

# CHESTERTON

## Conservation Area Appraisal



January 2008



# CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL FOR CHESTERTON

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# 1. Introduction and Planning Policy Context

1.1 This document is an appraisal of Chesterton Conservation Area and is based on a standard recording format derived from advice contained in English Heritage's document 'Conservation Area Appraisals'. By updating and expanding the Conservation Area appraisal for Chesterton, the special character and appearance of the area can continue to be identified and protected by ensuring that any future development preserves or enhances that identified special character.

1.2 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides legislation for the protection of the nation's heritage of buildings and places of architectural and historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

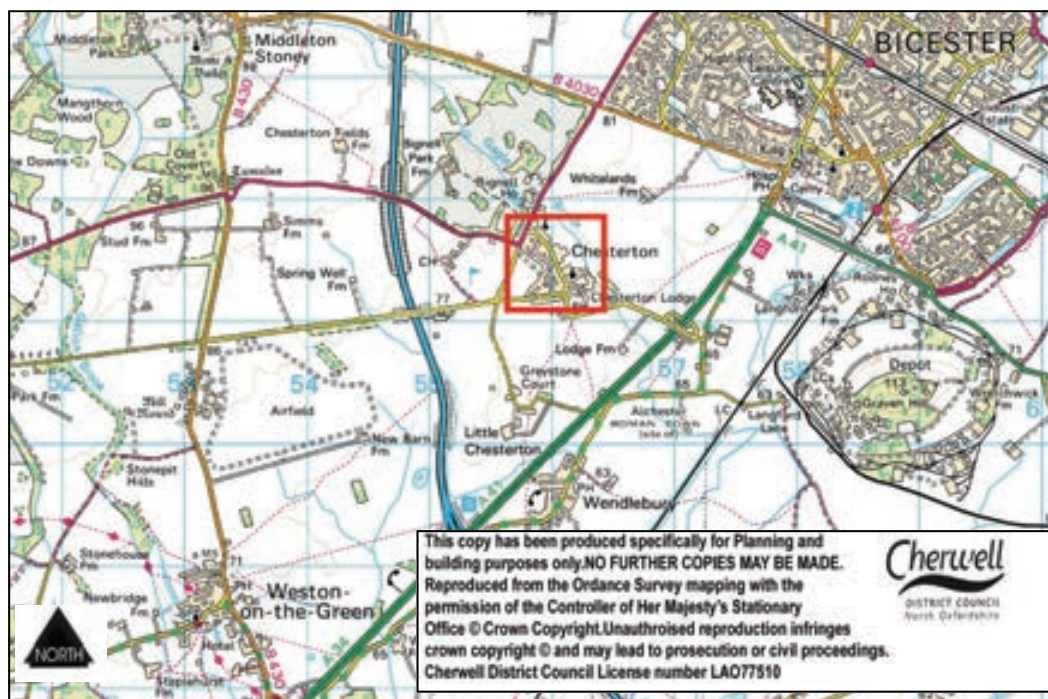
1.3 Conservation areas were introduced in the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. The Act required local planning authorities to identify areas, as opposed to individual buildings, of special architectural or historic

interest and to designate them as conservation areas. Since 1967 some 8,000 conservation areas have been designated in England, including 54 in Cherwell District.

1.4 Chesterton Conservation Area was designed in March 1988. Under the Act Local Planning Authorities have a duty to consider boundary revisions to their conservation areas "from time to time". Chesterton Conservation Area was reviewed in January 1995 and it is now considered appropriate to undertake a further review in order to further define the key characteristics of the area, so that this document can be used to inform the development of the proposed South West Bicester urban extension.

1.5 This appraisal was the subject of public consultation. A public exhibition and meeting were held on 28th November in Chesterton Village Hall. The appraisal was approved by the Council's Executive on 4th February 2008 with the extension to the conservation area shown on page 38. The appraisal is now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the conservation area and its setting.

Figure 1: Location Map



## 2. Location

### 2.1

Chesterton is situated 2.4 km (1.5 miles) south west of Bicester town centre and approximately 16 km (10 miles), north east of the centre of Oxford. The village lies close to the eastern boundary of the parish of Chesterton. The Councils landscape character assessment defines the area as part of the Otmoor Lowlands, which are further defined as a flat, wet, low lying landscape, that displays considerable variation owing to particular landform features and built development.

### 2.2

Chesterton is well connected to Bicester and the surrounding area via the A41 Oxford Road. The village is approached from 5 roads, all highlight its rural nature and setting within surrounding fields.



*Figure 2: Aerial view of Chesterton Conservation Area (highlighted in red) and Surroundings.*

### 2.3 Area Designations Map

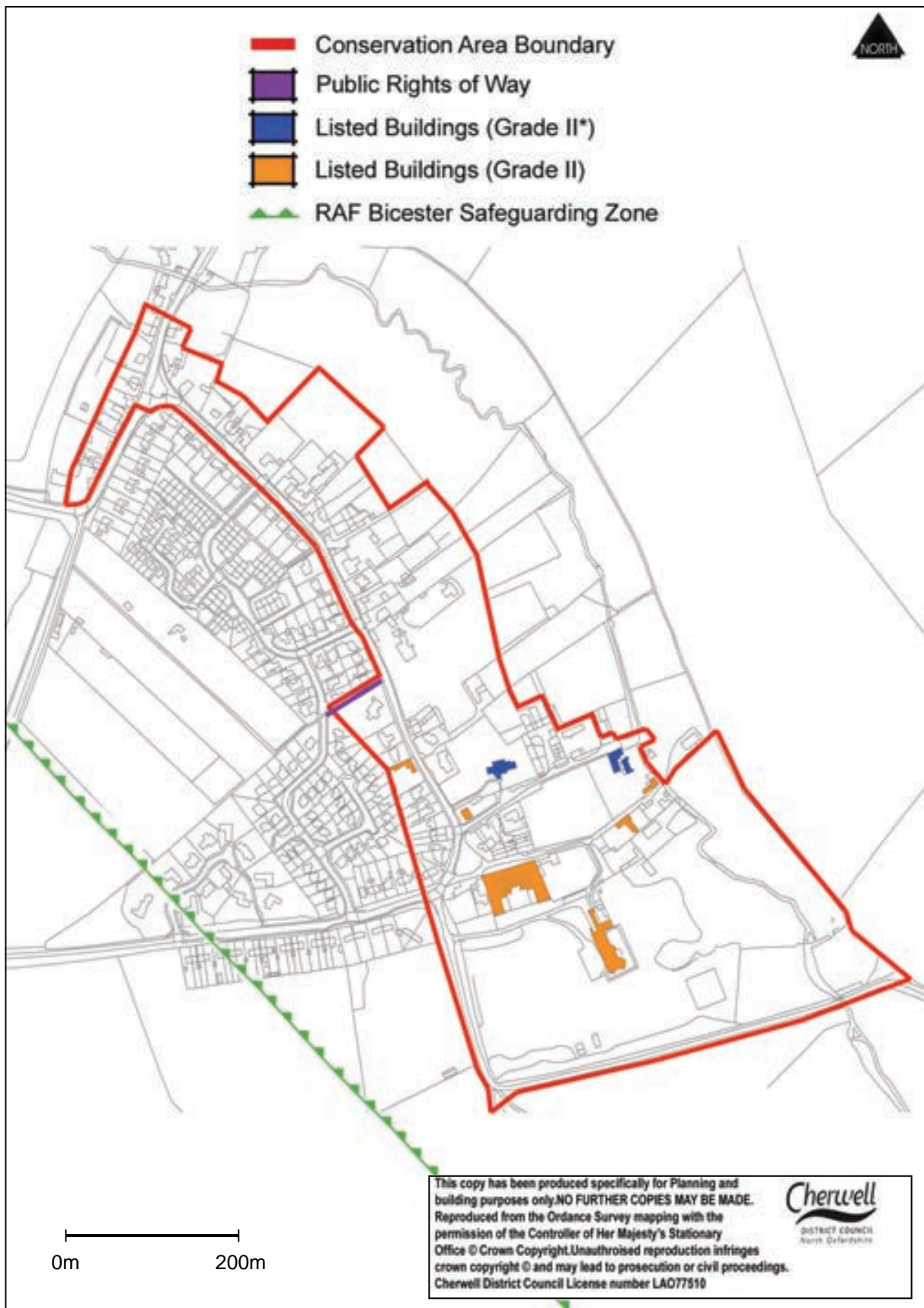


Figure 3: Area Designations Map

### 3. Topography and Geology

#### 3.1

Geologically the area falls with in the Jurassic Belt, an area made up of Great Oolite, a product of which is Stonesfield slates. Above Great Oolite is the Forest Marble formation and above that a flaggy limestone forms a narrow band, known as the cornbrash. This is widely employed in Oxfordshire for dry stone walling and upon which the greater part of Chesterton lies. This also explains the stony limestone quality of the areas soil. There is also Oxford Clay present in the area. The geological make up of the area informs the traditional vernacular building materials.

#### 3.2

The village sits on relatively flat land. The area rises gradually from 70m in the south east to 80m in the north west. The result of this topography is that views out of the conservation area are few if any and that the area contains no sweeping panoramas.

#### 3.3

The relatively flat plateau is interspersed with mostly small watercourses, including the Gagle Brook. Gagle brook lies to the east of Chesterton and runs north to south. The brook acts as a nature barrier, forming an edge to the settlement.

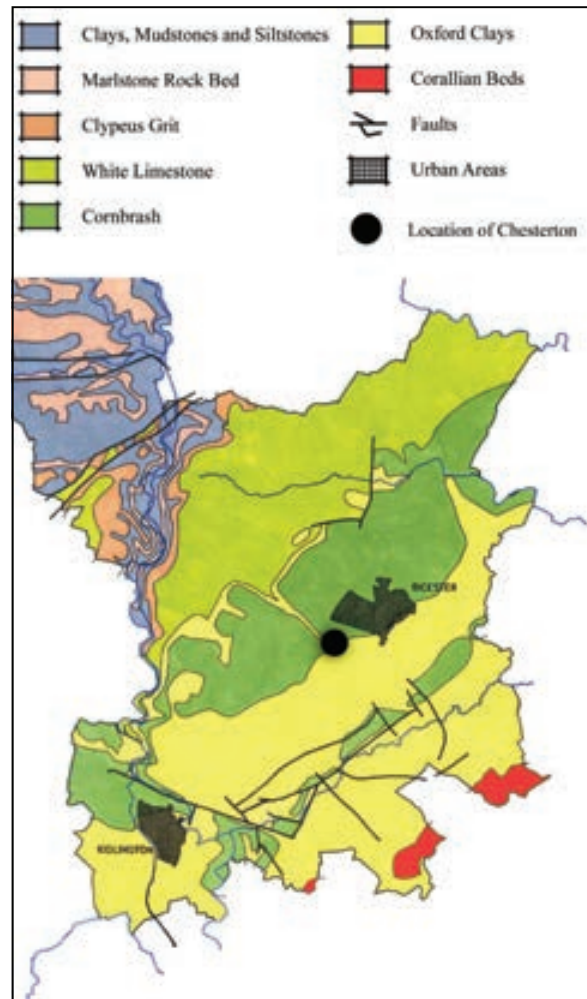


Figure 4: Geological Map

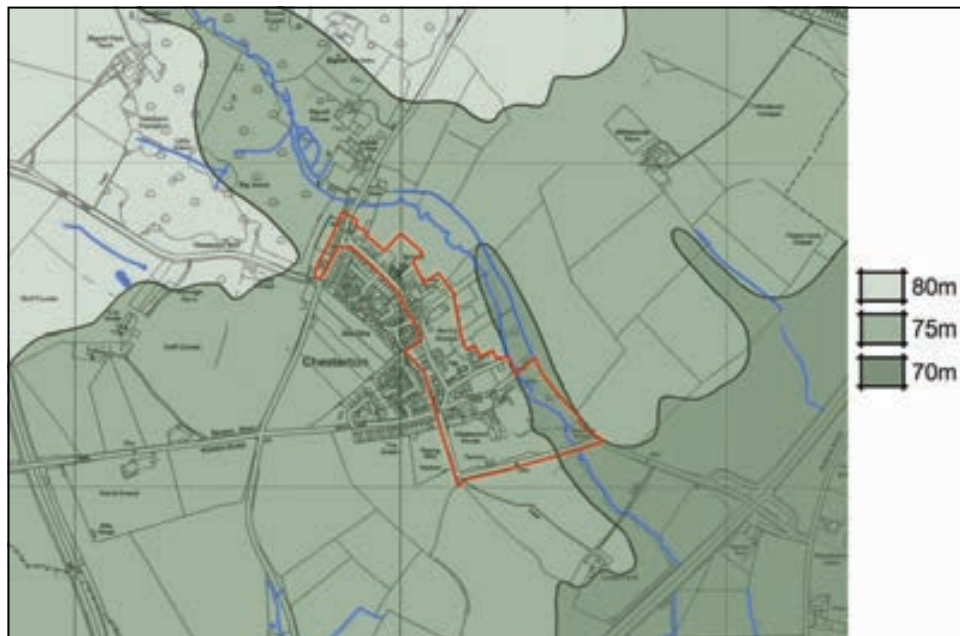


Figure 5: Topographical Land Contour Map



## 4. Archaeology

### 4.1

The Chesterton Conservation Area occupies much of the original historic village core. Still present within the village are the medieval buildings of the Old Manor and St Mary's Church, plus 13th Century building remains and the Post Medieval site of manor farm mill, a smithy and a school. From studying Figure 6, it would seem logical that the roman road, which enters the village from the west and exits from the south east, at one time crossed through the heart of the village. It would appear that this road was diverted in order to make way for Chesterton Lodge. Predominantly the archaeological sites lie outside of the boundary of the conservation area, located to the North and West. The archaeological map includes two large areas investigated as part of the Bicester urban extension.

Key (1-11, taken from County Archaeological Records):

**01:** Chesterton Historic Village Core  
**02:** Little Chesterton Historic Core. Believed to be a Roman Villa or Farmstead in the Vicinity.

**03:** Akeman Street, West of Alchester (Roman Road). Dotted line indicates possible route.

**04:** Akeman Street, East of Alchester (Roman Road).

**05:** Roman Road, Towcester to Alchester.

**06:** Site where 12th and 13th Century pits and ditches were excavated.

**07:** Romano-British Settlement, numerous finds including: Possible Stone Foundations, Scale Armor, Samian Ware, Coins and Pottery.

**08:** Pottery find (Samian). Possible part of Romano-British settlement and Iron Age settlement.

**09:** Post Medieval Windmill, with rectangular enclosure of unknown date and Bronze Age ring ditches and linear feature. Further evidence of Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Saxon settlement.

**010:** Ring ditches of unknown date.

**011:** Ruins of Medieval Chapel. Site of Bignell Deserted Medieval Village.

**012:** Areas extensively investigated as part of the environmental assessment required for the Bicester urban extension. Some archaeological finds were discovered as were extensive areas of ridge and furrow.

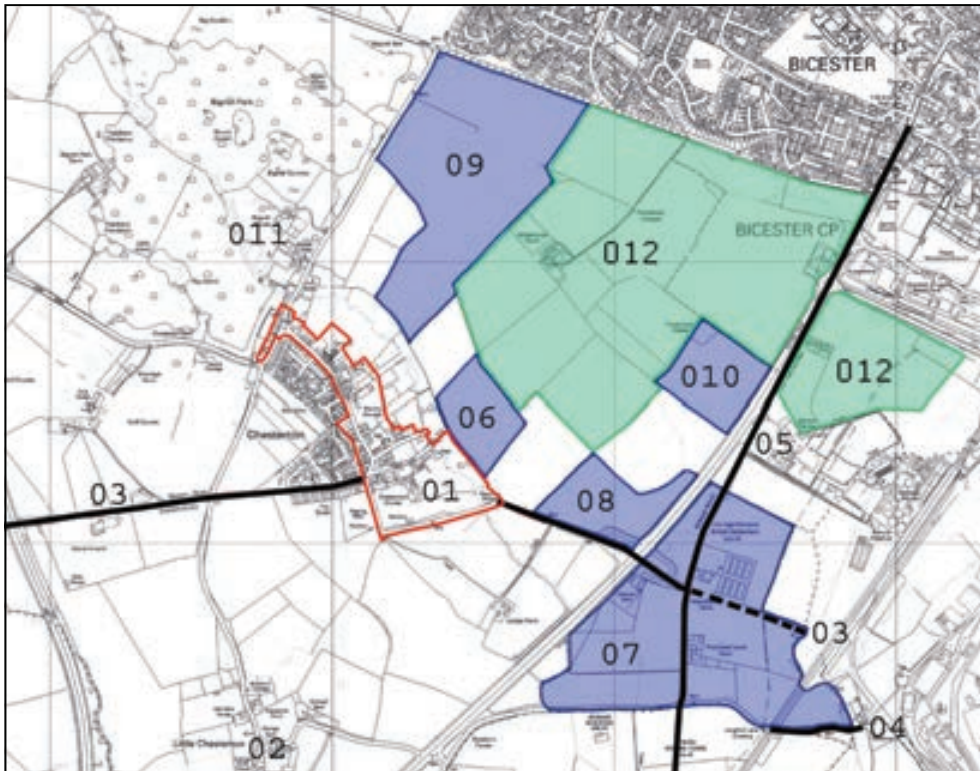


Figure 6: Archaeological Map of Chesterton.

## 5. Historic Maps and Photographs

### 5.1

The village was established by the middle of the 18th Century, Figure 7 is an estate map dated 1764 - 1768 by an unknown map maker and shows the built form located solely on the east side of Alchester Road. The village was at that time referred to as Great Chesterton. The later map from the start of the 20th Century shows Chesterton Lodge and highlights the re-routing of the Roman Road around the southwest corner of Chesterton Lodge. It also highlights that relatively little development occurred in the preceding 140 years.



Figure 7: Historic Map of Chesterton 1764 - 1768.

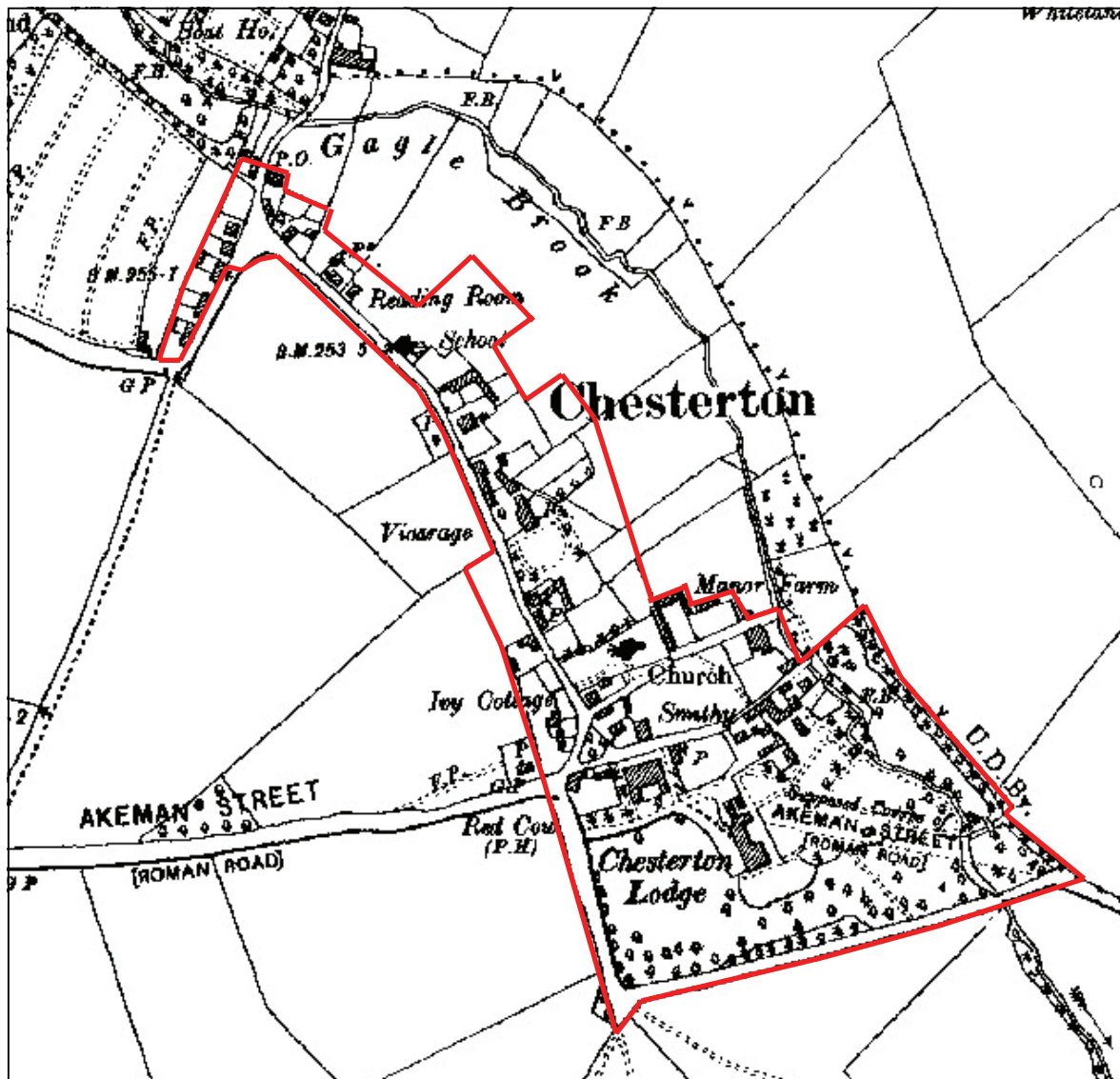


Figure 8: Historic Map of Chesterton 1900 to 1906.

## 5.2 Historic Photographs



Junction of Green Lane and Alchester Road.



Tubbs Lane.



Internal view of the church of St Mary.



View of Chesterton Lodge from an unknown date.



View north across lower green with Ivy Cottage in the background, (1910 - 40).



View east of the church of St Mary with Lych gate, (1920 - 40).



View east along Green Lane, towards The Red Cow Public House, (1920 - 40).



View north along Alchester Road, Vicarage Cottage on right, (1910 - 40).



View north along Alchester Road, School building on right, (1920 - 40).



View south along Alchester Road, (1920 - 40).



View east along Bignell View towards Top Green Cottage, (1910 - 40).



Figure 9: Historic Photographs

## 6. History

### 6.1

The village, as seen in figure 7 begun centred around St Mary's Church and Manor Farm before spreading in a linear northerly direction towards Bignell. It wasn't until the latter part of the 19th Century and the erection of Chesterton Lodge and the laying out of the grounds that the village took the shape it has today. The village appears to have had its origins in Saxon times, as it is suggested that the Anglo-Saxons named Chesterton after the nearby Roman settlement of Alchester, probably initially being attracted by the excellent water supply. This is assumed as the main street in Chesterton is named Alchester Road. The village lies on the line of the Roman road, Akeman Street and the Oxford to Brackley Road which was of considerable importance as it passes near by.

### 6.2

The earliest evidence for a church at Chesterton is recorded in the Domesday survey of 1087. The present church of St Mary dates from the 12th century, with substantial rebuilding and additions in the 13th century, and the addition of a tower in the 14th century. A restoration was carried out in 1865 by F.C. Penrose.

### 6.3

Early 14th century tax assessments indicate a fairly large and prosperous settlement, with 44 householders being assessed in 1316. Several substantial farmhouses beside the manor house and the vicarage are recorded in the 17th Century. Manor Farm (now known as 'Old Manor House') was probably built on the site of the original manor house in about 1700. A massive Norman chamber block of the 12th century manor house survives, with a barrel vaulted ground floor now divided into two.

### 6.4

Inclosure came in 1768, with all outlying farmhouses, except Chesterton Fields Farm (College Farm) being built after 1797. Throughout its agricultural history the area has been affected by poor soil quality and bad drainage, giving a consistently average split of 63% pasture and 37% arable. The village relied almost entirely on agriculture with no reference to trade apart from two millers until the 18th century. The numbers employed outside agriculture remained low well into the 19th century, despite a sharp rise in population from 330 inhabitants in 1801 to 435 in 1851. This increase was accompanied by poverty and overcrowding, which prompted the vicar in 1859 to describe some cottages as 'more like pig stys'. Much was later done by the Earl of Jersey to improve conditions with the building of new estate cottages. The spread of the village northward along the Alchester Road began in the 19th century, when the school and reading room were also built.

### 6.5

The earliest mention of a house on the site of the present Chesterton Lodge is in the early 18th century. It was later improved by Francis Penrose and George Clarke, Sheriff of Oxfordshire who in 1801, obtained permission to alter the line of Akeman Street to extend his grounds. By 1823 it was the principal mansion in the village. The present house was built between 1889-90 by Henry Tubb, a Bicester banker.

### 6.6

The Manor House has been owned by two families of note: the Bertie family in the 17th and 18th century (titles the Earls of Abingdon) and in the latter part of the 18th century through to 1920-1 by the Earls of Jersey, when the estate was finally split up and sold.

Among people of note to be associated with Chesterton are:-

- Gerald de Barry (1146-1223) - writer
- Francis Penrose (1718-1798) - an archaeologist, medical and a scientific writer of some repute.

## 7. Architectural History

### 7.1

Historically and architecturally the appearance of the conservation area has been influenced since Roman times by the ownership of the manor. The most recent being the building of cottages along Alchester Road. The area has a strong sense of place promoted by the extensive use of limestone for buildings and boundary walls. There are only 8 Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area.

### 7.2

The surviving historic buildings of Chesterton range in date from the church of St Mary's to Chesterton Lodge a large Italianate mansion built in 1890 but of a style more reminiscent of the 1840s. Chesterton Lodge like the other historic structures of the village is all constructed of stone, a locally available material. The Lodge is of five bays and two storeys with a central pediment, lantern and an ionic porch with lower side wings.



*Figure 10: Chesterton Lodge as seen in the early part of the 20th Century.*

### 7.3

Associated with Chesterton Lodge was Chesterton Court. The building, as its name now suggests, has courts on the north and south sides of its 'H' shaped plan. However it was previously the stables and coach houses of Chesterton Lodge and is believed to have been constructed at the same time in the same Italianate style. The building has recently been converted into residential units.



*Figure 11: South Elevation of Chesterton Court, former stable block.*

### 7.4

Visually it is the Church of St Mary and its churchyard that stands out. The church, the oldest building in the village was reconsecrated in 1238 after a partial rebuilding. The church occupies a central site within the Conservation Area and highlights the age of the village, as it demonstrates various periods of construction over a number of centuries. A transitional Norman north arcade of three bays remains from an earlier church, the south arcade is Early English Gothic, the font dates from the 12th century. The most recent addition to the church is that of the stair turret, added in 1865 during a restoration by F.C. Penrose. The date is inscribed on a panel above the door.

### 7.5

The barns located to the east of the Church were originally associated with the Old Manor, but have since been converted into residential accommodation. Most of the cottages are built of rubble which was easily available and many have casement windows and stone slate roofs. Some buildings show the signs of previous thatched roofs, although only one remains.

7.6

There are two further listed buildings worthy of note. Thatchover is one of only two remaining thatched properties in the village. It is a substantial building and its external appearance now includes an ornamental block ridge with triangular points. The thatch is of wheat reed, which probably covers earlier layers of long straw.



Figure 12: Thatchover

7.7

Another prominent building is Ivy Cottage, located at the south west corner of the churchyard. It is unusual in Chesterton being a property of small scale vernacular form with classical façade, including symmetrical 3-window front, Tuscan door case and vermiculated stone quoins. The property frontage is bounded by decorative iron railings set into a rendered brick plinth with rendered brick piers with pyramidal caps; the side and rear boundaries of the property are also defined by iron railings and stone walls.



Figure 13: Ivy Cottage

7.8

The mid 20th Century saw much infill and residential estate development, particularly to the west of Alchester Road. These developments are not considered to be of any architectural interest.

7.9 Important Non Listed Buildings

There are a large number of unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Red Cow Public House

An important unlisted building in the village, which dates mainly from the late 17th or early 18th century. It is constructed over two storeys with ashlar quoins and has an attic dormer. The date 1790 and the initials J.C. are inscribed over the doorway.



Figure 14: The Red Cow Public House.

Saddler's and Old Vicarage Cottages

Both cottages are Gothic Revival in style and are simple in their plan. The building is not symmetrical in its appearance, which is continued by the location of the chimney stacks. This may indicate that they were originally one building, with the door located in its current position to the Old Vicarage.



Figure 15: Saddler's and the Old Vicarage Cottages

### Tubbs Yard Terraced Cottages

The cottages can be dated to the 18th Century and are constructed of limestone with Welsh slate roofs and distinctive 19th Century windows and doors. Most of the cottages are located in front of a small grassed area, as shown in figure 16.



Figure 16: Terraced Cottages in Tubbs Yard

### Top Green Cottage

Originally four estate cottages, as indicated by one central chimney, now one dwelling. Built of coursed limestone with fronting gable ends on an asymmetrical plan.



Figure 17: Top Green Cottage

### Old Thatched Cottage

One of the two remaining thatched buildings in the village. Built up to the road edge with cat slide at rear and two chimneys added at a later date.



Figure 18: Old Thatched Cottage

### Hill Side Cottage

A pleasing building, constructed with a red brick front with blue brick detail. The flanks are coursed stone, which indicates the building may have been re-fronted. Historic maps suggest it was constructed in the 19th Century. The cottage is symmetrical in its appearance with chimneys at either end and is constructed on a simply rectangular plan.



Figure 19: Hill Side Cottage

### Vicarage Farmhouse

Records indicate the building was constructed in the 17th Century, although since it has been much altered. The buildings plan is best described as a 'T' shape, but would have originally been a simple rectangle. It is constructed of coursed stone and has later brick additions. One element which has survived since its construction is the access, which still remains directly in front of the green.



*Figure 20: Vicarage Farmhouse*

### School Building

The school is believed to have been constructed before 1850 by Lady Jersey who supported the education of the children of the village. The school was recognised as a junior school in 1933 and is an important landmark within the village. The building itself has had numerous alterations, but retains much of its original character. It is constructed of thinly coursed stone with ashlar quoins. The windows, which are of no age are framed by a decorative hood mould, designed to throw water away from the window. The symmetrical front elevation which is at 90 degrees to the road is exaggerated by the two gables, which frame the door.



*Figure 21: School Building*

### Home Farm

Home Farm is believed to be 17th Century in origin, with the oldest remaining part located to the rear of the property and identifiable by its use of stone slates. The building has a valley gutter and is constructed of stone.

One source on the history of Chesterton describes Home Farm as probably constructed by the Duke of Marlborough, once owner of the village in the style of a labourer's hut or bothy. The re-creation of a labourer's hut fits well with the style of the village, as most buildings are simple in form and being only one room deep.



*Figure 22: Home Farm*



### 7.10 Location of Important Non Listed Buildings

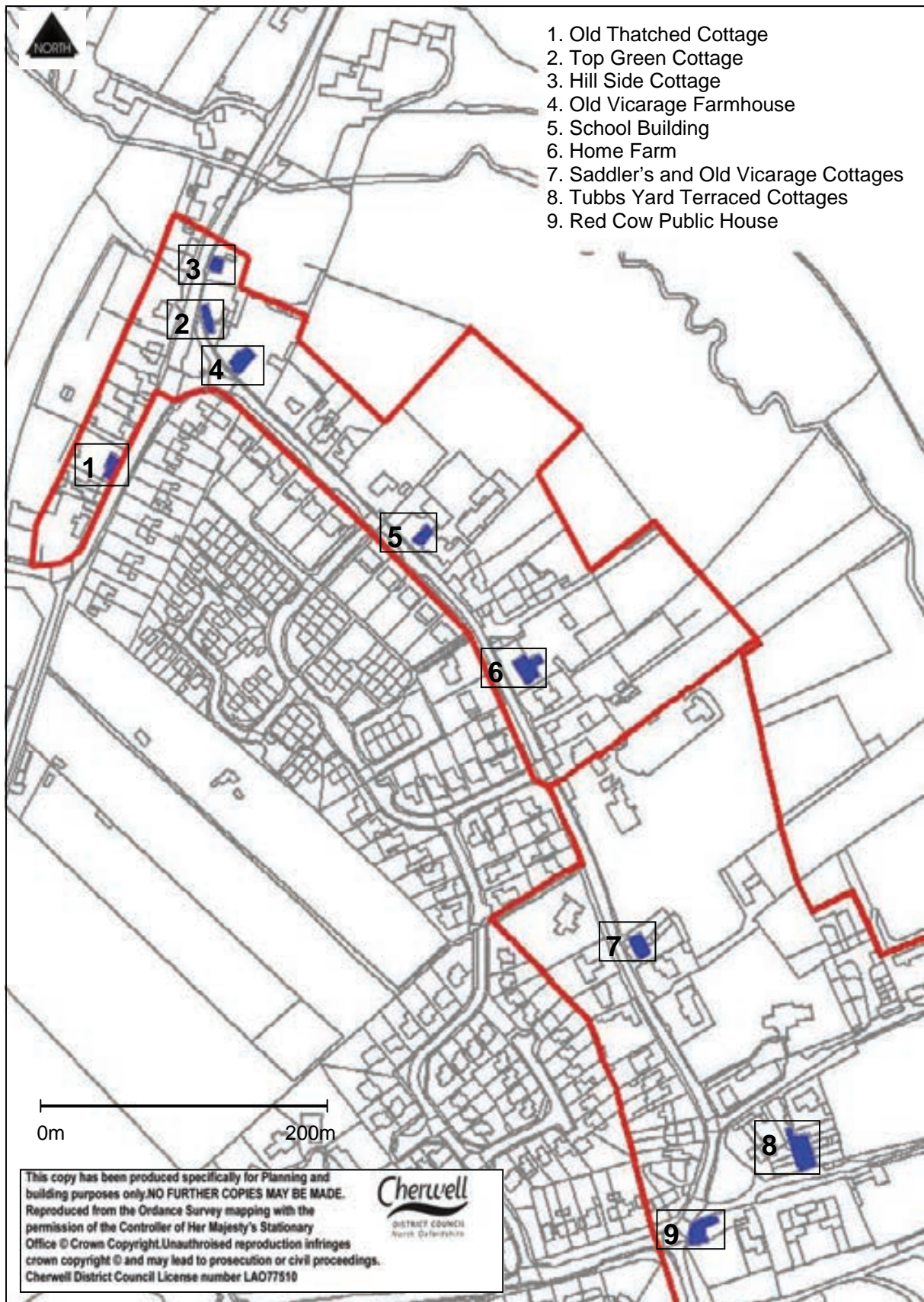


Figure 23: Important Non Listed Buildings Map.

The Chesterton can be clearly separated into three areas according to character, the Main Village Character area, Chesterton Lodge Character area and the Northern Character area. The areas are described in the following pages.

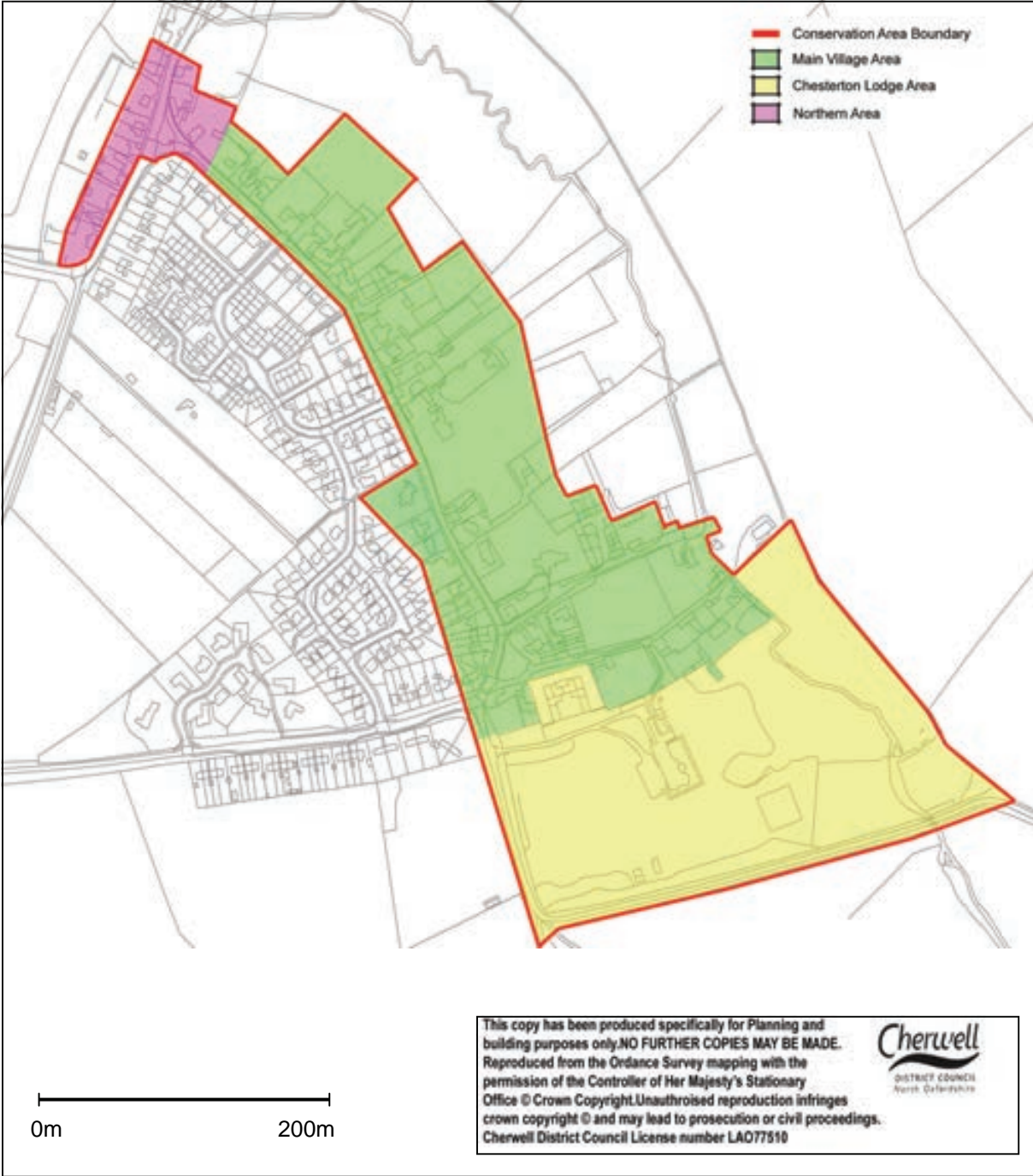


Figure 24: Character Areas Map

## 8. Main Village Character Area

This character area constitutes the core of the late medieval agricultural village, constructed predominantly on the northeast side of Akeman Street around the church and former manor.

### 8.1 Land Use

The village itself contains all the facilities of a small village; A Church, Vicarage, School, Village Hall, Public House and Post Office all still functioning except the Post office. The majority of the buildings within this character area are residential properties, either purpose built or converted from farm buildings. The major land holdings are associated with either the Old Vicarage, St Mary's Church or the Old Manor House. East of the buildings lies an area of back land which frames the conservation area. This land includes the school playing field and is bounded by a simple line of vegetation, which provides a clear visual boundary.

### 8.2 Street pattern

This area is characterised by its minimal street pattern. Chesterton is a linear village, built predominantly on the east side of Alchester Road and centred on the historic core formed by the Church, Manor and The Old Vicarage. Two lanes project from Alchester Road, Tubbs Lane and Manor Farm Lane. Plot width and depth varies greatly in this area. There are few if any areas where plot sizes remain constant through more than a handful of properties.

### 8.3 Building age, type and style

Most buildings in this character area are generally simple in their form, due to their farming origin. Most properties are either detached buildings, such as

Ivy Cottage or are semi detached properties, such as the cottages of the Old Vicarage and Saddlers. There are however some terraced properties, notably those of Tubbs Yard and a handful of barn conversions. The buildings range in date, but were mostly constructed in the 17th and 18th Centuries and some structures verify this with date stones above doorways. None of the historic buildings within this area of the village is known to have been designed by a well known or locally famous architect. Unfortunately there is a sporadic use of modern dormer windows on front elevations.



Figure 26: Date stone from above door of Number 6 Tubbs Lane.

### 8.4 Scale and massing

The main village character area is sparse in its building density, which in turn creates a sense of space. The buildings are well proportioned within what are generally large plots and rarely exceed two storeys in height. Most of the building mass can be found around Alchester Road with the larger barn conversions located to the east. Figure 27 highlights the massing of built form within the character area.

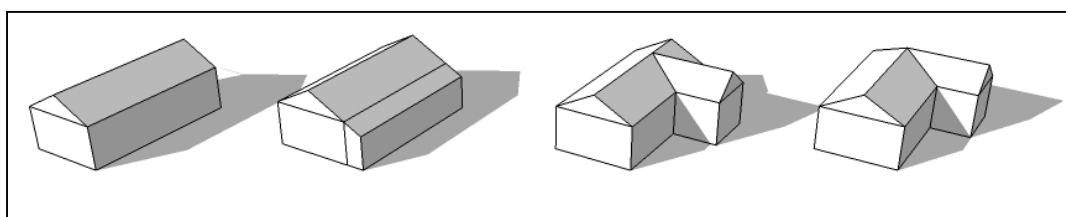


Figure 25: Dominant building types.



Figure 27: Figure Ground of Main Village Character Area.

### 8.5 Construction and Materials

The dominant vernacular building materials are limestone and stone slate. Coursed limestone rubble is used in the older cottages and church. Some of the lesser structures use similar materials but are not strictly coursed, but of 'rubble brought to courses'. The characteristics of the local stone mean that it is generally laid in thin beds.

Local red brick has been used in the construction of later additions to cottages, for outbuildings and for example in the detailing of window surrounds. The 20th Century properties are also constructed of brick, predominantly a buff yellow. Chimney stacks are now predominantly of red brick replacing limestone in early buildings and are simple in form.

Roofs were originally thatched, laid with Welsh slate or of red clay tiles, however most have been re-laid in a similar modern equivalents.

Window designs vary from painted softwood casements in the cottages, with a few examples of sash windows in the larger properties and in the converted barns to hardwood windows of varying styles. Doors are mostly plank or panelled with later doors of modern styles often with glass panels and constructed of uPVC.

### 8.6 Means of enclosure

Predominantly the properties within the village character area are bounded by stone boundary walls of about 1 metre in height. Some boundary walls rise to 1.5m and slightly above in height namely around the Old Vicarage. The walls, especially along the east side of Alchester Road form an important element to the character of the street scene and are reinforced by hedges behind them, providing high levels of privacy. On the west side some of these characteristic walls remain, but have new buildings behind.

The walls vary between traditional dry stone and those which have been pointed. It is generally the larger or more vulnerable parts of the wall that are pointed. Walls are topped with either a finishing stone or a heaped domed layer of mortar.



Figure 28: Typical boundary wall

### 8.7 Trees, hedges, verges, open spaces

Tree cover is important to the general character of this area. This is mainly broadleaved, with some pines and evergreens located around the larger grounds of the Old Vicarage, The Old Manor and the Churchyard. The Old Vicarage with its mature gardens, set behind a high limestone wall provides a landscaped backdrop to the northern part of the conservation area. The churchyard contains many trees, which frame the church and contribute significantly to its setting. There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) with in the area.



Figure 29: Panoramic view of green space to rear of buildings.

Hedges also play an important role in the appearance of the area, especially around the Old Vicarage. They are generally located along the road frontage with a wall positioned to the front.

There are a few important open spaces. The Lower Green, as it is known locally is located at the junction of Green Lane and Alchester Road and makes it an important contribution to this character area. The green is seen when approaching the village from either the south or west and opens out to views of the terraced buildings behind.

The gardens and fields of the properties located along Alchester Road spread out north eastwards towards the Gagle Brook. These areas are enclosed by simple vegetation which runs in an irregular pattern. Outside the enclosed gardens and school playing field, open fields create a natural buffer between Chesterton Village and Bicester. The boundary of the proposed designated area follows the clearly enclosed areas as these form part of the settings of the properties along Alchester Road. The open fields leading down to the Gagle Brook were considered for inclusion, but justification could not be found which would not require the inclusion of a large area of open field, which is not characteristic of the village. However these fields form the setting of the proposed extension.

### 8.8 Key Views

There are four key views identified with the main village character area. Firstly a view into the village as shown in figure 29, which provides setting for a large part of the village. The second is a view into the conservation area, seen when approaching

from the west along Green Lane. The view frames one of the important non listed buildings, the 'Red Cow Public House'. The third view is of the setting of the Church, its surrounding vegetation. In the back ground is the rear elevation of Ivy Cottage. The fourth view represents the character of the Main Village Character area in that it highlights the areas linear nature.



Figure 30: View into area from Green Lane towards the Red Cow Public House



Figure 31: View west along Manor Farm Lane with St Mary's Church located on the right.



Figure 32: View north along Alchester Road.

### 8.9 Carriageway, pavements, footpaths

There is no footway on the west side of Alchester Road and this combined with the hedges adds to the area's rural feel. The main road is laid in tarmac, which is coupled in parts with concrete kerb stones, which is unfortunate in its urbanising appearance. The two small branch roads are either a continuation of the tarmac or are loose gravel. The branch roads, as with parts of the main street do not incorporate kerb stones or a footway. With regards to the materials used for ground coverings, little historic or traditional material remains. There is evidence that Tubbs Lane was once cobbled and at the far eastern end, York Stone paving survives outside No. 6. However the remains of brick paving on the bridge which crosses Gagle Brook is no longer visible. As part of the conversion of the barns along Manor Farm Lane, granite kerbing has been introduced to the entrance lane.



Figure 33 Main road surface



Figure 34: York Stone outside No 6 Tubbs Lane.

### 8.10 Threats

The special character of the conservation area has begun to be eroded by the gradual introduction of unsympathetic modern materials, such as concrete tiles, modern style windows and doors and plastic rainwater goods. Barn conversions that remove much of the intrinsic character of the barn can have a similar impact.

On the east side there is little other than barn conversions in the back land plots at present. However any future infill and back land development could threaten the simple linear appearance of the village street.

6 Tubbs Lane, a grade II listed building, appears to have been empty for some time.

## 8.11 Visual Analysis

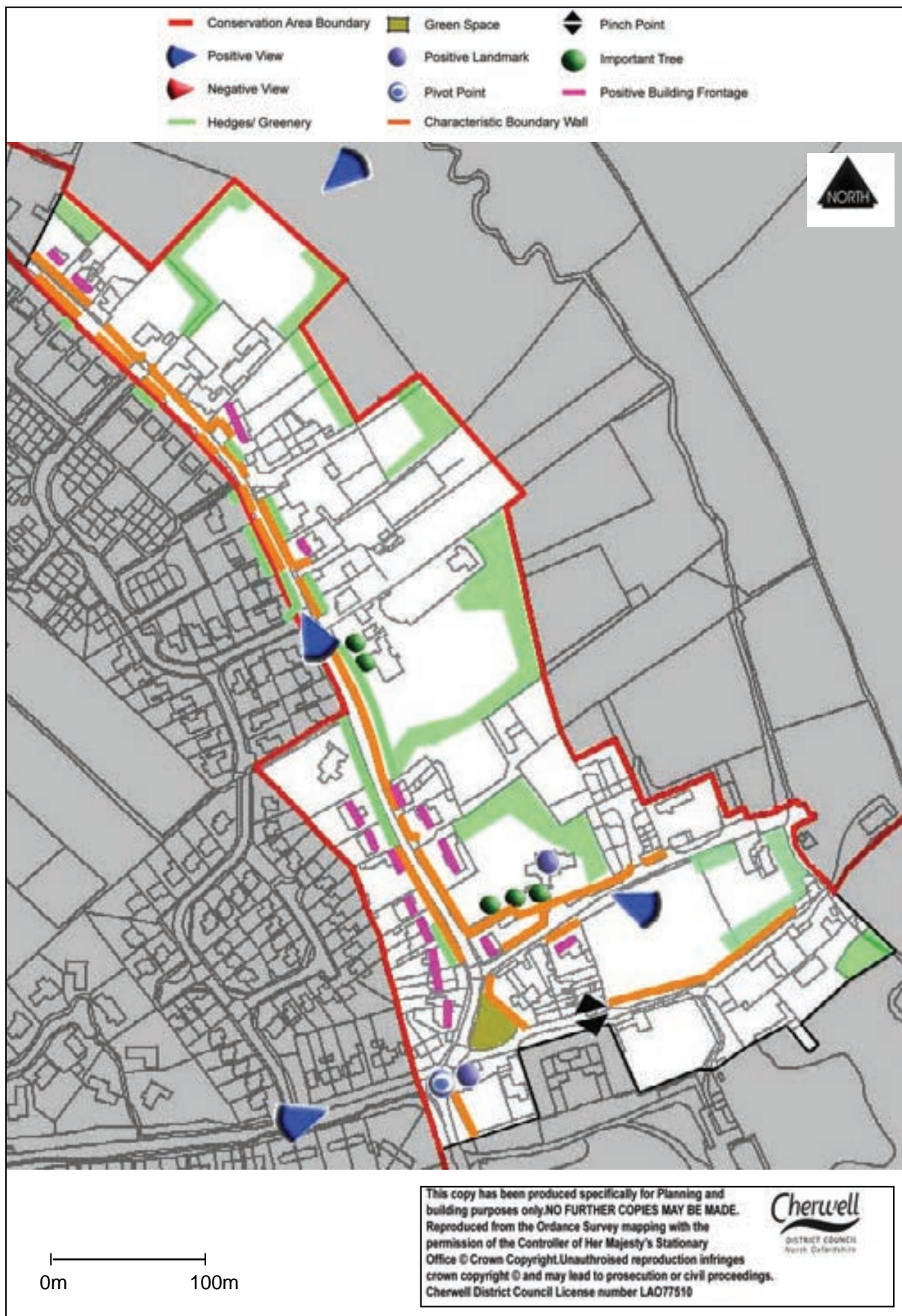


Figure 35: Main Village Character Area Visual Analysis.

## 9. Chesterton Lodge Character Area

This is a distinct self contained character area within the village comprising the house, grounds and outbuildings of the former Chesterton lodge, now Bruern Abbey School.

### 9.1 Land Use

Chesterton Lodge was originally constructed as a gentleman's residence for a local banker Henry Tubb from Bicester. The buildings first use as a school is reported to be in 1955 when a preparatory school called Audley House was situated there. The stables and coach house once of Chesterton Lodge have now been converted into residential apartments.

### 9.2 Building age, type and style

Local knowledge suggests that Chesterton Lodge was constructed in 1890 for Henry Tubb in an Italianate style. The coach house and stables were also thought to have been constructed at this time. The building is designed on a classical plan form with one central building with two smaller proportionate wings either side. This forms a symmetrical plan which appears to have had little external alterations to accommodate its current educational use. The pitches at the front of the building provide a good use of open parkland and retain the expansive views of the main building and balustrade, which is listed along with the rest of the building.



Figure 36: Chesterton Lodge.

### 9.3 Scale and massing

The character area is made up by the grounds of Chesterton Lodge. The grounds are secluded from view, but open up into large parklands with trees located sporadically throughout. The area includes only two buildings of worthy mention, which are some of the tallest within the village at over 2.5 storeys.

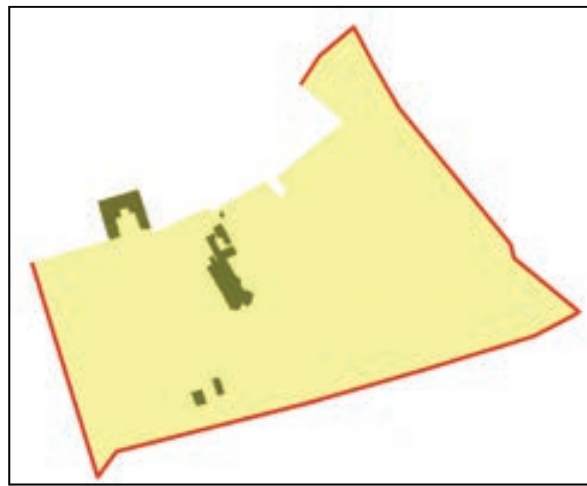


Figure 37: Chesterton Lodge Character Area.

### 9.4 Construction and Materials

Both the main buildings are constructed of limestone with freestone dressings and incorporate slate roofs. The buildings display a variety of windows including the notable segmental headed sash windows in the coach house and stable to the two large 2 storey bow windows on the south side of the main house.



Figure 38: Chesterton Court.



## 9.5 Means of enclosure

The boundary of Chesterton Lodge is either trees and dense greenery or stone walls of slightly over 1 metre in height. The walls are predominantly roughly coursed dry stone walls and incorporate a traditional coping with stones laid at right angles to the courses.



Figure 39: Chesterton Lodge boundary wall.

## 9.6 Trees, hedges, verges, open space

Tree cover is highly important to the character of this area. Trees line the east, south and west boundaries and are extremely prominent in the approach to the Conservation area from the south and east. This greenery is important as it defines this area and the development of the village. The parkland of Chesterton Lodge, once described as pleasure grounds were, by the middle of the 18th Century improved and were further improved by the end of the 18th Century, when permission was obtained to divert the line of Akeman Street to enable the construction of the current building and to further extend the grounds.



Figure 40: Tree lined road to south of Chesterton Lodge. View taken looking west on the approach to the village.



Figure 41: Tree lined road to west of Chesterton Lodge. View taken looking south leading away from the village.

## 9.7 Threats

The character of this area is formed by the open parklands of Chesterton Lodge and the greenery contained within and along its boundary. It is therefore important that these elements are protected as their loss would completely transform the appearance of the area.

## 9.8 Visual Analysis

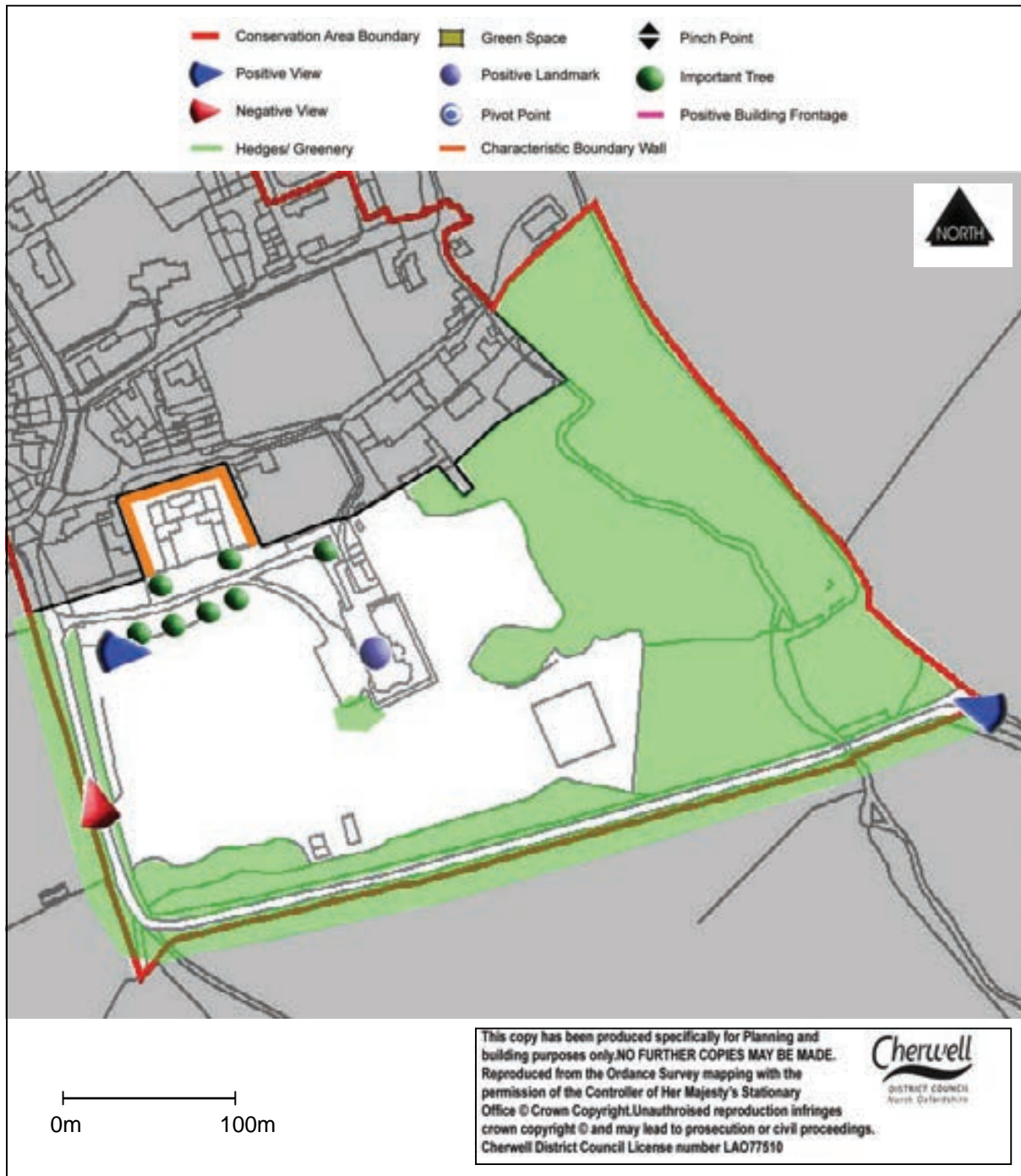


Figure 42: Chesterton Lodge Character Area Visual Analysis.

## 10. Northern Character Area

This character area preserves the location of late medieval buildings around the second green at Bignell.

### 10.1 Land Use and Street Pattern

Chesterton village is a polyfocal village with the northern green being one of these foci. The junction of Alchester Road and Bignell View is organised to form the pleasing small triangular green similar to Lower Green at the opposite end of Alchester Road. The buildings of the northern Character Area are all residential properties, as they would have been historically.



Figure 43: Northern green at Bignell View.



Figure 44: Southern green at junction of Alchester Road and Green Lane (area within Main Village Character area).

### 10.2 Building age, type and style

Most of the buildings are shown on the historic map dating from the 1760's. The historic buildings are similar to the rest of the village in that they are simple in form and would have originally been rectangular in plan. Most are vernacular in style with gable ends which face the street decorated with bargeboards.



Figure 45: Gable fronted building with decorative barge board.

### 10.3 Scale and massing

The buildings of the area are all of 2 storeys in height, although a few would be better described as 1.5 storeys. Some have single storey outbuildings or rear extensions. There is little uniformity in the spacing between building forms and plot sizes vary, although most of the buildings are detached structures. There is however a strong building line, which runs along the western road edge, starting at the southern corner of the character area towards the green at Bignell View.

The historic buildings are also recognisable as they are located on the footway with little or no set back. However two later semi detached infill developments are set back on thin plots.



Figure 46: Northern Character Area

#### 10.4 Trees, hedges, verges, open

There is one open space within the character area, the green, which contributes towards the areas overall rural appearance and to retaining wider views of the area. The area does not follow the characteristics of the Main Village Character area as there are few hedges or trees along the road frontage.

#### 10.5 Construction, Materials and Means of Enclosure

The majority of buildings are constructed along the west side of Bignell View and are of stone. The stone in this area appears more 'honey' coloured suggesting it is of a different origin to that elsewhere in the village. There is limited use of brick, varying in colour from blue to red, of which the best example is Hill Side Cottage. The use of small boundary walls are not as prevalent as in the rest of the village, due to the location of buildings on the footway. Although where they are used they tend to be smaller with few exceeding 1m in height.

Only one thatched building remains in the character area, although historic photos show that there were a few around 1930. Evidence of the previous use of thatch can be seen in the steeply pitched roofs of the historic buildings. However, thatch has generally now been replaced, in the most part with clay tiles, which are not unpleasing in their appearance.

#### 10.6 Key Views

Two key views have been identified in this character area. The first view can be seen from the east side of the green and highlights the importance of the green and the relationship of some of the historic structures to it. This view is considered to be a clear representation of the character of this part of the village. The second view can be seen from the south west corner of the character area looking north east and frames Top Green Cottage.



Figure 47: Key view south west across northern green.



Figure 48: Key view north east towards Top Green Cottage.

#### 10.7 Threats

The area has potentially a similar threat to the other character areas. The use of inappropriate or poor materials, cumulatively degrading the areas overall character.

Furthermore this area suffers from the high levels of traffic, which uses the A4095, a popular short cut.

## 10.8 Visual Analysis

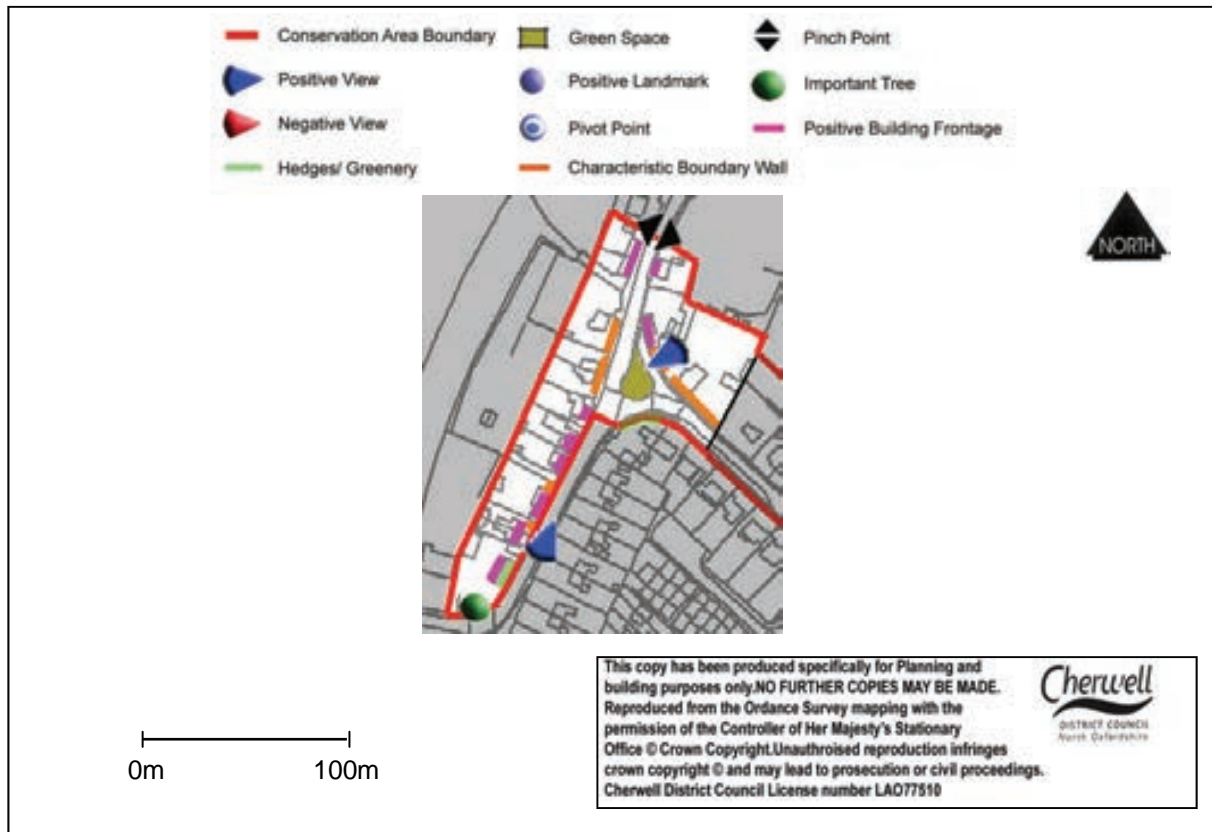


Figure 49: Northern Character Area Visual Analysis.

# 11. Materials and Details



Figure 50: Wall Materials.



Figure 51: Roof Materials.



Figure 52: Door Details.

Village and Northern Character Areas



Figure 53: Main Village and North Character Area Window Details.

Chesterton Lodge Character Area



Figure 54: Chesterton Lodge Character Area Window Details.



## 12. Management Plan

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

The conservation area is in general well looked after and cared for. The majority of buildings are in a good state of repair and most appear to have had recent works to maintain them. However there are three issues, which threaten the character and appearance of the Chesterton Conservation Area; The potential loss of green space through infill development, the loss of the characteristic boundary walls and the use of unsympathetic and inappropriate materials, particularly modern windows.

Care should also be taken to ensure that the parts of the conservation area which remain open and impact positively on its appearance are not used as development plots. Although there has been significant late 20th Century development in the village, in the main this is physically quite independent of the Conservation Area. The modern development within the Conservation Area, whilst it may not always be entirely sympathetic in choice of materials or architecture, is generally respectful of the morphology of the historic settlement.

A key characteristic of the village street is its linearity composed of a strong boundary at back of the footway with dwellings in often spacious grounds beyond, with no

back land development other than historic properties and barn conversions off Tubbs Lane and Manor Farm Lane. There is no precedent for back land infill and this would adversely effect the appreciation of the historic village. It is important that this characteristic and the Conservation Areas setting within open fields, generally lined with trees is protected. The two greens at either end of the village, the churchyard, the gardens of the Old Vicarage and of the Old Manor House and the open parkland of Chesterton Lodge are key to maintaining a rural feel and should be retained.

An important contribution to the appearance and character of the village is the front boundary walls, along the main street. They are a key characteristic of the view down Alchester Road. Their impact is reinforced by their number and any loss could have a large impact on the quality of the street scene.

The cumulative effect of additions and alterations to external features, whilst individually seem of little significance can change either the character of a building or its setting. The use of inappropriate materials, for example the replacement of traditional window casements, usually with uPVC double-glazing or the replacement of traditional roof tiles with poor imitations which can have the most visual impact.

These additions and alterations are a cause for concern and can lead to the erosion of the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The aim of management proposals is not to prevent changes but to ensure that any such changes are both sympathetic to the individual property, sympathetic to the streetscape and overall enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The principal policies covering alterations and development of the historic built environment are given in Appendix 1.

## 12.2 Generic Guidance

The Council Will:

1. Promote a policy of repair rather than replacement of traditional architectural details. Where repairs are not economically viable then the promotion of bespoke sympathetic replacement should be encouraged. This is particularly the case for windows when sympathetic refenestration is important in preserving the appearance of the building in the design and materials.

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

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

4. Strive to ensure that the conversion of traditional buildings to alternative uses will be achieved with minimal intervention and without the destruction of original character. Features and equipment pertinent to the building's original function where they exist should be retained.

5. Inappropriate 20<sup>th</sup> century concrete tiles are widespread in this Conservation Area. On these houses when possible, a return to traditional Stonesfield/ Welsh slate should be encouraged.

## 12.3 Enhancement and Management of the Public Realm

The Council Will:

1. Encourage a general level of good maintenance of properties and investigate whether appropriate planning permission or listed building consent has been obtained for an alteration. Unauthorised alterations to a listed building is a criminal offence and if necessary the council will enforce this.

2. Encourage the retention of front gardens, walls and boundary hedges.



Figure 55: Visually striking garden wall and hedge.

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

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

5. Exercise a presumption in favour of new alterations and extensions that are sympathetic to the existing buildings in scale, materials and design.

6. Promote tradition styles of pointing. The type of pointing in stone or brickwork is integral to the appearance of the wall or structure. It is therefore of great importance that only appropriate pointing is used in the repointing of stone or brickwork. Repointing work should be discrete to the point of being inseparable from the original. 'Ribbon' pointing and similar is considered a totally inappropriate style for this district.

7. Promote the use of lime mortar in the construction and repointing of stone and brickwork. This is a traditional building material and its use is of benefit to traditional buildings in contrast to hard cement mortars, often are used in modern construction. Modern mortars can accelerate weathering in stone.

8. Promote the use of sympathetic materials for garage doors. Vertical timber boarded side hung doors are preferable to metal or fibreglass, which can have a negative impact on the street scene.



Figure 56: Appropriate style of garage door.

9. Encourage on unlisted buildings the location of solar panels or micro-turbines on rear roof slopes or on outbuildings within rear gardens.

10. Encourage sympathetic refenestration where inappropriate windows have been inserted.

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

12. Encourage the reinstating of traditional features of the villages such as stiles.

13. Discourage disfiguring alterations such as unsympathetic extensions, altering the dimensions of window openings.

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

15. Create a dialogue with service providers to encourage underground power cables to reduce the visual pollution caused by the overhead lines and their supporting poles within the villages.



Figure 57: Overhead cables located around the green outside the Red Cow Public House.

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

17. Promote the retention of boundary walls and gateways.

18. Encourage the retention of grassed verges which meet the roads edge without the use of a kerb, where appropriate.

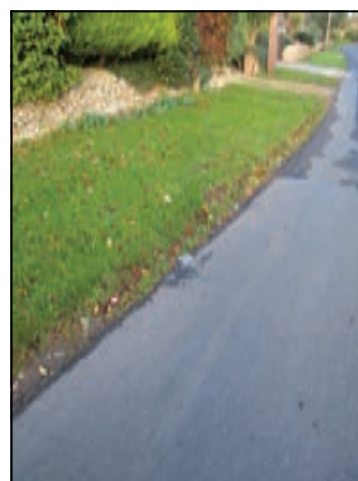


Figure 58: Grassed verge meeting edge of road without kerb stones gives attractive rural feel.

19. Promote the repair or replacement of lost or inappropriate boundary treatments with traditional walling in a style appropriate to the location.

## 12.4 Management and Protection of Important Green Spaces

The Council Will:

1. Promote the retention of significant open spaces around the village.
2. Promote positive management of vegetation. Trees and hedges make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Planting of exotic imports or inappropriate varieties, such as Leylandii, are to be strongly discouraged, these trees grow fast blocking important views as well being uncharacteristic of the area. Trees over a certain size within the area boundary are protected, this is a particularly important as none of the trees within Chesterton are subject to Tree Preservation Orders.
3. Protect of the relationship of the plots on the east side of Alchester Road with Gagle Brook.
4. Preserve the character and appearance of open spaces within the Conservation Area. Urban features such as roadside kerbing should be avoided and parking on grass areas discouraged.
5. Promote the retention of grass verges within the village. These play a key role in retaining the rural feel.
6. Protect views into and out of the Conservation Area.
7. Preserve the setting of the Conservation Area.



*Figure 59: Important green space within the Main Village Character area.*



*Figure 60: Grounds of Chesterton Lodge/ Bruern Abbey School.*

## 13. Conservation Area Boundary - Revisions and Justification

### 13.1

A conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

### 13.2

Chesterton Conservation Area was designated on 21st March 1988 following Circular advice from central government. The original boundary was drawn to include the buildings of architectural or historical interest.

### 13.3

Following the review of the conservation area in 1995 revisions to the original boundary were approved on 9th January 1995 to include the buildings on the west side of Alchester Road and the Bicester Road bounding the grounds of Chesterton Lodge.

### 13.4

Following a further review of the conservation area revisions to the boundary were approved on 4th February 2008 to include, in broad terms, the remainder of the historic village street frontages and immediately associated back land. The justification for this was fourfold:

- The development is contemporary with the rest of the historic core, predominantly pre 1760's.
- The building materials and vernacular style has a character and appearance comparable with the current designated area.
- Although the area contains no buildings currently on the statutory list, several are of local interest and more make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
- The area exhibits a similar vulnerability to potential infill, loss of significant boundary walls or vegetation etc, as the rest of the designated area.

### 13.5 Properties included in revised boundary

The Old Stables, Alchester Road  
Culverhay, Alchester Road  
Gables, Alchester Road  
Home Farm, Alchester Road  
Huish Farm, Home Farm Close  
Tarranias Cottage, 1 Home Farm Close  
2 Home Farm Close  
Granary Cottage, 3 Home Farm Close  
Chesterwood, Alchester Road  
Barnside, Alchester Road  
Chesterton Church of England Primary School, Alchester Road  
High Gaggle, Alchester Road  
Parish Hall, Alchester Road  
Sunnyside, Alchester Road  
Stonehaven, Alchester Road  
Fairground, Alchester Road  
Swallow Barn, Alchester Road  
Vicarage Farmhouse, Alchester Road  
Top Green Cottage, Alchester Road  
Hillside Cottage, Bignell View  
1 Parkside Cottage, Bignell View  
2 Parkside Cottage, Bignell View  
The Old Post Office, Bignell View  
Holly Bush Cottage, Bignell View  
Yew Tree Cottage, Bignell View  
West Green Cottage, Bignell View  
Stone Cottage, Bignell View  
Old Thatch Cottage, Bignell View  
Bignell View Cottage, Bignell View  
Plum Tree Cottage, Bignell View  
Squirrel Cottage, Bignell View  
Corner Cottage, Bignell View

### 13.6

It would be inappropriate for the whole village to be included within the designated area. Different planning controls apply in conservation areas and therefore it is vital that only areas which are demonstrably of special architectural or historic interest be included.

For the avoidance of doubt the boundary of the conservation area can be described as follows:

### 13.7 North Western Boundary

The north western boundary follows the rear boundary of the properties on the west side of Bignell View.

### 13.8 Eastern Boundary

The designated area turns sharply right parallel to Hill Side Cottage following its rear boundary before turning south east to follow the rear boundary of Vicarage Farmhouse. The boundary then follows the rear boundary of the building plots until turning north east to include the school playing field, before turning back towards Alchester Road. The boundary follows the rear plot boundaries on the north east side of Alchester Road running along side the rear boundary of the Old Vicarage and the converted barns of Manor Farm Lane. It then joins the Gagle Brook before skirting around the edge of the grounds of Chesterton Lodge.

### 13.9 Southern Boundary

The southern boundary follows the southern side of Bicester Road, including the vegetation, adjacent to the boundary of Chesterton Lodge.

### 13.10 Western Boundary

The western boundary runs along the west side of Bicester Road, crossing Green Lane to include the rear boundaries of the properties on the west side of Alchester Road before skirting around New College House and continuing north, including the front boundary walls of the properties on its west side of Alchester Road. Upon reaching the green at the north end of the village the designated boundary turns through 90 degrees and progress south west crossing Bignell View road to meet the north western boundary.

13.11 Original Conservation Area Boundary

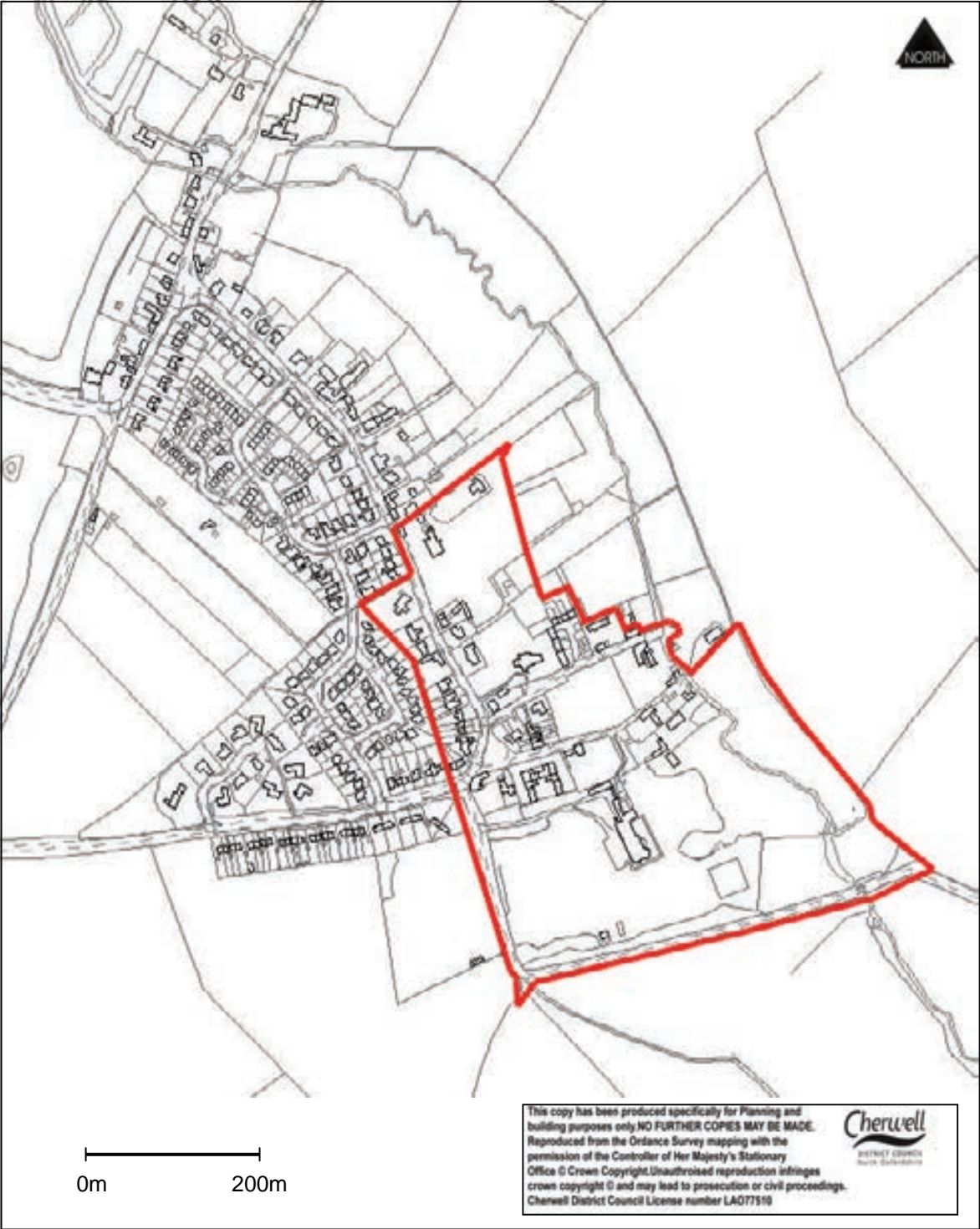


Figure 61: Original Conservation Area Boundary Map.

13.13 Revised Conservation Area Boundary

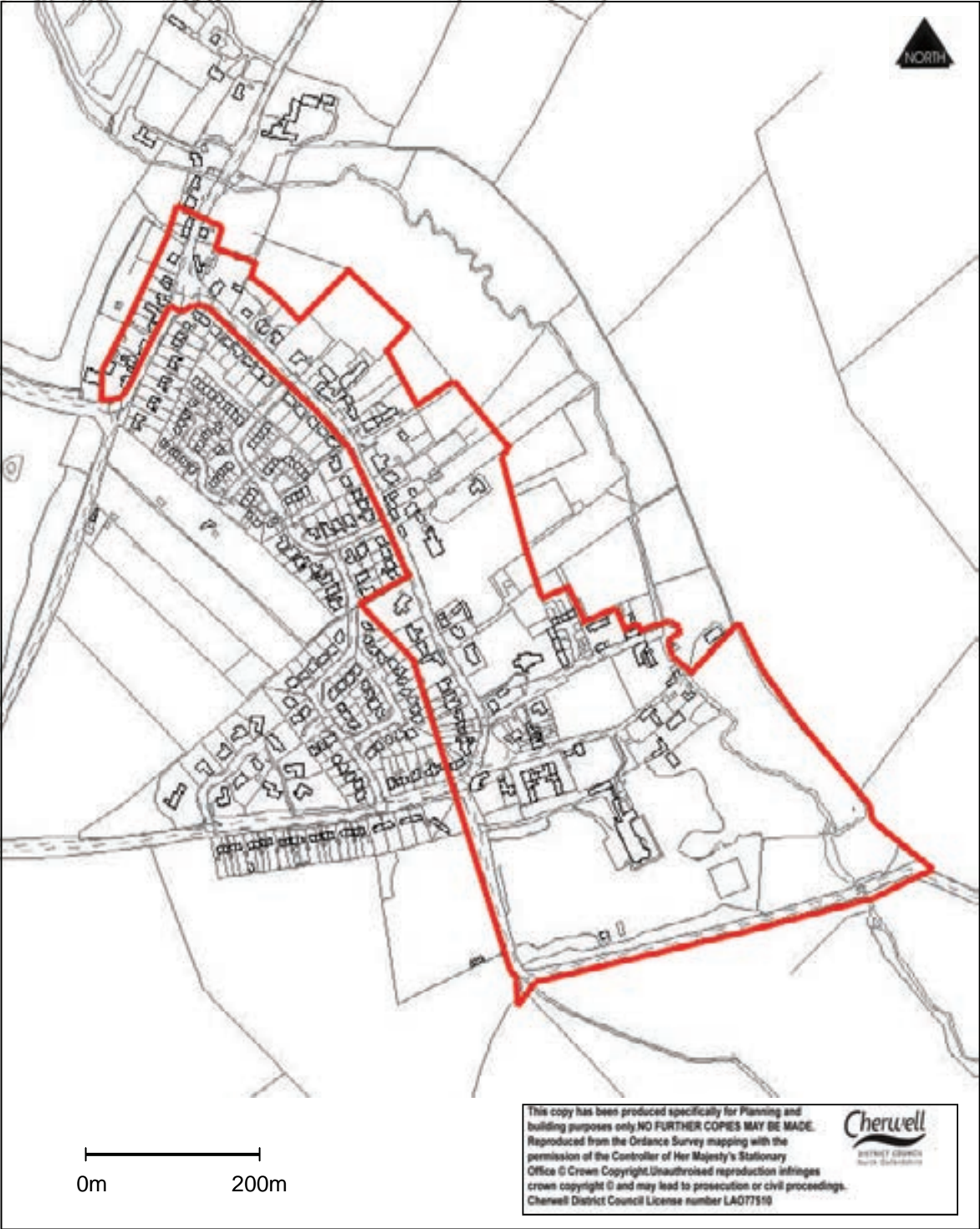


Figure 62: Revised Conservation Area Boundary Map.



## 14. Effects of Conservation Area Designation and Related Planning Policies

### 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 Department of Planning and Development Services at an early stage. The main effects of designation are as follows:

### 14.2 Development should preserve or enhance the area

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. This will enable the achievement of higher standards of design in new developments and secure 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.

### 14.3 Control over demolition of buildings

Conservation Area Consent is required from the Council, as the Local Planning Authority, for the demolition or substantial demolition of unlisted buildings in the conservation area. Where a building is of demonstrable architectural or historic interest, consent for demolition will only be given as a last resort.

### 14.4 Control over trees

The Council must be notified of any intention to carry out works to fell, lop or top any tree over 75mm (3 inches approx) in diameter not already the subject of a tree preservation order. This provides the Council an opportunity to consider making a tree preservation order. This will provide

an extra degree of control over the many trees that are important to the appearance of the conservation area.

### 14.5 Protection of important open spaces and views

There are a number of open spaces within the village that it is important to protect because they are integral to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The inclusion of these open spaces in the designation of the conservation area is specifically to ensure that these spaces are preserved.

### 14.6 Control over the demolition of enclosures

Consent is also required to demolish 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 will mean that walls not relating to listed buildings, that add so much to the character and appearance of the street scene, will be afforded protection.

### 14.7 Powers to seek repair of unlisted historic buildings

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.

#### 14.8 Reduced permitted development

There are more restrictions on the size of houses and industrial extensions that may be carried out without specific planning permission. Planning permission is also required for some additional alterations to dwellings:

- The cladding of the exterior of buildings;
- The construction of a (dormer) roof extension;
- The erection of satellite dishes fronting a highway.

#### 14.9 Enhancements should preserve and enhance the area

Land use planning policies in the Cherwell Local Plan aim to ensure that special attention is given to the preservation or enhancement of designated conservation areas, and proposals for new development will be acceptable if they assist in the achievement of that objective.

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## 16. Appendix 1

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

### 16.1 Oxfordshire structure plan 2016

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

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

### 16.2 Cherwell Local Plan 1996

**H5** Where there is a demonstrable lack of affordable housing to meet local needs, the district council will negotiate with developers to secure an element of affordable housing in substantial new residential development schemes. The district council will need to be satisfied that such affordable housing: (i) is economically viable in terms of its ability to meet the need identified (ii) will be available to meet local needs long term through secure arrangements being made to restrict the occupancy of the development (iii) is compatible with the other policies in this plan.

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

**H19** Proposals for the conversion of a rural building, whose form, bulk and general design is in keeping with its surroundings to a dwelling in a location beyond the built-up limits of a settlement will be favourably considered provided: (i) the building can be converted without major rebuilding or extension and without inappropriate alteration to its form and character; (ii) the proposal would not cause significant harm to the character of the countryside or the immediate setting of the building; (iii) the proposal would not harm the special character and interest of a building of architectural or historic significance; (iv) the proposal meets the requirements of the other policies in the plan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**C30** Design control will be exercised to ensure: (i) that new housing development is compatible with the appearance, character, layout, scale and density of existing dwellings in the vicinity; (ii) that any proposal to extend an existing dwelling (in cases where planning permission is required) is compatible with the scale of the existing dwelling, its curtilage and the character of the street scene; (iii) that new housing development or any proposal for the extension (in cases where planning permission is required) or conversion of an existing dwelling provides standards of amenity and privacy acceptable to the local planning authority.

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

### **16.3 Non-statutory Cherwell local plan**

**EN34** the council will seek to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the landscape through the control of development. Proposals will not be permitted if they would: (i) cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside; (ii) cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography; (iii) be inconsistent with local character; (iv) harm

the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features; (v) harm the historic value of the landscape.

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

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

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

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

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

**EN47** The Council will promote sustainability of the historic environment through conservation, protection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage and its interpretation and presentation to the public. In particular it will: (i) seek to ensure that scheduled ancient monuments and other unscheduled sites of national and regional importance and their settings are permanently preserved; (ii) ensure that development which could adversely affect sites, structures, landscapes or buildings of archaeological interest and their settings will require an assessment of the archaeological resource through a desk-top study, and where appropriate a field evaluation; (iii) not permit development that would adversely affect archaeological remains and their settings unless the applicant can demonstrate that the archaeological resource will be physically preserved in-situ, or a suitable strategy has been put forward to mitigate the impact of development proposals; (iv) ensure that where physical preservation in-situ is neither practical nor desirable and sites are not scheduled or of national importance, the developer will be responsible for making appropriate provision for a programme of archaeological investigation, recording, analysis and publication that will ensure the site is preserved by record prior to destruction. Such measures will be secured either by planning agreement or by a suitable planning condition.

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

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

## 17. Acknowledgments

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