



Pulham St Mary

Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines

December 2019



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Introduction



Church of St Mary the Virgin

Pulham St Mary is an attractive village with a great variety of listed buildings forming the historic centre. The centre of the village is approached from all directions along narrow meandering country lanes. Even the main B1134 retains this character, especially from the south-east. The roads converge at the west end at Pennoyers and the Kings Head, and at the east, at the Church of St Marys and the access to The Hall. From the south, views can be enjoyed of the buildings higher up along the Street set against the natural foreground of the river valley. The Conservation Area was designated on 1 February 1995.

Under the terms of the 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 and appearance it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate them as Conservation Areas. This document should be read in conjunction with the adopted Local Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework, and Planning Policy Guidance.

Key Characteristics

- Linear pattern but with a variety of buildings lining the streets.
- Rural setting and outlook especially to and from the south and east
- Key historic buildings tend to be less prominent
- Good later Victorian houses

Historical Development (also see historic map in Appendix 4 p16)

The relationship with the adjoining village of Pulham Market has been a fascinating one. In 1249, Pulham came within the jurisdiction of Earsham Hundred and was licensed to hold a weekly market. This probably gave rise to the form of Pulham Market with its village green which is a layout typical of a market village. At this time, Pulham was still described as a town and covered both parishes.

The present church in Pulham St Mary, dating back to the 13th century, is dedicated to St Mary the Virgin. A chapel-of-ease was built on the south side of the market area, and dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, from which Pulham St Mary takes its name. Thereafter the two parishes developed their own parochial identities although they remained joined ecclesiastically until 1849 when a faculty “dis-unionised” the parishes.

This decision was reversed in 1980 when the Church Commissioners created a united benefice of both parishes. However, the Pulhams still retain their separate civil identities along with separate churches.

Apart from farming, the parish was noted, between the 16th century and the early 1800s, for trading in hat making and weaving. It seems that looms were “rattling in almost every cottage in the village”. Although their decline must have affected the village, it seems the parishioners soon recovered and adapted.

Pennoyer’s School is of considerable architectural and historic interest. Although most of the present building dates from the late 19th century it “has a remarkable history which is rendered exceptional by the survival of a medieval chapel of considerable distinction at its core”. The chapel was built in 1401 and is unusual in that it is free-standing and not attached to the parish church. It remains an extremely rare and valuable witness of a local medieval guild. Its subsequent history, including its connection with the founding of Harvard University in the USA, is no less fascinating.

In 1913 land was purchased in Pulham for the construction of an airship base. During the first world war the base was a hive of activity and several sheds were erected to house the airships. One, re-erected at Cardington, measures 700’ x 181’ x 110’ high - these massive structures must have made a major impact on the surroundings. The airship activity ceased in 1926, and although the base continued in action, developing radar for example, the sheds were dismantled and the base finally decommissioned in 1952. The importance of the airships to Pulham is reflected by their inclusion on the village sign.

In more recent times, the population has risen gradually from 636 in 1961 to 743 in 1991, with the latest estimate in 2011 at 892. While the village retains a good range of facilities, it was affected by the closure of Pennoyers School in 1988. Credit is due to a team of local volunteers who secured the necessary funding and interest to convert the building to The Pennoyers Centre in 2010.

I am indebted to Hillary Clutten for the information in this section with most of the details taken from her book “School’s out, a History of Pennoyers School and its benefactor, William Pennoyer”, published in 1994.

Character Assessment

(Also see Streetscape and Natural Character Maps in Appendices 5 and 6 pages 17 and 18)

Pulham St Mary and its Setting

The setting on the lower valley slopes gives opportunities for extensive views both in and out of the village. While the development along The Street is fairly compact, attractive views can be enjoyed from the rural areas behind to the south, east and north.

The tower of The Church of St Mary, is a notable feature when seen from the north or south although it is less dominant in the street scene. The importance of trees and hedges both within the Conservation Area, and along approaches to it, cannot be over emphasised.

Conservation Area Boundary

The boundary includes the frontage properties along the main streets in the centre of the village, but also extends to cover the grounds of The Grange. The southern valley slopes, up to and including Dirty Lane with the river meadows to the north, contribute to the setting of the conservation area.

Some adjustments have been made to take account of changes to property or landscape boundaries.

Street Patterns and Historic Grain

As mentioned above, The Church, The Grange and the Maltings – which cover a major part of the village on plan, are either set back or shrouded in trees, accordingly, it is the trees which have the significant impact.

The variety of historic buildings was a factor in the designation of a Conservation Area. Modest cottages from the 17th to 19th centuries are interspersed with grander buildings - The Rectory, The King's Head, Steward's House. There is also an interesting contrast between the south and north sides of The Street. From the Maltings to the former pet shop is a relatively solid line of buildings. On the other side, the layout is much more informal, with trees, hedges, and the churchyard wall forming the line.



The Street



The Street

Perambulation

Station Road

While the Maltings are an impressive range of buildings, they are screened from The Street by trees, walls and houses. Hill House and its boundary wall confines the views of the Maltings to a narrow access on either side. Nonetheless, the conversion of the Maltings has retained the essential character of these significant buildings incorporating the car parking and domestication in a sensitive manner. Their scale and setting are enhanced and emphasised by the natural open character of the river valley to the south.

The view to The Street leads to the Old Forge, a modest building forming an island at the road junction (note the old Ransomes name plate on the gable). The sensitive conversion and extension of Pennoyers, the boundary wall, the paved area and car park has transformed this key site. In contrast, The King's Head remains unoccupied while its condition and appearance progressively worsens.

The range of traditional cottages extends along the south side of the street beyond which are some impressive trees. The west end cottage has an odd gable end which is prominent in the scene. The School Master's House and Pulham House are attractive fine 19th century buildings retaining many of their original features.

Norwich Road

The section within the Conservation Area is dominated by the two listed buildings on the south side and the hedges and trees to The Grange on the other. The hedge line continues past number 2, a pleasant cottage, to the boundary of The Retreat which is a charming 19th century house in gault brick. The trees on site and beyond enhance its setting. The longer view down The Street, between Pennoyers and The Forge is dominated by trees which obscures many of the buildings. The Grange is hidden, but glimpses are enticing. The criss-cross pattern of overhead wires in unfortunate



The King's Head



The Street

North Green Road

This is another attractive approach enhanced by the subtle curves and gradient of the road, and the way hedges and walls define its edges. Consequently, the views up and down The Street are continually changing. The barn assumes an important position looking south and then The Forge at which the road divides to give a choice of panorama; The King's Head on one side, with the Shop and Post Office to the other.

On the west side, the trees and walls to The Grange are significant. The Grange itself has a medieval core and many of its garden walls and outbuildings are of interest. Grange Cottage retains its original features and has a thoughtfully designed extension and garage. The chestnut trees to the north are a major landscape element dwarfing the neighbouring bungalows.

On the east, the random building line adds interest but accommodating car parking and gardens is a challenge. The terrace of Lynford is set back but is of a grand scale with gabled dormers and stout chimneys dominating the roof. To the south, the building line is more ordered “arching” back behind hedges and cottage gardens which are more successful visually. Stewards House commands this part of the street with its steep tiled roof and traditional windows.

Millward cottages are set back and give access to a pedestrian link passing close by Tara and Roseville, two attractive cottages and gardens before emerging into the street.



North Green Road



Pennoyers

The Street

The form of The Street is unusual with one side in contrast to the other.

The south side of The Street comprises a solid line of buildings extending from the Maltings around the corner in a gradual arc to Church Terrace. The buildings all vary in their form; all are 2 storey but with various roof pitches in black or red pantiles with render or brick walls. The subtle changes in alignment continues to surprise and please the eye. The main exceptions are The King’s Head and the flat roof to the shop which breaks the roof lines. Boundary treatments tend to be low walls, railings or hedges, which are appropriate. Some of the buildings have been badly modernised for example, Church Terrace, where only one cottage has survived unscathed.

Overhead wires again spoil the views. The Green itself is bordered by short timber posts.

In contrast, the north side of The Street has an informal, natural character. The natural boundaries of The Grange and the Church restrict their contribution to the scene. The gravelled car park has been well devised. Access can be had to Glebe Farm Close, a new development of some merit located behind the frontage properties. Another pathway leads around the front of the Old Rectory, an impressive range which is largely hidden behind walls and the development of Church Close. The retention of the trees in the former Rectory grounds have helped subdue the effect of the new houses. An attractive flint wall marks the edge of the access to the church. With the fall of The Street, the church can only be glimpsed from outside the churchyard, but its magnificent architecture and craftsmanship must be savoured from close quarters.

The east end of The Street is less noteworthy with new houses filling the gaps. The web of overhead wires continue.



The Old Forge



Hall Road

At the 'cross-roads' (Maid's Head Corner) there is a cluster of cottages the most notable of which is High Croft, a medieval timber framed house under a steep thatched roof. The various traditional cottages opposite are of interest and make a positive contribution, most have been modernised, but they mark the entrance to the Hall which is outside the Conservation Area, but its approach over the stream and up through a tree lined avenue, is of significance.

The hedge line continues along the lane on the north side serving Rambling Rose a cottage with a clear historical progression.

Starston Road

The hedge on the east side retains the rural character of this section. Riverdale, a modern house, is the only building of note with long views to the south. The bridge over the river marks the entrance to the village from the east



The Rambling Rose



High Croft

Dirty Lane

Is a pleasant country lane with a hedge line on the north side and raised bank on the other. The sewage works interrupts the natural character, but it is reasonably well screened. The view over the meadows is interesting, not only because it opens the backs of houses to view, but also because the way the parcels of land have been retained by hedge and tree boundaries. The opening up of these natural boundaries would be unfortunate. The church tower emerges over the trees and dominates the skyline while most of the other buildings, including the Maltings, are largely hidden by the trees. At the western end, Willowbeck House is of note together with its former barn, now a dwelling. Angle Villa and Brook Cottage are another two good examples of Victorian buildings.

Traditional Materials & Architectural Details

The conservation area includes a number of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, or of townscape significance, and these are shown in Appendix 1 and on map 5.

Examples of all materials traditional to South Norfolk can be found in Pulham St Mary. Red clay pantiles are the most prevalent roofing material, but a number are black glazed, as at The Grange, Pennoyers and 1 to 3 Norwich Road. The Old Rectory has all three materials most common in the district on one building - slate, peg tiles and pantiles. Thatch, once the dominant material as evidenced by the number of steeply pitched roofs, still survives in the area. The variety of roof pitches is of interest, so too are the number of hipped, as opposed to gable ends which are more common.

Brick and render walls are the most common; the former is usually traditional Norfolk red, but gault brick survives at the Old Rectory. Apart from the church and its churchyard wall, which has some excellent flint work, walls of flint are the exception – Pennoyers' School and the rear of Roseville being the only other notable examples.

The rendered buildings cover timber framing, some known to be of ancient origins and of high quality, or clay lump which is more usually associated with 18th or 19th century houses.

Attractive sash windows, door cases can be seen on several buildings, while the contrasting elements of Pennoyers are of interest



Victorian House Station Road



New housing built in a traditional scale using traditional render and black weatherboarding

Natural Character and Open Spaces

The forecourt from the King's Head leading to the Post Office, home to the village sign, including the land within the boundary of Pennoyers' School, is an important focus in the village.

The visual contribution of the churchyard is limited due to its position and screening, while other open spaces, for example the pond at Church Close, the grounds of The Grange and the land south of The Maltings, are more private.

The water meadows north of Dirty Lane are an important part of the setting of the village and conservation area.

There are a number of sites where hedges and trees in particular, play an important visual role. Some are covered by Tree Preservation Orders. These are marked on Map 6.



Hall Lane looking east

Street Furniture, Walls and Railings



Telephone kiosk and post box The Street

Hard surfaces are invariably tarmacadam but some of the minor paths and accesses are in gravel. The forecourt to the King's Head and down towards the shop is a mix of gravel, grass and tarmacadam with short timber posts which could be reviewed.

Being a small village, there is not a preponderance of street furniture. The cluster around the bus stop with the telephone box and heritage map makes a positive contribution, while the village sign is well placed. A traditional post box survives at the shop. The village pump could be made more of a feature while the incidence of overhead wires spoils many attractive views.

Conservation Management Guidelines

Wires



Station Road

There are some areas where views are harmed by the proliferation of telephone wires.

Encouragement should be given to removing obtrusive wires and poles.

Upgrading windows and doors



Varying replacement windows at Church Terrace

In some cases windows and doors have been replaced with different materials and/or different styles.

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

Front boundaries



Iron railings on The Street

The practice of using traditional walls, railings or hedges to define and enclose front boundaries should be encouraged.

Encouragement should be given to using and retaining traditional front boundaries unless their use would cause highway safety issues.

Trees and Hedges



Church boundary hedge

The trees and open spaces are important to the character of the area. While the Parish Council have responsibility for maintaining some of these areas, it is important that all the authorities and individuals who have an interest in the area and its future, should contribute in some way.

Managing change in ways that enhance the character and appearance of the natural character of the area should be a key consideration for all those involved in the area.

Painting/colour washing buildings



Painted houses on Station Road

A number of properties within the conservation area are timber framed and rendered with light colour pastel finishes that sit comfortably with the historic character. Some brick buildings also have similar painted finishes as can be seen at the north end of Church Road.

Colours should be well chosen to provide a similar appearance to existing painted finishes and have a similar appearance to historic limewash.

Repair of buildings



King's Head Public House

It is important to keep traditional buildings, particularly listed buildings, in good repair and to make sure that they are wind and weathertight and structurally sound if temporarily not in use.

When buildings are in danger of accelerated deterioration the council will approach the owner to carry out appropriate repairs, and will consider serving an Urgent Works Notice or Repairs Notice when considered appropriate.

Appendix 1 (i)

Listed Buildings

Note: All grade 2 except as noted

North Green Road	Roseville, Tara, Stewards House and adjoining cottage, Lynford, Byway, Webbs Cottage and Narrow House The Grange, Summerhouse south west of The Grange
Norwich Road	The Pennoyers Centre, Nos. 1 & 3
Station Road	The Old Maltsters, Old Maltsters Arms Cottage, Willowbeck House
The Street	King's Head Public House, Glebe Cottage, Mayfly Cottage, Post Office, Waveney Cottage, Pump Cottage, Lymehurst, High Croft, The Maid's Head, The Old Rectory (Nos. 1,2 & 3), Church of St Mary, (Grade 1). War memorial Rambling Rose

Appendix 1 (ii)

Unlisted Buildings of townscape significance

Hall Road	Merrythought Cottage, March Cottage, The Cottage, Vine Croft, Hall Cottage
Norwich Road	The Retreat and outbuilding
North Green Road	Wall and outbuildings to The Grange, Grange Cottage, April Cottage, 1,2, 3 (Millwood Cottage), Barn north of Clarence House
Starston Road	Bridge
Station Road	School Master's House, Hill House and boundary wall The former Maltings. Pulham House. Barn to Willowbeck, Sunnyside, Brook Cottage, Angle Villa
The Street	Old Forge, Clarence House, Wall east of Roseville 1 & 2 Lime Tree Cottages, Hobbers Cottage and Samba, Church Terrace, outbuildings west of the King's Head, Telephone Kiosk, outbuildings south of the Old Maid's Head Churchyard wall.

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 control 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

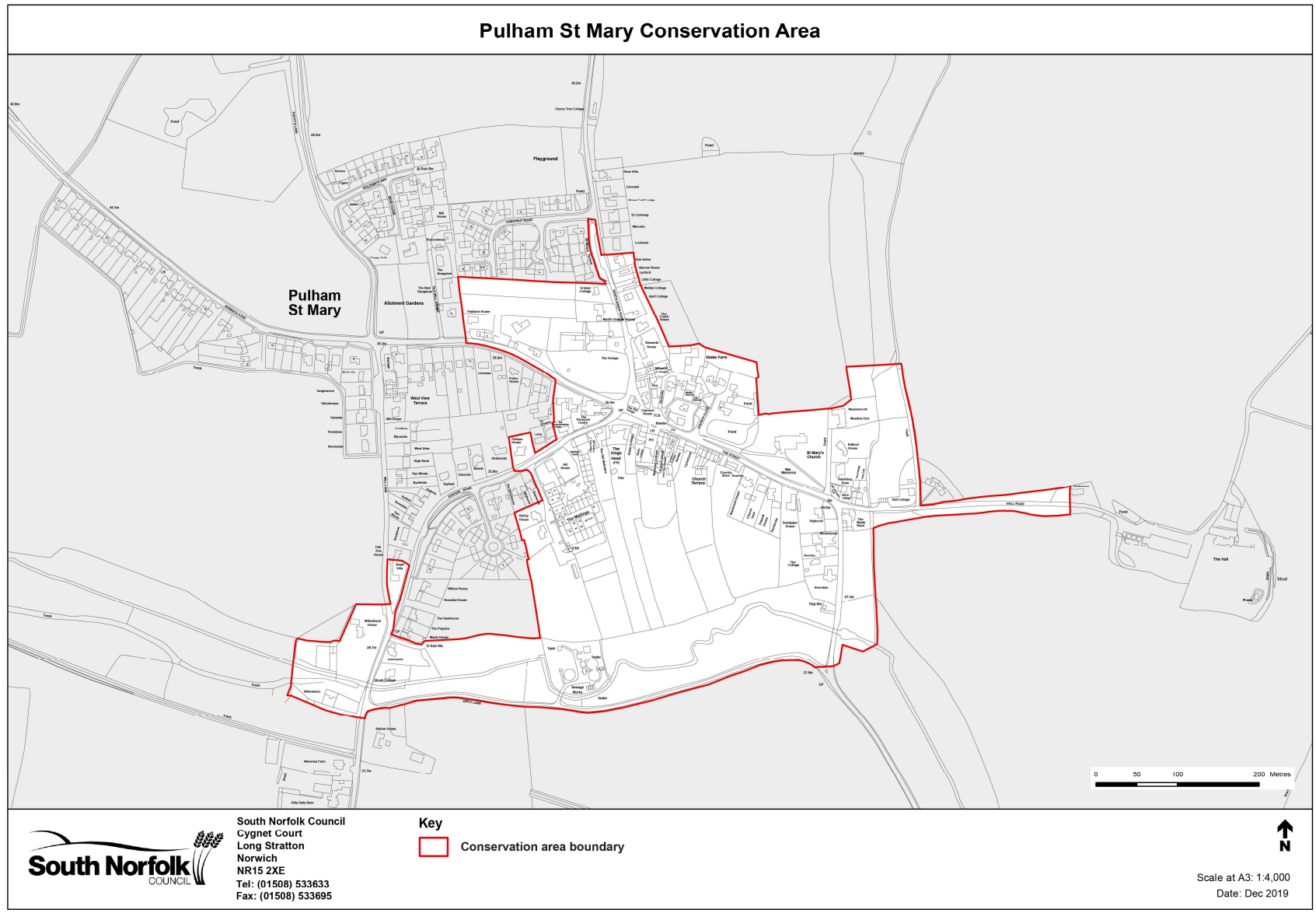
An informal ‘walkabout’ of the area was organised with the Parish Council on 10 December 2019. This informed the proposed boundary changes and the conservation management guidelines within the draft appraisal. The public consultation on the draft appraisal took place from 1st to 28th July.

This included:

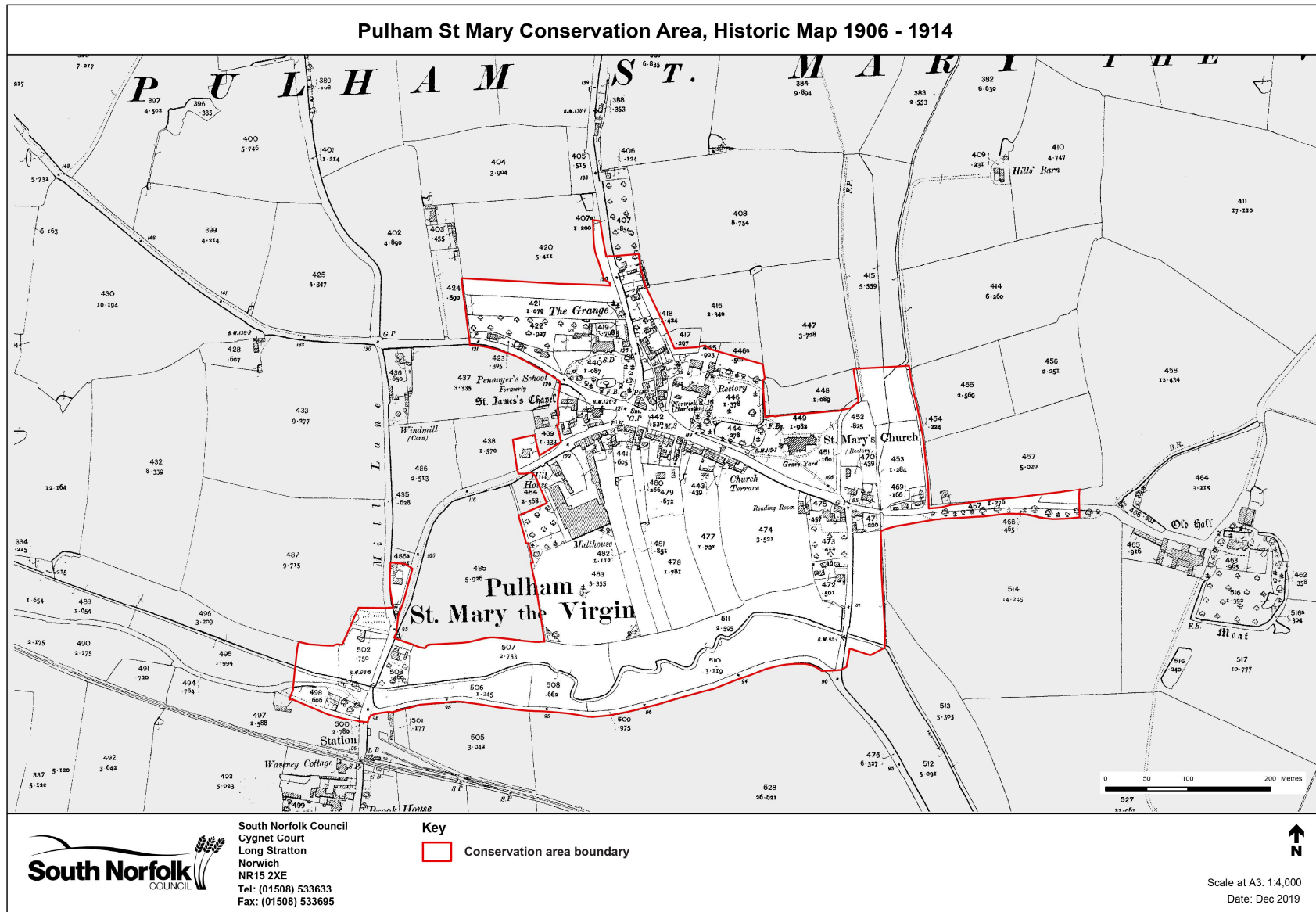
- A public exhibition held in the village hall on the 9th July for one hour with an officer in attendance to answer any queries.
- An advert in village notice board and local publicity by the parish council
- The draft appraisal being available to view on the council’s website and at the reception desk.
- Emailing Ward Councillors, County Councillors, the Parish Council and Historic England.
- A presentation made to the Parish Council on 10th July.
- Contacting residents directly affected by the proposed boundary changes by letter informing them of the proposed changes

As a result of the consultation a slight modification was made to the boundary to the south east to include the verge in the south east approach to the conservation area.

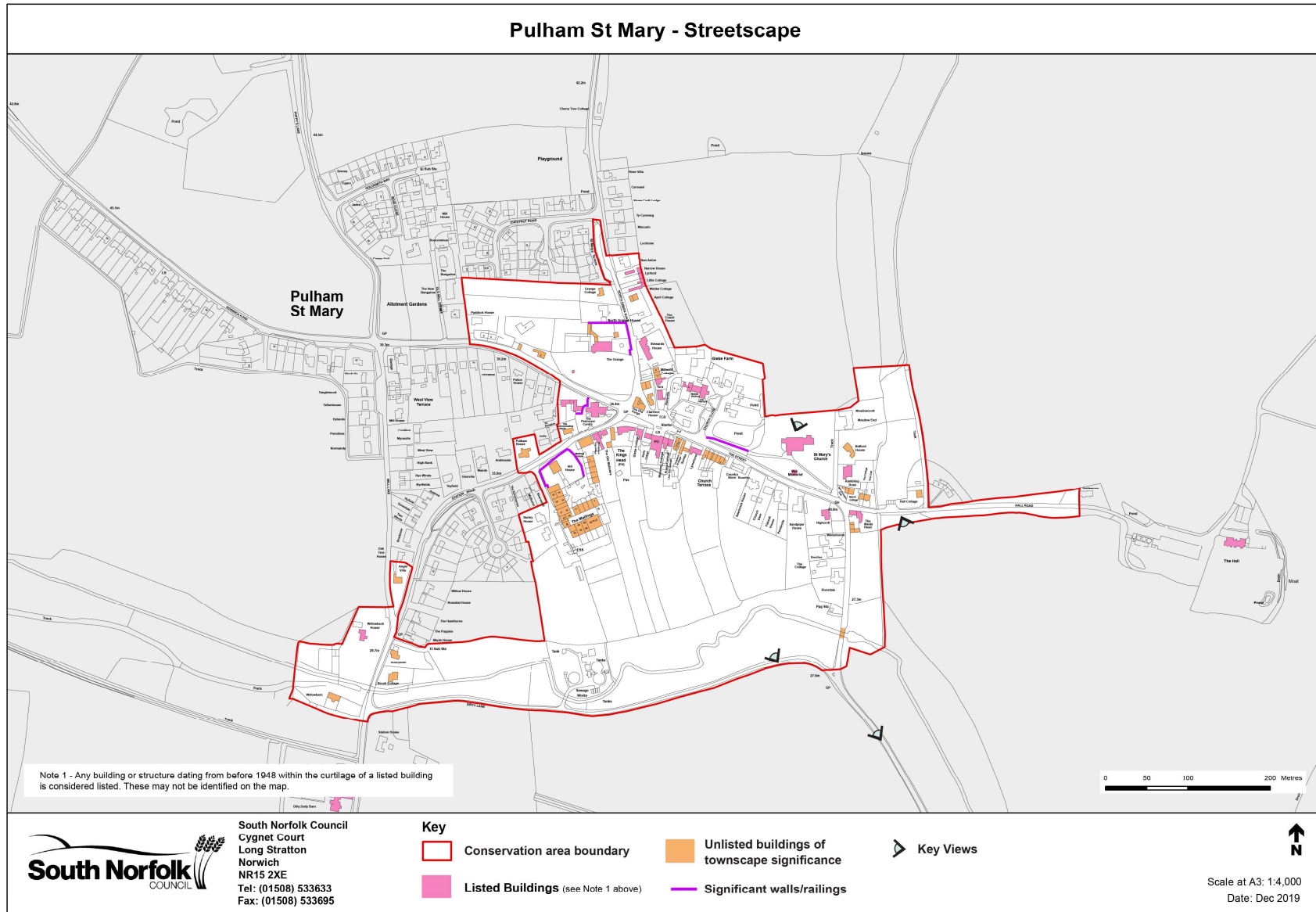
Appendix 3



Appendix 4



Appendix 5



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Appendix 6

