

TITCHWELL

CONSERVATION AREA

DRAFT CHARACTER STATEMENT



TITCHWELL, 5 miles W by N of Burnham Market, is a small village overlooking the salt marshes and Brancaster Bay. Its parish has 166 souls and 1430 acres, a great part of which (with the manor) belongs to Magdalen College, Oxford and is leased to a Mr Thompson who lives near York.

WILLIAM WHITE 1845

DESIGNATED: OCTOBER 1978
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.

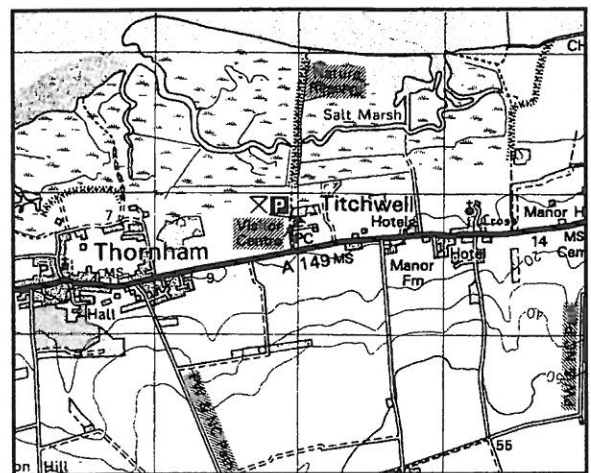
The Titchwell Conservation Area was first designated in 1978 and revised in 1992. This document highlights the special qualities which underpin the character of the conservation area, justifying its designation. It also seeks to increase awareness of those qualities so that where changes to the environment 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

Like other villages along the western end of the north Norfolk coast, Titchwell is situated on the A149 coastal road, between the chalk uplands to the south and salt marshes and sand dunes to the



north. It therefore has good communications westwards to Thornham, 3 kilometres (1¾ miles), Holme-next-the-Sea 4 kilometres (2½ miles) and Hunstanton 10 kilometres (6¼ miles) and eastwards to Brancaster 1 kilometre (½ miles), Burnham Market 10 kilometres (6¼ miles) and Wells

next-the-sea 18 kilometres (11 miles). In contrast, southwards, some 7 kilometres ($4\frac{1}{3}$ miles) of open rolling countryside, only sparsely inhabited, separates the village from Docking.



ORIGIN AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

In the late 1980s and the early 1990s evidence of prehistoric activity, and possibly of a settlement, was found on the beach north of the RSPB Reserve at Titchwell. Discoveries made at first on the surface of the beach, and later in excavation of the peat and clay layers which become visible only at low tides, have been subjected to radio-carbon tests showing that the occupation of the site could have been no later than 7000 BC, at a time when Norfolk would still have been joined to the Continent. The evidence suggests that the site was occupied by itinerant hunter-gatherers and that long-blade flint arrow heads were produced here.

Titchwell is thought to be the site of one of a series of Roman military settlements along this part of the coast, with good access via Peddars Way, a Roman road which ran from Coney Weston in Suffolk and terminated at nearby Holme. A map of 1818, recording roads and field boundaries thought to predate the Enclosure Award of 1786, shows a remarkably rigid grid pattern, typical of Roman settlements.

The name "Titchwell" means "kid spring", from the Old English ticcen and we/la. It indicates that the village has been in continuous occupation since the

Anglo Saxon period and possibly from as early as 5th Century. After the Conquest of 1066 the manor of Titchwell was seized by William the Conqueror from its previous holder, King Harold, and granted to William Lovell. In 1431 it was bought by Sir John Fastolf, a distinguished veteran of the battle of Agincourt, builder of Caister Castle and author of many of the Paston Letters. But it did not come cheaply: it famously took twenty-five years for a law suit, brought by a claimant to the Lovel inheritance, to be settled in Sir John's favour. Sir John settled the manor on the Archbishop of Canterbury, but later it was conveyed to Magdalen College Oxford.

In 1640 one James Dalling left money for weekly "doles" of bread to the poor of the parish. In 1788 about 220 acres of salt marsh were embanked: until then the tide came up as far as the Rectory, which stood just north of the church. By 1845 the village boasted a Wesleyan Chapel in addition to the Parish Church; and White's Directory recorded that the parish could send four boys to the Free School at Brancaster and that residents included the Rector, two farmers (one of them doubled as a merchant) a victualler (landlord of The Horseshoes), a shopkeeper and a shoemaker. By 1868 there was a parish school, the shopkeeper was doubling as postmistress (the post going by cart via Brancaster to King's Lynn), and Harrod's Directory recorded three farmers. By 1904 a parish clerk had been appointed. By 1937, the East Anglian Electric Supply Company was providing power to those in the village who could afford it, the inn and one of the farmers were on the telephone and there was now a police station in the village.

The population of the parish varied only marginally between the mid-19th and

the mid-20th Centuries: from 166 in 1845 to 154 in 1937. But by 1996 it had fallen to 100: a drop of some 35%. This may be accounted for by smaller families and some dwellings being occupied only in the summer. However the census of 2001 may record some increase due to the recent conversion of buildings at Manor Farm and the building of other new houses in the village.

CHARACTER OVERVIEW

Titchwell is a linear settlement, loosely strung out along the main coastal road: for the most part on one side or the other, but not both. As a result the village has a very open character, with views southwards to the higher ground and northwards towards the marshes and the sea (where not screened by hedges). There is a complete break of



some 140 metres between the group of cottages at the western end of the village and the next group at Dodman's Farm. There are two minor exceptions to this linear pattern: a spur off to the north by the ancient village cross, where a short cul-de-sac leads to the church, and a small early twentieth century estate of cottages at White City, off Chalkpit Road, which runs south from the village cross. To these could now perhaps be added Manor Court, a modern residential conversion and development of former farm buildings.

SPACES AND BUILDINGS

A number of distinctly separate groups of buildings can be identified: a group at the west end, Dodman's Farm,

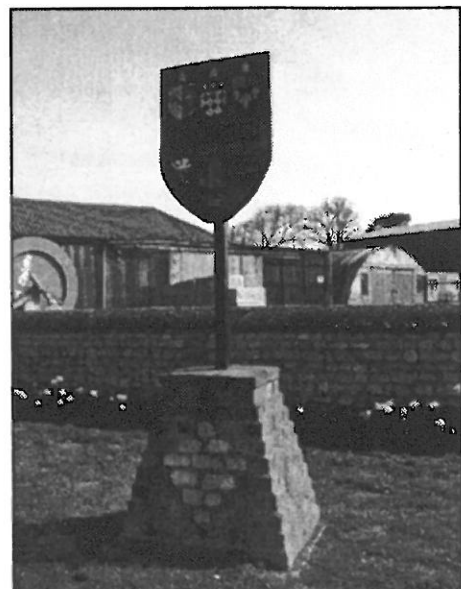
Briarfields Hotel, Manor Court/Manor Farm, the Three Horseshoes, the east end of the village with the Village cross and the Church and, finally, White City.

West end of village

Approaching from the west, a small group of buildings on the south side precedes the main village further on. A modern bungalow set back from the road is followed by a short terrace and a pair of semi-detached late 19th Century cottages hard onto the road. It is ironic that their gable-ends of clunch, which their builders would have considered a "common" material, dominate the street scene, while their "classy" red brick fronts only barely register in the passing perspective. (The status of the two materials is today reversed). Slightly separated from the rest of this group, Orchard Cottage sensibly turns its back on the road to face south. Originally a smaller building of squared clunch, it has been enlarged at some time using pieces of clunch laid herringbone fashion.

Dodman's Farm

The main village is, again on the south side only, with Dodman's Farm, on the corner of Choseley Road. The corner is marked by the village sign in front of a fine wall of clunch with gabled brick



coping. This wall continues along both roads and links - or incorporates - important farm buildings in both directions. Later corrugated buildings have been added to the traditional four sided yard. The farm yard is closely followed by the former farmhouse, Dodman's West. This imposing vernacular house continues the strong street line, turning its back on the road to face south, in the traditional way. It has a fine roof of black glazed pantiles, but is marred by "mock-sash" window replacements. East of the house a new "Georgian style" gateway has been formed in a high wall: though well executed, it seems too grand for its strong vernacular setting. There is an attractive view through the new opening and walled forecourt (formerly no doubt a kitchen garden) to an orchard beyond. A little further on May Cottage and another section of high wall continue the strong street line.

Briarfields Hotel

At this point development switches to the north side, with Briarfields Hotel and Fieldfare Cottages. This group of buildings, of clunch, flint and pantiles, is



all the more attractive for its isolation, making it visible for a great distance in both directions. The hotel is built hard up to the road, and comprises converted and extended farm buildings. The otherwise high quality of the new work is let down by the use of dark pointing in clunch walling and a somewhat excessive use of roof lights.

A long field wall extends along the north side of the road all the way from the Choseley Road turning to Briarfields Hotel. It is visually important, reflecting the firm road edge of Dodman's on the opposite side. At its western end it has become derelict where it skirts round a neglected small pond and then breaks off for a short distance where a small building once stood (reflected in the Conservation Area boundary at this point). It is protected, though not enhanced, by a modern cement coping.

Manor Court and Manor Hotel

Again development switches from one side of the road to the other, with buildings on the south side and the north side open. A terrace of single storey cottages of clunch, slightly set back but with an open frontage, faces the road. The east most cottage has only a door onto the road and a notice board, suggesting perhaps some kind of public use in the past. Sash windows and barge boards to eaves suggest they were built by the local big estate towards the end of the 19th Century. Their porches, with steeply pitched sides and flat tops, are unusual. There then follows the former Manor Farm, now -as Manor Court - converted and extended for residential use. It is a model of its kind: buildings and walls are linked to form clearly defined "hard" public and "soft" private spaces, new buildings are in harmony with the old and new elements have been designed in the local vernacular tradition.

Titchwell Manor Hotel has a rather grand Edwardian air, as if to attract visitors who might otherwise have settled for Cromer or Hunstanton. The entrance employs a lot of elaborate terra cotta decoration and the bay windows on either side have fancy cast iron cresting. Its date must be around 1900. Like the cottages already referred to, red brick was the "posh" material

used for the front, while "common" clunch was good enough for back and sides - even though the sides become the dominant elevations when approaching along the main road from east or west. The hotel has a deep forecourt and a wide drive on the west side. These are pleasantly uncluttered, and the building is of sufficient scale to benefit from such a wide open space.



Former stables, now converted to residential use, link the hotel complex to Manor Court to the west, while to the east a high garden wall ties the hotel into the street scene. This wall continues in front of The Cabin, an attractive house set back in its own garden.

The Three Horseshoes P.H.

Development again switches to the north side, where the former Three Horseshoes P.H. is set back behind a deep forecourt. Of similar date to the Manor Hotel, it is much simpler and replaces an earlier public house of the same name. The front wall is built of flint with gault brick dressings, but - once again - the gable ends are of clunch. The site is currently being converted and developed as housing.

Horseshoe Cottage, west of the pub, is an attractive small Victorian house with ornamented bargeboards and overhanging eaves. It backs hard onto the road and provides a firm corner to the former pub forecourt. East of the

former pub is a substantial 19th Century terrace of three cottages set back behind gardens, They are of two storeys and attics and are built in a deliberately rough mixture of clunch, brick and flint.

Village cross and Church of St Mary

The focal point of the village is the ancient stone cross standing proudly on a grass mound at the junction of the main road and the lane to the church. Only its base, shaft and bulbous head survive. A group of farm buildings enclose the space on the north east corner and are being developed for residential use.



The other buildings in the vicinity of the Cross comprise five pairs of early 20th Century estate houses facing the main road, with hedges or low walls to front gardens.

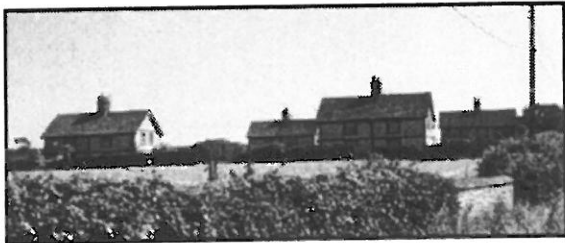
The lane north from the Cross stops at a green in front of the attractive small Church of St Mary, and a group of trees which includes a fine cedar. South of the Church old high clunch walls partly surround a small orchard. A high hedge encloses the east side of the lane, while on the west side there is a pleasing group of estate houses of 1925. The houses are built in knapped flints with red brick dressings and have unusual flint garden walls.

To this mix of Medieval and early 20th Century buildings have recently been added seven modern houses. On the

north side of the main road and in the lane to the Church two pairs of new houses fill two frontage gaps. Despite the use of local materials, notably clunch, their shape and proportions appear alien to the village. A third pair of new houses on the south side of the main road are rather more sympathetic in character. A single new house north-east of the Church, built in "cottage style", is less than sympathetic in its proportions, but is much enhanced by its setting of mature trees, including a fine cedar.

White City

Chalkpit Road rises gently, crossing the open countryside to meet the road from Burnham Market to Ringstead. It cuts into the chalk, with steep banks topped by high hedgerows. A steep turning to the east leads to White City. This small isolated development comprises four pairs of semi-detached estate houses, similar in form and date to the houses on the main road already referred to, but built of clunch with brick dressings (including horizontal and vertical bands of brick articulating each elevation). As a group they make a strong and purposeful statement in this open landscape.



A little further south, a track leads to Sparrow Hall. The house is completely surrounded by trees and hedgerows and makes no visual impact on the Conservation Area.

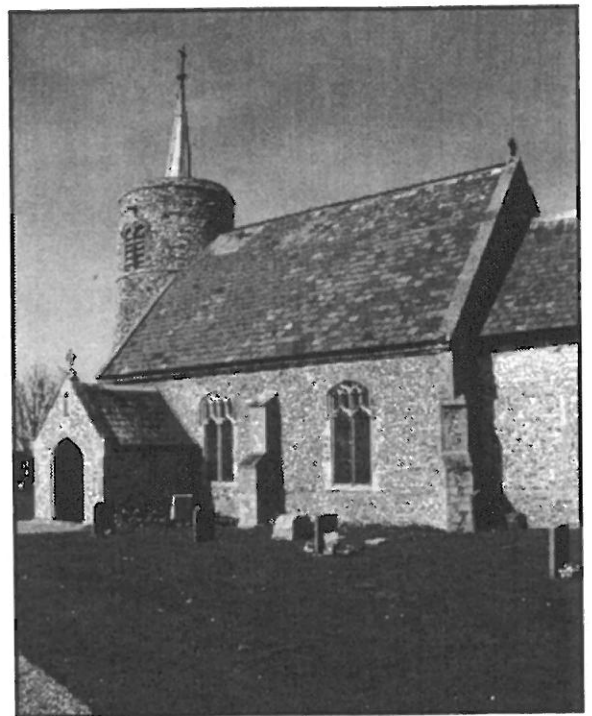
LISTED BUILDINGS

There are only two Listed structures in the Conservation Area. The statutory list

was published in 1953.

Listed Grade I

● **Church of St Mary**, at end of lane leading north from A149. An attractive small church. 12th Century flint round tower, with charming lead-covered spirelet. Also evidence of 12th Century work in chancel. Late 19th Century steep slated nave roof, dwarfing the tower. Lower pitched slated chancel roof. Fine 13th Century south doorway. 15th Century chancel arch with restored rood screen.



Listed Grade II

● **Village Cross**, at junction of A149 and lane to church. Medieval, perhaps 15th Century. Brick base and knob-angled stone pedestal with socket in which is set eight-sided shaft, with re-attached bulbous eight-sided head.

IMPORTANT UNLISTED BUILDINGS

The special quality of Titchwell Conservation Area, while greatly enhanced by its Listed buildings, owes as much to the large number of important unlisted buildings within its

boundaries. These are buildings which, by their position, their group value in relation to other buildings and their use of local materials, contribute to the character of the village. Thirty-eight such buildings have been identified, representing 76% of the total number of unlisted buildings in the Conservation Area. Important walls, which link buildings and enclose spaces, have also been identified.

IMPORTANT TREES

Trees, individual and in groups, make a vitally important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. These have been identified.

POST-WAR DEVELOPMENT

Although the number of new houses built since 1945 has been small, their impact on a small village should not be underestimated. They comprise a bungalow at the west end of the village and seven detached two storey houses at the eastern end (four on the main road and three in the lane leading to the church). Other developments include the conversion and extension of Manor

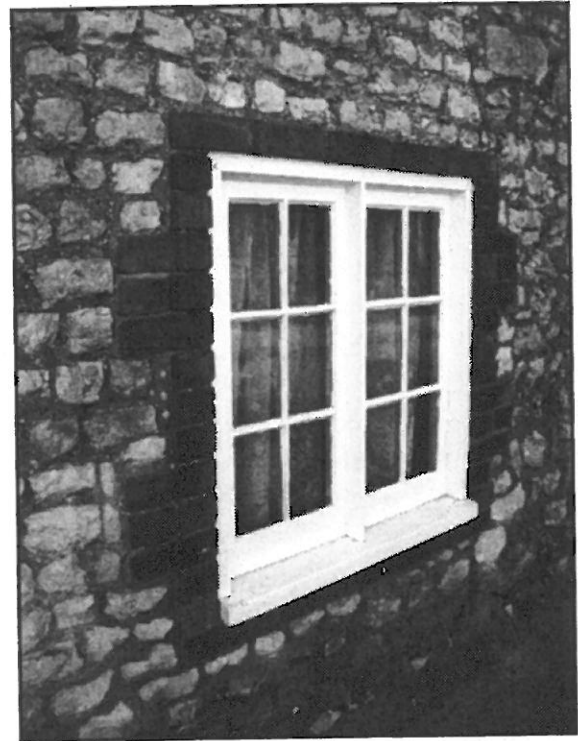


Farm to residential use, and the conversion and extension of farm buildings to form Briarfields Hotel, while modern developments in agriculture have led to the erection of new buildings at Dodman's Farm and Manor Farm. The most recent residential

development has taken place at Dodmans Farm, the former Three Horseshoes P.H. and the farm complex adjacent to the village cross.

TRADITIONAL MATERIALS

Chalk is not far beneath the surface on the higher ground south of the village.



Clunch is therefore much in evidence as a building material. It is combined with red - or occasionally gault - brick dressings. But a wide range of other materials from slightly further afield has also always been available and provided a rich palette for building in the village. Local materials include:

- clunch (chalk), rubble or squared, sometimes galletted (joints filled) with small pieces of carstone or brick.
- flint (usually pebble, but in some cases knapped)
- redbrick
- gault brick (pink-buff, but tends to weather to grey)
- red clay pantiles

- whitewash on any of these materials
- lime-sand render over any of these materials
- Welsh slates

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

There are no scheduled Ancient Monuments in the Conservation Area.

DETRACTORS

The special character of Conservation Areas can easily be eroded by poorly proportioned new buildings as well as by seemingly minor alterations such as unsympathetic replacement windows and doors, inappropriate materials or paintwork, the removal of walls, trees or hedges or the use of inappropriate front boundary features. Features which detract from the special character of the Conservation Area include:

- Unsympathetic window replacements.
- Derelict wall facing main road opposite Dodman's Farm
- Proliferation of overhead cables

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

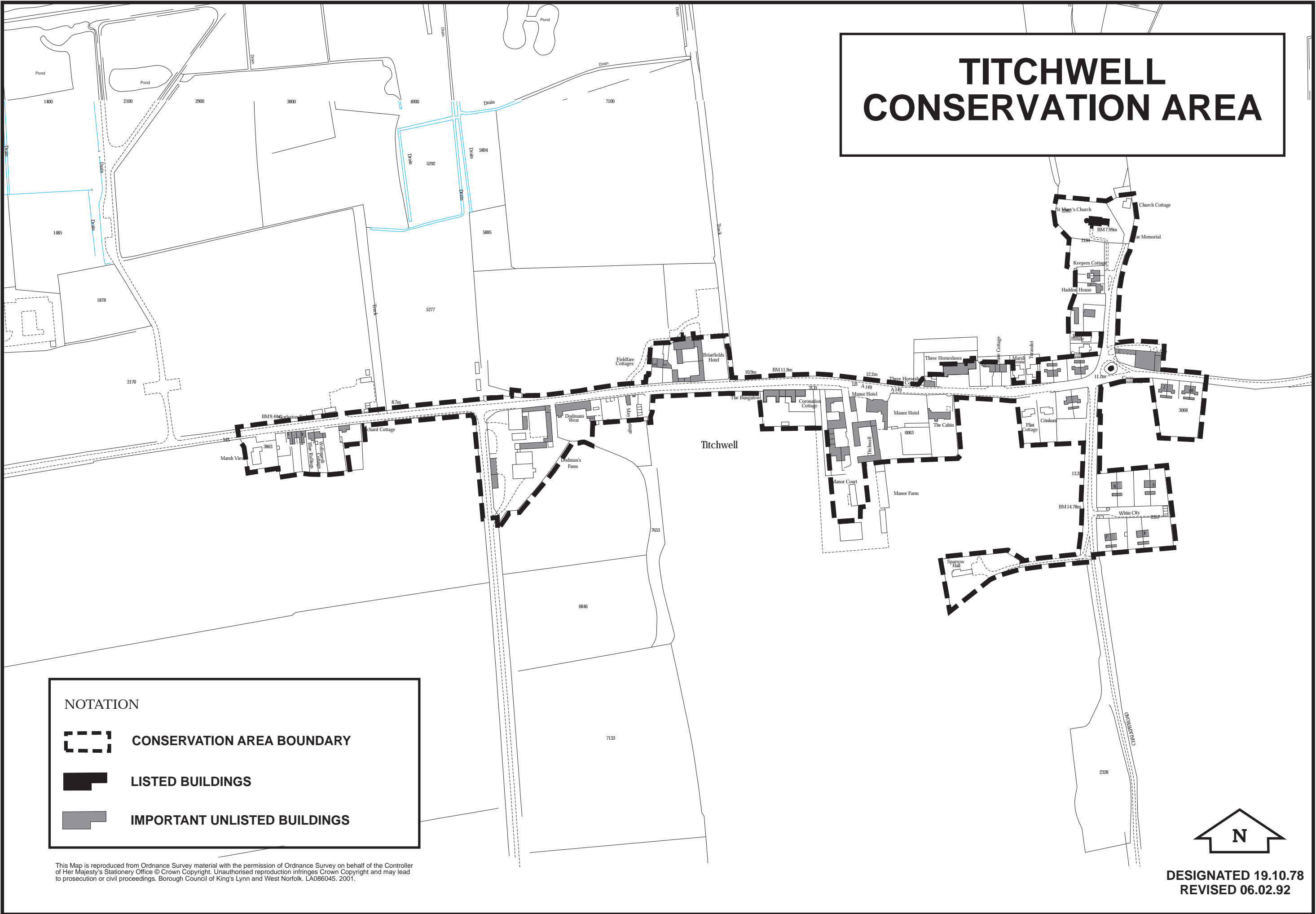
Within conservation areas, a number of special controls apply and it is advisable that anyone proposing to carry out new development, alterations, extensions, installations, should seek advice from Planning Policy at an early stage. Special controls apply to the trees and some may be subject to Tree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






PLANNING POLICY

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TITCHWELL CONSERVATION AREA



NOTATION

-  CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY
-  LISTED BUILDINGS
-  IMPORTANT UNLISTED BUILDINGS



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