



Balscote Conservation Area Appraisal

February 2022

Planning Policy and Conservation



Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

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There has been a delay in adopting the document due to a reprioritisation of resources during the Covid 19 Pandemic. The appraisal was finalised in March 2020, but policies and references have been updated where necessary. There have been no major planning applications submitted since March 2020.

1. Introduction

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What is a conservation area?

- 1.1 Conservation area status is awarded to places that are deemed to be of 'special architectural and historical interest'. The intention is not to prevent change or development in conservation areas but to try and manage change in order to protect and enhance the special character and appearance of the area.
- 1.2 Balscote was designated a Conservation Area in 1980. This conservation area appraisal and management plan is the second review of the Balscote Conservation Area boundary, and the second appraisal. The appraisal involved a combination of walk over surveys of the settlement (undertaken in the spring of 2019), research using historic sources and an assessment of known management data for the area. The appraisal is based on a template produced by Cherwell District Council for conservation area appraisals and has taken into account 'Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1' (2019).
- 1.3 The Balscote Conservation Area Boundary is shown in Figure 1 and the details of its designation are covered in Chapter 13 of this conservation area appraisal.

Key Characteristics of Balscote

- 1.4 A summary of the key characteristics of Balscote are:
 - The village is a small to medium sized village in a rural location 7km west of the town of Banbury. The village is also only 1km from the main A422 road which runs from Stratford-on Avon to Banbury. The village lies within an open upland landscape that has an agricultural character;
 - The character of the village itself is varied, the settlement is arranged around a triangle of roads, to which the church, The Butchers Arms public house and The Manor House (Now Manor Farmhouse) form the centre. Historic farmsteads are dispersed throughout the village all of which have now been converted to residential properties. The village saw substantial development in the 20th century and this adds to the diversity of the settlement.
 - Balscote is a village of agricultural origins and still retains a strong rural character with farm houses and their associated buildings still a prominent feature. Historically the settlement was tied to the Abbey at Wroxton. The overall physical form of the settlement is one of detached properties arranged in a compact nature around the three main roads. The prominent building material is ironstone and the majority of the buildings are either small cottages, farmhouses or converted farm buildings. Two notable farms within the village are Priory Farm and Grange Farm built in the late 14th or early 15th centuries probably by Wroxton Priory, other than the church these are considered to be the oldest buildings within the village.
 - There is a strong building line within Balscote with most buildings sitting close to the road. Because of the enclosed nature of the village and the differing land levels, views are mostly contained within the settlement. These internal views do however visually connect one part of the village to another and are fundamental to its character.

Summary of issues and opportunities

- 1.5 The future preservation and enhancement of the special character of the Balscote Conservation Area, will owe much to the positive management of the area by homeowners, landowners, the parish council, neighbouring parish councils, the district council, the county council, and service providers.
- 1.6 In addition to existing national statutory legislation and local planning control, the following opportunities for enhancement have been identified:
- propose buildings and other historic features to be put forward for the Register of Local Heritage Assets (see Appendix 3)
 - encourage the protection of historic detail and the reinstatement of missing architectural details;
 - consider how an Article 4 Direction, to remove selected permitted development rights could protect and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area (see Appendix 4 if taken forward this would form a separate process and consultation);
 - ensure that any new development is of a high quality, sustainable and sympathetic to the conservation area;
 - consider how to effectively manage the distinctive characteristics of the settlement.

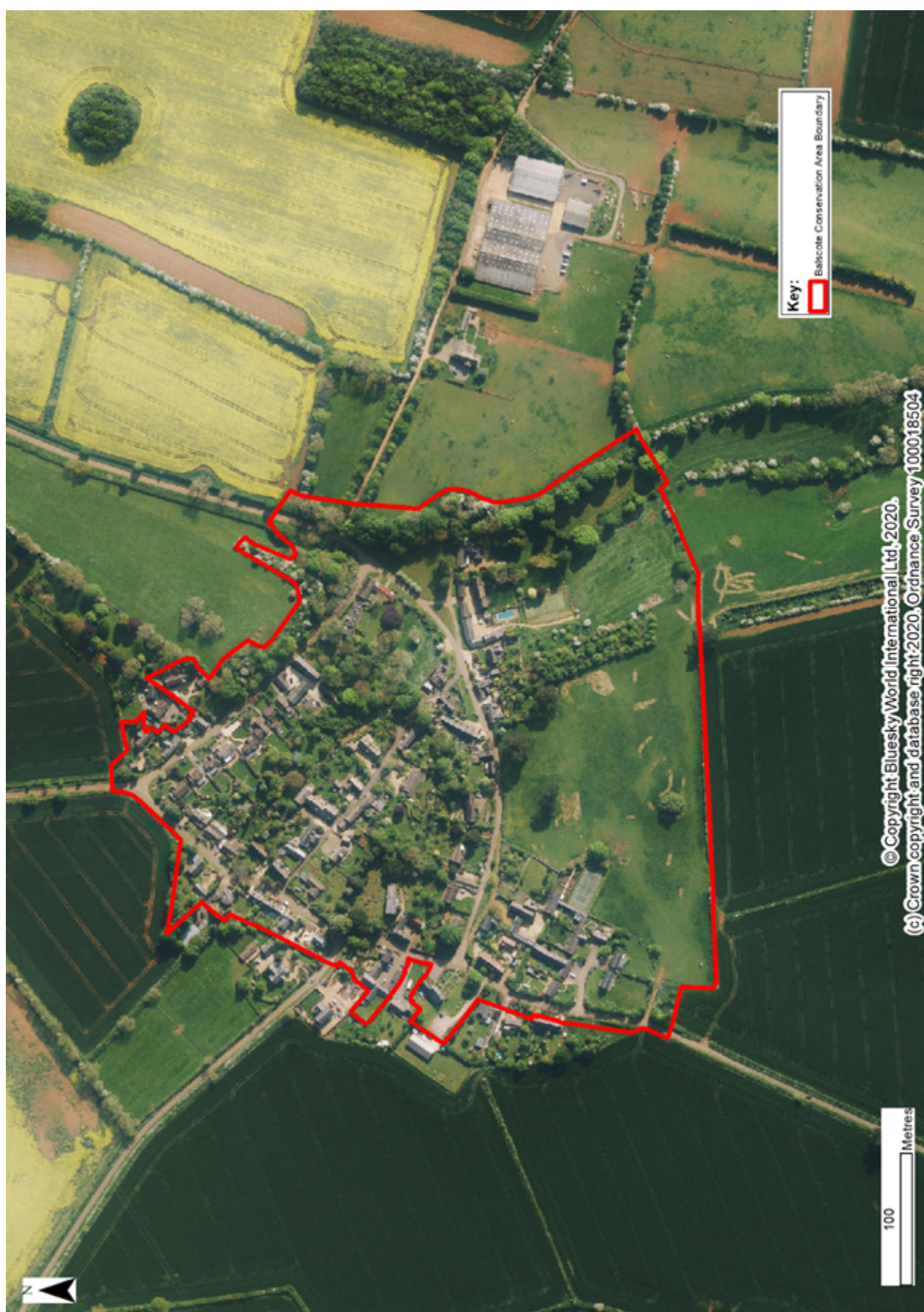


Figure 1. The Balscote Conservation Area boundary (2020) on the 2014-5 Aerial Photograph, see Chapter 13

2. Planning Policy Context

2. Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 The first conservation areas were designated under the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Section 69), placed a duty upon local planning authorities to identify areas of 'special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance', through an appraisal process. Local planning authorities also have a duty under the Act to consider boundary revisions to their Conservation Areas 'from time to time'. Since 1967, just under 10,000 Conservation Areas have been designated in England, including 60 in Cherwell District.
- 2.2 Protection for the built heritage is conferred under primary legislation. This document should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, saved retained policies from the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 and the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1. Appendix 1 of this appraisal provides a list of plans and policies relevant to heritage and conservation. These were all current at the time of publication. The up to date planning policy situation should be checked on Cherwell District Council and government websites.
- 2.3 Historic England advise local planning authorities to consult the public in the conservation area and take account of the views expressed. The perspective of people living and working in the area is considered to add depth to the appraisal and generate support and understanding for future plans. The advice current at the time of the appraisal is contained within 'Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1' (2019).
- 2.4 The purpose of this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is:
- to provide a clear definition of the area's special architectural and/or historic interest;
 - to identify ways in which the unique characteristics can be preserved and/or enhanced;
 - to strengthen justification for designation of the conservation area;
 - to review the boundary of the conservation area;
 - to create a clear context for future development in accordance with conservation area policies in national guidance and the Local Plan; and
 - to consult with the public and raise awareness of conservation area issues.
- 2.5 This appraisal and management plan aims to promote and support developments that help to preserve and/or enhance the character of the Balscote Conservation Area. It is not an attempt to stifle change. The aim is to strike a balance so that the interests of conservation are given their full weight against the needs for change and development. This document examines the reasons for designation, defining the qualities that make up its special interest, character and appearance. The omission of any reference to a particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.
- 2.6 The significant heritage assets in Balscote are shown in Figure 14 and Appendix 2. These include the current designated heritage assets and the designated conservation area boundary for the village.

- 2.7 The Council has a duty under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to identify locally significant 'heritage assets' which can be historic buildings, structures, objects or places that have historical importance or contribute to the built heritage, character or appearance of the area. There are buildings and structures which make a positive contribution to the Balscote conservation area, and these are identified in Appendix 3. The conservation area appraisal provides the opportunity to assess the significance of these buildings and structures and allows through a separate process for them to be considered in line with the Council's criteria for inclusion on the districtwide 'Register of Local Heritage Assets'.
- 2.8 Appendix 4 discusses the appropriateness of Article 4 directions to manage the protection of the significance of the conservation area. This conservation area appraisal does not make any Article 4 directions, this would form part of a separate process and consultation.

3. Location

3. Location

- 3.1 The village of Balscote is situated in the Ironstone Downs approximately 7 km (4 1 / 2 miles) west of Banbury in the Parish of Wroxton.
- 3.2 The village is located one kilometre to the south of the A422 Stratford Road which is the main road from Stratford-on-Avon to Banbury; this road bisects the parish east to west. The village of Wroxton lies 2 km (1 1 / 2 miles) to the east.
- 3.3 The parish of Wroxton was once traversed by ancient trackways and by the salt way which was a route from the salt works in Worcestershire to London. No evidence of Roman roads have been found but there are traces of some Roman settlement. The current Stratford Road (A422) was probably in use by the Anglo Saxons and was later turnpiked.
- 3.4 The roads within the village form a triangle around the core of the settlement, then radiate out one at each corner of the triangle. There is an additional road that leaves the village at the west. A Public Right of Way and a Bridleway both enter /leave the village in the south west corner.

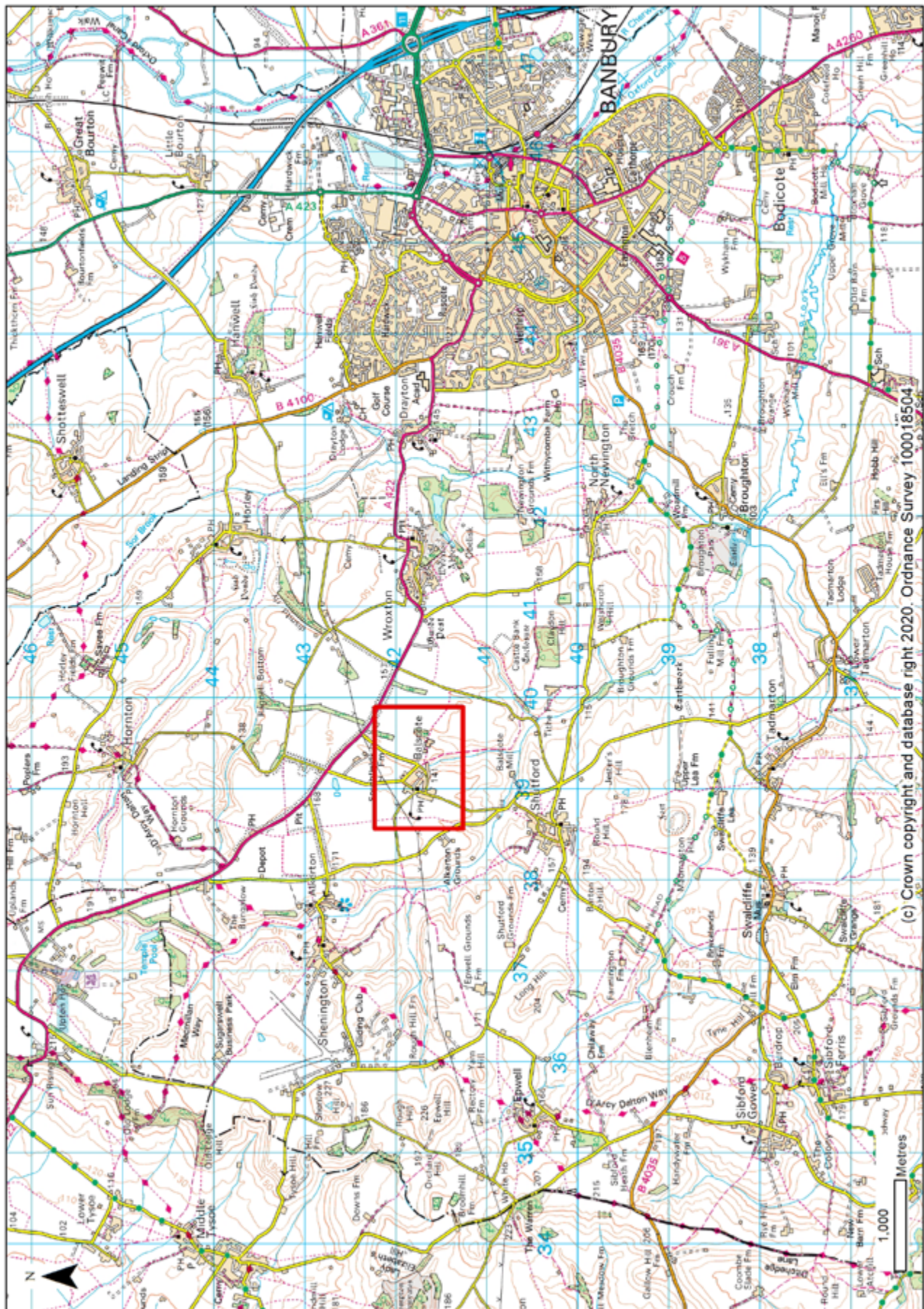


Figure 2. Current OS map showing location of Balcote

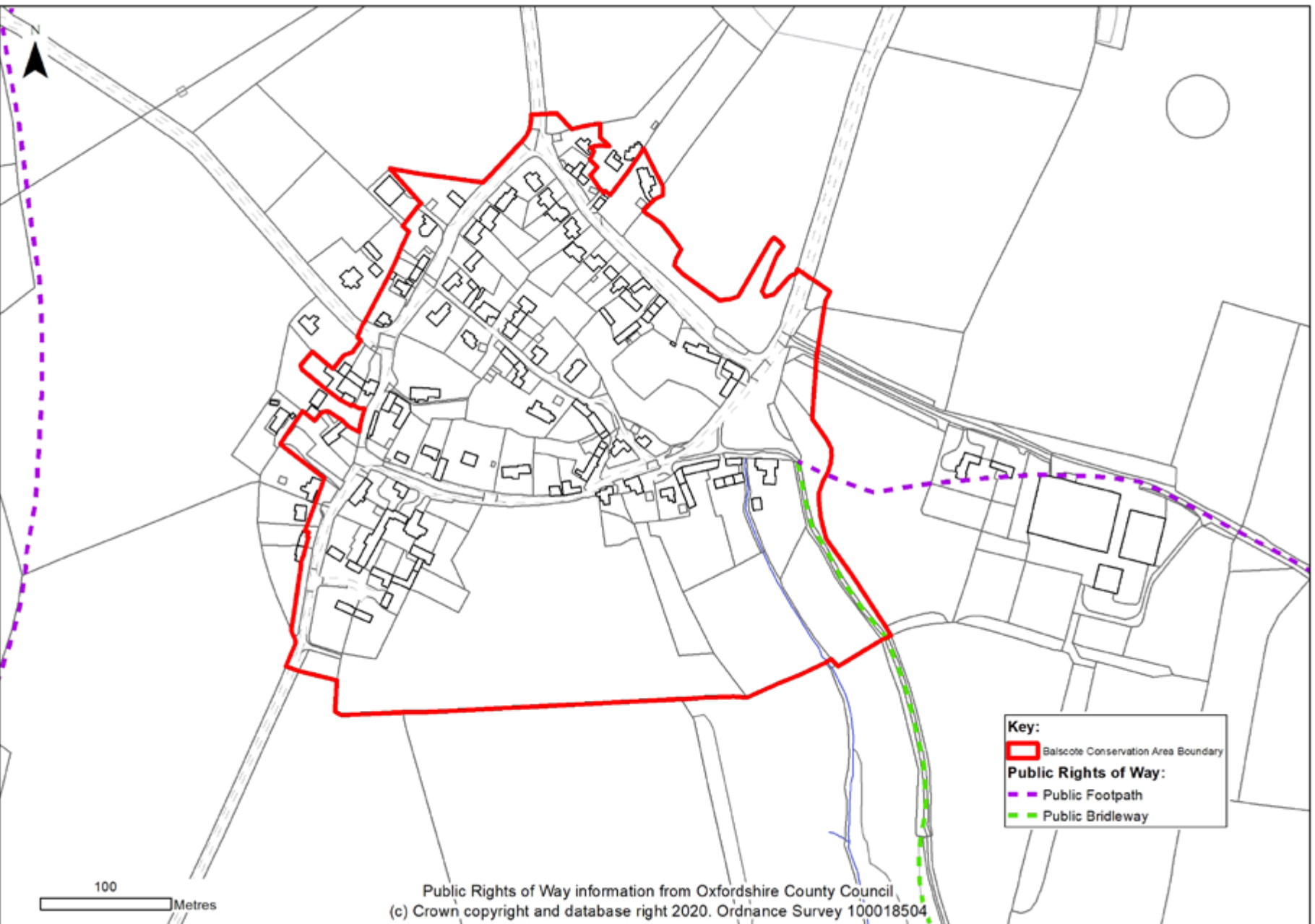


Figure 3. The Balscote Conservation Area boundary (2020) with Public Rights of Way, see Chapter 13

4. Geology and Topography

4. Geology and Topography

- 4.1 The village of Balscote is situated within an area identified in the Cherwell Local Plan as being 'Farmland Plateau'. The village is also located within the Incised Ironstone Plateau character area as identified by the Cobham Landscape Survey (Cobham Resource Consultants, 1995). The Incised Ironstone Plateau is a unified area of upland which is sharply divided by the Sor Brook and its tributaries. The area is characterised by open arable farming, with large areas of rough upland pasture.
- 4.2 The village lies between the 135 metre and 155 metre contours at the head of a steep gully which drains South South East into the Sor Brook. The gully divides into three short tributaries which converge at its head, thereby creating a significant change in levels within the settlement. The highest ground is occupied by the Manor House and the Church, with the low point being Priory Farm
- 4.3 The parish of Wroxton which includes the village of Balscote lies on a sandstone plateau covered by red loam, rising at Claydon Hill. Precipitous ravines cut by streams form natural boundaries; the exception to this is to the west.

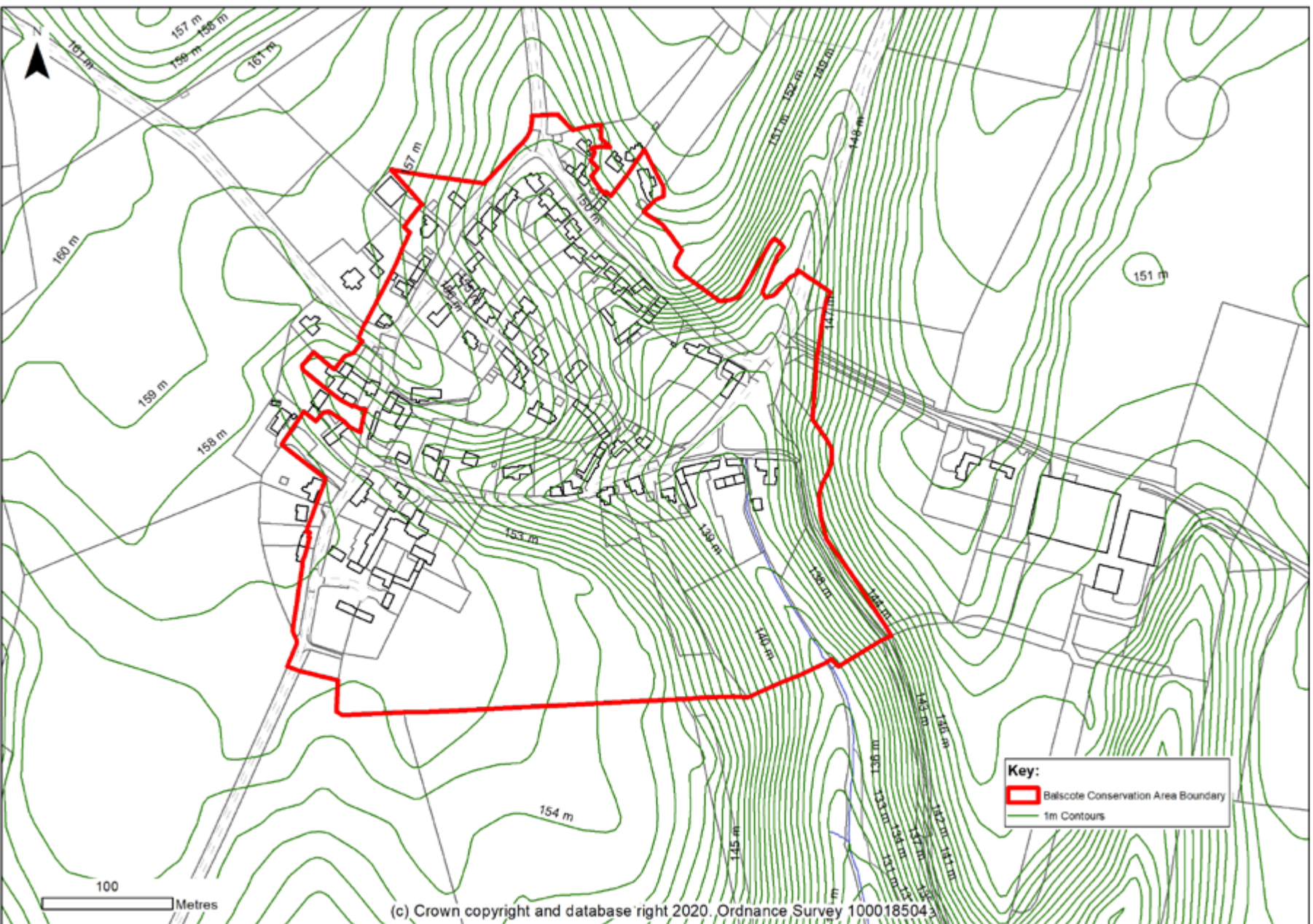


Figure 4. The Balscote Conservation Area boundary (2020) showing Topography, see Chapter 13

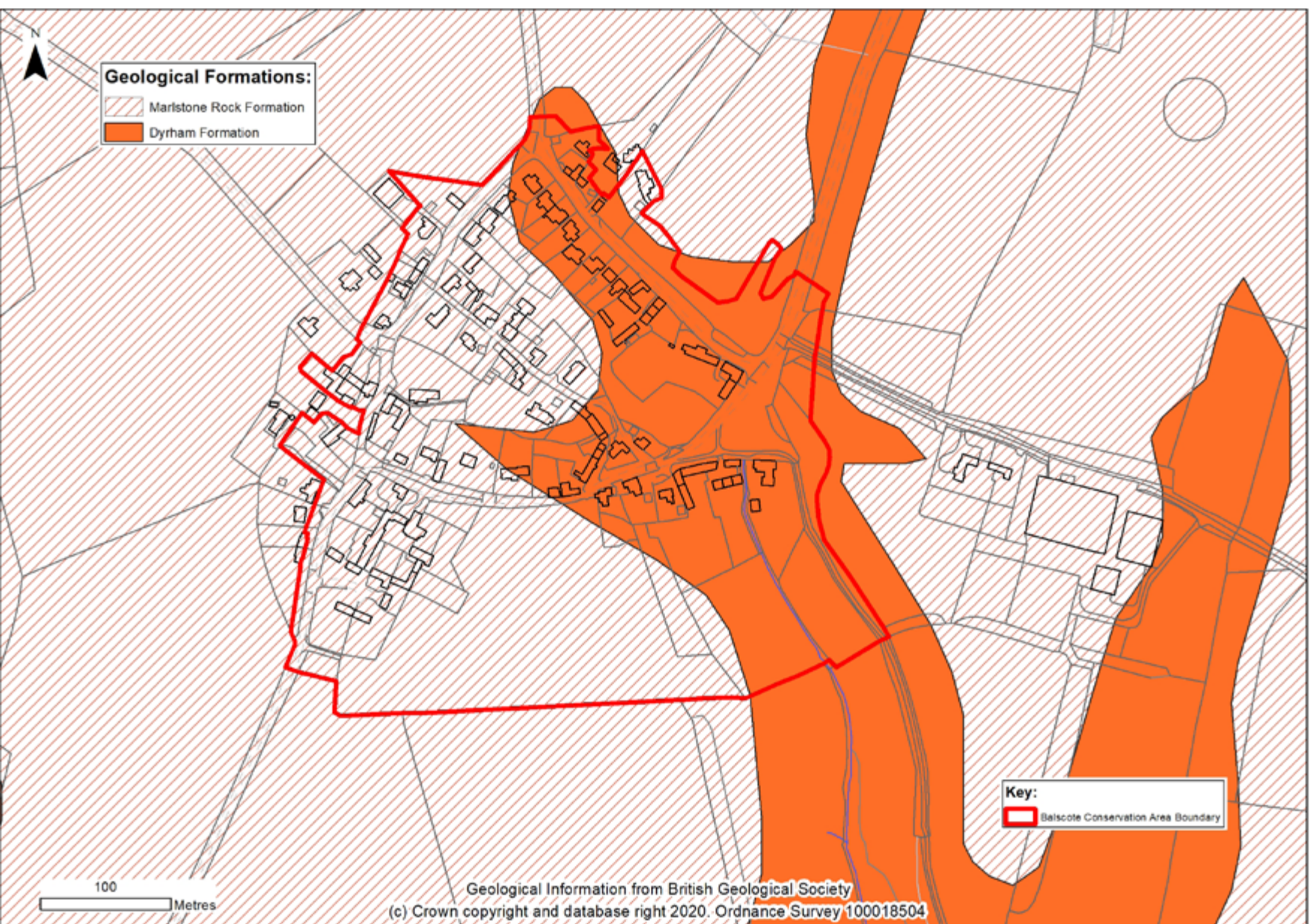


Figure 5. The Baiscote Conservation Area boundary (2020) showing Geology, see Chapter 13

5. Archaeology

5. Archaeology

- 5.1 Although the village of Balscote is rich in architectural history there is little catalogued archaeological evidence of the existence of the settlement before the 11th century. The field patterns of the land around Balscote show evidence of both medieval and 19th century inclosure.
- 5.2 There have been no significant archaeological finds within the village although some Roman pottery was recorded a short distance away to the north east at Ragnell Farm. A well was also discovered at Priory Farm, but the date of this is unconfirmed. It does however appear to have been infilled in the 19th century.
- 5.3 There are no designated Scheduled Monuments within the settlement or within its immediate surroundings. The closest Scheduled Monument is an Univallate Hillfort at Castle Bank between Claydon Hill and Wroxton.

6. History and Development

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History

- 6.1 This section provides a brief history of Balscote. A more detailed account is given in *The Victoria County History: A History of Oxfordshire*, Vol IX, PP 171-188. Other key sources can be found in the Bibliography.

Early and Manorial History

- 6.2 There is very little documentary evidence about the origins of Balscote, although records do indicate that there was a settlement in this location by at least the 11th century. The earliest spellings were 'Berescote' or 'Belescote', the name probably deriving from 'Baelles cot' or the homestead of Baell. There are multiple historical references to the hamlet of Balscott. Both Balscott and Balscote are used when referring to the settlement.
- 6.3 In the Middle Ages Balscote (Balscott) was a moderate sized hamlet built around a triangle of roads which had created a central 'green'. The core appears to have been centred on the Manor (now Manor Farmhouse) and the Church.
- 6.4 Throughout most of its history Balscote, together with Wroxton, has been distinguished by its connection with Wroxton Abbey and its inhabitants. This connection dated from the 13th century when Michael Belet the occupier of Manor Farm founded Wroxton Priory in about 1217. This was subsequently consolidated by the widespread acquisition of land holdings by the priory during the Middle Ages. It is known that in 1535 Richard Burden, a salaried official of the priory and general receiver of all its rents, farmed Grange Farm.

- 6.5 In the 16th century the priory's estate was acquired by Thomas Pope, the founder of Trinity College, Oxford. In establishing the College in 1554, Pope bequeathed his land at Wroxton and Balscote to the College.
- 6.6 A map of 1684 (reproduced at Fig 6) shows that during the 17th century the area around the manor and the church was a built up area. The map also shows the farm groups. e.g. Priory Farm and Grange Farm being separated from the core of the settlement to the east.

Population and development

- 6.7 Domesday Book records 9 households in the village of Balscote. The 14th Century tax lists suggest that Balscote was a slightly wealthier community than the neighbouring village of Wroxton. In 1738 records show that there were 20 houses in the village. This figure rose to 48 houses in 1841.
- 6.8 In the later part of the 20th century a number of infill residential developments have occurred e.g. along Shutford Road and Chapel Lane. Today the population of Balscote is thought to be approximately 200.

Inclosure

- 6.9 The history of inclosures covers the parish of Wroxham which includes Balscote; it is therefore difficult to identify specifically the land around Balscote. Some early inclosures within the parish occurred during the Middle Ages. In 1086 there were 5 plough lands and 20 acres of meadow at Balscote. The earliest inclosures by the Abbey would seem to date from the early 14th century. However these lands, inclosed for pasture were to the east of the priory buildings geographically associated with the village of Wroxham; this ties in with the records of wool levies paid by the Priory to the Crown.

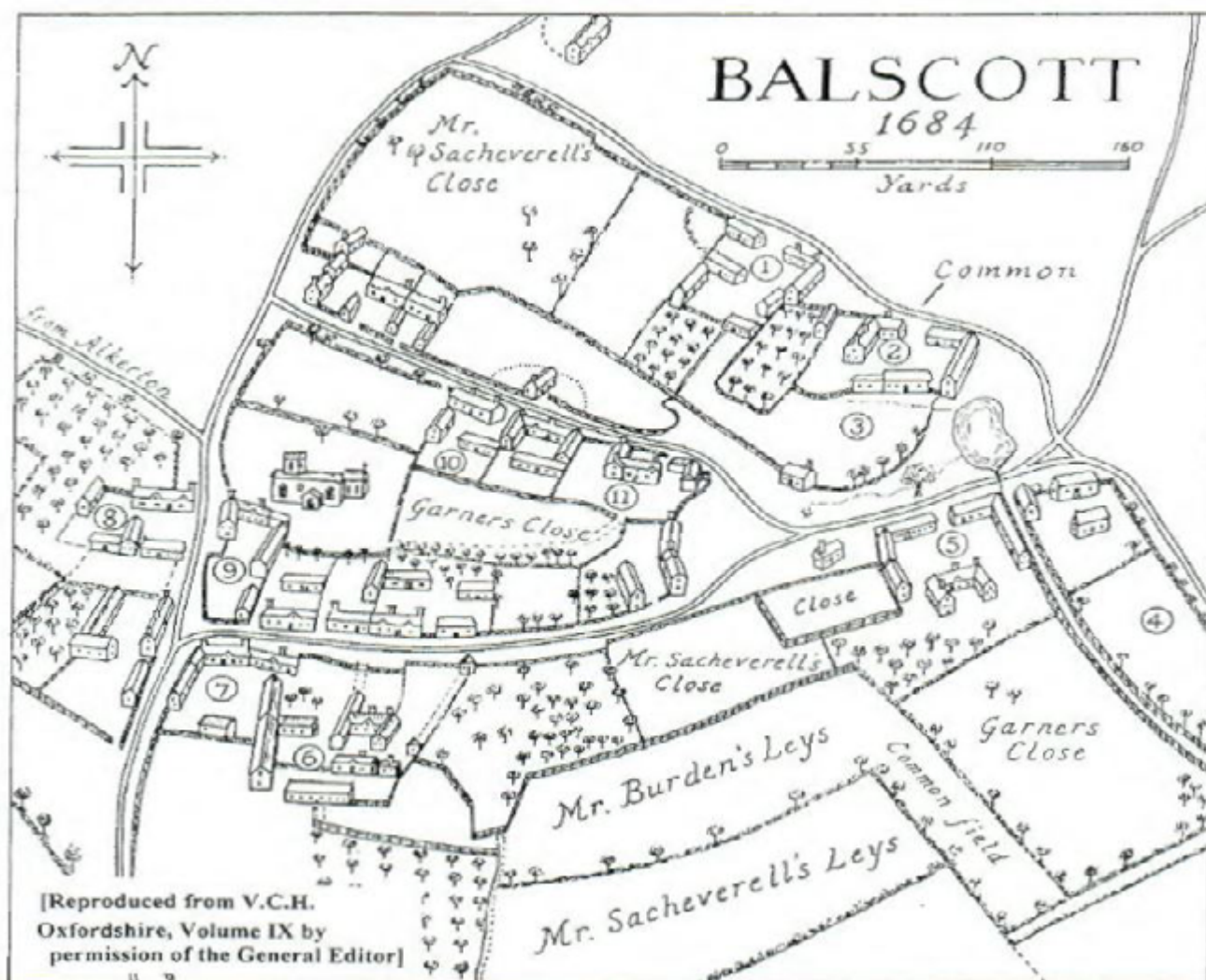


Figure 6. The Victoria County History Map of Balscott 1684

6.10 In addition to the Abbey inclosures there were small inclosures around the mills in 1571. On the western extremity of Balscott field there were 11 yardlands which by 1583 were known as 'inlands'. In 1684 these measured 156 acres.

6.11 The final Inclosure Award occurred in 1805 when 1,603 acres was redistributed to Trinity College; 326.5 acres to Christ Church for rectorial tithes, 194 acres to 11 freeholders, 101 acres to Brasenose College, 17 acres to the poor and 10 acres to the churchwardens.

6.12 Freeholders were never prominent or numerous in the parish of Wroxton. A 1768 Survey shows that the bulk of the land was held by the Lord of the Manor and shows land to the north of Balscott as inclosed open fields and land to the south as mostly common pasture with smaller inclosures to the east of the road.

Agriculture, Trade and industry

6.13 Despite its close proximity to Banbury with its weaving and other industries, the economy of the area before the 19th century seems to have been based primarily on agriculture. It was essentially arable farming, although some livestock was kept by the more affluent farmers.

6.14 Quarrying for building stone had been carried out on a small scale, as required locally, in the 18th century and probably before. However, transport costs without easy water communications prevented its growth. It was not until the end of the 19th century with the building of a mineral railway that large-scale ironstone quarrying began. Commercial quarrying continues in the locality to this day.

6.15 The Mill was located outside of the village. A miller held land in Balscote in the early 13th century and in 1504 it was granted to the Priory of Wroxton, by 1535 Balscote Mill was tenanted by John Sargent. After the dissolution the mill passed to Trinity College, the college carried out improvements to the mill in 1824-8. Because of failing water supply in 1914 working the mill was no longer considered a paying proposition and as a result the mill became a residential dwelling in the 1920's.

6.16 The Parish registers for the early to mid-19th century indicate a number of craftsmen within the parish, some of which are likely to have been located within Balscote village. These included rural craftsmen such as a blacksmith and carpenters but also two Masons, a lace maker, a glover, a cork seller, two plush-weavers and a linen weaver all recorded in the 1851 census.

6.17 There is one public house in the village known as The Butchers Arms. There is little reference to this historically although the earliest part of the building can be dated to the mid to late 18th century, with the later part of the building dating to the end of 19th century. Therefore it is possible that there was a public house in the village from at least the mid-18th century.

Education

6.18 Balscote school was built in 1840 with a teacher's residence attached. The school was largely supported by subscriptions and in 1860 there were 68 pupils, with one room for boys and girls. In 1862 the school was said to be in a bad condition. By 1866 the school was in receipt of a government grant and was affiliated to the National Society. At this point the school had 48 pupils in the day school and 30 in Sunday school. At this time the school was also managed by a committee instead of by the vicar who had managed it previously.

6.19 The school was rebuilt in 1867 and at this time increased in size with accommodation for 45 pupils in 1871. In 1888 there was accommodation for 54 children however attendance fell at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, by 1904 there were only 19 pupils. The school finally closed in 1931.

Religion

6.20 The dependent chapel at Balscote dates from the 12th century but it is likely that its mother church at Wroxton was earlier. Michael Belet rector of Wroxton founded Wroxton Priory in 1217. In 1219 the Bishop of Lincoln confirmed that Wroxton Priory should appropriate the rectory, Michael Belet retaining his rights for life. The chapel in Balscote was also included in Belet's grant. A vicarage had been ordained by 1219 with a chaplain to serve at Wroxton and Balscote. In 1395 the Prior and canons of Wroxton petitioned that on the death of the vicar they might serve the church with one of their canons or with a secular priest removable at their pleasure, thereafter the living was treated as a perpetual curacy.

6.21 The church never acquired parochial status. In 1526 there was no separate curate for Balscote and there was no curate for most of the 18th century. In 1738 the Wroxton incumbent took a service once a week and in 1834 the weekly Sunday service was taken by the curate of Horley.

6.22 The influence of the Oxford Movement was felt in the second half of the 19th Century, and along with other factors lead to an increase in church congregations in both Balscote and Wroxton. However since 1941 these numbers have fallen away.

Non conformity

6.23 In the 17th century Balscote was home to both Quaker and Anabaptist communities. The Quaker registers for Banbury give the names of 9 families living within Wroxton parish in the 17th century, half of these were in Balscote. Three of these remained in the 18th century. However it would appear that both the Quaker and the Anabaptist communities were dying out by the mid-18th century. It was reported that there were no Quakers left in the parish in 1738 and by the 19th century there was only one Anabaptist.

6.24 In 1778 the first evidence of Methodists appeared. At this time a Methodist preacher is said to have come sometimes to Balscote to preach in a farm house, the closest meeting-house was Banbury. There was a dissenting teacher with a licensed meeting in his house in Balscote in 1805. Three years later there were 10 'Calvinistic' Methodists in the village. The farm house of a Mr Williams was also licensed, but by 1814 was not used as a meeting house. There was a Methodist Chapel built in Balscote in 1850. In the late 19th century the independent Chapel seemed to disappear, however there was a notable Methodist population in Wroxton and Balscote in 1965.

Transport

6.25 Because of its isolated position the main transport to and from Balscote village historically and today is by road. The village is 1km from the main road from Stratford on Avon to Banbury; this was always a busy thoroughfare. In 1391 the Prior of Wroxton complained of impoverishment due to the obligation to give hospitality to the travellers using the road. This road was identified as London Way on maps of 1684 and 1768 further indicating its importance. The old route from Balscote to Wroxton is still used today albeit as a public footpath.

7. Historic Maps and Photographs

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Figure 7. 1875-87 Scale 1:2500 with the Balscote Conservation Area boundary (2020)

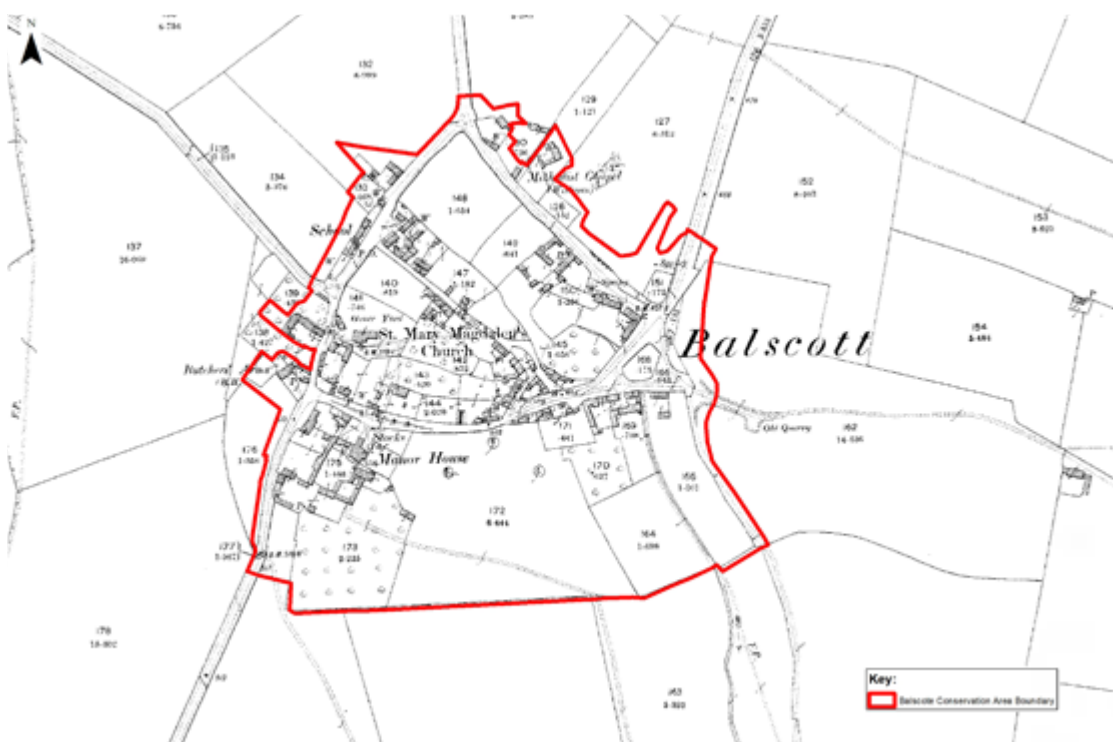


Figure 8. 1899-1905 Scale 1:2500 with the Balscote Conservation Area boundary (2020)

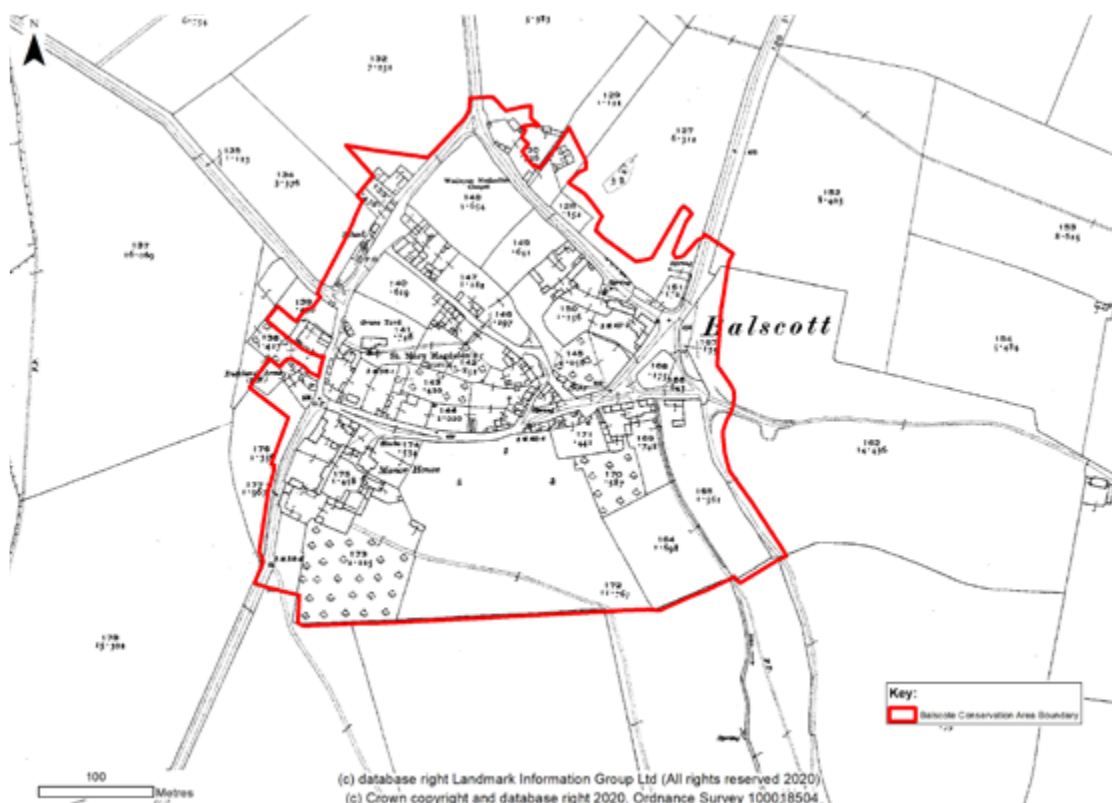


Figure 9. 1913-23 Scale 1:2500 with the Balscote Conservation Area boundary (2020)

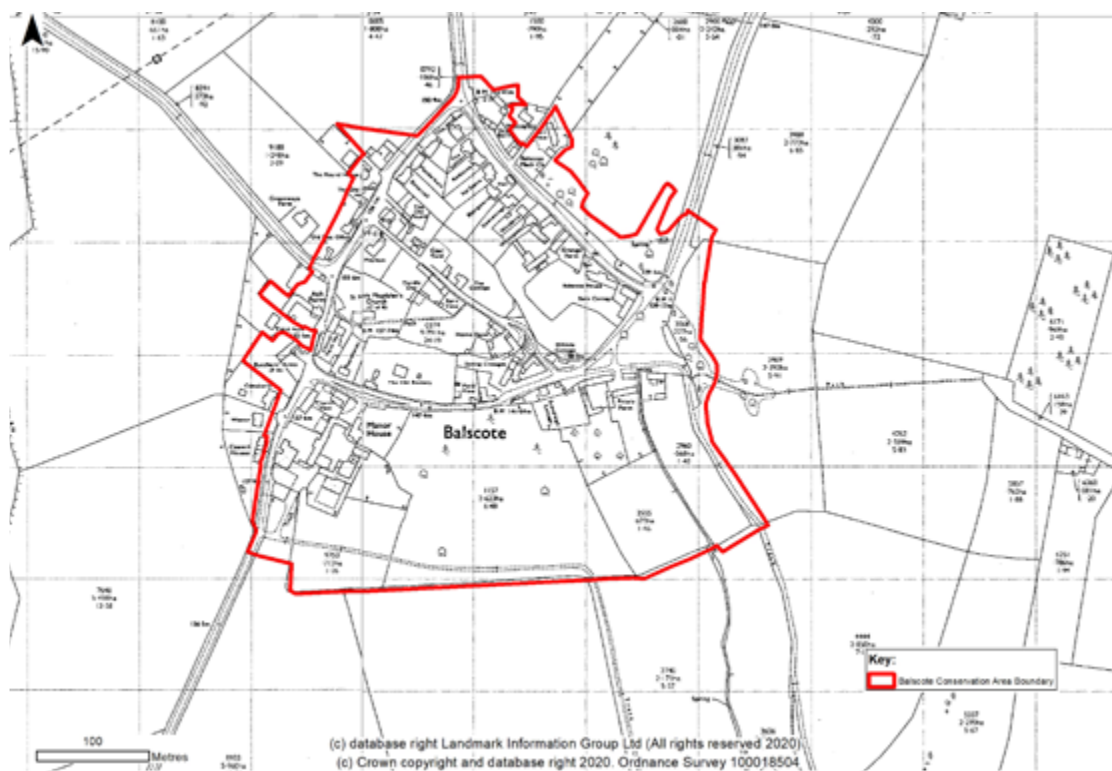


Figure 10. 1971-4 Scale 1:2500 with the Balscote Conservation Area boundary (2020)

Historic Photographs



St Mary Magdalen Church from Shutford Road
Copyright: Packer/Oxfordshire History Centre



Junction of Manor Farm Lane and Shutford Road
Copyright: Packer/Oxfordshire History Centre



Gable of Sundial Cottage, Manor Farm Lane
Copyright: Packer/Oxfordshire History Centre



Historic Photographs



View west from the Village green
Copyright: Packer/Oxfordshire History Centre



Shutford Road looking north, Church Farm to the right
Copyright: Packer/Oxfordshire History Centre



The Old Post Office, Shutford Road
Copyright: Packer/Oxfordshire History Centre



Historic Photographs



The Church from Church View
Copyright: Packer/Oxfordshire History Centre



The Methodist Chapel, Chapel Lane
Copyright: Packer/Oxfordshire History Centre



Junction of Manor Farm Lane and Chapel Lane
Copyright: Packer/Oxfordshire History Centre



8. Architectural History

8. Architectural History

8.1 Balscote was historically a village centred on agriculture and the building types reflect this. Until the mid-20th century the settlement essentially consisted of the Manor, the Church and several farmsteads together with a small number of associated cottages. However, in the later part of the 20th century many of these farms were converted to residential properties. Also at this time the village saw housing development on the Shutford Road and along Chapel Lane and a number of infill plots were developed.

8.2 The Church of St Mary Magdalene sits on higher ground and therefore provides a focal point within the conservation area, particularly when the village is approached along Shutford Road from the south. The church sits alongside The Manor (Manor Farmhouse) and Church Farmhouse which all form the older part of the settlement.

8.3 Productive building periods range from as early as the 14th century to the 20th century. Most of the buildings however date from 17th and 18th centuries. The school and the Methodist chapel are examples of the 19th century buildings and a number of residential dwellings were built in the 20th century.

Church of St Mary Magdalene

8.4 The Church of St Mary Magdalene consists of chancel, nave, south aisle and a slender south tower. It appears to have been built in the 12th century and rebuilt in the early 14th century, it retains a tub-shaped font which may be of late 12th century date. The tower has an octagonal parapet, and the lowest stage serves as a porch. In the period 1800-1823 the chapel was given new pews and a gallery, however this has now been removed.

8.5 The church had no churchyard in the 16th century but had one by the beginning of the 18th century; this was probably extended in 1823. Within the churchyard 10m south of the chancel is a memorial dated 1828. The memorial is a square ironstone construction mounted on a stone plinth and surmounted by an ironstone cornice and a flaming urn.



The Old Rectory

8.6 The Old Rectory dates to the 18th century with a 19th century range to the rear. The building is constructed of regular coursed ironstone rubble and is set back from the road by a significant distance giving it a large front garden.



Farm Houses

- 8.7 Balscote has three farm houses of considerable architectural interest. Of these, Grange Farm and Priory Farm are notable examples of the regional domestic style incorporating evidence of former open halls.

Priory Farm

- 8.8 Priory Farm was built in the 14th century probably coinciding with the rebuilding of the church. The architectural evidence suggests that it was built as a domestic structure, erected by the priory of Wroxton in connection with its possessions at Balscote, possibly as a dwelling for a priest or other agent of the priory.
- 8.9 Priory Farm is set back from the road behind its farm buildings. The main entrance to the through passage is by a distinctive wide doorway with 4-centred arched head with hood mould and enriched lozenge-shaped label stops. The spandrels have quatrefoil and vine leaf decoration. Its original medieval hall, although now sub-divided, can still be identified. It was unusually large and in the south wall there is a window of 4 lights, the heads of which have fine curvilinear tracery dating from the 14th or early 15th century. The walls are of medieval thickness and the roof is in part medieval, with later alterations in the 17th century.



Grange Farm

- 8.10 Grange Farm, a dwelling of some social significance, was erected in the first half of the 15th century, probably at about the same time as the second stage of building at Priory Farm. The name of the house and the unusual quality of its architecture suggests that it, like Priory Farm, was a dwelling erected by Wroxton Priory to farm its land in Balscote.
- 8.11 Grange Farm has a similar architectural history to Priory Farm. It is entered on the south by a fine and unusually large 4-centred arched doorway of 15th century date. A similar simpler doorway is located on the north. The 2 light hall window has stone mullions and transom and square head with perpendicular tracery. It is known that in 1535 Richard Burden, a salaried official of the priory and general receiver of all its rents farmed Grange Farm.



Manor Farm

- 8.12 Manor Farm stands on the site said to have been the home of the Belet family. The present house, once the Manor house, has an L-shaped plan and dates from the 17th century, but was altered in the 18th century. It was the chief house in the village in the 17th century and was occupied by the Sacheverell family.



Balscote House

- 8.13 Balscote House is a significant house that can be dated to the 17th century. It was originally built on a two unit plan but was added to at a later date. The garden front, left part probably dates from the early 19th century. The interior has a date stone of 1806. There is a spiral staircase that is contained within a block to the rear. The building is constructed of regular coursed ironstone rubble and has 20th century extensions and 20th century casement windows.



Church Farmhouse (formerly Clifford's Farmhouse)

- 8.14 Church Farmhouse is believed to be a 17th century yeoman's residence. The house is a large yeoman house with a stair contained in a square projection from the back wall of the main hall and a bread oven projection to the road side elevation. The house was extended historically at right angles and a fireplace added. This is shown on the Map of 1684 (Figure 6).



Cottages

- 8.15 In addition to the farm houses and farm buildings, the village boasts a range of house types and cottages. The area around the small green close to where Middle Lane and Manor Farm Lane meet houses a cluster of cottages, the oldest of these (Spring Cottage and Holly Cottage) both date to the 17th century. These cottages are of ironstone construction using both coursed rubble stone and squared stone. This form of cottage is consistent with the types of buildings expected within a village that was historically centred on agriculture.



The School and Teachers House (The Old School and School House)

- 8.16 The original school and teacher's house were built in 1840 in the Gothic style, through the efforts of a curate of the parish E. J. Middleton. Following a government grant in 1866, the school was rebuilt in 1867 and a playground added. The adjacent school house was built in 1888. The Old School is an ironstone building but the School House is constructed of red brick, this was commonly used in this period but is unusual for Balscote. Both buildings are now private residences.

Butchers Arms Public House

- 8.17 There is only one public house within the village, The Butchers Arms. There is no evidence that there was historically more than one. The building has two build dates, the left part is early 19th century and the right part is mid to late 18th century. The building is set back from the road and has a garden area to the front. Historic maps show outbuildings to the north side in the



19th century. The building is constructed of squared coursed ironstone and is still in use as a public house.

- 8.18 The Methodist Chapel was built in 1850. The building is a simple rectangular chapel constructed of squared coursed ironstone. The entrance door is in the end elevation facing on to the road, with arched windows in either side elevations. The building is typical of a chapel of this period.

Outbuildings

- 8.19 Many of the historic outbuildings within the conservation area have been converted to residential properties; however there are still some unconverted farm buildings at Priory Farm and Grange Farm.

Modern Development

- 8.20 The main area of 20th century development within the conservation area is the artificial stone bungalows built along Chapel Lane and extending around the corner onto Shutford Road. These buildings are single storey and sit in the valley between Chapel



Methodist Chapel

Lane and Middle Lane. The architectural style is consistent with buildings erected during the 1960's and because these buildings are single storey their low lying nature ensures that they appear unobtrusive and integrate with the form and character of the settlement.

- 8.21 Other examples of additions to the village include the conversion and redevelopment of farm buildings; these include the buildings at Priors Farm and Manor Farm converted in the 20th and 21st centuries.
- 8.22 Individual plots have been developed on the edge of the village, notably to the rear of the Old Chapel (Methodist Chapel), on Chapel Lane and to the south on Shutford Road, the latter being the earliest and dating to the 1970's. Norland, located on Shutford Road is an individual building built in a modern style and appears to have been developed as part of an infill plot.
- 8.23 The farm now known as Manor Farm (not to be confused with Manor Farmhouse) is located on the eastern edge of the village and outside of the conservation area. This is a modern farm with 20th and 21st century buildings. The village hall to the south of The Butchers Arms was constructed in 2011 as a result of a community fund raising initiative.



9. Character and Appearance

9. Character and Appearance

Settlement pattern

- 9.1 Balscote is a relatively compact and self-contained settlement which has developed around a triangle of roads which follow the routes of three small valleys. As a result the village is arranged around these hills and valleys. Three roads radiate from the angles of the triangle of roads with a fourth (to Alkerton) meeting the village at a junction opposite the entrance to the church.
- 9.2 The village was historically a loose-knit collection of farms and their associated buildings and has over its history, particularly during the 20th century, developed into a much more compact settlement as the gaps between the farmsteads have been infilled. Today the village is characterised by relatively low density detached properties built along the historic street pattern.

Land use

- 9.3 Historically the land use within Balscote would have been almost exclusively agriculture related. Today the predominant land use within the conservation area is residential. The school and school house have been converted and former farms including their barns and outbuildings are now purely residential. The exceptions are The Butcher's Arms public house, and the Church.
- 9.4 A village hall was constructed in 2011 and this is a modern timber building, located to the west of The Butchers Arms public house.

Building age, type and style

- 9.5 The main building types are vernacular ironstone farmhouses, cottages and former agricultural buildings that have been converted to residential use mainly in the 20th century. Good examples of unconverted traditional farm buildings remain at Grange Farm and Priory Farm.

- 9.6 With the exception of Priory Farm and Grange Farm which date from the 14th and 15th centuries respectively, most of the houses and cottages date from the early 17th and 18th centuries. They are predominantly 2-storey and many have been renovated, extended and altered in the more recent past. The main exceptions to this are the Bungalows built in the valley between Chapel Lane and Middle Lane.
- 9.7 The larger, more prestigious buildings, include Manor House (which was later used as a farmhouse and is now known as Manor Farmhouse) and the attractive mid-17th century Balscote House.

Construction and materials

- 9.8 Building construction in Balscote is characterised by the widespread use of coursed ironstone rubble for cottages and farmhouses. The church, although a higher status building, is also constructed of the same coursed and squared ironstone.
- 9.9 There are a few examples of buildings where red brick is used e.g. the Old School House, and Sundial Cottage. In the 1960's-70s artificial stone was employed but more recent developments have been built in the traditional ironstone.
- 9.10 Render is not a material readily used within the village, with isolated examples at Maymyo and on properties on Shutford Road that fall outside of the conservation area.
- 9.11 There is evidence that chimney stacks would originally have been constructed in ironstone, but most have been replaced with local handmade brick. Original roof coverings would have been long straw thatch with flush ridges or stone slates (as found at the Manor Farmhouse and the Church). Surviving examples of thatch (combed wheat straw with ornamental block ridges) can be seen at The Old Cottage and Peacehaven, although this is not traditional to the area.

9.12 Today, clay tile, concrete tile, Welsh slate and asbestos tiles are widely used. A 20th century wood shingle roof is found at Priory Farmhouse. Tin roofs can be found on the outbuildings of Church Farmhouse and Barn Cottage.

9.13 Examples of original windows and doors can be found from the 14th century onwards. Early windows include stone mullioned and transomed windows, stone mullioned windows, pegged oak frames with metal opening lights, lead eaves and wrought iron casement fasteners. Later windows include sash windows and painted timber casements. Many properties have replacement 20th century metal or wooden casements which are generally sympathetic to the style of building. Regrettably there are a few examples of uPVC replacement windows which dilute the special character and appearance of the conservation area.

9.14 Few original doors survive: the best examples being the wide plank doors at Priory Farmhouse and Grange Farmhouse, and a panelled door with overlight at the Old Rectory.

9.15 Dormer windows are a feature that are found relatively frequently within the conservation area. These tend to be pitched roof dormers positioned above the eaves and are occasionally rendered, but the predominant treatment is timber cladding. The Grade II listed Building; The Old Rectory provides an example of this type of Dormer.

Means of enclosure

9.16 Ironstone walls are an important feature throughout the conservation area and are the predominant means of enclosure. They are generally between 1 and 2 metres high, although the Manor House walls along Manor Farm Lane are a little higher.

9.17 The majority of walls are drystone walls with dog tooth capping. Flat flagstone capping is found at The Butcher's Arms, The Manor House and Balscote House. Rounded stone capping is found at Grange Farm. There are a few examples of mortar capping and many walls are covered in foliage which gives a softer appearance.

9.18 Limited examples of hedges are found to the northern tip of the village at the junction of Shutford Road and Chapel Lane, to the front of Balscote house and to the south eastern edge of the land adjacent to Hillside Cottage.

Trees and green spaces

9.19 Many of the open spaces within the village have been developed over time however vestiges of undeveloped agricultural fields survive in the environs of Grange Farmhouse and Balscote House. These help to maintain a rural feel and links to the village's agricultural past.

9.20 The relatively large village green, which once contained a pond, lies on the eastern edge of the village. It provides an attractive setting for Priory Farm and visually creates an agricultural gateway to the village when approached from the A422 Stratford Road.

9.21 Narrow grass verges are common throughout the village contributing to the rural character of the conservation area.

9.22 Trees are an important feature of the village, particularly in the grounds of the Church where they partially screen views of the church from the north. They are also important around the green where they serve as a visual containment to the village preventing views out eastwards.

9.23 Along Chapel Lane and within the vicinity of the village green the trees and vegetation also act as a transitional zone between the settlement and the countryside beyond. This strong village edge contrasts with the western and southern edges which primarily due to recent developments, are less defined and lack containment.

9.24 On the land to the east of Manor Farmhouse there are numbers of evergreens, this is unusual within farmland. In addition individual trees also contribute to the character of the area e.g. at The Butcher's Arms and at Balscote House. One TPO tree is located adjacent to Peacehaven.

Carriageways, pavements, footpaths

- 9.25 The roadways are tarmac throughout and sections of narrow tarmac and concrete kerbed pavements are found on Shutford Road, Manor Farm Lane and Chapel Lane. A short section of raised concrete pavement can be seen in Middle Lane.
- 9.26 Due to its isolated position; Balscote does not suffer from high volumes of through traffic and on street parking is notable only at the northern half of Shutford Road and along Chapel Lane where the roads are slightly wider. The narrow alignment of the roads together with relatively steep gradients keeps traffic speeds low.
- 9.27 The historic route to Wroxton is retained as a public footpath and a further path links the Church with Middle Lane via a private garden.

Key Views

- 9.28 The core of the settlement is formed by the church, the former Manor House (Manor Farmhouse) and the Butcher's Arms public house which acts as a focal point at the head of Manor Farm Lane. The Old School House also acts, to a lesser extent, as a focal point at the head of Middle Lane. Surprisingly, despite its elevated and central position, the church is relatively insignificant in the streetscene, its size and position only being truly evident when viewed from the environs of Manor Farm House.
- 9.29 Other buildings contribute to the character of the village particularly at the eastern end of Manor Farm Lane where the strong building lines help to create the intimacy and attractiveness of this area.
- 9.30 There are few views out of the settlement due to the topography. The exception is along the northern section of Shutford Road which runs along the edge of the ironstone plateau thereby providing open vistas to the farmland beyond the village confines.

Features of special interest

- 9.31 The features of special interest within the village of Balscote include both designated and non-designated heritage assets that are unique to the village or make a substantial contribution to the conservation area. Of the designated assets the listed buildings of particular note include the church of St Mary Magdalene and Priory Farmhouse and its associated buildings. A full list of the listed buildings and structures within the village is provided in Appendix 2.
- 9.32 Also of note is the memorial located within the churchyard of the Church of St Mary Magdalene which is dated 1828 and is Grade II listed.
- 9.33 The non-designated assets of special interest include the former Methodist chapel built in 1850, and the school and school teachers residence built in the 19th century. A full list of the non-designated assets (Local Heritage Assets) can be found in Appendix 4.
- 9.34 Other features or details of interest are the sun dial on the front of Sundial Cottage, the stone slated bread ovens that project at Spring Cottage and Grange Farmhouse and the fire plaque located above the door at Holly Cottage.
- 9.35 The gate to the entrance of the Church of St Mary Magdalene is also a feature of interest within the conservation area, as is the section of raised pavement on Middle Lane.

Threats

- 9.36 The use of modern window materials and styles, including uPVC, has slowly been introduced. This should be discouraged in order to ensure the character of the village is retained.
- 9.37 Loss and poor maintenance of stone walls. These are significant to the character and appearance of the conservation area and reduction in their traditional height or removal of coping or loss due to poor maintenance is an erosion of their contribution to the village character.

9.38 An important characteristic of the village is its built form around the triangle of historic roads. Gaps in the built form along these roads and between Chapel Lane and Middle Lane contribute to the unique character of the village. It is noted that the village is categorised as a category C village in the Cherwell District Local Plan 2006-2031 and therefore is considered suitable for conversion and minor infill development only. It is possible that modern pressures for development will demand the conversion of the few remaining farm buildings and seek additional dwellings on the currently undeveloped pieces of land. This therefore has potential to affect the character of the conservation area.

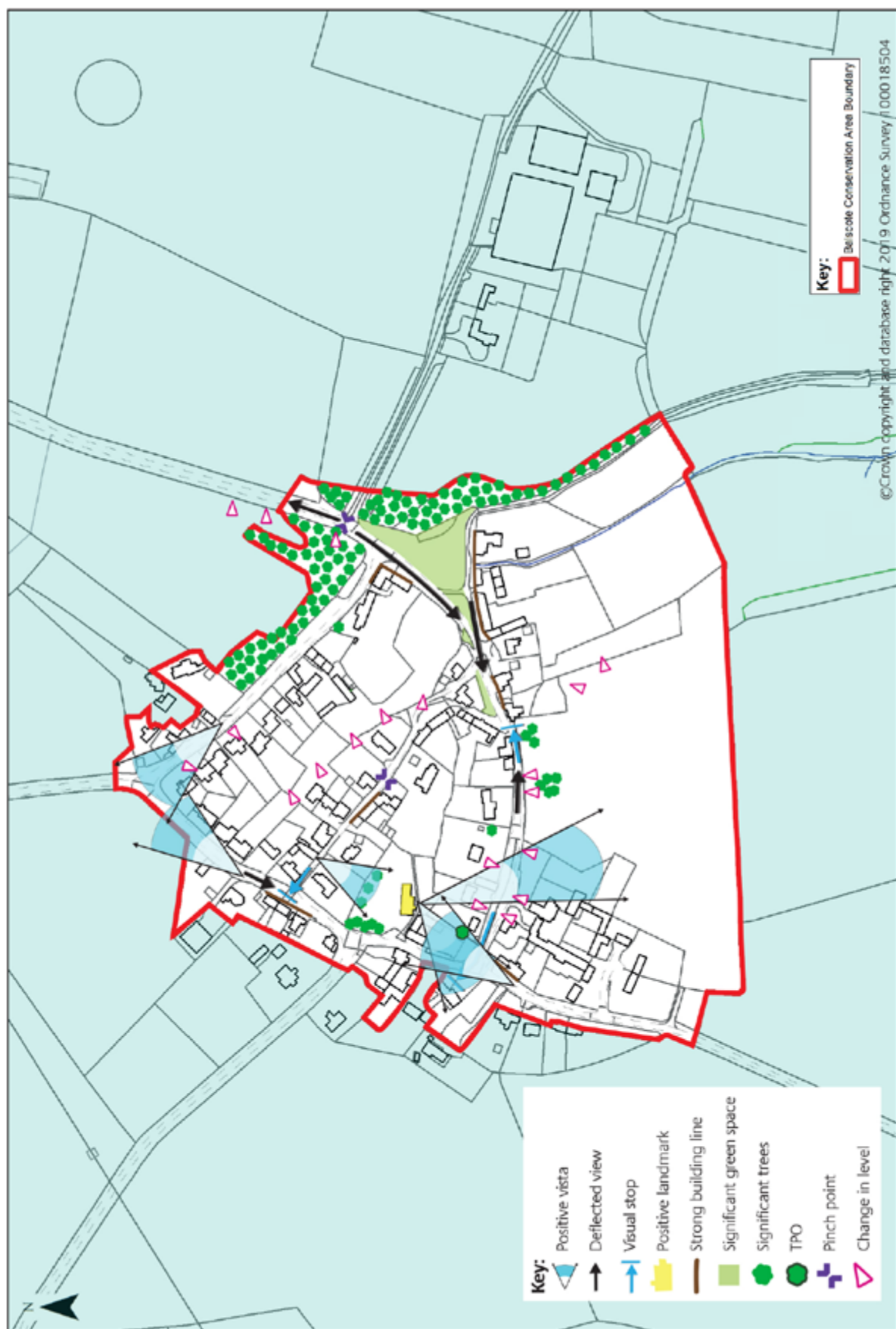


Figure 11. The Balscote Conservation Area boundary (2020) showing Visual Analysis

10. Character Areas

10. Character Areas

- 10.1 Balscote is divided into six character areas. The Historic Centre - which contains the area immediately around the church and the former Manor House, Manor Grounds, The Green - centred around the main open space in the village, Grange Farm, Middle Lane, and Modern Development - which is an area focused on development from the second half of the 20th century.

Historic Centre

- 10.2 This area includes the Church of St Mary Magdalene and its churchyard, Church Farm, Peacehaven, The Old Rectory, The Manor House (Manor Farmhouse) and The Butchers Arms public house. The church sitting on the highest ground, dominates the locality, with the other buildings, particularly those fronting Manor Farm Lane being significantly lower. The differences in levels are such that views of the Manor House (Manor Farmhouse) from the church can be seen over the rooftops. In return the Manor Farm complex which includes the historic Manor House (Manor Farmhouse) occupies a dominant position with views back across to the church. However, views from elsewhere in the village into the Manor Farm complex are very limited. This is because it is inward looking and sited on higher ground above the majority of the village. The buildings in this character area are at a low density with a number of mature coniferous and deciduous trees. The trees around the gate and entrance to the church are particularly important in the street scene and the Butchers Arms also stands in a prominent position. The church is not dominant outside this character area. This area with the Manor House, church and pub is the historic core of the village.

Manor grounds

- 10.3 This area comprises of the land historically associated with the Manor House (now Manor Farm). The buttressed stone retaining walls together with the steep grass bank are very important features of the streetscape of Manor Farm Lane (which runs adjacent to this area but is within The Green character area). This provides a strong boundary between the two character areas. The open land forms the historical setting for the Manor House and stretches around to the south of 'The Green' character area to enclose this southern side of the village. The Scots Pines located here also suggest that this area may contain the remnants of a more formal landscape.

The Green

- 10.4 This character area focuses on the simple grassed informal space that lies at the lowest point of the village and an informal, high density cluster of cottages grouped around a small green towards the eastern end of Manor Farm Lane. The cottages form an attractive grouping of mainly 17th century dwellings with some 20th century infilling. The green is bounded in the south by a strong building line of buildings associated with Priory Farm and a woodland belt to the east. This area acts as a rural 'gateway' to the village when approached from the north.

Grange Farm

- 10.5 This area includes Grange Farm and Balscote House with their associated buildings. Historically these were relatively isolated from the remainder of the historic core of the village. This separate identity is partially preserved today by the undeveloped land to the south west of the buildings. The range of traditional agricultural buildings at Grange Farm are little altered. This section of Chapel Lane climbs steeply and has a very enclosed feel

as the buildings are built close to the south side of the lane with a tall tree belt on the north side.

Middle Lane

- 10.6 Middle Lane is a very narrow and intimate area with the historic properties and more recent infill built immediately abutting the highway or at right angles to it. There is a substantial amount of modern infill between the more historic properties. The lane leads on to Shutford road to the North West, this area contains post 17th century development that accommodated the post office and school and formed a 'village street'. All of these buildings are now in residential use which is also the case for the other buildings within the character area. This character area has the greatest range of building ages, styles and materials and includes some recent infill.

Modern Development

- 10.7 The Modern Development character area focuses on the group of relatively low density artificial stone bungalows built in the "valley" between Middle Lane and Chapel Lane. These properties lie below the level of the road and have steeply sloping front gardens. Although of no architectural or historic merit these bungalows do not detract from the conservation area as they are relatively unobtrusive due to their low lying nature and this should be maintained. The use of ironstone retaining walls, grass verges and mature gardens also help to integrate them into the street scene. This character area includes the Methodist chapel and the mix of buildings that surround it on the northern extremity of the village. Here this small cluster of buildings range in size and type. These buildings would have historically been separated from the core of the village by an area of open land on the opposite side of Chapel Lane which now houses the bungalows. Overall the two periods of development sit well together and provide an integrated character to the area.

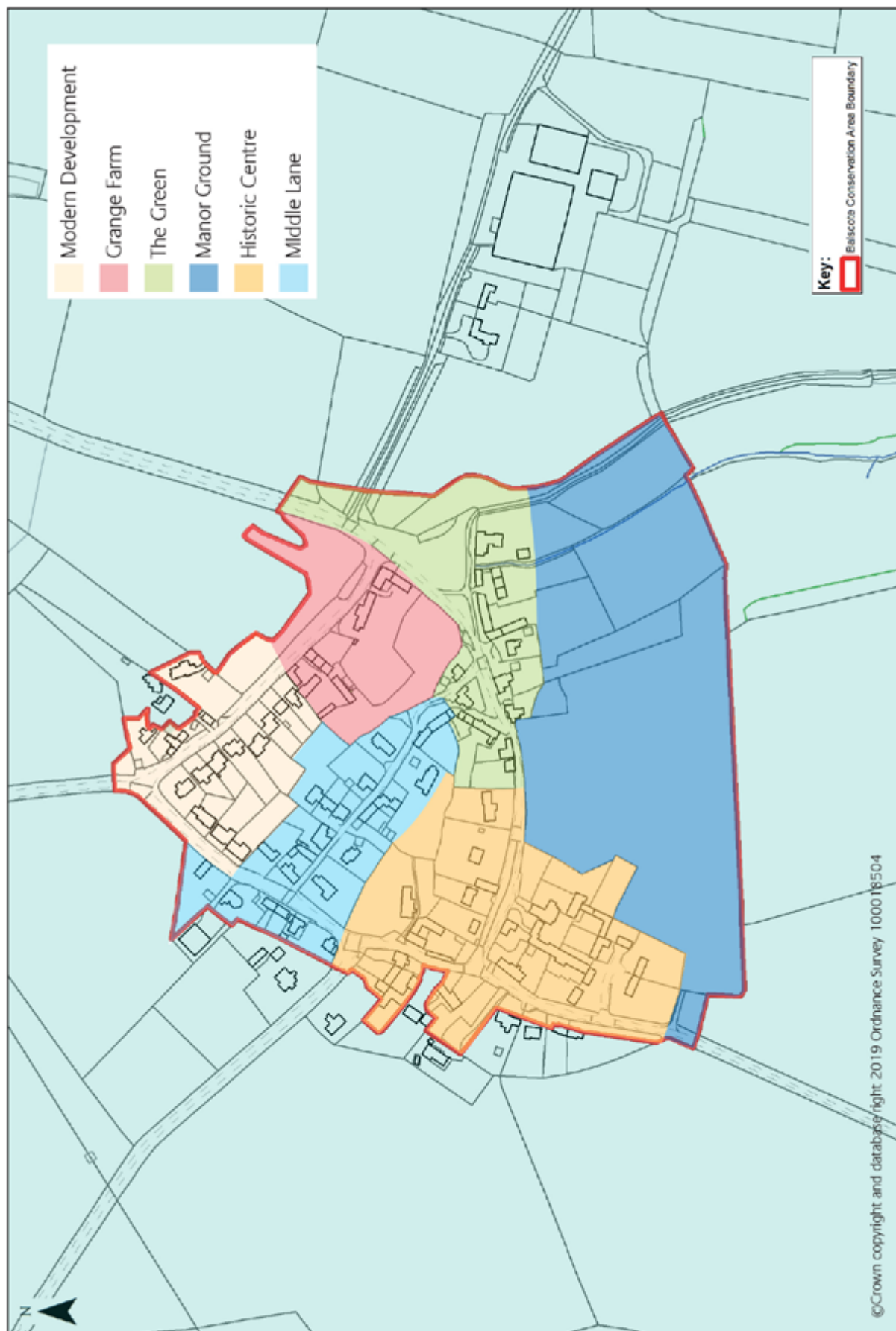


Figure 12. The Balscote Conservation Area boundary (2020) showing Character Areas

11. Materials and Details





12. Management Plan

12. Management Plan

Policy context

- 12.1 The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas. The conservation area appraisal document is designed to inform planning decisions, and other actions taken by the Council and/or property owners within the designated area. The role of the Management Plan is to identify actions that could contribute to the enhancement of the special character and appearance of the area by the Council, owners and other stakeholders alike.
- 12.2 The main threat to the character and appearance of any conservation area is the cumulative impact of numerous alterations, some quite small in themselves, to the traditional but unlisted buildings within the area. These changes include such works as the replacement of traditional window casements, often with uPVC, replacement of original doors, change to roof materials, additions such as non-traditional porches, erection of satellite dishes on the front elevations of properties, painting the walls of a property, non-traditional eaves or barge boards and poor repointing. Such alterations to unlisted residential properties are for the most part permitted development and therefore do not require planning permission. Unauthorised alterations and additions may also be a cause for concern and are often detrimental to the appearance of a property. The loss of dilapidated stone walls can also have a significant impact. Both unsympathetic permitted development and unauthorised development cumulatively result in the erosion of the historic character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 12.3 The aim of management proposals is not to prevent changes but to ensure that any such changes are both sympathetic to the individual property, streetscape and overall preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 12.4 The General Permitted Development Order explains what is permitted development in conservation areas. Building owners should also check there are no restrictive covenants or removal of permitted developments rights on their property.
- 12.5 The principal plans and policies covering alterations and development of the historic built environment are given in Appendix 1.
- 12.6 Demolition in a conservation area (previously known as ‘conservation area consent’) is now covered by planning permission. Refer to ‘control over demolition of buildings’ in Section 14 for further advice.
- (A listed building, including curtilage listed buildings and structures, will always require listed building consent for demolition).

General Proposals for Preservation and Enhancement	
Boundary Treatments	The traditional stone boundary walls surrounding properties particularly to the front and adjacent to the road make a valuable contribution to the character of the settlement and the demolition or loss of these features will be resisted.
Important Views	<p>Views into and out of the conservation areas are fundamental to understanding the relationship between settlements and their surrounding landscape. These views where they exist should be protected.</p> <p>Views within the settlement particularly those which focus on the church are important to the character of the conservation area and these too should be protected.</p>
Retention of Historic Features and Building Maintenance	<p>Traditional architectural details and local materials are important and should be retained, repaired or reinstated where lost. It is important that traditional techniques and materials (including the use of lime mortar and the like for like repair of buildings) are used to retain the special historic character and appearance of the area.</p> <p>The use of ironstone is a distinctive feature of the village and should be retained. There are a variety of roof coverings within the settlement, a number of which are traditional, these include thatch, stone slate, and Welsh slate. Where they exist these materials should be retained and any repairs should be completed on a like for like basis. New roofs should also make use of traditional materials to maintain the character and appearance of the buildings.</p> <p>The unsympathetic alteration of minor features could have a significant impact on the character and appearance of Balscote. An Article 4 Direction could ensure that existing original and traditional details are protected and where necessary sensitively replaced in the future. Where traditional windows remain on buildings these make an important contribution and should be retained.</p>
New Development	<p>As a category C village (Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031) Balscote is considered suitable for conversion of existing buildings and minor infill.</p> <p>Any proposed extensions or infill must respect the scale, design, proportions and materials of the immediately surrounding architecture to strengthen the cohesion of the street scene. It is crucial that the scale and diversity of the surrounding architecture is respected and that an imaginative and high quality design is employed.</p>
Character of roads, lanes and verges	The roads running through Balscote and the roads within the settlement need to comply with highway standards, but it is important to ensure that they do not become overly urbanised with road markings and signage. The rural feel and character of narrow lanes with narrow verges is an important characteristic and must be maintained. Grass verges should be protected. Where historic hard landscaping exists, this should also be retained.
Conversion of farm buildings	Conversion and extensions to farmhouses and their outbuildings needs special care in order that they retain their character and significance. Historic England provides guidance as does Cherwell District Council. It is important that outbuildings or farms, which are now solely residential, are not neglected and that their form and character are maintained.

Archaeology	There is potential for archaeological remains to exist within Balscote therefore early consultation with Oxfordshire County Council's Archaeology Department in relation to any proposed new works involving foundation excavation or ground levelling is encouraged.
Car Parking	<p>Car parking is limited within Balscote because of the narrow roads. Therefore car parking is an issue in some areas of the village where the roads and verges are wider. There is a danger that grass verges could be eroded by indiscriminate parking but this does not mean that grass verges should be removed or spoiled by the introduction of signage and bollards that would detract from the rural quality.</p> <p>Any development should consider suitable and adequate car parking provision.</p>
Wiring, satellites and aerials	<p>Overhead electricity lines can have a significant negative impact on historic buildings and areas and any opportunity to remove, relocate underground or place these in a more sensitive setting should be taken.</p> <p>Satellite dishes in particular can pose a threat and should be positioned in an inconspicuous location hidden from public view – they do not always have to be fixed to the main house and can be positioned on outbuildings or in the garden.</p>
Alternative technology	The siting of any alternative technology needs to be sensitively handled so that it does not detract from what makes the conservation area special and it should not cause harm.

13. Conservation Area Boundary

13. Conservation Area Boundary justification

- 13.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a conservation area as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Different planning controls apply within conservation areas and therefore it is important that only areas which are demonstrably of special architectural or historic interest be included. It is usually inappropriate for the whole of a settlement to be included within a conservation area.
- 13.2 Balscote Conservation Area was first designated in 1980 and the first appraisal was written in 1998. The original boundary was drawn to cover the historic core of the settlement and includes buildings of architectural or historical interest that were known at the time. This is the second review of the Balscote Conservation Area boundary and it has been guided by ‘Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation, and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1’ (2019).
- 13.3 Consideration of whether the boundaries of an existing conservation area should be re-drawn is an important aspect of the appraisal and review process. An explanation of why the boundary is drawn where it is, is helpful. The position of the conservation area boundary is to a large degree informed by the considerations identified in Historic England’s Advice Note 1, (2019).
- 13.4 As spaces contribute to enclosure, as well as framing views of assets and defining settings, a unified approach is desirable to their management. In almost all situations the conservation area boundary runs around rather than through a space or plot. It is generally defined by physical features such as walls and hedges and other land boundaries for ease of identification.
- 13.5 Proposals for inclusion or exclusion made during the public consultation of this Conservation Area Appraisal have been carefully considered alongside the research and survey work undertaken by the Conservation Team.
- Key changes include:**
- Inclusion of land south and east of The Manor (Manor Farmhouse complex) to include Hill barn, 8 The Hedges and the small parcel of land to the south of these properties adjacent to Shutford Road.
 - Inclusion of gardens to the rear of Ash Barn, Norland and Honeysuckle House to the west, to follow the boundary of these properties.
 - Removal of land within the residential grounds of Ashfield House to follow the property boundary.
 - Re drawn boundary to follow the tree line to the north east on Chapel Lane and include the garden of Chapel Barn. To follow property boundaries and natural features to include the trees that contribute to the character of the conservation area in this location.
 - Re drawn boundary to the east to follow the tree line between the village and New Manor Farm (Roundhill House).
- 13.6 The Balscote Conservation Area boundary was finalised in March 2020 and adopted in February 2022 (following a delay due to the Covid 19 pandemic). The boundary

was informed by an analysis of current and historical maps supplemented by investigation on the ground from public rights of way and by public consultation of the draft Stratton Audley Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan

Balscote conservation area boundary (2020)

- 13.7 A review of the boundary took place in the spring of 2019; this was based on an analysis of current and historical maps supplemented by investigation on the ground from public rights of way.

Northern boundary

- 13.8 The boundary runs more or less parallel to Chapel Lane including Chapel Barn and its garden but excluding Willoughby and Pops Place, before stepping out again to include Hillview. It then follows the outer edge of the line of the trees that bound the village before meeting Manor Farm Lane at the entrance/exit to the village.

Eastern boundary

- 13.9 The boundary then crosses Manor Farm Lane and follows the outer edge of the tree line to continue south on the line of the bridleway. At the end of the thickest part of the trees at the field boundary the conservation area boundary then turns at right angles in a westerly direction.

Southern boundary

- 13.10 The boundary to the south continues in a relatively straight line following the historic field boundary to include the land to the west of Priory Farm and to the south and east of The Manor (Manor Farmhouse). Also included are Hill Barn and 8 The Hedges and their gardens. The boundary then steps in to include the parcel of land south of these buildings adjacent to Shutford Road.

Western boundary

- 13.11 The boundary crosses Shutford Road and follows it to the north, including the front boundaries of the properties to the west of Shutford Road; it then steps out to include The Butchers Arms Public House and its car park (also the car park for the village hall). The boundary excludes the 20th and 21st century development of the village hall and Third Acre but includes the boundary wall of Third Acre fronting Shutford Road and the boundary wall between Third Acre and Ash Farm House. The boundary extends to include the garden of Ash Barn but excludes Ashfield House then crosses Alkerton Road and continues parallel with Shutford Road to include the properties, The Old Post Office, Old Village School, The Old School House, Norland and Honeysuckle House finally meeting the road again where the road leaves the village.

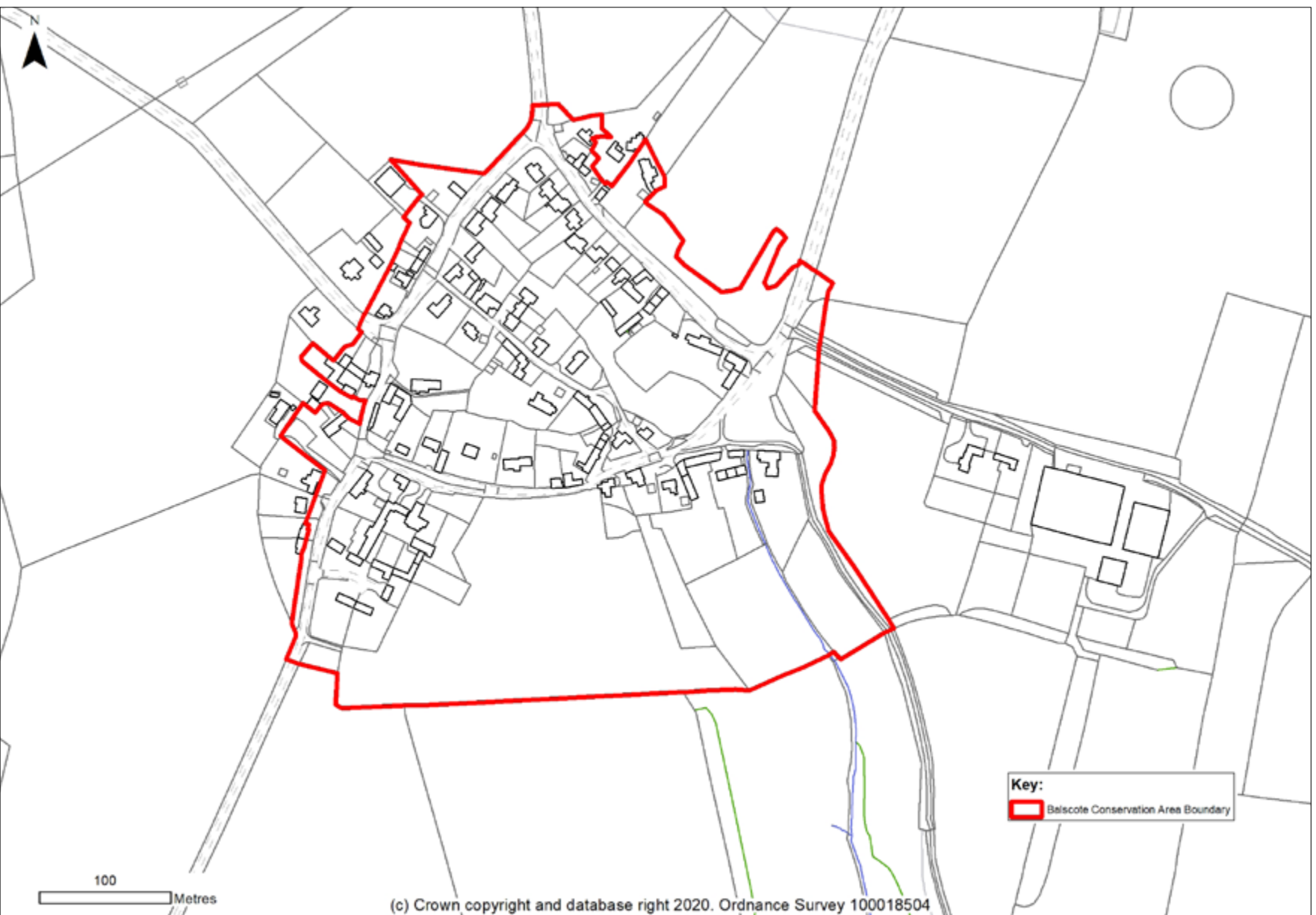


Figure 13. The Balscote Conservation Area boundary map (2020)

14. Effects of Conservation Area Designation

14. Effects of Conservation Area Designation

- 14.1 Conservation areas are designated by the Council under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. There are different planning controls in conservation areas and anyone proposing development should seek advice from the Council's Development Management Team at an early stage.
- 14.2 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' Historic England Advice Note 1 (2019) states that 'The contribution that historic areas make to our quality of life is widely recognised...They are a link to the past that can give us a sense of continuity and stability and they have the reassurance of the familiar which can provide a point of reference in a rapidly changing world. The way building traditions and settlement patterns are superimposed and survive over time will be unique to each area. This local distinctiveness can provide a catalyst for regeneration and inspire well designed new development which brings economic and social benefits valued by both local planning authorities and local communities.' It goes on to say that conservation areas can be at risk through 'pressure for inappropriate new development, vacancy, decay or damage.'
- 14.3 Conservation area appraisals are written to set out ways to manage change in a way that conserves or enhances historic areas which meet the high standards set by conservation area designation.

The main effects of designation are as follows:

Development should preserve or enhance a conservation area

- 14.4 Development should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, 'the special architectural or historic interest of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance'. This enables the achievement of higher standards of design in new developments and secures the conservation of existing important features and characteristics. Information supporting planning applications must demonstrate the proposal, and its impact on a conservation area, in sufficient detail to enable a thorough assessment.
- 14.5 Land use planning policies in the Cherwell Local Plan 2011–2031 Part 1 and the saved policies in the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 aim to ensure that special attention is given to the preservation or enhancement of designated conservation areas. Proposals for new development will only be acceptable if they assist in the achievement of that objective (see Section 2 and Appendix 1)

Control over demolition of buildings

- 14.6 Planning permission is required from Cherwell District Council, as the Local Planning Authority, for the demolition or substantial demolition of unlisted buildings in a conservation area that have a volume of more than 115 cubic metres. Where a building is of demonstrable architectural or historic interest, consent for demolition will only be given as a last resort.

Control over trees

- 14.7 The Council must be notified of any intention to carry out works to fell, lop or top any tree with a trunk/stem diameter greater than 75mm, when measured at 1.5m above ground level not already the subject of a tree preservation order. This provides the Council with an opportunity to consider making a tree preservation order and the provision of an extra degree of control over the many trees that are important to the appearance of a conservation area.

Protection of important open spaces and views

- 14.8 It is important to protect the open and aesthetic quality of the countryside adjacent to the village because it is integral to the character and appearance of a conservation area. Open space sometimes has its own historic significance. The inclusion of peripheral open spaces around the settlement in the designation of a conservation area is specifically to ensure that the character of these spaces is preserved.

Control over the demolition of enclosures

- 14.9 Permission is also required to demolish a significant proportion of any means of enclosure over 1 metre in height abutting a 'highway' (including a public footpath or bridleway), waterway or open space; or above 2 metres in height in any other case. This ensures that walls not relating to listed buildings that add to the character and appearance of the street scene are protected from removal.

Powers to seek repair of unlisted historic buildings

- 14.10 The Council has powers to seek the repair of unlisted (as well as listed) buildings in a poor state of repair where the building makes a valuable contribution to the street scene or is of local importance as a building type.

Reduced permitted development rights

- 14.11 Permitted development rights allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. Permitted development rights are subject to conditions and limitations which are set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

- 14.12 Permitted development rights are more restrictive inside conservation areas than they are in areas outside. In respect of works to residential properties, the following additional restrictions apply to properties within a conservation area:

- A two storey rear extension of any dimension;
- A single storey side extension of any dimension;
- Cladding any part of the exterior of the dwellinghouse with stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles;
- Any additions (e.g. dormer windows) to the roof of a dwellinghouse;
- Any part of an outbuilding, enclosure, pool or container situated between a wall forming the side elevation of the house and the boundary;
- A flue, chimney, soil or vent pipe on a wall or roof slope that fronts a highway or can be seen from a highway and forms the principal or side elevation of the house;
- A satellite dish on any chimney, wall or roof slope that faces onto and is visible from a highway or on a building which exceeds 15 metres in height.

14.13 It is worth noting that the permitted development rights legislation is subject to frequent amendment. Further up to date information can be found on the Planning Portal <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission> or Cherwell District Council's website <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/115/planning-process/206/do-i-need-planning-permission/4>

15. Design and Repair Guidance

15. Design and Repair Guidance

- 15.1 The following design guidance seeks to ensure that the character of the conservation area is enhanced, through imaginative and high quality design. The following aspects are particularly important:

Scale and settlement pattern

- 15.2 Restoration and re-development must respect traditional plot widths and avoid repetitive and unrelieved facades which typify so many modern designs. Balscote has variations of plot and property size. Although the majority of buildings are two storeys there are lower properties on Chapel Lane and Barn conversions vary in scale.
- 15.3 The scale and mass of traditional buildings varies between character areas therefore the character of the distinct areas within the settlement should be respected in any prospective development associated with the village.

Proportion

- 15.4 In most buildings within the conservation area the relationship between windows, doors, floor heights and the relationship of solid to void in the design of elevations is very important. Traditional proportions should be emulated in new development. It is of particular importance that traditional proportions are respected when designing an extension to an existing building. In most instances these will need to be subservient to the existing properties.

Roofs

- 15.5 There are a variety of roof types in Balscote including slate, clay tile, concrete tile and some isolated examples of surviving Stonesfield slate and thatch. The roof line is a dominant feature of a building and retention of the original height, shape, pitch, verge and eaves detail and ornamentation is essential. Flat roofs are alien to local tradition and should be resisted where possible. Chimneys are important features of the roof-scape, and should be retained even if no longer required for fireplaces.
- 15.6 Where historic roofing materials are to be replaced the new materials should preferably match the original in colour, size, texture and provenance. Where ventilation is required (where roofs have been insulated for example), this should be achieved by inconspicuous means (e.g. under eaves ventilation) as visible roof vents will be discouraged.

External Walls

- 15.7 Any alteration or repair to external walls must respect the existing building materials and match them in texture, quality and colour. Every effort should be made to retain or reuse facing stonework which should not ordinarily be rendered, pebble dashed or painted. Repointing should be carried out with a lime mortar to match the existing in colour, type and texture. Hard, modern cement mortars are inappropriate as they prevent the evaporation of moisture through the joints, which instead is drawn through the next softest material, the masonry itself, thereby damaging both the appearance and structure of the building. Render is not a material traditionally used in Balscote and therefore should not be used for new buildings or extensions to existing buildings.

Rainwater goods

- 15.8 Rainwater goods (guttering, downpipes, and hoppers) should be repaired if original or reinstated in original materials. Plastic guttering is not appropriate for listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas as it is not historically authentic and does not enhance a buildings character.

Windows

- 15.9 There are a range of window types in Balscote including stone mullioned, timber sash and casement windows and a wide range of later replacements. The style, design and construction of windows can have a significant impact on the character of a property and any replacement windows should be appropriate to the host building. Windows should be correctly proportioned, well related to each other and neighbouring buildings and should respect any existing openings. Retention and repair of original windows is the preferred option, but any replacement should match the original. This not only includes the structural elements of the window (e.g. frame, lintel) but also historic glass and window furniture. The thickness and moulding of glazing bars and the size and arrangement of panes are vital elements in determining appropriate replacement windows, which respect the age and history of a building.

- 15.10 Where more recent replacements have occurred it may not be appropriate to replace on a like for like basis, but to ensure a more appropriate form of window is utilised. Replacement of timber or metal windows in an uPVC alternative, no matter what the pattern or design, is unacceptable. Dormers are found in the area, although many of these are part of later alterations to the buildings. Dormers are not a traditional feature of barn conversions; here roof lights to the rear would be preferable where possible. However in the circumstances where dormers are appropriate these should relate to the style, design and construction of those windows on the host or neighbouring properties.

Doors

- 15.11 Old timber doors should be repaired rather than replaced wherever possible. The thermal performance of existing doors can be improved by the use of draught-stripping and curtains, uPVC doors are not appropriate for the conservation area. Where the replacement of an existing door is necessary, appropriate traditional designs of sheeted or panelled timber doors should be used.

Boundary Treatment

- 15.12 Stone boundary walls make a significant contribution to the character of Balscote and should be retained in-situ where possible. Repairs should be carried out on a like-for-like basis using identical materials and techniques. The copings of walls are usually regionally distinctive and should be replicated with the appropriate technique.

Micro Energy Generation

- 15.13 Whilst the use of micro energy systems are generally encouraged and satellite information systems generally tolerated, special care is necessary to find suitable sites for their use within the conservation area. It is preferred that equipment is located away from principal frontages as equipment fixed to main or visible elevations or roof slopes will damage the character and appearance of the conservation area.

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16. Bibliography

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On 1 April 2015 English Heritage changed their name to Historic England. The organisation is in the process of rebranding however all content and guidance remains current.

References and dates were correct at the time of writing but be aware that guidance is updated regularly

17. Acknowledgements

17. Acknowledgements

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Images used produced by Cherwell District Council or sourced from Oxfordshire Local History Centre unless otherwise accredited.

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Appendix 1: Policies

- A1.1 Balscote Conservation Area Appraisal should be used in conjunction with a number of national and local planning policy documents which have a set of policies pertaining to the historic environment. The main heritage policies are listed below, but there will be others of more general relevance elsewhere within the documents.
- A1.2 Up-to-date versions of the documents should be accessed via Cherwell District Council (www.cherwell.gov.uk) and government websites (www.legislation.gov.uk and www.gov.uk).

Main Legislation	National Policy Guidance	Local Policy Context
Town and Country Planning Act 1990	NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework)	Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	NPPG (National Planning Policy Guidance)	Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1: Adopted July 2015 (As amended)

ESD13: Local landscape protection and enhancement.

ESD16: The character of the built environment.

Cherwell Local Plan 1996 - 'Saved Policies'

H19 Conversion of buildings in the countryside.

H21 Conversion of buildings in settlements.

C18 Development of proposals affecting a listed building.

C21 Proposals for re-use of a listed building.

C23 Retention of features contributing to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

C25 Development affecting the site or setting of a scheduled ancient monument.

C28 Layout, design and external appearance of new development.

C30 Design of new residential development.

C33 Protection of important gaps of undeveloped land.

C38 Satellite dishes in a conservation area or on a listed building.

¹ This list was correct at the time of publication and is intended as a reference to relevant local policies, it does not represent an exhaustive list.

Appendix 2: Designated Heritage Assets

A2.1 The Balcote Conservation Area is a Designated Heritage Asset.

A2.2 The following listed buildings are Designated Heritage Assets in Balcote, see Figure 14. It should be noted that listed building legislation takes precedence over any conservation area designation. The list descriptions are current as of March 2019 and are for identification purposes only, and associated curtilage listed structures are not identified.

Listed Building	Address	Grade of Listing
Church of St Mary Magdalene	Shutford Road, Balcote	Grade II*
Priory Farm	Manor Farm Lane, Balcote	Grade II*
Outbuildings Priory Farm	Manor Farm Lane, Balcote	Grade II*
Spring Cottages	Manor Farm Lane, Balcote	Grade II
Holly Cottage	Manor Farm Lane, Balcote	Grade II
The Old Rectory	Manor Farm Lane, Balcote	Grade II
Manor Farmhouse and attached walls and Gateway	Manor Farm Lane, Balcote	Grade II
Church View	Manor Farm Lane, Balcote	Grade II
Manor Farm Barns	Manor Farm Lane, Balcote	Grade II
Peacehaven	Manor Farm Lane, Balcote	Grade II
The Butchers Arms	Shutford Road, Balcote	Grade II
Church Farmhouse (Cliffords Farmhouse)	Shutford Road, Balcote	Grade II
Heathcote Farm	Shutford Road, Balcote	Grade II
The Old Pound	Shutford Road, Balcote	Grade II
Grange Farm	Chapel Lane, Balcote	Grade II
Balcote House	Chapel Lane, Balcote	Grade II
The Old Cottage	Middle Lane, Balcote	Grade II

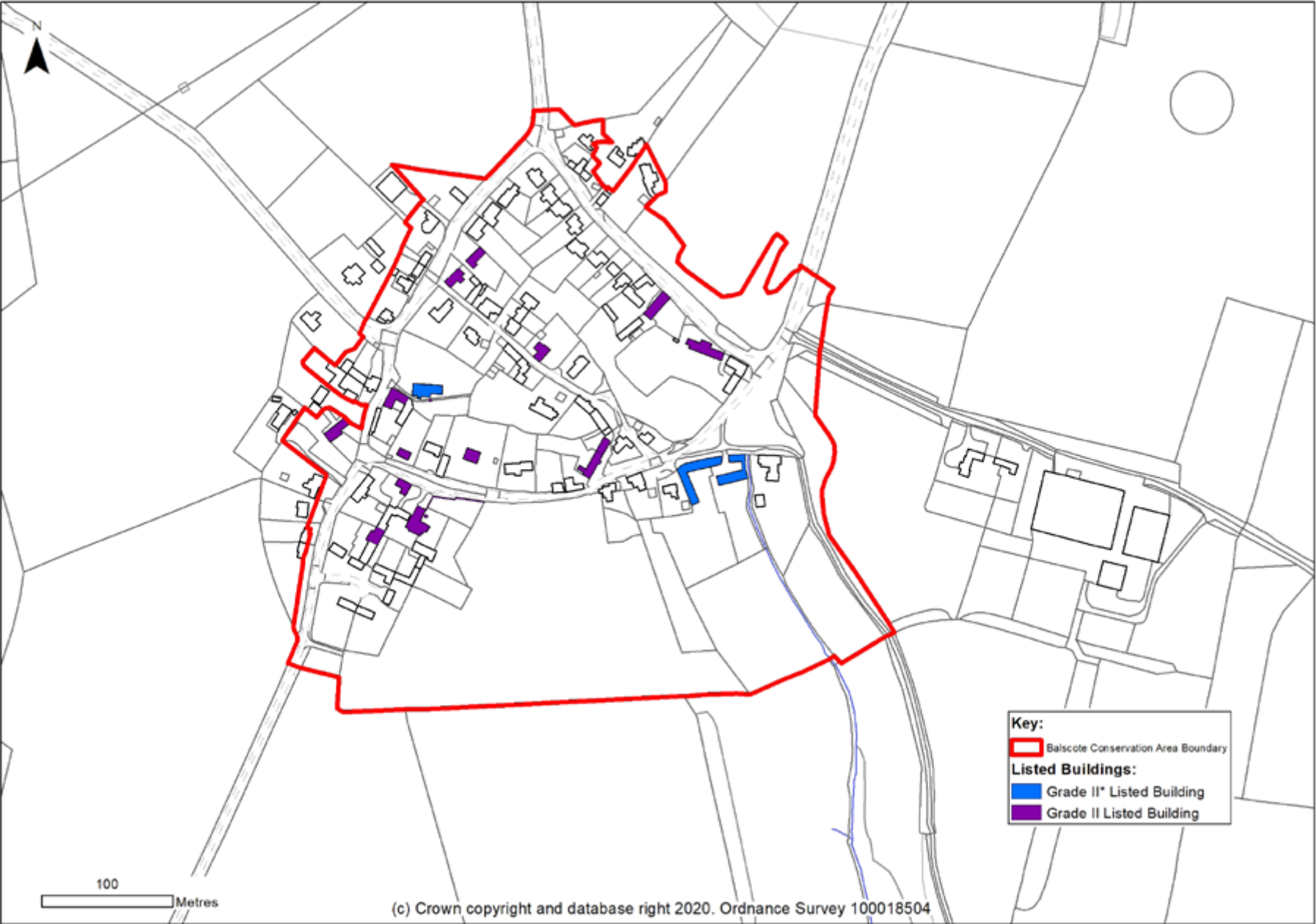


Figure 14. The Balscote Conservation Area boundary (2020) with Listed Buildings

Appendix 3: Local Heritage Assets

Buildings and Features that make a Positive Contribution

- A3.1 Local Heritage Assets are unlisted buildings and features that make a positive contribution, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) refers to them as ‘non-designated heritage assets’.
- A3.2 The NPPF refers to Heritage Assets as ‘A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).’
- A3.3 A number of ‘non-designated heritage assets’ (unlisted buildings and structures) within the village make a significant positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, this includes buildings beyond the conservation area boundary. There are prominent walls in the settlement which are generally protected through planning, or curtilage listing.
- A3.4 Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration of a heritage asset. Therefore, non-designated heritage assets are protected under the NPPF and the retention of such buildings within any conservation area is preferable to demolition and redevelopment.
- A3.5 The following buildings and structures are considered regionally or locally significant either for their architectural detail or for their part of the social history of Balscote (see figure 15). The Balscote conservation area appraisal provides the opportunity to assess the significance of these buildings and structures and they have been put forward for consideration for inclusion to the districtwide register of non-designated heritage assets which forms part of a separate process.



1. Old Village School, Shutford Road, Balscote.

The school building was originally built in 1840 but was rebuilt in 1867 after receiving a government grant. The building is constructed of ironstone with a substantial external chimney to the front elevation facing on to the road.



2. The Old School House, Shutford Road, Balscote.

A teacher's house was originally attached to the school building built in 1840, this new school house was built in 1888. The building is red brick (one of only a few red brick buildings in the village). There is a blue brick string course and gable detail. Originally the building was symmetrical with two gables to the front. The building has been extended to create a third gable.



3. Norland, Shutford Road, Balscote.

Norland was built in the 1960's and is unique for the village as it is of a modern design. Traditional materials have not been used but the building is an unusual addition to the conservation area and makes a contribution to the street scene.



4. Honeysuckle House, Shutford Road, Balscote.

Honeysuckle House is a barn conversion; there was a building in this location in the 19th century, likely associated with one of the many farms within the village. The building is therefore considered to make a contribution.



5. The Old Chapel, Chapel Lane, Balscote.

The Methodist Chapel was built in 1850. The building is a simple rectangular chapel constructed of squared coursed ironstone. The entrance door is in the end elevation with arched windows. The building is typical of a chapel of this period.



6. Barn Cottage, Manor Farm Lane, Balscote.

The building sits in a prominent position on the corner of Manor Farm Lane and Chapel Lane. The property may have historically been outbuildings associated with Balscote House which is a Listed Building with origins in the 17th century.



7. Sun-Dial Cottage, Manor Farm Lane, Balscote.

Sundial Cottage sits and the entrance to Middle Lane, the building is constructed of red brick and is noted for the feature of a sundial above the door on the front elevation. The building sits slightly elevated from the road adjacent to the Listed Buildings Holly Cottage and Spring Cottage.



8. Home Farm, Middle Lane, Balscote.

Home farm is constructed of both red brick and ironstone in parts. The dwelling appears likely to be 19th century however it is possible that this is in the location of earlier buildings dating back to 17th century, parts of these building may still remain or the materials re used.



9. Wall adjacent to Manor Farm Lane, Balscote.

The wall approximately 2m high is an ironstone dry stone wall with dog tooth capping. The wall encloses the land formerly associated with the Manor House (Now Manor Farmhouse) and acts as a retaining wall because of the large changes in level from the road to the land.

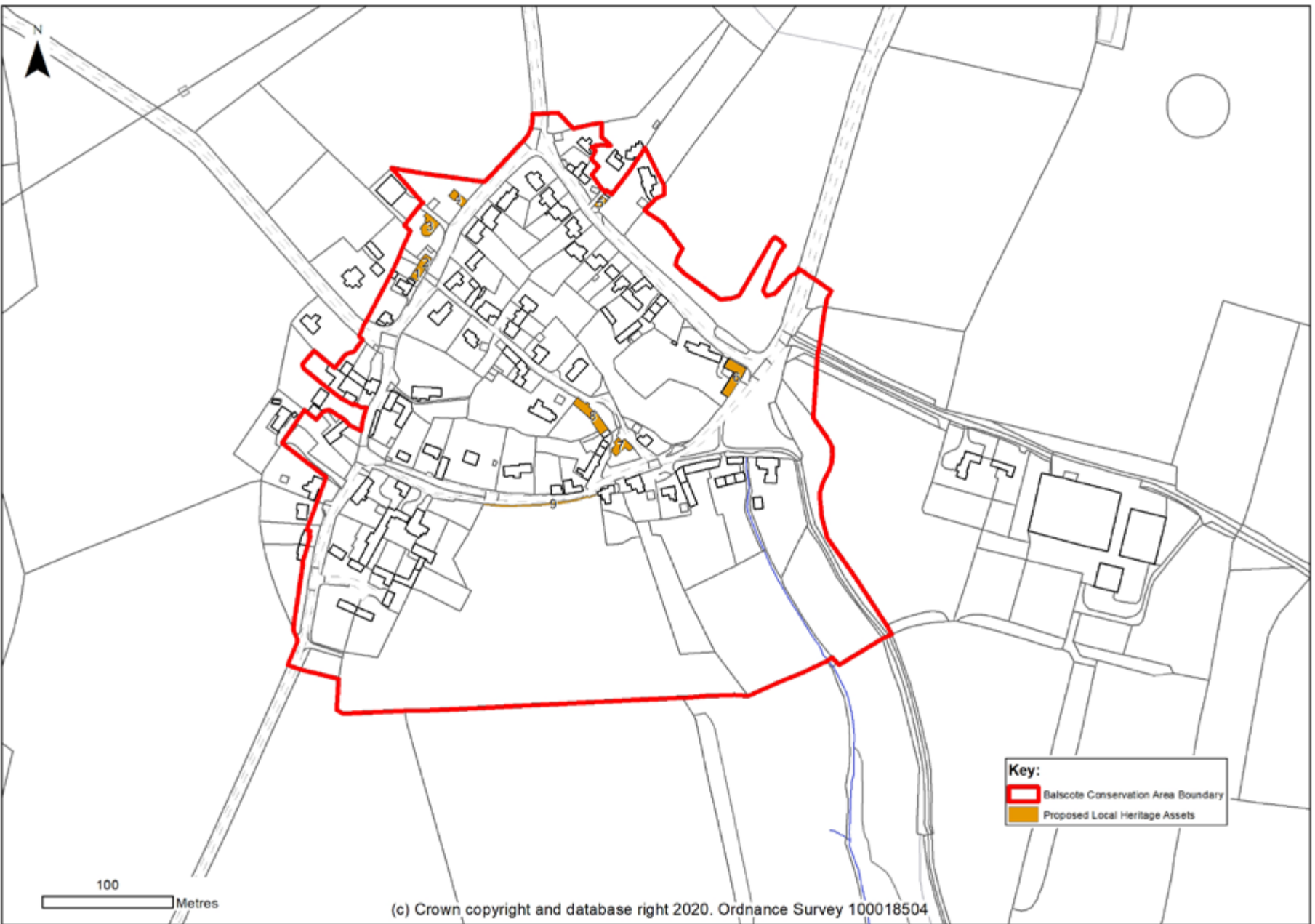


Figure 15. The Balscote Conservation Area boundary (2020) with Local Heritage Assets

Appendix 4: Article 4 Directions

What is an Article 4 Direction?

- A4.1 Certain types of minor alterations, extensions to buildings and changes of use of buildings do not require full planning permission from the council. These forms of development are called 'permitted development'. An Article 4 Direction is a special planning regulation adopted by a Local Planning Authority. It operates by removing permitted development rights from whatever is specified in the Article 4 Direction.
- A4.2 The effect of these Article 4 Directions is that planning permission is required for developments that would otherwise not require an application.
- A4.3 In September 2013 the executive of Cherwell District Council approved the rolling out of a district-wide programme of limited Article 4 Directions to ensure that accumulative minor changes do not undermine the visual amenity of heritage within the district. By doing so this enables the Council to consider these developments through the planning process so as to ensure that they accord with its policies to improve the local environment, protect businesses or any other issues.
- A4.4 **This conservation area appraisal does not make any Article 4 Directions but includes information for how an Article 4 could work for reference purposes. Any proposals for an Article 4 Direction would be subject to separate consultation.**
- A4.5 The Planning Portal (<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/responsibilities/planningpermission/permitted>) provides a useful summary of permitted development and provides links to the legislation which need to be referred to. It also sets out the Use Classes Order and permitted changes of use.

What are the effects of Article 4 Directions?

- A4.6 Once an Article 4 Direction has been made planning permission becomes necessary for the specific changes as set out in the Direction. This is only the case for the buildings covered by the Direction.

How will an Article 4 Direction affect Balscote?

- A4.7 The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies a number of Local Heritage Assets which make a special contribution to the character and appearance of Balscote, see Appendix 3. An Article 4 Direction could help to protect the special character and historical interest of the Balscote Conservation Area.
- A4.8 Article 4 Directions cover changes to the front and/or principle elevations fronting a highway, including an unadopted street or private way, public right of way, waterway or open space and for Balscote may include:
- the enlargement, improvement or other alteration to a dwelling house – i.e. changes to windows, doors, door surrounds and window headers and mouldings;
 - the removal, alteration or rebuilding of chimney stacks;
 - changes to roofing materials and the insertion of rooflights, erection or alteration of fascia boards;
 - erection or alteration of porches to the front elevation;
 - provision of hard standing;
 - the painting of previously unpainted stone or brickwork of a dwelling house or a building or enclosure within the curtilage (the addition of render or stone is already controlled under conservation area legislation);
 - installation of renewable technology including solar panels;

- the erection of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure, or demolition of traditional boundary walls, fences and gates below 1 m in height;
- replacement of above ground rainwater goods and external drainage (some external drainage already needs planning permission);
- installation and replacement of satellite dishes and other antennae/aerials.

Appendix 5: Public Consultation

- A5.1 Cherwell District Council considers public consultation an important part of conservation area designation and review. As part of the designation /review process the historic settlement in question and the environs are assessed and an appraisal document produced setting out what is significant about the place.
- A5.2 A similar process is undertaken for individual buildings, either for putting a structure forward for statutory designation as a heritage asset (formerly known as 'listing'), or for those buildings, structures or archaeological features that are locally significant for inclusion in the district-wide Register of Local Heritage Assets.
- A5.3 Conservation Officers engaged with Balscote Parish Council at early stages of preparation of the draft conservation area appraisal.
- A5.4 A six week public consultation took place from 16 September 2019 to 28 October 2019. An exhibition was held on 23 September 2019 to enable local residents to inspect the draft document and talk to the Conservation and Design team and planning colleagues. The draft document was available to be viewed on-line from Cherwell District Council's website (www.cherwell.gov.uk/conservation) and hard copies were available at Bodicote House and Banbury Library. Comments on the draft document and suggestions for inclusion or exclusion of areas and/or buildings within the conservation area were considered by the Conservation and Design Team. Where appropriate amendments were made and incorporated into the final document. The document was assessed and signed off by the Assistant Director for Planning and Development in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning in January 2022 and adopted in February 2022.

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