



Saxlingham Green

Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines

December 2018



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Introduction

Saxlingham Green a small settlement located off the minor route between Saxlingham Nethergate and Hempnall to the south. The unclassified road which bisects The Green eventually links with other minor roads linking the settlement with Hempnall to the south and Brooke to the north-east.

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. The Saxlingham Green conservation area was originally designated in 1973. This document should be read in conjunction with the adopted Local Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.

Key Characteristics

- Natural character dominates with the buildings being secondary to it
- There are a number of fine historic buildings dispersed within the area
- Situated on “plateau” site to the south east of Saxlingham Nethergate
- Linked to surrounding countryside by a matrix of footpaths and bridleways
- Much of The Green enclosed by groups of mature trees together with hedgerows
- The Green follows the line of the road but is made up of separate areas which provide a series of changing views and vistas

Historical Development (also see historic map in Appendix 4 page 22)

The name “Saxlingham” indicates ‘the home of the folk of Seaxe’ and was first mentioned in an Anglo-Saxon will of 1046, although evidence has come to light of an earlier Roman Villa to the north of the parish. Saxlingham Thorpe could have been a later Danish/Viking settlement, as the names suggest or English, since ‘thorpe’ means a ‘subsidiary settlement’. Indeed Saxlingham Thorpe was formerly ‘Uppergate’ as distinct from Saxlingham Nethergate which derives from the old English for “Lower Street”. The part of the village now known as Saxlingham Green has always been part of Saxlingham Nethergate, and was known as “Eastgate Green” at least as late as 1871.

Saxlingham Green probably developed as a typical ‘green village’ as a settlement of small farms surrounding a green on which all had common rights. It probably began as a later medieval ‘hiving-off’ from the original village, the initial clearing of The Green itself being carried out communally.

The 20th Century has seen the increased popularity of the area as a prime commuter location lying as it does in attractive country surroundings only a few miles from Norwich and other major transport routes to the south. Many villages and hamlets lying south of Norwich have evolved in this way as the mobility of the car has encouraged commuting to major centres of employment. This trend has been accompanied by a gradual reduction in employment opportunities within the villages themselves and surrounding countryside.

The effect of these trends in the villages has been a gradual decline of the traditional infrastructure such as village shops, post office, pubs, and local industry connected to agriculture. House values have generally risen due to the attractiveness of the location to the extent that young people from the village itself can rarely afford the housing within it and so have to move away, leading to yet further reduction in things like leisure facilities.

Both Saxlingham Nethergate and Green provide typical examples of these trends. The results of the change in farming practice and major shifts in wealth have led to dramatic changes in property ownership. Most property is now owner occupied, cottages have been amalgamated and extended, farm houses generally no longer contain farmers, stables and barns have been converted and at the end of the 20th Century it is difficult to see how significant further development could be accepted without damaging the essential character of the area.

Character Assessment (also see streetscape and natural character maps in Appendix 5 & 6, pages 19 - 20)

Saxlingham Nethergate and its Setting

Saxlingham Green is defined more by the natural elements in the landscape than by the buildings within it. While there are a number of fine historic buildings important in their own right, they are secondary elements and are often lost behind trees and hedges. Whilst the appraisal looks at the two elements separately, the essential character of the area is partly generated by the interaction of these two components.

Saxlingham Green occupies a plateau site to the south east of Saxlingham Nethergate, and is set amongst a rural agricultural topography of a dissected plateau typical of this part of South Norfolk.



View looking south



Footpath to the south

Conservation Area Boundary

The conservation area encompasses all the major buildings and landscape elements which together combine to give the area its unique character. The axis of The Green is east/west and the profile of the boundary reflects this orientation. The Green itself occupies the middle ground and stretches for approximately three quarters of a mile in length. The northern and southern boundaries are irregular and defined by the plots of the individual properties or important parcels of landscape associated with them. In essence, the east/west boundaries are marked by “Pisces” in the west and “Grove Farm” in the east.

For this review of the conservation area there are no significant additions or omissions proposed, only four quite minor changes to bring parts of the conservation area boundary in line with existing physical boundaries so that the area boundary is clearly visible when going through the village.

Street Patterns and Historic Grain

The western part of the area is located around Broaden Lane which is the name of the road leading to Hempnall. It's route takes the form of a 'dogleg' as it enters the conservation area which serves to slow down the general speed of traffic and has generated a plethora of highway signage.

There is another minor road (Chequers Lane) in the middle of The Green which heads northwards to link up with other minor roads to Stoke Holy Cross and Shotesham.

The Green is linked to the surrounding countryside by a matrix of public footpaths and bridleways which enter the area from both the north and south. The pattern of the historic grain is detached houses set well back from the green and dispersed within or behind woodland areas or hedgerows. The pattern of the woodland area remains much as it was in 19th century as can be seen from earlier maps



Bend in the main road at the junction with The Green, at the westside of the conservation area.

Perambulation

Western Edge of the Conservation Area up to Manor Farm

The far western edge of the conservation area boundary is formed by the property and boundary of "Pisces" located on the south side of the road leading to Saxlingham Nethergate in the north west and Hempnall to the south. "Pisces" is a single dwelling formed from two cottages. The garden contains some mature trees and a large pond so typical of the area.

The north side of the road contains a small copse of mature trees and to the east, Dairy Farm Cottage. A new garage range has been constructed to west of the cottages and is of a sympathetic design. There is a mature hedge at the entrance drive and some small trees. There is also an attractive low flint boundary wall with traditional clay coping.



Gravel drive at the far west end of the conservation area.

At the south side, there is a delightful grouping of village townscape elements, mature trees, a small stream with bridge, an extensive green verge and a seat. There is a front railing to prevent vehicles entering the small stream, which has rather unsympathetic concrete posts.

Further to the east side on the south corner of the carriageway is Manor Cottage, which is grade II listed and presumably once connected (not physically) to Manor Farm. Manor Cottage is set in an attractive garden containing mature trees and ponds to the east and south. A mature hedgerow marks the boundary with the road at the front garden. Adjacent further south is a railing with concrete posts which could be replaced with something more sympathetic to the character of the area.

The conservation area boundary contains the garden to Manor Cottage and its mature trees and runs along the natural edge between the soft intimate atmosphere of the settlement and bleak agricultural quality of Broaden Lane.

The “Green” effectively commences on the north and eastern side of the road as it turns southwards towards Hempnall. This first part of The Green is a focal point centred around the listed buildings of Manor Farm. The farmhouse itself is end on to The Green and has a main north/south axis and is a listed building of some importance. Manor Barn lies to the south and is located at right angles to the farmhouse forming an attractive group around the “farmyard”. The barn is also listed and has been converted to a dwelling.

The western boundary to the farmhouse is almost hard on to the carriageway. It has a mature hedgerow and continuing on from this further south at Manor Barn, a mature hedgerow. A more traditional hedgerow, green verge and ditch then runs up to the southern edge of the garden. The latter again is located at the natural edge between garden and agricultural land. The garden to Manor Farm contains several mature trees forming its north boundary with the green beyond. A small cottage lies to the north across the road junction from Manor Farm and is of townscape significance. A good hedge forms the south boundary to the cottage garden.

The Green here contains a number of townscape elements: village notice board; seat; telegraph pole; grit bin; finger post sign and road chevron sign. These look to be necessary, although they could be tidied up a little. A more traditional bench and notice board posts would also provide a small improvement. The general character is, however, not prejudiced greatly. The eastern boundary to this part of the conservation area is formed by a footpath which runs northwards towards Saxlingham Nethergate.



Manor Farm Cottage



Main road towards Hempnall at the west end of the conservation area.



Footpath going north from The Green



Road signs at the junction of The Green and the main road to Saxlingham Nethergate

The essential character of The Green becomes clearer as the road proceeds eastwards. A wide green dotted with mature and newly planted trees beyond which lies a series of buildings enclosed to the 'rear' by hedgerows. Interspersed are views to the agricultural landscape beyond. The buildings are a mixture of farmhouses and cottages, of varying plan form and architectural detail. All dwellings are historic accompanied by newer additions or modern farm outbuildings.

To the north, the range of buildings includes Queen Margaret Cottage, Orchard Cottage, Stable Cottage, Green Farmhouse and Chequers Cottage (formerly Stuart's Cottage). Queen Margaret Cottage, Orchard Cottage and Green Farmhouse are all listed.



Queen Margaret Cottage as viewed from The Green



Drive to Green Farm

To the south lies the eastern range of outbuildings to Manor Farmhouse, Orchard Farmhouse and its accompanying range of outbuildings, which are of townscape value. The outbuildings to Manor Farm have been converted to residential use.

Another important characteristic of The Green is the number of ponds and drainage ditches, both within the curtilage of properties as well as on The Green itself, all of which form an important part of the landscape.



Looking west along The Green towards the junction with Chequers Lane.

The junction of Chequers Lane with the main east-west road represents the second major focal point to the area and is marked by the presence of a red telephone kiosk. At the boundary to the south there is another footpath leading southwards towards Hempnall.

Chequers Lane Eastwards to Saxlingham Hall

The essential character of the area continues into this section of the settlement, although there are fewer buildings. To the north the buildings include Hall farmhouse, Cannon Cottage and adjoining cottage, Hall Cottage and Saxlingham Hall, all of which are listed. Hall Cottage is not listed but is of townscape value.

This part of the settlement is dominated by the Hall, the former seat of the Steward Family who once owned the whole village. It is currently run as a Nursing Home and has been sensitively extended in recent years. The conservation area boundary extends to the north to contain the agricultural land in front of the Hall which was once the Hall park and an important element in the setting for the complex of buildings.



Hall Cottage.



Cannon Cottage.



Saxlingham Hall.

The Hall has an attractive entrance wall and piers and an iron estate type boundary fence. The setting for the building is good with attractive lawns, mature trees and hoggin drive. Hall Farmhouse, Cannon Cottage and Hall Cottage have all been subject to refurbishment and extension in the late 20th century but all additions apart from the modern farm adjacent to Hall Farm are sensitive to the context and location.

Further east beyond a large copse at the south side of the road lies a modern house which attempts unsuccessfully to blend in with the surrounding vernacular buildings. Its dormer details, concrete tiles and neatly cut grass verges are not quite in keeping with the general character of buildings in the settlement. The front hedgerow and brick wall do, however, help the building to blend in to some degree with its surroundings.



Chestnut Trees south of Saxlingham Hall.



Wall and pillars at entrance to Saxlingham Hall.



Town Farm House and Holly Cottage

The Green at this point subtly bends to the south, following the line of the road and creating closed vista views. The landscape character is enhanced by the mature chestnut trees even though they are planted as an 'avenue' to the south of the Hall. Further eastward to the south side there are superb open views of the surrounding countryside to the north. There are fewer buildings to both north and south in this part of the area.

To the north, Holly Cottage and its neighbour are two isolated Victorian 'Estate' dwellings both having interesting architectural features. Holly Cottage is listed.

To the south, Grove Farmhouse and its outbuildings represent the eastern boundary of the area. Both ranges of buildings are of townscape value and it is suggested the outbuildings are reviewed for possible listed status. They are a vitally important and attractive grouping of buildings. The farmhouse itself appears to be more modern.

The Green itself continues in the same character and quality as before although views of the countryside to both the north and south are more prominent. The drainage components of ponds and ditches are present together with mature trees and hedgerows.



Entrance to Grove Farm House



Pond northwest of Grove Farm House

Traditional Materials & Architectural Details

Traditional building materials are generally render, brick, clay pantile and some thatch.

The prominence of older buildings in the conservation area indicates that the settlement pattern has changed little since the 18th century. The majority of buildings have been listed or are recognised as being of historic importance or of townscape significance.

There is a pleasant variety of buildings ranging from the more substantial houses of Saxlingham Hall, Manor Farm and Orchard Farmhouse to the smaller farmhouses such as Green Farm and Hall Farm and then the modest cottages at Dairy Farm. Earlier buildings are timber framed (though sometimes disguised by later brick cladding); later buildings are of brick. Most buildings have clay pantiled roofs and a few are thatched.

Of particular interest are Manor Farm a good example of a 17th Century brick house and its impressive timber framed barn, which has been converted into a dwelling. Orchard Farmhouse dating from the 17th Century has been considerably altered during restoration, as has Saxlingham Hall itself. The majority of buildings in the conservation area have been subject to alteration, refurbishment and repair during the 20th century.

The architectural/historic character of The Green provided by its buildings together with the natural character and ambience of the settlement is generally well maintained throughout the conservation area.

Street Furniture

In general terms the street furniture is conspicuous by its absence which is to be applauded. The situation could perhaps be improved a little at the western edge of The Green where there is a mix of bench seating, notice boards, road signs and telegraph poles. The bench seats themselves are rather too modern in appearance (powder coated metal and timber) although the muted colour and low maintenance materials are beneficial. The degree of 'wire-scape' (telegraph lines/poles etc) is in keeping with the character of such a rural settlement although it is more visually intrusive towards the east of The Green beyond Saxlingham Hall and Holly Cottage.



Bend at the west entrance to The Green.



Road signs at west entrance

The Green is a most attractive and varied landscape. There are many mature trees and hedges and where these are broken the views beyond give an opportunity to appreciate the panorama of the wider landscape.

Another important element is the drainage system of the area which employs a combination of ditches and ponds which are set amongst trees and hedgerows.

The Green is a linear space but not a continuous one being more a series of connected areas linked by a winding road. Trees and hedges form spurs into The Green, providing natural barriers and forming a series of changing views and vistas. This can be seen at Green Farm and Hall Farm while at Saxlingham Hall the line of chestnuts divides the Green in two. The result is a space of continuing interest and charm.



Looking east along The Green. South of Green Farm



Boudica Way footpath going North from The Green



Landscape northeast of conservation area as viewed from Boudica Way footpath.

Important too is the informal nature of The Green. The absence of kerb stones or tarmac drives is a beneficial factor and any attempt to introduce such elements should be strongly resisted.

Conservation Management Guidelines

Street furniture

Street furniture including signage at the western entrance to the conservation area could be reduced slightly and repositioned to enhance the natural character of key views. Also, it is unfortunate that the 'Giveaway' sign at the junction with Chequers Lane is in such a prominent position, although perhaps necessary.

Unless absolutely necessary, installing additional signage and other street furniture should be avoided to avoid harm to the natural character of the Green. Replacement of modern benches at the western end with traditional benches to match the one next to the telephone kiosk would provide some enhancement.

Ground surfacing

The main road through The Green is tarmacadam but with most of the driveways to properties having a traditional gravel finish.

It is important that gravel driveway finishes are retained as they form an important part of the character of the area. Replacing with tarmacadam or pavements would cause harm to key views from the road so any such proposals should be resisted.



Gravel driveway

Vegetation

The unchecked growth of vegetation on The Green whilst providing an important wildlife habitat, may also contribute to its deterioration. A careful balance therefore needs to be achieved between too much tidiness on the one hand and continual neglect on the other. New trees have previously been planted and the trees managed and cut down where appropriate.

Some of the grassland is cut back sensitively in certain areas but retaining wild verges were appropriate. The overall natural appearance which is so important for the character of the area is therefore largely maintained.

The reintroduction of animal grazing on The Green could be an alternative solution which would cut back vegetation to leave a more natural appearance compared to using grass cutting machinery.



Looking west along The Green towards Chequers Lane



Looking east along The Green towards Chequers Lane

Overhead wires

The impact of overhead wires has much less of an impact on the natural character of The Green as the back drop of vegetation tends to make it much less noticeable.

Beyond Saxlingham Hall and Holly Cottage overhead wires are much more noticeable, so some reduction here by having cabling underground would greatly enhance views.



Development

The strong natural landscape of Saxlingham Green defines much of the character of the conservation area, dominating views through the village from the road.

Retaining the strong natural character of the conservation area should be a key consideration with any proposals for new development.

Appendix 1 (i)

Listed buildings in Saxlingham Green Conservation Area

1. Manor Cottage
2. Manor Farmhouse
3. Manor Farmhouse Barn
4. Queen Margaret Cottage
5. Green Farmhouse
6. Cannon Cottage and adjoining Cottage
7. Hall Farmhouse
8. Saxlingham Hall
9. Orchard Farmhouse
10. Holly Cottage

Appendix 1 (ii)

Unlisted buildings of townscape significance

Dairy Farm Cottages
Outbuildings to Orchard Farmhouse
Orchard Farmhouse
Hall Cottage
Town Farm House
Stables to Saxlingham Hall
Game Larder to Saxlingham Hall
Town Farmhouse
Grove Farmhouse and out building to north

Generally:-

Trees and important hedgerows identified on natural character map.

Telephone kiosk identified on main boundary map

Appendix 2

Policy

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) 2012 Paragraphs 126 to 141 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

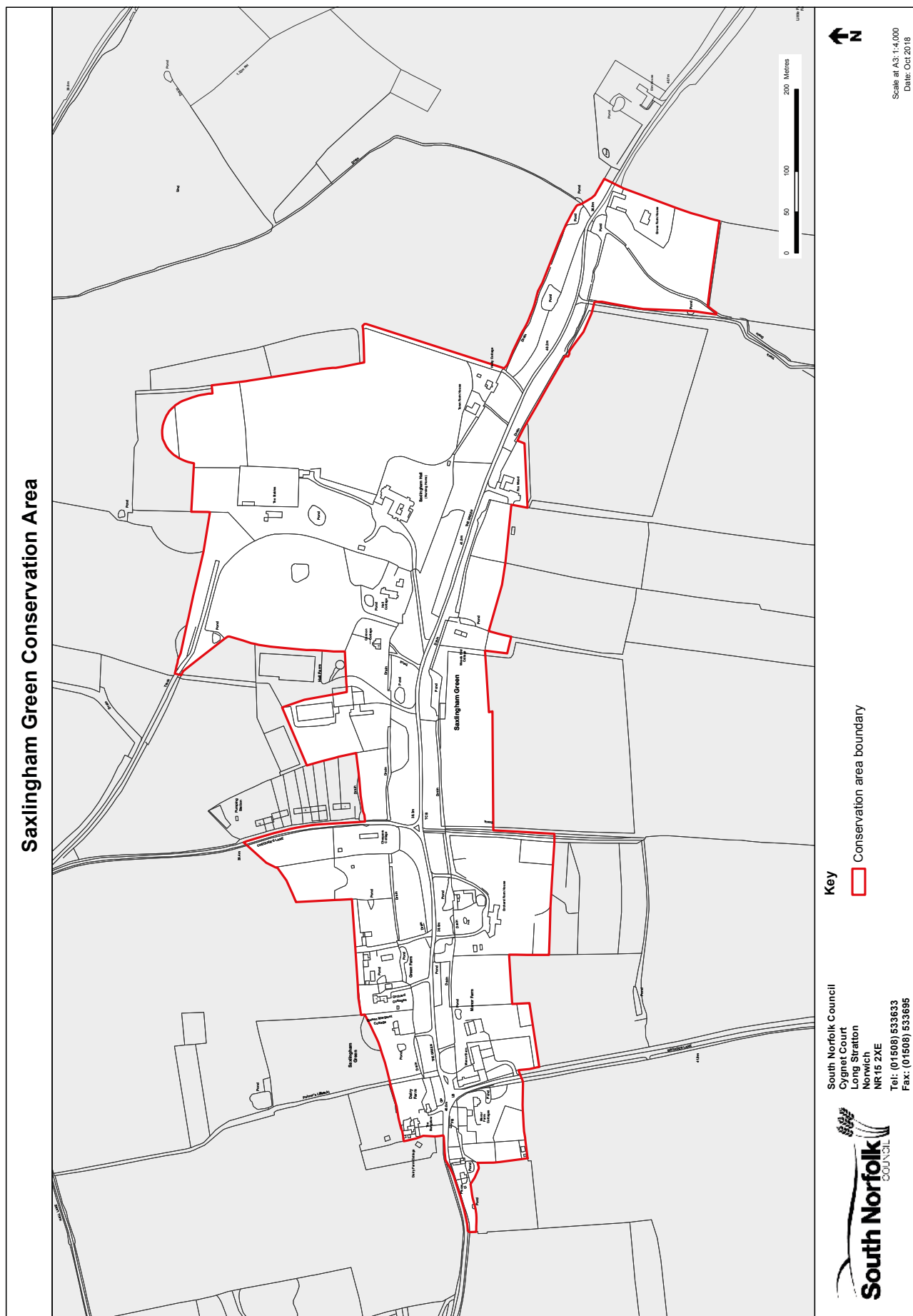
An informal ‘walkabout’ of the area was organised with local residents and councillors on 17th December 2017. This informed the proposed boundary changes and conservation management guidelines within the draft appraisal. The public consultation on the draft appraisal took place from 2nd to 29th July 2017. This included:

- A public exhibition held in Saxlingham village hall on 25th July for three hours, with an officer in attendance to answer any queries.
- 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, Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service and Historic England.
- A presentation made to Saxlingham Parish Council on 9th July.
- Contacting residents directly affected by the proposed boundary changes by letter informing them of the consequences of being included in the conservation area.

As a result of the consultation some revisions were made to including curtilages gardens areas within the area.

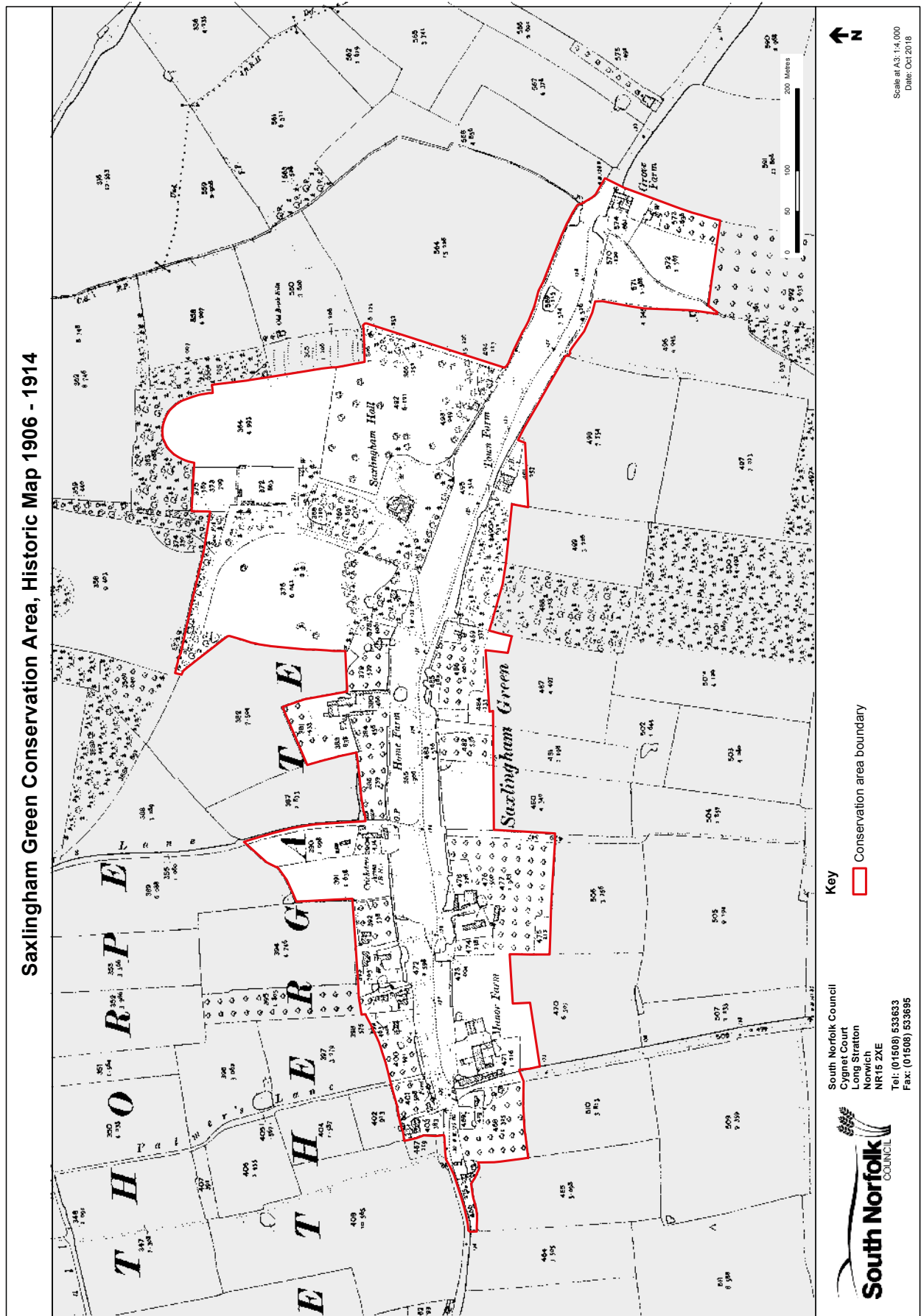
Appendix 3

Boundary Map



Appendix 4

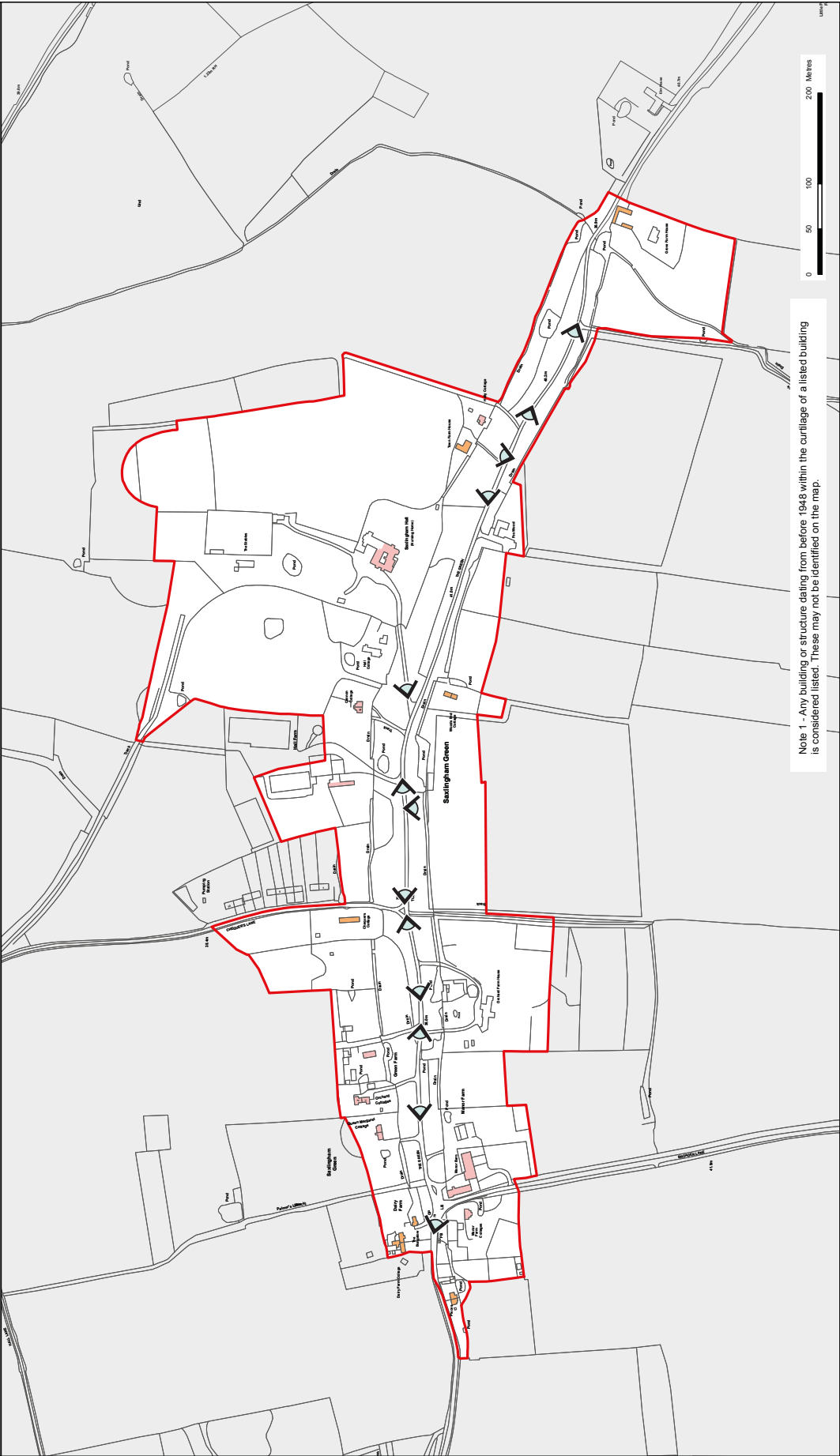
Historic Map




Appendix 5

Streetscape





Saxlingham Green - Streetscape





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Key

-  Conservation area boundary
-  Listed Buildings (see Note 1 above)
-  Unlisted buildings of townscape significance
-  Key Views

Scale at A3: 1:4,000
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Appendix 6

Natural Character

