

Littlebury Conservation Area Appraisal and Draft Management Proposals, 2011



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1 Part 1: Appraisal

Introduction

1.1 Uttlesford is extremely rich in terms of its heritage. It contains a wealth of fine buildings, many of them ancient and 'listed'. These buildings with their varied styles and methods of construction span many centuries. Attractive small market towns and villages punctuate the gently rolling countryside, whose arable and pastoral mosaic of greens, yellows, blues and browns alter with the seasons and from ever-changing crop selection. These fine built environments in their rural settings have been subject to damaging historic, economic and social influences but many settlements still continue to possess an architectural form and setting of the very highest quality, certainly amongst the finest in Essex and some arguably, worthy of inclusion in a list of the nation's best.

1.2 Patterns of change will inevitably continue to shape and influence the environment in the future. The district is subject to many significant economic pressures and the community is increasingly aware of the need to protect the environment. The council therefore considers this is a particularly relevant moment to appraise the qualities of our best historic and architectural areas and put forward proposals to protect and enhance them for both the present and future generations.

1.3 There is now widespread recognition that the quality of such conservation areas is the sum total of a number of factors. These include general layout, overall scale, the relationship of buildings to each other, the spaces and vistas between them and the elements that unite them, the mixture of uses; the quality of advertisements, road signage, surfaces, street furniture and trees, as well as the quality of the individual buildings themselves. Conservation area designation and the undertaking of this appraisal recognises the importance of all these factors, particularly in exercising the control of development and in formulating management proposals.

1.4 The purpose of undertaking this conservation area appraisal is to

- Identify and justify the special character of the area
- Identify elements that should be retained or enhanced
- Identify detracting elements
- Review the boundary
- Put forward enhancement proposals
- Provide and strengthen development and design control

1.5 In undertaking an exercise such as this, one aspect that is too easily forgotten is the community itself and the people who live locally and contribute to its cohesion and social success. Although situated just two miles from the large market town of Saffron Walden, Littlebury has managed to retain much of its local character. The village supports a diverse range of organisations including a local branch of the British Legion, Brownies, the Littlebury Ladies group and an active history group. The *Parish of Littlebury Millennium Album* published by the Parish of Littlebury Millennium Society in 2000 contained contributions from many of the residents then living in the parish. A further

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community project resulted in a parish history being published in 2005^(1.1). Holy Trinity Church is a focal point for many village activities and there is a well-used village hall in Walden Road.



Picture 1.1 Littlebury and Audley End as depicted on the 1777 Chapman and Andre map

1.6 The quality of this varied local environment has afforded the historic core of Littlebury Conservation Area status, which was designated in 1977. The extent of the area has remained unchanged since that date and one consideration of this study will be to examine the existing boundaries to see whether or not boundary changes are now appropriate.

Planning Legislative Framework

1.7 To benefit all participants in this process, it is considered important that this appraisal outlines the basics of how the planning system operates.

1.8 The legislative basis for designating a conservation area is set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 hereafter referred to as 'the Act'. The Act states that Local Authorities shall from time to time designate conservation areas, which are defined as being '*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance*'. The same section of the Act also requires councils to undertake periodic reviews.

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1.9 Within conservation areas there are additional planning controls. It is important that if these are to be supported, particularly through the planning appeal process, our conservation areas accord with the above statutory description, that rational and consistent judgements are made in determining their special qualities and extent of their boundaries and that the concept of designation is not devalued by including areas that lack special interest.

1.10 Uttlesford District Council has the responsibility in law to designate conservation areas and once designated has to review them from time to time (section 69 of the Act). Section 71 of the Act makes it clear that councils should '*formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement*' of conservation areas and hold a public meeting to consider them.

1.11 Conservation Area Consent. There are additional planning controls that apply in conservation areas relating specifically to the demolition of buildings. The detail is set out at section 74 of the Act which states that 'a building in a conservation area shall not be demolished without the consent of the appropriate authority'. This requirement is known as 'Conservation Area Consent' and is subject to certain exceptions. For example, it does not apply to Listed Buildings which are protected by their own legislation but is relevant to other non listed buildings in the conservation area above a threshold size set out in the legislation.

1.12 Permitted development. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 (as amended), hereafter referred to as 'the Order', defines the overall range of minor developments for which planning permission is not required and this range of 'permitted development' is more restricted in conservation areas. In this respect, the Order currently requires that the addition of dormer windows to roof slopes, various types of cladding, the erection of satellite dishes fronting a highway and a reduced size of extensions, require planning permission in a conservation area whereas they would not require permission beyond the boundary.

1.13 Minor developments. However there still remain many other minor developments that do not require planning permission, even in a conservation area. So as to provide further protection to the built environment, the law permits councils to introduce additional controls, if appropriate. Examples of such controls can include restrictions on the erection or removal of chimneys, restrictions on some developments fronting a highway or open space such as an external porch, or on the painting of a dwelling house or the demolition of gates, fences and walls. The removal of particular types of architectural features that are important to the character or appearance of a conservation area, or to individual buildings within it, such as distinctive porches, windows or walls or railings to non-listed properties, can be subject to a more detailed assessment and, if appropriate made subject to protection by a legal process known as an 'Article 4 Direction'. The use of such Directions can only be made in justified circumstances where a clear assessment of the qualities of the conservation area has been made. In conducting this appraisal, consideration will be given as to whether or not such additional controls are necessary for Littlebury.

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1.14 Trees. Trees located within conservation areas are further subjected to planning controls. Subject to certain exceptions, principally relating to size and condition, any proposal to lop, fell or uproot a tree has to be ‘notified’ to the council. The council may then decide whether to make the tree/s subject to a Tree Preservation Order. All types of trees can be protected including hedgerow trees if they have amenity value, but not hedges, bushes or shrubs. The order can cover anything from a single tree to large areas of woodland. This appraisal identifies only the most significant trees or groups of trees that make a particularly important contribution to the character of the conservation area, though other trees not specifically identified may still be suitable for statutory protection.

1.15 Hedgerows. The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 make provision for the protection of ‘important’ hedges. The regulations only cover hedgerows that are at least 20m long or, if shorter, connected to other hedgerows at both ends or part of a longer hedgerow. Additional considerations are made for its age and or its historical importance, the wildlife it supports and its number of woody species. The hedge must be in or adjacent to common land, village greens, SSSIs, LNRs, or land used for agriculture, forestry or breeding or keeping of horses, ponies or donkeys.

Planning Policy Framework

1.16 National Policy. Planning Policy Statement 5, Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS 5) published in 2010, sets out the Government’s national policies on the conservation of the historic environment. These policies are a material consideration to be taken into account when determining whether development should proceed within the conservation area.

1.17 PPS 5 attaches importance to achieving good quality design in new developments, stating a successful scheme should contribute positively to the character, distinctiveness and significance of the historic environment. To be successfully designed, proposals should take account of:

- the significance of nearby assets and the contribution of their setting;
- the general character and distinctiveness of the local buildings, spaces and landscape;
- features that are a key to a sense of place;
- construction, materials and detailing of existing buildings and spaces;
- topography;
- views into and from the site;
- green landscaping and the current and historic uses in the area and the urban grain

1.18 PPS 5 states that the ‘*Government’s overarching aim is that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations*’. Furthermore, ‘*the historic environment provides a tangible link with our past and contributes to our sense of national local and community identity. It also provides the character and distinctiveness that is so important to a positive sense of place...*’

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1.19 Article 4 Directions are referred to in PPS 5, which states that where the exercise of Permitted Development Rights undermines or would undermine the aims to protect the historic environment then councils should consider restricting permitted development rights by making use of Article 4 Directions.

1.20 Policies within other areas of local authority responsibility, such as highways, may need to be aligned with the strategy for the management of the historic environment.

1.21 PPS 5 importantly states that '*At local level plans should consider the qualities and local distinctiveness of the historic environment ...*' Such plans '*should include consideration of how best to conserve individual, groups or types of heritage assets that are most at risk of loss through neglect, decay or other threats*'.

1.22 These objectives for the historic environment are also reflected in Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, ODPM (2005) (PPS1), which states that, '*... planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by [amongst other things] protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of countryside, and existing communities*'.

1.23 **Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).** The draft NPPF was put out for consultation by the Government in 2011. As well as an "assertive" clarification of policy, the framework also proposes significant alterations to and simplification of existing planning policy and guidance and the cancellation of existing Planning Policy statements (PPS) and guidance notes (PPG).

1.24 The draft NPPF, as consulted upon, indicates that the Government remains committed to protecting the environment and comments that councils should have 'up to date evidence about the historic environment in their areas and use it to assess the significance of heritage assets....' The commissioning of Conservation Area Appraisals is part of such a process.

1.25 The East of England Plan. The East of England Plan is the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the east of the country. Policy ENV 6 offers advice for protecting and conserving the region's historic environment including, conservation areas and other heritage assets.

1.26 Uttlesford Adopted Local Plan. Local Plans are prepared by every council in the country to address conservation and development issues and set out policies on these matters. Local Plans provide the basis for making decisions on planning applications. The present Local Plan was adopted in 2005, though in 2012 the council will be consulting on the new form of this document that has to replace the current adopted plan, namely 'The Local Development Framework'. This will supersede the current adopted plan when it has been completed. Most of the policies set out in the Uttlesford Adopted Local plan remain in force and are relevant in relation to Conservation Area and Historic Building considerations. The Local Plan and its policies can be viewed on the [council's website^{\(1.2\)}](#) or a copy can be obtained directly from the council offices in Saffron Walden.

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1.27 In the Uttlesford Adopted Local Plan, Littlebury is designated a ‘settlement’. The plan defines the conservation area, parts of which lie within the ‘Development Limits’ where there is a general presumption in favour of appropriate development, including housing infilling on suitable sites.

1.28 A particularly relevant policy in the adopted local plan that relates to the design of development within conservation areas is Policy ENV1. This states that development will be allowed where it preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the essential features of a conservation area. It also states that demolition of buildings that positively contribute to the area will not be permitted. Thus one of the aims of this appraisal will be to identify non-listed buildings that contribute to the character and appearance of the Littlebury conservation area.

1.29 This conservation area appraisal, once it has been subject to public consultation will be approved by the council for use in the process of determining planning applications and also for implementing management proposals in Littlebury.

General Influences

1.30 The village of Littlebury straddles the old A11 London to Cambridge road (now the B1383) some two miles north west of Saffron Walden and about twelve miles south of Cambridge. The main Cambridge to Liverpool Street railway line and the M11 bisect the parish and via the motorway junction at Stumps Cross and stations at Audley End and Great Chesterford offer easy access for local people seeking education, employment and entertainment outside the immediate vicinity. Because of its location the village will continue to be subjected to development pressures and so now is an appropriate moment to be considering how to best protect its built environment.

1.31 The rural parish of Littlebury comprises Littlebury village itself, together with the two hamlets of Littlebury Green and Catmere End. North End, a small cluster of under a dozen buildings to the east of the River Cam was transferred from the parish of Saffron Walden in 1889. Only the historic core of the village of Littlebury itself is currently designated as a Conservation Area. Littlebury has grown considerably in extent since the mid nineteenth century when the 1848 edition of *White's Directory of Essex* described it as “a small village ... pleasantly situated on the London and Newmarket Road, and the river Cam or Granta”. By 1872 John Marius Wilson's *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales* noted the proximity of Eastern Counties railway and confidently asserted that the village “has a post office under Saffron-Walden”. The parish then contained also the hamlet of Littlebury-Green, and comprised 2,300 acres with a “real property” value of, £5,288 and a population of 974 persons occupying 191 houses.

1.32 Today the settlement still retains its pleasant situation but has grown considerably to the west and north with the addition of twentieth century housing. The core, though, retains much of its original character, mitigated only by the flow of traffic along the B1383 and by the introduction of local authority housing into the centre of the village at Church Walk. These are partly screened from view by thick hedging and mature trees abutting Mill Lane. The prominence of trees in the village scene, notably in the churchyard, as a backdrop to the mill and framing the approaches from the west and east adds

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considerably to the sense of rural tranquillity. Open gaps through buildings and vegetation permit views into and out of the village, which serve to emphasise its position in the valley.

1.33 Open gaps in the street scene and the spacious plots in which some of the older properties are set contribute to the pleasant uncrowned nature of the village. Careful consideration should be given to any applications for infill development to ensure that the scale and tone of this environment is maintained. Listed buildings are concentrated along the High Street and down Walden Road and extend down to the Mill situated on the banks of the river Cam or Granta. Twentieth century development, as previously noted, is mostly concentrated to the west and north although a number of sympathetic conversions to former agricultural buildings have been carried out at the John's Farm site adjacent to Cambridge Road.

1.34 The numerous flint and brick walls are another important feature linking properties and enhancing the street scene where they add texture and interest. Many of these are old, though there have been some quality modern additions, most notably along the western side of the gentle curve of the High Street where it meets Walden Road. As in the village of Great Chesterford to the north, these walls define the settlement and their preservation should be considered a priority if the local character is not to be eroded.

1.35 There is little local employment, though with recent improvements in information technology, increasing numbers of workers are choosing to work from home. What immediately local opportunities for employment that do exist are mainly confined, as they have been for over a thousand years, to agriculture or agricultural service industries. There are now few work opportunities based in the village, which like many small settlements, has seen an erosion of services over the past two decades; there is still a bustling pub and a thriving pet supplies business at Stalley's Barn, but the local shop, Post Office and the police house have gone and the primary school was closed in July 1970. Children now have to travel to Great Chesterford up to the age of 11 years when they can then attend either the Saffron Walden County High School or Newport Free Grammar School.

The General Character of Littlebury

1.36 Setting. Littlebury is situated in the Cam River Valley floodplain with the river itself roughly describing the eastern extent of the village. The surrounding fields are regular in pattern, bounded by sparse hedgerows, drainage ditches and occasional trees. Views from the village to higher ground often frame distant patches of woodland and scattered copses on the skyline. Littlebury is one of a number of settlements that 'follow the narrow course of the River Cam as it meanders within its floodplain between Great Chesterford and Shortgrove Bridge. The river corridor is fringed by trees which delineate its shape within the patchwork of pasture and plantation woodlands that line the valley floor. Audley End – an outstanding Jacobean manor set in its eighteenth century Capability Brown landscape park is a distinctive area of local character...The village of Littlebury, with its picturesque setting along the River Cam and its historic houses in many shades of colour-washed plaster, also possesses the former King's Mill - an old watermill that bridges the river behind the village'^(1.3).

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1.37 Geologically Littlebury sits on the East Anglian Chalk Ridge which characterises much of Hertfordshire and the far north western fringes of Essex. 'From within a mile of Walden, the chalk stratum extends by Audley End to the hills of Littlebury, and beyond the Chesterfords; and about Audley End the hills are all chalk. On these hills the soil is thin, and will only support forest trees in particular places; the cultivators, therefore, are careful not to plough too deep; and they have a proverb - Good Elm, good Barley; good oak; good Wheat'^(1.4). Today wheat, barley and rape are most frequently grown and except for a narrow band of lower quality land along the western edge of the built-up area, is classified as being of grade 2 quality (very good)^(1.5).

1.38 General character and plan form. With the exception of the modern development at Church Walk, the core of the village has changed little since the 19th century reflecting the mitigating influence of the Audley End Estate which once owned the majority of the buildings. Post war local authority developments at Church Walk have been followed by several barn conversions and infill properties. The existing conservation area, though, is a mirror reflection of the community as it existed in the late 19th century and as shown on the 1877 Ordnance survey map (see Figure 1). The community then, as the conservation area today, consists principally of a nucleated settlement with the Holy Trinity Church at its centre and with development straddling the London to Cambridge Road and then down Walden Road to the Kings Mill and the River Cam crossing.

1.39 Several quality areas of development sit outside the conservation area. Firstly at Northend where Northend Lodge and seven Victorian cottages, all still in the ownership of the Audley End Estate, and the now privately owned Northend Farm, are of high quality and make a pleasing addition to the landscape. Secondly, Merton Place comprises a small estate of post war local authority housing situated on the far side of the railway track from the historic core and straddling the Strethall Road. Each house sits in a generous plot; together these properties are of a unity of design that is both pleasing and very much of the period.

1.40 Several small developments of 20th century housing abut the conservation area to the west, where, because of the generous plots in which many of these properties sit and the lie of the land, they impinge little on the historic environment. On this side development has been mostly constrained by the presence of the railway line, but to the north piecemeal infilling and sporadic building has taken place, mainly of individually designed or small groups of properties such as those on Roman Way and Rectory Close. Whilst some of these are visible from the Cambridge Road, they are neutral in character and neither detract nor add to the street scene.

1.41 The combination of undulating topography, gently curving streets, mature trees, quality flint walls, buildings of good proportions and the juxtaposition of varied materials and roofscapes, all contribute to the special quality of Littlebury. Barn conversions and other adaptations to former agricultural buildings hint at the local heritage and infill properties are evident throughout the village. If the sense of a nucleated community centred close to the church is to be retained and not subjected to further erosion, it will be important to consider the nature of future developments. Similarly, the essential rurality of the village is enhanced by proximity of open fields to the church and to King's Mill where the mill meadow is of especial importance in framing the approach to the

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conservation area. Similarly views from the chalk ridge looking as the settlement is approached either along the Strethall Road or the Littlebury Green Road are unusual in this part of Essex and serve to reinforce the sense of a village in the valley. If the rural setting of this area is to be retained, it is important that surrounding land remains as open countryside.

1.42 The National Heritage List for England is maintained by English Heritage and records some 71 individually listed buildings in the parish of Littlebury, of which 44 are to be found in the designated conservation area^(1.6). The majority of these (over 90%) are timber-framed and plastered. Most date from the 16th to 18th centuries, though a few have earlier origins. Unsurprisingly, the earliest buildings – Holy Trinity Church, The Gatehouse, Parrishes and Barton House - are to be found clustered around the probable site of the Roman settlement. Other early buildings are to be found dispersed around the mill. These two areas define the essential historical foci of the village.

1.43 One characteristic feature of the village is the use of flint and brick walls to define boundaries and link buildings. The use of these materials reflects the local landscape where flints are turned up from the chalk seams by constant ploughing of the fields. Just occasionally, as at the front of South House, the walls are broken by short runs of iron railings, which have somehow survived the drive for scrap metals engendered by the needs of two world wars. This appraisal identifies a number of important walls that are not individually listed but there may also be others not immediately visible from the public realm and or in otherwise inaccessible locations.

1.44 Throughout the conservation area there are stands of mature trees and other vegetation particularly in the churchyard and adjacent to the Mill. Many of which have already been made subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

Origins and Historic Development

1.45 The parish of Littlebury now comprises Littlebury village and, to the east of the River Cam, North End. In addition, the two hamlets of Littlebury Green and Catmere End are situated on the higher chalk ridges to the west. Parts of Audley End and Chestnut Avenue are also included within the parish boundary.

1.46 Prehistoric. Faint traces of field enclosures are visible above the Cam and extending onto the higher ground near Nunn's Farm, Howe Wood and Chapel Green.

1.47 Roman. There is some considerable evidence of Roman activity within the historic settlement of Littlebury itself based on archaeological finds in the vicinity. '*Both Tom Williamson and S. R. Bassett believe that the village's main Roman settlement lies beneath the existing village from the church to the Walden Road, and including parts of the north side of the High Street*'^(1.7). As Littlebury sits equidistant between the well-known Roman settlement of Great Chesterford and the substantial villa at Wendens Ambo this would make it a suitable stopping off point on the main road during this period. Finds, including a fine Samian ware dish are now held by the Saffron Walden Museum.

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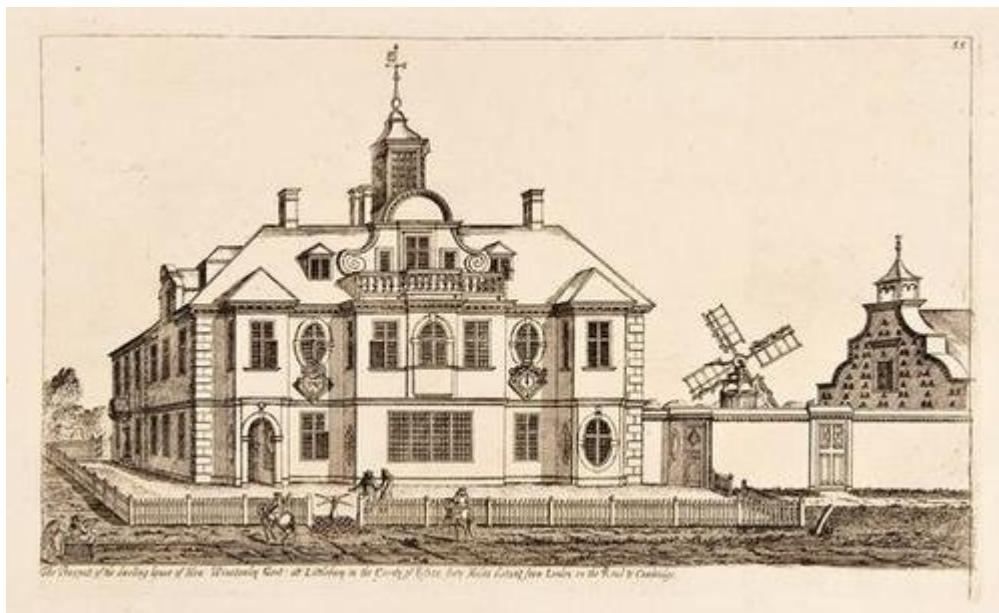
1.48 Anglo-Saxon. As with many Roman sites, occupation continued during the Saxon period. In the early nineteenth century George Cooke noted that '*One mile north of Audley End at the village of Littlebury could formerly have been traced the remains of an ancient encampment the area of which is now however occupied by the parish church*'^(1.8). Present thinking is that '*there is a probable enclosure surrounding the church and a considerable part of the present village*'^(1.9). In the first recorded reference to the village of 1004 King Aethelred gave twenty hides of land with meadow, pasture and woods called 'Lithanberi' (Littlebury) to the abbot and monks of Ely Abbey establishing a relationship that would last well into the reign of Elizabeth I.

1.49 Medieval. The Domesday Survey of 1086 records a manor of 25 hides supporting 39 villeins, 19 borders and 7 slaves. There was woodland, 160 pigs, meadows of 55 acres, four mills, 32 pigs, 80 sheep and 3 beehives all to a value of £20.

1.50 The later mediaeval period seems to have seen some development with more meadow land for grazing sheep being cut from the surrounding woods, ponds constructed for watering livestock, moats for defence, common land and strip fields laid out according to the turn and width of the plough. The importance of sheep in the local economy is demonstrated by the presence of two pairs of fleece shears carved into the wicket of the 15th century north door of Holy Trinity Church, the only significant surviving building from this period, which dates from the early 13th century.

1.51 Post Medieval. Historically, the settlement was focused in close proximity to Holy Trinity Church and along the London to Cambridge road with further development extending east down Walden road to the Mill and the important crossing of the River Cam. Between 1677 and 1678 Littlebury's most famous resident built himself a grand house in the meadow to the south of the church. This was Henry Winstanley, who a year later was to be made Clerk of Works at Audley End, then in royal ownership. Best known as the architect of the Eddystone Lighthouse, his house featured a fine broken façade with Dutch gable and central tower topped off with swept capping and a weather-vane not dissimilar to those found on Audley End House. It attracted numerous visitors entering via a turnstile on the main road and who could wonder at the model of the lighthouse in the garden or a mechanical chair, which tipped its occupants out into the orchard. It was demolished in the 1780s and nothing now remains.

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Picture 1.2 Henry Winstanley's House Littlebury engraved by himself (Private collection)

Surviving buildings dating from the 17th century onwards indicate that the area had entered a period of relative prosperity. Parrishes, The Little House (Mellowes), Beech Cottage, strung out along the main road are all of this period whilst properties such as Bakers Row, The Old Bakery and Folly Cottage show the continued expansion down Walden road towards the river. Eighteenth and then nineteenth century infilling can be seen with additions to the street scene such as Mill Cottage and the school on the High Street and elsewhere with buildings such as Mill Cottage and then Flint Cottage in Mill Lane. At Northend a cluster of under a dozen cottages and Northend Farm probably date from the 19th century though a settlement there was certainly established in the 18th century and may be of earlier origin. The cottages are in a uniform style and make a pleasing addition to the landscape.

1.52 With the exception of the modern development at Church Walk, the core of the village has changed little since the 19th century reflecting the mitigating influence of the Audley End Estate which once owned the majority of the buildings. Post war local authority developments at Church Walk have been followed by several barn conversions and infill properties. The existing conservation area, though, is a mirror reflection of the community as it existed in the late 19th century and as shown on the 1877 Ordnance survey map (see Figure 1).

1.53 Twentieth century. Several small developments of 20th century housing abut the conservation area to the west, where, because of the generous plots in which many of these properties sit and the lie of the land, they impinge little on the historic environment. On this side, development has been mostly constrained by the presence of the railway line, but to the north piecemeal infilling and sporadic building has taken place, mainly of individually designed or small groups of properties such as those on Roman Way and Rectory Close. Whilst some of these are visible from the Cambridge Road, they are neutral in character and neither detract nor add to the street scene.

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Picture 1.3 Modern barn conversions off Cambridge Road

1.54 Merton Place comprises a small estate of post war local authority housing situated on the far side of the railway track from the historic core and straddling the Strethall Road. Each house sits in a generous plot, together these properties are of a unity of design that is both pleasing and very much of the period.

1.55 The best picture of Littlebury as a changing community, though, can probably be gained from the various trade directories and censuses published throughout the nineteenth and centuries. These reveal a vibrant and largely self-sufficient community largely reliant on the land and local estates with many more tradesmen following more than one calling. White's Directory for 1848^(1.10) lists, amongst the usual selection of butchers, carpenters and carters, Robert Bull, saddler and victualler, who was also the publican at the Queen's Head and Thomas Green, a blacksmith who apparently also ran the local post office. Louisa Burgess plied her trade as a straw hat maker no doubt catching those passing on the road whilst her husband, William Burgess is described as a 'machine maker'.

1.56 The official Census summary report^(1.11), published as a Parliamentary Paper, records the total population of the Littlebury Parish in 1841 as 822 comprising 421 males and 401 females. There were 169 houses with none uninhabited and none under construction. Most of the men and lads are described as '*agricultural labourers*' and were employed on the local farms. As a consequence when agricultural depression hit in 'the hungry forties' Littlebury would be badly affected with many families relying on the parish for support.

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1.57 The agricultural depression of the early twentieth century only exacerbated the general decline in population as more and more villagers moved away from the land. The 1898 Ordnance Survey map shows eight farms in Littlebury where '*36 men were farmers or agricultural labourers; there were several railway workers for the siding at Littlebury, as well as smiths, bakers, a shepherd and a police constable ... and up until the mid 1950s many farm workers and their families lived in the parish, since when there has been a marked demographic change as new farming policies reduced the need for labour*'^(1.12). This population shift has in part been halted by the new developments of the past fifty years around the perimeter of the conservation area and by gradual infilling elsewhere so that during the latter part of the 20th century the population has increased significantly from 511 in 1961^(1.13) living in 182 houses to 1623 in 2001^(1.14).

Character Analysis

1.58 The existing conservation area has been treated as a single zone with a map and key, text and photographs to provide a brief description. The proposed additional area of coverage at Northend is similarly treated and separately described.

1.59 The extent of the areas is shown on Figure 2.

1.60 Individually listed buildings. The listed buildings have been individually identified from English Heritage's online source, 'The National Heritage List for England'^(1.15) and have been carefully plotted. Each individual analysis indicates the number of listed buildings as a percentage of principal buildings in that area.

1.61 Separately identified buildings within the curtilages of listed buildings. Such buildings, if they are pre-1948, are subject to the same controls as listed buildings. Historic walls within the curtilage of listed buildings are separately identified. Other curtilage buildings are not individually noted in this exercise except in respect of the outbuildings at the Kings Mill (see analysis below).

1.62 Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the conservation area. The basic criteria used to identify buildings falling into this category are:

- The non - listed building is of architectural or historic interest whose general external appearance has not been altered to such a degree that such qualities have been lost;
- It exhibits a sufficient level of original features and materials;
- It retains its original scale without modern inappropriate extensions that visually destroy the visual appearance of the building principally in respect of the front elevation
- It is visually important in the street scene.

Descriptions of buildings are by necessity very brief and principally describe features in general view.

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1.63 Scheduled Ancient monuments. There are no designated sites situated within or abutting the conservation area.

1.64 Important trees and open spaces. The basic criteria for identifying such trees are

- Trees must be in good condition;
- They are visible, at least in part, or as part of a group, from public viewpoints and
- Individual specimens selected should make a significantly dominant contribution to the street scene

It may also be appropriate to identify less mature trees, particularly if they appear as a group. The positions marked on the maps are indicative only. This is particularly true in respect of those in large private gardens.

1.65 Open spaces of landscape quality or of historic importance that contribute to the visual importance and add to the variety of the street scene or the conservation area generally, have been included. The entirety of the open space does not have to be visible from public viewpoints.

1.66 Traditional materials and detailing. Traditional materials and detail make a significant contribution to the character of the local area.



Picture 1.4 The Falcon Pub, High Street circa 1900 (Reproduced courtesy of Saffron Walden Museum)

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1.67 Lime render, either finished plain or with pargetted decoration is the predominant finish at the historic core of the village where buildings are most commonly constructed from oak timber frame. Timbers are left exposed. Infill should be with wattle panels rendered over with lime mortar, left unfinished or incised and pargetted for decorative effect. Colours to plasterwork are historically applied in limewash, with whites, yellows or earth-pigmented ochres most commonly found. Deeper reds and red browns are also occasionally employed. For joinery, white is the predominate finish with details sometimes picked out in black for contrast. Bricks, used for principal construction from the eighteenth century, are handmade reds, occasionally with gault brick detailing and with cambered or gauged arches to openings. Other features such as applied moulded window copings are typically found on better quality buildings dating from the 19th century. Brickwork is most commonly found in Flemish bond although English bond is also used, usually on perimeter walls and outbuildings where decorative effect is required. Barns and outbuildings are usually constructed in weatherboard, both feather edged and plain edged. It is historically preserved with pitch or creosote though now most often painted black.



Picture 1.5 Flint wall with half round brick cap at
Forge Cottage

1.68 Roofs are usually of double cambered handmade red clay plain tiles laid steeply (47 to 50°), natural blue-grey slate at a lower pitch (35 to 40°), usually hipped, and orange clay pantiles to outbuildings only. Throughout the historic core traditional long-straw thatch is occasionally found laid very steeply, typically at a pitch of 45 to 60°. It is usually finished plain, but ridges may be finished with decorative ligger work in patterns including dragons' teeth, diamond, scalloped, clubbed, herring-bone and crossed.

1.69 Windows are largely traditional; in painted or stained timber with either symmetrical flush or recessed casements, vertical or horizontally sliding sashes (Picture), the latter a particular feature of North West Essex. Although plastic replacement windows are to be found on a number of later properties, surprisingly few historic houses have been assailed by this blight. Where replacement windows are in evidence they are usually good copies of the original or are in period style.

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Picture 1.6 Dormer window with horizontal sliding sash,
Walden Road

1.70 Roofscapes provide a rich variety of architectural detail, form and shape. Interest is drawn from the single or multiple red brick chimney stacks, some of very elaborate shape. On low 1 ½ storey cottages dormer windows penetrate the roofline where they typically provide contour and interest. On grander buildings smaller pitched roof dormers are typically narrow openings sometimes partly concealed behind a parapet.

1.71 Boundary treatments are an important element in defining the street scene where they provide texture and interest to an area. Walls, many of which are constructed of flint panels supported by brick piers and capping, are a distinctive feature of the area. Iron railings, usually on half walls with the verticals terminated in arrow or ball heads are occasionally found surviving in short runs (South House and Old School House) or as remnants (High House) where they demarcate property boundaries from the main road. Fences are typically close-boarded and high to front and side elevations on public through-fares. Fields are defined by heavy agricultural timber fencing, always unfinished and usually of three horizontal bars either roughly squared or left in the round. Hedged boundaries are also frequent, particularly on the more rural periphery of the conservation area where they sometimes conceal more modern developments. There are also occasional poor quality timber and brick boundaries which harm the appearance of the area.

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Due to the scale of the maps the position of walls and fences are approximate and may include openings such as gates. Modern walls have only been identified if they have been well constructed in a traditional manner. Fences are only marked if they are a detracting element.

1.72 The main roads are predominantly tarmac with large rolled aggregate, although side roads are loose shingle. The pavements to parts of the High Street, Walden Road and Mill Lane and areas of newer development have been covered in bonded pea shingle, which is wholly appropriate for this rural village. There are few grass verges within the historic core though those roads which abut open countryside are often lined with low hedges and scrubby growth. Main roads are tarmac whilst those of a lesser status are finished with bonded pea shingle and a few tracks such as those across the churchyard are gravelled or left rough. Kerb stones are often of natural granite, although some concrete replacements are bland and inappropriate by comparison.

1.73 Important views. Only the finest views of landmark features or buildings have been shown. Development proposals that would significantly alter these important views would not be appropriate.

1.74 Neutral buildings. The uncoloured buildings on the plans are neutral in character and neither enhance nor detract from the street scene. Some are from the late 20th century and many attempt to reflect the principles set out in the 'Essex Design Guide'.

1.75 Detracting elements. Features such as poorly designed buildings, intrusive signs and electricity poles together with poor quality surfaces and fences, have been identified on individual maps.

1.76 Proposed boundary revisions to the conservation area. Two areas are proposed for inclusion that contain buildings or landscapes of quality that are now considered to positively add to the quality of the conservation area. Conversely a small area of land on the south side of the conservation area is no longer considered of appropriate merit and is accordingly proposed for exclusion. Proposed changes are made where arbitrary boundaries exist.

Area 1 - The Historic Core

1.77 The details described below are shown on Figure 3.



Picture 1.7 Quality railings, to the front of Old School House

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1.78 The London to Cambridge road, now the B1383, is the principal entrance to the village. This straight approach along the valley from Audley End to the south of the village presents the visitor, as it has done for centuries, with the dual aspect of the tower of Holy Trinity Church to the one side and the flint walling on the Granta House southern boundary to the other, both of which are defining features of the settlement. Like many villages along the Cam Valley, the main road, the old A11, cuts a swathe through the domestic heart with arterial roads radiating off. Heavy traffic traversing the relatively narrow streets has been a problem but the overall impression is of an area of considerable charm where the wide range of traditional materials, shapes and heights provide a street scene that is of pleasing visual appearance and of considerable architectural interest. The range of buildings dating from the 13th through to the 19th centuries, the open green spaces closely bordering the village and mature tree cover provide considerable historic and topographical interest.

1.79 Some buildings are partially hidden behind high walls and set well back from the street whilst others abut it. Within the street scene there is a rich variety of architectural detail, form and shape. Red peg-tiled roofs with small dormers and tall chimney stacks contrast with later, more shallow graded slate roofs and the rounded lines of low straw thatch to provide a distinctive roofline. Colour is provided by the painted lime render of early buildings in various shades of white, red, pink, blue and yellow often set off by joinery detail picked out in contrasting colours and interspersed with black weather boarding of former agricultural buildings. Finely pointed red Essex brick used on chimney stacks on early buildings contrasts with the dark blue-grey of flint infill panels on the church and some of the later cottages together with the many distinctive boundary walls where brick again forms a defining element in the form of supporting pillars and capping.

1.80 **Individually listed buildings.** The entrance to the village from the south is bounded on both sides by listed buildings; Holy Trinity Church and Granta House. The former is by far the most visible sitting high up in the generous plot of the churchyard adjacent to the road and hard on the settlement boundary with open agricultural land. Holy Trinity Church is the only Grade I listed building in the conservation area. Constructed of flint and stone with a tiled roof, the building is of Saxo-Norman origin. The north aisle is dated 1225 and the south aisle 1250. The west tower, with its castellated parapet is early 14th century. The north and south porches were added in early 15th century with vaulted roofs, which were never completed. The south doorway dates from circa 1200 and the north doorway from 1225. The heavy oak door, though, was probably added some two hundred years later and is notable for its finely detailed moulded battens and a carving of two pairs of cloth shears indicating the prominence of the wool trade in the locality at this period. A good deal of restoration was carried out in the 19th century principally under the auspices of Edward Barr who oversaw the rebuilding of the chancel during the period 1870-75. The internal fittings include a fine early 16th century carved wooden font case to the 13th century font and a number of important memorials to the Howard and Neville families who lived at Audley End.

1.81 On the opposite side of the road, Granta House also sits in a generous plot, though its presence on the approach is far less dominant in the street scene due to the screening effect of the high flint walls and hedges that demarcate its boundary with the

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road. Although of 16th century origins it is difficult to tell now as Granta House was extensively remodelled in the 19th century and now stands pedimented wings at the north and south ends of the east front. The two storeys are punctuated by a one then three then one window range of double-hung sashes with typically narrow glazing bars to the wings and casements in the centre block. A central six-panel double door has a segmental head and the roof slated. Two ranges of brick and slate outbuildings of 19th century origin within the cartilage of Granta House and the fine boundary walls which link them to the south and west are also separately listed.

1.82 Groups of listed buildings on both sides of High Street display a wide range of materials styles and spanning the 16th to 18th centuries. Of note is The Old Vicarage – now divided and renamed North House and South House in 1987- a pleasing timber-framed and plastered two storey building constructed sometime around 1520 and contrasting in scale and materials with the church with which it shares a boundary. The upper storey is notable for the horizontal sliding sashes that probably replace original window apertures and are a distinctive feature of the vernacular architecture of the area. As its name once denoted, the building was for many years the vicarage providing accommodation for the incumbent of Holy Trinity Church.



Picture 1.8 Littlebury High Street circa 1900 (Reproduced courtesy of Saffron Walden Museum)

1.83 On the other side of the road the range of buildings extending from Mill Cottage to Beech Cottage follows the gentle curve of the road as it approaches the junction and turning off to Strethall. They are typically comparatively low, rendered with occasional pargeted decoration, horizontal sliding sashes and small doors. Long House, recorded in the National Heritage List under its former name of 'Tudor House', is dated 1586 on the doorway and is of particular note. The upper storey is jettied on the whole front on four brackets, the upper storey casement windows have leaded lights and there is a small oriel bay window on the ground storey.

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1.84 The junction of Strethall Road and the High Street at this point comprises a typical triangular highway island with modern lighting column and road signage, once the position for the village pump. At each point is a listed building indicating that the junction has formed part of the local road layout for a considerable period. Forming a focal point is Kent's Farmhouse, a two storey 17th century timber-framed and plastered building with later additions. On the other side of the Strethall Road set back in its own plot is the impressive structure of The Gatehouse. The present house is said to be built on the site of the 13th century house of the Bishop of Ely who was at that time, Lord of the Manor. The present building, though, dates from the 16th century, and is of typical hall house construction; timber-framed and plastered with cross wings at the north and south ends. The cross wings are of two storeys with attic conversions evidenced by the diminutive windows at the apex.



Picture 1.9 The Gatehouse

The central hall block was originally of single storey construction, the roof now raised and pierced by non-symmetrical gabled dormers. The ground storey has exposed timber-framing in which evidence of the original window apertures can be seen. Across the road is the imposing Queens Head Inn. With its range of window joinery, varied roof heights and boldly painted name applied directly to the façade it has a dominant presence in this part of the village.

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1.85 Further along the road are Elizabethan Cottage, the Old Telegraph House and Flint Cottage, all Grade II listed. Together they form an almost unbroken run linking the High Street with the Walden Road. Running down to the crossing of the River Cam, Walden Road was, and is still today, an important arterial route into the centre of the village. It is lined with listed buildings and from either end presents an attractive prospect where 16th century jettied buildings sit side



Picture 1.10 Littlebury Post Office circa 1900 (Reproduced courtesy of Saffron Walden Museum)

by side with diminutive 19th century cottages presenting a continuity of shape, scale and form that is quite appropriate to their setting. Evidenced still in the names of many of the buildings, this was where much of the village business was carried on. The Old Post Office sits at the top of the road and the Old Carpenters Arms and Old Bakery can be found further down. Buildings on the south side are set back from the road behind a raised pathway that is divided from the thoroughfare by a whitewashed post and pole handrail. By contrast, on the north side buildings front hard up to the road with which they are mostly level. A number are notable in the street scene and deserve specific mention. Ring Hill Cottage and Number 2 Walden Road were originally connected to form an early 16th century timber-framed and plastered house of 2 bays set at right angles to the road. Of two storeys, the upper storey is jettied on the road front. It seems that slightly after this house was built a hall block was built on the east side and a smoke bay with an open hearth was built against the east wall. This was discovered during renovations and was heavily smoke blackened. The windows are partly horizontal sliding sashes and partly casements. A doorway to the cross passage of the hall has cyma and hollow moulding and a broach footstop which suggests a date during the first quarter of the 16th century. Roofs are tiled, with a gabled dormer and a central square chimney stack to the hall block. Further down Numbers 6-12 comprise a neat range of early 19th century framed and plastered houses, now faced with pebbledash. They are two storeys high with a five window range, mainly of horizontal sliding sashes with glazing bars. No 12 has double-hung sash windows with glazing bars, plain doorways, slate roof with two internal chimney stacks.

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Picture 1.11 Walden Road looking east

18th century, though St Johns Cottage has significant 20th century additions.

1.86 Across the road the buildings are low and slightly more spread out with paths and driveways punctuating the street frontages. Thatched Cottage, St Johns Cottage and Folly Cottage are characterised by their low roofs. The first of these, as denoted by its name, is thatched, all pierced by narrow dormers and with tall brick chimney stacks, low doors, small sash windows often sliding horizontally and sections of decorative plasterwork on the front elevations. Most date from the 17th –

1.87 On the approach to the river crossing there is greater contrast between the buildings on either side of the road. The compact range of four early 19th century timber-framed and plastered houses comprising numbers 22-28 Walden Road are again two storeys in height but are compact and modest in construction. Their four window range of mainly double-hung sashes with glazing bars are of the period as are their roofs which are finished in slate, with eaves levels stepped down, with a central square chimney stack. They contrast in scale, materials and situation with the large timber framed construction of Midsummer House. Set in its own plot, bordering the River Cam and on the eastern extent of the village, it is timber-framed with rendered infill panels dating probably from circa 1600, with later additions. The upper storey is jettied on exposed joists at the west end and the east end has a gable, tiled roof, casement windows and a central chimney stack with diagonal shafts. Extensions and renovation work carried out in the 20th century do not detract from the overall quality of the building.

1.88 From the river, Mill Lane is an ancient access taking traffic back to the main road. Here, again, quality listed buildings contrast in scale and materials. Flint Cottage, one of three dwellings so named in the village, is on the west side of the lane and is a most visually appealing mid-late 19th century house of flint pebble with red brick quoins and dressings. The two window range of double-hung sashes with glazing bars are set in plain reveals and segmental heads. The modern glazed door, whilst not perhaps historically correct, is in keeping with the window joinery. Across the road are to be found the mill and mill house, King's Mill. Both date from the 18th century. Having vacated Audley End during the war this is where Lady Braybrooke came to live from



Picture 1.12 Mill House, Littlebury circa 1900 (Reproduced courtesy of Saffron Walden Museum)

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1943 until her death in 1971. King's Mill House is three storeys high, whitewashed and with a red tiled roof, hipped at the north and south ends. Together with the weatherboarded mill it presents an impressive spectacle in this part of the settlement and serves as a reminder of the close association between the village and the surrounding fields.



Picture 1.13 Mill House

probably of 19th century origins and associated with the original business of the mill. Both appear on the 1881 Ordnance Survey map and now make a specific historic and architectural contribution to the village's heritage. As they are within the curtilage of a Listed Building, they are protected and in law are viewed as if they were listed. Although not strictly a building the presence of a remaining spigot mortar base in the grounds of the mill should also be noted. This forms part of the General Head Quarters line of defences dating from World War Two of which the numerous pillboxes and gun emplacements along the Cam Valley are the most visible remains.

1.91 Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the conservation area. Old School House is situated opposite Holy Trinity Church on the High Street. The present building replaces an earlier school on the same site and was designed by the architect Edward Barr who exhibited his scheme for the reconstruction at the Royal Academy in 1865. The new building was opened on 20th November of that year with the work of building having been carried out by William Brown of 'Lynn' at a cost of £1004 14s. The school closed just over a hundred years later in July 1970. Paul A. Baker described the building as it now stands in an essay for the Architectural Association of London in 1995 noting that "It displays typical Gothic revival characteristics of its time. On its North and East elevations there are circular windows, one in the end gable of the large school room is glazed in a simplified sexfoil pattern"^(1.17).

1.89 There are 44 individual buildings or groups of buildings that are listed and this represents about 62% of the total number of principal listed buildings in the parish of Littlebury^(1.16). The church is the only Grade I listed building in the village. The remainder are listed Grade II.

1.90 Separately identified buildings in the curtilages of listed buildings. To the side of Mill House and the Kings Mill stand a number of outbuildings,

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Picture 1.14 Old School House

1.92 The three storey High House stands beside Old School House on the High Street and is notable both for its height and by virtue of its striking mock Tudor façade. Originally built sometime in the late eighteenth century, the façade, added a century later, comprises mock timbers supporting two runs of casement windows,

with third lights leaded and the lower run divided in the middle by glazed doors. Comparison with a photograph of 1907 shows that it has been little altered over the past one hundred years.

1.93 On the opposite side of the High Street, The Old Coach House, whilst somewhat modified from its original form is of note. Constructed in flint panelling, it originally served the vicarage next door (now South House and North House) and is partly hidden from the road by the single storey Reading Room. This diminutive building was constructed by Joseph Wix, according to an incised tablet in the wall in 1852. Built of finely gauged red Essex brick, with a slate roof and windows rectangular, recessed with chamfered brickwork, major mullions and transoms are hollow chamfer moulded containing sash windows with glazing bars. The joinery has much in common with that on the Museum in Saffron Walden. Parts of the front elevation wall, principally at lower level, are eroded with a number of spalled bricks in need of repair or replacement. Another building of note is Forge Cottage on Cambridge Road; a two storey brick construction, sixteen pane double hung sash windows, slate roof with two tall chimney stacks. A plaque set high up within the brickwork records the building date as 1857 with the initials 'T G'. Although somewhat altered, Lime Tree Cottage on Church Walk has a pleasing appearance with a low roof line and some original detailing. Both are included as they make positive contributions to the street scene in their respective positions.

1.94 Important trees and open spaces. Extensive tree cover along the southern side of the village and up along the Littlebury Green Road adds scale and visual interest softens the village boundary where it meets the open arable landscape. Outlying buildings such as King's Mill, Granta House and Riverside Cottage are screened both from the road and from the main body of the settlement by surrounding stands of mature trees. The Mill Race water meadow between the Walden Road and the River Cam is especially important in setting both the river crossing and the mill complex in context.

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The line of trees and scrubby growth along the western side of Mill Lane performs a different function effectively screening the picturesque environment of the mill from the less than attractive local authority bungalows of Church Walk.



Picture 1.15 Holy Trinity Churchyard

1.95 The ancient and 20th century churchyards surrounding Holy Trinity Church are criss-crossed by tracks. This area together with the corresponding large gardens of Granta House on the opposite side of the road and views across open fields serve to give this area of the village a pleasantly open aspect. The churchyard itself is well maintained and its extensive area contains a large number of interesting tombstones, including a central group marking the burial places of several members of the Neville family of Audley End House. There are also a large number of mature trees. Many are subject to TPOs. From the west side of the churchyard there are extensive views over open countryside. Trees in both

areas play a very prominent and positive landscape function in this part of the village providing additional variety of form, colour, scale and shape.

1.96 Other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution. Hedges are an important feature of the street scene contrasting in scale and texture with the built environment whilst delineating boundaries. Some are high affording screening from the road whilst others are clipped and low offering views of cottage gardens beyond.

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Picture 1.16 Quality gate and walls at Forge Cottage

1.97 Important boundary walls either in solid brick with capped pillars or flint infill with half-round brick capping and detail enclose Holy Trinity Church and demarcate the road boundaries of King's Mill, Midsummer House and The Gatehouse. Most are quite low, although one section extending up Strethall Road along the boundary of Northgate is of some considerable height, being well over 3 metres tall.

Whilst some repairs have been

carried out to the wall separating the churchyard from the upper reaches of Mill Lane, there are a number of sections of spalled brickwork that should receive attention. Unbroken runs of similar walling border the approach down the hill from Littlebury Green and there is a significant unbroken length of quality modern wall along the High Street from Parrishes almost to the edge of the conservation area, although the addition of a short run of relatively low quality close-boarded fencing at the northern end is a detracting feature. Along Mill Lane an attractive low brick and flint boundary wall with some rounded brick capping piers and detailing is almost overlooked under the trees that fringe Church Walk. A small decorative iron gateway is inset between brick pillars half way down but is obscured by vegetation. Consideration should be given to some maintenance to make more of this feature.

1.98 Elsewhere, decorative iron railings are typically found on half walls to the front of properties such as Old School House and South House. Those fronting Old School House are of particular importance being of a highly unusual form with caged pillars terminated in tri-foliate decorations and square section points. Notable, too, are the distinctive early 20th century metal low railings forming a boundary to the raised



Picture 1.17 Walden Road looking west showing distinctive railings

pavement on the south side of Walden Road. The cylindrical metal bars are supported on concrete posts, each rounded on the top and the whole simply finished in white paint. Whilst of no great age these railings are a distinctive element of the street scene and should be preserved. As they form part of the street furniture, their care is most likely the responsibility of the highways authority, Essex County Council. Throughout the

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conservation areas there are also a number of high quality wrought and cast iron gates giving access to properties, most notably those to Forge Cottage, Folly Cottage and between Flint Cottage and the churchyard.

1.99 Important views. Four views are identified. The first is that looking down the Littlebury Green Road into the settlement. The road here is lined on both sides with high flint walls and as the descent is made the spire of Holy Trinity Church and the associated trees of the churchyard gradually become visible. Such a vista is unusual in this part of Essex where villages typically are approached along the valley. Views down the High Street towards the historic core and down Mill Lane alongside the church both present pleasingly historic tableaux that have changed little in the past century.

1.100 A final view from the top of Walden Road looking towards the southeast and open countryside underlines Littlebury's valley situation where a pleasantly open vista of fields, some maintaining their historic boundaries, is visible.

1.101 Detracting elements. With the main through-route, the B1383, cutting through the historic core at its western extent, the High Street and Cambridge Road can be less than peaceful parts of the village. The road is quite narrow in places and there are two sharp bends in front of the Queens Head and at the junction with Walden Road. The relative narrowness of the road with many properties separated from the highway only by the width of the path can make the speed of the traffic, limited to 30mph, seem much higher than it is. During peak periods turning into or out of any of the side roads can be dangerous and is a cause of concern for many local residents. If the speed of traffic could be reduced, the environment of this part of the village would be improved.

1.102 The post mounted electricity sub-station adjacent to Littlebury Bridge, whilst outside the conservation area, introduces a discordant element, conflicting with the considerable number of listed buildings and other important buildings in the vicinity. If its removal could be secured this would represent a major improvement to the environment.

1.103 The boundary wall of Thatched Cottage and John's Farm shows signs of structural instability and is currently crudely braced with timber. Its conservation should be considered a matter of immediate importance. Of more minor note, a small section of the boundary wall to St John's Cottage, constructed of red brick with rounded brick capping detail, has a number of spalled bricks in need of replacement/repair.

1.104 The modern bus shelter on Cambridge Road is functional but unattractive and its presence adds nothing to the otherwise high quality of the street scene. When a replacement is considered, the design should take into account the style and materials of the surrounding buildings.

1.105 The modern local authority properties, typical of standard mid 20th century local authority architecture, on Church Walk are not in keeping with the general surrounding architectural and historic quality of the Conservation Area. Planned as homes for older residents they work well functionally, but their scale and form, including shallow pitched roofs porches and conservatory extensions make little contribution to the environment. They are prominent when viewed from the bottom of the churchyard

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and when using the exit to the village adjacent to Flint Cottage. From Mill Lane, though, they are mostly screened from view by the extensive tree cover that has been retained along the eastern boundary.

1.106 Summary of opportunities to secure improvements. Consider the removal or re-siting of the post mounted electricity sub station adjacent to Littlebury Bridge. Lamp column design throughout the settlement needs to be considered. The design needs to be more in proportion with the street. This is particularly noticeable in Mill Lane where a modern column sits adjacent to a now redundant historic lamp on a wooden pole. Ensure action is taken to stabilise boundary wall of Thatched Cottage and John's Farm and other walls as noted previously. Whilst the Village Hall in Walden Road is a valuable community asset, in the long term the parish council should consider the potential to re-develop the building as a community resource more in keeping with the quality of the surrounding street scene. Continue to maintain the tree cover that screens Church Walk from Mill Lane and keep a watching brief on applications for development to properties on Church Walk to ensure that they do not impinge visually on the conservation area.

1.107 Proposed boundary revisions to the conservation area.

The area to the east of the Mill Race and King's Mill and bounded by Walden Road is an area of open space that is of historic interest. The importance of the tree cover to the south of this area is already acknowledged by the designation of several Tree



Picture 1.18 View across King's Mill meadow

Preservation Orders. Until the twentieth century the Walden Road ran out of the village from the ford by the Mill House traversing the meadow. Including this area will underline the role of the historic view and protect the open space on the edge of the village envelope. Conversely, the current inclusion of the 'D' shaped area at the field entrance off the Littlebury Green Road seems entirely arbitrary and its exclusion is suggested.

Area 2 - Northend

1.108 The area to the east of Littlebury village and known as Northend or North End is proposed for inclusion. Until 1889 this was part of the parish of Saffron Walden. Historically, though, it has always been much more closely associated with Littlebury and with the Audley End estate. The area possesses a pleasing, predominantly rural,

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character, which is distinct from the more densely developed area of the village further west. It is bypassed by the Walden Road, which links the village to the busy B184 and as such has the propensity to be overlooked. All the buildings here are associated and should be considered as a group.

1.109 Individually listed buildings. On the south side of the road sits the imposing North End Lodge, one of three similar outlying buildings that mark the principal entrances to the Audley End Estate. Built in the Tudor style c. 1850^(1.18) it is distinguished by its range of narrow windows of elegant joinery in double chamfered brick reveals and the four groups of tall clustered 'Tudor' chimney stacks behind parapets, also in moulded brick.



Picture 1.19 Mid 19th century estate cottages at Northend

Because of its position in the landscape it makes an impressive statement.

1.110 Separately identified buildings in the curtilages of listed buildings. There are none.

1.111 Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the conservation area. Less visible from the main road is the run of seven semi-detached and terraced estate cottages. The central group displays a date stone for 1873 and varied crest stones indicating that they were probably built at the same time as the Lodge with bricks from the estate brickworks. Both the Lodge and the cottages are shown on the 1877 Ordnance Survey map. Set in two groups of semi-detached buildings flanking a short terrace of three, they are built predominantly of red brick with contrasting cream brick reveals, quality casements to the ground floor and double hung sashes to the first floor principle elevations. The roofs are uniformly tiled with tall chimney stacks which although comparatively plain retain elements of the moulded Tudor style of the Lodge. Another notable feature is the finely detailed barge boards mirroring in style and execution many of those to be found in nearby Saffron Walden and which are said to have been the speciality of a local carpenter called Dix. In appearance and setting they are substantially unaltered from the view of Northend in 1919 depicted on a Francis Frith postcard of that date^(1.19). To the north is Northend Farm. It is only partly visible from the public highway but with its associated barns and other farm buildings varying in height, it still makes a valuable architectural and historical contribution to the village approach.

1.112 Important trees and open spaces. Northend is surrounded by mature trees which form a dominant visual feature from public viewpoints. These mature trees make a very valuable contribution to the quality of the proposed conservation area adding colour and shape to the street scene and contrasting with the open quality of the surrounding agricultural landscape.

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1.113 Other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution. Of particular note are the gently curving perimeter walls, yew hedges and gates fronting Northend Lodge. A half height flint wall with brick pillars and capped with half round red bricks encloses the run of estate cottages. Typically this is high to the sides but to the front it is low, merely acting as a retaining feature for the gardens where they meet the roadway. At the far ends are substantial brick pillars, that to the south extremity are now mostly covered in ivy.



Picture 1.20 Northend cottages, central grouping

1.114 Elsewhere hedges make an important visual contribution to the landscape often marking the boundaries between the various properties and the open landscape. They provide texture and interest whilst reinforcing the essentially rural nature of this part of the conservation area.

1.115 Important views. None noted.

1.116 Detracting elements. The view into Northend is compromised by the presence of telegraph poles and overhead cabling. Whilst it would be desirable to remove the electricity and telephone poles, this is not a high priority and their presence is partly mitigated by the numerous trees.

1.117 Proposed boundary revisions to the conservation area. Because of the uniform quality of the built environment Northend is proposed as a new conservation area. The concentration of the listed lodge and closely associated other buildings of

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note, their interaction with the landscape on the approach to Littlebury and general quality contribute to an environment which is distinct from that of the historic core of the village.

Overall Summary

1.118 Littlebury is a village of some importance in historical, visual and archaeological terms. Its range of listed timber-framed and plastered buildings principally dating from the 17th and 18th centuries, the church, and the mill in the historic core of the village make a particularly important contribution to the environment. Quality buildings from later periods provide diversity of architectural types.

1.119 Throughout the conservation area and along the peripheries of the settlement significant open spaces, the river and extensive tree cover enhance the scale of individual buildings of importance whilst often serving as a buffer between the historic core and more modern developments. Distinctive boundary walls of considerable visual merit and historic importance frequently link buildings and open spaces to provide overall cohesion. These walls and green spaces are an essential component of the village's cultural heritage contributing significantly to the overall quality of the conservation area generally.

1.120 A small number of unlisted buildings have been identified that are architecturally, visually and historically important. These, together with their architectural detailing could be at risk unless measures are introduced to protect them. Surprisingly, to date few buildings in the village have suffered from inappropriate development, though a number of modern properties could have been designed with greater sensitivity to their environment.

1.121 There are very few remaining infill plots for development but where such development does occur, it must be sensitive and respect the character of the conservation area in that particular location.

1.122 A number of important open spaces have been identified. Important trees have been plotted indicatively as have important views that should be retained.

1.123 Detracting elements have been described and the manner in which these will be dealt with is described in the table set out in the management proposals above.

Part 1: Appraisal 1

End Notes

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- 1.2 www.uttlesford.gov.uk
- 1.3 Landscape Character Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006 Section 7.0 – Landscape Character of Uttlesford District, p. 275
- 1.4 The History and topography of the County of Essex, Comprising its Ancient and Modern History ..., by Thomas Wright, London Geo. Virtue, 1835 Vol. I. p.9
- 1.5 Agricultural land Classification of England and Wales: revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land, Defra Publications, 1988
- 1.6 Some listing records encompass a number of buildings under a single entry
- 1.7 Littlebury a Parish History, The Parish of Littlebury Millennium Society, History Group, 2005, Editors: Lizzie Sanders and Gillian Williamson
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- 1.9 Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project 2009, Essex County Council, 2009, p. 23
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- 1.11 Population: account of the total population, according to the census taken, 1841, of each county in Great Britain;...also, the number of houses... ; similar returns for the Channel Islands and Isle of Man... ; account of the population of each city and royal and parliamentary burgh in Scotland. London : HMSO, 1841
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<http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/index.jsp>
- 1.14 2001 Census, Office of National Statistics
- 1.15 The National Heritage List for England:
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- 1.16 The Heritage List for England records 71 listed buildings in Littlebury parish
- 1.17 Littlebury a Parish History, The Parish of Littlebury Millennium Society, History Group, 2005, Editors: Lizzie Sanders and Gillian Williamson p.189
- 1.18 English Heritage report, 2011
- 1.19 North End 1919, Littlebury Francis Frith Archive Ref: 69151

1 Part 2 - Management Proposals

Revised Conservation Area Boundary

2.1 The revised boundary is shown on Figure 3. There is one area proposed for exclusion and one area is proposed for exclusion. A new conservation area is suggested at Northend.

2.2 The current inclusion of the ‘D’ shaped area at the field entrance off the Littlebury Green Road seems entirely arbitrary and its exclusion is suggested.

2.3 Conversely, the area to the east of the Mill Race and King’s Mill and bounded by Walden Road is an area of open space that is of historic interest. The importance of the tree cover to the south of this area is already acknowledged by the designation of several Tree Preservation Orders. Until the twentieth century the Walden Road ran out of the village from the ford by the Mill House traversing the meadow. Including this area will underline the role of the historic view and protect the open space on the edge of the village envelope.

2.4 Because of the uniform quality of the built environment, Northend is proposed as a new conservation area. The concentration of the listed lodge and closely associated other buildings of note, their interaction with the landscape on the approach to Littlebury and general quality contribute to an environment which is distinct from that of the historic core of the village.

General Planning Controls and Good Practice in the Conservation Area

2.5 The general controls and national legislative framework has already been described. Against this background, the Council’s Development Control staff process planning applications assisted by the council’s Conservation Officer.

2.6 Planning applications are currently considered against policies set out in the Uttlesford Local Plan that can be seen on line at the Council’s [Local Plan and Local Development Framework homepage](#). The present Local Plan was adopted in 2005, though, in 2012, the council will be consulting on the new form of this document that has to replace the current adopted plan. This will supersede the current adopted plan when it has been completed. Most of the policies set out in the Uttlesford Adopted Local plan remain in force and are relevant in relation to Conservation Area and Historic Building considerations. The Local Plan and its policies can be viewed on the [council’s website](#) (www.uttlesford.gov.uk/localplan) or a copy can be obtained directly from the council offices in Saffron Walden.

2.7 One particularly relevant policy, Policy ENV1 – Design of Development in Conservation areas says ‘*Development will be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the essential features of a Conservation Area, including plan form, relationship between buildings, the arrangement of open spaces and their enclosure, grain or significant natural or heritage features. Outline applications will not be considered. Development involving the demolition of a structure which positively contributes to the character and appearance of the area will not be permitted*’ This policy was a main consideration for developing management proposals set out below.

Part 2 - Management Proposals 1

Good practice advice for applicants wishing to submit an application is to carefully consider the wording of the above policy and enter into discussions with the council before submitting the application to avoid delay and hopefully achieve a satisfactory outcome.

Planning Control and Good Practice, Listed Buildings

2.8 There are 44 individually or group listed buildings and these are shown on Figures 3-4.

2.9 Policy ENV 2 – Development affecting listed buildings says '*Development affecting a listed building should be in keeping with its scale, character and surroundings. Demolition of a listed building, or development proposals that adversely affect the setting, and alterations that impair the special characteristics of a listed building will not be permitted. In cases where planning permission might not normally be granted for the conversion of listed buildings to alternative uses, favourable consideration may be accorded to schemes which incorporate works that represent the most practical way of preserving the building and its architectural and historic characteristics and its setting.*

2.10 The listed buildings in the conservation area are indicative of local character. They span many centuries and display a wide variety of architectural styles, methods of construction and use of materials. Good practice advice to applicants is to acknowledge this essential fact when submitting an application and recognise that the council's overall objective is to ensure that proposals accord with the above policy especially in determining scale and in the use of materials. The former must always be subservient whilst the latter should always be of the highest quality and frequently involve the use of second hand materials. A pre-submission discussion with the council's Conservation Officer is advised to establish such parameters.



Picture 1.1 Thatch and pantiles on Wheelwright's Cottage

2.11 Littlebury is unusual in that some of the properties retain their straw thatch. Such roofs must stay thatched with repair works being carried out in the traditional manner. Some thatch has been replaced by plain red clay tiles or occasionally pantiles. Welsh slate is another traditional material, particularly on 19th century listed buildings and when it becomes necessary to re-roof such buildings appropriate reclaimed or new tiles or second hand Welsh slate should normally be used. The use of plastic windows on listed buildings is entirely inappropriate. The council will use its powers of enforcement in appropriate situations if unauthorised works are carried out.

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Planning Controls and Good Practice in respect of other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution

2.12 Policy ENV1 referred to above refers to such buildings that are identified on Figure 4. As set out earlier buildings in conservation area cannot be demolished without consent. Because of the important architectural or historic contribution these buildings make to the conservation area, any application involving their demolition will normally be refused.

2.13 Not surprisingly a number of windows have been replaced in a few of these buildings by inappropriate modern ones. Similarly some original doors have been replaced. Elsewhere traditional roofing has been replaced with modern materials that are visually jarring. Where this has occurred it has detracted from the visual appearance of the property and the street scene. It is therefore intended to introduce an additional control to prevent this from happening in the future and the mechanism to achieve this is known as an Article 4 Direction as briefly described previously.

2.14 The council therefore proposes to make an Article 4(2) direction to remove the right to alter windows and doors and roofing materials on selected dwellings. In due course an Article 4(2) Direction will be drawn up and appropriate consultation will take place in due course.

2.15 The government advises that such powers should be used sparingly and this advice has been heeded. Notwithstanding the proposed Direction, other quality features such as chimney stacks and pots, decorative brickwork, porches and bargeboards will remain unprotected in law. Good practice by responsible owners will be to maintain and retain these features. The council's Conservation Officer will offer advice on request.

Planning Control and Good Practice, Important Open Spaces, Trees and Groups of Trees

2.16 Extensive tree cover along the southern side of the village and up along the Littlebury Green Road adds scale and visual interest and softens the village boundary where it meets the open arable landscape. Outlying buildings such as King's Mill, Granta House and Riverside Cottage are screened both from the road and from the main body of the settlement by surrounding stands of mature trees. The Mill Race water meadow between the Walden Road and the River Cam is especially important in setting both the river crossing and the mill complex in context. The line of trees and scrubby growth along the western side of Mill Lane performs a different function effectively screening the picturesque environment of the mill from the less than attractive local authority bungalows of Church Walk.

2.17 The ancient and 20th century churchyards surrounding Holy Trinity Church is criss-crossed by tracks. This area together with the corresponding large gardens of Granta House on the opposite side of the road and views across open fields serve to give this area of the village a pleasantly open aspect. The churchyard itself is well maintained and its extensive area contains a large number of interesting tombstones and mature trees. Many are subject to TPOs. From the west side of the churchyard

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there are extensive views over open countryside. Trees in both areas play a very prominent and positive landscape function in this part of the village providing additional variety of form, colour, scale and shape.

2.18 Littlebury is fortunate to have a number of areas of open space that contribute to the overall quality of the conservation area. The function of each area differs: Extensive tree cover along the southern side of the village and up along the Littlebury Green Road adds scale and visual interest softening the village boundary where it meets the open arable landscape. The Mill Race water meadow sets the mill in its historic context whilst trees in the churchyard and grounds of Granta House provide complimentary structure, form and colour. The stand of trees fronting Church Walk provides an important visual buffer between this modern development and the historic environment of the Mill Lane.

2.19 Policy ENV3 Open Spaces and Trees says '*The loss of traditional open spaces, groups of trees and fine individual specimens through development proposals will not be permitted unless the need for the development outweighs their amenity value*'.

2.20 The areas are identified on Figure 4 and it is considered that development on them would be entirely inappropriate and represent a considerable loss.

2.21 The general locations of trees that make a particular contribution to the conservation area are illustrated on Figure 4. Other trees also contribute to the quality of the street scenes. As noted in the appraisal all trees in the conservation area (subject to exceptions) are afforded protection, as owners have to notify the council if they wish to undertake works to them. Many trees have been made subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

2.22 Good practice guidance for owners includes making regular inspections of trees to check for dieback and danger in the general interests of amenity and health and safety. The council's Landscape Officer will offer advice in appropriate circumstances.

Proposed Controls in Respect of Other Distinctive Features that make an Important Visual or Historic Contribution

2.23 As the appraisal has demonstrated there are extensive lengths of quality flint walls and railings that are distinctive to Littlebury. These represent an essential component of the village's cultural heritage and must be protected from demolition.

2.24 The walls of quality are shown on Figure 4. Some are within the curtilages of listed buildings where listed building consent will normally be refused for any proposal involving their demolition. Others are not in the curtilages of listed buildings and as such are unprotected. Walls abutting Mill Lane and on the south side of the Littlebury Green Road are particularly noted in this respect as are the railings forming a boundary to the path on Walden Road. Ownership of these will need to be established prior to considering any formal means of protection. These can only be protected in law by the introduction of an Article 4 Direction. Prior to pursuing such a course of action, the

1 Part 2 - Management Proposals

council will need to seek to establish ownership and to ensure notification. If the council proposes to introduce an Article 4 Direction to remove the right to remove selected walls and railings appropriate consultation will take place.

Planning Control – Important views

2.25 The most important views within and out of the conservation area are represented on Fig 5.

Enhancement Proposals to Deal with Detracting Elements

2.26 The appraisal has identified the following elements that detract from the qualities of the conservation area. The table below identifies them and proposes a course of action in summary form.

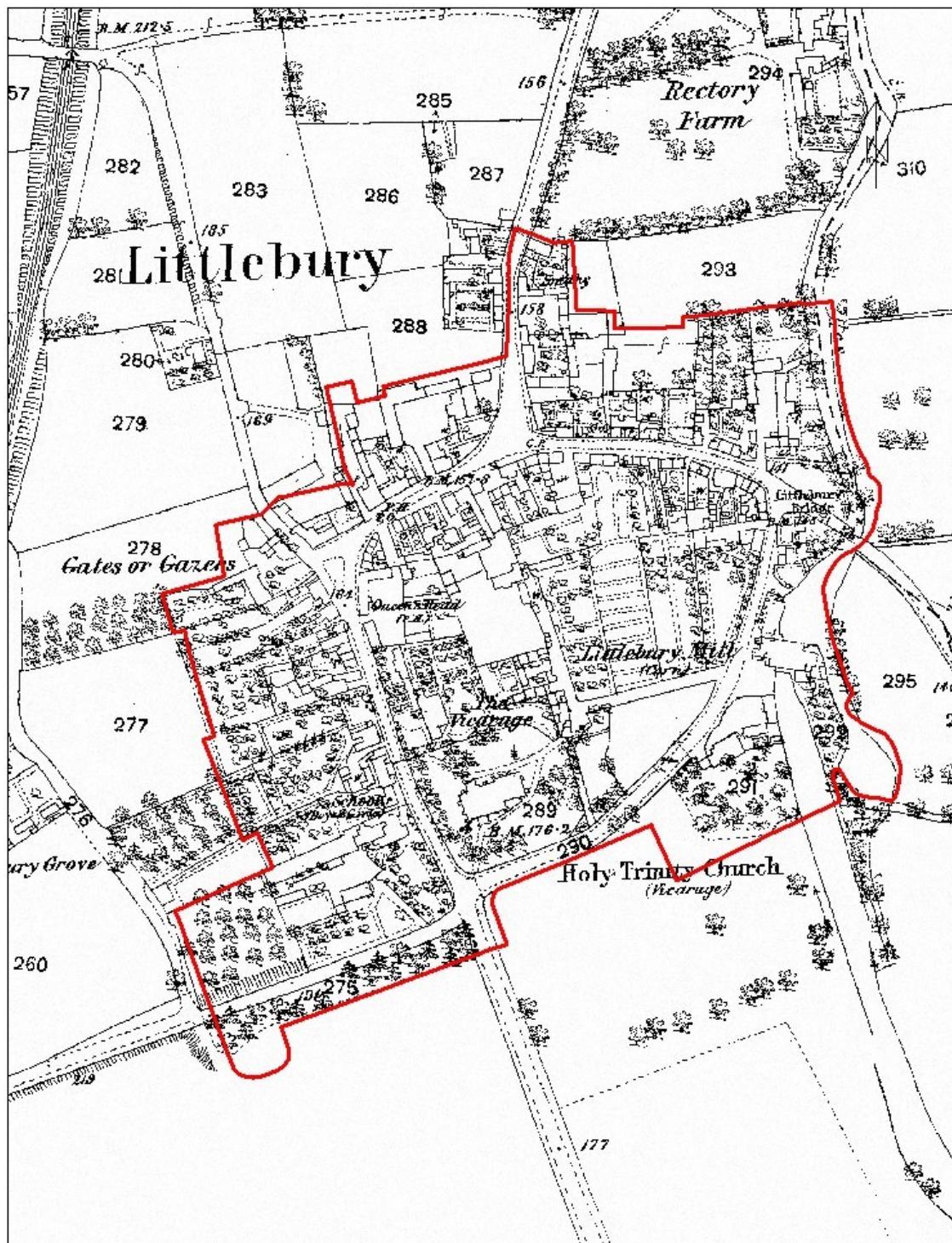
Detracting element	Location	Proposed action
Speed reduction plan	High Street and Cambridge Road	Discuss with the Parish Council and local District and County Members and support the Parish Council should they wish to pursue options with Essex County Council
Post mounted electricity sub-station	Adjacent to Littlebury Bridge	When appropriate enter into discussions with public utility company to seek removal and more appropriate siting
Unstable wall	Boundary Thatched Cottage and John's Farm, Walden Road	Liaise with owner to seek solution
Spalled brickwork	Boundary wall to St John's Cottage, Walden Road	Liaise with owner to encourage necessary works to this prominent wall
Untidy area	Gate through to the garden of Mulberry Cottage	Suggest removal of undergrowth to enhance this attractive feature
Spalled brickwork	The Reading Room, High Street	Contact owner concerning deteriorating condition of brickwork on road frontage
Bus shelter	Cambridge Road	When considering a replacement the design should take into account the style and materials of the surrounding buildings
Local authority properties	Church Walk	Watching brief to ensure that future developments are kept in scale and that screening greenery along Mill Lane is maintained
Spalled brickwork	Wall to Holy Trinity churchyard at the top of Mill Lane	Liaise with owner to encourage necessary works to this prominent wall

Part 2 - Management Proposals 1

Detracting element	Location	Proposed action
Telegraph poles and overhead cabling	Northend	Whilst it would be desirable to remove the electricity and telephone poles, this is not a high priority and their presence is partly mitigated by the numerous trees
General		
Lamp column design throughout the settlement needs to be considered. The design needs to be more in proportion with the street. Particularly noticeable in Mill Lane where a modern column sits adjacent to a now redundant historic lamp on wooden pole		
Windows. Where windows are replaced they should generally be in style and keeping with the property. Notable exceptions are the large casement windows to the rear of No. 1 Bakers Row and glazed doors on the front elevation of The Old Chapel.		
Village Hall, Walden Road. In the long term the parish council should consider the potential to re-develop the village hall as a community resource more in keeping with the quality of the surrounding street scene		

1 Maps

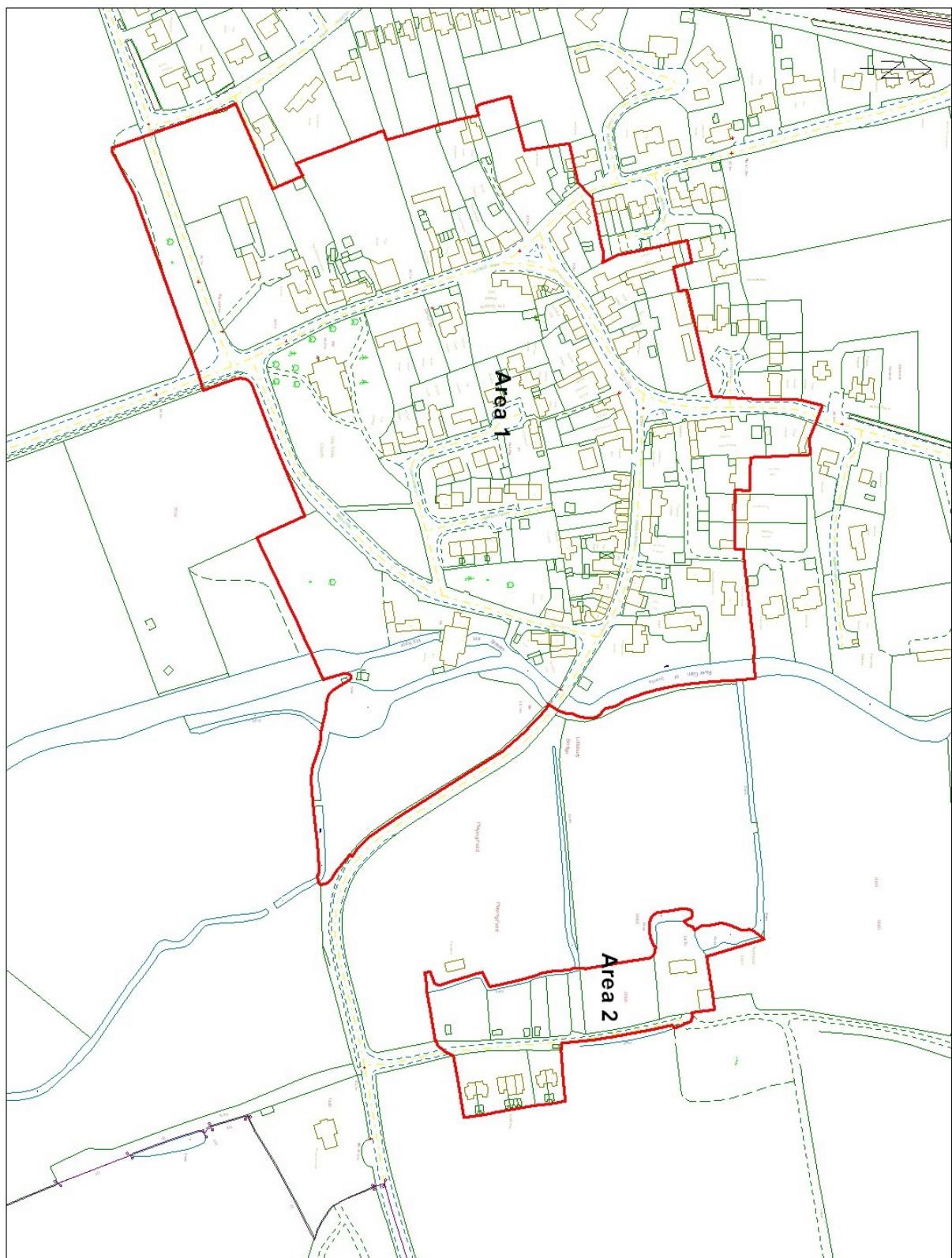
Fig 1 - 1877 Ordnance Survey Map



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Map to show: Historic

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DATE:01/02/2012 MAP REFERENCE ETL5139NE SCALE 1:2500

Maps 1**Fig 2 - Character Analysis Areas**

1 Maps

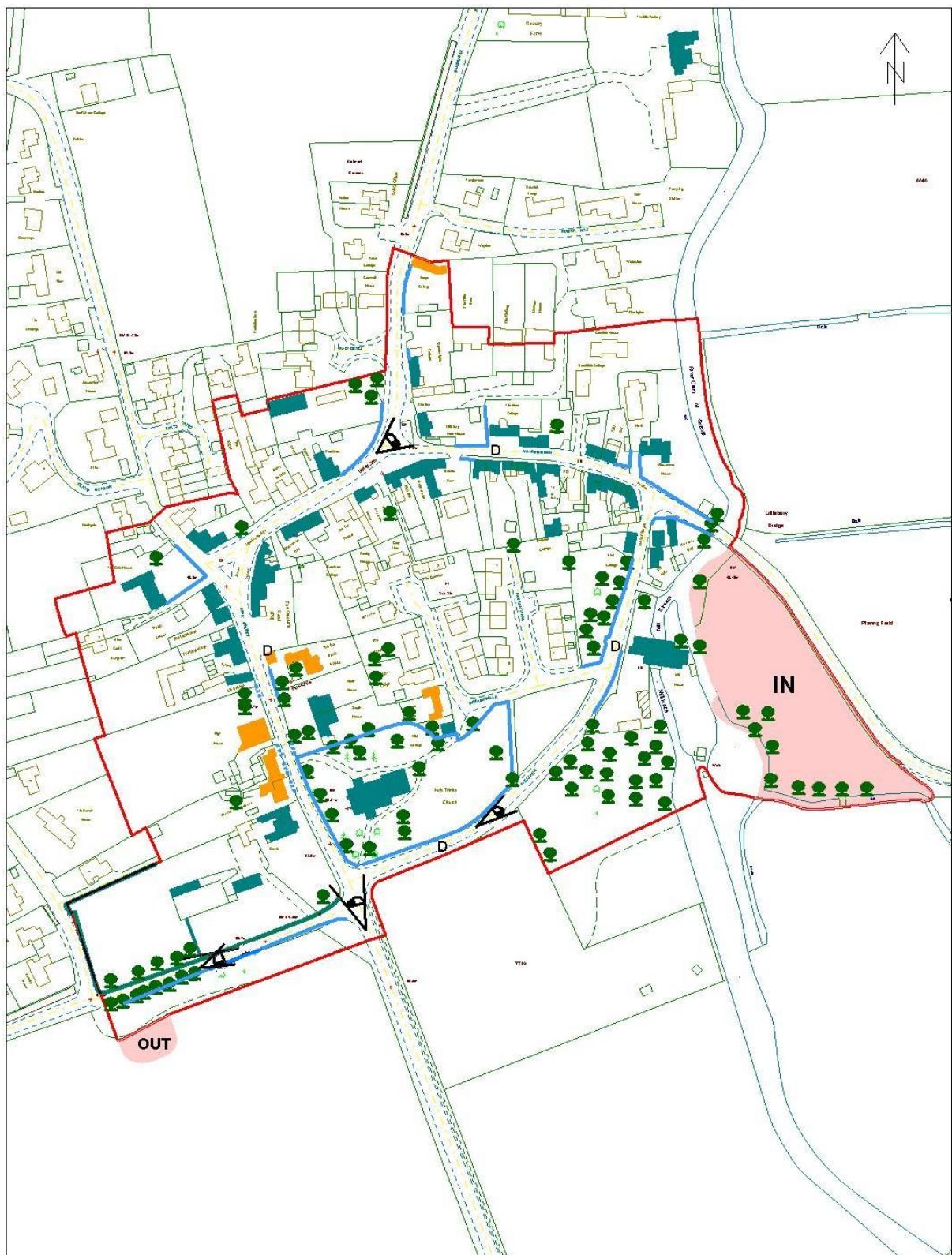
Character Analysis Key

CHARACTER ANALYSIS KEY

-  Existing Conservation Area Boundary
-  Individually Listed Buildings
-  Separately identified buildings within the curtilages of Listed Buildings
-  Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the Conservation Area
-  Scheduled Ancient Monuments
-  Important Open Spaces
-  Important Trees
-  Walls Other distinctive features that make an important visual or
-  Railings historic contribution
-  Important Views
-  Important Hedging
-  Defracting Elements
- Proposed boundary revisions to the Conservation Area
 -  Include additional area
 -  Exclude existing area

Maps 1

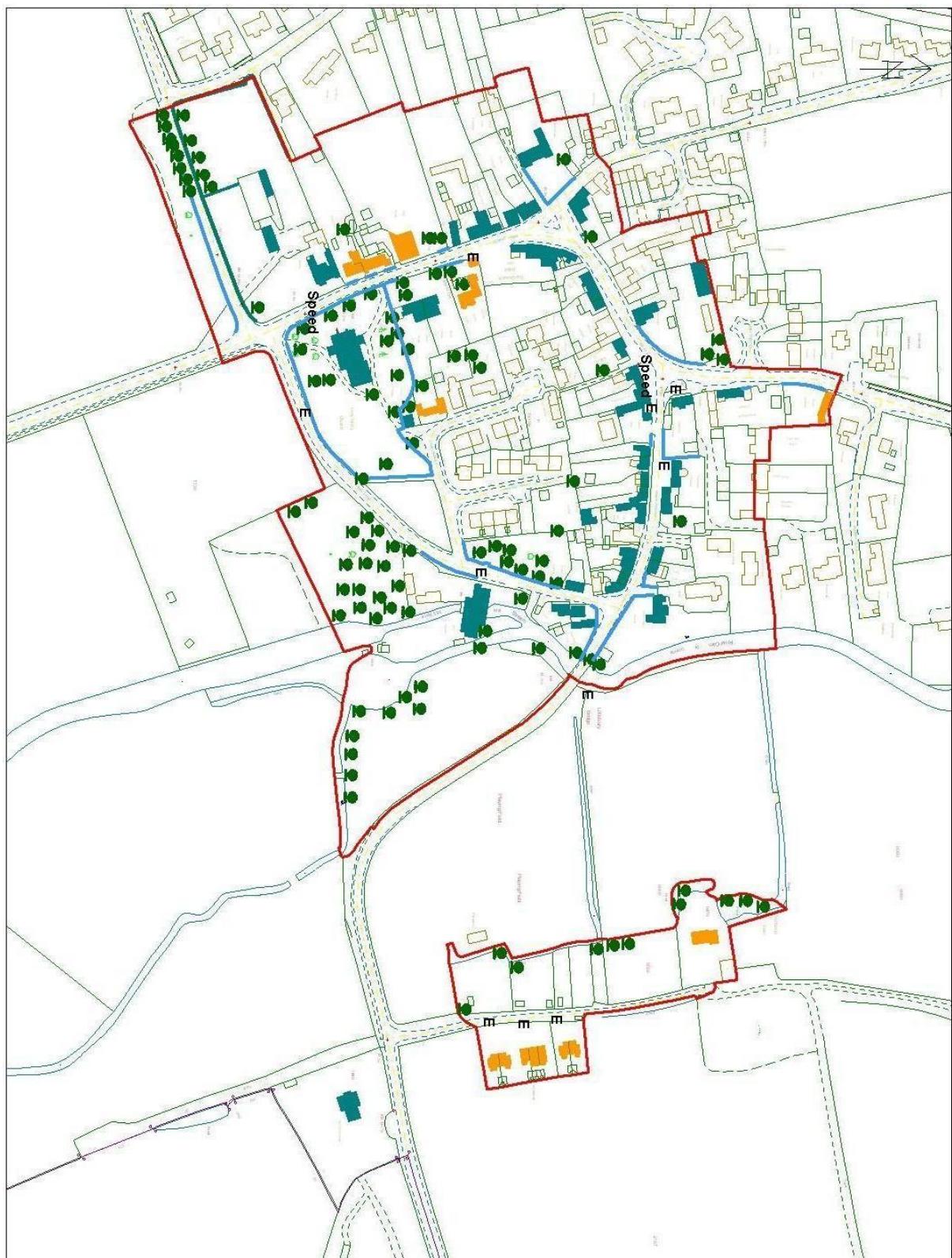
Fig 3 - Area 1



1 Maps

Fig 4 - Area 2



Maps 1**Fig 5 - Management Plan**

1 Maps

Management Plan Key

MANAGEMENT PLAN KEY

-  Revised conservation area boundary, adopted Policy ENV 1 applies
-  Listed buildings, Including important curtilage buildings, adopted Policy ENV 2 applies
-  Other buildings to be protected from demolition, see policy ENV 1. Additional controls to be introduced for selected buildings
-  Scheduled Ancient Monuments
-  Important open spaces protected from development, adopted Policy ENV 3 applies
-  General location of important trees/groups of trees
-  Walls Other distinctive features to be protected from demolition within parameters of planning law. Additional controls to be introduced for selected walls and railings
-  Railings
-  Proposed enhancements
-  SPEED Proposed Speed Reduction Plan
-  Important Hedging

Appendices 1

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1 Appendices

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Appendix 2 - Buildings that make an important Architectural or Historical Contribution to the Conservation Area

Buildings other than those already listed that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the conservation area (this is NOT a proposal for listing)

Building name	Location	Description
Old School House	High Street	Purpose built Gothic revival school building by Edward Barr. On its North and East elevations there are circular windows, one in the end gable of the large school room is glazed in a simplified sexfoil pattern.
High House	High Street	Late 18th century with a facade added in the 19th century. Mock timbers

Appendices 1

Building name	Location	Description
		supporting two runs of casement windows, with third lights leaded and the lower run divided in the middle by glazed doors.
The Old Coach House	High Street	Flint panels, two storey 19th century coach house originally serving the Rectory (South House and North House) and now converted as a private residence. A modern property has been added to the rear.
The Reading Room	High Street	Constructed by Joseph Wix, according to an incised tablet in the wall in 1852. Built of finely gauged red Essex brick, with a slate roof and windows rectangular, recessed with chamfered brickwork, major mullions and transoms are hollow chamfer moulded containing sash windows with glazing bars. The joinery has much in common with that on the Museum in Saffron Walden.
Forge Cottage	Cambridge Road	Dated 1857 in a date stone, two storey brick construction, double-hung sash windows, slate roof, two tall chimney stacks.
Lime Tree Cottage	Church Walk	19th century or earlier, shown on the 1877 Ordnance Survey map
Run of seven estate cottages	Northend	Run of seven semi-detached and terraced estate cottages, date stone for 1873 in central group, probably built at the same time as the adjacent Northend Lodge with bricks from the estate brickworks and are shown on the 1877 Ordnance Survey map. Set in two groups of semi-detached buildings and a short terrace of three, they are built predominantly of red brick with contrasting cream brick reveals, quality casements to the ground floor and double hung sashes to the first floor principle elevations. The roofs are uniformly slate with tall chimney stacks which although comparatively plain retain elements of the moulded Tudor style of the Lodge. Another notable feature is the

1 Appendices

Building name	Location	Description
		finely detailed barge boards mirroring in style and execution may of those to be found in nearby Saffron Walden and which are said to have been the speciality of a local carpenter called Dix.
Northend Farm	Northend	Farmhouse, possibly 18th century, with associated barns and other farm buildings varying in height, shown in much the same distribution on the 1881 Ordnance Survey map.

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