

# Ashbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base

## 2. Character Appraisal



Prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group  
in conjunction with Bluestone Planning LLP  
Second Draft - Published May 2018





*Woodland walk at Middle Wood, Ashdown House*

## Acknowledgements

The majority of images that appear in the Plan documents were taken by steering group members. There are some exceptions, however, and we would like to thank Gail Loose & Andrew Cornick for their contribution, and give particular thanks to Sharon & Anna Brentnall for generously giving up their time one weekend to tour the Parish and obtain images of publication quality where we had failed.

Title	Ashbury Parish Character Appraisal
Date	May-18
Status	Second Draft



1 Introduction & Methodology

2 Background

3 Planning Policy Context

4 Settlements Overview

5 Character Assessments - Settlements

CA1 Chapel Lane & Berrycroft

CA2 High St & Idstone Road

CA3 Malthouse Close

CA4 Pound Piece

CA5 Station Road

CA6 Walnut Trees Hill & Wixes Piece

CA7 Kingstone Winslow

CA8 Idstone

CA9 Odstone

Character Assessments - The Wider Parish

CA10 The Parish [North]

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Appendix 1 Listed buildings and features of interest

Appendix 2 Footpath Report



This character appraisal has been prepared by Ashbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in conjunction with Bluestone Planning LLP.

The aim of the report is to provide evidence regarding the character of the Parish and how it is perceived by its residents.

In order to successfully plan for the future growth and development of the parish it is imperative that there is a clear understanding of its character and what makes it unique.

## What is a Character Appraisal?

A character appraisal is a document which sets out the special interest, character and appearance of a particular place to highlight its local distinctiveness and identity.

The Appraisal itself is a factual and objective analysis, which seeks to enable an understanding of the wider qualities of distinctiveness of place by defining those physical elements that contribute to its special characteristics. Essentially it identifies those qualities that help to define and make the place unique: such as open space, materials, property type, maintenance, age of the structures.

In this instance, the study will define the character of the parish's settlements as a series of character areas. Each area is described against a series of common physical characteristics.

Whilst this appraisal seeks to assess the area's special interest as comprehensively as possible, it cannot cover the minutiae of all issues. Consequently, any omission of a particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it has no value or interest. The appraisal is the starting point; any development proposals should fully consider the appraisal, having regard to national and local policies. Such proposals should be informed by an individual assessment commensurate with the scale of the project proposed.

The information within the appraisal will comprise descriptive text supported by photographs, maps and other graphical material. It will also identify

opportunities for future enhancement if considered necessary.

Please note that this study is not designed to replace or be a substitute for any existing Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

## Purpose of the Study

The study has been produced for a number of reasons, but most importantly to inform the preparation of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. Identification of important issues will help shape the content and direction of that plan.

In addition to the above, it could also be used as a development management tool to secure better quality development appropriate to its surroundings. Such a document can be used by residents and developers when preparing a planning application, or for anyone wishing to comment on a current planning application.

The Localism Act 2011 introduces the right for communities to shape their local areas by creating their own Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

## Methodology

The following appraisal was prepared in accordance with The RTP1 document entitled *"How to prepare a character assessment to support design policy within a neighbourhood plan - Putting the pieces together"*

The character assessment was then conducted using the character assessment toolkit and pro forma, produced by Oxford City Council in partnership with English Heritage.

Volunteers from the Steering Group undertook the survey work which included:

- Recording in detail:
  - Buildings, views, use, spaces, greenery and landscape etc as set out in more detail in the character appraisal section
- Noting all visual features of the streetscapes and spirit of the place. All of the above will be



recorded using the above pro-forma and large scale mapping.

- Noting historical and cultural influences, by referring to historical maps, photographs, local web-sites and books, archaeological records, archives and talking to residents.
- Collating records and checking against up to date sources and on-site information.
- Obtaining photographic evidence to support this appraisal.
- Reporting and further consultation via a variety of methods to ensure the appraisal encompasses a true reflection of the Parish.
- Publication of a final draft to identify the key features of the Parish character areas and the implications for informing the Neighbourhood Plan process.



*Figure 1: View of the Kingstone Coombes*



The Character Assessments that form this appendix may be divided into two categories: 'rural', dealing with the parish as a whole of which there are just two, and; 'urban' dealing with the settlements or, in the case of Ashbury village, elements of the settlement and there are a total of eleven such assessments. However, there is one omission from the latter category, namely, Ashdown. As being part of a National Trust estate providing only limited access, it is instead covered as far as possible within the assessment for the southern area of the Parish.

To enable the reader to contextualise the distinct areas under consideration & features of same, an overarching map follows this introduction. The features are labelled, and the nomenclature\* is consistent with that used in the smaller 'street-maps' provided for each assessment. It should be noted that the order in which the assessments are presented is purely alphabetical and therefore driven only by the place or street name.

The 'street-maps' provided for each assessment are intended to help the reader identify particular features referenced within the text, and these pick-up the labelling used on the overarching map. They are then cross-referenced in a separate section at the end of the discrete assessment with photo-images also provided where they are available.

A significant part of Ildstone & Ashbury village comprise conservation areas that are shown in a map provided for each settlement, with appropriate reference made within the individual assessments where relevant. What is perhaps surprising is that Kingstone Winslow does not contain a conservation area despite the number of listed buildings there, not least of which are the only two surviving water-mills that remain of the original four known to have existed in the Parish.

\* The same nomenclature is also used in the maps that compliment other reports provided as part of the evidence base that underpins the Plan.

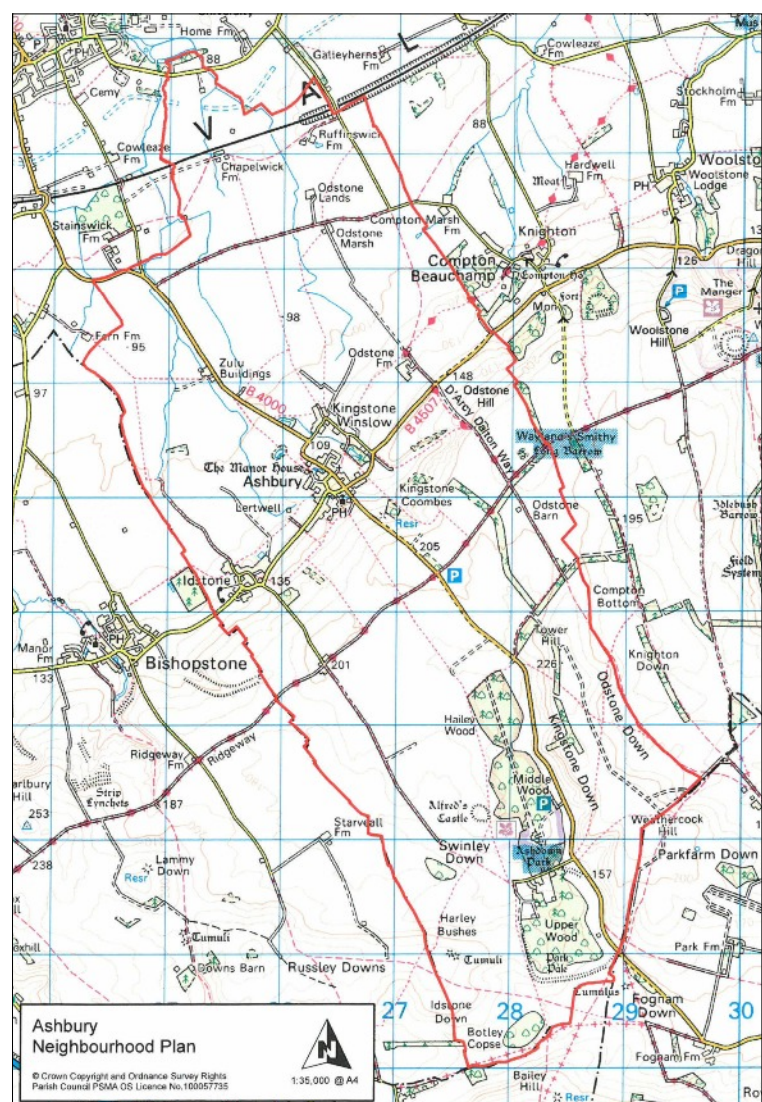


Figure 2: Map of Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area



#### National and Local Planning Policy and Guidance

This appraisal should be read in conjunction with the wider national and local planning policy and guidance

#### National Policy Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted by the Government in March 2012. All the policies in the NPPF constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice. One of the key dimensions of sustainability is that of design. This is supplemented by a second dimension of protecting and enhancing our historic environment. Development that fails to adhere to both the design and the historic environment policies is therefore not considered sustainable development.

The NPPF sets out how the Government intends to deliver sustainable development through the planning process. It expressly states that sustainable development is about achieving positive growth, balancing economic, environmental and social considerations.

Whilst there is a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development, the framework also recognises the finite nature and value of our built heritage and the natural environment,

Sections 7 and 12 of the NPPF set out the main policies in respect to the importance of design in the planning process:

- Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and is indivisible from good planning.
- Securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations.
- Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities presented by a site.
- Planning policies and decisions should not seek to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative, but it is appropriate to

seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

Specifically with regard to the historic environment, the key messages are:

- There should be a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.
- When considering the impact of proposals on a designated heritage asset great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Substantial harm should be exceptional, whilst less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the development
- In conservation areas and within their setting, there are opportunities for new development to enhance or better reveal their significance (such as by replacing inappropriate development or enhancing key spaces and views)



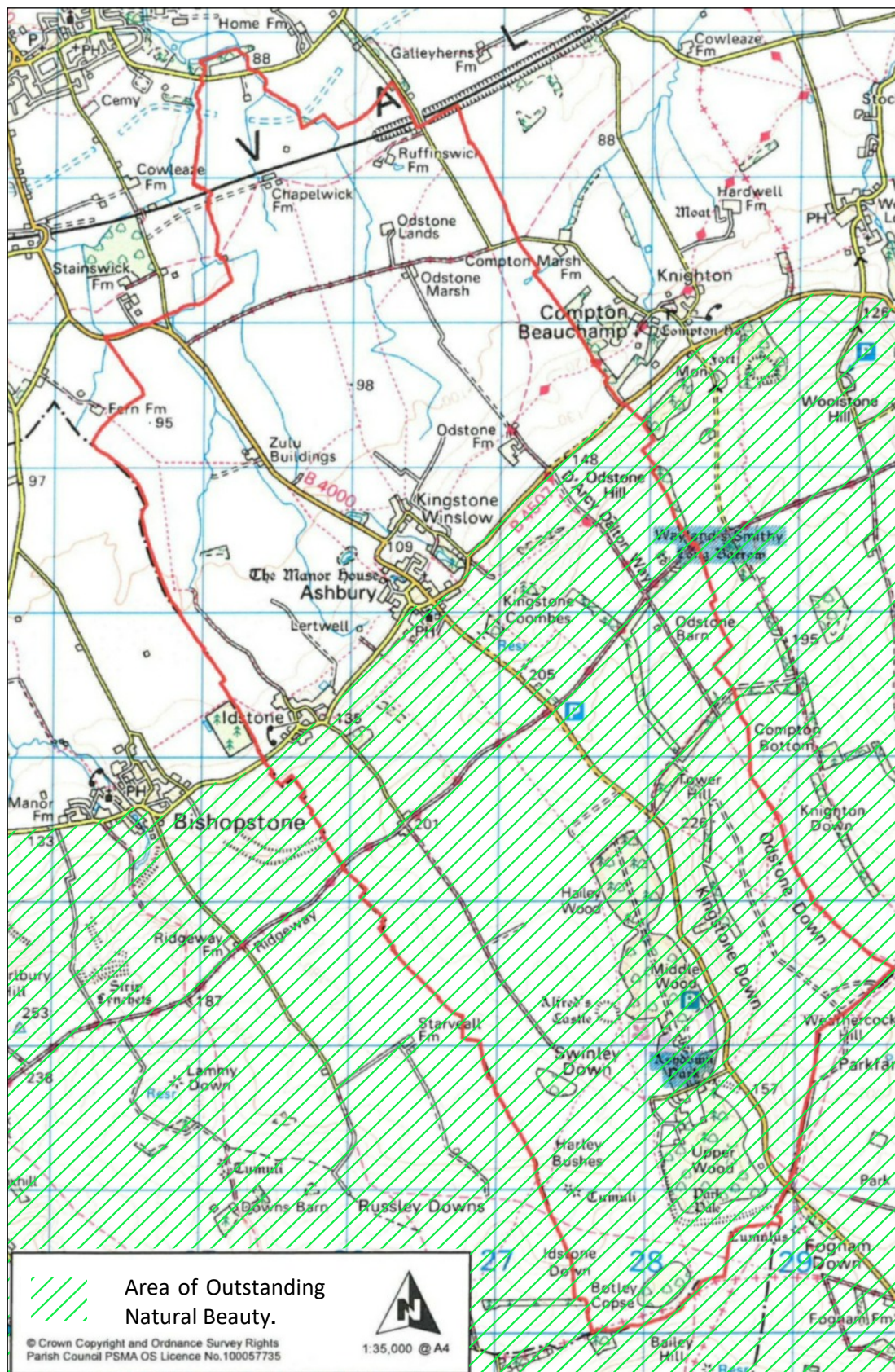


Figure 3: Plan of the parish highlighting the extent of the AONB



## INTRODUCTION

Ashbury is one of a series of small spring line settlements lying along the bottom of the North Downs chalk escarpment where the springs emerge from the porous chalk on to the clay under-bed. Ashbury lies at the cross roads of the north-south B4000 Shrivenham-Lambourn road and the east-west B4507 Wantage-Swindon road that runs between the neighbouring spring line settlements.



The earliest known record of Ashbury is from AD 840, when King Æthelwulf of Wessex granted land at Aisshedoune to his minister Duda. After AD 953 the manor of Ashbury was granted to Glastonbury Abbey, which then held it until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539. A deer park was established for the Abbey in the south of the parish which is now the Upper Wood of Ashdown House. Ashbury is mentioned in the Domesday book comprising 57 households, a large village in that time.

The grandest domestic building in the village is the Grade II\* listed **Manor House** which has earlier roots but was substantially developed in 1488 for ecclesiastical use by the Bishop of Glastonbury. The Manor is said to be one of the best-preserved

examples in the UK. Ashbury also contains many C16 listed building typically built from local chalkstone on hard sarsen stone foundations under a thatched roof.

The first **Free School** outside of Crown patronage in the United Kingdom was founded in Ashbury by the curate Thomas Stock in 1777 in collaboration with his colleague Robert Raikes.



Figure 4: View northwards across the sarsen fields at Ashdown House

Traditionally Ashbury was a farming community raising sheep on the chalk uplands and growing arable crops in the Vale. The chalk streams supported water mills for grinding corn and for cultivating water-cress.



Figure 5: The Manor House



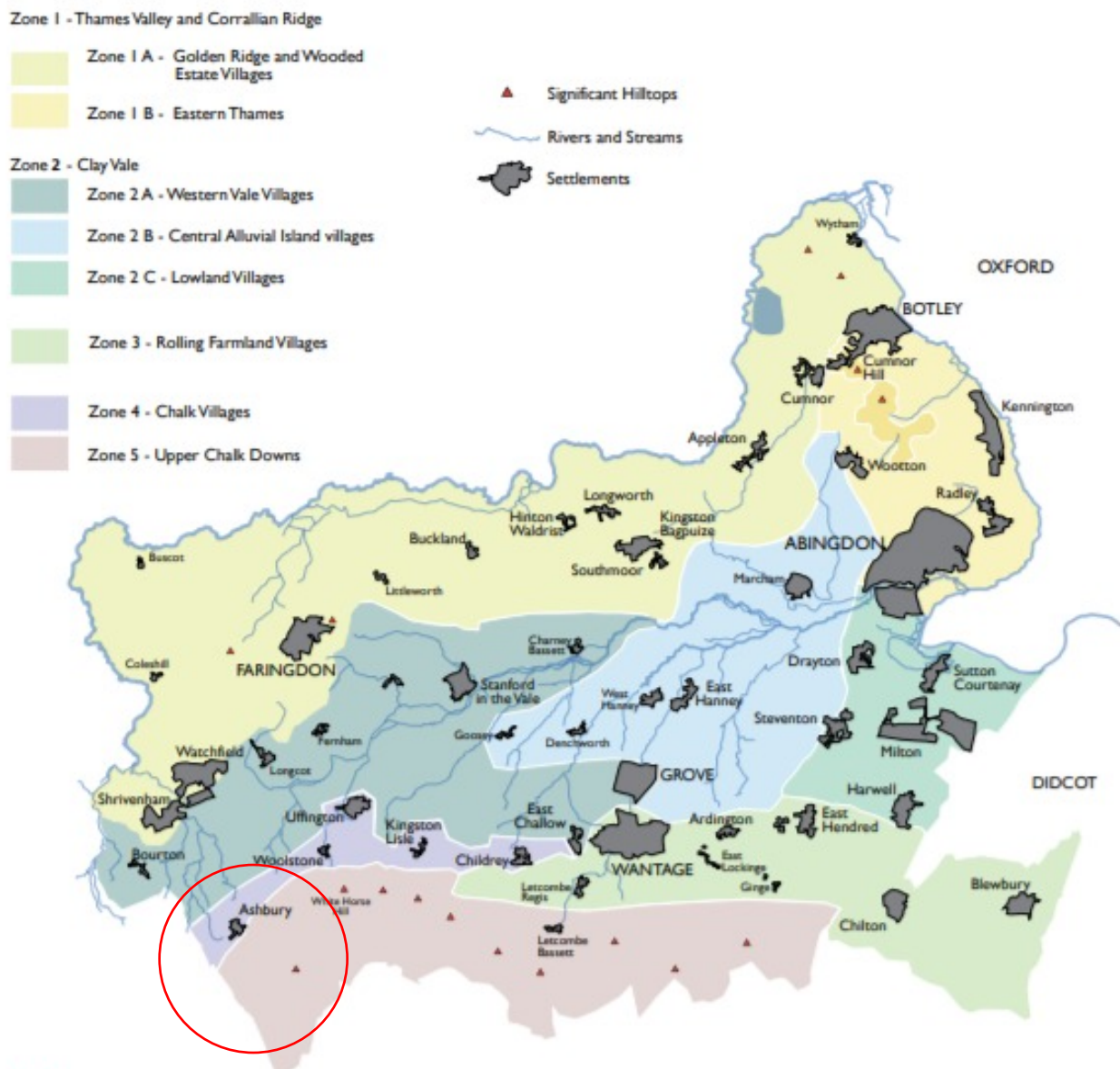


Figure 6: Landscape Character of the Parish within the wider Vale of the White Horse (as taken from the VoWHDC Residential Design Guide 2009)

The Parish of Ashbury makes up the most south-westerly tract of the county of Oxfordshire, forming an approximate rectangle running NNW to SSE. The Parish is almost entirely agricultural land but this is split into two distinct types, the demarcation line being an escarpment running SW to NE across the Parish. The B4507, Wantage to Swindon, road traverses the Parish along the lower slopes of this escarpment, crossing the B4000, Lambourn to Shrivenham road at Ashbury Village.

The more northerly area of flat, open, clay farmland, at around 90m above sea-level, is used predominately for crop production. Above the B4507 to the south the terrain rises and becomes rolling chalk downland, all within the North Wessex Downs ANOB. Here land use is a mixture of arable, pastoral & woodland.

With the exception of the National Trust properties within the ANOB at Ashdown - see The Parish [South] - the main settlements of the Parish have all grown from a series of ancient 'chalk-spring' settlements running along the B4507. As the name suggests, these were established to benefit from the pristine waters issuing at the spring line below the escarpment. The largest of these settlements is Ashbury village lying at the centre of the Parish, with the hamlets of Odstone, Kingstone Winslow and Idstone to the east, north and west respectively.

These chalk-spring settlements are separately described in individual character assessments in this document.



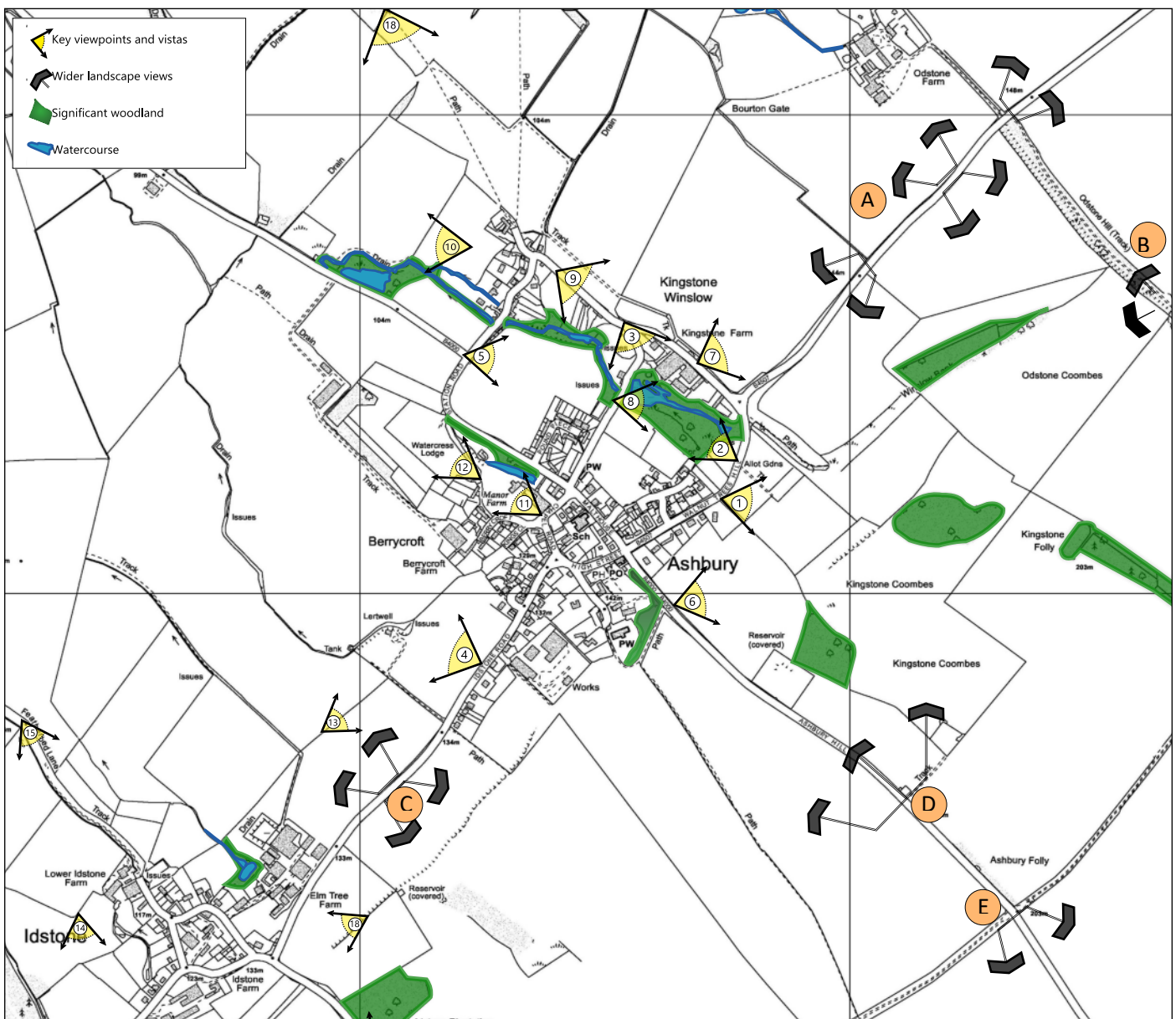


Figure 7: Plan of the important local and wider views around the settlements



Figure 8: Wider view C looking northwest



Figure 9: Wider view B looking southwest



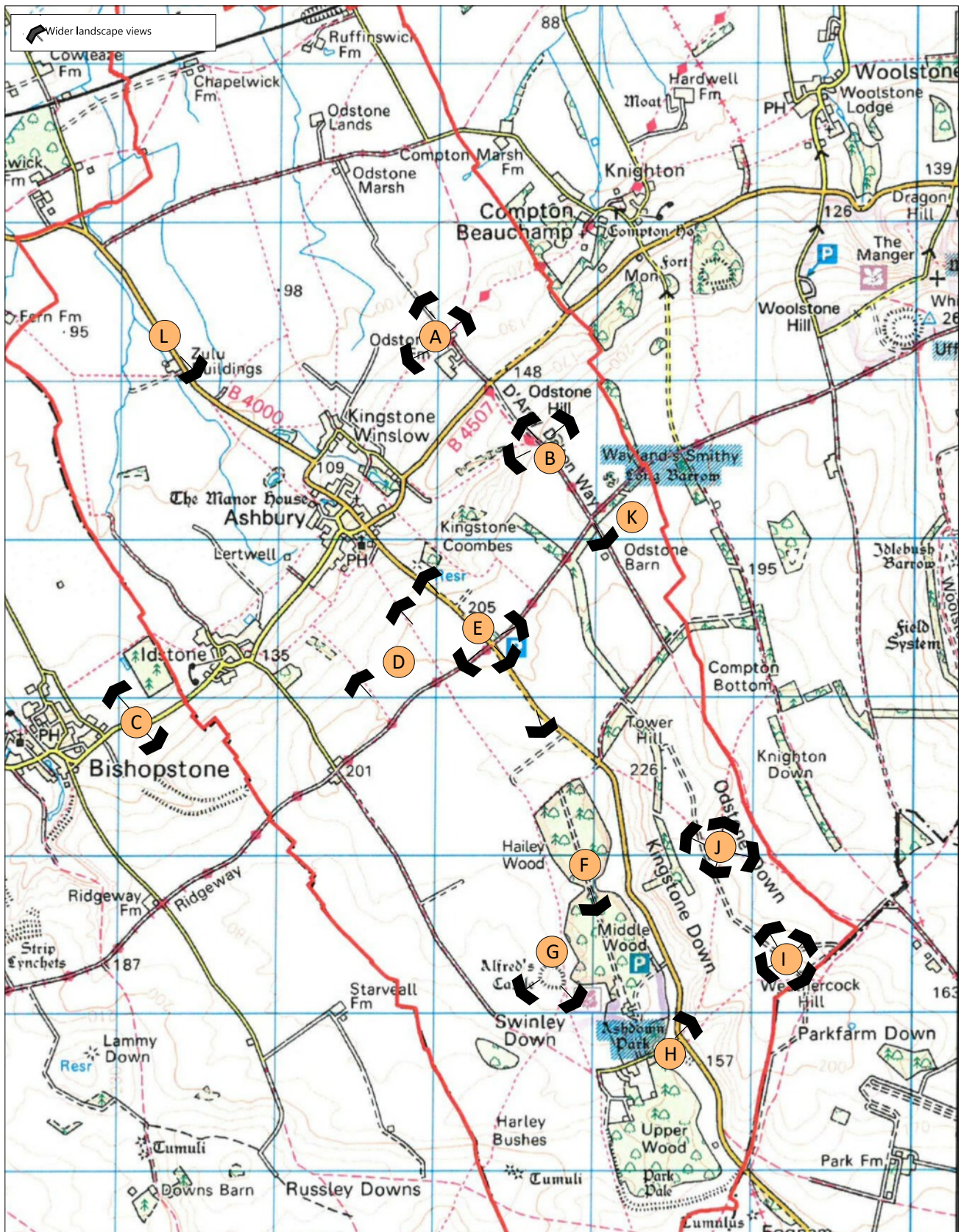


Figure 10: Plan of the important local and wider views around the parish





*Figure 11: Wider view F looking south*



*Figure 12: Wider view G looking southeast*



*Figure 13: Wider view H looking northeast*



*Figure 14: Wider view E looking southeast*



*Figure 15: Wider view B looking northwest*



*Figure 16: Wider view L looking southeast*





The designated listed buildings for the main settlements are shown above. The details for the wider parish and character areas are shown on larger scale plans. The appendix contains a list of all the listed buildings for the parish.

- Listed Building Grade II
- Listed Building Grade II\*
- Listed Building Grade I
- Locally important Buildings/Areas
- Conservation Area
- Important open space
- Significant woodland
- Watercourse





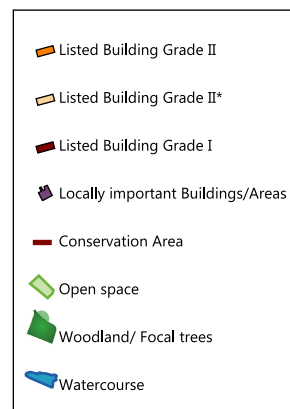
The designated listed buildings for Ashbury Village are shown above and highlighted according to the Grade of listing. The village contains 19 listed buildings (although individual listings may span more than one dwelling or subdivided building), of which the Church is Grade I listed and The Manor House Grade II\*. The central, historic core of the village designated as Conservation Area (washed over in grey).

- Listed Building Grade II
- Listed Building Grade II\*
- Listed Building Grade I
- Conservation Area
- Open space
- Significant woodland
- Watercourse





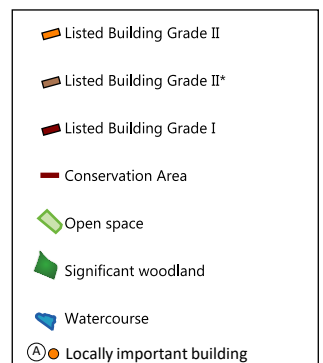
The designated listed buildings for Idstone are shown above and highlighted according to the Grade of listing. The hamlet contains 6 listed buildings (although individual listings may span more than one dwelling or subdivided building), which are all Grade II listed. Other locally important buildings are also shown, but it should be clear that these are not designated heritage assets, but buildings which are considered to make an important contribution for the purposes of this appraisal. The majority of the hamlet is designated as Conservation Area (washed over in grey).







The designated listed buildings for Kingstone Winslow are shown above and highlighted according to the Grade of listing. The hamlet contains 6 listed buildings (although individual listings may span more than one dwelling or subdivided building), which are all Grade II listed. Other locally important buildings are also shown, but it should be clear that these are not designated heritage assets, but buildings which are considered to make an important contribution for the purposes of this appraisal. All are listed in the appendices.





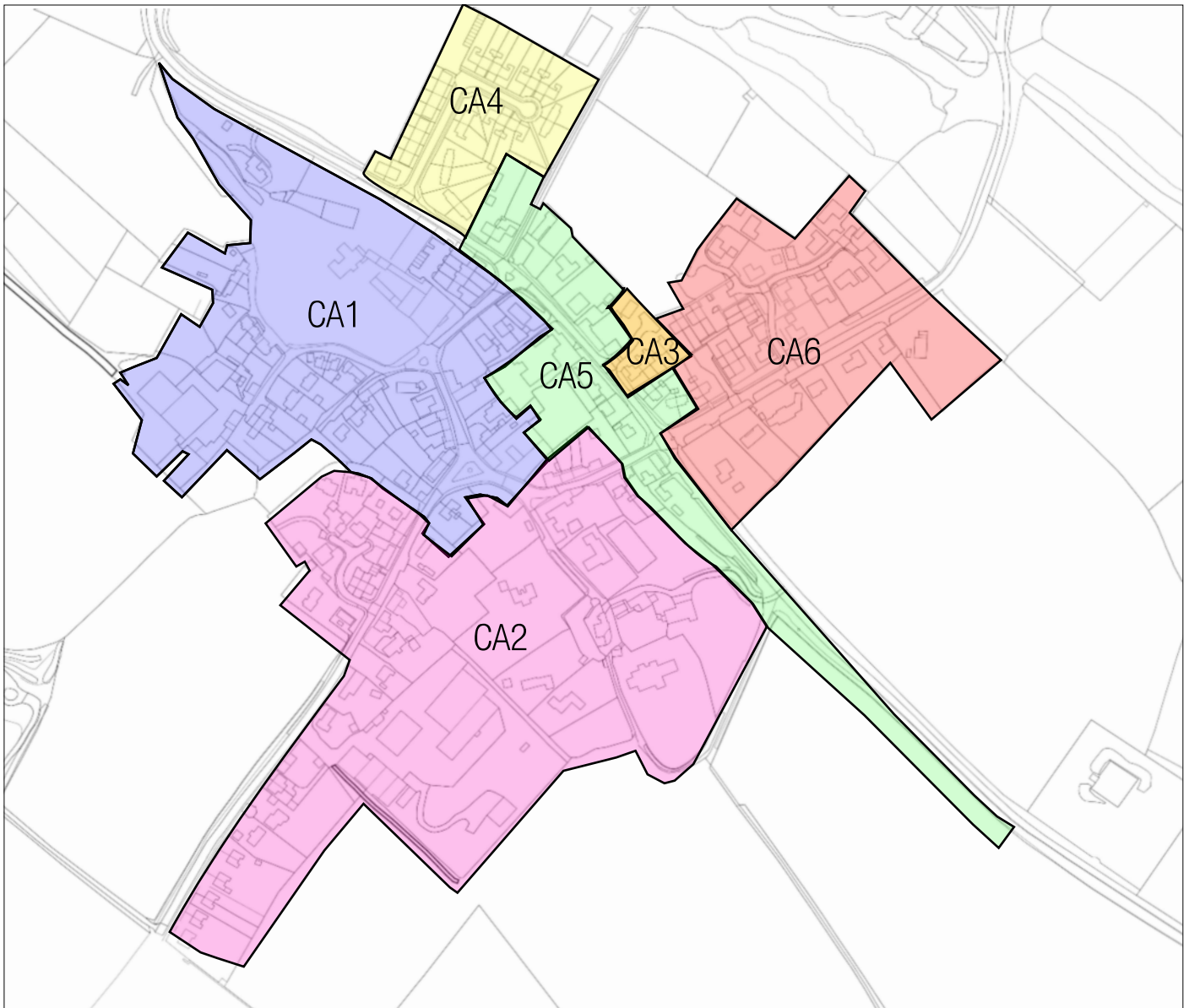


Figure 18: Ashbury Village Character Areas Plan

*Due to the size of the settlement Ashbury Village has been separated into character areas.*

CA1	CHAPEL LANE & BERRYCROFT
CA2	HIGH STREET, IDSTONE ROAD
CA3	MALHOUSE CLOSE
CA4	POUND PIECE
CA5	STATION ROAD - ASHBURY HILL
CA6	WALNUT TREES HILL & WIXES PIECE



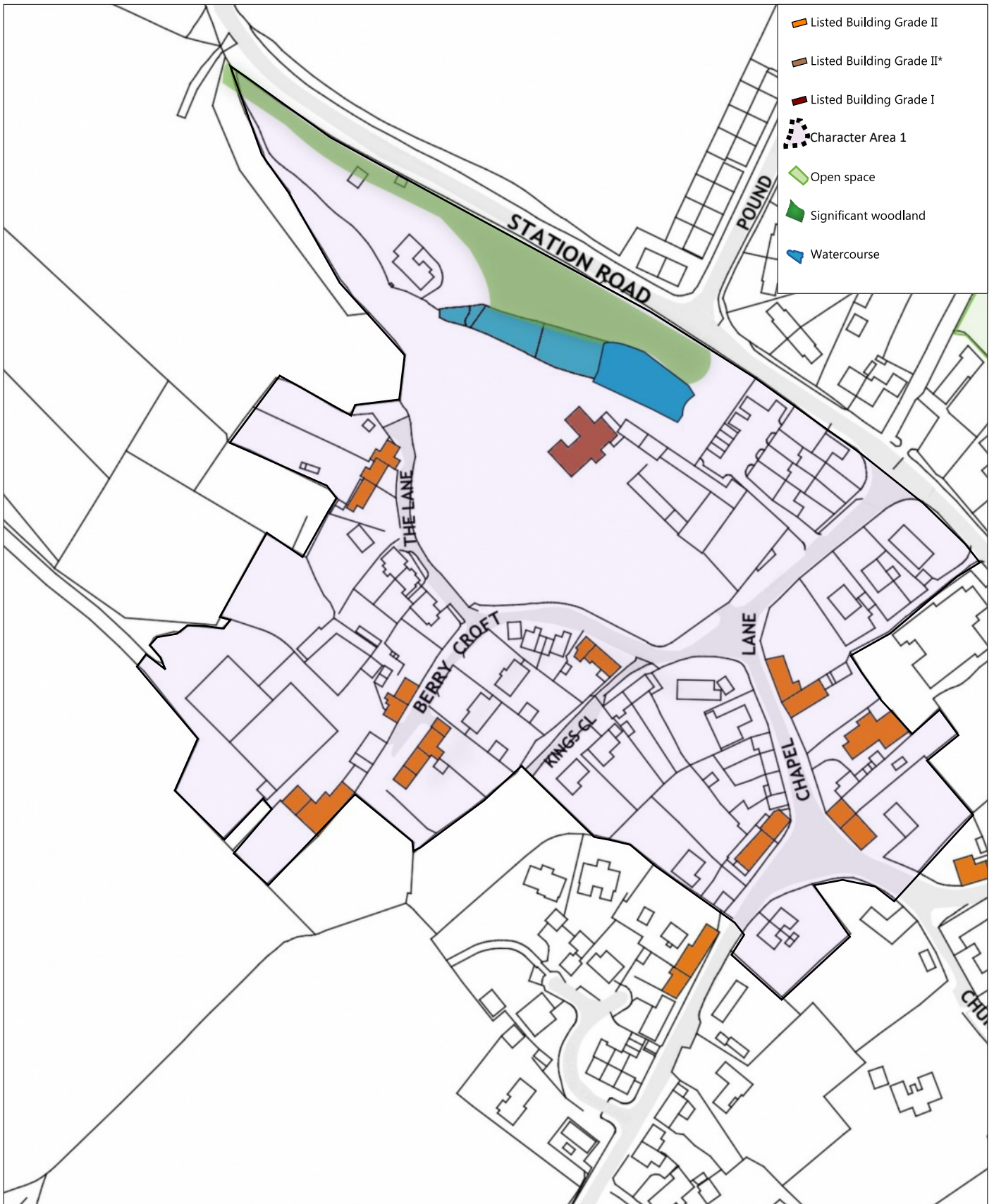


Figure 19: Map of Character Area 1 - Chapel Lane and Berrycroft (washed over in blue)





Figure 20: View north along Chapel Lane toward the Manor House

#### SPACES:

##### i Station road to Chapel Lane

Station Road (B4000) from Shrivenham ascends the hill into Ashbury to meet the B4507 Idstone to Wantage road at the cross roads. On the right side (south-west) an open fence and shrubbery gives way to substantial open views over Water Cress Cottage, the remains of the Water Cress beds, and the Manor House garden and woodland. There is a pavement on one or other side of the road but no street lighting. Parking on Station Road and Chapel Lane can be an issue when parents are depositing / collecting children from the Primary school.

##### ii. Chapel Lane to the Village Green / War memorial.

Chapel Lane branches right (south) off Station Road at the top of the rise. On the right side (west) there are three modern semi-detached brick built houses set back from the road within walled gardens planted with shrubbery and mature trees. Garages and parking are available at the rear. These dwellings were built on the partially in-filled chalk stream bed and remnants of Water Cress beds. The modern dwellings on the left side (east) of Chapel Lane are set back from the road on a raised bank, affording good views over the surrounding area.



Access to these dwellings is from the rear beside the primary school.

Chapel Lane passes the entrance drive to the Manor and its extensive open gardens on the west side before swinging left (south-east) up through the



Figure 19: View from the War Memorial

centre of the village to the small, triangular village green and **war memorial** at the junction with the B4507. On the left side (north) are a series of listed thatched cottages that front the road but have side and rear gardens, and the Village Hall and Old School House that are set back from the road behind a sarsen rubble wall. On the right side (south) of the lane is a row of joined brick dwellings fronting the road with gardens to the rear. Lack of parking space along Chapel lane can be a problem, especially if there are activities in the Village Hall.

### III. Berrycroft

Berrycroft is approached by turning right from Chapel Lane as it passes in front of the Manor gardens. The minor roads of Kings Close and The Lane are passed on the left side (south-west direction) before the road becomes Berrycroft Lane (north-west direction).

Berrycroft Lane is a narrow cul-de-sac bordered on one side by three modern semi-detached brick built dwellings that front the road, a modern brick built

detached property that stands in substantial grounds and three semi-detached C16 chalk and sarsen thatched cottages that front the road. On the opposite side of the lane are the Manor gardens, scrubs and mature trees behind a high hedge, giving an enclosed feeling to the lane.

The Berrycroft area is bordered by open fields towards Shrivenham (north-west) and Idstone (south-west), and the Manor gardens to the east.

All roads are asphalted, although not in good condition. There are a few discontinuous paved footpaths and no illumination. There is little vehicular traffic and only the occasional farm vehicle.

A short walk along Berrycroft Lane and the connecting footpath gives excellent views of the wooded gardens surrounding the Manor House, the former watercress ponds fed by the chalk springs, and views over open fields towards the B4000 and Shrivenham. A walk along the King's Close leads on to a footpath across open fields to Idstone and Bishopstone.

### BUILDINGS:

A wide variety of building styles and materials are employed in the dwellings found in Ashbury, all of which are generally well maintained.

#### I. Chapel Lane to the Village Green / War memorial.

Chapel Lane has a fine collection of listed thatched cottages and old buildings, which together with the Manor House, give the village an 'olde worlde' charm. On the right side of Chapel Lane one finds:

The **Manor House** (GV II\*) dating from 1488 is recognized as one of the best preserved manor

houses in this country. It is built from cut limestone, chalk, sarsen rubble and brick under a stone slate roof and sits in approximately 2 acres of gently sloping landscaped gardens. The Manor House originally served as a house for the Abbot of Glastonbury's steward, as well as a hostelry for Somerset monks and students visiting Oxford

The **Great Barn**, (GV II) at the south-eastern end of the Manor property is probably late-medieval. It was built as a threshing barn and subsequent alterations are important as they reflect changes in the agricultural economy. The barn has an oak timber frame and roof structure, weatherboarded walls and, plaintile roof.

On the right side of Chapel Lane is the red brick **Methodist Chapel** was built in 1927, and after closing in 1994 was tastefully converted into a private home.

A group of brick built cottages, including the old **Post Office** cottage front the lane before meeting the village green.

**Triangle Cottage and The Elms** facing the village green are examples of early C17 thatched cottages constructed of coursed chalk on sarsen base. They were originally 4 cottages with The Elms being a forge before the four properties became two dwellings in early C20.

On the left side of Chapel lane are:



Figure 20: Eastwood Cottage

**Eastwood Cottage** (GV II) was built in late C16/early C17 of chalk blocks on a sarsen and brick base under a thatched roof. The cottage fronts the road but has extensive rear gardens. In c.1777 Thomas Stock was

given this cottage by the Craven Estate for use as a Sunday School, claimed to be the first in England.



Figure 21: Rose Cottage

**Rose Cottage** (GV II) was built in 1420 and is the oldest cottage in Ashbury. Built of chalk blocks over sarsen base under a thatched roof. The cottage fronts the road with extensive side and rear gardens.

**Village Hall.** The single storey, chalk block Village Hall was originally built as the National School in 1864. Following construction of the new Ashbury C of E Primary School in 1961, the vacated National School was used as a Village Hall. The adjacent **Old School House**, where the Head Master lived has been restored to a family dwelling

**Cross Trees Cottage and Jessamin Cottage** (GV II 2). Late C16 /early C17 thatched cottages, originally timber framed with chalk block infill.

## II. Berrycroft

Substantial detached brick housing from 1960's set in substantial plots are found in King's Close and the Lane. Three joined brick properties from 1980's and a new detached dwelling from 2016 occupy Berrycroft Lane, and two joined properties from the 2000's were built on the site of the old bakery in The Lane. Most of these dwellings have garage parking, but the more modern dwellings have limited frontage and smaller gardens.





Figure 22: The Shieling

There are many fine examples of listed cottages in Berrycroft. The **Shieling** and **Kings Close East and West** date from the early C16 and were probably associated with the Manor. Kings Close East was once a post and telegraph office and the Shieling was a bakery.

**Old Berrycroft Cottages, Merry Madcap, Fox Cottage and Pear Tree Cottages** on either side of the The Lane are fine examples of chalk built thatched cottages from C15, probably built for the community surrounding the Manor. At the end of The Lane is **BerryCroft Farm** a Grade II listed, built in 1593 of chalk and brick bands under a slate roof. It is a working farm with arable and rare breed livestock.



Figure 23: Tilling Cottage

The joined **Tilling, Coyden, and Berrycroft Cottage** at the end of Berrycroft Lane are Grade II one and a half storey thatched cottages on chalk and sarsen foundations. The cottages were thought to be workers cottages from C17, but now are considered to be older, contemporary with the Manor.

The one and a half storey thatched cottages in Kings Close, The Lane and Berrycroft Lane are generally joined in groups of 2-3 units, front onto the road, but have good sized plots with gardens located behind the dwelling.

#### Construction:

The older dwelling are mostly constructed from sarsen or chalk stone outer walls with clunch infill topped with steeply pitched thatched roofs of reed or straw. In some cases the original stone walls have been rendered & painted. The more modern buildings from the mid 1950's are mostly constructed from buff or red brick walls and tiled shallow pitched roofs.

Traditional materials such as hardwood have been used for windows & doors on the listed and older properties. Newer properties have either been constructed using softwood or UPVC for windows & doors. No new builds have employed traditional stonework, a thatched roof or extensive use of hardwood for doors & windows to blend in with the adjacent properties.

#### VIEWS:

##### Chapel Lane:

On approaching Ashbury from Shrivenham there are excellent views over the open fields and countryside. On ascending Ashbury hill, the long views are somewhat restricted by trees on the rightside and housing on the left side. However, the views through the trees on the right hand side give way to shorter views over the water cress beds and the extensive Manor gardens. On entering Chapel Lane there are further excellent views of the Manor garden and the thatched cottages that line the lane, giving a good feel of openness and the old world character of the village. On approaching the village green / war memorial, there are again open views of the surrounding cottages, pub and church, but long distance views are restricted by the lower elevation of the lane.

**Berrycroft:**

Here again there are extensive views of the other side of the Manor gardens from Berrycroft Lane and views of Water Cress cottage, the pond, and, from the footpath starting from the end of Berrycroft Lane in a north-west direction, of open fields and the Vale. The dwellings at the end of Berrycroft Lane, Berrycroft Farm and Shire Barn all enjoy open views over the lowlands to the west from their gardens.

The footpath that leads from the end of King's Close provides unhindered views both of the lowlands towards Shrivenham (north -west) and the downs and Ridgeway to the south.

**GREENERY & LANDSCAPE FEATURES:**

A fine stand of mature poplars line the right side of Station Road, as it passes the Manor. The former farmyard at the Manor, beside Berrycroft, is now an orchard, planted with hardwoods and fruit trees. A great variety of mature deciduous trees and shrubs are planted in the Manor gardens and line the stream as it flows past Water Cress cottages towards Shrivenham. The former watercress beds, now a single pond, fed by two streams. This feeds what may have formerly been a mill-stream. All this can be seen from the Berrycroft footpath.

**LIGHT/ DARK:**

There is an even balance of shade and light throughout the day, some areas are open, some are partially shaded from the high hedge and trees along the boundary of the Manor gardens. The roads in Berrycroft do not have street lights. This preserves its character and the sight of the night sky but care is needed when walking at night over the uneven surfaces.

Many of the streets and dwellings have an east – west orientation, presenting a southerly aspect to the front or rear of the house.

**NOISE AND SMELL**

Ashbury is generally very quiet, with little traffic noise, though there is growing evidence of “rat-run” traffic at peak times along the Idstone-Wantage road. Noise from a grain dryer can be intrusive in late summer for residents in Berrycroft. Low flying military aircraft, particularly helicopters passing over the northern end of the village, can be exciting. The Bunce factory hooter sounds briefly four times a day and can be heard throughout the village. More gently, the Church clock strikes the hours. There are occasional odours from farming “fertilisers” at certain times of the year.

**SPIRIT OF PLACE**

Ashbury Parish is delightfully rural, being an active farming area surrounded by open fields. Ashbury village is popular with walkers using the Ridgeway and cyclists using the Swindon-Wantage road. The village is friendly and welcoming to visitors, as illustrated by the farmers market, street party, Ashbury fete, the Live Nativity and other social events, organised communally through the year.

**SUMMARY**

Ashbury is a quiet, tranquil spring line settlement with many fine examples of picturesque thatched cottages from the C16-17 and an outstanding example of an ancient manor house. The village



sits on the scarp of the North Wessex Downs, an area of outstanding natural beauty. Every effort should therefore be made to ensure that any new dwellings match and blend in with the surrounding dwellings in character, size, and materials of construction, whilst offering some variation in design and orientation. A poor example of new builds are the houses in Wixes Piece, which are all of very similar design, constructed of modern materials and have a disproportionately high roof line which stands out from many kms distance. By contrast, a good example of a modern build are the dwellings on Idstone Road. These are far less obtrusive and more pleasing to the eye



*Figure 24: View of the War Memorial with Chapel Lane beyond*



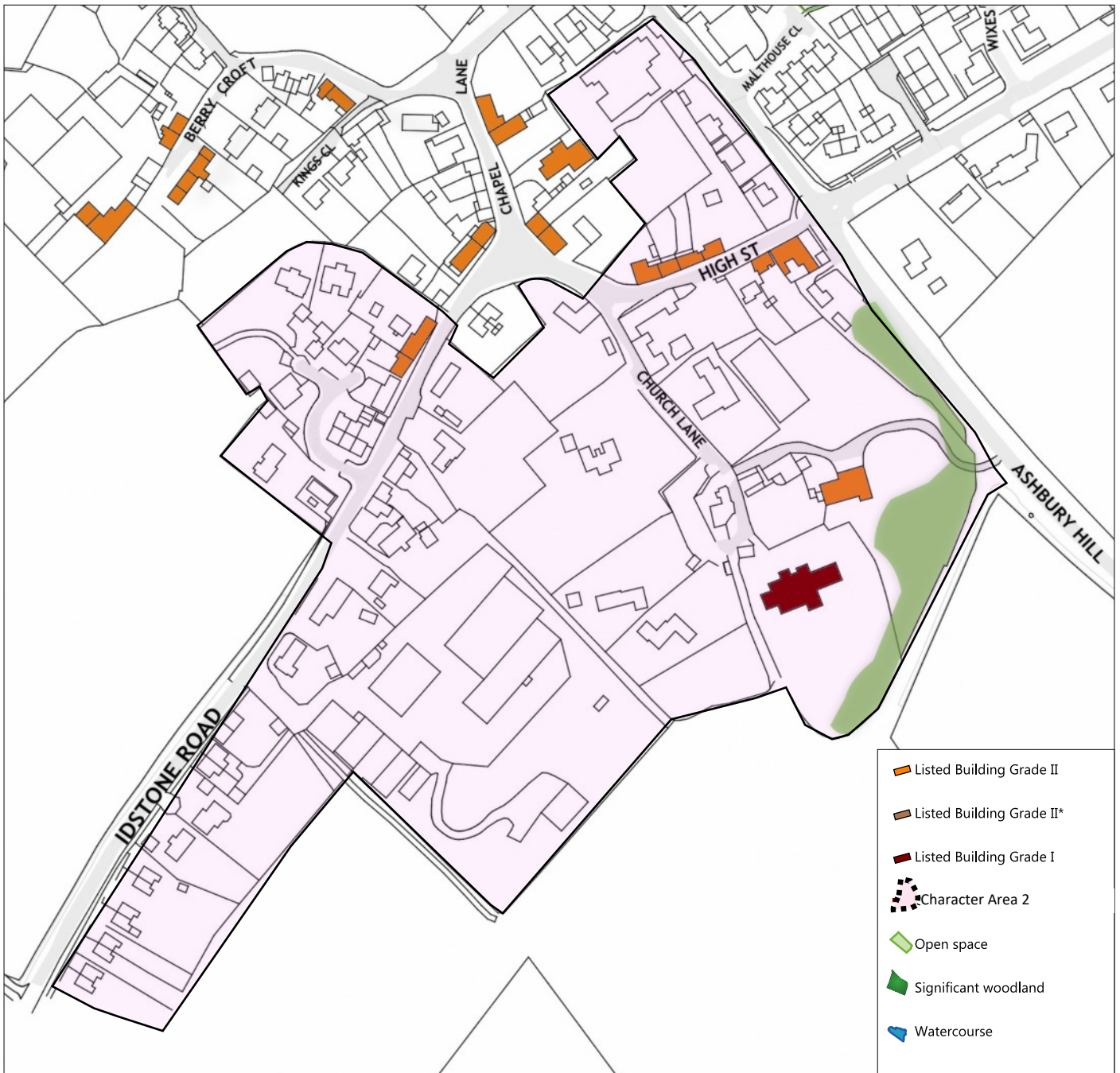


Figure 25 Map of Character Area 2 (washed over in pink)



## INTRODUCTION

This section describes the area from the crossroads of the B4000 and B4507 to the boundary of Ashbury Village on the B4507 (Ashbury-Idstone). The area includes residential housing, the pub, the war memorial, the church and churchyard, several listed buildings and a small factory surrounded by agricultural land. The Idstone Road leads out of the village into a rural landscape offering distant views to the right, down into the Vale, and to the left, up to the Ridgeway. There are footpaths going to the left (east) from the B4507 up through rural land and round the factory boundary and the church. Footpaths run between Ashbury village and Idstone both through the lower fields to the right and the upper fields to the left. With the exception of the south east section of the B4507 between the factory entrance and the village boundary, the area described lies within the Ashbury Conservation area. The B4507 forms the north west border of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

## SPACES:

The asphalted, two-way High Street leading from the crossroads bends to the right after 100m, then immediately to the left at a small triangle of garden on the right on which stands the war memorial. At this point the High St becomes the Idstone Road which continues straight on, initially sloping up, to the village boundary about 300m further on. To the left, almost to the village boundary, the road is bounded by residential housing and a discreet factory entrance. To the right, for the last 250m and beyond the village boundary, are beautiful, far-reaching rural views of the lower downs and the Vale, mostly laid to crops with woodland in the distance.

A footpath on the left hand side of the road, just past the entrance to the factory, rises steeply and leads around the factory itself back towards the village centre, curving to the left through a tunnel of overhead branches and down a short, steeply inclined approach through the main churchyard to the church. The path from the church door leads

down a flight of steps to a cobbled and uneven path joining Church Lane, an asphalted single lane linking the church and its car park back to the High Street.

There is a 30 mph speed restriction up to the outskirts of the village, and traffic calming measures. The road is asphalted, and wide enough for cars and lorries to pass each other, if there were no parked cars. Cars, however, are often parked on the south side of the road, as few of the houses here have off-street parking. The road can be busy with commuter traffic to Wantage and Swindon in early morning and evening. There is a pavement on one or the other side of the road to the outskirts of the village. There is no street lighting.

## BUILDINGS:

From the crossroads (B4000/B4507) the High Street passes between the **Old Shop and Post Office** on the left and the **Old Smithy, Teallach Cottage** and **Craven Cottage** under thatched roofs on the right.

200m north of the crossroads is **The Rose and Crown**, a large, rambling, tile-roofed, white-painted 16<sup>th</sup> century inn comprising a cluster of buildings of various ages and architectural styles, mostly centuries old and attractive, with trees around the car park, flower beds, a covered outside seating area behind and climbing shrubs and flowers up the walls. Outside the inn is a small grassed seating area shaded by a small tree. There is a large, arched window with leaded lights which used to be the



Figure 26 Rose and Crown

entrance to the stables in the days of the coaching inns.

There is no pavement and the road continues to curve round to the left, crossing the end of Church Lane, past old **Billy's Cottage** and its lawned front garden and pavement.



Figure 27: Billy's Cottage

Immediately facing the War Memorial on the right (north) are grade II listed **Elm and Triangle cottages** built of chalk block under a thatched roof.



Figure 28: Elm and Triangle Cottages

The road then straightens and becomes The Idstone Road. 50m on the right is the grade II listed **College Farmhouse** built in mid/late C18. The 2 storey 3-unit house is built of coursed sarsen rubble, chalk bands and brick dressings under a C20 tile roof and brick stacks. The house fronts the road but has an extensive plot and parking to the rear

A new development of 7 modern build semi-detached and detached brick and stone dwellings under tiled roofs fills the area between the road and Berrycroft. The Hayloft, Keeper's Cottage and several semi-detached units front the road, whilst large detached dwellings in substantial plots are accessed from the Close. The Close is connected to King's Close in Berrycroft by a short, wooded footpath. Immediately after the Close is the telephone exchange behind which is the last large



Figure 29: College Farmhouse

modern house set in a large plot. Thereafter there are expansive views over open fields to the north and west.

On the left (south side) of Idstone road are several mid C20 dwellings on large plots set back from the road (Cross Trees Cottages, Greystones, Sunningwell House). These are followed by several older dwellings, including Alyn House, built in 1806 as the Cross Keys Inn; Half Crown Cottage and Box Cottage all of which have frontages onto the road and limit the views up to the downs.

Behind these houses on the left, and accessed by footpath and driveway, is a cluster of factory buildings used by two firms, one of which manufactures snow ploughs. These are screened from the main road and surrounded to the North and East by thick woodland. The path behind the factory returns past a small cemetery and several modern houses with gardens until it reaches the perimeter of the Church.

Approached through the larger cemetery is the **Church of St. Mary The Virgin**. This is a stone-built structure from the middle-ages with a square tower and a pitched roof. Its size is typical of village churches in the area. There was a church here as early as middle of the 10th century, when records of Glastonbury Abbey refer to an already existing church on this site. Nothing now remains of that Saxon church, and the oldest part of the current building is the west end, which dates from the 12th century. One of the more interesting features is the Norman north door with traditional Norman dogtooth and chevron decorative patterns. The chancel dates from the 14th century, and it is here three medieval memorial brasses are set into the floor of the chancel; the outer two are those of Thomas Bushbury (died 1409) and William Skilton (died 1448).





Figure 30: Church of St Mary the Virgin

Beyond the Church on rising ground are three large, detached dwellings with substantial gardens. One of these is a fine 17th Century Grade II former **vicarage** with walled garden, now a private house.

To the left of the Lytchgate on Church Lane there is a small car park. Residential properties of various styles and sizes flank Church Lane as it descends back to the High Street.

#### VIEWS:

From the Village Green /War Memorial, there are good views of the centre of the village including Chapel lane with Cross Trees and Rose Cottages to the north and the Manor in the middle distance; the High Street with the Old Forge Cottages and the Rose and Crown pub to the east; St Mary's Church tower and the path up to the Ridgeway and downs to the south-east.

Along the High Street and the first stretch of Idstone Road, the view is a close up streetscape with small front gardens or frontages on to the pathway, until the beautiful views emerge to the right of the Idstone road approaching the village boundary. However, looking back from the start of the High St., there is an enticing view beyond the crossroads of part of the Combes. During the Christmas Nativity, that is where the Angel finds the shepherds.

From the pathway going up around the factory and the church, views to the left are mostly close-up, of trees and hedgerows, and to the right of sharply rising, managed fields.

The ground drops away from the church but the views from the churchyard and the top of Church

Lane are not distant, only an array of trees and nearby roof tops.

#### GREENERY & LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

The front gardens, mostly small, show flowers with low hedges or walls. The new houses in and around the Close are well landscaped with trees, high hedges and lawns.

The factory buildings are screened by trees and hedges. The farmland is well kept.

The cemeteries are regularly tended, with lawns and trees, many of which are ancient yews. Tall trees and hedges flank Church Lane.

#### LIGHT/ DARK:

During the day, the wide road, low hedges and few trees allow ample and even light conditions along the High Street and Idstone Road.

At night, there is no street lighting but ambient starlight and moonlight on cloudless nights help visibility along the streets.

On the footpaths, torches are necessary at night, particularly when navigating the uneven ground to church services.

#### NOISE AND SMELL

There is the usual noise from traffic and farm machinery as well as factory noise and the factory siren. Otherwise, it is mostly birdsong and the church bell tolling. In the spring there is the smell of wild flowers, giving way to manure as the farming year progresses.

This section of the road leads past the centre of Ashbury and gives travellers a good impression of

a spring-line village and its architecture, set in a rural landscape.

#### SPIRIT OF PLACE

The spirit is one of peaceful rural domesticity and friendly human interaction.

#### SUMMARY

High Street and Idstone road pass through the centre of the village and form the boundary with the AONB, offering magnificent views over the downs to the Ridgeway to the south and over open fields and downland to the north-west. Several listed buildings, including the ancient church and the Inn are located along this route.





Figure 31: Map of Character Area 3 (washed over in orange)

#### SPACES:

The road is a small cul-de-sac of 5 modern (mostly attached) house and 1 bungalow. The end of the road links to a playground and a communal field.

Unlike other roads in Ashbury, the road and pavements are paved.

The road also includes an attractive five foot high wall of chalk/brick construction topped with roof tiles.

#### BUILDINGS:

The houses are a mixture, either faced with red brick or rendered, under tiled roofs and all with garages. All have wood-framed windows with plastic guttering.

On the east side of the road the buildings are two storey with a single storey bungalow on the west side.

The houses are set back approximately 2- 5 metres from the road.



Figure 32: Malthouse Close

#### SPIRIT OF PLACE

Malthouse was built in the 80s. It is a quiet road of medium sized houses close to the heart of the village.

#### VIEWS:

There are dramatic views to the Coombes and Ridgeway beyond.

#### GREENERY & LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

The front gardens are relatively flat and open with no fencing. They are planted with a mixture of trees, shrubs and lawns.

#### LIGHT/ DARK:

The road is north facing and straight with no street lighting along the road.

#### NOISE AND SMELL

The road is generally quiet other than the traffic noise on the Lambourn-Shrivenham road.

The nearby school and playground are a source of activity and noise, especially during break times.





Figure 33: Map of Character Area 4 (washed over in yellow)

#### SPACES:

The road is an L-shaped cul-de-sac with access to a block of 10 garages on the corner.

The road is asphalted with generous pavements and well-kept verges on either side.

The front gardens of the bungalows have no boundary but the houses have low walls topped by well-kept hedges enclosing many attractive front gardens.

Many front gardens are enclosed by small rendered walls, some walls topped with hedging. However, some front gardens have been opened up and

turned into car parking. A number of residents park their cars on the road.

#### BUILDINGS:

The 30 dwellings in Pound Piece consist of two storey semi-detached houses and bungalows. Most have brick elevations but some are rendered.

The houses have either white wood or pvc windows and grey guttering.

A number of the houses have been extended over the years adding covered porches and additional rooms.



Figure 34: Pound Piece

#### VIEWS:

Several of the houses have good views over the surrounding countryside as they mark the boundary of Ashbury.

The public area around the garages provides views over open fields to Shrivenham and down into Kingstone Winslow.

#### GREENERY & LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

The verges have several trees and many of the gardens are attractively populated with a variety of trees and shrubs.

#### LIGHT/ DARK:

The road runs from south to north and then to the east

There is no street lighting along the road.

#### NOISE AND SMELL

The road is generally quiet other than the traffic noise.

The nearby pre-school at the Free Church has been a source of activity and some playground noise.

There are agricultural smells at certain times of the year.

#### SPIRIT OF PLACE

Pound Piece was built in the fifties as council housing. Like many such developments, most of the properties are now privately owned.

The bungalows were originally built for the elderly.

The well-kept houses and gardens with views to surrounding countryside make this an attractive residential development.



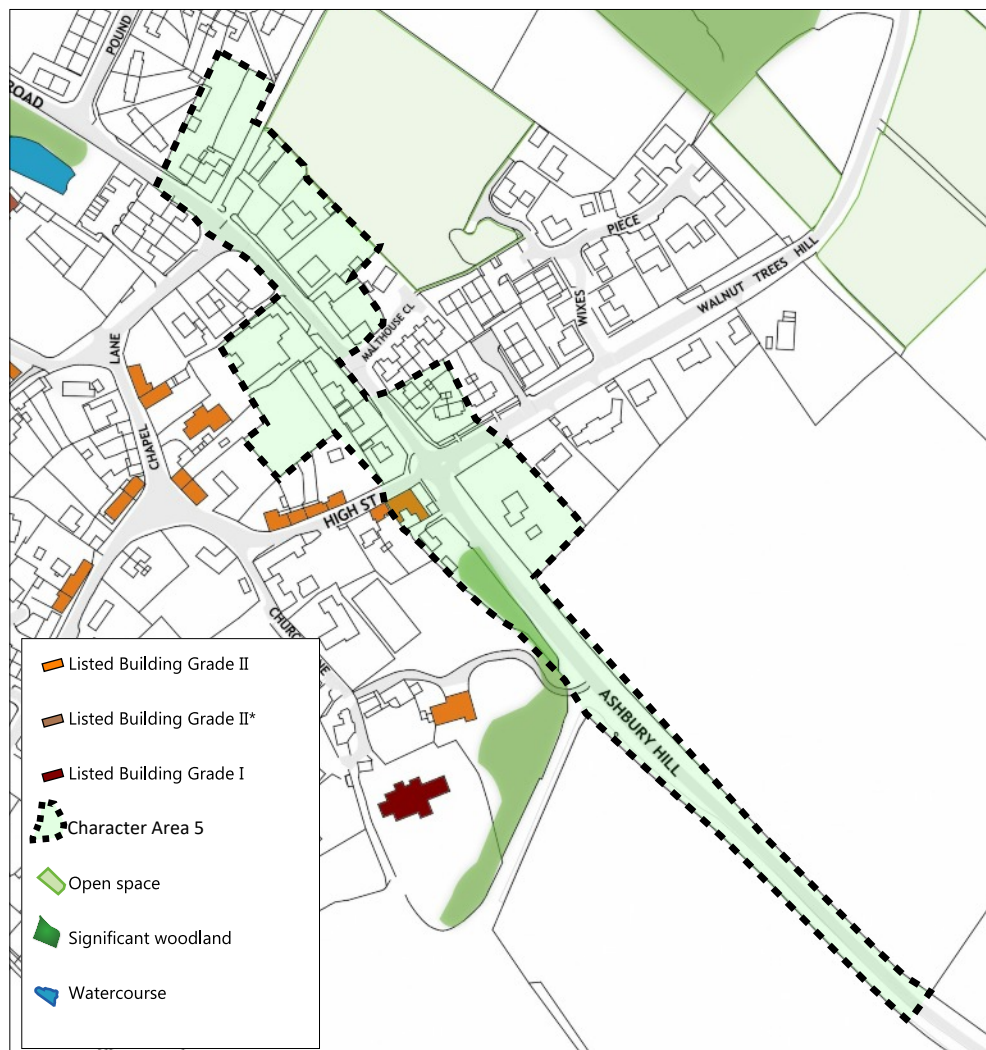


Figure 35: Map of Character Area 5 (washed over in green)

## INTRODUCTION

Station Road (B4000), runs up hill in a South Easterly direction curving round from the entrance to the separate settlement of Kingstone Winslow to run past the cul-de sacs of Pound Piece and Malthouse Close and on to the cross roads with Ildstone Road and Walnut Trees Hill (B4507).

The road up to the cross roads is known locally as Drews Hill. Past the cross roads, the road, now Ashbury Hill, rises steeply up the Berkshire Downs.

It is a relatively busy road for a rural road handling local and passing traffic: cars, lorries, farm vehicles, horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians.

The road's character and aspect relate strongly to its history and geography.

## SPACES:

The B4000, Station Road, rises up through the village. After crossing the B4507 it becomes Ashbury Hill as it rises up to the ancient Ridgeway. The road is quite steep in places, particularly after the crossroads.

There is a 30mph speed restriction through the village with the national speed limit applying on either side.

As the road enters the village from the Ridgeway, there are traffic-calming measures: wooden fences and planters as well as a speed warning sign.

There is also an old footpath, Millers Lane, that connects Station Road with Upper Mill and the mill pond. There is also a footpath linking Malthouse Close to the communal green space behind Wixes Piece.

Beyond the crossroads there is a foot path on the right leading past the back of the church

There is pavement or verges on one or other side of the road most of the way until the cross roads. Several benches are situated along the road.

Most houses have substantial front gardens with hedges and most households are able to park cars on their own property but there is some parking on the road.

There is abundant hedging and trees all the way along the road both in gardens and on field boundaries.

Past the cross roads, there are no pavements and the road quickly takes on a rural feel as it climbs steeply up towards the Ridgeway.

There is no street lighting on this asphalted road.

The road is wide enough for lorries to pass one another but not when cars are parked on the road.

The road can be busy with cars and lorries and there is a perceived problem with speeding, particularly by vehicles descending Ashbury Hill.

Parking can be difficult at the start and end of the school day.

Farm vehicles are also frequent users of the road, leaving mud when it is wet and straw during harvest.

A lot of pedestrians use the road; mostly villagers but also people visiting, including those walking the Ridgeway.

The road is also frequently used by cyclists and horse-riders.

#### BUILDINGS:

There is a variety of housing on both sides of the road. Styles vary and include detached and semidetached houses. Most are brick or stone built and some are rendered. The majority are of two storeys.

Most properties have hedge-enclosed front gardens. **The Kiln** (dating from the 1700s) is the only exception as it abuts the pavement.



Figure 36: The Kiln

As you enter the plan area you look down on the right, first, to the thatched Grade II listed cottage, Water Cress Lodge, and then to the former cress beds, now a single pond at the rear of the Manor. As you enter the main part of the village, there are more modern houses to left and right with Pound Piece, a 1950s council estate, on the left.

Ashbury Free Church and Ashbury Primary School take up dominant positions but are surrounded by housing of various sizes and ages. Also, as you approach the crossroads, the Georgian House, Claremont is a clear landmark.

As well as Pound Piece, Malthouse is another small close of modern houses (see following text).

Past the crossroads there is a driveway, giving access to the Old Rectory, a fine 18th Century house.



**VIEWS:**

Walking up Station Road to the right you can catch views into the grounds of Ashbury Manor, where water cress was grown in the late 19th early 20th century. Further up the road you begin to catch views to the left of the Coombes leading up to the Ridgeway.

To the right, Ashbury church can be glimpsed over the roof tops.

Further up the hill, looking back down the road, there are views over the roofs of Ashbury on to the fields between Ashbury and Shrivenham.



*Figure 37: View from Ashbury*

**GREENERY & LANDSCAPE FEATURES:**

Hedges on right and left allow the occasional glimpse into gardens. On either side of the road there are also views through hedges and gates to the fields that surround Ashbury.

Much of the road is tree or hedge lined.

**LIGHT/ DARK:**

There is an abundance of trees particularly as you enter and leave the village but also in the gardens of the houses along the road.

There is no street lighting. Sunset is a particularly beautiful time for views across the Vale and for the geological features of the Coombes behind the village to be cast into fine relief.

**NOISE AND SMELL**

The road is generally quiet other than the traffic noise.

The school is a source of activity and there is noise of children at play. The pre-school meets in the Free Church and their activity adds to that of the school.

Agricultural vehicles are frequent users of the road leaving mud on the road when it's wet and straw during harvesting.

There are agricultural smells at certain times of the year and the grain drier on the edge of the field can be heard in late summer/early autumn.

**SPIRIT OF PLACE**

Station Road with its school and church is very much part of Ashbury. Travellers coming down from the open country between Lambourn and the Ridgeway have a strong sense of returning to civilisation.

The road runs through the centre of the village linking the grazing areas of the downlands to the arable fields in the lowlands.

The open country-side views up and down the hill connect Ashbury and its residents on Station Road with their roots as a spring line village, Ashbury being one of many villages in long, thin parishes that run along the northern side of this part of the Ridgeway.

This openness, along with the active farming of the surrounding fields, underpins the essential rural character of the parish.



Figure 38: Map of Character Area 6 - (washed over in red)

## INTRODUCTION

This section describes two roads leading to the north of the crossroads between the B4000 and the B4507 from the point of view of the experience available to a visitor. As is the case throughout the village, they have a mixture of rural and residential areas. Architecture is varied, the houses having been built over several decades, and the population is represented by the typical spread of ages and social strata. There is a small development of similar houses [now known as Wixes Piece] which was built in 2014/15 which leads to footpaths past an open green space to Kingstone Winslow and the B4507 via a large millpond and to the B4000 opposite the primary school.. The crossroad is approached from the east (Lambourn Village) descending from a steep

hill separated from fields to either side by treed hedgerows; the village can be seen nestling in the valley on the journey down this hill. The B4507 leads out of the village towards allotments and an open rural landscape which can be accessed via two footpaths just at and just beyond the village boundary.

## SPACES:

- i] Wixes Piece - This is a new housing development built in 2014/15 for 10 large detached properties and



7 terraced properties in a T-shaped cul-de-sac just off to the west of the B4507 to Wantage, 200m from the crossroad with the B4000. The road is 2-way, asphalted and sloping down to the north.

There is a small village shop to the left at the entrance to the road, past which is a pathway curving round to the left in front of the terraced housing leading off to the parking spaces allotted to those houses and to a small road (Malthouse Close) which leads on to the B4000. There is a small parking area between the shop and the first block of terraced houses. All back gardens are surrounded by high walls and/ or fences.

There is a small children's playground next to the car park, railed off from dogs, accessed by a gate and provided with swings, a slide, a roundabout and two speaking tubes. From here a footpath goes round the field to join Millers Lane and another crosses it leading to Pound Piece.

**ii] Walnut Trees Hill** - This leads from the crossroad with the B4000 towards Wantage. It is two-way and asphalted, heading northeast and sloping upward after the village boundary which is marked by a planter with the village name on it on each side of the road. There are treed, hedged and grassed verges from Wixes Piece onward on the left (west) to the boundary and the whole length to the boundary to the east in front of 7 large detached houses of mixed styles with large plots and treed, hedged and lawned frontages. There is no footway, parking or lighting. There is a pavement from the crossroads to the shop at Wixes Piece.

Car and lorry speed is an issue due to the sudden change to a 30 mile an hour limit at the bottom of a hill from the Wantage direction. Cyclists are numerous and there is some pedestrian traffic to the allotments and the neighbouring hamlet of Kingstone Winslow as well as occasional horse riders.

#### BUILDINGS:

**i] Wixes Piece** - These are of stone construction, some of which have red brick patterns. The roofs are pitched and of grey slate or red tiles. The detached properties each have double garages with driveways. All dwellings are two storey, including a flat above the shop, and have front gardens of various sizes. There is one block of three terraced dwellings separated from the other block of four by the shared car park.

**ii] Walnut Trees Hill** - To the west ( the left towards Wantage) there are 6 semi-detached houses from the corner of the crossroads to a small residential close of 3 bungalows just before the turning into Wixes Piece beyond which is the fenced side of a back garden. A narrow strip of land accommodating a single stable and paddock leads down to the boundary, fenced off from the back gardens of the Wixes Piece houses situated behind.

Opposite on the right is a series of 7 large detached residential dwellings of mixed styles on large plots. They are set back from the road running down to the village boundary with treed, hedge and lawn frontages.

#### VIEWS:



Figure 39: Wixes Piece

**i] Wixes Piece** - Views at the entrance to Wixes Piece, looking west towards the "crossbar" of the T, are restricted to the foreground of trees and houses.

At the "crossbar", looking southwest, is the playground, neatly maintained by the Parish Council, beyond which is a flat green space or field, the purpose of which has yet to be determined so maintenance is, at present, rudimentary and erratic but still pleasant and frequented by wildlife and people walking dogs. The horizon is a border to the field of trees and hedges. Wildflowers abound in the spring. To the left, the terraced houses, fences and the tops of wooden sheds can be seen.



Figure 40: View of the Coombes

**ii] Walnut Trees Hill** -On entry to the B4507 from the crossroads, there are views in the middle distance of treed hills, partly obscured by a large and magnificent horse chestnut tree, beautiful in blossom in April and May, at the boundary at which point are views of allotments rising up through trees to the Coombes to the right and flat fields to the left full of wildflowers and an occasional grazing horse. Also at this boundary are footpaths, one to the west passing through a field and wood to Upper Mill (known locally as "Rookless") and one to the east past the allotments up to the Ridgeway.



Figure 41: View across to Walnut Tree Hill

#### GREENERY & LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

**i Wixes Piece** - has had trees planted by the developers and homeowners; they are still small, between 12-20feet high, mostly deciduous. They are well-maintained and attractive, softening the hard edges of newly-built houses and roadways. There are narrow grass verges and a grassed area with three trees between the first terraced houses to the left and the road. The car park has flower beds in each corner (again erratically maintained by the housing association). Front gardens are mostly well-maintained with flowers, shrubs and hedges and hanging baskets enhance the area.

In all directions can be seen more mature trees, the road has a rural feel.

**ii] Walnut Trees Hill** -Much has been described above. Overall, there is a rural feel with mixtures of trees, shrubs and flowers, some planted, some natural, with a variety of heights and colours at all times of the year with only small areas of neglect.

#### LIGHT/ DARK:

There is no street lighting but most properties have automatic lighting in the porch, sensitive to daylight. The night sky is amazing on clear nights which helps visibility as there is much sky to be seen at this altitude.

#### NOISE AND SMELL:

Houses next to the B4501 may be exposed to some traffic noise and the stable between them and the road may cause some occasional smell of manure in high summer. Occasional smells of fertiliser on surrounding farm land are detectable and noise of large farm machinery on the roads is inevitable at harvest time but neither is an issue. There is a siren heard 2-3 times a day from the local factory. There



is a lovely clear, soft church bell which chimes the hour and it peals for weddings and services. The children tend to scream in the playgrounds, particularly after end of the school day.

#### SPIRIT OF PLACE:

**i] Wixes Piece** - is able to be integrated into the village community as people meet on their way to the shop, the playground and the open green space. It is a friendly road with good communication between neighbours and the beautiful scenery contributes to the peace and tranquillity.

**ii] Walnut Trees Hill** -The road has two faces: travelling north-east into ancient open fields the road is very green with mixed hedgerows and trees of varied height and colour and the horse in the paddock or the adjacent field adds to the sense of peace and tranquillity

Travelling south-west towards the traditional old high street, one is welcomed by the glimpse of thatched cottages and the local pub.

expensive, if not "affordable", housing. The visual impact could be softened by the planting of more trees. Conversion of some residential housing to a variety of shops and services (such as clinics/hairdressers, etc) would be of benefit to the villagers. It is a shame that the green space is not yet available to the village for ball games, fetes and it is to be hoped that resolution of these issues can be achieved to enhance the village from the points of view of occupying older children safely and creatively and providing more opportunities for village cohesion.

The proximity of the allotments is of enormous benefit to Ashbury, enhancing the health and well-being of the villagers by giving the opportunity for vigorous exercise, occupation and nourishing fresh vegetables and eggs, as well as company for like-minded people of all ages.

The existing "traffic calming " feature ( a small planter drawing attention to the speed limit sign) at the boundary is not proving effective and could be improved by a speed bump, chicane or other physical impediment to speeding traffic.

#### SUMMARY:

This area is a traditional rural landscape with a variety of housing styles and sizes.

Although Wixes Piece was built on a greenfield site, some attempt was made to build according to the Arts and Craft Movement with choice of colour and building materials. However, if there had been a wider variety of styles and building materials it would have been more in keeping with the variety in the rest of the village. However, the village has been enhanced by a playground, a green space, a shop and some less



Figure 42: Recent housing development at Wixes Piece



Figure 43: Map of Character Area 7

Kingstone Winslow is a hamlet situated just to the north of Ashbury currently comprised of 35-dwellings, with two more under construction on the former site of an old farm cottage. The hamlet has grown around the site of one of the four spring-line settlements found within the Parish that sit on the lower slopes of the escarpment leading to the North Wessex Downs AONB and strung along what is now the B4507.

As such, it has a number of notable features, namely: i] among it's listed buildings, the only two surviving water mills [now non operational] of the original four that are thought to have existed in the Parish: ii] the former mill-streams that continue to flow and are fed by the chalk springs that were the very

reason that such settlements were sited where they are; iii] the rare animal & bird species that are attracted by these pristine chalk springs & the former mill-pond at Upper Mill, and lastly: iv] the remnants of a graveyard adjacent to the site of the former Methodist Chapel.

A short walk from The Green toward Shrivenham brings you to the fabled 'Snivelling Corner' with it's mythological links to the Waylands Smithy, while a walk away from the south of the hamlet across the B4507 brings you to Kingstone & Odstone Coombes and the expanse of the AONB beyond.



## SPACES:

The hamlet of Kingstone Winslow is served by an asphalted single track lane that may be accessed from the B4000 to the south-west, or B4507 to the south-east. The only speed restriction on the lane is the national speed limit, 60mph at the time of writing, and there is no footpath on the lane meaning that pedestrians share it with vehicular traffic.

Generally speaking traffic is light, but usage is by no means limited to residents as at certain times of the day the lane can become a 'rat-run' for people commuting from the Wantage direction toward Shrivenham and visa-versa, seemingly to avoid the 30mph speed restriction and cross roads at Ashbury. This is also replicated at the start and end of the school day when parents are known to opt to drive through the hamlet to avoid turning adjacent to Ashbury School at busy times.

#### i] B4000 to the Telephone-Box

Approaching from the B4000 the first dwelling, The Old Stable, is reached within a matter of 100m at which point the lane descends slightly to cross over the tunnelled millstreams and pass the disused **Lower Mill** and **Mill House**



Figure 44: Lower Mill

on the right. The road rises again through a series of bends until it reaches the former public telephone-box - now converted into a residents' library. Given its current usage there is also a conveniently sited bench adjacent to the telephone box, and a post-box & public notice board at the same location.

All the properties sited to the left [north-westerly] side of this part of the lane are detached and to a varying degree set back from it, and this together

with the general absence of closed fencing and hedges leads to a sense of openness. The exception is as you approach the telephone-box, where the construction of close-board fencing to your left, combined with high hedges on the opposite side of the lane gives a dramatically different feel.

On the opposite [south-easterly] side of the lane, the first five properties are all situated in close proximity to the lane save for limited 'off-road' parking. There are two further plots before the telephone-box, the first accommodates a large dwelling with commensurate plot, and finally a plot that has planning consent for two further large dwellings. High hedges to these final two plots together with the proximity of the other buildings on the opposite side of the lane contribute to a more closed feel to this side of the lane, particularly as you approach the telephone-box.

#### ii] Across the Green



Figure 45: The Green

At the former telephone-box the lane turns sharply to the south-east toward the B4507 [see below], but there is also a 'no-through road' in the opposite [north-westerly] direction that leads across the Green, an area of common land at the heart of the hamlet. **The Green** originally comprised the entire area within the loose triangle formed by the surrounding properties and the access lane was little more than a drovers' track, but over the years parts, notably at the south-eastern end, have been surfaced to provide 'street' parking. The resurfaced

areas have all been asphalted, but as you proceed across the Green the lane slopes down very gently and the surface deteriorates until at the furthestmost point it is little better than compressed rubble.

With the exception of The Haven and the adjacent three south-east facing cottages, all properties around and beyond the Green have little land to the front. But neither this nor the street parking



Figure 46: Former Methodist Graveyard

detracts from the open feel of this part of the hamlet as other than three properties adjacent to the telephone-box the easterly side comprises either side gardens or open countryside. This open feel is further enhanced by immediate access to the open countryside afforded by a footpath between The Haven & Chapel Cottage that leads west, through a former **Methodist graveyard** and back toward the B4000, and two others running north & north-west toward Shrivenham and accessed at two points opposite White & Honeysuckle Cottages respectively. The former being that that leads to Snivelling Corner.

### iii] The telephone-box to the B4507

As already mentioned, the lane turns sharply right in front of the telephone-box and follows south-east to the B4507. For the first 250m or so it is straight and rises gradually to Kingstone Farm where it deviates around the farm through a double bend before straightening and flattening out as it leads to the junction with the B4507. This part of the lane is also asphalted, but in places the sub-surface is exposed where heavy vehicles have eroded the lane surface at its edges.

The properties in this part of the hamlet are well spaced or in small clusters, probably typical of the hamlet's original form, and all sited on the right [westerly] side of the lane. On completion the first properties will be the two detached houses being



Figure 47: Grade II Kingstone Farmhouse

erected on the building plot referred to above, and located diagonally opposite the telephone-box. There is then a large 'paddock' before the next properties, a terrace of three cottages, followed by two more linked cottages separated only by side gardens. The next property is **Kingstone Farm**, substantial building, separated from the cottages by a small field and the 'no through road' serving Upper Mill. The final two properties face onto the B4507 and are separated from the farmhouse by a further small field and some barns & outbuildings.



Figure 48: Grade II Upper Mill

The 'no through road' serving **Upper Mill** slopes steeply down through a double bend before terminating in a turning area between the frontage of **Upper Mill** to the north-west, and the millpond to the south-east. This lane is also asphalted and in generally good condition. Beyond the turning area a restricted bridleway continues south-westerly to rejoin the B4000 in Ashbury, and from the same point a footpath leads south-east past the pond through woodland, ultimately crossing the B4507 and into the AONB.



This part of the hamlet being the most rural probably has the most open feel of the three areas, and offers immediate access to open countryside via a footpath opposite the entry to **Upper Mill** lane adjacent to the farmhouse. This leads to the neighbouring hamlet of Odstone. Across the B4507 another footpath leads directly into the AONB.

#### BUILDINGS:

A wide variety of building styles and materials are employed in the dwellings found in Kingstone Winslow all of which are generally well maintained, the exception being Lower Mill that was undergoing extensive renovation at the time of writing. Some of Kingstone Farm's outbuildings have also fallen into disrepair but this is probably a reflection of the level & type of usage these receive.

The older dwelling are constructed from more traditional materials, notably sarsen or chalk stone outer walls with clunch infill, topped with steeply pitched thatched roofs of reed or straw. These tend to be linked & situated close to the lane with only modest frontages. There are exceptions, and in some case thatched roofs have been replaced with slate or tile, or the original stone walls have been rendered & painted. In more recent houses, the construction materials change with extensive use of red-brick or, in two instances, Bradstone block walls and tiled shallow-pitched roofs. These more modern dwellings are almost all detached and sited back from the lane.

As may be expected, more traditional materials such as hardwood have been used for windows & doors on the older properties and this has generally been adhered to when renovation has been necessary even when the dwelling is unlisted. On the other hand the newer properties have either been constructed or renovated using materials such as softwood or UPVC for windows & doors. There are exceptions to this pattern, for example Chapel Cottage on the Green is a 'new build' in which

modern construction techniques have been used for the fabric of the building but it has a thatched roof and hardwood has been extensively used for doors & windows, precisely to provide a more compatible blend with the adjacent properties.

A number of the older buildings are Grade II listed, namely: Lower Mill and the adjacent Lower Mill House and two linked cottages on the approach from the B4000, **The Haven** on the Green, the Upper Mill and Kingstone Farm located just off the lane toward the B4507.



Figure 49: Grade II The Haven

#### VIEWS:



Figure 50: Odstone Coombe

Other than on the approach to the hamlet, long views are restricted by the dwellings and or hedges on the stretch of lane from the B4000 to the telephone-box but occasional glimpses across the

vale can be had over the larger gardens to the north-west.

By contrast, the open countryside that surrounds the Green affords greater access to views but these tend to be limited to 'mid-distance' due to a combination of field hedgerows and the low setting. It had been possible to enjoy an expansive view to the south-east from the Green across Kingstone Coombe and The Ridgeway beyond, but this is being progressively eroded by the development of the large properties diagonally opposite the telephone-box referred to above.

Two other notable views accessed from The Green are that looking west from the Methodist graveyard because of the stunning sunsets, and that looking south-east from the footpath toward Sniveling Corner that in places provides an almost 180-degree panorama of the escarpment of the AONB from beyond the Wayland's Smithy to Fox Hill, one of the highest points on The Ridgeway in the adjacent parish.

On the stretch of the lane up to the B4507 there are extensive views to be had in all directions, particularly as the lane rises, the only restrictions being where there are high banks and/or hedges to the side. For example on the stretch as you move away from the telephone-box there are good views to be had to the south-west across to Ashbury and beyond, and west across the Vale. Once past the farm, the views switch to the south-east affording views over Kingstone & Odstone Coombes to The Ridgeway, and later around to the north-east providing views to the hamlet of Odstone itself, and beyond.

#### GREENERY & LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

As Kingstone Winslow is the site of an ancient 'spring-line settlement' and sits within open countryside it is no surprise that it has a verdant appearance. There are ornamental trees and planting in the gardens and on the Green.

Indigenous trees such as Ash, Oak & Willow are found in and around the hamlet and more imposing trees, such as horse-chestnut, can be seen over the roofs of properties from almost anywhere within the hamlet.

There is particularly lush vegetation to be found near Lower Mill where the flow of the millstream maintains a healthy supply of water to both gardens and fields. Similarly, at **Upper Mill the old millpond** and feeder springs have encouraged an abundance of natural vegetation around the pond and back



Figure 51: The old millpond

toward the B4507. This attracts a significant amount of wildlife including waterfowl. There is great potential to improve the condition of the pond situated on the uncultivated farmland below Kingstone Farm in a manner that would encourage still more wildlife. This is an area of the hamlet that should be preserved & protected, not least because of its amenity value and historical context.

#### LIGHT/ DARK:

In general Kingstone Winslow is as light as the prevailing weather conditions permit. There is no street-lighting in the hamlet so light pollution is low, affording good, near pollution-free views of the night sky when clear. However, this lack of street



lighting does compound the issues created by having to share the lane with vehicular traffic.

In general smells are almost exclusively natural and reflect the time in the farming calendar - e.g. the more pleasant tend to occur when such crops as rape-seed are in full bloom and can last for weeks at a time, while the less pleasant result from crop-spraying or fertiliser and fortunately are shorter lived. The area that is an exception is that near the farm outbuildings, where the smell from livestock can occur all year round.

#### NOISE AND SMELL:

Noises can be natural or manmade. During the spring & summer birdsong is a welcome sound in & around the hamlet. With the exception of farm vehicles, given that this is a rural community, other man-made sounds tend to be less welcome, particularly low flying light & military aircraft. These, though infrequent, can be intrusive.

#### SPIRIT OF PLACE:

Kingstone Winslow is a tranquil hamlet, welcoming to visitors and populated by convivial people. An illustration of this is perhaps the 'residents' library' situated in the former telephone-box. Now that word of this has spread, it attracts almost as many users from neighbouring areas as residents of the hamlet.

#### SUMMARY:

It will be evident from the above that there are many aspects of Kingstone Winslow that recommend it, some of which are unique.

The two disproportionately large properties on the former site of Telephone Box Cottage are a discordant and looming presence. Being built immediately adjacent to the lane and with their size, they dominate the area around the Green and obstruct what had hitherto been a cherished view to Odstone & Kingstone Coombes and the Ridgeway beyond.

As mentioned above, these properties are a total contrast to the recently rebuilt Chapel Cottage that despite being of a similar size and built using modern techniques, is set back from the Green, and every effort has been made to 'blend' with adjacent properties. In an endeavour to ensure future development is equally appropriate to the area it is to be hoped that the policies of the ANP will ensure that such development is proportionate & in keeping with adjacent properties and compatible with local needs.

Another key objective of the plan should be to protect the unique features & rural setting of the Parish, and to avoid any diminution of the wildlife species that are to be found, particularly in & around the mills, chalk-springs and streams. For this reason in Kingstone Winslow we would wish to see: areas such as the Green and the millpond & adjacent woodland at Upper Mill designated 'green spaces': the unlisted but historic properties & features [see below], some of which date from the late 16th-century, added to a list of community assets, and finally: the areas alongside the chalk-springs & the streams they feed ring-fenced against development to better protect their quality and hence the wildlife that is to be found on/around them





*Figure 52: View along the walled lanes of Idstone*





Figure 53: Map of Character Area 8 - Idstone Hamlet - washed over in red

Idstone is an ancient springline settlement on the B4507 Wantage - Bishopstone road west of Ashbury. The village is located in a conservation area.

#### SPACES:

**Roads:** The hamlet of Idstone lies along the B4507 between Ashbury and Bishopstone. The two sharp blind bends in Idstone can be dangerous but also significantly slow passing traffic. The approach from Ashbury gives a good short view of

Rectory Farm and the field behind it. Coming from Bishopstone, Rectory farm entrance is on one side and the tied farm-worker's house on the left. There is a clear view into the farm areas near the road. A fine feature is the frontage of Trip The Daisy (the name of a number of greyhounds historically), formerly an Inn called the Greyhound.

#### Footpaths:

- One footpath connects Ashbury north of the B4507, Idstone and Bishopstone.
- Another connects Ashbury south of the B4507, crossing the road behind Trip The Daisey to



come into Idstone. This latter one is currently obstructed by an electric fence.

- Featherbed Lane is a public footpath/track heading north from Lower Idstone Farm.

A planning appeal ASH 1447/4 in 1994 stated that:

*"The conservation area is characterised by its relatively loose-knit structure and by the predominant role still played by working farm buildings. These latter confer on it the nature of a settlement still closely tied to the land. Houses in the settlement display a variety of styles and sizes with no one type prevailing, but unlike so many villages, there is no modern estate development, even on a modest scale. The overall effect is of a village relatively untouched where farming remains the main business of the community".*

Little has changed since then. The open space right at the heart of the village emphasises the agricultural heritage and character with the presence of stables, small paddocks and barns around it. Most houses have a fair amount of garden surrounding them which also contributes to the retention of a traditional rural atmosphere.

## BUILDINGS:

Farming still dominates the ownership of the hamlet and is reflected both in the type of dwellings, namely the three large farmhouses and smaller tied farm workers' cottages and the many livestock-related buildings which are increasingly for equine use. Many of the smaller old houses are now rented. Houses are set back from the road. On the B4507 there is an entrance to a farmyard which appears to be disused with brick buildings and galvanised metal barns.

**House Styles:** There is a complete mixture of styles but the older houses predominate. Roof + wall materials are not consistent - presumably whatever was expedient in the past was used to replace a failing roof. Most of the dwellings are two storeyed.

**Condition:** The inhabited buildings are generally well maintained but the farm buildings are of mixed condition, according to level of use.

**Roofs:** Some older houses are still roofed in thatch, the others in slate and ceramic tile except for the front building of Trip the Daisy which has a stone tile roof.



Figure 54: Idstone Farm House Entrance



**Walls:** The older house walls are made in the local vernacular; sarsen stone foundations, red brick quoins and window surrounds with clunch or sarsen infill. A sarsen and brick construction style without clunch applies to many of the boundary and garden walls; capped mainly in tile. One wall in the centre is clunch & brick with a tile cap. Newer houses are a mix of materials but mainly brick of varying ages.

**Doors and windows:** generally reflect the expected type for the age of the buildings with little evidence of modern fittings trying to imitate the past.

**Protection:** The conservation area covers the village to an area of 7.15 hectares and there are 6 grade II listed buildings, some of which are described below.



Figure 55: Grade II Trip the Daisy

**Trip the Daisy:** Late C17 2-storey house constructed of uncoursed sarsen rubble and dressed chalk under a stone slate gabled roof; There is a late C19 stone plaque over the door that depicts a hound jumping over a daisy, dating from when the house was the Daisy Trip Inn.



Figure 56: Grade II Double Cottage

**Double Cottage:** Originally two 2-unit C18 cottages. Constructed of squared chalk brought to course on a sarsen base under a thatched roof with brick stacks.



Figure 57: Grade II Rectory Farmhouse

**Rectory Farmhouse:** An early C18 Farmhouse. Constructed of uncoursed sarsen rubble, squared and coursed chalk under a C20 tiled roof with brick stacks. 2-storeys and attic, 5-window range. Windows are late C19 two-light casements in place of original sashes. Wing to the rear of uncoursed sarsen rubble with brick dressings;

#### VIEWS:

Long views are limited within the village (but there are fine views across the vale looking North) and shorter ones from the corner of Ashbury Road near Trip the Daisy looking south across the field behind Rectory Farm which is part of the designated AONB. Other views on footpaths in and around Idstone are marked on the viewpoints and vistas plans.

There are currently a number of problems on footpaths around Idstone: some stiles are overgrown & too narrow; a bridge crossing a stream is broken and unsafe; and vegetation encroaches in some places on paths, in some cases making them impassable.

#### GREENERY & LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

Oaks, Ash and other mature native vegetation are obvious at the roadsides and within the village there

are well planted gardens and significantly mature horse chestnut trees adding to the pastoral feel of the area. The settlement gradually slopes downhill from the steeper slope of the downs to the arable area of the Vale.

A number of small ponds can be found in and around the hamlet and there is at least one chalk spring.

#### LIGHT/ DARK:

There is no public lighting. As in surrounding settlements the low levels of lighting at night and isolation from large towns mean that light pollution is low and night skies can be seen well by astronomers. Light levels are below 1 nanowatt/cm<sup>2</sup>/steradian in the settlements and below 0.5 outside them. (Data from the CPRE: <http://nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>)

At the northern end of Idstone Lower Idstone Farm is actively used for livestock. The smell of animal manure is strong at times.

As Idstone is a farming community farm vehicle activity is frequent.

#### SPIRIT OF PLACE:

Idstone is a hidden hamlet with few houses visible on the main road which is separated from Ashbury by a large amount of open space. The formal designation of Idstone in the Local Plan as a hamlet indicates that that should not change. The character is largely open and green, giving a self-contained but airy feel to the settlement. However, there are no significant long views drawing the eye out from it. The village is still farm-dominated and composed largely of older buildings. Comparisons can be made with the model at Pendon Museum which was made in the 1920s and 30s.



Figure 58: The green at Idstone





*Figure 59: View of Odstone*





Figure 60: Map of Character Area 9 - Odstone (washed over in orange)

Odstone is the most easterly, and the smallest settlement in the Parish, situated a little over 1km NNE of Ashbury village and comprising just 4-dwellings. This was not always the case as the Domesday survey tells us that in the eleventh century it comprised 18-dwellings and was bigger than the nearby hamlet of Kingstone Winslow at that time. Today, it is entirely privately owned forming part of the holdings of Compton Beauchamp Estates, and for this reason the appraisal is very much from a 'dog-walkers' perspective.

#### SPACES:

Being private property vehicular access is restricted to a single track lane off the B4507, and a footpath running nominally parallel to the B4507 providing access to Kingstone Winslow to the south-west & Compton Beauchamp to the north-east in the neighbouring parish. The settlement comprises a large farmhouse and a number of farm-buildings that cover a commensurately large acreage, with the farmhouse, oxen stable and barn all being Grade II listed. Fifty metres or so to the north of the farmhouse are a run of 3-linked farm cottages



running parallel to the public footpath, but set away from it by large gardens on the north-westerly side and somewhat smaller gardens to the south-east.

#### BUILDINGS:

Elements of the listed buildings date back to circa 1700 and all are substantially built in traditional local style and with traditional materials.

The farm cottages are relatively modern by comparison and constructed of rendered & painted brick or stone walls and slate roofs, with a variety of materials used for the doors & window frames including UPVC and wood for the doors & UPVC, wood or metal for the window frames.

#### VIEWS:

Oddstone probable enjoys some of the most extensive views in the Parish, and because of its elevation, only a few metres walk away from the buildings is needed to reveal the full panorama of the Vale from the south-west around to the north-east. In the opposite direction the only restriction to the views is the ground rising still further up to the Ridgeway some 1km to the south-east, but the Ridgeway itself can be viewed eastwards to the Uffington White-horse [3km] and beyond, and to the south-west as far as Fox Hill [5.5km].

#### GREENERY & LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

Oddstone is set in open farmland and hence trees tend to be restricted to hedgerows and the gardens of the dwellings. As the fields nearest to the settlement and to the south-east are used to graze cattle the immediate impression is of a verdant setting but the fields in the middle distance to the north-west are normally used for crop production. The longer views, therefore, vary according to the season and the crop being cultivated. The other

feature of the settlement is a body of spring-fed water situated some 250m or so below the farm to the north, the feeder springs being typical of the settlements on or adjacent to the B4507.

#### LIGHT/ DARK:

There is no street-lighting in Oddstone and given the very small number of properties, there is little to detract from the natural daylight, while on a clear night the location provides unpolluted views of the starlit sky.

#### NOISE AND SMELL:

Smells are predominantly natural and dependent on the time in the farming calendar, while noise can be natural or manmade as passing traffic can be heard on the nearby B4507 and, as with the Parish as a whole, occasional low-flying aircraft can also interrupt the usual tranquillity of the setting.

#### SPIRIT OF PLACE:

With the lack of through traffic and its rural setting, Oddstone enjoys a rare tranquillity.

#### SUMMARY:

Though Oddstone today is small and privately owned, it nevertheless merits particular mention as it is arguably within the Parish the settlement most representative of the form & function of settlements found before the 'middle ages'. Its principal buildings are afforded a measure of protection by being 'listed' but the settlement as a whole merits recognition as it provides a valuable insight into the Parish's past.

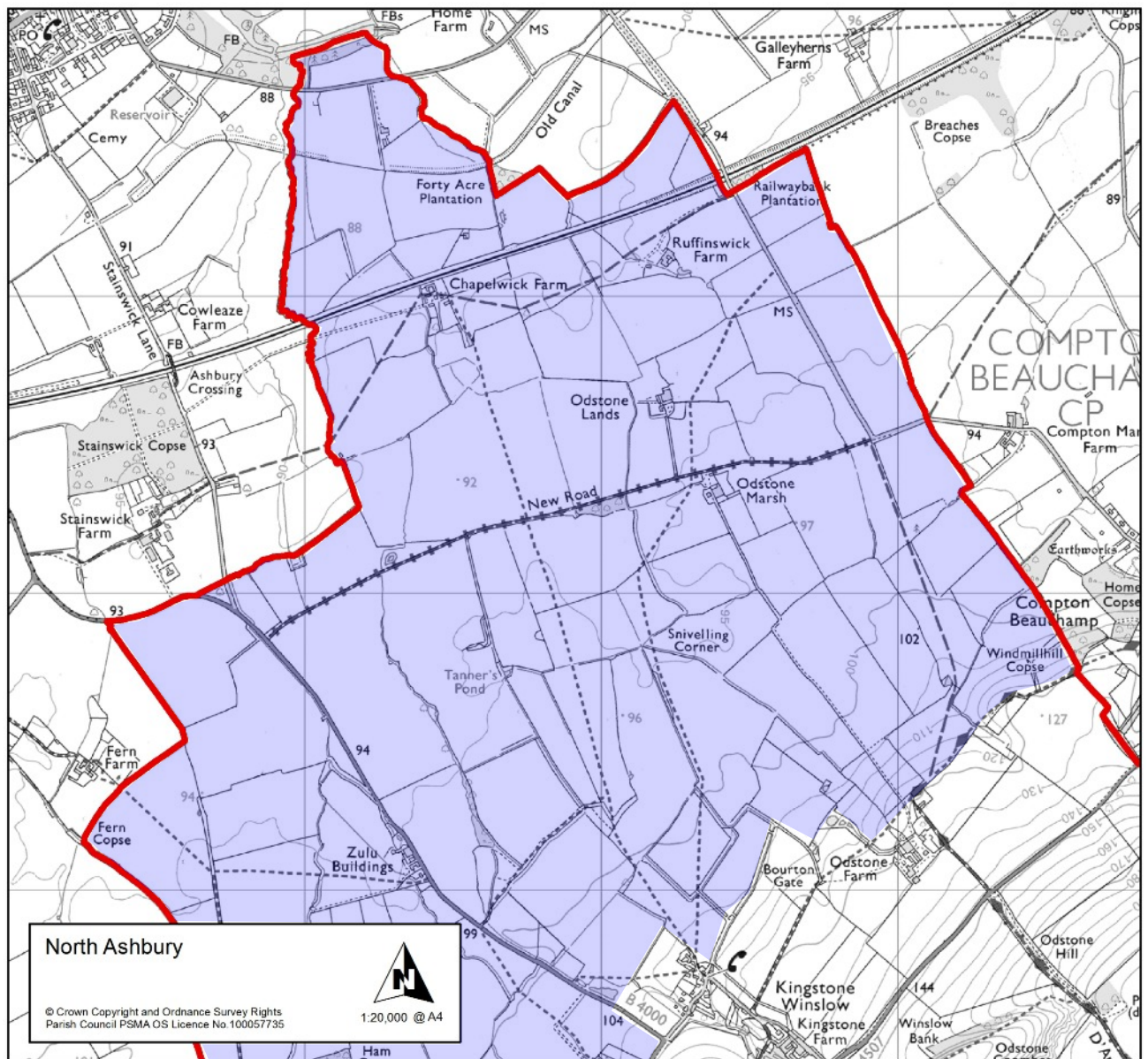


Figure 61: Map of Character Area 10 - The north of the parish - washed over in blue

The Parish of Ashbury makes up the most south-westerly tract of the county of Oxfordshire, forming an approximate rectangle running NNW to SSE. The Parish is almost entirely agricultural land but this is split into two distinct types, the demarcation line being an escarpment running SW to NE across the Parish. The B4507, Wantage to Swindon, road traverses the Parish along the lower slopes of this escarpment, crossing the B4000, Lambourn to Shrivenham road at Ashbury Village.

The more northerly area of flat, open, clay farmland, at around 90m above sea-level, is used predominately for crop production. Above the

B4507 to the south the terrain rises and becomes rolling chalk downland, all within the North Wessex Downs ANOB. Here land use is a mixture of arable, pastoral & woodland.

With the exception of the National Trust properties within the ANOB at Ashdown - see The Parish [South] - the main settlements of the Parish have all grown from a series of ancient 'chalk-spring' settlements running along the B4507. As the name suggests, these were established to benefit from the pristine waters issuing at the spring line below the escarpment. The largest of these settlements is Ashbury village lying at the centre of the Parish, with



the hamlets of Odstone, Kingstone Winslow and Idstone to the east, north and west respectively.

These chalk-spring settlements are separately described in individual character assessments in this appendix.

#### SPACES:

Outside the main settlements running along the B4507, there are very few buildings in the north of the Parish. The flat, open clay farmland is mainly



*Figure 62: The lowland fields of the northern parish*

used for the production of seasonal crops, with only a few smaller fields used for animal grazing.

The most northerly part of the parish is an oddly shaped protrusion that stretches just beyond the Shrivenham to Longcot road. Moving south-easterly the first feature encountered is the Kennet Canal, although this is little more than a ditch today having fallen into disrepair. An intended restoration to enable recreational use remains some years ahead. Further to the south-east, the next major feature is the Bristol to London [Paddington] Great Western railway-line, currently being electrified with completion scheduled for Spring 2019.

A further 1km south-east, to the north of Stainswick Farm in the neighbouring parish of Shrivenham, the Parish boundary broadens and it is at this point that the B4000 crosses into the Parish. At the point where the road enters the Parish it makes a gentle

right-hand bend toward the SSE, after which it runs roughly parallel to the longer Parish boundary traversing both the north & southern areas until it exits beyond the National Trust estate at Ashdown and into the parish of Lambourn in neighbouring West Berkshire.

As this first bend straightens out, a side-road branches hard-left and within a 100m turns back into the parish of Shrivenham. Both roads, the B4000 and the side-road where it falls within the Parish boundary are asphalted and in generally good condition. Shortly after the turning to the side-road a track leads off the B4000 to the left, providing access to the farm buildings at Odstone Lands.

After the initial bend, and apart from a gentle S-bend at Zulu Buildings, the B4000 in the northern area of the Parish is a relatively straight road until it reaches the outskirts of Ashbury. Speeding cars can be an issue as there is no footpath and many people walk this stretch of road, particularly in the more clement months, to access the greater range of shops and other amenities available in nearby Shrivenham.

Hedges line both sides of the B4000, but are set away from the road and well maintained by the local landowners and so do not detract from either the sense of broad spaces nor the long views toward the escarpment and the AONB, including the Uffington White Horse in the distance to the south east.

On the outskirts of Ashbury village, the road begins to climb following the general landscape across the Parish. The climb is quite gradual at first, but becomes steeper on the approach to the village. Shortly after the start of the climb the road takes a 90-degree turn to the right, and on the apex of the bend there is a turning left into the hamlet of Kingstone Winslow. Within a further 50m or so of the first bend there is another 90-degree bend, this time to the left, after which the road straightens as it enters Ashbury village. Exceptionally, this stretch of road benefits from a footpath.

Within Ashbury village, at an elevation of some 135m above sea-level, the B4000 intersects with the



*Figure 63: view over the northern parish*

B4507, which leads to Odstone to the east, and Ildstone to the west. The B4507 drops sharply as it leaves Ashbury village eastwards, before climbing again through an S-bend upon which there is a turning to the left onto the lane that drops into Kingstone Winslow. Beyond the S-bend the road levels off and passes through a series of modest bends & undulations before coming to a cross-roads, providing access to Odstone to the north-east and the escarpment to the south -west via a farm track which follows the 'D'Arcy Dalton Way' up into the AONB. The parish boundary lies just beyond this cross-roads before the road reaches Compton Beauchamp in the neighbouring parish of Woolstone.

Leaving Ashbury village westwards, the B4507 runs relatively flat and straight until the outskirts of Ildstone, where a series of sharp undulating, blind bends skirt the hamlet before the road straightens and almost immediately crosses into the neighbouring parish of Bishopstone. On the first of these bends a junction to the left leads uphill on an asphalted lane over the escarpment and into the southern area, while on the next bend a junction to the right leads into the hamlet.

Other than within the settlements referred to there are no buildings along the B4507 within the Parish boundary and only limited hedgerows, with the result that the general sense of wide open spaces is maintained.

#### BUILDINGS:

Other than in/around the settlements, there are few buildings in this area of the Parish visible from the road. The exceptions are those known as Zulu Buildings adjacent to the B4000 midway between the northern boundary and Ashbury village; and two clusters of farm buildings all of which are located on the western side of the road.

The name 'Zulu' Buildings is said to derive from the time that the buildings were occupied by veterans of the so called African 'Zulu' Wars. The habitable buildings comprise a short terrace of small, red-brick residential cottages next to a number of farm buildings nearby to the north - the latter being barns used to accommodate livestock until two or three years ago but now seemingly given over to storage. The whole cluster appears rather run down with some of the timber, concrete & galvanised steel farm buildings in particular appearing dilapidated. Some updating has been carried out on the cottages, using a mixture of material types ranging from steel to UPVC window-frames, and softwood or UPVC doors. As the cottages are set back off the road by an area of off-road parking, a hedge and small 'front' gardens, and there are a number of shrubs & trees, their impact is relatively modest. But the farm buildings being larger, in poorer



condition and spread over a wider area, do have a significantly larger visual impact.

There are then two further clusters of farm buildings nearer to Ashbury village, and these too are rather prominent, both because of their size and location. The first, some 250m further south, comprises a grain storage barn positioned in close proximity to the road on the western side constructed in plasticized steel, with a run of timber bird-houses to one side and loose-boxes to the other, both at right-angles to the road. Being 'low-rise' and partially screened by hedging the timber buildings do not impact to any great extent whereas the barn does detract from the views toward the escarpment.

The second cluster comprise further storage barns, also seemingly constructed of plasticized metal, and while these are set well off the road to the west, being recently constructed they have a rather stark appearance with a consequential impact on the view toward Ashbury village. Between the entrance drives to these respective farm buildings on the opposite side of the B4000 there is a small electricity distribution plant but being screened by trees & hedges, its impact is almost negligible.

The only other buildings in the northern area are those at Chapelwick Farm, Ruffinwick Farm, Odstone Lands & Odstone Marsh, but as all are on private land and none are visible from the public highway insufficient information is available to attempt to describe them here.

#### VIEWS:

Much of the parish enjoys extensive broad views, both of the Vale and of the dramatic 'Ridgeway' escarpment, flanked by undulating coombes. This appearance and feel of an ancient landscape is at the heart of the area's attraction to residents and visitors. Approaching from the northern end of the Parish along the B4000 there are extensive 120-degree views in a south-easterly direction toward the escarpment beyond the B4507 that leads up onto the southern area. Views are to be had through 360-degrees in fact, but in other directions the flat terrain and field hedges limit the views to mid-distance.

By contrast, the more elevated position of the B4507 allows unrestricted views to the north through some 150-degrees and extending well beyond the Parish boundary. Sunset often brings vivid views with extraordinary colours and cloud formations over the checkerboard countryside. The views to the south-east, towards the escarpment, are shorter distance but constantly striking, notably those across the allotments toward the Odstone & Kingstone Coombes east of Ashbury village, and the Ashbury & Odstone Hills to the west.

Being primarily arable land, the colours of the landscape are largely dependent on the season and the crop that is planted. However, there is still a great deal of 'greenery' throughout this area of the Parish, with numerous hedgerows and small copses.

#### GREENERY & LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

The ground slopes upwards as the escarpment is approached, reaching some 135m where the B4507 runs, but otherwise the area is generally flat at c. 90m above sea level. Other than drainage ditches, reflecting the marshland origin of the area, key features are: the Kennet Canal; the Bristol to London [Paddington] railway line; and the chalk streams found across the width of the Parish running roughly

parallel to the long boundary. Ultimately these all feed into the River Cole, west of Shrivenham, and eventually into the Thames near The Trout Inn at Lechlade.

#### LIGHT/ DARK:

The area being so rural, light is almost entirely natural. There is no street lighting and on clear nights the skies can be brilliant with stars, with so far little light pollution from larger settlements beyond the parish.

#### NOISE AND SMELL:

Other than from traffic and at harvest time when farm vehicles are very busy, noise in the rural areas is most likely to be natural, the one exception being aircraft noise particularly from low-flying military helicopters. There are the normal farming smells, largely dependent on the crop being grown and the season; the proximity of livestock and their winter quarters; and in the summer, the fertilisers in use.

#### SPIRIT OF PLACE

As would be expected of a rural area crossed by many footpaths, away from the roads the area has a tranquil, relaxing feel and in some parts can feel genuinely remote.

#### LOST HISTORY:

Unlike the southern area, this part of the Parish has not benefited from any forms of protection other than in the settlements of Ashbury village and Idstone, each of which has a conservation area. As a consequence, many of the historical features that are known to have existed in the northern area have been lost, namely: North Mill, thought to have been located near to Zulu Buildings; the Standing Stone at Snivelling Corner, said to have mythical links to Wayland's Smithy; and the site of the Roman villa near Odstone which was excavated but then lost.

Where such historical features do still exist within the Parish, greater public awareness and interest may now afford them sufficient protection to prevent their disappearance or despoilation.

For more complete information on the rural areas of the Parish, see: Landscape Evaluation of Rural Space report by David Pain and Land Use report by Oliver Green <sup>1</sup>.



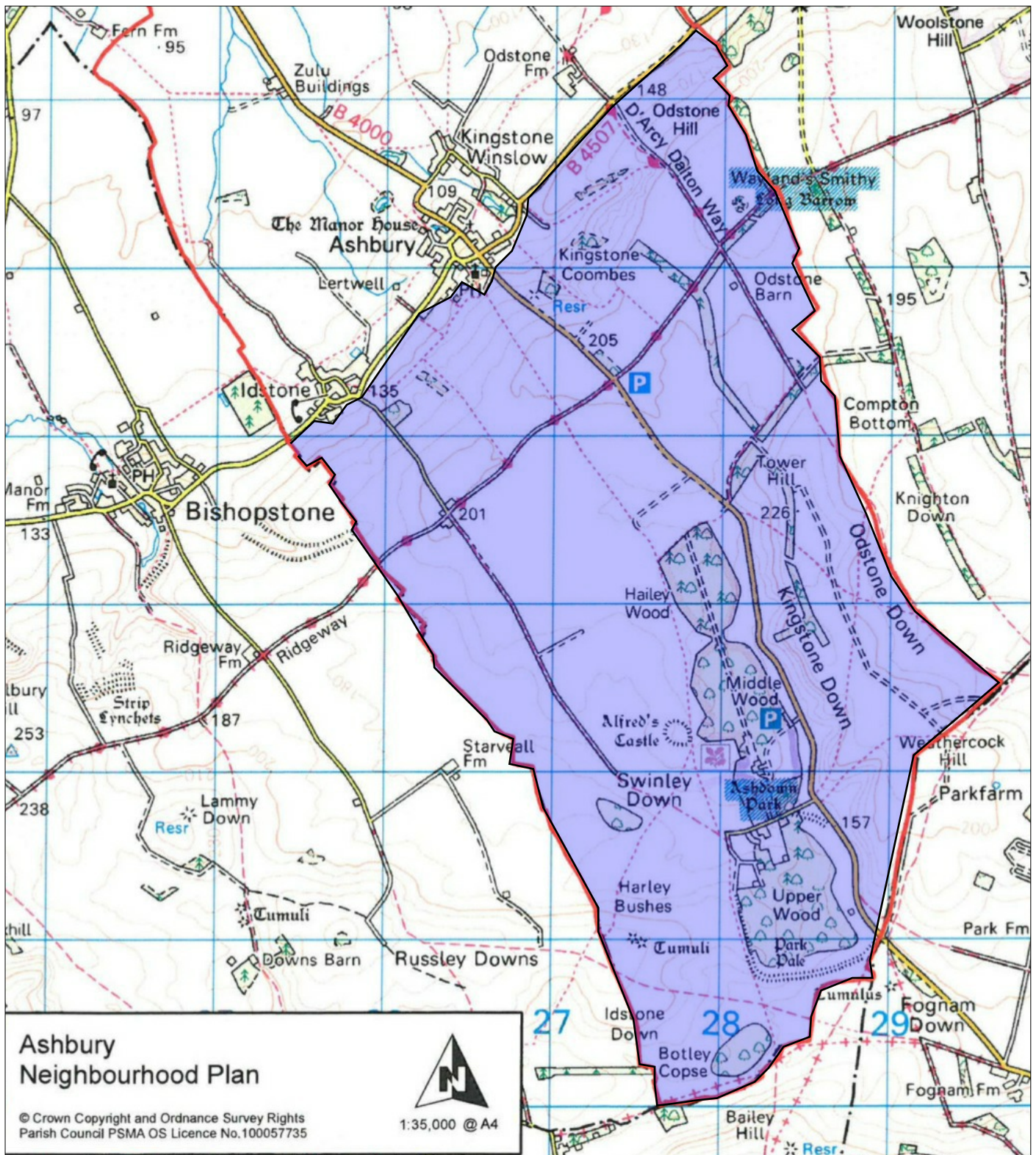


Figure 64 Map of Character Area 11 - The Southern Parish - washed over in blue





*Figure 65: View south towards Ashdown House*





Figure 66: Map of Ashdown Park Area

The south of the Parish comprises rolling, chalk downland used for a mixture of arable & pastoral farming combined with tracts of woodland and contains the most historically significant locations within the Parish that survive today.

#### SPACES:

At the arbitrary demarcation line with the northern area, namely the B4507, the Parish is at its widest and rises steeply from some 135m above sea-level to a little over 200m as it crosses over the escarpment toward the Ridgeway - see below. But this is to skate over the first noteworthy feature of the southern area, namely the escarpment itself, where erosion following the last ice-age has sculpted the chalk-land leaving behind a series of short valleys, or coombes, in the face of the escarpment. These can be seen in a number of

locations along the B4507, but within the Parish the coombes are particularly dramatic on the eastern outskirts of Ashbury village above Kingstone Winslow - the Odstone & Kingstone Coombes. Such features also mean that land on the steeper slopes along the escarpment is used for grazing, the exceptions being only where the slope is less severe making access feasible for cultivation equipment.

One such area, on the lower slopes of the Coombes running down to and across the B4507 to the south-east of Ashbury village, is that made available to local residents for allotments. Such usage probably dates back to the mid-1800's when the land was owned by the Craven family and it was common practice for such landowners to provide land near populated areas for 'home cultivation' by residents. This valuable public amenity is now enjoyed at the sole discretion of the present owners, Compton Beauchamp Estates [CBE].

Continuing a few hundred metres south having crested the escarpment the next feature of the landscape is the **Ridgeway**, an ancient equivalent of the M4 motorway probably dating as far back as the Neolithic period. Over the centuries it has served as a drove road but today is a National Trail, long stretches of which are bridleway popular with walkers, cyclists and horse-riders alike. Where the B4000 crosses the Ridgeway there is a car-park to either side of the road, and a walk of 1km eastwards along the Ridgeway from these car-parks brings you to **Wayland's Smithy**, a Scheduled Monument. This is a chambered long-barrow, or burial site, the innermost chamber of which dates back some 5,600 years. This was enlarged some 200-years later taking on the shape that we see today. Along the Ridgeway westward from the car-parks, the only noteworthy feature is a collection of farm-buildings used for storage in the more clement months of the year, but for sheltering grazing animals when the weather deteriorates.



Figure 67: the Coombes

Further south from the Ridgeway the B4000 descends through a series of gentle bends into a valley before levelling out at around 170m above sea-level. As it does so usage of the adjacent land changes from arable to pastoral, whereas some 500m or so east or west the fall is little more than a few metres with land usage remaining predominantly arable out to the respective Parish boundaries. The notable exception is on the eastern side where tracts of woodland follow a ridge that runs parallel to the road, as well as along the Ridgeway from the same 500m point off the road.



Figure 68: View along the Ridgeway





*Figure 69: Wayland's Smithy*



Continuing southwards along the B4000 the next major feature is woodland on the western side that make up much of the Ashdown estate. In fact there are three distinct parts comprising: Hailey [to the north], Middle & Upper Woods, the latter two separated by the National Trust property comprising Ashdown House & Park - see 'Buildings' below. Upper Wood is particularly noteworthy, as it has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest [SSSI].

The name Ashdown is significant because of its obvious links to Ashbury village, while the downland immediately to the east of the road is Kingstone Down and that on the eastern side of the '500m' ridge is Odstone Down, thereby highlighting the historic distinction between the three settlements.

The southern end of the Parish is steeped in history as, in addition to Wayland's Smithy and Ashdown House already mentioned, to the west of Ashdown Park can be found '**Alfred's Castle**'. There is no direct evidence that Alfred the Great used it as such but he was involved in a series of battles in the area with the invading Danes and it appears likely that this is why the name has been attributed to the site. It is not disputed, however, that it pre-dates the Saxon period and has probably been used as a fort and/or fortified farmstead by local tribes since the iron age.

Two other notable features of the southern end of the Parish are:

- A relic field liberally scattered with massive weathered Sarsen stones immediately to the west of the B4000, between the road and North Wood at Ashdown. These were deposited and exposed during the last Ice-Age but a legend attributes the stones to the Arthurian Wizard, Merlin, who allegedly wandered in the Downs and turned an offending flock of sheep to stone.
- A series of barrows & tumuli which arc around the south-western boundary of the Parish, accessible only on foot and probably dating as far back as the Neolithic period.



*Figure 70: The woods at Ashdown*



*Figure 71: Alfred's Castle - the ridge of the hill fort is still visible today (see dotted line)*



*Figure 72: The sarsen stones dominate the fields at Ashdown*



## BUILDINGS:

Other than in the settlements covered by the 'urban' assessments in this document, the only buildings in this area of the Parish visible from the road are those within Ashdown Park, the most distinctive of which is Ashdown House itself. With the rest of the park, it is now owned & managed by the National Trust. Construction of **Ashdown House** was begun in the second half of the 17th century by the first Earl of Craven for the White Queen, Queen, Elizabeth of Bohemia. Intended as a hunting lodge, this grade I listed Dutch-style house is often referred to as a 'dolls house' because of its simple cubic design in block topped by an elegant tiled roof. The main house is flanked by two pavilions the construction of which, again in block and tile, is arguably less elegant but rather serves to enhance the appearance of the main house. The house sustained much damage during its use by the military during the Second World War. So of the original interiors only the ornamental staircase remains.



Figure 73: Ashdown House

A variety of other properties are also to be found within the park a little way to the south-west of the main house. These include two further listed buildings, **Ashdown Park Farmhouse** and the farmhouse granary. These, and the other properties in this small settlement are constructed of mellowed 'Elizabethan' brick with tiled roofs. Because of the material used, the whole blends easily into the surrounding parkland.

Immediately before the Parish boundary the B4000 passes another building on the western side on



Figure 74: Ashdown Park Farmhouse

the edge of Upper Wood, Ashdown. This is a water pumping station housed within a low, modern building which contrasts markedly with its older neighbours despite attempts to make it blend into the landscape by extensive use of timber and also its shallow pitched roof.

Screened from both of the Parish's roads, but readily accessible on foot via the Ridgeway, or for vehicular access via Idstone Hill, are a number of timber, concrete & galvanized steel farm buildings situated on the crossing point of these two access routes. The older buildings are smaller with pre-cast concrete walls and, being partly constructed in timber, in a rather run-down state albeit still serviceable, while those used for over-wintering the livestock, or hay storage are both larger and a little more modern being constructed almost entirely in galvanized steel, albeit some is quite badly corroded.

The only other building of note in this area of the Parish is 'Odstone Barn', a galvanised steel storage barn situated some 500m south of the Ridgeway on the d'Arcy Dalton Way. Being screened from the Ridgeway by one of the tracts of woodland in this area of the Parish, the barn is only visible if approaching from the south.

As you leave Ashbury village behind and progress

## VIEWS:

up Ashbury Hill, extensive 120-degree views emerge in a south-easterly direction toward the escarpment beyond the B4507, though these are partially obscured by hedges. The one exception is immediately after the village boundary when arguably the best combined view of Odstone & Kingstone Coombes is to be had to the east of the road.

As the rise levels out, looking back across the hill extensive views are to be had through 150-degrees from the south-west to the north-east, ranging on a clear day far beyond the Parish boundary. On

cresting the escarpment, there are striking views of a different sort to the south, down & along Kingstone Coombe and Ashdown Park, and south-westerly for many miles across the cultivated fields to the ridges of Russley & Bishoptone Downs in the adjacent parish. Similar views are also to be had into & across the neighbouring parish from Alfred's Castle, where it is possible to discern the tumuli along the Parish's south-western border and others on the skyline in neighbouring West Berkshire.

The views referred to above are arguably the most accessible. However, with so many footpaths and bridleways criss-crossing the area, similar striking views are to be had almost anywhere along and beyond the escarpment.

Being a mixture of arable, pastoral & woodland

#### GREENERY & LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

areas, the appearance of the landscape in the southern part of the parish is less dependent on the season but still influenced by it. There is much 'greenery' in evidence at all times of the year but particularly through the spring and summer months when the woodland is at its most verdant. The Ashdown woods offer a famous display of bluebells in the Spring.

In total contrast to the northern area, the landscape in the south of the Parish is rolling rather than predominantly flat, and it is still possible to discern many of the historical features such as tumuli, as well as the more distinctive shape of the hill-fort of Alfred's Castle, as described above. There is a good network of footpaths & bridleways in the area. Most are in good repair.

There are no watercourses to be found within this part of the Parish, as it lies above the spring-line, but the area receives plentiful rain.

#### LIGHT/ DARK:

In so rural an area the light is almost entirely natural. The few houses around Ashdown Park are well away from the road and offer minimal interference with star-gazing. The night sky can be brilliant with stars.

#### NOISE AND SMELL:

Other than from traffic and at harvest time when farm vehicles are very busy, noise in the rural areas is most likely to be natural, the one exception being aircraft noise particularly from low-flying military helicopters. There are the normal farming smells, largely dependent on the crop being grown and the season; the proximity of livestock and their winter quarters; and in the summer, the fertilisers in use.

#### SPIRIT OF PLACE:

The southern area of the parish has a distinct air of remoteness and at certain times of the day this can be felt even close to the B4000 and the Ridgeway. Further off the beaten track, notably along the footpaths parallel to the road and screened by woodland, this sense of remoteness can be acute. This is an ancient landscape and evokes a feeling of the numinous. Wayland's Smithy still resonates with prehistoric echoes.



**SUMMARY:**

The sights to be had in the southern area of the Parish are clear evidence of the benefits of being within an AONB and the protection which such a status affords. This and the additional protection provided to: The Ridgeway, as a National Trail; Wayland's Smithy, as a Historical Monument, and to: Ashdown House & Park being owned & managed by the National Trust means that, in contrast to the northern area, much of the history has been not only protected but also made readily accessible to local residents & visitors alike.

Such protection is to be coveted, and, if the spirit and history of the Parish is to be maintained, the potential impact of any development that takes place within the Parish on less well protected historical features, particularly in the northern area and the settlements needs to be weighed carefully against any perceived gain.

## Heritage Assets within Ashbury village and Kingstone Winslow

(24 listed buildings)

Name	Reference	Grade
The haven	1368340	II
Lower mill cottages	1048736	II
Lower millhouse	1368360	II
Lower mill old mill, 2 metres south west of house	1048735	II
Kingstone farmhouse	1048734	II
Upper mill	1368361	II
Watercress Lodge	1048737	II
1-3, Berrycroft	1048773	II
The Manor House	1368375	II*
Great Barn, Attached Two-Bay Agricultural Building And Southern And Eastern Boundary Walls At Ashbury Manor	1393394	II
Berrycroft Farmhouse	1183184	II
Merry Madcap And Two Adjoining Cottages	1183203	II
Pear Tree Cottage And Suitsus Cottage	1183211	II
The Shielling	1368337	II
Eastwood And Rose Cottage	1048774	II
The Village Hall	1183245	II
Cross Trees Cottage And Jessamin Cottage	1048775	II
The Elms And Triangle Cottage	1048776	II
College Farmhouse	1368338	II
Billie's Cottage	1284164	II
Craven Cottage And Cottage Adjoining, Old Forge Cottage And Teallach Cottage	1284141	II
Post Office With Two Adjoining Cottages	1183310	II
The Old Vicarage	1048772	II
Church Of St Mary	1048770	I

**Other Key Buildings in Kingstone Winslow (non designated assets - see Kingstone Winslow map overleaf):**

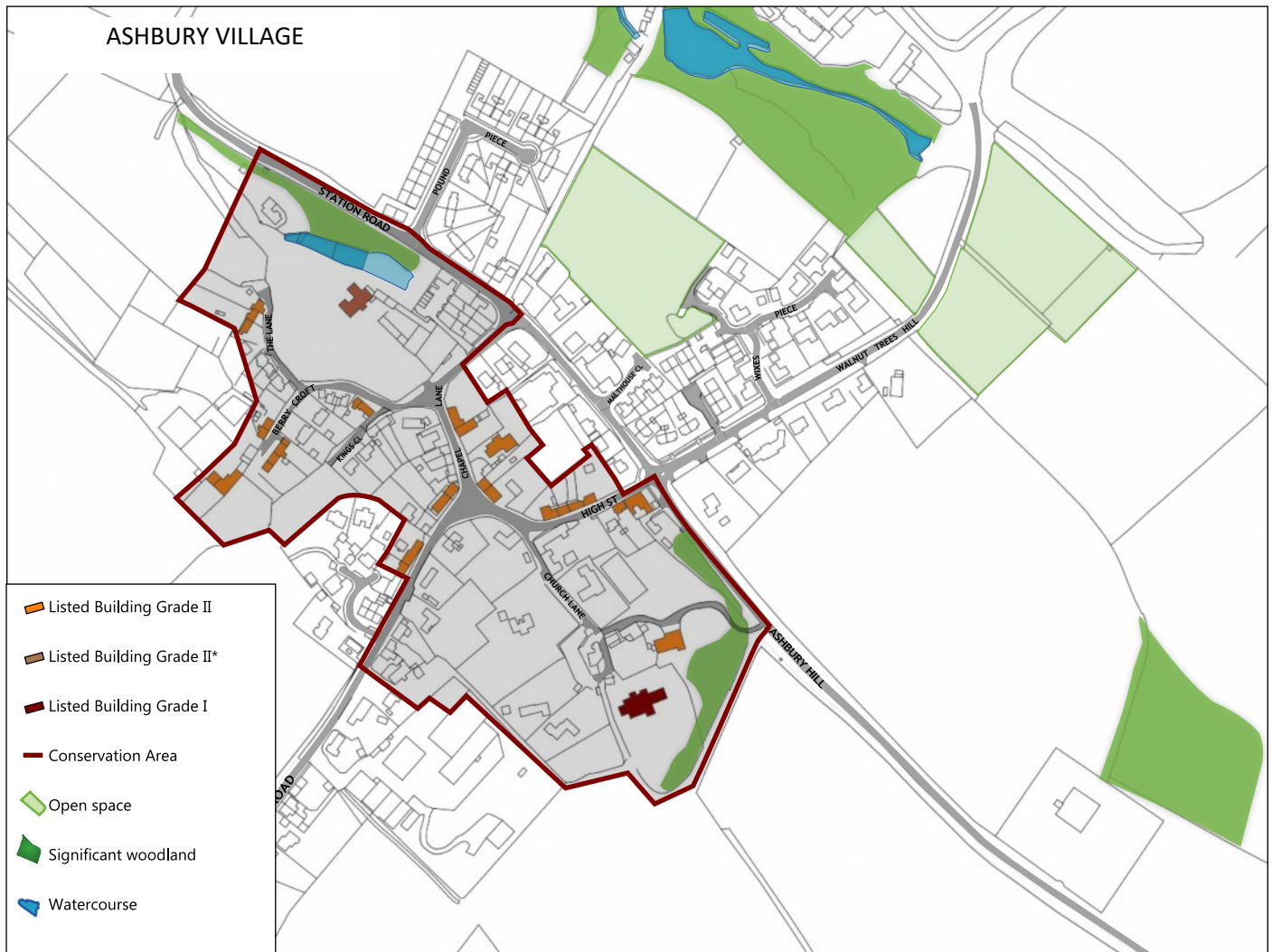
A) Eske Cottage; B) Millers Thatch; C) Millstream Cottage; D) Norval Cottage; E) Rose Cottage; F) Sarsen Cottage; G) Spring Cottage; H) Stable Cottage; I) The Cottage; J) White Cottage; K) Chapel Cottage\*

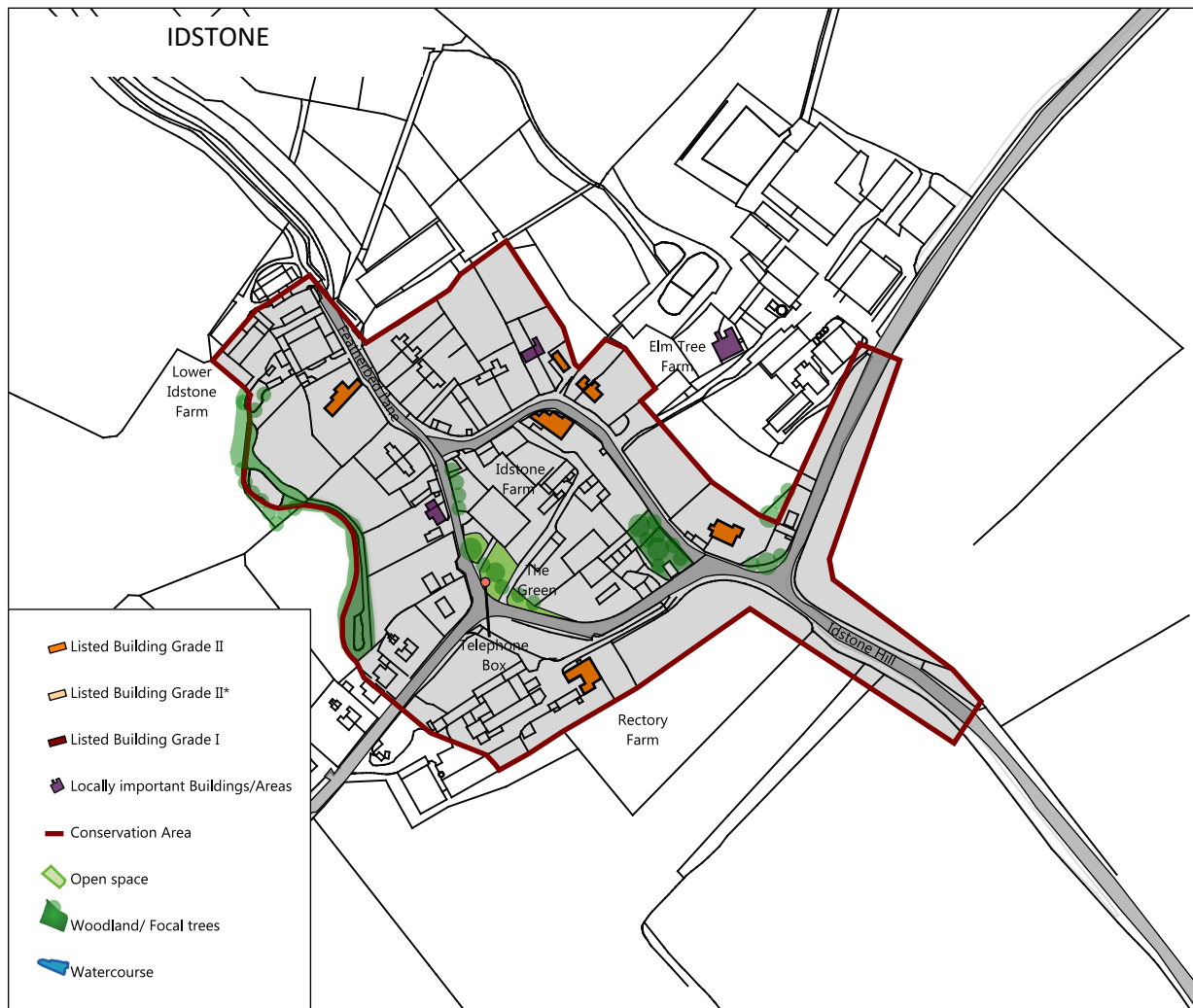
*\* Although 'new build', Chapel Cottage is noteworthy having been designed/constructed to blend in with the surrounding properties & location.*

**Other Noteworthy Features:**

The Upper Mill pond & surrounding woodland; the millstreams & feeder springs; the Green; the former Methodist graveyard; the former telephone box, now used as a residents' library.







### Heritage Assets within Idstone Hamlet

(6 listed buildings)

Name	Reference	Grade
Lower Idstone farmhouse and rose cottage adjoining	1048777	II
Double cottage	1183337	II
Cob cottage and adjoining cottage	1284120	II
Idstone farmhouse	1368339	II
Trip the daisy	1183366	II
Rectory farmhouse	1284111	II

### Non- Designation, Local Important Buildings

- Elm Tree Farm
- Featherbed Cottage
- Bake House Cottages



## Ashdown House/Park

(7 listed buildings)

Name	Reference	Grade
Ashdown house, urn approximately 10 metres north west of door	1048768	II
Ashdown house, pavilion approximately 20 metres north east	1048766	I
Ashdown House	1048765	I
Ashdown house, urn approximately 10 metres south west of door	1368373	II
Ashdown house, pavilion and attached wall approximately 20 metres south east	1048767	I
Ashdown park farmhouse	1048769	II
Ashdown park farmhouse, granary approximately 6 metres south east	1368374	II

## Odstone Farm

(3 listed buildings)

Name	Reference	Grade
Odstone farmhouse	1048771	II
Oddstone farmhouse, oxen stable approximately 40 metres south west	1368376	II
Oddstone farmhouse, barn approximately metres south west	1284208	II

## ANP Footpath Report, January 2016

References according to the footpath numbering on 'Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way for Oxfordshire 2006

Location	Reference	Commentary
FP/1	112/7	Stile & Bridge removed, leaving a narrow sloping path that is treacherous when wet.
FP/2	112/7	Bridge broken, unstable, and dangerous.
FP/2a		The route of the path between FP/2 & FP/3 is no longer discernible.
FP/3	112/10	One of the two bridges at Snivelling Corner partially collapsed leaving a 300mm plank with a loose handrail.
FP/4	112/4	Path overgrown and impassable.
FP/5	112/5	The bridge crossing stream is broken & unsafe, and obstructs access for path users.
FP/6	112/5	Stiles overgrown and too narrow for use.
FP/7	112/6	Path between Featherbed Lane & Zulu farm over-grown and impassable in places.
FP/8 & FP/9	112/7	Stiles 'high' and difficult to negotiate
FP/10	112/2	At junction with 112/1 a steep ramp, slippery when wet, which could be improved by appropriate [rural style] steps. Note: this is a well used path leading out of Ashbury village southwards to the Ridgeway.
FP/11	112/2	The patchy quickthorn hedge either side of path on the steep slope often restricts path
FP/12	112/15	Footpath impassable.



