



# **ISLIP**

## **Conservation Area Appraisal**

April 2008

Planning, Housing and  
Economy



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# 1. Introduction

Islip is a nucleated hillside village, developing around the church of St. Nicholas, and set in an agricultural landscape. The houses date principally from the 17th and 18th centuries

and reflect the village's history as a coach and wagon station. Despite being a united village, Islip retains a varied character. In acknowledgement of its special qualities

which need to be preserved and enhanced, this document is the second full appraisal of the village, the first being written in November 1994.

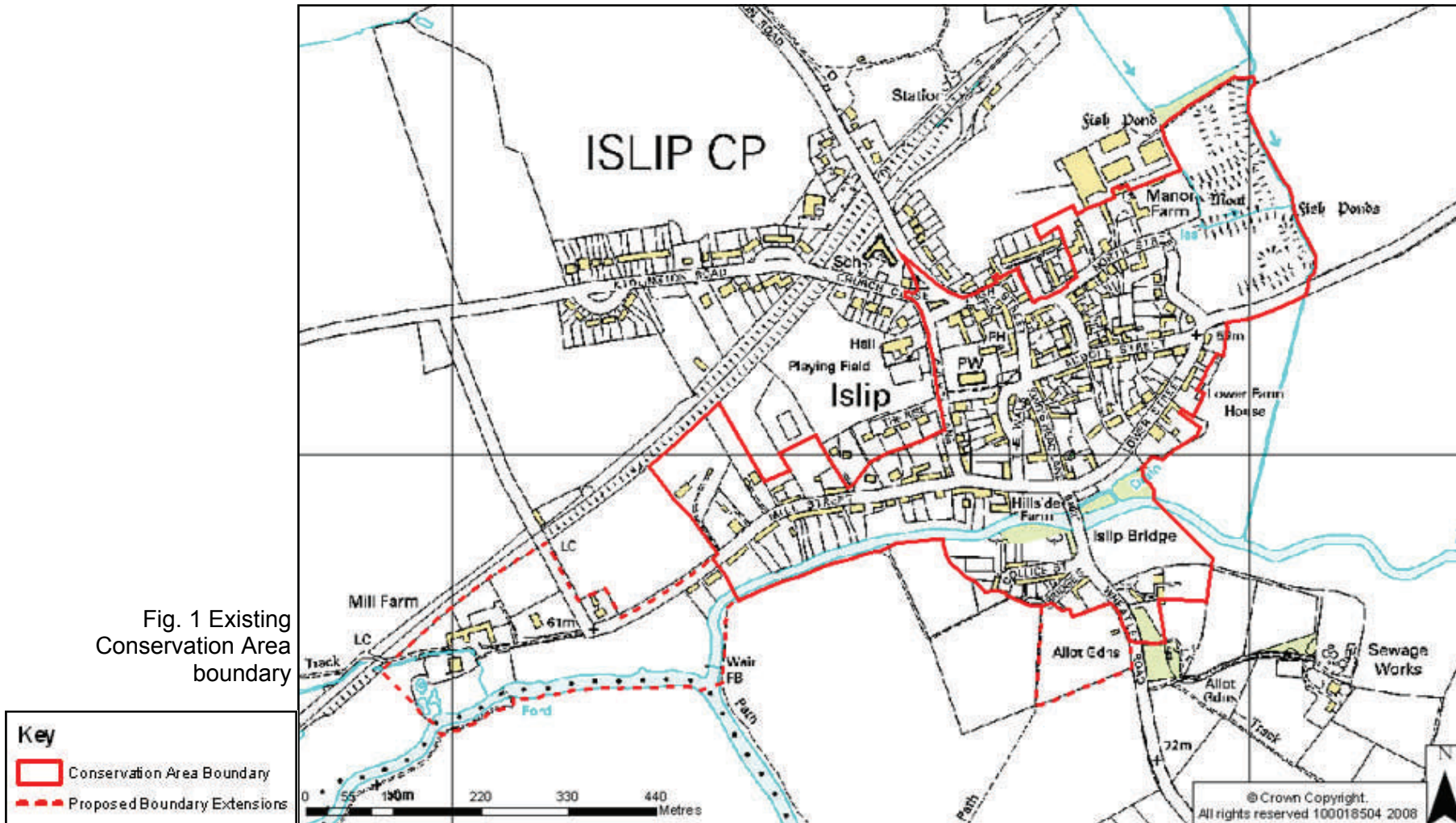


Fig. 1 Existing Conservation Area boundary

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

Since 1967 some 8,000 conservation areas have been designated in England, including 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 (2005). By writing a full Conservation Area appraisal for Islip, 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.

2.1.5 This appraisal was the subject of public consultation and has been adopted by the Council. It is now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the conservation area and its setting.



Figure 2: Area Designations

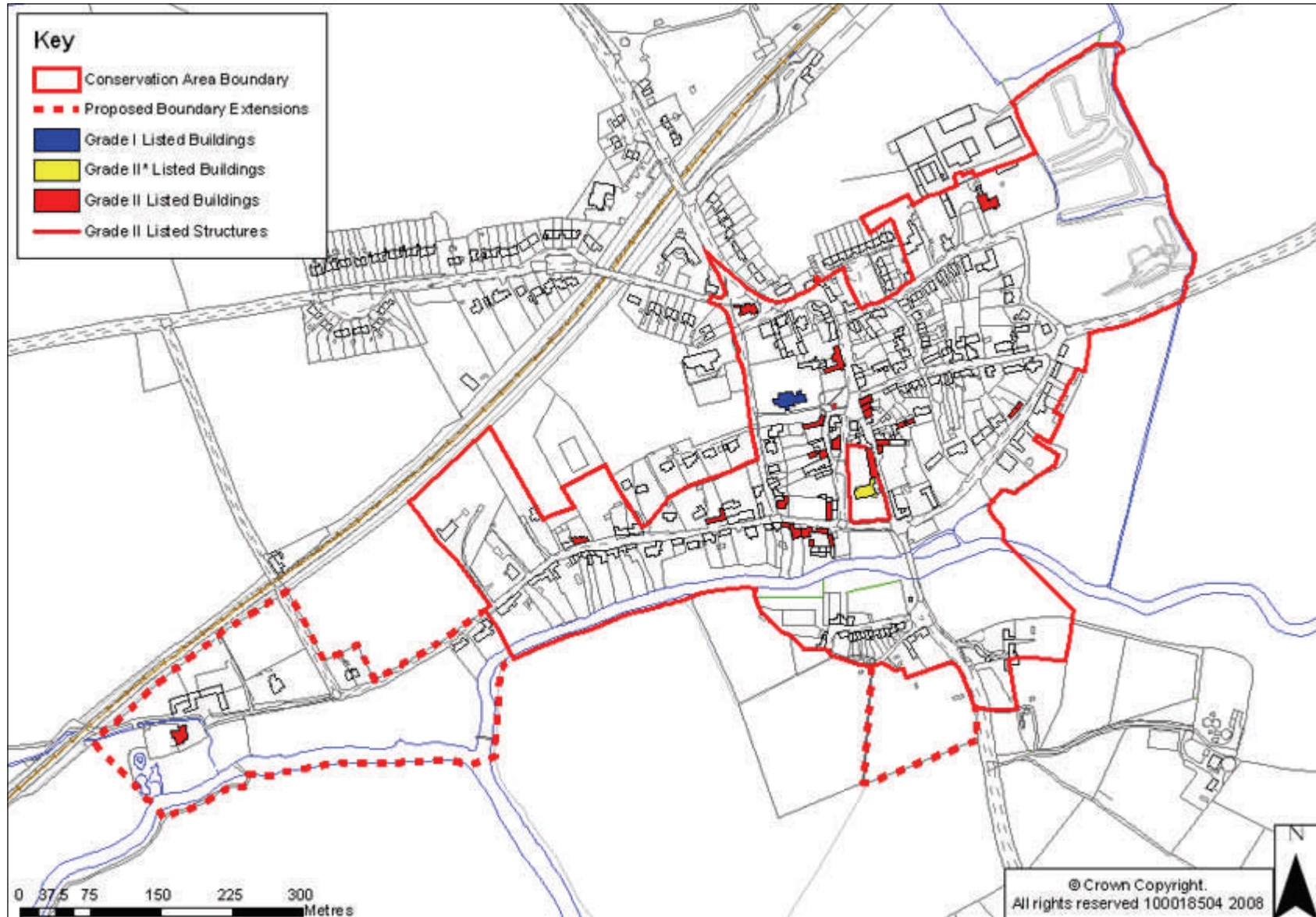
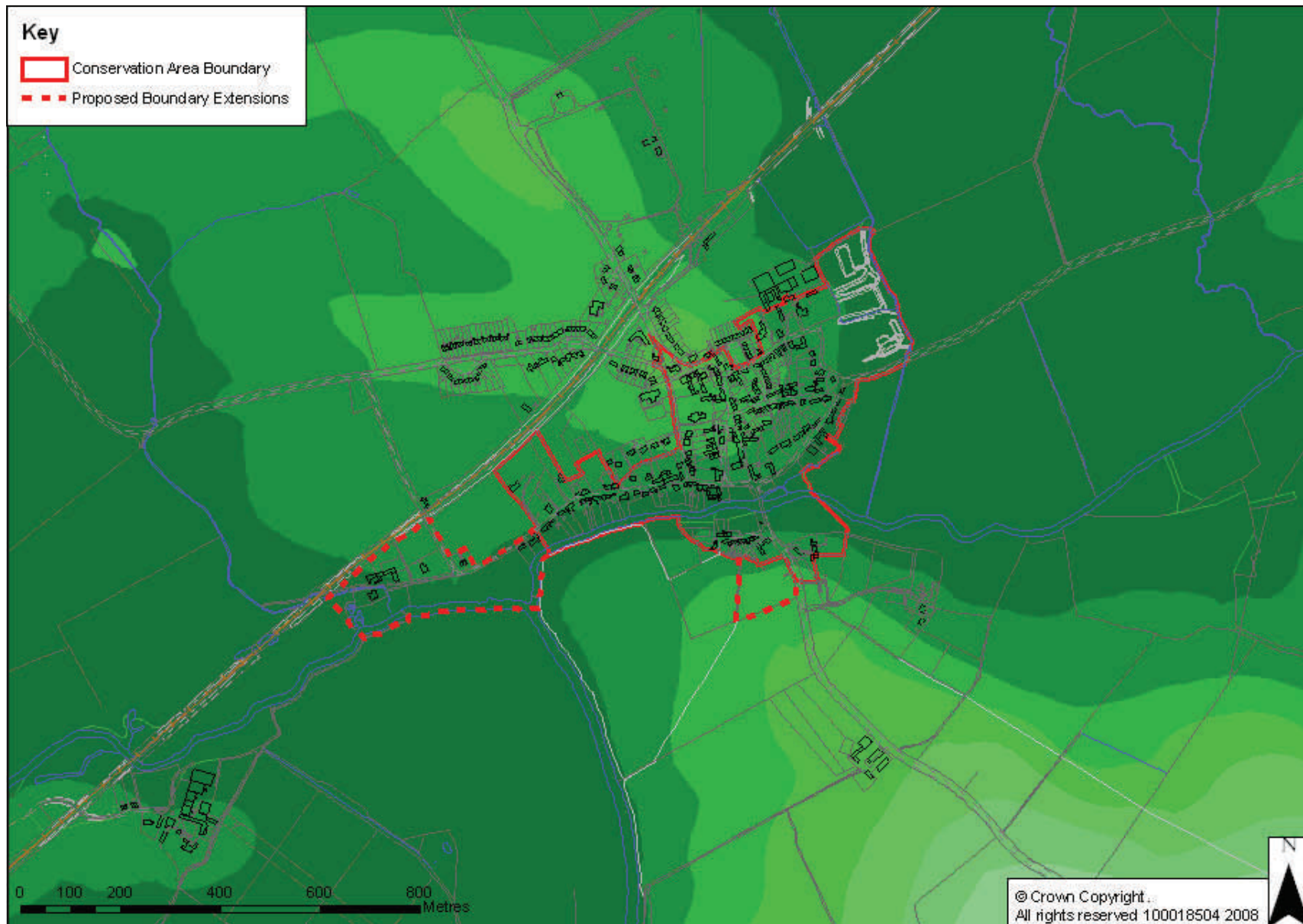


Figure 3: Topographical map



### 3. Location and Topography

Islip lies approximately six miles (10km) south-west of the market town of Bicester, with the main focus of the village being on the north bank of the River Ray. The name of the village derived from two Old English words, '*lght*' the old name for the Ray and '*slaep*', the precise meaning of which is unknown but which may have indicated a 'place where things are dragged'.

The main village is situated on a ridge of cornbrash, grouped around the Church of St. Nicholas on three sides. The land falls away south and east towards the river and flood plains, with the most recent development being on the north westerly extreme of the village. The lower southerly area of the village is prone to flooding and suffered extensive damage in the summer floods of 2007. The entire village is situated within the Oxford Green Belt which affords it special protection regarding development.

The geology is clearly reflected in the building materials within the village, giving the village a homogenous feel. The landscape around the village is arable, flood plain and ex-military, with a denser field pattern close to the settlement. There is no pocket of woodland close by, although Bernwood Forest was known to be a royal hunting ground, the remains of which lies approximately five miles (8km) south-east of the village.



Fig 4: Aerial view of the village including the Conservation Area

# 4. History of Islip

## 4.1 Origins

Despite the remains of both a Roman temple and villa just outside the village on the southerly Wheatley Road towards Oxford, there is

no evidence of a settlement at Islip until the Anglo-Saxon period. The village was allegedly the birthplace of Edward the Confessor in 1003/4 AD, and was likely to have been the site of a royal hunting lodge due to its proximity to Bernwood Forest.

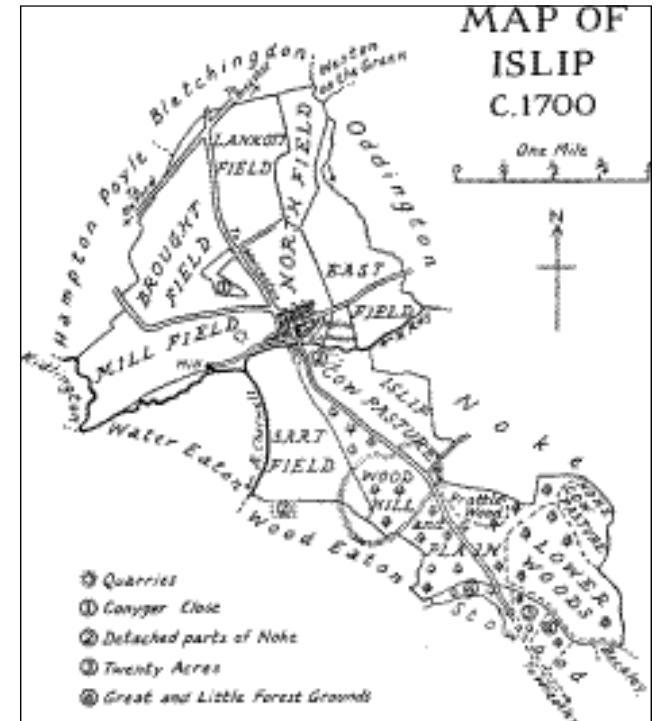


Fig. 6 Map of Islip and its field boundaries c. 1700

The village is known in the Domesday Book of 1085 as *Istelape*. The translation shows that the land was split between Edward of Salisbury and the wife of Roger D'Ivry.

Edward the Confessor gave the village of Islip as a gift to his new foundation of St Peter at Westminster in 1065, and the village remained (sporadically) in the hands of Westminster until 1869. As such, the living at Islip was given to men of distinction, such as the 19<sup>th</sup> century geologist William Buckland, later Dean of Westminster. Even today, Westminster still has the right to nominate the rector of Islip.

Although the church was the dominant force in the village, the rectors usually only lived there during the summer, leading to there being no dominant house or family. This makes Islip an unusual village for the time.

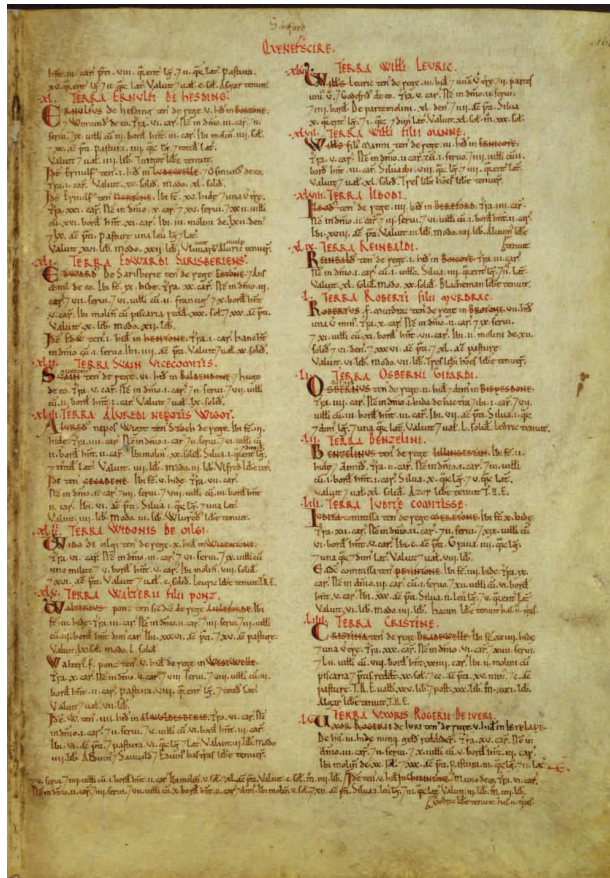


Fig. 5 Page of Domesday Book mentioning Islip

## 4.2 Development and Population

4.2.1 Archaeological remains suggest two medieval court houses, and the so-called Confessor's Chapel, showing that the village grew in prosperity during the medieval period. These may have been the result of a successful market after the licence was granted in 1245, at which it was likely that the villagers sold locally produced corn. The river Ray was important to the village, providing a site for the mill which refined the local arable production, and later for feeding the fishponds at the north-eastern manor.



Fig. 7 A 17th/18th century engraving of the Confessor's Chapel believed to be sited to the north of the present church. The Chapel had been converted into a barn and was demolished c.1780



Fig. 8 Map of Oxfordshire c. 1741

4.2.2 Islip was of strategic importance during the Civil War, mainly due to its location on both the River Ray and the London road from Worcester. The Battle of Islip Bridge in 1645 forced the Royalists to retreat, after which the village was in Cromwell's hands.

4.2.3 Islip became an important coach and wagon station during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and this is period which saw the greatest amount of development within the village. Situated on the main London-Worcester Road, the village boasted 8 inns at its peak. Trade and industry in the village began to slow as goods traffic switched from the roads to the canals when the Oxford Canal was opened in 1790. Together with the improvement in road conditions, the canal saw the beginning of the end of Islip's prominence as a coaching station.

4.2.4 Census data from the 19th century shows a somewhat diverse village, with some residents still working in the travel business, harness-makers and wagon-makers, while others were agricultural labourers or servants. There were still a number of gentlemen in the village, although the Rectory appears to have been the main employer of domestic servants.

## 4.3 Trade and Industrial Interest

4.3.1 The main Worcester-London road ran through the village, bypassing Oxford, during 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> century (now known as the Wheatley Road or B4027), and giving rise to the construction of coaching inns. During the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century however, this trade had fallen off to leave the majority of people working as agricultural labourers, associated travel tradesmen or servants. Today, the majority of employed residents work outside the village, with only the farms, timber yard, primary school and pubs providing real village employment. The village also retains a health centre, coal depot, and small village shop located within the village hall, which is manned by enthusiastic volunteers. The previous shop was located in Kings Head Lane, and was a successful family-run business which closed in 2000.

4.3.2 The modern village of Islip extends north and west along Bletchington and Kidlington Roads. Although not included in the conservation area, these houses have had a positive impact on the village by swelling numbers and supporting the few local businesses. The railway station was opened in May 1851, and the 19<sup>th</sup> century censuses show that several railway workers from across Oxfordshire and Berkshire lodged with families in the village, expanding the population.

4.3.3 Dr South's Primary School began in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century with only 21 boys. The Old School House, now the Old House on the Corner of Church Lane and the High Street, was built in 1710 for the school master. A schoolroom for the boys was situated at the rear.



*The Old House, High Street*

This older schoolhouse quickly became too small for its charges. A new school was built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century just north of the old site, in a triangle of ground between Bletchington and Kidlington Roads, and the railway, outside the conservation area, where the present school still stands.



*The pinch point, High Street*



*Kings Head Lane*

4.3.4 To the south-west of the village outside the conservation area, Islip mill (valued in the Domesday Book at 20s) was an important yet sporadic part of the local economy since the 11<sup>th</sup> century. This mill would most likely have been the recipient of the majority of the tenant farmers' corn. The mill was closed and demolished in 1949; however the associated mill buildings were listed in 1987 and have since become private houses. This area will be discussed in more detail in sections 11 and 17 of this appraisal.

4.3.5 The railway was closed in December 1967 and reopened in May 1989. Before its closure, the line was part of the London & North Western Railway, used for goods traffic as well as passenger, and a rail link to the fuel depot to the north was opened in the 1930s. First used by the RAF during the Second World War, the depot was taken over by Esso. The depot is still in sporadic use, however the connection to the railway has been severed.

The railway is still an important part of the village. Lying outside the Conservation Area, it is now used mainly by commuters to Oxford or Bicester, although there are plans to reopen the line to Bletchley, 'The Brain Line'.



*Islip Station c. 1951 (view towards Bicester)*

4.3.6 Some people of note within the village include:

- Edward the Confessor: King of England (1004—1066)
- Dr Robert South: chaplain in ordinary to Charles II and rector of Islip from 1678-1716
- William Buckland: Geologist and Dean of Westminster (1784-1856)



*Edward the Confessor*

#### 4.4 Archaeology

4.4.1 To the south of the conservation area between Islip and Woodeaton lie two Scheduled Ancient Monuments: a Romano British temple (AM107) and villa (AM148), with associated contemporary finds. Both were built within walled enclosures. Flints and other finds from the Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages have also been found on these sites.

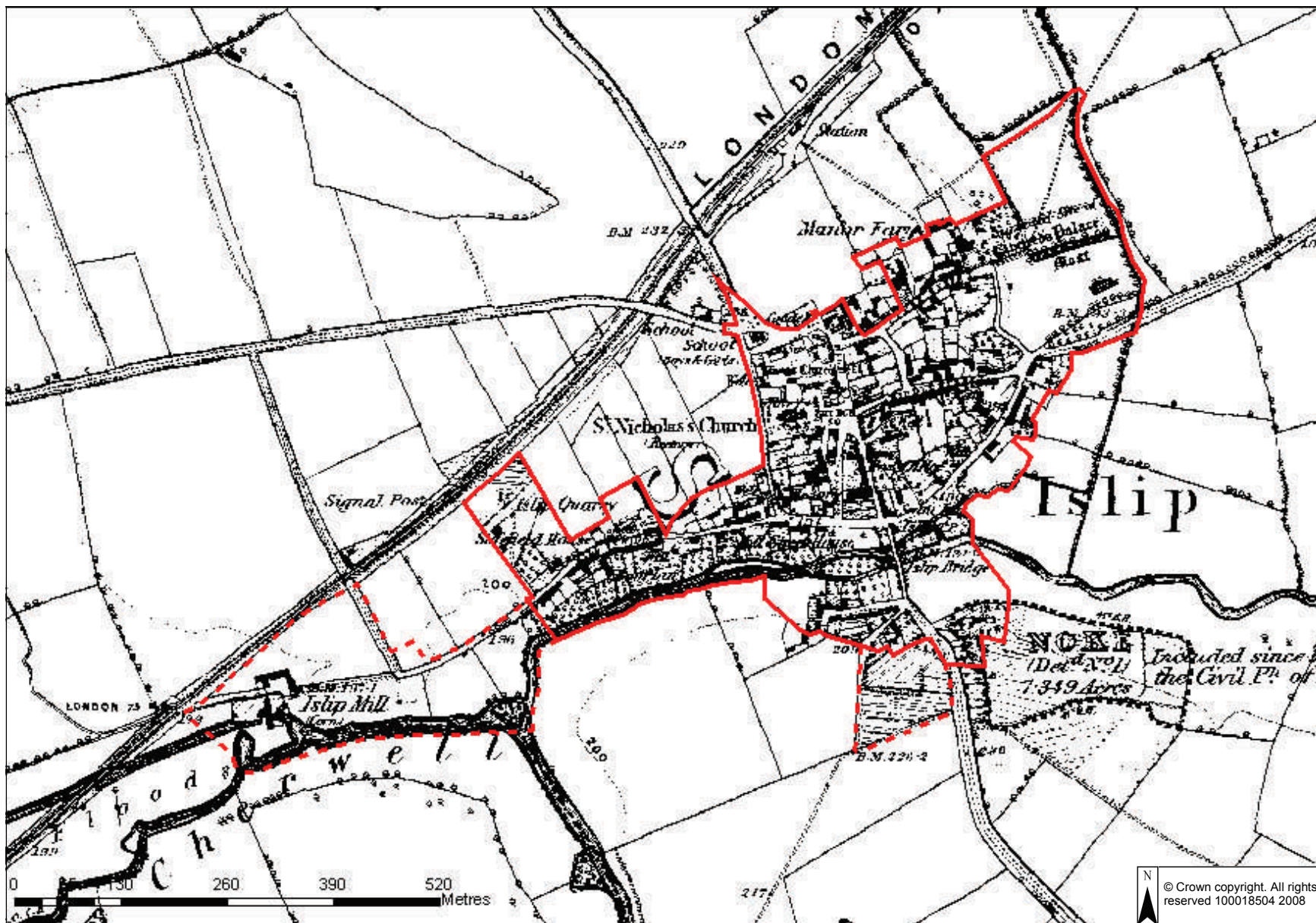
4.4.2 In the north-eastern corner of the conservation area, situated next to Manor Farm, is a medieval moated site, once thought to be King Æthelred's palace. It is more likely that this is actually the site of a new manor house built in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century for Abbott William de Curtlyngton, and sanctioned by Westminster Abbey. The building had a U-shaped moat and substantial fishponds which flow to the River Ray via a man-made stream. The site is still vulnerable to flooding and is used in the summer for grazing cattle.

4.4.3 In the summer of 2005, Channel 4's Time Team visited the village as part of the Edward the Confessor Millennium Celebrations. Despite having maps showing the chapel, the supposed foundations turned out to be a 17th century cesspit. The team were able to shed some light on the moated site near Manor Farm, with dozens of medieval pottery samples and documents supporting the theory of William de Curtlyngton.



*Time Team excavation trench in the rear garden of Confessor's Gate, High Street*

Figure 9: Map of Islip 1883-87 with Conservation Area boundary imposed



## 5.0 Architectural History

5.1 Islip has a rich architectural and historic background centred on its associations with Edward the Confessor and Westminster Abbey, and on its location on the London to Worcester Road which resulted in it becoming a prosperous coach and wagon station in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

5.2 The village is remarkable for the large numbers of well-preserved 17th and 18th century houses. The majority of these are built using natural local grey limestone with stone-slate roofing. The use of Welsh slate and red brick increased from the 19th century, and some examples of buff coloured brick can be seen on Middle Street.

5.3 The Church of St. Nicholas was given, with the village, by Edward the Confessor to Westminster Abbey in 1065. It is possible that the narrow south aisle and west gable wall may be the remnants of this 11th century structure. The church increased in size during the late 12th century, construction beginning again in the 14th and 15th centuries. The 3-stage tower is of 15th century construction and houses a peal of 8 bells. The chancel was built in 1680 for Dr Robert South of square coarsed rubble. The church was heavily restored both internally and externally in 1861 by E.G. Bruton, builder for the architect G. Wyatt of Oxford, and several 'modern' windows were inserted at that time.



*The Church of St Nicholas*

Although it dominates the village centre by its position next to the village green, views of the church from other parts of the village are rare. A glimpse of the tower amid trees is obtained from Mill Street, but the only uninterrupted views can be obtained from the village playing field, which is a large open space in the otherwise compactly developed settlement.

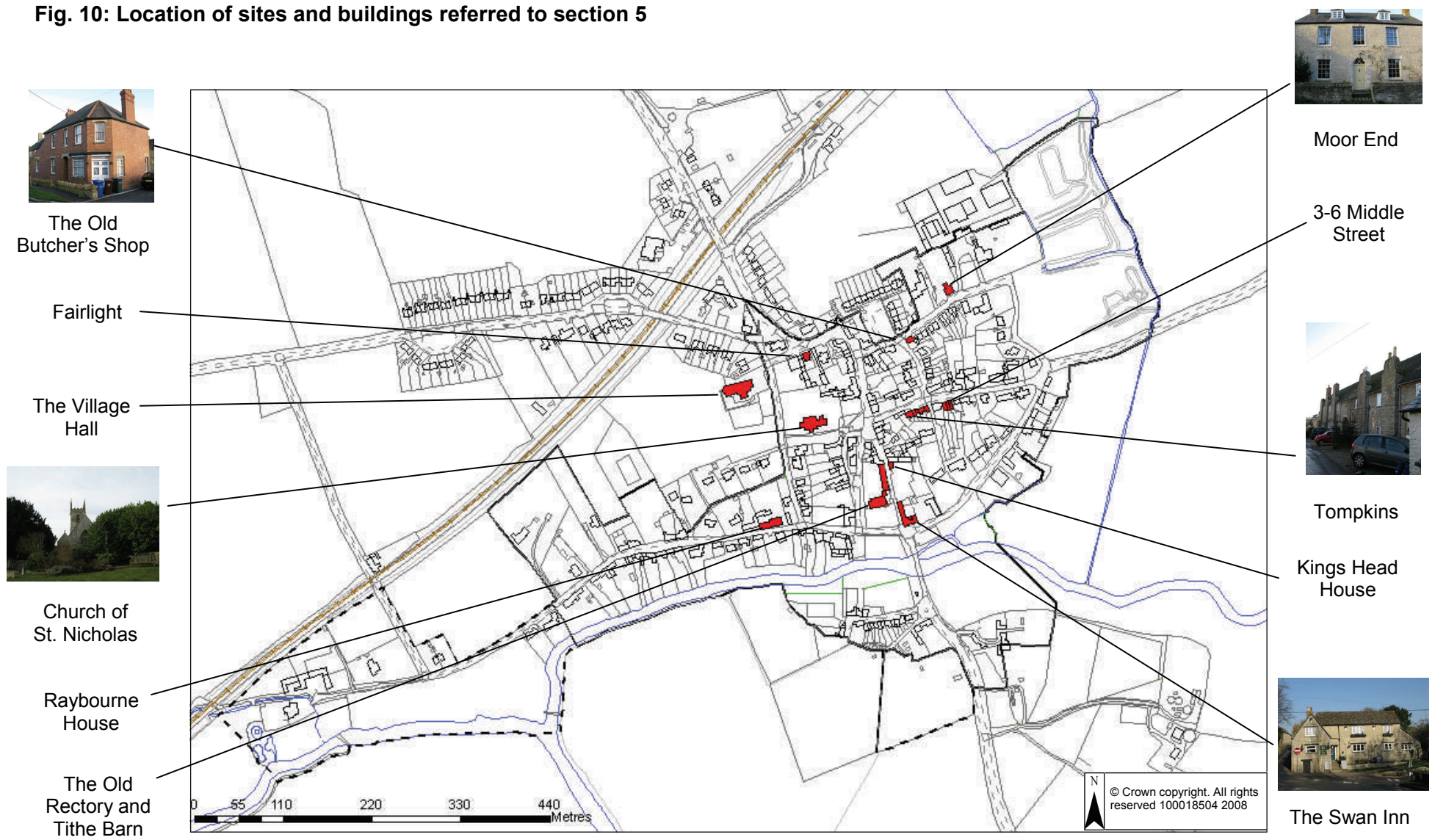
In contrast, the church is a strong landmark in the surrounding area. It can be seen clearly from the nearby A34 and other link roads, particularly at night when the tower is lit from below.

5.4 Kings Head House is believed to be the oldest remaining house in the village, constructed during the mid 17th century. A former coaching inn, the wooden lintels are the remains of the archway to the stables.

5.5 The Old Rectory was built in 1689-90 for Dr South during his curacy in the village. The date 1689 is stamped on a rainwater head. An impressive building, the south façade looks over the river from 5 bays and is a two storey building with attic dormers, and a hooded central doorway. There was once an entrance to the garden from Mill Street, however this has now been blocked up and the main entrance is through the stable yard off The Walk.

5.6 The village meeting place was located in the Tithe Barn beside the rectory during the late 19th and early 20th century. In 1952, after being housed in several different locations, this relocated to its present site on Church Lane, and was extended in 1998 following a National Lottery grant.

**Fig. 10: Location of sites and buildings referred to section 5**



The Old Butcher's Shop



Moor End

3-6 Middle Street



Tompkins

Kings Head House



The Swan Inn



Church of St. Nicholas

Raybourne House

The Old Rectory and Tithe Barn

5.7 To the south-east of the church stands a rectangular structure with an oak tree growing in the centre, known as the Cross Tree. Built in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century from limestone rubble around a mound of earth, it is likely that this structure stands on the site of the church cross and would have been a focal point of the medieval market place. In many Oxfordshire villages medieval crosses stood at crossroads and were usually removed to churchyards when threatened with demolition at the reformation.



*The Cross Tree, Church Square*

5.8 Tompkins Terrace is described by Pevsner as 'an extraordinary terrace in Gothic style'. In a style dating to the mid 1800s, the terrace bears the date 1925, although Pevsner suggests that this may relate to repairs rather than construction. All the dwellings are entered from the garden side which is accessed through a central archway. Unfortunately some of the buttress-like chimneybreasts have now been rebuilt in brick or adapted for modern flues with metal, however this threatened terrace is still a formidable sight within a coaching- and agriculturally-focussed village.

5.9 Unlisted buildings making a positive contribution towards the character of the conservation area include:

- The Old Butcher's Shop, prominently located on the corner of North Street and Middle Way;
- 3-6 Middle Street c.1800, an unusual and well preserved terrace;
- Tompkins Terrace in Middle Street
- Moor End on North Street and Raybourne House on Mill Street, two fine examples of Georgian construction;
- The Swan Inn on Mill Street, a prominent and pleasing landmark building at the southern entrance to the village.
- Fairlight—a Victorian yellow-brick house with red brick detailing at the entrance to the conservation area on the High Street—a very pleasing aspect.

5.10 There are now relatively few examples of thatched roofs in Islip. Examples can be seen in Lower Street, Mill Street and off The Walk. Historically long-straw thatch was used and in some cases remains under re-coating in combed wheat reed. Traditional finishes include wrap-over flush ridges, 'swept' eyebrow dormers and chimneys with mortar rather than lead flashings. More recent styles include ornamental block ridges; the patterns often indicate the trademark of individual thatchers.

5.11 There are several areas of 20th century housing development within the conservation area, notably in Middle Way, North Street, Middle Street and Lower Street. Where it has occurred it generally respects the traditional development in use of materials and stone walls, although the form is generally of a more modern style. An unfortunate number of these houses have been clad in timber boarding in a manner contrasting the local style. There is one notable exception to this in North Street, which is discussed more thoroughly in section 7. Other areas which are almost entirely of 20th century development on Mill Street, Kidlington Road and Bletchingdon Road are located outside the village core and designated conservation area.

5.12 Regrettably a few modern styles of windows and doors in inappropriate materials and styles are creeping in.

## 6.0 Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area

### High Street

#### 1. The Old House

School and schoolroom, now house. Built 1710 for Dr South, probably partly rebuilt late C18/early C19. Random and coursed limestone rubble with some ashlar dressings.

#### 2. The Red Lion Inn (below)

C17, altered C18. Limestone rubble with some squared quoins and wooden lintels; Welsh-slate roof with ashlar and brick gable stacks.



#### 3. Church of St. Nicholas

Grade I Listed. Late C12 (possibly C11), C14 and C15; Chancel added 1680, now C19 windows in Geometrical Decorated Style.

#### 4. Greystones (formerly Oaklea)

Late C17/early C18. Limestone rubble with wooden lintels. 2 storeys plus attic. C20 roof dormer.

#### 5. Cross Tree Cottage and adjoining stores

Originally 1 dwelling, now subdivided. Late C17 with earlier cellar, altered C19/C20. Coursed limestone rubble with some wooden lintels; concrete plain-tile roof with brick stacks.

#### 6. The Cross Tree

Late C17. Limestone rubble. Probably built to replace village cross.

#### 7. Group of 3 chest tombs

South of chancel of Church of St Nicholas. Mid/late C17, C18. Largely illegible inscriptions commemorating George and Bridgwater families.

### Kings Head Lane

#### 8. Evershot and Harvington

Originally 1 house, now subdivided. Late C17, enlarged and re-modelled C18. Limestone rubble with some ashlar dressings; thatch roof with rubble and brick stacks.

#### 9. Laneside/Kings Head House (below)

Late C16/early C17, remodelled c.1700 and C20. Former coaching inn, now two houses. Coursed limestone rubble and some rendered timber framing; Stonesfield slate and artificial stone-slate roof with rebuilt brick stacks.



#### 10. Tithe Barn to the Old Rectory

Late C17. Originally single 6 range barn plus 2 coach houses. Later used as hall/meeting place. Converted to garaging with C20 alterations.

## Mill Street

11. Garden walls to The Old Rectory  
c. 1690, limestone rubble, approximately 3 metres high with rendered rubble coping.

12. No. 2 (below)  
Late C17/early C18. Coursed limestone rubble with wooden lintel; thatch roof with rubble and brick gable stack.



13. Mill House (formerly Manor House)  
Early C18. Coursed squared limestone rubble; Stonesfield-slate roof with rubble gable stacks.

14. Islip Mill—Hillhouse  
C18 house, 2 storeys plus attic, C20th porch. Limestone rubble; wood-shingle and Welsh-slate roof with brick gable stacks.

15. Bank Cottage (below)  
Late C17, remodelled late C18/early C19. Formerly subdivided. Limestone rubble with wooden lintels. Shallow rounded stair projection.



16. Hillside Farm  
Farmhouse and former outbuilding, early 18th century, extended 19th century. Limestone rubble and yellow brick with Stonesfield slate roofing. Interesting casement windows.

## The Walk

17. Church Key Cottage  
Early C18, possibly originally 2 cottages. Coursed squared limestone rubble with wooden lintels; concrete plain-tile roof with rubble and brick end stacks.

18. Wooster Arms (below)  
Late C18. Formerly part of an inn. Limestone ashlar and rubble; plain-tile roof with brick gable stacks.



19. The Old Rectory  
Grade II\* Listed. 1689-90, built for Dr Robert South. Limestone with ashlar dressings, 2 storey with attic dormers. Façade of 5 bays, central hooded doorway. 19th century restoration and enlargement.

t20 River View (below)

Late C17/early C18. Limestone rubble with some ashlar dressings; concrete plain-tile roof with brick gable stacks. Possibly re-modelled mid/late C18.



21. Monks Cottage

Formerly 3 cottages, C17. Limestone rubble with wooden lintels; thatch roof with rubble and brick stacks.

### Church Lane

22. Lilac Cottage (below)

Early/mid C18, small house. Limestone rubble with wooden lintels; thatch and Welsh-slate roof with brick gable stacks.



### Lower Street

23. Nos. 1, 2 and the Thatched Cottage

Row of 3 cottages, early-late C18. Coarsed limestone rubble with wooden lintels. No. 3 is the earliest with thatched roof and casement windows. Entrance front has plank wooden doors.

### North Street

x24 Manor Farmhouse (below)

Early/mid C18 incorporating earlier elements, extended mid C19. Coarsed squared limestone rubble with ashlar dressings; Stonesfield-slate roofs with ashlar and brick stacks.



Figure 11: Location of Listed Buildings

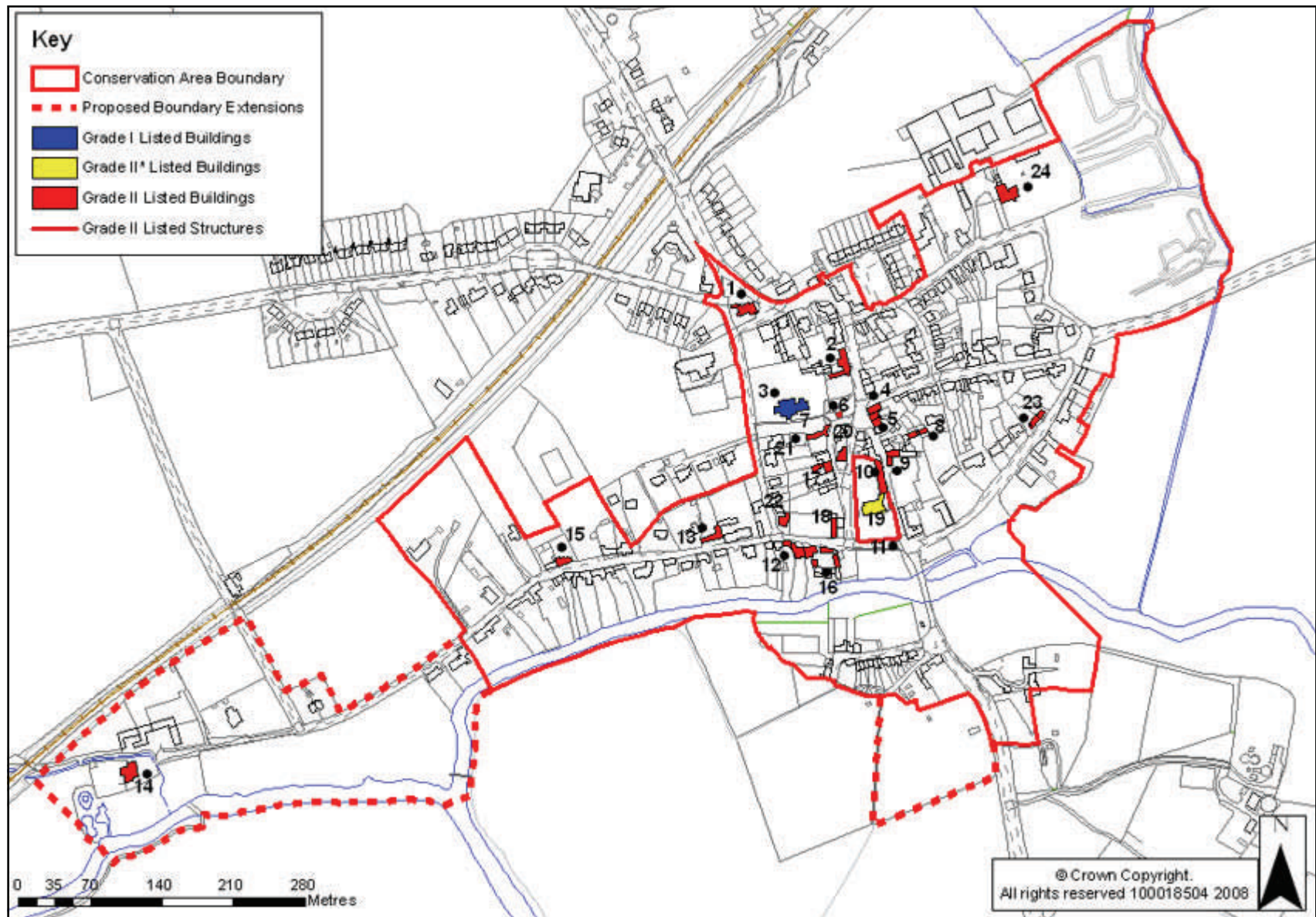
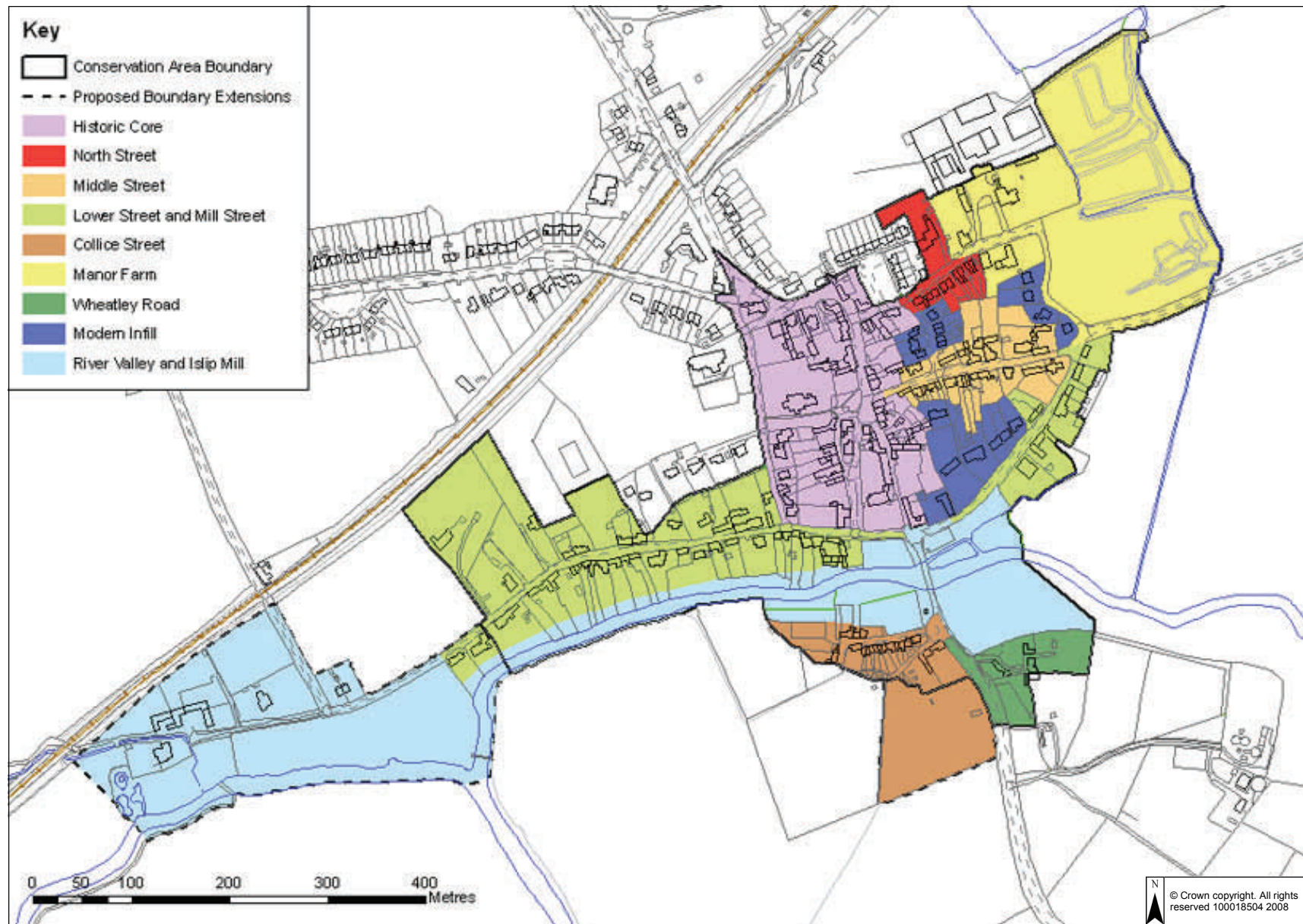


Figure 12: Character areas map



## 7. Historic Core Character Area

### 7.1 Land Use

The historic character area is a mixture of business and residential, surrounding the church. The majority of the properties are now residential, with only two pubs and an estate agents remaining in business use. The Church is included in this character area for historical, visual and land reasons. Historically, the market was held in Church Square after a licence was granted in 1245. The Church itself is surrounded by a fairly small amount of land and neither the historic or modern rectory is adjacent. The strong visual link the church has with the village centre dominates the key views.

### 7.2 Street pattern

The village core is the intersection of 7 streets. It focuses on the former market square in front of the church. Aside from this expanse of space, the area is comprised of linear streets tightly enclosed by the building line and walls, either at the back of the footway or frequently (as with Kings Head Lane) with no footway. There are numerous pinch points and 90° bends. Although the church sits on almost the highest point of the village, there are limited short-range views of the building from the majority of the village due to the close-knit street pattern around it.

### 7.3 Building age, type and style

The majority of the older buildings are detached houses, with the exceptions of the short terraces on the High Street and Kings Head Lane. There are several 17th and 18th century properties. The Church of St. Nicholas dates from the 11th century, with later additions, but was heavily restored in the 19th century. The remaining properties were either shops (such as the Old Smithy and Stores) and/or residences, the majority of which still contain architectural inclusions which show their original use.

The Old Rectory is the largest and grandest residence in the area, restored by Dr South in the 18th century. At least 4 properties are or were inns, and this is reflected in their architecture, with multiple entrances, parking areas and their positioning (set back slightly from the road).



*View up North Street towards High Street*



*The Old Fox, High Street*

## 7.4 Scale and massing

In addition to the church there are a couple of large dwellings, the Old Rectory and Confessor's gate, set in spacious grounds enclosed by imposing stone boundary walls. Other than these the street are linked by very modest dwellings of 1-2 storeys.

## 7.5 Construction and materials

The buildings are predominantly constructed of the coursed limestone typical of the locality, and some of the more striking historic buildings also include limestone ashlar. Most houses are roofed with stone slates.

Monks Cottage on the corner of The Walk and Church Square has an excellent thatched roof, and is curved in design, wrapping around the south-eastern corner of the churchyard.

There are some later infill houses on the High Street and Church Lane which are built with modern bricks, cladding and uPVC windows.

## 7.6 Means of enclosure

The frontages of the buildings create a strong building line on the High Street, while brick or stone walls provide privacy for the buildings away from the main commercial route. Some of the garden walls are topped with brick, tile or concrete coping to carry water off and protect the stone beneath.



*Monks Cottage, The Walk*

## 7.7 Trees, hedges, open spaces

Church Square is at the heart of the area and is the largest public open space within the village. Although now reclaimed by grass verges and parking, it is easy to see how this would have been the busy market place.

The ash in the garden of the Red Lion inn is one of only two trees with Tree Preservation Orders in the village, and the pub garden and churchyard are the only large expanses of relatively open grass within the village conservation area, Moatfield near Manor Farm being on the edge of both the village and conservation area. The churchyard is well-landscaped with several mature trees, while the trees in the back garden of the Old Rectory provide a welcome respite from the buildings around.

## 7.8 Features of Special Interest

- The elevated causeway south of the Old Rectory allowed the villagers to walk without mixing with animals in pasture beside the river. Historically this had turnpikes at each end to be maintained by the village rector.
- The views are contained within the area emphasising how important the vegetation is to the enclosed feeling of the village.
- The Nook, a 19th century village farm now converted to residences.

## 7.9 Carriageways and footways

The roads have been covered with tarmac and are pitted with repairs from over the years. Footways are not always continuous, and have been edged with standard kerbing.

In contrast, the entrance to the church is compressed gravel, and the western side of The Walk consists of loose gravel. A natural footpath is being worn across the green outside the church, and it may be suitable to consider a gravel replacement.

An historic feature is the raised footway on the High Street, with steps down to the road. The shops/houses are built at the same height to enable villagers to access them without being run-over.

Outside Wooster Arms, there is an area of block paving, which is uncharacteristic of the area. Further development of this kind should be discouraged, as it urbanises and divides the area.

## 7.10 Threats

- The Swan and Red Lion public houses advertise to catch local and passing trade; however this advertising could be more sympathetic to ensure that no harm is caused to the appearance of the area.
- The Builder's Yard occupies a backland site and provides welcome local employment using traditional skills and adds variety to the village. It would be regrettable if this activity were to be lost.
- There are increasing examples of the use of non-traditional materials such as uPVC windows and concrete tiles on unlisted buildings. This has a cumulative effect of downgrading the streetscape.
- Despite road improvements to the north of Oxford, the centre of the village is still subject to an unfortunately high volume of through traffic. Further developments within or outside the conservation area would put pressure on the already congested roads. This detracts greatly from the tranquillity that this rural settlement would otherwise enjoy.
- On-street parking is a major difficulty in the centre of the village. One option may be to replace the under-used coal depot with an area of off-street parking for residents/permit holders.
- Highway signage—whilst it is appreciated that the signage goes a long way to protecting road users and warning them of the hazards ahead, some thought may be given to the suitability of some of these signs within the village.

- Indifferent highway maintenance and inappropriate paving has the action of dividing the streetscene and splitting the character area. It may be worth considering a more traditional surfacing, such as bound gravel for pavements.



*The Coal Depot seen from the High Street  
(above and below)*



## 7.11 Opportunities

Islip has relatively few areas available for development. Being in an attractive area of the countryside within commuting distance of Oxford and London, the village also has the difficulty of being expensive for the existing community to buy into.

One rare example of development potential is the coal depot on the High Street, currently under-used, an approximately 0.2 acre site which is appropriate for sensitive infill residential development also possibly including some car parking for the nearby residents. The car parking would be a good compromise to protect the open space created by the depot whilst reducing the amount of parking 'clutter' which detracts so heavily from the visual enjoyment of the village, while the housing would allow either new or continuing residents to enjoy village life.

There is an opportunity to retain front boundary walls, continue established buildings lines and street enclosure with additional parking behind for other residents.



*View up Church Lane from Mill Street*



*River View viewed from Mill Street*

## 7.12 Key Views

- The view down The Walk towards the south end of the village is very pleasing, and reminiscent of a traditional street scene.
- Views both up and down the High Street are funnelled by the pinch point and Old Post Office to the north, and the downward slope of Kings Head Lane to the south. There is also an expansive view of the open playing field from the churchyard.
- The historic core differs from other character areas which have either glimpse or expansive views of the river valley and countryside to the east of the village. The relatively tunnelled views mean that certain buildings become landmarks as one moves through the village.
- There are some pleasing distant views of the church from open countryside to the west from the Bicester-Oxford railway line, and even from the A34, partly due to its elevated position and partly due to the funnel of undeveloped land, including the playing field west of the church.

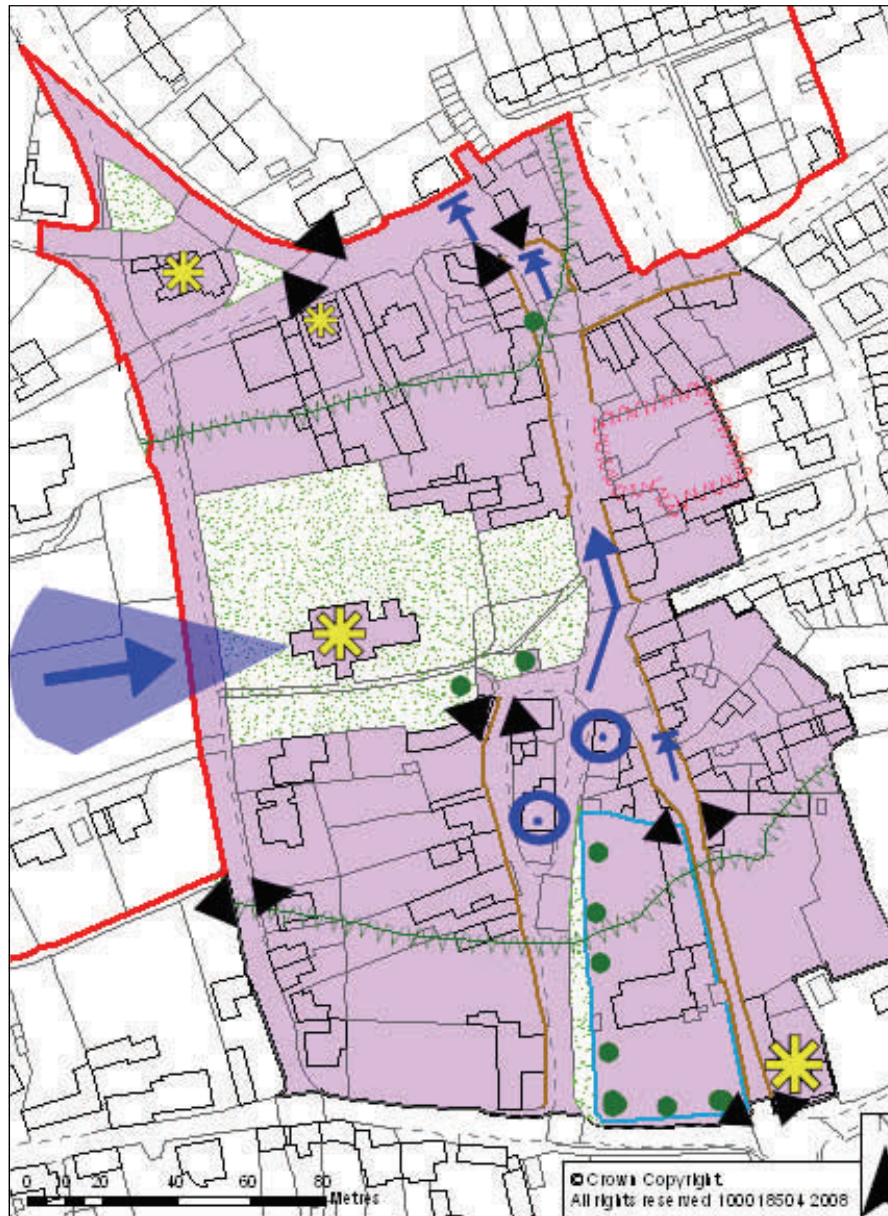


*The Old Rectory viewed from the ford*



*The Red Lion garden with protected ash tree*

Fig. 13 Historic Core Character Area Visual Analysis



| Key |                             |
|-----|-----------------------------|
|     | Conservation Area Boundary  |
|     | Character Area Boundary     |
|     | Strong Building Line        |
|     | Important Green Space       |
|     | Key Vegetation or Trees     |
|     | Area Requiring Enhancement  |
|     | Significant Change in Slope |
|     | Positive Landmark           |
|     | Pivot Point                 |
|     | Pinch Point                 |
|     | Positive View               |
|     | Positive Vista              |
|     | Visual Stop                 |
|     | Deflected View              |

## 8. North Street Character Area

### 8.1 Land use and street pattern

This small character area is largely comprised of housing constructed about 100 years ago, which provides the most typically urban aspect within the village, with a predominance of red brick and garden walls.

### 8.2 Building age, type and style

The houses along North Street are mainly late 19th/early 20th century semi-detached properties, with some later additions. The exception is The Lodge, detached and set back from the road.

### 8.3 Scale and massing

The houses are mainly 2 storey with some 2 storey plus attic, and are distinctly different from the historic stone cottages of the historic core.

### 8.4 Construction and materials

There is a mixture of materials along the street, mainly brick with slate roofing. Some examples of buff-coloured brick can be seen and one 20th century pair of houses is built using limestone-coloured concrete bricks.

### 8.5 Trees, hedges, open spaces

There is no public open space here. The small front gardens of the semi-detached houses are bounded by a low brick wall with railing at the back of the footway. Trees overhang from the front garden of The Lodge, and provide a welcome relief from the urban environment.

### 8.6 Features of special interest

The Old Butcher Shop at the corner of North Street and Middle Way is a striking entrance to this character area with a chamfered corner acting as a pivot at the junction. The area has the greatest variety of railings in the village. The gates of The Lodge are particularly striking, despite their lack of use now. These railings and gates aid the area in its enclosed feeling, while reinforcing each property's own distinct character and pairing.



*View up North Street*



*The gates of The Lodge*



*Railings on North Street*

## 8.7 Carriageways and footways

The pavement is exclusively tarmacadam with concrete kerbs, and there is only one pavement present which counteracts the urban feel of the area with a more rural feature.



*View east along North Street*

The footway has been raised in part, echoing that on the nearby High Street, and has added to the safety of the street immensely. The concrete kerbs are unpopular with the residents, who would rather the road was less 'urbanised'. The road is also tarmacadam and, like the pavement, is dotted with patchy repairs from engineering works. The road kinks slightly, containing the area, as it winds downhill eastward towards Manor Farm.

## 8.8 Threats

- Being semi-detached houses, there should be opportunities for residents to accommodate the wheeled refuse bins away from the street frontage. However, this is not always the case, and bin storage can detract from what would otherwise be a pleasant late Victorian street.
- Parking is a key issue; as the residents park on the north side of the street, the verge is being worn away. While a kerb would protect it, it would also detract from the rural feel. There are limited opportunities for off-street parking. The loss of front boundary walls to provide parking in front gardens would detract from the unifying effect of the boundary walls.
- The properties were built in distinct symmetrical pairs and their materials and style of external decoration reflect this. Differential maintenance and replacement of windows has had a negative effect on the symmetry of some of these properties. Retaining the symmetry will increase the group value of the street and maintain the visual distinctiveness of the area. Residents are encouraged to ensure that terraces and semi-detached pairs are maintained.

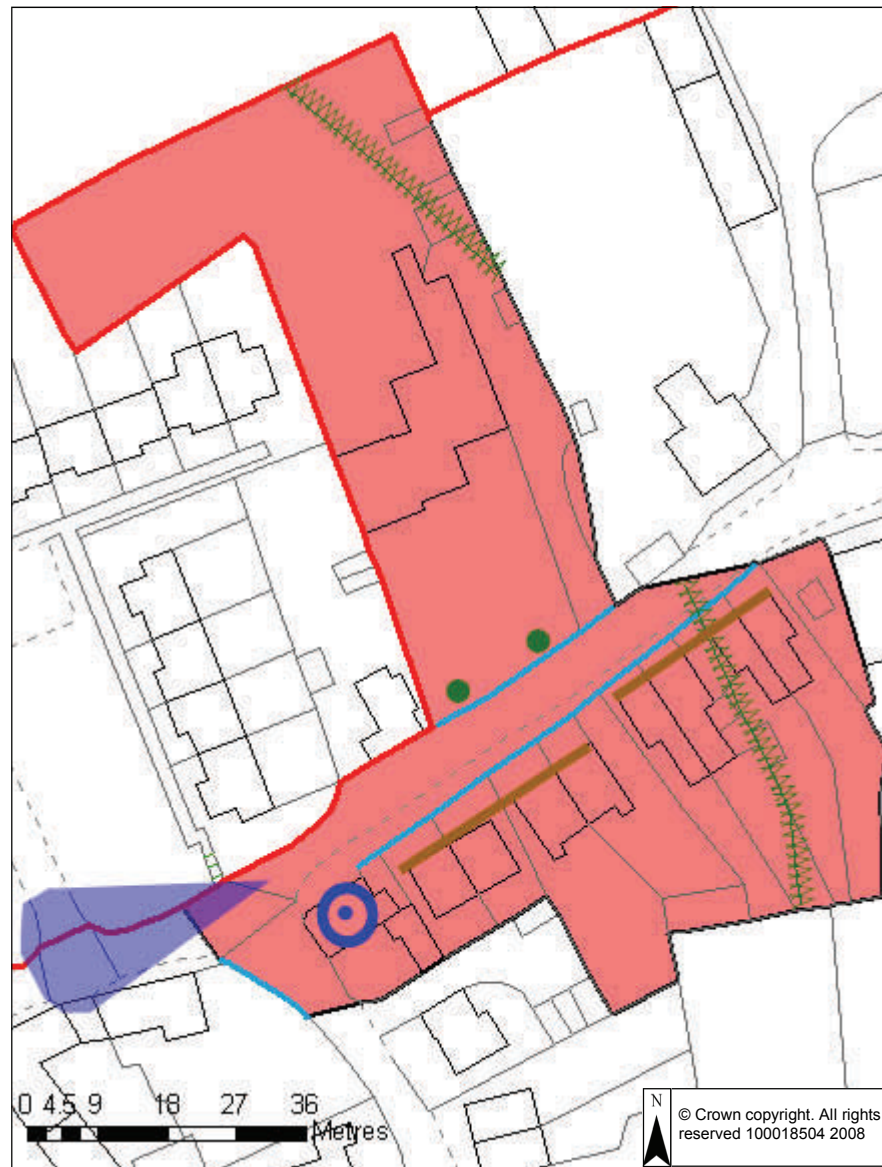











*An unaltered symmetrically balanced pair of semi-detached houses*



*The Old Butcher Shop*

Fig. 14 North Street Character Area Visual Analysis



| Key   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
|    | Conservation Area Boundary   |
|    | Character Area Boundary      |
|    | Strong Building Line         |
|    | Key Vegetation or Trees      |
|   | Pivot Point                  |
|  | Pinch Point                  |
|  | Characteristic Boundary Wall |
|  | Positive Vista               |
|  | Significant Change in Slope  |

## 9. Middle Street Character Area

### 9.1 Land Use

This area was a mixture of residential and agricultural buildings, including Middle Farm, which is still in evidence through the conversion of its barns for housing. The area is now all residential, and includes the almshouses marked 1925, and The Great Barn, which used to be the Saddlers Arms Inn. There is a marked difference between the two sides of the street in terms of original use and construction materials.



*No. 1 St Nicholas Close, another barn conversion*

### 9.2 Street pattern

The area has a very strong linear feel, with the houses having little or no front gardens. Old maps show the street pattern to have been in existence since the 17th century, flowing from the church and Church Square through to the outskirts of the village.

### 9.3 Building age, type and style

On the southern side of the street, the buildings were built as houses and have remained so. There is a good terrace of 4 houses from the mid 19th century, as well as a larger late Victorian/early Edwardian property further east. This larger detached house is a more formal town house, however it fits well with the surrounding properties due to being slightly set back and in complimentary materials. This is in marked contrast to the northern side, where the buildings are mainly conversions. These are larger in size, usually much wider along the streetscene due to their origins as barns, bakehouses etc. Many of these houses were probably still in use as barns until the early/mid 20th century. Many retain the features and names of their former use, and although not all have been very sympathetically restored, enough remains for them to display some of their original characters.

### 9.4 Scale and massing

The houses are all two storey, some with dormers in attics. There is a contrast between those that are setback and those almost directly on the road. This adds to the winding feeling of the road as the different sides reflect each other.

### 9.5 Construction and materials

The local limestone, ashlar dressings and stone-slate roofing are the most popular building materials, although some brick has been employed for the late Victorian properties and for detailing. Some modern window materials have crept in. The windows on nos. 3-6 are increasingly rare examples of early metal casements which was a style distributed via the canal network from the late 18th century onwards, showing the connection between the village and trade.



*The windows of 3-6 Middle Street*

## 9.6 Means of enclosure

The houses that are set back from the road are enclosed by low stone walling in building materials complimentary to the houses. The large banded wall with alternating lines of coursed and rubble limestone at the eastern end is part of the Walled Garden, probably the garden plot for the White House. There is also an interesting blue bull nose brick wall at the Old Bakehouse.

## 9.7 Trees, hedges, open spaces

Middle Street contains some very well-preserved kerbing in local stone which works well to protect the verge from erosion by traffic, and provide an aesthetically pleasing and locally distinctive definite edge to the verge. Lessons for the rest of the village could be learnt from this, as a replacement for the harsh concrete kerbing which occurs elsewhere.



*Natural stone kerbing on Middle Street*

## 9.8 Features of Special Interest

- Tompkins Terrace—almshouses built in the late 1800s and altered in 1925, to which the commemorative stone on the front of the building relates. A photograph from 1906 shows the almshouses before the works were undertaken to be of striking appearance. The reinstatement of the chimneys would have a very positive impact on the streetscene. The area in front of the building was previously enclosed using railing, however this is believed to have been removed during the 1940s for use as ammunition, and now the area provides off-street parking for residents with differential maintenance.
- 3-6 Middle Street is an unusually well-preserved terrace from the mid 19th century with iron casement windows and shutters. Although number 3 no longer retains its original window features, there may be a case for listing these properties as a fine example of an early 19th century vernacular terrace.



*3-6 Middle Street*



*The contrast between 1906 and 2008: The loss of the chimneys and front railings has had a dramatic effect on the building, which holds such a prominent site on the streetscene.*

## 9.9 Carriageways and footways

There is one footway along the road on the southern side. This is raised and begins after Tompkins Terrace.

The road is slightly too narrow to be considered to be two-way. The majority of cars wait to allow other motorists from the opposite direction through, which has a traffic calming effect, although the street has been the scene of several bad accidents in recent years. The road surface is tarmacadam with several repairs.

## 9.10 Threats

- Off-street parking is a difficulty. The smaller houses do not have parking spaces and this has led to the erosion of some unprotected verges.
- Some houses have been very highly restored, leaving them with an 'over-polished' appearance. The 'dirt' on the stone is often protecting the layer beneath, and harsh removal can be very damaging.



*Middle Farm*



*Blue bull nose brick used as coping*



*Details add touches of individuality*



*Large slates used as creasing/coping*

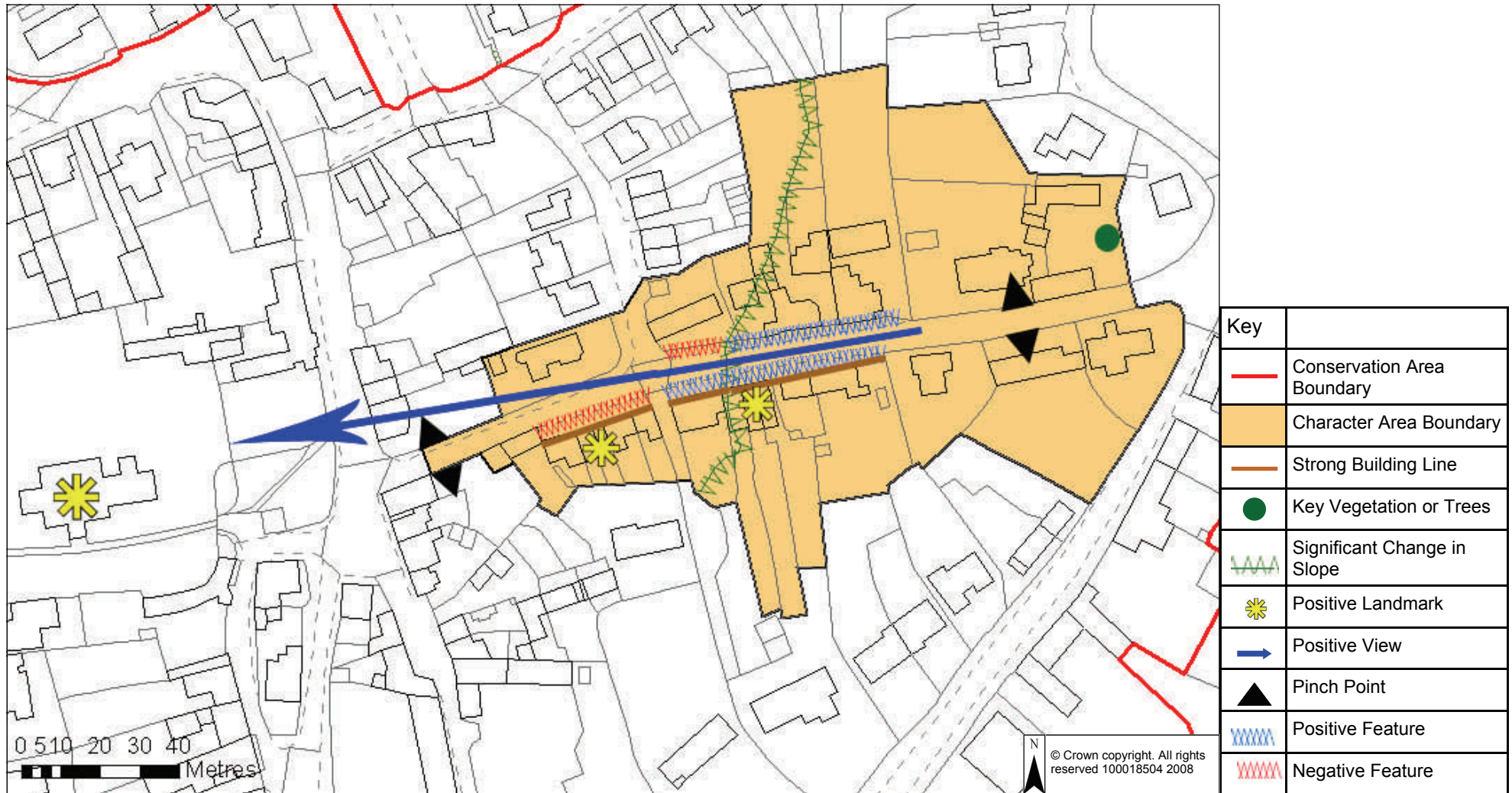
## 9.11 Key views

The view up Middle Street from the Lower Street/North Street junction frames the church between the houses. This is a very pleasing view, giving prominence to the church, and would be improved greatly by the removal of cars.



*The church is framed between the houses of Middle Street*

Fig. 15 Middle Street Character Area Visual Analysis



## 10. Lower Street and Mill Street Character Area

### 10.1 Land Use

Lower Street consists, on the south side, of former agricultural buildings belonging to Lower Farm, now converted to residential. Mill Street leads westward from the main village towards Islip Mill, and is entirely residential.

### 10.2 Street pattern

Both streets follow a strong linear pattern contained by houses fronting the road, visually framing the streetscene. Mill Street gently curves westward towards the site of the old mill, following the alignment of the River Ray, while Lower Street turns north-east towards the edge of the village, but still on low-lying land. The roads themselves demarcate the edge of the flood plain and properties on the south side of the river are subject to regular flooding.



*Bank Cottage—Grade II Listed*

### 10.3 Building age, type and style

The mill was established in the 11th century, and was a key part of the economy throughout the next century. It is likely that mill workers cottages grew up along the road between the village and the mill. The building style along Mill Street is 17th and 18th century vernacular, with a few 19th and 20th century additions dotted through the streetscene.

Lower Street is also vernacular and of the same time period, although these houses began life as agricultural barns and other associated buildings.

### 10.4 Scale and massing

The majority of the houses along both roads are two storey, although on Mill Street some are arguably 1 1/2 storey. Lower Street is composed mainly of detached buildings, due to its agricultural pedigree, whereas several houses on Mill Street are small terraces.

### 10.5 Construction and materials

The majority of houses are built of limestone rubble, some with ashlar or brick dressings. The Thatched Cottage on Lower Street, and no. 2 Mill Street are both listed and thatched, and the house on Mill Street is sited at a road junction, highlighting its importance in the village streetscene.

### 10.6 Means of enclosure

The majority of houses on Mill Street and the southern side of Lower Street front onto the road and thereby provide their own means of enclosure. Raybourne House on Mill Street is set back slightly and has an impressive set of railings dividing the street and a small paved area in front of the house. At the western end of Mill Street, a more modern house, The Paddock, is set back and has low stone walls set above the grass verge.



*Agricultural buildings converted into residences*

### 10.7 Trees, verges, open spaces

Both of these streets have a close relationship to the river, and the back gardens, particularly on Mill Street, are a key area of flood plain. While this may not be ideal for residents, they are compensated with a substantial rear plot and pleasing views over the fields beyond.

### 10.8 Features of special interest

The banded walling of the Walled Garden is striking and follows the curve of the wall around the corner of Middle Street and Lower Street.

The Grange on Mill Street, once known as Fieldside House, is tucked away behind Prospect House, containing the site of the old quarries within its gardens. The house appears on maps from the early 19th century, and its building style supports this.

### 10.9 Carriageways and footways

There is a small amount of stone pitching at both sides of the road at the entrance to Mill Street. This has partly been covered by modern tarmac, however it is important to preserve it as an early form of locally distinctive surface water drainage. There is a short section of footway which is covered in compressed gravel. This is an excellent rural solution for a footway and should be preserved, and if possible, expanded.



*Railings enclose without obscuring views*



*Traditional and effective coping*



*The banded brickwork of the Walled Garden*

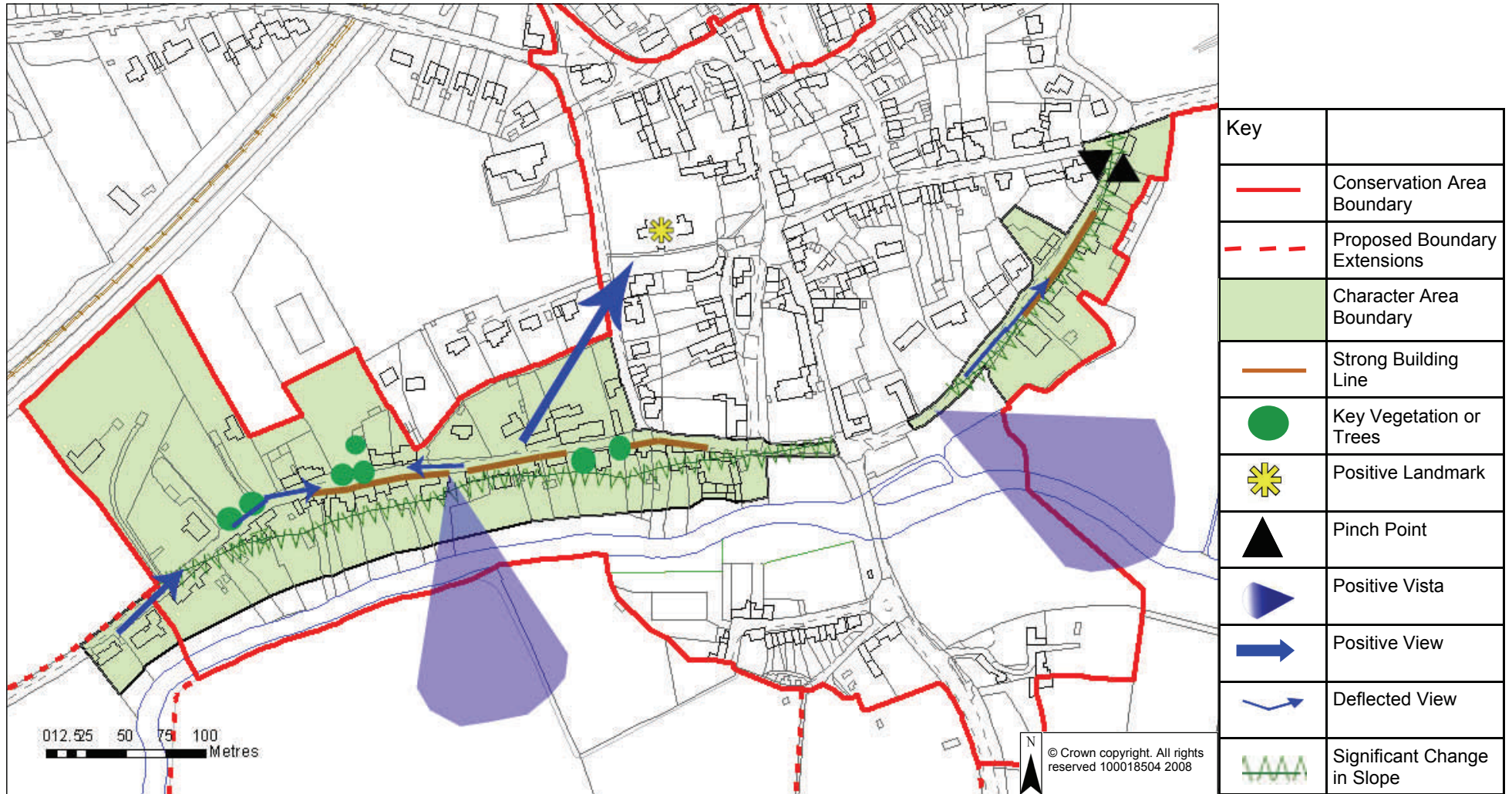
### 10.10 Threats

- Over head wires are visually intrusive in the streetscape and by liaising with service providers it might be possible to re-route them underground.
- Large wheeled refuse containers are difficult to store and many residents are forced to store them at the front of their properties. The presence of these containers is an unwelcome intrusion into the streetscene, however they are difficult to relocate due to their size.
- Flooding has become an issue in recent years as the Ray bursts its banks. The rear of the properties on the southern sides of the streets are in danger of flooding and must be prepared with every heavy rainstorm.

### 10.11 Key views

Due to the winding nature of the roads, neither affords expansive views east or west along the line of the road. There are glimpses of the open fields between the houses on the southern sides, and there is one good view of the church at the front of Apple Yard on Mill Street. However the deflected views along each street encourage the visitor to keep walking to discover the properties and open fields around the next bend in a most inviting manner.

Fig. 16 Lower Street and Mill Street Character Area Visual Analysis



## 11. Collice Street Character Area

### 11.1 Land Use

This area has been primarily residential for at least the last 200 years. According to census data, the area residents in the 19th century were mainly agricultural labourers, and several households of the same family would live here in these tiny houses.

### 11.2 Street pattern

The street is a single sided lane, turning 90° at the western end towards another farmstead. The terrace of small cottages runs along the southern side, overlooking the river to the north, with 3-4 houses at the north-western end backing onto the river.

### 11.3 Building age, type and style

The street appears on 18th century maps, and the architecture is indicative of vernacular buildings of the time. There are few additional features at the front of the properties, preserving the historic aspects of the streetscene, however there have been several additions such as large conservatories at the rear, which can be seen from the allotments above Bridge Street.

### 11.4 Scale and massing

The houses are all two storeys but of cottage dimensions, some now with an attic conversion inserted. The ceilings inside are very low, and the buildings are much smaller in height than other two storey buildings in the village. From the back, it is more obvious that several cottages have been converted into single dwellings, whereas the front still projects the feeling of a row of small cottages. The area projects the atmosphere of intimacy and self-containment. The largest house at the eastern end of the street is a modern addition, a rebuild of an earlier property.



*Collice Street entrance*

### 11.5 Construction and materials

The houses are predominantly limestone rubble, stone-slate with plank wooden doors and small single-glazed casement windows still with traditional timber lintels. Modern windows and doors of alien size, materials, proportion and design are slowly creeping in. Some houses have inserted red brick detailing around new windows which, although a characteristic feature of the wider area, detracts from their appearance.

### 11.6 Means of enclosure

A limestone wall separates the street from the ford area, and wooden picket fencing runs along the back of the houses. The strong building line of the main terrace provides a feeling of enclosure.

### 11.7 Trees, hedges, open spaces

The ford is the largest expanse of open space on the northern side of the area. This unfortunately is now inaccessible due to the trees and vegetation which have grown up there. To the southern side are the allotments and Millennium Wood which will be discussed more thoroughly in section 17.

### 11.8 Carriageways and footways

A grassed verge runs in front of the properties, and this is being significantly eroded by car parking. Part of this footway is raised which protects the main part of it from the cars. Due to the size of the street, there are no other forms of footway, although a public right of way runs through the allotments to the River Cherwell.

### 11.9 Features of special interests

The positioning of Bridge Cottage opposite the ford is a good historic reminder of how important the seasonal activities of the river were to the village. The streetscene as a whole is very pleasing and provides a good example of vernacular cottages of the time.

### 11.10 Threats

- Flooding is a constant risk to the residents in Collice Street. During the July floods of 2007, several houses were damaged, and wary homeowners now keep a supply of sandbags beside their doors.
- The increased use of uPVC windows is having a damaging effect on the streetscape. Double glazing changes the character of windows through its materials, detailing and reflective properties.



*Sandbags are almost a permanent feature now*



*Bridge Street*



*Traditional wooden lintel, leaded window*

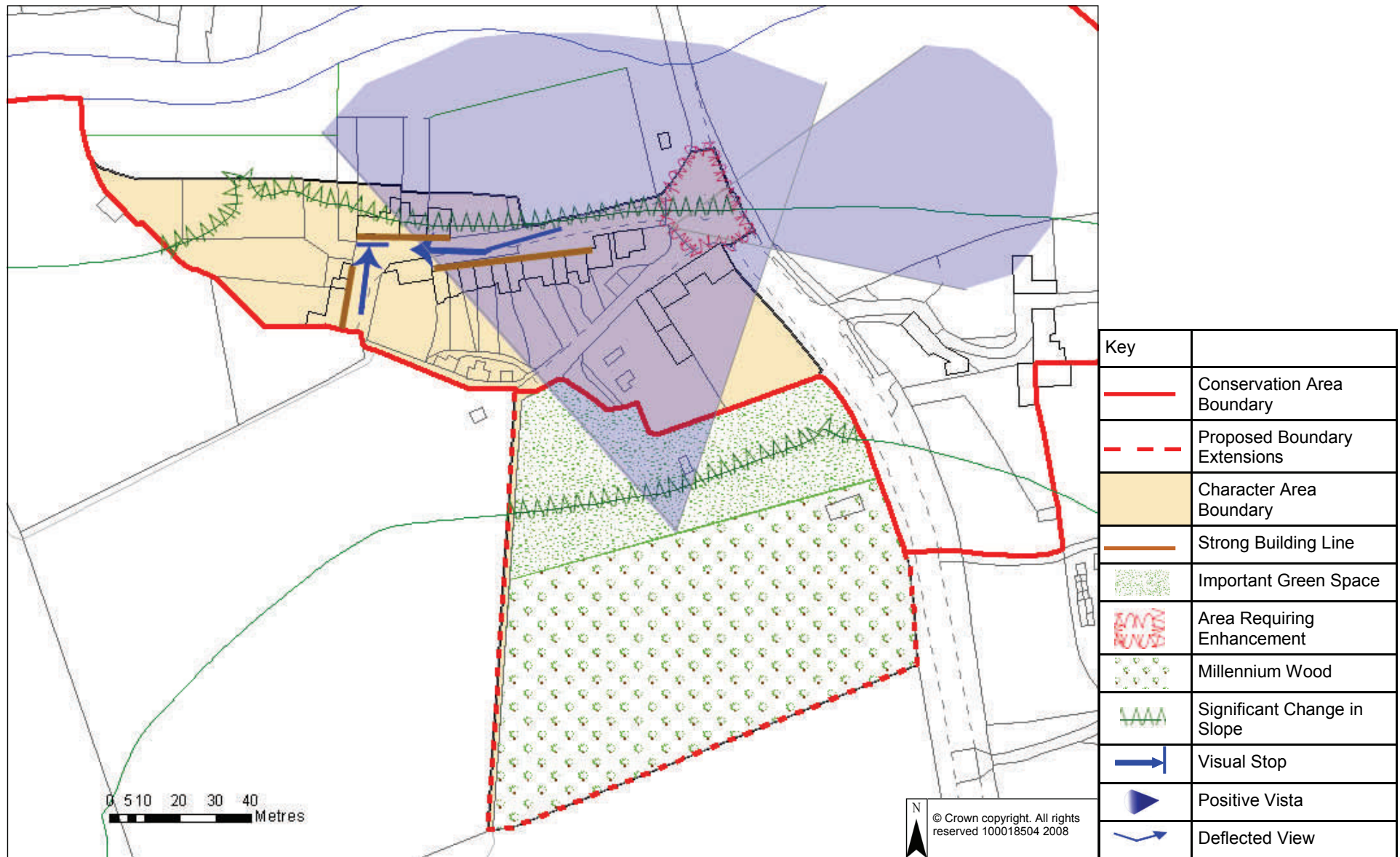
### 11.11 Key views

The vista across the fields at the end of Bridge Street is a pleasant contrast to the intimate scale and relative enclosure of Collice Street. The view eastwards down the street across the flood plain is that of a traditional street of workers' cottages.



*The view south towards World's End*

Fig. 17 Collice Street Character Area Visual Analysis



## 12. Manor Farm Character Area

### 12.1 Land Use

There are only 3 properties in this character area, all of which are very substantial, and have smaller buildings within their grounds. The land is mainly agricultural. It is the most rural part of the conservation area, based upon one of the remaining working farms in the village. The fields to the north-east were the site of a medieval moated house and associated fishponds.



*Manor Farm*

### 12.2 Street pattern

The road is winding and single-lane after turning south towards Lower Street. It curves to follow the natural line of the field

### 12.3 Building age, type and style

Manor Farm is a Grade II listed building, dating chiefly from the 17th and 18th centuries, with incorporated earlier elements. Moor End is slightly later, being Georgian in style, and Orchard House is a very recent addition although built in a neo-Gothic style.

### 12.4 Scale and massing

The houses are all 2 storey with attic accommodation with the exception of Manor Farm where the living accommodation has not been extended into the attic space.

### 12.5 Construction and materials

The properties are all built of coursed squared limestone or limestone rubble, with stone-slate roofing. Manor Farm also has brick gabled stacks. The materials are very homogenous and subtly link the three different styles of building.

### 12.6 Means of enclosure

Walling is chiefly stone, some dry stone walling and some with dry mortar. The walls around Orchard House have recently been increased in height, nearing 1.8m. This will create an area of enclosure in what is otherwise a very open area. Both Manor Farm and Moor End have low stone walls at the front of the properties, which allow a good view of the houses while protecting their privacy.



*Moor End*



*Moatfield*

### **12.7 Trees, hedges, open spaces**

The residential area is relatively open due to the low stone walling. Manor Farm has an extensive front garden incorporating a formal circular garden and disused grass tennis court with small orchard leading on to the farmyard. Trees are not plentiful although there is a small wooded area on the corner of North Street. Moatfield is the large open field in which the medieval moated courthouse of William de Curtlyngton probably stood. The 7 acres of pasture are now used for summer grazing of cattle. The area is prone to flooding, despite not being in the flood plain, due to its height above the water table and proximity to a Ray extension channel.

### **12.8 Features of special interest**

The remains of the courthouse in Moatfield can be clearly seen when walking across, or from the air during the summer or rainy periods. The fishponds are still evident and do still fill with water during the flood season.

### **12.9 Carriageways and footways**

There are no footways in this area, just wide grassed verges which are gradually being eroded by passing traffic and farm vehicles. The single-lane section of the road is lined with walls—natural stone lined with earth beside the fields, and limestone or concrete on the side by the modern houses. Manor Farm has a gravel driveway which occasionally egresses onto the carriageway.

### **12.10 Threats**

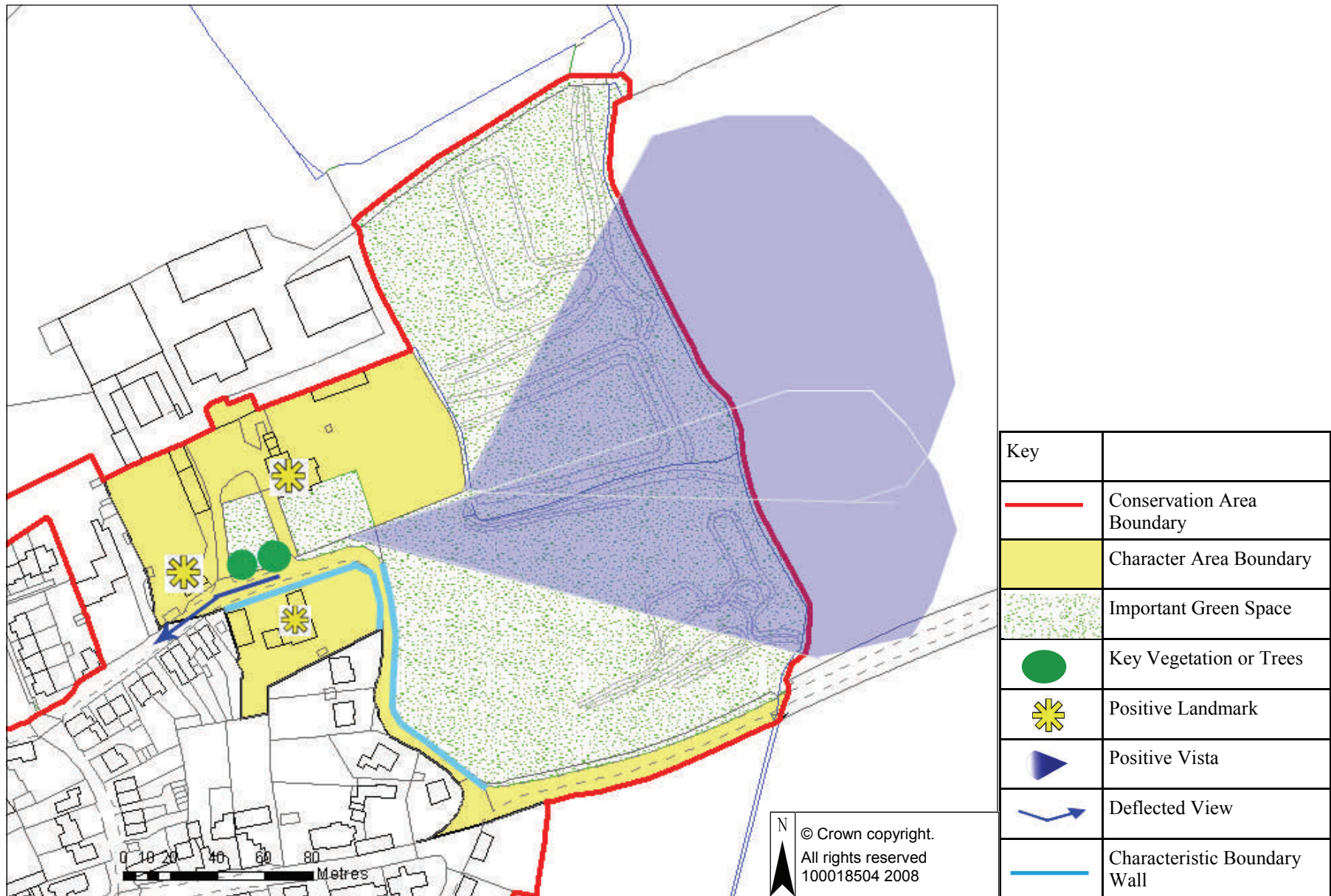
- The grass verges which add to the openness of the area are being eroded by traffic. Unfortunately, the width of the road prevents much action being taken to halt this, and the addition of kerbing would be inappropriate due to the rural location.
- The high walling of Orchard House may change the open character of this area if allowed to increase in height at its present rate.

### **12.11 Key views**

The view across Moatfield is one of the few truly open views in the village. On a clear day, Charlton-on-Otmoor can be seen over the fields.

Heading down North Street from the semi-detached houses, the eye is caught by the three similar and striking properties there; each one is different and yet their matching materials and rural location bring them together to form a pleasing group.

**Fig. 18 Manor Farm Character Area Visual Analysis**



## 13. Wheatley Road Character Area

### 13.1 Land Use

The area was formerly the site of Hillside Farm, and the site contains agricultural buildings converted into houses. According to census data, this area is likely to have been known as Oxford Road during the 19th century.

### 13.2 Street pattern

The houses are sited along a single width winding track. One house, Hillside, has off-street parking fronting Wheatley Road; the remainder are set back from the road.



*The close-knit relationship of properties within the area*

### 13.3 Building age, type and style

The converted buildings, none of which are listed, are vernacular in style and are likely to date from the late 18th to the late 19th century, with a few 20th century additions. They are functional farm buildings and as a result make spacious homes.

### 13.4 Scale and massing

The houses are all 2 storey with gardens and off-street parking. It is difficult to judge just how large the houses and their plots are from the lane, as the trees and arrangement of houses is difficult to see around except on a map.

### 13.5 Construction and materials

Local limestone, Welsh-slate and stone-slate are the chief materials with some brick gable stacks. 20th century repairs and alterations have included the insertions of uPVC windows and doors.



*This area is relatively well-hidden from the main village*

### 13.6 Means of enclosure

The lane is the main dividing feature between the properties. A low hedge divides this from Meadowside, and low fences coupled with vegetation is the main form of separation from each dwelling.

### 13.7 Trees, hedges, open spaces

As mentioned, hedges play an important part in the area by marking boundaries. Within the area there are small gardens which provide open space for each property, however communal open space is not plentiful.

**Fig. 17 Wheatley Road Character Area Visual Analysis**



## 14. Later/Modern Infill

These area pockets are residential and predominantly 1960s and 1970s housing, where previously agricultural buildings associated with Lower and Middle Farm stood.

The houses are mainly two storey, some single storey with attic conversions and box dormers. There are some architectural details typical of the era but nothing of particular note.

Brick and tile are the main building materials with timber and tile cladding, and painted render also popular. The materials are reflective of the period but not locally distinctive with no particular reference to the local colour palette.

In some areas there is a lack of boundary markers between the houses which both adds a feeling of space and is in marked contrast to the majority of the village. Some of this later modern infill occupies backland locations (e.g. Abbotsbury, Middle Street) and has a neutral impact on the Conservation Area but other plots are large and some occupy prominent locations in the village (e.g. the six later properties on Lower Street and the four overlooking the eastern fields on North Street).



*Middle Way*



*Lower Street*



*North Street*

In general this recent development has a neutral or negative effect on the Conservation Area, particularly as a couple of buildings occupy plots that intrude into key views. Since they were constructed the designation of the conservation area enables tighter controls on the appropriateness of infill development.

In seeking to identify sites for additional housing in the rural areas, the Council will have regard to the established character of the Conservation Area as outlined in this appraisal. There could be scope for enhancement of the Conservation Area by the redevelopment of the more prominent low density development that lacks locally distinctive character. Any new development under consideration would have to be sympathetic to the rural nature of the village and the historic elements of the conservation area.

## 15. River Valley and Islip Mill Character Area

### 15.1 Justification for extension

The Council considers that there is justification for the Conservation Area to be extended along the river corridor to the Mill. The Mill is intrinsically linked to the village through its history and the strong visual relationship that the lower village has with the river, and therefore is considered to be worthy of the protection afforded by designation.

### 15.2 Land Use

The ford next to the bridge was closed by the Turnpike Trustees in 1788, although the open space created by its use was still evident in the early 20th century. The mill was closed and demolished in 1949. There are some associated estate houses by the site of the old mill, and the rest of the river valley is flood plain and agricultural land.

The area south of the Old Rectory was the site of one of two fords. This area (right) still floods during heavy rains or high water levels, however it is cut off from the roads by tall trees and is therefore sheltered and relatively quiet. It is regrettable that this area is not open to public enjoyment as it is well suited as a picnic site or play area. Any built development would be unsuitable due to the flooding and Old Rectory views, which is likely to be the reason for the lack of opportunity taken in this area.

In addition to this, the opposite side of the ford which connects to Collice Street (below right) is also an undeveloped and underused area. The trees and undergrowth vegetation are in need of management to prevent them over-flowing into the river.

A small section of the back gardens of the southern houses on Mill Street has been included in this character area as they are deemed to be part of the flood zone required for the river. Although the gardens are all raised from the bank, they are still prone to flooding and are therefore included here as making an essential contribution to the setting of the River Ray.



*The old ford on the northern bank*

### 15.3 River pattern

The Ray runs through the southern part of the village and determines the street pattern and linear open space that is the flood plain.

For the most part, development in Mill Street and Collice Street inhibits views of the river. Large private garden plots run south to the river, and are inherently important to the setting of the river and to the houses on the north side.

There are two river islands to the east of the bridge, and the river's course has been changed over the years, being widened in the 19th century to accommodate the new bridge.



*View across the southern bank ford*

## 15.4 Building age, type and style

There are relatively few buildings in this character area except for the ones associated with the mill. The Millhouse still stands and is Grade II listed. The barns and cottages around the mill have now been converted to/continued as dwellings. The converted buildings are mainly single storey. There are three estate workers cottages on either side of Mill Lane, one detached and the others semi-detached, which all contribute to the historic setting of the mill.

The other main structure in the area is the bridge. Constructed in 1878, the present bridge replaced an earlier four-span bridge of uncertain date. The river bed was deepened in the early 19th century and the increase in current led to safety concerns about the bridge. Combined with the downturn in traffic at this time, the opportunity was taken to replace the structure.



*Islip Bridge from the southern bank*

## 15.5 Threats

- The area has historically been prone to flooding. For the most part, this is a vital part of replenishing the minerals in the surrounding agricultural land, however it can be devastating for local farmers. Regular maintenance of the river and its banks is necessary to lessen the severity of any flooding which may occur.
- Development on the area of land at the western end of Lower Street (below) would not be acceptable due to the flooding hazards. It would also lose vital open space from which it is possible to view the fields of the Otmoor valley and the two river islands.

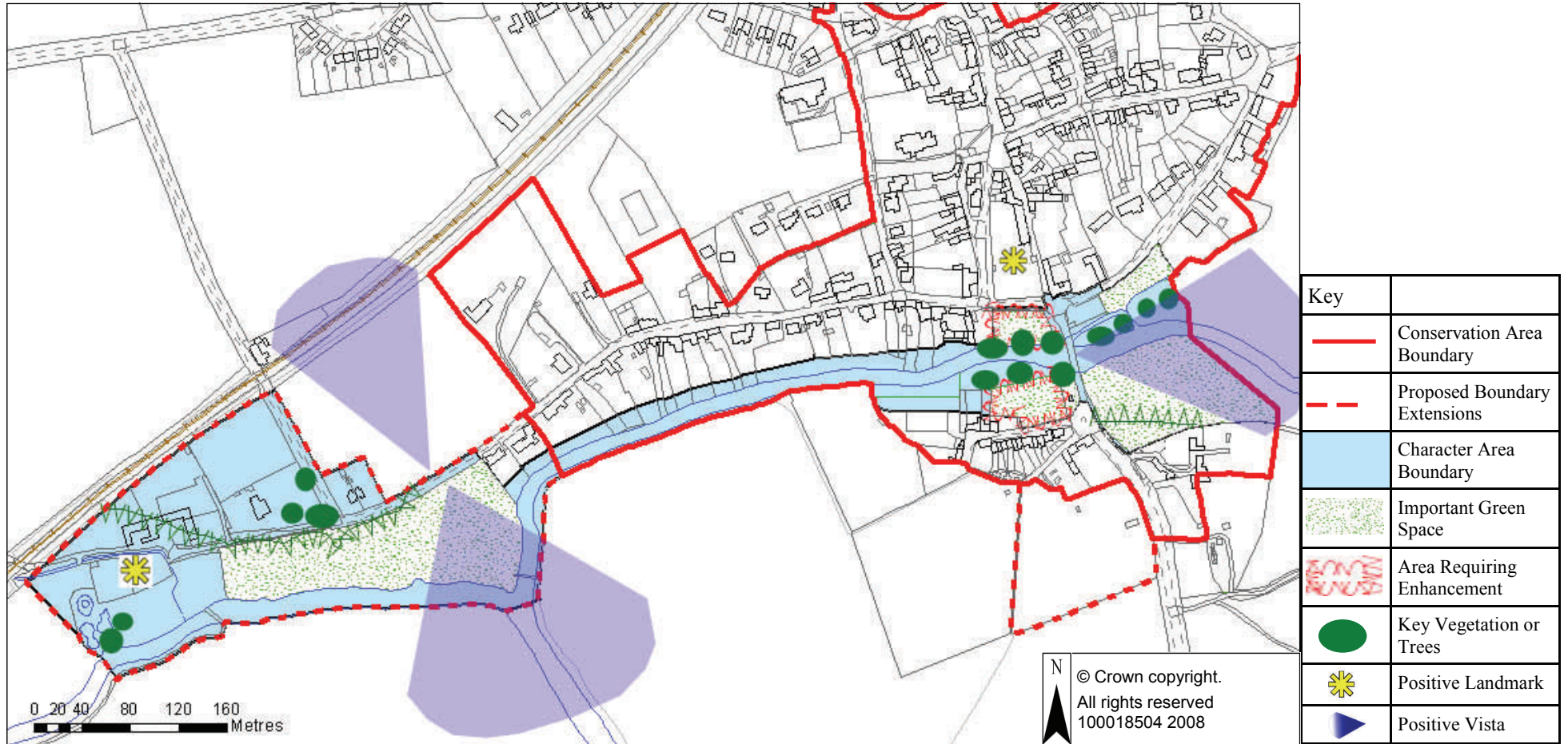


*The vital flood plain area on the north bank*



*Views of the River, ford and mill from the early 20th century*

Fig. 20 River Valley and Islip Mill Character Area Visual Analysis



## 16. Details





## 17. Historic Photographs



Greystones & Key Cottage



Wooster Arms c. 1900



Church Square 1906



Drapers and stores c. 1900



North Street c. 1900



River View 1910-1930



Millfield, Mill Street c. 1900



Middle Street c. 1900



Islip Bridge and poplar trees c.



The Ford 1885



High Street and Red Lion c. 1900



Collice Street c. 1900

## 18. Management Plan

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 Islip 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 that predates the Conservation Area designation as well as the cumulative impact of numerous alterations to the traditional but unlisted buildings within the area have started to undermine the historic structure of the village and also parts of its fabric.

The surrounding fields are vital to an area which has so little open space within its urban centre, and are key to external views of and from the village.

There are few areas left for infill development in the village excepting those mentioned, principally that of the coal depot, or outside the Conservation Area, and it is important that the setting of the Conservation Area as well as the setting of listed buildings are protected. The redevelopment of some of the 20th century housing with materials and/or styles more in keeping with the village would respect the visual amenity of the area.

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 within Conservation Areas 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.



*The contrast between traditional and replacement finishes on windows in the village*

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 20<sup>th</sup> century concrete tiles on historic properties are fortunately rare in Islip. On the houses which do have this roofing material, when possible a return to traditional Stonesfield/Welsh slate or thatch should be encouraged.



*Traditional roofing materials such as thatch are encouraged as they add so much to the historic character of the area*

## 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 discreet 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 fibre-glass 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 reinstatement of traditional features of the villages such as stiles and pumps.



*The reinstated pump of Collice Street*

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. It is essential that the historic and rural nature of the area is not overwhelmed.

13. 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.



*Overhead wires on Lower Street*

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



*The difference between traditional and modern*

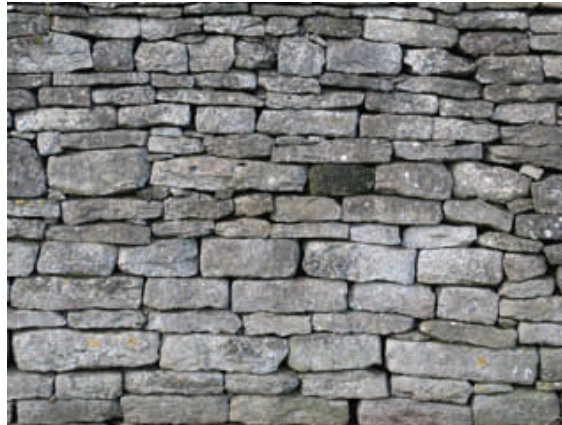
15. Create a dialogue with other authorities and agencies to rationalise any street furniture and ensure it is in keeping with the character of the area. Replacement of existing inappropriate street furniture should be encouraged wherever possible.

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.



*Unsympathetic lighting can ruin a streetscene as well as being disturbing to residents*

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.



*Traditional walling*

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

19. 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 Islip, in particular those which cross the north-eastern fields, are key to maintaining the village's rural character.

20. Promote the use of a suitable style of boundary for the location within the village, for example the replacement of degrading post and rail fencing such as those on Wheatley Road with walling or fencing.



*Effective rural fencing*

21. Promote the use of a suitable style of road bollarding for the location within the village, for example the use of simple posts and reflectors such as those on the High Street and Lower Street.



*Unobtrusive bollarding in traditional materials*

## Management and protection of important green spaces

The Council Will:

1. Encourage the retention of front gardens and boundary hedges where appropriate.

2. Promote the retention of significant open spaces and field systems, particularly in the south and east of the village. These historic fields are key to the character of the area because they create a rural and historic feel to the settlement.



*Moatfield*

3. Promote positive management of vegetation, particularly on the river banks and within key views. 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 inappropri-

-ate 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 Islip are currently subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

4. Preserve the character and appearance of open spaces within the Conservation Area with sympathetic use, such as with the development of the ford area. Urban features such as modern roadside kerbing should be avoided. The council will liaise with the county council on appropriate and legal methods to prevent erosion of grass verges through parking.

5. Promote the retention of grass verges within the village, and the protection of traditional kerbing/pitching.

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 the riverbanks, without compromising flood defences, and the traditional features that accompany them.



*View east from the bridge across the Otmoor valley*

8. Promote work to enhance the ecological value of the village fields by supporting the education of Young Farmers.

9. Encourage community involvement in maintaining and enhancing the verges and footways.

## 19. Proposed Conservation Area boundary revisions and justification

**19.1** The original designation and 1994 extensions cover most of the village, with the exception of the 20th century development to the north and west. There is justification for the inclusion of these identified key areas of open space that are of historical interest and have a strong visual relationship with the Conservation Area, and the Council is seeking opinions of interested parties on this matter. The extensions are also intended to rationalise the boundary.

The boundary extension includes:

1. The parish allotments and Millennium Wood
2. Land to the west of the present conservation area to the site of Islip Mill.

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

### 19.2 Southern extension

The boundary is extended to the south to include the parish allotments and Millennium Wood. This area has been chosen due to the allotments' relationship to the developments on Bridge Street and Collice Street.

In addition, the Millennium Wood has been included. This woodland is a rare example of undeveloped open space in the village, and has been well-cared-for by the villagers. The woodland affords views back to the village which are unobtainable in other areas, and despite being adjacent to the main road, provides a haven of tranquillity which it is important to protect.



*The Millennium Wood*

### 19.3 Western extension

The boundary is extended to the west to include the site of Islip Mill, and the field to the west of Mill Lane. This is an area which has previously been put forward by the parish council for inclusion. Although the mill was demolished in 1949, the Grade II listed millhouse still survives as a residence, along with some associated estate cottages and barns (now converted to residences). The mill had a significant impact on the village throughout its history, being a major part of the economy, and was the reason for the naming and building of Mill Street. Therefore it is considered of high importance and in need of protection through designation.



*Part of the river valley*

Fig. 20 Original Conservation Area boundary

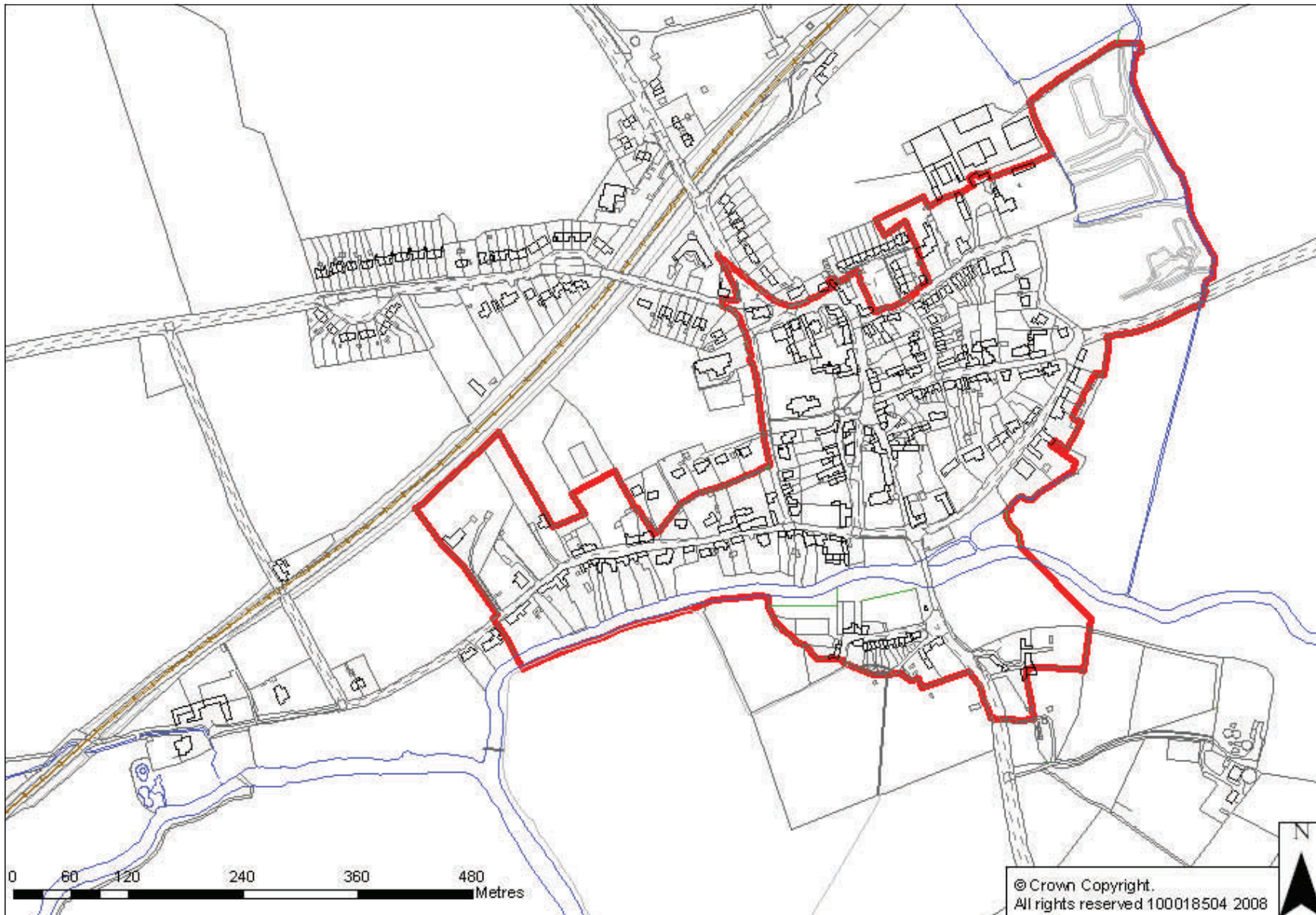
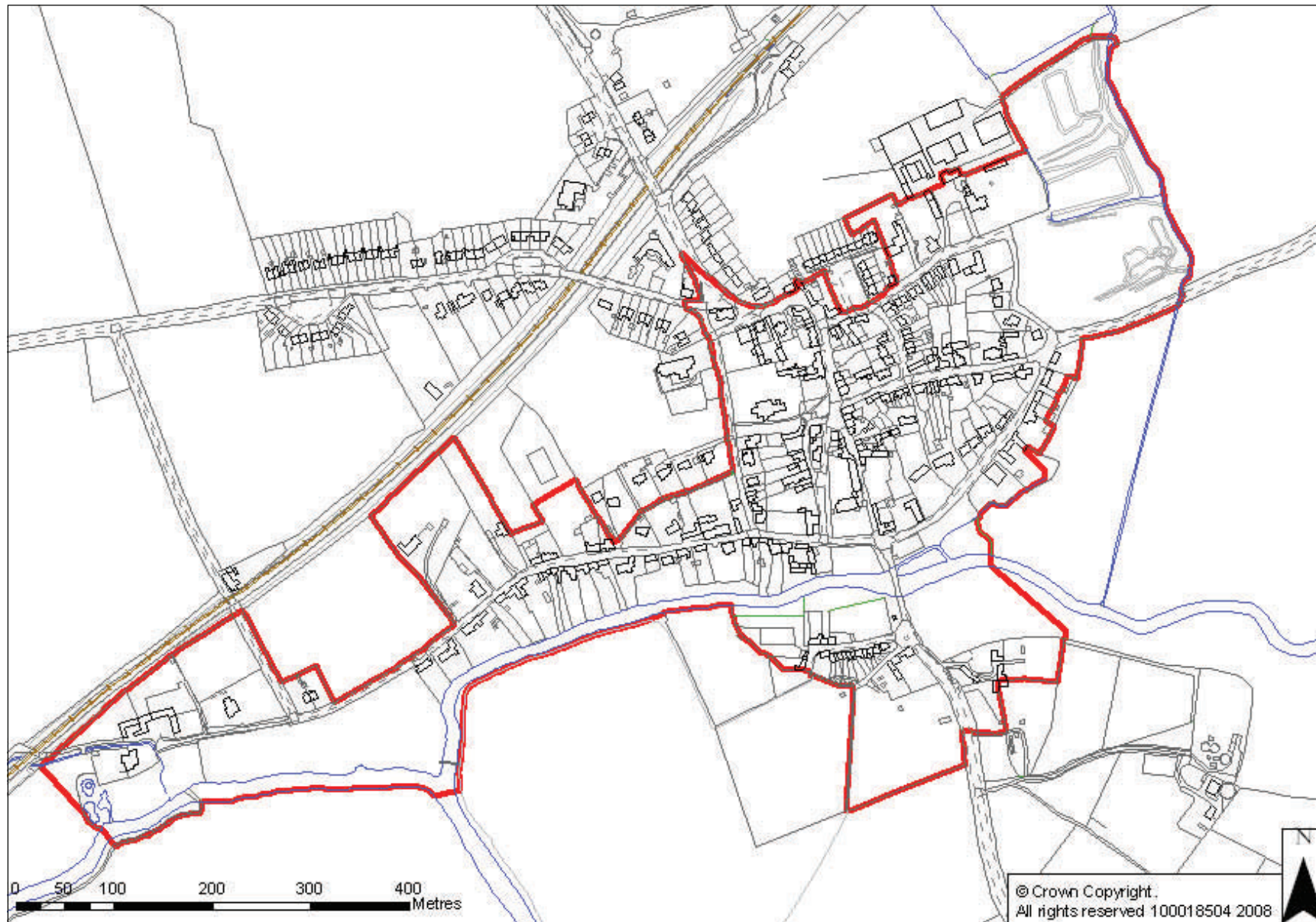


Fig. 21 Proposed Conservation Area boundary



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## 21. 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 terms 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 interest;
- (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.

**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 the character 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.

**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.

**EN50** 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.

## Acknowledgements

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