

WYCHAVON

conservation area appraisal

Offenham



Adoption statement

The Offenham Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals were adopted by Wychavon District Council as a document for planning purposes. Minute 151 of the Executive Board meeting of October 2007 refers.

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Part 1. OFFENHAM CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1 INTRODUCTION

What is this Appraisal for?

1.1

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, usually the historic part of a town or village, where we wish to preserve or enhance its character or appearance. Part of Offenham is a conservation area.

1.2

Under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 we must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. This appraisal identifies the special interest and character of the Offenham Conservation Area, and provides guidance on how the preservation or enhancement of its character or appearance can be achieved. The first part of the appraisal identifies its special interest and character. The second part sets out management proposals for addressing the issues identified in the appraisal.

1.3

The Offenham Conservation Area was designated in November 1969. The boundary was reviewed in 2007 during the preparation of this appraisal. The current conservation area boundary is shown in the appraisal.

Planning Policy Framework

1.4

This appraisal should be read in conjunction with the national, regional and the local planning policy framework, particularly:

- Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) which sets out Government policy on the protection of conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment;
- Policy QE5 of The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and Policies CTC19 and policy CTC20 of the adopted Worcestershire County Structure Plan 1996-2011, which seek to protect and enhance conservation areas; and
- Policy ENV12 of the Wychavon District Local Plan (June 2006) which is intended to ensure that development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of conservation areas.

1.5

Broadly, these policies seek to ensure that the conservation area is preserved by:

Refusing permission for:

- the demolition of any building or structure if its loss would damage its character or appearance

- the extension or alteration of a building where the change would damage its character or appearance
- development which would be harmful to its setting or character or appearance
- development which would adversely affect or result in the loss of historic plots, layouts and street pattern, important views, open spaces, tree cover or boundary features within the conservation area
- signage which would be harmful to the character or appearance of the conservation area,

and requiring new development to:

- respect its context in design, including scale, form, proportion and detailing
- Use materials in accordance with those traditionally used in that particular part of the conservation area, and maintain a similar mix
- be located on their sites in a similar way to the general pattern of building in that part of the conservation area
- Boundary walls, railings and hedges should be incorporated in the development in a similar way to those already in existence in that part of the conservation area, and these should use similar materials and detailing, or species, and
- Shop signs to respect the character of the buildings and quality of the historic environment in their siting, size, materials and design.

1.6

In accordance with the new planning system introduced in 2004 we are preparing a Local Development Framework. This will contain conservation area policies that will supersede the Structure and Local Plan from 2009.

1.7

This appraisal supplements Structure Plan and Local Plan Policies CTC19, CTC20 and ENV12 and was adopted by the Council on 16th October 2007.

2 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

2.1

Offenham is a large but quiet rural village with considerable historic, architectural and archaeological interest. Evidence of historic activity includes: prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and the still visible impacts of medieval and post medieval settlement to the present day.

2.2

Offenham is set between the River Avon and Badsey Brook, in a flat landscape of historic water meadows and pasture. From the Conservation Area there are distant views of the Cotswold escarpment, Bredon Hill and middle distance views of Green Hill.

2.3

Following its early foundation as a grange and deer park of the Benedictine Abbots of Evesham Abbey in the 13th century, and continuing until the dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century, Offenham prospered and expanded as a farming and market gardening community in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, with a strong market gardening tradition continuing to the present day.

2.4

The continuous settlement has left a wealth of historic buildings and structures overlaying an early historic settlement with buried archaeological deposits. Principally of 16th, 17th, 18th and 20th century date. Offenham has an exceptional number of thatched dwellings.

2.5

The mixture of cottages, farms and houses give a clue to the history of the village. Glimpses of gardens, trees and countryside between dwellings and over boundary walls, together with the presence of significant areas of open space the market gardening structures and the flat low lying countryside around the village, enhance it's rural tranquillity and confirm its continuing market gardening tradition.

2.6

Notably, significant modern intrusion in the form of obtrusive street lighting, road markings and signage, which can undermine the character and appearance of an historic place, is largely absent from the conservation area.

The special interest of Offenham that justifies its designation as a conservation area includes:

Its long history, still evident in its form, buildings and other structures

The strong survival of the medieval and post-medieval street pattern and customs with the continuing tradition of the maypole and the wake

Its significant archaeological potential

The survival of a clear demonstration of historic social hierarchy within the village, evident in the size, design and siting of buildings

The number and quality of historic buildings

The consistency and high level of survival of historic fabric, including a significant proportion of thatch, and architectural detailing

The strong visual and historic relationship between the village and its market garden setting.

The significant contribution of trees, gardens, open spaces and views

The conservation area boundary is drawn to reflect this special interest.

3 ASSESSING SPECIAL INTEREST

Location & Setting

Location

3.1

Offenham is situated in the lower Avon valley or Vale of Evesham a little way north east of Evesham, it is bounded by the River Avon to the west and north and Badsey brook to the south. The Avon banks in the north western corner of the parish are low and liable to flood.

The parish has an area of 1,215 acres and a population of 1344.

The only main road to Offenham is that from Evesham, no road runs through the parish. Probably the most important road in former times was that part of the old road from Worcester to London, which, branching off from the Roman road, Buckle Street (Icknield Street), ran along the southern part of Offenham to the Offenham boat or ferry across the Avon near the south western corner of the parish. A stone bridge known as Offenham or Twyford bridge had formerly spanned the river but it was damaged by flood water and replaced by a ferry in the 18th century. It was at this river crossing that Simon de Montfort's followers were killed during the Battle of Evesham in 1265.

The railway line passes through the southern part of the parish.

Landscape Setting

3.1

Offenham is set between the Avon and Badsey Brook in a flat landscape of historic water meadows and pasture, surrounded by distant views of the Cotswold escarpment, Bredon Hill and middle distance views of Green Hill.

3.2

From Evesham the village is approached by taking a left turn off the B4510. The flat landscape is predominantly market gardening, this is confirmed by the presence of glass houses and large cultivated fields.

3.4

The conservation area is approached from the southern end of Main Street where the church is situated. Main Street is very straight and wide forming a T with Gibbs Lane at the northern end. The farming and market gardening character of the conservation area is confirmed by views across farm land and the presence of glass houses and farm buildings.

Historical Development & Archaeology

The Origins & Development of Offenham

3.5

It is clear that there has been settlement of one kind or another from pre-historic times in the area around Offenham.

3.6

The parish has been known by various names through the centuries: Huffam (8th century), Afanhamme (11th century) and Uffenham (13th century).

3.7

It was given as a gift from King Offa to Evesham Abbey in 709 and seized with the Abbey in 976 by Alphere an ealdorman of Mercia, but eventually reverted into undisputed possession of the abbey and convent.

3.8

Offenham is exceptional in that it seems to have been one of the few manors that was retained by the Abbots. In effect they were and remained lords of the manor in residence until after the dissolution of the monasteries. We know a little of the life of the early villagers through the Chronicles of the Monastery of Evesham and the Domesday Survey. The first written mention of any fishing industry in England is a record in the Chronicles that the residents of Offenham should supply fish and eels to the Abbey. According to the Domesday survey there was one free hide. In Lordship 3 ploughs; 25 villagers with 7 ploughs; 2 riders and 2 Frenchmen; each of them has one plough. 20 smallholders. Meadow, 20 acres; a mill at 12s 6d. Oxen for 1 plough, but they draw stone to the church. Value before 1066 £8 after £6 10s.

3.9

Evidence that Offenham was established as a planned medieval village is in the straight and rectangular road and boundary patterns still visible. It may have been laid out by the Abbots of Evesham Abbey during the 13th century when they established a grange on the site where Court Farm stands today. This grange suffered a fire in the 13th century in which the buildings were burned down but it was 're-erected' by the Abbot. There is also evidence, in the shape of plot boundaries along the north of Gibbs Lane, of the communal open field system of farming usual in this period.

3.10

By the mid 14th century Evesham Abbey had established a flourishing wool trade with Flanders. The Abbey's involvement in textile production is confirmed by the existence of a number of fulling mills including the Faulk Mill at Offenham. Granges, like the one at Offenham, were often established to manage vast flocks of sheep.

3.11

Offenham seems to have been a favourite place of the Abbots, and it does appear that it was frequently visited by them. A deer park was enclosed at the end of the 15th century, though it is thought that a deer park had been created by Abbot Adam of Evesham as early as the 12th century. Abbot Lichfield is said to have gone to Offenham to retire when the monastery was dissolved.

3.12

At the Dissolution of the Monasteries the manor came into the hands of the crown and in March 1539 Henry VIII granted Evesham along with the manor and park at Offenham to Sir Philip Hoby who was English Ambassador to the Holy Roman Empire and to Flanders. After the Hoby family the manor was held by the Hazelwood family until the middle of the 18th century when it was subdivided passing into various hands and now mostly held by small owners.

3.13

From the 18th century onwards Evesham and surrounding areas started into commercial fruit and vegetable production. Petition to inclose was made in 1800. Offenham came to prominence in the mid 19th century when James Myatt brought new market gardening ideas and improvements to the village. He leased 70 acres in Offenham concentrating on strawberries, rhubarb and asparagus. The fertile soils are heavy lias clay with a light lime content which it was found gave a

free crumb structure if worked properly, allowing expansion to take place on the light bunter soils where Myatt did his pioneer work.

3.14

During the late 19th century the rise of the big grower merchants and the railway led to the expansion of market gardening as the markets expanded north and south; produce could be easily transported all over the country. The old Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton Railway, now Great Western, passes through the southern part of Offenham. The station at Littleton and Badsey opened in 1884, with the Aldington siding for goods, mostly vegetables opening earlier in 1872.

3.15

Expansion continued into the 20th century with the introduction of unheated glass houses in the 1930s under the Dutch influence of J. C. Eeuwens and Avonholm Glasshouses.

3.16

All amenities were provided locally, Greywalls was the first school, the Malt House was the village shop with dairy, bake house and brew house in the yard. The smithy was in Church Street, now in the garden of Forge House. There was a pub along Main Street. The Baptist Chapel was built in 1871 at Offenham Cross and the village hall was built in 1931. Today some amenities are still provided at Offenham but generally outside of the conservation area.

Archaeology

3.17

There is considerable evidence of settlement activity around and near to Offenham, a Bronze Age settlement and pit dwelling was discovered in Mill Lane, finds included a Neolithic stone axe head, an iron age twisted gold torque and 2 iron

currency bars. Romano British occupation in the 2nd and 4th centuries is confirmed by finds of pottery, coins and tiles and traces of a linear settlement along Badsey Brook. Excavations for drains uncovered a V shaped ditch containing Roman pottery and a quernstone. Coins and flue tiles are thought possibly to be from the site of a Roman Villa to the west of Offenham.

3.18

Remains of a Pagan Anglo-saxon cemetery were found at Bennetts Hill to the east of Offenham. Grave goods included a number of amber and crystal beads, pottery, shield bosses, brooches, belt fittings and a knife.

3.19

At Court Farm there are remains of the 13th century grange including a moat and medieval park.

3.20

The Church of St Mary and St Milburgh has its origins in the 13th century, it was rebuilt in 1861 though it still retains its 15th century tower.

Plan Form

3.21

Offenham has a simple form set around lanes in a T shaped plan comprising Main Street, Gibbs Lane, Court Lane and Church Street.

3.22

Both sides of Main Street are lined with plots characteristic of planned medieval village layout. The individual and terraced cottages and houses are set in sometimes very narrow plots with ridges mainly carried in approximate alignment fronting the road to back of pavement. The church and churchyard occupy a very large plot at the southern end of Main Street.

3.23

Gibbs Lane is situated at the north end of Main Street. The north side of Gibbs Lane is also lined with plots which are bounded at the rear by a ditch. Along Gibbs Lane to the left and on into Court Lane the individual houses are set in large plots. Court Farm and farm buildings mark the end of Court Lane. To the right side of Gibbs Lane another working farm, Avoncroft, is set in a large plot with a number of farm buildings. The rest of the properties along this side of Gibbs Lane are a mixture of dwellings of differing sizes and periods but predominantly modern bungalows.

3.24

Church Lane runs parallel to the back of properties to the left side of Main street. Here medium and smaller dwellings are set in their respective plots mainly with ridges carried in alignment fronting the road to back of pavement. At the end of the lane there are a number of modern houses which have been built on land which was once the 19th century gardens belonging to The Old Vicarage.

3.25

The distinctive relationship of building to plot and building to road is a characteristic feature of a medieval town plan and a distinctive feature of the Offenham Conservation Area and a key element of its character and special interest.

3.26

Modern development has obscured some of the medieval plan in part. Modern infil development has erased some of the distinctive plot definition of the medieval plan and the historic relationship of frontage building to rear plot. Nevertheless the historic plan form of the settlement is largely preserved and is a significant element of the character and special interest of the conservation area.

Spaces

3.27

The wide Main Street, churchyard and gardens around The Priory are significant areas of open space within the conservation area and are part of its historic form, character and appearance.

3.28

Market garden land to the rear of the east side of Main Street, and farming land around Court Farm and to the rear of Church Lane, Court Lane and Gibbs Lane provides the setting of the conservation area. There is a considerable amount of more recent development to the south and south west part of the conservation area.

3.29

Less apparent, but just as important to the special interest and character of the conservation area are private gardens and yards. While the full extent of these may not be entirely publicly visible, presence of planting and the proximity to farm and market garden land, contributes to an impression of space at the rear of street frontages, appreciated from glimpses over boundaries, between buildings and from back lane to the rear. These gardens also provide the setting of buildings and are historically important as the open space characteristically found behind frontage buildings.

Key Views & Vistas

3.30

The church is a landmark feature in the landscape on arrival at the Offenham Conservation Area. The maypole forms the end stop and focal point of the street vista along Main Street. The presence of the church and maypole is a constant reminder of the long history of the town.

3.31

A notable view into the conservation area is that from the south end of Main Street near the church looking toward the Maypole.

3.32

The mixture of loosely and closely knit buildings in the village and the very flat landscape limits views to street vistas and glimpses between buildings out into the surrounding countryside giving an impression of wide and open space beyond the conservation area.

3.33

Notable views are from The Grange looking down Church Street and The Manor looking toward Court Farm.

Other notable views are from between buildings including that between Holly House and Gravel House and Rowena Cottage and Lawrenny Cottage.

3.34

There are numerous opportunities for glimpses between buildings giving views of gardens, trees and the more distant landscape of Bredon Hill, the Cotswold escarpment and Green Hill.

4 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

General

4.1

Offenham is a quiet village with much evidence in its form and fabric of its early origin.

Character Areas

4.2

There are two distinct character areas within the conservation area the area around Court Lane and Gibbs Lane and that around Main Street, and Church Street

4.3

The character of Court Lane and Gibbs Lane is that of a mixture of large and medium sized houses in large plots but dominated by the 2 working farms in the conservation area and the larger houses

which are sometimes set back from the road in large gardens.

Main Street and Church Street in contrast are generally lined with smaller and medium sized houses which are situated to the back of pavement. Typically with long narrow plots to the rear.

Buildings

4.4

The majority of buildings in the conservation area are dwellings, ranging from substantial houses to modest cottages. With few exceptions, most were built in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries, with a resulting architectural eclecticism and mix of materials.

The historic development and the later breaking up of the medieval regular plots of the village is reflected in the mix of building and plot sizes and quality of buildings.

4.5

Some of the buildings are listed for their special architectural or historic interest with many timber frame and stone cottages much as originally designed and predominantly with thatched roofs.

4.6

Most buildings share common design characteristics of:

- limited spans/plan depths dictated by historic building construction methods
- a simple main rectangular plan form, often with one or more rear wings
- steeply pitched roofs
- tight verges with simple lime mortar fillets

Houses

4.7

Houses are mainly 17th and 18th century including Court Farmhouse, The Priory,

The Grange and Avoncroft Farm. These buildings are large in size, denoting prestige. They are typically three bays wide, two to two and a half or three storey in height, often with one or more rear wings and large in scale, with large doors and windows reflecting high internal floor to ceiling heights and are double pile. Principal elevations are characteristic of the Classical architectural influence of the period, with careful order or symmetry and verticality in elevation, incorporating a centre placed door with doorcase and fanlight, carefully proportioned double hung vertical sliding sashes under flat heads to each side and matching ridge chimneys to each gable end.

4.8

Additional or alternative architectural features to demonstrate prestige are incorporated into their design, such as, hipped roofs, stone dressings, and other embellishments such as moulded eaves cornices and string courses.

4.9

Rooflights are noticeably absent.

4.10

Buildings of this quality are concentrated in Gibbs Lane and Court Lane.

Cottage Terrace

4.11

The cottage row Main Street dates from the early 18th century and exhibits features characteristic of type and date. Individual single bays are joined together as a unified design, are one and a half storey with a simple plan and a simple repeated arrangement of a panelled door to the side of a single set of casement windows under flat heads, and ridge mounted chimney.

4.12

These houses are very modest in size and scale, with equal sized windows at ground

and first floor, reflecting common floor to ceiling heights. Upper floor windows have eyebrow dormers in thatched roofs.

Cottages

4.13

Cottages date from 14/15th through to the early 20th century indicating continuing replacement and development. They are one and half to two storey with one or two bays, have a simple rectangular plan and are very modest in size and scale with the upper floor partly within the roof. While ridge mounted chimneys are most common, they may be within the roof slope, centrally placed or, in some cases, external. Windows are casements in small squarely proportioned openings arranged in random pattern and fitted flush to the wall with minimal cills and flat heads. Within later cottages the same casement windows are more carefully arranged on principal elevations in a symmetrical composition, typically with cambered brick arched heads. Doors are mainly solid and painted and vertically planked, occasionally with modest but well detailed open timber porches.

4.14

Dormers are frequently present in cottages either wall plate mounted or breaking through the eaves. Rooflights are absent.

4.15

Cottages are found throughout the conservation area reflecting Offenham's origins as a farming/market gardening community.

Modern Houses

4.16

Modern development in Offenham generally does not conform in form, scale and features characteristic of its historic buildings. There are one or two examples which achieve a reasonable quality of design appropriate to the surrounds,

although often let down by poor detailing and use of inappropriate materials.

Ancillary Buildings

4.17

Other main building types in the conservation area are ancillary buildings such as barns and dove cotes. These are typically sited at the rear of houses and are generally contemporary in date with the principal residential building. Some barns are sited to the front of pavement. Some have been converted into residential uses. Where buildings survive unaltered they are typical in form and design of their period and purpose, with simple functional plans and minimal openings in plain walls.

4.18

These buildings have a visual and functional relationship with the principal building and are subservient in scale, form and design. The presence of these ancillary buildings and their relationship with their principal building is a clue to the history and development of the village and an essential element of the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation area.

4.19

Farm Buildings

Barns and farm buildings are grouped around yards close to their respective houses and are typical of the Worcestershire vernacular, with simple rectangular plans, simple plain gabled roofs and walls with minimal openings. Various Dutch barns of 20th century date are grouped around Court Farm and Avoncroft Farm.

Listed Buildings

4.20

Several buildings in the Offenham Conservation Area are "listed" for their architectural or historic interest. Other

buildings and structures attached to, or pre-dating 1st July 1948 and forming part of the curtilage of these identified buildings are also listed by association. While the aim of the listed building legislation is to preserve these buildings for their own sake, any changes affecting them will also be considered in terms of the effect on the conservation area.

4.21

Buildings and structures that are listed by association with those buildings included in the list are shown on the appraisal map where they have been able to be identified. The information shown on the map is not definitive. The Council's Heritage Team should be contacted for advice on whether a building or structure is listed by association before any works are carried out to potentially listed buildings or structures.

Unlisted Buildings

4.22

There are many other buildings that, while not "listed", have qualities of age, style and materials which are locally important and which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area

4.23

That many of these properties retain much of their original character and appearance is to the credit of those owners who have carefully preserved them. There is, however, no guarantee as to their future and these properties are vulnerable to future change. The Management Plan at Part 2 includes a proposal for consideration of Article 4(2) Directions to provide long-term protection against unsympathetic alterations. The effect of the Direction would be that certain alterations which formerly did not require planning permission would need permission in future, but only where the

change affects those parts of a property fronting a highway or public open space.

Materials

4.24

The use of building materials in the conservation area reflects what was locally available at the time. Where stone is used in construction it is either coursed blue lias rubble or Cotswold limestone, and sometimes a mixture of both regardless of the size, purpose or status of the building. The predominant building material for walls and roofs throughout the conservation area, however, is timber framing with brick infill panels and thatch, there are examples of brick in later buildings.

4.25

Walls.

Providing much of the character of the village are the predominantly surviving examples of timber framed buildings, with remnants of timber framed construction often visible in side walls, and from the rear of buildings faced with stone or brick. These cottages and houses have panels of painted render and brick infill between timbers mostly painted black. This framing is tangible evidence of the history and development of the village and part of its special interest and character.

4.26

There is a consistent use of the locally obtained stone in buildings and boundary walls throughout. There is a use of stone in houses, cottages and barns of all sizes and in the church, either Cotswold limestone or local blue lias. Frequently stone is used in plinths in dwellings, in chimney stacks and in farm buildings. Higher quality dressed Cotswold limestone is found on the south elevation of Court Farmhouse, in quoins at The Priory, the dovecote in Church Street and in mullions at Abbots Cottage. Stone is also frequently visible in gable ends of timber

frame cottages occasionally with a painted finish.

4.27

Brick is also a fairly frequently used material in later buildings occasionally painted or rendered.

4.28

Roofs. The predominant roof covering on buildings throughout the conservation area is thatch, and plain clay machine tile of a red/brown hue. There are examples of slate at Avoncroft Farmhouse and stone tile on Court Farmhouse, The Old Manor and The Priory. Tiles are largely machine made from the 19th century, but there are still examples of surviving earlier handmade tiles.

4.29

Windows.

Windows are generally casement of wrought iron or painted timber with some examples of sash windows of painted timber. Both materials are characteristic of their respective periods and status of buildings and the retention of these traditional materials is important to the character and appearance of the conservation area. There are occasional examples of dressed Cotswold stone mullioned windows.

4.30

Doors are painted timber.

4.31

There are examples of replacement windows and doors in uPVC, stained timber and painted timber. Replacement windows sometimes incorporate lead strips in imitation of leaded lights, and the design of replacement windows often incorporates top-hung hinged opening lights in lieu of side hung casements and sliding sashes. The materials, finishes, and much of the detailing of these replacement windows, are inconsistent with traditional window design, detail and finish prevalent in the

conservation area and are harmful to its character and appearance.

4.32

Wrought iron is used for railings, hand rails, and gates. The retention of this historic fabric and detailing is important to the character and appearance of the conservation area. There is a good survival of cast iron gutters and downpipes.

4.33

Road surfaces and pavements are tarmac, with natural stone and concrete kerbs. The modern materials, while serviceable, have a ubiquity and quality of finish that is disappointing in association with the historic environment. The natural stone kerbs have a patina and quality which is more appropriate and which it is important to the character and appearance of the conservation area to retain.

4.34

Private drives and yards are surfaced in loose Cotswold gravel, tarmac or concrete paviours. The gravelled surfaces gives a soft textured surface finish while the tarmac and concrete paviours are less appropriate for the setting of the historic buildings.

Local Details

4.35

There are many small building and other details in the Offenham conservation area that contribute to its character and special interest and which are important to retain. These include:

- The continued use of thatch on traditional timber framed and stone buildings
- The fine stone dressings on many of the buildings
- Stone plinths frequently found on buildings

- Fine wrought iron work in railings gates and hand rails and in window goods.
- Survival of boot scrape to the side of entrance door at the church
- Survival of original door furniture, such as doorknockers, knobs, letter plates and hinges
- Cogged or dogtooth dentilled eaves detailing
- Front entrance steps onto pavements
- The small buildings to the rear of plots including privies.

Boundaries

4.36

Dry stone wall boundaries of blue lias are common, this boundary treatment is consistent throughout the conservation area, regardless of location or status of building. They are an integral element of its special interest, character and appearance.

4.37

Front boundaries are a significant feature in the conservation associated mainly with later and modern properties though not exclusively. Dry stone walls are usual, with examples of brick walls, iron railings, timber picket fences and hedges.

Natural Environment

4.38

The natural environment makes a significant contribution to the character and

appearance of the Offenham Conservation Area.

4.39

Trees and hedges provide a green soft edge to the villages and setting for its buildings including the open space of the church yard the green at the junction of Gibbs Lane, Court Lane and Church Lane and the gardens around The Priory. They make a significant contribution to its rural character as appreciated from within and in views to and from the conservation area.

4.40

Less apparent, but just as important, are private gardens. These remain largely undeveloped and continue in use as gardens. While the full extent of private gardens may not be entirely publicly visible, these gardens provide the setting of buildings and are historically important as the open space characteristically found behind frontage buildings on the plots of the medieval village plan.

4.41

Trees to the backs of properties are a feature throughout the conservation area though not much in evidence in the street plan. There are frequent views and glimpses of these from roads and footpaths. Notable individual trees include the large cedar in front of the church and the large tree the rear of The Grange. Prominent tree groups are mixed species in the church yard, and the trees in the garden at The Priory. Worth noting is the tree cover to the rear of properties in Gibbs Lane.

4.42

All trees over a certain size are protected in the conservation area. Written notification must be given to the Council before carrying out any works to these trees. Some trees are individually protected by Tree Preservation Orders and

consent is needed from us before any works to them are carried out.

Our Landscape Team can advise on which trees are protected, the type of works which would need to be notified or need consent, the procedures and the likelihood of getting consent for the works. The contribution of the tree to the character and appearance of the conservation area will be a factor in the consideration of a notification or application.

Negative Features & Neutral Areas

Negative Features

4.43

Offenham has retained much of its historic form and fabric. There are, however, features that compromise or detract from its character and appearance. These include:

- **New development in the gardens of the Old Vicarage.** These have intruded on the visual and historic relationship between the green spaces around the church and the village scene along Main Street and Church Lane.
- **New buildings.** Some new buildings exhibit design characteristics that are quite different to the established characteristics of the area. The purpose of highlighting these buildings is not necessarily to aim at their re-development, but to guard against them becoming too dominant through future additions or alterations. These buildings will not be regarded by the Council as a guide or precedent for future development proposals

- **Poor quality re-pointing of fine historic brickwork** in hard cement mortars
- **Replacement doors and windows.** A number of properties have had replacement windows and/or doors in uPVC, stained timber or double glazed units. Window and door replacements with new ones of a different design, detail, materials or finish, erodes local building detail, which is an essential part of the distinctive character and appearance of the conservation area
- **Incremental addition of external fixtures to the front of buildings,** such as satellite dishes, alarm boxes, security lighting, video cameras, flues, vents and cables, These additions undermine the quality of the design and appearance of individual buildings and cumulatively detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area
- **Fences.** Some properties have modern timber panelled or boarded fences which jar with the prevailing character and appearance of the conservation area.

We would welcome the opportunity of discussing the scope for improving these features.

Neutral Areas

4.44

There are some parts of the conservation area which, in their present form, neither enhance or detract from its character or appearance.

4.45

Some of the modern infill developments in the Gibbs Lane and Main Street although exhibiting some different design characteristics to the established characteristics of the area, reflect the scale

and form of neighbouring buildings and do not intrude.

4.46

We will be careful, however, to guard against such properties and areas becoming too dominant through future additions or alterations.

5 ISSUES

5.1

The appraisal has highlighted the following problems and pressures in the Offenham Conservation Area.

- Design quality of new buildings
- Erosion of village's historic plan form

5.2

The Management Plan at Section 2 considers how these might be addressed to ensure the continuing preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

NOTE

Although it is intended that this appraisal should highlight significant features of the conservation area which are important to its character or appearance, omission of a particular feature should not be taken as an indication that it is without merit and unimportant in conservation and planning terms.

PART 2. OFFENHAM CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

1 INTRODUCTION

What is this Management Plan for?

1.1

This management plan is a mid- to long-term strategy for preserving and enhancing the Offenham conservation area, addressing the issues arising from the appraisal.

1.2

This plan is prepared in accordance with our duty under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of our conservation areas.

2 MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

1. Design quality of new buildings

Some new buildings exhibit design characteristics that are quite different to the established characteristics of the area and which fail to preserve or enhance the conservation area. Others are let down by poor attention to detail and materials.

Action

We will

- seek improvements to buildings where opportunities arise through development proposals
- assess new proposals against our Local Plan Policies on Design and on Preserving and Enhancing the Conservation Area, Preserving the Setting of Listed Buildings and our forthcoming supplementary planning document on design.

2. Loss of architectural features on historic buildings

Several of the buildings in the conservation area have been adversely affected by the use of inappropriate modern materials or details such as the replacement of original timber sash or timber and wrought iron

casements with double glazed uPVC or stained hardwood windows and the loss of original timber front doors.

Action

We will

- consider the need for Article 4(2) Directions to those properties listed at Appendix 1, to bring such works under planning control, to ensure that the special qualities of unlisted buildings of local significance are protected.
- address unauthorised alterations to buildings through enforcement action where appropriate, in accordance with our Enforcement Policy

3. Incremental addition of external fixtures

The fixing of such as satellite dishes, alarm boxes, security lighting, video cameras, flues, vents and cables to the outside of buildings, particularly their main elevations, undermines the quality of the design and appearance of individual buildings and cumulatively detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area

Action

We will

- address unauthorised harmful additions to buildings through enforcement action where appropriate, in accordance with our Enforcement Policy

9. Potential for loss of boundary wall

There are several instances where boundary walls important to the appearance and character of the conservation area have no protection. If these were replaced with other materials the quality of the historic environment would be undermined.

Action

We will

- consider the need for Article 4 Directions to bring such works under planning control, to ensure that the special character of the area is protected.
- address unauthorised works through enforcement action where appropriate, in accordance with our Enforcement Policy

APPENDIX 1

ARTICLE 4(2) DIRECTIONS

What is an Article 4(2) Direction?

An Article 4(2) Direction is an Order that the District Council can make to provide long-term protection against unsympathetic alterations to unlisted dwelling houses in conservation areas by restricting certain "permitted development" rights. This means that alterations that formerly did not require planning permission would need permission in the future. This would only apply to elevations or parts of a property which front public roads, rights of way or public open spaces. It would not normally affect the rear of a property or the rear garden, and does not affect interior alterations.

Why consider them for Offenham?

The conservation area at Offenham has been designated in recognition of its special architectural and historic interest and a desire to preserve its character and appearance.

Although many alterations to all types of buildings can be controlled in a conservation area by planning permission, changes can still take place to unlisted dwellings and their sites that can damage the character and appearance of the

conservation area, but which are "permitted development", i.e. they do not ordinarily require planning permission.

There are many buildings in the Offenham Conservation Area which, although not listed, have qualities of age, style and materials which are locally distinct and which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. That many of these properties retain much of their original character and appearance is to the credit of those owners who have carefully preserved them. There is, however, no guarantee as to their future and these properties are vulnerable to future change.

Article 4(2) directions are proposed for some properties in the conservation area. Those affected would be:

MAIN STREET

1 and 2 Court Cottages, The Old Timbers, Maypole Cottage, Lawrenny Cottage, Rowena Cottage, 1 and 2 Brighton Cottages, The Hollies, The Old Vicarage, The Cottage, Old Timbers, Maypole Cottage

COURT LANE

Yew Tree Cottage

CHURCH STREET

Holly House, Gravel House, Nos 3, 5, 6, Ty Gwyn, Abbots Croft, Knights Yard, No 12

APPENDIX 2

Statement of Community Involvement

Community involvement has taken the form of:

- informing Council Member representing the Offenham Ward
- a briefing session with the Offenham Town Council

- a public meeting at the Offenham Village Hall on the evening of 22nd August 2007.

Consultation

The consultation period began on 22nd August 2007 and ended on 19th September 2007.

Consultation was by:

- A public meeting held at Offenham Village Hall on the evening of 22nd August 2007
- Publication of the draft appraisal, management plan & proposed conservation area boundary changes on the Wychavon District Council website, accompanied by an electronic feedback form
- Placing of the same documents for public inspection during the consultation period at
 - Planning Reception Wychavon District Council, Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore
 - Evesham public library
 - Evesham Community Contact Centre
 - Letters to Evesham Civic Society, local Member, Evesham Town Council, Worcestershire Archaeological Unit, English Heritage

Consultees

The following were consulted on the draft appraisal and management plan:

- Evesham Civic Society
- Offenham residents
- Worcestershire County Archaeological Service
- Worcestershire County Council
- English Heritage

Publicity

Notice of the public meeting and consultation was given by way of:

- Letters to all residents in the Conservation Area
- Posters placed on the notice boards in Offenham
- News items in the Evesham Journal on 23 August 2007, Gloucester Echo on 29th August 2007.
- News feature on "Planning News" page of Wychavon Council website from 22nd August.
- Notice placed with the documents at the Civic Centre, Evesham public library, Evesham Community Contact Centre and on the Council's website.
- information forwarded to consultees

APPENDIX 3 Adoption Statement

The Offenham Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was adopted by Wychavon District Council as a document for planning purposes on 20th September 2007. Minute 151 of the Executive Board meeting of 16th October 2007 refers.

Wychavon District Council
Planning Services
Civic Centre
Queen Elizabeth Drive
Pershore
Worcestershire
WR10 1PT

Tel. 01386 565000
www.wychavon.gov.uk

APPENDIX 4

SOURCES & FURTHER INFORMATION

SOURCES

Victoria County History: Worcestershire
Tithe Map 1841

OS Maps 1883, 1901, 1920
A Survey of Historic Parks and Gardens of Worcestershire
Pastscape
Offenham A Short History of the Parish
Cox, G (1953)
List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (District of Wychavon)
Noake's Worcestershire
A Short History of Commercial Horticulture in the Vale of Evesham - R. W. Sitwell
Berkshire History: Biographies: Sir Philip Hoby

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further guidance and information please contact:

The Heritage Section
Planning Services
Wychavon District Council
Civic Centre
Queen Elizabeth Drive
Pershore
Worcs. WR10 1PT

Tel. 01386 565565
e.mail: planning@wychavon.gov.uk
web: www.wychavon.gov.uk

The following websites contain information relating to conservation areas:

Wychavon District Council at
www.wychavon.gov.uk

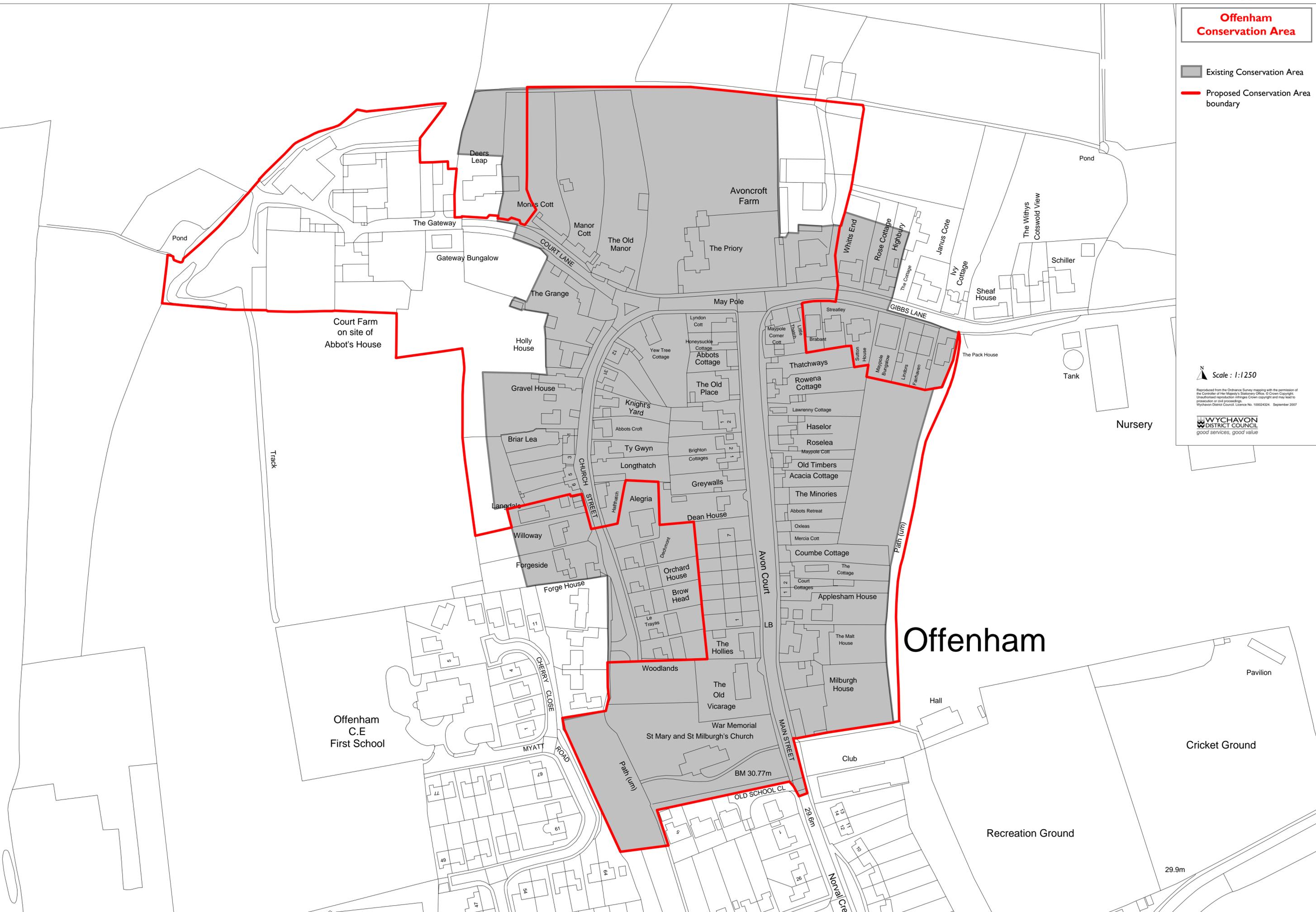
English Heritage at
www.english-heritage.org.uk

Offenham Conservation Area

- Existing Conservation Area
- Proposed Conservation Area boundary

Scale : 1:1250

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Offenham

Offenham
C.E
First School

Cricket Ground

Recreation Ground

29.9m

Pavilion

Hall

Club

BM 30.77m

Path (un)

MAIN STREET

OLD SCHOOL CL

29.9m

Norval Cre

Avon Court

LB

Orchard House

Brow Head

Le Trayas

The Hollies

The Old Vicarage

War Memorial

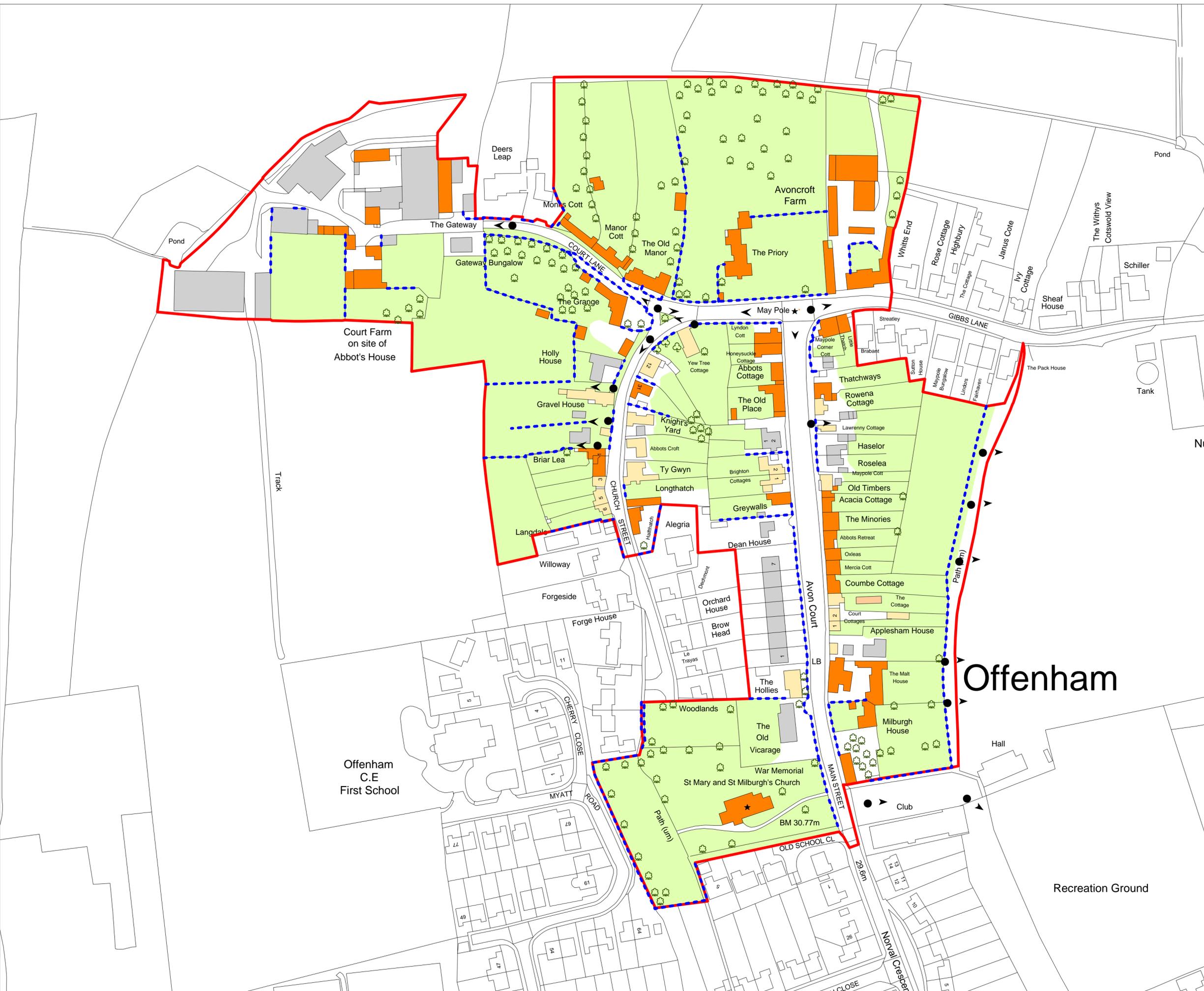
St Mary and St Milburgh's Church

Woodlands

Forge House

Offenham Conservation Area Appraisal

- Conservation Area boundary
- - - Important boundary feature
- Listed Buildings
- Unlisted buildings of local distinction
- Neutral features
- Significant views
- ★ Focal features
- Prominent open space
- 🌳 Trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order
- 🌳 Significant trees & tree groups



(Diagrammatic only)

Scale : 1:1250

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Offenham

Cricket Ground

Recreation Ground

29.9m