The background of the slide is a photograph of a cobblestone path on the left, which transitions into a brick wall on the right. The cobblestones are dark and rounded, while the bricks are rectangular and light-colored. The text is overlaid on this background.

Eriswell

Conservation Area Appraisal

Adopted April 2007

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal

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Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal

Key Characteristics

- Small estate village
- Linear 'L' shaped form, set either side of the B1112 road
- High proportion of flint buildings
- Mainly 19th century buildings
- Only a few 20th century buildings
- The grade II* church is the only listed building and is the main visual focus and most prominent building
- Set within relatively flat Breckland landscape.



Location Map

FOREST HEATH DISTRICT

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal

Introduction

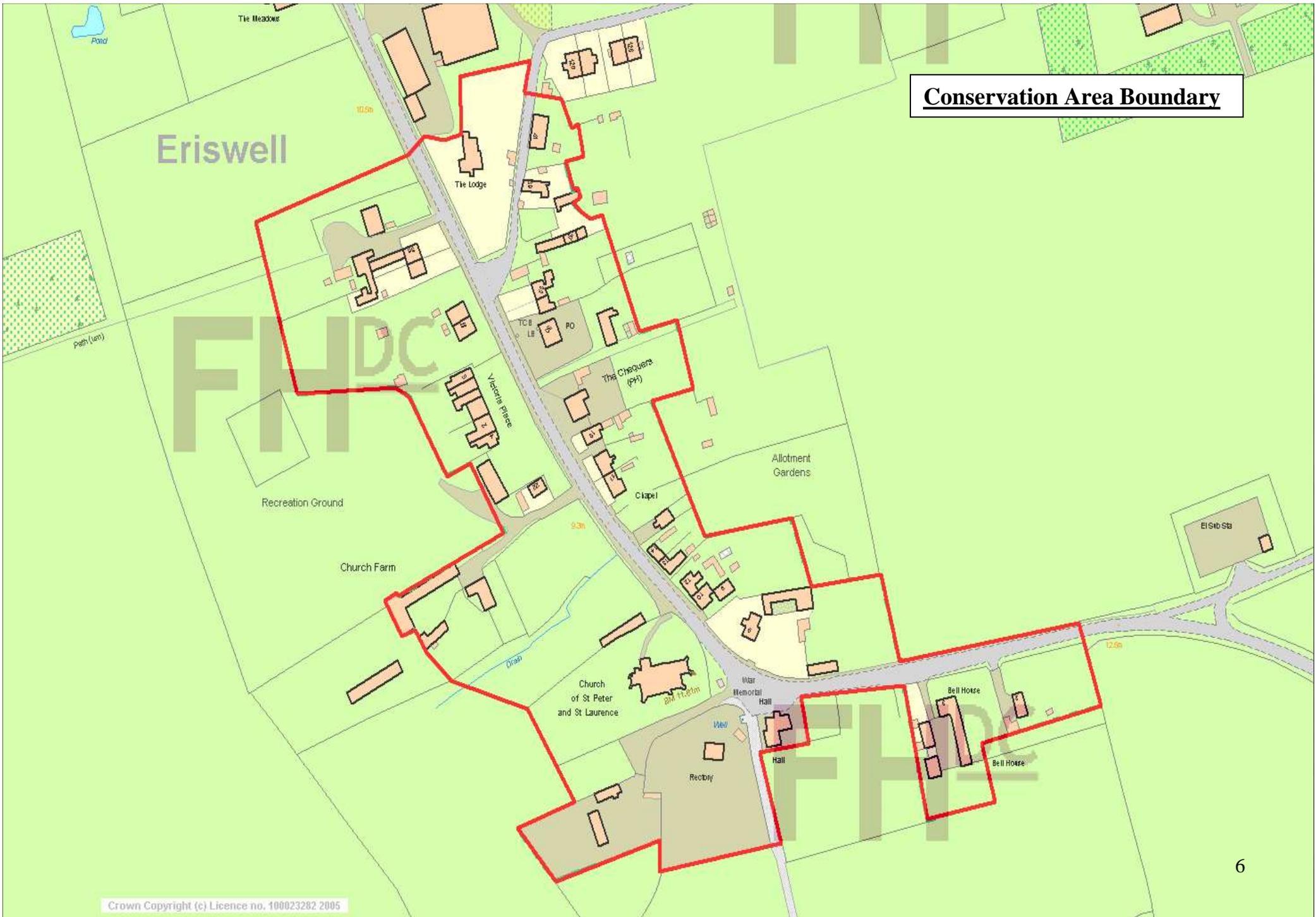
Eriswell is a Breckland village two miles north of Mildenhall and is situated in the Elveden Estate. The 2001 census records a parish population of 4,444. However, the majority of the population live in the north of the parish in the residential quarters of RAF Lakenheath. The village itself has a population of approximately 100 people and has a Public House, village hall, and until the early 1990's a post office and store.

The historic village centre of Eriswell was designated a conservation area in 1988.

The 1990 Planning Act defines conservation areas as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.'

This document is an appraisal of the Eriswell Conservation Area. It gives an overview of the existing character that should be preserved and identifies possible areas for future enhancement.





Conservation Area Boundary

Eriswell

FMDC

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal



The Mediaeval Church of St Laurence and St Peter

History

The **ANGLO-SAXONS** first settled at this location, being on a strip of relatively good soil, lying between what was waterlogged peat fen and sandy breckland.

During **MEDIAEVAL TIMES** Eriswell was known as Coclesworth, then later Chamberlains. At the same time a larger settlement had developed about 2km to the north, closer to the Lord of the Manor's residence at Eriswell Hall, and this was known as Eriswell. Both settlements had churches; St Peter's at Eriswell and St Laurence's at Chamberlains.

After the **REFORMATION** the population of the northern settlement began to drop, St Peter's Church being allowed to fall into dereliction. Chamberlains however remained vigorous, the Chapel of St Laurence becoming the parish church and the village taking over the name of Eriswell. The northern settlement is now known as Little Eriswell.

In **1649** the Manor of Eriswell cum Coclesworth was bought by the New England Company, income from which was used to send missionaries to North America to convert the Indian natives to Christianity. The Company built a number of houses and other buildings in the village, identifiable by the initials "NEC".

Eriswell 1885



In 1818 the NEC brought over a 14 year old American Indian to be educated and apprenticed to the village carpenter. Sadly he died two years later, his grave can be seen in the churchyard.

The British Government acquired Eriswell for the deposed Maharajah Duleep Singh in 1869. Land at Elveden was also purchased and a great sporting estate built up.

In 1894 the whole estate was sold to the first Lord Iveagh who was also primarily concerned with its use for shooting. Under his ownership the estate was extended to include much of Icklingham.

The second Lord Iveagh succeeded to the title in 1927. In contrast to his predecessor he was interested in agriculture and in particular the possibility of prosperous farming on sandy breckland soil. All his agricultural land in Eriswell became farmed, which stopped the plans of the Forestry Commission to plant the parish with conifers. At this time, every head of family in Eriswell was a paid employee of the Elveden Estate, except for the rector and publican.

The parish population declined over this period from a peak of 524 in 1851 to a low of 262 in 1961; it did not rise until the expansion of the air base with 3,278 inhabitants by 1971.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal



The Maharajah Duleep Singh

After the second Anglo Sikh war concluded, the British entered Lahore and removed Duleep Singh into exile. He left behind his throne, his palaces, much of his personal fortune and his country, never to return.

In 1850 Duleep Singh set sail for England, he quickly gained a royal audience and was an immediate success with Queen Victoria. She commissioned the best portrait painter of the day, Franz Xavier Winterhalter, to paint Duleep Singh during one of his numerous stays at Buckingham Palace.

He chose as his wife a part Ethiopian, part German, Arabic speaking girl from a Cairo mission school; Bamba Muller.

In 1894 they went to his newly acquired home at Elveden, selected and purchased for him by the India Office, and transformed the run-down estate into an efficient, modern, game preserve and the house into a semi-oriental palace. With halls decorated in the fashion of a shish mahal and dominated by the huge oil paintings of Ranjit Singh in durbar and with sculptures of past glories and cases of jewels, the whole place was a powerful reminder of his former status.

Duleep Singh loved the estate and rebuilt many of the buildings. His fame as a game shooter that he gained during his days in Scotland was to be relived in the grounds of the great Elveden Estate. He invited the Prince of Wales to his highly successful shoots.

‘We had the good Maharajah, who stayed till this morning, since Thursday. He looks so handsome and well - and is talkative and agreeable. Those eyes and those teeth are too beautiful..’

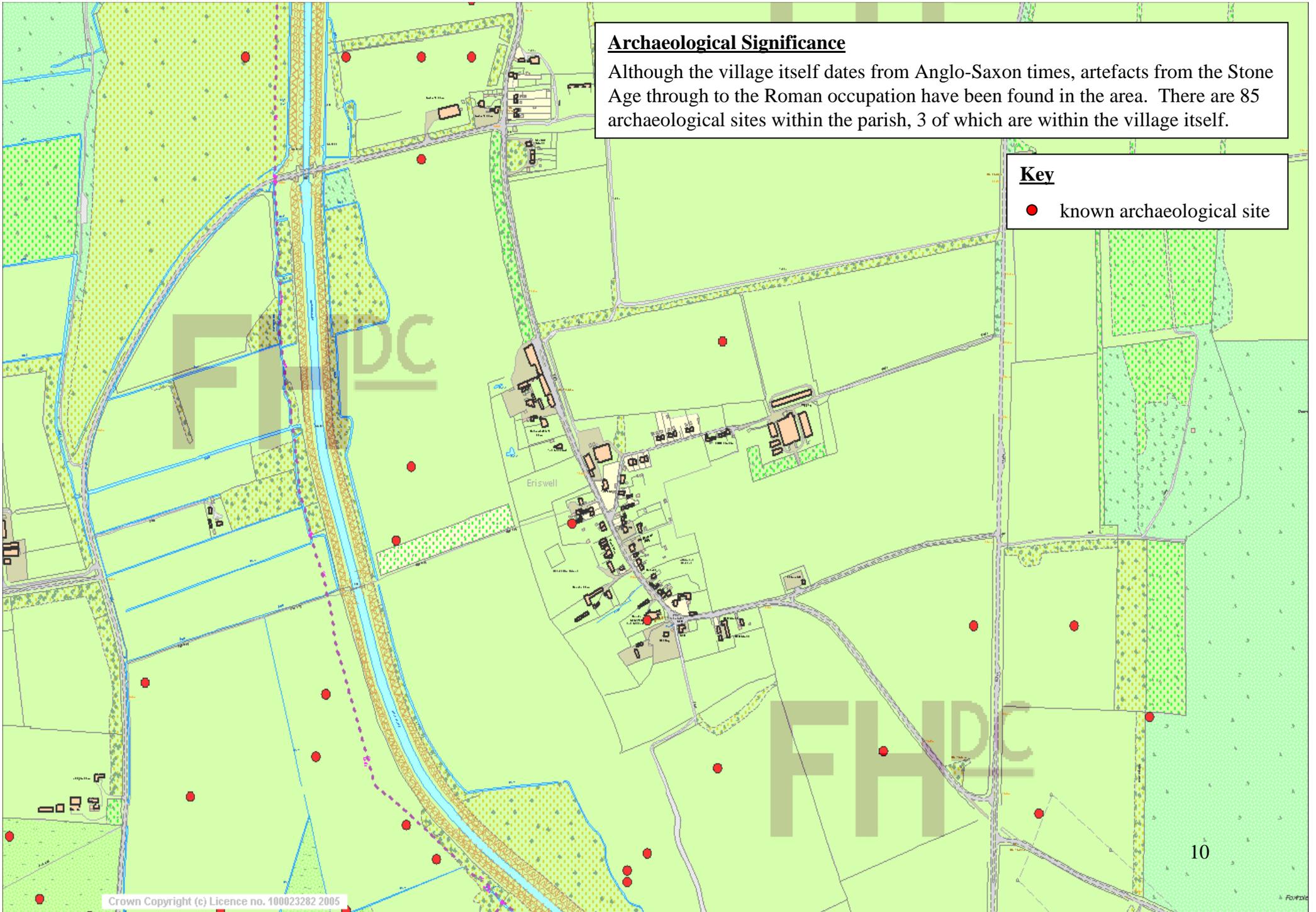
Queen Victoria in a letter to her daughter, the Princess Royal, November 1858.

Archaeological Significance

Although the village itself dates from Anglo-Saxon times, artefacts from the Stone Age through to the Roman occupation have been found in the area. There are 85 archaeological sites within the parish, 3 of which are within the village itself.

Key

● known archaeological site



Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal

Setting

Eriswell sits between the peaty soils of the fenland to the west and the sandy breckland soils to the east. The characteristics of the landscape have changed since the Anglo-Saxons first settled at what is now Eriswell. The Fen has been drained and consequently shrunk back and cultivated, and the open Breckland landscape has been enclosed with the fields edged by Scots Pine shelter belts.

Today Grade 4, poor quality, agricultural land surrounds the village apart from a parcel of Grade 3, good to moderate quality, land just to the south. Except for the most southern section, the village has developed along and close to the 10m contour, the level of the land gently falling westwards towards the Cut-off Channel and more steeply rising eastwards towards the A1065 and beyond.

Natural Environment

The Brecks have been recognised as an area of high nature conservation value for many years. However the area has seen a number of significant changes during the C20 which have resulted in both its wildlife habitats and landscape being under threat. In addition to various other initiatives, the area, including Eriswell, was designated an "Environmentally Sensitive Area" (ESA) by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in 1988.



Aerial Photograph (1999) of Eriswell showing its setting between the fens to the west and brecks to the east.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal



The wide open breckland spaces which form a context for the village and conservation area to the east. The view from the A1065 looking south west towards Eriswell illustrates how unobtrusively a development of the right scale, proportions and using local building materials sits in the landscape.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal

An ESA gives recognition to the traditional farming methods which have helped to create an exceptionally attractive landscape and valuable wildlife habitats. These should be supported in order to maintain and enhance the area's character. In 1992 the Brecks Countryside Project was set up, concerned with both the conservation and recreation aspects of the area.

Within the conservation area the churchyard is identified as a County Wildlife Site.

Trees and Hedges

There are a number of trees, both single specimens and groups, which contribute to the streetscene. Prominent trees include: the holm oak standing in the front garden of Bell House; the group comprising a lime and London plane which form an important backdrop to the old schoolhouse / hall; the London plane standing alongside the road to the front of the Church Farm complex; and the group that includes a yew standing in the garden of The Lodge. To the North of the conservation area, the trees in the garden of Chamberlains Hall Farmhouse contribute to its setting, and views out of the conservation area.

In some places hedges mark the boundaries of properties or fields. Species include hawthorn, elder and laurel. A leylandii cypress hedge has been planted at The Lodge. At such a prominent position in the village the choice of this non indigenous plant species is unfortunate.

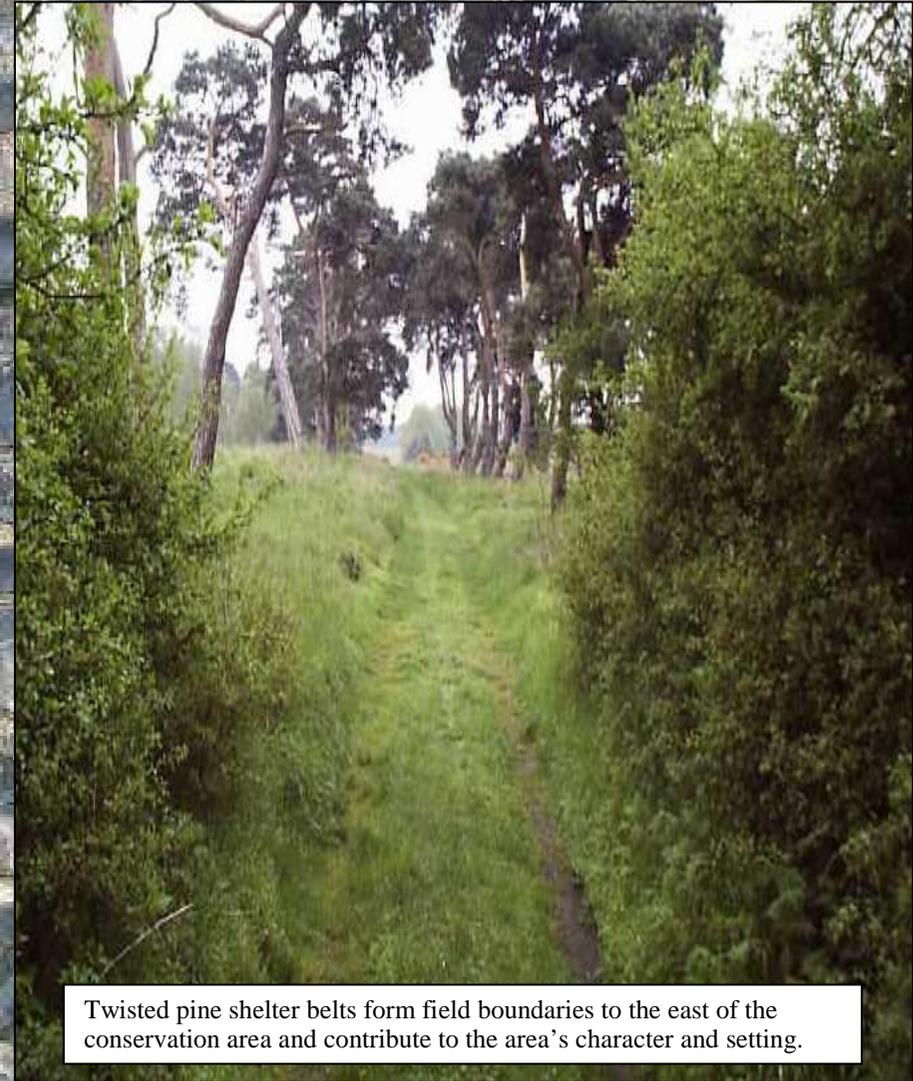


The evergreen holm oak at Bell House is prominent in many views into the village. A typical elder and hawthorn field hedge can be seen to the right of the picture, and the more manicured, waist high hedge and flint / brick boundary walls to the left. The group of trees that form a setting for the hall can be seen in the distance, with a glimpse of the fens beyond to the left of the church

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal



The London Plane Tree at Church Farm with views of the fens beyond.



Twisted pine shelter belts form field boundaries to the east of the conservation area and contribute to the area's character and setting.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal

Village Development

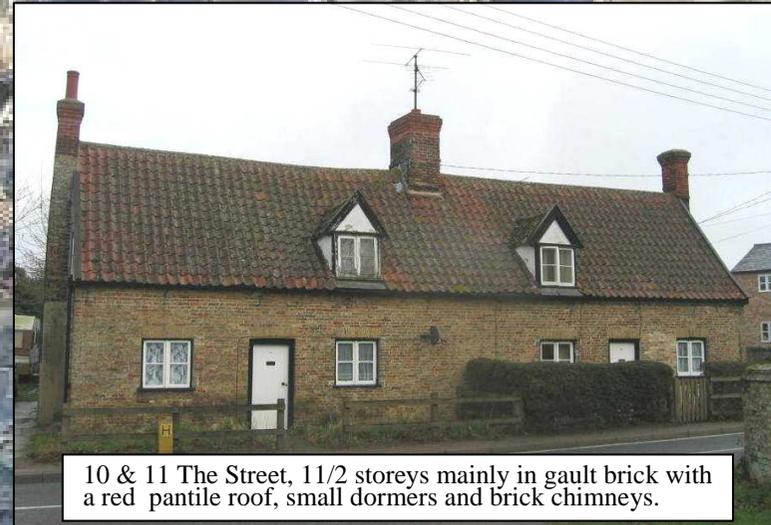
The oldest surviving part of the village is at the southern end; the church of St Peter and St Laurence, a grade II* listed building, is Mediaeval dating from the mid to late C13.

Nos. 10/12 The Street are early C18, whilst nos. 13/14 are later C18. No.8, at the end of Church Lane, the track running between the church and the former Rectory, dates from the C17 and was probably originally a farmhouse.

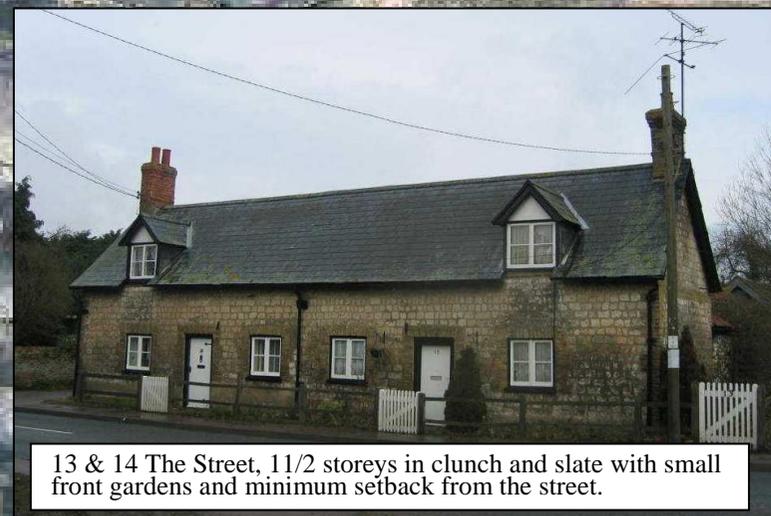
Outside the Conservation Area to the north, slightly separated from the main body of the village, is Chamberlain's Hall Farmhouse, a grade II listed building dating from the late C18 but bearing the same name, and probably location, as the Mediaeval hall.

The final evidence of a pre-C18 building within the village is to be found at The Lodge. The house is located in the apex formed by The Street and the lane to Little London; the main part of the building is early C19 but to its rear is an earlier wing dating from the C18.

The heart of the conservation area comprises C19 buildings, constructed in the main by the New England Company, identified by plaques on the buildings bearing the initials "NEC".

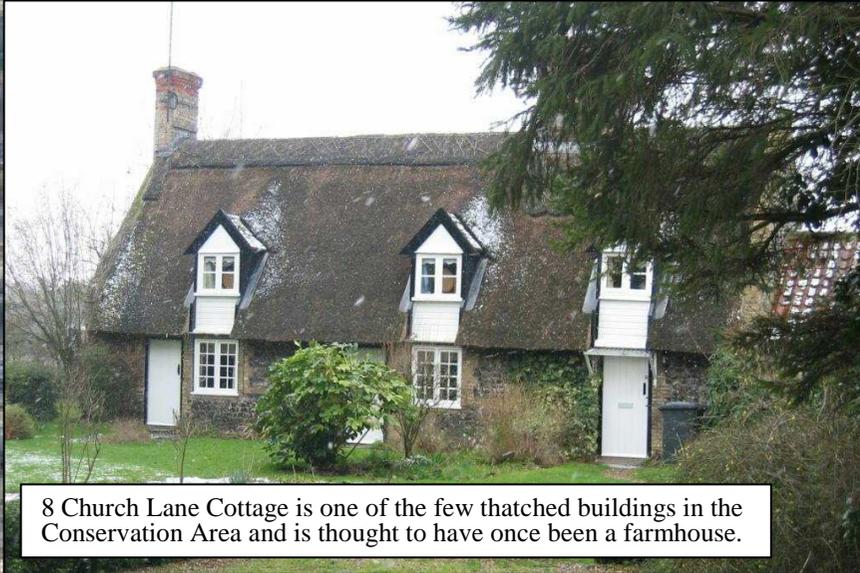


10 & 11 The Street, 1 1/2 storeys mainly in gault brick with a red pantile roof, small dormers and brick chimneys.



13 & 14 The Street, 1 1/2 storeys in clunch and slate with small front gardens and minimum setback from the street.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal



8 Church Lane Cottage is one of the few thatched buildings in the Conservation Area and is thought to have once been a farmhouse.



Bell House formerly The Bell Inn

The NEC however is not accountable for all the C19 buildings. After the Enclosures Award of 1818 a number of villagers, in exchange for their common rights, became the freeholders of small allotments. Where these plots were too small to farm for a profit the owners tried some form of "speculative development". It is thought that Bell House, at the southern end of the village was built as The Bell Inn, with a number of workshops and cottages also constructed behind it for letting.

To the North East of the conservation area the C19 cottages at Little London were built as, what was commonly known as "hovels" for letting, together with a cottage for the owner. By the end of the C19, as a result of the agricultural depression, any properties remaining in other hands were bought by the Elveden Estate.

The C20 has had little impact on the village in terms of new buildings. In the Conservation Area, the only C20 building is the former Rectory, constructed soon after the Second World War.

There has been a C20 extension of the village towards Little London with the Estate having constructed three pairs of houses probably during the 1950's, and the District Council two pairs of bungalows. In addition earlier this century the Estate carried out remodelling of the houses, often combining two, thereby improving the tenants homes but also reducing the number to that actually needed.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal

Village Form

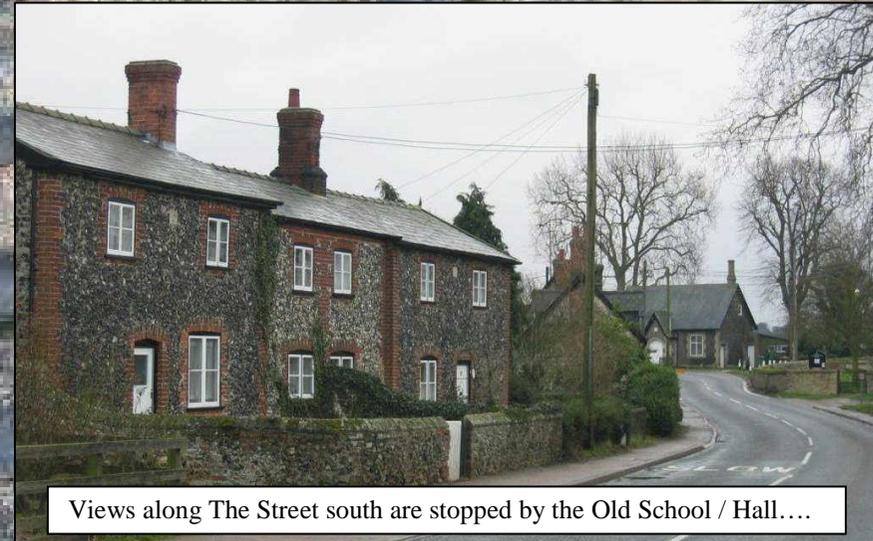
The village is basically linear in form along an L-shaped curve, with an offshoot, a no-through road known as Little London.

On the southern and western side of The Street the majority of the buildings are set back from the road and are separated by gardens, allotments or fields. The exception to this arrangement is the Church and the old schoolhouse / village hall which stand closer to the road. These are prominent in the streetscene and form stops to views out of the village looking south along The Street.

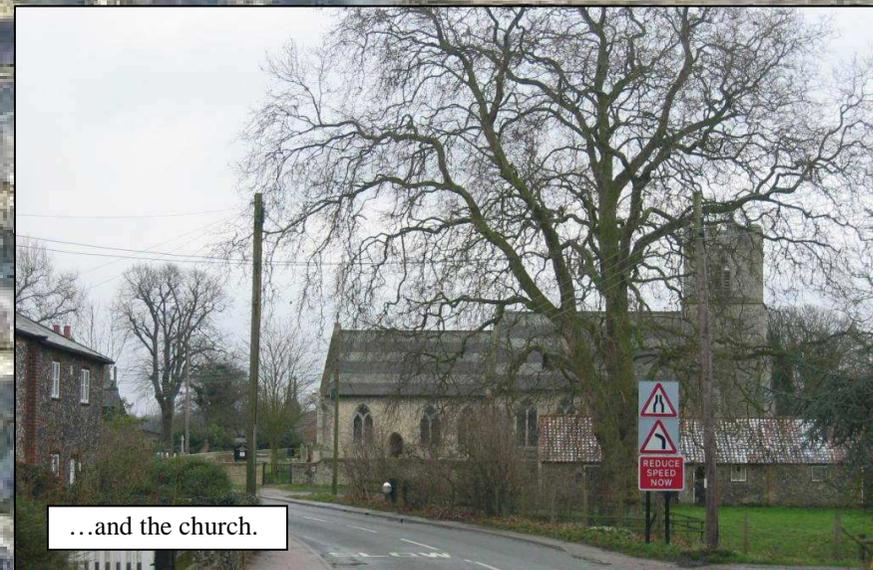
Nos. 33/34 The Street, a 2-storey flint and thatched building, are also set closer to the road. The height of this building, resulting from the steeper pitch required for the thatch roof, together with its positioning make it prominent in the streetscape.

To the north of Chamberlains Hall Farmhouse, the C19 barns act as a stop to views northwards along The Street.

Views can be seen out towards the fens to the west, and brecks to the east, between the buildings all along The Street. These spaces between buildings are an important part of the village's character allowing its landscape setting to penetrate into the heart of the conservation area.



Views along The Street south are stopped by the Old School / Hall....



...and the church.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal

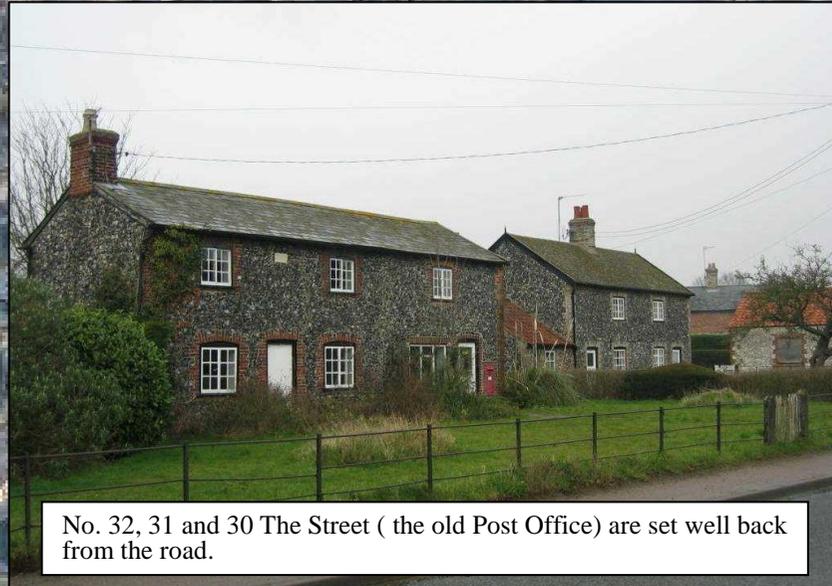


No. 33 and 34 are prominent in The Street as they are set nearer to the road than their neighbours and have a steeply pitched reed thatched roof. The knapped flint walls with local gault brick quins and chimneys, and the white and black painted joinery are all typical of the conservation area. 'Estate style' metal railings delineate the front boundary.

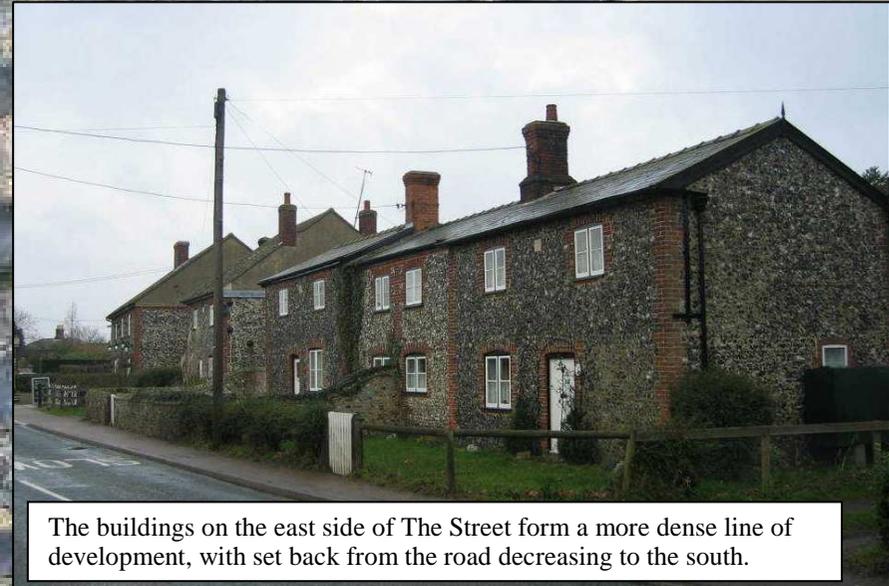


A view to open fenland to the west from The Street by Church Farm. An important element of the conservation area's character is played by these gaps between buildings that allow glimpses of the landscape beyond when narrow, or as in this case allow the landscape to penetrate right into the centre of the Conservation Area.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal



No. 32, 31 and 30 The Street (the old Post Office) are set well back from the road.



The buildings on the east side of The Street form a more dense line of development, with set back from the road decreasing to the south.

On the eastern side of The Street the buildings are arranged closer together providing a more solid line of development and this continues up to the right-hand fork in the road to Little London. At the oldest surviving part of the village, in the vicinity of the Church, the houses are set close to the road with only very narrow front gardens. Travelling north the depth of front gardens increases but at the junction of The Street with Little London they decrease once more with nos.

39 and 42 fronting the road.

The Lodge stands at a focal point in the village at the apex formed by The Street and Little London, however it is becoming masked by the growth of a *leylandii* cypress hedge. Property curtilages in the village are not always defined, a characteristic of an estate village, with rear garden areas merging into adjacent land uses.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal



This view north from the bend by the church gives a good overall impression of the villages character. Sympathetic extensions have been made over time to No. 10 & 11 with a cat slide roof, and additive forms subservient to the main building.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal



A band of decorative gault brick detail at first floor level gives individuality to the flint gable at No.5 The Street .

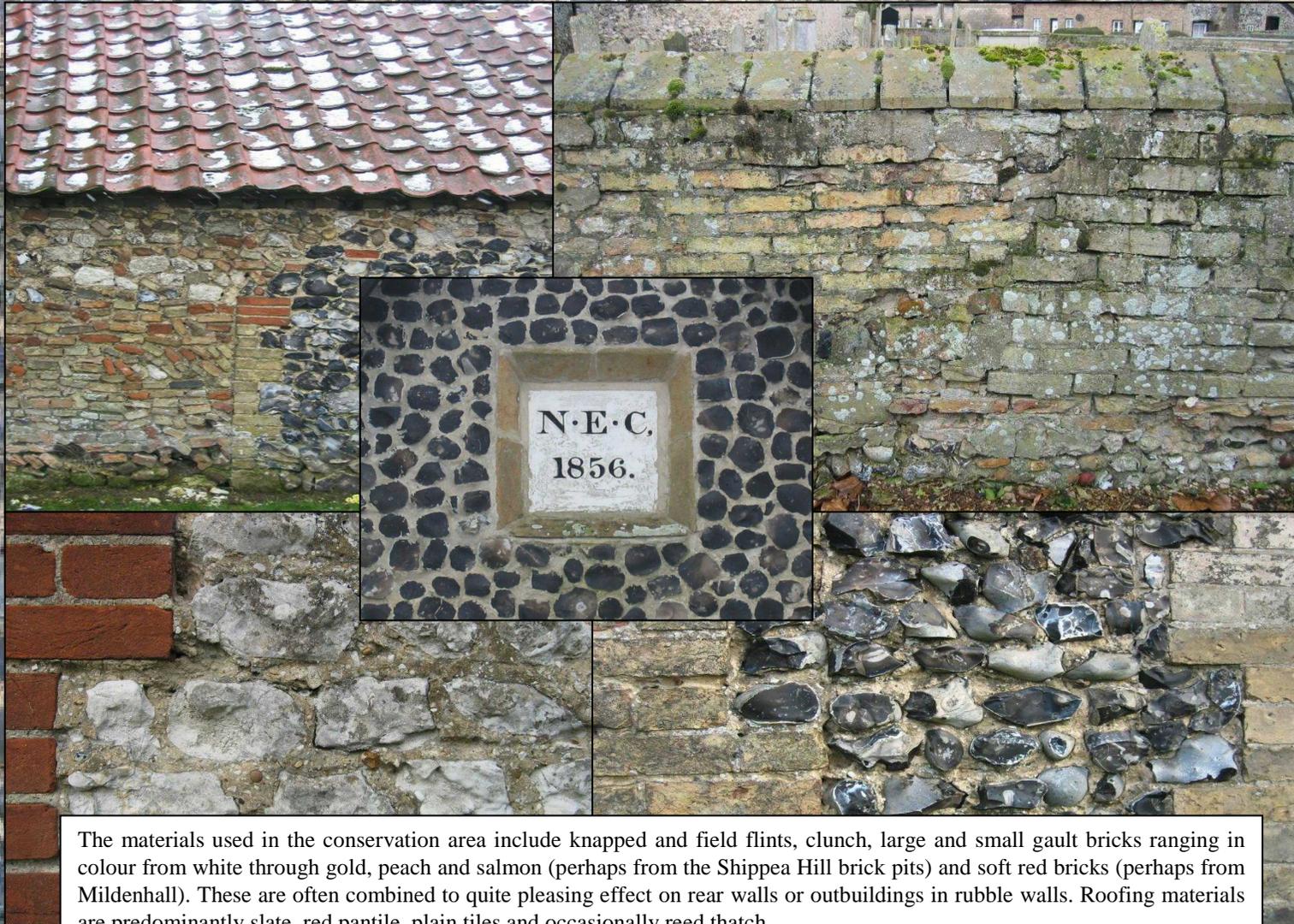
Buildings

The majority of the houses in the village are small in scale, perhaps reflecting its status of an estate village. Consequently the conservation area is characterised by the uniformity of its buildings, derived in this instance from the predominant use of flint for the construction of the C19 NEC houses. These houses are paired or in terraces and are 2-storey and flat-fronted. They give The Street a 'grey' appearance, especially where combined with the use of slate, thatch and weathered gault bricks. This contrasts with the warmth of the soft red brick and pantiles used to finish some of the buildings.

The character of most of the buildings in the conservation area have not been affected by unsympathetic piecemeal alterations through permitted development. Only two buildings currently have UPVC windows; the C20th Rectory and the converted Wesleyan Chapel.

Whilst the use of flint gives a sense of uniformity to the village, these houses do display a measure of individuality. This is achieved through the use of both knapped and field flints resulting in different shades of grey and texture, decorative window and door dressings and quoins of red or white brick and of the different roofing materials, which also includes red pantiles.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal



The materials used in the conservation area include knapped and field flints, clunch, large and small gault bricks ranging in colour from white through gold, peach and salmon (perhaps from the Shippea Hill brick pits) and soft red bricks (perhaps from Mildenhall). These are often combined to quite pleasing effect on rear walls or outbuildings in rubble walls. Roofing materials are predominantly slate, red pantile, plain tiles and occasionally reed thatch.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal

The C17 and C18 houses in the village are 1½ storey with dormer windows. These are constructed from early thin local yellow brick, clunch and flint for walls, with slate, red pantiles and thatch for roofs.

Many of the windows in the conservation area have the frame painted a gloss black, with the opening casements or sashes being white. Doors are often white with a black frame, and black barge boards are also a common feature on the un-hipped roofs.

Outside the conservation area Chamberlain's Hall Farmhouse was built of imported red brick in a grander style.

The C20 houses, mostly built in the 1950's, are typical of their period having been built with little regard for the essential character of the village. Whilst these are concentrated along Little London and their impact on the conservation area is limited, they are obtrusive in views when approaching the village.



Replacement UPVC windows and doors are inappropriate in the conservation area as their appearance differs in detail to traditional timber ones.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal



The narrow lane with no footpath and grass verges leading to Little London. A Leylandii hedge and uncharacteristically tall wall of clunch and flint with gault brick sections, bounds the Lodge. Nos. 39 and 41 in clunch and red brick with slate and red pantile roofs enclose the lane to the east.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal



The mid height flint wall forming the boundary to no. 9 The Street emphasises the curve in the road and is coped with knapped flints laid to a pitch.

Street Furniture

The front boundaries of the buildings are enclosed predominantly by flint walls, fencing or hedges. These are all of mid-height apart from a 2 to 3 metre high stretch of flint and clunch wall which forms the boundary between Little London and The Lodge.

Along The Street this is predominantly fencing, mainly iron but also some timber. In some places hedging of the same height reinforces the fencing whilst in others it replaces the fencing. The oldest surviving form is however flint walling and this is particularly prominent at the bend where it serves to pronounce the curve in the road. Unusually there is no coping on some stretches of this wall, with knapped flint being laid to a pitch along its top to shed the weather.

Being an estate village there is a measure of uniformity about the front boundary treatment, the changes in form not necessarily coinciding with the limits of property curtilages.

The open area at the junction of The Street and Little London is a focus for facilities. Although only constructed in the mid 1960's the conical bus shelter of gault brick with a wooden shingle roof is a distinctive feature in the streetscene. The village retains its traditional red telephone and letter box.

In contrast, the overhead wires are obtrusive.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal



The open space at the junction of The Street and London Road forms a focus for public facilities. The hexagonal 1960s bus shelter in gault brick with a wooden shingle roof is a distinctive feature.



The telephone kiosk and wall mounted letter box at the former post office. This is an example of a K6 telephone box designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, used from 1935 until 1968.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal

Conserving Eriswell's Special Character

The overall character of Eriswell remains that of a typical West Suffolk estate village, and it retains much of its traditional form and appearance. Despite some intrusive C20 development and some small scale incremental change the village continues to retain the special characteristics which justified the designation of a conservation area.

These special characteristics include the number and quality of its traditional buildings, and the degree to which they retain their traditional features: the shape form and layout of the settlement itself and in particular the attractive relationship which exists between the older buildings, the spaces between and around them, and the wider landscape. Important natural features such as the trees and hedgerows also make a contribution. This also includes the distinctive twisted pine shelter belts to the north and east, and the fenland willows which set the village in its context. It is vitally important therefore, that these special characteristics are retained and reinforced.

Inappropriate new development and the cumulative effects of incremental change are a constant threat to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. Detrimental change can take many forms, from infill with poorly designed new houses, to modern replacement windows and doors in old buildings.

Other changes could include inappropriate alterations and extensions which do not respect the scale form and detailing of existing buildings, the use of modern materials and details, insensitive highway works, signage and the introduction of intrusive non traditional walls, fences, hedgerows, driveways, garages and other structures. The District Council, will, whenever possible, seek to prevent such inappropriate development from taking place.

Article 4(2) direction. In conservation areas dwellings still have permitted development rights for the replacement of doors, windows, demolition of chimneys, removal of roof tiles and rendering or painting walls. These alterations can collectively seriously undermine the character or appearance of a conservation area. In the conservation area it is the vernacular, simple and unassuming flint, clunch and brick buildings that do much to define the area's character, but are also the most vulnerable to inappropriate changes. The uniformity of these buildings has been safeguarded by the fact that many of them are in one ownership, but this also makes them susceptible to large scale sweeping change. The District Council will pursue the introduction of an Article 4 direction and or a management agreement with Elveden Estates to safeguard the area's character.

Traffic has increased through the village with the expansion of the airbases and closure of Lords Walk to through traffic. In conservation terms a reduction in through traffic would be a significant environmental improvement.

Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal

Enhancements

Within the Eriswell Conservation Area a number of opportunities for improvement have been identified. These include:

- The **reduction of through traffic** and **traffic calming** along The Street will be pursued. Any planning applications that result in an increase in traffic flows will be expected to contribute towards traffic management schemes and other enhancements in the village.
- **Gateway** features at the entrances to the village will be encouraged. These should take account of the advice given in 'The Suffolk Countryside Manual - Design Guidelines for Highway Works in Rural Areas'
- The **Notice board** on the verge to the north of the entrance to 36 The Street would benefit from repair or replacement.
- A **Standard Tree** such as a **Holm Oak** could be planted in the triangle of land at the road junction by the electricity sub station. Although outside the area this would enhance the approach and its setting.
- All the pre C20 buildings in the area will be added to a **List of Locally Important Buildings**.
- The possibility of an **extension of the conservation area** to include Chamberlains Farm and Little London will be investigated.
- The under-grounding of the **overhead wires** will be pursued.

- The original design of the **bus shelter** will be investigated to see if it had a **finial**. If so its reinstatement will be pursued.
- The **K6 telephone box** will be put forward to English Heritage for **Listing**.



Eriswell Conservation Area Appraisal

Scope of Appraisal

It should be noted that this appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive, and that omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

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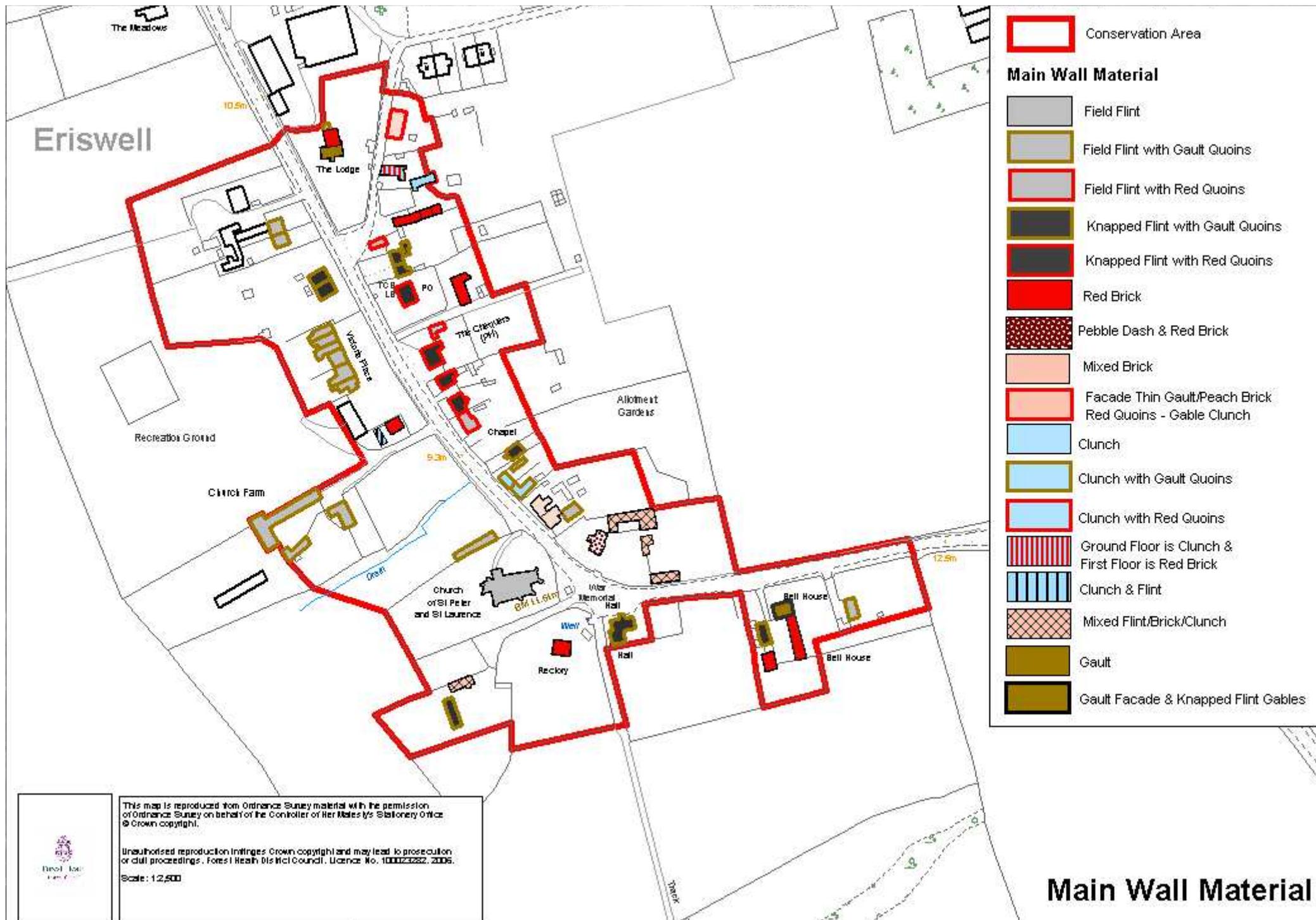
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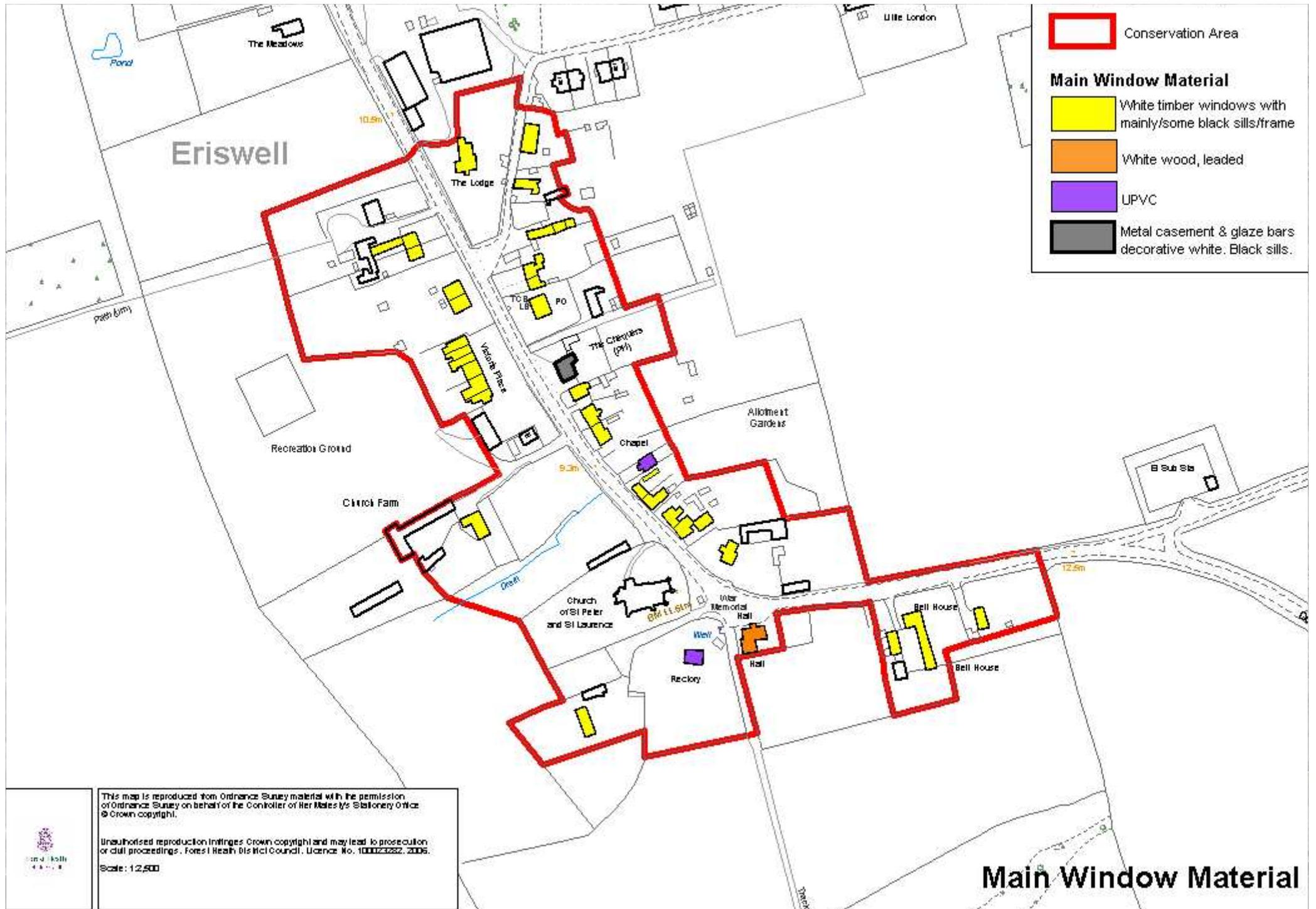
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The church tower viewed from the west with its distinctive topiary lined pathway. The grade II* church is the only listed building in the conservation area.



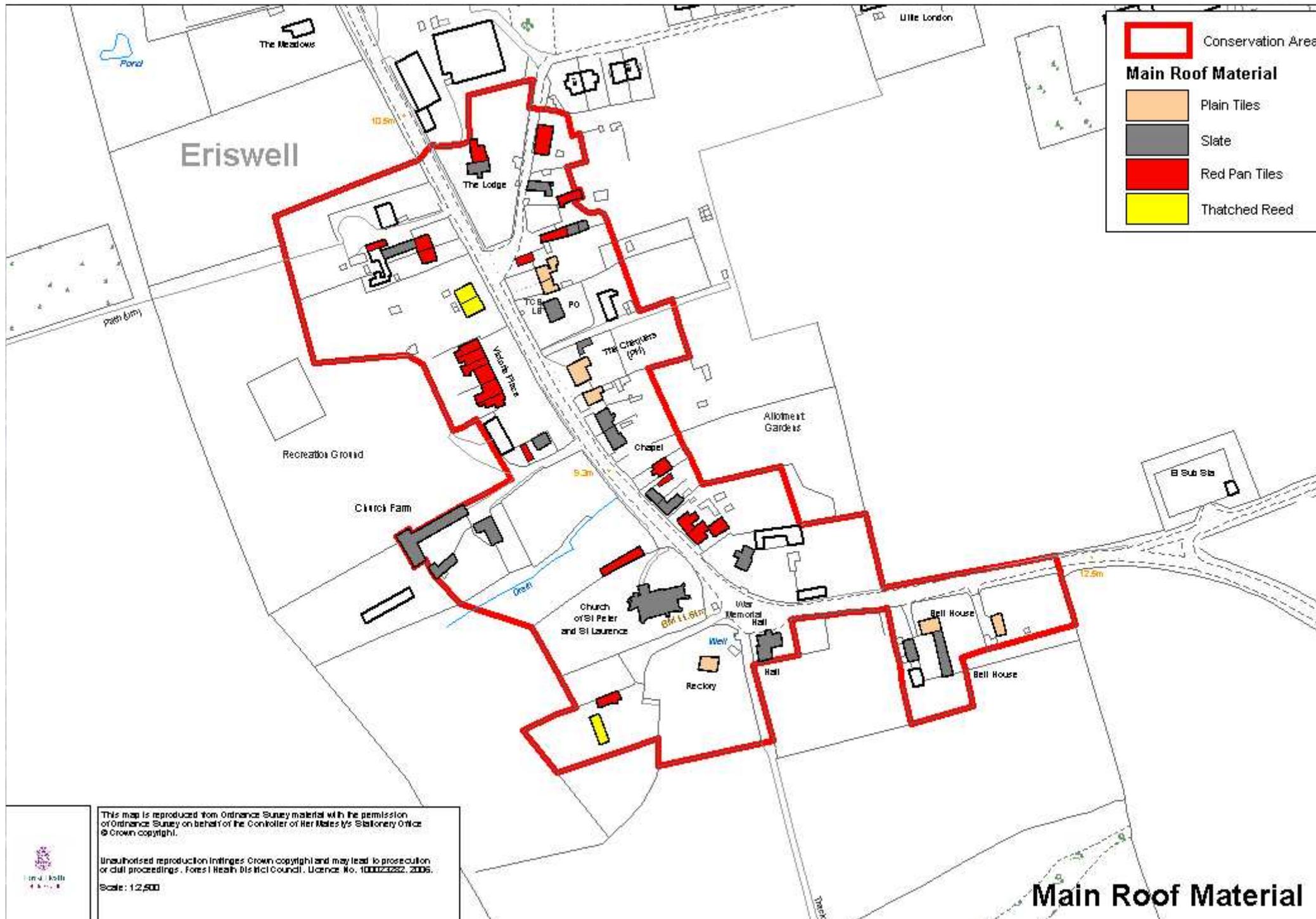


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Main Roof Material

