



Fritton

Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines

December 2019



Content

Introduction	3
Historical Development	4
Character Assessment	5
Conservation Management Guidelines	13
Appendix 1(i) - Listed Buildings in Fritton Conservation Area	15
Appendix 1(ii) - Unlisted Buildings in Fritton which are of townscape significance	15
Appendix 2 - Policy & Consultation	16
Appendix 3 - Conservation Area Boundary	17
Appendix 4 - Historic Map	18
Appendix 5 - Streetscape	19
Appendix 6 - Natural Character	20

Introduction



The church lychgate

The small rural hamlet of Fritton is dominated by the large grazing common to the south, which over time has shaped how the village has grown and strongly defines its character. The settlement lies 11 miles south of Norwich, 8 miles North West of Harleston, and 2 ½ miles East of Long Stratton.

Fritton retains a very rural character with its common well preserved. Historically, properties were widely dispersed around the common, however some infilling has created a more concentrated cluster of dwellings at the north end of the common where the two roads converge. The extent of landscaping at the north end of the common however screens much of the development.

The village lies within the Parish of Morningthorpe with the neighbouring hamlet of Morningthorpe lying half a mile to the west of the common. The area is identified in the South Norfolk Place Making Guide within the Great Moulton Plateau Farmland – an area of relatively flat landscape characterised by greens, commons and historic moated houses.

Under the terms of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Local Planning Authority is required to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate them as a Conservation Area. The 1990 Act also requires local authorities to prepare management guidance and proposals for Conservation Areas. Fritton conservation area was originally designated in 1976. This document should be read in conjunction with the adopted Local Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.

Key Characteristics

- Large well-preserved grazed common with numerous ponds which are important natural habitats (The common is a SSSI)
- Concentration of dwellings at the north end of the hamlet.
- Importance of verges with buildings set back behind hedges.
- Variety of vernacular architecture, including a number of thatched properties

Historical Development (also see historic map in Appendix 4 p18)

In the Domesday Book (1086) reference is made to "three Freeman and the moiety of another" in "Fredetuna" and Blomfield, the 18th century Norfolk historian, suggests that the name means "Free Town", implying that it was "free from many things that other villages were subject to". Another interpretation of the place name is "TUN with a fence round it" or "TUN by fenced ground". Alternatively, it may be derived from Freisia in North Germany, whence settlers may have come, or from the name of a person.

The oldest building in the village is the Church of St Catherine's to the north west which has a 12th century Norman round tower. The church also has a number of historic features dating from the 15th century with a belfry and porch of that date, an embattled parapet and font. A rare rood screen with medieval paintings dating to c1520 shows how colourful church interiors were before the reformation. Earlier still are several wall paintings that date from the 13th century.

The settlement belonged to the manor of Boyland-cum-Fritton. Boyland Hall was a large Elizabethan house to the north, rebuilt in the 19th century but demolished in 1947. Boyland was also the site of a small medieval village. There is a medieval moated property within the conservation area at Island House to the south east of the common. The house has remnants of a 15th century jettied house and cross passage and it is thought that it may have been the house of the Abbot of Bury's bailiff (NH3995).

The incumbent of Fritton Church during the 19th century was Reverend Thomas Howes who resided at Morningthorpe Hall, a large Elizabethan house (extended in the 19th century) to the west of the settlement with an extensive area of attached parkland. Mature trees within this extensive former parkland can still be seen to the west of the Common.

Fadens 1797 Map shows two tracks either side of the common to the west and east with planted avenues of trees. The 1884 OS Map still shows the remains of a tree lined avenue to the east, which is no longer clearly shown on the 1905 Map. A new tree lined avenue (although missing some trees) has now been established for the later Middle Road, which is now the principal road passing through the conservation area.

The common pasture of Fritton called 'Fritton Green' is an ancient common. South Norfolk has a number of surviving mediaeval commons. These heaths and commons were found on badly drained clay uplands which were less suitable for arable farming and were of great importance to the rural economy in the Middle Ages. They provided areas of pasture for those with communing rights at times when other grazing was not available. They were also sources of clay for house building and for marling the fields, which may be how some of the ponds formed.

The edges of the commons were frequently settled by peasants from the 11th or 12th century onwards, although as areas of common grazing they are almost certainly older, probably Anglo-Saxon.

The importance of common land led to its slow removal, it was nibbled away first by encroachment and then by enclosure so that whereas today less than 1% of Norfolk's land area is common, at the beginning of the 19th century it was as high as 11%.

Medieval Tofts can be found to the south east of the common south of Steppings Lane (M 32922) and there are various medieval pottery finds to the north of the village behind houses on the west either side of common.

In 1883 the village was described as "a pleasant village scattered around a green of 70 acres." In 1881 the census stated that it had 204 inhabitants living on 890 acres of land, indicative of the agricultural character of the village for much of its existence before the 20th century. The village was largely agricultural, although there was a public house in the village, the Nags Head, which was first recorded in 1775. This is now a house and can be found to the west side of the junction of Middle Road and The Street. The 1884 OS map shows the location of the Pillory (the village stocks) on the opposite verge.

During WWII United States Air Force servicemen from the 93rd Bomber Group were based at the nearby Hardwick airfield and frequently visited the pub. The arrival of the Americans in a quiet rural part of Norfolk must have created quite a stir. The pub closed in 1982 with the death of the last landlady, Daisy Elmar.

Daisy had worked with her husband since the 1940s (her husband dying in 1963) running the pub and was fondly remembered by the ex-servicemen after the war with Daisy continuing to receive Christmas and birthday cards and return visits for many years. The pub was also known for being one of the last pubs in Norfolk to have a serving hatch, known as 'a wicket', rather than a bar.

Other war time features include a type 22 Pill box in the south east corner of the common (NH18351), and a search light station relating to the airfield, which was situated to the south west of the Common (NH33311).



The Nags Head Public House and former pub sign

Character Assessment

(Also see Streetscape and Natural Character Maps in Appendices 5 and 6 pages 19 and 20)

Fritton and its Setting

The majority of properties are situated at the north end of the hamlet to either side of The Street. There remains wide verges to the front, and the rear of properties back onto agricultural fields. Planting around the ponds at the north end of the common obscures views of the housing from the large area of the common to the south.

The common is well enclosed by mature trees around its perimeter, so although the surrounding countryside is relatively flat, the common feels relatively enclosed and separated from the surrounding countryside, creating its own sense of place. Properties are more widely dispersed, although as many of the properties are rendered and painted in colours they stand out visibly.

Conservation Area Boundary

The boundary has been drawn around the historic settlement to include properties and landscaping around The Common, along The Street, and further to the north to include the church and Church Farm. Where fields are now cultivated and agricultural they have generally been taken out. The post-war housing along School Road is has also been taken out as they are a relatively common house type of the period and there is no reason to include them within the conservation area on heritage or architectural grounds.

Street Patterns and Historic Grain

The historic grain and pattern of development is strongly influenced by the shape and character of the large common and the convergence of the roads at the north end. Historically, buildings were dispersed around the common in farm yard clusters relating to agricultural use. The church and the Rectory were situated in a relatively isolated location to the north. Later 20th century infilling has changed the character at the north end with a higher concentration of properties and a more linear development character. However, to the east and west of the common infilling hasn't taken place and the preservation of the landscape gaps between properties is important to retaining its historic character and appearance. Landscaping at the north end of the common with associated ponds also assists in screening the higher concentration of housing at the north end of the common from views within The Common.

Perambulation

The Church and Church Farm are isolated from the rest of the settlement to the north. Once the Old Rectory is reached the character of development is shaped by linear development to either side of The Street, particularly on the west side, until reaching the north end of the Common. The common has a different character with farmyard clusters around the periphery of the open space and large landscape gaps in-between, although extensive planting around the common and around ponds obscures views out from the common over the surrounding agricultural open countryside.

The Street (West side)

Starting at the north end of the village on the west side, set back some distance from the road and not visible from it is the extremely well-hidden village church within a grouping of trees. The conservation area boundary passes along the line of an historic path which leads from the rectory across the field to the Church. Recent planting of an avenue of trees along the path helps to retain the historic connection even though the rectory is now a private house.

Once past the meadow to the front of the church and the village road signs, the first building on the right is the Old Rectory. The original 17th century house with its steep roof and plain, peg tiles is just about visible to the rear, as well as an earlier flint outbuilding further to the rear. More prominent is the later 18th/19th front range which is whitewashed brick and a little plain in appearance with a shallow hipped roof and dark pantiles and wide sash window units with margin lights. The tall red brick chimneys are however a strong feature, drawing the eye upwards.

The next group of properties are a converted flint barn unusually tight to the back of the road, followed by a semi-detached pair of smaller rendered 19th century labourer's cottages with casement windows.

There then follows several modern detached houses. These are set back at varying distances from the road with gabled forms and steeper roof pitches, although not as steep as historic properties. The ditch also becomes a landscape feature to the side of the road. The Limes unusually has crow stepped gable ends. 1 & 2 Council Houses date from the mid-20th century.

There is some inconsistency in front boundary treatments – firstly the historic remains of the low flint enclosure wall to the farm complex, followed by the open lawn frontage to the rendered Sycamore House. There are then tall hedges behind the open drainage ditch which obscures views of the properties, particularly in summer.



The informal approach to the isolated and hidden church



A short section of The Street where there is an untypical tight street frontage

There then follows Old Rectory Cottage, a 17th/18th century large cottage in two parts: A thatched two storey section to the left, and adjoining low single storey converted outbuilding with roof dormers to the right. At this point the verge starts to widen for a small area on the west side with hedging providing important boundary treatment. There is a low modern red brick bungalow, then East View, an interwar mid-20th suburban style house which appears a little incongruous within the rural context.

At the point where the road forks into the middle and west roads is the former Nags Head with its attractive varied red brick, prominent thatched roof and swept over dormer windows, now solely inhabited as a private house. The yard extends out to the front, enclosing the common with a ditch and hedge. The next house facing towards the common is Fritton Cottage, a simple early to mid-19th century brick cottage with black pantiles and segmental arches and casement windows. It has a pleasant front garden with picket hedge. The cottage is closer in character to the properties to the north of the common than those found dispersed around the common.

The Street (East side)

The first building within the conservation area boundary on the east side is a timber framed barn with weatherboarded gable end and rendered elevations, currently painted brick, and a prominent brick wall. This is part of the Church Farm grouping of buildings. The 17th century timber framed farmhouse, which is rendered, is set further back. Typically, it has 19th casements and a steep pitched roof with pantiles. There is then a long section of agricultural fields with a strong hedge boundary to the road.

The conservation area boundary now excludes New Church Farm as it is a relatively modern building which does not contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The boundary has been drawn to include the hedge and verge.

The first two properties, The Elms and Elm House, are both modern properties, the Elms single storey and Elm House two storeys. Following these houses is an historic building divided into four separate properties: Fern Cottage, Wayside Cottages and Rose Cottages. The north end, Fern Cottage, dates from the 19th century and is not listed. The central Wayside Cottages and Rose Cottage, part of which is a later extension, are listed grade II. The original part of the building is thatched with three eaves level dormer windows with swept over thatch. Rose Cottage is partly the thatch building, and partly a later extension. It is important to try to keep a coordinated colour across the property, particularly for the middle section.



Church Farm with barn to left



The group of Fern Cottage, Wayside Cottages and Rose Cottages east side of The Street

A track then separates off from The Street to the east of the pond with the beginning of the common area. Greenwood and Meadow House are both modern properties set back from the street. Point House and Sunnyside are older properties with pleasantly contrasting styles, the former brick, the latter thatched with a red pantile roof. Point House and Sunnyside provide an attractive setting as the back drop to the pond. These properties are followed by Nevada, another modern property.

The Common

The common is characterised by dispersed grouping of properties mostly based around historic farmsteads with the original farmhouses, outbuildings and walled or fenced enclosures, an important feature protecting yards from the livestock grazing on the common.

East side

On the east side of the common the first grouping is associated with 16th / 17th century Fritton Hall. This is the largest agricultural grouping of buildings in the village, with the converted stable ranges to the north, and two historic barns to the south, both individually also listed grade II with one barn with the date 1749 in ironwork on the gable end facing west. Apart from the Rectory to the north, the brick gable end of the hall with its diaper pattern work of vitrified bricks and crow stepped gable identifies the hall as the highest status property in the village. A brick wall provides enclosure to the courtyard to the north.

The next grouping is associated with the Island House moated site. The house has an attractive setting overlooking a pond to the east. The remains of 15th century jettied house with a screen passage are visible as part of the elevation, with the hall having been extensively rebuilt c1580. In the 19th century the house was reduced in height at the south end and given a new roof, and probably subdivided into cottages. The house was renovated and extended in the 20th century. An 18th century brick barn to the north is converted into a house, and a weatherboarded barn lies immediately to the north of the house. There are some old iron railings along the driveway, quite simple and plain in design.

Fritton End Farm is situated at the junction with Steppings Lane. End Farm Cottage to the north and two barns, both timber framed, dating from the 17th to early 18th century. The farmhouse has been re-fronted in red brick in the 19th and 20th centuries. The west side has an enclosed garden with a 19th century wall to the road and a flint wall to the south. A weatherboarded cartshed survives to the front of the wall with other outbuildings to the south. There are then no further properties to the south on this side of the common.



Fritton Hall



Fritton End Farm

West side

Properties are closer to the west road on the west side.

The first grouping of buildings, south of School Lane, are related to Malthouse Farm. This is a timber frame house dating from 17th century and has several clay lump barns and outbuildings. The farm is followed by Oak Cottage, 17th/18th century timber framed with later 19th century extensions, and a 18th century range of clay lump and painted brick cottages. The last grouping is the Manor Farm buildings, which include 16th/17th century timber frame barn. Another timber frame stable, formerly a smithy, which may be the original farmhouse as it has an ornately carved bresummer reset over the forge

Traditional Materials & Architectural Details

The village contains a variety of vernacular materials including flint, red brick, timber framing and clay lump. Roofs are mostly covered with red/orange pantiles, although three properties are still thatched.

17th century and earlier buildings are typically vernacular being timber framed with steep roof pitches, low eaves, dormer windows (catslide, eyebrow and gabled), off centre stacks, casement windows and vertically boarded doors.

Thatched roof buildings are a particularly feature of the village with Wayside Cottages, Sunnyside, and Nags Head Cottage all thatched. Other 17th century properties have very prominent steep roof pitches which are likely to indicate historic thatching.

Converted barns at Fritton Hall have 'tumbled-in' brickwork gable ends, black weatherboarding and red clay pantiles. The steep pitch and parapet gable ends indicate that the barn was likely to be historically thatched.

Although the converted flint barns formerly of Street Farm are very prominent in the streetscene, flints are relatively unusual within the conservation area – and apart from the church are only used for more functional buildings such as garden walls and outbuildings/barns.

There are a few barns and outbuildings that are either constructed in wattle and daub or clay lump, such as those at Malthouse Farm. Clay lump is very local to the South Norfolk area and is a building method used mainly in the early to mid-19th century.



Render and thatch at Sunnyside and later extensions in brick and pantiles to adjoining north end.



Converted barns at Fritton Hall with crow stepped gable ends

Natural Character



Ancient oaks, part of the historic tree lined vista to east, and west shown here) to The Common.

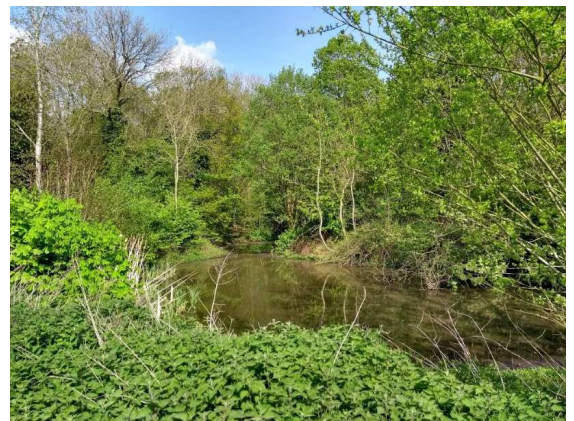
The open landscape of the grazed common dominates the natural character of the conservation area. The common is a designated site of special scientific interest (SSSI) and is therefore important to manage. It is one of the few large grassy commons in South Norfolk still under traditional management by light cattle grazing and several ancient oak and ash trees also survive. To the east side some of these indicate the line of the former tree lined avenue shown on Faden's map of 1797, and the vista is still visible to the west.

There are number of natural ponds and potentially manmade ponds, some of which are relatively shallow and only seasonally wet. These now show a great diversity of flora.

Further north St Catherine's Church is set back from the road in an isolated location. Mature landscaping makes an important contribution to the setting of the church, creating tranquillity of isolation. The graveyard is also well back from the road, preserved within a rural landscape with a tree lined track to the Rectory to the south.

The roads which run through the common are kept relatively informal with loosely defined edges. More informal bridleway tracks cross parts of the common, particularly from Middle Road to Fritton Hall and Island House. It is important these are relatively lightly used and kept informal and grassed.

The common tightens up at the north end where the roads converge and the character becomes one of wider grassed verges and high hedgerows, with buildings set back from the road behind hedges (the exception being the converted barns to Street Farm.)



Pond to the front of Manor Farm

Street Furniture, Walls and Railings



Listed telephone box, post box and village sign, and benches.



Flint wall formerly an enclosure as part of Street Farm complex of buildings, but now part of separate curtilage to the front of Vine Cottage

The settlement is very rural and not well populated. Street furniture is limited to the area around the grade II listed K6 Gilbert Scott designed telephone box and post boxes near the junction with School Road. This area could be enhanced with a more accessible surface. Although it is important to retain a rural character, the damage to the verge in this area resulting from parked cars could benefit from more robust edging.

The rural character of the area is reinforced with hedgerow planting. Some historic walls remain from historic farmyard enclosures, however walls and close boarded fences should be avoided to the front of properties, particularly where there is a higher concentration of more recently built houses along The Street.

Manor End Farm has a high garden wall adjacent to Steppings Lane with a dentil and round brick coping detail which wraps around to enclose the front garden. The old flint wall to Street Farm survives to the front of Vine Cottage, and has a decorative shaped round coping. Fern Cottage, Rose Cottage and Fritton Cottage all have cottage style picket fences to the front which positively contribute to the rural character providing enclosure but maintaining a sense of openness.

Conservation Management Guidelines

Highways



Verges along The Street

It is important to retain the rural character of The Common and the verge either side of The Street.

Verges should be kept informal and not kerbed. Avoid erecting obstacles on verge to stop cars parking, although the kerb where cars frequently park near the telephone box could benefit from some protection.

Upgrading windows and doors



Ideally replacement windows should be timber and flush fitting with glazing bars

Generally, the windows within the conservation area have been preserved or sympathetically replaced. However, in some cases windows and doors have been replaced with different materials such as uPVC and/or different styles.

If door or window frames need to be replaced they should ideally be replaced with in the same, original material. However, if different materials are chosen then the window style should still remain the same. The opportunity should be taken to reinstate traditional style windows where they have been unsympathetically replaced in the past.

Fencing and walls



Picket fence in front of Sunnyside

The village is mainly characterised by hedgerows, with the exception of wall providing historic farm yard enclosures.

Apart from retaining historic farmyard walls and enclosures, walls and close boarded fences should be avoided as they have an urbanising effect. Boundary treatments where considered applicable should be hedgerows or low picket style fences.

Painting/colour washing buildings



Malthouse Farm

A number of properties within the conservation area are timber framed and rendered. Although there is a variety of colours, the colours chosen are generally muted pastels to match historic limewash.

Colours should be well chosen to match historic limewash.

Appendix 1 (i)

Listed Buildings

Church of St Catherine
Church Farmhouse, The Street
The Old Rectory
Fritton Rectory
Barn north of Church Farmhouse
Malthouse Farmhouse
Three Nags Cottage
Fritton Hall
Stables north of Fritton Hall
"Oakwood" Barn (barn immediately south of Fritton Hall)
The 'Stables' (barn south of the above barn) converted to house 1982
Island House
Fritton End Farmhouse
Sunnyside (cottage range)
Fern Cottages - 1, 2 and Rose Cottage (no. 3) - (previously Wayside Cottages)
Telephone kiosk
Manor Farmhouse (west side Common)
Barn north-east of Manor Farmhouse (west side Common)
House (Oak Tree Cottage), Fritton Common (west side)
Cottage Range (including Avenue Cottage) south of the above

Appendix 1 (ii)

Unlisted Buildings of townscape significance

Fern Cottage
Fritton Cottage
Former Street Farm

Appendix 2

Policy background

In recent years, the approach to conservation area designation has changed considerably. It is now recognised that development plan policies, development management decisions, and proposals for the preservation or enhancement and the management of conservation areas, can best be achieved when there is a sound understanding of the special interest of the conservation area. This position is reinforced as follows:

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in section 66(1) makes it a duty of local authorities when considering applications to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest. Under section 72 of the same Act, it is a duty with respect to any buildings or land in a conservation area, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Department for Communities and Local Government. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 Paragraphs 184 to 202 cover “Conserving and enhancing the historic environment”. Joint Core Strategy- Policy 2: Promoting Good Design South Norfolk Local Plan. The South Norfolk Local Plan Development Management Policies Document was adopted in 2015 and policy 4.10 covers Heritage Assets.

Public Consultation

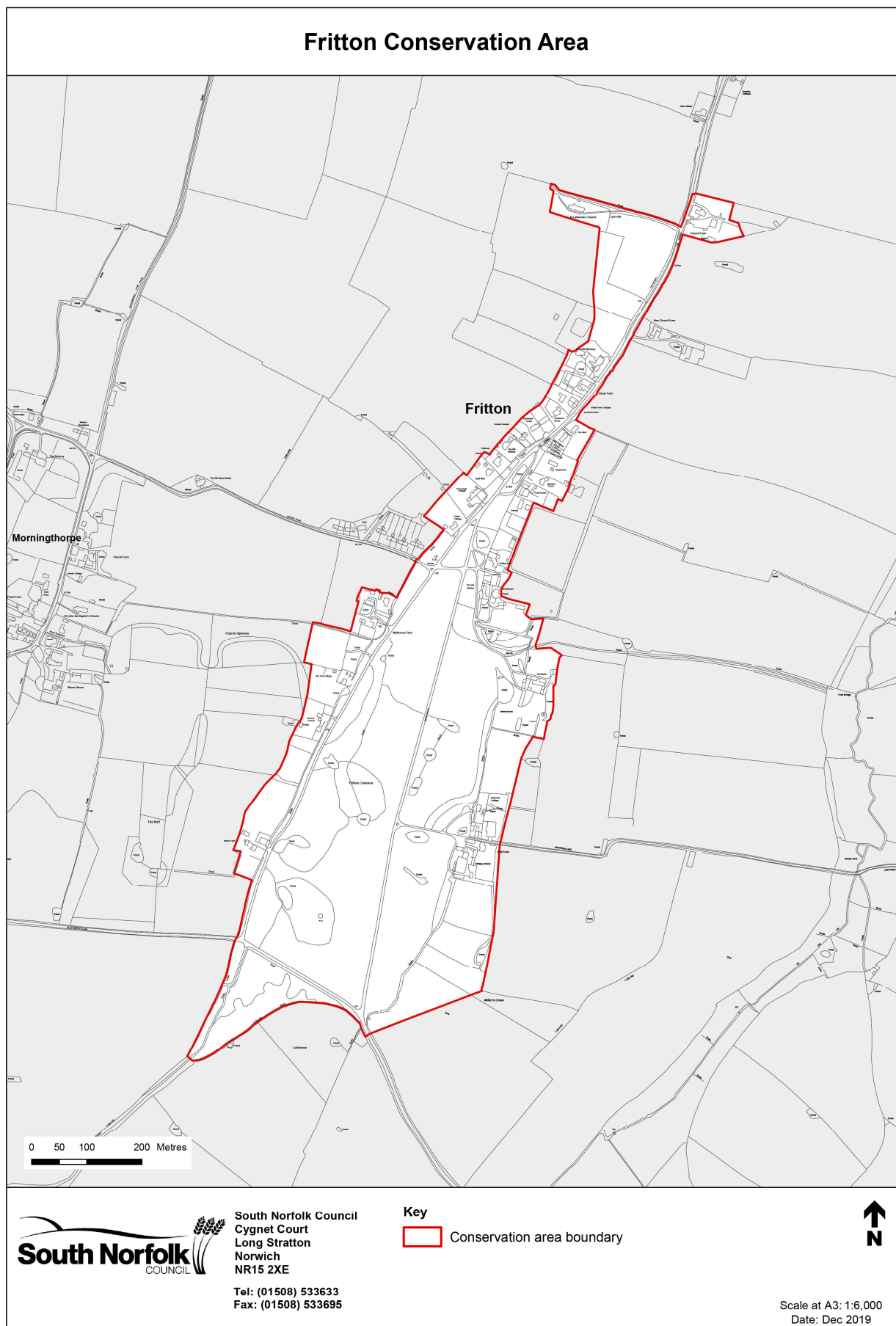
An informal ‘walkabout’ of the area was organised with the Parish Council on 14 December 2018. This informed the proposed boundary changes and the conservation management guidelines within the draft appraisal. The public consultation on the draft appraisal took place from 1st to 28th July.

This included:

- A public exhibition held in the before the parish council on 9th July for one hour with an officer in attendance to answer any queries.
- An advert in village notice board and local publicity by the parish council
- The draft appraisal being available to view on the council’s website and at the reception desk.
- Emailing Ward Councillors, County Councillors, the Parish Council and Historic England.
- A presentation made to the Parish Council on 9th July.
- Contacting residents directly affected by the proposed boundary changes by letter informing them of the proposed changes.

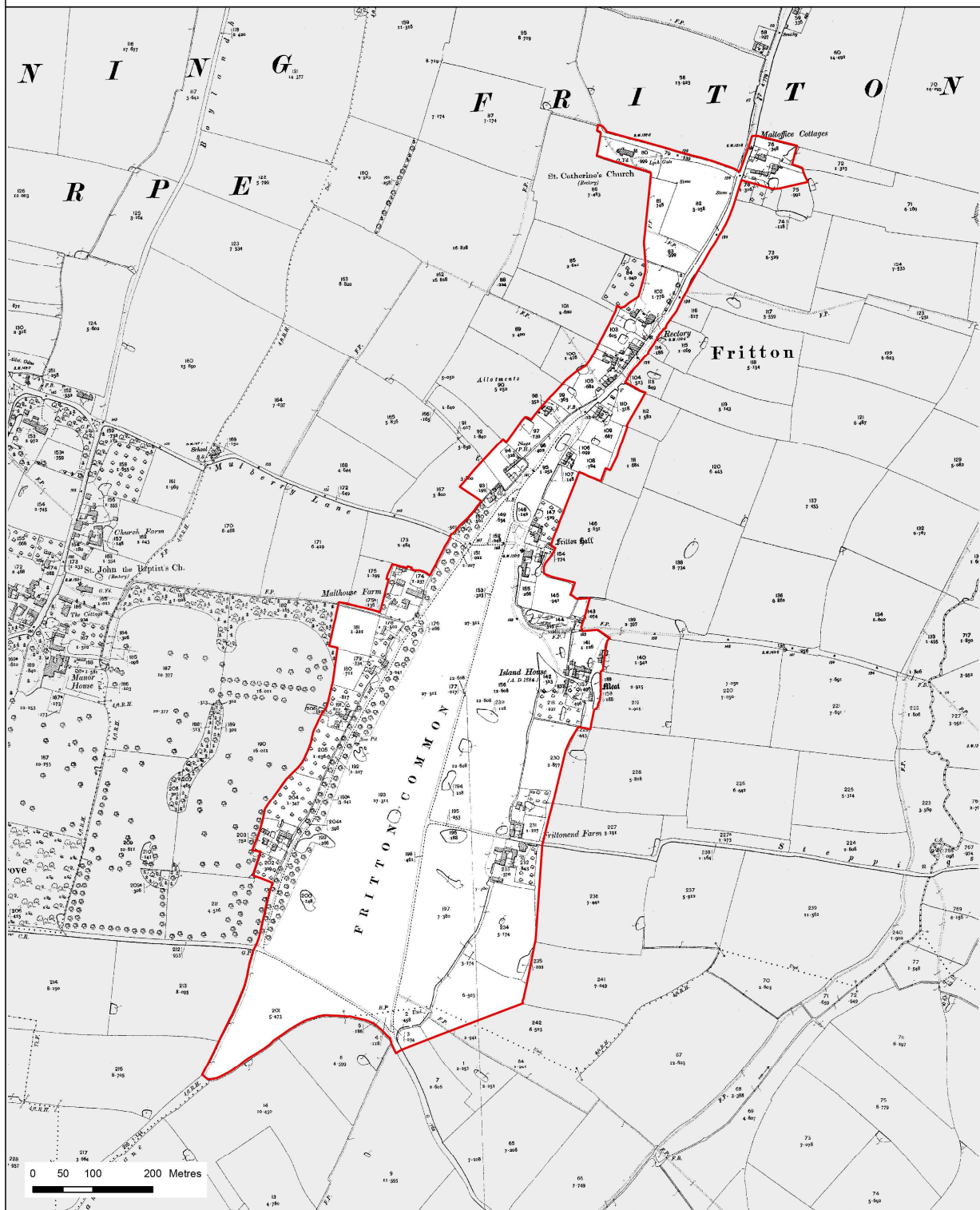
As a result of the consultation the proposed boundary extensions to include the whole curtilage of both the Old Rectory and Church Farmhouse were not carried forward. The former is characterised by a tennis court and relatively recent planting and the curtilage of Church Farmhouse was only recently extended following purchase of the field at the rear. Following representations made by respective owners, these areas were not considered to make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservations area and the boundary changes have not been made.

Appendix 3



Appendix 4

Fritton Conservation Area, Historic Map 1906 - 1914



South Norfolk Council
Cygnets Court
Long Stratton
Norwich
NR15 2XE

Tel: (01508) 533633
Fax: (01508) 533695

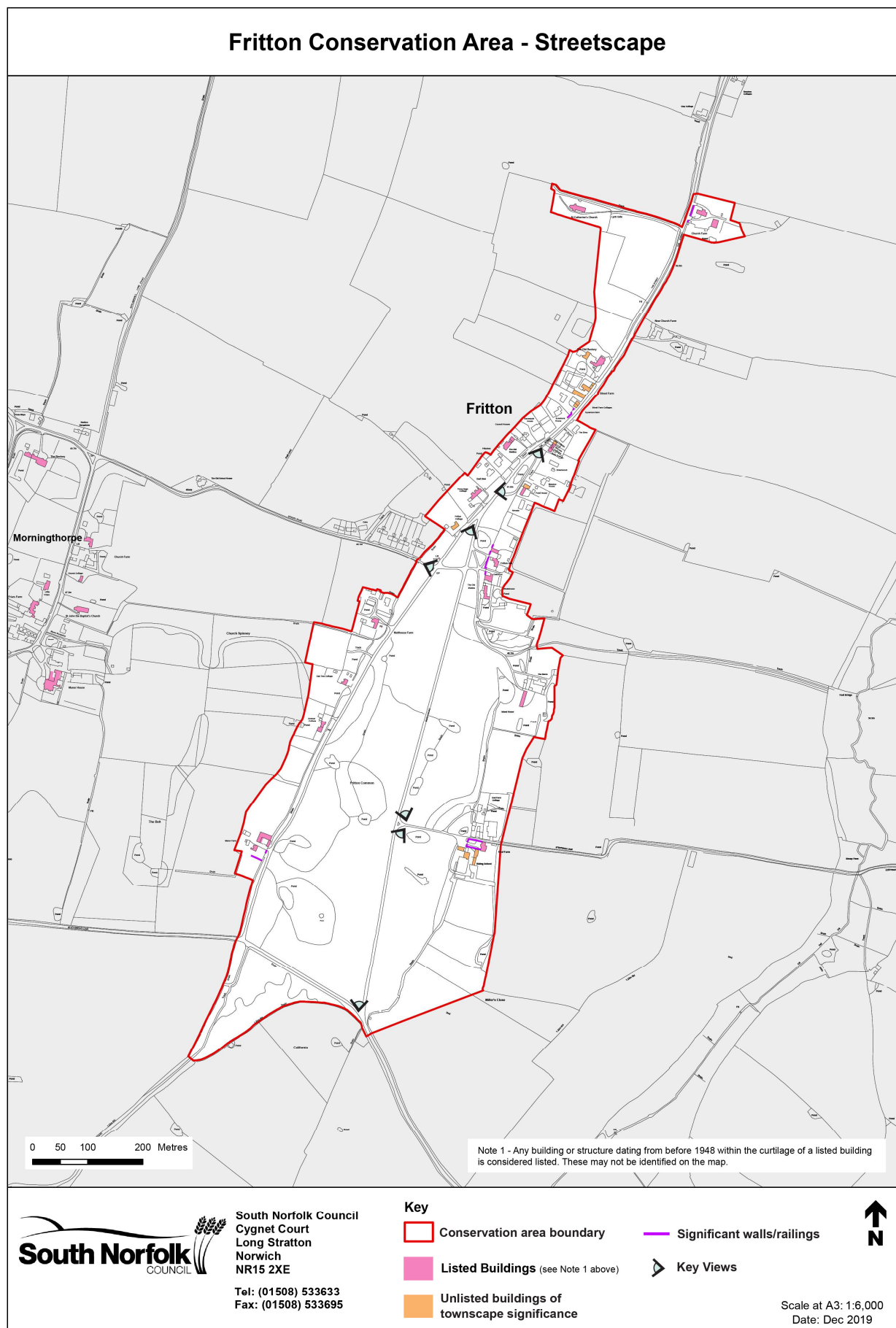
Key

Conservation area boundary



Scale at A3: 1:6,000
Date: Dec 2019

Appendix 5



Appendix 6

