and materials**

Despite the differing ages of the properties, the use of limestone coloured stone has a uniting effect, and together with the expansive grounds, allows the newer properties to blend well into the surroundings. The Old Vicarage and Old Rectory are limestone rubble with some use of ashlar on the windows and doorways, and the stone slate roofing spreads to the outbuildings and dovecote at the Old Rectory. Both have stone mullioned windows, and the drip moulding around the front door of the Old Rectory is an interesting feature within the area. The roof of Rectory Stables has been constructed to blend in using new stone slates, albeit set with dormers and rooflights.

The modern properties have concrete tiles and stone walling with double glazing and dormers. These do not sit unhappily with the older buildings, due to the expansive tree cover and spacious grounds.

**5.10.5 Means of enclosure**

Limestone walls are a feature of the older properties. The low wall around the Old Rectory contains the area of garden in front of the property, whereas to the rear, the 2metre wall allows privacy for the walled garden. This is echoed at no.47 Mill Street, which can be seen from the public highway.



*The high wall behind no.47 Mill Street*



*The Old Rectory: Grade II Listed*

The modern properties have a range of enclosures - a split rail wooden fence is seen at 19-21 Mill Street, and no. 31 relies on thick but low hedges for its boundary. A tunnel-effect is created by hedging along the main driveway through the area of the 19-39 Mill Street.

The edge of the former green is defined by low limestone walls, now covered in ivy and other vegetation. These are capped with rounded concrete and are in various states of repair.



*Rectory Stables*



*Tunnel-like hedges and snatched views*

### 5.10.6 Trees, hedges and open spaces

A small area of the former Town Green remains in front of 40-52 Mill Street. This is a key area of historical importance worthy of protection. Mature trees are grouped rather than scattered across the area, and therefore the area is open to views across to the largely 20th century development on the northern side of Mill Street.



*The area of lawn in front of 54 Mill Street is an important open space*

Both the area of former green and the private drive of 19-39 Mill Street provide the properties with extensive front gardens shielding the houses from the main carriageway. The groupings of mature trees within these spaces give a sense of enclosure, and all the trees within the grounds of nos. 19, 21, 23 and 31 are covered by Tree Preservation Orders. In addition to this, several of the trees within the grounds of The Old Vicarage and the Coach House are also covered by TPOs.



*The Dovecote: Grade II\* Listed*

### 5.10.8 Features of special interest

- The circular dovecote at The Old Rectory (Grade II\* Listed), survivor of the medieval farm
- The important remnants of the village green, key open spaces within the conservation area
- The properties have unusually spacious plots with mature vegetation. This is an important feature which should be protected

### 5.10.9 Carriageways and footways

The road is a main bus route and often subject to heavy traffic. The historic paving and footway has been replaced by modern tarmac and kerbing. Some use of granite setts can be seen beside 47 Mill Street. The carriageway has also been relocated within the 20th century to accommodate modern traffic along Mill Street & The Moors (by Thornbury House & by Petre Place). The driveway leading to the Old Rectory is rural in character with compressed gravel and no kerbing, and paving slabs have been inserted in the drive to The Old Rectory and Rectory Stables.

### 5.10.10 Threats

Modern development has virtually destroyed views of the village green and its surrounding prominent houses. The small remnant north of 40—52 Mill Street is vital to the streetscene and it is important to retain this area as undeveloped land.

### 5.10.11 Key views

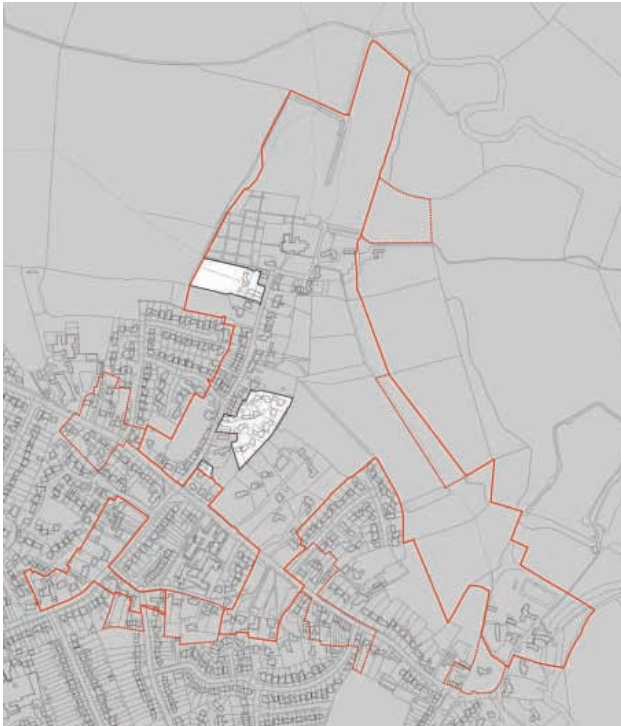
Due to the introverted nature of the properties, the only views of the areas are from within the private curtilages of the dwellings. However, there are views from the adjacent fields looking southwest back at the conservation area.



*The dovecote viewed from the fields beyond © S. Daggitt*



### 5.11 Modern Infill



Areas of post-1950 housing, in-filling gaps in Church Street.

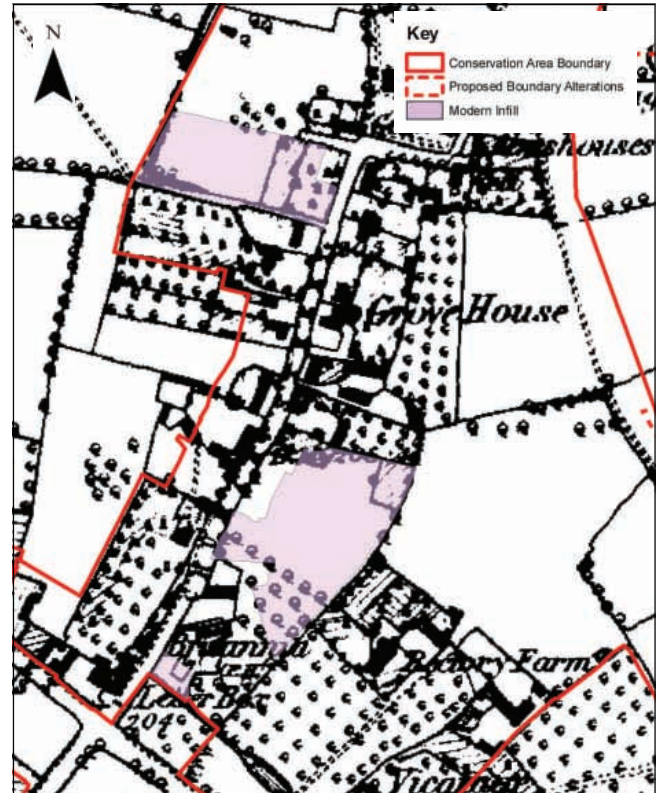


Fig 12: 1883 OS map - the location of relevant infill development

#### 5.11.1 History

Gaps in the streetscene and former farming land have gradually been filled with 20th century development. Figure 12 shows how the land around Church Street was once covered in orchards and pasture - areas which are now housing.

The land on which numbers 53-59 Church Street and Church Cottage now stand was likely to have been the site of Bury House, a fortified property known of at the time of Inclosure. This property was demolished by 1877 and the site remained vacant until the 1950s. It was used as a scrap iron and junk dump belonging to no. 65, and when the scrap was removed to commence building works, 3ft thick pink colour-washed wall were found. It is possible that these were the remains of Bury House.



Franklin Close



1 Spindlers

### 5.11.2 53-59 Church Street

These unconventional properties are a very different international style to that of the earlier properties around them. Designed and built by eastern European A. Dexler in the early 1950s, these properties are constructed on concrete, steel frames and large areas of glazing for the new 'modern lifestyle', demanding better light and air, concealing the soil and rainwater pipes, and 'a closer contact with nature'.



*57 and 59 Church Street: a radical new design seen in the 1950s without the later property of Church Cottage in front of them*



*53 and 55 Church Street*



*The entrance to Spindlers*

### 5.11.2 Spindlers and Franklin Close

The new properties in Spindlers Close and Franklin Close are of a modern design and the use of limestone allows them to blend with the existing properties in the main street. The access is less intrusive than earlier development at Manor Way, and the use of granite setts at the entrance is appropriate.

### 5.11.1 6-8 Church Street

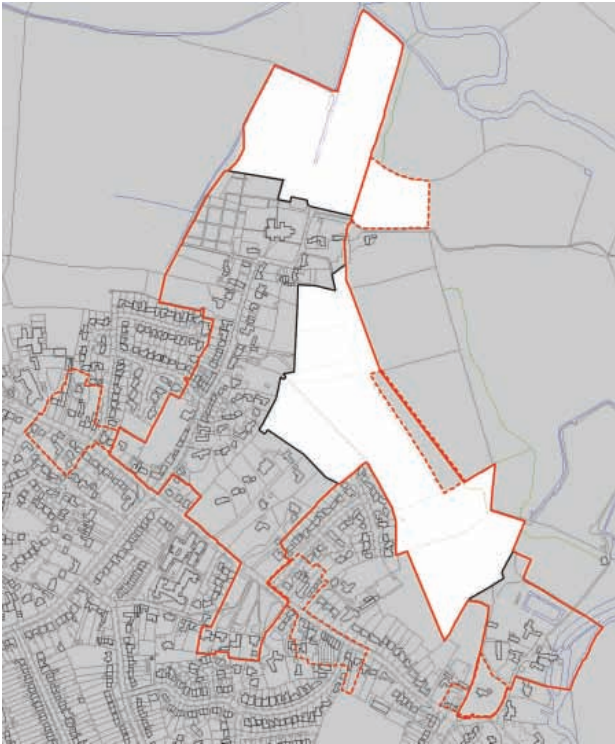
Built in 2001, these are attempt to blend in with their surroundings by using sympathetic materials and styles. Limestone has been used for walling, and some buildings have reconstructed the casement-style windows which were common on the cottages of the 19th century.



*6-8 Church Street: natural stone and vernacular detailing encourages mitigation*



## 5.12 Church Fields Character Area



This area includes the former Scheduled Ancient Monument site, and the fields to the east of the Church Street Conservation Area. It is proposed to include a small section of field to the northeast containing further earthworks from the former monument, and to justify the boundary in line with the existing right of way.

### 5.12.1 Land Use

In the main, the large expanse of fields to the east of historic Kidlington is used as paddocks for grazing horses. The land to the north of the church appears as a carefully cultivated shrubby wilderness, with natural ponds and open areas divided into sections with young larch and hawthorn patches.



*The pond north of the church*



*The church can be seen once again in its rural setting*

### 5.12.2 Landscape

The area north of the church is known locally as St Mary's fields—a nature reserve maintained by the Parish Council. It is a wild area, providing nesting and feeding sites for large numbers of bird species, as well as deer and foxes. The fields have more of a relationship with the open landscape beyond than more enclosed area of the houses and church.



### 5.12.3 Trees and hedges

Four trees close to the public footpath, east of no. 52 Church Street, are covered by TPOs. The three limes and one wych elm are important landmarks along the footpath. The shrubby undergrowth of mosses provides vital nutrients for visiting wildlife, and the combination of larch, birch and hawthorn is a natural contrast to the open patches of heath-like grasses.





*The rear of the properties on Mill Street and Church Street can clearly be seen from the public right of way*



*The footpath beside the Almshouses with its limestone wall and wire fencing*

#### 5.12.4 Threats

- The public right of way is an ideal place to see the rear of the properties on Church Street and Mill Street. The paddocks stretch right up to the high walls of the properties, and shows how easily inappropriate development to the rear can be detrimental to the conservation area. At present, the high walls and vegetation blends the line between fields and houses, and this symbiotic relationship should be protected.
- Telegraph poles march across the area, bringing an unwelcome touch of urban life to the wilderness.
- The area is prone to flooding, particularly during the winter and wet seasons.



*Although thankfully smaller than their 1950s ancestors, telegraph poles still blight the openness of the area*



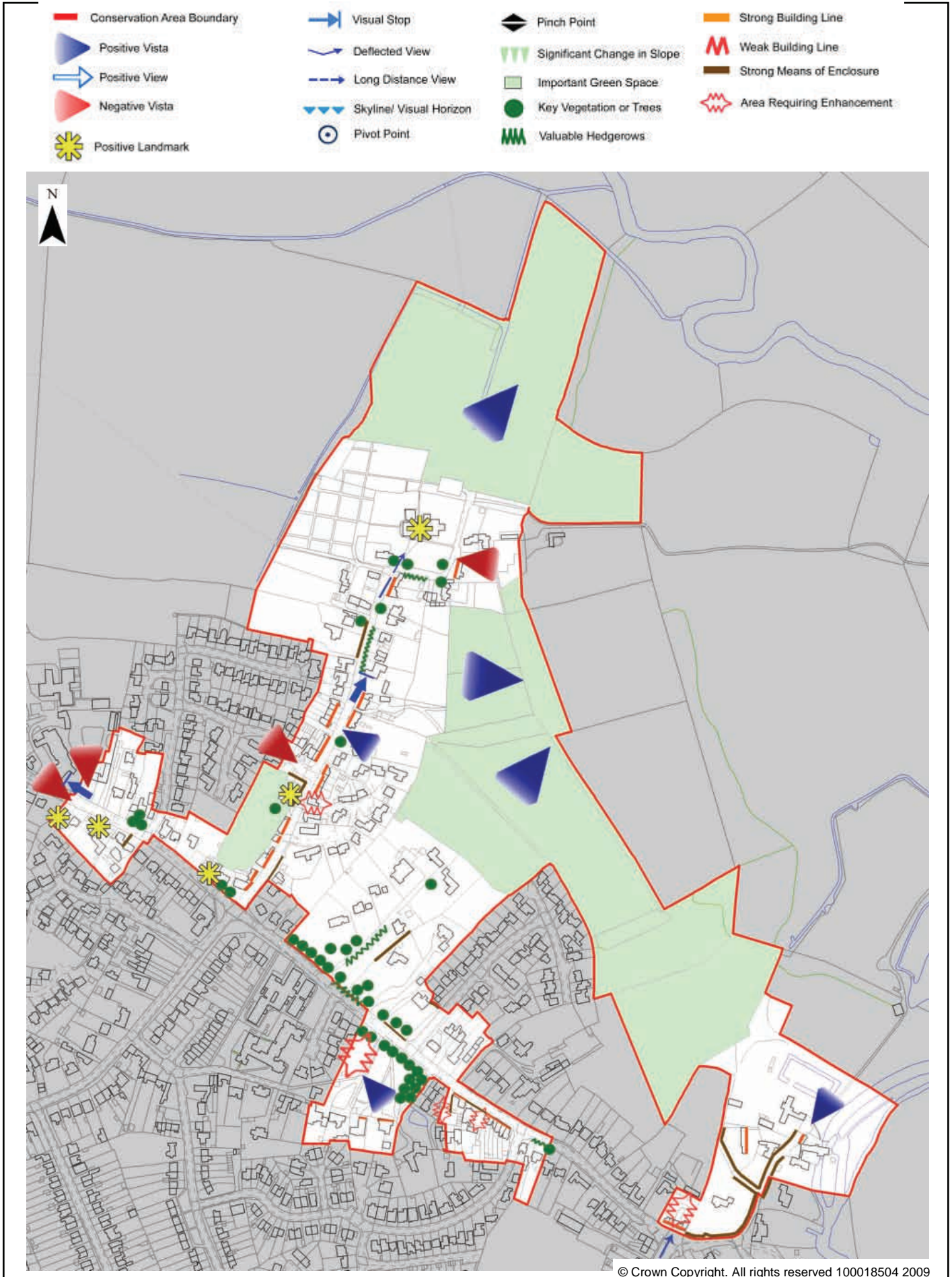
*The field to be included contains earthworks from the Roman archaeology site*



*The open fields north of the Church, with the footpath to Hampton Poyle*



Fig. 13: Visual Analysis



# 6. High Street Conservation Area

This Conservation Area includes properties built overlooking the former Town Green along its northwest and southwest sides.

It is proposed to extend the Conservation Area to include all the properties on School Road which enclosed the former green. These properties are comparable in age and style to the remaining smaller properties in the area. It is also proposed to include 97 School Road, a former detached house which has been extended to form four properties, in a similar fashion to the terrace of cottages at 107-115 High Street.

The Town Green was a central part of village life, providing an area of open space crossed by footpaths and containing a pond to the southeast.

## 6.1 Architectural History

The northern end of the High Street was a prime location for the smart villas which grew up as the area was developed in the late 18th century, imposing buildings on the landscape.

95 High Street is a prime example of the aspiration of property developers in the late 18th century. The building appears from the front to be a grand three storey 'Georgian' villa; upon closer inspection, the frontage is only one room deep and the older part of the property is evident at the rear. It is likely that the cost of building a new property was cut by



Fig 14: The former Town Green southeast of the High Street c.1830 © Kidlington & District Historical Society (with approximate High Street Conservation Area Boundary)

re-facing and re-modelling the front elevation while retaining the older core and rear of the property. Other properties such as Tower Hill (no. 101 High Street) also have historic elements evident at the rear.



95 High Street, only one room deep (left) with a grand front elevation (right)



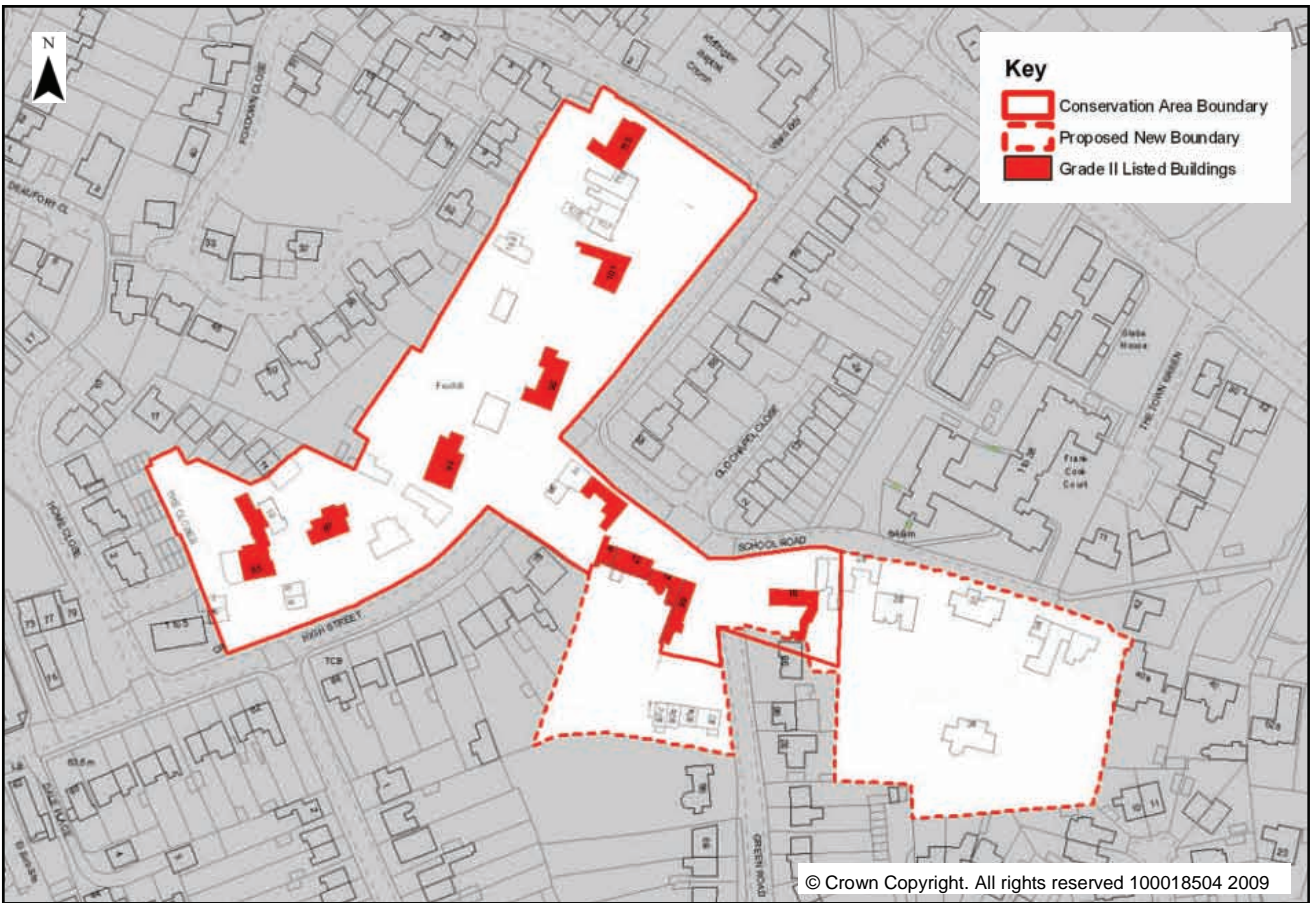


Fig 15: Listed Buildings within High Street Conservation Area. For descriptions see Appendix 2

Properties on School Road are smaller and more vernacular in style, compatible with the former use of no 14 as a workhouse and school room. A school was established on the green, opposite the Methodist Chapel, which was built in 1851 next to 14 School Road, the former workhouse. Allotments stretched on what was glebe land, cultivatable land belonging to the parish church.

The school closed in 1952, and after a fire in 1977 the building was demolished. The green was built upon soon after, creating Old Chapel Close and Frank Cook Court.



The Methodist Chapel on School Road in the early 20th century with no. 93 High Street visible in the distance  
© KDHS



The same view today with modern roadway and front gardens where the chapel once stood

### 6.2 Land Use

The area is now entirely in residential use, although the properties have had various uses in former years: a workhouse, shops, farms and a public house. Several of the properties in the High Street have collections of outbuildings which were originally used as farm buildings, for example at numbers 101 and 115 High Street. Those at 101 High Street have been converted to residential use; others are largely derelict but nevertheless contribute positively to the character of the conservation area.

### 6.3 Street Pattern

High Street runs northeast towards the parish Church of St Mary and was therefore an important route within the village. The western end of High Street, outside the conservation area is now the commercial centre of the settlement, close to its junction with the main north-south route to Oxford.

Prior to Inclosure, High Street was known as Kidlington Green Road, as it ran through the northern edge of the town green. It is also probable that the High Street was part of the route from Bletchington and Hampton Poyle. At this time School Road was the only road leading off High Street and skirted the south side of village green.

School Road originally defined the southern edge of the green, and buildings were only erected on its southern side. The school, built in 1851, broke this tradition, and the green was used as the playing fields for over a century.



*Manor Court, 85 High Street*

### 6.4 Building Age, type and style

There is a high proportion of statutorily listed buildings within the area, the majority of which date from the 19th century with earlier origins. Many of the properties on the north-west of High Street can be traced back to Inclosure in 1818. The oldest occupied site is at Home Close (no. 85), which has origins in the 16th century; the present building has been much altered and modern development has occurred in its grounds.

The former public house, The Old Dog (18 School Road) was one of Kidlington's first inns, the House of Jesus. The pub was run by monks for travellers in the middle ages, although the present building is likely to date from the 16th century. The pub became a dwelling in 1934, reducing the number of commercial buildings within the area.

Situated on the edge of the town green, the High Street was an ideal site for gentleman's residences which became popular in the 19th century. Conspicuous wealth has resulted in houses with fine 'Georgian' front elevations and large grounds, in contrast with the cottages and former workhouse on School Road. The remaining houses on School Road are Victorian in style, while retaining the vernacular proportions of earlier residences.



*View south from the junction of High Street and School Road*



The styles of the properties indicate their status; grand houses on the edge of the green. Although the area of open fields is now gone, the houses are a reminder of how grand their aspects once were. The individual styles vary, correlating with the architectural tastes of their time of construction, with the more humble terraces being constructed in the vernacular style, whilst the larger detached properties have either been gentrified or display classical features such as quoins, sash windows, and in the case of Hill House, a moulded cornice to a parapet.



*The classical parapet features of no. 101 High Street*

### 6.5 Scale & massing

Properties are generally two storeys, either detached or in short terraces. The difference in height between modern and older properties is illustrated in the additional property of Foxhill on the High Street. The newer building sits between the tall and imposing 97, and the more vernacular but still grand 93.



*Foxhill between two large properties*

### 6.6 Construction & materials

Properties are largely built of coursed limestone rubble, with ashlar used for detailing on some of the principal properties, e.g. Tower Hill which has ashlar quoins and dressings. Home Close (85 High Street) has an ashlar front and end stacks and a portico with moulded cornice and columns. Later additions and chimneys are often in brick. Roofing materials vary with an almost equal mix of stone slate, and Welsh slate, the latter found on properties of the 19th century. There are several examples of 20th century tiled roofs.

Doors vary, although there is a dominance of panelled doors, some with C20 materials. The C19 fanlights at nos. 85 and 101 High Street are an example of the opulence of the time. No. 4 School Road has a rare example of a plank door.

Timber lintels and casement windows are a feature of the smaller cottages. There are a few examples of 20th century replacement windows, for example 107-113 High Street. An illustration of the difficulty in replicating traditional fenestration in modern materials can be seen at 20-22 School Road, where the new windows of no. 24 can be compared with the older timber windows of no. 20.



*Replacement and original windows at 22 and 20 School Road respectively*

### 6.7 Means of enclosure

The main means of front enclosure are limestone rubble walls, mostly of about a metre in height with rounded mortar capping. Some of these front boundaries have been replaced in recent years, such as at 113 High Street, in unsympathetic materials (blue brick). Foxhill retains the existing strong enclosure line using high gates.

Several dwellings, most notably The Hill, Hill Farm House, and Hill Cottage are set behind high boundaries either formed by dense planting or limestone walls which preclude views. These give a sense of enclosure to the apex of the rise at the junction of High Street and School Road. The use of railings was popular on the grander buildings such as no. 85 High Street, and remnants of these can still be seen, such as at 28 School Road.



*Wall and railings at 28 School Road*

### 6.8 Trees, hedges & open spaces

Since the construction of Frank Cook Court, Glebe House and the properties at Chapel Close on the former green, vegetation is domestic and there is no definable open public space. The properties are set in generous front gardens, which once opened out onto the Town Green.

### 6.9 Features of special interest

- The rise of the road led to the area being known as The Hill. It is said that Tower Hill was so called due to the burning beacon which once stood there during the medieval period.
- The chamfered corner to the former shop at no. 2 School is a functional detail.



*The strong building line and chamfered corner at 2 School Road*

- Former workhouse at number 14: financially aided by the parish of Combe from its official establishment in 1735, the workhouse was later used for housing the poor until it was sold in 1836. Building land had been leased at the gravel pits on Moor End (The Moors) and the property was no longer needed. Shortly afterwards, it became a private dwelling.



*The former workhouse, 14 School Road*



### 6.10 Carriageways and footways

The junctions of High Street and School Road, and of School Road and Green Road, are key elements to the conservation area, creating defined lines within it. This junction is the highest part of the road, falling away to the north, south and east, with Hill House commanding a prominent position at the junction. This property would have been clearly visible across the green, marking the corner of the open space.

There are no examples of historic paving within the public areas, which are dominated by tarmac and concrete kerbing.

Outside The Old Dog, no. 18 School Road (a former public house), a remnant of rural verge survives. There is no footway along this section of the road, and although the grass verge is under threat from on-street parking, it is a reminder of how the road may have looked at the time of the green.



*The junction of the High Street and School Road in the early 20th century showing 93 High Street to the right and 2 School Road as a shop © KDHS*



### 6.11 Threats

- There are a number of examples of 20th century replacement windows and doors, which can erode the character of the conservation area.
- Due to the large plot size, there has been the temptation to infill with modern properties, as at no. 93 and Foxhill, and earlier at no. 85. Further development of this kind should be resisted to preserve the openness of the area.
- The railings at no. 93 are being pushed out by trees growing too close to the boundary wall, and wooden boarding is currently preventing these trees from blocking the pedestrian footway.
- The poor condition of the Grade II Listed 115 High Street and its former farm outbuildings, believed to have been vacant now for at least 30 years, are a cause for concern.



*The outbuildings of 115 High Street*



*Rural verge outside 18 School Road*