



Somerton Conservation Area Appraisal

February 2022

Planning Policy, Conservation and Design



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

1. Introduction

What is a conservation area?

- 1.1 Conservation area status is awarded to places that are deemed to be of 'special architectural and historic interest'. The intention of designating a conservation area is not to prevent change or development but to positively manage change in order to protect and/or enhance the special character and appearance of an area.
- 1.2 Somerton was designated a Conservation Area in 1992. This conservation area appraisal is the second review of the Somerton Conservation Area boundary, and the second appraisal. The appraisal involved a combination of walk over surveys of the settlement (undertaken in the winter 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 Somerton Conservation Area Boundary is shown in Figure 1 and the details of its designation are covered in Chapter 12 of this conservation area appraisal.

Key Characteristics of Somerton

- 1.4 A summary of the key characteristics of Somerton are:
 - Somerton is a village in the Cherwell Valley, it was a relatively large and prosperous settlement throughout the medieval period. There is archaeological evidence of the medieval castle of the De Grey family as well as settlement remains to the west of the church and the medieval manor house of the Fermor family to the south east of the settlement.
 - The standing built remains of the settlement consists largely of 17th and 18th century farmhouses and cottages. The oldest building in the village is the former school building dating to the 16th or 17th century. There are also a number of 19th and 20th century additions.
- Agriculture was of primary importance to Somerton. Inclosure took place in Somerton in 1765 and at the time there was just one landholder – William Fermor. A substantial amount of the land was common land. The settlement has a good water supply and is known for its good meadowland. Much of the agricultural land surrounding the village was historically used as pasture.
 - There were strong links to Catholicism in the village due to the Roman Catholic connections of the Fermor family and Somerton was known as one of the key centres for Catholicism in Oxfordshire.
 - The Fermor family had a substantial impact on the settlement and were the principal landowners (despite the fact they predominantly resided in Tusmore) until 1815 when the land was sold to Lord Jersey (George Augustus Frederick Villers).
 - Somerton is well placed in relation to transport networks. The historic routeways of Aves Ditch and the Portway lie to the eastern boundary and north-south of the parish respectively. The Oxford Canal runs to the west of the settlement, which historically had a weighbridge, wharf and lock in close proximity to Somerton. There was also a train station for the Banbury to Oxford Branch of the Great Western Railway.
 - The North Aston to Ardley and Fritwell Roads run through the centre of the settlement and there are a number of public footpaths which link through the village.
 - The settlement does not actively address the current road network and the most significant buildings within the village (Rectory, School House etc) are all located away from the road. Dovecot Farm with its outbuildings and extensive boundary wall all face away from the road. This is due to the shrunken nature of the settlement and reflects where buildings have historically been lost from key locations.
 - The proximity of the settlement to the River Cherwell is one of the key reasons for its location and relative prosperity. There were

numerous historic bridges and a causeway across the river in close proximity to the settlement.

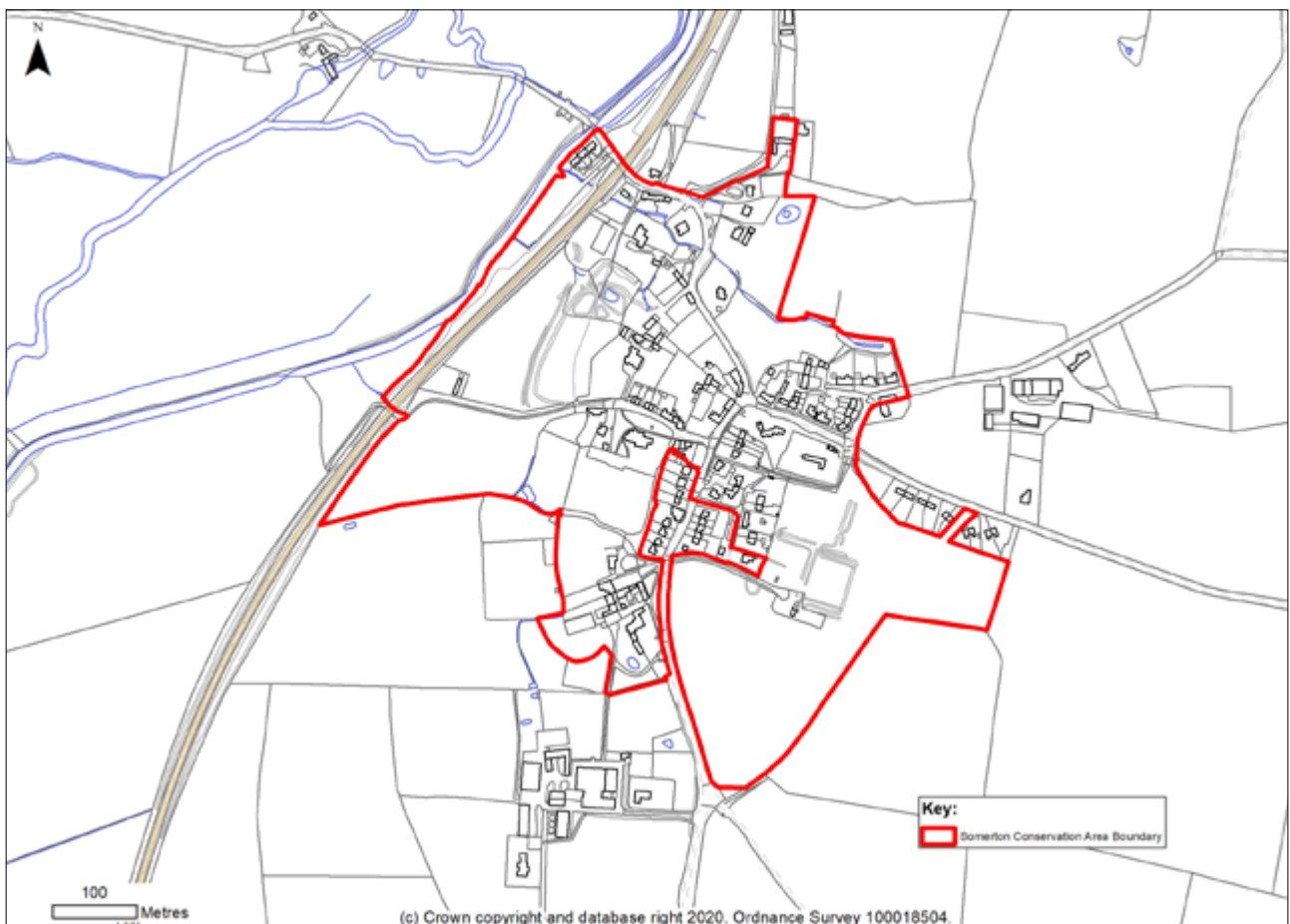
Summary of issues and opportunities

- 1.5 The future preservation and enhancement of the special character of the Somerton 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);
- identify important areas of historic green space and consider how they can be protected (where appropriate);
- ensure that any new development is sustainable, sympathetic to the conservation area and of high quality; and
- consider how to effectively manage the distinctive characteristics of the settlement.

Figure 1. Conservation area boundary (March 2020)



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), saved retained policies from the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996, the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 and Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (2019). 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 is to:
- provide a clear definition of the area's special architectural and/or historic interest;
 - identify ways in which the unique characteristics can be preserved and/or enhanced;
 - strengthen justification for designation of the conservation area;
 - review the boundary of the conservation area;
 - 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 Somerton 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 Somerton are shown in Figure 1 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 Somerton 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.

Figure 2. Conservation area boundary (March 2020) on aerial photograph

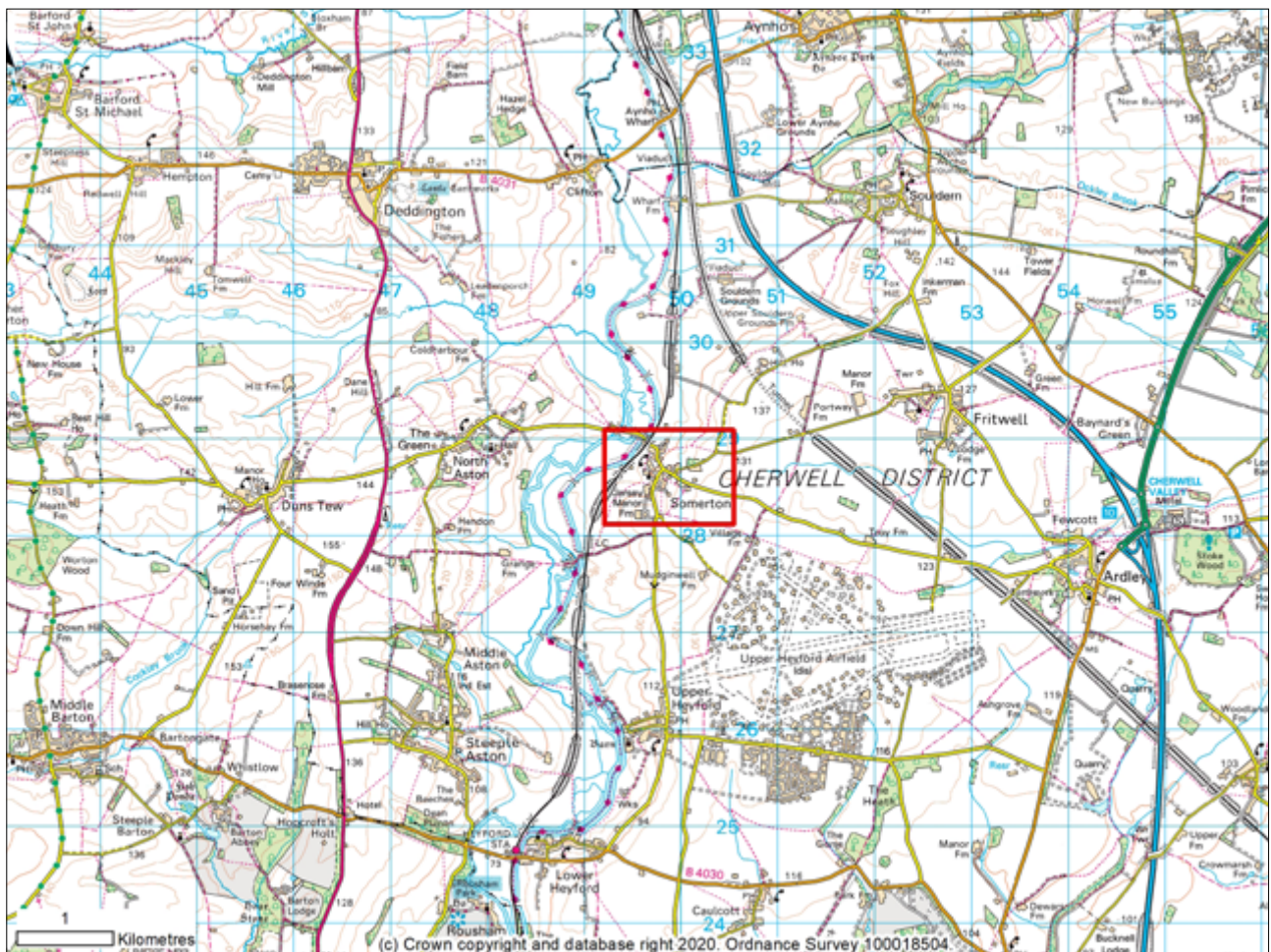


3. Location

3. Location

- 3.1 The village of Somerton lies approximately 15 miles due north of Oxford and seven miles to the northeast of Bicester. The settlement nestles on the east side of the Cherwell Valley.
- 3.2 Somerton lies along a network of local roads and footpaths leading between the villages of North Aston, Ardley, Fritwell, Souldern and Upper Heyford.
- 3.3 The Cherwell Valley Railway, Oxford Canal and River Cherwell all run immediately to the west of the village.

Figure 3. Location



4. Geology and Topography

4. Geology and Topography

- 4.1 Somerton Conservation Area lies within two character areas, as identified by the Cobham Landscape Survey. The majority of the settlement lies within Cherwell Valley character area to the west, with its clearly defined valley sides with open fields and water meadows to either side of the River Cherwell and other areas of the parish lie within the Upper Heyford Plateau Character Area to the east, with its distinctive landform unit on elevated land.
- 4.2 The topography of the area is entirely influenced by the river Cherwell, with a well defined valley bottom and steep slopes to either side. The area is green and well-wooded. The size of the Cherwell valley is considerable considering the current size of the river.
- 4.3 The geology of the area is also influenced by the River Cherwell with two distinct geological strata running to either side of the river. To the east of the Cherwell there is a band of the Great Oolite Group and to the west there is a band of Dynham Formation. Separate bands of Marlestone Rock Formation, Horsehay Sand Formation and Cornbrash formation run along the trajectory of the river.

Figure 4. Flood Zone

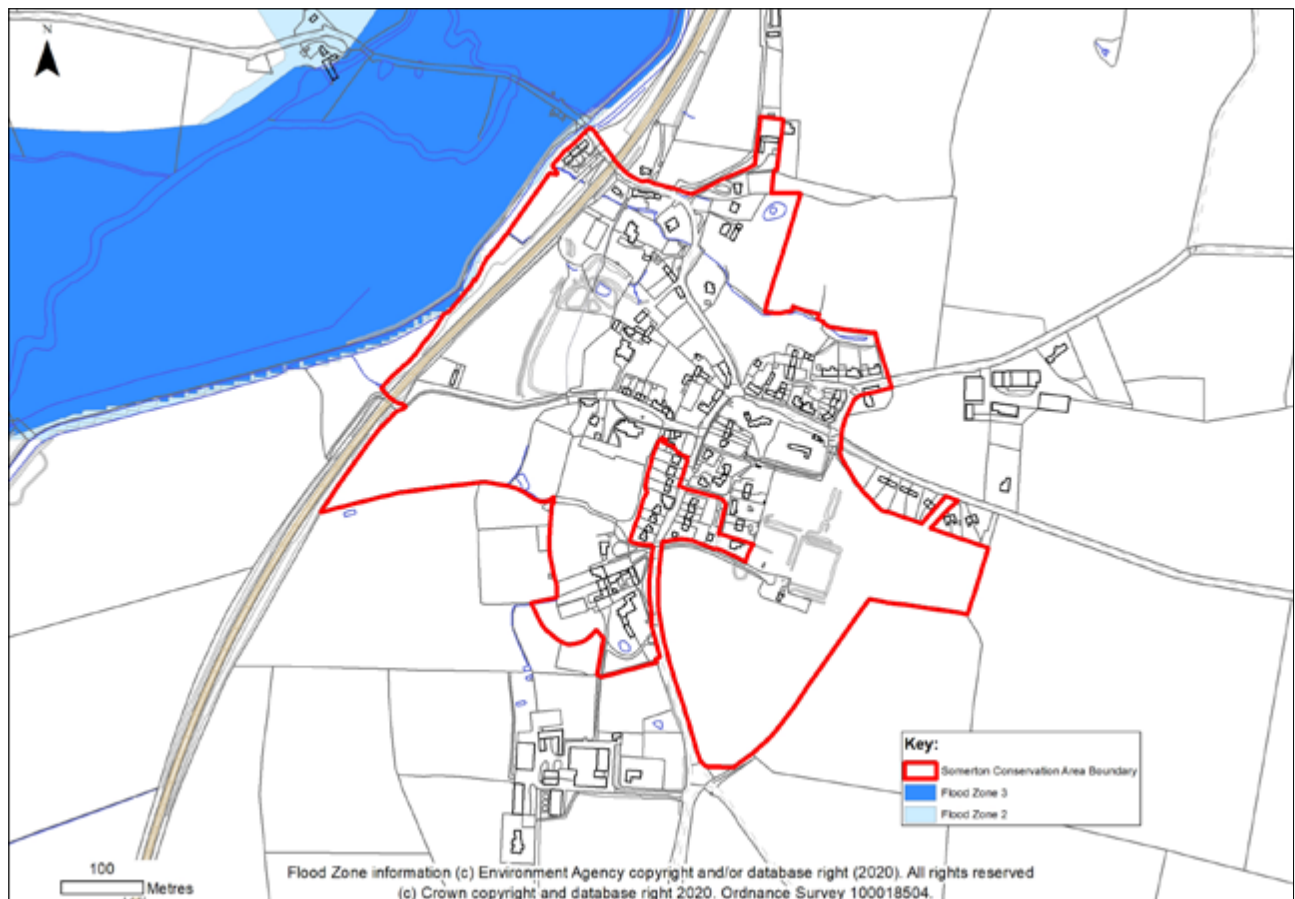


Figure 5. Topography

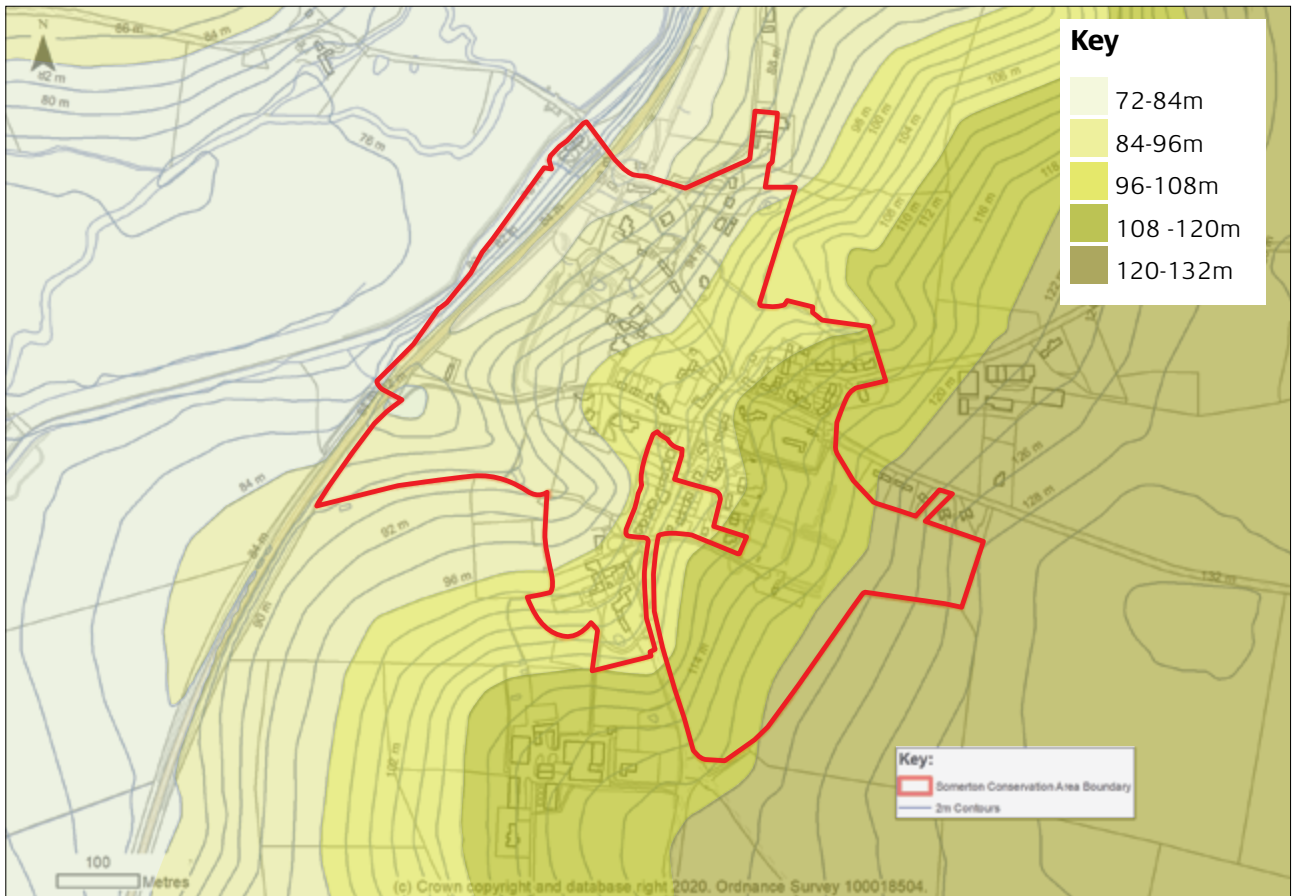
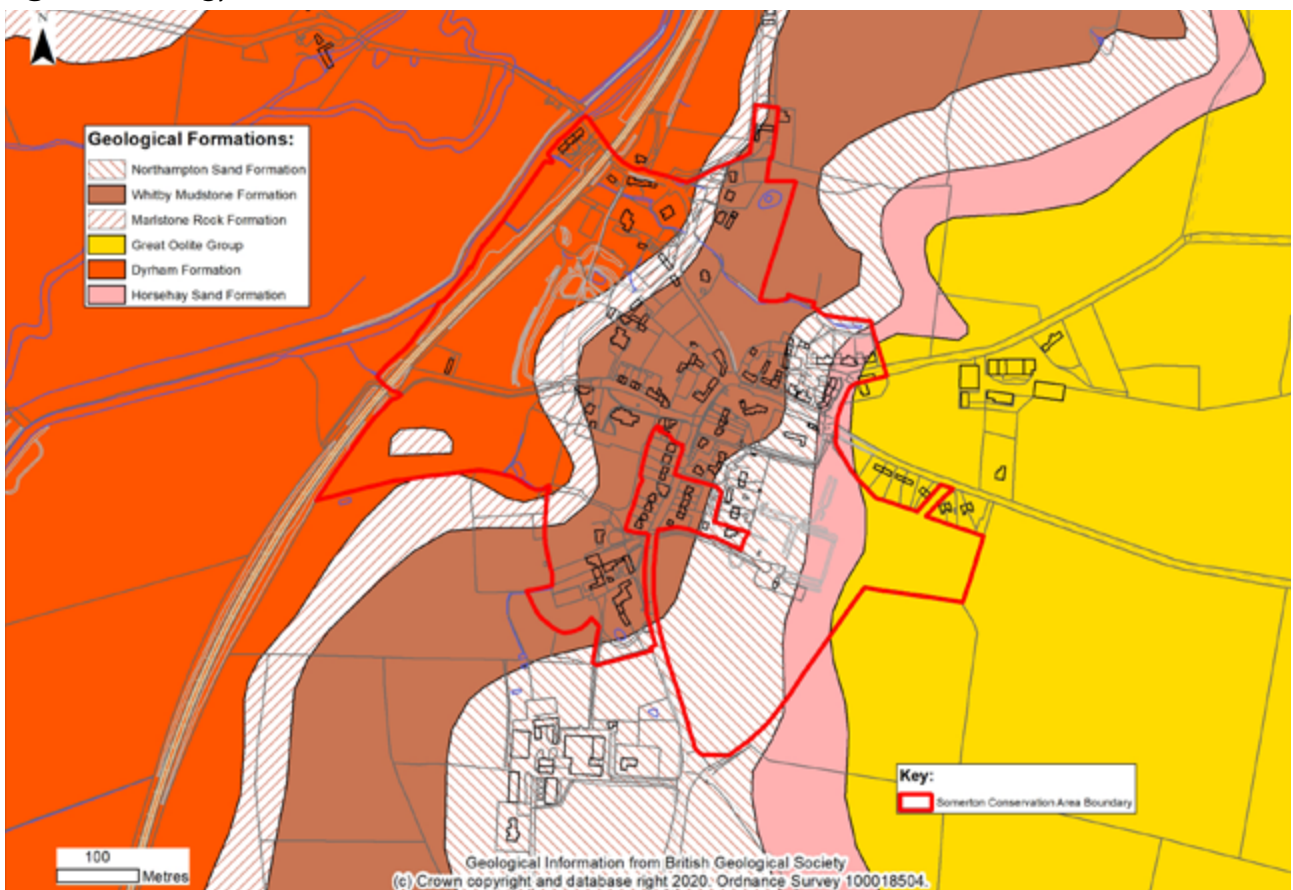


Figure 6. Geology

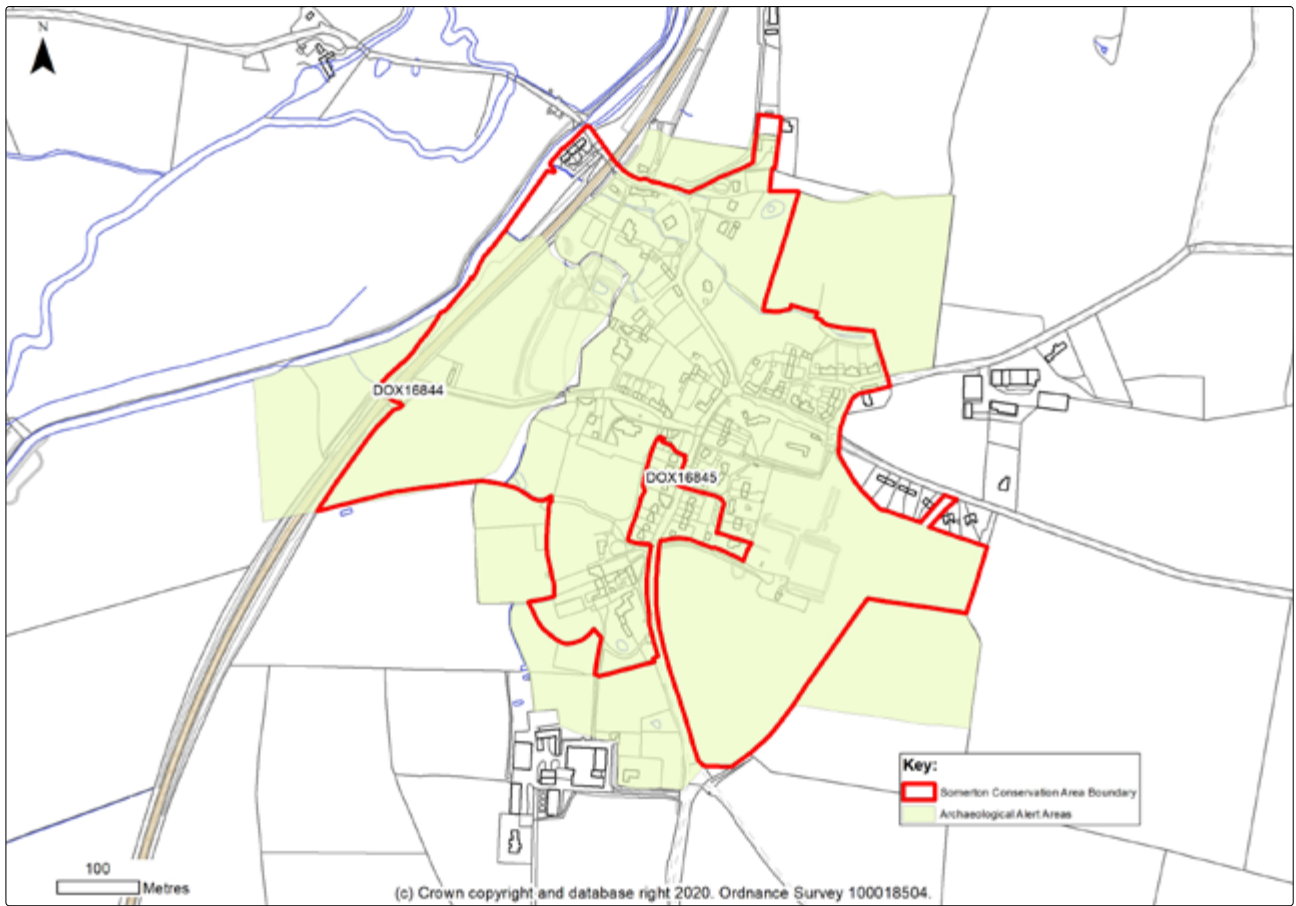


5. Archaeology

5. Archaeology

- 5.1 Somerton is an archaeologically rich parish. There are a wide range of archaeological monuments and features from all periods including Bronze Age ring ditch, Aves Ditch (possible Iron Age tribal boundary), Iron Age enclosures and pottery finds and Portway Roman Road with a burnt out Romano-British building with significant pewter ware finds in close proximity. There is a rare Turf Cut maze at Troy Farm which is a scheduled monument.
- 5.2 The most substantial archaeological remains, however, relate to the shrunken medieval village of Somerton, which was once the largest and most prosperous village in the Ploughley Hundred. There are visible earthworks remains located throughout the village and archaeological excavations within the current village have revealed medieval remains in the form of building platforms and additional holloways. There are believed to have been several house platforms to either side of Heyford Road, some of which have modern houses constructed on them.
- 5.3 The 16th century Fermor manor house lies to the south east of the existing settlement and is a scheduled monument and there are standing remains of the former hall (also known as the Fermor arch), although these are not visible from public footpaths. There are also quarry pits and early enclosures in the vicinity.
- 5.4 There are also substantial earthworks to the western side of the current settlement which include a hollow way (the original main street for the village) and fishponds as well as house platforms. This area is scheduled as an ancient monument.
- 5.5 To the north east of this area, around the historic school site, is understood to be the site of the medieval castle of the de Grey family (mentioned in a document of 1295). There is no confirmed archaeological evidence for this and the schedule does not refer to a castle, but there is conjecture that there was a moated area around a central rectangular platform near the school. The castle could either have been a motte and bailey or a simple moated enclosure with the lower moat lying parallel to the River Cherwell. The school is believed to have been built on the site of the chapel associated with the castle; the current building is of 16th century origin, but incorporates earlier work, and evidence for a burial ground was discovered with burials found during excavations in 1953 and 1969. Significant areas of archaeological interest, including potentially part of the castle, are likely to have been lost during the construction of the railway in the mid 19th century.
- 5.6 Somerton was an open field parish until the late 18th century and aerial photographs show ridge and furrow earthworks to the north and south of the village. Several enclosure hedges reflect the reverse S shape of former ridge and furrow.

Figure 7. Archaeological Constraint Area



6. History

6. History

General

- 6.1 The Somerton Conservation Area Appraisal provides a brief overview of the history and development of the settlement. It is not intended to be the definitive history of the area. Further information about the settlement can be gained from the Oxfordshire Local History Centre.
- 6.2 The Anglo-Saxons doubtless chose to settle at Somerton largely on account of the good water supply and the rich meadowland, which afforded pasture for cattle in the summer months when the uplands in this area were liable to drought. The old English name Sumortun means 'farm used in summer' and it is possible that it was originally used for a part of the year only by the upland settlement at Fritwell and later permanently colonized from there. Historical records dating from 1086 show Somerton to have been the largest and richest settlement in the Ploughley Hundred in the Middle Ages, probably partly due to the rich grazing land available in the Cherwell Valley. The settlement has a good water supply and rich meadowland, which no doubt contributed to its prosperity.
- 6.3 Somerton was largely owned by Odo of Bayeux (who appears in the Bayeux tapestry) at Domesday with Miles Crispin owning a minor share of the manor. The Cogges family then held the manor until 1512 when it passed to William Fermor and it remained in the family ownership until the early 19th century. The Fermor family were staunch Roman Catholics and had a significant influence on religious development in Somerton. They were absentee landowners from 1596 onwards (when they began to reside in Tusmore), but were all buried in the church at Somerton. In 1815 Somerton was sold to Lord Jersey for £90,000. The manor was then sold again in 1919, the manor itself to Thomas Edwin Ember and the land to existing tenants, but some parts of the parish remained in family ownership until the late 20th century.
- 6.4 The settlement was historically of some significance, the medieval castle of the de Grey family was located to the north east of the church and a court, dovecote, fishponds, curtilages and gardens were also mentioned in 1295. In the early 16th century William Fermor built a new manor house on an alternative site. The tenants of the land in Somerton included Eynsham Abbey and the smaller religious houses of Cogges Priory and Merton Priory.
- 6.5 Three eminent rectors resided in Somerton at different times – Master Nicholas Hereford (1397); Robert King (1537-52 - first Bishop of Oxford) and William Juxon (1615 - 1633- President of St Johns College, Oxford later became Archbishop of Canterbury). James Jennings (d.1832), the well known Oxfordshire surveyor for Inclosure Awards, also lived in the settlement in the former Railway Tavern.

Population

- 6.6 Somerton was the largest village in the Ploughley Hundred and had an unusually large population at Domesday. The village remained large and prosperous throughout the medieval period with 108 adults recorded during the poll tax of 1377 and 242 adults in 1676.
- 6.7 There was a relative decline in the population from the post-medieval period through to the 19th century, which can be seen in the shrunken form of the village. By 1801 the population numbered only 254. There was a subsequent rise, but it fell again between 1821 (400) and

1841 (329) as a result of the agricultural depression. By 1901 the population was 265 and this had reduced further to 200 inhabitants by 1951.

Agriculture and industry

- 6.8 Somerton has a very fertile and extensive pasture land and agriculture contributed significantly to its prosperity. It remained an open field system until enclosure in 1765. The only evidence for the layout of the field system comes from 1634 when a terrier shows 4 fields, the individual field names and allocations had changed by 1685. Somerton's pastures were carefully controlled – in the 16th century the holder of each yardland was allowed to keep five horses or oxen at most and 30 sheep on the common in winter. The rate was rigorously enforced by the court, and even the lady of the manor's son was presented in the 1560's for overstocking the common with sheep.
- 6.9 There was an Act of Parliament to enclose the land in 1765, which was a very simple procedure as there was only one landowner – William Fermor. At the time of enclosure there were 1,800 acres (or 48 yardlands) of common land.
- 6.10 Enclosure had the effect of increasing the size of the farms – the number of farms reduced from 12 in 1720 to 5 in 1820. The largest farm at this time was Troy Farm

with 600 acres. Farming practice does not appear to have altered significantly though and a high proportion of land remained devoted to pasture. Somerton was known for its dairy products into the 20th century.

- 6.11 Milling was also present in the settlement. At Domesday one mill was recorded and by the 15th century there were two including a fulling mill. This rose to three mills during the 16th century – Somerton Mill and 2 belonging to the Fermor family. By the 19th century just one mill remained and this provided employment for the miller and 5 men.
- 6.12 There were also the usual range of other rural trades. In the 16th century two bakers and a butcher were recorded and by the 18th century a shop, bakehouse, butcher, shoemaker, blacksmith and carpenter were noted. By the 19th century there was a brickmaker, stone mason, thatcher, 2 dressmakers, a tailor, lacemaker, smockmaker, wheelwright, instrument maker, station master and two men employed on railway work.

Education

- 6.13 Thomas Fermors endowed a free school for boys in 1580. The former chapel in the castle courtyard was converted for use as the school and land was purchased in Milcombe, near Bloxham, to pay for it. An associated school masters house was later



View from Fermor House

built in 1750. It may have been intended as a grammar school, but only taught reading, writing and arithmetic.

- 6.14 The school only admitted those who were already able to read and so by 1787 the majority of Somerton children were excluded from attending. In 1815 only 4 boys attended during the summer and approx. a dozen during the winter. Master supplemented his income by taking in fee paying boarders. By 1833 there were 26 boys at the school, but only 5 were receiving a free education.
- 6.15 In the early 19th century there were two other schools in the village – opened by Lady Jersey in 1815 – one for 12 girls and the other for 12 children. By 1854 numbers had risen to 24 girls and 18 infants. These schools merged into the main school between 1864 and 1871.
- 6.16 In the mid 19th century the land associated with the school was truncated by the railway and the school received some compensation which was spent on repairs to the school building. The school was affiliated to the National School movement by 1887 and attendance rose from 40 in 1889 to 55 in 1906. In 1955 there were 18 pupils. The school has now closed with residents from the village attending the school at the neighbouring villages of Fritwell and Steeple Aston. The building has now been converted to a private residence.

Religion

- 6.17 A church was in existence in Somerton in 1074, but the current building of the church of St James dates to the 12th century with only small amounts of fabric dating to this time. The layout of the church includes a chancel, nave, north and south aisles, north tower and west porch and was largely complete by the end of 15th century.
- 6.18 The church was in a state of decay in the late 19th century. The chancel was restored in 1854 and the remainder of the building was conservatively restored in



Church and churchyard

1891 by architect JD Sedding. A number of early items survive including 16th and 19th century box pews, a 14th century reredos and a 15th century chancel screen; it is believed that the latter items may have been hidden for a period of time due to the catholic sympathies of the parish. The Fermor family were patrons to the church and there is a 16th century chantry and a number monuments to the Fermor family added by William Fermor, but the family were later barred from the church.

- 6.19 The Fermor family had strong catholic connections and under their influence the parish of Somerton was one of the key centres in Oxfordshire for Catholicism. The chapel in the castle grounds, which later became the school, was used during Mary's reign for Catholic services and there is believed to be a Roman Catholic graveyard there. A new chapel was built as part of the 16th century manor house and is believed to have been used to celebrate mass, even after the Fermor family ceased to reside in Somerton. The catholic community in Somerton was both large and prosperous. The numbers were relatively static with 52 recorded papists in 1676, 45 in 1706, 47 in 1738 and 48 in 1811. Relations between catholics and anglicans in the parish appeared to be civil and only one member of Fermor family, the wife of Richard Fermor, was ever fined for popish practices. Catholicism gradually declined in

the parish after the Fermor family sold the manor and by the end of the 19th century there were only two Catholics left.

- 6.20 Protestant non-conformism in the parish was limited with no evidence of dissent until 1834 when two non-conformists were reported. In 1840 a house was licensed for Wesleyan meetings. By the 1880s they had joined the United Free Church Methodists and in the early 20th century there was a cottage meeting place, but this had closed in 1914 and been pulled down by 1915.

Transport

- 6.21 Somerton lies in close proximity to the Portway, an ancient routeway which predates Roman occupation. The route is still in use as a public right of way. The settlement also lies immediately to the east of the River Cherwell and there were numerous bridges and causeways crossing the river to allow access across.
- 6.22 The Oxford Canal was completed in 1790 and lies immediately to the east of the River Cherwell and follows its course in this location. A wharf and weighbridge were established in the parish and Somerton lock was based on the northern boundary of the parish. These features all now lie within Oxford Canal Conservation Area.
- 6.23 The Oxford to Banbury section of the Great Western Railway, now known as the Cherwell Valley line, lies to the west of the village. It was completed in 1850. The works associated with the railway destroyed the former castle site and some of the shrunken medieval settlement of Somerton. The Fritwell and Somerton Station was constructed in 1854, south of the railway bridge, this was a simple wooden structure with just room for one siding with a cattle dock and space for the local coal merchant to unload his wagons. The station closed during the 1960s.
- 6.24 There are a network of local roads running through Somerton between North Aston, Ardley, Upper Heyford and Fritwell. It is, however, noteworthy that the settlement does not specifically address the road network.



Railway bridge

Figure 8. Somerton 1875 - 1887 map

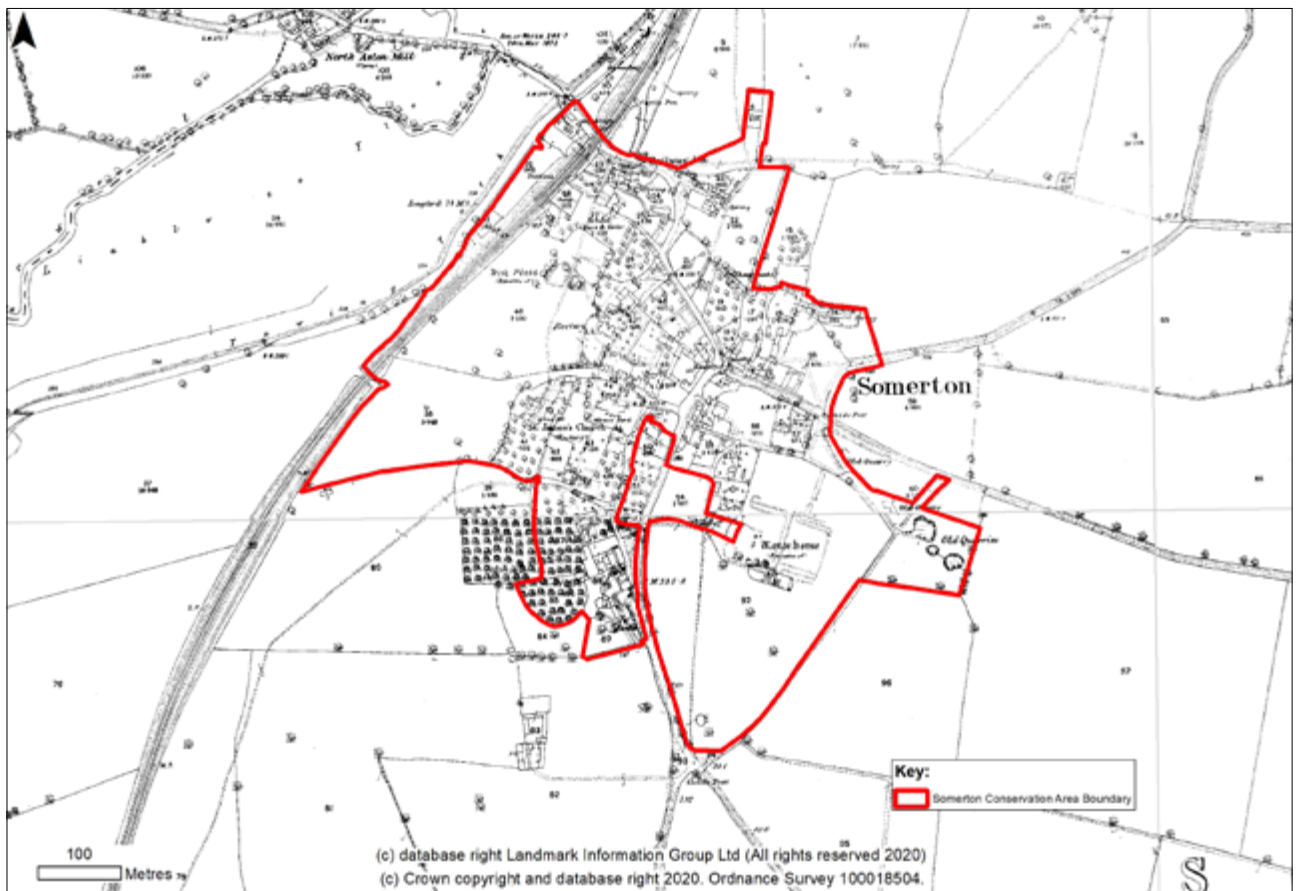


Figure 9. Somerton 1899 - 1905 map

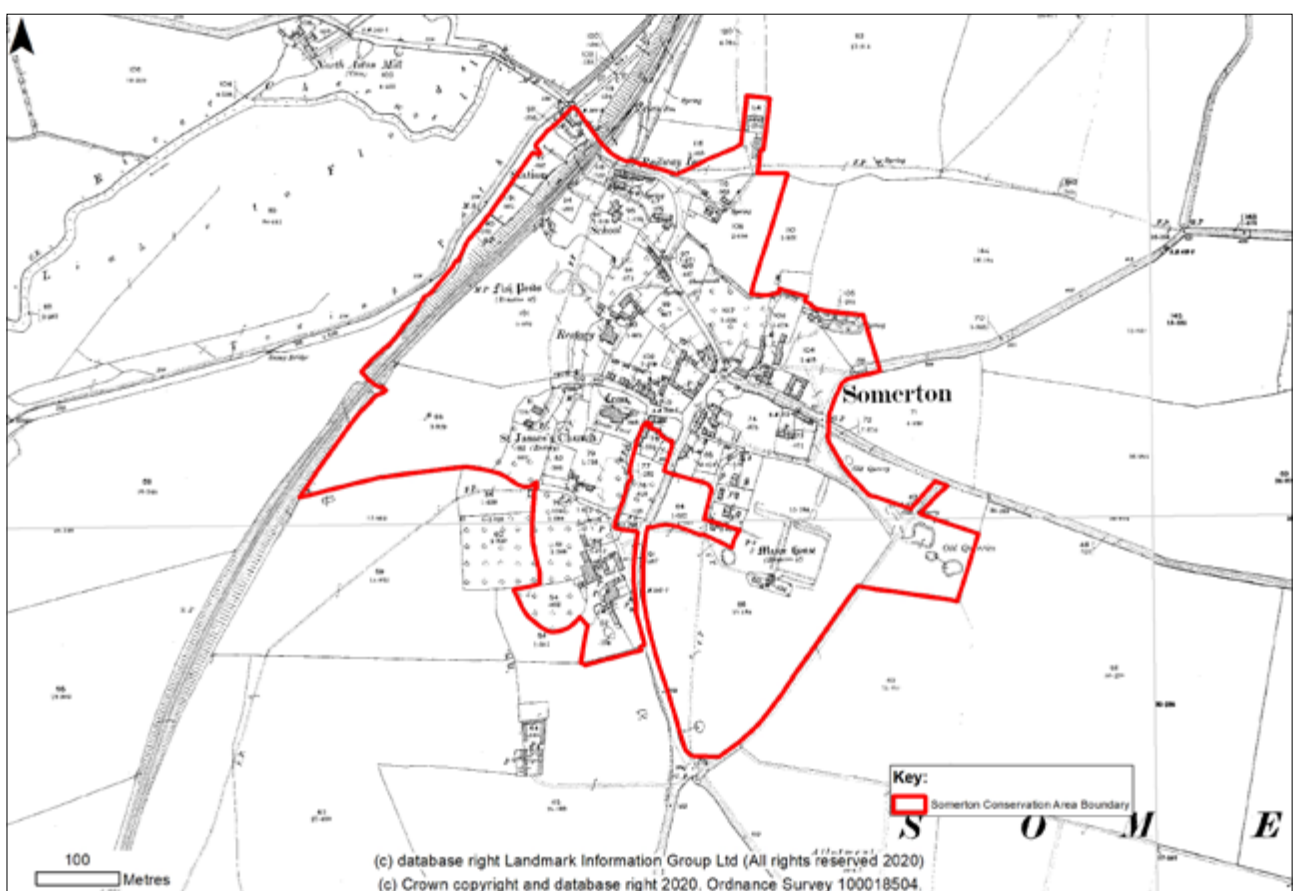


Figure 10. Somerton 1913 - 1923 map

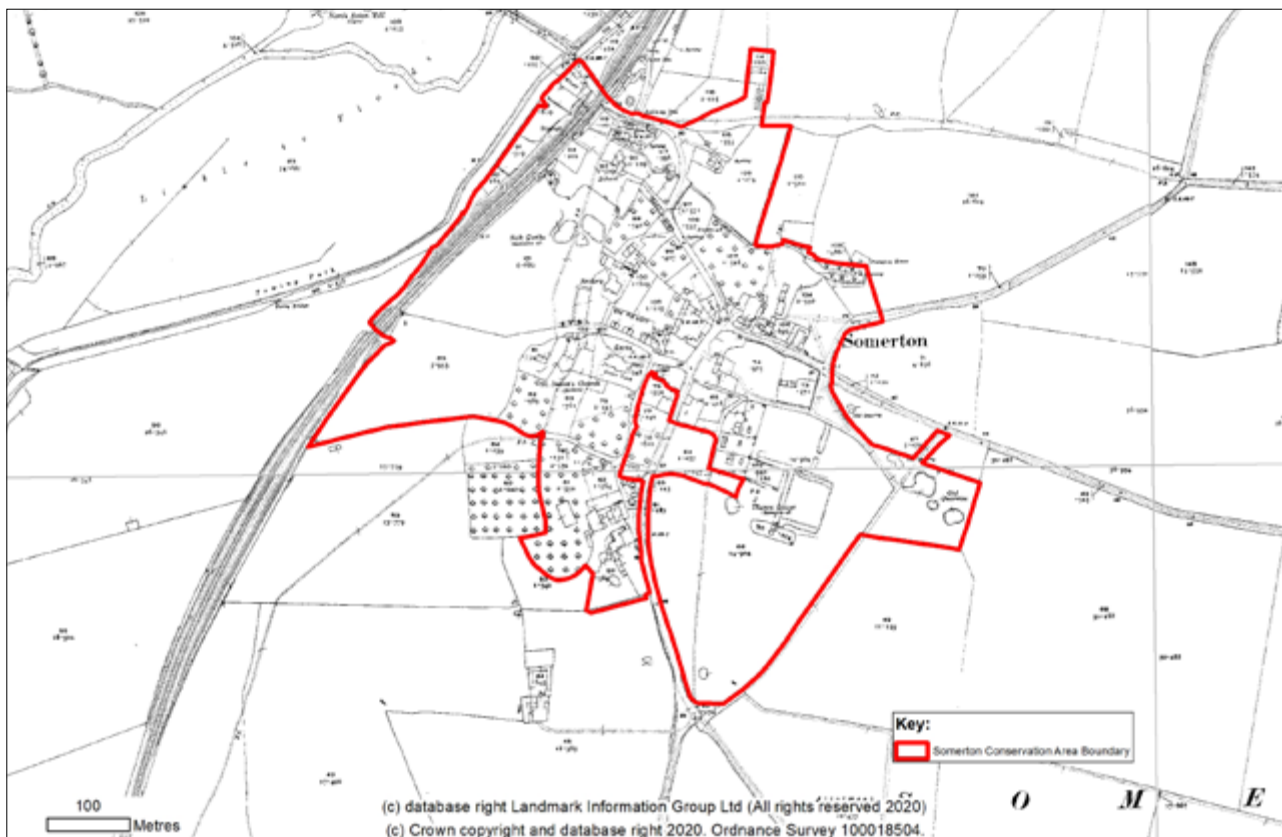
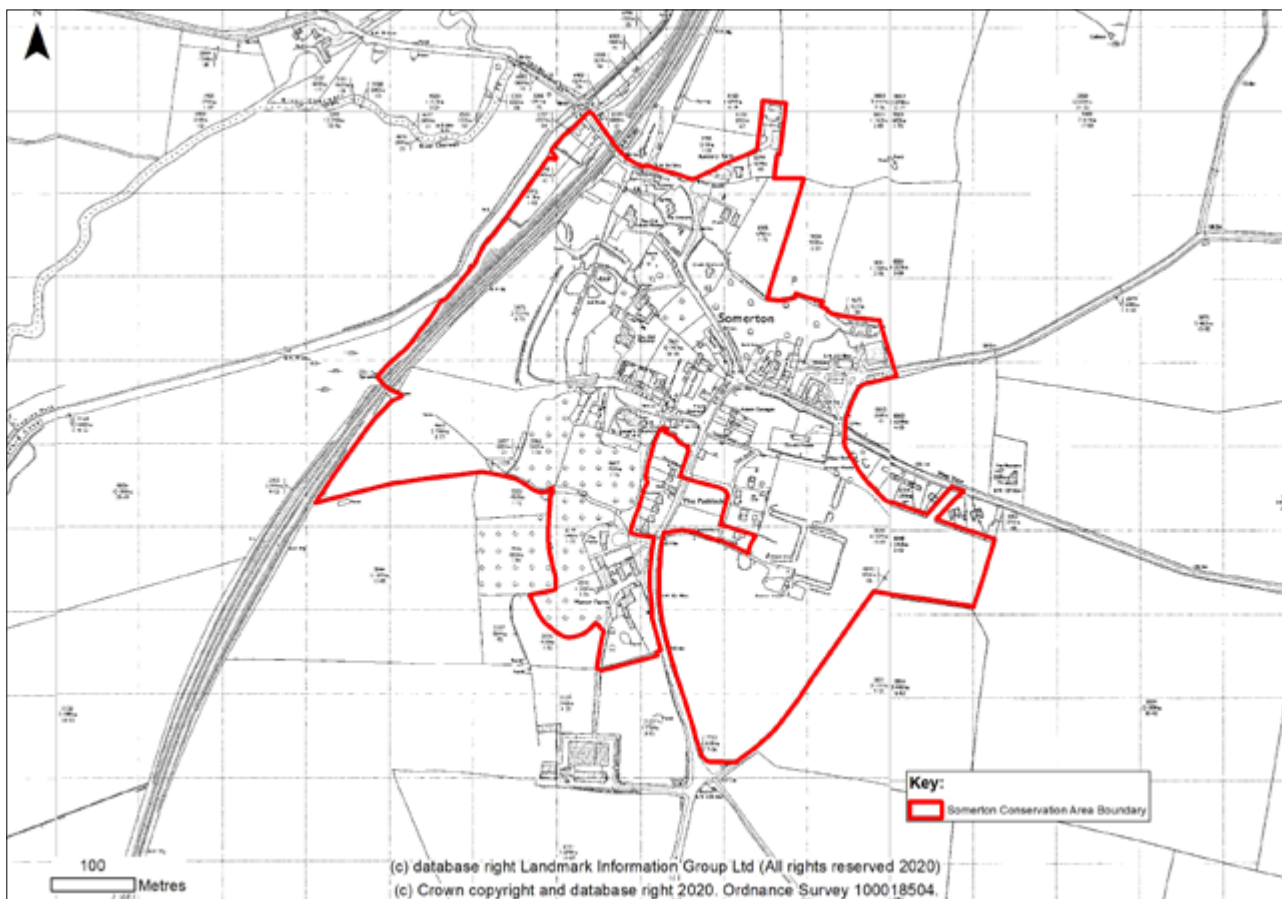


Figure 11. Somerton 1974 - 1976 map





1-4 Church Cottages



Church Street from the East



Church Street from the West





Railway Tavern



Church Street from the East



Somerton Post Office



The Paddocks



7. Architectural History

7. Architectural History

7.1 Somerton was once a large and prosperous village, although it has now contracted considerably. There are a number of significant surviving buildings around the settlement, but many of these do not positively address the main road running through the settlement, which has been infilled with later properties.

Cottages

7.2 There are a range of historic, vernacular cottages around the settlement, predominantly constructed of coursed limestone; notable examples dating from the 17th and 18th centuries include The Old Cottage, Church Street and Church End, which was one of the farmhouses in the 18th century and has medieval origins. There are also some 19th century cottages in Church Street, Ardley Road, Heyford Road and Water Lane. The two pairs of brick semi-detached cottages (built for railway workers) opposite the church are of typical estate cottage design with gabled half dormers, door hoods on brackets and decorative lintels. The brick and Welsh slate was presumably brought in by canal and railway during the 19th century.



The Old Cottage



Canal Cottages

Inn

7.3 The Railway Inn or Railway Tavern is of 18th century date and constructed in close proximity to the railway line to the east. The building is of coursed limestone construction and is a series of three linked buildings with associated barn, the central building is of three storeys and is a handsome building. It was once the home of the renowned Oxfordshire Inclosure Surveyor James Jennings. Later became an Inn which closed during the 1960s. It is now a private dwelling.



Railway Inn

Farms

7.4 There were eight farms in Somerton when it was inclosed in 1765, reducing to five by the time Somerton was sold in 1919. There were seven in 1955.

7.5 The largest farm was Troy Farm, which lies at some distance to the east of the settlement along the Ardley Road. The current building is of early 18th century date with extensions in the 19th century. It is of coursed limestone construction. The site is of particular note for its 16th century turf cut maze, which is one of only 5 in the country. The building does not lie within the Somerton Conservation Area, but has strong historic links to the settlement.

7.6 There are two remaining 17th century farms within Somerton itself – Jersey Manor Farm and Dovecote Farm.



Jersey Manor Farm

7.7 Jersey Manor Farmhouse originated in the 17th century with alterations in the 18th and 19th centuries. The building is of coursed limestone; it has a Stonefield slate roof and a number of 12 pane sash windows. It is located at the southern extreme of the current settlement. The building is currently in a very poor state of repair and has been classified as a building at risk for quite some time, but there is now a management plan for bringing the building back into use. The associated barn and farm buildings have been converted to residential use.



Dovecote Farm Barns

7.8 Dovecote Farm is based in a core location within the settlement on the junction of Ardley Road with Water Street. The farm, farmyard buildings (including barn, stables and cartshed) and dovecot (from which the farm gets its

name) are separately listed. The dovecote has a datestone of 1719 and there are reportedly over 1000 nesting boxes within the building. The farmhouse is of 17th century origin with alterations in the 18th and 19th centuries. The buildings are all constructed of coursed, squared limestone rubble. The buildings all face away from the road and have a strong visual presence in terms of their unbroken facades which line the road and create a sense of enclosure. The barn conversions and modern development along Dovecote Lane are on land formerly belonging to Dovecote Farm. the barn conversions and modern development along Dovecote Lane are on land historically associated with Dovecote Farm.

7.9 Rectory Farm is noted on OS maps from the mid 20th century onwards. This was one of the ‘new’ farms recorded in the Victoria County History in 1955, the other being Village Farm off the road to Ardley. Rectory Farmhouse is now called Home Paddock. The stone barn was converted in the 1990s.



1-4 Church Lane

School

7.10 The Old School is the oldest secular building in Somerton. The building is of 16th century construction (the school was endowed in 1580), but incorporates earlier medieval work reputedly related to the castle chapel on the site. The building was extended in the mid 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. The building originally consisted of a school house and school room and the school room retains its 7 light 16th century mullioned and transomed window. The list description provides an outline of the layout and interior of the building. It is now a private house.



Rectory

Rectory

7.11 The 19th century rectory was built in 1847 and extended in 1896. It replaced an earlier 17th century rectory and was built at a cost of £2,000. The building is of simple design and of coursed limestone construction. It is accessed from a driveway to the north of the church and has views over the shrunken medieval settlement earthworks.



Manor House

Manor House

7.12 The 16th century manor house of William Fermor (which was in a ruinous condition in 1738 and largely pulled down in the early 19th century) remains predominantly in earthwork form. There is a section of limestone rubble walling with a 16th century window, believed to be part of the former hall range of the house. The manor house is both listed and scheduled.

8. Character and Appearance

8. Character and Appearance

Settlement pattern

- 8.1 The current settlement of Somerton has no regular settlement pattern or layout, this is due to the extent of shrinkage in the settlement.
- 8.2 The current pattern of the settlement is based around the central spine of Water Lane, which runs from North Aston to Upper Heyford. This leads through the length of the current village, but there are few historic properties which address this main road. The Archaeology section notes that there is evidence for historic house platforms along this alignment, but the majority of standing buildings are of 20th century date. Similarly, the adjoining roads of Fritwell Road and Ardley Road only have a small number of historic properties.
- 8.3 The settlement had already shrunk by the late medieval period, but the construction of the Oxford Canal and Great Western Railway in the late 18th and 19th centuries truncated the settlement remains and confused the situation further. The remains of the historic settlement pattern can be gleaned from the network of footpaths which lead through the shrunken settlement and around the former Manor House. A number of historic buildings are based in close proximity to these footpaths or along Church Lane.
- 8.4 The map of the Manor of Somerton in 1765 shows the central spine road well populated with buildings and lanes leading off to the west providing access to the church and school with a link road running past the area where the 19th century now stands.

Land use

- 8.5 The majority of the historic village is now in domestic use. The rectory, school and former Railway Inn have all been converted to residential. The former settlement remains of both the shrunken village and the Manor House can still be clearly seen and the agricultural history of the settlement can be seen from the former farmyards. Dovecote Farm remains in

use for agriculture, but the only other historic building with a function other than residential is the church.

Building age, type and style

- 8.6 The majority of historic buildings in the village are simple, rectilinear cottages and farmhouses of coursed limestone construction dating to the 17th century and later. The buildings are of simple vernacular style and two storey construction.
- 8.7 The larger, bespoke buildings including 17th century school and 19th century are similarly constructed in the local limestone, but are not prominent within the streetscape

Construction and materials

- 8.8 The majority of historic buildings throughout the settlement are constructed of the local limestone. Somerton is situated on the edge of the marlstone belt and ironstone has been used for architectural detailing at the church and Dovecote Farm house.
- 8.9 There are a number of historic buildings of brick construction including the estate cottages along Church Lane and some small outbuildings. Brick is used for infilling timber framed panels on the cart shed at Dovecote Farmhouse and also used for the chimney stacks in the village.
- 8.10 There are a wide variety of roofing materials used throughout the village including Stonesfield slate (on dovecot and Jersey Manor Farmhouse) and Welsh slate as well as 20th century imitation products. There are no thatched buildings in Somerton

Means of enclosure

- 8.11 The main form of enclosure found around Somerton are limestone boundary walls. These are predominantly of approximately 1 metre high and are either mortared or of dry stone wall construction. There are retaining boundary walls around the churchyard and part of Dovecote Farm. There are 2 metre high walls

which surround Dovecote Farm and create a sense of enclosure in that area.

- 8.12 There are a range of cappings including rounded mortar caps, flat stone caps, stone on edge and stone / tile capping in different locations around the settlement. The boundary walls make a significant contribution to the character of the area.

Trees and green spaces

- 8.13 There are a number of important areas of green space within Somerton Conservation Area. These are predominantly areas relating to the shrunken medieval settlement and include scheduled monument earthworks to both the north-west and east of the current settlement.
- 8.14 The wharf area, to the south-east of the Oxford Canal, is also of significance in the historic development of the settlement. The canal itself, and the water meadows adjoining the River Cherwell to the north of the canal, make a contribution to the wider setting of Somerton but have not been included in the Somerton Conservation Area. The canal forms part of the Oxford Canal Conservation Area.
- 8.15 The churchyard and orchard to the south make a positive visual contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 8.16 There are a number of trees which make a positive contribution to the conservation area including individual trees in the churchyard, the trees in the orchard to the south of the church, a belt of trees around the site of the shrunken settlement to the west of the village and a centrally placed tree in the area around the Manor House earthworks.

Carriageways, pavements, footpaths

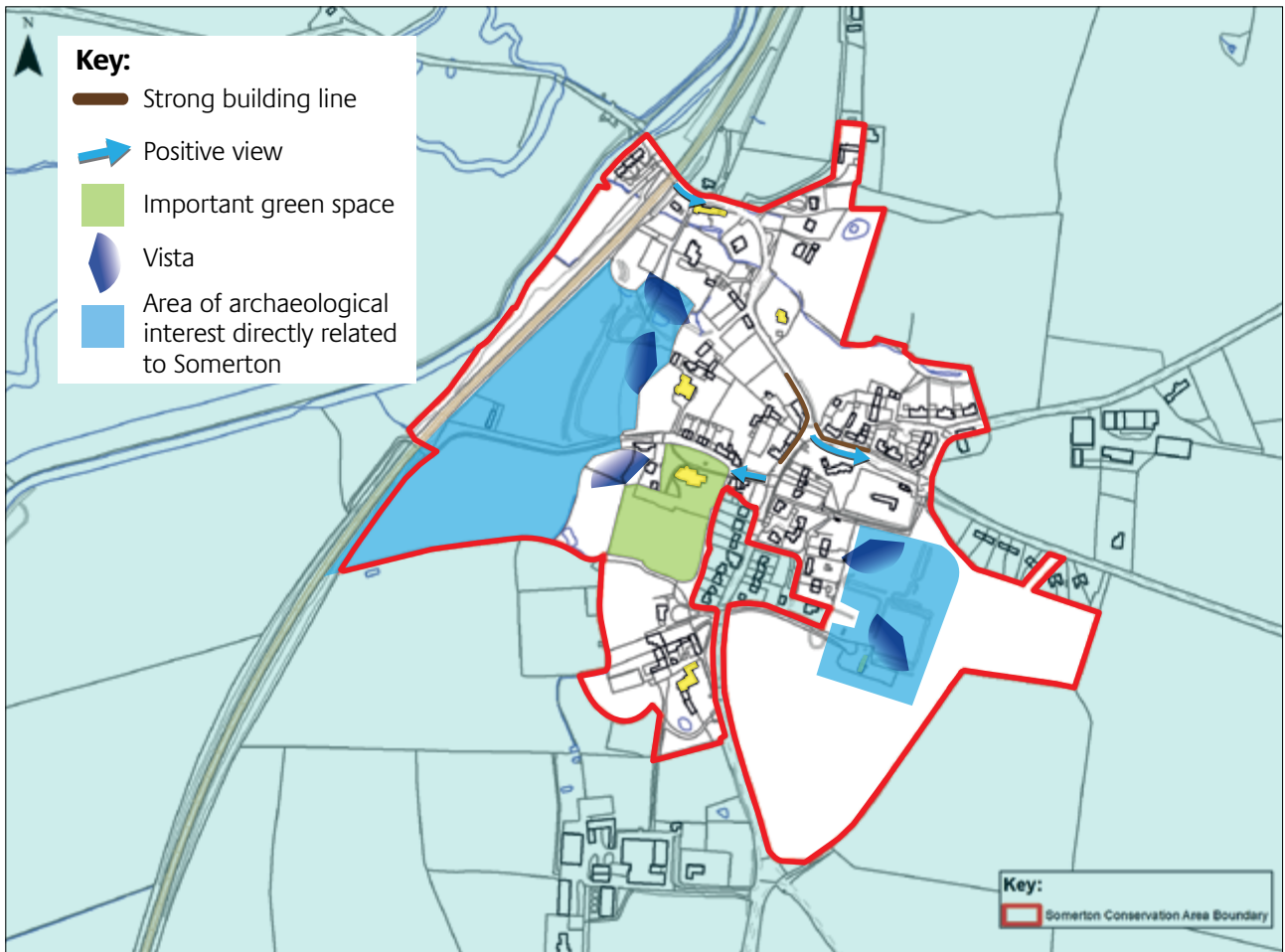
- 8.17 Heyford, Fritwell and Ardley Roads are constructed of tarmac, but other than road markings at key junctions the roads, retain their rural character including small areas of grass verges and informal pavements, some with stone setts. Church Lane, which runs to, west of the road, has a similar appearance until it peters out to a pebbled track as it leads into the fields containing the earthworks of the shrunken village.

- 8.18 There is an extensive network of footpaths leading through the village, which were the original routeways through the larger, historic settlement. The footpaths vary in form and include former hollow ways, routes through fields and meadows, footpaths through the churchyard and small enclosed lanes. The footpaths contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the conservation area and help to tell the story of the development of the settlement.

Key Views

- 8.19 There are very few views into Somerton Conservation Area from the surrounding area.
- 8.20 The canal and railway cut off views of the historic settlement from the north and west. The only view of Somerton from the northern part of the settlement is funnelled through the 19th century railway bridge and is predominantly of the former Railway Inn.
- 8.21 Modern development obscures any historic views from the Fritwell and Ardley Roads and similarly at the southern entrance along Water Lane, the only extant historic building – Jersey Manor Farm – is set back from the road and therefore views into the settlement are of late 20th century developments.
- 8.22 There are key views within and across the conservation area – notably from the site of the former (Fermor) Manor House, the shrunken settlement area and from the church and churchyard.

Figure 12. Visual Analysis



9. Character areas

9. Character areas

Central spine

9.1 The street running through the current settlement of Somerton is a through road to surrounding villages, but there are only a very few historic properties (Railway Tavern and a small number of cottages) along the route. Dovecote Farm is lined along the road; it presents a large blank stone wall to the road which creates a sense of enclosure, but does not address the street. The village does not, therefore, have the character of a roadside settlement and the road is in fact almost incidental to the settlement.

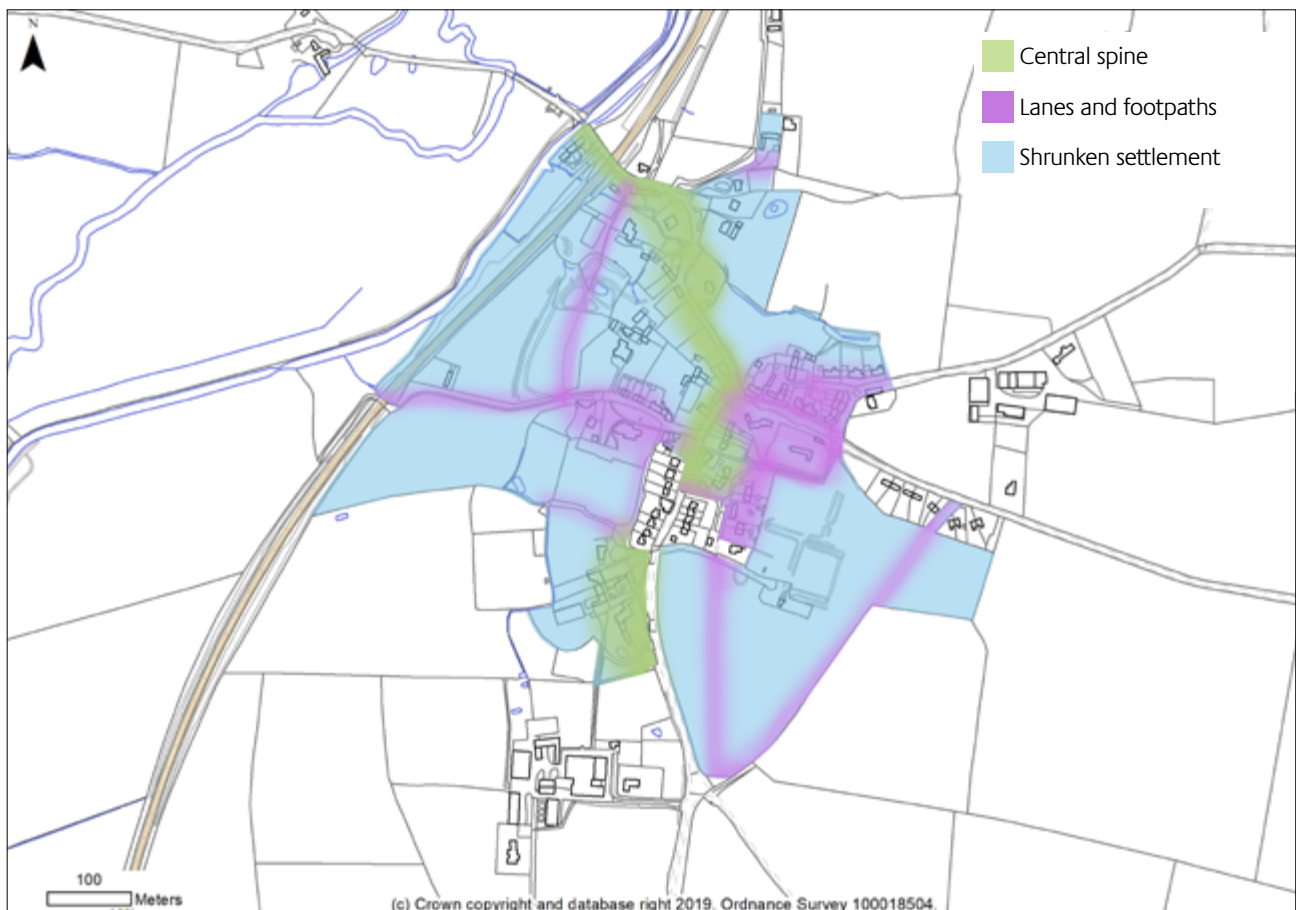
Lanes and footpaths

9.2 The lanes and footpaths are a very distinctive characteristic of the settlement and link the existing built development with the shrunken medieval settlement. The lanes and footpaths have differing characteristics, but contain a number of the historic properties within the village.

Shrunken settlement

9.2 The shrunken settlement and manor house earthworks are located in meadowland to the east and west of the settlement and make a significant contribution to the understanding of the settlement. The meadowland in which they sit provides a positive setting to the current built up extent of the village.

Figure 13. Character Area



10. Materials and Details



11. Management Plan

11. Management Plan

Policy context

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 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 and historic brick 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.
- 11.3 The aim of management proposals is not to prevent changes but to ensure that any such changes are both sympathetic to the individual property, the streetscape and overall preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 11.4 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.
- 11.5 The principal plans and policies covering alterations and development of the historic built environment are given in Appendix 1.
- 11.6 Demolition in a conservation area (previously known as 'conservation area consent' is now covered by planning permission and applications may need to specify whether they are for 'relevant demolition in a Conservation Area'. Refer to 'control over demolition of buildings' in Section 12 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

Settlement form	The current settlement has a very adhoc settlement pattern due to the degree of shrinkage. The defining characteristic is the number of lanes and footpaths and care should be taken to preserve these within any future development.
Boundary Treatments	The traditional stone boundary walls surrounding properties make a valuable contribution to the character of the settlement and the demolition of these features should be resisted
Important Views	There are very limited views into and out of the settlement, but there are key views between the earthwork manor house and main settlement which should be maintained.

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 unsympathetic alteration of minor features could have a significant impact on the character and appearance of Somerton. An Article 4 Direction could ensure that existing original and traditional details are protected and where necessary sensitively replaced in the future.</p>
New Development	<p>As a Category C village (Cherwell Local Plan 2006-2031) Somerton is considered suitable for conversions and extensions only.</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. There are distinctive character areas within the village and any development must use an imaginative and high quality design which reflects its immediate context.</p>
Character of roads and lanes	<p>The majority of roads within the village are small lanes which have an informal, rural character which make a significant contribution to the settlement. It is important that this character is retained in any proposed development.</p> <p>The main road which passes through the settlement also retains its rural character and has not been urbanised. It is important to prevent proliferation of roads markings and signs in the area.</p>
Overhead electricity lines	<p>Overhead electricity lines can have a significant negative impact on historic buildings and areas and any opportunity to remove, underground or place these in a more sensitive setting should be taken.</p>

12. Conservation Area Boundary

12. Conservation Area Boundary

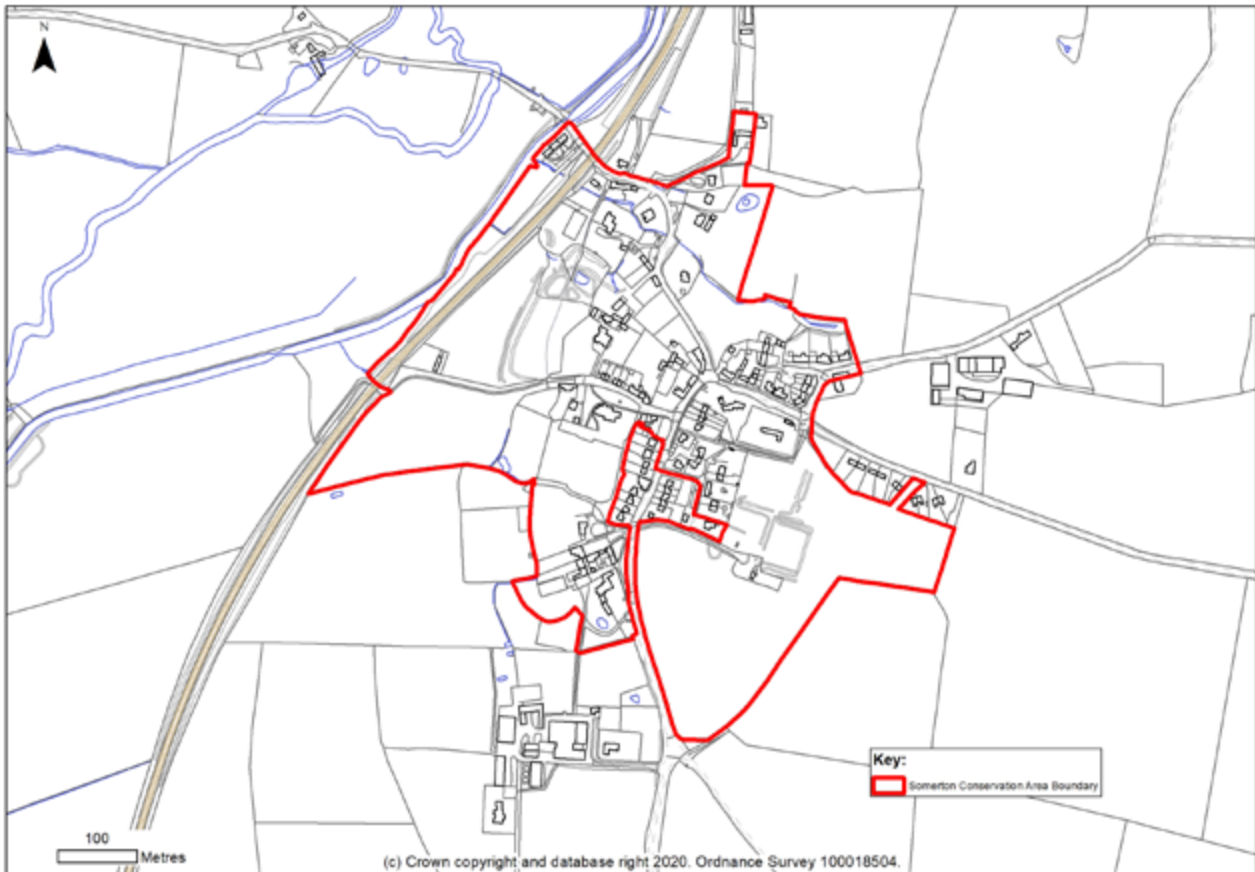


Figure 14. Conservation Area boundary

Conservation Area Boundary

12.1 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.

12.2 Somerton Conservation Area was first designated in March 1992 and reviewed in March 1996. when the first appraisal was written. 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 Somerton Conservation Area boundary and it has been guided by ‘Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation, and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1’ (2019).

12.3 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).

- 12.4 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.
- 12.5 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.
- 12.6 The Somerton 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 public consultation of the draft Somerton Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan from 26th February 2019 to 9th April 2019 including a public exhibition held on 26th February 2019.

Boundary description

Northern boundary

- 12.7 The boundary begins to the east of the Oxford Canal and runs along the road (and under the railway bridge) to the track leading up to Rectory Farm and continues to the rear of Rectory Farm and Stone Byre.

Eastern boundary

- 12.8 The boundary to the east begins at the rear of Rectory Farm and runs along the wooded hedge line to the rear of The Croft and then along the stream and to the rear of the properties associated with Dovecot Lane. The boundary then runs across the road to include the converted barn / outbuilding of Fallowfields and then sweeps round to Ardley Road excluding the council houses, but including the entrance to the field and bridleway.

Southern boundary

- 12.8 The boundary runs around the perimeter of the field with the Manor House earthwork remains. The boundary excludes the modern properties of Paddock End, The Paddocks and Orchard Way, Corner Stone, Somerfields, Moe End, Talisker, Shambles, Mallow Cottage, Stonecrop Cottage, 2 Moorelands, Wychway, The Barnes Memorial Hall, Galahad, Treetops, Homewood and Hill Croft on Heyford Road. The road is also excluded in this section. The boundary then includes the entranceway to The Manor and the buildings associated with Jersey Manor Farm including the rear entrance and associated land. The boundary follows the hedge lines of the paddocks and meadows associated with the village and runs along the southern edge of the shrunken medieval settlement earthwork remains.

Western boundary

- 12.9 The boundary continues along the edge of the field and to the east of the railway until it meets the track which leads from Church Walk. It then crosses the railway and continues to the east of the Oxford Canal encompassing the former wharf area and includes a section of Water Street .

13. Effects of Conservation Area Designation

13. Effects of Conservation Area Designation

13.1 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.

13.2 '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.'

13.3 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

13.4 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 the conservation area, in sufficient detail to enable a thorough assessment.

13.5 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

13.6 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

13.7 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.

13.8 Where trees are of little significance and used for coppicing there is the opportunity to agree 5-year management plans with Cherwell District Council's Arboricultural Officers.

13.9 A planning application must be submitted for any work to a tree or hedge covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) Some historic hedges, unless protected by a TPO, are controlled under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 and

are not dependent on conservation area status.

Protection of important open spaces and views

13.10 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 the 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

13.11 Planning 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

13.12 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

13.13 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).

13.14 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;
- the construction of any part of an outbuilding, enclosure, pool or container situated between a wall forming the side elevation of the house and the boundary, or between the side building line formed by the side elevation and the boundary;
- 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;
- the installation of 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;
- the erection of a microwave antenna (eg 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.

For further details, including restrictions on solar panels, air source heat pumps and turbines contact the Planning Department.

13.15 There are no permitted development rights for commercial properties or for any sites in mixed use or any use which falls outside a use class.

13.16 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 www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission or Cherwell District Council's website <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/planning-preapplication-advice>

14. Design and Repair Guidance

14. Design and Repair Guidance

14.1 High quality design and informed decision making are essential if we are to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The following considerations are particularly important:

Scale and settlement pattern

14.2 Somerton is a village without a defined settlement pattern and a proliferation of streets and lanes. This aspect of the settlement should be respected in any new development and a bespoke approach will be needed based on the specific character of the localised area around any proposed new development.

14.3 There is very little built-up frontage and the historic properties are spread throughout the settlement rather than being focused along the main streets. There is a tendency for the historic buildings to be set back from the street. The properties through the settlement are of two storey construction and this scale should be represented throughout the village.

Proportion

14.4 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

14.5 There are a variety of roof types in Somerton including thatch, slate, clay and concrete tile.

14.6 It is very important that the original pitch of roofs is maintained. Traditional eaves, verge and ridge details should be retained. Chimneys are important features of the roof-scape, often constructed in brick, and should be retained even if no longer required for fireplaces.

14.7 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) and visible roof vents will be discouraged.

External Walls

14.8 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 re-use 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 Portland cement mortars are inappropriate as they prevent the evaporation of moisture through the joints and cause deterioration of the stonework

Rainwater goods

14.9 Rainwater goods (guttering, downpipes, hoppers) should be repaired if original or reinstated in original materials. Plastic guttering is not appropriate for listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas.

Windows

14.10 There are a range of windows in Somerton including timber sash and casement windows and a wide range of later replacements. Historic windows should be retained wherever possible with specialised repair - where replacement is necessary it should match the original in every detail.

14.11 The style, design and construction of windows can have a significant impact on the character of the property and any replacement windows should be appropriate to the host building (casement or sash windows depending on building type). Windows should be correctly proportioned, well related to each other and neighbouring buildings and should respect any existing openings. 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. The thickness and moulding of glazing bars, the size and arrangement of panes are vital elements in determining appropriate replacement windows, which respect the age and history of a building.

14.12 Inappropriate replacement windows can be extremely damaging to the character and appearance of a building and conservation area alike and can undermine a property's monetary value. Replacement of timber or metal windows with uPVC alternative, no matter what the pattern or design, is inappropriate

Doors

14.13 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

14.14 Stone boundary walls make a significant contribution to the character of Somerton 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.



Historic wall

Micro Energy Generation

14.15 Whilst the use of micro energy systems are generally encouraged and satellite information systems generally tolerated, special care will be necessary to find suitable sites for their use within the conservation area. Preference will be given to equipment located away from principal frontages. Equipment fixed to main or visible elevations or roof planes will damage the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Highway Works

14.16 The road running through the settlement links to local villages and needs to conform to highway standards. The area hasn't been overly urbanised and it is important that the conservation area status is respected when any roadworks are undertaken and that no unnecessary items such as bollards, signs etc are introduced to the area.

14.17 The rural lanes in the settlement make a particular contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and special care should be taken to retain their informal character.

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

16. Acknowledgments

16. Acknowledgments

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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

Somerton 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.

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 Policies
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
		Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (2019)

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Key local policies of relevance to heritage and conservation include*:

Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031 (2019)

PD4 Protection of Important Views and Vistas

PD5 Building and Site Design

PD6 Control of Light Pollution

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

ESD13: Local landscape protection and enhancement.

ESD15: 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 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

C29 Appearance of development adjacent to the Oxford Canal

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

Appendix 2: Designated Heritage Assets

The Old School House	Listing	The Old School House, North Aston Road, Somerton Cherwell, Oxfordshire	II
1,2 and 3 Church Street	Listing	1,2 and 3 Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	II
Church of St James	Listing	Church of St James, Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	I
Headstone, Church of St James	Listing	Headstone approximately 4 metres north of chancel of Church of St James, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	II
Remains of Manor House	Listing	Remains of Manor House, Heyford Road, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	II
Jersey Manor Farmhouse	Listing	Jersey Manor Farmhouse, Heyford Road, Somerton Cherwell, Oxfordshire	II
Farm building range, Dovecote Farmhouse	Listing	Farm building range approximately 10 metres south of Dovecote Farmhouse , North Aston Road, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	II
Dovecote Farmhouse	Listing	Dovecote Farmhouse, North Aston Road, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	II
Churchyard Cross, Church of St James	Listing	Churchyard cross approximately 12 metres north of Church of St James, Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	I
4 Headstones, Church of St James	Listing	Group of 4 headstones approximately 1 metre north of north aisle of Church of St James, Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	II
Headstone approximately 5 metres east of Chancel of Church of St James	Listing	Headstone approximately 5 metres east of Chancel of Church of St James, Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	II
4 Collingridge Memorials, Church of St James	Listing	Group of 4 Collingridge memorials approximately 1 metre east of south aisle of Church of St James, Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	II
Dew memorial, Church of St James	Listing	Dew memorial approximately 2 metres south east of Chancel of St James, Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	II
Dovecot, Dovecote Farmhouse	Listing	Dovecot approximately 30 metres west of Dovecote Farmhouse, North Aston Road, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	II
Jasmine Cottage	Listing	Jasmine Cottage, Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	II
Somerton Manor House; earthworks and remains of hall	Scheduling	Somerton Manor House; earthworks and remains of hall, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	
Somerton Village earthworks	Scheduling	Somerton Village earthworks, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire	

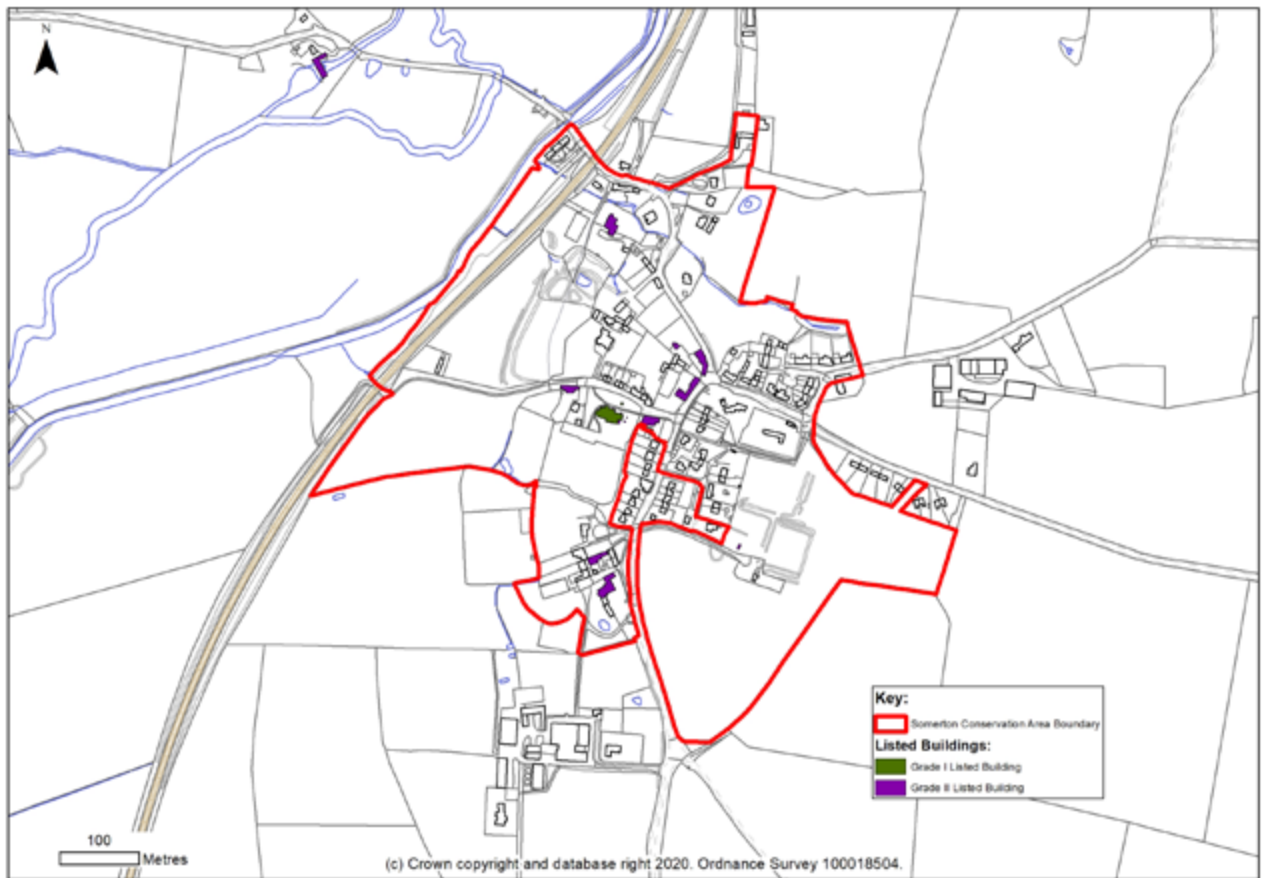


Figure 15. Conservation Area Boundary with listed buildings

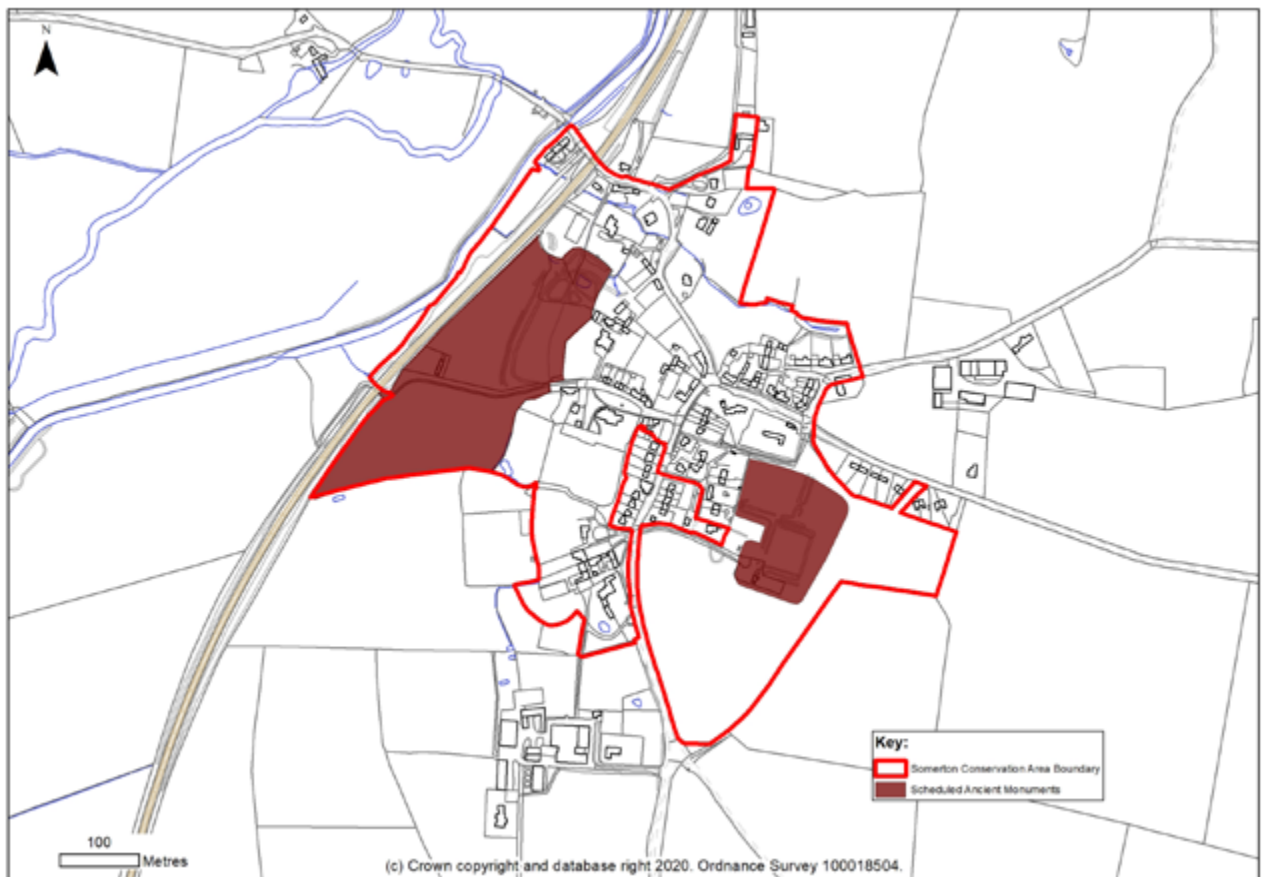
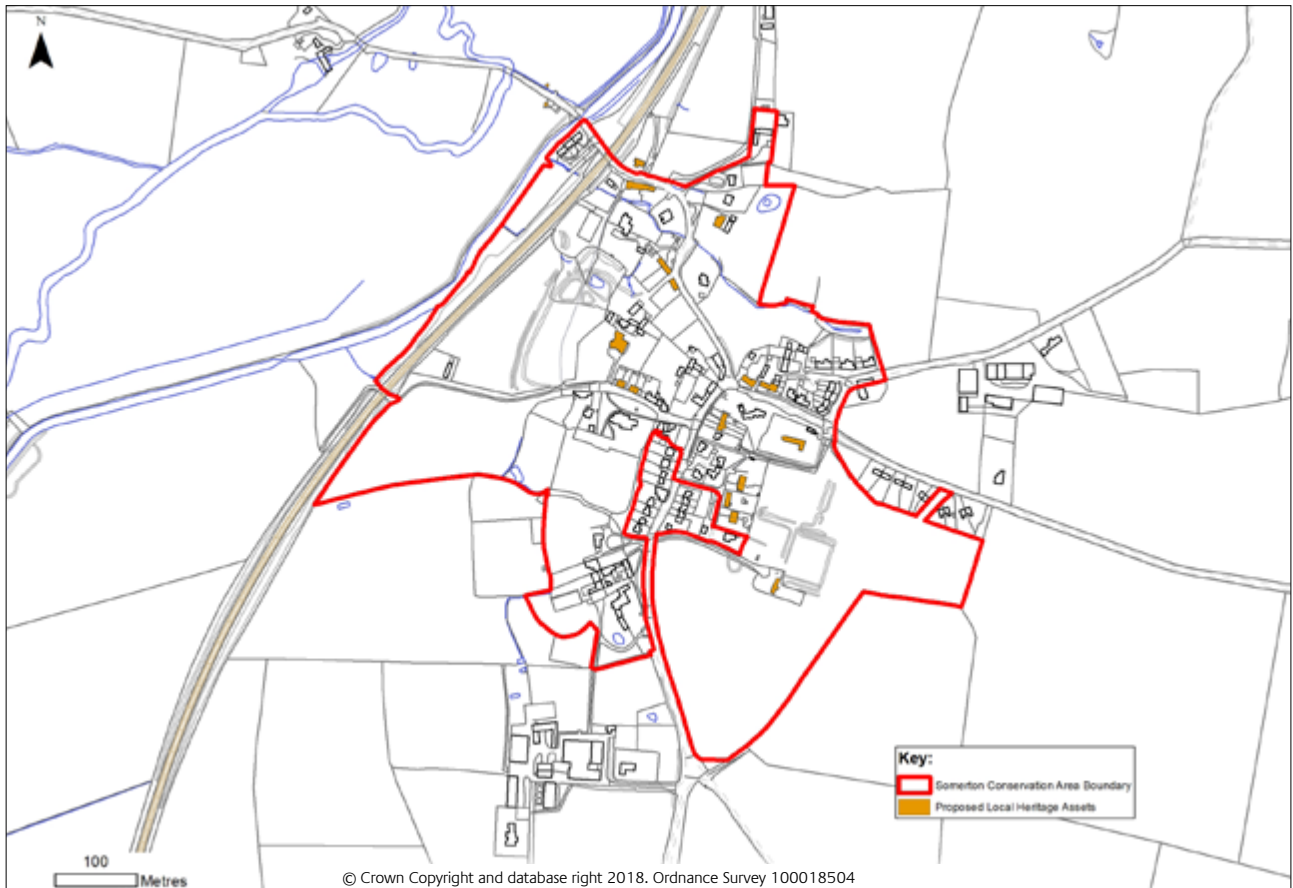


Figure 16. Conservation Area Boundary with scheduled ancient monuments

Appendix 3: Local Heritage Assets

Figure 17 – 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 Somerton (see figure 23). The Somerton 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.



The Old Inn / Railway Tavern, Water Lane

Stone building divided into three separate ranges. Central range of three storeys with two storey ranges to either side. Originally a farmhouse and later converted to use as a Railway Tavern, and now returned to use an individual house known as The Old Inn.



The Rectory, Church Street

Large 19th century former Rectory set within substantial grounds. The property has accesses on to Church Street and Water Lane as well as an outlook over the shrunken village remains. The building is of stone construction with regular fenestration, tile roof and red brick chimneys.



Red brick Cottages, 1-4 Church Street

Two pairs of red brick cottages in Arts and Crafts style. Dated 1879. Half dormers, canopied porches and simple timber fenestration. Built for railway workers.



Fermor House, Heyford Road

Substantial stone-built property built adjacent to site of Manor House earthworks. Main central range with side extensions. Large eyebrow dormer to central roof section detracts from simplicity of the form.



The Croft, Water Lane

'A crenallated house, formerly two cottages, to the Water Lane frontage, conceals larger property to the rear with extensive gardens.



The Dormers, Ardley Road

Large stone, linear building with regular fenestration and row of dormer windows. Stone building with tile roof. Possible farm house or former manor.



Yew Tree Cottage, Ardley Road

Stone built cottage with tile roof and red brick chimneys. Simple canopy porch and low boundary stone wall. Formerly two cottages.



Old School Cottage and Orchard Cottage, Water Lane

Row of stone built cottages of simple, rectilinear form with tile roof and limited openings. Originally three cottages and now two.



Station House, Water Lane

Early 20th century detached property in close proximity to the railway. Red brick and pebble dash render of significance in relation to links to railway.



Post Cottage and Hollow Way, Ardley Road

Stone built cottages set back from road with outbuilding ranges to the rear. Both properties have a large conservatory to the frontage. A farmhouse in the 18th century, butchers and then dairy business until the 20th century.



1-3 Adams Cottages, Heyford Road

Early 20th century barn conversion. Now terrace of stone built cottages set back from the road. Simple rectilinear form and cottages retain their simplicity and regular rhythm of fenestration.



1-2 The Paddocks

Pair of cottages, originally identical. Constructed of stone with large gables. Modern extension has been added to the side.



4-5 The Paddocks

Originally a pair of stone cottages with decorative barge boards and red brick chimneys. The cottages are now converted into one dwelling.



3 The Paddocks

Pair of stone built cottages forming a pair with 1-2 and 3 The Paddocks. The cottages are less decorative than the other properties and do not have pronounced gables.



Pillbox, SW of North Aston Road

Hexagonal, precast concrete pillbox intended for use as a guard post in case of enemy invasion during the Second World War. Loopholes as an opening for machine gun fire on every face.



Pillbox, NW of North Aston Road

Hexagonal, precast concrete pillbox intended for use as a guard post in case of enemy invasion during the Second World War. Loopholes as an opening for machine gun fire on every face.

Appendix 4: Article 4 Direction

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 could an Article 4 Direction affect Somerton?

A4.7 An Article 4 Direction could help to protect the special character and historical interest of the Duns Tew 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 Somerton 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 1m in height
- Replacement of above ground rainwater goods and external drainage (some external drainage already needs planning permission)

Appendix 5: Public consultation

A six week public consultation took place from 26 February 2019 to 9 April 2019. An exhibition was held on 26 February 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 online 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 December 2021 and adopted in February 2022



How to contact us

Planning Policy and Conservation Team
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX15 4AA

e-mail: design.conservation@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
www.cherwell.gov.uk



visit www.cherwell.gov.uk