

SOUTH CREAKE

CONSERVATION AREA

DRAFT CHARACTER STATEMENT



CREAKE (South), a large village and parish, pleasantly situated in a fertile valley, on the Fakenham road, 4 miles S of Burnham Market, has 4,041 acres of land, including an open sheep-walk of about 700 acres.

WILLIAM WHITE 1845

DESIGNATED: OCTOBER 1980
REVISED: FEBRUARY 1992

**PLANNING
POLICY**

INTRODUCTION

A Conservation Area – “An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of 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.

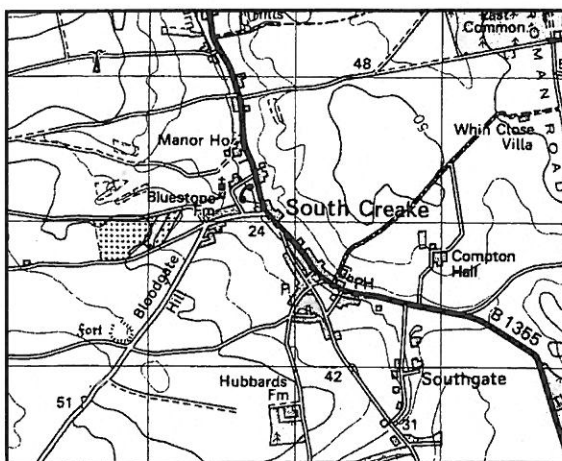
South Creake Conservation Area was designated in October 1980 by the Borough Council and was revised in 1992. This document highlights the special qualities which underpin the character of the conservation area, justifying its designation. It also seeks to increase awareness of those qualities so that 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 recent Government Advice (PPG15) and it will eventually form supplementary planning guidance to those policies in the King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan aimed at protecting the overall character of conservation areas. In particular, the guidance will supplement the Local Plan policies which deal with demolition and new development within the conservation area and new development on land adjoining the

conservation area which might affect its setting or the views in or out of the area.

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

SETTING AND LOCATION

South Creake is a linear settlement strung out along the B1355 between Fakenham 9km (5½ miles) to the south east and Burnham Market 7km (4⅓ miles) to the north. The village is 10km (6 miles) inland from the north Norfolk coast and is situated 26km (16⅛ miles) east of Hunstanton and 12km (7½ miles) south west of Wells-next-the-Sea.



In landscape terms South Creake has grown along the valley bottom of the river Burn, a clear chalk stream that flows north to the sea at Burnham Overy Staithe through the open, gently rolling countryside of north west Norfolk. This is a landscape of light chalky soil, large arable fields and wide horizons broken only by occasional copses and shelter belts of trees.

The main approaches on the B1355 are attractive but undramatic. From North Creake the road emerges from a formal avenue of lime trees into more open countryside, past a sequence of small attractive groups of farm buildings along the east bank of the river Burn. Immediately south of the road junction by the Black Swan, the road is lined on its west side by an elongated plantation of poplars as far as Manor Farm and the northern edge of the Conservation Area.



From the opposite direction the Fakenham Road slips almost imperceptibly into the Burn valley before running beside the stream into the southern end of the village where it is joined by several minor country lanes. The most impressive approach is along the top road from Syderstone off the B1454. At the point where it drops down Bloodgate Hill, the view ahead into the valley takes in the cluster of orange pantile roofs around Bluestone Farm against a mass of mature trees and beyond, more trees climbing out of the valley just above the main road.

ORIGIN AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

South Creake is a large parish straddling the Burn valley but long before the Saxons first marked out its boundaries the archaeological evidence for prehistoric activity is considerable. Bronze Age man kept to the higher ground and here on the dry slopes of Shepherd's Hill near East Common cropmarks of ring ditches suggest a group of ploughed out round barrows. Hoards including sword blades, spear and axe heads found elsewhere in the parish point clearly to movement across the open uplands by semi-nomadic people. The ring ditch within the Iron Age camp on Bloodgate Hill, now much denuded by ploughing, shows how later settlers often adapted old sites to serve new purposes.

The Roman road from Holkham to Toftrees ran along the higher ground to the east of the Burn valley and was later used as the boundary between South Creake and Barsham parishes. The main thrust of Saxon settlement would have been up the Burn river but evidence from the deserted medieval

villages at Waterden and Egmere near the Roman road together with late Saxon work in the ruined church at Waterden suggest that the first Saxons may have taken advantage of earlier Roman occupation. At the same time there is ample evidence of Saxon occupation continuing through the medieval period on the lower valley slopes east of Hall Farm and north west of Manor Farm.



The present church of St Mary dates from the 12th Century but it was probably built on the site of an earlier structure. Certainly South Creake (Saxon 'Crayke' meaning rock or ridge; or 'Crik' meaning Creek) was in existence by Domesday and by the time of Henry I it had four manors - Bodham, granted to Creake Abbey in the 13th Century, Roses Manor held by the de Rosays who were followers of the powerful Norman lord William de Warenne; a manor held by the Candos of Burnham and Bleaufoe Manor held by the de Beaufoes until 1485. The exact location of the manor houses is not known although Roses manor, like the others, passed through the hands of several powerful local families including the Calthorpes, Pepys and Cokes. The farmhouse replaced by Leicester Square farm in 1790 is one possible location while Rose Cottage in Fakenham Road dates from c1600 and is said to be marked on old maps as Rose's Manor.

Manor Farm (c1600) at the northern end of the village may be the remains of another and the scheduled earthworks south east of the church are described as a manorial site with garden earthworks. A map of 1630 shows it as 'Scite of ye Mannor of Bosshouse', but the existence of a hollow way and raised tofts suggest ancillary buildings that may represent part of the medieval village that has since contracted to the layout of cottages beside the church.

Together with the deserted villages at Waterden and Egmere the medieval settlement pattern clearly changed considerably in South Creake. There is no obvious documentary evidence for this but the reduction in population during the 15th Century and 16th Century may have coincided with the growth of large scale sheep farming. Castle Acre priory paid for the rebuilding of St Mary's Church in the early



14th Century and, together with Creake Abbey, owned much land in the parish. After the dissolution this passed into the hands of several powerful families including the Pepys of Cambridge, rich wool merchants who settled in the parish in the early 16th Century.

The Coke family were already lords of the Manor of Roses and Waterden but it was not until the late 18th Century that the Holkham estate began to impose itself on the surrounding countryside. The new farm complex at Waterden represents one of the earliest examples of a planned estate farm, followed in 1793 by the formal plan for Leicester Square farm designed by Wyatt and the more modest Compton Hall farm, also by Wyatt in 1800. The estate had a less obvious impact on the village itself but its prosperity and growth in the early 19th Century still owed much to Coke's agricultural improvements.

If this part of Norfolk owed its prosperity to sheep rearing in the 16th Century and innovative crop rotation in the late 18th Century, it's agricultural wealth during the 19th Century depended more on grain production as the great threshing barns at Manor Farm and Bluestone Farm testify. Wheat was ground into flour for local consumption at one of several windmills situated above the village or was transported to the coast at Burnham Overy for export. Every village had a number of brew houses using locally grown barley but in South



Creake local enterprise transformed the small 18th Century brewery into a much larger venture utilising clear water from the Burn. John Oliver who expanded and rebuilt the Front Street brewery in 1841 was the chief maltster but a disastrous fire in 1898 brought to an end the family business. In 1921 George Money bought the premises, installed electricity and, showing admirable ingenuity, created the Ace Razor Blade Company.

This capacity for change and innovation was also evident at Bluestone Farm where, in 1930 the Alley brothers, tenants from Lord Townsend's Bircham estate, introduced bulk storage of grain and the first combine harvester. They also began making 'Farmer's Glory' wheat flakes, to provide employment for their workers after mechanisation. When the brothers left the village in the 1930's, George Money stepped into the market and began producing his own breakfast cereal until his death in 1951. The land and buildings in Front Street were then bought for development, so bringing to an end two centuries of agricultural processing.

Today the village still has three agricultural holdings - Morley's Farm, Manor Farm and Bluestone Farm - and a small, local community with a shop, pub and primary school. There has been little growth since the addition of Churchill estate in the 1950's and, situated 10km (6 miles) inland from the coast, there are fewer weekend cottages and converted barns than in the Burnhams but the number is growing as house prices force out more of the resident population.

CHARACTER OVERVIEW

South Creake Conservation Area consists of a series of small, isolated group of cottages and farmhouses strung out along the B1355

separated either by ribbon development in the form of Council houses or open fields. This pattern of traditional roadside development is complicated by several other distinct areas that have evolved their own form and character. As a result the Conservation Area falls naturally into two separate identity areas.

In the southern half the tightly defined wedge of cottages between Front and Back Street gathered around the old brewery stands in contrast to the exposed area of open space formed by the playing field and the green.

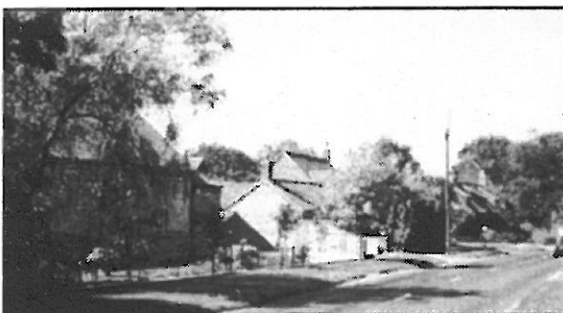


North of here the contrast between open areas and close-knit groups of buildings is similar but the open spaces are more rural - meadows dotted with trees and buildings visible against a backdrop of more trees, each group with its own distinctive focal point - school, chapel, church and farmhouse.

SPACES AND BUILDINGS

Fakenham Road

Approaching the village from the south the first group of buildings along Fakenham Road helps establish the form and character of the Conservation Area. Beyond a pond



overhung by willows the traditional buildings are strung out informally along the River Burn running clear and shallow beside the road. A

19th Century clunch barn, now converted, is followed by the Old Forge in flint and brick with catslide dormers overshadowed by a taller, steeply pitched house c1700 in red brick, framed by silver birch trees. Set at a slight angle it concludes the sequence before the first glimpse of council houses at the end of Back Lane.

From here attention switches to the opposite side, more tightly defined by short rows of early 19th Century cottages in flint and orange pantiles and then colourwashed render. Built hard against the road and with slight variation in roofline broken by central stacks and defined by coped parapet gables, the row is terminated by The Ostrich PH and its outbuildings.

The Green

At this point views open out across the playing field to a bleak prospect of council houses on the Churchill Estate, unrelieved by any scheme of planting. More council houses beyond The Ostrich separate it from the first of several minor focal points in the village. The grass area with the Burn flowing along one side and the former Post Office on the other side, takes on the character of a traditional village green and as such is the northern end of a much larger wedge of open, recreational space that runs into the heart of the village from Back Lane. As a central space, the green is closely defined on two sides only - by a simple, colourwashed terrace on the far side and then, at right angles, an L shaped row of new houses



terminating the view across the green. With its domestic scale, double aspect regular pattern of strongly defined openings and vernacular materials this bold development is an object lesson in sensitive design.

From here northwards the main road (Front Street) and Back Street run parallel with short rear gardens running down to the Burn.



Between the two is a well defined area of 19th Century housing that grew up around the brewery.

Back Street

As its name suggests, is a quiet minor road lined on both sides by a mixture of labourers' cottages, artisan houses and a Methodist chapel. Occasionally earlier structures have been enlarged but most date from the early 19th Century. The main view along the street is essentially linear with a network of small scale spaces on either side defined by cottages opening directly on to the road and short rows at right angles linked by low garden walls. These narrow gaps provide glimpses through to mature garden trees and buildings in Front Street, notably the tall brick tower of the old brewery. The familiar range of cobble and red brick facades is clearly evident, occasionally enlivened by colourwash with chalk and brick rubble used more often on side elevations. Orange pantiles are again the only roof material. Recent infill houses are undistinguished but either respect the building line or, where set back, have solid flint walls running along the road.

Front Street

Leaving the green the southern part of the street is similar in character to Back Street with side views between early 19th Century brick and cobble cottages to groups of mature trees, notably the limes at the back of Russell Cottage that help screen some new houses. This attractive flint building stands gable end to the road bounded by a low garden wall that ends beside a cottage in striking blue colourwash. Equally distinctive but more restrained is the plain late Georgian house with scalloped slates set back on the opposite side.

Despite these diversions the view ahead is



dominated by what remains of the brewery and the solitary horse chestnut opposite. Rising well above the range of colourwashed buildings hard up against the road, including the former Chequers PH to the north, this surprise element in the street scene, together with the old razor blade works in front, stands as a monument to rural enterprise in this isolated village.

Burnham Road

The junction of Front and Back Streets marks the end of the southern half of the village. From here the views open up across gently sloping arable fields to the right and, more importantly, across meadows dotted with ash and walnut trees to the cluster of orange pantile roofs at Bluestone Farm set against a backdrop of more trees. Straight ahead the view along Burnham Road, framed by a large beech tree at Morley's Farm, is terminated by



the primary school mid-way between the two halves of the village. Situated at a junction of roads and with the war memorial on a small

triangular green in front, the low flint building with its bellcote is the focal point of another small group of cottages with Morley's farm at the other end. This solid brick farmhouse with earlier flint gables and a neat group of outbuildings, was enlarged in the late 18th Century.

Bluestone Lane

By the school a lane branches off to the west and slopes gently uphill past Bluestone Farm and a scatter of cottages opposite. Separated from Burnham road by meadows this part of the Conservation Area appears as a quite detached rural enclave with views back across the fields to the brewery tower and the buildings in Front Street.

Bluestone Farm is still a large agricultural unit with an extensive range of traditional outbuildings grouped together on either side of the farmhouse, a tall late 18th Century



building with dormers and later additions hidden behind a dense screen of beech hedging and a length of brick garden wall. This complex of buildings runs uphill for some distance hard up against the lane, on the outside of a gentle curve; a series of blank walls in brick, flint and clunch under hipped pantile roofs against a thick backcloth of trees. By contrast the small cluster of 19th Century flint labourers' cottages opposite are attractively arranged at right angles to the lane and linked by low boundary walls on the edge of a meadow dotted with beech and walnut trees planted to improve the view south from the farmhouse.

The Church Area

The corner with New Road is defined quite dramatically by the flint parapet gable of a small 17th Century barn with honeycomb ventilation bricks reached by a sloping ramp up to weatherboarded doors. The range is continued northwards as an early 19th

Century brick threshing barn that looks out across a large central meadow bordered by trees along Burnham Road. Further along, with a small orchard on one side, New Road plunges through a mass of mature beech and ash trees to emerge at the churchyard.

St Mary's, on gently rising ground, is impressive from this position but, tucked



away here and surrounded by trees, the visitor comes across it unexpectedly. Just beyond the eastern wall of the churchyard are several rows of flint cottages separated by grass pathways running down to Church Lane. They are tightly packed with pantile roofs and are an attractive foil to the grey mass of St Mary's, but are also of great historical interest because they replicate the medieval pattern of tenements that survive from the village that once spread south across the meadow and is only now visible as a series of irregular humps and hollows.

Beyond the vicarage and a tree-lined paddock stands another isolated group of flint cottages at the junction of Church Lane with



Burnham Road, notable for the late 18th Century Congregational Church with Gothic windows and black glazed pantiles set back and almost hidden by the plain addition of 1896. Further north is Manor farmhouse, a large L shaped building below the road and less prominent than its early 17th Century barn, a long, clunch building beside the road that forms a memorable end to the village.

LISTED BUILDINGS

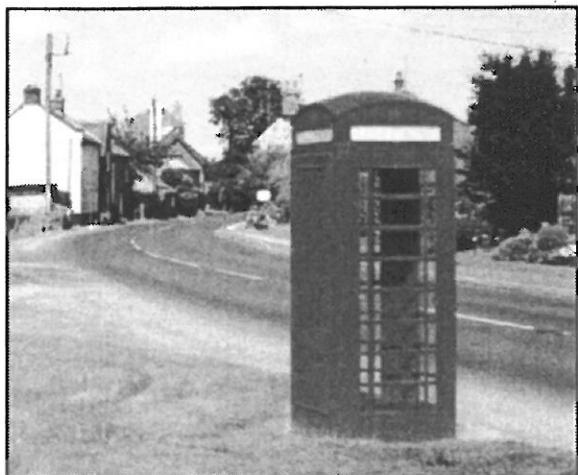
There are 13 listed buildings in the Conservation Area. The statutory list was revised in 1985 and there has been one later addition, the K6 telephone kiosk on the Green, listed in 1994.

Listed Grade I

- **Church of St Mary**, Medieval. West tower, nave and aisles, south porch, chancel and north chapel. Rubble and knapped flint. Slated nave and chancel, leaded aisle roofs. Mainly 14th Century and perpendicular windows including clerestorey nave roof single hammerbeam with angels. Aisle roofs also 15th Century. Fine 14th Century screen. Medieval goblet pulpit. Mutilated seven sacrament font. Much medieval glass.

Listed Grade II

- **Bluestone Farm Barn**, c.1800. Red brick, red pantiles, 3 stead threshing barn with honeycomb windows.
- **The Barn House**, Back Street: c.1700. Brick, flint and clunch, red pantiles. Sashes.
- **Telephone Kiosk**, The Green: K6 design 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. Cast iron, margin glazing bars. Painted red.



- **Avondale Farmhouse**, 17th Century fabric, later details. Colourwashed plaster on brick and clunch, smut pantiles. Sashes. Pedimented door case, sunburst fanlight. Steeply pitched roof with coped parapets. Substantial external gable end stack.

- **The Ostrich Inn**, Fakenham Road. Early 19th Century. Flint rubble with brick front whitewashed. Pantiles. Sashes. Late 19th Century rear wing.

- **Barn at Ostrich Inn**, With attached stable range. Early 19th Century. Flint rubble, pantiles, tumbled parapet gables. 3 bays with central cart entrance.

- **Stables at Ostrich Inn** attached to barn: Early 19th Century. Part brick and flint pantiles.

- **Rose Cottage and Old Cottage**, Fakenham Road: c.1600. Rubble flint, clunch and brick. Red pantiles. Perhaps originally a hall house. Late 17th Century brick classical door surround.

- **Manor Farmhouse**, Burnham Road: 17th Century south range, knapped flint. North range refaced c.1800 rubble flint and clunch. Red pantiles. Mixture of casements, sashes and blocked windows.

- **Manor Farm Barn**, 17th Century. Squared clunch. 3 threshing barns built end to end. Steeply pitched red pantile roof.

- **Former Congregational Church**, Late 18th Century with 1896 addition. Red brick, black glazed pantiles. Gothick windows. Hipped roof.



IMPORTANT UNLISTED BUILDINGS

In addition to the few listed buildings scattered throughout the Conservation Area there is a much larger number of unlisted traditional buildings - cottages, farm buildings and small houses - that together make a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The most important have

been identified because of their prominent position, use of local materials, their substantially intact character, and because they often relate to other historic buildings close by. Among the most distinctive are the former brewery and nearby War Memorial Institute in Front Street, the old school, Bluestone and Morely Farmhouses and The Vicarage.

TRADITIONAL MATERIALS

The character of South Creake Conservation Area owes a great deal to the use of local traditional materials in the construction of its historic buildings. Not surprisingly in this chalky landscape the predominant walling materials are clunch and flint with orange pantiles on almost every roof. But the ingenuity of local builders has resulted in an interesting variety of flint, chalk and brick not just on the main facade but in the choice of wall materials for front and side elevations. The effects are sometimes the result of



refronting or partial rebuilding at a later date. The full range of materials includes:

- Clunch (squared blocks and random)
- Flint nodules
- Cobbles (coursed and random)
- Red brick
- Yellow Gault Brick
- Colourwash
- Orange clay pantiles
- Black glazed pantiles
- Slate
- Clay plain tiles

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

There is one Scheduled Ancient Monument in South Creake Conservation Area - the earthworks south east of the church. There are also 2 sites of archaeological interest recorded on the Norfolk Sites and Monuments Record - the Church and Rose Cottage/Old Cottage, both listed buildings.

DETRACTORS

The special quality of Conservation Areas can easily be eroded by seemingly minor alterations such as unsuitable replacement windows and doors, inappropriate materials or unsympathetic paintwork, removal of walls, railings, trees and hedges.

Within South Creake Conservation Area there are few features which detract significantly from its intrinsic character. These include:

- The use of UPVC and other non-traditional new windows and doors in cottages has led to a regrettable loss of character in some parts of the Conservation Area.
- The rendering of some brick and flint facades has also led to an erosion of character.
- A few empty and neglected properties detract from its attractive character.
- The playing field is rather bare and exposed. The whole perimeter would benefit from a scheme of landscaping for example rows of lime or horse chestnut.
- There is an accumulation of street furniture along the Fakenham Road edge of The Green. The bus shelter, pump and bridge railings together with the parking strip would benefit from a scheme of environmental improvement.

CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

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, whether listed or not
- 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

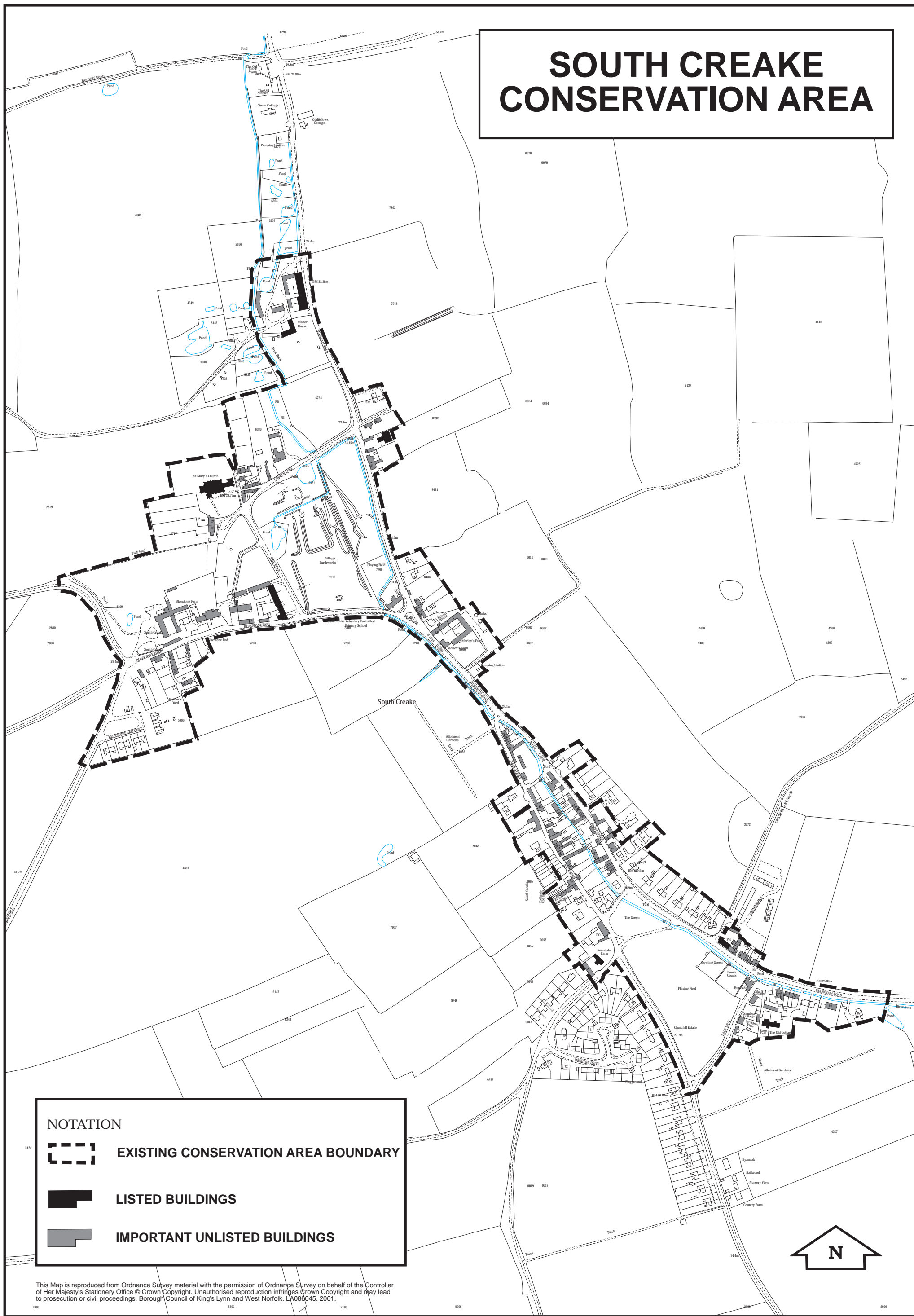
Within conservation areas, a number of special controls apply and it is advisable that anyone proposing to carry out new development, alterations, extensions, installations, demolition or work to trees should seek advice from Planning Policy at an early stage. A leaflet summarising these issues and including general information on conservation areas can be obtained from Planning Policy free of charge.






PLANNING POLICY

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SOUTH CREEKE CONSERVATION AREA



NOTATION

-  **EXISTING CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY**
-  **LISTED BUILDINGS**
-  **IMPORTANT UNLISTED BUILDINGS**



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