

Fritwell



Conservation Area Appraisal

January 2008

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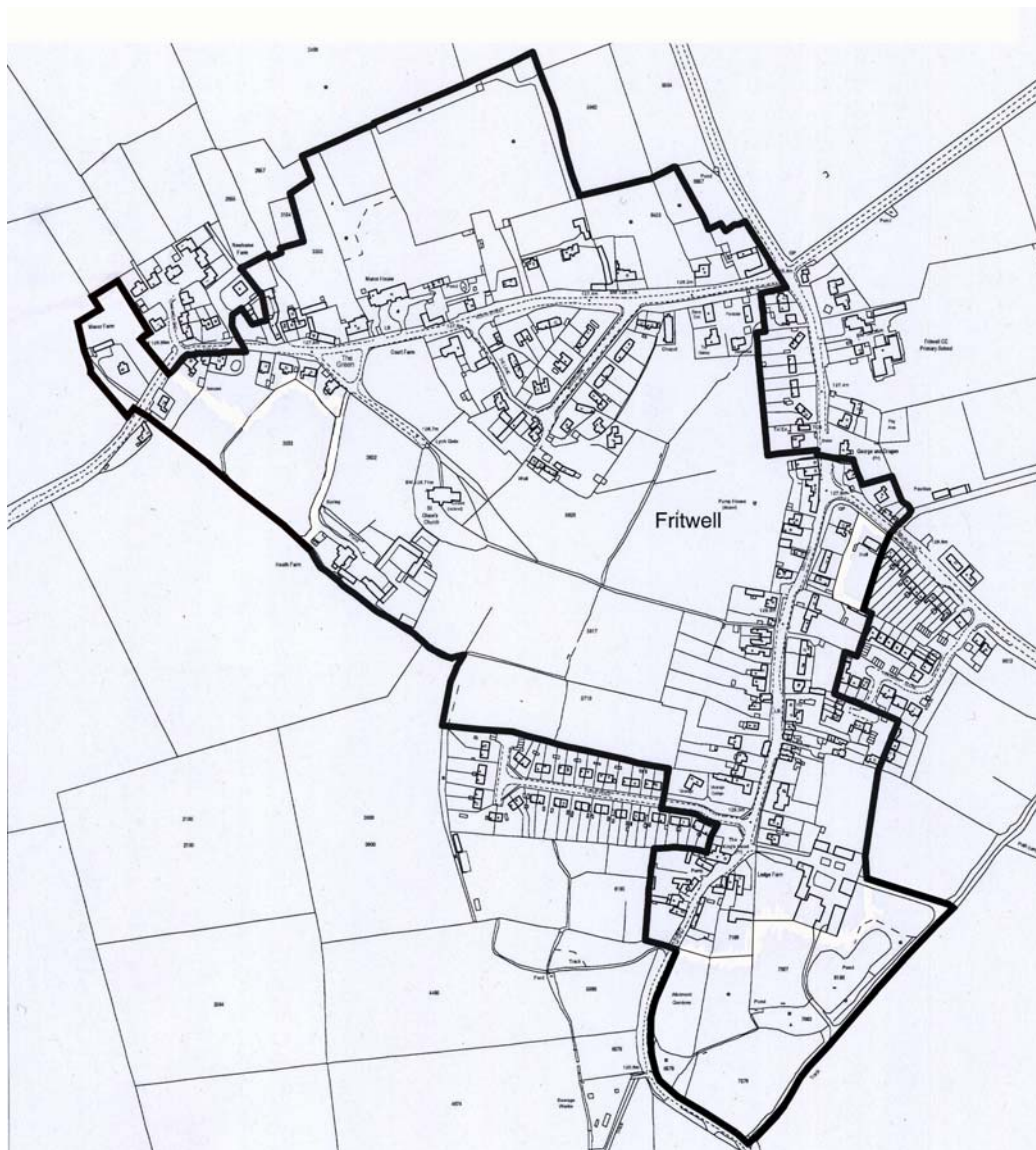
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1. Introduction

Fritwell is a polyfocal village, developing from two manorial estates on either side of open fields. These two settlements are joined to form the modern village by 20th century infill development. The Church, Manor House and village green are accessed from North Street, while the vicarage, shops, farmhouses and agricultural labourers' houses are found on East Street.

Despite being a united village Fritwell retains a varied character, the special qualities of which need to be preserved and enhanced. Although designated a conservation area in 1988 this document is the first full appraisal of the village.

Figure 1: Conservation Area boundary



Approximate Scale 0 10 50 100 200m

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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 or appearance 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 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 54 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'.

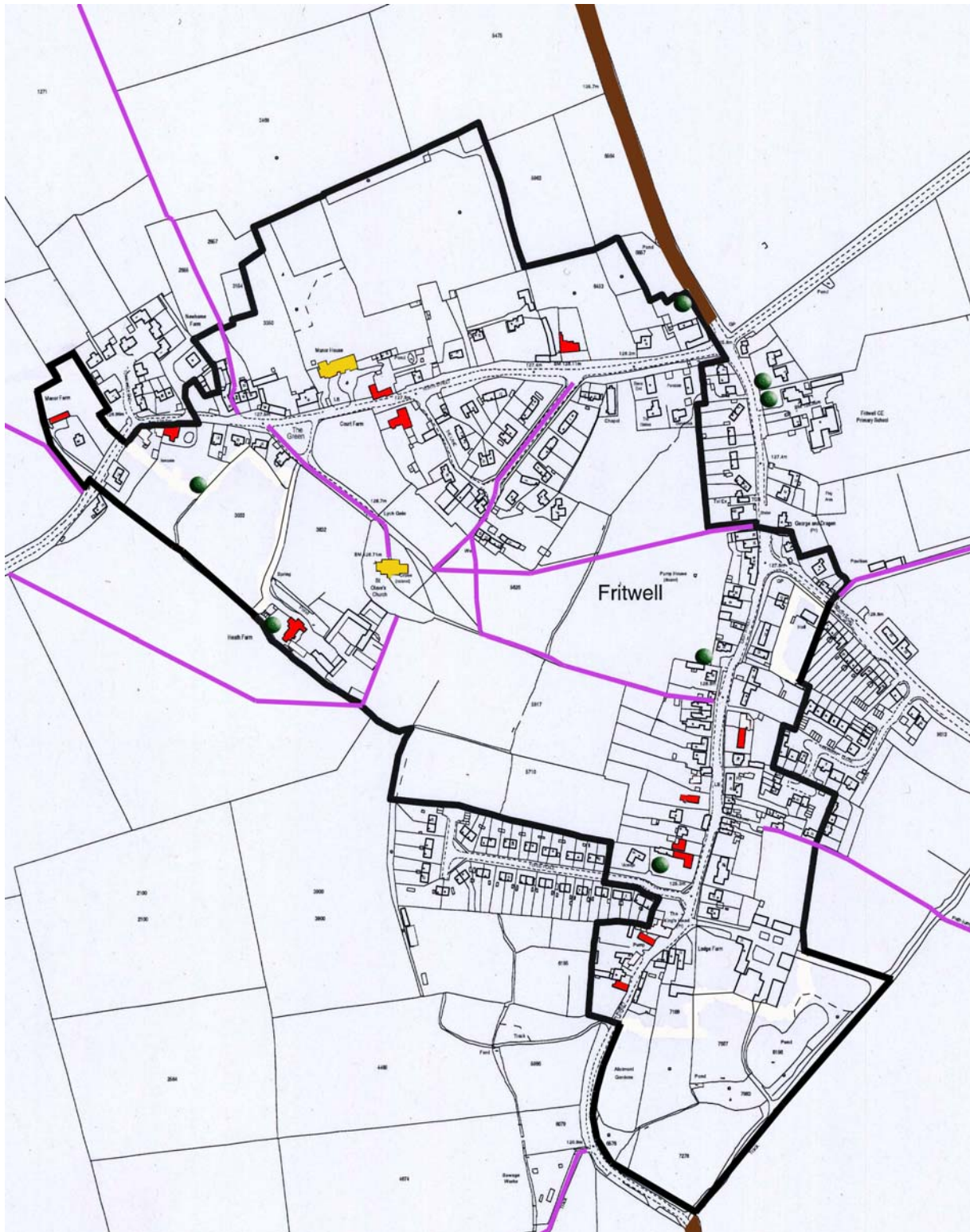
2.1.4 This document is based on a standard recording format derived from advice contained in documents published by English Heritage (2005a). By writing a full Conservation Area appraisal for Fritwell, the special character and appearance of the area can continue to be identified and protected by ensuring that any future development preserves or enhances that identified special character.

2.1.6 This appraisal was the subject of public consultation. A public exhibition and meeting were held on 29th October in Fritwell Village Hall. These events were attended by over 30 people and the appraisal amended as a result. The Conservation Area boundary has been extended as indicated in section 13. It was approved by the Council's Executive on 7th January 2007 and will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the conservation area and its setting.



Figure 2: Area Designations

- Conservation Area boundary
- Public Rights of Way
- Roman Road - Ashbank, Wattlebank, Aves Ditch
- Tree Preservation Orders
- Grade II* Listed Buildings
- Grade II Listed Buildings



Approximate Scale 0 10 50 100 200m

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Figure 3: Topographical map



3. Location and Topography

Fritwell lies roughly mid-way between two market towns—Banbury nine miles (14.5 Km) to the north-west and Bicester six miles (9.7 Km) to the south-east. The parish lies between 400 and 450 feet (122-137 metres) above sea level on a part of the Great Oolite escarpment. The importance of this topography on the positioning of the main streets is shown in Figure 3. This area is referred to in the Cherwell District landscape assessment (*Cobham Resource Consultants, 1995*) as part of the Upper Heyford Plateau.

Fritwell lies on a band of White Limestone, so called because of the high proportion of mica interbedded with grey marl. The geology is clearly reflected in the building materials within the village. The landscape around the village is arable with a weak field pattern, the field size decreasing and farming mix changing close to the settlement. No woodland was recorded in the Domesday Book and the plateau is bare except for a small fir plantation on the north-eastern boundary.

Figure 4: Aerial view of Conservation Area



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4. History of Fritwell

4.1 Origins

4.1.1

Until it was levelled in the early 19th century there was a round barrow (possibly pre Roman in date) situated on Ploughley Hill. Human bones were excavated on this site in 1845. The area is crossed by numerous roads: the pre-Roman Portway, a grass lane, joins the road from Somerton less than a mile to the south, while roads from Somerton, Souldern and Tusmore meet the Bicester– Banbury road nearby. These follow the route of ancient tracks, as does the road out of Fritwell to the south which runs along or close to the line of Aves Ditch. Aves Ditch is one of the best-preserved and yet most enigmatic of the ancient monuments in Oxfordshire. For over three centuries scholars have wondered whether it is of pre-Roman, Roman or Anglo-Saxon origin, whether it was a road or a linear earthwork and, in the latter case, what function it may have served. It is also one of the least known of the county's archaeological features and is seldom referred to in popular or scholarly work on the history or archaeology of the region.

4.1.2

In 1997 an archaeological watching brief supervising the insertion of a pipeline in the land south of the Methodist church found evidence of earthworks and pottery from the 12th to 14th centuries. It is possible that earthworks cover the open land at the centre of the village, however this area has yet to be comprehensively surveyed.

4.2 History

By 1086 and throughout the Middle Ages two manorial estates were recorded in

The village is still divided into a western part on North Street and a southern part on East Street. The latter, Ormond Manor, was perhaps the original settlement: it lay beside Aves Ditch and close to a spring which no doubt gave the village its name of *Fyrht-w(i)elle* or 'wishing well'. (other origins of the village name include—Fertwelle, Fretwelle or Fritwell in the Elms) This spring, with others in the village, feeds the southern boundary stream, and was thought by Plot to be the source of the Great Ouse (see Figure 5). The church was built between the two settlements. Its dedication is to St Olave, the early 11th century king of Norway. The northern part of the village retains the character of a closed settlement, (owned and governed by the manor house), while the southern part of Fritwell having lost its manor house in the 17th century has developed as an open village.

4.2.2

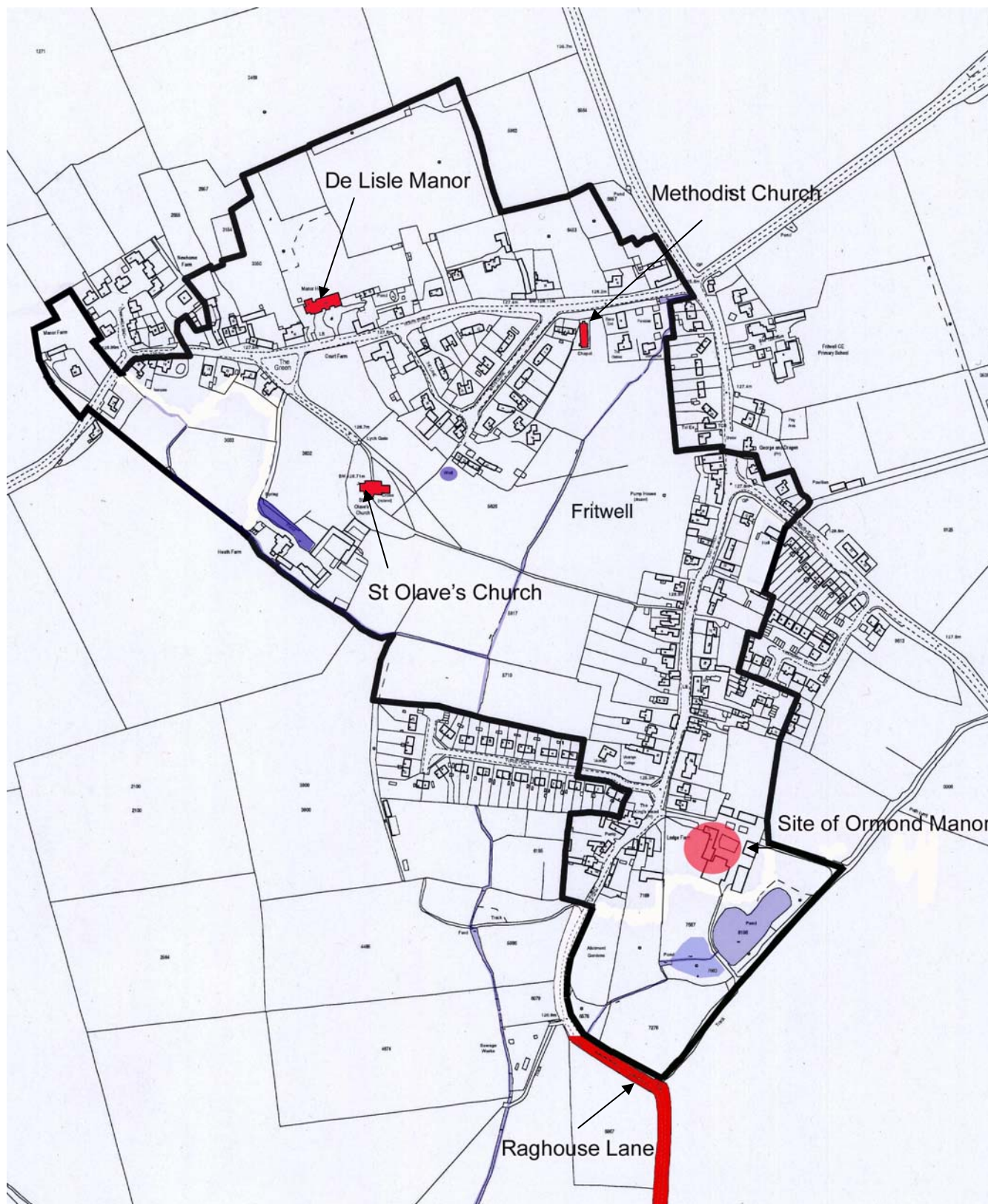
The larger of the two manorial estates, De Lisle Manor had 8 ploughlands in comparison to Ormond Manor's 4. The two manors together held 32 acres of meadow which had a working population of 22 in 1086, a number that had almost doubled to 40 by 1279. By this date Ormond Manor had expanded its land to encompass 8 virgates (a unit of land equivalent to 1/4 of a hide or roughly 2 or 3 hectares). At this time St Frideswide's Priory was the only religious house to hold land in the parish.

Figure 5: Map of the Fritwell area by Robert Plot 1677

Showing the two manors, Aves Ditch Roman road running through the village and the Ouse fluv'



Figure 6: Location of sites and buildings referred to in the text



Approximate Scale 0 10 50 100 200m



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Figure 7: Map of Fritwell 1797



4.2.3

In the 12th century many of the inhabitants were moderately prosperous. Thirty four were assessed for taxation in 1316. The subsidy list of 1534 with 21 names listed shows that wealth continued to be fairly widely distributed.

4.2.4

During the 13th century both a water mill and a windmill were recorded within the parish. The water-mill, probably located on the Cherwell, is mentioned in 1235, and was valued at 6s. 8d. In the early 19th century the windmill still stood in Windmill Ground Field, near the turnpike on the Souldern-Fritwell road.

4.2.5

Dovehouse Farm (called Lodge Farm by 1955) at the southern end of the village street, apparently stands on the site of the Ormonds' Manor House and incorporates fragments of it. The old house may still have been standing in 1665 when two houses in Fritwell each paid tax on ten hearths, but it is not marked on Plot's map of 1677, and had presumably been pulled down and converted into a farmhouse. A farm house on the Ormond estate was rented by Samuel Cox in the early 18th century and later let to Sir Edward Longueville. By 1702 Cox had built a dove-cote in the grounds which was still recorded as standing in 1897, although had disappeared by 1955.

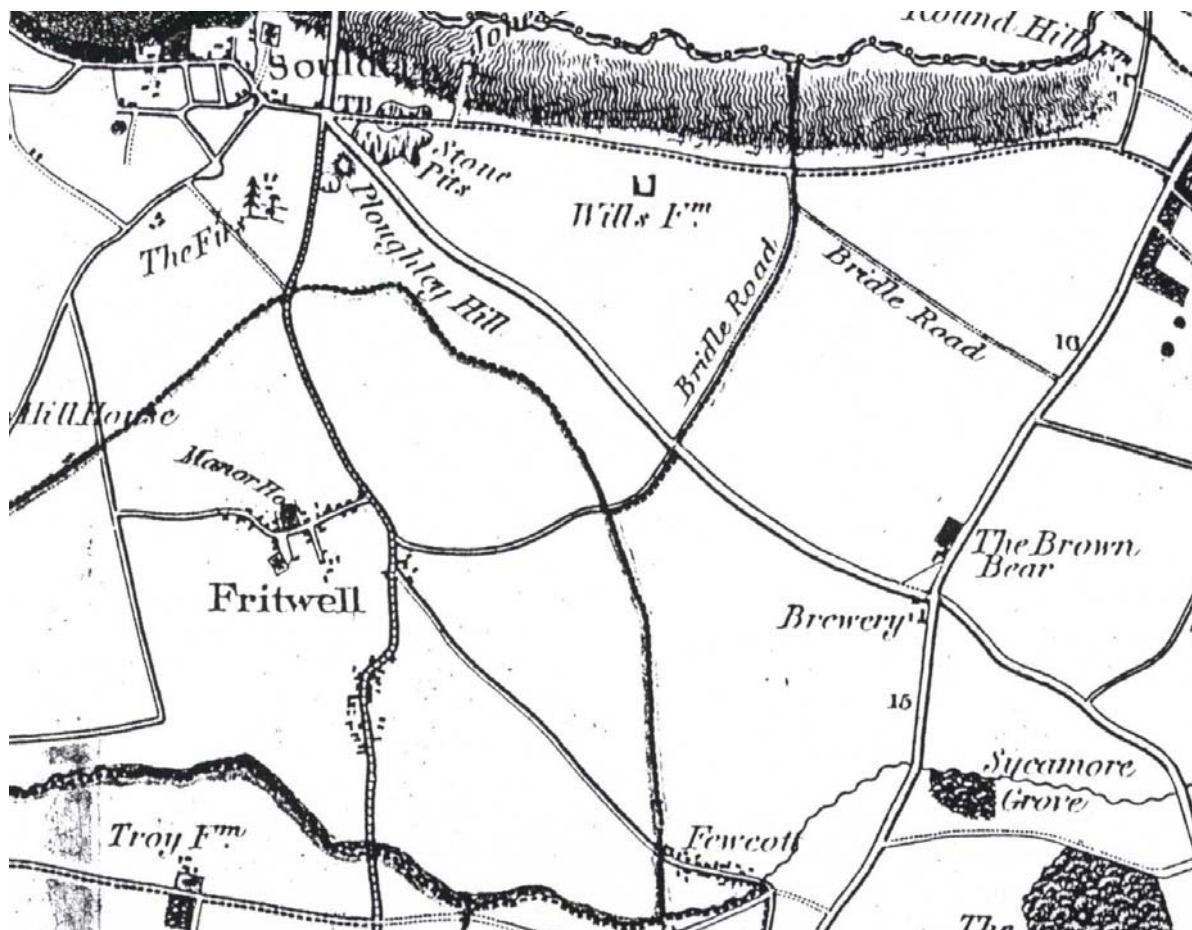
4.2.6

The earliest indication of the field system dates from about 1700. There were then seven fields. From the inclosure map of 1808 it is possible to work out the approximate position of the fields. In the west of the parish there were three fields: Meadow Field, in the western corner; next to it Wheatland Field, running from the northern to the southern boundary; and east of that, bounded on the north by the Souldern Hedge road and on the east by the road from Souldern to Fritwell, lay Darlow Field. The eastern part of the parish was divided into four fields, whose positions are not so easy to define, since furlong rather than field names are commonly used. To the east of Raghose Lane, was South Field, while to the north of that, along the eastern boundary was Lindon Field. Horwell Field was to the north of the parish towards Ockley Brook and finally Souldern Field lay south of the Bear Inn. South of the village, on the west of Raghose Lane, was the cow common, sometimes called Fritwell Moor, and in the north-east corner were the Leys.

4.2.7

Except for cow common, almost all the land was arable in the 18th century. Fritwell was noticeably lacking in meadow-land but had a detached area of 135 acres on the east bank of the Cherwell— mentioned in the Domesday Book and in the 14th century. Before inclosure each land holder was entitled to a portion of this meadow land known as Fritwell Meadow, decided by lot. Fritwell was notable in the 18th century for its large number of freeholders. While the smaller manor consisted of about 600 acres, and was thus virtually intact, the lands of the larger manor had been sold with only 236 acres remaining. In 1754 there were twenty nine freeholders in Fritwell, the largest number in the Ploughley hundred except for Bicester. Because Fritwell yeoman families owned their own land they show an unusual continuity, with some families such as the Hopcrofts recorded in the village for seven centuries.

Figure 8: Map of Fritwell 1824



4.2.8

The Wheatsheaf, Kings Head and the George and Dragon are mentioned by name in 1784, were probably the three inns licensed in 1735. The Kings Head remains in its 17th century building while the current George and Dragon Inn is a modern building.

4.2.9

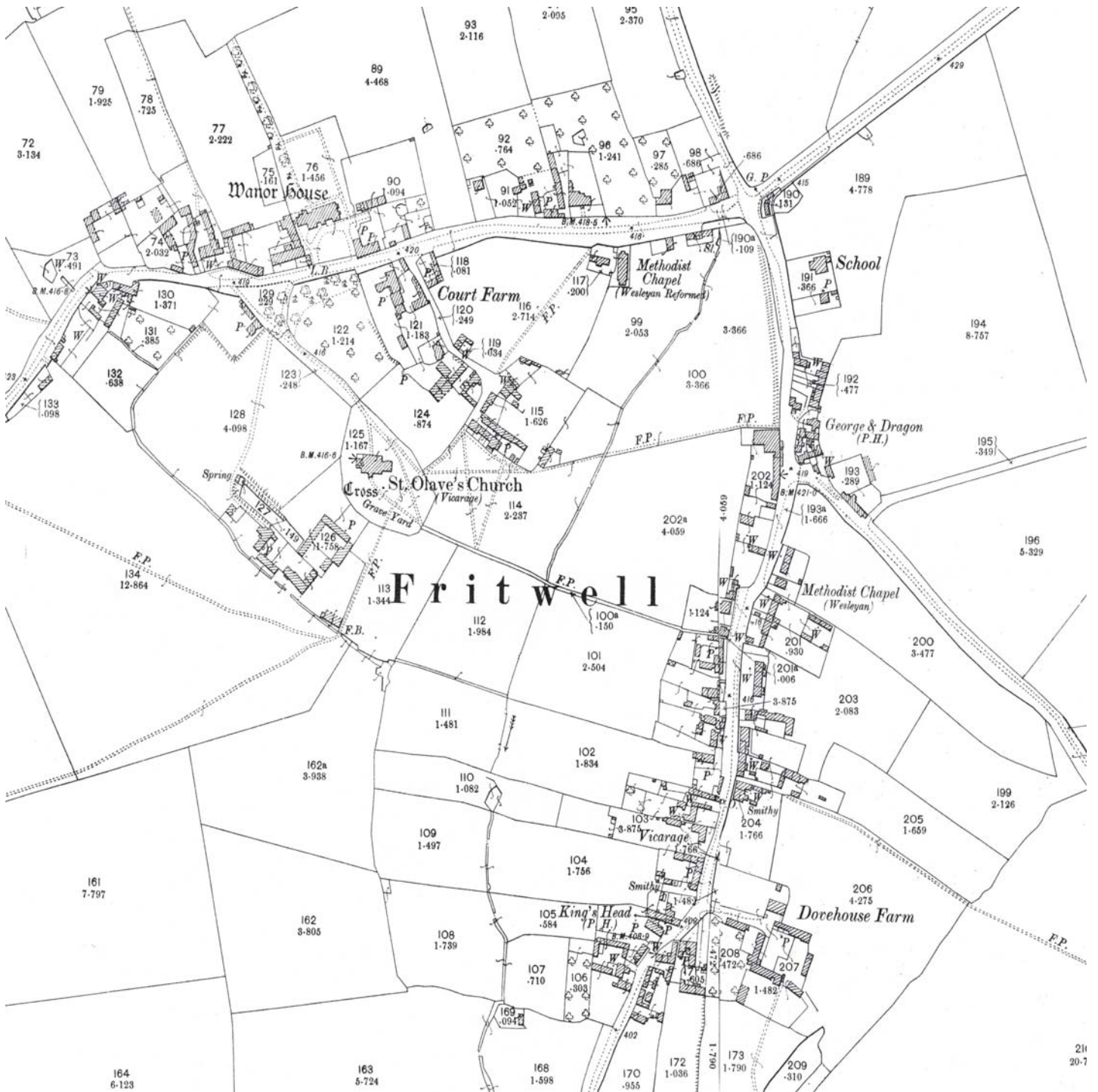
Apart from the usual village craftsmen Fritwell had a succession of clockmakers. Quarrying and brick-making were also local occupations, the location of the stone pits near Ploughley Hill can be seen on the 1824 map (see figure 7). The size of the village encouraged an increase in craftsmen and tradesmen. In the 1850s there were three public houses and a number of shops. Craftsmen included a straw-bonnet maker, a harness-maker, a cordwainer, a maltser and a brazier. Lace-making was a considerable home industry and several lace makers were recorded in the 1851 census.

4.2.10

A school, based in the vicarage barn, opened in 1795. By 1808 there were two schools attended by 30 village children, both kept by religious dissenters. However by 1818 both had closed down. It was not until 1871 that another school was opened and is recorded as having 67 pupils. By 1872 a school and mistress's house had been built and in 1930, when a new classroom was built children from neighbouring villages were admitted. Although the old school hall is no longer in use Fritwell primary school is still active and a new award winning school building was opened in September 2005.



Figure 9: Map of Fritwell 1900



5. Architectural History

5.1

St. Olave Church (see figure 10—no.1) dates from 12th Century but was restored and partly rebuilt in 1864. The church was built between the two manorial settlement. It is mainly constructed of Limestone rubble with limestone-ashlar and some marlstone-ashlar. Inside Romanesque decorative edging can be seen, however some parts have fallen off and been replaced with ordinary plain edging. The Church courtyard is medieval but was restored in 1913. The Romanesque chancel arch is now placed on the north wall of the chancel, the nave, arcades and the north and south doorways are the oldest parts of the church.



North door

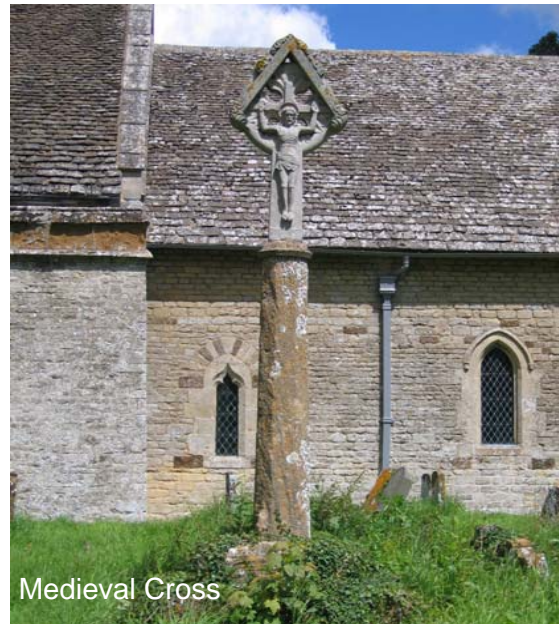
The north door displays cable moulding on the dripstone terminating in two grotesques of animal heads (now almost eroded away) and the south door is surmounted by a tympanum with a carving representing two monsters on both sides of the tree. The chancel was rebuilt early in the 13th century when the south aisle and tower were added.



South Door



St Olave's Church



Medieval Cross

5.2

Close to the church is a Medieval cross (2) restored in 1913. Made of limestone and marlstone with a tapering octagonal shaft it measures approximately 1.5 metres. The square base is chamfered and sits on a 2 step marlstone plinth. The head is restored and carved with the crucifixion. The purpose of the cross is unknown; although commonly referred to as preaching places for priests and monks, this is unsubstantiated. In many Oxfordshire villages medieval crosses such as this once stood at crossroads and were removed to churchyards when threatened with demolition at the reformation.

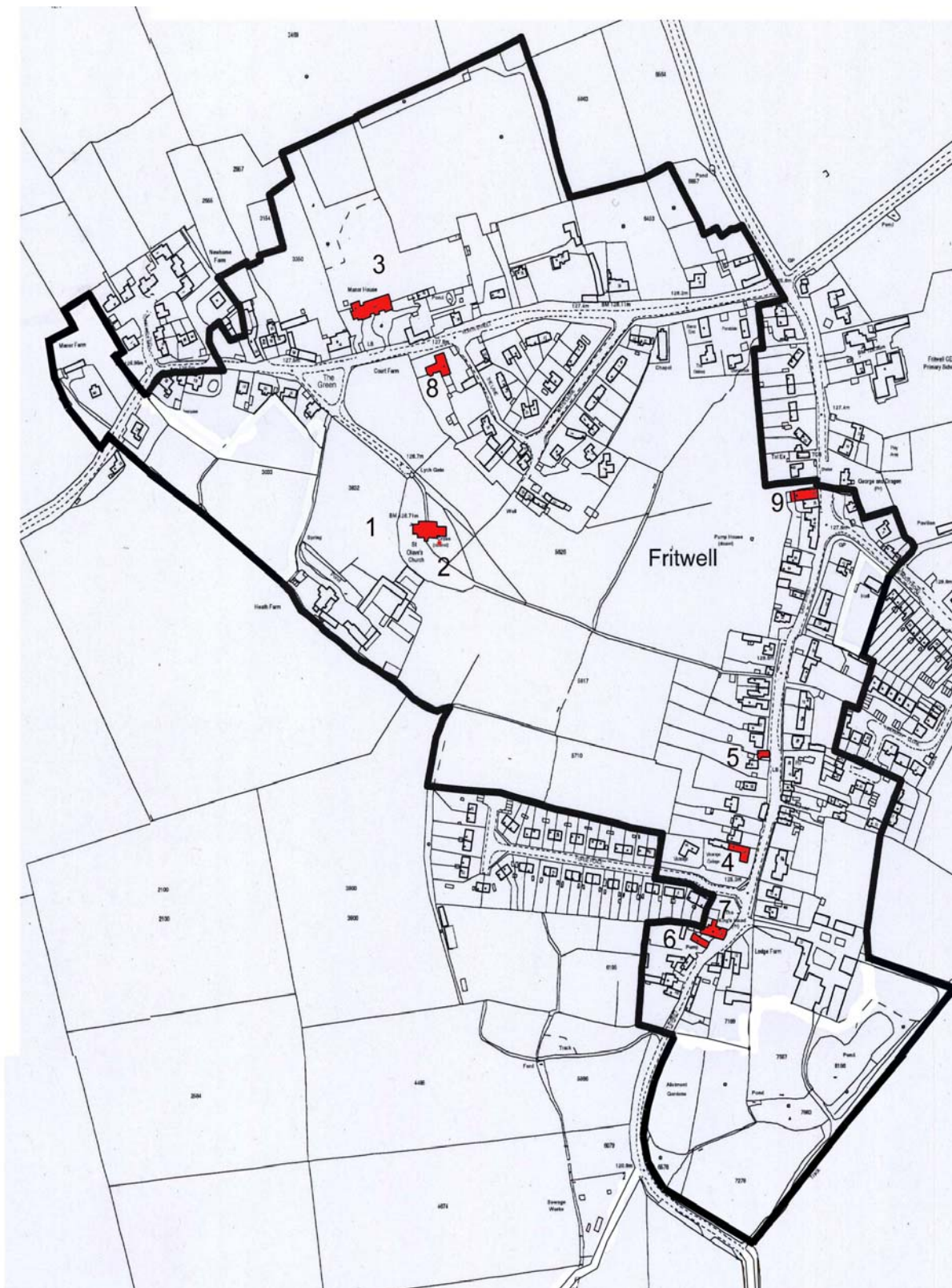


Fritwell Manor House

5.3

Fritwell manor house (3) is E-shaped, with three projecting gabled bays and mullioned windows. There are no certain dates for the manor however the core is thought to be late 16th century. In 1893 it was restored by Thomas Garner, further alterations were made in 1921 when a west wing was added. The back of the house dates from 1683 and inside there is a 16th century staircase.

Figure 10: Location of buildings of architectural importance



Approximate Scale

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5.4

The village is remarkable for the large numbers of well-preserved 17th century houses. They are mostly two storey houses, built in the local limestone rubble, and many have stone slate roofs. The Vicarage(4), enlarged in 1933, is a good example: it is built on an L-shaped plan, and on the first floor retains its original windows with wooden mullions. It appears to have been built in two phases, the earlier 16th century part being the southern wing. Its ancient tithe barn still stands.



The Limes



View down East Street

5.8

The three outlying farms, Inland, The Tower, and Inkerman, probably date from after the inclosure; Inkerman was built in about 1863.

5.5

'The Hollies'(5), with the date 1636 on its high-pitched gable, is another example of 17th century Vernacular. While further to the south 'The Limes'(6) displays attic dormers, a stone-slate roof, brick chimney shafts, and a spiral newel staircase in the square stair projection on the north-west of the building.

5.9

There was much rebuilding in the 18th century. Today East Street has many modern cottages and brick accretions mixed in with the small stone 18th century houses. In striking contrast are the old three storey shop (9), built in 1885 and the late 19th century block of semi-detached houses, also three stories high, and built of incongruous red brick with stone facings to the windows.



The Hollies

5.6

A number of 17th century cottages also survive, some with thatched and some with stone-slate or Welsh slate roofs. One appears to be dated 1637 with the initials I.W. Another notable 17th century building is the Kings Head pub(7), which although heavily restored retains some original features.



The old Dew's shop

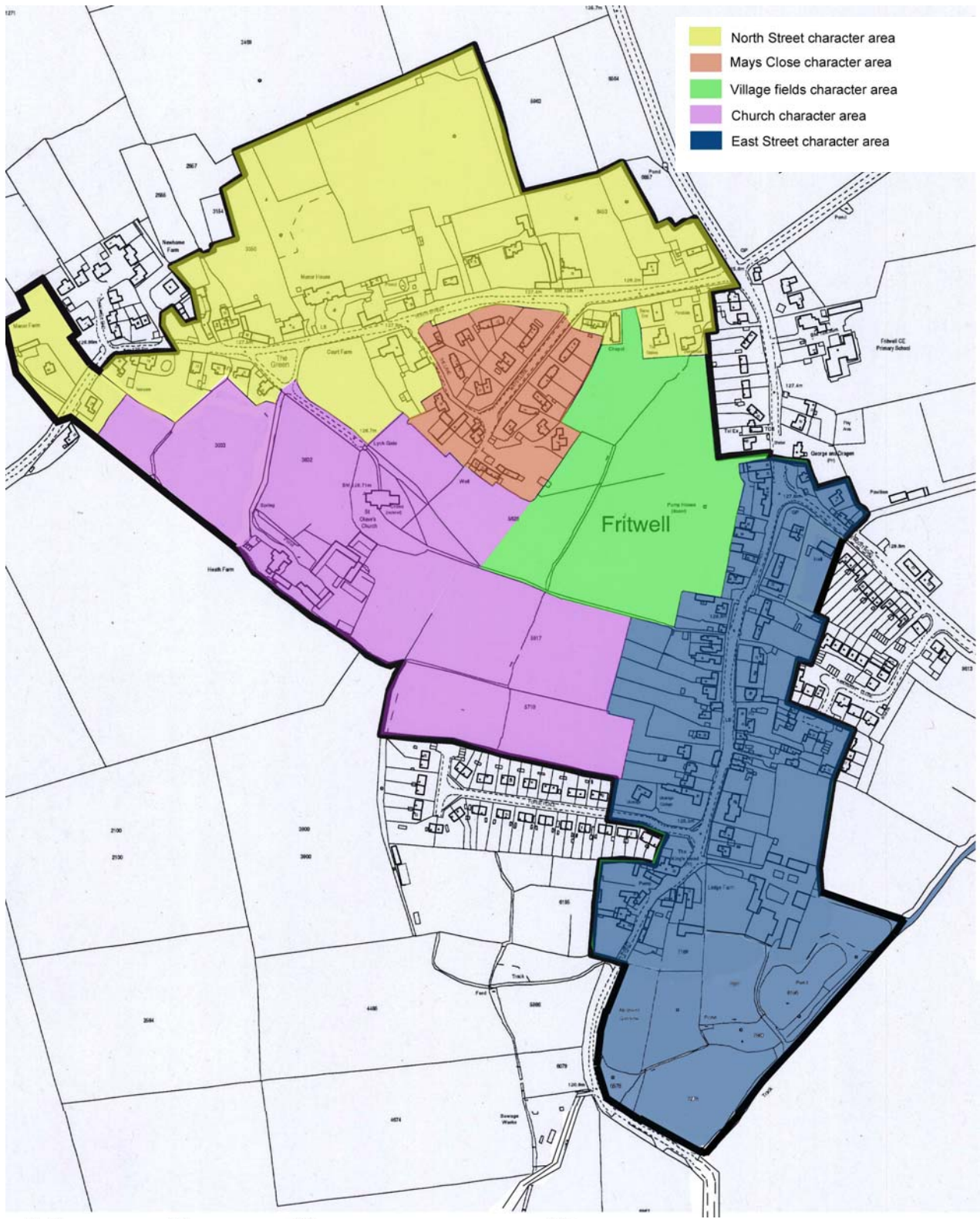
5.7

In the west end of the village there are two 17th century farm-houses: Court Farm(8) built on an L-shaped plan, and a neighbouring farm-house which has preserved its original windows with their stone mullions.

5.10

Since the First World War there has been much new building, particularly at the junction of East and North Street. Many of the older farm buildings have been converted and in the case of Court Farm, the farmyard developed (Mays Close). So far this century 15 new houses and a new school building have been built at the north end of the village.

Figure 11: Character area map



Approximate Scale 0 10 50 100 200m



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6. North Street Character Area

6.1 Land Use

The north character area is predominantly historic farms which have been subsumed into the village street. The area is now residential with the exception of the Methodist Chapel.

6.2 Street pattern

The street pattern in this character area is landscaped dominated with a sense of enclosure created by low walls rather than a built up frontage. The buildings are irregularly spaced and often set within large gardens. Many of the structures visible from North Street are outbuildings which although converted still create a rural feel. Some of the outbuildings such as those to the north west of North Street appear still to be in use as workshops.

6.3 Building age, type and style

The majority of older buildings along North Street are detached houses, while the more modern are predominantly semi detached. There are several large 17th century buildings, notably the Manor House and Court Farmhouse. There are also a number of 17th and 18th century local vernacular buildings of a high quality.



6.4 Scale and massing

Almost all the properties within this character area are 1-2 storey with some 2 1/2 storey houses. However the grander properties such as the manor house project a feeling of grander scale, standing back from the street within their own grounds. This allows the visitor to approach and appreciate the building from a greater distance. In most areas along North Street it is the boundary treatments that create the street scene.

6.5 Construction and Materials

The buildings in this area are predominantly constructed of the coursed limestone rubble typical of the locality. Some of the more important historic buildings, for example the manor house also include limestone ashlar and marble ashlar. The more modern houses such as those to the west of the Methodist Chapel are mainly course stone with slate roofs. Chimney stacks are now predominantly of brick replacing limestone in early buildings. While there are thatched buildings within the area, for example the outbuilding of Lane Cottage, most properties are roofed with Welsh Slate or Stonesfield Slate. The outbuilding at the front of Little Manor is unusual in displaying terracotta pan tiles. Some of the older buildings, such as the manor house retain stone mullioned windows while the majority have painted softwood casements. There are also a number of impressive sash windows, for example those on 20 North Street. The 20th century houses and a few of the older properties have uPVC casements.



6.6 Means of enclosure

Along North Street the means of enclosure is a key element in creating the areas distinctive character. The limestone boundary walls vary in height from around 1m to about 2.5m. These walls, often topped by hedges or mature shrubs, create a strong built line and sense of enclosure. Metal railings are also used as a boundary treatment in the area, for example at 20 North Street. To the west post and rail fencing is used to enclose paddocks on the south side of the road.



6.7 Trees, hedges, verges, open spaces

Trees are very important to the character of this area. North Street has a larger number of dominant and important trees than the Eastern part of the village. On the North side of the main street the large gardens and lack of a strong building line mean that the overall impression is fairly rural with boundary walls set back on wide grass verges. In places trees and shrubs overhang the boundary walls and many houses have attractive foliage on their façades. The small green and next to it Court Farm's paddock are important areas of open space that connect more directly with the street.



6.8 Features of Special interest

The large number of well preserved 17th century house are of architectural interest if not all of national importance and the Manor House is a dominant and architecturally interesting building. At the east end of North Street outside Pondside House and adjacent to the carriageway is a pool that appears to be the origin of the watercourse that crosses the village fields. The dry stone walls and large grass verges that define this area are also features of special interest, retaining as they do the rural character of North Street.

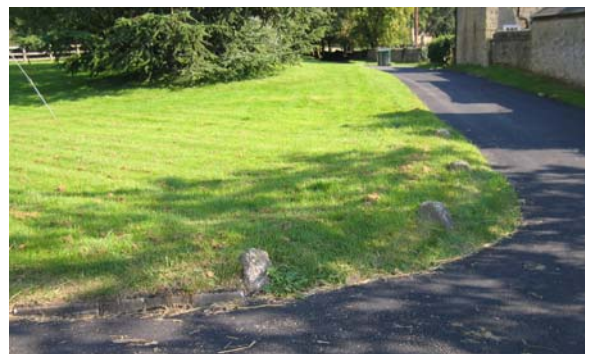


6.9 Carriageway, footways, footpaths

The carriageways are all tarmacadam within this area with the exception of some property driveways which are gravelled. The footways are also tarmacadam with no historic paving remaining. The kerbs where they occur are concrete and occasionally granite setts. Along most of North Street however kerbs are absent on at least one side with the un-edged grass verges contributing to the rural character.

6.10 Threats

- There are a number of open areas along North Street, for example to the east of the Methodist Church and to the west of Court Farm which contribute to the character of the area. Any infilling or back land development in such sites could seriously damage rural feel of this area of the village.
- There are a number of historic properties where concrete tiles and uPVC windows have been introduced. Although these buildings are not listed they are an important part of the village's history and the incremental effect of small changes can seriously damage the character of this area.



- The un-edged grass verges are an important part of retaining the village's rural character, the erosion of these verges by traffic and parking, for example adjacent to Corner Cottage, should be discouraged.

- The boundary walls within this area are key to the character and should be well maintained and preserved as dry stone. Pointing in many cases is inappropriate.
- There are areas where there are opportunities to enhance the street scene, for example at the junction of May's Close and North Street where the bench and surroundings could be revitalised. Another example is the pond at the far east end of North Street which is an important feature but is in need of a solution to reduce the litter problem.



6.11 Key Views

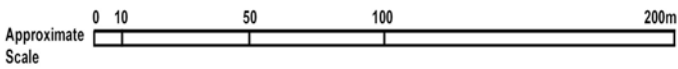
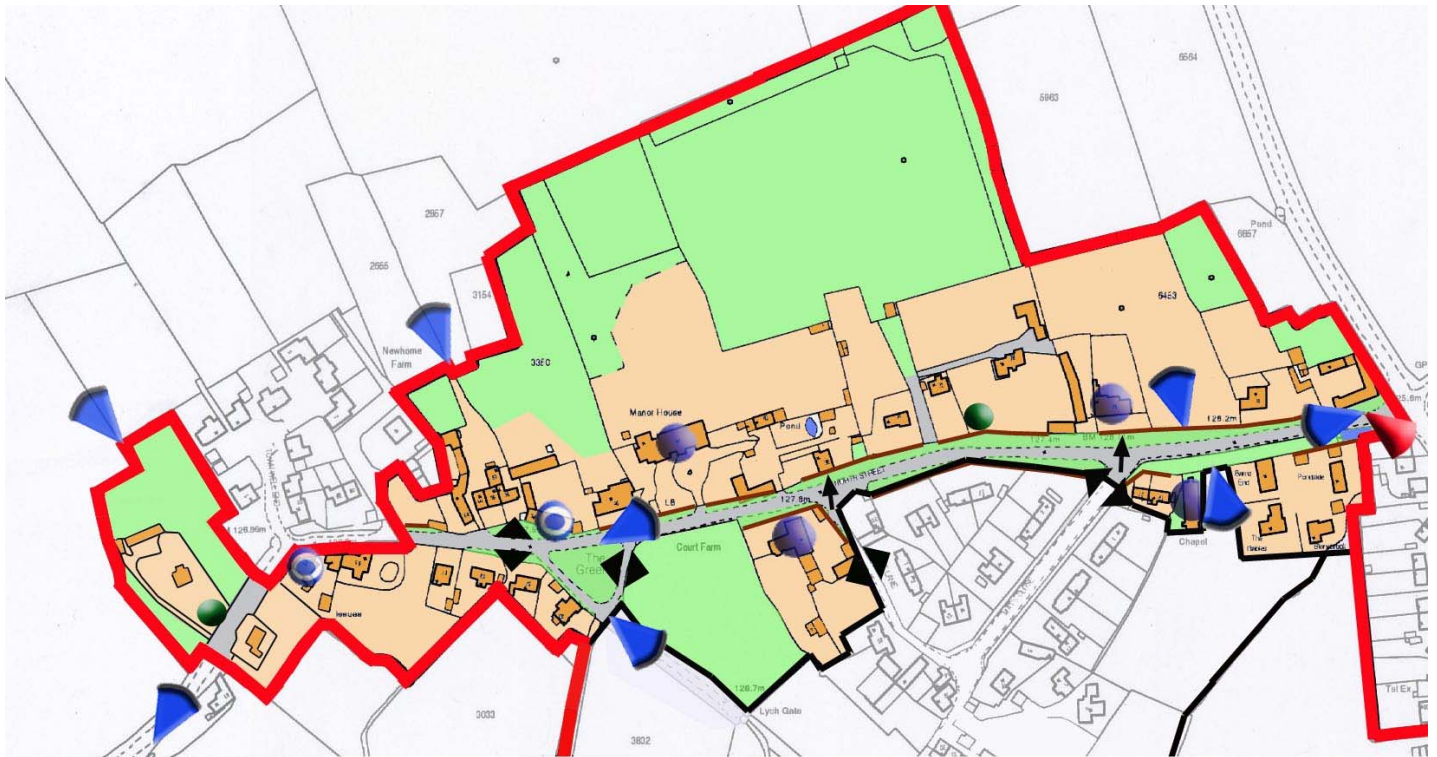
The vegetation along the property boundaries creates occasional picturesque views framed by trees of the large houses behind. The series of views as you leave the village to the west are aesthetically pleasing, as is the view from the village green towards the church down the avenue of trees. In places along North Street open fields are visible across walls and through field gates which add to the rural feel of the area.



- Over head wires are visually intrusive in the streetscape and by liaising with service providers it might be possible to re route them underground.



Figure 12: North Street character area visual analysis



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- | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------|--|
| Conservation Area boundary | | Positive landmark | |
| Character area boundary | | Pivot point | |
| Key walls | | Pinch point | |
| Positive view | | Visual stop | |
| Negative view | | Degraded edge | |
| Key trees | | | |

7. Mays Close Character Area

7.1 Land Use

This area is residential and predominantly post-war council houses. In the past the area was dominated by Court Farm and its outbuildings some of which still remain.

7.2 Street pattern

Mays Close has a strong repetitive building pattern as a result of having been planned as a group. To the south west of the area on The Lane the houses are more disparate, having been part of the original Court Farm buildings.

7.3 Building age, type and style

The old Court Farm buildings date from around the same period as the main house, probably 17th century, but have many later alterations. They are of a local vernacular style, while the most modern houses lying next to them to the east were built within the last 40 years. The majority of houses within this area however are typical 20th century double fronted Council houses.

7.4 Scale and massing

The post war houses are all semi-detached and two storey. At the south end of The Lane is a terrace of houses, while the rest of the buildings within this area are detached. The scale of no. 14,12 and 10 appears larger than no. 1 and 3 because of their proximity to the road and the feeling of enclosure this creates.



7.5 Construction and Materials

Limestone rubble, buff brick, imitation stone cladding, pebble dash and render are all materials seen in this area. Limestone on the older properties and pebble dash and render on the majority of 20th century dwellings. The post-war houses are double fronted with hipped roofs, some also have front dormers and later additions.



7.6 Means of enclosure

On May's Close the boundary treatments vary significantly from house to house with low walls of brick or stone and different heights and styles of fencing. On the boundary between the character area and open fields to the south and east low stone walls are the main form of enclosure. At the south end of The Lane access to the footpath is via a small wooden stile and metal field gate.



7.7 Trees, hedges, verges, open spaces

There are a number of mature gardens in this area that contribute to the street scene, in particular there is a small vegetable garden on the corner of Mays Close and The Lane which gives what could be an urban area a more rural feel. There are also important areas of grass verge to the south, and views across the fields that break up the strong building line. Many of the houses have vegetation on the front elevation which creates an aesthetically pleasing effect and reduces the homogeneity of the Close.



7.8 Features of Special interest

The remaining outbuildings of Court Farm within this area allow some interpretation of the historic farmstead layout. The well to the south west of the character area within the village fields may have been associated with the farm and its outbuildings.

7.9 Carriageway, footways, footpaths

The carriageways are all tarmacadam with gravel driveways to some properties. The footways are also tarmacadam with predominantly stone setts, although some concrete kerbs are used. A footpath still runs along Mays Close where there was once a grass track across the open fields.

7.10 Threats

- The large number of different boundary frontages on May's Close together with façade additions, such as satellite dishes, can make the road appear cluttered.
- Un-edged grass verges are important in retaining the rural character to the south of The Lane and their erosion by passing cars would threaten the area.



- On Mays Close the retention of gardens and the grass setbacks on the footways help give the area its special character. Laying tarmacadam over front gardens to enable parking would be highly detrimental.



7.11 Key Views

The building scale and narrow winding carriageway of The Lane create a series of views unusual in this character area. It is possible to see the Church from Mays Close creating a strong visual link with the rest of the village. The are views across the open fields from the south of the character area towards East Street, the old Dew's shop being particularly dominant on the skyline.



Figure 13: Mays Close character area visual analysis



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- | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| Conservation Area boundary | — | Positive landmark | ● |
| Character area boundary | — | Pivot point | ● |
| Key walls | — | Pinch point | ↔ |
| Positive view | ▲ | Visual stop | ← |
| Negative view | ▼ | Degraded edge | ⋈ |
| Key trees | ● | | |

8. Village fields Character Area

8.1 Land Use

This area contains no buildings or enclosures but is a large open area of rough ground lying between and connecting the two sides of the village.

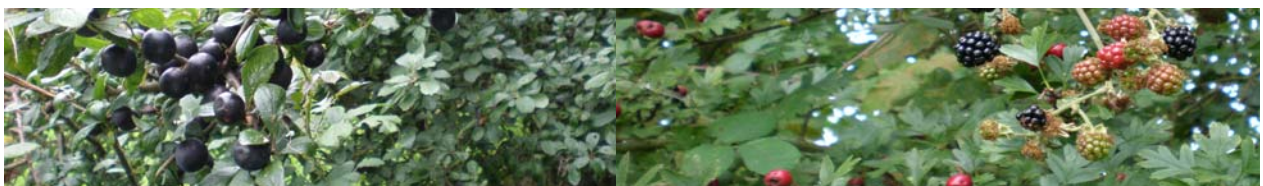
8.2 Means of enclosure

The area is divided by a ditch, which is dry in summer (but can flood in winter) and hedgerows with old stone walls forming the boundary to the west. There is a stone stile and metal gate in the churchyard boundary wall and another small wooden stile providing access to The Lane. To the west is a small field mown short and divided from the rest of the area by a number of tall conifers, while the southern boundary is marked by a hedgerow composed of elm, ash and elder which creates an enclosed path running from East Street towards the church.



8.3 Trees, hedges, verges, open spaces

Scattered scrub is present along the dry ditch, old hedgerow lines and the southern margin of the fields, primarily comprising hawthorn, elder and blackthorn. Sloes, Blackberries and crab apples are also found in the southern hedgerow. Most of the site is covered in grassland which appears not been grazed or mown for at least three years, with the exception of a number of mown paths. Amongst other common species found here are meadow-barley, white clover, red fescue and cow parsley.

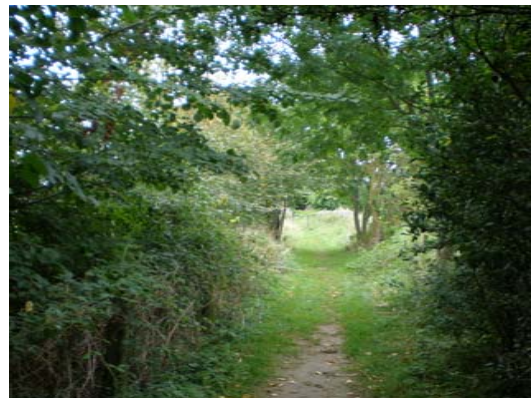


8.4 Carriageway, footways, footpaths

The fields are crossed by many paths some official footpaths but also informal routes. These are well used and unsurfaced.

8.5 Features of Special interest

From the brief archaeological investigation in 1997 it is likely that the paths crossing this area are ancient, possibly even pre-dating the manorial estates. These paths together with the well, water course and pump house remains show this to be area important to the village's social history.



8.6 Threats

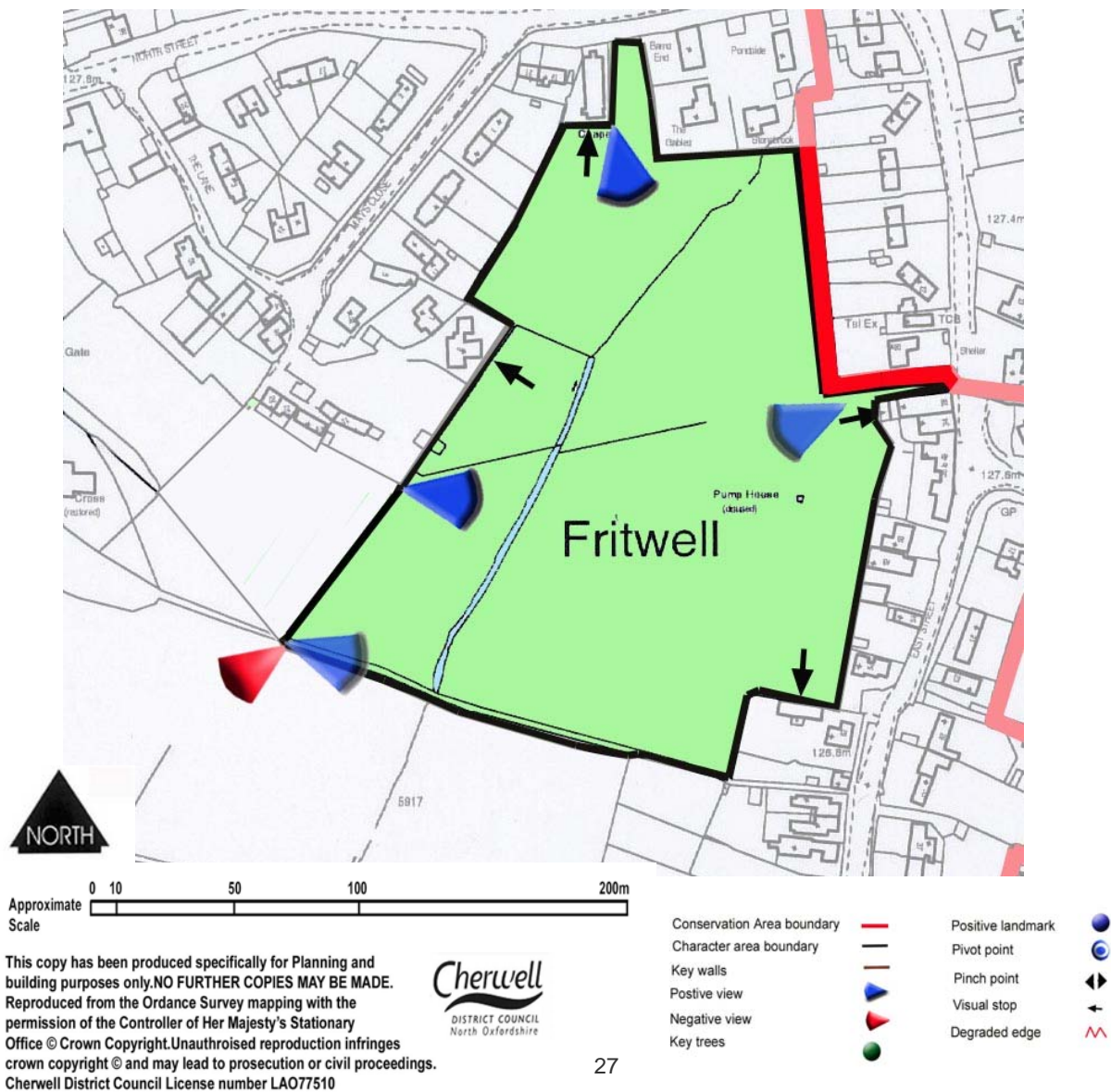
- The Footpaths across the fields are aesthetically pleasing and retain a rural character, unsympathetic hard surfacing of the paths or addition of urban features would threaten the character of the area. The use of crushed limestone on Church Lane is an example of a sympathetic approach to surfacing, improving winter accessibility on this popular route.
- The hedgerows within this area provide important shelter for wildlife and any removal would be a threat to the species variety.
- The open nature of this area is important in retaining the rural feel of Fritwell. Any Infill development is likely to threaten the distinctive character of the village fields.



8.7 Key Views

The western end of the double hedgerow surrounding the footpath to East Street is included in the area and provides a picturesque link to the eastern character area. The views across the grassland to key buildings in the eastern character area are impressive and in many places aesthetically pleasing. The open nature of this character area also allows East Street and the east of North Street views to the church.

Figure 14: Village fields visual analysis



9. Church Character Area

9.1 Land Use

This area includes the church and Heath Farm. Previously a working farmstead Heath Farm's outbuildings are now being converted and referred to as Goose Farm. There are also a number of fields owned by the farm which extend to the south east.

9.2 Building age, type and style

St Olave's Church dates from the 12th but was heavily restored in the 19th century. Norman elements remain, such as the north and south doorways, but the majority of the church in particular the west tower is an example of 19th century restoration. The rest of the buildings within this character area are associated with Heath Farm. The main farmhouse and outbuildings are 17th century with later additions and in a local vernacular style. The historic farmstead layout remains fairly intact despite the conversion.



9.3 Scale and massing

Heath Farmhouse is a two storey building, while the outbuildings are all one and one 1/2 storey. The farmhouse dominates the other buildings in scale, an impression created in part by the topography. The church also sits on high ground and as a result is visible from many areas within the village.



9.4 Construction and Materials

The church is predominantly limestone rubble with limestone-ashlar and some marlstone-ashlar. The windows are stone mullioned and the building is roofed in Stonesfield Slate. Heath Farmhouse and its outbuildings are constructed predominantly with limestone rubble with some brick elements. There are some areas of corrugated metal roofing and concrete tiles but the farmhouse and new conversions use Welsh Slate.



9.5 Means of enclosure

The churchyard is enclosed by stone walls with stone stiles and metal gates built in. One of these stone stiles allows access towards Heath Farm. The Farm is enclosed in areas by low stone walls, for example around the farmhouse, but mostly post and rail and barbed wire fencing is used. The fields to the south east have hedges enclosing smaller grazing areas, in places these are reinforced with fencing.





9.6 Trees, hedges, verges, open spaces

There are a number of mature broadleaved trees in this area, particularly around the churchyard and to the north east of Heath Farmhouse. There are also yew trees within the churchyard and on the avenue running towards the church from the west there are large Beech and Lime trees. The hedgerows also play an important role in this character area dividing the fields and running alongside the footpath to the north. The open fields appear to be rich grazing land in comparison to those within the village fields character area. With so much unaltered open land this area retains a very rural feel.

9.7 Features of Special interest

The fields to the south east may possibly contain some archaeological evidence of the ancient settlements in the area lying so close to Aves Ditch and having escaped the deep ploughing of modern agriculture. Heath Farm is almost unique in the village for retaining its farmyard lay out without large numbers of modern additions or infill housing.



9.8 Carriageway, footways, footpaths

There are no carriageways or footways within this area but the tracks to the church and farm are gravelled. Within the churchyard there is a single tarmac path with most being unsurfaced. The footpath towards East Street is also unsurfaced.

9.9 Threats

- Heath Farm and its outbuildings are an important part of Fritwell's historic past and their conversion and any later work should be conducted sympathetically.
- Stone walls, particularly those enclosing the churchyard, help to give this area its special character and should be preserved. This is also true of the stone stiles to the east and south west of the church.



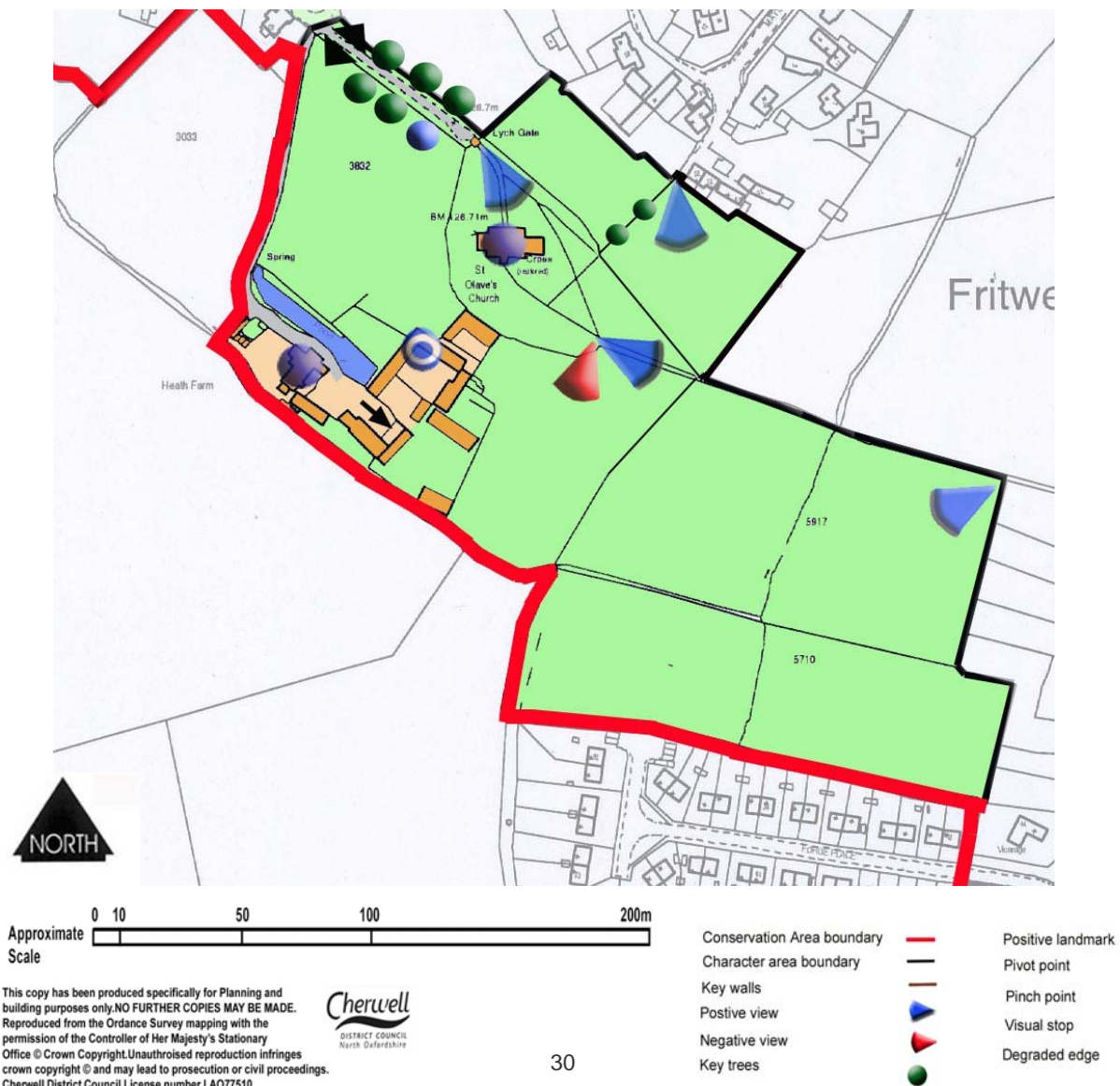
- The fields within this character area contribute to the open feel of the village centre and with possible archaeological interest any development on them would be detrimental to Fritwell.

9.10 Key Views

Views down the tree lined avenue to the church and along the hedgerow path towards East Street are aesthetically pleasing. The church is visible from most points within this area and is a positive landmark for the whole village.



Figure 15: Church character area visual analysis



10. East Character Area

10.1 Land Use

This character area includes the village shop and the Kings Head public house, in the past a strong commercial area it is now predominantly residential. The area is less homogenous than North Street with a variety of houses, not all of which are within the Conservation Area. To the south Lodge Farm still functions.

10.2 Street pattern

Lying on or next to the route of Aves Ditch the area is linear with a strong urban, in places suburban feel. This is partly a result of the strong building line and street width, the reduction of which to the south creates a more rural feel.

10.3 Building age, type and style

There is a greater variety in the age and style of buildings in this area. Most houses are semi-detached or in small terraces while the larger properties are detached. The older buildings, mainly 17th century, are mostly found at the south end of the village, although there are a few such as no. 21 East Street, in the north. At the northern end of the area are the imposing 19th century shop, now out of use, and terraced houses. The majority of the properties are 18th or 19th century in a vernacular style.

10.4 Scale and massing

East Street has a strong building line but the scale varies considerably, with the three storey houses at the Fewcott Road junction lying close to small one and a half storey cottages in the centre. The scale variations are striking in comparison to the northern character area due to the proximity of the properties and their importance in the streetscape.



10.5 Construction and Materials

The building material is predominantly limestone rubble, but brick is also common, both older red and more modern buff bricks are present. The older properties are mainly roofed in Welsh and Stonesfield Slate but the majority of houses within the area are plain concrete tiled. A number of buildings still retain timber sash windows but Upvc is also prevalent.



10.6 Means of enclosure

Many buildings front straight onto the main street but where houses are set back, low stone walls are often the means of enclosure. Metal railings are also used, for example outside the village shop. To the north a number of houses have brick walls with ornamental concrete decoration and ornamental metalwork that add to the suburban feel of the eastern character area. In some places hedges are used as a means of enclosure but mostly at the southern end of East Street.





10.7 Trees, hedges, verges, open spaces

Within the character area trees are less visible than on North Street, however they are still important to the character of the area. The amount of vegetation visible in the streetscape increases at the southern end of Fritwell where the narrower road gives a rural feel to the village exit. Along East Street where houses are set back there are intermittent large shrubs and hedges. Throughout the eastern character area there are glimpses through the building line to the open fields. One of the main paths linking the east side of the village to the north runs between two mature hedge-rows containing crab apples and sloes. There are also small areas of un edged grass verge along East Street notably to the south end of the village.



10.8 Features of Special interest

Although Ormond Manor no longer remains this was probably the older settlement of the two that make up Fritwell and this gives the area a historical interest. It is likely that some stone used in walls and 17th century buildings along East Street



may have come from the old manor building. Once the manorial estate disintegrated this area became an open settlement, in comparison to the closed, closely controlled north western village. As a result there is a variety in house age and style. This also reflects the popularity with craftsmen and travellers of East Street in the 17th,18th and 19th centuries. It is possible that a settlement existed in this area much earlier than anything visible today. The ditch together with the large number of springs in this area would have made Fritwell a likely position for an ancient community.

10.9 Carriageway, footways, footpaths

The carriageways and footways within this character area are all tarmacadam with stone sett and in some places concrete kerbs. Some driveways and house set-backs use gravel as a surface treatment. The footpaths crossing the fields towards North Street are unsurfaced and informally well kept.

10.10 Threats

- The Kings Head, George and Dragon (on the edge of the conservation area to the north) and village butchers shop are popular and obviously advertise to catch passing trade, but proliferation of signage can damage the appearance of the area and should be limited and sympathetic.
- Cars are often parked on pavements which as well as obstructing pedestrians can detract from the visual impact of the street.
- The number of old but unlisted properties with uPVC glazing is damaging the street scene, timber casements are strongly encouraged and are an economically viable alternative.
- The lack of road markings and new road signage are essential in retaining the special character of the area.



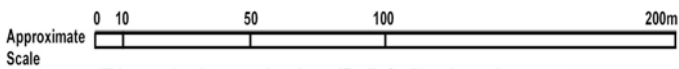
- As in the northern character area over head wires are visually intrusive in the streetscape and by liaising with service providers it might be possible to re route them underground.



10.11 Key Views

The width of the road in the middle of the character area together with the strong building line creates impressive views through the village. To the south the road narrows creating a series of rural views into and out of the village with visual stops created in both directions by strong right angled building lines. Just outside the village to the south there are aesthetically pleasing views to the west across grazing fields. Views through the housing line towards the church, fields and houses on North Street link the village together and create a more open feel in comparison to the views towards the imposing three storey scale of the rag house.

Figure 16: East Area visual analysis



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- Conservation Area boundary —
- Character area boundary —
- Key walls —
- Positive view ▲
- Negative view ▲
- Key trees ●
- Positive landmark ●
- Pivot point ⊙
- Pinch point ◄►
- Visual stop +
- Degraded edge ~

11
11.1 Details





11.2 Old Photographs

1900-1960



North Street looking west



East Street looking north



Methodist Church



View to the Raghouse



East Street looking south



East Street looking south



East Street looking north

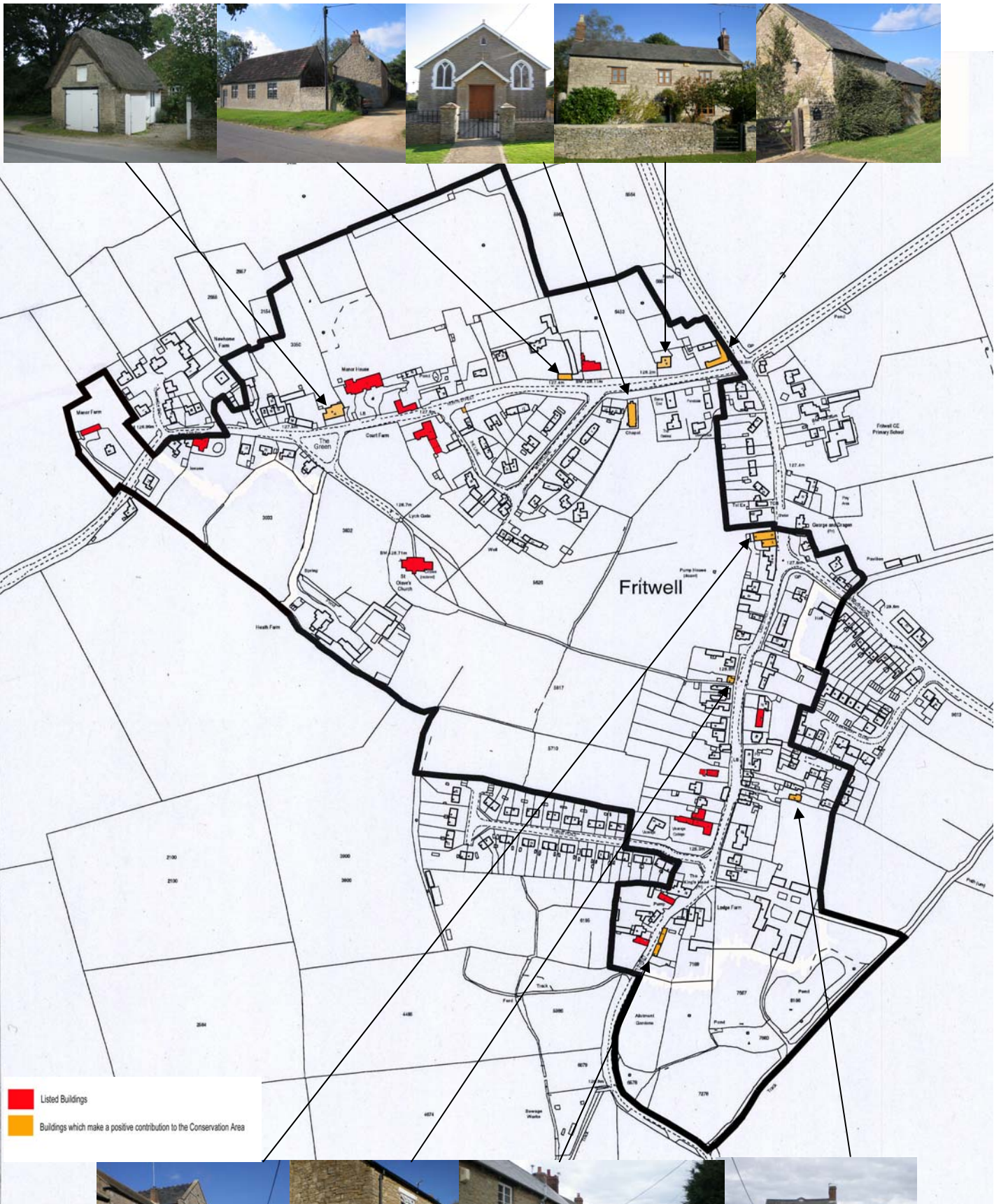


East Street looking north



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Figure 17: Unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area





12. Management Plan

12.1 Policy context

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 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. The most serious threat to the character and appearance of Fritwell is the erosion of its rural character and open space. The village is unique in the area for retaining a ground plan that shows strongly defined historic settlement. Unsympathetic infill housing and urban additions as well as the cumulative impact of numerous alterations to the traditional but unlisted buildings within the area have started to erode the very rural nature of the village. The central fields, although appearing uncared for are covered with well-used paths and are key to views within the village. Fritwell has little remaining scope for infill housing and it is important that the setting of the Conservation Area as well as the setting of listed buildings are protected.

In terms of the buildings within Fritwell some alterations which may seem quite small in themselves, for example the replacement of traditional window casements, usually with uPVC double-glazing and additions such as satellite dishes on the front elevations of properties can threaten the character of the village. Such alterations to unlisted residential properties are for the most part permitted development (with the exception of satellite dishes) and therefore do not require planning permission. Unauthorised alterations and additions are also a cause for concern and are often detrimental to the appearance of a property. Both unsympathetic permitted development and unauthorised development cumulatively result in the erosion of the historic character and rural appearance of the Conservation Area. The aim of management proposals is not to prevent changes but to ensure that any such changes are both 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.

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 should be encouraged. This is particularly the case for windows where sympathetic refenestration is important in preserving the appearance of the building.

2 Actively promote the use of traditional building and roofing materials and techniques in new building work, extensions and repair.

3 Encourage owners of historic properties wherever possible to replace inappropriate modern with the appropriate traditional materials. Materials such as uPVC and concrete tiles look out of place in a conservation area and their use is discouraged.



4 Expect the scale, massing, proportions and height of new buildings to reflect those of the existing built environment, of the immediate context or of the wider conservation area context. Layouts, boundary treatments and landscaping schemes will also be expected to make clear visual reference to those traditionally found within in the area.

5 Strive to ensure that the conversion of traditional buildings to alternative uses will be achieved with minimal intervention and without the destruction of original character. Features and equipment pertinent to the building's original function where they exist should be retained as part of any conversion. This is relevant in the case of farm buildings that might be converted in the future.

6 Inappropriate 20th century concrete tiles are widespread in Fritwell. On these houses when possible a return to traditional Stonesfield/Welsh slate or thatch should be encouraged.

Enhancement and management of the public realm

The Council Will:

1 Encourage a general level of good maintenance of properties.

2 Investigate whether appropriate planning permission or listed building consent has been obtained for an alteration. Unauthorised alterations to a listed building is a criminal offence and if necessary the council will enforce this.

3 Require the location of satellite dishes on rear elevations or within rear gardens to prevent visual pollution and damage to the character of the area.

4 Exercise a presumption against artificial cladding material, including render on the front elevations of older buildings.

5 Promote tradition 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 re-pointing of stone or brickwork. Re-pointing work should be discrete to the point of being inseparable from the original. 'Ribbon' pointing and similar is considered a totally inappropriate style of pointing for this district.



6 Promote the use of lime mortar in the construction and re-pointing of stone and brickwork. This is a traditional building material and its use is of benefit 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.

7 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 street scene.

8 Encourage on unlisted buildings the sympathetic location of solar panels on rear roof slopes or on outbuildings within rear gardens.

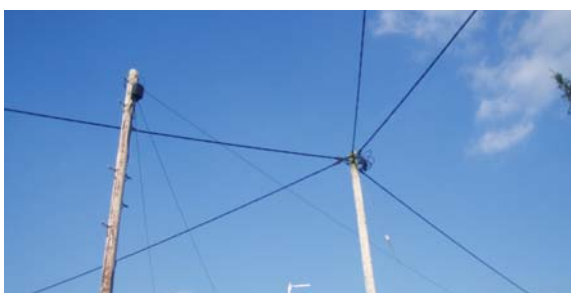
9 Actively promote the harmonisation of appearance within the individual terraces or pairs of properties.

10 Encourage the reinstating of traditional features of the villages such as stiles and pumps.

11 Discourage disfiguring alterations such as unsympathetic extensions and altering the dimensions of window openings.

12 Support occasional new buildings on infill plots that are sympathetic to the intrinsic character of the area in terms of scale, design and materials. There are existing areas of open land in and around the Conservation Area that should be protected from any future development that would adversely affect the character of the village. It is essential that the historic and rural nature of the area is not overwhelmed.

13 Create a dialogue with other authorities and agencies to rationalise any street furniture and ensure it is in keeping with the character of the area.



14 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 villages.

15 Promote a design solution that enables wheeled refuse bins to be discretely screened within gardens.

16 Encourage the sympathetic location of both amenity and private security lighting to limit light pollution. Lighting within the village can have an adverse effect on the rural character of the conservation area. The material and design of fittings and their position on the building should be carefully considered.

17 Promote the repair or replacement of lost or inappropriate boundary treatments with traditional walling or fences in a style appropriate to the location. Dry stone walls in particular should be retained and the traditional methods of construction encouraged



18 Promote the enclosure of rear access to plots where the boundary walls have been demolished.

19 Promote the use of a suitable style of boundary for the position within the village, for example the use of simple post and rail fencing for paddocks such as those on North Street.



20 Promote the retention of Historic footpaths within the village and work with bodies such as the Parish Council to prevent these being lost. The informality of these paths should be preserved and attempts to add hard surfaces or signage should be resisted. The footpaths within the Fritwell, in particular those which cross the central fields, are key to maintaining the village's rural character.

Management and protection of important green spaces

The Council Will:

1 Encourage the retention of front gardens and boundary hedges.

2 Promote the retention of significant open spaces and field systems in and around the village. The open fields within Fritwell are key to the character of the area because they create a rural and historic feel to the settlement.

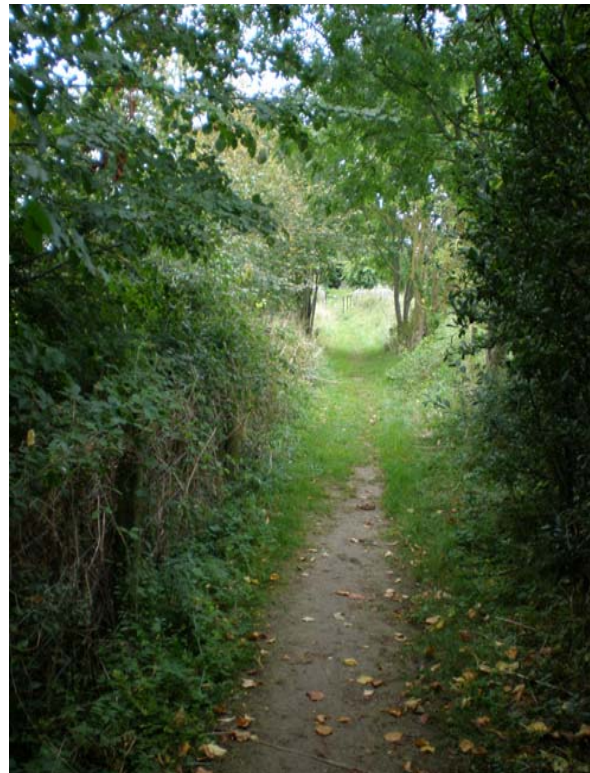
3 Promote positive management of vegetation. Trees and hedges make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, particularly on North Street, and at the south of East Street. Planting of exotic imports or inappropriate varieties, such as Leylandii, are to be strongly discouraged, these trees grow fast and can alter or block important views as well being uncharacteristic of the area. Trees over a certain size within the area boundary are protected from unauthorised felling by virtue of their location within a Conservation Area, this is a particularly important protection because only a few trees within Fritwell are currently subject to Tree Preservation Orders.



4 Preserve the character and appearance of open spaces within the Conservation Area. Urban features such as roadside kerbing should be avoided. Car parking on grass areas should be discouraged, in some areas stones have been successfully used for this purpose.

5 Promote the retention of grass verges within the village.

6 Promote the retention of hedgerows in the village fields as wildlife habitats and encourage the preservation and enhancement of the species variety.



7 Promote the preservation of small water courses and springs that occur within the open fields of Fritwell and the traditional features that accompany them.

8 Promote work to enhance the ecological value of the village fields.

9 Encourage community involvement in maintaining and enhancing the village fields.

13 Proposed Conservation Area boundary revisions and justification

13.1 The original designation covers most of the village, with the exception of most 20th century development. The boundary is irregular in some areas and does little to protect the village entrances. As a result of feedback during the public consultation the boundary has been extended to include key areas of open space, that are of historical interest and have a strong visual relationship with the Conservation Area. This is also intended to rationalise the boundary.

The boundary extension includes:

1. The site of the Village Hall
2. Land to the north west, including Manor Farm.
3. Land to the south of the village, including the medieval fishponds and gardens of Ormond Manor.

For the avoidance of doubt, the boundary of the proposed extension to the conservation area can be described as follows



13.2 Northern extension

The boundary is extended to the north west to include Manor Farm and the open fields to the south east that provide a visually pleasing village entrance. The boundary is rationalised by the inclusion of these fields and it is possible that they contain historical evidence extending from De Lisle Manor grounds.



13.3 Village hall extension

Although the village hall itself is not of particular architectural interest, the social history of the site and the importance of retaining the character of this area led to the inclusion of this section of the village. The extension was suggested by residents at the public meeting and it was felt that this would be a positive addition to the Conservation Area.

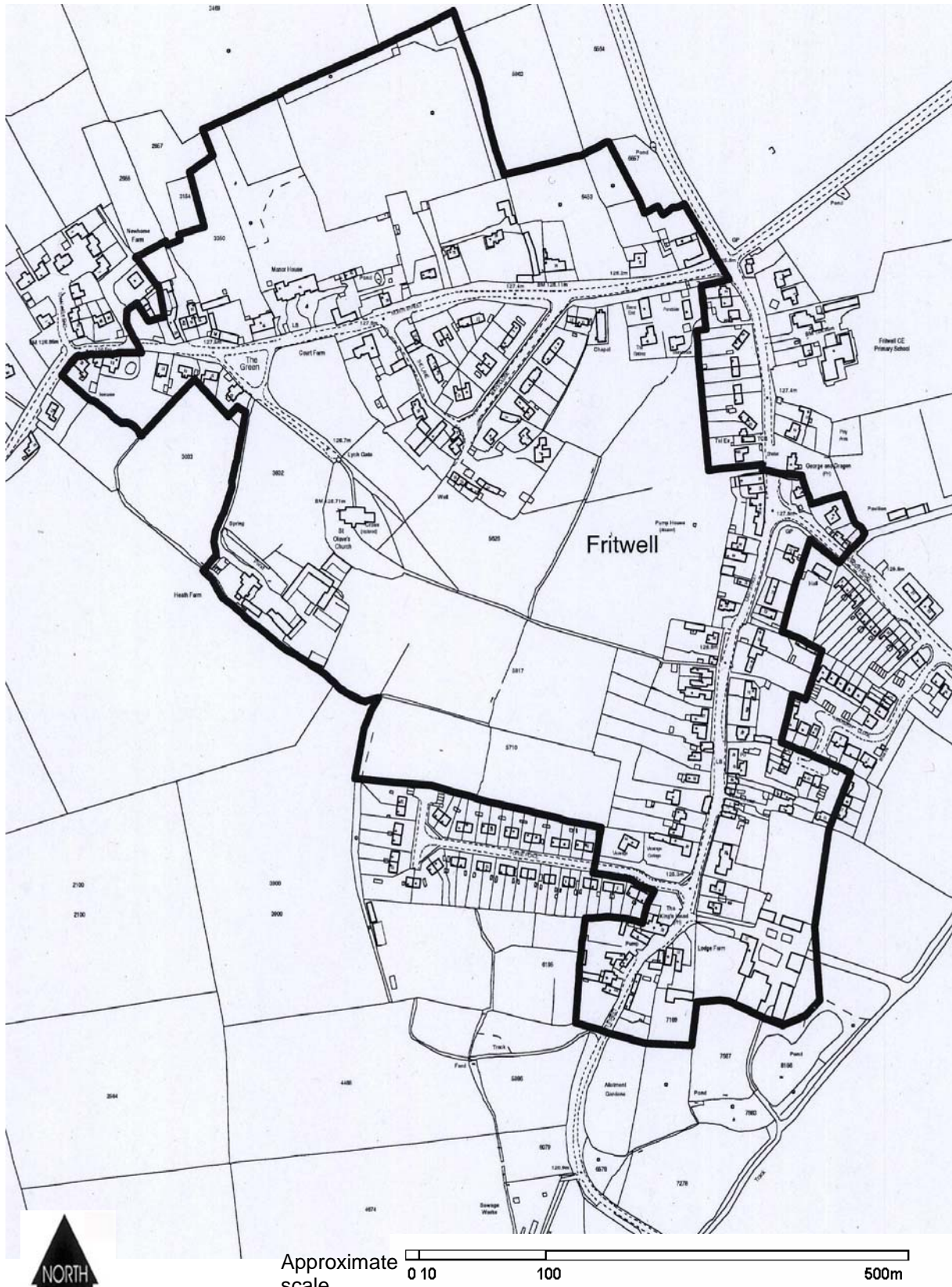


13.4 Southern extension

The boundary extensions to the south aims to protect the aesthetically pleasing entrance to the village. The extension also includes an area that has historical importance as the gardens of the medieval Manor of Ormond. The fields also lie close to the route of Akeman Street and may contain archaeological artefacts. However their inclusion will protect the character of the village entrance and was supported by all villagers who responded to the questionnaire provided at the public meeting.



Figure 18: Original Conservation Area boundary

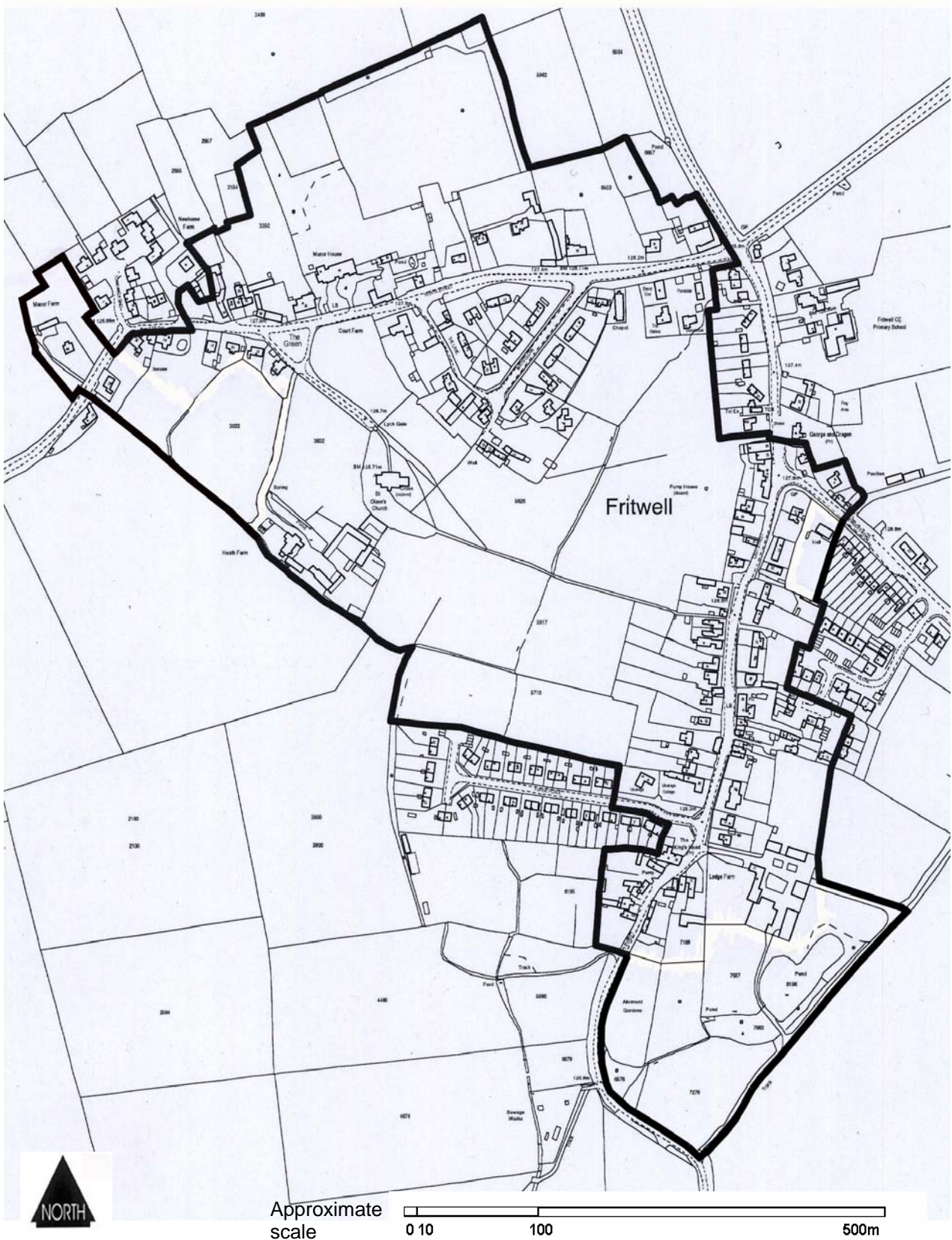


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Approximate scale 0 10 100 500m



Figure 19: Revised Conservation Area boundary



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15. 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.

C22 In a conservation area planning control will be exercised, to ensure inter alia, that the character or appearance of the area so designated is preserved or enhanced.

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.

C19 Before the determination of an application for the alteration, demolition or extension of a listed building applicants will be required to provide sufficient information to enable an assessment to be made of the likely impact of their proposals on the special interest of the structure, its setting, or special features.

C20 Special care will be taken to ensure that development which is situated within the setting of a listed building respects the architectural and historic character of the building and its setting.

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.

C36 In considering applications in conservation areas the council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

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.

Acknowledgments

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