

# BEGBROKE

## Conservation Area Appraisal



June 2008  
Planning, Housing and Economy



## BEGBROKE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

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# 1. Introduction and Planning Policy Context

## 1.1

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

## 1.2

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

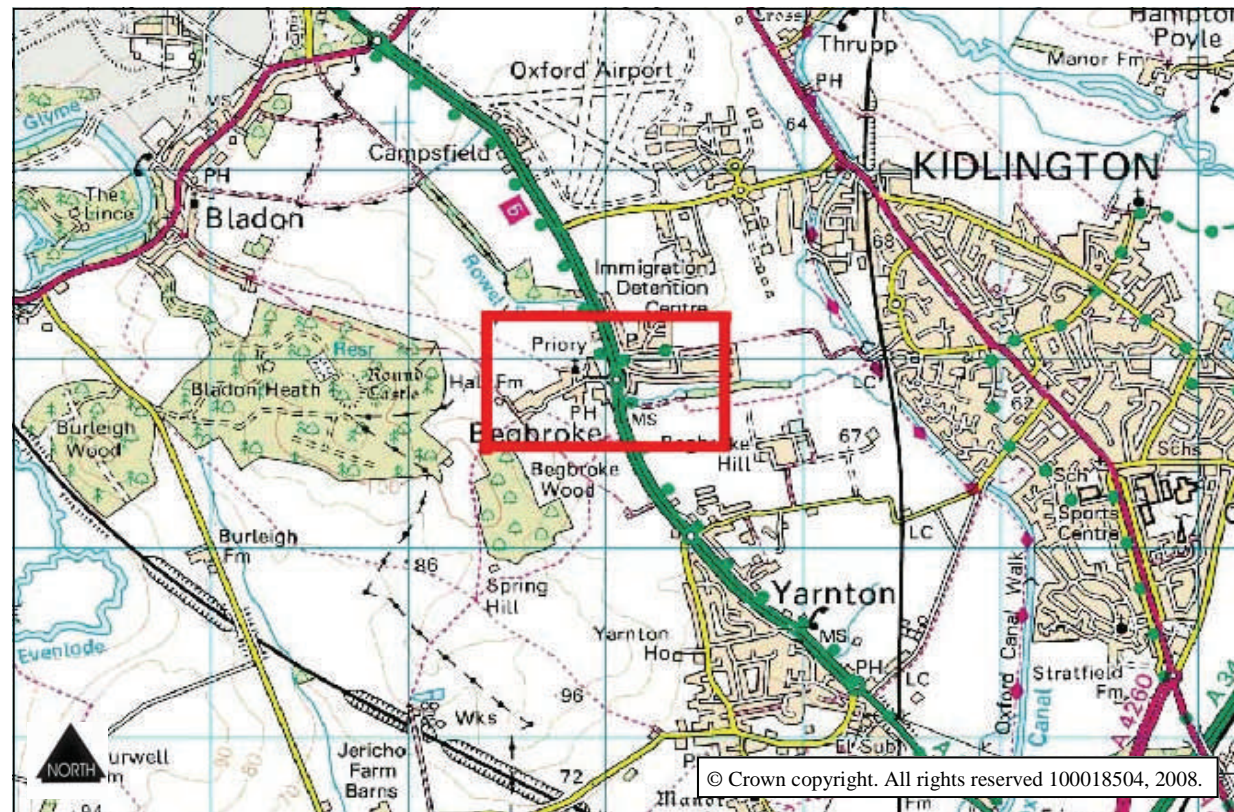
## 1.3

Conservation areas were introduced in the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. The Act required local planning authorities to identify areas, as opposed to individual buildings, of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as conservation areas. Since 1967 some 8,000 conservation areas have been designated in England, 54 in Cherwell District.

## 1.4

Begbroke Conservation Area was designated in July 1991. Under the Act Local Planning Authorities have a duty to consider boundary revisions to their conservation areas "from time to time".

Figure 1: Location Map



## 1.5

This appraisal was the subject of public consultation with an exhibition and meeting held on 9 April 2008 in Begbroke Village Hall. The appraisal was approved by the Council's Executive on 2nd June 2008 with the extension to the conservation area shown on page 29. The appraisal is now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the conservation area and its setting.



## 2. Location

### 2.1

The village straddles the A44 dual carriageway, which now forms a physical and visual barrier between the historic core to its west and the suburban residential development to the east.

### 2.2

The Council's Landscape Character Assessment places Begbroke within the Lower Cherwell Floodplain character area. This area is characterised by low lying, level ground with heavy clay soils and substantial local gravel deposits. Arable farming has been facilitated by improvements in drainage and now the large, flat fields are mostly cultivated for cereals.



Figure 2: Aerial view of Begbroke Conservation Area.



Figure 3: Aerial view of Begbroke Conservation Area (highlighted in red) .

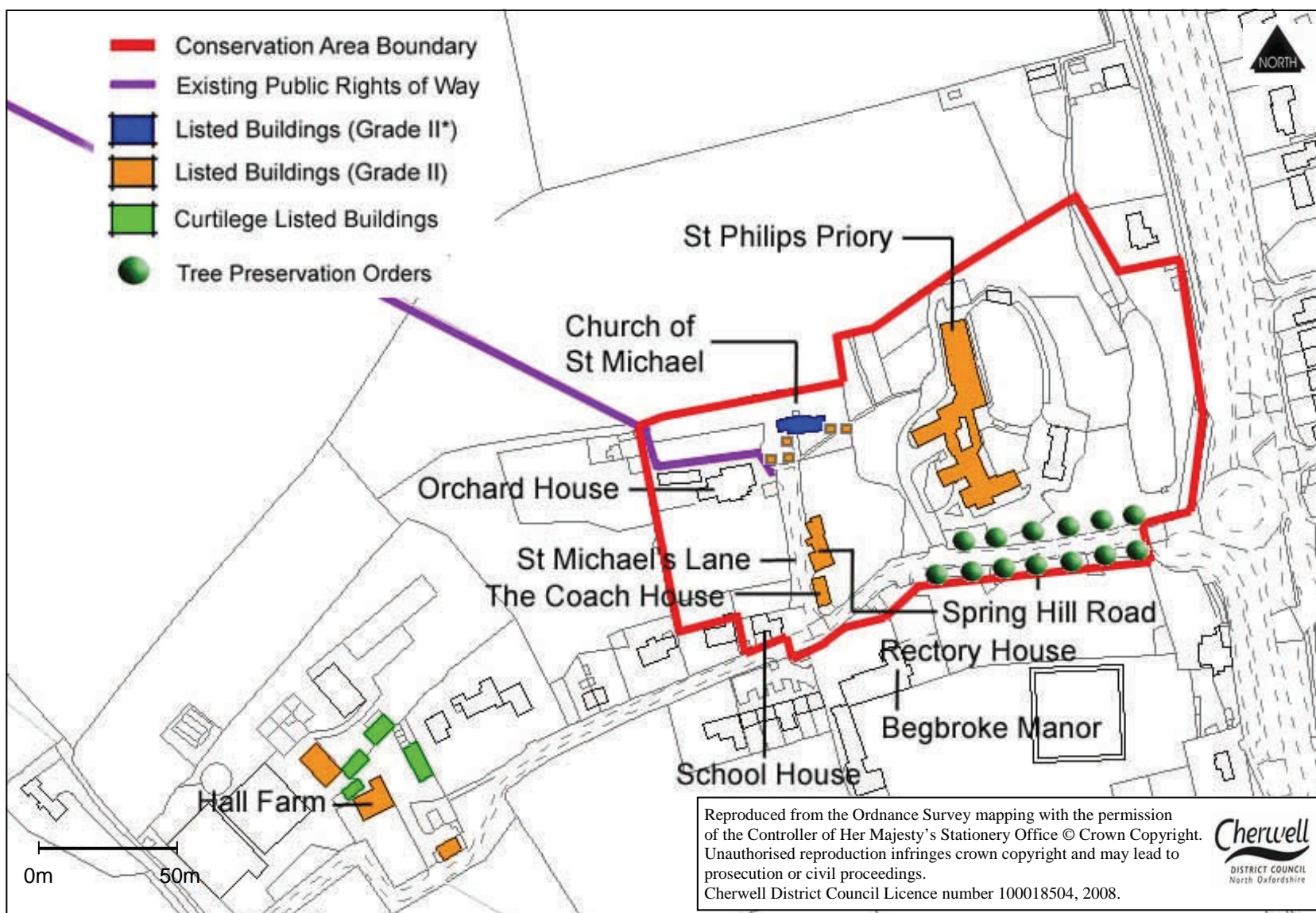


Figure 4: Area Designations Map



### 3. Geology and Topography

#### 3.1

Geologically the parish of Begbroke lies on Oxford Clay, but there is an area of sand and gravel east of the A44. The main settlement is on clay. This geological division is reflected in the names of the surrounding fields, such as Clays in the west and Sands in the east. Begbroke Wood located to the west was from the late 17th Century valued for its timber and reputation as a game reserve.

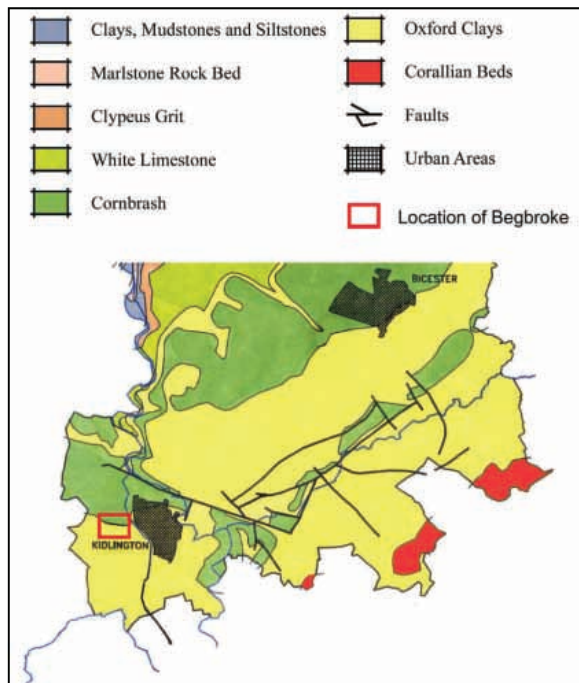


Figure 5: Geological Map

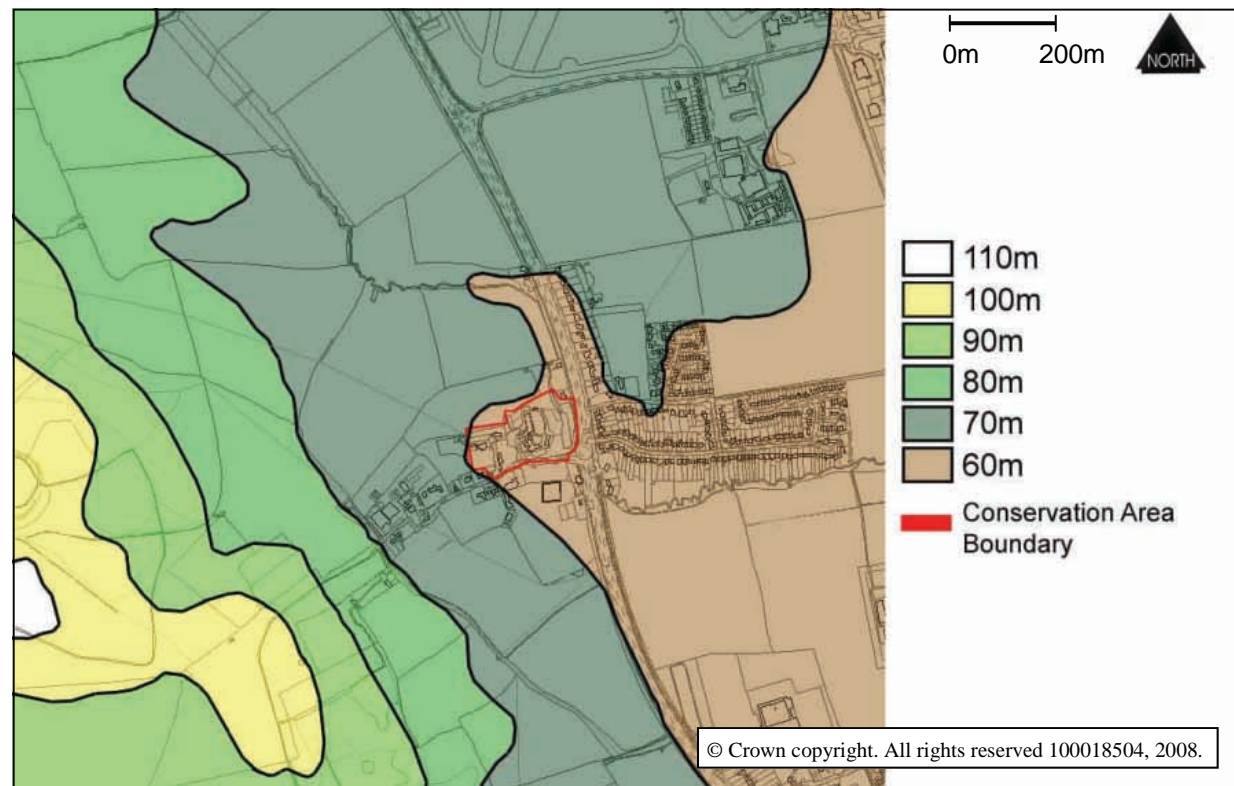
#### 3.2

The geology of the area would suggest that the majority of the surrounding buildings would be constructed of brick and timber. However due to the nature and importance of the buildings, they have been constructed of stone, which can also be acquired relatively locally.

#### 3.3

The land slopes gently from west to east. The higher ground, know as Bladon Heath rises to 110m, approximately 0.5km west of the village. But the village lies on lower ground at 60m above sea level.

Figure 6: Topographical Land Contour Map



## 4. Archaeology

### 4.1

Begbroke Conservation Area forms the heart of the original historic village core. Very little investigation has been conducted in the area and the little that there has been has generally failed to encounter any archaeology. Most of the discoveries have been to the south east of the Conservation Area. The information on the archaeology of this area is generally formed from cropmarks which are visible on aerial photographs. The reason that more has been discovered to the south east of the conservation area could be related to either the land use at the time of the photographs or the underlying geology, which could affect which areas show up features as cropmarks.

However it is possible that the prehistoric settlement did not extend as far west as the rest of the village and that in this case the find spots and cropmarks do indicate the settlement pattern.

Key:

- 01** - Begbroke Historic Village Core
- 02** - Possible Bronze Age site with round barrows.
- 03** - Bronze Age ring ditch and undated enclosures and linear marks.

**04** - Finds only. Neolithic leaf shaped arrowhead, other Neolithic arrowheads, prehistoric scrapers and struck flints. Also Iron Age and Roman pottery.

**05** - Undated enclosure, linear feature and pit.

**06** - Post Medieval house, (1610). Listed building.

**07** - Iron Age hut, including ditch and pit,

evidence of Romano British Settlement. Also Second World War Anti Aircraft gun site.

**08** - Scheduled Ancient Monument known as Round Castle, small multivallate Hill fort dating to the Early Iron Age. Consisting of concentric oval ramparts with outer ditches. Partially investigated in 1988 providing fragments of Early Iron Age pottery. (Located in West Oxfordshire).

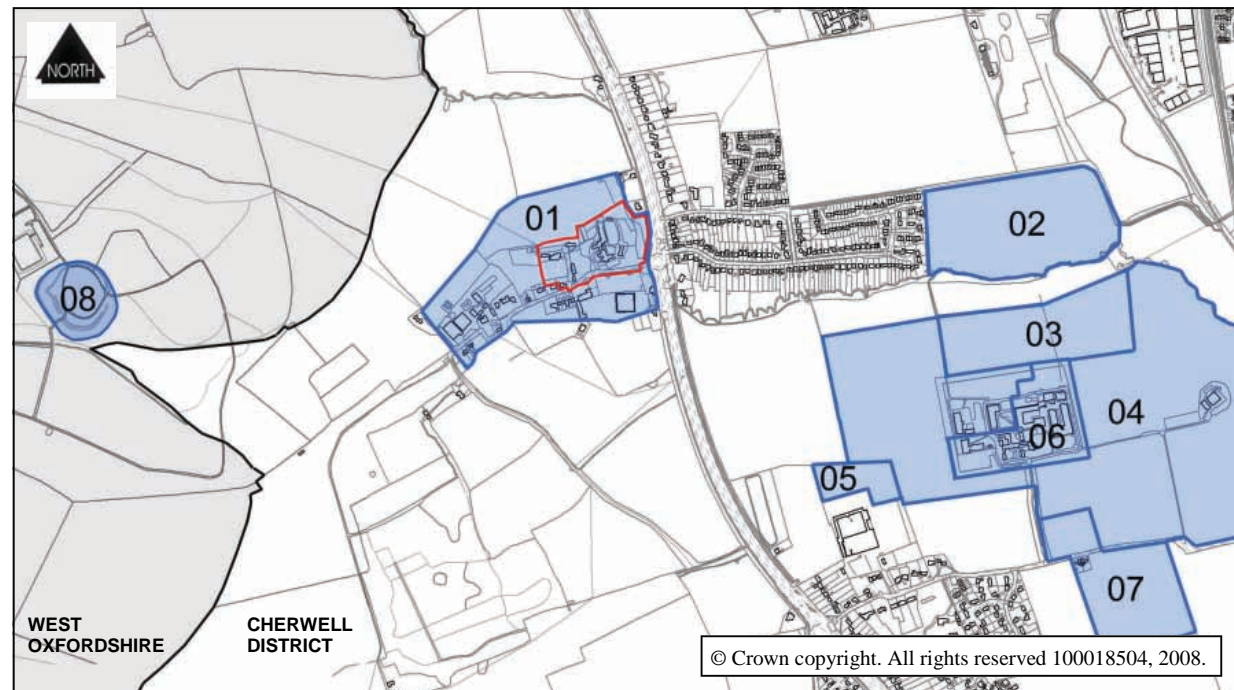


Figure 7: Archaeological Map of Begbroke



## 5. Historic Maps and Photographs

### 5.1

Begbroke Conservation Area covers part of the historic core of the village west of the Oxford/ Woodstock road and north of Spring Hill Road focussing on St Michael's Church, the rectory and St Philips Priory and grounds. Other historic buildings lie to the west and south and there is 20th century residential development to the east of the Conservation Area.

Although there has been significant suburban residential development to the east of the A44 and some infill housing to the west and recent development to the south, the conservation area itself remains today largely as shown on the early OS maps with the exception of some development in the grounds of the Priory.

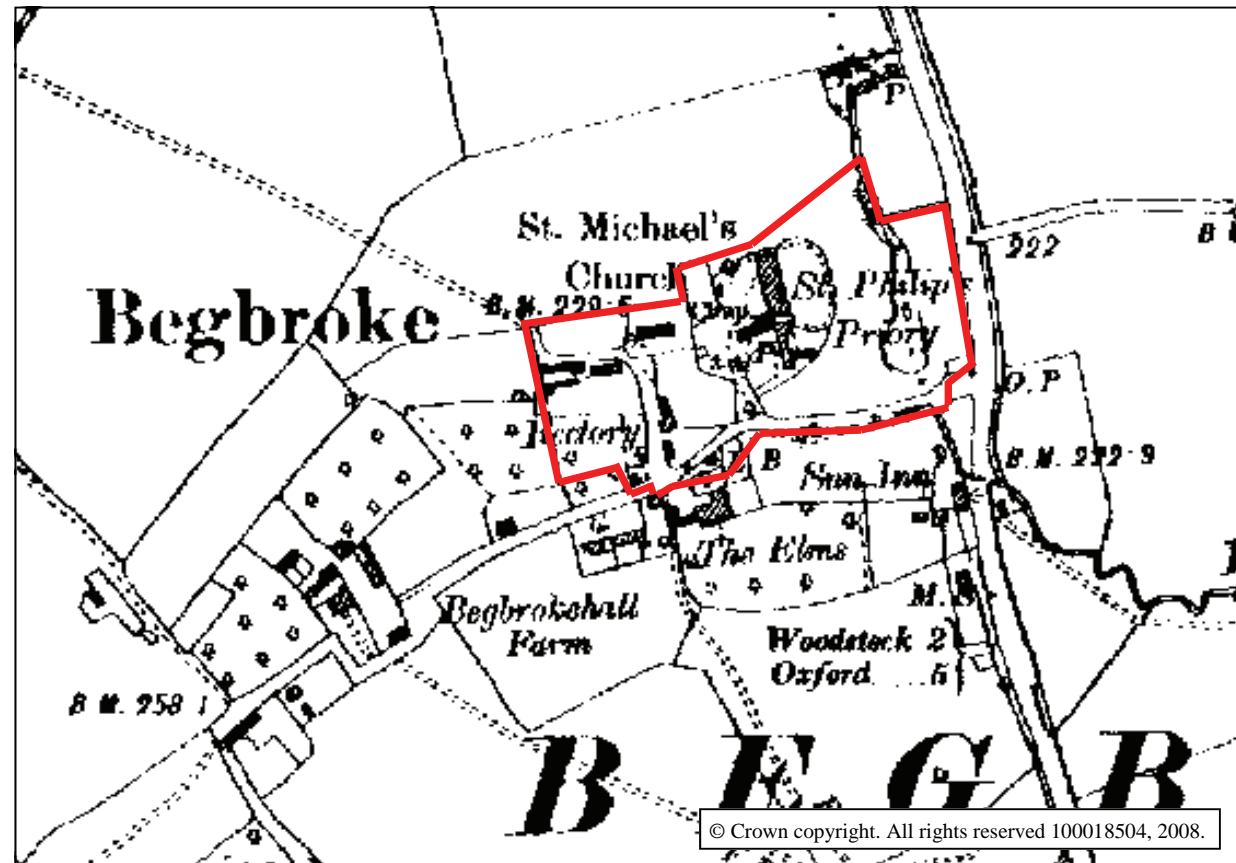
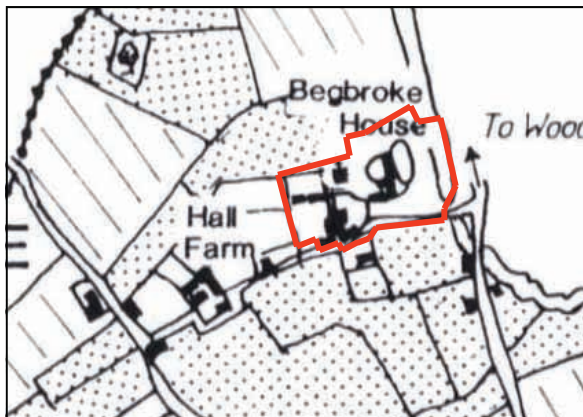


Figure 9: Ordnance Survey Map of Begbroke 1914 - 1923.

Figure 8: Extract from field boundary map of Begbroke and Yarnton from 1845.

## 5.2 Historic Photographs



The Royal Sun Inn, (Packer Collection - Simms).



Catholic Church, Priory of St Philip, (1910 - 40).



St Philips Priory, rear elevation facing the pond, (Packer Collection - Simms).



Church of St Michael, (Henry W Taunt - 1907).



Norman Arch, Church of St Michael Church (Packer Collection - Simms).



Formerly St Juliana's Convent School, (Packer Collection - Simms).



St Philips Priory, front elevation, (Packer Collection - Simms).



St Michaels Lane with church of St Michael at end, (Packer Collection - Simms).



Original Old School House and its replacement, (Packer Collection - Simms)

## 6. History

### 6.1

Traces of early settlements have been discovered close to Begbroke Hill to the south east of the village. The village is believed to be Anglo-Saxon in origin, sited adjacent to Rowel Brook, a tributary of the River Cherwell which runs north west to south east. The Anglo Saxon translation of Begbroke is 'Little Brook'. Alternate sources suggest that the village is named after two other Anglo-Saxon words 'Beck' and 'Broc' both meaning small stream.

### 6.2

The Oxford to Woodstock road was turnpiked in 1718. The Conservation area is approached along Spring Hill Road, formerly known as Watery Lane. The lane was said to be a 'hollow lane, dark, damp, and dirty and too narrow for carriages to pass', before it was widened in the 1820s.

### 6.3

The village appears to have developed from the two manorial centres sited at each end of Spring Hill Road. The site of St Philips Priory appears to have belonged to the non manorial estate known as Studley Priory.

### 6.4

The history of the St Philips Priory site is complicated. The building, which includes the original manor house dating from 1700 was originally known as Begbroke House and is commonly regarded as the chief manor house within the village. Its position, in its own grounds 100 yards east of the church of St Michael, to which it is connected by a private path, is conventional for the leading house in a village. The house was used as a country residence and then as a school until in 1896 when Charles Robertson, who later bought Begbroke Manor, purchased the property and gave it to the Roman Catholic Servite Order who, in turn, opened St Philips Priory in 1897.



*St Philips Priory, front elevation.*

### 6.5

The two manorial estates were named after John FitzHerbert, husband of Anne Giffard, a descendant of John Giffard, who acquired the east side of the village in 1245, whilst the west side belonged to Spencer and Dashwood, named after Sir William Spencer and Sir Robert Dashwood.

### 6.6

The manor house of the FitzHerbert estate was located in the current position of Orchard House, immediately south west of the Church of St Michael. History records the demolition of this house after the building of a larger manor to the south east of the village known as Begbroke Hill.

### 6.7

The School House and the building now known as Begbroke Manor, to the south of Spring Hill Road were also part of the FitzHerbert Estate. Begbroke Manor, located outside the Conservation Area, was renamed Begbroke Place in 1905 by the then owner Charles Robertson. It had previously been known as The Elms and was used as St Juliana's Convent School for a period during the 20th Century until its closure in 1984. The building has recently been greatly extended and converted to residential apartments, which has unfortunately eroded some of the buildings appeal.





*Begbroke Manor outside Conservation Area.*

#### 6.8

The Spencer Dashwood estate, originally belonged to Roger of Lyons who sold it to Sir William Spencer of Yarnton and, in 1599, three quarters of the estate was purchased by Sir Robert Dashwood.

The manor house of the Spencer and Dashwood estate, now known as Hall Farm, is a large, two storeyed building with a stone slate roof. It was extensively remodelled in the early 19th century and further enlarged at various times within that century. It retains however the chimney stacks, parts of walls and floor carpentry of an earlier, probably 17th century house.

As well as the main house several outbuildings are listed in their own right; the barn to the north west of the main house and a small stone building along the front boundary on Spring Hill Road.



*Hall Farm, listed grade II outside Conservation Area.*

#### 6.9 Population

Historically the village has always been very small. In 1086 the village had a population of 9 and by 1377 this had risen to 14. By 1428 there were 10 households in the parish. By 1676 the population had risen to 41 and by 1801 it was 80. The population then fluctuated throughout the 18th Century with a maximum of 118 distorted by the presence of a girls boarding school. During the 20th Century the population rose steadily to 792 in 2001, evidenced by the extensive suburban development to the east of the A44.

## 7. Architectural History

### 7.1

The Conservation Area comprises only 9 buildings and their grounds. These are:

- The Church of St Michael
- St Philips Priory
- St Philips Chapel
- A building associated with St Philips Priory
- Orchard House
- Orchard Cottage
- Old School House
- The Old Rectory
- The Coach House

### 7.2

Begbroke is a small, but unusual village as it includes two churches of different religious traditions within a very small area. The Church of St Michael is a Norman church and of some note, constructed on a traditional plan of chancel, nave and west tower. The two lower stages of the tower are original to its Norman origins with windows of that date. The upper third was added in the 14th Century and has bell-openings and a saddle-back roof. The church underwent restoration in the 19th Century, which included the rebuilding of the chancel (1845) and the replacement of the windows in both the chancel and the nave.



*Church of St Michael, listed grade II\*.*

### 7.3

The church is particularly noted for the Norman doorway and historic stained glass. The doorway has an arch of two orders, the inner arch is plain and the outer has zigzag decoration. The jamb shafts also have spiral and zigzag decoration with cushion capitals. The doorway has since been enclosed within a porch which has helped to reduce weathering to the stone work, which remains in fairly good condition.



*Norman doorway.*

### 7.4

The Church has various ages of stained glass. The oldest glass remains only as fragments and dates from the 15th Century. Much of the remaining glass dates from 1827 and was designed by T. Willement, (1786-1880) a provincial stained glass artist.

### 7.5

The second of the religious buildings is the Chapel associated with St Philips Priory. The Chapel was opened in 1899 and designed Leonard Stokes (1858—1925) in a style known as 'free perpendicular'. Stokes was an important church architect who studied with the likes of G E Street, T E Colcutt and G F Bodley. The building has single light, side windows and exaggerated corner buttresses, plus a small antechapel to the west, which has a parapet with ball finials.



*Chapel of St Philip, listed grade II.*

### 7.6

The Priory of St Philip is a group of loosely linked structures, which include a substantial level of new building. The main building has an irregular façade with sash windows, gable attic dormers and a pediment enclosing a round window. The entrance has a fanlight, with a three sided bay window to the left. At the rear there is a 18th century doorway with a wooden pediment on carved brackets. An orchard associated with The Priory is located to the north outside of the Conservation Area.



*Priory of St Philip, rear elevation.*

### 7.7

Also of interest is 'Rectory House'. Described in 1634 as 'a little dwelling house', which consisted of four bays. The original house was rebuilt in 1734 by Richard Hawkins, who was Rector of Begbroke and Vicar at Yarnton.

The building is based on Hawkins vicarage in Yarnton and was, when built, a small house. The house was then almost doubled in size after large additions were added to the north in the late 18th century. Extensive rebuilding took place in 1875, when the gabled roof was added and the coach house and stable erected.



*Rectory House*



### 7.8

The lack of small vernacular dwellings, dating from the 17th and 18th centuries is unusual and is due to demolition in the 19th Century, possibly around 1838 when the houses of the village were dismissed as 'poor cottages'.

### 7.9

House building began in the 1930s on the east side of the A44. The earliest houses and bungalows were reported to be of good quality on spacious grounds and construction continued into the latter part of the 1940s. After 1945 the housing started spreading steadily eastwards. This eastward development combined with the wide, busy main road divides the village into two communities.

### 7.10

One of the newest additions to the village are Solid State Logic Ltd, a manufacturer of broadcasting equipment who in 1986 brought the site to the east of Begbroke Manor. The offices form an interesting contemporary building within a historic setting.



*Solid State Logic outside of Conservation Area*

### 7.11 Important Non Listed Buildings

There are three unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. These are:

#### School House

The building is adorned with a stone tablet which reads 'Begbroke School House 1820' and refers to the original house which was demolished in 1965. The existing building was constructed around 1970 of rubble stone on a simple rectangular plan with bradstone quoins. The windows and doorways have a decorative fluting above to disperse water, referred to as a label mould.



*School House*

#### Orchard House

The building bears the dates 1692 and 1694 and the initials of its first owner Thomas FitzHerbert. It stands south west of the church of St Michael and is believed to be on what was the site of the FitzHerbert manor house. The building itself is a large, plain, two storeyed stone house which has been greatly altered and enlarged in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

A 1801 drawing of the church of St Michael appears to show a dovecot west of the churchyard walls presumably within the curtilage of Orchard House, however this is no longer present.



*Orchard House*

### Lodge Building

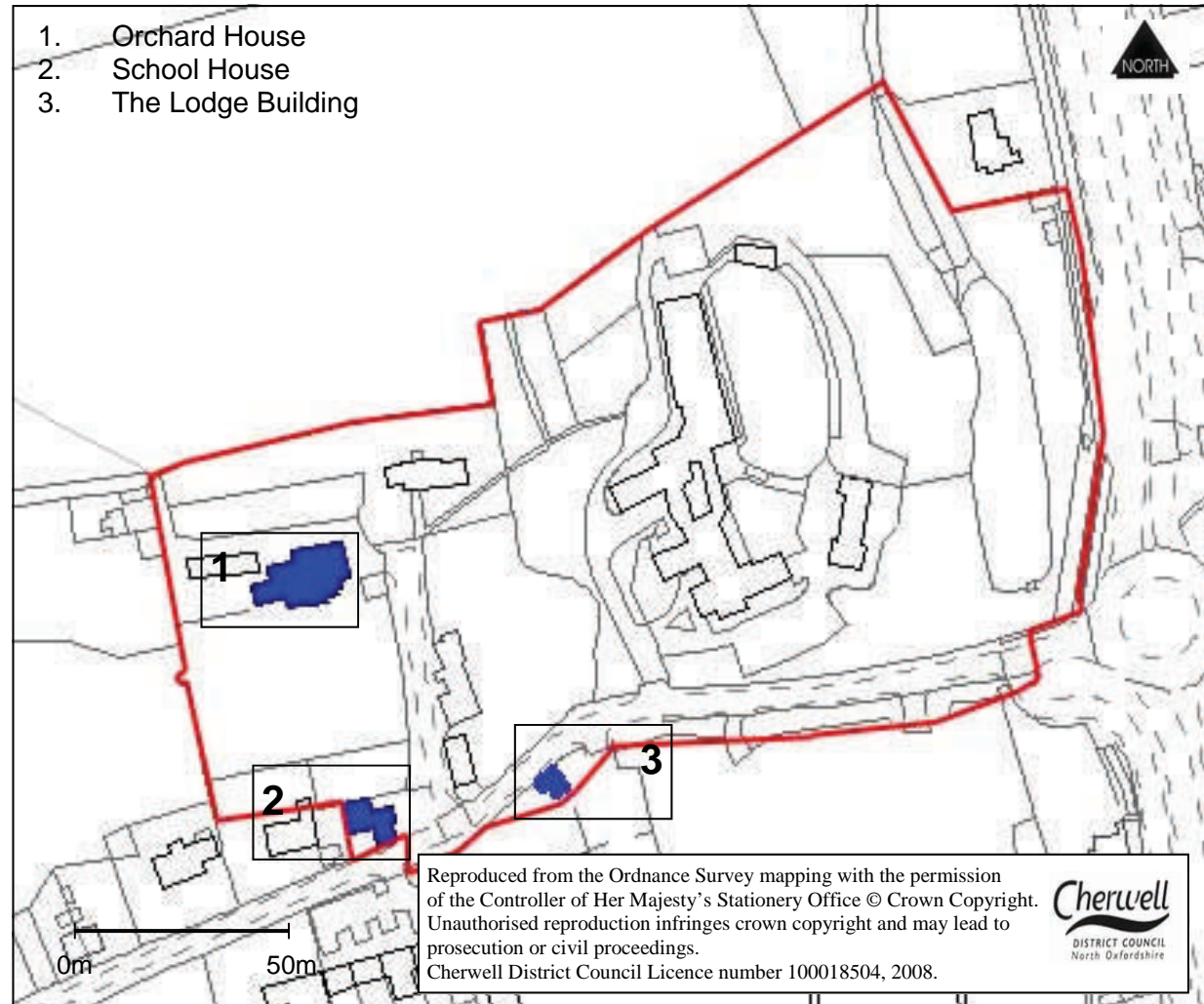
The building is located on a prominent corner along Spring Hill Road forming a tight bend and enclosing the street in a most attractive manner. Its constructed on an 'L' shaped plan in around 1900 and is a single storey in height. The building is constructed of roughly coursed local stone, in keeping with the areas vernacular style and has a steeply pitched roof.

The building is currently vacant and for sale, and its future use appears uncertain. The building is in a poor state of repair, however it is suitable for conversion. Care should be taken in handling access and the means of enclosure ensuring that the attractive frontage to Spring Hill Road is not adversely affected.



*Lodge Building.*

### 7.11 Location of Important Non Listed Buildings



*Figure 10: Location of important non listed buildings.*

## 8. Character

The essence of the special character of the Conservation Area is the use of local materials in traditional styles within large maturely vegetated plots, bordered by dry stone walls.

The nine buildings of noticeable size within the Conservation Area consists of five houses, one working Priory, one Church, one Chapel and an accommodation block associated with St Philips Priory.

Analysis of these two aspects has shown that what few buildings there are, are all historically connected, such as the Old School House and St Philips Priory and that there is a consistent character across the whole Conservation Area.

The two religious orders contribute to providing the Conservation Area with two strong focal points:

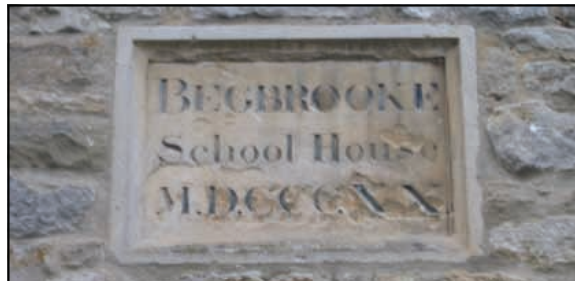
- St Philips Priory and its associated grounds.
- The Church of St Michael and surrounding houses.

### 8.1 Land Use and Street Pattern

The land use is either residential or ecclesiastical; no public amenities exist within the Conservation Area although a Public House is situated adjacent fronting the A44. The street pattern is minimal, as there are only two public highways. St Philips Priory is accessed off a private road which branches off Spring Hill Road.

### 8.2 Building age, type and style

The appearance of the buildings reflects their use. The buildings are predominantly detached, but with heights varying from one storey to three. Building ages also vary greatly from the late 12th Century with the Church of St Michael through to the late 19th Century with the Chapel of St Philip.



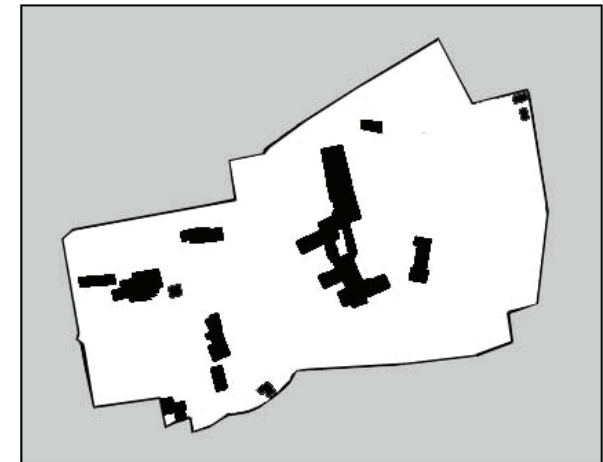
*Date stone in the front elevation of School House, MD CCCXX (1820).*

### 8.3 Scale and massing

Begbroke is unusual in that there is no street frontage, only two buildings face Spring Hill Road: The Lodge Building and The School House, and either really addresses it.

The limited number of buildings are predominantly large in scale, most set in spacious grounds. The enclosed, well vegetated grounds are the dominant

features, creating the settings for the buildings. This low level of building mass, combined with the open green spaces forms the basic composition of the Conservation Area.



*Figure 11: Figure ground of Begbroke Conservation*

### 8.4 Carriageway, pavements, footpaths

A footway only exists on the southern side of Spring Hill Road. Historically the whole of the road would have been without a footway, as with St Michael's Lane where grassed verges meet the edge of the road without the use of kerb stones. The lack of kerb stones creates a rural feel to the area, adding to its character.



Spring Hill Road is laid in tarmacadam which is matched in parts with concrete kerb stones.

The path between the Church of St Michael and St Philips Priory appears to have been recently re-laid and is pleasing in its appearance. Otherwise, no historic paving materials remain.

### 8.5 Means of enclosure

The Conservation Area is divided by characteristic roughly coursed dry stone walls, (some of which have been pointed) of between 0.7 and 1.2 metres in height, although there are examples of over 2m, such as along Spring Hill Road and within St Philips Priory. The walls are predominantly finished with a traditional dry stone wall coping, consisting of stones laid 'on edge', which historically deterred livestock from jumping over the boundary.

A large number of the walls are located around the Church of St Michael of which many are in a poor state of repair and have, or are on the verge of, collapse. Some have recently been crudely rebuilt. The walls play a key role in the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and therefore it is essential that they are well maintained and expertly repaired.



*Typical boundary wall, with on edge coping and limited areas of pointing.*

### 8.6 Trees, hedges, verges, open spaces

Spring Hill Road is overhung with an avenue of mature horse chestnut trees, all of which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders, which creates a pleasing entry to the Conservation Area. Heavy tree planting is continued into the private gardens of St Philips Priory and beyond. These gardens make up a large proportion of the Conservation Area. The area has limited hedging although the hedge along the east boundary of Orchard House focuses and frames the view on the Church of St Michael. The church yard is also worthy of note as it provides the setting for the church and allows views north, towards Bladon.



*Trees within the garden of St Philips Priory.*

The rear grounds of St Philips Priory also include two water bodies; a large pond along the eastern boundary and a decorative channel. Both add further interest to the grounds.



*Pond along the eastern boundary of St Philips Priory.*



*Channel within the garden of St Philips Priory.*

## 8.7 Key Views

There are five key views identified with the Conservation Area. These are:

- Along St Michael's Lane. The view highlights the rural feel of the lane and frames the Church of St Michael at the end.
- Out of the Conservation Area from the northern boundary; this view is present along the majority of the north boundary.
- Towards the Conservation Area from the fields to the north. Both this view and the one above highlight the setting of the Conservation Area.
- Both directions along Spring Hill Road, which is framed by the Horse Chestnut trees on either side and forms the entrance and exit to the Conservation Area.

- Across the gardens of St Philips Priory, which indicates the open nature of the Conservation Area.



*View north along St Michael's Lane towards church.*



*Tree lined view east along Spring Hill Road.*



*Above: View south from the edge of Bladon into Begbroke Conservation Area.*

*Below: View north into open fields. Taken from St Michaels's churchyard.*







*View north west across the gardens of St Philips Priory.*

### **8.8 Threats**

The character and appearance of the Conservation Area benefits from the fact that most of the properties are statutorily listed and so works require consent. Their spacious grounds, which are well vegetated, also make a positive contribution to the character. Properties appear well maintained and their grounds provide attractive green, well wooded settings.

The mature vegetation marks a significant contribution to the setting of all the buildings, but only the horse chestnut trees along Spring Hill Road are protected.

Dry stone boundary walls are a key characteristic and those under 1m high, not fronting a highway are afforded no protection by Conservation Area legislation. Due to the lack of a binding material dry stone walls can suffer from collapse, such as those within the churchyard. It is important that the rebuilding of the walls is undertaken by a skilled professional, so that their intended appearance is achieved.



*Dry stone wall within the churchyard.*

Being located on a no through road, the tranquillity of the place enables enjoyment of its rural location, but the sound of traffic on the A44 is ever present.

There are currently few alien materials or details by virtue of most properties being listed. The limited material palette of coursed local stone and stonesfield slates should be employed in any new building.

The future of The Lodge Building is of concern. The scale of the building does not suit it to many uses, however every effort should be made to find a suitable use and to secure the retention of the building.

The recent development to the south of the conservation area has involved the conversion and extension of historic buildings. Whilst this has been undertaken with relative sympathy, the scale of the development has had an impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Coach House Mews and Begbroke Manor were considered for inclusion but the proportion of new build was considered to have affected their architectural and historic interest.



## 8.9 Visual Analysis

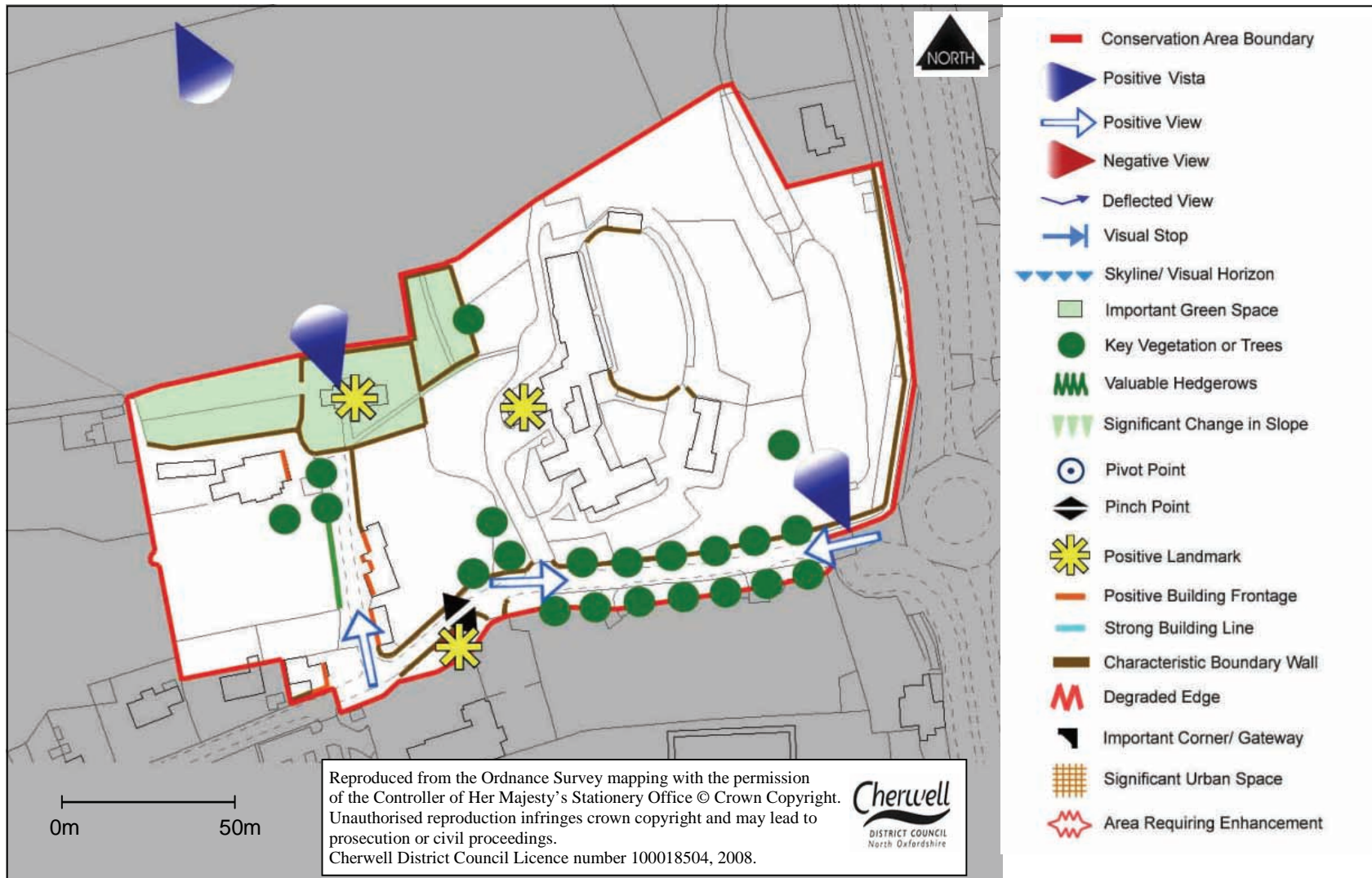
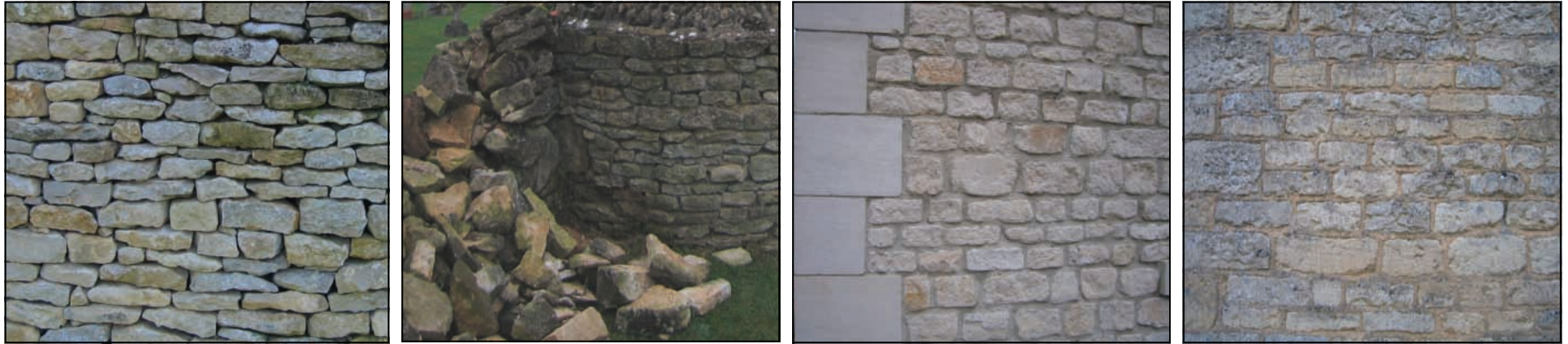


Figure 12: Visual Analysis Map

## 9. Materials and Details



*Wall Materials*



*Footway Materials. Left - Pavers from path between the Church of St Michael and St Philips Priory. Right - Brick pavers from the driveway of St Philips Priory.*



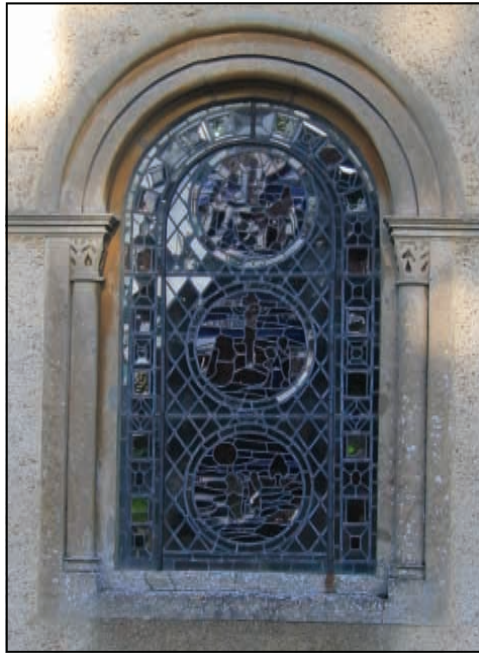


*Door Details*



*Roof Materials*





*Window Details*

## 10. Management Plan

### 10.1

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

The Conservation Area is well looked after and cared for, and the buildings well maintained. However there are four issues which threaten the character and appearance of Begbroke Conservation Area: The potential loss of characteristic boundary walls; the potential use of unsympathetic modern materials; the level of traffic movement on the A44, Woodstock Road; and potential new development.

A key characteristic of the village is the location of large buildings within larger open spaces, divided by characteristic boundary walls. Whilst there are few examples of the removal of boundary walls, their impact is reinforced by their number and any loss or poor or inappropriate maintenance could have a large impact on the quality of the street scene.

The cumulative effect of unsympathetic materials and alterations to external features, whilst individually seem of little significance can change either the character of a building or its setting. The use of inappropriate materials, for example the replacement of traditional window casements, usually with uPVC double glazing or the replacement of traditional roof tiles with poor imitations can have the most visual impact. It is changes such as these which is a cause for concern and whilst at present the Conservation Area is relatively lacking in these alterations they can lead to the gradual erosion of the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area and should therefore be discouraged.

The pleasing rural environment created by virtue of the no-through road is constantly disturbed by the noise of traffic from the A44. Although it is accepted that little can be done to reduce it, it remains of concern.

Care should be taken to ensure that the open parts of the Conservation Area and the land which make up its setting and impact positively on its appearance remain open. Whilst these areas are green belt, any form of development, especially within the spacious grounds of the existing buildings should be meticulously considered, as development could detract from the setting of some of the key buildings.

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 appearance of the conservation area. The policies covering alterations and development of the historic environment are given in Appendix 1.

## 10.2 Generic Guidance

The Council Will:

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

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

## 10.3 Enhancement and Management of the Public Realm

The Council Will:

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

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



*Typical boundary wall.*

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

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

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

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

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



*Existing bus stop on eastern edge of Conservation Area.*



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

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

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



*Overhead power cables.*

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

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

14. Promote the retention of grassed verges which meet the roadside without a kerb stone, where appropriate.



*Grassed verge meeting edge of road without a kerb stone gives an attractive rural feel.*



*Bollards restricting parking on grass.*

15. Promote the use of a suitable style of boundary for the position within the village, for example the use of simple post fencing for properties backing onto open ground.



*Simple post fencing at the rear of St Philips Priory separating it from the open fields behind.*

16. Promote the retention of historic footpaths within the village and work with bodies such as the Parish Council to prevent these being lost. The informality of these paths should be preserved and attempts to add hard surfaces or signage should be resisted.



*Footpath north, from the Church of St Michael to Bladon.*

#### **10.4 Management and Protection of Important Green Spaces**

The Council Will:

1. Promote positive management of vegetation. Trees and hedges make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Planting of exotic imports or inappropriate varieties, such as Leylandii, is to be strongly discouraged, these trees grow fast blocking important views as well being uncharacteristic of the area. Trees over a certain size within the area boundary are protected. Further protection is given to the avenue of trees either side of Spring Hill Road. These all subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

2. Promote the retention of grass verges within the village. These play a key role in retaining the rural feel.

3. Protect views in and out of the Conservation Area, especially those from and to the north.

4. ~~Seek~~ to preserve the setting of the Conservation Area.

5. Preserve the character and appearance of open spaces within the Conservation Area. Urban features such as roadside kerbing should be avoided and parking on grass areas discouraged, especially along St Michael's Lane.



*Part of the Churchyard of the Church of St Michael.*



*Gardens at the front of St Philips Priory.*



## 11. Conservation Area Boundary - Revisions and Justification

### 11.1

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

### 11.2

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

### 11.3

Begbroke Conservation Area was designated in July 1991, although no appraisal was undertaken. This is the first appraisal of the character and appearance of the area.

### 11.4

As part of the review the whole of Begbroke village has been examined. The buildings to the south of Spring Hill Road, namely Begbroke Manor and Coach House Mews as well as Hall Farm to the west were all considered for inclusion.

It was considered that the buildings to the south of Spring Hill Road have been greatly altered, which has reduced their historic and architectural interest and Hall Farm is already statutorily listed, which provides more protection than Conservation Area designation. It is noted that the two outbuildings associated with Hall Farm and statutorily listed in their own right are in a poor state of repair, especially the small barn located along Spring Hill Road.

### 11.5

However two small revisions to the Conservation Area boundary were approved on the 2 June 2008. These are:

- The remaining land associated with St Philips Priory. The extension rationalises the current boundary, giving further protection to the setting of the Priory.
- The lodge building on the southern side of Spring Hill Road. The building can be dated to around 1900 and forms an important feature within the overall street scene of Spring Hill Road, providing visual enclosure and interest. Furthermore the building is currently in a poor state of repair and its inclusion within the conservation area will afford it some protection against future neglect.



Figure 13: Historic Map of 1875 - 1887, without the Lodge Building marked.

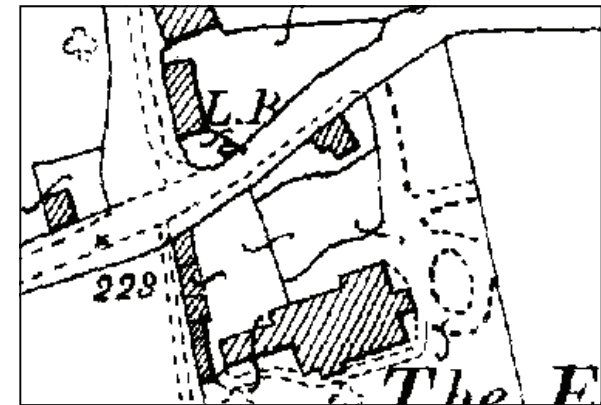


Figure 14: Historic Map of 1899 - 1905, with Lodge Building, plus plot boundary.



#### 11.6

For the avoidance of doubt the boundary of the Conservation Area can be described as follows:

#### 11.7 Northern Boundary

Starting in the North West corner the conservation area boundary runs east along the boundary of St Michael's Church. The boundary then turns through 90 degrees progressing north before again turning through 90 degrees to continue north east. It then follows the boundary of St Philips Priory to the furthest point north, where it turns right through 90 degrees continuing south east along the rear boundary of Priory House.

#### 11.8 Eastern Boundary

The east boundary runs on the western side of the A44, Woodstock Road, south before terminating at the roundabout with Spring Hill Road.

#### 11.9 Southern Boundary

The southern boundary continues from the roundabout with the A44, Woodstock Road progressing west, on the southern side of Spring Hill Road, including the horse chestnut trees.

It then deviates southwards from the entrance to Begbroke manor on the south side of Spring Hill Road, running around the Lodge Building, before heading west, crossing the road outside the School House.

Once past the front of the School House it turns through 90 degrees northwards along the western boundary of the School House. The boundary turns sharply west at the end of the School House, crossing 18 Spring Hill Road before reaching the south west corner.

#### 11.10 Western Boundary

The western boundary runs northwards along the boundary of Orchard House. The boundary has a small deviation half way up before reaching the north west corner.

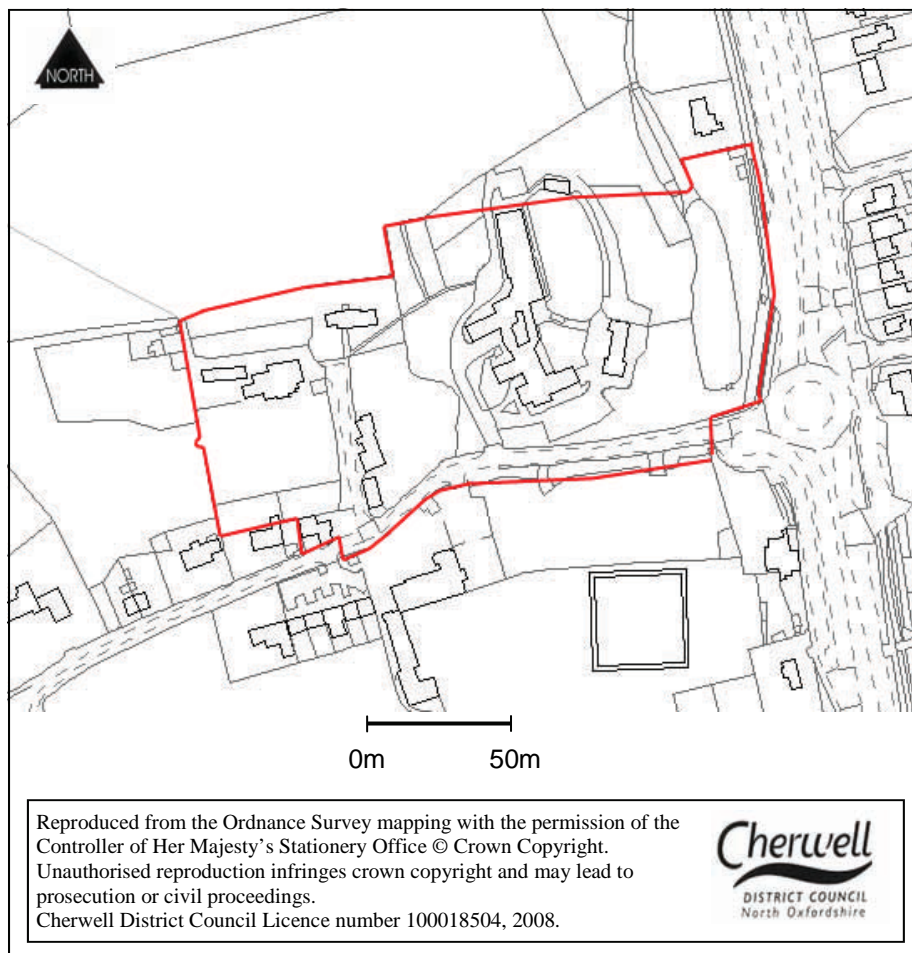


Figure 15: Original Conservation Area Boundary Map.

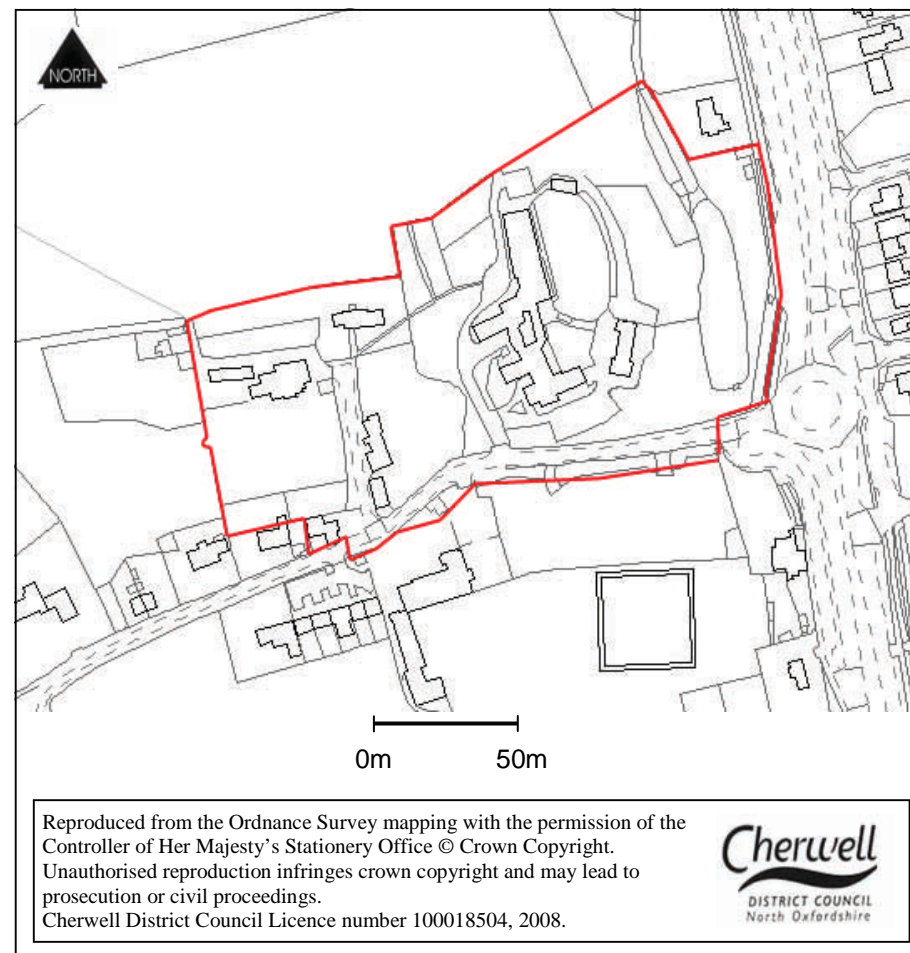


Figure 16: Revised Conservation Area Boundary Map.

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

### 12.1

Conservation areas are designated by the Council under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. There are different planning controls in conservation areas and anyone proposing development should seek advice from the Department of Planning and Development Services at an early stage. The main effects of designation are as follows:

### 12.2 Development should preserve or enhance the area

Development should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, the special architectural or historic interest of which it is desirable to conserve. This will enable the achievement of higher standards of design in new developments and secure the conservation of existing important features and characteristics. Information supporting planning applications must demonstrate the proposal, and its impact on the conservation area, in sufficient detail to enable a thorough assessment.

### 12.3 Control over demolition of buildings

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

### 12.4 Control over trees

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

### 12.5 Protection of important open spaces and views

There are a number of open spaces within the village that it is important to protect because they are integral to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The inclusion of these open spaces in the designation of the conservation area is specifically to ensure that these spaces are preserved.

### 12.6 Control over the demolition of enclosures

Consent is also required to demolish any means of enclosure over 1 metre in height abutting a 'highway' (including a public footpath or bridleway), waterway or open space; or above 2 metres in height in any other case. This will mean that walls not relating to listed buildings, that add so much to the character and appearance of the street scene, will be afforded protection.

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

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



### 12.8 Reduced permitted development

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

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

### 12.9 Enhancements should preserve and enhance the area

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

## 13. Bibliography

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English Heritage (2005a) *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, consultation document.*

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## 14. Appendix 1

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

### 14.1 Oxfordshire structure plan 2016

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

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

### 14.2 Cherwell Local Plan 1996

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

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

**H19** Proposals for the conversion of a rural building, whose form, bulk and general design is in keeping with its surroundings to a dwelling in a location beyond the built-up limits of a settlement will be favourably considered provided: (i) the building can be converted without major rebuilding or

extension and without inappropriate alteration to its form and character; (ii) the proposal would not cause significant harm to the character of the countryside or the immediate setting of the building; (iii) the proposal would not harm the special character and interest of a building of architectural or historic significance; (iv) the proposal meets the requirements of the other policies in the plan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**EN43** proposals that would result in the total or substantial demolition of a listed building, or any significant part of it, will not be permitted in the absence of clear and convincing evidence that the market testing set out in PPG15 paragraphs 3.16 to 3.19 has been thoroughly followed with no success.



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

**EN47** The Council will promote sustainability of the historic environment through conservation, protection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage and its interpretation and presentation to the public. In particular it will: (i) seek to ensure that scheduled ancient monuments and other unscheduled sites of national and regional importance and their settings are permanently preserved; (ii) ensure that development which could adversely affect sites, structures, landscapes or buildings of archaeological interest and their settings will require an assessment of the archaeological resource through a desk-top study, and where appropriate a field evaluation; (iii) not permit development that would adversely affect archaeological remains and their settings unless the applicant can demonstrate that the archaeological resource will be physically preserved in-situ, or a suitable strategy has been put forward to mitigate the impact of development proposals.

**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.

## 15. Acknowledgments

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