



Fincham

Conservation Area

Character Statement



FINCHAM, a parish and well built village, 5 miles E.N.E. of Downham. Fincham gives name to the deanery which comprises the whole of Clackclose hundred. There were anciently two CHURCHES here, but no traces of that dedicated to St. Michael now remain; after the Reformation its vicarage was consolidated with the rectory of St. Martin's, a spacious and handsome edifice of flint, with a tower and six bells.

WILLIAM WHITE 1845

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Introduction

A Conservation Area is defined as “*An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”.

The conservation of the historic environment is part of our quality of life, helping to foster economic prosperity and providing an attractive environment in which to live or work. The Borough Council is committed to the protection and enhancement of West Norfolk's historic built environment and significant parts of it are designated as conservation areas.

Conservation areas were introduced by the 1967 Civic Amenities Act. Local Authorities were 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 conservation areas. This duty is now part of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act, which also requires the review of existing conservation areas and, where appropriate, the designation of new ones. The quality and interest of a conservation area depends upon a combination of factors including the relationship and architectural quality of buildings, materials, spaces, trees and other landscape features, together with views into and out of the area.

The Fincham Conservation Area was designated in 2009. This document highlights the special qualities that underpin the character of the conservation area, justifying its designation. It also seeks to increase awareness of those qualities so that where changes to the environment occur, they do so in a sympathetic way without harm to the

essential character of the area. This type of assessment has been encouraged by Government Advice (PPG15) and the character statement has been adopted by the Borough Council as policy.

This character statement does not address enhancement proposals. Community led enhancement schemes will be considered as part of a separate process.

Setting and Location

Fincham is situated on the A1122, a Roman road and the main route between Swaffham, which lies 13 km or 8 miles to the east, and Downham Market which is 9 km (6 miles) to the West. King's Lynn is 19 km (12 miles) to the NNW.



The main road through the village

The A1122 runs approximately SWW right through the village and forms the High Street, turning SW towards Stradsett near the western edge of the conservation area. The area is low lying and most of the conservation area is fairly level although the north-east corner rises, which gives the church a commanding elevated position. At the eastern edge of the conservation area

there is a cross roads with the Marham Road and the Boughton Road, both minor roads, running approximately north-south. At the western edge a minor road, Lynn Road, runs north-west to Shouldham Thorpe. There are no major watercourses in the village but a small stream runs along Lynn Road. There are a number of ponds in the village and Lode Dike runs approximately west-east about 300m to the south.

Fincham is an agricultural village that has grown up along a main road and these factors have defined its character. Some buildings, right up to the street edge, give it almost an urban feel, with areas where the building line is quite tight and the road narrows. Other buildings are gable end on to the road, giving them access to land to the west and east, and there are a number of lanes giving access to agricultural land and buildings behind the main building line. The linear nature of the village and the relatively flat, low lying land means that views into the conservation area are limited. There is no very obvious centre to the village, although perhaps the open area around the church and small patch of green opposite fulfil this function. The village sign is located in the other more open part of the village, near the Old Rectory and opposite the playing field, but this is a fairly empty part of the village.

Origins and Historical Development



The name Fincham is considered to derive from the Anglo-Saxon, *Finc* and *Ham*, meaning a *place where there are finches*. The Domesday Book in 1086 gives a picture of a sizeable and thriving village - 'Phincham' had 734 arable acres and 109 acres of meadow, 145 heads of household with 18 cattle, 10 horses, 500 sheep and 65 swine. At this point there were three main landowners, but by late Norman times the village was split between 13 manors, which would have meant 13 manor houses. The names of some of these are preserved around the village; Fincham Hall dates from the late 1400s and is on the site of an earlier manor house, as is Talbot's Manor. Fairswell and Curple are names of manors preserved in current buildings, probably on the sites of the earlier manors. Littlewell Manor was sited on the south side of the Stradsett Road, and Baynards or Banyards was on the site of the playing fields, opposite the Old Rectory.

By 1460 Fincham's agricultural land had increased to 1850 acres, and by 1575 to 2000 acres. By 1636 the manors had been amalgamated and Lord of the Manor was Sir John Hare, who organised a full survey of the parish. This tells us that the area of 'the toun' was now 3487 acres, including 1747 acres of arable land contained in four huge fields, 1028 acres of enclosed land, including

all the dwelling houses with their yards, gardens and paddocks, while commons and waste land made up the rest. The vicarage of St Martin's Church was located to the west of the Boughton Road at this point. St Martin's Church was extensively rebuilt in the Perpendicular style around 1540 and in particular the south aisle, on show to the village, was meant to impress. It had a smaller churchyard than now, with a small building in the south-west corner used as a school house. There was a pond opposite St Martins, as there was until the 1950s. South of the pond, on 'The Hill', it seems likely that there once stood a free chapel dedicated to All Saints, which had disappeared by 1636. There is no record of there ever having been a market in Fincham, but some believe that 'The Hill' might have once been a market place, given that in a number of East Anglian towns sites referred to as 'Hill' were or are market places. The survey also tells us that to the east of the site of Barsham House stood the Guildhall, and records survive of at least four guilds in Fincham. At this time the Swan public house is mentioned on the north side of the road, to the east of Talbot Manor.

Moving west, on the south side was the Rectory of St Michael's and then St Michael's Church, which was still standing and in use in 1636. It stood a few metres to the north west of the current Old Rectory, and a tithe barn stood between it and the road. It was smaller than St Martin's and fragments reused in other buildings in the village suggest it was of an earlier date. It was abandoned in 1745 when its tower collapsed, and in 1747 the two parishes were consolidated, after permission was given to pull down the ruined church and use the proceeds to repair St Martin's.

The 18th century brought enclosure. At this point the village's agricultural land was divided into 1560 separate pieces, so some form of rationalisation was necessary. This came relatively late to Fincham in 1772, by which time a Parliamentary system was in place which at least provided some compensation to the poor. The major land owners began to build themselves houses in the village, such as Talbot Manor House and Ivy House. Fincham appears to have continued to prosper in the 19th century with further large houses being built, many of which survive. Although they are usually fairly unornamented, there are a number of grand doorcases to be seen. The village also furnished itself with the accoutrements of Victorian ideals, with the building of the school and teacher's house, and a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel on The Hill. There were also a number of inns, The Swan which survives, but also the Crown at Crown House and the Royal Oak at the Old Oak, and very probably others also. White's Directory of 1845 states that a Post Office was also available at Geo. Aylmer's. The population in 1845 was 837 people in 191 houses. Trades listed in 1845 and 1865 include carpenter, coal dealer, dress maker, surgeon, shopkeeper (at least three are mentioned), victualler, bricklayer, grocer and draper, master of the National School, saddlers, bakers, millers, shoemakers, tailors, owners of beerhouses, butchers, plumbers and wheelwrights. The village was clearly very active.



Crown House, formerly the Crown Inn

Well into the 20th century Fincham High Street was full of small businesses, shops and public houses. The latter part of the 20th century saw a substantial increase in the amount of traffic using the A1122 because of local industries, agricultural demands and tourism, which has put a certain amount of pressure on the buildings in Fincham. Although few businesses now exist in Fincham and most villagers work elsewhere, many are active in looking after the village and its buildings.

Character Overview

The conservation area in Fincham is largely the built up area to the north and south of the High Street, excluding some of the modern buildings. It extends to Fairswell Manor in the east, and a short distance up Marham Road and down Boughton Road on the east sides. To the west it includes the eastern side of Lynn Road as far as Talbot Cottages and the arboretum to Talbot Manor to the north, and to the south it ends at the track to the south-west of Sycamore House.

The High Street is of approximately even width apart from two areas where it widens. The road runs slightly south west for the first half of the village when coming from the east, straightens to run approximately east-west, and then towards the western edge of the conservation area it turns sharply southwards to the junction of Downham Road and Lynn Road. The High Street is the only main road in the conservation area, apart from a short section of Swaffham Road. Otherwise there are a number of narrow lanes such as Swan Lane and Chapel Lane.

The character is that of an agricultural village with many buildings of the 18th and 19th centuries, and a few earlier and later, using locally available materials rather than expensive imported ones. There is some evidence of past light industrial activity, and a busy garage right in the centre of the village. Most of the buildings are cottages or small houses, many with outbuildings behind (some of which have been converted to houses) and access lanes to these areas. Many face the road and most of the older buildings are built right up to the street edge. Some are gable end on to the road and face a small courtyard or open area with agricultural buildings and outhouses. The majority of buildings are two storey and there is no impression of great height. There are some larger houses, mostly on the south side, and a few glimpses of grandeur here, mostly in the form of doorcases.



Many buildings are right on the pavement edge

Views are hard to come by because of the linear nature of the village although slight bends in the road do afford some views and glimpses are available down some of the narrow tracks to the north and south. The main view available is of St Martin's Church, on an incline, which dominates the eastern part of the village. The village gives a strong impression of enclosure, no doubt the result of its site on a main road, with much use of walls, gates, fences, railings and hedges. Behind these, buildings may be partially glimpsed, for example, the Old Rectory and Talbot Manor House, emphasising the sense of privacy. There are many treed areas and a number of good trees, particularly in the more open, western part of the conservation area and the arboretum to the north of Talbot Manor. The centre of the village is usually considered to be the open area around the Church, but there is no very obvious central point because of the linear nature of the settlement.



Walls and farm buildings are part of Fincham's character

Spaces and Buildings

Entering the village from the east on Swaffham Road (the A1122), there is an immediate sense of enclosure as the proposed conservation area begins, with the walls of Fairswell Manor on the south and, after the first two houses on the north, the buildings on both sides are right up to the street edge. Fairswell Manor's enclosing walls, recently rebuilt in flint and gault brick, topped with tiles, curve elegantly towards the house and provide an introduction to the materials and sense of enclosure that is found throughout the village. Fairswell Manor is set in spacious grounds with a number of outbuildings. (three houses are being constructed here). It is a 19th century house in gault brick with tiled roof, the view of which is glimpsed through its gateposts, with decorative parapets over the porch, and bay windows. Although not listed it is a building of local importance which makes a positive contribution to the village at this entrance point.

On the north side the buildings are less grand; the gault brick Fairswell Cottage has replacement windows and a single storey extension at the front which have altered its 19th century character, and this is followed by an infill bungalow set back behind a front garden. Then the beginning of the 'urban' part of the village is announced as the next two cottages are built right up to the pavement edge. They are 18th century and are built of roughly coursed brick and field stones of flint and carstone, galetted with small carstone pieces, and have pantiled roofs (though thatched until the early 20th century) and first floor dormers added later. The corner into Marham Road is turned tightly by a two storey house of a similar roughly coursed construction, painted white, which begins a row of four early 19th cottages up the east side of Marham Road.

Running south Boughton Road creates almost a cross roads at this point. A cluster of 19th century brick houses with replacement windows turns the corner with Swaffham Road on the east side, with the Old Oak, formerly the Royal Oak Inn, on the corner. Running south the east side of Boughton Road is enclosed by the rear of the old inn, followed by a garage and the conservation area ends with another brick 19th century house, here again with replacement windows. The view down Boughton Road is entirely rural.

After the Boughton Road there is a narrow pavement. Ivy House, listed grade II, on the corner with Boughton Road is an imposing house of c.1740. It is somewhat set back and, as so often in Fincham, enclosed at the front, here with railings and a hedge. It is of three bays, two storeys with attics, in gault brick with a slate roof which is a modern replacement for the original pantiles. The tripartite sash window to the right of the front

door is oversized and perhaps suggests it was once a shop window. To the west, Ivy House adjoins a long building of similar height, of brick and flint with bricked up windows and doors and a small, modern inserted timber doorway and windows, inappropriate for the size of the building. This, followed by a high wall enclosing the property to the rear, of brick with flint panels and dentillated decoration along the top, presents a blank appearance to the street frontage and emphasises the sense of enclosure frequently found in Fincham. The gable to the house, glimpsed above the wall, is red brick with tumbling-in detail on its parapet.

Moving westwards on the south side the former police house (around 1750) is next, gable-end on to the road with some flint used at first floor level. Next we reach the former Fincham VC Primary School, fronting the street, and the school house which is hidden behind it and faces west. These were both listed in 2000. The school is of a lower scale than the surrounding buildings and the east-west section (it is L-shaped) and the school house were built in 1848. They are of carstone rubble with gault brick dressings and the north extension to the school, of 1875, is of carstone slips with gault brick dressings. The roofs are fish scale slate. The school has been converted into a private house which will preserve its interesting interior.



The former school building, west side

After the school a lane leads to School House and then next is Holly House, also grade II listed, set back from the road and barely visible from it behind a high wall of gault brick and a number of trees. The house is of c.1860 and is of flint and ashlar with a gault brick façade and slate roof. It was the village doctor's house between 1856 and 1978. Following Holly House, a lane leads to 'California', a series of cottages which appear on the 1839 tithe map. Beulah House next, a solid Victorian brick villa right up to the pavement edge with a decorative iron hood (created by the present owner) over the front door. Built around 1870, it was a butcher's shop and the building at the end of the garden was an abattoir. The opening up of the village is announced by the fact that two houses on the left are set back, Hill House and Church View (the probable site in 1802 of one of the first Industrial Schools), behind a long green front garden and railings.

On the north side of the road after the Marham Road are four houses right up to the street edge emphasising the tight entrance to the village, first the Post Office and the neighbouring house, all of the same

build although the Post Office has been painted white, of two storeys and red brick. They are C19th and have replacement doors and windows; the Post Office has had a shop front inserted. Then follows a much older and lower cottage of the C18th, single storey with attics and three dormers, of brick and flint or carstone painted white and with pantiles, but with replacement windows. Its high parapet and roof pitch suggests it may once have been thatched. This simple building emphasises Fincham's obsession with enclosure as it has railings at the front despite there being only a narrow space between it and the road. As in so many places in Fincham a lane leads off behind the building to provide access to outbuildings, as space behind buildings was more readily available than along the main road. This forms Crown Yard with two painted brick cottages.

Then follows Crown House, a former inn, in flint but with liberal use of gault brick for door and window surrounds, including segmental arches above the windows, and fragments of a render, scored to resemble stone, which once covered the front but now is left as panels at each end of the front elevation.

Moving westwards, the character of Fincham changes and opens up as one reaches the nearest thing the village has to a centre. The Church dominates on the north side up an incline and the south side is much more open with houses around a green open space, an attractive area with no jarring notes. This is the site of the former village pond. The area is well defined by the wall to Hill House, in flint, on the east side, outhouses and the side of a building on the west side, and the two late C18th houses on the south side. This sense of enclosure is relieved by glimpses of The Old Bakery in the south-east corner and down Chapel Lane in the

south-west corner. The 'green' is saved from cars driving onto it with timber posts and has two good trees and a bench facing the church. The conservation area extends southwards to include The Old Bake House. This cluster of houses on the south side of the green, known as The Hill, has buildings of different styles, ages and heights, but which have sufficient similarity not to strike a jarring note. They all make a positive contribution to the conservation area.



The Hill

The Church of St Martin (listed Grade I) opposite is splendidly set near the top of the incline that is the rising land towards Shouldham. It is mid-15th century, much restored in the 19th century, built of flint and carstone with ashlar dressings, and is described more fully under Listed Buildings below. It is beautifully set in the green churchyard which is enclosed by a grade II listed wall at the front, of brick and stone, the earliest parts of which are C17th. The Churchyard is enclosed by walls to east and west, the eastern one adjoining Church House.

After this open area the village tightens up again with houses built right up to the street edges. On the south side a coherent group of four houses leads off, all approximately mid C18th century, and all a little different but of similar heights and materials with fronts of rendered or painted carstone. One of these was originally the Post Office. They have a good collection of original windows, doors and doorcases and some have railings. The westernmost two, Australian House and Australian Cottage, are grade II listed. The conservation area extends back to include their gardens and the yard of Swan, but not the modern buildings behind. The Swan public house appears on the enclosure map of 1772 but has been extended and is now double pile. It is an extensive building of coursed flint with carstone galetting and brick surrounds to the windows which have been painted dark green. Opposite are two carstone cottages faced with gault brick, of early C19th date. To their east is a modern bungalow and behind is a cluster of mixed cottages and outbuildings. At the front is the former telephone exchange, gable end to the road in 1950s brick, and a modern phone box is on the roadside.

Moving further west, the village becomes less coherent and tightly knit with some buildings up to the street edge, some set some way back and some gable end to the road. There is a much more open and less urban feel. More trees and hedges appear in the gaps between buildings, and there is less definition along the street edge. More post war buildings appear to the west of this point, and there is also evidence of light industry.

On the north side the conservation area encompasses a cluster of buildings somewhat ill defined which do not contribute

greatly to the conservation area. A thirties garage with its canopy in front is towered over by the Church tower and a post-war bungalow sits on each side in rather redder brick than is to be found elsewhere. The roadside verge here is dotted with concrete bollards. Behind this can be found some post-war bungalows and then, at the northern edge of the conservation area, a wonderful collection of farm buildings, picturesque in flint patched with brick and roofs mainly of pantiles, with timber doors, some of them tumbledown. These belong to Church Farm and some of them appear on the enclosure map, the group having been extended ever since.



Garage with church tower behind

Opposite, the buildings are a little more open also, with two substantial grade II listed houses, Shrublands and Barsham House set in more spacious plots. Barsham House is of 1842, of rubble but with a gault brick facade, with a portico porch offset in the 4 bay façade. The house has railings at the front and is well protected to the west by a full height wall in the same material. It is encircled by outbuildings and sits in a large plot. To its east a more modern brick wall hides a rough square of concrete in front of

a somewhat dilapidated collection of outbuildings. Shrublands is of the early C18th with a further bay added to the west half a century later.



Barsham House

Moving west, the road widens after two brick cottages with a layby marking the former alignment of the main road before it was widened. To the north, after the post-war red brick single storey village hall, is the large open space of the playing fields, although hidden behind a high hedge, and to the south there is an appearance of emptiness, with glimpses of the Old Rectory barely visible behind its wall and trees. It is almost as though the village disappears at this point, but in fact it is the site of two key elements in its history, both now gone. On the south side stood St Michael's Church approximately where the new rectory is now, and in front of it was a tithe barn. St Michael's was abandoned in 1745 and nothing now remains of it, apart from blocks of limestone and other fragments re-used in village walls, including the roadside wall in front of the new rectory. It explains the large open space here around the new rectory. On the other side was Baynard's or Bainard's Hall, the dwelling house of the owner of

Bainard's manor. It was a medieval moated manor house described in 1921 as 'long gone' and its site has never been built on and is now a village amenity. The splendid Old Rectory is listed grade II and hides behind its hedge. It dates from the early C17th. It has a listed dovecot on a circular plan in front, possibly built from materials from the demolished church.

Further west after this break the village becomes more built up once again but it never reaches the density of the eastern part and although some of the buildings are right on the street edge, a number are set back or are gable end to the road. This is the less public end of the village and is where light industry and agriculture took place rather than services. Hardley House on the south side announces the beginning of this part of the village. First is its wall at shoulder height of flint, behind which lies Curple Cottage, a modern bungalow in red brick with rooms in the roof, facing west behind a modern iron gate. Hardley House has a panelled timber door in an elaborate doorcase and is an C18th house of substantial size, of brick with flint in the side walls and tumbled-in brickwork in the gable. The main part is of three bays with sashes and a central door, and is two storeys. The windows have segmental arches in red brick. To the right is a further, lower wing, also of brick and pantiles, containing a door under an arch possibly into a yard.

Following Hardley House there are a number of buildings gable end to the road. Next is a single storey long industrial building behind modern gates and an outbuilding of the 1920s in brick and painted white, extending back a considerable distance. These buildings are of particular interest as they used to accommodate a smithy, wheelwright and carpenters' shop and are a part of

Fincham's agricultural history. However they are currently not in use and in their dilapidated condition, with the untidy grassy yard in front, they detract somewhat from the conservation area. Then the double pile of St Mary's Lodge faces west in Victorian red brick, with crow-stepped gables and various extensions, in an attractive garden of trees and bushes with some good trees. Next there is a red brick cottage with gables and white painted barge boards of C19th date behind a tall hedge and railings, and, also gable end on, Midway Villa in gault brick behind railings, now two cottages with modern porches. Bryony Cottage reverts to face the street, and was originally four cottages. It is of five bays and two storeys and unusually for Fincham it is rendered and painted pink. It has pantiles and a nice original doorcase.



Former smithy and wheelwright's premises

Following some modern gates are two rendered cottages of around 1770, gable end on, and beyond these sits the modern Jubilee House. This is in grey brick and is set back behind a pair of modern gate piers. In front of its roadside wall is a cast iron milepost. Brett's Cottages follow, one gable end on and five facing the road; they are in

a two storey terrace, rendered and painted, with front gardens offering no street definition. Behind is Brett's Yard and the site of an old orchard, where some modern houses have been built. Brett's Yard announces the end of the built up part of the village - from now there is only trees and scrubland, with distant views back in to the village. The conservation area follows the street boundary to the south west of Sycamore House, a solid Victorian red brick villa with a good semi-circular hood which is set well back and half hidden by trees, and turns back east behind the plots of the houses on the south side of the High Street.

On the north the incline towards Shouldham has levelled out and after the playing field the built up part of the village begins again with a further cluster of buildings along the road or slightly set back, some taking advantage of free space behind the road, as on the south side, whereas street frontages are at a premium. Initially there is a small modern bungalow in brick followed by a small older brick outhouse gable end to the street and a garage behind. Next come Nelson House, Pump Cottage and Nelson Cottage, some of the oldest buildings in the village. They are c.1600 and were timber framed, which was replaced with brick in the C18th. Unusually the west wall, which is of carstone, has Barnack limestone quoins (possibly from the demolished St Michael's Church). Like many of the other older houses in the village it fronts the street, although part of it projects north in an L-shape.

These cottages are followed by the White House which is also grade II listed, a C17th house of lobby entrance plan, also right on the street edge. It is of whitewashed carstone and flint with brick dressings. Then a low modern bungalow is set back from the road,

and Norfolk House is reached, connected to a lower house to the east by an archway and passage. Norfolk House is of brick, with replacement windows but a good shop front and is currently a hairdresser. It is the last building fronting the High Street and announces the end of the 'urban' part of the village. From now on we are in rural territory, with a few buildings set well back behind country lanes with plentiful trees and hedges.

Evidence that the village proper is being left behind follows, with a stile and footpath leading north followed by conifers and a red brick wall topped with pantiles. This wall has been propped with buttresses as it is leaning. The pavement continues and behind it a high hedge leads to the modern gate piers and timber gates of Talbot Manor. This is a substantial C18th brick house with C20th windows, set in a large plot and hidden behind its wall and some good trees. As the road makes its way out of the conservation area the edge is defined by a hedge with railings, then a low brick wall topped with a hedge, and a raised curb separates the pavement from road. The conservation area curves north west up Lynn Road with open agricultural land on the left and on the right Talbot Manor Barn, now converted to a house in brick, and typically for Fincham hidden behind a wall. Behind it is Peacocks with a walled yard, and the conservation area ends a little further up the road at Talbot Cottages in pretty flint with their entrance path crossing the stream. The boundary of the conservation area follows and includes the arboretum which was planted by Maurice Mason, the eminent plant collector, just after the Second World War. It contains some fine trees and provides the backdrop to Talbot Manor and the conservation area. From Talbot Manor the conservation area

includes the field behind Norfolk House and the White House, and the playing fields and runs along the back of Church Farm barns.



Looking towards Bretts Cottages from the eastern edge of the conservation area

Listed Buildings

The 17 listed buildings in Fincham make a significant contribution to its character. They include 13 houses (some of which are of the same build and are listed together), the Church, a wall, a dovecot and the school.

Grade I

Church of St Martin

Rebuilt in the mid C15th, restored 1847 and 1870. The Church is of flint and carstone with ashlar dressings and leaded roofs. It has a three-stage west tower with flushwork panels and an arched west door under a square 19th century surround. The south aisle has a chequered base course, straight mullioned windows and battlements with flushwork panels topped by crocketed pinnacles. Above this is a clerestory with five three-light windows on the south side. The chancel is rendered. The five-light east window has been restored. There is a

priest's door on the south side and a two-story vestry on the north of c. 1503. The most notable item in the interior is the magnificent square Norman font which was originally in St Michael's church.

Grade II

Retaining wall of churchyard of St Martin

C17th and later. Brick, stone and tile coping. Supported at intervals by sloping buttresses.

Fincham Primary School

East-west block of 1848 by John Stimpson of King's Lynn. North extension 1875. Rubble carstone with gault brick dressings to 1848 elements. Interior has a dividing partition with an elevated panelled gallery and a folding timber glazed doorway. Former national school.

School House

1848 by John Stimpson. One-and-a-half storeys; 3-window range.

White House

Early C17th, altered and extended mid C18th. Colourwashed carstone and flint with brick dressings and pantiled roof.

Nelson House, Pump Cottage, Nelson Cottage

Three houses in an L-shaped block, c. 1600. Timber framed, replaced by brick in the C18th. West wall of carstone with Barnack quoins. Pantiled roofs.

Talbot's Manor House

C18th house in brick with plain tiles, pantiles and slate roofs. Original two storey block to the west, later additions to the east single storey under catslide roof.

Ivy House

House of c.1740 in gault brick with pantile roof. Two storeys with dormer attic, three bays.



Ivy House

Holly House

House of c 1860 of flint and ashlar with gault brick façade and slate roof. Central door has panelled reveals, overlight and flat door hood.

The Old Post Office/Australian Cottage and Australian House

Two houses including former shop, mid C18th. Whitewashed brick and carstone with pantiled roofs. Some C18th casements remain.

Shrublands

Early C18th house with later addition in brick with pantiled roof. Two storeys in three bays with a further storey added to the west in the mid C18th. Panelled door in fluted doorcase under square hood with scrolled console brackets.

Barsham House

House of 1842 of rubble construction with gault brick façade and slate roof. Two storeys in four bays, with portico porch offset on Tuscan columns.

The Old Rectory

Early C17th, rebuilt in the C18th and again in 1827. Carstone, brick and clunch. Pantiled roofs, some black glazed. Originally on a half-H plan, a block was inserted in a court of 1827.

Dovecote to Old Rectory

Carstone, clunch and reused ashlar from St Michael's Church on a circular plan. Now single storey.

Important Unlisted Buildings

The character of Fincham is defined to a large extent by its collection of important unlisted buildings. Marked on the map are the unlisted buildings of local importance that are significant in the history and in defining the character of the village.



Lavender Cottage is one of many important unlisted buildings

Post War Development

Within the conservation area post-war development is very limited, although beyond it Fincham has several areas of modern housing. There are a number of bungalows along the High Street on the north side, and three modern houses in the cluster of buildings to the west of the church, behind the garage and its flanking bungalows. The hood to the forecourt of the garage, the village hall, the telephone exchange and Jubilee house complete the list. Much more post-war building has taken place to the west of the Marham and Boughton Roads, outside the conservation area.

Significant, though, is the increase in traffic using the A1122 which forms the village High Street. Some of this includes heavy lorries which disturb the peace of the place.

Traditional Materials

The buildings of Fincham exhibit a rich mixture of local materials that give texture and character to the conservation area. Flint is widely used, sometimes coursed or

roughly coursed, either on its own or mixed with carstone or brick. It used for all kinds of buildings, from barns to the church, and is often found in walls. Carstone is found on its own also, and both carstone and ironstone conglomerate are found. Carstone is also used in small pieces for galetting between courses of flint, for example, in the two cottages on the north side of the High Street, to the east of Marham Road, and in the east wall of Shrublands. Flint and carstone could be picked up in fields, but were also found in nearby sandpits, for example at Crimplasham.



Carstone galetting

Brick is fairly widely used, on its own or with flint, and is usually the yellowish gault brick, though earlier red brick is used too. Although no evidence remains of a brickworks these could have been made in the village, as many villages had a brickworks, or otherwise would only have to come from as far as Downham Market. The grander houses such as Ivy House, Shrublands and Hardley House tend to have brick, at least as a frontage.

Stone is not much used in the village, and then only for quoins and dressings, as it would have to travel too far to be readily affordable. It is mainly found in grander buildings, for example, at Holly House and the quoins at the church. Nelson House, unusually for a cottage, has Barnack limestone quoins in the west wall, and these may have come from the demolished St Michael's Church. Timber framing is also rare in Fincham but Nelson House and its neighbouring cottages were originally timber framed; this was replaced by brick in the 18th century.

Pantiles, which could be made locally, although originally imported from the Low Countries via King's Lynn, are very much the roof covering of choice in the conservation area. Some slate is in use, such as on Ivy House and Holly House, and the village school has slate in a fish-scale pattern. Unusually for a village, there is fairly frequent use of iron, for railings, enclosing usually the smarter houses in the village.

Chalk is found occasionally in the village, notably in the Old Rectory. There is now no thatch in the conservation area but there is evidence that it once existed on the cottage next to the post office, which has the high parapet and steep roof pitch typical of a thatched roof.

Archaeological Interest

The parish of Fincham appears to have had a busy early history with considerable Iron Age and Roman activity, and 13 separate manors in the mediaeval period suggesting it was a wealthy settlement at this time. Although no prehistoric settlement site has been identified, there have been a number of finds including prehistoric flint implements and pottery. The cropmarks of four Bronze

Age ring ditches are visible on aerial photographs and three late Bronze Age hoards have been found. This apparent importance appears to have continued, with a number of Iron Age and Roman hoards having been found. Roman finds have been discovered scattered throughout the parish and the site of a Roman settlement has been found in the south. Settlement continued through the Saxon period and by the Late Saxon period it was a large and wealthy village.

During the mediaeval period Fincham was a well established settlement with 13 separate manors. Within the conservation area, Baynard Manor, on the site of the present playing fields, is mentioned in the Domesday Book. Littlewell Hall, a moated manor house dating to before the 13th century has disappeared but the site of the moat is marked by a small depression. Talbot's Manor House is built on the site of a mediaeval manor house. At this time Fincham was surrounded by open fields and mediaeval ridge and furrow has survived as earthworks in several areas. Coins, pottery and metalwork from this period have been found by metal detectors, including heraldic pendants.



Talbot's Manor House

St Michael's Church which may have dated back to the 12th century was demolished in the mid-18th century and material from it was reused in Fincham Rectory and possibly in other buildings within the village.

Detractors

A number of single story buildings in modern red brick do not always sit well within the village, both because most of the buildings are two storeys and because red brick is little found elsewhere. The concrete bollards in front of the garage are unattractive and seem unnecessary. Telegraph poles are fairly visible right on the pavement throughout the village and swathes of overhead wires detract. The area around the former smithy and wheelwrights to the east of St Mary's Lodge is untidy and the gates, posts and fencing to the road in front of these buildings are of modern materials that do not fit well within the village. The building itself has been empty for some time and has begun to look rather dilapidated.

Replacement windows and doors in uPVC and similar materials make an appearance in Fincham and some look out of place on the older buildings in traditional materials.

Conservation Objectives

Statement 1

The overall conservation objective is to protect and reinforce the established special character of Conservation Areas and their setting.

This will be achieved by:

- Encouraging the retention and maintenance of buildings which contribute to the overall character of each conservation area
- Ensuring that new development is sympathetic to the special qualities and character of each conservation area
- Protecting the setting of the conservation area from development which adversely affects views into or out of the area
- The retention, maintenance and locally appropriate new planting of trees
- Maintaining and enhancing local features and details which contribute towards an area's local distinctiveness
- Working with the community to prepare schemes of enhancement
- Encouraging the removal of detractors to the special character of each conservation area

Contacts and advice

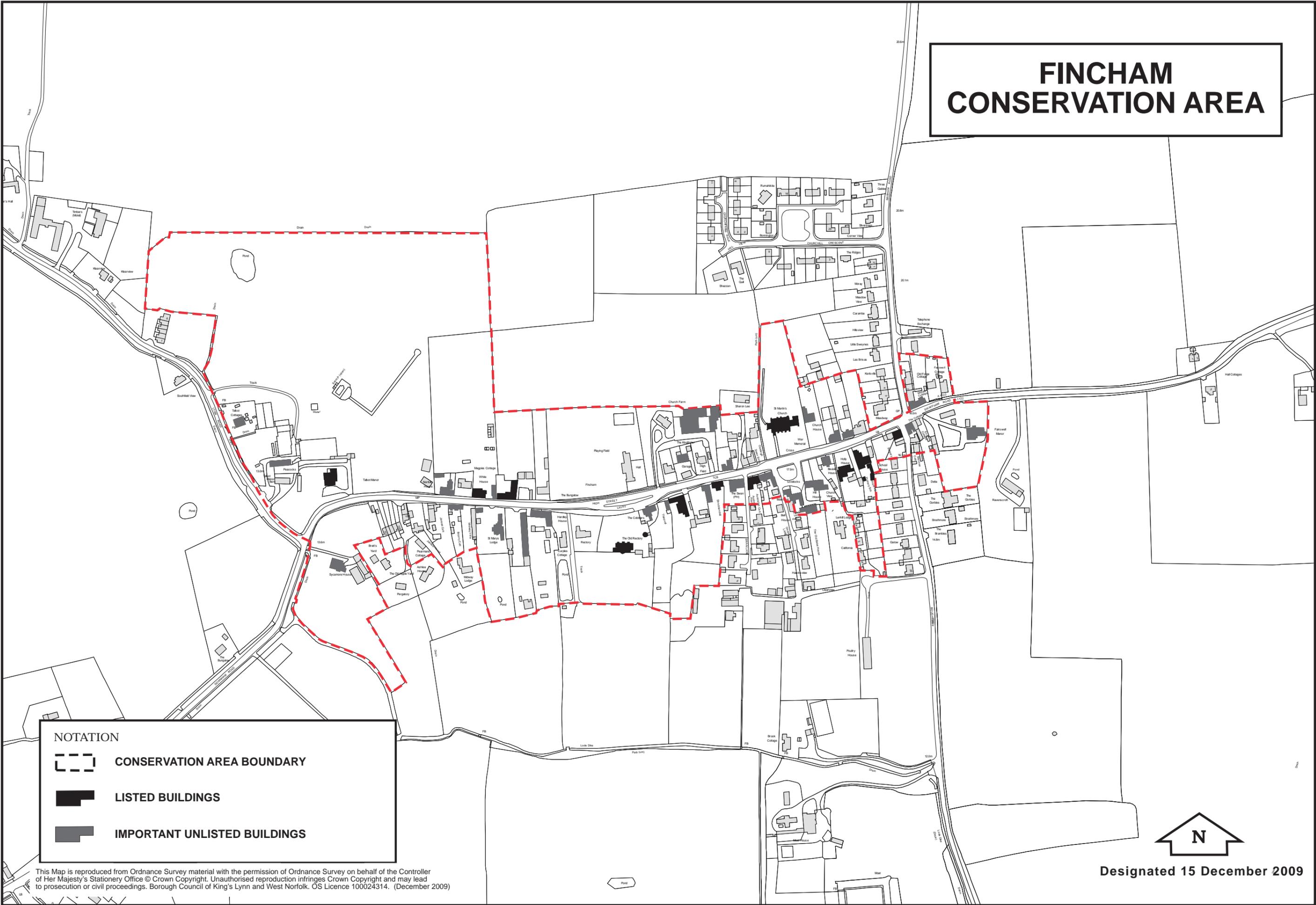
Within conservation areas, a number of special controls apply and it is advisable that anyone proposing to carry out new development, alteration, extensions, installations or demolition should seek advice from Development Services at an early stage. Special controls also apply to the trees and some may be subject to Tree Preservation Orders. Anyone wishing to carry out work to trees within a Conservation Area should therefore seek advice from Development Services.

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FINCHAM CONSERVATION AREA



NOTATION

-  CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY
-  LISTED BUILDINGS
-  IMPORTANT UNLISTED BUILDINGS



Designated 15 December 2009

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