



## Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop Conservation Area Appraisal

Design and Conservation Team  
Strategic Planning and the Economy



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# 1. Introduction and Planning Policy Context

## 1. Introduction and Planning Policy Context

- 1.1 This document is an appraisal of the character and appearance of the **Sibford Ferris Conservation Area**, first designated in November 1985 and the **Sibford Gower and Burdrop Conservation Area**, first designated in January 1988 (Figure 1). This is the first review of both conservation areas and is the first appraisal to have been produced. It is intended that the document will provide a comprehensive assessment of the current character and appearance of the conservation areas for Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop. It also provides a basis for providing informed judgements on future conservation and management of the three settlements within the Sib valley (so called after the Sib which runs through the valley, even though the valley appears to have no formal name).
- 1.2 Conservation areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. However, it is the 1990 Act (Section 69) which places a duty upon local planning authorities to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest through an appraisal process and to designate them as conservation areas. Since 1967 some 9,600 conservation areas have been designated in England, including 59 in Cherwell District.
- 1.3 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.'
- 1.4 Local planning authorities have a duty under the Act to consider boundary revisions to their conservation areas 'from time to time'.
- 1.5 This document is based on a standard recording format derived from advice contained in documents published by English Heritage (2011). By writing a full conservation area appraisal for Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop, the special character and appearance of each area can be identified and protected by ensuring that any future development preserves or enhances that identified special character.



**Figure 1.** 2009 Aerial photograph including the conservation area boundary.

## 2. Location

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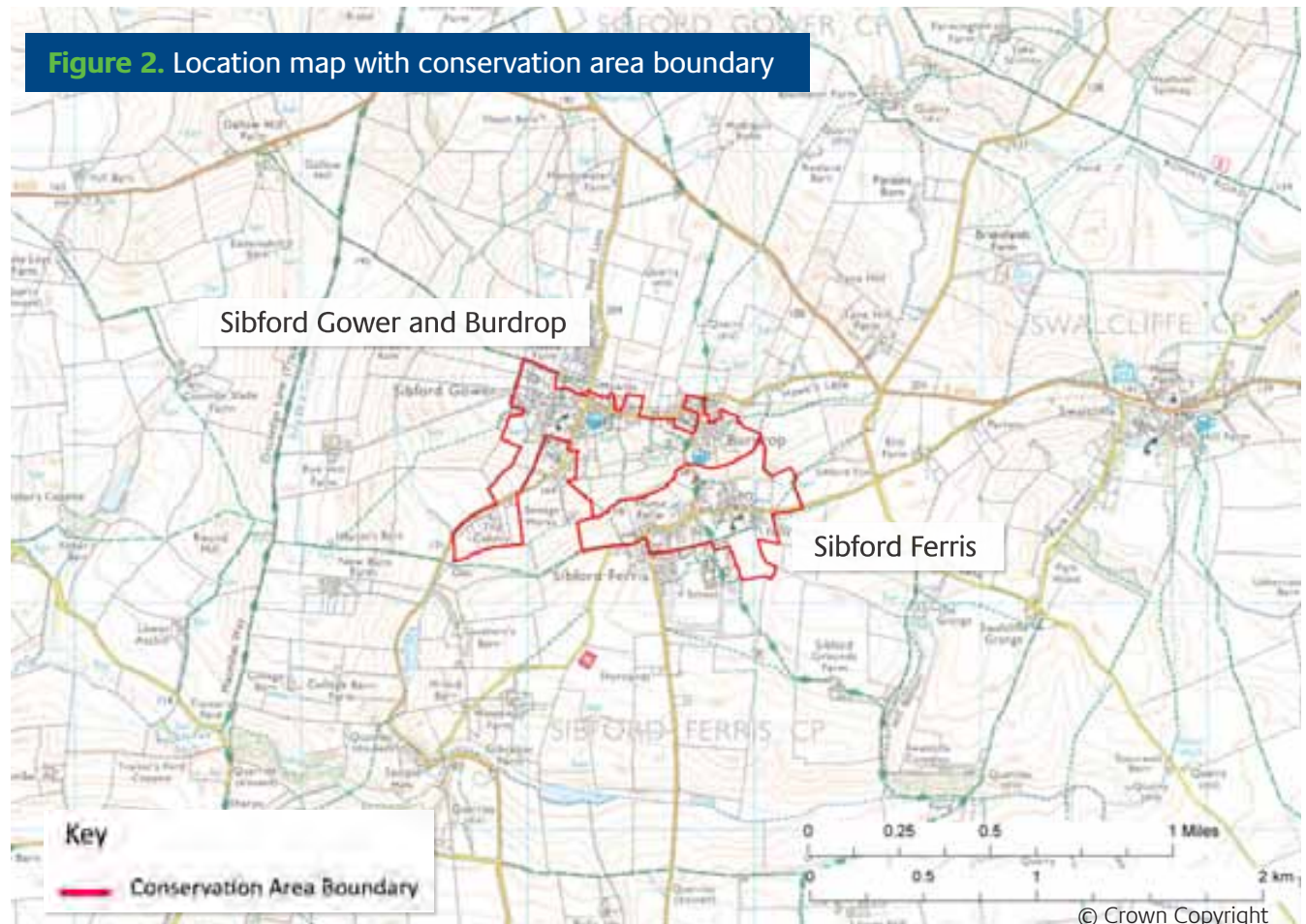
- 2.1 Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower together with Burdrop lie about 13km (8 miles) west-south-west of Banbury on the steep south-east and north-west sides of the Sib valley respectively. Historically these villages lay within the ancient parish of Swalcliffe, but since boundary reorganisation in 1841, now have their own civil parishes of Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower respectively, within the ecclesiastical parish of Sibford Gower.
- 2.2 The conservation areas cover the historic settlements of Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop and the immediate environs, with only the most recent housing developments and the Sibford School site in Sibford Ferris, all on the peripheries of their respective villages, being outside the boundary (Figure 2). The Colony (to the SW of Sibford Gower) and the land between The Colony and Sibford Gower are historically and archaeologically significant and therefore the Sibford Gower Conservation Area now includes this area (Figure 3).
- 2.3 The identified significant heritage assets for Sibford Gower, Burdrop and Sibford Ferris are shown in Figure 3. These include Designated Heritage Assets (Grade II), the designated conservation area boundary for Sibford Ferris and for Sibford Gower and Burdrop, the location of trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders and buildings identified as non-designated heritage assets. Buildings considered worthy of local listing

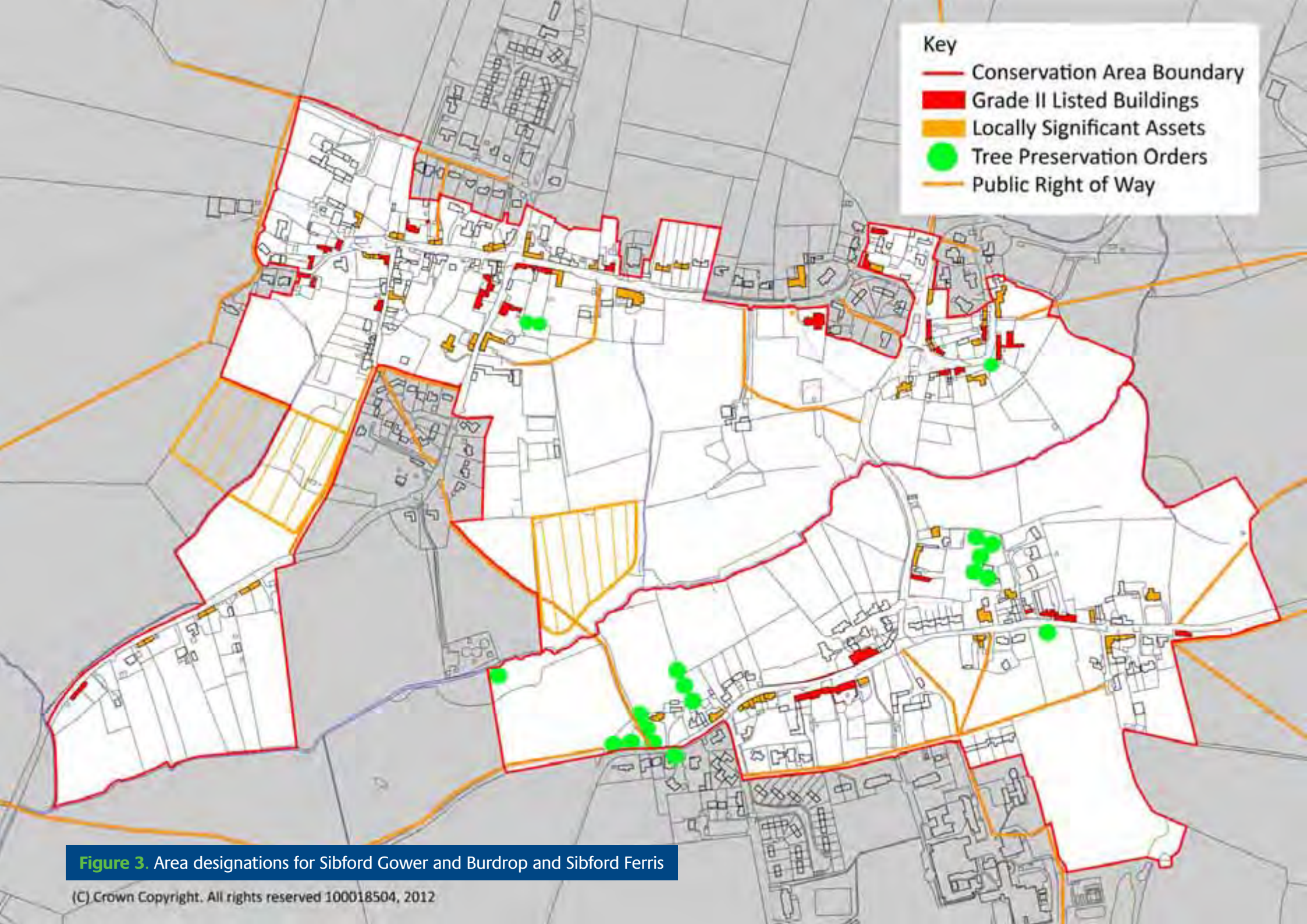
are identified in Appendix 3 and have been included on the district-wide register of locally significant Heritage Assets.

- 2.4 Protection for Designated Heritage Assets, conservation areas and identified trees is conferred under primary legislation, backed-up with policies within the Cherwell Local Plan and within National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- 2.5 Identification of locally significant heritage is advocated by the NPPF in relation to the contribution non-designated heritage assets make to the character of the historic environment.

**Figure 2.** Location map with conservation area boundary





**Key**

- Conservation Area Boundary
- Grade II Listed Buildings
- Locally Significant Assets
- Tree Preservation Orders
- Public Right of Way

**Figure 3.** Area designations for Sibford Gower and Burdrop and Sibford Ferris

# 3. Geology and Topography

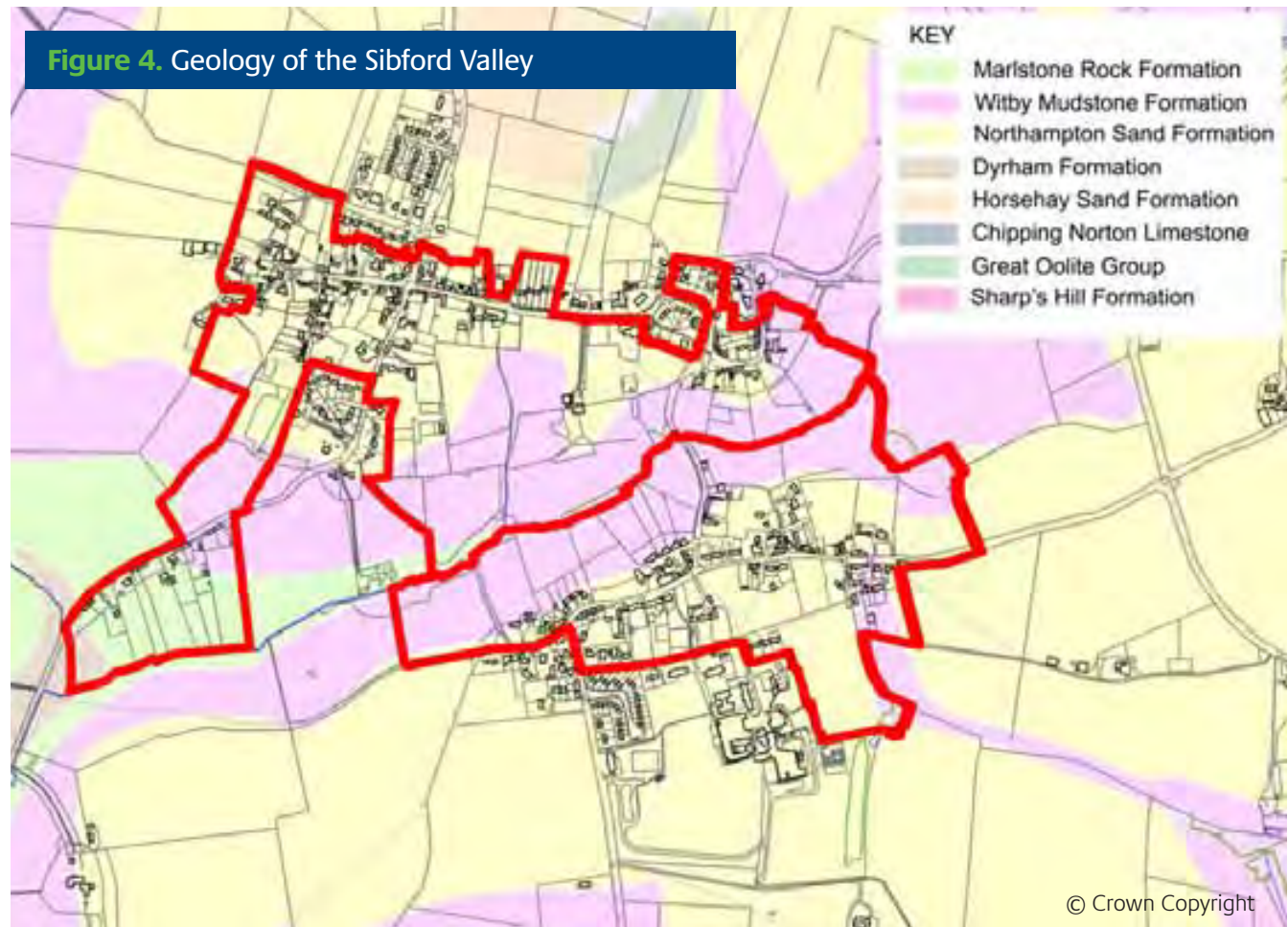
## 3. Geology and Topography

- 3.1 The villages of Sibford Gower, Sibford Ferris and Burdrop are located within the Ironstone Hills and Valleys character area; a large area incorporating land to the south and west of Banbury (Cobham Resource Consultants, 1995).
- 3.2 The geology of the area is faulted and fairly complex. The main distinguishing features are its extremely complex topography and the unique style of vernacular buildings associated with the use of ironstone as a building material (Wood-Jones, 1986). Thus the Sibford villages have much in common with the villages in the surrounding area, but also have their distinguishing features.
- 3.3 The land around the Sibford villages comprises a succession of steep-sided valleys and narrow valley floors with a pattern of small fields and mixed farming, predominately permanent pasture.
- 3.4 Field walls, and to some extent hedgerows, are significant, as well as locally characteristic features within the area. Many of the hedgerows are unmanaged or show signs of previous management which is now growing out. However, there is little woodland, although stands of trees along the narrow lanes give the impression of a well-treed environment.

3.5 The area is picturesquely hilly and lies between 120 and 190 metre. The line of hills has been formed by the Marlstone Rock Formation (the Ironstone which gives the area its distinctive colour and its name) which overlies the Lias group clays. Around the Sibfords faulting has uplifted an area of White Limestone and Northampton Sand

Formation. Thus the underlying complexity of the geology is, to some extent, expressed by the topography of the area.

3.6 The villages of Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower and the hamlet of Burdrop, stand on hillsides that face each other across an attractive valley which runs east-west, close

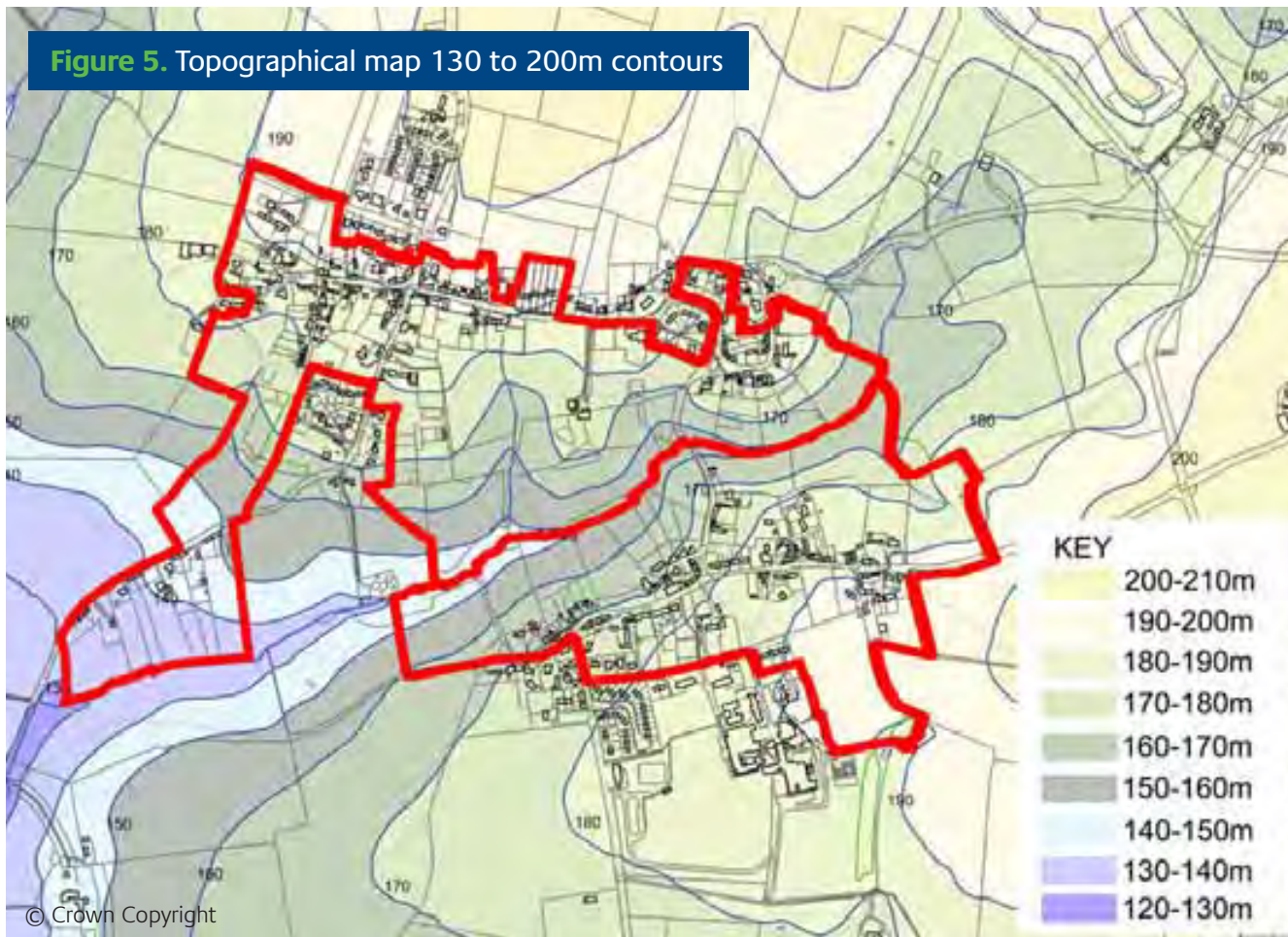






to the line of the un-named springs which drain west by feeding into the River Stour and ultimately the River Severn; Sibford Ferris to the south-east along the valley side at 180m and Sibford Gower and Burdrop to the north-west at 190m.

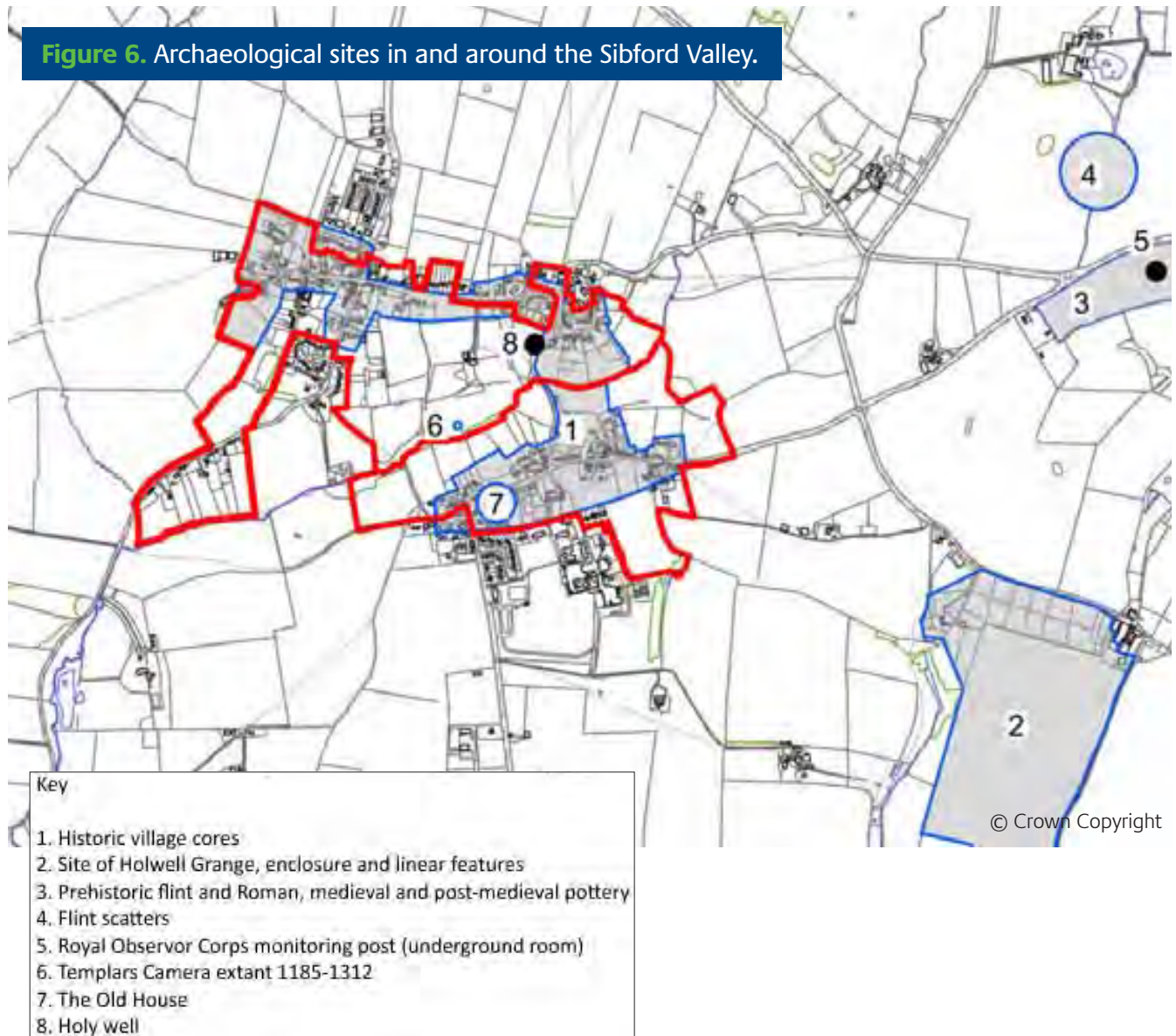
**Figure 5.** Topographical map 130 to 200m contours



# 4. Archaeology

## 4. Archaeology

- 4.1 The area has been settled from an early period, as evidenced by the mention of barrows at Sibford Gower (Beesley, 1841), and the remains of an extensive Iron-Age camp at Madmarston Hill (NE of Swalcliffe village) (National Monuments Record). Close by is a large site of Roman occupation at Swalcliffe Lea. The villages are also located on the pre-historic path from the south to Lincoln and York.
- 4.2 Few archaeological discoveries have been made in the Sibford Valley itself. This could be because there has been very limited archaeological investigation; but also because land use and the underlying geology has resulted in no easily identifiable evidence of the archaeology e.g. cropmarks. Flint arrow-heads have been found south-west of Sibford Grounds Farm and near The Colony at Sibford Gower. Archaeological evidence from later periods is also lacking, for even though the Battle of Edgehill was fought only 7 miles away during the English Civil war, there is no evidence of any impact on the villages.
- 4.3 Place-names suggest that the Saxon settlement of all principal hamlets was also relatively early.



## 5. History and Development

5.1 This section provides a brief history of the development of Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop. A more detailed account is given in *The Victoria County History: A History of Oxfordshire*, Vol X, pp 225-260, (Crossley (ed),1972). Easily accessible information is also available on the well researched website for the villages (<http://thesibfords.org.uk>). Other key sources can be found in the Bibliography.

### 5.2 Early History

5.2.1 From the evidence that is left us in the form of archaeological evidence and finds, it would seem that human activity within the vicinity of the Sibfords began in prehistoric times. Beesley in his *History of Banbury* (Beesley, 1841) states there are four 'Iron Age Barrows' at Sibford Gower. These, however, do not appear in the current archaeological record; possibly they have regrettably been ploughed-out, but equally a lot has changed in our understanding of archaeology since the early 1800s when Beesley was working. However, a Romano-British settlement has been located nearby at Swalcliffe Lea (also the site of the shrunken medieval hamlet of Lea) although there is no evidence of a Roman settlement within the villages themselves.

### 5.3 Sibford in the Domesday Book

5.3.1 The derivation of the settlement names is of interest in that the names both derive from a Saxon origin and the Norman names of the beneficiaries who received grants of land at the time of the conquest. The name 'Sibford' has been interpreted as 'sheep-ford' there being a ford between Burdrop and Sibford Ferris, or 'Sibba's Ford' which is found in a document from 1153. The name 'Zibberd' has also been found on old maps. In the Domesday Book of 1086 the names 'Scipforde' and 'Sibford' are found.

5.3.2 The Domesday book tell us that there were three manors. The manor at Sibford Ferris (assessed at 10 hides) was held by Henry de Ferrières, whilst on the other side of the valley at Sibford Gower the two manors were held by William Corbician (assessed at 10 hides), and Hugh de Grantmesnil (assessed at 11 hides). A hide is an old land measure, being enough land to support a house-hold, usually between 60-120 acres (24-48 hectares). A hide of good land was smaller than that of poor quality land.

5.3.3 From the Norman de Ferrières family, came the place-name Sibford Ferris. A charter of 1216 says that "Sibilla, Countess of Ferriers holds land at Sibford". The 12th century saw the Corbician manor held by the Norman Goher family, from

whom Sibford Gower takes it name.

5.3.4 Burdrop (a later settlement) derives its name from the Old English for the hamlet near the burh (a fortified place or manor). Until times within living memory, Sibford Gower and Burdrop were known as Broad Sibford, and Sibford Ferris was Little Sibford.



### 5.4 The Knights Templars and the Cistercians (1100 – 1400)

5.4.1 In the 13th century land at Sibford Gower was transferred to the Knights Templars by Alan de la Zouch who held the Corbician manor. He was a generous benefactor to the order and gave them much land. This was in addition to a grant made by Agnes de Sibford (before 1153) of the Chapel of St. John the Baptist at Sibford Gower, land and a mill. The site (although not the original buildings) of Temple Mill at Sibford remains thereby perpetuating its association with the Order.

5.4.2 The Templars remained at Sibford until 1312 when their entire international Order was suppressed for alleged scandals. At the Sibfords their lands and houses were transferred to the Knights Hospitallers, who then maintained the chapel at Sibford for close on two centuries. The dissolution of the monasteries put an end to the Sibford Gower chapel, which was declared derelict in 1547. The exact site of this chapel is now unknown; but is thought to be between the houses now known as Temple Close and Gower's Close.

5.4.3 Another monastic order, the Cistercians, were to be found for a period of about 150 years (1194-1349) living on the border between Swalcliffe and Sibford Ferris. Holwell (holy well) Grange comprised a chapel, farm, and living quarters for a small community of monks. A spring gushes from a rocky outcrop: this is the source of the River Stour and was the monks' water-supply. In 1349, the country was ravaged by the Black Death. This, it would seem, led the Cistercians to withdraw from Holwell Grange (<http://thesibfords.org.uk/>).

5.4.4 It was during this period that Sibford Gower was named from Great Sibford, after the the lord of the manor.



*Sibford Gower. Bonds End Lane*

### 5.5 Wool and weaving (1500 – 1900)

5.5.1 By the 16th century the trade in woollen cloth had become Britain's richest export, and the Cotswolds prospered. Fortunes were made by merchants living in towns like Chipping Camden. In Banbury there was a Wool Hall in Sheep Street, the western end of the present High Street. Every village, which had sheep on its hills, shared in the thriving business. It is therefore of no small surprise that the former public house, the Bishop Blaize at Burdrop, is named after the patron saint of the weavers (St. Blaize, 4th century martyr). Legend says that wool-auctions were held on Burdrop Green, outside the inn, which bears on its wall the date 1640.

5.5.2 Like much of north and west Oxfordshire, the Sib valley has provided good conditions for sheep farming, which due to the local topography (i.e. the steep valleys) is much less suitable for arable farming. The success of farming is reflected in the high number of farms between these three settlements.

5.5.3 Sheep farming was an important economic source of income in the late 16th and early 17th century, and made many people extremely rich, thereby providing the income for fine houses, such as Chastleton House, to be constructed for the Yeomanry (the emerging middle class) and gentry. Wealth and status was demonstrated in the construction of dwellings both for themselves and their families as well as for hired hands – evidence of an early form affordable housing.

5.5.4 This practical application of the traditional attitudes of mutual help and sharing, which is a fundamental part of the Quaker legacy, marks the villages as essentially different from other villages in the area. To this day residents are quick to reassure the visitor that the Quaker legacy lives on as independent-mindedness and contentment within the villages.

5.5.5 Plush-making (plush being a fabric not too dissimilar to velvet) continued long afterwards as a cottage craft in and around the area. William Wrench (born 1806) was a Plush Master: plush woven in the cottages was brought to him for finishing and selling. Joseph Alcock, the last of Sibford's cottage-weavers, wove part of the red carpet on which King Edward VII walked at his Westminster Abbey Coronation in 1902. It is reported that Mr. Alcock used to do three weeks' work at home, then take the cloth to Shutford where he was paid 11d. a yard (<http://thesibfords.org.uk>).



### 5.6 Religion in the parishes (1678 - 1840)

5.6.1 The area around the Sibfords has a long and strong history of nonconformity. Anabaptist (a radical protestant sect) and Quaker groups were established during the 1660s.

5.6.2 By 1669 the Society of Friends (Quakers) were meeting regularly in the house of Thomas Gilkes in Sibford. In 1678 George Fox (a founder of the Religious Society of Friends) preached at Sibford, on his way to North Newington, Adderbury and Banbury. In the same year a group of Sibford people bought a piece of land at Sibford Gower, on which - between 1678 and 1681 - a Quaker Meeting House was built. This building was subsequently replaced in 1866.

5.6.3 At the beginning of the 19th century Methodism gained a firm foothold in Sibford, Shutford and Epwell, in some part this was due to the alienating activities of the Swalcliffe incumbent, John Stevens. Methodists were first recorded in 1805 and a meeting-house licensed in 1823. In 1826 an appeal was made for funds for the building of a Methodist chapel which was ultimately built in Sibford Gower in 1827.

5.6.4 The Sibfords are unusual in that there was no Church of England building within the settlements, the original chapel having become derelict. Located within a large parish, the populations of the three settlements were required to attend church at the neighbouring village of Swalcliffe. The deemed remoteness and the problems of serving a large parish lead the Swalcliffe vicar, Edward Payne, to champion the building of a new Sibford church. Holy Trinity

Church was built in Sibford Gower in Early English style, to the design of H.J. Underwood of Oxford. The building was finally consecrated in 1840. Payne's efforts also resulted in the creation of the new combined Sibford benefice in 1841.



### 5.7 Inclosure of the fields (1773 - 1789)

5.7.1 Inclosure Acts were passed for Sibford Gower and Burdrop in 1773 and Sibford Ferris in 1789, nominating Commissioners to investigate, to re-allocate lands, and to decide the financial liability. The Inclosure awards saw 2,000 acres of land taken into private ownership at Sibford Gower and Burdrop and 950 acres at Sibford Ferris. Much common and waste land was taken in for cultivation, but the cost of the enclosures was high. Wealth was derived from agriculture and the preponderance of farms in and around the main settlements bears this out (Figure 8).

5.7.2 The Inclosures Act brought economic changes. Towards the end of the 18th century the Sibfords were characterised by the number of small owner-occupiers. The owners and occupiers of the land had twelve months to comply with the Act, and many restrictions were applied, such as the keeping of lambs was not permitted 'if new wood was planted' (Christ Church College (1773, 1789)). Many small farmsteads could no longer afford to pay the charges levied against them and sold to the richer, larger neighbouring owners. So by 1851 this number had fallen to less than half. A new poor class of dispossessed labourers came into existence, dependent on farm wages – well evidenced by the Stevens survey in 1877 (see below).

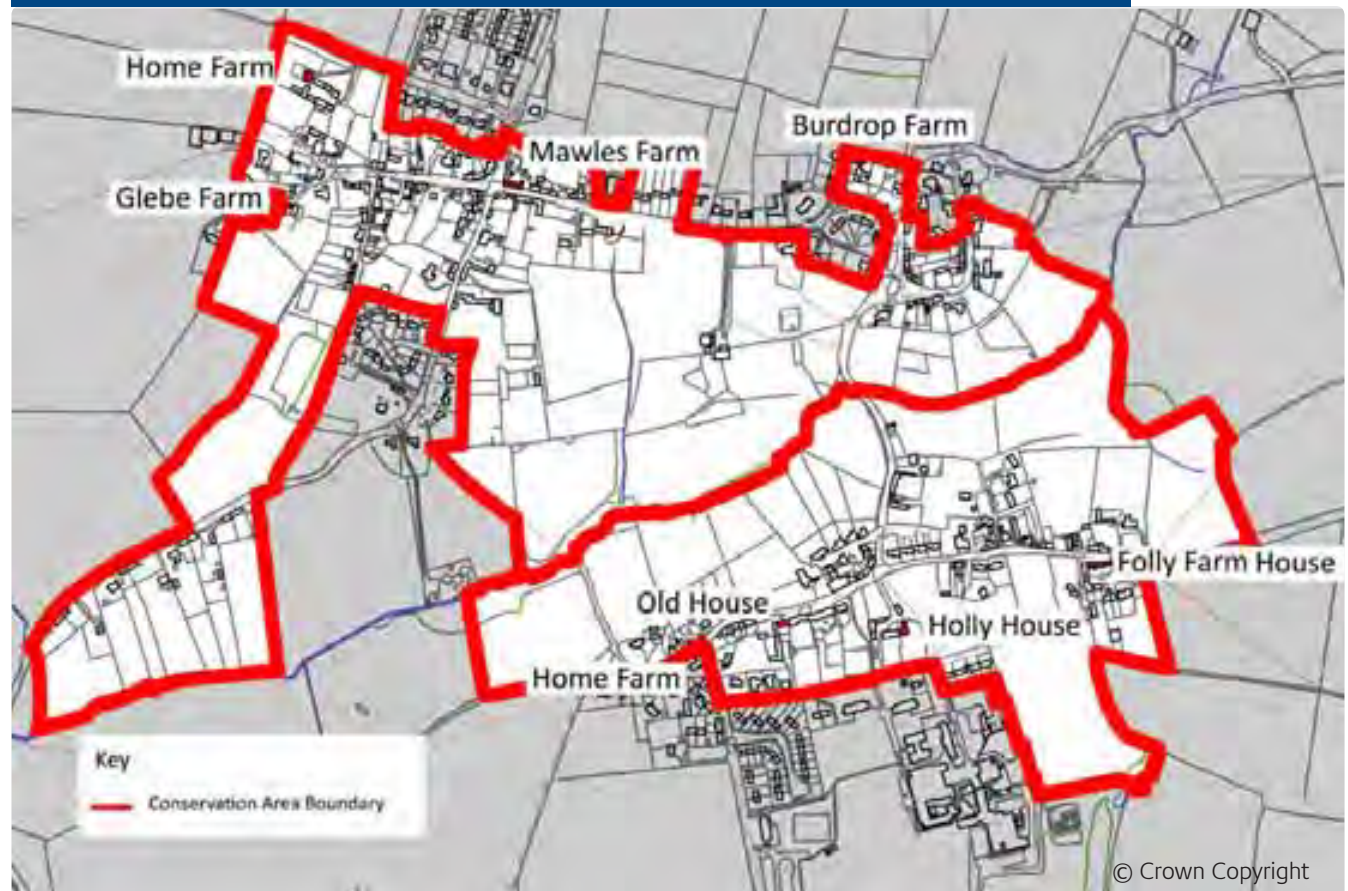
5.7.3 The post-inclosures rate books give us the names of extant farms at the time. The number of farms indicating the importance of agriculture (Town Estate charity archive) : within the village of Sibford Ferris there was Holly House, Home Farm, Old House, Folly Farm House, with

Woodway Farm, Grounds Farm and Tyne Hill Farm on inclosed land. At Sibford Gower the village farms include Glebe Farm, Home Farm, Mawles Farm, Burdrop Farm together with Blenhiem Farm, New Barn Farm, Rye Hill Farm and Handywater Farm on inclosed land.

### 5.8 Intervening Years (1790-1870)

5.8.1 There appears to be limited information on this period, the most notable is the changing of the name of the public house in Sibford Gower from the Kings Arms to Wykeham Arms in 1793.

**Figure 7.** Map showing the locations of the farms identified in the 1877 survey.



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### 5.9 The move from the land (1870 onwards)

5.9.1 The period 1870-1900 saw calamitous decline in British agriculture, due to heavy competition from imported wheat and meat. In 30 years 300,000 labourers left the land, some to work in towns, many to emigrate. Then with the 20th century came more intensive use of agricultural machinery, which further reduced the requirements for man-power. High wages in town factories accelerated the exodus. In 100 years, the populations of the two villages declined by over a third.

5.9.2 The film '24 Square Miles' filmed in 1944 and the associated research report 'Country Planning – a Study of Rural Problems' by the Agricultural Economics Research Institute, Oxford, illustrates graphically the state of economic decline in the countryside. The area investigated extended from Sibford Gower in the NW to Swerford (excluded) in the south and to Hempton in the east (Mander, K. (1944)). The theme of the report is one of chronic rural deprivation, except in Sibford Gower and Sibford Ferris where a long-standing tradition of community involvement, in line with the Quaker ethos, still prevailed.

### 5.10 1877 village survey

5.10.1 In 1877 the vicar of Sibford - Rev Edward Stevens - personally conducted a door to door survey of all households in Sibford Gower, Burdrop and Sibford Ferris. He recorded the gender, age groups and occupation of the head of the household. His findings were tabulated and give us an insight into the social history of the village at that time (<http://thesibfords.org.uk>).

## Village Survey 1877

Occupation	Householder	Additional members of household	Total
<i>Vicar</i>	1	4	5
<i>Surgeon</i>	1	3	4
<i>Lawyer</i>	1	5	6
<i>School Master</i>	2	6	8
<i>Surveyor</i>	1	3	4
<i>Bailiff</i>	1	1	2
<i>Independent</i>	10	16	26
<i>Farmer</i>	19	70	89
<i>Baker</i>	3	6	9
<i>Butcher</i>	2	4	6
<i>Blacksmith</i>	2	3	5
<i>Carpenter</i>	3	6	9
<i>Dairyman</i>	4	4	8
<i>Mason</i>	3	8	11
<i>Miller</i>	1	5	6
<i>Master Plumber</i>	1	2	3
<i>Painter</i>	3	11	14
<i>Tailor</i>	1	1	2
<i>Thatcher</i>	1	2	3

Occupation	Householder	Additional members of household	Total
<i>Shoemaker</i>	3	4	5
<i>Sawyer</i>	2	3	4
<i>Carrier</i>	4	5	6
<i>Machinist</i>	1	6	8
<i>Seamstress</i>	1	3	4
<i>Clock cleaner</i>	1	1	2
<i>Inn Keeper</i>	3	16	26
<i>Beershop</i>	3	70	89
<i>Shopkeeper</i>	3	6	9
<i>Bread seller</i>	1	4	6
<i>Coal seller</i>	1	3	5
<i>Roadman</i>	2	6	9
<i>Molecatcher</i>	1	4	8
<i>Servant</i>	3	8	11
<i>Widow</i>	11	5	6
<i>Separated from Husband</i>	2	2	3
<i>Labourer</i>	61	11	14
<i>Pauper</i>	14	1	2
<i>Lunatic</i>	1	2	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>615</b>

In addition the Quaker School (see Education section below) had 7 staff and 70 pupils.

5.10.2 The social and economic fabric of the Sibfords can be tracked through the published directories of the time. Kelly’s Directory of 1907 tells us of the following trades:

Sibford Gower	Sibford Ferris
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jobmaster</li> <li>• Co-op</li> <li>• Butcher</li> <li>• Plumber &amp; decorator</li> <li>• Collector of taxes</li> <li>• 3 Shop keepers</li> <li>• Boot maker</li> <li>• Machinest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chimney sweep</li> <li>• Carrier</li> <li>• Baker &amp; post office</li> <li>• Shop keeper</li> <li>• Doctor</li> <li>• Miller (based at Temple Mills)</li> <li>• Blacksmith</li> </ul>

But this level and diversity of local trade and employment could not be maintained and over the following 30 years the extent and number of local tradespeople are seen to markedly decline.

5.10.3 Inspection of the Ordnance Survey maps from 1875 to the present (Figures 8, 9,10 & 11) shows that the three settlements have changed remarkably little until the latter part of the 20th century when small housing estates as well as infill housing were built, in some cases, unfortunately, with little reference to the historic settlement pattern of the village, so that new developments tend to be self-referencing rather than integrated into the village layout as a whole.

**5.11 Famous sons**

5.11.1 Frank Lascelles (1875-1934)

5.11.1.1 In 1905 Louis Napoleon Parker produced his pageant, making this form of entertainment more accessible to the general public; in contrast to its earlier role of previous centuries as royal court entertainment. Pageants were dramas in which the place is the hero and its history is the plot, performed by a large casts of amateurs of all classes. This new form of drama captured the popular imagination; they were thought to induce local and national pride and were thus a good way of educating the public.

5.11.1.2 One of the most prolific pageant masters was Frank Lascelles (born in Sibford Gower). Frank was born Frank William Thomas Charles Stevens on 30 July 1875. His father was the Rev. Edward Thomas Stevens, the village’s vicar. Frank attended the village school and read English Literature at Keble College, Oxford University. After Oxford, he worked as an actor in London between 1904 and 1906. It was during this time that he changed his name from Stevens to Lascelles and invented a grand persona for himself that misted over his humble origins – entitling himself ‘Lord of the Manor of Sibford Gower’ and created a new manor house out of an old barn in the village. In 1907 Lascelles staged his first pageant, the highly sucessful Oxford Historical, this despite initial reservations by the University authorities and a student riot. Lascelles was passionately attached to Sibford and his ‘manor’. In September 1915 Frank Lascelles bought the manorial rights from Christ Church, Oxford, the prolific land owner at

the time. The sales documents indicate that 57 acres were freehold, with 29 acres as copy hold, legally defined as a “holding at the will of the lord according to the custom of the manor”, with the tenants stated in the contract being provided with protection. Christ Church sold the remaining 29 acres in 1917, after owning the land since 1657. Lascelles was a prominent and active member of the local community, serving on committees, putting on plays for the villagers in his gardens and also involved with the building of a new village hall.

5.11.2 Godfrey Baseley (1904-1997)

5.11.2.1 Godfrey Baseley counts as an honoury Sibford son, for although he was not born in the villages he did come to Sibford School as a boarder. He became a radio executive, who most famously went on to be the creator of the radio soap opera ‘The Archers’ for the BBC. He spent much time in Sibford during his school years and villagers are pleased to think that this would have had some influence on him.



### 5.12 Education

#### 5.12.1 Sibford Gower village school

5.12.1.1 The Sibford Gower Town Estates Charity was founded in about 1560. The charity began with a bequest of land, the income from which must be divided one-third to the relief of the poor, one-third to “pious and charitable purposes,” and one-third to the school and schoolmaster. The first village schoolroom of which there is definite evidence was built in 1625.

5.12.1.2 The school appears to have had something of a chequered history. In 1818 the feoffees (a feoffee is a trustee) of the town estate built a new cottage for the master. He was expected to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic to all children from Sibford Gower and Burdrop between the ages of 5 and 11; while his wife also taught the girls knitting and sewing. Parents paid no fees, but provided books and writing materials. In 1825 there were 59 children in the school.

5.12.1.3 In 1866 the school room and master’s house was rebuilt, and in 1878 the school was placed under government inspection. In March 1900, a letter was sent to Christ Church College – who were responsible for the building at the time – complaining about the poor accommodation at the school, with a threat of withdrawal of funding by the trustees. By 1903 there was accommodation for 139 children although the average attendance was 81. At this time, children of labourers from Sibford Gower or Burdrop were educated free, whilst tradesmen and farmers and

all families from Sibford Ferris paid between 4d and 6d a week.

5.12.1.4 Emotions seem to have run high regarding the naming of the school and the strong non-conformist element in the parish objected to the classification of the school as Church of England. A view agreed with by the Charity Commissioners.

5.12.1.5 The village school was taken over by the County Council in 1951. Electricity was installed to the school building in 1935 and in 1957, the village sewage system was completed and flush lavatories installed. A new open-plan building was completed in July 1968 to create additional classroom space and children are now taught from these two buildings, with later additional rooms being added.



#### 5.12.2 Sibford School

5.12.2.1 In 1839, a committee representing the Society of Friends in Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire was formed to seek premises for a school, “to afford a plain, useful, guarded, religious and moral education with board, lodging and clothing to children, both male and female.” The house they finally chose was the “Great House,” Sibford Ferris Manor, built by Thomas Walford in 1666. At the rear were barns and a farmyard.

5.12.2.2 From the start in 1842, the school was intended to educate the poor, with household and farm work combined with a religious education in line with the Puritan lifestyle of the founders. More recently it has become a pioneer in understanding dyslexia, but is still run in accordance with Quaker values, which seek to recognise ‘that of God in everyone’. The school plays a large and significant part in community life. It is a significant employer in the area and has actively promoted school/community links by making the school facilities available for community use. The presence of children also adds vitality to the community.

5.12.2.3 In 2001 the school sold the Sibford Manor house and the associated grounds for conversion to apartments and development of the land for houses. The school has now relocated to land south of the main road and is now truly located at the top of the hill.

Figure 8. O.S. map 1:2500 (1875-1887)

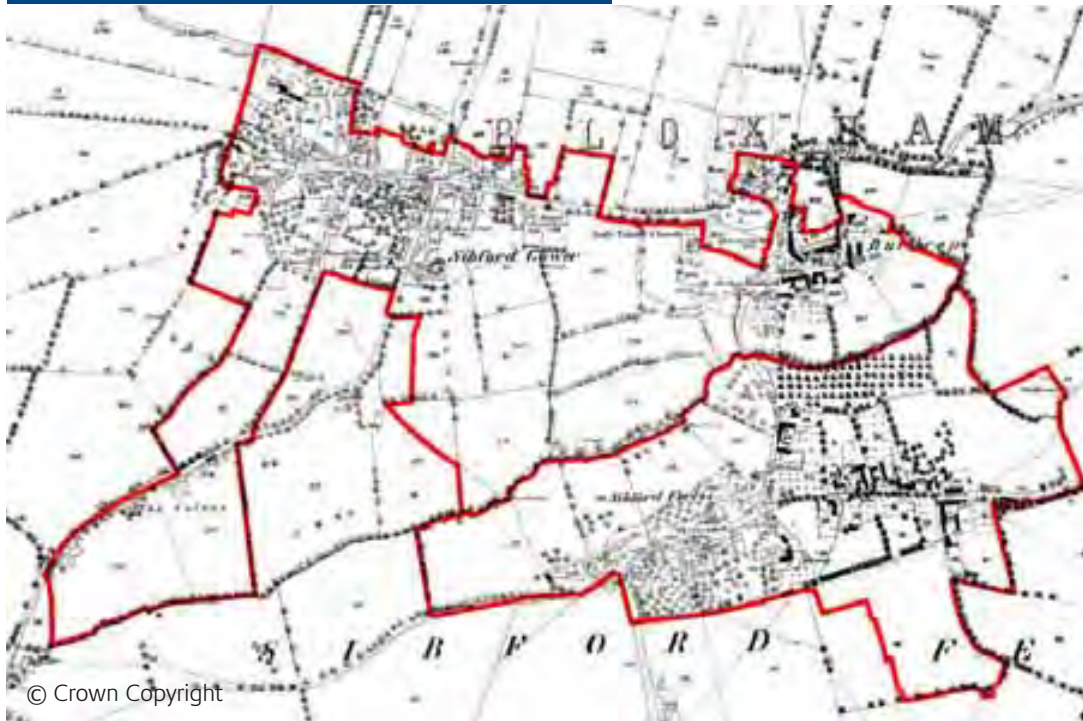
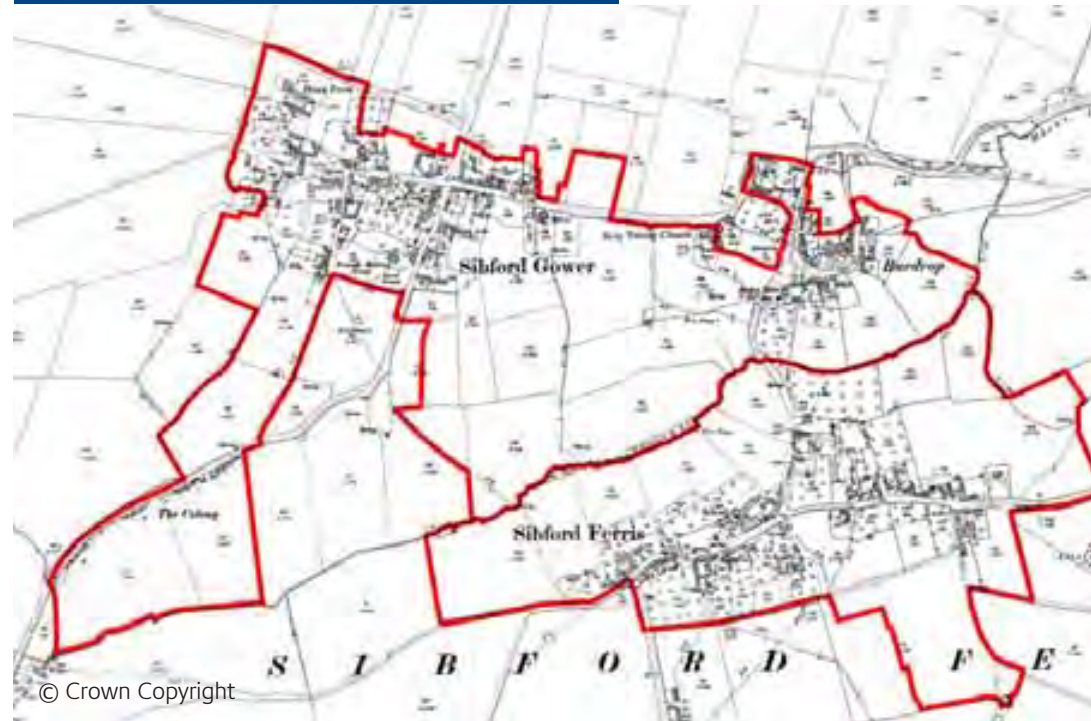
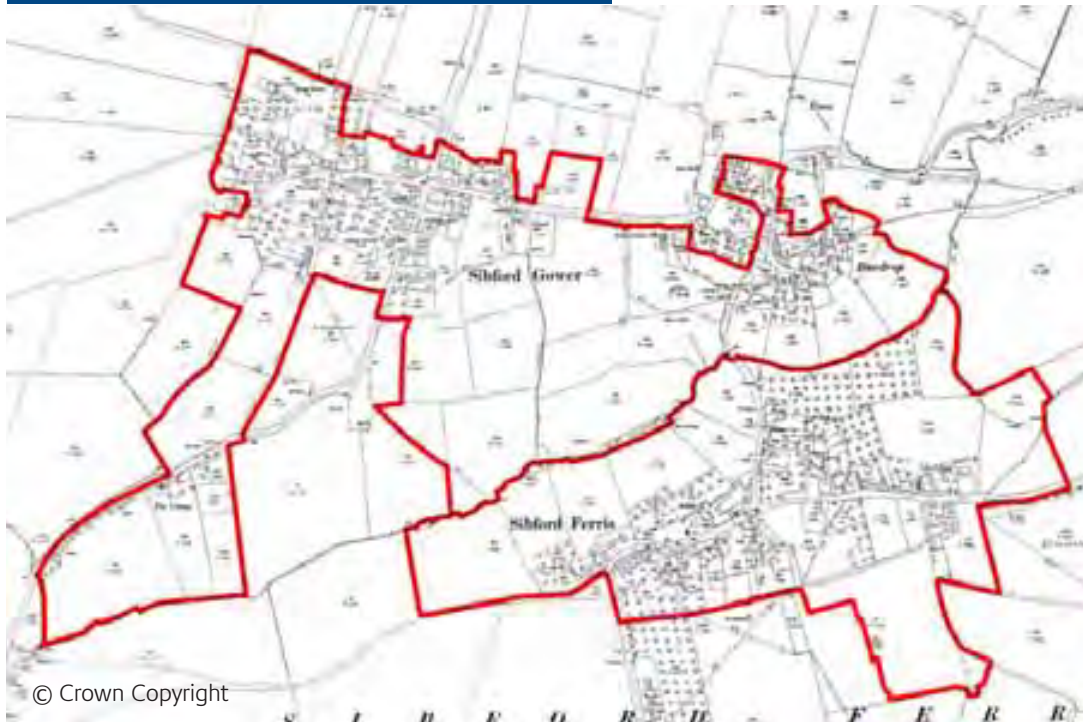


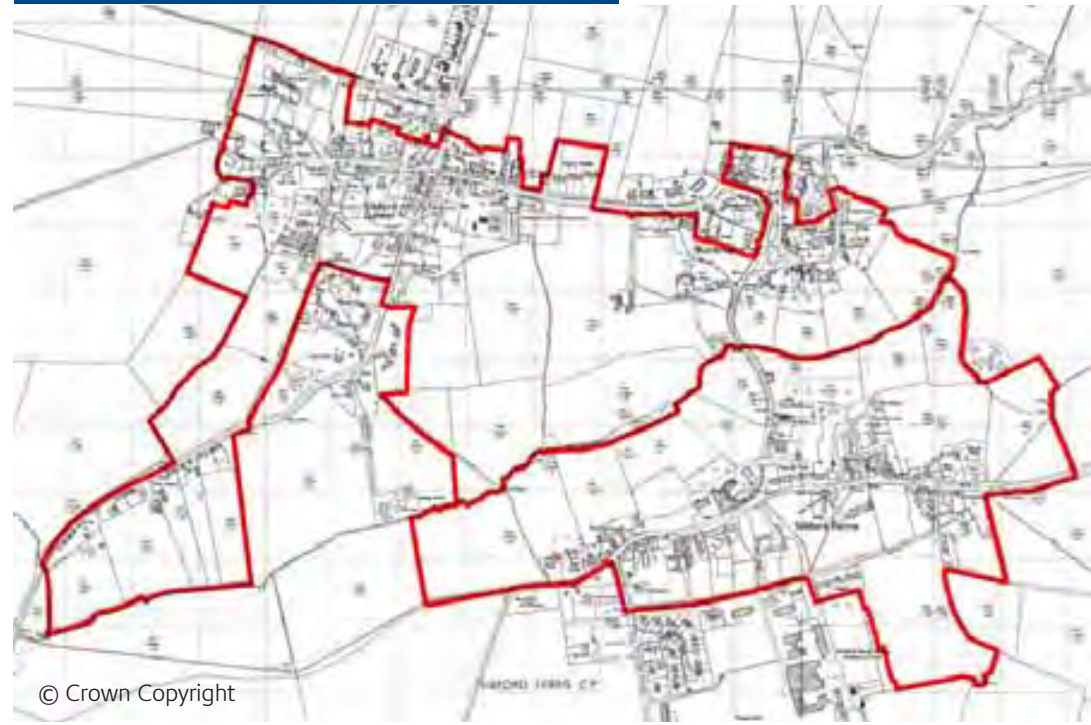
Figure 9. O.S. map 1:2500 (1899-1905)



**Figure 10.** O.S. map 1:250 0 (1913-1923)



**Figure 11.** O.S. map 1:2500 (1971-1974)



# 6. Architectural History

## 6. Architectural History

6.1 It is the underlying geology which gives rise to both the topography and the principal building material of the area. The Ironstone imparts a particular colour and characteristic to the settlements of the Ironstone Hills. Ironstone is a 'soft' building material and thus the architectural decoration is kept simple; drip moulds, mullions and moulded kneeler being the most common expression of status within the Sibford settlements.

6.2 Like many villages in the Ironstone Hills, the Sibfords are noticeable for the homogeneity of the palette of construction materials. The use of the distinctive local stone for construction and boundary walls is almost universal in the traditional buildings of the 17th and 18th centuries. Local red brick (and local stone although as a lower status material) is also to be found in the construction of houses of the 19th century to the advent of the 20th century.

6.3 The buildings are for the most part rectilinear in form; the majority with the ridge line parallel to the highway. That said, there are a small number of buildings where the gable of the main house presents to the highway and the elevation fronts to a yard or access lane. Examples of such an arrangement are Holly Tree House (if the 20th century front extension is ignored) and The Forge in Sibford Ferris and Vine Cottage and Glebe Farm House in Sibford Gower.



**Sibford Gower**

- Glebe Farm House & ancillary buildings

6.4 Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop all display good examples of vernacular Ironstone buildings. Like many villages in the area, the Sibford villages have developed over time. A growth in the 17th century due to the wool trade is reflected in the prevalence of 17th century vernacular buildings; some of which are much as they were built, others have been modified and up-dated as needs have changed.

6.5 The Colony was built by John Enock (1796-1855), a local Quaker, between 1839 and 1851 as a series of smallholdings, presumably to meet a social need in the area. Called Enock's Colony in the 1881 Census, it is now shown on OS maps as just The Colony. The eight dwellings are constructed as semi-detached pairs, in simple vernacular style (<http://thesibfords.org.uk/sibipedia/enocks-colony>).

6.6 Polite architectural buildings are to be found mostly among the late 19th century villas and gentlemen's residences and some earlier buildings that have been refronted in red brick with imposed symmetry. There are a small number of ironstone ashlar houses from the 18th century, but it is the Manor at Sibford Ferris, originally built in the 17th century but refronted, refenestrated and the interior reordered a century later, that is the epitome of polite Georgian architecture within the Sibfords.

6.7 The characteristic architecture of the villages is represented by the Grade II buildings. These include:

### Sibford Ferris

- Little London



- Rufus Cottage, Clematis Cottage, Ferris Cottage & The Cottage



- The Old House



- Sunny Bank



### Sibford Gower

- Pond Cottage



- Yew Tree House & dovecote



### Burdrop

- Goodmayes



- Burdrop House



- Jesamine Cottage



6.8 Unlisted buildings also make a positive contribution, and are listed in section 12.

### 6.9 Similarities in architectural detail

6.9.1 There are marked underlying similarities between the three settlements in terms of their built heritage.

6.9.2 There is noticeable homogeneity of construction materials in the older buildings; in the construction of 17th and 18th century buildings use of ironstone for elevations and boundary walls is pretty much universal.

6.9.3 Thatch almost certainly dominated the district before the coming of the Oxford Canal, when long-distance transport links for the first time allowed the wider distribution of such building materials as Welsh slate. The retention of so many thatched roofs is noteworthy; however, concrete tiles predominate in the replacement of thatch. Welsh slate is also predominant on 19th and early 20th century buildings. Roof lines are simple and there is a general absence of roof dormers on all but the later 20th century buildings.

6.9.4 The majority of buildings being vernacular in style, there is a preponderance of 2 and 3-light timber casement windows. But vertical-sliding box sash casement are to be found where buildings have been refronted, or are of later construction date.

6.9.5 Stone walls are a ubiquitous and defining feature of the locality. In Sibford Ferris where the ground is steeper they are more visually and physically prevalent. But despite the more open streetscapes in Burdrop and Sibford Gower, stone walls play an equally defining role in these villages too.

### 6.10 Atypical buildings within the Sibford villages

6.10.1 There are three listed dwelling houses and a listed church which are atypical within the settlements, but noteworthy nevertheless:

- The Manor in Sibford Gower



Sibford Gower has the unique mixture of architecture. This is singularly represented in the architecture of The Manor in Sibford Gower, which has been described by Pevesner as 'a huge rambling house...remodelled in the c1915 in a riotous nightmare of the picturesque, thatched and wildly irregular with a stone tower and brick flying buttresses'. At the time these works were undertaken the property was owned by actor and pageant master Frank Lascelles (1875 - 1934), a self-styled Lord of the Manor, who created the Manor House from a barn and a number of cottages.

- The Manor House at Sibford Ferris



Manor House, constructed originally in 1666 by Thomas Walford, sits at the centre of the village. The building's magnificence is the result of 18th and 19th century modifications; so whilst the impressive ironstone ashlar façade and tall sash windows are the epitome of Georgian town architecture, they are not typical of the 17th and 18th century vernacular architecture which is so redolent of the area.

- Home Close, Sibford Ferris



Home Close was designed in 1911 by the architect M.H. Baillie Scott in The Arts and Crafts style. The property is another polite building that sits outside the repertoire of vernacular architecture so grounded in the Ironstone Hills of north Oxfordshire. The impact and importance of the building is outshone by the Manor House opposite and, as such, comes across as a building with ostentation, as the façade appears 'fiddly' in relation to its 17th century neighbours. Pevesner does not have an opinion on Home Close, merely describing it as '...in traditional Cotswold style. Long and low, of two storeys, with three small asymmetrically placed gables and mullioned windows.'

- Holy Trinity Church, Burdrop



The Holy Trinity Church was designed by Henry Jones Underwood (1804-1852), an Oxford based architect who designed mainly churches such as St Giles, Horspath and St Pauls, Oxford, but also the Botanic Gardens and Oxford library. Pevesner described this building as having 'a remarkably simple and powerful design'. It does stand alone in its architectural style and character on the edge of the hamlet of Burdrop. This isolation of style and location does, to some extent, suggest the church as an 'after-thought' building because unlike the medieval church buildings of other settlements it is not integrated into the heart of the settlement pattern.

## 7. The character and appearance of Sibford Ferris

### 7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Sibford Ferris is a small linear settlement that hugs the south side of the steep-sided and intimate Sibford valley. The village comprises four groups of buildings but the buildings within the Conservation Area all contribute to a single 'village street' character area (Figure 12). The four groups of buildings are:

- The main village street with its mix of village farmsteads, polite gentleman's residences/ villas, traditional houses and cottages (plus traditional ancillary buildings), and limited modern infill, that fronts the road and the succession of short access lanes dispersed along it. Main Street runs along the 170-180m contour (west to east) on the valley side;
- Sibford Manor – standing sentinel at the centre of the village.

And outside the conservation area:

- Sibford School – sitting within its own grounds up on the valley-top to the south of the village Main Street; and
- The modern estate-style housing to the south of the historic Main Street, self-referencing, a mixture of materials, set back within their own plots.

### 7.2 Land use

7.2.1 The great majority of buildings within Sibford Ferris are residential properties; the exceptions are the small village shop, a 20th century addition tacked onto the west end of the row of 17th century cottages at the eastern end of Main Street; and the Sibford School sited with its eclectic mix of educational, residential and sports-related buildings, for the most part outside the traditional settlement, south of Main Street above the village. Three of the farms with yards within the village (The Old House, Home Farm and Folly Farm) are no longer working farms; they and many of the ancillary agricultural buildings are now converted to dwellings. But all the same still stand as reminders of the agricultural activity that once underpinned the existence of the settlement.



### 7.3 Street pattern

7.3.1 Main Street forms both the main eastern and western entrances into the village. From the east, Main Street is a succession of sequential views which run the length and gradient of the hill through the village; the climb is sufficient to make the casual cyclist, pause to re-catch their breath and glimpse snatched views across the valley to the north and north-west. Access to the backs of plots is via access-only lanes which occur regularly along the length of the settlement. At the western end of the village, Main Street becomes a bridleway, whilst the vehicular road strikes south for Hook Norton. To the south of Main Street is Back Lane, rural in appearance for the lack of pavements and abundance of trees and plants, which gives access to both some of the modern estate housing and the school site. The access to the Sibford School site from Main Street is via a drive planted with a imposing avenue of trees.

7.3.2 The figure ground plan shows clearly that development within the three settlements and The Colony, has been defined by the roadways, in as much as the majority of the traditional buildings (i.e. not the 19th century villas, nor the 20th century infill) front directly onto the highway. In Sibford Ferris the walls form an extremely important part of the streetscape and the nodes in the settlement are discretely focused around the traditional farms within the village. Geology and topography seem more of a determinant for building location within Burdrop. Sibford Gower, being a larger settlement, has a higher building density and in many respects has a traditional ironstone wolds village layout.



## 7.4 Building age, type and style

7.4.1 Sibford Ferris is unusual in that it can boast no church or chapel. The most imposing building instead of a chapel is the Manor House, constructed originally in 1666 by Thomas

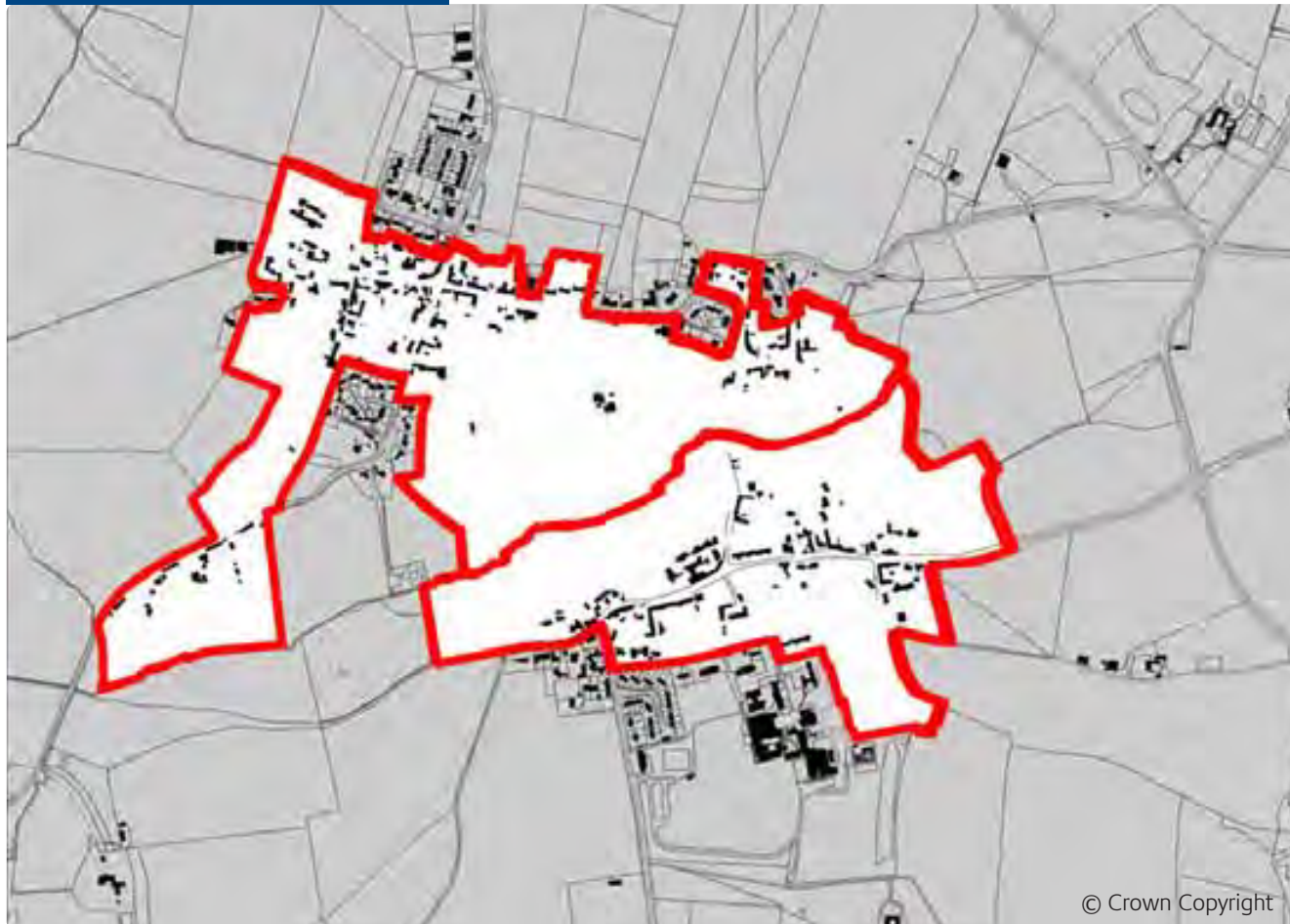
Walford, and modified in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was bought in 1797 by Joseph Harris, a Quaker, who sold it to the Society of Friends in 1842 for ‘the purposes of a school.’ The building sits at the centre of the village looking inward towards the heart of the

settlement and towards the new site of Sibford School, rather than outward across the valley to Burdrop and Sibford Gower. The impressive ironstone ashlar façade and tall sash windows date from the 18th century. The ancillary buildings on the road front date from the 19th century. The house was sold in 2001 for redevelopment into apartments. The newly built houses to the rear of the manor and the access road, Walford Road - which was named after the original builder - date from the 21st century.

7.4.2 The traditional properties, dating from the 17th to the 19th centuries, are a loosely knit mix of farmsteads, polite and vernacular housing and cottages. A number of the buildings are detached but equally dwellings have been constructed to form closely integrated terraces of cottages.

7.4.3 By comparing the modern plan of the village with a map of 1875, it can be seen that very few changes have occurred and infill has been limited, thereby helping to preserve the village appearance and character (Figures 8 and 11). 20th century development within the village has been confined to small groups of estate-style housing mostly to the south of the historic settlement. These are for the most part outside the conservation area due to the very different and non-traditional nature and character of these developments.

**Figure 12.** Figure ground plan



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### 7.5 Scale and massing

7.5.1 The properties within the settlement are an amalgam of ironstone vernacular houses and cottages, larger polite residences, and some modern housing. With the exception of the Manor House and a small number of one-and-a-half storey stone cottages and converted ancillary buildings, the great majority of the buildings within the settlement are two or two-and-a-half storeys in height. The larger houses tend to be either the traditional older stone houses or late 19th/ early 20th century, red brick or render, gentlemen's residences. The latter, located behind front boundary walls within their own grounds, are set back from the main village street and therefore do not dominate the streetscape in the same way as the older stone-built dwellings do. The 20th century infill includes some mid-century council housing as well as more recent pavilion-style housing, which apart from the use of ironstone in their construction have little that relates to the form of the more traditional dwellings.

7.5.2 The Sibford Manor House is a building without equal in the village. The building sits on the north side of the main street at the physical centre of the township. The impressive 18th century ashlar front commands respect with its size and polite architectural detail, dominating the streetscape at this point. The 19th century ancillary buildings fronting the street on the corner to the east and the impressive traditional garden wall on the western flank serve to enhance this dominance by drawing the observer's eye to the main façade of the house itself. Even Home Close opposite (constructed in 1911 in Arts and Crafts style, designed by M.H. Bailey-Scott) appears lack-lustre in the shadow of the manor building.

### 7.6 Construction and materials

7.6.1 Sibford Ferris demonstrates a relatively homogeneous use of traditional local ironstone and local 19th century red (Lias) brick in the construction of the pre-20th century building population, when compared with the more eclectic mix of building types and styles that are found in Sibford Gower and Burdrop which have a higher percentage of 20th century infill dwellings. The vast majority of the buildings are built close to or at the front of their plots. Where this is not the case stone walls almost invariably line the front of the plot. Walls and building elevations feature large in the streetscape. The strong building line giving rise to a strong sense of enclosure. As a general rule the traditional buildings are rectilinear in form with rear ranges, square gables and a ridgeline co-linear to the frontage.

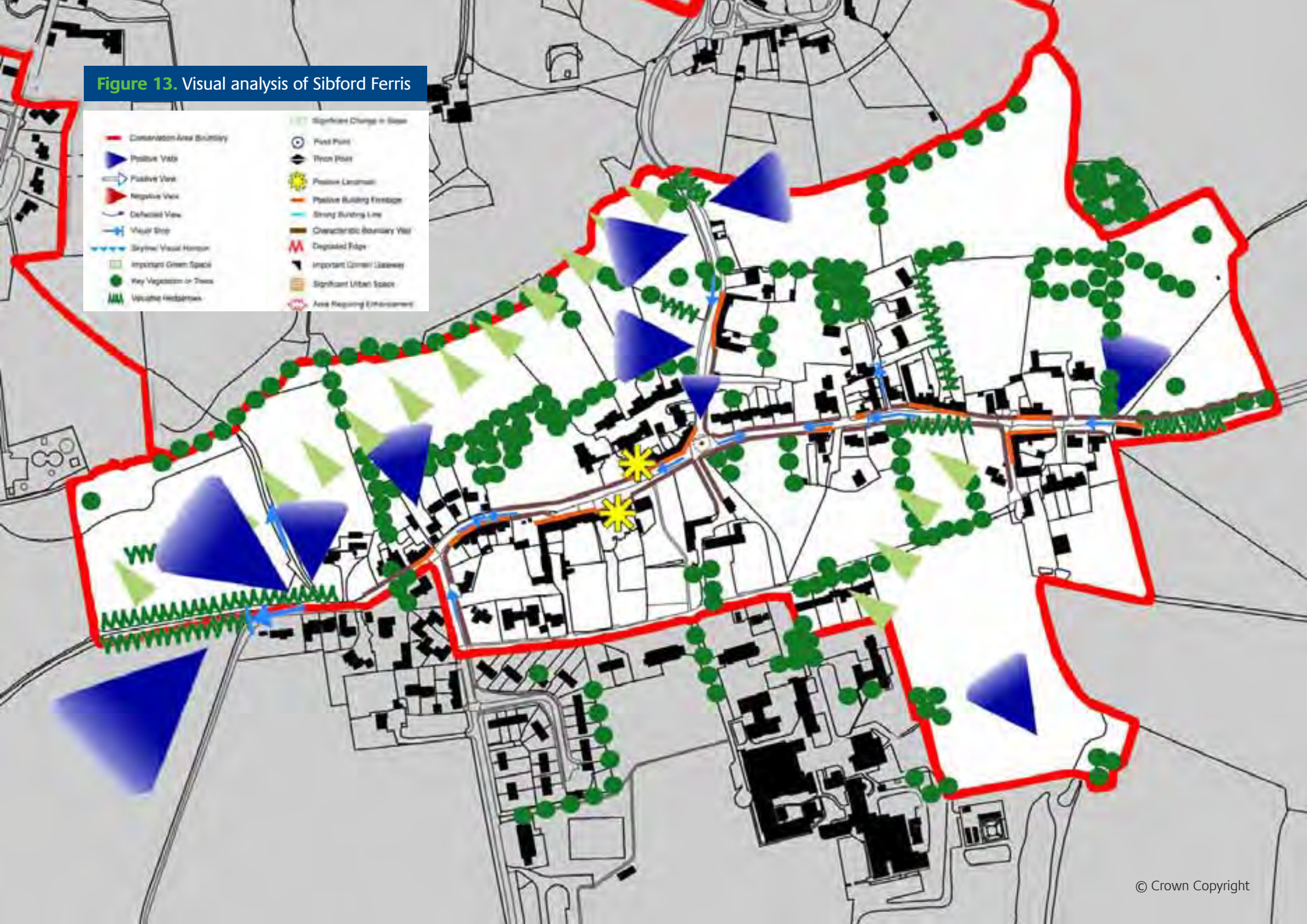
7.6.2 For the most part roofs are steeply pitched showing that originally many of the properties would have been thatched. Thatch has now given way to modern roofing materials with only a few properties retaining their thatch covering. The replacement of the traditional roofing has given rise to the use of concrete tiles. Welsh slates and, in the case of Home Close, stone tiles have also been used.

7.6.3 In line with the vernacular nature of most of the buildings, windows are mainly timber casements, some with leaded inserts. Vertically sliding box sash windows are found together with polite architectural detailing on buildings such as Sibford Manor. They are also to be found

on a number of 19th century dwellings (such as West Town House, Malvern House and Haven Cottage). As always there are also examples of inappropriate modern replacement windows (Mulberry House). Home Close has stone mullions consistent with the design concept of the building. Other properties (such as The Forge) may have one or more stone mullion casements, although in the case of The Forge the upper storey windows have been disrupted to accommodate modern replacement casements.



Figure 13. Visual analysis of Sibford Ferris



### 7.7 Means of enclosure

7.7.1 Prominent ironstone walls are an extremely important and significant feature within the settlement and, together with the buildings that front directly onto the road, define the visual character of the streetscape. The visual significance and strong sense of enclosure due to the terracing effect of the walls and building arises from the steepness of the valley side and the need to retain soil from the higher slopes. Buildings located within their own grounds such as Sunnybank, Holmby House and West Town House are well screened by a combination of front wall and tree/vegetation cover. In a number of locations stone walls to the roadside have been poorly maintained (the valley road between Burdrop and Sibford Ferris). This can unfortunately detract from the visual contribution they make to the streetscape and landscape in general. Elsewhere the field system is defined by a combination of dilapidated dry stone walls and hedging, although in some places the walling that might have been there once has now been replaced by hedging alone (bridleway boundary west of West Town House).

### 7.8 Trees, hedges, verges, open spaces

7.8.1 Sibford Ferris is full of vegetation; it shrouds most of the buildings when viewed from the other side of the valley and makes the extent of the village hard to discern.

7.8.2 The tall overhanging vegetation beside the Main Street is a key feature; the trees and vegetation both soften the edges and impact of the stone walls whilst at the same time providing greater depth and density of cover thereby increasing the sense of enclosure.

7.8.3 The tree and vegetation cover also contribute strongly to the sense of 'ruralness' within the settlement. This is particularly noticeable on Back Lane where there is a sense almost of being in the countryside rather than within the village confines.

7.8.4 Trees are at their demonstratively most impressive when they are used to create avenues. The access to the new Sibford School site is immeasurably enhanced visually by its tree-lined appearance which gives the school a true sense of presence.

### 7.9 Carriageway, pavements, footpaths

7.9.1 The main thoroughfare is tarmacadam; there are no pavements which is both visually aesthetic and retains that 'rural' feel to the village. The presence of Sibford School benefits the bus service to the village, but traffic congestion is kept to a manageable level by the relocation of the school entrance towards the outskirts of the village



**7.10 Features of special interest**

- West Town House



- The Ark and the flat at the Ark Sibford School



- Old Court House



- Home Farmhouse



- Malvern House



- Folly Farmhouse



• Holmby House



7.10.1 In addition to the designated heritage assets (listed buildings) the above buildings are all undesignated buildings.

7.10.2 The red post box outside Maria's House and the footpath steps on the lane to Burdrop and at the north-west edge of the school site are pleasing rural features.

**7.11 Threats**

7.11.1 Loss of stone walls especially, but not exclusively, those defining field boundaries.

7.11.2 The use of modern window materials and styles, including uPVC, has slowly crept in, and should be discouraged to retain the rural character of the village.

7.11.3 The shop is a positive asset to the village kept afloat by the patronage of the children; loss of local community facilities would be regrettable.



## 8. Character Area – The Sib Valley

### 8. The character and appearance of The Sib Valley

#### 8.1 The Sib Valley

8.1.1 The villages face each other across the valley of the Sib Brook. The watercourse is fed by springs and, unusually, drains west to the River Stour. The steep incised valley cutting through the upland plateau typifies the Ironstone Downs landscape character. The valley runs east west at this point and the villages sit on the north and south facing slopes at the top of the valley sides, with open farmland between.

8.1.2 The landscape is characterised by mixed farming, large scale intensive arable on the plateau and small scale grazing on the valley sides. Traditionally this would have been of sheep, but cattle have also been introduced. Most, but not all, farms within the villages have been converted to residential use and the farming activity in the valley is now centred on Wheathills Farm south of Acre Ditch, where new farm buildings were established in the mid 20th century.

8.1.3 The valley has a strong pattern of mixed thorn hedgerows containing hedgerow trees such as oak, ash, sycamore and occasionally beech. Stone walls are also used to divide fields, but are falling into disrepair and being replaced by fencing. The watercourse is distinctly marked by vegetation, and the roads are enclosed by hedgerows but there are very few extensive areas of woodland. There is evidence of disturbed ground suggesting quarrying activity or local brick



kilns, although no built structures remain.

8.1.4 Further west the boundaries of the smallholdings at The Colony subdivide the valley where it opens out and is joined by a water course from the north.

In this area the roads generally run along the higher ground and rarely run along the valley. Main Street in Sibford Ferris and Acre Ditch in Sibford Gower follow the contours near the top



of the valley sides and the historic core of these settlements follow these linear routes. Unusually neither village has the spire of a parish church as a focal point and so the settlements are not prominent despite their high locations. The planting associated with them has integrated the villages into the landscape, and the location of the villages is indicated as much by the non indigenous evergreen tree species as by built form. Burdrip feels more exposed, clustered on



a promontory, where the terraced curtilages near the former Bishop Blaize PH intrude into the view across of the valley. Both the grander historic buildings and the majority of the more recent development within the villages were positioned to enjoy a southerly aspect and the attractive views, but some of the 20th century development, particularly along Acre Ditch and Shepherds Close in Burdrop, has yet to integrate.

8.1.5 Essentially, though, the valley remains undeveloped, a rural scene little affected by modern agricultural practice, with only the Wheathill Farm barns and the service supply poles and lines being reminders of current technologies. The lack of development in the valley emphasises the separateness of the three settlements, whereas the ribbon development along Acre Ditch started coalescence between Sibford Gower and Burdrop, which should be further resisted. The small barn near the valley floor north of Hill House is just about the only structure near the valley floor and in a recent appeal decision the Inspector noted its picturesque qualities.



8.1.6 The valley is an integral part of the conservation areas and is included within the boundary as it has a significance in its own right and not just as a setting for the settlements.

### 8.2 Street pattern

8.2.1 The three settlements are joined by the lane that wends north across the valley from Sibford Ferris to Burdrop. The lane, known as 'Main Street' at the Sibford Ferris end (and 'Hawkes Lane' at the Burdrop end), once forded the stream at the valley bottom. At the Sibford end of the road, 17th, 18th and 19th century houses and outbuildings loosely gather on the eastern side of the lane, whilst the Manor and its grounds sit to the west, but the valley itself remains undeveloped.

### 8.3 Threats

8.3.1 At present, the three settlements of Sibford Ferris, Burdrop and Sibford Gower appear distinct, although the infill housing along the ridge between Burdrop and Sibford Gower has begun to blur this distinction. The openness of the valley has not as yet been compromised and in the interest of maintaining the character and appearance of the valley, housing infill and 'settlement boundary creep' should be resisted. This factor was, indeed, picked up in the conversion of the barn at Hill House, where the picturesque dilapidation of the barn was identified as a quality that contributed to the inherent visual aesthetic of the Sib valley.



# 9. Character Area – Sibford Gower & Burdrop

## 9. The character and appearance of Sibford Gower and Burdrop

### 9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 This side of the valley, much like Sibford Ferris on the other valley side, still retains the atmosphere of a quiet rural village backwater.

### 9.2 Burdrop

9.2.1 The small hamlet of Burdrop sits on the north side of the valley, at the junction of the road to Sibford Gower and the road across the valley ('The Sibford Gap') to Sibford Ferris. The settlement is composed of clusters of historic properties perched on a small south facing out crop and some 20th century infill.

### 9.3 Land Use

9.3.1 Although Burdrop is now composed almost entirely of residential properties, with the exception of Sibford Surgery, historically it is said that there was a wool market on Burdrop Green in front of the former Bishop Blaize Public House. Shepherds Knoll nearby was formerly a barn c1650 used for the storing of fleeces en route to market. Traditionally a farming community, there are no remaining operational farms, but the farmhouses and ancillary buildings remain; Burdrop Farm, located north of Acre Ditch, Park Farm adjacent to Holy Trinity Church, and Home Farm, to the west of the hamlet. The farm

buildings and barns are now mostly converted to residential use.

9.3.2 Burdrop also plays host to Holy Trinity Church. But surprisingly the building is technically outside the settlement because of its location just west of the hamlet boundary. This is also the case for the village hall, which is considered part of Sibford Gower although physically associated with Burdrop.



9.3.3 The current map shows that the historic loci within Burdrop have coalesced into a single settlement by modern infill housing. In some locations twentieth century development has entailed the loss of such traditional and locally significant features as apple orchards. This, lamentably, is also the case in the other Sibford villages.

### 9.4 Street Pattern

9.4.1 A total of 7 historic routes converge on Burdrop; however, only three have developed into highways with the others remaining as field paths. Thus the settlement is clustered around the junction of Hawkes Lane, which leads east to join the B4035 to Banbury; Acre Ditch, which leads west along the contours of the valley to Sibford Gower; and Main Street which leads south across the valley to Sibford Ferris. The topography of the valley results in impressive medium and long distance views when travelling along both Main Street and Acre Ditch, made the more impressive by the lack of dwellings to the south that might otherwise clutter the view.



9.4.2 Early maps show two separate clusters of buildings within the hamlet; one very coherent group fronting a small green at the junction of Main Street and an unnamed track which extends back to Hawkes Lane in a U shape and a second cluster around Burdrop Farm. The many routes within Burdrop have allowed substantial later infilling.

9.4.3 Unlike medieval churches, which were traditionally constructed on high ground in the centre of the settlement, Holy Trinity Church was constructed in 1840, when the settlement was already established. The alignment of the church building is traditional, whilst the location selected is a dramatic one, originally isolated on the south side of the road with significant churchyard views out across the valley. Modern housing in-fill has ameliorated the isolated location and mature evergreens integrate it into the street scene.

9.4.4 Small alleyways and footpaths run between stone retaining walls constructed to build up the land and level the ground for buildings and small garden plots. These retaining walls provide a form of partly hidden and concealed terracing within Burdrop to cope with the topography.



### 9.5 Building Age, Type and Style

9.5.1 Burdrop was never a manorial settlement and so there are no grand houses.

9.5.2 The older traditional stone buildings date from the latter part of the 17th century to mid-18th century and are constructed in coursed ironstone rubble. That said, Burdrop House and Burdrop Green both have squared coursed rubble on the front elevation. Architectural stone details are confined to stone coped gables with moulded kneelers and in the case of Burdrop House and Nicholas Corner House stone mullions windows, although there is evidence of the stone mullions having been removed from other buildings. Elsewhere on other properties windows with wooden mullions and casement windows under wooden lintels are to be found.

9.5.3 Roofs tend to be steeply pitched, except where there has been 19th century replacement (Burdrop House), and this together with the stone coped gables indicates strongly that thatch was the prevailing roofing material at the time of construction. These days the thatch on many buildings has been replaced by nondescript concrete tiles which 'do the job', without any of the inherent local distinctiveness.

9.5.4. Throughout Burdrop the architectural style of the older buildings is best described as 'vernacular': limited decoration with simple, unadorned elevations. Frontages for the most part are symmetrical or pseudo-symmetrical. Within Burdrop older dwellings tend to be humble, reflecting their likely origin as workers' cottages. In several cases these small dwellings

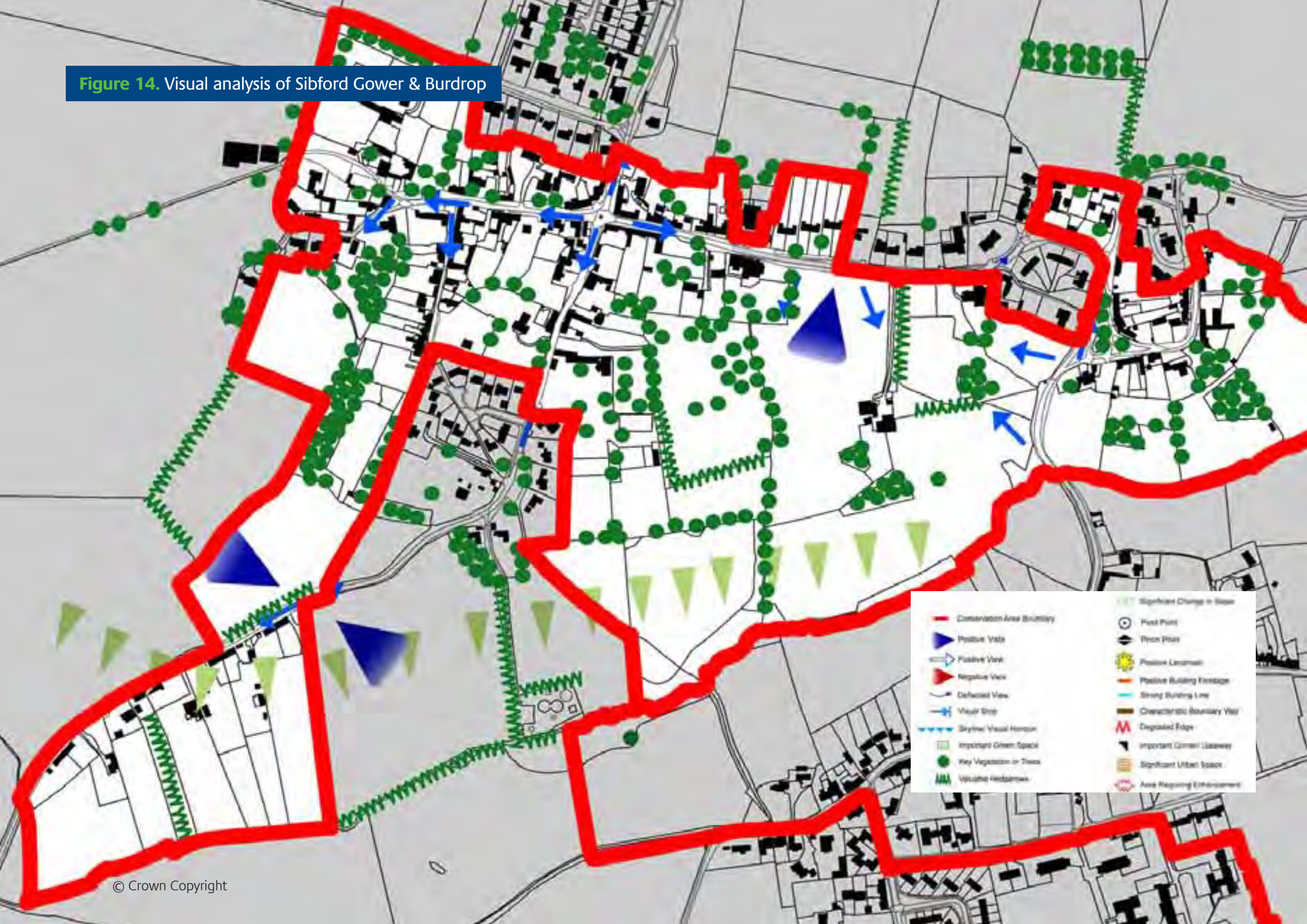
have been amalgamated with their neighbours to form larger family homes.

9.5.5 The advent of pattern books in the late 18th century, introduced a more polite style of architecture. These books introduced to rural areas new designs previously only seen in cities, with larger sash windows and symmetrical elevations and gradually replaced vernacular styles and these can particularly be seen in the alterations undertaken to Nicholas Corner House.



9.5.6 By the mid 19th century local brick production introduced a cheaper and easier to use building material to the district. Thus 19th century buildings may be identified not only by their sash windows but more particularly by the predominant use of local red bricks, which, like the ironstone, lend a warm and harmonious hue to the buildings. Brayes Close is an excellent example of this combination of brick and windows, providing level of light within a dwelling not possible when constructing traditionally in stone. Other examples such as the aptly named Red House, were constructed in red brick, whilst Little House, demonstrates

Figure 14. Visual analysis of Sibford Gower & Burdrop



the enthusiasm for modifying existing building (an early form of façadism) with the latest technologies and styles of the time. In this respect, the delightful mix of architectural styles is similar to Sibford Gower.

9.5.7 Holy Trinity Church is designed with strong Victorian details, with string course, but on a medieval floor plan. The Church has quite an impact, contrasting both in size and architectural detail with the modern, low lying village hall.

9.5.8 The dwellings constructed in the earlier parts of the 20th century, such as the former council housing, break with the vernacular tradition of using local materials. These houses with their consistent use of imported 'modern estate' style architecture and a blatant disregard for local materials, created their own pocket of character. Latterly the importance of 'local distinctiveness' and using local materials has come to be appreciated. But the consistent use of estate style architecture, out of keeping with the organic development of the historic part of the settlement, has led to these parts of Burdrop being excluded from the conservation area.

9.5.9 The underlying agricultural character of Burdrop, composed of unassuming vernacular farm dwellings and farm buildings still to some extent shines through, despite later infilling, and remains very much the character of the settlement with less overt gentrification than experienced in other villages.

### 9.6 Scale and Massing

9.6.1 The vernacular cottages are small, restricted in scale by the limitations of the building technologies of the 17th and 18th centuries. They were generally of simple unit plan, two storeys with the upper floor partly accommodated within the roof. Some dwellings had two rooms at ground floor with a central passage. Many of these simple cottages have been extended or knocked together to form a larger dwelling, but changes have had limited impact on the external appearance or overall scale and massing.



9.6.2 A majority of the properties are either one and a half, such as Shepherds Knoll, or 2 storey properties, with the notable exception of Burdrop Farm House, which is 3 storey building, but which uses the natural topography to minimise impact whilst maximising the views. The dwellings are grouped together in small terraces of 3-4 houses, or are now single dwellings with equivalent proportions to the terraces.

9.6.3 Most buildings settle and ease themselves into the landscape, without any one dwelling being particularly prominent. The Church, however, is deliberately located in a prominent location with views across the valley. In contrast, the village hall is a single storey building, which almost appears to apologise for itself by being tucked away at the rear of the car park and sitting low within a dip in the land.

9.6.4 The new properties outside the conservation area blend with the setting using the topography and sit behind the old low stone walls, allowing them not to distract from the character but provide a neutral impact by retaining the rural feel of the hamlet.



### 9.7 Construction and materials

9.7.1 The major vernacular construction material, like Sibford Ferris, is the local ironstone for the 17th and 18th century properties, with the local red (Lias clay) brick for later buildings, and also for extensions and alterations to properties within the conservation area. A few buildings, such as Cubbs, have been finished with a render to either protect poor quality construction or materials or to 'modernise' the property.



9.7.2 Together with Sibford Gower, the hamlet has a wider selection of materials than Sibford Ferris, with a majority of the older properties having two or more materials due to being altered, extended and repaired over time. This gives an eclectic mix of materials that works harmoniously across the village and continues through to parts of Sibford Gower. Local ironstone is particularly soft and, where localised repairs and improvements have been

completed, some non-traditional repairs have been undertaken with a 'make good and mend' attitude using whatever materials were to hand, evident on many of the former farm buildings. This saw stone buildings repaired with brick, and is indicative of vernacular buildings. This contributes to significance of character, albeit it runs counter to contemporary conservation practice.

9.7.3 The later buildings outside the conservation area are mainly built of mass produced building materials, mainly non-local brick in a variety of colours; the most prominent of which are the former council houses of 1-6 Acre Ditch which have or had distinctive mansard style roofing.

9.7.4 Roofs are mainly steeply pitched, indicative of the extensive long straw thatch tradition of the district. This in many cases has subsequently been replaced with Welsh slate or concrete tile. Within Burdrop only a small number of properties retain their thatch, such as Meadow Crest Cottages, retaining also the simple ridge detail. Later houses are constructed with shallower pitches, indicating the use of Welsh Slate as the intended roof covering. There are no plain clay tiles used as might be expected given the presence of clay in a brick manufacturing areas. From early in the 19th century until the onset of the First World War, bricks and tiles were made on site using local clay and fired in temporary kilns. This gave a readily available source of construction material, but a wide variety of colours and structural strength from the burning process.

9.7.5 Chimneys are now predominantly of simple brick construction. The 16th - 18th century properties would have had chimneys of stone or low quality brick. The original brick chimneys will have become degraded by the chemical reaction produced when burning cheap, poor quality coal or other materials and were replaced with the materials we see today.

9.7.6 Windows, as with all the architectural development of the hamlet, are found in a range of styles, often with a building presenting at least two styles. Like Sibford Ferris, Burdrop has stone mullioned windows found on a few 17th century buildings, eg Nicholas Corner has figure heads at either end of the hood. A majority of the properties have timber casements, such as Barn Close. A few buildings have Crittal (metal framed) windows, as at Enoch Cottages, vertical sash windows, as at Brynes, or timber frames with metal inserts. Bay windows have been introduced over time, but are restricted in number. Dormers and roof lights are not traditional in Burdrop, but have been introduced to allow roof space to be utilised as additional living accommodation rather than storage, although this is generally restricted to the post 18th century buildings.

### 9.8 Means of enclosure

9.8.1 Burdrop has clustered streets which provide limited glimpsed views across the valley with closed internal views. Burdrop does not have the high boundary walls which protect the larger, higher social properties found in Sibford Ferris but low (less than 1.2m high) rubble stone retaining walls where the cottages sit close to their boundary edge. The former council houses have exposed gardens in prominent locations on four sides. Acre Ditch offers an expansive outlook across the valley towards Sibford Ferris and beyond.

9.8.2 The stone walls link Burdrop and to its surrounding areas. Above the retaining walls by Shepherds Knoll, West Side and Wyatts, very substantial hedges of non-indigenous evergreen species have been planted within the front gardens and these with some modern trellis fencing are not traditional details.

9.8.3 New properties, outside the conservation area, have stone boundary walls, but the buildings tend to be more central in these larger plots and relate less well to the public domain.



### 9.9 Trees, hedges, verges, open spaces

9.9.1 The original groups of buildings were constructed in tight clusters. Main Street and Hawkes Lane focus around a steep green (which has been eroded to a series of informal verges crossed by single track roads, but is non the less important for that, adding to the informal rural ambience). The inward looking Burdrop Farm group and later development has infilled the spaces. There is little remaining public space in Burdrop, other than the church yard of the Holy Trinity Church, which is enclosed by a low stone wall and evergreens, but the eye is naturally drawn above this, and to the views beyond.

9.9.2 The hamlet has several examples of large trees, generally associated with newer properties and outside the conservation area. Many older properties have smaller fruit trees in their gardens which are traditionally more appropriate for these unassuming dwellings and may be remnants of the local orchards shown on the early OS maps.



### 9.10 Features of special interest

9.10.1 Burdrop exhibits a sense of tranquil village life as it is not located on a main route and enjoys unrivalled south facing views.

9.10.2 The buildings and associated gardens form a key component to this, especially the following buildings:

- Former Bishop Blaize, Public House – as this building shows typical vernacular construction of the period
- Nicholas Corner

9.10.3 The above buildings are undesignated heritage assets which contribute significantly to the conservation area.



9.10.4 The special character of Burdrop is also derived from its eclectic mix of materials and architectural styles where buildings have evolved with a 'make do and mend' ethic which exemplifies their vernacular origins. This should

not however be taken as a carte-blanc for an ‘anything goes’ approach to building conservation, maintenance or extension.

9.10.5 The Holy Well, located south of the Church, is also of significance. Originally a source of not only fresh drinking water, holy wells were natural springs revered for Pagan or Christian worship and offered a healing presence through either a Guardian spirit or Christian Saint. The Reformers, which included the Quakers, often felt that Catholicism was clinging onto Pagan ideas, and this affected the way Holy Wells were viewed. Throughout the country, Holy Wells have been designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments; however, the strong Quaker influence here may have lead to this well remaining relatively un-recognised.



### 9.11 Carriageway, footpaths

9.11.1 The main roads and the single track linking Main Street and Hawkes Lane are finished in tarmacadam. There are short sections of footway limited to the main road finished in tarmacadam. The historic area of Burdrop is similar to Sibford Ferris which has no footways and this contributes to the rural feel of the hamlet.

### 9.12 Threats

9.12.1 Lack of appreciation and understanding of the use of a variety of materials and architectural styles in repair and alteration works.

9.12.2 Further erosion of the soft edges of the village greens and verges.

9.12.3 Loss of local facilities such as the village pub and village hall which help reinforce Burdrop’s identity as a separate hamlet, not just a residential suburb of Sibford Gower.

9.12.4 Works to buildings and curtilages including means of enclosure that are visible in long distance views across the valley and disrupt the traditional organic relationship of buildings with the land.

## 9.13 Sibford Gower

9.13.1 Sibford Gower, the largest of the three settlements, has the most prevalent mix of architectural styles, materials, range of building types and most complex street patterns.

### 9.14 Land Use

9.14.1 Traditionally Sibford Gower was a large farming community; however, over recent years a majority of the farms have been converted into dwellings, with the exception of Mawles Farm right on the crossroads at the heart of the village and Home Farm on the outskirts.

9.14.2 The great majority of buildings within Sibford Gower are residential properties of various sizes and scales, and many are imposing in their own way, particularly the Manor.



9.14.3 The primary school, originally constructed at the boundary of the settlement, on a small plot to the south of Acre Ditch, has expanded and developed either side of Main Street. The only remaining non residential buildings are concentrated south of the cross roads on Colony Road. These comprise the Friends Meeting House and associated hall, with a large grave yard and views across the valley; the Methodist Chapel which virtually fills its plot and the Wykham Arms public house which is the only remaining commercial premises within the village.

9.14.4 Previous activities included a stone cutters workshop (Stone Cutters Cottage), forge, butcher, boot maker, Bake House (Bakehouse Cottage), carter (Carters Yard), Co-op and 3 other shops, though there is very limited visual evidence of these industries remaining apart from the house names. The garage and petrol station along Acre Ditch now stands empty and derelict, the unassuming style of the building reflecting the golden age of the motor car of the 1930s.

9.14.5 The Colony, located to the south of the village and closer to the valley floor, is a group of eight self contained small holdings, constructed by John Enoch in 1839-41 as an early form of social housing.

### 9.15 Street Pattern

9.15.1 Sibford Gower has a more formal layout than Burdrop and is based on a cross road of Pound Lane/Colony Road running north south, and Main Street (which leads into Acre Ditch), running east west along the contours of the valley. The crossroads is very tightly defined with a strong building line to the north west and Mawles Farm/ Carters Yard abutting the highway.

9.15.2 Leading off this are narrow single track lanes, such as Backside Lane and Bonds End Lane, which peter out into public footpaths and bridalways leading out into the fields beyond. Backside Lane, originally an access track to Home Farm, has been transformed into an unadopted suburban style road of modern, detached dwellings outside the conservation area.

9.15.3 Early maps show the main cluster of properties on Main Street between Bonds End Lane and Colony Road, with a small cluster around the duck pond. The parish church was built in Burdrop in 1840. The village is not centred around a medieval church, although a Vicarage is noted in the 1882 OS map located on the corner of Bonds End Lane and Main Street.

9.15.4 Sibford Gower has four distinct areas: the cross roads area with the large barn of Mawles Farm indicating the wealth farming brought to the village and Carters Yard opposite; the cottages which run along Main Street and Bonds End Lane; the Glebe Farm cluster; and finally, Colony Road. This is reflected in the figure ground plan (figure 12).



9.15.5 The area surrounding the pond has a more informal layout, with larger houses set within their own grounds. Main Street leads into a smaller track, which leads to Glebe Farm round to Bridleways and Rye Hill Lodge and then into bridleways and footpaths.

9.15.6 Outside the centre of the village, east of the school, Main Street turns into Acre Ditch, which has the remaining commercial industrial building, the 1930s garage, and more modern housing, with pre war set of 3 semi-detached former local authority houses which are typical of this area, and then detached houses, which include the new Rectory. These four properties are in contrast to Sibford Gower and Burdrop, as they are set off the main road, central in their own large gardens and are outside the conservation area.

9.15.7 Recent development extends the village to the north, east and south off existing roads and is excluded from the Conservation Area.



### 9.16 Building Age, Type and Style

9.16.1 The majority of buildings in the conservation area were constructed in the 16th and 17th centuries. These buildings, such as Ivy Cottage, are simply designed buildings using local ironstone. Unlike Burdrop, the range of styles reflects the social status of the occupiers.

9.16.2 The higher status houses, such as Rosebank or Stickleys, lack the architectural detail, such as string courses or window hoods, found on the high status buildings in Sibford Ferris. They are, however, constructed of good quality materials and are of a bigger scale than the cottages which allows larger and a higher number of windows, a statement of wealth and status in the 17th century.



9.16.3 Like Burdrop, the smaller more humble cottages, built to house the workers of the local farmsteads, are devoid of architectural detailing and are generally constructed in lower quality materials and of smaller scale. The cottages along Main Street appear to have been added together to form a terrace of similar but

individual cottages in a non-consistent style. Bonds End Lane has a row of identical brick cottages, such as Rose Cottage and Moneypenny Cottage, opposite stone built cottages, such as Vine Cottage.

9.16.4 These styles continued into the early 18th century, and it was not until later in that century, that a more polite style of architecture was introduced. Unlike Burdrop, there are no cottages which reflect the changing fashion of architecture and they continued to be constructed in the vernacular style. The larger houses, such as Elmridge, adjacent to the duck pond, display some architectural elements of classical proportions that would be expected in a gentleman's residence of the 18th century.



9.16.5 The Methodist Chapel, constructed in 1827, perched upon a retaining wall, is a plain honest building typical of the style of chapels of this period. This building hides its architectural history, being covered in a cement render and with later additions. The Friends Meeting House (1866) provides simple, late renaissance/ early Georgian style elegance, constructed in the cross over phase between vernacular building and polite architecture styles. Constructed in local stone, it is without the architectural details or classic proportions typically associated with this period, which reflects the basis of the Quaker theology.

9.16.6 During the early-mid 19th century, further development was undertaken, with the construction of cottages, houses and industrial buildings eg the Old Forge and Stone Cutters Cottage, which have now been converted to residential use.

9.16.7 Sibford Gower exhibits the greatest range of architectural styles of the three settlements. The most unique, strikingly individual and quirky building is the Manor House, created from a group of vernacular 17th century buildings. Some find this building a collection of random styles and a confusing personal show of eccentricity; others enjoy it as a truly eclectic example of one man's fantasy home.

9.16.8 The small holding cottages known as The Colony are constructed in a vernacular style, two storey in a very simple semi detached pairing, dating from the mid 19th century, although architecturally they are very similar to many mid 18th century rural houses.

### 9.17 Scale and Massing

9.17.1 The village is composed of humble workers cottages and the larger farm houses and yeomen's houses that these workers served. This huge array of buildings is one of the unique elements of the village. Although the majority of buildings are two storeys there is significant variation in scale and massing, reflecting the social status of the original occupier, and most dwellings remain unchanged from their original form, although a number of properties now have dormer windows and roof lights installed.

9.17.2 The dwellings surrounding the duck pond sit within their own grounds, some higher than the road, which increases their visual significance.



### 9.18 Construction and materials

9.18.1 The predominant building material is the local iron stone and the majority of buildings are roofed in slate but there remains a great variety in roofing materials and in the manner in which the stone was used.

9.18.2 The traditional roofing material of thatch is still greatly in evidence, with particular concentrations at and south of the cross roads and a further cluster at Lane Head. The traditional flush ridge has been replaced by the more decorative block cut detail on The Manor House and the prominent Pond Cottage and Lane End, but the traditional detail can still be found at Carters Yard and Gowers Close, where the length of thatched roof has a particular organic quality to it. The thatched roofs all appear to be in good condition.



9.18.3 Stonesfield slate is not seen as frequently in this area as in parts of the Cotswolds, due to the costs of transportation, but is found on Stickleys House and parts of The Manor, representing its use on buildings of a high social

status. Glebe Farm has been reroofed using artificial slates but their laying pattern in courses of diminishing size to the ridge replicates the traditional manner.

9.18.4 Cedar shingle, used from the 17th century onwards, is unusual these days as it is not particularly hard wearing. However it can be seen on The Old Forge and adjacent buildings.

9.18.5 Most other buildings are roofed in Welsh slate or plain clay tiles and few have more modern materials. Corrugated iron remains on a couple of out buildings, including the prominent Mawles Farm and this is an indication that the village has not been gentrified but retains reminders of its agricultural origins.

9.18.6 The use of local stone traditionally reflected the status of the building. We see fine ironstone ashlar at Yew Tree House where there are also moulded kneelers and decorative window surrounds. Gowers Close is built of large blocks of coursed iron stone.



9.18.7 Most properties are of coursed ironstone rubble and the most humble, such as The Colony, in ironstone rubble roughly brought to courses. This soft stone is susceptible to erosion and in some cases buildings have been rendered to protect the stone. This is not a traditional detail and generally is not positive for the buildings. In some cases tuck, or proud, cement pointing is in evidence and this also will encourage the erosion of the soft ironstone.

9.18.8 The soft stone does not lend itself to decoration and so even the larger yeomen's houses are relatively devoid of ornamentation.

9.18.9 The Cotswold limestone was more hard wearing and so was imported into the area. Several later buildings, for example School House, Fairview and Woodfords along the north side of Main Street, are constructed in a mix of both stones. This is seen elsewhere in the District, but usually at the interface with either the Cotswold stone (e.g. Hook Norton) or with the marlstone (e.g. Steeple Aston). The more resilient Cotswold stone is also used for lintels.

9.18.10 It is likely, in common with other settlements on Lias clay, that small brick kilns would have operated for a time. There are bricks in the village, notably the two prominent cottages at the cross roads which were refaced in brick and also the brick terrace of double fronted cottages at the bottom of Bonds End Lane, which appears to be an example of planned estate workers cottages.

9.18.11 Later development has been in a variety of non local brick but the most recent developments have used local stone, not always with regard to the traditional bed depths and laying patterns.



9.18.12 Chimneys are now mainly in brick, but The Old School House retains its stone stacks.

9.18.13 Buildings have in the main retained their original materials and where repairs or extensions have been undertaken there has been continuity of materials employed, which contrasts with Burdrop.

9.18.14 Windows follow the vernacular style of 2 and 3 light casements and there are very limited examples of windows with a vertical emphasis, whether sash or otherwise. This reflects the lack of gentrification during the 19th century. A few examples of stone mullioned windows remain e.g. at Carters Yard and Pond Cottage. There are many metal and latticed windows still in evidence, e.g. Woodfields and the Meeting Hall. Most windows are timber but a significant proportion of unlisted buildings have replacement UPVc double glazing and some have replacement windows of unsuitable design.

### 9.19 Means of Enclosure

The village is built on a gentler incline than Burdrop so retaining walls are less of a feature. Nevertheless a wide range of enclosures are found in the village and the variety and, in places, scale of these contributes much to the character of the village.

9.19.1 The building line at the cross roads at the centre of the village is tightly defined, particularly at the east where Mawles Farm and Carters Yard provide a strong edge. Further east along Main Street the properties on the north side display a range of metal railings, walls, picket fences and estate style horizontal railings at the back of the footway and this reinforces the linear urban character. The south side of Main Street offers a softer feel with larger plots, so stone walls and vegetation predominate. Further east, beyond the conservation area boundary, properties of more recent construction are set back from the street behind hedges and this creates a more suburban character.

9.19.2 West of the cross roads the buildings are mainly constructed behind grass verges, some above small retaining walls, such as that at West Farm Cottage and Rosebank Cottage, unusually of red brick with blue brick capping that links it to the limited brick buildings in the village. Stone walls are a significant feature, some of substantial height such as the listed wall at The Old Rectory, which is higher than the adjacent dwellings, and also that to its east which has a tile capping. Others are lower but still contribute to the enclosure in association with vegetation.

9.19.3 The sense of enclosure in the cluster at Lane Head is mainly created by buildings and beyond here the contrast with the suburban character is acute. Where enclosure has been lost, such as at Holly Close to enable a wide sweep of driveway, it is missed. Where properties, built from the mid 20th century onwards, have open plan front gardens the sense of place is lost. There are examples of well crafted recent gates, for example at Stickleys House, which enable vehicles to be accommodated without destroying the streetscape.



9.19.4 Bonds End Lane has a tightly defined entrance and properties are generally built at the back of the narrow carriageway along its length on the east side. On the west, some properties are built at 90 degrees to the road allowing views into cottage style gardens.

9.19.5 South of the cross roads, Colony Road is enclosed by buildings at the back of the carriage way, with the exception being Wykham Arms PH car park and the grounds of the Quaker Meeting House, but here the vegetation has a strong enclosing influence.

9.19.6 There are few views out of the village, except at its edges and those to the south are very fine long distance views across the valley.

### 9.20 Trees, hedges, verges and open space

9.20.1 Farm land adjacent to the village is important visually and also assists in anchoring the village to its agricultural roots. This includes

- The gap on the south side of Acre Ditch between the Parish Church and the Primary School, which is vital in maintaining the separate identity of the two villages, especially in view of the C20th infilling on the north side, and also allows expansive views into the Sib Valley, which are otherwise generally only able to be enjoyed from private property.
- Land north of Mawles Farm, which contributes to the view from the heart of the village retaining the agricultural character and also provides an appropriate setting to the farm group.

9.20.2 Grass verges contribute much to the rural ambience of the village.

- The raised grass bank on the north side of the cross roads ensures that, even with the tightly defined building lines here, the small village character permeates right into the centre. It also provides the West Farm group of cottages a higher visual status than their vernacular origins would suggest and provides a pleasing contrast with the more urban character of Main Street / Acre Ditch.
- Further west along Main Street, the grass verges continue, adding informality.
- They culminate here in the duck pond, a charming addition to this rural village scene,



now slightly compromised by the road markings and concrete edge treatment, all presumably in the cause of safety.

- Generally the soft edges of the verges are not harmed by vehicular traffic, but care needs to be taken that ad hoc measures aiming to deter vehicle over run do not clutter the simple streetscape.

9.20.3 Whilst there are significantly more trees within the village than there are in the surrounding landscape, many of these are within rear gardens and act as a back cloth to the public domain, rather than significant features within it. Exceptions include three sycamores, which herald the entrance to the village from the south, which is otherwise the least remarkable entrance. Significant tree groups are found within the grounds of the Quaker Meeting House, virtually obscuring this delightful building. Near the duck pond, are a couple of redwoods within the grounds of Elmridge, which have a

significant impact because of their scale and verticality, and also other significant evergreens, for example in the grounds of Yew Tree House, and these non indigenous species were often planted to emphasise the wealth of the property owner. The horse chesnut tree on the eastern side of the pond is also notable.

9.20.4 Hedges are not a significant feature within the area except in a few locations, such as to the west of Holly Close where they contribute to the tight enclosure of the lane.



### 9.21 Features of special interest

9.21.1 The Quaker tradition of the Sibford villages is evidenced by the Friends Meeting House and cottage on Colony Road, one of a number in the Banbury area.

9.21.2 Streetscape of exceptional quality remains in pockets within the village, for example the grouping looking east from the cross roads and the cluster around Stickleys House.

9.21.3 The duck pond is a reminder of the rural heritage of the village.



9.21.4 Mawles Farm is a working farm at the heart of the village. The loss of this activity and the solid masonry walls without significant openings and its corrugated iron roof, which would be hard to retain if the building were ever to be converted to another use, would alter the character of the village.

9.21.5 The Manor House must be the one iconic building for which the village is remembered.

9.21.6 The school bell provides visual interest along Acre Ditch and is a reminder of earlier days when its sound would summon children from across the valley.

9.21.7 The Colony is of significance to the social history of the settlement. For more information please refer to section 14.3.



### 9.22 Carriageways, pavements and footpaths

Whether footways run alongside the highway is a key determinant in defining the character of the street.

9.22.1 The location of the primary school on Main Street justifies the footway on the north side and this, together with the straight alignment and the construction of buildings at the back of the footway in terraces, creates the most urban character in all the Sibford villages.

9.22.2 West of the cross roads footways are intermittent and informal. On the south side there is a double kerb and on the north side the footpath rises above the banked grass verge with a timber handrail offering assistance.



9.22.3 However, for the most part, there are no footways. Soft edges to the grass verges are the norm, occasionally with granite setts as kerbs.

9.22.4 Highways are surfaced in tarmacadam, as are footways but, without formal footways or edgings, the boundaries of the highway can be indeterminate and this contributes to the informal ambiance.

9.22.5 Towards the western edge of the village where the lane forks at Pond Cottage it is hard to discern whether the roads are public routes or private accesses on account of their informal surface, narrow width, lack of turning heads and tight alignment and this adds to the qualities of the area. Bonds End lane has similar characteristics. This is partly because seven public rights of way, which originally would have linked the village with its surrounding farms, converge in this part of the village. Some of these routes have developed into roads, others are lanes giving access only to a few properties, some are narrow alleys between plots and some remain field paths.

### 9.23 Threats

Sibford Gower is a very well cared for village and almost all properties are immaculately maintained with well tended gardens or planting at the front.

9.23.1 There are relatively few examples where property owners have exercised their permitted development rights in a way that has harmed the character of the conservation area. The exception to this is that many properties have been re-fenestrated, often in appropriate simple timber casements, but also frequently in inappropriate styles and / or UPVc double glazing, which can cumulatively erode the historic character.

9.23.2 The impact of service supplies occasionally has a detrimental impact, for example overhead power and telecommunication lines intrude into some views and service supply paraphernalia intrudes into verges at the cross roads. There is one property with photo voltaic cells entirely covering its roof slope on its front elevation. However, the conservation area status, together with local pride in the village, has ensured that other intrusions such as satellite dishes are not visible.

9.23.3 There is little evidence of the soft verges being damaged by vehicles at present but a rash of preventative measures could clutter the informal street and the introduction of kerbing by the highway authority would harm the informal rural character. Further measures around the duck pond could result in similar damage.

9.23.4 The streetscape is composed of a mixture of terraces and larger properties set within their plots or at right angles to the road, so that there is a mix of built street frontage and gaps of gardens and vegetation, and this is a key component of the character. Infilling of gardens would change that balance. Similarly the farm land around the village, particularly north of Mawles Farm and south of Acre Ditch, is important in ensuring the village retains its connection with its agricultural heritage and that the village and Burdrop retain their separate identities. There is thus very little opportunity within the village for new development that would not harm its established character.

# 10. Historic Photographs

**10.1 Valley – looking north towards Sibford Ferris**



The road appears to have been slightly realigned. The valley vegetation has grown, but the chimneys can still be identified.

**10.2 Outbuildings/barns to the Old House, viewed from Back Lane, looking towards Burdrop**



The original farm buildings have been extensively altered and enlarged to create an independent dwelling now known as Lambs Croft.

**10.3 Homestead & Rufus Cottage, Sibford Ferris**



The thatch has been lost and new windows have been inserted but the character of the street remains much the same.



**10.4 Pond, Sibford Gower**



The only real change to this idyllic scene is the loss of thatch.

**10.5 Home Close, Sibford Ferris**



Home Close and its setting has altered little, the main exception being the missing Monkey Puzzle Tree.

**10.6 View looking north to Burdrop**



The terrace is remarkably intact with only Enock's Cottages having been painted and porches added. Chimneys survive.

# 11. Materials and Details



# 12. Undesignated Heritage Assets that make a positive contribution

A number of undesignated heritage assets (unlisted buildings) make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration of the heritage asset [conservation area] (NPPF). The retention of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area is generally preferable to their demolition and redevelopment.

Unlisted buildings that are deemed locally significant either for their architectural detail or for their part of the social history of the settlements are further identified as being locally listed and are identified in Figures 15 and 16 and listed in section 18.

## Sibford Ferris

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. West Town House                 | 8. Haven, Holly Tree and Wayside Cottages |
| 2. Home Farm                       | 9. The Old Court House                    |
| 3. Westerways to Mulberry House    | 10. The Forge                             |
| 4. The Ark and flat Sibford School | 11. Holmby House                          |
| 5. Woodway House                   | 12. Folly Farmhouse and Folly Cottage     |
| 6. Hill House                      | 13. Stone walls on main street            |
| 7. Malvern House                   |   |



3 Little Thatch



7 Malvern House



3 Westerways



8 Holly Tree Cottage



6 Hill House

## 12. Undesignated Heritage Assets that make a positive contribution

### Sibford Ferris



**1** West Town House



**4** The Ark and flat Sibford School



**2** Home Farm House



**9** The Old Court House



**12** Folly Farmhouse and Folly Cottage



**3** Mulberry Cottage



**8** Wayside Cottage



**13** The stone walls fronting the length of Main Street



**8** Wayside Cottage



**11** Holmby House

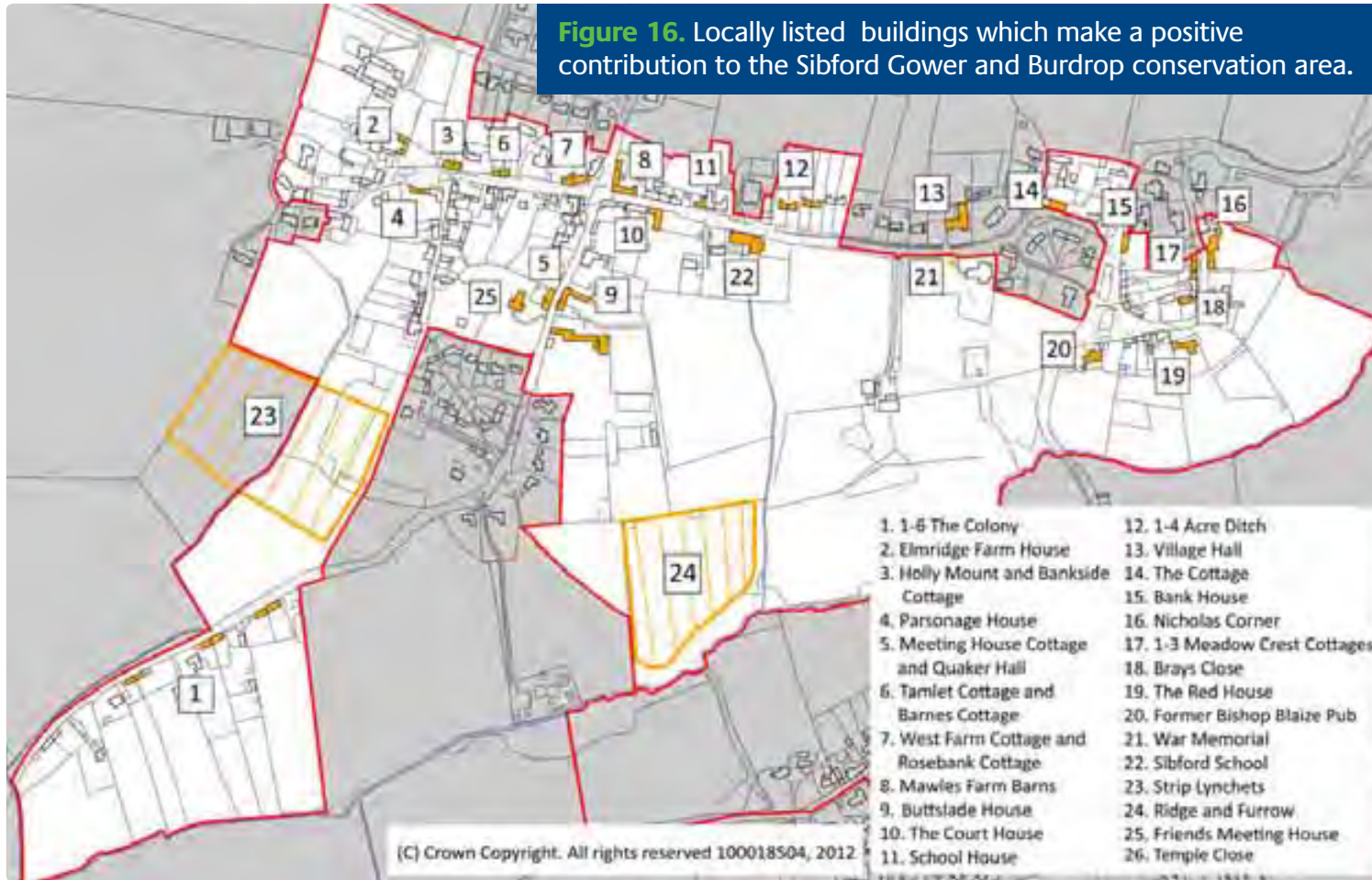


**5** Woodways House



**10** The Forge

**Sibford Gower and Burdrop**



**7** West Farm Cottage and Rosebank cottage



**25** Quaker Meeting House



**8** Mawles Farm Barns



**54 11** School House



**10** Court House



**9** Buttslade House



**6** Barnes Cottage & Tamlet Cottage

**Sibford Gower and Burdrop**



• The Old Post Office



1 1-6 The Colony



17 1-3 Meadow Crest Cottages



20 Bishop Blaize



• Ivy Cottage



21 War memorial



19 The Red House



15 Bankhouse



3 Bankside & Holly Mount



18 Brayes Close



14 The Cottage (red brick dwelling)



2 Elmridge



• Enock's Cottage



16 Nicholas Corner



12 1-4 Acre Ditch

# 13. Management Plan

## 13 Policy context

13.1 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. In line with English Heritage guidance (2011) Conservation Area Management Proposals are published as part of the process of area designation or review. The Conservation Area appraisal document is designed to inform planning decisions, and other actions that the Council and/ or property owners within the designated area take. The role of the Management Proposals 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.

13.2 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, usually with uPVC double-glazing, replacement of original doors, additions such as non-traditional porches and erection of satellite dishes on the front elevations of properties. 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 stone walls can also have a significant impact. Both

unsympathetic permitted development and unauthorised development cumulatively result in the erosion of the historic character and appearance of the conservation area.

13.3 The aim of management proposals is not to prevent changes but to ensure that any such changes are both sympathetic to the individual property, sympathetic to the streetscape and overall enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

13.4 The principal policies covering alterations and development of the historic built environment are given in Appendix 1

Objective	Action	Action by
Provide information on the importance of the Conservation Areas to the local community.	Publish Conservation Area appraisal and management plan and make readily available. Provide supporting information and guidance via the Council web site and staff.	CDC CDC
Improve the quality and amenity value of the public realm in the Conservation Areas.	Encourage OCC's highway maintenance programme to undertake repairs within the Conservation Area that respect the historic materials palette. Encourage the retention and maintenance of boundary walls. Encourage the sympathetic maintenance and landscaping of the Sibford Gower duck pond.	CDC and OCC CDC and Property Owner CDC and Property Owner
Preserve and enhance features that contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas.	Encourage appropriate repair and maintenance of all properties within the Conservation Areas by providing advice to property owners. Encourage maintenance of characteristic features and details that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Promote the use of traditional building and roofing materials and retention of historic details.	CDC CDC CDC



Objective	Action	Action by
Preserve and enhance features that contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas.	Encourage owners of historic properties to replace inappropriate modern with the appropriate traditional materials.	CDC
	Ensure traditional styles of pointing and the use of lime mortar.	CDC and Property Owners
	Promote new alterations and extensions that are sympathetic to the existing buildings in scale, materials and design.	CDC and Property Owners
	Require satellite dishes and solar panels to be located on rear elevations or within rear gardens to prevent visual pollution.	CDC and Property Owners
	Ensure the retention of important areas of open land such as the valley bottom and sides between settlements.	CDC and Property Owners
	Encourage the retention and repair of traditional boundary walls and gateways.	CDC and Property Owners
	Protect positive views into and out of the Conservation Areas, in particular across the valley and out over the country.	CDC, OCC and Property Owners
	Preserve the setting of the Conservation Areas as required by the 1990 Act.	CDC
Monitor planning approvals to make sure that works preserve or where possible enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas.	Take specialist Design and Conservation Team advice on significant planning applications which affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas.	CDC
	Promote high quality design in new housing and affordable housing schemes.	CDC
	Ensure that all new developments use appropriate materials, scale and massing.	CDC
Unauthorised works	Ensure that the Planning Enforcement team take appropriate action against unauthorised works in line with the Council's enforcement policy	CDC
Monitor the loss and gain of buildings within the Conservation Area through surveys, including photographic	Review the building stock at the next review of the Conservation Areas, due in 2017.	CDC
Retain important trees and encourage the planting of appropriate species.	Ensure the preservation of important trees. All trees have some protection under the Conservation Area designation. The Council's arboricultural officers will, where appropriate, make tree preservation orders if a tree that makes a positive contribution is under threat.	CDC
Preserve and enhance the landscape, and green spaces	Require appropriate landscaping schemes to accompany planning applications	CDC
	Seek the retention of historic openness of the valley and encourage its protection through discouraging piecemeal erosion.	CDC
Create and maintain a relationship with service providers and other agencies in order to ensure that the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas is retained.	Encourage underground power cables to reduce the visual pollution.	CDC, OCC and service providers
Review Conservation Area boundaries and their architectural and/ or historical importance.	To be reviewed and amended where necessary at the time of the Conservation Areas next review, due in 2017.	CDC

# 14. Conservation Area boundary justification

## 14. Justification for the proposed amendments to the conservation areas

14.1 Sibford Ferris Conservation Area was first designated in 1985 and that at Sibford Gower and Burdrop in 1988. The designated areas include the historic core of the villages, in the main excluding later development, together with the valley in between, which both divides and links the settlements.

14.2 This review proposes a number of extensions to the designated areas:

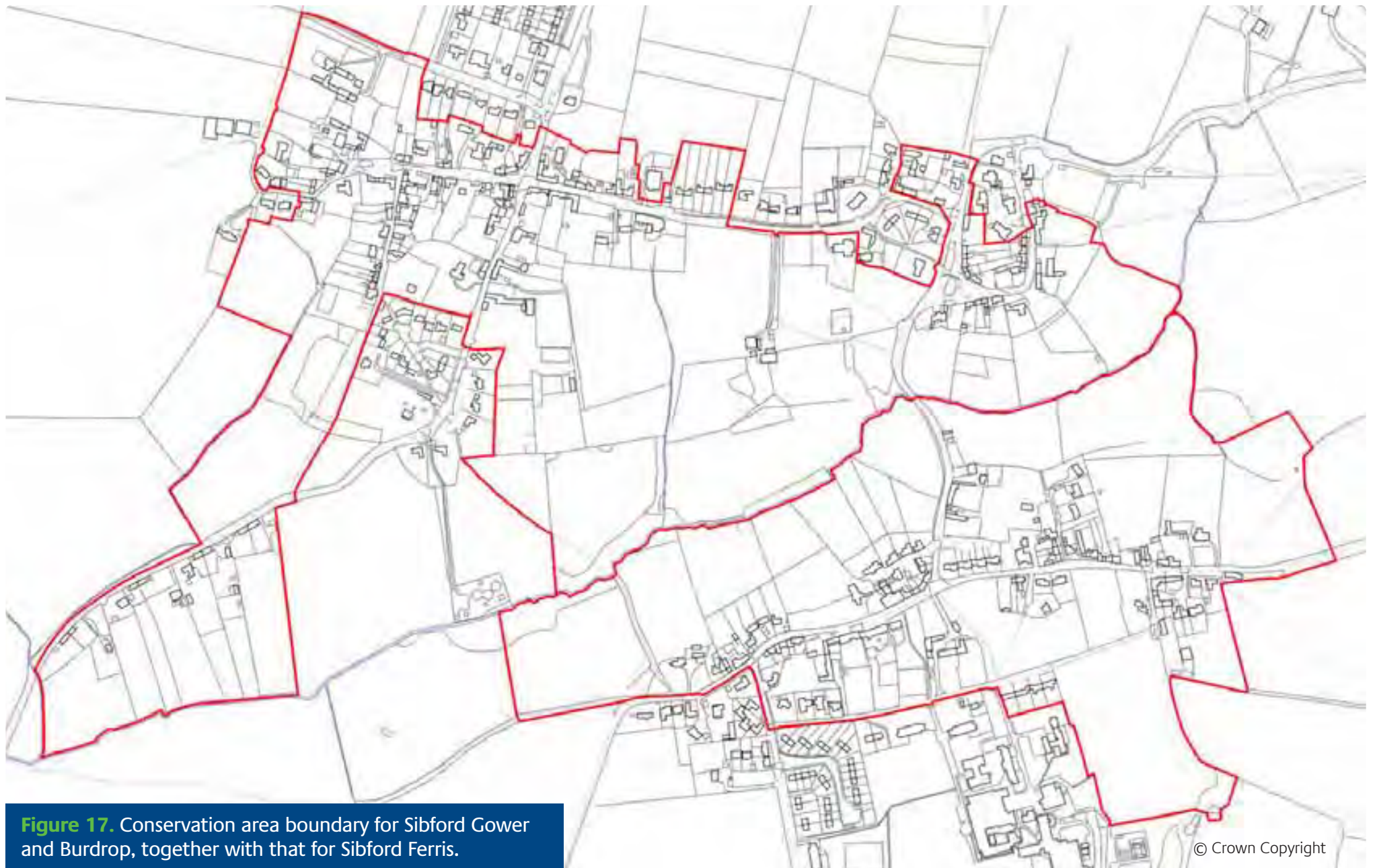
14.3 The most substantial proposal is to extend the Sibford Gower and Burdrop boundary to include The Colony and some intervening fields. The Colony was built by John Enock between 1839 and 1851 as a series of small holdings. John Enock was a Quaker who had moved to the area from the east end of London and in line with his Quaker beliefs he built this series of 8 semi-detached smallholding (the land provision is generous) to meet a social need in the area. The architecture of the buildings is unexceptional, but the provision of social housing (and part-time livelihood), albeit in line with Quaker doctrine, is wholly exceptional and pre-dates the Freehold Land Society housing movement (first started in Birmingham in 1847) by a number of years. There are four groups of semi detached cottages, the southern most, now called Bartlett Lodge, has been converted into one dwelling and is statutorily listed. However it is number 2 that retains most of its original appearance, with original pattern of fenestration openings and frames and outshut not incorporated into

the main dwelling, still with its metal roof. The other 5 dwellings have all been much altered with some render, replacement windows and Springfield Cottage has semi dormers inserted. There has also been some infill development between the carefully spaced small holdings. However, the evidence of the social entrepreneurship remains of local interest, as does the building typology. Moreover, their contribution to the village was acknowledged by a large number of parishioners asking for their inclusion in the conservation area.

14.4 The fields between The Colony and the south-west corner of Sibford Gower are included due to the underlying archaeology that is hinted at by the field surfaces indicating the remains of a fortified ditch and medieval house platforms, and remnants of ancient cultivation in the form of well preserved ridge and furrow.

14.5 Number 1-6 Acre Ditch are typical of the pre and interwar Banbury Rural District Council housing that was constructed in many villages in the area, with its spacious accommodation and distinctive mansard roof. Although all these particular properties have been updated with modern windows, only one has been altered beyond recognition and, in common with other locations, the boundary of the conservation area has been extended to include these in celebration of the part they play in the social history of this rural settlement.

14.6 The boundary of the Sibford Ferris Conservation Area has also been adjusted to reflect recent changes in field boundaries.



**Figure 17.** Conservation area boundary for Sibford Gower and Burdrop, together with that for Sibford Ferris.

# 15. Effects of Conservation Area designation

15.1 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 Development Control and Major Developments at an early stage. The main effects of designation are as follows:

## 15.2 Development should preserve or enhance the area

15.2.1 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.

## 15.3 Control over demolition of buildings

15.3.1 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.

## 13.4 Control over trees

15.4.1 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 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 the conservation area.

## 15.5 Protection of important open spaces and views

15.5.1 The valley is an important open space between the settlements that huddle on either side of the valley. It is important to protect the open and aesthetic quality of the valley because it is integral to the character and appearance of both conservation areas. The inclusion of this and other peripheral open spaces around the settlements in the designation of the conservation area is specifically to ensure that the character of these spaces is preserved.

## 15.6 Control over the demolition of enclosures

15.6.1 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 means that walls not relating to listed buildings, that add so much to the character and appearance of the street scene, are afforded protection.

## 15.7 Powers to seek repair of unlisted historic buildings

15.7.1 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.

## 15.8 Reduced permitted development

15.8.1 There are no permitted development rights for commercial properties.

15.8.2 Within conservation areas there are restrictions on the size of extensions to domestic properties that may be carried out without specific planning permission including:

- A two storey rear extension of any dimensions
- A single storey side extension of any dimension
- A building, enclosure, pool or container at the side of a dwelling
- Cladding in any material;
- Any alteration or extension to the roof;
- A satellite dish on any chimney, wall or roof slope that faces onto or is visible from a highway.
- 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.

## 15.9 Enhancements should preserve and enhance the area

15.9.1 Land use planning policies in the Cherwell Local Plan and the emerging Local Development Framework 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.

# 16. Policies

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.

## National Planning Policy Framework

This document sets out to ensure that the historic environment – buildings, landscapes, towns and villages – can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives, rather than withers.

## 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.

**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.

**C13** The ironstone downs, the Cherwell Valley, the Thames Valley, North Ploughley, Muswell Hill and Otmoor are designated areas of High Landscape Value within which the Council will seek to conserve and enhance the environment.

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

the architectural and historic character of the building.

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

**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.

**C33** The Council will seek to retain any undeveloped gap of land which is important in preserving the character of a loose-knit settlement structure or in maintaining the proper setting for a listed building or in preserving a view or feature of recognised amenity or historic value.

**C38** Where planning permission is required, proposals for satellite dishes in conservation areas or on a listed building will not normally be permitted where such apparatus would be visible from a public highway.

### **Non-statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011**

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

**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.

**EN42** Sympathetic consideration will be given to proposals for the change of use of a listed building, provided that the new use minimises damage to the character, fabric, interior or setting of the building, and does not adversely affect the reasons for its statutory listing.

**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.

**EN44** Special care will be taken to ensure that development that is situated within the setting of a listed building respects the architectural and historic character of the building and its setting.

**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.

**EN45A** The inclusion of a building in a local list of buildings of architectural or historic interest adopted by the council for planning purposes will be a material consideration in the

determination of planning applications that would affect it.

**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 a 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. Designated Heritage Assets

## **Sibford Ferris**

Little London (II)  
The Cottage (II)  
Ferris Cottage (II)  
Clematis Cottage (II)  
Rufus Cottage (II)  
Homestead (II)  
Barn House (II)  
Sunnybank (II)  
Maria's House (II)  
The Manor (II)  
Garden wall (II)  
Home Close (II)  
The Old Bakehouse (II)  
The Old House (II)

## **Sibford Gower**

Woodfields (II)  
Carters Yard (II)  
Wykham Arms Public House (II)  
The Manor House (II)  
Yew Tree House (II) & Dove Cote (II)  
The Old Rectory (II) & wall (II)  
Quince Cottage (II)  
Pond Cottage (II)  
Stickleys House (II)  
Lane Head (II)  
Glebe Farmhouse (II) & barn (II)  
7 The Colony (II) Bartlett Cottage  
8 The Colony (II) Bartlett Cottage  
Gower Close (II)  
Well housing opposite village pond (II)

## **Burdrop**

Barn Close (II)  
Carrier's Cottage (II)  
Burdrop House (II)  
Burdrop Cottage (II)  
Goodmayes (II)  
Burdrop Green (II)  
Wyatts Cottage (II)  
Westside Cottage (II)  
Shepherds Knoll (II)  
Jasmine Cottage (II)  
Burdrop Farmhouse (II)  
Holy Trinity Church (II)  
Pumpty Burdrop House (II)



# 18. Non-Designated Heritage Assets

## **Sibford Ferris**

Holmby House  
Folly Farmhouse  
Folly Cottage  
The Old Court House  
Malvern House  
The Ark Sibford School  
The Flat at the Ark Sibford School  
Home Farm House  
West Town House  
The Forge  
West Town House

## **Sibford Gower**

Court House  
Mawles Farm Barns  
Friends Meeting House  
Temple Close  
Barnes Cottage  
Tamlet Cottage  
Elmridge  
1-6 The Colony  
Remains of medieval strip under cultivation & fortified ditch (land adjacent to Glebe Farmhouse)

## **Burdrop**

Former Bishop Blaize Public House  
Brayes Close  
1-3 Meadow Crest Cottages  
Nicholas Corner  
War memorial

## 19. Public consultation

Cherwell District Council considers public consultation an important part of conservation area designation and review.

A map and a questionnaire were distributed with the community newsletter, *The Sibford Scene*, in October 2011 to all households within or associated with the three settlements, inviting interested people to indicate where the boundaries should be changed (if at all) and to list buildings and structures that they would like to see identified as special.

104 responses were received, 67 of which made suggestions for boundary changes or buildings to be identified as special. It was clear from the comments that villagers hold their local environment in high esteem and are keen to see that the well-being of the community is promoted, the positivity of the Quaker ethos very much in action.

There were a substantial number of requests for the conservation area boundary to be extended. Of those that responded with comments 33% requested that the boundary be extended to include The Colony. There was also a strong feeling (15% of respondents) that the Friends Meeting House should be put forward for statutory designation.

A very large number of the buildings were identified by the respondents as special. The vast majority of these are already recognised as such by statutory designation; the other suggested buildings have been put forward in this appraisal for inclusion in the district-wide local list. Certain buildings were repeatedly identified by respondents as special, 30% of respondents nominated the former Bishop Blaize Public House, with a good number of those respondents wishing to see the building reinstated as a public house again.

Although inclusion into the Local List is not subject to the same rigorous controls as statutory designation, once identified as an undesignated heritage asset the Council has a duty of care under the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Heritage assets:** 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. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Government guidance encourages local planning authorities to identify undesignated heritage assets and to have regard to any harm to their significance that would be caused by development. It does not mean that listed building consent is required for works to the buildings themselves.

A public exhibition was held in Sibford Gower Village Hall on the afternoon of 21st February 2012 followed by an informal public meeting. Consultation was undertaken between 21st February 2012 and 16th March 2012 to allow residents and interested parties an opportunity to comment on the appraisal. There was strong support for the appraisal both at the public meeting and in the received consultations. A further 14 responses were received as a result of the public exhibition and the public meeting. Of these 7 respondents supported the extension of the conservation area; with 3 respondents proposing yet further fields to be included. 6 respondents opposed the change in boundaries and for a range of reasons, but not all of them to do with conservation-related matters.

## 20. Acknowledgements

This document has been produced as part of the District Council's ongoing programme of conservation area appraisals.

Images used are sourced from the Victoria County History Vol IX. and from the Oxfordshire Studies Library unless otherwise accredited.

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Recommendation of the Executive Delegate authority to Local member for Planning	
Further recommended changes to the document No changes undertaken CDC logo	
Amended document approved by  Local member for Planning	Date approved 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2012

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