



Cottisford Conservation Area Appraisal

May 2009

Planning, Housing and Economy

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1. Introduction

Cottisford has a Saxon origin and retains architectural indications of a wealthy Medieval past but unusually never expanded to the extent of surrounding settlements. This could be due in part to the appearance of Juniper Hill as a subsidiary settlement to the north in the 18th century. Cottisford as a settlement originated at the western end of the current village. Houses around the parish church were cleared by the owner of Cottisford House in the 19th century and the centre of the village shifted to the east end. Several small groups of houses joined the old school at this end of the village in the 20th century but there has been little modern infill. The village was designated a Conservation Area in 1980 in acknowledgement of its special qualities which need to be preserved and enhanced. This document is the first full appraisal of the village following its designation.

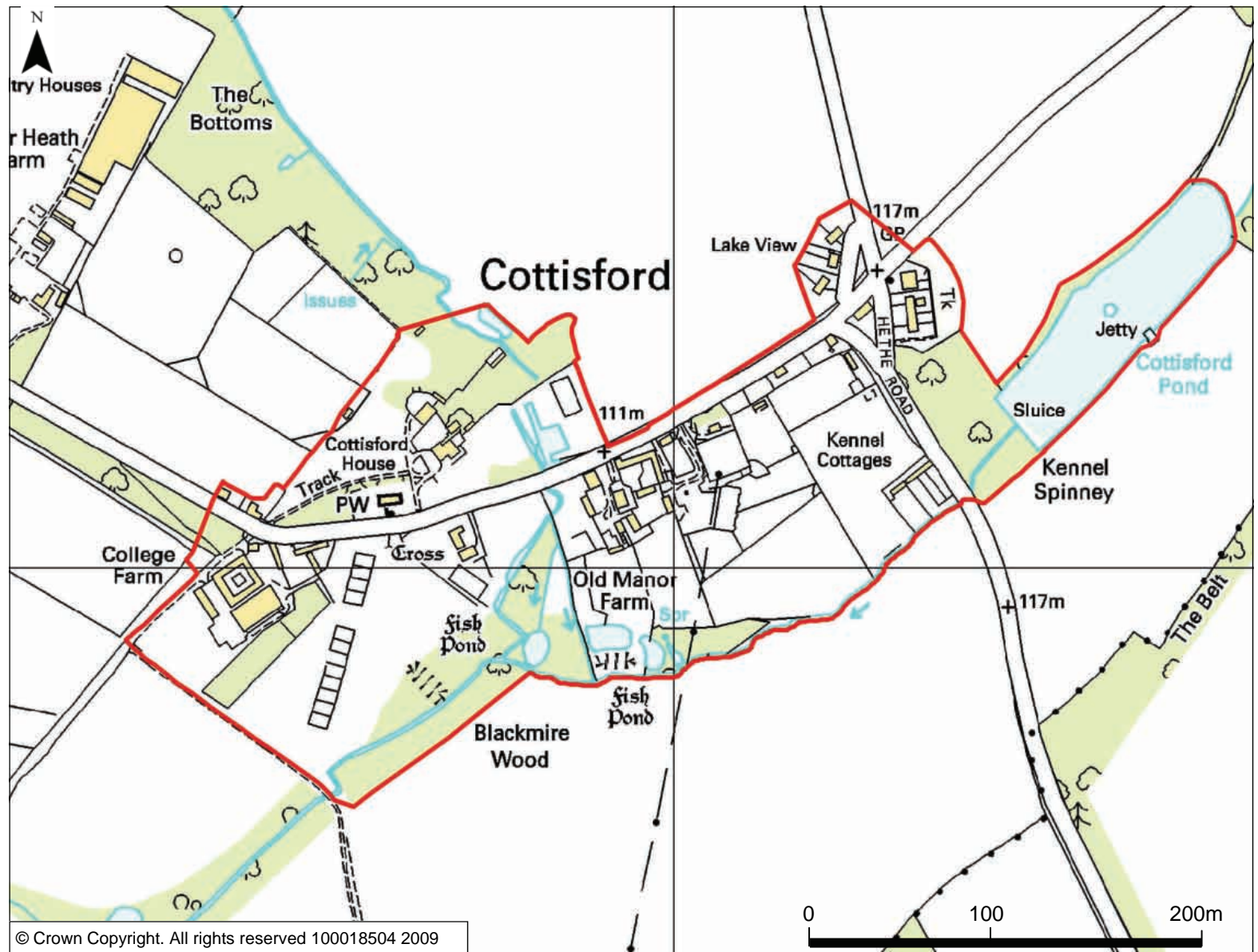


Fig. 1: Conservation Area Boundary

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.

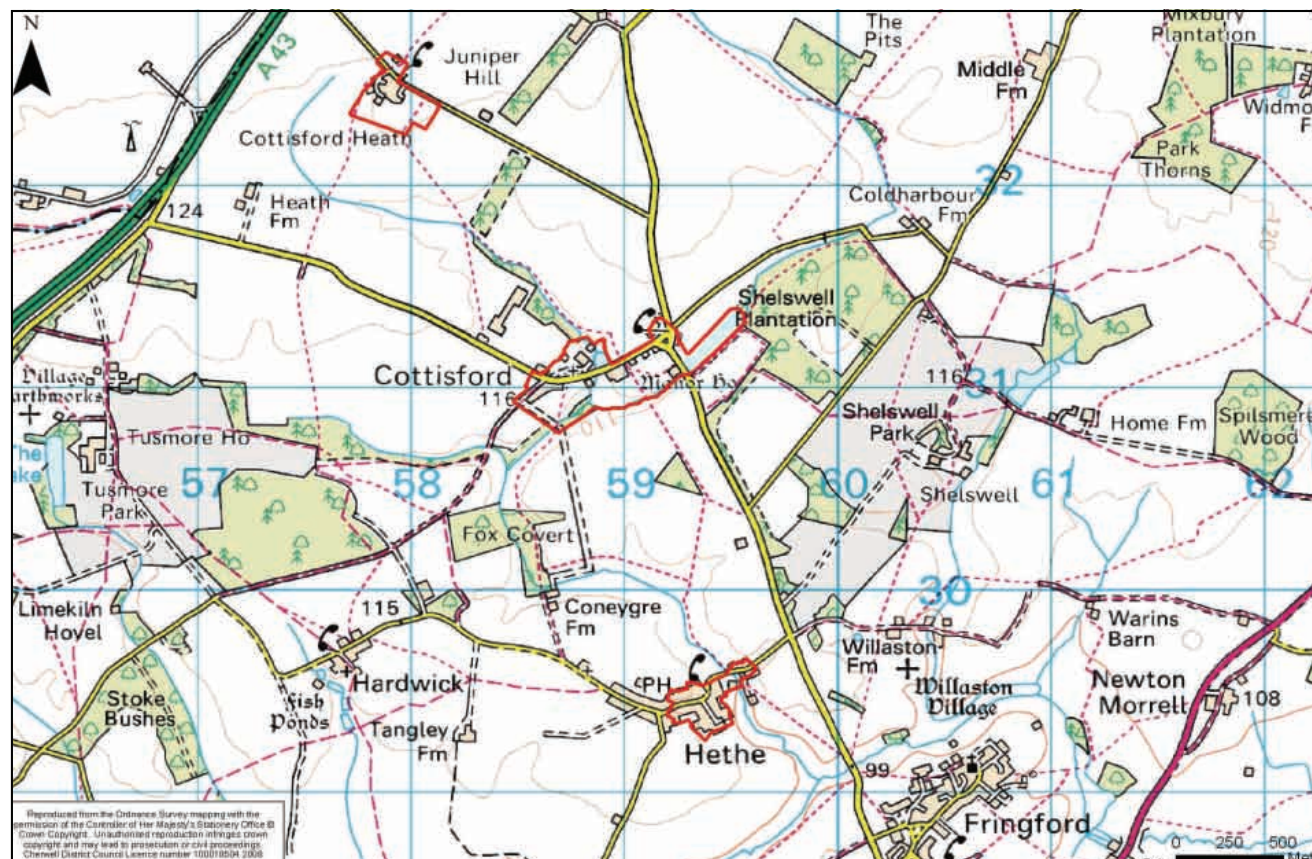
2.1.2 Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 which places a duty upon local planning authorities to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest through an appraisal process and to designate them as Conservation Areas. Since 1967 some 8,000 conservation areas have been designated in England, including 56 in 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'. The boundary of Cottisford Conservation Area was designated in 1980. This document is the first appraisal of the Conservation Area and has extended the boundary to the rear of Hethe Road Cottages, rationalised the boundary to the rear of Cottisford House and included Cottisford Pond to the east.

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

2.1.5 This appraisal has been the subject of public consultation and was adopted by the Council on the 11th May 2009. The document will be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the conservation area and its setting.

Fig 2: Location Plan



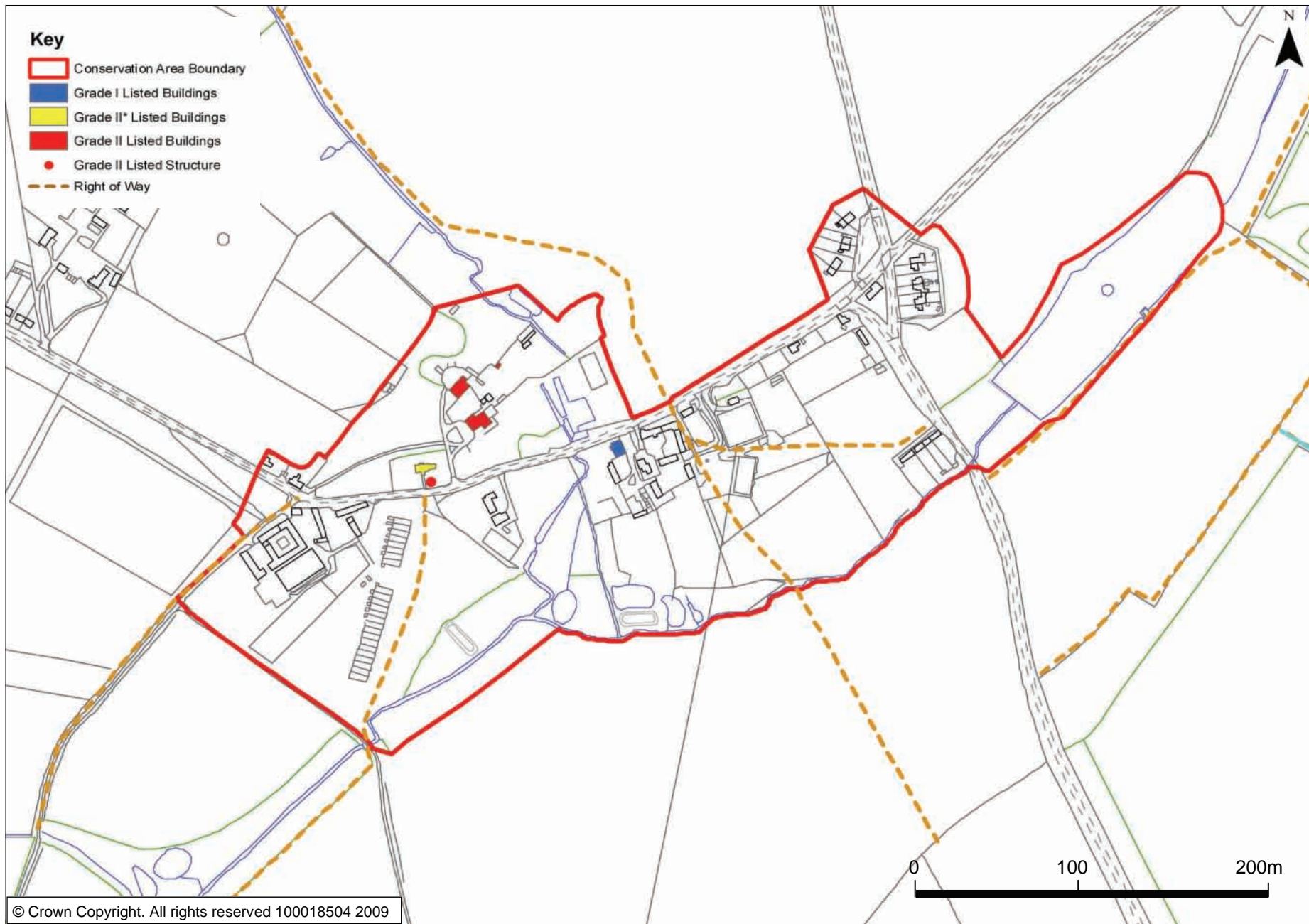
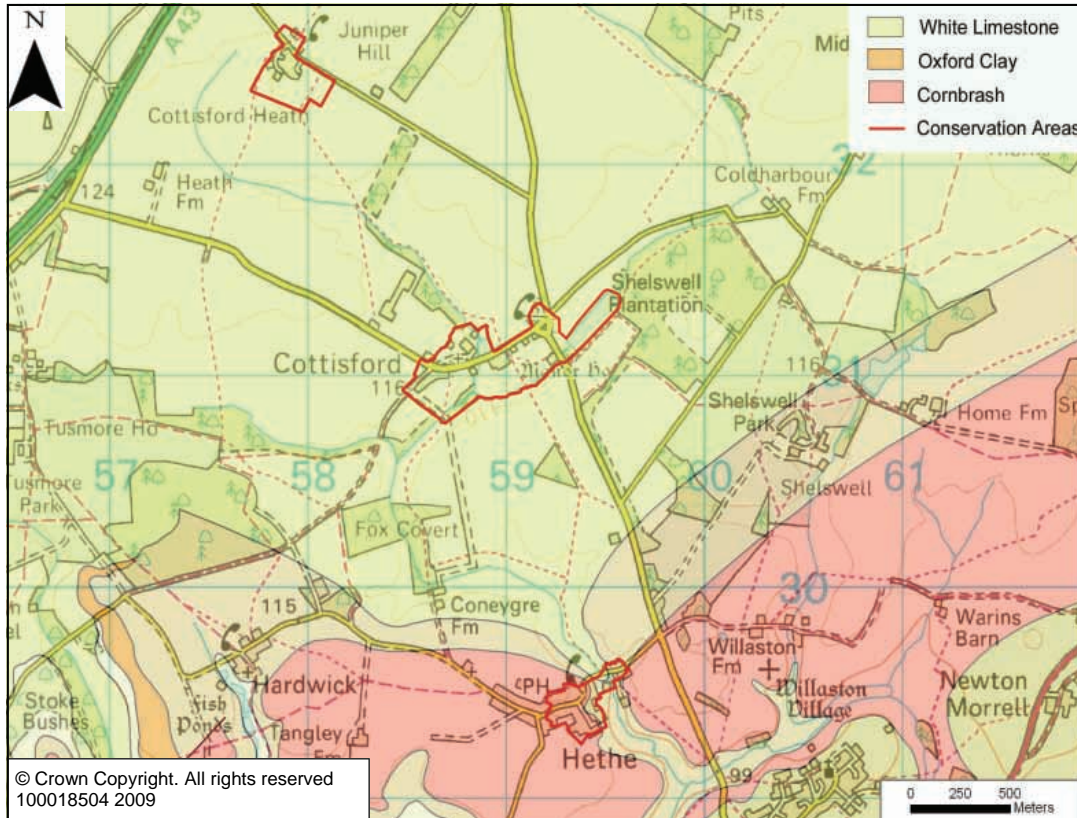


Fig. 3: Designations

3. Location and Topography

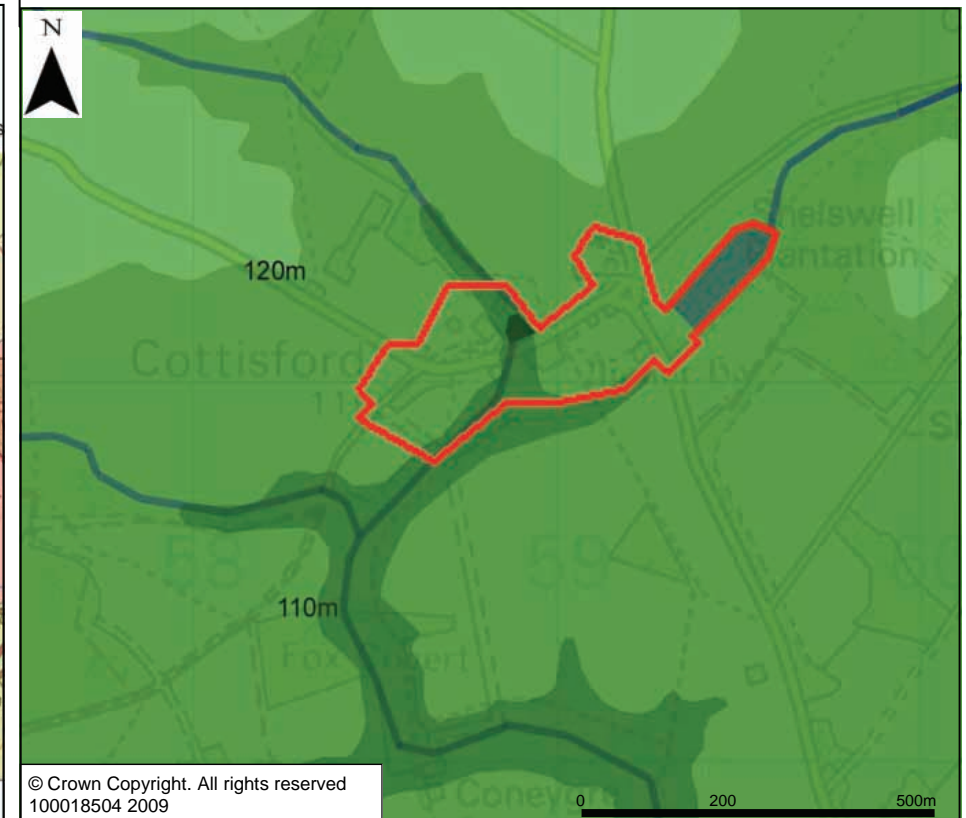
Figure 4: Geological map



Cottisford sits approximately six miles (9.7Km) north of Bicester and four miles (6.4Km) south of Brackley on an area of high ground close to the Northamptonshire border.

The two original settlements lie either side of the Crowell stream, a tributary of the Padbury Brook, which joins the River Great Ouse east of Buckingham.

Figure 5: Topographical map



The topography around Cottisford is relatively flat sloping downhill to a shallow valley south of the village.

Cottisford lies within the Oxfordshire Estate Farmlands area as defined in the Cherwell District Landscape Assessment (Cobham Resource Consultants, 1995). This area is notable for its rolling arable landscape with strong field pattern, copses and trees.

The watercourses are marked by scrubland and in some places managed woodlands of poplars. Larger fields have developed to the south and north east with the removal of hedgerows while smaller enclosures are retained to the west of Cottisford House. The watercourses have been dammed to form small ponds and a lake to the east reminiscent of the medieval fish ponds associated with the Old Manor Farm.

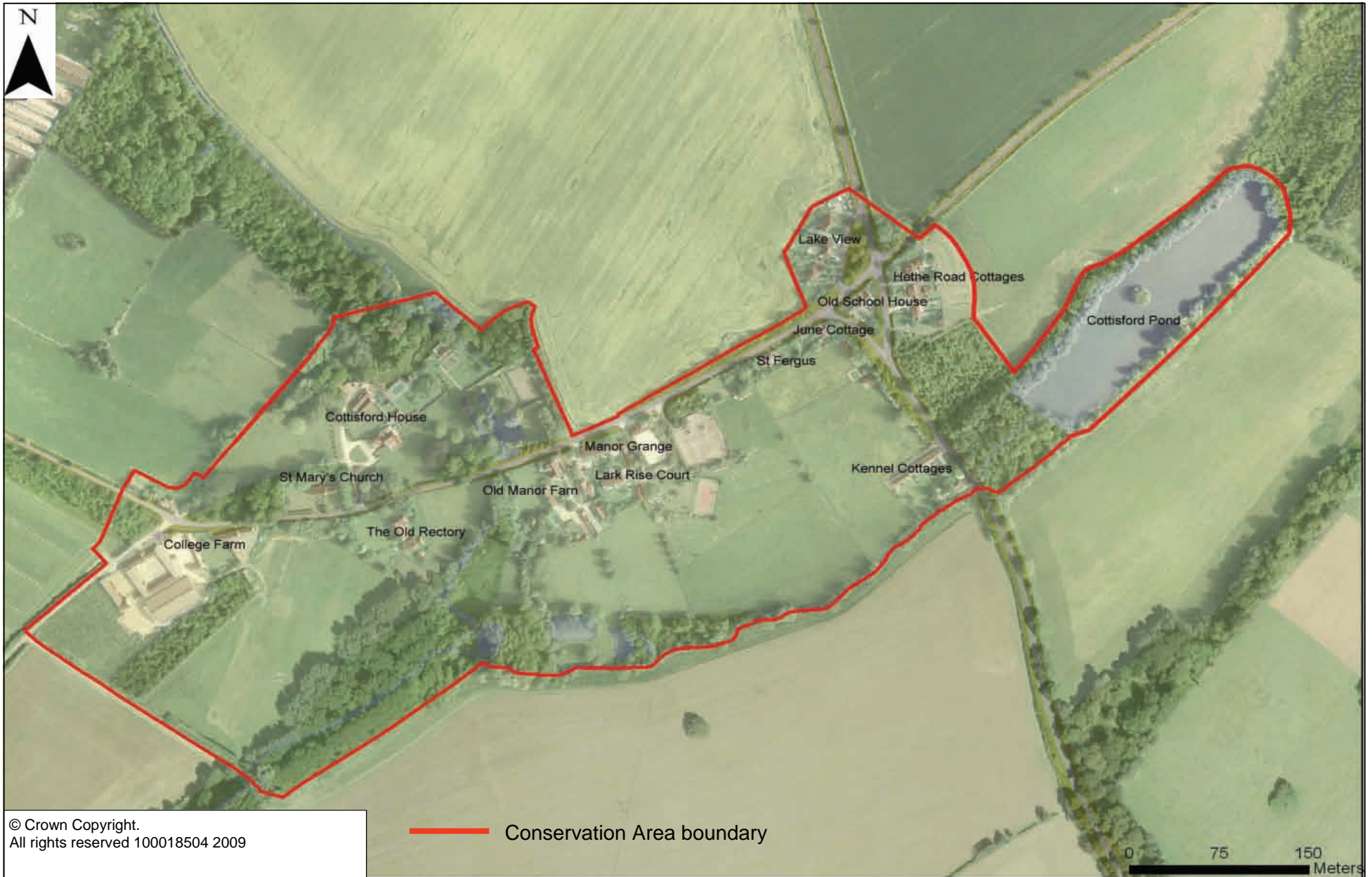


Fig 6: Aerial view of the village including the Conservation Area boundary

4. History of Cottisford

4.1 Archaeology

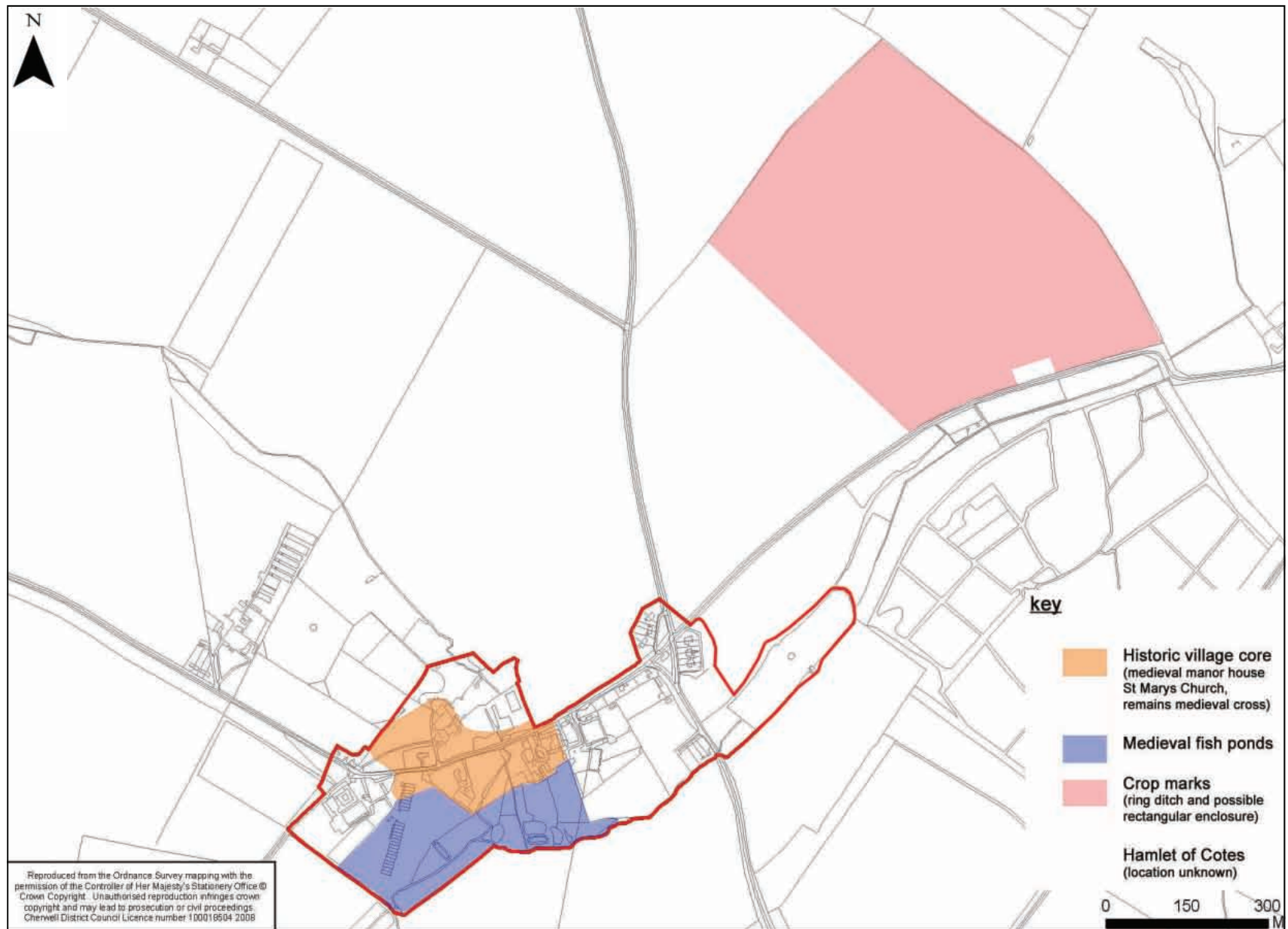


Fig 7: Archaeological map

4.2 Origins

Cottisford lies at a fording point of the Crowell stream. The name Cotts-ford loosely translates as cottages by the ford. However 13th century charters named the village 'Wolfheysford' or 'Urfesford'.

4.3 Development

The hearth tax returns of 1665 show that there were three substantial houses in the village, the Rectory with 4 hearths and two dwellings with 6 and 7 hearths (likely to be the Old Manor House and Cottisford House). 18th century records of the settlement by Sir John Peshall describe the village as 'lying in the form of a street from e(ast) to w(est)' and the Davis map of 1797 show this clearly. The 1797 map shows a lane and houses between the two. These were removed by the landscaping of Cottisford House by William Turner in the 1820s. New homes were created for the displaced villagers further along the existing village street. The relocation of whole villages was common to enable the creation of pleasure grounds for the ruling classes in this period. The area where the cottages once stood was planted with trees which are still growing on site today. A visitor in 1825 records that the churchyard was closed in by cottages on three sides and that there was a road (which was later closed by Turner) that used to run southwards Hethe. The old village lay mostly west of the ford (which was probably near Cottisford House pond) where the Rectory and College Farm can still be seen while on the east is Old Manor Farm, a medieval house of some importance.

The village expanded in the 18th and early 19th century—records of 1738 show the settlement as 12 cottages, Cottisford House and a farmhouse. The 19th century saw the development of Juniper Hill, a hamlet originating as a squatter's settlement to the north-west as well as an expansion of Cottisford to the east. The linear nature of the village is still apparent today with the church and Cottisford House lying north of the road and six semi-detached 19th century cottages alongside the Hethe Road at the eastern end. Between 1946 and the present day only 6 semi-detached council houses have been built in the village.



Old Manor Farm in 1970

Fig 8: Figure ground plan



Cottisford in 1887 in black and 2008 in grey, showing the limited growth of the settlement over this period of time.

Field names as recorded in the 13th century include Widemor, Mareweye, Nordmoresende, Cotesthorn and Eylesbrech which give an idea of the wild heath and fen nature of the landscape in this period. At this time there was a small hamlet recorded as 'Cote' in the vicinity of the village but its exact position along with the settlement itself has been lost.

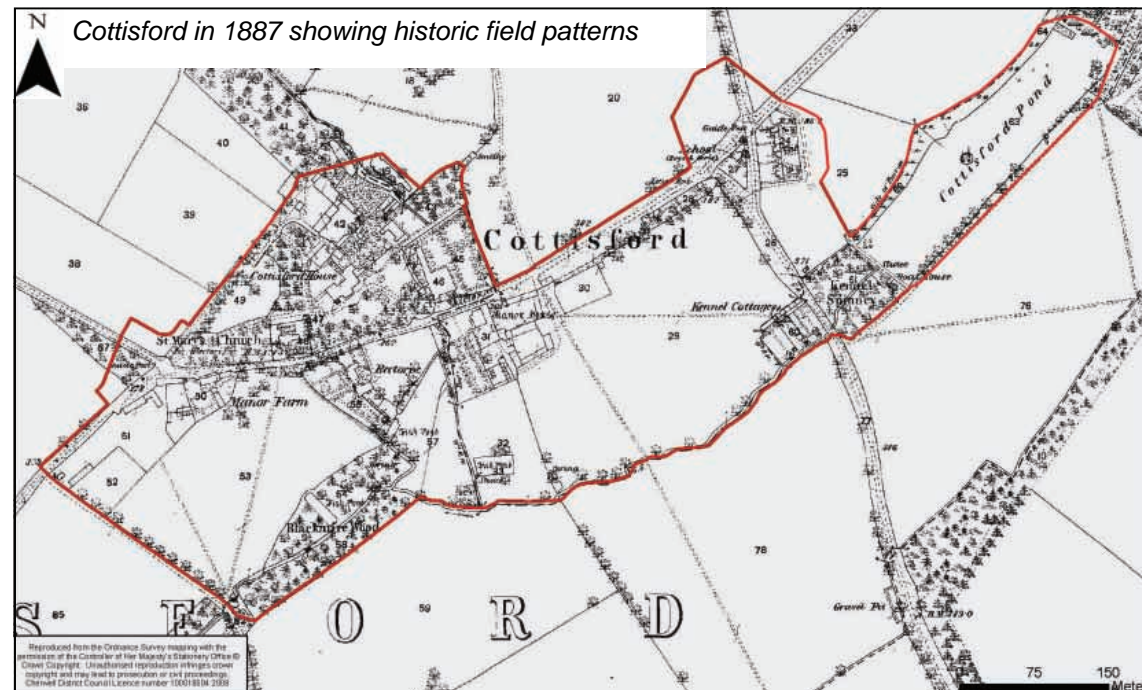
The ancient manor at Cottisford was assessed as having 6 hides and 40 virgates (roughly 30 acres) in the Domesday Book. This rose to 48 virgates under cultivation by 1245. The manor had various customs for the local virgaters including the need for licenses to marry off their daughters and fines to be paid when marrying a widow. These have all been preserved in the court rolls. The prosperity of Cottisford was at its height at the end of the 13th century declining significantly in the 14th century. A notable gap in manor accounts between 1343 and 1360 is likely to be the result of the disarray caused by the Black Death, which is also probably the cause of the disappearance of the hamlet of Cote.



Threshing machine and traction engine nr Fringford

The field system, in the absence of any pre-enclosure maps, cannot be satisfactorily made out, the current landscape being almost entirely a result of the 18th century inclosures. Before 1854 the farming practice in the area had been very conservative. William Fermor and Martha Eyre attempted to secure inclosure in 1761 and the matter was raised again in parliament in 1777 and 1809 by Eton's tenant Revd Greenhill, Rector of Fringford. In 1848 an act was finally obtained but the award was not made until 1854. At this time Eton College had around 30 acres of plantation and wood and the manor house estate covered around 865 acres.

The poor rate in Cottisford, as elsewhere in the country, rose rapidly in the late 18th century. The 19th century poor kept their cattle on the heath and had the right to cut furze and brushwood. It was the last quarter of this century that Flora Thompson recorded in detail in her autobiographical novels published in the 1940s. The majority of Cottisford inhabitants were farmers or agricultural labourers with numbers increasing significantly in the 19th century. A 1676 census records 46 adults in the parish while total numbers had increased to 263 by 1851 and 327 in 1871. However the introduction of mechanised agriculture saw a rapid decline with only 175 inhabitants recorded in 1901 and 150 in 1911.



In 1808 Cottisford had a small school supported by subscriptions which taught 12 children but it had closed by 1815. A Sunday school was established in 1819 with 30 pupils but it was not until 1856 that a National School was established with the help of Eton College on a plot set aside by the inclosure award of 1854. The school was closed in 1920 and reopened as a Council school a few years later but numbers were low with only 22 pupils in 1954 and it finally closed in 1968.



The Old School when it was first converted

Nonconformity in Cottisford has never been particularly strong. In the late 16th century the manor lessees the Arden family were fined as Catholic recusants. A Methodist meeting house was opened in 1844 in Juniper Hill. There were few members but it survived into the 1880's as recorded by Flora Thompson.

The village Church of St Mary has fluctuated between a state of near ruin and good repair during its history. A poor living in the middle ages, when it was worth only £2, its value rose to £66 in 1611. A gift of £200 in 1723 from Queen Anne and a further sum from the Dean of St Paul's came just 5 years after the church was described as very much out of repair and *'very nastily kept by reason of holes and a pigeon house as the west end'* (Rawlinson 1718) The 1861 restoration of St Mary's was paid for by private subscription.



The remains of the Medieval cross in the churchyard



Cottisford Church by G. Scaldwell, 1835-45 (from Alfred Beesley's History of Banbury Vol 6 pg 178)



St Mary's Church today

The parish has long been noted for the quality of its hunting and Mr Fermor's hounds pictured in a painting by Ben Marshall (1767-1865) were later known as the Bicester Hunt. The end of the hunting season saw annual horse races in the parish in the early 19th century, although the exact location of these is unclear.

5. Architectural History

Cottisford has two houses of particular interest; the Old Manor Farm (Grade I) which dates from the 14th century and Cottisford House (Grade II) which incorporates an earlier 16th century manor, which itself stood on the site of a much earlier grange. The current building dates from 1707 but was largely rebuilt following a serious fire in March 1929.

A 1325 indenture describes a grange on the site of Cottisford House containing a hall, chamber, kitchen and granary—a building of substantial size for the period. The property passed to Eton College in the mid 15th century and a new house was built at the end of the 16th century for the college tenants. Few records remain of its appearance but it was variously designated as a mansion house and manor house. The present Cottisford House was built by Laurence Lord (an Eton tenant) in the early 18th century and features attic dormers in a hipped roof, ashlar quoins, a broken pediment over the south door and a modillioned (ornamental bracket supports) eaves-cornice. The house was restored and altered in the 19th century by William Turner. The garden contains remnants of a large 17th century brick dovecote which is listed in its own right. The structure rests on limestone piers, the spaces between which were infilled in the 20th century. The 18th century stable and coach house to the north west of Cottisford house is also listed and retains its original stalls and carriage doors.



Old Manor Farm

Old Manor Farm is noted in Pevsner as of particular interest in representing the medieval manorial plan and is architecturally related to the stone defensive keeps or donjons of the Norman Castle. The oldest section of Old Manor Farm consists of two compartments, possibly a first floor hall and solar with two smaller projecting blocks. There is also a later 16th century wing to the south. Almost all the windows have been modernised but two 15th century trefoil-headed windows remain in the north wall of the solar and in the north gable a attic window dating from 1200 can be seen, although this is unlikely to be its original position. The north-west projection of the house contains a garde-robe accessible from the solar, a rare detail in a house of this date and in the north gable 16th century roof timbers remain visible. The building is built of the local limestone rubble with a Welsh slate roof. The interior has been much modernised but a 16th century fireplace remains on the ground floor.



The Granary of Cottisford House & Cottisford House

The village also contains the grade II* listed Church of St Mary. The building dates from the 13th century but has 14th century and later alterations. Major restoration took place in 1861 under the auspices of Charles Harrison, which included insertion of tracery in the square-headed windows. The church is constructed of squared coursed limestone and limestone rubble with a steeply pitched tile roof. A relatively small church, it consists of chancel, nave and south porch. The interior displays 19th century pews, piscina and font. The churchyard also contains the base and a fragment of the shaft of a medieval cross which is listed grade II.



St Mary's Church

6. Character Areas

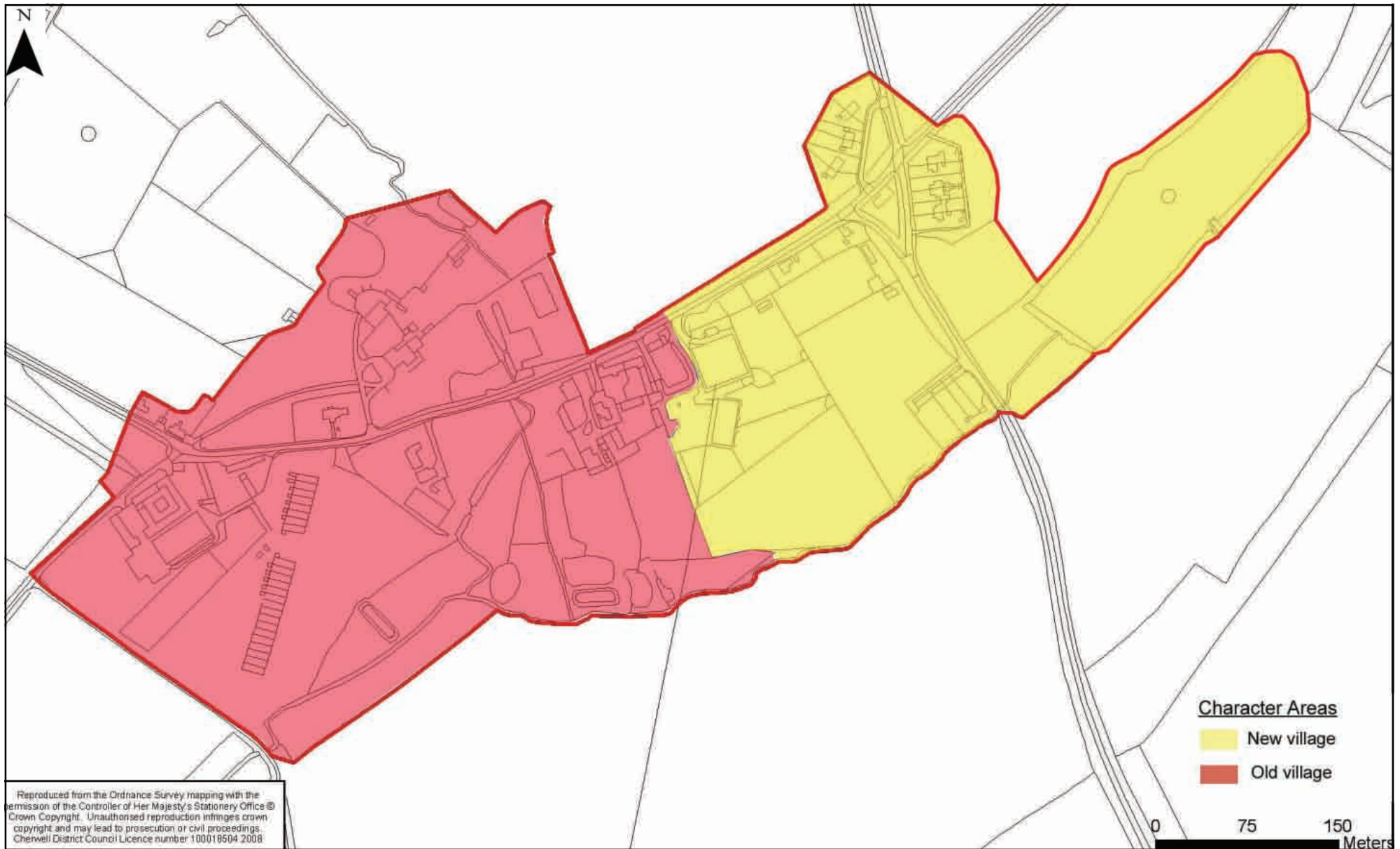


Figure 9: Character area map

6.1 The Old Village

6.1.1 Land use

This area contains the Church, Cottisford House, the former rectory, former and remaining farm buildings and cottages. The buildings are now almost entirely residential with the exception of St. Mary's Church and the buildings associated with College Farm which are still in agricultural use. Cottisford House retains a number of significant outbuildings such as the dovecote.

6.1.2 Street pattern, footpaths, means of enclosure

This character area contains one main street which gently curves through the village. The main means of enclosure are low limestone walls with some simple post and rail fencing. There are no footways in this character area and the road is unmarked. Apart from the granite setts around the entrance to Cottisford House and along the frontage of College Farm there are no kerbs. There is some erosion of the grass verges outside the church. A footpath, which is likely to be the route of the closed road, runs south to Hethe from opposite the church.

6.1.3 Trees, hedges and open spaces

Mature trees play an important role in the character of this area. Beeches line the driveway to Cottisford House from the west and also flank the churchyard. Further to the east varying heights of Yew hedging shield Old Manor Farm, Old Rectory and Church from the road. Grass verges are an important characteristic of the area and help to retain the rural feel of the village. The open space between properties emphasises the rural character with agricultural land interspersed with building groups which remain functionally and visually discrete.



Looking west showing the two main forms of enclosure



Looking east, showing mature hedges acting as screening



College Farm, vernacular style and limestone construction

6.1.4 Building age, type, style and materials

Buildings date from the Medieval period, (St Mary's Church and Old Manor Farm) through to the 20th century (Lodge Cottage and West Cottage). The Old Rectory, Cottisford House, College Farm and Manor Grange are 18th-19th century. Despite this the buildings display a cohesive character due to the use of only two main building materials—limestone and red brick. Coursed limestone rubble is used in most building with ashlar used on Cottisford House and on parts of the Church. Some buildings use varying sizes of limestone blocks in their construction, for example the barn to the west of Manor Grange seen below.



Hand made brick can be seen on The Old Rectory whereas The Lodge has machine made brick with less visible variation in colour. The roofing materials are also similar with the majority being red clay plain tile or Welsh slate. The rural vernacular style dominates with some estate influences on the College Farm buildings to the west which are owned by the Tusmore Estate. Fenestration is mainly simple wooden casements with the larger buildings having sliding sashes typical of the 18th and 19th century.

6.1.5 Scale and massing

The larger buildings within this area are detached and set back from the road within their own grounds (often with smaller outbuildings). This creates a dispersed ground plan at this end of the village. The old manor grange has been converted to residential use and a number of small dwellings have formed a conglomeration around the rear of the grange. Collectively known as Lark Rise Court these are accessed from the rear, confusing public and private space and presenting an inactive frontage to the road. With the exception of Old Manor Farm and Cottisford House, which are three storey buildings, the properties within this character area are two storey in height.



Lark Rise Court

6.1.6 Features of special interest

- The ancient church, the Old Manor Farm, Cottisford House and their associated outbuildings are of significant architectural interest.

- The history of Cottisford is typical of many in the 18th and 19th century but is preserved by virtue of its halted development. The complete relocation of village housing away from the main manor house was common in this period but later expansion has often made this element of history unclear by infilling gaps between manor house and relocated dwellings but here the legibility of the settlement growth has been maintained.
- One of the things that makes Cottisford so special is that the gaps between dwellings have been carefully maintained in a way that is historically appropriate. The paddocks between The Old Rectory and The Old Manor Farm retain the rural feel while Cottisford House's landscaped grounds contribute to the street scene without being over manicured.
- Water plays an important role in this character area with the stream still occasionally covering the road at the old fording point outside Cottisford House when flooded. The stream runs past the Old Manor Farm and down to a series of ponds to the south where evidence remains of the Medieval fish ponds.
- The social history of Cottisford (Fordlow) as described by Flora Thompson in her trilogy 'Lark Rise to Candleford' adds an extra dimension to our understanding of the village.

6.1.7 Views

The meandering road and rising land to the east creates a series of aesthetically pleasing views as you move through the village. The church in particular is picturesque and the man-made pond by Cottisford House adds an extra element of charm to the street scene. The open land to the north and south create breaks in the enclosed gardens of the larger houses and allow views down into the gently sloping valley and back towards their private elevations. From the north west there are views from the grounds of Cottisford House towards the industrial style sheds of the poultry farm of Lower Heath Farm.



The southern entrance to Cottisford House



View of the pond with the bridge as focal point

6.1.8 Threats

- Cottisford retains a narrow unmarked main street without footways and with generous grass verges, which is key to the rural character of the settlement. The poor visibility does help to discourage speeding, however some cars do cut through this area at speed and traffic avoiding them results in the erosion of these grass verges.
- Expansion of Lower Heath Farm's poultry houses could threaten the character and appearance of the Conservation Area due its close proximity.
- Infilling between distinct groups of buildings would harm our ability to 'read' the historical development of the village.
- Conversion of former farm houses and associated farm yard buildings to non agricultural use inevitably changes their character and can look over manicured. Unsympathetic changes to unlisted buildings which play a major role in the appearance of the street scene, such as College Farm, can potentially be a threat to the character of the conservation area.
- Domestication of the agricultural landscape through incursion of gardens and tennis courts into open land could threaten the rural feel of the settlement.
- The current owners of Cottisford House have respected the rural character of the village with sympathetic and limited interventions to ensure privacy. Elaborate security and privacy measures such as automatic gates, lighting and fencing would be highly detrimental to the character of the area.



Erosion to grass verges looking east towards College Farm



Manor Grange illustrates some of the problems of barn conversion



Agricultural land can become domesticated

6.2 The New Village

6.2.1 Land use

The buildings within this area of the settlement are now entirely residential but did once include the village school which is now converted.

6.2.2 Street pattern, footpaths, means of enclosure

In this area of the village the buildings address the highway rather than being located centrally within a plot. The buildings form a cluster around the crossing of roads with the Old School standing on the central triangle. The exception to this is the Kennel Cottages to the south east which stand apart from the rest of the village at 90° to the Hethe Road. The only footways within this area are found on one side of Lake View; these are surfaced with tarmac but have granite kerbs. The only concrete kerbs within the settlement are found on corners round the Old School and at the entrance to the electricity transformer station. The main form of enclosure is hedging and palisade or post and rail fencing although some low limestone walls are also used. An unsurfaced footpath cuts through Cottisford next to Stone Barn running north to Juniper Hill and south to Hethe with a branch veering east towards Kennel Cottages.



Concrete kerbs outside the electricity substation



Lake View, gardens enclosed by hedges and fencing

6.2.3 Trees, hedges and open spaces

The topography of the land is particularly apparent in this area of the village. The small scale fields in the valley falling south to the stream contrasts with the flat open modern agricultural landscape to the north. A break in the enclosed frontages creates a sense of openness and contributes to the rural character of the area. Trees and hedging also play an important role, with shrub along the stream, hedging around the houses to the east and more mature woodland to the south east of the Conservation Area. Despite the amount of greenery the impact of vegetation on character is less than in the Old Village area. Behind Hethe Cottages is land that is now a paddock but was once divided into 6 allotments which had a direct relationship with the houses and their individual cultivation needs. Lake View has a small triangle of open land around which the properties form a rough crescent.

6.2.4 Building age, type, style and materials

June Cottage and St Fergus appear to be examples of early labourers cottages possibly dating from the 18th century with later alterations. Hethe Cottages can be dated more exactly with the help of a Datestone on the gable ends reading 1869. Similarly history records that The Old School building was constructed in 1856 and was converted into a private house in the 1970s. Little of the original fabric of the school now remains. Kennel Cottages were divided into 5 dwellings in 1857 and are located on the site of the former kennels. A remnant of the kennels is visible as a red brick wall between Popes House (which is rendered) and number 3. The Lake View buildings were erected in the 20th century and are typical of Council Housing of this period with hipped roofs and uniform appearance. Render and pebble-dash are the predominant materials of the modern houses while coursed limestone rubble is found on the older buildings. Red handmade brick is used as detailing on Hethe Cottages. Concrete tile, red clay tile and Welsh slate are the roofing materials within this area. Windows within this area are mostly simple timber casements although there are some examples of Upvc. Almost all of the buildings within this area have been extended, some more appropriately than others.



Distinctive Tusmore Estate detailing of Hethe Cottages

6.2.5 Scale and massing

The buildings within this area are smaller and closer together than those in the Old Village character area and represent several phases of house building for the village residents. Kennel Cottages are slightly set apart to the south of the village and appear higher than their two storeys due to the nature of the topography. The 19th century Hethe Cottages and the 20th century Lake View houses are examples of the housing philosophy of their time. The majority of houses in this area are two storey, and unusually, semi-detached.

6.2.6 Features of special interest

The Old School Building although much altered in the 20th century, has a social history interest as the school which Flora Thompson attended and which is described in her books. The domestic architecture of the Hethe Road Cottages is interesting as a reflection of social history and day-to-day living in the 19th century. Numbers 3 & 4 retain their original outbuildings of a shed with built in copper, privy and pig-sty which are divided from an allotment by a back access lane.



Outbuildings of number 4 Hethe Road Cottages

6.2.7 Views

The lake to the east of the village is visible from the rear of Hethe Cottages but does not appear to have a direct relationship with the settlement. Views across it are picturesque in the summer although recent thinning of the surrounding trees and raising of the water level have given it a harsher appearance. Footpaths crossing the open land to the south provide expansive vistas while to the north there are views out of the village towards the surrounding settlements. The electricity transformer station is surrounded by hedging but is still visible from the main road.

The converted Old School building



View north from the valley bottom



6.2.8 Threats

- Part of the character of this area is provided by the uniformity of Hethe Cottages, Lake View and Kennel Cottages within the 3 groups. Modern extensions to these houses unbalance the planned symmetry and also dominate the original structure.
- The demolition of the outbuildings associated with some of the Hethe Road Cottages has resulted in a jumble of sheds and extensions which have less aesthetic appeal than the original structures.
- The route between Brackley and Fringford runs through the eastern end of Cottisford and traffic, although not constant, has a tendency to speed. This appears to be a particular problem for the occupiers of Kennel Cottages where the vehicular egress has limited visibility and overtaking has caused verge erosion.
- Any expansion of the electricity transformer station would threaten the rural character of the settlement. Screening of the existing transformer station with hedging on its southern and eastern boundaries would be a significant enhancement.

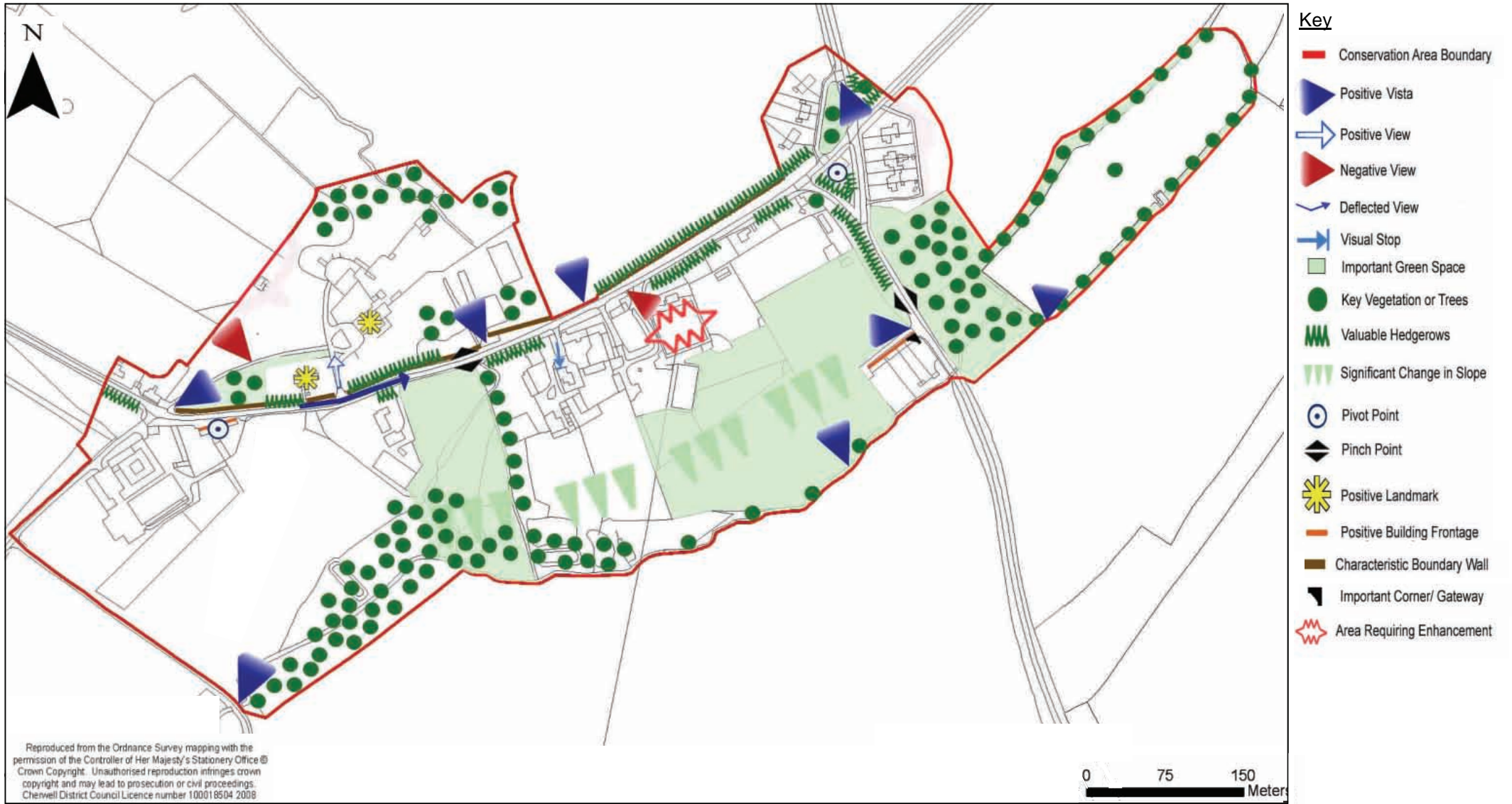


Fig 10: Visual Analysis

Fig 11: Unlisted building that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area



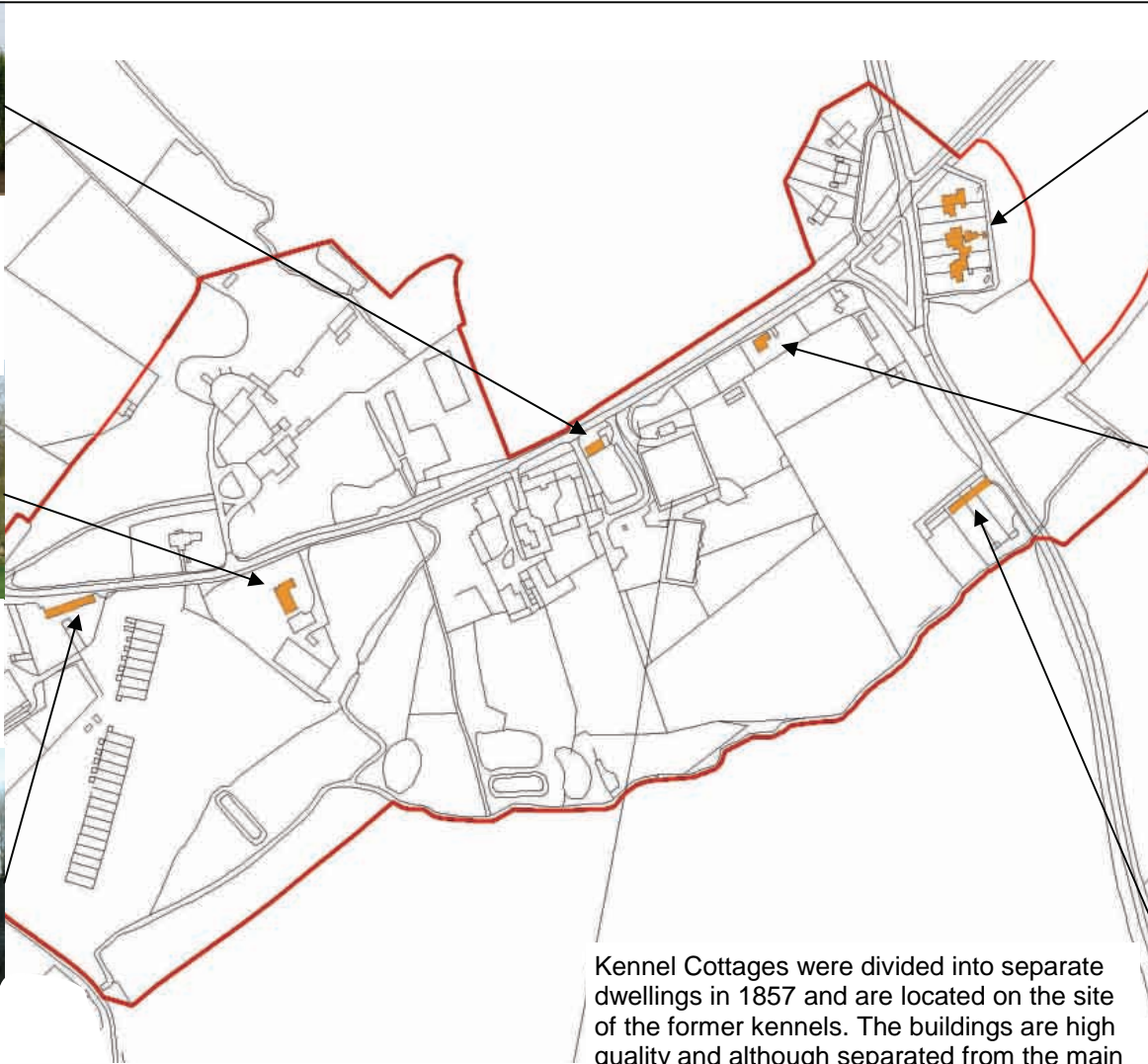
A barn once associated with Old Manor Farm, likely to be 19th century or earlier it plays an important role in the agricultural character of the village.



The Old Rectory is mentioned in Flora Thompson's books and is an impressive 19th century limestone and brick building.



Typical vernacular farmhouse which has been largely rebuilt following a fire in the late 20th century, College Farmhouse plays an important role in the street-scape.



This row of cottages in Hethe Road were built by the Hardwick Estate in 1869. A good example of estate architecture they were designed to be self-sufficient with outbuildings and allotment included in the layout.



St Fergus appears to date from the 19th century but may have earlier origins as labourers cottages. One of the few small village houses remaining it makes a positive contribution to the streetscene.



Kennel Cottages were divided into separate dwellings in 1857 and are located on the site of the former kennels. The buildings are high quality and although separated from the main village represent an important element of its history and contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.

7. Boundary Justification

Boundary alterations

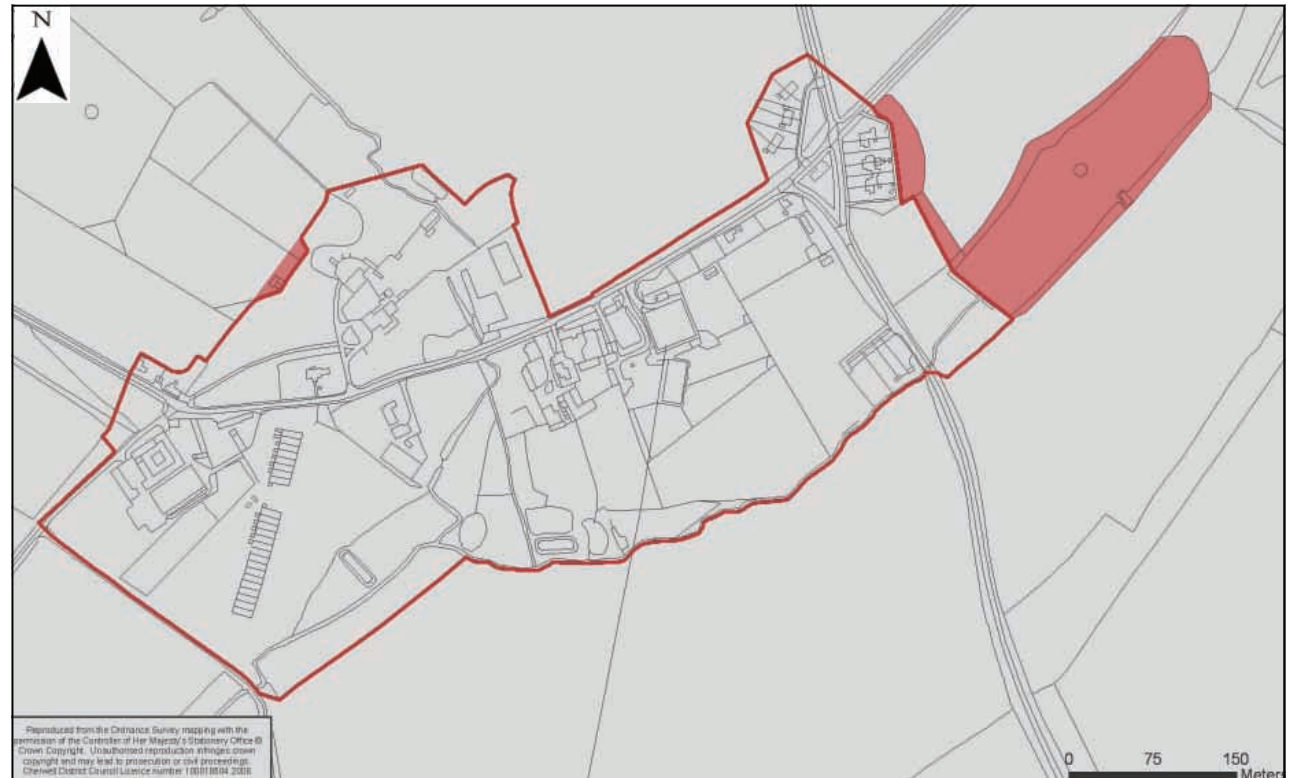
As a result of public consultation three changes were made to the 1980 conservation area boundary. To the west the boundary was rationalised to include a stone barn at the rear of Cottisford House which was felt to be of historical importance to the village. An area of paddock to the rear of Hethe Road Cottages was also included. When built in 1869 each of the Hethe Road cottages were designed to encourage self-sufficiency. The cottages were built in the estate style with each pair of semi-detached properties sharing a set of semi-detached outbuildings. Each house had a shed, outdoor privy and pig sty as well as a detached strip of land divided by a lane to the rear. The rural domestic juxtaposition is still legible and two cottages retain their full set of outbuildings. It is proposed that the boundary be amended to include the small area of paddock (which used to contain the detached gardens) to the rear of the cottages because of its close relationship with the existing buildings (in particular the pigsties of no's 3 & 4) which had not been appreciated when the original boundary line was drawn in the 1980s. The third alteration is the addition of Cottisford Pond which despite being hidden from most viewpoints in the village has historical and social associations with Cottisford. The pond is referred to in Flora Thompson's book 'Lark Rise' as 'pond piece', it features on the 1797 David Map and is likely to have much earlier Medieval origins.

Current boundary

The boundary follows the stream running from Kennel Cottages to College Farm at the south side of the settlement, it then runs adjacent to College Farm's out buildings along the restricted byway to and around The Lodge and West Cottage. The boundary then follows the edge of Cottisford House gardens to the north including the stone barn to the north west of the main house.

The boundary then crosses the stream before returning south to the main road opposite Manor Grange and the entrance to Dovecote House. The boundary then follows the main road to the east, circumnavigates the rear gardens of Lake View Cottages, crosses to Hethe Road Cottages and follows the edge of the paddock to the rear. From here the boundary runs around the edge of Cottisford Pond including the jetty and a thin band of land around the water before returning to the main road opposite Kennel Cottages.

Fig 12: Conservation Area boundary with new additions highlighted



8. Materials and details



9. Management Plan

Policy context

The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas. In line with English Heritage guidance (2005b) Conservation Area Management Proposals are to be published as part of the process of area designation or review. Their aim is to provide guidance through policy statements to assist in the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area.

Cottisford is a very small and dispersed settlement which retains a rural character despite its relative proximity to the A43. Little new development has taken place within the last century. Threats that would normally be associated with Conservation Areas are not so relevant here. Cottisford is a well kept village and the individual attention of each resident to their own property has ensured that the character has generally survived successfully.

However small incremental changes such as out of character extensions, obvious satellite dishes and uPVC windows should be guarded against as cumulatively they can damage the overall appearance of the settlement.

The aim of management proposals is not to prevent changes but to ensure that any such changes are sympathetic to the individual property, sympathetic to the streetscape and overall enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The principal policies covering alterations and development of the historic built environment are given in Appendix 1.

Eastern entrance to Cottisford House



▲ Looking west past Manor Grange
▼ Looking east towards Kennel Cottages from footpath



Generic Guidance

The Council Will:

1. Promote a policy of repair rather than replacement of traditional architectural details. Where repairs are not economically viable then the promotion of bespoke sympathetic replacement is encouraged. This is particularly the case for windows when sympathetic re-fenestration is important in preserving the appearance of the building in the design and materials.
2. Discourage the use of uPVC windows in historic properties. The use of uPVC in listed buildings will not be permitted and where unauthorised work is carried out enforcement action will be taken.
3. Actively promote the use of traditional building and roofing materials in new extensions and repair. The use of local limestone and red brick is encouraged.
4. Encourage owners of historic properties, not just those that are listed, to replace inappropriate modern with the appropriate traditional materials, for example wood casements.



▲
Render on one of Hethe Cottages could be detrimental to the character of the entire row.

5. Exercise a presumption against artificial cladding material. Render can be an acceptable treatment, but this is dependent on the building history and design. The ill considered use of render within the Conservation Area could be highly detrimental to the character and appearance of the settlement.
6. Encourage the sympathetic location of solar panels on inconspicuous roof slopes or on outbuildings.
7. Require the location of satellite dishes in inconspicuous sites to prevent harm to the historic character and visual appearance of the area.

8. Encourage the retention of traditional outbuildings and their sympathetic re-use. This is particularly relevant to the buildings to the rear of 3 and 4 Hethe Cottages which are an important remnant of the village past.
9. Discourage disfiguring alterations such as unsympathetic extensions, altering the dimensions of window openings and the removal of chimneys.
10. Investigate whether appropriate planning permission or listed building consent has been obtained for an alteration. Unauthorised alterations, internal or external, to a listed building are a criminal offence and where unauthorised work is carried out enforcement action will be taken.
11. Promote traditional styles of pointing. The type of pointing in stone or brickwork is integral to the appearance of the wall or structure. It is therefore of great importance that only appropriate pointing is used in the repointing of stone or brickwork. Repointing work should be discrete to the point of being inseparable from the original. 'Ribbon' pointing (where mortar is left standing proud of the stonework) and similar is considered a totally inappropriate style of pointing for this district.

- 12. Promote the use of lime mortar in the construction and repointing of stone and brickwork. This traditional building material is strongly advocated and its use is beneficial to traditional buildings. This is in contrast to hard cementaceous mortars often used in modern construction, which can accelerate the weathering of the local limestone.
- 13. Promote the use of sympathetic materials for garage doors. Vertical timber boarded side hung doors are preferable to metal or fibreglass versions which can have a negative impact on the rural setting.
- 14. Generally encourage the good maintenance of properties including boundary walls.
- 15. Support alterations to buildings where this would enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 16. Create a dialogue with service providers to encourage underground power cables to reduce the visual pollution caused by the overhead lines and their supporting poles within the settlement.

- 17. Encourage the sympathetic location of both amenity and private security lighting to limit light 'pollution'. Excessive lighting within the settlement can have an adverse effect on the very rural character of the area. The material and design of the fittings and their position on the building should be carefully considered.
- 18. Promote the repair or replacement of lost or inappropriate boundary treatments with traditional walling or hedging in a style or species appropriate to the location.
- 19. Promote the use of a suitable style of boundary for the position within the village, for example the use of simple post fencing for properties backing onto open ground.

- 20. Promote the retention of historic footpaths within and around the conservation area and work with bodies such as the Parish Meeting and Oxford County Council to prevent these being lost. The informality of these paths should be preserved and attempts to add hard surfaces or extensive signage should be resisted. In particular the links between Juniper Hill and Cottisford, which are mentioned by Flora Thompson in her books, are key to ensuring that the setting of the village remains evocative of its fascinating past.



▲ *Post and rail fencing around paddock opposite Cottisford House*



▲ *Footpath towards Juniper Hill*

Management and protection of important green spaces

The Council will:

1. Promote positive management of vegetation. Trees and hedges make an important contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area. Planting of exotic imports or inappropriate varieties, such as Leylandii, are to be strongly discouraged, as these trees grow fast and can alter or block important views as well as being uncharacteristic of the area. The trees and hedges within Cottisford play a key role in the character of the Conservation Area, with smaller scale vegetation in the new village contrasting with the more mature trees around the Church. The law on tree works within a Conservation Area is often misunderstood and therefore a fuller description of the controls is given on page 26.
2. Promote the sympathetic management of open areas within the Conservation Area. In Cottisford the open land between clusters of buildings is historically and visually important to the conservation area.
3. Seek to preserve the rural character of verges by working with the Highway Authority to avoid the insertion of inappropriate kerbing which would have an urbanising effect whilst seeking solutions that prevent harm to verges by parked cars and passing vehicles.
4. Encourage the retention and good maintenance of garden walls, garden fences and boundary hedges.
5. Resist development that would adversely affect the setting of the village. Further development within the village or in the surrounding area is unlikely because of its status as Category 3 and because of the detrimental impact that development is likely to have on the rural setting and characteristic dispersed pattern of Cottisford.

Land to the rear of Hethe Cottages



Cherwell District Council designated Cottisford a Conservation Area in 1980 in recognition of the settlement's special architectural and historic interest, which should be preserved and enhanced.

The area was designated under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The effects of designation are explained briefly below.

1. Cherwell District Council, as the local planning authority, will exercise a particular care to ensure that change, when it occurs, will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.
2. All planning applications for development which would affect the character or appearance of the area must be advertised in the local press and site notices must be posted so that the maximum opportunity for comment is given to the public before a decision is reached.
3. Cherwell District Council, as the local planning authority, will require planning applications in the Conservation Area to be accompanied by sufficient detail to enable the impact of the proposed development on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area to be assessed. This may include details of scale, massing, design and materials of buildings and their relationship to existing buildings.

4. Procedures pertaining to listed buildings remain essentially unaltered as listed building consent takes precedence over Conservation Area consent. Therefore all works of alteration, demolition or extension to a listed building require listed building consent.
5. Scheduled ancient monuments are exempt from Conservation Area control and scheduled monument consent for proposed works must be sought from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.
6. Conservation Area consent is required from the local planning authority for the demolition or substantial demolition of buildings in excess of 115 cubic meters and enclosures over a certain height within the Conservation Area. Exceptions to this rule are those laid down in section 75 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Exceptions mainly relate to small buildings within the curtilage of a dwelling; gates, walls, fences and other enclosures below the specified height; temporary buildings; certain agricultural and industrial buildings; and buildings required to be demolished under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, The Housing Act 1985 or the Pastoral Measure 1983. Roof extensions, including all dormer windows, and external cladding require Conservation Area consent.

7. The Council requires advance notification of the intention to fell, top or lop trees over a certain size within the designated area.
 - The legislation only covers trees with a trunk diameter of over 75mm measured at a height of 1.5m.
 - Certain trees, such as fruit trees in orchards are excluded.
 - The legislation allows for up to 2 years work to be catered for in a single Notification. Where work to a small wooded area is required this procedure would allow for a single approval of a programme or scheme of works for a group of trees. This would avoid the need for multiple applications.
 - The internal Council procedure has recently been stream lined, with the introduction of a simplified form and with the Street Scene and Landscape Service handling the notification direct to speed up the response rate.
 - The vast majority of such applications are approved. In 2008 only 4 TPOs (Tree Preservation Orders) were served as a result of 216 advance notices.
 - There are no exceptions or abbreviated procedures available in law to avoid the need to Notify the Council of intended works to such trees.

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11. Appendix

There are a number of policy documents which contain policies pertaining to the historic built environment. The main policies are summarised in this section. Other policies of a more general nature are also of some relevance, these are not listed here but can be found elsewhere in the specific documents mentioned below.

Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016

EN4 The fabric and setting of listed buildings including Blenheim Palace and Park, a World Heritage Site, will be preserved and the character or appearance of conservation areas and their settings will be preserved or enhanced. Other elements of the historic environment, including historic parks and gardens, battlefields and historic landscapes will also be protected from harmful development.

EN6 There will be a presumption in favour of preserving in situ nationally and internationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings. Development affecting other archaeological remains should include measures to secure their preservation in situ or where this is not feasible, their recording or removal to another site.

Cherwell Local Plan 1996

H5 Where there is a demonstrable lack of affordable housing to meet local needs, the district council will negotiate with developers to secure an element of affordable housing in substantial new residential development schemes. The district council will need to be satisfied that such affordable housing:

- (i) is economically viable in terms of its ability to meet the need identified
- (ii) will be available to meet local needs long term through secure arrangements being made to restrict the occupancy of the development
- (iii) is compatible with the other policies in this plan.

H12 New housing in the rural areas of the district will be permitted within existing settlements in accordance with policies H13, H14 and H15. Schemes which meet a specific and identified local housing need will be permitted in accordance with policies H5 and H6.

H19 Proposals for the conversion of a rural building, whose form, bulk and general design is in keeping with its surroundings to a dwelling in a location beyond the built-up limits of a settlement will be favourably considered provided:

- (i) the building can be converted without major rebuilding or extension and without inappropriate alteration to its form and character;

- (ii) the proposal would not cause significant harm to the character of the countryside or the immediate setting of the building;
- (iii) the proposal would not harm the special character and interest of a building of architectural or historic significance;
- (iv) the proposal meets the requirements of the other policies in the plan.

H21 Within settlements the conversion of suitable buildings to dwellings will be favourably considered unless conversion to a residential use would be detrimental to the special character and interest of a building of architectural and historic significance. In all instances proposals will be subject to the other policies in this plan.

C18 In determining an application for listed building consent the council will have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest. The council will normally only approve internal and external alterations or extensions to a listed building which are minor and sympathetic to the architectural and historic character of the building.

C23 There will be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings, walls, trees or other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

C27 Development proposals in villages will be expected to respect their historic settlement pattern.

C30 Design control will be exercised to ensure:

- (i) that new housing development is compatible with the appearance, character, layout, scale and density of existing dwellings in the vicinity;
- (ii) that any proposal to extend an existing dwelling (in cases where planning permission is required) is compatible with the scale of the existing dwelling, its curtilage and the character of the street scene;
- (iii) that new housing development or any proposal for the extension (in cases where planning permission is required) or conversion of an existing dwelling provides standards of amenity and privacy acceptable to the local planning authority.

Non-statutory Cherwell local plan 2011

EN34 the council will seek to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the landscape through the control of development. Proposals will not be permitted if they would:

- (i) cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside;
- (ii) cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography;
- (iii) be inconsistent with local character;
- (iv) harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features;
- (v) harm the historic value of the landscape.

EN35 The Council will seek to retain woodlands, trees, hedges, ponds, walls and any other features which are important to the character or appearance of the local landscape as a result of their ecological, historic or amenity value. Proposals which would result in the loss of such features will not be permitted unless their loss can be justified by appropriate mitigation and/or compensatory measures to the satisfaction of the council.

EN39 Development should preserve listed buildings, their features and settings, and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of designated conservation areas, as defined on the proposals map. Development that conflicts with these objectives will not be permitted.

EN40 In a conservation area or an area that makes an important contribution to its setting planning control will be exercised to ensure, *inter alia*, that the character or appearance of the area so designated is preserved or enhanced. There will be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings, walls, trees or other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. A new development should understand and respect the sense of place and architectural language of the existing but should seek to avoid pastiche development except where this is shown to be clearly the most appropriate.

EN43 proposals that would result in the total or substantial demolition of a listed building, or any significant part of it, will not be permitted in the absence of clear and convincing evidence that the market testing set out in ppg15 paragraphs 3.16 to 3.19 has been thoroughly followed with no success.

EN45 Before determination of an application for planning permission requiring the alteration, extension or partial demolition of a listed building, applicants will be required to provide sufficient information to enable an assessment of the likely impact of the proposals on the special architectural or historic interest of the structure, its setting or special features.

EN47 The Council will promote sustainability of the historic environment through conservation, protection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage and its interpretation and presentation to the public. In particular it will:

(i) seek to ensure that scheduled ancient monuments and other unscheduled sites of national and regional importance and their settings are permanently preserved;

(ii) ensure that development which could adversely affect sites, structures, landscapes or buildings of archaeological interest and their settings will require an assessment of the archaeological resource through a desk-top study, and where appropriate a field evaluation;

(iii) not permit development that would adversely affect archaeological remains and their settings unless the applicant can demonstrate that the archaeological resource will be physically preserved in-situ, or a suitable strategy has been put forward to mitigate the impact of development proposals.

EN48 Development that would damage the character, appearance, setting or features of designed historic landscapes (parks and gardens) and battlefields will be refused.

EN51 In considering applications for advertisements in conservation areas the council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

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Contact Details

Head of Planning and Affordable Housing Policy
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
BANBURY
OX15 4AA

planning.policy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk