



# Seething

## Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines

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December 2019



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# Introduction



View of church from  
Seething Road

The small rural village of Seething has developed as a linear settlement from north to south. The settlement lies 11 miles south of Norwich, 8 miles North West of Harleston, and 2 ½ miles East of Long Stratton.

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. Seething conservation area was originally designated on 12 October 1994. This document should be read in conjunction with the adopted Local Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.

## Key Characteristics

- Linear settlement originally based on rural agricultural economy
- Picturesque mere at the centre of village with Mere House facing the pond to the west.
- Partially moated village church with triangular green to south



# Historical Development (also see maps at Appendices 4 & 5 p16/17)

In the Domesday Book (1086) Seething is referred to as *Sithinges* and in a Pipe Roll of 1811 it is referred to as *Seinges*. The name is thought to be Anglo-Saxon in origin and to mean *Sithfa*(’s) *inge* (people).

The Parish Church of St Margaret and St Remigius is the oldest building in the settlement, dating back to 12<sup>th</sup> century with a Norman round tower. The nave, which is still thatched, is also Norman in origin, but extended in size with medieval windows.

Within the church there is a 15<sup>th</sup> century font with the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. Many of these fonts had faces defaced, but the Seething font remains intact, although there has been some speculation that it has been recut. There are also some fine 14<sup>th</sup> century medieval wall paintings and 15<sup>th</sup> century rood screen. The church is unusual for being moated on three sides, and the square plan of the moat is still evident in the tree planting, with allotments filling the remaining space of the triangle to the north east and north west corners.

The Domesday Book refers to the granting of land in Seething to Roger Bigot, ancestor of the Earls of Norfolk. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century the Bigots, whose name survives in Biggot's Lane, gave the lordship to Sir William Calthorpe, Lord of the Manor of Mundham, whose family held it until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when it passed by marriage to the Parkers. Other families with landed interests in Seething during the late Medieval period included the de Senges (taking the name of the village) and the de la Poles, Dukes of Suffolk.

Faden's map of 1797 shows a settlement strung out along the road with Seething Hall and its extensive parkland to the north of the church, and the site of the old hall to the east. The map also shows a wide common strip of land to either side of road running for about 1.5 miles from north to south.

The Enclosure Map of 1814 shows how this common land was divided into smaller plots/existing plot extensions. It appears that many houses were built in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century following the subdivision of land and this is reflected in properties being built closer to the street. Older properties, such as the group of properties to the west of the central mere, follow the older building line which fronted onto common land. Before enclosure the character would have been different with a more spacious central strip of land either side of the central road/track.

In the Whites Directory of 1845 the village is described as ‘well built’ which may reflect the number of recently built brick properties in the village at that time, as opposed to older timber framed properties. The Kelly directory describes the settlement as a ‘pleasant village’. Historically, the list of occupations are based on the serving the agricultural rural economy and include market gardeners, farmers, carriers, a vermin destroyer, as well as a blacksmith, carpenter, saddler, boot maker, shop keeper and shoe maker.

Seething Hall is described in the Whites Directory as “a large mansion with a beautiful lawn, descending to a picturesque valley, in which a rivulet is swelled into lakes and decoys, finely margined with wood” and that most of the land was owned by G S Kett of Brooke House, Brooke.

During the Second World War an American bomber base was built to the south east of the village and was home to the 448<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Division of the 8<sup>th</sup> American Air Force from 1843 to 1845. The base was constructed for four squadrons of Liberator bombers. Part of the airfield and various outbuildings still exist around the area and the control tower has been converted into a museum. It is estimated that as many as six thousand American airmen came to Seething during the course of the war. Since 1960 part of the airfield has been used by the Waveney Flying Group for small private planes.

After the war Loddon Rural District Council embarked on an ambitious scheme of providing rural council houses. The designs by the architects Tayler and Green in the spirit of a “festival of Britain” style of modernism applied to the rural vernacular. Although these properties are not listed, the

style of housing is nationally recognised. Some of these houses were built along Mill Lane in 1951 and it is proposed to include these in the conservation area.

The population of the parish has remained fairly consistent, although there are more houses and likely smaller households: 449 in 1845, 392 in 1881, 294 in 1951, 281 in 1961, 296 in 1971, 293 in 1981 and 315 in 1991 rising to 335 in 1995, 341 in 2001 and 365 in 2011.

## Character Assessment

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

### Seething and its setting

Seething is surrounded by relatively flat agricultural land and consequently some village buildings, most notably the church, can be viewed from some distance away. However, the extent of landscaping and mature trees means that the settlement is mostly only partially glimpsed from surrounding fields. With the village along the main street landscape in the form of trees and hedgerows also dominate views creating a very spacious and rural feel to the village.

The village has not been extended with any large scale suburban or estate like development, and therefore its linear characteristics are well preserved with the conservation area including most of the settlement.

### Conservation Area Boundary

Seething has been relatively unaffected by modern development and therefore the conservation area covers most of the settlement. The revised boundary includes the Priory Barn complex of buildings to the north west, the Tayler and Green houses along Mill Road, and the recreation area. The Priory Barn buildings are historically related to Seething Hall, and the recreation ground contributes to the character and appearance of the area along Wheelers Lane. The corner of the field to the east of Brooke Road, which was previously within the area, has been omitted as it does not contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area, but can still be considered to form part of its setting. The Tayler and Green houses to the east of the village, built in 1950-1, are included due to their architectural and historic value and contribution to the evolving character and history of the village. Pevsner describes the housing as 'a specially charming composition.'

### Street Patterns and historic grain

The historic grain of Seething is very linear with development predominantly fronting towards The Street from north to south. The grain is relatively loose with a varied building line. Older properties are set back, fronting onto what was common land. This incorporated ponds at the centre of the village including the central meer. 19<sup>th</sup> century housing and later is closer to the street, with hedgerows providing a greater sense of enclosure but a rural feel to the conservation area.

At the north end of the village the road forks to either side of the field to the south of the church and contributes to providing a rural setting for the church. Historically, some development took place to west of the church, but not to the east, however some more recent bungalow development has been built to the south east of the field. The east side of the road was the site of the Old Seething Hall. The field now provides an undeveloped corner and the church can be viewed directly in approach views into the village from the east with the field and hedgerows in the foreground.

Some modern development has taken place on the driveway to the Hall, and modern development including Taylor and Green properties on Mill Lane to the North East. The development to the south of the hall has been built with an area of Sylvan landscaping and the buildings with varied orientation, which allows for a looser more informal character. The Taylor and Green properties follow a more regular linear development pattern forming a terrace, but have a landscaped area to the front combined with parking.

## Perambulation

### The Old Hall and Old Hall Park

At the North end of the village lies Seething Hall with a large garden area contributing to its immediate setting as a higher status house on the periphery of the village. The house dates from late 18<sup>th</sup> century, with an earlier lower wing to the rear and was once set within much larger parkland grounds reaching down to the River Chet to the north. The house is irregular in plan with a glazed black pan tile hipped roof. The façade has sash windows with glazing bars under segmental arches. The sashes to the first floor are in a Gothick style. Just to the north of the hall is a large coach house also with gothic shaped windows and red pantiles.

To the north west are the various buildings relating to Priory Barn. These are much altered, but still retain some historic elements, and have now been included within the conservation area.

To the south of the hall to the west and east of the drive is a modern development of detached housing, mostly single storey bungalows, from the 1980s. Although very modern, the houses are set within attractive sylvan landscaping and orientated at an angle, so the development has very little impact on the overall character and appearance of the conservation area.



Church Farmhouse



Barn adjacent to street

### Brooke Road

The road from the west sweeps into the village with a right then left bend. There is initially a wide verge to the right with two prominent barns. The first barn is single storey with a brick plinth and red pantiles, but with the unfortunate application of a grey cement render. The barn partially screens views of the attractive and well-proportioned early 19<sup>th</sup> century Church Farmhouse with its red brick, hipped roof with black glazed pantiles and sash windows. The house is approached along a gravel drive to the left between the barns with a front lawn area enclosed by attractively maintained hedging.

Following the farm entrance is a taller barn, with unusual and prominent stepped bracing to the west, similarly coated in cement render. The steep steel covered roof indicates that this was once likely to have been thatched. The upper section of the gable end is timber weatherboarding. Behind these barns are large modern agricultural buildings. Before the junction with School Road



The Vicarage



Rose Cottage

is the new school, built in a contemporary style with timber and rendering. On the north and east side of the bend there are good views across open fields.

Although the first building is a single storey 1990s bungalow, the north side of Brooke Road is characterised by older 19<sup>th</sup> century dwellings, firstly The Vicarage, is a well-proportioned 19<sup>th</sup> century building with glazed black pantiles, gothic style windows and painted brickwork. The house is very visible in streetviews along School Lane. To the right is the village sign on a small corner green.

There are then 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages with small single storey outbuildings to the front, the first a cartshed built in ugly breeze blocks and corrugated doors, although the roof has attractive pantiles. The second outbuilding has more traditional red brick. The next house is more modern but designed in a traditional style and fits in well with its red brick and pantile roof and adjacent Rose Cottage, a modest symmetrical early 19<sup>th</sup> century design with red brick and black pantiles. Hedges provide important boundary treatment.

Entering Brooke from Mundham to the East there are some fine preserved views looking towards the church tower within its historic and rural context with the hedge and field to the south corner, and Rose Cottage to the right.

### Mill Lane

Further along the Brooke Road and slightly detached from the rest of the village is Mill Lane. Here is a group of social housing by Tayler and Green for Loddon Rural District Council. The group of houses and bungalows are described in Pevsner as a “specially charming composition, essentially a long terrace with old trees and a pond.” The houses are varied between buff and red brick, with shallow roof pitches of red and charcoal pan tiles and casement windows with strong horizontal emphasis. Parking is to the front in two parking courts with associated landscaping.

### School Lane

The original Seething and Mundham County Primary School, which unusually was built in clay lump and thatch in 1850 (NHER 57069) has been preserved and converted into a house c2013. This is a prominent building on the street corner. Clearly visible behind the school is an attractive row of rendered thatched cottages with swept over dormer windows. The rest of School Lane mostly consists of modern properties set back from the road. Tree and thick hedges provide strong rural boundaries and landscaping. The church is only glimpsed in views to the east.





Former school and School Cottages



The Grove

## Seething Road

The top end of the road at the junction with Brooke Road remains undeveloped and preserves the rural setting of the church. There are two small bungalows before reaching the junction with School Road, which remain fairly discreet set back from the road behind hedging, although the landscaping is not traditional. Looking north along this road there are picturesque views over the meadow towards the church. The village war memorial occupies a very prominent position where the road forks and is preserved within a very rural setting seen in the context of the meadow and church to the rear to the north

To the east is The Grove, a simple but well-proportioned early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century red brick house with black glazed pantiles, end stacks and sash windows. Brooke House, is closer to the street and although has a very 19<sup>th</sup> century appearance dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, using reclaimed white bricks, with a hipped roof and black glazed tiles. Crabbe Cottage to the rear dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and is not very visible from the street. The following bungalow and two houses are recent infill development traditionally designed with a white gault brick and red brick and fit in well within the traditional context.

The next building is the village shop, a modern style property built in 1959 with render and brick, and concrete tiles. There is scope to enhance the area to the front. An older cottage, Amber House, is to the rear and appears in quite a poor state of repair. Further along the road is Manor Cottage, an 18<sup>th</sup> century building, and a very small and modest detached cottage with an attractive front garden.

On the West side, either side of the junction with Wheeler Lane, Rysa Cottages, The Red House and Springwood are all modern development in traditionally form and materials i.e. red brick with black pantiles. The buildings are well placed and well-proportioned and complement the historic character of the village. Hedges remain as an important rural boundary treatment to the front.

Stanmare is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century red brick house with hipped roof and slates and some good quality gauged brickwork, including a round headed arch to the central door. The windows have been replaced with modern casements, and it would be a positive enhancement to consider reinstating sliding sash windows.

Pear Tree Cottage is also early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and originally two cottages (the remains of the round segments to the doors can still be seen in the brickwork) but is even more altered with casement windows and painted brickwork and a large extension to the rear to make it a double pile property. The slate roof has been retained.

The Old Post Office and Greenways are also very heavily altered, being rendered with dark stained wood casement windows. The buildings retain dark glazed pantiles (former) and orange/red pantiles (latter). Lotties Cottage and Well Cottage are both traditional 19<sup>th</sup> century small red brick cottages, Lotties Cottage having been extended.





Stanmare



Pond Farmhouse

The thick landscaping here marks the original width of the Common land pre-enclosure, as can be seen in the Enclosure Map on p17. Altimore House, Pear Tree House, White Lodge and Mere House are all older properties. To the west is the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Manor House in red brick and dark black pantiles. It includes a date R C 1831. To the north of the house is a small black weatherboarded barn which is attractively sited by the pond.

A track lead to the west side of an enclosed area which used to be the tennis court to the White house. The first property is modern detached house, but then the white gault brick of the White House dating from the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The House is larger in scale than the adjacent Mere House to the south, indicative of its later 19<sup>th</sup> century date

Then one comes upon the central mere (pond) which is in effect the centre of the village, with Pond Farmhouse a large rendered building to the east, and Mere House to the west. The mere is picturesquely landscaped with reedbeds to the north and a large feature willow.

Mere House is 18<sup>th</sup> century and unusual within the village being red brick with vertical divisions of gault bricks creating the effect of bays. It has a steep black pantile roof, and cruciform style casement windows. In contrast, Pond Farmhouse has an earlier 16<sup>th</sup> century plan with steeper roof pitches and wider mullion style casements. Later 17<sup>th</sup> century to south and 18<sup>th</sup> century wing to the north, and is timber framed with render. Rather than hedging, the property has estate railings to the front which allow for a more open aspect and views towards the mere

The group of houses around the Mere combined with the landscaping create a very attractive rural village scene within the village which has been well preserved.

To the south of Pond Farmhouse are two converted weatherboarded timber framed barns set well back from the road. The former agricultural buildings to the south are built in contrasting red brick, and further still an open field and pond with hedging to the front and estate rail to the side.

On the west side buildings of Mere Farm are attractively set back beyond an open meadow, in which there are a number of trees, planted in a park-like manner. There are several traditional buildings - some of them timber framed - including two timber boarded barns. Most have green corrugated iron roofs, presumably replacing thatch.

There is then a substantial house dating from 1950s set within large grounds. Finally, before the Conservation Area boundary, Orchard Cottages is a long one and-a-half storey range of grey brick with red brick gable ends with steep roof and off-centre axial stack. They were probably originally one three cell lobby entrance house (the north end appears to be a recent extension).

On the east side, following the modern Langhale cottage there is a group of early/mid-19<sup>th</sup> century cottages consisting of Searchers End, Ivy Cottage, Bramble Cottage and Cherry Orchard. These are Early/Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century cottages, now rendered or painted brick, extended, and replacement windows. In terms of contributing to the character of the area they are simple forms with broad frontages with a loose building line. The last two cottages, set further back and more hidden in street views, are earlier in date and listed. The Walnuts dating from late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> clay lump and thatch, and Breydon Cottage, 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century pebble dash render.

## Wheelers Lane

On the North side there are glimpsed views of the side and back of Rysa Lodge. The house is one of the oldest in the village, originally dating from 1614 as indicated by a date within the crow stepped gable end. It has been extensively altered in later remodelling including the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century gault brick frontage facing east. To the south are clay lump outbuildings and barns, and a greenhouse. To the east is a group of fine trees, in front of which lies the modern Otley Cottage.

On the south side of the road West of the old orchard is a pair of 19<sup>th</sup> century semi-detached gault white brick cottages, the west- one extended in matching style. The conservation area is extended to include the playing field as its boundary contributes to the approach views into the village, being opposite the landscape parkland of Rysa Lodge.

## Traditional Materials & Architectural Details

There are few surviving earlier 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed houses, most notably Pond Farmhouse. Rysa Lodge and Mere House are both early brick houses. These are all set back from the road and show the width of the common land between properties.

The majority of smaller cottages date from the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, being broad fronted and with shallow plans. The frontages are typically well-proportioned Georgian style. Many have been joined together and are rendered or painted.

There are number of white gault brick houses which were particularly fashionable during the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century period. White brick was initially a more expensive brick in early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, hence its use only for the front elevations and such is the case at the White House. Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century white brick was used for more humble houses such as the cottages on Wheelers Lane.

Smaller houses are simple gabled construction and can have casement style windows, whereas larger properties are bigger in plan, often double pile, and can have hipped roofs and sashes. Many pantiles are black glazed rather than red/orange, and there is also some use of slate.



The White House



New housing with traditional materials



Along The Street, apart from the village shop, which has a very 1950s design. More recent housing has been designed to fit in with the character in terms of architectural style and materials. The Tayler and Green houses, similar to the village shop are a mixture of orange and buff brick with modern windows and a shallow pantile roof.



Tayler and Green houses along Mill Lane

## Natural Character



Along The Street hedgerows and trees are important



The picturesque Mere and reed bed

The roads within the village are well landscaped with plenty of mature trees along the village streets and properties generally slightly set back behind hedgerows. This lends the village a more rural village character.

The open space to the south of the church and the immediate area to the north east and north west around it (partly cultivated for allotments) assists in defining the moated area and is very important to the setting of the church.

The area around the mere provides a very picturesque landscape and a tranquil setting with only Mere House and Ponds Farmhouse, both historic properties, visible in views to the east and west of it.



## Street Furniture, Walls and railings



Duck sign in the approach to the Mere.

There is quite limited street furniture. The post box and bench are in front of the post office and this area could be enhanced.

The village sign is on a small corner green to the north west of the church.

Of some interest are the road signs for ducks in the approach to the mere.

Generally, there are few walls in the conservation area and hedging to the front of properties is an important element in maintaining the rural character of the village. Close boarded fencing visible to the front of properties should be avoided. Railings are also a more urban feature and should generally be avoided, although rural estate style railings, such as to the front of Pond Farmhouse, can in some circumstances be considered acceptable.

## Conservation Management Guidelines

### Highways



Rural character of streets

Seething has a very informal character with no footpath or kerbs. The road is very lightly trafficked. Brooke Road is busier and has a pavement.

**Urbanising of the rural character with urban road features should be avoided where possible, although it recognised these can provide safety.**

## Upgrading windows and doors/solar panels



Replacement windows

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

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

## Painting/colour washing buildings



Rendered cottages

There are a number of painted properties in the village. Presently the colours work well together to give a sense of visual harmony in the village.

**Careful consideration needs to be given to painting buildings to ensure the visual harmony of rendered cottages in the village is retained.**

# Appendix 1 (i)

## Listed Buildings

Old Hall Park	Seething Hall
The Green	Church of St. Margaret and St. Remigius (Grade II*)
School Road	War memorial
The Street (east side)	Pond Farmhouse
	The Walnuts
	Breydon Cottage
The Street (west side)	Mere House
	White Lodge
	Mere House Barns

# Appendix 1 (ii)

## Unlisted Buildings of townscape significance

Brooke Road	Church Farmhouse
	Farm buildings, Church Farm
	Honeysuckle Cottage
	Prior Barn, 1-3 Prior Barn
Mill Lane	2-11 Mill Lane
The Green (north side)	The Old Vicarage
	The Beeches and cottage adjoining
	Two outbuildings at right angles to road
	Rose Cottage
The Street (east side)	The Grove
	Brook House
	Crabbe Cottage
	Cottage south-east of shop
	Manor Cottage
	Manor House
	Barn north of Manor House
	Farm buildings, Mere Park Farm
	Langhale Cottage
	Beachers End
	Ivy Cottage
	Bramble Cottage
	Cherry Orchard
	Outbuildings in front of The Walnuts
	(one corrugated iron, one brick).
The Street (west side)	Stainmare (divided into two)
	Pear Tree Cottage
	The Old Post Office
	Greenways
	Tofties Cottage
	Well Cottage
	Orchard Cottages
School Road (west side)	Former School
	School Cottages
	The Homestead
	Rysa Lodge



# 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

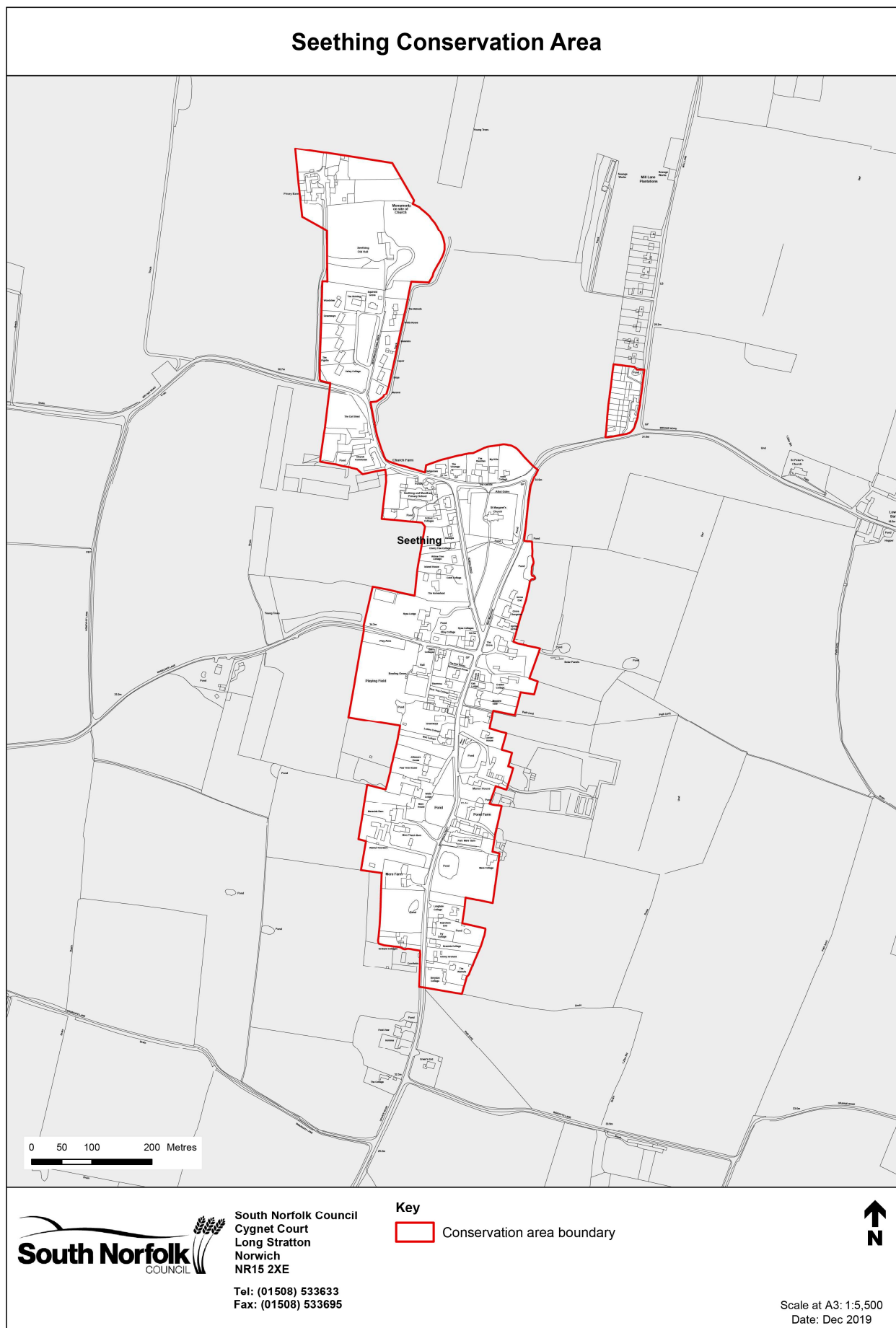
An informal ‘walkabout’ of the area was organised with the Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019. This informed the proposed boundary changes and the conservation management guidelines within the draft appraisal. The initial public consultation on the draft appraisal took place from 1<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July. This was then extended to 1<sup>st</sup> October to include subsequent feedback following the parish council meeting on September 6<sup>th</sup>.

This included:

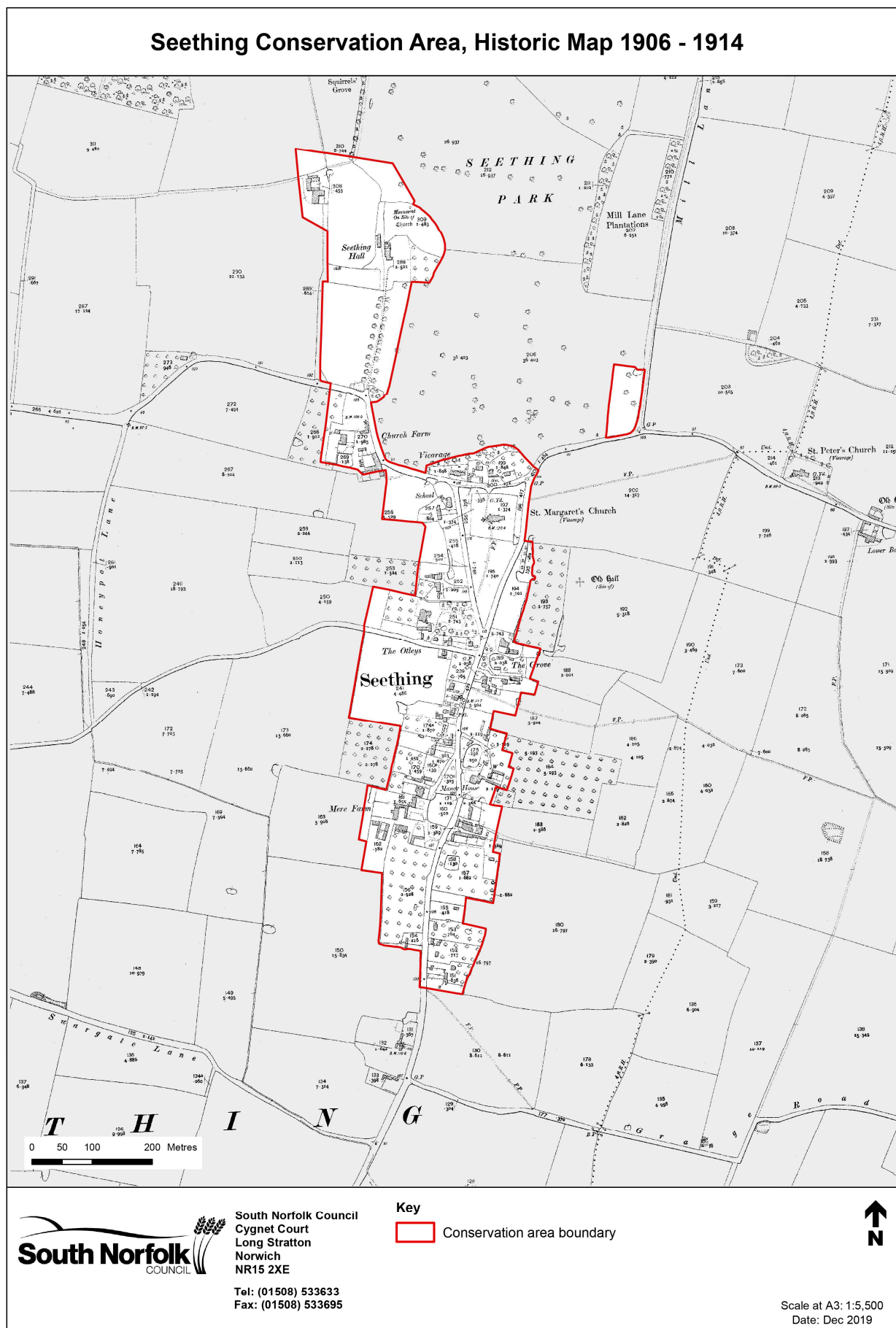
- A public exhibition held in the before the parish council on 9<sup>th</sup> July for one hour with an officer in attendance to answer any queries.
- An advert in village notice board and local publicity by the parish council
- The draft appraisal being available to view on the council’s website and at the reception desk.
- Emailing Ward Councillors, County Councillors, the Parish Council and Historic England.
- A presentation made to the Parish Council on 6<sup>th</sup> September.
- 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 the proposed boundary extensions to Cornfields was not included at the request of the owner, since although there is a hedgerow to the front, the house is relatively modern and can be considered neutral in terms of its contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

# Appendix 3



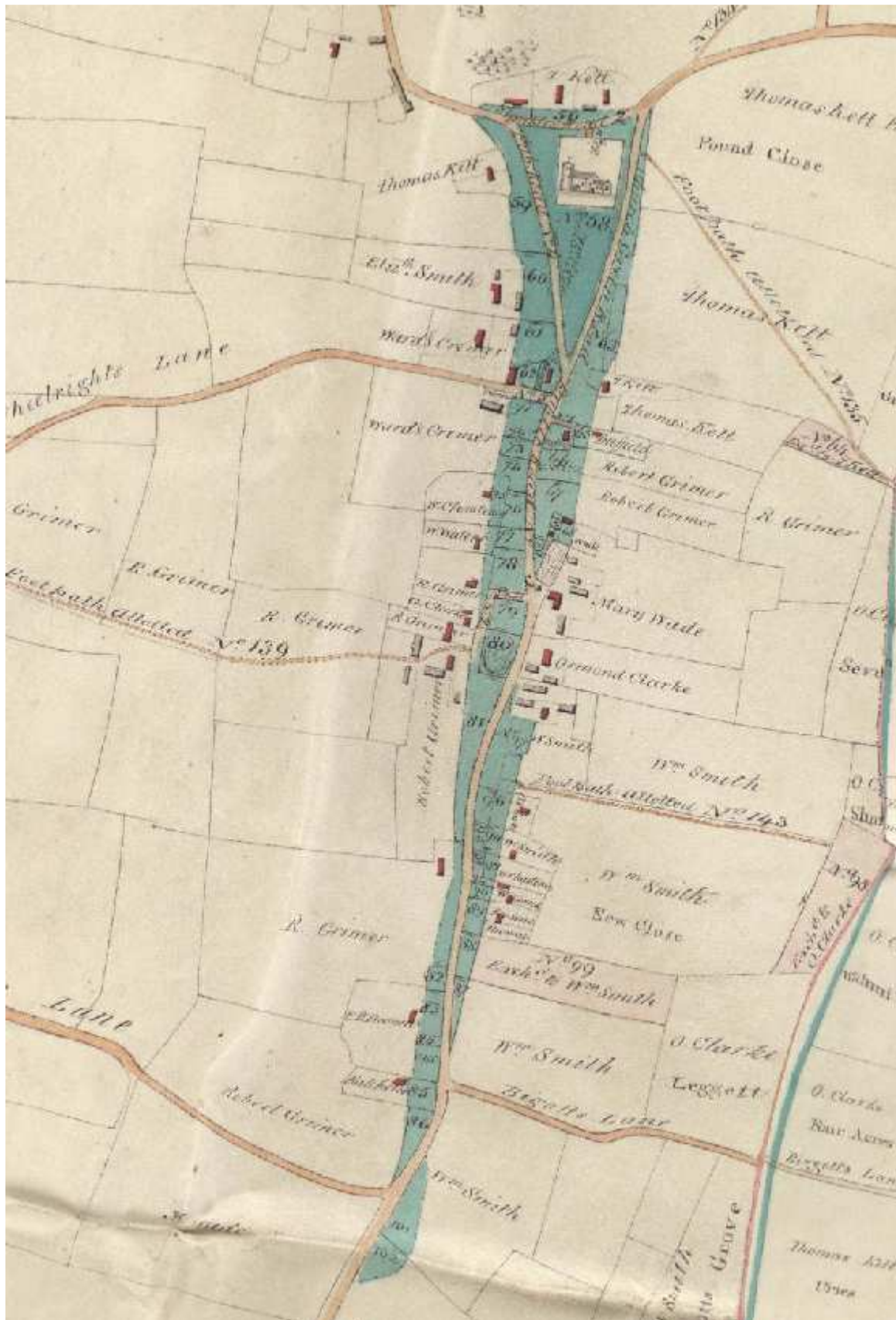
# Appendix 4





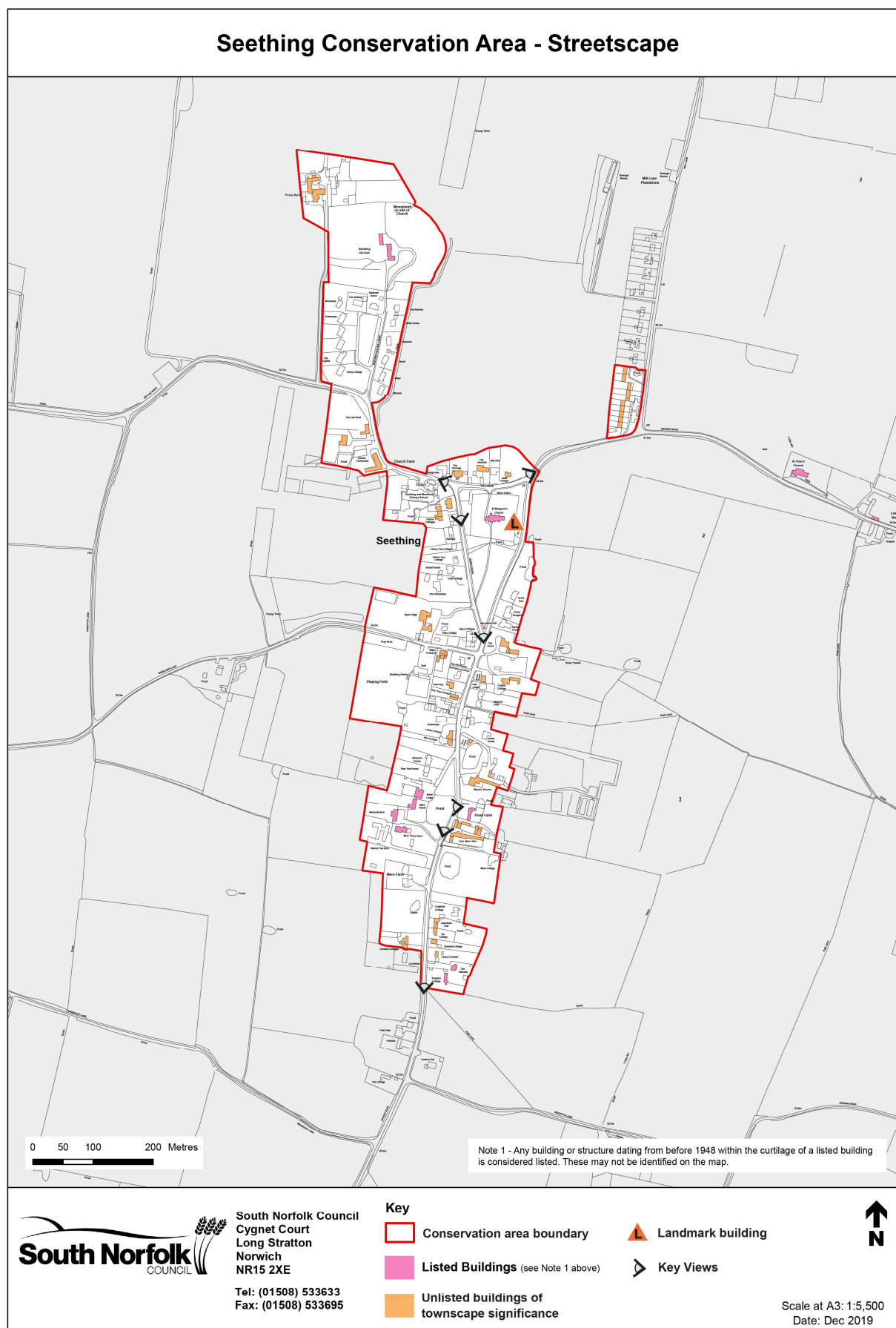
# Appendix 5

## Enclosure Map 1814



Enclosure map of 1814 showing sub division of common land (marked in green)

# Appendix 6



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# Appendix 7

