Parish of Norton St Philip



Character Assessment

For the settlements of Norton St Philip, Farleigh Hungerford and Hassage

2024 Regulation 14 Consultation Version

15th August 2024

Acknowledgements

This report details survey work done by the Norton St Philip Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group, mainly on the 28th May 2018, a warm, dry but generally overcast day. Liz Beth of LB Planning facilitated the survey work and drafted this report, working with the neighbourhood plan group. The BANES methodology, slightly adapted, was used to structure the survey and analysis of local character. Photographs have been provided by the Group.

Norton St Philip Parish Council

LB planning

Abbreviations used in the text:

The village of Norton St Philip is also referred to as 'Norton' and the Parish as 'NSP'.

The Conservation Area Appraisal for Norton St Philip is abbreviated to 'CAA'.

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Parish Church of St Philip and St James together with Church Cottage

Introduction

This report has been produced as an evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan, and future development in the parish will be required to pay regard to the guidance within it. It is a response to higher level planning policy. National planning policy (NPPF2018 paras 124-132) emphasises the importance of good design:

> "The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve…..developments [should be] sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting".

Design guides are seen as a key tool to provide clarity on what will be expected and considered good design. Policy DP1 in the adopted Mendip Local Plan Part 1 reflects this national guidance and emphasises the need for development proposals to 'maintain and enhance local identity and distinctiveness'.

Thus this Character Assessment has been produced to provide guidance on what locally responsive good design in Norton St Philip means in practice. It is the local detail needed for higher level policy to be truly effective. The Norton St Philip Neighbourhood Plan aims to promote excellent design in new development that protects and enhances local character and uniqueness. In this way the village and its setting will continue to appeal to residents and attract visitors, and reflect the considerable historic legacy in Norton.

1. Norton St Philip

1.1 Norton is an historic village in the north-east of Somerset, with a population of about a thousand (it has increased in size considerably since the 2011 Parish wide Census figure of 858). It is located between four larger urban centres: Bath 8 miles north, Frome 7 miles to the south, Trowbridge and Radstock. It is on the boundary between Wiltshire and Somerset, and on the north-eastern edge of the former Somerset district of Mendip. The A366 runs through the village on a west-east axis, and leads onto Trowbridge. Within the wider parish are two other small settlements, Farleigh Hungerford and Hassage, which have also been surveyed. Both of these settlements are in the Bristol and Bath Green Belt, which covers the northern section of the parish down to the village development limit.

Mendip District Council was the Local Planning Authority for NSP until March 2023 when the District became Somerset East, part of the new Unitary Authority, Somerset Council. The Mendip Local Plans Pt 1&2 remain the adopted policy documents for development in the District of Somerset East until a new Unitary Plan is adopted.

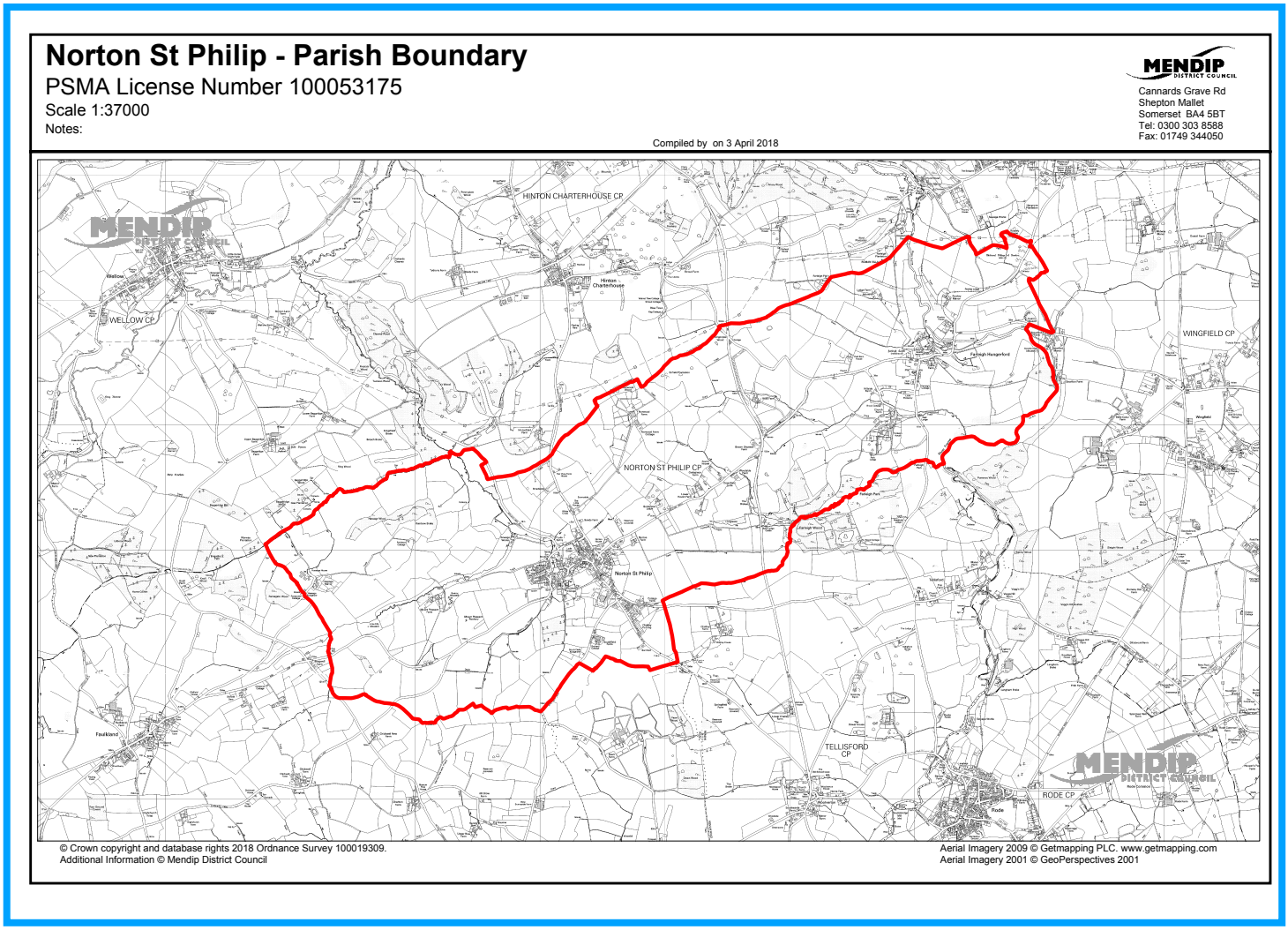

Figure 1: NSP Parish

1.2 The village is built on a ridge and its western slopes. Thus views from the village are notable, especially in a westerly direction, and it forms a visible skyline from many parts of the surrounding farmland. Agriculture and the early cloth trade have traditionally been the main economic activities. The village's fortunes rose and fell during the last millennium, but its buildings were not significantly impacted by the industrial revolution, and the form of the village slowly developed and shifted over the centuries. The twentieth century saw some new development but the most significant increase has come in the last 10 years.



1.3 Much of the population now commutes to work, although Norton has a higher than average number of people working from home (14% Census 2011). The village centre is characterised by narrow streets which combined with on street parking have necessitated a 20 mph zone on both the main arterial roads through the village (A366 and B3110). The narrowness of the roads through the village have contributed to many HGV related incidents. The arterial roads are now covered by a 7.5 tonne weight limit. The roads have no space for widening and the recent increase in housing in the village has put increased pressure on these roads leading to queues at busy times.



Traffic 'Pinch point' at junction of A366 and B3110

1.4 Local businesses include the headquarters of Bath Rugby, a timber building construction company, and the 14th century George Inn, claimed to be one of Britain's oldest taverns. The village has a convenience store which includes post-office facilities; a farm shop and café; two pubs; the Parish Church and a Gospel Chapel; a first school and pre school and a village hall. There are regular bus services between Norton and both Bath and Frome. Evening services are less frequent and Sunday services are limited.



The George Inn (Listed Grade 1)

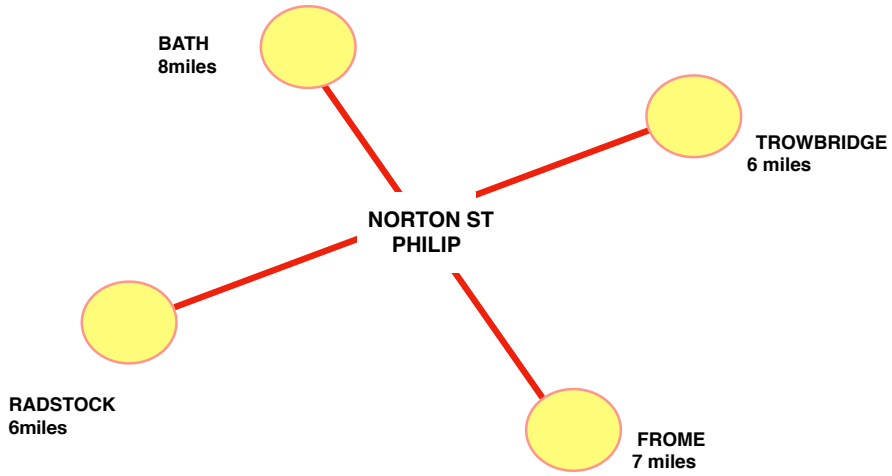

Figure 2:Norton St Philip in relation to surrounding urban centres

2. Landscape and Geology of the Village and Parish

2.1 Norton is situated on a ridge of limestone running approximately north south, at the top of the westerly slope. The local marble/mudstone formation underlies much of the village, and both stone features heavily in the historic construction of buildings.

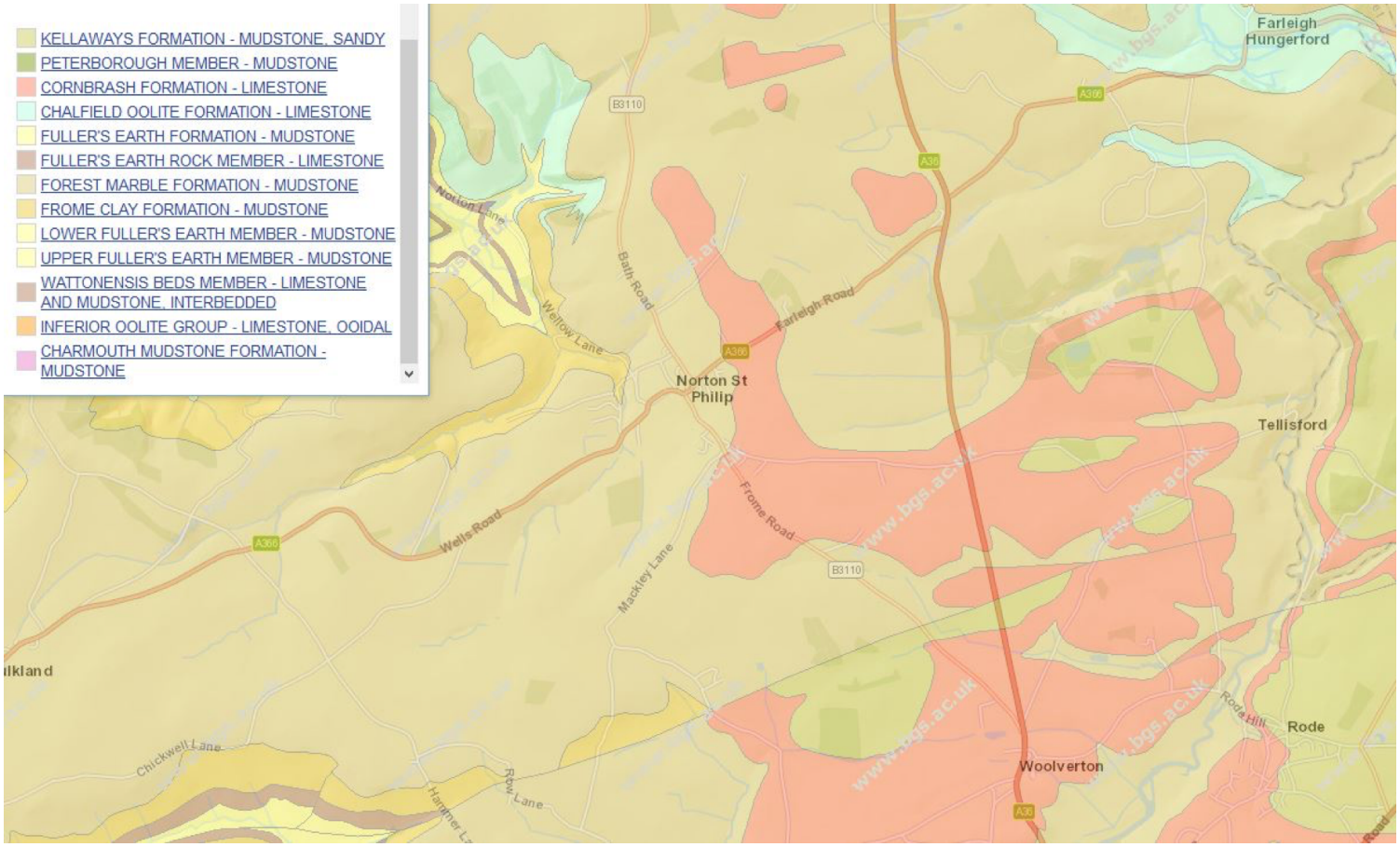

Figure 3: The local base rock (source: British Geological Survey website)

2.2 Norton St Philip is at the southern end of the Cotswolds National Character Area, as defined in the landscape profiles of Natural England. Key environmental objectives are seen as protecting the distinctive farmed landscape and expansive views. The historic environment and stone-built settlements are also a distinctive feature of this character area. The Oolite limestone geology has influenced drainage, soils and vegetation which in turn gives rise to a distinctive and sometimes rare and endangered local flora and fauna.

2.3 In 1997 Mendip DC commissioned a landscape study from Chris Blandford Associates of the entire district. Although somewhat dated now, it is a useful summary of the area's landscape attributes. Norton was included within the area described as "The Cotswold Edge", where key features were defined as:

- Broad, rolling landforms and ridges;
- Oolite buildings and occasional oolite drystone walls;
- Nucleated villages and scattered farms.

The George Inn is mentioned as a fine example of an Oolite limestone building. As to the landscape, Norton has greater tree cover than the surrounding agricultural landscape – which generally has an open aspect rather than extensive woodland areas.



View of Norton looking east from Hassage

3. Historical Development of Norton

3.1 Norton is mentioned in the Domesday Book. Norton Mill may be on the same site today as mentioned in 1086. Norton developed as a market town in medieval times with a flourishing cloth trade. It lost importance following the Industrial Revolution. During the late 19th century and first half of the 20th century the population of the village declined, as was general in rural areas. In recent years there has been significant development in the village particularly of 4 bedroom homes.

3.2 The village core and important open spaces are included in the Norton St Philip Conservation Area, which was first designated in 1969 (being the first such designation in Mendip), and extended in 1996. A Conservation Area Appraisal was undertaken in 2007, and was a key evidence base for this report. This appraisal is on the NP website at. https://nortonstphilipneighbourhoodplan.files.wordpress.com/2018/06/conservation_area_appraisal_nsp_-_final_draft-copy.pdf

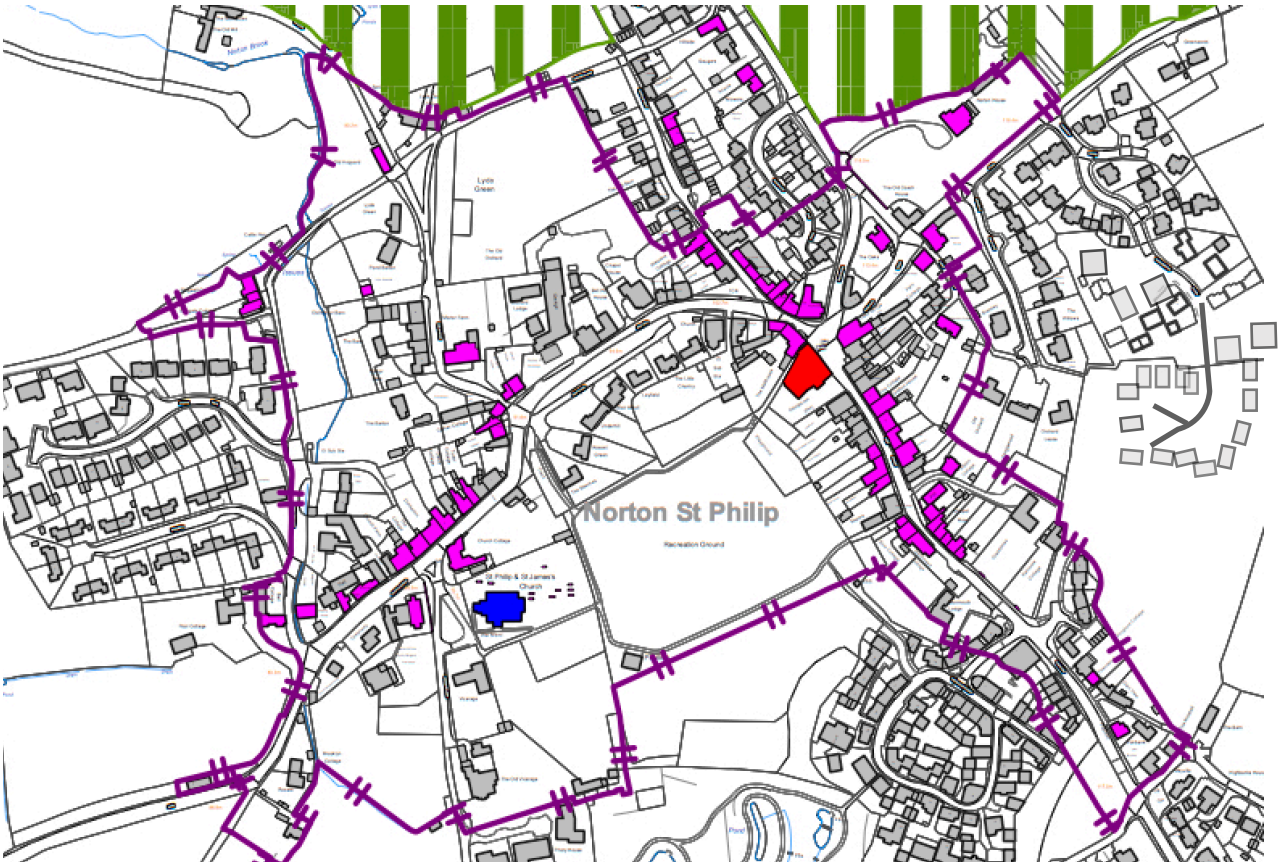

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Figure 4: Conservation Area, Listed Buildings and Greenbelt

3.3 The historic buildings in the village are mostly of seventeenth century construction, at least to the street frontage. Several have earlier features incorporated. The Church was restored in the 19th Century, but includes earlier medieval fabric. The George Inn is Grade 1 listed, and has been an important building and institution within the village for centuries. There was a medieval market beside it on the street, and during the Monmouth rebellion in 1685 it was the headquarters of the rebels locally. In the eighteenth century it was an important coaching inn, and it is still a busy public house, hotel and restaurant. Early nineteenth century buildings of note include the school and Baptist Chapel.

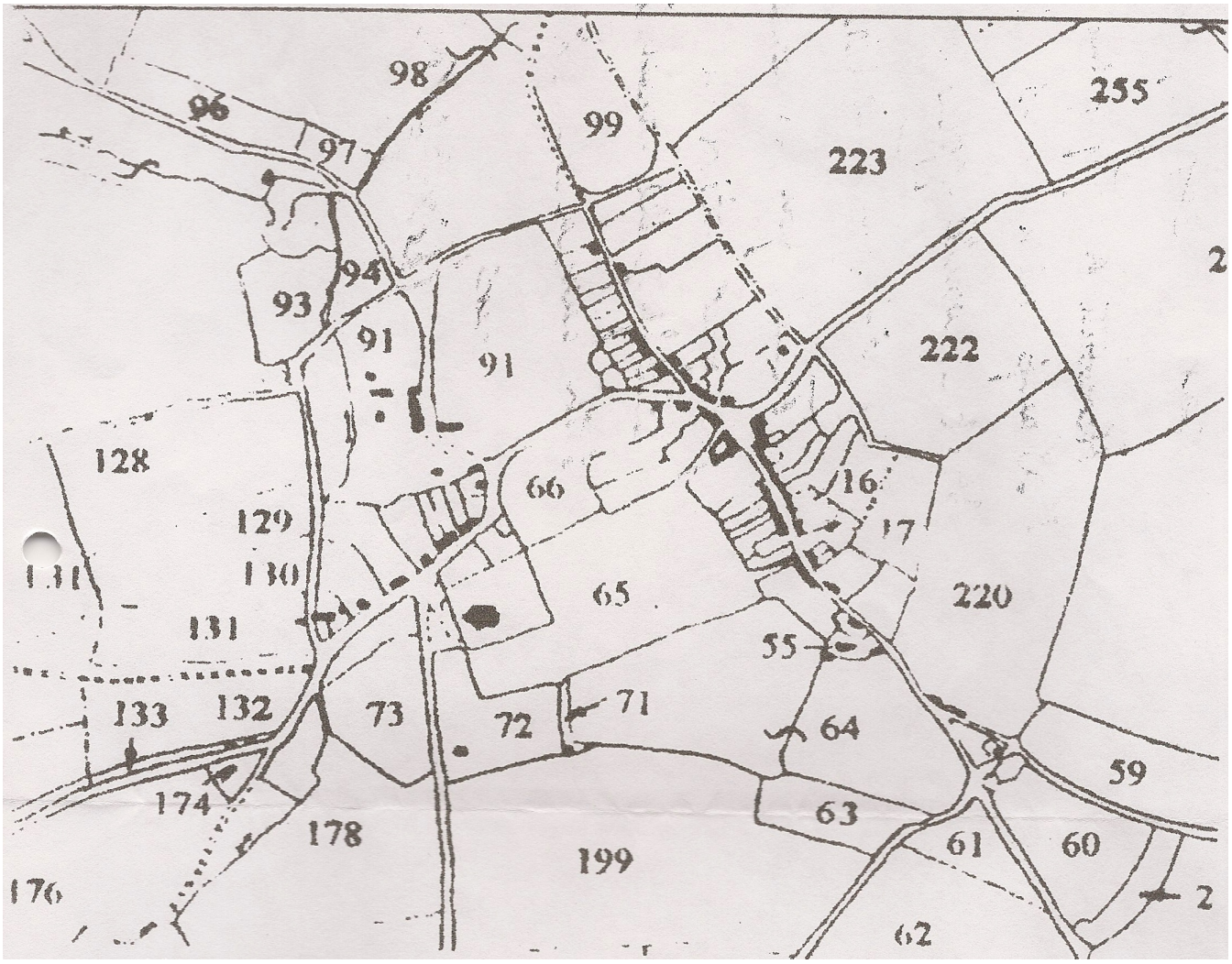

Figure 5 :1638 Survey plan of NSP

3.4 Historically, two separate areas of development can be seen, around the Parish Church to the west, and High Street, The Plaine and North Street on the ridge above. These areas have been linked with more modern development along Bell Hill, but listed buildings in the village show the older divide clearly (figure 4). Areas of open space that form 'green corridors' into the village from surrounding farmland help keep this historic form distinct. Green spaces within the village also perform an important visual function in that they define the historic village and contrast with the tightly packed development within its core. For this reason the conservation area boundary has included them. They often had historic functions, for example Fair Close and the orchard behind which was an important medieval marketplace.



Church Street



Bell Hill



High Street

The two village cores together with the linking Bell Hill



Aerial view 2004

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Effect of development at Longmead and Fortescue evident



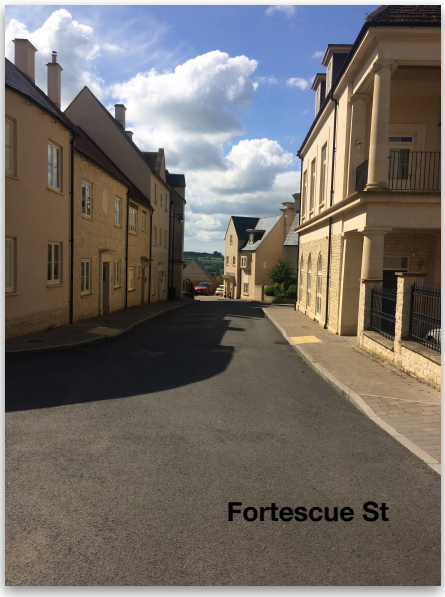
Aerial view 2022 Googlearth

4. The Built Character and Form of Norton

4.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) for Norton St Philip has described three distinct character areas within the conservation area. The original historic village core around the Parish Church has a varied architectural character from 17th to 19th Century styles still surviving. The High Street area is denser development, with consistent building lines and a corridor of terraces created - in contrast to the looser assembly of buildings and cottages around the Church. The third area defined is the semi-rural area to the north of Bell Hill and Church Street, where low density development and scattered cottages are found. This area is linked by enclosed and narrow rural lanes, with buildings often set back, and interspersed with areas of green space that reinforce the visual connection to surrounding fields and countryside. This report builds on the analysis and evidence in the CAA, but our survey has extended to the wider village and settlements in order that the character of the built environment generally is documented.


Church St


High St


Fortescue St

4.2 There are aspects of built form that are common to all development in the village. Two storey development predominates, with some single storey development and 'chalet' type development interspersed in the post-war development, and a few instances of a third storey built into the roof space in older buildings, including the George Inn and The Plaine. Historic roofing materials were stone rather than slate, but clay tiles are common now. Elevations are generally in stone, or, outside of the conservation area, reconstituted stone. Brick elevations on Ringwell have been painted, which reduces visual impact. There is also some use of render on modern buildings. This helps promote a unity between the historic village and newer development, a unity that has not always been assisted by other aspects of design.


North Street

4.3 Both of the smaller settlements, Hassage and Farleigh Hungerford, being within the green belt have not had significant new buildings added, and are both mostly historic building construction, with dwellings and other buildings informally spread out along narrow lanes, with mature vegetation linking the built form into the surrounding countryside.

4.4 The key visual elements of Norton and the smaller settlements were recorded during Survey work in May 2018. Figures 7 to 10 show the results of this work for Norton, the grounding sketch of Figure 7 clearly showing the areas of tightly packed older housing. The difference is also noticeable on this sketch between Ringwell and Springfield housing layouts on traditional streets, and the newer development at Fortescue. The latter has mimicked the densely packed layouts of the High Street and Church Street but is of larger and disproportionate scale, particularly as regards height. It should be noted that the roof-line is higher than that of the High Street: moreover, the development includes some three story houses (and one of four). Development at Fortescue has also replicated the building elevation up to the highway characteristic of the village's historic streets. The stone walls are a notable feature of the conservation area.



Fig 6: Grounding sketch showing the spaces between buildings in Norton

EXAMPLES OF STONE WALLS IN THE CONSERVATION AREA



Above and right:path to Church Mead





Above and below:Ringwell Lane



Wellow Lane (below)



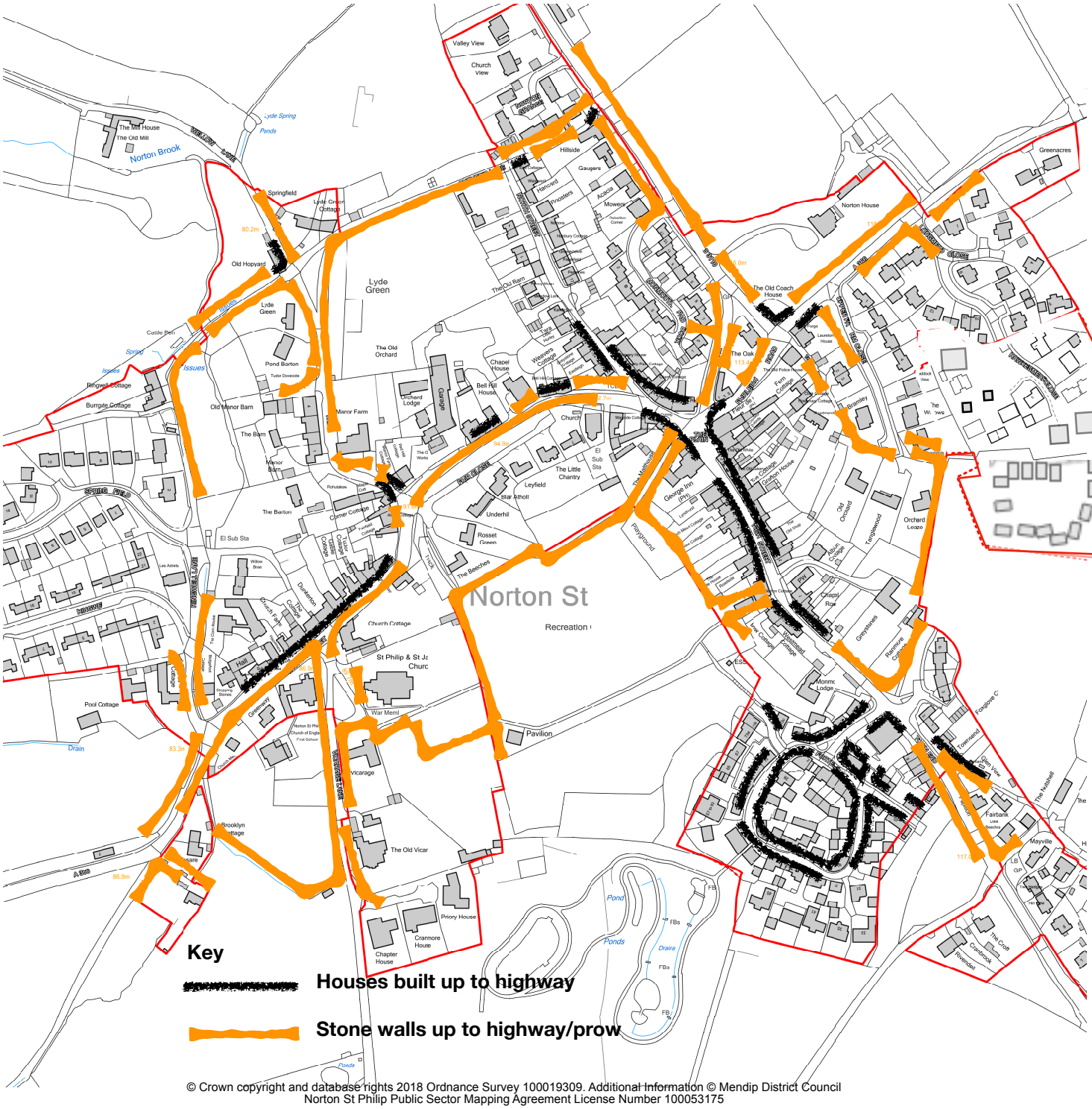


Figure 7: Stone walls and building elevations fronting the highway



Stone walls
Church Street

4.5 The scattered development of historic housing north of Church Street and Bell Hill, along Wellow, Chevers and Ringwell Lanes is clearly visible in Figure 7, which also shows the open spaces within the conservation area protecting the clear distinction between the two historic village centres. The general form of the village is of a 'spokes of a wheel' form, with development lining the streets leading into the village and forming a rough star shape. New development respects and maintains the historic form best when it complies with this pattern. New development to the north east of the village was once compatible, being located on the easterly spoke, but is now filling in too far to the south. The Fortescue Fields development is located on the southern spoke, the High Street, and has made efforts to reflect the historic built form of the village and has won architectural awards.







New development.
L-R: Springfield,
Fortescue, Longmead

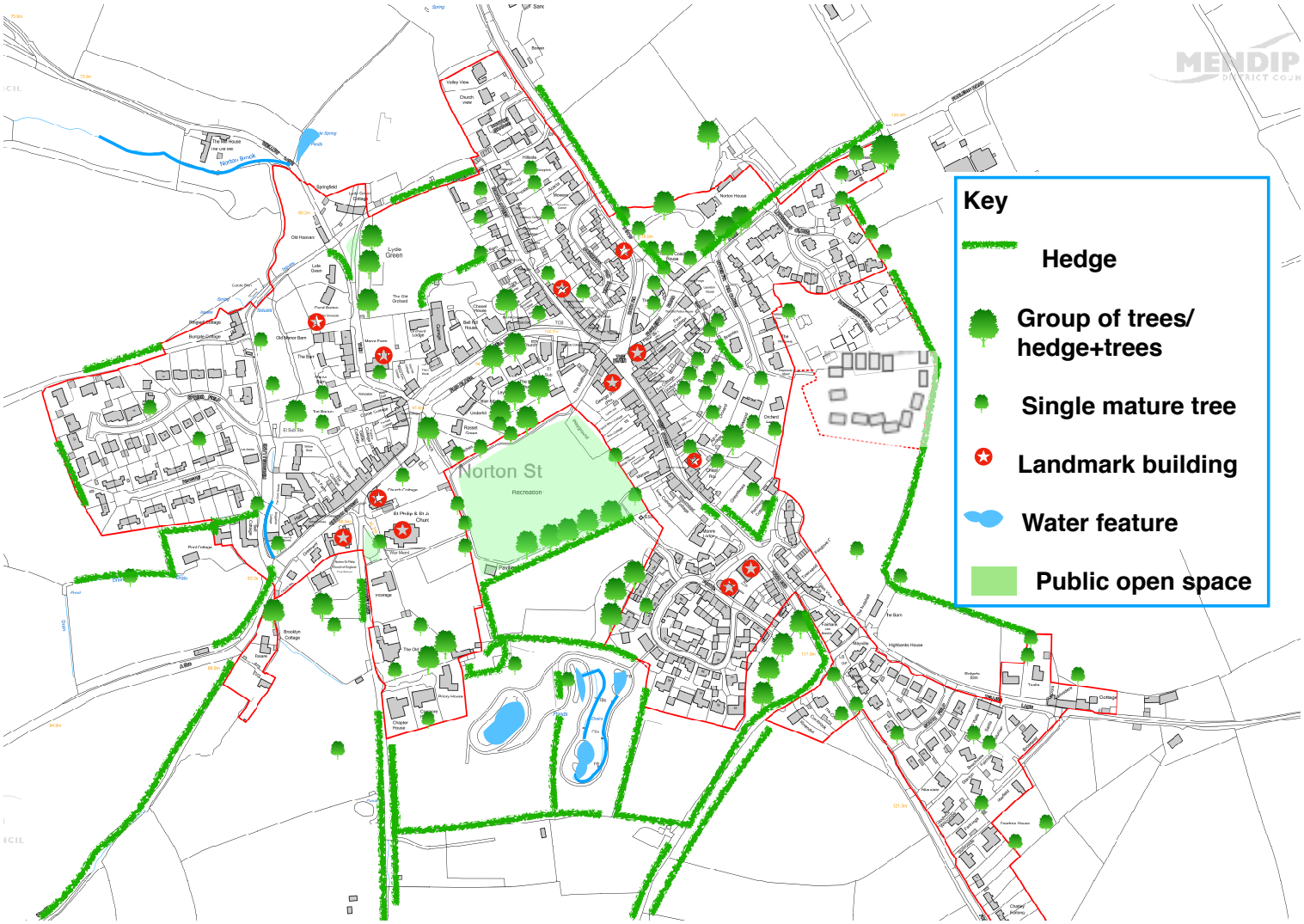


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Fig 8: Natural Features and Landmarks in Norton

4.6 The survey detailed in Figure 8 shows the lack of vegetation in the historic terraced streets of Church Street and High Street, as well as in the new development of Fortescue. Other areas have variable amounts of trees and hedges, but the traditional scattered cottages and other buildings of the Chevers and Wellow Lane area are set in abundant soft landscaping – for a limestone area. Similarly the area around the Parish Church is also very green. Thus there appears to be a gradation from dense, mainly terraced housing directly onto the street with no soft landscaping, to an almost rural landscape with cottages interspersed. This will be a key variable therefore in the guidance for the different Norton character areas.







Graduation from terraced housing to rural cottages- High Street,Bell Hill, Chevers Lane

Landmarks



Parish Church





Milestone and Brewery Pump



The George Inn

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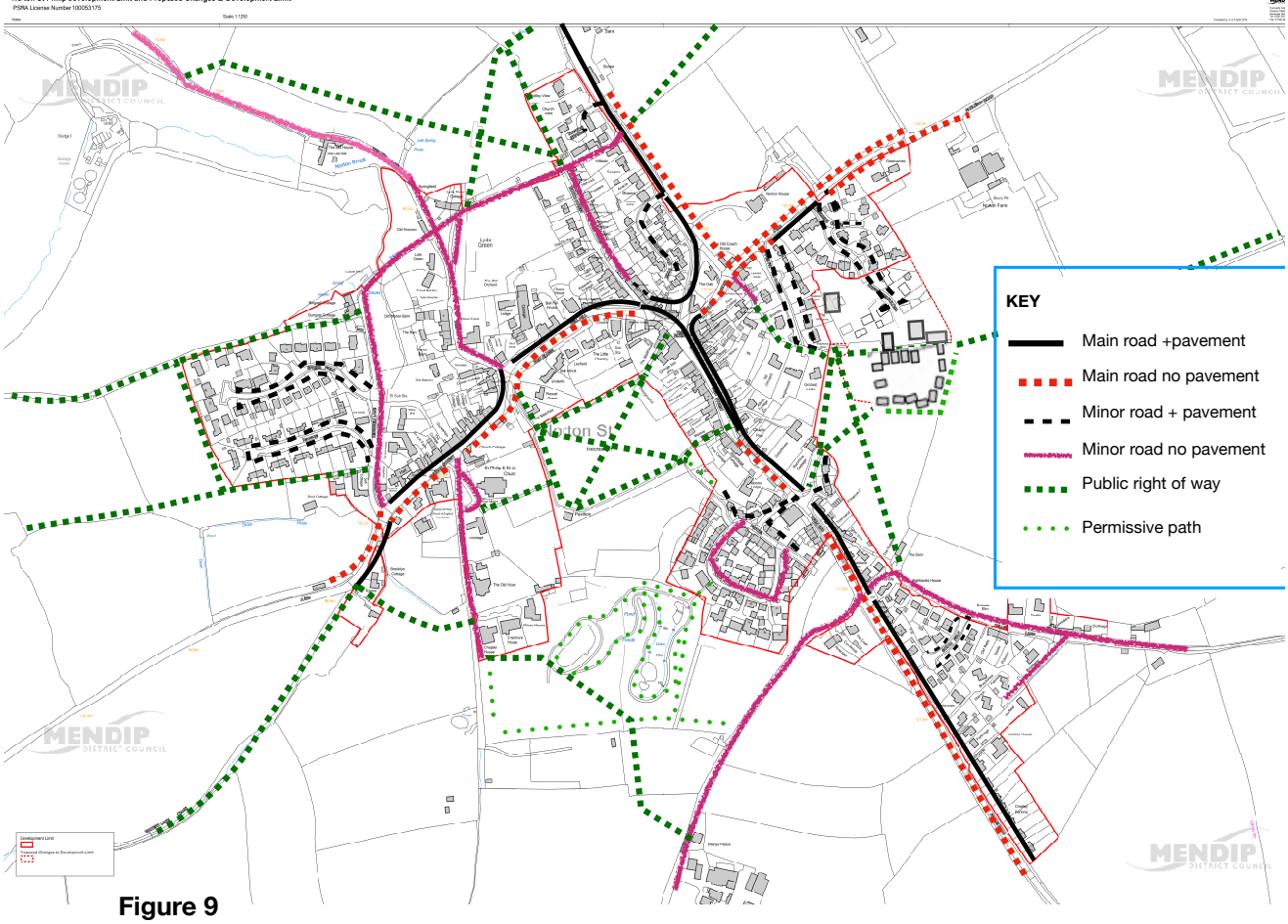

Figure 9
Roads and Rights of Way in Norton

4.7 The street plan of Figure 9 shows clearly the informal narrow lanes of the Chevers and Wellow Lanes area, all without formal pedestrian footways. A lack of footways is found elsewhere in the village on the older streets and lanes, but the majority of residential roads built post-war have provided footways each side with the notable exception of the shared surfaces of Fortescue Fields. The effect of this is that these very lightly trafficked residential roads are providing the most rigorous separation by transport mode in the village, often in cul-de-sacs. Current thinking in residential road design is that surfaces, design and widths should prioritise pedestrians use over the whole width of the road, and reduce vehicle speeds down to a point where that is safe.



Variation in provision for pedestrians : Chevers Lane (left), Longmead (centre) and Fortescue (right)

4.8 Where dwellings have a boundary treatment this is delineated either by a hedge or stone wall. An open grass sward with no boundary definition is not found in the older village, and can contribute to the discordant visual expanse of residential roads designed to modern highway specification.







Boundary Treatments in the Conservation Area- Church St (above); Bell Hill (top) and The Barton (right)



Springfield (no boundary treatment)

4.9 Although housing development post-war has used materials that are in keeping with the historic fabric, dwelling layouts and street treatments have conspired to create an overall impression of suburban development that is not in keeping with the historic village. The exception to this is Fortescue, where streets imaginatively reflect the historic form. The dwelling density and lack of soft landscaping at Fortescue will not always be appropriate in other developments but the street design does suggest a way forward for future developments generally, in order that they reflect Norton's traditional character more closely.

Southfield,
Off Tellisford Lane





Longmead



Fortescue Fields

4.10 The village of Norton St Philip has developed on a ridge, which means that the village has many views out to the countryside, and is visible, particularly to the west, from many locations outside the village. Figure 10 shows views from the streets and open spaces in Norton, with the key views identified. Farleigh Hungerford is located on the slopes of the Frome valley, and although a less exposed location still has views out from higher locations and up and down the river. A short walk east from Hassage provides an excellent panoramic view of Norton St Philip stretched out along the ridge with the Parish Church set a bit below the ridgeline.

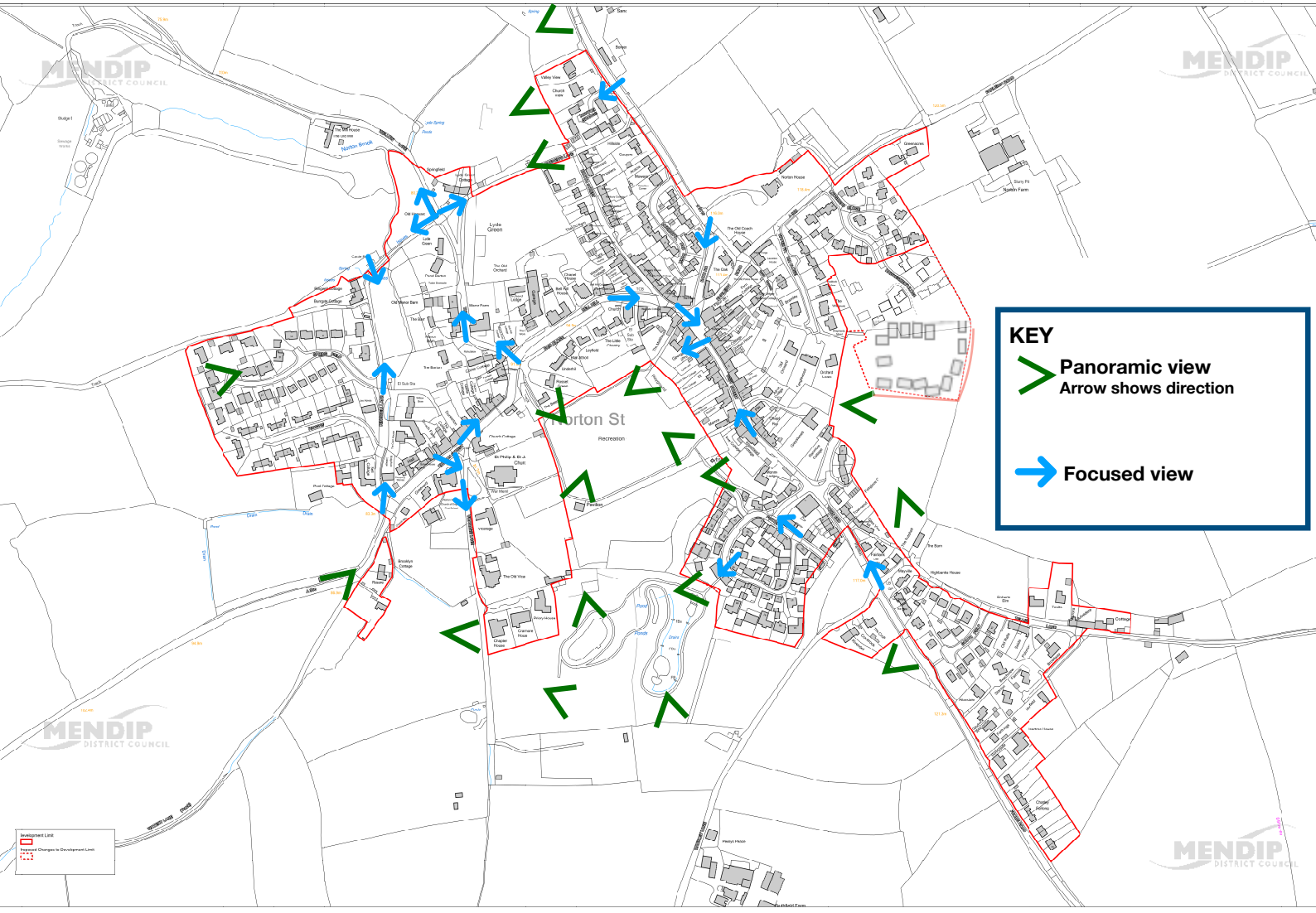

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Figure 10: Important views into and out of Norton St Philip

Church Mead





From Monmouth Paddock

Chevers Lane



From Fortescue Fields



The George from Fortescue Ponds



5. Character Areas in the Parish of Norton St Philip

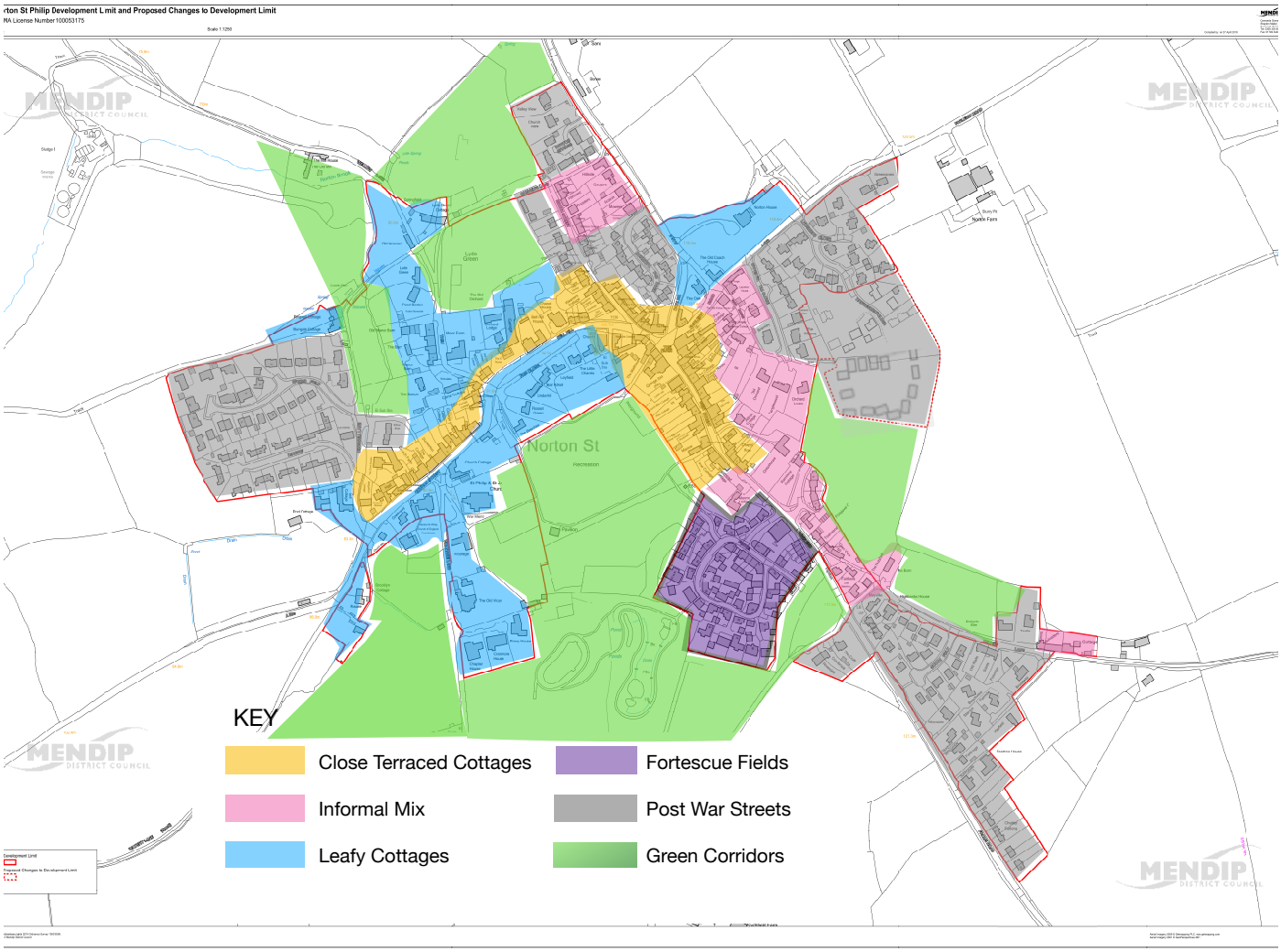

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Fig 11: Character Areas in Norton St Philip

5.1 From the analysis of the survey data in Section 4 above, six distinct character areas have been identified, as shown in Figure 11. The smaller settlements are included in a seventh character area of 'traditional villages in the countryside'. Each area is discussed separately, with additional guidelines given that are relevant only, or particularly, to that area.

5.2 Besides the guidance for each character area, there are some general guidelines for development in Norton village set out below. All development will be expected to comply with them, as well as the specific guidelines for the relevant character area:

- The Green corridors should be maintained as a key definition of the historic village form
- Development will generally be expected to be no more than two storeys in height, exceptionally a third storey partially or wholly within the roof space will be acceptable depending on context and character area.
- Dwelling layouts should respect the form of the character area and reflect traditional building features as discussed in the Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA). Roofs should be steep, at least 40° and traditional stone construction will be expected within the Conservation Area and outside it within the 'Informal Mixed' and Fortescue areas. Elsewhere elevations should use local stone or reconstituted stone that presents an acceptable appearance of stone, with some render in less visible areas and used to good overall effect. Double Roman pantiles and slate roofs also feature in the village.
- Larger developments will need to vary building elevations and scale in order to be in keeping with the small-scale variation found in the traditional village.
- New residential road layouts should be similar in scale to the traditional lanes of the village, not necessarily with a separate footway but designed to give pedestrians priority and a safe environment.
- All dwellings in the conservation area should include a chimney
- Street lighting is traditionally unobtrusive, for example on High Street, and external lighting should generally be shielded, kept to the minimum output required for purpose and designed to prevent light pollution.Lighting fixtures and fittings should be designed to blend into the historic village and other site contexts. There should be no floodlighting of large external sports or community facilities.
- Lighting in some residential areas can be excessive (Fortescue Fields for example), and low output LED are preferable to sodium lighting.
- Boundary treatments will normally be required, and should be constructed in stone or if planted be consistent with the treatment of surrounding properties. Existing stone walls on a site should be retained.
- Houses should include gardens; although desirable in flats this is not a requirement
- Wherever possible, developments should make use of re-cycled materials and /or material from sustainable local sources and promote the highest standards of sustainable building and conservation of resources

- New residential road layouts should ensure safe access for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users and could be based on a shared surface design rather than use separate footways where pedestrian safety would not be compromised..
- Boundary treatments will normally be required, and should be constructed in stone or planted in line only with native trees and hedgerows and be consistent with the treatment of surrounding properties. Any existing stone walls on a site should wherever possible be retained;
- Extensions and conversions are to be consistent with the above and should conform to the guidance set out in MDC's "House Extension Design Guide" (04 May 1993) or, if superseded, any subsequent guide



Excessive sodium lighting in Fortescue Fields (above)



Adequate pools of light in the High Street (right)

Area 1: Close-terraced Cottages

Found within the conservation area and the oldest parts of the village, this character area is mainly comprised of stone-built two storey terraced cottages hard up to the road, creating an enclosed corridor feel to the street, especially as sight lines along the street are interrupted by bends in the road. Traditionally the properties have been built along the main roads through the village. Although the streets have no trees or any soft-landscaping, they normally have a long thin garden to the rear. Roofs are steep, at least 45°, and often constructed in traditional stone tiles, although red pantile tiles are also fairly common. Slate features less, something that is general to the whole village.

Construction over the centuries has added several landmark buildings to the High Street character area. The Plaine is a visual centre to the village at the north end of High Street, a small enclosed square with landmark buildings on three sides, including the George Inn. Unfortunately the urban space between the buildings is given over to white-lined highway which detracts from the striking historic urban form.

Close-terraced Cottages Development Guidelines:

- Development should continue the building line of the street and not detract from existing landmarks or obscure existing views identified in Figure 10.
- Opportunities to improve the appearance and safety of the highway for vulnerable road users will be required where appropriate. New surface treatments should enhance the surrounding historic fabric and appearance of the conservation area.
- The character area is found in two parts of the village, both of which are within the conservation area, and development will be expected to enhance and conserve its appearance. Traditional building styles as described in the Norton St Philip Conservation Area Appraisal will be required.

Close-terraced Cottages - typical views (below and overleaf):







Above: Buildings directly onto the highway (normally a narrow pavement, sometimes raised)





Views up to The Plaine



View north up High Street



Bell Hill

Area 2: Leafy Cottages

This character area has a more rural feel, with dwellings set in green spaces and the wider rural hinterland, linked by narrow lanes enclosed with trees and hedges or stone walls. It is also part of the historic village and included within the conservation area. Although significantly different from the close-terraced cottages in Area 1, construction is also in the traditional local stone and features. There are some terraces within it, but detached and semi-detached dwellings set in gardens are much more prevalent. Fair Close dwellings are not of a traditional design, but the narrow street and significant vegetation reflect landscape aspects of this character area.

The more open aspect of this area makes landmarks such as the Parish Church and school highly visible. Other landmarks are Manor Farm and the Tudor dovecote, both examples of the historic rural legacy of Norton St Philip. There are two small areas of green public open space within this character area, Church Green and Lyde Green, and the area is bordered by green corridors that are crucial to the definition of it.

Leafy Cottages Design Guidelines

- Development layouts need to continue the low density and informal building arrangements of the area, with variety of dwelling type on any site with several dwellings.
- Soft landscaping and native tree-planting will normally be a requirement of development proposals. Existing open space and surrounding green corridors should be maintained and preserved, and the close interaction of dwellings and green space and fields preserved. Mature trees and hedgerows should be retained in any development proposal, or if this is not possible, and the development is acceptable given the overall assessment of its impact, suitable alternative landscape provision will be required.
- Traditional building styles as described in the Norton St Philip Conservation Area Appraisal will be required, and development will need to protect and enhance the Conservation Area.
- Where appropriate, development will be expected to keep traditional lanes for access and provide additional safety measures to slow traffic and encourage sustainable modes of travel that are in keeping with the conservation area.
- Development should be no higher than two storeys.

Leafy Cottages - typical views



The Barton

Leafy Cottage Area to west and South of the Church





Lyde Green

Area 3: Green Corridors

A key feature of Norton St Philip is the division of the historic village around two hubs, separated by green space that thins the urban form. Generally the village has built up over time along the rural roads leading through it, and the presence and visibility of areas of green space is general throughout the village. The edges of the village, particularly the older dwellings, blend into the surrounding fields, something 20th century development has been less successful at reflecting.

Some of the green open space in the village is included within the Conservation area due to its historic importance. Much of this area is proposed for designation as Local Green Space in the Norton St Philip NDP. Reasons for the designations are outlined in these documents, but include their importance for the setting of Norton village and its character.

Green corridors Design Guidelines

- The green corridors should remain open and continue to fulfil their visual importance as the green setting for the form and character of Norton St Philip. Existing mature trees should be retained in any development proposal.
- Development on the edge of the village and green corridors should not present a hard visual edge but blend into the green space and fields with appropriate soft landscaping and layouts.

Green Corridors in the Village



Lyde Green

Churchyard and Paddock





Church Mead



Laverton Triangle



Fortescue Fields Drainage Ponds (above)



Fortescue Fields West



Ringwell Meadow



Shepherds Mead



Great Orchard

Area 4: Post-war Streets

Post 1945, the village has been extended considerably with new developments at various locations. Ringwell and Springfield were earlier constructions, both to a regular suburban layout that is not in keeping with the traditional character of the village. Materials used did attempt to reflect the stone construction, and most roofs are steep with chimneys, but the repetition of building types are also out of character with the village. The road layout with footways is also not in keeping with older streets and lanes, and contributes to the suburban feel of the area.

Other parts of this character area do not always reflect the traditional character of the village in their layout, dwelling variety and streets. Monmouth Paddock with small dwellings close together on a narrow cul-de-sac has some visual references to the Close-terraced cottage area of the adjoining High Street. More recent development at Longmead Close of substantial stone houses has paid attention to traditional building forms and materials. However the overall impression is of large suburban houses rather than the informal and irregular 'Leafy Cottages' character area, although future tree-planting and alterations may reduce this effect.

Current building to the south of Longmead into a green corridor could not of course be surveyed. Its location has altered the dynamic of the overall form of the village of spokes leading into a central area of the church and High Street centres. Development to the south of the village has better continued this overall form, and does blend into the surrounding countryside better, partly because of the adjacent 'informal mixed' character area.

Post-war Streets Design Guidelines

- Complying with the general guidance on pages 16 -17 will ensure that future development is more in keeping with the character of Norton St Philip.
- Opportunities to improve the sensitivity of these areas to the character of the historic village should be considered in any extension or redevelopment proposals.





Wide streets in Ringwell and Longmead

BOUNDARIES BETWEEN POST WAR DEVELOPMENT AND OPEN FIELDS



Left and below: Examples of a hard edge to surrounding fields (Ringwell and Fortescue South)





Softer edge to development at Mackley Lane (above) and Fortescue East (right)



Area 5: Fortescue

A recent development here of a former poultry processing plant has made a serious attempt to reflect the character of the adjacent High Street 'Close-terraced Cottages' character area, with some success. Although the latter character area is actually found lining traditional streets rather than arranged in a block, the development has incorporated many features that design guidance for this character area favours. The development is high density for the village, and there are a variety of elevation and roof treatments, giving the area a rich visual interest and avoiding repetition of dwelling type. A terraced front to Town End (an extension of High Street) ties the most visible part of the development in well to the historic form, again with variety of elevational treatment. Within the development, buildings fronting the shared surface street create a similar enclosed feeling within the development, and some glimpsed views out have been created. The street has little soft landscaping, and the shared surface has used block rather than tarmac. The lighting columns are unobtrusive and of traditional design, although on street poles rather than on buildings. The lighting itself is overbright yellow sodium rather than low level white light more suited to a residential area.

Fortescue Design Guidelines

- The area should continue to reflect general guidelines and those of the Close-terraced Cottage character area.
- Any new development should continue to reflect the local historic features identified in the CAA and the assessment of the historic village that accompanied the original planning application (referenced in this document).
- Consideration should be given to reducing the harsh quality of the street lighting.



Shared surface and detail- Fortescue Fields

Area 6: Informal Mix

As the name suggests, this character area comprises new and old buildings in varying ratios, but always in an informal style, nearer that of the Leafy Cottages area, but generally with less landscaping and with the development of dwellings somewhat denser. The character is roughly a mix of the two historic character areas found in the village. The separate parts of this character area are sometimes located within, or partly within the conservation area. If not within the conservation area they are adjacent to it, apart from the southern section around Tellisford Lane which would have been a more isolated group of terraced cottages originally.

Informal Mix Design Guidelines

- New development in this area should continue the informal arrangement of dwellings and use the traditional elevational features and materials identified in the CAA.
- Boundary treatment should continue and maintain any existing stone walls, and mature trees and hedgerows should be retained in any development proposal, or if this is not possible, and the development is acceptable given the overall assessment of its impact, suitable alternative landscape provision will be required.
- Where relevant, any development should avoid creating a hard edge with the surrounding countryside.





Cottages (above) and mixed old and new development on Tellisford Lane (right)





Informal mix in Tellisford Lane (above) and Town Barton (below)





Green Belt and the smaller settlements

Much of the north and east of the parish of Norton St Philip is within the Bristol and Bath green belt, and the northern edge of the development limit abuts it. This area of Green Belt is a significant asset to be maintained, protected and enhanced. Outside the settlement boundary restrictive countryside policies apply to any development (Core Policy 1: Mendip Local Plan Part 1) whether or not the site is within the Green Belt. There is less development pressure here therefore, but also a lack of clear design guidance. The following discussion of the smaller settlements – Hassage and Farleigh Hungerford – will normally apply to the rest of the countryside areas of the parish, where dwellings and other buildings are also generally built of traditional materials and dispersed within a countryside setting

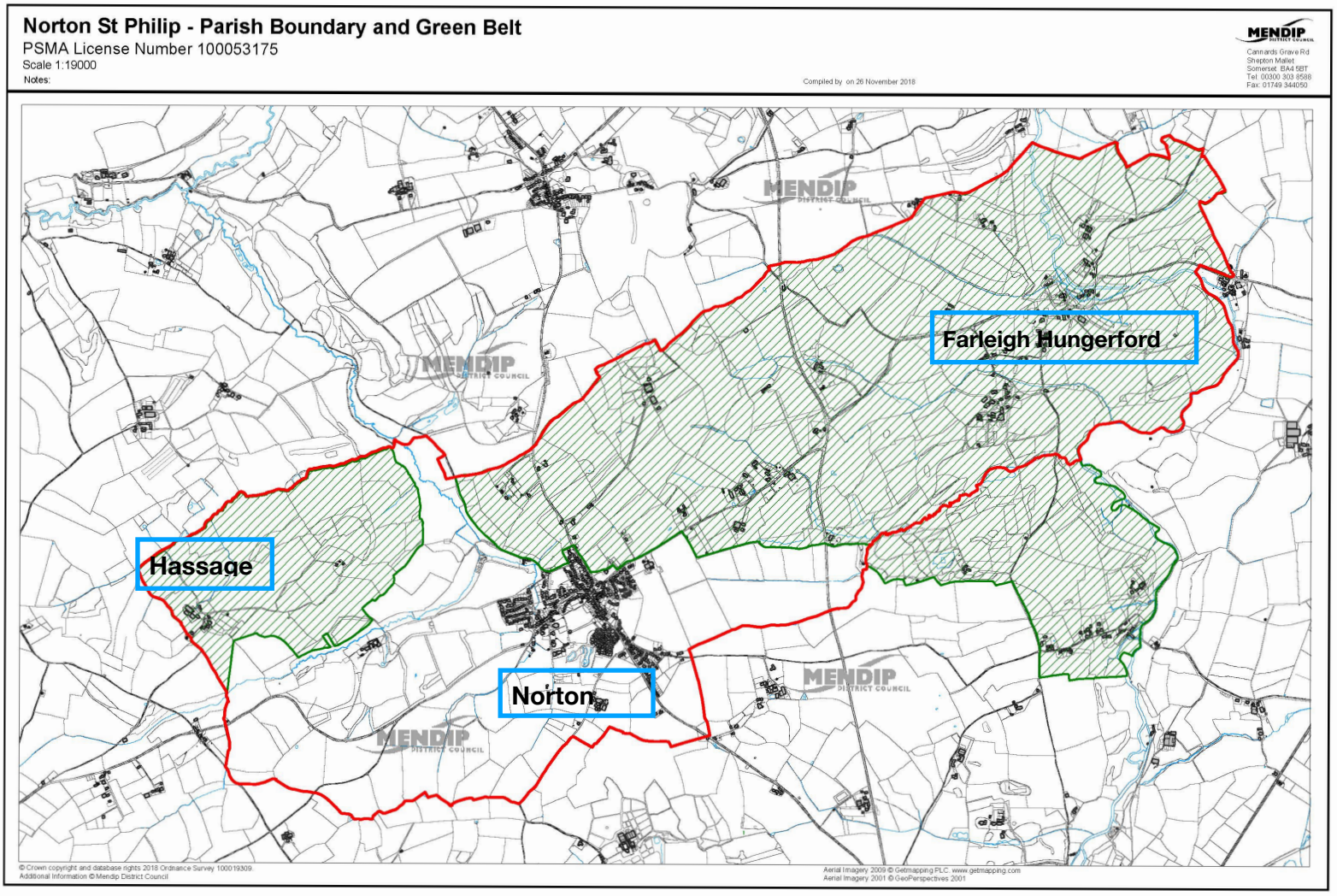

Figure 12: The Green Belt in Norton St Philip Parish

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Area 7: Traditional Settlements in the Countryside

Hassage

Hassage is a very small hamlet to the west of Norton St Philip. The few dwellings are built using traditional materials. Hassage Manor is a listed building. The settlement is located at the end of a single track lane, which blends quite naturally into the tracks and rights of way in the vicinity. Buildings do not dominate visually, and are spread out. A sense of enclosure is given by the mature trees that are grouped in the grounds of dwellings, in contrast to the surrounding open fields. Working farm buildings are located at the northern end of the hamlet. Stone boundary walls are a key feature of the hamlet; construction of dwellings is mainly in traditional stone.



Aerial image showing dispersed nature of the hamlet of Hassage and tree cover around the dwellings.

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Views of Hassage











View of Norton from Hassage

Farleigh Hungerford

Farleigh Hungerford's situation on the slopes of the Frome valley provides views out over the valley, and up and down the river in the valley. Again the settlement has more trees than the surrounding fields and hedgerows, and dwellings are mostly set in generous gardens and back from the road, although there are dwellings directly onto the road in places. The roads are narrow lanes, although the main A366 which crosses the river is a two lane road, with a footway on one side in places. Boundary treatments are hedges and soft landscaping or traditional dry stone walls.

The settlement lacks a clear centre, although the church is opposite a row of terraces and close to a small area of open space by the water pump. There are several landmark buildings, many of them listed. Of particular note is Farleigh Hungerford Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, in English Heritage guardianship.

Traditional Villages Design Guidelines

- Development within Hassage and Farleigh Hungerford and the wider parish of Norton St Philip will be expected to comply with the CAA advice on local features and use traditional construction materials so that any extensions to existing buildings match the existing property.
- Existing mature trees, hedgerows and dry stone walls will be expected to be retained, and landscaping may be required to maintain the dominance of green space, and the impression of dwellings set in a mainly rural landscape.
- Buildings and any extensions should not be higher than 2 storeys, and in any case not higher that the existing property and its ridgeline. The footprint of any building should not be significantly increased.
- .In any development, views identified in figure 13 are to be maintained, and the appearance and visibility of local landmarks are to be conserved

Aerial View of Farleigh Hungerford



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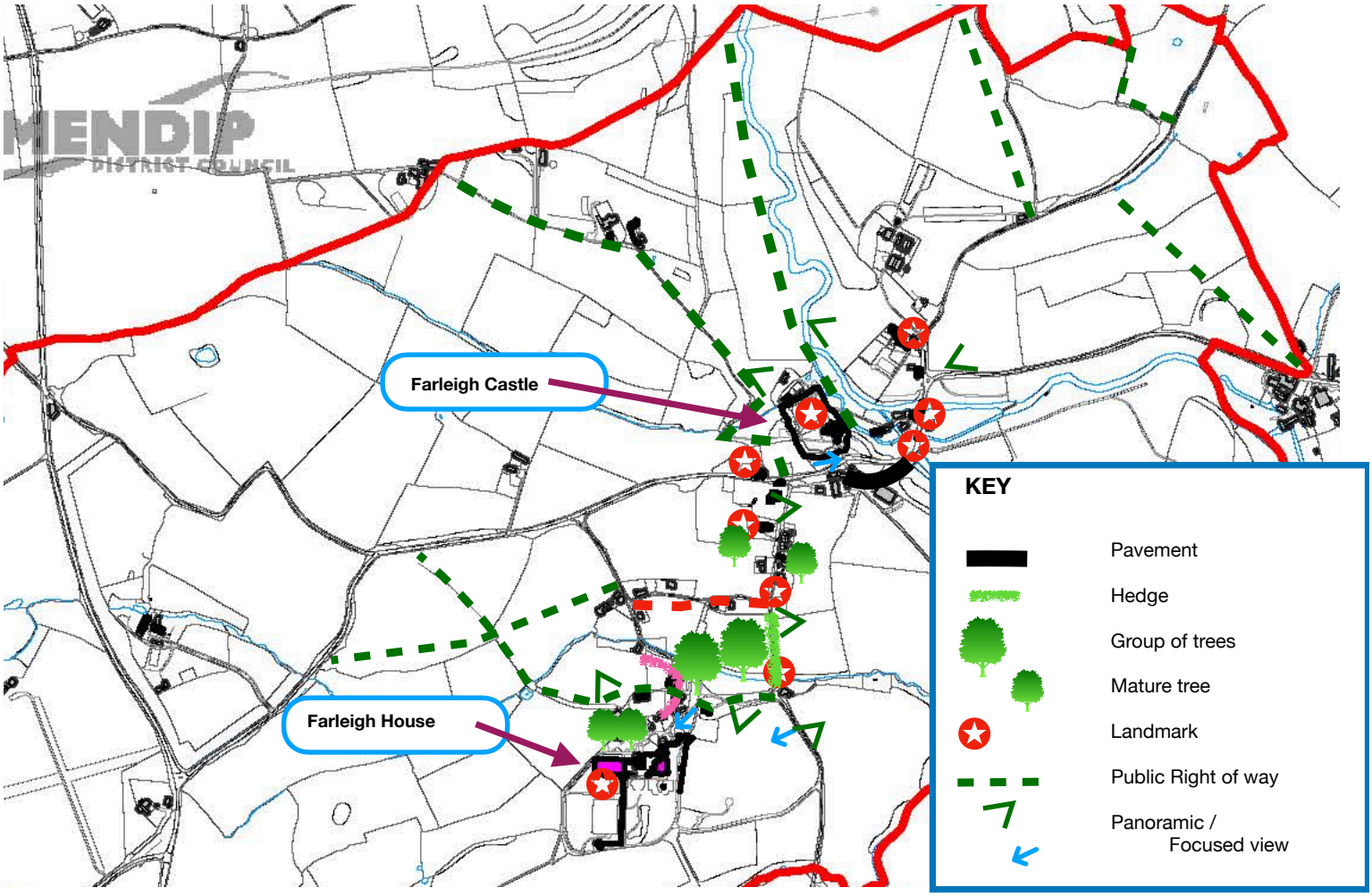

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Fig 13 Views ,landmarks and form of Farleigh Hungerford.
Roads have no pavements other than where shown

Farleigh Hungerford Castle





Aerial view of
Farleigh Hungerford













Traditional Detailing on Buildings

References

Robert Adam Architects Historic Development & Character Analysis

Conservation Area Appraisal 2007

Mendip Design Guidance for Extensions