

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).
 The form must be completed and passed to the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

To agree, for the purposes of public consultation, the content of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal (including proposed boundary) and Management Plan (Appendix A) for the proposed new conservation area in Little Barford and a list of individuals and organisations to be consulted (Appendix B).

2. Date of decision

4th November 2022

3. Reasons for decision

To ensure that the Council's draft appraisal document and consultation list are sound and thorough, and that the public's and other consultees' view is sought.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

None

5. How decision is to be funded

From existing budgets.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

Signed: *Dave Hodgson*

Date: 4th November 2022

Name of Decision Taker: Mayor Dave Hodgson.

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published: ...7 November 2022.....

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: ...16 November 2022.....

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....NO.....)

Bedford Borough Council – Report to the Mayor

Report by: Manager for Heritage and Planning Compliance

Subject: Public consultation on a new Conservation Area at Little Barford and Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Little Barford.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 A new conservation area is proposed for Little Barford. An appraisal of the area has been undertaken and proposed boundaries and a management strategy drafted. Formal consultation is now proposed over a period of four weeks to seek views on the proposed designation and appraisal document.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **To approve a Conservation Area Appraisal (including a proposed boundary for a new conservation area) and Management Plan for Little Barford (Appendix A) and a list of consultation groups (Appendix B) for the purposes of public consultation.**

3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To ensure that the Council's draft appraisal document and consultation list are sound and thorough, and that the public's and other consultees' view is sought.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Issues

- 4.1 Local planning authorities have a duty under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to determine which parts of their areas have special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which should be preserved or enhanced, and to designate those areas as conservation areas. That section also confers a duty to 'from time to time' review existing designations and to consider whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas. Section 71 also requires local authorities to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts, and to consult the local community about these proposals.

- 4.2 The Council is not required to undertake any public consultation prior to designating a new conservation area. It must simply place an advertisement in a local newspaper and the London Gazette and the Secretary of State and Historic England need to be formally notified once a new designation is made. However, there is a statutory requirement (Section 71 of The Act) to hold a public meeting for consideration of the Management Plan.
- 4.3 Whilst public consultation is not obligatory, it is now acknowledged that local consultation can help to bring valuable public understanding and 'ownership' to proposals for an area. Historic England advises that consultation should be undertaken generally in line with the Local Authority's Statement of Community Involvement. It is therefore proposed that a four week public consultation period be undertaken. This would proceed in the following manner:
- (i) A letter shall be sent to residents affected by the proposed designation of the new conservation area at the start of the four week consultation informing them of the proposed designation and consultation period and stating where the documents may be viewed which will include the Council's website. A copy will also be made available in the Customer Service Centre and all local libraries.
 - (ii) The local Parish Councils shall also be notified and posters placed in local libraries. It has not been possible to place notices within the village owing to the lack of local information boards. All Councillors and other interested groups shall also receive this information by email wherever possible or by second class post for those we don't have an email address for (please see Appendix B for consultation groups).
 - (iii) A notice shall be placed in a local newspaper at the start of week one of the consultation period giving details of the proposed new designation and appraisal and stating where the documents may be viewed and the exact dates of the public consultation period. This notice and letters/emails sent shall provide an opportunity for interested parties to make representations in support of or against the proposed designation. A consultation period of 4 weeks shall be provided.
 - (iv) A public meeting shall be held on a weekday including some time in an evening during the four week consultation period (exact dates to be finalised following confirmation of available venue dates).
 - (v) Once the consultation period has ended, the comments received shall be considered by officers and a report drafted detailing all responses with comments and recommendations on them. The matter is then referred back to Executive for a decision as to whether to proceed with the designation of the conservation area and adoption of the conservation area appraisal and management plan, either in its original or a revised form taking into account comments received.

Policy Issues

- 4.4 The emerging Local Plan 2040 states that the potential to designate a conservation area at Little Barford is being investigated by the Local Planning Authority.
- 4.5 The key conservation area policy in the 2030 Local Plan is Policy 41S which requires that development will be required to protect and, where appropriate, enhance the character of conservation areas.

Resource Implications

4.6 In the event that the Council does decide to designate a conservation area, there will be a variety of implications for the Council as well as other interested parties and these may be summarised as follows:

- Demolition of certain buildings will require the Council's consent.
- It will become an offence to carry out works to trees without first notifying the Council although certain exemptions apply.
- The Council comes under an obligation pursuant to Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publicise proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the area.
- The Council is required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area when exercising its powers under the Planning Acts/Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act.
- Planning applications require a greater level of publicity.
- Permitted development rights are more restricted.
- Specific statutory duties are placed on telecommunications operators.
- The right to display certain types of illuminated advertisement without consent is excluded.

4.7 The additional exercise of the Council's statutory responsibilities in a new Little Barford Conservation Area can be met within existing resources.

Risk Implications

4.8 There is a risk that the designation may be challenged by judicial review. Case law shows that previous challenges have had minimal success (five reported challenges, four unsuccessful, one success).

4.9 If the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan are not considered to have undergone sufficiently rigorous public consultation the documents may lack weight when used for development management and subsequent appeal determinations.

4.10 If the Management Plan has not been subject to a public meeting the authority will not have fulfilled its statutory duty.

Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Council by 2030

- 4.11 Without designation, there is a risk that the historic and architectural interest which has been identified would be harmed due to the inability to control potentially harmful development. There is also a risk of the loss of trees which are not afforded protection by a Tree Preservation Order.
- 4.12 Designation would confer initial protection to trees and therefore a greater likelihood that they will be preserved which would benefit carbon reduction.
- 4.13 Sustainability appraisal screening has been undertaken to assess whether designation of Little Barford village as a conservation area, and the adoption of a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan should be subject to sustainability appraisal. This has concluded that sustainability appraisal is not required as the matters being considered do not create new policy or result in development that was not intended in current adopted policies.

Equalities Impact

- 4.14 In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Borough Council's Statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.15 A relevance test for equality has been completed. The equality test determined that the activity has no relevance to Bedford Borough Council's statutory equality duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relation. An equality analysis is not needed.

5. DETAILS

- 5.1 The appraisal has followed the advice given by the Historic England Guidance *Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management Second edition, Advice Note 1* (2019) Firstly, the existing planning policy framework is identified. This is followed by the identification and definition of the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area. This is a fundamental aspect of the appraisal as it is this definition against which development proposals are measured. In particular, such proposals must meet the statutory test set out under s72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to 'preserve or enhance the character of the area'. The appraisals include an overview of the location, topography and landscape and the historic development of the area. Following this, a spatial analysis looks at the layout, open spaces, trees, focal points and key views/vistas which contribute to the character and interest of the area. Building on this, the character analysis then provides an assessment which highlights key architectural features within the area, those that both unify and those that are unique. An assessment of the general condition of the conservation area is also undertaken which includes neutral or negative features which helps to inform the accompanying Management Plan.
- 5.2 The Management Plan is a document informed by the appraisal providing action points to guide the future management of the conservation area in order to preserve and where possible enhance its special interest. The action points include guidance on new

development within the conservation area, considering the impact of proposals on key views and vistas, appropriate management of the public realm and open space and trees and consideration of the impact on archaeological remains. The Management Plan is then used as a technical document to provide guidance for owners, businesses and interest parties within the conservation area and to inform the development management process. It does not have any direct financial impact on the Council's revenue or capital budgets once published.

Boundary and Special Interest

- 5.3 The proposed designation is due to a number of elements and features which contribute to historic and architectural character and the boundary (shown on page 7 of Appendix A) includes all built form within the village. As well as the strong relationship between the Church and New Manor House and estate buildings, there are visible earthworks associated with the medieval settlement. The consistency of 19th century estate qualities in terms of materials and architectural features is also a strong unifying feature. The dispersed nature of buildings, open spaces and verdant character all contribute to the sense of place and rural character. When considering the exact line of the boundary, where it has not been possible to follow a physical boundary or clear feature such as the road edge, the boundary takes a straight line between identifiable points to enable greater ease in plotting the boundary 'on the ground'.
- 5.4 The large area of historic parkland to the west of the road has been included as it forms an integral part of the historic landscaping between the church and New Manor House. The modern Dower House and garden has been included and while the building itself makes a neutral contribution to the conservation area as it interrupts the high quality historic landscape surrounding it, the combination of the 18th century kitchen garden wall, manor house platform earthworks on which it stands and the maturity of the wider garden, result in the site cumulatively making a positive contribution.
- 5.5 Following an informal consultation workshop held in October 2022, a number of representations suggested including the large field located to the east of Barford Road and other surrounding fields in the conservation area. It is acknowledged that the field east of Barford Road located centrally to the village makes a positive contribution to the experience of the village, forming part of its immediate rural setting and also contains the earthwork remains of probable medieval house platforms and blocks of ridge and furrow. Whilst these archaeological features are of inherent heritage significance, they are not readily perceived in views from the public realm and therefore do not make sufficient contribution to architectural and historic interest of the conservation area to justify inclusion. It is also notable that Historic England guidance on conservation area designation states that rural character is not, in itself, generally an appropriate reason to justify an area for inclusion. Nevertheless, the Council would be statutorily required to pay special attention to the contribution made by setting to the character and appearance of the conservation area, which includes the field. The remaining fields around the village which have been referred to do not have any apparent architectural or historic interest.
- 5.6 The probable medieval fish ponds have been included and form the western boundary of the area. Whilst very overgrown and therefore not currently visible from the wider area, they are still evident on the ground and demonstrate the remains of the medieval manorial complex. These continue along the leat which fed the water supply from the River Great Ouse. The boundary then follows the south eastern bank of the river, taking in a dense area of trees and returning along a field boundary taking in the deserted medieval settlement in

the northern field. These earthworks are visible as significant bumps in this field and views from here allow the visual connection between Lower Farmhouse and barn (both Grade II listed) and 1-8 The Cottages (estate cottages).

The Management Plan

- 5.7 The Management Plan outlines threats and opportunities to the conservation area with recommendations made for each to ensure that its architectural and historic character is preserved or enhanced for the future. It commits the Council to working with stakeholders to seek ways in which vacant buildings can be brought back into a viable use consistent with their heritage interest. It directs that new development within the proposed conservation area will need to respond to the historic and rural character and preserve the archaeological earthworks.
- 5.8 A further measure seeks to preserve or enhance positive elements of important open spaces in the village. The Council will also explore the suitability of issuing Article 4 directions to remove certain permitted development rights in order to control specific changes to buildings. The plan also highlights buildings recommended for local listing and commits to work with stakeholders to consider the possibilities of reducing the harmful impact of traffic through the village in order to enhance the experience and tranquil character of the village.

6. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

7. Local Plan 2040 assessment work has highlighted the significant architectural and historic interest of Little Barford. Section 69 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 confers a duty on Local Planning Authorities to consider whether any parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas. This consideration has now been undertaken and resulted in the recommendations set out in this report. The alternative option of not considering whether the area should be designated has been rejected as it would fail to comply with the duty under Section 69.

7. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND OUTCOME

- 7.1 The following Council Units or Officers and/or other organisations have been consulted in preparing this report:

Director of Environment;
Manager for Planning and Housing Strategy;
Chief Officer for Transport, Highways & Engineering;
Interim Monitoring Officer and Service Manager (Governance, Planning, Property and Litigation);
Manager for Legal (GPPL), Legal Services;
Chief Officer for Finance;
Environment Officer in Environmental Services.

No adverse comments have been received.

8. **WARD COUNCILLOR VIEWS**

Cllr Tom Wootton – No comments received.

Report Contact Officer: Ian Johnson

File Reference: Little Barford Conservation Area

Previous Relevant Minutes: None relevant

Background Papers: None

Appendices: [Appendix A](#) – Little Barford Conservation Area and Management Plan
[Appendix B](#) – Consultation groups

THE LITTLE BARFORD
CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND
MANAGEMENT PLAN
(DRAFT VERSION, NOVEMBER 2022)



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1. Introduction

1.1 Why has this document been produced?

Under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, local planning authorities are, from time to time, required to consider which parts of their area have special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as conservation areas. The Council has identified the village of Little Barford as an area possessing special architectural or historic interest. Policy HOU19 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040: Plan for Submission makes reference to this and states 'The emerging Local Plan 2040 states that the potential to designate a conservation area at Little Barford is being investigated by the Local Planning Authority.' The production of this document is therefore part of that process.

1.2 Consultation

Section to be completed once the consultation process has ended

1.3 What is the purpose of this document?

The purpose of the appraisal is to define the special interest of Little Barford through a detailed assessment of its buildings, landscape setting, views and spaces. The appraisal identifies positive, negative and neutral features and spaces, and the problems, pressures and capacity for change. Its findings have been used to inform the management plan, which can be found in Section 9. Together they will assist and guide those involved with development and changes affecting the character or appearance of the conservation area.

This appraisal has been produced in accordance with the Historic England guidance document *Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2019)*, as well as national and local policy and legislation.

1.4 What status does this document have?

The appraisal and management plan is a technical document for the purposes of development control and will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

1.5 How is this document structured?

The appraisal begins with an introduction to conservation areas and a background to policy and legislation. A summary of the conservation area boundary is provided in Section 3, followed by the 'Summary of Special Interest' on page 10. The location, topography and landscape of the area is discussed in Section 5, with a summary of the historic development of Little Barford included in Section 6. A spatial summary is found in Section 7, with an architectural character analysis in Section 8. Following the findings of the appraisal, a management plan has been produced (Section 9) which sets out the ways in which the special interest of the conservation area is to be preserved or enhanced.

2. Policy and Legislation

2.1 What is a conservation area?

A conservation area is defined under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area 'of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Section 72 of the same Act requires that the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area is given special attention.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) states that great weight should be given to the conservation of a conservation area when determining development proposals (paragraph 199). Paragraph 190 also requires local planning authorities to set out a positive strategy for the conservation of the historic environment, taking into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Policy 41S of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 currently outlines the Council's approach to the conservation of the historic environment and heritage assets and this strategic policy will be carried across to the Local Plan 2040 upon its adoption.

In summary, conservation areas exist to manage and protect the features that make the area unique, by combining extra planning controls and a statutory duty for the Council to consider the special interest of the area.

2.2 What does it mean to live and work in a conservation area?

Although conservation areas mean some extra planning controls and considerations, these exist to protect the historic and architectural elements which make the place special. They are most likely to affect owners who want to make external changes to their property and undertake work on trees within their property boundary.

Planning permission is required for the demolition of buildings within a conservation area, or a boundary over 1m facing a highway (2m elsewhere). There is a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to a conservation area's character and appearance.

If you wish to cut down, top or lop a tree with a stem over 75mm in diameter at 1.5m above ground, you must first notify Bedford Borough Council. If the Council considers that the

works will harm the tree and it is considered to possess sufficient amenity value, a Tree Preservation Order is likely to be served.

Properties also possess fewer permitted development rights in conservation areas. Owners should check the General Permitted Development Order before undertaking works to establish whether or not express planning permission will be needed for them.

2.3 Further information

If you are considering works to your property, you should check if the Council is able to offer pre-application advice (this may incur a charge) which would provide the opportunity to discuss proposals and their acceptability prior to submitting an application. Owners may also wish to take their own professional advice prior to contacting the Council.

3. Summary of Conservation Area Boundary

Beginning at the northern edge of Little Barford, the boundary follows the rear boundaries of 1-8 The Cottages and continues southward in a straight line until reaching a post and rail fence. It then follows the same post and rail fence as it leads westward and runs parallel to Barford Road southwards. The boundary takes in 1-4 The Bungalows and their rear gardens, before continuing southward along the fence line. North Close and South Close are included within the conservation area, as well as a short section of the grass verge immediately south of the access. Here, the boundary crosses Barford Road and takes in the historic parkland. It then turns west, following the south western boundary of the Dower House's plot. The boundary then shadows a number of fences where they still exist, before following the western bank of what is likely to have been two medieval fishponds up to the leat at the River Great Ouse. It follows the riverbank northwards for roughly 200m before turning in a south easterly direction along the course of a small stream. The sewage works fall outside the conservation area, but the boundary takes in buildings associated with Lower Farm and follows the northeastern wall of the north range until reaching Barford Road. The boundary runs north up to the northern plot boundary to No.1 The Cottages.

The Dower House itself makes a neutral contribution to the conservation area as it interrupts the high quality historic landscape surrounding it to some degree, though views of it are limited. However, because of the combination of the 18th century kitchen garden wall, manor house platform earthworks on which it stands and the maturity of the wider garden, the site cumulatively makes a positive contribution to special interest. Similarly, the probable fishponds situated north and west of the church provide historic evidence of the high status medieval manorial complex, and form part of a wider group of extant earthworks associated with the medieval settlement.



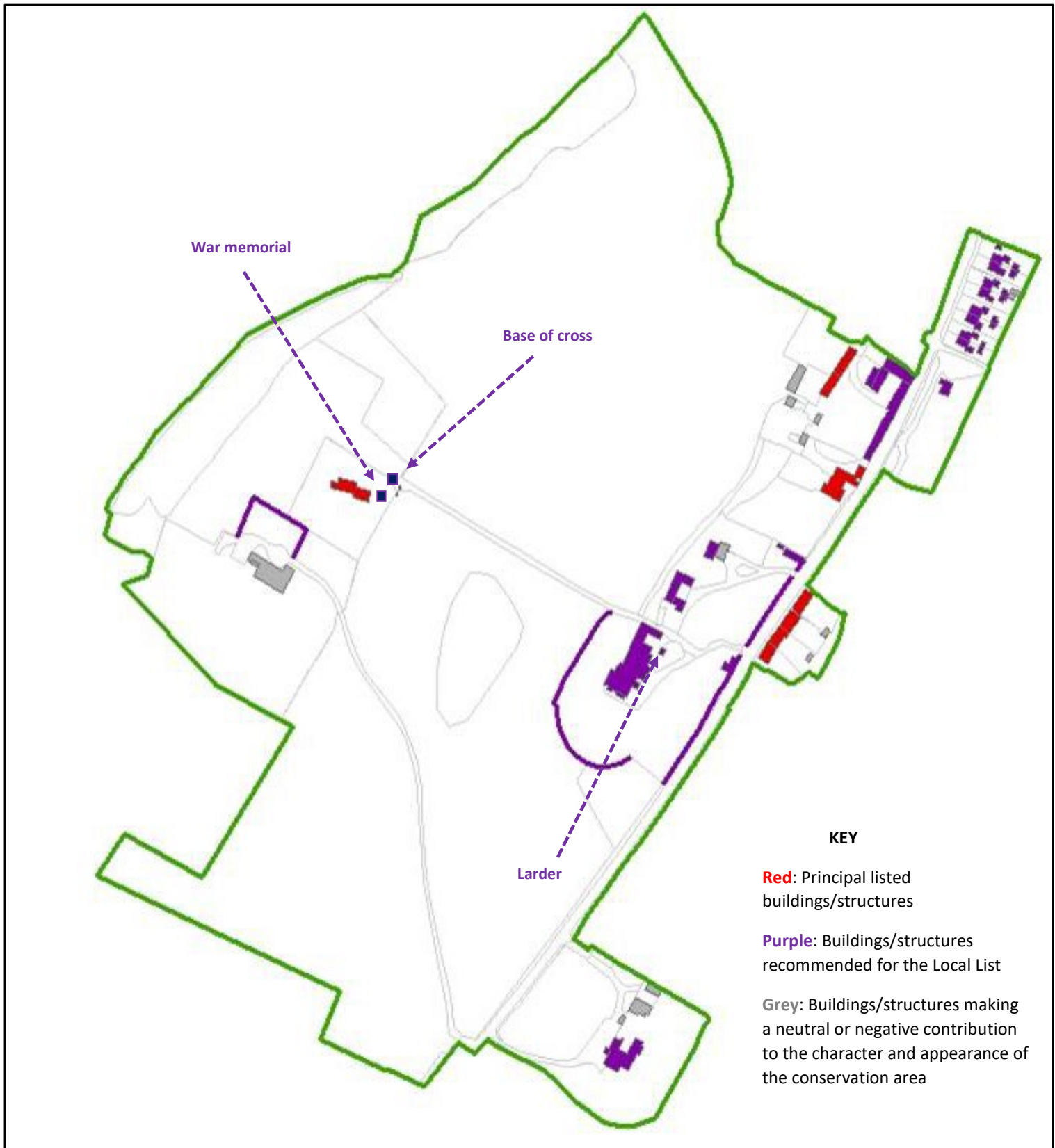
Map 1 The Little Barford Conservation Area, with the red line denoting the boundary.

4. Summary of Special Interest

This section encapsulates what is distinct and special about Little Barford. Current guidance from Historic England identifies different ways in which an area may possess special interest, including (but not limited to) the visible effects of an area's historic development; the architectural quality of the built environment, the consistent use of materials which contribute to local distinctiveness and the contribution made by setting.

The special interest of the Little Barford Conservation Area derives from the following key characteristics:

- The survival of tangible earthworks related to the deserted medieval settlement, alongside 19th century parkland associated with the New Manor House; all experienced in conjunction with the 12th century Church. This landscape west of Barford Road provides a striking insight into the development of the village over at least an 800 year period, as well as a tangible link to the village's past origins, development and re-shaping;
- St Denys' Church (grade II*); The Bungalows, Lower Farmhouse and associated barn (all grade II) are buildings of inherent special interest and provide evidence of buildings constructed prior to ownership by the Alington estate;
- The high proportion of buildings and structures associated with the 19th century estate which have undergone little alteration— forming a rare and relatively complete example of an estate village in Bedfordshire, with the function, hierarchy and inter-relationship between buildings and places still clearly legible;
- The consistent use of buff and red brick, clay tiles, timber windows and doors and architectural features such as quoin detailing, string courses, dentil courses and bay windows which provide a unifying character to buildings/structures associated with the estate village, with older structures identifiable through the use of handmade red brick, timber frame and thatched roofs;
- The presence of trees which contribute to the verdant character of areas within the village, with a number of significant trees and boundary treatments reflecting the historic formality and status of spaces. In the wider area, trees often provide a soft termination of views and contribute to the rural, secluded feel of the settlement;
- Important views throughout the village include views of the parkland and deserted medieval village; views to and from landmark buildings (particularly the Church and New Manor House), views out towards the surrounding countryside setting and short views within the village that are informative of the relationship between buildings and spaces;
- The dispersed nature of buildings, alongside the low-key public realm and the immediacy of the surrounding countryside setting, reinforces the positive rural character of the village;
- The village's historic associations with Nicholas Rowe and the Alington family.



Map 2 Map of heritage assets, with the conservation area boundary in green.

5. Location, Topography and Landscape

The village of Little Barford is located roughly 3.5km south of the centre of St Neots and about 15km north east of Bedford. Little Barford is situated at the north eastern extent of Bedford Borough and within the Little Barford Parish. Little Barford Parish's western boundary runs through the centre of the River Great Ouse, with the north and eastern boundaries following Bedford Borough's border with Huntingdonshire District Council. Most of the Parish's southern boundary also forms the unitary boundary between Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire.

According to the *Bedford Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2020)*, the village and the Parish west of the East Coast Mainline Railway falls within the 'Great Ouse Clay Valley' area – a shallow and fairly wide valley founded on Oxford clay. Though relatively flat, the land rises steadily from west to east away from the river, cumulating in an elevated outcrop at the eastern edge of the parish. Little Barford sits on a bedrock of Peterborough Member Mudstone, although superficial glaciofluvial and river terrace deposits are found to the west of the river.

Little Barford sits at the western side of the Parish along Barford Road which runs broadly north to south between Tempsford and St Neots. Roughly bisecting the Parish is the railway line which also follows a north-south course. Within Little Barford, remnants of 19th century parkland can be found in proximity to the New Manor House and South Close. The landscape to the south and east of the village is characterised by arable and pasture fields bounded by hedgerows and woodland. The village's agriculture history is a defining feature of the surrounding landscape even today, with some fields containing ridge and furrow as evidence of medieval farming practices and the open field system. Though the river represents a significant natural feature in the Parish, visually it plays a subdued role given mature planting along its eastern bank.

Leading north out of the village, Barford Road retains a rural character either side until reaching the industrial estate and power station at the northern end of the Parish. The power station is a landmark feature (though not a positive one), not only from within the Parish but in views from the wider landscape.

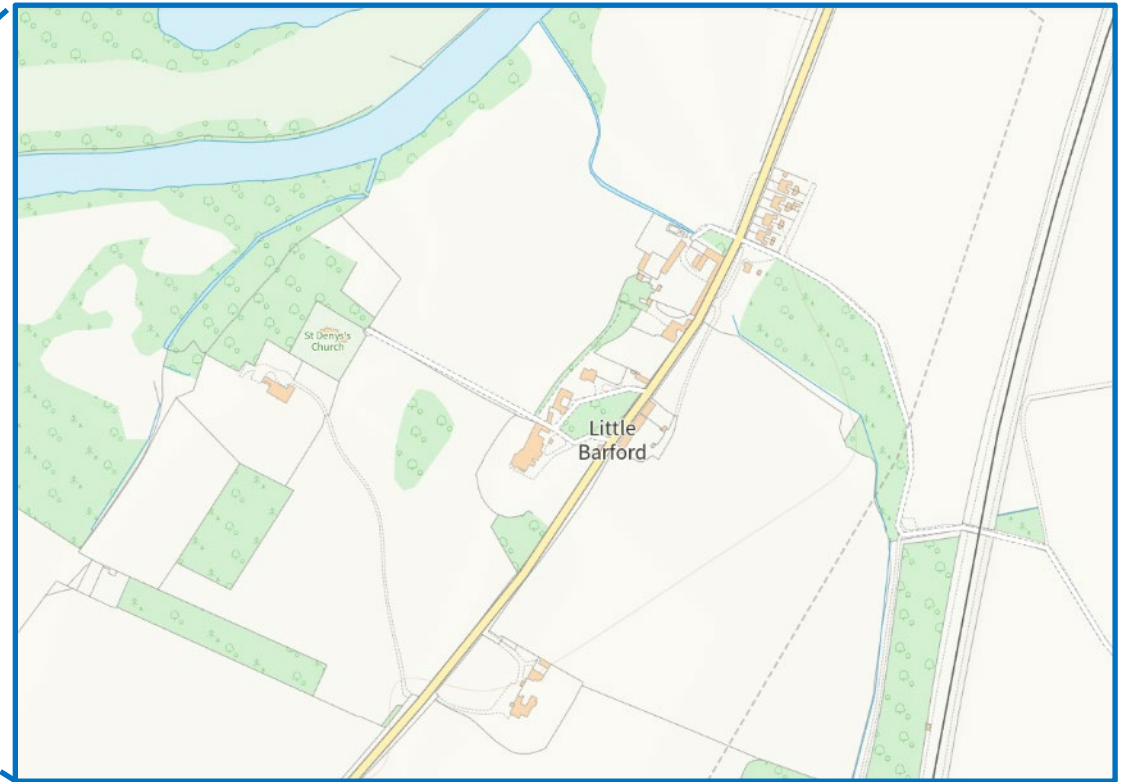
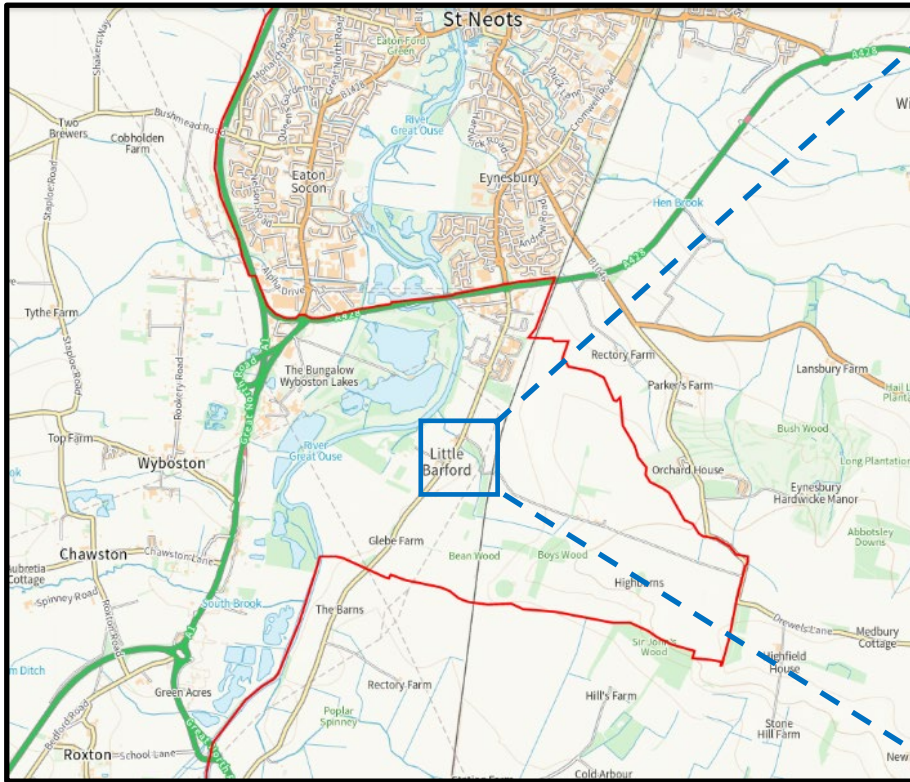


Figure 1 The location of Little Barford in the surrounding area, with Bedford Borough's boundary outlined in red.

Figure 2 Little Barford village shown in relation to the River Great Ouse to the west, Barford Road running through the village and the East Coast Mainline Railway to the east.

6. Historic Development

A large ring ditch, probably dating from the Bronze Age, is located north of Lower Farm on the eastern bank of the river and provides evidence of early human activity within the parish. Nearby rectangular enclosures visible as crop marks are probably Iron Age or Roman. Aerial photography has also revealed an Iron Age or Roman settlement and an associated field system north west of Top Farm. These and other finds, alongside a possible Roman road running along the eastern boundary of the parish, point to many thousands of years of continuous human activity up until the Saxon Era. The current village is thought to date from this period.

In 1086, the Domesday Book recorded the village of 'Bereforde' (likely deriving from "birch-tree-ford") as home to 27 households and two manors. One of the manors was held by the Benedictine Abbey of Ramsey from the Saxon period until it was seized by the crown in 1539. Both this and the second manor, which would become part of the Barony of Eaton in the early 12th century, would eventually join and pass into the ownership of the Alington family in the 19th century.

St Denys' Church is located to the west of the village on a slight rise relative to the river and partially surrounded by a ditch, which may pre-date the church itself. Its earliest features date from the 12th century with later remodelling taking place in the 14th and 15th centuries. A probable moated building shown on the 1840 map (Fig.10) immediately northeast of the church is likely the site of a medieval manor house. Visible earthworks including rectilinear closes and house platforms and probable fishponds to the north east, southeast and west of the church respectively suggest that the medieval village, which included the original manor was centred on the church. A possible medieval village cross is located within the churchyard.



Figure 3 View of St Denys' Church from the east. The ditch in the foreground may point to an earlier use of the site.

To the east of Barford Road lie the earthworks of roadside house platforms and scattered blocks of possible medieval ridge and furrow surviving as potential evidence of the expansion or shift of the village away from the church later on in the medieval period, as well as the pre-enclosure open field system. Ridge and furrow also survives within the flood plains to the south west of the village. Though agriculture would have been the principal form of employment in Little Barford during the medieval period, a water mill recorded in the Domesday Book is also known to have existed north of the church.



Map 3 Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) map of Little Barford with the boundary of the conservation area marked in red. LiDAR measures the height of the ground surface and other features which can also record earthwork remains. The imagery reveals extensive areas of ridge and furrow (the arrows denote their direction), building platforms and other earthworks associated with the medieval and pre-medieval settlement.

It is likely that up until the enclosure of the Parish in 1778, the village continued to develop around the Barford Road and/or in close proximity to the Church. A Wealden house dating from the late 14th or early 15th century known as Rowe's Cottages was once located between the Rectory and The Bungalows fronting Barford Road. The building may have been associated with the dramatist and Poet Laureate to King George I Nicholas Rowe (1674-1718), who was born in the village and buried at Westminster Abbey. In 1977, Rowe's Cottages were dismantled and rebuilt in Glatton, Cambridgeshire.



Figure 4 Above ground earthworks provide evidence of the medieval settlement that grew around St Denys' Church.

Aside from the church, the earliest surviving buildings in Little Barford are Lower Farmhouse and the large barn at Lower Farm, which date from the 17th century. During the 18th century, a second manor house was built to the southwest of the Church at the present location of Dower House. The house was constructed from brick with a plain tile roof, and much of the former kitchen garden wall still survives in close proximity to the churchyard. The Bungalows also date from the 18th century and served as workers' cottages.

The earliest map of any detail (Fig.9) shows that by 1765, the village had developed a distinctive horseshoe form leading off Barford Road, with buildings concentrated around the Church and also close to Lower Farm. However, by 1808 the layout of the village had changed considerably – the horseshoe layout had been replaced by a single straight track leading from Barford Road up to the church. This change broadly corresponds with John Williamson's acquisition of Little Barford Manor in 1797.



Figure 5 A photo taken of Rowe's Cottages shortly before it was dismantled (source: Historic England).

Further changes were to come. John Williamson's daughter Sarah married Rev. William Alington, and Williamson settled the manor on Alington in 1829. The New Manor House was built shortly after - probably by John Usher and originally serving as the rectory. By 1840 the part of the village west of Barford Road had been largely cleared and replaced by either parkland or pasture. The church took on an isolated location relative to the smaller settlement now almost solely focussed on Barford Road. The sense of change felt within Little Barford would have been compounded by the opening of the Great Northern Railway in 1850, which passed the village approximately 350m to the east.

The Alington family were responsible for the village's mid-19th century remodelling which in turn created a coherent built environment responsible for much of the settlement's unique and special character. The 'new' rectory or South Close, both lodges, the coach house, the school room, the estate cottages at the north of the village as well as various boundary treatments all date from this period. Furthermore, these

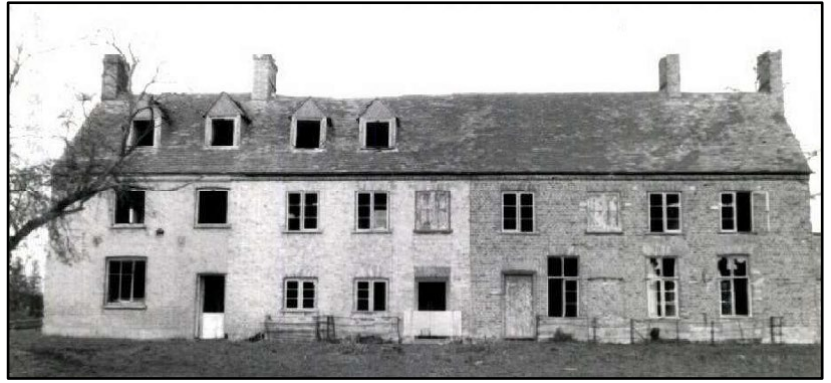


Figure 6 A photograph of the 18th century manor house taken in 1977. The building was demolished a year later (source: Bedfordshire Archives reference F224/3).

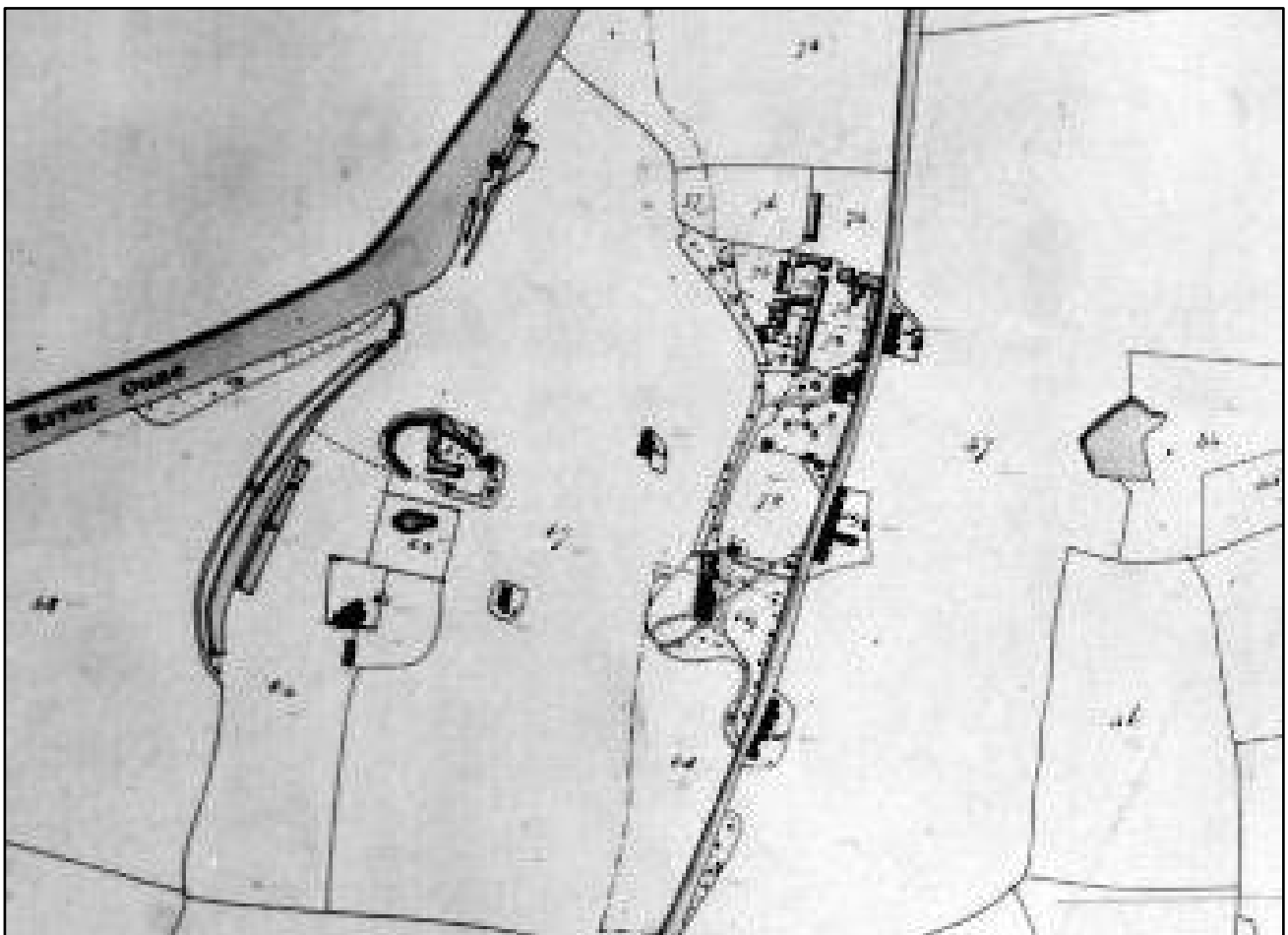
buildings share similarities in terms of materials, detailing and design which help to form a distinctive group value. From its construction, life in Little Barford would have centred on the New Manor House (as well as an important and continuing relationship with the church), with the village's inhabitants all directly or indirectly servicing the Alington estate.

Probably because the village and its buildings mostly remained in the hands of the Alington family until recently, the 19th century estate character of Little Barford has remained remarkably intact. The extensive and earlier vestiges of the medieval village also contribute to the settlement's character – a palimpsest landscape demonstrating the origins and evolution of the village throughout its history. The greatest change in the 20th century was the loss of the two earlier manor houses either side of the church as well as the relocation of Rowe's Cottages. Following the gradual decline of the medieval manor site during the 19th century, the house was no longer depicted in 1970s mapping. The 18th century manor house was demolished in 1978 and replaced with the 'Dower House' shortly after. The demolition of the manor houses heralded the final step in the settlement's transition of focus away from the church.

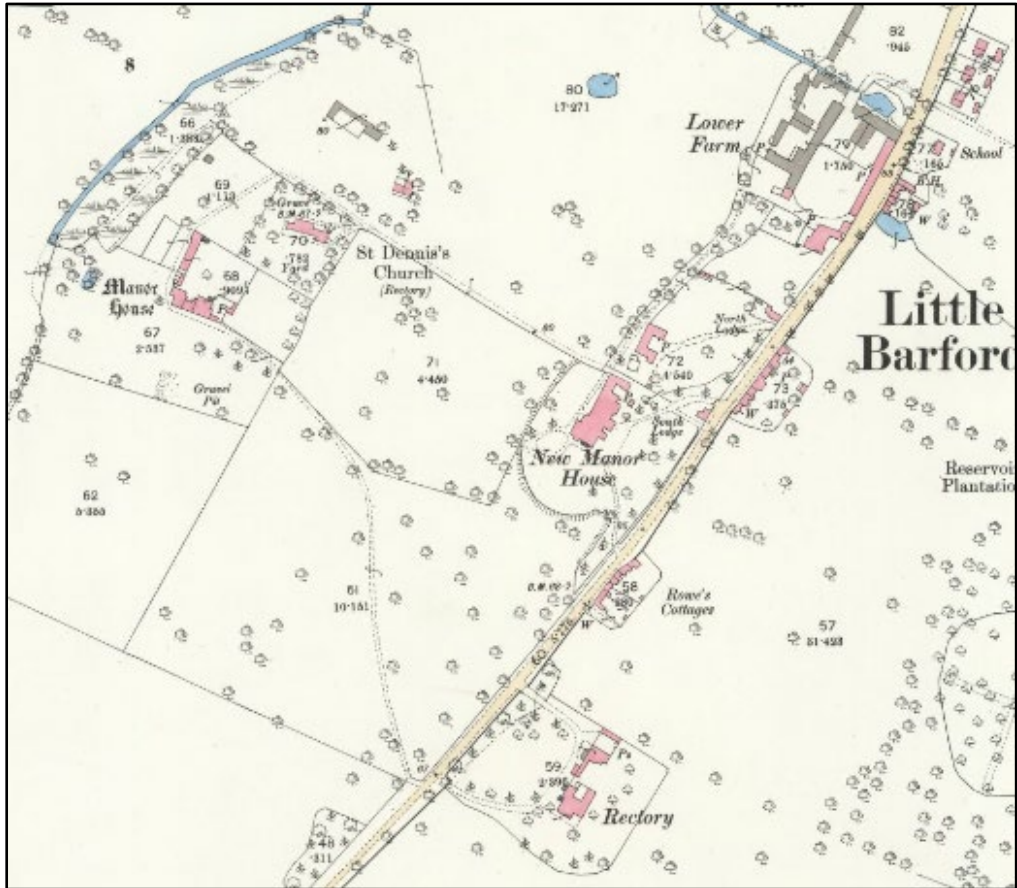
This period also saw a significant decline in the village's population, from a peak of 189 in 1881 to 49 inhabitants by 1971. The war memorial located in the churchyard honours those in Little Barford who fell in World War I. By 1932, the school room was forced to close before temporarily re-opening to school evacuees for the duration of World War II. As a result of declining numbers, several buildings in Little Barford, not least the New Manor House itself, were vacant by the turn of the 21st century. St Denys' Church was vested in The Churches Conservation Trust for preservation in 1974. In 1994, a gas fired power station replaced the earlier coal fired station, and the two gas turbines now form a landmark not just in Little Barford but in views across the surrounding landscape.



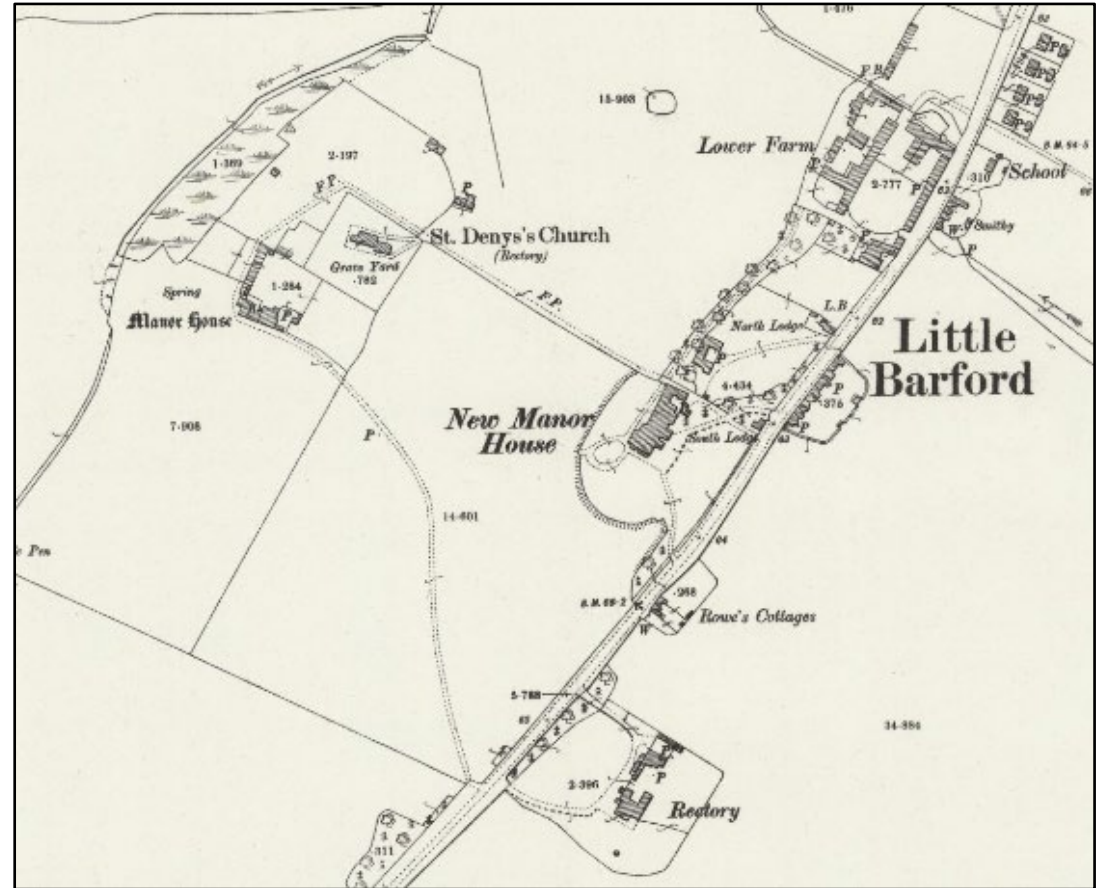
Map 4 Jefferys' map of Little Barford (1765) (source: Bedfordshire Archives reference R1/100)



Map 5 Little Barford Parish Tithe Plan (1840) (source: Bedfordshire Archives reference MAT2/1).



Map 6 OS map of Little Barford (surveyed 1881) (source: Bedfordshire Archives reference OS25/83).



Map 7 OS map of Little Barford (surveyed 1900) (source: Bedfordshire Archives reference OS25/83).

7. Spatial Summary

The character of a settlement is formed by buildings, spaces between buildings and other features of interest. This can include elements such as settlement layout, green infrastructure, trees, open spaces, the public realm and views. These features and their contribution to the conservation area are considered below.

7.1 Spatial overview

Little Barford is characterised by the 19th century estate built form along Barford Road, with some examples of earlier vernacular properties. Owing to this 19th century evolution of the village, the predominant experience of the spatial character is linear along Barford Road. However, in addition to this linear character, the earlier spatial layout is visible with glimpses of the medieval church set away from Barford Road and now in the isolation of the later 19th century parkland around the New Manor House. These signpost the earlier nucleated part of the settlement with its medieval earthworks centred on the church.

There is a track that leads up from the driveway serving the New Manor House towards the church. This track allows for an appreciation of the parkland character and visible remains of the deserted medieval settlement. This visual relationship reflects a key aspect of the special interest of the area – a palimpsest of the historic open landscape set between key views of the now-isolated medieval church and the 19th century manor house. A second track, formerly the route to the 18th century manor house leads from the southern edge of the conservation area, through the parkland and arriving at the Dower House. From the access, the track serves to direct views towards the church, where its isolation is most clearly appreciated from the public realm.

The main, public experience of the settlement is along Barford Road, where an informal feel prevails due to the absence of views towards New Manor House and the church. Spatial and visual interest arises through the village's loose grain and variation in how buildings address the road. This creates an irregular layout which is derived from the historic function and inter-relationship of buildings within the working estate. The linear character is reinforced by the two rows of worker's cottage fronting the east side of Barford Road.

The settlement has a dispersed character, united by walls running along the back of the verge to the western side of Barford Road. The eastern side of the road is characterised by scattered groups of properties, with open fields or informal areas between. A pavement



Figure 7 Parkland historically associated with New Manor House as seen from the churchyard.

runs through the majority of the village along the eastern side of the road, with a post and rail fence and open pasture land beyond.

Views across the large open field east of the village are terminated by woodland which screens views of the railway line. Passing trains are mostly hidden from view but are heard from most points within the village. Pylons running parallel to the railway to some extent jar with the otherwise rural vista. At the northern edge of the village, channelled views along Barford Road include the gas turbines of the power station juxtaposed with the domestic scale of 1-8 The Cottages in the foreground.

Longer views to the south west are limited along the road owing to its gentle curvature. This naturally results in views being directed to the east out into the countryside. At the southernmost part of the Conservation Area there are also expansive views north west across the parkland to the Dower House, New Manor House and church with the informal track directing the eye. Leaving the conservation area southwards, views take in the tree-lined road with gaps in the hedgerows offering views of the open fields beyond.

The approach from the north into the village is industrial in character with the infrastructure for the power station dominant in the experience. This detracts significantly from the otherwise historic character of the village. Opposite The Cottages, a break in hedgerow offers wider views of agricultural fields towards the tree lined river bank beyond.

7.2 Key views and vistas

Key views and vistas are considered to be those which best reveal particular aspects of the conservation area's special architectural and historic interest. The surrounding topography around Little Barford is relatively flat with only slight undulations. As such, whilst views are achieved out into the surrounding landscape they are then often terminated by areas of woodland or mature hedgerows. This contributes to the spacious yet intimate character of Little Barford.

Channelled views along Barford Road (Views 1-3) tend to take in the architectural interest of buildings and walls, enlivening the experience and interrelationships of built form and uses. Views 4, 5 and 6 are vistas looking east from Barford Road. From this perspective, there is not one location where a single, focussed view is achieved but the general appreciation of pasture brings the wider rural character right into the heart of the village. This openness is made more apparent by the high brick walling fronting the west side of the road, which closes off views beyond in that direction.

An integral aspect of the character of Little Barford is the relationship between the church, the New Manor House and the intervening landscape (Views 7-10). These wider views demonstrate the interrelationship between the historic landscape and the evolution of the built form that affords a unique and distinctive sense of place to the settlement. Though a comparatively late building in the historic development of the village, the New Manor House's proximity and visual relationship to the church, framed within the settlement and agricultural earthworks of a medieval landscape, demonstrates the continuity of hierarchy and social order over the centuries. These landmark buildings are a focal point in views.

Below are key view montages followed by the key views and vistas map (Map 8).



View 1 – View of Lower Farmhouse from Barford Road, taking in the varying roofscapes and phases of development.



View 2 – Chanelled view north along Barford Road, taking in The Bungalows, boundary wall and South Lodge with specimen trees.



View 3 - Chanelled view south along Barford Road – the enclosed feel here is unique along Barford Road, which otherwise adopts a loose grain.



Views 4, 5 and 6 – Wide views east from Barford Road, taking in the pastureland and belt of trees beyond.



View 7 – View across parkland n Barford Road.



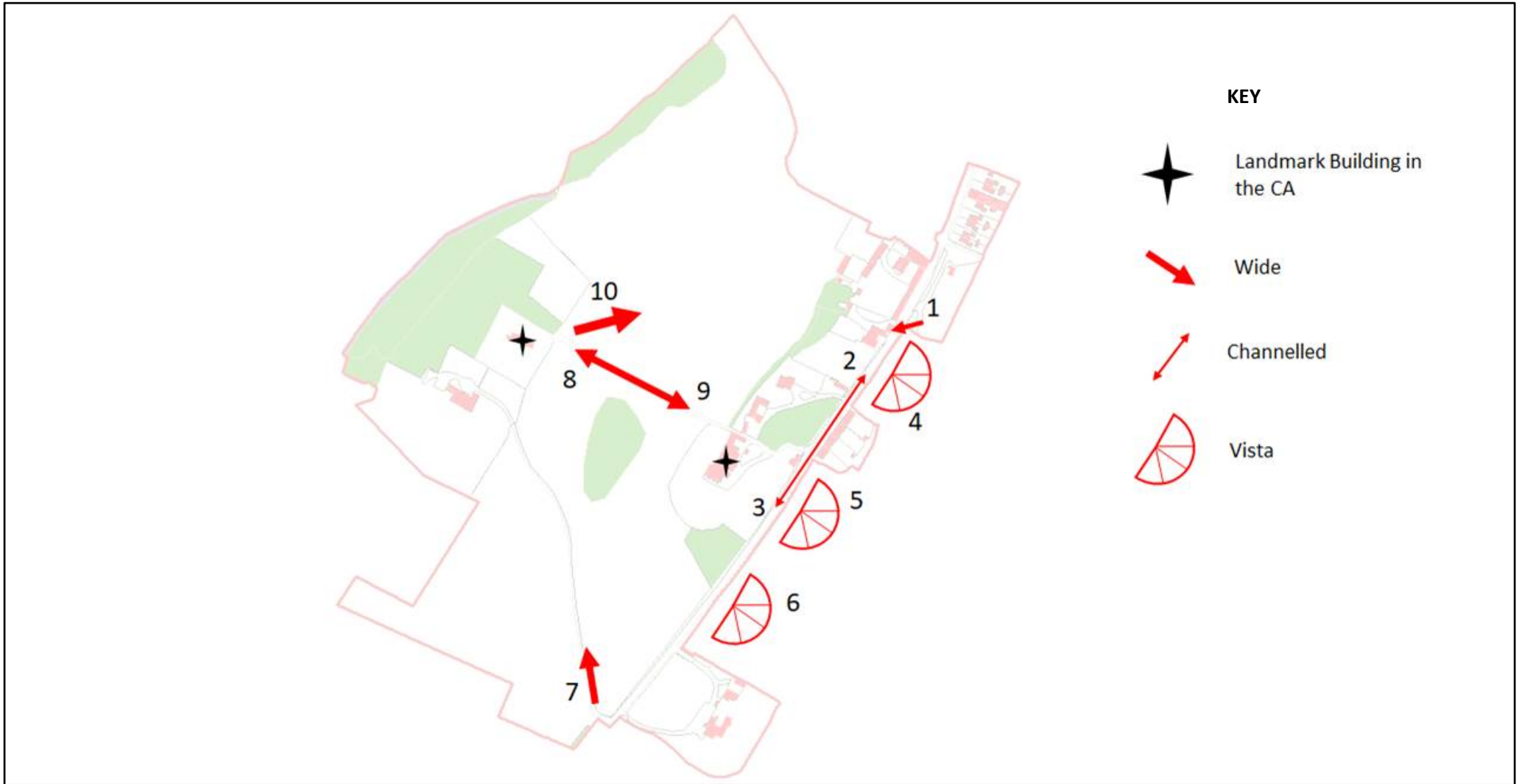
View 8 – View from the track towards the New Manor House.



View 9 – View towards the church from the track.



View 10 – View towards Lower Farm over the deserted medieval village.



Map 8 Key views and vistas, including landmark buildings.

7.3 Important open space

The conservation area has no formal public open spaces such as a village green, but it does still retain an open character to the west and east of the village as well as between clusters of buildings. The following section covers specific open spaces identified in Map 9. Other spaces may contribute positively, such as those areas forming part of the soft rural edge to the village and the conservation area, but do not make as strong of a contribution as the spaces identified below. Map 9 shows the location and extent of these important open spaces.

Open space 1

The churchyard is located on slightly raised ground and interspersed with trees, bushes and headstones. The open space allows for an appreciation of the church from various perspectives and possesses strong historic, communal and evidential interest.

Open space 2

This space is located within the large field west of Lower Farm and contains many of the visible earthworks associated with the medieval village. The open space forms an integral part of the historic landscape – enabling an understanding of the evolution of the settlement and the distinct spatial relationship between buildings that remain. From the track and the churchyard, the contribution of the open space reduces towards its northern end, where it is less intervisible with historic buildings.



Figure 8 Open Spaces 2 and 3 located either side of the trackway leading south from the church.

Open space 3

The large area of parkland located between the church and New Manor House forms an important element of the 19th century remodelling of Little Barford and is evidence of the final phase of settlement shift to Barford Road that took place as a result. The verdant, spacious character of the space contributes very positively to the experience of the church and the manor.

7.4 Trees

Little Barford is a rural village within a verdant character, created in part by the presence of trees. A blend of specimen and mature planting, some of which is associated with the 19th century parkland, helps to reinforce the tranquil feel of the conservation area.

Mature specimen trees can be found close to St Denys' Church; South Close, New Manor House, Dower House and Lower Farmhouse. These buildings and/or their spaces were historically of high status, which is in part still perceivable through the retention of formal tree planting. Within the parkland west of New Manor House, open spaces are punctuated by dispersed mature planting, which help to orchestrate views and draw attention to individual trees. To the east of the New Manor House, trees help to form a more intimate feel and enclose ancillary buildings around the driveway – enhancing their group value. An impressive group of large 19th century cedars and pines in front of South Close infer a sense of formality when compared to the rural approach to the village.



Figure 9 Important trees in the front garden of South Close.

Belts of trees sitting on the edge of the village also help to define, channel and conclude views of the village within the wider landscape. This includes dense planting outside the conservation area, including to the north of the church; west of the Dower House; south west of the parkland, to the east of the school house and adjacent to the railway line east of Little Barford. Mostly, these trees appear to have been planted during the 20th century and do not convey a parkland character, but nevertheless offer a pleasant and rural backdrop to views from within the conservation area. Additionally, and as a soft, terminating feature they provide a sense of enclosure to the settlement, as well as a buffer from noise associated with the railway line and the A1.

7.5 Boundary treatments

A defining feature of the conservation area is the series of walls which run along the western side of Barford Road. The wall associated with the New Manor House is built from buff brick – its height, detailing and the integration of the lodges into the boundary is evidence of the formal character of the space behind. The wall also provides an enclosed feel to the west side of Barford Road juxtaposed with the openness of the landscape to the east. Further north, the wall continues but varies in terms of its age and architectural quality, but as a whole forms a distinctive feature in the conservation area. This continuous boundary effect extends further north, as buildings associated with Lower Farm front the road behind a shallow grass verge.

The former kitchen garden wall associated with the demolished 18th century manor is visible from the adjacent churchyard. This wall is evidence of the status and wealth of the former building, expressed partly through its proximity to the church.

Traditional metal estate fencing fronts the north side of the track leading up to the church and reflects the former use of the land. Otherwise, boundary treatments tend to be informal and permeable – reflective of the rural character of Little Barford. This includes hedgerows, some fronting Barford Road on the approach to the village. There are short sections of close-boarded fencing around The Cottages and at South Lodge which detract from the character and appearance of the area.

Important boundary treatments are highlighted in Map 9.

7.6 Landmark buildings

Landmark buildings can be defined as visually important structures which make an architectural statement, form a focal point or draw attention in views, occupy an important location within the landscape or are prominent features because of their scale, height or form. Landmark buildings can contribute positively or negatively to the character of a conservation area.

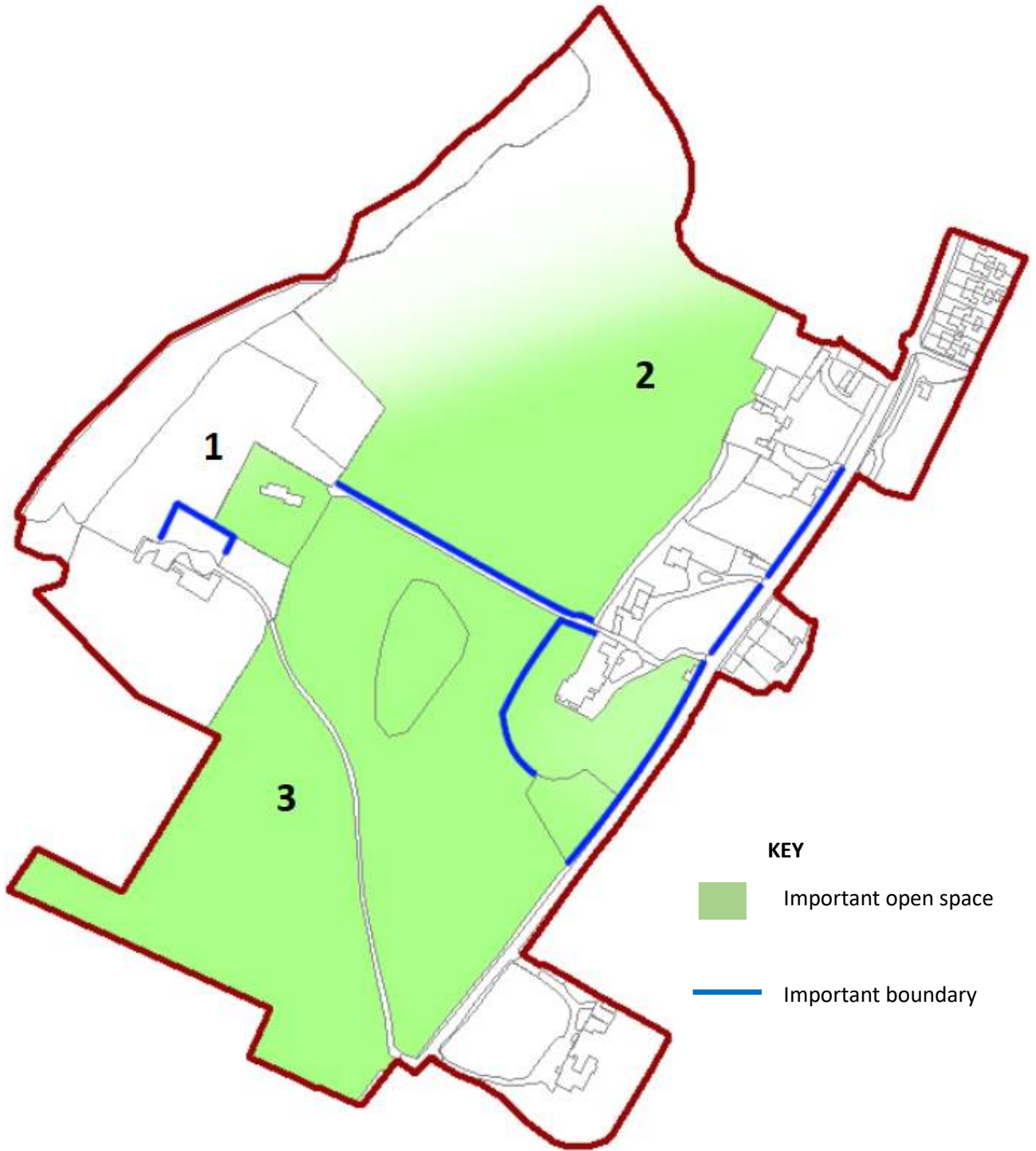
Within Little Barford and the wider area, the landmark buildings are:

- St Denys' Church – the church is of very high historic and architectural interest, now occupies an isolated position within the village and forms a focal point in several views;
- New Manor House – the manor is of architectural and historic interest, possesses a distinctive form and design and the openness of its surroundings allows for positive views from the west; and
- Little Barford Power Station – the power station is a prominent feature in the backdrop to the village due to its scale, height and industrial character; drawing undue attention in several views and detracting from the experience of the area.

Landmark buildings within the conservation area are identified in Map 8.



Figure 10 The ha-ha wall to the north west of the New Manor House, designed to facilitate views towards the parkland and possibly the church and 18th century manor beyond.



Map 9 Important open spaces.

7.7 Public realm

The informality of the public realm emphasises the rural character of the streetscene within Little Barford. The lack of street lights or excessive road signage throughout the conservation area contributes to the informality of the village. However, Barford Road offers a means of bypassing the busy A428 and A1 junction, resulting in heavy and fast-moving road traffic passing through Little Barford at certain times of the day. The absence of a pavement in and out of the village, and the provision of only a single narrow pavement within Little Barford reinforces the negative impact of vehicles on the experience of the village.



Figure 11 The narrow pavement on the east side of Barford Road leading out of the village due south.

7.8 Setting

The setting of the conservation area generally makes an important contribution to its special interest. Little Barford is approached via the Barford Road which retains a rural character either side of the village, often experienced alongside woodland areas and tree belts. The village is experienced within, and derives a part of its significance from, the wider rural setting which is reflective of its agricultural origins and continued prosperity. Furthermore, the immediacy of fields to the north, south and east, coupled with the loose grain of the built environment, frames the village within a consistent rural landscape, which would have been farmed by residents for centuries.

Though the river forms a significant natural feature within the landscape, it makes a limited visual contribution to the character of the conservation area. Rather, the tree-lined eastern bank and intervening land forms the backdrop to views of the church and frames it within a tranquil and verdant setting.

The power station's gas turbines are located roughly 700m to the north of the conservation area. The incongruous scale, form and industrial character of the turbines detract from the experience of the conservation area from various viewpoints. In other locations, such as to



Figure 12 Part of the rural setting of Little Barford village.

the west of Barford Road, associated buildings are glimpsed over and through the treelines, intruding on the otherwise historic feel of the village. However, fields either side of Barford Road constitute a spatial buffer from the power station and associated development, offering breathing space and reducing the visual impact to a degree. The pylons in the eastern field, though relatively permeable features nevertheless serve as large-scale, functional structures crossing the rural landscape. Passing trains on the railway beyond also have some impact on the peaceful feel of the village, although mature trees bounding the line limit most of the associated visual impacts.

8. Architectural Character Analysis

The architectural character of Little Barford forms an integral aspect of its special interest. The conservation area is experienced as a consistent and relatively intact 19th century estate village that possesses a unified character, created through the use of similar materials and architectural detailing. The architectural character is informative of the function and status of buildings relative to the wider estate. Earlier buildings are identified by the use of different materials, construction methods and appearance and make an important contribution to the understanding of the village's development over time.

8.1 Building age, types and materials

The earliest surviving building in Little Barford is St Denys' Church. The church incorporates Norman elements but also features Decorated-period lancet arches to the north aisle and Perpendicular windows in the tower. The church was reworked in the mid and late 19th century which included the demolition of the south chapel. The church is constructed from cobblestones with ashlar dressings with a modern slate and clay tile roof.

The original range at Lower Farmhouse and the associated listed barn are vernacular buildings dating from the 17th century. Lower Farmhouse is constructed from handmade red brick which is indicative of its historic status. The later, 19th century wing is in part identifiable through the use of fine red brick detailing and stone dressing. The plain clay tile roof across all phases unifies the different phases of the building. The 17th century part-aisled barn is timber framed with a queen post roof and a weather-boarded exterior. Corrugated sheets have replaced the previous thatched roof covering. The barn forms a courtyard with a later, 19th century red brick range with some 20th century Fletton brick infill – characteristic of the adapting agricultural use. This range now possesses similar corrugated sheet roofing and possible asbestos to the east range fronting Barford Road.



Figure 13 The grade II listed barn at Lower Farm, which is ailed to the rear side.

1-4 The Bungalows form a row of relatively late, vernacular timber framed workers' cottages. Built in the 18th century, they possess a simple plan form with roughcast render finish which harmonises with the buff brick wall opposite. The row possesses a distinctive, thatched roof which offers visual interest along Barford Road. Some later additions and alterations are in buff brick.

The majority of buildings within Little Barford date from the 19th century having been built by the Alington Estate, establishing much of the more formal components, polite character of the village. The earliest building from this era, The New Manor House, dates from the 1830s and is built exclusively with buff brick with timber bargeboards and a plain clay tile roof. Every estate building had a specific role and function, such as the school house, rectory, lodges, stables, larder, gardener's cottage and workers' cottages. Most of these buildings are unified through the use of buff and red brickwork - with differentiating brick and some ironstone used for decorative purposes – alongside plain clay tiles for roofs (with slate used sparingly). In places, weathering of the roof tiles has resulted in additional texture and depth to the palette which heightens visual interest and a sense of antiquity. Generally, the consistent use of materials strongly contributes to the character and appearance of the area.

The only 20th century building within the conservation area is the Dower House, which replaced the 18th century manor. The house is built from painted brick with concrete pantiles, and is therefore an anomaly in terms of its age and materials used.

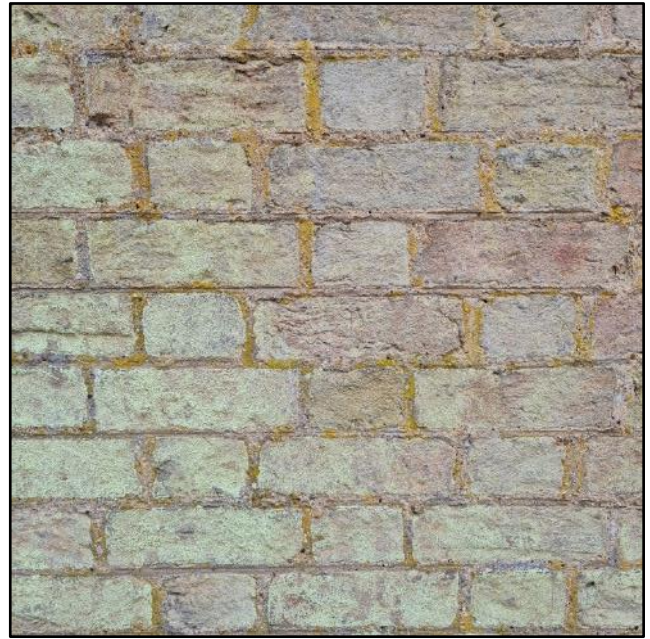


Figure 14 Buff brickwork laid out in Flemish bond with ruled joints at the New Manor House. The same treatment is used for the stables.



Figure 15 [Above] North Lodge is built from both red and buff brick. The red brick utilised for the east elevation harmonises with the red brick boundary wall which continues northward.



Figure 16 [Left] 18th century red brick alongside modern buff brick in the former kitchen garden wall for the 18th century manor, now within the garden of the Dower House.

8.2 Scale, massing and form



Figure 17 The west elevation of the New Manor House. The building is attributed to the architect John Usher and is described by Pevsner as 'rambling'. The elevation is relatively plain in terms of detailing.

Generally, the scale and massing of buildings defines their historic use and hierarchy within Little Barford. The largest building, St Denys' Church, is of a scale reflective of the pivotal role the church played within the village from the medieval period onwards. The New Manor House has a ponderous massing due to the extent of the built form, although gables, dormers and the stepped roof do break up the visual bulk of the building. The building adopts a linear form set back from the road, primarily addressing the parkland to the west. To the east, the New Manor House is accessed via the driveway, with associated buildings grouped around the manor. Here, the location of buildings relative to the manor is informative of their use and inter-relationships. Though most of these buildings adopt a suitably subservient scale and simple planform when compared to the New Manor House, the stable block is imposing because of its location, scale and planform which infers a sense of status and formality on the building. Similarly, South Close is of a significant scale but the mass is broken up by gables and chimney stacks.

Along Barford Road, buildings vary in heights and massing, are dispersed and generally adopt a linear layout fronting the road; offering a sense of cohesion to the built environment. Lower Farmhouse is a large two storey dwelling of 17th century origins with later phases including a 19th century wing orientated to the south, resulting in a complex form. The single storey height and functional form of the attached barn emphasises the hierarchy and use of spaces.

1-4 The Bungalows occupies a wayside location typical of the 18th century, with a narrow linear layout contributing to an enclosed feel to the streetscene. By comparison, the late 19th century workers' cottages, which are arranged as pairs and set back from the road, offer more amenity space and have a deeper planform and a larger scale. Both are one and a half storeys but differ in terms of heights and bulk. Though each recognisable as estate cottages, the contrast between these buildings reveals changing societal



Figure 18 The New Manor House's 19th century pantry is one of the smallest buildings in the village.

attitudes and quality of living standards over the period, emphasised in part through the use of architectural detailing with subtle differences to each of the pairs.

The single storey school room is centrally located within the village, reinforcing its historic community use. The building is particularly diminutive in terms of its scale – reflecting the size and needs of the village at the time.

8.3 Architectural detailing

There are certain architectural details associated with the Alington estate that are repeated throughout Little Barford. A defining feature is the use of dentil courses at eaves and verge level, sometimes picked out using a contrasting brick colour. Quoin detailing is also commonplace, either utilising different coloured brick or stone, or through raised brickwork such as the stables. String courses, lintels and window surrounds include dressed stone and contrasting brick, offering texture and depth to elevations.

Some clay tile roofs possess bands of fishscale tiles which provide visual interest to roofslopes. Sawtooth or fretted timber bargeboards are utilised as a decorative feature at South Close 3-6 The Cottages and the New Manor House where they are painted red to match the windows. Chimneys survive to all domestic buildings and typically possess string and dentil courses. Chimney pots are largely functional in appearance, aside from highly decorative examples that survive at the New Manor House.

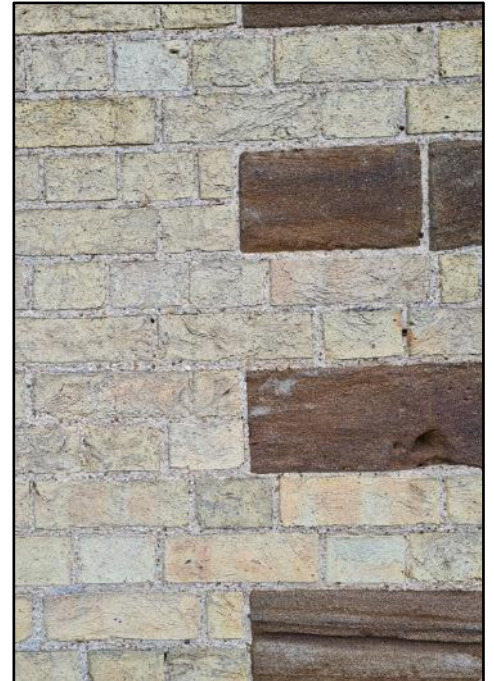


Figure 19 Ironstone quoins with surrounding buff brick bedded in tight lime mortar joints.



Figure 20 The principal elevation of South Lodge, with dressed stone detailing and a dentil course to the eaves and verges.



Figure 21 The 19th century addition to Lower Farmhouse, which utilises a similar dentil course within the gable end apex.

The New Manor House possesses relatively simple but repeated architectural embellishment, drawing more interest from its form and massing. South Close displays more variation in detailing such as string courses, arched lintels and some faux timber framing. The Cottages exhibit subtle differences between the pairs in terms of their design, but incorporate hints of Gothick and Arts and Crafts features that create a distinct group character.

1-4 The Cottages and Lower Farmhouse are vernacular buildings and as such possess very limited architectural detailing, although the Farmhouse's 19th century wing is more decorative. Similarly, barns associated with Lower Farm have a functional appearance derived from their use and therefore lack design features.

8.4 Windows and doors



Figure 22 A selection of timber windows to 19th century buildings in the village - note the red frames to the windows in centre and right-hand images.

All windows visible from the street are of white painted timber, many original to the buildings. Typically, windows in 19th century estate buildings are side hung, single pane casement windows. The New Manor House possesses a mix of vertically hung sashes and casements with red-painted frames, whilst the stable block's original sash windows (with their frames also painted red) survive. The original sashes are also evident in the 19th century wing to Lower Farmhouse with multi-pane casements to the original house. 'Yorkshire' horizontal sliding sashes can be found at ground floor level to The Cottages, with side hung casements above. A characteristic feature of the village is the use of bay windows under hipped roofs, as well as narrow dormer windows in the roofspace which together help to provide visual interest and break up the mass of buildings.

The presence of white-painted timber windows provides consistency and quality to the historic environment and forms part of the special interest of Little Barford. However where buildings have fallen out of use, boarded up openings and broken windows detract from the experience of the conservation area.

Doors visible from the public realm are typically made from timber, painted white with black ironmongery, contributing to the consistent feel of the built environment. However, the loss of doors to vacant buildings has reduced the sense of vibrancy and architectural quality to the area.

Porches of varying styles are evident at 1-8 The Cottages and as features help to individualise the pairs. A gabled timber porch with a clay tile roof survives at North Lodge. These open-style porches are built from timber painted white with clay tile roofs which complements the aesthetic character of the village.



Figure 23 Gabled porch at North Lodge.

8.5 Roofs

The consistent use of plain clay tiles and steeply pitched roofs contributes strongly to the shared estate character of Little Barford. Variations in roof forms at Lower Farmhouse, New Manor House and North Lodge provide aesthetic interest and reinforce the architectural approach. Dormers, stepped rooflines and steep



Figure 24 Fishscale tiles used at 1 and 2 The Cottages.

gable projections are used to good architectural effect at the New Manor House. Block ridge detailing is seen at The Bungalows with low eaves and catslide dormers integrated into the roofslope. Original roof coverings have been replaced with metal sheeting at Lower Farm and the gardener's cottage, which reduces the aesthetic quality of these buildings.

The majority of roofs are dual pitched, but half-hipped and hipped roofs are used at The Cottages, Lower Farmhouse and The Bungalows. The west roofslope of the listed barn is a catslide to accommodate the aisle, and a catslide hipped roof over the outbuilding adjacent to Barford Road contributes to the attractive grouping of roof forms and orientations seen at Lower Farmhouse.

8.6 Walls



Figure 25 The red brick boundary wall at Lower Farmhouse, which forms one of several walls continuously fronting the west side of Barford Road in the village.

An important feature of the conservation area is the series of walls which run along the western side of Barford Road. At the southern end of the village, a c.2m high buff brick wall forms the boundary to New Manor House. This wall possesses fielded panels and piers either side of openings, offering a sense of formality despite the modern concrete coping. At North Lodge a series of red brick walls continue northward, which vary in terms of age and quality, but nevertheless continue to contribute to the enclosed feel.

Elsewhere, surviving aspects of the kitchen garden wall of the former 18th century manor provides evidence of its former status and wealth, as well as the historic focal point of the village prior to the 19th century. The original 18th century red brick wall incorporates later 19th century brickwork used to heighten the structure, as well as 20th and possibly 21st century repairs of lower quality.

The curved ha-ha wall running to the west and south west of the New Manor House was built to allow uninterrupted views of the parkland whilst simultaneously allowing livestock to graze. The wall was constructed from a combination of stone and brickwork.

Traditional metal estate fencing fronts the north side of the private track leading up to the church and reflects the former use of the land. Metal gates are also seen across the entrance adjacent to South Lodge. These features reinforce the estate character.

The condition of some of the walls require attention. Those adjacent to the road suffer from splashing and salt damage, whilst the ha-ha requires localised repair.



Figure 26 The ha-ha wall running to the west of New Manor House.

8.7 Positive contribution of buildings

The quality of the built environment and the scale of preservation within Little Barford is such that the vast majority of buildings within the conservation area make a positive contribution to its special interest. In most cases, individual buildings are considered to be non-designated heritage assets in their own right, and in the case of estate-era structures typically possess a strong group value with neighbouring buildings.

The contribution made by individual buildings to the special interest of the conservation area is set out in Map 2.



Figure 27 A winch and hayloft at the stables. Where buildings have fallen out of use, historic features have often survived intact.

8.8 General condition, including negative factors

The village currently has a slight feeling of neglect caused by a lack of occupancy of properties, not least the New Manor House and associated buildings. However, the lack of occupancy or inappropriate re-use of buildings has allowed for the retention of historic fabric, and where buildings remain in use they are well-maintained.

St Denys' Church is a highly graded asset which contributes very strongly to the appreciation and understanding of the conservation area. Though appearing to be in good condition thanks to the stewardship of The Churches Conservation Trust, it would be beneficial to promote further visitation and possibly additional use of the building going forward.

Views of the west elevation of the New Manor House, as well as of the earthworks historically associated with the medieval village, are similarly not perceptible from the public realm. This limits the public to views from Barford Road only, and therefore to only experience the post-medieval period onwards.



Figure 28 The track between New Manor House and St Denys' Church, an important and historic thoroughfare, is not a public right of way.

The experience of the conservation area is also impacted by cars travelling at some speed through Little Barford and in close proximity to pedestrians. More widely, noise associated with the railway line and traffic on the A1 and A428 detract from the otherwise idyllic character of the village. As noted elsewhere in this document, the presence of the power station to the north, and to a lesser extent pylons and associated power lines, detracts from the historic character of Little Barford and its mostly rural surroundings.

9. Management Plan

9.1 Introduction

The designation and appraisal of a conservation area is not an end in itself. The purpose of this document is to provide a basis for the management of the conservation area in a manner that will preserve or enhance its character and appearance. This particular management plan follows on from the appraisal in which the special character and visual qualities of the area are identified, along with any threats that are currently affecting it.

A risk to the character of the conservation area is the relatively high proportion of historic buildings that have fallen out of use. Therefore, whilst the retention of historic interest is high, the condition of the conservation area is fair, and finding a new use for vacant buildings is a key challenge to the ongoing management of the area.

The management plan will be used as a technical document to provide guidance for stakeholders in the conservation area and to inform and guide the development management process and policy formation.

For this management plan, which is informed by the appraisal, threats and opportunities have been identified in Section 9.2. Section 9.3 includes buildings proposed to be placed on a possible Local List. Finally, Section 9.4 considers possible Article 4 directions affecting buildings and structures within Little Barford.

9.2 Threats and opportunities

Identifying threats and opportunities is crucial to addressing the area's needs. An 'opportunity' is an aspect which currently contributes to the character and appearance of the conservation area and where there is scope to preserve or enhance that contribution. A 'threat' is defined as an aspect or issue which currently detracts from the special interest of the conservation area or has the potential to, and measures are required to mitigate against or reverse that impact.

The following section details threats to the conservation area's special interest and opportunities to enhance its character and appearance. The order they appear does not convey a sense of priority.

9.2.1 Threat: Vacancy of buildings in Little Barford

Several buildings within the village are either unoccupied or have fallen out of use. In several cases there are concerns regarding their condition as a result of their vacancy, and that their failing condition may have a negative impact on the vitality and character of the conservation area. Additionally, the Church and New Manor House no longer function as a hub of the community as would have historically been the case, which has negatively affected the feel and sense of place of the wider village.

Recommendation:

The Council will work with stakeholders to seek ways in which vacant buildings can be brought back into a viable use consistent with their heritage interests. Where sufficiently justified, a new viable use would be supported provided the special interest of the conservation area and the contribution made by the building, its surroundings and group value with other buildings is preserved or enhanced. Some vacant buildings within the conservation area may lend themselves to uses other than residential.

9.2.2 Opportunity: New development within the conservation area

New development within Little Barford offers the opportunity to increase the vitality and sustainability of the conservation area by bringing new people and uses to the village.

Recommendation:

The location of new development will need to respond to the historic and rural character of Little Barford taking into account the dispersed form of the village, its morphology, views and open spaces, inter-relationship between buildings, the layout, massing, bulk and scale of nearby buildings as well as the design and materials that characterise the conservation area. Development will also need to consider the preservation of archaeological earthworks which provide tangible evidence of the settlement's historic origins and evolution. The appraisal provides details of what characterises the special interest of Little Barford.

9.2.3 Threat: New development affecting the setting of the conservation area

Development that now forms part of the setting of the conservation area, such as the power station and associated buildings detracts from the experience of Little Barford as an area of architectural and historic interest. Otherwise, the rural surroundings experienced from the conservation area generally make a positive contribution. New development which erodes the wider rural landscape risks impacting on the appreciation of Little Barford.

Recommendation:

Any future development outside the conservation area should seek to respect the contribution made by setting to the special interest of Little Barford. Particular attention is drawn to the way in which the rural landscape might be informative of the use or historic function of a building or group of buildings, how setting contributes to views from within the conservation area, where it forms an important open space, or where archaeological remains may reflect the historic development of the settlement.

9.2.4 Opportunity: Above and below ground archaeological remains

Traces of human activity within Little Barford parish are recorded as dating at least as far back as the Bronze Age. Within the conservation area, above ground archaeological remains include medieval, and post-medieval settlement and associated agricultural earthworks and there is the potential for associated below ground remains to survive. The historic buildings still standing within the village also contain archaeological evidence in their fabric, plan form, detailed design and traces of former occupation and use. The 19th century parkland

contains relict parkland features and traces of the earlier settlement which it replaced. Investigation of the conservation area's archaeology is an opportunity to gather evidence and promote a better understanding of Little Barford's historical origins and development and its special interest.

Recommendation:

New development or works within the conservation area will need to demonstrate that they have considered the significance of archaeology and impacts upon such significance for all heritage assets of archaeological and historic interest potentially affected. They should also put in place avoidance or mitigation measures where necessary. Where justified, the Council will look to secure the investigation of Little Barford's historic landscapes, buildings and archaeology, and where appropriate, support the design and implementation of improved public accessibility and interpretation.

9.2.5 Threat: Loss of architectural detailing and historic features

The conservation area retains a high degree of original architectural detailing and historic features with relatively few inappropriate later changes. Features that make positive contributions are identified in more detail in the appraisal, but include windows, doors, bargeboards, porches and chimneys.

Recommendation:

The Council will encourage the retention of features which make a positive contribution. Additionally, the Council will explore the possibility of issuing Article 4 directions to remove certain permitted development rights in order to control specific changes to buildings. The Council will also highlight buildings recommended for Local Listing which will typically possess these features. Please see Section 9.3 and 9.4 for more information.

9.2.6 Opportunity: Trees and open spaces

Trees make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Open spaces also contribute to the historic and aesthetic quality of the village.

Recommendation:

The conservation area designation will serve as the first step in the positive management of trees within Little Barford, including those that make a strong individual or group contribution to the amenity of the area. Similarly, the Council will seek to preserve or enhance positive elements of important open spaces in the village.

9.2.7 Threat: Enhancement of public realm and traffic within the conservation area

The Barford Road is generally lacking in superfluous signage or traffic controls such as double yellow lines, which is a positive aspect. Traffic however has a negative impact with the speed and proximity of vehicles passing through the village resulting in an uninviting pedestrian experience.

Recommendation:

Future proposals regarding street furniture, upgrades and surfacing should be sympathetic to the character of the conservation area while meeting statutory highway obligations. The Council will work with stakeholders to consider the possibilities of reducing the harmful impact of traffic through the village in order to preserve or enhance the experience and rural character of the conservation area.

9.3 Local List

Through the emerging Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040, the Council has committed to producing a Local List of buildings or assets of architectural and/or historic local interest for the purpose of identifying and managing those non-designated heritage assets. Local listing does not impose further planning controls, but assets placed on the Local List will be afforded a level of non-statutory recognition within the planning process.

Candidates for the Bedford Borough Council Local List are judged by criteria assessing such things as their age, integrity and rarity, and their architectural and archaeological interest. The criteria can be found in Appendix 5 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040.

After assessing them against this criteria, the following buildings and structures in Little Barford have been recognised as possessing inherent local interest, and will therefore be considered for the proposed Local List. They are also shown in Map 2 in the appraisal:

- New Manor House;
- Stables, garage, larder, haha and boundary wall associated with the New Manor House;
- Base of cross, churchyard;
- War memorial, churchyard;
- South Close, Barford Road;
- North Lodge and South Lodge, Barford Road;
- Barn range fronting Barford Road, Lower Farm;
- School Room, Barford Road;
- 1-8 The Cottages, Barford Road;
- 18th century kitchen garden wall, Dower House.



Figure 29 Base of a cross, possibly a medieval village cross located within the churchyard.

The assessment of the Local List buildings and structures is found in Appendix 2.

9.4 Article 4 directions

A conservation area designation provides additional controls over development.

Under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, certain rights to development which can normally be carried out without the need for planning permission, known as 'permitted development rights', can be removed to preserve or enhance elements which contribute to the character of the area. This is achieved through what is known as an 'Article 4 Direction'.

Article 4 Directions can afford protection from incremental change to the historic environment, for instance, the alteration or replacement of windows and doors; extensions or other material changes which would affect the external façade of the property and in turn affect its character or the character of the streetscape. Many of these rights are unaffected by a conservation area designation.

Based on the findings of the appraisal and the objectives of the management plan, the Council will explore the removal of permitted development rights under Article 4 of the General permitted Development Order 2015, and within the Little Barford Conservation Area, for the following:

- Windows;
- Doors and porches;
- Walls and fences.

Currently, windows, doors and porches make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area and the incremental loss of such features or their replacement would harm the unity and quality of the built environment. Similarly, walls and fences contribute positively and their removal or replacement with inappropriate treatments such as close boarded fences would impact on the historic, rural character of the village.



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Appendix 1: Listed Buildings in Little Barford

<u>Listed Buildings</u>	<u>Grade</u>
Parish Church of St Denys'	II*
1-4 The Bungalows	II
Lower Farmhouse	II
Barn North of Farmhouse, Lower Farm	II

Appendix 2: Local List Assessment Table

Based on the evidence to hand limited to an external inspection only, the following assessment has been made:

Building/structure	Selection Criteria*								Comments
	Age and Integrity	Rarity	Architectural Interest	Archaeological Interest	Artistic Interest	Historic Interest	Landmark Value	Group Value	
Base of cross, churchyard	✓	✓						✓	Likely the base of a mediaeval village cross, which is a relatively rare surviving feature providing evidence of the historic focus of development and forming a group with the medieval St Denys' Church
War memorial, churchyard						✓		✓	Memorialises local residents who died in WW1, possessing a strong group value with the church and gravestones
New Manor House	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	Pre-1840 landmark building attribute to John Usher and retaining much of its original external form and features. Associated with the Alington estate and forms part of an important group of buildings
Stable block	✓							✓	Mid-19 th century building which retains most of its original external features. Possesses a strong group value with

Building/structure	Selection Criteria*								Comments
	Age and Integrity	Rarity	Architectural Interest	Archaeological Interest	Artistic Interest	Historic Interest	Landmark Value	Group Value	
									nearby buildings, in particular the New Manor House.
Larder	✓	✓						✓	Mid-19 th century building which retains most of its original features including internal paraphernalia. Rare historic example of a 19 th century larder with a strong group value with the New Manor House and the wider estate.
Ha-ha at New Manor House	✓							✓	Mid-19 th century wall retaining most of its original fabric, forming part of the wider, designed landscape. Strong group value with the New Manor House and wider Alington estate.
Boundary wall at New Manor House	✓							✓	Mid-19 th century wall with an 'estate' character retaining most of its original features. Possesses a strong group value with the New Manor House and wider Alington estate.
North Lodge	✓							✓	Mid-19 th century building retaining most of its original features, possessing a strong group value with New Manor House, estate wall, the Stables and South Lodge.
South Lodge	✓							✓	Mid-19 th century building retaining most of its original features, possessing

Building/structure	Selection Criteria*								Comments
	Age and Integrity	Rarity	Architectural Interest	Archaeological Interest	Artistic Interest	Historic Interest	Landmark Value	Group Value	
									a strong group value with the estate wall, New Manor House and North Lodge.
South Close (former Vicarage)	✓							✓	Mid-19 th century structure retaining most of its original external features with a group value with other assets deriving from similar architectural detailing and materials used
School Room	✓							✓	Mid-19 th century building retaining most of its original external features and possessing a strong group value with other assets in the village, in particular 1-8 The Cottages and Lower Farm
1-8 The Cottages	✓							✓	Mid- to late-19 th century buildings retaining most of their original external features. Possess a strong group value as planned pairs which subtly differ in terms of architectural detailing. Also group value with the school room and Lower Farm
Garden Wall at Dower House	✓			✓				✓	Mid-18 th century former kitchen garden wall providing above-ground evidence of the former 18 th century manor. Possesses a group value with the Church, which together offer

Building/structure	Selection Criteria*								Comments
	Age and Integrity	Rarity	Architectural Interest	Archaeological Interest	Artistic Interest	Historic Interest	Landmark Value	Group Value	
									evidence of the manorial-church relationship.
Barns fronting Barford Road at Lower Farm	✓							✓	Mid-19 th century buildings retaining most of their original features (may possess elements of earlier brickwork). Strong group value with the listed barn and Lower Farmhouse (both grade II).

Appendix B

List of consultee groups

Under Section 71 of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, the local planning authority has a duty to publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in a public meeting. There is no statutory requirement to undertake any additional consultation exercise for the designation or appraisal of a conservation area. However, the Council will offer residents and other stakeholders the opportunity for participation and comment over a four week consultation period including a meeting held at a local public venue. The process for consultation is set out in further detail in sections 4.2 and 4.3 of the Executive Report and will be carried out in accordance with the key principles of *The General Data Protection Regulation* (GDPR).

The following groups will be consulted regarding the designation of the Conservation Area:

- Council members and Parish Councils in Bedford Borough;
- Residents and land owners within the proposed Conservation Area of Little Barford and owners of land/property immediately adjacent to the proposed boundary;
- Adjacent Local Authorities and adjacent parish / town councils;
- All other interested parties and statutory stakeholders on the Planning Policy Database including those that have requested to be informed of local plan/policy consultations.

Whilst the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will not be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, the consultation process will accord with the objectives of the Council's *Statement of Community Involvement* (2019).